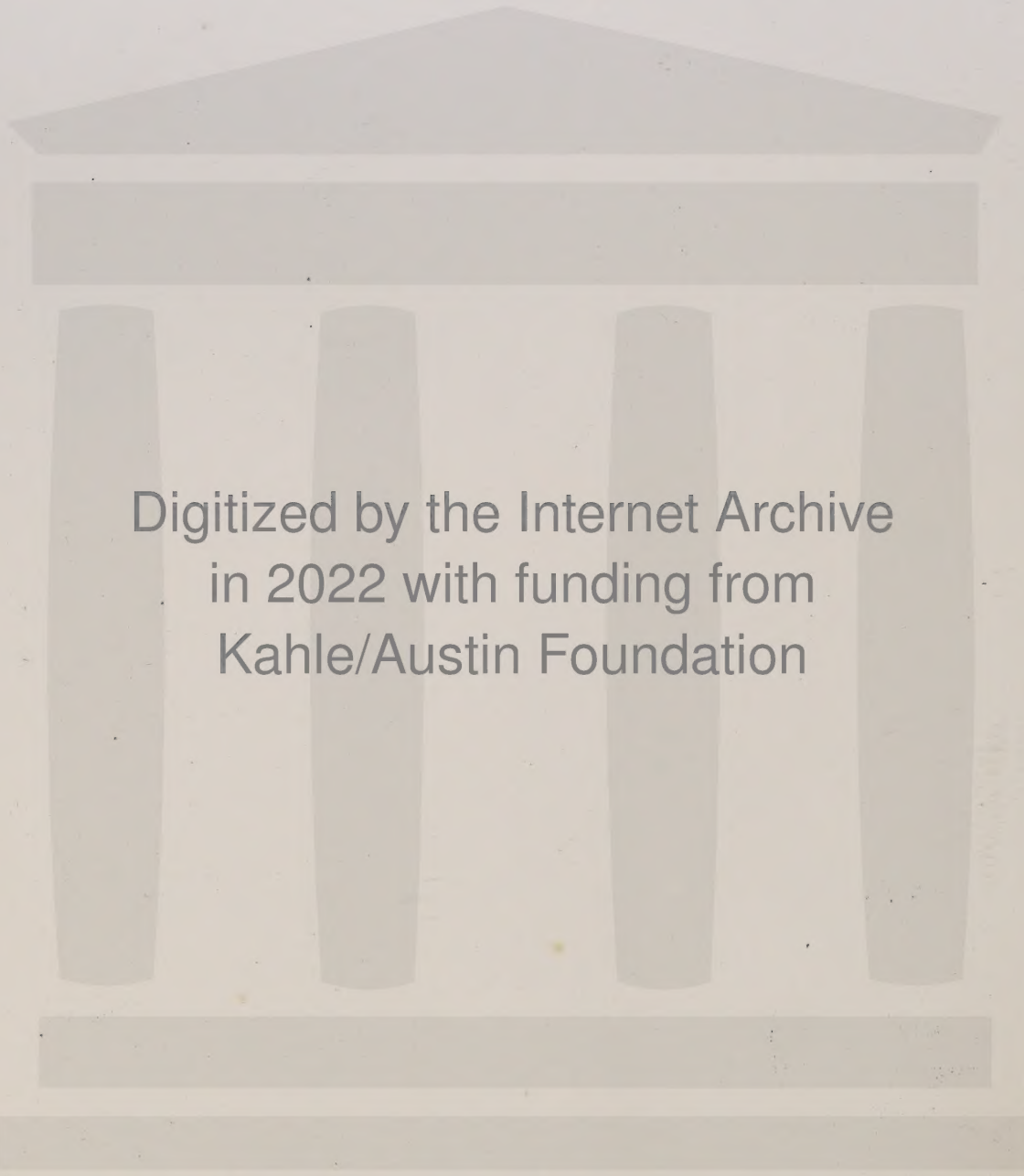




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A COMMENTARY
ON THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

BY
MATTHEW HENRY.

New and Illustrated Edition,

With Additional Original Notes, Critical, Historical, and Geographical;

TOGETHER WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.



IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME III.

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PREFACE.

THE one half of our undertaking upon the New Testament is now, by the assistance of Divine grace, finished, and presented to the reader, who, it is hoped, the Lord working with it, may hereby be somewhat helped in understanding and improving the sacred history of Christ and his apostles; and in making it, as it certainly is, the best exposition of our creed, in which these inspired writers are summed up, as is intimated by that evangelist who calls his gospel "a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us," *Luke i. 1.* And, as there is no part of Scripture in the belief of which it concerns us more to be established, so there is none with which the generality of Christians are more conversant, or which they speak of more frequently. It is therefore our duty, by constant pains in meditation and prayer, to come to an intimate acquaintance with the true intent and meaning of these narratives,—what our concern is in them, and what we are to build upon them and draw from them,—that we may not rest in such a knowledge of them as that which we had when in our childhood we were taught to read English out of the translation, and Greek out of the originals of these books. We ought to know them as the physician does his dispensatory, the lawyer his books of reports, and the sailor his chart and compass; that is, to know how to make use of them in that to which we apply ourselves as our business in this world, which is to serve God here and enjoy him hereafter, and both in Christ the Mediator.

The great designs of the Christian institutes (of which these books are the fountains and foundations) were, to reduce the children of men to the fear and love of God, as the commanding, active principle of their observance of him and obedience to him,—to shew them the way of their reconciliation to him and acceptance with him, and to bring them under obligations to Jesus Christ as Mediator, and thereby to engage them to all instances of devotion towards God, and justice and charity towards all men, in conformity to the example of Christ, in obedience to his law, and in pursuance of his great intentions. What, therefore, I have endeavoured here has been with this view, to make these writings serviceable to the faith, holiness, and comfort of good Christians.

Now, that these writings, thus made use of to serve these great and noble designs, may have their due influence upon us, it concerns us to be well established in our belief of their Divine origin. And here we have to do with two sorts of people. Some embrace the Old Testament, but set that up in opposition to the New, pleading that, if that be right, this is wrong; and these are the Jews. Others, though they live in a Christian nation, and by baptism wear the Christian name, yet, under pretence of freedom of thought, despise Christianity, and consequently reject the New Testament, and therefore the Old of course. I confess it is strange that any now who receive the Old Testament should reject the New, since, besides all the particular proofs of the Divine authority of the New Testament, there is such an admirable harmony between it and the Old. It agrees with the old in all the main intentions of it, refers to it, builds upon it, shews the accomplishment of its types and prophecies, and thereby is the crown and perfection of it. Nay, if it be not true, the Old Testament must be false, and all the glorious promises which shine so brightly in it, and the performance of which was limited within certain periods of time, must be a great delusion, which we are sure they are not, and therefore must embrace the New Testament to support the reputation of the Old.

Those things in the Old Testament which the New Testament lays aside are the peculiarity of the Jewish nation and the observances of the ceremonial law, both which certainly were of Divine appointment; and yet the New Testament does not at all clash with the Old; for,

1. They were always designed to be laid aside in the fulness of time. No other is to be expected than that the morning star should disappear when the sun rises; and the latter parts of the Old Testament often speak of the laying aside of those things, and of the calling in of the Gentiles.

2. They were very honourably laid aside, and rather exchanged for that which was more noble and excellent, more Divine and heavenly. The Jewish church was swallowed up in the Christian, the Mosaic ritual in evangelical institutions; so that the New Testament is no more the undoing of the Old than the sending of a youth to the university is the undoing of his education in the grammar school.

3. Providence soon determined this controversy (which is the only thing that seemed a controversy between the Old Testament and the New) by the destruction of Jerusalem, the desolations of the temple, the dissolution of the temple-service, and the total dispersion of all the remains of the Jewish nation, with a judicial defeat of all the attempts to incorporate it again now for above one thousand six hundred years; and this, according to the express predictions of Christ, a little before his death. And, as Christ would not have the doctrine of his being the Messiah much insisted on, till the great conclusive proof of it was given by his resurrection from the dead, so the repeal of the ceremonial law, as to the Jews, was not much insisted on, but their keeping up the observation of it was connived at, till the great conclusive proof of its repeal was given by the destruction of Jerusalem, which made the observation of it for ever impracticable. And the manifest tokens of Divine wrath which the Jews, considered as a people, even notwithstanding the prosperity of particular persons among them, continue under to this day, is a proof, not only of the truth of Christ's predictions concerning them, but that they lie under a greater guilt than that of idolatry, (for which they lay under a desolation of seventy years,) and this can be no other than crucifying Christ, and rejecting his Gospel.

Thus evident it is, that in our expounding of the New Testament we are not undoing what we did in expounding the Old; so far from it, that we may appeal to the law and the prophets for the confirmation of the great truth which the gospels are written to prove—That our Lord Jesus is the Messiah promised to the fathers, who should come, and we are to look for no other. For though his appearing did not answer the expectation of the carnal Jews, who looked for a Messiah in external pomp and power, yet it exactly answered all the types, prophecies, and promises of the Old Testament, which all had their accomplishment in him; and even his ignominious sufferings, which are the greatest stumblingblock to the Jews, were foretold concerning the Messiah; so that if he had not submitted to them we had failed in our proof; so far it is from being weakened by them. Bishop Kidder's *Demonstration of the Christian's Messiah* has abundantly made out this truth, and answered the cavils (for such they are, rather than arguments) of the Jews against it, above any in our language.

But we live in an age when Christianity and the New Testament are more virulently and daringly attacked by some within their own bowels than by those upon their borders. Never were Moses and his writings so arraigned and ridiculed by any Jews, or Mahomet and his Alcoran by any Mussulmans, as Christ and his Gospel by men that are baptized and called Christians; and this, not under any colour of any other Divine revelation, but in contempt and defiance of all Divine revelation; and not by way of complaint that they meet with that which shocks their faith, and which, through their own weakness, they cannot get over, and therefore desire to be instructed in, and helped in the understanding of, and the reconciling of them to the truth which they have received, but by way of resolute opposition, as if they looked upon it as their enemy, and were resolved by all means possible to be the ruin of it, though they cannot say what evil it has done to the world or to them. If the pretence of it has transported many in the church of Rome into such corruptions of worship and cruelties of government as are indeed the scandal of human nature, yet, instead of being thereby prejudiced against pure Christianity, they should the rather appear more vigorously in defence of it, when they see so excellent an institution as this is in itself so basely abused and misrepresented. They pretend to a liberty of thought

Note to Preface.—The object of Mr. Henry in this Preface is not merely to state his own faith, but to call attention to various erroneous opinions which were prevalent in his time, and to advance reasons in support of right belief. He mentions the Jews, who reject the Old Testament, and unbelievers, who repudiate the New Testament as well as the Old. With respect to the Jews in particular, he mentions a few points which are of importance, as explaining how and under what circumstances the ceremonial law was laid aside. He justly

regards this as not a repeal of the Old Testament. Bishop Kidder, whose "*Demonstration of the Christian's Messiah*" is referred to, was raised to the see of Bath and Wells in 1691. The book consisted of three volumes, and was held in high estimation. Dr. Kidder was accidentally killed in the great storm of November 26, 1703.

In answer to those who rejected Christianity on the plea of free-thinking, Mr. Henry shows under a series of heads that the believer is the real free-thinker. Of the authors he mentions under this head,

In their opposition to Christianity, and would be distinguished by the name of free-thinkers. I will not here go about to produce the arguments which, to all that are not wilfully ignorant and prejudiced against the truth, are sufficient to prove the Divine origin and authority of the doctrines of Christ. The learned find much satisfaction in reading the apologies of the ancients for the Christian religion, when it was struggling with the polytheism and idolatry of the Gentiles. Justin Martyr and Tertullian, and Lactantius and Minutius Felix, wrote admirably in defence of Christianity, when it was further sealed by the blood of the martyrs. But its patrons and advocates in the present day have another sort of enemies to deal with. The antiquity of the pagan theology, its universal prevalence, the edicts of princes, and the traditions and usages of the country, are not now objected to Christianity; but I know not what imaginary freedom of thought, and an unheard-of privilege of human nature, are assumed, not to be bound by any Divine revelations whatsoever. Now it is easy to make out,

1. That those who would be thought thus to maintain a liberty of thinking as one of the privileges of human nature, and in defence of which they will take up arms against God himself, do not themselves think freely, nor give others leave to do so. In some of them a resolute indulgence of themselves in those vicious courses which they knew the Gospel, if they admit it, will make very uneasy to them, and a secret enmity to a holy, heavenly mind and life, forbid them all free thought; for so strong a prejudice have their lusts and passions laid them under against the laws of Christ, that they find themselves under a necessity of opposing the truths of Christ, upon which these laws are founded. *Perit judicium, quando res transit in affectum*.—"The judgment is overcome, when the decision is referred to the affections." Right or wrong, Christ's bonds must be broken, and his cords cast from them; and therefore, how evident soever the premises be, the conclusion must be denied, if it tend to fasten these bands and cords upon them; and where is the freedom of thought then? "While they promise themselves liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome of the same is he brought into bondage." In others of them, a reigning pride and affectation of singularity, and a spirit of contradiction, those lusts of the mind, which are as impetuous and imperious as any of the lusts of the flesh and of the world, forbid a freedom of thinking, and enslave the soul in all its inquiries after religion. Those can no more think freely who resolve they will think by themselves, than those can who resolve to think with their neighbours. Nor will they give others liberty to think freely; for it is not by reason and argument that they go about to convince us, but by jest and banter, and exposing Christianity and its serious professors to contempt. Now, considering how natural it is to most men to be jealous for their reputation, this is as great an imposition as can possibly be; and the unthinking are as much kept from free-thinking by the fear of being ridiculed in the club of those who set up for oracles in reason, as by the fear of being cursed, excommunicated, and anathematized, by the counsel of those who set up for oracles in religion. And where is the free-thinking then?

2. That those who will allow themselves a true liberty of thinking, and will think seriously, cannot but embrace all Christ's sayings as faithful, and well "worthy of all acceptance." Let the corrupt bias of the carnal heart towards the world, and the flesh, and self, (the most presumptuous idol of the three,) be taken away, and let the doctrine of Christ be proposed first in its true colours, as Christ and his apostles have given it to us, and in its true light, with all its proper evidence, intrinsic and extrinsic; and then let the capable soul freely use its rational powers and faculties, and, by the operation of the Spirit of grace, who alone works faith in all that believe, even the high thought, when once it becomes a free thought, freed from the bondage of sin and corruption, will, by a pleasing and happy power, be captivated, and brought into obedience to Christ; and when he thus makes it free, it will be free indeed. Let any one who will give himself leave to think impartially, and be at the pains to think closely, read Mr. Baxter's *Reasons for the Christian Religion*, and he will find, both that it goes to the bottom, and lays the foundation deep and firm, and also that it brings forth the topstone in a believer's consent to God in Christ, to the satisfaction of any that are truly concerned about their souls and another world. The proofs of the truths of the Gospel have been excellently well methodized, and enforced likewise, by Bishop Stillingfleet, in his *Origines Sacre*; by Grotius, in his book of the *Truth of the Christian Religion*; by Dr. Whitby, in his General Preface to his *Commentary on the New Testament*; and of late by Mr. Ditton, very argumentatively, in his discourse

concerning "the resurrection of Jesus Christ;" and many others have herein done worthily. And I will not believe any man who rejects the New Testament and the Christian religion to have thought freely upon the subject, unless he has, with humility, seriousness, and prayer to God for direction, deliberately read these or the like books, which, it is certain, were written both with liberty and clearness of thought.

For my own part, if my thoughts were worth any one's notice, I do declare I have thought of this great concern with all the liberty that a reasonable soul can pretend to, or desire; and the result is, that the more I think, and the more I freely think, the more fully I am satisfied that the Christian religion is the true religion, and that which, if I submit my soul sincerely to it, I may venture my soul confidently upon. For when I think freely,

1. I cannot but think that the God, who made man a reasonable creature by his power, has a right to rule him by his law, and to oblige him to keep his inferior faculties of appetite and passion, together with the capacities of thought and speech, in due subjection to the superior powers of reason and conscience. And, when I look into my own heart, I cannot but think that it was this which my Maker designed in the order and frame of my soul, and that herein he intended to support his own dominion in me.

2. I cannot but think that my happiness is bound up in the favour of God, and that his favour will, or will not, be towards me, according as I do, or do not, comply with the laws and ends of my creation,—that I am accountable to this God, and that from him my judgment proceeds, not only for this world, but for my everlasting state.

3. I cannot but think that my nature is very unlike what the nature of man was as it came out of the Creator's hands,—that it is degenerated from its primitive purity and rectitude. I find in myself a natural aversion to my duty, and to spiritual and Divine exercises, and a propensity to that which is evil, such an inclination towards the world and the flesh as amounts to a propensity to backslide from the living God.

4. I cannot but think that I am therefore, by nature, thrown out of the favour of God; for though I think he is a gracious and merciful God, yet I think he is also a just and holy God, and that I am become, by sin, both odious to his holiness and obnoxious to his justice. I should not think freely, but very partially, if I should think otherwise. I think I am guilty before God, have sinned, and come short of glorifying him, and of being glorified with him.

5. I cannot but think that, without some special discovery of God's will concerning me, and good-will to me, I cannot possibly recover his favour, be reconciled to him, or be so far restored to my primitive rectitude as to be capable of serving my Creator, and answering the ends of my creation, and becoming fit for another world; for the bounties of providence to me, in common with the inferior creatures, cannot serve either as assurances that God is reconciled to me, or means to reconcile me to God.

6. I cannot but think that the way of salvation, both from the guilt and from the power of sin, by Jesus Christ, and his mediation between God and man, as it is revealed by the New Testament, is admirably well fitted to all the exigencies of my case, to restore me, both to the favour of God, and to the government and enjoyment of myself. Here I see a proper method for the removing of the guilt of sin (that I may not die by the sentence of the law) by the all-sufficient merit and righteousness of the Son of God in our nature, and for the breaking of the power of sin (that I may not die by my own disease) by the all-sufficient influence and operation of the Spirit of God upon our nature. Every malady has herein its remedy, every grievance is hereby redressed, and in such a way as advances the honour of all the Divine attributes, and is suited and accommodated to human nature.

7. I cannot but think that what I find in myself of natural religion does evidently bear testimony to the Christian religion; for all that truth which is discovered to me by the light of nature is confirmed, and more clearly discovered, by the Gospel: the very same thing which the light of nature gives me a confused sight of (like the sight of men as trees walking), the New Testament gives me a clear and distinct sight of. All that good which is pressed upon me by the law of nature is more fully discovered to me, and I find myself much more strongly bound to it by the Gospel of Christ, the engagements it lays upon me to my duty, and the encouragements and assistances it gives me in my duty. And this is further confirming to me that there, just there, where natural light leaves me at a loss, and unsatisfied—tells me that hitherto it can carry me, but no farther—the Gospel takes me up, helps me out,

a few words may be spoken. Justin Martyr suffered for his faith, after boldly defending it by his writings, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Tertullian of Carthage died probably after A.D. 220, and Lactantius about a century later. Minutius Felix seems to have lived somewhat after Tertullian. All these four distinguished themselves by their zeal and ability. Dr. Stillingfleet, whose "*Origines Sacre*" is even now consulted, published that work in 1662. He became Bishop of Worcester, and died in 1699. Grotius was a

prodigy of learning. The work here mentioned was written in Latin, and is still of value. The author died in 1645. Dr. Whitby, the commentator, died in 1726. His work on the New Testament appeared in 1703, but the author's Arminian tendencies involved him in controversy. Mr. Ditton was an eminent mathematician, but he published a valuable book on the resurrection of Christ, which was translated into other languages. "The Reasons for the Christian Religion," by Richard Baxter, were first published in 1667.

and gives me all the satisfaction I can desire, and that is especially in the great business of the satisfying of God's justice for the sin of man. My own conscience asks, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God?" "Will he be pleased with thousands of rams?" But I am still at a loss; I cannot frame a righteousness from any thing I am, or have, in myself, or from any thing I can do for God, or present to God, wherein I dare appear before him; but the Gospel comes, and tells me that Jesus Christ has "made his soul an offering for sin," and God has declared himself well pleased with all believers in him; and this makes me easy.

8. I cannot but think that the proofs by which God has attested the truth of the Gospel are the most proper that could be given in a case of this nature—that the power and authority of the Redeemer in the kingdom of grace should be exemplified to the world, not by the highest degree of the pomp and authority of the kings of the earth, as the Jews expected, but by the evidences of his dominion in the kingdom of nature, which is a much greater dignity and authority than any of the kings of the earth ever pretended to, and is no less than Divine. And his miracles being generally wrought upon men,—not only upon their bodies, as they were mostly when Christ was here upon earth, but, which is more, upon their minds, as they were mostly after the pouring out of the Spirit in the gift of tongues and other supernatural endowments,—were the most proper confirmations possible of the truth of the Gospel, which was designed for the making of men holy and happy.

9. I cannot but think that the methods taken for the propagation of this Gospel, and the wonderful success of those methods, which are purely spiritual and heavenly, and destitute of all secular advantages and supports, plainly shew that it was of God, for God was with it; and it could never have spread as it did, in the face of so much opposition, if it had not been accompanied with a power from on high. And the preservation of Christianity in the world to this day, notwithstanding the difficulties it has struggled with, is to me a standing miracle for the proof of it.

10. I cannot but think that the Gospel of Christ has had some influence upon my soul, has had such a command over me, and been such a comfort to me, as is a demonstration to myself, though it cannot be so to another, that it is of God; I have tasted in it "that the Lord is gracious," and the most subtle disputant cannot convince one who has tasted honey that it is not sweet.

And now I appeal to Him who knows the thoughts and intents of the heart, that in all this I think freely, (if it be possible for a man to know that he doth so,) and not under the power of any bias. Whether we have reason to think that those who, without any colour of reason, not only usurp, but monopolize the character of free-thinkers, do so, let those judge who easily observe that they do not speak sincerely, but industriously dissemble their notions; and one instance I cannot but take notice of, their unfair dealing with their readers,—that when, for the diminishing of the authority of the New Testament, they urge the various readings of the original, and quote an acknowledgment of Mr. Gregory of Christchurch, in his preface to his works, 'That no profane author whatsoever,' &c.; and yet suppress what immediately follows, as the sense of that learned man upon it, 'That this is an invincible reason for the Scriptures' part, &c.

We then receive the books of the New Testament as our oracles; for it is evident that that excellent notion of Dr. Henry More's is true, 'that they have a direct tendency to take us off from the animal life, and to bring us to the Divine life.'

But while we are thus maintaining the Divine origin and authority of the New Testament, as it has been received through all the ages of the church, we find our cause not only attacked by the enemies we speak of, but in effect betrayed by one who makes our New Testament almost double to what it really is, adding to it the *Constitutions of the Apostles* collected by Clement, together with the *Apostolical Canons*, and making those to be of equal authority with the writings of the evangelists, and preferable to the Epistles. By enlarging the lines of defence thus, without either cause or precedent, he gives great advantage to the invaders. Those *Constitutions of the Apostles* have many things in them very good, and may be of use, as other human compositions; but to pretend that they were composed, as they profess themselves to be, by the twelve apostles in consort at Jerusalem, 'I Peter saying this,' 'I Andrew saying that,' &c., is the greatest imposition that can be practised upon the credulity of the simple.

1. It is certain there were a great many spurious writings which, in the early days of the church, went under the names of the

apostles and apostolical men; so that it has always been complained of as impossible to find out anything but the canon of Scripture that could with any assurance be attributed to them. Baronius himself acknowledgeth it,—*Cum apostolorum nomine tam facta quam dicta reperiantur esse supposititia; nec sic quid de illis a veris sincerisque scriptoribus narratum sit integrum et incorruptum remanserit, in desperationem plane quandum animum dejiciunt posse unquam assequi quod verum certumque subsistat*—'Since so many of the acts and sayings ascribed to the apostles are found to be spurious, and even the narrations of faithful writers respecting them are not free from corruption, we must despair of ever being able to arrive at any absolute certainty about them;' *Ad An. Christ.* 44, sect. 42, &c. There were acts under the names of Andrew the apostle, Philip, Peter, Thomas; a gospel under the name of Thaddeus, another of Barnabas, another of Bartholomew; a book concerning the infancy of our Saviour, another concerning his nativity, and many the like, which were all rejected as forgeries.

2. These Constitutions and Canons, among the rest, were condemned in the primitive church as apocryphal, and therefore justly rejected; because, though otherwise good, they pretended to be what really they were not, dictated by the twelve apostles themselves, as received from Christ. If Jesus Christ gave them such instructions, and they gave them in such a solemn manner to the church, as is pretended, it is unaccountable that there is not the least notice taken of any such thing done or designed, in the Gospels, the Acts, or any of the Epistles.

Those who have judged the most favourably of these Canons and Constitutions have concluded that they were compiled by some officious persons, under the name of Clement, towards the end of the second century, above one hundred and fifty years after Christ's ascension, out of the common practice of the churches; that is, that which the compilers were most acquainted with, or had respect for; when at the same time we have reason to think, that the far greater number of Christian churches which by that time were planted had Constitutions of their own, which, if they had had the happiness to be transmitted to posterity, would have recommended themselves as well as these, or better. But, as the legislators of old put a reputation upon their laws, by pretending to have received them from some deity or other, so church governors studied to gain reputation to their sees, by placing some apostolical man or other at the head of their catalogue of bishops, (see Bishop Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, p. 302,) and reputation to their Canons and Constitutions, by fathering them upon the apostles. But how can it be imagined that the apostles should be all together at Jerusalem, to compose this book of Canons with so much solemnity, when we know that their commission was to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature? Accordingly, Eusebius tells us that Thomas went into Parthia, Andrew into Scythia, John into the lesser Asia; and we have reason to think that after their dispersion they never came together again, any more than the planters of the nations did, after the Most High had separated the sons of Adam.

I think any one who will compare these Constitutions with the writings which we are sure were given by inspiration of God, will easily discern a vast difference in the style and spirit: "What is the chaff to the wheat?" 'Where are ministers, in the style of the true apostles, called priests, high priests? Where do we find in the apostolical age, that age of suffering, of the placing of the bishop in his throne? or of readers, singers, and porters in the church?'—*Edit. Joan. Clerici*, p. 245.

I fear the collector and compiler of these Constitutions, under the name of Clement, was conscious to himself of dishonesty in it, in that he would not have them published before all, because of the mysteries contained in them; nor were they known or published till the middle of the fourth century, when the forgery could not be so well disproved. I cannot see any mysteries in them, that they should be concealed, if they had been genuine; but I am sure Christ bids his apostles publish the mysteries of the kingdom of God upon the house-tops. And St. Paul, though there are mysteries in his Epistles much more sublime than any of these Constitutions, chargeth that they should be read to all the holy brethren. Nay, these Constitutions are so wholly in a manner taken up, either with moral precepts, or rules of practice in the church, that if they had been what they pretend, they had been most fit to be published before all. And though the Apocalypse is so full of mysteries, yet a blessing is pronounced upon the readers and hearers of that prophecy. We must therefore conclude that, whenever they were written, by declining the light they owned themselves to be apocryphal, that is, hidden or concealed;

Mr. John Gregory, who is mentioned by Mr. Henry as of Christ Church, was born at Amersham in 1607, and became a chaplain of his college, Christ Church, Oxford, but after displaying great talent, so as to be called the wonder of his age, died in 1646, after publishing "Observations on Scripture." Other volumes of his works were subsequently issued. By "one who makes our New Testament almost double to what it really is," Mr. Henry means Whiston, now best known for his translation of Josephus, but then famous on

account of other books. The second and third volumes of his "Primitive Christianity Revived," published in 1711, contained the so-called "Apostolical Constitutions," and an essay upon them. The first volume contained the Epistles of Ignatius. What are termed Apostolical Canons and Constitutions are fairly estimated by Mr. Henry, and although curious, are forgeries much more modern than apostolical times. They form part of a system of frauds invented to sustain the credit of a new-fledged sacerdotal and ritualistic system

P R E F A C E.

that they durst not mingle themselves with what was given by Divine inspiration; to allude to what is said of the ministers, *Acts* v. 13, "Of the rest durst no man join himself" to the apostles, "for the people magnified them." So that, even by their own confession, they were not delivered to the churches with the other writings, when the New Testament canon was solemnly sealed up with that dreadful sentence, passed on those that "add unto these things."

And as we have thus had attempts made of late upon the purity and sufficiency of our New Testament, by additions to it, so we have likewise had from another quarter a great contempt put upon it by the papal power. The occasion was this: One father Quesnel, a French papist, and a Jansenist, near thirty years ago published the New Testament in French, in several small volumes, with Moral Reflections on every verse, to render the reading of it more profitable, and meditation upon it more easy. It was much esteemed in France, for the sake of the piety and devotion that appeared in it, and it had several impressions. The Jesuits were much disgusted, and solicited the pope for the condemnation of it, though the author of it was a papist, and many things in it countenance popish superstition. After much struggling about it in the court of Rome, a bull was at length obtained, at the request of the French king, from the present pope, Clement XI., bearing date, September 8, 1713; by which the said book, with what title, or in what language soever it is printed, is prohibited and condemned; both the New Testament itself, because in many things varying from the vulgar Latin, and the Annotations, as containing divers propositions, (above a hundred are enumerated,) scandalous and pernicious, injurious to the church and its customs, impious, blasphemous, savouring of heresy. And the propositions are such as these: 'That the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is the effectual principle of all manner of good, is necessary for every good action, for without it nothing is done, nay, nothing can be done;' 'that it is a sovereign grace, and is an operation of the almighty hand of God;' 'that, when God accompanies his word with the internal power of his grace, it operates in the soul the obedience which it demands;' 'that faith is the first grace, and the fountain of all others;' 'that it is in vain for us to call God our Father, if we do not cry to him with a spirit of love;' 'that there is no God nor religion where there is no charity;' 'that the Catholic church comprehends the angels, and all the elect, and just men of the earth, of all ages;' 'that it has the Word incarnate for its head, and all the saints for its members;' 'that it is profitable, and necessary at all times, in all places, and for all sorts of persons, to know the holy Scriptures;' 'that the holy obscurity of the word of God is no reason for the laity not reading it;' 'that the Lord's day ought to be sanctified by reading books of piety, especially the holy Scriptures;' and, 'that to forbid Christians from reading the Scriptures is to prohibit the use of light to the children of light.' Many such positions as these, which the spirit

every good Christian cannot but relish as true and good, are condemned by the pope's bull as impious and blasphemous. And this bull, though strenuously opposed by a great number of the

bishops in France, who were well affected to the notions of father Quesnel, was yet received and confirmed by the French king's letters patent, bearing date at Versailles, February 14, 1714; which forbid all manner of persons, upon pain of exemplary punishment, so much as to keep any of those books in their houses; and adjudge any that should hereafter write in defence of the propositions condemned by the pope as disturbers of the peace. It was registered the day following, February 15, by the parliament of Paris, but with divers provisos and limitations.

By this it appears that Popery is still the same thing that ever it was, an enemy to the knowledge of the Scriptures, and to the honour of Divine grace. What reason have we to bless God that we have liberty to read the Scriptures, and have helps to understand and improve them, which we are concerned diligently to make a good use of, that we may not provoke God to give us up into the hands of those powers that would use us in like manner!

I am willing to hope that those to whom the reading of the Exposition of the Old Testament was pleasant will find this yet more pleasant; for this is that part of Scripture which doth most plainly testify of Christ, and in which that "gospel grace which appears unto all men, bringing salvation," shines most clear. This is the New Testament milk for babes, the rest is strong meat for strong men. By these, therefore, let us be nourished and strengthened, that we may be pressing on towards perfection; and that, having laid the foundation in the history of our blessed Saviour's life, death, and resurrection, and the first preaching of his Gospel, we may build upon it by an acquaintance with the mysteries of godliness, to which we shall be further let into in the Epistles.

I desire I may be read with a candid, and not a critical eye. I pretend not to gratify the curious; the summit of my ambition is to assist those that are truly serious in searching the Scriptures daily. I am sure the work is designed, and hope it is calculated, to promote piety towards God, and charity towards our brethren; and that there is not only something in it which may edify, but nothing which may justly offend any good Christian.

If any receive spiritual benefit by my poor endeavours, it will be a comfort to me, but let God have all the glory, and that free grace of his which has employed one that is utterly unworthy of such an honour, and enabled one thus far to go on in it who is utterly insufficient for such a service.

Having obtained help of God, I continue hitherto in it, and humbly depend upon the same good hand of my God to carry me on in that which remains; to gird my loins with needful strength, and to make my way perfect, and for this I humbly desire the prayers of my friends. One volume more, I hope, will include what is yet to be done; and I will both go about it, and go on with it, as God shall enable me, with all convenient speed; but it is that part of the Scripture which, of all others, requires the most care and pains in expounding it. But I trust that "as the day so shall the strength be."

M. H.

1712.

The traitors who framed such things generally gave to their deceitful works the name of some truly eminent man. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Clement of Rome, in the apostolic age, and whose name appears in the New Testament, should be thus dishonoured. With regard to the date of the numerous Clementine impostures, it may be confidently said that they began to appear before the end of the second century; but the Constitutions are not so old, and in all probability were concocted in the fourth century. There is nothing like them in the genuine writings of an earlier period. As for the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, &c., under the names of Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Peter, &c., the simple fact is that they were never received by the churches as genuine and authoritative. Some of them are fictions which can be traced back to the second century, when they seem to have originated among heretical sects; and from that time onward, we might almost say down to our own day, their number has been multiplied. At present their character and position are so well understood that they are comparatively harmless, and have not one respectable scholar to uphold their credit. Mr. Whiston had few

followers, and as might be expected, the only friends of his scheme now are a few obscure infidels.

For the other authors mentioned by Mr. Henry in this Preface, the following dates may be given:—Henry More, a profoundly learned man, died in 1687; Cæsar Baronius, who wrote an enormous Church history in the interests of Rome, died 1607; Eusebius, the Church historian, died about 340; Joannes Clericus, or John le Clerc, a miscellaneous theological writer, died in 1736; Pasquier Quesnel, whose "New Testament, with Moral Observations" roused so much the wrath of the Jesuits, was obliged to retire to Holland from France, and died in 1719; Clement XI., whose bull, known as "Unigenitus," condemning Scripture doctrine and its upholders, is referred to by Mr. Henry, died in 1721. The question of the canon practically raised by our author, but not discussed, has been much inquired into by many able men, from Bishop Cosins to Canon Westcott. The former wrote on all the books of Scripture in a style more fit for the learned; the latter confines himself to the New Testament, respecting which he collects nearly all the principal witnesses.



AN EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE have now before us, I. The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; so this second part of the Holy Bible is entitled: the *New Covenant*; so it might as well be rendered; the word signifies both. But when it is, as here, spoken of as Christ's act and deed, it is most properly rendered a *Testament*, for he is the testator, and it becomes of force by his death, *Heb. ix. 16, 17*; nor is there, as in covenants, a previous treaty between the parties; but what is granted, though an estate upon condition, is owing to the will, the freewill of the testator; so is all the grace contained in this Book owing to Jesus Christ, as our Lord and Saviour; and unless we consent to him as our Lord, we cannot expect any benefit by him as our Saviour. This is called a *New Testament* to distinguish it from that which was given by Moses, and was now antiquated; and to signify that it should be always *New*, and should never wax old, and grow out of date. These books contain not only a full discovery of that grace which has "appeared to all men, bringing salvation," but a legal instrument, by which it is conveyed to, and settled upon, all believers. How carefully do we preserve, and with what attention and pleasure do we read the last will and testament of a friend that has by it left us a fair estate, and with it high expressions of his love to us! How precious then should this *Testament* of our blessed Saviour be to us, which secures to us all his unsearchable riches! It is his Testament; for though, as is usual, it was written by others, (we have nothing upon record that was of Christ's own writing,) yet he dictated it; and the night before he died, in the institution of his Supper, signed, sealed, and published it, in the presence of twelve witnesses. For though these books were not written for some years after, for the benefit of posterity, in *perpetuam rei memoriam*,—"for a perpetual memorial;" yet the New Testament of our Lord Jesus was settled, confirmed, and declared, from the time of his death, as a nuncupative will, with which these records exactly agree. The things which St. Luke wrote were things which were "most surely believed," and therefore well known before he wrote them; but when they were written, the oral tradition was superseded and set aside, and these writings were the repository of that New Testament; and this is intimated by the title which is prefixed to many Greek copies, *Της καθ' ὅλης Διαθήκης Απαρχή*, 'The Whole of the New Testament,' or, 'All the Things of it.' In it is declared "the whole counsel of God" concerning our salvation, *Acts xx. 27*. As "the Law of the Lord is perfect," so is the Gospel of Christ, and nothing is to be added to it. We have it all, and are to look for no more.

II. We have before us the *Four Gospels*. Gospel signifies 'good news,' or 'glad tidings;' and this history of Christ's coming into the world to save sinners, is without doubt the best news that ever came from heaven to earth. The angel gave it this title, *Lu. ii. 10*, *Ευαγγελίζομαι υμῖν*,—"I bring you good tidings; I bring the Gospel to you." And the prophet foretold it, *Isa. lii. 7*; *lxi. 1*, where it is foretold, that in the days of the Messiah good tidings should be preached.

Gospel is an old Saxon word; it is God's spell or word; and God is so called, because he is good, *Deus optimus*,—"God most excellent;" and therefore it may be a good spell, or word. And if we take spell in its more proper signification for a charm, (*carmen*), and take that, in a good sense, for what is moving and affecting, which is apt (*lenire dolorem*) to calm the spirits, or to raise them in admiration or love, as that which is very amiable we call charming, it is applicable to the Gospel; for in it the charmer charmeth wisely, though to deaf adders, *Ps. lviii. 4, 5*. Nor, one would think, can any charms be so powerful as those of the beauty and love of our Redeemer. The whole New Testament is the Gospel. St. Paul calls it his Gospel, because he was one of the preachers of it. Oh, that we may each of us make it ours, by our cordial acceptance of it, and subjection to it! But the four books which contain the History of the Redeemer, we commonly call the *Four Gospels*; and the inspired penmen of them, evangelists, or Gospel writers; but not very properly, because that title belongs to a particular order of ministers, that were assistants to the apostles, *Eph. iv. 11*, "He gave some apostles, and some evangelists." It was requisite that the doctrine of Christ should be interwoven with, and founded upon the narrative of his birth, life, miracles, death, and resurrection; for then it appears in its clearest and strongest light. As in nature, so in grace, the most happy discoveries are those which take rise from the certain representations of matters of fact. Natural history is the best philosophy; and so is the Sacred History, both of the Old and New Testament, the most proper and grateful vehicle of Sacred Truth. These

Introductory Note.—The authorship of this gospel has been very seldom questioned. St. Matthew is identified with the Levi of Mark and Luke, a publican, one of the twelve, and the son of Alphæus. We know little of his life and death, though legends concerning him are plentiful. The earliest extant allusion to his death is that of Heracleon (A.D. 140), who mentions him as dying a natural death. This Heracleon may be called the first Christian commentator, and, although heretical, he wrote on the gospels or some of them, and

refers to St. Matthew. The language of the first gospel has been much disputed. It comes to us in Greek, which the chief modern critics believe to be the original. The early writers say it was written in Hebrew, or a kindred dialect. The general opinion has been that it was intended for Jewish readers, more especially for converts from that nation. Equally general has been the belief that this was the first written of the four, though other views have been occasionally held in modern times. With regard to the actual

Four Gospels were early and constantly received by the primitive church and read in Christian assemblies as appears by the writings of Justin Martyr and Irenæus, who lived little more than a hundred years after the ascension of Christ. They declare there were neither more nor fewer than four received by the church. And there was a harmony of these four evangelists compiled by Tatianus about that time, which he called, *To dia tetrastikon*, 'The Gospel out of the Four.' In the third and fourth centuries there were Gospels forged by divers sects, and published, one under the name of St. Peter, another of St. Thomas, another of St. Philip, &c.; but they were never owned by the church, nor any credit given to them, as the learned Dr. Whitby shews; and he gives this good reason why we should adhere to these written records: because, whatever the pretences of tradition may be, it is not sufficient to preserve traditions with any certainty, as appears by experience; for whereas Christ said and did many things memorable, which were "not written," *Jno. xx. 30; xxi. 25*, tradition has not preserved any one of them to us, but all is lost except what was written; that therefore is it we must abide by; and blessed be God that we have it to abide by. It is the sure word of history.

III. We have before us the *Gospel according to St. Matthew*. The penman was by birth a Jew, by calling a publican, till Christ commanded his attendance, and then he left the receipt of custom to follow him, and was one of those that accompanied him "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was taken up." *Acts i. 21, 22*; and was therefore a competent witness of what he has here recorded. He is said to have written this history about eight years after Christ's ascension. Many of the ancients say he wrote it in the Hebrew or Syriac language, but the tradition is sufficiently disproved by Dr. Whitby. Doubtless it was written in Greek, as the other parts of the New Testament were, not in that language which was peculiar to the Jews, whose church and state were near a period, but that which was common to the world, and in which the knowledge of Christ would be most effectually transmitted to the nations of the earth; yet it is probable there might be an edition of it in Hebrew, published by St. Matthew himself, at the same time that he wrote it in Greek; the former for the Jews, the latter for the Gentiles, when he left Judæa to go to preach among the Gentiles. Let us bless God that we have it, and have it in a language we understand.

CHAPTER I.

This Evangelist begins with the account of Christ's parentage and birth, his ancestors from whom he descended, and the manner of his entry into the world, to make it appear that he was indeed the Messiah promised: for it was foretold that he should be the son of David, and should be "born of a virgin;" and that he was so, is here plainly shewn. For here is, I. His pedigree from Abraham, in forty-two generations, three fourteens, ver. 1—17. II. An account of the circumstances of his birth, so far as was requisite to shew that he was born of a virgin, ver. 18—25. Thus methodically is the life of our blessed Saviour written, as lives should be written, for the clearer proposing of the example of them.



THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; 3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; 4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; 5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; 6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; 7 And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; 8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; 9 And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; 10 And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; 11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: 12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; 13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; 14 And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; 15 And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; 16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. 17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into

Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

Concerning this genealogy of our Saviour, observe,

I. *The title of it*: It is "the Book," or "the Account," as the Hebrew word *sepher*, 'a book,' sometimes signifies, "of the generation of Jesus Christ," of his ancestors according to the flesh; or, it is the narrative of his birth. It is *Biblos Geneas*, 'a Book of Genesis.' The Old Testament begins with the book of the generation of the world, and it is its glory that it doth so; but the glory of the New Testament herein excelleth, that it begins with the book of the generation of him that made the world. As God, "his outgoings were of old from everlasting," *Mic. v. 2*, and none can declare that generation. But as man, he was sent forth in the fulness of time, born of a woman, and it is that generation which is here declared.

II. *The principal intention of it*. It is not an endless or needless genealogy; it is not a vain-glorious one, as those of great men commonly are. *Stemmata quid faciunt?*—of what avail are ancient pedigrees? It is like a pedigree given in evidence to prove a title, and make out a claim. The design is to make it out that our Lord Jesus is the "son of David," and the "son of Abraham," and therefore of that nation and family out of which the Messiah was to arise. Abraham and David were in their day the great trustees of the promise relating to the Messiah; the promise of the blessing was made to Abraham and his seed; of the dominion to David and his seed. And those that will have an interest in Christ as the son of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed, must be faithful, loyal subjects to him as the son of David, by whom all the families of the earth are to be ruled. It was promised to Abraham that Christ should descend from him, *Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18*; and to David that he should descend from him, *2 Sam. vii. 12; Ps. lxxxix. 3, &c.; cxxiii. 11*; and therefore, unless it can be proved that Jesus is a son of David, and a son of Abraham, we cannot admit him to be the Messiah. Now this is here proved from the authentic records of the heralds' offices. The Jews were very exact in preserving their pedigrees, and there was a providence in it, for the clearing up of the descent of the Messiah from the fathers; and since his coming, that nation is so dispersed and confounded, that it is a question whether any person in the world can legally prove himself to be a son of Abraham. However, it is certain there is none can prove himself to be either a son of Aaron or a son of David, so that the priestly and kingly office must either be given up as lost for ever, or be lodged in the hands of our Lord Jesus. Christ is here first called "the son of David," because under that title he was commonly spoken of and expected among the Jews. Those that owned him to be "the Christ" called him "the son of David," *ch. xv. 22; xx. 31; xxi. 15*. This therefore the evangelist undertakes to make out, that he is not only a son of David, but that son of David, on whose shoulders the government was to be; not only a son of Abraham, but that son of Abraham that was to be the father of many nations. In calling Christ the son of David, and the son of Abraham, he shews that God is faithful to his promise, and will make good every word that he hath spoken. And this, First. Though the performance be long deferred. When God promised Abraham a son that should be the great blessing of the world, perhaps he expected it should be his immediate son, but it proved to be one at the distance of forty-two generations, and about two thousand years. So long before can God foretell what shall be done, and so long after sometimes doth God fulfil what has been promised. Note, Delays of promised mercies, though they exercise our patience, do not weaken God's promise. Secondly. Though it begin to be despaired of. This son of David and son of Abraham, that was to be the glory of his father's house, was born then, when the seed of Abraham was a despised people, newly become tributaries to the Roman yoke, and the house of David buried in obscurity; for Christ was to be a "root out of a dry ground." Note, God's time for the performance of his promise is when it labours under the greatest improbabilities.

III. *The particular series of it*, drawn in a direct line from Abraham downwards, according to the genealogies recorded in the beginning of the Books of Chronicles, as far as those go, and which here we see the use of. Some particulars we may observe in this genealogy;

First. Among the ancestors of Christ that had brethren, generally, he descended from a younger brother; so Abraham himself was, and Jacob, and Judah, and David, and Nathan, and Rhesa; to shew that the pre-eminence of Christ came not as that of earthly princes from the primogeniture of his ancestors, but from the will of God, who according to the method of his providence, "exalteth them of low degree," and puts "more abundant honour upon that part which lacked."

Secondly. Among the sons of Jacob, besides Judah, from whom Shiloh came, here is notice taken of his brethren: "Judas and his brethren." No mention is made of Ishmael the son of Abraham, or Esau the son of Isaac, because they were shut out of the church; whereas all the children of Jacob were taken in, and though not fathers of Christ, yet were patriarchs of the church, *Acts vii. 8*, and therefore are mentioned in this genealogy, for the encouragement of the "twelve tribes that were scattered abroad;" intimating to them that they have an interest in Christ, and stand in relation to him as well as Judah.

date there is no precise information, hence it has been placed as early as A.D. 37 or 38, and as late as A.D. 60 or 63. The oldest authority, Irenæus, favours the later date. There is no evidence that the word "gospel" was the original title; and indeed it may not have been, since it does not occur in some of the most ancient copies. Justin Martyr calls the gospels by the name of "memoirs," but he also uses the word "gospel" as a recognised appellation.

i. 1. The words, "The book of the generation," &c., seem to apply

especially to the genealogy and subsequent notice of the birth of Jesus Christ.

i. 8. There is an omission of three names in this verse, as Dean Alford says, "viz., Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah (1 Chron. iii. 11, 12). Some think they were erased on account of their connection, by means of Athaliah, with the accursed house of Ahab. Simeon is omitted by Moses in blessing the tribes (Deut. xxviii.); the descendants of Zebulun and Dan are passed over in 1 Chron.; and none of

Thirdly. Pharez and Zara, the twin sons of Judah, are likewise both named, though Pharez only was Christ's ancestor, for the same reason that the brethren of Judah are taken notice of; and some think, because the birth of Pharez and Zara had something of allegory in it; Zarah put out his hand first, as the firstborn, but drawing it in, Pharez got the birthright: the Jewish church, like Zara, reached first at the birthright, but through unbelief withdrawing the hand, the Gentile church, like Pharez, broke forth, and went away with the birthright. And thus "blindness is in part happened unto Israel, till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and then Zara shall be born—"all Israel shall be saved," *Rom. ii. 25, 26.*

Fourthly. There are four women, and but four, named in this genealogy; two of them were originally strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, Rachab a Canaanitess and a harlot besides, and Ruth the Moabitess; for "in Jesus Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew." Those that are strangers and foreigners are welcome in Christ to the citizenship of the saints. The other two were adulteresses, Thamar and Bathsheba, which was a further mark of humiliation put upon our Lord Jesus, that not only he descended from such, but that his descent from them is particularly remarked in his genealogy, and no veil drawn over it. He took upon him "the likeness of sinful flesh," *Rom. viii. 2*, and takes even great sinners, upon their repentance, into the nearest relations to himself. Note, We ought not to upbraid people with the scandals of their ancestors; it is what they cannot help, and has been the lot of the best, even our Master himself. David's begetting "Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias," is taken notice of (saith Dr. Whitby) to shew, that that crime of David being repented of, was so far from hindering the promise made to him, that it pleased God by this very woman to fulfil it.

Fifthly. Though divers kings are here named, yet none is expressly called a king but David, ver. 6, "David the king;" because with him the covenant of royalty was made, and to him the promise of the kingdom of the Messiah was given, who is therefore said to inherit "the throne of his father David," *Lx. i. 32.*

Sixthly. In the pedigree of the kings, or Judah, between Joram and Ozias, ver. 8, there are three left out, namely, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah; and therefore, when it is said "Joram begat Ozias," it is meant according to the usage of the Hebrew tongue, that Ozias was lineally descended from him, as it is said to Hezekiah, that the sons which he should beget should be carried to Babylon, whereas they were removed several generations from him. It was not through mistake or forgetfulness that these three were omitted; but probably they were omitted in the genealogical tables that the evangelist consulted, which yet were admitted as authentic. Some give this reason for it: it being Matthew's design, for memory's sake, to reduce the number of Christ's ancestors to three fourteens, it was requisite that in this period three should be left out; and none more fit than they who were the immediate progeny of cursed Athaliah, who introduced the idolatry of Ahab into the house of David; for which this brand is set upon the family, and the iniquity thus visited "to the third and fourth generation." Two of these three were apostates, and such God commonly sets a mark of his displeasure upon in this world. They all three had their heads brought to the grave with blood.

Seventhly. Some observe what a mixture there was of good and bad in the succession of these kings; as for instance, ver. 7, 8, wicked Rehoboam begat wicked Abia, wicked Abia begat good Asa, good Asa begat good Jehosaphat, good Jehosaphat begat wicked Joram. Grace doth not run in the blood, nor reigning sin either. God's grace is his own, and he gives or withholds it as he pleaseth.

Eighthly. The captivity in Babylon is mentioned as a remarkable period in this line, ver. 11, 12. All things considered, it was a wonder the Jews were not lost in that captivity, as other nations were. But this intimates the reason why the streams of that people were kept to run pure through that dead sea, because from them, "as concerning the flesh," Christ was to come. "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it;" even that blessing of blessings, Christ himself, *Isa. lxi. 8, 9.* It was with an eye to him that they were restored, and the desolations of the sanctuary were looked upon with favour "for the Lord's sake," *Dan. ix. 17.*

Ninthly. Josias is here said to beget "Jechonias and his brethren," ver. 11, whereby Jechonias is meant Jehoiakim, who was the firstborn of Josias; but when it is said, ver. 12, that "Jechonias begat Salathiel," that Jechonias was the son of that Jehoiakim who was carried into Babylon, and there begat Salathiel; as Dr. Whitby shews. And when Jechonias is said to have been written childless, *Jer. xxii. 30*, it is explained thus, "No man of his seed shall prosper." Salathiel is said here to beget Zorobabel, whereas Salathiel begat Pedaiah, and he begat Zorobabel, *1 Chr. iii. 19*; but, as before, the grandson is often called the son. Pedaiah it is likely died in his father's lifetime; and so his son Zorobabel was called the son of Salathiel.

Tenthly. The line is brought down, not to Mary the mother of our Lord, but to "Joseph the husband of Mary," ver. 16. For the Jews always reckoned their genealogies by the males. Yet Mary was of the same tribe and family with Joseph, so that both by the mother, and by his supposed father, he was of the house of David; yet his interest in that dignity is derived by Joseph, to whom really, according to the flesh, he had no relation, to shew that the kingdom of the Messiah is not founded in a natural descent from David.

Eleventhly. The centre in whom all these lines meet is "Jesus, who is called Christ," ver. 16. This is he that was so importunately desired, so impatiently expected, and whom the patriarchs had an eye to, when they were so desirous of children, that they might have the honour of coming into the sacred line. Blessed be God, we are not now in such a dark and cloudy state of expectation as they were then in, but see clearly what these prophets and kings saw, as through a glass, darkly. And we may have, if it be not our own fault, a greater honour than that of which they were so ambitious. For they that do the will of God are in a more honourable relation to Christ, than those that were akin to him according to the flesh, *Mat. xii. 50.* Jesus is called "Christ," that is, "the anointed," the same with the Hebrew name "Messiah." He is called "Messiah the Prince," *Dan. ix. 25*, and often God's "anointed," *Ps. ii. 2.* Under this character he was expected: "Art thou the Christ?" the "anointed one." David the king was anointed, *1 Sam. xvi. 13*; so was Aaron the priest, *Lev. viii. 12*, and Elisha the prophet, *1 Kin. xix. 16*, and Isaiah the prophet, *Isa. lxi. 1.* Christ being appointed to and qualified for all these offices, he is therefore called "the anointed;" "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows." And from this name of his, which is as ointment poured forth, all his followers are called Christians, for they also have received the anointing.

Lastly. The general summary of all this genealogy we have, ver. 17, where it is summed up in three fourteens, signalized by remarkable periods. In the first fourteen we have the family of David rising, and looking forth as the morning; in the second we have it flourishing in its meridian lustre; in the third we have it declining and growing less and less, dwindled into the family of a poor carpenter, and then Christ shines forth out of it, "the glory of his people Israel."

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:

the latter tribe are sealed in Rev. vii. But more probably such erasion, even if justifiable by that reason, was not made on account of it, but for convenience, in order to square the numbers of the different portions of the genealogies, as here." In the next note we give Dean Alford's arrangement.

i. 17. "If we carefully observe Matthew's arrangement, we shall have no difficulty in completing the three 'fourteens,' for the first is from Abraham to David, of course inclusive; the second from

When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 24 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: and he called his name JESUS.

The mystery of Christ's incarnation is to be adored, not pryed into. If we "know not the way of the Spirit," in the formation of common persons, nor "how the bones are formed in the womb of any one that is with child," (*Ecc. xi. 5*) much less do we know how the blessed Jesus was formed in the womb of the blessed virgin. When David admires how he himself was "made in secret, and curiously wrought," *Ps. cxxxix. 13-16*, perhaps he speaks in spirit, of Christ's incarnation. Some circumstances attending the birth of Christ we find here that are not in Luke, though it is more largely recorded there. Here is,

I. *Mary's espousals to Joseph.* Mary the mother of our Lord was espoused to Joseph, not completely married, but contracted; a purpose of marriage solemnly declared in words, *de futuro*, "that regarded a future," and a promise of it made, if God permit. We read of a man "that has betrothed a wife, and has not taken her," *Deu. xx. 7.* Christ was born of a virgin, but a contracted virgin:

First. To put respect upon the married state, and to recommend it as honourable among all, against that doctrine of devils which forbiddeth to marry, and placeth perfection in the single state. Who more highly favoured than Mary was in her espousals?

Secondly. To save the credit of the blessed virgin, which otherwise would have been exposed. It was fit her conception should be protected by a marriage, and so justified in the eyes of the world. One of the ancients saith, "It was better it should be asked, 'Is not this the son of a carpenter?' than 'Is not this the son of a harlot?'"

Thirdly. That the blessed virgin might have one to be the guide of her youth, the companion of her solitudes and travels, a partner in her cares, and a help meet for her. Some think Joseph was now a widower, and that those who are called the brethren of Christ, *Mat. xiii. 55*, were Joseph's children by a former wife. This is the conjecture of many of the ancients. Joseph was a just man, she a virtuous woman. Those that are believers should not be "unequally yoked with unbelievers;" but let those that are religious choose to marry with those that are so, as they expect the comfort of the relation, and God's blessing upon them in it. We may also learn from this example, that it is good to enter into the married state with deliberation, and not hastily; to preface the nuptials with a contract. It is better to "take time to consider before, than find time to repent after."

II. *Her pregnancy of the promised seed.* "Before they came together, she was found with child," which really was "of the Holy Ghost." The marriage was deferred so long after the contract, that she appeared to be with child, before the time came for the solemnizing of the marriage, though she was contracted before she conceived. Probably it was after her return from her cousin Elizabeth, with whom she continued three months, *Lx. i. 56*, that she was perceived by Joseph to be with child, and did not herself deny it. Those in whom Christ is formed will shew it: it will be found to be a work of God, which he will own. Now we may well imagine what a perplexity this might justly be an occasion of to the blessed virgin. She herself knew the Divine original of this conception; but how could she prove it? She would be "dealt with as with a harlot." Note, After great and high advancements, lest we should be puffed up with them, we must expect something or other to humble us; some reproach as a thorn in the flesh, nay, as a sword in the bones. Never was any daughter of Eve so dignified as the Virgin Mary was, and yet in danger of falling under the imputation of one of the worst of crimes; yet we find not that she tormented herself about it, but being conscious of her own innocence, kept her mind calm and easy, and committed her cause "to him that judgeth righteously." Note, Those who take care to keep a good conscience, may cheerfully trust God with the keeping of their good names, and have reason to hope that he will clear up, not only their integrity, but their honour, as the sun at noonday.

III. *Joseph's perplexity, and his care what to do in this case.* We may well imagine what a great trouble and disappointment it was to him, to find one he had such an opinion of and value for, come under the suspicion of such a heinous crime. "Is this Mary?" He began to think, "How may we be deceived in those we think best of! How may we be disappointed in that we expect most from!" He is loath to believe so ill a thing of one he believed so good a woman; and yet the matter, as it is too bad to be excused, so it is too plain to be denied. What a struggle doth this occasion in his breast, between that

David (again inclusive) to the migration, which gives no name, as before, to be included in both the second and third periods, but which is mentioned simultaneously with the begetting of Jechonias, leaving him for the third period. This last, then, takes in from Jechonias to Jesus Christ inclusive. So that the three stand thus, according to the words of this verse: (1) from Abraham to David; (2) from David to the migration to Babylon, i.e., about the time when Josiah begat Jechonias; (3) from the migration (i.e., from

jealousy which is the rage of man, and is as cruel as the grave, on one hand; and that affection which he has for Mary, on the other hand. Observe.

First. The extremity which he studied to avoid. He was "not willing to make her a public example." He might have done it; for by the law, a betrothed virgin, if she play the harlot, was to be stoned to death, *Deu. xxii. 23, 24*. But he was not willing to take the advantage of the law against her; if she be guilty, yet it is not known, nor shall it be known for him. How unlike was the spirit of Joseph here to that of Judah, who in such a case hastily passed that severe sentence, "Bring her forth and let her be burnt," *Gen. xxxviii. 24*. How good it is to think on things, as Joseph did here. Were there more of deliberation in our censures and judgments, there would be more of mercy and moderation in them. Bringing her to punishment is here called, making her a public example; which shews what is the end to be aimed at in punishments, which is the giving of warning to others; it is *in terrorem*—that all about may hear and fear. "Smite the scorner," and the simple will beware. Some that have rigour in their temper would blame Joseph for his clemency, but it is here spoken of to his praise; because he was "a just man," therefore he was not willing to expose her. He was a religious good man, and therefore inclined to be merciful, as God is, and to forgive as one that was forgiven. In the case of a betrothed damsel, if she were lain with in the field, the law charitably supposed that she cried out, *Deu. xxii. 25-27*, and she was not to be punished; and some charitable construction or other Joseph will put upon this matter, and herein he is "a just man," tender of the good name of one that never before had done any thing to blench it. Note, It becomes us in many cases to be gentle towards those that come under suspicion of having offended, to hope the best concerning them, and make the best of that which at first appears bad, in hopes it may prove better. *Summum jus*—the rigour of the law, is sometimes *summa injuria*—the height of injustice. That court of conscience which moderates the rigour of the law, we call a court of equity. Those that are found faulty, perhaps "were overtaken in the fault," and are therefore to be "restored with the spirit of meekness;" and threatening, when just, must be moderated.

Secondly. The expedient he found out for the avoiding of this extremity. He was "minded to put her away privily;" that is, to give her a bill of divorce into her hand, before two witnesses, and so to hush up the matter among themselves. Being a just man, that is, a strict observer of the law, he would not proceed to marry her, but resolved to put her away, and yet in tenderness for her, determined to do it with all the privacy that might be. Note, The necessary censures of those that have offended ought to be managed without noise. The "words of the wise are heard in quiet." Christ himself "shall not strive or cry." Christian love and Christian prudence will "hide a multitude of sins," and great ones, as far as may be done without having fellowship with them.

IV. *Joseph's discharge from this perplexity by an express sent from heaven, ver. 20, 21.* "While he thought on these things," and knew not what to determine, God graciously directed him what to do, and made him easy. Note, Those that would have direction from God, must think on things themselves, and consult with themselves. They are the thoughtful, not the unthinking, that God will guide. When he was at a loss, and had carried the matter as far as he could in his own thoughts, then God came in with advice. Note, God's time to come in with instruction to his people, is when they are nonplussed, and at a plunge in themselves. God's comforts most delight the soul in the multitude of its perplexed thoughts. The message was sent to Joseph by an "angel of the Lord;" probably the same angel that brought to Mary the tidings of the conception, the angel Gabriel. Now the commerce with heaven by angels, which the patriarchs had been dignified with, but had long been disused, begins to be revived; for when the firstborn is to be brought into the world, the angels are ordered to attend his motions. How far God may now in an invisible way make use of the ministration of angels, for the extricating of his people out of their straits, we cannot say, but this we are sure of, "they are all ministering spirits" for their good. This angel appeared to Joseph "in a dream," when he was asleep, as God sometimes spake unto the fathers. When we are most quiet and composed, we are in the best frame to receive the notices of the Divine will. The Spirit moveth on the calm waters. This dream no doubt carried its own evidence along with it, that it was of God, and not the product of a vain fancy. Now,

First. Joseph is here directed to proceed in his intended marriage. The angel calls him, "Joseph, thou son of David;" puts him in mind of his relation to David, that he might be prepared to receive this surprising intelligence of his relation to the Messiah, who every one knew was to be a descendant from David. Sometimes when great honours devolve upon those that have small estates, they care not for accepting them, but are willing to drop them; it was therefore requisite to put this poor carpenter in mind of his high birth. "Value thyself, Joseph, thou art that son of David through whom the line of the Messiah is to be drawn." We may thus say to every true believer, "Fear not, thou son of Abraham, thou child of God; forget not the dignity of thy birth, thy new birth." "Fear not to take Mary for thy wife;" so it may be read. Joseph, suspecting she was with child by whoredom, was afraid of taking her, lest he should bring upon himself either guilt or reproach: "No," saith God, "fear not; the matter is not so." Perhaps Mary had told him that she was with child by the Holy Ghost, and he might have heard what Elizabeth said to her, *Lu. i. 43*, when she called her "the mother of her Lord;" and if this were so, he was afraid of presumption in marrying one so much above him. But whencesoever his fears arose, they were all silenced with this word, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife." Note, It is a great mercy to be delivered from one's fears, and to have our doubts resolved, so as to proceed in our affairs with satisfaction.

Secondly. He is here informed concerning that holy thing which his espoused wife was now with child of. That which is conceived in her is of a Divine origin. He is so far from being in danger of sharing in any impurity by marrying her, that he will thereby share in the highest dignity he is capable of. Two things he is here told of: 1. That she had conceived by the power "of the Holy Ghost," not by the power of nature. The Holy Spirit that produced the world, now produced the Saviour of the world, and prepared him a body, as was promised him, when he said, "Lo, I come," *Heb. x. 5*. Hence he is said to be "made of a woman," *Gal. iv. 4*, and yet to be that second Adam that is "the Lord from heaven," *1 Cor. xv. 37*. He is the Son of God, and yet so far partakes of the substance of his mother, as to be called "the fruit of her womb," *Lu. i. 42*. It was requisite that his conception should be otherwise than by ordinary generation, that so, though he did partake of the human nature, yet he might escape the corruption and pollution of it, and not be conceived and shapen in iniquity. Histories tell us of some who vainly pretended to have conceived by a Divine power, as the mother of Alexander, but never any really did so, before the mother of our Lord. His name in this, as in other things, is "Wonderful." We do not read that the Virgin Mary did herself proclaim the honour due her, but "hid it in her heart," and therefore God sent an angel to attest it. Those that seek not their own glory, shall have the honour that comes from God; it is reserved for the humble. 2. That she should bring forth the Saviour of the world, *ver. 21*: "She shall bring forth a son;" what he shall be is intimated *1st*. In the name that should be given to her son, "Thou shalt

call his name Jesus," "a Saviour." Jesus is the same name with Joshua, the termination only made more pliable to the Greek. Joshua is called Jesus, *Acts vii. 45*; *Heb. iv. 8*, from the Seventy. There were two of that name under the Old Testament, that were both of them illustrious types of Christ; Joshua that was Israel's captain at their first settlement in Canaan, and Joshua that was their high priest at their second settlement after the captivity, *Zec. vi. 11, 12*. Christ is our Joshua, both the "captain of our salvation," and the "high priest of our profession," and in both our Saviour; a Joshua that comes in the stead of Moses, and doth that for us which "the law could not do in that it was weak." Joshua had been called Oshea, but Moses prefixed the first syllable of the name Jehovah, and so made it Jehoshua, *Num. xiii. 16*, to intimate that the Messiah, who was to bear that name, should be Jehovah; he is therefore "able to save to the uttermost," neither is there "salvation in any other."

Thirdly. In the reason of that name; "for he shall save his people from their sins;" not the nation of the Jews only, "he came to his own, and they received him not;" but all that were given him by the Father's choice, and all that have given themselves to him by their own. He is a king that protects his subjects, and as the judges of Israel of old, works salvation for them. Note Those whom Christ saves, he saves from their sins; from the guilt of sin by the merit of his death, from the dominion of sin by the spirit of his grace. In saving them from sin he saves them from wrath and the curse, and all misery here and hereafter. Christ came not to save his people in their sins but from their sins; to purchase for them, not a liberty to sin, but a liberty from sin; "to redeem them from all iniquity," *Tit. ii. 14*, and so to redeem them "from among men," *Rev. xiv. 4*, to himself, who is "separate from sinners." So that those who leave their sins, and give up themselves to Christ as his people, are interested in the Saviour and the great salvation he has wrought out, *Rom. xi. 26*.

V. *The fulfilling of the Scripture in all this.* This evangelist, writing among the Jews, doth more frequently observe this than any other of the evangelists. Here the Old Testament prophecies had their accomplishment in our Lord Jesus; by which it appears this was he that should come, and we are to look for no other, for this was he "to whom all the prophets bare witness." Now the Scripture that was fulfilled in the birth of Christ, was that promise of a sign which God gave to king Ahaz, *Isa. vii. 14*, "Behold a virgin shall conceive," where the prophet, encouraging the people of God to hope for the promised deliverance from Sennacherib's invasion, directs them to look forward to the Messiah who was to come of the people of the Jews, and the house of David; whence it was easy to infer, that though that was then an afflicted people, that then a distressed house, yet neither the one nor the other could be abandoned to ruin as long as God had such an honour, such a blessing in reserve for them. The deliverances God wrought for the Old Testament church were types and figures of the great salvation by Christ, and if God will do the greater, he will not fail to do the lesser. The prophecy here quoted is justly ushered in with a "behold," which commands both attention and admiration; for we have here "the mystery of godliness" which is without controversy "great," that "God was manifested in the flesh."

First. The sign given is, that the Messiah shall be born of a virgin, "a virgin shall conceive," and by her he shall be "manifested in the flesh." The word *Almah* signifies "a virgin" in the strictest sense, such as Mary professed herself to be, *Lu. i. 34*, "I know not a man;" nor had it been any such wonderful sign as it was intended for, if it had been otherwise. It was intimated from the beginning that the Messiah should be born of a virgin, when it was said that he should be the "seed of the woman;" so the seed of the woman, as not to be the seed of any man. Christ was born of a virgin, not only because his birth was to be supernatural and altogether extraordinary, but because it was to be spotless, and pure, and without any stain of sin. Christ would be born not of an empress or queen, for he appeared not in outward pomp or splendour, but of a virgin, to teach us spiritual purity, to die to all the delights of sense, and so to "keep ourselves unspotted from the world" and the flesh, as that they may be presented "chaste virgins to Christ."

Secondly. The truth proved by this sign is, that he is the Son of God, and the mediator between God and man, for "they shall call his name Emmanuel;" that is, "he shall be Emmanuel;" as when it is said, "he shall be called," it is meant "he shall be the Lord our righteousness." Emmanuel signifies "God with us;" a mysterious name, but very precious; God incarnate among us, and so God reconcilable to us, at peace with us, and taking us into covenant and communion with himself. The people of the Jews had God with them, in types and shadows, dwelling between the cherubims, but never so as when the "Word was made flesh,"—that was the blessed Shechinah. What a happy step is hereby taken towards the settling of a peace and correspondence between God and man, that the two natures are thus brought together in the person of the Mediator; by this he became an unexceptionable referee, a daysman fit to lay his hand upon them both, since he partakes of the nature of both. Behold in this, the deepest mystery and the richest mercy that ever was. By the light of nature we see God as a God above us; by the light of the law we see him a God against us; but by the light of the Gospel we see him Emmanuel, God with us, in our own nature, and, which is more, in our interests. Herein the Redeemer commended his love. With Christ's name, Emmanuel, we may compare the name given to the Gospel church, *Eze. xlviii. 35*, *Jehovah-shammah*, "the Lord is there," "the Lord of Hosts is with us." Nor is it improper to say, that the prophecy which foretold that he should be called Emmanuel, was fulfilled in the design and intention of it, when he was called Jesus; for if he had not been Emmanuel, "God with us," he could not have been Jesus, "a Saviour;" and herein consists the salvation he wrought out in the "bringing of God and man together;" this was what he designed, to bring God to be with us, which is our great happiness, and to bring us to be with God, which is our great duty.

VI. *Joseph's obedience to the Divine precept, ver. 24*: "being raised from sleep" by the impressions which the dream made upon him, "he did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him," though it was contrary to his former sentiments and intentions; he "took unto him his wife," he did it speedily, without delay, and cheerfully, without dispute; he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. Extraordinary direction like this here, we are not now to expect; but God hath still ways of making known his mind in doubtful cases, by hints of providence, debates of conscience, and advice of faithful friends; each of these applying the general rules of the written Word; we should therefore in all the steps of our life, particularly the great turns of it, such as this of Joseph's, take direction from God, and we shall find it safe and comfortable to do as he bids us.

VII. *The accomplishment of the Divine promise, ver. 25*: "She brought forth her firstborn son." The circumstances of it are more largely related, *Lu. ii. 1, &c*. Note, That which is "conceived of the Holy Ghost" never proves abortive, but will certainly be brought forth in its season. What is of the will of the flesh, and of the will of man, often miscarries; but if Christ be formed in the soul, God himself has begun the good work which he will perform; what is conceived in grace will no doubt be brought forth in glory. It is here further observed,

Jechonias) to Christ." Whatever the merit of this ingenious solution, it is still a fact that three of the series of kings are omitted. A similar explanation was offered by Storr, in 1790, as Kuinoel observes.

i. 18. For "birth" some important copies read "generation," as in verse 1, and the latter reading is the one adopted by Von Tischendorf. The espousal or contract of marriage took place, in accordance with the common custom of the East, before the marriage

was completed. Dr. Jamieson says, "This promissory engagement to marry is a custom of high antiquity, and has prevailed to a great extent. Claiming, as parents anciently did, an unlimited right to dispose of their sons and daughters at pleasure, a betrothal was frequently entered into by friends and neighbours on behalf of their children at an early age; in which case a long period necessarily elapsed before it was followed by a public celebration of the nuptials. But more commonly it was formed by the parties themselves, when

First. That Joseph, though he solemnized the marriage with Mary his espoused wife, yet he kept at a humble distance from her while she was with child of this holy thing, "he knew her not till she had brought him forth." A mighty rout has been made concerning the perpetual virginity of the mother of our Lord; Jerome was very angry with Helvidius for denying it. It is certain it cannot be proved from Scripture. Dr. Whitby inclines to think, that it being said, "Joseph knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn," it is intimated that afterwards, the reason ceasing, he did the duty of a husband to her according to the law, *Ex. xxi. 10.*

Secondly. That Christ was the firstborn, and so he might be called, though his mother had not any other children. After him, according to the language of Scripture. Nor was it without a mystery, that Christ is called "her firstborn," for he is the "firstborn of every creature," and it is the heir of all things, and he is the "firstborn among many brethren," that all things he may have the pre-eminence.

Thirdly. That Joseph "called his name Jesus," according to the direction given him. God having appointed him to be the Saviour, which was intimated in his giving him the name Jesus, we must accept of him to be our Saviour, and in concurrence with that appointment we must call him Jesus our Saviour.

CHAPTER II.

In this chapter we have the history of our Saviour's infancy, where we find how early he began to suffer, and that in him the word of righteousness was fulfilled, before he himself began to fulfil all righteousness. Here is, I. The wise men's solicitude inquiry after Christ, ver. 1-8. II. Their devout attendance on him when they found out where he was, ver. 9-12. III. Christ's flight into Egypt to avoid the cruelty of Herod, ver. 13-15. IV. The barbarous murder of the infants of Bethlehem, ver. 16-18. V. Christ's return out of Egypt into the land of Israel again, ver. 19-23.



NOW when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. 5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet, 6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. 7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

It was a mark of humiliation put upon the Lord Jesus, that though he was "the desire of all nations," yet his coming into the world was so little observed and taken notice of, his birth obscure and unregarded; herein he emptied himself, and made himself of no reputation. If the Son of God must be brought into the world, one might justly expect he should be received with all ceremony possible; that crowns and sceptres should immediately have been laid at his feet, and the high and mighty princes of the world should have been his humble servants; such a Messiah as this the Jews expected, but we see none of all this; "he came into the world, and the world knew him not;" nay, "he came to his own, and his own received him not;" for having undertaken to make satisfaction to his Father for the wrong done him in his honour by the sin of man, he did it by denying himself in, and despoiling himself of the honours undoubtedly due to an incarnate Deity; yet as afterwards, so in his birth, there were some rays of glory darted forth in the midst of the greatest instances of his abasement. Though "there was a sign to condemn the world, and the beams coming out of his hand," *Hab. iii. 4.* enough to condemn the world, and the Jews especially for their stupidity. The first we find that took notice of Christ after his birth were the shepherds, *Lu. ii. 15, &c.* who saw and heard glorious things concerning him, and "made them known abroad," to the amazement of all that heard them. After that, Simeon and Anna spake of him by the Spirit to all that were disposed to heed what they said, *Lu. ii. 38.* Now one would think these hints should have been taken by the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; but that they should with both arms have embraced the long looked for Messiah; but for aught appears, he continued near two years after at Bethlehem, and no further notice was taken of him till these wise men came. Note, Nothing will awaken those that are resolved to be regardless. O the amazing stupidity of these Jews! And no less that of many who are called Christians. Observe,

I. When this inquiry was made concerning Christ; it was "in the days of

Herod the king. This Herod was an Edomite, made king of Judæa by Augustus and Antonius, the then chief rulers of the Roman state, a man made up of falsehood and cruelty; yet he was complimented with the title of "Herod the Great." Christ was born in the thirty-fifth year of his reign, and notice is taken of this, to shew that "the sceptre" was now "departed from Judah," and the "lawgiver from between his feet," and therefore now was the time for Shiloh to come, and "to him shall the gathering of the people be;" witness these wise men, *Gen. xlix. 10.*

II. Who and what these wise men were; they are here called *μαγοι*, 'magicians;' some take it in a good sense; the *magi* among the Persians were their philosophers and their priests; nor would they admit any for their king that had not been first enrolled among the *magi*; others think they dealt in unlawful arts; the word is used of Simon, the sorcerer, *Acts viii. 9, 11,* and of Elymas, the sorcerer, *Acts xiii. 6,* nor doth the Scripture use it in any other sense; and then it was an early instance and presage of Christ's victory over the devil, when those that had been so much his devotees, became the early adorers, even of the infant Jesus; so soon were trophies of his victory over the powers of darkness erected. Well, whatever sort of wise men they were before, now they began to be wise men indeed when they set themselves to inquire after Christ. This we are sure of,

First. That they were Gentiles, and not belonging to the commonwealth of Israel. The Jews regarded not Christ, but these Gentiles inquired him out. Note, Many times those that are nearest to the means, are furthest from the end: see *Ch. viii. 11, 12.* The respect paid to Christ by these Gentiles was a happy presage and specimen of what would follow, when those that were afar off should be made nigh by Christ.

Secondly. That they were scholars, they dealt in arts, curious arts; good scholars should be good Christians, and then they complete their learning, when they learn Christ.

Thirdly. That they were men of the East, who were noted for their sooth-saying, *Isa. ii. 6.* Arabia is called the land of the East, *Gen. xxv. 6;* and the Arabians men of the East, *Jud. vi. 3.* The presents they brought were the products of that country; the Arabians had done homage to David and Solomon, as types of Christ. Jethro and Job were of that country. More than this we have not to say of them. The traditions of the Romish church are frivolous, that they were in number three, (though one of the ancients saith they were fourteen) that they were kings, and that they lie buried in Cologne; thence called the three kings of Cologne; we covet not to be wise above what is written.

II. What induced them to make this inquiry. They in their country, which lay East, had seen an extraordinary star, such as they had not seen before, which they took to be an indication of an extraordinary person born in the land of Judæa, over which land this star had been seen to hover, in the nature of a comet, or a meteor rather, in the lower regions of the air; this differed so much from any thing that was common, that they concluded it to signify something uncommon. Note, Extraordinary appearances of God in the creatures should put us upon inquiring after his mind and will therein; Christ foretold "signs in the heavens." The birth of Christ was notified to the Jewish shepherds by an angel; to the Gentile philosophers by a star; to each God spoke in their own language, and in the way they were best acquainted with. Some think that very light which the shepherds saw shining round about them the night after Christ was born, was the very same which to the wise men, who lived at such a distance, appeared as a star, which we cannot easily admit, because the same star they had seen in the East, they saw a great while after, leading them to the house where Christ lay; it was a candle set up on purpose to guide them to Christ. The idolaters worshipped the stars as the host of heaven, especially the Eastern nations, whence the planets have the names of their idol gods; we read of a particular star they had in veneration, *Am. v. 26.* Thus the stars that had been misused came to be put to the right use, to lead men to Christ; the gods of the heathen became his servants. Some think this star put them in mind of Balaam's prophecy, that a star should come out of Jacob, pointing at a sceptre that shall rise out of Israel: see *Num. xxiv. 17;* and Balaam came from the mountains of the East, and was one of their wise men. Others impute their inquiry to the general expectation, that was at that time in those Eastern parts, of some great prince to appear. *Tactus in his History, Lib. v.* takes notice of it: *pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valeret Oriens, profectique Judææ rerum potirentur,*—a persuasion existed in the minds of many, that some ancient writings of the priests contained a prediction that about that time an Eastern power would prevail, and that persons proceeding from Judæa would obtain dominion. *Suetonius* in the Life of Vespasian speaks of it; so that this extraordinary phenomenon was construed as pointing at that king; and we may suppose a Divine impression made upon their minds, enabling them to interpret this star as a signal given by heaven of the birth of Christ.

IV. How they prosecuted this inquiry: "they came from the East to Jerusalem" in further quest of this prince; whether should they come to inquire for the King of the Jews, but to Jerusalem, the mother city, "whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord." They might have said, if there were such a prince born, they should hear of him shortly in their own country, and it would be time enough then to pay their homage to him; but so impatient are they to be better acquainted with him, that they took a long journey on purpose to inquire after him. Note, Those who truly desire to know Christ, and find him, will not stick at pains or perils in seeking after him: "then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord." Their question is, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" They do not ask, "whether there was such an one born," they are sure of that, and speak of it with assurance, so strongly was it set home upon their hearts; but "where is he born?" Note, Those who know something of Christ, cannot but covet to know more of him. They call Christ the "King of the Jews," for so the Messiah was expected to be, and he is protector and ruler of all the spiritual Israel; he is "born a king." To this question they doubted not but to have a ready answer, and to find all Jerusalem worshipping at the feet of this new king; but they come from door to door with this question, and no man can give them any information. Note, There is more gross ignorance in the world, and in the church too, than we are aware of. Many that we think should direct us to Christ, are themselves strangers to him; they ask, as the spouse of the daughters of Jerusalem, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" but are never the wiser. However, like the spouse, they pursue the inquiry, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" Are they asked why they make this inquiry? It is because they "have seen his star in the East." Are they asked what business they have with him? What have the men of the East to do with the King of the Jews? They have their answer ready, "We are come to worship him." They conclude he will in process of time be their king, and therefore they will betimes ingratiate themselves with him, and with those about him. Note, Those in whose hearts the daystar is risen to give them any thing of the knowledge of Christ, must make it their business to worship him. Have we seen Christ's star? study to give him honour.

V. How this inquiry was rewarded at Jerusalem. News of it at last came to court, and "when Herod heard it he was troubled," ver. 3. He could not be a

they had arrived at a marriageable age; the interval between that engagement and the performance of the rites of wedlock varying from one, two, or three months, which was the most ordinary duration, to as many years. In modern times, among the Hindoos and other Asiatic people, with whom the custom obtains, a couple are generally espoused a year, and often longer, before they become formally man and wife. But among the ancient Jews, the period of betrothment, though for the most part only a year or six months

intervened, was frequently of much greater duration, as appears from the marriage of Herod and Marianne, which was not consummated till four years after the espousals, and which is related by Josephus in a manner that shows the postponement was of no rare occurrence."

i. 25. Instead of "firstborn son" there are copies which read "a son," and this is the best and oldest reading. For "he called his name Jesus," some have said it ought to be "she called his name

stranger to the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah and his kingdom, and the times fixed for his appearing by Daniel's weeks; but having himself reigned so long, and so successfully, he began to hope that those promises should for ever fail, and that his kingdom should be established and perpetuated in spite of them; what a mighty damp therefore must it needs be upon him to hear talk of this king being born, now when the time fixed for his appearing was come! Note, Carnal, wicked hearts dread nothing so much as the fulfilling of the Scripture. But though Herod, an Edomite, was troubled, one would have thought Jerusalem should rejoice greatly to hear that her king comes; yet it seems all Jerusalem, except the few there that "waited for the consolation of Israel," were troubled with Herod, and were apprehensive of I know not what ill consequences of the birth of this new king; that it would involve them in war, or restrain their lusts; they for their parts desired no king but Herod, no, not the Messiah himself. Note, The slavery of sin is foolishly preferred by many before the glorious liberties of the children of God, only because they apprehend some present difficulties attending that necessary revolution of the government in the soul. Herod and Jerusalem were thus troubled from a mistaken notion that the kingdom of the Messiah would clash and interfere with the secular powers; whereas the star that proclaimed him king, plainly intimated that his kingdom was heavenly, and not of this lower world. Note, The reason why the kings of the earth, and the people, oppose the kingdom of Christ, is because they do not know it, but err concerning it.

VI. *What assistance they met with in this inquiry from the scribes and priests, ver. 4-6.* No body can pretend to tell where the King of the Jews is; but Herod inquires where it was expected "he should be born." The persons he consults are the chief priests, who were teachers by office, and the scribes, who made it their business to study the law; their lips must "keep knowledge," but then the people must "inquire the law" at their mouth, *Mal. ii. 7.* It was generally known that Christ should be born at Bethlehem, *Jos. vii. 42.* But Herod would have counsel's opinion upon it, and therefore applies himself to the proper persons; and that he might be the better satisfied, he hath them altogether, "all the chief priests, and all the scribes," and demands of them what was the place, according to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, "where Christ should be born?" Many a good question is put with an ill design, so was this by Herod. The priests and scribes need not take any long time to give an answer to this query, nor do they differ in their opinion, but all agree that the Messiah must be born in Bethlehem, the city of David, here called "Bethlehem of Judaea," to distinguish it from another city of the same name, in the land of Zebulun, *Jos. xix. 15.* Bethlehem signifies "the house of bread," the fittest place for him to be born in, who is the true manna, the "bread which came down from heaven," that was "given for the life of the world." The proof they produce is taken from *Mic. v. 2*, where it is foretold, that though Bethlehem be little among the thousands of Judah, so it is in *Micah*, (no very populous place); yet it shall be found "not the least among the princes of Judah," so it is here; for Bethlehem's honour lay not, as that of other cities, in the multitude of the people, but in the magnificence of the princes it produced. Though upon some accounts Bethlehem was little, yet herein it had the pre-eminence above all the cities of Israel, that "the Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man (even the man Christ Jesus) was born there," *Ps. lxxxvii. 6.* "Out of thee shall come a Governor," the King of the Jews. Note, Christ will be a Saviour to those only that are willing to take him for their Governor. Bethlehem was the city of David, and David the glory of Bethlehem; there therefore must David's son and successor be born. There was a famous well at Bethlehem by the gate, which David longed to drink of, *2 Sam. xxiii. 15.* In Christ we "have bread enough, and to spare," but may "come and take also of the water of life freely." Observe here, how Jews and Gentiles compare notes about Jesus Christ; the Gentiles know the time of it by a star; the Jews knew the place of it by the Scriptures, and so they are capable of informing one another. Note, It would contribute much to the increase of knowledge, if we did thus mutually communicate what we know; men grow rich by bartering and exchanging; so if we have knowledge to communicate to others, they will be ready to communicate to us; thus many shall discourse, "shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

VII. *The bloody project and design of Herod occasioned by this inquiry, ver. 7, 8.* Herod was now an old man, had reigned thirty-five years; this king was but newly born, and not likely to enterprize any thing considerable of many years, yet Herod is jealous of him; crowned heads cannot endure to think of successors, much less of rivals, and therefore nothing less than the blood of this infant king will satisfy him; and he will not give himself liberty to think that if this new-born child should be indeed the Messiah, in opposing him, or making any attempts upon him, he would "be found fighting against God," than which nothing more vain, nothing more dangerous; passion has got the mastery of reason and conscience. Now,

First, See how cunningly he laid the project, ver. 7, 8. He "privily called the wise men" to talk with them about this matter. He would not openly own his fears and jealousies, it would be his disgrace to let the wise men know them, and dangerous to let the people know them. Sinners are often tormented with secret fears which they keep to themselves. Herod learns of the wise men the time when "the star appeared," that he might take his measures accordingly, and then employs them to inquire further, and bids them bring him an account. All this might look suspicious, if he had not covered it with a show of religion, "that I may come and worship him also." Note, The greatest wickedness often conceals itself under a mask of piety; Absalom cloaks his rebellious project with a vow.

Secondly, See how strangely he was befooled and infatuated in this, that he trusted it with the wise men, and did not choose some other managers that would have been true to his interests. It was but seven miles from Jerusalem; how easily might he have sent spies to jog the wise men, that should have been as soon there to destroy the child, as they to worship him. Note, God can hide from the eyes of the church's enemies those methods by which they might easily destroy the church; when he intends to "lead princes away spoiled," his way is to "make the judges fools."

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and wor-

shipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

We have here the wise men's humble attendance upon this new-born "King of the Jews," and the honours they paid him. From Jerusalem they went to Bethlehem, resolving to seek till they find; but it is very strange they went alone, that not one person of the court, church, or city should accompany them, if not in conscience, yet in civility to them, or touched with a curiosity to see this young prince. As the "queen of the South," so "the wise men of the East" will "rise up in judgment against the men of that generation," and of this too, "and will condemn them;" for they came from a far country to worship Christ, while the Jews, his kinsmen, would not stir a step, would not go to the next town to bid him welcome. It might have been a discouragement to these wise men to find him whom they sought thus neglected at home: "Are we come so far to honour the King of the Jews, and do the Jews themselves put such a slight upon him and us?" Yet they persist in their resolution. Note, We must continue our attendances upon Christ, though we be alone in them; whatever others do, we must serve the Lord; if they will not go to heaven with us, yet we must not go to hell with them. Now,

I. See how they found Christ out, by the same star that they had seen in their own country, ver. 9, 10. And there observe,

First, How graciously God directed them; by the first appearance of the star, they were given to understand where they might inquire for this king, and then it disappeared, and they were left to take the usual methods for such an inquiry. Note, Extraordinary helps are not to be expected where ordinary means are to be had. Well, they had traced the matter as far as they could, they were upon their journey to Bethlehem, but that is a populous town, where shall they find him when they come thither; here they were at a loss, at their wit's end, but not at their faith's end; they believed God, that had brought them thither by his word, would not leave them there; nor did he, for behold "the star which they saw in the East went before them." Note, If we go on as far as we can in the way of our duty, God will direct and enable us to do that which of ourselves we cannot do; "up and be doing, and the Lord will be with thee." *Vigilantibus non dormientibus succurrit lex*—the law affords its aid, not to the idle, but to the active. The star hath left them a great while, yet now returns. They that follow God in the dark, shall find that light is sown, is reserved for them. Israel was led by a pillar of fire to the "promised land," the wise men by a star to the "promised seed," who is himself the "bright and morning star." *Rev. xxii. 16.* God would rather "create a new thing," than leave those at a loss that diligently and faithfully sought him. This star was the token of God's presence with them, for he is light, and goes before his people as their guide. Note, If we by faith eye God in all our ways, we may see ourselves under his conduct; he guides with his eye, *Ps. xxxii. 8*, and saith to them, "this is the way, walk ye in it;" and there is a day-star that ariseth in the hearts of those that inquire after Christ, *2 Pet. i. 19*.

Secondly, Observe how joyfully they followed God's direction, ver. 10: "when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." Now they saw they were not deceived, and had not taken this long journey in vain; "when the desire cometh it is a tree of life." Now they were sure that God was with them, and the tokens of his presence and favour cannot but fill the souls of those that know how to value them with joy unspeakable. Now they could laugh at the Jews in Jerusalem, who probably had laughed at them, as coming on a fool's errand. The watchmen can give the spouse no tidings of her beloved, but it is but a little that she passeth from them, and she finds him, *Cant. iii. 3, 4.* We cannot expect too little from man, nor too much from God. What a transport of joy these wise men were in upon this sight of the star, none know so well as those, who, after a long and melancholy night of temptation and desertion, under the power of a "spirit of bondage," at length receive the "spirit of adoption," witnessing with their spirits that they are the children of God; this is light out of darkness, it is life from the dead. Now they had reason to hope for a sight of the Lord's Christ presently; of the Sun of Righteousness, for they see the morning star. Note, We should be glad of every thing that will shew us the way to Christ. This star was sent to meet the wise men, and to conduct them into the presence chamber of the king; by this master of the ceremonies they were introduced to have their audience. Now God fulfils his promise of meeting those that are disposed to "rejoice and work righteousness," *Isa. lxiv. 5.* And they fulfil his precept; "let the hearts of those rejoice that seek the Lord," *Ps. cv. 3.* Note, God is pleased sometimes to favour young converts with such tokens of his love as are very encouraging to them in reference to the difficulties they meet with at their setting out in the ways of God.

II. See how they made their address to him when they had found him, ver. 11. We may well imagine their expectations were raised to find this royal babe, though slighted by the nation, yet honourably attended at home, and what a disappointment it was to them when they found a cottage was his palace, and his own poor mother all the retinue he had. Is this the Saviour of the world! Is this the King of the Jews, nay, and the Prince of the kings of the earth! Yes, this is he, "who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became thus poor." However these wise men were so wise as to see through this veil, and in this despised babe to discern the glory, "as of the only begotten of the Father;" they did not think themselves balked or baffled in their inquiry, but as having found the king they sought, they presented themselves first, and then their gifts to him.

First, They presented themselves to him, "they fell down and worshipped him." We do not read that they gave such honour to Herod, though he was in the height of his royal grandeur, but to this babe they gave this honour; not only as to a king, then they would have done the same to Herod, but as to a God. Note, All that have found Christ, fall down before him; they adore him, and submit themselves to him. "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him." It will be the wisdom of the wisest of men, and by this it will appear they know Christ, and understand themselves and their true interests, if they be the humble faithful worshippers of the Lord Jesus.

Secondly, They presented their gifts to him. In the Eastern nations, when they did homage to their kings, they made them a present; thus the subjection of the kings of Sheba to Christ is spoken of, *Ps. lxxii. 10.* They shall bring presents, and offer gifts. See *Isa. lx. 6.* Note, With ourselves, we must give up all that we have to Jesus Christ, and if we be sincere in the surrender of ourselves to him, we will not stick at parting with what is dearest to us, and most valuable to him and for him; nor are our gifts accepted, unless we first present ourselves to him living sacrifices; "God hath respect to Abel," and

Jesus." So Ward, in his "Errata," says, "To take from the holy mother of God what honour they can, they translate that 'he (viz., Joseph) called his name Jesus,'" &c. Since that time the revisers of the Douay version have adopted our translation in this very passage.

ii. 1. Bethlehem was in the tribe of Judah. The town still exists, and is about six miles to the south of Jerusalem. There were other kings called Herod: the one here meant is known as Herod the Great, whose father was an Idumean, and his mother an Arabian. He

received his title from the Roman emperor, Augustus. His character, as represented by Josephus, was very bad, and in his cruelty he did not spare even his wife and children, while his atrocities towards others justify all that follows concerning him. The literal translation for "wise men" would be magi or magians. These were a class of persons whose representatives were to be found in various lands to the east of Palestine. They may be traced back as far as the time of Daniel, when they were in great repute at Babylon, as a compound

then "to his offering." The gifts they presented were "gold, frankincense, and myrrh," money, and money's worth. Providence sent this for a seasonable relief to Joseph and Mary, in their present poor condition. These were the products of their own country; what God favours us with we must honour him with. Some think there was a significance in their gifts; they offered him gold as a king, paying him tribute; to Caesar, the things that are Caesar's; frankincense as God, for they honoured God with the smoke of incense; and myrrh as a man that should die, for myrrh was used in embalming dead bodies.

III. See how they left him when they had made their address to him, ver. 12. Herod appointed them to "bring him word" what discoveries they had made, and it is probable they would have done so, if they had not been countermanded, not suspecting their being thus made his tools in a wicked design. Those that mean honestly and well themselves, are easily made to believe that others do so too, and cannot think the world is so bad as really it is. But "the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation." We do not find that the wise men promised to come back to Herod, and if they had, it must be with the usual proviso, "if God permit;" and God did not permit them, and so prevented the mischief Herod designed to the child Jesus, and the trouble it would have been to the wise men to have been made involuntarily accessory to it. They were "warned of God;" χρηματισθέντες, 'oraculo vel responso accepto'—by an oracular intimation. Some think it intimates that they asked counsel of God, and this was the answer. Note, Those that act cautiously, and are afraid of sin and snares, if they apply themselves to God for direction, may expect to be led in the right way. They were warned "not to return to Herod," or to Jerusalem; these were unworthy to have reports brought them concerning Christ, that might have seen them with their own eyes, and would not. They "departed into their own country another way," to bring the tidings to their countrymen; but it is strange we never hear any more of them, and that they or theirs did not afterwards attend him in the temple whom they had worshipped in the cradle. However, the direction they had from God in their return, would be a further confirmation of their faith in this child, as the "Lord from heaven."

13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. 14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

We have here Christ's flight into Egypt to avoid the cruelty of Herod, and this was the effect of the wise men's inquiry after him, for before that the obscurity he lay in was his protection. It was but little respect, compared with what should have been, that was paid to Christ in his infancy, yet even that, instead of honouring him among his people, did but expose him. Now here observe.

I. The command given to Joseph concerning it, ver. 13. Joseph knew neither the danger the child was in, nor how to escape it, but God by an angel tells him both "in a dream;" as before he directed him in like manner what to do, ch. i. 20. Joseph before his alliance to Christ had not been wont to converse with angels, as now. Note, Those that are spiritually related to Christ by faith, have that communion and correspondence with Heaven which before they were strangers to.

First, Joseph is here told what their danger was: "Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." Note, God is acquainted with all the cruel projects and purposes of the enemies of his church. "I know thy rage against me," saith God to Sennacherib, Isa. xxxvii. 28. How early was the blessed Jesus involved in trouble! Usually even those whose ripper years are attended with toils and perils, yet have a peaceable and quiet infancy, but it was not so with the blessed Jesus; his life and sufferings began together. He was born a man striven with, as Jeremiah was, Jer. xv. 10, who was sanctified from the womb, Jer. i. 5. Both Christ the head, and the church his body, agree in saying, "Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth up." Pharaoh's cruelty fastens upon the Hebrew children; and the great red dragon stands ready to devour the man child as soon as it should be born, Rev. xii. 4.

Secondly, He is directed what to do to escape the danger: "take the young child and flee into Egypt." Thus early must Christ give an example to his own rule, ch. x. 23, when "they persecute you in one city, flee to another." He that came to die for us, when his hour was not yet come, fled for his own safety. Self-preservation being a branch of the law of nature, is eminently a part of the law of God. Flee: but why into Egypt? Egypt was infamous for idolatry, tyranny, and enmity to the people of God; it had been a house of bondage to Israel, and particularly cruel to the infants of Israel; in Egypt, as much as in Ramah, Rachel had been "weeping for her children" yet that is appointed to be a place of refuge to the holy child Jesus. Note, God when he pleases can make the worst of places serve the best of purposes; for "the earth is the Lord's," he makes what use he pleases of it; sometimes the earth helps the woman, Rev. xii. 16. God, that made Moab a shelter to his outcasts, makes Egypt a refuge for his son. This may be considered, 1. As a trial of the faith of Joseph and Mary; they might be tempted to think, "if this child be the Son of God, as we are told he is, has he no other way to secure himself from a man that is a worm, but by such a mean and inglorious retreat as this? Cannot he summon legions of angels to be his life-guard, or cherubims with flaming swords to keep this tree of life? Cannot he strike Herod dead, or wither the hand that is stretched out against him, and so save us the trouble of this remove?" They had been lately told that he should be "the glory of his people Israel," and is the land of Israel so soon become too hot for him? But we find not that they made any such objections; their faith being tried, was found firm, and they believe "this is the Son of God," though they see no miracle wrought for his preservation, but they are put to the use of ordinary means. Joseph had great honour put upon him in being the husband of the blessed virgin, but that honour has trouble attending it, as all honours have in this world; Joseph must take the young child and carry him into Egypt;

of philosophers and priests. Among the Greeks the title got associated with divination, &c., and hence the word "magician" took its rise. The class was widely spread at the time to which the evangelist refers, but it is at best only a conjecture that those who came to Herod were Parsee fire-worshippers, or Zoroastrians, though this is the most reasonable supposition, and one entertained among the Nestorians of Persia, as well as by modern critics in Europe.

ii. 2. "They being in the east, or when in the east, saw the star."

and now it appeared how well God had provided for the "young child and his mother," in appointing Joseph into relation to them; now the gold which the wise men brought would stand them instead of bear the charges. God foresees his people's distresses, and provides against them beforehand. God intimates the continuance of his care and conduct, when he saith, "be thou there until I bring thee word;" so that he must expect to hear from God again, and not stir without fresh orders. Thus God will keep his people still in a dependence upon him. 2. As an instance of the humiliation of our Lord Jesus. As there was no room for him in the inn at Bethlehem, so there was no quiet room for him in the land of Judaea. Thus was he banished from the earthly Canaan, that we, who for sin were banished from the heavenly Canaan, might not be for ever expelled. If we and our infants be at any time in straits, let us remember the straits Christ in his infancy was brought into, and be reconciled to them. 3. As a token of God's displeasure against the Jews, who took so little notice of him; justly doth he leave those who had slighted him; and as an earnest of his favour to the Gentiles, to whom the apostles were to bring the Gospel when the Jews rejected it. If Egypt entertain Christ when he is forced out of Judaea, it will not be long ere it be said, "blessed be Egypt my people," Isa. xix. 25.

II. Joseph's obedience to this command, ver. 14. The journey would be inconvenient and perilous, both to the young child and to his mother, they were but poorly provided for it, and were likely to meet with cold entertainment in Egypt, yet "Joseph was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," made no objection, nor was he dilatory in his obedience. As soon as he had received his orders, he immediately arose and went away "by night," the same night, as it should seem, that he received the orders. Note, Those that would make sure work of their obedience must make quick work of it. Now Joseph went out, as his father Abraham did, with an implicit dependence upon God, "not knowing whither he went," Heb. xi. 8. Joseph and his wife having little, had little to take care of in this remove: an abundance encumbers a necessary flight. If rich people have the advantage of the poor while they possess what they have, the poor have the advantage of the rich when they are called to part with it. Joseph "took the young child and his mother." Some observe that the young child is put first as the principal person, and Mary is called, not the wife of Joseph, but, which was her greater dignity, the "mother of the young child." This was not the first Joseph that was driven from Canaan to Egypt for a shelter from the anger of his brethren; this Joseph ought to be welcome there for the sake of that. If we may credit tradition, at their entrance into Egypt, happening to go into a temple, all the images of their gods were overthrown by an invisible power, and fell, like Dagon before the ark, according to that prophecy, "the Lord shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence," Isa. xix. 1. They continued in Egypt till the death of Herod, which some think was seven years, others think not so many months. There they were at a distance from the temple, and the service of it, and in the midst of idolaters, but God sent them thither, and "will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Though they were far from the temple of the Lord, they had with them the Lord of the temple. A forced absence from God's ordinances, and a forced presence with wicked people, may be the lot, is not the sin, yet cannot but be the grief, of good people.

III. The fulfilling of the Scripture in all this; that Scripture, (Hos. xi. 1.) "out of Egypt have I called my Son." Of all the evangelists, Matthew takes most notice of the fulfilling of the Scripture in what concerned Christ, because his Gospel was first published among the Jews, with whom that would add much strength and lustre to it. Now this word of the prophet undoubtedly referred to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, in which God owned them for his son, "his firstborn," Ex. iv. 22. But it is here applied by way of analogy to Christ, the head of the church. Note, The Scripture has many accomplishments, so full and copious is it, and so well ordered in all things; God is every day fulfilling the Scriptures. Scripture is not of private interpretation, we must give it its full latitude. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him;" and though I loved him, I suffered him to be a great while in Egypt; but because I loved him, in due time I called him out of Egypt. They that read this, must in their thoughts not only look back, but look forward; that which has been shall be again, Eccl. i. 9, and the manner of expression intimates this; for it is said, not 'I called him,' but 'called my Son out of Egypt.' Note, It is no new thing for God's sons to be in Egypt, in a strange land, in a house of bondage; but they shall be fetched out: they may be hid in Egypt, but they shall not be left there. All the elect of God, being by nature children of wrath, are born in a spiritual Egypt, and in conversion are effectually called out. It might be objected against Christ, that he had been in Egypt. "Must the Sun of Righteousness arise out of that land of darkness?" But this shews that to be no strange thing; Israel was brought out of Egypt to be advanced to the highest honours, and this is but the doing of the same thing again.

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, 18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Here is, I. Herod's resentment of the departure of the wise men. He waited long for their return; hopes though they be slow, they will be sure, and he shall crush this rival at his first appearing; but hears upon inquiry, that they are gone off another way, which increaseth his jealousy, and makes him suspect they are in the interest of this new king; which made him "exceeding wroth," and he is the more desperate and outrageous for his being disappointed. Note, Inevitable corruption swells the higher, for the obstructions it meets with in a sinful pursuit.

II. His politic contrivance, notwithstanding this, to take off him that is born "King of the Jews." If he could not reach him by a particular execution, he

The whole context shows that this must be the meaning. What the star was is much disputed; but the narrative compels us to believe that it was not of great magnitude, and was not very elevated, because (verse 9) it was possible for it to point out the place where the infant Jesus lay. On sundry accounts it has been believed that the so-called star was like what we call a meteor. The theory which makes the star an actual planet or fixed star, implies a minute accuracy of scientific knowledge which we fear none then possessed.

doubted not but to involve him in a general stroke, which, like the sword of war, should devour one as well as another. This would be sure work; and thus those that would destroy their own iniquity, must be sure to destroy all their iniquities. Herod was an Edomite, enmity to Israel was bred in the bone with him; Doeg was an Edomite, who for David's sake "slew all the priests of the Lord." It was strange that Herod could find any so inhuman, as to be employed in such a bloody and barbarous piece of work; but wicked hands never want wicked tools to work with. Little children have always been taken under the special protection, not only of human laws, but of human nature; yet these are sacrificed to the rage of this tyrant, under whom, as under Nero, innocence is the least security. Herod was throughout his reign a bloody man; it was not long before, that he destroyed the whole Sanhedrim, or bench of judges. But blood to the bloodthirsty, is like drink to the man in a drowsy; *Quo plus sunt potus, plus sitiuntur aquæ*.—"The more they drink, the more thirsty they become." Herod was now about seventy years old, so that an infant at this time under two years old, was not likely ever to give him any disturbance. Nor was he a man over fond of his own children, or of their preferment, having formerly slain two of his own sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, and his son Antipater after this, but five days before he died: so that it was purely to gratify his brutish lusts of pride and cruelty, that he did this. All is fish that comes to his net. Observe what large measures he took.

First. As to time; he slew all "from two years old and under." It is probable the blessed Jesus was at this time not a year old; yet Herod took in all the infants under two years old, that he might be sure not to miss of his prey. He cares not how many heads fall, whom he allows to be innocent, provided that escape not, whom he supposeth to be guilty.

Secondly. As to place; he kills all the male children, not only in Bethlehem, but "in all the coasts thereof," in all the villages of that city. This was being "overmuch wicked," *Ecd. vii. 17*. Note, An unbridled wrath armed with an unlawful power, often transports men to the most absurd and unreasonable instances of cruelty. It was no unrighteous thing with God to permit this; every life is forfeited to his justice as soon as it commeth. That sin which entered by one man's disobedience introduced death with it; and we are not to suppose any thing more than that common guilt; nor that these children "were sinners above all that were in Israel," because they suffered such things. "God's judgments are a great deep." The diseases and deaths of little children are proofs of original sin. But we must look upon this murder of the infants, under another character; it was their martyrdom. How early did persecution commence against Christ and his kingdom! "Think ye that he came to send peace on the earth? no, but a sword," such a sword as this, *ch. x. 34, 35*. A passive testimony was hereby given to the Lord Jesus. As when he was in the womb, he was witnessed to by a child's leaping in the womb, for joy at his approach; so now, at two years old, he had contemporary witnesses to him of the same age; they shed their blood for him, who afterwards shed his for them. These were the infantry of the "noble army of martyrs." If these infants were thus baptized with blood, though it were their own, into the church triumphant, it could not be said but that with what they got in heaven, they were abundantly recompensed for what they lost on earth. "Out of the mouths of these babes and sucklings, God did perfect praise," otherwise "it is not good to the Almighty that he should thus afflict."

The tradition of the Greek church (and we have it in the Ethiopic missal) is, that the number of the children slain were fourteen thousand; but that is very absurd: I believe if the births of the male children in the weekly bills were computed, there would not be found so many under two years old, in one of the most populous cities of the world, much less in Bethlehem, a small town, that was not near a fortieth part of it; but it is an instance of the vanity of tradition. It is strange, that Josephus doth not relate this story; but he wrote long after St. Matthew, and it is probable he therefore would not relate it, because he would not so far countenance the Christian history, for he was a zealous Jew; but to be sure, if it had not been true, and well attested, he would have contested it. Macrobius, a heathen writer, tells us, that when Augustus Caesar heard, that Herod, among the children he ordered to be slain under two years old, among the rest slew his own son, he passed this jest upon him, "that it was better to be Herod's swine than his son." The usage of the country forbade him to kill a swine, but nothing could restrain him from killing his son. Some think he had a young child at nurse in Bethlehem; others think, that through mistake two events are confounded, the murder of the infants, and the murder of his son Antipater. But for the church of Rome to put the holy innocents, as they call them, into their calendar, and observe a day in memory of them, while they have so often by their barbarous massacres justified, and even outdone Herod, is but to do as their predecessors did, who built the tombs of the prophets, while they themselves filled up the same measure. Some observe another design of Providence in the murder of the infants: by all the prophecies of the Old Testament, it appears that Bethlehem was the place, and this the time, of the Messiah's nativity; now all the children of Bethlehem, born at this time, being murdered, and Jesus only escaping, none but he could pretend to be the Messiah. Herod now thought that he had baffled all the Old Testament prophecies, and defeated the indications of the star, and the devotions of the wise men, by ridding the country of this new king; having burnt the hive, he concludes he had killed the master bee, but God in heaven laughs at him, and has him in derision. Whatever crafty, cruel devices are in men's hearts, the counsel of the Lord shall stand.

III. The fulfilling of the Scripture in this, ver. 17, 18: "Then was fulfilled" that prophecy, *Jer. xxxi. 15*, "a voice was heard in Ramah." See and adore the fullness of the Scripture! that prediction was accomplished in Jeremiah's time, when Nebuzaradan, after he had destroyed Jerusalem, brought all his prisoners to Ramah, *Jer. xl. 1*, and there disposed of them as he pleased, for the sword, or for captivity: "then was the cry in Ramah heard to Bethlehem," (for those two cities, the one in Judah's lot, and the other in Benjamin's, were not far asunder;) but now the prophecy is again fulfilled, in the great sorrow that was for the death of these infants. The Scripture was fulfilled.

First. In the place of this mourning: the noise of it was heard from Bethlehem to Ramah; for Herod's cruelty extended itself to all the coasts of Bethlehem, even into the lot of Benjamin, among the children of Rachel. Some think the country about Bethlehem was called Rachel, because there she died and was buried; Rachel's sepulchre was hard by Bethlehem, *Gen. xxxv. 16, 19*; compare *1 Sam. x. 2*. Rachel had her heart much set upon children; the son she died in travail of, she called *Benoni*, 'the son of her sorrow'; these mothers were like Rachel, lived near Rachel's grave, and many of them descended from Rachel, and therefore their lamentations are elegantly represented by Rachel's weeping.

Secondly. In the degree of this mourning: "It was lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning;" all little enough to express the sense they had of this aggravated calamity. There was a great cry in Egypt when the firstborn were slain, and so there was here when the youngest were slain; for whom we naturally have a particular tenderness. Here was a representation of this world we live in: we hear in it, "lamentation, and weeping, and mourning,"

At the same time the magi may have thought the luminous guide really a star. Some have interpreted, or rather misinterpreted the passage so as to favour what is called judicial astrology, casting of nativities, and other science falsely so called. Whether a miracle or not a miracle, the phenomenon was a reality, and the explanation given to it by the magi was correct; but it is impossible to say whether they knew the prophecy of Balaam (*Num. xxiv. 17*), and took this to be its fulfilment. One thing, however, is known by the

and see the tears of the oppressed, some upon one account, and some upon another. Our way lies through a vale of tears. This sorrow so great that they "would not be comforted;" they hardened themselves in it, and took a pleasure in their grief. Blessed be God, there is no occasion of grief in this world, no, not sin itself, that will justify us in refusing to be comforted. They "would not be comforted, because they are not," that is, they are not in the land of the living, are not as they were in their mother's embraces; if indeed they were not, there might be some excuse for sorrowing, as though we had no hope; but we know they are not lost, but gone before; if we forget that they are, we lose the best ground of our comfort, *1 Thes. iv. 13*. Some make this great grief of the Bethlehemites to be a just judgment upon them for their contempt of Christ; they that would not rejoice for the birth of the Son of God, are justly made to weep for the death of their own sons; for they only wondered at the tidings the shepherds brought them, but did not welcome him.

The quoting of this prophecy might serve to obviate an objection, which some would make against Christ upon this sad providence; "Can the Messiah, who is to be the consolation of Israel, be introduced with all this lamentation?" Yes, for so it was foretold, and the Scripture must be accomplished. And besides, if we look further into that prophecy we shall find, that the "bitter weeping" in Ramah was but a prologue to the greatest joy, for it follows, "thy work shall be rewarded," and "there is hope in thy end." The worse things are, the sooner they will mend. Unto them a child was born, sufficient to repair their losses.

19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. 21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: 23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it



NAZARETH.

might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

We have here Christ's return out of Egypt into the land of Israel again: Egypt may serve to sojourn in, or take shelter in for a while, but not to abide in; Christ was sent to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," and therefore to them he must return. Observe,

1. What it was that made way for his return: the death of Herod, which happened not long after the murder of the infants; some think not above three months: such quick work did Divine vengeance make. Note, Herods must die; proud tyrants that were the terror of the mighty, and the oppressors of the godly in the land of the living, their day must come to fall, and down to the pit they must go. "Who art thou then, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die?" *Isa. i. 12, 13*; especially considering that at death, not only their envy and hatred are perished, *Ecd. ix. 6*, and they cease from troubling, *Job iii. 17*, but they are punished. Of all sins, the guilt of innocent blood fills the measure soonest. It is a dreadful account which Josephus gives of the death of this same Herod, (*Antiq. Jud., lib. xvii. cap. 8-10*), that he was seized with a disease, which burned him inward with an inexpressible torture, that he was insatiably greedy of meat, had the cholick, and gout, and drowsy; such an intolerable stink attended his disease, that none could come near him, and so passionate and impatient, that he was a torment to himself, and a terror to all that attended him; his innate cruelty being thus exasperated made him more barbarous than ever. Having ordered his own son

witness of Tacitus and Suetonius, that a great deliverer was at that time looked for all over the East, and expected, in fact, to proceed from Judea.

ii. 11. The gifts presented were possibly symbolical of the dignities of the Saviour, but they may have been such products of the land of the magians as they were wont to offer to kings and princes. The vulgar fable that these men were kings is without the shadow of a foundation.

to be put to death, he imprisoned many of the nobility and gentry, and ordered that as soon as he was dead they should be killed; but that execution was prevented. See what kind of men have been the enemies and persecutors of Christ and his followers! Few opposed Christianity, but what have first destroyed themselves of humanity, as Nero and Domitian.

II. *The orders given from Heaven concerning their return, and Joseph's obedience to those orders*, ver. 19–21. God had sent Joseph into Egypt, and there he stayed till the same that brought him thither ordered him thence. Note, in all our removes it is good to see our way plain, and God going before us; we should not move either one way or other, without order. These orders were sent him by an angel. Note, Our intercourse with God, if it be kept up on our part, shall be kept up on his, wherever we are. No place can exclude God's gracious visits; angels came to Joseph in Egypt, to Ezekiel in Babylon, and to John in Patmos. Now,

First. The angel informs him of the death of Herod, and his accomplices: "they are dead which sought the young child's life." They are dead, but the young child lives: persecuted saints sometimes live to tread upon the graves of their persecutors. Thus did the church's King weather this storm, and many an one has the church in like manner weathered. They are dead; to wit, Herod and his son Antipater, who, though there were mutual jealousies between them, yet probably concurred in seeking the destruction of this new king. If Herod first kill Antipater, and then die himself, the coasts are cleared, and the Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth, when one wicked instrument is the ruin of another.

Secondly. He directs him what to do: he must go and "return to the land of Israel," and he did so without delay, not pleading the tolerably good settlement he had in Egypt, or the inconveniences of the journey, especially if, as is supposed, it was in the beginning of the winter that Herod died. God's people follow his conduct wherever he leads them, wherever he lodges them. Did we but look upon the world as our Egypt, the place of our bondage and banishment, and heaven only as our Canaan, our home, our rest, we should as readily arise and depart thither when we are called for, as Joseph did out of Egypt.

III. *The further direction he had from God, which way to steer, and where to fix in the land of Israel*, ver. 22, 23. God could have given him instructions with the former, but God reveals his mind to his people by degrees, to keep them still waiting on him, and expecting to hear further from him. These orders Joseph received in a dream, probably as those before, by the ministration of an angel. God could have signified his will to Joseph by the child Jesus, but we do not find that in these removes he either takes notice, or gives notice, of any thing that occurred; surely it was because "in all things it behoved him to be made like his brethren," being a child, he spake as a child, and did as a child, and threw a veil over his infinite knowledge and power; as a child he increased in wisdom. Now the direction given this holy, royal family is,

First. That it might not settle in Judæa, ver. 22. Joseph might think, that Jesus being born in Bethlehem, must be brought up there; yet is prudently afraid for the young child, because he heard that Archelaus reigns in Herod's stead, not over all the kingdom as his father did, but only over Judæa, the other provinces being put into other hands. See what a succession of enemies there is to fight against Christ and his church. If one drop off, another presently appears, to keep the old enmity. But for this reason Joseph must not take the young child into Judæa. Note, God will not thrust his children into the mouth of danger, but when it is for his own glory and their trial; for "precious in the sight of the Lord is the life and death of his saints," precious is their blood to him.

Secondly. That it must settle in Galilee, ver. 22. There Philip now ruled, who was a mild quiet man. Note, The providence of God commonly so orders it, that his people shall not want a quiet retreat from the storm and from the tempest; when one climate becomes hot and scorching, another shall be kept more cool and temperate. Galilee lay far north, Samaria lay between it and Judæa; thither they were sent to Nazareth, a city upon a hill, in the centre of the lot of Zebulun; there the mother of our Lord lived, when she conceived "that holy thing," and probably Joseph lived there too, *Lu. i. 26, 27*. Thither they were sent, for there they were well known, and were among their relations; the most proper place for them to be in. There they continued, and from thence our Saviour was called "Jesus of Nazareth," which was to the Jews a stumbling block, for "can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" In this is said to be fulfilled what was "spoken by the prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene," which may be looked upon, 1. As a name of honour and dignity, though primarily it signifies no more but a man of Nazareth, yet there is an allusion or mystery in it, speaking Christ to be, 1st. The man, the "Branch," spoken of, *Isa. xi. 1*, where the word is *Netsar*, which signifies, either a branch of the city of Nazareth; in being denominated from that city, he is declared to be that branch. 2nd. It speaks him to be the great Nazarite, of whom the legal Nazarites were a type and figure, especially Samson, *Jud. xiii. 5*, and Joseph, who is called a Nazarite among his brethren, *Gen. xlix. 26*; and to whom that which was prescribed concerning the Nazarites has reference, *Nam. vi. 2*, &c.; not that Christ was strictly a Nazarite, for he drank wine, and touched dead bodies; but he was eminently so, both as he was singularly holy, and as he was by a solemn designation and dedication set apart to the honour of God in the work of our redemption, as Samson was to save Israel; and it is a name we have all reason to rejoice in, and to know him by. Or, 2. As a name of reproach and contempt. To be called a Nazarene, was to be called a despicable man, a man from whom no good was to be expected, and to whom no respect was to be paid. The devil first fastened this name upon Christ, to render him mean, and to prejudice people against him, and it stuck as a nickname to him and his followers. Now this was not particularly foretold by any one prophet, but in general it was spoken by the prophets, that he should be "despised and rejected of men," *Isa. liii. 2, 3*; "a worm and no man," *Psa. xxii. 6, 7*; that he should be an alien to his brethren, *Psa. lxi. 9*. Let no name of reproach for religion's sake seem hard to us, when our Master was himself called a Nazarene.

CHAPTER III.

As the story of this chapter, concerning the baptism of John, begins the Gospel, *Mar. i. 1*, what went before is but preface or introduction; this is "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ;" and Peter observes the same date, *Acts i. 22*; "beginning from the baptism of John;" for then Christ began first to appear in him, and then to appear to him, and by him to the world. Here is, I. The glorious rising of the morning star, John the Baptist, ver. 1. 1. The doctrine he preached, ver. 2. 2. The fulfilling of the Scripture in him, ver. 3. 3. His manner of life, ver. 4. 4. The resort of multitudes to him, and their submission to his baptism, ver. 5, 6. 5. His sermon that he preached to the Pharisees and Sadducees, wherein he endeavours to bring them to repentance, ver. 7–10, and so to bring them to Christ, ver. 11, 12. II. The more glorious shining forth of the sun of righteousness immediately after; where we have, 1. The honour done by him to the baptism of John, ver. 13–15. 2. The honour done to him by the descent of the Spirit upon him, and a voice from heaven, ver. 16, 17.

ii. 17, 18. The words of *Jer. xxxi. 15*, here quoted, refer originally to the captivity in Babylon, but, like other prophetic utterances, they are capable of more than a single application. Rachel, the mother of the tribe of Benjamin, is, by a bold poetic figure, introduced as weeping over her descendants. The tomb of Rachel is about a mile north of Bethlehem, but the position of Rama is disputed, as the name was borne by various places.

ii. 22. Herod, by a new will prepared not long before his death,



N those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

We have here an account of the preaching and baptism of John, which was the dawning of the Gospel-day. Observe,

I. *The time when he appeared*: "In those days," ver. 1, or, 'after those days,' long after what was recorded in the foregoing chapter, which left the child Jesus in his infancy. "In those days," that is, in the time appointed of the Father for the beginning of the Gospel, "when the fulness of time was come," which was often thus spoken of in the Old Testament, "In those days." Now the last of Daniel's weeks began, or rather the latter half of the last week, when the Messiah was to "confirm the covenant with many," *Dan. ix. 27*. Christ's appearances are all in their season. Glorious things were spoken both of John and Jesus, at and before their births, which would have given occasion to expect some extraordinary appearances of a Divine presence and power with them when they were very young; but it is quite otherwise. Except Christ's disputing with the doctors at twelve years old, nothing appears remarkable concerning either of them, till they were about thirty years old. Nothing is recorded of their childhood and youth, but the greatest part of their life is *tempus aëreum*; it is wrapt up in darkness and obscurity. These children differ little in outward appearance from other children, as the heir while he is under age "differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all." And this was to shew,

First. That even then when God is acting as the God of Israel, the Saviour, yet "verily he is a God that hideth himself," *Isa. xlv. 15*. "The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not," *Gen. xxviii. 16*. Our Beloved stands behind the wall long before he "looks forth at the windows," *Cant. ii. 9*.

Secondly. That our faith must principally have an eye to Christ in his office and undertaking, for there is the display of his power; but in his person is the hiding of his power. All this while Christ was God-man; yet we are not told what he said or did, till he appeared as a prophet, and then "hear ye him."

Thirdly. That young men, though well qualified, should not be forward to put forth themselves in public services, but be humble and modest, and self-diffident, "swift to hear and slow to speak." Matthew saith nothing of the conception and birth of John the Baptist, which is largely related by St. Luke, but finds him at full age, as if dropped from the clouds to preach in the wilderness. For above three hundred years the church had been without prophets, those lights had been long put out, that he might be the more desired, who was to be the Great Prophet. After Malachi there was no prophet, nor any pretender to prophecy, till John the Baptist, to whom therefore the prophet Malachi points more directly than any of the Old Testament prophets had done, *Mal. iii. 1*, "I send my messenger."

II. *The place where he appeared first*: "In the wilderness of Judæa." It was not an uninhabited desert, but a part of the country not so thickly peopled, nor so much inclosed into fields and vineyards, as other parts were; it was such a wilderness as had six cities and their villages in it, which are named, *Jos. xv. 61, 62*. In these cities and villages John preached, for thereabouts he had hitherto lived, being born hard by in Hebron. The scenes of his action began there, where he had long spent his time in contemplation, and even when he shewed himself to Israel, he shewed how well he loved retirement, as far as would consist with his business. "The word of the Lord" found John here in a "wilderness." Note, No place is so remote as to shut us out from the visits of Divine grace: nay, commonly the sweetest intercourse the saints have with heaven is, when they are withdrawn furthest from the noise of this world. It was in this wilderness of Judah, that David penned the sixty-third Psalm, which speaks so much of the sweet communion he then had with God, *Hos. ii. 14*. In a wilderness the Law was given; and as the Old Testament, so the New Testament Israel was first found in a desert land, and there God "led him about and instructed him," *Deu. xxxii. 10*. John Baptist was a priest of the order of Aaron, yet we find him preaching in a wilderness, and never officiating in the temple; but Christ who was not a son of Aaron, yet is often found in the temple, and sitting there "as one having authority;" so it was foretold, *Mal. iii. 1*, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple;" not the messenger that was to "prepare his way." This intimated that the priesthood of Christ was to thrust out that of Aaron, and drive it into a wilderness. The beginning of the Gospel in a wilderness, speaks comfort to the deserts of the Gentile world. Now must the prophecies be fulfilled, I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, *Isa. xli. 18, 19*. The wilderness shall be a beautiful field, *Isa. xxxii. 15*; and "the desert shall rejoice," *Isa. xxxv. 1, 2*, which the Septuagint reads, 'the desert of Jordan,' the very wilderness in which John preached. In the Romish church there are those who call themselves hermits, and pretend to follow John, but when they say of Christ, "Behold he is in the desert, go not forth," *Mat. xxiv. 26*. There was a seducer that led his followers into the wilderness, *Acts xxi. 38*.

III. *His preaching*. This he made his business; he came not fighting, not disputing, but preaching, ver. 1, for "by the foolishness of preaching" Christ's kingdom must be set up.

named Archelaus his successor as king of Judæa. The death of Herod occurred at Jericho, and forthwith Archelaus was greeted as king, though afterwards his title was changed to ethnarch. The rumour that he reigned was as true as it must have been unexpected, for, until a few days of his death, Herod had indicated Antipas, and not Archelaus, as his successor.

ii. 23. The main road from Egypt into Palestine branched off at Beersheba, and again further north, the right leading away to

First. The doctrine he preached was that of repentance, ver. 2: "Repent ye." He preached this in Judæa, among those that were called Jews, and made a profession of religion; for even they need repentance. He preached it not in Jerusalem, but in the "wilderness of Judæa," among the plain country people; for even those who think themselves most out of the way of temptation, and furthest from the vanities and vices of the town, yet cannot wash their hands in innocency, but must do it in repentance. John Baptist's business was to call men to repent of their sins; *μετανοείτε*, "bethink yourselves," admit a second thought to correct the errors of the first; an after-thought; consider your ways, change your minds; you have thought amiss, think again, and think aright. Note, True penitents have other thoughts of God and Christ, and sin and holiness, and this world and the other, than they have had, and stand otherwise affected towards them. The change of the mind produceth a change of the way. Those who are truly sorry for what they have done amiss, will be careful to do so no more. This repentance is a necessary duty in obedience to the command of God, *Acts xvii. 30*, and a necessary preparative and qualification for the comforts of the Gospel of Christ. If the heart of man had continued upright and unstained, Divine consolations might have been received without this painful operation preceding, but being sinful, it must be first pained before it can be laid at ease; must labour before it can be at rest; the sore must be searched, or it cannot be cured. "I wound, and I heal."

Secondly. The argument he used to enforce this call was, for "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The prophets of the Old Testament called people to repent, for the obtaining and securing of temporal national mercies, and for the preventing and removing of temporal national judgments; but now, though the duty pressed is the same, the reason is new, and purely evangelical. Men are now considered in their personal capacity, and not so much, as then, in a social and political one. Now, "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," that is, the Gospel dispensation of the covenant of grace, the opening of the kingdom of heaven to all believers, by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a kingdom which Christ is the sovereign of, and we must be the willing loyal subjects of. It is a kingdom of heaven, not of this world; a spiritual kingdom; its original from heaven, its tendency to heaven. John preached this "at hand;" then it was at the door—to us it is come, by the pouring out of the Spirit, and the full exhibiting of the riches of Gospel grace. Now, 1. This is a great inducement to us to repent: nothing like the consideration of Divine grace to break the heart, both for sin, and from sin. That is evangelical repentance that flows from a sight of Christ, from a sense of his love, and the hopes of pardon and forgiveness through him. Kindness is conquering, abused kindness humbling and melting. "What a wretch was I to sin against such grace! against the law and love of such a kingdom!" 2. It is great encouragement to us to repent. Repent, for your sins shall be pardoned upon your repentance. Return to God in a way of duty, and he will, through Christ, return to you in a way of mercy. The proclamation of pardon discovers and fetcheth in the malefactor that before fled and absconded. Thus are we drawn to it with the cords of a man, and the bands of love.

IV. The prophecy that was fulfilled in him, ver. 3. This is he that was spoken of in the beginning of that part of the prophecy of Esaias, which is mostly evangelical, and which points at Gospel times, and Gospel grace; see *Isa. xl. 3, 4*. John is here spoken of.

First. As the "voice of one crying in the wilderness." John owned it himself, *Jno. i. 23*, "I am the voice," and that is all; God is the speaker, who maketh known his mind by John, as a man doth by his voice. The Word of God must be received as such, 1 *Thes. ii. 13*: what else is Paul, and what is Apollos, but the voice? John is called "the voice," *φωνη βοωντος*, "the voice of one crying" aloud, which is startling and awakening; Christ is called "the Word," which being distinct and articulate, is more instructive. John as "the voice" roused men, and then Christ as "the Word" taught them; as we find, *Rev. xiv. 2*: the voice of many waters, and of a great thunder, made way for the melodious voice of harpers, and the new song, ver. 3. Some observe, that as Samson's mother must drink no strong drink, yet he was designed to be a strong man, so John Baptist's father was struck dumb, and yet he was designed to be "the voice of one crying." When the crier's voice is begotten of a dumb father, it shews "the excellency of the power to be of God, and not of man."

Secondly. As one whose business it was to "prepare the way of the Lord, and to make his paths straight;" so it was said of him before he was born, that he should "make ready a people prepared for the Lord," *Lu. i. 17*, as Christ's harbinger and forerunner, and such an one as intimated the nature of Christ's kingdom, for he came not in the gaudy dress of a herald at arms, but the homely one of a hermit. Officers are sent before great men to clear the way, so John prepares the way of the Lord. 1. He himself did so among the men of that generation. In the Jewish church and nation at that time all was out of course; there was a great decay of piety, the vitals of religion were corrupted and eaten out by the traditions and injunctions of the elders. The scribes and Pharisees, that is, the greatest hypocrites in the world, had the key of knowledge and the key of the government at their girdle. The people were generally extremely proud of their privileges, confident of justification by their own righteousness, insensible of sin, and though now under the most humbling providences, being lately made a province of the Roman Empire, yet were unhumiliated: they were much in the same temper, that they were in Malachi's time, insolent and haughty, and ready to contradict the Word of God. Now John was sent to level these mountains, to take down their high opinion of themselves, and to shew them their sins, that the doctrine of Christ might be the more acceptable and effectual. 2. His doctrine of repentance and humiliation is still as necessary as it was then "to prepare the way of the Lord." Note, There is a great deal to be done to make way for Christ into a soul, to bow the heart for the reception of the Son of David, 2 *Sam. xix. 14*; and nothing more needful, in order to this, than the discovery of sin, and a conviction of the insufficiency of our own righteousness. That which letteth will let, until it be taken out of the way. Prejudices must be removed, high thoughts brought down, and captivated to the obedience of Christ. Gates of brass must be broken, and bars of iron cut asunder, ere the everlasting doors be opened for the King of glory to come in. The way of sin and Satan is a crooked way; to prepare a way for Christ, the paths must be made straight, *Heb. xii. 13*.

V. The garb in which he appeared, the figure he made, and the manner of life he lived, ver. 4. They that expected the Messiah as a temporal prince, would think his forerunner must come in great pomp and splendour, that his equipage should be very magnificent and gay; but it proves quite contrary: he shall be "great in the sight of the Lord," but mean in the eye of the world; and as Christ himself, having no "form or comeliness," to intimate betimes, that the glory of Christ's kingdom was to be spiritual, and the subjects of it such as ordinarily were, either found by it, or made by it, poor and despised, and had their honours, pleasures, and riches derived from another world.

First. His dress was plain. "This same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins;" he did not go in long clothing

as the scribes, or soft clothing as the courtiers, but in the clothing of a country husbandman, for he lived in a country place, and suited his habits to his habitation. Note, It is good for us to accommodate ourselves to the place and condition which God in his providence has put us in. John appeared in this dress, 1. To shew that, like Jacob, he "was a plain man," and mortified to this world, and the delights and gaieties of it. "Behold an Israelite indeed." Those that are lowly in heart should shew it by a holy negligence and indifference in their attire, and not make the putting on of apparel their adorning, nor value others by their attire. 2. To shew that he was a prophet; for prophets wore rough garments, as mortified men, *Zec. xiii. 4*. And especially to shew that he was the Elias promised; for particular notice is taken of Elias, that he was a hairy man (which some think is meant of the hairy garments he wore), and that "he was girt with a girdle of leather about his loins," 2 *Kin. i. 8*. John Baptist appears no way inferior to him in mortification; this therefore is "that Elias that was to come." 3. To shew that he was a man of resolution; his girdle was not fine, such as were then commonly worn, but it was strong, it was a leathern girdle; and blessed be that servant whom his Lord, when he comes, finds with his loins girt, *Lu. xii. 35*; 1 *Pet. i. 13*.

Secondly. His diet was plain: "His meat was locusts and wild honey." Not as if he never ate anything else, but these he frequently fed upon, and made many a meal's meat of when he retired into solitary places, and continued long there for contemplation. Locusts were a sort of flying insect, very good for food, and allowed as clean, *Lev. xi. 22*; they required little dressing, and were light and easy of digestion; whence it is reckoned among the infirmities of old age, that the grasshopper, or locust, is then a burden to the stomach, *Ecc. xii. 5*. Wild honey was that which Canaan flowed with, 1 *Sam. xiv. 26*. Either it was gathered immediately as it fell in the dew, or rather as it was found in the hollows of trees and rocks, where bees built, that were not, as those in hives, under the care and inspection of men. This intimates that he ate sparingly, a little served his turn. A man would be long ere he filled his belly with locusts and wild honey. John Baptist "came neither eating nor drinking," *ch. xi. 18*. Not with that curiosity, formality, and familiarity that other people do. He was so entirely taken up with spiritual things, that he could seldom find time for a set meal. Now, 1. This agreed with the doctrine he preached of "repentance," and "fruits meet for repentance." Note, Those whose business it is to call others to mourn for sin, and to mortify it, ought themselves to live a serious life, a life of self-denial, mortification, and contempt of the world. John Baptist thus shewed the deep sense he had of the badness of the time and place he lived in, which made the preaching of repentance needful; every day was a fast day with him. 2. This agreed with his office as Christ's forerunner; by this practice he shewed that he knew what the kingdom of heaven was, and had experienced the powers of it. Note, Those that are acquainted with Divine and spiritual pleasures, cannot but look upon all the delights and ornaments of sense with a holy indifference; they know better things. By giving others this example, he made way for Christ. Note, A conviction of the vanity of the world and every thing in it is the best preparative for the entertainment of the kingdom of heaven in the heart. "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

VI. The people that attended upon him, and flocked after him, ver. 5: "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa." Great multitudes came to him from the city, and from all parts of the country; some of all sorts, men and women, young and old, rich and poor, Pharisees and publicans, they "went out to him" as soon as they heard of his preaching the kingdom of heaven, that they might hear what they heard so much of. Now,

First. This was a great honour put upon John, that so many attended him, and with so much respect. Note, Many times those have most real honour done them that least court the shadow of it. Those that live a mortified life, that are humble and self-denying, and dead to the world, command respect, and men have a secret value and reverence for them, more than one would imagine.

Secondly. This gave John a great opportunity of doing good, and was an evidence that God was with him. Now people begin to crowd and press into the kingdom of heaven, *Lu. xvi. 16*, and a blessed sight it was to see the dew of the youth dropping from the womb of the Gospel morning, *Ps. cx. 3*; to see the net cast where there were so many fish.

Thirdly. This was an evidence that now was a time of great expectation, it was generally thought that the kingdom of God should presently appear, *Lu. xix. 11*; and therefore when John shewed himself to Israel, lived and preached at this rate, so very different from the scribes and Pharisees, they were ready to say of him, that he was "the Christ," *Lu. iii. 15*; and this occasioned such a confluence of people about him.

Fourthly. Those that would have the benefit of John's ministry, must go out to him to the wilderness, sharing in his reproach. Note, They who truly desire "the sincere milk of the Word" if it be not brought to them, will go seek out for it; and they who would learn the doctrine of repentance, must go out from the hurry of this world, and be still.

Fifthly. It appears by the issue, that of the many that came to John's baptism, there were but few that stuck to it; witness the cold reception Christ had in Judæa, and about Jerusalem. Note, There may be a multitude of forward hearers, where there are but a few true believers. Curiosity, affectation of novelty, and variety, may bring many to attend upon good preaching, and to be affected with it for a while, who yet are never subject to the power of it, *Eze. xxxiii. 31, 32*.

VII. The rule or ceremony by which he admitted disciples, ver. 6. Those that received his doctrine, and submitted to his discipline, "were baptized of him in Jordan," thereby professing their repentance, and their belief that the kingdom of the Messiah was at hand.

First. They testified their repentance by "confessing their sins;" a general confession, it is probable, they made to John, that they were sinners, that they were polluted by sin, and needed cleansing, but to God they made a confession of particular sins, for he is the party offended. The Jews had been taught to justify themselves, but John teacheth them to accuse themselves, and not to rest, as they used to do, in the general confession of sin made for all Israel once a year upon the day of atonement, but to make a particular acknowledgment, every one, of "the plague of his own heart." Note, A penitent confession of sin is required, in order to peace and pardon; and those only are ready to receive Jesus Christ as their righteousness, who are brought with sorrow and shame to own their guilt, 1 *Jno. i. 8*.

Secondly. The benefits of the "kingdom of heaven" now "at hand," were thereupon sealed to them by baptism. He washed them with water in token of this, that from all their iniquities God would cleanse them. It was usual with the Jews to baptize those whom they admitted proselytes to their religion, especially those who were only "proselytes of the gate," and were not circumcised as the "proselytes of righteousness" were. Some think it was likewise a custom for persons of eminent religion, that set up for leaders, by baptism to admit pupils and disciples. Christ's question concerning John's baptism, "Was it from heaven or of men?" implied that there were baptisms of men,

Hebron, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem, and the left running nearer the coast. Hence, after reaching the land of Israel, the holy family went away to Galilee without touching Bethlehem, as seems to have been intended. Owing to the residence of Jesus at Nazareth he was called a Nazarene, in accordance with a very common practice in all ages. The words, "He shall be called a Nazarene," cannot be a verbal quotation; for they are found in none of the prophets. They must be viewed as an inference from prophecy, and may have some

allusion to the word *netzer* ("a branch"), by which title our Saviour is foretold in *Isa. xi. 1*; or they may refer to the order of Nazarites. Certainly is, however, unattainable, and Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament: we prefer, therefore, to leave it, with Dean Alford, "as an unsolved difficulty," or as a phrase not yet clearly explained.

iii. 1. "In those days" must mean while Jesus yet resided at Nazareth, and the words imply that he continued to dwell there

who pretended not to a Divine mission; with this usage John complied, but his was from heaven, and was distinguished from all others, with this character, it was the "baptism of repentance," *Acts* xix. 4. All Israel were "baptized into Moses," *1 Cor.* x. 2. The ceremonial law consisted in "divers washings," or baptisms, *Heb.* ix. 10. But John's baptism refers to the remedial law, the law of repentance and faith. He is said to baptize them in Jordan, that river which was famous for Israel's passage through it, and Naaman's cure; yet it is probable John did not baptize in that river at first, but afterwards, when the people that came to his baptism were numerous, he removed to Jordan. By baptism he obliged them to live a holy life, according to the profession they took upon themselves. Note, Confession of sin must always be accompanied with holy resolutions, in the strength of Divine grace, not to return to it again.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10 And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that



SHOES AND SANDALS.

cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: 12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.



ANCIENT MODE OF WINNOWING.

The doctrine John preached was that of "repentance," in consideration of the "kingdom of heaven at hand;" now here we have the use of that doctrine. Application is the life of preaching, so it was of John's preaching. Observe,

until his appearance before the world. Of the period, and of the earlier history of John, we receive fuller details from St. Luke. "The wilderness of Judea" here meant is shown by the context to have extended to the Jordan. According to Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," John baptised at three places. The first, here referred to, was at the lower ford of the river, near Jericho; the second place was further north, near the upper ford, or Bethabara; and the third near Enon and Salem, still more to the north. The "wilderness of

I. To whom he applied it; to "the Pharisees and Sadducees" that came "to his baptism," ver. 7. To others he thought it enough to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" but when he saw these Pharisees and Sadducees come about him, he found it necessary to explain himself, and deal more closely. These were two of the three noted sects among the Jews at that time; the third was that of the Essenes, whom we never read of in the Gospels, for they affected retirement, and declined busying themselves in public action. The Pharisees were zealots for the ceremonies, for the power of the church, and the traditions of the elders; the Sadducees ran into the other extreme, and were little better than deists, denying the existence of spirits and a future state. It was strange that they came to John's baptism, but their curiosity brought them to be hearers; and some of them, it is probable, submitted to be baptized; but it is certain the generality of them did not, for Christ saith, *Lu.* vii. 29, 30, that when "the publicans justified God, and were baptized of John, the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." Note, Many come to ordinances that come not under the power of them. Now to them John here addresseth himself with all faithfulness, and what he said to them he said to the multitude, *Lu.* iii. 7, for they were all concerned in what he said.

II. What the application was; it is plain and home, and directed to their consciences; he speaks as one that came not to preach before them, but to preach to them. Though his education was private, he was not bashful when he appeared in public, nor feared the face of man, for he was full of the Holy Ghost, and of power.

First. Here is a word of conviction and awakening. He begins harshly, calls them not Rabbi, gives them not the titles, much less the applauses, they had been used to. 1. The title he gives them is, "O generation of vipers;" Christ gave them the same title, *ch.* xii. 34; *xxiii.* 33. They were as vipers, though specious, yet venomous and poisonous, and full of malice and enmity to every thing that was good; they were a viperous brood, the seed and offspring of such as had been of the same spirit; it was bred in the bone with them. They gloried in it, that they were the seed of Abraham, but John shewed them that they were the serpent's seed; compare *Gen.* iii. 15: "of thy father the devil," *Jno.* viii. 44. They were a viperous gang, they were all alike; though enemies to one another, yet confederate in mischief. Note, A wicked generation is a generation of vipers, and they ought to be told so; it becomes the ministers of Christ to be bold in shewing sinners their true character. 2. The alarm he gives them is, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" This intimates that they were in danger of the wrath to come, and that their case was so near to desperate, and their hearts so hardened in sin—the Pharisees, by their shows of religion, and the Sadducees by their arguments against religion—that it was next to a miracle to see any hopes of them. "What brings you hither? Who thought of seeing you here? What fright have you been put into, that you inquire after the kingdom of heaven?" Note, 1. There is a "wrath to come;" besides present wrath, the vials of which are poured out now, there is future wrath, the stores of which are treasured up for hereafter. 2. It is the great concern of every one of us to flee from that wrath. It is wonderful mercy that we are fairly warned to flee from this wrath. Think, who has warned us; God has warned us, who delights not in our ruin; he warns by the written word, by ministers, by conscience. 3. These warnings sometimes startle those that seemed to have been very much hardened in their security and good opinion of themselves.

Secondly. Here is a word of exhortation and direction, ver. 8: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." "Therefore," because you are "warned to flee from the wrath to come," let the terrors of the Lord persuade you to a holy life. Or, "therefore," because you profess repentance, and attend upon the doctrine and baptism of repentance, evidence that you are true penitents: repentance is seated in the heart. There it is as a root; but in vain do we pretend to have it there, if we do not "bring forth the fruits" of it in an universal reformation, forsaking all sin, and cleaving to that which is good; these are fruits *αἱ ἀγαθὰς τὰς ἐργασίας*,—worthy of repentance. Note, Those are not worthy the name of penitents, nor their privileges, who say they are sorry for their sins and yet persist in them. They that profess repentance, as all that are baptized do, must be and act as becomes penitents, and never do any thing unbecoming a penitent sinner. It becomes penitents to be humble and low in their own eyes, to be thankful for the least mercy, patient under the greatest affliction, to be watchful against all appearances of sin and approaches towards it, to abound in every duty, and to be charitable in judging others.

Thirdly. Here is a word of caution not to trust to their external privileges, so as with them to shift off these calls to repentance, ver. 9: "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father." Note, There is a great deal which carnal hearts are apt to say within themselves, to put by the convincing, commanding power of the Word of God, which ministers should labour to meet with and anticipate: vain thoughts which lodge within those who are called to wash their hearts, *Jer.* iv. 14. *Μὴ δοκῆτε*,—Pretend not, presume not to say within yourselves; be not of the opinion that this will save you; harbour not such a conceit. "Please not yourselves with saying this," so some read it, "rock not yourselves asleep with this, nor flatter yourselves into a fool's paradise." Note, God takes notice what we say within ourselves, which we dare not speak out; and is acquainted with all the false rests of the soul, and the fallacies with which it deludes itself, but will not discover them, lest it should be undecieved. Many hide the lie that ruins them in their right hand, and roll it under their tongue, because they are ashamed to own it: they keep in the devil's interest by keeping the devil's counsel. Now John shews them, 1. What their pretence was: "We have Abraham to our father;" we are not sinners of the Gentiles, it is fit indeed they should be called to repent; but we are Jews, a holy nation, a peculiar people, what is this to us?" Note, The Word doth us no good, when we will not take it as spoken to us, and belonging to us. "Think not that because you are the seed of Abraham, therefore, 1st. You need not repent, you have nothing to repent of; your relation to Abraham, and your interest in the covenant made with him, denominates you so holy that there is no occasion for you to change your mind or way. 2nd. That, therefore, you shall fare well enough, though you do not repent: think not that this will bring you off in the judgment, and secure you from the wrath to come; that God will connive at your impenitency because you are Abraham's seed." Note, It is vain presumption to think that our having good relations will save us, though we be not good ourselves. What though we be descended from pious ancestors, have been blessed with a religious education, have our lot cast in families where the fear of God is uppermost, and have good friends that advise us and pray for us, what will all this avail us, if we do not repent and live a life of repentance? "We have Abraham to our father," and, therefore, are entitled to the privileges of the covenant made with him: being his seed, we are sons of the church, "the temple of the Lord," *Jer.* vii. 4. Note, Multitudes, by resting in the honours and advantages of their visible church-membership, take up short of heaven. 2. How foolish and groundless this pretence was: they thought that, being the seed of Abraham, they were the only people God had in the world, and, therefore, if they were cut off, he would be at a loss for a church; but John shews them the folly of this conceit: "I say unto you," (whatever you say

Judea" in this place will, therefore, be that district which was not far from Jericho. It was readily accessible from Jerusalem and other parts of Judea, from which multitudes flocked to receive baptism.

iii. 4. The dress of John was peculiar, resembling that of Elijah (*2 Kings* i. 8). Camels' hair was woven into a cloth of coarse texture, resembling sackcloth, and better adapted for tents than for the ordinary apparel of men. This rude garment was fastened round the waist by a leathern girdle. In the East, both the loose dress and

within yourselves,) that "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." He was now baptizing in Jordan, at Bethabara, *Jno. i. 28*, the house of passage, where the children of Israel passed over, and there were the twelve stones, one for each tribe, which Joshua set up for a memorial, *Jos. iv. 20*. It is not unlikely that he pointed to those stones, which God could make to be, more than in representation, the twelve tribes of Israel. Or, perhaps, he refers to *Isa. li. 12*, where Abraham was called "the rock out of which they were hewn." That God, who raised Isaac out of such a rock, can, if there be occasion, do as much again, for with him nothing is impossible. Some think he pointed to those heathen soldiers that were present, telling the Jews that God would raise up a church for himself among the Gentiles, and entail the blessing of Abraham upon them. Thus, when our first parents fell, God could have left them to perish, and out of stones have raised up another Adam and another Eve. Or take it thus: 'stones themselves shall be owned as Abraham's seed, rather than such hard, dry, barren sinners as you are.' Note, As it is lowering to the confidence of the sinners in Zion, so it is encouraging to the fears of the sons of Zion, that whatever comes of the present generation, God will never want a church in the world; if the Jews fall off, the Gentiles shall be grafted in, *ch. xxi. 43; Rom. xi. 11*.

Fourthly, Here is a word of terror to the careless and secure Pharisees and Sadducees, and other the Jews, that knew not the signs of the times, nor the day of their visitation, *ver. 10*. Now look about you, now "the kingdom of God is at hand," and be made sensible. 1. How strict and short your trial is: "now the ax" is carried before you, now it is "laid to the root of the tree," now you are upon your good behaviour, and are to be so but a while; now you are marked for ruin, and cannot avoid it but by a speedy and sincere repentance. Now you must expect that God will make quicker work with you by his judgments than he did formerly, and that they will "begin at the house of God;" where God allows more means, he allows less time. "Behold, I come quickly." Now they were put upon their last trial; now or never. 2. How sore and severe your last doom will be, if you do not improve this. It is now declared, with the axe at the root, to shew that God is in earnest in the declaration, that "every tree" though never so high in gifts and honours, though never so green in external professions and performances, if it "bring not forth good fruit," the "fruits meet for repentance," it "is hewn down," disowned as a tree in God's vineyard, unworthy to have room there, and "is cast into the fire" of God's wrath: the fittest place for barren trees; what else are they good for? If not fit for fruit, they are fit for fuel. Probably this refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, which was not, as other judgments had been, like the lopping off of the branches, or cutting down the body of the tree, leaving the root to bud again; but it would be the total, final, irrecoverable extirpation of that people, in which all those should perish that continued impenitent. Now God would make a full end; wrath was coming on them to the utmost.

Fifthly, A word of instruction concerning Jesus Christ, in whom all John's preaching centred: Christ's ministers preach not themselves, but him. Here is, 1. The dignity and pre-eminence of Christ above John. See how meanly he speaks of himself, that he might magnify Christ, *ver. 11*: "I indeed baptize you with water," that is the utmost I can do. Note, Sacraments derive not their efficacy from those that administer them; they can only apply the sign: it is Christ's prerogative to give the thing signified, *1 Cor. iii. 6; 2 Kin. iv. 31*. But "he that comes after me is mightier than I." Though John had much power, for he came in the spirit and power of Elias, Christ had more; though John was truly great, great in the sight of the Lord, not a greater born of woman, yet he thinks himself unworthy to be in the meanest place of attendance upon Christ, "whose shoes I am not worthy to bear." He sees, *1st*, How mighty Christ is in comparison with him. Note, It is a great comfort to faithful ministers to think that Jesus Christ is mightier than they, can do that for them, and that by them, which they cannot do; his strength is perfected in their weakness. 2nd, How mean he is in comparison with Christ; not worthy to carry his shoes after him. Note, Those whom God puts honour upon, are thereby made very humble and low in their own eyes; willing to be abased, so that Christ may be magnified; to be any thing, to be nothing, so that Christ may be all. 2. The design and intention of Christ's appearing, which they were now speedily to expect. When it was prophesied that John should be sent as Christ's forerunner, *Mal. iii. 1, 2*, it immediately follows, "The Lord whom ye seek will suddenly come," and shall "sit as a refiner," *ver. 3*. And after the coming of Elijah, "the day cometh that shall burn as an oven," *Mal. iv. 1*. To which the Baptist seems here to refer: Christ will come to make a distinction. 1st, By the powerful working of his grace, "he shall baptize you," that is, some of you, "with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Note, 1. It is Christ's prerogative to baptize with the Holy Ghost. This he did in the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit conferred upon the apostles, to which Christ himself applies these words of John, *Acts i. 5*. "This he doth in the graces and comforts of the Spirit, given to them that ask him," *Lu. xi. 13; Jno. vii. 38, 39*. See *Acts xi. 16, 2*. Those that are baptized with the Holy Ghost are baptized as with fire; the seven spirits of God appear as "seven lamps of fire," *Rev. iv. 5*. Is fire enlightening?—So the Spirit is a spirit of illumination. Is it warming?—And do not their hearts burn within them? Is it consuming?—And doth not the spirit of judgment, as a spirit of burning, consume the dross of their corruptions? Doth fire make all it seizes like itself, and doth it move upwards?—So doth the Spirit make the soul holy, like itself, and its tendency is heavenwards. Christ saith "I am come to send fire," *Lu. xii. 49*. 2nd, By the final determinations of his judgment, *ver. 12*: "whose fan is in his hand." His ability to distinguish, as the eternal wisdom of the Father, who sees all by a true light, and his authority to distinguish, as the person to whom all judgment is committed, is the fan that is in his hand, *Jer. xv. 7*. Now he "sits as a refiner." Observe here, *1st*, That the visible church is Christ's floor; "O my threshing, the corn of my floor," *Isa. xxi. 16*. The temple, a type of the church, was built upon a threshing-floor. *Secondly*, In this floor there is a mixture of wheat and chaff; true believers are as wheat, substantial, useful, and valuable; hypocrites are as chaff, light and empty, useless and worthless, and carried about with every wind; these are now mixed, good and bad under the same external profession, and in the same visible communion. *Thirdly*, There is a day coming when the floor shall be purged, and the wheat and chaff shall be separated. Something of this kind is often done in this world, when God calls his people out of Babylon, *Rev. xviii. 4*. But it is the day of the last judgment that will be the great winnowing, distinguishing day, which will infallibly determine concerning doctrines and works, *1 Cor. iii. 13*, and concerning persons, *ch. xxi. 32, 33*; when saints and sinners shall be parted for ever. *Fourthly*, Heaven is the "garner" into which Jesus Christ will shortly gather all his wheat, and not a grain of it shall be lost. He will gather them as the ripe fruits were gathered in. Death's scythe is made use of to gather them to their people. In heaven the saints are brought together, and no longer scattered; they are safe, and no longer exposed; separated from corrupt neighbours without, and corrupt affections within, and there is no chaff among them. They are not only gathered into the barn, *ch. xiii. 30*, but into the garner, where they are thoroughly purified. *Fifthly*, Hell is the "unquenchable fire" which will burn up the chaff,

which will certainly be the portion, and punishment, and everlasting destruction of hypocrites and unbelievers. So that here is life and death, good and evil, set before us; according as we now are in the field, we shall be then in the floor.

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Our Lord Jesus, from his childhood till now, when he was almost thirty years of age, had lain hid in Galilee, buried alive; but now, after a long and dark night, behold the Sun of Righteousness rises in glory! The fulness of time was come that Christ should enter upon his prophetic office, and he chooseth to do it, not at Jerusalem, though it is probable he went thither at the three yearly feasts, as others did, but there where John was baptizing; for to him resorted those that "waited for the consolation of Israel," to whom alone he would be welcome. John the Baptist was six months older than our Saviour, and it is supposed that he began to preach and baptize about six months before Christ appeared; so long he was employed in preparing his way in the region round about Jordan; and more was done towards it in these six months than had been done of some ages before. Christ's coming from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized teacheth us, not to stick at pains and travail, that we may have an opportunity of drawing nigh to God in an ordinance; we should be willing to go far, rather than come short of communion with God. Those that will find must seek. Now, in this story of Christ's baptism, we may observe,

1. How hardly John was persuaded to admit of it, *ver. 14, 15*. It was an instance of Christ's great humility that he would offer himself to be baptized of John; that he who knew no sin would submit to the baptism of repentance. Note, As soon as ever Christ began to preach, he preached humility, preached it by his example, preached it to all, especially to young ministers. Christ was designed for the highest honours, yet in his first step he thus abashed himself. Note, That that would rise high must begin low; "before honour is humility." It was a great piece of respect thus done to John, for Christ thus to come to him, and it was a return for the service he did him in giving notice of his approach. Note, Those that honour God, he will honour. Now here we have,

First, The objection that John made against baptizing Jesus, *ver. 14*: "John forbade him," as Peter did, when Christ went about to wash his feet, *Jno. xiii. 6, 8*. Note, Christ's gracious condescensions are so surprising as to appear at first incredible to the strongest believers; so deep and mysterious, that even those who know his mind well, cannot soon find out the meaning of them, but, by reason of darkness, start objections against the will of Christ. John's modesty thinks this an honour too great for him to receive; and he expresseth himself to Christ, just as his mother had done to Christ's mother, *Lu. i. 43*: "Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" John had now won a great name, and was universally respected, yet see how humble he is still. Note, God has further honours in reserve for those whose spirits continue low when their reputation riseth. 1. John thinks it necessary that he should be baptized by Christ. "I have need to be baptized of thee," with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as of fire, for that was Christ's baptism, *ver. 11*. 1st, Though John was "filled with the Holy Ghost" from the womb, *Lu. i. 15*, yet he acknowledges he had need to be baptized with that baptism. Note, Those that have much of the Spirit of God, yet, while they are here in this imperfect state, see they have need of more, and need to apply themselves to Christ for more. 2nd, John has need to be baptized, though he was the greatest that ever was born of woman, yet, being born of a woman, he was polluted, as others of Adam's seed are, and owns he has need of cleansing. Note, The purest souls are most sensible of their own remaining impurity, and seek most earnestly for spiritual washing. 3rd, He has need to be baptized of Christ, who can do that for us which no one else can, and which must be done for us, or we are undone. Note, The best and holiest of men "have need of Christ," and the better they are, the more they see of that need. 4th, This was said before the multitude, who had a great veneration for John, and were ready to embrace him for the Messiah; yet he publicly owns he had need to be baptized of Christ. Note, It is no disparagement to the greatest of men to confess that they are undone without Christ and his grace. 5th, John was Christ's forerunner, and yet owns he has need to be baptized of him. Note, Even those that were before Christ in time, yet depended on him, received from him, and had an eye to him. 6th, While John was dealing with others about their souls, observe how feelingly he speaks of the case of his own soul: "I have need to be baptized of thee." Note, Ministers who preach to others, and baptize others, are concerned to look to it, that they preach to themselves, and be themselves baptized with the Holy Ghost; take heed to thyself first, "save thyself," *1 Tim. iv. 16*. 2. He therefore thinks it very preposterous and absurd that Christ should be baptized by him. "Comest thou to me?" "Doth the Holy Jesus, that is separated from sinners, come to be baptized by a sinner, as a sinner, and among sinners? How can this be? Or what account can we give of it?" Note, Christ's coming to us may well be wondered at.

Secondly, The overruling of this objection, *ver. 15*: Jesus said, "Suffer it to be so now." Christ accepted his humility but not his refusal; he will have the thing done, and it is fit Christ should take his own method, though we do not understand it, nor can give a reason for it. See, 1. How Christ insists upon it; it must be so now. He doth not deny but that John had "need to be baptized" of him, yet he will now be baptized of John. *Agree agree.* Let it be yet so: "suffer it to be so now." Note, Every thing is beautiful in its season. But why now? Why yet? 1st, Christ is now in a state of humiliation, he has emptied himself, and made himself of no reputation. He is not only "found in fashion as a man," but is made in the "likeness of sinful flesh," and, therefore, now let him be baptized of John; as if he needed to be washed, though he be perfectly pure; and thus he was "made sin for us,"

the girdle are often of a costly and elaborate character, and it was probably the same in ancient times. The Baptist adopted his attire in accordance with the stern, self-denying spirit of his preaching. It was the same with his food. Locusts are, it is true, extensively eaten, but not as a regular article of diet, except under peculiar circumstances. Some have supposed that the pods of the locust-tree are meant, and such is the sense of the Syriac version; but it is generally allowed that the insects are intended. Wild

honey also is still used, and found in large quantities. The chief sustenance of the prophet of repentance was derived from the hills and valleys of the desolate region where he exercised his ministry. He rejected the comforts and the luxuries of ordinary life.

iii. 7. Pharisees and Sadducees alike were moved by his preaching. The former boasted of their orthodoxy and adhesion to the forms and ceremonies of Judaism, and occupied the chief place among the Jews, both in numbers and influence. They were diligent observers

though he "knew no sin." 2nd. John's baptism is now in reputation, that is it by which God is now doing his work, that is the present dispensation, and, therefore, Jesus will now be baptized with water, but his baptizing with the Holy Ghost is reserved for hereafter, "many days hence," *Acts* i. 5. John's baptism has now its day, and, therefore, honour must now be put upon that, and those that attend upon it must encourage it. Note, Those that are of the greatest attainments in gifts and graces, should yet, in their place, bear their testimony to instituted ordinances, by an humble and diligent attendance on them, that they may give a good example to others. What we see God owns, and while we see he doth so, we must own. John was now increasing, and, therefore, it must be thus yet; shortly he will decrease, and then it will be otherwise. 3rd. It must be so now, because now is the time for Christ's appearing in public, and this will be a fair opportunity for it. See *John* i. 31-34. Thus he must be "made manifest to Israel," and be signalized by wonders from heaven, in that act of his own, which was most condescending and self-abasing. 2. The reason he gives for it: "Thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness." Note, 1st. There was a becomingness in every thing that Christ did for us; it was all graceful, *Heb.* ii. 10; vii. 26; and we must study to do, not only that which behoves us, but that which becomes us; not only that which is indispensably necessary, but that which is lovely and of good report. 2nd. Our Lord Jesus looked upon it as a thing well becoming him to "fulfil all righteousness," that is, (as Dr. Whitby explains it,) to own every Divine institution, and to shew his readiness to comply with all God's righteous precepts. Thus it becomes him to justify God, and approve his wisdom, in sending John to prepare his way by the baptism of repentance. Thus it becomes us to countenance and encourage every thing that is good, by pattern as well as precept. Christ often mentioned John and his baptism with honour, which, that he might do the better, he was himself baptized. Thus Jesus began first to do, and then to teach, and his ministers must take the same method. Thus Christ "filled up the righteousness" of the ceremonial law, which consisted in divers washings: thus he recommended the Gospel ordinance of baptism to his church, put honour upon it, and shewed what virtue he designed to put into it. It became Christ to submit to John's washing with water, because it was a Divine appointment; but it became him to oppose the Pharisees washing with water, because it was a human invention and imposition, and he justified his disciples in refusing to comply with it. With the will of Christ, and this reason for it, John was entirely satisfied, and "then he suffered him." The same modesty which made him at first decline the honour Christ offered him, now made him do the service Christ enjoined him. Note, No pretence of humility must keep us off from our duty.

11. How solemnly Heaven was pleased to grace the baptism of Christ with a special display of glory, ver. 16, 17: "Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." Others that were baptized stayed to confess their sins, ver. 6; but Christ having no sins to confess, went up immediately "out of the water;" so we read it, but not right; for it is *απο τῆς ὑδατος*, from the water; from the brink of the river, to which he went down to be washed with water, that is, to have his head or face washed, (*John* xiii. 9.) for here is no mention of the putting off or putting on of his clothes, which circumstance would not have been omitted, if he had been baptized naked. He went up "straightway," as one that entered upon his work with the utmost cheerfulness and resolution; he would lose no time. How was he straitened till it was accomplished! Now when he was coming up out of the water, and all the company had their eye upon him,

First, "Lo, the heavens were opened unto him," so as to discover something above and beyond the starry firmament, at least to him. This was, 1. To encourage him to go on in his undertaking, with the prospect of the glory and joy that were set before him; heaven is opened to receive him, when he has finished the work he is now entering upon. 2. To encourage us to receive him, and submit to him. Note, In and through Jesus Christ the heavens are opened to the children of men. Sin shut up heaven, put a stop to all friendly intercourse between God and man; but now Christ has "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." Divine light and love are darted down upon the children of men, and we have "boldness to enter into the holiest." We have receipts of mercy from God, we make returns of duty to God, and all by Jesus Christ, who is the ladder that has the foot on earth, and the top in heaven, by whom alone it is that we have any comfortable correspondence with God, or any hope of getting to heaven at last. The heavens were opened when Christ was baptized, to teach us, that when we duly attend on God's ordinances, we may expect communion with him, and communications from him.

Secondly, "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove," or, 'as a dove,' and coming, or "lighting upon him." Christ saw it, (*Mark* i. 10.) and John saw it, (*John* i. 32.) and it is probable all the standers by saw it, for this was intended to be his public inauguration. Observe, 1. The Spirit of God descended and lighted on him. In the beginning of the old world, the "Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," *Gen.* i. 2, hovered, as a bird upon the nest: so here in the beginning of this new world, Christ, as God, needed not to receive the Holy Ghost, but it was foretold that the "Spirit of the Lord should rest upon him," *Isa.* xi. 1; lxi. 1; and here he did so; for, 1st. He was to be a prophet, and prophets always spoke by the Spirit of God, who came upon them; Christ was to execute the prophetic office, not by his Divine nature, saith Dr. Whitby, but by the *afflatus* of the Holy Spirit. 2nd. He was to be the head of the church, and the Spirit "descended upon him," by him to be derived to all believers, in his gifts, graces, and comforts. The ointment on the head ran down to the skirts; Christ received gifts for men, that he might give gifts to men. 2. He descended on him "like a dove;" whether it was a real living dove, or as was usual in visions, the representation or similitude of a dove, is uncertain. If there must be a "bodily shape," (*Lu.* iii. 22.) it must not be that of a man, for the being seen in fashion as a man, was peculiar to the second person; none, therefore, more fit than the shape of one of the fowls of heaven, (heaven being now opened,) and of all fowl, none so significant as the dove. 1st. The Spirit of Christ is a dove-like Spirit; not "like a silly dove without heart," *Hos.* vii. 11, but like an innocent dove without gall. The Spirit descended, not in the shape of an eagle, which is, though a royal bird, yet a bird of prey, but in the shape of a dove, than which no creature more harmless and inoffensive. Such was the Spirit of Christ, "he shall not strive, nor cry," such must Christians be, "harmless as doves." The dove is remarkable for her eyes; we find that both the eyes of Christ, (*Cant.* v. 12.) and the eyes of the church, (*Cant.* i. 15; iv. 1.) are compared to doves' eyes, for they have the same spirit. The dove mourns much, *Isa.* xxxviii. 14; Christ wept oft; and penitent souls are compared to doves of the valleys. 2nd. The dove was the only fowl that was offered in sacrifice, *Lev.* i. 14; and Christ by the Spirit, "the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." 3rd. The tidings of the decrease of Noah's flood were brought by a dove, with an olive leaf in her mouth; fitly therefore is the glad tidings of peace with God brought by the Spirit as a dove; it speaks God's "good will towards men;" that his thoughts towards us are "thoughts of good, and not of evil." By "the voice of the turtle heard in our land," *Cant.* ii. 12,

the Chaldee paraphrase understands, the "voice of the Holy Spirit." That God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, is a joyful message, that comes to us upon the wing, the "wings of a dove," *Ps.* lxxviii. 13.

Thirdly, To explain and complete this solemnity, "there came a voice from heaven," which we have reason to think was heard by all that were present. The Holy Spirit manifested himself in the likeness of a dove, but God the Father by a voice; for when the law was given, they saw no manner of similitude, only they "heard a voice," *Deu.* iv. 12; and so this Gospel came, and Gospel indeed it is, the best news that ever came from heaven to earth, for it speaks plainly and fully God's favour to Christ, and us in him. 1. See here how God owns our Lord Jesus: "This is my beloved Son." Observe, 1st. The relation he stood in to him; 'he is my Son.' Jesus Christ is the Son of God by eternal generation, as he was "begotten of the Father before all worlds," *Col.* i. 15; *Heb.* i. 3; and by supernatural conception; he was therefore called "the Son of God," because he was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, *Lu.* i. 35; yet this is not all; he is the Son of God by special designation to the work and office of the world's Redeemer. He was sanctified and sealed, and sent upon that errand, "brought up" with the Father for it, *Pr.* viii. 30; appointed to it: "I will make him my firstborn," *Ps.* lxxxix. 27. 2nd. The affection the Father had for him; "He is my beloved Son;" his dear Son, the son of his love, *Col.* i. 13; he had lain in his bosom from all eternity, *John* i. 18; had been always his delight, *Pr.* viii. 30. But particularly as Mediator, and in undertaking the work of man's salvation, he was his "beloved Son." He is "mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth," see *Isa.* xlii. 1. Because he consented to the covenant of redemption, and delighted to do that will of God, "therefore the Father loved him," *John* x. 17; iii. 35. "Behold," then, behold and wonder, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us," that he should deliver up him that was the Son of his love, to suffer and die for those that were the generation of his wrath; nay, and therefore love him, "because he laid down his life for the sheep." Now know we that he loved us, seeing he has not withheld his Son, his only Son, his Isaac, whom he loved, but gave him to be a sacrifice for our sin. 2. See here how ready he is to own us in him. He is "my beloved Son," not only with whom, but "in whom I am well pleased," he is pleased with all that are in him, and are united to him by faith. Hitherto God had been displeased with the children of men, but now his anger is turned away; and he hath made us "accepted in the beloved," *Eph.* i. 6. Let all the world take notice, that this is the peace maker, the daysman, that has laid his hand upon us both, and there is no coming to God, as a Father, but by him, as Mediator, *John* xiv. 6. In him our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable, for he is the altar that sanctifies every gift, 1 *Pet.* ii. 5. Out of Christ, God is a consuming fire, but in Christ a reconciled Father. This is the sum of the whole Gospel; "it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance," that God has declared by a voice from heaven, that Jesus Christ is "his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased," with which we must by faith cheerfully concur, and say, 'that he is our beloved Saviour, in whom we are well pleased.'

CHAPTER IV.

John Baptist said concerning Christ, "He must increase, but I must decrease;" and so it proved: for after John had baptized Christ, and borne his testimony to him, we hear little more of his ministry; he had done what he came to do, and thenceforward there is as much talk of Jesus as ever there had been of John: as the rising sun advanceth, the morning star disappears. Concerning Jesus Christ, we have in this chapter, I. The temptation he underwent, the triple assaults the tempter made upon him, and the repulse he gave to each assault, ver. 1-11. II. The teaching work he undertook, the places he preached in, ver. 12-16; and the subject he preached on, ver. 17. III. His calling of disciples, Peter and Andrew, James and John, ver. 18-22. IV. His curing of diseases, ver. 23, 24; and the great resort of people to him, both to be taught and to be healed.



HEN was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9

of tradition, which the Sadducees rejected. The Sadducees are said to have denied the existence of angels, the resurrection of the dead, the immortality of the soul, and other doctrines, as well as practices, which were commonly accepted. They seem to have been Jewish rationalists. John regards both sects as gone astray, and hence his severe epithet, "generation of vipers"—a race or brood of vipers. "The wrath to come" is a most comprehensive expression, inclusive of the Divine judgments upon sinners here and hereafter.

iii. 12. The process by which the chaff is separated from the corn here alluded to, is one common, as might be expected, to various ages and countries. After threshing the corn, straw and chaff formed a mingled heap, from which portions were thrown to form another heap at a distance off. When the wind was not strong enough to blow away the chaff, a large sort of fan was used by an attendant to agitate the air. The process, though tedious, was effectual, and it was followed by storing the corn and destroying the chaff.

And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

We have here the story of a famous duel, fought hand to hand, between Michael and the dragon; the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, nay, the serpent himself; in which the seed of the woman "suffers, being tempted," and so has his heel bruised; but the serpent is quite baffled in his temptations, and so has his head broken; and our Lord Jesus comes off a conqueror, and so secures not only comfort, but conquest at last, to all his faithful followers. Concerning Christ's temptation observe.

I. *The time when it was:* "then;" there is an emphasis laid upon that. Immediately after "the heavens were opened" to him, and the "Spirit descended on him," and he was declared to be the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, the next news we hear of him is, he is tempted; for then he is best able to grapple with the temptation. Note, 1. Great privileges and special tokens of Divine favour, will not secure us from being tempted. Nay, 2. After great honours put upon us, we must expect something that is humbling; as Paul had a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, after he had been in the third heavens. 3. God useth to prepare his people for temptation before he calls them to it; he "gives strength according to the day," and before a sharp trial gives more than ordinary comfort. 4. The assurance of our sonship is the best preparative for temptation: if the good Spirit witnesseth to our adoption, that will furnish us with an answer to all the suggestions of the evil spirit, designed either to debauch or disquiet us. "Then," when he was newly come from a solemn ordinance, when he was "baptized," then he was "tempted." Note, After we have been admitted into communion with God, we must expect to be set upon by Satan. The enriched soul must double its guard; "when thou hast eaten and art full, then beware." "Then," when he began to shew himself publicly to Israel, then he was tempted, so as he never had been while he lived in privacy. Note, The devil has a particular spite at useful persons, that not only are good, but given to do good, especially at their first setting out. It is the advice of the son of Sirach, *Ecclesiasticus* ii. 1, "My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thyself for temptation." Let young ministers know what to expect, and arm accordingly.

II. *The place where it was:* "in the wilderness," probably in the great wilderness of Sinai, where Moses and Elijah fasted forty days, for no part of the wilderness of Judaea was so abandoned to wild beasts, as this is said to have been, *Mark* i. 13. When Christ was baptized, he did not go to Jerusalem, there to publish the glories that had been put upon him, but retired into a wilderness. After communion with God, it is good to be private awhile, lest we lose what we have received, in the crowd and hurry of worldly business. Christ withdrew into the wilderness.

First. To gain advantage to himself. Retirement gives an opportunity for meditation and communion with God; even those that are called to the most active life, must yet have their contemplative hours, and must find time to be alone with God. Those are not fit to speak of the things of God in public to others, that have not first conversed with those things in secret by themselves. When Christ would appear as "a teacher from God," it shall not be said of him, 'he is newly come from travelling, he has been abroad, and has seen the world;' but, 'he is newly come out of a desert, he has been alone, conversing with God and his own heart.'

Secondly. To give advantage to the tempter, that he might have a readier access to him than he could have had in company. Note, Though solitude is a friend to a good heart, yet Satan knows how to improve it against us; "woe to him that is alone." Those that, under pretence of sanctity and devotion, retire into dens and deserts, find they are not out of the reach of their spiritual enemies, and that there they want the benefit of the communion of saints. Christ retired, 1. That Satan might have leave to do his worst. To make his victory the more illustrious, he gave the enemy sun and wind on his side, and yet baffled him. He might give the devil advantage, for the "prince of this world had nothing in him;" but he hath in us, and therefore we must pray not to be "led into temptation," and must keep out of harm's way. 2. That he might have opportunity to do his best himself, that he might be exalted in his own strength, for so it was written, "I have trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with me." Christ entered the lists without a second.

III. *The preparatives for it, which were two.*

First. He was directed to the combat; he did not wilfully thrust himself upon it, but he was "led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil." The Spirit that descended upon him like a dove, made him meek, and yet made him bold. Note, Our care must be, not to enter into temptation; but if God, by his providence, order us into circumstances of temptation for our trial, we must not think it strange, but double our guard; be strong in the Lord, resist, "steadfast in the faith," and all shall be well. If we presume upon our own strength, and tempt the devil to tempt us, we provoke God to leave us to ourselves; but whithersoever God leads us, we may hope he will go along with us, and bring us off more than conquerors. Christ was led to be "tempted of the devil," and of him only. Others are tempted when they are "drawn aside of their own lust, and enticed," *James* i. 13. The devil takes hold of that handle, and ploughs with that heifer; but our Lord Jesus had no corrupt nature, and therefore he was led securely without any fear or trembling, as a champion into the field, to be tempted purely by the devil. Now Christ's temptation is, 1. An instance of his own condescension and humiliation. Temptations are fiery darts, thorns in the flesh, buffetings, siftings, wrestlings, combats, all which note hardship and suffering, therefore Christ submitted to them, because he would humble himself in all things to be made "like unto his brethren;" thus he gave his back to the smiters. 2. It was an occasion of Satan's confusion. There is no conquest without a combat; Christ was tempted that he might overcome the tempter; Satan tempted the first Adam and triumphed over him, but he shall not ever triumph, the second Adam shall overcome him, and "lead captivity captive." 3. It is matter of comfort to all the saints. In the temptation of Christ it appears that our enemy is subtle, spiteful, and very daring in his temptations, but it appears withal that he is not invincible. Though he is a strong man armed, yet the captain of our salvation is stronger than he. It is some comfort to us to think that Christ "suffered being tempted" for then temptations, if they are not yielded to, are not sins; they are afflictions only, and such as may be the lot of those with whom God is well

pleased; and we have a High Priest that knows by experience what it is to be tempted, and therefore is the more tenderly "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" in an hour of temptation, *Hebrews* ii. 18; iv. 15. But it is much more a comfort to us to think, that Christ conquered "being tempted," and conquered for us, not only that the enemy we grapple with is a conquered, baffled, disarmed enemy, but that we are interested in Christ's victory over him; and through him are "more than conquerors."

Secondly. He was dieted for the combat, as wrestlers used to be, who are "temperate in all things," 1 *Corinthians* ix. 25; but Christ beyond any other, for he "fasted forty days and forty nights," in compliance with the type and example of Moses the great lawgiver, and of Elias the great reformer, of the Old Testament. John Baptist came as Elias in those things that were moral, but not in such things as were miraculous, *Isaiah* x. 41, that honour was reserved for Christ. Christ needed not to fast for mortification, he had no corrupt desires to be subdued; yet he fasted, 1. That herein he might humble himself, and might seem as one abandoned, whom no "man seeketh after." 2. That he might give Satan both occasion and advantage against him, and so make his victory over him the more illustrious. 3. That he might sanctify and recommend fasting to us, when God in his providence calls to it, or when we are reduced to straits, and are destitute of daily food, or when it is requisite for the keeping down of the body, or the quickening of prayer, and that is a good preparative for temptation. If good people are brought low, if they want friends and succours, this may comfort them, that their Master himself was in like manner exercised. A man may want bread, and yet be a favourite of Heaven, and under the conduct of the Spirit. The reference which the Papists make of their Lent fast to this fasting of Christ forty days, is a piece of foppery and superstition, which the law of our land witnesseth against. (*Stat. 5 Eliz. cap. 6. sec. 39, 40.*) When he fasted forty days he was never hungry; converse with Heaven was instead of meat and drink to him, but "he was afterwards an hungred;" to shew that he was really and truly man, and he took upon him our natural infirmities, that he might atone for us. Man fell by eating, and that way we often sin, and therefore Christ was an hungred.

IV. *The temptations themselves.* That which Satan drove at in all his temptations, was to bring him to "sin against God," and so to render him for ever incapable to be a sacrifice for the sin of others. Now whatever the colours were, that which he aimed at was, to bring him, 1. To despair of his Father's goodness. 2. To presume upon his Father's power. 3. To alienate his Father's honour, by giving it to Satan. In the two former, that which he tempted him to, seemed innocent, and therein appeared the subtlety of the tempter: in the last, that which he tempted him with, seemed desirable. The two former are sly temptations, which there was need of great wisdom to discern; the last was a strong temptation, which there was need of great resolution to resist; yet he was baffled in them all.

First. He tempted him to despair of his Father's goodness, and to distrust his Father's care concerning him.

1. See how the temptation was managed, ver. 3: "the tempter came to him." Note. The devil is "the tempter," and therefore he is "Satan, an adversary;" for those are our worst enemies that entice us to sin, and are Satan's agents, are doing his work, and carrying on his designs. He is called emphatically "the tempter," because he was so to our first parents, and still is so, and all other tempters are set on work by him. The tempter came to Christ in a visible appearance, not terrible and affrighting, as afterwards in his agony in the garden; no, if ever the devil transformed himself into an "angel of light," he did it now, and pretends to be a good genius, a guardian angel. Observe the subtlety of the tempter in tacking this first temptation to what went before, to make it the stronger. 1st. Christ began to be hungry, and therefore the motion seemed very proper "to turn stones into bread," for his necessary support. Note. It is one of the wiles of Satan, to take advantage of our outward condition, in that to plant the battery of his temptations. He is an adversary, no less watchful than spiteful; and the more ingenious he is to take advantage against us, the more industrious we must be to give him none. When he began to be hungry, and that in a wilderness, where there was nothing to be had, then the devil assaulted him. Note. Want and poverty are great temptations to discontent and unbelief, and the use of unlawful means for our relief, under pretence that "necessity has no law," and it is excused with this, that 'hunger will break through stone walls,' which yet is no excuse, for the law of God ought to be stronger to us than stone walls. Agur prays against poverty, not because it is an affliction and reproach, but because it is a temptation, "lest I be poor, and steal." Those therefore who are reduced to straits, have need to double their guard; it is better starve to death, than live and grow fat by sin. 2nd. Christ was lately declared to be the "Son of God," and here the devil tempts him to doubt of that; "if thou be the Son of God." Had not the devil known that the Son of God was to come into the world, he would not have said this; and had he not suspected that this was he, he would not have said it to him; nor durst he have said it, if Christ had not now drawn a veil over his glory, and if the devil had not now put on an impudent face. First. 'Thou hast now an occasion to question, whether thou be the Son of God, or no; for can it be, that the Son of God, who is heir of all things, should be reduced to such straits? If God were thy Father, he would not see thee starve, for all the beasts of the forest are his,' *Psalms* 1. 10, 12. 'It is true, there was a voice from heaven, "this is my beloved Son," but sure it was delusion, and thou wast imposed upon by it; for either God is not thy Father, or he is a very unkind one.' Note, 1. The great thing Satan aims at in tempting good people is, to overthrow their relation to God as a Father, and so to cut off their dependence on him, their duty to him, and their communion with him. The good Spirit, as the comforter of the brethren, witnesseth that they are "the children of God;" the evil spirit, as the accuser of the brethren, doth all he can to shake that testimony. 2. That outward afflictions, wants, and burthens, are the great arguments Satan useth to make the people of God question their sonship; as if afflictions could not consist with, when really they proceed from, God's fatherly love. Those know how to answer this temptation, who can say, with holy Job, 'Though he slay me, though he starve me, yet will I trust in him, and love him as a friend, even when he seems to come forth against me as an enemy.' 3. The devil aims to shake our faith in the Word of God, and bring us to question the truth of that. Thus he began with our first parents: 'Yea, hath God said so and so? sure he has not;' so here: 'Hath God said that thou art his beloved Son? Sure he did not say so; or if he did, it is not true.' We then give place to the devil when we question the truth of any word that God hath said; for his business, as the father of lies, is to oppose the true sayings of God. 4. The devil carries on his designs very much by possessing people with bad thoughts of God, as if he were unkind or unfaithful, and had forsaken or forgotten those who have ventured their all with him. He endeavoured to beget in our first parents a notion that God forbade them the tree of knowledge because he grudged them the benefit of it; and so here he insinuates to our Saviour that his Father had cast him off, and left him to shift for himself. But see how unreasonable this suggestion was, and how easily answered: if Christ seemed to be a mere man now, because he was hungry why was he not confessed to be more than a man, even the Son of God, when

iii. 15. The words "fulfil all righteousness" are explained by Dr. Campbell of "every institution," and by others "every ordinance." Dean Alford explains "righteousness" to mean "requirements of the law," but this may be objected to, for baptism was not one of the requirements of the law. We prefer, with Robinson and others, to interpret it of what is right, proper, or fitting. It was becoming and right in those who recognised the claims of the Lord, to manifest their spirit of obedience by appropriate outward actions.

iii. 16. The expression, "descending like a dove," even though St. Luke says "in a bodily shape" or appearance, may not mean that the form of a dove was assumed, as is generally taken for granted. As a dove might descend upon a person from the air, so the Holy Spirit visibly descended upon Jesus. The manner of the descent, and not the form which appeared, may alone be intended. The word for "lighting" is literally "remaining" or staying.

iv. 1. The next great event was the temptation, but we have no

for forty days he fasted, and was not an hungred. *Secondly*, 'Thou hast now an opportunity to shew that thou art the Son of God.' 'If thou be the Son of God,' prove it by this, 'command that these stones (a heap of which probably lay now before him) be made bread,' ver. 3. John Baptist said but the other day, that God can out of stones raise up children to Abraham, a Divine power therefore can, no doubt, out of stones make bread for those children; if therefore, thou hast that power, exert it now in a time of need for thyself. He doth not say, 'Pray to thy Father, that he would turn them into bread,' but 'Command it to be done; thy Father hath forsaken thee, set up for thyself, and be not beholden to him.' The devil is for nothing that is humbling, but every thing that is assuming; and gains his point, if he can but bring men off from their dependence upon God, and possess them with an opinion of their self-sufficiency.

2. See how his temptation was resisted and overcome. 1. Christ refused to comply with it. He would not command these stones to be made bread; not because he could not; his power, that soon after this turned water into wine, could have turned stones into bread, but he would not: and why would he not? At first view the thing appears justifiable enough; and the truth is, the more plausible a temptation is, and the greater appearance there is of good in it, the more dangerous it is. This matter would bear a dispute, but Christ was soon aware of the snake in the grass, and would not do any thing, *First*. That looked like questioning the truth of the voice he heard from heaven, or putting that upon a new trial, which was already settled. *Secondly*. That looked like distrusting his Father's care of him, or limiting him to one particular way of providing for him. *Thirdly*. That looked like setting up for himself, and being his own carver; or, *Fourthly*. That looked like gratifying Satan, by doing a thing at his motion. Some would have said, 'to give the devil his due, this was good counsel; but for those that wait upon God, to consult him, is more than his due; it is like inquiring of the god of Ekron, when there is a "God in Israel." 2nd. He was ready to reply to it, ver. 4: "he answered and said, it is written." This is observable, that Christ answered and baffled all the temptations of Satan, with "it is written." He is himself the eternal Word, and could have produced the mind of God, without having recourse to the writings of Moses, but he put honour upon the Scripture, and to set us an example, he appealed to what was written in the law; and he saith this to Satan, taking it for granted, that he knew well enough what was written. It is possible, that those who are the devil's children, may yet know very well what is written in God's book; the "devils believe and tremble." This method we must take, when at any time we are tempted to sin, resist and repel the temptation, with "it is written." "The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit," the only offensive weapon in all the Christian armoury; *Eph. vi. 17*, and we may say of it, as David of Goliath's sword, "none like that" in our spiritual conflicts. This answer, as all the rest, is taken out of the book of *Deuteronomy*, which signifies 'the second law,' and in which there is very little ceremonial; the Levitical sacrifices and purifications could not drive away Satan, though of Divine institution—much less holy water and the sign of the Cross, which are of human invention; but moral precepts and evangelical promises mixed with faith, these are mighty, through God, for the vanquishing of Satan. This is here quoted from *Deut. viii. 3*, where the reason given, why God fed the Israelites with manna, is, because he would teach them, that "man shall not live by bread alone;" this Christ applies to his own case: Israel was God's son, whom he "callesth out of Egypt," *Hos. xi. 1*, so was Christ, *ch. ii. 15*; Israel was then in a wilderness, Christ was so now, perhaps the same wilderness. Now, *First*, the devil would have him question his sonship, because he was in straits; 'no,' saith he, 'Israel was God's son, and a son he was very tender of, and whose manners he bore, (*Acts xiii. 18*), and yet he brought them into straits; and it follows there, *Deut. viii. 5*, "as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." Christ being a son, thus learns obedience. *Secondly*. The devil would have him to distrust his father's love and care; 'no,' saith he, 'that would be to do as Israel did, who, when they were in want, said, "is the Lord among us?" and "can he furnish a table in the wilderness? can he give bread?"' *Thirdly*. The devil would have him, as soon as he began to be hungry, presently to look out for supply; whereas God, for wise and holy ends, suffered Israel to hunger before he fed them, to humble them, and prove them. God will have his children, when they want, not only to wait on him, but to wait for him. *Fourthly*. The devil would have him to supply himself with bread; 'no,' saith Christ, 'what needs that? It is a point long since settled, and incontestably proved, that man may live without bread, as Israel in the wilderness lived forty years upon manna.' It is true, God in his providence ordinarily maintains men by "bread out of the earth," *Job xxviii. 5*; but he can, if he pleaseth, make use of other means to keep men alive; any "word proceeding out of the mouth of God," that is, any thing that God shall order and appoint for that end, will be as good a livelihood for man, as bread, and will maintain him as well; as we may have bread, and yet not be nourished, if God deny his blessing, *Hag. i. 6, 9*; *Mic. vi. 14*; for though bread is the staff of life, it is God's blessing that is the staff of bread; so we may want bread, and yet be nourished some other way. God sustained Moses and Elias without bread, and Christ himself just now for forty days; he sustained Israel with bread from heaven, angels' food; Elijah with bread sent miraculously by ravens, and another time with the widow's meal miraculously multiplied; therefore Christ need not turn stones into bread, but trust God to keep him alive some other way, now he is hungry, as he had done forty days before he hungred. Note, As in our greatest abundance we must not think to live without God, so in our greatest straits we must learn to live upon God; and when the fig tree doth not blossom, and the field yields no meat, when all ordinary means of succour and support are cut off, yet then we must "rejoice in the Lord;" then we must not think to command what we will, though contrary to his command, but must humbly pray for what he thinks fit to give us, and be thankful for the bread of our allowance, though it be a short allowance. Let us learn of Christ here, to be at God's finding, rather than at our own; and not to take any irregular courses for our supply, when our wants are never so pressing, *Ps. xxxvii. 3*. *Jehovah-jireh*, some way or other, "the Lord will provide." It is better live poorly upon the fruits of God's goodness, than live plentifully upon the products of our own sin.

Secondly. He tempted him to presume upon his Father's power and protection. See what a restless, unwearied adversary the devil is; if he fail in one assault, he tries another. Now in the second attempt, we may observe.

1. What the temptation was, and how it was managed. In general, finding Christ so confident of his Father's care of him, in point of nourishment, he endeavours to draw him to presume upon that care, in point of safety. Note, We are in danger of missing our way, both on the right hand, and on the left, and therefore must take heed, lest when we avoid one extreme, we be brought by the artifices of Satan to run into another; lest by overcoming our prodigality we fall into covetousness; nor are any extremes more dangerous, than those of despair and presumption, especially in the affairs of our souls. Some that have obtained a persuasion, that Christ is able and willing to save them from their sins, are then tempted to presume that he will save them in

their sins. Thus when people begin to be zealous in religion, Satan hurries them into bigotry and intemperate heats. Now in this temptation, we may observe, 1st. How he made way for it. He took Christ, not by force, and against his will, but moved him to go, and went along with him to Jerusalem. Whether Christ went upon the ground, and so went up the stairs to the top of the temple, or whether he went in the air, is uncertain; but so it was, that he was "set upon a pinnacle" or spire; 'upon the vane, so some; 'upon the battlements,' so others; 'upon the wing,' so the word is; 'of the temple.' Now observe, *First*. How submissive Christ was in suffering himself to be hurried thus, that he might let Satan do his worst, and yet conquer him. The patience of Christ here, as afterwards in his sufferings and death, is more wonderful than the power of Satan, or his instruments, for neither he nor they could have any power against Christ, but what was given them from above. How comfortable is it, that Christ, who let loose this power of Satan against himself, doth not in like manner let it loose against us, but restrains it, for "he knoweth our frame." *Secondly*. How subtle the devil was, in the choice of the place for his temptations. Intending to solicit Christ to an ostentation of his own power, and a vain-glorious presumption upon God's providence, he fixes him on a public place; in Jerusalem, a populous city, and the "joy of the whole earth;" in the temple, one of the wonders of the world, continually gazed upon with admiration by some one or other; there he might make himself remarkable, and be taken notice of by every body, and prove himself the Son of God, not, as he was urged in the former temptation, in the obscurities of a wilderness, but before multitudes, upon the most eminent stage of action. Observe, 1st. That Jerusalem is here called "the holy city;" for so it was in name and possession, and there was in it a holy seed, that was the substance thereof. Note, There is no city on earth so holy as to exempt and secure us from the devil and his temptations. The first Adam was tempted in the "holy garden," the second in the "holy city." Let us not therefore in any place be off our watch. Nay, the "holy city" is the place, where he doth with the greatest advantage and success tempt men to pride and presumption; but blessed be God, into the Jerusalem above, that "holy city," no unclean thing shall enter; there we shall be for ever out of temptation. 2nd. That he "set him upon a pinnacle of the temple," which, as Josephus describes it, (*Antiq. lib. xv. cap. 14*), was so very high, that it would make a man's head giddy to look down to the bottom. Note, Pinnacles of the temple are places of temptation; I mean, 1. High places are so; they are slippery places; advancement in the world makes a man a fair mark for Satan to shoot his fiery darts at. God casts down that he may raise up; the devil raiseth up, that he may cast down; therefore those that would take heed of falling, must take heed of climbing. 2. High places in the church are in a special manner dangerous. Those that excel in gifts, are in eminent stations, and have gained a great reputation, have need to keep humble, for Satan will be sure to aim at them, to puff them up with pride, and so they "fall into the condemnation of the devil." Those that stand high are concerned to stand fast. 2nd. How he moved it. "If thou be the Son of God," now shew thyself to the world, and prove thyself to be so, "cast thyself down," and then, *First*. Thou wilt be admired "as under the special protection of heaven," when they see thee receive no hurt by a fall from such a precipice, they will say (as the barbarous people did of Paul), that thou art a God. Tradition saith, that Simon Magus by this very thing attempted to prove himself a god, but his pretensions were disproved, for he fell down, and was miserably bruised. 'Nay, *Secondly*. Thou wilt be received, as coming "with a special commission from heaven." All Jerusalem will see and acknowledge, not only that thou art more than a man, but that thou art that messenger, that "angel of the covenant," that should "suddenly come to the temple," *Mal. iii. 1*; and from thence descend into the streets of the holy city, and thus the work of convincing the Jews will be cut short, and soon done. Observe, The devil said, "cast thyself down." The devil could not cast him down, though a little thing would have done it from the top of a spire. Note, The power of Satan is a limited power: "Hitherto he shall come, and no further." Yet if the devil had cast him down, he had not gained his point, that had been his suffering only, not his sin. Note, What ever real mischief is done us, it is of our own doing; the devil can but persuade, he cannot compel; he can but say, "cast thyself down," he cannot cast us down: every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and not forced, but enticed. Therefore let us not hurt ourselves, and then, blessed be God, no one else can hurt us, *Pr. ix. 12*. 3rd. How he backed this motion with a Scripture, "for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee." But "is Saul also among the prophets?" Is Satan so well versed in Scripture, as to be able to quote it so readily? It seems he is. Note, It is possible a man may have his head full of Scripture notions, and his mouth full of Scripture expressions, and yet his heart full of reigning enmity to God and all goodness. The knowledge which the devils have of the Scripture, increaseth both their mischievousness and their torment: never did the devil speak with more vexation to himself, than when he said to Christ, "I know thee who thou art." The devil would persuade Christ to throw himself down, in hopes he will be his own murderer, and there would be an end of him and his undertaking, which he looked upon with a jealous eye; and to encourage him to do it, tells him, there was no danger, the good angels would protect him, for so was the promise, *Ps. xci. 11*, "he shall give his angels charge over thee." Now in this quotation, *First*. There was something right: it is true, there is such a promise of the ministration of the angels, for the protection of the saints; the devil knows it by experience, for he finds his attempts against them fruitless, and he frets and rages at it, as he did at the hedge about Job, which he speaks of so sensibly, *Job i. 10*. He was also right in applying it to Christ, for to him all the promises of the protection of the saints primarily and eminently belong, and to them, in and through him: that promise, that "not a bone of theirs shall be broken," *Ps. xxiv. 20*, was fulfilled in Christ, *Jno. xix. 36*; the angels guard the saints for Christ's sake, *Rev. v. 6, 11*. *Secondly*. There was a great deal wrong in it, and perhaps the devil had a particular spite to this promise, and perverted it, because it often stood in his way, and baffled his mischievous designs against the saints. See here, 1st. How he misquoted it, and that was bad: the promise is, "they shall keep thee," but how? "in all thy ways;" not otherwise: if we go out of our way, out of the way of our duty, we forfeit the promise, and put ourselves out of God's protection. Now this word made against the tempter, and therefore he industriously left it out: if Christ had cast himself down, he had been out of his way, for he had no call so to expose himself. It is good for us upon all occasions to consult the Scriptures themselves, and not to take things upon trust, that we may not be imposed upon by those that maim and mangle the Word of God; we must do as the noble Bereans, that "searched the Scriptures daily." 2nd. How he misapplied it; and that was worse. Scripture is abused, when it is pressed to patronise sin, and when men thus wrest it to their own temptation, they do it to "their own destruction," *2 Pet. iii. 16*. This promise is firm and stands good, but the devil made an ill use of it, when he used it as an encouragement to presume upon the Divine care. Note, It is no new thing, for the grace of God to be turned into wantonness; and for men to take encouragement in sin, from the discoveries of God's good will to sinners: but

definite description of the locality, beyond the word "wilderness." However, from the expression "was led up," it may be presumed that this wilderness was the hilly region west of the Jordan valley. That it was among the mountains of Moab beyond the Jordan, as some have thought, is improbable. Tradition, and of somewhat ancient date, has fixed upon a place called Quarantana, not very far from Jericho, a high and precipitous mountain, with its perpendicular side facing the plain. Dr. Robinson speaks of it as an almost

perpendicular wall of rock, twelve or fifteen hundred feet above the plain, and having a chapel on its highest point. Dr. Sepp observes that the name, Quarantana, rests on the tradition that here our Lord spent forty days in fasting and prayer. The first time the name is met with is in A.D. 1112, in the life of a Spanish saint. In course of time the monks had and exhibited a chapel in the rock, wherein they said Jesus spent forty days and nights. There is a splendid view from Quarantana, but the surrounding region is desolate and uninhabited.

"shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound;" throw ourselves down, that the angels may bear us up? God forbid.

2. How Christ overcame this temptation; he resisted, and overcame it as he did the former, with "it is written." The devil's abusing Scripture did not prevent Christ from using it, but he presently urgeth, *Deu. vi. 16*, "thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." The meaning of this is not, "therefore thou must not tempt me," but, "therefore I must not tempt my Father." In the place whence it is quoted, it is in the plural number, "ye shall not tempt;" here it is singular, "thou shalt not." Note, We are then likely to get good by the Word of God, when we hear and receive general promises, as speaking to us in particular. Satan said "it is written," Christ saith, "it is written;" not that one Scripture contradicts another; God is one, and his Word one, and in one mind; but that is a promise, this is a precept, and therefore that is to be explained and applied by this: for Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture; and those that prophesy, that expound Scripture, must do it according to the proportion of faith, *Rom. xii. 6*, in consistence with practical godliness. If Christ should "cast himself down," it would be the tempting of God, *1st*. As it would be requiring a further confirmation of that which was so well confirmed. Christ was abundantly satisfied, that God was already his Father, and took care of him, and gave his angels a charge concerning him; and therefore to put it upon a new experiment, would be to tempt him, as the Pharisees tempted Christ, when they had so many signs on earth, they demanded a "sign from heaven;" this is limiting "the Holy One of Israel." 2nd. As it would be requiring a special preservation of him, in doing that which he had no call to. If we expect, that because God has promised not to forsake us, therefore he should follow us out of the way of our duty; that because he has promised to supply our wants, therefore he should humour us, and please our fancies; that because he has promised to keep us, we may wilfully thrust ourselves into danger, and may expect the desired end, without using the appointed means; this is presumption, this is tempting God. And it is an aggravation of the sin, that he is the Lord our God; it is an abuse of the privilege we have, in having him for our God; he has thereby encouraged us to trust him, but we are very ungrateful, if therefore we tempt him; it is contrary to our duty to him as our God: this is to affront him whom we ought to honour. Note, We must never promise ourselves any more than God has promised us.

Thirdly. He tempted him to the most black and horrid idolatry, with the proffer of "the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." And here we may observe,

1. How the devil made this push at our Saviour, ver. 8, 9. The worst temptation was reserved for the last. Note, Sometimes the saint's last encounter is with the sons of Anak, and the parting blow is the sorest; therefore whatever temptation we have been assaulted by, still we must prepare for worse; must be armed for all attacks with the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left. In this temptation, we may observe,

1st. What he "shewed him,—all the kingdoms of the world;" in order to this he took him to an "exceeding high mountain;" in hopes of prevailing, as Balak with Balaam, he changing his ground. The pinnacle of the temple is not high enough, the prince of the power of the air must have him further up into his territories. Some think this high mountain was on the other side Jordan, because there we find Christ next after the temptation, *Mat. i. 28, 29*. Perhaps it was mount Pisgah, from whence Moses, in communion with God, had all the kingdoms of Canaan shewed him. Hither the blessed Jesus was carried for the advantage of a prospect; as if the devil could shew him more of the world than he knew already, who made and governed it. From thence he might discover some of the kingdoms that lay about Judæa, though not "the glory of them;" but there was doubtless a juggle, and a delusion of Satan's in it; it is likely that which he shewed him was but a landscape, an airy representation in a cloud, such as that great deceiver could easily frame and put together; setting forth, in proper and lively colours, the glorious and splendid appearances of princes, and their robes and crowns, their retinue, equipage, and life-guards; the pomps of thrones, and courts, and stately palaces, the sumptuous buildings in cities, the gardens and fields about the country seats, with the various instances of their wealth, pleasure, and gaiety; so as might be most likely to strike the fancy, and excite the admiration and affection; such was this show, and his taking him up into a high mountain, was but to humour the thing, and to colour the delusion; in which yet the blessed Jesus did not suffer himself to be imposed upon, but saw through the cheat, only he permitted Satan to take his own way, that his victory over him might be the more illustrious. Hence observe concerning Satan's temptations, that, *First*. They often come in at the eye, that is blinded to the things it should see, and dazzled with the vanities it should be turned from. The first sin began in the eye, *Gen. iii. 6*. We have therefore need to make a covenant with our eyes, and to pray that God would "turn them away from beholding vanity." *Secondly*. That temptations commonly take rise from the world, and the things of it. The lust of the flesh and of the eye, with the pride of life, are the topics from which the devil fetcheth most of his arguments.

Thirdly. That it is a great cheat which the devil puts upon poor souls in his temptations. He deceives, and so destroys; he imposes upon men with shadows, and false colours; shews the world, and the glory of it, and hides from men's eyes that sin, and sorrow, and death, which stains the pride of all this glory; the cares and calamities that attend great possessions, and the thorns which crown themselves are lined with. *Fourthly*. That the "glory of the world" is the most charming temptation to the unthinking and unwary, and that by which men are most imposed upon. Laban's sons grudged "Jacob all his glory;" the "pride of life" is the most dangerous snare.

2nd. What "he said to him," ver. 9: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." See, *First*. How vain the promise was: "All things will I give thee." He seems to take it for granted, that in the former temptations he had in part gained his point, and proved that Christ was not the Son of God, because he had not given him those evidences of it which he demanded; so that here he looks upon him as a mere man. "Come," saith he, "it seems the God, whose son thou thinkest thyself to be, deserts thee, and starves thee, a sign he is not 'thy father; but, if thou wilt be ruled by me, I will provide better for thee than so; own me for thy father, and ask me a blessing, and 'all this will I give thee.'" Note, Satan makes an easy prey of men, when he can persuade them to think themselves abandoned of God. The fallacy of this promise lies in that—"all this will I give thee." And what was all that? It was but a map, a picture, a mere phantasm, that had nothing in it real or solid; and this he would give him, a goodly prize! yet such are Satan's proffers. Note, Multitudes lose the sight of that which is, by setting their eyes on that which is not. The devil's baits are all a sham, they are shows and shadows, with which he deceives them, or rather they deceive themselves. The nations of the earth had been long before promised to the Messiah; if he "be the Son of God," they belong to him. Satan pretends now to be a good angel, probably one of those that was set over kingdoms, and to have received a commission to deliver possession to him, according to promise. Note, We must take heed of receiving even that which God hath

promised, out of the devil's hand; we do so when we precipitate the performance by catching at it in a sinful way. *Secondly*. How vile the condition was: "If thou wilt fall down and worship me." Note, The devil is fond of being worshipped. All the worship which the heathen performed to their gods was directed to the devil, *Deu. xxxii. 17*, who is therefore called "the god of this world," *2 Cor. iv. 4*, *1 Cor. x. 20*. And fain would he draw Christ into his interests, and persuade him, now he set up for a teacher, to preach up the Gentile idolatry, and to introduce it again among the Jews, and then the nations of the earth would soon flock in to him. What temptation could be more hideous, more black? Note, It is possible the best of saints may be tempted to the worst of sins—especially when they are under the power of melancholy—as to atheism, blasphemy, murder, self-murder, and what not. It is their affliction; but while there is no consent to it, nor approbation of it, it is not their sin; Christ was tempted to worship Satan.

2. See how Christ put by the thrust, baffled the assault, and came off a conqueror. He rejected the proposal, *1st*. With an abhorrence and detestation: "Get thee hence, Satan." The two former temptations had something of colour, which would admit of a consideration, but this was so gross as not to bear a parley; it appears abominable at the first sight, and therefore is immediately rejected. If the best friend we have in the world should suggest such a thing as this to us, "Go, serve other gods," he must not be heard with patience, *Deu. xiii. 6, 8*. Some temptations have their wickedness written in their forehead, they are open beforehand; they are not to be disputed with, but rejected; "Get thee hence, Satan," away with it. I cannot bear the thought of it." While Satan tempted Christ to do himself a mischief, by casting himself down, though he yielded not, yet he heard it; but now the temptation flies in the face of God, he cannot bear it: "Get thee hence, Satan." Note, It is a just indignation which riseth at the proposal of any thing that reflects on the honour of God, and strikes at his crown. Nay, whatever is an abominable thing, which we are sure the Lord hates, we must thus abominate it; far be it from us that we should have any thing to do with it. Note, It is good to be peremptory in resisting temptation, and to stop our ears to Satan's charms. 2nd. With an argument fetched from Scripture. Note, In order to the strengthening of our resolutions against sin, it is good to see what a great deal of reason there is for those resolutions. The argument is very pat and to the purpose, taken from *Deu. vi. 13*, and *x. 20*, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Christ doth not dispute whether he were an angel of light, as he pretended, or no; but though he were, yet he must not be worshipped, because that is an honour due to God only. Note, It is good to make our answers to temptation as full and as brief as may be, so as not to leave room for objections. Our Saviour has recourse to the fundamental law in this case, which is indispensable, and universally obliging. Note, Religious worship is due to God only and must not be given to any creature; it is a flower of the crown which cannot be alienated; a branch of God's glory which he will not give to another; and which he would not give to his own Son, by obliging all men to "honour the Son, even as they honour the Father," if he had not been God, "equal to him, and one with him." Christ quotes this law concerning religious worship, and quotes it with application to himself: *First*. To shew that in his estate of humiliation, he was himself "made under this law;" though as God he was worshipped, yet as man he did worship God, both publicly and privately. He obligeth us to no more than what he was first pleased to oblige himself to. Thus it became him to "fulfil all righteousness." *Secondly*. To shew that the law of religious worship is of eternal obligation; and though he abrogated and altered many institutions of worship, yet this fundamental law of nature—that God only is to be worshipped—he came to ratify and confirm, and enforce upon us.

Lastly. We have here the end and issue of this combat, ver. 11. Though the children of God may be exercised with many and great temptations, yet God will not suffer them to be tempted above the strength which either they have, or he will put into them, *1 Cor. x. 13*. It is but for a season that they are in heaviness, through manifold temptations. Now the issue was glorious, and much to Christ's honour, for

First. The devil was baffled, and quitted the field: "Then the devil leaveth him;" forced to do so by the power that went along with that word of command, "Get thee hence, Satan." He made a shameful and inglorious retreat, and came off with disgrace; and the more daring his attempts had been, the more mortifying was the foil that was given him. *Magnus temen excidit ausis.*—The attempt, however, in which he failed, was daring. Then, when he had done his worst, had tempted him with "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," and found that he was not influenced by that bait, that he could not prevail with that temptation, with which he has overthrown so many thousands of the children of men, then he leaves him; then he gives him over as more than a man: since this did not move him, he despairs of moving him, and begins to conclude that he is "the Son of God," and it is in vain to tempt him any further. Note, If we resist the devil, he will flee from us; he will yield, if we keep our ground; as when Naomi saw that Ruth was steadfastly resolved, "she left off speaking to her." When the devil left our Saviour, he owned himself fairly beaten; his head was broken by the attempt he made to bruise Christ's heel. He left him because he had nothing in him, nothing to take hold of; he saw it was to no purpose, and so gave off. Note, The devil, though he is an enemy to all the saints, he is a conquered enemy. The captain of our salvation has defeated and disarmed him, we have nothing to do but to pursue the victory.

Secondly. The holy angels came and attended upon our victorious Redeemer. "Behold, angels came and ministered unto him." They came in a visible appearance, as the devil had done in the temptation. While the devil was making his assaults upon our Saviour, the angels stood at a distance, and their immediate attendance and ministrations was suspended, that it might appear he vanquished Satan in his own strength, and his victory might be the more illustrious; and that afterwards, when Michael makes use of his angels in fighting with the dragon and his angels, it is not because he needs them, or could not do his work without them, but because he is pleased to honour them so far as to employ them. One angel might have served to bring him food, but here are many attending him, to testify their respect to him, and their readiness to receive his commands. Behold this, it is worth taking notice of; 1. That as there is a world of wicked, malicious spirits that fight against Christ, and his church, and all particular believers, so there is a world of holy, blessed spirits engaged and employed for them. In reference to our war with devils, we may take abundance of comfort from our "communion with angels." 2. That Christ's victories are the angels' triumphs. The angels came to congratulate Christ's success, to rejoice with him, and to give him the glory due to his name; for that was sung with a loud voice in heaven, when the great dragon was cast out, *Rev. xii. 9, 10*: "Now is come salvation and strength." 3. That the angels "ministered" to the Lord Jesus, not only food, but whatever else he wanted after this great fatigue. See how the instances of Christ's condescension and humiliation were balanced with tokens of his glory. As when he was "crucified in weakness," yet he "lived

iv. 5. This Evangelist uses the phrase "holy city" of Jerusalem here and in chap. xxvii. 53. No other New Testament writer, except John in the Revelation, employs the expression. For "a pinnacle" it is better to say "the pinnacle," though some object to the word "pinnacle," and hence Dean Alford's version is "the cornice." The original word means a little wing, and might be used of the hem or fringe of a garment, or the extremity of anything. It is manifest that a lofty projection of some kind is meant, but we cannot define it

with certainty. The Temple was that which Herod had restored and beautified, to whose work we shall have occasion hereafter to refer from time to time, both in this and other Gospels.

iv. 8. We have seen under verse 1 that tradition has fixed on Mount Quarantana as the scene of our Lord's temptation. The same elevation is the one supposed to be intended here, but we have no real testimony either for or against; and we can only say that traditional instinct has fixed upon that portion of the country in which

by the power of God;" so when in weakness he was tempted, was hungry and weary, yet by his Divine power he commanded the ministration of angels. Thus the Son of Man did eat angels' food, and, like Elias, is fed by an angel in the wilderness, 1 *Kin.* xix. 4, 7. Note, Though God may suffer his people to be brought into wants and straits, yet he will take effectual care for their supply, will rather send angels to feed them, than see them perish. "Trust in the Lord, and verily thou shalt be fed," *Ps.* xxxvii. 3. Christ was thus succoured after the temptations, 1st. For his encouragement to go on in his undertaking, that he might see the powers of heaven siding with him, when he saw the powers of hell set against him. 2nd. For our encouragement to trust in him; for as he knew by experience what it was to "suffer, being tempted," and how hard that was, so he knew what it was to be succoured, being tempted, and how comfortable that was; and therefore we may expect, not only that he will sympathize with his tempted people, but that he will come in with seasonable relief to them; as our great Melchizedek, who met Abraham when he returned from the battle, and as the angels here, ministered to him.

Lastly, Christ having been thus signalized, and made great in the invisible world by the voice of the Father, the descent of the Spirit, his victory over devils, and his dominion over angels, he was doubtless qualified to appear in the visible world as the Mediator between God and man; for "consider how great this Man was."

12 Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; 13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; 16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. 17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

We have here an account of Christ's preaching in the synagogues of Galilee, for he came into the world to be a preacher; the "great salvation" which he wrought out, he himself began to publish, *Heb.* ii. 3, to shew how much his heart was upon it, and ours should be. Several passages in the other Gospels, especially that of St. John, are supposed, in the order of the story of Christ's life, to intervene between his temptation and his preaching in Galilee: his first appearance after his temptation, was when John Baptist pointed to him, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God," *Jno.* i. 29. After that he went up to Jerusalem to the passover, *Jno.* ii., discoursed with Nicodemus, *Jno.* iii., with the woman of Samaria, *Jno.* iv., and then returned into Galilee, and preached there. But Matthew having had his residence in Galilee, begins his story of Christ's public ministry with his preaching there, which here we have an account of. Observe,

I. The time: "When Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison," then he "went into Galilee," ver. 12. Note, The cry of the saints' sufferings comes up into the ears of the Lord Jesus. If John be cast into prison, Jesus hears it, takes cognizance of it, and steers his course accordingly; he remembers the bonds and afflictions that abide his people. Observe,

First, Christ did not go into the country, till he heard of John's imprisonment; for he must have time given him to "prepare the way of the Lord," before the Lord himself appear. Providence wisely ordered it, that John should be eclipsed before Christ shone forth; otherwise the minds of people would have been distracted between the two; one would have said, 'I am of John,' and another, 'I am of Jesus.' John must be Christ's harbinger, but not his rival. The moon and stars are lost when the sun riseth. John had done his work by the baptism of repentance, and then he is laid aside. The witnesses were slain when they had finished their testimony, and not before, *Rev.* xi. 7.

Secondly, He did go into the country as soon as he heard of John's imprisonment; not only to shift for his own safety, knowing that the Pharisees in Judaea were as much enemies to him as Herod was to John, but to supply the want of John Baptist, and to build upon the good foundation he had laid. Note, God will not leave himself without witness, nor his church without guides; when he removes one useful instrument, he can raise up another, for he has the residue of the Spirit, and he will do it, if he has work to do. 'Moses, my servant, is dead, John is cast into prison; now, therefore, Joshua arise, Jesus arise.'

II. The place where he preached: "In Galilee," a remote part of the country, that lay furthest from Jerusalem, and was there looked upon with contempt, as rude and boorish. The inhabitants of that country were reckoned stout men, cut out for soldiers; but not polite men, or cut out for scholars. Thither Christ went, there he set up the standard of his Gospel; and in this, as in other things, he "humbled himself." Observe,

First, The particular city he chose for his residence; not Nazareth, where he had been bred up; no, he left Nazareth; particular notice is taken of that, ver. 13; and with good reason did he leave Nazareth; for the men of that city "thrust him out" from among them, *Lu.* iv. 29. He made them his first, and a very fair, offer of his service, but they rejected him and his doctrine, and were filled with indignation at him and it; and therefore he left Nazareth, and shook off the dust of his feet for a testimony against them there, that would not have him to teach them. Nazareth was the first place that refused Christ, and was therefore refused by him. Note, It is just with God, to take the Gospel and the means of grace from those that slight them, and thrust them away. Christ will not stay long where he is not welcome. Unhappy Nazareth! "If thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace," how well had it been for thee! "But now they are hid from thine eyes." But he "came and dwelt in Capernaum," which was a city of Galilee, but many miles distant from Nazareth, a great city, and of much resort. It is said here to be "on the sea coast," not the great sea, but the sea of Tiberias, an inland water, called also "the lake of Genesaret." Close by the falling of Jordan into this sea stood Capernaum, in the tribe of Naphtali, but bordering upon Zebulun;

either Christ came, and here he dwelt. Some think his father Joseph had a habitation here; others that he took a house or lodgings at least; and some think it more than probable, that he dwelt in the house of Simon Peter; however, here he fixed, not constantly, for "he went about doing good;" but this was for some time his head-quarters, what little rest he had was here, here he had a place, though not a place of his own, to lay his head on; and at Capernaum, it should seem, he was welcome, and met with better entertainment than he had at Nazareth. Note, If some reject Christ, yet others will receive him, and bid him welcome. Capernaum is glad of Nazareth's leaving. If Christ's own countrymen be not gathered, yet he will be glorious. "And thou, Capernaum, hast now a day of it; thou art now lifted up to heaven, be wise for thyself, and know the time of thy visitation."

Secondly, The prophecy that was fulfilled in this, ver. 14—16. It is quoted out of *Isa.* ix. 1, 2, but with some variation. The prophet in that place is foretelling a greater darkness of affliction to befall the contempters of Emmanuel, than befell the countries there mentioned, either in their first captivity under Benhadad, which was but light, 1 *Kin.* xv. 20, or in their second captivity under the Assyrian, which was much heavier, 2 *Kin.* xv. 29. The punishment of the Jewish nation for rejecting the Gospel should be sorer than either; see *Isa.* viii. 21, 22: for those captivated places had some reviving in their bondage, and saw a great light again, *Isa.* ix. 2. This is Isaiah's sense; but the Scripture has many fulfillings; and the evangelist here takes only the latter clause, which speaks of the return of the light of liberty and prosperity to those countries that had been in the darkness of captivity, and applies it to the appearing of the Gospel among them. The places are spoken of, ver. 15: "The land of Zebulun" is rightly said to be "by the sea coast;" for Zebulun was a "haven of ships," and "rejoiced" in her "going out" *Gen.* xlix. 13; *Deu.* xxxiii. 18. Of Naphtali, it had been said, that he should "give goodly words," *Gen.* xlix. 21, and should be "satisfied with favour," *Deu.* xxxiii. 23, for from him began the Gospel—"goodly words" indeed, and such as bring to a soul God's satisfying favour. The country beyond Jordan is mentioned likewise, for there we sometimes find Christ preaching, and Galilee of the Gentiles, the upper Galilee to which the Gentiles resorted for traffic, and were mingled with the Jews; which intimates a kindness in reserve for the poor Gentiles. When Christ came to Capernaum, the Gospel came to all those places round about, such diffusive influences did the Sun of Righteousness cast. Now concerning the inhabitants of these places, observe, 1. The posture they were in before the Gospel came among them, ver. 16: they were "in darkness." Note, Those that are without Christ, are in the dark, nay, they are darkness itself; as the darkness that "was upon the face of the deep." Nay, they were "in the region and shadow of death," which notes not only great darkness, as the grave is a land of darkness, but great danger. A man that is desperately sick, and not likely to recover, is in the "valley of the shadow of death," though not quite dead; so the poor people were in the borders of damnation, though not yet damned, dead in law. And, which is worst of all, they were sitting in this condition. Sitting is a continuing posture; where we sit, we mean to stay; they were in the dark, and likely to be so, despairing to find the way out; and it is a contented posture; they were in the dark, and they loved darkness, they chose it rather than light; they were willingly ignorant. Their condition was sad; it is still the condition of many great and mighty nations, that are to be thought of, and prayed for, with pity. But their condition is more sad, who sit in darkness in the midst of Gospel light. He that is in the dark because it is night, may be sure the sun will shortly arise: but he that is in the dark, because he is blind, will not so soon have his eyes opened. We have the light, but what will that avail us, if we be not "light in the Lord?" 2. The privilege they enjoyed when Christ and his Gospel came among them, as great a reviving as ever light was to a benighted traveller. Note, When the Gospel comes, light comes; when it comes to any place, when it comes to any soul, it makes day there, *Jno.* iii. 19 *Lu.* i. 78, 79. Light is discovering, it is directing; so is the Gospel. It is a "great light," noting the clearness and evidence of Gospel revelations; not like the light of a candle, but the light of the sun, when he goes forth in his strength. Great in comparison with the light of the law, the shadows of which were now done away. It is a "great light," for it discovers great things, and of vast consequence; it will last long, and spread far; and it is a growing light, intimated in that word, it is "sprung up." It was but spring of day with them; now the day dawned, which afterwards shone more and more. The Gospel kingdom, like a grain of mustard seed, or the morning light, was small in its beginnings, gradual in its growth, but great in its perfection. Observe, The light sprung up to them; they did not go to seek it, but were prevented with the blessings of this goodness. It came upon them ere they were aware, at the time appointed, by the disposal of Him who "commandeth the morning," and "causeth the day-spring to know its place, that it may take hold of the ends of the earth," *Job* xxxviii. 12, 13.

III. The text he preached upon, ver. 17: "From that time," that is, from the time of his coming into Galilee, into the land of Zabulon and Nephthalim, "from that time he began to preach." He had been preaching before this in Judaea, and had made and baptized many disciples, *Jno.* iv. 1; but his preaching was not so public and constant as now it began to be. The work of the ministry is so great and awful, that it is fit to be entered upon by steps and gradual advances. The subject Christ dwelt upon now in his preaching, and it was indeed the sum and substance of all his preaching, was the very same that John had preached upon, *ch.* iii. 2, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" for the Gospel is the same for substance, under various dispensations; the commands the same, and the reasons to enforce them the same; an "angel from heaven" dares not "preach any other Gospel," *Gal.* i. 8, and will preach this, for it is the "everlasting Gospel." "Fear God," and, by repentance, "give honour to him," *Rev.* xiv. 6, 7. Christ put a great respect upon John's ministry, when he preached to the same purpose that he had preached before him. By this he shewed that John was his messenger and ambassador, for when he brought the errand himself, it was the same that he had sent by him. Thus did God confirm the word of his messengers, *Isa.* xlv. 26. The Son came on the same errand that the servants came on, *ch.* xxi. 37, to seek fruit, "fruits meet for repentance." Christ had lain in the bosom of the Father, and could have preached sublime notions of divine and heavenly things, that should have alarmed and amazed the learned world; but he pitcheth upon this old plain text, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

First, This he preached first upon; he began with this. Ministers must not be ambitious of broaching new opinions, framing new schemes, or coining new expressions, but must content themselves with plain, practical things; with the word that is high us, even in our mouth, and in our heart: we need not go up to heaven, or down to the deep, for matter or language in our preaching. As John prepared Christ's way, so Christ prepared his own, and made way for the further discoveries he designed with the doctrine of repentance. If any man will do this part of his will, he shall know more of his doctrine, *Jno.* vii. 17.

Secondly, This he preached often upon; wherever he went this was his subject, and neither he nor his followers ever reckoned it worn threadbare, as those would have done that have itching ears, and are fond of novelty and variety

the event described took place. With regard to the nature of the event, there is room for a difference of opinion. Either the devil wrought a miracle of the most extraordinary character or he did not. The common view recognises "the supernatural character of the vision," and the power of Satan "to extend preternaturally for a moment our Lord's range of vision." If this is conceded, the devil can work real miracles, which it may be perilous to admit; we do not add that it savours of impiety to suggest that Satan wrought

a real miracle upon the Lord Jesus. On the whole, therefore, we prefer to think that the tempter pointed out the fair and glorious scene of hill, valley, and plain, of forest, river, and pasture, with peaceful and industrious hamlets, and said, in effect, "Such is an epitome of the wide world; let the mind's eye range over its surface, and realise its glory: all shall be thine if thou wilt worship me." The Greek text uses no word which requires us to believe the kingdoms were shown as a panorama, or that the eyesight of the

more than that which is truly edifying. Note, That which has been preached and heard before, may yet very profitably be preached and heard again; but then it should be preached and heard better, and with new affections; what Paul had said before, he said again, "weeping," *Phil. iii. 1, 18*.

Thirdly. This he preached as Gospel: "Repent," review your ways, and return to yourselves." Note, The doctrine of repentance is right Gospel doctrine. It was not only the austere Baptist, that was looked upon as a melancholy morose man, but the sweet and gracious Jesus, whose lips dropped as a honeycomb, that preached repentance; for it is an unspeakable privilege that room is left for repentance.

Fourthly. The reason is still the same: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" for it was not reckoned to be fully come, till the pouring out of the Spirit after Christ's ascension. John had preached the kingdom of heaven at hand above a year before this; but now it was so much nearer, the argument was so much the stronger; now is the "salvation nearer," *Rom. xiii. 11*. We should be so much the more quickened to our duty, "as we see the day approaching," *Heb. x. 25*.

18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw

two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. 20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. 21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. 22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.



SEA OF GALILEE.

When Christ began to preach, he began to gather disciples, that should now be the hearers, and hereafter the preachers of his doctrine, that should now be witnesses of his miracles, and hereafter concerning them. Now in these verses we have an account of the first disciples that he called into fellowship with himself. And this was an instance.

First. Of effectual calling to Christ. In all his preaching he gave a common call to all the country, but in this he gave a special and particular call to those that were given him by the Father. Let us see and admire the power of Christ's grace, own his Word to be the rod of his strength, and wait upon him for those powerful influences which are necessary to the efficacy of the Gospel call, those distinguishing influences. All the country was called, but those were "called out," were "redeemed from among men." Christ was so manifested to them, as he was not manifested unto the world.

Secondly. It was an instance of ordination and appointment to the work of the ministry. When Christ, as a teacher, set up his great school, one of his first works was to appoint ushers, or under-masters, to be employed in teaching work. Now he began to give gifts unto men, to put the treasure into earthen vessels. It was an early instance of his care for his church. Now we may observe here.

I. *Where they were called:* by the "sea of Galilee," where Jesus was walking; Capernaum standing near that sea. Concerning this sea of Tiberias, the Jews have a saying, "That of all the seven seas that God made, he made choice of none but this sea of Gennesaret;" which is very applicable to Christ's choice of it, to honour it, as he often did, with his presence and miracles. Here, on the banks of the sea, Christ was walking for contemplation, as Isaac in the field; hither he went to call disciples; not to Herod's court, for few mighty or noble are called, not to Jerusalem, among the chief priests and the elders, but to the sea of Galilee: surely Christ sees not as men see. Not but that the same power which effectually called Peter and Andrew would have wrought upon Annas and Caiaphas, for with God nothing is impossible, but, as in other things, so in his converse and attendance, he would humble himself, and shew that God hath "chosen the poor of this world." Galilee was a remote part of the nation, the inhabitants were less cultivated and refined, their very language was broad and uncouth to the curious, their "speech bewrayed them." Those that were picked up at the sea of Galilee had not the advantages and improvements, no, not of the more polished Galileans, yet thither Christ went to call his apostles, that were to be the prime ministers of state in his kingdom, for he "chooseth the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."

II. *Who they were.* We have an account of the call of two pair of brothers in these verses, Peter and Andrew, James and John; the two former, and, probably, the latter also, had had acquaintance with Christ before, *Jno. i. 40, 41*, but were not till now called into a close and constant attendance upon him. Note, Christ brings poor souls by degrees into fellowship with himself. They had been disciples of John, and so were the better disposed to follow Christ. Note, Those that have submitted to the discipline of repentance shall be welcome to the joys of faith. We may observe concerning them.

First. That they were brothers. Note, It is a blessed thing, when those that are "kinsmen according to the flesh" (as the apostle speaks, *Rom. ix. 3*), are brought together into a spiritual alliance to Jesus Christ. It is the honour and comfort of a house, when those that are of the same family are of God's family.

Secondly. That they were fishers: and being fishers, 1. They were poor men; if they had had estates, or any considerable stock in trade, they would not have made it their trade, however they might have made it their recreation. Note, Christ doth not despise the poor, and therefore we must not; the poor are evangelized, and the Fountain of honour sometimes gives more abun-

dant honour to that part which most lacked. 2. They were unlearned men; not bred up to books, or literature, as Moses was, who was conversant with all the learning of the Egyptians. Note, Christ sometimes chooseth to endow those with the gifts of grace that have least to shew of the gifts of nature. Yet this will not justify the bold intrusion of ignorant and unqualified men upon the work of the ministry; extraordinary gifts of knowledge and utterance are not now to be expected, but requisite abilities must be obtained in an ordinary way, and without a competent measure of these, none are to be admitted in that service. 3. They were men of business, that had been bred up to labour. Note, Diligence in an honest calling is pleasing to Christ, and no hindrance to a holy life. Moses was called from keeping sheep, and David from following the ewes, to eminent employments. Idle people lie more open to the temptations of Satan than to the calls of God. 4. They were men that were accustomed to hardships and hazards; the fisher's trade, more than any other, is laborious and perilous. Fishermen must be often wet and cold; they must watch, and wait, and toil, and be often in "perils by waters." Note, Those that have learned to bear hardships, and to run hazards, are best prepared for the fellowship and discipleship of Jesus Christ. Good soldiers of Christ must "endure hardness."

III. *What they were doing.* Peter and Andrew were then using their nets, they were fishing; and James and John were "mending their nets," which was an instance of their industry and their good husbandry; they did not go to their father for money to buy new nets, but took pains to mend their old ones. What we have, it is commendable to make it go as far, and last as long, as may be. James and John were with their father Zebedee, ready to assist him, and make his business easy to him. Note, It is a happy and hopeful presage to see children careful of their parents, and dutiful to them. Observe.

First. They were all employed, all very busy, and none idle. Note, When Christ comes, it is good to be found doing. "Am I in Christ?" is a very needful question for us to ask ourselves; and, next to that, "Am I in my calling?"

Secondly. They were differently employed: two of them were fishing, and two of them mending their nets. Note, Ministers should be always employed, either in teaching or studying; they may always find themselves something to do, if it be not their own fault; and "mending their nets" is, in its season, as necessary work as fishing.

IV. *What the call was,* ver. 19: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." They had followed Christ before as ordinary disciples, *Jno. i. 37*, but so they might follow Christ, and follow their calling too; therefore they were called to a more close and constant attendance, and must leave their calling. Note, Even those that have been called to follow Christ, yet have need to be called to follow on, and to follow nearer, especially when they are designed for the work of the ministry. Observe.

First. What Christ intended them for: "I will make you fishers of men." This alludes to their former calling. Let them not be proud of the new honour designed them, they are still but fishers; let them not be afraid of the new work cut out for them, for they have been used to fishing, and fishers they are still. It was usual with Christ to speak of spiritual and heavenly things, under such allusions, and in such expressions, as took rise from common things that offered themselves to his view. David was called from feeding sheep to feed God's Israel; and when he is a king, is a shepherd. Note, 1. Ministers are "fishers of men," not to destroy them, but to save them, by bringing them into another element. They must fish, not for wrath, wealth, honour, and preferment, to gain them to themselves, but for souls, to gain them to Christ. They "watch for your souls," *Heb. xiii. 17*, and "seek not yours, but you," *2 Cor. xii. 4-16*. 2. It is Jesus Christ that makes them so. "I will make you

Saviour looked on them. The verb "showeth" applies to both the mind and the eye, as will be seen by referring to *Matt. xvi. 21*; *Mark xiv. 15*; *John x. 32*; *James ii. 18, iii. 13*; *Rev. xxii. 1, 6, 8, &c.* Like our word "indicate," it has several shades of meaning.

iv. 12. The margin has "delivered up," which is correct, and the text, "cast into prison," is a mistranslation. The word "Jesus" is regarded as an addition by sundry modern critics, who substitute the pronoun "he" for it. But it is a most ancient reading, and

occurs even in the Syriac, both in the common or Peshito text, and in that named after Dr. Cureton. The Latin Vulgate also has it, but not the Ethiopic nor the Coptic versions. The expression, "he departed into Galilee," probably means he withdrew or removed thither from Judea, where he was when John was deprived of liberty.

iv. 13. "Leaving Nazareth" may imply that our Lord first located himself there after reaching Galilee. Capernaum was upon the

fishers of men." It is he that qualifies men for this work, calls them to it, authorizeth them in it, and gives them success in it; gives them commission to fish for souls, and wisdom to win them. Those ministers are likely to have comfort in their work that are thus made by Jesus Christ.

Secondly, What they must do in order to this: "Follow me." They must separate themselves to a diligent attendance on him, and set themselves to an humble imitation of him, must follow him as their leader. Note, 1. Those whom Christ employs in any service for him, it is requisite they be first fitted and qualified for it. 2. Those that would preach Christ must first learn Christ, and learn of him. How can we expect to bring others to the knowledge of Christ, if we do not know him well ourselves? 3. Those that would get an acquaintance with Christ must be diligent and constant in their attendance on him. The apostles were prepared for their work by companying with Christ all the time that he went in and out among them, *Acts i. 21*. There is no learning comparable to that which is got by following Christ. Joshua, by ministering to Moses, is fitted to be his successor. 4. Those that are to fish for men, must therein follow Christ, and do it as he did, with diligence, faithfulness, and tenderness; Christ is the great pattern for preachers, and they ought to be "workers together with him."

V. *What was the success of this call.* Peter and Andrew "straightway left their nets," *ver. 20*, and James and John "immediately left the ship, and their father," *ver. 22*, and they all "followed him." Note, Those that would follow Christ aright, must leave all to follow him. Every Christian must leave all in affection, sit loose to all, must "hate father and mother," *Lu. xiv. 26*, must love them less than Christ, must be ready to part with his interest in them, rather than with his interest in Jesus Christ; but those that are devoted to the work of the ministry, are in a special manner concerned to disentangle themselves from all the affairs of this life, that they may give themselves wholly to that work which requires the whole man. Now,

First, This instance of the power of the Lord Jesus gives us a good encouragement to depend upon the sufficiency of his grace. How strong and effectual is his word! He speaks, and it is done. The same power goes along with this word of Christ, "Follow me," that went along with that word, "Lazarus, come forth," a power to make willing, *Ps. cx. 3*.

Secondly, This instance of the pliability of the disciples gives us a good example of obedience to the command of Christ. Note, It is the good property of all Christ's faithful servants, to come when they are called, and to follow their Master wherever he leads them. They objected not their present employments, their engagements to their families, the difficulties of the service they were called to, or their own unfitness for it; but being called, they obeyed, and, like Abraham, went out, "not knowing whither they went," but knowing very well whom they followed. James and John "left their father;" it is not said what became of him; their mother Salome was a constant follower of Christ. No doubt their father Zebedee was a believer, but the call to follow Christ fastened on the young ones: youth is the learning age, and the labouring age. The priests ministered in the prime of their time.

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. 24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. 25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan.

See here, I. *What an industrious preacher Christ was*; he "went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom." Observe,

First, What Christ preached: "The Gospel of the kingdom." The kingdom of heaven, that is, of grace and glory, is emphatically "the kingdom," the kingdom that was "now to come;" that kingdom that shall survive, as it doth surpass, all the kingdoms of the earth. "The Gospel" is the charter of that kingdom, containing the King's coronation oath, by which he hath graciously obliged himself to pardon, protect, and save the subjects of that kingdom; and their oath of allegiance, by which they oblige themselves to observe his statutes, and seek his honour; this is "the Gospel of the kingdom;" this Christ was himself the preacher of, that our faith in it might be confirmed.

Secondly, Where he preached: "In the synagogues;" not there only, but there chiefly, because those were the places of concourse, where wisdom was to "lift up her voice," *Pr. i. 21*; because they were places of concourse for religious worship, and there it was to be hoped people's minds would be prepared to receive the Gospel; and there the Scriptures of the Old Testament were read, the exposition of which would easily introduce the "Gospel of the kingdom."

Thirdly, What pains he took in preaching: he "went about all Galilee, teaching." He might have issued out a proclamation, to summon all to come in to him, but to shew his humility, and the condescensions of his grace, he goes to them; for he "wants to be gracious," and comes to "seek and save." Josephus saith, there were above two hundred cities and towns in Galilee, and all, or most of them, Christ visited. He "went about doing good." Never was there such an itinerant preacher, such an indefatigable one as Christ was; he went a-begging from town to town to beseech poor sinners to be reconciled to God. This is an example to ministers to lay out to do good, and to "be instant" and constant, "in season and out of season," to preach the Word.

II. *What a powerful physician Christ was.* He went about, not only teaching, but healing, and both with his Word, that he might magnify that, above all his Name. He "sent his Word and healed them." Now observe,

First, What diseases he cured: "all" without exception. He healed "all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease." There are diseases that are called the reproach of physicians, that are obstinate to all the methods they can prescribe, but even those were the glory of this Physician, for he healed them all, though never so inveterate. His Word was the true *panpharmakon*, "all heal." Three general words are here used to intimate this; he healed

"every sickness," *πανση*, as blindness, lameness, fever, dropsy; "every disease," or languishing, *μαλακας*, as fluxes and consumptions; and all "torments," *βασανισμους*, gout, stone, convulsions, and such like torturing distempers; whether the disease was acute or chronic, whether it was a racking or a wasting disease, none was too bad, none too hard, for Christ to heal with a word's speaking. Three particular diseases are instanced in it: the "palsy," which is the greatest weakness of the body; "lunacy," which is the greatest malady of the mind; and "possession of the devil," which is the greatest misery and calamity of both; yet Christ healed all, for he is the sovereign Physician both of soul and body, and has command of all diseases.

Secondly, What patients he had. Such a physician, that was so easy of access, so sure of success, that cured immediately, without either a painful suspense and expectation, or such painful remedies as are worse than the disease, that cured *gratis*, and took no fees, could not but have abundance of patients. See here what flocking there was to him from all parts; great multitudes of people came, not only "from Galilee," and the country about, but even "from Jerusalem, and from Judæa," that lay a great way off, for "his fame went throughout all Syria;" not only among all the people of the Jews, but among the neighbour nations, which, by the report that now spread far and near concerning him, would be prepared to receive his Gospel, when afterwards it should be brought them. This is given as the reason why such multitudes came to him, because "his fame" spread so as it did. Note, What we hear of Christ from others, should invite us to him. The queen of Sheba was brought by the fame of Solomon to give him a visit. The voice of fame is, "Come and see." Christ both taught and healed; those that came for cures, met with instructions concerning the things that belonged to their peace. It is well if any thing will bring people to Christ, and those that come to him will find more with him than they expected. These Syrians, like Naaman the Syrian, coming to be healed of their diseases, many of them became converts, *2 Kin. v. 15-17*. They sought health for the body, and obtained the salvation of the soul; like Saul, that sought the asses, and found the kingdom. Yet it appeared by the issue that many of them who rejoiced in Christ as a healer, forgot him as a teacher.

Now concerning the cures which Christ wrought, let us once for all observe the miracle, the mercy, and the mystery of them.

First, The miracle of them; they were wrought in such a manner as plainly spake them the immediate products of a Divine and supernatural power; and they were God's seal to his commission. Nature could not do these things, it was the God of nature; the cures were many, of diseases incurable by the art of the physician, of persons that were strangers, of all ages and conditions; the cures were wrought openly, before many witnesses, in mixed companies of persons that would have denied the matter of fact, if they could have had any colour for it: no cure ever failed or was afterwards called in question; they were wrought speedily, and not (as cures by natural causes) gradually; they were perfect cures, and wrought with a word's speaking; all which proves him "a teacher come from God," for otherwise none could have done the works that he did, *Jno. iii. 2*. He appeals to these as credentials, *ch. xi. 4, 5*; *Jno. v. 36*. It was expected that the Messiah should work miracles, *Jno. vii. 31*, miracles of this nature, *Isa. xxxv. 5, 6*, and we have this proof beyond dispute, of his being the Messiah; never was there any man that did thus; and therefore his healing and his preaching generally went together, for the former confirmed the latter; thus here he began "to do and to teach," *Acts i. 1*.

Secondly, The mercy of them. The miracles that Moses wrought to prove his mission, were most of them plagues and judgments, to intimidate the terror of that dispensation, though from God; but the miracles that Christ wrought were most of them cures, and all of them (except the cursing of the barren fig tree) blessings and favours; for the Gospel dispensation is founded and built up in love, and grace, and sweetness; and the management, such as tends not to affright, but allures us to obedience. Christ designed by his cures to win upon people, and to ingratiate himself and his doctrine into their minds, and so to draw them with the bands of love, *Hos. xi. 4*. The miracle of them proved his doctrine "a faithful saying," and convinced men's judgments; the mercy of them proved it "worthy of all acceptance," and wrought upon their affections. They were not only great works, but good works, that he shewed them from his Father, *Jno. x. 32*; and this goodness was intended "to lead men to repentance," *Rom. ii. 4*, as also to shew, that kindness, and beneficence, and doing good to all, to the utmost of our power and opportunity, is an essential branch of that holy religion which Christ came into the world to establish.

Thirdly, The mystery of them. Christ, by curing bodily diseases, intended to shew that his great errand into the world was to cure spiritual maladies. He is the "Sun of Righteousness" that "ariseth with this healing under his wings." As the converter of sinners, he is "the physician of souls," and has taught us to call him so, *ch. ix. 12, 13*. Sin is the sickness, disease, and torment of the soul; Christ came to take away sin, and so to heal these. And the particular stories of the cures Christ wrought, may not only be applied spiritually, by way of allusion and illustration, but, I believe, are very much intended to reveal to us spiritual things, and to set before us the way and method of Christ's dealing with souls in their conversion and sanctification; and those cures are recorded, that were most significant and instructive this way; and they are therefore so to be explained and improved, to the honour and praise of that glorious Redeemer, who "forgiveth all our iniquities," and so "healeth all our diseases."

CHAPTER V.

This chapter and the two that follow it are a sermon, a famous sermon, the sermon upon the mount; it is the longest and fullest continued discourse of our Saviour's that we have upon record in all the Gospels. It is a practical discourse, there is not much of the *credenda* of Christianity in it,—the things to be believed, but it is wholly taken up with the *agenda*,—the things to be done; these Christ began with in his preaching, for if any man will "do his will," he shall "know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." The circumstances of the sermon being accounted for, *ver. 1, 2*, the sermon itself follows, the scope of which is, not to fill our heads with notions, but to guide and regulate our practice. I. He proposeth blessedness as the end, and gives us the character of those who are entitled to blessedness, (very different from the sentiments of a vain world,) in eight beatitudes, which may justly be called paradoxes, *ver. 3-12*. II. He prescribes duty as the way, and gives us standing rules of that duty. He directs his disciples, 1. To understand what they are, "the salt of the earth, and the lights of the world," *ver. 13-17*. 2. To understand what they have to do: they are to be governed by the moral law. Here is, 1st. A general ratification of the law, and a recommendation of it to us as our rule, *ver. 17-20*. 2nd. A particular rectification of divers mistakes, or rather a reformation of divers wilful gross corruptions, which the scribes and Pharisees had introduced in their exposition of the law, and an authentic explication of divers branches that most needed to be explained and vindicated, *ver. 20*. Particularly here is an explication, 1st. Of the sixth commandment, which forbids murder, *ver. 21-26*. 2nd. Of the seventh commandment, against adultery, *ver. 27-32*. 3rd. Of the third commandment, *ver. 33-37*. 4th. Of the law of retaliation, *ver. 38-42*. 5th. Of the law of brotherly love, *ver. 43-48*. And the scope of all this is to shew that the law is spiritual.

shore of the Sea of Tiberias, or Gennesareth, a large fresh-water lake in the course of the Jordan, which flows directly through it. It is said that "Capernaum by the sea" was on the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim, two tribes of Israel, whose domains touched towards the northern end of the lake. There have been considerable discoveries on the site of Capernaum, which had been practically forgotten.

iv. 15. Several districts are mentioned here:—1, "the land of

Zabulon;" 2, "the land of Nephthalim;" 3, "the way of the sea," or the region adjacent to the lake, along the whole western shore of which there was a high road, with important towns and villages; 4, "beyond Jordan," or the tract of country east of the Jordan and the lake; 5, "Galilee of the Gentiles," or Upper Galilee, towards Tyre and Sidon, where a mixed population was resident.

iv. 18. There are prodigious quantities of fish in the Sea of Galilee even now, and the capture of them requires scarcely any skill what-



ND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

We have here a general account of this sermon.

The Preacher was our Lord Jesus, the Prince of preachers, the great Prophet of his church, who came into the world to be the light of the world. The prophets and John, had done virtuously in preaching, but Christ "excelled them all." He is the eternal Wisdom, that lay in the bosom of the Father before all worlds, and perfectly knew his will, *Jno. i. 18*; and he is the eternal Word, by whom he has in these last days spoken to us. The many miraculous cures Christ wrought in Galilee, which we read of in the close of the foregoing chapter, were intended to make way for this sermon, and to dispose people to receive instructions from one, in whom there appeared so much of a Divine power and goodness; and probably this sermon was the summary or rehearsal of what he had preached up and down in the synagogues of Galilee. His text was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This is a sermon upon the former part of that text, shewing, what it is to "repent;" it is to reform, both in judgment and practice; and he here tells us wherein, in answer to that question, *Mal. iii. 7*: "Wherein shall we return?" He afterwards preached upon the latter part of the text, when in divers parables he shewed what the kingdom of heaven is like, *ch. xiii.*

II. The place was a mountain in Galilee. As in other things, so in this, our Lord Jesus was but ill accommodated; he had no convenient place to preach in, any more than to lay his head on. While the scribes and Pharisees had Moses's chair to sit in, with all the ease, honour, and state that might be, and there corrupted the law; our Lord Jesus, the great teacher of truth, is driven out to the desert, and finds no better a pulpit than a mountain can afford him; and not one of the holy mountains either, not one of the mountains of Zion, but a common mountain; by which Christ would intimate, that there is no such distinguishing holiness of places now under the Gospel, as there was under the law; but it is the will of God that men should pray and preach every where, any where, provided it be decent and convenient. Christ preached this sermon, which was an exposition of the law, upon a mountain, because upon a mountain the law was given; and this was also a solemn promulgation of the Christian law. But observe the difference, when the law was given, the Lord "came down" upon the mountain, now the Lord "went up;" then he spoke "in thunder and lightning" now in "a still small voice;" then the people were bid to keep their distance, now they are invited to draw near; a blessed change! If God's grace and goodness be (as certainly it is) his glory, then the glory of the Gospel is "the glory that excelleth," for "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," *2 Cor. iii. 10*; *Heb. xii. 18*. It was foretold of Zebulun and Issachar, two of the tribes of Galilee, (*Deu. xxxiii. 19*), that "they shall call the people to the mountain;" to this mountain we are called, to learn "to offer the sacrifices of righteousness." Now was this "the mountain of the Lord," where he "taught us his ways," *Isa. ii. 2, 3*; *Mic. iv. 1, 2*.

III. The auditors were "his disciples," who "came unto him," came at his call, as appears by comparing *Mar. iii. 13*; *Lu. vi. 13*. To them he directed his speech, because they followed him for love and learning, while others attended him only for cures. He "taught them," because they were willing to be taught; "the meek will he teach his way," and because they would understand what he taught, which to others was foolishness; and because they were to teach others; and it was therefore requisite they should have a clear and distinct knowledge of these things themselves. The duties prescribed in this sermon were to be conscientiously performed by all those that would enter into that "kingdom of heaven" they were sent to set up, with hope to have the benefit of it. But though this discourse be directed to the disciples, it was in the hearing of the multitude; for it is said, *ch. vii. 28*, "the people were astonished." Here were no "bounds set about this mountain" to keep the people off, as were about Mount Sinai, *Ex. xix. 12*. For through Christ we have access to God, not only to speak to him, but to hear from him. Nay, he had an eye to the multitude in preaching this morning. When the fame of his miracles had brought a vast crowd together, he took the opportunity of so great a confluence of people to instruct them. Note, It is an encouragement to a faithful minister to cast the net of the Gospel where there are a great many fish, in hopes some will be caught. The sight of a multitude puts life into a preacher, which yet must arise from a desire of their profit, not his own praise.

IV. The solemnity of his sermon is intimated in that word "when he was set." Christ preached many times occasionally, and by interlocutory discourses; but this was a set sermon, *καθ' αὐτὸν αὐτὸν*, when he had placed himself so as to be best heard. He sat down as a judge, or lawgiver. It intimates with what sedateness and composure of mind the things of God should be spoken and heard of. He sat, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, *Mal. iii. 3*, "He shall sit as a refiner" to purge away the dross, the corrupt doctrines of the "sons of Levi." He sat, as "in the throne, judging right," *Ps. ix. 4*, for the word he spake shall judge us. That phrase, he "opened his mouth," is only an Hebrew periphrasis of speaking, as *Job iii. 1*. Yet some think it notes the solemnity of this discourse; the congregation being large, he raised his voice, and spoke louder than usual. He had spoken long by his servants the prophets, and opened their mouths, *Eze. iii. 27*; *xxiv. 27*; *xxiii. 22*; but now he opened his own, and spake with freedom, as one having authority. One of the ancients has this remark upon it, Christ taught much without opening his mouth, viz., by his holy and exemplary life; nay, he taught, when being led "as a lamb to the slaughter," he "opened not his mouth;" but now he opened his mouth and taught, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, *Pr. viii. 1, 2, 6*, "Doth not wisdom cry—cry on the top of high places?" And the "opening of her lips shall bring forth things." He taught them according to the promise, *Isa. liv. 13*, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord," for this purpose he had the "tongue of the learned," *Isa. i. 4*, and the "Spirit of the Lord," *Isa. lxi. 1*. He taught them what was the evil they should abhor, and what the good they should abide and abound in; for Christianity is not a matter of speculation, but is designed to regulate the temper of our minds, and the tenor of our conversations: Gospel time is a time of reformation, *Heb. ix. 10*, and by the Gospel we must be reformed, must be made good, must be made better. The truth, as it is in Jesus, is the truth which is according to godliness, *Tit. i. 1*.

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. 10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Christ began his sermon with blessings, for he came into the world to bless us, *Acts iii. 26*, as the great High Priest of our profession, as the blessed Melchizedek, as he in whom all the families of the earth should "be blessed," *Gen. xii. 3*. He came not only to purchase blessings for us, but to pour out and pronounce blessings on us; and here he doth it as one having authority, as one that can "command the blessing," even "life for evermore," and that is the blessing here again and again promised to the good; his speaking them happy makes them so; for those whom he bleseth, they are blessed indeed. The Old Testament ended with a curse, *Mal. iv. 6*; the Gospel begins with a blessing, for hereunto are we called that we should "inherit the blessing." Each of these blessings Christ here pronounceth, hath a double intendment; 1. To shew who they are that are to be accounted truly happy, and what their characters are. 2. What that is wherein true happiness doth consist; in the promises made to those of such and such characters, the performance of which will make them happy. Now,

First. This is designed to rectify the ruining mistakes of a blind and carnal world. Blessedness is the thing which men pretend to pursue; "Who will make us to see good?" *Ps. iv. 6*; but most mistake the end, and form a wrong notion of happiness, and then no wonder they miss the way; they choose their own delusions, and court a shadow. The general opinion is, blessed and happy are they that are rich, and great, and honourable in the world, that spend their days in mirth, and their years in pleasure, that eat the fat and drink the sweet, and carry all before them with a high hand, and have every sheaf bowing to their sheaf; "happy the people that is in such a case," and their designs, aims, and purposes are accordingly; they bless the covetous, *Ps. x. 3*, they will be rich. Now our Lord Jesus comes to correct this fundamental error, to advance a new hypothesis, and to give us quite another notion of blessedness, and blessed people; which, however (to those that are prejudiced) it may appear to be a paradox, yet is in itself, and is evident to all that are savingly enlightened, a rule and doctrine of eternal truth and certainty, by which we must shortly be judged. If this, therefore, be the beginning of Christ's doctrine, the beginning of a Christian's practice must be to take his measures of happiness from those maxims, and direct his pursuits accordingly.

Secondly. It is designed to remove the discouragements of the weak and poor that "receive the Gospel," by assuring them that his Gospel did not make those only happy that were eminent in gifts, graces, comforts, and usefulness; but even the "least in the kingdom of heaven," whose heart was upright with God, was happy in the honours and privileges of that kingdom.

Thirdly. It is designed to invite souls to Christ, and to make way for his law into them; Christ's pronouncing these blessings, not at the end of his sermon, to dismiss the people, but at the beginning of it, to prepare them for what he had further to say to them, may remind us of mount Gerizim and mount Ebal, on which the blessings and cursings of the law were read, *Deu. xxvii. 12*, &c. There the curses are expressed, and the blessings only implied; here the blessings are expressed, and the curses implied; in both, life and death are set before us; but the law appeared more as a ministration of death, to frighten us from sin; the Gospel as a dispensation of life, to allure us to Christ, in whom alone all good is to be had. And they who had seen the gracious cures wrought by his hand, *ch. iv. 23, 24*, and now heard the "gracious words proceeding out of his mouth," would say, he was all of a piece, made up of love and sweetness.

Fourthly. It is designed to settle and sum up the articles of agreement between God and man. The scope of the Divine Revelation is to let us know what God expects from us, and what we may then expect from him; and no where is this more fully set forth in a few words than here, nor with a more exact reference to each other; and this is that Gospel which we are required to believe; for what is faith but a conformity to these characters, and a dependence upon these promises? The way to happiness is here opened and made a "highway," *Isa. xxxv. 8*; and this coming from the mouth of Jesus Christ, it is intimated that from him and by him we are to receive both the seed and the fruit, both the grace required and the glory promised. Nothing passeth between God and fallen man, but through his hand. Some of the wisest heathens had notions of blessedness different from the rest of mankind, and looking towards this of our Saviour. *Seneca*, undertaking to describe a blessed man, makes it out that it is only an honest, good man that is to be so called; *De Vita beata*, c. 4.—*Cui nullum bonum malumque sit, nisi bonus malusque animus—Quem nec extollant fortuita, nec frangant—Cui vera voluptas erit voluptatum contemptio—Cui unum bonum honestas, unum malum turpitudine.*—In whose estimation nothing is good or evil, but a good or evil heart.—Whom no occurrences elate or deject.—Whose true pleasure consists in a contempt of pleasure.—To whom the only "good is virtue, and the only evil vice."

Our Saviour here gives us eight characters of "blessed" people, which represent to us the principal graces of a Christian. On each of them a present blessing is pronounced, "blessed are they;" and to each a future blessedness is

ever. Dr. Tristram says, "Frequently these shoals cover an acre or more of the surface, and the fish, as they slowly move along in masses, are so crowded, with their back fins just appearing on the level of the water, that the appearance at a little distance is that of a violent shower of rain pattering on the surface." It is a curious fact that the fish of this lake, and of the Jordan in general, resemble in character those of the Nile. Thus Hasselquist says, "We afterwards went out to the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, and had some fish

brought us by the fishermen. I thought it remarkable that the same kind of fish should be met with as in the Nile." In ancient days the fishing trade of this lake was important, and doubtless supplied the markets of Jerusalem and elsewhere; but now, as Dr. Thomson says, the fish are but little troubled by either hook, net, or spear; the few semi-savage Arabs who frequent this shore have no occasion for ships; they are afraid of the water, they do not even know how to construct a boat, and fishing is held in contempt.

promised, which is variously expressed so as to suit the nature of the grace or duty recommended. Do we ask, then, who are happy? It is answered,

1. "The poor in spirit" are happy, ver. 3. There is a poor-spiritedness, that is so far from making men blessed, that it is a sin and a snare,—cowardice and base fear, and a willing subjection to the lusts of men. But this poverty of spirit is a gracious disposition of soul, by which we are emptied of self, in order to our being "filled with Jesus Christ." To be "poor in spirit" is,

First. To be contentedly poor, willing to be empty of worldly wealth, if God orders that to be our lot; to bring our mind to our condition, when it is a low condition. Many are poor in the world, but high in spirit, poor and proud, murmuring, and complaining, and blaming their lot; but we must accommodate ourselves to our poverty, must "know how to be abased," *Phil. iv. 12*; acknowledging the wisdom of God in appointing us to poverty, we must be easy in it, patiently bear the inconveniences of it, be thankful for what we have, and make the best of that which is. It is to sit loose to all worldly wealth, and not set our hearts upon it, but cheerfully to bear losses and disappointments, which may befall us in the most prosperous state. It is not in pride or pretence to make ourselves poor, by throwing away what God hath given us, especially as those in the church of Rome, who vow poverty, and yet engross the wealth of nations; but if we be rich in the world, we must be poor in spirit, that is, we must condescend to the poor, and sympathize with them, as being touched with the feeling of their infirmities: we must expect and prepare for poverty, must not inordinately fear or shun it, but must bid it welcome, *Hebrews x. 34*. Job was "poor in spirit," when he blessed God in taking away, as well as giving.

Secondly. It is to be humble and low in our own eyes; to be "poor in spirit," is to think meanly of ourselves, of what we are and have to do. The poor are often taken, in the Old Testament, for the humble and self-denying, as opposed to those that are at ease, and the proud. It is to be as little children in our opinion of ourselves, weak, and foolish, and insignificant, *ch. xvii. 4; xix. 14*. Laodicea was poor in spirituals, wretchedly and miserably poor, and yet rich in spirit, so well increased with good, as to have need of nothing, *Rev. iii. 17*. On the other hand, Paul was rich in spirituals, excelling most in gifts and graces, and yet "poor in spirit," the least of the apostles, less than the least of all saints, and nothing in his own account. It is to look with a holy contempt upon ourselves, to value others, and undervalue ourselves in comparison with them. It is to be willing to make ourselves cheap, and mean, and little, to do good; to become "all things to all men." It is to acknowledge that God is great, and we are mean; he is holy, and we are sinful; he is all, we are nothing, less than nothing, worse than nothing; and to humble ourselves before him, and under his mighty hand.

Thirdly. It is to come off from all confidence in our own righteousness and strength, that we may depend only upon the merit of Christ for our justification, and the Spirit and grace of Christ for our sanctification. That broken and contrite spirit, with which the publican cried for mercy to a poor sinner, is this poverty of spirit. We must call ourselves poor, because always in want of God's grace, always begging at God's door, always hanging on in his house. Now, 1. This poverty in spirit is put first among the Christian graces; the philosophers did not reckon humility among their moral virtues, but Christ puts it first. Self-denial is the first lesson to be learned in his school, and poverty of spirit entitled to the first beatitude. The foundation of all other graces is laid in humility; those that would build high must begin low; and it is an excellent preparative for the entrance of Gospel grace into the soul; it fits the soil to receive the seed. Those that are "weary and heavy laden" are the "poor in spirit," and they shall find rest with Christ. 2. They are blessed, now they are so in this world; God looks graciously upon them, they are his little ones, and have their angels. To them he gives more grace, they live the most comfortable lives, and are easy to themselves, and all about them, and nothing comes amiss to them, while high spirits are always uneasy. 3. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of grace is composed of such; they only are fit to be members of Christ's church, which is called "the congregation of the poor," *Ps. lxxiv. 19*. The kingdom of glory is prepared for them. Those that thus humble themselves, and comply with God when he humbles them, shall be thus exalted. The great high spirits go away with the glory of the kingdoms of the earth, but the humble, mild, and yielding souls obtain the glory of the kingdom of heaven. We are ready to think, those that are rich and do good with their riches, no doubt but "theirs is the kingdom of heaven," for they can thus lay up in store a good security for the time to come; but what shall the poor do, that have not wherewithal to do good? Why, the same happiness is promised to those who are contentedly poor, as to those who are usefully rich. "If I am not able to spend cheerfully for his sake, if I can but wait cheerfully for his sake, even that shall be recompensed; and do not we serve a good master, then?"

11. "They that mourn" are happy, ver. 4: "blessed are they that mourn." This is another strange blessing, and fitly follows the former; the poor used to mourn, the graciously poor mourn graciously. We used to think, "blessed are the merry;" but Christ, that was himself a great mourner, saith, "blessed are the mourners." There is a sinful mourning that is an enemy to blessedness—the sorrow of the world, despairing melancholy upon a spiritual account, and disconsolate grief upon a temporal account: there is a natural mourning which may prove a friend to blessedness, by the grace of God working with it, sanctifying the afflictions to us, for which we mourn: but there is a gracious mourning that qualifies for blessedness—an habitual seriousness, the mind mortified to mirth, and an actual sorrow.

First. A penitential mourning for our own sins, this is godly sorrow, a sorrow according to God; sorrow for sin with an eye to Christ, *Zec. xii. 10*. Those are God's mourners that live a life of repentance, that lament the corruption of their nature, and their many actual transgressions, and God's withdrawals from them, and out of a regard to God's honour, mourn also for the sins of others, and "sigh and cry for their abomination," *Eze. ix. 4*.

Secondly. A sympathising mourning for the afflictions of others, that "weep with them that weep," are "sorrowful for the solemn assemblies," for the desolations of Zion, *Zep. iii. 18; Ps. cxxxvii. 1*; especially that look with compassion on perishing souls, and weep over them, as Christ over Jerusalem. Now these gracious mourners, 1. They are blessed; as in vain and sinful laughter the heart is sorrowful, so in gracious mourning the heart hath a serious joy, a secret satisfaction, which a "stranger doth not intermeddle with." They are blessed, for they are like the Lord Jesus, who was a man of sorrows, and of whom we never read that he laughed, but often that he wept. They are armed against the many temptations that attend vain mirth, and are prepared for the comforts of a sealed pardon, and a settled peace. 2. They shall be comforted, though perhaps they are not presently comforted, yet plentiful provision is made for their comfort; light is sown for them; and in heaven, it is certain they shall be comforted, as Lazarus, *Luk. xvi. 25*. Note. The happiness of heaven lies in being perfectly and eternally comforted, and the wiping away of all tears from their eyes. It is the "joy of our Lord," a fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore; which will be doubly sweet to

those that have been prepared for them by this godly sorrow. Heaven will be heaven indeed to those that go mourning thither; it will be a harvest of joy, the return of a seed time of tears. *Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6*; a mountain of joy, to which our way lies through a vale of tears. See *Isa. lxvi. 10*.

111. "The meek" are happy, ver. 5: "blessed are the meek." The meek are those that quietly submit themselves to God, to his word, and to his rod; that follow his conduct, and comply with his designs, and that are "gentle towards all men," *Tit. iii. 2*; that can bear provocation without being influenced by it, are either silent, or return a soft answer; and that can shew their displeasure, when there is occasion for it, without being transported into any indecencies; that can be cool when others are hot, and in their patience keep possession of their own souls, when they can scarce keep possession of any thing else. They are the meek that are rarely and hardly provoked, but quickly and easily pacified, and would rather forgive twenty injuries than revenge one: having the rule of their own spirits. Now these meek ones are here represented as happy, even in this world.

First. They are blessed, for they are like the blessed Jesus, in that wherein particularly they are to learn of him, *ch. xii. 29*; they are like the blessed God himself, who is "Lord of his anger," and in whom "fury is not;" they are blessed, for they have the most comfortable, undisturbed enjoyment of themselves, their friends, their God; they are fit for any relation, any condition, any company; fit to live, and fit to die.

Secondly. "They shall inherit the earth," it is quoted from *Ps. xxxvii. 11*, and it is almost the only express temporal promise in all the New Testament. Not that they shall always have much of the earth, much less that they shall be put off with that only, but this branch of godliness hath in a special manner the promise of the life that now is. Meekness, however ridiculed and run down, hath a real tendency to our health, wealth, comfort, and safety, even in this world. The meek and quiet are observed to live the most easy lives, compared with the froward and turbulent. Or, "they shall inherit the land," so it may be read; the land of Canaan, a type of heaven. So that all the blessedness of heaven above, and all the blessings of earth beneath, are the meek man's portion.

IV. "They that hunger and thirst after righteousness" are happy, ver. 6. Some understand this as a further instance of outward poverty, and a low condition in this world, which not only exposeth men to injury and wrong, but makes it in vain for them to seek to have justice done them; they hunger and thirst after it, but such is the power on the side of their oppressors, that they cannot have it. They desire only that which is just and equal, but it is denied them by those that neither fear God, nor regard man; this is a melancholy case; yet blessed are they if they suffer these hardships for, and with, a good conscience; let them hope in God, who will see justice done, right take place, and will deliver the poor from their oppressors, *Ps. ciii. 6*. Those that contentedly bear oppression, and quietly refer themselves to God to plead their cause, shall in due time be satisfied, abundantly satisfied, in the wisdom and kindness that shall appear in his appearances for them. But it is certainly to be understood spiritually, of such a desire as being terminated on such an object is gracious, and the work of God's grace in the soul, and qualifies for the gifts of the Divine favour.

First. "Righteousness" is here put for all "spiritual blessings." See *Ps. xxiv. 5; ch. vi. 33*. They are purchased for us by the righteousness of Christ, conveyed and secured by the imputation of that righteousness to us, and confirmed by the faithfulness of God. To have Christ, made of God to us righteousness, and to be made the "righteousness of God in him," to have the whole man renewed in righteousness so as to become a new man, and to bear the image of God, to have an interest in Christ, and the promises, this is "righteousness."

Secondly. These we must "hunger and thirst after." We must truly and really desire them, as one that is hungry and thirsty desires meat and drink, that will not be satisfied with any thing but meat and drink, and will be satisfied with them, though other things be wanting. Our desires of spiritual blessings must be earnest and importunate: "give me these, or else I die, every thing else is dust and chaff, unsatisfying; give me these, and I have enough, though I had nothing else." Hunger and thirst are appetites that return frequently, and call for fresh satisfactions; so these holy desires rest not in any thing attained, but are carried out towards renewed pardons, and daily fresh supplies of grace. The quickened souls call for constant meals of righteousness, grace to do the work of every day in its day, as duly as the living body calls for food. They that hunger and thirst will labour for supplies; so we must not only desire spiritual blessings, but take pains for them in the use of the appointed means. Dr. Hammond, in his Practical Catechism, distinguisheth between the hunger and thirst; hunger is a desire of food to sustain, such is sanctifying righteousness; thirst is the desire of drink to refresh, such is justifying righteousness, and the sense of our pardon. Now those who thus hunger and thirst after spiritual blessings, they are blessed in those desires, and shall be filled with those blessings. 1. They are blessed in those desires. Though all desires of grace are not grace—feigned, faint desires are not—yet such a desire as this is: it is an evidence of something good, and an earnest of something better. It is a desire of God's own raising, and he will not forsake the work of his own hands. Something or other the soul will be hungering and thirsting after, therefore they are blessed who fasten upon the right object, which is satisfying and not deceiving, and do not "pant after the dust of the earth," *Am. ii. 7; Isa. lv. 2*. 2. They shall be filled with those blessings. God will give them what they desire to their complete satisfaction. It is God only who can fill a soul, whose grace and favour is adequate to its just desires; and he will fill those with "grace for grace," that in a sense of their own emptiness have recourse to his fulness. "He filleth the hungry," *Luk. i. 53*; "satiates them," *Jer. xxxi. 25*. The happiness of heaven will certainly fill the soul; there righteousness shall be complete, the favour of God, and his image, both in their full perfection.

V. "The merciful" are happy, ver. 7. This, like the rest, is a paradox; for the merciful are not taken to be the wisest, nor are likely to be the richest, yet Christ pronounceth them blessed. Those are the merciful who are piously and charitably inclined to pity, help, and succour those that are in misery. A man may be truly merciful, that has not wherewithal to be bountiful or liberal, and then God accepts the willing mind; we must not only bear our own afflictions patiently, but we must by Christian sympathy partake of the afflictions of our brethren; pity must be shewed, *Job vi. 14*; and "bowels of mercy put on," *Col. iii. 12*; and being put on, they must put forth themselves in contributing all we can for the assistance of those that are any way in misery. We must have compassion on the souls of others, and help them; pity the ignorant, and instruct them; the careless, and warn them; those that are in a state of sin, and snatch them, "as brands out of the burning." We must have compassion on those that are melancholy and in sorrow, and comfort them, *Job xvi. 5*; on those that we have advantage against, and not be rigorous and severe with them; on those that are in want, and supply them; which, if we deny to do, whatever we pretend, we "shut up the bowels of our compassion," *Jas. ii. 15, 16; 1 Jno. iii. 17, 18*. "Draw out thy soul" by "dealing

On this verse also note that the names Peter and Andrew are Greek, while Simon is genuine Hebrew. The Syriac has Cephas for Peter.

iv. 20. Although so little is done in the way of fishing at the Sea of Tiberias, it is practised on the coast of the Mediterranean, though less as a matter of trade than as a means of procuring sustenance. Several kinds of nets are used, as hand-nets, bag nets, and drag-nets, the latter like our seine.

iv. 25. Decapolis was a political division, owing its name to ten

principal places, all of which, except Scythopolis, were east of the Jordan. The names are not all certainly known. Pliny includes Damascus among them, but this may be an error, because Josephus says Scythopolis was the largest.

v. 1. "A mountain:" literally "the mountain;" perhaps a hill overlooking the Lake of Tiberias in the neighbourhood of Capernaum.

v. 3. Dr. Brown says, "Of the two words which our translators

thy bread to the hungry," *Isa. lviii. 7, 10*; nay, a good man is merciful to his beast. Now those that are merciful,

First. They are blessed; so it was said in the Old Testament, "blessed is he that considers the poor," *Ps. xli. 1*. Herein they resemble God, whose goodness is his glory; in being "merciful, as he is merciful," we are in our measure "perfect, as he is perfect." It is an evidence of love to God; it will be a satisfaction to ourselves to be any way instrumental for the benefit of others; one of the purest and most refined delights in this world, is that of doing good. In this word, "blessed are the merciful," is included that saying of Christ, which otherwise we find not in the Gospels, "it is more blessed to give than to receive," *Acts xx. 35*.

Secondly. "They shall obtain mercy." Mercy with men, when they need it; "he that watereth, shall be watered also himself." We know not how soon we may stand in need of kindness, and therefore should be kind; but especially mercy with God, for "with the merciful, he will shew himself merciful," *Ps. xviii. 25*. The most merciful and charitable cannot pretend to merit, but must fly to mercy. The merciful shall find with God, sparing mercy, *ch. vi. 14*; supplying mercy, *Pr. xix. 17*; sustaining mercy, *Ps. xli. 2*; mercy in that day, *2 Tim. i. 18*. Nay, they shall "inherit the kingdom prepared for them," *ch. xxv. 34, 35*; whereas they shall have "judgment without mercy," which can be nothing short of hell fire, that have "shewed no mercy."

VI. "The pure in heart" are happy, ver. 8: "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This is the most comprehensive of all the beatitudes; here is holiness and happiness fully described, and put together.

First. Here is the most comprehensive character of the blessed: they are "the pure in heart." Note, True religion consists in heart purity. Those that are inwardly pure, shew themselves to be under the power of an undefiled religion. True christianity lies in the heart, in the "purity of the heart;" the washing of that from wickedness, *Jer. iv. 14*. We must lift up to God, not only clean hands, but a pure heart, *Ps. xxiv. 4, 5*; *1 Tim. i. 5*. The heart must be pure in opposition to mixture, an honest heart, that aims well; and pure in opposition to pollution and defilement; as wine unmixed, as water unclouded. The heart must be kept pure from fleshly lusts, all unchaste thoughts and desires; and from worldly lusts; covetousness is called filthy lucre; from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, all that which "comes out of the heart," and "defiles the man." The heart must be "purified by faith," and entire for God; must be presented, and preserved, a chaste virgin to Christ. "Create in me such a clean heart, O God."

Secondly. Here is the most comprehensive comfort of the blessed: "they shall see God." Note, 1. It is the perfection of the soul's happiness to see God; seeing him, as we may, by faith, in our present state, is a "heaven upon earth;" and seeing him, as we shall in the future state, is the "heaven of heaven;" to see him as he is, face to face, and no longer through a glass darkly; to see him as ours, and to see him and enjoy him; to see him, and be like him, and be satisfied with that likeness, *Ps. xvii. 15*; and to see him for ever, and never lose the sight of him; this is heaven's happiness. 2. The happiness of seeing God is promised to those, and those only, that are "pure in heart." None but the pure are capable of seeing God, nor would it be a felicity to the impure; what pleasure could an unsanctified soul take in the vision of a holy God? As he cannot endure to look upon their iniquity, so they cannot endure to look upon his purity; nor shall any unclean thing enter into the New Jerusalem; but all that are pure in heart, all that are truly sanctified, have desires wrought in them, which nothing but the sight of God will satisfy, and Divine grace will not leave those desires unsatisfied.

VII. "The peace makers" are happy, ver. 9: the wisdom that is from above is first pure, and then peaceable; the blessed ones pure towards God, and peaceable towards men; for with reference to both, conscience must be kept void of offence. The peace makers are those that have,

First. A peaceable disposition. As to make a lie, is to be given and addicted to lying; so to make peace, is to have a strong and hearty affection to peace. "I am for peace," *Ps. cxx. 7*. It is to love, and desire, and delight in peace, to be in it as in our element, and to study to be quiet.

Secondly. A peaceable conversation. Industiously, as far as we can, to preserve the peace that it be not broken, and to recover it when it is broken; to hearken to proposals of peace ourselves, and to be ready to make them to others; where distance is among brethren and neighbours, to do all we can to accommodate it, and to be repairers of the breaches. The making peace is sometimes a thankless office, and it is the lot of him that parts a fray to have blows on both sides; yet it is a good office, and we must be forward to it. Some think this is intended especially as a lesson for ministers, who should do all they can to reconcile those that are at variance, and to promote Christian love among those under their charge. Now those that are so, 1. They are blessed; for they have the satisfaction of enjoying themselves by keeping the peace, and of being truly serviceable to others by disposing them to peace. They are working together with Christ, who came into the world to "slay all enmities, and to proclaim peace on earth." 2. "They shall be called the children of God;" it will be an evidence to themselves that they are so; God will own them as such, and herein they will resemble him. He is the God of peace, the Son of God is the Prince of peace, the spirit of adoption is a spirit of peace. Since God has declared himself reconcilable to us all, he will not own those for his children that are implacable in their enmity to one another; for if "blessed are the peace makers," woe to the peace breakers. Now, by this, it appears that Christ never intended to have his religion propagated by fire and sword, or penal laws; nor to own bigotry, or intemperate zeal, as the marks of his disciples. The children of this world love to fish in troubled waters, but the children of God are the peace makers, the quiet in the land.

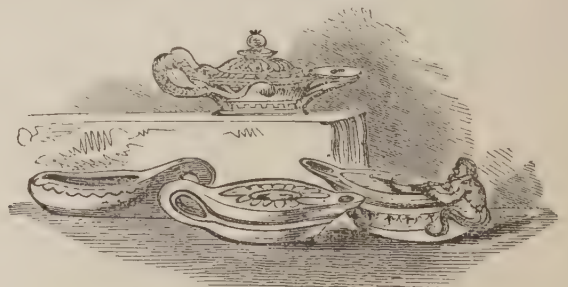
VIII. Those that are "persecuted for righteousness sake" are happy. This is the greatest paradox of all, and peculiar to christianity, and therefore it is put last, and more largely insisted upon than any of the rest, ver. 10-12. This beatitude, like Pharaoh's dream, is doubled, because hardly credited, and yet "the thing is certain;" and in the latter part there is a change of the person, "blessed are ye;" ye my disciples, and immediate followers. This is that, which you that excel in virtue, are more immediately concerned in, for you must count upon hardships and troubles more than other men. Observe here,

First. The case of suffering saints described; and it is a hard case, and a very piteous one. 1. They are persecuted, hunted, pursued, run down, as noxious beasts are, that are sought for to be destroyed; as if a Christian did *caput gerere lupinum*,—"bear a wolf's head," as an outlaw is said to do; any one that finds him may slay him; they are abandoned as the off-scouring of all things; fined, imprisoned, banished, stripped of their estates, excluded from all places of profit and trust, scourged, racked, tortured, always delivered to death, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter. This has been the effect of the enmity of the serpent's seed against the holy seed ever since, *Gen. iii. 15*, from "the blood of righteous Abel." It was so in Old Testament times, as we find, *Heb. xi. 35, &c.* Christ has told us it would much more be so with the Christian church, and we are not to think it strange, *1 Jno. iii. 13*. He has left us an example. 2. They are "reviled, and have all manner of evil said against them falsely." Nick-names, and names of reproach, are fastened upon them, upon

particular persons, and upon the generations of the righteous in the gross, to render them odious; sometimes to make them despicable, that they may be trampled upon; sometimes to make them formidable, that they may be run upon; things laid to their charge that they knew not, *Ps. xxxv. 20*; *Jer. xx. 18*; *Acts xvii. 6, 7*. Those that have not had power in their hands to do them any other mischief, yet could do this; and those that have had power to persecute, have found it necessary to do this too, to justify themselves in their barbarous usage of them; they could not have baited them, if they had not drest them in bears' skins, nor have given them the worst of treatment, if they had not first represented them as the worst of men: they will "revile you, and persecute you." Note, Reviling the saints is persecuting them, and will be found so shortly, when "hard speeches" must be accounted for, *Jude 15*, and "cruel mockings," *Heb. xi. 36*. They will "say all manner of evil of you falsely;" sometimes before the seat of judgment, as witnesses; sometimes in the seat of the scornful, with hypocritical mockers at feasts; they are "the song of the drunkards;" sometimes to their faces, as Shimei cursed David; sometimes behind their backs, as the enemies of Jeremiah did. Note, There is no evil so black and horrid, but one time or other it has been said falsely of Christ's disciples and followers. 3. All this is "for righteousness sake, ver. 10;" "for my sake," ver. 11. If for "righteousness sake," then for "Christ's sake," for he is nearly interested in the work of righteousness; enemies to righteousness are enemies to Christ. This precludes those from this blessedness that suffer justly, and are evil spoken of truly for their real crimes, let such be ashamed and confounded, it is part of their punishment; it is not the suffering, but the cause, that makes the martyr. Those suffer "for righteousness sake," that suffer because they will not sin against their consciences, and that suffer for doing that which is good. Whatever pretence persecutors have, it is the power of godliness that they have an enmity to; it is really Christ and his righteousness that is maligned, hated, and persecuted; "for thy sake I have borne reproach," *Ps. lxxix. 7*; *Rom. viii. 36*.

Secondly. The comforts of suffering saints laid down. 1. They are blessed; for they now in their lifetime receive their "evil things," *Lu. xvi. 25*, and receive them upon a good account. They are blessed, for it is an honour to them, *Acts v. 41*; it is an opportunity of glorifying Christ, and doing good, and of experiencing special comforts, and visits of grace, and tokens of his presence, *2 Cor. i. 5*; *Dan. iii. 24*; *Rom. viii. 29*. 2. They shall be recompensed: "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." They have at present a sure title to it, and sweet foretastes of it, and shall ere long be in possession of it. Though there be nothing in those sufferings that can in strictness merit of God, for the sins of the best deserve the worst, yet this is here promised as a reward, ver. 12. "Great is your reward in heaven," so great as far to transcend the service. It is "in heaven," future, and out of sight, but well secured, out of the reach of chance, fraud, and violence. Note, God will provide, that those who "lose for him," though it be life itself, shall not "lose by him" in the end. Heaven at last will be an abundant recompense for all the difficulties we meet with in our way. This is that which has borne up the suffering saints in all ages, this "joy set before them." 3. "So persecuted they the prophets that were before you," ver. 12. They were before you in excellency, above what you are yet arrived to; they were before you in time, that they might be examples to you of "suffering, affliction, and of patience," *Jas. v. 10*. They were in like manner persecuted and abused, and can you expect to go to heaven in a way by yourselves? Was not Isaiah mocked for his "line upon line?" Elisha for his "bald head?" Were not all the prophets thus treated? therefore marvel not at it as a strange thing; murmur not at it as a hard thing; it is a comfort to see the way of suffering a beaten road, and an honour to follow such leaders. That grace that was sufficient for them, to carry them through their sufferings, shall not be deficient to us. Those that are your enemies, are the seed and successors of them that of old mocked the messengers of the Lord, *2 Chr. xxxvi. 16*; *Mat. xxiii. 25*; *Acts vii. 52*. 4. Therefore "rejoice, and be exceeding glad," ver. 12. It is not enough to be patient and content under these sufferings, as under common afflictions, and not to render railing for railing, but we must "rejoice," because the honour and dignity, the pleasure and advantage of suffering for Christ, is much more considerable than the pain or shame of it. Not that we must take a pride in our sufferings, that spoils all, but we must take a pleasure in them, as Paul, *2 Cor. xii. 10*; as knowing Christ is herein beforehand with us, and he will not be behind-hand with us, *1 Pet. iv. 2, 13*.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and



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it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see

render 'blessed,' the one here used points more to what is inward, and so might be rendered 'happy' in a lofty sense, while the other denotes what comes to us from without." The word answers very well to the same word "blessed" in the 1st Psalm. "The poor in spirit" are the "lowly in purpose and in soul," "the humble and contrite in heart," or such as are conscious of their spiritual necessities.

v. 5. "The meek" are the gentle, as opposed to the boisterous, pre-

tentious, and self-satisfied. God honours virtue, not pretence. (See *Ps. xxxvii. 11*.)

v. 6. "Hunger and thirst after righteousness" indicate the awakening and activity of the spiritual life, which is shown by its desires.

v. 7. "The merciful" are such as do to others as they would be done to; and they will have mercy, because their disposition proves their genuine love to God.

v. 8. "The pure in heart" have a blessing couched in special terms,

your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Christ had lately called his disciples, and told them they should be "fishers of men;" here he tells them further what he designed them to be, the "salt of the earth," and "lights of the world," that they might be indeed what it was expected they should be.

1. "*Ye are the salt of the earth.*" This would encourage and support them under their sufferings, that though they should be treated with contempt, yet they should really be blessings to the world, and the more so for their suffering thus. The prophets that went before them were the salt of the land of Canaan, but the apostles were the salt of "the whole earth," for they must "go into all the world to preach the Gospel." It was a discouragement to them that they were so few, and so weak; what could they do in so large a province as the whole earth? Nothing, if they were to work by force of arms and dint of sword; but being to work silently as salt, one handful of that salt would diffuse its savour far and wide, would go a great way, and work insensibly and irresistibly, as leaven, *ch. xiii. 33*. The doctrine of the Gospel is as salt; it is penetrating, "quick, and powerful," *Heb. iv. 12*; "pricks to the heart," *Acts ii. 37*; it is cleansing, it is relishing, and preserves from rottenness and putrefaction; we read of the "savour of the knowledge of Christ," *2 Cor. ii. 14*, for all other learning is insipid without that. An everlasting covenant is called "a covenant of salt," *Num. xviii. 19*, and the Gospel is an "everlasting Gospel." Salt was required in all the sacrifices, *Lev. ii. 13*; in Ezekiel's mystical temple, *Eze. xlii. 21*. Now Christ's disciples having themselves learned the doctrine of the Gospel, and being employed to teach it to others, were as salt. Note, Christians, and especially ministers, "are the salt of the earth."

First. If they be such as they should be, they are as good salt, white and small, and broken into many grains, but very useful and necessary. *Pliny* saith, *Sine sale vita humana non potest degere*,—without salt human life cannot be sustained. See in this, 1. What they are to be in themselves, seasoned with the Gospel, with the salt of grace; thoughts and affections, words and actions, all seasoned with grace, *Col. iv. 6*; "Have salt in yourselves," else you cannot diffuse it in others, *Mar. ix. 50*. 2. What they are to be to others; they must not only be good, but do good; must insinuate themselves into the minds of people, not to serve any secular interest of their own, but that they may transform them into the taste and relish of the Gospel. 3. What great blessings they are to the world. Mankind, lying in ignorance and wickedness, was a great heap of unsavoury stuff, ready to putrefy; but Christ sent forth his disciples, by their lives and doctrines, to season it with knowledge and grace, and so to render it acceptable to God, to the angels, and to all that relish Divine things. 4. How they must expect to be disposed of: not laid on a heap, they must not continue always together at Jerusalem, but must be scattered as salt upon the meat, here a grain, and there a grain, as the Levites were dispersed in Israel, that wherever they live they may communicate their savour. Some have observed, that whereas it is foolishly called an ill omen, to have the salt fall towards us, it is really an ill omen to have this salt fall from us.

Secondly. If they be not, they are as salt that has "lost its savour." If you, that should season others, are yourselves unsavoury, void of spiritual life, relish, and vigour; if a Christian be so, especially if a minister be so, his condition is very sad; for, 1. He is irrecoverable; "Wherewith shall he be salted?" Salt is a remedy for unsavoury meat, but there is no remedy for unsavoury salt. Christianity will give a man a relish; but if a man can take up and continue the possession of that, and yet remain flat, and foolish, and graceless, and insipid, there is no other doctrine, no other means that can be applied to make him savoury. If Christianity do not do it, nothing will. 2. He is unprofitable: "It is therefore good for nothing," what use can it be put to, in which it will not do more hurt than good? As a man without reason, so is a Christian without grace. A wicked man is the worst of creatures, a wicked Christian is the worst of men, and a wicked minister is the worst of Christians. 3. He is doomed to ruin and rejection. He shall be cast out, expelled the church, and the communion of the faithful, to which he is a blot and a burthen; and he shall "be trodden under foot of men." Let God be glorified in the shame and rejection of those by whom he has been reproached, and who have made themselves fit for nothing, but to be trampled upon.

II. "*Ye are the light of the world.*" *ver. 14*. This also speaks them useful as the former, (*Sole et sale nihil utilis*—"nothing more useful than the sun and salt," but more glorious. All Christians are "light in the Lord," *Eph. v. 8*, and must "shine as lights" *Phil. ii. 15*; but ministers in a special manner. Christ calls himself the "light of the world," *Jno. viii. 12*; and they are "workers together with him," and have "some of his honour" put upon them. Truly the light is sweet, it is welcome; the light of the first day of the world was so, when it shone out of darkness, so is the morning light of every day; so was the Gospel, and those that spread it, to all sensible people. The world "sat in darkness," Christ raised up his disciples to shine in it, and that they may do so, from him they borrow and derive their light. This similitude is here explained in two things.

First. As the "lights of the world," they are illustrious and conspicuous, and have many eyes upon them. "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." The disciples of Christ, especially those that are forward and zealous in his service, become remarkable, and are taken notice of as beacons. They "are for signs," *Isa. viii. 18*, "Men wondered at," *Zec. iii. 8*, all their neighbours have an eye upon them. Some admire them, commend them, rejoice in them, and study to imitate them; others envy them, hate them, censure them, and study to blast them. They are concerned therefore to "walk circumspectly," because of their observers: they are "a spectacle to the world," and must take heed of every thing that looks ill, because they are so much looked at. The disciples of Christ were obscure men before he called them, but the character he put upon them dignified them, and as preachers of the Gospel they made a figure; and though they were reproached for it by some, they were respected for it by others, advanced to thrones, and made judges, *Lu. xxii. 30*; for Christ will honour those that honour him.

Secondly. As the "lights of the world," they are intended to illuminate and give light to others, *ver. 15*, and therefore, 1. They shall be "set up as lights." Christ having lighted these candles, they shall not be "put under a bushel," nor confined always as they are now to the cities of Galilee, or the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," but they shall be "sent into all the world." The churches are the candlesticks, the golden candlesticks, in which these lights are placed, that their light may be diffused; and the Gospel is so strong a light, and carries with it so much of its own evidence, that, "like a city on a hill, it cannot be hid," it cannot but appear to be from God, to all those that do not wilfully shut their eyes against it. It will "give light to all that are in the house," to all that will draw near to it, and come where it is: those to whom it doth not give light, must thank themselves, they will not be in the house with it, will not make a diligent and impartial inquiry into it, but are prejudiced against it. 2. They must "shine as lights," 1st. By their good preaching. The

knowledge they have they must communicate for the good of others; not put it "under a bushel," but spread it. The talent must not be buried in a napkin, but traded with. The disciples of Christ must not nuzzle themselves up in privacy and obscurity, under pretence of contemplation, modesty, or self-preservation, but "as they have received the gift," must "minister the same." See *Lu. xii. 3*. 2nd. By their good living. They must be "burning and shining lights," *Jno. v. 35*; must evidence in their whole conversation, that they are indeed the followers of Christ, *Jas. iii. 13*. They must be to others for instruction, direction, quickening, comfort, *Job xxix. 11*. See here, *First*. How our light must shine—by doing such good works, as men may see, and men may approve of; such works as are of good report among them that are without, and which will therefore give them cause to think well of Christianity. We must do good works that may be seen, to the edification of others, but not that they may be seen to our own ostentation; we are bid to pray in secret, and what lies between God and our souls must be kept to ourselves; but that which is of itself open and obvious to the sight of men, we must study to make congruous to our profession, and praiseworthy, *Phil. iv. 8*. Those about us must not only hear our good words, but see our good works, that they may be convinced religion is more than a bare name, and that we do not only make a profession of it, but abide under the power of it. *Secondly*. For what end our light must thus shine—"That those who see your good works may be brought, not to glorify you, which was the thing the Pharisees aimed at, and it spoiled the acceptance of all their performances, but to 'glorify your Father which is in heaven.'" Note, The glory of God is the great thing we must aim at in every thing we do in religion, *1 Pet. iv. 11*. In this centre the lines of all our actions must meet. We must not only endeavour to glorify God ourselves, but we must do all we can to bring others to glorify him. The sight of our good works will do this by furnishing them, 1st. With matter for praise. "Let them 'see your good works,' that they may see the power of God's grace in you, and may thank him for it, and give him the glory of it, who has given such power unto men." 2nd. With motives to piety. "Let them 'see your good works,' that they may be convinced of the truth and excellency of the Christian religion, may be provoked by a holy emulation to imitate your good works, and so may glorify God." Note, The holy, regular, and exemplary conversation of the saints may do much towards the conversion of sinners; those that are unacquainted with religion, may hereby be brought to know what it is; examples teach; and those that are prejudiced against it, may hereby be brought in love with it, and thus there is a winning virtue in godly conversation.

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Those to whom Christ preached, and for whose use he gave these instructions to his disciples, were such as in their religion had an eye, 1. To the Scriptures of the Old Testament as their rule, and therein Christ here shews them they were in the right. 2. To the scribes and Pharisees, as their example, and therein Christ here shews them they were in the wrong; for,

1. The rule Christ came to establish, exactly agreed with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, here called "the law and the prophets;" the prophets were commentators upon the law, and both together made up that rule of faith and practice which Christ found upon the throne in the Jewish church, and here he keeps it on the throne.

First. He protests against the thought of cancelling and weakening the Old Testament. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets." 1. "Let not the pious Jews, that have an affection for the law and the prophets, fear that I come to destroy them." Let not them be prejudiced against Christ and his doctrine, from a jealousy that this kingdom he came to set up would derogate from the honour of the Scriptures they had embraced as coming from God, and had experienced the power and purity of; no, let them be satisfied Christ has no ill design upon the law and the prophets. 2. "Let not the profane Jews that have a disaffection to the law and the prophets, and are weary of that yoke, hope that I am come to destroy them." Let not carnal libertines imagine that the Messiah is come to discharge them from the obligation of Divine precepts, and yet to secure to them Divine promises, to make them happy, and yet give them leave to live as they list. Christ commands nothing new, that was forbidden, either by the law of nature, or the moral law, nor forbids any thing which those laws have enjoined; it is a great mistake to think that he doth, and he here takes care to rectify the mistake: "I am not come to destroy." The Saviour of souls is the destroyer of nothing, but the "works of the devil," of nothing that comes from God, much less of these excellent dictates which we have from "Moses and the prophets." No, he came to fulfil them; that is, 1st. To obey the commands of the law, for he was "made under the law," *Gal. iv. 4*. He in all respects yielded obedience to the law, honoured his parents, sanctified the Sabbath, prayed, gave alms, &c., and did that which never any else did, obeyed perfectly, and never broke the law in any thing. 2nd. To make good the promises of the law and the predictions of the prophets, which did all bear witness to him. The covenant of grace is for substance the same now that it was then, and Christ the Mediator of it. 3rd. To answer the types of the law; thus (as Bishop Tillotson expresseth it) he did not make void, but make good the ceremonial law, and manifested himself to be the substance of all those shadows. 4th. To fill up the defects of it, and so to complete and perfect it. Thus the word πληρωσαι properly signifies; as a vessel that had some water in it before, Christ did not come to pour that out, but to fill it up to the brim; or, as a picture that is first rough drawn, some shades only of the piece intended, which are afterwards filled up; so Christ made an improvement

which are meant to indicate the purity of the Most High, and the honour he bestows on purity.

v. 9. "Peacemakers" are messengers or agents of peace, who endeavour to make peace between contending parties, not merely the "peaceful," as some have it.

v. 10. There are some to whom loss here is gain elsewhere. God works no miracle in their favour, but provides invisible blessings, celestial and eternal.

v. 11. What are called the Beatitudes end with verse 10, and here we are introduced to the series of promises and exhortations which our Saviour addressed more particularly to his disciples. The change of person from "Blessed are they" to "Blessed are you" shows what we mean.

v. 14. Men have laboured to find some city on a hill to which Jesus might have referred, but we would rather refer to texts like *Psa. xlviii.*

of the law and the prophets, by his additions and explications. 5th. To carry on the same design; the Christian institutes are so far from thwarting and contradicting that which was the main design of the Jewish religion, that they promote it to the highest degree. The Gospel is "the time of reformation," Heb. ix. 10, not the repeal of the law, but the amendment of it, and consequently its establishment.

Secondly. He asserts the perpetuity of it; that not only he designed not the abrogation of it, but it never should be abrogated, ver. 18: "Verily I say unto you," I the Amen, the faithful Witness, solemnly declare it, that "till heaven and earth pass," when time shall be no more, and the unchangeable state of recompenses shall supersede all laws, "one jot, or one tittle," the least and most minute circumstance, "shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled;" for what is it that God is doing in all the operations, both of providence and grace, but fulfilling the Scripture? Heaven and earth shall come together, and all the fulness thereof be wrapt up in ruin and confusion, rather than any word of God shall fail to the ground, or be in vain. "The Word of the Lord endures for ever," both that of the Law, and that of the Gospel. Observe. The care of God concerning his law, extends itself even to those things that seem to be of least account in it: the *jotas* and the *tittles*; for whatever belongs to God, and bears his stamp, be it never so little, shall be preserved. The laws of man are conscious to themselves of so much imperfection, that they allow it for a maxim, *Apices juris non sunt jura*. The extreme points of law are not law; but God will stand by and maintain every *iota* and *tittle* of his law.

Thirdly. He gives it in charge to his disciples, carefully to preserve the law, and shews them the danger of the neglect and contempt of it, ver. 19. "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of the least commandments of the law of Moses," much more any of the greater, as the Pharisees did who neglected the weightier matters of the law, "and shall teach men so," as they did, who made void the commandments of God with their traditions, ch. xv. 3, "he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." Though the Pharisees be cried up for such teachers as should be, they shall not be employed as teachers in Christ's kingdom; but "whosoever shall do and teach them," as Christ's disciples would, and thereby prove themselves better friends to the Old Testament than the Pharisees were, they, though despised by men, shall be "called great in the kingdom of heaven." Note, 1. Among the commands of God, there are some less than others; none absolutely little, but comparatively so. The Jews reckon the least of the commandments of the law to be that of the bird's nest, *Deu. xxii. 6, 7*; yet even that had a significance and an intention very great; and considerable. 2. It is a dangerous thing, in doctrine or practice, to diminish the least of God's commands, to break them, that is, to go about either to contract the extent, or weaken the obligations of them; whoever doth so will find it at his peril. Thus to vacate any of the ten commandments, is too bold a stroke for the jealous God to pass by. It is something more than transgressing the law, it is making void the law, *Ps. cxix. 126*. 3. That the further such corruptions as these spread, the worse they are. It is impudence enough to break the command, but it is a greater degree of it to teach men so. This plainly refers to those who at this time sat in Moses' seat, and by their comments corrupted and perverted the text. Opinions that tend to the destruction of serious godliness, and the vitals of religion, by corrupt glosses on the Scripture are bad when they are held, but worse when they are propagated and taught, as the Word of God. He that doth so, shall be called "least in the kingdom of heaven," in the kingdom of glory; he shall never come thither, but be eternally excluded; or rather in the kingdom of the Gospel church. He is so far from deserving the dignity of a teacher in it, that he shall not so much as be accounted a member of it. The prophet that teacheth these lies, he shall be the tail in that kingdom, *Isa. ix. 15*; when truth shall appear in its own evidence, such corrupt teachers, though cried up as the Pharisees, shall be of no account with the wise and good. Nothing makes ministers more contemptible and base than corrupting the law, *Mal. ii. 8-11*. Those that extenuate and encourage sin, and discountenance and put contempt upon strictness in religion and devotion, they are the dregs of the church. But, on the other hand, those are truly honourable, and of great account in the church of Christ, that lay out themselves, by their life and doctrine, to promote the purity and strictness of practical religion; that both do and teach that which is good; for those who do not as they teach, put down with one hand what they build up with the other, and give themselves the lie, and tempt men to think all religion is a sham; but those who speak from experience, who live up to what they preach, they are truly great, they honour God, and God will honour them, *1 Sam. ii. 10*, and hereafter they shall shine as the "stars in the kingdom of our Father."

II. The righteousness Christ came to establish by this rule, must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ver. 20. This was strange doctrine to those who looked upon the scribes and Pharisees to have arrived at the highest pitch of religion. The scribes were the most noted teachers of the law; and the Pharisees the most celebrated professors of it, and they both sat in Moses' chair, ch. xxiii. 2, and had such a reputation among the people, that they were looked upon super-conformable to the law, and people did not think themselves obliged to be as good as they; it was therefore a great surprise to them, to hear that they must be better than they, or they should not go to heaven; and therefore Christ here avers it with solemnity, "I say unto you," it is so. The scribes and Pharisees were enemies to Christ and his doctrine, and were great oppressors; and yet it must be owned there was something commendable in them; they were much in fasting and prayer, and giving of alms; were punctual in observing the ceremonial appointments, and made it their business to teach others; they had such an interest in the people, that they thought, if but two men went to heaven, one would be a Pharisee; and yet our Lord Jesus here tells his disciples, that the religion he came to establish, did not only exclude the badness, but excel the goodness, of the scribes and Pharisees. We must do more than they, and better than they, or we shall come short of heaven. They were "partial in the law," and laid most stress upon the ritual part of it; but we must be universal, and not think it enough to give the priest his tithe, but must give God our hearts. They minded only the outside; but we must make conscience of inside godliness; they aimed at the praise and applause of men, but we must aim at "acceptance with God;" they were proud of what they did in religion, and trusted to it as a righteousness; but we, when we have done all, must deny ourselves, and say, "we are unprofitable servants, and trust only to the righteousness of Christ;" and thus we may go beyond the scribes and Pharisees.

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother

without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. 23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. 25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. 26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Christ having laid down these principles, that Moses and the prophets were still to be their rulers, but the scribes and Pharisees were to be no longer their rulers, proceeds to expound the law in some particular instances, and to vindicate it from the corrupt glosses which those expositors had put upon it. He adds not any thing new, only limits and restrains some permissions which had been abused; and, as to the precepts, shews the breadth, strictness, and spiritual nature of them, adding such explanatory statutes as made them more clear, and tended much towards the perfecting of our obedience to them. In these verses he explains the law of the sixth commandment, according to the true intent and full extent of it.

I. Here is the command itself laid down, ver. 21: "Ye have heard it," and remember it; he speaks to them that know the law, that had Moses read to them in their synagogues every Sabbath day. "You have heard that it was said by them," or rather as it is in the margin, "to them of old time;" to your forefathers the Jews, "Thou shalt not kill." Note, The laws of God are not novel, upstart laws, but were delivered to "them of old time;" they are ancient laws, but of that nature as never to be antiquated or grow obsolete. The moral law agrees with the law of nature, and the eternal rules and reasons of good and evil, that is, the rectitude of the eternal mind. Killing is here forbidden; killing ourselves, killing any other, directly or indirectly, or being any way accessory to it. The law of God, the God of life, is a hedge of protection about our lives. It was one of the precepts of Noah, *Gen. ix. 5, 6*.

II. The exposition of this command, which the Jewish teachers contented themselves with; their comment upon it was, "Whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment." This was all they had to say upon it, that wilful murderers were liable to the sword of justice, and casual ones to the judgment of the city of refuge. The courts of judgment sat in the gate of their principal cities, the judges ordinarily in number twenty-three; these tried, condemned, and executed murderers; so that whoever killed was in danger of their judgment. Now this gloss of theirs upon this commandment was faulty, for it intimated,

First. That the law of the sixth commandment was only external, and forbade no more than the act of murder, and laid no restraint upon the inward lusts, from which "wars and fightings come." This was indeed the *πρωτον ψευδος*,—"the fundamental error" of the Jewish teachers, that the Divine law prohibited only the sinful act, not the sinful thought; they did *hæretic in cortice*,—"rest in the letter of the law,"—and never inquired into the spiritual meaning of it; Paul, while a Pharisee, did not, till, by the key of the tenth commandment, Divine grace let him into the knowledge of the spiritual nature of all the rest, *Rom. vii. 7-14*.

Secondly. Another mistake of theirs was, that this law was merely political and municipal, given for them, and intended as a directory for their courts, and no more; as if they only were the people, and the wisdom of the law must die with them.

III. The exposition which Christ gave of this commandment; and we are sure that, according to his exposition of it, we must be judged hereafter, and, therefore, ought to be ruled now. The "commandment is exceeding broad," and not to be limited by the will of the flesh or the will of men.

First. Christ tells them, that rash anger is heart murder, ver. 22: "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause" breaks the sixth commandment. By our brother, here we are to understand any person, though never so much our inferior—a child, a servant,—for we are all "made of one blood." Anger is a natural passion; there are cases in which it is lawful and laudable, but it is then sinful when we are angry without cause. The word is *αἰτι*, which signifies both *sine causa, sine effectu, et sine modo*,—"without cause, without any good effect, and without moderation;" so that the anger is then sinful, 1. When it is without any just provocation given; either for no cause, or no good cause, or no great and proportionable cause. When we are angry at children or servants for that which could not be helped, which was only a piece of forgetfulness, or mistake, that we ourselves might easily have been guilty of, and for which we would not have been angry at ourselves. When we are angry upon groundless surmises, or for trivial affronts, not worth speaking of. 2. When it is without any good end aimed at, merely to shew our authority, to gratify a brutish passion, to let people know our resentments, and excite ourselves to revenge, then it is in vain, it is to do hurt; whereas if we are at any time angry, it should be to awaken the offender to repentance, and prevent his doing so again, to clear ourselves, *2 Cor. vii. 11*, and to give warning to others. 3. When it exceeds due bounds, when we are hardy and head-strong in our anger, violent and vehement, outrageous and mischievous, and seek the hurt of those we are displeased at. This is a breach of the sixth commandment, for he that is thus angry would kill, if he could and durst; he has taken the first step towards it. Cain's killing his brother began in anger; he is a murderer in the account of God, who knows his heart, whence murders proceed, ch. xv. 19.

Secondly. He tells them, that giving opprobrious language to our brother is tongue-murder, calling him "Raca," and "thou fool;" when this is done with mildness and for a good end, to convince others of their vanity and folly, it is not sinful. Thus James saith, "O vain man;" and Paul, "thou fool;" and

v. 17. "Destroy" is too strong a word, and we should rather put "nullify." The Lord came not to nullify the law, but to work out its ultimate intentions.

v. 18. The word for "verily" is the Hebrew "Amen," implying a solemn assertion. "Jot" is in Hebrew the letter *yod*, the smallest of the alphabet, as *iota* is of the Greek. The word for "tittle" denotes one of the little points or prominences by which alone some letters are in the Hebrew alphabet distinguished from others. But

while the words "jot" and "tittle" originally refer to letters and their forms, it is clear that our Lord speaks of the substance and details of the law.

v. 19. In the opinion of some the "least commandments" are the ceremonial observances of the law, to which the Pharisees especially attached great importance. This, however, can scarcely be correct, because our Lord's whole discourse is concerned with moral and spiritual duties, which extend to our least conspicuous and most

Christ himself, "O fools, and slow of heart." But when it proceeds from anger and malice within, it is the smoke of that fire which is kindled from hell, and falls under the same character. 1. "Raca" is a scornful word, and comes from pride: "thou empty fellow." It is the language of that which Solomon calls "proud wrath," *Pr. xxi. 24*, which tramples upon our brother, disdains to set him even "with the dogs of our flock." 2. "Thou fool" is a spiteful word, and comes from hatred; looking upon him, not only as mean, and not to be honoured, but as vile, and not to be loved. "Thou wicked man, thou reprobate," the former speaks a man without wit, this (in Scripture language) speaks a man without grace; the more the reproach toucheth his spiritual condition, the worse it is. The former is a haughty taunting of our brother, this is a malicious censuring and condemning him, as abandoned of God. Now this is a breach of the sixth commandment; malicious slanders and censures are "poison under the tongue," that kills secretly and slowly; bitter words are as arrows that wound suddenly, *Ps. lxxv. 3*, or as a sword in the bones. The good name of our neighbour, which is better than life, is thereby stabbed and murdered; and it is an evidence of such an ill-will to our neighbour, as would strike at his life, if it were in our power.

Thirdly, He tells them, that how light soever they made of these sins, they will certainly be reckoned for; he that is "angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment," and anger of God; he that calls him "Raca, shall be in danger of the council," that is, of being punished by the Sanhedrim for reviling an Israelite; but whosoever saith, "Thou fool, thou profane person, thou child of hell," shall be in danger of hell fire, to which he condemns his brother;—so the learned Dr. Whitby. Some think, in allusion to the penalties used in the several courts of judgment among the Jews, Christ shews that the sin of rash anger exposes men to lower or higher punishments, according to the degrees of its proceeding. The Jews had three capital punishments, each worse than the other: beheading, which was inflicted by the judgment; stoning, by the council; or chief Sanhedrim; and burning in the valley of the son of Hinnom, which was used only in extraordinary cases. It signifies, therefore, that rash anger and reproachful language are damning sins. But some are more sinful than others, and accordingly, there is a greater damnation and a sorer punishment reserved for them. Christ would thus shew which sin was most sinful, by shewing which was it, the punishment whereof was most dreadful.

Fourthly, From all this it is here inferred, that we ought carefully to preserve Christian love and peace with all our brethren, and, if at any time a breach happens, to labour for a reconciliation, by confessing our fault, humbling ourselves to our brother, begging his pardon, and making restitution, or offering satisfaction for wrong done in word or deed, according as the nature of the thing is, and to do this quickly, for two reasons:

1. Because, till this be done, we are utterly unfit for communion with God in holy ordinances, *ver. 23, 24*. The case supposed is, "that 'thy brother have somewhat against thee,' that thou hast injured and offended him, either really or in his apprehension. If thou art the party offended, there needs not this delay: if thou have aught against thy brother, make short work of it: no more is to be done but to "forgive him," *Mar. xi. 25*, and forgive the injury; but if the quarrel begun on thy side, and the fault was either at first or afterwards thine, so that thy brother has a controversy with thee, go and be reconciled to him before thou "offer thy gift at the altar," before thou approach solemnly to God in the Gospel services of prayer and praise, hearing the Word, or the sacraments." Note, 1st. When we are addressing ourselves to any religious exercises, it is good for us to take that occasion of serious reflection and self-examination. There are many things to be remembered when we "bring our gift to the altar," and this among the rest, whether "our brother hath aught against us." Then, if ever, we are disposed to be serious, and therefore should then call ourselves to an account. 2nd. Religious exercises are not acceptable to God if they be done when we are in wrath. Envy, malice, and uncharitableness, are sins so displeasing to God, that nothing pleases him which comes from a heart wherein those are predominant, *1 Tim. ii. 8*. Prayers made in wrath are written in gall, *Isa. i. 15*; *lviii. 4*. 3rd. Love and charity are so much better "than all burnt offerings and sacrifice," that God will have reconciliation made with an offended brother before the gift is offered. He is content to stay for the gift, rather than have it offered while we are under guilt, and engaged in a quarrel. 4th. Though we are unfitted for communion with God, by a continual quarrel with a brother, yet that can be no excuse for the omission or neglect of our duty. "Leave there thy gift before the altar," lest otherwise, when thou art gone away, thou be tempted not to come again. Many give this as a reason why they do not come to church, or to the communion, because they are at variance with some neighbour; and whose fault is that? One sin will never excuse another, but will rather double the guilt: want of charity cannot justify the want of piety. The difficulty is easily got over; those who have wronged us must first forgive, and those whom we have wronged we must make satisfaction to or at least make a tender of it, and desire a renewing of the friendship, so that if reconciliation be not made, it may not be our fault. "And 'then come,' come and welcome, 'come and offer thy gift,' and it shall be accepted." Therefore, we must not "let the sun go down upon our wrath" any day, because we must go to prayer before we go to sleep; much less let the sun rise "upon our wrath" on a Sabbath day, because it is a day of prayer.

2. Because, till this be done, we lie exposed to much danger, *ver. 25, 26*. It is at our peril, if we do not labour an agreement, and that quickly, upon two accounts. 1st. Upon a temporal account. If the offence we have done to our brother, in his body, goods, or good name, be such as will bear an action, in which he may recover considerable damages, it is our wisdom, and it is duty to our family, to prevent that by an humble submission, and a just and peaceable satisfaction, lest otherwise he recover it by law, and put us to the extremity of a prison. In such a case it is better compound, and make the best terms we can, than to stand it out; for it is in vain to contend with the law, and there is danger of our being crushed by it. Many ruin their estates by an obstinate persisting in the offences they have given, which would soon have been pacified by a little yielding at first. Solomon's advice in case of suretyship is, "Go humble thyself," and so secure and "deliver thyself," *Pr. vi. 1*. It is good to agree, for the law is costly. Though we must be merciful to those we have advantage against, yet we must be just to those that have advantage against us, as far as we are able. "Agree and compound with thine adversary quickly, lest he be exasperated by thy stubbornness, and provoked to insist upon the utmost demand, and will not make thee the abatement, which at first he would have made." A prison is an uncomfortable place to those who are brought to it by their own pride and prodigality, their own wilfulness and folly. 2nd. Upon a spiritual account. "Go and be 'reconciled to thy brother,' be just to him, be friends with him; because while the quarrel continues, as thou art unfit to "bring thy gift to the altar," unfit to come to the table of the Lord, so thou art unfit to die; if thou persist in this sin, there is danger lest thou be suddenly snatched away by the wrath of God, whose judgment thou canst not escape, or except against; and if that iniquity be laid to thy charge, thou art undone for ever." Hell is a prison for all that live and die in malice and un-

charitableness, for all that are contentious, *Rom. ii. 8*; and out of that prison there is no rescue, no redemption, no escape, to eternity. This is very applicable to the great business of our reconciliation to God through Christ; "agree with him quickly, while thou art in the way." Note, 1. The great God is an adversary to all sinners, *aristotēs*,—"a law adversary"; he has a controversy with them, an action against them. 2. It is our concern to agree with him, to acquaint ourselves with him, that we may "be at peace," *Jno. xxii. 21*; *2 Cor. v. 20*. It is our wisdom to do this "quickly, while we are in the way." While we are alive, we "are in the way," after death it will be too late to do it; therefore "give not sleep to thine eyes" till it be done. 4. Those that continue in a state of enmity to God are continually exposed to the arrests of his justice, and the most dreadful instances of his wrath. Christ is the judge to whom impenitent sinners will be delivered; for "all judgment is committed to the Son." He that was rejected as a Saviour, cannot be escaped as a Judge, *Rev. vi. 16, 17*. It is a fearful thing to be thus turned over to the Lord Jesus, when the lamb shall become a lion. Angels are the officers to whom Christ will deliver them, *ch. xiii. 41, 42*: devils are so too, having "the power of death," as executioners to all unbelievers, *Heb. ii. 14*. Hell is the prison into which those will be cast that continue in a state of enmity to God, *2 Pet. ii. 4*. 5. Damned sinners must lie by it to eternity. They shall not depart till they have "paid the uttermost farthing," and that will not be to the utmost ages of eternity. Divine justice will be for ever in the satisfying, but never satisfied.

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. 30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. 31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

We have here an exposition of the seventh commandment, given us by the same hand that made the law, and, therefore, was fittest to be the interpreter of it. It is the law of uncleanness, which fitly follows upon the former; that laid a restraint upon sinful passions, this upon sinful appetites, both which ought always to be under the government of reason and conscience, and if indulged, are equally pernicious.

1. The command is here laid down, *ver. 27*: "Thou shalt not commit adultery," which includes a prohibition of all other acts of uncleanness, and the desire of them. But the Pharisees, in their expositions of this command, made it to extend no further than the act of adultery; suggesting, if the iniquity was only "regarded in the heart," and went no further, God could not hear it, would not regard it, *Ps. lxxvi. 18*; and, therefore, they thought it enough to be able to say, they were "no adulterers," *Lu. xviii. 11*.

2. It is here explained in the strictness of it, in three things, which would seem new and strange, to those who had been always governed by the tradition of the elders, and took all for oracle that they taught.

First, We are here taught that there is such a thing as heart adultery, adulterous thoughts and dispositions, which never proceed to the act of adultery and fornication; and perhaps the defilement which these give to the soul, that is here so clearly asserted, was not only included in the seventh commandment, but was signified and intended, in many of those ceremonial pollutions under the law, for which they were to "wash their clothes, and bathe their flesh in water." "Whosoever looketh on a woman," *ver. 28*, not only another man's wife, as some would have it, but any woman, "to lust after her, has committed adultery with her in his heart." This command forbids, not only the acts of fornication or adultery, but, 1. All appetites to them, all lusting after the forbidden object; this is the beginning of the sin, lust conceiving, *Jas. i. 15*; it is an ill step towards the sin, and where the lust is dwelt upon and approved, and the wanton desire is rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel, it is the commission of the sin, as far as the heart can do it; there wants nothing but a convenient opportunity for the sin itself. *Adultera mens est*,—"The mind is debauched,"—*Ovid*. Lust is conscience baffled or biased; biased, if it say nothing against the sin; baffled, if it prevail not in what it saith. 2. All approaches towards them, feeding the eye with the sight of the forbidden fruit. Not only looking for that end, that I may lust, but looking till I do lust, or looking to gratify the lust, where further satisfaction cannot be obtained. The eye is both the inlet and the outlet of a great deal of wickedness of this kind; witness Joseph's mistress, *Gen. xxxix. 7*; Samson, *Jud. xvi. 1*; David, *2 Sam. xi. 2*. We read of "eyes full of adultery," that cannot cease from this sin, *2 Pet. ii. 14*; what need have we, therefore, with holy Job, to "make a covenant with our eyes," to make this bargain with them, that they should have the pleasure of beholding the light of the sun and the works of God, provided they would never fasten or dwell upon any thing that might occasion impure imaginations or desires, and under this penalty, that if they did, they must smart for it in penitential tears! *Job xxxi. 1*. What have we the covering of the eyes for, but to restrain corrupt glances, and keep out their defiling impressions? This forbids also the using of any other of our senses to stir up lust. If ensnaring looks are forbidden fruit, much more can clean discourses and wanton dalliances, the fuel and bellows of this hellish

private actions and sentiments. The phrase, "the kingdom of heaven," which occurs so often, is not a mere periphrasis for heaven, but denotes a heavenly kingdom or government. The kingdom of heaven is wherever the Lord reigns in the lives and hearts of men. The various shades of meaning assigned to the words in different places are consistent with this general application. In this verse all the professed servants of God are regarded as citizens of a kingdom, or subjects of a government, which has a heavenly head, and is

founded on heavenly principles. In this kingdom rank is determined by conformity to the will of the supreme Lord.

v. 20. The scribes were the official or professional expounders of the Jewish laws, and were, like the Pharisees, very precise in calling attention to the minutiae of the letter, though not always earnest in exemplifying the excellence of the spirit of God's word, in which the higher righteousness consists.

v. 21. For "by them of old time" some render "to them of old

fire. These precepts are hedges about the law of heart purity, ver. 8; and if looking be lust, they who dress, and deck, and expose themselves, with design to be looked at and lusted after, (like Jezebel, that "painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at the window,") are no less guilty. Men sin, but devils tempt to sin.

Secondly. That such looks and such dalliances are so very dangerous and destructive to the soul, that it is better to lose the eye and the hand that thus offend, than give way to the sin, and perish eternally in it. This lesson is here taught us, ver. 29, 30. Corrupt nature would soon object against the prohibition of heart adultery, that it is impossible to be governed by it: 'it is a hard saying, who can bear it? Flesh and blood cannot but look with pleasure upon a beautiful woman, and it is impossible to forbear lusting after and dallying with such an object.' Such pretences as these will scarce be overcome by reason, and, therefore, must be argued against with the terrors of the Lord, and so they are here argued against. 1. It is a severe operation that is here prescribed for the preventing of these fleshly lusts. "If thy right eye offend thee," or cause thee to offend, by wanton glances, or wanton gazes, upon forbidden objects; "if thy right hand offend thee," or cause thee to offend, by wanton dalliances; and if it were indeed impossible, as is pretended, to govern the eye and the hand, and they have been so accustomed to these wicked practices, that they will not be withheld from them; yet if there were no other way to restrain them, (which, blessed be God, through his grace, there is,) it were better for us, and less hurtful, to "pluck out the eye," and "cut off the hand," though the right eye, and right hand, the more honourable and useful, than indulge them in sin, to the ruin of the soul. And if this must be submitted to, at the thought of which nature startles, much more must we resolve to "keep under the body, and to bring it into subjection;" to live a life of mortification and self denial, to keep a constant watch over our own hearts, and to suppress the first rising of lust and corruption there; to avoid the occasions of sin, to resist the beginnings of it, and to decline the company of such who will be a snare to us, though never so pleasing; to keep out of harm's way, and abridge ourselves in the use of lawful things, when we find them temptations to us; and to seek unto God for his grace, and depend upon that grace daily, and so to "walk in the Spirit," as that we may not "fulfil the lusts of the flesh;" and this will be as effectual as cutting off a right hand, or pulling out a right eye, and perhaps as much against the grain to flesh and blood: it is the destruction of the old man. 2. It is a startling argument that is made use of to enforce this prescription, ver. 29; and it is repeated in the same words, ver. 30, because we are loath to hear such rough things, *Isa. xxx. 10*: "It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish," though it be an eye or a hand, which can be worst spared, "and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Note, *Isa.* It is not unbecoming a minister of the Gospel to preach of hell and damnation, nay, he must do it, for Christ himself did it, and we are unfaithful to our trust, if we give not warning of the wrath to come. 2nd. There are some sins from which we need to be saved with fear, particularly fleshly lusts, which are such natural brute beasts, as cannot be checked, but by being frightened; cannot be kept from a forbidden tree, but by "a cherubim with a flaming sword." 3rd. When we are tempted to think it hard, to deny ourselves, and to crucify fleshly lusts, we ought to consider how much harder it will be to lie for ever in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Those do not know, or do not believe, what hell is, that will rather venture their eternal ruin in those flames, than deny themselves the gratification of a base and brutish lust. 4th. In hell there will be torments for the body; the whole body will be cast into hell, and there will be torment in every part of it; so that, if we have any care of our own bodies, we will possess them in "sanctification and honour," and not in the lusts of uncleanness. 5th. Even those duties that are most displeasing to flesh and blood, yet are profitable for us; and our Master requires nothing from us but what he knows to be for our advantage.

Thirdly. That men's divorcing their wives upon dislike, or for any other cause, except adultery, however tolerated and practised among the Jews, was a violation of the seventh commandment, as it opened a door to adultery, ver. 31, 32. Here observe, 1. How the matter now stood with reference to divorce. "It hath been said," (he doth not say, as before, "It hath been said by them of old time," because this was not a precept, as those were, though the Pharisees were willing so to understand it, *ch. xix. 7*, but only a permission,) "Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement;" let him not think to do it by word of mouth, when he is in a passion, but let him do it deliberately, by a legal instrument in writing, attested by witnesses; if he will dissolve the matrimonial bond, let him do it solemnly. Thus the law had prevented rash and hasty divorces; and perhaps at first, when writing was not so common among the Jews, that made divorces rare things; but in process of time they became very common, and this direction how to do it, when there was just cause for it, was construed a permission of it, for any cause, *ch. xix. 3*. 2. How this matter was rectified and amended by our Saviour. He reduceth the ordinance of marriage to its primitive institution; "they two shall be one flesh," not to be easily separated; and therefore a divorce is not to be allowed, except in case of adultery, which breaks the marriage covenant; but he that puts away his wife upon any other pretence, "causeth her to commit adultery," and him also that shall marry her when she is thus divorced. Note, Those who lead others into temptation to sin, or leave them in it, or expose them to it, make themselves guilty of their sin, and will be accountable for it. This is one way of being "partaker with adulterers," *Ps. l. 18*.

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: 34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: 35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. 36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. 37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

We have here an exposition of the third commandment, which we are the more concerned rightly to understand, because it is particularly said, that

time." The Greek allows of both, and may include both, like our "among them," &c. The "judgment" of which the murderer was in danger under the law was the judicial court established in every city, as ordered in *Deut. xvi. 18*.

v. 22. The words "without a cause" are not found in all copies, but they are very ancient, being in the Syriac version. "The judgment" here is not that of the preceding verse, but a spiritual tribunal. "Raca" is a term of contempt and loathing, apparently

"God will not hold him guiltless," however they may told themselves, who break this commandment, by "taking the name of the Lord their God in vain." Now as to this commandment,

1. It is agreed on all hands, that this commandment forbids perjury, forswearing, and the violation of oaths and vows, ver. 33. This was said to them of old time, and is the true intent and meaning of the third commandment. "Thou shalt not use, or take up the name of God (as we do by an oath) in vain, or unto vanity, or a lie." He "hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity," is expounded in the next words, "nor sworn deceitfully," *Ps. xxiv. 4*. Perjury is a sin condemned by the light of nature, as a complication of impiety towards God, and injustice towards man, and rendering a man highly obnoxious to the Divine wrath, which was always judged to follow so infallibly upon that sin, that the forms of swearing were commonly turned into execrations or imprecations; as that, "God do so to me, and more also;" and with us, 'so help me God,' wishing I may never have any help from God, if I swear falsely. Thus by the consent of nations have men cursed themselves, not doubting but that God would curse them, if they lied against the truth then, when they solemnly called God to witness to it. It is added from some other Scriptures, but "shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths," *Num. xxx. 2*, which may be meant either,

First. Of those promises to which God is a party, vows made to God; these must be punctually paid, *Eccl. v. 4, 5*. Or,

Secondly. Of those promises made to our brethren, to which God was a witness, he being appealed to concerning our sincerity; these must be performed to the Lord, with an eye to him, and for his sake; for to him, by ratifying the promise with an oath, we have made ourselves debtors; and if we break a promise so ratified, we "have not lied unto men" only, "but unto God."

II. It is here added, that the commandment doth not only forbid false swearing, but all rash, unnecessary swearing. "Swear not at all," ver. 34, compare *Jas. v. 17*. Not that all swearing is sinful; so far from that, that if rightly done, it is a part of religious worship, and we in it "give unto God the glory due unto his name:" see *Deut. vi. 13*; *x. 20*; *Isa. xlv. 23*; *Jer. iv. 2*. We find Paul confirming what he said by such solemnities, *2 Cor. i. 23*, when there was a necessity for it. In swearing, we pawn the truth of something known, to confirm the truth of something doubtful or unknown; we appeal to a greater knowledge, to a higher court, and imprecate the vengeance of a righteous Judge, if we swear deceitfully. Now the mind of Christ in this matter is,

First. That we must "swear not at all," but when we are duly called to it, and justice or charity to our brother, or respect to the commonwealth, make it necessary for the end of strife, *Heb. vi. 16*, of which necessity the civil magistrate is ordinarily to be the judge. We may be sworn, but we must not swear; we may be adjured, and so obliged to it, but we must not thrust ourselves upon it for our own worldly advantage.

Secondly. That we must not swear lightly and irreverently, in common discourse; it is a very great sin, a ludicrous appeal to the glorious Majesty of heaven, which being a sacred thing ought always to be very serious; it is a gross profanation of God's holy name, and of one of the holy things which "the children of Israel sanctify to the Lord;" it is a sin that has no cloak, no excuse for it, and therefore a sign of a graceless heart, in which enmity to God reigns: "Thine enemies take thy name in vain."

Thirdly. That we must in a special manner avoid promissory oaths; of which Christ more particularly speaks here, for they are oaths that are to be performed. The influence of an assertory oath immediately ceaseth, when we have faithfully discovered the truth, and the whole truth, the peril is over; but a promissory oath binds so long, and may be so many ways broken, by the surprise, as well as strength of a temptation, that therefore it is not to be used, but upon great necessity. The frequent requiring and using of them is a reflection upon Christians, who should be of such acknowledged fidelity, as that their sober words should be as sacred as their solemn oaths.

Fourthly. That we must not swear by any creature. It should seem there were some, who in civility, as they thought, to the name of God, would not make use of that in swearing, but would swear by heaven or earth, &c. This Christ forbids here, ver. 34, and shews there is nothing we can swear by, but it is some way or other related to God, who is the Fountain of all beings; and therefore it is as dangerous to swear by them, as it is to swear by God himself. It is the verity of the creature that is laid at stake; now that cannot be an instrument of testimony, but as it has regard to God, who is the *summum verum*,—"the chief Truth." As for instance, 1. Swear not "by the heaven"—as sure as there is a heaven, this is true:—"for it is God's throne," where he resides, and in a particular manner manifests his glory, as a prince upon his throne. "This being the inseparable dignity of the upper world, you cannot swear by heaven, but you swear by "God himself." 2. "Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool." He governs the motions of this lower world: as he rules in heaven, so he rules over the earth; and though under his feet, yet withal under his eye and care, and stands in relation to him as his, *Ps. xxiv. 1*: "the earth is the Lord's;" so that swearing by it, you swear by its owner. 3. "Neither by Jerusalem," a place which the Jews had such a veneration for, that they could not speak of any thing more sacred, to swear by; but besides the common reference Jerusalem has to God, as part of the earth, it is in special relation to him, "for it is the city of the great King," *Ps. xlviii. 2*; "the city of God," *Ps. xlii. 4*; he is therefore interested in it, and in every oath taken by it. 4. "Neither shalt thou swear by thy head;" though it be near thee, and an essential part of thee, yet it is more God's than thine; for he made it, and formed all the springs and powers of it; whereas thou thyself canst not, from any natural intrinsic influence, change the colour of one hair, so as to make it white or black; so that thou canst not swear by thy head, but thou swearest by Him, who is the life of thy head, and the lifter up of it, *Ps. iii. 3*.

Fifthly. That therefore in all our communication we must content ourselves with "yea, yea," and "nay, nay," ver. 37. In ordinary discourse, if we affirm a thing, let us only say, 'Yea, it is so;' and if need be, to evidence our assurance of a thing, we may double it, and say 'yea, yea, indeed it is so;' 'verily, verily,' was our Saviour's 'yea, yea.' So, if we deny a thing, let it suffice to say, 'no;' or, if it be requisite to repeat the denial, and say, 'no, no;' and if our fidelity be known, that will suffice to gain us credit; and if it be questioned, to back what we say with swearing and cursing, is but to render it more suspicious; they that can swallow a profane oath, will not strain at a lie. It is pity that this which Christ puts in the mouths of all his disciples, should be fastened as a name of reproach, upon a set faultily enough other ways; when, as Dr. Hammond saith, we are not only forbidden any more than 'yea and nay,' but are in a manner directed to the use of that.

The reason is observable, "for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil," though it do not amount to the iniquity of an oath. It comes *ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου*, so an ancient copy has it: it comes 'from the devil,' the evil one; it comes from the corruption of men's nature, from passion and vehemence, and a reigning vanity in the mind, and a contempt of sacred things: it comes from that deceitfulness which is in men, "all men are liars;" therefore men use these protestations, because they are distrustful one of another, and think they cannot be believed without them. Note, Christians should, for the credit of their religion, avoid not only that which is in itself evil, but that which "cometh of evil," and

Syriac, from a verb meaning to spit. The word rendered "fool" is by some wrongly supposed to be Hebrew, and signifying "rebel." "Hell fire" is literally "the Gehenna of fire." The actual Gehenna was the Valley of Hinnom, where fire consumed the carcasses of criminals and offal of every sort. Hence the term came to be used of the place of future punishment.

v. 25. "Adversary" here is not an enemy, but one who brings an accusation at law. "In the way" seems, from *Luke xii. 58*, to mean

has the appearance of it. That may be suspected as an ill thing, which comes from an ill cause. An oath is physic, which supposeth a disease.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. 42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

In these verses the law of retaliation is expounded, and in a manner repealed. Observe,

I. *What the Old Testament permission was, in case of injury*: and here the expression is only, "Ye have heard that it hath been said," not as before concerning the commands of the Decalogue, that it has been said, 'by or to them of old time.' It was not a command, that every one should of necessity require such satisfaction, but they might lawfully insist upon it, if they pleased; "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." This we find, *Ex. xxi. 24; Lev. xxiv. 20; Deut. xix. 21*; in all which places it is appointed to be done by the magistrate, who "bears not the sword in vain," but is "the minister of God," "an avenger to execute wrath." *Rom. xiii. 4*. It was a direction to the judges of the Jewish nation, what punishment to inflict in case of maims, for terror to such as would do mischief on the one hand, and for a restraint to such as have mischief done them on the other hand, that they may not insist on a greater punishment than is fitting; it is not a life for an eye, or a limb for a tooth, but observe a proportion; and it is intimated, *Num. xxxv. 31*, that the forfeiture in this case might be redeemed with money; for when it is provided that no ransom shall be taken for the life of a murderer, it is supposed, that for maims a pecuniary satisfaction was allowed. But some of the Jewish teachers, who were not the most compassionate men in the world, insisted upon it as necessary, that such revenges should be taken, even by private persons themselves, and there was no room left for remission, or the acceptance of satisfaction. Even now when they were under the government of the Roman magistrates, and consequently the judicial law fell to the ground of course, yet they were still zealous for any thing that looked harsh and severe. Now, so far this is in force with us, as a direction to magistrates, to use the sword of justice, according to the good and wholesome laws of the land, for the terror of evil doers, and the vindication of the oppressed. That judge neither feared God, nor regarded man, who would not avenge the poor widow of her adversary, *Lu. xviii. 2, 3*. And as a rule to lawgivers, to provide accordingly, and wisely to apportion punishments to crimes, for the restraint of rapine and violence, and the protection of innocence.

II. *What the New Testament precept is*. As to the complainant himself, his duty is, to "forgive the injury" as done to himself, and no further to insist upon the punishment of it, than is necessary to the public good. And this precept is consonant to the meekness of Christ, and the gentleness of his yoke. Two things Christ teacheth us here.

First. We must not be revengful, *ver. 39*: "I say unto you, that ye resist not evil;" the evil person that is injurious to you. The resisting of any ill attempt upon us, is here as generally and expressly forbidden, as the resisting of the higher powers is, *Rom. xiii. 2*; and yet this doth not repeal the law of self preservation, and the care we are to take of our families. We may avoid evil, and may resist it so far as is necessary to our own security; but we must not "render evil for evil," must not bear a grudge, or avenge ourselves; nor study to be even with those that have done us an unkindness; but to go beyond them by forgiving them, *Pr. xx. 22; xxiv. 29; xxv. 21, 22; Rom. xii. 17*. The law of retaliation must be made to consist with the law of love; nor, if any have injured us, is our amends in our own hands, but in the hands of God, to whose wrath we must give place; and sometimes in the hands of his vicegerents, where it is necessary for the preservation of the public peace. But it will not justify us in hurting our brother, to say, that he began, for it is the second blow that makes the quarrel; and when we were injured, we had an opportunity, not to justify our injuring him, but to shew ourselves the true disciples of Christ, by forgiving him. Three things our Saviour instanteth, to shew that Christians must patiently yield to those who bear hard upon them, rather than contend; and these include others.

1. A blow on the cheek, which is an injury to me in my body. "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek," which is not only a hurt, but an affront and indignity, *2 Cor. xi. 20*; if a man in anger or scorn thus abuse thee, "turn to him the other cheek;" that is, instead of avenging that injury, prepare for another, and bear it patiently. Give not the rude man as he brings, do not challenge him, or enter an action against him; if it be necessary to the public peace, that he be bound to his good behaviour, leave that to the magistrate; but for thy own part, it will ordinarily be the wisest course, to pass it by, and take no further notice of it. There are no bones broken, no great harm done, forgive it and forget it; and if proud fools think the worse of thee, and laugh at thee for it, all wise men will value and honour thee for it, as a follower of the blessed Jesus, who, though he was the Judge of Israel, did not smite those who smote him on the cheek, *Mt. v. 1*. Though this may perhaps, with some base spirits, expose us to the like affront another time, and so it is in effect to "turn the other cheek," yet let not that disturb us, but let us trust God and his providence to protect us in the way of our duty. Perhaps the forgiving of one injury may prevent another, when the avenging of it would but draw another; some will be overcome by submission, who by resistance would but be the more exasperated, *Pr. xxv. 22*. However, our amends is in Christ's hands, who will recompense us with eternal glory, for the shame we thus patiently endure; and though it be not directly inflicted, if it be quietly borne, for conscience sake, and in conformity to Christ's example, it shall be put upon the score of suffering for Christ.

2. The loss of a coat, which is a wrong to me in my estate, *ver. 40*. "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat;" it is a hard case. Note, it is common for legal processes to be made use of for the doing of the greatest injuries. Though judges be just and circumspect, yet it is possible for ill men, that make no conscience of oaths and forgeries, by course of law to recover the coat off a man's back. "Marvel not at the matter,"

Eccl. v. 8, but in such a case rather than go to law by way of revenge, rather than exhibit a cross bill, or stand out to the utmost in defence of that which is thy undoubted right, let him even "take thy cloak also." If the matter be small, which we may part with without any considerable damage to our families, it is good to quit it for peace's sake. It will not cost thee so much to buy another cloak, but it will cost thee a great deal more by course of law to recover that; and therefore unless thou canst get it again by fair means, it is better let him take it.

3. The going of a mile by constraint, which is a wrong to me in my liberty, *ver. 41*. "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile," to run of an errand for him, or to wait upon him, grudge not at it, but "go with him two" miles, rather than fall out with him. Say not, 'I would do it, if I were not compelled to it, but I hate to be forced;' rather say, therefore, 'I will do it;' for otherwise there will be a quarrel, and it is better serve him, than serve our own lust of pride and revenge. Some give this sense of it: the Jews taught that the disciples of the wise, and students of the law were not to be pressed, as others might, by the king's officers, to travel upon the public service; but Christ will not have his disciples to insist upon this privilege, but to comply rather than offend the government. The sum of all is, that Christians must not be litigious; small injuries must be put up with, and no notice taken of them: and if the injury be such as requires we should seek for reparation, it must be for a good end, and without thought of revenge. Though we must not invite injuries, yet we must meet them cheerfully in the way of duty, and make the best of them. If any say, flesh and blood cannot pass by such an affront, let them remember that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

Secondly. We must be charitable and beneficent, *ver. 42*: must not only do no hurt to our neighbours, but labour to do them all the good we can.

1. We must be ready to give: "give to him that asketh thee." If thou hast an ability, look upon the request of the poor as giving thee an opportunity for the duty of almsgiving. When a real object of charity presents itself, we should give at the first word: "give a portion to seven, and also to eight;" yet the affairs of our charity must be guided with discretion, *Ps. cxli. 5*, lest we give that to the idle and unworthy, which should be given to those that are necessitous and deserve well. What God saith to us, we should be ready to say to our poor brethren, "ask, and it shall be given you."

2. We must be ready to lend. This is sometimes as great a piece of charity as giving; as it not only relieveth the present exigence, but obligeth the borrower to providence, industry, and honesty; and therefore "from him that would borrow of thee" something to live on, or something to trade on, "turn not thou away." Shun not those that thou knowest have such a request to thee, nor contrive excuses to shake them off. Be easy of access to him that would borrow. Though he be bashful, and hath not confidence to make known his case, and beg the favour, yet thou knowest both his need and his desire, and therefore offer him the kindness. *Exorabor antequam rogor; honestis precibus occurram*.—I will be prevailed on before I am entreated; I will anticipate the becoming petition.—*Seneca, De Vit. Beat.* It becomes us to be thus forward in acts of kindness, for before we call, God hears us, and "prevents us with the blessing of his goodness."

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

We have here, lastly, an exposition of that great fundamental law of the second Table, "thou shalt love thy neighbour," which was the fulfilling of the law.

I. *See here how this law was corrupted by the comments of the Jewish teachers*, *ver. 43*. God said, "thou shalt love thy neighbour;" and by neighbour, they understood those only of their own country, nation, and religion, and those only that they were pleased to look upon as their friends. Yet this was not the worst; from this command, "thou shalt love thy neighbour," they were willing to infer, what God never designed, "thou shalt hate thine enemy;" and they looked upon whom they pleased as their enemies, thus making void that great command of God by their traditions; though there were express laws to the contrary, *Ex. xxiii. 4, 5; Deut. xxiii. 7*: "thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, or an Egyptian," though these nations had been as much enemies to Israel, as any whatsoever. It was true, God appointed them to destroy the seven devoted nations of Canaan, and not to make leagues with them; but there was a particular reason for it, to make room for Israel, and that they might not be "snares to them;" but it was very ill-natured, from hence to infer, that they must hate all their enemies; yet the moral philosophy of the heathen allowed this: it is *Cicero's* rule, *Nemini nocere nisi prius lacessitum injuria*.—To injure no one, unless previously injured.—*De Offic.* See how willing corrupt passions are to fetch countenance from the Word of God, and to take occasion by the commandment to justify themselves.

II. *See how it is cleared by the command of the Lord Jesus*, who teacheth us another lesson; "but I say unto you," I, who come to be the great Peacemaker, the general Reconciler, who loved you when you were strangers and enemies; I say, "love your enemies," *ver. 44*. Though men are never so bad themselves, and carry it never so basely towards us, yet that doth not discharge us from the great debt we owe them, of love to our kind, love to our kin. We cannot but find ourselves very prone to wish the hurt, or at least very coldly to desire the good, of those that hate us, and have been abusive to us: but that which is

"on the way" to the magistrate. "Lest at any time" conveys not exactly the idea, which is, "that the adversary may not at all deliver or hand thee over to the judge," &c. The "officer" is he to whom convicted persons are consigned in order to be put into prison. The whole of this verse and of the next is in the language of human tribunals.

v. 31. The husband who repudiated his wife had to give her a written form of dismission. As this was done by some on com-

paratively trivial occasions, our Lord condemns the abuse of the power, by laying down a more stringent rule.

v. 33. "Forswear:" that is, perjure; "thou shalt not take a false oath, nor take an oath and fail to observe it." Some, in order to evade the obligation of an oath, omitted to swear by the Lord, supposing an oath not to be binding unless the Divine name was introduced.

v. 34—37. In these verses various forms of oath are prohibited,

CHAPTER VI.

at the bottom hereof, is a root of bitterness, which must be plucked up, and a remnant of corrupt nature, which grace must conquer. Note, It is the great duty of Christians to "love their enemies;" we cannot have complacency in one that is openly wicked and profane; nor put a confidence in one that we know to be deceitful; nor are we to love all alike; but we must pay respect to the human nature, and so far "honour all men;" we must take notice with pleasure, of that, even in our enemies, which is amiable and commendable; ingenuity, good temper, learning, moral virtue, kindness to others, profession of religion, &c., and love that, though they are our enemies. We must have a compassion for them, and a good will towards them: we are here told,

First. That we must speak well of them; "bless them that curse you." When we speak to them, we must answer their revilings with courteous and friendly words, and "not render railing for railing;" behind their backs we must commend that in them which is commendable, and when we have said all the good we can of them, not be forward to say any more; see 1 Pet. iii. 9. They, in whose tongues is the "law of kindness," can give good words to those who give ill words to them.

Secondly. That we must do well to them; "do good to them that hate you," and that will be a better proof of love than good words. Be ready to do them all the real kindness that may be, and glad of an opportunity to do it, in their bodies, estates, names, families, and especially to do good to their souls. It was said of Archbishop Cranmer, that the way to make him one's friend, was to do him an ill turn, so many did he serve that had disoblighed him.

Thirdly. We must pray well for them; "pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." Note, 1. It is no new thing for the most excellent saints to be hated, and cursed, and persecuted, and despitefully used by wicked people; Christ himself was so treated. 2. That when at any time we meet with such usage, we have an opportunity of shewing our conformity, both to the precept and to the example of Christ, by praying for them who thus abuse us. If we cannot otherwise testify our love to them, yet this way we may, without ostentation, and it is such a way as surely we durst not dissemble in. We must pray that God will forgive them, that they may never fare the worse for any thing they have done against us, and that he would make them to be at peace with us, and this is one way of making them so. *Ptolemy* in his *Laconic Apophthegms* has this of *Aristo*; when one commended *Cleomene's* saying, who being asked, 'what a good king should do?' replied, *τοὺς μὲν φίλους ἐνεργεῖν τοὺς δὲ ἐχθρούς κακῶς ποιεῖν*,—'good turns to his friends, and evil to his enemies;' he said 'how much better is it' *τοὺς μὲν φίλους ἐνεργεῖν τοὺς δὲ ἐχθρούς φίλους ποιεῖν*,—'to do good to our friends, and make friends of our enemies.' This is "heaping coals of fire on their head."

Two reasons are here given to enforce this command, which sounds so harsh, of "loving our enemies." We must do it,

First. That we may be like God our Father; that ye may be, that is, may approve yourselves to be "the children of your Father which is in heaven." Can we write after a better copy? It is a copy in which love to the worst of enemies is reconciled to, and consistent with infinite purity and holiness. God "maketh his sun to rise," and "sendeth rain on the just and unjust," ver. 45. Note, 1. Sunshine and rain are great blessings to the world, and they come from God. It is his sun that shines, and the rain is sent by him. They do not come of course or by chance, but from God. 2. Common mercies must be valued as instances and proofs of the goodness of God, who in them shews himself a bountiful benefactor to the world of mankind, who would be very miserable without these favours, and are utterly unworthy of the least of them. 3. These gifts of common providence are dispensed indifferently to good and evil, just and unjust; so that we cannot know love and hatred by what is before us, but what is within us; not by the shining of the sun on our heads, but by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness in our hearts. 4. The worst of men partake of the comforts of this life in common with others, though they abuse them, and fight against God with his own weapons; which is an amazing instance of God's patience and bounty. It was but once that God forbade his sun to shine on the Egyptians, when the "Israelites had light in their dwellings;" God could make such a distinction every day. 5. The gifts of God's bounty to wicked men that are in rebellion against him, teach us to "do good to those that hate us;" especially considering, that though there is in us a carnal mind, which is enmity to God, yet we share in his bounty. 6. Those only will be accepted as the children of God that study to resemble him, particularly in his goodness.

Secondly. That we may herein "do more than others," ver. 46, 47. 1. "Publicans love their friends;" nature inclines them to it, interest directs them to it. To do good to them which do good to us, is a common piece of humanity, which even those whom the Jews hated and despised, could give as good proofs of as the best of them. The publicans were men of no good fame, yet they were grateful to such as had helped them to their places, and courteous to those they had a dependence upon; and shall we be no better than they? In doing this we serve ourselves, and consult our own advantage; and what reward can we expect for that, unless a regard to God and sense of duty carry us further than our natural inclination and worldly interest? 2. We must, therefore, love our enemies, that we may exceed them. If we must go beyond scribes and Pharisees, much more beyond publicans. Note, Christianity is something more than humanity; it is a serious question, which we should frequently put to ourselves: "What do we more than others? what excelling thing do we do?" We know more than others; we talk more of the things of God than others; we profess, and have promised more than others; God has done more for us, and therefore justly expects more from us than from others; the glory of God is more concerned in us than in others; but what do we more than others? Wherein do we live above the rate of the children of this world? "Are we not carnal," and do we not walk as men below the character of Christians? In this especially we must do more than others, that while every one will render good for good, we must render "good for evil;" and this will speak a nobler principle, and is consonant to a higher rule than the most of men act by. Others "salute their brethren," they hug those of their own party, and way, and opinion; but we must not so confine our respect, but love our enemies; otherwise what reward have we? We cannot expect the reward of Christians if we rise no higher than the virtue of publicans. Note, Those that promise themselves a reward above others, must study to "do more than others."

Lastly. Our Saviour concludes this subject with this exhortation, ver. 48: "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;" which may be understood, 1. In general, including all those things wherein we must be "followers of God as dear children." Note, It is the duty of Christians to desire, and aim at, and press towards a perfection in grace and holiness, *Phil.* iii. 12–14; and therein we must study to conform ourselves to the example of our heavenly Father, 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. Or, 2. In this particular before mentioned of "doing good to our enemies," see *Lu.* vi. 36. It is God's perfection to "forgive injuries," and to "entertain strangers," and to do good to the evil and unthankful; and it will be ours to be like him. We that owe so much, that owe our all to the Divine bounty ought to copy it out as well as we can.

those which are specified being such as men would lightly utter. That all oaths are here forbidden is held by some, but it is maintained by most that our Lord's words restrict rather than condemn oaths. Here, as in verses 29, 30, and some which follow, it is alleged that the language was never intended to be taken according to the strict letter of it.

v. 40. The "coat" here is the under garment, and the "cloak" the outer one. The coat was a kind of tunic with sleeves; the cloak

Christ having in the former chapter armed his disciples against the corrupt doctrines and opinions of the scribes and Pharisees, especially in their expositions of the law, (that was called their leaven, *ca.* xvi. 12,) comes in this chapter to warn them against their corrupt practices, against the two sins, which though in their doctrine they did not justify, yet in their conversation they were notoriously guilty of, and so as even to recommend them to their admirers; those were hypocrisy and worldly-mindedness, sins, which of all others, the possessors of religion need to guard against, as sins that most easily beset those who have escaped the grosser pollutions that are in the world through lust, and are therefore highly dangerous. We are here cautioned, 1. Against hypocrisy; we must not be as the hypocrites are, nor do as the hypocrites do; 1. In giving of alms, ver. 1–4. 2. In prayer, ver. 5–8; and here taught what to pray for, and how to pray, ver. 9–13, and to forgive in prayer, ver. 14, 15. 3. In fasting, ver. 16–18. II. Against worldly-mindedness. 1. In our choice, which is the destroying sin of hypocrites, ver. 19–24. 2. In our cares, which is the disquieting sin of many good Christians, ver. 25–34.



TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: 4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

As we must do better than the scribes and Pharisees in avoiding heart sins, heart adultery, and heart murder, so likewise in maintaining and keeping up heart religion, doing what we do from an inward, vital principle, that we may be approved of God, not that we may be applauded of men; that is, we must watch against hypocrisy, which was the leaven of the Pharisees, as well as their doctrine, *Lu.* xii. 1. Almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, are three great Christian duties—the three foundations of the law, say the Arabians; by them we do homage and service to God with our three principal interests; by prayer with our souls, by fasting with our bodies, by almsgiving with our estates. Thus we must not only "depart from evil," but "do good," and do it well, and so "dwell for evermore." Now in these verses we are cautioned against hypocrisy in giving alms. "Take heed" of it. Our being bid to "take heed" of it, intimates it is a sin, 1. We are in great danger of it; it is a subtle sin; vain-glory insinuates itself into what we do ere we are aware. The disciples would be tempted to it by the power they had to do any wondrous works, and their living with some that admired them, and others that despised them, both which are temptations to covet to make a fair show in the flesh. 2. It is a sin we are in great danger by. Take heed of hypocrisy, for if it reign in you it will ruin you. It is the dead fly that spoils the whole box of precious ointment. Two things are here supposed.

1. The giving of alms is a great duty, and a duty which all the disciples of Christ according to their ability must abound in. It is prescribed by the law of nature, and of Moses, and great stress laid upon it by the prophets. Divers ancient copies here, for *τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην*,—'your alms,' read *τὴν δικαιοσύνην*,—'your righteousness;' for alms are righteousness, *Ps.* cxii. 9; *Pr.* x. 2. The Jews called the poor's box, 'the box of righteousness.' That which is given to the poor is said to be their due, *Pr.* iii. 27. The duty is never the less necessary and excellent for its being abused by hypocrites to serve their pride. If superstitious papists have placed a merit in works of charity, that will not be an excuse for covetous protestants that are barren in such good works. It is true our alms-deeds do not deserve heaven, but it is as true we cannot go to heaven without them. It is "pure religion," *Jas.* i. 27, and will be the test at the great day; Christ here takes it for granted that his disciples give alms, nor will he own those that do not.

II. That it is such a duty as hath a great reward attending it, which is lost if it be done in hypocrisy. It is sometimes rewarded in temporal things—with plenty, *Pr.* xi. 24, 25; xix. 17; security from want, *Pr.* xxvii. 27; *Ps.* xxvii. 21, 25; succour in distress, *Ps.* xli. 1, 2; honour and a good name, which follows those most that least covet it, *Ps.* cxii. 9; however, it shall be recompensed in the resurrection of the just, *Lu.* xiv. 14, in eternal riches. *Quas dederis, solas semper habebis, opes*,—'The riches you impart form the only wealth you will always retain.'—*Martial*. This being supposed, observe now,

First. What was the practice of the hypocrites about this duty. They did it, indeed, but not from any principle of obedience to God, or love to man, but in pride and vain-glory; not in compassion to the poor, but purely for ostentation, that they might be cried up for good men, and so might gain an interest in the esteem of the people, with which they knew how to serve their own turn, and to get a great deal more than they gave. Pursuant to this intention, they chose to "give their alms in the synagogues and in the streets," where there was the greatest concourse of people to observe them, who applauded their liberality because they shared in it, but were so ignorant as not to discern their abominable pride. Probably they had collections for the poor in the synagogues; and the common beggars haunted the streets and the highways, and upon these public occasions they chose to give their alms. Not that it is unlawful to give alms "when men see us," we may do it, we must do it, but not "that men may see us;" we should rather choose those objects of charity that are less observed. The hypocrites, if they gave alms at their own houses, "sounded a trumpet" under pretence of calling the poor together to be served, but really to proclaim their charity, and to have that taken notice of and made

was a sort of loose robe. On the subject of the dress worn by the Jews the following quotations are instructive:—"The ordinary robes of the Jew were two, which are distinguished in our Bible as the coat and cloak. The former was in reality an under garment, resembling in shape our shirt, inasmuch as it fitted close to the body, reaching to the knee, and was furnished with sleeves. Its shape may have varied at different periods, but this was its general appearance. A person clothed in the coat or tunic alone was said to be stripped,

the subject of discourse. Now the doom that Christ passeth upon this is very observable: "Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward." At first view this seems a promise; if they have their reward they have enough: but two words in it make it a threatening. 1. It is a reward, but it is their reward; not the reward which God promiseth to them that do good, but the reward which they promise themselves, and a poor reward it is; they did it to be seen of men, and they are seen of men; they chose their own delusions, with which they cheated themselves, and they shall have what they chose. Carnal professors indent with God for preferment, honour, wealth, and they shall have their bellies filled with those things, *Ps. xvii. 14*; but let them expect no more, these are their consolation, *Lu. vi. 24*; their good things, *Lu. xvi. 25*; and they shall be put off with these. "Didst not thou agree with me for a penny?" It is the bargain thou art like to abide by. 2. It is a reward, but it is a present reward; they have it, and there is none reserved for them in the future state. They now have all that they are likely to have from God; they have their reward here, and have none to hope for hereafter. *Αρέγονται τὸν μισθόν*, it signifies 'a receipt in full.' What rewards the godly have in this life are but in part of payment; there is more behind, much more; but hypocrites have their all in this world, so shall their doom be; themselves have decided it. The world is but for provision to the saints, it is their spending money, but it is pay to hypocrites, it is their portion.

Secondly. What is the precept of our Lord Jesus about it, ver. 3, 4. He that was himself such an example of humility, pressed it upon his disciples as absolutely necessary to the acceptance of their performances. "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" when thou givest alms. Perhaps it alludes to the placing of the *corban*, the poor man's box, or the chest, into which they cast their free will offering, on the right hand of the passage into the temple; so that they put their gift into it with the right hand. Or the giving of alms with the right hand, intimates readiness to it, and resolution in it; do it dexterously, not awkwardly, or with a sinister intention. The right hand may be used in helping the poor, lifting them up, writing for them, dressing their sores, and other ways besides giving to them; but whatever kindness thy right hand doth to the poor, "let not thy left hand know it," that is, conceal it as much as possible, industriously keep it private. Do it because it is a good work, not because it will get thee a good name. *In omnibus factis, re, non teste, moveamur*,—"In all our actions we should be influenced by a regard to the object, not to the observer," *Cic. de Fin.* It is intimated, 1. That we must not let others know what we do; no, not those that stand at our left hand, that are very near us. Instead of acquainting them with it, keep it from them, if possible; however, appear so desirous to keep it from them, as that in civility they may seem not to take notice of it, and keep it to themselves, and let it go no further. 2. That we must not observe it too much ourselves; the left hand is a part of ourselves: we must not within ourselves take notice too much of the good we do, must not applaud and admire ourselves. Self-conceit, and self-complacency, and an adorning of our own shadow, are branches of pride, as dangerous as vain-glory and ostentation before men. We find those had their good works remembered to their honour, who had themselves forgotten them:—"When saw we thee an hungered or athirst?"

Thirdly. What is the promise of those who are thus sincere and humble in their almsgiving. "Let 'thine alms be in secret,' and then 'thy Father which seeth in secret' will observe them." Note, When we take least notice of our good deeds ourselves, God takes most notice of them. As God hears the wrongs done to us when we do not hear them, *Ps. xxxviii. 14, 15*, so he sees the good done by us when we do not see it. As it is a terror to hypocrites, so it is a comfort to sincere Christians, that God "sees in secret." But this is not all, not only the observation and praise, but the recompense, is of God, "himself shall reward thee openly." Note, Those that in their almsgiving study to approve themselves to God, only turn themselves over to him for their paymaster. The hypocrite catches at the shadow, but the upright man makes sure the substance. Observe how emphatically it is expressed: "himself shall reward:" he will himself be the rewarder, *Heb. xi. 6*. Let him alone to make it up in kind or kindness: nay, he will himself be the reward, *Gen. x. 1*, "thine exceeding great reward." He will reward thee as thy Father, not as a master, who gives his servant just what he earns and no more, but as a father, who gives abundantly more and without stint to his son that serves him. Nay, "he shall reward thee openly," if not in the present day, yet in the great day; "then shall every man have praise of God," open praise; thou shalt be confessed before men. If the work be not open the reward shall, and that is better.

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

In prayer we have more immediately to do with God than in giving alms, and therefore are yet more concerned to be sincere, which is what we are here directed to. "When thou prayest," ver. 5. It is taken for granted that all the disciples of Christ pray. As soon as ever Paul was converted, 'behold he prayeth.' You may as soon find a living man that doth not breathe, as a living Christian that doth not pray. "For this shall every one that is godly pray." If prayerless, then graceless. "Now, when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are," nor do as they do, ver. 5. Note, Those who would not do as the hypocrites do in their way and actions, must not be as the hypocrites are in their frame and temper. He names nobody, but it appears by *ch. xxiii. 13*, that by the hypocrites here he means especially the scribes and

Pharisees. Now there were two great faults they were guilty of in prayer, against each of which we are here cautioned,—vain-glory, ver. 5, 6, and vain repetitions, ver. 7, 8.

1. *We must not be proud and vain-glorious in prayer, nor aim at the praise of men.* And here observe,

First. What was the way and practice of the hypocrites. In all their exercises of devotion, it was plain the chief thing they aimed at was to be commended by their neighbours, and thereby to make an interest for themselves. When they seemed to soar upwards in prayer, (and if it be right, it is the soul's ascent towards God,) yet even then their eye was downwards upon this as their prey. Observe, 1. What the places were which they chose for their devotion; they prayed "in the synagogues," which were indeed proper places for public prayer, but not for personal; they pretended thereby to do honour to the places of their assemblies, but intended to do honour to themselves. They prayed "in the corners of the streets," the broad streets (so the word signifies) which were most frequented; they withdrew thither, as if they were under a pious impulse which would not admit delay, but really it was to make themselves to be taken notice of. There, where two streets met, they were not only within ken of both, but every passenger turning close upon them would observe them, and hear what they said. 2. The posture they used in prayer: they "pray standing;" this is a lawful and proper posture for prayer, *Mar. xi. 25*: "when ye stand praying;" but kneeling being the more humble and reverent gesture, *Lu. xxii. 41*; *Acts vii. 60*; *Eph. iii. 14*, their standing seemed to savour of pride and confidence in themselves, *Lu. xviii. 11*: "The Pharisee stood and prayed." 3. Their pride in choosing those public places, which is expressed in two things. 1st. They "love to pray" there. They did not love prayer for its own sake, but they loved it when it gave them an opportunity of making themselves taken notice of. Circumstances may be such that our good deeds must needs be done openly, so to fall under the observations of others, and be commended by them; but the sin and danger is, when we love it, and are pleased with it, because it feeds the proud humour. 2nd. It is "that they may be seen of men;" not that God might accept them, but that men might admire and applaud them; and that they might easily get the estates of widows and orphans into their hands, (who would not trust such devout, praying men?) and when they had them, might "devour them" without being suspected, *ch. xxiii. 14*; and effectually carry on their public designs to enslave the people. 4. The product of all this: "they have their reward;" they have all the recompense they must ever expect from God for their service, and a poor recompense it is. What will it avail us to have the good word of our fellow-servants, if our master do not say "well done?" But if in so great a transaction as is between us and God, when we are at prayer we can take in so poor a consideration as the praise of men is, it is just that that should be all our reward. They did it to be "seen of men," and they are so; and much good may it do them. Note, Those that would approve themselves to God in their integrity in their religion, must have no regard to the praise of men; it is not to men that we pray, nor from them that we expect an answer; they are not to be our judges, they are dust and ashes like ourselves, and therefore we must not have our eye to them; what passeth between God and our own souls must be out of sight. In our synagogue worship we must avoid every thing that tends to make our personal devotion remarkable, as they that caused their "voice to be heard on high," *Isa. lviii. 4*; nor are public places proper for private, solemn prayer.

Secondly. What is the will of Jesus Christ in opposition to this: Humility and sincerity are the two great lessons that Christ teacheth us; "thou, when thou prayest," do so and so, ver. 6, thou in particular, by thyself, and for thyself." Personal prayer is here supposed to be the duty and practice of all Christ's disciples. Observe, 1. The directions here given about it. 1st. Instead of praying "in the synagogues," and "in the corners of the streets," "enter into thy closet," that is, into some place of privacy and retirement; Isaac went into the field, *Gen. xxv. 63*; Christ to a mountain; Peter to the house-top: no place amiss in point of ceremony, if it do but answer the end. Note, Secret prayer is to be performed secretly, that we may be unobserved, and so may avoid ostentation; undisturbed, and so may avoid distraction; unheard, and so may use the greater freedom; yet if the circumstances be such that we cannot possibly avoid being taken notice of, we must not therefore neglect the duty, lest the omission be a greater scandal than the observation of it. 2nd. Instead of doing it to be seen of men, "pray to thy Father which is in secret;" "to me, even to me," *Zec. vii. 5, 6*. The Pharisees prayed rather to men than to God; whatever was the form of their prayer, the scope of it was to beg the applause of men, and court their favours. "Well, do thou pray to God, and let that be enough for thee: pray to him as a Father, as thy Father, ready to hear and answer; graciously inclined to pity, help, and succour thee; pray to thy Father which is in secret." Note, In secret prayer we must have an eye to God, as present in all places: he is there, in thy closet, when no one else is there; there especially, nigh to thee in what thou "callest upon him for." By secret prayer we give God the glory of his universal presence, *Acts xvii. 25*; and may take to ourselves the comfort of it. 2. The encouragements here given us to it. 1st. Thy Father "seeth in secret;" his eye is upon thee to accept thee, when the eye of no man is upon thee to applaud thee; "under the fig tree I saw thee," said Christ to Nathaniel, *Jno. i. 48*: he saw Paul at prayer in such a street, at such a house, *Acts ix. 11*; there is not a secret, sudden breathing after God but he observes it. 2nd. He "will reward thee openly;" they have their reward that do it openly, and thou shalt not lose thine for thy doing it in secret. It is called a reward, but it is of grace, not of debt; what merit can there be in begging? The reward will be open; they shall not only have it, but have it honourably; the open reward is that which hypocrites are fond of, but they have not patience to stay for it; it is that which the sincere are dead to, and they shall have it over and above. Sometimes secret prayers are rewarded openly in this world by signal answers to them, which manifest God's praying people in the consciences of their adversaries; however, at the great day there will be an open reward, when all praying people shall "appear in glory" with the great Intercessor. The Pharisees had their reward before all the town, and it was a mere flash and shadow; true Christians shall have theirs "before all the world," angels and men, and it shall be a "weight of glory."

II. *We must not use "vain repetitions" in prayer*, ver. 7, 8: though the life of prayer lies in "lifting up the soul," and "pouring out the heart," yet there is some interest which words have in prayer, especially in joint prayer; for in that, words are necessary, and it should seem that our Saviour speaks here especially of that; for before he said "when thou prayest," here "when ye pray;" and the Lord's Prayer which follows is a joint prayer, and in that, he that is the mouth of others is most tempted to an ostentation of language and expression, against which we are here warned; "use not vain repetitions," either alone, or with others; the Pharisees affected this, they "made long prayers," *ch. xxiii. 14*; all their care was to make them long. Now observe,

First. What the fault is that is here reprov'd and condemn'd, it is making a mere lip labour of the duty of prayer, the service of the tongue, when it is not the service of the soul; this is expressed here by two words, *Βαττολογία, πολυλογία*, 1. "Vain repetitions." Tautology, battology, idle babbling over the same

or naked; thus of Saul it is said that he lay down naked, when he had stripped off his clothes, *i.e.*, his outer garments (*1 Sam. xix. 24*). So again of Isaiah: 'Go and loose the sackcloth (which was worn, not next the skin, but over the coat) from off thy loins . . . and he did so, walking naked' (*Isa. xx. 2*). And so lastly of Peter: 'He girt his fisher's coat (the outer garment) unto him, for he was naked' (*John xxi. 7*). The coat was confined at the waist by a girdle. The folds of the coat overlapping the girdle formed a kind

of pocket or purse." The cloak was little more than a square piece of thick stuff, worn in various ways, like a plaid.

v. 41 "Compel" here means to press into a service. There were ancient governments, and some modern ones might be added, in which men have been taken forcibly and compelled to act as couriers, to work as labourers on public works, or to fight as soldiers.

vi. 1. The word "alms" is the reading of some copies, but the weight of authorities is in favour of "righteousness." We should

words again and again, to no purpose, like *Baltus, sub illis montibus erant, erant sub montibus illis*; like that imitation of the wordiness of a fool, *Eccl. x. 14*: "a man cannot tell what shall be, and what shall be after him, who can tell?" which is indecent and nauseous in any discourse, much more in speaking to God. It is not all repetition in prayer that is here condemned, but "vain repetitions." Christ himself prayed, saying the same words, *ch. xxvi. 44*; out of a more than ordinary fervour and zeal, *Lu. xiii. 44*; so *Daniel, Dan. ix. 18, 19*; and there is a very elegant repetition of the same words, *Ps. cxxxvi*; it may be of use both to express our own affections, and so to excite the affections of others. But the superstitious rehearsing of a tale of words, without regard to the sense of them, as the papists saying, by their beads, so many *Ave Marias* and *Paternosters*; or the barren and dry going over of the same things again and again, merely to drill out the prayer to such a length, and to make a show of affection, when really there is none; these are the "vain repetitions" here condemned. When we would fain say much, but cannot say much to the purpose; this is displeasing to God, and all wise men. 2. "Much speaking," that is, an affection of prolixity in prayer, either out of pride or superbia, or an opinion that God needs either to be informed or argued with by us, or out of mere folly and impertinence, because men love to hear themselves talk: not that all long prayers are forbidden; Christ prayed all night, *Lu. vi. 12*; Solomon's was a long prayer; there is sometimes need of long prayers, when our errands and our affections are extraordinary; but merely to prolong the prayer, as if that would make it more pleasing or more prevailing with God, is that which is here condemned; it is not much praying that is condemned, no, we are bid to "pray always," but much speaking; the danger of this error is when we only say our prayers, not when we pray them; this caution is explained by that of Solomon, *Eccl. v. 2*: "let thy words be few," that is, considerate and well weighed; "take with you words," *Hos. xiv. 2*: "choose out words," *Job ix. 14*; and do not say every thing that comes uppermost.

Secondly, What reasons are given against this. 1. This is the way of the heathen, "as the heathen do," and it ill becomes Christians to worship their God as the Gentiles worship theirs. The heathen were taught by the light of nature to worship God, but becoming vain in their imaginations concerning the object of their worship, no wonder they became so concerning the manner of it, and particularly in this instance; thinking God altogether such an one as themselves, they thought he needed many words to make him understand what was said to him, or to bring him to comply with their requests; as if he were weak, and ignorant, and hard to be intreated. Thus Baal's priests were hard at it, from morning till almost night, with their "vain repetitions," "O Baal, hear us, O Baal, hear us," and vain petitions they were; but Elijah, in a grave, composed frame, with a very short, concise prayer, prevailed for fire from heaven first, and then water, *1 Kin. xviii. 26-36*; lip labour in prayer, though never so well laboured, if that be all, is but lost labour. 2. It needs not be your way, "for your Father in heaven knoweth what things you have need of before you ask him," and therefore there is no occasion for such abundance of words: it doth not follow that therefore you need not pray, for God requires you by prayer to own your need of him, and dependence on him, and to put his promises in suit; but therefore you are to open your case, and pour out your hearts before him, and then leave it with him. Consider, 1st. The God we pray to is "Our Father," by creation, by covenant, and therefore our addresses to him should be easy, natural, and unaffected; children do not use to make long speeches to their parents, when they want any thing, it is enough to say 'my head, my head.' Let us come to him with the disposition of children, with love, reverence, and dependence; and then those need not say many words that are taught by the spirit of adoption to say that one aright, "Abba, Father." 2nd. He is a Father that knows our case, and knows our wants better than we do ourselves; "he knows what things we have need of," his eyes run to and fro through the earth to observe the necessities of his people, *2 Cor. xvi. 9*; and he often gives "before we call," *Isa. lxxv. 24*; and "more than we ask for," *Lph. iii. 20*; and if he do not give his people what they ask, it is because he knows they do not need it, nor is it for their good; and of that he is fitter to judge for us than we are for ourselves; we need not be long, or use many words in representing our case, God knows it better than we can tell him, only he will know it from us, "what will ye that I should do unto you?" and when we have told him what it is, we must refer ourselves to him, "Lord, all my desire is before thee," *Ps. cxxxviii. 9*. So far is God from being wrought upon by the length or language of our prayers, that the most powerful intercessions are those which are made with groanings that cannot be uttered, *Rom. viii. 26*; we are not to prescribe, but subscribe to God.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. 14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

When Christ had condemned what was amiss, he directs to do better: for his are reproofs of instruction. Because we know not what to pray for as we ought, he here helps our infirmities, by putting words into our mouths: "after this manner therefore pray ye," *ver. 9*. So many were the corruptions that were crept into this duty of prayer among the Jews, that Christ saw it needful to give a new directory for prayer, to shew his disciples what must ordinarily be the matter and method of their prayer, which he gives in words that may very well be used as a form; as the summary or contents of the several particulars of our prayers; not that we are tied up to the use of this form only, or of this always, as if this were necessary to the consecrating of our other prayers; we are here bid to pray "after this manner," with these words, or to this effect: that in Luke differs from this; we do not find it used by the apostles. We are not here taught to pray in the name of Christ, as we are

afterwards; we are here taught to pray, that that kingdom might come which did come when the Spirit was poured out: yet without doubt it is very good to use it as a form, and it is a pledge of the communion of saints, it having been used by the church in all ages, at least, saith Dr. Whitby, from the third century. It is our Lord's Prayer, it is of his composing, of his appointing; it is very compendious, yet very comprehensive, in compassion to our praying infirmities; the matter is choice and necessary, the method instructive, and the expression very concise; it has much in a little; and it is requisite that we acquaint ourselves with the sense and meaning of it, for it is used acceptably, no further than it is used understandingly, and without vain repetition. The Lord's Prayer (as indeed every prayer) is a letter sent from earth to heaven. Here is the inscription of the letter, "the person to whom it is directed," "Our Father," the place where, "in heaven;" the contents of it, in several errands of request; the close, "for thine is the kingdom;" the seal, "Amen;" and if you will the date too, "this day." Plainly thus; there are three parts of the prayer.

I. *The preface.* "Our Father which art heaven." Before we come to our business, there must be a solemn address to him with whom our business lies; "Our Father," intimating that we must pray, not only alone, and for ourselves, but with, and for others; for we are members one of another, and are called into fellowship with each other. We are here taught to whom to pray,—to God only, and not to saints and angels, for they are ignorant of us, are not to have the honours we give in prayer, nor can give the favours we expect. We are taught how to address ourselves to God, and what title to give him, that which speaks him rather beneficent than magnificent, for we are to "come boldly to the throne of grace."

First. We must address ourselves to him as "Our Father," and must call him so. He is a common Father to all mankind, by creation, *Mal. ii. 10*; *Acts xviii. 27*; he is in a special manner a Father to the saints by adoption and regeneration, *Eph. i. 5*; *Gal. iv. 6*; and an unspeakable privilege it is. Thus we must eye him in prayer, keep up good thoughts of him, such as are encouraging, and not affrighting; nothing more is pleasing to God, or pleasant to ourselves, than to call God "Father." Christ in prayer mostly called God "Father." If he be "Our Father," he will pity us under our weaknesses and infirmities, *Ps. ciii. 13*; will spare us, *Mal. iii. 17*; will make the best of our performances, though very defective; will deny us nothing that is good for us, *Lu. xi. 11-13*; we have access with boldness to him, as to a Father, and have an advocate with the Father, and the spirit of adoption. When we come repenting of our sins, we must eye God as a Father, as the prodigal did, *Lu. xv. 18*; *Jer. iii. 19*; when we come begging for grace, and peace, and the inheritance and blessing of sons, it is an encouragement that we come to God not as an unreconciled, avenging Judge, but as a loving, gracious, reconciled Father in Christ, *Jer. iii. 4*.

Secondly. As our Father "in heaven," so in heaven as to be every where else, for the heaven cannot contain him; yet so in heaven as there to manifest his glory, for it is his throne, *Ps. ciii. 19*; and it is to believers a throne of grace; thitherward we must direct our prayer, for Christ the Mediator is now in heaven, *Heb. vii. 1*; heaven is out of sight, and a world of spirits, therefore our converse with God in prayer must be spiritual; it is on high, therefore in prayer we must be raised above the world, and lift up our hearts, *Ps. v. 1*; heaven is a place of perfect purity, and we must therefore lift up pure hands, must study to sanctify his name, who is the Holy One, and dwells in that holy place, *Lev. x. 3*; from heaven God beholds the children of men, *Ps. cxxxiii. 12, 14*, and we must in prayer see his eye upon us; therefore he has a full and clear view of all our wants, and burthens, and desires, and all our infirmities; it is the firmament of his power likewise, as well as of his prospect, *Ps. cl. 1*; he is not only as a Father, willing to help us, but as a heavenly Father, able to help us, able to do great things for us more than we can ask or think; he has wherewithal to supply our needs, for every good gift is from above. He is a Father, and therefore we may come to him with boldness; but a Father in heaven, and therefore we must come with reverence, *Eccl. v. 2*. Thus all our prayers should correspond with that which is our great aim as Christians, and that is, to be with God in heaven. God and heaven, the end of our whole conversation, must be particularly eyed in every prayer; there is the centre to which we are all tending. By prayer we send before us thither, where we profess to be going.

II. *The petitions.* and those are six: the first three relating more immediately to God and his honour, the last three to our concerns, both temporal and spiritual; as in the Ten Commandments, the first four teach us our duty towards God; and the last six our duty towards our neighbour. The method of this prayer teacheth us to seek first the "kingdom of God and his righteousness," and then to hope that "other things shall be added."

First. "Hallowed be thy name:" it is the same word that in other places is translated 'sanctified'; but here the old word "hallowed" is retained, only because people were used to it in the Lord's Prayer. In these words, 1. We give glory to God; it may be taken, not as a petition, but as an adoration; as that, "the Lord be magnified," or "glorified," for God's holiness is the greatness and glory of all his perfections; we must begin our prayers with praising God, and it is very fit he should be first served, and that we should give glory to God, before we expect to receive mercy and grace from him. Let him have the praise of his perfections, and then let us have the benefit of them. 2. We fix our end, and it is the right end to be aimed at, and ought to be our chief and ultimate end in all our petitions, that God may be glorified; all our other requests must be in subordination to this, and in pursuance of it. "Father, glorify thyself in giving me my daily bread, and pardoning my sins," &c. Since all is of him and through him, all must be to him and for him. In prayer, our thoughts and affections should be carried out most to the glory of God. The Pharisees made their own name the chief end of their prayers, *ver. 5*, "to be seen of men;" in opposition to which we are directed to make the name of God our chief end; let all our petitions centre in this, and be regulated by it: "do so and so for me, for the glory of thy name," and as far as is for the glory of it." 3. We desire and pray that the name of God, that is, God himself in all that whereby he has made himself known, may be sanctified and glorified both by us and others, and especially by himself. "Father, let thy name be glorified as a Father, and a Father in heaven; glorify thy goodness and thy highness, thy majesty and mercy;" "let thy name be sanctified" for it is a holy name; no matter what becomes of our polluted names, but, Lord, "what wilt thou do to thy great name?" When we pray that God's name may be glorified, 1st. We make a virtue of necessity, for God will "sanctify his own name" whether we desire it or no; "I will be exalted among the heathen," *Ps. xlii. 2*. 2nd. We ask for that which we are sure shall be granted; for when our Saviour prayed, "Father, glorify thy name," it was immediately answered, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it yet again."

Secondly. "Thy kingdom come." This petition has plainly a reference to the doctrine which Christ preached at this time, which John Baptist had preached before, and which he afterwards sent his apostles out to preach: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." The kingdom of your Father which is in heaven, the kingdom of the Messiah, this is at hand, pray that it may come. Note, We should turn the word we hear into prayer, our hearts should echo to it; doth Christ promise "Surely I come quickly," our hearts should answer "Even so,

regard the word "righteousness" as including alms, prayer, and fasting, which is the view taken by Dean Alford and others.

vi. 2. "Do not sound a trumpet:" that is, be not ostentatious, and make a parade of your benevolence in the sanctuary and in the public street. By the words rendered "have their reward" some understand that they lack or fail of a reward; the idea rather is, they do it for glory, and glory is all the reward they get.

vi. 5. Standing in prayer is not rebuked, because it was a custo-

mary posture, but praying in order to be seen of men. As again prayer in the synagogues is not blamed, it may be inferred that even praying in the streets is sometimes allowable; not the place, but the motive, is condemned.

vi. 6. Inasmuch as private prayers in public gave rise to abuse, and tended to vanity, our Lord enjoins a more diligent use of secret prayer.

vi. 7. "Use not vain repetitions" not merely reproves the fre-

some. Ministers should pray over the word; when they preach, "The kingdom of God is at hand," they should pray, "Father, thy kingdom come." What God has promised, we should pray for; for promises are given, not to supersede, but to quicken and encourage prayer; and when the accomplishment of a promise is near, and at the door, when the kingdom of heaven is at hand, we should then pray for it the more earnestly. "Thy kingdom come." As Daniel set his face to pray for the deliverance of Israel, when he understood that the time of it was at hand, *Dan. ix. 2*. See *Lu. xix. 11*. It was the Jews' daily prayer to God, "Let him make his kingdom reign, let his redemption flourish, and let his Messiah come and deliver his people." Dr. Whitby, *ex Vitringa*. "Let 'thy kingdom come' that is, let the Gospel be preached to all, and embraced by all; let all be brought to subscribe to the record God has given in his Word concerning his Son, and to embrace him as their Saviour and Sovereign. Let the bounds of the Gospel church be enlarged, the kingdom of the world be made Christ's kingdom, and all men become subjects to it, and live as becomes their character."

Thirdly, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." We pray that, God's kingdom being come, we and others may be brought into obedience to all the laws and ordinances of it. By this let it appear that Christ's kingdom is come, let God's "will be done;" and by this let it appear that it is come as a kingdom of heaven, let it introduce a heaven upon earth. We make Christ but a titular prince, if we call him King, and do not do his will; having prayed that he may rule us, we pray that we may in every thing be ruled by him. Observe, 1. The thing prayed for, "Thy will be done," "Lord, do what thou pleasest with me and mine," *1 Sam. iii. 18*; I refer myself to thee, and am well satisfied that all thy counsel concerning me should be performed." In this sense Christ prayed, "Not my will, but thine, be done." And enable me to do what is pleasing to thee; give me that grace that is necessary to the right knowledge of thy will, and an acceptable obedience to it. Let thy will be done conscientiously by me and others, not our own wills, the wills of the flesh, or the mind, not the wills of men, *1 Pet. iv. 2*, much less Satan's will, *Jno. viii. 44*; "that we may neither displease God in any thing we do," (*ut nihil nostrum displiceat Deo*), nor be displeased at anything God did, (*ut nihil Dei displiceat nobis*). 2. The pattern or sampler of it,—that it may be done on earth, in this place of our trial and probation, where our work must be done, or it will never be done, "as it is done in heaven," that place of rest and joy, that that may at length be our state. We pray that earth may be made more like to heaven by the observance of God's will, which, through the prevalence of Satan's will, is become so near akin to hell; and that saints may be made more like to the holy angels in their devotion and obedience. We are on earth, blessed be God, not yet under the earth; we pray for the living only, not for the dead, that are "gone down into silence."

Fourthly, "Give us this day our daily bread;" because our natural being is necessary to our spiritual well-being in this world, therefore, after the things of God's glory, kingdom, and will, we pray for the necessary supports and comforts of this present life, which are the gift of God, and must be asked of him. *Τὸν ἄρτον ἐπιούριον*,—"Bread for the day approaching," that is, for all the remainder of our lives. "Bread of the time to come," or "bread for our being and subsistence," that which is agreeable to our condition in the world, *Pr. xxx. 8*. "Food convenient for us" and our families, according to our rank and station. Every word here hath a lesson in it. 1. We ask for bread,—that teacheth us sobriety and temperance; we ask for bread, not dainties, not superfluities,—that which is wholesome, though it be not nice. 2. We ask for bread,—that teacheth us honesty and industry; we do not ask for bread out of other people's mouths, not the "bread of deceit," *Pr. xx. 13*, not the "bread of idleness," *Pr. xxxi. 27*, but the bread honestly got. 3. We ask for our "daily bread," which teacheth us not to "take thought for the morrow," *ch. vi. 34*, but constantly to depend upon Divine providence, as those that live from hand to mouth. 4. We beg of God to give it us, not sell it us, or lend it us, but give it. The greatest of men must be beholden to the mercy of God for their "daily bread." 5. We pray, give it to "us," not to me only, but to others in common with me. This teacheth us charity, and a compassionate concern for the poor and needy; it intimates also that we ought to pray with our families, we and our households eat together, and, therefore, ought to pray together. 6. We pray that God would give it us "this day," which teacheth us to renew the desires of our souls towards God, as the wants of our bodies are renewed; as duly as the day comes we must pray to our heavenly Father, and reckon we could as well go a day without meat as without prayer.

Fifthly, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." This is connected to the former; "and forgive," intimating, that unless our sins be pardoned, we can have no comfort in life, and the supports of it. Our daily bread doth but feed us as lambs for the slaughter, if our sins be not pardoned. It intimates, likewise, that we must pray for daily pardon as duly as we pray for daily bread. "He that is washed needeth to wash his feet." Here we have, 1. A petition: "Father in heaven, forgive us our debts," our debts to thee. Note, 1st. Our sins are our debts. There is a debt of duty which, as creatures, we owe to our Creator; we do not pray to be discharged from that, but upon the non-payment of that, there ariseth a debt of punishment. In default of obedience to the will of God, we become obnoxious to the wrath of God; and for not observing the precept of the law, we stand obliged to the penalty. A debtor is liable to process; so are we. A malefactor is a debtor to the law; so are we. 2nd. Our heart's desire and prayer to our heavenly Father every day should be, that he would forgive us our debts; that the obligation to punishment may be cancelled and vacated; that we may not come into condemnation; that we may be discharged, and have the comfort of it. In suing out the pardon of our sins, the great plea we have to rely upon is, the satisfaction that was made to the justice of God for the sin of man, by the dying of the Lord Jesus, our surety, or rather bail to the action, that undertook our discharge. 2. An argument to enforce this petition: "As we forgive our debtors." This is not a plea of merit, but a plea of grace. Note, Those that come to God for the forgiveness of their sins against him, must make conscience of forgiving those who have offended them; else they curse themselves when they say the Lord's Prayer. Our duty is to "forgive our debtors;" as to debts of money, we must not be rigorous and severe in exacting them from those that cannot pay them without ruining themselves and their families. But this means debts of injury. Our debtors are those that "trespass against us," that "smite us," *ch. v. 39, 40*, and in strictness of law, might be prosecuted for it. We must forbear, and forgive, and forget the affronts put upon us, and the wrongs done us; and this is a moral qualification for pardon and peace. It encourageth to hope that God will forgive us, for if there be in us this gracious disposition, it is wrought of God, and, therefore, is a perfection eminently and transcendently in himself: it will be an evidence to us that he has forgiven us, having wrought in us the condition of forgiveness.

Sixthly, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." This petition is expressed, 1. Negatively: "Lead us not into temptation." Having prayed that the guilt of sin may be removed, we pray, as is fit, that we may never return again to folly; that we may not be tempted to it. It is not as if God tempted any to sin; but, "Lord, do not let Satan loose upon us; chain up

that roaring lion, for he is subtle and spiteful; Lord, do not leave us to ourselves, *Ps. ix. 13*, for we are very weak; Lord, do not lay stumbling-blocks and snares before us, nor put us into such circumstances as may be an occasion of falling." Temptations are to be prayed against, both because of the discomfort and trouble of them, and because of the danger we are in of being overcome by them, and the guilt and grief that then follows. 2. Positively: "But deliver us from evil," *ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ*,—"from the evil one," that is, the devil, the tempter; keep us, that either we may not be assailed by him, or we may not be overcome by those assaults; or "from the evil thing," that is, sin, the worst of evils; an evil, an only evil; that evil which God hates, and which Satan tempts men to, and destroys them by. "Lord, deliver us from the evil of the world, the corruption that is in the world through lust, from the evil of every condition in the world; from the evil of death, from the sting of death, which is sin. Deliver us from ourselves, from our own evil hearts; deliver us from evil men, that they may not be a snare to us, nor we a prey to them."

III. The conclusion: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." Some refer this to David's doxology, *1 Chr. xxix. 11*, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness." It is.

First, A form of plea, to enforce the foregoing petitions. It is our duty to plead with God in prayer, to fill our mouth with arguments, *Job xxiii. 4*; not to move God, but to affect ourselves, to encourage our faith, to excite our fervency, and to evidence both. Now the best pleas in prayer are those that are taken from God himself, and from that which he hath made known of himself. We must wrestle with God in his own strength, both as to the matter of our pleas and the urging of them. The plea here has special reference to the first three petitions: "Father in heaven, thy kingdom come, for thine is the kingdom; thy will be done, for thine is the power; hallowed be thy name, for thine is the glory." And as to our own particular errands, these are encouraging: "Thine is the kingdom," thou hast the government of the world, and the protection of thy saints, thy willing subjects in it. God gives and says like a king. "Thine is the power" to maintain and support that kingdom, and to make good all thine engagements to thy people. "Thine is the glory," as the end of all that which is given to, and done for, the saints, in answer to their prayers; for their praise waiteth for him. This is matter of comfort and holy confidence in prayer.

Secondly, It is a form of praise and thanksgiving. The best pleading with God is praising of him; it is the way to obtain further mercy, as it qualifies us to receive it. In all our addresses to God, it is fit that praise should have a considerable share, for "praise becometh the saints;" they are to be to our God "for a name and for a praise." It is just and equal: we praise God, and give him glory, not because he needs it,—he is praised by a world of angels,—but because he deserves it; and it is our duty to give him glory, in compliance with his design in revealing himself to us. Praise is the work and happiness of heaven, and all that would go to heaven hereafter must begin their heaven now. Observe, how full this doxology is: "The kingdom, and the power, and the glory," it is all thine. Note, It becomes us to be copious in praising God. A true saint never thinks he can speak honourably enough of God. Here there should be a gracious fluency, and this "for ever." Ascribing glory to God "for ever," intimates an acknowledgment that it is eternally due, and an earnest desire to be eternally doing it, with angels and saints above, *Ps. lxxi. 14*.

Lastly, To all this we are taught to affix our "amen," so be it. God's "amen" is a grant; his fiat is, It shall be so. Our "amen" is only a summary desire; our fiat is, Let it be so. It is in token of our desire and assurance to be heard that we say, "Amen." "Amen" refers to every petition going before; and thus, in compassion to our infirmities, we are taught to knit up the whole in one word, and so to gather up in the general, what we have lost and let slip in the particulars. It is good to conclude religious duties with some warmth and vigour, that we may go from them with a sweet savour upon our spirits. It was of old the practice of good people to say "amen" audibly at the end of every prayer; and it is a commendable practice, provided it be done understandingly, as the apostle directs, *1 Cor. xiv. 16*, and uprightly, with life, and liveliness, and inward impressions, answerable to that outward expression of desire and confidence.

Most of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer had been commonly used by the Jews in their devotions, or words to the same effect, but that clause in the fifth petition, "as we forgive our debtors," was perfectly new; and, therefore, our Saviour here shews for what reason he added it, not with any personal reflections upon the peevishness, litigiousness, and ill-nature of the men of that generation, though there was cause enough for it, but only from the necessity and importance of the thing itself. God, in forgiving us, hath a peculiar respect to our forgiving those that have injured us, and, therefore, when we pray for pardon, we must mention our making conscience of that duty, not only to mind ourselves of it, but to bind ourselves to it. See that parable, *ch. xviii. 23—35*. Selfish nature is loath to comply with this, and, therefore, it is here inculcated, *ver. 14, 15*.

First, In a promise: "If ye forgive, your heavenly Father will also forgive." Not as if this were the only condition required,—there must be repentance, and faith, and new obedience; but as where other graces are in truth, there will be this, so this will be a good evidence of the sincerity of our other graces. He that relents towards his brother, thereby shews that he repents towards his God. Those which, in the prayer, are called "debts," are here called "trespasses," debts of injury; wrongs done us in our bodies, goods, or good names. "Trespasses;" it is an extenuating term for offences: παραπτώματα,—"stumbles, slips, falls." Note, It is a good evidence, and a good help of our forgiving others, to call the injuries done us by a mollifying, excusing name. Call them not treasons, but trespasses; not wilful injuries, but casual inadvertencies; "peradventure it was an oversight," *Gen. xliii. 12*, therefore make the best of it. We must forgive, as we hope to be forgiven; and, therefore, must not only bear no malice, nor meditate revenge, but must not upbraid our brother with the injuries he has done us, nor rejoice in any hurt that befalls him; but must be ready to help him, and do him good; and if he repent, and desire to be friends again, we must be free and familiar with him, as before.

Secondly, In a threatening: "But if you forgive not those that have injured you, that is a bad sign you have not the other requisite conditions, but are altogether unqualified for pardon; and, therefore, your Father, whom you call Father, and who, as a Father, offers you his grace upon reasonable terms, will nevertheless not forgive you. And if other graces be sincere, and yet you be defective greatly in forgiving, you cannot expect the comfort of your pardon, but to have your spirits brought down, by some affliction or other, to comply with this duty." Note, Those that would find mercy with God must shew mercy to their brethren; nor can we expect that he should stretch out the hands of his favour to us, unless we lift up to him "pure hands, without wrath," *1 Tim. ii. 8*. If we pray in anger, we have reason to fear God will answer in anger. It has been said, "prayers made in wrath are written in gall." What reason is there that God should forgive us the talents we are indebted to him, if we forgive not our brethren the pence they are indebted to us? Christ "came into the world" as the great Peacemaker, not only "to reconcile us to God," but one to another, and in this we must comply with him. It is

quent uttering of the same petition, but the utterance of unintelligible expressions, which was and still is a feature of heathen worship. Words which they do not understand are spoken times without number in connection with some pagan systems, because the speakers believe there is some secret virtue or power in what they say. It is generally observed that our Lord's words condemn the Mahometan and Romish custom of saying certain forms so many times, the efficacy depending on the number of times.

vi. 9. Whether this is intended as an actual form of prayer, or only as an example of what prayers should be, is a question which has been much discussed. The safer method is to view it as both a form and a pattern. It has been sometimes urged that all, or nearly all, the expressions of the prayer may be gathered from Jewish writings. This may be quite true; but since not one of the writings quoted is so ancient as the Lord's Prayer, the fact is worthless as an objection to the originality of the prayer. Of course, our Saviour

great presumption, and of dangerous consequence, for any to make a light matter of that which Christ here lays such stress upon. Men's passions shall not frustrate God's word.

16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; 18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

We are here cautioned against hypocrisy in fasting, as before in almsgiving and in prayer.

1. It is here supposed that religious fasting is a duty required of the disciples of Christ, when God in his providence calls to it, and when the case of their own souls, upon any account, calls for it; "when the bridegroom is taken away, then shall they fast," *ch. ix. 15*. Fasting is here put last, because it is not so much a duty for its own sake, as a means to dispose us for other duties. Prayer comes in between almsgiving and fasting, as being the life and soul of both. Christ here speaks especially of private fasts, such as particular persons prescribe to themselves, as free-will offerings, commonly used among the pious Jews: some fasted one day, some two, every week, others seldomer, as they saw cause; on those days they did not eat till sunset, and then very sparingly. It was not the Pharisee's fasting twice in the week, but his boasting of it, that Christ condemned, *Lu. xviii. 12*. It is a laudable practice, and we have reason to lament it, that it is so generally neglected among Christians. Anna was much in fasting, *Lu. ii. 37*. Cornelius fasted and prayed, *Acts x. 30*. The primitive Christians were much in it; see *Acts i. 14*; *xiii. 3*; *xiv. 23*. Private fasting is supposed, *1 Cor. vii. 5*. It is an act of self-denial and mortification of the flesh, a holy revenge upon ourselves, and humiliation under the hand of God; the most grown Christians must hereby own, they are so far from having any thing to be proud of, that they are unworthy of their daily bread. It is a means to curb the flesh, and the desires of it, and to make us more lively in religious exercises, as fulness of bread is apt to make us drowsy. Paul was "in fasting often," and so he "kept under his body, and brought it into subjection."

11. We are cautioned not to do this "as the hypocrites" did it, lest we lose the reward of it; and the more difficulty attends the duty, the greater loss it is to lose the reward of it. Now,

First. The hypocrites pretended fasting, when there was nothing of that contrition and humiliation of soul in them, which is the life and soul of the duty. Theirs were mock fasts, the show and shadow without the substance. They took on them to be more humbled than really they were, and so endeavoured to put a cheat upon God, than which they could not put a greater affront upon him. The fast that God hath chosen is a day to afflict the soul, not to hang down the head like a bulrush, or for a man to spread sackcloth and ashes under him; we are quite mistaken if we call this a fast, *Isa. lviii. 5*. Bodily exercise, if that be all, profits little; that is not fasting to God, even to him.

Secondly. They proclaimed their fasting, and managed it so that all who saw them might take notice that it was a fasting-day with them. Even on these days they appeared in the streets, whereas they should have been in their closets; and they affected a down look, a melancholy countenance, a slow and solemn pace, and perfectly disfigured themselves, that men might see how oft they fasted, and might cry them up for devout, mortified men. Note, It is said that men who have in some measure mastered their pleasure, which is sensual wickedness, should be ruined by their pride, which is spiritual wickedness, and no less dangerous. Here, also, they have their reward, that praise and applause of men, which they court and covet so much; they have it, and it is their all.

111. We are directed how to manage a private fast; we must keep it private, *ver. 17, 18*. He doth not tell us how often we must fast; circumstances vary, and wisdom is profitable therein to direct. The Spirit in the word has left that to the spirit in the heart; but take this for a rule, whenever you undertake this duty, study therein to approve yourselves to God, and not to recommend yourselves to the good opinions of men. Humility must evermore attend upon our humiliation. Christ doth not direct to abate any thing of the reality of the fast; not 'take a little meat, or a little drink, or a little cordial;' no, 'let the body suffer, but to lay aside the show and appearance of it; appear with thy ordinary countenance, guise, and habit; and, while thou deniest thyself thy bodily refreshments, do it so as that it may not be taken notice of, no, not by those that are nearest to thee; look pleasant, "anoint thine head, and wash thy face," as thou usest to do on other days, on purpose to conceal thy devotion, and thou shalt be no loser in the praise of it at last; for though it be not of men, it shall be of God.' Fasting is the "humbling of the soul," *Ps. xxxv. 13*; that is the inside of the duty, let that, therefore, be thy principal care; and as to the outside of it, covet not to let it be seen. If we be sincere in our solemn fasts, and humble, and trust God's omniscience for our witness, and his goodness for our reward, we shall find both that he did "see in secret," and "will reward openly." Religious fasts, if rightly kept, will shortly be recompensed with an everlasting feast. Our acceptance with God in our private fasts should make us dead, both to men's applauses, (we must not do the duty in hopes of them,) and to men's censures too (we must not decline the duty for fear of them.) David's fasting was turned to his reproach, *Ps. lxxix. 10*, and yet, *ver. 13*, "as for me," let them say what they will of me, "my prayer is unto thee in an acceptable time."

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is,

there will your heart be also. 22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Worldly-mindedness is as common and as fatal a symptom of hypocrisy, as any other; for by no sin can Satan have a surer and faster hold of the soul, under the cloak of a visible and passable profession of religion, than by this; and therefore Christ having warned us against coveting "the praise of men," comes next to warn us against coveting the wealth of the world; in this also we must take heed, lest we be as the hypocrites are, and do as they do. The fundamental error that they are guilty of is, that they choose the world for their reward. We must therefore take heed of hypocrisy and worldly-mindedness, in the choice of our treasure, our end, and our master.

1. In choosing the treasure we lay up. Something or other every man has which he makes his treasure, his portion, which is heart is upon, to which he carries all he can get, and which he depends upon for hereafter. It is that good, that chief good, which Solomon speaks of with such an emphasis, *Ecc. ii. 3*. Something the soul will have which it looks upon as the best thing, which it has a complacency and confidence in above other things: now Christ designs not to deprive us of our treasure, but to direct us in the choice of it. And here we have,

First. A good caution against making the things that are seen, that are temporal, our best things, and placing our happiness in them. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." Christ's disciples had left all to follow him, let them still keep in the same good mind. "A treasure" is an abundance of something that is in itself, at least in our opinion, precious and valuable, and likely to stand us in stead hereafter. Now we must not "lay up our treasures on earth," that is, 1. We must not count these things the best things, not the most valuable in themselves, nor the most serviceable to us. We must not call them "glory," as Laban's sons did, but see and own, that they have no glory in comparison with the "glory that excelleth." 2. We must not covet an abundance of these things, nor be still grasping at more and more of them, and adding to them; as men do to that which is their treasure; as never knowing when we have enough. 3. We must not confide in them for hereafter, to be our security and supply in time to come; must not say to the gold, "thou art my hope." 4. We must not content ourselves with them, as all we need or desire; we must be content with a little for our passage, but not with all for our portion. These things must not be made our "consolation," *Lu. vi. 24*, our "good things," *Lu. xvi. 25*. Let us consider we are laying up, not for our posterity in this world, but for ourselves in the other world. We are put to our choice, and made in a manner our own carvers; that is ours which we lay up for ourselves; it concerns thee to choose wisely, for thou art choosing for thyself, and shalt have as thou chooseth. If we know and consider ourselves, what we are, what we are made for, how large our capacities are, and how long our continuance, and that our souls are ourselves, we shall see it a foolish thing to lay up our treasure on earth. Here is a good reason given, why we should not look upon any thing on earth as our treasure, because it is liable to loss and decay, 1st. From corruption within. What is treasured up on earth, "moth and rust do corrupt." If the treasure be laid up in fine clothes, the moth frets them, and they are gone and spoiled insensibly, when we thought them most securely laid up. If it be in corn, or other eatables, as his was who had his barns full, *Lu. xii. 16, 17*, rust (so we read it) corrupts that. *Bovores*,—Eating, eating by men; for "as goods are increased, they are increased that eat them," *Ecc. v. 11*; eating by mice or other vermin; manna itself bred worms; or it grows mouldy and musty, is struck, or smutted, or blasted; fruits soon rot. Or, if we understand it of silver and gold, that tarnish and cankers: it grows less with using, and grows worse with keeping, *Jas. v. 2, 3*; the rust and the moth breed in the metal itself and in the garment itself. Note, Worldly riches have in themselves a principle of corruption and decay, they wither of themselves, "and make themselves wings." 2nd. From violence without: "Thieves break through and steal." Every hand of violence will be aiming at the house where the treasure is laid up; nor can any thing be laid up so safe, but we may be spoiled of it. *Namquam ego fortuna credidi, etiam si videretur pacem agere; omnia illa quae in me indulgentissima conferebat, pecunia, honores, gloriam, eo loco posui, unde posset ea, sine metu meo, repelere*.—I never reposed confidence in fortune, even if she seemed propitious: whatever were the favours which her bounty bestowed, whether wealth, honours, or glory, I so disposed of them, that it was in her power to recall them without occasioning me any alarm.—*Seneca Consol. ad Helv.* It is folly to make that our treasure which we may so easily be robbed of.

Secondly. Good counsel, to make the joys and glories of the other world, those "things not seen," that "are eternal," our best things, and to place our happiness in them. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Note, 1. There are treasures in heaven, as sure as there are on this earth, and those in heaven are the only true treasures; the riches, and glories, and pleasures that are at God's right hand, which those that are sanctified truly arrive at, when they come to be sanctified perfectly. 2. It is our wisdom to lay up our treasure in those treasures, to give all diligence to make sure our title to eternal life through Jesus Christ, and to depend upon that as our happiness, and look upon all things here below with a holy contempt, as not worthy to be compared with it. We must firmly believe there is such a happiness, and resolve to be content with that, and to be content with nothing short of it. If we thus make those treasures ours, they are laid up, and we may trust God to keep them safe for us; thither let us then refer all our designs, and let out all our desires; thither let us send before our best effects and best affections. Let us not burthen ourselves with the cash of this world, which will but load us, and defile us, and be in danger to sink us, but lay up in store good securities. The promises are bills of exchange, by which all true believers return their treasure to heaven, payable in a future state. And thus we must make that sure, that will be made sure. 3. It is a great encouragement to us, to lay up our treasure in heaven, that there it is safe; it will not decay of itself, no moth or rust will corrupt it, nor can we be by force or fraud deprived

employed phraseology and introduced ideas with which the Hebrews would be practically familiar, such at any rate as they would readily understand. It might be almost said that the prayer chiefly embodies, in the language of prayer, thoughts with which every reader of the Old Testament would be acquainted.

vi. 11. "Daily" in this verse is a word regarding which critics and translators in all ages have differed in opinion. A vast number understand it as meaning what comes to us day by day, in regular

succession. Others explain it to mean what has been provided for us by our heavenly Father. Some again, excluding the idea of temporal food, apply the word to spiritual provision, and call it "super-substantial" bread. Then there is the turn adopted in the ancient Syriac version, "the bread of our necessity," i.e., the bread which we require. It is not at all impossible that "bread for our sustenance" may convey the true shade of thought almost as nearly as our language can express it. "Bread for our subsistence" may be

of it: "Thieves do not break through to steal." It is a happiness above and beyond the changes and chances of time; an inheritance incorruptible.

Thirdly. A good reason why we should thus choose, and an evidence that we have done so, ver. 21: "Where your treasure is," on earth or in heaven, "there will your hearts be." We are therefore concerned to be right and wise in the choice of our treasure, because the temper of our minds, and consequently the tenor of our lives, will be accordingly; either carnal or spiritual, earthly or heavenly. The heart follows the treasure, as the needle follows the loadstone, or the sunflower the sun. Where the treasure is, there the value and esteem is, there the love and affection is, *Col. iii. 2*; that way the desires and pursuits go, thitherward the aims and intents are levelled, and all is done with that in view. Where the treasure is, there our cares and fears are, lest we come short of it: about that we are most solicitous; there our hope and trust is, *Pr. xiii. 10, 11*; there our joys and delights will be, *Ps. cxix. 111*; and there our thoughts will be; there the inward thought will be, the first thought, the free thought, the fixed thought, the frequent, the familiar thought. The heart is God's due, *Pr. xxiii. 26*, and that he may have it, our treasure must be laid up with him, and then our souls will be lifted up to him. This direction about laying up our treasure, may very fitly be applied to the foregoing caution, of not doing what we do in religion "to be seen of men." Our treasure is our alms, prayers, and fastings, and the reward of them; if we have done these only to gain the applause of men, we have laid up this treasure on earth, have lodged it in the hands of men, and must never expect to hear any further from it. Now it is folly to do this, for the praise of men we covet so much, is liable to corruption; it will soon be rusty, and moth-eaten, and tarnished; a little folly, like a dead fly, will spoil it all, *Ecc. x. 1*. Slander and calumny are thieves that break through and steal it away, and so we lose all the treasure of our performances; we have run in vain, and laboured in vain, because we misplaced our intentions in doing of them. Hypocritical services lay up nothing in heaven, *Isa. lviii. 5*, the gain of them is gone, when the soul is called for, *Job xxvii. 8*. But if we have prayed, and fasted, and given alms, in truth and uprightness, with an eye to God and to his acceptance, and have approved ourselves to him therein, we have laid up that treasure in heaven: a "book of remembrance is written" there, *Mal. iii. 16*, and being there recorded, they shall be there rewarded, and we shall meet them again with comfort, on the other side death and the grave. Hypocrites are "written in the earth," *Jer. xvii. 13*; but God's faithful ones have their names "written in heaven," *Lu. x. 20*. Acceptance with God is treasure in heaven, which can neither be corrupted nor stolen. His "well done" shall stand for ever; and if we have thus laid up our treasure with him, with him our hearts will be; and where can they be better?

II. We must take heed of hypocrisy and worldly-mindedness in choosing the end we look at. Our concern as to this, is represented by two sorts of eyes, which men have; a "single" eye, and an "evil" eye, ver. 22, 23. The expressions here are somewhat dark, because concise; we shall therefore take them in some variety of interpretation. "The light of the body is the eye," that is plain: the eye is discovering and directing; the "light of the world" would avail us little without this "light of the body." It is the "light of the eye" that "rejoiceth the heart," *Pr. xv. 30*; but what is that which is here compared to the eye in the body.

First. "The eye" that is, 'the heart,' so some; if that "be single," *αἷος*,—"free," and "bountiful," so the word is frequently rendered; as *Rom. x. 8*; *2 Cor. viii. 2*; ix. 11—13; *Jas. i. 5*; and we read of a "bountiful eye," *Pr. xvii. 9*; if the heart be liberally affected, and stand inclined to goodness and charity, it will direct the man to Christian actions, the whole conversation will "be full of light," full of the evidences and instances of true Christianity, that "pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father," *Jas. i. 27*; full of light, that is, of good works, which are our "light shining before men." But if the heart "be evil," covetous and hard, and envious, griping and grudging, (such a temper of mind is often expressed by "an evil eye," *ch. xx. 15*; *Mar. vii. 22*; *Pr. xxiii. 6, 7*;) the body will be "full of darkness," that is, the whole conversation will be heathenish and unchristian. The instruments of the churl are (and always will be) evil, but the liberal deviseth liberal things, *Isa. xxxii. 5—8*. "If the light that is in us," that is, those affections which should guide us to that which is good, "be darkness," if these be corrupt and worldly, if there be not so much as good nature in a man, not so much as a kind disposition, how great is the corruption of the man, and the darkness in which he sits! This sense seems to agree with the context; we must lay up treasure in heaven by liberality in giving of alms; and that not grudgingly but with cheerfulness, *Lu. xii. 33*; *2 Cor. ix. 7*. But these words in the parallel place do not come in upon any such occasion, *Lu. xi. 34*, and therefore the coherence here doth not determine that to be the sense of them.

Secondly. "The eye," that is, 'the understanding,' so some: the practical judgment, the conscience, which is to the other faculties of the soul, as the eye is to the body, to guide and direct their motions: now, "if this eye be single," that is, if it makes a true and right judgment, and discerns things that differ, especially in the great concern of "laying up the treasure," so as to choose aright in that, it will rightly guide the affections and actions, which will all be full of the light of grace and comfort. But "if this be evil" and corrupt, and instead of leading the inferior powers, is led, and bribed, and biassed by them, if this be erroneous and misinformed, the heart and life must needs be "full of darkness," and the whole conversation corrupt and naught. They that "will not understand" are said to "walk on in darkness," *Ps. lxxxii. 5*. It is sad when the spirit of a man, that should be the candle of the Lord, is an *ignis fatuus*, when "the leaders of the people," the leaders of the faculties, "cause them to err," for then they "that are led of them are destroyed," *Isa. ix. 16*. An error in the practical judgment is fatal, it is that which calls "evil good, and good evil," *Isa. v. 20*. Therefore it concerns us to understand things aright, to get our eyes anointed with eye salve.

Thirdly. "The eye," that is, 'the aims and intentions.' By the eye we set our end before us, the mark we shoot at, the place we go to, keep that in view, and direct our motions accordingly. In every thing we do in religion there is something or other that we have in our eye; now, if our "eye be single," that is, if we aim honestly, fix right ends to ourselves, and move rightly towards them, if we aim purely and only at the glory of God, seek his honour and favour, and direct all entirely to him, then the eye is single. Paul's was so when he said, "To me to live is Christ;" and if we be right here, the "whole body will be full of light," all the actions will be regular and gracious, pleasing to God, and comfortable to ourselves. But if this "eye be evil," if instead of aiming only at the glory of God, and our acceptance with him, we look aquint at the applause of men, and while we profess to honour God, contrive to honour ourselves, and seek our own things under colour of "seeking the things of Christ," this spoils all, the whole conversation will be perverse and unsteady, and the foundations being thus out of course, there can be nothing but "confusion, and every evil work," in the superstructure. Draw the lines from the circumference to any other point but the centre, and they will cross. "If the light that is in thee be" not only dim, but "darkness" itself, it is a fundamental error, and destructive to all that follows. The end

specifies the action. It is of the last importance in religion, that we be right in our aims, and make "eternal things," not temporal, our scope, *2 Cor. iv. 18*. The hypocrite is like the waterman, that looks one way and rows another; the true Christian like the traveller, that has his journey's end in his eye. The hypocrite soars like the kite, with his eye upon the prey below, which he is ready to come down to, when he has a fair opportunity; the true Christian soars like the lark, higher and higher, forgetting the things that are beneath.

III. We must take heed of hypocrisy and worldly-mindedness in choosing the master we serve, ver. 24: "No man can serve two masters." Serving two masters is contrary to the single eye; for the eye will be to the master's hand, *Ps. cxxiii. 1, 2*. Our Lord Jesus doth here obviate the cheat which those put upon their own souls, who think to divide between God and the world, to have a treasure on earth, and a treasure in heaven too; please God and please men too: "Why not?" saith the hypocrite, "it is good to have two strings to one's bow." They hope to make their religion serve their secular interest and so it will turn to account both ways. The pretending mother was for dividing the child: the Samaritans will compound between God and idols: "no," saith Christ, "this will not do." It is but a supposition that "gain is godliness," *1 Tim. vi. 5*. Here is,

First. A general maxim laid down; it is likely, it was a proverb among the Jews, "No man can serve two masters," much less two gods; for their commands will some time or other cross and contradict one another, and their occasions interfere. While two masters go together, a servant may follow them both, but when they part, you will see to which he belongs; he cannot love, and observe, and cleave to both as he should: if to the one, not to the other: either this or that must be comparatively hated and despised. This truth is plain enough in common cases.

Secondly. The application of it to the business in hand. "Ye cannot serve God and 'mammon.'" *Mammon* is a Syriac word, that signifies 'gain'; so that whatever it is in this world, that is, or that we account to be, gain to us, (as St. Paul speaks, *Phil. iii. 7*;) that is "mammon;" "Whatever it is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," it is "mammon." To some their belly is their "mammon," and they serve that, *Phil. iii. 19*; to others their ease, their sleep, their sports and pastimes are their "mammon," *Pr. vi. 9*; to others worldly riches, *Jas. iv. 13*; to others honours and preferences; the praise and applause of men was the Pharisees' "mammon;" in a word, self, the unity in which the world's trinity centres, sensual, secular self, the "mammon" which cannot be served in conjunction with God; for if it be served, it is in competition with him, and in contradiction to him.

He doth not say, 'We must not, or we should not, but we cannot serve God and mammon,' we cannot love both, *1 Jno. ii. 15*; *Jas. iv. 4*, or hold to both, or hold by both, in observance, obedience, attendance, trust, and dependence, for they are contrary, the one to the other. God saith, "My son, give me thy heart." Mammon saith, "No, give it me." God saith, "Be content with such things as ye have." Mammon saith, "Grasp at all that ever thou canst;" *Rem, rem, quocunque; modo rem.*—Money, money, by fair means or by foul, money. God saith, "Defraud not, never tell a lie, be honest and just in all thy dealings." Mammon saith, "Cheat thy own father, if thou canst get by it." God saith, "Be charitable." Mammon saith, "Hold thy own, this giving undoeth us all." God saith, "Be careful for nothing." Mammon saith, "Be careful for every thing." God saith, "Keep holy the Sabbath day." Mammon saith, "Make use of that day as well as any other for the world." Thus inconsistent are the commands of God and mammon, so that we cannot serve both. Let us not then halt between God and Baal, but "choose ye this day whom ye will serve," and abide by your choice.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

nearer still. After a careful examination of various opinions, Dean Alford reaches a similar conclusion. It may be well to note, as one reason for such difference of opinion, that the word rendered "daily" is not found in any other passage or writing whatever.

vi. 13. The petition, "Lead us not into temptation," has by some objectors been regarded as implying that God arbitrarily exposes men to the temptations of sin. Such a view must be erroneous, because the prayer is addressed to God as our Father. And yet God

tempted Abraham, in the well-known sense of the word—exposed to trial, put to the proof. Such a tentative process may sometimes be just and right, and to the glory of God, as well as to the advantage of his servants. On a lesser scale we are all similarly tempted every day; for what is life in the world but a mingled series of trials and deliverances? Yet we may pray not to be brought into temptations and trials which, without special grace, we cannot overcome. We may therefore pray to be delivered from the evil which besets us.

There is scarce any one sin that our Lord Jesus doth more largely and earnestly warn his disciples of, nor with more variety of arguments arm them against, than here the sin of disquieting, distracting, distrustful cares about the things of this life, which are a bad sign that both the treasure and the heart are on the earth; and therefore he thus largely insists upon it. Here is,

1. *The prohibition laid down.* It is the counsel and command of the Lord Jesus, that we "take no thought" about the things of this world. "I say unto you," He saith it as our Lawgiver, and the Sovereign of our hearts; he saith it as our Comforter and the Helper of our joy. What is it that he saith? It is this, and "he that hath ears to hear, let him hear" it: "Take no thought for your life, nor yet for your bodies," ver. 25; "take no thought, saying, What shall we eat?" ver. 31; and again, ver. 34, "Take no thought, *αὐτὴ μεριμνᾷ*," Be not in care." As against hypocrisy, so against worldly cares, the caution is thrice repeated, and yet no "vain repetition." Precept must be upon precept, and line upon line to the same purpose, and all little enough, it is a "sin which doth so easily beset us." It intimates, how pleasing it is to Christ, and of how much concern it is to ourselves, that we should live without carefulness. It is the repeated command of the Lord Jesus to his disciples, that they should not divide and pull in pieces their own minds, with care about the world. There is a thought concerning the things of this life, which is not only lawful, but duty, such as is commended in the virtuous woman, *Pr. xxvii. 23*. The word is used concerning Paul's care of the churches, and Timothy's care for the state of souls, *2 Cor. xi. 28; Phil. ii. 20*. But the care here forbidden is, 1. A disquieting, tormenting care, which hurries the mind hither and thither, and hangs it in suspense; which disturbs our joy in God, and is a damp upon our hopes in him; which breaks the sleep, and hinders our enjoyment of ourselves, of our friends, and of what God has given us. 2. A distrustful, unbelieving thought. God has promised to provide for those that are his, all things needful for life, as well as godliness; the life that now is, food and covering—not dainties, but necessities. He never said, "They shall be feasted, but," verily they shall be fed." Now, an inordinate care for time to come, and fear of wanting those supplies, spring from a disbelief of these promises, and of the wisdom and goodness of the Divine providence; and that is the evil of it. For present sustenance we may and must use lawful means to get it, else we tempt God; must be diligent in our callings, and prudent in proportioning our expenses to what we have, and pray for daily bread; and if all other means fail, we may and must ask relief of those that are able to give it. He was none of the best of men that said, "To beg I am ashamed," *Lu. xvi. 3*, as he was who, ver. 21, "desired to be fed with the crumbs;" but for the future we must "cast our care upon God," and "take no thought," because it looks like a jealousy of God, who knows how to give what we want, when we know not how to get it. Let our souls dwell at ease in him. This gracious carelessness is the same with that sleep which God gives to his beloved, in opposition to the worldling's toil, *Ps. cxxvii. 2*. Observe the cautions here:

First, "Take no thought for your life." Life is our greatest concern for this world—"all a man has will he give for his life;" yet take no thought about it. 1. Not about the continuance of it; refer it to God, to lengthen or shorten it as he pleases; "my times are in thy hand," and they are in a good hand. 2. Not about the comforts of this life; refer it to God, to embitter or sweeten it as he pleases. We must not be solicitous, no, not about the necessary support of this life—food and raiment; these God has promised, and therefore, we may more confidently expect; say not, "What shall we eat?" It is the language of one at a loss and almost despairing; whereas, though many good people have the prospect of little, yet few but have present support.

Secondly, "Take no thought for the morrow," that is, for the time to come. Be not solicitous for hereafter, how you shall live next year, or when you are old, or what you shall leave behind you. As we must not boast of to-morrow, so we must not "care for to-morrow," or the events of it.

III. *The reasons and arguments to enforce this prohibition.* One would think the command of Christ was enough to restrain us from this foolish sin of disquieting, distrustful care, besides the comfort of our own souls so nearly concerned; but to shew how much the heart of Christ is upon it, and what pleasure he takes in those that hope in his mercy, the command is backed with the most powerful arguments that can be. If reason may but rule us, surely we shall ease ourselves of these thorns. To free us from caring thoughts, and to expel them, Christ here suggests to us comforting thoughts, that we may be filled with them. It will be worth while to take pains with our own hearts, to argue them out of their disquieting cares, and to make ourselves ashamed of them. They may be weakened by right reason, but it is by an active faith only that they must be overcome. Consider, then,

First, "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" ver. 25. Yes, no doubt it is; so he saith who had reason to understand the true value of present things, for he made them, he supports them, and supports us by them; and the thing speaks itself. Note, 1. Our life is a greater blessing than our livelihood. It is true, life cannot subsist without a livelihood; but the meat and raiment which are here postponed to the life and body, is such as is for ornament and delight; for about such we are apt to be solicitous. Meat and raiment are in order to life, and the end is more noble and excellent than the means. The daintiest food and finest raiment are from the earth, but life from the "breath of God." Life is the "light of men," meat is but the oil that feeds that light; so that the difference between rich and poor is very inconsiderable, since in the greatest things they stand on the same level, and differ only in the lesser. 2. This is an encouragement to us to trust God for food and raiment, and so to ease ourselves of all perplexing cares about them. God has given us life, and given us the body; it was an act of power, it was an act of favour, it was done without our care. What cannot he do for us who did that? What will he not? If we take care about our souls and eternity, which are more than the body and its life, we may leave it to God to provide for us food and raiment, which are less. God has maintained our lives hitherto, if sometimes with pulse and water, that has answered the end; he hath protected us, and kept us alive. He that guards us against the evils we are exposed to, will supply us with the good things we are in need of. If he had been pleased to kill us, to starve us, he would not so often have "given his angels a charge concerning us" to keep us.

Secondly, "Behold the fowls of the air" and "consider the lilies of the field." Here is an argument taken from God's common providence towards the inferior creatures, and their dependence, according to their capacities, upon that providence. A fine pass fallen man has come to, that he must be sent to school to the "fowls of the air," and they must "teach him!" *Job xii. 7, 8*.

1. Look upon the fowls, and learn to trust God for food, ver. 26, and disquiet not yourselves with thoughts "what you shall eat." 1st. Observe the providence of God concerning them. Look upon them and receive instruction. There are various sorts of fowls; they are numerous, some of them ravenous, but they are all fed, and fed with food convenient for them; it is rare that any of them perish for want of food, even in winter, and there goes no little to feed

them all the year round. The fowls, as they are least serviceable to man, so they are least within his care; men often feed upon them, but seldom feed them; yet they are fed, we know not how, and some of them fed fattest in the hardest weather: and it is "your heavenly Father that feeds them;" he "knows all the wild fowls of the mountains" better than you know the tame ones at your own barn door, *Ps. l. 11*. Not a sparrow lights to the ground to pick up a grain of corn but by the providence of God, which extends itself to the meanest creatures. But that which is especially observed here is, that they are fed without any care or project of their own; "they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns;" the ant indeed doth, and the bee, and they are set before us as examples of prudence and industry; but the fowls of the air do not, they make no provision for the future themselves, and yet, every day, as duly as the day comes, provision is made for them; and their "eyes wait on God," that great and good housekeeper, that "provides food for all flesh." 2nd. Improve this for your encouragement to trust in God. "Are ye not much better than they?" Yes, certainly you are. Note, The heirs of heaven are much better than the fowls of heaven; nobler and more excellent beings, and, by faith, soar higher; of a better nature and nurture, "wiser than the fowls of heaven," *Job xxxv. 11*: though the children of this world, that "know not the judgment of the Lord," are not so wise as the stork, and the crane, and the swallow, *Jer. viii. 7*, you are dearer to God, and nearer, though they fly in the open firmament of heaven. He is their maker and lord, their owner and master; but, besides all this, he is your Father, and in his account "ye are of more value than many sparrows;" you are his children, his firstborn; now he that feeds his birds surely will not starve his babes. They trust your Father's providence, and will not you trust it! In dependence upon that, they are careless for the morrow, and being so, they live the merriest lives of all creatures, they "sing among the branches," *Ps. civ. 12*, and, to the best of their power, they praise their Creator. If we were, by faith, as unconcerned about the morrow as they are, we should sing as cheerfully as they do; for it is worldly care that mars our mirth, and damps our joy, and silenceth our praise as much as any thing.

2. Look upon the lilies, and learn to trust God for raiment. That is another part of our care, what we shall put on; for decency, to cover our nakedness; for defence, to keep us warm; yea, and with many for dignity and ornament, to make them look great and fine; and so much concerned are they for gaiety and variety in their clothing, that this care returns almost as often as that for their daily bread. Now, to ease us of this care, let us "consider the lilies of the field;" not only look upon them,—every eye doth that with pleasure,—but "consider" them. Note, There is a great deal of good to be learned from what we see every day, if we would but consider it, *Pr. vi. 6; xxiv. 32*. 1st. Consider how frail the lilies are; they are the "grass of the field." Lilies, though distinguished by their colours, yet still are but grass. Thus "all flesh is grass," though some in the endowments of body and mind are, as lilies, much admired, yet still they are grass: the grass of the field, in nature and constitution; they stand upon the same level with others. Man's days, at best, are as grass, as the "flower of the grass," *1 Pet. i. 24*. This grass "to day is," and "to-morrow is cast into the oven;" in a little while, the place that knows us will "know us no more." The grave is the oven into which we shall be cast, and in which we shall be consumed, as grass in the fire, *Ps. xlix. 14*. This intimates a reason why we should not take thought for the morrow what we shall put on, because perhaps by to-morrow we may have occasion for our grave clothes. 2nd. Consider how free from care the lilies are. "They toil not," as men do to earn clothing, as servants to earn their liversies; "neither do they spin," as women do to make clothing. It doth not, therefore, follow, that we must therefore neglect, or do carelessly, the proper business of this life; it is the praise of the virtuous woman, that "she lays her hand to the spindle, makes fine linen, and sells it," *Pr. xxxi. 13, 24*. Idleness tempts God, instead of trusting him; but he that provides for the inferior creatures without their labour, much more will provide for us, by blessing our labour, which he has made our duty; and if we should, by sickness, be disabled to toil and spin, God can furnish us with what is necessary for us. 3rd. Consider how fair, how fine, the lilies are. How they grow. What they grow from. The root of the lily or tulip, as other bulbous roots, is, in the winter, lost and buried under ground, yet when spring returns, it appears and starts up in a little time; hence it is promised to God's Israel, that they "shall grow as the lily," *Hos. xiv. 5*. Consider what they grow to. Out of that obscurity, in a few weeks they come to be so very gay, that even "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The array of Solomon was very splendid and magnificent; he that had the peculiar treasure of kings and provinces, and so studiously affected pomp and gallantry, doubtless had the richest clothing, and the best made up that could be got, especially when he appeared in his glory on high days; and yet, let him dress himself as fine as he could, he comes far short of the beauty of the lilies, and a bed of tulips outshines him. Let us, therefore, be more ambitious of the wisdom of Solomon, in which he was outdone by none; wisdom to do our duty in our places, rather than the glory of Solomon, in which he was outdone by the lilies. Knowledge and grace are the perfection of man—not beauty, much less fine clothes. Now God is here said thus to "clothe the grass of the field." Note, All the excellencies of the creature flow from God, the fountain and spring of them. It was he that gave the horse his strength, and the lily its beauty; every creature is in itself, as well as to us, what he makes it to be. 4th. Consider how instructive all this is to us, ver. 30. First. As to fine clothing. This teaches us not to care for it at all, not to covet it, not to be proud of it, not to make "the putting on of apparel our adorning," for after all our care in this, the lilies will far outdo us; we cannot dress so fine as they do, why then should we go about to vie with them? Their adorning will soon perish, and so will ours; they fade, "are to day," and "to-morrow are cast," as other rubbish, "into the oven;" and the clothes we are proud of are fading, the gloss is soon gone, the colour sheds, the shape goes out of fashion, or in a while the garment itself is worn out. Such is man in all his pomp, *Isa. xlii. 6, 7*, especially rich men, *Jas. i. 10*; they "fade away in their ways." Secondly. As to necessary clothing. This teacheth us to cast the care of it upon God; *Jehovah-jireh*, trust him that clothes the lilies to provide for you what you shall put on. If he give such fine clothes to the grass, much more will he give fitting clothes to his own children; clothes that shall be warm upon them, not only "when he quieteth the earth with the south wind," but when he disquiets it with the north wind, *Job xxxvii. 17*. He shall much more clothe you; for you are nobler creatures, of a more excellent being; if so he clothe the short-lived grass, much more will he clothe you that are made for immortality. Even the children of Nineveh are preferred before the gourd, *Jonah iv. 10, 11*, much more the sons of Zion, that are in covenant with God. Observe the title he gives them, ver. 30: "O ye of little faith." This may be taken, 1st. As an encouragement to true faith; though it be but weak, it entitles us to the Divine care, and the promise of suitable supply. Great faith shall be commended, and fetch in great things, but little faith shall not be rejected, even that shall fetch in food and raiment. Sound believers shall be provided for, though they be not strong believers. The babes in the family are fed and clothed as well as those that are grown up, and with a special care

The language in James i. 13 is not opposed to this, because that refers to temptation to sin. The doxology, "for thine is the kingdom," &c., is omitted in so many copies, that most modern critics regard it as a very ancient addition to the text. Those, however, who say, with Mr. Blackley, that it "is unsupported by ancient authorities" are wrong, since it is wholly found in the Peshito, and nearly all in the Curetonian Syriac, two texts which claim an antiquity much greater than that of any Greek copy in existence.

vi. 16. The hypocrites who do their "righteousness" before men throw aside their cheerful aspect when they fast, look sad, and even neglect their personal appearance. The word for "disfigure" would apply to anything which alters the natural features, even to the paints used by women. In this case it is rather slovenliness than cosmetics which are in view. "They have their reward" is to be explained as in verse 2. They attract attention, and this is their whole reward.

and tenderness; say not "I am but a child," but "a dry tree," *Isa.* lvi. 3, 5; for though "poor and needy," yet "the Lord thinketh on thee." Or, 2nd. It is rather a rebuke to weak faith, though it be true, *ch.* xiv. 31; and it intimates what is at the bottom of all our inordinate care and thoughtfulness, it is owing to the weakness of our faith, and the remainders of unbelief in us. If we had but more faith, we should have less care.

Thirdly. "Which of you," the wisest, the strongest of you, "by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?" ver. 27, 'to his age,' so some; but the measure of a cubit speaks it to be meant of the stature; and the age, at longest, is but a span, *Ps.* xxxix. 5. Let us consider, 1. We did not arrive to the stature we are of by our own care and thought, but by the providence of God. An infant of a span long is grown up to be a man of six foot, and how was one cubit after another added to his stature?—not by his own forecast or contrivance; he grew, he knew not how, by the power and goodness of God. Now he that made our bodies, and made them of such a size, surely will take care to provide for them. Note, God is to be acknowledged in the increase of our bodily strength and stature, and to be trusted for all needful supplies, because he has made it to appear that he is for the body. The growing age is the thoughtless, careless age, yet we grow; and shall not he who reared us to this, provide for us now we are reared? 2. We cannot alter the stature we are of, if we would never so fain; what a foolish and ridiculous thing would it be for a man of low stature to perplex himself, to break his sleep, and beat his brains about it, and to be continually taking thought how he might be a cubit higher; when, after all, he knows he cannot effect it, and therefore he had better be content, and take it as it is. We are not all of a size, yet the difference in stature between one and another is not material, nor of any great account; a little man is ready to wish he were as tall as such an one, but he knows it is to no purpose, and therefore doth as well as he can with it. Now as we do in reference to our bodily stature, so we should do in reference to our worldly estate. 1st. We should not covet an abundance of the wealth of this world, any more than we would covet the addition of a cubit to one's stature, which is a great deal in a man's height; it is enough to grow by inches; such an addition would but make one unwieldy, and a burden to one's self. 2nd. We must reconcile ourselves to our state, as we do to our stature; set the conveniences against the inconveniences, and so make a virtue of necessity: what cannot be remedied must be made the best of. We cannot alter the disposals of Providence, and therefore must acquiesce in them, accommodate ourselves to them, and relieve ourselves as well as we can against inconveniences, as Zaccheus against the inconvenience of his stature, by climbing into the tree.

Fourthly. "After all these things do the Gentiles seek," ver. 32. Thoughtfulness about the world is a heathenish sin, and unbecoming Christians. The Gentiles seek these things, because they know not better things; are eager for this world, because they are strangers to a better; they seek these things with care and anxiety, because they are "without God in the world," and understand not his providence. They fear and worship their idols, but know not how to trust them for deliverance and supply, and therefore are themselves full of care; but it is a shame for Christians, that build upon nobler principles, and profess a religion which teacheth them, not only that there is a Providence, but that there are promises made to the good of the life that now is; which teacheth them a confidence in God and a contempt of the world, and gives such reasons for both; it is a shame for them to walk as other Gentiles walk, and to fill their heads and hearts with these things.

Fifthly. "Your heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all these things;" these necessary things, food and raiment; knows our wants better than we do ourselves; though he be in heaven, and his children on earth, he observes what the least and poorest of them has occasion for, *Rev.* ii. 9, "I know thy poverty." You think if such a good friend did but know your wants and straits, you should soon have relief; your God knows them, and he is your Father, that loves you and pities you, and is ready to help you; your heavenly Father, that has wherewithal to supply all your needs. Therefore, away with all disquieting thoughts and cares; go to thy Father; tell him, "He knows thou hast need of such and such things," he asks you, "Children, have you any meat?" *Jno.* xxi. 5. Tell him whether you have or no. Though he knows our wants, he will know them from us; and when we have opened them to him, let us cheerfully refer ourselves to his wisdom, power, and goodness for our supply. Therefore we should ease ourselves of the burthen of care, by casting it upon God, because it is he "that careth for us," *1 Pet.* v. 7; and what needs all this ado? If he care, why should we care?

Sixthly. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," ver. 33. Here is a double argument against the sin of thoughtfulness; take no thought for your life, the life of the body, for, 1st. You have greater and better things to take thought about; the life of your soul, your eternal happiness, that is the "one thing needful," *Lu.* x. 42, about which you should employ your thoughts, and which is commonly neglected in those hearts wherein worldly cares have the ascendancy. If we were but more careful to please God, and to work out our own salvation, we should be less solicitous to please ourselves, and work out an estate in the world. Thoughtfulness for our souls is the most effectual cure of thoughtfulness for the world. 2nd. You have a surer, an easier, a safer, and a more compendious way to obtain the necessities of this life, than by carking, and caring, and fretting about them; and that is, by seeking "first the kingdom of God," and making religion your business. Say not that is the way to starve; no, that is the way to be well provided for, even in this world. Observe here,

1. The great duty required; it is the sum and substance of our whole duty: "Seek first the kingdom of God," that is, 'mind religion as your great and principal concern.' Our duty is to seek, that is, to desire, pursue, and aim at these things. It is a word that has in it much of the constitution of the new covenant in favour of us; though we have not attained, but in many things fail and come short, sincere seeking is accepted, that is, a careful concern, and an earnest endeavour. Now observe, 1st. The object of this seeking: "The kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" that is, we must mind heaven as our end, and holiness as our way. "Seek the comforts of the kingdom of grace and glory as your felicity; aim at 'the kingdom of heaven,' press towards it, give diligence to make it sure, resolve not to take up short of it; seek for this glory, honour, and immortality; prefer heaven and heavenly blessings, far before earth and earthly delights." We make nothing of our religion, if we do not make heaven of it. And with the happiness of this kingdom seek the righteousness of it; God's righteousness, the righteousness which he requires to be wrought in us, and wrought by us, such as exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees; we must "follow peace and holiness," *Heb.* xii. 14. 2nd. The order of it: "Seek first the kingdom of God." Let your care for your souls and another world take place of all other cares; and let all the concerns of this life be made to truckle to those of the life to come. We must seek the things of Christ more than our own things; and if ever they come in competition, we must remember which we are to give the preference to. 'Seek these things first; first in thy days, let the morning of youth be dedicated to God. Wisdom must be sought early; it is good beginning betimes to be religious. Seek this first every day; let waking thoughts be of God.' Let this

be our principle, to do that first which is most needful, and let him that is the first have the first.

2. The gracious promise annexed is, that then "all these things," the necessary supports of life, "shall be added unto you;" shall be 'given over and above;' so it is in the margin. You shall have what you seek—the "kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" for never any sought in vain, that sought in earnest; and, besides that, you shall have food and raiment by way of over-plus, as he that buys goods hath paper and packthread given him over and above into the bargain. "Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is," *1 Tim.* iv. 8. Solomon asked wisdom, and had that and other things added to him, 2 *Chr.* i. 11, 12. Oh what a blessed change would it make in our hearts and lives did we but firmly believe this truth, that the best way to be comfortably provided for in this world is to be most intent upon another world! We then begin at the right end of our work when we begin with God. If we give diligence to make sure to ourselves the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, as to all the things of this life, *Jehovah-jireh*, 'the Lord will provide' as much of them as he sees good for us, and more we would not wish for. Have we trusted him for the "portion of our inheritance" at our end, and shall we not trust him for the "portion of our cup" in the way to it? God's Israel were not only brought to Canaan at last, but had their charges borne through the wilderness. Oh that we were more thoughtful about the things that are not seen, that are eternal, and then the less thoughtful we shall be, and the less thoughtful we shall need to be, about the things that are seen, that are temporal! "Also regard not your stuff," *Gen.* xlv. 20, 23.

Seventhly. "The morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," ver. 34. We must not perplex ourselves inordinately about future events, because every day brings along with it its own burthen of cares and grievances, as, if we look about us, and suffer not our fears to betray the succours which grace and reason offer, it brings along with it its own strength and supply too. So that we are here told, 1. That thoughtfulness for the morrow is needless. "Let the morrow take thought for the things of itself." If wants and troubles be renewed with the day, there are aids and provisions renewed likewise; "compassions," that are "new every morning," *Lam.* iii. 22; the saints have a friend that is "their arm every morning," and gives out fresh supplies daily, *Isa.* xxxiii. 2, according "as the business of every day requires," *Ezr.* iii. 4; and so he keeps his people in a constant dependence on him. Let us refer it therefore to the morrow's strength to do the morrow's work, and bear the morrow's burthen; to morrow, and the things of it, will be provided for without us; what need we thus anxiously care for that which is so wisely cared for already? This doth not forbid a prudent foresight, and preparation accordingly, but perplexing solicitude, and a prepossession of difficulties and calamities which may perhaps never come, or if they do, may be easily borne, and the evil of them guarded against. The meaning is, 'let us mind present duty, and then leave events to God; do the "work of the day in its day," and then let "to morrow" bring along with it.' 2. That thoughtfulness for the morrow is one of those foolish and hurtful lusts, which they that will be rich fall into, and one of the many sorrows wherewith they "pierce themselves through;" "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." This present day has trouble enough attending it, we need not accumulate burthens by anticipating our cumber, nor borrow perplexities from to morrow's evils, to add to those of this day. It is uncertain what to morrow's evils may be, but whatever they be, it is time enough to take thought about them when they come. What a folly is it to take that trouble upon ourselves this day, by care and fear, which belongs to another day, and will be never the lighter when it comes. Let us not pull that upon ourselves altogether at once, which providence hath wisely ordered to be borne by parcels. The conclusion of this whole matter then is, that it is the will and command of the Lord Jesus, that his disciples should not be their own tormentors, nor make their passage through this world, more dark and unpleasant by their apprehensions of troubles, than God has made it by the troubles themselves. By our daily prayers we may fetch in strength to bear us up under our daily troubles, and to arm us against the temptations that attend them, and "let none of these things move us."

CHAPTER VII.

This chapter continues and concludes Christ's sermon on the mount, which is purely practical, directing us to order our conversation aright, both toward God and man; for the design of the Christian religion is to make men good, every way good. We have, I. Some rules concerning censure and reproof, ver. 1—6. II. Encouragements given us to pray to God for what we need, ver. 7—11. III. The necessity of strictness in conversation urged upon us, ver. 13, 14. IV. A caution given us to take heed of false prophets, ver. 16—20. V. The conclusion of the whole sermon, shewing the necessity of universal obedience to Christ's commands, without which we cannot expect to be happy, ver. 21—27. VI. The impression which Christ's doctrine made upon his hearers, ver. 28, 29.



JUDGE not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. 3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. 6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,

vi. 17. Anointing the head, by applying oil or pomades, was universal among the civilised nations of antiquity. This anointing seems to have been sometimes in a manner public, because it was often one of the compliments paid to guests. Lightfoot says the Jews neither anointed nor washed themselves when they fasted.

vi. 19, 20. In the Greek text the Greek word for "corrupt" is the same rendered "disfigure" in verse 16. Moth and rust change the appearance of what they attack. Mention is made of thieves

breaking through; it is rather "digging through," the fact being that the plunderers often made a breach in the very walls of houses. Dr. Jamieson observes, that in hot climates moths appear in little colonies, moving in close and regular columns, and fastening with determined voracity on all sides at once of whatever object promises them a suitable repast. The risks to which wealth is exposed where it consists of garments and other perishable goods, are very great.

vi. 24. Mammon is an Aramaic word, meaning riches or wealth,

neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Our Saviour is here directing us how to carry it in reference to the faults of others; and it seems intended for a reproof to the scribes and Pharisees, who were very rigid and severe, very magisterial and supercilious, in condemning all about them, as those commonly are that are proud and conceited in justifying themselves. We have here,

I. A caution against judging, ver. 1, 2. There are those whose office is to judge,—magistrates and ministers; Christ, though he made not himself a judge, yet came not to unmake them, for by him princes decree justice; but this is directed to private persons, to his disciples, who shall hereafter “sit on thrones judging,” but not now. Now observe,

First. The prohibition “judge not,” we must judge ourselves, and judge of our own acts, but we must not judge our brother; not magisterially, assuming such an authority over others, as we do not them over us; whereas our rule is, to be “subject to one another.” Be not many masters,” *Jas. iii. 1*. We must not sit in the judgment seat to make our word a law to everybody; we must not judge our brother, that is, we must not “speak evil” of him, so it is explained, *Jas. iv. 11*; we must not “despise him,” or “set him at nought,” *Rom. xiv. 10*. Judge not rashly, pass not such a judgment upon our brother as hath no ground, but is only the product of our own jealousy and ill-nature; we must not make the worst of people, nor infer such invidious things from their words and actions as they will not bear. Judge not uncharitably, and unmercifully, and with a spirit of revenge, and a desire to do him a mischief; judge not of a man’s state by a single act, nor of what he is in himself, by what he is to us, because in our own cause we are apt to be partial; we must not judge the hearts of others, nor their intentions, for it is God’s prerogative to try the heart, and we must not step into his throne; nor must we judge of their eternal state, nor call them hypocrites, reprobates, and cast-aways; that is stretching beyond our line; what have we to do thus to judge another man’s servant? Counsel him, and help him, but do not judge him.

Secondly. The reason to enforce this prohibition; “that ye be not judged.” This intimates, 1. That if we presume to judge others we may expect to be ourselves judged. He that usurps the bench shall be called to the bar. He shall be judged of men; commonly none are more censured than those that are most censorious, every one will have a stone to throw at him; he that, like Ishmael, has “his hand,” his tongue “against every man,” shall, like him, have every man’s hand and tongue against him, *Gen. xvi. 12*; and no mercy shall be shewed to the good names of those that shew no mercy to the good names of others. Yet that is not the worst of it, they shall be judged of God, from him they shall receive the “greater condemnation,” *Jas. iii. 1*; both parties must appear before him, *Rom. xiv. 10*; who, as he will relieve the “humble sufferer,” so he will resist the “haughty scorner,” and give him enough of judging. 2. That if we be modest and charitable in our censures of others, and decline judging them, and judge ourselves rather, “we shall not be judged of the Lord.” As God will forgive those that forgive their brethren; so he will not judge those that will not judge their brethren; “merciful shall find mercy.” It is an evidence of humility, charity, and deference to God, and shall be owned and rewarded by him accordingly; see *Rom. xiv. 10*. The judging of those that judge others, is according to the law of retaliation; “with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged,” ver. 2. The righteous God doth many times in his judgments observe a rule of proportion, as in the case of Adonibezek, *Jud. i. 7*; and see *Rev. xiii. 10*; *xviii. 6*. Thus will he be both justified and magnified in his judgments, and all flesh will be silenced before him. “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again;” perhaps in this world, so that men may read their sin in their punishment. Let this deter us from all severity in dealing with our brother; “what then shall we do when God riseth up?” *Job xxxi. 14*; what would become of us, if God should be as exact and severe in judging us, as we are in judging our brethren? if he should weigh us in the same balance? We may justly expect it, if we be extreme to mark what our brethren do amiss. In this, as in other things, men’s “violent dealings return upon their own heads.”

II. Some cautions about reproving. Because we must not judge others, which is a great sin, it doth not therefore follow that we must not reprove others, which is a great duty, and may be a means of “saving a soul from death;” however, it will be a means of saving our souls from sharing in their guilt. Now observe here,

First. It is not every one that is fit to reprove; those that are themselves guilty of the same faults they accuse others of, or worse, bring shame upon themselves, and are not likely to do good to those they reprove, ver. 3–5. Here is, 1. A just reproof to the censorious, that quarrel with their brother for small faults, while they allow themselves in great ones; are quick sighted to spy “a mote” in his eye, but are not sensible of “a beam” in their own; nay, and will be very officious to “pull out the mote out of his eye,” when they are as unfit to do it, as if they were themselves stark blind. Note, 1st. There are degrees in sin; some sins are comparatively but as motes, while others are as beams; some as a gnat, others as a camel; not that there is any sin little, for there is no little God to sin against; if it be a mote, (or splinter, for so it might better be read,) it is in the eye; if a gnat, it is in the throat; both painful and perilous, and we cannot be easy or well till they are got out. 2nd. Our own sins ought to appear greater to us than the same sins in others; that which charity teaches us to call but a “splinter in our brother’s eye,” true repentance and godly sorrow will teach us to call a “beam in our own.” For the sins of others must be extenuated, but our own aggravated. 3rd. There are many that have “beams in their own eyes,” and yet “do not consider it.” They are under the guilt and dominion of very great sins, and yet are not aware of it, but justify themselves, as if they needed no repentance or reformation; it is as strange that a man can be in such a sinful miserable condition, and not be aware of it, as that a man should have a beam in his eye, and not consider it; but the god of this world so artfully blinds their minds, as that yet with great assurance they say, “we see.” 4th. It is common for those that are most sinful themselves, and least sensible of it, to be most forward and free in judging and censuring others; the Pharisees, that were most haughty in justifying themselves, were most scornful in condemning others. They fell foul upon Christ’s disciples for “eating with unwashed hands,” which was scarce a mote, while they bolstered him up in a contempt of their parents, which was a beam. Pride and uncharitableness are commonly beams in the eyes of those that pretend to be critical and nice in their censures of others. Nay, many are guilty of that in secret, which they have the face to punish in others when it is discovered. *Cogita tecum, fortasse vitium de quo queris, si te diligenter excusseris in sinu invenies; inique publico trasceris crimini tuo.*—“Reflect that perhaps the fault of which you complain, night, on a strict examination, be discovered in yourself; and that it would be unjust publicly to

express indignation against your own crime.” *Seneca, de Beneficiis*. But, 5th. Men’s being so severe upon the faults of others, while they are indulgent of their own, is a mark of hypocrisy; “thou hypocrite,” ver. 5; whatever such an one may pretend, it is certain he is no enemy to sin, (if he were, he would be an enemy to his own sin,) and therefore is not worthy of praise; nay, it appears he is an enemy to his brother, and therefore worthy of blame. This spiritual charity must begin at home; “for how canst thou say?”—how canst thou for shame say to thy brother, Let me help to reform thee, when thou takest no care to reform thyself? Thy own heart will upbraid thee with the absurdity of it; thou wilt do it with an ill grace, and thou wilt expect every one to tell thee that vice corrects sin: “Physician, heal thyself;” *1 pra, sequar.*—“Go you before, and I will follow.” See *Rom. ii. 21*. 6th. The consideration of what is amiss in ourselves, though it ought not to keep us from friendly reproof, ought to keep us from magisterial censuring, and to make us very candid and charitable in judging others. “Therefore,” restore with the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, *Gal. vi. 1*, what thou hast been, what thou art, and what thou wouldest be, if God should leave thee to thyself.” 2. Here is a good rule for reprovers, ver. 5: Go in the right method, “first cast the beam out of thine own eye.” Our own badness is so far from excusing us in not reproofing, that our being by it rendered unfit to reprove, is an aggravation of our badness; I must not say, “I have” a beam in my own eye,” and, therefore, I will not help my brother with the mote out of his; a man’s offence will never be his defence; but I must first reform myself, that I may thereby help to reform my brother, and may qualify myself to reprove him. Note, Those that blame others ought to be blameless and harmless themselves. Those that are “reprovers in the gate,” reprovers by office, magistrates, and ministers, are concerned to “walk circumspectly,” and to be very regular in their conversations. An elder must have “a good report,” *1 Tim. iii. 2, 7*. The snuffers of the sanctuary were to be of pure gold.

Secondly. It is not every one that is fit to be reproved; “give not that which is holy unto dogs,” ver. 6. This may be considered either, 1. As a rule to the disciples in preaching the Gospel: not that they must not preach it to any that were wicked or profane,—Christ himself preached to publicans and sinners,—but such as they found obstinate after the Gospel was preached to them, blasphemed it, and persecuted the preachers of it, let them not spend much time among such, for it would be lost labour, but let them turn to others, *Acts xiii. 41*; so Dr. Whitby. Or, 2. As a rule to all in giving reproof. Our zeal against sin must be guided by discretion, and we must not go about to give instructions, counsels, and rebukes, much less comforts, to hardened scorners, to whom it will certainly do no good, but who will be exasperated and enraged at you. Throw a pearl to a swine, and he will resent it as if you threw a stone at him; reproofs will be called reproaches, as they were, *Lu. xi. 45*; *Jer. vi. 10*; therefore give not to dogs and swine, unclean creatures, holy things. Note, 1st. Good counsel and reproof is a holy thing, and a pearl: it is an ordinance of God, it is precious; as an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reproof, *Pr. xxv. 12*; and a wise reproof “like an excellent oil,” *Ps. cxi. 5*. It is a “tree of life,” *Pr. iii. 8, 2nd*. Among the generation of the wicked there are some that are arrived to such a pitch of wickedness, that they are to be looked upon as dogs and swine, that are impudently and notoriously vile, that have so long “walked in the way of sinners,” that they are set down in “the seat of the scornful,” and professedly hate and despise instruction, and set it at defiance, so that they are irrecoverably and irreclaimably wicked; they return with “the dog to his vomit,” and with the sow to her “wallowing in the mire.” 3rd. Reproofs of instruction are ill bestowed upon such, and expose the reprove to all the contempt and mischief that may be expected from dogs and swine. One can expect no other but that they will trample the reproofs under their feet, in scorn of them, and rage against them; for they are impatient of control and contradictions, and they will turn again and rend the reprovers; rend their good names with their revilings, return them wounding words for their healing ones; rend them with persecution. Herod rent John Baptist for his faithfulness. See here what is the evidence of men being dogs and swine. Those are to be reckoned such who hate reproofs and reprovers, and fly in the face of those that, in kindness to their souls, shew them their sin and danger. These sin against the remedy; who shall heal and help those that will not be healed and helped? It is plain “God has determined to destroy such,” *2 Chr. xxv. 16*. The rule here given is applicable to the distinguishing, sealing ordinances of the Gospel, which must not be prostituted to those who are openly wicked and profane, lest holy things be thereby rendered contemptible, and unholy persons be thereby hardened. “It is not meet to take the children’s bread and cast it to the dogs.” Yet we must be very cautious who we condemn as dogs and swine, and not till after trial, and upon full evidence. Many a patient is lost by being thought to be so, who, if means had been used, might have been saved. As we must take heed of calling the good bad, by judging all professors to be hypocrites; so we must take heed of calling the bad desperate, by judging all the wicked to be dogs and swine. 4th. Our Lord Jesus is very tender of the safety of his people, and would not have them needlessly to expose themselves to the fury of those that will “turn again and rend” them. Let not them be “righteous overmuch,” so as to destroy themselves. Christ makes the law of self-preservation one of his own laws, and “precious is the blood” of his subjects to him.

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Our Saviour in the foregoing chapter had spoken of prayer as a commanded duty, by which God is honoured, and which, if done aright, shall be rewarded. Here he speaks of it as the appointed means of obtaining what we need, especially grace to obey the precepts he had given, some of which are so displeasing to flesh and blood.

here personified. We have no proof that Mammon was ever the name of an idol, as some say.

vi. 25. The phrase rendered “take no thought” is equivalent to “be not anxious.” It reproves those fretful fears of coming trouble which so much distress those who entertain them. The assertion that our Lord here discourages thoughtfulness and prudence is owing to prejudice or culpable ignorance.

vi. 28. No particular species of lily is indicated here; the word

might therefore include those “many plants of the lily tribe” which Dr. Tristram says flourish in Palestine. He adds that the Arabs now apply their word *susan* (a lily) to any brilliant flower at all resembling a lily, as tulip, anemone, ranunculus, &c.

vi. 30. The word for “grass” means herbage or vegetation. In heating ovens, dry sticks and all kinds of vegetable refuse were and still are used by the Easterns.

vii. 3. The so-called “mote” means any small particle of chaff

1. *Here is a precept*, in three words, to the same purpose: "Ask, seek, knock," ver. 7, that is, in one word, "pray; pray often; pray with sincerity and seriousness; pray, and pray again; make conscience of prayer, and be constant in it; make a business of prayer, and be earnest in it. Ask as a beggar asks an alms. Those that would be rich in grace must betake themselves to the poor trade of begging, and they shall find it a thriving trade. "Ask," that is, represent your wants and burthens to God, and refer yourselves to him for support and supply, according to his promise. "Seek," as a traveller asks the way; to pray is to inquire of God, *Eze. xxxvi. 37*. "Seek," as for a thing of value that we have lost; or as the merchantman that "seeks goodly pearls." "Seek by prayer," *Dan. ix. 3*. "Knock" as he that desires to enter into the house knocks at the door. We would be admitted to converse with God; would be taken into his love, and favour, and kingdom. Sin has shut and barred the door against us; by prayer we knock, "Lord, Lord, open to us." Christ knocks at our door, *Rev. iii. 20*; *Cant. v. 2*, and allows us to knock at his, which is a favour we do not allow to common beggars. Seeking and knocking speak something more than asking and praying.

First, We must not only "ask," but "seek," that is, we must second our prayers with our endeavours; we must, in the use of the appointed means, seek for that which we ask for, else we tempt God. When the dresser of the vineyard asked for a year's reprieve for the barren fig tree, he added, "I will dig about it," *Lu. xiii. 7, 8*. God gives knowledge and grace to those that search the Scriptures, and wait at wisdom's gates; and power against sin to those that avoid the occasions of it.

Secondly, We must not only "ask," but "knock;" we must come to God's door, must ask importunately; not only pray, but plead, and wrestle with God; we must seek diligently; we must continue knocking; must persevere in prayer, and in the use of means; must endure to the end in the duty.

II. *Here is a promise annexed*: "Our labour in prayer, if indeed we do labour in it, shall not be in vain;" where God finds a praying heart, he will be found a prayer-hearing God. He shall "give thee an answer of peace." The precept is threefold, "ask, seek, knock;" there is "precept upon precept;" but the promise is sixfold, "line upon line," for our encouragement; because a firm belief of the promise would make us cheerful and constant in our obedience. Now here.

First, The promise is made, and made so as exactly to answer the precept, ver. 7. God will meet those that attend on him. "Ask, and it shall be given you;" not lent you, not sold you, but given you, and what is more free than a gift? "It shall," that is, whatever you pray for according to the promise, whatever you ask shall be given you, if God see it fit for you; and what would you more? It is but ask and have. "Ye have not, because ye ask not," or ask not aright; what is not worth asking is not worth having, and then it is worth nothing. "Seek, and ye shall find," and then you do not lose your labour; God is himself found of those that seek him, and if we find him we have enough. "Knock, and it shall be opened;" the door of mercy and grace shall no longer be shut against you as enemies and intruders, but opened to you as friends and children. It will be asked, "Who is at the door?" If you be able to say, "A friend," and have the ticket of the promise ready to produce in the hand of faith, doubt not of admission. If the door be not opened at the first knock, "continue instant in prayer;" it is an affront to a friend to knock at his door and then go away; though the return tarry, yet wait.

Secondly, It is repeated, ver. 8; it is to the same purpose, yet with some advantage. 1. It is made to extend to all that pray aright; not only you, my disciples shall receive what you pray for, but "every one that asketh receiveth," whether Jew or Gentile, young or old, rich or poor, high or low, master or servant, learned or unlearned, they are all alike welcome to the throne of grace, if they come in faith; for "God is no respecter of persons." 2. It is made so as to amount to a grant, in words of the present tense, which is more than a promise for the future. "Every one that asketh," not only shall receive, but "receiveth;" by faith, applying and appropriating the promise, we are actually interested and invested in the good promised: so sure and inviolable are the promises of God, that they do in effect give present possession; an active believer enters immediately, and makes the blessings promised his own. What we have in hope, according to the promise, is as sure, and should be as sweet, as what we have in hand. "God hath spoken in his holiness," and then "Gilead is mine, Manasseh mine," *Ps. cviii. 7, 8*; "it is all mine own, if I can but make it so by believing it so." Conditional grants become absolute upon the performance of the condition; so here, "he that asketh receiveth." Christ hereby puts his fiat to the petition, and he having all power, that is enough.

Thirdly, It is illustrated by a similitude, taken from earthly parents, and their innate readiness to give their children what they ask. Christ appeals to his hearers, "What man is there of you," though never so morose and ill-humoured, "whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" ver. 9, 10. Whence he infers, ver. 11, "If ye then be evil," yet grant your children's requests, "much more will your heavenly Father give you the good things you ask." Now this is of use, 1. To direct our prayers and expectations. 1st. We must come to God, as children to a "Father in heaven," with reverence and confidence; how naturally doth the child in want or distress run to the father with its complaints, "my head, my head;" thus should the new nature send us to God for supports and supplies. 2nd. We must come to him for "good things," for those he gives to them that ask him; which teaches us to refer ourselves to him; we know not what is good for ourselves, *Ecc. vi. 12*, but he knows what is good for us, we must therefore leave it with him; "Father, thy will be done." The child is here supposed to ask "bread" that is necessary, and "a fish" that is wholesome; but if the child should foolishly ask for a "stone," or a "serpent," for unripe fruit to eat, or a sharp knife to play with, the father, though kind, is wiser so wise as to deny him. We oft ask that of God which would do us hurt if we had it; he knows it, and therefore doth not give it us. Denials in love are better than grants in anger. We had been undone ere this, if we had had all we desired. This is admirably well expressed by a heathen,

*Permites ipsis expendere numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris,
Nam pro jucundis aptissima quæque dabunt dii;
Carior est illis homo, quam sibi: Nos animorum
Impulsu, et cæca magna cupidine ducti,
Conjugum petimus, partumque uxoribus; at illis
Notum est, qui pueri, qualisque futura sit uxor.*

"Intrust thy fortune to the pow'rs above.
Leave them to manage for thee, and to grant
What their unerring wisdom sees thee want:
In goodness, as in greatness, they excel;
Ah, that we lov'd ourselves but half so well!
We, blindly by our headstrong passions led,
Seek a companion, and desire to wed;
Then wish for heirs: but to the gods alone
Our future offspring, and our wives, are known.

Juvenal, Sat. 10.

wood, &c., as contrasted with the "beam" or great log of timber. The metaphor explains itself: "you see the lesser faults of others, and overlook the greater faults of yourself." Lightfoot observes that the figures in this verse and the one before it occur in Rabbinical writings: "With what measure a man measures, with that will they measure to him." Rabbi Tarphon said, I wonder whether there is any one in this world who will receive correction. But if one should say to another, Cast out the mote from thine eye, he would

2. To encourage our prayers and expectations. We may hope that we shall not be denied and disappointed, we shall not have a "stone for bread" to break our teeth, (though we have a hard crust to employ our teeth,) nor a "serpent for a fish" to sting us. We have reason, indeed, to fear it, because we deserve it; but God will be better to us than the desert of our sins. The world often gives stones for bread, and serpents for fish, but God never doth. Nay, we shall be heard and answered, for children are so by their parents. 1st. God has put into the hearts of parents a compassionate inclination to succour and supply their children according as need is. Even those that have had little conscience of duty, yet have done it, as it were by instinct. No law was ever thought necessary to oblige parents to maintain their legitimate children, nor, in Solomon's time, their illegitimate ones. 2nd. He has put himself into the relation of a Father to us, and owns us for his children, that from the readiness we find in ourselves to relieve our children, we may be encouraged to apply ourselves to him for relief. What love and tenderness fathers have, it is from him; not from nature, but from the God of nature, and, therefore, it must needs be infinitely more in himself. He compares his concern for his people to that of a father for his children, *Ps. ciii. 13*; nay, to that of a mother, which is usually more tender, *Isa. lxvi. 13*; *xlix. 14, 15*. But here it is supposed that his love, and tenderness, and goodness, far excel that of any earthly parent; and therefore it is argued with a much more, and it is grounded upon this undoubted truth; that God is a better Father, infinitely better, than any earthly parents are, his thoughts above theirs. Our earthly fathers have taken care of us, we have taken care of our children, much more will God take care of his; for they are evil, originally so; the degenerate seed of fallen Adam; they have lost much of the good nature that was incident to humanity; and, among other corruptions, have that of crossness, and unkindness, and unlovingness in them; yet they give good things to their children, and they "know how to give," suitably and seasonably; "much more will God," for he takes up when they forsake, *Ps. xxvii. 10*. And, *First*, God is more knowing. Parents are often foolishly fond, but God is wise, infinitely so; he knows what we need, what we desire, and what is fit for us. *Secondly*, God is more kind. If all the compassions of all the tender fathers in the world were crowded into the bowels of one, yet, compared with the tender mercies of our God, they would be but as a candle to the sun, or a drop to the ocean. God is more rich and more ready to his children than the fathers of our flesh can be, for he is the Father of our spirits, an ever loving, ever living Father. The bowels of fathers yearn even towards undutiful children, towards prodigals, as David's towards Absalom; and will not all this serve to silence unbelief?

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. 13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Our Lord Jesus here presseth upon us that righteousness towards men which is an essential branch of true religion; and that religion towards God which is an essential branch of universal righteousness.

I. *We must make righteousness our rule, and be ruled by it*, ver. 12. "Therefore" lay this down for your principle, "to do as you would be done by." Therefore, that you may conform to the foregoing precepts, which are particular, that you may not judge and censure others, go by this rule in general; you would not be censured, therefore do not censure. Or, that you may have the benefit of the foregoing promises; fidly is the law of justice tacked to the law of prayer, for unless we be honest in our conversation, God will not hear our prayers, *Isa. i. 15-17*; *Isa. vi. 9*; *Zec. vii. 9, 13*. We cannot expect to receive good things from God, if we do not do fair things, and that which is honest, and lovely, and of good report among men. We must not only be devout, but honest, and our devotion is but hypocrisy. Now here we have,

First, The rule of justice laid down; "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Christ came to teach us, not only what we are to know and believe, but what we are to do; what we are to do, not only towards God, but towards men; not only towards our fellow disciples, those of our party and persuasion, but toward men in general, all with whom we have to do. The golden rule of equity is, "to do to others as we would they should do to us." Alexander Severus, a heathen emperor, was a great admirer of this rule, had it written upon the walls of his closet, often quoted it in giving judgment, honoured Christ, and favoured Christians for the sake of it. *Quod tibi hoc alteri,*—"do to others as you would they should do to you." Take it negatively, *Quod tibi fieri non vis ne alteri feceris*; or positively, it comes all to one; as here, *Quod vis tibi fieri, fac alteri*. We must not do to others the evil they have done to us, nor the evil which they would do to us if it were in their power; nor may we do that which we think, if it were done to us, we would bear contentedly, but what we desire should be done to us. This is grounded upon that great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." As we must bear the same affection to our neighbour that we would have borne to ourselves, so we must do the same good offices. The meaning of this rule lies in three things: 1. We must do that to our neighbour which we ourselves acknowledge to be fit and reasonable; the appeal is made to our own judgment, and the discovery of our judgment is referred to that which is our own will and expectation, when it is our own case. 2. We must put other people upon the level with ourselves, and reckon we are as much obliged to them as they to us; we are as much bound to the duty of justice as they, and they as much entitled to the benefit of it as we. 3. We must, in our dealings with men, suppose ourselves in the same particular case and circumstances with those we have to do with, and deal accordingly. If I were making such an one's bargain, labouring under such an one's infirmity and affliction, how would I desire and expect to be treated? And this is a just supposition, because we know not how soon their case may really be ours; however, we may fear, lest God, by his judgments, do to us as we have done to others, if we have not done as we would be done by.

Secondly, A reason given to enforce this rule. "This is the law and the prophets." It is the summary of that second great commandment, which is one of those two "on which hang all the law and the prophets," *ch. xxii. 40*. We have not this in so many words, either in "the law or the prophets," but it is the concurring language of the whole. All that is there said concerning our duty towards our neighbour, and that is no little, may be reduced to this rule. Christ has here adopted it into his law; so that both the Old Testament and

answer, Cast out the beam from thine eye." The mote is explained of a little sin, and the beam of a great sin. There is reason to believe that our Lord often turned to account sayings which were current among the people.

vii. 6. Dogs and swine were neither of them favourites among the Jews, and though often mentioned in the Scriptures it is usually with dislike or contempt.

vii. 10. At some periods of Jewish history fish formed an im-

† e New agree in prescribing this to us, "to do as we would be done by." By this rule the law of Christ is commended, but the lives of Christians are condemned, by comparing them with it. *Aut hoc non Evangelium, aut hi non Evangelici.* Either this is not the Gospel, or these are not Christians.

11. We must make religion our business, and be intent upon it. We must be strict and circumspect in our conversation, which is here represented to us as entering in at "a strait gate," and walking on in a "narrow way," ver. 13, 14. Observe here,

First. The account that is given of the bad way of sin and the good way of holiness. There are but two ways, right and wrong, good and evil; the way to heaven, and the way to hell; in the one of which we are all walking. No middle place hereafter, no middle way now. The distinction of the children of men into saints and sinners, godly and ungodly, will swallow up all to eternity.

Here is, 1. An account given us of the way of sin and sinners, both what is the best and what is the worst of it. 1st. That which allures multitudes into it, and keeps them in it; that the "gate is wide, and the way broad," and there are many travellers in that way. First. "You will have abundance of liberty in that way. The gate is wide, and stands wide open to tempt those that go right on their way. You may go in at this gate with all your lusts about you, it gives no check to your appetites, to your passions; you may walk in the "way of your heart, and in the sight of your eye," that gives room enough." It is a "broad way," for there is nothing to hedge in those that walk in it, but they wander endlessly; a "broad way," for there are many paths in it; there is choice of sinful ways, contrary to each other, but all paths in this "broad way." Secondly. "You will have abundance of company in that way. Many there be that go in at this gate, and walk in this way." If we "follow the multitude," it will be "to do evil;" if we go with the crowd, it will be the wrong way. It is natural to us to incline to go down the stream, and do as the most do; but it is too great a compliment to be willing to be damned for company, and go to hell with them, because they will not go to heaven with us. If many perish, we should be the more cautious. And. That which should frighten us all from it, is, that it "leads to destruction;" death, eternal death, is at the end of it, and the way of sin tends to it; "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Whether it be the highway of open profaneness, or the backway of close hypocrisy, if it be a way of sin, it will be our ruin, if we repent not.

2. Here is an account given us of the way of holiness. 1st. What there is in it that frightens many from it. Let us know the worst of it, that we may sit down and count the cost of it. Christ deals faithfully with us, and tells us, First. That "the gate is strait." Conversion and regeneration is the gate by which we enter into this way, in which we begin a life of faith and serious godliness; out of a state of sin into a state of grace we must pass by the "new birth," *Jno. iii. 3, 5.* This is a "strait gate," hard to hit, and hard to get through; like a passage between two rocks, *1 Sam. xiv. 4.* There must be a "new heart and a new spirit," and "old things must pass away." The bent of the soul must be changed, corrupt habits broken, corrupt customs broken off; what we have been doing all our days must be undone again; we must swim against the stream; much opposition must be struggled with, and broken through, from without and from within. It is easier to set a man against all the world than against himself, and yet this must be in conversion. It is a "strait gate," for we must stoop, or we cannot go in at it; must become as little children; high thoughts must be brought down: nay, we must strip, must deny ourselves, put off the world, "put off the old man," must be willing to forsake all for our interest in Christ. The gate is "strait" to all, but to some straiter than to others; to the rich, to some that have been long prejudiced against religion. The gate is "strait," blessed be God it is not shut up or locked against us; nor kept with a flaming sword, as it will be shortly, *ch. xxv. 10.* Secondly. That the "way is narrow." We are not in heaven as soon as we are got through the "strait gate," not in Canaan as soon as we are got through the Red sea; no, we must go through a wilderness; must travel a narrow way, hedged in by the Divine law which is "exceeding broad," and that makes the way narrow. Self must be denied, the body kept under, corruptions mortified, that are as a right eye and a right hand; daily temptations must be resisted; duties must be done that are against the grain; we must endure hardness, must wrestle and be in an agony, must watch in all things, and walk with care and circumspection; we must go "through much tribulation." It is *ὁδὸς στενὴ καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῆς ὀδὸς*, "an afflicted way, a way hedged about with thorns; blessed be God it is not hedged up. The bodies we carry about with us, and the corruptions remaining in us, make the way of our duty difficult; but as the understanding and will grow more and more sound, it will open and enlarge, and grow more, and more pleasant. Thirdly. The "gate" being so "strait," and the way so "narrow," it is not strange that there are but "few that find it," and choose it. Many pass it by through carelessness, they will not be at the pains to find it; they are well as they are, and see no need to change their way; others look upon it, but shun it, they like not to be so limited and restrained. Those that are going to heaven are but few, compared to those that are going to hell; a remnant, a little flock, *1 Kin. xx. 27*, like the grape-gleanings of the vintage; as the eight that were saved in the ark. *In vitia alterum truditur: quomodo ad salutem revocari potest, quum nulus retrahit et populus impellit?*—"In the ways of vice men urge each other onwards; how shall any one be restored to the path of safety, when impelled forwards by the multitude, without any counteracting influence?" *Seneca, Epist. 29.* This discourages many, they are loath to be singular, to be solitary; but instead of stumbling at this, say rather, "If so few are going to heaven, there shall be one the more for me." 2nd. Let us see what there is in this way which, notwithstanding this, should invite us all to it: it "leads to life;" to present comfort in the favour of God, which is the life of the soul; to eternal bliss, the hope of which at the end of our way should reconcile us to all the difficulties and inconveniences of the way. "Life and godliness" are put together, *2 Pet. i. 3.* The "gate" is "strait," and the "way narrow" and up-hill, but one hour in heaven will make amends for all.

Secondly. The great concern and duty of every one of us, in consideration of all this:—"Enter ye in at the strait gate." The matter is fairly stated: "life and death, good and evil, are set before us; both the ways, and both the ends. Now let the matter be taken entire, and considered impartially, and then 'choose you this day' which you will walk in; nay, the matter determines itself, it will not admit of a debate; no man in his wits would choose to go to the gallows, because it is a smooth, pleasant way to it; nor refuse the offer of a palace and a throne, because it is a rough, dirty way to it; yet such absurdities as these are men guilty of in the concerns of their souls. Delay not, therefore, deliberate not any longer, but 'enter ye in at the strait gate;' "knock" at it by sincere and constant prayers and endeavours, and "it shall be opened," nay, a wide door shall be opened, and an effectual one. It is true we can neither go in nor go on without the assistance of Divine grace, but it is as true, that grace is freely offered, and shall not be wanting to those that seek it, and submit to it. Conversion is hard work, but it is needful; and, blessed be God, it is not impossible, if we "strive," *Lu. xiii. 24.*

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you

portant article of food, and they were plentiful as well in the Mediterranean as in the lakes of the Jordan. Serpents of various kinds were also numerous, many of them being snakes of quite a harmless character, but others more or less venomous.

vii. 12. The grand moral rule laid down here by our Lord is by himself evidently set forth as deduced from the law and the prophets, or the Old Testament. The oft-repeated statement that something like it can be found in Chinese, for example, is to be supplemented

in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

We have here a caution against "false prophets," to take heed that we be not deceived and imposed upon by them. Prophets are properly such as foretell things to come. There were some in the Old Testament who pretended to that without warrant, and the event disproved their pretensions, as Zedekiah, *1 Kin. xxii. 11*; and another Zedekiah, *Jer. xxix. 21*. But prophets did also take the people their duty, so that false prophets here are false teachers. Christ being a prophet and "a teacher come from God," and designing to send abroad teachers under him, gives warning to all to take heed of counterfeits, who, instead of healing souls with wholesome doctrine, as they pretend, would poison them. Those are false teachers, and false prophets, 1. Who produce false commissions, who pretend to have immediate warrant and direction from God to set up for prophets, and to be divinely inspired, when they are not so. Though their doctrine may be true, we are to "beware" of them as "false prophets." False apostles are those who "say they are apostles, and are not," *Rev. ii. 2*, such are "false prophets." Take heed of those who pretend to revelation, and admit them not without sufficient proof, lest that one absurdity being admitted, a thousand follow. 2. Who preach false doctrine in those things that are essential to religion; who teach that which is contrary to "the truth as it is in Jesus," to "the truth which is according to godliness." The former seem to be the proper notions of *Pseudoprophetae*, "a false or pretending prophet," but commonly the latter falls in with it; for who would hang out false colours, but with designs under pretence of them, the more successfully to attack the truth? Well, beware of them, suspect them, try them, and when you have discovered their falsehood, avoid them, have nothing to do with them. Stand upon your guard against this temptation, which commonly attends the days of reformation, and the breathings out of Divine light, in more than ordinary strength and splendour. When God's work is revived, Satan and his agents are most busy. Here is,

1. A good reason for this caution. Beware of them, for they are "wolves in sheep's clothing," ver. 15.

First. We have need to be very cautious, because their pretences are very fair and plausible, and such as will deceive us, if we be not upon our guard. They come in "sheep's clothing," in the habit of prophets, which was plain, and coarse, and unwrought; they wear a rough garment, to deceive, *2 Cor. xi. 4*. Elijah's mantle the Septuagint calls *ἡ μίλητος*,—a sheep-skin mantle. We must take heed of being imposed upon by men's dress and garb, as by that of the scribes, which "desire to walk in long robes," *Lu. xx. 46*. Or it may be taken figuratively; they pretend to be sheep, and outwardly appear so innocent, harmless, meek, useful, and all that is good, as none more; they feign themselves to be just men, and for the sake of their clothing, are admitted among the sheep, which gives them an opportunity of doing them a mischief ere they are aware. They and their errors are gilded with the specious pretences of sanctity and devotion. Satan turns himself into "an angel of light," *2 Cor. xi. 13, 14*; the enemy has "horns like a lamb," *Rev. xiii. 11*; "faces of men," *Rev. ix. 7, 8*; seducers in language and carriage are "soft as wool," *Rom. x. 18*; *Isa. xxx. 10*.

Secondly. Because under these pretences their designs are very malicious and mischievous. "Inwardly they are ravening wolves." Every hypocrite is a goat in "sheep's clothing;" but a false prophet is a wolf in "sheep's clothing;" not only not a sheep, but the worst enemy the sheep has, that comes not but to tear and devour, to "scatter the sheep," *Jno. x. 12*, to drive them from God, and one from another, into crooked paths. Those that would cheat us of any truth, and possess us with error, whatever they pretend, it is mischief to our souls that they intend. Paul calls them "grievous wolves," *Acts xv. 29*; they ravin for themselves, "serve their own belly," *Rom. xvi. 18*, make a prey of you, make a gain of you. Now, since it is so easy a thing, and withal so dangerous, to be cheated, "beware of false prophets."

11. Here is a good rule to go by in this caution. We must "prove all things," *1 Thes. v. 21*; "try the spirits," *1 Jno. iv. 1*; and here we have a touchstone to try by, "Ye shall know them by their fruits," ver. 16–20. Observe.

First. The illustration of this comparison, of the fruits being the discovery of the tree. You cannot always distinguish them by their bark and leaves, or by the spreading of their boughs, but "by their fruits ye shall know them." The fruit is according to the tree. Men may, in their professions, put a force upon their nature, and contradict their inward principles, but the stream and bent of their practices will agree with them. Christ insists upon this, the agreeableness between the fruit and the tree, which is such, as that, 1. If you know what the tree is, you may know what fruit to expect. Never look to "gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles;" it is not in their nature to produce such fruits. An apple may be stuck, or a bunch of grapes hung, upon a thorn, so may a good truth, a good word or action, be found in an ill man, but you may be sure it never grew there. Note, 1st. Corrupt, vicious, unsanctified hearts are like thorns and thistles, which came in with sin, are worthless, vexing, and for the fire at last. 2nd. Good works are "good fruit," like grapes and figs, pleasing to God, and profitable to men. 3rd. This "good fruit" is never to be expected from bad men, any more than a "clean thing out of an unclean." They want an influencing, acceptable principle; out of an evil treasure will be brought forth evil things. 2. On the other hand, if you know what the fruit is, you may by that perceive what the tree is. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit," nay, it cannot but bring forth good fruit; and "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit," nay, it cannot but bring forth evil fruit; but then that must be reckoned the fruit of the tree which it brings forth naturally, and which is its genuine product, and which it brings forth plentifully and constantly, and is its usual product. Men are known, not by particular acts, but by the course and tenor of their conversations, and by the more frequent acts, especially those that appear to be free, and most their own, and least under the influence of external motives and inducements.

Secondly. The application of this to the false prophets. 1. By way of terror and threatening, ver. 19: "Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn

by the fact that the same Chinese authority enjoins blood revenge of the most unrelenting description. The Chinese maxim must therefore be taken in a very modified sense. It is, however, a question of small moment whether a similar maxim occurs elsewhere, so long as it is found here, and has the force of a Divine law to every believer in Christ. The phrase "law and prophets" included the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures. The "Hore Hebraica" of Lightfoot contains the following Rabbinic story:—"A certain

down." This very saying John Baptist had used, *ch. iii. 10*. Christ could have spoken the same sense in other words, could have altered it, or given it a new turn, but he thought it no diminution to him, to say the same that John had said before him. Let not ministers be ambitious of coining new expressions, nor people's ears itch for novelties: "to write and speak the same things" must not be "grievous, for it is safe." Here is, 1st. The description of barren trees. They are trees that do not "bring forth good fruit." Though there be fruit, if it be not "good fruit," (though that be done which for the matter of it is good, if it be not done well, in a right manner, and for a right end,) the tree is accounted barren. 2nd. The doom of barren trees. "They are," that is, "certainly they shall be," "laid down, and cast into the fire." God will deal with them as men use to deal with dry trees that cumber the ground: he will mark them by some signal tokens of his displeasure, he will bark them by stripping them of their parts and gifts, will cut them down by death, and "cast them into the fire" of hell, a fire blown with the bellows of God's wrath, and fed with the wood of barren trees. Compare this with *Eze. xxxi. 12, 13*; *Dan. iv. 14*; *Jno. xv. 6*. 2. By way of trial: "By their fruits ye shall know them." 1st. By the fruits of their persons, their words and actions, and the course of their conversation. If you would know whether they be right or no, observe how they live; their works will testify for them or against them. The scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' chair, and taught the law, but they were proud, and covetous, and false, and oppressive, and therefore Christ warned his disciples to beware of them and their leaven, *Mar. xii. 38*. If men pretend to be prophets, and are immoral, that disproves their pretensions; those are no true friends "to the cross of Christ," whatever they profess, whose "god is their belly," and "who mind earthly things," *Phil. iii. 18, 19*. Those are not taught, or sent of the holy God, whose lives evidence that they are led by the unclean spirit. God puts the treasure into earthen vessels, but not into such stinking vessels. They may declare God's statutes, but what have they to do to declare them? 2nd. By the fruits of their doctrine; their fruits as prophets: not that this is the only way, but it is one way, of trying doctrines, whether they be of God or no. What do they tend to? What affections and practices will they lead those into that embrace them? If the "doctrine be of God," it will tend to promote serious piety, humility, charity, holiness, and love, with other Christian graces; but if, on the contrary, the doctrines these prophets preach have a manifest tendency to make people proud, worldly, and contentious, to make them loose and careless in their conversations, unjust or uncharitable, factious or disturbers of the public peace; if it indulge carnal liberty, and take people off from governing themselves and their families, by the strict rules of the narrow way, we may conclude that "this persuasion cometh not of him that calleth us," *Gal. v. 8*; "this wisdom is not from above," *Jas. iii. 15*. "Faith and a good conscience" are held together, *1 Tim. i. 19*; *iii. 9*. Note, "Doctrines of doubtful disputation" must be tried by graces and duties of confessed certainty; those opinions come not from God that lead to sin; but if we cannot know them by "their fruits," we must have recourse to the great touchstone, "to the law and to the testimony." Do they speak according to that rule?

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. 24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. 28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: 29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

We have here the conclusion of this long and excellent sermon, the scope of which is to shew the indispensable necessity of obedience to the commands of Christ; this is designed to clench the nail, that it might fix in a sure place. He speaks this to his disciples that sat at his feet wherever he preached, and followed him wherever he went. Had he sought his own praise among men, he would have said that was enough; but the religion he came to establish is "in power, not in word only," *1 Cor. iv. 20*; and, therefore, something more is necessary.

1. He shews by a plain remonstrance, that an outward profession of religion, though making itself never so remarkable, will not bring us to heaven, unless there be an agreeable conversation, ver. 21—23. All judgment is committed to our Lord Jesus; the keys are put into his hand; he has power to prescribe new terms of life and death, and of judging men according to them. Now this is a solemn declaration pursuant to that power. Observe here,

Gentile went to Shammai and said, Make me a proselyte, if I learn the whole law while I stand on one foot. Shammai thrust him away with the staff which was in his hand. He went to Hillel, and he made him a proselyte, and said, What is hateful to thyself, thou shalt not do to thy neighbour: for this is the whole law." This Hillel was a great Jewish teacher, who was born about seventy-five years before the Christian era.

vii. 13. Lightfoot thinks there is here an allusion to Jewish rules

First, Christ's law laid down, ver. 21: "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," that is, into the kingdom of grace and glory. It is an answer to that question, *Ps. xv. 1*, "Who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle?" that is, the church militant; and "who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" that is, the church triumphant. Christ here tells in two things, 1. That it will not suffice to say, "Lord, Lord;" in word and tongue to own Christ for our Master, and to make addresses to him, and professions of him accordingly; in prayer to God, in discourse with men, we must call Christ "Lord, Lord;" we "say well," for so he is, *Jno. xiii. 13*. But can we imagine that this is enough to bring us to heaven, that such a piece of formality as this should be so recompensed; or that he who knows and requires the heart should be so put off with shows for substance? Compliments among men are pieces of civility that are returned with compliments, but they are never paid as real services; and can they, then, be of any account with Christ? There may be a seeming opportunity in prayer, "Lord, Lord;" but if inward impressions be not answerable to outward expressions, we are but "as a sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal." This is not to take us off from saying, "Lord, Lord," from praying and being earnest in prayer, from professing Christ's name, and being bold in professing it; but from resting in these, in the form of godliness without the power. 2. That it is necessary to our happiness that we "do the will" of Christ, which is indeed the "will of his Father in heaven." The will of God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him "our Father." Now this is his will, that we believe in Christ, that we repent of sin, that we live a holy life, that we "love one another." This is his will, "even our sanctification." If we comply not with the will of God, we mock Christ in calling him "Lord," as they did who put on him a gorgeous robe, and said, "Hail, King of the Jews." Saying and doing are two things often parted in the conversation of men. He that said, "I go, sir," stirred never a step, *ch. xxi. 30*. But these two things God has joined in his command, and let no man that puts them asunder think to enter into the "kingdom of heaven."

Secondly, The hypocrite's plea against the strictness of this law, offering other things in lieu of obedience, ver. 22. The plea is supposed to be "in that day," that great day when every man shall appear in his own colours, when the "secrets of all hearts" shall be manifest, and, among the rest, the secret pretences with which sinners now support their vain hopes. Christ knows the strength of their cause, and it is but weakness; what they now harbour in their bosoms they will then produce in arrest of judgment, to stay the doom, but it will be in vain. They put in their plea with great importunity, "Lord, Lord;" and with great confidence, appealing to Christ concerning it: "Lord, dost not thou know, 1. That we have prophesied in thy name? Yes, it may be so; Baalam and Caiaphas were overruled to prophesy, and Saul was against his will "among the prophets;" yet that did not save them. These prophesied in his name, but he did not send them; they only made use of his name to serve a turn. Note, A man may be a preacher, may have gifts for the ministry, and an external call to it, and perhaps some success in it, and yet be a wicked man may help others to heaven, and yet come short himself. 2. "That 'in thy name we have cast out devils.'" That may be too; Judas cast out devils, and yet was a son of perdition. Origen saith, "That in his time, so prevalent was the name of Christ to cast out devils, that sometimes it availed when named by wicked Christians." A man might cast devils out of others, and yet have a devil, nay, and be a devil, himself. 3. "That 'in thy name we have done many wonderful works.'" There may be a faith of miracles where there is no justifying faith, none of that faith which works by love and obedience. Gifts of tongues and healing would recommend men to the world, but it is only real holiness and sanctification that is accepted of God. Grace and love is "a more excellent way" than "removing mountains," or "speaking with the tongues of men and angels," *1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2*. Grace will bring a man to heaven without working miracles, but working miracles will never bring a man to heaven without grace. Observe, that which their hearts were upon in doing these works, and which they confided in, was the wonderfulness of them. Simon Magus wondered at the miracles, *Acts viii. 13*, and therefore would give any money for power to do the like. Observe, they had not many good works to plead, and they could not pretend to have done many gracious works of piety and charity; one such would have passed better in their account than "many wonderful works," which availed not at all while they persisted in disobedience. Miracles are now ceased, and with them this plea. But do not carnal hearts still bolster up themselves in their groundless hopes with the like vain supports? They think they shall go to heaven, because they have been of good repute among professors of religion, have kept fasts, and given alms, and have been preferred in the church, as if this would atone for their reigning pride, worldliness, and sensuality, and want of love to God and man. "Bethel is their confidence," *Zep. iii. 11*; and boast that they are "the temple of the Lord," *Jer. vii. 4*. Let us take heed of resting in external privileges and performances, lest we "deceive ourselves," and perish eternally, as multitudes do, with a "lie in our right hand."

Thirdly, The rejection of this plea, as frivolous. The same that is the Law-maker, ver. 21, is here the Judge according to that law, ver. 23; and he will overrule the plea, will overrule it publicly: he "will profess to them," with all possible solemnity, as sentence is passed by the judge, "I never knew you," and therefore "depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Observe, 1. Why, and upon what ground, he rejects them and their plea: because they were "workers of iniquity." Note, It is possible for men to have a great name for piety, and yet to be workers of iniquity, and those that are so will receive the greater damnation. Secret haunts of sin, kept up under the cloak of a visible profession, will be the ruin of hypocrites. Living in known sin nullifies men's pretensions, be they never so specious. 2. How it is expressed: "I never knew you," that is, "I never owned you as my servants, no, not when you 'prophesied in my name;' when you were in the height of your profession, and were most cried up." This intimates that if he had ever known them, as "the Lord knows them that are his," had ever owned them and loved them as his, he would have known them, and owned them, and loved them to the end. But he never did know them, for he always knew them to be hypocrites, and rotten at heart, as he did Judas; therefore, "Depart from me." Hath Christ need of such guests? When he came in the flesh he called sinners to him, *ch. ix. 13*. But "when he shall come again in glory," he will drive sinners from him. They that would not come to him to be saved, must depart from him to be damned. To depart from Christ is the very hell of hell; it is the foundation of all the misery of the damned, to be cut off from all hope of benefit of Christ and his mediation. Those that go no further in Christ's service than a bare profession, he doth not accept, nor will he own in the great day. See from what a height of hope men may fall into the depth of misery, how they may go to hell by the gates of heaven! This should be an awakening word to all Christians. If a preacher, one that cast out devils and wrought miracles, be disowned of Christ for working iniquity, what will become of us if we be found such? And if we be such, we shall certainly be found such. At God's bar a profession of religion will not bear out any man in the practice and indulgence

concerning private and public roads. A private road was four cubits wide, and a public road sixteen cubits. It seems probable that the reference is rather to the comparative fewness of those who strive to attain to real excellence, and to the strictness of the eternal law of moral and spiritual goodness. You can take anything, both good and bad, to perdition, but only good to eternal life.

vii. 15. Sheep in appearance, but wolves in reality. Wolves appear to have been formidable as well as numerous. They are still

of sin. Therefore, "let every one that names the name of Christ, depart from all iniquity."

11. *He shews by a parable, that hearing these sayings of Christ will not make us happy, if we do not make conscience of doing them; but if we hear them and do them, we are "blessed in our deed," ver. 24-27.*

First. The hearers of Christ's word are here divided into two sorts; some that hear and do what they hear, others that hear and do not do. Christ preached now to a mixed multitude, and he thus "separates them one from the other," as he will at the great day, when "all nations shall be gathered before him." Christ is still speaking from heaven by his Word and Spirit, speaks by ministers, by providences, and of those that hear him there are two sorts. 1. Some that "hear his sayings, and do them;" blessed be God that there are any such, though comparatively few. To hear Christ is not barely to give him the hearing, but to obey him. Note, It highly concerns us all to do what we hear of the sayings of Christ. It is a mercy that we hear his sayings: "Blessed are those ears," *ch. xiii. 16, 17*. But if we practise not what we hear, we receive that "grace in vain." To do Christ's sayings, is conscientiously to abstain from the sins that he forbids, and perform the duties that he requires. Our thoughts and affections, our words and actions, the temper of our minds, and the tenor of our lives, must be conformable to the Gospel of Christ; that is the doing he requires. All the sayings of Christ, not only the laws he hath enacted, but the truths he hath revealed, must be done by us: they are a light, not only to our eyes, but to our feet; and are designed, not only to inform our judgments, but to reform our hearts and lives; nor do we indeed believe them, if we do not live up to them. Observe, It is not enough to hear Christ's sayings and understand them, hear them and remember them, hear them and talk of them, repeat them, dispute for them, but we must hear and do them. "This do, and thou shalt live." Those only that "hear and do" are "blessed," *Lu. xi. 28; Jno. xiii. 17*, and are akin to Christ, *ch. xii. 50*. 2. There are others who hear Christ's sayings and "do them not;" their religion rests in bare hearing, and goes no further; like children that have the rickets, their heads swell with empty notions and ungrounded opinions, but their joints are weak, and they heavy and listless; they neither can stir, nor care to stir in any good duty; they "hear God's words" as if they desired to "know his ways," like a people "that did righteousness," but they will not "do them," *Eze. xxxiii. 30, 31; Isa. lviii. 2*. Thus they deceive themselves, as Micah, who thought himself happy because he had a Levite to be his priest, though he had not the Lord to be his God. "The seed is sown, but it never comes up; they see their spots in the glass of the Word, but wash them not off," *Jas. i. 22, 24*. Thus they put a cheat upon their own souls; for it is certain, if our hearing be not the means of our obedience, it will be the aggravation of our disobedience. Those who only hear Christ's sayings, and do them not, sit down in the midway to heaven, and that will never bring them to their journey's end; they are akin to Christ only by the *law* blood, and our law allows not such to inherit.

Secondly. These two sorts of hearers are here represented in their true characters, and the state of their case, under the comparison of two builders: one was "wise," and built "upon the rock," and his building stood in a storm; the other "foolish," and built "upon the sand," and his building fell. Now, 1. The general scope of this parable teacheth us, that the only way to make sure work for our souls and eternity, is, to "hear and do the sayings" of the Lord Jesus; these sayings of his in this sermon upon the mount, which is wholly practical; some of them seem hard sayings to flesh and blood, but they must be done; and thus we lay up in store "a good foundation for the time to come," *1 Tim. vi. 19*: "a good bond," so some read it; a bond of God's making, which secures salvation upon Gospel terms, that is a good bond; not one of our devising, which brings salvation to our own fancies. Those make sure the good part, who, like Mary, when they hear the Word of Christ, "sit at his feet," in subjection to it; "Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears." 2. The particular parts of it teach us divers good lessons. 1st. That we have every one of us a house to build, and that house is our hopes for heaven. It ought to be our chief and constant care to make our calling and election sure, and so we make our salvation sure; to secure a title to heaven's happiness, and then to get the comfortable evidence of it; to make it sure, and sure to ourselves, that, "when we fall, we shall be received into everlasting habitations." Many never mind this; it is the furthest thing in their thoughts; they are building for this world, as if they were to be here always, but take no care to build for another world. All that take upon them to profess religion, profess to inquire, what they shall do to be saved? How they may get to heaven at last, and may have a well-grounded hope of it in the meantime? 2nd. That there is a rock provided for us to build this house upon, and that "rock is Christ." He is "laid for a foundation," "and other foundation can no man lay," *Isa. xxviii. 16; 1 Cor. iii. 11*. He is "our hope," *1 Tim. i. 1*. Christ in us is so; we must ground our hopes for heaven upon the fulness of Christ's merit for the pardon of sin, the power of his Spirit for the sanctification of our nature, and the prevalence of his intercession for the drawing out of all that good which he hath purchased for us. There is that in him, as he is "made known" and made over "to us in the Gospel," which is sufficient to redress all our grievances, and to answer all the necessities of our case; so that he is a "Saviour to the uttermost." The church is built upon this rock, and so is every believer. He is strong and immovable as a rock; we may venture our all upon him, and shall not be made ashamed of our hope. 3rd. There is a remnant, who, by hearing and doing the sayings of Christ, build their hopes upon this "rock," and it is their wisdom. Christ is our only "way to the Father," but the obedience of faith is our only way to Christ; for to them that "obey him," and to them only, he becomes the "Author of eternal salvation." Those build upon Christ who, having sincerely consented to him as their Prince and Saviour, make it their constant care to conform to all the rules of his holy religion, and therein depend entirely upon him for assistance from God, and acceptance with him; and count every thing "but loss and dung," that they may "win Christ, and be found in him." Building upon a rock requires care and pains; those that would make their calling and election sure must give diligence. Those are wise builders that begin to build so as they may be "able to finish," *Lu. xiv. 30*; and therefore lay a foundation. 4th. There are many who profess they hope to go to heaven, but despise this rock, and build their hopes upon the sand, which is done without much pains; out it is their folly. Every thing besides Christ is "sand." Some build their hopes upon their worldly prosperity, as if that were a sure token of God's favour, *Hos. xii. 8*; others upon their external profession of religion, the privileges they enjoy, and the performances they go through in that profession, and the reputation they have got by it; they are called Christians, were baptized, go to church, hear Christ's Word, say their prayers, and do nobody any harm; and if they perish, God help a great many. This is the "light of their own fire" which they walk in; this is that which, with a great deal of assurance, they venture upon; but it is all "sand," too weak to bear such a fabric as our hopes for heaven. 5th. There is a storm coming that will try what our hopes are bottomed on, "try every man's work," *1 Cor. iii. 13*, will "discover the foundation," *Hab. ii. 13*. "Rain, and floods, and wind, will beat upon the house." The trial is sometimes in this world, when "tribulation and persecution arise because of the Word;" then it will be seen who only heard the

Word, and who heard and practised it; then, when we have occasion to use our hopes, it will be tried whether they were right and well grounded or no. However, when death and judgment come, then the storm comes, and it will undoubtedly come, how calm soever things may be with us now. Then every thing else will fail us but these hopes, and then, if ever, they will be turned into everlasting fruition. 6th. Those hopes that are built upon Christ, the rock, will stand, and will stand the builder in stead when the storm comes. They will be his preservation, both from desertion and from prevailing disquiet. His profession will not wither, his comforts will not fail, they will be his strength and song, as "an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast." When he comes to the last encounter, those hopes will take off the terror of death and the grave, will carry him cheerfully through that dark valley, will be approved by the Judge, will stand the test of the great day, and will be crowned with endless glory, *2 Cor. i. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8*. Blessed is that servant, whom the Lord, when he comes, finds so doing, so hoping. 7th. Those hopes which foolish builders ground upon any thing but Christ, will certainly fail them in a stormy day; will yield them no true comfort and satisfaction in trouble, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment; will be no fence against temptations to apostacy in a time of persecution; when "God takes away the soul, where is the hope of the hypocrite?" *Job xxvii. 8*. It is as the "spider's web," and as the "giving up of the ghost." He shall "lean upon his house, but it shall not stand," *Job viii. 15*. It fell in the storm, when the builder had most need of it, and expected it should be a shelter to him. It fell when it was too late to build another; "when a wicked man dies, his expectation perishes," then when he thought it should have been turned into fruition. "It fell, and great was the fall of it." It was a great disappointment to the builder, the shame and loss was great. The higher men's hopes have been raised, the lower they fall. It is the sorest ruin of all that attends formal professors; witness Capernaum's doom.

Lastly. In the last two verses we are told what impressions Christ's discourse made upon the auditory. It was an excellent sermon, and it is probable he said more than is here recorded; and doubtless the delivery of it from the mouth of him, into whose lips grace was poured, did mightily set it off. Now,

First. They "were astonished at his doctrine." It is to be feared few of them were brought by it to follow him; but for the present they were filled with wonder. Note, It is possible for people to admire good preaching, and yet to remain in ignorance and unbelief: to be astonished, and yet not sanctified.

Secondly. The reason was, because he taught them "as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The scribes pretended to as much authority as any teachers whatsoever, and were supported by all the external advantages that could be, but their preaching was mean, and flat, and jejune; they spake as those that were not themselves masters of what they preached; the Word did not come from them with any life or force; they delivered it as a schoolboy says his lesson; but Christ delivered his discourse as a judge gives his charge. He did indeed, *dominari in concionibus*,—deliver his discourses with a tone of authority; his lessons were laws,—his word a word of command. Christ upon the mountain shewed more true authority than the scribes in Moses' seat. Thus when Christ teacheth by his spirit in the soul, he teacheth with authority. He saith, "Let there be light, and there is light."

CHAPTER VIII.

The Evangelist had given this general idea of the conversation of our Lord Jesus, after his entrance upon his public work, that "he went about preaching the Gospel, and healing all manner of sickness," *ch. iv. 23*; and the doctrine he preached was both confirmed and recommended by the cures he wrought. Having, therefore, in the foregoing chapters given us a specimen of his preaching, he comes now to give some instances of the miracles he wrought, which prove him "a teacher come from God," and the great healer of a diseased world. In this chapter we have, I. Christ's cleansing of a leper, ver. 1-4. II. His curing a palsy and fever, ver. 5-18. III. His coming with two that had a mind to follow him, ver. 19-22. IV. His controlling of the tempest, ver. 23-27. V. His casting out of devils, ver. 28-34.



WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. 2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean.

And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

The first verse refers to the close of his foregoing sermon. The people that heard him "were astonished at his doctrine;" and the effect of that was, that "when he came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him." Though he was so strict a lawgiver, and so faithful a reprover, they diligently attended him, and were loath to disperse and go from him. Note, Those to whom Christ has manifested himself, cannot but desire to be better acquainted with him. They who know much of Christ should covet to know more: and "then shall we know, if we thus follow on to know the Lord." It is good to see people so well affected to Christ, as never to think they can hear enough of him; so well affected to the best things, as thus to flock after good preaching, and to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes. Now was Jacob's prophecy concerning the Messiah fulfilled, that "unto him shall the gathering of the people be;" yet those who gathered to him did not cleave to him. They who followed him closely and constantly were but few compared with the multitudes that were but followers at large.

In these verses we have an account of Christ's "cleansing a leper." It would seem, by comparing *Mar. i. 40*, and *Lu. v. 12*, that this passage, though placed by St. Matthew after the sermon on the mount, because he would give an

not uncommon in Palestine, and are as rapacious (the true meaning of "ravening") as in olden time, though they are probably fewer in number, being seldom or never met with in packs.

vii. 16. The illustrations employed continue to be of the most familiar description. Every-day expressions, and objects constantly before their eyes, are introduced everywhere in this discourse. Hence the grapes, thorns, figs, and thistles of this verse, which is not more trite in its imagery than profound in its truth. There is

no more common sin than for men to look for grapes and figs from thorns and thistles, unless it is to see thorns and thistles where they should see grapes and figs.

vii. 25-27. The ideas here are vividly expressed. One man builds his house upon a foundation of rock, near one of the torrent's down which the winter storms rush violently, but his dwelling is uninjured. Another man builds, perhaps, upon the sandy soil accumulated in the valley at its outlet, and when the storm encounters

account of his doctrine first, and then of his miracles, yet happened some time before; but that is not at all material. This is fitly recorded with the first of Christ's miracles: 1. Because the leprosy was looked upon among the Jews as a particular mark of God's displeasure: hence we find Miriam, Gehazi, and Uzziah smitten with leprosy for some one particular sin; and therefore Christ, to shew that he came to turn away the wrath of God by taking away sin, began with the cure of a leper. 2. Because this disease, as it was supposed to come immediately from the hand of God, so also to be removed immediately by his hand, and therefore it was not attempted to be cured by physicians, but was put under the inspection of the priests, the Lord's ministers, who waited to see what God would do. And its being in a garment, or in the walls of a house, was altogether supernatural; and it should seem to be a disease of a quite different nature from what we call now the leprosy. The king of Israel said, "Am I a God," that I am sent to "to recover a man of his leprosy?" 2 *Kin. v. 7.* Christ proved himself God by recovering many from the leprosy, and authorizing his disciples in his name to do so too, *ch. x. 8.* and it is put among the proofs of his being the Messiah, *ch. xi. 5.* He also shewed himself to be the "Saviour of his people from their sins;" for though every disease is both the fruit of sin and a figure of it, as the disorder of the soul, yet the leprosy was in a special manner so; for it contracted such a pollution, and obliged to such a separation from holy things, as no other disease did; and therefore in the laws concerning it, *Lev. xiii. and xiv.*, it is treated, not as a sickness, but as an uncleanness. The priest was to pronounce the party clean or unclean, according as the indications were; but the honour of "making the lepers clean" was reserved for Christ, who was to do it as the "High Priest of our profession;" he comes to do that which "the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh," *Rom. viii. 3.* The law discovered sin, (for by the law is the knowledge of sin,) and pronounced sinners unclean, it "shut them up," *Gal. iii. 23.* as the priest did the leper, but could go no further; it could not "make the comers thereunto perfect." But Christ takes away sin, cleanseth us from it, and so "perfecteth for ever them that are sanctified." Now here we have,

I. *The leper's address to Christ.* If this happened as it is here placed, after the sermon on the mount, we may suppose that the leper, though shut out by his disease from the cities of Israel, yet got within hearing of Christ's sermon, and was encouraged by it to make his application to him; for he that taught "as one having authority" could heal also; and therefore he "came and worshipped him," as one clothed with a Divine power. His address is, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The cleansing of him may be considered,

First. As a temporal mercy; a mercy to the body, delivering it from a disease, which, though it did not threaten life, embittered it. And so it directs us, not only to apply ourselves to Christ, who has power over bodily diseases for the cure of them, but in what manner to apply ourselves to him; with an assurance of his power, he is able to cure diseases now, as he was when on earth, but with a submission to his will; "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst." As to temporal mercies we cannot be so sure of God's will to bestow them, as we may of his power, for his power in them is unlimited, but his promise of them is limited as far as it is for his glory, and our good; but when we cannot be sure of his will, yet we may be sure of his wisdom and mercy, to which we may cheerfully refer ourselves; "Thy will be done;" and this makes the expectation easy, and the event, when it comes, comfortable.

Secondly. As a typical mercy. Sin is the leprosy of the soul, it shuts us out from communion with God; to which, that we may be restored, it is necessary we be cleansed from this leprosy, and ought to be our great concern. Now, observe, it is our comfort when we apply ourselves to Christ, as the great Physician, that if he will, he can make us clean, and we should with an humble, believing boldness go to him and tell him so. That is, 1. We must "rest ourselves upon his power;" be confident of this, that Christ can make us clean. No guilt so great, but there is a sufficiency in his righteousness to atone for it; no corruption so strong, but there is a sufficiency in his grace to subdue it. God would not appoint a physician to his hospital that was not *par negotio*,—"every way qualified for the undertaking." 2. We must "recommend ourselves to his pity," we cannot demand it as a debt, but we humbly request it as a favour: "Lord, if thou wilt." "I throw myself at thy feet, and if I perish, I will perish there."

II. *Christ's answer to this address*, which was very kind, *ver. 3.*

First. He "put forth his hand, and touched him." The leprosy was a noisome, loathsome disease, yet Christ touched him; for he did not disdain to converse with publicans and sinners to do them good. There was a ceremonial pollution contracted by the touch of a leper, but Christ would shew that when he conversed with sinners he was in no danger of being infected by them, for the prince of this world had nothing in him. If we touch pitch we are defiled; but Christ was "separate from sinners," even when he lived among them.

Secondly. He said, "I will; be thou clean." He did not say, as Elisha to Naaman, "Go, wash in Jordan;" did not put him upon a tedious, troublesome, chargeable course of physic, but spake the word and healed him. 1. Here is a word of kindness, "I will." "I am as willing to help thee, as thou art to be helped." Note, Those who by faith apply themselves to Christ for mercy and grace, may be sure that he is willing, freely willing, to give them the mercy and grace they come to him for. Christ is a physician that doth not need to be sought for, he is always in the way; doth not need to be urged,—"while we are yet speaking he hears;"—doth not need to be feed, he heals freely, "not for price or reward." He has given all possible demonstration that he is as willing as he is able to save sinners. 2. A word of power, "Be thou clean." Both a power of authority and a power of energy are exerted in this word. Christ heals by a word of command to us: "Be thou clean," that is, 'be willing to be clean, and use the means; cleanse thyself from all filthiness;' but there goes along with this a word of command concerning us, a word that doth the work: "I will that thou be clean." Such a word as this is necessary to the cure, and effectual for it; and the almighty grace that speaks it shall not be wanting to those that truly desire it.

III. *The happy change hereby wrought.* "Immediately his leprosy was cleansed." Nature works gradually, but the God of nature works "immediately;" he speaks, it is done; and yet works effectually:—he "commands, and it stands fast." One of the first miracles Moses wrought was curing himself of a leprosy, *Ex. iv. 7.* for the priests under the law offered sacrifice first for their own sin; but one of Christ's first miracles was curing another of a leprosy, for he had no sin of his own to atone for.

IV. *The after-directions Christ gave him.* It is fit that those who are cured by Christ should ever after be ruled by him.

First. "See thou tell no man," that is, 'tell no man till thou hast shewn thyself to the priest, and he has pronounced thee clean; and so thou hast a legal proof, both that thou wast before a leper, and art now thoroughly cleansed.' Christ would have his miracles to appear in their full light and evidence, and not to be published till they could appear so. Note, Those that preach the truths of Christ should be able to prove them, to defend what they preach, and convince gainsayers. "Tell no man till thou hast shewed thyself to the priest;" rest if he hear who cured thee, he should out of spite deny to give thee a certificate of the cure, and so continue thee under confinement." Such were the

priests in Christ's time, that those who had any thing to do with them had need to be wise as serpents.

Secondly. "Go, shew thyself to the priest," according to the law, *Lev. xiv. 9.* Christ took care to have the law observed, lest he should give offence; and to shew that he will have order kept up, and good discipline and respect paid to those that are in office. It may be of use to those who are cleansed of their spiritual leprosy to have recourse to Christ's ministers, and open their case to them, that they may assist them in their inquiries into their spiritual state, and advise and comfort them, and pray for them.

Thirdly. "Offer the gift that Moses commanded," in token of thankfulness to God, and recompense to the priest for his pains; and this "for a testimony unto them;" either, 1. Which "Moses commanded for a testimony;" the ceremonial laws were testimonies of God's authority over them, care of them, and of that grace which should after be revealed. Or, 2. 'Do thou offer it for a testimony, and let the priest know who cleansed thee, and how; and it shall be a testimony that there is one among them who doth that which the high priest cannot do. Let it remain upon record as a witness of my power, and a testimony for me to them, if they will use it, and improve it; but against them, if they will not;' for so Christ's word and works are testimonies.

5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,



ROMAN CENTURION.

6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. 7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. 9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

We have here an account of Christ's curing the centurion's servant of a palsy. This was done at Capernaum, where Christ now dwelt, *ch. iv. 13.* Christ went about doing good, and came home to do good too; every place he came to was the better for him. The persons Christ had now to do with were,

First A "centurion;" he was the supplicant; a Gentile, a Roman, a captain, an officer of the army; probably commander in chief of that part of the Roman army which was quartered at Capernaum, and kept garrison there.

1. Though he was a soldier, and a little piety commonly goes a great way with men of that profession, yet he was a godly man, he was eminently so. Note, God hath his remnant among all sorts of people. No man's calling or place in the world will be an excuse for his unbelief and impiety; none shall say in the great day, 'I had been religious if I had not been a soldier;

his house it is utterly swept away. Indirectly this teaches forethought in human affairs; it directly teaches provision for eternity.

viii. 2. The leper was afflicted with a disease of which there are several varieties, and still one of the scourges of Oriental lands, though rarely found in modern times in Western Europe. Speaking of some cases which he saw at Nablus, Maundrell, the traveller, says, "The whole distemper, as it there appeared, was so noisome that it might well pass for the utmost corruption of the human body on

this side the grave." Of the lepers whom he saw at Jerusalem Dr. Robinson says, "They are pitiable objects, and miserable outcasts from society. They all live here together, and intermarry only with each other. The disease develops itself when they grow up, and increases as long as they live, which may be till forty or fifty years of age." Leprosy is admitted to be one of the most incurable and most loathsome maladies of our race.

viii. 4. Kuinoel here observes that by the law of Moses only a priest

for such there are among the "ransomed of the Lord." And sometimes where grace conquers the unlikely, it is more than a conqueror; this soldier that was good, was very good.

2. Though he was a Roman soldier, and his very dwelling among the Jews was a badge of their subjection to the Roman yoke, yet Christ, who was "King of the Jews," favoured him; and therein has taught us to do good to our enemies, and not needlessly to interest ourselves in national enmities.

3. Though he was a Gentile, yet Christ countenanced him. It is true he went not to any of the Gentile towns, (it was the land of Canaan that was Emmanuel's land, *Isa. viii. 8.*) yet he received addresses from Gentiles; now good old Simeon's word began to be fulfilled, that he should be "a light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as "the glory of his people Israel." Matthew in annexing this cure to that of the leper, who was a Jew, intimates that the leprous Jews Christ touched and cured, for he preached personally to them; but paralytic Gentiles he cured at a distance; for to them he did not go in person, but "sent his Word and healed them;" yet in them he was more magnified.

Secondly, *The centurion's "servant;" he was the patient.* In this also it appears that there is "no respect of persons with God;" for in Christ Jesus, as there is "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision," so there is "neither bond nor free." He is as ready to heal the poorest servant, as the richest master; for he himself "took upon him the form of a servant," to shew his regard to the meanest.

Now, in the story of the cure of this servant, we may observe an intercourse or interchanging of graces, very remarkable between Christ and the centurion. See here.

1. *The grace of the centurion working towards Christ.* Can any good thing come out of a Roman soldier? Any thing tolerable, much less any thing laudable? "Come and see," and you will find abundance of good coming out of this centurion, that was eminent and exemplary. Observe,

First. His affectionate address to Jesus Christ, which speaks, 1st. A pious regard to our great Master, as one able and willing to succour and relieve poor petitioners. He came to him "beseeching him,"—not as Naaman the Syrian, (a centurion too,) came to Elisha, demanding a cure, taking state and standing upon points of honour—but with cap in hand, as an humble suitor. By this it appears that he saw more in Christ than what appeared at first view; saw that which commanded respect, though to those that looked no further, "his visage was marred more than any man's." The officers of the army being comptrollers of the town, no doubt made a great figure, yet he lays by the thoughts of his post of honour when he addresseth himself to Christ, and comes "beseeching him."

Note. The greatest of men must turn beggars when they have to do with Christ. He owns Christ's sovereignty in calling him "Lord," and referring the case to him and to his will and wisdom, by a modest remonstrance, without any formal and express petition. He knew he had to do with a wise and gracious physician, to whom the opening of the malady was equivalent to the most earnest request. An humble confession of our spiritual wants and diseases shall not fail of an answer of peace. Pour out thy complaint, and mercy shall be poured out.

2nd. A charitable regard to his poor servant. We read of many that came to Christ for their children, but this is the only instance of one that came to him for a servant: "Lord, my servant lies at home sick." Note, It is the duty of masters to concern themselves for their servants when they are in affliction. The palsy disabled the servant for his work, and made him as troublesome and tedious as any distemper could, yet he did not turn him away when he was sick, as that Amalekite did his servant, *1 Sam. xxx. 13.* did not send him to his friends, or let him lie by neglected, but sought out the best relief he could for him; the servant could not have done more for the master, than the master did here for the servant. The centurion's servants were very dutiful to him, ver. 9, and here we see what made them so; he was very kind to them, and that made them the more cheerfully obedient to him.

As we must not despise "the cause of our servants when they contend with us," *Job xxxi. 13—15.* so we must not despise their case when God contends with them, for we are made of the same mould, by the same hand, and stand upon the same level with them before God, and must not set them with the "dogs of our flock."

The centurion seeks not to witches or wizards for his servant, but to Christ. The palsy is a disease in which the physician's skill commonly fails; it was therefore a great evidence of his faith in the power of Christ to come to him for a cure which was above the power of natural helps to effect. Observe, How pathetically he represents his servant's case as very sad: he is "sick of the palsy," a disease which commonly makes the patient senseless of pain, but this here was "grievously tormented," being young, nature was strong to struggle with the stroke, which made it painful. It was not *paralysis simplex*, but *spasmodica*. We should thus concern ourselves for the souls of our children and servants that are spiritually sick of the palsy, the dead palsy, the dumb palsy, senseless of spiritual evils, inactive in that which is spiritually good, and bring them to Christ by faith and prayer; bring them to the means of healing and health.

Secondly, See here his great humility and self-abasement. After Christ had intimated his readiness to come and heal his servant, ver. 7, he expressed himself with the more humbleness of mind. Note, Humble souls are made more humble by Christ's gracious condescensions to them. Observe what was the language of his humility: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof," ver. 8; which speaks mean thoughts of himself, and high thoughts of our Lord Jesus. He doth not say, "my servant is not worthy that thou shouldst come into his chamber, because it is in the garret;" but "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come into my house." The humility was a great man, yet owned his unworthiness before God. Note, Humility very well becomes persons of quality. Christ now made but a mean figure in the world, yet the centurion, looking upon him as a prophet, "yea, more than a prophet," paid him this respect. Note, We should have a value and veneration for what we see of God, even in those who in outward condition are every way our inferiors. The centurion came to Christ with a petition, and therefore expresseth himself thus humbly. Note, In all our approaches to Christ, and to God through Christ, it becomes us to abase ourselves, and to be low in a sense of our own unworthiness, as mean creatures, and as vile sinners, to do anything for God, receive any good from him, or to have any thing to do with him.

Thirdly, See here his great faith; and the more humility the more faith; the more diffident we are of ourselves, the stronger will be our confidence in Jesus Christ. He had an assurance of faith, not only that Christ could cure his servant, but that he could cure him at a distance. There needed not any physical contact, as in natural operations; no application to the part affected, no, not to the blood or the weapon, as is pretended in the sympathetic powder, but the cure he believes may be wrought without bringing the physician and patient together. We read afterwards of those who brought the man sick of the palsy to Christ, through much difficulty, and set him before him, and Christ commended their faith for a working faith. This centurion did not bring his "man sick of the palsy," and Christ commended his faith for a trusting faith; true faith is accepted of Christ, though variously appearing. Christ puts the best construction upon the different methods of religion that people take, and

thereby has taught us to do so to. This centurion believed, and it is undoubtedly true, that the power of Christ knows no limits, and therefore near or far off are alike to him. Distance of place cannot obstruct either the knowing or working of him that fills all places. "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?" *Jer. xxiii. 23.* 2. That he could cure him with a word, not send him a medicine, much less a charm, but "speak the word only," and I do not question but "my servant shall be healed." Herein he owns him to have a Divine power, an authority to command all the creatures and powers of nature, which enables him to do whatever he pleaseth in the kingdom of nature, as at first he raised that kingdom by an almighty word, when he said, "Let there be light." With men, saying and doing are two things, but not so with Christ, who is, therefore, the "arm of the Lord," because he is the "eternal Word." His saying, "Be ye warmed, and filled," (*Jas. ii. 16.*) and healed, warmed, and fills, and heals. The centurion's faith in the power of Christ he here illustrates by the dominion he had as a centurion over his soldiers, as a master over his servants; he saith to one, "Go, and he goeth," &c. They were all at his beck and command, so far, that he could by them execute things at a distance; "his word was a law to them,"—*dictum factum*. Well disciplined soldiers know that the commands of their officers are not to be disputed, but obeyed; thus could Christ speak, and it is done; such a power had he over all bodily diseases. The centurion had this command over his soldiers, though he was himself a "man under authority;" not a commander in chief, but a subaltern officer; much more had Christ this power, who is the supreme and sovereign Lord of all. The centurion's servants were very obsequious, would go and come at every the least intimation of their master's mind. Now, 1st. Such servants we all should be to God; we must go and come at his bidding, according to the directions of his word, and the disposals of his providence; run where he sends us, return when he remands us, and do what he appoints. "What saith my Lord unto his servant?" When his will crosseth our own, then his must take place, and our own be set aside. 2nd. Such servants bodily diseases are to Christ. They seize us when he sends them, they leave us when he calls them back; they have that effect upon us, upon our bodies, upon our souls, that he orders. It is matter of comfort to all that belong to Christ, for whose good his power is exerted and engaged, that every disease hath his commission, executes his command, is under his control, and is made to serve the intentions of his grace. Those need not fear sickness, nor what it can do, who see it in the hand of so good a friend.

II. *Here is the grace of Christ appearing towards this centurion; for to the gracious he will shew himself gracious.*

First. He complies with his address at the first word. He did but tell him his servant's case, and was going on to beg a cure, when Christ prevented him with this good word, and comfortable word, "I will come and heal him," ver. 7. Not "I will come and see him," that had spoken him a kind Saviour; but "I will come and heal him," that speaks him a mighty Saviour, almighty; it was a great word, but no more than he could make good, for he has "healing under his wings;" his coming is healing. Those who wrought miracles by a derived power did not speak thus positively, as Christ did, who wrought them by his own power, as one that had authority. When a minister is sent for to a sick friend, he can but say, "I will come, and pray for him;" but Christ saith, "I will come and heal him;" it is well that Christ can do more for us than our ministers can. The centurion desired he would heal his servant; he saith "I will come and heal him;" thus expressing more favour than he did either ask or think of. Note, Christ often outdoes the expectations of poor supplicants. See an instance of Christ's humility, that he would make a visit to a poor soldier. He would not go down to see a nobleman's sick child, who insisted upon his coming down, *Jno. iv. 47—49.* but proffers to go down to see a sick servant; thus doth he regard "the low estate" of his people, and give "more abundant honour to that part which lacked." Christ's humility in being willing to come, gave an example to him, and occasioned his humility, in owning himself unworthy to have him come. Note, Christ's gracious condescensions to us should make us the more humble and self-abasing before him.

Secondly, He commends his faith, and takes occasion from it to speak a kind word of the poor Gentiles, ver. 10—12. See what great things a strong but self-denying faith can obtain from Jesus Christ, even of general and public concern. 1. As to the centurion himself. He not only approved him, and accepted him (that honour have all true believers,) but he admired him, and applauded him (that honour great believers have, as Job;) there is "none like him in the earth." 1st. Christ admired him, not for his greatness, but for his graces. "When Jesus heard it, he marvelled," not as if it were to him new and surprising, he knew the centurion's faith, for he wrought it; but it was great and excellent, rare and uncommon, and Christ spoke of it as wonderful, to teach us what to admire; not worldly pomp and bravery, but the "beauty of holiness," and the ornaments which are "in the sight of God of great price." Note, The wonders of grace should affect us more than the wonders of nature or providence, and spiritual attainments more than any achievements in this world. Of those that are "rich in faith," not of those that are "rich in gold and silver," we should say that they have "gotten all the glory," *Gen. xxxi. 1.* But whatever there is admirable in the faith of any, it must redound to the glory of Christ, who will shortly be himself "admired in all them that believe," as having done in and for them "marvellous things." 2nd. He applauded him in what he said to them that followed. All believers shall be "in the other world," but some believers are in this world, confessed and acknowledged by Christ before men, in his eminent appearances for them and with them. "Verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Now this speaks, *First.* Honour to the centurion, who, though not a son of Abraham's loins, was an heir of Abraham's faith, and Christ found it so. Note, The thing that Christ seeks is faith, and wherever it is he finds it, though but as a grain of mustard seed. He had not found "so great faith," all things considered, and in proportion to the means; as the poor widow is said to be "cast in more than they all," *Lu. xxi. 3.* Though the centurion was a Gentile, yet he was thus commended. Note, We must be so far from grudging, that we must be forward to give those their due praise that are not within our denomination or pale. *Second.* It speaks "shame to Israel," to whom pertained "the adoption, the glory, the covenants," and all the assistances and encouragements of faith. Note, When "the Son of man comes," he finds little faith, and therefore he finds so little fruit. Note, The attainments of some that have had but little helps for their souls, will aggravate the sin and ruin of many that have had great plenty of the means of grace, and have not made a good improvement of them. Christ said this "to those that followed" him, if by any means he might provoke them to a holy emulation, (as Paul speaks *Rom. xi. 14.*) They were Abraham's seed: in jealousy for that honour, let them not suffer themselves to be outstripped, especially in that grace which Abraham was famous for, by a Gentile. 2. As to others, Christ takes occasion from hence to make a comparison between Jews and Gentiles, and tells them two things, which could not but be very surprising to them, who had been taught that "salvation was of the Jews." 1st. That a great many of the Gentiles shall be saved, ver. 11. The faith of the centurion was but a specimen of the conversion of the Gentiles, and a preface to their adoption into the church. This was a strong Lord

could pronounce a leper clean. The rites and offerings enjoined by the law at the cleansing of a leper are given in *Lev. xiv. 4.* &c. The words "for a testimony unto them" are differently explained, but it seems most natural to refer them to the priests; hence, as Storr says, "Show thyself to the priest, that every one of them may understand thou art healed." Some, however, think the sense is, "Show thyself to the priest, that thou mayest be a witness against the priests if they reject me, or deny that I have healed thee."

viii. 5. The centurion derived his name from his office, as commander of a hundred men. That he was a Gentile is inferred from verse 10.

viii. 6. "Sick of the palsy," or paralytic. The sufferer is said to have been "grievously tormented," probably by convulsive and other violent symptoms. Thus we read in Fairbairn's "Bible Dictionary," "This part of the description may have referred to the convulsions, foamings, or heavy breathings under which. at

Jesus harped often upon. He speaks it with assurance, "I say unto you:" I that know all men; and he could not say any thing more pleasing to himself, or more displeasing to the Jews: an intimation of this kind enraged the Nazarenes against him, *Lu. iv. 27*. Christ gives us here an idea, *First*. Of the persons that shall be saved: many "from the East and the West." He had said, *ch. vii. 14*, "Few there be that find the way to life," and yet here "many shall come." Few at one time, and in one place, yet when they come all together, they will be a great many. We now see but here and there one brought to grace; but we shall shortly see the Captain of our salvation "bringing many sons to glory," *Heb. ii. 10*. He will come with "ten thousands of his saints," *Jude 14*, such a company as "no man can number," *Rev. vii. 9*; "Nations of them that are saved," *Rev. xxi. 24*. They shall come "from the East, and from the West," places far distant from each other, yet they shall all meet at the right hand of Christ, the centre of their unity. Note, God has his remnant in all places, "from the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same," *Mal. i. 11*. The elect will be gathered from the four winds, *ch. xiv. 31*. They are sown in the earth, some scattered in every corner of the field. The Gentile world lay "from East to West," and they are especially meant here; though they were strangers to the covenant of promise now, and had been long, yet who knows what hidden ones God had among them then? as in Elijah's time in Israel, *1 Kin. xix. 14*; and soon after they flocked into the church in great multitudes, *Isa. lx. 3, 4*. Note, When we come to heaven, as we shall miss a great many thence that we thought had been going thither, so we shall meet a great many there that we did not expect to have met here. *Secondly*. Christ gives us an idea of the salvation itself. They shall come, shall come together, shall come together to Christ, *2 Thes. ii. 1*. They shall be admitted "into the kingdom of grace" on earth into the covenant of grace made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; they shall be "blessed with faithful Abraham," whose blessing comes upon the Gentiles, *Gal. iii. 14*. This makes Zaccheus a son of Abraham, *Lu. xix. 9*. 2. They shall be admitted into the "kingdom of glory in heaven." They shall come cheerfully, flying "as doves to their windows;" they shall sit down to rest from their labours, as having done their day's work: sitting notes continuance; while we stand we are going, where we sit we mean to stay; heaven is a remaining rest, it is "a continuing city;" they shall sit down, as upon a throne, *Rev. iii. 21*: as at a table, that is the metaphor here; they shall sit down to be feasted; which notes both fulness of communication, and freedom and familiarity of communion, *Lu. xxii. 30*. They shall "sit down with Abraham." Those that in this world were never so far distant from each other, in time, place, or outward condition, shall all meet together in heaven; ancients and moderns, Jew and Gentile, rich and poor. The rich man in hell sees Abraham, but Lazarus sits down with him, leaning on his breast. Note, Holy society is a part of heaven's felicity; and those on whom the ends of the world are come, and are most obscure, shall share in glory with the renowned patriarchs. 2nd. That a great many of the Jews should perish, *ver. 12*. Observe, *First*. A strange sentence passed. "The children of the kingdom shall be cast out;" that is the Jews that persist in unbelief, though they were by birth "children of the kingdom," yet shall be cut off from being members of the visible church; the "kingdom of God," which they boasted that they were the children of, shall be taken from them, and they shall become "not a people," nor "obtaining mercy," *Rom. xi. 20*; *ix. 31*. In the great day it will not avail men to have been "children of the kingdom," either Jews or Christians; for men will then be judged, not by what they were called, but by what they were; "if children" indeed, "then heirs;" but any are children in profession in the family, but not of it, that will come short of the inheritance. Being born of professing parents denominates us children of the kingdom; but if we rest in that, and have nothing else to shew for heaven but that, we shall be cast out. *Secondly*. A strange punishment for the "workers of iniquity" described. They shall be cast into "outer darkness," the darkness of those that are without, that is, of the Gentiles that were out of the church; into that the Jews were cast, and worse. They were blinded, and hardened, and filled with terrors, as the apostle shews, *Rom. xi. 8-10*. A people so unchurched, and given up to spiritual judgments, are in utter darkness already; but it looks further, to the state of damned sinners in hell, which the other is a dismal preface to. They shall be cast out from God, and all true comfort, and cast into darkness. In hell there is fire, but no light; it is utter darkness, darkness in extremity, the highest degree of darkness, without any remainder, or mixture, or hope of light; not the least gleam or glimpse of it. It is darkness that results from their being shut out of heaven, the land of light. They that are without are in the regions of darkness, yet that is not the worst of it, "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 1. In hell there will be great grief, floods of tears shed to no purpose. Anguish of spirit preying eternally upon the vitals, in the sense of the wrath of God, is the torment of the damned. 2. Great indignation. Damned sinners will gnash their teeth for spite and vexation, "full of the fury of the Lord;" seeing with envy the happiness of others, and reflecting with horror upon the former possibility of their own being happy, which is now past.

Thirdly. He cures his servant. He doth not only commend his application to him, but grants him that which he applied himself to him for, which was a real answer, *ver. 13*. Observe, 1. What Christ said to him. He said that which made the cure as great a favour to him as it was to his servant, and much greater: "as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee." The servant got a cure of his disease, but the master got the confirmation and approbation of his faith. Note, Christ often gives encouraging answers to his praying people, when they are interceding for others. It is kindness to us to be heard for others. God returned the captivity of Job then, when he prayed for his friends, *Job xlii. 10*. It was a great honour which Christ put upon this centurion, when he gave him a blank, as it were: "be it done as thou believest." What could ye have more? yet what was said to him is said to us all, "Believe, and ye shall receive;" only believe. See here the power of Christ, and the power of faith. As Christ can do what he will, so an active believer may have what he will from Christ. The oil of grace multiplies, and stays not till the vessels of faith fail. 2. What was the effect of this saying. The prayer of faith was a prevailing prayer, it ever was so, and ever will be so. It appears, by the suddenness of the cure, that it was miraculous, and by its coincidence with Christ's saying that the miracle was his; "he spake, and it was done;" and this was a proof of his omnipotence, that he had a long arm. It is the observation of a learned physician, that the diseases Christ cured were mostly such as were the most difficult to be cured by any natural means, and particularly the palsy. *Omnis paralyticus praesertim vetusta, aut incurabilis est, aut difficilis curatio, etiam pueris: atque, solum ego dicere, morbos omnes qui Christo curandi fuerunt, propositi, difficillimos sua natura curatu esse.*—Every kind of palsy, especially of long continuance, is either incurable, or is found to yield with the utmost difficulty to medical skill, even in young subjects, so that I have frequently remarked, that all the diseases which were referred to Christ for cure, appear to have been of the most obstinate and hopeless kind.—*Mercurialis de Morbis Nervorum*, lib. 2, cap. 5.

14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house,

he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them. 16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

Those that pretend to be critical in the harmony of the evangelists, place this passage, and all that follows, to the end of *ch. ix.*, before the sermon on the mount, according to the order, which Mark and Luke observe in placing it. Dr. Lightfoot placeth only this passage before the sermon on the mount, and *ver. 18, &c.*, after. Here we have,

1. A particular account of the cure of Peter's wife's mother, that was ill of a fever. In which observe,

First. The case, which was nothing extraordinary: fevers are the most common distempers; but the patient being a near relation of Peter's, it is recorded as an instance of Christ's peculiar care of, and kindness to, the families of his disciples. Here we find, 1. That Peter had a wife, and "yet was called to be an apostle of Christ," and Christ countenanced the married state he was in, by being thus kind to his wife's relations. The Church of Rome, therefore, which forbids ministers to marry, go contrary to that apostle, from whom they pretend to derive an infallibility. 2. That Peter had a house, though Christ had not, *ver. 20*. Thus was the disciple better provided for than his Lord. 3. That he had a house at Capernaum, though he was originally of Bethsaida: it is probable he removed to Capernaum when Christ removed thither, and made that his principal residence. Note, It is worth while to change our quarters, that we may be near to Christ, and have opportunities of converse with him. When the ark removes, Israel must remove, and go after it. 4. That he had his wife's mother with him in his family, which is an example to yoke-fellows to be kind to one another's relations as their own. Probably this good woman was old, and yet was respected and taken care of, as old people ought to be, with all possible tenderness. 5. That she lay ill "of a fever." Neither the strength of youth, nor the weakness and coldness of age, will be a fence against diseases of this kind. The palsy was a chronic disease, the fever an acute disease, but both were brought to Christ.

Secondly. The cure, *ver. 15*. 1. How it was effected: "he touched her hand;" not to know the disease, as the physicians do, by the pulse, but to heal it. This was an intimation of his kindness and tenderness; he is himself touched with the feeling of our infirmities. It likewise shews the way of spiritual healing, by the exerting of the power of Christ with his word, and the application of Christ to ourselves. The Scripture speaks the word, the Spirit gives the touch, touches the heart, touches the hand. 2. How it was evidenced, this shewed that the fever left her; she arose and ministered unto them." By this it appears, 1st. That the mercy was perfected. Those that recover from fevers by the power of nature, are commonly weak and feeble, and unfit for business a great while after: to shew, therefore, that this cure was above the power of nature, she was immediately so well as to go about the business of the house. 2nd. That the mercy was sanctified, and the mercies that are so, are indeed perfected. Though she was thus dignified by a peculiar favour, yet she doth not take state, but is as ready to wait at table, if occasion be, as any servant. Those must be humble whom Christ has honoured; being thus delivered, she studies what she shall render. It is very fit that those whom Christ hath healed should minister unto him, as his humble servants, all their days.

3. Here is a general account of the many cures that Christ wrought. This cure of Peter's mother in law brought him abundance of patients: "he healed such an one, why not me? Such an one's friend, why not mine?" Now here we are told,

First. What he did, *ver. 16*. 1. He cast out devils, "cast out the evil spirits with his word." There may be much of Satan's agency, by the Divine permission, in those diseases of which natural causes may be assigned, as in Job's boils, especially in the diseases of the mind; but about the time of Christ's being in the world, there seems to have been a more than ordinary letting loose of the devil to possess and vex the bodies of people: he came, "having great wrath, for he knew that his time was short;" and God wisely ordered it so, that Christ might have the fairer and more frequent opportunities of shewing his power over Satan, and the purpose and design of his coming into the world, which was to disarm and dispossess Satan, to break his power, and to destroy his works; and his success was as glorious as his design was gracious. 2. He "healed all that were sick;" all, without exception, though the patient was never so mean, and the case never so bad.

Secondly. How the Scripture was herein fulfilled, *ver. 17*. The accomplishment of the Old Testament prophecies was the great thing Christ had in his eye, and the great proof of his being the Messiah: among other things it was written of him, *Isa. liii. 4*: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows;" it is referred to, *1 Pet. ii. 24*, and there it is construct, "he hath borne our sins;" here it is referred to, and is construed, "he hath borne our sicknesses;" our sins make our sicknesses our griefs; Christ bore away sin by the merit of his death, and bore away sickness by the miracles of his life; nay, though those miracles are ceased, we may say that "he bore our sicknesses" then, when he bore our sins in his own body upon the tree; for sin is both the cause and the sting of sickness; many are the diseases and calamities which we are liable to in the body; and there is more in this one line of the Gospel to support and comfort us under them, than in all the writings of the philosophers, that Jesus Christ "bore our sicknesses," and carried our sorrows: he bore them before us; though he was never sick, yet he was hungry and thirsty, and weary, and troubled in spirit, sorrowful, and very heavy; he bore them for us in his passion, and bears them with us in his compassion, being "touched with the feeling of our infirmities;" and thus he bears them off from us, and makes them sit light, if it be not our own fault. Observe how emphatically it is expressed here, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses;" he was both able and willing to interpose in that matter, and concerned to deal with our infirmities and sicknesses, as our physician; that part of the calamity of the human nature was his particular care, which he evidenced by his great readiness to cure diseases; and he is not less powerful, or less tender now for we are sure never any were the worse for going to heaven.

certain stages of the disease, the patient laboured, and which, to the witnesses of his trouble, gave the impression of heavy suffering or torment, whether he might himself be conscious of pain or not."

viii. 11. This verse is a clear foreshowing of the fact that others besides the Jews would be received among God's children. They would "sit down," that is, would take a place among the chosen and accepted guests, and partake of the blessings of salvation.

viii. 12. "The children of the kingdom" are the Hebrews, of

whom many, not all, would be excluded from the privileges of grace first offered to them. The language is figurative, in allusion to the exclusion of those who had rejected the conditions of mercy. They would be not only shut out from the banquet where the patriarchs were, but would be overtaken with grievous punishment.

viii. 14. The Romish divines admit that Peter was married, but they maintain that the apostle separated himself from his wife when the Saviour called him to office. This, however, is very doubtful,

18 Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side. 19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. 20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. 21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

Here is, First, Christ's removing to "the other side" of the sea of Tiberias, and his ordering his disciples, whose boats attended him, to get their transport vessels ready in order to it, ver. 18. The influences of this Sun of Righteousness were not to be confined to one place, but diffused all the country over: he must go about to do good; the necessities of souls called to him, "Come over and help us," *Acts* xvi. 9. He removed when "he saw great multitudes about him." Though by this it appeared they were desirous to have him there, he knew there were others as desirous to have him with them, and they must have their share of him. His being acceptable and useful in one place, was no objection against, but a reason for, his going to another. Thus he would try the multitudes that were about him, whether their zeal would carry them to follow him, and attend on him when his preaching was removed to some distance: many would be glad of such helps, if they could have them at next door, that will not be at the pains to follow them to the other side; and thus Christ shook off those that were less zealous, and the perfect were "made manifest."

Secondly, Christ's communication with two, who upon his remove to the other side were loath to stay behind, and had a mind to follow him; not as others that were his followers at large, but to come into close discipleship; which the most were shy of; for it carried such a face of strictness as they could not digest, or be well reconciled to: but here is an account of two that seemed fond to come into communion, and yet were not right; which is here given as a specimen of the hinderances by which many are kept from closing with Christ, and cleaving to him; and a warning to us to set out in following Christ, so as that we may not come short; to lay such a foundation as that our building may stand.

We have here Christ's managing of two different tempers: one quick and eager, the other dull and heavy; and his instructions are adapted to each of them, and designed for our use.

I. Here is one that was too hasty in promising, and he was "a certain scribe," ver. 19: a scholar, a learned man, one of those that studied and expounded the law: generally we find them, in the Gospels, to be men of no good character, usually coupled with the Pharisees, as enemies to Christ and his doctrine: "Where is the scribe?" *1 Cor.* i. 20; he is very seldom following Christ, yet here was one that bade pretty fair for discipleship; a "Saul among the prophets." Now observe,

First, How he expressed his forwardness: "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." I know not how any man could have said better. His profession of a self-dedication to Christ is, 1. Very ready, and seems to be *ex mero motu*,—from his unbiassed inclination; he is not called to it by Christ, or urged by any of the disciples, but of his own accord proffers himself to be a close follower of Christ; is not a pressed man, but a volunteer. 2. Very resolute; he seems to be at a point in this matter; not, 'I have a mind to follow thee'; but, 'I am determined I will do it.' 3. It was unlimited, and without reserve: "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest;" not only to the other side of the country, but if it were to the utmost regions of the world. Now we would think ourselves sure of such a man as this; and yet it appears by Christ's answer, that his resolution was rash, his ends low and carnal; either he did not consider at all, or not that which was to be considered. He saw the miracles Christ wrought, and hoped he would set up a temporal kingdom, and he would put in betimes for a share in it. Note, There are many resolutions for religion produced by some sudden pangs of conviction, and taken up without due consideration, that prove abortive, and when they should knit, fall and come to nothing. Soon ripe, soon rotten.

Secondly, How Christ tried his forwardness, whether it were sincere or no, ver. 20. He let him know that this "Son of man," whom he is so eager to follow, "has not where to lay his head," ver. 20. Now this account of Christ's deep poverty, 1. Is strange in itself; that the Son of God, when he came into the world, should put himself into such a very low condition as to want the convenience of a certain resting-place, which the meanest of the creatures have. If he would take our nature upon him, one would think he should have taken it in its best estate and circumstances; no, he takes it in its worst. See here, 1st. How well provided for the inferior creatures are: "The foxes have holes," though they are not only not useful, but hurtful to man, yet God provides holes for them, in which they are earthed. Man endeavours to destroy them, but thus they are sheltered; their holes are their castles. The "birds of the air," though they take no care for themselves, yet are taken care of, and "have nests," *Ps.* civ. 17; nests in the field, some of them nests in the house, in God's courts, *Ps.* lxxiv. 3. 2nd. How poorly the Lord Jesus was provided for. It may encourage us to trust God for necessities, that the beast and birds have such good provision, and may comfort us, if we want necessities, that our Master did so before us. Note, Our Lord Jesus, when he was here in the world, submitted to the disgraces and distresses of extreme poverty: "for our sakes he became poor," very poor: he had not a settlement, had not a place of repose, not a house of his own to put his head in, not a pillow of his own to lay his head on; he and his disciples lived upon the charity of well-disposed people, that "ministered to him of their substance," *Lu.* viii. 2; Christ submitted to this, not only that he might in all respects humble himself, and fulfil the Scriptures, which spoke of him as poor and needy, but that he might shew us the vanity of worldly wealth, and teach us to look upon it with a holy contempt; that he might purchase better things for us, and so "make us rich," *2 Cor.* viii. 9. 2. It comes in strangely here. When a scribe offered to follow Christ, one would think he should have encouraged him, "Come, and I will take care of thee;" one scribe might be capable of doing him more credit and service than twelve fishermen; but Christ saw his heart, and answered to the thoughts of that, and therein teaches us all how to come to Christ. 1st. The scribe's resolve seems to have been sudden; and Christ would have us, when we take

upon us a profession of religion, to "sit down and count the cost," *Lu.* xiv. 28, to do it intelligently, and with consideration, and choose the way of godliness, not because we know no other, but because we know no better. It is no advantage to religion to take men by surprise, ere they are aware: they that take up a profession in a pang, will throw it off again in a fret; let him therefore take time, and he will have done the sooner; he that will follow Christ, let him know the worst of it, and expect to lie hard, and fare hard. 2nd. His resolve seems to have been from a worldly, covetous principle. He saw what abundance of cures Christ wrought, and concluded he had large fees, and would get an estate quickly, and therefore he would follow him in hopes of growing rich with him; but Christ rectifies his mistake, and tells him, he was so far from growing rich, that he had not a place to lay his head on; and if he follow him, he cannot expect to fare better than he fared. Note, Christ will accept none for his followers that aim at worldly advantages in following him, or design to make any thing but heaven of their religion. We have reason to think that this scribe hereupon "went away sorrowful," being balked in a bargain he thought would turn to account; he is not following Christ unless he can get by him.

II. Here is another, that was too slow in performing. Delay in execution is as bad on the one hand, as precipitancy in resolution is on the other hand; when we have taken time to consider, and then have determined, let it never be said, we left that to be done to-morrow, which we could do to-day. This candidate for the ministry, this propositant, was one of Christ's disciples already, ver. 21, a follower of him at large. Clemens Alexandrinus tells us, from an ancient tradition, that this was Philip; he seems to be better qualified and disposed than the former, because not so confident and presumptuous: a bold, eager, overforward temper is not the most promising in religion; sometimes the last are first, and the first last. Now observe here,

First, The excuse that this disciple made to shift off an immediate attendance on Christ, ver. 21: "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father;" before I come to be a close and constant follower of thee, let me be allowed to perform this last office of respect to my father; and, in the mean time, let it suffice to be a hearer of thee now and then, when I can spare time." His father (some think) was now sick, or dying, or dead; others think he was only aged, and not likely in a course of nature to continue long; and he desired leave to attend upon him in his sickness, at his death, and to his grave, and then he will be at Christ's service. This seemed a reasonable request, and yet it was not right; he had not the zeal he should have had for the work, and therefore pleaded this because it seemed a plausible plea. Note, An unwilling mind never wants an excuse; the meaning of *non vacat*, is *non placet*,—"the want of leisure is the want of inclination." He that saith he has no time, the truth is, he has no mind. We will suppose it to come from a true filial affection and respect to his father, but still the preference should have been given to Christ. Note, Many are hindered from and in the way of serious godliness by an over concern for their families and relations: these lawful things undo us all, and our duty to God is neglected and postponed, under colour of discharging our debts to the world; here therefore we have need to double our guard.

Secondly, Christ's disallowing of this excuse, ver. 22: "Jesus said to him, Follow me;" and, no doubt, power went along with this word to him, as to others, and he did follow Christ, and cleave to him, as Ruth to Naomi, when the scribe in the verses before, like Orpah, took leave of him. That said, "I will follow thee," to this Christ said, "Follow me;" comparing them together, it is intimated, that we are brought to Christ by the force of his calling to us, not of our promises to him; it is not of him that willett, nor of him that runneth, but of God that shews mercy, and calleth whom he will, *Rom.* ix. 16. And further, Note, Though chosen vessels may make excuses, and shift off their compliance with Divine calls a great while, yet Christ will at length answer their excuses, conquer their unwillingness, and bring them to his foot; when Christ calls, he will overcome and make the call effectual, *1 Sam.* iii. 10; his excuse is laid aside as insufficient; "Let the dead bury their dead." It is a proverbial expression, 'Let one dead man bury another; that is, rather let them lay unburied, than that the service of Christ should be neglected. Let the dead spiritually bury the dead corporally; let worldly offices be left to worldly people; especially a dead father, but it is not thy work at this time; it may be done as well by others that are not called and qualified as thou art to be employed for Christ; thou hast something else to do, and must not defer that.' Note, Piety to God must be preferred before piety to parents, though that is a great and needful part of our religion. The Nazarenes under the law were not to mourn for their own parents, because they were "holy to the Lord," *Num.* vi. 6-8; nor was the high priest to "defile himself for the dead," no, not for "his own father," *Lev.* xxi. 11, 12. And Christ requires of those who would follow him, that they "hate father and mother," *Lu.* xiv. 26, that is, love them less than God; we must comparatively neglect and disesteem our nearest relations, when they come in competition with Christ, and either our doing for him, or our suffering for him.

23 And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. 24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. 25 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. 26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. 27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

Christ had given sailing orders to his disciples, ver. 18: that they should "depart to the other side" of the sea of Tiberias, into the country of Gadara, in the tribe of Gad, which lay east of Jordan; thither he would go to rescue a poor creature that was possessed with a legion of devils, though he foresaw how he should be affronted there. Now, 1. He chose to go by water. It had not been much about if he had gone by land, but he chose to cross the lake, that he might have occasion to manifest himself the God of the sea, as well as of the dry land, and that "all power is his, both in heaven and earth." And it is a comfort to those who "go down to the sea in ships," and are oft in perils there, that they have a Saviour to trust to, and pray to, who knows what it is to be at sea, and to be in storms there. But observe, when he went to sea, he

because, many years after, St. Paul says, "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" (*1 Cor.* ix. 5.) To avoid the difficulty it is alleged that our version of St. Paul's words is wrong, and that for "wife" we ought to translate "woman." But if Peter was married, as is allowed, what woman would he be so likely to take about as his own wife?

viii. 17: The evangelist here applies to the external and bodily

remedies wrought by Christ a passage which in *1 Peter* ii. 24 seems to be extended to pardon and all the blessings of the atonement. There is no reason why the prophetic words (*Isa.* liii. 4) should not include all the gracious works of the Saviour.

viii. 20. The phrase "the Son of Man" is used in an emphatic sense of the Saviour, although "son of man" was a common equivalent for a man in the Aramaic dialect, and by no means uncommon in Hebrew. It points to his dignity.

had no yacht, or pleasure boat, to attend him, but made use of his disciples, fishing boats; so poorly was he accommodated in all respects. 2. "His disciples followed him," the twelve kept close to him, when others stayed behind upon the *terra firma*, where there was sure footing. Note, They, and they only, will be found the true disciples of Christ that are willing to go to sea with him, to follow him into dangers and difficulties. Many would be content to go the land way to heaven, that will rather stand still, or go back, than venture upon a dangerous sea; but those that would rest with Christ hereafter, must follow him now, wherever he leads them, into a ship or into a prison, as well as into a palace. Now observe here,

1. *The peril and perplexity of the disciples in this voyage*; and in this appeared the truth of what Christ had just now said, that those who follow him must count upon difficulties, ver. 20.

First, "There arose a very great storm," ver. 24: Christ could have prevented this storm, and have ordered them a pleasant passage; but that would not have been so much for his glory, and the confirmation of their faith, as their deliverance was. This storm was "for their sakes," as *Jno. xi. 4*. One would have expected that, having Christ with them, they should have had a very favourable gale; but it is quite otherwise; for Christ would shew that those who are passing with him over the ocean of this world, to the other side, must expect storms by the way. The church is "tossed with tempests," *Isa. liv. 11*; it is only the upper region that enjoys a perpetual calm, this lower one is ever and anon disturbed and disturbing.

Secondly, Jesus Christ "was asleep" in this storm. We never read of Christ's sleeping but at this time; he was in watchings often, continued all night in prayer to God; this was a sleep, not of security, like Jonah's in a storm, but of holy serenity, and dependence upon his Father. He slept to shew that he was really and truly man, and subject to the sinless infirmities of our nature; his work made him weary and sleepy, and he had no guilt, no fear within, to disturb his repose: those that can lay their heads upon the pillow of a clear conscience, may sleep quietly and sweetly in a storm, *Ps. iv. 8*; as Peter, *Acts xii. 6*; he slept at this time to try the faith of his disciples, whether they could trust him when he seemed to slight them. He slept, not so much with a desire to be refreshed, as with a design to be awaked.

Thirdly, The poor disciples, though used to the sea, were in a great fright, and in their fear came to their Master, ver. 25: whither else should they go? It was well they had him so near them. They awoke him with their prayers: "Lord, save us: we perish." Note, Those who would learn to pray, must go to sea. Imminent and sensible dangers will drive people to Him who alone can help in time of need. Their prayer has life in it, "Lord, save us, we perish." 1. Their petition is, "Lord, save us:" they believed he could save them, they begged he would; Christ's errand in the world was to save, but those only "shall be saved that call on the name of the Lord," *Acts ii. 21*; those who by faith are interested in the eternal salvation wrought out by Christ may with an humble confidence apply themselves to him for temporal deliverance. Observe, they call him "Lord," and then pray, "save us." Note, Christ will save none but those that are willing to take him for their "Lord," for he is a Prince and a Saviour. 2. Their plea is, "we perish;" which was, 1st. The language of their fear; they looked upon their case as desperate, and gave all for gone, and received sentence of death within themselves, and this they plead: "we perish, if thou dost not save us; look upon us therefore with pity." 2nd. It was language of their fervency; they pray as men in earnest that beg for their lives; it becomes us thus to strive and wrestle in prayer; therefore Christ slept that he might draw out this importunity.

11. *The power and grace of Jesus Christ put forth for their succour*; then the Lord Jesus awaked, as one refreshed, *Ps. lxxviii. 65*; Christ may sleep when his church is in a storm, but he will not outsleep himself; "the time, the set time," to favour his distressed church will "come," *Ps. cii. 13*.

First, He rebuked the disciples, ver. 26: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" He doth not chide them for disturbing him with their prayers, but for disturbing themselves with their fears. Christ reproved them first, and then delivered them; this is his method to prepare us for a mercy, and then give it us. Observe, 1. His dislike of their fears: "why are ye fearful?" "ye my disciples; let the sinners in Zion be afraid, let heathen mariners tremble in a storm, but you shall not be so. Inquire into the reasons of your fear, and weigh them." 2. His discovery of the cause and spring of their fears; "O ye of little faith." Many that have true faith are weak in it, and it doth but little. Note, 1st. Christ's disciples are apt to be disquieted with fears in a stormy day, to torment themselves with jealousies that things are bad with them, and conclusions that they will be worse. 2nd. The prevalence of our inordinate fears in a stormy day is owing to the weakness of our faith, which would be as an anchor to the soul, and would ply the oar of prayer. By faith we might see through the storm to the quiet shore, and encourage ourselves with hope that we shall weather our point. 3. The fearfulness of Christ's disciples in a storm, and their unbelief the cause of it, is very displeasing to the Lord Jesus, for it reflects dishonour upon him, and creates disturbance to themselves.

Secondly, He "rebukes the wind." The former he did as the God of grace, and the Sovereign of the heart, that can do what he pleaseth in us; this he did as the God of nature, the Sovereign of the world, that can do what he pleaseth for us. It is the same power that "stills the noise of the sea" and the tumult of fear, *Ps. lxxv. 7*. See, 1. How easily this was done; with a word's speaking. Moses commanded the waters with a rod; Joshua with the ark of the covenant; Elisha with the prophet's mantle; but Christ with a word. See his absolute dominion over all the creatures, which speaks both his honour and the happiness of those that have him on their side. 2. How effectually it was done: there "was a great calm," all of a sudden. Ordinarily after a storm, there is such a fret of the waters that it is a good while ere they can settle; but if Christ speak the word, not only the storm ceaseth, but all the effects of it, all the remains of it. Great storms of doubt and fear in the soul under the power of the spirit of bondage, sometimes end in a wonderful calm, created and spoken by the spirit of adoption.

Thirdly, This set them all on wondering, ver. 27: "The men marvelled." They had been long acquainted with the sea, and never saw a storm so immediately turned into a perfect calm in all their lives. It had all the marks and signatures of a miracle upon it; "It is the Lord's doing, and is marvellous in their eyes." Observe, 1. Their admiration of Christ: "What manner of man is this?" Note, Christ is a nonsuch; every thing in him is admirable: none so wise, so mighty, so amiable as he. 2. The reason of it: "Even the winds and the sea obey him." Upon this account Christ is to be admired, that he has a commanding power even over winds and seas. Others pretended to cure diseases, but he only undertook to command the winds. We know not the way of the wind, *Jno. iii. 8*, much less can we control it; but he that "bringeth forth the wind out of his treasury," *Ps. cxxxv. 7*, when it is out, gathers it "into his fists," *Pr. xxx. 4*. He that can do this, can do anything; can do enough to encourage our confidence and comfort in him in the most stormy day, within or without, *Isa. xvi. 4*. The Lord "sits upon the floods," and is "mightier than the noise of many waters." Christ, by commanding the seas,

shewed himself to be the same that made the world, when 'at his rebuke the waters fled," *Ps. civ. 7, 8*, as now at his "rebuke" they fell.

28 And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. 29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? 30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. 31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. 32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. 33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. 34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

We have here the story of Christ's casting the devils out of two men that were possessed. The scope of this chapter is to shew the Divine power of Christ, by the instances of his dominion over bodily diseases, which to us are irresistible; over winds and waves, which to us are yet more uncontrollable; and lastly, over devils, which to us are most formidable of all. Christ has not only all "power in heaven and earth," and all deep places, but has the keys of hell too. "Principalities and powers were made subject to him," even while he was in his estate of humiliation, as an earnest of what should be at his entrance into his glory, *Eph. i. 21*. He spoiled them, *Col. ii. 15*. It was observed in general, ver. 16, that Christ "cast out the spirits with his word;" here we have a particular instance of it, which had some circumstances more remarkable than the rest. This miracle was wrought in the country of the Gergesenes, some think they were the remains of the old Girgashites, *Deu. vii. 1*. Though Christ was sent chiefly to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," yet some sallies he made out among the borderers, as here, to gain this victory over Satan, which was a specimen of the conquest of his legions in the Gentile world.

Now, besides the general instance which this gives us of Christ's power over Satan, and his design against him, to disarm and dispossess him, we have here especially discovered to us the way and manner of evil spirits in their enmity to man. Observe, concerning this legion of devils, what work they made where they were, and where they went.

1. *What work they made where they were*, which appears in the miserable condition of those two that were possessed by them; and some think those two were man and wife, because the other evangelists speak but of one.

First, They dwelt among "the tombs," thence they came when they met Christ. The devil having "the power of death," not as judge, but as executioner, he delighted to converse among the trophies of his victory, the dead bodies of men: but there, where he thought himself in the greatest triumph and elevation, as afterwards in "Golgotha, the place of a skull," did Christ conquer and subdue him. Conversing among the graves increased the melancholy and frenzy of the poor possessed creatures, and so strengthened the hold he had of them by their bodily distemper; and did also make them more formidable to other people, who generally startle at any thing that stirs "among the tombs."

Secondly, They were "exceeding fierce;" not only ungovernable themselves, but mischievous to others, frightening many, having hurt some, so that no man durst "pass that way." Note, The devil bears malice to mankind, and shews it by making men spiteful and malicious one to another. Mutual enmities, where there should be mutual endearments and assistances, are effects and evidences of Satan's enmity to the whole race. He makes 'one man a wolf, a bear, a devil, or another,'—*Homo homini lupus*. Where Satan rules in a man spiritually, by those lusts that war in the members, pride, envy, malice, revenge, they make him as unfit for human society, as unworthy of it, and as much an enemy to the comfort of it, as these poor possessed creatures were.

Thirdly, They bad defiance to Jesus Christ, and disclaimed all interest in him, ver. 29. It is an instance of the power of God over the devils, that notwithstanding the mischief they studied to do by and to these poor creatures, yet they could not keep them from meeting Jesus Christ, who ordered the matter so as to meet them. It was his overpowering hand that dragged these unclean spirits into his presence, which they dreaded more than any thing else. His chains could hold them, when the chains men made for them could not. But being brought before him, they protested against his jurisdiction, and broke out into a rage, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?" Here is, 1. One word that the devil said like a saint; he addressed himself to Christ as, "Jesus, thou Son of God;" a good word, and at this time, when it was a truth but in the proving, it was a great word too, what flesh and blood did not reveal to Peter, *ch. xvi. 6*. Even the devils know, and believe, and confess Christ to be the Son of God, and yet they are devils still, which makes their enmity to Christ so much the more wicked, and indeed a perfect torment to themselves; for how can it be otherwise, to oppose one they know to be the Son of God? Note, It is not knowledge, but love, that distinguisheth saints from devils. He is the firstborn of hell that knows Christ, and yet hates him, and will not be subject to him and his law. We may remember that not long since the devil made a doubt whether Christ was "the Son of God," or no, and would have persuaded him to question it, *ch. iv. 3*, but

viii. 22. Sundry explanations of "let the dead bury their dead" have been proposed, but none is so probable as the common one: "let those who are dead to spiritual things perform the task of burying the literally dead; duties of a more important character devolve upon you."

viii. 24. Dr. Thomson speaks of the violent storms which sometimes sweep over this lake, the surface of which becomes "like a boiling caldron" and the whole lake "lashed into fury."

viii. 26. Dr. Thomson says that he and his companions were once, on the shore of this lake, "for three days and nights exposed to the tremendous wind." It is the winds, rushing down from the mountains, which are the cause of the sudden and violent storms.

viii. 28. There is some uncertainty about the word Gergesenes, for which some copies read Gerasenes, and others Gadarenes. Origen supposed that Gerasenes, which he found in the text, should be changed for Gergesenes, and observed that there was a place

now he readily owns it. Note, Though God's children may be much disquieted in an hour of temptation, by Satan's questioning their relation to God as a father, yet the Spirit of adoption shall at length clear it up to them so much as their satisfaction, as to set it even above the devil's contradiction. 2. Two words that he said like a devil, like himself. 1st. A word of defiance: "What have we to do with thee?" Now, *First*, It is true that the devils have nothing to do with Christ as a Saviour, for he took not on him the nature of the angels that fell, nor did he lay hold on them, *Heb. ii. 6*; they are in no relation to him; they neither have nor hope for any benefit by him. Oh, the depth of this mystery of Divine love, that fallen man hath so much to do with Christ, when fallen angels have nothing to do with him! Surely here was torment enough before the time, to be forced to own the excellency that is in Christ, and yet that he has no interest in him. Note, It is possible for men to call Jesus the Son of God, and yet have nothing to do with him. *Secondly*, It is as true that the devils desire not to have any thing to do with Christ as a ruler; they hate him, they are filled with enmity against him, they stand in opposition to him, and are in open rebellion against his crown and dignity. See whose language they speak that will have nothing to do with the Gospel of Christ, with his laws and ordinances, that throw off his yoke, that "break his bands in sunder," and will "not have him to reign over them;" that say to the Almighty Jesus, "Depart from us." They are of their father the devil; they do his lusts, and speak his language. *Thirdly*, But it is not true that the devils have nothing to do with Christ as a judge; for they have, and they know it. These devils could not say, "What hast thou to do with us?" could not deny but that the Son of God is the judge of devils; to his judgment they are bound over in chains of darkness, which they would fain shake off, and shake off the thought of. 2nd. A word of dread and deprecation: "Art thou come hither to torment us?" that is, 'to cast us out from these men, and to restrain us from doing the hurt we would do.' Note, To be turned out and tied up from doing mischief, is a torment to the devil, all whose comfort and satisfaction is man's misery and destruction. Should not we then count it our heaven to be doing well, and reckon that our torment, whether within or without, that hinders us from well doing. Now, must we be tormented by thee before the time? Note, 1. There is a time in which devils will be more tormented than they are, and they know it. The great assize at the last day is the time prefixed for their complete torture in that "Tophet" which "is ordained of old, for the king," for the "prince of the devils," and "his angels." *Isa. xxx. 33; Mat. xxv. 41*; for the judgment of that day they are reserved, *2 Pet. ii. 4*. Those malignant spirits that are now by the Divine permission prisoners at large, walking to and fro through the earth, *Job i. 7*, yet are in a chain; hitherto shall their power reach, and no further; they will then be made close prisoners, that have now some ease, will then be in torment without ease. This they here take for granted, and ask not, never to be tormented; despair of relief is the misery of their case; but not before the time, for though they knew not when the day of judgment should be, they knew it should not be yet. 2. The devils have a certain fearful looking for of that judgment and fiery indignation upon every approach of Christ, and every check that is given to their power and rage. The very sight of Christ, and his word of command to come out of the man, made them thus apprehensive of their torment. Thus the devils "believe and tremble," *Jas. ii. 19*. It is their own enmity to God and man that puts them upon the rack, and torments them before the time. The most desperate sinners, whose damnation is sealed, yet cannot quite harden their hearts against the surprise of fearfulness when they see the day approaching.

11. Let us now see what work they made where they went, when they were turned out of the men possessed; and that was in a "herd of swine," which was a "good way off," *ver. 30*. These Gergesenes, though living on the other side Jordan, were Jews; what had they to do with swine, which by the law were unclean, and not to be eaten or touched? Probably, lying in the outskirts of the land, there were many Gentiles among them, to whom this herd of swine belonged; or they kept them to be sold or bartered to the Romans, with whom they had now great dealings, and who were admirers of swine's flesh.

First, Now observe how the devils seized the swine. Though they were a "good way off," and one would think out of danger, yet the devils had an eye upon them to do them a mischief. For they go up and down "seeking to devour," seeking an opportunity, and they seek not long but they find. Now here, 1. They asked leave to enter into the swine, *ver. 31*. They "besought him," with all earnestness, "If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine." Hereby, 1st. They discover their own inclination to do mischief, and what a pleasure it is to them: those therefore are their children, and resemble them, whose "sleep departeth from them, except they cause some to fall," *Pr. iv. 16*. "Let us go into the 'herd of swine,'" any whither rather than into the place of torment, any whither to do mischief. If they might not be suffered to hurt men in their bodies, they would hurt them in their goods, and in that too they intend hurt to their souls, by making Christ a burthen to them, such malicious reaches hath that old subtle serpent. 2nd. They own Christ's power over them, that without his sufferance and permission they could not so much as hurt a swine. This is comfortable to all the Lord's people, though the devil's power be very great, yet it is limited, and not equal to his malice, (what would become of us, if it were?) especially that it is under the control of our Lord Jesus, our most faithful, powerful friend and Saviour; that Satan and his instruments can go no further than he is pleased to lengthen their tether; "here shall their proud waves be stayed," 2. They had leave. Christ said unto them, "Go," *ver. 32*; as God did to Satan, when he desired leave to afflict Job. Note, God doth often for wise and holy ends permit the efforts of Satan's rage, and suffer him to do the mischief he would, and even by it serve its own purposes: the devils are not only Christ's captives, but his vassals. His dominion over them appears in the harm they do, as well as in the hindrance of them from doing more. Thus even their wrath is made to praise Christ, and the remainder of it he doth and will restrain. Christ permitted this, 1st. For the conviction of the Sadducees, that were then among the Jews, who denied the existence of spirits, and would not own there were such beings, because they could not see them: now Christ would by this bring it as near as might be to an ocular demonstration of the being, multitude, power, and malice of evil spirits, that if they were not hereby convinced, they might be left inexcusable in their infidelity. We see not the wind, but it would be absurd to deny it, when we see trees and houses blown down by it. 2nd. For the punishment of the Gadarenes, who perhaps, though Jews, took a liberty to eat swine's flesh, contrary to law: however their keeping swine bordered upon evil; and Christ would also shew what a hellish crew they were delivered from, that if he had permitted it, would soon have choked them as they did their swine. The devils, in obedience to Christ's command, came out of the men; and having permission, "when they were come out," immediately "they went into the herd of swine." See what an industrious enemy Satan is, and how expeditious; he will lose no time in doing mischief.

Secondly, Observe, whither they hurried them, when they had seized them. They were not bid to "save their lives," and therefore they were made to "run violently down a steep place into the sea," where they all perished, to the number of about "two thousand," *Mar. v. 13*. Note. The possession which the

devil gets is for destruction. Thus the devil hurries people to sin, hurries them to that which they resolved against, and which they know will be shame and grief to them; with what a force doth the evil spirit "work in the children of disobedience," when by so many foolish and hurtful lusts they are brought to act in direct contradiction, not only to religion, but to right reason and their interest in this world. Thus likewise he hurries them to ruin, for he is Apollyon and Abaddon, the great destroyer. By his lusts which men do they are "drowned in destruction and perdition." This is Satan's will to swallow up, and to devour; miserable then is the condition of those that are led "captively by him at his will;" they are hurried into a worse lake than this, a lake that "burns with fire and brimstone."

Thirdly, Observe what effect this had upon the owners. The report of it was soon brought them by the swine herds, who seemed to be more concerned for the loss of the swine than any thing else, for they went not to tell "what was befallen to the possessed of the devils," till the swine were lost, *ver. 33*. Christ went not into the city, but the news of his being there did; by which he was willing to feel how their pulse beat, and what influence it had upon them, and then act accordingly. Now, 1. Their curiosity brought them out to see Jesus; the whole city came out to meet him, that they might be able to say "they had seen a man who did such wonderful works." Thus many go out, in profession, to meet Christ, for company, that have no real affection for him, nor desire to know him. 2. Their covetousness made them willing to be rid of him. Instead of inviting him into their city, or bringing their sick to him to be healed, they desired him "to depart out of their coasts," as if they had taken the devil's words out of their mouths, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?" And now the devils had what they aimed at in drowning the swine; they did it, and then made the people believe Christ had done it, and so prejudiced them against him. He seduced our first parents by possessing them with hard thoughts of God, and kept the Gadarenes from Christ by suggesting that he came into their country to destroy their cattle, and that he would do more hurt than good; for though he had cured two men, yet he had drowned two thousand swine. Thus the devil sows tares in God's field, doth mischief in the Christian church, and then lays the blame upon Christianity, and incenseth men against that. They besought him that he would depart, lest, like Moses in Egypt, he should proceed to some other plague. Note, There are a great many who prefer their swine before their Saviour, and so come short of Christ, and salvation by him: they desire Christ to depart out of their hearts, and will not suffer his word to have a place in them; because he and his word will be the destruction of their brutish lusts, those swine, which they give up themselves to the feeding of. And justly will Christ forsake those that thus are weary of him, and say to them, hereafter "Depart ye cursed, who now say to the Almighty, 'Depart from us.'"

CHAPTER IX.

We have in this chapter remarkable instances of the power and pity of the Lord Jesus, sufficient to convince us that he is both able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, and as willing as he is able. His power and pity appear here in the good offices he did, 1. To the bodies of people: in curing the palsy, *ver. 2-8*; raising to life the ruler's daughter, and healing the bloody issue, *ver. 18-26*; giving sight to two blind men, *ver. 27-31*; casting the devil out of one possessed, *ver. 32-34*; and healing all manner of sickness, *ver. 35*. 2. To the souls of people: in forgiving sins, *ver. 2*; calling Matthew, and conversing freely with publicans and sinners, *ver. 9-13*; considering the frame of his disciples, with reference to the duty of fasting, *ver. 14-17*; preaching the Gospel, and in compassion to the multitude providing preachers for them, *ver. 35-38*; thus did he prove himself to be, as undoubtedly he is, the skilful faithful Physician both of soul and body, that hath sufficient remedies for all maladies of both; for which we must therefore apply ourselves to him, and glorify him, both with our bodies and with our spirits, which are his, in return for his kindness to both.



AND he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. 2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. 3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. 4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? 5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? 6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. 7 And he arose, and departed to his house. 8 But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

The first words of this chapter oblige us to look back to the close of that foregoing, where we find the Gadarenes so resenting the loss of their swine, that they were sick of Christ's company, and besought him to "depart out of their coasts." Now here it follows, "he entered into a ship, and passed over." They bad him begone and he took them at their word, and we never read that

called Gergesa near the lake of Gennesareth. He did not approve of the reading, Gadarenes, in favour of which, however, the evidence reponderates, and it is now adopted by most of our best critics. Gadara was one of the towns of Decapolis, and well known. With regard to the tombs here mentioned, it must be noted that the Hebrews buried their dead outside and away from their cities. The sepulchres were often hewn in the rocks in solitary places, or were natural caves, only frequented by the living under peculiar circum-

stances. Thus Philo speaks of fugitives betaking themselves to the tombs, and other unlikely places, in order to escape from their enemies.

viii. 31. The word for "devils" is demons; and it is the opinion of some that it should have been always retained in our Bibles where it occurs in the original. "The demons besought him" are words which imply personality as distinctly as any words which could be used.

he came into their coasts again. Now observe here, 1. His justice—that he left them. Note, Christ will not tarry long there where he is not welcome. In righteous judgment he forsakes those places and persons that are weary of him, but abides with those that covet and court his stay. If the unbeliever will depart from Christ, “let him depart,” it is at his peril, 1 Cor. vii. 15. 2. His patience—that he did not leave some destroying judgment behind him, to punish them, as they deserved, for their contempt and contumacy. How easily, how justly, might he have sent them after their swine, who were already so much under the devil’s power. The provocation, indeed, was very great, but he put it up, and passed it by, and, without any angry resentments or upbraidings, he “entered into a ship, and passed over.” This was the day of his patience; he came not to “destroy men’s lives,” but to save them; not to kill, but to cure. Spiritual judgments agree more with the constitution of gospel times; yet some observe, that in those bloody wars which the Romans made upon the Jews, which began not many years after this, they first besieged the town of Gadara, where these Gadarenes dwelt. Note, Those that drive Christ from them, draw all miseries upon them. Wo unto us, if God depart from us.

He “came into his own city,” that was Capernaum, the principal place of his residence at present, Mar. ii. 1, and therefore called “his own city.” He had himself testified that a prophet is least honoured in “his own country” and city, yet thither he came; for he “sought not his own honour,” but being in a state of humiliation, he was content to be despised of the people. At Capernaum all the passages of story recorded in this chapter happened, and are therefore put together here, though in the harmony of the evangelists other events intervened. When the Gadarenes desired Christ to depart, they of Capernaum received him. If Christ be affronted by some, there are others in whom he will be glorious; if one will not, another will.

Now the first passage of story, after Christ’s return to Capernaum, is in these verses, concerning the cure of the man sick of the palsy. In which we may observe,

I. *The faith of his friends in bringing him to Christ.* His distemper was such that he could not come to Christ himself, but as he was carried. Note, Even the halt and the lame may be brought to Christ, and they shall not be rejected of him. If we do as well as we can, he will accept of us. Christ had an eye to their faith. Little children cannot go to Christ themselves, but he will have an eye to the faith of those that bring them, and it shall not be in vain. Jesus “saw their faith,” his own as well as theirs that brought him; which Jesus saw the habit of, though his distemper perhaps impaired his intellects, and obstructed the actings of it. Now their faith was,

First, A strong faith; they firmly believed that Jesus Christ both could and would heal him, else they would not have brought the sick man to him so publicly, and through so much difficulty.

Secondly, An humble faith; though the sick man was unable to stir a step, they would not ask Christ to make him a visit, but bring him to attend on Christ. It is fitter we should wait on Christ, than he on us.

Thirdly, An active faith; in the belief of Christ’s power and goodness, they brought the sick man to him, “lying on a bed,” which could not be done without a deal of pains. Note, A strong faith sticks at nothing in pressing after Christ.

II. *The favour of Christ in what he said to him:* “Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.” This was a sovereign cordial to a sick man, and which was enough to “make all his bed in his sickness,” and to make it easy to him. We read not of any thing said to Christ; probably, the poor sick man could not speak for himself, and they that brought him chose rather to speak by actions than words; they set him before Christ, that was enough. Note, It is not in vain to present ourselves and our friends to Christ, as the objects of his pity. Misery cries as well as sin, and mercy is no less quick of hearing than justice. Here is, in what Christ said,

First, A kind compellation: “Son.” Note, Exhortations and consolations to the afflicted speak to them as to sons, for afflictions are fatherly discipline, Heb. xii. 5.

Secondly, A gracious encouragement: “Be of good cheer.” ‘Have a good heart on it; cheer up thy spirits.’ Probably the poor man, when let down among them all in his bed, was dashed out of countenance, was afraid of a rebuke, for being brought in so rudely; but Christ doth not stand upon ceremony, bids him “be of good cheer,” all would be well, he should not be laid before Christ in vain. Christ bids him “be of good cheer,” and then cures him. He would have those to whom he deals his gifts, to be cheerful in seeking to him, and in trusting in him; to be of good courage.

Thirdly, A good reason for this encouragement: “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” Now this may be considered, 1. As an introduction to the cure of his bodily distemper, ‘Thy sins are pardoned, and therefore thou shalt be healed.’ Note, As sin is the cause of sickness, so the remission of sin is the comfort of recovery from sickness; not but that sin may be pardoned, and yet the sickness not removed; not but that sickness may be removed, and yet the sin not pardoned; but if we have the comfort of our reconciliation to God, with the comfort of our recovery from sickness, this makes it mercy indeed to us, as to Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 17. Or, 2. As a reason of the command to be of good cheer, whether he was cured of his disease or no. ‘Though I should not heal thee, wilt thou say thou hast not sought in vain, if I assure thee that thy sins are pardoned; and look upon that as a sufficient ground of comfort, though thou shouldst continue “sick of the palsy.”’ Note, Those who through grace have some evidence of the forgiveness of their sins, have reason to be of good cheer, whatever outward troubles or afflictions they are under. See Isa. xxxiii. 24.

III. *The cavil of the scribes at that which Christ said,* ver. 3. They “said within themselves,” in their hearts, among themselves, in their secret whisperings, “This man blasphemeth.” See how the greatest instance of Heaven’s power and grace is branded with the blackest note of hell’s enmity: Christ’s

pardon sin is termed blasphemy; nor had it been less if he had not had commission from God for it. Those, therefore, are guilty of blasphemy that have no such commission, and yet pretend to pardon sin.

IV. *The conviction which Christ gave them of the unreasonableness of this cavil,* before he proceeded.

First, He charged them with it. Though they did but say it within themselves, he “knew their thoughts.” Note, Our Lord Jesus has the perfect knowledge of all that we say within ourselves. Thoughts are secret and sudden, yet naked and open before Christ, the eternal Word, Heb. iv. 12, 13; and he “understands them afar off,” Ps. cxxxix. 2. He could say to them, which no mere man could, “Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?” Note, There is a great deal of evil in sinful thoughts, which is very offensive to the Lord Jesus. He being the Sovereign of the heart, sinful thoughts invade his right, and disturb his possession; therefore he takes notice of them, and is much displeased with them. In them lies the “root of bitterness,” Gen. vi. 5. The sins that begin and end in the heart, and go no further, are as dangerous as any other.

Secondly, He argued them out of it, ver. 5, 6. Where observe, 1. How he asserts his authority in the kingdom of grace. He undertakes to make out that the “Son of man,” the Mediator, has “power on earth to forgive sins;” for therefore the Father has “committed all judgment to the Son,” and has given him this authority, “because he is the Son of man,” Jno. v. 22, 27. If he have “power to give eternal life,” as he certainly has, Jno. xvii. 2, he must have power to forgive sin, for guilt is a bar that must be removed, or we can never get to heaven. What an encouragement is this to poor sinners to repent, that the power of pardoning sin is put into the hands of the “Son of man,” who is bone of our bone! And if he had this “power on earth,” much more now he is exalted to the Father’s right hand to give “repentance and remission of sins,” and so to be both “a Prince and a Saviour,” Acts v. 31. 2. How he proves it by his power in the kingdom of nature, his power to cure diseases. Is it not as easy to say, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” as to say, “Arise and walk?” He that can cure the disease, whether declaratively as a prophet, or authoritatively as God, can in like manner forgive the sin. Now, 1st. This is a general argument to prove that Christ had a Divine mission. His miracles, especially his miraculous cures, confirm what he said of himself, that he was the Son of God; the power that appeared in his cures proved him “sent of God;” and the pity that appeared in them proved him sent of God “to heal and save.” The God of truth would not set his seal to a lie. 2nd. It had a particular cogency in this case. The palsy was but a symptom of the disease of sin; now he made it to appear that he could effectually cure the original disease, by the immediate removal of that symptom; so close a connexion was there between the sin and the sickness. He that had power to remove the punishment, no doubt had power to remit the sin. The scribes stood much upon a legal righteousness, and placed their confidence in that, and made no great matter of the “forgiveness of sin,” the doctrine of which Christ hereby designed to put honour upon, and to shew that his great errand into the world was to “save his people from their sins.”

V. *The immediate cure of the sick man.* Christ turned from disputing with them, and spake healing to him. The most necessary arguments must not divert us from doing the good that our hand finds to do. He saith “to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thine house;” and a healing, quickening, strengthening power went along with this word, ver. 7: “He arose and departed to his house.” Now,

First, Christ bade him “take up his bed,” to shew that he was perfectly cured, and that, not only he had no more occasion to be carried on his bed, but that he had strength to carry it.

Secondly, He sent him “to his house,” to be a blessing to his family, where he had been so long a burthen; and did not take him along with him for a show, which those would do, in such a case, who seek the honour that cometh from men.

VI. *The impression which this made upon the multitude,* ver. 8: “They marvelled, and glorified God.” Note, All our wonder should help to enlarge our hearts in glorifying God, who alone doth marvellous things. They glorified God for what he had done for this poor man. Note, Other mercies should be our praises, and we should give him thanks for them, for we are members one of another. Though few of this multitude were so convinced as to be brought to believe in Christ, and to follow him, yet they admired him, not as God, or the Son of God, but as a man to whom God “had given such powers.” Note, God must be glorified in all the power that is “given to men” to do good. For all power is originally his; it is in him as the fountain, in men as the cisterns.

9 And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him. 10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? 12 But when



SITTING AT MEAT.—FROM THE LYCIAN MARBLES.

viii. 32. “A steep place:” a precipitous descent, on the very shores of the lake of Tiberias. In some places the cliffs are several hundred feet high; Dr. Porter says that “on the east the banks are nearly 2,000 feet high, destitute of verdure and foliage, deeply furrowed by ravines, but quite flat along the summit, forming, in fact, the supporting wall of the great table-land of Bashan.”

ix. 1. “His own city” is generally understood of Capernaum at this particular period, and correctly so, because it is recorded in

chap. iv. 13 that “he came and dwelt in Capernaum.” This agrees also with Mark ii. 1. “His own city” can only be his usual place of abode.

ix. 2. The man sick of the palsy, or paralysed, lay upon a bed, a kind of portable couch. Oriental travellers have often observed that a bed is at most a small, light, narrow couch, which can be carried about very easily, but generally only a mattress, mat, or folded quilt.

Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. 13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

In these verses we have an account of the grace and favour of Christ to poor publicans, particularly to Matthew. What he did to the bodies of people was to make way for a kind design he had upon their souls. Now observe here.

I. *The call of Matthew*, the penman of this Gospel. Mark and Luke call him Levi; it was ordinary for the same person to have two names; perhaps Matthew was the name he was most known by as a publican, and therefore in his humility he called himself by that name, rather than by the more honourable name of Levi. Some think Christ gave him the name of Matthew, when he called him to be an apostle, as Simon he surnamed Peter. *Matthew* signifies 'the gift of God.' Ministers are God's gifts to the church, their ministry and their ability for it are God's gifts to them. Now observe,

First. The posture that Christ's call found Matthew in. He was "sitting in the receipt of custom," for he was a publican, *Lu. v. 27*. He was a custom-house officer at the port of Capernaum, or an exciseman, or collector of the land tax. Now, 1. He was in his calling, as the rest of them whom Christ called, *ch. iv. 18*. Note, As Satan chooseth to come with his temptations to those that are idle, so Christ chooseth to come with his calls to those that are employed. But, 2. It was a calling of ill fame among serious people, because it was attended with so much corruption and temptation, and there were so few in that business that were honest men. Matthew doth himself own what he was before his conversion, as doth St. Paul, *1 Tim. i. 13*; that the grace of Christ in calling him might be the more magnified, and to shew, that God hath his remnant among all sorts of people. None can justify themselves in their unbelief by their calling in the world; for there is no sinful calling but some have been saved out of it, and no lawful calling but some have been saved in it.

Secondly. The preventing power of this call. We find not that Matthew looked after Christ, or had any inclination to follow him, though some of his kindred were already disciples of Christ, but Christ prevented him with the blessings of his goodness. He is found of those that seek him not. Christ spoke first; we have not chosen him, but he hath chosen us. He said, "Follow me;" and the same Divine, Almighty power went along with this word to convert Matthew, which went along with that word, *ver. 6*, "Arise, and walk," to cure the man sick of the palsy. Note, A saving change is wrought in the soul by Christ as the Author, and his word as the means. His gospel is the "power of God unto salvation," *Rom. i. 16*. The call was effectual, for he came at the call; "he arose and followed him" immediately; neither denied nor deferred his obedience. The power of Divine grace soon answers and overcomes all objections. Neither his commission for his place, nor his gains by it, could detain him when Christ called him. He "conferred not with flesh and blood," *Gal. i. 15, 16*. He quitted his post and his hopes of preferment in that way; and though we find the disciples that were fishers occasionally fishing again afterwards, we never find Matthew at the receipt of custom again.

III. *Christ's converse with publicans and sinners upon this occasion*: Christ called Matthew to introduce himself into an acquaintance with people of that profession. "Jesus sat at meat in the house," *ver. 10*. The other evangelists tell us that Matthew made a great feast (which the poor fishermen, when they were called, were not able to do). But when he comes to speak of this himself, he neither tells us that it was his own house, nor that it was a feast, but only that he "sat at meat in the house," preserving the remembrance of Christ's favour to the publicans, rather than of the respect he had paid to Christ. Note, It well becomes us to speak sparingly of our own good deeds. Now observe,

First. When Matthew invited Christ, he invited his disciples to come along with him. Note, Those that welcome Christ must welcome all that are his for his sake, and let them have a room in their hearts.

Secondly. He invited many publicans and sinners to meet him. This was the chief thing Matthew aimed at in this treat, that he might have an opportunity of bringing his old comrades acquainted with Christ. He knew by experience what their temptations were, and pitied them; knew by experience what the grace of Christ could do, and would not despair concerning them. Note, Those who are effectually brought to Christ themselves, cannot but be desirous that others also may be brought to him, and ambitious of contributing something towards it. True grace will not contentedly eat its morsels alone, but will invite others. When, by the conversion of Matthew, the gang was broken, presently his house swarms with publicans, and it shall go hard but some of them shall follow him, as he "followed Christ." Thus did Andrew and Philip, *Jno. i. 41, 45*; *iv. 29*. See *Jud. xiv. 9*.

III. *The displeasure of the Pharisees at this*, *ver. 11*. They cavilled at it; "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" Here observe,

First. That Christ was quarrelled with. It was not the least of his sufferings that he "endured the contradiction of sinners against himself." None was more quarrelled with by men than he that came to take up the great quarrel between God and man. Thus he denied himself the honour due to an incarnate Deity, which was to be justified in what he spake, and to have all he said readily subscribed to; for though he never spoke or did any thing amiss, every thing he said and did was found fault with. Thus he taught us to expect and prepare for reproach, and bear it patiently.

Secondly. Those that quarrelled with him were the Pharisees; a proud generation of men, conceited of themselves and censorious of others; of the same temper with those in the prophets' time, that said, 'Stand by thyself, come not near me, I am holier than thou;' very strict in avoiding sinners, but not in avoiding sin; none greater zealots than they for the form of godliness, nor greater enemies to the power of it. They were for keeping up the traditions of the elders to a nicety, and so propagating the same spirit that they were themselves governed by.

Thirdly. They brought their cavil, not to Christ himself, (they had not the courage to face him with it,) but to his disciples. The disciples were in the same company, but the quarrel is with the Master; for they would not have done it, if he had not; and they thought it worse in him, that was a prophet, than in them; his dignity, they thought, should set him at a greater distance from such company than others. Being offended at the Master, they quarrelled with the disciples. Note, It concerns Christians to be able to vindicate and justify Christ, and his doctrines, and laws, and to "be ready always to give an answer to those that ask them a reason of the hope that is in them," *1 Pet. iii. 15*. While he is an advocate for us in heaven, let us be advocates for him on earth, and make his reproach our own.

ix. 6. The writer of "The Bible in Palestine" says, "We had now to retire to rest; and it was not to a bed, raised from the ground, with bed-posts, and canopy, &c. Both had to lie on the floor. From a large receptacle in the room two thick cotton quilts were taken out, one of which was folded double, to serve as a mattress, and the other as a covering, with large flat pillows for our heads. We found it very comfortable, though so different from what we had been accustomed to. How forcibly the words came to our minds, 'Take up

Fourthly. The quarrel was his "eating with publicans and sinners;" to be intimate with wicked people is against the law of God, *Ps. cxix. 115*; *i. 1*; and perhaps by accusing Christ of this to his disciples, they hoped to tempt them from him, to put them out of conceit with him, and so to bring them over to themselves to be their disciples, who kept better company; for they "compassed sea and land to make proselytes." To be intimate with publicans was against the "tradition of the elders," and therefore they looked upon it as a heinous thing. They were angry with Christ for this, 1. Because they wished ill to him, and sought occasion to misrepresent him. Note, It is an easy and very common thing to put the worst constructions upon the best words and actions. 2. Because they wished no good to publicans and sinners, but envied Christ's favour to them, and were grieved to see them brought to repentance. Note, It may justly be suspected that those have not the grace of God themselves who grudge others a share in that grace, who are not pleased with it.

IV. *The defence that Christ made for himself and his disciples*, in justification of their converse with publicans and sinners. The disciples, it should seem, being yet weak, were to seek for an answer to the Pharisees' cavil, and therefore bring it to Christ, and he heard it, *ver. 12*, or perhaps overheard them whispering it to his disciples; let him alone to vindicate himself, and to plead his own cause; to answer for himself, and for us too. Two things he urges in his defence.

First. The necessity and exigence of the publicans' case, which called aloud for his help, and therefore justified him in conversing with them for their help. It was the extreme necessity of poor lost sinners that brought Christ from the pure regions above, to these impure ones, and the same was it that brought him into this company which was thought impure. Now, 1. He proves the necessity of the publicans' case: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." The publicans are sick, and they need one to help and heal them, which the Pharisees think they do not. Note, 1st. Sin is the sickness of the soul; sinners are spiritually sick. Original corruptions are the diseases of the soul, actual transgressions are its wounds, or the eruptions of the disease. It is deforming, weakening, disquieting, wasting, killing, but, blessed be God, not incurable. 2nd. Jesus Christ is the great physician of souls. His curing of bodily diseases signified this, that he arose with "healing under his wings." He is a skilful, faithful, compassionate physician, and it is his office and business to heal the sick. Wise and good men should be as physicians to all about them.—Christ was so. *Hunc affectum versus omnes habet sapiens, quem versus ceteros suos medicus.*—A wise man cherishes towards all around him the feelings of a physician for his patient.—*Seneca, de Const. 3rd*. Sin-sick souls have need of this physician, for their disease is dangerous; nature will not help itself, no man can help us; such need have we of Christ, that we are undone, eternally undone, without him. Sensible sinners see their need, and apply themselves to him accordingly. 4th. There are multitudes who conceit themselves to be sound and whole, think they have "no need of Christ," but that they can shift for themselves well enough without him, as Laodicea, *Rev. iii. 17*. Thus the Pharisees desired not the knowledge of Christ's word and ways, not because they had no need of him, but because they thought they had none; see *Jno. ix. 40, 41*. 2. He proves that their necessity did sufficiently justify his conduct in conversing familiarly with them, and he ought not to be blamed for it; for that necessity made it an act of charity, which ought always to be preferred before the formalities of a religious profession, in which beneficence and munificence are far better than magnificence, as much as substance is than shows or shadows. Those duties which are of moral and natural obligation are to take place even of those Divine laws which are positive and ritual, much more of those impositions of men, and traditions of the elders, which make God's law stricter than he has made it. This he proves, *ver. 13*, by a passage quoted out of *Hos. vi. 6*, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." That morose separation from the society of publicans, which the Pharisees enjoined, was "less than sacrifice," but Christ's conversing with them was more than an act of common mercy, and therefore to be preferred before it. If to do well ourselves is better than sacrifice, as Samuel shews, *1 Sam. xv. 22, 23*, much more to do good to others. Christ's conversing with sinners is here called mercy; to promote the conversion of souls is the greatest act of mercy imaginable, it is "saving a soul from death," *Jas. v. 20*. Observe how Christ quotes this, "Go ye, and learn what that meaneth." Note, It is not enough to be acquainted with the letter of the Scripture, but we must learn to understand the meaning of it. And those have best learned the meaning of the Scripture, that have learned how to apply it as a reproof to their own faults, and a rule to their own practice. This Scripture which Christ quoted, served not only to vindicate him, but, 1st. To shew wherein true religion doth consist: not in external observances, not "in meats, and drinks," and shows of sanctity, not in little particular opinions, and doubtful disputations, but in doing all the good we can to the bodies and souls of others, in righteousness and peace, in "visiting the fatherless and widows." 2nd. To condemn the Pharisaical hypocrisy of those who place religion in rituals, more than in morals, *ch. xxiii. 23*. They espouse those forms of godliness which may be made consistent with, and perhaps subservient to, their pride, covetousness, ambition, and malice, while they hate that power of it which is mortifying to these lusts.

Secondly. He urgeth the nature and end of his own commission. He must keep to his orders, and prosecute that for which he was appointed to be the great teacher; now, saith he, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," and therefore must converse with publicans. Observe, 1. What his errand was; it was to call "to repentance." This was his first text, *ch. iv. 17*, and it was the tendency of all his sermons. Note, The gospel call is a call to repentance, a call to us to change our mind, and to change our way, 2. With whom his errand lay; not with "the righteous," but with "sinners." That is, 1st. If the children of men had not been sinners, there had been no occasion for Christ's coming among them. He is the Saviour, not of man as man, but of man as fallen. Had the first Adam continued in his original righteousness, we had not needed a second Adam. 2nd. Therefore his greatest business lies with the greatest sinners; the more dangerous the sick man's case is, the more occasion there is for the physician's help. Christ came into the world to "save sinners," but especially "the chief," *1 Tim. i. 15*. To call not those so much who, though sinners, are comparatively righteous, but the worst of sinners. 3rd. The more sensible any sinners are of their sinfulness, the more welcome will Christ and his gospel be to them; and every one chooseth to go where their company is desired, not to those who would rather have their room. Christ came not with any expectation of speeding among the righteous, that is, those who conceit themselves so, and therefore will sooner be sick of their Saviour than sick of their sins, but among the convinced, humbled "sinners;" to them Christ will come, for with them he will be welcome.

14 Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? 15 And Jesus said unto them,

thy bed and walk!" The bed of the sick man here was doubtless quite as portable.

ix. 9. "From thence" must mean either the city of Capernaum or "the house" of Jesus. (Compare verses 1 and 7.) For the name Matthew we find Levi in Mark and Luke; and the question has been raised whether two men are meant. But although much has been written on the point, there is no real reason to doubt that the two names belong to one man. When called by Christ Jesus, he was

Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. 16 No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. 17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

The quarrels that were picked with Christ and his disciples, gave occasion to some of the most profitable of his discourses: thus are the interests of truth often served, even by the opposition it meets with from gainsayers, and thus the wisdom of Christ brings good out of evil. This is the third instance of it in this chapter; his discourse of his power to forgive sin, and his readiness to receive sinners, was occasioned by the cavils of the scribes and Pharisees; so here, from a reflection upon the conduct of his family, arose a discourse concerning his tenderness of it. Observe,

I. *The objection which the disciples of John made against Christ's disciples for not fasting so oft as they did;* which they are charged with as another instance of the looseness of their profession, besides that of eating with publicans and sinners; and it is therefore suggested to them that they should change that profession for another more strict. It appears by the other evangelists, *Mar. ii. 18, and Lu. v. 33*, that the disciples of the Pharisees joined with them, and we have reason to suspect, set them on making use of John's disciples as their spokesmen, because they being more in favour with Christ, and nearer allied to his disciples, could do it more plausibly. Note, It is no new thing for bad men to set good men together by the ears; if the people of God differ in their sentiments, designing men will take that occasion to sow discord, and to incense them one against another, and alienate one from another, and so to make an easy prey of them. If the disciples of John and of Jesus clash, we have reason to suspect the Pharisees have been at work underhand, blowing the coals. Now the complaint is, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?" It is a pity the duties of religion, which ought to be the confirmations of holy love, should be made the occasions of strife and contention; but they often are so, as here; where we may observe,

First, How they boasted of their own fasting: "We and the Pharisees fast oft." Fasting has in all ages of the church been consecrated upon special occasions to the service of religion; the Pharisees were much in it, many of them kept two fast-days in a week, and yet the generality of them were hypocrites and ill men. Note, False and formal professors often excel others in outward acts of devotion, even of mortification. The disciples of John too "fasted oft," partly in compliance with their master's practice, for he "came neither eating nor drinking," *ch. xi. 18*; and people are apt to imitate their leaders, though not always from the same inward principle; partly in compliance with their master's doctrine of repentance. Note, The severer part of religion is often most minded by those that are yet under the discipline of the Spirit, as a "spirit of bondage;" whereas, though these are good in their place, we must pass through them to that life of delight in God, and dependence on him, which these are in order to. Now they come to Christ to tell him that they "fasted oft," at least they thought it often. Note, "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness," *Pr. xx. 6*. There is a proneness in professors to brag of their own performances in religion, especially if there be any thing extraordinary in them; nay, and not only to boast of them before men, but to plead them before God, and confide in them as a righteousness.

Secondly, How they blamed Christ's disciples for not fasting so oft as they did: "Thy disciples fast not." They could not but know that Christ had instructed his disciples to keep their fasts private, and to manage themselves so as that they might not "appear unto men to fast;" and therefore it was very uncharitable in them to conclude they did "not fast," because they did not proclaim their fasts. Note, We must not judge of people's religion by that which falls under the eye and observation of the world. But suppose it was so, that Christ's disciples did not fast so oft or so long as they did; why, truly, they would therefore have it thought that they had more religion in them than Christ's disciples had. Note, It is common for vain professors to make themselves a standard in religion, by which to try and measure persons and things, as if all who differed from them were so far in the wrong; as if all that did less than they, did too little, and all that did more than they, did too much; which is a plain evidence of their want of humility and charity.

Thirdly, How they brought this complaint to Christ. Note, If Christ's disciples, either by omission or commission, give offence, Christ himself will be sure to hear of it, and be reflected upon for it. "O Jesus, are these thy Christians? Therefore, as we tender the honour of Christ, we are concerned to carry ourselves well. Observe, The quarrel with Christ was brought to the disciples, *ver. 11*; the quarrel with the disciples was brought to Christ, *ver. 14*. This is the way of sowing discord and killing love, to set people against ministers, ministers against people, and one friend against another.

II. *The apology which Christ made for his disciples in this matter.* Christ might have upbraided John's disciples with the former part of their question, "Why do we fast oft?" Nay, you know best why you do it; but the truth is, many abound in external instances of devotion, that scarce do themselves know why and wherefore; but he only vindicates the practice of his disciples; when they had nothing to say for themselves, he had something ready to say for them. Note, As it is wisdom's honour to be justified of all her children, so it is her children's happiness to be all justified of wisdom. What we do according to the precept and pattern of Christ, he will be sure to bear us out in, and we may with confidence leave it to him to clear up our integrity. "But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me."—*Herbert*. Two things Christ pleads in defence of their not fasting:

First, That it was not a season proper for that duty, *ver. 15*: "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?" Observe, Christ's answer is so framed, as that it might sufficiently justify the practice of his own disciples, and yet not condemn the institution of John, or the practice of his disciples. When the Pharisees fomented this dispute, they hoped Christ would cast blame, either on his own disciples, or on John's, but he did neither. Note, When at any time we are unjustly censured, our care

must be only to clear ourselves, not to recriminate or throw dirt upon others; and such a variety may there be of circumstances, as may justify us in our practice, without condemning those that practise otherwise. Now his argument is taken from the common usage of joy and rejoicing during the continuance of marriage solemnities, when all instances of melancholy and sorrow are looked upon as improper and absurd, as it was at Samson's wedding, *Jud. xiv. 17*. Now, 1. The disciples of Christ were the "children of the bridechamber," invited to the wedding feast, and welcome there; the disciples of the Pharisees were not so, but "children of the bond woman," *Gal. iv. 25, 31*, continuing under a dispensation of darkness and terror. Note, The faithful followers of Christ that have the spirit of adoption, have a continual feast; while they that have the spirit of bondage and fear cannot rejoice for joy as other people, *Hos. ix. 1*. 2. The disciples of Christ had "the bridegroom with them," which the disciples of John had not. Their master was now cast into prison, and lay there in continual danger of his life, and therefore it was seasonable for them to "fast oft." Such a day would come upon the disciples of Christ, when the bridegroom should be taken from them, when they should be deprived of his bodily presence, and "then shall they fast." The thoughts of parting grieved them when he was going, *Jno. xv. 6*; tribulation and affliction befell them when he was gone; and gave them occasion of mourning and praying, that is, of religious fasting. Note, 1st, Jesus Christ is the bridegroom of his church, and his disciples are the "children of the bridechamber." Christ speaks of himself to John's disciples under this similitude, because it was the same that John had used, when he called himself a friend of the bridegroom, *Jno. iii. 29*. And if they would by this hint call to mind what their Master then said, they would answer themselves. 2nd, The condition of those that are the children of the bridechamber is liable to many changes and alterations in this world; they sing of mercy and judgment. 3rd, It is merry or melancholy with the children of the bridechamber, according as they have more or less of the bridegroom's presence. When he is with them, the candle of God shines upon their head, and all is well; but when he is withdrawn, though but for a small moment, "they are troubled," and walk heavily; the presence and nearness of the sun makes day and summer, his absence and distance night and winter. Christ is all in all to the church's joy. 4th, Every duty is to be done in its proper season; see *Ecc. vii. 24; Jas. v. 13*. There is a time to mourn, and a time to laugh, to each of which we should accommodate ourselves, and bring forth fruit in due season. In fasts, regard is to be had to the methods of God's grace in us, when he mourns to us, we must lament; and also in the dispensations of his providence concerning us; there are times when "the Lord God calls to weeping and mourning." Regard is likewise to be had to any special work before us, *ch. xvii. 21; Acts xiii. 2*.

Secondly, They had not a strength sufficient for that duty. This is set forth in two similitudes; one of putting "new cloth into an old garment," which doth but pull the old to pieces, *ver. 16*; the other, of putting "new wine into old bottles," which doth but burst the bottles, *ver. 17*. Christ's disciples were not able to bear these severe exercises so well as those of John and of the Pharisees; which the learned Dr. Whitby gives this reason for: "There were among the Jews not only sects of the Pharisees and Essenes, who led an austere life, but also schools of the prophets, who frequently lived in mountains and deserts, and were many of them Nazarites; they had also private academies, to train men up in a strict discipline, and possibly from these many of John's disciples might come, and many of the Pharisees; whereas Christ's disciples being taken immediately from their callings, had not been used to such religious austerities, and were unfit for them, and would by them be rather unfitted for their other work." Note, 1. Some duties of religion are harder and more difficult than others, like "new cloth," and "new wine," which require most intenseness of mind, and are most displeasing to flesh and blood; such is religious fasting, and the duties that attend it. 2. The best of Christ's disciples pass through a state of infancy; all the trees in Christ's garden are not of a growth, nor all his scholars in the same form; there are "babes in Christ," and grown men. 3. In the enjoying of religious exercises, the weakness and infirmity of young Christians ought to be considered. As the food provided for them must be such as is proper for their age, (see *1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12*), so must the work be that is cut out for them. Christ would not speak to his disciples that which they could not then bear, *Jno. xvi. 12*. Young beginners in religion must not presently be put upon the hardest duties at first, lest they be discouraged. Such as was God's care of his Israel, when he brought them out of Egypt, not to lead them by the way of the Philistines, *Ex. xiii. 17, 18*, and such as was Jacob's care of his children and cattle, not to overdrive them, *Gen. xxxiii. 13*, such is Christ's care of the little ones of his family, and the lambs of his flock; he gently leads them. For want of this care many times "the bottles break," and the "wine is spilled;" the profession of many miscarries, and comes to nothing, through indiscretion at first. Note, There may be overdoing even in well-doing, a being "righteous overmuch;" and such an overdoing as may prove an undoing, through the subtlety of Satan.

18 While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. 19 And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. 20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: 21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. 22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. 23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the

"sitting at the receipt of custom," i.e., discharging the office of publican. The Romans gave the name of publican to those whom the Greeks called tax-collectors. Their duty was to receive the taxes, tributes, or customs which were levied by the supreme government. In some cases they farmed the taxes, agreeing to pay so much into the treasury. This saved the authorities trouble, but it opened the door to extortion and oppression, and hence the publicans were very unpopular, and often very unprincipled. In verse 10,

here, they are, as often elsewhere, reckoned in the same category with sinners, and not without reason.

ix. 14. The disciples of John the Baptist appear to have assumed a separate character, and were not yet merged into the body of Christ's disciples.

ix. 15. Dean Alford says that the children of the bridechamber "are more than the mere guests at the wedding: they are the bridegroom's friends, who go and fetch the bride." On the words "then

people making a noise, 24 He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. 25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. 26 And the fame thereof went abroad into all that land.

We have here two passages of story put together; that of the raising of Jairus' daughter to life, and that of the curing of the woman that had "the bloody issue," by the way, as he was going to Jairus' house, which comes in, in a parenthesis, in the midst of the other; for Christ's miracles were thick sown, and interwoven; the work of him that sent him was his daily work. He was called to do these good works from speaking those things foregoing, in answer to the cavils of the Pharisees, ver. 18: "While he spake these things;" and we may suppose it a pleasing interruption given to that unpleasant work of disputation, which, though sometimes needful, a good man will gladly leave to go about a work of devotion or charity. Here is,

I. *The ruler's address to Christ*, ver. 18. A "certain ruler," a ruler "of the synagogue," came and "worshipped him." "Have any of the rulers believed on him?" Yes, here was one, a church ruler, whose faith condemned the unbelief of the rest of the rulers. This ruler had a little daughter, of twelve years old, newly dead, and this breach made upon his family comforts was the occasion of his coming to Christ. Note, In trouble we should visit God; the death of our relations should drive us to Christ, who is our life; it is well if any thing will do it. When affliction is in our families, we must not sit down astonished, but, as Job, "fall down and worship." Now observe,

First, His humility in this address to Christ. He came with his errand to Christ himself, and did not send a servant. Note, It is no disparagement to the greatest rulers personally to attend on the Lord Jesus. He "worshipped him," bowed the knee to him, and gave him all imaginable respect. Note, Those that would receive mercy from Christ, must give honour to Christ.

Secondly, His faith in this address: "My daughter is even now dead," and though any other physician would now come too late, (nothing more absurd than *post mortem medicina*,—medicine after death,) yet Christ comes not too late; he is a physician after death, for he is the "resurrection and the life." "O come, then, and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." This was quite above the power of nature, (*ad privationem ad habitum non datur regressus*,—"life once lost cannot be restored,") yet within the power of Christ, who has "life in himself, and quickeneth whom he will." Now Christ works in an ordinary way, by nature, and not against it, and therefore we cannot in faith bring him such a request as this. While there is life there is hope, and room for prayer; but when our friends are dead the case is determined; "we shall go to them, but they shall not return to us." But while Christ was here upon earth working miracles, such a confidence as this was not only allowable, but very commendable.

III. *The readiness of Christ to comply with his address*, ver. 19. Jesus immediately "arose," left his company, and followed him; "he was not only willing to grant him what he desired, in raising his daughter to life, but to gratify him so far as to come to his house to do it. Surely 'he never said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain.' He denied to go along with the nobleman, who said, 'Sir, come down ere my child die.' *Jno. iv. 48*—50, yet went along with the ruler of the synagogue, who said, 'Sir, come down, and my child shall live.'" The variety of methods which Christ took in working his miracles is perhaps to be attributed to the different frame and temper of mind which those were in that applied themselves to him, which he who "searcheth the heart" perfectly knew, and accommodated himself to. He knows what is in man, and what course to take with him. And observe, when Jesus "followed him, so did his disciples," whom he had chosen for his constant companions. It was not for state, or that he might come with observation, that he took his attendants with him, but that they might be the witnesses of his miracles, who were hereafter to be the preachers of his doctrine.

III. *The healing of the poor woman's bloody issue*. I call her a poor woman, not only because her case was piteous, but because, though she had had something in the world, she had "spent it all upon physicians," for the cure of her distemper, and was never the better; which was a double aggravation of the misery of her condition, that she had been full, but was now empty; and that she had impoverished herself for the recovery of her health, and yet had not her health neither. This woman was "diseased with a constant issue of blood twelve years," ver. 20; a disease which was not only weakening and wasting, and under which the body must needs languish, but also it rendered her ceremonially unclean, and shut her out "from the courts of the Lord's house," but did not cut her off from approaching to Christ. She applied herself to Christ, and received mercy from him by the way, as he followed the ruler, whose daughter was dead, to whom it would be a great encouragement, and would help to keep up his faith in the power of Christ; so graciously doth Christ consider the frame, and consult the case of weak believers. Observe,

First, The woman's great faith in Christ, and in his power. Her disease was of such a nature, that her modesty would not suffer her to seek openly to Christ for a cure, as others did, but by a peculiar impulse of the spirit of faith, she believed him to have such an overflowing fulness of healing virtue, that the very "touch of his garment" would be her cure. This perhaps had something of fancy mixed with faith; for she had no precedent for this way of application to Christ, unless, as some think, she had an eye to the raising of the dead man by the touch of Elisha's bones, 2 *Kin. xiii. 21*. But what "weakness of understanding" there was in it, Christ was pleased to overlook, and accept the sincerity and strength of her faith; for he "eateth the honeycomb with the honey," *Cant. v. 1*. She believed she should be healed, if she did but touch the very hem of his garment, the outmost part of it. Note, There is virtue in every thing that belongs to Christ. The holy oil, with which the high priest was anointed, ran down "to the skirts of his garments," *Ps. cxxxiii. 2*. Such a fulness of grace is there in Christ, that from it "we may all receive," *Jno. i. 16*.

Secondly, Christ's great favour to this woman. He did not suspend (as he might have done) his healing influences, but suffered this bashful patient to steal a cure, unknown to any one else, though she could not think to do it unknown to him. And now she was well content to be gone, for she had what she came for, but Christ was not willing to let her go so; he will not only have his power magnified in her cure, but his grace magnified in her comfort and commendation. The triumphs of her faith must be to her praise and honour. He "turned about" to see for her, ver. 22, and soon discovered her. Note, It is great encouragement to humble Christians, that those who hide themselves from men, are known to Christ, who sees in secret their applications to Heaven that are most private. Now here, 1. He puts gladness into her heart, by that word,

shall they fast" he adds that "these words are not a declaration of a duty or of an ordinance, as binding on the Church in the days of her Lord's absence. The whole spirit of what follows is against such a supposition."

ix. 16. The sense evidently is that the old ceremonies of the law are not to be joined to the Gospel scheme; all must be new. The same idea is illustrated by another figure in the next verse, but with some difference. The Gospel cannot be trammelled by the forms of

"Daughter, be of good comfort." She feared being chidden for coming clandestinely, but is encouraged. 1st. He calls her "Daughter," for he spoke to her with the tenderness of a father, as he did to the "man sick of the palsy," ver. 2, whom he called "Son." Note, Christ has comforts ready for "the daughters of Zion" that are of a sorrowful spirit, as Hannah was, 1 *Sam. i. 15*. Believing women are Christ's daughters, and he will own them as such. 2nd. He bids her "be of good comfort." She has reason to be so, if Christ own her for a daughter. Note, The saints' consolation is founded in their adoption. His bidding her to "be comforted" brought comfort with it, as his saying, "be ye whole," brought health with it. Note, It is the will of Christ that his people should be comforted, and it is his prerogative to command comfort to troubled spirits. He "creates the fruit of his lips, peace," *Isa. lvii. 19*. 2. He puts honour upon her faith. That grace, of all other, gives most honour to Christ, and therefore he puts most honour upon it; "thy faith hath made thee whole." Thus by faith she "obtained a good report." And as of all graces Christ puts the greatest honour upon faith, so of all believers he puts the greatest honour upon those that are most humble; as here on this woman, who had more faith than she thought she had. She has reason to be of "good comfort," not only because she was "made whole," but because her "faith had made her whole," that is, 1st. She was spiritually healed. That cure was wrought in her which is the proper fruit and effect of faith, the pardon of sin and the work of grace. Note, We may then be abundantly comforted in our temporal mercies, when they are accompanied with those spiritual blessings that resemble them; our food and raiment comfortable, when by faith we are fed with "the bread of life," and clothed with "the righteousness of Jesus Christ;" our rest and sleep comfortable, when by faith we repose in God, and dwell at ease in him; our health and prosperity comfortable, when by faith our souls prosper, and are in health; see *Isa. xxxviii. 16, 17*. 2nd. Her bodily cure was the fruit of faith, of her faith, and that made it a happy, comfortable cure indeed. Those out of whom the devils were cast were helped by Christ's sovereign power, some by the faith of others, as ver. 2, but it is "thy faith that hath made thee whole." Note, Temporal mercies are then comforts indeed to us, when they are received by faith. If, when we are in pursuit of mercy, we prayed for it in faith, with an eye to the promise, and in dependence upon that, if we desired it for the sake of God's glory, and with a resignation to God's will, and have our hearts enlarged by it in faith, love, and obedience, we may then say it was received by faith.

IV. *The posture in which he found the ruler's house*, ver. 23: "He saw the people and the minstrels," or musicians, "making a noise." The house was in a hurry; such work doth death make when it comes into a family; and perhaps the necessary cares that arise at such a time, when our dead is to be decently buried out of our sight, give some useful diversion to that grief which is apt to prevail and play the tyrant. The people in the neighbourhood came together to condole the loss, to comfort the parents, to prepare for, and attend on, the funeral, which the Jews were not wont to defer long. The musicians were among them, according to the custom of the Gentiles, with their doleful, melancholy tunes, to increase the grief, and stir up the lamentation of those that attended on this occasion; as (they say) is usual among the Irish, with their 'ahone, ahone.' Thus they indulged a passion that is apt enough of itself to grow intemperate, and affected to "sorrow as those that had no hope." See how religion provides cordials, where irreligion administers corrosives: heathenism aggravates that grief which Christianity studies to assuage. Or, perhaps these musicians endeavoured, on the other hand, to divert the grief, and exhilarate the family; but "as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that sings songs to a heavy heart." Observe, The parents, who were immediately touched with the affliction, were silent, while the people and minstrels, whose lamentations were forced, made such a noise. Note, The loudest grief is not always the greatest; rivers are most noisy where they run shallow: *Ille dolet vere, qui sine teste dolet*.—That grief is most sincere, which shuns observation." But notice is taken of this, to shew that the girl was really dead, in the undoubted apprehension of all about her.

V. *The rebuke that Christ gave to this hurry and noise*, ver. 24: He said, "Give place." Note, Sometimes, when "the sorrow of the world" prevails, it is much ado for Christ and his comforts to crowd in. Those that harden themselves in sorrow, and like Rachel, "refuse to be comforted," should think they hear Christ saying to their disquieting thoughts, "Give place." Make room for him who is "the consolation of Israel," and brings with him "strong consolation," strong enough to overcome the confusion and tyranny of these worldly griefs, if it may but be admitted into the soul. He gives a good reason why they should not thus disquiet themselves and one another, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth."

First, This was eminently true of this maid, that was immediately to be raised to life. She was really dead, but not so to Christ, who knew within himself what he would do, and could do, and who had determined to make her death but as a sleep. There is little more difference between sleep and death, but in continuance; whatever other difference there is, it is but a dream. This death must be but of short continuance, and therefore is but a sleep, like one night's rest. He that quickens the dead, may well call the things which be not, as though they were, *Rom. iv. 17*.

Secondly, It is in a sense true of all that die, chiefly they that "die in the Lord." Note, 1. Death is a sleep. All nations and languages, for the softening of that which is so dreadful, and withal so unavoidable, and the reconciling of themselves to it, have agreed to call it so. It is said even of the wicked kings, that they "slept with their fathers;" and of that that shall arise to everlasting contempt, that they "sleep in the dust," *Dan. xii. 2*. It is not the sleep of the soul,—its activity ceaseth not,—but the sleep of the body, which lies down in the grave, still and silent, regardless and disregarded, wrapt up in darkness and obscurity. Sleep is a short death, and death a long sleep. But the "death of the righteous" is in a special manner to be looked upon as a sleep, *Isa. lvii. 2*. They sleep in Jesus, 1 *Thes. iv. 14*; not only rest from the toils and labours of the day, but "rest in hope" of a joyful waking again in the morning of the resurrection, when they shall wake refreshed, wake to a new life, wake to be richly dressed and crowned, and "wake to sleep no more," *2*. The consideration of this should moderate our grief at the death of our dear relations; say not, 'they are lost; no, they are but gone before;' say not, 'they are slain; no, they are but fallen asleep;' and the apostles speak of it as an absurd thing to imagine that they that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished, 1 *Cor. xv. 18*. "Give place," therefore, to those comforts which the covenant of grace ministers, fetched from the future state and the glory to be revealed. Now could it be thought that such a comfortable word as this, from the mouth of our Lord Jesus, should be ridiculed as it was? "They laughed him to scorn." These people lived in Capernaum, knew Christ's character, that he never spake a rash or foolish word; they knew how many mighty works he had done; so that if they did not understand what he meant by this, they might at least have been silent in expectation of the issue. Note, The words and works of Christ, which cannot be understood, yet are not therefore to be despised. We must adore the mystery of Divine sayings, even when they seem to contradict what we think ourselves most confident of. Yet even this tended

the law. The ordinary rules of prudence are to be observed even in relation to spiritual matters, and their violation will involve disaster.

ix. 18. While Jesus was addressing the disciples of John, he received an application from a ruler in behalf of his daughter. He had probably left the house of Matthew, and was at his dwelling in Capernaum when these things occurred. The ruler, as we learn from Mark and Luke, was Jairus, one of the rulers or presidents of the synagogue, in accordance with a well-known custom. The words

to the confirmation of the miracle; for it seems she was so apparently dead, that it was thought a very ridiculous thing to say otherwise.

VI. *The raising of the damsel to life, by the power of Christ*, ver. 25. The "people were put forth." Note, Scorners, that laugh at what they see and hear that is above their capacity, are not proper witnesses of the wonderful works of Christ, the glory of which lies not in pomp, but in power. The widow's son at Nain, and Lazarus, were raised from the dead openly, but this damsel privately, for Capernaum, that had slighted the lesser miracles of restoring health, was unworthy to see the greater, of restoring life. These pearls were not to be cast before those that would "trample them under their feet." Christ went in and "took her by the hand," as it were to awake her, and to help her up, prosecuting his own metaphor of her being asleep. The high priest, that typified Christ, was not to come near the dead, *Lev. xxi. 10, 11*; but Christ "touched the dead." The Levitical priesthood leaves the dead in their uncleanness, and therefore keeps at a distance from them, because it cannot remedy them; but Christ, having power to raise the dead, is above the infection, and therefore is not shy of touching them. He "took her by the hand, and the maid arose," so easily, so effectually was the miracle wrought; not by prayer, as Elijah did, *1 Kin. xvii. 21*, and Elisha, *2 Kin. iv. 33*, but by a touch. They did it as servants, he as a Son, as a God, "to whom belong the issues of death." Note, Jesus Christ is the Lord of souls, he commands them forth, and commands them back, when and as he pleases. Dead souls are not raised to spiritual life, unless Christ "take them by the hand": it is done in the "day of his power." He helps us up or we lie still.

VII. *The general notice that was taken of this miracle*: Though it was wrought privately, yet, ver. 26, "the fame thereof went abroad into all that land": it was the common subject of discourse. Note, Christ's works are more talked of than considered and improved; and, doubtless, they that heard only the report of Christ's miracles, were accountable for that, as well as they that were eye-witnesses of them. Though we at this distance have not seen Christ's miracles, yet, having an authentic history of them, we are bound upon the credit of that to receive his doctrine; and "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed," *Jno. xx. 29*.

27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, *Thou son of David, have mercy on us.* 28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. 29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. 30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. 31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country. 32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. 33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. 34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

In these verses we have an account of two more miracles wrought together by our Saviour.

I. *The giving of sight to two blind men*, ver. 27–31. Christ is the fountain of light as well as life; and as, by raising the dead, he shewed himself to be the same that at first "breathed into men the breath of life," so by giving sight to the blind, he shewed himself to be the same that at first "commanded the light to shine out of darkness." Observe,

First. The importunate address of the blind men to Christ. He was returning from the ruler's house to his own lodgings, and these "blind men follow him," as beggars do, with their incessant cries, ver. 27. He that cured diseases so easily, so effectually, and withal so cheap, shall have patients enough: as for other things, so he is famed for an oculist. Observe, 1. The title which these blind men gave to Christ: "Thou son of David, have mercy on us." The promise made to David, that of his loins the Messiah should come, was well known, and the Messiah was therefore commonly called "the son of David." At this time there was a general expectation of his appearing; these blind men know, and own, and proclaim it in the streets of Capernaum, that he is come, and this is he; which aggravates the folly and sin of the chief priests and Pharisees, that denied and opposed him. They could not see him and his miracles, but "faith comes by hearing." Note, Those who, by the providence of God, are deprived of bodily eyesight, may yet, by the grace of God, have the eyes of their understanding so enlightened as to discern those great things of God which "are hid from the wise and prudent." 2. Their petition: "Have mercy on us." It was foretold that the son of David should be merciful, *Ps. lxxii. 12, 13*; and in him shines the "tender mercy of our God," *Lu. i. 78*. Note, Whatever our necessities and burthens are, we need no more for supply and support, than a share in the "mercy of our Lord Jesus." Whether he heal us or no, if he "have mercy on us," we have enough; as to the particular instances and methods of mercy, we may safely and wisely refer ourselves to the wisdom of Christ. They did not each of them say for himself, 'Have mercy on me,' but both for one another, 'Have mercy on us.' Note, It becomes those that are under the same affliction, to concur in the same prayers for relief. Fellow-sufferers should be joint petitioners. In Christ there is enough for all. 2. Their importunity in this respect: They "followed him, crying." It seems he did not take notice of them at first, for he would try their faith, which he knew to be strong, would quicken their prayers, and make his cures the more valued, when they did not always come at the first word; and would teach us to "continue instant in prayer, always to pray, and not to faint;" and though the answer do not come presently, yet to wait for it, and to follow Providence, even in those steps and outgoings of it which seem to neglect or contradict our prayers. Christ would not heal them publicly in the streets,

for this was a cure he would have kept private, ver. 30; but when he came "into the house," they followed him hither and "came to him." Note, Christ's doors are always open to believing and importunate petitioners. It seemed rude in them, to thrust into the house after him, when he desired to retire; but (such is the tenderness of our Lord Jesus) they were not more bold than welcome.

Secondly. The confession of faith which Christ drew from them upon this occasion. When they came to him for mercy, he asked them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Note, Faith is the great condition of Christ's favours. Those who would receive the mercy of Christ, must firmly believe the power of Christ; what we would have him do for us, we must be fully assured that he is "able to do it." They followed Christ, and followed him crying; but the real question is, "Do ye believe?" Nature may work fervency, but it is only grace that can work faith. Spiritual blessings are fetched in only by faith. They had intimated their faith in the office of Christ, as "son of David," and in his mercy; but Christ demands likewise a profession of faith in his power: "Believe ye that I am able?" Note, Christ will have the glory of his power ascribed to him, by all those that hope to have the benefit of it. "Believe ye that I am able for this, to bestow sight to the blind, as well as to cure the palsy, and raise the dead?" Note, It is good to be particular in the exercise of faith; to apply the general assurances of God's power and good will, and the general promises to our particular exigencies. All shall work for good; and if all, then this. "Believe ye that I am able, not only to prevail with God for it, as a prophet, but that I am able to do it by my own power?" This will amount to their belief of his being not only the "son of David," but the "Son of God;" for it is God's prerogative to "open the eyes of the blind," *Ps. cxlvi. 8*; he makes "the seeing eye," *Ex. iv. 11*. Job was "eyes to the blind," *Job xxix. 15*, was to them instead of eyes, but he could not give eyes to the blind. Still it is put to us, 'Believe we that Christ is able to do for us, by the power of his merit and intercession in heaven, of his spirit and grace in the heart, and of his providence and dominion in the world?' To believe the power of Christ, is not only to assure ourselves of it, but to commit ourselves to it, and encourage ourselves in it. To this question they gave an immediate answer without hesitation; they said, "Yea, Lord." Though he had kept them in suspense awhile, and had not helped them at first, they honestly imputed that to his wisdom, not to his weakness, and were still confident of his ability. Note, The treasures of mercy, that are laid up in the power of Christ, are "laid out and wrought for those that trust in him," *Ps. xxxi. 19*.

Thirdly. The cure that Christ wrought on them: "He touched their eyes," ver. 29. This he did to encourage their faith, which by his delay he had tried, and to shew that he gives sight to blind souls by the operations of his grace going along with the word, "anointing the eyes with eye salve;" and he put the cure upon their faith, "according to your faith be it unto you." When they begged for a cure, he inquired into their faith, ver. 28: "Believe ye that I am able?" He did not inquire into their wealth, whether they were able to pay him for a cure? nor into their reputation, should he get credit by curing them? but into their faith; and now they had professed their faith, he referred the matter to that. "I know you do believe, and the power you believe in shall be exerted for you, 'According to your faith be it unto you.'" This speaks, 1. His knowledge of the sincerity of their faith, and his acceptance and approbation of it. Note, It is a great comfort to true believers that Jesus Christ knows their faith, and is well pleased with it. Though it be weak, though others do not discern it, though they themselves are ready to question it, it is known to him. 2. His insisting upon their faith as necessary: "If you believe, take what you come for." Note, Those that apply themselves to Jesus Christ shall be dealt with according to their faith; not according to their fancies, or according to their profession, but according to their faith; that is, unbelievers cannot expect to find any favour with God, but true believers may be sure to find all that favour which is offered in the Gospel; and our comforts ebb or flow, according as our faith is stronger or weaker: we are not straitened in Christ; let us not then be straitened in ourselves.

Fourthly. The charge he gave them to keep it private, ver. 30: "See that no man know it." He gave them this charge, 1. To set us an example of humility, and that lowliness of mind which he would have us to learn of him. Note, In the good we do, we must not seek our own praise, but only the glory of God. It must be more our care and endeavour to be useful, than to be known and observed to be so, *Pr. xx. 6*; *xxv. 27*. Thus Christ seconded the rule he had given, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth." 2. Some think Christ, in keeping it private, shewed his displeasure against the people of Capernaum, who had seen so many miracles, and yet believed not. Note, The silencing of those who should proclaim the works of Christ, is a great judgment to any place or people; and it is just with Christ to deny the means of conviction to those that are obstinate in their infidelity, and to shroud the light from those that shut their eyes against it. 3. He did it in discretion, for his own preservation, because the more he was proclaimed, the more jealous would the rulers of the Jews be of his growing interest in the people.

4. Dr. Whitby gives another reason, which is very considerable, why Christ sometimes concealed his miracles, and afterwards forbade the publishing of his transfiguration: because he would not indulge that pernicious conceit which obtained among the Jews, that their Messiah should be a temporal prince, and so give occasion to the people to attempt the setting up of his kingdom by tumults and seditions, as they offered to do, *Jno. vi. 15*. But when, after his resurrection, (which was the full proof of his mission,) his spiritual kingdom was set up, then that danger was over, and they must be published to all nations. And he observes, that the miracles which Christ wrought among the Gentiles and the Gadarenes were ordered to be published, because with them there was not that danger. But honour is like the shadow, which, as it flees from those that follow it, so it follows those that flee from it. They "spread abroad his fame," ver. 31. This was more an act of zeal, than of prudence and observance; and though it may be excused as honestly meant for the honour of Christ, yet it cannot be justified, being done against a particular charge. Whenever we profess to direct our intention to the glory of God, we must see to it that the action be according to the will of God.

II. *The healing of "a dumb man" that was "possessed with a devil."* And here observe,

First. His case, which was very sad. He was so under the power of the devil, in this particular instance, that he was disabled to speak, ver. 32. See the calamitous state of this world, and how various the afflictions of the afflicted are; we have no sooner dismissed "two blind men," but we meet with "a dumb man." How thankful should we be to God for our sight and speech! See the malice of Satan against mankind, and how many ways he shews it! This man's dumbness was the effect of his being "possessed with a devil;" but it was better he should be unable to say any thing, than be forced to say, as those demonsiacs did, *ch. viii. 29*, "What have we to do with thee?" Of the two, better a dumb devil than a blaspheming one. When the devil gets possession of a soul, it is made silent as to any thing that is good; dumb in prayers and praises, which the devil is a sworn enemy to. This poor creature they brought to Christ, who entertained not only those that came of themselves in their own

rendered "is even now dead" can scarcely mean so much, because in Mark v. 23 the girl is said to be "at the point of death," and this is confirmed by Luke viii. 42, 49. We may, without violence to the Greek, understand the words of the actual dying condition of the person. A similar rule has to be followed with Luke viii. 42, on comparing it with verse 49 of the same chapter, so that the sense must be the one given.

ix. 20. The hem of the garment was really the fringe or tassel

which the Jews were required to wear upon the corners of their garment. The law enjoining this custom will be found in Num. xv. 37, and the custom itself is religiously observed by the Jews to this day.

ix. 23. The minstrels were doubtless the musicians who were hired professionally on occasion of a death, along with wailing-women, to perform dirges over the deceased. The musicians here seem to have been pipers, for so the word may be rendered. Dr.

faith, but those that were brought to him by their friends, and the faith of others. Though the just shall live eternally by his faith, yet temporal mercies may be bestowed on us with an eye to their faith that are intercessors on our behalf. They brought him in just as the blind men went out. See how unwearied Christ was in doing good, how closely one good work followed another! Treasures of mercy, wondrous mercy, are hid in him, which may be continually spent upon, but can never be exhausted.

Secondly, His cure, which was very sudden, ver. 33: "When the devil was cast out, the dumb spake." Note, Christ's cures strike at the root, and remove the effect by taking away the cause, "open the lips," by breaking Satan's power in the soul. In sanctification he heals the waters, by casting salt into the spring. When Christ, by his grace, casts the devil out of a soul, presently the dumb speak. When Paul was converted, "behold he prays." Then "the dumb spake."

Thirdly, The consequences of this cure. 1. "The multitudes marvelled," and well they might. Though few believed, many wondered. The admiration of the common people is sooner raised than any other affection. It was foretold that the new song, the New Testament song, should be sung for "marvellous works," *Ps. xcvi. 1*. They said, "It was never so seen in Israel," and, therefore, never so seen any where; for no people experienced such wonders of mercy as Israel did. There had been those in Israel that were famous for working miracles, but Christ excelled them all. The miracles Moses wrought had reference to Israel as a people, but Christ's were brought home to particular persons. 2. The Pharisees blasphemed, ver. 34. When they could not gainsay the convincing evidence of these miracles, they fathered them upon the devil, as if they had been wrought by compact and collusion. "He casteth out devils," say they, "by the prince of the devils," a suggestion horrid beyond expression; we shall hear more of it afterwards, and Christ's answer to it, *ch. xii. 25*. Only observe, here, how "evil men and seducers wax worse and worse," *2 Tim. iii. 13*; and it is both their sin and their punishment. Their quarrels with Christ, for taking upon him to "forgive sin," ver. 3; for "conversing with publicans and sinners," ver. 11; for "not fasting," ver. 14; though spiteful enough, yet had some colour of piety, purity, and devotion in them. But this (which they are left to, to punish them for those), breathes nothing else but malice and falsehood, and hellish enmity in the highest degree: it is diabolism all over, and was therefore justly pronounced unpardonable. Because the people marvelled, they must say something to diminish the miracle, and this was all they could say.

35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; 38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Here is, I. A conclusion of the foregoing account of Christ's preaching and miracles, ver. 35: "He went about all the cities, teaching and healing." This is the same we had before, *ch. iv. 23*. There it ushers in the more particular record of Christ's preaching, *ch. v. vi. and vii.*; and of his cures, *ch. viii. and ix.* And here it is elegantly repeated, in the close of these instances, as the *quod erat demonstrandum*,—"the point to be proved;" as if the evangelist should say,

Now I hope I have made it out, by an induction of particulars, that Christ preached and healed; for you have had the heads of his sermons, and some few instances of his cures, which were wrought to confirm his doctrine; and "these were written that you might believe." Some think this was a second perambulation of Galilee, like the former; he visited again those whom he had before preached to. Though the Pharisees cavilled at him, and opposed him, he went on with his work; he preached "the gospel of the kingdom." He told them of a kingdom of grace and glory, now to be set up under the government of a Mediator: this was gospel indeed, good news, glad tidings of great joy. Observe how Christ, in his preaching, had respect,

First, To the private towns. He visited not only the great and wealthy "cities," but the poor obscure "villages;" there he preached, there he healed. The souls of those that are meanest in the world are as precious to Christ, and should be to us, as the souls of those that make the greatest figure. "Rich and poor meet together" in him, citizens and boors. His "righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages" must be "rehearsed," *Jud. v. 11*.

Secondly, To the public worship. He taught "in their synagogues." 1. That he might bear a testimony to solemn assemblies, even then, when there were corruptions in them. We must not "forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." 2. That he might have an opportunity of preaching there, where people were gathered together, with an expectation to hear. Thus, even after the gospel church was founded, and Christian meetings erected, the apostles often preached in the synagogues of the Jews. It is the wisdom of the prudent to make the best of that which is.

II. A preface or introduction to the account, in the following chapter, of his sending forth his apostles. He took notice of "the multitude," ver. 36; not only the crowds that "followed him," but the vast numbers of people with which, as he passed along, he observed the country to be replenished; what nests of souls the towns and cities were, and how thick of inhabitants; what abundance of people there were in every synagogue, and what places of concourse the openings of the gates were. So very populous was that nation now grown, and it was the effect of God's blessing on Abraham. Seeing this,

First, He pitied them, and was concerned for them, ver. 36. "He was moved with compassion on them;" not upon a temporal account, as he pitied the blind and lame, and sick, but upon a spiritual account. He was concerned to see them ignorant and careless, and ready to perish for lack of vision. Note, Jesus Christ is a very compassionate friend to precious souls. Here his bowels do, in a special manner, yearn. It was pity to souls that brought him from heaven to earth, and there to the cross. Misery is the object of mercy, and the miseries of sinful, self-destroying souls are the greatest miseries. Christ pities those most that pity themselves least. So should we. The most Christian compassion is compassion to souls; it is most Christ-like. See what moved this pity.

Kitto says, "The poorest Israelite thought himself bound to provide two pipes and one wailing-woman when his wife died. The number of both was increased with the means of the family, and in the present instance there was probably a considerable number of both."

ix. 27. The title "Son of David" was a recognition of the Saviour as the Messiah, who was specially so styled by the Jews.

ix. 32. This miracle must have closely followed the preceding. It took place when they left the house mentioned in verse 28.

1. "They fainted;" they were destitute, vexed, wearied; "they strayed," some, were loosed one from another; the staff of Bands was broken, *Zech. xi. 14*; they wanted help for their souls, and had none at hand that was good for any thing. The scribes and Pharisees filled them with vain notions, burdened them with the traditions of the elders, deluded them into many mistakes; while they were not instructed in their duty, nor acquainted with the extent and spiritual nature of the Divine law; therefore, "they fainted;" for what spiritual health, and life, and vigour, can there be in those souls that are fed with husks and ashes, instead of the "bread of life?" Precious souls faint when duty is to be done, temptations to be resisted, afflictions to be borne, being not nourished up with the word of truth. 2. They were "scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." That expression is borrowed from *1 Kin. xxii. 17*; and it sets forth the sad condition of those that are destitute of faithful guides to go before them in the things of God. No creature more apt to go astray than a sheep; and, when gone astray, more helpless, shiftless, and exposed, nor more unapt to find the way home again. Sinful souls are as "lost sheep;" they need the care of shepherds to bring them back. The teachers the Jews then had, pretended to be shepherds; yet Christ saith they had no shepherds, for they were worse than none: idle shepherds, that led them away, instead of reducing them, and fleeced the flock, instead of feeding it; such shepherds as were described, *Jer. xxiii. 1, &c.*; *Eze. xxxiv. 2, &c.* Note, The case of those people is very piteous that either have no ministers at all, or those that are as bad as none; that seek their own things, not the things of Christ and souls.

Secondly, He puts his disciples on to pray for them. His pity put him upon devising means for the good of these people. It appears (*Lu. vi. 12, 13*), that, upon this occasion, before he sent out his apostles, he did himself spend a great deal of time in prayer. Note, Those we pity, we should pray for. Having spoken to God for them, he turns to the disciples, and tells them, 1. How the case stood, ver. 37: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." People desired good preaching, but there were few good preachers. There was a great deal of work to be done, and a great deal of good likely to be done, but there wanted hands to do it. 1st. It was an encouragement that the harvest was so "plenteous." It was not strange that there were multitudes that needed instruction; but it was, what doth not often happen, that they who needed it desired it, and were forward to receive it. They that were ill taught were desirous to be better taught. People's expectations were raised, and there was such a moving of affections as promised well. Note, It is a blessed thing to see people in love with good preaching: the valleys are then covered over with corn, and there are hopes it may be well gathered in. That is a gale of opportunity that calls for a double care and diligence in the improvement of it; a harvest day that should be a busy day. 2nd. It was pity, when it was so, that the labourers should be so "few;" that the corn should shed, and spoil, and rot upon the ground, for want of reapers. Lotteries many, but labourers very few. Note, It is ill with the church when good work stands still, or goes slowly on, for want of good workmen. When it is so, the labourers that are have need to be very busy. 2. What was their duty in this case? ver. 38: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest." Note, The melancholy aspect of the times, and the deplorable state of precious souls, should much excite and quicken prayer. When things look discouraging we should pray more, and then we should complain and fear less; and we should adapt our prayers to the present exigencies of the church: such an understanding we ought to have of the times, as to know not only what Israel ought to do, but what Israel ought to pray for. Note, 1st. God is the "Lord of the harvest;" "My Father is the husbandman," *Jno. xv. 1*. It is "the vineyard of the Lord of hosts," *Isa. v. 7*. It is for him, and to him, and to his service and honour, that the harvest is gathered in. "Ye are God's husbandry," *1 Cor. iii. 9*. "His threshing, and the corn of his floor," *Isa. xxi. 10*. He orders every thing concerning the harvest as he pleaseth; when and where the labourers shall work, and how long; and it is very comfortable to those who wish well to the harvest work that God himself presides in it, who will be sure to order all for the best. 2nd. Ministers are, and should be, labourers in God's harvest; the ministry is a work, and must be attended to accordingly; his harvest work, which is needful work, work that requires every thing to be done in its season, and diligence to do it thoroughly; but it is pleasant work; they reap in joy, and the joy of the preachers of the Gospel is likened to the "joy of harvest," *Isa. ix. 2, 3*. And, "he that reapeth receiveth wages," the "hire of the labourers," that reap down God's fields, shall not be "kept back," as theirs was, *Jas. v. 4*. 3rd. It is God's work to send forth labourers; Christ makes ministers, *Eph. iv. 11*. The office is of his appointing, the qualifications of his working, the call of his giving. Those will not be owned, nor paid as labourers, that run without their errand, unqualified, uncalled. "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" 4th. All that love Christ and souls should shew it by their earnest prayers to God, especially when the "harvest is plenteous," that he would "send forth" more skilful, faithful, wise, and industrious "labourers into his harvest." That he will raise up such as he will own in the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints; would spirit them for the work, call them to it, and succeed them in it; that he would give them "wisdom to win souls, that he would thrust forth labourers," so some; intimating unwillingness in them to go forth, because of their own weakness, and the people's badness, and opposition from men that endeavour to thrust them out of the harvest, but pray that all contradiction from within and from without may be conquered and got over. Christ puts his friends upon praying this, just before he sends apostles forth to labour in the harvest. Note, It is a good sign God is about to bestow some special mercy upon a people, when he stirs up those that have an interest at the throne of grace to pray for it, *Ps. x. 17*. Further observe, that Christ said this to his disciples, who were to be employed as labourers. They must pray.

First, That God would "send them forth." Here am I, send me," *Isa. vi. 8*. Note, Commissions given in answer to prayer are most likely to be successful: Paul is a "chosen vessel," for, "behold, he prays," *Acts ix. 11, 15*.

Secondly, That he would send others forth. Note, Not the people only, but those who are themselves ministers, should pray for the increase of ministers. Though self-interest makes those that seek their own things desirous to be placed alone, the fewer ministers the more preferments; yet, those that "seek the things of Christ" desire more workmen, that more work may be done, though they may be eclipsed by it.

CHAPTER X.

This chapter is an ordination sermon, which our Lord Jesus preached when he advanced his twelve disciples to the degree and dignity of apostles. In the close of the foregoing chapter he had stirred them and others up to pray, that God would "send forth labourers;" and here we have an immediate answer to that prayer; while they are yet speaking, he hears and doth. What we pray for, according to Christ's direction, shall be given in. Now, here we have, I. The general commission that was given them, ver. 1. II. The names of the persons to whom this commission was given, ver. 2-4. III. The instructions that were given them, which are very full and particular, I. Concerning the services they were to do, their preaching, their working miracles, to whom they

ix. 35. This very summary statement suggests the extraordinary activity of Jesus in his great work, and the impartiality with which he granted his favours. Not only in cities but in villages, anywhere and everywhere, he made the Gospel known, and wrought miracles. Synagogues were doubtless very numerous, and it was usual for permission to be given even to strangers who were willing to speak in them.

x. 1-4. In verse 1 the twelve are called "his twelve disciples,"

must apply themselves, how they must behave themselves, and in what method they must proceed, ver. 5-15. 2. Concerning the sufferings they were to undergo. They are told what they should suffer, and from whom: counsels are given them, what counsels to take when they were persecuted, and encouragements to bear up cheerfully under their sufferings, ver. 16-42. And these things, though primarily intended for direction to the apostles then, are of use to all Christ's ministers, with whom, by this Word, Christ is, and will be always to the end of the world.



AND when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. 2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew

his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

Here we are told,

I. Who they were that Christ ordained to be his apostles, or ambassadors; they were his disciples, ver. 1. He had called them to be disciples some time before; his immediate followers, and constant attendants; and he then told them they should be made fishers of men, which promise he now performed. Note, Christ commonly confers honours and graces by degrees; the light of both, like that of the morning, "shines more and more." All this while Christ had had these twelve,

First. In a state of probation. Though he knows what is in man, knew from the first what was in them, *Jno. vi. 70*, yet he took this method to give an example to his church. Note, The ministry being a great trust, it is fit that men should be tried, for a time, before they be trusted with it. Let them "first be proved," *1 Tim. iii. 10*. Therefore, hands must not be laid suddenly on any man; but let him first be observed as a candidate and probationer, a *proposant* (that is the term the French churches use), because some men's sins go before, others follow, *1 Tim. v. 22*.

Secondly. In a state of preparation. All this while he had been fitting them for this great work. Note, Those whom Christ intends for, and calls to, any work, he first prepares and qualifies them, in some measure, for it. He prepared them, 1. By "taking them to be with him." Note, The best preparative for the work of the ministry is acquaintance and communion with Jesus Christ. Those that would "serve Christ," must first be "with him," *Jno. xii. 26*. Paul had Christ revealed not only "to him," but "in him," before he went to preach him among the Gentiles, *Gal. i. 16*. By the lively acts of faith, and the frequent exercise of prayer and meditation, that fellowship with Christ must be maintained and kept up, which is a requisite qualification for the work of the ministry. 2. By "teaching them;" they were with him as scholars, or pupils; and he taught them privately, besides the benefit they had by his public preaching. He opened the Scriptures to them, and opened their understandings to understand the Scripture. To them it was given to "know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven;" and to them they were made plain. Note, Those that design to be teachers must first be learners; they must receive, that they may give; they must be "able to teach others," *2 Tim. ii. 2*. Gospel truths must be first committed to them, before they be commissioned to be gospel ministers. To give men authority to teach others that have not an ability, is but a mockery to God and the church; it is sending a message by the hand of a fool, *Pr. xxvi. 6*. Christ "taught his disciples" before he sent them forth, *ch. v. 2*; and afterwards, when he enlarged their commission, he gave them more ample instructions, *Acts i. 3*.

II. What the commission was that he gave them.

First. He "called them to him," ver. 1. He had called them to come after him before; now he calls them to come to him, admits them into a greater familiarity, and will not have them to keep at such a distance as they had hitherto observed. Those that "humble themselves" shall thus be "exalted." The priests under the law were said to "draw near, and approach" unto God nearer than the people: the same may be said of gospel ministers; they are called to draw near to Christ, which, as it is an honour, so it should strike an awe upon them, remembering that Christ will be sanctified in those that "come nigh unto him." It is observable, when the disciples were to be instructed, they came unto him of their own accord, *ch. v. 1*. But now they were to be ordained, he called them. Note, It well becomes the disciples of Christ to be more forward to learn than to teach. In the sense of our own ignorance we must seek opportunities to be taught; and, in the same sense, we must "wait for a call," a clear call, ere we take upon us to "teach others;" for "no man ought to take the honour to himself."

Secondly. He "gave them power," ἐξουσίαν, 'authority, in his name, to command men into obedience; and, for the confirmation of that authority, to command devils too into a subjection. Note, All rightful authority is derived from Jesus Christ. All power is given to him, without limitation; and the subordinate powers that be, are ordained of him. Some of his honour he puts on his ministers, as Moses put some of his on Joshua. Note, It is an undeniable proof of the fulness of power Christ used as a mediator, that he could impart his power to those he employed, and enable them to work the same miracles that he wrought, in his name. He gave them "power over unclean spirits, and over all manner of sickness." Note, The design of the Gospel was to "conquer the devil," and to "cure the world." These preachers were sent out destitute of all external advantages to recommend them; they had no wealth, or learning, or titles of honour, and made a very mean figure. It was therefore requisite they should have some extraordinary power to advance them above the scribes.

not surely because they were alone, but because they were his chief companions and attendants. Lists appear in three of the Gospels and in the Acts, and certain names often occur. In the four complete lists Peter is always put first, from which the Romanists strangely infer that he was "prince of the apostles," and as such is succeeded in office and dignity by the bishops of Rome. That he was chief and foremost of the twelve during our Lord's ministry, and for some time after, is certain; but nowhere is there a word in

1. "He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out." Note, The power that is committed to the ministers of Christ is directly levelled against the devil and his kingdom. The devil, as an "unclean spirit," is working both in doctrinal errors, *Rev. vi. 13*, and in practical debauchery, *2 Pet. ii. 19*; and in both, these ministers have a charge against him. This, here, is meant of a power to cast him out of the bodies of people; but that was to signify the destruction of his "spiritual kingdom," and all the works of the devil; for which purpose the "Son of God was manifested." 2. He gave them power "to heal all manner of sickness." He authorized them to "work miracles" for the confirmation of their doctrine, to prove that it was of God; and they were to work useful miracles for the illustration of it, to prove that it is not only faithful, but "well worthy of all acceptance," that the design of the Gospel is to heal and save. Moses' miracles were, many of them, for destruction; those Mahomet pretended to were for ostentation; but the miracles Christ wrought, and appointed his apostles to work, were all for edification, and speak him not only the great teacher and ruler, but the great redeemer of the world. Observe, what an emphasis is laid upon the extent of their power, to "all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease," without exception, even of those that are reckoned incurable, and the "reproach of physicians." Note, In the grace of the Gospel there is a salve for every sore, a remedy for every malady. There is no spiritual disease so malignant, so inveterate, but there is sufficiency of power in Christ for the cure of it. Let none therefore say there is no hope, or that the breach is wide as the sea, that cannot be healed.

III. The number and names of those that were commissioned; they are made apostles, that is, 'messengers.' An angel and an apostle both signify the same thing, 'one sent on an errand,' 'an ambassador.' All faithful ministers are sent of Christ; but those that were first and immediately sent by him, are eminently called "apostles," the prime ministers of state in his kingdom. Yet this was but the infancy of their office; it was when Christ "ascended on high" that he "gave some apostles," *Eph. iv. 11*; Christ himself is called an "apostle," *Heb. iii. 1*; for he was "sent by the Father," and so sent them, *Jno. xx. 21*; the prophets were called God's messengers.

First. The number was twelve, referring to the number of the tribes of Israel, and the sons of Jacob, that were the patriarchs of those tribes. The gospel church must be the Israel of God, the Jews must be first invited into it; the apostles must be spiritual fathers, to beget a seed to Christ. Israel after the flesh is to be rejected for their infidelity: these twelve therefore are appointed to be the fathers of another Israel; these twelve, by their doctrine, were to judge the twelve tribes of Israel, *Lu. xxii. 30*; these were the twelve stars that made up the church's crown, *Rev. xii. 1*; the twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem, *Rev. xxi. 12, 14*, typified by the twelve precious stones in Aaron's breastplate, the twelve loaves on the table of shewbread, the twelve wells of water at Elim. This was a famous jury, (and to make it a grand jury, Paul was added to it,) that was empaneled to inquire between the King of kings and the body of mankind; and in this chapter they have their charge given them by Him to whom "all judgment was committed."

Secondly. Their names are here left upon record, and it is their honour; yet in this they had more reason to rejoice that their names were "written in heaven," *Lu. x. 20*, when the high and mighty names of the great ones of the earth are "buried in the dust." 1. There are some of these twelve apostles that we know no more of from the Scripture but only their names: as Bartholomew, and Simon the Canaanite, and yet they were faithful servants to Christ and his church. Note, All the good ministers of Christ are not alike famous, or their actions alike celebrated. 2. They are named by couples; for at first they were sent forth "two and two," because "two are better than one;" they would be serviceable to each other, and the more serviceable jointly to Christ and souls; what one forgot the other would remember, and "out of the mouth of two witnesses every word would be established." Three couple of them were brethren; Peter and Andrew, James and John, and the other James and Lebbaeus. Note, Friendship and fellowship ought to be kept up among relations, and to be made serviceable to religion. It is an excellent thing when brethren by nature are brethren by grace, and those two bonds strengthen each other. 3. Peter is named first, because he was first called; or because he was the most forward man among them, and upon all occasions made himself the mouth of the rest; and he was to be the apostle of circumcision; but that he gave him no power over the rest of the apostles; nor is there the least mark of any supremacy that was given to him, or ever claimed by him, in this sacred college. 4. Matthew, the penman of this gospel, is here joined with Thomas, ver. 3; but in two things, varying from the accounts of Mark and Luke (*Mar. iii. 18*; *Lu. vi. 15*). There Matthew is put first, in that order it was likely he was ordained, before Thomas; but here in his own catalogue, Thomas is put first. Note, It well becomes the disciples of Christ in honour to "prefer one another." There, he is only called Matthew; here, Matthew the publican, the toll-gatherer, or collector of the customs, who was called from that infamous employment to be an apostle. Note, It is good for those who are advanced to honour with Christ to look "unto the rock whence they were hewn," oft to remember what they were before Christ called, that thereby they may be kept humble, and Divine grace may be the more glorified. Matthew the apostle was Matthew the publican. 5. Simon is called the Canaanite, or rather, the Canite, from Cana of Galilee, where probably he was born; or Simon the Zealot, which some make to be the signification of *Kavartys*. 6. Judas Iscariot is always named last, and with that black brand upon his name, "who also betrayed him;" which intimates, that from the first Christ knew what a wretch he was, that he had a devil, and would prove a traitor; yet Christ took him among the apostles, that it might not be a surprise and discouragement to his church, if at any time the vilest scandals should break out in the best societies. Such spots there have been in our feasts of charity; tares among the wheat, wolves among the sheep; but there is a day of discovery and separation coming, when hypocrites shall be unmasked and discarded. Neither the apostleship nor the rest of the apostles were ever the worse for Judas being one of the twelve while his wickedness was concealed, and did not break out.

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. 9 Provide neither gold,

Scripture to give him an officially higher dignity—to make him the vicegerent of God and Christ, and the first of a series occupying a like startling position. No greater delusion, or one more mischievous, ever entered the minds of men. No claim can be more shadowy than any built upon the word "first," which is without the article in the Greek, and is therefore not "the first," as in our translation. We shall have to observe hereafter that some of the apostles are differently described in other places. Simon, who is

nor silver, nor brass in your purses, 10 Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. 11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. 12 And when ye come into an house, salute it. 13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. 15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

We have here the instructions that Christ gave to his disciples, when he gave them their commission. Whether this charge was given them in a continued discourse, or the several articles of it hinted to them at several times, is not material; in this he "commanded them." Jacob's blessing his sons is called "commanding" them; and with these commands Christ commanded a blessing. Observe,

I. *The people to whom he sent them.* These ambassadors are directed what places to go to.

First. Not to the Gentiles, or the Samaritans: they must not go "into the way of the Gentiles," not into any road out of the land of Israel, whatever temptations they might have. The Gentiles must not have the Gospel brought them till the Jews have first refused it. As to the Samaritans, who were the posterity of that mongrel people that the king of Assyria planted about Samaria, their country lay between Judea and Galilee, so that they could not avoid "going into the way" of the Samaritans, but they must "not enter any of their cities." Christ had declined manifesting himself to the Gentiles, or Samaritans, and therefore the apostles must not preach to them. If the Gospel be hid from any place, Christ thereby hides himself from that place. This restraint was upon them only in their first mission; afterwards they were appointed to go "into all the world," and teach "all nations."

Secondly. But, "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." To them Christ appropriated his own ministry, *ch. xv. 24*; for he was a "minister of the circumcision." *Rom. xv. 8*; and therefore to them the apostles, who were but his attendants and agents, must be confined. The first offer of salvation must be made to the Jews, *Acts iii. 26*. Note, Christ had a particular and very tender concern for the "house of Israel;" they were "beloved for the fathers' sake," *Rom. xi. 28*; he looked with compassion upon them as "lost sheep," whom he, as a shepherd, was to gather out of the bypaths of sin and error, into which they were gone astray, and in which, if not reduced, they would wander endlessly; see *Jer. l. 6*. The Gentiles also had been as lost sheep, *1 Pet. xx. 25*. Christ gives this description of those to whom they were sent, to quicken them to diligence in their work; they were sent to the house of Israel, of which number they themselves lately were, whom they could not but pity, and be desirous to help.

II. *The preaching-work he appointed them.* He did not send them forth without an errand, no, "as ye go, preach," *ver. 7*: they were to be itinerant preachers; wherever they came they must proclaim the beginning of the Gospel, "saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Not that they must say nothing else; but this must be their text, on this subject they must enlarge; let the people know that the kingdom of the Messiah, who is the Lord from heaven, is now set up according to the Scriptures: from whence it follows, that men must "repent" of their sins, and forsake them, that they might be admitted to the privileges of that kingdom. It is said, *Mar. vi. 12*, they went out and preached that men should repent; which was the proper use and application of this doctrine concerning the approach of the "kingdom of heaven." They must therefore expect to hear more of this long-looked-for Messiah shortly, and must be ready to receive his doctrine, to believe in him, and to submit to his yoke. The preaching of this was like the morning light, to give notice of the approach of the rising sun. How unlike was this to the preaching of Jonah, which proclaimed ruin at hand! *Jon. iii. 4*; this proclaims salvation at hand, "nigh them that fear God; mercy and truth meet together," *Ps. lxxxv. 10*; that is, "the kingdom of heaven at hand." Not so much the personal presence of the king, that must not be doted upon, but a spiritual kingdom, which is to be set up, when his bodily presence is removed, in the hearts of men. Now this was the same that John Baptist and Christ had preached before. Note, People need to have good truths pressed again and again upon them; and if they be preached and heard with new affections, they are as if they were fresh to us. Christ, in the Gospel, is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," *Heb. xiii. 8*; afterwards, indeed, when the Spirit was poured out, and the Christian church was formed, this "kingdom of heaven came," which was now spoken of as "at hand;" but the "kingdom of heaven" must still be the subject of our preaching: now it is come, we must tell people it is come to them, and must lay before them the precepts and privileges of it: and there is a kingdom of glory yet to come, which we must speak of as "at hand," and quicken people to diligence from the consideration of that.

III. *The power he gave them to work miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine, ver. 8.* When he sent them to preach the same doctrine that he had preached, he empowered them to confirm it by the same Divine seals, which could never be set to a lie. This needs not now the kingdom of God is come: to call for miracles now, is to lay again the foundation when the building is reared. The point being settled, and the doctrine of Christ sufficiently attested by the miracles which Christ and his apostles wrought, it is tempting God to ask for more signs. They are directed here,

First. To use their power in doing good; not, 'go and remove mountains, or fetch fire from heaven,' but, "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers." They are sent abroad as public blessings, to intimate to the world that love and goodness were the spirit and genius of that Gospel which they came to preach, and that kingdom which they were employed to set up. By this it would appear that they were the servants of that God who is good, and doth good, and whose mercy is "over all his works;" and that the intention of the doctrine they

preached was to heal sick souls, and to raise those that were "dead in sin;" and therefore, perhaps, that of "raising the dead" is mentioned; for though we read not of their raising any to life before the "resurrection of Christ," yet they were instrumental to raise many to "spiritual life."

Secondly. In doing good freely: "freely ye have received, freely give." Those that had power to heal all diseases, had an opportunity to enrich themselves. Who would not purchase such easy, certain cures at any rate? Therefore they are cautioned not to make a gain of the power they had to work miracles: they must cure gratis, further to exemplify the nature and complexion of the gospel kingdom, which is made up, not only of grace, but of free grace; *gratia gratis data, Rom. iii. 24*, "freely by his grace." Buy medicines "without money, and without price," *Isa. lv. 1*; and the reason is, because "freely ye have received." Their power to heal the sick cost them nothing, and therefore they must not make any secular advantage to themselves of it. Simon Magus would not have given money for the gifts of the Holy Ghost, if he had not hoped to get money by them; *Acts viii. 18*. Note, the consideration of Christ's freeness in doing good to us should make us free in doing good to others.

IV. *The provision that must be made for them in this expedition.* It is a thing to be considered, in sending an ambassador, who must bear the charge of the embassy. As to that,

First. They must make no provision for it themselves, *ver. 9, 10*: "provide neither gold, nor silver." As, on the one hand, they shall not raise estates by their work, so, on the other hand, they shall not spend what little they have of their own upon it. This was confined to the present mission; and Christ would teach them, 1. To act under the conduct of human prudence; they were now to make but a short sally out, and were soon to return to their Master and to their head quarters again, and therefore why should they burden themselves with that which they would have no occasion for? 2. To act in dependence upon Divine providence. They must be taught to live without "taking thought for life," *ch. vi. 25, &c.* Note, Those who go upon Christ's errand, have, of all people, most reason to trust him for "food convenient." Doubtless he will not be wanting to those that are working for him; those whom he employs, as they are taken under special protection, so they are entitled to special provisions: Christ's hired servants shall have "bread enough, and to spare." While we abide faithful to God and our duty, and are in care to do our work well, we may cast all our other care upon God; *Jehovah-jireh*, 'let the Lord provide for us and ours,' as he thinks fit.

Secondly. They may expect that those they were sent to would provide for them what was necessary, *ver. 10*: the "workman is worthy of his meat." They must not expect to be fed by miracles, as Elijah was; but they might depend upon God to incline the hearts of those they went among to be kind to them, and provide for them. Though they who "serve at the altar" may not expect to grow rich by the altar, yet they expect to live, and to live comfortably upon it; *1 Cor. ix. 13, 14*; it is fit they should have their maintenance from their work. Ministers are and must be workmen, labourers; and those that are so, are "worthy of their meat," so as not to be forced to any other labour for the earning of it. Christ would have his disciples, as not to distrust their God, so not to distrust their countrymen, so far as to doubt of a comfortable subsistence among them. If you preach to them, and endeavour to do good among them, surely they will give you meat and drink enough for your necessities; and if they do, never desire dainties: God will pay you your wages hereafter, and it will be running on in the mean time.

V. *The proceedings they were to make in dealing with any place, ver. 11—14.* They went abroad, they knew not whither, uninvited, unexpected, knowing none, and known of none; the land of their nativity was to them a strange land. What rule must they go by? What course must they take? Christ would not send them out without full instructions; and here they are:

First. They are here directed how to carry themselves towards those that were strangers to them; how to do.

1. In strange towns and cities. When you come to a town, "inquire who in it is worthy." 1st. It is supposed there were some such in every place as were better disposed than others to receive the Gospel, and the preachers of it; though it was a time of general corruption and apostasy. Note, In the worst of times and places we may charitably hope there are some that distinguish themselves, and are better than their neighbours; some that swim against the stream, and are as wheat among the chaff. There were saints in Nero's household; "inquire who is worthy," that is, who there are that have some fear of God before their eyes, and have made a good improvement of the light and knowledge they have. The best are far from meriting the favour of a gospel offer; but some would be more likely than others to give the apostles and their message a favourable entertainment, and would not trample these pearls under their feet. Note, Previous dispositions to that which is good are both directions and encouragements to ministers in dealing with people: there is most hope of the Word being profitable to those who are already so well inclined as that it is acceptable to them; and there is here and there one such. 2nd. They must inquire out such; not inquire for the best inns: public-houses were no proper places for them, that neither took money with them, *ver. 9*, nor expected to receive any, *ver. 8*; but they must hearken out for accommodations in private houses, with those that would entertain them well, and expect no other recompense for it but a prophet's reward, an apostle's reward—their praying and preaching. Note, Those that entertain the Gospel must neither grudge the expense of it, nor promise themselves to get by it in this world: they must inquire not who is rich, but who is worthy; not who is the best gentleman, but who is the best man. Note, Christ's disciples, wherever they come, should ask for the good people of the place, and be acquainted with them: when we took God for our God, we took his people for our people; and like will rejoice in its like. Paul, in all his travels, found out the brethren, if there were any, *Acts xxviii. 24*: it is implied, that if they did "inquire who was worthy, they might discover them." Those that were better than their neighbours would be taken notice of, and any one could tell them.

There lives an honest, sober, good man; for this is a character, which, like the ointment of the right hand, bewrays itself, and fills the house with its odours. Every body knew where the seer's house was, *1 Sam. ix. 18*. 3rd. In the house of those they found worthy, they must continue; which intimates, that they were to make so short a stay at each town, that they needed not change their lodging, but whatever house Providence brought them to at first, there they must continue till they left that town. Those are justly suspected as having no good design, that are often changing their quarters. Note, It becomes the disciples of Christ to make the best of that which is, to abide by it, and not be for shifting upon every dislike or inconvenience.

2. In strange houses. When they had found the house of one they thought worthy, they must at their entrance salute it. "In those common civilities be beforehand with people, in token of your humility. Think it not a disparagement to invite yourselves into a house, nor stand upon the punctilio of being invited. Salute the family, 1st. To draw on further discourse, and so to introduce your message. From matters of common conversation we may insensibly pass into that communication which is good to the use of edifying. 2nd. To try

called a Canaanite in our version, is wrongly so styled. The word is Cananite, and is Syriac, meaning the same as Zelotes, a zealous man, or zealot. Iscariot is commonly explained to mean *Ish Kerieth*, Hebrew for man of Kerieth. There was a place called Kerieth in the tribe of Judah.

x. 5, 6. On giving to the twelve their first commission, our Lord restricted their labours to Israel. They were not to preach either among the heathen generally or the Samaritans in particular. At

a later date these restrictions were removed, but at the outset the Saviour imposed them. His own work was pre-eminently among the Jews, and it is only incidentally that we find exceptions to the rule.

x. 9—13. These directions must also be regarded as specially addressed to the twelve under actual circumstances. To some extent only were they applicable to the entire range of their labours, though altogether suitable for the mission on which they were now sent. There are great and permanent truths underlying the instructions

whether you are welcome or no, you will take notice whether the salutation be received shyly and coldly, or with a ready return. He that will not receive your salutation kindly, will not receive your message kindly; for he that is unskilful and unfaithful in a little, will be in much, *Luz. xiv. 10.* 3rd. 'To insinuate yourselves into their good opinion, "salute the family," that they may see, though you are serious, you are not morose.' Note, Religion teacheth us to be courteous and civil, and obliging to all with whom we have to do. Though the apostles went out backed with the authority of the Son of God himself, yet their instructions were, when they came into a house, not to command it, but to salute it; for "love's sake rather to beseech" is the evangelical way, *Phil. 8. 9.* Souls are first drawn to Christ with the "cords of a man," and kept to him by the "bands of love," *Hos. xi. 4.* When Peter made the first offer of the Gospel to Cornelius, a Gentile, Peter was first saluted; see *Acts x. 25*; for the Gentiles courted that which the Jews were courted to. When they had saluted the family after a godly sort, they must by the return judge concerning the family, and proceed accordingly. Note, The eye of God is upon us, to observe what entertainment we give to good people and good ministers. "If the house be worthy, let your peace come," and rest "upon it; if not, let it return to you," ver. 13. It seems, then, after they had inquired for the most worthy, ver. 11, it was possible they might light upon those that were unworthy. Note, Though it is wisdom to hearken to, yet it is folly to rely upon, common report and opinion; we ought to use a judgment of discretion, and to see with our own eyes: "The wisdom of the prudent is," himself, to "understand his own way." Now this rule is intended, *First*, For satisfaction to the apostles. The common salutation was, "peace be unto you;" this, as they used it, was turned into "gospel;" it was the "peace of God," the peace of the kingdom of heaven, that they wished. Now lest they should make a scruple of pronouncing this blessing upon all promiscuously, because many were utterly unworthy of it, this is to clear them of that scruple: Christ tells them that this gospel proffer was made to all indefinitely, and let God alone, who knows the heart, and every man's true character, to determine the issue of it. If the house be worthy, it will reap the benefit of your blessing; if not, there is no harm done; you will not lose the benefit of it; "it shall return to you," as David's prayers for his ungrateful enemies did, *Psa. xxxv. 13.* Note, It becomes us to judge charitably of all, pray heartily for all, and carry ourselves courteously to all, for that is our part, and then leave it with God what effect it shall have upon them, for that is his part. *Secondly*, For direction to them. "If upon your salutation it appear that they are indeed worthy, let them have more of your company, and so "let your peace come upon them," preach the Gospel to them, peace by Jesus Christ; but if otherwise, if they carry it rudely to you, and shut their doors against you, "let your peace," as much as in you lies, "return to you." Retract what you have said, and turn your backs upon them: by slighting this, they have made themselves unworthy of the rest of your favours, and cut themselves short of them." Note, Great blessings are often lost by a neglect, seemingly small and inconsiderable, when men are in their probation, and upon their behaviour. Thus Esau lost his birthright, *Gen. xxv. 34*; and Saul his kingdom, *1 Sam. xiii. 13, 14.* *Secondly*, They are here directed how to carry it towards those that were refusers of them. The case is put, ver. 14, of those that would not receive them, nor hear their words. The apostles might think, now they had such a doctrine to preach, and such a power to work miracles for the confirmation of it, no doubt but they should be universally entertained and bid welcome: they are therefore told, before, that there would be those that would slight them, and put contempt on them and their message. Note, The best and most powerful preachers of the Gospel must expect to meet with some that will not so much as give them the hearing, nor shew them any token of respect. Many turn a "deaf ear," even to "the joyful sound," and will not "hearken to the voice of the charmers, charm they never so wisely." Observe, 'They will not receive you, and they will not hear your words.' Note, Contempt of the Gospel, and contempt of gospel ministers, commonly go together, and they will either of them be construed a contempt of Christ, and will be reckoned for accordingly. Now in this case we have here, 1. The directions given to the apostles what to do: they must "depart out of that house, or city." Note, The Gospel will not tarry long with those that put it away from them. At their departure, they must "shake off the dust of their feet." 1st. In detestation of their wickedness; it was so abominable, that it did even pollute the ground they went upon, which must therefore be shaken off as a filthy thing. The apostles must have no fellowship or communion with them; must not so much as carry away the dust of their city with them: "The work of them that turn aside shall not cleave to me," *Ps. ci. 3.* The prophet was not to "eat or drink" in Bethel, *1 Eza. xiii. 9.* 2nd. As a denunciation of wrath against them. It was to signify that they were base, and vile as dust, and God would shake them off. The dust of the apostles' feet, which they left behind them, would witness against them, and be brought in evidence that the Gospel had been preached to them, *Mar. vi. 11.* Compare *Jas. v. 3.* See this practised, *Acts xiii. 51*; *xviii. 6.* Note, Those who despise God and his Gospel shall be "lightly esteemed." 2. The doom passed upon such wilful recusants, ver. 15: "It shall be more tolerable in the day of judgment for the land of Sodom," as wicked a place as it was. Note, 1st. There is a day of judgment coming, when all those that refused the Gospel will certainly be called to account for it, however they may make a jest of it; those that would not hear the doctrine that would save them, shall be made to hear the sentence that will ruin them; their judgment is respited till that day. 2nd. There are different degrees of punishment in that day. All the pains of hell will be intolerable, but some will be more so than others; some sinners sink deeper into hell than others, and are beaten with more stripes. 3rd. The condemnation of those that reject the Gospel will in that day be severer and heavier than that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom is said to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, *Jude 7*; but that vengeance will come with an aggravation upon those that despise the great salvation. Sodom and Gomorrah were exceeding wicked, *Gen. xiii. 13.* and that which filled up the measure of their iniquity was, that they "received not" the angels that were sent to them, but abused them, *Gen. xix. 4, 5.* and hearkened not to their words, ver. 14; and yet it will be more tolerable for them than for those who receive not Christ's ministers, and hearken not to their words. God's wrath against them will be more flaming, and their own reflections upon themselves more cutting. "Son, remember," will sound most dreadfully in the ears of such as had a fair offer made them of "eternal life," and chose death rather. The iniquity of Israel, when God sent them his servants the prophets, is represented as upon that account more heinous than the iniquity of Sodom, *Eze. xvi. 48, 49*; much more now he sent them his Son, the great prophet.

16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men:

for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; 18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. 21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. 22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. 23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. 24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. 25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? 26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. 27 What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. 28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. 32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. 34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. 40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 41 He that re-

but in their actual form they belong to a special occasion. The rites of hospitality among the Jews were accorded freely to their brethren for the most part, and Jesus bids his apostles rely on them. With regard to the word "worthy," in verse 11, it may mean any worthy person who is known as a good and benevolent man, and can entertain strangers. So, in verse 13, a worthy house is one which is hospitable; by "house," however, the household is chiefly meant.

x. 14. The rule to shake off the dust from the feet was as a token

of renunciation, and cessation of friendly communion. This has been referred to as an indication of the severity of Jesus Christ, and as laying the foundation of persecution; very erroneously, however, because no violence to unbelievers is counselled, and the language leaves them to the righteous judgment of God himself.

x. 16. The apostles were to be as wise as serpents, that is, as prudent and cautious, running into no unnecessary danger, nor provoking needless opposition. Amid so imminent perils they must be

ceiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name



GIVING CUP OF WATER.

of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

All these verses relate to the sufferings of Christ's ministers in their work, which they are here taught to expect and prepare for, and are directed how to bear them, and how to go on with their work in the midst of them. And this part of the sermon looks further than to their present mission; for we find not that they met with any great hardships or persecutions while Christ was with them, nor were they well able to bear them; but they are here forewarned of the troubles they should meet with, when, after Christ's resurrection, their commission should be enlarged, and the kingdom of heaven, which was now at hand, should be actually set up; they dreamed of nothing then but outward pomp and power, but Christ tells them they must expect greater sufferings than they were yet called to; that they should then be made prisoners, when they expected to be made princes. It is good to be told what troubles we may hereafter meet with, that we may provide accordingly, and may not boast, as if we had put off the harness, when we are yet but girding it on. We have intermixed, 1. Predictions of trouble; and, 2. Prescriptions of counsel and comfort with reference to it.

1. We have here predictions of trouble which the disciples should meet with in their work. Christ foresaw their sufferings, as well as his own, and yet will have them go on as he went on himself; and he foretold them, not only that the troubles might not be a surprise to them, and so a shock to their faith, but that, being the accomplishment of a prediction, they might be a confirmation to their faith. He tells them what they should suffer, and from whom.

First. What they should suffer, hard things to be sure; for, "Behold I will send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," ver. 16. And what may a flock of poor helpless unguarded sheep expect, in the midst of a herd of ravenous wolves, but to be worried and torn. Note, 1. Wicked men are like wolves, in whose nature it is to devour and destroy. 2. God's people, and especially his ministers, are like sheep among them, of a contrary nature and disposition, exposed to them, and commonly hardened by them, and an easy prey to them. It looked unkind in Christ to expose those to so much danger, who had left all to follow him; but he knew the glory reserved for his sheep, when in the great day they shall be set on his right hand, would be a recompense sufficient for sufferings as well as services. They are as "sheep among wolves," that is, frightful; but Christ sends them forth, that is, comfortable; for he that sends them forth will protect them, and bear them out. But that they might know the worst, he tells them particularly what they must expect.

1. They must expect to be hated, ver. 22: "Ye shall be hated for my name's sake." That is the root of all the rest, and a bitter root it is. Note, Those whom Christ loves, the world hates; as whom the court blesteth, the country curseth. If the world hated Christ "without cause," *Jno. xv. 25*, no marvel if it hated those that bore his image, and served his interests. We hate what is noxious, and they are counted as the "offscouring of all things," *1 Cor. iv. 13*. We hate what is noxious, and they are counted the "troublers of the land," *1 Kin. xviii. 17*, and the tormentors of their neighbours, *Rev. xi. 10*. It is grievous to "be hated," and to be the object of so much ill will, but it is "for thy name's sake," which, as it speaks the true reason of the hatred, whatever is pretended, so it speaks comfort to them who are thus hated; it is for a good cause, and they have a good friend that shares with them in it, and takes it to himself.

2. They must expect to be apprehended and arraigned as malefactors. Their restless malice is resistless malice, and they will not only attempt, but will prevail to "deliver you up to the councils," ver. 17, 18, to the bench of aldermen, or justices, that take care of the public peace. Note, A deal of mischief is often done to good men under colour of law and justice. In the "place of judgment there is wickedness," persecuting wickedness, *Ecc. iii. 16*. They must look for trouble, not only from inferior magistrates in the councils, but from governors and kings, the supreme magistrates: to be brought before them under such black representations as were commonly made of Christ's disciples, was dreadful and dangerous, for the wrath of a king is "as the roaring of a lion." We find this oft fulfilled in the Acts of the Apostles.

3. They must expect to be put to death, ver. 21. "They shall deliver them to death;" to death in state, with pomp and solemnity, when it shews itself

most as "the king of terrors." The malice of the enemies ran so high as to inflict this; it is the blood of the saints that they thirst after: the faith and patience of the saints stand so firm as to expect this; "neither count I my life dear to myself." The wisdom of Christ permits it, knowing how to make the blood of the martyrs the "seed of the truth," and the "seed of the church." By this noble army, not loving their lives to the death, Satan has been vanquished, and the kingdom of Christ and its interests greatly advanced, *Rev. xi. 11*. They were put to death as criminals, so the enemies meant it, but really as sacrifices, *Phil. ii. 17*; *2 Tim. iv. 6*, as burnt offerings, sacrifices of acknowledgment to the honour of God, and his truths and cause.

4. They must expect in the midst of these sufferings to be branded with the most odious and ignominious names and characters that could be. Persecutors would be ashamed, in this world, if they did not first dress up those in bears' skins whom they thus bait, and represent them in such colours as may serve to justify such cruelties. The blackest of all the ill characters they give them is here instanced in: they call them Beelzebub, the name of the prince of the devils, ver. 25; they represent them as ringleaders of the interest of the kingdom of darkness; and since every one thinks he hates the devil, thus they endeavour to make them odious to all mankind. See, and be amazed to see, how this world is imposed upon. 1st. Satan's sworn enemies are represented as his friends. The apostles, who pulled down the devil's kingdom, were called devils; thus men "laid to their charge," not only "things which they knew not," but things which they abhorred and were directly contrary to, and the reverse of. 2nd. Satan's sworn servants would be thought to be his enemies; and they never more effectually do his work than when they pretend to be fighting against him. Many times those that themselves are nearest akin to the devil, are most apt to father others upon him; and those that paint him on others' clothes, have him reigning in their own hearts. It is well there is a day coming when (as it follows here, ver. 26,) that which is "hid will be brought to light."

5. These sufferings are here represented by a sword, and division, ver. 34, 35: "Think not that I am come to send peace," that is, temporal peace, and outward prosperity. They thought Christ came to give all his followers wealth and power in the world. "No," saith Christ, "I did not come so much as to give them peace: peace in heaven they may be sure of, but not peace on earth." Christ came to give us peace with God, peace in our consciences, peace with our brethren, but "in the world ye shall have tribulation." Note, Those mistake in the design of the Gospel who think their profession of it will secure them from, for it will certainly expose them to, trouble in this world. If all the world would receive Christ, there would then follow a universal peace; but while there are and will be so many that reject him, and those not only the children of the world, but the seed of the serpent, the children of God, that are called out of the world, must expect to feel the fruits of their enmity. 1st. Look not for "peace, but a sword." Christ came to give "the sword of the Word," with which his disciples fight against the world, and conquering work this sword hath made, *Rev. vi. 2*; *xix. 21*; and the "sword of persecution" with which the world fights against the disciples, being "cut to the heart" with the sword of the Word, *Acts vii. 54*, and tormented by the testimony of Christ's witnesses, *Rev. xi. 10*, and cruel work this sword made. Christ sent that Gospel which gives occasion for the drawing of this sword, and so may be said to send this sword; he orders his church into a suffering state, for the trial and praise of his people's graces, and the filling up of the measure of their enemies' sins. 2nd. Look not for peace, but division, ver. 35: "I am come to set men at variance." This effect of the preaching of the Gospel is not the fault of the Gospel, but of those that do not receive it. When some "believe the things that are spoken," and others "believe them not," the faith of those that believe condemns those that believe not, and therefore they have an enmity to them that believe. Note, The most violent and implacable feuds have ever been those that have arisen from difference in religion. No enmity like that of the persecutors, no resolution like that of the persecuted. Thus Christ tells his disciples what they should suffer, and these were hard sayings; if they could bear these, they could bear any thing. Note, Christ has dealt fairly and faithfully with us, in telling us the worst we can meet with in his service; and he would have us deal so with ourselves, in sitting down and counting the cost.

Secondly. They are here told from whom, and by whom, they should suffer these hard things. Surely hell itself must be let loose, and devils, those desperate and despairing spirits, that have "no part or lot" in the great salvation, must become incarnate, ere such spiteful enemies could be found to a doctrine, the substance of which was "good will towards men," and the "reconciling of the world to God." No—would you think it?—all this mischief ariseth to the preachers of the Gospel from those whom they came to preach salvation to. Thus "the bloodthirsty hate the upright, but the just seek his soul," *Pr. xxix. 10*; and therefore heaven is so much opposed on earth, because earth is so much under the power of hell, *Eph. ii. 2*. These hard things Christ's disciples must suffer.

1. From men, ver. 17; "Beware of men." "You will have need to stand upon your guard, even against those that are of the same nature with you," such is the pravity and degeneracy of that nature, *homo homini lupus*,—"man is a wolf to man;" crafty and politic as men, but cruel and barbarous as beasts, and wholly divested of the thing called humanity. Note, Persecuting rage and enmity turns men into brutes, into devils. Paul at Ephesus fought with beasts in the shape of men, *1 Cor. xv. 32*. It is a sad pass that the world is come to, when the best friends it has have need to "beware of men." It aggravates the troubles of Christ's suffering servants, that they arise from those that are "bone of their bone," made of the same blood. Persecutors are in this respect worse than beasts, that they prey upon those of their own kind: *Sævis inter se convenit ursis*,—"even savage bears agree among themselves." It is very grievous to have "men rise up against us," *Ps. cxxiv*, from whom we might expect protection and sympathy; men, and no more, mere men; men, and not saints: "natural men," *1 Cor. ii. 14*; "men of this world," *Ps. xvii. 14*. Saints are more than men, and are "redeemed from among men," and therefore are "hated by them," *Rev. xiv. 14*. The nature of man, if it be not sanctified, is the worst nature in the world, next to that of devils. They are men, and therefore subordinate, depending, dying creatures; they are men, but they are "but men," *Ps. ix. 20*; and "who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die?" *Isa. li. 12*. "Beware of the men:" so Dr. Hammond: "Those you wot of, the men of the Jewish Sanhedrim, which disallowed Christ," *1 Pet. ii. 4*.

2. From professing men, men that "have a form of godliness," and make a show of religion. "They will scourge you in their synagogues," their places of meeting for the worship of God, and for the exercise of their church discipline; so that they looked upon the scourging of Christ's ministers to be a branch of their religion. Paul was "five times scourged in the synagogues," *2 Cor. xi. 24*. The Jews, under colour of zeal for Moses, were the most bitter persecutors of Christ and Christianity, and placed those outrages to the score of their religion. Note, Christ's disciples have suffered much from conscientious persecutors, that scourge them in their synagogues, cast them out, and kill them, and "think they do God good service," *Jno. xv. 2*, and say, "Let the

ever on their guard. Yet they must be "harmless," that is, free from craft and hypocrisy; as simple and inoffensive in their habits as sheep. The combination of qualities would produce an admirable character. Cleverness and tact, without moral principle, may do for a mere adventurer, but not for an apostle. And so high moral principle without tact leaves a man exposed to many risks, and he will neither be safe nor successful, certainly not in any calling like that of the apostles.

x. 17. The councils are local courts of justice. It may seem strange that men were to be whipped in synagogues, which were buildings reared for the worship of God; but a reference to Matt. xxiii. 37, Acts xxii. 19, xxvi. 11, recognises the fact too distinctly for us to doubt it. It is said that in every synagogue there was a council of three persons, who ordered summary punishment in cases under their jurisdiction. Scourging has always been, as it still is, a common mode of punishment in Eastern lands.

Lord be glorified," *Isa. lxi. 5; Zec. xi. 4, 5.* But the synagogue will be so far from consecrating the persecution, that the persecution, doubtless, profanes and desecrates the synagogue.

3. From great men, and men in authority. The Jews did not only scourge them, which was the utmost their remaining power extended to, but when they could go no further themselves, they delivered them up to the Roman powers, as they did Christ, *Jno. xviii. 30.* "Ye shall be brought before governors and kings," ver. 18, who, having more power, are in a capacity of doing the more mischief. "Governors and kings" receive their power from Christ, *Pr. viii. 15,* and should be his servants, and his church's protectors and nursing fathers; but they often use their power against him, and are rebels to Christ, and oppressors of his church: "The kings of the earth" set themselves against his kingdom, *Ps. ii. 2; Acts iv. 25, 26.* Note, It has often been the lot of good men to have great men for their enemies.

4. From all men, ver. 22. "Ye shall be hated of all men," that is, of all wicked men; and these are the generality of men, for "the whole world lies in wickedness." So few are there that love, and own, and countenance Christ's righteous cause, that we may say the friends of it are "hated of all men;" they are "all gone astray," and therefore "eat up my people," *Ps. xiv. 3.* As far as the apostasy from God goes, so far the enmity against the saints goes; sometimes it appears more general than at other times, but there is something of this poison lurking in the hearts of all the "children of disobedience." The world hates you, for it "wonders after the beast," *Rev. xiii. 3.* Every man is a liar, and therefore a hater of truth.

5. From those of their own kindred: "The brother shall deliver up the brother to death," ver. 21. A man shall be upon this account "at variance with his own father," nay, and those of the weaker and tenderer sex too become persecutors, and persecuted; "the persecuting daughter will be against the (believing) mother," where natural affection and filial duty, one would think, should prevent or soon extinguish the quarrel; and then, no marvel if "the daughter in law be against the mother in law;" where too often the coldness of love seeks occasion of contention, ver. 35. In general, ver. 36, "a man's foes shall be they of his own household;" they that should be his friends, will be incensed against him for embracing Christianity, and especially for adhering to it, when it comes to be persecuted, and will join with his persecutors against him. Note, The strongest bonds of relative love and duty have been often broken through by an enmity to Christ and his doctrine. Such has been the power of prejudice against the true religion, and zeal for a false one, that all other regards, the most natural and sacred, the most engaging and endearing, have been sacrificed to these Molochs. Those that rage against the Lord and his anointed ones break even these bonds in sunder, and cast away even these cords from them, *Ps. ii. 2, 3.* Christ's spouse suffers hard things from the anger of "her own mother's children," *Cant. i. 6.* Sufferings from such are more grievous, nothing cuts more than this, "It was thou, a man, mine equal," *Ps. lv. 12, 13;* and the enmity of such is commonly most implacable; "a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city," *Pr. xviii. 19.* The martyrologies, both ancient and modern, are full of instances of this. Upon the whole matter, it appears that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution;" and "through many tribulations we must expect to enter into the kingdom of God."

II. With these predictions of trouble, we have here prescriptions of counsels, and comforts for a time of trial. He sends them out exposed to danger indeed, and expecting it, but withal well armed with instructions and encouragements sufficient to bear them up and bear them out, in all these trials. Let us gather up what he saith:

First. By way of counsel and direction in several things.

1. "Be wise as serpents," ver. 16. "You may be so," (so some take it, only as a permission,) you may be as wary as you please, provided you be "harmless as doves." But it is rather to be taken as a precept, recommending to us "that wisdom of the prudent which is to understand his way," as useful at all times, but especially in suffering times. Therefore, because you are exposed as sheep among wolves, "be ye wise as serpents," not wise as foxes, whose cunning is to deceive others, but as serpents, whose policy is only to defend themselves, and to shift for their own safety. The disciples of Christ are hated and persecuted as serpents, and their ruin sought, and therefore need the serpent's wisdom. Note, It is the will of Christ, that his people and ministers, being so much exposed to troubles in this world, as they are, should not needlessly expose themselves, but use all fair and lawful means for their own preservation. Christ gave us an example of this wisdom, *ch. xxi. 24, 25; xxii. 17-19; Jno. viii. 6, 7;* besides the many escapes he made out of the hands of his enemies till his hour was come. See an instance of St. Paul's wisdom, *Acts xxiii. 6-9.* In the cause of Christ, we must sit loose to life and all its comforts, but must not be prodigal of them. It is the wisdom of the serpent to secure his head, that that may not be broken, to stop his "ear to the voice of the charmer," *Ps. lvi. 4, 6;* and to take shelter in the clefts of the rock; and herein we may be "wise as serpents." We must be wise, not to pull trouble upon our own heads; wise to keep silence in an evil time, and not to give offence, if we can help it.

2. "Be ye harmless as doves." "Be mild, and meek, and dispassionate; not only do nobody any hurt, but bear nobody any ill will; be without gall, as doves are." This must always go along with the former. They are sent forth "among wolves," therefore must be "wise as serpents," but they are sent forth "as sheep," therefore must be "harmless as doves." We must be wise, not to wrong ourselves, but rather so than wrong any one else; must use the harmlessness of the dove, to bear twenty injuries, rather than the subtlety of the serpent, to offer or to return one. Note, It must be the continual care of all Christ's disciples to be innocent and inoffensive in word and deed, especially in consideration of the enemies they are in the midst of. We have need of a dove-like spirit when we are beset with birds of prey, that we may neither provoke them nor be provoked by them. David coveted "the wings of a dove," on which to fly away and be at rest, rather than the wings of a hawk. The Spirit descended on Christ "as a dove," and all believers partake of the Spirit of Christ, a dove-like spirit, made for love, not for war.

3. "Beware of men," ver. 17. "Be always upon your guard, and avoid dangerous company; take heed what you say and do, and presume not too far upon any man's fidelity. Be jealous of the most plausible pretensions, 'trust not in a friend,' no, not in the wife of thy bosom," *Mec. vii. 5.* Note, It becomes those that are gracious to be cautious, for we are taught to "cease from man," such a wretched world do we live in, that we know not whom to trust. Ever since our Master was betrayed with a kiss, by one of his own disciples, we have need to "beware of men," of false brethren.

4. "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak," ver. 19. "When ye are brought before magistrates, carry yourselves decently, but afflict not yourselves with care how you shall come off. A prudent thought there must be, but not an anxious, perplexing, disquieting thought; let this care be cast upon God, as well as that 'what you shall eat, and what you shall drink.'" Do not study to make fine speeches, *ad captandam benevolentiam*,—to ingratiate yourselves; fleet not quaint expressions, flourishes of wit, and laboured periods, which

only serves to gild a bad cause; the gold of a good one needs it not. It argues a diffidence of your cause to be solicitous in this matter, as if it were not sufficient to speak for itself. You know upon what grounds you go, and then *verbaque præsum rem non invita sequentur*,—suitable expressions will readily occur. Never any spoke better before governors and kings than those three champions, who took no thought before what they should speak; "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter," *Dan. iii. 1.* See *Ps. cxix. 46.* Note, The disciples of Christ must be more thoughtful how to do well, than how to speak well; how to keep their integrity, than how to vindicate it. *Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus*,—Our lives, not boasting words, form the best apology.

5. "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another," ver. 23. "Thus reject them that reject you and your doctrine, and try whether others will not receive you and it. Thus shift for your own safety." Note, In case of imminent peril, the disciples of Christ may, and must, secure themselves by flight, when God in his providence opens to them a door of escape. He that flies may fight again. It is no inglorious thing for Christ's soldiers to quit their ground, provided they do not quit their colours. They may go out of the way of danger, though they must not go out of the way of duty. Observe Christ's care of his disciples, in providing places of retreat and shelter for them, ordering it so that persecution rageth not in all places at the same time, but when one city is made too hot for them, another is reserved for a cooler shade and "a little sanctuary" a favour to be used, and not to be slighted; yet always with this proviso, that no sinful, unlawful means be used to make the escape, for then it is not a door of God's opening. We have many examples to this rule in the history both of Christ and his apostles, in the application of all which to particular cases, wisdom and integrity are "profitable to direct."

6. "Fear them not," ver. 26, because "they can but kill the body," ver. 28. Note, It is the duty and interest of Christ's disciples not to fear the greatest of their adversaries. Those that truly fear God need not fear man, and those that are afraid of the least sin, need not be afraid of the greatest trouble. "The fear of man bringeth a snare," a perplexing snare, that disturbs our peace; an entangling snare, by which we are drawn into sin; and therefore it must be carefully watched, and striven, and prayed against. Be the times never so difficult, enemies never so outrageous, and events never so threatening, yet need we not fear, "yet will we not fear, though the earth be removed," while we have so good a God, so good a cause, and so good a "hope through grace." Yes, this is soon said; but when it comes to the trial, racks and tortures, dungeons and galleys, axes and gibbets, fire and faggot, are terrible things, enough to make the stoutest heart to tremble and to start back, especially when it is plain they may be avoided by a few declining steps; and therefore, to fortify us against this temptation, we have here, 1st. A good reason against this fear, taken from the limited power of the enemies; they "kill the body," that is the utmost their rage can extend to; hitherto they can go, if God permit them, but no further; "they are not able to kill the soul," nor to do it any hurt, and the soul is the man. By this it appears that the soul doth not (as some dream) fall asleep at death, nor is deprived of thought and perception; for then the killing of the body would be the killing of the soul too. The soul is killed when it is separated from God and his love, which is its life, and is made a vessel of his wrath; now this is out of the reach of their power. "Tribulation, distress, and persecution," may separate us from all the world, but cannot part between us and God, cannot make us either not to love him, or not to be beloved by him, *Rom. viii. 35, 37.* If therefore we were more concerned about our souls, as our jewels, we should be less afraid of men, whose power cannot rob us of them. They can but "kill the body," which would quickly die of itself; not the soul, which will enjoy itself and its God in spite of them. They can but crush the cabinet; a heathen set the tyrant at defiance with this, *Tunc capiam Anaxarchi, Anaxarchum non lædis*,—You may abuse the case of Anaxarchus, you cannot injure Anaxarchus himself. The pearl of price is untouched. Seneca undertakes to make it out, that you cannot hurt a wise and good man, because death itself is no real evil to him: *Si maximum illud ultra quod nihil habent irate leges, aut savissimi domini minatur, in quo imperium suum fortuna consumit, æquo placidoque animo accipimus, et scimus mortem malum non esse ob hoc ne injuriam quidem*,—If with calmness and composure we meet that last extremity, beyond which injured laws and merciless tyrants have nothing to inflict, and in which fortune terminates her dominion, we know that death is not an evil, because it does not occasion the slightest injury.—*Seneca de Constantia.* 2nd. A good remedy against it, and that is to "fear God." "Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Note, 1. Hell is the destruction both of "soul and body," not of the being of either, but well-being of both; it is the ruin of the whole man. If the soul be lost, the body is lost too. They sinned together, the body was the soul's tempter to sin, and its tool in sin, and they must eternally suffer together. 2. This destruction comes from the power of God; he is "able to destroy;" it is a destruction from his glorious power, *2 The. i. 9.* He will, in it, "make his power known;" not only his authority to sentence, but his ability to execute the sentence, *Rom. ix. 28.* 3. God is therefore "to be feared," even by the best saints in this world; "Knowing the terrors of the Lord," we persuade men to "stand in awe of him." If, according to his fear, so is his wrath, then, according to his wrath, so should his fear be, especially because "none knows the power of his anger," *Pr. xc. 11.*

When Adam in innocence was awed by a threatening, let none of Christ's disciples think they need not the restraint of a holy fear: "Happy is the man that feareth always." The "God of Abraham," who was then dead, is called the "fear of Isaac," who was yet alive, *Gen. xxxi. 42, 53.* 4. The fear of God, and of his power reigning in the soul, will be a sovereign antidote against the fear of man. It is better to fall under the frowns of all the world, than under God's frowns; and therefore, as it is most right in itself, so is it most safe for us to "obey God rather than men," *Acts iv. 19.* They that are "afraid of a man that shall die, forget the Lord their maker," *Isa. li. 12, 13; Neh. iv. 14.*

7. "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light," ver. 27, that is, "Whatever hazards you run, go on with your work, publishing and proclaiming the everlasting Gospel to all the world; that is your business, mind that." The design of the enemies is not merely to destroy you, but to suppress that; and therefore, whatever comes of it, publish that; "what I tell you, that speak ye." Note, That which the apostles have delivered to us is the same that they "received from Jesus Christ," *Heb. ii. 3.* They spake what he told them, that, all that, and nothing but that. Those ambassadors received their instructions in private, in darkness, in the ear, in corners, in parables. Many things Christ spake openly, and nothing in secret varying from what he preached in public, *Jno. xviii. 20.* But the particular instructions he gave his disciples after his resurrection, concerning "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," were whispered in the ear, *Acts i. 3;* for then he "never shewed himself openly." But they must deliver their embassy publicly,—"in the light," and upon "the housetops," for the doctrine of the Gospel is what all are concerned in, *Pr. i. 20, 21; viii. 2, 3.* Therefore, "he that hath ears to hear let him hear." The first indication of the taking in of the Gentiles into the church was "upon a housetop," *Acts x. 9.* Note, There is no part of Christ's gospel that needs, upon any account, to be concealed: the whole "counsel of G.

before the Son of Man comes. The coming referred to is understood of the final overthrow of the Jewish people under the Romans.

x. 25. For Beelzebub many read Beelzeboul, who was a Philistine deity. The Jews adopted the word as a designation of Satan.

x. 27. The flat roofs of the houses were sometimes resorted to as platforms from which appeals were addressed to the people below.

x. 29. The Roman brass coin called a farthing was one of small value, and the name was used for any insignificant amount.

x. 21, 22. This prediction is one which unlettered English readers sometimes stumble at, not knowing that the words "shall deliver," "shall be hated," and such-like, are merely the future tense. Our Lord foresaw the opposition his Gospel would encounter, and the trials to which his disciples would be exposed, and he forewarned them, and encouraged them in view of what they must suffer.

x. 23. The phrase "ye shall not have gone over" represents the verb "ye will not finish," i.e., will not go the whole round of Israel

must be revealed, **Acts xx. 27.** In never so mixed a multitude, let it be plainly and fully delivered.

Secondly. By way of comfort and encouragement. Here is very much said to that purpose, and all little enough, considering the many hardships they were to grapple with throughout the course of their ministry, and their present weakness, which was such as that, without some powerful support, they could scarce bear even the prospect of such usage; Christ therefore shews them why they should be of good cheer.

1. Here is one word peculiar to their present mission, and their expedition upon it, ver. 23: "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come." They were to preach that "the kingdom of the Son of man," that is, the Messiah, "was at hand;" they were to pray, "Thy kingdom come." Now they should "not have gone over all the cities of Israel," thus praying and thus preaching, before that kingdom they spoke of should come in the exaltation of Christ, and the pouring out of the Spirit. It was comfort, 1st. That what they said should be made good; they said, the Son of man is coming, and "behold he comes." Christ will "confirm the word of his messengers," *Isa. xlv. 26.* 2nd. That it should be made good quickly. Note, It is matter of comfort to Christ's labourers, that their working time will be short, and soon over; the hireling has his day; the work and warfare will in a little time be accomplished. 3rd. That then they should be advanced to a higher station. When "the Son of man comes," they shall be "endued with greater power" from on high; now they were sent forth as agents and envoys, but in a little time their commission should be enlarged, and they should be sent forth as plenipotentiaries into all the world.

2. Here are many words that relate to their work in general, and the troubles they were to meet with in it; and they are good words, and comfortable words. 1st. That their sufferings were "for a testimony against them and the Gentiles," ver. 18. "When the Jewish consistories remove you before the Roman governors, that they may have you put to death, your being hurried thus from one judgment-seat to another will help to make your testimony the more public, and will give you an opportunity of bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews; nay, you will testify to them and against them by the very troubles you undergo." Note, God's people, and especially God's ministers, are his witnesses, *Isa. xliii. 10*, not only in their doing work, but in their suffering work. Hence they are called martyrs, witnesses for Christ, that his truths are of undoubted certainty and value; and being witnesses for him, they are witnesses against those that oppose him and his Gospel. The sufferings of the martyrs, as they witness to the truth of the Gospel they profess, so they are testimonies of the enmity of their persecutors, and both ways they are a testimony against them; and will be produced in evidence in the great day, when the "saints shall judge the world." And the reason of the sentence will be, "Inasmuch as you did it unto these, ye did it unto me." Now, if their sufferings be a testimony, how cheerfully should they be borne, for the testimony is not finished till those come, *Rev. xi. 7*. If they be Christ's witnesses, they shall be sure to have their charges borne. 2nd. That upon all occasions they should have God's special presence with them, and the immediate assistance of his holy Spirit, particularly when they should be called out to bear their testimony before governors and kings; "it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." Christ's disciples were chosen "from among the foolish of the world," unlearned and ignorant men, and therefore might justly distrust their own abilities, especially when they were called before great men. When Moses was sent to Pharaoh, he complained, "I am not eloquent," *Ex. iv. 10*; when Jeremiah was set over the kingdoms, he objected, "I am but a child," *Jer. i. 6, 10*. Now in answer to this suggestion, *First*. They are here promised that "it should be given them," not some time before, but, "in that same hour what they shall speak." They shall speak extempore, and yet shall speak as much to the purpose as if it had been never so well studied. Note, When God calls us out to speak for him, we may depend upon him to teach us what to say; even then when we labour under the greatest disadvantages and discouragements. *Secondly*. They are here assured that the blessed Spirit should draw up their plea for them: "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you," ver. 20. They were not left to themselves upon such an occasion, but God undertook for them, his spirit of wisdom spoke in them, as sometimes his providence wonderfully spoke for them, and by both together they were manifested in the consciences even of their persecutors. God gave them an ability, not only to speak to the purpose, but what they did say, to say it with holy zeal: the same Spirit that assisted them in the pulpit, assisted them at the bar. These cannot but come off well that have such an advocate; and to whom God saith, as he did to Moses, *Ex. iv. 12*, "Go, and I will be with thy mouth, and with thy heart."

3. That "he that endures to the end, shall be saved," ver. 22. Here it sounds very comfortable, 1st. That there will be an end of these troubles; they may last long, but will not last always. Christ comforted himself with this, and so may his followers: "The things concerning me have an end," *Lu. xxii. 37*. *Dabit Deus his quoque finem.*—These also will God bring to a termination. Note, A believing prospect of the period of our troubles will be of great use to support us under them: "The weary will be at rest" when "the wicked cease from troubling," *Job iii. 17*. God will give an expected end, *Jer. xxix. 11*. The troubles may seem tedious, like "the days of a hireling," but, blessed be God, they are not everlasting. 2nd. That while they continue, they may be endured; as they are not eternal, so they are not intolerable. They may be borne, and borne to the end; and therefore the sufferings may be borne, because the sufferers shall be borne up under them in everlasting arms. The strength shall be "according to the day," *1 Cor. x. 13*. 3rd. Salvation will be the eternal recompense of all those that "endure to the end." The weather is stormy, and the way foul, but the pleasure of home will make amends for all. A believing regard to the crown of glory has been in all ages the cordial and support of suffering saints, *2 Cor. iv. 16–18*; *Heb. x. 34*. This is not only an encouragement to us to endure, but an engagement to "endure to the end." Those that "endure but a while," and "in time of temptation fall away," have run in vain, and lose all they have attained; but those that persevere are sure of the prize, and those only, "Be faithful unto death," and then thou shalt have "the crown of life."

4. That whatever hard usage the disciples of Christ meet with, it is no more than what their Master met with before, ver. 24, 25: "The disciple is not above his master." We find this given them as a reason why they should not stick at the meanest duties, no, not washing one another's feet, *Jno. xiii. 16*. Here it is given as a reason why they should not stumble at the hardest sufferings. They are minded of this saying, *Jno. xv. 20*; it is a proverbial expression: "The servant is not better than his master," and therefore let him not expect to fare better. Note, 1st. Jesus Christ is "our master," our teaching master, and we are his disciples to learn of him; our ruling master, and we are his servants to obey him. He is master of the house, *οικονομος*, has a despotic power in the church, which is his family. 2nd. Jesus Christ, our Lord and master, met with very hard usage from the world. They called him Beelzebub, the god of flies, the name of the chief of the devils, with whom they said he was in league. It

is hard to say which is here more to be admired, the wickedness of men, that thus abused Christ, or the patience of Christ, who suffered himself to be thus abused; that he who was the God of glory should be stigmatized as the god of flies; the King of Israel as the god of Ekron; the Prince of light and life, as the prince of the powers of death and darkness; that Satan's greatest enemy and destroyer should be run down as his confederate, and yet endure such "contradiction of sinners." 3rd. The consideration of the ill treatment Christ met with in the world, should engage us to expect and prepare for the like, and to bear it patiently. Let us not think it strange if those that hated him hate his followers for his sake, nor think it hard if those that are shortly to be made "like him in glory" be now made "like him in sufferings." Christ began in the bitter cup, let us be willing to pledge him: his bearing the cross made it easy for us.

5. That "there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed," ver. 26. We understand this, 1st. Of the revealing of the Gospel to all the world. "Do you publish it, ver. 27, for it shall be published." The truths, which are now as mysteries hid from the children of men, shall all be made known to all nations in their own language, *Acts ii. 11*. The "ends of the earth" must see this "salvation." Note, It is a great encouragement to those who are doing Christ's work, that it is a work which shall certainly be done; it is a plough which God will speed. Or, 2nd. Of the clearing up of the innocence of Christ's suffering servants that are called Beelzebub. Their true character is now invidiously blackened with false colours; but however their innocence and excellency is now covered, it "shall be revealed." Sometimes it is in a great measure done in this world, when the righteousness of the saints is made, by subsequent events, to "shine forth as the light." However, it will be done at the great day, when their glory shall be manifested to all the world, angels and men, to whom they are now "made spectacles," *1 Cor. iv. 9*. All their reproach shall be rolled away, and their graces and services, that are now covered, shall be revealed, *1 Cor. iv. 5*. Note, It is matter of comfort to the people of God, under all the calumnies and censures of men, that there will be a resurrection of names as well as of bodies at the last day, when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun. Let Christ's ministers faithfully reveal his truths, and then leave it to him in due time to reveal their integrity.

6. That the providence of God is, in a special manner, conversant about the saints in their sufferings, ver. 29–31. It is good to have recourse to our first principles, and particularly to the doctrine of God's universal providence extending itself to all the creatures, and all their actions, even the smallest and most minute. The light of nature teacheth us this; and it is comfortable to all men, but especially to all good men, who can, in faith, call this God their Father, and for whom he has a tender concern. See here, 1st. The genera. extent of providence to all the creatures, even the least, and least considerable, to the "sparrows," ver. 29. These little animals are of so small account that one of them is not valued, there must go two to be worth a "farthing" (nay, you shall have five for a halfpenny, *Lu. xii. 6*), and yet they are not shut out of the Divine care: "one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father." That is, *First*. They do not light on the ground for food, to pick up a grain of corn, but your heavenly Father, by his providence, laid it ready for them. In the parallel place, (*Lu. xii. 6*) it is thus expressed: "Not one of them is forgotten before God"—forgotten to be provided for. "He feedeth them," *Mat. vi. 26*. Now, he that feeds the sparrows will not starve the saints. *Secondly*. They do not "fall to the ground" by death, either a natural or a violent death. Though they are so small a part of the creation, yet even their death comes within the notice of the Divine providence; much more the death of his disciples. Observe, the birds that soar above, when they die, "fall to the ground." Death brings the highest to the earth. Some think Christ here alludes to the two sparrows that were used in cleansing the leper, *Lev. xiv. 4–6*. The two birds in the margin are called sparrows; of these, one was killed, and so fell to the ground; the other was let go. Now it seemed a casual thing, which of the two was killed; the persons employed took which they pleased, but God's providence designed and determined which. Now this God, who has such an eye to the sparrows, because they are his creatures, much more will have an eye to you, who are his children. If a sparrow die not without your Father, sure a man doth not, a Christian, a minister, my friend, my child. A bird falls not into the fowler's net, or by the fowler's shot, and so comes not to be sold in the market, but according to the direction of Providence. Your enemies, like subtle fowlers, lay snares for you, and privily shoot at you, but they cannot take you, they cannot hit you, unless God give them leave. Therefore be not afraid of death, for your enemies have no power against you but what is "given them from above." God can break their bows and snares, *Ps. xxxvii. 14, 15*; *lxiv. 4–7*, and make your souls to "escape as a bird," *Ps. cxlvii. 7*. "Fear ye not, therefore," ver. 31. Note, There is enough in the doctrine of God's providence to silence all the fears of God's people: "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." All men are so; for the other creatures were made for man, and "put under his feet," *Ps. viii. 4–8*. Much more the disciples of Jesus Christ, who are the excellent ones of the earth, however contemned, as if not worth one sparrow. 2nd. The particular cognizance which Providence takes of the disciples of Christ, especially in their sufferings, ver. 30: "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." This is a proverbial expression, noting the account which God takes and keeps of all the concerns of his people, even those that are most minute and least regarded. This is not to be made a matter of curious inquiry, but of encouragement to live in a continual dependence upon God's providential care, which extends itself to all occurrences, yet without disparagement to the infinite glory, or disturbance to the infinite rest of the eternal mind. If God numbers their hairs, much more doth he number their heads, and take care of their lives, their comforts, their souls. It intimates that God takes more care of them than they do of themselves. Those that are solicitous to number their money, and goods, and cattle, yet were never careful to number their hairs, which fall, and are lost, and they never miss them; but God numbers the hairs of his people, and "not a hair of their head shall perish," *Lu. xxi. 18*; not the least hurt shall be done them, but upon a valuable consideration; so "precious to God are his saints, and their lives and deaths."

7. That he will shortly, in the day of triumph, own those that now own him in the day of trial, when those that deny him shall be for ever disowned and rejected by him, ver. 32, 33. Note, 1st. It is our duty, and, if we do it, will hereafter be our unspeakable honour and happiness, to confess Christ before men. *First*. It is our duty not only to believe in Christ, but to profess that faith in suffering for him, when we are called to it, as well as in serving him. We must never be ashamed of our relation to Christ, our attendance on him, and our expectations from him. Hereby the sincerity of our faith is evidenced, his name glorified, and others edified. *Secondly*. However this may expose us to reproach and trouble now, we shall abundantly be made amends for that in the resurrection of the just, when it will be our unspeakable honour and happiness. What would we more? "Him will I confess:" though a poor, worthless worm of the earth, Christ will say, "This is one of mine; one of my friends and favourites, that loved me, and was beloved of me; the purchase of my blood, the workmanship of my spirit. 'I will confess him before my Father,' when it will do him the most service; I will speak a good word for him when he

x. 34–36. The remarks previously made are applicable here to some extent. Here, however, our Lord distinctly intimates that the result, or one result, of his coming will be to rouse the enmity of unbelievers. It is not the object of his coming, but the consequence. He knew and foretold that the bitterest feuds would ensue from the conversion of men. At the same time it may be alleged that the Gospel was itself a declaration of hostility against all sin and error, and would resist and oppose it to the uttermost.

x. 39. He who, in order to escape the loss of this world's goods, and of life itself, rejects or renounces the Saviour, will lose the higher blessings of spiritual and eternal life. But he who is willing to incur all risks for Christ's sake, and loses all things here, will receive an endless and blessed reward.

x. 41. He that receives a prophet as such will share the reward in store for the prophet; so he who receives a righteous man as such will share the reward in store for the righteous man. The reward is

appears before my Father to receive his doom: I will present him, will represent him, to my Father." Them that honour Christ, he will thus honour. They honour him before men, that is a poor thing; he will honour them before his Father, that is a great thing. 2nd. It is a dangerous thing for any to deny and disown Christ before men; for those that do so will be disowned by him in the great day, when they have most need of him. He will not own them for his servants that would not own him for their master: "I tell you, I know you not," *ch. vii. 23*. In the first ages of Christianity, when for a man to confess Christ was to venture all that was dear to him in this world, it was more a trial of sincerity than it was afterwards, when it had secular advantages attending it.

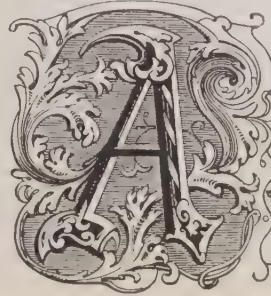
8. That the foundation of their discipleship was laid in such a temper and disposition as would make sufferings very light and easy to them; and it was upon the condition of a preparedness for suffering that Christ took them to be his followers, *ver. 37-39*. He told them, at first, they were not worthy of him, if they were not willing to part with all for him. Men stick not at those difficulties which necessarily attend their profession, and which they counted upon when they undertook that profession; and they will either cheerfully submit to those fatigues and troubles, or disclaim the privileges and advantages of their profession. Now, in the Christian profession, those are reckoned unworthy the dignity and felicity of it, that put not such a value upon their interest in Christ as to prefer that before any other interest. They cannot expect the gains of a bargain, that will not come up to the terms of it. Now thus the terms are settled: if religion be worth anything, it is worth every thing; and therefore all that believe the truth of it will soon come up to the price of it; and those who make it their business and bliss will make every thing else to truckle to it. Those that like not Christ on these terms may leave him at their peril. Note, It is very encouraging to think that, whatever we leave, or lose, or suffer for Christ, we do not make a hard bargain for ourselves. Whatever we part with for this pearl of price, we may comfort ourselves with this, that it is well worth what we give for it. The terms are, that we must prefer Christ, 1st. Before our nearest and dearest relations, "father or mother, son or daughter." Between these relations, because there is little room left for envy, there is commonly more room for love; and therefore these are instanced in as relations which we are most likely to affect. Children must love their parents, and parents must love their children; but if they love them better than Christ, they are unworthy of him. As we must not be deterred from Christ by the hatred of our relations, which he spoke of, *ver. 21-36*, so we must not be drawn from him by their love. Christians must be as Levi, that "said to his father, I have not seen him," *Deu. xxxiii. 9*. 2nd. Before our ease and safety. We must "take up our cross and follow him," else we are not "worthy of him." Here observe, 1. Those that would follow Christ must expect their cross, and take it up. 2. In taking up the cross we must follow Christ's example, and bear it as he did. 3. It is a great encouragement to us, when we meet with crosses, that, in bearing of them, we follow Christ, who hath shewed us the way, and, if we follow him faithfully, will lead us through sufferings, like him, to glory with him. 3rd. Before life itself, *ver. 39*: "He that findeth his life shall lose it;" that thinks he has found it, when he hath saved it, and kept it, by denying Christ, he shall lose it in an eternal death; but he "that loseth his life for Christ's sake," that will part with it rather than deny Christ, he "shall find it," his unspeakable advantage, in an eternal life. Those are best prepared for the life to come that sit most loose to this present life.

9. That Christ himself would so heartily espouse their cause as to shew himself a friend to all their friends, and to repay all the kindnesses that should at any time be bestowed upon them, *ver. 40-42*: "He that receiveth you, receiveth me." 1st. It is here implied, that though the generality would reject them, yet they should meet with some that would receive and entertain them, would bid the message welcome into their hearts, and the messengers into their houses, for the sake of it. Why was the Gospel-market made, but that if some will not, others will? In the worst of times there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Christ's ministers shall not "labour in vain." 2nd. Jesus Christ takes what is done to his faithful ministers, whether in kindness or in unkindness, as done to himself, and reckons himself treated as they are treated: "He that receiveth you, receiveth me." Both honours and contempts put upon an ambassador do reflect honour or contempt upon the prince that sends him; and ministers are "ambassadors for Christ." See how Christ may still be entertained by those that would testify their respects to him; his people and ministers we have always with us, and he is "with them always," even to the end of the world. Nay, the honour riseth higher: "He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." Not only Christ takes it as done to himself, but, through Christ, God doth so too. By entertaining Christ's ministers, they entertain not "angels unawares," but Christ; nay, and God himself, and unawares too, as appears, *ch. xxv. 37*: "When saw we thee an hungred?" 3rd. That though the kindness done to Christ's disciples be never so small, yet, if there be occasion for it, and ability to do no more, it shall be accepted, though it be "but a cup of cold water given to one of these little ones," *ver. 42*. They are "little ones," poor and weak, and often stand in need of refreshment, and glad of the least. The extremity may be such that a "cup of cold water," may be a great favour. Note, Kindnesses shewed to Christ's disciples are valued, in Christ's books, not according to the cost of the gift, but according to the love and affection of the giver. On that score, the widow's mite not only passed current, but was stamped high, *Lu. xxi. 3, 4*. Thus, they that are truly rich in graces may be rich in good works, though poor in the world. 4th. That kindness to Christ's disciples which he will accept, must be done with an eye to Christ, and for his sake. A prophet must be received in the name of "a prophet," and "a righteous man," in the name of "a righteous man;" and one of those "little ones," in the name of "a disciple," not because they are learned, or witty, or because they are our relations or neighbours, but because they are righteous, and so bear Christ's image. They are prophets and disciples, and so are sent on Christ's errand. It is a believing regard to Christ that puts an acceptable value upon the kindnesses done to his ministers, when we entertain them for their Master's sake, whose they are, and whom they serve. Christ doth not interest himself in the matter, unless we first interest ourselves in it: *Ut tibi debeam aliquid pro eo quod prestat, debes non tantum mihi prestare, sed tanquam mihi.* "If you wish me to feel an obligation to you for any service you render, you must not only perform the service, but you must convince me that you do it for my sake."—*Seneca*. 5th. That kindnesses shewn to Christ's people and ministers shall not only be accepted, but richly and suitably rewarded. There is a great deal to be gotten by doing good offices to Christ's disciples: if it be done to the Lord, he will repay them again with interest; for he is "not unrighteous to forget any labour of love," *Heb. vi. 10*. First. They shall "receive a reward," and "in nowise lose it." He doth not say, they deserve a reward; we cannot merit any thing as wages from the hand of God; but they shall "receive a reward" from the free gift of God. And they shall "in no wise lose it," as good services often do among men, because those that should reward them are either false or forgetful. The reward may be deferred; the full reward will be deferred till the resurrection of the just; but it shall in nowise be

lost, nor shall they be losers by the delay. *Secondly*. This is a prophet's reward, and a righteous man's; that is, either, 1st. The reward that God gives to prophets and righteous men; the blessings conferred upon them shall distil upon their friends; or, 2nd. The reward he gives by prophets and righteous men, in answer to their prayers, *Gen. xx. 7*: "He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee;" that is a prophet's reward: and by their ministry, when he gives the instructions and comforts of the Word to those that are kind to the preachers of the Word, then he sends a prophet's reward. Prophets' rewards are spiritual blessings in heavenly things; and if we know how to value them, we shall reckon them good payment.

CHAPTER XI.

In this chapter we have, I. The constant and unwearied diligence of our Lord Jesus in his great work of preaching the Gospel, *ver. 1*. II. His discourse with the disciples of John, concerning his being the Messiah, *ver. 2-6*. III. The honourable testimony that Christ bore to John Baptist, *ver. 7-15*. IV. The sad account he gives of that generation in general, and especially of some particular places, with reference to the success both of John's ministry and of his own, *ver. 16-24*. V. His thanksgiving to his Father for the wise and gracious method he had taken in revealing the great mysteries of the Gospel, *ver. 25, 26*. VI. His gracious call and invitation to poor sinners to come to him, and to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him, *ver. 27-30*. Nowhere have we more of the terrors of Gospel woes for warning to us, or of the sweetness of Gospel grace for encouragement to us, than in this chapter, which sets before us life and death, the blessing and the curse.



AND it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. 2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples; 3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? 4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

The first verse of this chapter some join to the foregoing chapter, and make it, not unfitly, the close of that.

First. The ordination sermon which Christ preached to his disciples, in the foregoing chapter, is here called his "commanding them." Note, Christ's commissions imply commands. Their preaching of the Gospel was not only permitted them, but it was enjoined them. It was not a thing they were left at their liberty about, but "necessity was laid upon them," *1 Cor. ix. 16*. The promises he made them are included in these commands, for the covenant of grace is a "word which he hath commanded," *Ps. cv. 8*: "He made an end of commanding,"—*ἐτέλεσεν διατάσσειν*. Note, The instructions Christ gives are full instructions; he goes through with his work.

Secondly. When Christ had said what he had to say to his disciples, "he departed thence." It should seem they were very loath to scatter and go abroad from their Master, till he departed, and separated himself from them; as the nurse withdraws the hand, that the child may learn to go itself. Christ would now teach them how to live, and how to work without his bodily presence. It was expedient for them that Christ should thus go away for awhile, that they might be prepared for his long departure, and that, by the help of the Spirit, their own hands might be "sufficient for them," (*Deu. xxxiii. 7*) and they might not be always children. We have little account of what they did now pursuant to their commission. They went abroad, no doubt, probably into Judea, (for in Galilee, the Gospel had been mostly preached hitherto,) publishing the doctrine of Christ, and working miracles in his name, but still in a more immediate dependence upon him, and not being long from him; and thus they were trained up, by degrees, for their great work.

Thirdly. Christ departed "to teach and preach," there, where he sent his disciples before him to "work miracles," *ch. x. 1-8*, and so to raise people's expectations, and make way for his entertainment. Thus was the "way of the Lord prepared." John prepared it by bringing people to repentance, but he "did no miracles." The disciples go further, they "work miracles" for the confirmation. Note, Repentance and faith prepare people for the blessings of the kingdom of heaven, which Christ gives. Observe, when Christ empowered them to work miracles, he employed himself in teaching and preaching, as if that were the more honourable of the two. That was but in order to this. Healing the sick was the "saving of bodies," but preaching the Gospel was to the "saving of souls." Christ had directed his disciples to preach, *ch. x. 7*; yet he did not leave off preaching himself. He set them to work, not for his own ease, but for the ease of the country, and was not the less busy for employing them. How unlike are they to Christ who yoke others only that they may themselves be idle. Note, The increase and multitude of labourers in the Lord's work should be made not an excuse for our negligence, but an encouragement to our diligence. The more busy others are, the more busy we should be; and all little enough, so much work is there to be done. Observe, he went to preach in their cities, which were populous places; he cast the net of the Gospel where there were most fish to be enclosed. Wisdom cries "in the city," *Pr. i. 21*; "at the entry of the city," *Pr. viii. 3*. In "the cities of the Jews," even theirs who made light of him, yet had the first offer.

that kindness shown under such circumstances is a test of real character.

xi. 2. John the Baptist, who is here meant, was imprisoned by Herod in a place called Machærus, which Josephus says was a castle on the borders of the dominions of Aretas, the king of Arabia Petraea, and of Herod. Here John heard of the miracles of Jesus, and hence, apparently to obtain fuller information for the satisfaction of his disciples, sent the messengers of whom we read. John

may have been anxious on his own account to obtain from Jesus a direct avowal of his Messiahship. Dean Alford very well says it is a fact not to be neglected that John is said to have heard of the works, not of Jesus, but of (the) Christ: the only place where that name, standing alone, is given to our Lord in this Gospel. It is, perhaps, well to add that the word Christ is really a title and not a proper name.

xi. 3. The word "said" is in the singular number; it is therefore

What he preached we are not told; but it is likely it was to the same purpose with his Sermon on the Mount. But here is next recorded a message which John Baptist sent to Christ, and his return to it, ver. 2-6. We heard before that Jesus heard of John's sufferings, *ch. iv. 12*. Now we are told that John, in prison, hears of Christ's doings. He "heard in the prison the works of Christ;" and, no doubt, he was glad to hear of them, for he was a true friend of the Bridegroom, *Jno. iii. 29*. Note, When one useful instrument is laid aside, God knows how to raise up many others in the stead of it. The work went on, though John was in prison, and it added no affliction, but a great deal of consolation to his bonds. Nothing is more comfortable to God's people in distress than to "hear of the works of Christ," especially to experience them in their own souls. This turns a prison into a palace. Some way or other, Christ will convey the notices of his love to those that are in trouble for conscience sake. John could not see the works of Christ, but he heard of them with pleasure. And blessed are they which "have not seen," but only heard, and yet "have believed." Now John Baptist, hearing of Christ's works, sent two of his disciples to him; and what passed between them and him we have here an account of. Here is,

1. *The question they had to propose to him*: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" This was a serious and important question: "Art thou the Messiah promised, or not? Art thou the Christ? Tell us." 1. It is taken for granted that the Messiah should come. It was one of the names by which he was known to the Old Testament saints: "He that cometh," or "shall come," *Ps. cxviii. 26*. He is now come, but there is another coming of his we still expect. 2. They intimate that, if this be not he, they would "look for another." Note, We must not be weary of looking for him that is to come, nor ever say, we will no more expect him till we come to enjoy him. Though he tarry, wait for him, for "he that shall come will come," though not in our time. 3. They intimate, likewise, that if they be convinced this is he, they will not be sceptics, they will be satisfied, and will look for no other. 4. They therefore ask, "Art thou he?" John had said, for his part, "I am not the Christ," *Jno. i. 20*. Now,

First, Some think John sent this question for his own satisfaction. It is true he had borne a noble testimony to Christ, he declared him to be the "Son of God," *Jno. i. 34*; "the Lamb of God," *ver. 29*; and he that "should baptize with the Holy Ghost," *ver. 33*; and "sent of God," *Jno. iii. 34*; which were great things. But he desired to be further and more fully assured that he was the Messiah that had been so long promised and expected. Note, In matters relating to Christ, and our salvation by him, it is good to be sure. Christ appeared not in that external pomp and power that it was expected he should appear in; his own disciples stumbled at this, and perhaps John did so: Christ saw something of this at the bottom of this inquiry, when he said, "Blessed is he who shall not be offended in me." Note, It is hard, even for good men, to bear up against vulgar errors.

Secondly, John's doubt might arise from his own present circumstances. He was a prisoner, and might be tempted to think, if Jesus be indeed the Messiah, whence is it that I, his friend and forerunner, am brought into this trouble, and am left to be so long in it, and he never looks after me, visits me not, nor sends to me, inquires not after me, doth nothing either to sweeten my imprisonment, or hasten my enlargement. Doubtless there was a good reason why our Lord Jesus did not go to John in prison, lest there should seem to have been a compact between them; but John construed it a neglect, and it was perhaps a shock to his faith in Christ. Note, 1. Where there is true faith, yet there may be a mixture of unbelief; the best are not always alike strong. 2. Troubles for Christ, especially when they continue long unrelieved, are such trials of faith as sometimes prove too hard to be borne up against. 3. The remaining unbelief of good men may sometimes in an hour of temptation strike at the root, and call in question the most fundamental truths, which were thought to be well settled: "Will the Lord cast off for ever?" But we will hope that John's faith did not fail in this matter, only he desired to have it strengthened and confirmed. Note, The best saints have need of the best helps they can get for the strengthening of their faith, and the arming of themselves against temptations to infidelity. Abraham believed, and yet desired a sign, *Gen. xv. 6, 8*; so did Gideon, *Jud. vi. 36, 37*. But,

Thirdly, Others think John sent his disciples to Christ with this question, not so much for his own satisfaction as for theirs. Observe, Though he was a prisoner, they stuck to him, attended on him, and were ready to receive instructions from him; they loved him, and would not leave him. Now, 1. They were weak in knowledge, and wavering in their faith, and needed instruction and confirmation; and in this matter they were somewhat prejudiced; being jealous for their master, they were jealous of our Master; were loath to acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, because he eclipsed John; and are loath to believe their own master when they think he speaks against himself and them. Good men are apt to have their judgments biased by their interest. Now John would have their mistakes rectified, and them as well satisfied as he himself was. Note, The strong ought to consider the infirmities of the weak, and do what they can to help them; and such as we cannot help ourselves, we should send to those that can: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." 2. John was all along industrious to turn over his disciples to Christ, as from the grammar school to the academy. Perhaps he foresaw his death approaching, and therefore would bring his disciples to be better acquainted with Christ, under whose guardianship he must leave them. Note, Ministers' business is to direct every body to Christ. And those who would know the certainty of the doctrine of Christ, must apply themselves to him, who is come to give an understanding; those that would grow in grace, must be inquisitive.

II. *Here is Christ's answer to this question*, *ver. 4-6*. It was not so direct and express, as when he said, "I that speak unto thee, am he;" but it was a real answer, an answer in fact. Christ will have us to spell out the convincing evidences of gospel truths, and to take pains in digging for knowledge.

First, He points them to what they heard and saw, which they must tell John, that he might from hence take occasion the more fully to instruct and convince them out of their own mouths. Go and tell him "what you hear and see." Note, Our senses may and ought to be appealed to in those things that are their proper objects. Therefore the Popish doctrine of the real presence agrees not with the truth "as it is in Jesus;" for Christ refers us to the things we "hear and see." "Go and tell John," 1. What you see of the power of Christ's miracles: you see how, by the word of Jesus, "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk," &c. Christ's miracles were done openly, and in the view of all; for they feared not the strongest and most impartial scrutiny: *veritas non querit angulos*—"truth seeks not concealment." They are to be considered, 1st. As the acts of a Divine power. None but the God of nature could thus overrule and outdo the power of nature. It is particularly spoken of as God's prerogative to "open the eyes of the blind," *Ps. cxlvi. 8*. Miracles are therefore the broad seal of heaven, and the doctrine they are affixed to must be of God, for his power will never contradict his truth; nor can it be imagined he should set his seal to a lie: however lying wonders may be vouched for proof of false doctrines, true miracles evince a Divine commission: such Christ's were, and leave no room to doubt that he was sent of God, and his doctrine was his that sent him. 2nd. As the accomplishment of a Divine prediction. It was

foretold, *Isa. xxxv. 5, 6*, that our God should come, and that then "the eyes of the blind should be opened." Now if the works of Christ agree with the words of the prophet, as it is plain they do, then no doubt but this is our God, whom we have waited for, who shall come with a recompense; this is he that is so much wanted. 2. Tell him what you hear of the preaching of his Gospel, which goes along with his miracles. Faith, though confirmed by seeing, comes by hearing. Tell him, 1st. That "the poor preach the Gospel;" so some read it. It proves Christ's Divine mission, that those whom he employed in founding his kingdom were poor men, destitute of all secular advantages, and therefore could never have carried their point if they had not been carried on by a Divine power. 2nd. That the "poor have the Gospel preached to them." Christ's auditory is made up of such as the scribes and Pharisees despised, and looked upon with contempt; and the rabbis would not instruct, because they were not able to pay them. The Old Testament prophets were sent mostly to kings and princes, but Christ preached to the congregation of the poor. It was foretold that the "poor of the flock" should "wait upon him," *Zec. xi. 11*. Note, Christ's most gracious condescensions and compassions to the poor are an evidence that it was he that should bring to the world the tender mercies of our God. It was foretold that the "son of David" should be the "poor man's king," *Ps. lxxii. 2, 4, 12, 13*; or, we may understand it, not so much of the poor of the world as the "poor in spirit," and so that Scripture is fulfilled, *Isa. lxi. 1*: "He hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the meek." Note, It is a proof of Christ's Divine mission that his doctrine is Gospel indeed; good news to those that are truly humbled in sorrow for their sins, and truly humble in the denial of self; to them it is accommodated, for whom God always declared he had mercy in store. 3rd. That the "poor receive the Gospel," and are wrought by it: they are evangelized, they receive and entertain the Gospel, are leavened by it, and delivered into it, as into a mould. Note, The wonderful efficacy of the Gospel is a proof of its Divine original. The poor are wrought upon by it. The prophets complained of the poor, that they "knew not the way of the Lord," *Jer. v. 4*; they could do no good upon them; but the Gospel of Christ made its way into their stupid souls.

Secondly, He pronounceth a blessing on those that "were not offended in him," *ver. 6*. So clear are these evidences of Christ's mission, that those who are not wilfully prejudiced against him, and scandalized in him, (so the word is), cannot but receive his doctrine, and so be "blessed in him." Note, 1. There are many things in Christ which those that are ignorant and unthinking are apt to be offended at; some circumstances, for the sake of which they reject the substance of his Gospel: the meanness of his appearance, his education in Nazareth, the poverty of his life, the despicableness of his followers, the slights which the great men put upon him, the strictness of his doctrine, and the contradiction it gives to flesh and blood; the sufferings that attend the profession of his name, and are likely to do so; these are things that keep many from him, who otherwise cannot but see much of God in him. Thus he is set "for the fall of many," even in Israel, *Lu. ii. 34*; a "rock of offence," *1 Pet. ii. 8*. 2. They are happy who get over these offences: "Blessed are they." The expression intimates that it is a difficult thing to conquer these prejudices; and a dangerous thing not to conquer them; but those who, notwithstanding this opposition, believe in Christ, their faith will be found so much the more to "praise, and honour, and glory."

7 And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? 8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. 10 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. 15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

We have here the high encomium which our Lord Jesus gave of John Baptist; not only to revive his honour, but to revive his work. Some of Christ's disciples might perhaps take occasion, from the question John sent, to reflect upon him, as weak, and wavering, and inconsistent with himself; to prevent which, Christ gives him this character. Note, It is our duty to consult the reputation of our brethren, and not only to remove, but to obviate and prevent jealousies, and ill thoughts of them; and we must take all occasions, especially those which discover any thing of infirmity, to speak well of those that are praiseworthy, and to give them that "fruit of their hands." John Baptist, when he was upon the stage, and Christ in privacy and retirement, bore testimony to Christ; and now Christ appeared publicly, and John was under a cloud, he bore testimony to John. Note, Those who have a confirmed interest themselves, should improve it for the helping of the credit and reputation of others, whose character claims it, but either their temper or present circumstances put them out of the way of it. This is giving honour to whom honour is due. John had abased himself to honour Christ, *Jno. iii. 29, 30*; *ch. iii. 11*; had made himself nothing, that Christ might be all; and now Christ dignifies

John who asks the question by means of his two messengers. The inquiry is put in a form so direct that it is evident the Baptist, for whatever reason, was anxious to have a reply equally direct and explicit.

xi. 4-6. The Saviour, however, did not return a formal answer to the question. He appealed to his miracles, thus investing them with an importance and a significance which is denied them by some modern writers. From the miracles, as facts of a special order,

they were to draw conclusions; but not from the miracles alone, because the preaching of the Gospel to the poor is added. This, however, is in truth an indication of the fulfilment of prophecy, the particular allusion being to *Isa. lxi. 1*. Verse 6 points to the proper conclusion from what he had said. If not directly applicable to John it is inclusive of him, and encourages the faith of all who rightly regard the Lord Jesus Christ.

xi. 7. The interview with the messengers from John appears to

him with this character. Note, Those that humble themselves shall be exalted, and those that honour Christ, he will honour; that confess him before men, he will confess, and sometimes "before men" too, even in this world. John had now "finished his testimony," and now Christ commends him. Note, Christ reserves his honour for his servants when they "have done their work," *Jno. xii. 26*. Now concerning this commendation of John, observe,

I. That Christ spoke thus honourably of John, not in the hearing of John's disciples, but "as they departed," just after they were gone, *Lu. vii. 24*. He would not so much as seem to flatter John, nor have these praises of him reported to him. Note, Though we must be forward to give to all their due praise for their encouragement, yet we must avoid every thing that looks like flattery, or may be in danger of puffing them up; those that in other things are mortified to the world, yet cannot well bear their own praise. Pride is a corrupt humour, which we must not feed, either in others or in ourselves.

II. That what Christ said concerning John was intended not only for his praise, but for the people's profit, to revive the remembrance of John's ministry, which had been much flocked after, but was (as other such things used to be) strangely forgotten; they did for a season, and but "for a season, rejoice in his light," *Jno. v. 35*. "Now, consider, 'What went ye out into the wilderness to see?' Put this question to yourselves."

First, John preached "in the wilderness," and thither people flocked in crowds to him, though in a remote place, and an inconvenient one. If teachers be removed into corners, it is better to go after them than without them. Now if his preaching be worth taking so much pains to hear it, surely it was worth taking some care to recollect it. The more difficulties we have broke through to hear the Word, the more we are concerned to profit by it.

Secondly, They went out to him to see him; rather to feed their eye with the unusual appearance of his person, than to feed their souls with his wholesome instructions, rather for curiosity than for conscience. Note, Many that attend on the Word, come rather to see and be seen, than to learn and be taught; to have something to talk of, than to be made wise to salvation.

Thirdly, Christ puts it to them, "What went ye out to see?" Note, Those that attend on the Word will be called to an account, what their intentions and what their improvements were. We think, when the sermon is done, the care is over; no, then the greatest of the care begins. It will shortly be asked, "What business had you such a time at such an ordinance? What brought you thither? Was it custom or company, or was it a desire to honour God, and get good? 'What have you brought hence?' What knowledge, and grace, and comfort? 'What went you to see?'" Note, When we go to read and hear the Word, we should see that we aim right in what we do.

III. Let us see what the commendation of John was. They know not what answer to make to Christ's question; 'Well,' saith Christ, 'I will tell you what a man John Baptist was.'

First, He was a firm resolute man, and not "a reed shaken with the wind;" you have been so in your thoughts of him, but he was not so. He was not wavering in his principles, or uneven in his conversation; but was remarkable for his steadiness, and consistency with himself. Those that are weak as reeds will be shaken as reeds; but John was "strong in spirit," *Eph. iv. 14*; when the wind of popular applause, on the one hand, blew fresh and fair,—when the storm of Herod's rage, on the other hand, grew fierce and blustering,—John was still the same, the same in all weathers. The testimony he had borne to Christ, it was not the testimony of a reed, of a man that was of one mind to-day, and of another to-morrow; it was not a weathercock testimony; no, his constancy in it is intimated, *Jno. i. 20*; "he confessed, and denied not, but confessed," and he stood to it afterwards, *Jno. iii. 28*. And therefore this question sent by his disciples was not to be construed as speaking any suspicion he now had of the truth of what he had formerly said; therefore the people flocked to him, because he was not as a reed. Note, There is nothing lost at long run by an unshaken resolution to go on with our work, neither hurting the smiles nor fearing the frowns of men.

Secondly, He was a self-denying man, and mortified to this world. Was he a man "clothed in soft raiment?" If so, you would not have gone "into the wilderness" to see him, but to the "court." You went to see one that had "his raiment of camel's hair," and a "leathern girdle about the loins;" his mien and habit shewed that he was dead to all pomps of the world, and the pleasures of sense; his clothing agreed with the wilderness he lived in, and the doctrine he preached there, that of repentance. Now you cannot think that he who was such a stranger to the pleasures of a court should be brought to change his mind by the terrors of a prison, and now to question whether Jesus be the Messiah or no? Note, Those who have lived a life of mortification are least likely to be driven off from their religion by persecution. He was not a man clothed in "soft raiment," such there are, but they are "in kings' houses." Note, It becomes people in all their appearances to comport with their character and the place they are in, and to conform to that. Those that are preachers must not affect to look like courtiers; nor those whose lot is cast in common dwellings, be ambitious of the soft clothing which they wear that are in kings' houses. Prudence teacheth us to be of apiece. John appeared rough and unpleasant, yet they flocked after him. Note, The remembrance of our former zeal in attending on the Word of God should quicken us to and in our present work: let it not be said that we have done and suffered so many things in vain, have "run in vain," and "laboured in vain."

Thirdly, His greatest commendation of all was his office and ministry, which was more his honour than any personal endowments or qualifications could be; and therefore this is mostly enlarged upon in a full enumeration.

1. He was "a prophet, yea, and more than a prophet," *ver. 9*; so he said of him who was the great prophet, to whom all the prophets bare witness. John said of himself, he was not that prophet, that great prophet, the Messiah himself; and now Christ (a very competent judge) saith of him, that he was "more than a prophet." He owned himself inferior to Christ, and Christ owned him superior to all other prophets. Observe, The forerunner of Christ was not a king, but a prophet, lest it should seem that the kingdom of the Messiah had been laid in earthly power; but his immediate forerunner was, as such, a transcendent prophet, more than an Old Testament prophet: they all "did virtuously," but John excelled them all; they "saw Christ's day" at a distance, and their vision was yet for a great while to come; but John saw the day dawn, he saw the sun rise, and told the people of the Messiah as one that stood among them. They spake of Christ, but he pointed to him; they say, "a virgin shall conceive," he said, "Behold the Lamb of God."

2. He was the same that was prophesied to be Christ's forerunner, *ver. 10*: "This is he of whom it is written." He was prophesied of by the other prophets, and therefore was greater than they. Malachi prophesied concerning John, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face." Herein some of Christ's honour was put upon him, that the Old Testament prophets spake and wrote of him; and this honour have all the saints, that their names are "written in the Lamb's book of life." It was a great preferment to John above all the prophets, that he was Christ's harbinger. He was a messenger sent on a great errand; a messenger, "one among a thousand," deriving his honour from him whose messenger he was; "he is my messenger," sent "of God," and sent before

the "Son of God." His business was to "prepare Christ's way," to dispose people to receive the Saviour, by discovering to them their sin and misery, and their need of a Saviour. This he had said of himself, *Jno. i. 23*; and now Christ said it of him; intending hereby, not only to put an honour upon John's ministry, but to revive people's regard to it, as making way for the Messiah. Note, Much of the beauty of God's dispensations lies in their mutual connexion and coherence, and the reference they have one to another. That which advanced John above the Old Testament prophets was, that he went immediately before Christ. Note, The nearer any are to Christ, the more truly honourable they are.

3. There was "not a greater born of women" than John Baptist, *ver. 11*: Christ knew how to value persons according to the degrees of their worth, and he prefers John before all that went before him, before all that were "born of women" by ordinary generation. Of all that God has raised up, and called to any service in his church, John is the most eminent, even beyond Moses himself; for he began to preach the gospel doctrine of remission of sins to those that are truly penitent; and he had more signal revelations from heaven than any of them had; for he "saw heaven opened," and "the Holy Ghost descend." He also had great success in his ministry; almost the whole nation flocked to him. None rose on so great a design, or came on so noble an errand, as John did, nor had such reason to be welcome. Many had been born of women that made a greater figure in the world, but Christ prefers John before them. Note, Greatness is not to be measured by shows and appearances, and outward splendour; but those are the greatest men that are the greatest saints and the greatest blessings; that are, as John was, "great in the sight of the Lord," *Lu. i. 15*. Yet this high encomium of John hath a surprising limitation; "notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." 1st. In the kingdom of glory. John was a great and good man; but he was yet in a state of infirmity and imperfection, and therefore came short of glorified saints, and the "spirits of just men made perfect." Note, 1. There are degrees of glory in heaven, some that are less than others there; though every vessel is alike full, it is not alike large and capacious. 2. The least saint in heaven is greater, and knows more, and loves more, and doth more in praising God, and receives more from him, than the greatest in this world. The saints on earth are excellent ones, *Ps. xvi. 3*; but those in heaven are much more excellent; the best in this world are "lower than the angels," *Ps. viii. 5*; the least there are "equal with the angels," which should make us long for that blessed state, where the "weak shall be as David," *Zec. xii. 8*. 2nd. By the "kingdom of heaven" here, is rather to be understood the kingdom of grace, the gospel dispensation in the perfection of its power and purity, and, *ὁ μικρότερος*, — "he that is less in that, is greater than John." Some understand it of Christ himself, who was younger than John, and in the opinion of some less than John, who always spoke diminishingly of himself; "I am a worm, and no man," yet greater than John: so it agrees with what John Baptist said, *Jno. i. 15*: "He that cometh after me, is preferred before me." But it is rather to be understood of the apostles and ministers of the New Testament, the evangelical prophets; and the comparison between them and John, is not with respect to their personal sanctity, but to their office. John preached Christ "coming," but they preached Christ not only come, but "crucified," and "glorified." John came to the dawning of the gospel day, and therein excelled the foregoing prophets; but he was taken off before the noon of that day, before the rending of the veil, before Christ's death and resurrection, and the pouring out of the Spirit; so that the least of the apostles and evangelists, having greater discoveries made to them, and being employed in a greater embassy, is "greater than John." John did no miracles, the apostles wrought many. The ground of this performance is laid in the preference of the New Testament dispensation, above that of the Old Testament. Ministers of the New Testament therefore excel, because their ministration doth so, *2 Cor. iii. 6*, &c. John was a *maximum quod sit*, — "the greatest of his order;" he went to the utmost that the dispensation he was under would allow; but *minimum maximi est, majus maximo minime*, — "the least of the highest order is superior to the first of the lowest;" a dwarf upon a mountain sees farther than a giant in the valley. Note, All the true greatness of men is derived from, and denominated by, the gracious manifestation of Christ to them. The best men are no better than he is pleased to make them, and reflect light upon them. What reason have we to be thankful that our lot is cast in the days of the "kingdom of heaven," under such advantages of light and love; and the greater the advantages, the greater will the account be, if we "receive the grace of God in vain."

4. The great commendation of John Baptist was, that God owned his ministry, and made it wonderfully successful for the breaking of the ice, and the preparing of people for the "kingdom of heaven." "From the days of" the first appearing of "John Baptist until now," (which was not much above two years,) a great deal of good was done; so quick was the motion when it came to Christ the centre: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence," *βιάζεται, vim patitur*, like the violence of an army taking a city by storm, or of a crowd thrusting into a house, so the violent take it by force. The meaning of this we have in the parallel place, *Lu. xvi. 16*: "Since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Multitudes are wrought upon by the ministry of John, and become his disciples. And it is, 1st. An improbable multitude. Those strove for a place in this kingdom that one would think had no right or title to it, and so seemed to be intruders, and to make a tortuous entry, as our law calls it, a wrongful and forcible one. When the "children of the kingdom" are excluded out of it, and many come into it "from the East and the West," then it "suffers violence." Compare this with *ch. xxi. 31, 32*. The publicans and harlots believed John, whom the scribes and Pharisees rejected, and so went into the kingdom of God before them, "took it over their heads," while they trifled. Note, It is no breach of good manners to go to heaven before our betters. And it is a great commendation of the Gospel, from the days of its infancy, that it has brought many to holiness that were very unlikely. 2nd. An importunate multitude. This violence notes a strength, and vigour, and earnestness of desire and endeavour, in those that followed John's ministry, else they would not have come so far to attend upon it. It shews us also what fervency and zeal is required of all those that design to make heaven of their religion. Note, Those that would "enter into the kingdom of heaven" must "strive to enter." That kingdom suffers a holy violence. Self must be denied; the bent and bias, the frame and temper, of the mind must be altered; there are hard services to be done, and hard sufferings to be undergone, a force to be put upon the corrupt nature; we must run, and wrestle, and fight, and be "in an agony," and all little enough to win such a prize, and to get over such opposition from without and from within. "The violent take it by force." Those that will have an interest in the great salvation are carried out towards it with a strong desire; will have it upon any terms, and not think them hard, nor quit their hold without a blessing, *Gen. xxxii. 26*. Those that will make their calling and election sure must give diligence. The kingdom of heaven was never intended to indulge the ease of triflers, but to be the rest of them that labour. It is a blessed sight: O that we could see more of it; not with an angry contention, thrusting others out of the kingdom of heaven; but with a holy contention, thrusting ourselves into it.

have been public, and as soon as they were gone our Lord turned the occasion to profit. Many had gone out into the wilderness to look at John, entertaining, perhaps, vague notions as to who or what he was.

xi. 10. In this passage it is plainly declared that John was the subject of prophecy. The words quoted are from Mal. iii. 1, but with remarkable variations. In Malachi it is, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." But here

the words "before thy face" are introduced, and "before thee" is put for "before me." We can only infer from these changes that our Lord applied the prophecy to himself as well as to John. And he so applied it as to teach that he was himself "the Lord" mentioned in the part of the verse unquoted. On the one hand, then, it sets forth John as the predicted forerunner of the Messiah, and on the other hand it sets Jesus forth as the predicted Messiah.

xi. 12. This verse has been variously explained both by the older

5. The ministry of John was the "beginning of the Gospel," as it is reckoned, *Mar. i. 1; Acts i. 22*. This is shewed here in two things: 1st. In John the Old Testament dispensation began to die, ver. 13. So long that ministration continued in full force and virtue, but then it began to decline. Though the obligation of the law of Moses was not removed till Christ's death, yet the discoveries of the Old Testament began to be superseded by the more clear manifestation of "the kingdom of heaven" as "at hand." Because the "light of the Gospel," as that of nature, was to precede and make way for its law; therefore the prophecies of the Old Testament came to an end (*finis perfectus*, not *interficiens*,—an end of completion, not of duration,) before the precepts of it; so that when Christ saith, "All the prophets and the law prophesied until John," he shews us, *First*, How the light of the Old Testament was set up; it was set up "in the law and the prophets," who spoke, though darkly, of Christ and his kingdom. Observe, The law is said to prophesy, as well as the prophets, concerning him that was to come. Christ "began at Moses," *Lu. xxiv. 27*. Christ was foretold by the dumb signs of the Mosaic work, as well as by the more articulate voices of the prophets, and was exhibited, not only in the verbal predictions, but in the personal and real types. Blessed be God that we have both the New Testament doctrine to explain the Old Testament prophecies, and the Old Testament prophecies to confirm and illustrate the New Testament doctrine, *Heb. i. 1*; like the two cherubims, they look at each other. The law was given by Moses long ago, and there had been no prophets for three hundred years before John, and yet they were both said to "prophesy until John," because the law was still observed, and Moses and the prophets still read. Note, The Scripture is teaching to this day, though the penmen of it are gone. Moses and the prophets are dead, the apostles and evangelists dead, *Zec. i. 5*, but "the Word of the Lord endures for ever." *1 Pet. i. 25*. The Scripture is "speaking expressly," though the writers are silent in the dust. *Secondly*, How this light was laid aside: when he saith, they "prophesied until John," he intimates that their glory was eclipsed by the glory which excelled; their predictions superseded by John's testimony, "Behold the Lamb of God." Even before the sun riseth, the morning light makes the candles to grow dim. Their prophecies of a Christ to come became out of date when John said, "He is come." 2nd, In him the New Testament day began to dawn; for, ver. 14, "This is Elias, that was for to come." John was as the loop that coupled the two Testaments; as Noah was *fibula utriusque mundi*,—the link connecting both worlds; so was he *utriusque Testamenti*,—the link connecting both Testaments. The concluding prophecy of the Old Testament was, "Behold, I will send you Elijah," *Mal. iv. 5, 6*. Those words prophesied until John, and then being turned into a history, they ceased to prophesy. *First*, Christ speaks of it as a great truth, that John Baptist is the Elias of the New Testament, not Elias in propria persona,—"in his own person," he denied that, *Jno. i. 21*. Such an Elias the carnal Jews expected; but one that should come in the spirit and power of Elias, *Lu. i. 17*, like him in temper and conversation, that should press repentance with terrors, and especially, as it is in the prophecy, that should "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children." *Secondly*, He speaks of it as a truth, which would not be easily apprehended by those whose expectations fastened upon the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, and introductions to it agreeable. Christ suspects the welcome of it; "if ye will receive it." Not but that it was true, whether they would receive it or no; but he upbraids them with their prejudices, that they were backward to receive the greatest truths that were cross to their sentiments, though never so favourable to their interests. Or, "if 'you will receive him,' or, if you will receive the ministry of John as that of the promised Elias, he will be an Elias to you, to turn you, and prepare you for the Lord." Note, Gospel truths are as they are received, a savour of life or death. Christ is a Saviour, and John an Elias, to those who will receive the truth concerning them.

Lastly, *Our Lord closeth this discourse with a solemn demand of attention*, ver. 15: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," which intimates that those things were dark, and hard to be understood, and therefore needed attention; but of great concern and consequence, and therefore well deserved it. Let all people take notice of this. If John be the Elias prophesied of, then

certainly there is a great revolution on foot; the Messiah's kingdom is at the door, and the world will shortly be surprised into a happy change. These are things which require your serious consideration, and therefore you are all concerned to hearken to what I say. Note, The things of God are of great and common concern: every one that has ears to hear any thing, is concerned to hear this. It intimates that God requires no more from us but the right use and improvement of the faculties he has already given us. He requires those to hear that have ears, those to use their reason that have reason. Therefore people are ignorant, not because they want powers, but because they want will; therefore they do not hear, because, like the deaf adder, they "stop their ears."

16 But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, 17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. 19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children. 20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: 21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. 23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.



TYRE, WITH THE OLD PORT.

Christ was going on in the praise of John Baptist and his ministry, but here stops on a sudden, and turns that to the reproach of those who enjoyed both that and the ministry of Christ and his apostles too in vain. As to that generation, we may observe who he "compares them to," ver. 16-19. And as to the particular places he instanteth in, we may observe who he compares them with, ver. 20-24.

1. As to that "generation," the body of the Jewish people at that time. There were many indeed that pressed into the kingdom of heaven; but the generality continued in unbelief and obstinacy. John was a great and good man, but the generation into which his lot was cast was as barren and unprofitable as could be, and unworthy of him. Note, The badness of the places where good ministers live, serves for a foil to their beauty. It was Noah's praise that he was "righteous in this generation." Having commended John, he condemns those that had him among them, and did not profit by his ministry. Note, The more praiseworthy the minister is, the more blameworthy the people are if they slight him, and so it will be found in the day of account. This our Lord Jesus here sets forth in a parable, yet speaks as if he were at a loss to find out a similitude proper to represent this, "Whereunto shall I liken this generation?" Note, There is not a greater absurdity than that which they are guilty of, that

have good preaching among them, and are never the better for it. It is hard to say "what they are like." The similitude is taken from some common custom among the Jewish children at their play, who, as is usual with children, imitated the fashions of grown people at their marriages and funerals, "rejoicing and lamenting" but, being all a jest, it made no impression; no more did the ministry either of John Baptist or of Christ upon that generation. He especially reflects on the scribes and Pharisees, who had a proud conceit of themselves; therefore, to humble them, he compares them to children, and their carriage to children's play. The parable will be best explained by opening it and the reddition of it together, in these five observations.

Note, First, The God of heaven useth variety of proper means and methods for the conversion and salvation of poor souls; he would "have all men to be saved," and therefore leaves no stone unturned in order to it. The great thing he aims at is the melting of our wills into a compliance with the will of God, and, in order to this, the affecting of us with the discoveries he has made of himself. Having various affections to be wrought upon, he useth various ways of working upon them, which, though differing one from another all tend to the same thing, and God is in them all, driving on the same design. In the parable this is called his piping to us, and his mourning to us; he hath "piped

and by more recent critics. Some have understood it of the persecutions to which the faithful were exposed, and of the apparent triumph of persecutors. This seems to have been a view for which our translators provided, although the ambiguity of the version allows of another, viz., that from the time when John began to preach to the time when Jesus spoke, the kingdom of heaven had been entered by earnest men, who had obtained possession of its blessings by their endeavours. Another view is that the first clause

refers to those who strove to enter into the kingdom, and the second to those who rashly and by violent measures sought to establish it. To the former would belong such as took a spiritual view of the kingdom, and to the latter such as looked for a temporal reign, and were for proclaiming Christ as a king, and throwing off the Roman yoke. The sense may well be that from the time when John began to preach the kingdom it had been earnestly sought for by many, and that as a great truth those who strive to seize its blessings are

to us" in the precious promises of the Gospel, proper to work upon hope, and mourned to us in the dreadful threatenings of the law, proper to work upon fear, that he might frighten us out of our sins, and allure us to himself. He hath "piped to us" in gracious and merciful providences, "mourned to us" in calamitous afflicting providences, and hath set the one over against the other. He hath taught his ministers to "change their voice," *Gal. iv. 20*. Sometimes to speak in thunder from Mount Sinai, sometimes in a still small voice from Mount Zion. In the reddition of the parable is set forth the different temper of John's ministry and of Christ's, who were the two great lights of that generation. 1. On the one hand John came "mourning" to them, neither "eating nor drinking;" nor conversing familiarly with people, nor ordinarily eating in company, but alone, in his cell in the wilderness, where "his meat was locusts and wild honey." Now this, one would think, should work upon them; for such an austere mortified life as this was very agreeable to the doctrine he preached, and that minister is most likely to do good whose conversation is according to his doctrine; and yet the preaching even of such a minister is not always effectual. 2. On the other hand, "the Son of man came eating and drinking," and so he "piped unto them." Christ conversed familiarly with all sorts of people, not affecting any peculiar strictness or austerity; he was affable and easy of access, not shy of any company; was often at feasts, both with Pharisees and publicans, to try if this would win upon those that were not wrought upon by John's reservedness. Those that were not awed by John's frowns would be allured by Christ's smiles, from whom St. Paul learned to become "all things to all men," *1 Cor. ix. 22*. Now our Lord Jesus, by this freedom he took, did not at all condemn John, any more than John did condemn him, though their carriage was so very different. Note, Though we are never so clear in the goodness of our own practice, yet we must not judge of others by it. There may be a great "diversity of operations," where "it is the same God that worketh all in all," *1 Cor. xii. 6*; and this various "manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," ver. 7. Observe, especially that God's ministers are variously gifted. The ability and genius of some lies one way; of others, another way. Some are Boanergeses, 'sons of thunder'; others Barnabases, 'sons of consolation'; yet "all these worketh that one and the selfsame" Spirit, *1 Cor. xii. 11*; and therefore we ought not to condemn either, but to praise both, and praise God for both, who thus tries various ways of dealing with persons of various tempers, that sinners may be either made pliable or left inextensible: so that whatever the issue is, God will be glorified.

Note, Secondly, The various methods which God takes for the conversion of sinners are, with many, fruitless and ineffectual. "Ye have not danced, ye have not lamented," that is, 'you have not been suitably affected either with the one or with the other. Particular means have, as in medicine, their particular intentions, which must be answered; particular impressions, which must be submitted to, in order to the success of the great and general design. Now if people will be neither bound by laws, nor invited by promises, nor frightened by threatenings, will neither be awakened by the greatest things, nor allured by the sweetest things, nor startled by the most terrible things, nor be made sensible by the plainest things, if they will hearken to the voice neither of Scripture, nor reason, nor experience, nor providence, nor conscience, nor interest, what more can be done? "The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed, the founder melteth in vain, reprobate silver shall men call them," *Jer. vi. 29, 30*. Ministers' labour is bestowed in vain, *Isa. xlix. 4*—and, which is a much greater loss, "the grace of God received in vain," *2 Cor. vi. 1*. Note, It is some comfort to faithful ministers, when they see little success of their labours, that it is no new thing for the best preachers, and the best preaching in the world, to come short of the desired end. "Who hath believed our report?" If "from the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty," the bow of those great commanders, Christ and John, returned so often empty, *2 Sam. i. 22*, no marvel if ours do so, and we prophesy to so little purpose upon dry bones.

Note, Thirdly, That commonly those people that do not profit by the means of grace are perverse, and reflect upon the ministers by whom they enjoy those means; and because they do not get good themselves, they do all the hurt they can to others, by raising and propagating prejudices against the Word, and the faithful preachers of it. Those that will not comply with God, and walk after him, confront him and walk contrary to him. So "this generation" did; because they were resolved not to believe Christ and John, and to own them, as they ought to have done, for the best of men, they set themselves to abuse them, and to represent them as the worst. 1. As for John Baptist, they say, "He has a devil." They imputed his strictness and reservedness to melancholy, and some kind or degree of a possession of Satan. 'Why should we heed him? he is a poor hypochondriacal man, full of fancies, and under the power of a crazed imagination.' 2. As for Jesus Christ, they imputed his free and obliging conversation to the more vicious habit of luxury and flesh-pleasing; "Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber." No reflection could be more foul and invidious; it is the charge against the rebellious son, *Deut. xxi. 20*: "He is a glutton and a drunkard." Yet none could be more false and unjust; for Christ "pleased not himself," *Rom. xv. 3*, nor did ever any man live such a life of selfdenial, mortification, and contempt of the world, as Christ lived. He that was "undefiled, and separate from sinners," is here represented as in league with them, and polluted by them. Note, The most unspotted innocence, and the most unparalleled excellency, will not always be a fence against "the reproach of tongues;" nay, a man's best gifts, and best actions, which are both well intended, and well calculated for edification, may be made the matter of his reproach. The best of our actions may become the worst of our accusations, as David's fasting, *Psa. lxxix. 10*. It was true, in some sense, that Christ was a "friend to publicans and sinners," the best friend they ever had, for he "came into the world to save sinners," great sinners, even "the chief;" so he said, very feelingly, who had been himself, not a publican and sinner, but a Pharisee and sinner; but this is, and will be to eternity, Christ's praise, and they forfeited the benefit of it who thus turned it to his reproach.

Note, Fourthly, That the cause of this great unfruitfulness and perverseness of people, under the means of grace, is because "they are like children sitting in the markets;" they are foolish as children, froward as children, mindless and playful as children. Would they but "shew themselves men" in understanding, there would be some hopes of them. "The market-place" they sit in, is to some a place of idleness, *ch. xx. 3*; to others, a place of worldly business, *Jas. iv. 13*; to all a place of noise, of diversion; so that if you ask the reason why people get so little good by the means of grace, you will find it is because they are slothful and trifling, and do not love to take pains; or, because their heads, and hands, and hearts are full of the world, the cares of which choke the Word, and choke their souls at last, *Ez. xxxiii. 31*; *Amos vii. 5*; and they study to divert their own thoughts from every thing that is serious. Thus "in the markets" they are, and there they sit: in these things their hearts rest, and by them they resolve to abide.

Note, Fifthly, Though the means of grace be thus slighted and abused by many, by the most, yet there is a remnant that, through grace, do improve them, and answer the designs of them, to the glory of God, and the good of their own souls. "But wisdom is justified of her children." Christ is "wisdom," in him "are hid treasures of wisdom;" the saints "are the children God

has given" him, *Heb. ii. 13*. The Gospel is "wisdom," it is the "wisdom from above." True believers are begotten again by it, and born from above too; they are wise children, wise for themselves and their true interests; not like the foolish children that sat in the markets. These "children of wisdom justify wisdom," they comply with the designs of Christ's grace, answer the intentions of it, and are suitably affected with, and impressed by, the various methods it takes, and so evidence the wisdom of Christ in taking these methods. This is explained, *Lu. vii. 29*. "The publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John," and afterwards embracing the Gospel of Christ. Note, The success of the means of grace justifies the wisdom of God in the choice of these means, against those who charge him with folly therein. The cure of every patient that observes the physician's orders justifies the wisdom of the physician; and therefore Paul is "not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," because, whatever it is to others, to them "that believe, it is the power of God unto salvation," *Rom. i. 16*; when "the cross of Christ," which to others is "foolishness," and a "stumbling-block," is to them "that are called the wisdom of God, and the power of God," *1 Cor. i. 23, 24*: so that they make the knowledge of that the top of their ambition, *1 Cor. ii. 2*, and the efficacy of that the crown of their glorying, *Gal. vi. 14*. Here is "wisdom justified of her children." Wisdom's children are wisdom's "witnesses" in the world, *Isa. xliii. 10*, and shall be pronounced as witnesses in that day when wisdom, that is now "justified" by the saints, shall "be glorified in the saints," and "admitted in all them that believe," *2 Thes. i. 10*. If the unbelief of some reproach Christ, by giving him the lie, the faith of others shall honour him, by setting to its seal that he is true, and that "he also is wise," *1 Cor. i. 25*. Whether we do it or no, it will be done; not only God's equity, but his "wisdom, will be justified, when he speaks, when he judges." Well, this is the account Christ gives of that generation; and that generation is not passed away, but remains in a succession of the like; for as it was then, it has been since, and is still; some believe the things which are spoken, and some believe not, *Acts xxviii. 24*.

11. As to the particular places in which Christ was most conversant. What he said in general of that generation, he applied in particular to those places, to affect them. "Then began he to upbraid them," ver. 20. He began to preach to them long before, *ch. iv. 17*, but he did not begin "to upbraid" till now. Note, Rough and displeasing methods must not be taken till gentler means have first been used. Christ is not apt to upbraid; he "gives liberally, and upbraideth not," till sinners, by their obstinacy, extort it from him. Wisdom first invites, but when her invitations are slighted, then she upbraids, *Pr. i. 20, 24*. Those do not go in Christ's method who begin with upbraidings. Now observe,

First, The sin charged upon them, not any against the moral law; then an appeal would have lain to the Gospel, which would have relieved; but a sin against the Gospel, the remedial law, and that is impenitency. This was it he upbraided them with, or reproached them for, as the most shameful, ungrateful thing that could be, that "they repented not." Note, Wilful impenitency is the great damning sin of multitudes that enjoy the Gospel, and which, more than any other, sinners will be upbraided with to eternity. The great doctrine that both John Baptist, and Christ and the apostles preached, was "repentance;" the great thing designed, both in the piping and in the mourning, was to prevail with people to change their minds and ways, to leave their sins, and turn to God; and this they would not be brought to. He doth not say, because they "believed not,"—for some kind of faith many of them had, that Christ was "a teacher come from God,"—but because "they repented not;" their faith did not prevail to the transforming of their hearts, and the reforming of their lives. Christ reproved them for their other sins, that he might "lead them to repentance;" but when "they repented not," he "upbraided them" with that, as their "refusal to be healed." He upbraided them with it, that they might upbraid themselves, and might at length see the folly of it, as that which alone makes the sad case a desperate one, and the wound incurable.

Secondly, The aggravation of the sin. They were "the cities in which most of his mighty works were done;" for thereabouts his principal residence had been for some time. Note, Some places enjoy the means of grace in greater plenty, power, and purity than other places. God is a free agent, and acts so in all his disposals, both as the God of nature and as the God of grace, common and distinguishing grace. By Christ's "mighty works" they should have been prevailed with, not only to receive his doctrine, but to obey his law; the curing of bodily diseases should have been the healing of their souls; but it had not that effect. Note, The stronger inducements we have to repent, the more heinous is the impenitency, and the severer will the reckoning be; for Christ keeps account of the "mighty works done among us," and of the gracious works done for us too, by which also we should be "led to repentance," *Rom. ii. 4*.

1. Chorazin and Bethsaida are here instanced in ver. 21, 22; they have each of them their woe: "Woe unto thee Chorazin, woe unto thee Bethsaida." Christ came into the world to bless us; but if that blessing be slighted, he has woes in reserve; and his woes are of all other the most terrible. These two cities were situate upon "the sea of Galilee," the former on the east side, and the latter on the west; rich and populous places. Bethsaida was lately advanced to a city by Philip the tetrarch; out of it Christ took at least three of his apostles. Thus highly were these places favoured; yet because "they knew not the day of their visitation," they fell under these woes, which stuck so close to them, that soon after this they decayed, and dwindled into mean obscure villages: so fatally doth sin ruin cities, and so certainly doth the word of Christ take place. Now Chorazin and Bethsaida are here compared with Tyre and Sidon, two maritime cities we read much of in the Old Testament, that had been brought to ruin, but began to flourish again: these cities bordered upon Galilee, but were in a very ill name among the Jews, for idolatry and other wickedness. Christ sometimes went "into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon," *ch. xv. 21*, but never thither; the Jews would have taken it very heinously if he had; therefore Christ, to convince and humble them, here shews, 1st, That Tyre and Sidon would not have been so bad as Chorazin and Bethsaida: if they had had the same word preached, and the same miracles wrought among them, "they would have repented," and that "long ago," as Nineveh did, "in sackcloth and ashes." Christ, who knows the hearts of all, knew that if he had gone and lived among them, and preached among them, he should have done more good there than where he was; yet he continued where he was for some time, to encourage his ministers to do so, though they see not the success they desire. Note, Among the children of disobedience, some are more easily wrought upon than others. And it is a great aggravation of the impenitency of those that plentifully enjoy the means of grace, not only that there are many who sit under the same means that are wrought upon, but there are many more that would have been wrought upon if they had enjoyed the same means. See *Eze. iii. 6, 7*. Our repentance is slow, and delayed; but theirs would have been speedy, they would have repented "long ago;" ours has been flighty and superficial, theirs would have been deep and serious, "in sackcloth and ashes." Yet we must observe, with an awful adoration of the Divine sovereignty, that the Tyrians and Sidonians will justly perish in their sin; though, if they had had the means of grace, they would have repented; for God is a "debtor to no man."

the men who succeed. The words imply the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah.

xi. 13 The law as well as the prophets is said to have prophesied, because the services and symbols of the law pointed in so marked a degree to the Gospel dispensation. The law was a standing prophecy rehearsed and repeated from generation to generation by its many ceremonials.

xi. 14. "This is Elias:" Malachi had foretold the coming of

Elijah or Elias, and here he is identified with the "messenger" of the same prophet. The Jews had an opinion that Elijah would bodily re-appear, and some Christians in early times adopted a similar opinion. They regarded him as one of the two witnesses of the Book of Revelation (chap. xi. 3).

xi. 18, 19. Of course John did both eat and drink, but as an ascetic he abstained from ordinary food. (See Luke vi. 33.) The Saviour, on the contrary, conformed to the ordinary habits of men.

2nd. That therefore Tyre and Sidon shall not be so miserable as Chorazin and Bethsaida, but it shall be "more tolerable" for them "in the day of judgment," ver. 22. Note, 1. At the day of judgment, the everlasting state of the children of men will, by an unerring and unalterable doom, be determined; happiness or misery, and the several degrees of each. Therefore it is called the "eternal judgment," *Heb. vi. 2*, because decisive of the eternal state. 2. In that judgment, all the means of grace that were enjoyed in the state of probation will certainly come into the account, and it will be inquired, not only how bad we were, but how much better we might have been, had it not been our own fault, *Isa. v. 3, 4*. 3. Though the damnation of all that perish will be intolerable, yet the damnation of those that had the fullest and clearest discoveries made them of the power and grace of Christ, and yet repented not, will be of all other the most intolerable. The Gospel light and sound open the faculties, and enlarge the capacities, of all that see and hear it, either to receive the riches of "Divine grace," or, if that grace be slighted, to take in the more plentiful effusions of "Divine wrath." If self-reproach be the torture of hell, it must needs be hell indeed to those that had such a fair opportunity of getting to heaven. "Son, remember that."

2. Capernaum is here condemned with an emphasis, ver. 23. "And thou, Capernaum," hold up thy hand, and hear thy doom! Capernaum, above all the cities of Israel, was dignified with Christ's most usual residence; it was like Shiloh of old, the place which he chose to put his name there; and it fared with it as with Shiloh, *Jer. vii. 12, 14*. Christ's miracles here were "daily bread;" and therefore, as the manna of old, were despised and called light bread. Many a sweet and comfortable lecture of grace Christ had read them to little purpose, and therefore here he reads them a dreadful lecture of wrath. Those who will not hear the former, shall be made to feel the latter. We have here Capernaum's doom. 1st. Put absolutely, "Thou," which art exalted to heaven, shall be brought down to hell." Note, 1. Those that enjoy the Gospel in power and purity are thereby "exalted to heaven;" they have therein a great honour for the present, and a great advantage for eternity: they are lifted up "towards heaven;" but if, notwithstanding, they still "cleave to the earth," they may thank themselves that they are not lifted up "into heaven." 2. Gospel advantages and advancements abused, will sink sinners so much the lower into hell. Our external privileges will be so far from saving us, that if our hearts and lives be not agreeable to them, they will but inflame the reckoning. The higher the precipice is, the more fatal is the fall from it. Let us "not therefore be high-minded, but fear;" not slothful, but diligent. See *Job xx. 6, 7*; *xxiv. 29*. 2nd. We have it here put in comparison with the doom of Sodom, a place more remarkable both for sin and ruin than perhaps any other; and yet Christ here tells us, *First*. That Capernaum's means would have saved Sodom. If these miracles had been done among the Sodomites, as bad as they were, they would have repented, and "their city would have remained unto this day," a monument of sparing mercy, as now it is of destroying justice, *Jude 7*. Note, Upon true repentance through Christ, even the greatest sin shall be pardoned, and the greatest ruin prevented, that of Sodom not excepted. Angels were sent to Sodom, and yet it remained not; but if Christ had been sent thither, it "would have remained." How well is it for us, then, that the world to come "is put in subjection to Christ," and "not to angels," *Heb. ii. 5*. Lot would not have "seemed as one that mocked," if he had wrought miracles. *Secondly*. That Sodom's ruin will therefore be less at the great day than Capernaum's. Sodom will have many sins to answer for, but not the sin of neglecting Christ, as Capernaum will. If the Gospel prove "a savour of death," a killing savour, it is doubly so, it is "of death unto death," so great a death, *2 Cor. ii. 16*. Christ had said the same of all other places that receive not his ministers, nor bid his Gospel welcome, *ch. x. 15*. "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, than for that city." We that have now the written Word in our hands, the Gospel preached, and gospel ordinances administered to us, and live under the dispensation of the Spirit, have advantages not inferior to those of Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum, and the account in the great day will be accordingly. It has therefore been justly said, that the professors of this age, whether they go to heaven or hell, will be the greatest debtors in either of these places; if to heaven, the greatest debtors to Divine mercy, for those rich means that brought them thither; if to hell, the greatest debtors to Divine justice, for those rich means that would have kept them thence.

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. 26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. 27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. 28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

In these verses we have Christ looking up to heaven with thanksgiving to his Father for the sovereignty and security of the covenant of redemption; and looking around him upon this earth with an offer to all the children of men, to whom these presents shall come, of the privileges and benefits of the covenant of grace.

1. Christ here returns thanks to God for his favour to those "babes," who had the mysteries of the Gospel "revealed to them," ver. 25, 26. "Jesus answered and said." It is called an answer, though no other words are before recorded but his own, because it is so comfortable a reply to the melancholy considerations preceding, and is aptly set in the balance against them. The sin and ruin of those woful cities, no doubt, was a grief to the Lord Jesus; he could not but "weep" over them, as he did over "Jerusalem," *Lu. xix. 41*. With this thought therefore he refresheth himself; and to make it the more refreshing, he puts it into a thanksgiving, that for all this "there is a remnant," though but "babes," to whom the things of the Gospel "are revealed." "Though Israel be not

gathered, yet shall he be glorious." Note, We may take great encouragement in looking upwards to God, when round about us we see nothing but what is discouraging. It is sad to see how regardless the most men are of their own happiness; but it is comfortable to think that the wise and faithful God will, however, effectually secure the interests of his own glory. "Jesus answered and said, I thank thee." Note, Thanksgiving is a proper answer to dark and disquieting thoughts, and may be an effectual means to silence them. Songs of praise are sovereign cordials to drooping souls, and will help to cure melancholy. When we have no other answer ready to the suggestions of grief and fear, we may have recourse to this "I thank thee, O Father;" let us bless God that it is not worse with us than it is. Now in this thanksgiving of Christ's we may observe,

First, The title he gives to God: "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." Note, 1. In all our approaches to God, by praise as well as by prayer, it is good for us to eye him as a Father, and to fasten on that relation, not only when we ask for the mercies we want, but when we give thanks for the mercies we have received. Mercies are then doubly sweet, and powerful to enlarge the heart in praise, when they are received as tokens of a Father's love, and gifts of a Father's hand. "Giving thanks to the Father," *Col. i. 12*. It becomes children to be grateful, and to say, "Thank you, Father," as readily as, "Pray, Father." 2. When we come to God as a father, we must withal remember that he is "Lord of heaven and earth;" which obligeth us to come to him with reverence, as to the sovereign Lord of all, and yet with confidence, as one able to do for us whatever we need, or can desire; to defend us from all evil, and to supply us with all good. Christ, in Melchizedek, had long since "blessed God," as the possessor or "Lord of heaven and earth;" and in all our thank-givings for mercies in the stream, we must give him the glory of the all-sufficiency that is in the fountain.

Secondly, The thing he gives thanks for. "Because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent," and yet "revealed them to babes." "These things," he doth not say what things, but means the great things of the Gospel, "the things that belong to our peace," *Lu. xix. 42*. He speaks thus emphatically of them "these things," because they were things that filled him, and should fill us. All other things are as nothing to these things. Note, 1. The great things of the everlasting Gospel have been, and are, hid from many that were "wise and prudent" that were eminent for learning and worldly policy. Some of the greatest scholars and the greatest statesmen have been the greatest strangers to gospel mysteries: "The world by wisdom knew not God," *1 Cor. i. 21*. Nay, there is an opposition given to the Gospel by a "science falsely so called," *1 Tim. vi. 20*. Those that are most expert in things sensible and secular, are commonly least experienced in spiritual things. Men may dive deep into the mysteries of nature, and the mysteries of state, and yet be ignorant of, and mistake about, the mysteries of "the kingdom of heaven," for want of an experience of the power of them. 2. While the "wise and prudent" men of the world are in the dark about gospel mysteries, even "the babes" in Christ have the sanctifying saving knowledge of them. "Thou hast revealed them unto babes," such the disciples of Christ were, men of mean birth and education; no scholars, no artists, no politicians, unlearned and ignorant men, *Acts iv. 13*. "Thus are the secrets of wisdom, (which is double to that which is, *Job xi. 6*), made known to 'babes and sucklings,' that 'out of their mouth strength' might be 'ordained,' *Ps. viii. 2*, and God's 'praise' thereby 'perfected.'" The learned men of the world were not made choice of to be the preachers of the Gospel, but the "foolish things of the world," *1 Cor. ii. 6, 8, 10*. 3. This difference between the prudent and the babes is of God's own making. 1st. It is he that has "hid these things from the wise and prudent;" he gave them parts and learning, and much of human understanding above others, and they were proud of that, and rested in it, and looked no further, and therefore God justly denies them the spirit of wisdom and revelation, and then, though they hear the sound of the gospel tidings, they are to them as a strange thing. God is not the author of their ignorance and error, but he leaves them to themselves, and their sin becomes their punishment, and the Lord is righteous in it. See *Jno. xii. 39, 40*; *Rom. xi. 7, 8*; *Acts xxviii. 26, 27*. Had they honoured God with the wisdom and prudence they had, he would have given them the knowledge of these better things; but because they served their lusts with them, he has "hid their hearts" from this "understanding." 2nd. It is he that has "revealed them unto babes." Things revealed belong to our children, *Deu. xiv. 29*, and to them he "gives an understanding" to receive these things, and the impressions of them. Thus he "resists the proud," and "gives grace to the humble," *Jas. iv. 6*. 4. This dispensation must be resolved into the Divine sovereignty. Christ himself referred it to that: "Even so Father, because it seemed good in thy sight." Christ here subscribes to the will of his Father in this matter: "Even so." Let God take what way he pleaseth to glorify himself, and make use of what instruments he pleaseth for the carrying on of his own work; his grace is his own, and he may give or withhold it as he pleases. We can give no reason why Peter, a fisherman, should be made an apostle, and not Nicodemus, a Pharisee, and a ruler of the Jews, though he also believed in Christ; but "so it seemed good in God's sight." Christ said this in the hearing of his disciples, to shew them that it was not for any merit of their own that they were thus dignified and distinguished, but purely from God's good pleasure. He made them to differ. 5. This way of dispensing Divine grace is acknowledged by us, as it was by our Lord Jesus, with all thankfulness. We must thank God, 1st. That "these things" are "revealed;" the mystery hid from ages and generations is manifested; that they are revealed not to a few, but to be published to all the world. 2nd. That they are "revealed to babes," that the meek and humble are beautified with this salvation, and this honour put upon those whom the world pours contempt upon. 3rd. It magnifies the mercy to them, that these things are "hid from the wise and prudent." Distinguishing favours are most obliging. As Job adored "the name of the Lord," in "taking away" as well as in "giving," so may we, in "hiding these things from the wise and prudent," as well as in "revealing them unto babes;" not as it is their misery, but as it is a method by which self is abased, proud thoughts brought down, all flesh silenced, and Divine power and wisdom are made to shine the more brightly. See *1 Cor. i. 27, 31*.

II. Christ here makes a gracious offer of the benefits of the Gospel to all; and these are the things which are revealed to babes, ver. 27, &c. Observe here, First, The solemn preface which ushers in this call or invitation, both to command our attention to it, and to encourage our compliance with it. That we might "have strong consolation" in flying for refuge to this "hope set before us," Christ prefixeth his authority, produceth his credentials; we shall see he is empowered to make this offer. Two things he here lays before us, ver. 27. 1. His commission from the Father: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." Christ, as God, is equal in power and glory with the Father; but, as mediator, he receives his power and glory from the Father; hath "all judgment committed to him." He is authorized to settle a new covenant between God and man, and to offer peace and happiness to the apostate world, upon such terms as he should think fit. He was sanctified and sealed to be the sole plenipotentiary to concert and establish this great affair. In order to this, he has "all power" both in heaven and in earth," *ch. xxviii. 18*; power over all

Both were misunderstood by many, who uttered the base calumnies here recorded. The closing maxim may be differently explained, but it seems best to view it in connection with the foolish conclusions of prejudiced persons as just described. The wise conduct of John and of Jesus was treated as folly, but the children of wisdom, or wise men, understood and justified it. Literally, the words describe what had been; but they involve a great truth of much value, and of very wide applicability.

xi. 20. "To upbraid" here means not simple rebuke, but reproach and denunciation. Jesus had performed his chief miracles in that region.

xi. 21—24. The Saviour first mentions Chorazin, the name of which only occurs elsewhere once in the New Testament (at Luke x. 13). It was not far from the sea of Galilee, but whether on the coast or at some distance is still undecided. Bethsaida was certainly upon the shore, as also was Capernaum. The exact site of the latter has

flesh, *Jno. xvii. 2*; authority to execute judgment, *Jno. v. 22, 27*. This encourages us to come to Christ, that he is commissioned to receive us, and to give us what we come for, and has "all things delivered to him" for that purpose, by him who is "Lord of all." All powers, all treasures, are in his hand. Observe, The Father has delivered his all into the hands of the Lord Jesus; let us but deliver our all into his hand, and the work is done; God has made him the great referee, the blessed daysman, to lay his hand upon us both. That which we have to do is, to agree to the reference, to submit to the arbitration of the Lord Jesus for the taking up of this unhappy controversy, and enter into bonds to stand to his award. 2. His intimacy with the Father. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son." This gives us a farther satisfaction, and an abundant one. Ambassadors use to have not only their commissions, which they produce, but their instructions, which they reserve to themselves, to be made use of as there is occasion in their negotiations; our Lord Jesus had both, not only authority, but ability, for his undertaking. In transacting the great business of our redemption, the Father and the Son are the parties principally concerned; "the counsel of peace is between them," *Zec. vi. 12*. It must therefore be a great encouragement to us to be assured that they understood one another very well in this affair; that the Father knew the Son, and the Son knew the Father, and both perfectly, (a mutual consciousness, we may call it, between the Father and the Son,) so that there could be no mistake in the settling of this matter; as often there is among men, to the overthrow of contracts, and the breaking of the measures taken, through their misunderstanding one another. The Son had "lain in the bosom of the Father," from eternity; he was a *secretarius*—"of the cabinet council," *Jno. i. 18*. He was "by him, as one brought up with him," *Jr. viii. 30*. So that "none knows the Father save the Son," he adds, "and he to whom the Son will reveal him." Note, 1. The happiness of men lies in an acquaintance with God; it is life eternal, it is the perfection of rational beings. 2. Those that would have an acquaintance with God must apply themselves to Jesus Christ; for the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines in the face of Christ, *2 Cor. iv. 6*. We are obliged to Christ for all the revelation we have of God the Father's will and love, ever since Adam sinned. There is no comfortable intercourse between a holy God and sinful man, but in and by a mediator, *Jno. xiv. 6*.

Secondly, Here is the offer itself that is made to us, and an invitation to accept of it. After so solemn a preface we may well expect something very great; and it is so, "a faithful saying, and well worthy of all acceptance;" "words whereby we may be saved." We are here invited to Christ as our priest, prince, and prophet, to be saved; and in order to that, to be ruled and taught by him.

1. We must come to Jesus Christ as our rest, and repose ourselves in him, *ver. 28*: "Come unto me, all that labour, and are heavy laden." Observe, 1st. The character of the persons invited, "all that labour and are heavy laden." This is "a word in season to him that is weary," *Isa. li. 4*. Those that complain of the burthen of the ceremonial law, which was an intolerable yoke, and was made much more so by the traditions of the elders, *Lu. xi. 46*, let them come to Christ, and they shall be made easy. He came to free his church from this yoke, to cancel the imposition of those carnal ordinances, and to introduce a purer and more spiritual way of worship.

But it is rather to be understood of the burthen of sin, both the guilt, and the power of it. Note, All those, and these only, are invited to rest in Christ, that are sensible of sin as a burthen, and groan under it; that are not only convinced of the evil of sin, of their own sin, but are contrite in soul for it; that are really sick of their sins, weary of the service of the world and the flesh; that see their state sad and dangerous by reason of sin, and are in pain and fear about it, as Ephraim, *Jer. xxxi. 18-20*; the prodigal, *Lu. xv. 17*; the publican, *Lu. xviii. 13*; Peter's hearers, *Acts ii. 37*; Paul, *Acts ix. 4-9*; the jailor, *Acts xvi. 29, 30*. This is a necessary preparative for pardon and peace. The Comforter must first convince, *Jno. xvi. 8*: "I have torn, and then will heal." 2nd. The invitation itself; "Come unto me." That glorious display of Christ's greatness which we had, *ver. 27*, as Lord of all, might frighten us from him; but see here how he holds out the golden sceptre, that we may touch the top of it, and may live. Note, It is the duty and interest of weary and heavy-laden sinners to "come to Jesus Christ." Renouncing all those things which stand in opposition to him, or in competition with him, we must accept of him as our physician and advocate, and give up ourselves to his conduct and government, freely willing to be saved by him, in his own way, and upon his own terms. Come and cast that burthen upon him, under which thou art "heavy laden." This is the gospel call: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him come." 3rd. The blessing promised to those that do come: "I will give you rest." Christ is our Noah, whose name signifies "rest," for "this same shall give us rest," *Gen. v. 29; viii. 9*. Truly, "rest is good," *Gen. xlix. 15*, especially to those "that labour and are heavy laden;" *Ecc. v. 12*. Note, Jesus Christ will give assured rest to those weary souls that by a lively faith come to him for it: rest from the terror of sin, in a well-grounded peace of conscience; rest from the power of sin, in a regular order of the soul, and its due government of itself; a rest in God, and a complacency of soul in his love, *Ps. xi. 6, 7*. This is that rest which "remains for the people of God," *Heb. iv. 9*, begun in grace, and perfected in glory.

2. We must come to Jesus Christ as our ruler, and submit ourselves to him; *ver. 29*, "Take my yoke upon you." This must go along with the former, for Christ is exalted to be both a "Prince and Saviour," a "Priest upon his throne." The rest he promises is a release from the drudgery of sin, not from the service of God; but an obligation to the duty we owe to him. Note, Christ hath a yoke for our necks, as well as a crown for our heads; and this yoke he expects we should take upon us, and draw in. To call those that are "weary and heavy laden" to "take a yoke" upon them, looks like adding affliction to the afflicted; but the pertinency of it lies in the word "my." You are under a yoke which makes you weary; shake that off, and try mine, which will make you easy. Servants are said to be "under the yoke," *1 Tim. vi. 1*, and subjects, *1 Kin. xii. 10*. To take Christ's yoke upon us, is to put ourselves into the relation of servants and subjects to him, and then to carry ourselves accordingly, in a conscientious obedience to all his commands, and a cheerful submission to all his disposals. It is to "obey the Gospel of Christ," to "yield ourselves to the Lord." It is Christ's yoke: the yoke he has appointed, a yoke he has himself drawn in before us, for "he learned obedience," and which he doth by his Spirit draw in with us, for he "helpeth our infirmities," *Rom. viii. 26*. A yoke speaks some hardship; but if the beast must draw, the yoke helps him. Christ's commands are all in our favour. We must take this yoke upon us, to draw in it. We are yoked to work, and therefore must be diligent; we are yoked to submit, and therefore must be humble and patient; we are yoked together with our fellow-servants, and therefore must keep up the communion of saints. And "the words of the wise are as goads" to those that are thus yoked. Now, this is the hardest part of our lesson, and therefore it is qualified, *ver. 30*, "My yoke is easy, and my burthen light," you need not be afraid of it. 1st. The yoke of Christ's commands is an easy yoke; it is *gracious*, not only "easy," but "gracious;" so the word signifies; it is sweet and pleasant. There is nothing in it to gall the yielding neck, nothing to hurt us; but, on the contrary, much to refresh us.

It is a yoke that is lined with love. Such is the nature of all Christ's commands, so reasonable in themselves, so profitable to us, and all summed up in one word, and that a sweet word, "love." So powerful are the assistances he gives us, so suitable the encouragements, and so strong the consolations that are to be found in the way of duty, that we may truly say, it is a yoke of pleasantness. It is easy to the new nature; very "easy to him that understandeth," *Pr. xiv. 6*. It may be a little hard at first, but it is easy afterwards; the love of God, and the hope of heaven, will make it easy. 2nd. The burthen of Christ's cross is a "light burthen," very light; afflictions from Christ, which befall us as men; afflictions for Christ, which befall us as Christians; the latter are especially meant. This burthen, in itself, is "not joyous, but grievous;" yet, as it is Christ's, it is light. Paul knew as much of it as any man, and he calls it a light affliction, *2 Cor. iv. 17*. God's presence, *Isa. xliii. 2*, Christ's sympathy, *Isa. lxiii. 9*; *Dan. iii. 25*, and especially the Spirit's aids and comforts, *2 Cor. i. 5*, make sufferings for Christ light and easy. As afflictions abound and are prolonged, consolations abound and are prolonged too. Let this therefore reconcile us to the difficulties, and help us over the discouragements, we may meet with, both in doing work and suffering work: though we may lose for Christ, we shall not lose by him.

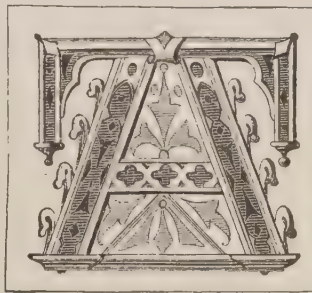
3. We must come to Jesus Christ as our teacher, and set ourselves to learn of him, *ver. 29*. Christ hath erected a great school, and has invited us to be his scholars. We must enter ourselves, associate with his scholars, and daily attend the instructions he gives by his Word and Spirit. We must converse much with what he said and have it ready to us to use upon all occasions. We must conform to what he did, and follow his steps, *1 Pet. ii. 21*. Some make the following words, "for I am meek and lowly in heart," to be the particular lesson we are required to learn from the example of Christ. We must learn of him to be "meek and lowly," and must mortify our pride and passion, which render us so unlike to him. We must so "learn of Christ," as to "learn Christ," *Eph. iv. 20*; for he is both teacher and lesson, guide and way, and all in all.

Two reasons are given why we must "learn of Christ." First, "I am meek and lowly in heart," and therefore fit to teach you. 1st. He is "meek," and can have compassion on the ignorant, whom others would be in a passion with. Many able teachers are hot and hasty, which is a great discouragement to those that are dull and slow; but Christ knows how to bear with such, and to open their understandings. His carriage toward his twelve disciples was a specimen of this: he was mild and gentle with them, and made the best of them though they were heedless and forgetful, he was not extreme to mark their follies. 2nd. He is "lowly in heart." He condescends to teach poor scholars, to teach novices; he chose disciples not from the court or the schools, but from the sea side. He teacheth the first principles, such things as are milk for babes; he stoops to the meanest capacities; he taught Ephraim to go, *Hos. xi. 3*. Who teacheth like him? It is an encouragement to us to put ourselves to school to such a teacher. This humility and meekness, as it qualifies him to be a teacher, so it will be the best qualification of those that are to be taught by him; "for the meek will he guide in judgment," *Ps. xxv. 9*. Secondly, "You shall find rest to your souls." This promise is borrowed from *Jer. vi. 16*; for Christ delighted to express himself in the language of the prophets, to shew the harmony between the two Testaments. Note, 1st. Rest for the soul is the most desirable rest; to have the soul to "dwell at ease." 2nd. The only way, and a sure way, to find "rest for our souls," is to sit at Christ's feet, and hear his Word. The way of duty is the way of rest. The understanding finds rest in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, and is there abundantly satisfied; finding that wisdom in the Gospel which has been sought for in vain throughout the whole creation, *Job xxviii. 12*. The truths Christ teacheth are such as we may venture our souls upon. The affections find rest in the love of God and Jesus Christ, and meet with that in them which gives them an abundant satisfaction, quietness, and assurance for ever. And those satisfactions will be perfected and perpetuated in heaven, where we shall see and enjoy God immediately, shall see him as he is, and enjoy him as he is ours. This rest is to be had with Christ, for all those that learn of him.

Well, this is the sum and substance of the gospel call and offer. We are here told, in a few words, what the Lord Jesus requires of us, and it agrees with what God said of him once and again: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

CHAPTER XII.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's clearing of the law of the fourth commandment concerning the sabbath day, and vindicating it from some superstitious notions advanced by the Jewish teachers; shewing that works of necessity and mercy are to be done on that day, *ver. 1-13*. II. The prudence, humility, and self-denial of our Lord Jesus in working his miracles, *ver. 14-23*. III. Christ's answer to the blasphemous cavils and calumnies of the scribes and Pharisees, who imputed his casting out devils to a compact with the devil, *ver. 24-37*. IV. Christ's reply to a tempting demand of the scribes and Pharisees, challenging him to shew them a sign from heaven, *ver. 38-45*. V. Christ's judgment about his kindred and relations, *ver. 46-50*.



At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. 2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. 3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; 4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? 5 Or

been identified, and the spot is marked by some interesting ruins, including those of a synagogue.

xi. 25. This verse might be rendered, "At that time Jesus answered and said, I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things," &c. The verb for "thank" really signifies to acknowledge or confess, though it may involve the idea of gratitude. Its sense may be, "I thankfully acknowledge to thee," &c. After certain verbs, the word translated

"because" frequently has the meaning of "that," as in *Heb. xi. 13*: "confessed that they were strangers." The things alluded to are probably those which are mentioned in verse 27. It is questioned whether the utterances here closely followed those in the preceding verses, or whether other transactions intervened. (See *Luke i. 21*.)

xi. 29. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me," is as much as to say, "Receive me as your ruler, and submit to me as your teacher." The yoke is a symbol of subjection and obedience. Christ is, how-

have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? 6 But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple. 7 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. 8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day. 9 And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: 10 And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. 11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? 12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. 13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

The Jewish teachers had corrupted many of the commandments, by interpreting them more loosely than they were intended; a mistake which Christ discovered and rectified in his Sermon on the Mount, *ch. v.*; but, concerning the fourth commandment, they had erred in the other extreme, and interpreted it too strictly. Note, It is common for men of corrupt minds, by their zeal in rituals and the external services of religion, to think to atone for the looseness of their morals. But they are cursed who add to, as well as they who "take from, the words of this book," *Rev. xii. 16-19*; *Pr. xxx. 6*. Now, that which our Lord Jesus here lays down is, that the works of necessity and mercy are lawful on the sabbath day, which the Jews in many instances were taught to make a scruple of. Christ's industrious explaining the fourth commandment intimates its perpetual obligation to the religious observation of one day in seven as a "holy sabbath." He would not expound a law that was immediately to expire; but doubtless intended hereby to settle a point which would be of use to his church in all ages; and so it is to teach us that our Christian sabbath, though under the direction of the fourth commandment, is not under the injunctions of the Jewish elders. It is useful to settle the meaning of a law by judgments given upon cases that happen in fact, and in like manner is the meaning of this law settled. Here are two passages of story put together for this purpose, happening at some distance of time from each other, and of a different nature, but both answering this intention.

1. Christ, by justifying his disciples plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day, shews that works of necessity are lawful on that day. Now here observe,

First. What it was the disciples did. They were following their Master one sabbath day through a corn field; it is likely, going to the synagogue, *ver. 9*, for it becomes not Christ's disciples to take idle walks on that day; and "they were hungry." Let it be no disparagement to our Master's housekeeping. But we will suppose they were so intent upon the sabbath work that they forgot to eat bread, and spent so much time in their morning worship that they had no time for their morning meal, but came out fasting, because they would not come late to the synagogue. Providence ordered it that they "went through the corn," and there they were supplied. Note, God has many ways of bringing suitable provision to his people when they need it, and will take particular care of them when they are going to the synagogue, as of old for them that went up to Jerusalem to worship, *Psa. lxxxix. 6, 7*, for whose use the rain filled the pools; while we are in the way of duty, *Jehonah-jireh*, 'let God alone to provide for us.' Being in the corn fields, they began to pluck the ears of corn: the law of God allowed this, *Deut. xxiii. 25*, to teach people to be neighbourly, and not to insist upon property in a small matter, whereby another may be benefited. This was but slender provision for Christ and his disciples, but it was the best they had, and they were content with it. The famous Mr. Ball of Whitmore used to say he had two dishes of meat to his sabbath dinner; a dish of hot milk, and a dish of cold, and he had enough and enough.

Secondly. What was the offence that the Pharisees took at this. It was but a dry breakfast, yet the Pharisees would not let them eat that in quietness. They did not quarrel with them for taking another man's corn; they were no great zealots for justice; but for doing it "on the sabbath day," for plucking and rubbing the ears of corn on that day was expressly forbidden by the tradition of the elders, for this reason, because it was "a kind of reaping." Note. It is no new thing for the most harmless and innocent actions of Christ's disciples to be evil spoken of; and reflected upon as unlawful, especially by those who are zealous for their own inventions and impositions. The Pharisees complained of them to their Master for doing that which it was "not lawful to do." Note, Those are no friends to Christ and his disciples who make that to be unlawful which God has not made to be so.

Thirdly. What was Christ's answer to this cavil of the Pharisees. The disciples could say little for themselves, especially because those that quarrelled with them seemed to have the strictness of sabbath sanctification on their side, and it is safest to err on that hand; but Christ came to free his followers, not only from the corruptions of the Pharisees, but from their unscriptural impositions, and therefore has something to say for them, and justifies what they did, though it was a transgression of the canon.

1. He justifies them by precedents, which were allowed to be good by the Pharisees themselves. 1st. He urgeth an ancient instance of David, who in a case of necessity did that which otherwise he ought not to have done, *ver. 3, 4*. "Have ye not read" the story (1 *Sam. xxi. 6*) of David's eating the shewbread, which by the law was appropriated to the priest, *Lev. xxiv. 5-9*; "it is most holy to Aaron and his sons;" and, *Ex. xxix. 33*, a stranger shall not eat of it; yet the priest gave it to David and his men. For though the exception of a case

of necessity was not expressed, yet it was implied in that and all other ritual institutions. That which bore out David in eating the shewbread was not his dignity, (Uzziah, that invaded the priest's office in the pride of his heart, though a king, was struck with a leprosy for it, 2 *Chr. xxvi. 16*, &c.) but it was his hunger. The greatest shall not have their lusts indulged, but the meanest shall have their wants considered. Hunger is a natural desire, which cannot be mortified, but must be gratified, and cannot be put off with any thing but meat; therefore we say it will break through stone walls. Now the Lord is for the body," and allowed his own appointment to be dispensed with in a case of distress; much more might the tradition of the elders be dispensed with. Note, That may be done in a case of necessity, which may not be done at another time; there are laws which necessity has not, but it is a law to itself: "Men do not despise," but pity, "a thief that steals to satisfy his soul when he is hungry," *Pr. vi. 30*. 2nd. He urgeth a daily instance of the priests, which they likewise "read in the law" and according to which was the constant usage, *ver. 15*. "The priests in the temple" did a great deal of servile work on the sabbath day; killing, flaying, burning the sacrificed beasts, which, in a common case, would have been "profaning the sabbath;" and yet it was never reckoned any transgression of the fourth commandment, because the temple service required and justified it. This intimates that those labours are lawful on the sabbath day which are necessary not only to the support of life, but to the service of the day; as tolling a bell to call the congregation together, travelling to church, and the like. Sabbath rest is to promote, not to hinder, sabbath worship.

2. He justifies them by arguments, three cogent ones: 1st. "In this place is one greater than the temple," *ver. 6*. If the temple service would justify what priests did in their ministrations, the service of Christ would much more justify the disciples in what they did in their attendance upon him. The Jews had an extreme veneration for the temple; it "sanctified the gold." Stephen was accused for "blaspheming that holy place," *Acts vi. 13*. But Christ in a corn field was "greater than the temple;" for in him dwelt, not the "presence of God" symbolically, but "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Note, If, whatever we do, we do it "in the name of Christ," and "as unto him," it shall be graciously accepted of God, however it may be censured and cavilled at by men. 2nd. "God will have mercy, and not sacrifice," *ver. 7*. Ceremonial duties must give way to moral, and the natural royal law of love and self-preservation must take place of ritual observances. This is quoted from *Hos. vi. 6*. It was used before, *Mat. ix. 9*, in vindication of mercy to the souls of men, here of mercy to their bodies. The rest of the sabbath was ordained for man's good, in favour of the body, *Deut. v. 14*. Now no law must be construed so as to contradict its own end: "If you had known what this means," had known what it is to be of a merciful disposition, you would have been sorry that they were forced to do this to satisfy their hunger, and would "not have condemned the guiltless." Note, 1. Ignorance is the cause of our rash and uncharitable censures of our brethren. 2. It is not enough for us to know the Scriptures, but we must endeavour to know the meaning of them: "Let him that readeth understand." 3. Ignorance of the meaning of the Scripture is especially shameful in those who take upon them to teach others. 3rd. "The Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day," *ver. 8*. That law, as all the rest, is put into the hand of Christ, to be altered, enforced, or dispensed with, as he sees good. It was by "the Son" that God "made the world," and by him he instituted the sabbath in innocency; by him he gave the ten commandments at mount Sinai; and, as Mediator, he is intrusted with the institution of ordinances, and to make what changes he thought fit; and particularly, as being "Lord of the sabbath," he was authorized to make such an alteration of that day as that it should become the Lord's day, the Lord Christ's day. And if Christ be the "Lord of the sabbath," it is fit the day, and all the work of it, should be dedicated to him. By virtue of this power, Christ here enacts that works of necessity, if they be really such, and not pretended and a self-created necessity, are lawful on the sabbath day. And this explanation of the law plainly shews it was to be perpetual. *Exceptio firmat regulam*—"the exception confirms the rule."

Christ having thus silenced the Pharisees, and got clear of them, it is said, *ver. 9*, he "departed" and "went into their synagogue," the synagogue of these Pharisees, in which they presided, and which he was going towards when they picked this quarrel with him. Note, 1. We must take heed lest any thing that occurs in our way to holy ordinances disfit us for, or divert us from, our due attendance on them. Let us proceed in the way of our duty, notwithstanding the artifices of Satan, who endeavours by the "perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds," and many other ways, to ruffle and discompose us. 2. We must not, for the sake of private feuds and personal piques, draw back from public worship. Though the Pharisees had thus maliciously cavilled at Christ, yet "he went into their synagogue." Satan gains his point if, by sowing discord among brethren, he prevail to drive them, or any of them, from the synagogue, and the communion of the faithful.

11. Christ, by healing the man that had the withered hand on the sabbath day, shews that works of mercy are lawful and proper to be done on that day. The work of necessity was done by the disciples, and justified by him; the work of mercy was done by himself, for works of mercy were his works of necessity; it was his meat and drink to "do good." "I must preach," saith he, *Lu. iv. 43*. This cure is recorded for the sake of the time when it was wrought, on the sabbath day.

First. Here is, 1. The affliction that this poor man was in: his hand was withered, so that he was utterly disabled to get his living by working with his hands. St. Jerome saith that the Gospel of Matthew, in Hebrew, used by the Nazarenes and Ebionites, adds this circumstance to this story of the man with the withered hand, that he was *cementarius*, 'a bricklayer,' and applied himself to Christ thus: 'Lord, I am a bricklayer, and have got my living by my labour (*manibus victum queritans*); I beseech thee, O Jesus, restore me the use of my hand, that I may not be obliged to beg my bread, (*ne turpiter mendicem cibos*).' Hieron. *in loc.* This poor man was the synagogue. Note, Those that can do but little, or have but little to do, for the world, must do so much the more for their souls: as the rich, the aged, and the infirm.

Secondly. A spiteful question, which the Pharisees put to Christ, upon the sight of this man. "They asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal?" We read not here of any address this poor man made to Christ for a cure; but they observed Christ began to take notice of him, and knew it was usual for him to be "found of those that sought him not;" and therefore, with their badness they prevented his goodness, and started this case as a stumblingblock in the way of doing good: "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" Whether it was lawful for physicians to heal on that day or no, which was the thing disputed in their books, one would think it past dispute that it is lawful for prophets to heal, for him to heal who discovered a Divine power and goodness in all he did of this kind, and manifested himself to be sent of God. Did ever any ask whether it is lawful for God to heal, to send his word and heal? It is true, Christ was now "made under the law," by a voluntary submission to it, but he was never made under the precepts of the elders. "Is it lawful to heal?" To inquire into the lawfulness and unlawfulness of actions is very good; and we cannot apply ourselves to any, with such inquiries, more fitly than to Christ; but they asked here, not that they might be instructed by him, but "that they

ever, not only our Lord, but our instructor, and these words imply as much.

xii. 1. Jesus went on the Sabbath-day with his disciples through the corn, or rather, through the corn-fields. The disciples, being hungry, began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat them, which they were allowed to do by *Deut. xxiii. 25*. The Pharisees appear already to have held the tradition, which was afterwards inserted in the Talmud, forbidding such an act on the Sabbath-day. Hence the

objection was to its being done on that day. They said it was not lawful, or not allowed, but did not mention the authority they relied upon; of that, however, there can be no question.

xii. 7. Having refuted tradition by an appeal to the law, and to the recorded example of David, our Lord adds a final reference to the prophets (*Hos. vi. 6*).

xii. 8. Jesus goes yet further; he claims for himself a degree of authority which none in human form had ever before advanced—he

might accuse him." If he should say it was lawful to heal on the sabbath day, they would accuse him of a contradiction to the fourth commandment; to so great a degree of superstition had the Pharisees brought the sabbath rest, that, unless in peril of life, they allowed not any medical operations on the sabbath day. If he should say it was not lawful, they would accuse him of partiality, having lately justified his disciples plucking the ears of corn on that day.

Thirdly, Christ's answer to this question, by way of appeal to themselves, and their own opinion and practice, ver. 11, 12. In case a sheep (though but one, of which the loss would not be very great) should fall into a pit on the sabbath day, "would they not lift it out?" No doubt they might do it, the fourth commandment allows it; they must do it, for "a merciful man regardeth the life of his beast;" and their parts they would do it rather than lose a sheep. Doth Christ take care for sheep? Yes, he doth, he preserves and provides for both man and beast. But here he saith it for our sakes, 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10, and hence argues, "How much then is a man better than a sheep?" Sheep are not only harmless, but useful creatures, and are prized and tended accordingly; yet a man is here preferred far before them. Note, Man, in respect of his being, is a great deal better and more valuable than the best of the brute creatures; man is a reasonable creature, capable of knowing, loving, and glorifying God, and therefore is better than a sheep. The sacrifice of a sheep could therefore not atone for the sin of a soul. They do not consider this who are more solicitous for the education, preservation, and supply of their horses and dogs than of God's poor, or perhaps their own household. Hence Christ infers a truth, which even at first sight appears very reasonable and good-natured, that "it is lawful to do all on the sabbath days." They had asked, "Is it lawful to heal?" Christ proves it is lawful to do well; and let any one judge whether healing, as Christ healed, was not doing well. Note, There are more ways of doing well upon sabbath days than by the duties of God's immediate worship: attending the sick, relieving the poor, helping those that are fallen into sudden distress, and call for speedy relief: this is doing good; and this must be done from a principle of love and charity, with humility and self-denial, and a heavenly frame of spirit; and this is doing well, and it "shall be accepted," Gen. iv. 7.

Fourthly, Christ's curing of the man, notwithstanding the offence which he foresaw the Pharisees would take at it, ver. 13. Though they could not answer Christ's arguments, they were resolved to persist in their prejudice and enmity; but Christ went on with his work, however. Note, Duty is not to be left undone, nor opportunities of doing good neglected or let slip, for fear of giving offence. Now the manner of the cure is observable: he said to the man, "Stretch forth thy hand," "exert thyself as well as thou canst;" and he did so, and "it was restored whole." This, as other the cures Christ wrought, had a spiritual significance. 1. By nature our hands are withered, we are utterly unable of ourselves to do any thing that is good. 2. It is Christ only, by the power of his grace, that cures us: he heals the withered hand, by putting life into the dead soul, "works in us both to will and to do." 3. In order to our cure, he commands us to "stretch forth our hands," to improve our natural powers, and do as well as we can: stretch them out in prayer to God, stretch them out to lay hold on Christ by faith, stretch them out in holy endeavours. Now this man could not stretch forth his withered hand of himself, no more than the impotent man could arise and carry his bed, or Lazarus come forth out of his grave; yet Christ bid him do it; God's commands to us to do the duty which of ourselves we are not able to do, are no more absurd or unjust than this command to the man with the withered hand, which is given by the Word: "Turn ye at my reproof, and I will pour out my spirit," Pr. i. 23. And those that perish are as inexcusable, as this man would have been, if he had not attempted to stretch forth his hand, and so had not been healed. But those that are saved have no more to boast of than this man had, of contributing to his own cure by stretching forth his hand, but are as much indebted to the power and grace of Christ as he was.

14 Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.



PHARISEES.

15 But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; 16 And charged them

declared himself Lord of the Sabbath-day. This could have but one meaning, which was to assert that which mere man could not utter without blasphemy. If he was superior to the Sabbath, he was higher than the law which appointed it; but since it was a Divine institution, he must himself be a Divine person.

iii. 9-13. Either on the same Sabbath-day or the next to that mentioned in the previous verses, our Lord appeared in the synagogue. A man who had lost the use of a hand was present, and his old

that they should not make him known: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. 19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. 20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. 21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

As in the midst of Christ's greatest humiliation there were proofs of his dignity, so in the midst of his greatest honours he gave proofs of his humility; and when the mighty works he did gave him an opportunity of making a figure, yet he made it appear that "he emptied himself," and had "made himself of no reputation." Here we have,

I. *The cursed malice of the Pharisees against Christ*, ver. 14. Being enraged at the convincing evidence of his miracles, they "went out and held a council against him, how they might destroy him." That which vexed them was, not only that by his miracles his honour eclipsed theirs, but that the doctrine he preached was directly opposite to their pride, and hypocrisy, and worldly interest. But they pretended to be displeased at his breaking the sabbath day, which was by the law a capital crime, Ex. xxxv. 2. Note, It is no new thing to see the vilest practices cloaked with the most specious pretences. Observe their policy: they took counsel about it, considered with themselves which way to do it effectually; they "took counsel together," in a close cabal, about it, that they might both animate and assist one another. Observe their cruelty: they took counsel, not to imprison or banish him, but to destroy him, to be the death of him who came "that we might have life." What an indignity was hereby put upon our Lord Jesus, to run him down as an outlaw, (*qui caput gerit lupinum*,—one who carries a wolf's head,) and the plague of his country, who was the greatest blessing of it, the glory of his people Israel.

II. *Christ's ascending upon this occasion, and the privacy he chose*, to decline, not his work, but his danger, because "his hour was not yet come;" ver. 15. "He withdrew himself from thence." He could have secured himself by miracle, but chose to do it in the ordinary way of flight and retirement; because in this, as in other things, he would submit to the sinless infirmities of our nature. Herein he humbled himself, that he was driven to the common shift of those that are most helpless; thus also he would give an example to his own rule, "when they persecute you in one city, flee to another." Christ had said and done enough to convince those Pharisees, if reason or miracle would have done it; but instead of yielding to the conviction, they were hardened and enraged, and therefore he left them, as incurable, Jer. li. 9. Christ did not retire for his own ease, nor seek an excuse to leave off his work; no, his retirements were filled up with business, and he was even then doing good, when he was forced to flee for the same. Thus he gave an example to his ministers to do what they can, when they cannot do what they would, and to continue teaching, even when they are removed into corners. When the Pharisees, the great dons and doctors of the nation, drove Christ from them, and forced him to withdraw himself, yet the common people crowded after him, "great multitudes followed him," and found him out. This some would turn to his reproach, and call him the ringleader of the mob; but it was really his honour, that all that were unbiassed and unprejudiced, and not blinded by the pomp of the world, were so hearty, so zealous for him, that they would follow him whithersoever he went, and whatever hazards they ran with him; as it was also the honour of his grace, that the poor were evangelized, that when they received him, he received them, and healed them all. Christ came into the world to be a physician general, as the sun to the lower world, "with healing under his wings." Though the Pharisees persecuted Christ for doing good, yet he went on in it, and did not let the people fare the worse for the wickedness of their rulers. Note, Though some are unkind to us, we must not therefore be unkind to others. Yet Christ studied to reconcile usefulness and privacy; "he healed them all," and yet (ver. 16) "charged them that they should not make him known;" which may be looked upon, 1. As an act of prudence. It was not so much the miracles themselves, as the public discourse concerning them, that enraged the Pharisees, ver. 23, 24. Therefore Christ, though he would not omit doing good, yet would do it with as little noise as possible, to avoid offence to them, and peril to himself. Note, Wise and good men, though they covet to do good, yet are far from coveting to have it talked of, when it is done; because it is God's acceptance, not men's applause, that they aim at; and in suffering times, though we must boldly go on in the way of duty, yet we must contrive the circumstances of it, so as not to exasperate more than needs those that seek occasion against us: "Be ye wise as serpents," ch. x. 16. 2. It may be looked upon as an act of righteous judgment upon the Pharisees, who were unworthy to hear of any more of his miracles, having made so light of those they had seen. By shutting their eyes against the light, they had forfeited the benefit of it. 3. As an act of humility and self-denial. Though Christ's intention in his miracles was to prove himself the Messiah, and so bring men to believe on him, in order to which it was requisite they should be known, yet sometimes he charged people to conceal them, to set us an example of humility, and to teach us not to "proclaim our own goodness" or usefulness, or to desire to have it proclaimed. Christ would have his disciples to be the reverse of those who did all their works "to be seen of men."

III. *The fulfilling of the Scriptures in all this*, ver. 17. Christ retired into privacy and obscurity, that, though he was eclipsed, the Word of God might be fulfilled, and so illustrated and glorified, which was the thing his heart was upon. The Scripture here said to be fulfilled, is Isa. xlii. 1-4, which is quoted at large, ver. 18-21. The scope of it is to shew how mild and quiet, and yet how successful, our Lord Jesus should be in his undertaking; instances of both which we have in the foregoing passages. Observe here,

First, The pleasedness of the Father in Christ, ver. 18: "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased." Hence we may learn, 1. That our Savior was God's servant in the great work of our redemption. He therein submitted himself to the Father's will, Heb. x. 7, and set himself to serve the designs of his grace, and the interests of his glory, in repairing the breaches that had been made by man's apostasy. As a servant, he had a great work appointed him, and a great trust reposed in him. This

questioners asked him whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath. The rabbis held that it was not lawful to heal the sick on that day unless life was in danger. Before practically showing his disregard for this tradition, our Lord reminded them of their own practice in matters of lesser importance. This practice he did not condemn. He concluded, therefore, that it was lawful to do good on any day, even on the Sabbath. He then miraculously healed the sick man, leaving the Pharisees to draw their own conclusions. As has been

was a part of his humiliation, that though he "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," yet in the work of our salvation he took upon him the form of a servant, received a law, and came into bonds; "though he were a Son, yet learned he this obedience," *Heb. v. 8*. The motto of this prince is *Ich dien*,—"I serve." 2. That Jesus Christ was chosen of God, as the only fit and proper person for the management of the great work of our redemption. He "is my servant whom I have chosen," as *par negotio*,—"equal to the undertaking." None but he was able to do the Redeemer's work, or fit to wear the Redeemer's crown. He was "one chosen out of the people," *Ps. lxxxix. 19*, chosen by Infinite Wisdom to that post of service and honour, which neither man nor angel was qualified for; none but Christ, that he might in all things have the pre-eminence. Christ did not thrust himself upon this work, but was duly chosen into it; Christ was so God's chosen as to be the head of election, and of all other the elect, for we are "chosen in him," *Eph. i. 4*. 3. That Jesus Christ is God's beloved, his beloved Son; as God, he lay from eternity in his bosom, *Jno. i. 18*; he was "daily his delight," *Pr. viii. 30*. Between the Father and the Son there was before all time an eternal and inconceivable intercourse and interchanging of love, and thus "the Lord possessed him in the beginning of his way," *Pr. viii. 22*. As Mediator the Father loved him; then when it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and he submitted to it, "therefore did the Father love him," *Jno. x. 17*. 4. That Jesus Christ is one in whom the Father is well pleased, in whom his "soul is pleased," which notes the highest complacency imaginable. God declared, by a voice from heaven, that he is his beloved Son in whom he is well pleased; well pleased in him, because he was the ready and cheerful undertaker of that work of wonder which God's heart was so much upon; and he is well pleased with us in him; for he hath "made us accepted in the beloved," *Eph. i. 6*. All the interests which fallen man hath, or can have, in God, is grounded upon, and owing to, God's well-pleasedness in Jesus Christ; for there is "no coming to the Father but by him," *Jno. xiv. 6*.

Secondly. The promise of the Father to him in two things. 1. That he should be every way well qualified for his undertaking: "I will put my spirit upon him," as a spirit of "wisdom and counsel," *Isa. xi. 2, 3*. Those whom God calls to any service, he will be sure to fit and qualify them for it; and by that it will appear that he called them to it, as Moses, *Ex. iv. 12*. Christ, as God, was equal in power and glory with the Father; as Mediator, he received from the Father power and glory, and received that he might give; and all that the Father gave him to qualify him for his undertaking was summed up in this, he "put his spirit upon him;" this was that "oil of gladness" with which he was "anointed above his fellows," *Heb. i. 9*. He received the Spirit, not by measure, but "without measure," *Jno. iii. 34*. Note, Whoever they be that God hath chosen, and in whom he is well pleased, he will be sure to "put his spirit upon them." Wherever he confers his love, he confers somewhat of his likeness. 2. That he should be abundantly successful in his undertaking. Those whom God sends he will certainly own. It was long since secured by promise to our Lord Jesus, that the "good pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand," *Isa. liii. 10*. And here we have an account of that prospering good pleasure. 1st. "He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles." Christ in his own person preached to those that bordered upon the heathen nations, see *Mar. iii. 6, 7*, and by his apostles shewed his Gospel, called here his judgment, to the Gentile world. The way and method of salvation, the judgment which is "committed to the Son," is not only wrought out by him as our great high priest, but shewed and published by him as our great prophet. The Gospel, as it is the rule of practice and conversation, which has a direct tendency to the reforming and bettering men's hearts and lives, shall be shewed to the Gentiles. God's judgments had been the Jews' peculiar, *Ps. cxlvii. 19*. But it was oft foretold by the Old Testament prophets, that they should be "shewed to the Gentiles," which therefore ought not to have been such a surprise as it was to the unbelieving Jews; much less a vexation. 2nd. "In his name shall the Gentiles trust," *ver. 21*. He shall so "shew judgment" to them, that they shall heed and observe what he shews them, and be influenced by it to depend upon him, to devote themselves to him, and conform to that judgment. Note, The great design of the Gospel is to bring people to trust in the name of Jesus Christ; his name, Jesus the Saviour, that precious name whereby he is called, and which is as ointment poured forth, "the Lord our Righteousness." The evangelist here follows the Septuagint, or perhaps the latter editions of the Septuagint follow the evangelist; the Hebrew (*Isa. xlii. 4*) is, "the isles shall wait for his law." The isles of the Gentiles are spoken of, *Gen. x. 5*. Peopled by the sons of Japheth, of whom it was said, *Gen. ix. 27*, "God shall persuade Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem;" which was now to be fulfilled, when "the isles" (saith the prophet), "the Gentiles" (saith the evangelist), shall "wait for his law, and trust in his name." Compare these together, and observe, that they, and they only, can with confidence "trust in Christ's name," that "wait for his law" with a resolution to be ruled by it. Observe also, that the law we wait for is the law of faith, the law of "trusting in his name." This is now his great commandment, that we "believe in Christ," *1 Jno. iii. 23*.

Thirdly. The prediction concerning him, and his mild and quiet management of his undertaking, *ver. 19, 20*. It is chiefly for the sake of this that it is here quoted, upon occasion of Christ's affected privacy and concealment. 1. That he should carry on his undertaking without noise or ostentation: "He shall not strive, or make an outcry." Christ and his kingdom "come not with observation," *Lu. xvii. 20, 21*. When the first-begotten was brought into the world, it was not with state and ceremony; he made no public entry, had no harbingers to proclaim him king: "He was in the world, and the world knew him not." Those were mistaken that fed themselves with hopes of a pompous Saviour: "His voice was not heard in the streets;" "Lo, here is Christ, or, Lo, he is there." He spoke in a still small voice, which was alluring to all, but terrifying to none; he did not affect to make a noise, but came down silently, like the dew. What he spoke and did was with the greatest humility and self-denial possible. His kingdom was spiritual, and therefore not to be advanced by force or violence, or by talking big. No, "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." 2. That he should carry on his undertaking without severity and rigour, *ver. 20*: "A bruised reed shall he not break." Some understand this of his patience in bearing with the wicked; he could as easily have broken these Pharisees as a bruised reed, and have quenched them as soon as smoking flax; but he will not do it till the judgment day, when all his enemies shall be made his footstool. Others rather understand it of his power and grace in bearing up the weak. In general, the design of his Gospel is to establish such a method of salvation as encourage sincerity, though there be much infirmity; doth not insist upon a sinless obedience, but accepts an upright willing mind. As to particular persons that follow Christ, in weakness, and in fear, and much trembling, observe, 1st. How their case is here described; they are like "a bruised reed," and "smoking flax." Young beginners in religion are weak, as a "bruised reed," and their weakness offensive, like "smoking flax;" some little they have, but it is like that of a bruised reed; some little heat, but like that of "smoking flax." Christ's disciples were as yet but weak; and many are so, that have a place in his family. The grace and goodness in them

is as a "bruised reed;" the corruption and badness in them is as "smoking flax," as the wick of a candle when it is put out, and is yet smoking. 2nd. What is the compassion of our Lord Jesus towards them. He will not discourage them, much less reject them, or cast them off; the reed that is bruised shall not be broken and trodden down, but shall be supported and made as a strong cedar, or flourishing palm tree. The candle newly lighted, though it only smokes, and doth not flame, shall not be blown out, but blown up. The day of "small things" is the day of "precious things;" and therefore he will not despise it, but make it the day of "great things," *Zec. iv. 10*. Note, Our Lord Jesus deals very tenderly with those that have true grace, though they be weak in it, *Isa. xl. 11*; *Heb. v. 2*. He remembers, not only that we are dust, but that we are flesh. 3rd. The good issue and success of this, intimated in that, "till he send forth judgment unto victory." That judgment which he shewed to the Gentiles shall be victorious; he will go on conquering and to conquer, *Rev. vi. 2*. Both the preaching of the Gospel in the world, and the power of the Gospel in the heart, shall prevail. Grace shall get the upper hand of corruption, and shall at length be perfected in glory; Christ's judgment will be brought forth to victory, for when he judgeth he will overcome. He shall "bring forth judgment unto truth;" so it is, *Isa. xlii. 3*. Truth and victory are much the same; for "great is the truth, and will prevail."

22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, inso-much that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. 25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: 26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? 27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. 30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. 31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. 32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. 33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. 34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. 36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

In these verses we have,
1. Christ's glorious conquest of Satan in the gracious cure of one that, by the Divine permission, was under his power, and in his possession, *ver. 22*. Here observe,

First. The man's case was very sad; he was "possessed with a devil." There were more cases of this kind occurred in Christ's time than usual, that Christ's

well said, he "does no outward act: the healing is performed without even a word of command. The stretching forth the hand was to prove its soundness, which the Divine power wrought in the act of stretching forth." Meanwhile the man was healed, and they were confounded.

xii. 14. That a consultation was held as to the means to be adopted for putting Jesus to death need not surprise us. Not only were the enemies disconcerted and embittered, but they regarded

our Lord as a blasphemer, who by the Mosaic law deserved the punishment of death. But since the right to inflict a capital sentence was not allowed them by the actual rulers, it was deemed advisable to consider what steps should be taken.

xii. 15—21. Our Lord withdrew from the danger which menaced him, and adopted other measures of a precautionary character, because his time was not yet come, and his glorious scheme was not yet fully developed. The prophecy quoted from *Isa. xlii. 1* not

power might be the more magnified, and his purpose the more manifested in opposing and dispossessing Satan, and it might the more evidently appear that he came to "destroy the works of the devil." This poor man that was possessed was blind and dumb; a miserable case; he could neither see to help himself, nor speak to others to help him. A soul under Satan's power, and led captive by him, is blind in the things of God, and dumb at the throne of grace; sees nothing, and saith nothing to the purpose. Satan blinds the eye of faith, and seals up the lips of prayer.

Secondly. His cure was very strange, and the more so because sudden: "he healed him." Note, The conquering and dispossessing of Satan is the healing of souls; and the cause being removed, immediately the effect ceased; the "blind and dumb both spake and saw." Note, Christ's mercy is directly opposite to Satan's malice; his favour, to the devil's mischief. When Satan's power is broke in the soul, the eyes are opened to see God's glory, and the lips opened to speak his praise.

III. The conviction which this gave to the people, to "all the people;" they "were amazed." Christ had wrought divers miracles of this kind before, but his works are not the less wonderful, nor the less to be wondered at, for their being oft repeated. They inferred from it, "Is not this the son of David?" the Messiah promised, that was to spring from the loins of David? Is not this he that should come? We may take this.

First. As an inquiring question: they asked, "Is not this the son of David?" out did not stay for an answer: the impressions were cogent, but they were transient. It was a good question they started; but it should seem it was soon lost, and was not prosecuted. Such convictions as these should be brought to a head, and then they are likely to be brought to the heart. Or,

Secondly. As an affirming question: "Is not this the son of David?" "Yes, certainly it is; it can be no other. Such miracles as these plainly evince that the kingdom of the Messiah is now in the setting up. And they were the people, the vulgar sort of the spectators, that drew this inference from Christ's miracles. Atheists will say, 'That was because they were less prying than the Pharisees.' No, the matter of fact was obvious, and required not much search; but it was because they were less prejudiced and biased by worldly interest. So plain and easy was the way made to this great truth, of Christ's being the Messiah and Saviour of the world, that the common people could not miss it: the "wayfaring men, though fools, could not err therein;" see *Isa. xxv. 8*. It was found of them that sought it; and it is an instance of the condescension of the Divine grace, that the things that were "hid from the wise and prudent" were "revealed unto babes." The world by wisdom knew not God, and by the foolish things the wise were confounded.

III. The blasphemous cavil of the Pharisees, ver. 24. The Pharisees were a sort of men that pretended to more knowledge in, and zeal for, the Divine law than other people, yet they were the most inveterate enemies to Christ and his doctrine. They were proud of the reputation they had among the people, that fed their pride, supported their power, and filled their purses; and when they heard the people say, "Is not this the son of David?" they were extremely nettled, more at that than at the miracle itself: this made them jealous of our Lord Jesus, and apprehensive that if his interest in the people's esteem increased, theirs must of course be eclipsed and diminished; therefore they envied him, as Saul did his father David, because of what the women sang of him, *1 Sam. xviii. 7, 8*. Note, Those that bind up their happiness in the praise and applause of men, expose themselves to a perpetual uneasiness upon every favourable word that they hear said of any other. The shadow of honour followed Christ, that fled from it, and fled from the Pharisees that were eager in the pursuit of it. They said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils," and therefore is not the son of David." Observe.

First. How scornfully they speak of Christ: "This fellow;" as if that precious name of his, which is "as ointment poured forth," were not worthy to be taken into their lips. It is an instance of their pride and superciliousness, and their diabolical envy, that the more people magnified Christ, the more industrious they were to vilify him. It is an ill thing to speak of good men with disdain, because they are poor.

Secondly. How blasphemously they speak of his miracles: they could not deny the matter of fact; it was as plain as the sun that devils were cast out by the word of Christ; nor could they deny that it was an extraordinary thing, and supernatural; and being thus forced to grant the premises, they had no other way to avoid the conclusion, that "this is the son of David," but by suggesting that Christ "cast out devils by Beelzebub;" that there was a compact between Christ and the devil; pursuant to that, the devil was not cast out, but did voluntarily retire, and give back by consent, and with design; or, as if by an agreement with the ruling devil, he had power to cast out the inferior devils. No surmise could be more palpably false and vile than this; that he who is truth itself should be in combination with the father of lies, to cheat the world. This was the last refuge, or subterfuge rather, of an obstinate infidelity, that was resolved to stand it out against the clearest conviction. Observe, Among the devils there is a prince, the ringleader of the apostasy from God, and rebellion against him. But this prince is Beelzebub, the god of a fly, or a dunghill god: How art thou fallen, O Lucifer! from an angel of light to be a lord of flies! Yet this is the prince of the devils too, the chief of the gang of infernal spirits.

IV. Christ's reply to this base insinuation, ver. 25-30: "Jesus knew their thoughts." Note, Jesus Christ knows what we are thinking at any time, knows what is in man; "he understandeth our thoughts afar off." It would seem the Pharisees could not for shame speak it out, but kept it in their minds: they could not expect to satisfy the people with it; they therefore reserved it for the silencing of the convictions of their own consciences. Many are kept off from their duty by that which they are ashamed to own, but which they cannot hide from Jesus Christ. Yet it is probable the Pharisees had whispered what they thought among themselves, to help to harden one another: but Christ's reply is said to be to their thoughts, because he knew with what mind, and from what principle, they said it; that they did not say it in their haste, but it was the product of a rooted malignity. Christ's reply to this imputation is copious and cogent; that "every mouth may be stopped" with sense and reason, before it be stopped with fire and brimstone. Here are three arguments by which he demonstrates the unreasonableness of this suggestion:

First. It would be very strange, and highly improbable, that Satan should be cast out by such a compact, because then Satan's kingdom would be "divided against itself;" which, considering his subtlety, is not a thing to be imagined, ver. 25, 26. 1. Here is a known rule laid down, that in all societies a common ruin is the consequence of mutual quarrels: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation," and every family too. *Quæ enim domus tam stabilis est, quæ tam firma civitas, quæ non oditis atque dissidiis funditus everti possit?* For what family is so strong, what community so firm, as not to be overturned by enmity and dissension?—*Cic. Læl. 7*. Divisions commonly end in desolations: if we clash, we break; if we divide one from another, we become an easy prey to a common enemy; much more, if we "bite and devour

one another," shall we be "consumed one of another," *Gal. v. 15*. Churches and nations have known this by sad experience. 2. The application of it to the case in hand, ver. 26: "If Satan cast out Satan." If the prince of the devils should be at variance with the inferior devils, the whole kingdom and interest would soon be broken. Nay, if Satan should come into a compact with Christ, it must be to his own ruin; for the manifest design and tendency of Christ's preaching and miracles was to overthrow the kingdom of Satan, as a kingdom of darkness, wickedness, and enmity to God; and to set up, upon the ruins of it, a kingdom of light, holiness, and love. "The works of the devil," as a rebel against God, and a tyrant over the souls of men, were destroyed by Christ; and therefore it was the most absurd thing imaginable to think that Beelzebub should at all countenance such a design, or come into it. If he should fall in with Christ, "how should then his kingdom stand?" He would himself contribute to the overthrow of it. Note, The devil has a kingdom, a common interest, in opposition to God and Christ, which, to the utmost of his power, he will make to stand; and he will never come into Christ's interests: he must be conquered and broken by Christ, and therefore cannot submit and bend to him. What concord or communion can there be between light and darkness, Christ and Belial, Christ and Beelzebub? Christ will destroy the devil's kingdom; but he needs not do it by any such little arts and projects as this of a secret compact with Beelzebub; no, this victory must be obtained by nobler methods. Let the prince of the devils muster up all his forces—let him make use of all his powers and politics, and keep his interests in the closest confederacy; yet Christ will be too hard for his united force, and "his kingdom shall not stand."

Secondly. It was not at all strange or improbable that devils should be cast out by the Spirit of God; for, 1. How otherwise "do your children cast them out?" There were those among the Jews who, by invocation of the name of the most high God, or the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, did sometimes cast out devils. Josephus speaks of some in his time that did it. We read of "Jewish exorcists," *Acts xix. 13*; and of some that in "Christ's name cast out devils," though they did not follow him, *Mar. ix. 38*, or were not faithful to him, *ch. vii. 22*. These the Pharisees condemned not; but imputed what they did to the Spirit of God, and valued themselves and their nation by it. It was therefore merely from spite and envy to Christ that they would own that others cast out devils by the Spirit of God, but suggest that he did it by compact with Beelzebub. Note, It is the way of malicious people, especially the malicious persecutors of Christ and Christianity, to condemn the same thing in those they hate, which they approve of and applaud in those they have a kindness for. The judgments of envy are made, not by things, but persons; not by reason, but prejudice. But those were very unfit to sit in Moses' seat who knew faces, and knew nothing else, in judgment: "Therefore they shall be your judges;" that is, "This contradicting of yourselves will rise up in judgment against you at the great day, and will condemn you." Note, In the last judgment, not only every sin, but every aggravation of it, will be brought into the account; and some of our notions that were right and good will be brought in evidence against us, to convict us of partiality. 2. This casting out of devils was a certain token and indication of the approach and appearance of the kingdom of God, ver. 28. "But if it be indeed that 'I cast out devils by the Spirit of God,' as certainly I do, then you must conclude that, though you are unwilling to receive it, yet the kingdom of the Messiah is now about to be set up among you." Other miracles that Christ wrought proved him sent of God; but this proved him sent of God to destroy the devil's kingdom and his works. Now that great promise was evidently fulfilled, that "the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head," *Gen. iii. 15*. Therefore that glorious dispensation of the kingdom of God, which has been long expected, is now commenced; slight it at your peril." Note, 1st. The destruction of the devil's power is wrought by the Spirit of God. That Spirit, who works to the obedience of faith, overthrows the interest of that spirit who works in the children of unbelief and disobedience. 2nd. The casting out of devils is a certain introduction to the kingdom of God. If the devil's interest in a soul be not only checked by custom or external restraints, but sunk and broken by the Spirit of God, as a sanctifier, no doubt but "the kingdom of God is come" to that soul—the kingdom of grace, a blessed earnest of the kingdom of glory.

Thirdly. The comparing of Christ's miracles, particularly this of casting out devils with his doctrine, and the design and tendency of his holy religion, did evidence that he was so far from being in league with Satan, that he was at open enmity and hostility against him, ver. 29. "How can one enter into a strong man's house, and plunder his goods, and carry them away, 'except he first bind the strong man,' and then he may do what he pleaseth with his goods. The world that sat in darkness, and lay in wickedness, was in Satan's possession, and under his power, as a house in the possession and under the power of a strong man; so is every unregenerate soul: there Satan resides, there he rules. Now, 1. The design of Christ's Gospel was to spoil the devil's house, which, as a strong man, he kept in the world; to turn people "from darkness to light," from sin to holiness, from this world to a better "from the power of Satan unto God," *Acts xxvi. 18*, to alter the property of souls. 2. Pursuant to this design, he bound the strong man, when he cast out unclean spirits by his word. Thus he wrested the sword out of the devil's hand, that he might wrest the sceptre out of it. The doctrine of Christ teacheth us how to construe his miracles; and, when he shewed how easily and effectually he could cast the devil out of people's bodies, he encouraged all believers to hope that, whatever power Satan might usurp and exercise in the souls of men, Christ, by his grace, will break it: he will spoil him, for it appears he can bind him. When nations were turned "from the service of idols to serve the living God," when some of the worst of sinners were sanctified and justified, and became the best of saints, then Christ spoiled the devil's house, and will spoil it more and more.

Lastly. It is here intimated that this holy war, which Christ was carrying on with vigour against the devil and his kingdom, was such as would not admit of a neutrality, ver. 30: "He that is not with me is against me." In the little differences that may arise between the disciples of Christ among themselves, we are taught to lessen the matters in variance, and to seek peace, by accounting those that are not against us, to be with us, *Lu. ix. 50*; but in the great quarrel between Christ and the devil, no peace is to be sought, nor any such favourable construction to be made of an indifferency in the matter: he that is not hearty for Christ, will be reckoned with as really against him; he that is cold in the cause is looked upon as an enemy. When the dispute is between God and Baal, there is no halting between the two, *1 Kin. xviii. 21*. There is no trimming between Christ and Belial; for the kingdom of Christ, as it is eternally opposite to, so it will be eternally victorious over, the devil's kingdom; and therefore, in this cause, there is no sitting still, with Gilead beyond Jordan, or Asher on the sea shore, *Jud. v. 16, 17*: we must be entirely, faithfully, and immovably on Christ's side; it is the right side, and will at last be the rising side; see *Ex. xxxii. 26*. The latter clause is to the same purpose, "He that gathereth not with me, scattereth." Note, 1. Christ's errand into the world was to gather; to gather in his harvest, to gather in those that the Father had given him, *Jno. xi. 52*; *Eph. i. 10*. 2. Christ expects and requires from those that are with him, that they gather with him; that they not only gather to him

merely shows the character which the Messiah would bear, but the fact that the Gentile nations were to be included in the Gospel plan of salvation. The words of the prophecy are not quoted with a literal regard to the Hebrew text, in accordance with the constant habit of the evangelists. The expression, "a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench," is by some regarded as proverbial, although it occurs in the original of Isaiah. It may or may not be so. It is usually understood to mean that he will not

crush the contrite heart, nor extinguish the faintest glimmering of grace. No doubt it signifies that he will exercise forbearance until his conflict shall issue in victory. This being the case, the forbearance may be shown towards the shattered and doomed forces of the world, as well as towards the feeble believer.

xii. 23. "Is not this the son of David?" means, "Is not this the Messiah, who is expected from among the descendants of David?" The phrase "son of David" does not actually appear in the Old

themselves, but do all they can in their places to gather others to him, and so to strengthen his interest. 3. Those who will not appear and act as furtherers of Christ's kingdom, will be looked upon, and dealt with, as hinderers of it. If we gather not with Christ, we scatter: it is not enough, not to do hurt, but we must do good. Thus is the breach widened between Christ and Satan, to shew there was no such compact between them as the Pharisees whispered. *V. Here is a discourse of Christ's upon this occasion, concerning tongue sins.* "Wherefore I say unto you." He seems to turn from the Pharisees to the people, from disputing to instructing; and, from the sin of the Pharisees, he warns the people concerning three sorts of tongue sins: for others' harms are admissions to us.

First. Blasphemous words against the Holy Ghost, the worst kind of tongue sins, and unpardonable, ver. 31, 32.

1. Here is a gracious assurance of the pardon of all sin upon gospel terms. This Christ saith unto us, and it is a comfortable saying, that the greatness of sin shall be no bar to our acceptance with God, if we truly repent, and believe the Gospel: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Though the sin has been "as scarlet and crimson," *Isa. i. 18*, though never so heinous in its nature, never so much aggravated by its circumstances, and never so oft repeated, though it "reach up to the heaven," yet with the Lord there is mercy, that "reacheth beyond the heavens;" even blasphemy, a sin immediately touching God's name and honour. Paul obtained mercy, who had been a blasphemer, *1 Tim. i. 13*. Well may we say, "who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity?" *Mic. vi. 18*. Even "words spoken against the Son of man shall be forgiven," as theirs who he reviled him at his death, many of whom repented, and found mercy. Christ herein hath set an example to all other the sons of men, to be ready to forgive words spoken against them: "I, as a deaf man, heard not." Observe, They shall be forgiven unto men, not to devils: this is love to the whole world of mankind, above the world of fallen angels, that all sin is pardonable to them.

2. Here is an exception of the blasphemy "against the Holy Ghost," which is here declared to be the only unpardonable sin. See here, 1st. What this sin is. It is "speaking against the Holy Ghost." See what malignity there is in tongue sins, when the only unpardonable sin is so. But "Jesus knew their thoughts," ver. 25. It is not all speaking against the person or essence of the Holy Ghost, or some of his more private operations, or merely the resisting of his internal working in the sinner himself, that is here meant; for "who then should be saved?" It is adjudged in our law, that an act of indemnity shall always be construed in favour of that grace and clemency which is the intentment of the act; and therefore the exceptions in the act are not to be extended further than needs must. The Gospel is an act of indemnity; none are excepted by name, nor any by description, but those only that "blaspheme the Holy Ghost," which therefore must be construed in the narrowest sense. All presuming sinners are effectually cut off by the conditions of the indemnity, faith and repentance; and therefore the other exceptions must not be stretched far: and this blasphemy is excepted, not for any defect of mercy in God, or merit in Christ, but because it inevitably leaves the sinner in infidelity and impenitency. We have reason to think that none are guilty of this sin who believe that Christ is "the Son of God," and sincerely desire to have part in his merit and mercy. And those who fear they have committed this sin, it is a good sign they have not. The learned Dr. Whitby very well observes, that Christ speaks not of what was now said or done, but of what should be, *Mar. iii. 28*; *Lu. xii. 10*, "whosoever shall blaspheme." As for those who blasphemed Christ, when he was here upon earth, and called him a winebibber, a deceiver, a blasphemer, and the like, they had some colour of excuse, because of the meanness of his appearance, and the prejudices of the nation against him; and the proof of his Divine mission was not perfected till after his ascension; and therefore, upon their repentance, they shall be pardoned; and it is hoped they may be convinced, by the pouring out of the Spirit, as many of them were, who had been his betrayers and murderers. But if, when the Holy Ghost is given, in his inward gifts of revelation, speaking with tongues and the like, such as were the distributions of the Spirit among the apostles, if they continue to blaspheme the Spirit likewise as an evil spirit, there is no hope of them, that they will ever be brought to believe in Christ. For, **First.** Those gifts of the Holy Ghost in the apostles were the last proofs that God designed to make use of for the confirming of the Gospel, and were still kept in reserve, when other methods proceeded. **Secondly.** This was the most powerful evidence, and more apt to convince than miracles themselves. **Thirdly.** Those therefore that blaspheme this dispensation of the Spirit cannot possibly be brought to believe in Christ. Those who shall impute them to a collusion with Satan, as the Pharisees did the miracles, what can convince them? This is such a stronghold of infidelity as a man can never be beaten out of, and is therefore unpardonable, because hereby repentance is hid from the sinner's eyes. 2nd. What the sentence is that is passed upon it: "It shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." As in the then state of the Jewish church there was no sacrifice of expiation for the "soul that sinned presumptuously," so neither under the dispensation of gospel grace, which is often in Scripture called "the world to come," shall there be any pardon to such as "tread under foot the blood of the covenant," and do "despite to the spirit of grace." There is no cure for a sin so directly against the remedy. It was a rule in our old law, "No sanctuary for sacrilege;" or, "It shall be forgiven neither now, in the sinner's own conscience, nor in the great day, when the pardon shall be published;" or, "This is a sin that exposeth the sinner both to temporal and eternal punishment, both to present wrath, and the wrath to come."

Secondly. Christ speaks here concerning other words, the products of corruption reigning in the heart, and breaking out thence, ver. 33-35. It was said, ver. 25, that "Jesus knew their thoughts;" and here he spoke with an eye to them, shewing that it was not strange they should speak so ill, when their hearts were so full of enmity and malice, which yet they often endeavoured to cloak and cover, by feigning themselves just men. Our Lord Jesus therefore points to the springs, and heals them; let the heart be sanctified, and it will appear in our words.

1. The heart is the root, the language is the fruit, ver. 33. If the nature of the tree be good, it will bring forth fruit accordingly. Where grace is the reigning principle in the heart, the language will be the language of Canaan; and, on the contrary, whatever lust reigns in the heart, it will break out: rotten lungs make a stinking breath. Men's language discovers what country they are of, so likewise "what manner of spirit they are of." Either "make the tree good," and then the "fruit will be good,"—get pure hearts, and then you will have pure lips and pure lives,—or else "the tree will be corrupt," and "the fruit" accordingly. You may make a crab stock to become a good tree, by grafting into it an imp from a good tree, and then the fruit will be good; but if the tree be still the same, plant it where you will, and water it with what you will, the fruit will be still corrupt. Note, Unless the heart be transformed, the life will never be thoroughly reformed. These Pharisees were shy of speaking out their wicked thoughts of Jesus Christ; but Christ here intimates how vain it was for them to seek to hide that root of bitterness in

them, that bore this gall and wormwood, when they never sought to mortify it. Note, It should be more our care to be good really, than to seem good outwardly.

2. The heart is the fountain, the words are the streams, ver. 34: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks," as the streams are the overflowings of the spring. A wicked heart is said to "send forth wickedness as a fountain casteth forth her waters," *Jer. vi. 7*. "A troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring," such as Solomon speaks of, *Pr. xxv. 26*, must needs send forth muddy and unpleasant streams. Evil words are the natural genuine product of an evil heart. Nothing but the salt of grace, cast into the spring, will heal the waters, "cleanse the speech," and purify the "corrupt communication." This they wanted; they were evil; and "how can we, being evil, speak good things?" They were "a generation of vipers," John Baptist had called them so, *ch. iii. 7*, and they were still the same; for "can the Ethiopian change his skin?" The people looked upon the Pharisees as a generation of saints; but Christ calls them "a generation of vipers," the seed of the serpent, that had an enmity to Christ and his Gospel. Now what could be expected from "a generation of vipers," but that which is poisonous and malignant? Can the viper be otherwise than venomous? Note, Ill things may be expected from ill people, as said the proverb of the ancients; "wickedness proceedeth from the wicked," *1 Sam. xxiv. 13*. "The vile person will speak villany," *Isa. xxxii. 6*. Those that are themselves evil, have neither skill nor will to speak good things, as they should be spoken. Christ would have his disciples know what sort of men they were to live among, that they might know what to look for. They are as Ezekiel, "among scorpions," *Eze. ii. 6*, and must not think it strange if they be stung and bitten.

3. The heart is the treasury, the words are the things brought out of that treasury, ver. 35; and from hence men's characters may be drawn, and they may be judged of. 1st. It is the character of a "good man," that he has "a good treasure in his heart," and from thence "brings forth good things," as there is occasion. Graces, comforts, experiences, good knowledge, good affections, good resolutions, these are a "good treasure in the heart;" the Word of God hidden there, the law of God written there, Divine truths dwelling and ruling there, are a treasure there, valuable and suitable, kept safe, and kept secret, as the stores of the good householder, but ready for use upon all occasions. A good man thus furnished "will bring forth," as Joseph out of his stores—will be speaking and doing that which is good, for God's glory and the edification of others. See *Pr. x. 11, 13, 14, 20, 21, 31, 32*. This is "bringing forth good things." Some pretend to good expenses that have not a "good treasure;" such will soon be bankrupts: some pretend to have a good treasure within, but give no proof of it: they hope they have it in them, and thank God, whatever their words and actions are, they have good hearts. But "faith without works is dead." And some have a good treasure of wisdom and knowledge, but they are not communicative, they do not "bring forth" out of it. They have a talent, but know not how to trade with it. The complete Christian in this bears the image of God, that he both "is good, and doth good." 2nd. It is the character of an "evil man," that he has an "evil treasure in his heart," and out of it "bringeth forth evil things." Lusts and corruptions dwelling and reigning in the heart are an evil treasure, out of which the sinner brings forth ill words and actions, to the dishonour of God and the hurt of others. See *Gen. vi. 5, 12*; *ch. xv. 18-20*; *Jer. i. 15*. But "treasures of wickedness" (*Pr. x. 2*) will be "treasures of wrath." 3rd. Christ speaks here concerning "idle words," and shews what evil there is in them, ver. 36, 37; much more is there in such wicked words as the Pharisees spoke. It concerns us to think much of the day of judgment, that that may be a check upon our tongues. And let us consider, **First.** How particular the account will be of tongue sins in that day; even "for every idle word," or discourse, "that men speak, they shall give account." This intimates, 1st. That God takes notice of every word we say, even that which we ourselves do not take notice of. See *Pe. cxxxix. 4*: "Not a word in my tongue but thou knowest it," though spoken without regard or design, God takes cognizance of it. 2nd. That vain, idle, impertinent talk is displeasing to God, which tends not to any good purpose, is not to any use of edifying; it is the product of a vain and trifling heart. These "idle words" are the same with that "foolish talking and jesting" which is forbidden, *Eph. v. 4*. This is that sin which is seldom wanting in the "multitude of words, unprofitable talk," *Job xv. 3*. 3rd. We must shortly account for these idle words; they will be produced in evidence against us, to prove us unprofitable servants, that have not improved the faculties of reason and speech, which are part of the talents we are intrusted with. If we repent not of our idle words, and our account for them be not balanced by the blood of Christ, we are undone. **Secondly.** How strict the judgment will be upon that account, ver. 37: "By thy words thou shalt be justified," or condemned; a common rule in men's judgments, and here applied to God's. Note, The constant tenour of our discourse, according as it is gracious or not gracious, will be an evidence for us, or against us, at the great day. Those that seemed to be religious, but "bridled not their tongue," will then be found to have put a cheat upon themselves with a vain religion, *Jer. i. 26*. Some think Christ here refers to that of Eliphaz, *Job xv. 6*, "Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I;" or rather to that of Solomon, *Pr. xviii. 21*, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. 39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: 40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. 42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for

Testament, but it was adopted by the Jews in consequence of passages which declare that the future glorious king and deliverer would descend from David. Lightfoot observes that it is of common occurrence in the Talmud.

xii. 27. The children of the Pharisees were probably the followers of their sect, some of whom certainly were professed exorcists. Josephus refers the origin of the practice to Solomon, who, he says, "left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they

drive away demons, so that they never return; and this method of cure is of great force unto this day." He then proceeds to report a curious case which he had himself witnessed ("Antiq.," viii. 2, 5). He elsewhere gives a very fabulous account of a root which had the virtue of expelling demons ("Wars," vii. 6, 3). Whether the Jewish exorcist did or did not expel demons is a disputed point, but we can scarcely think that God used their incantations to work miracles.

xii. 31. "Wherefore" here refers to what our Lord had already

she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. 43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. 44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. 45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

It is probable these Pharisees, that Christ is here in discourse with, were not the same that cavilled at him, ver. 24, and would not credit the signs he gave; but another set of them, that saw there was no reason to discredit them, but would not content themselves with the signs he gave, nor admit the evidence of them, unless he would give them such further proof as they should demand. Here is,

I. *Their address to him, ver. 38.* They compliment him with the title of "Master," pretending respect for him, when they intended to abuse him: all are not indeed Christ's servants who call him "master." Their request is, "We would see a sign from thee." It was highly reasonable they should see a sign: that he should, by miracles, prove his Divine mission: see *Ex. iv. 8, 9.* He came to take down a model of religion that was set up by miracles, and therefore it was requisite he should produce the same credentials. But it was highly unreasonable to demand a sign now, when he had given so many signs already, that did abundantly prove him "sent of God." Note, It is natural to proud men to prescribe to God, and then make that an excuse for not subscribing to him: but a man's offence will never be his defence.

II. *His answer to this address, this insolent demand.* First, He condemns the demand, as the language of an "evil and adulterous generation," ver. 39. He fastens the charge, not only on the scribes and Pharisees, but the whole nation of the Jews; they were all like their leaders, a seed and succession of evil doers. They were "an evil generation," indeed, that not only hardened themselves against the conviction of Christ's miracles, but set themselves to abuse him, and put contempt on his miracles. They were "an adulterous generation." 1. As an adulterous brood, so miserably degenerated from the faith and obedience of their ancestors, that Abraham and Israel acknowledged them not; see *Isa. lviii. 3.* Or, 2. As an adulterous wife: they departed from that God, to whom by covenant, they had been espoused. They were not guilty of the whoredom of idolatry, as they had been before the captivity; but they were guilty of infidelity and all iniquity, and that is whoredom too. They did not look after gods of their own making, but they looked for signs of their own devising; and that was adultery.

Secondly, He denies to give them any other sign more than he has already given them, but "that of the prophet Jonas." Note, Though Christ is always ready to hear and answer holy desires and prayers, yet he will not gratify corrupt lusts and humours. Those that ask amiss, ask and have not. Signs were granted to those who desired them for the confirmation of their faith, as to Abraham and Gideon; but were denied to those that demanded them for the excuse of their unbelief. Justly might Christ have said they shall never see another miracle; but see his wonderful goodness. 1. They shall have the same signs still repeated, for their further benefit and more abundant conviction. 2. They shall have one sign of a different kind from all these, and that is the "resurrection of Christ from the dead, by his own power," called here "the sign of the prophet Jonas." This was yet reserved for their conviction; and was intended to be the great proof of Christ's being the Messiah, for by that he was "declared to be the Son of God with power," *Rom. i. 4.* That was such a sign as surpassed all the rest, completed and crowned them. "If they will not believe the former signs, they will not believe this," *Ex. iv. 9*; and if this will not convince them, nothing will. And yet the unbelief of the Jews found out an evasion to shift off that too, by saying, "his disciples came and stole him away," for none are so incurably blind as those that are resolved they will not see. Now the sign of the prophet Jonas he further explains here, ver. 40: "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly," and then came out again safe and well, thus Christ shall be so long in the grave, and then shall rise again. 1st. The grave was to Christ as the belly of the fish was to Jonas; thither was he thrown as a ransom for lives ready to be lost in a storm; there he lay, as "in the belly of hell," *Jonah ii. 2*, and seemed to be cast out of God's sight. 2nd. He continued in the grave just as long as Jonas continued in the fish's belly, "three days and three nights;" not three whole days and nights; it is probable Jonas did not lie so long in the whale's belly, but part of three natural days (*νύκτες*, the Greeks called them): he was buried in the afternoon of the sixth day of the week, and rose again in the morning of the first day. It is a manner of speech very usual; see *1 Kin. xx. 29*; *Est. iv. 16*; *v. 1*; *Lu. ii. 21*. So long Jonas was a prisoner for his own sin, so long Christ was a prisoner for ours. 3rd. As Jonas in the whale's belly comforted himself with an assurance that yet he should look again towards God's "holy temple," *Jonah ii. 4*, so Christ, when he lay in the grave, is expressly said to "rest in hope," as one assured he should "not see corruption," *Acts ii. 26, 27*. 4th. As Jonas, on the third day, was discharged from his prison, and came to the land of the living again, from the "congregation of the dead," (for dead things are said to be "formed from under the water," *Job xxvi. 5*) so Christ, on the third day, should return to life, and rise out of his grave, to send abroad his Gospel to the Gentiles.

Thirdly, Christ takes this occasion to represent the sad character and condition of that generation in which he lived; a generation that would not be reformed, and therefore could not but be ruined. And he gives them their character, as it would stand in the day of judgment, under the full discoveries and final sentences of that day. Persons and things now appear under false colours; characters and conditions are here changeable: if, therefore, we would make a right estimate, we must take our measures from the last judgment; things are really what they are eternally. Now Christ represents the people of the Jews,

1. As a generation that would be condemned by "the men of Nineveh," whose repenting at the preaching of Jonah would "rise up in judgment" against them,

ver. 41. Christ's resurrection will be the sign of the prophet Jonas to them but it will not have so happy an effect upon them as that of Jonas had upon the Ninevites, for they were by it brought to such a repentance as prevented their ruin; but the Jews will be hardened in an unbelief that shall hasten their ruin. And in the day of judgment the repentance of the Ninevites will be mentioned as an aggravation of the sin, and consequently the condemnation, of those to whom Christ preached then, and of those to whom Christ is preached now; for this reason, because Christ is greater than Jonah. 1st. Jonah was but a man, subject to like passions, to like sinful passions, as we are; but Christ is the Son of God. 2nd. Jonah was a stranger in Nineveh; he came among strangers, that were prejudiced against his country; but Christ "came to his own," when he preached to the Jews; and much more when he is preached among professing Christians, that are called by his name. 3rd. Jonah preached but one short sermon, and that with no great solemnity, but as he passed along the streets; Christ renews his calls—sate and taught, taught in the synagogues. 4th. Jonah preached nothing but wrath and ruin within forty days, gave no instructions, directions, or encouragement to repent; but Christ, besides the warning given us of our danger, hath shewed wherein we must repent, and assured us of acceptance upon our repentance, because "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." 5th. Jonah wrought no miracle to confirm his doctrine, shewed no good will to the Ninevites; but Christ wrought abundance of miracles, and all miracles of mercy; and yet the Ninevites "repented at the preaching of Jonas," but the Jews were not wrought upon by Christ's preaching. Note, The goodness of some who have less helps and advantages for their souls, will aggravate the badness of those that have much greater; those that by twilight discover "the things that belong to their peace," will shame those that grope at noonday.

2. As a generation that would be condemned by the queen of the south, the queen of Sheba, ver. 42. The Ninevites would shame them for not repenting, the queen of Sheba for not believing in Christ. She came from a far country to hear the wisdom of Solomon; yet people will not be persuaded to come and hear the wisdom of Christ, though he is in every thing greater than Solomon. 1st. The queen of Sheba had no invitation to come to Solomon, nor any promise of being welcome; but we are invited to Christ, to sit at his feet, and hear his Word. 2nd. Solomon was but a wise man, but Christ is wisdom itself, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom. 3rd. The queen of Sheba had many difficulties to break through; she was a woman unfit for travel, the journey long and perilous; she was a queen, and what would become of her own country in her absence? We have no such cares to hinder us. 4th. She could not be sure that it would be worth her while to go so far on this errand. Fame uses to flatter men, and perhaps she might have in her own country, or court, wise men sufficient to instruct her; yet, having heard of Solomon's fame, she would see him; but we come not to Christ upon such uncertainties. 5th. She "came from the uttermost parts of the earth;" but we have Christ among us, and his Word nigh us: "Behold, he stands at the door, and knocks." 6th. It should seem, the wisdom the queen of Sheba came for, was only philosophy and politics; but the wisdom that is to be had with Christ, is wisdom to salvation. 7th. She could only hear Solomon's wisdom, he could not give her wisdom; but Christ will give wisdom to those that come to him; nay, he will himself "be made of God to them wisdom." So that, upon all these accounts, if we do not "hear the wisdom of Christ," the forwardness of the queen of Sheba, to come and hear the wisdom of Solomon will rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us; for Jesus Christ is greater than Solomon.

3. As a generation that were resolved to continue in the possession and under the power of Satan, notwithstanding all the methods that were used to dispossess him, and rescue them, they are compared to one from whom the devil is gone out, but returns with double force, ver. 43-45. The devil, here called "the unclean spirit," for he has lost all his purity, and delights in and promotes all manner of impurity among men. Now, 1st. The parable represents his possessing men's bodies; Christ having lately cast out a devil, and they having said he had a devil, gave occasion to shew how much they were under the power of Satan. This is a further proof that Christ did not cast out devils by compact with the devil, for then he would soon have returned again; but Christ's ejection of him was final, and such as barred re-entry; we find him charging the evil spirit to "go out, and enter no more," *Mar. ix. 17*. Probably the devil was wont sometimes thus to sport with those he had possession of: he would go out, and then return again with more fury; hence the lucid intervals of those in that condition were commonly followed with the more violent fits. When the devil is gone out, he is uneasy, for "he sleeps not except he have done mischief," *Pr. iv. 16*; "he walks in dry places," like one that is very melancholy; he "seeks rest, but finds none," until he returns again. When Christ cast the legion out of the man, they begged leave to enter into the swine, where they went not long in dry places, but into the lake presently. 2nd. The application of the parable makes it to represent the case of the body of the Jewish church and nation: "So shall it be with this wicked generation," that now resist, and will finally reject, the Gospel of Christ. The devil, who, by the labours of Christ and his disciples, had been cast out of many of the Jews, sought for rest among the heathen, from whose persons and temples the Christians would every where expel him: so Dr. Whitby. Or, finding no where else in the heathen world such pleasant desirable habitations to his satisfaction, as here in the hearts of the Jews, (so Dr. Hammond,) he shall therefore enter again in them; for Christ had not found admission among them; and they, by their prodigious wickedness and obstinate unbelief, were still more ready than ever to receive him. And then he shall take a durable possession here; and the state of this people is likely to be more desperately damnable (so Dr. Hammond) than it was before Christ came among them, or would have been, if Satan had never been cast out. The body of that nation is here represented, *First*, As an apostate people. After the captivity in Babylon, they began to reform; left their idols, appeared with some face of religion; but they soon corrupted themselves again. Though they never relapsed into idolatry, they fell into all manner of impiety and profaneness, went worse and worse, and added, to all the rest of their wickedness, a wilful contempt of, and opposition to, Christ and his Gospel. *Secondly*, As a people marked for ruin. A new commission was passing the seals against that "hypocritical nation," the "people of God's wrath," like that, *Isa. x. 6*; and their destruction by the Romans was likely to be greater than any other, as their sins had been more flagrant. Then it was that "wrath came upon them to the uttermost," *1 Thes. ii. 15, 16*. Let this be a warning to all nations and churches to take heed of leaving their first love, of letting fall a good work of reformation begun among them, and returning to that wickedness which they seemed to have forsaken; for "the last state of such will be worse than the first."

46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. 47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without,

said of the men who ascribed his miracles to Satan, whereas he wrought them by the Spirit of God. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men;" that is, can be pardoned, or is pardonable. In the next clause the word "Holy" is not in the original, which reads "but the blaspheming of the Spirit," meaning the Spirit of God named in verse 28.

xii. 32. The interpretations put upon these words are numerous. The sense is that there is hope of mercy for such as revile the

Messiah, but none for those who revile the Holy Spirit. When our Lord adds, "neither in this world, neither in the world to come," he surely does not teach that pardon for any sins is bestowed in the future state after death. Yet on such shadowy inferences the whole system of purgatory, prayers for the dead, and the like is founded. The phrase does not occur in the parallel texts, Mark iii. 29 and Luke iii. 10. Among the fathers Augustine was, perhaps, the first who thought this proved the forgiveness of some in the world to come.

desiring to speak with thee. 48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? 49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Many excellent useful sayings came from the mouth of our Lord Jesus upon particular occasions: even his digressions were instructive, as well as his set discourses; as here observe,

I. *How Christ was interrupted in his preaching by his mother and his brethren*, that "stood without, desiring to speak with him," ver. 46, 47; which desire of theirs was handed to him through the crowd. It is needless to inquire which of his brethren they were that came along with his mother; perhaps they were those that "did not believe in him," *Jno.* vii. 5; or what their business was; perhaps it was only designed to oblige him to break off, for fear he should overspend himself, or to caution him to take heed of giving offence, by his discourse, to the Pharisees, and running himself into a *premunire*; as if they could teach him wisdom.

First. He was yet "talking to the people." Note, Christ's preaching was talking; it was plain, easy, and familiar, and suited to their capacity and case. What Christ had delivered had been cavilled at, and yet he went on. Note, The opposition we meet with in our work must not drive us from it. He left off talking with the Pharisees, for he saw he could do no good with them; but continued to talk to the common people, who, having not such a conceit of their knowledge as the Pharisees had, were willing to learn.

Secondly. His mother and brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him, when they should have been standing within, desiring to hear him. They had the advantage of his daily converse in private, and therefore were less mindful to attend upon his public preaching. Note, Many times those that are nearest akin to the means of knowledge and grace are most negligent. Familiarity and easiness of access breed some degree of contempt. We are apt to neglect that, this day, which we think we may have any day, forgetting that it is only the present time we can be sure of: to-morrow is none of ours. There is too much truth in that common proverb, 'The nearer the church, the further from God.' It is a pity it should be so.

Thirdly. They not only would not hear him themselves, but they interrupted others, that "heard him gladly." The devil was a sworn enemy to our Saviour's preaching. He had sought to baffle his discourse by the unreasonable cavils of the scribes and Pharisees; and when he could not gain his point that way, he endeavoured to break it off by the unreasonable visits of his relations. Note, We often meet with hindrances and obstructions in our work by our friends that are about us, and are taken off by civil respects from our spiritual concerns. Those that really wish well to us, and to our work, may sometimes, by their indiscretion, prove our back friends, and impediments to us in our duty; as Peter was offensive to Christ, with his "Master, spare thyself," when he thought himself very officious. The mother of our Lord desired to speak with him. It seems she had not then learned to command her son, as the iniquity and idolatry of the church of Rome hath since pretended to teach her; nor was she so free from fault and folly as they would make her. It was Christ's prerogative, and not his mother's, to do every thing wisely and well, and in its season. Christ once said to his mother, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" and it was then said, she "laid up that saying in her heart," *Lu.* ii. 49. But if she had remembered it now, she would not have given him this diversion, when he was about his Father's business. Note, There is many a good truth, that we thought was well laid up when we heard it, which yet is out of the way when we have occasion to use it.

II. *How he resented this interruption*, ver. 48—50.

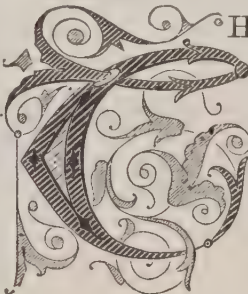
First. He would not hearken to it; was so intent upon his work, that no natural or civil respects should take him off from it: "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" Not that natural affection is to be put off; or that, under pretence of religion, we may be disrespectful to parents, or unkind to other relations; but "every thing is beautiful in its season," and the lesser duty must stand by while the greater is done. When our regard to our relations comes in competition with the service of God, and the improving of an opportunity to do good, in such a case we must say to our father, "I have not seen him," as Levi did, *Deu.* xxxiii. 9. The nearest relations must be comparatively hated; that is, we must love them less than Christ, *Lu.* xiv. 26; and our duty to God must have the preference. This Christ has here given us an example of; the "zeal of God's house" did so far "eat him up," that it made him not only forget himself, but forget his dearest relations; and we must not take it ill of our friends, nor put it upon the score of their wickednesses, if they prefer the pleasing of God before the pleasing of us; but must readily forgive those neglects which may easily be imputed to a pious zeal for God's glory and others' good. Nay, we must deny ourselves, and our satisfaction, rather than do that which may any way divert our friends from, or distract them in, their duty to God.

Secondly. He took that occasion to prefer his disciples, who were his spiritual kindred, before his natural relations as such, which was a good reason why he would not leave preaching to speak with his brethren. He would rather be profiting his disciples than pleasing his relations. Observe, 1. The description of Christ's disciples: they are such as "do the will of his Father;" not only hear it, and know it, and talk of it, but do it; for doing the will of God is the best preparative for discipleship, *Jno.* vii. 17, and the best proof of it, *ch.* vii. 21; that denominates us his disciples indeed. Christ doth not say, "Whosoever shall do my will;" for he came not to seek or do his own will, distinct from his Father's; his will and his Father's are the same; but he refers us to his Father's will, because now, in his present state and work, he referred himself to it, *Jno.* vi. 38. 2. The dignity of Christ's disciples: "The same is my brother, and sister, and mother." His disciples, that had left all to follow him, and embraced his doctrine, were dearer to him than any that were akin to him according to the flesh. They had preferred Christ before their relations; they "left their father," *ch.* iv. 22; x. 37; and now, to make them amends, and to shew that there was no love lost, he preferred them before his relations. Did not they hereby receive, in point of honour, "a hundredfold?" *ch.* xix. 29. It was very endearing, and very encouraging, for Christ to say, "Behold my mother, and my brethren;" yet it was not their privilege alone; "this honour have all the saints." Note, All obedient believers are near akin to Jesus Christ: they wear his name, bear his image, have his nature, are of his family. He loves them, owns them, converses freely with them, as his relations; he bids them

welcome to his table, takes care of them, provides for them, sees that they want nothing that is fit for them: when he died, he left them rich legacies; now he is in heaven, he keeps up a correspondence with them, and will have them all with him at last, and will in nothing fail to "do the kinsman's part," *Ru.* iii. 13; nor will ever be ashamed of his poor relations, but will confess them before men, before the angels, and before his Father.

CHAPTER XIII.

In this chapter we have, I. The favour which Christ did to his countrymen in preaching the kingdom of heaven to them, ver. 1, 2. He preached to them in parables, and here gives the reason why he chose that way of instructing, ver. 10—17. And the evangelist gives another reason, ver. 34, 35. Here are eight parables recorded in this chapter, which are designed to represent "the kingdom of heaven," the method of planting the gospel kingdom in the world, and of its growth and success. The great truths and laws of that kingdom are in other Scriptures laid down plainly, and without parables; but, from circumstances of its beginning and progress, are here laid open in parables. 1. Here is one parable to shew what are the great hindrances of people's profiting by the word of the Gospel, and in how many it comes short of its end, through their own folly; and that is the parable of the four sorts of grounds, delivered, ver. 3—9, and expounded, ver. 18—23. 2. Here are two parables intended to shew that there would be a mixture of good and bad in the gospel church, which would continue till the great separation between them in the judgment day. The parable of the tares put forth, ver. 24—36, and expounded, at the request of the disciples, ver. 36—43; and that of the net cast into the sea, ver. 47—50. 3. Here are two parables intended to shew that the gospel church would be very small at first, but in process of time it should become a considerable body: that of the grain of mustard seed, ver. 31, 32, and that of the leaven, ver. 33. 4. Here are two parables intended to shew that those who expect salvation by the Gospel must be willing to venture all, and quit all in the prospect of it, and they shall be no losers by the bargain: that of the treasure hid in the field, ver. 43, and that of the pearl of great price, ver. 45, 46. 5. Here is one parable intended for direction to the disciples to make use of the instructions he had given them for the benefit of others; and that is the parable of the good householder, ver. 51, 52. II. The contempt which his countrymen put upon him, for the sake of the meanness of his parentage, ver. 53—58.



HE same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. 3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: 8 But other fell into good ground, and



EGYPTIAN SOWING WHEAT.

brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. 9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

xii. 35. Menander says, "Good works proceed from a good mind." This sentiment accords with the first part of the verse before us, and implies the second.

xii. 40. The word "whale" here stands for "fish" in *Jonah* i. 17, where the Septuagint version has "whale:" "And the Lord commanded a great whale to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights." But it is well known that the Greeks gave the name of whale to other very large fish.

On the common objection that Jesus was not in the grave three days and three nights, Kuinoel says, "The Hebrews called two nights, with part of the first and third day, three days and three nights." Hence such passages as *1 Sam.* xxx. 12, 13.

xii. 42. "The queen of the south" is called queen of Sheba in *1 Kings* x. 1, and *2 Chron.* ix. 1. Josephus says she ruled over Ethiopia and Egypt, and so the Abyssinians say; but the Arabs say she came from Saba, in Arabia Felix. In this verse, for "a greater

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. 17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. 18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

We have here Christ preaching, and may observe.

First. When Christ preached this sermon, it was the same day that he preached the sermon in the foregoing chapter; so unwearied was he in doing good, and working the works of Him that sent him. Note, Christ was for preaching both ends of the day, and has, by his example, recommended that practice to his church: we must, "in the morning sow our seed, and in the evening not withhold our hand," see *Ecc. xi. 6*. An afternoon sermon, well heard, will be so far from driving out the morning sermon, that it will rather clench it, and fasten the nail in a sure place. Though Christ had been in the morning opposed and cavilled at by his enemies, and disturbed and interrupted by his friends, yet he went on with his work; and in the latter part of the day we do not find that he met with such discouragements. Those who with courage and zeal break through difficulties, in God's service, will perhaps find them not so apt to recur as they fear. Resist them, and they will flee.

Secondly. To whom he preached. There were "great multitudes gathered together to him," and they were the auditors. We do not find that any of the scribes or Pharisees were present: they were willing to hear him when he preached in the synagogue, *ch. xii. 9, 14*; but they thought it below them to go hear a sermon by the sea side, though Christ himself was the preacher; and truly he had better have their room than their company; for, now they were absent, he went on quietly and without contradiction. Note, Sometimes there is most of the power of religion there, where there is less of the pomp of it: "the poor receive the Gospel." When Christ went "to the sea side," "multitudes" were presently "gathered together to him." Where the king is, there is the court; where Christ is, there is the church, though it be the sea side. Note, Those that would get good by the Word, must be willing to follow it in all its removes; when the ark shifts, shift after it. The Pharisees had been labouring, by base calumnies and suggestions, to drive the people off from following Christ, but they still flocked after him as much as ever. Note, Christ will be glorified, in spite of all opposition; he will be followed.

Thirdly. Where he preached this sermon. 1. His meeting place was the sea side. He went "out of the house" (because there was no room for the auditory) into the open air. It was a pity but such a preacher should have had the most spacious, sumptuous, and convenient place to preach in that could be devised, like one of the Roman theatres. But he was now in his state of humiliation; and in this, as in other things, denied himself the honours due to him: that as he had not a house of his own to live in, so he had not a chapel of his own to preach in. By this he teacheth us, in the external circumstances of worship, not to covet that which is stately, but to make the best of the conveniences which God in his providence allots to us. When Christ was born he was crowded into the stable; and now to the sea side, upon the strand, where all persons might come to him with freedom. He that was truth itself sought no corners, no *adyta*, as the pagan mysteries did: "Wisdom cried without," *Pr. i. 20*; *Jno. xviii. 20*. 2. His pulpit was a ship; not like Ezra's pulpit, that was "made for the purpose," *Neh. viii. 4*; but converted to this use, for want of a better. No place amiss for such a preacher, whose presence dignified and consecrated any place. Let not those who preach Christ be ashamed, though they have mean and inconvenient places to preach in. Some observe, that the people stood upon dry ground, and firm ground, while the preacher was upon the water, in more hazard. Ministers are most exposed to trouble. Here was a true *restrum*, ship pulpit.

Fourthly. What, and how he preached. 1. He "spake many things unto them;" many more, it is likely, than are here recorded, but all excellent and necessary things; things that belong to our peace, things pertaining to the "kingdom of heaven;" they were not trifles, but things of everlasting consequence that Christ spoke of. It concerns us to "give a more earnest heed," when Christ hath so many things to say to us, that we miss not any of them. 2. What he spoke was "in parables;" a parable sometimes signifies any wise, weighty saying, that is instructive; but here, in the Gospels, it generally signifies a continued similitude, or comparison, by which spiritual and heavenly things were described in language borrowed from the things of this life. It was a way of teaching used very much, not only by the Jewish rabbins, but by the Arabians, and other the wise men of the East; and it was found very profitable, and the more so for its being pleasant. Our Saviour used it much, and in it condescended to the capacities of people, and lisped to them in their own language. God had long "used similitudes by his servants the prophets," *Hos. xii. 10*, and to little purpose; now he useth similitudes by his Son; surely they will reverence him, who speaks "from heaven," and of "heavenly things," and yet clothes them with expressions borrowed from "things earthly;" see *Jno. iii. 12*; so descending in a cloud. Now.

I. We have here the general reason why Christ taught in parables. The disciples were a little surprised at it: for, hitherto, in his preaching, he had not much used it; and therefore they ask, "Why speakest thou to them in parables?" Because they were truly desirous that the people might hear with understanding. They do not say, "Why speakest thou to us?" they knew how to get the parables explained, but "to them." Note, We ought to be concerned for the edification of others, as well as for our own, by the Word preached; and, if ourselves strong, yet to "bear the infirmities of the weak." To this question Christ answers largely, *ver. 11-17*, where he tells them, that therefore he preached in parables, because thereby the things of God were made more plain, and easy to them that were willing to be taught, and, at the same time, more difficult and obscure to those that were willingly ignorant; and thus the Gospel would be a "savour of life" to some, and of death to others. A parable, like the pillar of cloud and fire, turns a dark side towards Egyptians, which confounds them, but a light side towards Israelites, which comforts them, and so answers a double intention. The same light directs the eyes of some, but dazzles the eyes of others. Now,

First. This reason is laid down, *ver. 11*: "Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." That is, 1. The disciples had knowledge, but the people had not. You know already something of these mysteries, and need not in this familiar way to be instructed; but the people are ignorant, are yet but babes, and must be taught as such, by plain similitudes, being yet incapable of receiving instruction in any other way; for 'though they have eyes, they know not how to use them;' so some. Or, 2. The disciples were well inclined to the knowledge of gospel mysteries, and would search into the parables, and by them would be led into a more intimate acquaintance with those mysteries; but the carnal hearers, that rested in bare hearing, and would not be at the pains to look further, nor to ask the meaning of the parables, would be never the wiser, and so would justly suffer for their remissness. A parable is a shell that keeps good fruit for the diligent, but keeps it from the slothful. Note, 1st. There are mysteries in the kingdom of heaven; and, without controversy, "great is the mystery of godliness." Christ's incarnation, satisfaction, intercession, our justification and sanctification by union with Christ, and indeed the whole work of redemption, from first to last, are mysteries; they could never have been discovered but by Divine revelation, *1 Cor. xv. 51*; were at this time discovered but in part to the disciples, and will never be fully discovered till the veil shall be rent: but the mysteriousness of gospel truth should not discourage us from, but quicken us in, our inquiries after it, and searches into it. 2nd. It is graciously given to the disciples of Christ to be acquainted with these mysteries. Knowledge is the first gift of God, and it is a distinguishing gift, *Pr. ii. 6*. It was given to the apostles, because they were Christ's constant followers and attendants. Note, The nearer we draw to Christ, and the more we converse with him, the better acquainted we shall be with gospel mysteries. It is given to all true believers, who have an experimental knowledge of the gospel mysteries; and that is, without doubt, the best knowledge. A principle of grace in the heart is that which makes men of quick understanding "in the fear of the Lord," and in the faith of Christ, and so in the meaning of parables; and for want of that, Nicodemus, a master in Israel, talked of the "new birth" as a blind man of colours. 3rd. That there are those to "whom this knowledge is not given;" and a man can "receive nothing unless it be given him from above," *Jno. iii. 27*. And be it remembered that God is debtor to no man; his grace is his own, he gives or withholds it at pleasure; *Rom. xi. 35*. The difference must be resolved into God's sovereignty, as before, *ch. xi. 25, 26*.

Secondly. This reason is further illustrated by the rule God observes in dispensing his gifts; he bestows them on those that improve them, but takes them away from those that bury them. It is a rule among men, that they will rather intrust their money with those that have increased their estates by their industry, than with those who have diminished them by their slothfulness. 1. Here is a promise to him that hath, that hath true grace, pursuant to the election of grace; that hath, and useth what he hath; he shall have more abundance. God's favours are earnest of further favours; where he lays the foundation he will build upon it. Christ's disciples used the knowledge they now had, and they had more abundance at the pouring out of the Spirit, *Acts ii*. They that have the truth of grace shall have the increase of grace, even to an abundance in glory, *Pr. iv. 18*. "Joseph, he will add," *Gen. xxx. 24*. 2. Here is a threatening to him that hath not; that has no desire of grace, that makes no right use of the gifts and graces he has, has no root, no solid principle; that hath, but useth not what he has; from him shall be taken away that which he

than Solomon," we should read, "more than Solomon." So in verse 41, for "a greater than Jonas," we should have "more than Jonas."

xii. 43-45. This passage is an allegory or a parable, the imagery of which is drawn from opinions current among the Jews. To regard it as a literal statement of fact is scarcely possible. The man who gives up evil and does not take to good is likely before long to be worse than before.

xii. 46. The mention of our Lord's brethren has provoked much

discussion, and sundry opinions respecting their relation to him have been entertained. The ancient writer Hegesippus says that, in the time of Domitian, "there were yet living of the family of our Lord the grandchildren of Judas, called the brother of our Lord, according to the flesh." Some have supposed they were the children of Mary's sister, the wife of Cleopas or Alphaeus; others that they were the sons of Joseph by a former wife; and others that they were really the sons of Mary, and the younger brothers of Jesus. This last

has, or seems to have. His leaves shall wither, his gifts decay; the means of grace he has, and makes no use of, shall be taken from him. God will call in his talents, out of their hands that are likely to become bankrupts quickly.

Thirdly. This reason is particularly explained with reference to the two sorts of people Christ had to do with.

1. Some were willingly ignorant; and such were amused by the parables, ver. 13, "because they seeing, see not." They had shut their eyes against the clear light of Christ's plainer preaching, and therefore were now left in the dark. Seeing Christ's person, they see not his glory, see no difference between him and another man; seeing his miracles, and hearing his preaching, they see not, they hear not, with any concern or application; they understand neither. Note, 1st, There are many that see the gospel light, and hear the gospel sound, but it never reacheth their hearts, nor has it any place in them. 2nd, It is just with God to take away the light from those that shut their eyes against it; that such as will be ignorant may be so. And God's dealing thus with them magnifies his distinguishing grace to his disciples. Now in this the Scripture would be fulfilled, ver. 14, 15: it is quoted from *Isa. vi. 9, 10*; the evangelical prophet, that spoke most plainly of gospel grace, foretold the contempt of it, and the consequences of that contempt. It is referred to no less than six times in the New Testament, which intimates that in gospel times spiritual judgments would be most common, which make least noise, but are most dreadful. That which was spoken of the sinners in Isaiah's time was fulfilled in those in Christ's time, and it is still in the fulfilling every day; for while the wicked heart of man keeps up the same sin, the righteous hand of God inflicts the same punishment. Here is, *First*, A description of sinners' wilful blindness and hardness, which is their sin: "This people's heart is waxed gross," it is "fattened;" so the word is, which notes both sensuality and senselessness, *Ps. cix. 70*: secure under the word and rod of God, and scornful as Jeshurun, that "waxed fat and wicked," *Deu. xxxii. 15*; and when the heart is thus heavy, no wonder that the ears are dull of hearing. The whispers of the Spirit they hear not at all; or the loud calls of the Word, though the Word be nigh them, they regard not, nor are at all affected with: "they stop their ears," *Ps. lvi. 4, 5*; and because they are resolved to be ignorant, they shut up both the learning senses, for they eyes also they have closed, resolved they would not see light come into the world when the Sun of Righteousness arose, but they shut their windows, because they "loved darkness rather than light," *1 Jno. iii. 19*; 2 *Pet. iii. 5*. *Secondly*, A description of that judicial blindness which is the just punishment of this: "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand;" that is, "What means of grace you have shall be to no purpose to you; though in mercy to others they are continued, yet in judgment to you the blessing upon them is denied." The saddest condition a man can be in, on this side hell, is to sit under the most lively ordinances with a dead, stupid, untouched heart. To hear God's word, and see his providences, and yet not to understand and perceive his will, either in the one or in the other, is the greatest sin, and the greatest judgment, that can be. Observe, It is God's work to "give an understanding heart;" and he often, in a way of righteous judgment, denies it to those to whom he hath given the hearing ear and the seeing eye in vain. Thus doth God choose sinners' delusions, *1 Jn. xvi. 4*, and binds them over to the greatest ruin, by giving them up to their own hearts' lusts, *Ps. lxxx. 11, 12*: "Let them alone," *Hos. iv. 17*; "My Spirit shall not always strive," *Gen. vi. 3*. *Thirdly*, The woful effect and consequence of this, "lest at any time they should see." They will not see, because they will not turn; and God saith they shall not see, because they shall not turn, "lest they should be converted, and I should heal them." Note, 1. That seeing, hearing, and understanding are necessary to conversion; for God, in working grace, deals with men as men, as rational agents; he draws with cords of a man, changeth the heart, by opening the eyes; and turn "from the power of Satan unto God," by turning first "from darkness to light," *Acts xxvi. 18*. 2. Al those that are truly converted to God, shall certainly be healed by him: "If they be converted, I shall heal them, I shall save them." So that if sinners perish, it is not along of God, but of themselves; they foolishly expected to be healed, without being converted. 3. It is just with God to deny his grace to those that have long and oft refused the proposals of it, and resisted the power of it. Pharaoh for a good while hardened his own heart, *Ex. viii. 15, 32*; and afterwards God hardened it, *Ex. ix. 12*; x. 20. Let us therefore fear, lest by sinning against the Divine grace, we sin it away.

2. Others were effectually called to be the disciples of Christ, and were truly desirous to be taught of him, and they were instructed and made to improve greatly in knowledge by these parables, especially when they were expounded; and by them the things of God were made more plain and easy, more intelligible and familiar, and more apt to be remembered, ver. 16, 17; "your eyes see, your ears hear." They saw the glory of God in Christ's person, they heard the mind of God in Christ's doctrine; they saw much, and were desirous to see more, and thereby were prepared to receive further instruction; they had opportunity for it, by being constant attendants on Christ, and they should have it from day to day, and grace with it. Now this Christ speaks of, 1st. As a blessing: "Blessed are your eyes, for they see," and "your ears, for they hear;" that is, "It is your happiness (and it is a happiness), for which you are indebted to the peculiar favour and blessing of God; it is a promised blessing, that, in the days of the Messiah, 'the eyes of them that see shall not be dim,' *Isa. xxxii. 3*. The eyes of the meanest believer, that knows experimentally the grace of Christ, are more blessed than those of the greatest scholars, the greatest masters in experimental philosophy, that are strangers to God, who, like the other gods they serve, 'have eyes, and see not.' "Blessed are your eyes." Note, True blessedness is entailed upon the right understanding and due improvement of the mysteries of the kingdom of God. The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, are God's work in those that are sanctified; they are the work of his grace, *Pr. xx. 12*; and they are a blessed work, which shall be fulfilled with power, when those that now "see through a glass darkly shall see face to face." It was to illustrate this blessedness that Christ said so much of the misery of those that are left in ignorance: "they have eyes, and see not," but "blessed are your eyes." Note, The knowledge of Christ is a distinguishing favour to those that have it, and upon that account the more obliging; see *1 Jno. xiv. 22*. The apostles were to teach others, and therefore were themselves blessed with the clearest discoveries of Divine truth: "The watchmen shall see eye to eye," *Isa. lii. 8*. 2nd, As a transcendent blessing, desired by, but not granted to, many prophets and righteous men, ver. 17. The Old Testament saints, that had some glimpses, some glimmerings of gospel light, coveted earnestly further discoveries. They had the types, shadows, and prophecies of these things, but longed to see the substance; that glorious end of these things which they could not steadfastly look unto; that glorious inside of those things which they could not look into. They desired to see the great salvation, the consolation of Israel; but did not see it, because "the fulness of time was not yet come." Note, 1. Those that know something of Christ cannot but covet to know more. 2. The discoveries of Divine grace are made, even to prophets and righteous men, but according to the dispensation they are under. Though they were the favourites of Heaven, with whom God's secret was, yet they have not seen the things which they desired to see, because God had

determined not to bring them to light yet; and his favours shall not anticipate his counsels. There was then, as there is still, "a glory to be revealed;" something in reserve, "that they without us should not be made perfect," *Heb. xi. 40*. 3. For the exciting of our thankfulness, and the quickening of our diligence, it is good for us to consider what means we enjoy, and what discoveries are made to us now, under the Gospel, over what they had and enjoyed that lived under the Old Testament dispensation, especially in the revelation of the atonement for sin—see what are the advantages of the New Testament above the Old, *2 Cor. iii. 7, &c.*; *Heb. xii. 18*; and see that our improvements be proportionable to our advantages.

1. We have here, in these verses, one of the parables which our Saviour put forth; it is that of the sower, and the seed; both the parable itself and the reddition of it. Christ's parables are borrowed from common ordinary things, not from any philosophical notions or speculations, or the unusual phenomena of nature, though applicable enough to the matter in hand, but from the most obvious things, that are of every day's observation, and come within reach of the meanest capacity; many of them are fetched from the husbandman's calling, as this of the sower, and that of the tares. Christ chose to do this, 1. That spiritual things might hereby be made more plain, and, by familiar similitudes, might be made the more easily to slide into our understandings. 2. That common actions might hereby be spiritualized, and we might take occasion, from those things which fall so often under our view, to meditate with delight on the things of God; and thus, when our hands are busiest about the world, we may not only, notwithstanding that, but even with the help of that, be led to have our hearts in heaven: thus the word of God shall talk with us, talk familiarly with us, *Pr. vi. 22*. The parable of the sower is plain enough, ver. 3-9. The exposition of it we have from Christ himself, who knew best what was his own meaning. The disciples, when they asked, "Why speakest thou to them in parables?" ver. 10, intimated a desire to have the parable explained for the sake of the people; nor was any disparagement to their own knowledge to desire it for themselves. Our Lord Jesus kindly took the hint, and gave the sense, and "caused them to understand" the parable, directing his discourse to the disciples, but in the hearing of the multitude, for he did not dismiss them till ver. 36. "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower," ver. 13; "You have heard it, but let us go over it again." Note, It is of good use, and would contribute much to our understanding of the Word, and of God's will, to hear the interpretation of it. Note, Then only we hear the Word aright, and to good purpose, when we understand what we hear; it is no hearing at all, if it be not with understanding, *Neh. xiii. 2*. It is God's grace, indeed, that gives the understanding, but it is our duty to give our minds to understand. Let us therefore compare the parable and the exposition.

First. The seed sown is the Word of God, here called "the word of the kingdom," ver. 19; that is, the kingdom of heaven; that is the kingdom; the kingdoms of the world, compared with that, are not to be called kingdoms. The Gospel comes from that kingdom, and conducts to that kingdom. The word of the Gospel is "the word of the kingdom;" it is the word of the King; and where that is, "there is power;" it is a law by which we must be ruled and governed. This word is the seed sown, which seems a dead dry thing, but all the product is virtually in it. It is "incorruptible seed," *1 Pet. i. 23*. It is the Gospel that "brings forth fruit" in souls, *Col. i. 5, 6*.

Secondly. The sower, that scatters this seed, is our Lord Jesus Christ, either by himself or by his ministers; see ver. 37. People are God's husbandry, his tillage; so the word is; and ministers are "labourers together with God," *1 Cor. iii. 9*. Preaching to a multitude is sowing the corn; we know not where it must light; only see that it be good, that it be clean, and be sure to give it seed enough. The sowing of the Word is the sowing of a people for God's field, the corn of his floor, *Isa. xxi. 16*.

Thirdly. The ground, in which this seed is sown, is the hearts of the children of men, which are differently qualified and disposed; and accordingly the success of the Word is different. Note, Man's heart is like soil, capable of improvement, of bearing good fruit; it is a pity it should lie fallow, or be like the field of the slothful, *Pr. xxiv. 30*. The soul is the proper place for the Word of God to dwell, and work, and rule in; its operation is upon conscience; it is to light that "candle of the Lord." Now, according as we are, so the Word is to us; *recipitur ad modum recipientis*—the reception depends upon the receiver. As it is with the earth, some sort of ground, take never so much pains with it, and throw never so good seed into it, yet it brings forth no fruit to any purpose; while the good soil brings forth plentifully: so it is with the hearts of men, whose different characters are here represented by four sorts of ground, of which three are bad, and but one good. Note, The number of fruitless hearers is very great, ever of those that heard Christ himself preach: "Who has believed our report?" It is a melancholy prospect which this parable gives us of the congregations of those that hear the Gospel preached, that scarce one in four brings forth fruit to perfection. Many are called, with the common call, but in few is the Eternal choice evidenced by the efficacy of that call, *ch. xx. 16*. Now observe the characters of these four sorts of ground.

1. The highway ground, ver. 4-19. They had pathways through their corn fields, *ch. xii. 1*; and the seed that fell on them never entered, and so the birds picked it up. The place where Christ's hearers now stood, represented the characters of most of them; the sand on the sea shore, which was to the seed like the highway ground. Observe, 1st, What kind of hearers are compared to the highway ground: such as hear the Word, and understand it not; and it is their own fault that they do not. They take no heed to it, take no hold of it; they do not come with any design to get good, as the highway was never intended to be sown. They come before God as his people come, and sit before him as his people sit; but it is merely for fashion's sake, to see and be seen; they mind not what is said; it comes in at one ear, and goes out at the other, and makes no impression. 2nd, How they come to be unprofitable hearers. The "wicked one," that is the devil, "cometh and catcheth away that which was sown." Such mindless, careless, trifling hearers are an easy prey to Satan; who, as he is the great murderer of souls, so he is the great thief of sermons, and will be sure to rob us of the Word, if we take not care to keep it; as the birds pick up the seed that falls on the ground that is neither ploughed before, nor harrowed after. If we break not up the fallow ground, by preparing our hearts to the Word, and humbling them to it, and engaging our own attention,—and if we cover not the seed afterwards, by meditation and prayer,—if we give not "a more earnest heed to the things which we have heard," we are as the highway ground. Note, The devil is a sworn enemy to our profiting by the Word of God; and none do more befriend his design than heedless hearers, who are thinking of something else, when they should be thinking of the things that belong to their peace.

2. The stony ground. Some fell upon stony places," ver. 6, 7; which represents the case of hearers, that go further than the former, who receive some good impressions of the Word, but they are not lasting, ver. 20, 21. Note, It is possible we may be a great deal better than some others, and yet not be so good as we should be; may go beyond our neighbours, and yet come short of heaven. Now observe, concerning these hearers that are represented by the

opinion came to be so objectionable that at an early date it was considered heretical, owing to its incompatibility with the ecclesiastical doctrine of the perpetual virginity of our Lord's mother.

xiii. 1. The words rendered "the same day" are more literally "on that day;" and it has been thought not certain whether or no the day was the one to which the preceding events belong. The question is not of much importance, but a reference to verse 46 of chap. xii, suggests that "the same day" is in all probability intended,

though verse 9 of the same chapter is regarded as throwing a doubt upon it. The sea is the sea of Galilee.

xiii. 3. The word parable is used in several different senses in our version of Scripture, but it is commonly applied in the Gospels to those imaginary narratives which are designed in a figurative form to teach spiritual truth. The parable is somewhat different from a fable, inasmuch as the latter is usually meant only to convey some lesson in ordinary prudence or morality. It differs from an allegory,

stony ground.—1st. How far they went. First. They "hear the Word;" they turn neither their backs upon it, nor a deaf ear to it. Note, Hearing the Word, though never so frequently, never so gravely, if we rest in that, will never bring us to heaven. Secondly. They are "quick in hearing" swift to hear; "he anon receiveth it," (*εὐθεὺς*), he is ready to receive it; "forthwith it sprung up," ver. 5; it sooner appeared above ground than that which was sown in the good soil. Note, Hypocrites often get the start of true Christians in the shows of profession, and are often too hot to hold. He "receiveth it straightway," without trying it; swallows it without chewing, and then there can never be a good digestion; those are most likely to "hold fast that which is good," that "prove all things," 1 *Thes. v. 21*. Thirdly. They receive it with joy. Note, There are many that are very glad to hear a good sermon, that yet do not profit by it; may be pleased with the Word, and yet not changed and ruled by it; the heart may melt under the Word, and yet not be melted down by the Word, much less into it, as into a mould. Many taste the good Word of God, *Heb. vi. 5*, and say they find sweetness in it; but some beloved lust is "rolled under the tongue," which it would not agree with, and so they spit it out again. Fourthly. They "endure for a while," like a violent motion, which continues as long as the impression of the force remains, but ceaseth when that hath spent itself. Note, Many "endure for a while," that do not endure to the end, and so come short of the happiness which is promised to them only that persevere, *ch. x. 12*; they did run well, but something hindered them, *Gal. v. 7*. 2nd. How they fell away, so that no fruit was brought to perfection; no more than the corn, that having no depth of earth, from which to draw moisture, is scorched and withered by the heat of the sun; and the reason is, First. They have "no root in themselves," no settled fixed principles in their judgments, no firm resolution in their wills, nor any rooted habits in their affections; nothing firm, that will be either the sap or the strength of their profession. Note, 1. It is possible there may be the green blade of a profession, where yet there is not the root of grace; hardness prevails in the heart, and what there is of soil and softness is only in the surface; inwardly they are no more affected than a stone; they have no root, that is, they are not by faith united to Christ, who is our root; they derive not from him, they depend not on him. 2. Where there is not a principle, though there be a profession, we cannot expect perseverance. Those that have no root will endure but a while. A ship without ballast, though she may at first out sail the laden vessel, yet will certainly fail in stress of weather, and never make her port. Secondly. Times of trial come, and then they come to nothing: "When tribulation and persecution arise because of the Word, he is offended;" it is a stumblingblock in his way, which he cannot get over; and so he flies off, and this is all that his profession comes to. Note, 1. After a fair gale of opportunity, usually follows a storm of persecution, to try who have received the Word in sincerity, and who have not. When the Word of Christ's kingdom comes to be the Word of Christ's patience, *Rev. iii. 10*, then is the trial, who keeps it, and who doth not, *Rev. i. 9*; it is wisdom to prepare for such a day. 2. When trying times come, those that have no root are soon offended; they first quarrel with their profession, and then quit it; first find fault with it, and then throw it off. Hence we read of "the offence of the cross," *Gal. v. 11*. Observe, The persecution is represented in the parable by "the scorching sun," ver. 6: the same sun which warms and cherishes that which is well rooted, withers and burns up that which is without root. As the Word of Christ, so the cross of Christ, is to some "a savour of life unto life," to others "a savour of death unto death." The same tribulation which drives some to apostasy and ruin, works for others a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Trials which shake some, confirm others, *Phil. i. 12*. Observe, How soon they fall away; by and by, as soon rotten as they were ripe; a profession taken up without consideration is commonly let fall without it. "Light come, light go."

3. The thorny ground. "Some fell among thorns," which are a good guard to the corn, when they are in the hedge; but a bad inmate, when they are in the field; "and the thorns sprung up;" which intimates that they did not appear, or but little, when the corn was sown; but afterwards they proved choking to it, ver. 7. This went further than the former, for it had root; and it represents the condition of those that do not quite cast off their profession, and yet come short of any saving benefit by it; the good they gain by the Word being insensibly overcome and overborne by the things of this world. Prosperity destroys the Word in the heart, as much as persecution doth, and more dangerously, because more silently: the stones spoiled the root, the thorns spoil the fruit. Now, what are these choking thorns? 1st. "The cares of this world." Care for another world would quicken the springing of this seed, but care for this world chokes it. Worldly cares are fitly compared to thorns, for they came in with sin, and are a fruit of the curse; they are good in their place; to stop a gap; but a man must be well armed that deals too much in them, 2 *Sam. xxiii. 6, 7*; they are entangling, vexing, scratching, and "their end is to be burned," *Heb. vi. 8*; these thorns choke the good seed. Note, Worldly cares are great hindrances to our profiting by the Word of God, and our proficiency in religion; they eat up that vigour of the soul which should be spent in Divine things, divert us from duty, distract us in duty, and do us most mischief of all afterwards; quenching the sparks of good affections, and bursting the cords of good resolutions. Those that are "careful, and cumbered about many things," commonly "neglect the one thing needful." 2nd. "The deceitfulness of riches." Those that by their care and industry have raised estates, and so the danger that ariseth from care seems to be over, and they "continue hearers of the Word," yet are still in a snare, *Jer. v. 4, 5*. It is "hard for them to enter into the kingdom of heaven." They are apt to promise themselves that in riches that is not in them; to rely upon them, and to take an inordinate complacency in them; and this chokes the Word as much as care did. Observe, It is not so much riches, as "the deceitfulness of riches," that doth the mischief. Now they cannot be said to be deceitful to us, unless we put our confidence in them, and raise our expectations from them, and then it is that they choke the good seed.

4. The good ground, ver. 18. "Other fell into good ground;" and it is a pity out that good seed should always meet with good soil, and then there is no loss: such are "good hearers of the Word," ver. 23. Note, Though there are many that "receive the grace of God," and the Word of his grace, "in vain," yet God hath a remnant, by whom it is received to good purpose; for God's Word shall not return empty, *Isa. lv. 10, 11*. Now, that which differed this good ground from the rest, was in one word, "fruitfulness." By this true Christians are distinguished from hypocrites, that they "bring forth the fruits of righteousness; so shall ye be my disciples," *Jno. xv. 8*. He doth not say that this good ground has no stones in it, or no thorns; but "there were none that prevailed to hinder its fruitfulness." Saints in this world are not perfectly free from the remains of sin, but happily freed from the reign of it. The hearers represented by the good ground are, 1st. Intelligent hearers. They "hear the Word, and understand it;" they understand, not only the sense and meaning of the words, but their own concern in them; they understand it as a man of business understands his business. God, in his Word, deals with men as men, in a rational way, and gains possession of the will and affections by opening the understanding; whereas Satan, who is a thief and a robber, "comes not in

by that door, but climbeth up another way." 2nd. Fruitful hearers, which is an evidence of their good understanding, which "also beareth fruit." Fruit is to every seed its own body, a substantial product in the heart and life, agreeable to the seed of the Word received. We then bear fruit, when we practise according to the Word; when the temper of our minds and the tenor of our lives are conformable to the Gospel we have received, and we do as we are taught. 3rd. Not all alike fruitful; "some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." Note, Among fruitful Christians, some are more fruitful than others. Where there is true grace, yet there are degrees of it; some are of greater attainments in knowledge and holiness than others; all Christ's scholars are not in the same form. We should aim at the highest degree, to "bring forth an hundredfold," as Isaac's ground did, *Gen. xxvi. 12*; "abounding in the work of the Lord," *Jno. xv. 8*. But if the ground be good, and the fruit right—the heart honest, and the life of a piece with it, those that bring forth but thirtyfold shall be graciously accepted of God, and it will be fruit abounding to their account; for "we are under grace, and not under the law."

Lastly. He closeth the parable with a solemn call to attention, ver. 9: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Note, The sense of hearing cannot be better employed than in hearing the Word of God. Some are for hearing sweet melody, their ears are only the "daughters of music," *Ecc. xii. 4*; there is no melody like that of the Word of God: others are for "hearing new things," *Acts xvi. 21*; no news like that.

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. 31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. 33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. 34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: 35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. 36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the tares

because an allegory is altogether a figurative substitution of one set of persons and events for another. It differs from a myth, which is not only imaginary, but commonly with no definite moral. Sometimes a parable is identical with a proverb in the language of Scripture, but the proverb in its customary form is without the narrative element. It is a moot point whether all the details of a parable are significant individually, or whether its leading idea and lessons alone are to be taken as preceptive. Those who maintain

that each word of importance and every phrase has a specific typical meaning find many symbols where others discover but few.

xiii. 11. Although the word "because" here seems to correspond with "why" in the verse preceding, it may be redundant. This word often appears as a mere introduction to some saying, and may be omitted in translation, as some critics omit it here. "The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" are the spiritual truths relating to it, which the natural man fails to apprehend in their real character.

are gathered and burned in the fire: so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

In these verses we have,

1. Another reason given why Christ preached by parables, ver. 34, 35: "All these things he spake in parables." Because the time was not yet come for the more clear and plain discoveries of the mysteries of the kingdom, Christ, to keep the people attending and expecting, preached in parables; "and without a parable spake he not unto them;" namely, at this time, and in this sermon. Note, Christ tries all ways and methods to do good to the souls of men, and to make impressions upon them; if men will not be instructed and influenced by plain preaching, he will try them with parables; and the reason here given is, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." The passage here quoted for it, is part of the preface to that historical Psalm, *Ps. lxxvii. 2*, "I will open my mouth in a parable." What the Psalmist David, or Asaph, saith there of his narrative, is accommodated to Christ's sermons; and that great precedent would serve to vindicate this way of preaching from the offence which some took at it. Here is,

First. The matter of Christ's preaching; he preached "things which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world." The mystery of the Gospel had been "hid in God," that is, in his counsels and decrees, "from the beginning of the world," *Eph. iii. 9*; compare *Rom. xvi. 25*; *1 Cor. ii. 7*; *Col. i. 26*. If we delight in the records of ancient things, and in the revelation of secret things, how welcome should the Gospel be to us, which hath in it such antiquity, and such mystery. It was "from the foundation of the world," wrapped up in types and shadows, which are now done away, and those secret things are now become such things revealed as "belong to us, and to our children," *Deu. xxix. 29*.

Secondly. The manner of Christ's preaching. He preached by parables, wise sayings, but figurative, and which help to engage attention and a diligent search. Solomon's sententious dictates, which are full of similitudes, are called proverbs, or parables, it is the same word; but in this, as in other things, "behold, a greater than Solomon is here," in whom are hid treasures of wisdom.

II. The parable of the tares, and the exposition of it. They must be taken together, for the exposition explains the parable, and the parable illustrates the exposition. Observe,

First. The disciples' request to their Master to have this parable expounded to them, ver. 36; "Jesus sent the multitude away;" and it is to be feared many of them went away no wiser than they came; they had heard a sound of words, and that was all. It is sad to think how many go away from sermons, with the word of grace in their ears, but not the work of grace in their hearts. Christ "went into the house," not so much for his own repose, as for particular converse with his disciples, whose instruction he chiefly intended in all his preaching. He was ready to do good in all places; the disciples laid hold on the opportunity, and "they came to him." Note, Those that would be wise for every thing else, must be wise to discern and improve their opportunities, especially of converse with Christ, of converse with him alone, in secret meditation and prayer. It is very good, when we return from the solemn assembly, to talk over what we have heard there, and by familiar discourse to help one another to understand and remember it, and to be affected with it; for we lose the benefit of many a sermon by vain and unprofitable discourse after it; see *Lu. xxiv. 32*; *Deu. vi. 6, 7*. It is especially good, if it may be, to ask, of the ministers of the Word, the meaning of the Word, for "their lips should keep knowledge," *Mal. ii. 7*. Private conference would contribute much to our profiting by public preaching. Nathan's "Thou art the man" was it that touched David to the heart. The disciples' request to their Master was, "Declare unto us the parable of the tares." This implied acknowledgment of their ignorance, which they were not ashamed to make. It is probable they did apprehend the general scope of the parable; but they desired to understand it more particularly, and to be assured that they took it right. Note, Those are rightly disposed for Christ's teaching that are sensible of their ignorance, and sincerely desirous to be taught. He will "teach the humble," *Ps. xxv. 8, 9*; but "will for this be inquired of." "If any man lack" instruction, "let him ask it of God." Christ had expounded the foregoing parable unasked; but for the exposition of this they ask him. Note, The mercies we have received must be improved, both for direction what to pray for, and for our encouragement in prayer. The first light and the first grace are given in a preventing way; further degrees of both which must be daily prayed for.

Secondly. The exposition Christ gave of the parable, in answer to their request; so ready is Christ to answer such desires of his disciples. Now, the drift of the parable is to represent to us the present and future state of the kingdom of heaven—the gospel church; Christ's care of it, the devil's enmity against it; the mixture that there is in it, of good and bad, in this world; and the separation between them in the other world. Note, The visible church is the kingdom of heaven; though there be many hypocrites in it, Christ rules in it as a king; and there is a remnant in it, that are the subjects and heirs of heaven, from whom, as the better part, it is denominated. The church is "the kingdom of heaven" upon earth. Let us go over the particulars of the redemption of the parable.

1. "He that sows the good seed is the Son of man." Jesus Christ is the Lord of the field, "the Lord of the harvest," the sower of good seed. When "he ascended on high," he gave gifts "to the world,"—not only good ministers, but other good men. Note, Whatever good seed there is in the world, it all comes from the hand of Christ, and is of his sowing. Truths preached, graces planted, souls sanctified, are good seed, and all owing to Christ. Ministers are instruments in Christ's hand to sow good seed, are employed by him, and under him; and the success of their labours depends purely upon his blessing: so that it may be well said it is Christ, and no other, that sows the good seed; he is "the Son of man," one of us, that his terror might not make us afraid; "the Son of man," that is, the Mediator, and that has authority.

2. "The field is the world," the world of mankind; a large field, capable of bringing forth good fruit; the more is it to be lamented that it brings

forth so much bad fruit. The world, here, is the visible church, scattered all the world over, not confined to one nation. Observe, In the parable it is called "his field;" the world is Christ's field, for "all things are delivered unto him of his Father." Whatever power and interest the devil has in the world, it is usurped and unjust. When Christ comes to take possession, he comes whose right it is; it is his field; and because it is his, he took care to sow it with good seed.

3. "The good seed are the children of the kingdom." That is, true saints. They are, 1st. "The children of the kingdom," not in profession only, as the Jews were, *ch. viii. 12*; but in sincerity, Jews inwardly Israelites indeed, incorporated in faith and obedience to Jesus Christ, the great king of the church. 2nd. They are the good seed, precious as seed, *Ps. cxxvi. 6*. The seed is the substance of the field; so the holy seed, *Isa. vi. 13*. The seed is scattered: so are the saints, dispersed, here one, and there another, though in some places thicker sown than in others. The seed is that from which fruit is expected. What fruit of honour and service God has from this world, he has it from the saints, whom he hath sown unto himself in the earth, *Hos. ii. 23*.

4. "The tares are the children of the wicked one." Here is the character of sinners, hypocrites, and all profane and wicked people. 1st. They are the children of the devil, as a wicked one; though they do not own his name, yet they bear his image, do his lusts; and from him they have their education: he rules over them, he works in them, *Eph. ii. 2*; *Jno. viii. 44*. 2nd. They are tares in the field of this world; they do no good, they do hurt; unprofitable in themselves, and hurtful to the good seed, both by temptation and persecution; they are weeds in the garden; have the same rain and sunshine, and soil, with the good plants, but are good for nothing. The tares are "among the wheat." Note, God hath so ordered it that good and bad should be mixed together in this world, that the good may be exercised, the bad left inexcusable, and a difference made between earth and heaven.

5. The enemy that sowed the tares is the devil,—a sworn enemy to Christ and all that is good, to the glory of the good God, and the comfort and happiness of all good men. He is an enemy to the field of the world, which he endeavours to make his own, by sowing his tares in it. Ever since he became a wicked spirit himself, he has been industriously to promote wickedness, and has made it his business, and therein to counterwork Christ. Now concerning the sowing of the tares, observe, in the parable, 1st. That they were sown "while men slept." Magistrates slept, that, by their power,—ministers slept, that, by their preaching, should have prevented this mischief. Note, Satan watcheth all opportunities, and lays hold on all advantages, to propagate vice and profaneness. The prejudice he doth to particular persons is when reason and conscience sleep, when they are off their guard: we have therefore need to be "sober and vigilant." It was in the night, for that is the sleeping time. Note, Satan rules "in the darkness of this world;" that gives him an opportunity to sow tares, *Ps. civ. 20*. It was "while men slept;" and there is no remedy but men must have some sleeping time. Note, It is as impossible for us to prevent hypocrites being in the church, as it is for the husbandman, when he is asleep, to hinder an enemy from spoiling his field. 2nd. The enemy, when he had sown the tares, "went his way," ver. 25; that it might not be known who did it. Note, When Satan is doing the greatest mischief, he studies most to conceal himself; for his design is in danger of being spoiled if he be seen in it; and therefore, when he comes to sow tares, he "transforms himself into an angel of light," *2 Cor. xi. 13, 14*. He "went his way," as if he had done no harm; "such is the way of an adulterous woman," *Pr. xxx. 20*. Observe, Such is the proneness of fallen man to sin, that if the enemy sow the tares, he may even go his way; they will spring up of themselves, and do hurt; whereas, when good seed is sown, it must be tended, watered, and fenced, or it will come to nothing. 3rd. The tares appeared not till "the blade sprung up, and brought forth fruit," ver. 26. There is a great deal of secret wickedness in the hearts of men, which is long hid under the cloak of a plausible profession, but breaks out at last. As the good seed, so the tares lie a great while under the clouds, and, at first springing up, it is hard to distinguish them; but, when a trying time comes, when fruit is to be brought forth, when good is to be done that has difficulty and hazard attending it, then you will return and discern between the sincere and the hypocrite, then you may say, "This is wheat, and that is tares." 4th. The servants, when they were aware of it, complained to their master, ver. 27, "Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field?" No doubt he did; whatever is amiss in the church, we are sure it is not a long of Christ: considering the seed which Christ sows, we may well ask with wonder, "Whence should these tares come?" Note, The rise of errors, the breaking out of scandals, and the growth of profaneness, are matter of great grief to all the servants of Christ, especially to his faithful ministers, who are directed to complain of it to Him whose the field is. It is sad to see such tares, such weeds, in the garden of the Lord; to see the good soil wasted, the good seed choked, and such a reflection cast on the name and honour of Christ, as if his field were no better than "the field of the slothful, all grown over with thorns." 5th. The master was soon aware whence it was, ver. 28: "An enemy has done this." He doth not lay the blame upon the servants; they could not help it; had done what was in their power to prevent it. Note, The ministers of Christ, that are faithful and diligent, shall not be judged of Christ, and therefore should not be reproached by men, for the mixture of bad with good, hypocrites with the sincere, in the field of the church. "It must needs be that such offences will come;" and they shall not be laid to our charge, if we do our duty, though it have not the desired success; though they sleep, if they do not love sleep; though tares be sown, if they do not sow them, nor water them, nor allow of them, the blame shall not lie at their door. 6th. The servants were very forward to have these tares rooted up: "Wilt thou that we go?" and do it presently? Note, The over-hasty and inconsiderate zeal of Christ's servants, before they have consulted with their Master, is sometimes ready, with the hazard of the church, to root out all that they presume to be tares: "Lord, wilt thou that we call for fire from heaven?" 7th. The master very wisely prevented this, ver. 29: "Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." Note, It is not possible for any man infallibly to distinguish between tares and wheat; but he may be mistaken; and therefore such is the wisdom and grace of Christ, that he will rather permit the tares than any way endanger the wheat. It is certain scandalous offenders are to be censured, and we are to withdraw from them; those that are openly "the children of the wicked one" are not to be admitted to special ordinances: yet it is possible there may be a discipline either so mistaken in its rules, or so over nice in the application of them, as may prove vexatious to many that are truly godly and conscientious. Great caution and moderation must be used in inflicting and continuing church censures, lest the wheat be trodden down, if not plucked up. "The wisdom from above," as it is "pure," so it is "peaceable;" and "those that oppose themselves" must not be cut off, but "instructed" and with meekness, *2 Tim. ii. 25*. The tares, if continued under the means of grace, may become good corn; therefore have patience with them.

6. "The harvest is the end of the world," ver. 39. This world will have an end; though it continue long, it will not continue always: time will shortly be swallowed up in eternity. At the end of the world there will be a great

xiii. 12. This expression is in form proverbial. On the words rendered "shall be taken away," &c., Lange says it does not necessarily mean that it will be taken away, but may mean that it will be taken out of the owner's power and administered by others. In Luke viii. 18 it is "that which he seemeth to have," a modification of some importance, as showing that there is at least an appearance of something to be taken away. The lessons which some men receive profit them not, because not spiritually apprehended.

xiii. 17. Here our Lord clearly intimates the prevalence of Messianic hopes and evangelical aspirations in the minds and hearts of ancient Israel. It is a practical declaration that his coming was foreshadowed, and that prophecy was in him accomplished.

xiii. 24, 25. By "tares" we are not to understand the plant so called among ourselves. Dr. Tristram adopts the common view that a plant called darnel is meant. He says, "The *Lolium temulentum*, or bearded darnel, is a grass weed not very common in England, but of

harvest day—a day of judgment: at harvest all is ripe, and ready to be cut down; both good and bad are ripe at the great day, *Rev. vi. 11*. It is “the harvest of the earth,” *Rev. xiv. 15*. At harvest the reapers cut down all before them—not a field, not a corner left behind; so, at the great day, all must be judged, *Rev. xv. 12, 13*. God hath “set a harvest,” *Hos. vi. 11*, and it shall not fail, *Gen. viii. 22*. At harvest every man reaps as he sowed; every man’s ground, and seed, and skill, and industry, will be manifested; see *Gal. vi. 7, 8*. Then they who sowed “precious seed,” will “come again with rejoicing,” *Ps. cxv. 5, 6*; with “the joy of harvest,” *Isa. ix. 3*; when “the sluggard, who would not plough, by reason of cold, shall beg and have nothing,” *Pr. xx. 4*; shall cry, “Lord, Lord,” but “in vain,” when the harvest of those that sowed to the flesh shall be “a day of grief and desperate sorrow,” *Isa. xvii. 11*.

7. “The reapers are the angels;” they shall be employed in the great day in executing Christ’s righteous sentences, both of approbation and condemnation, as ministers of his justice, *ch. xxv. 31*. The angels are skilful, strong, and swift, obedient servants to Christ, holy enemies to the wicked, and faithful friends to all the saints; and therefore fit to be thus employed. “He that reapeth receiveth wages,” and the angels will not be unpaid for their attendance; for “he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together,” *Jno. iv. 36*; that is, “joy in heaven, in the presence of the angels of God.”

8. Hell torments are the fire into which the tares shall then be cast, and in which they shall be burned. At the great day, a distinction will be made, and with it a vast difference: it will be a notable day indeed. 1st. The tares will then be “gathered out.” “The reapers” (whose primary work it is to gather in the corn) shall be charged first to “gather out the tares.” Note, Though good and bad are together in this world, undistinguished, yet at the great day they shall be parted. No tares shall then be among the wheat; no sinners among the saints. Then you shall plainly discern “between the righteous and the wicked,” which here sometimes it is hard to do, *Mal. iii. 18*; *iv. 1*. Christ will not bear always, *Ps. l. 1, &c.* They shall “gather out of his kingdom” all wicked things “that offend,” and all wicked persons that “do iniquity,” when he begins he will make a full end. All those corrupt doctrines, worships, and practices, which have offended, have been scandals to the church, and stumblingblocks to men’s consciences, shall be condemned by the righteous Judge in that day, and consumed “by the brightness of his coming;” all the “wood, hay, and stubble,” *1 Cor. iii. 12*. And then, “woe to them that do iniquity,” that make a trade of it, and persist in it; not only those in the last age of Christ’s kingdom upon earth, but those in every age. Perhaps here is an allusion to *Zep. i. 3*, “I will consume the stumblingblocks with the wicked.” 2nd. They will then be “bound in bundles,” *ver. 30*. Sinners of the same sort will be bundled together in the great day: a bundle of atheists, a bundle of epicures, a bundle of persecutors, and a great bundle of hypocrites. Those that have been associates in sin, will be so in shame and sorrow; and it will be an aggravation of their misery, as the society of glorified saints will add to their bliss. Let us pray, as David, “Lord, gather not my soul with sinners,” *Ps. xxvi. 9*; but let it be bound in “the bundle of life, with the Lord our God,” *1 Sam. xxv. 29*. 3rd. They will be “cast into a furnace of fire.” Such will be the end of wicked, mischievous people, that are in the church as “tares in the field.” They are fit for nothing but fire; to it they shall go: it is the fittest place for them. Note, Hell is a furnace of fire, kindled by the wrath of God, and kept burning by the bundles of tares cast into it; who will be ever in the consuming, but never consumed. But he slides out of the metaphor into a description of those torments that are designed to be set forth by it: “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Comfortless sorrow, and an incurable indignation, at God, themselves, and one another, will be the endless torture of damned souls. Let us therefore, “knowing these terrors of the Lord,” be persuaded not to do iniquity.

9. Heaven is the barn into which all God’s wheat shall be gathered, in that harvest day: “But gather the wheat into my barn;” so it is in the parable, *ver. 30*. Note, 1. In the field of this world good people are the wheat, the most precious grain, and the valuable part of the field. 2. This wheat shall shortly be gathered—gathered from among the tares and weeds; all “gathered together in a general assembly: all the Old Testament saints, all the New Testament saints; not one missing:” “Gather my saints together to me,” *Ps. l. 5*. 3. All God’s wheat shall be lodged together in God’s barn. Particular souls are housed at death, as a shock of corn, *Job v. 26*; but the general in-gathering will be at the end of time. God’s wheat will then be put together, and no longer scattered: there will be sheaves of corn as well as bundles of tares. They will then be secured, and no longer exposed to wind and weather, sin and sorrow; no longer afar off, and at a distance in the field; but near, in the barn. Nay, heaven is “a garner,” *ch. iii. 12*, in which the wheat will not only be separated from the tares of ill companions, but sifted from the chaff of their own corruptions. In the redemption of the parable this is gloriously represented, *ver. 43*: “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” 1st. It is their present honour that God is their Father: “Now are we the sons of God,” *1 Jno. iii. 2*; “our Father in heaven” is king there, Christ, when he went to heaven, went to “his Father, and our Father,” *Jno. xx. 17*. It is our Father’s house; nay, it is our Father’s palace, “his throne,” *Rev. iii. 21*. 2nd. The honour in reserve for them is, that they shall “shine forth as the sun in that kingdom.” Here they are obscure, and hidden, *Col. iii. 3*; their beauty is eclipsed by their poverty and the meanness of their outward condition; their own weaknesses and infirmities, and the reproach and disgrace cast upon them, cloud them. But then they shall “shine forth as the sun” from behind a dark cloud; at death they shall shine forth to themselves; at the great day they will shine forth publicly, before all the world; their bodies will be made “like Christ’s glorious body;” they shall shine by reflection, with a light borrowed from the fountain of light. Their sanctification will be perfected, and their justification published: God will own them for his children, and will produce the record of all their services and sufferings for his name. They shall shine as the sun, the most glorious of all visible beings. The glory of the saints is, in the Old Testament, compared to that of the firmament and the stars, but here to that of the sun; for life and immortality are brought to a much clearer light by the Gospel than under the law. Those that shine as lights in this world, that God may be glorified, shall shine as the sun in the other world, that they may be glorified. Our Saviour concludes, as before, with a demand of attention: “Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” These are things which it is our happiness to hear of, and our duty to hearken to.

111. Here is the parable of the grain of mustard seed, *ver. 31, 32*. The scope of this parable is to shew, that the beginnings of the Gospel would “be small, but its latter end would greatly increase.” In this way the gospel church, the kingdom of God among us, would be “set up in the world;” in this way the work of grace in the heart, “the kingdom of God within us,” would be carried on in particular persons. Now, concerning the work of the Gospel, observe,

First. That it is commonly very weak and small at first; “like a grain of mustard seed, which is one of the least of all seeds,” the kingdom of the Messiah, which was now in the setting up, made but a small figure; Christ and the apostles, compared with the grandees of the world, appeared “like a grain of

mustard seed,” the weak things of the world. In particular places, the first breaking out of the gospel light is but as “the dawning of the day;” and in particular souls, it is at first “the day of small things,” like a bruised reed. Young converts are “like lambs,” that must be “carried in arms,” *Isa. xl. 11*. There is a little faith, but there is much lacking in it, *1 Thes. iii. 10*; and the “groanings” such as “cannot be uttered,” they are so small; a principle of spiritual life, and some motion, but scarcely discernible.

Secondly. That yet it is growing and coming on. Christ’s kingdom strangely got ground; great accessions were made to it; nations were born at once, in spite of all the oppositions it met with from hell and earth. In the soul where grace is true, it will grow—really, though perhaps insensibly. A grain of mustard seed is small; but, however, it is seed, and has in it a disposition to grow. Grace will be getting ground, “shining more and more,” *Pr. iv. 18*; gracious habits confirmed, actings quickened, and knowledge more clear; faith more confirmed, love more inflamed. Here is the seed growing.

Thirdly. That it will at last come to a great degree of strength and usefulness; “when it is grown” to some maturity, “it becomes a tree,” much larger in those countries than in ours. The church, like “the vine brought out of Egypt,” has taken root, and “filled the earth,” *Ps. lxxx. 9–11*. The church is like a great tree, in which the fowls of the air do lodge; God’s people have recourse to it for food and rest, shade and shelter. In particular persons, the principle of grace, if true, will persevere, and be perfected at last. Growing grace will be strong grace, and will bring much to pass. Grown Christians must covet to be useful to others, as the mustard seed, when grown, is to the birds; that those that dwell near or under their shadow may be the better for them, *Hos. xiv. 7*.

IV. Here is the parable of the leaven, *ver. 33*. The scope of this is much the same with that of the foregoing parable, to shew that the Gospel should prevail and be successful by degrees, but silently and insensibly. The preaching of the Gospel is like leaven, and works like leaven in the hearts of those that do receive it. 1. A woman took this leaven; it was her work. Ministers are employed in leavening places, in leavening souls, with the Gospel. “The woman is the weaker vessel,” and we have this treasure in such vessels. 2. The leaven was “hid in three measures of meal.” The heart is as the meal, soft and pliable: it is the tender heart that is likely to profit by the Word. Leaven among corn unground doth not work, nor doth the Gospel in souls unhumiliated and unbroken for sin. The law grinds the heart, and then the Gospel leavens it: it is “three measures of meal,” that is, a great quantity, for “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” The meal must be kneaded before it receive the leaven; our hearts, as they must be broken, so they must be moistened, and pains taken with them to prepare them for the Word, that they may receive the impressions of it. This leaven must be “hid in the heart,” *Ps. cxix. 11*; not so much for secrecy (for it will shew itself) as for safety. Our inward thoughts must be upon it; we must lay it up, as Mary laid up the sayings of Christ, *Lu. ii. 51*. When the woman hides the leaven in the meal, it is with an intention that it should communicate its taste and relish to it; so we must treasure up the Word in our souls, that we may be sanctified by it, *Jno. xvii. 17*. 3. The leaven, thus hid in the dough, works there; it ferments. “The Word is quick and powerful,” *Heb. iv. 12*. The leaven works speedily, so doth the Word, and yet gradually. What a sudden change did Elijah’s mantle make upon Elisha! *1 Kin. xix. 20*. It works silently and insensibly, *Mar. iv. 26*, yet strongly and irresistibly; it doth its work without noise, for so is “the way of the Spirit” but doth it without fail. Hide but the leaven in the dough, and all the world cannot hinder it from communicating its taste and relish to it; and yet none sees how it is done, but by degrees “the whole is leavened.” 1st. Thus it was in the world. The apostles, by their preaching, hid a handful of leaven in the great mass of mankind, and it had a strange effect; it put the world into a ferment, and, in a sense, “turned it upside down,” *Acts xvii. 6*; and by degrees made a wonderful change in the taste and relish of it. The savour of the Gospel was “manifested in every place,” *2 Cor. ii. 14*; *Rom. xv. 19*. It was thus effectual, not by outward force, and therefore not by any such force resistible and conquerable; but by the “Spirit of the Lord of hosts, who works, and none can hinder.” 2nd. Thus it is in the heart. When the Gospel comes into the soul, *First*. It works a change, not in the substance, (the dough is the same,) but in the quality; it makes us to savour otherwise than we have done, and other things to savour with us, otherwise than they used to do, *Rom. viii. 5*. *Secondly*. It works an universal change; it diffuses itself into all the powers and faculties of the soul, and alters the property even of the members of the body, *Rom. vi. 13*. *Thirdly*. This change is such as makes the soul partake of the nature of the Word, as the dough doth of the leaven. We are delivered into it, as into a mould, *Rom. vi. 7*; “changed into the same image,” *2 Cor. iii. 18*, like the impression of the seal upon the wax. The Gospel savours of God, and Christ, and free grace, and another world, and these things now relish with the soul. It is a Word of faith and repentance, holiness and love, and these are wrought in the soul by it. This savour is communicated insensibly, for “our life is hid;” but inseparably, for grace is “a good part, that shall never be taken away” from those that have it. When the dough is leavened, then to the oven with it: trials and afflictions commonly attend this change; but thus saints are fitted to be bread for our Master’s table.

14 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. 45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: 46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. 47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: 48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. 49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among

very wide distribution, and abundant in all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean. It is a kind of rye-grass, and is the only species of the grass family the seeds of which are poisonous.” He adds that the effect of eating darnel is “to produce violent nausea, convulsions, and diarrhoea, which frequently ends in death. The plant, having a broader leaf than most wild grasses, is entirely like wheat until the ear appears. It is carefully eradicated, wherever possible, in the corn-fields; and Dean Stanley as well as other tra-

vellers have observed the women and children employed in picking out the tall green stalks, still called by the Arabs *zawan*, in the great corn-fields of Samaria.” It is an old superstition that darnel and wheat both spring from the same seed.

xiii. 31. The Talmudists have strange stories concerning the mustard-seed, the plant from which sometimes attains considerable magnitude. Dr. Thomson says, “I have seen this plant on the rich plain of Acre as tall as the horse and his rider.” The same writer

the just, 50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. 52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

We have four short parables in these verses.

I. *That of the treasure hid in the field.* Hitherto he had compared "the kingdom of heaven" to small things, because its beginning was small; but, lest any should thence take occasion to think meanly of it, in this parable and the next he represents it as of great value in itself, and of great advantage to those that embrace it, and are willing to come up to its terms. It is here likened to a "treasure hid in the field," which, if we will, we may make our own.

First. Jesus Christ is the true treasure: in him there is an abundance of all that which is rich and useful, and will be a portion for us; "all fulness," Col. i. 19; Jno. i. 16. "Treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. ii. 3; of righteousness, grace, and peace; these are laid up for us in Christ; and if we have an interest in him, it is all our own.

Secondly. The Gospel is the field in which this treasure is hid: it is hid in the word of the Gospel, both the Old Testament and the New Testament gospel. In gospel ordinances it is hid, as the milk in the breast, the marrow in the bone, the manna in the dew; as "the water in the well," Isa. xii. 3; as the honey in the honeycomb. It is hid, not in "a garden enclosed," or a "spring shut up," but "in a field," an open field; whoever will, let him come and "search the Scriptures," let him dig in this field, Pr. ii. 4; and whatever royal mines we find, they are all our own, if we take the right course.

Thirdly. It is a great thing to discover the treasure hid in this field, and the unspeakable value of it. The reason why so many slight the Gospel, and will not be at the expense, and run the hazard, of entertaining it, is because they look only upon the surface of the field, and judge by that, and so see no excellency in the Christian institutes above those of the philosophers; nay, the richest mines are often in grounds that appear most barren; and therefore will not so much as bid for the field, much less come up to the price. "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" "What is the Bible more than other good books?" The Gospel of Christ more than Plato's philosophy, or Confucius's morals? But those that have "searched the Scriptures," so as in them to find Christ and "eternal life," Jno. v. 39, have discovered such a treasure in this field as makes it infinitely more valuable.

Fourthly. Those that discern this treasure in the field, and value it aright, will never be easy till they have made it their own, upon any terms. He that has found his treasure hides it, which notes a holy jealousy, lest we come short, Heb. iv. 1; "looking diligently," Heb. xii. 15, lest Satan come between us and it. He rejoiceth in it; though as yet the bargain be not made, he is glad there is such a bargain to be had, and that he is in a fair way to have an interest in Christ; that the matter is in treaty: their hearts may rejoice who are yet but "seeking the Lord," Ps. cv. 3. He resolves to "buy this field." Those that embrace gospel offers, upon gospel terms, buy this field; they make it their own for the sake of the unseen treasure in it. It is Christ in the Gospel that we are to have an eye to. We need not go up to heaven; but Christ, "in the Word, is nigh us." And so intent he is upon it, that he "sells all to buy that field." Those that would have saving benefit by Christ, must be willing to part with all, that they may make it sure to themselves; must "count every thing but loss, that they may win Christ, and be found in him."

II. *That of the pearl of price,* ver. 45, 46, which is to the same purpose with the former, of the treasure. "The dream is thus doubled," for "the thing is certain." Note, 1. All the children of men are busy "seeking goodly pearls." One would be rich, another would be honourable, another would be learned; but the most are imposed upon, and take up with counterfeits for pearls. 2. Jesus Christ is a "pearl of great price," a jewel of inestimable value, which will make those that have it rich, truly rich, rich towards God: in having him, we have enough to make us happy here and for ever. 3. A true Christian is a spiritual merchant, that seeks and finds this pearl of price, that doth not take up with any thing short of an interest in Christ, and, as one that is resolved to be spiritually rich, trades high. "He went and bought that pearl," did not bid for it, but purchase it. What will it avail us to know Christ, if we do not know him as ours, "made to us wisdom?" 1 Cor. i. 30. 4. Those that would have a saving interest in Christ, must be willing to part with all for him, leave all to follow him. Whatever stands in opposition to Christ, or in competition with him, for our love and service, we must cheerfully quit it, though never so dear to us. A man may buy gold too dear, but not this "pearl of price."

III. *That of the net cast into the sea,* ver. 47-49.

First. Here is the parable itself; where, Note, 1. The world is a vast sea, and the children of men "are things creeping, innumerable, both small and great," in that sea, Ps. civ. 25. Men in their natural state are "like the fishes of the sea, that have no ruler over them," Hab. i. 14. 2. The preaching of the Gospel is the casting of a net into the sea, to catch something out of it, for his glory who hath the sovereignty of this sea. Ministers are "fishers of men," employed in casting and drawing this net; and then they speed, when at Christ's word they let down the net; otherwise they "toil and catch nothing." 3. This net gathers of every kind, as large drag nets used to do. In the visible church there is a deal of trash and rubbish, dirt and weeds, and vermin, as well as fish. 4. There is a time coming when this net will be full, and drawn to shore; a set time, when the Gospel shall have fulfilled that for which it was sent, and we are sure it shall not return void, Isa. lv. 10, 11. The net is now in the fill; sometimes it fills faster than at other times; but still it fills, and will be drawn to shore, when the "mystery of God shall be finished." 5. When the net is full, and drawn to shore, there shall be a separation between the good and bad that were gathered in. Hypocrites and true Christians shall then be parted; the good shall be gathered into vessels, as valuable, and therefore to be carefully kept; but the bad shall be cast away, as vile and unprofitable; and miserable is the condition of those who are castaways in that day. While the net is in the sea, it is not known what is in it: the fishermen themselves cannot distinguish; but they carefully draw it, and all that is in it, to shore, for the sake of the good that is in it. Such is God's care for the visible church, and such should ministers' concern be for those under their charge, though they are mixed.

Secondly. Here is the reddition of the latter part of the parable; the former is present, and plain enough. We see gathered into the visible church "some

of every kind;" but the latter part refers to that which is yet to come, and is therefore more particularly explained, ver. 49, 50; "So shall it be at the end of the world;" then, and not till then, will the dividing, discovering day be. We must not look for the net full of all good fish; the vessels will be so, but in the net they are mixed. See here, 1. The distinguishing of the wicked from the righteous. The angels of heaven shall come forth to do that which the angels of the church could never do—they shall "sever the wicked from among the just;" and we need not ask how they will distinguish them, when they have both their commission and their instructions from Him that knows all men, and particularly knows them that are his, and them that are not; and we may be sure there shall be no mistake or blunder either way. 2. The doom of the wicked, when they are thus severed; they shall be "cast into the furnace." Note, Everlasting misery and sorrow will certainly be the portion of those that live among sanctified ones, but themselves die un sanctified. This is the same with what we had before, ver. 42. Note, Christ himself preached often of hell torments, as the everlasting punishment of hypocrites; and it is good for us to be often minded of this awakening, quickening truth.

IV. *Here is the parable of the good householder,* which is intended to rivet all the rest.

First. The occasion of it was the good proficiency which the disciples had made in learning, and their profiting by this sermon in particular. 1. He asked them, "Have ye understood all these things?" intimating, that if they had not, he was ready to explain what they did not understand. Note, It is the will of Christ, that all those who read and hear the Word should understand it; for otherwise, how should they get good by it? It is therefore good for us, when we have read or heard the Word, to examine ourselves, or to be examined, whether we have understood it or no. It is no disparagement to the disciples of Christ to be catechised. Christ invites us to seek to him for instruction, and ministers should proffer their services to those who have any good question to ask concerning what they have heard. 2. They answered him, "Yea, Lord." And we have reason to believe they said true, because when they did not understand, they asked for an explication, ver. 36. And the exposition of that parable was a key to the rest. Note, The right understanding of one good sermon will very much help us to understand another; for good truths mutually explain and illustrate one another, and "knowledge is easy to him that understandeth."

Secondly. The scope of the parable itself was to give his approbation and commendation of their proficiency. Note, Christ is ready to encourage willing learners in his school, though they are but weak, and to say, "Well done," "Well said." 1. He commends them as scribes, "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven." They were now learning, that they might teach; and the teachers among the Jews were scribes. Ezra, that "prepared his heart to teach in Israel," is called a "ready scribe," Ezr. vii. 6, 10. Now, a skilful, faithful minister of the Gospel is a scribe too; but, for distinction, he is called a scribe "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven," well versed in the things of the Gospel, and well able to teach those things. Note, 1st. Those that are to instruct others, have need to be well instructed themselves. If the priest's lips must keep knowledge, his head must first have knowledge. 2nd. The instruction of a gospel minister must be in "the kingdom of heaven;" that is it about which his business lies. A man may be a great philosopher and politician, and yet, if not instructed to the kingdom of heaven, he will make but a bad minister. 2. He compares them to a good householder, that "brings forth out of his treasure things new and old;" fruits of last year's growth, and this year's gathering; abundance and variety, for the entertainment of his friends. See Cant. vii. 13. See here, 1st. What should be a minister's furniture, "a treasure of things new and old." Those that have so many and various occasions, need to stock themselves well in their gathering days, with truths new and old, out of the Old Testament, and out of the New, with ancient and modern improvements, "that the man of God may be thoroughly well furnished," 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Old experiences and new observations each have their use; and we must not content ourselves with old discoveries, but must be adding new. Live and learn. 2nd. What use he should make of this furniture. He should "bring forth;" laying up is in order to laying out, for the benefit of others: *Sic vos non vobis.* "You are to lay up, but not for yourselves." Many are full, but they have no vent, Job xxxii. 19; have a talent, but they bury it; such are unprofitable servants. Christ himself received that he might give; so must we, and we shall have more. In bringing forth things, new and old do best together; old truths, but new methods and expressions, especially new affections.

53 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. 54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? 55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? 57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. 58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

We have here Christ in his own country. He went about doing good, yet left not any place till he had finished his testimony there at that time. His own countrymen had rejected him once, yet he came to them again. Note, Christ doth not take refusers at their first word, but repeats his offers to those that have often repulsed them. In this, as in other things, Christ was like his brethren, that he had a natural affection to his own country, *Patriam quisque amat, non quia pulchram, sed quia suam.* "Every one loves his country, not because it is beautiful, but because it is his own."—Seneca. His treatment this time was much the same as before, scornful and spiteful. Observe,

observes, "We are not to suppose that the mustard-seed is the least of all seeds in the world, but it was the smallest which the husbandman was accustomed to sow; and the tree, when full grown, was larger than the other herbs in his garden." This is no doubt the correct explanation.

xiii. 33. At the word "measures" the following note occurs in the margin of some editions of our Bible: "The word in the Greek is a measure containing about a peck and a half, wanting a little

more than a pint." Some think the word "leaven" refers to the evil principle only, others that it means a good principle only, and others that it is an allusion to both "the leaven of original sin and its counter agent, the leaven of grace and salvation" (so Macarius, as noticed by Lange). The last-named writer says "the leaven, which in itself is not noxious and evil, but, on the contrary, highly useful and wholesome, serves here as a figure of the secret but all-pervading and subduing power of the Gospel."

1. *How they expressed their contempt of him.* When he "taught them in their synagogue, they were astonished;" not that they were taken with his preaching, or admired his doctrine in itself, but only that it should be his, looking upon him as unlikely to be such an undertaker. Two things they upbraided him with:

First. His want of academical education. They owned that he had wisdom, and did mighty works; but the question was, whence he had them; for they knew he was not brought up at the feet of their rabbins: he had never been at the university, nor taken his degree, or was called of men, "Rabbi, rabbi." Note, Mean and prejudiced spirits are apt to judge of men by their education, and to inquire more into their rise than into their reasons: "Whence has this man these mighty works?" "Did he come honestly by them?" Has he not been studying the black art?" Thus they turned that against him which was really for him; for if they had not been wilfully blind, they must have concluded him to be divinely assisted and commissioned, who, without the help of education, gave such proofs of an extraordinary wisdom and power.

Secondly. The meanness and poverty of his relations, ver. 55, 56. 1. They upbraided him with his father: "Is not this the carpenter's son?" Yes; it is true he was reputed so, and what harm in that? No disparagement to him to be the son of an honest tradesman. They remember not, though they might have known it, that this carpenter was "of the house of David," *Lu. i. 27*; "a son of David," *ch. i. 20*; therefore, though a carpenter, yet a person of honour. Those that are willing to pick quarrels will overlook that which is worthy and deserving, and fasten upon that only which seems mean. Some sordid spirits regard no branch—no, not a branch from the stem of Jesse, *Isa. xi. 1*—if it be not a top branch. 2. They upbraided him with his mother; and what quarrel have they with her? Why, truly, "his mother is called Mary;" and that was a very common name, and they all knew her, and knew her to be an ordinary person; she was "called Mary," not Queen Mary, or Lady Mary, or so much as Mistress Mary, but plain "Mary," and this is turned to his reproach, as if men had nothing to be valued by but foreign extraction, noble birth, or splendid titles—poor things to measure worth by. 3. They upbraided him with his brethren, whose names they knew, and had them ready enough to serve this turn; "James, and Joses, and S'mon, and Judas," good men, but poor men, and therefore despised, and Christ for their sakes. These brethren, it is probable, were Joseph's children by a former wife; or whatever their relation was to him, they seem to have been brought up with him in the same family; and therefore of the calling of three of these, who were of the twelve, to that honour (James, Simoa, and Jude, the same with Thaddeus,) we read not particularly, because they needed not such an express call into acquaintance with Christ who had been the companions of his youth. 4. His sisters, too, are "all with us;" they should therefore have loved him and respected him the more, because he was one of themselves; but therefore they despised him; "they were offended in him;" they stumbled at these stumblingstones, for he was set for "a sign that should be spoken against," *Lu. ii. 34*; *Isa. viii. 14*.

11. *See how he resented this contempt,* ver. 57, 58.

First. It did not trouble his heart. It appears he was not much concerned at it; he "despised the shame," *Heb. xii. 2*. Instead of aggravating the affront, or expressing an offence at it, or returning such an answer to their foolish suggestions as they deserved, he mildly imputes it to the common humour of the children of men to undervalue excellences that are cheap, and common, and homebred. It is usually so: "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country." Note, 1. Prophets should have honour paid them, and commonly have; men of God are great men, and men of honour, and challenge respect. It is strange, indeed, if prophets have not honour. 2. Notwithstanding this, they are commonly least regarded and revered in their own country; nay, and sometimes most envied. Familiarity breeds contempt.

Secondly. It did for the present (to speak with reverence) in effect tie his hands: "He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." Note, Unbelief is the great obstruction to Christ's favours. "All things are," in general, "possible to God," *ch. xix. 26*; but then it is "to him that believes," as to the particulars, *Mar. ix. 23*. The Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation;" but then it is to "every one that believes," *Rom. i. 21*. So that if mighty works be not wrought in us: it is not for want of power or grace in Christ, but for want of faith in us: "By grace are ye saved," and that is a mighty work, but it is "through faith," *Eph. ii. 8*.

CHAPTER XIV.

John Baptist had said concerning Christ, "He must increase, but I must decrease," *Jno. iii. 30*. The morning star is here disappearing, and the Sun of Righteousness rising to his meridian lustre. Here is, 1. The martyrdom of John, his imprisonment for his faithfulness to Herod, ver. 1-5; and the beheading of him to please Herodias, ver. 6-12. 11. The miracles of Christ. 1. His feeding five thousand men, that came to him to be taught, with five loaves and two fishes, ver. 13-21. 2. Christ's walking on the water to his disciples in a storm, ver. 22-33. 3. His healing the sick with the touch of the hem of his garment, ver. 34-36. Thus he went forth, thus he went on, conquering, and to conquer; or rather, curing, and to cure.



At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, 2 And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. 3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. 4 For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. 5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they

counted him as a prophet. 6 But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. 7 Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. 8 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. 9 And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. 10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. 11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. 12 And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

We have here the story of John's martyrdom. Observe,

1. *The occasion of relating this story here,* ver. 1, 2. Here is First. The account brought to Herod of the miracles which Christ wrought. Herod, the tetrarch, or chief governor of Galilee, "heard of the fame of Jesus." "At that time," when his countrymen slighted him, upon the account of his meanness and obscurity, he began to be famous at court. Note, God will honour those that are despised for his sake. And the Gospel, like the sea, gets in one place what it loses in another. Christ had now been preaching and working miracles above two years, yet it should seem Herod had not heard of him till now, and now only "heard the fame" of him. Note, It is the unhappiness of the great ones of the world, that they are most out of the way of hearing the best things, *1 Cor. ii. 8*, "which none of the princes of the world knew." 1 *Cor. i. 26*. Christ's disciples were now sent abroad to preach, and to work miracles in his name, and this spread the fame of him more than ever; which was an indication of the spreading of the Gospel, by their means, after his ascension.

Secondly. The construction he puts upon this, ver. 2. He said to "his servants," that told him of the fame of Jesus, "As sure as we are here, 'this is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead.'" Either the heaven of Herod was not Sadducism, ("for the Sadducees say there is no resurrection," *Acts xxiii. 8*), or else Herod's guilty conscience (as is usual with atheists) did at this time get the mastery of his opinion; and now he concludes, whether there be a general resurrection or no, for certain "John Baptist is risen," and "therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him." John, while he lived, did no miracle, *Jno. x. 41*; but Herod concludes that, being "risen from the dead," he is clothed with a greater power than he had while he was living. And he very well calls the miracles he supposed him to work, not his mighty works, but "mighty works shewing forth themselves in him." Observe here, concerning Herod, 1. How he was disappointed in what he intended by beheading John. He thought if he could get that troublesome fellow out of the way, he might go on in his sin, undisturbed and uncontrolled; yet, no sooner is that effected, than he hears of Jesus and his disciples preaching the same pure doctrine that John preached; and, which is more, even the disciples confirming it by miracles in their Master's name. Note, Ministers may be silenced, and imprisoned, and banished, and slain, but the Word of God cannot be run down. The prophets "live not for ever," but "the Word takes hold," *Zec. i. 5, 6*; see 2 *Tim. ii. 5*. Sometimes God raiseth up many faithful ministers out of the ashes of one. This hope there is of God's trees, though "they be cut down;" alluded to, *Job xiv. 7-9*. 2. How he was filled with causeless fears, merely from the guilt of his own conscience. Thus "blood cries," not only "from the earth," on which it was shed, but from the heart of him that shed it, and makes him (nagor-missabel, 'a terror round about,') a terror to himself. A guilty conscience suggests every thing that is frightful, and, like a whirlpool, gathers all to itself that comes near it. Thus "the wicked flee when none pursue," *Pr. xxviii. 1*; are in "great fears," where "no fear is," *Ps. xiv. 6*. Herod, by a little inquiry, might have found out that this Jesus was in being long before John Baptist's death, and therefore could not be *Johannes redivivus*,—John restored to life, and so have undeceived himself; but God justly left him to this infatuation. 3. How, notwithstanding this, he was hardened in his wickedness; for though he was convinced that John was a prophet, and one owned of God, yet he doth not express the least remorse or sorrow for his sin in putting him to death. The devils believe and tremble, but they never believe and repent. Note, There may be the terror of strong convictions, where there is not the truth of a saving conversion.

11. *The story itself of the imprisonment and martyrdom of John.* And these extraordinary sufferings of him who was the first preacher of the Gospel plainly shew that bonds and afflictions will abide the professors of it. As the first Old Testament saint, so the first New Testament minister, died a martyr; and if Christ's forerunner was thus treated, let not his followers expect to be caressed by the world. Observe, here,

First. John's faithfulness in reproving Herod, ver. 3, 4. Herod was one of John's hearers, *Mar. vi. 20*; and therefore John might be the more bold with him. Note, Ministers, who are reprovers by office, are especially obliged to reprove those that are under opportunity of dealing with them, and with them may expect the most favourable acceptance. The particular sin he reproved him for, was marrying his brother Philip's wife—not his widow, that had not been so criminal—but his wife. Philip was now living, and Herod inveigled his wife from him, and kept her for his own. Here was a complication of wickedness—adultery, incest—besides the wrong done to Philip, who had had a child by this woman; and it was an aggravation of the wrong, that he was his brother, his half-brother—by father, but not by mother: see *Ps. l. 20*. For this sin John reproved him, not by tacit and oblique terms, but in plain terms, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." He chargeth it upon him as a sin; not, it is not honourable, or it is not safe, but "it is not lawful;" the sinfulness of sin, as it is the transgression of the law, is the worst thing in it. This was Herod's own iniquity, his beloved sin; and therefore this John Baptist tells him of particularly. Note, 1. That which by the law of God is unlawful to other people, is by the same law unlawful to princes and the greatest of men. They that rule over men, must not forget that they are themselves but men, and subject

xiii. 43. The manifestation of the righteous is shown by the beautiful comparison of the sun suddenly appearing in all his brightness, as from behind a dense black cloud, or above the mountain tops. The comparison seems to involve the degree as well as the mode of the saints' manifestation.

xiii. 44. Probably because of the frequency with which treasure has been hidden, there is in the East, as in the West, among the untaught, a deep conviction that all antiquarian researches are

carried on with a view to the discovery of secreted wealth. Dr. Kitto refers the Oriental disposition to hide riches to the insecurity of private property, and hence recourse is had to ingenious devices. Or course hidden treasure is often never reclaimed, being subject to so many contingencies. Many facts might be adduced in illustration of the allusion contained in the parable. Treasure-trove was regarded as the property of the owner of the land; hence the secrecy of him who, after discovering the treasure, keeps the fact to himself

to God: "It is not lawful for thee," any more than for the meanest subject thou hast, to debauch another man's wife. There are no prerogatives—no, not for the greatest and most arbitrary kings—to break the law of God. If princes and great men break the law of God, it is very fit they should be told of it, by proper persons, and in a proper manner; as they are not above the commands of God's word, so they are not above the reproofs of his ministers. It is not fit indeed to say to a king, "Thou art wicked," *Job xxiv. 18*, any more than to call a brother "Raca," or "thou fool." It is not fit, while they keep within the sphere of their own authority, to arraign them; but it is fit that, by those whose office it is, they should be told what is unlawful, and told, with application, "Thou art the man;" for it follows there, that God, whose agents and ambassadors faithful ministers are, "accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor," *Job xxiv. 19*.

Secondly. The imprisonment of John for his faithfulness, *ver. 3*. "Herod laid hold on John," when he was going on to preach and baptize, put an end to his work, "bound him, and put him in prison," partly to gratify his own revenge, and partly to please Herodias, who, of the two, seemed to be most incensed against him; it was for her sake that he did it. Note, 1. Faithful reproofs, if they do not profit, usually provoke; if they do not do good, they are resented as affronts, and they that will not bow to the reproof, will fly in the face of the reprover, and hate him, as Ahab hated Micaiah, *1 Kin. xxii. 8*; see *Pr. ix. 8*; *xv. 10, 12*. *Veritas odium parit*.—'Truth produces hatred.' 2. It is no new thing for God's ministers to suffer ill for doing well; troubles abide those most that are most diligent and faithful in doing their duty, *Acts xx. 20, 23*. It was so with the Old Testament prophets; see *2 Chr. xvi. 10*; *xxiv. 20, 21*. Perhaps some of John's friends would blame him as indiscreet in reproving Herod, and tell him he had better been silent than provoke Herod, whose character he knew very well, thus to deprive him of his liberty. But away with that discretion that would hinder men from doing their duty, as magistrates, ministers, or Christian friends. I believe John's own heart did not reproach him for it, but this testimony of his conscience for him made his bonds easy, that he suffered for well doing, and not as "a busybody in other men's matters," *1 Pet. iv. 15*.

Thirdly. The restraint that Herod lay under from further venting of his rage against John, *ver. 5*. 1. He would have put him to death. Perhaps that was not intended at first, when he imprisoned him, but his revenge by degrees boiled up to that height. Note, The way of sin, especially the sin of persecution, is down hill; and when once a respect to Christ's ministers is cast off and broken through in one instance, that is at length done which the man would sooner have thought himself a dog than to have been guilty of, *2 Kin. viii. 13*. 2. That which hindered him was his "fear of the multitude, because they counted John as a prophet." It was not because he feared God, (if the fear of God had been before his eyes, he would not have imprisoned him; nor because he feared John, (though formerly he had had a reverence for him; his lusts had overcome that,) but because he feared the people; that is, he was afraid for himself, his own safety, and the safety of his government; his abuse of which he knew had already rendered him odious to the people, whose resentments, being so far heated already, would be apt, upon such a provocation as the putting of a prophet to death, to break out into a flame. Note, 1st. Tyrants have their fears. Those that are, and affect to be, the terror of the mighty, are many times greatest terrors of all to themselves; and when they are most ambitious to be feared by the people, are most afraid of them. 2nd. Wicked men are restrained from the most wicked practices merely for their secular interest, and not from any regard to God; a concern for their ease, credit, wealth, and safety, being their reigning principle, as it keeps them from many duties, so it keeps them from many sins, which otherwise they would not be restrained from; and this is one means by which sinners are kept from being 'overmuch wicked,' *Ecc. vii. 17*. The danger of sin that appears to sense or to fancy only, influenceth men more than that which appears to faith. Herod feared that the putting of John to death might raise a mutiny among the people, which it did not; but he never feared it might raise a mutiny in his own conscience, which it did; *ver. 2*. Men fear being hanged for that which they do not fear being damned for.

Fourthly. The contrivance of bringing John to his death. Long he lay in prison; and, against the liberty of the subject, (which, blessed be God, is secured to us of this nation by law,) might neither be tried nor bailed. It is computed that he lay a year and half a close prisoner, which was about as much time as he had spent in his public ministry, from his first entrance into it. Now here we have an account of his release, not by any other discharge than death, the period of all a good man's troubles, that brings the prisoners to "rest together," so that "they hear not the voice of the oppressor," *Job iii. 18*. Herodias laid the plot; her implacable revenge thirsted after John's blood, and she would be satisfied with nothing less. Cross the carnal appetites, and they turn into the most barbarous passions. It was a woman, a whore, and the mother of harlots, that was drunk with the blood of the saints, *Rev. xvii. 5, 6*. Herodias contrived how to bring about the murder of John so artificially as to save Herod's credit, and so to pacify the people. A sorry excuse is better than none. But I am apt to think, that if the truth were known, Herod was himself in the plot; and, for all his pretences of surprise and sorrow, was privy to the contrivance, and knew before what would be asked; and his pretending his oath, and respect to his guests, was all but sham and grimace. But if he were trepanned into it, ere he was aware, yet, because it was the thing he would have, and might have prevented, he is justly found guilty of the whole contrivance. Though Jezebel bring Naboth to his end, yet if Ahab take possession he hath killed. So, though Herodias contrive the beheading of John, yet if Herod consent to it, and take pleasure in it, he is not only an accessory, but a principal murderer. Well, the scene being laid behind the curtain, let us see how it was acted upon the stage, and in what method. Here we have, 1. The humouring of Herod by the damsel's dancing upon his birthday. It seems Herod's birthday was kept with some solemnity; in honour of the day, there must needs be, as usual, a ball at court; and, to grace the solemnity, "the daughter of Herodias danced before them," which, being the queen's daughter, was more than what she ordinarily condescended to. Note, Times of carnal mirth and jollity are convenient times for carrying on ill designs against God's people. When the king was "made sick with bottles of wine, he stretched out his hand with scorners," *Ps. vii. 5*; for it is part of the "sport of a fool to do mischief," *Pr. x. 23*. The Philistines, when their heart was merry, called for Samson, to abuse him; the Parisian massacre was at a wedding. This young lady's dancing "pleased Herod." We are not told who danced with her; but none pleased Herod like her dancing. Note, A vain and graceless heart is apt to be hugely in love with the lusts of the flesh and of the eye; and when it is so, it is entering into further temptation; for by that Satan gets and keeps possession; see *Pr. xxiii. 31, 33*. Herod was now upon the merry pin, and nothing was more agreeable to him than that which fed his vanity. 2. The rash and foolish promise which Herod made to this wanton girl, "to give her whatsoever she would ask," and this promise confirmed with an oath, *ver. 7*. It was a very extravagant obligation which Herod here entered into, and no becoming a prudent man, that is afraid of being "snared in the words of

his mouth," *Pr. vi. 2*; much less a good man, that fears an oath, *Ecc. ix. 2*. To put this blank into her hand, and enable her to draw upon him at pleasure, was too great a recompense for such a sorry piece of merit; and I am apt to think Herod would not have been guilty of such an absurdity, if he had not been instructed by Herodias, as well as the damsel. Note, Promissory oaths are ensnaring things; and, when made rashly, are the products of inward corruption, and the occasions of many temptations. Therefore swear not at all, lest thou have occasion to say "it was an error," *Ecc. v. 6*.

III. The bloody demand the young lady made of John Baptist's head, *ver. 8*. She was "before instructed of her mother." Note, The case of those children is very sad, whose parents are their "counsellors to do wickedly," as Ahaziah's, *2 Chr. xxii. 3*; who instruct them and encourage them in sin, and set them ill examples; for the corrupt nature will sooner be quickened by bad instructions than restrained and mortified by good ones. Children ought not to obey their parents against the Lord; but if they command them to sin, must say, as Levi did, to father and mother, they have not seen them. Herod having given her her commission, and Herodias her instructions, she requires John Baptist's head in a charger. Perhaps Herodias feared lest Herod should grow weary of her, (as lust useth to nauseate and be cloyed,) and then would make John Baptist's reproof a pretence to dismiss her; to prevent which she contrives to harden Herod in it, by engaging him in the murder of John. John must be beheaded, then; that is the death by which he must glorify God; and because it was his who died first after the beginning of the Gospel, though the martyrs died various kinds of deaths, and not so easy and honourable as this, yet this is put for all the rest, *Rev. xx. 4*, where we read of the souls of those that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus. Yet this is not enough; the thing must be humour'd too, and not only a revenge, but a fancy, must be gratified; it must be "given her here in a charger," served up in blood, as a dish of meat at the feast, or sauce to all other dishes. It is reserved for the third course, to come up with the rarities. He must have no trial, no public hearing; no forms of law or justice must add solemnity to his death; but he is tried, condemned, and executed, in a breath. It was well for him he was so mortified to the world, that death could be no surprise to him, though never so sudden. It must be given her; and she will reckon it a recompense for her dancing, and desire no more.

IV. Herod's grant of this demand, *ver. 9*: "The king was sorry," or at least took on him to be so; but, "for the oath's sake, he commanded it to be given her." Here is,

First. A pretended concern for John: "The king was sorry." Note, Many a man sins with regret, that never has any true regret for his sin; is sorry to sin, yet is utterly a stranger to "godly sorrow;" sins with reluctance, and yet goes on to sin. Dr. Hammond suggests, that one reason of Herod's sorrow was, because it was his birthday festival, and it would be an ill omen to shed blood on that day, which, as other days of joy, used to be graced with acts of clemency. *Natalem colimus, tacete lites*.—We are celebrating the birthday, let there be no contentions.

Secondly. Here is a pretended conscience of his oath, with a specious show of honour and honesty; he must needs do something "for the oath's sake." Note, It is a great mistake, to think that a wicked oath will justify a wicked action. It was implied so necessarily, that it needed not be expressed, that he would do any thing for her that was lawful and honest; and when she demanded what was otherwise, he ought to have declared, and he might have done it honourably, that the oath was null and void, and the obligation of it ceased. No man can oblige himself to sin, because God hath already so strongly obliged every man against sin.

Thirdly. Here is a real baseness in compliance with wicked companions. Herod yielding, not so much for the sake of the oath, but because it was public, and in compliment to "them that sat at meat with him;" he granted the demand, that he might not seem, before them, to have broke his engagement. Note, A point of honour goes much further with many than a point of conscience. Those that sat at meat with him probably were as well pleased with the damsel's dancing as he, and therefore would have her by all means to be gratified in a frolic, and perhaps were as willing as she to see John Baptist's head off. However, none of them had the honesty to interpose, as they ought to have done, for the preventing of it, as Jehoiakim's princes did, *Jer. xxxv. 25*. If some of the common people had been here, they would have rescued this Jonathan, as *1 Sam. xiv. 45*.

Fourthly. Here is a real malice to John, at the bottom of this concession, or else he might have found out evasions enough to have gotten clear of his promise. Note, Though a wicked mind never wants an excuse, yet the truth of the matter is, that every man is tempted when he is "drawn aside of his own lusts and enticed," *Jas. i. 14*. Perhaps Herod, presently reflecting upon the extravagance of his promise, on which she might ground a demand of some vast sum of money, which he loved a great deal better than John Baptist, was glad to get clear of it so easily, and therefore immediately issues out a warrant for the beheading of John Baptist; it should seem, not in writing, but only by word of mouth; so little account is made of that precious life: "he commanded it to be given her."

Fifthly. The execution of John pursuant to this grant, *ver. 10*: "He sent and beheaded John in the prison." It is probable the prison was very near, at the gate of the palace; and thither an officer was sent to cut off the head of this great man. He must be beheaded for expedition, to gratify Herodias, who was in a longing condition till it was done. It was done in the night, for it was at supper time, after supper, it is likely; it was done in the prison, not at the usual place of execution, for fear of an uproar. A great deal of innocent blood, of martyrs' blood, has thus been huddled up in corners, which, when God comes to make inquisition for blood, the earth shall disclose, and shall no more cover, *Isa. xxvi. 21*; *Ps. ix. 12*. Thus was that voice silenced, that burning and shining light extinguished; thus did that prophet, that Elias of the New Testament, fall a sacrifice to the resentments of an imperious, whorish woman; thus did he, who was great in the sight of the Lord, "die as a fool dieth; his hands were bound, and his feet put into fetters; and as a man falleth before wicked men," so he fell; a true martyr, to all intents and purposes; dying, though not for the profession of his faith, yet for the performance of his duty. However, though his work was soon done, it was done, and his testimony finished; for till then none of God's witnesses are slain. And God brought this good out of it, that hereby his disciples, who, while he lived, though in prison, kept close to him, now, after his death, heartily closed with Jesus Christ.

V. The disposal of the poor remains of this blessed saint and martyr. The head and body being separated,

First. The damsel brought the head in triumph to her mother, as a trophy of the victories of her malice and revenge, *ver. 11*. Jerome, *ad Rufin.*, relates, that when Herodias had John Baptist's head brought her, she gave herself the barbarous diversion of pricking the tongue with a needle, as Fulvia did Tully. Note, Bloody minds are pleased with bloody sights, which those of tender spirits shrink and tremble at. Sometimes the insatiable rage of bloody persecutors has fallen upon the dead bodies of the saints, and made sport with

till he has purchased the ground. Our Lord merely states the circumstance, pronouncing no judgment upon it as a phase of commercial morality. The lesson is, that men who know the value of salvation will make any sacrifice to secure it.

xiii. 45, 46. Here the merchant-man meets with a precious pearl rather than finds it, and parts with inferior things in order to obtain it.

xiii. 47—50. It is often said that this parable refers to the visible

Church of Christ, as made up of good and bad; but from the allusion to the end of the world, it rather seems to point to that day when the claim which the Gospel makes upon all men will be enforced in the general judgment.

xiii. 52. The well-instructed disciples of Christ will not keep their knowledge to themselves, but will employ it for the benefit of others.

xiii. 54. His own country was Nazareth and its vicinity. There our Lord resumed his teachings, even in the synagogue itself.

them, *Ps. lxxix. 2*. When the witnesses are slain, "they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry," *Rev. xi. 10; Ps. xiv. 4, 5*.

Secondly, The disciples "buried the body," and brought the news, in tears, to our Lord Jesus. The disciples of John had fasted often while their master was in prison; their bridegroom was taken from them, and they prayed earnestly for his deliverance, as the church did for Peter's, *Acts xii. 5*. They had free access to him in prison, which was a comfort to them, but they wished to see him at liberty, that he might preach to others; but now, on a sudden, all their hopes are dashed. Disciples weep and lament when the world rejoiceth. Let us see what they did. 1. They "buried the body." Note, There is a respect owing to the servants of Christ, not only while they live, but in their bodies and memories when they are dead. Concerning the two first New Testament martyrs, it is particularly taken notice of, that they were decently buried; John Baptist by his disciples, and Stephen by devout men, *Acts viii. 2*; yet there was no enshrining of their bones or other relics; a piece of superstition which sprung up long after, when the enemy had sowed tares. That overdoing, in respect to the bodies of the saints, is undoing; though they are not to be vilified, yet they are not to be deified. 2. They "went and told Jesus;" not so much that he might shift for his own safety, (no doubt he heard of it from others, the country rang of it,) as that they might receive comfort from him, and be taken in among his disciples. Note, 1st, When any thing ails us at any time, it is our duty and privilege to make Christ acquainted with it. It will be a relief to our burdened spirits to unbosom ourselves to a friend we may be free with. Such a relation dead or unkind, such a comfort lost or embittered; go and tell Jesus, who knows already, but will know from us the trouble of our souls in adversity. 2nd, We must take heed lest our religion, and the profession of it, die with our ministers; when John was dead, they did not return every man to his own, but resolved to abide by it still. When the shepherds are smitten, the sheep need not be scattered, while they have the great Shepherd of the sheep to go to, who is still the same, *Heb. xiii. 7, 8*. The removal of ministers should bring us nearer to Christ, into a more immediate communion with him. 3rd, Comforts, otherwise highly valuable, are sometimes therefore taken from us, because they come between us and Christ, and are apt to carry away that love and esteem which is due to him only. John had long since directed his disciples to Christ, and turned them over to him; but they could not leave their old master while he lived; therefore he is removed, that they may go to Jesus, whom they had sometimes emulated and envied for John's sake. It is better to be drawn to Christ by want and loss, than not come to him at all. If our masters be taken from our heed, this is our comfort, we have a Master in heaven, who himself is our head. Josephus mentions this story of the death of John Baptist, (*Antiq. l. 18, c. 7*), and adds that a fatal destruction of Herod's army, in his war with Aretas, king of Petra, (whose daughter was Herod's wife, whom he put away to make room for Herodias,) was generally looked upon by the Jews to be a just judgment upon him for putting John Baptist to death. Herod having, at the instigation of Herodias, disobliterated the emperor, he was deprived of his government, and they were both banished to Lyons in France; which, saith Josephus, was his just punishment for hearkening to her solicitations. And, lastly, it is storied of this daughter of Herodias, that, going over the ice in winter, the ice broke, and she slipt in up to her neck, which was cut through by the sharpness of the ice; God requiring her head (saith Dr. Whitby) for that of the Baptist; which, if true, was a remarkable providence.

13 When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities. 14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick. 15 And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. 16 But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. 17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. 18 He said, Bring them hither to me. 19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. 20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. 21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

This passage of story, concerning Christ's feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, is recorded by all the four evangelists; which very few, if any, of Christ's miracles are: this intimates there is something in it worthy of special remark. Observe,

I. The great resort of people to Christ, when he was retired into a desert place, ver. 13. He withdrew into privacy when he heard, not of John's death, but of the thoughts Herod had concerning him, that he was "John Baptist risen from the dead," and therefore so feared by Herod as to be hated; he departed further off, to get out of Herod's jurisdiction. Note, In times of peril, when God opens a door of escape, it is lawful to flee for our own preservation, unless we

have some special call to expose ourselves. Christ's hour was not yet come, and therefore he would not thrust himself upon suffering. He could have secured himself by Divine power; but because his life was intended for an example, he did it by human prudence, "he departed by ship." But "a city on a hill cannot be hid;" when the people heard of it, they followed him on foot, from all parts. Such an interest had Christ in the affections of the multitude, that his withdrawing from them did but draw them after him with so much the more eagerness. Here, as often, the Scripture was fulfilled, that "unto him shall the gathering of the people be." It should seem there was more crowding to Christ after John's martyrdom than before. Sometimes the sufferings of the saints are made to further the Gospel, *Phil. i. 12*; and the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Now John's testimony was finished, it was recollected, and more improved than ever. Note, 1. When Christ and his Word withdraw from us, it is best for us (whatever flesh and blood may object to the contrary) to follow it, preferring opportunities for our souls before any secular advantages whatsoever: "When the ark removes, ye shall remove, and so after it," *Jos. iii. 3*. 2. Those that truly desire the sincere milk of the Word will not stick at the difficulties they may meet with in their attendance on it. The presence of Christ and his Gospel makes a desert place not only tolerable, but desirable; it makes the wilderness an Eden, *Isa. li. 3-41; xix. 30*.

II. The tender compassion of our Lord Jesus towards those that thus followed him, ver. 14. 1. He went forth and appeared publicly among them. Though he retired for his own security and his own repose, yet he went forth from his retirement when he saw people desirous to hear him, as one willing both to toil himself and to expose himself for the good of souls, "for even Christ pleased not himself." 2. When he saw the multitude, he had compassion on them. Note, The sight of a great multitude may justly move compassion. To see a great multitude, and to think how many precious immortal souls here are, the greatest part of which we have reason to fear are neglected and ready to perish, would grieve one to the heart. None like Christ for pity to souls; his compassions fail not. 3. He did not only pity them, but he helped them. Many of them were sick, and he, in compassion to them, healed them; for he came into the world to be the great healer. After a while they were all hungry; and he, in compassion to them, fed them. Note, In all the favours Christ shews to us, he is "moved with compassion," *Isa. lxiii. 9*.

III. The motive which the disciples made for the dismissing of the congregation, and Christ's setting aside the motion. 1. The evening drawing on, the disciples moved it to Christ to "send the multitude away." They thought there was a good day's work done, and it was time to disperse. Note, Christ's disciples are often more careful to shew their discretion than to shew their zeal, and their abundant consideration rather than their abundant affection in the things of God. 2. Christ would not dismiss them hungry as they were, nor detain them longer without meat, nor put them upon the trouble and charge of buying meat for themselves, but orders his disciples to provide for them. Christ all along expressed more tenderness towards the people than his disciples did; for what are the compassions of the most merciful men compared with the tender mercies of God in Christ? See how loath Christ is to part with those that are resolved to cleave to him: "They need not depart." Note, Those that have Christ have enough, and need not depart to seek a happiness and livelihood in the creature. They that have made sure the one thing needful need not be "cumbered about much serving." Nor will Christ put his willing followers upon a needless expense, but will make their attendance cheap to them. But if they be hungry they have need to depart, for that is a necessary which has no law; therefore "give ye them to eat." Note, The Lord is for the body; it is the work of his hands, it is part of his purchase; he was himself clothed with a body, that he might encourage us to depend upon him for the supply of our bodily wants. But he takes a particular care of the body when it is employed to serve the soul in his more immediate service. If we "seek first the kingdom of God," and make that our chief care, we may depend upon God to add other things to us, as far as he sees fit, and may cast all our care of them upon him. These followed Christ but for a push, in a present pang of zeal, yet Christ took this care of them; much more will he provide for those that follow him fully.

IV. The slender provision that was made for this great multitude. And here we must compare the number of invited guests with the bill of fare.

First, The number of the guests was "five thousand men, besides women and children," and it is probable the women and children might be as many as the men, if not more. This was a vast auditory that Christ preached to, and we have reason to think an attentive auditory; and yet it should seem far the greater part, notwithstanding all this seeming zeal and forwardness, came to nothing; went off and followed him no more; for many are called, but few chosen. We would rather perceive the acceptableness of the Word by the conversations than by the crowds of its hearers, though that also is a good sight and a good sign.

Secondly, The bill of fare was very disproportionate to the number of the guests; but "five loaves and two fishes." This provision the disciples carried about with them for the use of the family, now they were retired into the desert. Christ could have fed them by miracle; but to set us an example of providing for those of our own household, he will have their own camp victualled in an ordinary way. Here is neither plenty, nor variety, nor dainty. A dish of fish was no rarity to them, that were fishermen; but it was food convenient for the twelve: two fishes for their supper, and bread to serve them, perhaps, for a day or two. Here was no wine or strong drink; fair water, from the rivers in the desert, was the best they had to drink with their meat; and yet out of this Christ will have the multitude fed. Note, Those that have but a little, yet when the necessity is urgent, must relieve others out of that little, and that is the way to make it more. "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" Yes, he can, when he pleaseth, a plentiful table.

V. The liberal distribution of this provision among the multitude, ver. 19, 19: "Bring them hither to me." Note, The way to have our creature comforts — comforts indeed to us, is to bring them to Christ; for every thing is sanctified by his Word, and by prayer to him. That is likely to prosper, and do well with us, which we put into the hands of our Lord Jesus, that he may dispose of it as he pleaseth, and that we may take it back from his hand, and then it will be doubly sweet to us. What we give in charity we should bring to Christ first, that he may graciously accept it from us, and graciously bless it to those to whom it is given: this is doing it as unto the Lord. Now at this miraculous meal we may observe,

First, The seating of the guests, ver. 19: He "commanded them to sit down;" which intimates that while he was preaching to them they were standing, which is a posture of reverence and readiness for motion. But what shall we do for chairs for them all? Let them sit down on the grass. When Ahasuerus would "shew the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty," in a royal feast for the great men of all the provinces, the beds or couches they sat on "were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red and blue and white and black marble," *Est. i. 4*. Our Lord Jesus did now shew, in a Divine feast, the riches of a more glorious kingdom than that, and the honour of a more excellent majesty, even a dominion over nature itself; but here is not so much as a cloth spread, no plates or napkins laid, no knives or

xiii. 55. Here we find not only a reference to Joseph, the carpenter, and to Mary, the mother of Jesus, but the mention of four persons as his brothers. For Josias some copies read Joseph, and others John; the weight of evidence is in favour of Joseph. In the next verse the sisters of Jesus are spoken of. Josias, or Joseph, and Simon only occur as names; nothing more is recorded of them. Nor does it at all appear that James and Judas were numbered with the twelve. The Jews certainly speak of all four as if they were the

real brothers of Jesus, and so of the sisters, of whom we know nothing. In the note on chap. xii. 46 mention is made of some of the explanations which have been proposed. It is impossible to decide dogmatically.

xiv. 1. Herod the tetrarch was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great and Malthace. His province consisted of Peræa and Galilee. He left his wife, the daughter of Aretas, in order to live with Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip. This act eventually

forks, not so much as a bench to sit down on; but, as if Christ intended indeed to reduce the world to the plainness and simplicity, and so to the innocency and happiness, of Adam in paradise, he commanded them to sit down on the grass. By doing every thing thus without any pomp or splendour, he plainly shewed that his kingdom was not of this world, nor cometh with observation.

Secondly. The craving of a blessing. He did not appoint one of his disciples to be his chaplain, but he himself "looked up to heaven, and blessed, and gave thanks;" he praised God for the provision they had, and prayed to God to bless it to them. His craving a blessing was commanding a blessing; for as he preached, so he prayed, like one having authority; and in this prayer and thanksgiving we may suppose he had special reference to the multiplying of this food; but herein he has taught us that good duty of craving a blessing and giving thanks at our meals. God's good creatures must be "received with thanksgiving," 1 Tim. iv. 4. Samuel blessed the feast, 1 Sam. ix. 31; Acts ii. 46, 47; xxvii. 34, 35. This is eating and drinking to the glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31; giving God thanks, Rom. xiv. 6; before God, as Moses and his father in law, Ex. xviii. 15. When Christ blessed he looked up to heaven, to teach us in prayer to eye God as a Father in heaven; and when we receive our creature comforts, to look thitherward, as taking them from God's hand, and depending on him for a blessing.

Thirdly. The carving of the meat. The master of the feast was himself head carver, for "he brake, and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude." Christ intended hereby to put honour upon his disciples, that they might be respected as workers together with him; as also to signify in what way the spiritual food of the Word should be dispensed to the world, from Christ, as the original author, by his ministers. What Christ designed for the churches, he signified to his servant John, Rev. i. 1, 4. They delivered all that, and that only, which they received from the Lord, 1 Cor. xi. 23. Ministers can never fill the people's hearts unless Christ first fill their hands. And what he has given to the disciples they must give to the multitude; for they are stewards, to give to every one their portion of meat, ch. xxiv. 45. And, blessed be God, be the multitude never so great, there is enough for all, enough for each.

Fourthly. The increase of the meat. This is taken notice of only in the effect, not in the cause or manner of it. Here is no mention of any word that Christ spoke by which the food was multiplied; the purposes and intentions of his mind and will shall take effect, though they be not spoken out. But this is observable, that the meat was multiplied, not in the heap, at first, but in the distribution of it. As the widow's oil increased in the pouring out, so here, the bread in the breaking. Thus grace grows by being acted; and while other things perish in the using, spiritual gifts increase in the using. God ministers seed to the sower, and multiplies, not the seed hoarded up, but the seed sown, 2 Cor. ix. 10. Thus there is that scattereth and yet increaseth, that scattereth and so increaseth.

VI. The plentiful satisfaction of all the guests with this provision. Though the disproportion was so great, yet there was enough and to spare.

First. There was enough: "They did all eat, and were filled." Note, Those that Christ feeds he fills; so runs the promise, Ps. xxxvii. 19: "They shall be satisfied." As there was enough for all, "they did all eat;" so there was enough for each; they were filled: though there was but a little, there was enough, and that is as good as a feast. Note, The blessing of God can make a little go a great way; as, if God blasts what we have, we eat and have not enough. Hag. i. 9.

Secondly. There was to spare. "They took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full," one basket for each apostle. Thus what they gave they had again, and a great deal more with it: and they were so far from being nice, that they could make this broken meat serve another time, and be thankful. This was to manifest and magnify the miracle, and to shew that the provision Christ makes for those that are his, is not bare and scanty, but rich and plentiful, "bread enough, and to spare," Lu. xv. 17; an overflowing fullness. Elisha's multiplying the loaves was somewhat like this, but far short of it; and then it was said, "They shall eat, and leave," 2 Kin. iv. 43. It is the same Divine power, though exerted in an ordinary way, which multiplieth the seed sown in the ground every year, and makes the earth yield her increase; so that what was brought out by handfuls is brought home in sheaves. "This is the Lord's doing;" it is by Christ that all natural things "consist," and "by the word of his power" that they are "upheld."

22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. 23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. 24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. 27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. 28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying,

involved him in a war with his father-in-law, and led to his deposition and banishment.

xiv. 2. On Herod's exclamation here Middleton says, "We are to consider that Herod was a Sadducee, and that he had hitherto believed neither in a resurrection nor in the agency of spirits. His remorse, however, and his fears, for the moment at least, shake his infidelity, and he involuntarily renounces the two great principles of his sect." Some have doubted whether Herod was a Sadducee.

Lord, save me. 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? 32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. 33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

We here have the story of another miracle which Christ wrought for the relief of his friends and followers, his walking upon the water to his disciples. In the foregoing miracle he acted as the Lord of nature, improving its powers for the supply of those that were in want; in this he acted as the Lord of nature, correcting and controlling its powers for the succour of those that were in danger and distress. Observe,

I. Christ's dismissing of his disciples and the multitude, after he had fed them miraculously. He "constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side," ver. 22. St. John gives a particular reason for the hasty breaking up of this assembly, because the people were so affected with the miracle of the loaves that they were about to "take him by force, and make him a king," Jno. vi. 15; to avoid which he immediately scattered the people, sent away the disciples, lest they should join with them, and he himself withdrew, Jno. vi. 15. When they had sat down to eat and drink, they did not rise up to play, but each went to his business.

First. Christ sent the people away. It intimates somewhat of solemnity in the dismissing of them; he sent them away with a blessing, with some parting word of caution, counsel, and comfort, which might abide with them.

Secondly. He constrained the disciples to go into a ship first; for, till they were gone, the people would not stir. The disciples were loath to go, and would not have gone if he had not constrained them. They were loath to go to sea without him: "If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence," Ex. xxxv. 15. They were loath to leave him alone, without any attendance or any ship to wait for him; but they did it, in pure obedience.

II. Christ's retirement hereupon, ver. 23: "He went up into a mountain apart to pray." Observe, here,

First. That he was alone; he went "apart" into a solitary place, and was there all alone. Though he had so much work to do with others, yet he chose sometimes to be alone, to set us an example. Those are not Christ's followers that do not care for being alone, that cannot enjoy themselves in solitude when they have none else to converse with, none else to enjoy, but God and their own hearts.

Secondly. That he was alone at prayer: that was his business in this solitude, to pray. Though Christ, as God, was "Lord of all," and was prayed to; yet Christ, as man, had the form of a servant, of a beggar, and prayed. Christ has herein set before us an example of secret prayer, and the performance of it secretly, according to the rule he gave, ch. vi. 6. Perhaps in this mountain there was some private oratory, or convenience provided for such an occasion; it was usual among the Jews to have such. Observe, When the disciples went to sea, their Master went to prayer; when Peter was to be sifted as wheat, Christ prayed for him.

Thirdly. That he was long alone. There he was when the evening was come; and, for aught appears, there was he till towards morning, the fourth watch of the night. The night came on, and it was a stormy, tempestuous night; yet he continued instant in prayer. Note, It is good, at least sometimes, upon special occasions, and when we find our hearts enlarged, to continue long in secret prayer, and to take full scope in pouring out our hearts before the Lord. We must not restrain prayer, Job xv. 4.

III. The condition that the poor disciples were in at this time. Their "ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves," ver. 24. We may observe,

First. That they were got "into the midst of the sea" when the storm rose. We may have fair weather at the beginning of our voyage, and yet meet with storms before we arrive at the port we are bound for. Therefore let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off;" but, after a long calm, expect some storm or other.

Secondly. The disciples were now where Christ sent them, and yet met with this storm. Had they been flying from their Master and their work, as Jonah was when he was arrested by the storm, it had been a dreadful one indeed; but they had a special command from their Master to go to sea at this time, and were going about their work. Note, It is no new thing for Christ's disciples to meet with storms in the way of their duty, and to be sent to sea then when their Master foresees a storm. But let them not take it unkindly; what he doth they "know not now, but they shall know hereafter," that Christ designs hereby to manifest himself with the most wonderful grace to them, and for them.

Thirdly. It was a great discouragement to them now, that they had not Christ with them, as they had formerly when they were in a storm; though he was then asleep, indeed, yet he was soon waked, ch. viii. 24. But now he was not with them at all. Thus Christ useth his disciples first to lesser difficulties, and then to greater, and so trains them up by degrees to live by faith, and not by sense.

Fourthly. Though the wind was contrary, and they were tossed with waves, yet, being ordered by their Master to the other side, they did not tack about and come back again, but made the best of their way forward. Note, Though troubles and difficulties may disturb us in our duty, they must not drive us from it; but through the midst of them we must press forwards.

IV. Christ's approach to them in this condition, ver. 25. And in this we have an instance,

First. Of his goodness; that he went unto them as one that took cognizance of their case, and was under a concern about them, as a father about his children. Note, The extremity of the church and people of God is Christ's opportunity to visit them, and appear for them. But he came not till the fourth watch, towards three o'clock in the morning, for then the fourth watch began. It was in the morning watch that the Lord appeared for Israel in the Red Sea, Ex. xiv. 24. So was this: "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth," but, when there is occasion, "walketh in darkness" for their succour, helps, and that right early.

Secondly. Of his power; that he went unto them walking on the sea. This is a great instance of Christ's sovereign dominion over all the creatures; they are all under his feet, and at his command forget their natures, and change their qualities, that we call essential. We need not inquire how this was done; whether by condensing the surface of the water, (when God pleaseth, "the

xiv. 4. Three reasons were assigned for John's judgment in this case:—1. The true husband of Herodias was yet alive. 2. The lawful wife of Herod was living. 3. Herodias and Herod the tetrarch were related to one another within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity.

xiv. 6. Some have doubted whether the actual anniversary of Herod's birth is meant here, or of that on which he began his reign. Bengel's note leaves it an open question. Olshausen says the birthday is meant, and that the other sense is never found attached

depths are congealed in the heart of the sea." *Ex. xv. 8*.) or by suspending the gravitation of his body, which was transfigured as he pleased: it is sufficient that it proves his Divine power; for it is God's prerogative "to tread upon the waves of the sea," *Job ix. 8*, as it is "to ride upon the wings of the wind." He that made the sea a walk for the Redeemer himself, who, as Lord of all, appears with one foot on the sea, and the other on dry land," *Rev. x. 2*. The same power that made "iron to swim," *2 Kin. vi. 6*, did this, "What ailed thee, O thou sea?" It was "at the presence of the Lord," *Ps. cxiv. 5, 7*. "Thy way, O God, is in the sea," *Ps. lxxvii. 19*. Note, Christ can take what way he pleaseth to save his people.

V. Here is an account of what passed between Christ and his distressed friends upon his approach.

First. Between him and all the disciples. We are here told, 1. How their fears were raised, ver. 26: "When they saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit." *Φάντασμα ἑστίν*.—It is an apparition; so it might much better be rendered. It seems the existence and appearance of spirits was generally believed by all, except the Sadducees, whose doctrine Christ had warned his disciples against; yet, doubtless, many supposed apparitions to have been merely the creatures of men's own fancies. These disciples said, "It is a spirit," when they should have said, "It is the Lord, it can be no other." Note, 1st. Even the appearances and approaches of deliverance are sometimes the occasions of trouble and perplexity to God's people, who are sometimes most frightened when they are least hurt: nay, when they are most favoured, as the Virgin Mary, *Luk. i. 29*; *Ex. iii. 6, 7*. The comforts of the spirit of adoption are introduced by the terrors of the spirit of bondage, *Rom. viii. 15*. 2nd. The appearance of a spirit, or the fancy of it, cannot but be frightful, and strike a terror upon us, because of the distance of the world of spirits from us, the just quarrel good spirits have with us, and the inveterate enmity evil spirits have against us; see *Job iv. 14, 15*. The more acquaintance we have with God, the Father of spirits, and the more careful we are to keep ourselves in his love, the better able we shall be to deal with those fears. 3rd. The perplexing, disquieting fears of good people arise from their mistakes and misapprehensions concerning Christ, his person, offices, and undertaking: the more clearly and fully we know his name, with the more assurance we shall trust in him, *Ps. ix. 10*. 4th. A little thing frightens us in a storm. When "without are fightings," no marvel that "within are fears." Perhaps the disciples fancied this was some evil spirit that raised the storm. Note, Most of our danger from outward troubles ariseth from the occasion they give for inward troubles.

2. How these fears were silenced, ver. 27. He straightway relieved them, by shewing them their mistake. When they were wrestling with the waves, he delayed his succour for some time, but hastened his succour against their fright, as much the more dangerous; he "straightway" laid that storm with his word, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." 1st. He rectified their mistake, by making himself known to them, as Joseph to his brethren: "It is I." He doth not name himself as he did to Paul, "I am Jesus," for Paul as yet knew him not; but to these disciples it was enough to say, "It is I;" they "knew his voice," as his sheep, *Jno. x. 45*; as Mary Magdalen, *Jno. xx. 16*. They need not ask, "Who art thou, Lord? Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" but could say with the spouse, "It is the voice of my beloved," *Cant. ii. 8*; v. 2. True believers know it by a good token. It was enough, to make them easy, to understand who it was they saw. Note, A right knowledge opens the door to true comfort, especially the knowledge of Christ. 2nd. He encouraged them against their fright: "It is I" and therefore, *First*, "Be of good cheer." *Θαράττειτε*.—"Be courageous;" "Pluck up your spirits, and be courageous." If Christ's disciples be not cheerful in a storm, it is their own fault; he would have them so. *Secondly*, "Be not afraid." 1st. "Be not afraid of me; now you know it is I, surely you will not fear, for you know I mean you no hurt." Note, Christ will not be a terror to those to whom he manifests himself; when they come to understand him aright the terror will be over. 2nd. "Be not afraid of the tempest, of the winds and waves, though noisy and very threatening; fear them not while I am so near you; I am he that concern myself for you, and will not stand by and see you perish." Note, Nothing need be a terror to those that have Christ near them, and know he is theirs—no, not death itself.

Secondly. Between him and Peter, ver. 28—31; where observe, 1. Peter's courage, and Christ's countenancing that. 1st. It was very bold in Peter, that he would venture to come to Christ upon the water, ver. 28: "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee." Courage was Peter's master grace, and that made him so forward above the rest to express his love to Christ, though others perhaps loved him as well. *First*. It is an instance of Peter's affection to Christ, that he desired to come to him. When he sees Christ, whom, doubtless, during the storm he had many a time wished for, he is impatient to be with him. He doth not say, "Bid me walk upon the waters," as desiring it for the miracle's sake; but "Bid me come to thee," as desiring it for Christ's sake. Let me come to thee, no matter how. Note, True love will break through fire and water, if duly called to it, to come to Christ. Christ was coming to them, to succour and deliver them; "Lord," saith Peter, "bid me come to thee." Note, When Christ is coming towards us in a way of mercy, we must go forth to meet him in a way of duty; and herein we must be willing and bold to venture with him, and venture for him. Those that would have benefit by Christ as a Saviour, must thus by faith come to him. Christ had been now for some time absent; and hereby it appears why he absented himself: it was to endear himself so much the more to his disciples at his return, to make it highly seasonable and doubly acceptable. Note, When, for a small moment, Christ has forsaken his people, his returns are welcome, and most affectionately embraced; when gracious souls, after long seeking, find their beloved at last, they "hold him, and will not let him go," *Cant. iii. 4*. *Secondly*. It is an instance of Peter's caution, and due observance of the will of Christ, that he would not come without a warrant; not, "If it be thou, I will come," but, "If it be thou, bid me come." Note, The boldest spirits must wait for a call to hazardous enterprises; and we must not rashly and presumptuously thrust ourselves upon them. Our will to services and sufferings is interpreted, not willingness, but wilfulness, if it have not a regard to the will of Christ, and be not regulated by his call and command. Such extraordinary warrants as this to Peter we are not now to expect, but must have recourse to the general rules of the Word; which, how to apply to particular cases, with the help of providential hints, "wisdom is profitable to direct." *Thirdly*. It is an instance of Peter's faith and resolution, that he ventured upon the water when Christ bade him. To quit the safety of the ship, and throw himself into the jaws of death; to despise those threatening waves he so lately dreaded, argued a very strong dependence upon the power and word of Christ. What difficulty or danger could stand before such a faith, and such a zeal?

2nd. It was very kind and condescending in Christ, that he was pleased to own him in it, ver. 29. He might have condemned the proposal as foolish and rash—nay, and as proud and assuming: "Shall Peter pretend to do as his master doth? But Christ knew that it came from a sincere and zealous affec-

tion to him, and graciously accepted of it. Note, Christ is well pleased with the expressions of his people's love, though mixed with manifold infirmities, and makes the best of them. *First*. He bade him come. When the Pharisees asked a sign, they had not only a repulse, but a reproof for it; because they did it with a design to tempt Christ: when Peter asked a sign, he had it, because he did it with a resolution to trust Christ. The gospel call is, 'Come, come to Christ; venture all in his hand, and commit the keeping of your souls to him; venture through a stormy sea, a troublesome world, to Jesus Christ.' *Secondly*. He bore him out when he did come: "he walked upon the water." The communion of true believers with Christ is represented by their being quickened with him, and raised up with him, and made to sit with him, *Eph. ii. 5, 6*; and their being crucified with him, *Gal. ii. 20*. Now methinks it is represented in this story by their walking with him on the water. Through the strength of Christ we are borne up above the world, are enabled to trample upon it, kept from sinking into it, from being overwhelmed by it, obtain a victory over it, *1 Jno. v. 4*; by faith in Christ's victory, *Jno. xvi. 33*; and with him are crucified to it, *Gal. vi. 14*. See blessed Paul walking upon the water with Jesus, and more than a conqueror through him; and treading upon all the threatening waves, as not able to "separate him from the love of Christ," *Rom. viii. 35*, &c. Thus the sea of the world is become like a sea of glass, congealed so as to bear; and they that have gotten the victory stand upon it and sing, *Rev. xv. 2, 3*. "He walked upon the water," not for diversion or ostentation, but to go to Jesus; and in that he was thus wonderfully borne up. Note, When our souls are following hard after God, then it is that his right hand upholds us: it was David's experience, *Ps. lxxiii. 8*. Special supports are promised, and are to be expected, only in spiritual pursuits. When God bears his Israel upon eagle's wings, it is to bring them to himself, *Ex. xix. 4*; nor can we ever come to Jesus unless we be upheld by his power: it is in his own strength that we wrestle with him, that we reach after him, that we "press forward toward the mark," being "kept by the power of God;" which power we must depend upon, as Peter when he walked upon the water; and there is no danger of sinking, while underneath are the everlasting arms.

2. Here is Peter's cowardice, and Christ's reproving him, and succouring him. Christ bade him come, not only that he might walk upon the water, and so know Christ's power; but that he might sink, and so shew his own weakness; for, as he would encourage his faith, so he would check his confidence, and make him ashamed of it. Observe, then, 1st. Peter's great fear, ver. 30. He was afraid. The strongest faith, and the greatest courage, has a mixture of fear: those that can say, "Lord, I believe," must say, "Lord, help my unbelief." Nothing but "perfect love" will quite "cast out fear." Good men often fail in those graces they are most eminent for, and which they have then in exercise, to shew that they have not yet attained. Peter was very stout at first, but afterwards his heart failed him. The lengthening out of a trial discovers the weakness of faith. Here is, *First*. The cause of this fear; "he saw the wind boisterous." While Peter kept his eye fixed upon Christ, and upon his word and power, he walked upon the water well enough; but when he took notice withal of the danger he was in, and observed how the floods lift up their waves, then he feared. Note, Looking at difficulties with an eye of sense, more than at precepts and promises with an eye of faith, is at the bottom of all our inordinate fears, both as to public and personal concerns. Abraham was strong in faith, because he considered not his own body, *Rom. iv. 19*; he minded not the discouraging improbabilities which the promise lay under, but kept his eye on God's power; and so, against hope, believed in hope, ver. 18. Peter, when he saw the wind boisterous, should have remembered what he had seen, *Ch. vii. 27*, when the winds and the sea obeyed Christ; but therefore we "fear continually every day," because we "forget the Lord our maker," *Isa. li. 12, 13*. *Secondly*. The effect of this fear; "he began to sink." While faith kept up, he kept above water; but when faith staggered, he began to sink. Note, The sinking of our spirits is owing to the weakness of our faith: we are upheld (but it is as we are saved) "through faith," *1 Pet. i. 5*; and therefore, when our souls are "cast down and disquieted," the sovereign remedy is to "hope in God," *Ps. xliii. 5*. It is likely Peter, being bred a fisherman, could swim very well; it should seem so by *Jno. xxi. 7*; and perhaps he trusted in part to that when he cast himself into the sea; if he could not walk, he could swim; but Christ let him begin to sink, to shew him that it was Christ's right hand, and his holy arm, not any skill of his own, that was his security. It was Christ's great mercy to him that, upon the failing of his faith, he did not leave him to sink outright, to sink to the bottom as a stone, (*Ex. xv. 5*), but gave him time to cry, "Lord, save me." Such is the care of Christ concerning true believers, though weak, they do but begin to sink: a man is never sunk, never undone, till he is in hell. Peter walked as he believed; to him, as to others, the rule held good, "According to your faith be it unto you." *Thirdly*. The remedy he had recourse to in this distress; the old, tried, approved remedy, and that was prayer: he cried, "Lord, save me." Observe, 1st. The manner of his praying; it is fervent and importunate; "he cried." Note, When faith is weak, prayer should be strong. Our Lord Jesus has taught us in the day of our fear to offer up strong cries, *Heb. v. 7*. Sense of danger will make us cry; sense of duty and dependence on God should make us cry to him. 2nd. The matter of his prayer was pertinent, and to the purpose: he cried, "Lord, save me." Christ is the great Saviour; he came to save: those that would be saved must not only come to him, but cry to him for salvation. But we are never brought to this till we find ourselves sinking. Sense of need will drive us to him. 2nd. Christ's great favour to Peter in this fright. Though there was a mixture of presumption with Peter's faith, in his first adventure, and of unbelief with his faith, in his after fainting, yet Christ did not cast him off; for, *First*. He saved him. He answered him with the saving strength of his right hand, *Ps. xx. 6*; for "immediately he stretched forth his hand, and caught him." Note, Christ's time to save is when we sink, *Ps. xviii. 4—7*; he helps at a dead lift. Christ's hand is still stretched out to all believers, to keep them from sinking. Those whom he hath once apprehended as his own, and hath snatched as brands out of the burning, he will catch out of the water too: though he may seem to have left his hold, he doth but seem to do so, for they "shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of his hand," *Jno. x. 28*. Never fear, he will hold his own. Our deliverance from our own fears, which else would overwhelm us, is owing to the hand of his power and grace, *Ps. xxiv. 4*. *Secondly*. He rebuked him; for as many as he loves and saves he reproves and chides: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Note, 1st. Faith may be true, and yet weak; at first like a grain of mustard seed. Peter had faith enough to bring him upon the water; yet, because not enough to carry him through, Christ tells him he had but a little. 2nd. Our discouraging doubts and fears are all owing to the weakness of our faith; therefore we doubt, because we are but of little faith. It is the business of faith to resolve doubts, the doubts of sense in a stormy day, so as even then to keep the head above water. Could we but believe more, we should doubt less. 3rd. The weakness of our faith, and the prevalence of our doubts, is very displeasing to our Lord Jesus. It is true he doth not cast off weak believers; but it is as true that he is not pleased with weak faith—not in those that are nearest to him: "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" What

to the word. That it was used for birthday appears both from Josephus, as Alford shows, and also from Philo, in more than one of his treatises.

xiv. 8. A "charger" was a large dish or plate, such as was employed for serving up meat and the like at meals.

xiv. 12. Bishop Wordsworth notes that Jerome says Herodias ordered the dead body of John to be cast out in contempt, and left unburied.

xiv. 13. It may be fairly asked what Jesus heard of, because the immediate reference seems to be to the death of John, whereas verse 1 mentions the rumours which had reached Herod. The words "when Jesus heard of it" may apply to the reasonings of Herod, concerning whom reports might easily reach the apostolic circle, through "Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward" (*Luke viii. 3*). On the whole we think this application worthy of attention, although the words of verse 12 seem to tell strongly in favour of the other

reason was there for it? Note, Our doubts and fears would soon vanish before a strict inquiry into the cause of them; for, all things considered, there is no good reason why Christ's disciples should be of a doubtful mind—no, not in a stormy day, because he is ready to them, a very present help.

VI. The ceasing of the storm, ver. 32. When Christ was come into the ship, they were presently at the shore. Christ walked upon the water till he came to the ship, and then took into that, when he could as easily have walked to the shore; but when ordinary means are to be had, miracles are not to be expected. Though Christ needs not instruments for the doing of his work, he is pleased to use them. Observe, When Christ came into the ship, Peter came in with him: companions with Christ in his patience shall be companions in his kingdom, *Rev. i. 9.* Those that walk with him, shall reign with him; that are exposed and suffer with him, shall triumph with him. When they were come into the ship, immediately the storm ceased, for it had done its work, its trying work. He that has "gathered the winds into his fists, and bound the waters in a garment," is the same that ascended and descended; and his Word, his will, even stormy winds fulfil, *Ps. cxlviii. 8.* When Christ comes into a soul, he makes winds and storms to cease there, and commands the peace. Welcome Christ, and the noise of her waves will soon be quelled. The way to be still, is to know that he is God, that he is the Lord with us.

VII. The adoration paid to Christ hereupon, ver. 33: "They that were in the ship came and worshipped him," and said, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Two good uses they made of this distress, and this deliverance:

First, It was a confirmation of their faith in Christ, and abundantly convinced them that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him: for none but the world's Creator could multiply the loaves—none but its Governor could tread upon the waters of the sea; they therefore yield to the evidence, and make confession of their faith, "Thou truly art the Son of God." They knew before that he was the Son of God, but now they know it better. Faith, after a conflict with unbelief, is sometimes the more active, and gets to greater degrees of strength by being exercised. Now they know it of a truth. Note, It is good for us to know more and more of the certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed, *Lu. i. 4.* Faith then grows when it arrives to a full assurance, when it sees clearly, and saith, "Of a truth."

Secondly, They took occasion from it to "give him the glory due unto his name." They not only owned that great truth, but were suitably affected with it: they "worshipped Christ." Note, When Christ manifests his glory for us, we ought to return it to him, *Ps. l. 15:* "I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Their worship and adoration of Christ was thus expressed, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Note, The matter of our creed may and must be made the matter of our praise. Faith is the proper principle of worship, and worship the genuine product of faith. He that comes to God must believe, and he that believes in God will come, *Heb. xi. 6.*

34 And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. **35** And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; **36** And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

We have here an account of miracles by wholesale, which Christ wrought on the other side of the water, in the land of Gennesaret. Wherever Christ went he was doing good. Gennesaret was a tract of land that lay between Bethsaida and Capernaum, and either gave the name to, or took the name from, this sea, which is called, *Lu. v. 1,* the lake of Gennesaret; it signifies the valley of branches. Observe, here,

I. The forwardness and faith of the men of that place. These were more noble than the Gergesenes, their neighbours, who were borderers upon the same lake. Those besought Christ to depart from them—they had no occasion for him; these besought him to help them—they had need of him. Christ reckons it the greatest honour we can do him, to make use of him. Now here we are told,

First, How the men of that place were brought to Christ; they "had knowledge of him." It is likely his miraculous passage over the sea, which they that were in the ship would industriously spread the report of, might help to make way for his entertainment in those parts; and perhaps it was one thing Christ intended in it, for he has great reaches in what he doth. This they had knowledge of, and of other the miracles Christ had wrought; and therefore they flocked to him. Note, They that know Christ's name will make their application to him. If Christ were better known, he would not be neglected as he is: he is trusted as far as he is known. They had knowledge of him; that is, of his being among them, and that he would be but a while among them. Note, The discerning of the day of our opportunities is a good step towards the improvement of it. This was the condemnation of the world, that "Christ was in the world, and the world knew him not," *Jno. i. 42.* Jerusalem knew not, *Lu. xix. 42.* But there were some that, when he was among them, had "knowledge of him." It is better to know that there is a prophet among us than that there has been one, *Eze. ii. 5.*

Secondly, How they brought others to Christ, by giving notice to their neighbours of Christ's being come into those parts: "They sent out into all that country." Note, Those that have got the knowledge of Christ themselves, should do all they can to bring others acquainted with him too. We must not eat these spiritual morsels alone; there is in Christ enough for us all: so that there is nothing got by monopolizing. When we have opportunities of getting good to our souls, we should bring as many as we can to share with us: more than we think of would close with opportunities, if they were but called upon and invited to them. They sent into their own country, because it was their own, and they desired the welfare of it. Note, We cannot better testify our love to our country, than by promoting and propagating the knowledge of Christ in it. Neighbourhood is an advantage of doing good which must be improved. Those that are near to us we should contrive to do something for, at least, by our example, to bring them near to Christ.

Thirdly, What their business was with Christ: not only, perhaps not chiefly, if at all, to be taught, but to have their sick healed. They "brought unto him all that were diseased." If love to Christ and his doctrine will not bring them to him, yet self-love would. Did we but rightly seek our own things, the things of our own peace and welfare, we should seek the things of Christ: we should do him honour and please him, by deriving grace and righteousness from him. Note, Christ is the proper person to bring the diseased to; whither should they

go but to the Physician, to the Sun of Righteousness, that hath "healing under his wings?"

Fourthly, How they made their application to him: "They besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment," ver. 36. They applied themselves to him, 1. With great importunity; "they besought him." We I may we beseech to be healed, when God, by his ministers, beseecheth us that we will be healed. Note, The greatest favours and blessings are to be obtained from Christ by entreaty: ask and it shall be given. 2. With great humility: they came to him as those that were sensible of their distance, humbly beseeching him to help them; and their desiring to "touch the hem of his garment" intimates, they thought themselves unworthy that he should take any particular notice of them, that he should so much as speak to their case, much less touch them for their cure; but they will look upon it as a great favour if he will give them leave to touch the hem of his garment. The Eastern nations shew respect to their princes by kissing their sleeve or skirt. 3. With great assurance of the all-sufficiency of his power, not doubting but they should be healed, even by touching the hem of his garment; that they should receive abundant communications from him by the smallest token or symbol of communion with him. They did not expect the formality of striking his hand over the place or persons diseased, as Naaman did, *2 Kin. v. 11;* but were sure there was in him such an overflowing fulness of healing virtue, that they could not fail of a cure that were but admitted near him. It was in this country and neighbourhood that the woman with the bloody issue was cured by touching the hem of his garment, and was commended for her faith, *ch. ix. 20–22;* and thence probably they took occasion to ask this. Note, The experiences of others, in their attendance upon Christ, may be of use, both to direct and to encourage us in our attendance on him. It is good using those means and methods which others have before us sped well in the use of.

II. The fruit and success of this their application to Christ. It was not in vain that these seed of Jacob sought him, for as many as touched were made perfectly whole. Note, 1. Christ's cures are perfect cures; those that he heals, he heals perfectly; he doeth not his work by halves. Though spiritual healing be not perfected at first, yet, doubtless, he that has begun the good work will perform it, *Phil. i. 6.* 2. There is abundance of healing virtue in Christ for all that apply themselves to him, be they never so many. That precious ointment which was poured on his head, ran down to the skirts of his garments, *Ps. cxxxiii. 2.* The least of Christ's institutions, like the hem of his garment, is replenished with the overflowing fulness of his grace, and he is able to save to the uttermost. 3. The healing virtue that is in Christ is put forth for the benefit of those that by a true and lively faith touch him. Christ is in heaven, but his Word is nigh us, and he himself in that Word. When we mix faith with the Word, apply it to ourselves, depend upon it, and submit to the influences and commands of it, then we touch the hem of Christ's garment; it is but thus touching, and we are made whole: on such easy terms are spiritual cures offered by Him that may truly be said to heal freely: so that if our souls die of their wounds it is not along of our physician, it is not for want of skill or will in him, but it is purely along of ourselves. He could have healed us, he would have healed us, but we would not be healed; so that our blood will lie upon our own heads.

CHAPTER XV.

In this chapter we have our Lord Jesus as the great Prophet, teaching; as the great Physician, healing; and, as the great Shepherd of the sheep, feeding; as the Father of spirits, instructing them; as the Conqueror of Satan, dispossessing him; and, as concerned for his people, providing for them. Here is, I. Christ's discourse with the scribes and Pharisees about human traditions and injunctions, ver. 1–9. II. His discourse with the multitude and with his disciples, concerning the things that defile a man, ver. 10–20. III. His casting the devil out of the woman of Canaan's daughter, ver. 21–28. IV. His healing all that were brought to him, ver. 29–31. V. His feeding four thousand men with seven loaves and a few little fishes, ver. 32–39.



HEN came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, **2** Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. **3** But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? **4** For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. **5** But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, *It is a gift*, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; **6** And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. **7** Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, **8** This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. **9** But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

view. Bengel refers this verse to the whole passage from verse 1. The desert place to which Jesus withdrew was on the eastern side of the sea of Galilee, which the people reached by travelling round the northern shore.

xiv. 15. The expression "the time is now past" either means, as some think, "the time for dining," or "the day." It was late in the day.

xiv. 20. It has been suggested that this miracle is only another

version of the one in chap. xv., but it is very unlikely that the same evangelist should fall into such an error. Blunt, in his "Scriptural Coincidences," observes that the Greek word for "baskets" here, and in the parallel passages of the other gospels, is not the same as we find in Matt. xv. 37 and Mark viii. 8. Two kinds of baskets are designed by the two words. It may be further noted that in Matt. xvi. 9, 10 the miracles are distinguished, and (in the Greek) the baskets also.

Evil manners, we say, beget good laws. The intemperate heat of the Jewish teachers, for the support of their hierarchy, occasioned many excellent discourses of our Saviour's, for the settling of the truth; as here.

1. *Here is the cavil of the scribes and Pharisees at Christ's disciples, for eating with unwashed hands.* The scribes and Pharisees were the topping men of the Jewish church; men whose gain was godliness; great enemies to the Gospel of Christ, but colouring their opposition with a pretence of zeal for the law of Moses, when really nothing was intended but the support of their own tyranny over the consciences of men: they were men of learning, and men of business. These scribes and Pharisees here introduced were of Jerusalem, the holy city, the head city, whither the tribes went up, and where were set the thrones of judgment; they should therefore have been better than others, but they were worse. Note, External privileges, if they be not duly improved, commonly swell men up the more with pride and malignity. Jerusalem should have been a pure spring; it was now become a poisoned sink. How is the faithful city become a harlot! Now if these great men be the accusers, pray what is the accusation? What articles do they exhibit against the disciples of Christ? Why, truly, the thing laid to their charge is, nonconformity to the canons of their church, ver. 2. "Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders?" This charge they make good in a particular instance, "they wash not their hands when they eat bread," a very high misdemeanor! It was a sign Christ's disciples carried themselves indifferently, when this was the worst thing they could charge them with. Observe,

First. What was the tradition of the elders: that people should often wash their hands, and always at meat. This they placed a great deal of religion in, supposing that the meat they touched with unwashed hands would be defiling to them. The Pharisees practised this themselves, and with a great deal of strictness imposed it upon others, not under civil penalties, but as a matter of conscience, and making it a sin against God if they did not do it. Rabbi Jose determined, that to eat with unwashed hands is as great a sin as adultery. And Rabbi Akiba being kept a close prisoner, having water sent him both to wash his hands with, and to drink with his meat, the greatest part being accidentally shed, he washed his hands with the remainder, though he left himself none to drink, saying he would rather die than transgress the tradition of the elders. Nay, they would not eat meat with one that did not wash before meat. This mighty zeal in so small a matter would appear very strange, if we did not still see it incident to church oppressors not only to be fond of practising their own inventions, but to be furious in pressing their own impositions.

Secondly. What was the transgression of this tradition or injunction by the disciples. It seems they did not wash their hands when they eat bread, which was the more offensive to the Pharisees, because they were men that in other things were strict and conscientious. The custom was innocent enough, and had a decency in its civil use. We read of the waters for purifying at the marriage where Christ was present, *Jo. ii. 6*, though Christ turned it into wine, and so put an end to that use of it; but when it came to be practised and imposed as a religious rite and ceremony, and such a stress laid upon it, the disciples, though weak in knowledge, yet were so well taught as not to comply with it or observe it; no, not when the scribes and Pharisees had their eye upon them. They had already learned St. Paul's lesson, "All things are lawful for me," no doubt it is lawful to wash before meat; "but I will not be brought under the power of any," especially not of those who said to their souls, "Bow down that we may go over," *1 Cor. vi. 12*.

Thirdly. What was the complaint of the scribes and Pharisees against them. They quarrel with Christ about it, supposing that he allowed them in it, as he did, no doubt, by his own example. "Why do thy disciples transgress the canons of the church, and why dost thou suffer them to do it?" It was well the complaint was made to Christ; for the disciples themselves, though they knew their duty in this case, yet perhaps were not so well able to give a reason for what they did as were to be wished.

11. *Here is Christ's answer to this cavil, and his justification of the disciples in that which was charged upon them as a transgression.* Note, While we stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, he will be sure to bear us out in it. Two ways Christ replies upon them,

First. By way of recrimination, ver. 3-6. They were spying notes in the eyes of his disciples, but Christ shews them a beam in their own. But that which he chargeth upon them is not barely a recrimination, for it will be no vindication of ourselves to condemn our reprovers; but it is such a censure of their tradition (and the authority of that was it they built their charge upon) as makes not only a noncompliance lawful, but an opposition a duty. That human authority must never be submitted to, which sets up in competition with Divine authority. 1. The charge in general is, "You transgress the commandment of God by your tradition." They called it the "tradition of the elders," laying stress upon the antiquity of the usage, and the authority of them that imposed it, as the church of Rome doth upon fathers and councils; but Christ calls it their tradition. Note, Illegal impositions will be laid to the charge of those that support and maintain them, and keep them up, as well as of those who first invented and enjoined them, *Mic. vi. 16*: "You transgress the commandment of God." Note, Those that are most zealous for their own impositions are commonly most careless of God's commands; which is a good reason why Christ's disciples should stand upon their guard against such impositions, lest, though at first they seem only to infringe the liberty of Christians, they come at length to confront the authority of Christ. Though the Pharisees, in this command of washing before meat, did not intrench upon any command of God, yet because in other instances they did, he justifies his disciples' disobedience to this. 2. The proof of this charge is in a particular instance, that of their transgressing the fifth commandment. 1st. Let us see what the command of God is, ver. 4; what the precept, and what the sanction of the law is. The precept is, "Honour thy father and thy mother:" this is enjoined by the common Father of mankind; and by paying respect to them, whom Providence has made the instruments of our being, we give honour to him who is the author of it, who has thereby, as to us, put some of his image upon them. The whole of children's duty to their parents is included in this of honouring them, which is the spring and foundation of all the rest: "If I be a father, where is my honour?" Our Saviour here supposes it to mean the duty of children maintaining their parents, and ministering to their wants, if there be occasion, and being every way serviceable to their comfort. "Honour widows," that is, maintain them, *1 Tim. v. 3*. The sanction of this law, in the fifth commandment, is a promise "that the days may be long;" but our Saviour waives that, lest any should thence infer it to be only a thing commendable and profitable, and insists upon the penalty annexed to the breach of this commandment in another Scripture, which speaks the duty highly and indispensably necessary: "He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death." This law we have, *Ex. xxi. 17*. The sin of cursing parents is here opposed to the duty of honouring them. Those that speak ill of their parents or wish ill to them; that mock at them, or give them taunting and opprobrious language, break this law. If to call a brother "Raca," be so penal, what is it to call a father so? By our Saviour's application of this law, it appears that denying service or relief to parents is included in cursing of them. Though the language be respectful enough, and

nothing abusive in it, yet what will that avail, if the deeds be not agreeable. It is but like him that said, "I go, sir, and went not," *ch. xxi. 30*. 2nd. Let us see what was the contradiction which the tradition of the elders gave to this command: it was not direct and downright, but implicit; their casuists gave them such rules as furnished them with an easy evasion from the obligation of this command, ver. 5, 6. "You hear what God saith, 'but ye say' so and so." Note, That which men say, even great men, and learned men, and men in authority, must be examined by that which "God saith;" and if it be found either contrary or inconsistent, it may and must be rejected, *Acts iv. 19*. Observe, First. What their tradition was: that a man could not in any case bestow his worldly estate better than to give it to the priests, and devote it to the service of the temple; and that when any thing was so devoted, it was not only unlawful to alienate it, but all other obligations, though never so just and sacred, were thereby superseded, and a man was thereby discharged from them. And this proceeded partly from their ceremoniousness, and the superstitious regard they had to the temple, and partly from their covetousness, and love of money; for what was given to the temple they were gainers by. The former was in pretence, the latter was in truth, at the bottom of this tradition. Secondly. How they allowed the application of this to the case of children. When their parents' necessities called for their assistance, they pleaded that all they could spare from themselves and their children they had devoted to the treasury of the temple. "It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me," and therefore their parents must expect nothing from them; suggesting what, that the spiritual advantage of what was so devoted would redound to the parents, who must live upon that air. This, they taught, was a good and valid plea, and many undutiful, unnatural children made use of it, and they justified them in it, and said, "He shall be free," so we supply the sense. Some go further, and supply it thus: "He doth well, his days shall be long in the land, and he shall be looked upon as having duly observed the fifth commandment." The pretence of religion would make his refusal to provide for his parents, not only passable, but plausible. But the absurdity and impolicy of this tradition was very evident; for revealed religion was intended to improve, not to overthrow, natural religion, one of the fundamental laws of which is this of honouring our parents; and had they "known what that meant, I will have justice and mercy, and not sacrifice," they had not thus made the most arbitrary rituals destructive of the most necessary morals: this was "making the command of God of none effect." Note, Whatever leads to or countenances disobedience, doth in effect make void the command; and they that take upon them to dispense with God's law, do in Christ's account reveal and disannul it. To break the law is bad, but to teach men so, as the scribes and Pharisees did, is much worse, *ch. v. 19*. To what purpose is the command given, if it be not obeyed? the rule is, as to us, of none effect, if we be not ruled by it. "It is time for thee, Lord, to work; high time for thee, great Reformer, the great Refiner, to appear; for they have made void the law," *Ps. cxix. 126*; not only sinned against the commandment, but, as far as in them lay, sinned away the commandment. But, thanks be to God, in spite of them and all their traditions, the command stands in full force, power, and virtue.

Secondly. The other part of Christ's answer is by way of reprehension, and that which he here chargeth them with is hypocrisy: "ye hypocrites," ver. 7. Note, It is the prerogative of him who searcheth the heart, and knows what is in man, to pronounce who are hypocrites. The eye of man can perceive open profaneness, but it is only the eye of Christ that can discern hypocrisy. *Lu. xvi. 15*. And as it is a sin which his eye discovers, so it is a sin which of all other his soul hates. Now Christ fetches his reproof from *Isa. xxiii. 13*, "Well did Esaias prophesy of you." Esaias spoke it of the men of that generation to whom he prophesied; yet Christ applies it to these scribes and Pharisees. Note, The reproofs of sin and sinners, which we find in Scripture, were designed to reach the like persons and practices to the end of the world; for they are not of private interpretation, *2 Pet. i. 20*. The sinners of the latter days are prophesied of, *1 Tim. iv. 1*; *2 Tim. iii. 1*; *2 Pet. iii. 3*. Threatenings directed against others belong to us, if we be guilty of the same sins. Esaias prophesied not of them only, but of all other hypocrites, against whom that word of his is still levelled, and stands in force. The prophecies of Scripture are every day in the fulfilling. This prophecy doth exactly decipher an hypocritical nation, *Isa. ix. 17*; *x. 6*. Here is, 1. The description of hypocrites in two things. 1st. In their own performances of religious worship, ver. 8. When they "draw nigh to God with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, their heart is far from him." Observe, First. How far an hypocrite goes. He draws nigh to God, and honours him; he is in profession a worshipper of God: the "Pharisee went up to the temple to pray." He doth not stand at that distance which those are at that "live without God in the world;" but has a name among the people near unto him; they "honour him;" that is, they take on them to honour God, they join with those that do so. Some honour God has even from the services of hypocrites, as they help to keep up the face and form of godliness in the world, whence God fetches honour to himself, though they intend it not to him. When God's enemies submit themselves but feignedly, when they lie unto him, so the word is, *Ps. lxxvi. 3*, it redounds to his honour, and he gets himself a name. Secondly. Where he rests and takes up. This is done but with his mouth, and with his lips; it is piety but from the teeth outwards; he shews much love, and that is all; there is in his heart no true love: they "make their voice to be heard," *Isa. lviii. 4*; mention "the name of the Lord," *Isa. xlviii. 1*. Hypocrites are those that only make a lip-labour of religion and religious worship; in word and tongue the worst hypocrites may do as well as the best saints, and speak as fair with "Jacob's voice." Thirdly. What that is wherein he comes short. It is in the main matter: "their heart is far from me," habitually "alienated" and estranged, *Eph. iv. 18*; actually wandering and dwelling upon something else: no serious thoughts of God; no pious affections towards him; no concern about the soul and eternity; no thoughts agreeable to the service: God is near in their mouths, but far from their reins, *Jer. xii. 2*; *Eze. xxxiii. 31*; the heart with the fool's eyes in the ends of the earth: it is a "silly dove" that is "without heart;" and so it is a silly duty, *Hos. vii. 11*. An hypocrite saith one thing, but thinks another; the great thing that God looks at, and requires, is the heart, *Pr. xxi. 26*; if that be far from him, it is not a reasonable service, and therefore not an acceptable one; it is the sacrifice of fools, *Eccl. v. 1*. 2nd. In their prescriptions to others. This is an instance of their hypocrisy, that they "teach for doctrines the commandments of men." The Jews then, as the Papists since, paid the same respect to oral tradition that they did to the Word of God, receiving it, *patri pietatis affectu ac reverentia*,—with the same pious affection and reverence.—*Conc. Trident.*, sess. 4, dec. 1. When men's inventions are tacked to God's institutions, and imposed accordingly, this is hypocrisy, a mere human religion. The commandments of men are properly conversant about the things of men, but God will have his own work done by his own rules, and accepts not that which he did not himself appoint: that only comes to him that comes from him. 2. The doom of hypocrites. It is put in a little compass; "in vain do they worship me." Their worship doth not attain the end for which it was appointed; it will neither please God, nor profit themselves: if it be not "in spirit," it is not "in truth," and so it is all nothing. That man who only seems to be religious, but

xiv. 25. On the words "the fourth watch of the night," it may be noted that "originally the Jews divided the night into three watches, as the early Greeks and Romans did; but in after times the Greeks introduced a fourth watch, which was adopted by the Romans, and then by the Jews, when Judea became a Roman province." As to the precise hour referred to, we can only say that it was between three and six in the morning.

xiv. 28. "This narrative respecting Peter is peculiar to Matthew.

It is in very strict accordance with his warm and confidential character, and has been called almost a rehearsal of his denial afterwards. It contains one of the most pointed and striking revelations which we have of the nature and analogy of faith; and a notable example of the power of the higher spiritual state of man over the inferior laws of matter so often brought forward by our Lord" (Alford's "New Testament for English Readers"). We do not quite assent to the last remark, because Peter walked on the water,

is not so, his religion is vain, *Jas. i. 26*; and if our religion be "a vain oblation," a vain religion, "how great is that vanity!" How sad is it to live an age of prayers, and sermons, and sabbaths, and sacraments, in vain—to beat the air in all these. It is so, if the heart be not with God in them. Lip labour is lost labour, *Isa. i. 11*. Hypocrites sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind; trust in vanity, and vanity will be their recompense. Thus Christ justified his disciples in their disobedience to the traditions of the elders, and this the scribes and Pharisees got by their cavilling; we read not of any reply they made; if they were not satisfied, yet they were silenced, and could not resist the power wherewith Christ spoke.

10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: 11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. 12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? 13 But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. 14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. 15 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. 16 And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? 17 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? 18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Christ having proved that the disciples, in eating with unwashen hands, were not to be blamed, as transgressing the traditions and injunctions of the elders, comes here to shew that they were not to be blamed as having done any thing that was in itself evil. In the former part of his discourse, he overturned the authority of the law, and in this, the reason of it. Observe.

I. The solemn introduction to this discourse, ver. 10: "He called the multitude." They were withdrawn while Christ discoursed with the scribes and Pharisees. Probably those proud men ordered them to withdraw, as not willing to talk with Christ in private. But Christ had a regard to the multitude: he soon despatched the scribes and Pharisees, and then turned them off, and invited the mob, the multitude, to be his hearers. Thus the poor are evangelized; and the foolish things of the world, and things that are despised, hath Christ chosen. The humble Jesus embraceth those whom the proud Pharisees looked upon with disdain; and to them he designed it for a mortification; he turns from them, as wilful, and unteachable; and turns to the multitude, who, though weak, were humble, and willing to be taught. To them he said, "Hear, and understand." Note, What we hear from the mouth of Christ, we must give all diligence to understand; not only scholars, but even the multitude, the ordinary people, must apply their minds to understand the words of Christ. He therefore calls upon them to understand; because the lesson he was now about to teach them was contrary to the notions they had sucked in with their milk from their teachers, and overturned many of the customs and usages which they were wedded to, and laid stress upon. Note, There is need of great attention of mind, and clearness of understanding, to free men from those corrupt principles and practices which they have been bred up in, and long accustomed to, for in that case the understanding is commonly bribed and biassed by prejudice.

II. The truth itself laid down, ver. 11, in two propositions, which are opposite to the vulgar errors of that time, and were therefore surprising.

First, "Not that which goes into the mouth defileth a man." It is not the kind or quality of our food, nor the dirtiness of our hands, that affects the soul with any moral pollution or defilement: "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink," *Rom. xiv. 17*. That "defileth a man," by which guilt is contracted before God, and the man is rendered offensive to him, and unfitted for communion with him. Now, what we eat, if we do not eat unseasonably and immoderately, doth not this; for "to the pure, all things are pure," *Tit. i. 15*. The Pharisees carried the ceremonial pollutions, by eating such and such meats, much further than the law intended, and burthened it with additions of their own; which our Saviour witnesseth against, intending hereby to pave the way to a repeal of the ceremonial law in that matter. He was now beginning to teach his followers to call nothing common or unclean; and if Peter, when he was bid to kill and eat, had remembered this word, he would not have said, "Not so, Lord," *Acts x. 13—15, 28*.

Secondly, "But that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." We are polluted, not by the meat we eat with "unwashen hands," but by the words we speak from an unsanctified heart; so it is that "the mouth causeth the flesh to sin," *Ecc. v. 6*. Christ, in a former discourse, had laid a great stress upon our words, *ch. xii. 36, 37*; and that was intended for reproof and warning to those that cavilled at him: this, here, is intended for a reproof and warning to those that cavilled at the disciples, and censured them. It is not the disciples that defile themselves with what they eat, but the Pharisees that defile themselves with what they speak spitefully and censoriously of them. Note, Those who charge guilt upon others for transgressing the commandments of men,

not by the power of his faith, but by the power of Jesus, who honoured the faith by a divine miracle.

xiv. 33. Hereupon Lange says, "Not merely the Messiah in the ordinary sense, but with special reference to his divine character, as revealed in the New Testament." Jesus is here for the first time owned by man as the Son of God, as Meyer and others remark.

xiv. 34, 35. In the Syriac version we read, "And they voyaged and came to the land of Genesar: and the men of that place re-

many times bring greater guilt upon themselves, by transgressing the law of God against rash judging. Those most defile themselves who are most forward to censure the defilements of others.

III. The offence that was taken at this truth, and the account brought to Christ of that offence, ver. 12: "The disciples said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees are offended?" and didst thou not foresee that they would be so, "as this saying," and would think the worse of thee and of thy doctrine for "and be the more enraged at thee?"

First, it was not strange that the Pharisees should be offended at this plain truth, for they were men made up of error and enmity, mistake and malice. Sore eyes cannot bear clear light; and nothing is more provoking to proud imposers than the undeceiving of those whom they have first blindfolded, and then enslaved. It should seem that the Pharisees, who were the strict observers of the traditions, were more offended than the scribes, who were the teachers of them; and perhaps they were as much galled with the latter part of Christ's doctrine, which taught a strictness in the government of our tongue, as with the former part, which taught an indifferency about washing our hands; great contenders for the formalities of religion, being commonly as great contempters of the substantial of it.

Secondly, The disciples thought it strange their Master should say that which he knew would give so much offence; he did not use to do so; surely, think they, if he had considered how provoking it would be, he would not have said it. But he knew what he said, and to whom he said it, and what would be the effect of it, and would teach us, that though in indifferent things we must be tender of giving offence, yet we must not, for fear of that, balk any truth or duty. Truth must be owned, and duty must be done; and if any be offended, it is their own fault; it is not scandal given, but taken. Perhaps the disciples were themselves stumbled at the word Christ said, which they thought bold, and scarcely reconcilable with the difference that was put by the law of God between clean and unclean meats, and therefore objected this to Christ, that they might themselves be better informed. They seem likewise to have a concern upon them for the Pharisees, though they had quarrelled with them; which teacheth us to forgive, and seek the good, especially the spiritual good, of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers. They would not have the Pharisees go away displeased at any thing Christ had said; and therefore, though they do not desire him to retract it, yet they hope he will explain, correct, and mollify it. Weak hearers are sometimes more solicitous than they should be not to have wicked hearers offended. But if we please men with the concealment of truth, and the indulging of their errors and corruptions, we are not the servants of Christ.

IV. The doom passed upon the Pharisees and their corrupt traditions; which comes in as a reason why Christ cared not though he offended them, and therefore why the disciples should not care, because they were a generation of men that hated to be reformed, and were marked out for destruction. Two things Christ here foretells concerning them:

First, The rooting out of them and their traditions, ver. 13: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." Not only the corrupt opinions and superstitious practices of the Pharisees, but their sect, and way, and constitution, were plants not of God's planting. The rules of their profession were no institutions of his, but owed their original to pride and formality. The people of the Jews were planted a noble vine; but now they had become the degenerate plant of a strange vine, God disowned them, as not of his planting. Note, 1. In the visible church, it is no strange thing to find plants that our heavenly Father has not planted. It is implied that whatever is good in the church is of God's planting, *Isa. xli. 19*; but let the husbandman be never so careful, his ground will cast forth weeds of itself, more or less; and there is an enemy busy sowing tares. What is corrupt, though of God's permitting, is not of his planting; he sows nothing but good seed in his field. Let us not therefore be deceived, as if all must needs be right that we find in the church, and all those persons and things our Father's plants that we find in our Father's garden; "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits," see *Jer. xix. 5*; *xxiii. 31, 32*. 2. Those that are of the spirit of the Pharisees, proud, formal, and imposing, what figure soever they make, and of what denomination soever they be, God will not own them as of his planting; "by their fruits ye shall know them." 3. Those plants that are not of God's planting shall not be of his protecting, but shall undoubtedly be rooted up: what is "not of God shall not stand," *Acts v. 38*; what things are unscriptural will wither and die of themselves, or be justly exploded by the churches. However, in the great day, these tares that offend will be bundled for the fire. What is gone with the Pharisees and their traditions? They are long since abandoned; but the Gospel of truth is great, and will remain. It cannot be rooted up.

Secondly, The ruin of them, and their followers, that had their persons and principles in admiration, ver. 14; where, 1. Christ bids his disciples "let them alone." Have no converse with them, no concern for them; neither court their favour nor dread their displeasure; care not though they be offended; they will take their course, and let them take the issue of it: they are wedded to their own fancies, will have every thing their own way, and let them alone. Seek not to please a generation of men that please not God, *1 Thes. ii. 15*, and will be pleased with nothing less than an absolute dominion over your consciences. They are "joined to idols, as Ephraim," *Hos. iv. 17*, the idols of their own fancy; "let them alone," let them be filthy still," *Rev. xxii. 11*. The case of these sinners is sad indeed, whom Christ orders his ministers to let alone. 2. He gives them two reasons for it. "Let them alone," for, 1st. They are proud and ignorant; two bad qualities that often meet, and render a man incurable in his folly, *Pr. xxvi. 12*; "they be blind leaders of the blind." They are grossly ignorant in the things of God, and strangers to the spiritual nature of the Divine law; and yet so proud, that they think they see better and further than any, and therefore undertake to be leaders of others, to shew others the way to heaven, when they themselves know not one step of the way, and accordingly they prescribe to all, and proscribe those who will not follow them. Though they were blind, if they had owned it, and come to Christ for eye salve, they might have seen; but they took the intimation of such a thing very heinously, *Jno. ix. 40*: "Are we blind also?" and were confident that they themselves were guides of the blind, *Rom. ix. 19, 20*; were appointed to be so, and fit to be so; that every thing they said was an oracle, and a law; "therefore, let them alone; their case is desperate, do not meddle with them; you may soon provoke them, but never convince them." How miserable was the case of the Jewish church now, when their leaders were blind; were so self-conceitedly foolish as to be peremptory in their conduct; while the people were so sottiſhly foolish as to follow them with an implicit faith and obedience, and "willingly walk after the commandment," *Hos. v. 11*. Now the prophecy was fulfilled, *Isa. xxix. 10, 14*; and it is easy to imagine what will be in the end hereof, when "the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means," and the "people love to have it so," *Jer. v. 31*. 2nd. They are posting to destruction, and will shortly be plunged in it: "both shall fall into the ditch." This must needs be the end of it, if both be so blind, and yet both so bold, venturing forwards, and yet not aware of danger. Both will be involved in the general

cognised him, and sent to all the villages which were round about," &c. Josephus shows the accuracy of the evangelical description, when, after describing the lake, he says, "The country also that lies over against this lake hath the same name of Gennesareth; its nature is wonderful, as well as its beauty. Its soil is so fruitful that all sorts of trees can grow upon it, and the inhabitants accordingly plant all sorts of trees there," &c. ("Wars," III. x. 8).

xv. 3—6. Instead of showing why his disciples did not follow

desolation coming upon the Jews, and both drowned in eternal destruction and perdition; the blind leaders and the blind followers will perish together. We find, *Rev. xiii. 15*, that hell is the portion of those that "make a lie," and of those that love it when it is made. The deceived and the deceiver are obnoxious to the judgment of God, *Joh. xii. 16*. Note, *First*. Those that by their cunning craftiness draw others to sin and error, yet shall not, with all their craft and cunning, escape ruin themselves. If both fall together into the ditch, the blind leaders will fall undermost, and have the worst of it: see *Jer. xiv. 15, 16*: "the prophets shall be consumed first," and then "the people to whom they prophesy," *Jer. xx. 6*; *xviii. 15, 16*. *Secondly*. The sin and ruin of the deceivers will be no security to those that are deceived by them. Though the leaders of the sin "cause them to err," yet they "that are led of them are destroyed," *Isa. ix. 16*; because they shut their eyes against the light, which would have rectified their mistake. Seneca, complaining of most people's being led by common opinion and practice, *unusquisque mavult credere quam judicare*,—"things are taken upon trust, and never examined," concludes, *inde ista tanta coactatio aliorum super alios ruentium*,—"hence crowds fall upon crowds in vast confusion."—*De Vit. Beat.* The falling of both together will aggravate the fall of both; for they that have thus mutually increased each other's sin, will mutually exasperate each other's ruin.

V. Instructions given to the disciples concerning the truth Christ had laid down, ver. 10. Though Christ rejects the wilfully ignorant, that care not to be taught, he can have compassion on the ignorant that are willing to learn, *Heb. v. 2*. If the Pharisees, that made void the law, be offended, let them be offended; but this "great peace have they that love the law," that "nothing shall offend them;" but, some way or other, the offence shall be taken off, *Ps. cxix. 165*. Here is,

First. Their desire to be better instructed in this matter, *ver. 15*; and in this request, as in many others, Peter was their speaker; the rest, it is probable, putting him on to speak, or intimating their concurrence: "Declare unto us this parable." What Christ said was plain; but because it agreed not with the notions they had imbibed, though they would not contradict it, yet they call it a parable, and cannot understand it. Note, 1. Weak understandings are apt to turn plain truths into parables, and to seek for a knot in a burly: the disciples often did so, as *Jno. xvi. 17*; even the grasshopper is a burthen to a weak stomach; and babes in understanding cannot bear and digest strong meat. 2. Where a weak head doubts concerning any word of Christ, an upright heart, and a willing mind, will seek for instruction. The Pharisees were offended, but kept it to themselves; hating to be reformed, they hated to be informed; but the disciples, though offended, sought for satisfaction, imputing the offence, not to the doctrine delivered, but to the shallowness of their own capacity.

Secondly. The reproof Christ gave them for their weakness and ignorance, *ver. 16*: "Are ye also yet without understanding?" As many as Christ loves and teaches, he thus rebukes. Note, They are very ignorant indeed who understand not that moral pollutions are abundantly worse, and more dangerous, than ceremonial ones; and two things aggravate their dulness and darkness, 1. That they were the disciples of Christ. "Are ye also without understanding?" "You whom I have admitted into so great a degree of familiarity with me, are you so unskilful in the word of righteousness?" Note, The ignorance and mistakes of those that profess religion, and enjoy the privileges of church membership, is justly a grief to the Lord Jesus: "No wonder the Pharisees understand not this doctrine, who know nothing of the Messiah's kingdom; but you that have heard of it, and embraced it yourselves, and preached it to others, are you also such strangers to the spirit and genius of it?" 2. That they had been a great while Christ's scholars: "Are you yet so, after you have been so long under my teaching?" Had they been but of yesterday in Christ's school, it had been another matter; but to have been for so many months Christ's constant hearers, and yet to be without understanding, was a great reproach to them. Note, Christ expects from us some proportion of knowledge, and grace, and wisdom, according to the times and means we have had. See *Jno. xiv. 9*; *Heb. v. 12*; *2 Tim. iii. 7, 8*.

Thirdly. The explication Christ gave them of this doctrine of pollutions. Though he chid them for their dullness, he did not cast them off, but pitied them, and taught them, as *Lu. xxiv. 25-27*. He here shews us, 1. What little danger we are in of pollution from that which entereth in at the mouth, *ver. 17*. An inordinate appetite, intemperance, and excess in eating, come out of the heart, and are defiling; but meat in itself is not so, as the Pharisees supposed. What there is of dregs and defilement in our meat, nature (or rather the God of nature) has provided a way to clear us of it; "it goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught," and nothing remains to us but pure nourishment; so fearfully and wonderfully are we made, and preserved, and our souls held in life. The expulsive faculty is as necessary in the body as any other, for the discharge of that which is superfluous, noxious, or excrementitious; so happily is nature enabled to help itself, and shift for its own good. By this means nothing defiles. If we eat with unwashen hands, and so any dirt stick to our meat, nature will separate it, and cast it out, and it will be no defilement to us. So that though it may be a piece of cleanliness, it is no point of conscience, to wash before meat; and we go upon a great mistake if we place religion in it. It is not the practice itself, but the opinion it is built upon, that Christ condemns; as if meat commended us to God, *1 Cor. viii. 8*; whereas Christianity stands not in such observances. 2. What great danger we are in of pollution from that which "proceeds out of the mouth," *ver. 18*; that is, out of the abundance of the heart: compare *ch. xii. 34*. There is no defilement in the products of God's bounty, the defilement ariseth from the products of our own corruption. Now, here we have, 1st. The corrupt fountain of that which proceeds out of the mouth: it comes from the heart; that is the spring and source of all sin, *Jer. viii. 7*. It is the heart that is so "desperately wicked," *Jer. xvii. 9*; for there is no sin in word or deed, but it was first in the heart; there is the root of bitterness, which bears gall and wormwood. It is the inward part of a sinner that is very wickedness, *Ps. v. 9*; all evil speakings come forth from the heart, and are defiling; from the corrupt heart comes the corrupt communication. 2nd. Some of the corrupt streams which flow from this fountain instanced. Though they do not all come out of the mouth, yet they all come out of the man, and are the fruits of that wickedness which is in the heart, and is wrought there, *Ps. lviii. 2*. *First*. Evil thoughts: sins against all the commandments: therefore David puts vain thoughts in opposition to the whole law, *Ps. cxix. 113*; these are the firstborn of the corrupt nature, the beginning of its strength, and do most resemble it; these, as the son and heir, abide in the house, and lodge within us. There is a great deal of sin that begins and ends in the heart, and goes no further. Carnal fancies and imaginations are evil thoughts, wickedness in the contrivance, *διαλογισμοι πορνικoi*,—are wicked plots, purposes, and devices of mischief to others, *Mic. ii. 1*. *Secondly*. Murders: sins against the sixth commandment. These come from a malice in the heart against our brother's life, or a contempt of it. Hence he that hates his brother, is said to be a murderer; he is so at God's bar, *1 Jno. iii. 15*; war is in the heart, *Ps. lv. 21*; *Jas. i. 4*. *Thirdly*. Adulteries and fornications: sins against the seventh commandment. These come from the wanton, unclean,

carnal heart; and the lusts that reign there, are conceived there, and bring forth these sins, *Jas. i. 15*; there is adultery in the heart first, and then in the act, *ch. v. 28*. *Fourthly*. Thefts: sins against the eighth commandment. Cheats, wrongs, rapines, and all injurious contracts; the fountain of all these is in the heart; that is it that is exercised in these covetous practices, *2 Pet. ii. 14*; that is set upon riches, *Ps. lxxii. 10*; "Achan coveted," and then "took," *Jos. vii. 20*. *Fifthly*. False witness: against the ninth commandment. This comes from a complication of falsehood and covetousness, or falsehood and malice, in the heart. If truth, holiness, and love, which God requires in the inward part, reigned, as they ought, there would be no false witness bearing, *Ps. lxxv. 6*; *Jer. ix. 8*. *Sixthly*. Blasphemies, speaking evil of God, against the third commandment; speaking evil of our neighbour, against the ninth commandment; these come from a contempt and disesteem of both in the heart; thence the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost proceeds, *ch. xii. 33, 34*. Those are the overflowings of the gall within. Now, "these are the things which defile a man," *ver. 20*. Note, Sin is defiling to the soul, renders it unlovely and abominable in the eyes of the pure and holy God, unfit for communion with him, and for the enjoyment of him in the new Jerusalem, into which nothing shall enter that defileth or worketh iniquity. The mind and conscience is defiled by sin, and that makes every thing else so, *Tit. i. 15*; this defilement by sin was signified by the ceremonial pollutions, which the Jewish doctors added to, but understood not; see *Heb. ix. 13, 14*; *1 Jno. i. 7*; these, therefore, are the things we must carefully avoid, and all approaches towards them, and not lay stress upon the washing of the hands. Christ doth not yet repeal the law of the distinction of meats, that was not done till *Acts x. 1*; but the tradition of the elders, which was tacked to that law; and therefore he concludes, "to eat with unwashen hands," which was the matter now in variance, "this defileth not a man." If he wash, he is not the better before God; if he wash not, he is not the worse.

21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. 23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. 24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. 26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. 27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. 28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

We have here that famous story of Christ's casting the devil out of the woman of Canaan's daughter. It has something in it singular and very surprising, and which looks favourably upon the poor Gentiles, and is an earnest of that mercy which Christ had in store for them. Here is a gleam of that light which was "to lighten the Gentiles," *Lu. ii. 32*. Christ "came to his own, and his own received him not;" but many of them quarrelled with him, and "were offended in him;" and observe what follows, *ver. 21*.

First. "Jesus went thence." Note, Justly is the light taken from those that either play by it, or rebel against it. When Christ and his disciples could not be quiet among them, he left them, and so left an example to his own rule, *ch. x. 14*, "Shake off the dust of your feet." Though Christ endure long, he will not always endure the contradiction of sinners against himself. He had said, *ver. 14*, "let them alone," and he did so. Note, Wilful prejudices against the Gospel, and cavils at it, often provoke Christ to withdraw, and to "remove the candlestick out of its place," *Acts xiii. 45, 51*.

Secondly. When he went thence, he "departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon;" not to those cities, they were excluded from any share in Christ's mighty works, *ch. xi. 21, 22*; but into that part of the land of Israel which lay that way. Thither he went, as Elias to Sarepta, a city of Sidon, *Lu. iv. 25*; thither he went to look after this poor woman, whom he had mercy in reserve for. While he "went about doing good," he was never out of his way. The dark corners of the country which lay most remote shall have their share of his benign influences; and as now the ends of the land, so afterwards the ends of the earth, shall see his salvation, *Isa. xlix. 6*. Here it was that this miracle was wrought, in the story of which we may observe,

1. The address of the woman of Canaan to Christ, *ver. 22*. She was a Gentile, "a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel;" probably one of the posterity of those accursed nations that were devoted by that word, "Cursed be Canaan." Note, The doom of political bodies doth not always reach every individual member of them: God will have his remnant out of all nations; chosen vessels in all coasts, even the most unlikely. She came out of the same coasts. If Christ had not now made a visit to these coasts, though the mercy was worth travelling far for, it is probable she had never come to him. Note, It is often an excitement to a dormant faith and zeal, to have opportunities of acquaintance with Christ brought to our doors, to have the Word nigh us. Her address was very importunate; she cried to Christ as one in earnest; cried, as being at some distance from him, not daring to approach too near, being a Canaanite, lest she should give offence. In her address,

First. She relates her misery: "My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil," *κακῶς βασανίζεται*, 'she is ill bewitched' or 'possessed.' There were degrees of that misery, and this was of the worst sort. It was a common case at that time, and very calamitous. Note, The vexations of children are the trouble of

tradition, our Lord asks the Jews why they violate the commandment of God. Of their culpability in this respect he gives an illustration, quoting two precepts of Scripture as a command of God, and their tradition as contrary thereto. The words of the tradition are obscure in our version. The sense is: "Whoever shall say to his father or his mother, 'That by which thou mightest have been benefited from me is a gift,' and shall not honour his father or his mother, will be blameless." In other words, a man had only to tell his needy parents

that what they required of him was devoted to a religious use. In this way the claims of God and of natural affection were set aside, and the casuistry of priestcraft prevailed over every human and divine ordinance.

xv. 11. Here our Lord's words refer to the current notion represented by the washing of hands; if the hands were not washed it was supposed that a man was polluted in a religious sense by the food he took. The truth, however, is, that a man is not rendered

parents, and nothing should be more so than their being under the power of Satan. Tender parents very sensibly feel the miseries of those that are pieces of themselves: 'Though vexed with the devil, yet she is my daughter still.' The greatest afflictions of our relations do not dissolve our obligations to them, and therefore ought not to alienate our affections from them. It was the distress and trouble of her family that now brought her to Christ: she came to him, not for teaching, but for healing; yet, because she came in faith, he did not reject her. Though it is need that drives us to Christ, yet we shall not therefore be driven from him. It was the affliction of her daughter that gave her this occasion of applying to Christ. It is good to make others' afflictions our own in sense and sympathy, that we may make them our own in improvement and advantage.

Secondly. She requests for mercy: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David." In calling him Lord, the son of David, she owns him to be the Messiah: that is the great thing which faith should fasten upon, and fetch comfort from. From the Lord we may expect acts of power; he can command deliverances: from the son of David we may expect all that mercy and grace which was foretold concerning him. Though a Gentile, she owns the promise made to the fathers of the Jews, and the honour of the house of David. The Gentiles must receive Christianity not only as an improvement of natural religion, but as the perfection of the Jewish religion, with an eye to the Old Testament. Her petition is, "Have mercy on me." She doth not limit Christ to this or that particular instance of mercy; but mercy, mercy is the thing she begs. She pleads not merit, but depends upon mercy: "Have mercy on me." Mercies to the children are mercies to the parents; favours to ours are favours to us, and are so to be accounted. Note, It is the duty of parents to pray for their children, and to be earnest in prayer for them, especially for their souls: 'I have a son, a daughter, grievously vexed with a proud will, an unclean devil, a malicious devil, led captive by him at his will: Lord, help them.' This is a case more deplorable than that of a bodily possession. Bring them to Christ by faith and prayer, who alone is able to heal them. Parents should look upon it as a great mercy to themselves to have Satan's power broken in the souls of their children.

II. *The discouragements she met with in this address.* In all the story of Christ's ministry, we do not meet with the like. He was wont to countenance and encourage all that came to him, and either to answer before they called, or to hear while they were yet speaking; but here was one otherwise treated. And what should be the reason of it? 1. Some think Christ shewed himself backward to gratify this poor woman because he would not give offence to the Jews, by being as free and forward in his favour to the Gentiles as to them. He had bidden his disciples not to go into the way of the Gentiles, *ch. x. 5*, and therefore would not himself seem so inclinable to them as to others, but rather more shy. Or rather, 2. Christ treated her thus to try her. He knows what is in the heart, knew the strength of her faith, and how well able she was, by his grace, to break through such discouragements, and therefore met her with them, that the trial of her faith might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, *1 Pet. i. 6, 7*. This was like God's tempting Abraham, *Gen. xxii. 1*; like the angel's wrestling with Jacob, only to put him upon wrestling, *Gen. xxxii. 24*. Many of the methods of Christ's providence, and especially of his grace in dealing with his people, which are dark and perplexing, may be explained with the key of this story, which is for that end left upon record, to teach us that there may be love in Christ's heart while there are frowns in his face, and to encourage us therefore, though he slay us, yet to trust in him.

Observe the particular discouragements given her. First. When she cried after him, he answered her not a word, *ver. 23*. His ear was wont to be always open and quick to the cries of poor supplicants; and his lips, which dropped as the honeycomb, always ready to give "an answer of peace;" but to this poor woman he turned a deaf ear, and she could get neither an alms nor an answer. It was a wonder she did not fly off in a fret, and say, 'Is this he that is so famed for clemency and tenderness? Have so many been heard and answered by him, as they talk, and must I be the first rejected suitor? Why so stiff to me, if it be true that he hath stooped to so many?' But Christ knew what he did; and therefore did not answer, that she might be the more earnest in prayer. He heard her, and was pleased with her, and strengthened her with strength in her soul to prosecute her request, *Ps. cxxxviii. 3*, *Job xxiii. 6*, though he did not immediately give her the answer she expected. By seeming to draw away the desired mercy from her, he drew her on to be so much the more importunate for it. Note, Every accepted prayer is not presently an answered prayer. Sometimes God seems not to regard his people's prayers, like a man asleep, or astonished, *Ps. xlv. 3*; *Jer. xiv. 9*; *Ps. xxii. 1, 2*; may, to be angry at them, *Ps. lxxx. 4*; *Lam. iii. 8, 44*. But it is to prove, and so to improve their faith, and to make his after appearances for them the more glorious to himself, and the more welcome to them; for the vision at the end "shall speak, and shall not lie," *Hab. ii. 3*. See *Job xxxv. 14*.

Secondly. When the disciples spoke a good word for her, he gave a reason why he refused her, which was yet more discouraging. 1. It was some little relief that the disciples interposed on her behalf. They said, "Send her away, for she crieth after us." It is desirable to have an interest in the prayers of good people, and we should be desirous of it. Yet the disciples, though wishing she might have what she came for; yet therein, to consult rather their own ease than the poor woman's satisfaction, said, "Send her away with a cure, for she cries, and is in good earnest; she cries after us, and is troublesome to us, and shames us." Continued importunity may be uneasy to men, even to good men, but Christ loves to be cried after. 2. Christ's answer to the disciples quite dashed her expectations: "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." "You know I am not; she is none of them; and would you have me go beyond my commission?" Importunity seldom conquers the settled reason of a wise man; and those refusals are most silencing which are so backed. He doth not only answer her, but he argues against her, and stops her mouth with a reason. It is true she is a "lost sheep," and hath as much need of his care as any; but she is not "of the house of Israel," to whom he was first sent, *Acts iii. 26*, and therefore not immediately interested in it, and entitled to it. Christ was "a minister of the circumcision," *Rom. xv. 8*; and though he was intended for "a light to the Gentiles," yet the fulness of time for that was not now come, the veil was not yet rent, nor the partition wall taken down; Christ's personal ministry was to be "the glory of his people Israel;" "And if I am sent to them, what have I to do with those that are none of them?" Note, It is a great trial, when we have occasion given us to question whether we be of those to whom Christ was sent. But, blessed be God, no room is left for that doubt; the distinction between Jew and Gentile is taken away. We are sure he gave his life a ransom for many; and if for many, why not for me? 3. When she continued her importunity, he insisted upon the unfitness of the thing, and gave her not only a repulse, but a seeming reproach too, *ver. 26*. "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto dogs." This seems to cut her off from all hope, and might have driven her to despair, if she had not had a very strong faith indeed. Gospel grace and miraculous cures (the appurtenances of it) were children's bread; they belonged to them to whom pertained the adoption. *Rom. ix. 4*, and lay not upon the same level with that rain from heaven,

and those fruitful seasons, which God gave to the nations whom he suffered to walk in their own ways, *Acts xiv. 16, 17*. No, these were peculiar favours appropriated to the peculiar people the garden enclosed. Christ preached to the Samaritans, *Jno. iv. 41*, but we read not of any cures he wrought among them; that salvation was of the Jews; it is not meet therefore to alienate these. The Gentiles were looked upon by the Jews with great contempt, were called and counted dogs, and, in comparison with the house of Israel, who were so dignified and privileged, Christ here seems to allow it, and therefore thinks it not meet that the Gentiles should share in the favours bestowed on the Jews. But see how the tables are turned: after the bringing the Gentiles into the church, the Jewish zealots for the law are called dogs, *Phil. iii. 2*. Now this Christ urgeth against this woman of Canaan. How could she expect to eat of the children's bread, who was not of the family? Note, 1st. Those whom Christ intends most signally to honour, he first humbles and lays low in a sense of their own meanness and unworthiness. We must first see ourselves to be as dogs, "less than the least of all God's mercies," before we are fit to be dignified and privileged with them. 2nd. Christ delights to exercise great faith with great trials, and sometimes reserves the sharpest for the last, that, being tried, we may come forth like gold. This general rule is applicable to other cases, for direction, though here used only for trial. Special ordinances and church privileges are children's bread, and must not be prostituted to the grossly ignorant and profane. Common charity must be extended to all, but spiritual dignities are appropriated to the household of faith; and therefore promiscuous admission to them, without distinction, wastes the children's bread, and is the "giving of that which is holy to the dogs," *ch. vii. 6*. *Procul hinc, procul inde profani*—Off, ye profane.

III. *Here is the strength of her faith and resolution in breaking through all these discouragements.* Many a one, thus tried, would either have sunk down into silence, or broke out into a passion. 'Here is cold comfort, might she have said, for a poor distressed creature; as good for me have stayed at home, as come hither to be taunted and abused at this rate; not only to have a piteous case slighted, but to be called a dog.' A proud, unhumiliated heart would not have borne it. The reputation of the house of Israel was not now so great in the world, but that this slight put upon the Gentiles was capable of being retorted, had the poor woman been so minded. It might have occasioned a reflection upon Christ, and might have been a blemish upon his reputation, as well as a shock to the good opinion she had entertained of him; for we are apt to judge of persons as we ourselves find them, and think that they are what they are to us. 'Is this the son of David?' might she have said; 'is this he that has such a reputation for kindness and tenderness, and compassion? I am sure I have no reason to give him that character, for I was never treated so roughly in my life; he might have done as much for me as for others; or, if not, he needed not to have set me with the dogs of his flock. I am not a dog; I am a woman, and an honest woman, and a woman in misery; and I am sure it is not meet to call me a dog.' No, here is not a word of this. Note, A humble believing soul, that truly loves Christ, takes every thing in good part that he saith and doth, and puts the best construction upon it.

She breaks through all these discouragements. First. With a holy earnestness of desire in prosecuting her petition. This appeared upon the former repulse, *ver. 25*: "Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me." 1. She continued to pray. What Christ said silenced the disciples; you hear no more of them; they took the answer, but the woman did not. Note, The more sensibly we feel the burthen, the more resolutely we should pray for the removal of it. And it is the will of God that we should continue instant in prayer, should always pray, and not faint. 2. She improved in prayer. Instead of blaming Christ, or charging him with unkindness, she seems rather to suspect herself, and lay the fault upon herself. She fears, lest in her first address, she had not been humble and reverent enough, and therefore now she came and worshipped him, and paid him more respect than she had done; or, that she had not been earnest enough; and therefore now she cries, Lord, help me. Note, When the answers of prayer are deferred, God is thereby teaching us to pray more, and pray better. It is then time to inquire wherein we have come short in our former prayers, that what has been amiss may be amended for the future. Disappointments in the success of prayer must be excitements to the duty of prayer. Christ, in his agony, prayed more earnestly. 3. She waives the question, whether she was of those to whom Christ was sent, or no; she will not argue that with him, though perhaps she might have claimed some kindred to the house of Israel; but, whether an Israelite or no, "I come to the son of David for mercy, and I will not let him go, except he bless me." Many weak Christians perplex themselves with questions and doubts about their election, whether they are of the house of Israel or no: such had better mind their errand to God, and continue instant in prayer for mercy and grace; throw themselves by faith at the feet of Christ, and say, "If I perish, I will perish here; and then that matter will by degrees clear itself. If we cannot reason down our unbelief, let us pray it down. A fervent, affectionate "Lord, help me," will help us over many of our discouragements, which are sometimes ready to bear us down, and overwhelm us. 4. Her prayer is very short, but comprehensive and fervent: "Lord, help me." Take this, 1st. As lamenting her case: 'If the Messiah be sent only to the house of Israel, the Lord help me; what will become of me and mine?' Note, It is not in vain for broken hearts to benight themselves; God looks upon them then, *Jer. xxi. 18*. Or, 2nd. As begging grace to assist her in this hour of temptation. She found it hard to keep up her faith when it was thus frowned upon, and therefore prays, "Lord, help me." 'Lord, strengthen my faith now; Lord, let thy right hand uphold me, while my soul is following hard after thee,' *Ps. lxxiii. 8*. Or, 3rd. As enforcing her original request: "Lord, help me;" that is, 'Lord, give me what I come for.' She believed that Christ could and would help her, though she was not of the house of Israel, else she would have dropped her petition. Still she keeps up good thoughts of Christ, and will not quit her hold. "Lord, help me," is a good prayer, if well put up; and it is a pity it should be turned into a by-word, and that we should "take God's name in vain" in it.

Secondly. With a holy skillfulness of faith, suggesting a very surprising plea. Christ had placed the Jews with the children, as olive plants round about God's table, and had put the Gentiles with the dogs, under the table; and she doth not deny the aptness of the similitude. Note, There is nothing got by contradicting any word of Christ, though it bear never so hard upon us. But this poor woman, since she cannot object against it, resolves to make the best of it, *ver. 27*: "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs." Now here, 1. Her acknowledgment was very humble: "Truth, Lord." Note, You cannot speak so meanly and slightly of a humble believer, but he is ready to speak as meanly and slightly of himself. Some that seem to dispraise and disparage themselves, will yet take it as an affront if others do so too; but one that is humbled aright will subscribe to the most abasing challenges, and not call them abusing ones. "Truth, Lord, I cannot deny it; I am a dog, and have no right to the children's bread." David, Thou hast done foolishly, very foolishly: "Truth, Lord." Asaph, Thou hast been as a beast before God. "Agi, Thou art more brutish than any man;" "Truth, Lord." Paul, Thou hast been the chief

unclean before God by what he eats and drinks, but by the thoughts and passions which are expressed in words and deeds. This is the universal tendency of mere formalism, which loses sight of real religion, and is content with outward rite and ceremonial. In the fuller development of the idea in what he said to the disciples, Jesus abundantly confirms the accuracy of his declaration.

xv. 15. It is not clear why Peter calls the saying in verse 11 a parable, but possibly the word is used in its wider sense of maxim or

proverb. In the Hebrew the word for "proverb" is the same as that which is used for a parable in the ordinary sense of that term.

xv. 21. Literally rendered, this verse reads, "And going away from thence, Jesus departed into the parts of Tyre and Sidon." He may not have entered the immediate neighbourhood of either Tyre or Sidon, which were several miles asunder, but he may and must have gone into the vicinity of the district regarded as belonging to those two places. Tyre was much reduced from its ancient splen-

of sinners, art less than the least of saints, not meet to be called an apostle; "Truth, Lord." 2. Her improvement of this, into a plea, was very ingenious: "Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs." It was by a singular acumen, and spiritual quickness and sagacity, that she discerned matter of argument in that which looked like a slight. Note, A lively active faith will make that to be for us which seems to be against us; will fetch meat out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong. Unbelief is apt to mistake recruits for enemies, and to draw dismal conclusions from comfortable promises, *Jude* 13, 22, 23; but faith can find encouragement even in that which is discouraging, and get nearer to God by taking hold on that hand which is stretched out to push it away. So good a thing it is to be of "quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." *Isa.* xi. 3. Her plea is, "Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs." It is true, the full and regular provision is intended for the children only, but the small casual neglected crumbs are allowed to the dogs, and are not grudged them; that is, to the dogs under the table, that attend there, expecting them. "We poor Gentiles cannot expect the stated ministry and miracles of the son of David, that belongs to the Jews; but they begin now to be weary of their meat, and to play with it; they find fault with it, and crumble it away: surely, then, some of the broken meat may fall to a poor Gentile. I beg a cure, by the by, which is but as a crumb, though of the same precious bread, yet but a small inconsiderable piece, compared with the loaves which they have." Note, When we are ready to surfeit on the children's bread, we should remember how many there are that would be glad of the crumbs. Our broken meat in spiritual privileges would be a feast to many a soul, as *Acts* xiii. 42. Observe, here,

First. Her humility and necessity made her glad of crumbs. Those who are conscious to themselves that they deserve nothing, will be thankful for any thing. And then we are prepared for the greatest of God's mercies, when we see ourselves less than the least of them. The least of Christ is precious to a believer, and the very crumbs of the bread of life.

Secondly. Her faith encouraged her to expect these crumbs. Why should it not be at Christ's table as at a great man's, where the dogs are fed as sure as the children? Observe, She calls it their master's table. If she were a dog, she was his dog; and it cannot be ill with us if we stand but in the meanest relation to Christ. Though unworthy to be called children, yet "make me as one of thy hired servants;" nay, rather let me be set with the dogs than turned out of the house; for in my father's house there is not only bread enough, but to spare, *Lu.* xv. 17, 19. It is good lying in God's house, though we lie at the threshold there.

IV. The happy issue and success of all this. She came off with credit and comfort from this struggle; and, though a Canaanite, approved herself a true daughter of Israel, who, like a prince, had power with God, and prevailed. Hitherto Christ hid his face from her, but now gathers her with everlasting kindness, ver. 27: "Then Jesus said, O woman, great is thy faith." This was like Joseph making himself known to his brethren, "I am Joseph;" so here, in effect, "I am Jesus." Now he begins to speak like himself, and put on his own countenance. He will not contend for ever.

First. He commended her faith: "O woman, great is thy faith." Observe, 1. It is her faith that he commends. There were several other graces that shone bright in her conduct of this affair; wisdom, humility, meekness, patience, perseverance in prayer; but these were the product of her faith, and therefore Christ fastens upon that as most commendable. Because of all graces faith honours Christ most, therefore of all graces Christ honours faith most. 2. It is the greatness of her faith. Note, 1st. Though the faith of all the saints be alike precious, yet it is not in all alike strong; all believers are not of the same size and stature. 2nd. The greatness of faith consists much in a resolute adherence to Jesus Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour, even in the face of discouragements; to love him and trust him as a friend, even when he seems to come forth against us as an enemy: this is great faith. 3rd. Though weak faith, if true, shall not be rejected, yet great faith shall be commended and shall appear greatly well-pleasing to Christ; for in them that thus believe he is most admired. Thus Christ commended the faith of the centurion; and he was a Gentile too. He had a strong faith in the power of Christ; this woman, in the good will of Christ. Both were acceptable.

Secondly. He cured her daughter: "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt;" "I can deny thee nothing; take what thou earnest for." Note, Great believers may have what they will for the asking; when our will conforms to the will of Christ's precept, his will concurs with the will of our desire. Those that will deny Christ nothing, shall find that he will deny them nothing, at last, though for a time he seem to hide his face from them. Thou wouldst have thy sins pardoned, thy corruptions mortified, thy nature sanctified, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And what canst thou desire more? When we come, as this poor woman did, to pray against Satan and his kingdom, we concur with the intercession of Christ, and it shall be accordingly. Though Satan may sift Peter, and buffet Paul, yet through Christ's prayer, and the sufficiency of his grace, we shall be more than conquerors, *Lu.* xxii. 31, 32; *2 Cor.* xii. 7, 9; *Rom.* xvi. 20. The event was answerable to the word of Christ; "her daughter was made whole from that very hour;" from thenceforward was never "vexed with the devil" any more. The mother's faith prevailed for the daughter's cure. Though the patient was at a distance, that was no hindrance to the efficacy of Christ's word: "He spake, and it was done."

29 And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. 30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:* 31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel. 32 Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they

faint in the way. 33 And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude? 34 And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. 35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. 36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. 37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets full. 38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children. 39 And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

Here is, I. A general account of Christ's cures; his curing by wholesale. The tokens of Christ's power and goodness are neither scarce nor scanty: for there is in him an overflowing fulness. Now observe,

First. The place where these cures were wrought. It was near the sea of Galilee, a part of the country Christ was pretty much conversant with. We read not of any thing he did in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, but the casting of the devil out of the woman of Canaan's daughter, as if he took that journey on purpose, with that in prospect. Let not ministers grudge their pains to do good, though but to few. He that knows the worth of souls would go a great way to help to save one from death and Satan's power. But "Jesus departed thence;" having let fall that crumb under the table, he here returns to make a full feast for the children. We may do that occasionally for one, which we may not make a constant practice of. Christ steps into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, but he sits down by the sea of Galilee, ver. 29; sits down, not on a stately throne, or tribunal of judgment, but on a mountain; so mean and homely were his most solemn appearances in the days of his flesh. He sat down on a mountain that all might see him and have free access to him, for he is an open Saviour. He sat down there as one tired with his journey, and willing to have a little rest; or rather, as one waiting to be gracious. He sat expecting patients, as Abraham at his tent door, ready to entertain strangers. He settled himself to this good work.

Secondly. The multitudes and maladies that were healed by him, ver. 30: "Great multitudes came to him;" that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "unto him shall the gathering of the people be" *Gen.* xlix. 10. If Christ's ministers could cure bodily diseases, as Christ did, there would be more flocking to them than there is. But bodily pain and sickness is a thing we are soon sensible of; but few are concerned about their souls and their spiritual diseases. Now, 1. Such was the goodness of Christ, that he admitted all sorts of people. The poor as well as the rich are welcome to Christ, and with him there is room enough for all comers. He never complained of crowds or throngs of seekers, or looked with contempt upon the vulgar, the herd, as they are called; for the souls of peasants are as precious with him as the souls of princes. 2. Such was the power of Christ, that he healed all sorts of diseases. Those that came to him brought their sick relations and friends along with them, "and cast them down at Jesus' feet," ver. 30. We read not of any thing they said to him, but they laid them down before him as objects of pity to be looked upon by him. Their calamities spoke more for them than the tongue of the most eloquent orator could. "David shewed before God his trouble;" that was enough; he then left it with him, *Ps.* cxlii. 2. Whatever our case is, the only way to find ease and relief is to lay it at Christ's feet; to spread it before him, and refer it to his cognizance; and then submit it to him, and refer it to his dispose. Those that would have spiritual healing from Christ must lay themselves at his feet, and be ruled and ordered as he pleaseth. Here were "lame, blind, dumb, maimed," and many others" brought to Christ: see what work sin has made; it has turned the world into an hospital; what various diseases are human bodies subject to: see what work the Saviour makes; he conquers those hosts of enemies to mankind. Here were such diseases as a flame of fancy could contribute neither to the cause of, nor to the cure of; as lying not in the humours, but in the members of the body; and yet these were subject to the commands of Christ; "he sent his Word, and healed them." Note, All diseases are at the command of Christ, to go and come as he bids them. This is an instance of Christ's power which may comfort us in all our weaknesses, and of his pity, which may comfort us in all our miseries.

Thirdly. The influence that this had upon the people, ver. 31. 1. They "wondered;" and well they might. Christ's works should be our wonder. It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous, *Ps.* cxviii. 23. The spiritual cures that Christ works are wonderful. When blind souls are made to see by faith, the dumb to speak in prayer, the lame to walk in holy obedience, it is to be wondered at. Sing unto the Lord a new song, for thus he has done marvellous things. 2. They "glorified the God of Israel," whom the Pharisees, when they saw these things, blasphemed. Miracles, which are the matter of our wonder, must be the matter of our praise; and mercies, which are the matter of our rejoicing, must be the matter of our thanksgiving. Those that were healed glorified God: if he "heal our diseases," "all that is within us must bless his holy name;" and if we have been graciously preserved from blindness, and lameness, and dumbness, we have as much reason to bless God as if we had been cured of them. Nay, and the standers-by glorified God. Note, God must be acknowledged with praise and thankfulness in others' mercies, as in our own. They glorified him as the God of Israel, his church's God; a God in covenant with his people, who hath sent the Messiah promised, and this is he. See *Lu.* i. 68: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel." This was done by the power of the God of Israel, and no other could do it.

11. Here is a particular account of his feeding four thousand men with seven loaves and a few little fishes, as he had lately fed five thousand with five loaves. The guests, indeed, were now not quite so many as then, and the provision a little more; which does not intimate that Christ's arm was shortened, but that he wrought his miracles as the occasion required, and not for ostentation, and therefore he suited them to the occasion. Both then and now

dour, but it was still a place of some importance, and continued to be more or less so until the close of the thirteenth century. It was the seat of a long series of bishops, and eventually of an archbishop. Sidon was one of the most ancient cities in the world, and was powerful and great even in the time of Joshua. It was probably older than Tyre, and fell into decay at an earlier date. Still it lingered on, and its site, like that of Tyre, is occupied at the present day, though by an inconsiderable population.

xv. 22. There still lingered in the regions towards the Mediterranean some descendants of the old heathen population. For "a woman of Canaan came out of the same districts," we may adopt Dean Alford's translation, "a Canaanitish woman of those districts came out." The woman was of Gentile descent, and fuller particulars concerning her are given by St. Mark in chap. vii. 26, to which we refer.

xv. 26, 27. The term rendered "dogs" is diminutive, meaning little

he took as many as were to be fed, and made use of all that was at hand to feed them with. When once the utmost powers of nature are exceeded, we must say, 'This is the finger of God:' and it is neither here nor there how far they are outdone; so that this is no less a miracle than the former. Here is,

First, Christ's pity, ver. 32: "I have compassion on the multitude." He tells his disciples this, both to try and excite their compassion. When he was about to work this miracle, he called them to him, and made them acquainted with his purpose, and discoursed to them about it; not because he needed their advice, but because he would give an instance of his condescending love to them. He "called them not servants, for the servant knows not what his Lord doeth;" but treated them as his right trusty and well beloved cousins and counsellors: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing that I do?" *Gen. xvii. 17.* In what he said to them, observe,

1. The case of the multitude: "They continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat." This is an instance of their zeal, and the strength of their affection to Christ and his Word, that they not only left their callings to attend upon him on week days, but underwent a deal of hardship to continue with him; they wanted their natural rest, and, for aught appeared, lay like soldiers in the field; they wanted necessary food, and had scarcely enough to keep life and soul together. In those hotter countries they could better bear long fasting than we can, in these colder climates; but however, it could not but be grievous to the body, and might endanger their health, yet the zeal of God's house thus ate them up, and they esteemed the words of Christ more than their necessary food. We think three hours too much to attend upon public ordinances; but these people stayed together three days, and yet snuffed not at it, nor said, 'Behold, what a weariness is it!' Observe with what tenderness Christ spoke of it: "I have compassion on them." It had become them to have compassion on him, who took so much pains with them for three days together, and was so indefatigable in teaching and healing; so much virtue had gone out of him; and yet, for aught appears, he was fasting too; but he prevented them with his compassion. Note, Our Lord Jesus keeps an account how long his followers continue their attendance upon him, and takes notice of the difficulty they sustain in it, *Rev. ii. 2*: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience," and it shall in nowise lose its reward. Now the exigence the people were reduced to, serves to magnify, 1st. The mercy of their supply: he fed them when they were hungry, and then food was doubly welcome. He treated them as he did Israel of old; he "suffered them to hunger," and then "fed them," *Deu. viii. 3*; for that is sweet to the hungry soul which the full soul loathes. 2nd. The miracle of their supply. Having been so long fasting, their appetites were the more craving. If two hungry meals make the third a glutton, what would three hungry days do? And yet, "they did all eat, and were filled." Note, There is mercy and grace enough with Christ to give the most earnest and enlarged desire an abundant satisfaction: "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." He replenisheth even the hungry soul.

2. The care of our Master concerning them: "I will not send them away, lest they should faint by the way;" which would be a discredit to Christ and his family, and a discouragement both to them and to others. Note, It is the unhappiness of our present state, that when our souls are in some measure elevated and enlarged, yet our bodies cannot keep pace with them in good duties: the weakness of the flesh is a great grievance to the willingness of the spirit. It will not be so in heaven, where the body shall be made spiritual; where they rest not day or night from praising God, and yet faint not; where they hunger no more, nor thirst any more, *Rev. vii. 16*.

Secondly, Christ's power. His pity of their wants sets his power on work for their supply. Now observe,

1. How his power was distrusted by his disciples, ver. 33: "Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness?" A proper question, one would think, like that of Moses, *Num. xi. 22*, "Shall the flocks and the herds be slain to suffice them?" But it was here an improper question, considering not only the general assurance the disciples had of the power of Christ, but the particular experience they lately had of a seasonable and sufficient provision, by miracle, in a like case. They had been not only the witnesses, but the ministers, of the former miracle; the multiplied bread went through their hands; so that it was an instance of great weakness for them to ask, "Whence shall we have bread?" Could they be to seek, while they had their Master with them? Note, Forgetting former experiences leaves us under present doubts. Christ knew how slender the provision was, but he would know it from them, ver. 34: "How many loaves have ye?" Before he would work, he would have it seen how little he had to work on, that his power might shine the brighter. What they had, they had for themselves, and it was little enough for their own family; but Christ would have them bestow it all upon the multitude, and trust Providence for more. Note, It becomes Christ's disciples to be generous; their Master was so: what we have we should be free of, as there is occasion; given to hospitality. Not like Nahai, *1 Sam. xxv. 11*, but like Elisha, *2 Kin. iv. 42*. Niggardiness to-day, out of thoughtfulness for to-morrow, is a complication of corrupt affections, that ought to be mortified. If we be prudently kind and charitable with what we have, we may piously hope that God will send more: *Jehovah-jireh*,—"The Lord will provide." The disciples asked, "Whence should we have bread?" Christ asked, "How many loaves have ye?" Note, When we cannot have what we would, we must make the best of what we have, and do good with it as far as it will go. We must not think so much of our wants as of our havings. Christ herein went according to the rule he gave to Martha, not to be "troubled about many things, nor cumbered about much serving." Nature is content with little, grace with less, but lust with nothing.

2. How his power was discovered to the multitude in the plentiful provision he made for them; the manner of which is much the same as before, *ch. xiv. 18*, &c. Observe here, 1st. The provision that was at hand: "Seven loaves, and a few little fishes." The fish not proportionable to the bread, for bread is the staff of life. It is likely the fish was such as they had themselves taken, for they were fishers, and were now near the sea. Note, It is comfortable "eating the labour of our hands," *Ps. cxviii. 2*, and enjoying that which is in any way the product of our own industry, *Pr. xii. 27*. And what we have got by God's blessing on our labour we should be free of; for therefore we must labour, "that we may have to give," *Eph. iv. 28*. 2nd. The putting of the people in a posture to receive it, ver. 35: "He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground." They saw but very little provision, yet they must sit down, in faith that they should have a meal's meat out of it. They who would have spiritual food from Christ must sit down at his feet to hear his Word, and expect it to come in the unseen way. 3rd. The distributing of the provision among them. He first "gave thanks," *εὐχαριστῶντας*. The word used in the former miracle was *εὐλόγησεν*, he "blessed." It comes all to one; giving thanks to God is a proper way of craving a blessing from God. And when we come to ask and receive further mercy, we ought to give thanks for the mercies we have received. He then "broke the loaves," (for it was in the breaking that the bread multiplied,) and gave to his disciples, and they to the multitude. Though the disciples had distrusted Christ's power, yet he made use of them now as before; he is not provoked, as he might be, by the weaknesses and infirmities of his ministers, to lay them aside; but still he gives to them, and they

to his people, of the Word of life. 4th. The plenty there was among them, ver. 37: "They did all eat, and were filled." Note, Those whom Christ feeds he fills. While we labour for the world we labour for that which sauseneth not, *Isa. lv. 2*; but those that duly wait on Christ shall be "abundantly satisfied with the goodness of his house," *Ps. lxxv. 4*. Christ thus fed people, once and again, to intimate, that though he was called "Jesus of Nazareth," yet he was of "Bethlehem,"—"the house of bread;" or rather, that he was himself "the bread of life." To shew that they had all enough, there was a great deal left—"seven baskets full of broken meat:" not so much as there was before, because they did not gather after so many eaters; but enough to shew that with Christ "there is bread enough, and to spare;" supplies of grace for more than seek it, and for those that seek more. 5th. The account taken of the guests; not that they might pay their ordinary; here was no reckoning to be discharged, they were fed gratis; but that they might be witnesses to the power and goodness of Christ; and that this might be some resemblance of that universal Providence that gives "food to all flesh," *Ps. cxxxvi. 25*. Here were four thousand men fed; but what were they to that great family which is provided for by the Divine care every day? God is a great housekeeper, on whom "the eyes of all the creatures wait, and he giveth them their food in due season," *Ps. civ. 27*; *cxlv. 15*. Lastly, The dismissal of the multitude, and Christ's departure to another place, ver. 39: He "sent away" the people. Though he had fed them twice, they must not expect miracles to be their daily bread. Let them now go home to their callings, and to their own tables. And he himself departed by ship to another place; for, being the light of the world, he must be still in motion, and go about to do good.

CHAPTER XVI.

None of Christ's miracles are recorded in this chapter, but four of his discourses. Here is, I. A conference with the Pharisees, who challenged him to shew them a sign from heaven, ver. 1-4. II. Another with his disciples, about the leaven of the Pharisees, ver. 5-12. III. Another with them, concerning himself, as the Christ, and concerning his church, built upon him, ver. 13-20. IV. Another, concerning his sufferings for them, and theirs for him, ver. 21-28. And all these are written for our learning.



HE Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. 2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.* 3 And in the morning, *It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring.* O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? 4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

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We have here Christ's discourse with the Pharisees and Sadducees; men at variance among themselves, as appears, *Acts xxiii. 7, 8*, and yet unanimous in their opposition to Christ; because his doctrine did equally overthrow the errors and heresies of the Sadducees, who denied the existence of spirits and a future state, and the pride, tyranny, and hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who were the great imposers of the traditions of the elders. Christ and Christianity meet with opposition on all hands. Observe,

I. *Their demand, and the design of it.* First, The demand was of a sign from heaven. This they desired him to shew them, pretending they were very willing to be satisfied and convinced, when really they were far from being so, but sought excuses for an obstinate infidelity. That which they pretended to desire was, 1. Some other sign than what they had yet had. They had great plenty of signs: every miracle which Christ wrought was a sign; for no man could do what he did unless God were with him; but this will not serve; they must have a sign of their own choosing: they despised those signs which relieved the necessity of the sick and sorrowful, and insisted upon some sign which would gratify the curiosity of the proud. It is fit the proofs of Divine revelation should be chosen by the wisdom of God, not by the follies and fancies of men. The evidence that is given is sufficient to satisfy an unprejudiced understanding, but was not intended to please a vain humour; and it is an instance of the deceitfulness of the heart, to think that we should be wrought upon by the means and advantages which we have not, while we slight those we have: "If we hear not Moses and the prophets," neither would we be wrought upon, "though one rose from the dead." 2. It must be a sign from heaven. They would have such miracles to prove his commission as were wrought at the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai: "thunder and lightning, and the voice of words," were "the sign from heaven" they required; whereas the sensible signs, and terrible ones, were not agreeable to the spiritual and comfortable dispensation of the Gospel. Now the Word comes more nigh us, *Rom. x. 8*; and therefore the miracles do so, and do not oblige us to keep such a distance as these did, *Heb. xii. 18*.

Secondly, The design was to tempt him; not to be taught by him, but to ensnare him. If he should shew them a sign from heaven, they would attribute it to a confederacy with the prince of the power of the air; if he should not, as they supposed he would not, they would have that to say for themselves why they did not believe on him. They now tempted Christ as Israel did, *1 Cor. xi. 9*. And observe their perverseness then, when they had signs from heaven; they tempted Christ, saying, "Can he furnish a table in the wilderness?" Now he had "furnished a table in the wilderness," they tempted him, saying, "Can he give us a sign from heaven?"

dogs, and somewhat like the word "doggies;" therefore not necessarily used by way of reproach, but probably rather in a kind and friendly spirit. The impression received by many is that in speaking as he does our Lord regards the Gentiles as dogs when compared with the Israelites. But even if the comparison were a tually implied, it by no means follows that Jesus cherished any such opinion. We must rather conclude that he employed the popular phraseology for a specific purpose. Kuinoel says verse 26 is a proverbial expression, which

was employed by those who wished to signify that the advantages which belonged to the members of the household should not be conferred on aliens. Lightfoot quotes a Rabbinical saying in which the nations of the world are compared with dogs, and he observes that the Saviour uses this phraseology according to the common utterances of the people rather than his own opinion. Dean Alford adopts the view that "no contempt is indicated by the diminutive, still less any allusion to the daughter of the woman; the word is

II. *Christ's reply to this demand.* Let them be wise in their own conceit, he answered these fools according to their folly, *Pr. xxvi. 5.* In his answer,

First. He condemns their inadvertency of the signs they had, *ver. 2, 3.* They were seeking for the signs of the kingdom of God, when it was already among them; "the Lord was in this place, and they knew it not;" thus their unbelieving ancestors, when miracles were their daily bread, yet asked, "Is the Lord among us, or not?" To expose this, he observes to them, 1. Their skillfulness and sagacity in other things, particularly in natural prognostications of the weather; "You know that a red sky over night is a presage of fair weather, and a red sky in the morning, of foul weather." There are common rules, drawn from observation and experience, by which it is easy to foretell, very probably, what weather it will be. When second causes have begun to work, we may easily guess at their issue; so uniform is nature in its motions, and so consistent with itself. We "know not the balancings of the clouds," *Job xxxvii. 16,* but we may spell something from the faces of them. This gives no countenance at all to the wild and ridiculous predictions of the "astrologers, the star-gazers, and the monthly prognosticators," (*Isa. xlvii. 13.*) concerning the weather, long before, with which weak and foolish people are imposed upon; we are sure, in general, that "seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, shall not cease;" but as to the particulars, till by the weather-glasses, or otherwise, we perceive the immediate signs and harbingers of the change of weather, it is not for us to know, no, not that concerning the times and seasons. Let it suffice, that it shall be what weather pleaseth God, and that which pleaseth God should not displease us. 2. Their sottishness and stupidity in the concerns of their souls; "Can ye not discern the signs of the times?" 1st. "Do you not see that the Messiah is come?" The sceptre was departed from Judah, Daniel's weeks were upon expiring, and yet they regarded not. The miracles Christ wrought, and the gathering of the people to him, were plain indications that the "kingdom of heaven was at hand," that this was "the day of their visitation." Note, *First.* There are signs of the times by which wise and upright men are enabled to make moral prognostications, and so far to understand the motions and methods of Providence, as, from thence, to take their measures, and to know what Israel ought to do, as the men of Issachar, as the physician from some certain symptoms finds a crisis formed. *Secondly.* There are many who are skillful enough in other things, and yet cannot, or will not, discern the day of their opportunities; are not aware of the wind when it is fair for them, and so let slip the gale. See *Jer. viii. 7; Isa. i. 3.* *Thirdly.* It is great hypocrisy, when we slight the signs of God's ordaining, to seek for signs of our own prescribing. 2nd. "Do not you foresee your own ruin coming, for rejecting him? You will not entertain the Gospel of peace, and can you not evidently discern that hereby you pull an inevitable destruction upon your own heads?" Note, It is the undoing of multitudes, that they are not aware what will be the end of their refusing Christ.

Secondly. He denies to give them any other sign, *ver. 4,* as he had done before in the same words, *ch. xii. 39.* Those that persist in the same iniquities must expect to be met with the same reproofs. Here, as there, 1. He calls them "an adulterous generation," because while they professed themselves of the true church and spouse of God, they treacherously departed from him, and broke their covenants with him. The Pharisees were a generation pure in their own eyes, having the way of the adulterous woman, that thinks she has done no wickedness, *Pr. xxx. 20.* 2. He refuseth to gratify their desire. Christ will not be prescribed to; we ask, and have not, because we ask amiss. 3. He refers them to the sign of the prophet Jonas, which should yet be given them; his resurrection from the dead, and his preaching by his apostles to the Gentiles, these were reserved for the last and highest evidences of his Divine mission. Note, Though the fancies of proud men shall not be humoured, yet the faith of the humble shall be supported, and the unbelief of them that perish left for ever inexcusable, and "every mouth shall be stopped." This discourse broke off abruptly; "he left them, and departed." Christ will not tarry long with those that tempt him, but justly withdraws from those that are disposed to quarrel with him; he left them as irreclaimable: "Let them alone." He left them to themselves, left them in the hand of their own counsels, so he "gave them up to their own hearts' lusts."

5 And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. 6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. 7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. 8 Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? 9 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? 12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

We have here Christ's discourse with his disciples concerning bread; in which as in many other, he speaks to them of spiritual things under a similitude, and they misunderstand him of carnal things. The occasion of it was, their forgetting to victual their ship, and to take along with them provisions for their family on the other side the water; usually they carried bread along with them, because they were sometimes in desert places, and when they were not, yet they would

not be burthensome; but now they forgot, we will hope it was because their minds and memories were filled with better things. Note, Christ's disciples are often such as have no great forecast for the world.

I. *Here is the caution Christ gave them, to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees."* He had now been discoursing with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and saw them to be men of such a spirit, that it was necessary to caution his disciples to have nothing to do with them. Disciples are in most danger from hypocrites; against those that are openly vicious they stand upon their guard, but against Pharisees, that are great pretenders to devotion, and Sadducees, that pretend to a free and impartial search after truth, they commonly lie unguarded; and therefore the caution is doubled, "take heed, and beware." The corrupt principles and practices of the Pharisees and Sadducees are compared to leaven; they were souring, and swelling, and spreading like leaven, they fermented wherever they came.

II. *Their mistake concerning this caution, ver. 7.* They thought Christ hereby upbraided them with their improvidence and forgetfulness; that they were so busy attending to his discourse with the Pharisees, that therefore they forgot their private concerns; or, because having no bread of their own with them, they must be beholden to their friends for supply, he would not have them to ask of the Pharisees and Sadducees, nor to receive of their alms, because he would not so far countenance them; or, for fear, lest, under pretence of feeding them, they should do them a mischief; or, they took it for a caution not to be familiar with the Pharisees and Sadducees, not to eat with them, *Pr. xxiii. 6;* whereas the danger was not in their bread, Christ himself did eat with them, *Lu. vii. 36; xiv. 1; xi. 37,* but in their principles.

III. *The reproof Christ gave them for this.*

First. He reproves their distrust of his ability and readiness to supply them in this strait, *ver. 8:* "O ye of little faith," why are ye in such perplexity because ye have taken no bread that you can mind nothing else; that you think your Master is as full of it as you, and apply every thing he saith to that? He doth not chide them for their little forecast, as they expected he would. Note, Parents and masters must not be angry at the forgetfulness of their children and servants, more than is necessary to make them take more heed another time; we are all apt to be forgetful of our duty. This should serve to excuse a fault, "peradventure it was an oversight." See how easily Christ forgave his disciples' carelessness, though it was in such a material point as taking bread; and do likewise. But that which he chides them for, is their little faith. 1. He would have them to depend upon him for supply, though it were in a wilderness, and not to disquiet themselves with anxious thoughts about it. Note, Though Christ's disciples be brought into wants and straits through their own carelessness and inopitancy, yet he encourageth them to trust in him for relief. We must not therefore use this as an excuse for our charity to those that are really poor, that they should have minded their own affairs better, and then they would not have been in need: it may be so, but they must not therefore be left to starve when they are in need. 2. He is displeased at their solicitude in this matter. The weakness and shiftlessness of good people in their worldly affairs, is that for which men are apt to condemn them, but it is not such an offence to Christ as their inordinate care and anxiety about those things. We must endeavour to keep the mean between the extremes of carelessness and carefulness; but, of the two, the excess of thoughtfulness about the world worst becomes Christ's disciples: "O ye of little faith, why are ye disquieted for want of bread?" Note, To distrust Christ, and disturb ourselves, when we are in straits and difficulties, is an evidence of the weakness of our faith, which, if it were in exercise as it should be, would ease us of our burthen of care, by casting it on the Lord, who careth for us. 3. The aggravation of their distrust was the experience they had so lately had of the power and goodness of Christ in providing for them, *ver. 9, 10.* Though they had no bread with them, they had Him with them that could provide bread for them; if they had not the cistern, they had the fountain: "Do not ye yet understand, neither remember?" Note, Christ's disciples are often to be blamed for the shallowness of their understandings, and the slipperiness of their memories. "Have you forgot those repeated instances of merciful and miraculous supplies; five thousand fed with five loaves, and four thousand with seven loaves, and yet they had enough and to spare. Remember "how many baskets ye took up," which were intended for memorials, by which to keep the mercy in remembrance, as the pot of manna which was preserved in the ark," *Ex. xvi. 32.* The fragments of those meals would be a feast now; and he that could furnish them with such an overplus then, surely could furnish them with what was necessary now. That meat for their bodies was intended to be meat for their faith, *Ps. lxxiv. 24,* which therefore they should have lived upon, now they had forgotten to take bread. Note, We are therefore perplexed with present cares and distrusts, because we do not duly remember our former experiences of Divine power and goodness.

Secondly. He reproves their misunderstanding of the caution he gave them, *ver. 11:* "How is it that ye do not understand?" Note, Christ's disciples may well be ashamed of the slowness and dullness of their apprehensions in Divine things; especially when they have long enjoyed the means of grace. "I spake it not unto you concerning bread." He took it ill, 1. That they should think him as thoughtful about bread as they were; whereas his meat and drink was to do his Father's will. 2. That they should be so little acquainted with his way of preaching, as to take that literally which he spake by way of parable, and should thus make themselves like the multitude, who, when Christ spoke to them in parables, seeing, saw not, and hearing, heard not, *ch. xiii. 13.*

IV. *The rectifying of the mistake by this reproof, ver. 12:* "Then understood they what he meant." Note, Christ therefore shews us our folly and weakness, that we may stir up ourselves to take things right. He did not tell them expressly what he meant, but repeated what he had said, that they should "beware of the leaven," and so obliged them, by comparing this with his other discourses, to bolt out the sense of it in their own thoughts. Thus Christ teacheth by the spirit of wisdom in the heart, opening the understanding to the spirit of revelation in the Word; and those truths are most precious which we have thus digged for, and have found out, after some mistakes. Though Christ did not tell them plainly, yet now they were aware that, by the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, he meant their doctrine and way, which was corrupt and vicious, but, as they managed it, was very apt to insinuate itself into the minds of men like leaven, and to eat like a canker; they were leading men, and were had in reputation, which made the danger of infection by their errors the greater. In our age we may reckon atheism and deism to be the leaven of the Sadducees, and popery to be the leaven of the Pharisees, against both which it concerns all Christians to stand upon their guard.

13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14 And they

commonly used of tame dogs, as diminutives frequently express familiarity." No fact is more certain than that the Jews regarded themselves as having a sort of monopoly or special right to God's best gifts.

xv. 29. From the parallel passage (*Mark vii. 31*), we gather that it was to the eastern shore of the Galilean lake that our Lord went. "The mountain" to which he went up was the elevated region which borders the lake on the east. Recent surveys show that "the hills,

which everywhere else on the eastern side are recessed from a half to three-quarters of a mile from the water's edge," in one place approach within forty feet of it. These hills are of no great elevation, and their outline is not broken by any prominent peak.

xv. 39. Instead of Magdala, so many ancient authorities have Magada that it is adopted without hesitation by a good many modern critics. At the same time, in favour of the common reading, it is to be noted that a place called Mejdal still exists on the western

said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

We have here a private conference which Christ had with his disciples concerning himself. It was in the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, the utmost borders of the land of Canaan, northward; there, in that remote corner, perhaps there was less flocking after him than in other places, which gave him leisure for this private conversation with his disciples. When ministers are abridged in their public work, they should endeavour to do the more in their own families. Christ is here catechising his disciples.

1. He inquires what the opinions of others were concerning him: 'Whom do men say that I am?'

First. He calls himself "the Son of man;" which may be taken either, 1. As a title common to him with others; he was called, and justly, "the Son of God," for so he was, *Luk. i. 35*; but he called himself "the Son of man;" for he is really and truly "man, made of a woman." In courts of honour it is a rule to distinguish men by their highest titles, but Christ, having now emptied himself, though he was "the Son of God," yet will be known by the style and title of "the Son of man." Ezekiel was often called so, to keep him humble; Christ called himself so, to shew that he was humble. Or, 2. As a title peculiar to him as Mediator. He is known in Daniel's vision as "the Son of man," *Dan. vii. 13*: "I am the Messiah, that Son of man that was promised." But,

Secondly. He inquires what people's sentiments were concerning him: 'Whom do men say that I am?—the Son of man?' So, I think it might better be read, 'Do they own me for the Messiah?' He asks not, 'Whom do the scribes and Pharisees say that I am?' They were prejudiced against him, and said, that he was a deceiver, and in league with Satan; but, 'Whom do men say that I am?' The common people, whom the Pharisees despised, to them Christ had a regard. Christ asked this question, not as one that knew not, for if he knows what men think, much more what they say; nor as one desirous to hear his own praises, but to make the disciples solicitous concerning the success of their preaching, by shewing that he himself was so. The common people conversed more familiarly with the disciples than they did with their Master, and therefore from them he might better know what they said. Christ had not plainly said who he was, but left people to infer it from his works, *Jno. x. 24, 25*. Now he would know what inferences the people drew from them, and from the miracles which his apostles wrought in his name.

Thirdly. To this question the disciples gave him an answer, ver. 14: "Some say thou art John the Baptist," &c. There were some that said he was "the son of David," *ch. xii. 23*, and "the great Prophet," *Jno. vi. 14*; but the disciples do not mention that, but only those that were wide, which they had gathered up from their countrymen. Observe, 1. They are different opinions; some say one thing, and others another; truth is one, but those who vary from that, commonly vary one from another. Thus Christ came eventually to send division, *Luk. xii. 51*. Being so noted a person, every one would be ready to pass his verdict upon him; and, many men, many minds; those that were not willing to own him to be the Christ, wandered in endless mazes, and followed the chase of every uncertain guess and wild hypothesis. 2. They are honourable opinions, and speak the respect they had for him, according to the best of their judgment. These were not the sentiments of his enemies, but the sober thoughts of those that followed him with love and wonder. Note, It is possible men may have good thoughts of Christ, and yet not right ones; a high opinion of him, and yet not high enough. 3. They all suppose him to be "one risen from the dead," which perhaps arose from a confused notion they had of the resurrection of the Messiah before his public preaching, as of Jonas; or their notions arose from an over value for antiquity; as if it were not possible for an excellent man to be produced in their own age, but it must be one of the ancients returned to life again. 4. They are all false opinions, and built upon mistakes, and wilful mistakes. Christ's doctrines and miracles spoke him an extraordinary person; but because of the meanness of his appearance, so different from what they expected, they would not own him to be the Messiah, but will grant him to be any thing rather than that. 1st. "Some say, thou art John the Baptist;" Herod said so, *ch. xiv. 2*, and those about him would be apt to say as he said; and this notion might be strengthened by an opinion they had, that those who died as martyrs should rise again before others; which some think the second of the seven sons refers to in his answer to Antiochus, *2 Mac. vii. 9*: "The King of the world shall raise us up, who have died for his laws, unto everlasting life." 2nd. "Some, Elias;" taking occasion, no doubt, from the prophecy of Malachi, *Mal. iv. 5*: Behold I will send you Elijah; and the rather, because Elijah (as Christ) did many miracles, and was himself, in his translation, the greatest miracle of all. 3rd. "Others, Jeremias;" they fasten upon him, either because he was the weeping prophet, and Christ was often in tears, or because God had set him over the kingdoms and nations, *Jer. i. 10*, which they thought agreed with their notion of the Messiah. 4th. "Or one of the prophets." This shews what an honourable account they made of the prophets, and yet they were the children of them that persecuted and slew

them, *ch. xxiii. 29*. Rather than they would allow Jesus of Nazareth, one of their own country, to be such an extraordinary person as his works spoke him to be, they would say, It was not he, but one of the old prophets.

11. He inquires what their thoughts were concerning him: "But whom say ye that I am?" ver. 15. You tell me what other people say of me, can you say better? 1. The disciples had themselves been better taught than others—had, by their intimacy with Christ, greater advantages of getting knowledge than others had. Note, It is justly expected that those who enjoy greater plenty of the means of knowledge and grace than others, should have a more clear and distinct knowledge of the things of God than others: those that have more acquaintance with Christ than others, should have truer sentiments concerning him, and be able to give a better account of him than others. 2. The disciples were trained up to teach others, and therefore it was highly requisite they should understand the truth themselves. 'Ye that are to preach the Gospel of the kingdom, what are your notions of him that sends you?' Note, Ministers must be examined before they be sent forth, especially what their sentiments are of Christ, and whom they say he is; for how can they be owned as ministers of Christ, that are either ignorant or erroneous concerning Christ? This is a question we should, every one of us, be frequently putting to ourselves: 'Whom do we say, what kind of one do we say, that the Lord is? Is he precious to us? Is he, in our eyes, the chief of ten thousand? Is he the beloved of our souls?' It is well or ill with us, according as our thoughts are right or wrong concerning Jesus Christ.

Well, this was the question; now let us observe. First. Peter's answer to this question, ver. 16. To the former question, concerning the opinion others had of Christ, several of the disciples answered according as they had heard people talk; but to this Peter answers in the name of all the rest, they all consenting to it, and concurring in it. Peter's temper led him to be forward in speaking upon all such occasions; and sometimes he spoke well, sometimes amiss: in all companies there are found some warm, bold men, to whom a precedence of speech falls of course: Peter was such an one; yet we find other of the apostles sometimes speaking as the mouth of the rest, as John, *Mar. ix. 38*; Thomas, and Philip, and Jude, *Jno. xvi. 5*; *viii. 22*. So that this is far from being a proof of such a primacy and superiority of Peter above the rest of the apostles, as the church of Rome ascribes to him: they will needs advance him to be a Judge, when the utmost they can make of him is, that he was but foreman of the jury, to speak for the rest; and that only *pro hac vice*,—for this once; not the perpetual dictator or speaker of the house, only chairman upon this occasion.

Peter's answer is short, but it is full, and true, and to the purpose: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Here is a confession of the Christian faith, addressed to Christ, and so made an act of devotion: here is a confession of the true God, as the living God, in opposition to dumb and dead idols, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, whom to know is life eternal. This is the conclusion of the whole matter: 1. The people called him a prophet—"that Prophet," *Jno. vi. 14*; but the disciples own him to be "the Christ," the anointed one; the great Prophet, Priest, and King of the church; the true Messiah promised to the fathers, and depended on by them as he that should come. It was a great thing to believe this concerning one whose outward appearance was so contrary to the general idea the Jews had of the Messiah. 2. He called himself the Son of man, but they owned him to be the Son of the living God. The people's notion of him was, that he was the ghost of a dead man, Elias or Jeremias; but they knew and believe him to be the Son of the living God, who has "life in himself, and has given to his Son to have life in himself," and to be the life of the world. If he be the Son of the living God, he is of the same nature with him; and though his Divine nature was now veiled with the cloud of flesh, yet there were those who looked through it and saw his glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Now, can we, with assurance of faith, subscribe to this confession? Let us then, with a fervency of affection and adoration, go to Christ and tell him so: Lord Jesus, "thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Secondly. Christ's approbation of this answer, ver. 17—19; in which Peter replied to, both as a believer and as an apostle.

1. As a believer, ver. 17. Christ shews himself well pleased with Peter's confession, that it was so clear and express—without ifs or ands, as we say. Note, The proficiency of Christ's disciples in knowledge and grace is very acceptable to him; and Christ shews him whence he received the knowledge of this truth. At the first discovery of this truth, in the dawning of the gospel day, it was a mighty thing to believe it: all men had not this knowledge, had not this faith; but, 1st. Peter had the happiness of it: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona." He minds him of his rise and original, the meanness of his parentage, the obscurity of his extraction: he was "Bar-jona," the 'son of a dove'; so some. Let him remember "the rock out of which he was hewn," that he might see he was not born to this dignity, but preferred to it by the Divine favour: it was free grace that made him to differ. Those that have received the Spirit must remember who is their Father, *1 Sam. x. 12*; and having minded him of this, he makes him sensible of his great happiness as a believer: blessed art thou. Note, True believers are truly blessed; and those are blessed indeed whom Christ pronounceth blessed: his saying they are so, makes them so. Peter, thou art a happy man, who thus "knowest the joyful sound," *Ps. lxxxix. 15*: "blessed are your eyes," *ch. xiii. 16*. All happiness attends the right knowledge of Christ. 2nd. God must have the glory of it: "For flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee;" thou hadst this neither by the invention of thy own wit and reason, nor by the instruction and information of others; this light sprung neither from nature nor education, but from my Father which is in heaven." Note, First. The Christian religion is a revealed religion, has its rise in heaven; it is a religion from above, given by inspiration of God—not the learning of philosophers, or the politics of statesmen. Secondly, Saving faith is the gift of God; and wherever it is, is wrought by him, as the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," for his sake, and upon the score of his mediation, *Phil. i. 29*. Therefore thou art blessed, because "my Father has revealed it to thee." Note, The revealing of Christ to us, and in us, is a distinguishing token of God's good will, and a firm foundation of true happiness; and blessed are they that are thus highly favoured. Perhaps Christ discerned something of pride and vain-glory in Peter's confession, a subtle sin, and which is apt to mingle itself even with our good duties. It is hard for good men to compare themselves with others, and not to have too great a conceit of themselves; to prevent which, we should consider that our preference above others is no achievement of our own, but the free gift of God's grace to us, and not to others; so that we have nothing to boast of, *Ps. cxv. 1*; *1 Cor. iv. 7*.

2. Christ's replies to him as an apostle or minister, ver. 18, 19. Peter, in the name of the church, had confessed Christ; and to him therefore the promise intended for the church is directed. Note, There is nothing lost in being forward to confess Christ, for those who thus honour him he will honour.

Upon occasion of this great confession made of Christ, which is the church's homage and allegiance, he signed and published this royal, this Divine charter, by which that body politic is incorporated; such is the communion between Christ and the church, the Bridegroom and the spouse. God had a church in

shore of the lake, and is thought by many to be the Magdala referred to here, and in the epithet Magdalene applied to one of the Marys. It is very probable that the two forms of the name apply to one locality, especially as both are of quite early occurrence.

xvi. 2, 3. Some of the oldest authorities omit the words from "when it is evening" to "the signs of the times;" but the passage must be retained.

xvi. 13. Cæsarea Philippi is a place of much interest. In "Our

Work in Palestine," issued by the Palestine Exploration Fund Committee, we read, "It was on the first day of the new year (1866) that work commenced in Palestine proper, near Banias. Banias, called Panium by Josephus, is perhaps the site of "Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under Mount Hermon" (*Josh. xi. 17*), the northernmost point of Joshua's conquests. Herod built here a temple in honour of Augustus Caesar. The city round this temple was afterwards, by Philip the tetrarch, called Cæsarea Philippi. It was near here that

the world from the beginning, and it was built upon the rock of the promised seed, *Gen. iii. 15*; but now that promised seed was come, it was requisite the church should have a new charter, as Christian, and standing in relation to a Christ already come. Now here we have that charter; and a thousand pities it is that this Word, which is the great support of the kingdom of Christ, should be wrested and pressed into the service of antichrist. But the devil has employed his subtlety to pervert it, as he did that promise, *Ps. xci. 11*, which he perverted to his own purpose, *ch. iv. 6*; and perhaps both that Scripture and this he thus perverted, because they stood in his way, and therefore he owed them a spite. Now the purport of this charter is,

First. To establish the being of the church: "I say also unto thee." It is Christ that makes the grant, he that is the church's head and ruler, to whom all judgment is committed, and from whom all power is derived; he that makes it pursuant to the authority received from the Father, and his undertaking for the salvation of the elect. The grant is put into Peter's hand: I say it to thee. The Old Testament promises relating to the church were given immediately to particular persons, eminent for faith and holiness, as to Abraham and David; which yet gave no supremacy to them, much less to any of their successors; so the New Testament charter is here delivered to Peter as an agent, but to the use and behoof of the church in all ages, according to the purposes therein specified and contained. Now it is here promised,

1. That Christ would build his church upon a rock. This body politic is incorporated by the style and title of Christ's church. It is a number of the children of men called out of the world, and set apart from it, and dedicated to Christ. It is not thy church, but mine; Peter remembered this when he cautioned ministers not to "lord it over God's heritage." The church is Christ's peculiar, appropriated to him; the world is God's, and they that dwell therein; but the church is a chosen remnant, that stands in relation to God through Christ as mediator: it "bears his image and superscription." 1st. The builder and maker of the church is Christ himself: "I will build it." The church is a temple, which Christ is the builder of, *Zec. vi. 11, 13*. Herein Solomon was a type of Christ and Cyrus, *Isa. xlv. 28*. The materials and workmanship are his. By the working of his Spirit, with the preaching of his Word, he adds souls to his church, and so builds it up with living stones, *1 Pet. ii. 5*: "ye are God's building," and building is a progressive work; the church in this world is but *in fieri*, in the forming, like a house in the building. It is comfort to all those who wish well to the church, that Christ, who has a Divine wisdom and power, undertakes to build it. 2nd. The foundation on which it is built is "this rock." Let the architect do his part never so well, if the foundation be rotten, the building will not stand; let us therefore see what the foundation is, and it must be meant of Christ, for other foundation can no man lay: see *Isa. xxviii. 16*. First. The church is built upon "a rock"—a firm, strong, and lasting foundation, which time will not waste; nor will it sink under the weight of the building. Christ would not build his house upon the sand, for he knew that storms would arise. A rock is high, *Ps. vi. 2*: Christ's church doth not stand upon a level with this world. A rock is large, and extends far, so doth the church's foundation; and the more large, the more firm: those are not the church's friends that narrow its foundations. Secondly. It is built upon "this rock"—"Thou art Peter," which signifies a "stone or rock;" Christ gave him that name when he first called him, *Jno. i. 42*; and here he confirms it: Peter, thou dost answer thy name; thou art a solid, substantial disciple, fixed and stayed, and one that there is some hold of: Peter is thy name, and strength and stability are with thee. Thou art not shaken with the waves of men's fluctuating opinions concerning me, but established in the present truth, *2 Pet. i. 12*. And, from the mention of this significant name, occasion is taken for this metaphor of building upon a rock. 1st. Some, by this rock, understand Peter himself as an apostle, the chief, though not the prince, of the twelve; senior among them, but not superior over them. The church is built "upon the foundation of the apostles," *Eph. ii. 20*. The first stones of that building were laid in and by their ministry; hence their names are said to be written in the foundations of the new Jerusalem, *Rev. xxi. 14*. Now Peter, being that apostle by whose hand the first stones of the church were laid, both in Jewish converts, *Acts ii.*, and in the Gentile converts, *Acts x.*, he might, in some sense, be said to be the rock on which it was built. Cephas was one that seemed to be a pillar, *Gal. ii. 9*. But it sounds very harsh to call a man that only lays the first stone of a building, which is a transient act, the foundation on which it is built, which is an abiding thing. Yet if it were so, this would not serve to support the pretensions of the bishop of Rome; for Peter had no such headship as he claims, much less could devise it to his successors, least of all to the bishops of Rome, who, whether they are so in place or no, is a question; but that they are not so in the truth of Christianity, is past all question. 2nd. Others, by this rock, understand "Christ." "Thou art Peter;" thou hast the name of a stone, but upon this rock, pointing to himself, "I will build my church;" perhaps he laid his hand on his breast, as when he said, "Destroy this temple," *Jno. ii. 19*, when he "spoke of the temple of his body." Then he took occasion from the temple where he was, so to speak of himself, and gave occasion to some to understand him of that: so here he took occasion from Peter to speak of himself as the rock, and gave occasion to some to misunderstand him of Peter. But this must be explained by those many Scriptures which speak of Christ as the only foundation of the church: see *1 Cor. iii. 11*; *1 Pet. ii. 6*. Christ is both its founder and its foundation: he draws souls, and he draws them to himself; to him they are united, and on him they rest, and have a constant dependence. 3rd. Others, by "this rock," understand this confession which Peter made of Christ; and this comes all to one with understanding it of Christ himself. It was a "good confession" which Peter "witnessed." "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God;" the rest concurred with him in it. Now, saith Christ, this is that great truth upon which I will build my church. 1. Take away this truth itself, and the universal church falls to the ground. If Christ be not the Son of God, Christianity is a cheat, and the church is a mere chimera; our preaching is vain, your faith is vain, and you are yet in your sins, *1 Cor. xv. 14, 17*. If Jesus be not the Christ, those that own him are not of the church, but deceivers, and deceived. 2. Take away the faith and confession of this truth from any particular church, and it ceaseth to be a part of Christ's church, and relapseth to the state and character of infidelity. This is *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*;—that article, with the admission or the denial of which the church either rises or falls; the main hinge on which the door of salvation turns: those who let go this, do not hold the foundation; and though they may call themselves Christians, they give themselves the lie; for the church is a sacred society, incorporated upon the certainty and assurance of this great truth—and great it is, and has prevailed.

2. Christ here promiseth to preserve and secure his church when it is built: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," neither against this truth, nor against the church which is built upon it. 1st. This implies that the church has enemies that fight against it, and endeavour its ruin and overthrow, here represented by the gates of hell, that is, the city of hell, which is directly opposite to this heavenly city, this "city of the living God," the devil's interest among the children of men. "The gates of hell" are the powers and policies of the devil's kingdom: the dragon's heads and horns, by which he makes war with

the Lamb; all that comes out of hell gates, has been hatched and contrived there. These fight against the church, by opposing gospel truths, corrupting gospel ordinances, persecuting good ministers and good Christians; drawing or driving, persuading by craft or forcing by cruelty, to that which is inconsistent with the purity of religion. This is the design of the gates of hell, to root out the name of Christianity, *Ps. lxxxiii. 4*, "to devour the man child," *Rev. xii. 4*, to raze this city to the ground. 2nd. This assures us that the enemies of the church shall not gain their point. While the world stands, Christ will have a church in it, in which his truths and ordinances shall be owned and kept up, in spite of all the opposition of the powers of darkness; "they shall not prevail against it," *Ps. cxxix. 1, 2*. This gives no security to any particular church, or church governors, that they shall never err, never apostatize, or be destroyed; but that, somewhere or other, the Christian religion shall have a being, though not always in the same degree of purity and splendour, yet so as that the entail of it shall never be quite cut off: the woman lives, though in a wilderness, *Rev. xiv. 12*; cast down, but not destroyed, *2 Cor. iv. 9*; as dying, and behold, we live, *2 Cor. vi. 9*: corruptions grieving, persecutions grievous, but neither fatal. The church may be foiled in particular encounters, but in the main battle it shall come off more than a conqueror: particular believers are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," *1 Pet. i. 5*.

Secondly. The other part of this character is to settle the order and government of the church, *ver. 19*. When a city or society is incorporated, officers are appointed, and empowered to act for the common good: a city without government is a chaos. Now this constituting of the government of the church is here expressed by the delivering of the keys, and with them a power to bind and loose. This is not to be understood of any peculiar power that Peter was invested with, as if he were sole doorkeeper of the kingdom of heaven, and had that key of David which belongs only to the son of David; no, this invests all the apostles and their successors with a ministerial power to guide and govern the church of Christ, as it exists in particular congregations or churches, according to the rules of the Gospel: *Claves regni celorum in B. Petro apostolo cuncti suscepimus sacerdotes*.—All we that are priests received, in the person of the blessed apostle Peter, the keys of the kingdom of heaven: so *Ambrose, de Dignit. Sacerd.*: only the keys were first put into Peter's hand, because he was the first that "opened the door of faith to the Gentiles," *Acts x. 28*. As the king, in giving a charter to a corporation, empowers the magistrates to hold courts in his name, to try matters of fact, and determine therein according to law, confirming what is so done regularly, as if done in any of the superior courts; so Christ, having incorporated his church, hath appointed the office of the ministry for the keeping up of order and government, and to see that his laws be duly observed: "I will give thee the keys." He doth not say he has given them, or doth now, but he will do it after his resurrection; when he ascended on high he gave those gifts, *Eph. iv. 8*. Then his power was actually given, not to Peter only, but to all the rest, *ch. xxviii. 19, 20*; *Jno. xx. 21*. He doth not say the keys shall be given, but, "I will give" them; for ministers derive their authority from Christ, and all their power is to be used in his name, *1 Cor. v. 4*. Now, 1. The power here delegated is a spiritual power; it is a power pertaining to the kingdom of heaven, that is, to the church, that part of it which is militant here on earth, to the gospel dispensation; that is it about which the apostolical and ministerial power is wholly conversant. It is not any civil, secular power that is hereby conveyed; Christ's "kingdom is not of this world." Their instructions afterwards were in "things pertaining to the kingdom of God," *Acts i. 3*. 2. It is the power of the keys that is given; alluding to the custom of investing men with authority in such a place, by delivering to them the keys of the place; or, as the master of the house gives the keys to the steward, the keys of the stores, where the provisions are kept, that he may give to every one in the house their portion of meat in due season, *Lu. xii. 42*; and deny it, as there is occasion, according to the rules of the family. Ministers are stewards, *1 Cor. iv. 1*; *Tit. i. 7*. Eliakim, that had the key of the house of David, was over the household, *Isa. xxii. 22*. 3. It is a power to bind and loose; that is, following the metaphor of the keys, to shut and open. Joseph, that was lord of Pharaoh's house, and steward of the stores, had power to bind his princes, and teach his senators wisdom, *Ps. cv. 21, 22*. When the stores and treasures of the house are shut up from any, they are bound: *Interdico tibi aqua et igne*.—I forbid thee the use of fire and water; when they are opened to them again, they are loosed from that bond, are discharged from the censure, and restored to their liberty. 4. It is a power which Christ has promised to own the due administration of, to ratify the sentences of his steward with his own approbation; it shall be "bound in heaven, and loosed in heaven." Not that Christ hath hereby obliged himself to confirm all church censures, right or wrong; but such as are duly passed according to the Word, *clave non errante*.—the key turning the right way, they are sealed in heaven; that is, the word of the Gospel, in the mouth of faithful ministers, is to be looked upon, not as the word of man, but as the Word of God, and to be received accordingly, *1 Thes. ii. 13*; *Jno. xiii. 20*. Now the keys of the kingdom of heaven are, 1st. The key of doctrine, called the key of knowledge: "Your business shall be to explain to the world the will of God, both as to truth and duty; and for this you shall have your commissions, credentials, and full instructions;" To bind and loose, in the common speech of the Jews at that time, signified to prohibit and permit: to teach or declare a thing to be unlawful, was to bind; to be lawful, was to loose. Now the apostles had an extraordinary power of this kind: some things forbidden by the law of Moses were now to be allowed, as the eating of such and such meats; some things allowed there, were now to be forbidden, as divorce; and the apostles were empowered to declare this to the world, and men might take it upon their words. When Peter was first taught himself, and then taught others, to call nothing common or unclean, this power was exercised. There is also an ordinary power hereby conveyed to all ministers to preach the Gospel as appointed officers, to tell people, in God's name, and according to the Scriptures, what is good, and "what the Lord requires of them;" and they who "declare the whole counsel of God," use these keys well, *Acts xx. 27*. Some make the giving of the keys to allude to the custom of the Jews in creating a doctor of the law, which was to put into his hand the keys of the chest where the book of the law was kept, noting his being authorized to take and read it; and the binding and loosing, to allude to the fashion about their books, which were in rolls: they shut them by binding them up with a string, which they untied when they opened them. Christ gives his apostles power to shut or open the book of the Gospel to people, as the case required: see the exercise of this power, *Acts xiii. 46*; *xviii. 6*. When ministers preach pardon and peace to the penitent, wrath and the curse to the impenitent, in Christ's name, they act then pursuant to this authority of binding and loosing. 2nd. The key of discipline, which is but the application of the former to particular persons, upon a right estimate of their characters and actions. It is not a legislative power that is hereby conferred, but judicial. The judge doth not make the law, but only declares what is the law; and upon an impartial inquiry into the merits of the cause, gives sentence accordingly: such is the power of the keys, wherever it is lodged, with reference to church membership, and the privileges thereof. First. Christ's ministers have a power to

our Lord asked Simon Peter the memorable question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" It was near here, in "a high mountain apart," that the transfiguration took place. "It lies in a triangular terrace 500 feet above the level of the plain beneath. At its innermost angle there issues a spring from the rock, which rises a full-grown stream. It is one of those springs which constitute a peculiar charm in Palestine scenery, welling up from the rock, and forming at once a full-grown river . . . The ruins of the once

famed city Cæsarea Philippi lie about this terrace; and about 1,000 feet above this place, at an hour's ride, is the great castle of Banias, Kalaat es Subeibeh, one of the most magnificent ruins in Syria." The junction of the two names, Cæsar and Philip, is readily accounted for. There was another Cæsarea on the Mediterranean, and to distinguish this from that it was called the Cæsarea of Philip. It does not appear that our Lord actually visited the city on the occasion here recorded.

admit into the church: 'Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them; those who profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him, admit them and their seed members of the church by baptism.' Ministers are to let in to the wedding feast those that are bidden, and to keep out such as are apparently unfit for so holy a communion. Secondly, They have a power to expel and cast out such as have forfeited their church membership, that is binding; refusing to unbelievers the application of gospel promises, and the seals of them; and declaring to such as appear to be "in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity," that they have "no part or lot in the matter," as Peter did to Simon Magus, though he had been baptized; and this is a binding over to the judgment of God. Thirdly, They have a power to restore, and to receive in again, upon their repentance, such as had been thrown out; to loose those whom they had bound; declaring to them, that if their repentance be sincere, the promise of pardon belongs to them. The apostles had a miraculous gift of discerning spirits; yet even they went by the rule of outward appearances, as *Acts* viii. 21; *1 Cor.* v. 1; *2 Cor.* ii. 7; *1 Tim.* i. 20; which ministers may still make a judgment upon, if they be skilful and faithful.

Lastly, Here is the charge which Christ gave his disciples to keep this private for the present, ver. 20; they must tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ; what they had professed to him they must not yet publish to the world, for several reasons: 1. Because this was the time of preparation for his kingdom. The great thing now preached was, that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand;" and therefore those things were now to be insisted on which were proper to make way for Christ, as the doctrine of repentance, not this great truth, in and with which the kingdom of heaven was to be actually set up. Every thing is beautiful in its season; and it is good advice, "Prepare thy work, and afterwards build," *Pr.* xxiv. 27. 2. Christ would have his messiahship proved by his works, and would rather they should testify of him than that his disciples should, because their testimony was but as his own, which he insisted not on; see *Jno.* v. 31, 34: he was so secure of the demonstration of his miracles, that he waived other witnesses, *Jno.* x. 25, 38. 3. If they had known that he was "Jesus the Christ," they "would not have crucified the Lord of glory," *1 Cor.* ii. 8. 4. Christ would not have the apostles preach this till they had the most convincing evidence ready to allege in confirmation of it. Great truths may suffer damage by being asserted before they can be sufficiently proved. Now the great proof of Jesus being the Christ was his resurrection; by that he was declared to be the Son of God with power; and therefore the Divine wisdom would not have this truth preached till that could be alleged for proof of it. 5. It was requisite that the preachers of so great a truth should be furnished with greater measures of the Spirit than the apostles as yet had; therefore the open asserting it was adjourned till the Spirit should be poured out upon them. But when Christ was glorified, and the Spirit poured out, we find Peter proclaiming upon the housetops what was here spoken in a corner, *Acts* ii. 36, that "God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ:" for as there is a time to keep silence, so there is a time to speak.

21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. 22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. 23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

We have here Christ's discourse with his disciples concerning his own sufferings, in which observe,

I. Christ's foretelling his sufferings. Now he began to do it, and from this time frequently spoke of them. Some hints he had already given of sufferings, as when he said, "Destroy this temple," when he spoke of the Son of man being lifted up; and of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; but now he began to shew it, to speak plainly and expressly of it. Hitherto he had not touched upon this, because the disciples were weak, and could not well bear the notice of a thing so very strange, and so very melancholy; but now they were more ripe in knowledge, and strong in faith, he began to tell them this. Note, Christ reveals his mind to his people gradually, and lets in light as they can bear it, and are fit to receive it. "From that time," when they had made that full confession of Christ, that he was the Son of God, then he began to shew them to him that has found them knowing in one truth, he taught them another; for to him that has, shall be given. Let them first be established in the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and then go on to perfection, *Heb.* vi. 1. If they had not been well grounded in the belief of Christ's being the Son of God, it would have been a great shaking to their faith. All truths are not to be spoken to all persons at all times, but such as are proper and suitable to the present state. Now observe,

First. What he foretold concerning his sufferings: the particulars and circumstances of them are all surprising. 1. The place where he should suffer. He must go to Jerusalem, the head city, the holy city, and suffer there. Though he lived most of his time in Galilee, he must die at Jerusalem: there all the sacrifices were offered; there, therefore, he must die who is the great sacrifice, *Zu.* xiii. 34. 2. The persons by whom he should suffer: "the elders, and chief priests, and scribes;" these made up the great Sanhedrim, which sat at Jerusalem, and was had in veneration by the people. Those that should have been most forward in owning and admiring Christ, were the most bitter in persecuting him. It was strange that men of knowledge in the Scripture, who professed to expect the Messiah's coming, and pretended to have something sacred in their character, should use him thus barbarously when he did come. It was the Roman power that condemned and crucified Christ; but he lays it at the door of the chief priests and scribes, who were the first movers. 3. What he should suffer. He must "suffer many things," and "be killed." His enemies' insatiable malice, and his own invincible patience, appears in the variety and multiplicity of his sufferings. He suffered many things; and in the extremity of them, nothing less than his death would satisfy them; he must be killed. The suffering of many things, if not unto death, is more tolerable; for while there is life, there is hope; and death without such prefaces would be less terrible: but he must first suffer many things, and then be killed. 4. What should be the happy issue of all his sufferings. He shall be "raised again the third day."

xvi. 17. Simon Bar-jona is a Syriac form of the words elsewhere given in the Greek as "Simon, son of Jonas" (*John* xxi. 15-17).

xvi. 18, 19. Upon this passage an immense amount of literary labour has been expended, and gigantic claims have been founded. The Church of Rome, assuming that Peter was the first pope, and that all popes have the same privileges as he is supposed to have had, undauntedly our Lord as saying in effect, "Upon thee and upon thy successors I will build my church," &c. But Jesus said nothing

As the prophets, so Christ himself, when he testified beforehand his sufferings, testified withal the glory that should follow, *1 Pet.* i. 11. His rising again the third day proved him to be the Son of God, notwithstanding his sufferings; and therefore he mentions that to keep up their faith. When he spoke of the cross and the shame, he spoke in the same breath of the joy set before him; in the prospect of which he "endured the cross, and despised the shame." Thus we must look upon Christ's sufferings for us—see his suffering the way to his glory; and thus we must look upon our suffering for Christ—look through it to the recompense of reward: "if we suffer with him, we shall reign with him."

Secondly, Why he foretold his sufferings. 1. To shew that they were the product of an eternal counsel and consent; were agreed upon between the Father and the Son from eternity: "thus it behoved Christ to suffer." The matter was settled in the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge," in pursuance of his own voluntary susception and undertaking for our salvation: his sufferings were no surprise to him, did not come upon him as a snare, but he had a distinct and certain foresight of them, which greatly magnifies his love, *Jno.* xviii. 4. 2. To rectify the mistakes of his disciples concerning the external pomp and power of his kingdom, which they had imbibed the notion of. Believing him to be the Messiah, they counted upon nothing but dignity and authority in the world: but here Christ reads them another lesson; tells them of the cross and sufferings; nay, and that the chief priests and elders, whom it is likely they expected to be the supports of the Messiah's kingdom, should be the great enemies and persecutors of it. This would give them quite another idea of that kingdom which they themselves had preached the approach of: and it was requisite this mistake should be rectified. Those that follow Christ must be dealt plainly with, and warned not to expect great things in this world. 3. It was to prepare them for the share, at least of sorrow and fear, which they must have in his sufferings: when he suffered many things, the disciples could not but suffer some; and if their Master be killed, they will be ill frightened. Let them know it before, that they may provide accordingly; and being forewarned, may be fore-armed.

III. The offence which Peter took at this. He said; "Be it far from thee, Lord," and, it is likely, spoke the sense of the rest of the disciples, as before, for he was chief speaker. "He took him, and began to rebuke him." Perhaps Peter was a little elevated with the great things Christ had now said to him, which made him more bold with Christ than did become him; so hard is it to keep the spirit low and humble in the midst of great advancements.

First. It did not become Peter to contradict his Master, or take upon him to advise him. He might have wished that, if it were possible, this cup might pass away, without saying so peremptorily, "This shall not be," when Christ had said, "It must be." Shall any teach God knowledge? He that reproveth God, let him answer it. Note, When God's dispensations are either intricate or cross to us, it becomes us silently to acquiesce in, and not to prescribe to, the Divine will. God knows what he has to do, without our teaching; unless we know the mind of the Lord, it is not for us to be his counsellors, *Rom.* xi. 34.

Secondly. It savoured much of fleshly wisdom for him to appear so warmly against suffering, and to startle thus at the offence of the cross: it is the corrupt part of us that is thus solicitous to sleep in a whole skin. We are apt to look upon sufferings as they relate to this present life, to which they are uneasy; but there are other rules to measure them by, which, if duly observed, will enable us to make nothing of them, *Rom.* viii. 18. See how passionately Peter speaks: "Be it far from thee, Lord;" "God forbid that thou shouldst suffer and be killed; we cannot bear the thoughts of it;" "Master, spare thyself;" it might be read; *Ἰησοῦ σὺ, Κύριε*,—"Be merciful to thyself, and then no one else can be cruel to thee; pity thyself, and then this shall not be to thee." He would have Christ to dread suffering as much as he did: but we mistake if we measure Christ's love and patience by our own. He intimates likewise the improbability of the thing, humanly speaking: "This shall not be unto thee;" "It is impossible that one who hath so great an interest in the people as thou hast, should be crushed by the elders, who fear the people. This can never be. We, that have followed thee, will fight for thee, if occasion be; and there are thousands that will stand by us."

III. Christ's displeasure against Peter for this suggestion of his, ver. 23. We do not read of any thing said or done by any of his disciples, at any time, that he resented so very ill as this here, though they often offended. Observe,

First. How he expressed his displeasure: he turned upon Peter, and, we may suppose, with a frown said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." He did not so much as take time to deliberate upon it, but gave an immediate reply to his temptation, which was such as made it to appear how heinously he took it. Just now he had said, "Blessed art thou, Simon," and had even laid him in his bosom; but here, "Get thee behind me, Satan;" and there was cause for both. Note, A good man may, by a surprise of temptation, soon grow very unlike himself. He answered him as he did Satan himself, *ch.* iv. 10. Note, 1. It is the subtlety of Satan to send temptations to us by the unsuspected hands of our best and dearest friends: thus he assaulted Adam by Eve; Job by his wife; and here Christ by his beloved Peter. It concerns us therefore not to be ignorant of his devices, but to stand against his wiles and depths, by standing always upon our guard against sin, whoever moves us to it. Even the kindnesses of our friends are often abused by Satan, and made use of as temptations to us. 2. Those who have their spiritual senses exercised, will be aware of the voice of Satan, even in a friend, a disciple, a minister that dissuades them from their duty: we must not regard who speaks, so much as what is spoken; we should learn to know the devil's voice when he speaks in a saint, as well as when he speaks in a serpent. Whoever takes us off from that which is good, and would have us afraid of doing too much for God, speaks Satan's language. 3. We must be free and faithful in reproving the dearest friend we have, that saith or doth amiss, though it may be under colour of kindness to us. We must not compliment, but rebuke, mistaken courtesies: faithful are the wounds of a friend; such smitings must be accounted kindnesses, *Ps.* cxli. 5. 4. Whatever appears to be a temptation to sin must be resisted with abhorrence, and not parleyed with.

Secondly. What was the ground of this displeasure; why did Christ thus resent a motion that seemed not only harmless, but kind? Two reasons are given.

First. "Thou art an offence to me," *Σκάνδαλον μου εἶ*, "Thou art my hindrance; so it may be read; 'Thou standest in my way.' Christ was hastening on in the work of our salvation; and his heart was so much upon it, that he took it ill to be hindered, or tempted to start back, from the hardest and most discouraging part of his undertaking: so strongly was he engaged for our redemption, that they who but indirectly endeavoured to divert him from it, touched him in a very tender and sensitive part. Peter was not so sharply reproved for disowning and denying his Master in his sufferings, as he was for dissuading him from them; though that was the defect, this the excess of kindness. It argues a very great firmness and resolution of mind in any business, when it is an offence to be dissuaded, and a man will not endure to hear any thing to the contrary, like that of Ruth, "Entreat me not to leave thee." Note, Our Lord Jesus preferred our salvation before his own ease and safety; for "even Christ pleased not himself," *Rom.* xv. 3: he came into the world not to spare himself,

about Rome, nothing about Peter's successors, nor even "Upon thee," but "Upon this rock I will build my church." There is nothing in the New Testament to indicate that Peter was the foundation of the Church of Christ, though as one of its founders he is recognised in *Rev.* xxi. 14, as generally interpreted. Even that, however, is open to question, because the names of the apostles are on the foundations of the city wall, and not on those of the city itself. The phrase "the gates of hades," rendered "the gates of

as Peter advised, but to spend himself. See why he called Peter "Satan" when he suggested this to him: because whatever stood in the way of our salvation, he looked upon as coming from the devil, who is a sworn enemy to it. The same Satan that afterwards entered into Judas maliciously, to destroy him in his undertaking, here prompted Peter plausibly to divert him from it: thus he changes himself into an angel of light. "Thou art an offence unto me." Note, 1. Those that engage in any great and good work, must expect to meet with hindrance and opposition, from friends and foes, from within and from without. 2. Those that obstruct our progress in any duty, must be looked upon as "an offence to us;" then we do the will of God, as Christ did, whose meat and drink it was to do it, when it is a trouble to us to be solicited from our duty. Those that hinder us from doing or suffering for God, when we are called to it, whatever they are in other things, in that they are Satans, adversaries to us.

Secondly, "Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Note, 1. The things that be of God, that is, the concerns of his will and glory, do often clash and interfere with the things that be of men, that is, with our own wealth, pleasure, and reputation; while we mind Christian duty as our way and work, and the Divine favour as our end and portion, we savour the things of God; but if these be minded, the flesh must be denied, hazards must be run, and hardships borne; and here is the trial which of the two we savour. 2. Those that inordinately fear and industriously decline suffering for Christ, when they are called to it, savour more of the things of man, than of the things of God; they relish those things more themselves, and make it appear to others that they do so.

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. 28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Christ having shewed his disciples that he must suffer, and that he was ready and willing to suffer, here shews them that they must suffer too, and must be ready and willing to it: it is a weighty discourse that we have in these verses.

1. Here is the law of discipleship laid down, and the terms fixed upon which we may have the honour and benefit of it, ver. 24; he said this to his disciples, not only that they might instruct others concerning it, but that by this rule they might examine their own sincerity. Observe,

First. What it is to be a disciple of Christ: it is to come after him. When Christ called disciples, this was the word of command, "Follow me." A true disciple of Christ is one that doth follow him in duty, and shall follow him to glory; he is one that comes after Christ, not one that prescribes to him, as Peter now undertook to do, forgetting his place; a disciple of Christ comes after him as the sheep after the shepherd; the servant after his master; the soldiers after their captain; he is one that aims at the same end that Christ aimed at, the glory of God, and the glory of Heaven; and one that walks in the same way that he walked in; is led by his spirit; treads in his steps; submits to his conduct; and "follows the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," Rev. xiv. 4.

Secondly. What are the great things required of those that will be Christ's disciples. If any man will come; *Εἰ τις θέλει*.—"If any man be willing" to come: it notes a deliberate choice, and cheerfulness, and resolution in that choice. Many are disciples more by chance, or the will of others, than by any act of their own will; but Christ will have his people volunteers, Ps. cx. 3; it is as if Christ had said, If any of the people, that are not my disciples, be steadfastly minded to come to me, and if you that are, be in like manner minded to stick to me, it is upon these terms, these and no other; you must follow me in sufferings, as well as in other things; and therefore when you sit down to count the cost, reckon upon it.

Now what are these terms? 1. Let him deny himself. Peter had advised Christ to spare himself, and would be ready in the like case to take the advice; but Christ tells them all, they must be so far from sparing themselves, that they must deny themselves. Herein they must come after Christ; for his birth, and life, and death, were all a continued act of self-denial, a self-emptying, Phil. ii. 7, 8. If self-denial be a hard lesson, and against the grain, to flesh and blood, it is no more than what our Master learned and practised before us, and for us, both for our redemption and for our instruction; and "the servant is not above his Lord." Note, All the disciples and followers of Jesus Christ must deny themselves. It is the fundamental law of admission into Christ's school, and the first and great lesson to be learned in his school, to deny ourselves; it is both the strait gate and the narrow way; it is necessary in order to our learning all the other good lessons that are there taught. We must deny ourselves absolutely: we must not admire our own shadow, nor gratify our own humour; we must not lean to our own understanding, nor seek our own things, nor be our own end. We must deny ourselves comparatively: we must deny ourselves for Christ, and his will, and glory, and the service of his interest in the world; we must deny ourselves for our brethren, and for their good; and we must deny ourselves for ourselves: deny the appetites of the body for the benefit of the soul. 2. Let him take up his cross. The cross is here put for all sufferings, as men or Christians; providential afflictions; persecutions for righteousness' sake; every trouble that befalls us, either for doing well or for doing ill. The troubles of Christians are fitly called crosses, in allusion to the death of the cross, which Christ was obedient to; and it should reconcile us to troubles, and take off the terror of them, that they are what we bear in common with Christ, and such as he hath borne before us. Note, 1st. Every disciple of Christ hath his cross, and must count upon it; as each hath his special duty to be done, so each hath his special trouble to be borne, and every one feels most from his own burthen. Crosses are the common lot of God's children, but in this common lot each hath his particular share: that is our cross which Infinite Wisdom hath appointed for us, and a Sovereign

Providence has laid on us, as fittest for us. It is good for us to call the cross we are under our own, and entertain it accordingly: we are apt to think we could bear such an one's cross better than our own; but that is best which is, and we ought to make the best of it. 2nd. Every disciple of Christ must take up that which the wise God hath made his cross: it is an allusion to the Roman custom of compelling those that were condemned to be crucified to carry their cross; when Simon carried Christ's cross after him this phrase was illustrated.

First. It is supposed that the cross lies in our way, and is prepared for us; we must not make crosses to ourselves, but must accommodate ourselves to those which God has made for us. Our rule is, not to go a step out of the way of duty, either to meet a cross, or to miss one: we must not by our rashness and indiscretion null crosses down upon our heads, but must take them up when they are laid in our way; we must so manage an affliction, as that it may not be a stumblingblock or hindrance to us in any service we have to do for God; we must take it up out of our way, by getting over the offence of the cross; "None of these things move me;" and we must then go on with it in our way, though it lie heavy. Secondly. That which we have to do is not only to bear the cross—that a stock, or a stone, or a stick may do,—not only to be silent under it; but we must take up the cross, must improve it to some good advantage; not say, 'This is an evil, and I must bear it, because I cannot help it; but, 'This is an evil, and I will bear it, because it shall work for my good.' When we rejoice in our afflictions, and glory in them, then we take up the cross. This fitsly follows upon denying ourselves; for he that will not deny himself the pleasures of sin, and the advantages of this world, for Christ, when it comes to the push will never have the heart to take up his cross. "He that cannot take up a resolution to live a saint, has a demonstration within himself that he is never like to die a martyr;" so Archbishop Tillotson. 3. Let him follow me in this particular of taking up the cross. Suffering saints must look unto Jesus, and take from him both direction and encouragement in suffering. Do we bear the cross; we therein follow Christ, who bears it before us, bears it for us, and so bears it off us: he bore the heavy end of the cross, the end that had the curse upon it, (that was a heavy end), and so made the other light and easy for us. Or, we may take it in general: we must follow Christ in all instances of holiness and obedience. Note, The disciples of Christ must study to imitate their Master, and conform themselves in every thing to his example, and continue in well-doing, whatever crosses lie in their way. To do well, and to suffer ill, is to follow Christ: "If any man will come after me, let him follow me;" that seems to be *idem per idem*,—"the same thing over again." What is the difference? Surely it is this: 'If any man will come after me in profession, and so have the name and credit of a disciple, let him follow me in truth, and so do the work and duty of a disciple.' Or thus: 'If any man will set out after me in good beginning, let him continue to follow me with all perseverance;' that is, following the Lord fully, as Caleb did. Those that come after Christ must fulfil after him.

II. Here are arguments to persuade us to submit to these laws, and come up to these terms. Self-denial and patient suffering are hard lessons, which will never be learned, if we consult with flesh and blood; let us therefore consult with our Lord Jesus, and see what advice he will give us. And here he gives us,

First. Some considerations proper to engage us to these duties of self-denial and suffering for Christ. Consider, 1. The weight of that eternity which depends upon our present choice, ver. 25: "Whosoever shall save his life," by denying Christ, "shall lose it;" and whosoever is content to "lose his life," for owning Christ, "shall find it." Here is life and death, good and evil, the blessing and the curse, set before us. Observe, 1st. The misery that attends the most plausible apostasy. Whosoever will save his life in this world, if it be by sin, he shall lose it in another; he that forsakes Christ to preserve a temporal life, and avoid a temporal death, will certainly come short of eternal life, and will be hurt by the second death, and eternally held by it. There cannot be a fairer pretence for apostasy and iniquity than saving the life by it, so cogent is the law of self-preservation; and yet even that is folly, for it will prove in the end self-destruction. The life saved is but for a moment, the death shunned is but a sleep; but the life lost is everlasting; and the death run upon, is the depth and complement of all misery, and an endless separation from all good. Now let any rational man consider of it, take advice, and speak his mind, whether there is any thing got at long run by apostasy, though a man save his estate, preferment, or life by it. 2nd. The advantage that attends the most perilous and expensive constancy. Whosoever will lose his life for Christ's sake, in this world, shall find it in a better, infinitely to his advantage. Note, First. There is many a life lost for Christ's sake, in doing work, by labouring fervently for his name; in suffering work, by choosing rather to die, than to deny him, or his truths and ways. Christ's holy religion is handed down to us sealed with the blood of thousands, that have not known their own souls, but have despised their lives, (as Job speaks in another case,) though very valuable ones, when they have stood in competition with their duty, and the testimony of Jesus, Rev. xx. 4. Secondly. Though many have been losers for Christ, even of life itself, yet never any one was or will be a loser by him in the end. The loss of other comforts for Christ may possibly be made up in this world, Mar. x. 30; the loss of life cannot, but it shall be made up in the other world, in an eternal life; the believing prospect of which hath been the great support of suffering saints in all ages: an assurance of the life they should find, in lieu of the life they hazarded, hath enabled them to triumph over death in all its terrors, to go smiling to a scaffold, and stand singing at a stake, and to call the utmost instances of their enemies' rage but a light affliction. 2. The worth of the soul, which lies at stake; and the worthlessness of the world, in comparison of it, ver. 26: "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul," *τινὸς ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ*; the same word which is translated, 'his life,' ver. 25: for the soul is the life, Gen. ii. 7. This alludes to that common principle, that whatever a man gets, if he lose his life, it will do him no good, he cannot enjoy his gains. But it looks higher, and speaks of the soul as immortal, and a loss of it beyond death, which cannot be compensated by the gain of the whole world. Note, 1st. Every man has a soul of his own. The soul is the spiritual and immortal part of man, which thinketh and reasoneth, has a power of reflection and prospect, which acts in the body now, and will shortly act in a separation from the body. Our souls are our own, not in respect of dominion and propriety, for we are not our own: "All souls are mine," saith God; but in respect of nearness and concern, our souls are our own, for they are ourselves. 2nd. It is possible the soul may be lost, and there is danger of it. The soul is lost when it is eternally separated from all the good, to all the evil, that a soul is capable of; when it dies, as a soul can die, when it is separated from the favour of God, and sunk under his wrath and curse. A man is never undone till he is in hell. 3rd. If the soul be lost, it is of the sinner's own losing. The man loseth his own soul, for he doth that which is certainly destroying to it, and neglects that which alone would be saving, Hos. xiii. 9; the sinner dies, because he will die; his blood is on his own head. 4th. One soul is worth more than all the world; our own souls that we have, are of greater value to us than all the wealth, honour, and pleasures of this present time, if we had it. Here is the whole world set in the scale against one soul,

hell, 'is one which is used by the Greeks to signify death, or the transition from the seen to the unsen world. The Hebrew synonym occurs in Isa. xxxviii. 10, where it is rendered "the gates of the grave." The declaration in this place may fairly be taken as the equivalent of our Lord's saying in John x. 27, 28, where he declares that his sheep shall never perish. The words "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" must mean the administrative authority of the heavenly kingdom; they cannot mean that Peter received

authority to admit to and exclude from heaven, and to shut up in hell, all who were received and rejected, saved and lost. Such a construction takes Peter out of the sphere of humanity at once, and implies authority and endowments which are truly divine. There are those who seem to see no limits to the powers here conferred upon Peter; but they forget that a limit must be imposed by human nature itself, or it must cease to be human nature. Those who demand so much for Peter, and claim the same for the bishops of

and Tekel written upon it; it is weighed in the balance, and found too light to weigh it down. This is Christ's judgment upon the matter, and he is a competent judge; he had reason to know the price of souls, for he redeemed them, nor would he underrate the world, for he made it. 5th. The winning of the world is often times the losing of the soul. Many an one has ruined his eternal interest by his preposterous and inordinate care to secure and advance his temporal ones. It is the love of the world, and the eager pursuit of it, that drowns men in destruction and perdition. 6th. The loss of the soul is so great a loss, that the gain of the whole world will not countervail it, or make it up. He that loses his soul, though it be to gain the world, makes a very bad bargain for himself, and will sit down at last an unspeakable loser. When he comes to balance the account, and to compare the profit and loss, he will find, that instead of the advantage he promised himself, he is ruined to all intents and purposes, is irreparably broken. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Note, If once the soul be lost, it is lost for ever. There is no ἀντάλλαγμα, no counterprice that can be paid, or will be accepted. It is a loss, that never can be repaid, never be retrieved. If, after that great price which Christ laid down to redeem our souls, and to restore us to the possession of them, they be so neglected for the world, as that they come to be lost, that new mortgage will never be taken off, there remains no more sacrifices for sins, nor price for souls, but the equity of redemption is eternally precluded; therefore, it is good to be wise in time, and do well for ourselves.

Secondly. Here are some considerations proper to encourage us in self-denial and suffering for Christ.

1. The assurance we have of Christ's glory at his second coming to judge the world, ver. 27. If we look to the end of all these things, the period of the world, and the posture of souls then, we shall from thence form a very different idea of the present state of things. If we see things as they will appear then, we shall see them as they should appear now. The great encouragement to steadfastness in religion, is taken from the second coming of Christ, considering it, 1st. As his honour. "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels." To look upon Christ in his state of humiliation, so abused, so abused, a reproach of men, and despised of the people, would discourage his followers from taking any pains, or running any hazards for him; but, with an eye of faith, to see the Captain of our salvation coming in his glory, in all the pomp and power of the upper world, will animate us, and make us think nothing too much to do, or too hard to suffer for him. "The Son of man shall come." He here gives himself the title of his humble state, he is the Son of man, to shew that he is not ashamed to own it. His first coming, was in the meanness of his children, who being partakers of flesh, he took part of the same; but his second coming will be in the glory of his Father. In his first coming he was attended with poor disciples; in his second coming he will be attended with glorious angels; and if we suffer with him, we shall be "glorified with him," 2 Tim. ii. 12. 2nd. As our concern. Then "he shall reward every man according to his works." Observe, First. Jesus Christ will come as a judge, to dispense rewards and punishments, infinitely exceeding the greatest that any earthly potentate has the dispensing of. The terror of man's tribunal, ch. x. 13, will be taken off by a believing prospect of the glory of Christ's tribunal. Secondly. Men will then be rewarded, not according to their gains in this world, but according to their works, according to what they were, and did. In that day, the treachery of backsliders will be punished with eternal destruction; and the constancy of faithful souls recompensed with a crown of life. Thirdly. The best preparative for that day, is to deny ourselves, and take up our cross, and follow Christ; for so we shall make the judge our friend; and these things will then pass well in the account. Fourthly. The rewarding of men according to their works is deferred till "that day." Here good and evil seem to be dispensed promiscuously; we see not apostasy punished with immediate strokes, nor fidelity encouraged with immediate smiles from Heaven; but in that day all will be set to rights; therefore, judge nothing before the time, 2 Tim. iv. 6—8.

2. The near approach of his kingdom in this world, ver. 28: it was so near, that there were some attending him that should live to see it. As Simeon was assured that he should not "see death till he had seen the Lord's Christ" come in the flesh; so some are assured that they shall not taste death, (death is a sensible thing, its terrors are seen, its bitterness is tasted,) till they have seen the Lord's Christ coming in his kingdom. At the end of time he shall come in his Father's glory, but now in the fulness of time he was to come in his own kingdom, his mediatorial kingdom. Some little specimen was given of his glory a few days after this in his transfiguration, ch. xvii. 1; then he tried his robes. But this points at Christ's coming, by the pouring out of his Spirit, the planting of the gospel church, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the taking away of the place and nation of the Jews, who were the most bitter enemies to Christianity. Here was the Son of man coming in his kingdom. Many then present lived to see it, particularly John, who lived till after the destruction of Jerusalem, and saw Christianity planted in the world. Let this encourage then the followers of Christ to suffer for him. 1st. That their undertaking shall be succeeded; the apostles were employed in setting up Christ's kingdom; let them know for their comfort, that whatever opposition they meet with, yet they should carry their point, should see of the travail of their soul. Note, It is a great encouragement to suffering saints to be assured, not only of the safety but of the advancement of Christ's kingdom among men; not only notwithstanding their sufferings, but by their sufferings. A believing prospect of the success of the kingdom of grace, as well as of our share in the kingdom of glory, may carry us cheerfully through our sufferings. 2nd. That their cause shall be pleaded, their deaths shall be revenged, and their persecutors reckoned with. 3rd. That this shall be done shortly, in the present age. Note, The nearer the church's deliverances are, the more cheerful should we be in our sufferings for Christ. "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door." It is spoken as a favour to those that should survive the present cloudy time, that they should see better days. Note, It is desirable to share with the church in her joys, Dan. xii. 12. Observe, Christ saith, some shall live to see those glorious days, not all; some shall enter into the promised land, but others shall fall in the wilderness. He doth not tell them who should live to see th' kingdom, lest if they had known, they should have put off the thoughts of dying, but some of them shall; "Behold, the Lord is at hand." "The Judge standeth before the door;" be patient therefore, brethren.

CHAPTER XVII.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ, in his pomp and glory, transfigured, ver. 1—13. II. Christ, in his power and grace, casting the devil out of a child, ver. 14—21. And, III. Christ, in his poverty and great humiliation, 1. Foretelling his own sufferings, ver. 22, 23. 2. Paying tribute, ver. 24—27; so that here is Christ, the brightness of his Father's glory, by himself, purging our sins, paying our debts, and destroying for us him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. Thus were the several indications of Christ's gracious intentions admirably interwoven.

Rome, overlook the fact that what is here given to Peter is given him absolutely, with no intimation that he would lose it all at death, or that he was merely the first of a series of men who could possess it. In what follows attention must be paid to the neuter gender, which is adopted, "whatever thou shalt bind shall be bound," and "whatever thou shalt loose shall be loosed." Although this is usually understood of persons, we may fairly object to such a limitation. Hence the words "whatever thou shalt bind" may not mean



ND after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, behold,

there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. 4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. 7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. 8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. 9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead. 10 And his disciples asked him saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? 11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. 12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. 13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

We have here the story of Christ's transfiguration. He had said that the Son of man should shortly come in his kingdom, to which promise all the three evangelists industriously connect this story, as if Christ's transfiguration were intended for a specimen and an earnest of the kingdom of Christ, and of that light and love of his, which therein appears to his select and sanctified ones. Peter speaks of this as the power and coming of our Lord Jesus, 2 Pet. i. 16, because it was an emanation of his power, and a previous notice of his coming, which it was fit should be introduced by such proper prefaces. When Christ was here in his humiliation, though his state for the main was a state of abasement and affliction, yet there were some glimpses of his glory intermixed, that he himself might be the more encouraged in his sufferings, and others the less offended. His birth, his baptism, his temptation, and his death, were the most remarkable instances of his humiliation; and these were each of them attended with some signal points of glory, and the smiles of Heaven. But the series of his public ministry being a continued humiliation, here, just in the midst of that, comes in this discovery of his glory. As now he is in heaven he has his condescensions, so when he was on earth he had his advancements. Now concerning Christ's transfiguration, observe,

I. The circumstances of it, which are here noted, ver. 1. First. The time: six days after he had had that solemn conference with his disciples, ch. xvi. 21. St. Luke saith, it was about eight days after, six whole days intervening, and this, the eighth day, that day seven-night. Nothing is recorded to be said or done by our Lord Jesus, for six days before his transfiguration; thus before some great appearances, "there was a silence in heaven for the space of half an hour," Rev. viii. 1. Then, when Christ seems to be doing nothing for his church, expect ere long something more than ordinary.

Secondly. The place: it was on the top of a high mountain apart. Christ chose a mountain. 1. As a secret place: he went apart; for though a city upon a hill can scarcely be hid; two or three persons upon a hill can hardly be found; therefore their private oratories were commonly on mountains. Christ chose a retired place to be transfigured in, because his appearing publicly in his glory was not agreeable to his present state, and thus he would shew his humility, and teach us, that privacy doth much befriend our communion with God. Those that would maintain an intercourse with Heaven, must frequently withdraw from the converse and business of this world, and they will find themselves never less alone than when alone, for the Father is with them. 2. Though a sublime place, elevated above things below. Note, Those that would have a transforming fellowship with God, must not only retire, but ascend; lift up their hearts, and seek things above. The call is, "Come up hither," Rev. vi. 1.

"whomsoever thou shalt exclude from the Church;" and the subsequent words, "whatever thou shalt loose," may not mean "whomsoever thou shalt admit to, or retain within the Church." And as to the words "bind" and "loose," we must not take for granted that they denote to exclude and to admit; to withhold pardon, and to grant pardon, &c. The wonderful ingenuity of the advocates of papal and priestly power has been now here more active than in discussing this text, the general sense of which ought to be traced by

Thirdly. The witnesses of it: "He took with him Peter, and James, and John." 1. He took three, a competent number, to testify what they should see; for out of the "mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." Christ makes his appearances certain enough, but not too common, not to all the people, but to witnesses, *Acts x. 41*, that they might be blessed who have not seen, and yet they have believed. 2. He took these three, because they were the chief of his disciples—the first three of the worthies of the son of David; probably they excelled in gifts and graces. They were Christ's favourites, singled out to be the witnesses of his retirements: they were present when he raised the damsel to life, *Mar. v. 37*; they were afterwards to be the witnesses of his agony, and this was to prepare them for that. Note, A sight of Christ's glory, while we are here in this world, is a good preparative for our sufferings with him, as these are preparatives for the sight of his glory in the other world. Paul, that had abundance of trouble, had abundance of revelations.

II. The manner of it, ver. 2: "He was transfigured before them." The substance of his body remained the same, but the accidents and appearances of it were greatly altered: he was not turned into a spirit; but his body, which had appeared in weakness and dishonour, now appeared in power and glory. "He was transfigured," μεταμορφώθη—he was metamorphosed. The profane poets amused and abused the world with idle extravagant stories of metamorphoses, especially the metamorphoses of their gods, and such as were disparaging and diminishing to them, which were equally false and ridiculous. To these some think Peter has an eye, when, being about to mention this transfiguration of Christ, he saith, "we have not followed cunningly devised fables," when we "made it known unto you," *2 Pet. i. 14*. Christ was both God and man; but in the days of his flesh he took on him the form of a servant, *μορφή δούλου*, *Phil. ii. 7*; he drew a veil over the glory of his godhead; but now, in his transfiguration, he put by that veil, appeared *ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ*,—in the form of God, *Phil. ii. 6*; gave his disciples a glimpse of his glory, which could not but change his form. The great truth which we declare is, that "God is light," *1 Jno. i. 5*; dwells in light, *1 Tim. vi. 16*; covers himself with light, *Ps. civ. 2*; and therefore, when Christ would appear in the form of God, he appeared in light, the most glorious of all visible beings, the firstborn of the creation, and most nearly resembling the Eternal Parent. Christ is the light; while he was in the world, he shined in darkness; and therefore the world knew him not, *Jno. i. 5, 10*. But at this time, that "light shined out of the darkness."

Now his transfiguration appeared in two things:

First. "His face did shine as the sun." The face is the principal part of the body by which we are known; therefore such a brightness was put on Christ's face, that face which afterwards he hid not from shame and spitting. It shone as the sun when it goes forth in its strength—so clear, so bright—for he is the Sun of Righteousness, the light of the world. The face of Moses shone but as the moon, with a borrowed, reflected light; but Christ's shone as the sun, with an innate, inherent light, which was the more sensibly glorious because it suddenly broke out as it were from behind a black cloud. Secondly, "His raiment was white as the light." All his body was altered, as his face was; so that beams of light, darting from every part through his clothes, made them white and glittering. The shining of the face of Moses was so weak that it could easily be concealed by a thin veil; but such was the glory of Christ's body, that his clothes were enlightened by it.

III. The companions of it. He will come at last, "with ten thousands of his saints;" and, as a specimen of that, there now appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with him, ver. 3. Observe, 1. There were glorified saints attending him, that when there were three to bear record on earth—Peter, James, and John, there might be some to bear record from heaven too. Thus here was a lively resemblance of Christ's kingdom, which is made up of saints in heaven and saints on earth, and to which belong "the spirits of just men made perfect." We see here that they which are fallen asleep in Christ are not perished, but do exist in a separate state, and shall be forthcoming when there is occasion. 2. These two were "Moses and Elias," men very eminent in their day; they had both fasted forty days and forty nights, as Christ did, and wrought other miracles, and were both remarkable at their going out of the world, as well as in their living in the world. Elias was carried to heaven in a fiery chariot, and died not: the body of Moses was never found; possibly it was preserved from corruption, and reserved for this appearance. The Jews had great respect for the memory of Moses and Elias; and therefore they came to witness of him, they came to carry tidings concerning him to the upper world. In them the law and the prophets did honour to Christ, and bore testimony to him. Moses and Elias appeared to the disciples: they saw them, and heard them talk; and either by their discourse, or by information from Christ, they knew them to be Moses and Elias: glorified saints shall know one another in heaven. They talked with Christ. Note, Christ has communion with the blessed, and will be no stranger to any of the members of that glorified corporation. Christ was now to be sealed in his prophetic office; and therefore these two great prophets were fittest to attend him, as transferring all their honour and interest to him, for "in these last days God speaks to us by his Son," *Heb. i. 1*.

IV. The great pleasure and satisfaction that the disciples took in the sight of Christ's glory. Peter, as usual, spoke for the rest: "Lord, it is good for us to be here." Peter here expresses,

First. The delight they had in this converse: "Lord, it is good for us to be here." Though upon "a high mountain," which we may suppose rough and unpleasant, bleak and cold, yet "it is good to be here." He speaks the sense of his fellow disciples; it is not only good for me, but good for us. He did not covet to monopolize this favour, but gladly takes them in. He saith this to Christ. Pious and devout affections love to pour out themselves before the Lord Jesus. The soul that loves Christ, and loves to be with him, loves to go and tell him so. "Lord, it is good for us to be here." This intimates a thankful acknowledgment of his kindness in admitting them to this favour. Note, Communion with Christ is the delight of Christians; all the disciples of the Lord Jesus reckon it is good for them to be with him in the holy mount; it is good to be here, where Christ is, and brings us along with him by his appointment; it is good to be here, retired and alone with Christ; to be here, where we may behold the beauty of the Lord Jesus, *Ps. xxvii. 4*. It is pleasant to hear Christ compare notes with Moses and the prophets—to see how all the institutions of the law, and all the predictions of the prophets, pointed at Christ, and were fulfilled in him.

Secondly. The desire they had of the continuance of it: "Let us make here three tabernacles." There was in this, as in many other of Peter's sayings, a mixture of weakness and of good will, more zeal than discretion. 1. Here was a zeal for this converse with heavenly things, a laudable complacency in the sight they had of Christ's glory. Note, Those that by faith behold the beauty of the Lord in his house, cannot but desire to dwell there all the days of their life. It is good having a nail in God's holy place, *Ez. ix. 8*; a constant abode; to be in holy ordinances, as a man at home, not as a wayfaring man. Peter thought this mountain was a fine spot of ground to build upon; and he was for making tabernacles there, as Moses in the wilderness made a tabernacle for the Shechinah or Divine glory. It argued great respect for his Master and

the heavenly guests, with some commendable forgetfulness of himself and his fellow disciples, that he would have tabernacles for Christ, and Moses, and Elias, but none for himself. He would be content to lie in the open air, on the cold ground, in such good company; if his Master have but where to lay his head, no matter whether he himself has or not. 2. Yet in this zeal he betrayed a great deal of weakness and ignorance. What need had Moses and Elias of tabernacles? They belonged to that blessed world "where they hunger no more, nor doth the sun light upon them." Christ had lately foretold his sufferings, and bid his disciples expect the like. Peter forgets that; or, to prevent it, will needs be building tabernacles in the mount of glory, out of the way of trouble: still he harps upon, 'Master, spare thyself,' though he had been so lately checked for it. There is a proneness in good men to expect the crown, without the cross. Peter was laying hold of this as the prize—though he had not yet fought his fight, nor finished his course—as those other disciples, *ch. xi. 21*. We are out in our aim, if we look for a heaven here upon earth. It is not for strangers and pilgrims (such we are, in our best circumstances, in this world,) to talk of building, or expect a continuing city. Yet it is some excuse to the incongruity of Peter's proposal, not only that he knew not what he said, *Lu. ix. 33*, but also that he submitted the proposal to the wisdom of Christ: "If thou wilt, let us make tabernacles." Note, Whatever tabernacles we propose to make to ourselves in this world, we must always remember to ask Christ leave. Now to this, which Peter said, there was no reply made; the disappearing of the glory would soon answer it. They that promise themselves great things on this earth, will soon be undeceived by their own experience.

V. The glorious testimony which God the Father gave to our Lord Jesus, in which he "received from him honour and glory," *2 Pet. i. 17*, when "there came this voice from the excellent glory." This was like proclaiming the titles of honour or the royal style of a prince, when at his coronation he appears in his robes of state; and be it known, to the comfort of mankind, the royal style of Christ is taken from his mediation. Thus in vision he appeared with a rainbow, the seal of the covenant, about his throne, *Rev. iv. 3*; for it is his glory to be our Redeemer. Now concerning this testimony from heaven to Christ, Observe,

First. How it came, and in what manner it was introduced. 1. There was "a cloud." We find often, in the Old Testament, that a cloud was the visible token of God's presence; he came down upon mount Sinai in a cloud, *Ex. xix. 9*; and so to Moses, *Ex. xxxiv. 5*; *Nam. xi. 25*; he took possession of the tabernacle in a cloud, and afterwards of the temple; where Christ was in his glory the temple was, and there God shewed himself present. We know not the balancings of the clouds; but we know that much of the intercourse and communication between heaven and earth is maintained by them. By the clouds vapours ascend, and rains descend; therefore God is said to make the clouds his chariots; so he did here when he descended upon this mount. 2. It was a bright cloud. Under the law, it was commonly a thick and dark cloud that God made the token of his presence; he came down upon mount Sinai in a thick cloud, *Ex. xix. 16*; and said he would dwell in the thick darkness, see *1 Kin. viii. 1*: but we are not now come to that mount that was covered with blackness and darkness, *Heb. xii. 18*, but to the mount that is crowned with a bright cloud. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament dispensation had tokens of God's presence; but that was a dispensation of darkness, and terror, and bondage; this, of light, love, and liberty. 3. It "overshadowed them." This cloud was intended to break the force of that great light which otherwise would have overcome the disciples, and have been intolerable; it was like the veil which Moses put upon his face when it shone. God, in manifesting himself to his people, considers their frame. This cloud was to their eyes as parables to their understandings, to convey spiritual things by things sensible, as they were able to bear them. 4. There came "a voice out of the cloud," and it was the voice of God, who now, as of old, "spake in the cloudy pillar," *Ps. xlix. 7*. Here was no thunder, or lightning, or voice of a trumpet, as there was when the law was given by Moses; but only a voice, a still small voice, and that not ushered in with a strong wind, or an earthquake, or fire, as when God spake to Elias, *1 Kin. xix. 11, 12*. Moses then, and Elias, were witnesses, that in these last days God hath spoken to us by his Son in another way than he spake formerly to them. This voice came from the excellent glory, *2 Pet. i. 17*, the glory which excelleth, in comparison of which the former had no glory; though the excellent glory was clouded, yet thence came a voice, for faith comes by hearing.

Secondly. What this testimony from heaven was: "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him." Here we have, 1. The great gospel mystery revealed: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This was the very same that was spoken from heaven at his baptism, *ch. iii. 17*; and it was the best news that ever came from heaven to earth since man sinned. It is to the same purpose with that great doctrine, *2 Cor. v. 19*, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." Moses and Elias were great men, and favourites of Heaven, yet they were but servants, and servants that God was not always well pleased in; for Moses spake unadvisedly, and Elias was a man subject to passions; but Christ is a Son, and in him God was always well pleased. Moses and Elias were sometimes instruments of reconciliation between God and Israel; Moses was a great intercessor, and Elias a great reformer; but in Christ God is reconciling the world: his intercession is more prevalent than that of Moses, and his reformation more effectual than that of Elias. This repetition of the same voice that came from heaven at his baptism, was no vain repetition; but, like the doubling of Pharaoh's dream, was to shew the thing was established. What God hath thus spoken once, ye twice, no doubt he will stand to, and he expects we should take notice of it. It was spoken at his baptism, because then he was entering upon his temptation and his public ministry; and now it was repeated, because he was entering upon his sufferings, which are to be dated from hence; for now, and not before, he began to foretell them; and immediately after his transfiguration it is said, *Lu. ix. 51*, that "the time was come that he should be received up." This, therefore, was then repeated to arm him against the terror, and his disciples against the offence of the cross. When sufferings begin to abound, consolations are given in most abundantly, *2 Cor. i. 3*. 2. The great gospel duty required; and it is the condition of our benefit by Christ: "Hear ye him." God is well pleased with none in Christ but those that hear him. It is not enough to give him the hearing, (what will that avail us?) but we must hear him, and believe him, as the great Prophet and Teacher; hear him, and be ruled by him, as the great Prince and Lawgiver; hear him, and heed him. Who ever would know the mind of God, must hearken to Jesus Christ; for by him God has in those last days spoken to us. This voice from heaven has made all the sayings of Christ as authentic as if they had been thus spoken out of a cloud. God doth here as they were turn us over to Christ for all the revelations of his mind; and it refers to that prediction concerning the prophet God would raise up like unto Moses, *Deu. xviii. 18*: "Him shall ye hear." Christ now appeared in glory; and the more we see of Christ's glory, the more cause we shall see to hearken to him. But the disciples were gazing on that glory of his, which they saw; they are therefore bid, not to look at him, but to hear him. Their sight of his glory was soon intercepted by the cloud, but their business was to hear him. We walk by faith, which comes by

the light of customary Hebrew and Syriac phraseology. This brings us to a speedy and intelligible conclusion. The verb "to loose" signifies to annul or prohibit; and the verb "to bind" means to ordain and appoint. Hence we may conclude that the apostles (in chap. xviii. 18, all are addressed) were empowered to expound the laws of the Church and to administer the same, they were authorised to declare the principles of the religion of Christ, to institute regulations for the conduct of the disciples, and to make known what of

the old law was abolished and what new laws were introduced under the Gospel. The words do not refer to pardoning and retaining sins.

xvi. 23. The word "Satan" here used must be taken, not as though our Lord called Peter Satan or the devil, but in the sense of one who hinders and stands in the way, as by giving evil counsel. The Hebrew word "Satan" simply signifies an opponent, and so we understand it here.

xvi. 28. The phrase "The Son of man coming in his kingdom"

hearing, not by sight, **2 Cor. v. 7.** Moses and Elias were now with him, the law and the prophets: hitherto it was said, "Hear them," *Lu. xvi. 29.* The disciples were ready to equal them with Christ, when they must have tabernacles for them, as well as for him. They had been talking with Christ, and probably the disciples were very desirous to know what they said, and to hear something more from them. "No," saith God, "hear him, and that is enough;" him, and not Moses and Elias, who were present, and whose silence gave consent to this voice; they had nothing to say to the contrary; whatever interest they had in the world as prophets, they were willing to see it all transferred to Christ, "that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." "Be not troubled that Moses and Elias make so short a stay with you; hear Christ, and you will not want them."

VI. The fright which the disciples were put into by this voice, and the encouragement Christ gave them.

First, "The disciples fell on their faces, and were sore afraid." The greatness of the light, and the surprise of it, might have a natural influence upon them to dispirit them. But that was not all: ever since man sinned, and heard God's voice in the garden, extraordinary appearances of God have ever been terrible to man, who, knowing he has no reason to expect any good, has been afraid to hear any thing immediately from God. Note, Even then when "fair weather comes out of the secret place, yet with God is terrible majesty," *Job xxxvii. 22.* See what dreadful work the voice of the Lord makes, *Ps. xxxix. 4.* It is well for us that God speaks to us by men like ourselves, whose "terror shall not make us afraid."

Secondly, Christ graciously raised them up with abundance of tenderness. Note, The glories and advancements of our Lord Jesus do not at all lessen his regard to, and concern for, his people, that are compassed about with infirmity. It is comfortable to think that, now he is in his exalted state, he has a compassion for, and condescends to, the meanest true believer. Observe here, 1. What he did: he came and touched them. His approaches banished their fears; and when they apprehended that they were "apprehended of Christ," there needed no more to make them easy. Christ laid his right hand upon John in a like case, and upon Daniel, *Rev. i. 17; Dan. viii. 18; x. 18.* Christ's touches were often healing, and here they were strengthening and comforting. 2. What he said: "Arise, and be not afraid." Note, Though a fear of reverence in our converse with Heaven is pleasing to Christ, yet a fear of amazement is not so, but must be striven against. Christ said, "Arise." Note, It is Christ, by his Word, and the power of his grace going along with it, that raiseth up good men from their dejections, and silenceth their fears, and none but he can do it. "Arise, and be not afraid." Note, Causeless fears would soon vanish, if we would not yield to them, and lay down under them, but get up, and do what we can against them. Considering what they had seen and heard, they had more reason to rejoice than to fear; and yet it seems they needed this caution. Note, Through the infirmity of the flesh, we often frighten ourselves with that wherewith we should encourage ourselves. Observe, After they had had an express command from Heaven to hear Christ, the first word they had from him was, "Be not afraid." Hear that. Note, Christ's errand into the world was to give comfort to good people, that, being delivered out of the hands of their enemies, they might serve God "without fear," *Lu. i. 74, 75.*

VII. The disappearing of the vision, ver. 8. They lift up themselves, and then "lift up their eyes, and saw no man, save Jesus only." Moses and Elias were gone; the rays of Christ glory were laid aside, or veiled again. They hoped this had been the day of Christ's entrance into his kingdom, and his public appearance in that external splendour which they dreamed of; but see how they are disappointed. Note, It is not wisdom to raise our expectations high in this world; for the most valuable of our glories and joys here are vanishing; even those of near communion with God are so; not a continual feast, but a running banquet. If sometimes we are favoured with special manifestations of Divine grace, glimpses and pledges of future glory, yet they are withdrawn presently: two heavens are too much for those to expect that never deserve one. Now they "saw no man, save Jesus only." Note, Christ will tarry with us when Moses and Elias are gone. "The prophets do not live for ever," *Zec. i. 5;* and we see the period of our ministers' conversation; but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, *Heb. xiii. 7, 8.*

VIII. The discourse between Christ and his disciples, as they came down from the mountain, ver. 9-13. Observe, 1. They "came down from the mountain." Note, Even the holy mountains, where we have communion with God, and complacency in that communion, and of which we are saying, "It is good to be here," yet we must come down from; even there we have no continuing city. Blessed be God, there is a mountain of glory and joy before, whence we shall never come down. But observe, when the disciples came down, Jesus came with them. Note, When we return to the world again, after an ordinance, it must be our care to take Christ with us; and then it may be our comfort that he is with us. 2. As they came down they talked of Christ. Note, When we are returning from holy ordinances, it is good to entertain ourselves, and one another, with discourse suitable to the work we have been about. That communication which is good to the use of edifying, is then in a special manner seasonable; as, on the contrary, that which is corrupt is worse than at another time. Here is,

First, The charge that Christ gave the disciples to keep the vision very private for the present, ver. 9: "Tell it to no man till the Son of man is risen." If they had proclaimed it, the credibility of it would have been shocked by his sufferings, which were now hastening on. But let the publication of it be adjourned till after his resurrection; and then that, and his subsequent glory, will be a great confirmation of it. Note, Christ observed a method in the manifestation of himself; would have his works put together, mutually to explain and illustrate each other, that they might appear in their full strength and convincing evidence. Every thing is beautiful in its season. Christ's resurrection was properly the beginning of the gospel state and kingdom, to which all before was but preparatory and by way of preface; and therefore, though this was transacted before, yet it must not be produced as evidence till then, (and then it appears to have been much insisted on, by *2 Pet. i. 16-18.*) when the religion it was designed for the confirmation of was brought to its full consistence and maturity. Christ's time is the best and fittest for the manifesting of himself, and must be attended by us.

Secondly, An objection which the disciples made against something Christ had said, ver. 10: "Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?" "If Elias make so short a stay, and is gone so suddenly, and we must say nothing of him, why have we been taught out of the law to expect his public appearance in the world immediately before the setting up of the Messiah's kingdom? Must the coming of Elias be a secret, which every body looks for?" Or thus: "If the resurrection of the Messiah, and with it the beginning of his kingdom, be at hand, what comes of that glorious preface and introduction to it which we expect in the coming of Elias?" The scribes, who were the public expositors of the law, said this according to the Scripture, *Mal. iv. 5,* "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet." The disciples spoke the common language of the Jews, who made that the saying of the scribes which was the saying of the Scripture; what ministers speak to us according to the Word of God, we should

say God speaks it to us, not the ministers; for we must not receive it as the word of men, *1 Thes. ii. 13.* Observe, When the disciples could not reconcile what Christ said with what they had heard out of the Old Testament, they desired him to explain it to them. Note, When we are puzzled with Scripture difficulties, we must apply ourselves to Christ by prayer, for his Spirit to open our understandings, and lead us into all truth.

Thirdly, The solving of this objection: "Ask, and it shall be given,"—"Ask instruction, and it shall be given." 1. Christ allows the prediction, ver. 11: "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things;"—"So far you are in the right," Christ did not come to alter, or invalidate any thing foretold in the Old Testament. Note, Corrupt and mistaken glosses may be sufficiently rejected and exploded, without diminishing or derogating from the authority or dignity of the sacred text. New Testament prophecies are true and good, and to be received and improved, though some hot foolish men may have misinterpreted them, and drawn wrong inferences from them. He shall come, and "restore all things;" not restore them to their former state; John Baptist went not about to do that; but he shall "accomplish all things," so it may be read; to wit, all things that were written of him—all the predictions of the coming of Elias. John Baptist came to restore things spiritually, to revive the decays of religion, "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," which means the same with this here, he shall "restore all things." John preached repentance, and that restores all things. 2. He asserts the accomplishment: "The scribes say true, that 'Elias shall come; but I say unto you, what the scribes could not say, 'that Elias is come,'" ver. 12. Note, God's promises are often fulfilled, and men perceive it not, but inquire, "Where is the promise?" when it is already performed. "Elias is come, and they knew him not;" they knew him not to be the Elias promised, the forerunner of the Messiah. The scribes busied themselves in criticising upon the Scripture, but understood not, by the signs of the times, the fulfilling of the Scripture. Note, It is easier to explain the Word of God than to apply it, and make a right use of it; but it is no wonder that the morning star was not observed, when He who is the sun itself was in the world, and "the world knew him not." Because they "knew him not," they have "done to him whatsoever they listed." If they had known, they would not have crucified Christ, or beheaded John, *1 Cor. ii. 8.* They ridiculed John, persecuted him, and at last put him to death, which was Herod's doing, but is here charged upon the whole generation of unbelieving Jews, and particularly the scribes, who, though they could not prosecute John themselves, yet were pleased with what Herod did. He adds, "Likewise also shall the Son of man suffer of them." Marvel not that Elias should be abused and killed by those who pretended with a great deal of reverence to expect him, when the Messiah himself will be in like manner treated. Note, The sufferings of Christ took off the strangeness of all other sufferings, *Jno. xv. 18;* when they had inbruted their hands in the blood of John Baptist, they were ready to do the like to Christ. Note, As men deal with Christ's servants, so they would deal with him himself; and they that are drunk with the blood of the martyrs still cry, "Give, give," *Acts xii. 1-3.*

Fourthly, The disciples' satisfaction in Christ's reply to their objection, ver. 13: they "understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." He did not name John; but gives them such a description of him as would put them in mind of what he had said to them formerly concerning him, "This is Elias." This is a profitable way of teaching; it engageth the learners' own thoughts; and makes them, if not their own teachers, yet their own remembrancers; and thus knowledge becomes easy to him that understandeth. When we diligently use the means of knowledge, how strangely are mistakes scattered, and mistakes rectified.

14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, **15 Lord, have mercy on my son:** for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. **16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.** **17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.** **18 And Jesus rebuked the devil;** and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. **19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?** **20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.** **21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.**

We have here the miraculous cure of a child that was lunatic, and vexed with a devil. Observe,

I. A melancholy representation of the case of this child made to Christ by the afflicted father. This was immediately upon his coming down from the mountain where he was transfigured. Note, Christ's glories do not make him unmindful of us, and of our wants and miseries. Christ, when he came down from the mount where he had conversation with Moses and Elias, did not take state upon him; but was as easy of access, as ready to poor beggars, and as familiar with the multitude, as ever he used to be. This poor man's address was very importunate; he came kneeling to Christ. Note, Sense of misery will bring people to their knees. Those who see their need of Christ will be earnest, will be in good earnest, in their applications to him, and he delights to be thus wrestled with.

refers to the event described in Mark ix. 1 and Luke ix. 27, viz., the fall of Jerusalem, and the general break-up of the Jewish nation and its institutions. From that time the temple and its worship became things of the past; the Mosaic rites could be only partially observed. With these judgments compare the amazing spread of the Gospel at the same period.

xvii. 1. The tradition which fixes upon Tabor as the scene of the transfiguration is ancient, but unsupported by evidence; nor is it at

all likely that the actual locality will be ever certainly known. Tabor must be given up, because a fortified place crowned its summit, as Robinson says; whereas the mountain of transfiguration was unquestionably away from the abodes of men. The earliest allusions to Tabor in connection with the transfiguration occur in the writings of Cyril of Jerusalem and Jerome; it is therefore probable that the site was adopted in the fourth century, of which Dr. Robinson so truly says it was the "hotbed of like superstitions." The word "apart"

Two things the father of the child complains of:

First. The distress of his child, ver. 15: "Lord, have mercy on my son." The affliction of the children cannot but affect their tender parents, for they are pieces of themselves. And the case of afflicted children should be presented to God by faithful and fervent prayer. This child's distemper probably disabled him to pray for himself. Note, Parents are doubly concerned to pray for their children, not only that they are weak, and cannot, but much more that they are wicked, and will not, pray for themselves. Now, 1. The nature of this child's disease was very bad, he is "lunatic, and sore vexed." A lunatic is properly one whose distemper lies in the brain, and returns with the change of the moon. The devil, by the Divine permission, either caused this distemper, or at least concurred with it to heighten and aggravate it. The child had the falling sickness, and the hand of Satan was in it; by it he tormented then, and made it much more grievous than ordinarily it is. And those whom Satan got possession of, he afflicted by those diseases of the body which do most affect the mind; for it is the soul that he aims to do mischief to. The father, in this complaint, saith, "he is a lunatic," taking notice of the effect; but Christ, in the cure, rebuked the devil, and so struck at the cause. Thus he doth in spiritual cures. 2. The effects of the disease were very deplorable: he oft "falls into the fire, and into the water." If the force of the disease made him to fall, the malice of the devil made him fall into the fire or water: so mischievous is he, where he gains possession and power in any soul: he seeks to devour, 1 Pet. v. 8. Secondly, The disappointment of his expectation from the disciples, ver. 16: "I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him." Christ gave his disciples power to cast out devils, *ch. x. 1, 8*; and therein they were successful, *Lu. x. 17*; yet at this time they failed in the operation, though there were nine of them together, and before a great multitude. Christ permitted this, 1. To keep them humble, and to shew them their dependence upon him, that without him they could do nothing. 2. To glorify himself and his own power. It is for the honour of Christ to come in with help at a dead lift, when other helpers cannot help. Elisha's staff in Gehazi's hand will not raise the child; he must come himself. Note, There are some special favours which Christ reserves to himself the bestowing of; and sometimes he keeps the cistern empty, that he might bring us to himself, the fountain. But the failures of instruments shall not hinder the operations of his grace, which will work, if not by them, yet without them.

II. The rebukes that Christ gave to the people first, and then to the devil.

First. He chid those about him, ver. 17: "O faithless and perverse generation." This is not spoken to the disciples, but to the people, and perhaps especially to the scribes, who are mentioned in *Mar. ix. 14*, and who, as it should seem, insulted over the disciples because they had now met with a case that was too hard for them. Christ himself could not do many mighty works among a people in whom unbelief reigned. It was here owing to the faithlessness of this generation that they could not obtain those blessings from God that otherwise they might have had, as it was owing to the weakness of the disciples' faith that they could not do those works for God which otherwise they might have done. They were faithless and perverse. Note, Those that are faithless will be perverse, and perverseness is sin in its worst colours. Faith is compliance with God; unbelief is opposition and contradiction to God. Israel of old was perverse, because faithless, *Ps. xc. 9*; froward, for in them is no faith, *Deu. xxxii. 20*. Two things he upbraids them with. 1. His presence with them so long, "How long shall I be with you?" "Will you always need my bodily presence, and never come to such maturity as to be fit to be left?"—the people to the conduct of the disciples, and the disciples to the conduct of the Spirit and of their commission? Must the child be always carried, and will it never learn to go alone? 2. His patience with them so long, "How long shall I suffer you?" Note, 1st. The faithlessness and perverseness of those who enjoy the means of grace is a great grief to the Lord Jesus. Thus did he "suffer the manners" of Israel of old, *Acts xiii. 18*. 2nd. The longer Christ has borne with a perverse and faithless people, the more he is displeased with their perverseness and unbelief; and he is God, and not man, else he would not suffer so long, nor bear so much, as he doth.

Secondly, He cured the child, and set him to rights again. He called, "Bring him hither to me." Though the people were perverse, and Christ was provoked, yet care was taken of the child. Note, Though Christ may be angry, he is never unkind; nor doth he, in the greatest of his displeasure, shut up the bowels of his compassion from the miserable: "Bring him to me." Note, When all other helps and succours fail, we are welcome to Christ, and may be confident in him, and in his power and goodness. See here an emblem of Christ's undertaking as our Redeemer.

1. He breaks the power of Satan, ver. 18: "Jesus rebuked the devil" as one having authority, that could back with force his word of command. Note, Christ's victories over Satan are obtained by the power of his word, the sword that comes out of his mouth, *Rev. xix. 21*. Satan cannot stand before the rebukes of Christ, though his possession has been never so long. It is comfortable to those who are wrestling with principalities and powers, that Christ hath spoiled them, *Col. ii. 15*. The lion of the tribe of Judah will be too hard for the roaring lion that seeks to devour.

2. He redresseth the grievances of the children of men: "the child was cured from that very hour." It was an immediate cure, and a perfect one. This is an encouragement to parents to bring their children to Christ whose souls are under Satan's power; he is able to heal them, and as willing as he is able. Not only bring them to Christ by prayer, but bring them to the Word of Christ, the ordinary means by which Satan's strongholds are demolished in the soul. Christ's rebukes, brought home to the heart, will ruin Satan's power there.

III. Christ's discourse with his disciples hereupon.

First. They ask the reason why they could not cast out the devil at this time, ver. 19: They "came to Jesus apart." Note, Ministers, that are to deal for Christ in public, have need to keep up a private communion with him, that they may in secret, where no eye sees, bewail their weakness and straitness, their follies and infirmities, in their public performances, and inquire into the cause of them. We should make use of that liberty of access we have to Jesus apart, where we may be free and particular with him. Such questions as the disciples put to Christ, we should put to ourselves, in communing with our own hearts upon our beds: "What was the reason we were so dull and careless, at such a time—we came so much short in such a duty?"—that, finding out what was amiss, it may be amended.

Secondly, Christ gives them two reasons why they failed. 1. It was because of their unbelief, ver. 20. When he spoke to the father of the child, and to the people, he charged it upon their unbelief; when he spoke to his disciples, he charged it upon theirs; for the truth was, there were faults on both sides; but we are more concerned to hear of our own faults than of other people's, and to impute amisses to ourselves than to others. When the preaching of the Word seems not to be so successful as sometimes it has been, the people are apt to lay all the fault upon the ministers, and the ministers upon the people; whereas it is more becoming for each to own their own faultiness, and to say, "It is alone of me." Ministers, in reproving, must learn thus to give to each their

portion of the Word, and to take people off from judging others, by teaching all to judge themselves. "It is because of your unbelief." Though they had faith, yet that faith was weak and ineffectual. Note, 1st. As far as faith falls short of its due strength, vigour, and activity, it may truly be said there is unbelief. Many are chargeable with unbelief, that yet are not to be called unbelievers. 2nd. It is because of our unbelief that we bring so little to pass in religion, and so oft miscarry and come short in that which is good. Our Lord Jesus takes this occasion to shew them the power of faith, that they might not be defective in that another time, as they were now: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed," ye shall do wonders, ver. 20. Some make the comparison to refer to the quality of the mustard seed, which is, when bruised, sharp and penetrating: "If you have an active growing faith,—not dead, flat, or insipid,—you will not be baffled and balked thus." But it rather refers to the quantity: "If you had but a grain of true faith, though so little that it were like that which is the least of all seeds, you would do wonders." Faith, in general, is a firm assent to, a compliance with, and a confidence in, all Divine revelation. The faith here required is that which had for its object that particular revelation by which Christ gave his disciples power to work miracles in his name, for the confirmation of the doctrine they preached: it was a faith in this revelation that they were defective in; either doubting the validity of their commission, or fearing it was expired with their first mission, and was not to continue when they were returned to their Master; or, that it was, some way or other, forfeited or withdrawn. Perhaps their Master's absence with the three chief of his disciples, with a charge to the rest not to follow them, might occasion some doubts concerning their power, or rather the power of the Lord with them, to do this. However, there was not at present such a strong actual dependence upon, and confidence in, the promise of Christ's presence with them, as there should have been. It is good for us to be diffident of ourselves, and of our own strength; but it is displeasing to Christ when we distrust any power derived from him, or granted by him. If ye have never so little of this faith in sincerity—if you truly rely upon the powers committed to you, "ye shall say to the mountain, Remove." This is a proverbial expression, noting that which follows, and no more,—"nothing shall be impossible to you." They had a full commission, among other things, to cast out devils, without exception; but this devil being more than ordinarily malicious and inveterate, they distrusted the power they had received, and so failed. To convince them of this, Christ shews them what they might have done. Note, An active faith can "remove mountains;" not of itself, but in virtue of a Divine power engaged by a Divine promise, both which faith fastens upon.

2. Because there was something in the kind of malady which rendered the cure more than ordinary difficult, ver. 21: "This kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting." This possession, which works by a falling sickness, or this kind of devils, that are thus furious, is not cast out ordinarily but by great acts of devotion, and therein you were defective. Note, 1st. Though the adversaries we wrestle with be all principalities and powers, yet some are stronger than others, and their power more hardly broken. 2nd. The extraordinary power of Satan must not discourage our faith, but quicken us to a greater intenseness in the acting of it, and more earnestness in praying to God for the increase of it; and so some understand it here: "this kind (of faith, which removeth mountains,) doth not proceed (that is, is not obtained,) from God; nor is it carried up to its full growth, nor drawn out into act and exercise, but by earnest prayer." 3rd. Fasting and prayer are proper means for the bringing down of Satan's power against us, and the fetching in of Divine power to our assistance. Fasting is of use to put an edge upon prayer; it is an evidence and instance of humiliation which is necessary in prayer; and is a means of mortifying some corrupt habits, and of disposing the body to serve the soul in prayer. When the devil's interest in the soul is confirmed by the temper and constitution of the body, fasting must be joined with prayer to keep under the body.

22 And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: 23 And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

Christ here foretells his own sufferings: he began to do it before, *ch. xvi. 21*; and finding that it was to his disciples a hard saying, he saw it necessary to repeat it. There are some things which God speaketh once, yea, twice, and yet man perceiveth it not. Observe here,

First. What he foretold, concerning himself, that he should be betrayed and killed. He perfectly knew before all things that should come to him, and yet undertook the work of our redemption, which greatly commendeth his love; nay, his clear foresight of them was a kind of ante-passion, had not his love to man made all easy to him. 1. He tells them that he should be betrayed into the hands of men. He shall be delivered up, so it might be read; and understood, of his Father's delivering him up by his determined counsel and foreknowledge, *Acts iv. 23*; *Rom. viii. 32*. But as we render it, it refers to Judas's betraying him into the hands of the priests, and their betraying him into the hands of the Romans. He was betrayed into the hands of men—men, to whom he was allied by nature, and from whom therefore he might expect pity and tenderness; men, whom he had undertaken to save, and from whom therefore he might expect honour and gratitude; yet these are his persecutors and murderers. 2. That they should kill him; nothing less than that would satisfy their rage; it was his blood, his precious blood, they thirsted after: "This is the heir; come, let us kill him;" and nothing less would satisfy God's justice, and answer his undertaking: if he be a sacrifice of atonement, he must be killed; without blood, no remission. 3. That he shall be raised again the third day. Still, when he spoke of his death, he gave a hint of his resurrection—the joy set before him, in the prospect of which he endured the cross; and despised the shame. This was an encouragement, not only to him, but to his disciples; for if he rise the third day, his absence from them would not be long, and his return to them would be glorious.

Secondly, How the disciples resented this: "they were exceeding sorry." Herein appeared their love to their Master's person, but withal their ignorance and mistake concerning his undertaking. Peter indeed durst not say any thing against it, as he had done before, *ch. xvi. 22*, having then been soundly chidden for it; but he and the rest of them greatly lamented it, as it would be their own loss, their Master's grief, and the sin and ruin of them that did it.

24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? 25 He

does not mean that the mountain stood alone, but our Lord and the three apostles were alone.

xvii. 4. Instead of "let us make," some important copies have "I will make," which is adopted by Tischendorf, Alford, &c.

xvii. 10–13. We have seen that the Jews expected the return of Elijah before the coming of the Messiah. This expectation was based upon *Mal. iv. 5*, which was understood literally. The Saviour on more than one occasion showed that the prophecy was fulfilled in

the coming of John the Baptist. The Greek of verse 11 is somewhat peculiar; literally rendered, the second clause is, "Elias indeed first cometh, and shall restore all things." The words appear to be a recognition of the correctness of the common opinion that Elijah would come and introduce a general reformation. But the next verse declares that Elijah has come, and has been severely dealt with. Some understand verse 11, as intimating that in addition to the coming of John in the spirit and power of Elijah, there would

saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? 26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. 27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

We have here an account of Christ's paying tribute. Observe, 1. *How it was demanded*, ver. 24. Christ was now at Capernaum, his head quarters, where he mostly resided; he did not keep from thence to decline being called upon for his dues, but the rather came thither to be ready to pay them.

First. The tribute demanded was not any civil payment to the Roman powers; that was strictly exacted by the publicans; but the church duties, the half shekel, about fifteen pence, which was required from every person for the service of the temple, and the defraying of the expenses of the worship there: it is called a ransom for the soul, *Ex. xxx. 12*, &c. This was not so strictly exacted now as sometimes it had been, especially not in Galilee.

Secondly. The demand was very modest: the collectors stood in such awe of Christ, because of his mighty works, that they durst not speak to him about it, but applied themselves to Peter, whose house was in Capernaum, and probably in his house Christ lodged; and therefore he was fittest to be spoken to, as the housekeeper, and they presumed he knew his Master's mind. Their question is, "Doth not your master pay tribute?" Some think they sought an occasion against him, designing, if he refused, to represent him as disaffected to the temple service, and his followers as lawless people, that would pay neither toll, tribute, nor custom, *Ex. iv. 13*. It should rather seem they asked this with respect; intimating, that if he had any privilege to exempt him from this payment, they would not insist upon it.

Peter presently passed his word for his Master: 'Yes, surely, my Master pays tribute; it is his principle and practice; you need not fear moving it to him.' 1. He was "made under the law," *Gal. iv. 4*; therefore under this law he was paid for at forty days old, *Lu. ii. 22*, and now he paid for himself, as one that in his state of humiliation had taken upon him "the form of a servant," *Phil. ii. 7, 8*. 2. He was "made sin for us," and was sent forth "in the likeness of sinful flesh," *Rom. viii. 3*. Now this tax paid to the temple is called an atonement for the soul, *Ex. xxx. 15*. Christ, that in every thing he might appear in the likeness of sinners, paid it, though he had no sin to atone for. 3. Thus it became him to fulfil all righteousness, *ch. iv. 15*. He did this to set us an example, 1st. Of rendering to all their due, tribute to whom tribute is due, *Rom. xiii. 7*. The kingdom of Christ not being of this world, the favourites and officers of it are so far from having a power granted them, as such, to tax other people's purses, that theirs are made liable to the powers that be. 2nd. Of contributing to the support of the public worship of God in the places where we are. If we reap spiritual things, it is fit we should return carnal things. The temple was now made a den of thieves, and the temple worship a pretence for the opposition which the chief priests gave to Christ and his doctrine, and yet Christ paid this tribute. Note, Church duties, legally imposed, are to be paid, notwithstanding church corruptions. We must take heed of using our liberty as a cloak of covetousness or maliciousness, 1 *Pet. ii. 16*. If Christ pay tribute, who can pretend an exemption?

II. *How it was disputed*, ver. 25: not with the collectors themselves, lest they should be irritated; but with Peter, that he might be satisfied in the reason why Christ paid tribute, and might not mistake about it. He brought the collectors into the house; but Christ prevented him, to give him a proof of his omniscience, and that no thought can be withheld from him: the disciples of Christ are never attacked but he knows it. Now,

First. He appeals to the way of the kings of the earth, which is to take tribute of strangers, of the subjects of their kingdom, or foreigners that deal with them, but not of their own children, that are of their families. There is such a community of goods between parents and children, and a joint interest in what they have, that it would be absurd for the parents to levy taxes upon the children, or demand any thing from them; it is like one hand taxing the other.

Secondly. He applies this to himself: "Then are the children free." Christ is the Son of God, and heir of all things: the temple is his temple, *Mal. iii. 1*; his Father's house, *Jno. ii. 16*: in it he is faithful, as a son in his own house, *Heb. iii. 6*; and therefore not obliged to pay this tax for the service of the temple. Thus Christ asserts his right, lest his paying this tribute should be misimproved, to the weakening of his title as the Son of God and the king of Israel, and should have looked like a disowning of it himself. These immunities of the children are to be extended no further than our Lord Jesus himself: God's children, by grace and adoption, are freed from the slavery of sin and Satan, but not from their subjection to civil magistrates in civil things. Here the law of Christ is express: "Let every soul (sanctified souls not excepted) be subject to the higher powers;" "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

III. *How it was paid, notwithstanding*, ver. 27.

First. For what reason Christ waived his privileges, and paid this tribute, though he was entitled to an exemption; "lest we should offend them." Few knew, as Peter did, that he was the Son of God; and it would have been a diminution of the honour of that great truth, which was yet a secret, to advance it now, to serve such a purpose as this: therefore Christ drops that argument, and considers, that if he should refuse this payment, it would increase people's prejudice against him and his doctrine, and alienate their affections from him, and therefore resolves to pay it. Note, Christian prudence and humility teach us in many cases to recede from our right, rather than give offence by insisting upon it. We must never decline our duty for fear of giving offence: Christ's preaching and miracles offended them, yet he went on with them, *ch. xv. 12, 13*. Better offend men than God; but we must deny ourselves in that which is our secular interest, sometimes, rather than give offence, as Paul, 1 *Cor. viii. 13*; *Rom. xiv. 13*.

Secondly. What course he took for the payment of this tax: he furnished himself with money for it out of the mouth of a fish, ver. 27: wherein appears, 1. The poverty of Christ: he had not fifteen pence at command to pay this tax

with, though he cured so many that were diseased; it seems he did all gratis: "for our sakes he became poor," 2 *Cor. viii. 9*. In his ordinary expenses he lived upon alms, *Lu. viii. 3*; and in extraordinary ones he lived upon miracles. He did not order Judas to pay this out of the bag which he carried; that was for subsistence; and he would not order that for his particular use which was intended for the benefit of the community. 2. The power of Christ, in fetching money out of a fish's mouth for this purpose. Whether his omnipotence put it there, or his omniscience knew that it was there, it comes all to one; it was an evidence of his divinity, and that he is Lord of hosts. Those creatures that are most remote from man are at the command of Christ, even the fishes of the sea are under his feet, *Ps. viii. 5*. And to evidence his dominion in this lower world, and to accommodate himself to his present state of humiliation, he chose to take it out of a fish's mouth, when he could have taken it out of an angel's hand. Now observe, 1st. Peter must catch the fish, by angling. Even in miracles he would use means to encourage industry and endeavour—Peter has something to do, and it is in the way of his old calling too—to teach us diligence in the employment we are called to, and called in. Do we expect Christ should give to us; let us be ready to work for him? 2nd. The fish came up with money in the mouth of it, which represents to us the reward of obedience in obedience. What work we do at Christ's command brings its own pay along with it, *Ps. xix. 11*. In keeping God's commands, as well as after keeping them, there is a great reward. Peter was made a fisher of men, and those that he caught thus came up; where the heart is open to entertain Christ's Word, the hand is open to encourage his ministers. 3rd. The piece of money was just enough to pay the tax for Christ and Peter: "Thou shalt find a stater," the value of a Jewish shekel, which would pay the poll-tax for two, for it was half a shekel, *Ex. xxx. 13*. Christ could as easily have commanded a bag of money as a piece of money; but he would teach us not to covet superfluities; but having enough for our present occasions, therewith to be content, and not to distrust God, though we live but from hand to mouth. Christ made the fish his cash-keeper, and why may we not make God's providence our storehouse and treasury; and if we have a competency for to-day, "let to-morrow take thought for the things of itself." Christ paid for himself and Peter; because, it is probable, here he only was assessed, and of him it was at this time demanded; perhaps the rest had paid already, or were to pay elsewhere. The Papists make a great mystery of Christ's paying for Peter, as if this made him the head and representative of the whole church; whereas the payment of tribute for him was rather a sign of subjection than of superiority. His pretended successors pay no tribute, but exact it. Peter fished for this money, and therefore part of it went for his use. Those that are workers together with Christ in winning souls, shall be sharers with him in his glory, and shall shine with him. "Give it for thee and me." What Christ paid for himself was looked upon as a debt; what he paid for Peter was a courtesy to him. Note, It is a desirable thing, if God so please, to have wherewithal of this world's goods, not only to be just, but to be kind; not only to be charitable to the poor, but obliging to our friends. What is a great estate good for, but that it enables a man to do so much the more good. Observe,

Lastly. That here is recorded the orders Christ gave to Peter what to do, the warrant he had; the effect is not particularly mentioned, but taken for granted, and justly; for, with Christ, saying and doing are the same thing.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Gospels are, in short, a record of what Jesus began both to do and to teach. In the foregoing chapter we had an account of his doings: in this, of his teachings; probably not all at the same time, in a continued discourse; but at several times, upon divers occasions, here put together as near akin. We have here, I. Instructions concerning humility, ver. 1—6. II. Concerning offences in general, ver. 7, particularly offences given: 1. By us to ourselves, ver. 8, 9; 2. By us to others, ver. 10—14; 3. By others to us, which are of two sorts: 1st. Scandalous ones, that are to be reprov'd, ver. 15—20; 2nd. Personal wrongs, that are to be forgiven, ver. 21—35. See how practical Christ's preaching was: he could have revealed mysteries, but he pressed plain duties, especially those that are most displeasing to flesh and blood.

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, 3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. 6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

As there never was a greater pattern of humility, so there never was a greater preacher of it, than Christ: he took all occasions to command it, to commend it to his disciples and followers.

1. The occasion of this discourse here concerning humility, was an unbecoming contest among the disciples for preëminence. They came to him, saying among themselves, (for they were ashamed to ask, *Mar. ix. 34*), "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" They mean not, who by character; then the question had been good, that they might know what graces and duties to excel in;

be a real coming of that prophet before the second coming of the Saviour, which is yet future. It is difficult, however, to reconcile this opinion with the statement made in verse 13; and Meyer says Jesus does not anywhere speak of a personal return of the actual Elijah. With this view we on the whole concur.

xvii. 24. On this verse Dean Alford has the following note, after indicating that for "tribute money" we should render "the two drachmas":—"This was a sum paid annually by the Jews of twenty

years old and upwards, towards the temple in Jerusalem (*Ex. xxx. 13*; 2 *Kings xii. 4*; 2 *Chron. xxiv. 6—9*). Josephus says of Vespasian, 'He levied a tribute on the Jews all over the world, compelling each man to pay two drachmas yearly into the capital, as they formerly used to do to the temple at Jerusalem.' It does not quite appear whether this payment was compulsory or not; the question here asked would look as if it were voluntary, and therefore by some declined. Many commentators, both ancient and modern,

but, who by name. They had heard much, and preached much, of the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of the Messiah, his church in this world; but as yet they were so far from having any clear notion of it, that they dreamt of a temporal kingdom, and the external pomp and power of it. Christ had lately foretold his sufferings, and the glory that should follow—that he should rise again; from whence they expected his kingdom would commence; and now they thought it was time to put in for their places in it. It is good, in such cases, to speak early. Upon other discourses of Christ to that purpose; debates of this kind arose, *Ch. xx. 19, 20; Lu. xxii. 22, 24*. He spoke many words of his sufferings, but only one of his glory; yet they fasten upon that, and overlook the other; and instead of asking how they might have strength and grace to suffer with him, they ask him who shall be highest in reigning with him. Note, Many love to hear and speak of privileges and glory, that are willing to pass by the thoughts of work and trouble; they look so much at the crown, that they forget the yoke and the cross. So the disciples here did, when they asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

First, They suppose that all that have a place in that kingdom are great, for it is a "kingdom of priests." Note, Those are truly great that are truly good; and they will appear so at last, when Christ shall own them as his, though never so mean and poor in the world.

Secondly, They suppose that there are degrees in this greatness. All the saints are honourable, but not all alike so; one star differs from another star in glory. All David's officers were not worthies, nor all his worthies of the first three.

Thirdly, They suppose it must be some of them that must be prime ministers of state. To whom should King Jesus "delight to do honour," but to them, who had left all for him, and were now his companions in patience and tribulation.

Fourthly, They strive who it should be, each having some pretence or other to it. Peter was always the chief speaker, and already had the keys given him, and he expects to be lord chancellor, or lord chamberlain of the household, and so to be the greatest. Judas had the bag, and therefore he expects to be lord treasurer, which, though now he came last, he hopes will then denominate him the greatest. Simon and Jude are nearly related to Christ; and they hope to take place of all the great officers of state, as princes of the blood. John is the beloved disciple, the favourite of the prince, and therefore hopes to be greatest. Andrew was first called, and why should not he be first preferred? Note, We are very apt to amuse and humour ourselves with foolish fancies of things that will never be.

II. *The discourse itself*, which is a just rebuke to the question, who should be greatest? And we have abundant reason to think, that if Christ ever intended that Peter, and his successors at Rome, should be the heads of the church, and his chief vicars on earth, having so fair an occasion given him, he would now have laid his disciples know it; but so far is he from this, that his answer disallows and condemns the thing itself. Christ will not lodge such an authority or supremacy any where in his church; whoever pretend to it are usurpers. Instead of settling any of the disciples in this dignity, he warns them all not to put in for it. Christ here teacheth them to be humble:

First, By a sign, *ver. 2*: "He called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them." Christ often taught by signs, or sensible representations, comparisons to the eye, as the prophets of old. Note, Humility is a lesson so hardly learned, that we have need by all ways and means to be taught it. When we look upon a little child, we should be put in mind of the use Christ made of this child: sensible things must be improved to spiritual purposes. He "set him in the midst of them," not that they might play with him, but learn by him. Grown men and great men should not disdain the company of little children, or think it below them to take notice of them. They may either speak to them, and give instruction to them, or look upon them, and receive instruction from them. Christ himself, when a child, was in the midst of the doctors, *Lu. ii. 46*.

Secondly, By a sermon upon this sign, in which he shews them and us, 1. The necessity of humility, *ver. 3*. His preface is solemn, and commands both attention and assent: "Verily I say unto you," (I, the Amen, the faithful witness, say it:) "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Here observe, 1st. What it is that he requires and insists upon. First, 'You must be converted; you must be of another mind, and in another frame and temper, must have other thoughts, both of yourselves and of the kingdom of heaven, before you be fit for a place in it. This pride, ambition, and affectation of honour and dominion, which appears in you, must be repented of, mortified, and reformed, and you must come to yourselves.' Note, Besides the first conversion of a soul, from a state of nature to a state of grace, there are after conversions, from particular paths of backsliding, which are equally necessary to salvation. Every step out of the way by sin, must be a step into it again by repentance. When Peter repented of his denying his Master, he was converted. Secondly, 'You must become as little children.' Note, Converting grace makes us like little children; not foolish as children, *1 Cor. xiv. 20*; nor fickle, *Eph. iv. 14*; nor playful, *ch. xi. 16*; but, as children, we must desire the sincere milk of the Word, *1 Pet. ii. 2*; as children, we must "be careful for nothing," but leave it to our heavenly Father to care for us, *ch. vi. 31*; we must, as children, be as harmless and inoffensive, and void of malice, *1 Cor. xiv. 20*; governable and under command, *Gal. iv. 2*; and (which is here chiefly intended) we must be humble as little children, who do not take state upon them, nor stand upon the punctilios of honour; the child of a gentleman will play with the child of a beggar, *Rom. xii. 16*; the child in rags, if he have the breast, is well enough pleased, and envies not the gaiety of the child in silks: little children have no great aims at great places, nor projects to raise themselves in the world; they exercise not themselves in things too high for them; and we should, in like manner, behave and quiet ourselves, *Ps. cxxi. 1, 2*; as children are little in body, and low in stature, so we must be little and low in spirit, and in our thoughts of ourselves. This is a temper which leads to other good dispositions: the age of childhood is the learning age. 2nd. What stress he lays upon this. Without this "you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Note, Disciples of Christ have need to be kept in awe by threatenings, that they may fear lest they seem to come short, *Heb. iv. 1*. The disciples, when they put that question, *ver. 1*, thought themselves sure of the kingdom of heaven; but Christ awakens them to be jealous of themselves. They were ambitious of being greatest in the kingdom of heaven: Christ tells them that, except they come to a better temper, they should never come thither. Note, Many that set up for great ones in the church, prove not only little, but nothing, and are found to have no part or lot in the matter. Our Lord designs here to shew the great danger of pride and ambition; whatever profession men make, if they allow themselves in this sin, they will be rejected both from God's tabernacle and from his holy hill. Pride threw the angels that sinned out of heaven, and will keep us out, if we be not converted from it. They that are lifted up with pride "fall into the condemnation of the devil." To prevent this, we must become as little children; and in order to that, must be first born again—must put on a new man, must be like the holy child Jesus; so he is called even after his ascension, *Acts iv. 27*. 2. He shews the honour and advancement that attend humility, *ver. 4*: which is a direct but surprising answer to their question: he that humbles himself as a little child, though he may fear that hereby

he will render himself contemptible, as low spirits do, that hereby throw themselves out of the way of preferment, yet the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Note, The humblest Christians are the best Christians, and most like to Christ, and highest in his favour—are best disposed for the communications of Divine grace, and fittest to serve God in this world, and enjoy him in another. They are great, for God overlooks heaven and earth to look on such; and certainly those are to be most respected and honoured in the church that are most humble and self-denying; for though they least seek it, they best deserve it. 3. The special care Christ takes for those that are humble: he espouseth their cause, protects them, interesteth himself in their concerns, and will see that they are not wronged, but they shall be righted. Those that thus humble themselves will be afraid, 1st. That nobody will receive them; and as to that fear, *ver. 5*, "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." Whatever kindnesses are done to such, Christ takes as done to himself: who entertains a meek and humble Christian, keeps him in countenance, will not let him lose by his modesty, takes him into his love, and friendship, and society, and care, and studies to do him a kindness, and doth this in Christ's name, for his sake, because he bears the image of Christ, serves Christ; and because Christ has received him, this shall be accepted as recompensed as an acceptable piece of respect to Christ. Observe, Though it be but one such little child that is received in Christ's name, it shall be accepted. Note, The tender regard Christ has to his church extends itself to every particular member, even the meanest; not only to the whole family, but to every child of the family: the less they are in themselves to whom we shew kindness, the more there is of good will in it to Christ; the less it is for their sakes, the more it is for his, and he takes it accordingly: If Christ were personally among us, we think we should never do enough to welcome him. The poor, the poor in spirit, we have always with us; and they are his receivers: see *ch. xxv. 35–40*. 2nd. They will be afraid that every body will abuse them. The basest men delight to trample upon the humble, *verat censura columbas*,—censure pounces on doves. This objection he obviates, *ver. 6*; where he warns all people, as they will answer it at their utmost peril, not to offer any injury to one of Christ's little ones. This word makes a wall of fire about them; he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of God's eye.

Observe, First, The crime supposed, offending one of these little ones, that believe in Christ. Their believing in Christ, though they be little ones, unites them to him; so that as they partake of the benefit of his sufferings, so he partakes in the wrongs of theirs, and interesteth him in their cause. Even the little ones, that believe, have the same privilege with the great ones, for they have all obtained like precious faith. There are those that offend these little ones, by drawing them to sin, *1 Cor. viii. 10, 11*; grieving and vexing their righteous souls; discouraging them; taking occasion, from their mildness, to make a prey of them, in their persons, families, goods, or good name. Thus the best men have oft met with the worst treatment in this world. Secondly, The punishment of this crime; intimated in that word, "better for him that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." The sin is so heinous, and the ruin proportionably so great, that he had better undergo the sorest punishments inflicted on the worst of malefactors, which can only kill the body. Note, 1st. Hell is worse than the depth of the sea; for it is a bottomless pit, and it is a burning lake. The depth of the sea is only killing, but hell is tormenting. We meet with one that had comfort in the depth of the sea: it was Jonah, *Jon. ii. 2, 4, 9*; but never any had the least grain or glimpse of comfort in hell, nor will have, to eternity. 2nd. The irresistible, irrevocable doom of the great Judge will sink sooner and surer, and bind faster, than a millstone hanged about the neck: it fixeth a great gulf, that can never be broke through, *Lu. xvi. 26*. Offending Christ's little ones, though by omission, is assigned as the reason of that dreadful sentence, "Go, ye cursed," which will at last be the doom of proud persecutors.

7 Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! 8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. 9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. 10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. 11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. 12 How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? 13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. 14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

Our Saviour here speaks of offences, or scandals:

1. In general, *ver. 7*. He takes occasion, from the mention of the offending the little ones, to speak more generally of offences. That is an offence,

and among them no less names than Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Jerome, and Augustine, seem to have missed the meaning of this miracle, by interpreting the payment as a civil one, which it certainly was not. The drachma was about the same as the Roman denarius or penny, or sevenpence-halfpenny of our money. Two drachmas were half a shekel, or thereabout. The Hebrew name for this amount was a bekah, as shown by *Ex. xxxviii. 26*, with which compare *Ex. xxx. 13, 15*. That our Lord was wont to pay the custom-

ary amount in support of the Temple is quite in harmony with his general conformity to the religious customs of the nation. According to the Talmudists, the collection of the two drachmas began on the 15th of the month Adar, or February.

xvii. 25, 26. There seems to be a deeper thought in these words: "The children of kings do not pay taxes; this charge is paid to the King of heaven and earth, whose son I am; therefore I am not required to pay the tribute which is justly expected from others."

1. Which occasions guilt; which, by enticement or affrightment, tends to draw men from that which is good, to that which is evil. 2. Which occasions grief; which makes the heart of the righteous sad. Now, concerning offences, Christ here tells them,

First. That they were certain things: "It must needs be that offences come." When we are sure there is danger, we should be the better armed: not that Christ's word necessitates any man to offend; but it is a prediction, upon a view of the causes. Considering the subtlety and malice of Satan, the weakness and depravity of men's hearts, and the foolishness that is found there, it is morally impossible but that there should be offences; and God has determined to permit them, for wise and holy ends, that both they which are perfect, and they which are not, may be made manifest: see 1 *Cor.* xi. 19; *Dan.* xi. 35. Being told before that there will be seducers, tempters, persecutors, and many ill examples, let us stand upon our guard, *ch.* xxiv. 24; *Acts* xx. 29, 30.

Secondly. That they would be woful things, and the consequences of them fatal. Here is a double woe annexed to offences: 1. A woe to the careless and unguarded, to whom the offence is given: "Woe to the world because of offences." The obstructions and oppositions given to faith and holiness in all places are the bane and plague of mankind, and the ruin of thousands. This present world is an evil world; it is so full of offences, of sins, and snares, and sorrows: a dangerous road we travel, full of stumblingblocks, precipices, and false guides. "Woe to the world!" As for those whom God hath chosen, and called out of the world, and delivered from it, they are preserved by the power of God from the prejudice of these offences, are helped over all these stones of stumbling. They that love God's law have great peace, and nothing shall offend them, *Ps.* cxix. 165. 2. A woe to the wicked, that willfully give the offence: "But woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." Though it must needs be that the offence will come, yet that will be no excuse for the offenders. Note, Though God makes the sins of sinners to serve his purposes, yet that will not secure them from his wrath; and the guilt will be laid at the door of those that give the offence, though they also fall under a woe that take it. Note, They who any way hinder the salvation of others will find their own condemnation the more intolerable: like Jeroboam, that sinned, and made Israel to sin. This woe is the moral of that judicial law, *Eze.* xxi. 33, 34; *xxii.* 6, that he who opened the pit, and kindled the fire, was accountable for all the damage that ensued. The antichristian generation by whom came the great offence will fall under this woe, for their delusions of sinners, 2 *Thes.* ii. 11, 12, and their persecutions of saints, *Rev.* xvii. 1, 2, 6; for the righteous God will reckon with those that ruin the eternal interests of precious souls, and the temporal interests of precious saints; for precious in the sight of the Lord is the blood of souls and the blood of saints; and men will be reckoned with, not only for their doings, but for the fruit of their doings, the mischief done by them.

11. *In particular.* Christ speaks here of offences given.

First. By us to ourselves, which is expressed by our hand or foot offending us. In such a case, it must be cut off, *ver.* 8, 9. This Christ had said before, *ch.* v. 29, 30, where it especially refers to seventh commandment sins; here it is taken more generally. Note, Those hard sayings of Christ, which are displeasing to flesh and blood, need to be repeated to us again and again, and all little enough. Now observe, 1. What it is that is here enjoined. We must part with an eye, or a hand, or a foot,—that is, that whatever it is which is dear to us,—when it proves unavoidably an occasion of sin to us. Note, 1st. Many prevailing temptations to sin arise from within ourselves: our own eyes and hands offend us; if there were never a devil to tempt us, we should be "drawn away of our own lust." Nay, those things which in themselves are good, and may be used as instruments of good, yet, through the corruptions of our hearts, prove snares to us, incline us to sin, and hinder us in duty. 2nd. In such a case we must, as far as lawfully we may, part with that which we cannot keep without being entangled in sin by it. First. It is certain the inward lust must be mortified, though it be dear to us as an eye or a hand. The flesh, with its affections and lusts, must be mortified, *Gal.* v. 24; the body of sin must be destroyed; corrupt inclinations and appetites must be checked and crossed; the beloved lust, that has been rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel, must be abandoned with abhorrence. Secondly. The outward occasions of sin must be avoided, though we thereby put as great a violence upon ourselves as it would be to cut off a hand or pluck out an eye. When Abraham quitted his native country, for fear of being ensnared into the idolatry of it, and when Moses quitted Pharaoh's court, for fear of being entangled in the sinful pleasures of it, there was a right hand cut off. We must think nothing too dear to part with for the keeping of a good conscience. 2. Upon what inducement this is required: "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to be cast into hell." The argument is taken from the future state, from heaven and hell; thence are fetched the most cogent dissuasions from sin. The argument is the same with that of the apostle, *Rom.* viii. 13. 1st. If we live after the flesh, we must die; having two eyes, no breaches made upon the body of sin, inbred corruption, like Adonijah, never displeased, we shall be cast into hell fire. 2nd. If we through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live: that is meant by our entering into life maimed; that is, the body of sin maimed; and it is but maimed at the best, while we are in this world. If the right hand of the old man be cut off, and its right eye plucked out, its chief policies blasted, and powers broken, it is well; but there is still an eye and a hand remaining, with which it will struggle. They that are Christ's have nailed the flesh to the cross, but it is not yet dead; its life is prolonged, but its dominion taken away, *Dan.* vii. 12; and the deadly wound given it, that shall not be healed.

Secondly. Concerning offences given by us to others, especially Christ's little ones, which we are here charged to take heed of, pursuant to what he had said, *ver.* 6. Observe,

1. The caution itself: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones." This is spoken to the disciples. As Christ will be displeased with the enemies of his church, if they wrong any of the members of it, even the least, so he will be displeased with the great ones of the church, if they despise the little ones of it: "You that are striving who shall be greatest, take heed lest in this contest you despise the little ones." We may understand it literally, of little children; of them Christ was speaking, *ver.* 3, 4; the infant seed of the faithful belong to the family of Christ, and are not to be despised; or, figuratively, true but weak believers are these little ones, that, in their outward condition, or the frame of their spirits, are like little children, the lambs of Christ's flock. 1st. We must not despise them; not think meanly of them, as lambs despised, *Job* xii. 5. We must not make a jest of their infirmities, not look upon them with contempt, nor carry it scornfully or disdainfully towards them, as if we cared not what became of them: we must not say, "Though they be offended, and grieved, and stumbled, what is that to us?" nor make a slight matter of doing that which will entangle and perplex them. This despising of the little ones is what we are largely cautioned against, *Rom.* xiv. 3, 10, 15, 20, 21. We must not impose upon the consciences of others, nor bring them into subjection to our humours, as they do who say to men's souls, "Bow down, that we may go over." There is a respect owing to every man's conscience that appears to be conscientious. 2nd. We must take heed that we do not despise them: we must be afraid of the sin, and be very cautious what we say and do, lest we

should, through inadvertency, give offence to Christ's little ones—lest we put contempt upon them, and are not aware of it. There were those that hated them, and cast them out, and yet said, "Let the Lord be glorified." And we must be afraid of the punishment: "Take heed of despising them, for it is at your peril if you do."

2. The reasons to enforce the caution. We must not look upon these little ones as contemptible; because, really, they are considerable: let not earth despise those whom Heaven respects; nor let them be looked upon by us with disdain whom God has put honour upon, and looks upon with respect, as his favourites. To prove that the little ones which believe in Christ are worthy to be respected, consider, 1st. The ministration of the good angels about them: "In heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father." This Christ saith to us, and we may take it upon his word, who came from heaven to let us know what is done there by the world of angels. Two things he lets us know concerning them: First. That they are the little ones' angels. God's angels are theirs, for all his is ours, if we be Christ's, 1 *Cor.* iii. 22. They are theirs, for they have a charge concerning them, to minister for their good, *Heb.* i. 14, to pitch their tents about them, and bear them up in their arms. Some have imagined that every particular saint has a guardian angel; but what need we suppose that, when we are sure every particular saint, when there is occasion, has a guard of angels? This is particularly applied here to the little ones, because they are most despised and most exposed. They have but little that they can call their own, but they can look by faith on the heavenly hosts, and call them theirs. While the great ones of the world have honourable men for their retinue and guards, the little ones of the church are attended with glorious angels; which speaks not only their dignity, but the danger those run themselves upon that despise and abuse them. It is ill being enemies to those who are so guarded; and it is good having God for our God, for then we have his angels for our angels. Secondly. That they "always behold the face of the Father in heaven." This speaks, 1st. The angels' continual felicity and honour. The happiness of heaven consists in the vision of God, seeing him face to face, as he is, beholding his beauty: this the angels have without interruption; when they are ministering to us on earth, yet even then, by contemplation, they behold the face of God, for they are "full of eyes within." Gabriel, when speaking to Zacharias, yet stands in the presence of God, *Rev.* iv. 8; *Lu.* i. 19. The expression intimates, as some think, the special dignity and honour of the little ones' angels: the prime ministers of state are said to see the king's face, *Est.* i. 14; as if the strongest angels had the charge of the weakest saints. 2nd. It speaks their continual readiness to minister to the saints: they "behold the face of God," expecting to receive orders from him, what to do for the good of the saints. "As the eyes of the servant are to the hand of his master," ready to go or come upon the least beck, so the eyes of the angels are upon the face of God, waiting for the intimations of his will, which those winged messengers fly swiftly to fulfil: they go and return like a flash of lightning, *Eze.* i. 14. If we would behold the face of God in glory hereafter, as the angels do, *Lu.* xx. 36, we must "behold the face of God" now, in readiness to our duty, as they do, *Acts* ix. 6. 2nd. The gracious design of Christ concerning them, *ver.* 11: "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost." This is a reason, First. Why the little ones' angels have such a charge concerning them, and do attend upon them: it is in pursuance of Christ's design to save them. Note, The ministration of angels is founded in the mediation of Christ; through him angels are reconciled to us; and when they celebrated God's good will towards men, to it they annexed their own. Secondly. Why they are not to be despised: because Christ came to save them, to save them that are lost; that is, the little ones that are lost in their own eyes, *Isa.* lvi. 3, that are at a loss within themselves; or rather, the children of men. Note, 1st. Our souls by nature are lost souls, as a traveller is lost that is out of his way, as a convicted prisoner is lost. God lost the service of fallen man, lost the honour he should have had from him. 2nd. Christ's errand into the world was to save that which was lost, to reduce us to our allegiance, restore us to our work, reinstate us in our privileges, and so to put us into the right way that leads to our great end; to save those that are spiritually lost from being eternally so. 3rd. This is a good reason why the least and weakest believers should not be despised or offended. If Christ put such a value upon them, let not us undervalue them; if he denied himself so much for their salvation, surely we should deny ourselves for their edification and consolation. See this argument urged, *Rom.* xiv. 15; 1 *Cor.* viii. 11, 12. Nay, if Christ came into the world to save souls, and his heart is so much upon that work, he will reckon severely with those that obstruct and hinder it by obstructing the progress of those that are setting their faces heavenwards, and so thwart his great design. 3rd. The tender regard which our heavenly father has to these little ones, and his concern for their welfare. This is illustrated by a comparison, *ver.* 12–14. Observe the gradation of the argument: the angels of God are their servants, the Son of God is their Saviour, and, to complete their honour, God himself is their friend: "None shall pluck them out of my Father's hand," *Jno.* x. 24. Here is, 1. The comparison, *ver.* 12, 13: The owner that has lost one sheep out of a hundred, doth not slight it; but diligently inquires after it, is hugely pleased when he has found it, and has in that a sensible and affecting joy, more than in the ninety and nine that wandered not. The fear he was in of losing that one, and the surprise of finding it, add to that joy. Now this is applicable, 1st. To the state of fallen man in general: he is strayed like a lost sheep; the angels that stood were as the ninety-nine that never went astray: wandering man is sought upon the mountains, which Christ in a great fatigue traversed in pursuit of him, and he is found; which is matter of joy. Greater joy there is in heaven for returning sinners than for remaining angels. 2nd. To particular believers that are offended, and put out of their way by the stumblingblocks that are laid in their way, or the wiles of those that seduce them out of the way. Now, though but one of a hundred should thereby be driven off, as sheep easily are, yet that one shall be looked after with a great deal of care, the return of it welcomed with a great deal of pleasure; and therefore the wrong done to it, no doubt, will be reckoned for with a great deal of displeasure. If there be joy in heaven for the finding of one of these little ones, there is wrath in heaven for the offending of them. Note, God is graciously concerned, not only for his flock in general, but for every lamb or sheep that belongs to it. Though they are many, yet out of these many he can easily miss one, for he is a great Shepherd; but not so easily lose it, for he is a good Shepherd, and takes a more particular cognizance of his flock than ever any did; for he "callest his own sheep by name," *Jno.* x. 3. See a full exposition of this parable, *Eze.* xxxiv. 2, 10, 16, 19. 2. The reddition of this comparison, *ver.* 14: "It is not the will of your Father that one of these little ones should perish." More is implied than is expressed: it is not his will that any should perish; but, 1st. It is his will that these little ones should be saved; it is the will of his design and delight; he has designed it, and his heart is upon it, and he will effect it: it is the will of his precept that all should do what they can to further it, and nothing to hinder it. 2nd. This care extends itself to every particular member of the flock, even the meanest. We think, if but one or two be offended and ensnared, it is no great matter, we need not mind it; but God's thoughts of love and tenderness are above ours. 3rd. It is intimated that those who

xvii. 27. "The sea," was the fresh-water lake of Tiberias, or sea of Galilee. The idea that there was no miracle, but that a fish was caught and sold for a piece of money (a stater, or shekel, worth half-a-crown), is quite untenable. Nothing in the language justifies such a supposition.

xviii. 10. The meaning of our Lord's words here has been much disputed. Three principal opinions have been advocated:—1. That certain attendant and guardian angels are allotted to individuals,

even in childhood. 2. That the humble disciples of Christ are favoured with special angelic ministrations. 3. That the souls of deceased children, here called angels, are admitted to the bliss of heaven. The first opinion is a very ancient one, and is still maintained by the Romish Church and some others. But our Lord certainly does not say that angels are the guardians of children in the sense meant. What he says is that in heaven the angels always see the face of God, which is quite a different thing. In defence of

any thing by which any of these little ones are brought into danger of perishing, contradict the will of God, and highly provoke him; and though they cannot prevail in it, yet they will be reckoned with for it, by Him who, in his saints, as in other things, is jealous of his honour, and will not bear to have it trampled on: see *Ier. iii. 15*. What mean ye that you beat my people? *Ps. lxxvi. 8, 9*. Observe that, *ver. 19*, Christ called God, "my Father which is in heaven;" *ver. 14*, he calls him, "your Father which is in heaven," intimating that he is not ashamed to call his poor disciples brethren,—for have not he and they one Father? *Jno. xx. 17*: "I ascend to my Father, and your Father;" therefore ours, because his. This intimates likewise the ground of the safety of his little ones, that God is their Father, and is therefore inclined to succour them. A father takes care of all his children, but is particularly tender of the little ones, *Gen. xiv. 20*. He is their Father in heaven, a place of prospect, and therefore se sees all the indignities offered them; and a place of power, therefore he is able to avenge them. This comforts offended little ones, that their Witness is in heaven, *Job xvi. 19*; their Judge is there, *Ps. lxxviii. 45*.

15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. 18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Christ, having cautioned his disciples not to give offence, comes next to direct them what they must do in case of offences given them; which may be understood, either of personal injuries—and then these directions are intended for the preserving the peace of the church,—or of public scandals,—and then they are intended for the preserving of the purity and beauty of the church. Let us consider it both ways.

1. Let us apply it to the quarrels that happen among Christians upon any account. If thy brother trespass against thee, by grieving thy soul, *1 Cor. vii. 12*, by affronting thee, or putting contempt or abuse upon thee; if he blemish thy good name by false reports or tale-bearing; if he encroach on thy rights, or be any way injurious to thee in thy estate; if he be guilty of any of those trespasses that are instanced in *Lev. vi. 2, 3*; if he transgress the laws of justice, charity, or relative duties,—these are trespasses against us, and often happen among Christ's disciples; and sometimes, for want of prudence, are of very ill consequence. Now observe what is the rule prescribed in this case:

First. "Go, and tell him his fault between him and thee alone." Let this be compared with, and explained by, *Lev. xix. 17*: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart;" that is, "If thou hast conceived a displeasure at thy brother, for any injury he hath done thee, do not suffer thy resentments to ripen into a secret malice, like a wound that is most dangerous when it bleeds inwardly; but give vent to them in a mild and grave admonition; let them so spend themselves, and they will expire the sooner: do not go and rail against him behind his back; but thou shalt in any ways reprove him. If he hath, indeed, done thee a considerable wrong, endeavour to make him sensible of it; but let the rebuke be private, between thee and him alone; if thou wouldst convince him, do not expose him, for that will but exasperate him, and make the reproof look like a revenge." This agrees with *Pr. xxv. 8, 9*: "Go not forth hastily to strive," but "debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself;"—argue it calmly and amicably; and "if he shall hear thee," well and good, "thou hast gained thy brother;" there is an end of the controversy, and it is a happy end; let no more be said of it, but let the falling out of friends be the renewing of friendship.

Secondly. "If he will not hear thee;" if he will not own himself in a fault, nor come to an agreement, yet do not despair, but try what he will say to it if thou "take one or two more," not only to be witnesses of what passeth, but to reason the case further with him; he will be the more likely to hearken to them, because they are disinterested; and if reason will rule him, the word of reason "in the mouth of two or three witnesses" will be better spoken to him, (*plus vident oculi quam oculus*),—"Many eyes see more than one," and more regarded by him, and perhaps it will influence him to acknowledge his error, and to say, "I repent."

Thirdly. "If he shall neglect to hear them," and will not refer the matter to their arbitration, then tell it to the church,—to the ministers, elders, or other officers, or the most considerable persons in the congregation you belong to; make them the referees to accommodate the matter; and do not presently appeal to the magistrate, or fetch a writ for him. This is fully explained by the apostle, *1 Cor. vi.*, where he reproves those that went to law before the unjust, and not before the saints, *ver. 1*; and would have the saints to judge those small matters (*ver. 2*) that pertain to this life, *ver. 3*. If you ask who is the church, that must be told, the apostle directs there, *ver. 5*, "Is there not a wise man among you?"—those of the church that are presumed most capable of determining such matters; and he speaks ironically, when he saith, *ver. 4*, "Set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church;"—those, if there be no better, those—rather than suffer an irreconcilable breach between two church members. This rule was then in a special manner requisite, when the civil government was in the hands of such as were not only aliens, but enemies.

Fourthly. "If he will not hear the church," will not stand to their award, but

persists in the wrong that he has done thee, and proceeds to do thee further wrong, "let him be to thee as a heathen man, and a publican;"—take the benefit of the law against him, but let that always be the last remedy; appeal not to the courts of justice till thou hast first tried all other means to compromise the matter in variance; or thou mayest, if thou wilt, break off thy friendship and familiarity with him; though thou must by no means study revenge, yet thou mayest choose whether thou wilt have any dealings with him, at least in such a way as may give him an opportunity of doing the like again: thou wouldst have healed him, wouldst have preserved his friendship, but he would not, and so has forfeited it. If a man cheat and abuse me once, it is his fault; if twice, it is my own.

II. Let us apply it to scandalous sins, which are an offence to the little ones, of ill example to those that are weak and pliable, and of great grief to those that are weak and timorous. Christ having taught us to indulge the weakness of our brethren, here cautions us not to indulge their wickedness under pretence of that. Christ, designing to erect a church for himself in the world, here took care, 1. Of its purity: that it might have an expulsive faculty, a power to cleanse and clear itself, like a fountain of living waters, which is necessary as long as the net of the Gospel brings up both good fish and bad. 2. Of its peace and order: that every member may know his place and duty, and the purity of it may be preserved in a regular way, and not tumultuously. Now let us see,

First. What is the case supposed. "If thy brother trespass against thee." 1. The offender is a brother; one that is in Christian communion, that is baptized, that hears the Word, and prays with thee, with whom thou joinest in the worship of God, stately or occasionally. Note, Church discipline is for church members: "Them that are without, God judgeth," *1 Cor. v. 12, 13*. When any trespass is done against us, it is good to remember that the trespasser is a brother, which furnisheth us with a qualifying consideration. 2. The offence is a trespass against thee: "If thy brother sin against thee, (so the word is,) if he do any thing which is offensive to thee as a Christian." Note, A gross sin against God is a trespass against his people, that have a true concern for his honour. Christ and believers have twisted interests; what is done against them, Christ takes as done against himself; and what is done against him, they cannot but take as done against themselves: "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me," *Ps. lxxix. 9*.

Secondly. What is to be done in this case. We have here,

1. The rules prescribed, *ver. 15–17*. Proceed in this method:

1st. "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Do not stay till he comes to thee; but go to him as the physician visits the patient, and the shepherd goes after the lost sheep. Note, We should think no pains too much to take for the recovering of a sinner to repentance. "Tell him his fault," mind him of what he has done, and of the evil of it; shew him his abominations. Note, People are loath to see their faults, and have need to be told of them. Though the fact is plain, and the fault too, yet they must be put together with application. Great sins often amaze conscience, and, for the present, stupify and silence it, and there is need of help to awaken it. David's own heart smote him when he had cut off Saul's skirt, and when he had numbered the people; but (which is very strange) we do not find that it smote him in the matter of Uriah, till Nathan told him, "Thou art the man." Tell him his fault, *ελεγχον αυτον*, argue the case with him, (so the word signifies,) and do it with reason and argument, not with passion. Where the fault is plain and great, the person proper for us to deal with, and we have an opportunity for it, and there is no apparent danger of doing more hurt than good, we must, with meekness and faithfulness, tell people of what is amiss in them. Christian reproof is an ordinance of Christ for the bringing of sinners to repentance, and must be managed as an ordinance. Let the reproof be private, "between him and thee alone," that it may appear you seek not his reproach but his repentance. Note, It is a good rule, which should ordinarily be observed among Christians, not to speak of our brethren's faults to others, till we have first spoken of them to themselves: this would make less reproaching, and more reproofing; that is, less sin committed, and more duty done. It will be likely to work upon an offender, when he sees his reprovers concerned, not only for his salvation, in telling him his fault, but for his reputation, in telling him of it privately. "If he shall hear thee," that is, heed thee,—if he be wrought upon by the reproof, it is well, "thou hast gained thy brother,"—"thou hast helped to save him from sin and ruin, and it will be to thy credit and comfort," *Jas. v. 19, 20*. Note, The converting of a soul is the winning of that soul, *Pr. xi. 30*; and we should covet it, and labour after it, as gain to us; and if the loss of a soul be a great loss, the gain of a soul is surely no small gain.

2nd. If that doth not prevail, then "take with thee one or two more," *ver. 16*. Note, We must not be weary of well doing, though we see not presently the good success of it. "If he will not hear thee, yet do not give him up as in a desperate case; say not, it will be to no purpose to deal with him any further, but go on in the use of other means." Even those that harden their necks must be often reproofed; and those that oppose themselves, instructed in meekness. In work of this kind, we must "travail in birth again," *Gal. iv. 19*; and it is after many pains and throes that the child is born. "Take with thee one or two more;" First, To assist thee: "they may speak some pertinent, convincing word, which thou didst not think of, and may manage the matter with more prudence than thou didst." Note, Christians should see their need of help in doing good; and pray in the aid of one another; as in other things, so in giving reproofs, that the duty may be done, and may be done well. Secondly, To affect him. He will be the more likely to be humbled for his fault, when he sees it witnessed against by two or three, *Deu. xix. 15*. Note, Those should think it high time to repent and reform, that see their miscarriages become a general offence, and scandal. Though, in such a world as this, it is rare to find one good whom all men speak well of; yet it is more rare to find one good whom all men speak ill of. Thirdly, To be witnesses of his carriage, in case the matter should afterwards be brought before the church. None should come under the censure of the church, as obstinate and contumacious, till it be very well proved that they are so.

3rd. "If he neglect to hear them," and will not be humbled, then "tell it to the church," *ver. 17*. There are some stubborn spirits, to whom the likeliest means of conviction prove ineffectual; yet such must not be given over as incurable; but let the matter be made more public, and further help called in. Note, First, Private admonitions must always go before public censures; if gentler methods will do the work, those that are more rough and severe must not be used, *Tit. iii. 10*. Those that will be reasoned out of their sins, need not be shamed out of them. Let God's work be done effectually, but with as little noise as may be: his kingdom comes with power, but not with observation. But, Secondly, Where private admonition doth not prevail, there public censure must take place. The church must receive the complaints of the offended, and rebuke the sins of the offenders, and judge between them, after an impartial inquiry made into the merits of the cause. "Tell it to the church." It is a thousand pities that this appointment of Christ, which was designed to end differences, and remove offences, should itself be so much a matter of debate, and occasion differences and offences through the corruption of men's hearts. What church must be told? is the great question. The civil magistrate, say some; the Jewish Sanhedrim, then in being, say others. But by what follows, *ver. 18*,

both the first and second views, it is said that to see the face of God is to be his servant, to receive his commands, and to enjoy his favour. This explanation seems, however, to be a direct argument in favour of the third explanation, the supporters of which, with Watson, refer to *Acts xii. 15*, as showing that the spirit of a deceased person is called an angel. This last view is certainly consistent with the Scripture doctrine that angels minister to the children of God, while it is very comforting to bereaved parents.

The doctrine of special guardian angels is to be regarded with distrust, in consequence of the many absurd superstitions which it has been allied with.

xviii. 11. This verse is altogether omitted by some of the more ancient authorities, and some editors therefore bracket it as doubtful.

xviii. 12. Alford's version of the latter clause is, "Will he not leave the ninety and nine on the mountains, and go and seek that which is going astray?" The flocks were taken from their winter

It is plain he means a Christian church, which, though not yet formed, was now in the embryo. "Tell the church," that is, that particular church, in the communion of which the offender liveth; make the matter known to those of that congregation, who are by consent appointed to receive informations of that kind. Tell it to the guides and governors of that church, the minister or ministers, the elders or deacons, or, if such the constitution of the society be, tell it to the representatives, or heads of the congregation, or to all the members of it; let them examine the matter, and if they find the complaint frivolous and groundless, let them rebuke the complainant; if they find it just, let them rebuke the offender, and call him to repentance, and this will be likely to put an edge and an efficacy upon the reproof, because given, 1. With greater solemnity; and, 2. With greater authority. It is an awful thing to receive a reproof from a church, from a minister, a reprover by office, and therefore the more regarded by such as pay any deference to an institution of Christ and his ambassadors.

4th. "If he neglect to hear the church," if he slight the admonition, and will neither be ashamed of his faults, nor amend them, "let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican;" let him be cast out of the communion of the church, secluded from special ordinances, degraded from the dignity of a church member; let him be put under disgrace, and let the members of the society be warned to withdraw from him, that he may be ashamed of his sin, and that they may not be infected by it, or chargeable with it. Those who put contempt on the orders and rules of a society, and bring reproach upon it, forfeit the honours and privileges of it, and are justly laid aside till they repent, and submit, and reconcile themselves to it again. Christ has appointed this method for the vindicating of the church's honour, the preserving of its purity, and the conviction and reformation of those that are scandalous. But observe, he doth not say, Let him be to thee as a devil, or damned spirit, as one whose case is desperate—but, as a heathen and a publican, as one in a capacity of being restored and received again. "Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." The directions given to the church of Corinth concerning the incestuous person, agree with the rules here; he must be taken away from among them, 1 Cor. v. 2, must be delivered to Satan; for if he be cast out of Christ's kingdom, he is looked upon as belonging to Satan's kingdom; they must not keep company with him, ver. 11, 13. But when by this he is humbled and reclaimed, he must be welcomed into communion again, and all shall be well.

2. Here is a warrant signed for the ratification of all the church's proceedings according to these rules, ver. 18. What was said before to Peter is here said to all the disciples, and in them to all the faithful office-bearers in the church to the world's end; while ministers preach the word of Christ faithfully, and in the government of their church strictly adhere to his laws, *clave non errante*, "the key not turning the wrong way," they may be assured he will own them, and stand by them, and will ratify what they say and do, so that it shall be taken as said and done by himself. He will own them, 1st. In their sentence of suspension: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven." If the censures of the church duly follow the institution of Christ, his judgments will follow the censures of the church, his spiritual judgments, which are the sorest of all other, such as the rejected Jews fell under, *Rom. xi. 8*, a spirit of rebellion; for Christ will not suffer his own ordinances to be trampled upon, but will say Amen to the righteous sentences which the church passeth on obstinate offenders. How light soever proud scornors may make of the censures of the church, let them know that they are confirmed in the court of heaven, and it is in vain for them to appeal to that court, for judgment is there already given against them. They that are shut out from the congregation of the righteous now, shall not stand in it in the great day, *Ps. i. 5*. Christ will not own those as his, nor receive them to himself, whom the church has duly delivered to Satan; but if, through error or envy, the censure of the church be unjust, Christ will graciously find those who are so cast out, *Jno. ix. 34, 35*. 2nd. In their sentence of absolution: "Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Note, *First*. No church censures bind so fast but that, upon the sinner's repentance and reformation, they may and must be loosed again. Sufficient is the punishment which has attained its end, and the offender must then be forgiven and comforted, *2 Cor. ii. 6*. There is no impassable gulf fixed, but that between hell and heaven. *Secondly*. Those that, upon their repentance, are received by the church into communion again, may take the comfort of their absolution in heaven, if their hearts be upright with God. As suspension is for the terror of the obstinate, so absolution is for the encouragement of the penitent. St. Paul speaks in the person of Christ, when he saith, "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also," *2 Cor. ii. 10*.

Now it is a great honour which Christ here puts upon the church, that he will condescend, not only to take cognizance of their sentences, but to confirm them, and in the following verses, we have two things laid down as the ground of this.

First. God's readiness to answer the church's prayers, ver. 19: "If two of you shall agree," harmoniously, "touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them." Apply this, 1. In general, to all the requests of the faithful praying seed of Jacob; they shall not seek God's face in vain. Many promises we have in Scripture of a gracious answer to the prayers of faith, but this here gives a particular encouragement to joint prayer; the requests which two of you agree in, much more which many agree in. No law of heaven limits the number of petitioners. Note, Christ has been pleased to put an honour upon, and to allow a special efficacy in, the joint prayers of the faithful, and the common supplications they make to God. If they join in the same prayer, if they meet by appointment to come together to the throne of grace on some special errand, or, though at a distance, agree in some particular matter of prayer, they shall speed well. Besides the general regard God has to the prayers of the saints, he is particularly pleased with their union and communion in those prayers: see *2 Chr. v. 13; Acts iv. 24*. 2. In particular, to these requests that are put up to God about binding and loosing, to which this promise seems more especially to refer. Observe, 1st. That the power of church discipline is not here lodged in the hand of a single person, but two at least are supposed to be concerned in it. When the incestuous Corinthian was to be cast out, the church was gathered together, *1 Cor. v. 4*; and it was a punishment inflicted of many, *2 Cor. ii. 6*. In an affair of such importance, "two are better than one; and in a multitude of counsellors there is safety." 2nd. It is good to see those that have the management of church discipline agreeing in it. Heats and animosities among them whose work it is to remove offences, will be the greatest offence of all. 3rd. Prayer must evermore go along with church discipline. Pass no sentence which you cannot in faith ask of God to confirm. The binding and loosing spoken of, *ch. xvi. 17*, was done by preaching; this by praying. Thus the whole power of gospel ministers is resolved into the word and prayer, to which they must wholly give themselves. He doth not say, If you shall agree to sentence and decree a thing, it shall be done, as if ministers were judges and lords; but if you agree to ask it of God, from him you shall obtain it. Prayer must go along with all our endeavours for the conversion of sinners: see *Jas. v. 16*. 4th. The unanimous petitions of the church of God for the ratification of their just censures shall be heard in heaven, and obtain an answer. It shall be done; it shall be bound and loosed in heaven: God will set his fiat to the appeals and applications you make to him. If Christ (who here speaks as one having authority)

say it shall be done, we may be assured it is done, though we see not the effect in that way that we look for it. God doth especially own and accept us when we are praying for those that have offended him and us. The Lord turned the captivity of Job, not when he prayed for himself, but when he prayed for his friends, who had trespassed against him.

Secondly. The presence of Christ in the assemblies of Christians, ver. 20. Every believer hath the presence of Christ with him, but where two or three are gathered in his name, not only for discipline, but for religious worship, or any act of Christian communion. Meetings of Christians for holy purposes are hereby appointed, directed, and encouraged. 1. They are hereby appointed. The church of Christ in the world exists most visibly in religious assemblies, which it is the will of Christ should be set up, and kept up, for the honour of God, the edification of men, and the preserving of a face of religion upon the world. When God intends special answers to prayer, he calls for a solemn assembly, *Joel ii. 15, 16*. If there be no liberty and opportunity for large and numerous assemblies, yet then it is the will of God that two or three should gather together to shew their good will to the great congregation. Note, When we cannot do what we would in religion, we must do as we can, and God will accept us. 2. They are hereby directed to gather together in Christ's name. In the exercise of church discipline, they must come together in the name of Christ, *1 Cor. v. 4*. That name gives what they do, an authority on earth, and an acceptableness in heaven. In meeting for worship, we must have an eye to Christ; we must come together by virtue of his warrant and appointment, in token of our relation to him, professing faith in him, and in communion with all that in every place call upon him. When we come together to worship God in a dependence upon the Spirit and grace of Christ as mediator, for assistance,—and upon his merit and righteousness as mediator, for acceptance,—having an actual regard to him as our way to the Father, then we are met together in his name. 3. They are hereby encouraged with an assurance of the presence of Christ, "there am I in the midst of them." By his common presence he is in all places as God, but this is a promise of his special presence; where his saints are, his sanctuary is, and there he will dwell; it is his rest, *Ps. cxxii. 14*; it is his walk, *Rev. ii. 1*; he is in the midst of them to quicken and strengthen them, to refresh and comfort them, as the sun in the midst of the universe. He is in the midst of them, that is, in their hearts; it is a spiritual presence, the presence of Christ's Spirit with their spirit, that is here intended. "There am I," not only I will be there, but I am there; as if he came first, is ready before them; they shall find him there. He repeated this promise at parting, *ch. xxviii. 20*: "Lo, I am with you always." Note, The presence of Christ in the assemblies of Christians is promised, and may in faith be prayed for and depended on: "there am I." This is equivalent to the Shechinah, or special presence of God in the tabernacle and temple of old, *Ex. xl. 24; 2 Chr. v. 14*.

Though but two or three are met together, Christ is among them. This is an encouragement to the meeting of a few, when it is either, 1. Of choice. Besides the secret worship performed by particular persons, and the public services of the whole congregation, there may be occasion sometimes for two or three to come together, either for mutual assistance in conference, or joint assistance in prayer,—not in contempt of public worship, but in concurrence with it,—there Christ will be present. Or, 2. By constraint. When there are not more than two or three to come together, or if there be, they dare not for fear of the Jews, yet Christ will be in the midst of them; for it is not the multitude, but the faith and sincere devotion of the worshippers, that invites the presence of Christ. And though there be but two or three, the smallest number that can be, yet if Christ make one among them, who is the principal one, their meeting is as honourable and comfortable as if they were two or three thousand.

21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. 23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord, after that

fold, and pastured upon the mountains or hills during the spring of the year.

xviii. 17. This is another verse in which the Lord's teaching has been terribly misunderstood. The word "church" may here signify an assembly of our Lord's disciples, but there is nothing to intimate that it anticipates the governing body of an ecclesiastical corporation, like that of Rome, for example. The word "church," honestly explained, signifies a congregation or assembly in this text.

Those who deny to the community or congregation all right to a share in the affairs of the church lose sight of the true sense of such a passage as this.

xviii. 18. Our Saviour here says to all the apostles what in chap. xvi. 19 he said to Peter only. (See the notes upon that passage.)

xviii. 21, 22. As observed by Dr. Lightfoot, Peter's question relates to the Saviour's words in verse 15. The form of it was probably suggested by the rabbinical rules relating to the forgiveness of offences.

he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. 35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

This part of the discourse concerning offences, is certainly to be understood of personal wrongs, which it is in our power to forgive. Now observe,

I. *Peter's question concerning this matter*, ver. 21: "Lord, how oft shall my brother trespass against me, and I forgive him?" Will it suffice to do it seven times?

First. He takes it for granted that he must forgive; Christ had before taught his disciples this lesson, *ch. vi. 14, 15*, and Peter has not forgot it. He knows he must not only not bear a grudge against his brother, or meditate revenge, but he must be as good a friend as ever, and forget the injury.

Secondly. He thinks it a great matter to forgive till seven times; he means not seven times a day, as Christ said, *Lu. xvii. 4*, but seven times in his life; supposing, that if a man had any way abused him seven times, though he were never so desirous to be reconciled, he might then abandon his society, and have no more to do with him. Perhaps Peter had an eye to *Pr. xxiv. 16*: "A just man falleth seven times;" or to the mention of three transgressions, and four, which God would no more pass by, *Amos ii. 1*. Note, There is a proneness in our corrupt nature to stint ourselves in that which is good, and to be afraid of doing too much in religion, particularly of forgiving too much, though we have so much forgiven us.

II. *Christ's direct answer to Peter's question*: "I say not unto thee till seven times," never intended to set up any such bounds, "but until seventy times seven;" a certain number for an indefinite one, but a great one. Note, It doth not look well for us to keep count of the offences done against us by our brethren. There is something of ill nature in scoring up the injuries we forgive, as if we would allow ourselves to be revenged when the measure is full; God keeps an account, *Deu. xxxii. 34*, because he is the judge, and vengeance is his; but we must not, lest we be found stepping into his throne. It is necessary to the preservation of peace, both within and without, to pass by injuries, without reckoning how often: to forgive and forget. God multiplies his pardons, and so should we, *Ps. lxxviii. 38-40*; it intimates that we should make it our constant practice to forgive injuries, and should accustom ourselves to it till it becomes habitual.

III. *A further discourse of our Saviour's, by way of parable, to shew the necessity of forgiving the injuries that are done to us*. Parables are of use, not only for the explaining of Christian doctrines, but for the pressing of Christian duties; for they make and leave an impression. The parable is a comment upon the fifth petition of the Lord's prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us;" those and those only may expect to be forgiven of God, who forgive their brethren. The parable represents the kingdom of heaven, that is, the church, and the administration of the gospel dispensation in it. The church is God's family, it is his court; there he dwells, there he rules; God is our master, his servants we are, at least in profession and obligation. In general, the parable intimates how much provocation God has from his family on earth, and how untoward his servants are.

There are three things in the parable:

First. The master's wonderful clemency to his servant who was indebted to him; he forgave him ten thousand talents out of pure compassion to him, ver. 23-27. Where observe, 1. Every sin we commit is a debt to God; not like a debt to an equal, contracted by buying or borrowing, but to a superior; like a debt to a prince when a recognisance is forfeited, or a penalty incurred by a breach of the law, or breach of the peace; like this debt of a servant to his master, by withholding his service, wasting his lord's goods, breaking his indentures, and incurring the penalty: we are all debtors, we owe satisfaction, and are liable to the process of the law. 2. There is an account kept of these debts, and we must shortly be reckoned with for them. This "king would take account of his servants." God now reckons with us by our own consciences; conscience is an auditor for God in the soul, to call us to account, and to account with us. One of the first questions that an awakened conscience asks, is, "How much owest thou unto my Lord?" And unless it be bribed, it will tell the truth, and not write fifty for a hundred. There is another day of reckoning coming, when these accounts will be called over, and either passed or disallowed, and nothing but the blood of Christ will balance the account. 3. The debt of sin is a very great debt; and some are more in debt, by reason of sin, than others. "When he began to reckon," one of the first defaulters appeared to owe ten thousand talents: there is no evading the inquiries of Divine justice; your sin will be sure to find you out. The debt was ten thousand talents; a vast sum, amounting by computation to one million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds sterling; a king's ransom, or a kingdom's subsidy, more likely than a servant's debt. See what our sins are: 1st. For the heinousness of their nature they are talents, the greatest denomination that ever was used in the account of money or weight: every sin is the load of a talent; a talent of lead, this is wickedness, *Zec. v. 7, 8*. The trusts committed to us as stewards of the grace of God, are each of them a talent, *ch. xxv. 15*, a talent of gold; and for every one of them buried, much more for every one of them wasted, we are a talent in debt, and this raises the account. 2nd. For the vastness of their number; they are ten thousand, a myriad, more than the hairs on our head, *Ps. xl. 12*: who can understand the number of his errors, or tell how often he offends, *Ps. xix. 12*. 4. The debt of sin is so great, that we are not able to pay it: "he had not to pay;" sinners are insolvent debtors; the scripture which concludeth all under sin is a statute of bankrupt against us all: silver and gold would not pay our debt, *Ps. xlix. 6, 7*; sacrifice and offering would not do it; our good works are but God's work in us, and cannot make satisfaction; we are without strength, and cannot help ourselves. 5. If God should deal with us in strict justice, we should be condemned as insolvent debtors, and God might exact the debt by glorifying himself in our utter ruin. Justice demands satisfaction; *Curat lex*: "Let the sentence of the law be executed." The servant had contracted this debt by his wastefulness and wilfulness, and therefore might justly be left to lie by it. "His lord commanded him to be sold" as a bond slave into the galleys, sold to grind in the prison house; "his wife and children to be sold, and all that he had, and payment to be made;" see here what every

sin deserves; this is the wages of sin: 1st. To be sold; those that sell themselves to work wickedness, must be sold to make satisfaction: captives to sin are captives to wrath. He that is sold for a bond slave is deprived of all his comforts, and has nothing left him but his life, that he may be sensible of his miseries; which is the case of damned sinners. 2nd. Thus he would have payment to be made, that is, something done towards it, though it is impossible that the sale of one so worthless should amount to the payment of so great a debt. By the damnation of sinners, Divine justice will be to eternity in the satisfying, but never satisfied. 6. Convinced sinners cannot but humble themselves before God, and pray for mercy: the servant under this charge, and this doom, fell down at the feet of his royal master, and worshipped him; or, as some copies read it, he besought him; his address was very submissive and very importunate, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all," ver. 26. The servant knew before that he was so much in debt, and yet was under no concern about it, till he was called to an account. Sinners are commonly careless about the pardon of their sins, till they come under the arrests of some awakening word, some startling providence, or an approaching death; and then, "wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" *Mic. vi. 6*. How easily, how quickly, can God bring the proudest sinner to his feet; Ahab to his sackcloth; Manasseh to his prayers; Pharaoh to his confessions; Judas to his restitution; Simon Magus to his supplication; Belshazzar and Felix to their tremblings: the stoutest heart will truckle when God sets the sins in order before it. This servant doth not deny the debt, nor seek evasions, or go about to abscond. But, 1st. He begs delay: "Have patience with me." Patience and forbearance is a great favour, but it is folly to think that that alone will save us; reprieves are not pardons: many are borne with that are not thereby brought to repentance, *Rom. ii. 4*, and then their being borne with doth them no kindness. 2nd. He promiseth payment: "have patience a while, and I will pay thee all." Note, It is the folly of many that are under convictions of sin, to imagine that they can make God satisfaction for the wrong they have done him; as those that, like a compounding bankrupt, would discharge the debt, by giving their "firstborn for their transgression," *Mic. vi. 7*; that "go about to establish their own righteousness," *Rom. x. 3*. He that had nothing to pay, ver. 25, yet fancied he could pay all: see how close pride sticks, even to awakened sinners; they are convinced, but not humbled. 7. The God of infinite mercy is very ready, out of pure compassion, to forgive the sins of those that humble themselves before him, ver. 27. The lord of that servant, when he might justly have ruined him, mercifully released him; and since he could not be satisfied by the payment of the debt, he would be glorified by the pardon of it. The servant's prayer was, Have patience with me; the master's grant is a discharge in full. Note, 1st. The pardon of sin is owing to the mercy of God, to his tender mercy, *Lu. i. 77, 78*: "He was moved with compassion." God's reasons of mercy are fetched from within himself: he has mercy because he will have mercy. God looked with pity on mankind in general, because miserable, and sent his Son to be a surety for them; he looks with pity on particular penitents, because sensible of their misery, their hearts broken and contrite, and accepts them in the Beloved. 2nd. There is forgiveness with God for the greatest sins, if they be repented of: though the debt was vastly great, he forgave it all, ver. 32; though our sins be very numerous, and very heinous, yet upon gospel terms they may be pardoned. 3rd. The forgiving of the debt is the losing of the debtor: "he loosed him." The obligation is cancelled, the judgment vacated; we never walk at liberty till our sins are forgiven. But observe, though he discharged him from the penalty as a debtor, he did not discharge him from his duty as a servant: the pardon of sin doth not slacken but strengthen our obligations to obedience; and we must reckon it a favour, that God is pleased to continue such wasteful servants as we have been, in such a gainful service as his is, and should therefore deliver us, that we might serve him, *Lu. i. 74*: "I am thy servant," for "thou hast loosed my bonds."

Secondly. The servant's unreasonable severity towards his fellow servant, notwithstanding his lord's clemency to him, ver. 28-30. This represents the sin of those who, though they are not unjust in demanding that which is not their own, yet are rigorous and unmerciful in demanding that which is their own, to the utmost of right, which sometimes proves a real wrong; *summum jus, summa injuria*.—"Push a claim to an extremity, and it becomes a wrong." To exact satisfaction for debts of injury, which tend neither to reparation nor to the public good, but purely for revenge, though the law may allow it in *terrorem*,—"in order to strike terror," and for the hardness of men's hearts, yet savours not of a Christian spirit. To sue for money debts when the debtor cannot possibly pay them, and so to let him rot in prison, argues a greater love of money and a less love of our neighbour than we ought to have, *Neh. v. 7*. See here, 1. How small the debt was, how very small, compared with the ten thousand talents which his lord forgave him; he owed him a hundred pence, about three pounds and half-a-crown of our money. Note, Offences done to men, are nothing to those which are committed against God: dishonours done to a man like ourselves, are but as pence, moths, gnats; but dishonours done to God, are as talents, beams, camels; not that therefore we may make light of wronging our neighbour, for that is also a sin against God; but therefore we should make light of our neighbour's wronging us, and not aggravate it, or study revenge. David was unconcerned at the indignities done to him: "I, as a deaf man, heard not;" but laid much to heart the sins committed against God, for them "rivers of tears run down his eyes." 2. How severe the demand was: he "laid hands on him, and took him by the throat." Proud and angry men think, if the matter of their demand be just, that will bear them out, though the manner of it be never so cruel and unmerciful, but it will not hold. What needed all this violence? The debt might have been demanded without taking the debtor by the throat, without sending for a writ, or setting the bailiff upon him. How lordly is this man's carriage, and yet how base and servile is his spirit. If he had been himself going to prison for his debt to his lord, his occasions would have been so pressing that he might have had some pretence for going to this extremity in requiring his own; but many times, pride and malice prevail more to make men severe, than the most urgent necessity would do. 3. How submissive the debtor was: "his fellow servant," though his equal, yet knowing how much he lay at his mercy, "fell down at his feet," and humbled himself to him for this trifling debt, as much as he did to his lord for that great debt, for "the borrower is servant to the lender," *Pr. xxii. 7*. Note, Those that cannot pay their debts, yet ought to be very respectful to their creditors, and not only give them good words, but do them all the good offices they possibly can. They must not be angry at those who claim their own, nor speak ill of them for it; no, not though they do it in a rigorous manner, but in that case leave it to God to plead their cause. The poor man's request is, "Have patience with me;" he honestly confesseth the debt, and puts not his creditor to the charge of proving it, only begs time. Note, Forbearance, though it be no acquittance, is sometimes a piece of needful and laudable charity. As we must not be hard, so we must not be hasty in our demands, but think how long God bears with us. 4. How implacable and furious the creditor was, ver. 30: he would not have patience with him, would not hearken to his fair promise, but without mercy cast him into prison. How insolently did he trample upon one, as good as himself, that submitted to him! How cruelly did he use one

According to the later testimony of Maimonides, he is most to be commended who is most ready to forgive; but from what follows, it seems that while a first, second, and third offence was forgiven, a fourth was not. In his liberality Peter contemplated the pardon of a seventh fault; but our Lord practically abolished all such limitations by his reply.

xviii. 23-35. The imagery of this parable is derived from the incidents which might occur in an Eastern court. Ten thousand talents

is an enormous sum, say, two millions and a half of our money, and therefore one which no man in a private station would be able to pay. The order that the debtor, his wife and children, and all he had, should be sold, is such as would probably be given by an Oriental despot. That the man who had experienced favour so great as the remission of his debt should deal harshly with others is strange, but quite in accordance with some phases of human character. A hundred pence are a hundred denarii, not much above £3, therefore this

that had done him no harm, and though it would be no advantage to himself! In this, as in a glass, unmerciful creditors may see their own faces, who take pleasure in nothing more than to swallow up and destroy, 2 *Sam. xx. 19*; and glory in having their poor debtor's bones. 5. How much concerned the rest of the servants were: "they were very sorry," ver. 31, sorry for the creditor's cruelty, and for the debtor's calamity. Note, The sins and sufferings of our fellow servants should be matter of grief and trouble to us. It is said that any of our brethren should either make themselves beasts of prey by cruelty and barbarity, or be made beasts of slavery by the inhuman usage of those that have power over them. To see a fellow servant either raging like a bear, or trampled on like a worm, cannot but occasion great regret to all that have any jealousy for the honour, either of their nature or of their religion. See with what eye Solomon looked both upon the tears of the oppressed, and the power of the oppressors, *Ecccl. iv. 1*. 6. How the notice of it was brought to the master: "they came and told their lord." They durst not reprove their fellow servant for it, he was so unreasonable and outrageous: "Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than such a fool in his folly;" but they went to their lord, and besought him to appear for the oppressed against the oppressor. Note, That which gives us occasion for sorrow should give us occasion for prayer: let our complaints, both of the wickedness of the wicked, and of the afflictions of the afflicted, be brought to God and left with him.

III. *The master's just resentment of the cruelty his servant was guilty of.* If the servants took it so heinously, much more would the Master, whose compassions are infinitely above ours. Now observe here,

First, How he reproveth his servant's cruelty, ver. 32, 33: "O thou wicked servant." Note, Unmercifulness is wickedness, it is great wickedness. 1. He upbraids him with the mercy he had found with his master: "I forgave thee all that debt." Those that will use God's favours shall never be upbraided with them, but they that abuse them may expect it, *ch. xi. 20*. Consider, it was all that debt, that great debt. Note, The greatness of sin magnifies the riches of pardoning mercy; we should think how much has been forgiven us, *Lu. vii. 47*. 2. He thence shews him the obligation he was under to be merciful to his fellow servant: "shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?" Note, It is justly expected that such as have received mercy should shew mercy: *Dat ille veniam facile cui venia est opus*,—"He who needs forgiveness, easily bestows it."—*Senec. Agam.* He shews him, 1st. That he should have been more compassionate to the distress of his fellow servant, because he had himself experienced the same distress. What we have had the feeling of ourselves, we can the better have the fellow-feeling of with our brethren. The Israelites know the heart of a stranger, for they were strangers; and this servant should have better known the heart of an arrested debtor, than to have been thus hard upon such an one. 2nd. That he should have been more conformable to the example of his master's tenderness, having himself experienced it so much to his advantage. Note, The comfortable sense of pardoning mercy tends much to the disposing of our hearts to forgive our brethren. It was in the close of the day of atonement that the jubilee trumpet sounded a release of debts, *Lev. xxv. 9*; for we must have compassion on our brethren as God has on us.

Secondly, How he revokes his pardon, and cancelled the acquittance, so that the judgment against him revived, ver. 34: "He delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." Though the wickedness was very great, his lord laid upon him no other punishment but the payment of his own debt. Note, Those that will not come up to the terms of the Gospel, need be no more miserable than to be left open to the law, and to let that have its course against them. See how the punishment answers the sin; he that would not forgive shall not be forgiven: "he delivered him to the tormentors;" the utmost he could do to his fellow servant was but to cast him into prison, but he was himself delivered to the tormentors. Note, The power of God's wrath to ruin us, goes far beyond the utmost extent of any creature's strength and wrath. The reproaches and terrors of his own conscience would be his tormentors, for that is a worm that dies not. Devils, the executioners of God's wrath, that are sinners' tempters now, will be their tormentors for ever. He was sent to bridewell "till he should pay all." Note, Our debts to God are never compounded; either all is forgiven, or all is exacted: glorified saints in heaven are pardoned all through Christ's complete satisfaction; damned sinners in hell are paying all, that is, are punished for all. The offence done to God by sin is in point of honour, what cannot be compounded for, without such a diminution as the case will by no means admit, and therefore, some way or other, by the sinner or by his surety, it must be satisfied.

IV. *Here is the reddition of the whole parable,* ver. 35: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you." The title Christ here gives to God was made use of, ver. 19, in a comfortable promise, "it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven;" here it is made use of in a terrible threatening. If God's government be fatherly, it follows thence that it is not rigorous, but it doth not therefore follow that it is not righteous, or that under his government we must not be kept in awe by the fear of Divine wrath. When we pray to God as our Father in heaven, we are taught to ask for the forgiveness of sins as we forgive our debtors. Observe here,

First, The duty of forgiving; we must from our hearts forgive. Note, We do not forgive our offending brother aright, nor acceptably, if we do not forgive from the heart, for that is it that God looks at: no malice must be harboured there, or ill will to any person, one or another; no projects of revenge must be hatched there, or desires of it, as there are in many who outwardly appear peaceable and reconciled. Yet this is not enough, we must from the heart desire and endeavour the welfare, even of those that have offended us.

Secondly, The danger of not forgiving; so shall your heavenly Father do. 1. This is not intended to teach us that God reverseth his pardons to any, but that he denies them to those that are unqualified for them, according to the tenor of the Gospel; though having seemed to be humbled, like Ahab, they thought themselves, and others thought them, in a pardoned state, and they made bold with the comfort of it. Intimations enough we have in Scripture of the forfeiture of pardons, for caution to the presumptuous; and yet security enough of the continuance of them, for comfort to those that are sincere, but timorous; that the one may fear, and the other may hope. Those that do not forgive their brother's trespasses, did never truly repent of their own, nor ever truly believe the Gospel; and therefore that which is taken away is only what they seemed to have, *Lu. viii. 18*. 2. This is intended to teach us, that "they shall have judgment without mercy, that have shewed no mercy," *Jas. ii. 13*. It is indispensably necessary to pardon and peace, that we not only do justly, but love mercy. It is an essential part of that religion which is pure and undefiled before God and the Father, of that wisdom from above which is "gentle and easy to be intreated." Look how they will answer it another day who, though they bear the Christian name, persist in the most rigorous and unmerciful treatment of their brethren; as if the strictest laws of Christ might be dispensed with for the gratifying of their unbridled passions, and so they curse themselves every time they say the Lord's prayer.

debtor was a poor man, as he could not pay it. The decision of the king in verse 34, revoking the remission of the debt, was an act of sovereign authority, of the nature of a punishment. The doctrine laid down in the application of the parable harmonises with our Lord's teaching on other occasions. An unforgiving spirit excludes a man from God's mercy.

xix. 1. Here for "coasts" read "borders." The "borders of Judea beyond Jordan" is by some understood of the district called Peraea,

CHAPTER XIX.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ changing his quarters, leaving Galilee, and coming into the coasts of Judea, ver. 1, 2. II. His dispute with the Pharisees about divorce, and his discourse with his disciples upon occasion of it, ver. 3—12. III. The kind entertainment he gave to some little children which were brought to him, ver. 13—15. IV. An account of what passed between Christ and a hopeful young gentleman that applied himself to him, ver. 16—22. V. His discourse with his disciples upon that occasion, concerning the difficulty of the salvation of those that have much in the world, and the certain recompense of those that leave all for Christ, ver. 23—30.



AND it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judæa beyond Jordan; 2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

We have here an account of Christ's remove. Observe,

First, He left Galilee. There he had been brought up, and had spent the greatest part of his life in that remote, despicable part of the country; it was only upon occasion of the feasts that he came up to Jerusalem, and manifested himself there; and we may suppose that, having no constant residence there, when he did come, his preaching and miracles were the more observable and acceptable. But it was an instance of his humiliation; and in this, as in other things, he appeared mean, that he would go under the character of a Galilean, a north countryman, the least polite and refined part of the nation. Most of Christ's sermons hitherto had been preached, and most of his miracles wrought, in Galilee; but now, having finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and it was his final farewell; for (unless his passing through the midst of Samaria and Galilee, *Lu. xvii. 11*, was after this, which yet was but a visit *in transitu*) he never came to Galilee again till after his resurrection, which makes this transition very remarkable. Christ did not take his leave of Galilee, till he had done his work there, and then he departed thence. Note, As Christ's faithful ministers are not taken out of the world, so they are not removed from any place till they have finished their testimony in that place, *Rev. xi. 7*. This is very comfortable to those that follow not their own humours, but God's providence, in their removes, that their sayings shall be finished before they depart. And who would desire to continue any where longer than he has work to do for God there?

Secondly, He "came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan," that they might have their day of visitation as well as Galilee, for they also belonged to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But still Christ kept to those parts of Canaan that lay towards other nations. Galilee is called Galilee of the Gentiles, and the Syrians dwelt beyond Jordan; thus Christ intimated, that while he kept within the confines of the Jewish nation, he had his eye upon the Gentiles, and his Gospel was aiming and coming towards them.

Thirdly, "Great multitudes followed him." Where Shiloh is, "there will the gathering of the people be." The redeemed of the Lord are such as "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," *Rev. xiv. 4*. When Christ departs, it is best for us to follow him. It was a piece of respect to Christ, and yet it was a continual trouble to be thus crowded after wherever he went; but he sought not his own ease, nor, considering how mean and contemptible this mob was, (as some would call them,) his own honour much, in the eye of the world. He went about doing good; for so it follows, "he healed them there." This shews what they followed him for,—to have their sick healed; and they found him as able and ready to help here as he had been in Galilee; for wherever this Sun of Righteousness arose, it was with healing under his wings. He healed them there, because he would not have them follow him to Jerusalem, lest it should give offence. He shall not strive, nor cry.

3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put

on the east of the Jordan. In Mark x. 1 we read that Jesus came into the borders of Judea through or by way of the farther side of Jordan, which suggests that after leaving Galilee he took the route to Judea along the eastern side of the Jordan, which could be crossed near Jericho. There were two main routes from Judea to Galilee; one through Samaria, on the west, and the other on the east of the Jordan. Dean Alford says "Bethany, where he went, was beyond Jordan, but on the confines of Judea," a statement which can apply only to

away doth commit adultery. 10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry. 11 But he said unto them, All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given. 12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

We have here the law of Christ in the case of divorce, occasioned, as some other declarations of his will, by a dispute with the Pharisees; so patiently did he endure the contradiction of sinners, that he turned it into instructions to his own disciples. Observe here,

I. *The case proposed by the Pharisees*, ver. 13: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" This they asked, tempting him, not desiring to be taught by him. Some time ago he had, in Galilee, declared his mind in this matter against that which was the common practice, *ch. v. 31, 32*; and if he would in like manner declare himself now against divorce, they would make use of it for the prejudicing and incensing of the people of this country against him, who would look with a jealous eye upon one that attempted to cut them short in a liberty they were fond of. They hoped he would lose himself in the affections of the people, as much by this as by any of his precepts. Or the temptation might be designed thus: If he should say that divorces were not lawful, they would reflect upon him as an enemy to the law of Moses, which allowed them; if he should say they were, they would represent his doctrine as not having that perfection in it which was expected in the doctrine of the Messiah; since though divorces were tolerated, they were looked upon by the strictest sort of people as not of good report. Some think, though the law of Moses did permit divorce, yet in assigning the just causes for it, there was a controversy between the Pharisees among themselves, and they desired to know what Christ said to it. Matrimonial cases have been numerous, and sometimes intricate and perplexed; made so, not by the law of God, but by the lusts and follies of men; and many times in these cases, people resolve, before they ask, what they will do. Their question is, Whether a man may put away his wife for every cause; that it might be done for some cause, even for that of fornication, was granted; but may it be done, as now it commonly was done by the looser sort of people, for every cause; for any cause that a man shall think fit to assign, though never so frivolous; upon every dislike or displeasure: the toleration in this case permitted it, in case she said "no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her," *Deu. xxiv. 1*. This they interpreted so largely as to make any disgust, though causeless, the ground of a divorce.

II. *Christ's answer to this question*: though it was proposed to tempt him, yet being a case of conscience, and a weighty one, he gave a full answer to it; not a direct one, but an effectual one; laying down such principles as undeniably prove that such arbitrary divorces as were then in use, which made the matrimonial bond so very precarious, were by no means lawful. Christ himself would not give the rule, without a reason; nor lay down his judgment, without Scripture proof to support it. Now his argument is this: If husband and wife are, by the will and appointment of God, joined together in the strictest and closest union, then they are not to be lightly, and upon every occasion, separated; if the knot be sacred, it cannot be easily untied. Now to prove that there is such a union between man and wife, he urgeth three things:

First. The creation of Adam and Eve; concerning which he appeals to their own knowledge of the Scriptures: "Have ye not read?" It is some advantage in arguing, to deal with those that own and have read the Scriptures. "You have read," but have not considered, "that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female," *Gen. i. 27; v. 2*. Note, It will be of great use to us often to think of our creation—how, and by whom, what, and for what, we were created. He made them male and female, one female for one male; so that Adam could not divorce his wife, and take another, for there was no other to take. It likewise intimated an inseparable union between them; Eve was a rib out of Adam's side, so that he could not put her away but he must put away a piece of himself, and contradict the manifest indications of her creation. Christ hints briefly at this; but in appealing to what they had read, he refers them to the original record, where it is observable, that though the rest of the living creatures were made male and female, yet it is not said so concerning any of them, but only concerning mankind; because between man and woman the conjunction is rational, and intended for nobler purposes than merely the pleasing of sense, and the preserving of a seed; and it is therefore more close and firm than that between male and female among the brutes, who were not capable of being such helps meet for one another, as Adam and Eve were.

Hence the manner of expression is somewhat singular, *Gen. i. 27*, "In the image of God created he him; male and female created he them;" him and them are used promiscuously, being one by creation before they were two; when they became one again by marriage covenant, that oneness could not but be closer and undissolvable.

Secondly. The fundamental law of marriage; which is, that "a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife," ver. 5. The relation between husband and wife is nearer than that between parents and children; now, if the filial relation may not easily be violated, much less may the marriage union be broken. May a child desert his parents, or may a parent abandon his children for any cause? for every cause? No, by no means; much less may a husband put away his wife, betwixt whom, though not by nature, yet by Divine appointment, the relation is nearer, and the bond of union stronger, than between parents and children; for that is in a great measure superseded by marriage, when a man must leave his parents to cleave to his wife. See here the power of a Divine institution, that the result of it is a union stronger than that which results from the highest obligations of nature.

Thirdly. The nature of the marriage contract: it is a union of persons, "they twain shall be one flesh," so that, ver. 6, "they are no more twain, but one flesh." A man's children are pieces of himself; but his wife is himself. As the conjugal union is closer than that between parents and children, so it is in a manner equivalent to that between one member and another in the natural body. As this is a reason why husbands should love their wives, so it is a reason why they should not put away their wives; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, or cut it off, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, and doth all he can to preserve it. They two shall be one, therefore there must be but one

wife, for God made but one Eve for one Adam, *Mal. ii. 15*. From hence he infers "what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Note, 1. Husband and wife are of God's joining together; *συνεσθην*, he hath yoked them together, so the word is, and it is very significant; God himself instituted the relation between husband and wife in the state of innocence. Marriage and the sabbath are the most ancient of Divine ordinances. Though marriage be not peculiar to the church, but common to the world, yet being stamped with a Divine institution, and here ratified by our Lord Jesus, it ought to be managed after a godly sort, and "sanctified by the word of God and prayer." A conscientious regard to God in this ordinance would have a good influence upon the duty, and consequently upon the comfort of the relation. 2. Husband and wife being joined together by the ordinance of God, are not to be put asunder by any ordinance of man. Let not man put them asunder; not the husband himself, or any one for him; not the magistrate, God never gave him authority to do it. The God of Israel hath said, that he hateth putting away, *Mal. ii. 16*. It is a general rule, that man must not go about to put asunder what God hath joined together.

III. *An objection started by the Pharisees against this, and it has colour enough*, ver. 7: "Why did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, in case a man did put away his wife?" He urged Scripture authority for it. Note, The seeming contradictions that are in the Word of God, are great stumbling-blocks to men of corrupt minds. It is true, Moses was faithful to him that appointed him, and commanded nothing but what he received from the Lord; but as to the thing itself, what they call a command, was only an allowance, (*Deu. xxiv. 1*), and designed rather to restrain the exorbitances of it, than to give countenance to the thing itself. And the Jewish doctors themselves observe such limitations in that law, as that it could not be done without great deliberation; a particular reason must be assigned; the bill of divorce must be written; and, as a judicial act, must have all the solemnities of a deed executed and enrolled; it must be given into the hands of the wife herself; and (which would oblige men, if they had any consideration in them, to consider) they were expressly forbidden ever to come together again.

IV. *Christ's answer to this objection*, in which,

First. He rectifies their mistake concerning the law of Moses; they called it a command, Christ calls it but a permission, a toleration; carnal hearts will take an ell, if but an inch be given them. The law of Moses, in this case, was a political law, which God gave as the governor of that people, and it was for reasons of state that divorces were tolerated. The strictness of the marriage union being the result, not of a natural, but a positive law, the wisdom of God dispensed with divorces in some cases, without any impeachment to his holiness. But Christ tells them there was a reason for this toleration, not at all for their credit—"it was because of the hardness of your hearts that you were permitted to put away your wives." Moses complained of the people of Israel in his time, that their hearts were hardened, *Deu. ix. 6; xxxi. 27*, hardened against God; this here is meant of their being hardened against their relations; they were generally violent and outrageous, which way soever they took, both in their appetites and in their passions; and therefore, if they had not been allowed to put away their wives when they had conceived a dislike of them, they would have used them cruelly, would have beaten and abused them, and perhaps have murdered them. Note, There is not a greater piece of hardheartedness in the world, than for a man to be harsh and severe with his own wife. The Jews, it seems, were infamous for this, and therefore were allowed to put them away; better divorce them than do worse, than that the altar of the Lord should be covered with tears, *Mal. ii. 13*. A little compliance to humour a mad man, or a man in a frenzy, may prevent a greater mischief. Positive laws may be dispensed with, for the preservation of the law of nature, for God will have mercy, and not sacrifice; but then those are hardhearted wretches that have made it necessary; and none can wish to have the liberty of divorce, but they must own the hardness of their hearts. Observe, he saith, it is for the hardness of your hearts; not only theirs who lived then, but all their seed. Note, God not only sees, but foresees the hardness of men's hearts; he suited both the ordinances and providences of the Old Testament to the temper of that people, both in terror. Further, observe, The law of Moses considered the hardness of men's hearts, but the Gospel of Christ cures it, and his grace takes away the heart of stone, and gives a heart of flesh. By the law was the knowledge of sin, but by the Gospel was the conquest of it.

Secondly. He reduceth them to the original institution: "But from the beginning it was not so." Note, Corruptions that are crept into any ordinance of God must be purged out, by having recourse to the primitive institution. If the copy be vicious, it must be examined and corrected by the original. Thus when St. Paul would redress the grievances in the church of Corinth about the Lord's supper, he appealed to the appointment, *1 Cor. xi. 23*: So and "I received it from the Lord." Truth was from the beginning; we must therefore inquire for the good old way, *Jer. vi. 16*, and must reform, not by later patterns, but by ancient rules.

Thirdly. He settles the point by an express law: "I say unto you," ver. 9; and it agrees with what he said before, *ch. v. 32*; there it was said in preaching, here in dispute, but the same, for Christ is constant to himself. Now in both these places, 1. He allows divorce in case of adultery. The reason of the law against divorce being this, "they two shall be one flesh;" if the wife play the harlot, and make herself one flesh with an adulterer, the reason of the law ceaseth, and so doth the law. By the law of Moses, adultery was punished with death, *Deu. xxii. 22*. Now our Saviour mitigates the rigour of that, and appoints divorce to be the penalty. Dr. Whitby understands this not of adultery, but (because our Saviour useth the word *πορνεία*, fornication) of uncleanness committed before marriage, but discovered afterwards; because if it were committed afterwards, it was a capital crime, and there needed no divorce. 2. He disallows it in all other cases: "Whosoever puts away his wife, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery." This is a direct answer to their query, that it is not lawful. In this, as in other things, gospel times are times of reformation, *Heb. ix. 10*. The law of Christ tends to restate man in his primitive integrity; the law of love, conjugal love, is no new commandment but was from the beginning. If we consider what mischiefs to families and states, what confusions and disorders would follow upon arbitrary divorces, we shall see how much this law of Christ is for our own benefit, and what a friend Christianity is to our secular interests. The law of Moses allowing divorce for the hardness of men's hearts, and the law of Christ forbidding it, intimates, that Christians being under a dispensation of love and liberty, tenderness of heart may justly be expected among them, that they will not be hardhearted, like Jews, for God has called us to peace. There will be no occasion for divorces, if we "forbear one another," and "forgive one another in love," as those that are and hope to be forgiven, and have found God not forward to put us away, *Isa. i. 1*. No need of divorces, if husbands love their wives, and wives be obedient to their husbands, and they live together as heirs of the grace of life; and these are the laws of Christ, such as we find not in all the law of Moses.

V. *Here is a suggestion of the disciples against this law of Christ*, ver. 10.

the Bethany which some copies read for Bethabara, in John i. 28. We think Mark x. 1 points to the true explanation of our verse. At the same time, we suppose that the journey was intermitted, and that some delay took place in the Perea district.

xix. 3. The words "for every cause" mean for any reason a man may choose to allege. This has been correctly called a captious and a malicious question, because it was apparently propounded while Jesus was yet in Perea, which was then subject to Herod Antipas,

who had put to death John the Baptist, and whose marriage relations had not been of the most honourable character. Lightfoot also notes that the question was one disputed in the schools. The school of Shammai only permitted divorce in case of adultery; but the school of Hillel advocated looser opinions. Lightfoot mentions two rabbis whose practice illustrated the laxer views of some.

xix. 7. The Pharisees took our Lord's answer as prohibiting all divorce, which they could not reconcile with the provisions of Deut.

"If the case of a man be so with his wife, it is better not to marry." It seems the disciples themselves were loath to give up the liberty of divorce, thinking it a good expedient for preserving comfort in the married state; and therefore, like sullen children, if they may not have what they would have, they will throw away what they have; if they may not be allowed to put away their wives when they please, they will have no wives at all; though from the beginning, when no divorce was allowed, God said, "It is not good for man to be alone," and blessed them, pronounced them blessed who were thus strictly joined together; yet, unless they may have a liberty of divorce, they think it is good for a man not to marry. Note, 1. Corrupt nature is impatient of restraint, and would fain break Christ's bonds in sunder, and have a liberty for its own lusts. 2. It is a foolish, peevish thing for men to abandon the comforts of this life, because of the crosses that are commonly woven in with them; as if we must needs go out of the world, because we have not every thing to our mind in the world; or must enter into no useful calling or condition, because it is made our duty to abide in it. No, whatever our condition is, we must bring our minds to it, be thankful for its comforts, submissive to its crosses, and, as God has done, set the one over against the other, and make the best of that which is, *Ecc. vii. 14*. If the yoke of marriage may not be thrown off at pleasure, it doth not follow that therefore we must not come under it, but therefore when we do come under it, we must resolve to comport with it by love, and meekness, and patience, which will make divorce the most unnecessary, undesirable thing that can be.

VI. Christ's answer to this suggestion, ver. 11, 12: in which, First. He allows it good for some not to marry: "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." Christ allowed what the disciples said, "It is good not to marry," not as an objection against the prohibition of divorce, as they intended it, but as giving them a rule, perhaps no less unpleasing to them, that they who have the gift of continency, and are not under any necessity of marrying, do best if they continue single, *1 Cor. vii. 1*; for they that are unmarried have opportunity, if they have but a heart, to care more for the things of the Lord: "How they may please the Lord," *1 Cor. vii. 32, 34*; being less encumbered with the cares of this life, and having a greater vacancy of thoughts and time to mind better things. The increase of grace is better than the increase of the family; and fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, is to be preferred before any other fellowship.

Secondly. He disallows it, as utterly mischievous to forbid marriage, because "all men cannot receive this saying;" indeed, few can; and therefore the crosses of the married state must be borne, rather than that men should run themselves into temptation to avoid them: better marry than burn.

Christ here speaks of a twofold unaptness to marriage: 1. That which is a calamity, by the providence of God, such are they under that are born eunuchs, or made so by men, that being incapable of answering one great end of marriage, ought not to marry. But to that calamity, let them oppose the opportunity that there is in the single state of serving God better to balance it. 2. That which is a virtue, by the grace of God; such is theirs "who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." This is not meant of an unaptness for marriage in body,—which some, through mistake of this Scripture, have foolishly and wickedly brought upon themselves,—but in mind. Those have thus made themselves eunuchs, who have attained a holy indifferency to all the delights of the married state; have a fixed resolution, in the strength of God's grace, wholly to abstain from them; and by fasting, and other instances of mortification, have subdued all desires towards them. These are they that can receive this saying: and yet these are not to bind themselves by a vow that they will never marry, only that in the mind they are now in, they purpose not to marry. Now, 1st. This affection to the single state must be given of God; for "none can receive it, save they to whom it is given." Note, Continence is a special gift of God to some, and not to others; and when a man in the single state finds by experience that he has this gift, he may determine with himself, and, as the apostle speaks, *1 Cor. vii. 37*, stand steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but "having power over his own will, that he will keep himself so." But men in this case must take heed lest they boast of a false gift, *Pr. xxv. 14*. 2nd. The single state must be chosen for the kingdom of heaven's sake. Those who resolve never to marry, only that they may save charges, or may gratify a morose selfish humour, or have a greater liberty to serve other lusts and pleasures; in them, it is so far from being a virtue, that it is an ill-natured vice; but when it is for religion's sake, not as in itself a meritorious act, which the Papists make it, but only as a means to keep our minds more entire for, and more intent upon, the services of religion, and having no families to provide for, we may do the more in works of charity; then it is approved and accepted of God. Note, That condition is best for us, and to be chosen, and stuck to accordingly, which is best for our souls, and tends most to the preparing of us for, and the preserving of us to the kingdom of heaven.

13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. 15 And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

We have here the welcome which Christ gave to some little children that were brought to him. Observe.

I. The faith of those that brought them. How many they were that were brought, we are not told, but they were so little as to be taken up in arms; a year old it may be, or two at most. The account here given of it is, that "there were brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray," *ver. 13*. Probably they were their parents, guardians, or nurses that brought them; and herein, 1. They testified their respect to Christ, and the value they had for his favour and blessing. Note, Those who glorify Christ by coming to him themselves, should further glorify him by bringing all they have, or have influence upon, to him likewise. Thus give him the honour of his unsearchable riches of grace; his overflowing, never-failing fullness. We cannot better honour Christ than by making use of him. 2. They did a kindness to their children, not doubting but they would fare the better, in this world and the other, for the blessing and prayer of the Lord Jesus, whom they looked upon at least as an extraordinary person, as a prophet, if not as a priest and king, and the blessings of such were valued and desired. Others brought their children to Christ to be healed, when they were sick; but these children were under no present malady, only they desired a blessing for them. Note, It is a good thing when we come to Christ ourselves and bring our children to him, before

we are driven to him, as we say, by wo-need: not only to visit him when we are in trouble, but to address ourselves to him in a sense of our general dependence on him, and of the benefit we expect by him; this is pleasing to him. They desired that he would put his hands on them and pray. Imposition of hands was a ceremony used, especially in paternal blessing; Jacob used it when he blessed and adopted the sons of Joseph, *Gen. xlviii. 14*. It intimates something of love and familiarity, mixed with power and authority, and speaks an efficacy in the blessing. Whom Christ prays for in heaven, he puts his hand upon by his Spirit. Note, 1. Little children may be brought to Christ as needing, and being capable of receiving, blessings from him, and having an interest in his intercession. 2. Therefore they should be brought to him. We cannot do better for our children, than to commit them to the Lord Jesus, to be wrought upon and prayed for by him. We can but beg a blessing for them; it is Christ only that can command the blessing.

II. The fault of the disciples in rebuking them. They discountenanced the address, as vain and frivolous, and reproved them that made it, as impertinent and troublesome; either they thought it below their Master to take notice of little children, except any thing in particular ailed them; or, they thought he had toil enough with his other work, and would not have him diverted from it; or, they thought if such an address as this were encouraged, all the country would bring their children to him, and they should never see an end of it. Note, It is well for us that Christ has more love and tenderness in him than the best of his disciples have. And let us learn of him not to discountenance any willing, well-meaning souls, in their inquiries after Christ, though they are but weak. If he do not break the bruised reed, we should not. Those that seek unto Christ, must not think it strange if they meet with opposition and rebuke, even from good men, who think they know the mind of Christ better than they do.

III. The favour of the Lord Jesus. See how he carried it here.

First. He rebuked the disciples, *ver. 14*: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not;" and he rectifies the mistake they went upon: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Note, 1. The children of believing parents belong to the kingdom of heaven, and are members of the visible church. "Of such;" not only of such in disposition and affection, that might have served for a reason why doves or lambs should be brought to him; but of such in age, "is the kingdom of heaven;" to them pertain the privileges of visible church membership, as among the Jews of old. "The promise is to you and your children: I will be a God to thee and thy seed." 2. That for this reason they are welcome to Christ, who is ready to entertain those that, when they cannot come themselves, are brought to him. And this, 1st. In respect to the little children themselves, whom he had upon all occasions expressed a concern for, and who, having participated of the malignant influences of the first Adam's sin, must needs share in the riches of the second Adam's grace, else what would come of the apostle's parallel? *1 Cor. xv. 22; Rom. v. 14, 15, &c.* Those that are given to Christ as part of his purchase, he will in no wise cast out. 2nd. With an eye to the faith of the parents that brought them, and presented them as living sacrifices. Parents are trustees of their children's wills, are empowered by nature to transact for their benefit: and therefore Christ accepts their dedication of them, as their act and deed, and will own these dedicated things in the day he makes up his jewels. 3. Therefore he takes it ill at those who forbid them, and exclude those whom he has received; who cast them out from the inheritance of the Lord, and say, Ye have no part in the Lord, see *Jos. xxii. 27*; and who forbid water that they should be baptized; who if that promise be fulfilled, *Isa. xlv. 3*, have received the Holy Ghost as well as we, for aught we know.

Secondly. He received the little children, and did as he was desired: "he laid his hands on them," that is, he "blessed them." The strongest believer lives not so much by apprehending Christ, as by being apprehended of him, *Phil. iii. 12*; not so much by knowing God, as by being known of him, *Gal. iv. 9*; and this the least child is capable of. If they cannot stretch out their hands to Christ, yet he can lay his hands on them, and so make them his own, and own them for his own. Methinks it hath something observable in it, that when he had done this, "he departed thence," *ver. 5*; as if he reckoned he had done enough there, when he had thus asserted the rights of the lambs of his flock, and made this provision for a succession of subjects in his kingdom.

16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. 18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Here is an account of what passed between Christ and a hopeful young gentleman that addressed himself to him upon a serious errand: he is said to be a "young man," *ver. 22*; and I call him a gentleman, not only because he had "great possessions," but because he was a "noble," *Lu. xviii. 18*, a magistrate, a justice of peace in his country: it is probable he was of pregnant parts beyond his years, else his youth would have debarred him from the magistracy. Now concerning this young gentleman, we are told how fair he bid for heaven, and yet came short.

xxiv. 1. To this the reply is that the permission granted in that passage was a later concession, and no part of the original law of God. Jahn observes that Moses laid a restriction upon the power of the husband so far as this, that he would not permit him to repudiate the wife without giving her a bill of divorce. Moreover, a husband might receive his repudiated wife back again, provided she had not in the meantime married another man, "a law which the faith due to the second husband clearly required." Jahn says again, that

wives, who were considered the property of their husbands, did not enjoy by the Mosaic statutes a reciprocal right, and were not at liberty to dissolve the matrimonial alliance by giving a bill of divorce to that effect. Unquestionably, by asserting the greater sanctity of the marriage bond, our Lord promoted considerably the rights of women, who had been little more than chattels in the estimation of many. It would appear that some Jewish women even then successfully sought to be divorced from their husbands.

I. How fair he bid for heaven, and how kindly and tenderly Christ treated him in favour to good beginnings. Here is,

First: The gentleman's serious address to Jesus Christ, ver. 16: "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Not a better question could be asked, nor more gravely.

1. He gives Christ an honourable title, Good Master. *Διδάσκαλε ἀγαθὲ*. It signifies not a ruling, but a teaching master. His calling him Master, speaks his submissiveness and willingness to be taught; and good Master, his affection and peculiar respect to the teacher; like that of Nicodemus, "Thou art a teacher come from God." We read not of any that addressed themselves to Christ more respectfully, than that master in Israel, and this ruler. It is a good thing when men's quality and dignity increases their civility and courtesy. It was gentlemanlike to give this title of respect to Christ, notwithstanding the present meanness of his appearance. It was not usual among the Jews to accost their teachers with the title of 'good'; and therefore, this speaks the singular, uncommon respect he had for Christ. Note, Jesus Christ is a good Master; the best of teachers: none teacheth like him; he is famous for his goodness, for he can have compassion on the ignorant; he is meek and lowly in heart.

2. He comes to him upon an errand of importance, none could be more so; and he came not to tempt him, but sincerely desiring to be taught by him. His question is, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" By this it appears; 1st. That he had a firm belief of eternal life: he was no Sadducee. He was convinced that there was a happiness prepared for those in the other world, that are prepared for it in this world. 2nd. That he was concerned to make it sure to himself that he should live eternally, and was desirous of that life more than any of the delights of this life. It was a rare thing for one of his age and quality to appear so much in care about another world. The rich are apt to think it below them to make such an inquiry as this, and young people think it time enough yet; but here was a young man, and a rich man, solicitous about his soul and eternity. 3rd. That he was sensible something must be done; some good thing for the attainment of this happiness. It is by patient continuance in well doing, that we seek for immortality, *Rom. ii. 7*. We must be doing, and doing that which is good. The blood of Christ is the only purchase of eternal life; he merited it for us; but obedience to Christ is the appointed way to it, *Heb. v. 9*. 4th. That he was, or at least thought himself, willing to do what was to be done for the obtaining of this eternal life. Those that know what it is to have eternal life, and what it is to come short of it, will be glad to accept of it upon any terms. Such a holy violence doth the kingdom of heaven suffer. Note, While there be many that say, "Who will shew us any good?" our great inquiry should be, What we shall do that we may have eternal life? what we shall do to be for ever happy—happy in another world? for this world has not that in it that will make us happy.

Secondly, The encouragement that Jesus Christ gave to this address. He doth not use to send any way without an answer, that come to him on such an errand, for nothing pleaseth him more, ver. 17. In his answer, 1. He tenderly assists his faith; for doubtless, he did not mean it for a reproof, when he said, "Why callest thou me good?" but would seem to find that faith in what he said, when he called him a good Master, which the gentleman perhaps was not conscious to himself of; he intended no more but to own and honour him as a good man, but Christ would lead him to own and honour him as a good God, for "there is none good but one, that is God." Note, As Christ is graciously ready to make the best that he can of what is said or done amiss, so he is ready to make the most that can be made of what is well said, and well done. His constructions are often better than our intentions; as in that, "I was hungry, and you gave me meat," though you little thought it was to me. Christ will have this young man, either know him to be God, or not call him good, to teach us to transfer to God all the praise that is at any time given to us. Do any call you good? tell them all goodness is from God, and therefore not to us, but to him, give glory. All crowns must lie before the throne. Note, God only is good, and there is none essentially, originally, and unchangeably good, but God only. His goodness is of and from himself, and all the goodness in the creature is from him; he is the fountain of goodness, and whatever the streams are, all the springs are in him, *Jas. i. 17*. He is the great pattern and sampler of goodness; by him all goodness is to be measured; that is good which is like him, and agreeable to his mind. We in our language call him God, because he is good. In this, as in other things, our Lord Jesus was "the brightness of his glory," (and his goodness is his glory,) "and the express image of his person," and therefore fitly called "Good Master."

2. He plainly directs his practice, in answer to his question. He started that thought of his being good, and therefore God; but did not stay upon it, lest he should seem to divert from, and so to drop the main question, as many do in needless disputes, and strifes of words. Now Christ's answer is in short this, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." 1st. The end proposed is entering into life. The young man, in his question, spoke of eternal life; Christ, in his answer, speaks of life, to teach us that eternal life is the only true life. The words concerning that are "the words of this life," *Acts v. 20*. The present life scarce deserves the name of life, for in the midst of life we are in death. Or, "into life," that is, that spiritual life which is the beginning and earnest of eternal life. He desired to know how he might have eternal life, Christ tells him how he might enter into it: we have it by the merit of Christ; a mystery which was not as yet fully revealed, and therefore Christ waives that; but the way of entering into it is by obedience, and Christ directs us in that. By the former we make our title; by this, as by our evidence, we prove it; it is by adding to faith virtue, that an entrance, the word here used, is ministered us into the everlasting kingdom, *2 Pet. i. 5, 11*. Christ, who is our life, is the way to the Father, and to the vision and fruition of him; he is the only way; but duty and the obedience of faith is the way to Christ. There is an entrance into life hereafter, at death, at the great day, a complete entrance; and those only shall then enter into life that do their duty; it is the diligent faithful servant that shall then enter into the joy of his Lord, and that joy will be his eternal life. There is an entrance into life now; "we which have believed do enter into rest," *Heb. iv. 3*. We have peace, and comfort, and joy, in the believing prospect of the glory to be revealed, and to this also sincere obedience is indispensably necessary. 2nd. The way prescribed is keeping the commandments. Note, Keeping the commandments of God, according as they are revealed and made known to us, is the only way to life and salvation; and sincerity herein is accepted, through Christ, as our gospel perfection; provision being made of pardon upon repentance, wherein we come short. Through Christ we are delivered from the condemning power of the law, but the commanding power of it is lodged in the hand of the Mediator, and under that, in that hand, we still are: under the law to Christ, *1 Cor. ix. 12*; under it as a rule, though not as a covenant. Keeping the commandments includes faith in Jesus Christ, for that is the great commandment, *1 Jno. iii. 23*; and it was one of the laws of Moses, that when the great Prophet should be raised up, they should hear him. Observe, In order to our happiness here and for ever, it is not enough for us to know the commandments of God, but we must keep them; keep in them as our way, keep to them as our rule, keep them as our treasure, and with care, as the apple of our eye.

3. At his further instance and request, he mentions some particular commandments which he must keep, ver. 18, 19: "The young man saith unto him, Which? Note, Those that would do the commandments of God must seek them diligently, and inquire after them, what they are. Ezra set himself to seek the law, and to do it, *Ezra. vii. 10*. There were many commandments in the law of Moses; "Good Master, let me know which those are, the keeping of which is necessary to salvation?" In answer to this, Christ instanceth in several, especially the commandments of the second table. 1st. That which concerns our own, and our neighbour's life: "Thou shalt do no murder." 2nd. Our own and our neighbour's chastity, which should be as dear to us as life itself: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." 3rd. Our own and our neighbour's wealth and outward estate, as hedged about by the law of property: "Thou shalt not steal." 4th. That which concerns truth, and our own and our neighbour's good name: "Thou shalt not bear false witness," neither for thyself, nor against thy neighbour; for so it is here left at large. 5th. That which concerns the duties of particular relations: "Honour thy father and thy mother." 6th. That comprehensive law of love, which is the spring and summary of all these duties, whence they all flow, which they are all founded, and in which they are all fulfilled: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," *Gal. v. 14*; *Rom. xiii. 9*; that royal law, *Jas. ii. 8*. Some think this comes in here, not as the sum of the second table, but as the particular import of the tenth commandment: "thou shalt not covet," which, in Mark, is, Defraud not; intimating that it is not lawful for me to design advantage or gain to myself, by the diminution or loss of another; for that is to covet, and to love myself better than my neighbour, whom I ought to love as myself, and to treat as I would myself be treated.

Our Saviour here instanceth in second-table duties only; not as if the first were of less account, but, 1. Because they that now sat in Moses' seat, either wholly neglected, or greatly corrupted, these precepts in their preaching. While they pressed the tithing of mint, anise, and cummin; judgment, and mercy, and faith, the summary of second-table duties, were overlooked, *ch. xxiii. 23*; their preaching ran out all in rituals, and nothing in morals; and therefore Christ pressed that most, which they least insisted on. As one truth, so one duty, must not jostle out another, but each must know its place, and be kept in it; but equity requires that that be helped up which is most in danger of being thrust out. That is the present truth we are called to bear our testimony to, not only which is opposed, but which is neglected. 2. Because he would teach him and us all, that moral honesty is a necessary branch of true Christianity, and to be minded accordingly. Though a mere moral man comes short of being a complete Christian, yet an immoral man is certainly no true Christian; for the grace of God teacheth us to live soberly and righteously, as well as godly; nay, though the first-table duties have in them more of the essence of religion, yet second-table duties have in them more of the evidence of it. Our light burns in love to God, but it shines in love to our neighbour.

II. See here how he came short, though he bid thus fair, and wherein he failed; he failed by two things.

First, By pride, and a vain conceit of his own merit and strength; this is the ruin of thousands, who keep themselves miserable by fancying themselves happy. When Christ told him what commandments he must keep, he answered very scornfully, "All these things have I kept from my youth up," ver. 20. Now, I. According as he understood the law, as prohibiting only the outward acts of sin, I am as to think he said true, and Christ knew it, for he did not contradict him; nay, it is said in Mark, he "loved him," so far was very good, and pleasing to Christ. St. Paul reckons it a privilege, not contemptible in itself, though it was dress in comparison with Christ, that he was, "as touching the righteousness that is in the law, blameless," *Phil. iii. 6*. His observance of these commands was universal, "all these have I kept;" it was early and constant, "from my youth up." Note, A man may be free from gross sin, and yet come short of grace and glory. His hands may be clean from external pollutions, and yet he may perish eternally in his heart-wickedness. What shall we think, there of those who do not attain to this? whose fraud and injustice, drunkenness and uncleanness, witness against them, that all the good they have broken from their youth up, though they have named the name of Christ? well, it is sad to come short of those that come short of heaven. It was commendable also, that he desired to know further what his duty was; "what lack I yet?" He was convinced he wanted something to fill up his works before God, and was therefore desirous to know it, because, if he was not mistaken before God, and he was willing to do it. Having not yet attained, he thus seemed to press forward; and he applied himself to Christ, whose doctrine was supposed to improve and perfect the Mosaic institution. He desired to know what were the peculiar precepts of his religion, that he might have all that was in them to polish and accomplish him. Who could bid fairer? But, 2. Even in this that he said, he discovered his ignorance and folly. 1st. Taking the law in its spiritual sense, as Christ expounded it, doubt, in many things he had offended against all these commands. Had he been acquainted with the extent and spiritual meaning of the law, instead of saying, "all these have I kept," what lack I yet? he would have said, with shame and sorrow, "all these have I broken, what shall I do to get my sins pardoned?" 2nd. Take it how you will, what he said savoured of pride and vain-glory, and had in it too much of that boasting, which is "excluded by the law of faith," *Rom. iii. 27*; and which doth exclude from justification, *Lu. xviii. 11, 14*. He valued himself too much, as the Pharisees did, upon the plausibility of his profession before men, and was proud of that, which spoiled the acceptableness of it. That word, "what lack I yet?" perhaps was not so much a desire of further instruction, as a demand of the praise his present fancied perfection, and a challenge to Christ himself to shew him any one instance wherein he was deficient.

Secondly, His came short by an inordinate love of the world, and his enjoyments in it. This was the fatal rock on which he split. Observe,

How he was tried in this matter, ver. 21: "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast." Christ waived the matter of his boasted obedience to the law, and let that drop, because this would be a more effectual way of discovering him, than a dispute of the extent of the law. Come, saith Christ, "if thou wilt be perfect;" if thou wilt approve thyself sincere in thine obedience; for sincerity is our gospel perfection, if thou wilt come up to that which Christ has added to the law of Moses; if thou wilt be perfect, that is, if thou wilt enter into life, and so be perfectly happy; for that which Christ here prescribes, is not a thing of supererogation, or a perfection we may be saved without; but in the wide main scope and intendment of it, it is our necessary and indispensable duty. When Christ said to him, he thus far said to us all, that if we will approve ourselves Christians indeed, and would be found at last the heirs of eternal life, we must do these two things: 1st. We must practically prefer the heavenly treasures, before all the wealth and riches in this world. That glory must have the pre-eminence in our judgment and esteem before this glory. No thanks to us to prefer heaven before hell; the worst man in the world would be glad of that Jerusalem for a refuge, when he can stay no longer here, and to have it in reserve; but to make it our choice, and to prefer it before this earth, that is to be a Christian indeed. Now, as an evidence of this, First, We must dispose of what we have in this world for

but with respect to the third class, it has been gravely alleged that it is a recommendation to men to mutilate themselves. Infidel writers have audaciously alleged that Christ teaches such iniquity. But observe that our Lord is here merely classifying men actually in the world, and not saying what should or ought to be. Again, the phrase "kingdom of heaven," or "celestial kingdom," is not peculiar to Jesus and the gospels, but was in common use among the Jews. Finally, it is questioned whether the word eunuchs must not in each instance be

the honour of God, and in his service. "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor." If the occasions of charity be very pressing, sell thy possessions that thou mayest have to give to them that need; as the first Christians did, with an eye to this precept, *Acts iv. 34*. Sell what thou canst spare for pious uses; all thy superfluities; if thou canst not otherwise do good with it, sell it; sit loose to it; be willing to part with it for the honour of God, and the relief of the poor. A gracious contempt of the world, and compassion of the poor and afflicted ones in it, is in all a necessary condition of salvation; and in those that have wherewithal, giving of alms is as necessary an evidence of that contempt of the world and compassion to our brethren; by this the trial will be at the great day, *ch. xxv. 35*, though many that call themselves Christians do not act as if they believed it. It is certain, when we embrace Christ, we must let go the world, for we cannot serve God and mammon. Christ knew that covetousness was the sin that did most easily beset this young man; that though what he had he had got honestly, yet he could not cheerfully part with it; and by this he discovered his insincerity. This command was like the call to Abraham, "get thee out of thy country, to a land that I will shew thee." As God tries believers by their strongest graces, so hypocrites by their strongest corruptions. *Secondly*. We must depend upon what we hope for in the other world, as an abundant recompense for all we have left, or lost, or laid out for God in this world. "Thou shalt have treasure in heaven." We must, in the way of chargeable duty, trust God for a happiness out of sight, which will make us rich amends for all our expenses in God's service. The precept sounded hard and harsh; "sell that thou hast, and give it away;" and the objection against it would soon arise, that "charity begins at home;" therefore Christ immediately annexeth this assurance of a "treasure in heaven." Note, Christ's promises make his precepts easy, and his yoke, not only tolerable, but pleasant, and sweet, and very comfortable; yet this promise was as much a trial of this young man's faith, as the precept was of his charity and contempt of the world. *2nd*. We must devote ourselves entirely to the conduct and government of our Lord Jesus: "Come and follow me." It seems here to be meant of a close and constant attendance upon his person, such as the selling of what he had in the world was necessary to, as it was to the other disciples to quit their callings; but of us it is required that we follow Christ, that we duly attend upon his ordinances, strictly conform to his pattern, and cheerfully submit to his disposals, and by upright and universal obedience to observe his statutes, and keep his laws; and all this from a principle of love to him, and dependence on him, and with a holy contempt of every thing else, in comparison of him, and much more in competition with him. This is to follow Christ fully. To "sell all and give to the poor" will not serve, unless we come and "follow Christ." "If I give all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." Well, on these terms and no lower, is salvation to be had; and they are very easy and reasonable terms, and will appear so to those who are brought to be glad of it, upon any terms.

2. See how he was discovered, *ver. 22*. This touched him in a tender part, *ver. 22*: "When he heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." *1st*. He was a rich man, and loved his riches, and therefore went away. He did not like eternal life upon these terms. Note, *First*. Those that have much in the world, are in the greatest temptation to love it, and to set their hearts upon it. Such is the bewitching nature of worldly wealth, that those who want it least, desire it most; when riches increase, then is the danger of setting the heart upon them, *Ps. lxxii. 10*. If he had had but two mites in all the world, and had been commanded to give them to the poor—or but one handful of meal in the barrel, and a little oil in the cruse, and had been bidden to make a cake of that for a poor prophet—the trial, one would think, had been much greater, and yet those trials have been overcome, *Lu. xxi. 4*, and *1 Kin. xvii. 14*; which shews that the love of the world draws stronger than the most pressing necessities. *Secondly*. The reigning love of this world keeps many from Christ, that seem to have had some good desires towards him. A great estate, as to those who are got above it it is a great furtherance, so to those who are entangled in the love of it it is a great hindrance, in the way to heaven. Yet something of honesty there was in it, that when he did not like the terms "he went away," and would not pretend to that which he could not find in his heart to come up to the strictness of; better so than do as Demas did, who, "having known the way of righteousness," afterwards "turned aside out of love to this present world," to the greater scandal of profession; since he could not be a complete Christian, he would not be an hypocrite. *2nd*. Yet he was a thinking man, and well inclined, and therefore "went away sorrowful;" he had a good mind to Christ, and was loath to part with him. Note, Many an one is ruined by the sin he commits with reluctance; leaves Christ sorrowfully, and yet is never truly sorry for leaving him, for if he were he would return to him. Thus this man's wealth was vexation of spirit to him, then when it was his temptation; what then would the sorrow be afterwards, when his possessions would be gone, and all hopes of eternal life gone too?

23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 25 When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? 26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. 27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? 28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And every one

that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. 30 But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

We have here Christ's discourse with his disciples, upon occasion of the rich man's breaking with Christ.

1. Christ took occasion from thence to shew the difficulty of the salvation of rich people, *ver. 23–26*.

First. That it is a very hard thing for a rich man to get to heaven, such a rich man as this here. Note, From the harms and falls of others, it is good for us to infer that which will be of caution to us. Now, *1*. This is vehemently asserted by our Saviour, *ver. 23, 24*. He said this to his disciples, who were poor and had but little in the world, to reconcile them to their condition with this, —that the less they had of worldly wealth, the less hindrance they had in the way to heaven. Note, It should be a satisfaction to them who are in a low condition, that they are not exposed to the temptations of a high and prosperous condition: if they live more hardly in this world than the rich, yet, if withal they get more easily to a better world, they have no reason to complain. This saying is ratified, *ver. 23*: "Verily, I say unto you." He that has reason to know what the way to heaven is, for he has laid it open, he tells us that this is one of the greatest difficulties in that way. It is repeated, *ver. 24*: "Again I say unto you." Thus he speaketh once, yea, twice, that which man is loath to perceive, and more loath to believe. *1st*. He saith, That it is a hard thing for a rich man to be a good Christian, and to be saved; to enter into the kingdom of heaven, either here or hereafter. The way to heaven is to all "a narrow way," and the gate that leads into it "a strait gate," but it is particularly so to rich people. More duties are expected from them than from others, which they can hardly do; and more sins do easily beset them, which they can hardly avoid. Rich people have great temptations to resist, and such as are very insinuating; it is hard not to be charmed with a smiling world; very hard when our bellies are filled with these hid treasures, not to take up with them for a portion. Rich people have a great advantage to make up for their estates, their interest, their time, and their opportunities of doing and getting good above others. It must be a great measure of Divine grace that will enable a man to break through these difficulties. *2nd*. He saith, That the conversion and salvation of a rich man is so extremely difficult, that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle," *ver. 24*. This is a proverbial expression, noting a difficulty altogether unconquerable by the art and power of man; nothing less than the almighty grace of God, will enable a rich man to get over this difficulty. The difficulty of the salvation of apostates, *Heb. vi. 4*, and of old sinners, *Jer. xiii. 23*, is thus represented as an impossibility. The salvation of any is so very difficult, even the righteous scarcely are saved, that where there is a peculiar difficulty, it is fitly set forth thus: It is very rare for a man to be rich, and not to set his heart upon his riches; and it is utterly impossible for a man that sets his heart upon his riches to get to heaven; for "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," *1 Jno. ii. 15*; *Jas. iv. 4*. *First*. The way to heaven is very fitly compared to a needle's eye, which it is hard to hit, and hard to get through. *Secondly*. A rich man is fitly compared to a camel, a beast of burthen, for he has riches, as the camel has his load; he carries it, but it is another's; he has it from others, spends it for others, and must shortly leave it to others; it is a burthen, for men "load themselves with thick clay," *Hab. ii. 6*. A camel is a large creature, but unwieldy. *2*. This truth is very much admired, and scarce credited by the disciples, *ver. 25*: "They were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?" Many surprising truths Christ told them, which they were astonished at, and knew not what to make of, and this was one, and their weakness was the cause of their wonder. It was not in contradiction to Christ, but for awakening to themselves, that they said, Who then can be saved? Note, Considering the many difficulties that are in the way of salvation, it is really strange that any are saved. When we think how good God is, it may seem a wonder that so few are his; but when we think how bad man is, it is more a wonder that so many are, and Christ will be eternally admired in them. "Who then can be saved?" Since so many are rich, and have great possessions, and so many more would be rich, and are well affected to great possessions, who can be saved? If riches are a hindrance to rich people, are not pride and luxury incident to those that are not rich, and as dangerous to them, and who then can get to heaven? This is a good reason why rich people should strive against the stream.

Secondly. That though it be hard, yet it is not impossible but that rich people may be saved, *ver. 26*: "Jesus beheld them;" turned, and looked wistfully upon his disciples, to shame them out of their fond conceit of the advantages rich people had in spiritual things: he beheld them as men that had got over this difficulty, and were in a fair way for heaven, and the more so, because poor in this world; and he said unto them, "with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." This speaks a great truth in general, that God is able to do that which quite exceeds all created power; that nothing is too hard for God, *Gen. xviii. 14*; *Num. xi. 23*; when men are at a loss, God is not, for his power is infinite and irresistible; but this truth is here applied, *1*. To the salvation of any. Who can be saved? say the disciples. None, saith Christ, by any created power. With men this is impossible: the wisdom of man would soon be nonplussed in contriving, and the power of man baffled in effecting, the salvation of a soul. No creature can work the change that is necessary to the salvation of a soul, either in itself or in any one else: "With men it is impossible," that so strong a stream should be turned, so hard a heart softened, so stubborn a will bowed. It is a creation, it is a resurrection, and "with men this is impossible;" it can never be done by philosophy, medicine, or politics; but with God all things are possible. Note, The beginning, progress, and the perfection of the work of salvation, depends entirely upon the almighty power of God, to which all things are possible. Faith is wrought by that power, *Eph. i. 19*; and is kept by it, *1 Pet. i. 5*. Job's experience of God's convincing, humbling grace, made him acknowledge more than any thing else, "I know that thou canst do every thing," *Job xlii. 2*. *2*. To the salvation of rich people especially; it is impossible with men that such should be saved, but with God even this is possible; not that rich people should be saved in their worldliness, but that they should be saved from it. Note, The sanctification and salvation of such as are surrounded with the temptations of this world is not to be despaired of; it is possible it may be brought about by the all-sufficiency of the Divine grace, and when such are brought to heaven, they will be there everlasting monuments of the power of God. I am willing to think, that in this word of Christ, there is an intimation of mercy Christ had yet in store for this young gentleman, that was now gone away sorrowful; it was not impossible to God yet to recover him, and bring him to a better mind.

understood of all who cannot, may not, and will not marry. Thus Kuinoel remarks, "For not only do they remain unmarried whom nature or the malice of men compel to live in celibacy, but they also who remain celibates of their own accord, subduing their passions and affections." The closing words, "He that can receive it, let him receive it," apply to what the disciples had said in favour of not marrying, and the sense clearly is that a man must decide for himself whether to marry or not. This principle is recognised in the writings

of the earliest fathers; but gradually the notion of the apostles became of more authority than the words of Christ, and celibacy became a profession. The terrible mischiefs due to monasteries, nunneries, and priestly celibates all come of this. We cannot wonder at ignorant perversion of this important passage when writers like Schleusner, Kuinoel, &c., paraphrase our Lord's words mistranslated in our version, "There be eunuchs which have made themselves," &c., in this way: "Abstain from marriage, in order that, free from all

11. Peter took occasion from hence to inquire what they should get by it, who had come up to these terms, upon which this young man broke with Christ, and had left all to follow him, ver. 27, &c.; where we have the disciples' expectations from Christ, and his promises to them.

First. We have their expectations from Christ. Peter in the name of the rest, signifies that they depend upon him for something considerable in lieu of what they had left for him. "Behold we have forsaken all, and have followed thee, what shall we have therefore?" Christ had promised the young man, that if he would sell all, and come and follow him, he should have treasure in heaven; now Peter desires to know, 1. Whether they had sufficiently come up to those terms; they had not sold all, for they had many of them wives and families to provide for, but they had forsaken all; they had not given it to the poor, but they had renounced it as far as it might be any way a hindrance to them in serving Christ. Note, When we hear what are the characters of those that shall be saved, it concerns us to inquire whether we, through grace, answer those characters. Now Peter hopes, that as to the main scope and intentment of the condition, they had come up to it, for God had wrought in them a holy contempt of the world and "the things that are seen," in comparison with Christ, and "the things that are not seen;" and how this must be evidenced, no certain rule can be given, but according as we are called. Lord, saith Peter, "we have forsaken all." Alas! it was but a poor all that they had forsaken; one of them had indeed quitted a place in the custom-house, but Peter, and the most of them, had only left a few boats and nets, and the appurtenances of a poor fishing trade; and yet see how big Peter here speaks of it, as if it had been some mighty thing: "behold, we have forsaken all." Note, We are too apt to make the most of our services and sufferings, our expenses and losses for Christ, and to think we have made him much our debtor. However, Christ doth not upbraid them with this; though it was but little they had forsaken, yet it was their all, like the widow's two mites, and was as dear to them as if it had been more, and therefore Christ took it kindly, that they left it to follow him; for he accepts according to what a man hath. 2. Whether therefore they might expect that treasure; the young man shall have it if he will sell all, "Lord," saith Peter, "shall we have it who have left all?" All people are for what they can get, and Christ's followers are allowed to consult their own true interest, and to ask, What shall we have? Christ looked at "the joy set before him," and Moses at "the recompense of reward." For this end it is set before us, that by a "patient continuance in well doing," we might seek for it. Christ encourageth us to ask what we shall gain by leaving all to follow him, that we may see he doth not call us to our prejudice, but unspeakably to our advantage. As it is the language of an obdiential faith, to ask "what shall we do?" with an eye to the precepts; so it is of a hoping, trusting faith, to ask "what shall we have?" with an eye to the promises. But observe, the disciples had long since left all to engage themselves in the service of Christ, and yet never till now asked, What shall we have? Though there was no visible prospect of advantage by it, they were so well assured of his goodness, that they knew they should not lose by him at last, and therefore referred themselves to him, in what way he would make up their losses to them; minded their work, and asked not what should be their wages. Note, It honours Christ to trust him, and serve him, and not to indent with him. Now this young man was gone from Christ to his possessions, it was time for them to think which they should take to, what they should trust to; when we see what others keep by their hypocrisy and apostasy, it is proper for us to consider what we hope through grace to gain, not for, but by our sincerity and constancy, and then we shall see more reason to pity them than to envy them.

Secondly. We have here Christ's promises to them, and to all others that tread in the steps of their faith and obedience. What there was either of vain glory, or of vain hopes, in that which Peter said, Christ overlooks, and is not extreme to mark it, but takes this occasion to give the bond of a promise.

1. To his immediate followers, ver. 28. They had signalized their respects to him, as the first that followed him, and to them he promiseth not only treasure, but honour in heaven; and here they have a grant or patent for it from him, who is the fountain of honour in that kingdom: "Ye which have followed me in the regeneration shall sit upon twelve thrones." Observe, 1st. The preamble to the patent, or the consideration of the grant, which, as usual, is a recital of their services: "You have followed me in the regeneration, and therefore this will I do for you." The time of Christ's appearing in this world, was a time of regeneration, of reformation, *Heb. ix. 10*; when old things began to pass away, and all things to look new. The disciples had followed Christ when the church was yet in the embryo, when the gospel temple was but in the framing; when they had more of the work and service of apostles, than of the dignity and power that belonged to their office. Now they followed Christ with a constant fatigue, when few did, and therefore on them he will put particular marks of honour. Note, Christ hath special favour for those that begin early with him, that trust him further than they can see him, as they did who followed him in the regeneration. Observe, Peter spoke of their forsaking all to follow him, Christ only speaks of their following him, which was the main matter. 2nd. The date of their honour, which fixeth the time when it should commence; not immediately from the day of the date of these presents; no, they must continue a while in obscurity, as they were: but "when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory," (and to this some refer that, "in the regeneration,") "you, which now have followed me, shall in the regeneration be thus dignified." Christ's second coming will be a regeneration, when there shall be new heavens, and a new earth, and the restitution of all things. All that partake of the regeneration in grace, *Jno. iii. 3*, shall partake of the regeneration in glory; for as grace is the first resurrection, *Rev. xx. 6*, so glory is the second regeneration. Now their honour being adjourned till the "Son of man's sitting in the throne of his glory," intimates, *First*, That they must stay for their advancement till then. Note, As long as our Master's glory is delayed, it is fit that ours should be so too; and that we should wait for it with an earnest expectation, as of a hope not seen, *Rom. viii. 19*. We must live, and work, and suffer in faith, and hope, and patience, which therefore must be tried by these delays. *Secondly*, That they must share with Christ in his advancement; their honour must be a communion with him in his honour. They, having suffered with a suffering Jesus, must reign with a reigning Jesus, for both here and hereafter Christ will be all in all; we must be where he is, *Jno. xii. 26*, must appear with him, *Col. iii. 4*; and this will be an abundant recompense, not only for our loss, but for the delay; and when our Lord comes, we shall receive, not only our own, but our own with usury. The longest voyages make the richest returns. 3rd. The honour itself hereby granted: "Ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." It is hard to determine the particular sense of this promise; and whether it was not to have many accomplishments, which I see no harm in admitting. *First*, When Christ is ascended to the right hand of the Father, and sits on the throne of his glory, then the apostles shall receive power by the Holy Ghost, *Acts i. 8*, shall be so much advanced above themselves, as they are now, that they shall think themselves upon thrones in promoting the Gospel; they shall deliver it with authority, as a judge from the bench: they shall then have their commission enlarged, and shall publish the laws of Christ, by which the

church, God's spiritual Israel, *Gal. vi. 16*, shall be governed; and Israel according to the flesh, that continues in infidelity, with all others that do likewise, shall be condemned. This honour and power given them, may be explained by *Jer. i. 10*, "See, I have set thee over the nations;" and *Eze. xx. 4*, "Wilt thou judge them?" and *Dan. vii. 18*, "The saints shall take the kingdom;" and *Rev. xii. 1*, where the doctrine of Christ is called a "crown of twelve stars." *Secondly*, When Christ appears for the destruction of Jerusalem, *ch. xxiv. 30*, then the apostles shall be sent to judge the Jewish nation, because, in that destruction, their predictions, according to the word of Christ, would be accomplished. *Thirdly*, Some think it has reference to the conversion of the Jews, which is yet to come, at the latter end of the world, after the fall of antichrist; so Dr. Whitby; and that "it respects the apostles' government of the twelve tribes of Israel, not by a resurrection of their persons, but by a reviviscence of that spirit which resided in them, and of that purity and knowledge which they delivered to the world; and chiefly by admission of their Gospel to be the standard of their faith, and the direction of their lives." *Fourthly*, It is certainly to have its full accomplishment at the second coming of Jesus Christ, when the saints in general shall judge the world, and the twelve apostles especially as assessors, with Christ, in the judgment of the great day, when all the world shall receive their final doom, and they shall ratify and applaud the sentence. But the tribes of Israel are named, partly because the number of the apostles was designedly the same with the number of the tribes; partly because the apostles were of the Jewish nation, befriended them most, but were most spitefully persecuted by them; and it intimates, that the saints will forget their acquaintance and kindred according to the flesh, and will in the great day judge those they had a kindness for, will judge their persecutors, who in this world judged them. But the general intentment of this promise is, to shew the glory and dignity reserved for the saints in heaven, which will be an abundant recompense for the disgrace they suffered here in Christ's cause. There are higher degrees of glory for those who have done and suffered most. The apostles in this world were hurried and tossed, there they shall sit down at rest and ease; here bonds, and afflictions, and deaths did abide them, but there they shall sit on thrones of glory; here they were dragged to the bar, there they shall be advanced to the bench; here the twelve tribes of Israel trampled upon them, there they shall tremble before them; and will not this be recompense enough to make up all their losses and expenses for Christ? see *Lu. xxii. 29*. 4th. The ratification of this grant; it is firm, it is inviolably, immutably sure; for Christ hath said, "Verily I say unto you," I, the amen, the faithful witness, who am empowered to make this grant; I have said it, and it cannot be disannulled.

2. Here is a promise to all others who should in like manner leave all to follow Christ. It was not peculiar to the apostles to be thus preferred, but this honour have all his saints; Christ will take care they shall none of them lose by him, ver. 29, "Every one that has forsaken any thing for Christ shall receive." 1st. Losses for Christ are here supposed. Christ had told them that his disciples must deny themselves in all that is done to them in this world; now here he instanteth in particulars, for it is good to count upon the worst; if they have not forsaken all, as the apostles did, yet they have forsaken a great deal—houses, suppose, and have turned themselves out to wander in deserts; or dear relations, that would not go with them to follow Christ. These are particularly mentioned, as hardest for a tender, gracious spirit to part with—brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children; and lands are added in the close, the profits of which were the support of the family. Now, *First*, The loss of these things is supposed to be for Christ's name's sake, else he doth not oblige himself to make it up. Many forsake brethren, and wife, and children, in humour and passion, as the bird that wanders from her nest; that is a sinful desertion; but if we forsake them for Christ's sake, because we cannot keep them and keep a good conscience, we must either quit them or quit our interest in Christ—not quit our concern for them, or our duty to them, but our comfort in them, and will do it rather than deny Christ; and this with an eye to him, and to his will and glory; this is that which shall be thus recompensed. It is not the suffering, but the cause, that makes both the martyr and the confessor. *Secondly*, It is supposed to be a great loss, and yet Christ undertakes to make it up, for he is able to do it, be it never so great. See the barbarity of the persecutors, that they stripped innocent people of all they had, for no other crime but because they adhered to Christ. See the patience of the persecuted, and the strength of their love to Christ, which was such as all these waters could not quench. 2nd. A recompense of these losses is here secured. Thousands have dealt with Christ, and have trusted him far, but never any one lost by him, never any one but was an unspeakable gainer by him, when the account came to be balanced. Christ here gives his word for it, that he will not only indemnify his suffering servants, and save them harmless, but will abundantly reward them. Let them make a schedule of their losses for Christ, and they shall be sure to receive. *First*, A hundredfold in this life, sometimes in kind, in the things themselves they have parted with; God will raise up for his suffering servants more friends, that will be so to them for Christ's sake, than they have left, that were so for their own sakes. The apostles, wherever they came, met with those that were kind to them, and entertained them, and opened their hearts and doors to them; however, they shall receive a hundredfold in kindness in those things that are abundantly better and more valuable. Their graces shall increase, their comforts abound; they shall have tokens of God's love; more free communion with him, more full communications from him; clearer foresights, and sweeter foretastes of the glory to be revealed; and then they may truly say they have received a hundred times more comfort in God and Christ, than they could have had in wife or children. *Secondly*, Eternal life at last. The former is reward enough, if there were no more: cent. per cent. is great profit, what, then, as a hundred to one? But this comes in over and above, as it were into the bargain. The life here promised includes in it all the comforts of life in the highest degree, and all eternal. Now if we could but mix faith with this promise, and trust Christ for the performance of it, surely we should think nothing too much to do, nothing too hard to suffer, nothing too dear to part with, for him. Our Saviour, in the last verse, obviates a mistake of some, as if pre-eminence in glory went by precedence in time, rather than the measure and degree of grace; no, "many that are first shall be last, and the last first," ver. 30. God will cross hands, will reveal that to babes which he hid from the wise and prudent, will reject unbelieving Jews, and receive believing Gentiles. The heavenly inheritance is not given as earthly inheritances commonly are, by seniority of age and priority of birth, but according to God's pleasure. This is the text of another sermon, which we shall meet with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XX.

We have four things in this chapter: I. The parable of the labourers in the vineyard, ver. 1—16. II. A prediction of Christ's approaching sufferings, ver. 17—19. III. The petition of two of the disciples, by their mother, reproved, ver. 20—28. IV. The petition of the two blind men granted, and their eyes opened, ver. 29—34.

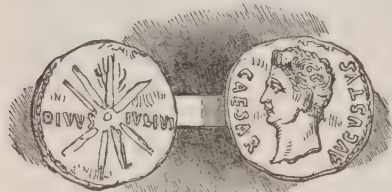
impediments, they may be able to consecrate themselves wholly to the Christian religion and its propagation." Our Lord says nothing about the "Christian" religion; and as for our version we must correct it thus, "And there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven." It is possible that some Jewish fanatics had become eunuchs or adopted celibacy from spurious religious motives. It is not apparent that these were Christ's followers, nor that Christ approved of their vows.

xix. 24. The natural interpretation of this is that a camel can pass more easily through a needle's eye than a rich man be a really good man. Some, however, say that a cable is meant by a camel, and others that a small loophole window is meant by the eye of a needle. Mahomet says of unbelievers in the Koran, "Heaven's gates shall not be opened to them, nor shall they enter Paradise, until the camel passeth through the eye of the needle." Rodwell, whose version we quote, says, "By the change of a single vowel in the Arabic word



OR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an housholder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. 2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And he went out about the third

hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, 4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. 5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? 7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, *that* shall ye receive. 8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first. 9 And



DENARIUS OF AUGUSTUS.

when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. 10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have re-

ceived more; and they likewise received every man a penny. 11 And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the good man of the house, 12 Saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. 13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? 14 Take *that* thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? 16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

This parable of the labourers in the vineyard is intended,

First. To represent to us the kingdom of heaven, ver. 1, that is, the way and method of the gospel dispensation. The laws of that kingdom are not wrapt up in parables, but plainly set down, as in the sermon upon the mount; but the mysteries of that kingdom are delivered in parables, in sacraments, as here, and *ch. xiii.* The duties of Christianity are more necessary to be known than the notions of it, and yet the notions of it more necessary to be illustrated than the duties of it; which is that that parables are designed for.

Secondly. In particular to represent to us that concerning the kingdom of heaven, which he had said in the close of the foregoing chapter, that "many that are first shall be last, and the last first;" to which this parable is connected: that truth, having in it a seeming contradiction, needed further explication. Nothing was more a mystery in the gospel dispensation than the rejection of the Jews, and the calling in of the Gentiles; so the apostle speaks of it, *Eph. iii. 3-6*, that "the Gentiles should be fellow heirs;" nor was any thing more provoking to the Jews than the intimations of it. Now this seems to be the principal scope of this parable, to shew that the Jews should be first called into the vineyard, and many of them should come at the call; but at

length the Gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, and they would receive it, and be admitted to equal privileges and advantages with the Jews, should be fellow citizens with the saints, which the Jews, even those of them that believed, would be very much disgusted at, but without reason. But the parable may be applied more generally, and shews us, 1. That God is debtor to no man: a great truth, which the 'Contents' in our Bible give as the scope of this parable. 2. That many who begin last, and promise little in religion, sometimes, by the blessing of God, arrive to greater attainments in knowledge, grace, and usefulness, than others whose entrance was more early, and who promised fairer. Though Cushi gets the start of Ahimaaz, yet Ahimaaz, choosing the way of the plain, outruns Cushi; John is swifter of foot, and comes first to the sepulchre, but Peter has more courage, and goes first into it. Thus many that are last shall be first. Some make it a caution to the disciples, who had boasted of their timely and zealous embracing of Christ; they had left all to follow him. But let them look to it that they kept up that zeal, let them press forwards and persevere, else their good beginnings will avail them little; they that seemed to be first would be last. Sometimes those that are converted later in their lives outstrip those that are converted earlier: Paul was "as one born out of due time, yet came not behind the chief of the apostles," and outdid those that were in Christ before him. Something of affinity there is between this parable and that of the prodigal son, where he that returned from his wandering was as dear to his father as he was that never went astray; first and last alike. 3. That the recompense of reward will be given to the saints, not according to the time of their conversion, but according to the preparations for it by grace in this world; not according to the seniority, as *Gen. xlii. 33*, but "according to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Christ had promised the apostles who followed him in the regeneration, at the beginning of the gospel dispensation, great glory, *ch. xix. 28*; but tells them, those that are in like manner faithful to him, even in the latter end of the world, shall have the same reward, shall sit with Christ on his throne as well as the apostles, *Rev. ii. 26*; *iii. 21*. Sufferers for Christ in the latter days, shall have the same reward with the martyrs and confessors of the primitive times, though they are more celebrated; and faithful ministers now, the same with the first fathers. We have two things in the parable: the agreement with the labourers, and the account with them.

1. Here is the agreement made with the labourers, ver. 1-7. And here it will be asked as usual,

First. Who hires them? "A man that is an householder." God is the great householder, "whose we are, and whom we serve." As a householder he has work that he will have to be done, and servants that he will have to be doing; he hath a great family in heaven and earth, which is named from Jesus Christ, *Eph. iii. 16*, which he is owner and ruler of. God hires labourers, not because he needs them or their services, for if we be righteous, what do we unto him? but as some charitable, generous householders keep poor men to work, in kindness to them, to save them from idleness and poverty, and pay them for working for themselves.

Secondly. Whence are they hired? Out of the market-place, where, till they are hired into God's service, they stand idle, ver. 3, all the day idle, ver. 6. Note, 1. The soul of man stands ready to be hired into some service or other; it was (as all the creatures were) created to work, and is either a servant to iniquity, or a servant to righteousness, *Rom. vi. 19*. The devil, by his temptations, is hiring labourers into his field to feed swine; God, by his Gospel, is hiring labourers into his vineyard to dress it and keep it, paradise work: we are put to our choice, for hired we must be, *Jos. xxiv. 15*: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." 2. Till we are hired into the service of God, we are standing all the day idle; a sinful state, though a state of drudgery to Satan, may really be called a state of idleness: sinners are doing nothing, nothing to the purpose, nothing of the great work they were sent into the world about; nothing that will pass well in the account. 3. The gospel call is given to those that stand idle in the market-place. The market-place is a place of concourse, and there Wisdom cries, *Pr. i. 20, 21*; it is a place of sport, there the children are playing, *ch. xi. 16*, and the Gospel calls us from vanity to seriousness. It is a place of business, of noise and hurry, and from that we are called to retire. Come, come from this market-place.

Thirdly. What are they hired to do? To labour in his vineyard. Note, 1. The church is God's vineyard; it is of his planting, watering, and fencing; and the fruit of it must be to his honour and praise. 2. We are called upon to be labourers in this vineyard. The work of religion is vineyard work—pruning, dressing, digging, watering, fencing, weeding; we have each of us our own vineyard to keep, our own soul; and it is God's, and to be kept and dressed for him. In this work we must not be slothful, nor loiterers but labourers, working, and working out our own salvation: work for God will not admit of trifling. A man may go idle to hell, but he that will go to heaven must be busy.

Fourthly. What shall be their wages? He promiseth, 1. A penny, ver. 2. The Roman penny was, in our money, of the value of sevenpence halfpenny—a day's wages for a day's work, and the wages sufficient for the day's maintenance. This doth not prove that the reward of our obedience to God is of works, or of debt; no, it is of grace, free grace, *Rom. iv. 4*; or that there is any proportion between our services and heaven's glories; no, when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants; but it is to signify that there is a reward set before us, and a sufficient one. 2. Whatsoever is right, ver. 4, 7. Note, God will be sure not to be behind-hand with any for the service they do him. Never any lost by working for God. The crown set before us is a crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge shall give.

Fifthly. For what term are they hired? For a day: it is but a day's work that is here done. The time of life is the day in which we must work the works of Him that sent us into the world: it is a short time; the reward is for eternity, the work is but for a day. Man is said to accomplish as a hiring his day, *Job vii. 1*. This should quicken us to expedition and diligence in our work—that we have but a little time to work in, and the night is hastening on when no man can work; and if our great work be undone when our day is done, we are undone for ever. It should also encourage us in reference to the hardships and difficulties of our work, that it is but for a day: the approaching shadow which the servant earnestly desireth, will bring with it both rest and the reward of our work, *Job vii. 2*. Hold out faith and patience yet a little while.

Sixthly. Notice is taken of the several hours of the day at which the labourers were hired. The apostles were sent forth at the first and third hour of the gospel day; they had a first and second mission while Christ was on earth, and their business was to call in the Jews. After Christ's ascension, about the sixth and ninth hour, they went out again on the same errand, preaching the Gospel to the Jews only, to them in Judea first, and afterwards to them at the dispersion; but at length, as it were about the eleventh hour, they call the Gentiles to the same work and privilege with the Jews, and told them that in Christ Jesus there should be no difference made between Jew and Greek.

But this may be, and commonly is, applied to the several ages of life, in which souls are converted to Christ. The common call is promiscuous, to come work in the vineyard; but the effectual call is particular, and it is then effectual.

for camel, we obtain the rendering 'cable.' In the rabbinic form of the proverb, however, the elephant is substituted for the camel, which confirms the usual rendering and reading." That a cable and not a camel is intended is an opinion as old as Theophylact, who says it is a thick rope which sailors use for casting anchors. We see no good reason for departing from the usual sense of the word. In like manner, the view which makes the eye of a needle a very low and narrow entrance must be given up.

xix. 23. Through inattention to the pointing, the words here are often read as if our Lord spoke of following him in the regeneration. This is an error: "They who follow him shall in the regeneration sit upon thrones," &c. The words, it will be noted, are exclusively spoken to the twelve. Very much has been written upon this passage, where evidently mention is made of a renovation which would take place when Jesus assumed his glorious throne. In the New Testament the word for regeneration occurs but once more (*Titus iii. 5*), where it

when we come at the call. 1. Some are effectually called, and begin to work in the vineyard when they are very young, are sent in early in the morning, whose tender years are seasoned with grace, and the remembrance of their Creator. John Baptist was sanctified from the womb, and therefore great, *Lu. i. 15*; Timothy from a child, *2 Tim. iii. 15*; Obadiah feared the Lord from his youth. Those that have such a journey to go, had need set out betimes; the sooner the better. 2. Others are savingly wrought upon in middle age; go work in the vineyard at the third, sixth, or ninth hour. The power of Divine grace is magnified in the conversion of some when they are in the midst of pleasures and worldly pursuits, as Paul. God has work for all ages; no time amiss to turn to God. None can say, "It is all in good time" for whatever hour of the day it is with us, "the time past of our life may suffice" that we have served sin. "Go ye also into the vineyard." God turns away none that are willing to be hired, for yet there is room. 3. Others are hired into the vineyard in old age, at the eleventh hour, when the day of life is far spent, and there is but one hour of the twelve remaining. None are hired at the twelfth hour: when life is done, opportunity is done; but while there is life, there is hope. 1st. There is hope for old sinners; for if in sincerity they turn to God, they shall doubtless be accepted: true repentance is never too late; and, 2nd. There is hope of old sinners, that they may be brought to true repentance: nothing is too hard for Almighty grace to do; that can change the Ethiopian's skin, and the leopard's spots; can set those to work who have contracted a habit of idleness. Nicodemus may "be born again when he is old," and "the old man" may be "put off" which "is corrupt." Yet let none, upon this presumption, put off their repentance till they are old. These were sent into the vineyard, it is true, at the eleventh hour; but nobody had hired them, or offered to hire them before. The Gentiles came in at the eleventh hour, but it was because the Gospel had not been preached before to them. Those that have had gospel offers made them at the third or sixth hour, and have resisted and refused them, will not have that to say for themselves at the eleventh hour that these had, "no man has hired us," nor can they be sure that any man will hire them at the ninth or eleventh hour; and therefore, not to discourage any, but to awaken all, be it remembered, that now is the accepted time; if we will hear his voice, it must be to-day.

II. *Here is the account with the labourers.* Observe, First. When the account was taken: "when the evening was come," then, as usual, the day labourers were called and paid. Note, Evening time is the reckoning time: the particular account must be given up in the evening of our life; for "after death, the judgment." Faithful labourers shall receive their reward when they die. It is deferred till then, that they may wait with patience for it, but no longer; for God will observe his own rule; the "hire of the labourers shall not abide with thee all night until the morning," see *Deu. xxiv. 15*. When Paul, that faithful labourer, departs, he is with Christ presently. The payment shall not be wholly deferred till the morning of the resurrection; but then, in the evening of the world, shall be the general account, when every one shall receive according to the things done in the body. When time ends, and with it the world of work and opportunity, then the state of retribution commeth; then "call the labourers, and give them their hire." Ministers call them into the vineyard, to do their work; death calls them out of the vineyard, to receive their penny; and those to whom the call into the vineyard is effectual, the call out of it will be joyful. Observe, They did not come for their pay till they were called. We must, with patience, wait God's time for our rest and recompense; go by our Master's clock. The last trumpet at the great day shall call the labourers, *1 Thes. iv. 16*, "Then shall thou call, saith the good and faithful servant, and I will answer." In calling the labourers, they must begin from the last, and so to the first: let not those that come in at the eleventh hour be put behind the rest; but, lest they should be discouraged, call them first. At the great day, though the dead in Christ shall rise first, yet "they which are alive and remain," on whom the ends of the world (the eleventh hour of its day) come, "shall be caught up together with them in the clouds," no preference shall be given to seniority, but every man shall stand in his own lot "at the end of the days."

Secondly. What the account was; and in that observe, 1. The general pay, *ver. 9, 10*: "they received every man a penny." Note, All that, "by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality," shall undoubtedly obtain "eternal life," *Rom. ii. 7*; not as wages for the value of their work, but as "the gift of God." Though there be degrees of glory in heaven, yet it will be to all a complete happiness. They that come from the east and west, and so come in late,—that are picked up out of the highways and the hedges, yet shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the same feast, *ch. viii. 11*. In heaven every vessel will be full, brimfull, though every vessel is not alike large and capacious. In the distribution of future joys, as it was in the gathering of the manna, he that shall gather much will have nothing over, and he that shall gather little will have no lack, *Ex. xvi. 18*. Those whom Christ fed miraculously, though of different sizes,—men, women, and children, yet "did all eat, and were filled." The giving of a whole day's wages to those that had not done the tenth part of a day's work, is designed to shew that God distributes his rewards by grace and sovereignty, and not of debt. The best of the labourers, and those that begin soonest, yet having so many empty spaces in their time, and their works not being filled up before God, may truly be said to labour in the vineyard scarcely one hour out of the twelve; but because we are under grace, and not under the law, even such defective services, done in sincerity, shall not be accepted, but, by free grace, richly rewarded: compare *Lu. xvii. 7, 8*, with *Lu. xii. 37*. 2. The peculiar pleading with those that were offended with this distribution in gavelkind. The circumstances of this serve to adorn the parable; but the general sense is plain, that the "last shall be first." We have here, 1st. The offence taken, *ver. 11, 12*: "They murmured at the Goodman of the house;" not that there is, or can be, any discontent or murmuring in heaven; for that is both guilt and grief, and in heaven there is neither; but there may be, and often is, discontent and murmuring concerning heaven and heavenly things, while they are in prospect and promise in this world. This signifies the jealousy which the Jews were provoked to by the admission of the Gentiles into the kingdom of heaven. As the elder brother, in the parable of the prodigal, repined at the reception of his younger brother, and complained of his father's generosity to him; so these labourers quarrelled with their master, and found fault; not because they had not enough, so much as because others were made equal with them. They boast, as the prodigal's elder brother did, of their good services, "we have borne the burthen and heat of the day;" that was the most they could make of it. Sinners are said to labour in the sun; not in the heat of the iron furnace, but only in the heat of the day. Now these last have worked but one hour, and that, too, in the cool of the day, and yet thou hast made them equal with us." The Gentiles, that are newly called in, have as much of the privileges of the kingdom of the Messiah as the Jews have, that have so long been labouring in the vineyard of the Old Testament church, under the yoke of the ceremonial law, in expectation of that kingdom. Note, There is a great perverseness in us to think that we have too little, and others too much, of the tokens of God's favour: and that we do too much, and others too little, in the work of

God. Very apt we all are to undervalue others' deserts, and to overvalue our own. Perhaps Christ here gives an intimation to Peter not to boast too much, as he seemed to do, of his having left all to follow Christ; as if, because he and the rest of them had borne the burthen and heat of the day thus, they must have a heaven by themselves. It is hard for those that do or suffer more than ordinary for God not to be elevated too much with the thought of it, and to expect to merit by it. Blessed Paul guarded against this, when, though the chief of the apostles, he owned himself to be nothing, to be "less than the least of all saints." 2nd. The offence removed. Three things the master of the house urgeth in answer to this ill-natured surmise:

First. That the complainant had no reason at all to say he had any wrong done to him, *ver. 13, 14*. Here he asserts his own justice: "Friend, I do thee no wrong." He calls him friend; for, in reasoning with others, we should use soft words and hard arguments; if our inferiors are peevish and provoking, yet we should not thereby be put into a passion, but speak calmly to them. 1st. It is incontestably true, that God can do no wrong. This is the prerogative of the King of kings. "Is there unrighteousness with God?" The apostle startles at the thought of it: "God forbid," *Rom. iii. 5, 6*. His Word should silence all murmurings; that whatever God doth to us, or withholds from us, he doth us no wrong. 2nd. If God gives that grace to others which he denies to us, it is kindness to them, but no injustice to us; and bounty to another, while it is no injustice to us, we ought not to find fault with. Because it is free grace that is given to those that have it, boasting is for ever excluded; and because it is free grace that is withheld from those that have it not, murmuring is for ever excluded. Thus shall "every mouth be stopped," and all flesh be silent before God.

To convince the murmurer that he did no wrong, he refers him to the bargain, "Didst not thou agree with me for a penny?" And if thou hadst what thou didst agree for, thou hast no reason to cry out of wrong; thou shalt have what we agreed for. Though God is a debtor to none, yet he is graciously pleased to make himself a debtor by his own promise, for the benefit of which, through Christ, believers agree with him, and he will stand to his part of the agreement. Note, It is good for us often to consider what it was that we agreed with God for. First. Carnal worldlings agree with God for their penny in this world: they choose their portion in this life, *Ps. xvii. 14*. In these things they are willing to have their reward, *ch. vi. 2, 5*; their consolation, *Lu. vi. 24*; their good things, *Lu. xvi. 25*; and with these they shall be put off, shall be cut off from spiritual and eternal blessings. And herein God doth them no wrong; they have what they chose, the penny they agreed for: so shall their doom be; themselves have decided it; it is conclusive against them. Secondly. Obedient believers agree with God for their penny in the other world, and they must remember that they have so agreed. "Didst not thou agree to take God's word for it? Thou didst. And wilt thou go and agree with the world? Didst not thou agree to take up with heaven as thy portion, thy all, and to take up with nothing short of it? And wilt thou seek for a happiness in the creature, or think from thence to make up the deficiencies of thy happiness in God?" He therefore, 1. Ties him to his bargain, *ver. 14*: "Take that thine is, and go thy way." If we understand it of that which is ours by debt, or absolute propriety, it would be a dreadful word. We are all undone if we be put off with that only which we can call our own. The highest creature must go away into nothing, if he must go away with that only which is his own. But if we understand it of that which is ours by gift, the free gift of God, it teacheth us to be content with such things as we have. Instead of repining that we have no more, let us take what we have, and be thankful. If God be better in any respect to others than to us, yet we have no reason to complain, while he is so much better to us than we deserve, in giving us our penny, though we are unprofitable servants. 2. He tells him that those he envied should fare as well as he did: "I will give unto this last even as unto thee," "I am resolved I will." Note, The unchangeableness of God's purposes in dispensing his gifts should silence our murmurings. If he will do it, it is not for us to gainsay; for "he is in one mind, and who can turn him?" neither giveth he an account of any of his matters," nor is it fit he should.

Secondly. He had no reason to quarrel with the master, for what he gave was absolutely his own, *ver. 15*. As before he asserted his justice, so here his sovereignty: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?" Note, 1st. God is the owner of all good; his propriety in it is absolute, sovereign, and unlimited. 2nd. He may therefore give or withhold his blessings as he pleaseth. What we have is not our own, and therefore it is not lawful for us to do what we will with it; but what God has is his own. And this will justify him, 1. In all the disposals of his providence. When God takes from us that which was dear to us, and which we could ill spare, we must silence our discontents with this, "May he not do what he will with his own?" *Abstulit, sed et dedit*. "He hath taken away, but he originally gave." It is not for such depending creatures as we are to quarrel with our sovereign. 2. In all the dispensations of his grace. God gives or withholds the means of grace, and the Spirit of grace, as he pleaseth. Not but that there is a counsel in every will of God; and what seems to us to be done arbitrarily, will appear at length to have been done wisely, and for holy ends. But this is enough to silence all murmurers and objectors, that God is sovereign lord of all, and may do what he will with his own. We are in his hand as clay in the hand of the potter, and it is not for us to prescribe to him, or strive with him.

Thirdly. He had no reason to envy his fellow servant, or to grudge at him; nor to be angry that he came into the vineyard no sooner, for he was not sooner called; nor to be angry that the master had given him wages for the whole day, when he had idled away the greatest part of it; for "is thine eye evil, because I am good?" See here, 1st. The nature of envy; it is an evil eye. The eye is oftentimes both the inlet and outlet of sin. Saul saw that David prospered, and he eyed him, *1 Sam. xviii. 9, 15*. It is an evil eye, being displeased at the good of others, and desiring their hurt. What can have more evil in it? It is grief to ourselves, anger to God, and ill will to our neighbour; and it is a sin that has neither pleasure, profit, nor honour in it: it is an evil, an only evil. 2nd. The aggravation of it: it is because I am good. Envy is unlikeness to God, who is good, and doth good, and delights in doing good; nay, it is an opposition and contradiction to God; it is a dislike of his proceedings, and a displeasure at what he doth, and is pleased with. It is a direct violation of both the two great commandments at once; both that of love to God, in whose will we should acquiesce, and love to our neighbour, in whose welfare we should rejoice. Thus man's badness takes occasion from God's goodness to be more exceeding sinful.

III. *Here is the reddition of the parable*, *ver. 16*, in that observation which occasioned it, *ch. xix. 30*, so "the first shall be last, and the last first." There were many that followed Christ now in the regeneration, when the Gospel kingdom was first set up; and these Jewish converts seemed to have got the start of others; but Christ, to obviate and silence their boasting, here tells them, First. That they might possibly be outstripped by their successors in profession; and though they were before others in profession, might be found inferior to them in knowledge, grace, and holiness. The Gentile church, which was as yet unborn,—the Gentile world, which as yet stood idle in the market-place, would produce greater numbers of eminent, useful Christians than were found

refers to personal renewal. Here some have taken it to refer to the resurrection of Christ; others to the general resurrection, to the reformation effected among men by the Gospel, admission into heaven, &c. The true sense seems best deducible from a comparison of this with such texts as *Acts iii. 21*; *1 Cor. vi. 2, 3*; *Rev. iii. 21, xx. 4*. Believers in a personal millennial reign explain the text in accordance with their system. It may be fairly asked whether an actual judicial power will be exercised by the twelve apostles, or whether our Lord

means to say that in the new world they will enjoy a greater dignity than the twelve tribes of Israel as a whole, on the principle that the least in the kingdom of heaven was declared to be greater than John the Baptist. We do not favour a literal judgment as an apostolical prerogative, although it may well be that those heralds of the cross will have the highest places in glory.

xx. 1. Here Lightfoot quotes a parable resembling this in some sense, though, as he says, insanely applied by its rabbinical authors

among the Jews. "More" and more excellent "shall be the children of the desolate than those of the married wife," *Isa. liv. 1*. Who knows but that the church in its old age may be more fat and flourishing than ever, to shew that the Lord is upright? Though primitive Christianity had more of the purity and power of that holy religion than is to be found in the degenerate age wherein we live, yet what labourers may be sent into the vineyard in the eleventh hour of the church's day, in the Philadelphian period; and what plentiful effusions of the Spirit may then be, above what has been yet, who can tell? Secondly, That they had reason to fear lest they themselves should be found hypocrites at last; for "many are called, but few chosen." This is applied to the Jews, *ch. xxii. 14*. It was so then; it is too true still. Many are called with a common call, that are not chosen with a saving choice. All that are chosen from eternity, are effectually called "in the fulness of time," *Rom. viii. 30*; so that in making our effectual calling sure, we make sure our election, *2 Pet. i. 10*. But it is not so as to the outward call. Many are called, and yet refuse, *Pr. i. 24*; nay, as they are called to God, so they go from him, *Hos. xi. 2, 7*. By which it appears they were not chosen, for the election will obtain, *Rom. xi. 7*. Note, There are but few chosen Christians in comparison with the many that are only called Christians; it therefore highly concerns us to build our hope for heaven upon the rock of an eternal choice, and not upon the sand of an external call; and we should fear lest we be found but seeming Christians, and so should really come short; nay, lest we be found blemished Christians, and so should seem to come short, *Heb. iv. 1*.

17 And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the



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with him; and therefore it was requisite they should know of it, that, being forewarned, they might be forearmed. It was not fit to be spoken publicly as yet, 1. Because many that were cool towards him would hereby have been driven to turn their backs upon him; the scandal of the cross would have frightened them from following him any longer. 2. Because many that were hot for him would hereby be driven to take up arms in his defence, and it might have occasioned an uproar among the people, *ch. xxvi. 5*, which would have been laid to his charge if he had told them of it publicly before. And besides that such methods are utterly disagreeable to the genius of his kingdom, which is not of this world, he never countenanced any thing which had a tendency to prevent his sufferings. This discourse was not in the synagogue, nor in the house, but in the way, as they travelled along; which teaches us, in our walks or travels with our friends, to keep up such discourse as is good, and to the use of edifying; see *Deu. xvi. 7*.

II. The prediction itself, ver. 18, 19. Observe,

First, It is but a repetition of what he had once and again said before, *ch. xvi. 21*; *xvii. 22, 23*. This intimates, that he not only saw clearly what troubles lay before him, but that his heart was upon his suffering work; it filled him, not with fear—then he would have studied to avoid it, and could have done it—but with desire and expectation. He spoke thus frequently of his sufferings, because through them he was to enter into his glory. Note, It is good for us to be often thinking and speaking of our death, and of the sufferings which it is likely we may meet with betwixt this and the grave: and thus, by making them more familiar, they would become less formidable. This is the way of dying daily, and of taking up our cross daily, to be daily speaking of the cross and of dying, which would come neither the sooner nor the surer, but much the better, for our thoughts and discourses of them.

Secondly, He is more particular here in foretelling his sufferings than any time before. He had said, *ch. xvi. 21*, that he should "suffer many things, and be killed;" and, *ch. xvii. 22*, that he should "be betrayed into the hands of men, and they should kill him;" but here he adds, that he shall be condemned, and "delivered to the Gentiles;" that they shall mock him, and scourge him, and crucify him. These are frightful things, and the certain foresight of them was enough to damp an ordinary resolution; yet, as was foretold concerning him, *Isa. xlii. 4*, he did not fail, nor was discouraged, but the more clearly he foresaw his sufferings, the more cheerfully he went forth to meet them. He foretells by whom he should suffer, by the chief priests and the scribes; so he had said before; but here he adds, they "shall deliver him to the Gentiles," that he might be the better understood; for the chief priests and scribes had no power to put him to death, nor was crucifying a manner of death in use among the Jews. Christ suffered from the malice both of Jews and Gentiles, because he was to suffer for the salvation both of Jews and Gentiles; both had a hand in his death, because he was to reconcile both by his cross, *Eph. ii. 16*.

Thirdly, Here, as before, he annexeth the mention of his resurrection and his glory to that of his death and sufferings: "the third day he shall rise again." He still brings this in, 1. To encourage himself in his sufferings, and to carry him cheerfully through them. He "endured the cross, for the joy set before him;" he foresaw he should rise again, and rise quickly, the third day. He shall be straight tway glorified, *Jan. xiii. 32*. The reward is not only sure, but very near. 2. To encourage his disciples, and comfort them, who would be overwhelmed and greatly terrified by his sufferings. 3. To direct us, under all the sufferings of this present time, to keep up a believing prospect of the glory to be revealed; to look at the things that are not seen, that are eternal, which will enable us to call the present afflictions light, and but for a moment.

20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and de-

twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, 18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, 19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.

This is the third time that Christ gave his disciples notice of his approaching sufferings. He was now going up to Jerusalem to celebrate the passover, and to offer up himself the great passover; both must be done at Jerusalem, there the passover must be kept, *Deu. xii. 5*. And there a prophet must perish, because there the great Sanhedrim sat, who were judges in that case, *Lu. xiii. 33*. Observe,

1. The privacy of this prediction: he "took the twelve disciples apart in the way." This was one of those things which was told to them in darkness, but which they were afterwards to speak in the light, *ch. x. 27*. His secret was with them as his friends, and this particularly. It was a hard saying; and if any could bear it, they could. They would be more immediately exposed to peril

siring a certain thing of him. 21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. 22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. 23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. 24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. 25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. 26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: 28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Here is, 1. The request of the two disciples to Christ, and the rectifying of the mistake upon which that was grounded, ver. 20–23. The sons of Zebedee were James and John, two of the first three of Christ's disciples; Peter and they were his favourites; John was the disciple whom Jesus loved; yet none were so often reproved as they: whom Christ loves best, he reproves most, *Rev. iii. 19*.

First, Here is the ambitious address they made to Christ, that they might sit the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom, ver. 20, 21. It was a great degree of faith, that they were confident of his kingdom, though now he appeared in meanness; but a great degree of ignorance, that they should

"Where to was R. Bon Bar Chajia like? To a king who hired many workmen, among whom one was hired who excelled in his work extraordinarily. What did the king do? He took him with him, and walked up and down with him. When it was evening the labourers came to receive their wages, and he gave full pay to him along with them. And the workmen murmured, saying, We have laboured hard all day, and he only for two hours, and there is given to him a reward equal to ours. The king said unto them, He laboured more in two hours

than you in the whole day. So R. Bon applied himself more to the law in eight-and-twenty years than others in a hundred years." Jewish writers observe that a working day began at sunrise and ended when the stars appeared.

xx. 2. The penny, or denarius, as already noted, was about equal to sevenpence-halfpenny of our money. It is said to have been a soldier's daily pay in the reign of Tiberius, and this text suggests that farm labourers received the same amount.

expected a temporal kingdom, with worldly pomp and power, when Christ had so often told them of sufferings and self-denial. This kingdom they expected to be grandees in. They ask not for employment in his kingdom, but for honour only; and no place would serve them in this imaginary kingdom, but the highest, next to Christ, and above every body else. It is likely the last word in Christ's foregoing discourse gave occasion to this request, that "the third day he should rise again." They concluded that his resurrection would be his entrance upon his kingdom, and therefore were resolved to put in betimes for the best place; nor would they lose it for want of speaking early. What Christ said to comfort them, they thus abused, and were puffed up with. Some cannot bear comforts, but they turn them to a wrong purpose; as sweetmeats in a foul stomach breed cholera. Now observe, 1. There was a policy in the management of this address, that they put their mother on to present it, that it might be looked upon as her request, and not theirs. Though proud people think well of themselves, they would not be thought to do so, and therefore affect nothing more than a show of humility, *Col. ii. 18*; and others must be put on to court that honour for them which they are ashamed to court for themselves. The mother of James and John was Salome, as appears by comparing *ch. xvii. 46*, with *Mar. xv. 40*. Some think she was the daughter of Cleophas, or Alpheus, and sister or cousin german to Mary the mother of our Lord. She was one of those women that attended Christ, and ministered to him; and they thought she had such an interest in him, that he could deny her nothing, and therefore they make her their advocate. Thus when Adonijah had an unreasonable request to make to Solomon, he put Bathsheba on to speak for him. It was their mother's weakness thus to become the tool of their ambition, which she should have given a check to. Those that are wise and good would not be seen in an ill-favoured thing. In gracious requests we should learn this wisdom, to desire the prayers of those that have an interest at the throne of grace; should beg of our praying friends to pray for us, and reckon it a real kindness. It was likewise policy to ask first for a general grant, that he would do a certain thing for them, not in faith, but in presumption upon that general promise, "Ask, and it shall be given you;" in which is implied this qualification of our request, that it be according to the revealed will of God; otherwise we ask, and have not, if we ask to consume it upon our lusts, *Jas. iv. 3*. 2. There was pride at the bottom of it, a proud conceit of their own merit, a proud contempt of their brethren, and a proud desire of honour and pre-eminence. Pride is a sin that doth most easily beset us, and which it is hard to get clear of. It is a holy ambition to strive to excel others in grace and holiness, but it is a sinful ambition to covet to exceed others in pomp and grandeur. "Seest thou great things for thyself, when thou hast just now heard of thy Master's being mocked, and scourged, and crucified? For shame, seek them not," *Jer. xlv. 5*.

Secondly, Christ's answer to this address, ver. 22, 23, directed, not to the mother, but to the sons that set her on. Though others be our mouth in prayer, the answer will be given to us according as we stand affected. Christ's answer is very mild: they were overtaken in the fault of ambition, but Christ restored them with the spirit of meekness. Observe,

1. How he reproved the ignorance and error of their petition: "Ye know not what ye ask." 1st. They were much in the dark concerning the kingdom they had their eye upon: they dreamed of a temporal kingdom; whereas "Christ's kingdom is not of this world." They knew not what it was to sit on his right hand, and on his left; they talked of it as blind men do of colours. Our apprehensions of that glory which is yet to be revealed, are like the apprehensions which a child has of the preferments of grown men. If at length, through grace, we arrive at perfection, we shall then put away such childish fancies; when we come to see face to face, we shall know what we enjoy; but now, alas, we know not what we ask; we can but ask for the good as it lies in the promise, *Tit. i. 2*; what it will be in the performance, eye has not seen, nor ear heard. 2nd. They were much in the dark concerning the way to that kingdom: they know not what they ask, that ask for the end, but overlook the means, and so put asunder what God has joined together. The disciples thought, when they had left what little all they had for Christ, and had gone about the country a while preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, all their service and suffering was over, and it was now time to ask, "What shall we have?" As if nothing were now to be looked for but crowns and garlands; whereas there were far greater hardships and difficulties before them than they had yet met with: they imagined their warfare was accomplished, when it was scarcely begun, and they had yet but run with the footmen: they dream of being in Canaan presently, and consider not what they shall do in the swellings of Jordan. Note, *First*. We are all apt, when we are but girding on the harness, to boast as though we had put it off. *Secondly*. We know not what we ask, when we ask for the glory of wearing the crown, and ask not for grace to bear the cross in our way to it.

2. How he repressed the vanity and ambition of their request. They were pleasing themselves with the fancy of sitting on his right hand and on his left, in great state. Now, to check this, he leads them to the thoughts of their sufferings, and leaves them in the dark about their glory.

1st. He leads them to the thoughts of their sufferings, which they were not so mindful of as they ought to have been. They looked so earnestly upon the crown, the prize, that they were ready to plunge headlong and unprepared into the foul way that led to it; and therefore he thinks it necessary to put them in mind of the hardships that were before them, that they might be no surprise or terror to them. Observe, *First*. How fairly he puts the matter to them concerning these difficulties, ver. 22: "You would stand candidates for the first post of honour in the kingdom, but 'are you able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?' You talk of what great things you must have when you have done your work; but are you able to hold out to the end of it? Put the matter seriously to yourselves." These same two disciples once knew not what manner of spirit they were of, when they were disturbed with anger, *Lu. ix. 55*; and now were not aware what was amiss in their spirits, when they were lifted up with ambition. Christ sees that pride in us which we discern not in ourselves. Note, 1st. That to suffer for Christ is to drink of a cup, and to be baptized with a baptism. In this description of sufferings, 1. It is true that "affliction doth abound." It is supposed to be a bitter cup that is drunk of, wormwood and gall, those waters of a full cup that are wrung out to God's people, *Ps. lxxii. 10*; a cup of trembling indeed, but not of fire and brimstone, the portion of the cup of wicked men, *Ps. xi. 6*. It is supposed to be a baptism, a washing with the waters of affliction: some are dipped in them; the waters compass them about even to the soul, *Jonah ii. 5*; others have but a sprinkling of them; both are baptisms; some are overwhelmed in them, as in a deluge, others ill wet, as in a sharp shower. But, 2. Even in this, "consolation doth more abound." It is but a cup, not an ocean; it is but a draught, bitter perhaps, but we shall see the bottom of it; it is a cup in the hand of a Father, *Jno. xviii. 11*, and it is full of mixture, *Ps. lxxv. 8*. It is but a baptism; if dipped, that is the worst of it, not drowned; perplexed, but not in despair. Baptism is an ordinance by which we join ourselves to the Lord in covenant and communion, and so is suffering for Christ, *Eze. xx. 37*; *Isa. xlviii. 10*; baptism is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, and so is

suffering for Christ: for "unto us it is given," *Phil. i. 29*. 2nd. It is to drink of the same cup that Christ drank of, and to be baptized with the same baptism that he was baptized with. Christ is beforehand with us in suffering; and in that, as in other things, left us an example. 1. It speaks the condescension of a suffering Christ, that he would drink of such a cup, *Jno. xviii. 11*; nay, and such a brook, *Ps. cx. 7*; and drink so deep, and yet so cheerfully; that he would be baptized with such a baptism, and was so forward to it, *Lu. xii. 50*. It was much he would be baptized with water, as a common sinner, much more with blood, as an uncommon malefactor; but in all this he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was made sin for us. 2. It speaks the consolation of suffering Christians, that they do but pledge Christ in the bitter cup, are "partakers of his sufferings," and fill up that which is behind of them; we must therefore "arm ourselves with the same mind, and go to him without the camp." 3rd. It is good for us to be often putting it to ourselves, whether we be able to "drink of this cup," and to be "baptized with this baptism." We must expect suffering, and look upon it as a hard thing to suffer well, and as becomes us. Are we able to suffer cheerfully, and in the worst of times still to hold fast our integrity? What can we afford to part with for Christ? How far will we give him credit? Could I find in my heart to drink of a bitter cup, and to be baptized with a bloody baptism, rather than let go my hold for Christ? The truth is, religion, if it be worth any thing, is worth every thing; but it is worth little, if it be not worth suffering for. Now let us sit down and count the cost of dying for Christ, rather than denying him, and ask, "Can we take him upon these terms?" *Secondly*. See how boldly they engage for themselves: they said, "We are able," in hopes of sitting on his right hand, and on his left; but at the same time fondly hoped that they should never be tried: as before they knew not what they asked, so now they knew not what they answered. "We are able," they would have done well to put in, "Lord, by thy strength, and in thy grace, we are able; otherwise, we are not." But the same that was Peter's temptation—to be confident of his own sufficiency, and presume upon his own strength—was here the temptation of James and John; and it is a sin we are all prone to. They knew not what Christ's cup was, nor what his baptism; and therefore they were thus bold in promising for themselves. But those are commonly most confident that are least acquainted with the cross. *Thirdly*. See how plainly and positively their sufferings are here foretold, ver. 23: "Ye shall drink of my cup." Sufferings foreseen will be the easier borne, especially if looked upon under a right notion, as drinking of his cup, and being baptized with his baptism. Christ began in suffering for us, and expects we should pledge him in suffering for him. Christ will have us know the worst, that we may make the best of our way to heaven. "Ye shall drink," that is, "ye shall suffer." James drank the bloody cup first of all the apostles, *Acts xii. 2*. John, though at last he died in his bed, if we may credit the ecclesiastical historians, yet often drank of this bitter cup, as when he was banished into the isle Patmos, *Rev. i. 9*; and when, as they say, at Ephesus, he was put into a caldron of boiling oil, but was miraculously preserved. He was, as the rest of the apostles, in deaths off. He took the cup, offered himself to the baptism, and was accepted.

2nd. He leaves them in the dark about the degrees of their glory. To carry them cheerfully through their sufferings, it was enough to be assured that they should have a place in his kingdom. The lowest seat in heaven is an abundant recompense for the greatest sufferings on earth. But as to the preferments there, it was not fit there should be any intimation given for whom they were intended; for the infirmity of the present state could not bear such a discovery with any evenness. "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give," and therefore it is not for you to ask or to know it, "but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." Note, 1. It is very probable there are degrees of glory in heaven; for our Saviour seems to allow that there are some that shall sit on his right hand and on his left, in the highest places. 2. As the future glory itself, so the degrees of it, are purposed and prepared in the eternal counsel of God; as the common salvation, so the more peculiar honours are appointed; the whole affair is long since settled, and there is a certain measure of the stature, both in grace and glory, *Eph. iv. 13*. 3. Christ, in dispensing the fruits of his own purchase, goes exactly by the measures of his Father's purpose. "It is not mine to give, save to those," (so it may be read,) "for whom it is prepared." Christ has the sole power of giving eternal life; but then it is "to as many as were given him," *Jno. xvii. 2*; "it is not mine to give;" that is, to promise now: that matter is already settled and concerted, and the Father and the Son understand one another perfectly well in this matter. "It is not mine to give to those that seek it, and are ambitious of it, but to those that, by great humility and self-denial, are prepared for it."

11. Here is the reproof and instruction which Christ gave to the other ten disciples for their displeasure at the request of James and John. He had something to do with them all, they were so weak in knowledge and grace; yet he bore their manners.

First. The fret that the ten disciples were in, ver. 24: "They were moved with indignation against the two brethren;" not because they were desirous to be preferred, which was their sin, and for which Christ was displeased with them, but because they were desirous to be preferred before them, which was a reflection upon them. Many seem to have indignation at sin; but it is not because it is sin, but because it toucheth them; they will inform against a man that swears, but it is only if he swears at them, and affronts them, not because he dishonours God. These disciples were angry at their brethren's ambition, though they themselves, nay, because they themselves, were as ambitious. Note, It is common for people to be angry at those sins in others which they allow of and indulge in themselves. Those that are proud and covetous themselves, yet do not care to see others so. Nothing makes more mischief among brethren, nor is the cause of more indignation and contention, than ambition and desire of greatness. We never find Christ's disciples quarrelling, but something of this was at the bottom of it.

Secondly. The check that Christ gave them, which was very gentle, rather by way of instruction what they should be, than by way of reprimand for what they were. He had reproved this very sin before, *ch. xviii. 3*, and told them they must be humble as little children, yet they relapsed into it; and yet he reproved them for it thus mildly. He "called them unto him," which intimates great tenderness and familiarity. He did not, in anger, bid them get out of his presence; but called them, in love, to come into his presence; for therefore he is fit to teach, and we are invited to learn of him, because he is "meek and lowly in heart." What he had to say concerned both the two disciples and the ten, and therefore he will have them all together; and he tells them, that whereas they were asking which of them should have dominion in a temporal kingdom, there was really no such dominion reserved for any of them; for,

1. They must not be like the princes of the Gentiles. Christ's disciples must not be like Gentiles; no, not like princes of the Gentiles. Principality doth no more become ministers, than Gentilism doth Christians. Observe, 1st. What is the way of the princes of the Gentiles, ver. 25: to exercise dominion and authority over their subjects; and, if they can but win the upper hand with a strong hand, over one another too; a d that which bears them up in it is, that they are great, and great men think they may do any thing. Dominion

xx. 8. The Jews divided their day into twelve hours, from six in the morning to six in the evening. Hence the third hour was nine a.m. Persons in want of employment waited in the market-places, where assemblies were held, and public and private business was transacted. Dr. Kitto quotes from Morier's travels in Persia a passage from which it appears that at Hamadan they saw in the square every morning before sunrise a numerous band of peasants, with spades in their hands. These men were waiting to be hired for the day to work in

the surrounding fields. Some of them often waited till late in the day, because, as they said, no man had hired them.

xx. 22, 23. The words "cup" and "baptism" are here used metaphorically of the trials and calamities which the Saviour had to pass through. To drink of the cup and to be baptised therefore denote in this place participation in trial. In both verses it must be observed that the portions relating to baptism are omitted by the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts, and other weighty authorities.

and authority is the great thing which the princes of the Gentiles pursue, and pride themselves in; they would bear sway, would carry all before them, have every body truckle to them, and every sheaf bow to theirs; they would have it cried before them, "Bow the knee, like Nebuchadnezzar, who slew and kept alive at pleasure." 2nd. What is the will of Christ concerning his apostles and ministers in this matter. First, "It shall not be so among you." The constitution of the spiritual kingdom is quite different from this. You are to teach the subjects of this kingdom, to instruct and beseech them, to counsel and comfort them, to take pains with them, and suffer with them; not to exercise dominion or authority over them; you are not to lord it over God's heritage, 1 *Pet. v. 3*, but to labour in it. This forbids not only tyranny and abuse of power, but the claim or use of any such secular authority as the princes of the Gentiles lawfully exercise. So hard is it for vain men, even good men, to have such authority, and not to be puffed up with it, and do more hurt than good with it, that our Lord Jesus saw fit wholly to banish it out of his church. Paul himself disowns dominion over the faith of any, 2 *Cor. i. 24*. The pomp and grandeur of the princes of the Gentiles ill becomes Christ's disciples. Now, if there were no such power and honour intended to be in the church, it was nonsense for them to be striving who should have it: they "knew not what they asked." Secondly, How, then, shall it be among the disciples of Christ? Something of greatness among them Christ himself had intimated; and here he explains it: "He that will be great among you," that will be chief, that would really be so, and would be found to be so at last, "let him be your minister, your servant," ver. 26, 27. Hence observe, 1st. That it is the duty of Christ's disciples to serve one another for mutual edification. This includes both humility and usefulness. The followers of Christ must be ready to stoop to the meanest offices of love for the good of one another; must "submit one to another," 1 *Pet. v. 5*; *Eph. v. 21*, "and edify one another," *Rom. xiv. 19*; please one another for good, *Rom. xv. 2*. The great apostle made himself every one's servant. See 1 *Cor. ix. 19*. 2nd. It is the dignity of Christ's disciples faithfully to discharge this duty. The way to be great and chief, is to be humble and serviceable. Those are to be best accounted for, and most respected in the church, and will be so, by all that understand things aright, not that are dignified with high and mighty names, like names of the great ones of the earth, that appear in pomp, and assume to themselves a power proportionable; but those that are most humble and self-denying, and lay out themselves most to do good, though to the diminishing of themselves: those honour God most, and those he will honour. As he must become a fool that would be wise, so he must become a servant that would be chief. St. Paul was a great example of this; he "laboured more abundantly than they all," made himself, as some would call it, a drudge to his work; and is not he chief? Do we not, by consent, call him the great apostle?—though he called himself less than the least. And perhaps our Lord Jesus had an eye to him, when he said, there were last that should be first; for Paul was "one born out of due time," 1 *Cor. xv. 8*; not only the youngest child of the family of the apostles, but a posthumous one; yet he became greatest. And perhaps he it was for whom the first post of honour in Christ's kingdom was reserved, and prepared of his Father; not for James, who sought it; and therefore, just before Paul began to be famous as an apostle, Providence ordered it so that James was cut off, *Acts xii. 1*, that in the college of the twelve Paul might be substituted in his room.

2. They must be like the Master himself, and it is very fit they should; that, while they were in the world, they should be as he was, when he was in the world; for, to both, the present state is a state of humiliation; the crown and glory was reserved for both in the future state: let them consider that "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many," ver. 28. Our Lord Jesus here sets himself before his disciples as a pattern of those two things before recommended, humility and usefulness. 1st. Never was there such an example of humility and condescension as there was in the life of Christ, who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." When the Son of God came into the world, his ambassador to the children of men, one would think he should have been ministered to, should have appeared in an equipage agreeable to his person and character: but he did not so; he made no figure, had no pompous train of state-servants to attend him, nor was he clad in robes of honour; for he "took upon him the form of a servant." He was indeed ministered to, as a poor man, which was a part of his humiliation; there were those that "ministered to him of their substance," *Lu. viii. 2, 3*; but he was never ministered to as a great man; never took state upon him, was not waited on at table: he once washed his disciples' feet, but we never read that they washed his feet. He came to minister help to all that were in distress; he made himself a servant to the sick and diseased; was as ready to their requests as ever any servant was to the beck of his master, and took as much pains to serve them; he attended continually to this very thing, and denied himself both food and rest to attend to it. 2nd. Never was there such an example of beneficence and usefulness as there was in the death of Christ, who gave his life a ransom for many. He lived as a servant, and went about doing good; but he died as a sacrifice, and in that did the greatest good of all: he came into the world on purpose to give his life a ransom, it was first in his intention. The aspiring princes of the Gentiles make the lives of many a ransom for their own honour, and perhaps a sacrifice to their own humour; Christ doth not do so; his subjects' blood is precious to him, and he is not prodigal of it. *Ps. lxxii. 14*; but, on the contrary, he gives his honour, and life too, a ransom for his subjects. Note, First, Jesus Christ laid down his life for "a ransom." Our lives were forfeited into the hands of Divine justice by sin; Christ, by parting with his life, made atonement for sin, and so rescued ours; he was made sin and a curse for us; and died, not only for our good, but in our stead, *Acts xx. 28*; 1 *Pet. i. 18, 19*. Secondly, It was "a ransom for many," sufficient for all, effectual for many; "and if for many, then, saith the poor doubting soul, 'why not for me?' for many, that by him many may be made righteous; these many were his seed, for which his soul travailed, *Isa. liii. 10, 11*: for many; so they will be, when they come all together, though now they appear but a little flock. Now this is a good reason why we should not strive for precedence, because the cross is our banner, and our Master's death is our life; it is a good reason why we should study to do good, and, in consideration of the love of Christ in dying for us, not stick at "laying down our lives for the brethren," 1 *Jno. iii. 16*. Ministers should be more forward than others to serve and suffer for the good of souls, as blessed Paul was, *Acts xx. 24*; *Phil. ii. 17*. And the nearer we are all concerned in, and the more we are advantaged by, the humility and humiliation of Christ, the more ready and careful we should be to imitate it.

29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. 30 And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on

us, O Lord, thou son of David. 31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. 32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? 33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. 34 So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

We have here an account of the cure of two poor blind beggars, in which we may observe,

I. Their address to Christ, ver. 29, 30; and in this, First, The circumstances of it are observable: it was as Christ and his disciples departed from Jericho: that devoted place, which was rebuilt unto a curse, Christ took his leave of with this blessing; for he received gifts even for the rebellious: it was in the presence of a great multitude, that followed him. Christ had a numerous, though not a pompous attendance, and did good to them, though he did not take state to himself. This multitude, that followed Christ, was a mixed multitude: some followed him for loaves, and some for love; some for curiosity, and some in expectation of his temporal reign, which the disciples themselves dreamed of; and very few with desire to be taught their duty; yet for the sake of those few he confirmed his doctrine by miracles, wrought in the presence of great multitudes; who, if they were not convinced by them, would be the more inexcusable. Two blind men concurred in their request, for joint prayer is pleasing to Christ, *ch. xviii. 19*: these joint sufferers were joint suitors; being companions in the same tribulation, they were partners in the same supplication. Note, It is good for those that are labouring under the same calamity, or infirmity of body or mind, to join together in the same prayer to God for relief, that they may quicken one another's fervency, and encourage one another's faith: there is mercy enough in Christ for all the petitioners. These blind men were "sitting by the way side" as blind beggars used to do. Note, Those that would receive mercy from Christ, must place themselves there where his outgoings are, where he useth to manifest himself to those that seek him: it is good thus to waylay Christ, to be in his road. "They heard that Jesus passed by:" though they were blind, they were not deaf. Seeing and hearing are the learning senses: it is a great calamity to want either; but the defect of one may be, and often is, made up in the acuteness of the other; and therefore it has been observed by some, as an instance of the goodness of Providence, that none were ever known to be born both blind and deaf; but that, one way or other, they might be in a capacity of receiving knowledge. These blind men had heard of Christ "by the hearing of the ear," but they desired that their eyes might see him: "when they heard that Jesus passed by," they asked no further questions, who were with him, or whether he was in haste, but immediately "cried out." Note, It is good to improve the present opportunity, to make the best of the price now in hand; because, if once let slip, it may never return. These blind men did so, and did wisely; for we do not find that Christ ever came to Jericho again: "Now is the accepted time."

Secondly, The address itself is more observable: "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David;" repeated again, ver. 31. Four things are recommended to us for an example in this address; for though the eye of the body was dark, the eye of the mind was enlightened concerning truth, duty, and interest. 1. Here is an example of importunity in prayer: they cried out as men in earnest. Men in want use to be so; cold desires do but beg denials. Those that would prevail in prayer must stir up themselves to take hold on God in the duty; when they were discouraged in it, they cried the more: the stream of fervency, if it be stopped, will rise and swell the higher. This is wrestling with God in prayer, and makes us the fitter to receive mercy; for the more it is striven for, the more it will be prized, and thankfully acknowledged. 2. Of humility in prayer, in that word, "Have mercy on us," not specifying the favour, or prescribing what, much less pleading merit, but casting themselves upon, and referring themselves cheerfully to, the Mediator's mercy, in what way he pleaseth; only have mercy: they ask not for silver or gold, though they were poor; but mercy, mercy. This is that which our hearts must be upon when we come to the throne of grace, that we may find mercy, *Heb. iv. 16*; *Ps. cxxx. 7*. 3. Of faith in prayer. In the title they gave to Christ, which was in the nature of a plea, "O Lord, thou son of David," they confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and therefore had authority to command deliverance for them. Surely it was by the Holy Ghost that they called Christ Lord, 1 *Cor. xii. 3*: thus they take their encouragement in prayer from his power; as, in calling him the son of David, they take encouragement from his goodness as Messiah, of whom so many kind and tender things had been foretold, particularly his compassion to the poor and needy, *Ps. lxxii. 12, 13*. It is of excellent use in prayer to eye Christ in the grace and glory of his Messiahship; remember that he is the son of David, whose office it is to help, and save; and plead it with him. 4. Of perseverance in prayer, notwithstanding discouragement: "the multitude rebuked them," as noisy, and clamorous, and importunate; and bid them "hold their peace," and not disturb the Master, who perhaps, at first, himself seemed not to regard them. In following Christ with our prayers we must expect to meet with hindrances and manifold discouragements, from within and from without, something or other that bids us hold our peace; such rebukes are permitted, that faith and fervency, patience and perseverance, may be tried: these poor blind men were rebuked by the multitude that followed Christ. Note, The sincere and serious beggars at Christ's door commonly meet with the worst rebukes from those that follow him but in pretence and hypocrisy. But they would not be beaten off so; when they were in pursuit of such a mercy, it was no time to compliment or be meal-mouthed; no, "they cried the more." Note, Men ought always to pray, and not to faint; to pray with all perseverance, *Lu. xviii. 1*; to continue in prayer with resolution, and not to yield to opposition.

II. The answer of Christ to this address of theirs. The multitude rebuked them; but Christ encouraged them. It were ill for us if the Master were not more kind and tender than the multitude; but he loves to countenance those with special favour that are under frowns, and rebukes, and contempts from men. He will not suffer his humble supplicants to be run down and dashed out of countenance.

First, He "stood still, and called them," ver. 32. He was now going up to Jerusalem, and was straitened till his work there was accomplished, and yet he stood still to cure these blind men. Note, When we are never so much in haste

Some good critics explain the latter part of verse 23 thus: "is not mine to give, except to those for whom it is prepared by my Father;" or, "but is for those," &c.

xx. 26, 27. If our Lord's words prohibit the idea of degrees of rank among the apostles, and it is hard to see how they can be understood otherwise, they rebuke the folly of those who proclaim Peter the prince of the apostles. In chap. x. 2 it is alleged by some that the word rendered "first" means chief, and assigns the primacy to Simon

Peter. The Greek word there for first is the same as that for chief here; we may therefore see that a primacy cannot be meant in that place which is forbidden in this, and forbidden to the apostles themselves.

xx. 29. Jericho lay in the valley of the Jordan, about six miles west of the river, and below the rugged mountain called Quarantana. It is now represented by a miserable village called Riha, a collection of hovels, which Dr. Robinson says are merely four walls of stones taken

about any business, yet we should be willing to stand still to do good. He called them, not because he could not cure them at a distance, but because he would do it in the most obliging and instructing way, and would countenance weak but willing patients and petitioners. Christ doth not only enjoin us to pray, but invites us; holds out the golden sceptre to us, and bids us come touch the top of it.

Secondly, He inquired farther into their case: "What will ye that I shall do unto you? Which speaks, 1. A very fair offer: 'Here I am; let me know what you would have, and you shall have it'; and what would he more? He is able to do for us, and as willing as he is able: 'Ask, and it shall be given you.' 2. A condition annexed to this offer, which is a very easy and reasonable one, that they should tell him what they would have him do for them. One would think this a strange question; any one might tell what they would have. Christ knew well enough; but he would know it from them, whether they begged only for an alms, as from a common person, or for a cure, as from the Messiah. Note, It is the will of God that we should in every thing make our requests known to him by prayer and supplication; not to inform or move him, but to qualify ourselves for the mercy. The waterman in the boat, that with his hook takes hold of the shore, doth not thereby pull the shore to the boat, but the boat to the shore: so, in prayer, we do not draw the mercy to ourselves, but ourselves to the mercy. They soon made known their request to him, such an one as they never made to any one else. "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." The wants and burthens of the body we are soon sensible of, and can readily relate: *ubi dolor, ibi digitus*.—The finger promptly points to the seat of pain. "O that we were but as apprehensive of our spiritual maladies, and could as feelingly complain of them, especially our spiritual blindness: 'Lord, that the eyes of our mind may be opened.' Many are spiritually blind, and yet say they see, *Jno. ix. 41*: were we but sensible of our darkness, we should soon apply ourselves to Him who alone has the eyesalve, with this request, "Lord, that our eyes be opened."

Thirdly, He cured them: when he encouraged them to seek him, he did not say, 'Seek in vain.' What he did was an instance, 1. Of his pity: "He had compassion on them." Misery is the object of mercy; they that are poor and blind are wretched and miserable, *Rev. iii. 17*, and the objects of compassion. It was the tender mercy of our God that gave light and sight to them that sat in darkness, *Lu. i. 79, 79*. We cannot help those that are under such calamities, as Christ did; but we may and must pity them, as Christ did, and draw out our soul to them. 2. Of his power. He that formed the eye, can he not heal it? Yes, he can, he did: he did it easily; "he touched their eyes;" he did it effectually; "immediately their eyes received sight." Thus he not only proved that he was sent of God, but shewed on what errand he was sent; to give sight to those that are spiritually blind, to turn them from darkness to light.

Lastly, These blind men, when they had received sight, "followed him." Note, None follow Christ blindfold; he first by his grace opens men's eyes, and so draws their hearts after him. They followed Christ as his disciples, to learn of him; and as his witnesses, eye-witnesses, to bear their testimony to him, and to his power and goodness. The best evidence of spiritual illumination is a constant, inseparable adherence to Jesus Christ as our Lord and leader.

CHAPTER XXI.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the two main hinges upon which the door of salvation turns: he came into the world on purpose to give his life a ransom; so he had lately said, *ch. xx. 28*; and therefore the history of his sufferings, even unto death, and his rising again, is more particularly recorded by all the evangelists than any other part of his story, and to that this evangelist now hastens apace: for at this chapter begins that which they call the passion week: he had said to his disciples, more than once, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and there the Son of man must be betrayed." A great deal of good he did by the way; and now, at length, he is come up to Jerusalem: and here we have, I. The public entry which he made into Jerusalem, upon the first day of the passion week, ver. 1—11. II. The authority he exercised there, in cleansing the temple, and driving out of it the buyers and sellers, ver. 12—16. III. The emblem he gave of the state of the Jewish church, in cursing of the barren fig tree, and his discourse with his disciples thereupon, ver. 17—22. IV. His justifying his own authority by appealing to the baptism of John, ver. 23—27. V. His shaming the infidelity and obstinacy of the chief priests and elders with the repentance of the publicans, illustrated by the parable of the two sons, ver. 29—32. VI. His reading the doom of the Jewish church for its unfruitfulness, in the parable of the vineyard, 'et out to unthankful husbandmen, ver. 32—46.



AND when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, 2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. 3 And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. 4 All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. 6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, 7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and

put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.

8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. 9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. 10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? 11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

All the four evangelists take notice of this passage of Christ's riding in triumph into Jerusalem, five days before his death. The passover was on the fourteenth day of the month, and this was the tenth, on which day the law appointed that the paschal lamb should be taken up, *Ex. xii. 3*, and set apart for that service; on that day therefore, Christ our passover, who was to be sacrificed for us, was publicly shewed. So that this was the prologue to his passion: he had lodged at Bethany, a village not far from Jerusalem, for some time; at a supper there, the night before, Mary had anointed his feet, *Jno. xii. 2*; but, as is usual with ambassadors, he deferred his public entry till some time after his arrival. Our Lord Jesus travelled much, and his custom was to travel on foot, from Galilee to Jerusalem, some scores of miles, which was both mean and toilsome. Many a dirty, weary step he had, when he went about doing good: how ill doth it become Christians to be inordinately solicitous about their own ease and state, when their Master had so little of either. Yet once in his life he rode in triumph; and it was now when he went into Jerusalem to suffer and die, as if that were the pleasure and preferment he courted; and then he thought himself begin to look great. Now here we have,

1. The provision that was made for this solemnity; and it was very poor and ordinary, and such as bespoke his kingdom not of this world: here were no heralds at arms provided, no trumpet sounded before him, no chariots of state, no liveries; such things as these were not agreeable to his present state of humiliation, but will be far outdone at his second coming, to which his magnificent appearance is reserved: when the last trumpet shall sound, the glorious angels shall be his heralds and attendants, and the clouds his chariots. But in this public appearance,

First, The preparation was sudden and off hand. For his glory in the other world, and ours with him, preparation was made before the foundation of the world; for that was the glory his heart was upon. His glory in this world he was dead to; and therefore, though he had it in prospect, did not forecast for it, but took what came next. They were "come to Bethphage," which was the suburbs of Jerusalem, and was accounted (say the Jewish doctors) in all things as Jerusalem; a long scattering street, that lay towards the mount of Olives. When he entered upon that, he sent two of his disciples, some think Peter and John, to fetch him an ass, for he had none laid ready for him.

Secondly, It was very mean: he sent only for an ass and her colt, ver. 2. Asses were much used in that country for travel; horses were kept only by great men, and for war. Christ could have summoned a cherub to carry him, *Ps. xviii. 10*; but though, by his name Jah, which speaks him God, he rides upon the heavens; yet now, by his name Jesus, Immanuel, 'God with us,' in his state of humiliation, he rides upon an ass; yet some think he had herein an eye to the custom in Israel for the judges to ride upon white asses, *Jud. v. 10*, and their sons on asses' colts, *Jud. xii. 14*; and Christ would thus enter, not as a conqueror, but as the Judge of Israel, who for judgment came into this world.

Thirdly, It was not his own, but borrowed. Though he had not a house of his own, yet one would think, like some wayfaring men that live upon their friends, he might have had an ass of his own to carry him about; but for our sakes he became in all respects poor, 2 *Cor. viii. 9*. It is commonly said, They that live by borrowing live on sorrowing; in this therefore, as in other things, Christ was a man of sorrows, that he had nothing of this world's goods but what was given him or lent him. The disciples who were sent to borrow this ass were directed to say, "The Lord has need of him." Those that are in need must not be ashamed to own their need: nor say, as the unjust steward, "to beg I am ashamed," *Lu. xvi. 3*; as, on the other hand, none ought to impose upon the kindness of their friends, by going to beg or borrow when they have not need. In the borrowing of this ass, 1. We have an instance of Christ's knowledge; though the thing was altogether contingent, yet Christ could tell his disciples where they should find an ass tied, and a colt with her: his omniscience extends itself to the meanest of his creatures, asses and their colts, and their being bound and loosed. "Doth God take care for his oxen?" 1 *Cor. ix. 9*; no doubt he doth, and would not see Balaam's ass abused. He knows all the creatures, so as to know and make them serve his own purposes. 2. We have an instance of his power over the spirits of men: the hearts of the meanest subjects, as well as of kings, are in the hand of the Lord. Christ asserts his right to use the ass, in bidding them to bring it to him: the fulness of the earth is the Lord Christ's; but he foresees some hindrance which the disciples might meet with in this service; they must not take them *clam et secreto*,—'privily,' but in the sight of the owner; much less *vi et armis*,—'with force and arms;' but with the consent of the owner, which he undertakes they shall have: "If any man say aught to you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them." Note, What Christ sets us to do, he will bear us out in the doing of, and furnish us with answers to the objections we may be assailed with, and make them prevalent, as here, "straightway he will send them." Christ, in commanding the ass into his service, shewed that he is Lord of hosts; and in inclining the owner to send him without further security, shewed that he is the "God of the spirits of all flesh," and can bow men's hearts. 3. We have an example of justice and honesty, in not using the ass, though for so small a piece of service as riding the length of a street or two, without the owner's consent; and, as some read the latter clause, it gives us a further rule of justice, 'you shall say to the Lord, I have need of him, and he' (that is, the Lord) 'will presently send them back, and take care that they be safely delivered to the owner, as soon as he has done with them.' Note, What we borrow we must restore in due time, and in good order; for "the wicked borroweth, and payeth not again." Care must be taken of borrowed goods, that they be not damaged. "Alas, Master, for it was borrowed."

II. The prediction that was fulfilled in this, ver. 4, 5. Our Lord Jesus, in all he did and suffered, had very much his eye upon this, that the Scriptures might

from ancient ruins, and having flat roofs of corn-stalks or brushwood covered with gravel. The Jericho of Joshua's time may have been a mile and a half to the north-west of Riha. In our Saviour's time Jericho, which had been beautified, and adorned with palaces by Herod the Great, stood a little south of the older town, and was about seventeen English miles from Jerusalem. The highway between the capital and the districts on the east of the Jordan passed either through or was very near to the town of Jericho.

xxi. 1. Bethphage was a suburban village, not far from Jerusalem, and, according to Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, Chrysostom, &c., was at the Mount of Olives, and near to Bethany. No trace of it remains at the present day. The Mount of Olives, or Olivet, is a conspicuous object in the landscape, being separated from Jerusalem only by a narrow valley, the Kedron, or Valley of Jehoshaphat. It forms a ridge to the east of the city, and has three rounded summits, upon the central one of which stands the Church of the Ascension.

be fulfilled. As the prophets looked forward to him—to him they all bare witness, so he looked back upon them, that all things which were written of the Messiah might be punctually accomplished in him. This particularly, which was written of him, *Zec. ix. 9*, where it ushers in a large prediction of the kingdom of the Messiah, "Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold thy King cometh," must be accomplished. Now observe here,

First. How the coming of Christ is foretold: "Tell ye the daughter of Zion," the church, the holy mountain, "Behold thy King cometh unto thee." Note, 1. Jesus Christ is the church's King; one of our brethren, like unto us, according to the law of the kingdom, *Deu. xvii. 15*. He is appointed King over the church, *Ps. ii. 6*; he is accepted King by the church; the daughter of Zion swears allegiance to him, *Hos. i. 11*. 2. Christ, the King of his church, came to his church, even in this lower world: "He comes to thee, to rule thee, to rule in thee, to rule for thee;" he is "head over all things to the church." He came to Zion, *Rom. xi. 26*, that out of Zion the law might go forth; for the church and its interests were all in all with the Redeemer. 3. Notice was given to the church beforehand of the coming of her King, "Tell the daughter of Zion." Note, Christ will have his coming looked for, and waited for, and his subjects big with expectation of it: tell the daughters of Zion that they may go forth and behold King Solomon, *Cant. iii. 11*. Notices of Christ's coming are usually ushered in with a "Behold!"—a note commanding both attention and admiration: "Behold thy King cometh;" "Behold, and wonder at him; behold, and welcome him." Here is a royal progress truly admirable. Pilate, like Caiaphas, said he knew not what, in that great word, *Jno. xix. 14*, "Behold your King."

Secondly. How his coming is described. When a king comes, something great and magnificent is expected, especially when he comes to take possession of his kingdom. The King, the Lord of hosts, was seen upon a throne, high and lifted up, *Isa. vi. 1*; but here is nothing of that here; "Behold, he comes, to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass;" when Christ would appear in his glory, it is in his meekness, not in his majesty. 1. His temper is very mild: he comes not in wrath, to take vengeance; but in mercy, to work salvation. He is meek, to suffer the greatest injuries and indignities for Zion's cause; meek, to bear with the follies and unkindnesses of Zion's own children: he is easy of access, easy to be entreated. He is not only meek as a teacher, but meek as a ruler; he rules by love. His government is mild and gentle, and his laws not written in the blood of his subjects, but in his own: his yoke is easy. 2. As an evidence of this, his appearance is very mean, sitting upon an ass, a creature made not for state, but service; not for battles, but for burthens; slow in its motions, but sure, and safe, and constant. The foretelling of this so long before, and the care taken that it should be exactly fulfilled, intimates it to have a peculiar significance, for the encouragement of poor souls to apply themselves to Christ. Zion's King comes riding, not on a prancing horse, which the timorous petitioner dares not come near; or a running horse, which the slow-footed petitioner cannot keep pace with; but on a quiet ass, that the poorest of his subjects may not be discouraged in their access to him. Mention is made in the prophecy of a colt, the foal of an ass; and therefore Christ sent for the colt with the ass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

III. The procession itself, which was answerable to the preparation, both being destitute of worldly pomp, and yet both accompanied with a spiritual power. Observe,

First. His equipage. "The disciples did as Jesus commanded them," *ver. 6*; they went to fetch the ass and the colt, not doubting but to find them, and to find the owner willing to lend them. Note, Christ's commands must not be disputed, but obeyed; and those that sincerely obey them shall not be balked or baffled in it: they "brought the ass and the colt." The meanness and contemptibleness of the beast Christ rode on might have been made up with the richness of the trappings; but those were like all the rest, such as came next hand; they had not so much as a saddle for the ass; but the disciples threw some of their clothes upon it, and that must serve for want of better accommodations. Note, We ought not to be nice or curious, or to affect exactness in outward conveniences. A holy indifference and neglect well becomes us in these things: it will evidence that our heart is not upon them, and that we have learned the apostle's rule, *Rom. xii. 16, margin*, "to be content with mean things." Any thing will serve travellers; and there is beauty in some sort of carelessness: a noble negligence. Yet the disciples furnished him with the best they had, and did not object the spoiling of their clothes, when the Lord had need of them. Note, We must not think the clothes on our back too near to part with for the service of Christ, for the clothing of his poor, destitute, and afflicted members: "I was naked, and ye clothed me," *ch. xxv. 36*. Christ stripped himself for us.

Secondly. His retinue; and there was nothing in this stately or magnificent: Zion's King comes to Zion; and the daughter of Zion was told of his coming long before; and yet he is not attended by the gentlemen of the country, nor met by the magistrates of the city in their formalities, as one might have expected. He should have had the keys of the city presented to him, and should have been conducted with all possible convenience to the thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. But here is nothing of all this: yet he has his attendants, "a very great multitude;" they were only the common people, the mob, (the rabble, we should have been apt to call them,) that graced the solemnity of Christ's triumph, and none but they. The chief priests and the elders afterwards herded themselves with the multitude that abused him upon the cross; but we find none of them here joining with the multitude that did him honour. Ye see here your calling, brethren; not many mighty or noble attend on Christ, but the foolish things of this world, and base things, which are despised, *1 Cor. i. 26, 28*. Note, Christ is honoured by the multitude more than by the magnificence of his followers, for he values men by their souls, not by their preferences, names, or titles of honour. Now, concerning this great multitude, we are told, 1. What they did. According to the best of their capacity, they studied to do honour to Christ. 1st. They "spread their garments in the way," that he might ride upon them. When Jehu was proclaimed king, the captains put their garments under him, in token of their subjection to him. Note, Those that take Christ for their King must lay their all under his feet: the clothes, in token of the heart; for when Christ comes, though not when any else comes, it must be said to the soul, "Bow down, that he may go over." Some think these garments were spread, not upon the ground, but on the hedges or walls, to adorn the roads; as, to beautify a cavalcade, the balconies are hung with tapestry. This was but a poor piece of state; yet Christ accepted their good will, and we are hereby taught to contrive how to make Christ welcome—Christ and his grace, Christ and his Gospel—into our hearts and houses. How shall we express our respects to Christ? What honour, and what dignity, shall be done to him? 2nd. "Others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way," as they used to do at the feast of tabernacles, in token of liberty, victory, and joy; for the mystery of that feast is particularly spoken of as belonging to gospel times, *Zec. xiv. 16*. 2. What they said. They that went before, and they that followed, were in the same tune; both those that gave notice of his coming, and those that attended him with their applauses: they cried, saying, "Hosanna to the son of David," *ver. 9*. When they carried branches about, at the feast of tabernacles, they were wont to

cry Hosanna; and from thence, to call their bundles of branches their Hosannas. Hosanna signifies, 'Save now, we beseech thee,' referring to *Ps. cxviii. 25, 26* where the Messiah is prophesied of as the Headstone of the corner, though the builders refused him; and all his loyal subjects are brought in triumphing in him, and attending him, with hearty good wishes to the prosperity of all his enterprises: "Hosanna to the son of David" is, 'This we do in honour of the son of David.' The hosannas with which Christ was attended speak two things: 1st. Their welcoming his kingdom. Hosanna speaks the same with, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' It was foretold concerning this son of David, that "all nations shall call him blessed," *Ps. lxxii. 17*. These here began, and all true believers in all ages concur in it, and call him blessed; it is the genuine language of faith. Note, First. Jesus Christ comes in the name of the Lord; he is sanctified, and sent into the world as Mediator: "him hath God the Father sealed." Secondly. The coming of Christ in the name of the Lord is worthy of all acceptance, and we all ought to say, "Blessed is he that cometh;" "Praise him, and be pleased in him; let his coming in the name of the Lord be mentioned with strong affections to our comfort, and joyful acclamations to his glory." Well may we say, "Blessed is he," for it is in him that we are blessed; well may we follow him with our blessings, that meets us with his. 2nd. Their wishing well to his kingdom, intimated in their hosanna, earnestly desiring that prosperity and success may attend it, and that it might be a victorious kingdom: "Send now prosperity" to that kingdom. If they understood it of a temporal kingdom, and had their hearts carried out thus towards that, it was their mistake, which a little time would rectify; however, their good will was accepted. Note, It is our duty earnestly to desire and pray for the prosperity and success of Christ's kingdom in the world. Thus "prayer must be made for him continually" *Ps. lxxii. 15*, that all happiness may attend his interest in the world; and that though he ride on an ass, yet in his majesty he may ride prosperously, because of that meekness, *Ps. xlv. 4*. This we mean when we pray, "Thy kingdom come." They add, "Hosanna in the highest;" "Let prosperity in the highest degree attend him; let him have a name above every name, a throne above every throne;" or, "Let us praise him in the best manner, with exalted affections;" or, "Let our prayers for his church ascend to heaven, to the highest heavens, and fetch in peace and salvation from thence." See *Ps. xx. 6*, "The Lord saveth his anointed, and will hear from his high, his holy heaven."

Thirdly. We have here his entertainment in Jerusalem, *ver. 10*: "When he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved;" every one took notice of him; some were moved with wonder at the novelty of the thing, others with laughter at the meanness of it; some, perhaps, were moved with joy, who waited "for the consolation of Israel;" others, of the Pharisees' kidney, were moved with envy and indignation: so various are the motions in the minds of men upon the approach of Christ's kingdom. Upon this commotion we are there told, 1. What the citizens said: "Who is this?" 1st. They were, it seems, ignorant concerning Christ,—though he was "the glory of his people Israel," yet Israel knew him not; though he had distinguished himself by the many miracles he wrought among them, yet the daughters of Jerusalem knew him not from another beloved, *Cant. v. 9*. The Holy One unknown in the holy city! In places where the clearest light shines, and the greatest profession of religion is made, there is more ignorance than we are aware of. 2nd. Yet they were inquisitive concerning him: "Who is this that is thus cried up, and comes with so much observation?" "Who is this King of glory, that demands admission into our hearts?" *Ps. xxiv. 8*; *Isa. lxiii. 1*. 2. How the multitude answered them: "This is Jesus," *ver. 11*. The multitude were better acquainted with Christ than the great ones; *vox populi*, 'the voice of the people,' is sometimes *vox Dei*, 'the voice of God.' Now in the account they give of him, 1st. They were right in calling him the Prophet, that great Prophet; hitherto he had been known as a Prophet, teaching and working miracles; now they attend him as a King. Christ's priestly office was, of all the three, last discovered. 2nd. Yet they missed it in saying he was of Nazareth, and it helped to confirm some in their prejudices against him. Note, Some that are willing to honour Christ, and bear their testimony to him, yet labour under mistakes concerning him, which would be rectified if they would take pains to inform themselves.

12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, 13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. 14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. 15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased, 16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? 17 And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

When Christ came into Jerusalem, he did not go up to the court or the palace, though he came in as a king, but into the temple; for his kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world: it is in holy things that he rules, in the temple of God that he exerciseth authority. Now what did he do there?

1. Thence he drove the buyers and sellers. Abuses must first be purged out, and the plants not of God's planting be plucked up, before that which is right can be established: the great Redeemer appears as a great reformer, that turns away ungodliness, *Rom. xi. 26*. Here we are told,

First. What he did, *ver. 12*. He "cast out all them that sold and bought;" he had done this once before, *Jno. ii. 14, 15*; but there was occasion to do it

xxi. 2. The village referred to here will be Bethphage. Mark and Luke, who record this incident, only mention the colt, and not the ass.

xxi. 7. The word "thereon" in this verse refers to the garments which were placed on the two animals. Jesus rode upon the colt.

xxi. 9. The word "Hosanna" is Hebrew, signifying "save now." The words used are principally a quotation from *Psa. cxviii. 25, 26*.

xxi. 12. This occurrence is not to be identified with the similar action recorded in *John ii. 15*, which was much earlier.

xxi. 18—20. A comparison of the parallel narrative in *Mark xi. 12—14*, 20, 21, shows that the anathema pronounced upon the fig-tree (verse 19) took place the day before the incidents recorded in verse 20, &c. A visit to Jerusalem and a night spent at Bethany had intervened. Dr. Tristram observes that the fig-tree is still common on Mount Olivet, and in the neighbourhood of Bethany. He adds, "Some difficulties have arisen respecting the incident mentioned by the Evangelists, of our Lord cursing the barren fig-tree: 'He saw

again. Note, Buyers and sellers driven out of the temple will return and nestle there again, if there be not a continual care and oversight to prevent it, and if the blow be not followed and often repeated. 1. The abuse was buying and selling, and changing money, in the temple. Note, Lawful things ill timed and ill placed, may become sinful things: that which was decent enough in another place, and not only lawful, but laudable, on another day, yet defiles the sanctuary, and profanes the sabbath. This buying and selling, and changing money, though secular employments, yet had the pretence of being *in ordine ad spiritualia*,—for spiritual purposes; they sold beasts for sacrifice, for the convenience of those that could easier bring their money with them than their beast; and they changed money for those that wanted the half shekel, which was their yearly poll, or redemption money, or upon the bills of return; so that this might pass for the outward business of the house of God; and yet Christ will not allow of it. Note, Great corruptions and abuses come into the church by the practices of those whose gain is godliness, that is, that make worldly gain the end of their godliness, and counterfeit godliness their way to worldly gain, 1 Tim. vi. 5; such, and from such, turn away. 2. The purging out of this abuse. Christ "cast them out that sold;" he did it before with a "scourge of small cords," Jno. ii. 13; now he did it with a look, with a frown, with a word of command. Some reckon this none of the least of Christ's miracles, that he should himself thus clear the temple, and not be opposed in it by them who by this craft got their living, and were backed in it by the priests and elders. It is an instance of his power over the spirits of men, and the hold he has of them by their own consciences. This was the only act of regal authority and coercive power that Christ did in the days of his flesh; he began with it, Jno. ii., and here ended with it. Tradition saith that his face shone, and beams of light darted from his blessed eyes, which astonished these market people, and compelled them to yield to his command. If so, the Scripture was fulfilled, Pr. xx. 8: "The King that sitteth upon the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes." He "overthrew the tables of the money-changers;" he did not take the money to himself; but scattered it, threw it to the ground; the fittest place for it. The Jews, in Esther's time, "on the spoil laid not their hand," Est. ix. 10.

Secondly. What he said to justify himself, and to convict them, ver. 13: "It is written." Note, In the reformation of the church, the eye must be upon the Scripture, and that must be adhered to as the rule, the pattern in the mount; and we must go no further than we can justify ourselves with "It is written." Reformation is then right, when corrupted ordinances are reduced to their primitive institution. 1. He shews from a Scripture prophecy what the temple should be, and was designed to be: "My house shall be called the house of prayer," which is quoted from Isa. lvi. 7. Note, All the ceremonial institutions were intended to be subservient to moral duties: the house of sacrifices was to be a house of prayer, for that was the substance and soul of all those services. The temple was in a special manner sanctified to be a house of prayer; for it was not only the place of that worship, but the medium of it; so that the prayers made in or towards that house had a particular promise of acceptance, 2 Chr. vi. 21, as it was a type of Christ; therefore Daniel looked that way in prayer; and so no house or place is now or can be a house of prayer, for Christ is our temple; yet in some sense the appointed places of our religious assemblies may be so called, as places "where prayer is wont to be made," Acts xvi. 13. 2. He shews from a Scripture reproof, how they had abused the temple, and perverted the intention of it: "Ye have made it a den of thieves." This is quoted from Jer. vii. 11, "Is this house become a den of robbers in your eyes?" When dissimulated piety is made the cloak and cover of iniquity, it may be said that the house of prayer is become a den of thieves, in which they lurk and shelter themselves. Markets are too often dens of thieves, so many are the corrupt and cheating practices in buying and selling; but markets in the temple are certainly so, for they rob God of his honour, the worst of thieves, Mal. iii. 8. The priests lived, and lived plentifully, upon the altar; but not content with that, they found other ways and means to squeeze money out of the people; and therefore Christ here calls them thieves, for they exacted that which did not belong to them.

II. *There, in the temple, he healed the blind and the lame*, ver. 14. When he had driven the buyers and sellers out of the temple, he invited the blind and lame into it; for "he filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich he sends empty away." Christ in the temple, by his Word there preached, and in answer to the prayers there made, heals those that are spiritually blind and lame. It is good coming to the temple when Christ is there; who, as he shews himself jealous for the honour of his temple, in expelling those that profane it, so he shews himself gracious to those who humbly seek him. The blind and the lame were debarred David's palace, 2 Sam. v. 8, but were admitted into God's house; for the state and honour of his temple lies not in those things wherein the magnificence of princes' palaces is supposed to consist: from them blind and lame must keep their distance, but from God's temple only the wicked and profane. The temple was profaned and abused, when it was made a market-place; but it was graced and honoured when it was made an hospital: to be doing good in God's house is more honourable, and better becomes it, than to be getting money there. Christ's healing was a real answer to that question, "Who is this?" His works testified of him, more than the hosannas; and his healing in the temple was the fulfilling of the promise, that "the glory of the latter house should be greater than the glory of the former." There also he silenced the offence which the chief priests and scribes took at the acclamations with which he was attended, ver. 15, 16: they that should have been most forward to give him honour were his worst enemies.

First. They were inwardly vexed at the wonderful things that he did: they could not deny them to be true miracles, and therefore were cut to the heart with indignation at them, as Acts iv. 16; v. 33. The works that Christ did recommended themselves to every man's conscience. If they had any sense, they could not but own the miracle of them; and if any good-nature, could not but be in love with the mercy of them: yet because they were resolved to oppose him, for these they envied him, and bore him a grudge.

Secondly. They openly quarrelled at the children's hosannas: they thought hereby an honour was given him which did not belong to him, and that it looked like ostentation. Proud men cannot bear that honour should be done to any but to themselves, and are uneasy at nothing more than at the just praises of deserving men. Thus Saul envied David the women's songs; and "who can stand before envy?" When Christ is most honoured, his enemies are most displeased. Just now we had Christ preferring the blind and the lame, before the buyers and sellers; now here we have him, ver. 16, taking part with the children, against priests and scribes. Observe, 1. The children were in the temple; perhaps playing there; and no wonder, when the rulers made it a market-place, that the children made it a place of pastime: but we are willing to hope many of them were worshipping there. Note, It is good to bring children betimes to the house of prayer, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Let children be taught to keep up the form of godliness; it will help to lead them to the power of it: Christ has a tenderness for the lambs of his flock. 2. They were there, crying "Hosanna to the son of David." This they learned from those that were grown up: little children say and do as they hear others

say, and see others do; so easily do they imitate: and therefore great care must be taken to set them good examples, and no ill ones: *marina debetur puero reverentia*,—our intercourse with the young should be conducted with the most scrupulous care. Children will learn of those that are with them, either to curse and swear, or to pray and praise. The Jews did cry hosannas to their children to carry branches at the feast of tabernacles, and to cry hosanna, but God taught them here to apply it to Christ. Note, "Hosanna to the son of David," well becomes the mouths of little children, who should learn young the language of Canaan. 3. Our Lord Jesus not only allowed it, but was very well pleased with it, and quoted a scripture that was fulfilled in it, Ps. viii. 3, or at least may be accommodated to it: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise;" which some think refers to the children's joining in the acclamations of the people, and the women's songs, with which David was honoured, when he returned from the slaughter of the Philistine; and therefore is very fitly applied here to the hosannas with which the son of David was cried up, now he was entering upon his conflict with Satan, that Goliath. Note, 1st. Christ is so far from being ashamed of the services of little children, that he takes particular notice of them, (and children love to be taken notice of,) and is well pleased with them. If God may be honoured by babes and sucklings, who are made to hope at the breast, much more by children that are grown up to maturity and some capacity. 2nd. Praise is perfected out of the mouth of such. It has a peculiar tendency to the honour and glory of God for little children to join in his praises; the praise would be accounted defective and imperfect if they had not their share in it; which is an encouragement for children to be good betimes, and to parents to teach them to be so; the labour neither of the one nor of the other shall be in vain. In the Psalm it is, "thou hast ordained strength." Note, God perfecteth praise, by ordaining strength, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, when great things are brought about by weak and unlikely instruments. God is thereby much honoured, for his strength is perfected in weakness; and the infirmities of the babes and sucklings serve for a foil to the Divine power. That which follows in the Psalm, "that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger," was very applicable to the priests and scribes; but Christ did not apply it to them, but left it to them to apply it.

Lastly. Christ having thus silenced them, forsook them, ver. 17: "he left them," in prudence, lest they should now have seized him, before his hour was come; in justice, because they had forfeited the favour of his presence. By repining at Christ's praises we drive him from us. He left them, as incorrigible; and he "went out of the city to Bethany," which was a more quiet retired place; not so much that he might sleep undisturbed, as that he might pray undisturbed. Bethany was but two little miles from Jerusalem: thither he now went on foot, to shew, that when he rode it was only to fulfil the Scripture. He was not lifted up with the hosannas of the people; but, as having forgot them, soon returned to his mean and toilsome way of travelling.

18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. 19 And when he saw a fig tree



FIG TREES.

in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. 20 And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! 21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which

a fig-tree in the way, where the fruit was common to all comers, 'and found nothing thereon but leaves only.' The event occurred at the end of March, or beginning of April, a time of year when it would be most unusual for a fig-tree on Mount Olivet to be in leaf. But if the tree exhibited its precociousness by having leaves so early, it might be expected to have fruit, although the time of figs was not yet, for the fruit appears before the leaves." This latter fact is of considerable significance.

xxi. 21, 22. Our Lord here plainly promises his disciples miracles as a return for their faith, and also that their prayers shall be granted. The great question is as to the limitations of the twofold promise. With respect to miracles, we may urge that the promise was special, as directed only to the apostles who heard it, and not common to the whole Church and all time. With regard to prayer, there seems no need to limit the promise to the apostles, though it belongs to them; in fact, the conditions on which prayer will be answered are

is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. 22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Observe, I. *Christ returned in the morning to Jerusalem*, ver. 18. Some think he went out of the city overnight because none of his friends there durst entertain him, for fear of the great men; yet, having work to do there, he returned. Note, We must never be driven off from our duty, either by the malice of our foes or the unkindness of our friends. Though he knew that in this city bonds and afflictions did abide him, yet none of these things moved him. Paul followed him, when he went bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, *Acts xx. 22*.

II. *As he went he hungered*. He was a man, and submitted to the infirmities of our nature; he was an active man, and was so intent upon his work that he neglected his food, and came out fasting; for the zeal of God's house did even eat him up, and his meat and drink was to do his Father's will. He was a poor man, and had no present supply; he was a man that pleased not himself, for he would willingly have taken up with green raw figs for his breakfast, when it was fit he should have had something warm. Christ therefore hungered, that he might have occasion to work this miracle, in cursing, and so withering, the barren fig tree; and therein might give us an instance of his justice and his power, and both instructive.

First. See his justice, ver. 19. He went to it, expecting fruit, because it had leaves, but finding none, he sentenced it to a perpetual barrenness. This miracle had its significance, as well as his other miracles. All Christ's miracles, hitherto, were wrought for the good of men, and proved the power of his grace and blessing; (the sending of the devils into the herd of swine was but a permission; all he did was for the benefit and comfort of his friends, none for the terror or punishment of his enemies: but now, at last, to shew that all judgment is committed to him, and that he is able, not only to save, but to destroy, he would give a specimen of the power of his wrath and curse: yet this not on any man, woman, or child,—because the great day of his wrath is not yet come,—but on an inanimate tree; but that is set forth for an example: "Come, learn a parable of the fig tree," *ch. xxiv. 32*: the scope of it is the same with the parable of the fig tree, *Lu. xiii. 6*.

1. This cursing of the barren fig tree represents the state of hypocrites in general; and so it teacheth us, 1st. That the fruit of fig trees may justly be expected from those that have the leaves. Christ looks for the power of religion from those that make profession of it; the savour of it, from those that have the show of it; grapes from the vineyard that is planted in a fruitful hill: he hungers after it, his soul desires the first ripe fruits. 2nd. Christ's just expectations from flourishing professors are often frustrated and disappointed: he comes to many seeking fruit, and finds leaves only, and he discovers it. Many have a name to live, and are not alive indeed; dote on the form of godliness, and yet deny the power of it. 3rd. The sin of barrenness is justly punished with the curse and plague of barrenness: "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." As one of the chiefest blessings, and which was the first, is, "Be fruitful," so one of the saddest curses is, "Be no more fruitful." Thus the sin of hypocrites is made their punishment; they would not do good, and therefore they shall do none: "He that is fruitless, let him be fruitless still, and lose his honour and comfort." 4th. A false and hypocritical profession commonly withers in this world; and it is the effect of Christ's curse. The fig tree that had no fruit soon lost its leaves. Hypocrites may look plausible for a time, but having no principle, no root in themselves, their profession will soon come to nothing; the gifts wither, common graces decay, the credit of the profession declines and sinks, and the falseness and folly of the pretender are manifested to all men.

2. It represents the state of the nation and people of the Jews in particular: they were a fig tree planted in Christ's way, as a church. Now observe, 1st. The disappointment they gave to our Lord Jesus. He came among them, expecting to find some fruit, something that would be pleasing to him; he hungered after it; not that he desired a gift, he needed it not; but fruit that might abound to a good account; but his expectations were frustrated, he found nothing but leaves. They called Abraham their father, but did not do the works of Abraham; they professed themselves expectants of the promised Messiah, but when he came, they did not receive and entertain him. 2nd. The doom he passed upon them, that never any fruit should grow upon them, or be gathered from them, as a church, or as a people, from henceforward for ever. Never any good came from them; (except the particular persons among them that believed;) after they rejected Christ they went worse and worse; blindness and hardness happened to them, and grew upon them, till they were unchurched, unpeopled, and undone, and their place and nation rooted up; their beauty was defaced, their privileges and ornaments, their temple and priesthood, and sacrifices and festivals, and all the glories of their church and state, fell like leaves in autumn. How soon did their "fig tree wither away," after they said, "His blood be on us, and on our children!" and the Lord was righteous in it.

Secondly. See the power of Christ. The former is wrapped up in the figure, but this more fully discoursed of, Christ intending hereby to direct his disciples in the use of their powers. 1. The disciples admired the effect of Christ's curse, ver. 20, "they marvelled." No power could do it but his who spake, and it was done. They admired at the suddenness of the thing, "How soon is the fig tree withered away!" There was no visible cause of the fig tree's withering; but it was a secret blast, a worm at the root: it was not only the leaves of it that withered, but the body of the tree; it withered away in an instant, and became like a dry stick. Gospel curses are upon this account the most dreadful, that they work insensibly and silently, by a fire not blown, but effectually. 2. Christ empowered them by faith to do the like, ver. 21, 22; as he said, *Jno. xiv. 12*, "greater works than these shall ye do." Observe, 1st. The description of this wonder-working faith: "If ye have faith, and doubt not." Note, Doubting of the power and promise of God is the great thing that spoils the efficacy and success of faith. "If ye have faith, and dispute not, so some read; not, 'Dispute not with yourselves, dispute not with the promise of God; if you stagger not at the promise,' *Rom. iv. 20*; for as far as we do so, our faith is deficient; as certain as the promise is, so confident our faith should be. 2nd. The power and prevalence of it, expressed figuratively: "If ye shall say to this mountain," meaning the mount of Olives, "Be thou removed, it shall be done." There might be a particular reason for his saying so of this mountain, for there was a prophecy that the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem, should cleave in the midst, and then remove, *Zec. xiv. 4*; and whatever was the intent of that word, the same must be the expectation of faith, how impossible soever it might appear to sense. But this is a proverbial expression, intimating that we are to believe that nothing is impossible with God; and

therefore, what he has promised shall certainly be performed, though so as it seems impossible. It was among the Jews a usual commendation of their learned rabbins, that they were removers of mountains; that is, could solve the greatest difficulties. Now this may be done by faith acted on the Word of God, which will bring great and strange things to pass. 3rd. The way and means of exercising this faith, and of doing that which is to be done by it: "All things, whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Faith is the soul, prayer is the body; both together make a complete man for any service. Faith, if it be right, will excite prayer; and prayer is not right if it do not spring from faith. This is the condition of our receiving, we must ask in prayer believing. The requests of prayer shall not be denied; the expectations of faith shall not be frustrated. We have many promises to this purpose from the mouth of our Lord Jesus, and all to encourage faith, the principal grace, and prayer, the principal duty, of a Christian. It is but ask and have; believe and receive; and what would we more? Observe, how comprehensive the promise is, of "all things whatsoever ye shall ask;" this is like "all and every the premises," in a conveyance. "All things," in general; "whatsoever," brings it to particulars; though generals include particulars, yet such is the folly of our unbelief, that though we think we assent to promises in the general, yet we fly off when it comes to particulars; and therefore, that we might have strong consolation, it is thus copiously expressed, "all things whatsoever."

23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? 24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? 26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. 27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Our Lord Jesus (like St. Paul, after him,) preached his Gospel with much contention. His first appearance was in a dispute with the doctors in the temple, when he was twelve years old; and here, just before he died, we have him engaged. In this sense, he was like Jeremiah, a man of contention, not striving, but striven with. The great contenders with him were the chief priests and the elders, the judges of two distinct courts: the chief priests presided in the ecclesiastical courts, in all matters of the Lord, as they are called; the elders of the people were judges of the civil courts in temporal matters: see an idea of both, 2 *Chr. xix. 5, 8, 11*. These joined to attack Christ, thinking they should find or make him obnoxious either to the one or to the other. See how woefully degenerate that generation was, when the governors, both in church and state, that should have been the great promoters of the Messiah's kingdom, were the great opposers of it. Here we have them disturbing him when he was preaching, ver. 23: they would neither receive his instructions themselves, nor let others receive them. Observe,

I. *As soon as he came into Jerusalem he went to the temple*. Though he had been affronted the day before, was there in the midst of enemies, and in the mouth of danger, yet thither he went, for there he had a fairer opportunity of doing good to souls than any where else in Jerusalem: though he came hungry to the city, and was disappointed of a breakfast at the barren fig tree, yet, for aught appears, he went straight to the temple, as one that esteemed the words of God's mouth, the preaching of them, more than his necessary food.

II. *In the temple he was teaching*. He had called it a "house of prayer," ver. 13; and here we have him preaching there. Note, In the solemn assemblies of Christians, praying and preaching must go together, and neither must encroach upon or jostle out the other. To make up a communion with God, we must not only speak to him in prayer, but hear what he has to say to us by his Word; ministers must give themselves both to the Word and to prayer, *Acts vi. 4*. Now Christ taught in the temple, that scripture was fulfilled, *Isa. ii. 3*: "Let us go up to the house of the Lord, and he will teach us his ways." The priests of old often taught there the good knowledge of the Lord, but they never had such a teacher as this. When Christ was teaching the people, the priests and elders came upon him, and challenged him to produce his orders: the hand of Satan was in this, to hinder him in his work. Note, It cannot but be a trouble to a faithful minister to be taken off, or diverted from, plain and practical preaching, by an unavoidable necessity of engaging in controversies: yet good was brought out of this evil; for hereby occasion was given to Christ to dispel the objections that were advanced against him, to the greater satisfaction of his followers: and while his adversaries thought by their power to have silenced him, he by his wisdom silenced them. Now, in this dispute with them, we may observe,

First. How he was assaulted by their insolent demand: "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" Had they duly considered his miracles, and the power by which he wrought them, they needed not to have asked this question; but they must have something to say for the shelter of an obstinate infidelity: "Thou ridest in triumph into Jerusalem, receivest the hosannas of the people, contrivest in the temple, drivest out such as had licence to be there from the rulers of the temple, and paid them rent; thou art here preaching a new doctrine; whence hadst thou a commission to do all this? Was it from Cæsar? or from the high priest? or from God? Produce thy warrant, thy credentials. Dost not thou take too much upon thee?" Note, It is good for all that take upon them to act with authority, to put this question to themselves—who gave them that authority? For unless a man be clear in his own conscience concerning that, he cannot act with any comfort,

summarised in 1 *John v. 14*. There have always been enthusiasts, who have explained passages like the one before us as if it extended to every true believer; and scepticism itself has used the words in the same way. It does not appear, however, that all the members of the apostolic churches claimed the power of working miracles; it is quite certain that in all after ages that power has been regarded as a peculiar prerogative, and not a common gift.

xxi. 23. It is quite well to notice the phrases "chief priests" and 120

"elders of the people." With reference to the former, showing that there were more chief priests than one, it is observable that the same Greek word is used to designate the high priest and the principal priests. The high priesthood was at this period an office of uncertain tenure, and the mere shadow of the venerable institution which comes before us in the Old Testament. Money and political influences or personal favouritism were now too often sufficient to cause a vacancy or to fill one, and consequently the high priests, properly so

or hope of success. They who run before their warrant, run without their blessing, *Jer. xxiii. 21*. Christ had often said it, and proved it beyond contradiction, and Nicodemus, a master in Israel, had owned it, that he was a teacher sent of God, *Jno. iii. 2*; yet at this time of day, when that point had been so fully cleared and settled, they come to him with this question. 1st. In the ostentation of their own power, as chief priest and elders, which they thought authorized them to call him to an account in this manner. How laughingly do they ask, "who gave thee this authority?" intimating that he could have no authority, because he had none from them, *1 Kin. xxii. 24; Jer. xx. 1*. Note, It is common for the greatest abusers of their power to be the most rigorous asserters of it, and to take a pride and pleasure in anything that looks like the exercise of it. 2nd. It was to ensnare and entangle him; should he deny to answer this question, they would enter judgment against him; *nihil dicit*,—he says nothing, would condemn him as standing mute, and would insinuate to the people that his silence was a tacit confessing of himself a usurper; should he plead an authority from God, they would, as formerly, demand a sign from heaven, or make his defence his offence, and accuse him of blasphemy for it.

Secondly, How he answered this demand with another, which would help them to answer it themselves, *ver. 24, 25*: "I also will ask you one thing." He declined giving them a direct answer, lest they should take advantage against him, but answers them with a question. Those that are as sheep in the midst of wolves have need to be "wise as serpents;" the "heart of the wise studieth to answer." We must give a reason of the hope that is in us, not only with meekness, but with fear, *1 Pet. iii. 15*; with prudent caution, lest truth be damaged, or ourselves endangered. Now this question is concerning John's baptism, here put for his whole ministry, preaching as well as baptizing. Was this from heaven, or of men? One of the two it must be; either what he did was of his own head, or he was sent of God to do it. Gamaliel's argument turned upon this hinge, *Acts v. 34, 39*; either this counsel is of men, or of God; though that which is manifestly bad cannot be of God, yet that which is seemingly good may be of men, nay, of Satan, when he transforms himself into an angel of light. This question was not at all shuffling, to evade theirs; but, 1. If they answer this question, it would answer theirs; if they should say, against their consciences, that John's baptism was of men, yet it would be easy to answer, "John did no miracle," *Jno. x. 41*; Christ did many; but if they should say, as they could not but own, that John's baptism was from heaven, (which was supposed in the questions sent him, *Jno. i. 21*, "Art thou Elias, or that prophet?") then their demand was answered, for he bare testimony to Christ. Note, Truths appear in the clearest light when they are taken in their due order; the resolving of the previous question will be a key to the main question. 2. If they refuse to answer it, that will be a good reason why he should not offer proofs of his authority to men that were obstinately prejudiced against the strongest conviction: it was but to cast pearls before swine. Thus "he taketh the wise in their own craftiness," *1 Cor. iii. 19*; and those that would not be convinced of the plainest truths, shall be convicted of the vilest malice, against John first, then against Christ, and in both against God.

Thirdly, How they were hereby baffled and run aground: they knew the truth, but would not own it, and so were taken in the snare they laid for our Lord Jesus. Observe, 1. How "they reasoned with themselves," not concerning the merits of the cause; what proofs there were of the Divine original of John's baptism; no, their care was how to make their part good against Christ. Two things they considered and consulted in this reasoning with themselves; their credit and their safety; the same things which they principally aim at that seek their own things. 1st. They consider their own credit, which they would endanger if they should own John's baptism to be of God: for then Christ would ask them, before all the people, "Why did ye not believe him?" and to acknowledge that a doctrine is from God, and yet not to receive and entertain it, is the greatest absurdity and iniquity that a man can be charged with. Many that will not be kept by the fear of sin from neglecting and opposing that which they know to be true and good, yet are kept by the fear of shame from owning that to be true and good which they neglect and oppose. Thus they "reject the counsel of God against themselves," in not submitting to John's baptism, and were left without excuse. 2nd. They consider their own safety, that they would expose themselves to the resentments of the people, if they should say that John's baptism was of men: "we fear the people, for all hold John as a prophet." It seems then, *First*, That the people had righter sentiments of John than the chief priests and the elders had, or at least were more free and faithful in declaring their sentiments. This people, of whom they said in their pride, that they knew not the law, and were cursed, *Jno. vii. 49*, it seems knew the Gospel, and were blessed. *Secondly*, That the chief priests and elders stood in awe of the common people, it is an evidence that things were in disorder among them, and that mutual jealousies were at a great height; that the government was become obnoxious to the hatred and scorn of the people, and the Scripture was fulfilled, "I have made you contemptible and base," *Mal. ii. 8, 9*. If they had kept their integrity, and done their duty, they had kept up their authority, and needed not to fear the people. We find sometimes that the people feared them, and it served them for a reason why they did not confess Christ, *Jno. ix. 22; xii. 44*. Note, Those cannot but fear the people who study only how to make the people fear them. *Thirdly*, That it is usually the temper, even of common people, to be zealous for the honour of that which they account sacred and divine. If they "account John as a prophet," they will not endure it should be said his baptism was of men; hence the hottest contests have been about holy things. *Fourthly*, That the chief priests and elders were kept from an open denial of the truth, even against the conviction of their own minds; not by the fear of God, but purely by the fear of the people; as the fear of man may bring good people into a snare, *Pr. xxix. 25*, so sometimes it may keep bad people from being "overmuch wicked, lest they should die before their time," *Ecc. vii. 17*. Many ill people would be a deal worse than they are if they durst. 2. How they replied to our Saviour, and so dropped the question. They fairly confessed, "We cannot tell;" that is, we will not, *οὐκ οἶδμεν*,—we never knew; the more shame for them, while they pretended to be leaders of the people, and by their office were obliged to take cognizance of such things when they would not confess their knowledge, they were constrained to confess their ignorance. And observe, by the way, when they said, "We cannot tell," they told a lie, for they knew that John's baptism was of God. Note, There are many who are more afraid of the shame of lying than of the sin; and therefore, scruple not to speak that which they know to be false concerning their own thoughts and apprehensions, their affections and intentions, or their remembering or forgetting of things, because in those things they know nobody can disprove them. Thus Christ avoided the snare they laid for him, and justified himself in refusing to gratify them; "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." If they be so wicked and base, as either not to believe, or not to confess that the baptism of John was from heaven, (though it obliged to repentance, that great duty, and sealed the kingdom of God at hand, that great promise,) they were not fit to be discoursed with concerning Christ's authority; for men of such a disposition could not be convinced of the truth, nay, they could not but be provoked by it; and therefore he that is thus ignorant, let him be ignorant still. Note, Those that imprison the truths they

know in unrighteousness, either by not professing them, or by not practising according to them, are justly denied the further truths they inquire after, *Rom. i. 18, 19*. Take away the talent from him that buried it: those that will not see, shall not see.

28 But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. 29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. 30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. 31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

As Christ instructed his disciples by parables, which made the instructions the more easy, so sometimes he convinced his adversaries by parables, which bring reproofs more close, and make men, or ever they are aware, to reprove themselves. Thus Nathan convinced David by a parable, *2 Sam. xii. 1*; and the woman of Tekoa surprised him in like manner, *2 Sam. xiv. 2*. Reproving parables are appeals to the offenders themselves, and judge them out of their own mouths. This Christ designs here, as appears by the first words, *ver. 28*: "But what think ye?" In these verses we have the parable of the two sons sent to "work in the vineyard," the scope of which is to shew, that they who knew not John's baptism to be not of men, were shamed even by the publicans and harlots, who knew it, and owned it. Here is,

1. The parable itself, which represents two sorts of persons; some that prove better than they promise, represented by the first of those sons; others that promise better than they prove, represented by the second.

First, They had both one and the same father, which signifies that God is a common father to all mankind. There are favours which all alike receive from him, and obligations which all alike lie under to him: "Have we not all one Father?" Yes; and yet there is a vast difference between men's characters.

Secondly, They had both the same command given them: "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." Parents should not breed up their children in idleness: nothing more pleasing, and yet nothing more pernicious, to youth than that, *Lam. iii. 27*. God sets his children to work, though they are all heirs. This command is given to every one of us. Note, 1. The work of religion, which we are called to engage in, is vineyard work; creditable, profitable, and pleasant. By the sin of Adam, we were turned out to work upon the common, and to eat the herb of the field; but by the grace of our Lord Jesus, we are called to work again in the vineyard. 2. The gospel call to work in the vineyard requires present obedience: "Son, go work to-day," while it is called to-day, because "the night cometh when no man can work;" we were not sent into the world to be idle, nor had we daylight given us to play by; and therefore, if ever we mean to do any thing for God and our souls, why not now? why not to-day? 3. The exhortation, to go work to-day in the vineyard, "speaketh unto us as unto children," *Heb. xii. 5*. "Son, go work;" it is the command of a Father, which carries with it both authority and affection; a Father, that pities his children, and considers their frame, and will not overtask them, *Ps. ciii. 13, 14*; a Father, that is very tender of "his son, that serves him," *Mal. iii. 17*; if we work in our Father's vineyard, we work for ourselves.

Thirdly, Their carriage was very different. 1. One of the sons did better than he said; proved better than he promised: his answer was ill, but his actions well. 1st. Here is the untoward answer that he gave to his father; he said, flat and plain, "I will not." See to what a degree of impudence the corrupt nature of man riseth, to say, "I will not" to the command of a father; such a command of such a father: they are impudent children and stiff-hearted. Those that will not bend, surely they cannot blush; if they had any degree of modesty left them, they could not say, "We will not," *Jer. ii. 25*. Excuses are bad; but downright denials are worse; yet such peremptory refusals do the calls of the Gospel often meet with. *First*, Some love their ease, and will not work; they would live in the world, as Leviathan in the waters, to play therein, *Ps. civ. 26*; they do not love working. *Secondly*, Their hearts are so much upon their own fields, that they are not for working in God's vineyard; they love the business of the world better than the business of their religion. Thus some by the delights of sense, and others by the employments of the world, are kept from doing that great work which they were sent into the world about, and so stand all the day idle. 2nd. Here is the happy change of his mind, and of his way, upon second thoughts: "Afterwards he repented, and went." Note, There are many that in their beginning are wicked and wilful, and very unpromising, who afterwards repent and mend, and come to something. Some that God hath chosen are suffered for a great while to run to a great excess of riot; "such were some of you," *1 Cor. vi. 11*. These are set forth for patterns of long-suffering, *1 Tim. i. 16*; "afterwards he repented." Repentance is *μετάνοια*,—an after wit; and *μεταμέλεια*,—an after care; better late than never. Observe, When he repented, he went; that was the fruit meet for repentance. The only evidence of our repentance for our former resistance, is immediately to comply, and set to work, and then what is past shall be pardoned, and all shall be well. See what a kind father God is; he resents not the affront of our refusals, as justly he might. He that told his father to his face he would not do as he bid him, deserved to be kicked out of doors, and disinherited; but our God waits to be gracious, and notwithstanding our former follies, if we repent and mend, will favourably accept of us: blessed be God, we are under a covenant that leaves room for such a repentance. 2. The other son said better than he did; promised better than he proved: his answer was well, but his actions ill. To him the father "said likewise," *ver. 30*. The gospel call, though very different in the effect, is the same to all, and is carried on with an even tenor. We all have the same commands, engagements, encouragements; though to some they

called, were not a very honourable succession of men. Along with these there were the chief priests alluded to in the verse before us. Robinson describes them, as Wahl and some others had done, as the heads of the twenty-four divisions or classes of the Jewish priesthood (see *1 Chron. xxiv.*). There is, however, another idea connected with this word, viz., that they who had once filled the office of high priests continued to bear the name. In the verse under notice, the high priests, or chief priests, appear to be those who occupied seats at the

Jewish Sanhedrim. Hence they are associated with the "elders of the people," and the two constituted a sort of small parliament, in which the secular and ecclesiastical elements were represented under the authority of the Roman Government as supreme, and consulted on weighty matters. The members of the Sanhedrim who were not priests are sometimes represented as elders, and sometimes, as in verse 15, are called scribes.

xxi. 27. When our Lord declined to give his authority for his

are a savour of life unto life; to others, of death unto death. Observe, 1st. How fairly this other son promised. He said, "I go, sir." He gives his father a title of respect, "sir." Note, It becomes children to speak respectfully to their parents. It is one branch of that honour which the fifth commandment requires. He professes a ready obedience: "I go;" not "I will go by-and-by;" but "ready, sir, you may depend upon it: I go just now." This answer we should give from the heart heartily to all the calls and commands of the Word of God. See *Jer. iii. 22; Ps. xxvii. 8*. 2nd. How he failed in the performance: he "went not." Note, There are many that give good words and make fair promises in religion; and those from some good motions for the present, that rest there, and go no further, and so come to nothing. Saying and doing are two things; and many are they that say, and do not: it is particularly charged upon the Pharisees, *ch. xxiii. 3*. Many with their mouth shew much love, but their heart goes another way. They had a good mind to be religious, but they met with something to be done that was too hard, or something to be parted with that was too dear; and so the purposes are to no purpose: buds and blossoms are not fruit.

II. A general appeal upon the parable: "Whether of them did the will of his father?" ver. 31. They both had their faults; one was rude, and the other was false: such variety of exercises parents sometimes have in the different humours of their children; and they have need of a great deal of wisdom and grace to know what is the best way of managing them. But the question is, which was the better of the two, and the less faulty? and it was soon resolved, "The first;" because his actions were better than his words; and his latter end than his beginning. This they had learned from the common sense of mankind; who would much rather deal with one that will be better than his word, than with one that will be false to his word; and in the intention of it they had learned from the account God gives of the rule of his judgment, *Eze. xviii. 21, 22*, that if "the sinner turn from his wickedness," he shall be pardoned; and "if the righteous man turn from his righteousness," he shall be rejected. The tenor of the whole Scripture gives us to understand that those are accepted as doing their Father's will who, wherein they have missed it, are sorry for it, and do better.

III. A particular application of it to the matter in hand, ver. 31, 32. The primary scope of the parable is to shew how the publicans and harlots, who never talked of the Messiah and his kingdom, yet entertained the doctrine, and submitted to the discipline, of John Baptist, his forerunner; when the priests and elders, who were big with the expectations of the Messiah, and seemed very ready to go into his measures, slighted John Baptist, and ran counter to the designs of his mission. But it has a further reach; the Gentiles were sometimes disobedient; had been long so; children of disobedience, like the elder son, *Tit. iii. 3, 4*. Yet, when the Gospel was preached to them, they became obedient to the faith; whereas the Jews, who said, "I go, sir," promised fair, *Ez. xxiv. 7; Jos. xxiv. 24*, yet went not: "they did but flatter God with their mouth," *Ps. lxxviii. 36*. In Christ's application of this parable, observe,

First. How he proves that John's baptism was from heaven, and not of men. If you cannot tell, saith Christ, you might tell, 1. By the scope of his ministry: "John came unto you in the way of righteousness." Would you know whether John had his commission from heaven? remember the rule of trial, "By their fruits ye shall know them;" the fruits of their doctrines; the fruits of their doings. Observe but their way, and you may trace out both their rise and their tendency. Now it was evident that John came in the way of righteousness: in his ministry he taught the people to repent, and to work the works of righteousness; in his conversation, he was a great example of strictness, and seriousness, and contempt of the world; denying himself, and doing good to every body else. Christ therefore submitted to the baptism of John, because it became him to fulfil all righteousness. Now, if John thus came in the way of righteousness, could they be ignorant that his baptism was from heaven, or make any doubt of it? 2. By the success of his ministry: "The publicans and the harlots believed him." He did abundance of good among the worst sort of people. St. Paul proves his apostleship by the seals of his ministry, *1 Cor. ix. 2*. If God had not sent John Baptist, he would not have crowned his labours with such wonderful success, nor have made him so instrumental as he was for the conversion of souls. If publicans and harlots believe his report, surely the arm of the Lord is with him: the people's profiting is the minister's best testimonial.

Secondly. How he reproves them for their contempt of John's baptism, which yet, for fear of the people, they were not willing to own; and to shame them for it, he sets before them the faith, repentance, and obedience of the publicans and harlots, which aggravated their unbelief and impenitence. As he shews, *ch. xi. 21*, that the less likely would have repented; so here, that the less likely did repent. 1. The publicans and harlots were like the first son in the parable; from whom little of religion was expected. They promised little good; and those that knew them, promised themselves little good from them. Their disposition was generally rude, and their conversation profligate and debauched; and yet many of them were wrought upon by the ministry of John, who came in the spirit and power of Elias; see *Lu. vii. 29*. And these fitly represented the Gentile world; for (as Dr. Whitby observes) the Jews generally ranked the publicans with the heathen; nay, and the heathen were represented by the Jews as harlots, and born of harlots, *Jno. viii. 41*. 2. The scribes and Pharisees, the chief priests and elders, and indeed the Jewish nation in general, were like the other son, that gave good words: they made a specious profession of religion; and yet, when the kingdom of the Messiah was brought among them, by the baptism of John, they slighted it, they turned their back upon it, nay, they lift up the heel against it. An hypocrite is more hardly convinced and converted than a gross sinner: the form of godliness, if that be rested in, becomes one of Satan's strongholds, by which he opposeth the power of godliness. It was an aggravation of their unbelief, 1st. That John was such an excellent person; that he came, and came to them, in the way of righteousness. The better the means are, the greater the account will be, if not improved, 2nd. That when they saw the publicans and harlots go before them into the kingdom of heaven, they did not afterwards repent and believe; were not thereby provoked to a holy emulation, *Rom. xi. 14*. Shall publicans and harlots go away with grace and glory, and shall not we put in for a share? Shall our inferiors be more holy and more happy than we? They had not the wit and grace that Esau had, who was moved to take other measures than he had done, by the example of his younger brother, *Gen. xxviii. 6*. These proud priests, that set up for leaders, scorned to follow, though it were into the kingdom of heaven; especially to follow publicans: "through the pride of their countenance they would not seek after God;" after Christ, *Ps. x. 4*.

33 Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went

into a far country: 34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. 35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. 37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. 38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. 39 And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. 40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? 41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. 42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. 45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

This parable plainly sets forth the sin and ruin of the Jewish nation; they and the leaders are the husbandmen here; and what is spoken for conviction to them, is spoken for caution to all that enjoy the privileges of the visible church, not to be high-minded, but fear.

I. We have here the privileges of the Jewish church represented by the letting out of a vineyard to the husbandmen; they were as tenants holding by, from, and under God, the great householder. Observe,

First. How God established a church for himself in the world. The kingdom of God upon earth is here compared to a vineyard, furnished with all things requisite to an advantageous management and improvement of it. 1. He planted this vineyard: the church is the planting of the Lord, *Isa. lxi. 3*. The forming of a church is a work by itself, like the planting of a vineyard, which requires a great deal of cost and care: "It is the vineyard which his right hand has planted," *Ps. lxxx. 15*; planted with the choicest vine, *Isa. v. 2*; a noble vine, *Jer. ii. 21*: the earth of itself produceth thorns and briars, but vines must be planted. The being of a church is owing to God's distinguishing favour, and his manifesting himself to some, and not to others. 2. He "hedged it round about." Note, God's church in the world is taken under his special protection; it is a "hedge round about," like that about Job, on every side, *Job i. 10*; a wall of fire, *Zec. ii. 5*: wherever God has a church, it is and will always be his peculiar care. The covenant of circumcision, and the ceremonial law, were a hedge, or wall of partition, about the Jewish church, which is taken down by Christ; who yet has appointed a gospel order and discipline to be the hedge of his church. He will not have his vineyard to lie in common, that those that are without may thrust in at pleasure; nor to lie at large, that those that are within may lash out at pleasure, but care is taken to set bounds about this holy mountain. 3. "He digged a winepress, and built a tower:" the altar of burnt-offerings was the winepress, to which all the offerings were brought. God instituted ordinances in his church, for the due oversight of it, and for the promoting of its fruitfulness. What could have been done more to make it every way convenient?

Secondly. How he intrusted these visible church privileges with the nation and people of the Jews, especially their chief priests and elders: he "let it out to them as husbandmen;" not because he had need of them, as landlords have of their tenants, but because he would try them, and be honoured by them. When in Judah God was known, and his name was great; when they were taken to be to God "for a people, and for a name, and for a praise," *Jer. xiii. 11*; when he revealed his word unto Jacob, *Ps. cxlvii. 19*; when the covenant of life and peace was made with Levi, *Mal. ii. 4, 5*—then this vineyard was let out: see an abstract of the lease, *Cant. viii. 11, 12*. The Lord of the vineyard was to have a thousand pieces of silver, (compare *Isa. vii. 13*); the main profit was to be his, but the keepers were to have two hundred; a competent and comfortable encouragement: and then he "went into a far country." When God had in a visible appearance settled the Jewish church at mount Sinai, he did in a manner withdraw,—they had no more such open vision, but were left to the written Word; or they imagined that he was gone into a far country, as Israel, when they

professed as a teacher, he repudiated the authority of the Sanhedrim, which was the legitimate tribunal for investigating such cases. Unquestionably, our Saviour, by refusing to satisfy them, placed himself above them, and superseded them. A reference to John i. 19—27 will show that John the Baptist assumed a much lower position.

xxi. 31, 32. The constant connection of publicans with sinners of one kind or other indicates the popular odium with which they were

regarded; nor is there any reason for hoping that the publicans as a class deserved a better character. They answered in most respects to the officials who at this day, under Turkish and Persian rule, compound with the empire for the taxes, and extort from the people as much as they can. The system is bad, and encourages rapacity and violence, under the names of loyalty and justice.

xxi. 33. This parable opens with a very truthful and graphic representation of facts. The proprietor of a suitable piece of ground

made the calf, fancied that Moses was gone;—they put far from them the evil day.

II. *God's expectation of rent from these husbandmen*, ver. 34; and good reason, for "who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?" Note, From those that enjoy church privileges, both ministers and people, God looks for fruit accordingly. 1. His expectations were not hasty; he did not demand a fore-rent, though he had been at such expense upon it, but stayed till "the time of the fruit drew near," as it did, now John preached the kingdom of heaven as at hand: God waits to be gracious, that he may give us time. 2. They were not high: he did not require them to come at their peril, upon penalty of forfeiting their lease if they run behind-hand; but he sent his servants to them, to mind them of their duty, and of the rent day, and to help them in gathering in the fruit, and making return of it. These servants were the prophets of the Old Testament, who were sent, and sometimes directly to the people of the Jews, to reprove and instruct them. 3. They were not hard: it was only to "receive the fruits." He did not demand more than they could make of it, but some fruit of that which he himself planted, and observance of the laws and statutes he gave them. What could have been done more reasonable? But his expectations were frustrated, "he found none." Israel was an empty vine; nay, it was become the degenerate plant of a strange vine, and brought forth wild grapes.

III. *The husbandmen's baseness in abusing the messengers that were sent to them.*

First. When he sent them his servants, they abused them, though they represented the master himself, and spoke in his name. Note, The calls and reproofs of the Word, if they do not engage, will but exasperate. See here what hath all along been the lot of God's faithful messengers, more or less, 1. To suffer: "so persecuted they the prophets," they were hated with a cruel hatred; they not only despised and reproached them, but treated them as the worst of malefactors; they beat them, and killed them, and stoned them: they beat Jeremiah; killed Isaiah; stoned Zechariah the son of Jehoiada in the temple. If they that live godly in Christ Jesus themselves shall suffer persecution, much more they that press others to it. This was God's old quarrel with the Jews, misusing his prophets, 2 *Chr.* xxxvi. 16. 2. It has been their lot to suffer from their Master's own tenants: they were the husbandmen that treated them thus, the chief priests and elders, that sat in Moses' chair, that professed religion and relation to God; these were the most bitter enemies of the Lord's prophets, that cast them out and killed them, and said, "Let the Lord be glorified," *Isa.* lvi. 5; see *Jer.* xx. 1, 2; xvi. 11. Now see, 1st. How God persevered in his goodness to them: he sent "other servants, more than the first," though the first sped not, but were abused; he sent them John Baptist, and him they had beheaded, and yet he sent them his disciples to prepare his way. O the riches of the patience and forbearance of God, in keeping up in his church a despised, persecuted ministry. 2nd. How they persisted in their wickedness: they "did unto them likewise." One sin makes way for another of the same kind: they that are drunk with the blood of the saints, add drunkenness to thirst, and still cry, Give, give.

Secondly. At length he sent them his son: we have seen God's goodness in sending, and their badness in abusing the servants, but in the latter instance both these exceed themselves. 1. Never did grace appear more gracious than in sending the Son: this was done last of all. Note, All the prophets were harbingers and forerunners to Christ. He was sent last; for if nothing else would work upon them, surely this would; it was therefore reserved for the *ratio ultima*,—the last expedient; "surely they will reverence my son," and therefore I will send him. Note, It might reasonably be expected that the Son of God, when he came to his own, should be revered; and reverence to Christ would be a powerful and effectual principle of fruitfulness and obedience to the glory of God: if they will but reverence the Son the point is gained. "Surely they will reverence my Son," for he comes with more authority than the servants could; judgment is committed to him, that "all men should honour him." There is greater danger in refusing him than in despising Moses' law. 2. Never did sin appear more sinful than in the abusing of him, which was now to be done in two or three days. Observe, 1st. How it was plotted, ver. 38: "When they saw the son," when he came whom the people owned and followed as the Messiah, who would either have the rent paid or distract for it, this touched their copyhold, and they were resolved to make one bold push for it, and to preserve their wealth and grandeur by taking him out of the way who was the only hindrance of it, and rival with them: "This is the heir; come, let us kill him." Pilate and Herod, the princes of this world, knew not, for if they had known, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," 1 *Cor.* ii. 8: but the "chief priests and elders" knew that "this was the heir," at least some of them; and therefore, "Come, let us kill him," many are killed for what they have. The chief thing they envied him, and for which they hated and feared him, was his interest in the people, and their hosannas, which, if he were taken off, they hoped to engross securely to themselves: they pretended he must die to save the people from the Romans, *Jno.* xi. 50; but really he must die to save their hypocrisy and tyranny from that reformation which the expected kingdom of the Messiah would certainly bring along with it. He drives the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and therefore "let us kill him;" and then, as if the premises must of course go to the occupant, "let us seize on his inheritance." They thought, if they could but get rid of this Jesus, they should carry all before them in the church without control, might impose what traditions, and force the people to what submissions, they pleased. Thus they "take counsel against the Lord and his Anointed;" but he that sits in heaven laughs to see them outshot in their own bow; for while they thought to kill him, and so to seize on his inheritance, he went by his cross to his crown, and they were broke in pieces with a rod of iron, and their inheritance seized, *Ps.* ii. 2-9. 2nd. How this plot was executed, ver. 39: while they were so set upon killing him, in pursuance of their design to secure their own pomp and power, and while he was so set upon dying, in pursuance of his design to subdue Satan, and save his chosen, no wonder if they soon caught him, and slew him, when his hour was come. Though the Roman power condemned him, yet it is still charged upon the chief priests and elders; for they were not only the persecutors, but the principal agents, and had the greater sin: "Ye have taken," *Acts* ii. 23. Nay, looking upon him to be as unworthy to live, as they were unwilling he should, they cast him out of the vineyard, out of the holy church, which they supposed themselves to have the key of, and out of the holy city, for he was crucified without the gate, *Heb.* xiii. 12, as if he had been the shame and reproach, who was the greatest glory, of his people Israel. Thus they who persecuted the servants, persecuted the son; as men treat God's ministers, they would treat Christ himself, if he were with him.

IV. *Here is their doom read out of their own mouths*, ver. 40, 41: he puts it to them, "When the lord of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto these husbandmen?" He puts it to themselves for their stronger conviction, that, knowing the judgment of God against them which do such things, they might be the more inexcusable. Note, God's proceedings are so unexceptionable, that there needs but an appeal to sinners themselves concerning the equity of them; God will be "justified when he speaks:" they could readily answer, "He will miser-

ably destroy those wicked men." Note, Many can easily prognosticate the dismal consequences of other people's sins, that see not what will be the end of their own.

First. Our Saviour in his question supposeth that "the lord of the vineyard will come" and reckon with them. God is the Lord of the vineyard, the property is his, and he will make them know it who now lord it over his heritage, as if it were all their own: the Lord of the vineyard will come. Persecutors say in their hearts, "He delays his coming, he doth not see, he will not require;" but they shall find, though he bear long with them, he will not bear always. It is comfort to abused saints and ministers that the Lord is at hand, the Judge stands before the door: when he comes, what will he do to carnal professors?—what will he do to cruel persecutors? They must be called to account; they have their day now, but he sees that his day is coming.

Secondly. They in their answer suppose that it will be a terrible reckoning; the crime appearing so very black, you may be sure, 1. That "he will miserably destroy those wicked men;" it is destruction that is their doom; *κακοὶς κακὸς ἀποκρίσει*,—*malis male perdit*—"let men never expect to do ill and fare well." This was fulfilled upon the Jews, in that miserable destruction which was brought upon them by the Romans, and was completed about forty years after this; an unparalleled ruin, attended with all the most dismal, aggravating circumstances: it will be fulfilled upon all that tread in the steps of their wickedness. Hell is everlasting destruction, and it will be the most miserable destruction to them, of all others, that have enjoyed the greatest share of church privileges, and have not improved them: the hottest place in hell will be the portion of hypocrites and persecutors. 2. That "he will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen." Note, God will have a church in the world, notwithstanding the unworthiness and opposition of many that abuse the privileges of it: the unbelief and frowardness of man shall not make the word of God of none effect. If one will not, another will; the Jews' leavings were the Gentiles' feast: persecutors may destroy the ministers, but cannot destroy the church. The Jews imagined that no doubt but they were the people, and wisdom and holiness must die with them; and if they were cut off, what would God do for a church in the world? But when God makes use of any to bear up his name, it is not because he needs them; nor is he at all beholden to them. If we were made a desolation and an astonishment, God could build a flourishing church upon our ruins; for he is never at a loss what to do for his great name, whatever becomes of us, and of our place, and nation.

V. *The further illustration and application of this by Christ himself, telling them, in effect, they had rightly judged.*

First. He illustrates it, by referring to a scripture fulfilled in this, ver. 42: "Did ye never read in the Scripture?" Yes, no doubt, they had often read and sung it, but had not considered it: we lose the benefit of what we read, for want of meditation. The scripture he quotes is, *Ps.* cxvii. 22, 23; the same context out of which the children fetched their hosannas. The same word yields matter of praise and comfort to Christ's friends and followers, which speaks conviction and terror to his enemies; such a two-edged sword is the Word of God. That scripture, "the stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner," illustrates the preceding parable, especially that part of it which refers to Christ. 1. The builders' rejecting the stone, is the same with the husbandmen's abusing the son that was sent to them: the chief priests and the elders were the builders, had the oversight of the Jewish church, which was God's building; and they would not allow Christ a place in their building, would not admit his doctrine or laws into their constitution; they threw him aside, as a despised broken vessel, a stone that would serve only for a stepping stone, to be trampled upon. 2. The advancing of this stone to be the head of the corner, is the same with letting out the vineyard to other husbandmen: he who was rejected by the Jews, was embraced by the Gentiles; and to that church where there is no difference of circumcision or uncircumcision, Christ is all, and in all. His authority over the gospel church, and influence upon it, his ruling it as the head, and uniting it as the corner stone, is the great instance of his exaltation. Thus, in spite of the malice of the priests and elders, he "divided a portion with the great," and received his kingdom, though they would not have him to reign over them. 3. The hand of God was in all this, "this is the Lord's doing;" even the rejecting of him by the Jewish builders was "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," he permitted and overruled it; much more was his advancement to the head of the corner; his right hand, and his holy arm brought it about: it was God himself that "highly exalted him," and gave him the name above every name: and "it is marvellous in our eyes." The wickedness of the Jews that rejected him is marvellous; that men should be so prejudiced against their own interest; see *Isa.* xxix. 9-14: the honour done him by the Gentile world, notwithstanding the abuses done him by his own people, is marvellous; that he whom men despised and abhorred should be adored by kings, *Isa.* xlix. 7; but it is "the Lord's doing."

Secondly. He applies it to them, and application is the life of preaching. 1. He applies the sentence which they had passed, ver. 41, and turns it upon themselves; not the former part of it, concerning the miserable destruction of the husbandmen, he could not bear to speak of that; but the latter part, of letting out the vineyard to others, he makes application of; because though it looked black upon the Jews, it spoke good to the Gentiles. Know then, 1st. That the Jews shall be unchurch'd; "the kingdom of God shall be taken from you." This turning out of the husbandmen speaks the same doom with that of dismantling the vineyard, and laying it common, *Isa.* v. 5. To the Jews had long pertained the adoption, and the glory, *Rom.* ix. 4; to them were committed the oracles of God, *Rom.* iii. 2; and the sacred trust of revealed religion, and bearing up God's name in the world, *Ps.* lxxvi. 1, 2; but now it shall be so no longer. They were not only unfruitful in the use of their privileges, but, under pretence of them, opposed the Gospel of Christ, and so forfeited them; and it was not long ere the forfeiture was taken. Note, It is a righteous thing with God to remove church privileges from those that not only sin against them, but sin with them, *Rev.* ii. 4, 5. The kingdom of God was taken from the Jews, not only by the temporal judgments that befel them, but by the spiritual judgments they lay under; their blindness of mind, hardness of heart, and indignation at the Gospel, *Rom.* xi. 8-10; 1 *Thes.* ii. 15. 2nd. That the Gentiles shall be taken in: God need not ask us leave whether he shall have a church in the world; though his vine be plucked up in one place, he will find another to plant it in; he will give it (*ἐδωκεν*) to the Gentile world, that will bring forth the fruit of it: they who had been "not a people," and had "not obtained mercy," became favourites of Heaven. This is the mystery which blessed Paul was so much affected with, *Rom.* xi. 30-33, and which the Jews were so much affronted by *Acts* xxii. 21, 22. At the first planting of Israel in Canaan, the fall of the Gentiles was the riches of Israel, *Ps.* cxxxv. 10, 11; so at their extirpation, the fall of Israel was the riches of the Gentiles, *Rom.* xi. 12: it shall go to a "nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Note, Christ knows beforehand who will bring forth gospel fruits in the use of gospel means; because our fruitfulness is all the work of his own hands, and known unto God are all his works. They shall bring forth the fruits better than the Jews had done, God has had more glory from the New Testament church, than from that of the Old Testament; for when he changeth, it shall not be to his loss. 2. He applies the scripture which

plants it as a vineyard, and protects it with a fence, which may be either a thorn hedge or a stone wall, or both; excavates a wine-press, and erects a watch-tower; after which he lets it to tenants, and removes from the locality. It is affirmed that "there is scarcely any region in the world more admirably adapted for vine culture than Palestine. It is the true climate of the vine." Hence we find that the Scriptures abound, from the earliest period, with allusions to the vine and its culture in the Holy Land. A cluster of grapes was

adopted as an emblem of the nation during and after the times of the Maccabees, as we see from the coins which are preserved. Travelers in Palestine often speak of the ancient and modern vineyards, with their fences, and towers, and wine-presses. These latter, often of great antiquity, are constantly found hewn out of the solid rock, and are frequently the only evidence that vineyards once existed. The modern vineyards are always protected with a fence.

xxii. 3. Dr. Kitto says it is still customary in the East, not only

ne had quoted, ver. 42, to their terror, ver. 44: this stone, which the builders refused, is set for the fall of many in Israel; and we have here the doom of two sorts of people, for whose fall it proves that Christ is set. 1st. Some through ignorance stumble at Christ in his state of humiliation: when this stone lies on the earth, where the builders threw it, they through their blindness and carelessness fall on it, fall over it, and "they shall be broken." The offence they take at Christ will not hurt him, no more than he that stumbles hurts the stone he stumbles at, but it will hurt themselves; they will fall, and be broken, and snared, *Isa. viii. 14*; *1 Pet. ii. 7, 8*: the unbelief of sinners will be their ruin. 2nd. Others through malice oppose Christ, and bid defiance to him in his state of exaltation, when this stone is advanced to "the head of the corner;" and on them it shall fall, for they pull it on their own heads, as the Jews did by that challenge, "his blood be upon us, and upon our children," and "it will grind them to powder." The former seems to speak the sin and ruin of all unbelievers; this the greater sin, and sorer ruin, of persecutors, that kick against the pricks, and persist in it. Christ's kingdom will be a burdensome stone to all those that attempt to overthrow it, or heave it out of its place; see *Zec. xii. 3*: this stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, will break in pieces all opposing power, *Dan. ii. 34, 35*. Some make this an allusion to the manner of stoning to death among the Jews: the malefactors were first thrown down violently from a high scaffold upon a great stone, which would much bruise them; but then they threw another great stone upon them, which would crush them to pieces: one way or other, Christ will utterly destroy all those that fight against him; if they be so stout-hearted that they are not destroyed by falling on this stone, yet it shall fall on them, and do their business. He will strike through kings, he will "fill the places with dead bodies," *Ps. cx. 5, 6*. None ever hardened his heart against God and prospered.

VI. The entertainment which this discourse of Christ met with among the chief priests and elders that heard his parables.

First. "They perceived that he spake of them," ver. 45; and that, in what they said, ver. 41, they had but read their own doom. Note, A guilty conscience needs no accuser, and sometimes will save a minister the labour of saying, "Thou art the man;" *Mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur*.—"Change but the name, the tale is told of thee." So quick and powerful is the word of God, and such a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, that it is easy for bad men (if conscience be not quite seared) to perceive that it speaks of them.

Secondly. "They sought to lay hands on him." Note, When those who hear the reproofs of the Word perceive that it speaks of them, if it do not do them a great deal of good, it will certainly do them a great deal of hurt. If they be not "pricked to the heart" with conviction and contrition, as they were, *Acts ii. 37*, they will be "cut to the heart" with rage and indignation, as they were, *Acts v. 33*.

Thirdly. They durst not do it for they "feared the multitude," who "took him for a prophet," though not for the Messiah; this served to keep the Pharisees in awe. The fear of the people restrained them from speaking ill of John, ver. 26, and here from doing ill to Christ. Note, God has many ways of restraining the remainders of wrath, as he has of making that which breaks out or redound to his praise, *Ps. lxxvi. 10*.

CHAPTER XXII.

This chapter is a continuation of Christ's discourses in the temple two or three days before he died. His discourses then are largely recorded, as being of special weight and consequence. In this chapter we have, I. Instruction given by the parable of the marriage supper, concerning the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, ver. 1—10; and by the doom of the guest who had not the wedding garment, the danger of hypocrisy in the profession of Christianity, ver. 11—14. II. Disputes with the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes, who opposed Christ: 1. Concerning paying tribute to Caesar, ver. 15—22; 2. Concerning the resurrection of the dead, and the future state, ver. 23—33; 3. Concerning the great commandment of the law, ver. 34—40; 4. Concerning the relation of the Messiah to David, ver. 41—46.



AND Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, 2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, 3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. 5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: 6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. 7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. 9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. 10 So those ser-

vants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests. 11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

We have here the parable of the guests invited to the wedding feast. In this it is said, ver. 1, "Jesus answered," not to what his opposers said, for they were put to silence, but what they thought, when they were wishing for an opportunity to lay hands on him, *ch. xxi. 46*. Note, Christ knows how to answer men's thoughts, for he is a discernor of them. Or, he answered, that is, he continued his discourse to the same purpose; for this parable represents the gospel offer, and the entertainment it meets with, as the former, but under another similitude. The parable of the vineyard represents the sin of the rulers that persecuted the prophets; this shews also the sin of the people, who generally neglected the message, while their "real ones were persecuting the messengers."

I. Gospel preparations are here represented by a feast which a king made at the marriage of his son. Such is the kingdom of heaven, such the provision made for precious souls in and by the new covenant. The king is God, a great God, King of kings. Now,

First. Here is a marriage made for his son. Christ is the bridegroom, the church is the bride. The gospel day is the day of his espousals, *Cant. iii. 11*. Behold by faith the church of the firstborn that are written in heaven, and were given to Christ by Him whose they were, and in them you see "the bride, the Lamb's wife," *Rev. xxi. 9*. The gospel covenant is a marriage covenant betwixt Christ and believers, and it is a marriage of God's making. This branch of the similitude is only mentioned, and not prosecuted here.

Secondly. Here is a dinner prepared for this marriage, ver. 4. All the privileges of church membership, and all the blessings of the new covenant,—pardon of sin, the favour of God, peace of conscience; the promises of the Gospel, and all the riches contained in them; access to the throne of grace, the comforts of the Spirit, and a well-grounded hope of eternal life;—these are the preparations for this feast, a heaven upon earth now, and a heaven in heaven shortly. God has prepared it in his counsel, in his covenant. It is a dinner, noting present privileges in the midst of our day, besides the supper at night in glory. 1. It is a feast. Gospel preparations were prophesied of as a feast, *Isa. xxv. 6*, "a feast of fat things;" and were typified by the many festivals of the ceremonial law, *1 Cor. v. 8*, "Let us keep the feast." A feast is a good day, *Est. viii. 17*. So is the Gospel; it is a continual feast. Oxen and fatlings are killed for this feast; no niceties, but substantial food; enough, and enough of the best. The day of a feast is a day of slaughter or sacrifice, *Jas. v. 5*. Gospel preparations are all founded in the death of Christ, his sacrifice of himself. A feast was made for love: it is a reconciliation feast, a token of God's good will towards men. It was made for laughter, *Eccl. x. 19*. It is a rejoicing feast. It was made for fullness: the design of the Gospel was to fill every hungry soul with good things. It was made for fellowship, to maintain an intercourse between heaven and earth. We are sent for to the banquet of wine, that we may tell what is our petition, and what is our request. 2. It is a wedding feast. Wedding feasts use to be most rich, and free, and most joyful. The first miracle Christ wrought was to make plentiful provision for a wedding feast, *Jno. ii. 7*; and surely, then, he will not be wanting in provision for his own wedding feast, when the "marriage of the Lamb is come," and the "bride has made herself ready," a victorious, triumphant feast, *Rev. xix. 7, 17, 18*. 3. It is a royal wedding feast; it is the feast of a king, *1 Sam. xxv. 36*; at the marriage, not of a servant, but of a son; and then, if ever, he will, like Ahasuerus, shew the riches of his glorious kingdom, *Eccl. i. 4*. The provision made for believers in the covenant of grace is not such as becomes such worthless worms as we are to receive, but such as becomes the King of glory to give. He gives like himself, for he gives himself to be to them *El shaddai*, a God that is enough, a feast indeed for a soul.

II. Gospel calls and offers are representea by an invitation to this feast. Those that make a feast will have guests to grace the feast with. God's guests are the children of men. Lord, what is man, that he should be thus dignified? The guests that were first invited were the Jews. Wherever the Gospel is preached, this invitation is given. Ministers are the servants that are sent to invite, *Pr. ix. 4, 5*. Now,

First. The guests are called, "bidden to the wedding." All that are within hearing of the joyful sound of the Gospel, to them is the word of this invitation sent. The servants that bid have not their names set down in a paper; that needs not, since none are excluded but those that exclude themselves. Those that are bidden to the dinner are "bidden to the wedding;" for all that partake of gospel privileges are to give a due and respectful attendance on the Lord Jesus, as the faithful friends and humble servants of the bridegroom: they are bidden to the wedding, that they may "go forth to meet the bridegroom;" for it is the Father's will that all men should honour the Son.

Secondly. The guests are called upon; for in the Gospel there are not only gracious proposals made, but gracious persuasives; we persuade men, we beseech them in Christ's stead, *2 Cor. v. 11, 20*. See how much Christ's heart is set upon the happiness of poor souls. He not only provides for them, in consideration of their want, but sends to them, in consideration of their weakness and forgetfulness. When the invited guests were slack in coming, the king sent forth other servants, ver. 4. When the prophets of the Old Testament prevailed not, nor John Baptist, nor Christ himself, who told them dinner was almost ready, "The kingdom of God was at hand," the apostles and ministers of the Gospel were sent, after Christ's resurrection, to tell them it was come—it was quite ready, and to persuade them to accept the offer. One would think it had been enough to give men an intimation that they had leave to come, and should be welcome; that during the solemnity of the wedding, the king kept open house; but because the natural man discerns not, and therefore desires not the things of the Spirit of God, we are pressed to accept the call by the most

to give an invitation beforehand, but to send round servants at the proper time to inform the invited guests that "all things are ready." The custom was the same among the Greeks and Romans. The word rendered "wedding" and "marriage" in this verse and those before and after it is plural, and must be understood of the wedding banquet or festival, which extended over several days. The duration of this festival and its splendour depended on the condition of the bridegroom, but it often lasted seven days.

xxii. 9, 10. This proceeding may seem strange, but it must be remembered that the circumstances were unusual. Dr. Kitto observes, "Those who were now invited to the feast, and became the primary guests, were probably of the same class as those who would have been the secondary guests, had those who were first invited arrived, or, in other words, who would have received the benefit from the surplus provision which is usually made on such grand occasions. It is then always customary to provide far more meats and drinks than are re-

powerful inducements, drawn with the cords of a man, and all the bonds of love. If the repetition of the call will move us, "Behold, the Spirit saith, Come, and the bride saith, Come; let him that hears say, Come; let him that is athirst come," *Rev. xxii. 17*. If the reason of the call will work upon us, "Behold, the dinner is prepared, the oxen and fattings are killed, and all things are ready; the Father is ready to accept of us, the Son to intercede for us, the Spirit to sanctify us; pardon is ready, peace ready, comforts ready, the promises ready, as wells of living water for supply; ordinances ready, as golden pipes for conveyance; angels ready to attend us, creatures ready to be in league with us; providences ready to work for our good, and heaven at last ready to receive us; it is a "kingdom prepared, ready to be revealed in the last time;"—is all this ready, and shall we be unready? Is all this preparation made for us, and is there any room to doubt of our welcome, if we come in a right manner? Come, therefore, O come to the marriage; "we beseech you, receive not all this grace of God in vain," *2 Cor. vi. 1*.

III. *The ill entertainment which the Gospel of Christ often meets with among the children of men*, represented by the cold treatment that this message met with, and the hot treatment that the messengers met with, and in both, the king himself and the royal bridegroom are affronted. This reflects primarily upon the Jews, who rejected the counsel of God against themselves. But it looks further to the contempt that would by many, in all ages, be put upon, and the opposition that would be given to, the Gospel of Christ.

First. The message was basely slighted, *ver. 3*: "they would not come." Note, The reason why sinners come not to Christ, and salvation by him, is not because they cannot, but because they will not, *Jno. v. 40*: "Ye will not come unto me." This will aggravate the misery of sinners, that they might have had happiness for the coming for; but it was their own act and deed to refuse it. "I would, and ye would not." But this was not all, *ver. 5*, "they made light of it." They thought it not worth coming for; thought the messengers made more ado than needs: let them magnify the preparations never so much, they could dine as well at home. Note, Making light of Christ, and of the great salvation wrought out by him, is the damning sin of the world; *2 Peter 2. 1*, "they were careless." Note, Multitudes perishing eternally through mere carelessness, that have not any direct aversion to, but a prevailing indifference in, the matters of their souls, and an unconcernedness about them. And the reason why they made light of the marriage feast was, because they had other things that they minded more, and had more mind to; they "went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise." Note, The business and profit of worldly employments proves to many a great hindrance in closing with Christ. *Nu. xiv. 18*. The country people have their farms to look after, about which there is always something or other to do; the town's people must tend their shops, and be constant upon the exchange; they must buy and sell, and get gain; and it is true, that both farmers and merchants must be diligent in their business, but not so as to keep them from making religion their main business; *Eccl. ix. 10*, "these lawful things undo us." These lawful things undo us when they are unlawfully managed, when we are so careful and troubled about many things as to neglect "the one thing needful." Observe, Both the city and the country has its temptations; the merchandise in the one, and the farms in the other: so that whatever we have of the world in our hands, our care must be to keep it out of our hearts, lest it come between us and Christ.

Secondly. The messengers were basely abused. "The remnant," or the rest of them, that is, those who did not go to the farms or merchandise, were neither husbandmen nor tradesmen, but ecclesiastics—the scribes and Pharisees, and chief priests—these were the persecutors, these "took the servants and in-treated them spitefully, and slew them." This, in the parable, is unaccountable; never any could be so rude and barbarous as this to servants that came to invite them to a feast; but, in the redemption of the parable, it was matter of fact. They whose feet should have been beautiful, because they brought the glad tidings of the solemn feast, *Nah. i. 15*, were treated as the offscouring of all things, *1 Cor. iv. 13*. The prophets and John Baptist had been thus abused already, and the apostles and ministers of Christ must count upon the same. The Jews were either directly or indirectly agents in most of the persecutions of the first preachers of the Gospel: witness the history of the Acts, that is, the sufferings, of the Apostles.

IV. *The utter ruin that was coming upon the Jewish church and nation is here represented by the revenge which the king, in wrath, took on these insolent recusants*, *ver. 7*. "He was wroth." The Jews, that had been the people of God's love and blessing, by rejecting the Gospel became the generation of his wrath and curse; "wrath came upon them to the uttermost," *1 Thes. ii. 16*. Now observe here,

First. What was the crying sin that brought the ruin? It was their being murderers. He doth not say, he destroyed those despisers of his call, but those murderers of his servants; as if God were more jealous for the lives of his ministers than for the honour of his Gospel: he that toucheth them toucheth the apple of his eye. Note, Persecution of Christ's faithful ministers fills the measure of guilt more than any thing. Filling Jerusalem with innocent blood was that sin of Manasseh which the Lord would not pardon, *2 Kin. xxiv. 4*.

Secondly. What was the ruin itself that was coming? "He sent forth his armies." The Roman armies were his armies—of his raising, of his sending against the people of his wrath—and he gave them a charge to tread them under foot, *Isa. x. 6*. God is the lord of men's hosts, and makes what use he pleaseth of them to serve his own purposes, though they mean not so, neither doth their heart think so, *Mic. iv. 11, 12*. His armies "destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." This speaks very plainly the destruction of the Jews, and the burning of Jerusalem by the Romans, forty years after this. No age ever saw a greater desolation than that, nor more of the direful effects of fire and sword. Though Jerusalem had been a holy city, the city that God had chosen to put his name there,—beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth,—yet that city, being now become a harlot, righteousness being no longer lodged in it, but murderers, the worst of murderers, (as the prophet speaks, *Isa. i. 21*.) judgment came upon it, and ruin, without remedy; and it is set forth for an example to all that should oppose Christ and his Gospel. It was the Lord's doing, to avenge the quarrel of his covenant.

V. *The re-venishing of the Church again, by the bringing in of Gentiles, is here represented by the furnishing of the feast with guests out of the highways*, *ver. 8–10*. Here is,

First. The complaint of the master of the feast concerning those that were first bidden, *ver. 8*. "The wedding is ready" the covenant of grace ready to be sealed, a church ready to be founded, "but they which were bidden," that is, the Jews, to whom pertained the covenant and the promises, by which they were of old invited to the feast of fat things, they "were not worthy," that is, they were utterly unworthy, and, by their contempt of Christ, had forfeited all the privileges they were invited to. Note, It is not along of God that sinners perish, but of themselves. Thus when Israel of old was within sight of Canaan, the land of promise was ready, the milk and honey ready, but their unbelief, and murmuring, and contempt of that pleasant land shut themselves out, and their

carcasses were left to perish in the wilderness; and "these things happened to them for ensamples;" see *1 Cor. x. 11*; *Heb. iii. 16*; *iv. 1*.

Secondly. The commission he gave to the servants to invite other guests; the inhabitants of the city (*ver. 9*), had refused: "Go to the highways," then; into the way of the Gentiles, which at first they were to decline, *ch. x. 5*. Thus by the fall of the Jews salvation is come to the Gentiles, *Rom. xi. 11, 12*; *Eph. iii. 8*. Note, Christ will have a kingdom in the world, though many reject the grace, and resist the power of that kingdom; though Israel be not gathered, he will be glorious. The offer of Christ and salvation to the Gentiles was, 1. Unlooked for, and unexpected; such a surprise as it would be to wayfaring men upon the road to be met with an invitation to a wedding feast. The Jews had notice of the Gospel long before, and expected the Messiah and his kingdom; but to the Gentiles it was all new, and what they had never heard of before, *Acts xvii. 19, 20*; nor thought did belong to them: see *Isa. lxxv. 1, 2*. It was universal and undistinguishing. Go, and bid as many as you find. The highways are public places, and there Wisdom cries, *Pr. i. 20*. Ask them that go by the way; that is, ask any body, *Jno. xxi. 29*; high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, young and old, Jew and Gentile; tell them all they shall be welcome to gospel privileges upon gospel terms: whoever will, let him come without exception.

Thirdly. The success of this second invitation: if some will not come, others will, *ver. 10*: They "gathered together all as many as they found." The servants obeyed their orders. Jonah was sent into the highways, but was so tender of the honour of his country, that he avoided the errand; but Christ's apostles, though Jews, preferred the service of Christ before their respects to their nation; and St. Paul, though sorrowing for the Jews, yet magnifies his office as the apostle of the Gentiles: they "gathered together all." The design of the Gospel is, 1. To gather souls together, not the nation of the Jews only, but all the children of God who were scattered abroad, *Jno. xi. 52*. The other sheep, that were not of that fold, *Jno. x. 16*. They were gathered into one body, one family, one corporation. 2. To gather them together to the wedding feast, to pay their respects to Christ, and to partake of the privileges of the new covenant. Where the dole is, there will the poor be gathered together. Now the guests that were gathered were, 1st. A multitude, all, as many as they found, so many that the guest chamber was filled. The sealed ones of the Jews were numbered, but those of other nations were without number; "a very great multitude," *Rev. vii. 9*. See *Isa. lx. 4, 8*. 2nd. A mixed multitude, "both bad and good." Some that before their conversion were sober and well inclined, as the devout Greeks, *Acts xvii. 4*, and Cornelius; others that had run to an excess of riot, as the Corinthians, *1 Cor. vi. 11*; "such were some of you;" or, some that after their conversion proved bad, that turned not to the Lord with all their heart, but feigningly; others that were upright, and sincere, and proved well. Ministers, in casting the net of the Gospel, enclose both good fish and bad, but the Lord knows them that are his.

VI. *The case of hypocrites, that are in the church, but not of it, that have a name to live, but are not alive indeed, is represented by the guest that "had not a wedding garment;" one of the bad that were gathered in.* Those come short of salvation by Christ, not only who refuse to take upon them the profession of religion, but who are not sound at heart in that profession. Concerning this hypocrite, observe,

First. His discovery; how he was found out, *ver. 11*. 1. "The king came in to see the guests," to bid those welcome that came prepared, and to turn those out that came otherwise. Note, The God of heaven takes particular notice of those who profess religion, and have a place and a name in the visible church. Our Lord Jesus walks among the golden candlesticks, and therefore knows their works: see *Rev. ii. 1, 2*; *Cant. vii. 12*. Let this be a warning to us against hypocrisy, that disguises will shortly be stripped off, and every man will appear in his own colours, and an encouragement to us in our sincerity, that God is a witness to it. Observe, This hypocrite was never discovered to be without a wedding garment till the king himself came in to see the guests. Note, It is God's prerogative to know who are sound at heart in their profession, and who are not. We may be deceived in men, either one way or other, but He cannot. The day of judgment will be the great discovering day, when all the guests will be presented to the King: then "he will separate between the precious and the vile," *ch. xxv. 32*; "the secrets of all hearts will then be made manifest," and we shall infallibly discern between the righteous and the wicked, which now is not easy to do. It concerns all the guests to prepare for that scrutiny, and to consider how they will pass the piercing eye of the heart-searching God. 2. As soon as he came in, he presently espied the hypocrite; "he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment;" though but one, he soon had his eye upon him: there is no hope of being hid in a crowd from the arrests of Divine justice. He "had not on a wedding garment;" he was not dressed as became a nuptial solemnity; he had not his best clothes on. Note, Many come to the wedding feast without a wedding garment. If the Gospel be the wedding feast, then the wedding garment is a frame of heart and a course of life agreeable to the Gospel, and our profession of it, "worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called," *Eph. iv. 1*, "as becometh the Gospel of Christ," *Phil. i. 27*. The righteousness of saints, their real holiness and sanctification, and Christ made righteousness to them, is the clean linen, *Rev. xix. 6*. This man was not naked, or in rags; some raiment he had, but not a wedding garment. Those, and those only, that put on the Lord Jesus, that have a Christian temper of mind, and are adorned with Christian graces, that live by faith in Christ, and to whom he is all in all, have the wedding garment.

Secondly. His trial, *ver. 12*; and there we may observe, 1. How he was arraigned, *ver. 12*: "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" A startling question to one that was priding himself in the place he securely possessed at the feast. "Friend;" that was a cutting word; a seeming friend, a pretended friend, a friend in profession, under manifold ties and obligations to be a friend. Note, There are many in the church that are false friends to Jesus Christ, that say they love him, but their hearts are not with him. "How camest thou in hither?" He doth not chide the servants for letting him in. The wedding garment is an inward thing; ministers must go according to that which falls within their cognizance; but he checks his presumption in crowding in, when he knew his heart was not upright: "How durst thou claim a share in gospel benefits, when thou hadst no regard to gospel rules?" "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?" *Ps. l. 16, 17*. Such are spots in the feast, dishonour the bridegroom, affront the company, and disgrace themselves; and therefore "how camest thou in hither?" Note, The day is coming when hypocrites will be called to an account for all their presumptuous intrusion to gospel ordinances, and usurpation of gospel privileges: "who has required this at your hand?" *Isa. i. 12*. Despised sabbaths and abused sacraments must be reckoned for, and judgment taken out upon an action of waste against all those who "received the grace of God in vain." "How camest thou to the Lord's table at such a time, unhumiliated and unsanctified? What brought thee to sit before God's prophets, as his people do, when thy heart went after thy covetousness? How camest thou in?" Not by the door, but some other way, as a thief and a robber: it was a tortuous entry, a possession without a colour of a title. Note, It is good for those that have a place in the church often to put

quired for the guests, or than the servants can consume; yet on such occasions it is not customary to reserve any part of that which has been provided. The poor who pass by, or whom the rumour of the feast brings to the neighbourhood, are called in to consume what remains." This is usually done in an outer room, but sometimes the places of the retiring guests are occupied.

xxii. 11–13. Hereupon Dean Alford says, "With regard to the wedding garment, we must not, I think, make too much of the

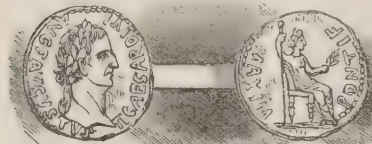
usually cited Oriental custom of presenting the guests with such garments at feasts. For (1) it is not distinctly proved that such a custom existed; the passages usually quoted (*Gen. xlv. 22*, *Judg. xv. 12*, *2 Kings v. 22*) are nothing to the purpose; *2 Kings x. 22* shows that the worshippers of Baal were provided with vestments, and at a feast; and at the present day those who are admitted to the presence of royalty are clothed with a caftan; but all this does not make good the assumption; and (2), even granting it, it is not to

to themselves, 'How came I in hither? Have I a wedding garment?' If we would thus judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 2. How he was convicted: "He was speechless," *ἑρμῆς*, 'he was muzzled,' so the word is used, 1 Cor. ix. 9. The man stood mute upon his arraignment, being convicted and condemned by his own conscience. Note, They who live within the church, and die without Christ, will not have one word to say for themselves in the judgment of the great day; they will be without excuse: should they plead, 'We have eaten and drunk in thy presence,' as they do, *Lu. xiii. 26*, that is to plead guilty; for the crime they are charged with is, thrusting themselves into the presence of Christ, and to his table, before they were called. They that never heard a word of this wedding feast will have more to say for themselves, their sin will be more excusable, and their condemnation more tolerable than theirs who come to the feast without the wedding garment, and so sin against the clearest light and dearest love.

Thirdly. His sentence, ver. 13: "Bind him hand and foot," &c. 1. He is ordered to be pinioned, as condemned malefactors are to be manacled and shackled. Those that will not work and walk as they should may expect to be bound hand and foot. There is a binding in this world by the servants, the ministers, whose suspending of persons that walk disorderly to the scandal of religion, is called binding of them, *ch. xvii. 18*; bind them up from partaking of special ordinances, and the peculiar privileges of their church-membership: bind them over to the righteous judgment of God. In the day of judgment hypocrites will be bound; and the angels shall bind up these tares in bundles for the fire, *ch. xiii. 41*. Damned sinners are bound hand and foot by an irreversible sentence: this signifies the same with the fixing of the great gulf; they can neither resist nor outrun their punishment. 2. He is ordered to be carried off from the wedding feast: "Take him away." When the wickedness of hypocrites appears, they are to be taken away from the communion of the faithful, to be cut off as withered branches. This speaks the punishment of loss in the other world; they shall be taken away from the king, from the kingdom, from the wedding feast: "Depart from me, ye cursed." It will aggravate their misery that, like the unbelieving lord, 2 *Kin. vii. 2*, they shall see all this plenty with their eyes, but shall not taste of it. Note, Those that walk unworthy of their Christianity forfeit all the happiness they presumptuously laid claim to, and complimented themselves with a groundless expectation of. 3. He is ordered into a doleful dungeon: "Cast him into utter darkness." Our Saviour here insensibly slides out of this parable into the reddition of it, the damnation of hypocrites in the other world; hell is utter darkness, it is darkness out of heaven, the land of light; or 't is extreme darkness, darkness to the last degree, without the least ray or spark of light, or hope of it: like that of Egypt, darkness which might be felt; the blackness of darkness, as darkness itself, *Job x. 22*. Note, Hypocrites go by the light of the Gospel itself down to utter darkness; and hell will be hell indeed to such, a condemnation more intolerable: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This our Saviour often useth as part of the description of hell torments, which are hereby represented, not so much by the misery itself, as by the resentment sinners will have of it: "there shall be weeping," an expression of great sorrow and anguish; not a gush of tears, which gives present ease, but constant weeping, which is constant torment; and the "gnashing of teeth" is an expression of the greatest rage and indignation. They will be like a wild bull in a net, full of the fury of the Lord, *Isa. li. 20*; *viii. 21, 22*. Let us therefore hear and fear.

Lastly. The parable is concluded with that remarkable saying which we had before, *ch. xx. 16*: "Many are called, but few are chosen," ver. 14. Of the many that are called to the wedding feast, if you set aside all those as unchosen that make light of it, and avowedly prefer other things before it; if, then, you set aside all that make a profession of religion, but the temper of their spirits, and the tenor of their conversation is a constant contradiction to it,—set aside all the profane, and all the hypocrites,—and you will find they are few, very few, that are chosen; many called to the wedding feast, but few chosen to the wedding garment; that is, to salvation by sanctification of the Spirit. This is the strait gate, and narrow way, which few find.

15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. 16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. 17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19 Shew me



DENARIUS OF TIBERIUS.

the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. 22 When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

It was not the least grievous of the sufferings of Christ that he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, and had snares laid for him by those that sought how to take him off with some pretence. In these verses we have

be pressed, as being manifestly not the salient point of this part of the parable. The guest was bound to provide himself with this proper habit, out of respect to the feast and its author; how this was to be provided does not here appear, but does elsewhere. Whether or not the king is supposed to have presented a wedding garment to each of the guests, an appearance on such an occasion in ordinary dress, and as if no attention to outward show was needed, was as great an offence as one would commit who sought the pre-

him attacked by the Pharisees and Herodians, with a question about paying tribute to Cæsar. Observe,

1. What their design was, which they proposed to themselves: they "took counsel to entangle him in his talk." Hitherto his encounters had been mostly with the chief priests and the elders, men in authority, who trusted more to their power than to their policy, and examined him concerning his commission, *ch. xxi. 23*. But now he is set upon from another quarter, the Pharisees will try whether they can deal with him by their learning in the law, and in casuistical divinity, and they have a *tentamen novum*,—a new trial, for him. Note, It is vain for the best and wisest of men to think that, by their ingenuity, or interest, or industry, or by their innocency and integrity itself, they can escape the hatred and ill-will of bad men, or screen themselves from the strife of tongues. See how unwearied the enemies of Christ and his kingdom are in their opposition.

First. They took counsel. It was foretold concerning him, that the rulers would take counsel against him, *Ps. ii. 2*; and "so persecuted they the prophets," "Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah:" see *Jer. xxiii. 18*; *xx. 10*. Note, The more there is of contrivance and consultation about sin, the worse it is. There is a particular woe to them that devise iniquity, *Mic. ii. 1*. The more there is of the wicked wit in the contrivance of a sin, the more there is of the wicked will in the commission of it.

Secondly. That which they aimed at was, to "entangle him in his talk." They saw him free and bold in speaking his mind, and hoped, by that, if they could bring him to some nice and tender point, to get an advantage against him. It has been the old practice of Satan's agents and emissaries to "make a man an offender for a word," a word misplaced, or mistook, or misunderstood; a word, though innocently designed, yet perverted by strange inuendos: thus they "lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate," *Isa. xxix. 21*, and represent the greatest teachers as the greatest troublers of Israel. Thus "the wicked plotteth against the just," *Ps. xxxvii. 12, 13*. There were two ways by which the enemies of Christ might be revenged on him, and be rid of him—either by law or by force. By law they could not do it, unless they could make him obnoxious to the civil government; for "it was not lawful for them to put any man to death," *Jno. xviii. 31*, and the Roman powers were not apt to concern themselves about questions of words, and names, and their law, *Acts xviii. 14*. By force they could not do it, unless they could make him obnoxious to the people, who were always the hands, whoever were the heads, in such violence, which they called the beating of the rebels: now the people took Christ for a prophet, and therefore they could not get him mobbed. Now (as the old serpent was from the beginning more subtle than any beast of the field) the design was to bring him into such a dilemma, that he must make himself liable to the displeasure either of the Jewish multitude or of the Roman magistrates; let him take which side of the question he will, he shall run himself into a *premunire*; and so they gain their point, and make his own tongue to fall upon him.

11. The question which they put to him, pursuant to this design. ver. 16, 17. Having devised this iniquity in secret, in a close cabal, behind the curtain, when they went abroad, without loss of time, they practised it. Observe,

First. The persons they employed. They did not go themselves, lest the design should be suspected, and Christ should stand the more upon his guard; but they sent their disciples, who would look less like tempters, and more like learners. Note, Wicked men will never want wicked instruments to be employed in carrying on their wicked counsels: Pharisees have their disciples at their beck, that will go on any errand for them, and say as they say; and they have this in their eye when they are so industrious to make proselytes. With them they "sent the Herodians," a party among the Jews who were for a cheerful and entire subjection to the Roman emperor, and to Herod his deputy, and made it their business to reconcile people to that government, and pressed all to pay their tribute. Some think they were the collectors of the land tax, as the publicans were of the customs; and they went with the Pharisees to Christ with this blind upon their plot, that while the Herodians demanded the tax, and the Pharisees denied it, they were both willing to refer it to Christ, as a proper judge to decide the quarrel. Herod being obliged by the charter of the sovereignty to take care of the Roman tribute, these Herodians, by assisting him in that, helped to endear him to his great friends at Rome. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were zealous for the liberty of the Jews, and did what they could to make them impatient of the Roman yoke. Now, if he should countenance the paying of tribute, the Pharisees would incense the people against him; if he should discountenance or disallow it, the Herodians would incense the government against him. Note, It is common for those that oppose one another to continue in an opposition to Christ and his kingdom: Samson's foxes looked several ways, but met in one firebrand: see *Ps. lxxxiii. 3-8*. If they are unanimous in opposing, should not we be so in maintaining, the interests of the Gospel?

Secondly. The preface with which they were plausibly to introduce the question, and it is a mighty compliment upon our Saviour, ver. 16: "Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth." Note, It is a common thing for the most spiteful projects to be covered with the most specious pretences. Had they come to Christ with the most serious inquiry, and the most sincere intention, they could not have expressed themselves better: here is hatred covered with deceit, and a wicked heart with burning lips, *Pr. xxvii. 23*, as Judas, that kissed and betrayed; Joab, that kissed and killed. Now, 1. What they said of Christ was right; and whether they knew it or no, blessed be God we know it. 1st. That Jesus Christ was a faithful teacher: "thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth." For himself he is true, the amen, the faithful witness; he is the truth itself. As for his doctrine, the matter of his teaching was the way of God, the way that God requires us to walk in; the way of duty that leads to happiness; that is the way of God. The manner of it was in truth: he shewed people the right way, the way in which they should go. He was a skilful teacher, and knew the way of God; and a faithful teacher, that would be sure to let us know it: see *Pr. viii. 6-9*. This is the character of a good teacher, to preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and not to balk, pervert, or stretch any truth, for favour or affection, hatred or ill-will, either out of a desire to please or a fear to offend any man. 2nd. That he was a bold reprover: in preaching he cared not for any, to value no man's frowns or smiles; he did not court, he did not dread, either the great or the many, for he regarded not the person of man. In his evangelical judgment, he did not know faces; that lion of the tribe of Judah turned not away for any, *Pr. xxx. 30*, turned not a step from the truth, nor from his work, for fear of the most formidable: "he reproveth with equity," *Isa. xi. 4*, and never with partiality. 2. Though what they said was true, for the matter of it, yet there was nothing but flattery and treachery in the intention of it. They called him Master, when they were contriving to treat him as the worst of malefactors; they pretended respect for him, when they intended mischief against him; and they affronted his wisdom as man, much more his omniscience as God, which he had so often given pregnant proofs of, when they imagined that they could impose upon him with these pretences, and that he could not see through them. It is the grossest atheism, that is, the

sence of our monarch without a court dress. The scenery is, however, altogether that of the East, and the summary and severe sentence uttered characterises admirably the action of an Oriental autocrat. The "outer darkness," where the poor criminals weep and gnash their teeth, is probably an obscure dungeon beneath the palace, whose gloom contrasts with the brightness of the festive hall, and whose woes are the antithesis of the gaieties of the merry-making throng in that hall.

greatest folly in the world, to think to put a cheat upon Christ, who searcheth the heart, *Rev. ii. 23*. Those that mock God do but deceive themselves, *Gal. vi. 7*.

Thirdly. The proposal of the case: "What thinkest thou?" that is to say, Many men are of many minds in this matter; it is a case which relates to practice, and occurs daily: let us have thy thoughts freely in the matter, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?" which implies a further question, "Have they a right to demand it?" The nation of the Jews was lately, about a hundred years before this, conquered by the Roman sword, and so, as other nations, made subject to the Roman yoke, and became a province of the empire; accordingly toll, tribute, and custom was demanded from them, and sometimes poll money. By this it appeared that the sceptre was departed from Judah, *Gen. xl. 10*; and therefore, if they had understood the signs of the times, they must have concluded that Shiloh was come, and either this was he, or they must find out another, more likely to be so. Now the question was, whether it was lawful to pay these taxes voluntarily; or whether they should not insist upon the ancient liberty of their nation, and rather suffer themselves to be distrained upon. The ground of the doubt was, that they were Abraham's seed, and should not, by consent, be in bondage to any man, *Jno. viii. 33*. God had given them a law, that they should not set a stranger over them; and whether that did not imply that they were not to yield any willing subjection to any prince, state, or potentate, that was not of their own nation and religion. This was an old mistake, arising from that pride and haughty spirit which brings destruction and a fall. Jeremiah, in his time, though he spake in God's name, could not possibly beat them off it, nor persuade them to submit to the king of Babylon; and their obstinacy in that matter was then their ruin, *Jer. xxvii. 12, 13*. And now again they stumbled at the same stone, and it was the very thing which, in a few years after, brought a final destruction upon them by the Romans. They quite mistook the sense both of the precept and of the privilege; and, under colour of God's word, contended with his providence, when they should have kissed the rod, and accepted the punishments of their iniquity. However, by this question they hoped to entangle Christ, and, which way soever he resolved it, to expose him to the fury either of the jealous Jews or of the jealous Romans; and were ready to triumph, as Pharaoh did of Israel, that the wilderness had shut him in; and his doctrine would be concluded either injurious to the rights of the church, or hurtful to kings and provinces.

III. *The breaking of this snare by the wisdom of the Lord Jesus.*

First. He discovered it, *ver. 18*; he "perceived their wickedness," for "surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird," *Pr. i. 17*. A temptation perceived is half conquered, for our greatest danger lies from snakes under the green grass: and he said, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" Note, What-ever vizard the hypocrite puts on, our Lord Jesus sees through it; he perceives all the wickedness that is in the hearts of pretenders, and can easily convict them of it, and set it in order before them. He cannot be imposed upon, as we often are, by flatteries and fair pretences: he that searcheth the heart can call hypocrites by their own name, as Abijah did the wife of Jeroboam, *1 Kiv. xiv. 6*: "Why feignest thou thyself to be another?" "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" Note, Hypocrites tempt Jesus Christ; they try his knowledge, whether he can discover them through their disguises; they try his holiness and truth, whether he will allow of them in his church; but if they that of old tempted Christ, when he was but darkly revealed, were destroyed of serpents, of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy who tempt him now, in the midst of gospel light and love? Those that presume to tempt Christ will certainly find him too hard for them, and that he is of more piercing eyes than not to see, and more pure eyes than not to hate, the disguised wickedness of hypocrites, that dig deep to hide their counsel from him.

Secondly. He evaded it. His convicting them of hypocrisy might have served for an answer: such captious, malicious questions deserve a reproof, not a reply; but our Lord Jesus gave a full answer to their question, and introduced it by an argument sufficient to support it, so as to lay down a rule for his church in this matter, and yet to avoid giving offence, and to break the snare. 1. He forced them, ere they were aware, to confess Cæsar's authority over them, *ver. 19, 20*; in dealing with those that are exceptions, it is good to give our reasons, and, if possible, reasons of confessed cogency, before we give our resolutions. Thus the evidence of truth may silence gainsayers by surprise, while they only stood upon their guard against the truth itself, not against the reason of it. "Shew me the tribute money." He had none of his own to convince them by; it should seem he had not so much as one piece of money about him; for, for our sakes, he emptied himself, and became poor; he despised the wealth of this world, and thereby taught us not to over-value it: silver and gold he had none; why, then, should we covet to load ourselves with that thick clay? The Romans demanded their tribute in their own money, which was current among the Jews at that time; that therefore is called the tribute money: he doth not name what piece, but the tribute money, to shew that he did not mind things of that nature, nor concern himself about them; his heart was upon better things, the kingdom of God, and the riches and righteousness thereof; and ours should be so too. They presently "brought him a penny," a Roman penny in silver, in value about sevenpence halfpenny of our money, the most common piece then in use: it was stamped with the emperor's image and superscription, which was the warrant of the public faith for the value of the pieces so stamped; a method agreed on by most nations for the more easy circulation of money with satisfaction. The coining of money has always been looked upon as a branch of the prerogative, a flower of the crown, a royalty belonging to the sovereign powers; and the admitting of that, as the good and lawful money of a country, is an implicit submission to those powers, and an owning of them in money matters. How happy is our constitution, and how happy we, who live in a nation where, though the image and superscription be the sovereign's, the property is the subject's, under the protection of the laws, and that what we have we can call our own. Christ asked them, "Whose image is this?" and they owned it to be Cæsar's, and thereby convicted those of falsehood who said, "We were never in bondage to any," and confirmed what afterwards they said, "We have no king but Cæsar." It is a rule in the Jewish Talmud, that he is the king of the country whose coin is current in the country; and some think the superscription upon this coin was a memorandum of the conquest of Judea by the Romans, *anno post captam Judæam*,—the year after that event; and they admitted that too. 2. From thence he inferred the lawfulness of paying tribute to Cæsar, *ver. 21*: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's;" not give it him, as they expressed it, *ver. 17*; but render it, return or restore it; if Cæsar fill the purses, let Cæsar command them: it is too late now to dispute paying tribute to Cæsar, for you are become a province of the empire; and when once a relation is admitted, the duty of it must be performed: "Render to all their due," and particularly, "tribute to whom tribute is due." Now by this answer, 1st. No offence was given. It was much to the honour of Christ and his doctrine that he did not interpose as a judge or a divider in matters of this nature, but left them as he found them, for his kingdom is not of this world; and in this he hath given an example to his ministers, who deal in sacred things, not to meddle with disputes about things secular, nor to wade far into controversies relating to them, but leave that to those whose proper

business it is. Ministers that would mind their business, and please their Master, must not "entangle themselves in the affairs of this life;" they forfeit the conduct of God's Spirit, and the convoy of his providence, when they thus go out of their way. Christ discusseth not the emperor's title, but subjoins a peaceable subjection to "the powers that be." The government, therefore, had no reason to take offence at his determination; but to thank him; for it would strengthen Cæsar's interest with the people that held him for a prophet; and yet such was the impudence of his persecutors, that though he had expressly charged them to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," they laid the direct contrary to his indictment, that he "forbade to give tribute to Cæsar," *Lu. xxiii. 2*. As to the people, the Pharisees could not accuse him to them, because they themselves had, before they were aware, yielded the premises, and then it was too late to evade the conclusion. Note, Though truth seeks not a fraudulent concealment, yet it sometimes needs a prudent management, to prevent the offence which may be taken at it. 2nd. His adversaries were reproved. First. Some of them would have had him make it unlawful to give tribute to Cæsar, that they might have a pretence to save their money. Thus many excuse themselves from that which they must do, by arguing whether they may do it or not. Secondly. They all withheld from God his dues, and are reproved for that; while they were vainly contending about their civil liberties, they had lost the life and power of religion, and needed to be put in mind of their duty to God, with that to Cæsar. 3rd. His disciples were instructed, and standing rules left to the church. First. That the Christian religion is no enemy to civil government, but a friend to it: Christ's kingdom doth not clash or interfere with the kingdoms of the earth in any thing that pertains to their jurisdiction. By Christ kings reign. Secondly. It is the duty of subjects to render to magistrates that which, according to the laws of their country, is their due. The higher powers being intrusted with the public welfare, the protection of the subject, and the conservation of the peace, is entitled, in consideration thereof, to a just proportion of the public wealth and the revenue of the nation: for this cause pay we tribute, because they "attend continually to this very thing," *Rom. xiii. 6*; and it is doubtless a greater sin to cheat the government than to cheat a private person. Though it is the constitution that determines what is Cæsar's, yet, when that is determined, Christ bids us render it to him: my coat is my coat by the law of man, but he is a thief by the law of God that takes it from me. Thirdly. When we render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, we must remember withal to render to God the things that are God's: if our purses be Cæsar's, our consciences are God's: he hath said, "My son, give me thy heart;" he must have the innermost and uppermost place there. We must render to God that which is his due, out of our time, and out of our estates: from them he must have his share, as well as Cæsar his; and if Cæsar's commands interfere with God's, we must "obey God rather than men."

Lastly. Observe, how they were dashed by this answer: they "marvelled, and left him, and went their way," *ver. 22*. They admired his sagacity in discovering and evading a snare, which they thought so craftily laid. Christ is, and will be, the wonder, not only of his beloved friends, but of his baffled enemies. One would think they should have marvelled, and followed him; marvelled, and submitted to him; no, they marvelled, and left him. Note, There are many in whose eyes Christ is marvellous, and yet not precious: they admire his wisdom, but will not be guided by it; his power, but will not submit to it. They went their way, as persons ashamed, and made an inglorious retreat. The stratagem being defeated, they quitted the field. Note, There is nothing got by contending with Christ.

23 The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, 24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: 26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. 27 And last of all the woman died also. 28 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. 33 And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.

We have here Christ's dispute with the Sadducees concerning the resurrection; and it was the same day that he was attacked by the Pharisees about paying tribute. Satan was now more busy than ever to ruffle and disturb him; it was an hour of temptation, *Rev. iii. 10*. The truth as it is in Jesus will still meet with contradiction in some branch or other of it. Observe here,

1. *The opposition which the Sadducees made to a very great truth of religion.* they say, "There is no resurrection," as there are some fools who say, "Th

xxii. 17—21. The Pharisees said, "Is it lawful to give tribute?" and our Lord says, "Show me the tribute money." They brought him a penny, that is, a denarius, which was the amount demanded of the Jews as a poll-tax by the Romans. This was, therefore, a very different payment from that in chap. xvii. 24—27, being half the amount, and an imperial impost, whereas the other was appropriated to ecclesiastical uses. The image and superscription on the denarius *was* said to be those of Cæsar, probably of Tiberius Cæsar then

reigning, whose denarius appears in the accompanying illustration, in precise agreement with the account given of it here and elsewhere by the Evangelists.

xxii. 23. The Sadducees denied a resurrection, as well as the existence of angels and spirits, and therefore the question they propounded to our Lord is not based upon their own belief, but upon the common opinion as they understood it, but which they rejected.

xxii. 24. The passage alluded to, but not literally quoted, is Deut

is no God." These heretics were called Sadducees, from one Sadoc, a disciple of Antigonos Sochneus, who flourished about two hundred and eighty-four years before our Saviour's birth: they lie under an ill character among the writers of their own nation, as men of base and debauched conversations, which their principles led them to. They were the fewest in number of all the sects among the Jews, but generally persons of some rank. As the Pharisees and Essenes seemed to follow Plato and Pythagoras, so the Sadducees were much of the genius of the Epicureans: they denied the resurrection; they said, there is no future state, no life after this; that when the body dies, the soul is annihilated, and dies with it; that there is no state of rewards or punishments in the other world; no judgment to come, in heaven or hell; they maintained that, except God, there is no spirit, *Acts* xiii. 8; nothing but matter and motion; they would not own the Divine inspiration of the prophets, nor any revelation from heaven but what God himself spoke upon mount Sinai. Now the doctrine of Christ carried that great truth of the resurrection and a future state much farther than it had yet been revealed; and therefore the Sadducees, in a particular manner, set themselves against it. The Pharisees and Sadducees were contrary to each other, and yet confederated against Christ. Christ's Gospel hath always suffered between superstitious, ceremonious hypocrites and bigots on the one hand, and profane deists and infidels on the other; the former abusing, the latter despising, the forms of godliness, but both denying the power of it.

II. The objection they made against the truth, which was taken from a supposed case of a woman that had seven husbands successively. Now they take it for granted, if there be a resurrection, it must be a return to such a state as this we are now in, and to the same circumstances, like the imaginary Platonic year; and if so, it is an invincible absurdity, for this woman, in the future state, to have seven husbands; or else an insuperable difficulty, which of them should have her,—he whom she had first, or he whom she had last, or he whom she loved best, or he whom she lived longest with.

First, they suggest the law of Moses in this matter, *ver. 24*, that the next of kin should marry the widow of him that died childless, *Deut.* xxv. 5; we have it practised, *Ru.* iv. 5. It was a political law, founded in the particular constitution of the Jewish commonwealth, to preserve the distinction of families and inheritances, of both which there was special care taken in that government.

Secondly, they put a case upon this statute, which, whether it were a case in fact, or only a moot case, is not at all material; if it had not really occurred, yet possibly it might: it was of seven brothers that married the same woman, *ver. 25–27*. Now this case supposeth, 1. The desolations that death sometimes makes in families, when it comes with commission; how it often sweeps away a whole fraternity in a little time; seldom, as the case is put, according to seniority; the land of darkness is without any order, but "heaps upon heaps;" it diminisheth families that had multiplied greatly, *Ps.* cvii. 28, 29; when there were seven brothers grown up to man's estate, there was a family very likely to be built up; and yet this numerous family leaves neither "son nor nephew, nor any remaining in their dwellings," *Job* xviii. 14: well may we say, then, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Let none be sure of the advancement and perpetuity of their names and families, unless they could make a covenant of peace with death, and be at an agreement with the grave. 2. The obedience of these seven brothers to the law, though they had a power of refusal, under the penalty of a reproach, *Deut.* xxv. 7. Note, Discouraging providences should not keep us from doing our duty; because we must be governed by the rule, not by the event. The seventh that ventured last to marry the widow, many a one would say, was a bold man; I would say, if he did it purely in obedience to God, he was a good man, and one that made conscience of his duty. But "last of all the woman died also." Note, Survivorship is but a reprieve; they that live long, and bury their relations and neighbours, one after another, do not thereby acquire an immortality; no, their day will come to fall. Death's bitter cup goes round, and sooner or later, we must all pledge in it. Alluded to, *Jer.* xxv. 26.

Thirdly, They propose a doubt upon this case, *ver. 28*: "In the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven?" You cannot tell whose, and therefore we must conclude there is no resurrection. The Pharisees, who professed to believe in a resurrection, had very gross and carnal notions concerning it, and concerning the future state, expecting to find there, as the Turks in their paradise, the delights and pleasures of the animal life, which perhaps drove the Sadducees to deny the thing itself; for nothing gives greater advantage to atheism and infidelity than the carnality of those that make religion, either in its profession or in its prospects, a servant to their sensual appetites and secular interests; while those that are erroneous deny the truth, those that are superstitious betray it to them. Now they, in this objection, went upon the Pharisees' hypothesis. Note, It is not strange that carnal minds have very false notions of spiritual and eternal things: the natural man receiveth not these things, for they are foolishness to him, *1 Cor.* ii. 14. Let truth be set in a clear light, and then it appears in its full strength.

III. Christ's answer to this objection: wherein, by reproving their ignorance, and rectifying their mistake, he shews the objection to be fallacious and unconvincing. First, He reproves their ignorance, *ver. 28*: "Ye do err." Note, Those do greatly err in the judgment of Christ, who deny the resurrection and a future state. Here Christ reproves with the meekness of wisdom, and is not so sharp upon them, whatever was the reason, as sometimes he was upon the chief priests and elders: "Ye err, not knowing." Note, Ignorance is the cause of error; those that are in the dark miss their way; the patrons of error do therefore resist the light, and do what they can to take away the key of knowledge: "Ye err in this matter, not knowing." Note, Ignorance is the cause of error about the resurrection and the future state. What it is in its particular instances, the wisest and best know not; it doth not yet appear what we shall be, it is a glory that is to be revealed. When we speak of the state of separate souls, the resurrection of the body, and of eternal happiness and misery, we are soon at a loss; we cannot order our speech, by reason of darkness; but that it is, is a thing about which we are not left in the dark,—blessed be God, we are not;—and those who deny it, are guilty of a willing and affected ignorance. It seems there were some Sadducees, some such monsters among professing Christians, "some among you that say there is no resurrection of the dead," *1 Cor.* xv. 12; and some that did, in effect, deny it, by turning it into an allegory, saying, "The resurrection I past already." Now observe, 1. They know not "the power of God," which speaks it possible that there may be a resurrection, and a future state. Note, The ignorance, disbelief, or weak belief of God's power is at the bottom of many errors, particularly theirs who deny the resurrection: when we are told of the soul's existence and agency in a state of separation from the body, and especially, that a dead body, which has lain many ages in the grave, and is turned into common and undistinguished dust, that this shall be raised the same body that it was, and live, and move, and act again, we are ready to say, "How can these things be?" Nature allows it for a maxim, *a privatione ad habitum nondatur regressus*.—The habits attaching to a state of existence vanish irrecoverably with the state itself. "If a man die, shall he live again?" And vain men, because they cannot comprehend the way of it, of it; whereas, if we firmly believe in God the Father Al-

mighty, that nothing is impossible with God, all these difficulties vanish. This, therefore, we must fasten upon in the first place, that God is omnipotent, and can do what he will, and then no room is left for doubting but that he will do what he has promised; and if so, "why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" *Acts* xxvi. 8. His power far exceeds the power of nature. 2. "They know not the Scriptures," which speak it certain that there shall be a resurrection and a future state. The power of God, determined and engaged by his promise, is the foundation for faith to build upon. Now the Scriptures speak plainly that the soul is immortal, and there is another life after this; it is the scope both of the law and of the prophets, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, *Acts* xxiv. 15. Job knew it, *Job* xix. 26; Ezekiel foresaw it, *Eze.* xxxvii.; and Daniel plainly foretold it, *Dan.* xii. 2. Christ rose again according to the Scriptures, *1 Cor.* xv. 3, and so shall we. Those, therefore, who deny it, either have not conversed with the Scriptures, or do not believe them, or do not take the true sense and meaning of them. Note, Ignorance of the Scripture is the rise of abundance of mischief. Secondly, He rectifies their mistake, and, *ver. 30*, corrects those gross ideas which they had of the resurrection and a future state, and fixeth these doctrines upon a true and lasting basis. Concerning that state, observe, 1st. It is not like the state we are now in upon earth; "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage." In our present state marriage is necessary; it was instituted in innocence; whatever intermission or neglect there has been of other institutions, this was never laid aside, nor will be to the end of time. In the old world "they were marrying, and giving in marriage." The Jews in Babylon, when cut off from other ordinances, yet were bid to take them wives, *Jer.* xxxix. 6. All civilized nations have had a sense of the obligation of the marriage covenant; and it is requisite, for the gratifying of the desires, and recruiting the deficiencies of the human nature; but in the resurrection there is no occasion for marriage. Whether in glorified bodies there will be any distinction of sexes, some too curiously dispute; the ancients are divided in their opinions about it; but whether there will be a distinction or no, it is certain there will be no conjunction; where God will be all in all, there needs no other meet-help; the body will be spiritual, and there will be in it no carnal desires to be gratified: when the mystical body is completed, there will be no further occasion to seek a godly seed, which was one end of the institution of marriage, *Mal.* ii. 15. In heaven there will be no decay of the individuals, and therefore no eating and drinking; no decay of the species, and therefore no marrying; where there shall be no more deaths, *Rev.* xxi. 4, there needs be no more births. The married state is a composition of joys and cares; those that enter upon it are taught to look upon it as subject to changes, richer and poorer, sickness and health; and therefore it is fit for this mixed, changing world; but as in hell, where there is no joy, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride shall be heard no more at all; so in heaven, where there is all joy, and no care, or pain, or trouble, there will be no marrying; the joys of that state are pure and spiritual, and arise from the marriage of all of them to the Lamb, not of any of them to one another. 2nd. It is like the state angels are now in, in heaven; "they are as the angels of God in heaven;" they are so, that is, undoubtedly they shall be so; they are so already in Christ their head, who has made them sit with him in heavenly places, *Eph.* ii. 6. The spirits of just men already made perfect are of the same corporation with the innumerable company of angels, *Heb.* xii. 22, 23. Man in his creation was "a little lower than the angels," *Psa.* viii. 5; but, in his complete redemption and renovation, will be as the angels; pure and spiritual as the angels, knowing and loving as those blessed seraphim, ever praising God like them, and with them. The bodies of the saints shall be raised incorruptible and glorious, like the uncom-pounded vehicles of those pure and holy spirits, *1 Cor.* xv. 42, &c.; swift and strong, like them. We should therefore desire and endeavour to do the will of God now, as the angels do it in heaven; because we hope shortly to be like the angels, who always behold our Father's face. He saith nothing of the state of the wicked in the resurrection; but, by consequence, they shall be like the devils, whose lusts they have done.

IV. Christ's argument, to confirm this great truth of the resurrection, and a future state. The matters being of great concern, he did not think it enough, as in some other disputes, to discover the fallacy and sophistry of the objections, but backed the truth with a solid argument; for Christ brings forth judgment to truth as well as victory, and enables his followers to give a reason of the hope that is in them. Now observe, 1. From whence he fetched his argument: from the Scripture; that is the great magazine or armory, whence we may be furnished with spiritual weapons, offensive and defensive. "It is written," is Goliath's sword: "Have ye not read that which was spoken to you by God?" Note, 1. What the Scripture speaks God speaks. 2. What was spoken to Moses was spoken to us; it was spoken and written for our learning. 3. It concerns us to read and hear what God hath spoken, because it is spoken to us; it was spoken to you Jews in the first place, for to them were committed the oracles of God. The argument is fetched from the books of Moses, because the Sadducees received them only, as some think, or, however, them chiefly, for canonical Scriptures; Christ therefore fetched his proof from the most indisputable fountain. The later prophets have more express proofs of a future state than the law of Moses has; for though the law of Moses doth suppose the immortality of the soul, and a future state, as principles of religion, in some degree naturally, yet no new express revelation of it is made by the law of Moses, because so much of that law was peculiar to that people, and was therefore guarded, as municipal laws used to be, with temporal promises and threatenings; and the more express revelation of a future state was reserved for the latter days; but our Saviour finds a very solid argument for the resurrection even in the writings of Moses. Much Scripture treasure lies underground, that must be digged for. Secondly, What his argument was, *ver. 32*: "I am the God of Abraham." This was not an express proof, *totidem verbis*,—"in so many words;" and yet it was really a conclusive argument. Consequences from Scripture, if rightly deduced, must be received as Scripture; for it was written for those that have the use of reason. Now the drift of the argument is to prove, 1. That there is a future state, another life after this, in which the righteous shall be truly and consequently happy. This is proved from what God said: "I am the God of Abraham." 1st. For God to be any one's God, supposeth some very extraordinary privilege and happiness; unless we know fully what God is, we could not comprehend the riches of that word, "I will be to thee a God," that is, a benefactor like myself. The God of Israel is a God to Israel, *1 Chr.* xvii. 29, a spiritual benefactor; for he is "the Father of spirits," and blesteth with spiritual blessings. It is to be an all-sufficient benefactor; a God that is enough; a complete good, and an eternal benefactor; for he is himself an everlasting God, and will be, to those that are in covenant with him, an everlasting good. This great word God had often said to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and it was intended as a recompense for their singular faith and obedience, in quitting their country at God's call. The Jews had a mighty veneration for those three patriarchs, and would extend the promise God made them to the uttermost. 2nd. It is manifest that these good men had no such extraordinary happiness befall them in this life as might look any thing like the accomplishment of so great a word as that. They were strangers in

xxv. 5. The word for "marry" is peculiar in the Greek, and technically describes the kind of marriage in view. By the Mosaic law, if a man died childless, the widow was married by his brother or nearest kinsman.

xxii. 29. Mr. Godwin says, "The answer of our Lord is twofold. The objection was founded on a false supposition. They assumed that the future life would be merely a repetition of the present, not a new and higher life. Again, their doctrine was contrary to the

statement of Scripture. God declared that he was the God of men who had finished their earthly life; and therefore there was another life, in which they still lived with him." The quotation from *Exod.* iii. 6 rehearses words uttered after the decease of the patriarchs, and implies that as God was yet their God, they had not ceased to exist, although withdrawn from human gaze. It is the opinion of some that the resurrection to which reference is made in this passage is not the great resurrection at the last day, but that exaltation of the

the land of promise, wandering, pinched with famine, had not a foot of ground of their own, but a burying place, which directed them to look for something beyond this life. In present enjoyments they came far short of their neighbours, that were strangers to this covenant. What was there in this world to difference them and the heirs of their faith from other people, any whit proportionable to the dignity and distinction of this covenant? If no happiness had been reserved for these great and good men on the other side death, that melancholy word of poor Jacob's, when he was old, *Gen. xlvii. 9*, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been," would have been an eternal reproach to the wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness of that God who had so often called himself the God of Jacob. 3rd. Therefore there must certainly be a future state, in which, as God will ever live, to be eternally rewarded, so Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will ever live, to be eternally rewarded. That of the apostle, *Heb. xi. 16*, is a key to this argument, where, when he had been speaking of the faith and obedience of the patriarchs, in the land of their pilgrimage, he adds, "therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God;" because "he has provided for them a city," a heavenly city; implying, that if he had not provided so well for them in the other world, considering how they sped in this, he would have been ashamed to have called himself their God; but now he is not, having done that for them which answers it in its true intent, and full extent.

2. That the soul is immortal; and the body shall rise again, to be united. If the former point be gained, these will follow; but are likewise proved by considering the time when God spake this; it was to Moses at the bush; long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead and buried; and yet God saith, not, "I was," or "I have been," but "I am the God of Abraham." Now, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." He is a living God, and communicates vital influences to those to whom he is a God. If, when Abraham died, there had been an end of him, there had been an end likewise of God's relation to him as his God; but at that time, when God spoke to Moses, he was the God of Abraham; and therefore Abraham must be then alive; which proves the immortality of the soul, in a state of bliss; and that, by consequence, infers the resurrection of the body; for there is such an inclination in the human soul to its body as would make a final and eternal separation inconsistent with the bliss of those that have God for their God. The Sadducees' notion was, that the union between body and soul is so close, that when the body dies, the soul dies with it. Now upon the same hypothesis, if the soul lives, as it certainly doth, the body must some time or other live with it; and besides, the Lord is for the body; it is an essential part of the man: there is a covenant with the dust, which will be remembered; otherwise the man would not be happy. The charge which the dying patriarchs gave concerning their bones, and that in faith, was an evidence that they had some expectation of the resurrection of their bodies. But this doctrine was reserved for a more full revelation after the resurrection of Christ, who was the firstfruits of them that slept.

Lastly, *We have the issue of this dispute.* The Sadducees were put to silence, ver. 34, and so put to shame. They thought by their subtlety to put Christ to shame, when they were preparing shame for themselves. But the multitudes were astonished at his doctrine, ver. 33.—

First. Because it was new to them. See to what a sad pass the exposition of Scripture was come among them, when people were astonished at it, as a miracle, to hear the fundamental promise applied to this great truth: they had sorry scribes, or this had been no news to them.

Secondly. Because it had something in it very good and great. Truth often shows the brighter, and is the more admired, for its being opposed. Observe, Many gainsayers are silenced, and many hearers astonished, when neither are savingly converted; yet even in the silence and astonishment of unsanctified souls God magnifies his law, magnifies his Gospel, and makes both honourable.

34 But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. 35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Here is a discourse which Christ had with a Pharisee lawyer, about the great commandment of the law. Observe,

I. The combination of the Pharisees against Christ, ver. 34. They "heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence," had stopped their mouths, though their understandings were not opened; and "they were gathered together," not to return him the thanks of their party, as they ought to have done, for his effectual asserting and confirming the truth against the Sadducees, the common enemies of their religion, but to tempt him, in hopes to get the reputation of puzzling him who had puzzled the Sadducees: they were more vexed that Christ was honoured, than pleased that the Sadducees were silenced; being more concerned for their own tyranny and traditions, which Christ opposed, than for the doctrine of the resurrection and a future state, which the Sadducees opposed. Note, It is an instance of Pharisaical envy and malice to be displeased at the maintaining of a confessed truth, when it is done by those we do not like; to sacrifice a public good to private piques and prejudices. Blessed Paul was otherwise minded, *Phil. i. 18*.

II. The lawyer's question, which he put to Christ. The lawyers were students in, and teachers of, the law of Moses, as the scribes were: but some think in this they differed, that they dealt more in practical questions than the scribes: they studied and professed casuistical divinity. This lawyer "asked him a question, tempting him;" not with any design to ensnare him, as appears by St. Mark's relation of this story, where we find that this was he to whom Christ said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God," *Mar. xii. 34*; but only to see what he would say, and to draw on discourse with him, to satisfy his own and his friends' curiosity.

righteous to a high and heavenly life which occurs when they are called from this earthly sphere.

xxii. 34, 35. The Pharisees might be pleased that the Sadducees were silenced, but they were still anxious that Jesus should receive a check. Therefore they assembled together, perhaps in order to confer as to the course which it would be best to adopt. A reference to verse 41 suggests that the conversation with the lawyer took place while the Pharisees continued their conference. The man was one

First. The question was, "Master, which is the great commandment of the law?" A needless question, when all the things of God's law are great things, *Hos. viii. 12*, and the wisdom from above is without partiality, partially in the law, *Mal. ii. 9*, and hath respect to them all. Yet it is true, there are some commands, that are the principles of the oracles of God, more extensive and inclusive than others; our Saviour speaks of "the weightier matters of the law," *ch. xxiii. 23*.

Secondly. The design was to try him, or tempt him; to try, not so much his knowledge, as his judgment. It was a question disputed among the critics in the law; some would have the law of circumcision to be the great commandment; others, the law of the sabbath; others, the law of sacrifices; according as they severally stood affected, and spent their zeal. Now they would try what Christ said to this question, hoping to incense the people against him, if he should not answer according to the vulgar opinion; and if he should magnify one commandment, they would reflect on him, as vilifying the rest. The question was harmless enough; and it appears, by comparing *Lu. x. 27, 28*, that it was an adjudged point among the lawyers, that the love of God and our neighbour is the great commandment, and the sum of all the rest, and Christ had there approved it; so that the putting of it to him here seems rather a scornful design to catechize him as a child, than a spiteful design to dispute with him as an adversary.

III. Christ's answer to this question; and it is well for us that such a question was asked him, that we might have this answer. It is no disparagement to great men to answer plain questions. Now Christ recommends to us those as the great commandments, not which are so exclusive of others, but which are therefore so, because inclusive of others. Observe,

First. Which these great commandments are, ver. 37—39: not the judicial law; those could not be the greatest, now the people of the Jews, to whom they pertained, were so little; not the ceremonial laws; those could not be the greatest, now they were waxen old, and were ready to vanish away; nor any particular moral precept; but the love of God and our neighbour, which are the spring and foundation of all the rest, which (these being supposed) will follow of course. 1. "All the law is fulfilled in one word," and that is "love," see *Rom. xiii. 10*; all obedience begins in the affections; and nothing in religion is done right that is not done there first. Love is the leading affection, which gives law and gives ground to the rest; and therefore that, as the main fort, is to be first secured, and garrisoned for God. Man is a creature cut out for love; thus therefore is the law "written in the heart," that it is a law of love. Love is a short and sweet word; and if that be the fulfilling of the law, surely the yoke of the command is very easy. Love is the rest and satisfaction of the soul: if we walk in this good old way, we shall find rest. 2. The "love of God is the first and great commandment of all;" and the summary of all the commands of the first table. The proper act of love being complacency, good is the proper object of it. Now God being good, infinitely, originally, and eternally, he is to be loved in the first place, and nothing loved beside him but what is loved for him. Love is the first and great thing that God demands from us, and therefore the first and great thing that we should devote to him.

Now here we are directed, 1st. To love God as ours. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" as thine. The first commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other God;" which implies, that we must have him for our God; and that will engage our love to him: those that made the sun and moon their gods, loved them, *Jer. lvi. 2*; *Jud. xviii. 24*. To love God as ours, is to love him because he is ours; our creator, owner, and ruler; and carry ourselves to him as ours, with obedience to him; and dependence on him. We must love God as reconciled to us, and made ours by covenant; that is the foundation of this, "thy God." 2nd. To love him "with all our heart, and soul, and mind." Some make these to signify one and the same thing: "love him with all thy powers;" others distinguish them: the heart, soul, and mind, are the will, affections, and understanding, or the vital, sensitive, and intellectual faculties. Our love of God must be a sincere love; and not in word and tongue only, as theirs is, who say they love him, but their hearts are not with him. It must be a strong love; we must love him in the most intense degree; as we must praise him, so we must love him with all that is within us, *Ps. ciii. 1*. It must be a singular and superlative love; we must love him more than any thing else; this way the stream of our affections must entirely run. The heart must be united to love God, in opposition to a divided heart. All our love is too little to bestow upon him; and therefore all the powers of the soul must be engaged for him, and carried out towards him. "This is the first and great commandment;" for obedience to this is the spring of obedience to all the rest; which is then only acceptable when it flows from love. 3rd. To love our neighbour as ourselves, is the second great commandment, ver. 39. It is like unto that first; it is inclusive of all the precepts of the second table, as that is of the first. It is like it, for it is founded upon it, and flows from it; and a right love to our brother, whom we have seen, is both an instance and an evidence of our love to God, whom we have not seen, *1 Jno. iv. 20*. First. It is implied that we do and should love ourselves; there is a self-love which is corrupt, and the root of the greatest sins; and it must be put off and mortified; but there is a self-love which is natural, and the rule of the greatest duty; and it must be preserved and sanctified. We must love ourselves, that is, we must have a due regard to the dignity of our own natures, and a due concern for the welfare of our own souls and bodies. Secondly. It is prescribed, that we "love our neighbour as ourselves." We must honour and esteem all men, and must wrong and injure none; must have a good will to all, and good wishes for all, and, as we have opportunity, must do good for all. We must love our neighbour as ourselves, as truly and sincerely as we love ourselves, and in the same instances; nay, in many cases we must deny ourselves for the good of our neighbour; and must make ourselves servants to the true welfare of others; and be willing to spend and be spent for them; to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Secondly. Observe what the weight and greatness of these commandments is, ver. 40: "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets;" that is, this is the sum and substance of all those precepts relating to practical religion which were written in men's heart by nature, revived by Moses, and backed and enforced by the preaching and writing of the prophets. All hang upon the law of love; take away this, and all falls to the ground, and comes to nothing. Rituals and ceremonials must way give to these, as must all spiritual gifts, for love is the "more excellent way." This is the spirit of the law, which animates it; the cement of the law, which joins it; it is the root and spring of all other duties; the compendium of the whole Bible; not only of the law and the prophets, but the Gospel too; only supposing this love to be the fruit of faith, and that we love God in Christ, and our neighbour for his sake. All hangs on these two commandments, as the effect doth, both on its efficient and on its final cause; for the fulfilling of the law is love, *Rom. xiii. 10*; and the end of the law is love, *1 Tim. i. 5*; the law of love is the nail—is the nail in the sure place, fastened by the masters of assemblies, *Eccl. xii. 11*—on which is hung all the glory of the law and the prophets, *Isa. xxii. 24*; a nail that shall never be drawn; for on this nail all the glory of the New Jerusalem shall eternally hang. Love never faileth. Into these great commandments, therefore, let our hearts be delivered, as into a

of them, but it is evident that as a whole they do not come before Jesus until verse 41. The question put by the lawyer was one of a class about which the thoughts of the Pharisees were occupied. They wanted to settle some nice and delicate distinction, and were more concerned about their theological hair-splittings than about the hearty service of the living God. The Pharisees of all ages are wonderfully alike, caring more for rites and definitions than for true holiness.

xxii. 37—39. It has been said that the two great commandments

ould; in the defence and evidence of these let us spend our zeal, and not in notions, names, and strifes of words; as if those were the mighty things on which the law and the prophets hung, and to them the love of God and our neighbour must be sacrificed; but to the commanding power of these let every thing else be made to truck.

41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The son of David.* 43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, 44 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? 45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? 46 And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

Many questions the Pharisees had asked Christ, by which, though they thought to pose him, they did but expose themselves. But now let him ask them a question, and he will do it when they are gathered together, ver. 41. He did not take some one of them apart from the rest; *ne Hercules contra duos*,—Hercules himself may be overmatched; but to shame them the more, he took them all together, when they were in confederacy and consult against him, and yet puzzled them. Note, God delights to baffle his enemies, when they most strengthen themselves; gives them all the advantages they can wish for, and yet conquers them. Associate yourselves, and you shall be broken in pieces, *Isa. iii. 3, 9, 10.* Now here,

1. *Christ proposeth a question to them*, which they could easily answer: it was a question in their own Catechism: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" "Whose son do you expect the Messiah to be, who was promised to the fathers?" This they could easily answer, "The son of David." It was the common periphrasis of the Messiah, they called him the son of David. So the scribes, who expounded the Scripture, had taught them from *Ps. lxxxix. 35, 36*, "I will not lie unto David; his seed shall endure for ever;" *Isa. ix. 7*, "upon the throne of David;" and *Isa. xi. 1*, "A rod out of the stem of Jesse." The covenant of royalty made with David was a figure of the covenant of redemption made with Christ; who, as David, was made king with an oath, and was first humbled and then advanced. If Christ was the son of David, he was really and truly man; Israel said, "We have ten parts in David," and Judah said, "He is our bone and our flesh;" what part have we then in the son of David, who took our nature upon him? "What think ye of the Christ?" They had put questions to him, one after another, out of the law; but he comes and puts a question to them upon the promise. Many are so full of the law, that they forget Christ, as if their duties would save them, without his merit and grace. It concerns each of us seriously to ask ourselves, What think we of Christ? Some think not of him at all: he is not in all, not in any of their thoughts: some think meanly, and some think hardly of him; but "to them that believe he is precious;" and how precious then are the thoughts of him! While the daughters of Jerusalem think no more of Christ than of another beloved, the spouse thinks of him as the chief of ten thousands.

11. *He starts a difficulty upon their answer*, which they could not so easily solve, ver. 43—45. Many can so readily affirm the truth, that they think they have knowledge enough to be proud of, who when they are called to confirm the truth, and to vindicate and defend it, shew they have ignorance enough to be ashamed of. The objection Christ raised was, "if Christ be David's son, how then doth David in spirit call him Lord?" He did not hereby design to ensnare them, as they did him; but to instruct them in a truth they were loath to believe, that the expected Messiah is God.

First. It is easy to see that David calls Christ Lord, and this in spirit, being divinely inspired, and acted therein by a spirit of prophecy; for it was the Spirit of the Lord that spake by him, 2 *Sam. xxiii. 1, 2.* David was one of those holy men that spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, especially in calling Christ Lord; for it was then, as it is still, 1 *Cor. xii. 3*, that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now to prove that David in spirit called Christ Lord, he quotes *Ps. cx. 1*; which Psalm the scribes themselves understood of Christ; of him it is certain the prophet there speaks; of him, and of no other man. And it is a prophetic summary of the doctrine of Christ: it describes him executing the offices of a prophet, priest, and king, both in his estate of humiliation, and exaltation. Christ quotes the whole verse, which shews the Redeemer in his exaltation. 1. "Sitting at the right hand of God." His sitting, notes both rest and rule; his sitting at God's right hand, notes superlative honour, and sovereign power. See in what great words this is expressed, *Heb. viii. 1*: "He is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty;" see *Phil. ii. 9*; *Eph. i. 21*. He did not take this honour to himself, but was entitled to it by covenant with his Father, and invested in it by commission from him; and here is that commission. 2. Subduing his enemies. There he shall sit till they be made either his friends or his footstool. The carnal mind, wherever it is, is enmity to Christ, and that is subdued in the conversion of the willing people that are called to his foot, as the expression is, *Isa. xli. 2*; and in the confusion of his impenitent adversaries that shall be brought under his foot, as the kings of Canaan were under the feet of Joshua. But that which this verse is quoted for, is that David calls the Messiah his Lord, "the Lord Jehovah said unto my Lord." This intimates to us that, in expounding Scripture, we must take notice of, and improve, not only that which is the main scope and sense of a verse, but of the words and phrases by which the Spirit chooseth to express that sense, which have many times a very useful and instructive significance. Here is a good note from that word, "my Lord."

Secondly. It is not so easy for those who believe not the godhead of the Messiah to clear this from an absurdity, if Christ be David's son. It is incongruous for the father to speak of his son, the predecessor of his successor, as his lord. "If David call him Lord," that is laid down, ver. 45, as the *magis notum*,—the more evident truth; for whatever is said of Christ's humanity and humiliation must be construed and understood in consistency with the truth of his Divine nature and dominion. We must hold this fast, that he is David's Lord; and by that explain his being David's son. The seeming differences of Scripture, as here, may not only be accommodated, but contribute to the beauty and harmony of the whole: *amica Scripturarum lites, ut nam et notata*—the differences observable in the Scriptures are of a friendly kind: would to God that our differences were of the same kind.

were not so much a part of the law as the principle of religion; but see *Deut. vi. 5*, *Lev. xix. 18*. The fact that these two precepts are embodied in the Mosaic law elevates it above all other known systems prior to the Christian era.

xxii. 44. Upon this quotation it has been very well remarked that if the person of Christ were simply human, and his kingdom of an earthly nature, the language would be inconsistent and improper. The question was proposed, not merely to overcome his opponents,

Thirdly. We have here the success of this gentle trial, which Christ made of the Pharisees' knowledge, in two things: 1. It puzzled them, ver. 46: "No man was able to answer him a word:" either it was their ignorance, that they did not know, or their impiety, that they would not own, the Messiah to be God, which truth was the only key to unlock this difficulty. What those rabbis could not then answer, blessed be God, the plainest Christian, that is led into the understanding of the Gospel of Christ, can now account for; that Christ, as God, was David's Lord; and Christ, as man, was David's son. This he did not now himself explain, but reserved it till the proof of it was completed by his resurrection; but we have it fully explained by him in his glory, *Rev. xxii. 16*: "I am the root and offspring of David." Christ, as God, was David's root; Christ, as man, was David's offspring. If we hold not fast this truth, that Jesus Christ is over all, God blessed for ever, we run ourselves into inextricable difficulties; and well might David, his remote ancestor, call him, Lord; when Mary, his immediate mother, after she had conceived him, called him Lord, and God her Saviour, *Lu. i. 46, 47*. 2. It silenced them, and all others that sought occasion against him; "neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more," such captious, tempting, ensnaring "questions." Note, God will glorify himself in the silencing of many, whom he will not glorify himself in the salvation of. Many are convinced, that are not converted by the Word. Had these been converted, they would have asked him more questions, especially that great question, "What must we do to be saved?" But since they could not gain their point, they would have no more to do with him. But thus all that strive with their Master shall be convinced, as these Pharisees and lawyers here were, of the inequality of the match.

CHAPTER XXIII.

In the foregoing chapter we had our Saviour's discourses with the scribes and Pharisees; here we have his discourse concerning them, or rather, against them. I. He allows their office, ver. 2, 3. II. He warns his disciples not to imitate their hypocrisy and pride, ver. 4—12. III. He exhibits a charge against them for divers high crimes and misdemeanors—corrupting the law, opposing the Gospel, and treacherous dealing, both with God and man; and to each article he prefixes a woe, ver. 13—33. IV. He passeth sentence upon Jerusalem, and foretells the ruin of the city and temple, especially for the sin of persecution, ver. 34—39.



HEN spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. 4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, 6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. 8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. 11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

We find not Christ, in all his preaching, so severe upon any sort of people as upon these scribes and Pharisees: for the truth is, nothing is more directly opposite to the spirit of the Gospel than the temper and practice of that generation of men, who were made up of pride, worldliness, and tyranny, under a cloak and pretence of religion. Yet these were the idols and darlings of the people, who thought, if but two men went to heaven, one would be a Pharisee. Now Christ directs his discourse here "to the multitude, and to his disciples," ver. 1, to rectify their mistakes concerning these scribes and Pharisees, by painting them out in their true colours; and so to take off the prejudice which some of the multitude had conceived against Christ and his doctrine, because it was opposed by those topping men of their church, that called themselves the people's guides. Note, It is good to know the true characters of men, that we may not be imposed upon by great and mighty names, titles, and pretensions to power. People must be told of the wolves, *Acts xx. 29, 30*; the dogs, *Phil. iii. 2*; the deceitful workers, 2 *Cor. xi. 13*; that they may know where to stand upon their guard. And not only the mixed multitude, but even the disciples need these cautions; for good men are apt to have their eyes dazzled with worldly pomp. Now in this discourse,

1. *Christ allows their office as expositors of the law.* "The scribes and Pha-

but to direct attention to his own dignity and dominion, as the object of faith, the fulfilment of prophecy, the Lord and Saviour of mankind. All the conditions of the query imply that the Jews understood Psalm cx. of the Messiah.

xxiii. 2—4. It is only in a special sense that the scribes and Pharisees sat in the seat of Moses, or occupied his place. The nation had a directing head in the person of Moses when he lived, and now the directing body was made up of scribes and Pharisees.

riases," (that is, the whole sanhedrim, who sat at the helm of church government, who were all called scribes, and were some of them Pharisees,) they "sit in Moses' seat," ver. 2, as public teachers and interpreters of the law; and the law of Moses being the municipal law of their state, they were as judges, or a bench of justices. Teaching and judging seem to be equivalent, comparing 2 Chr. xvii. 7, 9, with 2 Chr. xix. 5, 6, 8. They were not the itinerant judges, that rode the circuit; but the standing bench, that determined on appeals, specific verdicts, or writs of error, by the law. They sat in Moses' seat; not as he was mediator between God and Israel, but only as he was chief justice, *Ex. xviii. 26*; or we may apply it, not to the sanhedrim, but to the other Pharisees and scribes that expounded the law, and taught the people how to apply it to particular cases. The pulpit of wood, such as was made for Ezra, that ready scribe in the law of God, *Neh. viii. 4*, is here called Moses' seat, because Moses had those in every city (so the expression is, *Acts xv. 21*), which in those pulpits preached him. This was their office; and it was just and honourable. It was requisite there should be some at whose mouth the people might inquire the law, *Mal. ii. 7*. Note, 1. There is many a good place filled with bad men. It is no new thing for the vilest men to be exalted, even to Moses' seat, *Ps. xii. 8*. And when it is so, the men are not so much honoured by the seat, as the seat is dishonoured by the men. Now they that sat in Moses' seat were so wretchedly degenerate as they were, it was time for the great Prophet to arise, like unto Moses, to erect another seat. 2. Good and useful offices and powers are not therefore to be presently condemned and abolished, because they fall sometimes into the hands of ill men, that abuse them. We must not therefore pull down Moses' seat, because scribes and Pharisees have got possession of it; rather than so, "let both grow together until the harvest," *ch. xiii. 30*. Hence heifers, ver. 3: "Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." As far as they sit in Moses' seat, that is, read and preach the law that was given by Moses, (which as yet continued in full force, power, and virtue,) and judge according to that law, so far you must hearken to them, as remembrancers to you of the written word. The scribes and Pharisees made it their business to study the Scripture, and were well acquainted with the language, history, and customs of it, and its style and phraseology. Now Christ would have the people to make use of the helps they gave them for the understanding of the Scripture, and do accordingly. As long as their comments did illustrate the text, and not pervert it—did make plain, and not make void, the commandment of God, so far they must be observed and obeyed; but with caution, and a judgment of discretion. Note, We must not think the worse of good truths, for their being preached by bad ministers; nor of good laws, for their being executed by bad magistrates. Though it is most desirable to have our food brought by angels, yet, if God send it to us by ravens, if it be good and wholesome, we must take it, and thank God for it. Our Lord Jesus premiseth this to prevent the cavil which some would be apt to make at his following discourse; as if, by condemning the scribes and Pharisees, he designed to bring the law of Moses into contempt, and to draw the people off from it; whereas, he came not to destroy, but to fulfil. Note, It is wisdom to obviate the exceptions which may be taken at just reproofs, especially when there is occasion to distinguish between officers and their offices, "that the ministry be not blamed," when the ministers are.

II. *He condemns the men.* He had ordered the multitude to do as they taught; but here he annexeth a caution, not to do as they did; to beware of their leave, "Do not ye after their works." Their traditions were their works—were their idols—the works of their fancy. Or, do not according to their example. Doctrines and practices are both spirits that must be tried; and, where there is occasion, must be carefully separated and distinguished. And as we must not swallow corrupt doctrines, for the sake of any laudable practices of those that teach them; so we must not imitate any ill examples, for the sake of the plausible doctrines of those that give them. The scribes and Pharisees boasted as much of the goodness of their works, as of the orthodoxy of their teaching, and hoped to be justified by them: it was the plea they put in, *Lu. xviii. 11, 12*. And yet these things, which they valued themselves so much upon, were an abomination in the sight of God. Our Saviour here, and in the following verses, instanceth, in divers particulars of their works, wherein we must not imitate them. In general they are charged with hypocrisy, dissimulation, or double dealing in religion; a crime which cannot be inquired of at men's bar, because we can only judge according to outward appearance; but God, who searcheth the heart, can convict of hypocrisy, and nothing is more displeasing to him, for he desireth truth.

Four things are in these verses charged upon them.

First. Their saying and doing were two things. Their practice was no way agreeable, either with their preaching or with their profession; "for they say, and do not." They teach out of the law that which is good, but their conversation gives them the lie; and they seem to have found another way to heaven, for themselves, than what they shew to others: see this illustrated and charged home upon them, *Rom. ii. 17–24*. Those are of all sinners most inexcusable that allow themselves in the same sins they condemn in others, or in worse. This doth especially touch wicked ministers, who will be sure to have their portion appointed them with hypocrites, *ch. xxiv. 51*; for what greater hypocrisy can there be, than to press that upon others, to be believed and done, which they themselves live in unbelief of, and disobedience to?—who pull down in their practice what they build up in their preaching; who, when they are in the pulpit, preach so well, that it is a pity they should ever come out; but when they are out of the pulpit, live so ill, that it is a pity they should ever come in; like bells that call others to church, but hang out themselves; or mercurial posts, that point the way to others, but stand still themselves; such will be judged out of their own mouths. It is applicable to all others that "say, and do not;" that make a plausible profession of religion, but do not live up to that profession; that make fair promises, but do not perform their promises; are full of good discourse, and can lay down the law to all about them, but are as empty of good works; great talkers, but little doers; the voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau; *vox et præterea nihil*—mere sound: they speak fair, "I go, sir," but there is no trusting them, for there are seven abominations in their heart.

Secondly. They were very severe in imposing upon others those things which they were not themselves willing to submit to the burthen of, ver. 4; "they bind heavy burthens, and grievous to be borne;" not only insisting upon the minute circumstances of the law, which is called a yoke, *Acts xv. 10*, and pressing the observation of them with more strictness and severity than God himself did, (whereas the maxim of the lawyers is, *Apices juris, non sunt jura*—Mere points of law are not law,) but by adding to his words, and imposing their own inventions and traditions under the highest penalties. They loved to shew their authority, and to exercise their domineering faculty, lording it over God's heritage, and saying to men's souls, "Bow down, that we may go over." Witness their many additions to the law of the fourth commandment, by which they made the sabbath a burthen on men's shoulders; which was designed to be the joy of their hearts. Thus with force and cruelty did those shepherds rule the flock, as of old, *Eze. xxxiv. 4*. But see their hypocrisy, "they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." 1. They would not exercise

themselves in those things which they imposed upon others. they pressed upon the people a strictness in religion, which they themselves would not be bound by; but secretly transgressed their own traditions, which they publicly enforced. They indulged their pride in giving law to others, but consulted their ease in their own practice. Thus it has been said to the reproach of the Popish priests, that they fast with wine and sweetmeats, while they force the people to fast with bread and water, and decline the penances they enjoin the laity. 2. They would not ease the people in these things—not put a finger to lighten their burthen, when they saw it pinched them: they could find out loose constructions to put upon God's law, and could dispense with that, but would not bate an ace of their own impositions, nor dispense with a failure in the least punctilio of them; they allowed no chancery to relieve the extremity of their common law. How contrary to this was the practice of Christ's apostles, who would allow to others that use of Christian liberty which, for the peace and edification of the church, they would deny themselves in; they would lay no other burthen but necessary things, and those easy, *Acts xv. 29*. How carefully doth Paul spare those to whom he writes, *1 Cor. vii. 28*; *ix. 12*.

Thirdly. They were all for show, and nothing for substance, in religion, ver. 5: "All their works they do to be seen of men." We must do such good works, that they who see them may glorify God; but we must not proclaim our good works with design that others may see them, and glorify us; which our Saviour here chargeth upon the Pharisees in general, as he had done before in the particular instances of prayer and giving of alms. All their end was to be praised of men; and therefore all their endeavour was to be seen of men—to make a fair show in the flesh. In those duties of religion which fall under the eye of men, none so constant and abundant as they; but in what lies between God and their souls, in the retirements of their closets, and the recesses of their hearts, they desire to be excused. The form of godliness will get them a name to live, which is all they aim at; and therefore trouble not themselves with the power of it, which is essential to a life indeed. He that doth all to be seen, doth nothing to the purpose.

He instanceth in two things which they did "to be seen of men:" 1. "They made broad their phylacteries." Those were little scrolls of paper, or parchment, wherein were written, with great niceness, these four paragraphs of the law: *Ex. xiii. 2–10*; *11–16*; *Deu. vi. 4–9*; *xi. 13–21*. These were sewn up in leather, and worn upon their foreheads and left arms; it was a tradition of the elders, which had reference to *Ex. xiii. 9*, and *Pr. vii. 3*, where the expressions seem to be figurative; intimating no more but that we should bear the things of God in our minds as carefully as if we had them bound between our eyes. Now the Pharisees made broad these phylacteries, that they might be thought more holy, and strict, and zealous for the law, than others. It is a gracious ambition to covet to be really more holy than others; but it is a proud ambition to covet to appear so. It is good to excel in real piety, but not to exceed in outward shows, for overdoing is justly suspected of design, *Pr. xxvii. 14*. It is the guise of hypocrisy to make more ado than needs in external services; more than is needful either to prove or to improve the good affections and dispositions of the soul. 2. They "enlarged the borders of their garments." God appointed the Jews to make borders or fringes upon their garments, *Num. xv. 38*, to distinguish them from other nations, and to be a memorandum to them of their being a peculiar people; but the Pharisees were not content to have these borders like other people's, which might serve God's design in appointing them, but they must be larger than ordinary, to answer their design of making themselves to be taken notice of, as if they were more religious than others. But those who thus enlarge their phylacteries, and the borders of their garments, while their hearts are straitened, and destitute of the love of God and their neighbour, though they may now deceive others, will in the end deceive themselves.

Fourthly. They much affected pre-eminence and superiority, and prided themselves extremely in it. Pride was the darling, reigning sin of the Pharisees, the sin that did most easily beset them, and which our Lord Jesus takes all occasions to witness against. 1. He describes their pride, ver. 6, 7. They courted and coveted, 1st. Places of honour and respect. In all public appearances, as at feasts, and in the synagogues, they expected, and had, to their heart's delight, the uppermost rooms, and the chief seats. They took place of all others, and precedence was adjudged to them as persons of the greatest note and merit; and it is easy to imagine what a complacency they took in it; they loved to have the pre-eminence, *3 Jo. 9*. It is not possessing the uppermost rooms, nor sitting in the chief seats, that is condemned, (somebody must sit uppermost,) but loving them. For men to value such a little piece of ceremony as sitting highest, going first, taking the wall, or the better hand, and to value themselves by it, and seek it, and resent it, if they have it not, what is that but making an idol of ourselves, and then falling down and worshipping it?—the worst kind of idolatry. It is bad any where, but especially in the synagogues. There to seek honour to ourselves, where we come to give glory to God, and to humble ourselves before him, is indeed to mock God, instead of serving him. David would willingly lie at the threshold in God's house; so far was he from coveting the chief seat there, *Ps. lxxv. 10*. It savours much of pride and hypocrisy, when people do not care for going to church, unless they could look fine, and make a figure there. 2nd. Titles of honour and respect. They loved "greetings in the markets;" loved to have people put off their hats to them, and shew them respect when they met them in the streets: O how it pleased them, and fed a vain humour, *digito monstrari et dicere, Hic est*—to be pointed out, and to have it said, This is he; to have way made for him in the crowd of market people: "Stand off, here is a Pharisee coming;" and to be complimented with the high and pompous title of Rabbi, Rabbi; this was meat, and drink, and dainties to them, and they took as great a satisfaction in it as Nebuchadnezzar did in his palace, when he said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" The greetings would not have done them half so much good, if they had not been in the markets, where every body might see how much they were respected, and how high they stood in the opinion of the people. It was but a little before Christ's time that the Jewish teachers, the masters of Israel, had assumed the titles of Rabbi, Rab, and Rabban, which signifies great, or much, and was construed as doctor, or my lord; and they laid such a stress upon it, that they gave it for a maxim, that he who saluteth his teacher, and doth not call him Rabbi, provokes the Divine Majesty to depart from Israel; so much religion did they place in that which was but a piece of good manners. For him that is taught in the Word to give respect to him that teacheth, is commendable enough in him that gives it; but for him that teacheth to love it, and demand it, and affect it—to be puffed up with it, and to be displeased if it be omitted, is sinful and abominable; and instead of teaching, he has need himself to learn the first lesson in the school of Christ, which is humility. 2. He cautions his disciples against being herein like them: herein they must not do after their works; "but be ye not called so, for ye shall not be of such a spirit," ver. 8, &c. Here is,

1st. A prohibition of pride. They are here forbidden, *First*. To challenge titles of honour and dominion to themselves, ver. 8, 10. It is repeated twice, "Be not called Rabbi, neither be ye called Master," or guide; not "that it is unlawful to give civil respect to those that are over us in the Lord, say, it is

Their power was, however, very much curtailed, and they could take action in no important public matter without the assent of the Roman authority, to which, in fact, great causes were necessarily referred. The Sanhedrim itself, though a venerable and influential institution, was restrained on every side by foreign supremacy. Hence it is apparent that scribes and Pharisees could assume little more than regulate religious practices on the one hand, and mediate with the Romans on the other, when matters within their province

afforded the occasion. As public teachers of the Mosaic law they were to be regarded, though our Lord shows fully enough that neither their lives nor their teachings were wholly according to that law. Verse 3 seems to condemn the inconsistency of their private lives, and verse 4 the severity of the ritualism which they imposed upon the people. Some, however, think that the "burdens" are not traditional observances so much as stern legal exactions. But we cannot forget that these men refined upon the correct letter of

An instance of that honour and esteem of them which is our duty. But, 1st. Christ's ministers must not affect the name of Rabbi, or master, by way of distinction from other people; it is not agreeable to the simplicity of the Gospel for them to covet or accept the honour which they have that are in kings' palaces. 2nd. They must not assume the authority and dominion that is implied in those names; they must not be magisterial, nor domineer over their brethren, or over God's heritage, as if they had dominion over the faith of Christians: what they received of the Lord, all must receive from them; but in other things they must not make their opinions and wills a rule and standard to all other people, to be admitted with an implicit faith, and submitted to with an implicit obedience. The reasons for this prohibition are, First, "One is your Master, even Christ," ver. 8. And again, ver. 10. Note, 1. Christ is our master, our teacher, our guide. Mr. George Herbert, when he named the name of Christ, usually added, 'My master.' 2. Christ only is our master: ministers are but ushers in the school; Christ only is the master, that great prophet, whom we must hear, and be ruled and overruled by—whose word must be an oracle and a law to us: "Verily I say unto you," must be enough for us. And if he only be our master, then for his ministers to set up for dictators, and to pretend to a supremacy, and an infallibility, is a daring usurpation of that honour of Christ which he will not give to another. Secondly, "All ye are brethren." Ministers are not only brethren to one another, but to the people; and therefore it ill becomes them to be masters, when there are none for them to master it over but their brethren; yea, and we are all younger brethren, otherwise the eldest might claim an excellency of dignity and power, Gen. xlix. 3. But to preclude that, Christ himself is "the firstborn among many brethren," Rom. viii. 29. "Ye are brethren," as ye are all disciples of the same master; school-fellows are brethren, and as such should help one another in getting their lesson; but it will by no means be allowed that one of the scholars step into the master's seat, and give law to the school. If we are all brethren, we must not be many masters, Jas. iii. 1.

Secondly. They are forbidden to ascribe such titles to others, ver. 9: "Call no man your father upon the earth." "Constitute no man the father of your religion; that is, the founder, author, director, and governor of it. The fathers of our flesh must be called fathers, and as such we must give them reverence, but God only must be owned as the Father of our spirits, Heb. xii. 9. Our religion must not be derived from, or made to depend upon any man. We are born again to the spiritual and divine life, "not of corruptible seed, but by the Word of God," not "of the will of the flesh, or the will of man, but of God." Now the will of man not being the rise of our religion, must not be the rule of it: we must not *jurare in verba magistri*—not swear to the dictates of any creature; not the wisest or best, nor pin our faith on any man's sleeve, because we know not whither he will carry it. St. Paul calls himself a father to those whose conversion he had been an instrument of, 1 Cor. iv. 10; Phile. 10: but he pretends to no dominion over them, and useth that title to note, not authority but affection; therefore he calls them not his obliged, but his beloved sons, 1 Cor. iv. 14. The reason given is, "One is your Father, which is in heaven." God is our Father, and is all in all in our religion. He is the fountain of it, and its founder; the life of it, and its Lord; from whom alone, as the original, our spiritual life is derived, and on whom it doth depend. He is Father of all lights, Jas. i. 17; that "one Father, from whom are all things, and we in him," Eph. iv. 6. Christ having taught us to say, "Our Father which art in heaven," let us "call no man father upon earth; no man, because man is a worm, and the son of man is a worm, hewn out of the same rock with us; especially not upon earth, for man upon earth is a sinful worm; there is not a just man upon earth that doth good and sinneth not," and therefore not fit to be called father.

2nd. Here is a precept of humility and mutual subjection, ver. 11. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant;" not only call himself so; we know of one that styles himself *servus servorum Dei*—servant of the servants of God; but acts as Rabbi, and Father, and Master, and *Dominus Deus noster*—"the Lord our God," and what not; but he shall be so: take it as a promise, he shall be accounted greatest, and stand highest in the favour of God that is most submissive and serviceable; or as a precept, he that is advanced to any place of dignity, trust, and honour in the church, "let him be your servant;" (some copies read *εταρος* for *εταρος*;) let him not think that his patent of honour is a writ of ease; no, he that is greatest is not a lord, but a minister. St. Paul, who knew his privilege as well as duty, though free from all, yet made himself servant of all, 1 Cor. ix. 19. And our Master frequently pressed it upon his disciples to be humble and self-denying, mild and condescending, and to abound in all offices of Christian love, though mean, and to the meanest, and of this hath set us an example.

3rd. Here is a good reason for all this, ver. 12. Consider, First. The punishment intended for the proud: "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased." If God give them repentance, they will be abased in their own eyes, and will abhor themselves for it; if they repent not, sooner or later they will be abased before the world. Nebuchadnezzar in the height of his pride was turned to be a fellow-commoner with the beasts; Herod to be a feast for the worms; and Babylon, that sat as a queen, to be the scorn of nations. God made the proud and aspiring priests contemptible and base, Mal. ii. 9; and the lying prophet to be the tail, Isa. ix. 15. But if proud men have not marks of humiliation set upon them in this world, there is a day coming when they shall "rise to everlasting shame and contempt," Dan. xii. 2: so plentifully will he reward the proud doer, Ps. xxxi. 23.

Secondly. The preferment intended for the humble: "he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Humility is that ornament which is in the sight of God of great price. In this world the humble have their honour of being accepted with the holy God, and respected by all wise and good men, of being qualified for, and often called out to, the most honourable services; for honour is like the shadow, which flees from those that pursue it, and grasp at it, but follows those that flee from it. However, in the other world, they that have humbled themselves in contrition for their sin, in compliance with their God, and in condescension to their brethren, shall be exalted to inherit the throne of glory; but be not only owned, but crowned, before angels and men.

13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. 14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater

damnation. 15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! 17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? 18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. 19 Ye fools and blind, for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? 20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. 21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. 22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon. 23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. 25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. 26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. 27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. 28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. 29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, 30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. 33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

In these verses we have eight woes levelled directly against the scribes and Pharisees by our Lord Jesus Christ, like so many claps of thunder, or flashes of lightning from mount Sinai: three woes are made to look very dreadful, Rev. viii. 13; ix. 10; but here are eight woes, in opposition to the eight beatitudes, ch. v. 3. The Gospel has its woes, as well as the law; and gospel curses are, of all other, the heaviest. These woes are the more remarkable, not only because of the authority, but because of the meekness and gentleness of him that denounced them. He came to bless, and loved to bless; but if his wrath be kindled, to be sure there is cause for it; and who shall entreat for him that the great Intercessor pleads against? A woe from Christ is a remediless woe. This is here the burden of the song, and it is a heavy burden; "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." Note, 1. The scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites; that is in which all the rest of their ill characters are summed up: it was the leaven which gave the relish to all they said and did. An hypocrite is a stage-player in religion; that is the primary signification of the word; he personates or acts the part of one that he neither is nor may be, or perhaps that he neither is nor would be. 2. That

the law until their distinctions and exactions became almost intolerable. In all this they protected themselves, consulting their own ease and profit; so that while escaping many of the exactions which they levied upon the general public, they took a prominent part in outward and conspicuous actions which were popularly called religious.

xxiii. 8. In this verse the important words "even Christ" are regarded as an interpolation, or as explanatory of the word master.

xxiii. 9. The words "call no man your father" are simple enough, but expositors have limited them, as they have done others, so as to allow a very extensive practice of what seems to be forbidden. The names even of pope and abbot both signify "father."

xxiii. 14. This verse is altogether omitted by some modern editors, as Tischendorf, Alford, Lachmann, and Tregelles, but some retain it. The words do not occur in the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Cambridge MSS.; they must nevertheless be very ancient if not original. Dr.

hypocrites are in a woful state and condition. 'Woe to hypocrites,' so he said whose saying their case is miserable, makes it so; while they live, their religion is vain; when they die, their ruin is great. Now each of these woes against the scribes and Pharisees has a reason annexed to it, containing a several crime charged upon them, proving their hypocrisy, and justifying the judgment of Christ upon them; for his woes, his curses, are never causeless.

1. *They were sworn enemies to the Gospel of Christ, and consequently to the salvation of the souls of men*, ver. 13: they "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men;" that is, they did all they could to keep people from believing in Christ, and so entering into his kingdom. Christ came to open the kingdom of heaven; that is, to lay open for us a new and living way into it, to bring men to be subjects of that kingdom. Now the scribes and Pharisees, who sat in Moses' seat, and pretended to be the key of knowledge, ought to have contributed their assistance herein, by opening those scriptures of the Old Testament which pointed at the Messiah and his kingdom in their true proper sense; they that undertook to expound Moses and the prophets should have shewed the people how they testified of Christ; that Daniel's weeks were expiring, the sceptre was departed from Judah; and therefore now was the time for the Messiah's appearing. Thus they might have facilitated that great work, and have helped thousands to heaven; but instead of this they shut up the kingdom of heaven; they made it their business to press the ceremonial law, which was now in the vanishing; and to suppress the prophecies, which were now in the accomplishing; and to beget and nourish up in the minds of people prejudices against Christ and his doctrine.

First. They would not go in themselves: "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" *Jno. vi. 48*. No, they were too proud to stoop to his meanness, too formal to be reconciled to his plainness; they did not like a religion which insisted so much on humility, self-denial, contempt of the world, and spiritual worship. Repentance was the door of admission into this kingdom; and nothing could be more disagreeable to the Pharisees, that justified themselves, and admired themselves, than to repent; that is, to accuse, and abuse, and abhor themselves: therefore they went not in themselves; but that was not all.

Secondly. They would not suffer them that were entering to go in. It is bad to keep away from Christ ourselves, but it is worse to keep others from him: yet that is commonly the way of hypocrites; they do not love that any should go beyond them in religion, or be better than they. Their not going in themselves was a hindrance to many; for having so great an interest in the people, multitudes rejected the Gospel only because their leaders did; but besides that, they opposed both Christ's entertaining of sinners, *Luk. vii. 39*, and sinners entertaining of Christ. They perverted his doctrine, confronted his miracles, quarrelled with his disciples, and represented him and his institutes and economy to the people in the most disingenuous, disadvantageous manner imaginable; they thundered out their excommunications against those that confessed him, and used all their wit and power to serve their malice against him: and thus they shut up the kingdom of heaven, so that they who would enter into it must suffer violence, *ch. xi. 12*, and press into it (*Luk. xvi. 16*) through a crowd of scribes and Pharisees, and all the obstructions and difficulties they could contrive to lay in their way. How well is it for us that our salvation is not intrusted in the hands of any man, or company of men, in the world; if it were, we were undone. They that shut out of the church, would shut out of heaven, if they could; but the malice of men cannot make the promise of God, to his chosen, of none effect. Blessed be God, it cannot.

II. *They made religion and the form of godliness a cloak and stalking-horse to their covetous practices and desires*, ver. 14. Observe here,

First. What their wicked practices were: they devoured widows' houses, either by quartering themselves and their attendants upon them for entertainment, which must be of the best, for men of their figure; or by insinuating themselves into their affections, and so getting to be the trustees of their estates, which they could make an easy prey of; for who could presume to call such as they were to an account? The thing they aimed at, was to enrich themselves; and this being their chief and highest end, all considerations of justice and equity were laid aside, and even widows' houses were sacrificed to this. Widows are of the weaker sex, in its weakest state, easily imposed upon, and therefore they fastened on them to make a prey of. They devoured those whom by the law of God they were particularly obliged to protect, patronize, and relieve. There is a woe in the Old Testament to those that made widows their prey, *Isa. x. 1, 2*; and Christ here seconded it with his woe. God is the judge of the widows; they are his peculiar care; he establisheth their border, *Pr. xv. 25*, and espouseth their cause, *Ex. xxii. 22, 23*: yet these were they whose houses the Pharisees devoured by wholesale; so greedy were they to get their bellies filled with the treasures of wickedness; their devouring notes, not only covetousness, but cruelty in their oppression, described *Mic. iii. 3*; they eat the flesh, and flay the skin; and doubtless they did all this under colour of law; for they did it so artfully that it passed uncensured, and did not at all lessen the people's veneration for them.

Secondly. What was the cloak with which they covered this wicked practice? For a pretence they made long prayers; very long indeed, if it be true, which some of the Jewish writers tell us, that they spent three hours at a time in the formalities of meditation and prayer, and did it thrice every day, which is more than an upright soul, that makes conscience of being inward with God in the duty, dares pretend ordinarily to do; but to the Pharisees it was easy enough, who never made a business of the duty, and always made a trade of the outside of it. By this craft they got their wealth, and maintained their grandeur. It is not probable that these long prayers were extemporary; for then (as Mr. Baxter observes) the Pharisees had much more of the gift of prayer than Christ's disciples had; but rather that they were stated forms of words in use among them, which they said over by tale, as the papists drop their beads. Christ doth not here condemn long prayers, as in themselves hypocritical; nay, if there were not a great appearance of good in them, they would not have been used for a pretence; and the cloak must be very thick which was used to cover such wicked practices. Christ himself continued all night in prayer to God; and we are commanded to pray without ceasing too soon. Where there are many sins to be confessed, and many wants to pray for the supply of, and many mercies to give thanks for, there is occasion for long prayers; but the Pharisees' long prayers were made up of vain repetitions, and, which was the end of them, they were for a pretence. By them they got the reputation of pious devout men, that loved prayer, and were the favourites of Heaven; and by this means people were made to believe it was not possible such men as they should cheat them; and therefore happy the widow that could get a Pharisee for her trustee and guardian to her children. Thus, while they seem to soar heavenwards upon the wings of prayer, their eye, like the kite's, was all the while upon their prey on earth, some widow's house or other that lay convenient for them. Thus circumsion was the cloak of the Schemites' covetousness, *Gen. xxv. 22, 23*; and the payment of a vow in Hebron, the cover of Absalom's rebellion, *2 Sam. xv. 7*; and a fast in Jezreel must patronize Naboth's murder, and the extirpation of Baal is the footstool of

Jehu's ambition. Popish priests, under pretence of long prayers for the dead, masses and dirges, and I know not what stuff, enrich themselves, by devouring the houses of the widows and fatherless. Note, It is no new thing for the show and form of godliness to be made a cloak to the greatest enormities. But dissembled piety, however it passeth now, will be reckoned for as double iniquity "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men."

Thirdly. The doom passed upon them for this: "therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." Note, 1. There are degrees of damnation; there are some whose sin being more inexcusable, their ruin will be more intolerable. 2. The pretences of religion, which hypocrites use to disguise or excuse their sin now, will aggravate their condemnation shortly. Such is the deceitfulness of sin, that that very thing by which sinners hope to expiate and atone for their sins, will come against them, and make their sins more exceeding sinful. But it is sad for the criminal when his defence proves his offence, and his plea, "We have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name made long prayers," heightens the charge against him.

III. *While they were such enemies to the conversion of souls to Christianity, they were very industrious in the perversion of them to their faction*; they shut up the kingdom of heaven against those that would turn to Christ, but at the same time compassed sea and land to make proselytes to themselves, ver. 15. Observe here,

First. Their commendable industry in making proselytes to the Jewish religion; not only proselytes of the gate, who obliged themselves to no more but the observance of the seven precepts of the sons of Noah, but proselytes of righteousness, who addicted themselves wholly to all the rites of the Jewish religion, for that was the game they flew at; for this, for one such, though but one, they compass sea and land, had many a cunning reach, and laid many a plot, rode, and ran, and sent, and wrote, and laboured unweariedly; and what did they aim at? Not the glory of God, and the good of souls; but that they might have the credit of making them proselytes; and the advantage of making a prey of them, when they were made. Note, 1. The making of proselytes, if it be to the truth and serious godliness, and be done with a good design, is a good work, well worthy of the utmost care and pains. Such is the value of souls, that nothing must be thought too much to do to "save a soul from death." The industry of the Pharisees herein may shew the negligence of many, who would be thought to act from better principles, but will be at no pains or cost to propagate the Gospel. 2. To make a proselyte sea and land must be compassed; all ways and means must be tried; first one way, and then another, must be tried; all little enough; but all well paid, if the point be gained. 3. Carnal hearts seldom stick at pains to carry on their carnal purposes: when a proselyte is to be made to serve a turn for themselves, they will compass sea and land to make him, rather than be balked.

Secondly. Their cursed impiety, in abusing their proselytes, when they were made: ye make him the disciple of a Pharisee presently, and he sucks in all their notions, and so "ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." Note, 1. Hypocrites, while they fancy themselves heirs of heaven, are, in the judgment of Christ, the children of hell. The rise of their hypocrisy is from hell, for the devil is the father of lies; and the tendency of their hypocrisy is towards hell; that is the country they belong to, the inheritance they are heirs to: they are called children of hell, because of their rooted enmity to the kingdom of heaven, which was the principle and genius of Pharisaism. 2. Though all that maliciously oppose the Gospel are children of hell, yet some are twofold more so than others, more furious and bigoted and malignant. 3. Perverted proselytes are commonly the greatest bigots: the scholars outdid their masters; 1st. In fondness of ceremony. The Pharisees themselves saw the folly of their own impositions, and in their hearts smiled at the obsequiousness of those that conformed to them; but their proselytes were eager for them. Note, Weak heads commonly admire those shows and ceremonies which wise men (however for public ends they countenance them) cannot but think meanly of. 2nd. In fury against Christianity. The proselytes readily imbibed the principles which their crafty leaders were not wanting to possess them with, and so became extremely hot against the truth. The most bitter enemies the apostles met with, in all places, were the Hellenist Jews, that were mostly proselytes, *Acts xiii. 45*; *xiv. 2-19*; *xvii. 5*; *xviii. 6*. Paul, a disciple of the Pharisees, was exceedingly mad against the Christians, *Acts xxvi. 11*; when his master, Gamaliel, seems to have been more moderate.

IV. *Their seeking of their own worldly gain and honour more than God's glory, put them upon coining false and unwarrantable distinctions, with which they led the people into dangerous mistakes, particularly in the matter of oaths*, which, as an evidence of a universal sense of religion, have been by all nations accounted sacred, ver. 16, "ye blind guides." Note, 1. It is sad to think how many are under the guidance of such as are themselves blind; who undertake to shew others that way which they are themselves willingly ignorant of; "His watchmen are blind," *Isa. lvi. 10*; and, too often, "the people love to have it so," and say to the seers, "See not." But the case is bad when the leaders of the people cause them to err, *Isa. ix. 16*. 2. Though the condition of those whose guides are blind is very sad, yet that of the blind guides themselves is yet more woful. Christ denounceth a woe to the blind guides, that have the blood of so many souls to answer for. Now to prove their blindness, he instanteth in the matter of swearing, and shews what corrupt casuists they were.

First. He lays down the doctrine they taught. 1. They allowed swearing by creatures, provided they were consecrated to the service of God, and stood in any special relation to him. They allowed swearing by the temple, and the altar, though they were the work of men's hands, intended to be the servants of God's honour, not sharers in it. An oath is an appeal to God, to his omniscience and justice; and to make this appeal to any creature is to put that creature into the place of God: see *Deut. vi. 13*. 2. They distinguished between an oath by the temple, and an oath by the gold of the temple; an oath by the altar, and by the gift upon the altar; making the latter binding, but not the former. Here was a double wickedness: 1st. That there were some oaths which they dispensed with, and made light of, and reckoned a man was not bound by, to assert the truth, or perform a promise. They ought not to have sworn by the temple or the altar; but when they had so sworn, they were taken in the words of their mouth. That doctrine cannot be of the God of truth, which gives countenance to the breach of faith in any case whatsoever. Oaths are edge tools, and are not to be jested with. 2nd. That they preferred the gold before the temple, and the gift before the altar, to encourage people to bring gifts to the altar, and gold to the treasures of the temple, which they hoped to be gainers by. They who had made gold their hope, and whose eyes were blinded by gifts in secret, were great friends to the Corban; and gain being their godliness, by a thousand artifices they made religion truckle to their worldly interests. Corrupt church guides make things to be sin, or no sin, as it serves their purposes, and lay a much greater stress on that which concerns their own gain, than that which is for God's glory, and the good of souls.

Secondly. He shews the folly and absurdity of this distinction, ver. 17, 19: "Ye fools and blind." It was in the way of a necessary reproof, not an angry

Conant says it is omitted in the oldest MSS. versions and citations, which is an exaggerated statement, as it occurs in both the Peshito and the Curetonian Syriac, and some other very early authorities. Still, the verse must be regarded as a doubtful one.

xxiii. 16-22. Among the idle distinctions introduced were those concerning oaths, some of which were regarded as binding, and others not so, for reasons as trivial as those which the Jesuit theologians have urged in like cases. "The gold of the Temple" was

apparently its money, or the wealth resulting from offerings. Jahn says, "The Jews in the time of Christ were in the habit of swearing by the altar, by Jerusalem, by heaven, by the earth, by themselves, by their heads, by the gold of the Temple, by sacrifices, &c." The oaths in which the name of God was not introduced were reckoned of little obligation, unless, as it would seem, an offering of some kind or other to the Temple altar or treasury was implied or expressed. The expression in verse 18, "he is guilty," fails to convey the real

reproach, that Christ called them fools. Let it suffice us, from the Word of wisdom, to shew the folly of sinful opinions and practices; but for the fastening of the character upon particular persons, leave that to Christ, who knows what is in man, and hath forbidden us to say, "Thou fool." To convict them of folly, he appeals to themselves. "Whether is greater, the gold," (the golden vessels and ornaments, or the gold in the treasury,) "or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?" Any one will own, *Propter quod aliquid est tute, id est magis tale*,—that, on account of which any thing is qualified in a particular way, must itself be much more qualified in the same way. They that swore by the gold of the temple had an eye to it as holy; but what was it that made it holy, but the holiness of the temple, to the service of which it was appropriated? And therefore the temple cannot be less holy than the gold, but must be more so; for the less is blessed and sanctified of the better, *Heb. vii. 7*. The temple and altar were dedicated to God fixedly, the gold and gift but secondarily. Christ is our altar, *Heb. xiii. 10*; our temple, *Jno. ii. 21*; for it is he that sanctifies all our gifts, and puts an acceptableness in them, *1 Pet. ii. 5*. Those that put their own works into the place of Christ's righteousness, in justification, are guilty of the Pharisees' absurdity, that preferred the gift before the altar. Every true Christian is a living temple, and by virtue thereof common things are sanctified to him: "unto the pure all things are pure," *Tit. i. 15*; and the "unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife," *1 Cor. vii. 14*.

Thirdly, He rectifies the mistake, ver. 20–22, by reducing all those oaths they had invented, to the true intent of an oath, which is, 'By the name of the Lord'; so that though an oath by the temple, or the altar, or heaven, be formally bad, yet they are binding: *Quod fieri non debuit, factum valet*. 'Engagements which ought not to have been made, are yet, when made, binding.' A man shall never take advantage of his own fault. 1. He that swears by the altar, let him not think to shake off the obligation of it, by saying, The altar is but wood, and stone, and brass; for his oath shall be construed most strongly against himself, because he was culpable, and so as that the obligation of it may be preserved; *Ut res potius valeat quam pereat*,—the obligation being hereby strengthened, rather than destroyed. And therefore an oath "by the altar" shall be interpreted "by it, and by all things thereon;" for the appurtenances pass with the principal; and the things thereon being offered up to God, to swear by it and them was, in effect, to call God himself to witness; for it was the altar of God, and he that went to that, went to God, *Ps. xliii. 4*; *xxvi. 6*. 2. He that swears by the temple, if he understand what he doth, cannot but apprehend that the ground of such a respect to it is, not because it is a fine house, but because it is the house of God, dedicated to his service, the place which he hath chosen to put his name there; and therefore he "swears by it, and by him that dwelleth therein;" there he was pleased, in a peculiar manner, to manifest himself, and give tokens of his presence; so that whoso swears by it, swears by Him who had said, "This is my rest; here will I dwell." Good Christians are God's temples, and the Spirit of God dwells in them, *1 Cor. iii. 16*; *vi. 19*; and God takes what is done to them as done to himself. He that grieves a gracious soul, grieves it and the Spirit that dwells in it, *Eph. iv. 30*. 3. If a man swear by heaven, he sins, *ch. v. 34*; yet he shall not therefore be discharged from the obligation of his oath; no, God will make him know that the heaven he swears by is his throne, *Isa. lxvi. 1*; and he that swears by the throne, appeals to Him that sits upon it, who, as he represents the affront done to him in the form of an oath, so he will certainly revenge the greater affront done to him by the violation of it. Christ will not countenance the evasion of a solemn oath, though never so plausible.

V. They were very strict and precise in the smaller matters of the law, but as careless and loose in the weightier matters, ver. 23, 24. They were partial in the law, *Mal. ii. 9*; would pick and choose their duty, according as they were interested or stood affected. Sincere obedience is universal; and he that from a right principle obeys any of God's precepts will have respect to them all, *Ps. cxix. 6*; but hypocrites, who act in religion for themselves, and not for God, will do no more in religion than they can serve a turn by for themselves. The partiality of the scribes and Pharisees appears here in two instances:

First. They observed smaller duties, but omitted greater; they were very exact in paying tithes, till it came to mint, anise, and cummin; their exactness in tithing of which would not cost them much, but would be cried up, and they should buy reputation pretty cheap. The Pharisee boasted of this: "I give tithes of all that I possess," *Lu. xvi. 12*. But it is likely they had ends of their own to serve, and would find their own account in it; for the priests and Levites, to whom the tithes were paid, were in their interests, and knew how to return their kindness. Paying tithes was their duty, and what the law required. Christ tells them they ought not to leave it undone. Note, All ought, in their places, to contribute to the support and maintenance of a standing ministry. Withholding tithes is called robbing God, *Mal. iii. 8–10*. They that are taught in the Word, and do not communicate to them that teach them, that love a cheap Gospel, come short of the Pharisees. But that which Christ here condemns them for is, that they "omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith;" and their niceness in paying tithes was, if not to atone to God, yet at least to excuse and palliate to men the omission of those. All the things of God's law are weighty, but those are most weighty which are most expressive of inward holiness in the heart—the instances of self-denial, contempt of the world, and resignation to God, in which lies the life of religion. Judgment and mercy towards men, and faith towards God, are the weighty matters of the law, the good things which the Lord our God requires, *Mic. vi. 8*; to do justly, and love mercy, and humble ourselves by faith, to walk with God. This is the obedience which is better than sacrifice, or tithing; judgment is preferred before sacrifice, *Isa. i. 11*. To be just to the priests in their tithe, and yet to cheat and defraud every body else, is but to mock God, and deceive ourselves. Mercy also is preferred before sacrifice, *Hos. vi. 6*. To feed those who made themselves fat with the offerings of the Lord, and at the same time to shut up the bowels of compassion from a brother or a sister, that is naked and destitute of daily food—to pay tithe—mint to the priest, and to deny a crumb to Lazarus, is to lie open to that judgment without mercy which is awarded to those who pretended to judgment, and shewed no mercy. Nor will judgment and mercy serve, without faith in Divine revelation; for God will be honoured in his truth, as well as in his laws.

Secondly. They avoided lesser sins, but committed greater, ver. 24. "Ye blind guides," so he had called them before, ver. 16, for their corrupt teaching; here he calls them so for their corrupt living; for their example was leading, as well as their doctrine; and in this also they were blind and partial; they strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel. In their doctrine, they strained at gnats, warned people against every the least violation of the tradition of the elders; in their practice, they strained at gnats, heaved at them with a seeming dread, as if they had a great abhorrence of sin, and were afraid of it in the least instance; but they made no difficulty of those sins which, in comparison with them, were as a camel to a gnat. When they devoured widows' houses, they did indeed swallow a camel; when they gave Judas the price of innocent blood, and yet scrupled to put the returned money into the treasury, *ch. xxvii. 6*; when they would not go into the judgment hall, for fear of being defiled, and

yet would stand at the door, and cry out against the holy Jesus, *Jno. cviii. 23*, when they quarrelled with the disciples for eating with unwashed hands, and yet, for the filling of the Corban, taught people to break the fifth commandment,—they strained at gnats, or less things, and yet swallowed camels. It is not the scrupling of a little sin that Christ here reproves; if it be a sin, though but a gnat, it must be strained at; but the doing of that, and then swallowing a camel—in the lesser matters of the law to be superstitious, and to be profane in the greater—is the hypocrisy here condemned.

VI. They were all for the outside, and not at all for the inside of religion; they were more desirous and solicitous to appear pious to men, than to approve themselves so towards God. This is illustrated by two similitudes:

First. They are compared to a vessel that is clean washed on the outside, but all dirt within, ver. 25, 26. The Pharisees placed religion in that which, at best, was but a point of decency, the washing of cups, *Mar. vii. 4*; they were in care to eat their meat in clean cups and platters, but made no conscience of getting their meat by extortion, and using it to excess. Now what a foolish thing would it be for a man to wash only the outside of a cup, which is to be looked at; and to leave the inside dirty, which is to be used: so they who only avoid scandalous sins, that would spoil their reputation with men, but allow themselves in heart wickedness, which renders them odious to the pure and holy God. In reference to this, Observe, 1. The practice of the Pharisees: they made clean the outside. In those things which fell under the observation of their neighbours, they seemed very exact; and carried on their wicked intrigues with so much artifice, that their wickedness was not suspected: people generally took them for very good men; but within, in the recesses of their hearts, and the close retirements of their lives, they were full of extortion and excess, of violence and incontinence; so Dr. Hammond; that is, of injustice and intemperance; while they would seem to be godly, they were neither sober nor righteous; their inward part was very wickedness, *Ps. v. 9*; and that we are really, that we are inwardly. 2. The rule Christ gives in opposition to this practice, ver. 26. It is addressed to the blind Pharisee. They thought themselves the seers of the land, *Jno. ix. 40*; but Christ calls them blind. Note, Those are blind in Christ's account, who (how quick-sighted soever they are in other things) are strangers, and no enemies, to the wickedness of their own hearts; that see not, and hate not, the secret sin that lodgeth there. Self-ignorance is the most shameful and hurtful ignorance, *Rev. iii. 17*. The rule is, "cleanse first that which is within." Note, The principal care of every one of us should be, to wash our hearts from wickedness, *Jer. iv. 14*. The main business of a Christian lies within, to get cleansed from the filthiness of the spirit. Corrupt affections and inclinations,—the secret lusts that lurk in the soul, unseen and unobserved,—those must first be mortified and subdued; those sins must be conscientiously abstained from, which the eye of God only is a witness to, who searcheth the heart. Observe, The method prescribed: "cleanse first that which is within;" not that only, but that first; because, if due care be taken concerning that, the outside will be clean also. External motives and inducements may keep the outside clean, while the inside is filthy; but by renewing, sanctifying grace make clean the inside, that will have an influence upon the outside, for the commanding principle is within. If the heart be well kept, all is well: "for out of it are the issues of life;" the eruptions will vanish of course: if the heart and spirit be made new, there will be a newness of life: here, therefore, we must begin with ourselves; "first cleanse that which is within;" we then make sure work, when this is our first work.

Secondly. They are compared to whitened sepulchres, ver. 27, 28. 1. They were fair without; "like sepulchres, which appear beautiful outward." Some make it to refer to the custom of the Jews to whiten graves, only for the notifying of them, especially if they were in unusual places, that people might avoid them, because of the ceremonial pollution contracted by the touch of a grave, *Num. xix. 16*. And it was part of the charge of the overseers of the highways to repair that whitening when it was decayed. Sepulchres were thus made remarkable, *2 Kin. xxiii. 16, 17*. The formality of hypocrites, by which they study to recommend themselves to the world, doth but make all wise and good men the more careful to avoid them, for fear of being defiled by them: "Beware of the scribes," *Lu. xx. 46*. It rather alludes to the custom of whitening the sepulchres of eminent persons, for the beautifying of them. It is said here, ver. 29, that they garnished "the sepulchres of the righteous," as it is usual with us to erect monuments upon the graves of great persons, and to strew flowers on the graves of dear friends. Now, the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was like the ornaments of a grave, or the dressing up of a dead body, only for show. The top of their ambition was to appear righteous before men, and to be applauded and had in admiration by them. But, 2. They were foul within, like sepulchres, "full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness;" so vile are our bodies when the soul has deserted them. Thus were they full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Hypocrisy is the worst iniquity of all other. Note, It is possible for those that have their hearts full of sin, yet to have their lives free from blame, and to appear very good. But what will it avail us to have the good word of our fellow-servants, if our Master do not say, "Well done?" When all other graves are opened, these whitened sepulchres will be looked into, and the dead men's bones and all the uncleanness shall be brought out, and be spread before all the host of heaven, *Jer. viii. 1, 2*; for it is the day when God shall judge, not the shows, but the secrets of men: and it will then be small comfort to them who shall have their portion with hypocrites, to remember how creditably and plausibly they went to hell, applauded by all their neighbours.

VII. They pretended a deal of kindness for the memory of the prophets that were dead and gone, while they hated and persecuted those that were present with them. This is put last, because it was the blackest part of their character. God is jealous for his honour in his laws and ordinances, and resents it, if they be profaned and abused; but he has often expressed a no less jealousy for his honour in his prophets and ministers, and resents it worse, if they be wronged and persecuted; and therefore, when our Lord Jesus comes to this head, he speaks more fully than upon any of the other, ver. 29–37; for he that toucheth his ministers, toucheth his anointed, and toucheth the apple of his eye. Observe, here,

First. The respect which the scribes and Pharisees pretended for the prophets that were gone, ver. 29, 30. This was the varnish, and that in which they outwardly appeared righteous. 1. They honoured the relics of the prophets; they built their tombs, and garnished their sepulchres. In seems the places of their burial were known: David's sepulchre was with them, *Acts ii. 29*. There was a title upon the sepulchre of the man of God, *2 Kin. xxiii. 17*; and Josiah thought it respect enough not to move his bones, ver. 28. But they would do more, rebuild and beautify them. Now consider this, 1st. As an instance of honour done to deceased prophets, who, while they lived, were counted as the outscouring of all things, and had all manner of evil spoken against them falsely. Note, God can extort, even from bad men, an acknowledgment of the honour of piety and holiness. Them that honour God, he will honour; and sometimes with those from whom contempt is expected, *2 Sam. vi. 27*. "The memory of the just is blessed," when the names of those that hated and persecuted them shall be covered with shame. The honour of constancy and resolution in the way of duty will be a lasting honour; and

sense to modern ears; the meaning is, "he is bound," or under an obligation to perform his oath. The Syriac idiom scarcely distinguishes between guilt, condemnation, and debt, the notion being that of liability or accountableness.

xxiii. 23. To "tithe" is either to exact or to render a tenth. Here the word is employed to denote that the scribes and Pharisees gave tithes so carefully that even the herbs of their gardens were not overlooked. Yet these punctilious observers of ceremony neglected

the vital obligations of God's law. They scrupulously paid their tithes, but were too often unjust, unmerciful, and unfaithful; very much as happens in our own day. Anise is believed to be the plant called dill, which is grown in the East, and is mentioned in the Talmud as liable to tithe. Cummin is similarly cultivated for domestic purposes, as also is mint, which is said to be one of the bitter herbs eaten at the Passover with the lamb.

xxiii. 24. To "strain at a gnat" in colloquial English is to swallow

those that are manifest to God, will be manifest in the consciences of those about them. 2nd. As an instance of the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, who paid this respect to them. Note, Carnal people can easily honour the memories of faithful ministers that are dead and gone; because they do not reprove them, nor disturb them in their sins. Dead prophets are seers that see not, and those they can bear well enough; they do not torment them, as the living witnesses do, that bear their testimony, *viva voce*,—"with a living voice," *Rev. xi. 10*. They can pay a respect to the writings of the dead prophets, which tell them what they should be; but not the reproofs of the living prophets, which tell them what they are. *Sit divus, modo non sit vivus*,—"Let there be saints, but let them not be living here." The extravagant respect which the church of Rome pays to the memory of saints departed, especially the martyrs, dedicating days and places to their names, enshrining their relics, praying to them, and offering to their images, while they make themselves drunk with the blood of the saints of their own day, is a manifest proof that they not only succeed, but exceed, the scribes and Pharisees, in a counterfeit, hypocritical religion, which builds the prophets' tombs, but hates the prophets' doctrine.

2. They protested against the murder of them, *ver. 30*: "If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them." They would never have consented to the silencing of Amos, and the imprisonment of Micahiah; to the putting of Hanani in the stocks, and Jeremiah in the dungeon; to the stoning of Zechariah, and the mocking of all the messengers of the Lord, and the abuses put upon his prophets: no, not they; they would sooner have lost their right hands than have done any such thing: "What! is thy servant a dog?" And yet they were at this time plotting to murder Christ, to whom all the prophets bare witness. They think, if they had lived in the days of the prophets, they would have heard them gladly, and obeyed; and yet rebelled against the light that Christ brought into the world. But it is certain a Herod and a Herodias to John Baptist, would have been an Ahab and a Jezebel to Elijah. Note, The deceitfulness of sinners' hearts appears very much in this, that while they go down the stream of the sins of their own day, they fancy they should have swum against the stream of the sins of the former days; that if they had had other people's opportunities, they would have improved them more faithfully; had been in other people's temptations, they would have resisted them more vigorously; when yet they improve not the opportunities they have, nor resist the temptations they are in. We are sometimes thinking, If we had lived when Christ was upon earth, how constantly we would have followed him; we would not have despised and rejected him, as they then did; and yet Christ, in his Spirit, in his Word, in his ministers, is still no better treated.

Secondly. Their enmity and opposition to Christ and his Gospel notwithstanding, and the ruin they were bringing upon themselves, and upon that generation thereby, *ver. 31-33*. Observe here, 1. The indictment proved: "Ye be witnesses against yourselves." Note, There are no hopes for sinners' escaping the judgment of Christ, for want of proof against them, when it is easy to find them witnesses against themselves; and their very pleas will not only be overruled, but turned to their conviction; and their own tongues shall be made to fall upon them, *Ps. lxxviii. 8*. 1st. By their own confession, it was the great wickedness of their forefathers to kill the prophets; so that they knew the fault of it, and yet were themselves guilty of the same fact. Note, They who condemn sin in others, and yet allow the same or worse in themselves, are of all others most inexcusable, *Rom. i. 32*; ii. 1: they knew they ought not to have been partakers with persecutors, and yet were the followers of them. Such self-contradictions now will amount to self-condemnation in the great day. Christ puts another construction upon their building of the tombs of the prophets, than what they intended; as if, beautifying their graves, they justified their murderers, *Lu. xi. 48*; for they persisted in the sin. 2nd. By their own confession, these notorious persecutors were their ancestors "ye are the children of them." They meant no more but that they were their children by blood and nature; but Christ turns it upon them, that they were so by spirit and disposition: You are of those fathers, and their lusts you will do. They are, as you say, your fathers, and you do *partizare*,—"take after your fathers." It is the sin that runs in the blood among you: "As your fathers did, so do ye," *Acts vii. 51*. They came of a persecuting breed, were a seed of evil doers, *Isa. i. 4*; risen up in their fathers' stead, *Num. xxxii. 14*. Malice, and envy, and cruelty were bred in the bone with them; and they had formerly espoused it for a principle, to do as their fathers did, *Jer. xlv. 17*. And it is observable here, *ver. 30*, how careful they are to mention the relation; 'they were our fathers that killed the prophets; and they were men in honour and power, whose sons and successors we are.' If they had detested the wickedness of their ancestors, as they ought to have done, they would not have been so fond to call them their fathers; for it is no credit to be akin to persecutors, though they had never so much dignity and dominion.

2. The sentence passed upon them. Christ here proceeds, 1st. To give them up to the sin, as irreclaimable, *ver. 32*: "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." If Ephraim be joined to idols, and hate to be reformed, let him alone. "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still." Christ knew they were now contriving his death, and in a few days would accomplish it. "Well," saith he, "go on with your plot, take your course: walk in the way of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes, and see what will come of it." "What thou doest, do quickly." "You will but fill up the measure of guilt, which will then overflow in a deluge of wrath." Note, *First*. There is a measure of sin to be filled up, before utter ruin comes upon persons and families, churches and nations. God will bear long, but the time will come when he can no longer forbear, *Jer. xlv. 22*. We read of the measure of the Amorites, that was to be filled, *Gen. xvi. 16*; and the harvest of the earth being ripe for the sickle, *Rev. xiv. 15, 19*; and of sinners making an end to deal treacherously, arriving to a full stature in treachery, *Isa. xxxiii. 1*. *Secondly*. Children fill up the measure of their fathers' sins, when they are gone, if they persist in the same, or the like. That national guilt, which brings national ruin, is made up of the sin of many, in several ages; and in the successions of societies there is a score going on: for God justly visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children that tread in the steps of it. *Thirdly*. Persecuting Christ, and his people, and ministers, is a sin that fills the measure of a nation's guilt sooner than any other. This was it that brought wrath without remedy upon the fathers, *2 Chr. xxxvi. 16*; and wrath to the utmost upon the children too, *1 Thes. ii. 16*. This was that fourth transgression which, when added to the other three, the Lord would not turn away the punishment, *Am. i. 3, 6, 9, 11, 13*. *Fourthly*. It is just with God to give those up to their own hearts' lusts that obstinately persist in the gratification of them. Those that will run headlong to ruin, let the reins be laid in their neck; and it is the saddest condition a man can be in on this side hell. 2nd. He proceeds to give them up to the ruin, as irrecoverable, to a personal ruin in the other world, *ver. 33*: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" These are strange words to come from the mouth of Christ, into whose lips grace was poured; but he can, and will, speak terror; and in these words he explains and sums up the eight woes he had denounced against the scribes and Pharisees. Here is, *First*. Their description: "Ye serpents." Doth Christ call names? Yes; but this doth not warrant us to do so. He infallibly knew what was in man; and knew them to be subtle as serpents; cleaving to the earth, feeding on

dust; they had a specious outside, but were within malignant; had poison under their tongues, the seed of the old serpent. They were "a generation of vipers;" they, and those that went before them: they, and those that joined with them, were a generation of envenomed, enraged, spiteful adversaries to Christ and his Gospel. They loved to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi; but Christ calls them serpents and vipers; for he gives men their true characters, and delights to put contempt upon the proud. *Secondly*. Their doom. He represents their condition as very sad, and in a manner desperate: "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Christ himself preached hell and damnation, for which his ministers have often been reproached by those that care not to hear it. Note, 1st. "The damnation of hell" will be the fearful end of all impenitent sinners. This doom, coming from Christ, was more terrible than coming from all the prophets and ministers that ever were; for he is the Judge, into whose hands the keys of hell and death are put; and his saying they were damned, made them so. 2nd. There is a way of escaping this damnation; this is implied here: some are delivered from the wrath to come. 3rd. Of all sinners, those who are of the spirit of the scribes and Pharisees are least likely to escape this damnation; for repentance and faith are necessary to that escape; and how will they be brought to these, who are so conceited of themselves, and so prejudiced against Christ and his Gospel as they were? How could they be healed and saved, that would not bear to have their wound searched, nor the balm of Gilead applied to it? Publicans and harlots, who were sensible of their disease, and applied themselves to the Physician, were more likely to "escape the damnation of hell" than those, who, though they were in the high road to it, were confident they were in the way to heaven.

34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. 37 O Jerusalem Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. 39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

We have left the blind leaders fallen into the ditch under Christ's sentence, into the damnation of hell; let us see what will become of the blind followers of the body of the Jewish church, and particularly Jerusalem.

1. *Jesus Christ designs yet to try them with the means of grace*: "I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes." The connexion is strange: You are a generation of vipers, not likely to escape the damnation of hell; one would think it should follow, Therefore you shall never have a prophet sent to you any more; no, "therefore I will send you prophets," to see if you will yet at length be wrought upon, or else to leave you inexcusable, and to justify God in your ruin. It is therefore ushered in with a note of admiration, Behold! Observe, First. It is Christ that sends them: "I send." By this he avows himself to be God, having power to gift and commission prophets. It is an act of kingly office; he sends them as ambassadors, to treat with us about the concerns of our souls. After his resurrection he made this word good, when he said, "So send I you," *Mat. xx. 21*. Though now he appeared mean, yet he was intrusted with this great authority. Secondly, He sends them to the Jews first: "I send them to you." They began at Jerusalem, and wherever they went they observed this rule, to make the first tender of gospel grace to the Jews, *Acts xiii. 46*. Thirdly, Those he sends are called "prophets, wise men, and scribes,"—Old Testament names for New Testament officers; to shew that the ministers sent to them now, should not be inferior to the prophets of the Old Testament, to Solomon the wise, or Ezra the scribe. The extraordinary ministers, which in the first ages were divinely inspired, were as the prophets, commissioned immediately from Heaven; the ordinary settled ministers that were then, and continue in the church still, and will do to the end of time, are as the wise men and scribes, to guide and instruct the people in the things of God. Or, we may take the apostles and evangelists for the prophets and wise men, and the pastors and teachers for the scribes, instructed to the kingdom of Heaven, *ch. xiii. 52*; for the office of a scribe was honourable, till the men dishonoured it.

II. *He foresees and foretells the ill usage that his messengers would meet with among them*: "Some of them ye shall kill, and crucify;" and yet I will send them. Christ knows beforehand how ill his servants will be treated, and yet sends them, and appoints them their measure of sufferings; yet he loves them never the less for his thus exposing them, for he designs to glorify himself by their sufferings, and them after them; and will balance them, though not prevent them. Observe, First. The cruelty of these persecutors: "ye shall kill, and crucify them." It is no less than the blood, the life-blood, that they thirst after; their lust is not satisfied with anything short of their destruction, *Ez. xv. 9*. They killed the two Jameses, crucified Simon the son of Cleophas, and scourged Peter and John; thus did the members partake of the sufferings of the Head; he was killed and crucified, and so were they. Christians must expect to resist unto blood. Secondly. Their unwearied industry: "Ye shall persecute them from city to city." As the apostles went from city to city to preach the Gospel, the Jews dodged them, and haunted them, and stirred up persecution against them, *Acts xiv. 19*; xvii. 13. They that did not believe in Judea, were more bitter enemies to the Gospel than any other unbelievers, *Rom. xv. 31*. Thirdly. The pretence of religion in this: they scourged them in

it with difficulty; but it is now generally understood that the Greek means to "strain out." The Jews could not swallow the gnat, but they carefully strained their liquor to avoid it.

xxiii. 25. The religion which is here condemned is that which has more regard to external observances than to internal excellence.

xxiii. 27. Once a year, on the 15th day of the month Adar, the tombs were whitewashed or whitened with a kind of chalk or lime—a practice which was justified by Ezek. xxxix. 15, and was observed

not only for the sake of appearance, but to render such places conspicuous, and therefore easily to be avoided. The Jews regarded all connected with the dead as unclean, and therefore never venerated the relics which occupy so prominent a position in some perverted forms of Christianity, especially the Romish.

xxiii. 29. Observe, however, that the Jews erected monuments to some, and decorated the sepulchres of others who had been famous in their lives.

their synagogues, their places of worship, where they kept their ecclesiastical courts; so that they did it as a piece of service to the church; cast them out, and said, "Let the Lord be glorified," *Isa. lvi. 5; Jno. xvi. 2.*

III. *He imputes the sin of their fathers to them, because they imitated it:* "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth," ver. 35, 36. Though God bear long with a persecuting generation, he will not bear always; and patience abused turns into the greatest wrath. The longer sinners have been heaping up treasures of wickedness, the deeper and fuller will the treasures of wrath be; and the breaking of them up will be like breaking up the fountains of the great deep. Observe,

First. The extent of this imputation. It takes in "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth," that is, the blood shed for righteousness' sake, which has all been laid up in God's treasury, and not a drop of it lost; for it is precious, *Ps. lxxii. 14.* He dates the account "from the blood of righteous Abel;" thence this *Eva Martyrum*.—Age of martyrs,—doth commence; he is called "righteous Abel," for he obtained witness from heaven that he was righteous; "God testifying of his gifts." How early did martyrdom come into the world! The first that died, died for his religion; and continues to cry against all that "walk in the way of Cain," and hate and persecute their brethren, because their works are righteous. He extends it to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachias, ver. 36; not Zechariah the prophet, though he was the son of Barachias, *Zec. i. 1*, as some would have it; nor Zechariah the father of John Baptist, as others say; but, as is most probable, Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, who was "slain in the court of the Lord's house," *2 Chr. xxiv. 20, 21*; his father is called Barachias, which signifies much the same with Jehoiada, and it was usual among the Jews for the same person to have two names; "Whom ye slew;" ye of this nation, though not of this generation. This is instanced in, because the requiring of that is particularly spoken of, *2 Chr. xxiv. 22*, as that of Abel's is: the Jews imagined that the captivity had sufficiently atoned for that guilt, but Christ lets them know it was not yet fully accounted for, but remained upon the score. And some think this is mentioned with a prophetic hint, for there was one Zechariah, the son of Baruch, whom Josephus speaks of, *De Bel. Judaic. lib. v. c. 1*, that was a just and good man, who was killed in the temple, a little before it was destroyed by the Romans. Archbishop Tillotson thinks Christ doth both allude to the history of the former Zechariah in Chronicles, and foretell the death of this latter in Josephus: though the latter was not yet slain, yet before this destruction comes, it would be true that they had slain him; so that all shall be put together from first to last.

Secondly. The effect of it: "all these things shall come," all the guilt of this blood, all the punishment of it, it shall all come upon this generation. The misery and ruin that is coming upon them shall be so very great, that though considering the evil of their own sins, it was less than even those deserved, yet comparing it with other judgments, it would seem to be a general reckoning for all the wickedness of their ancestors, especially their persecutions; to all which God declared this ruin to have special reference and relation. The destruction shall be so dreadful, as if God had once for all arraigned them for all the righteous blood shed in the world. "It shall come upon this generation;" which intimates, that it shall come quickly; some here shall live to see it. Note, The sorer and nearer the punishment of sin is, the louder is the call to repentance and reformation.

IV. *He laments the wickedness of Jerusalem, and justly upbraids them with the many kind offers he had made them, ver. 37.* See with what concern he speaks of that city: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem;" the repetition is emphatical, and speaks abundance of commiseration. A day or two before, Christ had wept over Jerusalem, now he sighed and groaned over it; Jerusalem, the vision of peace, so it signifies, must now be the seat of war and confusion; Jerusalem, that had been the joy of the whole earth, must now be a hissing, and an astonishment, and a by-word; Jerusalem, that has been a city compact together, shall now be shattered and ruined by its own intestine broils; Jerusalem, the place that God has chosen to put his name there, shall now be abandoned to the spoil, and the robbers, *Lam. i. 1; iv. 1.* But wherefore will the Lord do all this to Jerusalem? Why, "Jerusalem hath grievously sinned," *Lam. i. 8.*

First. She persecuted God's messengers: "thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee." This sin is especially charged upon Jerusalem, because there the sanhedrim, or great council, sat, who took cognizance of church matters, and therefore a prophet could not perish but in Jerusalem, *Lu. xiii. 33.* It is true they had not now a power to put any man to death, but they killed the prophets in popular tumults, mobbed them, as Stephen, and put the Roman powers on to kill them. At Jerusalem, where the Gospel was first preached, it was first persecuted, *Acts viii. 1*; and that place was the head quarters of the persecutors; thence warrants were issued out to other cities, and thither the saints were brought bound, *Acts ix. 2.* "Thou stonest them;" that was a capital punishment, in use only among the Jews; by the law false prophets and seducers were to be stoned, *Deu. xiii. 10*; under colour of which law they put the true prophets to death. Note, It has often been the artifice of Satan to turn that artillery against the church, which was originally planted in the defence of it. Brand the true prophets as seducers, and the true professors of religion as heretics and schismatics, and then it will be easy to persecute them. There was abundance of other wickedness in Jerusalem, but this was the sin that made the loudest cry, and which God had an eye to more than any other, in bringing that ruin upon them; as *2 Kin. xxiv. 4; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 16.* Observe, Christ speaks in the present tense; "thou killest, and stonest;" for all they had done, and all they would do, was present to Christ's notice.

Secondly. She refused and rejected Christ and gospel offers. The former was a sin without remedy, this against the remedy. Here is, 1. The wonderful grace and favour of Jesus Christ towards them: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings." Thus kind and condescending are the offers of gospel grace, even to Jerusalem's children, as bad as she is, the inhabitants, the little ones, not excepted. 1st. The favour proposed, was the gathering of them. Christ's design is to gather poor souls, gather them in from their wanderings, gather them home to himself, as the centre of unity; for to him must the gathering of the people be. He would have taken the whole body of the Jewish nation into the church, and so gathered them all (as the Jews used to speak of proselytes) under the wings of the Divine Majesty; it is here illustrated by a humble similitude, as a hen clucks her chickens together. Christ would have gathered them, *First.* With such a tenderness of affection as the hen doth, that has by instinct a strange concern for her young ones: Christ's gathering souls comes from his love, *Jer. xxxi. 3.* *Secondly.* For the same end: the hen "gathereth her chickens under her wings" for protection and safety, and for warmth and comfort. Poor souls have in Christ both refuge and refreshment. The chickens naturally run to the hen for shelter, when they are threatened by the birds of prey. Perhaps Christ refers to that promise, *Ps. xci. 4*, "He shall cover thee with his feathers." There is healing under Christ's wings, *Mal. iv. 2*; that is more than the hen has for her chickens. 2nd. The forwardness of Christ to confer this favour. His offers are, *First.* Very free: "I would have done it." Jesus Christ is truly

willing to receive and save poor souls that come to him: he desires not their ruin; he delights in their repentance. *Secondly.* Very frequent: "how often." Christ often came up to Jerusalem, preached and wrought miracles there; and the meaning of all this was, he would have gathered them. He keeps account how often his calls have been repeated. As often as we have heard the sound of the Gospel, as often as we have felt the strivings of the Spirit so often Christ would have gathered us.

Thirdly. Their wilful refusal of this grace and favour; "Ye would not." How emphatically is their obstinacy opposed to Christ's mercy! "I would, and ye would not." He was willing to save them, but they were not willing to be saved by him. Note, It is wholly owing to the wicked wills of sinners, that they are not gathered under the wings of the Lord Jesus. They did not like the terms upon which Christ proposed to gather them, and loved their sins, and yet trusted to their righteousness; they would not submit, either to the grace of Christ, or to his government; and so the bargain broke off.

V. *He reads Jerusalem's doom, ver. 38, 39:* "Therefore, behold, your house is left unto you desolate;" both the city and the temple, God's house and their own, all shall be laid waste. But it is especially meant of the temple, which they boasted of, and trusted to: that holy mountain, because of which they were so haughty. Note, They that will not be gathered by the love and grace of Christ, shall be consumed and scattered by his wrath. "I would, and you would not;" "Israel would none of me, so I gave them up," *Ps. lxxxi. 11, 12.*

First. Their house shall be deserted: "it is left unto you." Christ was now departing from the temple, and never came to it again, but by this word abandoned it to ruin. They doted on it, would have it to themselves; Christ must have no room or interest there: "Well," saith Christ, "it is left to you; take it, and make your best of it; I will never have anything more to do with it." They had made it a house of merchandise, and a den of thieves, and so it is left to them. Not long after this the voice was heard in the temple, "Let us depart hence." When Christ went, Ichabod, the glory departed. Their city also was left to them, destitute of God's presence and grace. He was no longer a wall of fire about them, nor the glory in the midst of them.

Secondly. It shall be desolate: "it is left unto you desolate;" it is left *ἐρημος*, a wilderness. 1. It was immediately, when Christ left it, in the eyes of all that understood themselves, a very dismal, melancholy place: Christ's departure makes the best furnished, best replenished place a wilderness; though it be the temple, the chief place of converse: for what comfort can there be where Christ is not? Though there may be a crowd of other contentments, yet if Christ's special spiritual presence be withdrawn, that soul, that place, is become a wilderness, a land of darkness, a darkness itself; and this comes of men's rejecting Christ, and driving him away from them. 2. It was, not long after, destroyed and ruined, and not one stone left upon another. The lot of Jerusalem's enemies, will now become Jerusalem's lot; to be "made of a city a heap; of a defended city a ruin," *Isa. xxv. 2*: a lofty city laid low, even to the ground, *Isa. xxvi. 5.* The temple, that holy and beautiful house, became desolate. When God goes out, all enemies break in.

VI. *Here is the final farewell that Christ took of them and their temple:* "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh." This speaks,

First. His departure from them. The time was at hand when he should leave the world to go to his Father, and be seen no more: after his resurrection he was seen only by a few chosen witnesses, and they saw him not long; but he soon removed to the invisible world, and there will be till the time of the restitution of all things; when his welcome at his first coming will be repeated with loud acclamations, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Christ will not be seen again till he comes in the clouds, "and every eye shall see him," *Rev. i. 7*; and then, even they who, when time was, rejected and pierced him, will be glad to come in among his adorers: then every knee shall bow to him, even those that had bowed to Baal; and even the workers of iniquity will then cry, "Lord, Lord," and will own, when his wrath is kindled, that "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Would we have our lot in that day, with those that say, "Blessed is he that cometh;" let us be with them now, with them that truly worship and truly welcome Jesus Christ.

Secondly. Their continued blindness and obstinacy: "Ye shall not see me;" that is, not see me to be the Messiah, (for otherwise they did see him upon the cross), not see the light of the truth concerning me, nor the things that belong to your peace, till ye shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh." They will never be convinced till Christ's second coming convince them; when it will be too late to make an interest in him, and nothing will remain but "a fearful looking for of judgment." Note, 1. Wilful blindness is often punished with judicial blindness: if they will not see, they shall not see; with this word he concludes his public preaching. After his resurrection, which was the sign of the prophet Jonas, they should have no other sign given them, till they should see the sign of the Son of man, *ch. xxiv. 30.* 2. When the Lord comes with ten thousand of his saints, he will convince all, and will force acknowledgments from the proudest of his enemies, of his being the Messiah; and even they shall be found liars to him. They that would not now come at his call, shall then be forced to depart with his curse. The chief priests and scribes were displeased with the children for crying hosanna to Christ; but the day is coming when proud persecutors would gladly be found in the condition of the meanest and poorest they now trample upon. They who now reproach and ridicule the hosannas of the saints, will be of another mind shortly; it were therefore better to be of that mind now. Some make this to refer to the conversion of the Jews to the faith of Christ; then they shall see him, and own him, and say, "Blessed is he that cometh;" but it seems rather to look further, for the complete manifestation of Christ, and conviction of sinners, is reserved to be the glory of the last day.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Christ's preaching was mostly practical; but in this chapter we have a prophetic discourse, a prediction of things to come; but such as had a practical tendency, and was intended not to gratify the curiosity of his disciples, but to guide their consciences and conversations; and it is therefore concluded with a practical application. The church has always had particular prophecies, besides general promises, both for direction and for encouragement of believers; but it is observable, Christ preached this prophetic sermon in the close of his ministry, as the Apocalypse is the last book of the New Testament, and the prophetic books of the Old Testament are placed last, to intimate to us, that we must be well grounded in plain truths and duties, and those must first be well digested, before we dive into those things that are dark and difficult; many run themselves into confusion, by beginning their Bible at the wrong end. Now in this chapter we have, I. The occasion of this discourse, ver. 1—3. II. The discourse itself: in which, 1. The prophecy of divers events, especially referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the utter ruin of the Jewish church and nation, which was now hastening on, and was completed about forty years after; the preface to that destruction, the concomitants, and consequences of it; yet looking further to Christ's coming at the end of time, and the consummation of all things, of which that was a type and figure, ver. 4—31. 2. The practical application of this prophecy for the awakening and quickening of his disciples, to prepare for these great and awful things, ver. 32—51.

xxiii. 32. Lange notes that "Chrysostom says this was spoken prophetically; Grotius, permissively. De Wette and Meyer make it an ironical imperative. If this is irony, it is Divine irony." The Pharisees were even now scheming how they might put him to death.

xxiii. 34. The language here rises to a sublime elevation, which is truly heroic, and in it Jesus exhibits himself in a more emphatic manner than before in this Gospel, arrayed in the full grandeur of Messianic dignity. The prophets, wise men, and scribes of the

nature are sent by him: "Behold, I send unto you prophets," &c. Language like this represents the claim to authority more than human, and is fatal to Unitarian principles.

xxiii. 37. On the words "as a hen," &c., commentators have remarked that the figure of a hen was often used by the rabbins of the Shechinah, as gathering the proselytes under the shadow of its wings. The children of Jerusalem are the citizens, though all Israel seems to be implied.



AND Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. 3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Here is, I. *Christ's quitting the temple, and his public work there.* He had said in the close of the foregoing chapter, "your house is left unto you desolate;" and here he made his words good, "he went out, and departed from the temple." The manner of expression is observable; he not only went out of the temple, but departed from it, took his final farewell of it; he departed from it, never to return to it any more; and then immediately follows a prediction of its ruin. Note, That house is left desolate indeed which Christ leaves. "Woe unto them when I depart," *Hos. ix. 12; Jer. vi. 8.* It was now time to groan out their lachrymation, "The glory is departed;" "their defence is departed." Three days after this, the veil of the temple was rent: when Christ left it, all became common and unclean. But Christ departed not till they drove him away; did not reject them till they first rejected him.

II. *His private discourse with his disciples.* He left the temple; but he did not leave the twelve, who were the seed of the gospel church; which the casting off of the Jews was the enriching of. When he left the temple, his disciples left it too, and came to him. Note, It is good being where Christ is, and leaving that which he leaves. They came to him to be instructed in private, when his public preaching was over; for the "secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." He had spoken of the destruction of the Jewish church to the multitude in parables, which here, as usual, he explains to his disciples. Observe,

First. His disciples came to him, "to shew him the buildings of the temple." It was a stately and beautiful structure, one of the wonders of the world; no cost was spared, no art left untried, to make it sumptuous. Though it came short of Solomon's temple, and its beginning was small, yet its latter end did greatly increase. It was richly furnished with gifts and offerings, to which there were continual additions made. They shewed Christ these things, and desired him to take notice of them, either, 1. As being greatly pleased with them themselves, and expecting he should be so too. They had lived mostly in Galilee, at a distance from the temple, had seldom seen it, and therefore were the more struck with admiration at it; and thought he should admire as much as they did all this glory, *Gen. xxxi. 1;* and would have him divert himself after his preaching, and from his sorrow which they saw him perhaps almost overwhelmed with, with looking about him. Note, Even good men are apt to be too much enamoured with outward pomp and gaiety, and to overvalue it, even in the things of God; whereas we should be as Christ was, dead to it, and look upon it with contempt. The temple was indeed glorious; but, 1st. Its glory was sullied and stained with the sin of the priests and people. That wicked doctrine of the Pharisees, which preferred the gold before the temple that sanctified it, was enough to deface the beauty of all the ornaments of the temple. 2nd. Its glory was eclipsed, and outdone by the presence of Christ in it, who was "the glory of this latter house," *Hag. ii. 9;* so that the buildings had no glory in comparison with that glory which excelled; or 2. As pitying that this house should be left desolate; they "shewed him the buildings" as if they would move him to reverse the sentence: "Lord, let not this holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, be made a desolation." They forgot how many providences concerning Solomon's temple had manifested how little God cared for that outward glory, which they had so much admired, when the people were wicked, *2 Chr. vii. 21:* "This house, which is high," sin will bring low. Christ had lately looked upon the precious souls, and wept for them, *Lu. xix. 41.* The disciples look upon the pompous buildings, and are ready to weep for them. In this, as in other things, his thoughts are not like ours. It was weakness, and meanness of spirit in the disciples, to be so fond of fine buildings—it was a childish thing. *Animo magno nihil magnum,*—"To a great mind nothing is great."—*Seneca.*

Secondly, Christ hereupon foretells the utter ruin and destruction that was coming upon this place, ver. 2. Note, A believing foresight of the defacing of all worldly glory, will help to take us off from admiring it, and overvaluing it. The most beautiful body will be shortly worm's meat; and the most beautiful building a ruinous heap. And shall we then set our eyes upon that which so soon is not? and look upon that with so much admiration, which ere long, we shall certainly look upon with so much contempt? "See ye not all these things?" They would have Christ look upon them, and be as much in love with them as they were: he would have them look upon them, and be as dead to them as he was. There is such a sight of these things as will do us good; so to see them, as to see through them; and see to the end of them. Christ, instead of reversing the degree, ratifies it: "Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another." 1. He speaks of it as a certain ruin: "I say unto you," I that know what I say, and know how to make good what I say. Take my word for it, it shall be so: I, the Amen, the true witness, say it to you. All judgment being committed to the Son, the threatenings as well as the promises are all yea and amen in him, *Heb. vi. 17, 18.* 2. He speaks of it as an utter ruin. The temple shall not only be stripped, and plundered, and defaced, but utterly demolished, and laid waste: "not one stone shall be left upon another." Notice is taken in the building of the second temple, of the laying of one stone upon another, *Hag. ii. 15;* and here, in the ruin, of not leaving one stone upon another. The story tells us, that this was fulfilled in the latter; for though Titus, when he took the city, did all he could to preserve the temple, yet he could not restrain the enraged soldiers from destroying it

utterly; and it was done to that degree, that Turnus Rufus ploughed up the ground on which it had stood; and that scripture was fulfilled, *Mic. iii. 12:* "Sion shall for your sake be ploughed as a field." And afterwards in Julian the apostate's time, when the Jews were encouraged by him to rebuild their temple, in opposition to the Christian religion, what remained of the ruins was quite pulled down, to level the ground for a new foundation; but the attempt was defeated by the miraculous eruption of fire out of the ground, which destroyed the foundation they laid, and frightened away the builders. Now this prediction of the final and irreparable ruin of the temple, includes a prediction of the period of the Levitical priesthood, and the ceremonial law.

Thirdly, The disciples, not disputing either the truth or the equity of this sentence, nor doubting of the accomplishment of it, inquire more particularly of the time when it should come to pass, and the signs of its approach, ver. 3. Observe, 1. Where they made this inquiry, privately, as he sat upon the mount of Olives; probably, he was returning to Bethany, and there sat down by the way to rest him. The mount of Olives directly faced the temple, and from thence he might have a full prospect of it at some distance. There he sat as a judge upon the bench; the temple and city before him as at the bar; and thus he passed sentence on them. We read, *Eze. xi. 23,* of the removing of the glory of the Lord from the temple to the mountain; so Christ, the great Shechinah, here removes to this mountain. 2. What the inquiry itself was: "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Here are three questions which they put. 1st. Some think these questions do all point at one and the same thing: the destruction of the temple, and the period of the Jewish church and nation, which Christ had himself spoken of as his coming, *ch. xvi. 28;* and which would be "the consummation of the age;" for so it may be read, the finishing of that dispensation; or, they thought the destruction of the temple must needs be the end of the world. If that house be laid waste, the world cannot stand; for the rabbis used to say, that the house of the sanctuary was one of the seven things for the sake of which the world was made; and they think, if so, the world will not survive the temple. 2nd. Others think their question, "When shall these things be?" refers to the destruction of Jerusalem; and the other two to the end of the world; or, Christ's coming may refer to his setting up his gospel kingdom; and the end of the world to the day of judgment. I rather incline to think, that their question looked no further than the event Christ now foretold; but it appears by other passages, they had very confused thoughts of future events; so that, perhaps, it is not possible to put any certain construction upon this question of theirs. But Christ in his answer, though he doth not expressly rectify the mistakes of his disciples, that must be done by the pouring out of the Spirit, yet looks further than their question, and instructs his church, not only concerning the great events of that age, the destruction of Jerusalem, but concerning his second coming at the end of time: which here he insensibly slides into a discourse of; and of that, it is plain, he speaks in the next chapter, which is a continuation of this sermon.

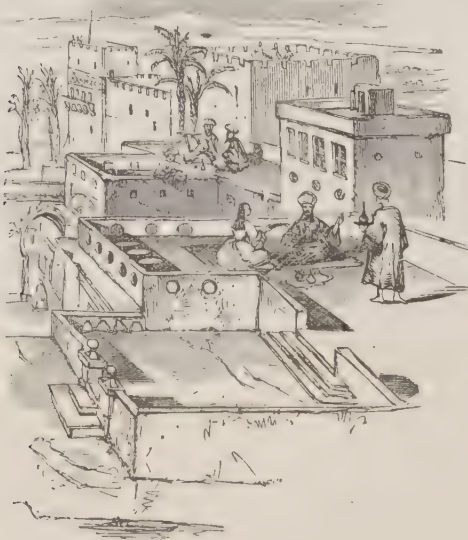
4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. 9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. 15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand;) 16 Then let them which be in Judæa, flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

xxiii. 39. Three periods are proposed as intended here—the destruction of Jerusalem, the second advent, and the restoration of the Jews.

xiv. 1. Much has been said on our Lord's final departure from the Temple, as ominous or symbolical of the calamities which were impending. The Jewish writings record that about forty years before the fall of the Temple the central light of the holy candlestick became extinct, the scarlet wool on the horns of the scapegoat lost

its colour, the lot of the Lord fell on the left hand, and the doors of the Temple, which were closed at night, were found open in the morning. About the same time the power to pronounce capital sentences was taken away, and the Sanhedrim lost its fixed place of sitting. All these things seemed to forebode greater disasters, and were so explained by the rabbins. It is exceedingly to be regretted that these words have not been left as the conclusion of chap. xiii. At the conclusion of his divine philippic, "Jesus went out and

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. 23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. 27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 28 For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.



HOUSETOPS.—See ver. 17.

The disciples had asked concerning the times when these things should be, and Christ gives them no answer to that, after what number of days and years his prediction should be accomplished; for it is not for us to know the times, Acts i. 7; but they had asked, "What shall be the sign?" and that question he answers fully, for we are concerned to understand the signs of the times, ch. xvi. 3. Now the prophecy primarily respects the events near at hand: the destruction of Jerusalem, the period of the Jewish church and state, the calling of the Gentiles, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world; but as the prophecies of the Old Testament, which have an immediate reference to the affairs of the Jews, and the revolutions of their state, yet under the figure of them, do certainly look further to the gospel church, and the kingdom of

the Messiah, and are so expounded in the New Testament;—and such expressions are found in those predictions as are peculiar thereto, and not applicable otherwise;—so this prophecy, under the type of Jerusalem's destruction, looks as far forward as the general judgment; and, as is usual in prophecies, some passages are most applicable to the type, and others to the anti-type; and towards the close, as usual, it points more particularly to the latter. And it is observable, that what Christ here saith to his disciples, tends more to engage their caution, than to satisfy their curiosity; more to prepare them for the events that should happen, than to give them a distinct idea of the events themselves. This is that good understanding of the times we should all covet, from thence to infer what Israel ought to do. And so this prophecy is of standing, lasting use to the church, and will be so to the end of time; for "the thing that has been is that which shall be," Eccl. i. 5—7, 9; and the series, connexion, and presages of events, are much the same still that they were then: so that upon the prophecy of this chapter, pointing at that event, moral prognostications may be made, and such constructions of the signs of the times, as the wise man's heart will know how to improve.

1. Christ here foretells the going forth of deceivers. He begins with a caution: "Take heed that no man deceive you." They expected to be told when these things should be, to be let into that secret; but this caution is a check to their curiosity: "What is that you? Mind you your duty, follow me, and be not seduced from following me." Those that are most inquisitive concerning the secret things which belong not to them, are easiest imposed upon by seducers, 2 Thes. ii. 3. The disciples, when they heard that the Jews, their most inveterate enemies, should be destroyed, might be in danger of falling into security; 'Nay,' saith Christ, 'you are more exposed other ways: seducers are more dangerous enemies to the church than persecutors.' Three times in this discourse he mentions the false prophets appearing, which was 1. A presage of Jerusalem's ruin. Justly were they that killed the true prophets, left to be ensnared by false prophets; and that crucified the true Messiah, left to be deceived and broken by false Christs, and pretended Messiahs. The appearing of these was the occasion of dividing that people into parties and factions, which made their ruin the more easy and speedy; and the sin of the many that were led aside by them, helped to fill the measure. 2. It was a trial to the disciples of Christ; and therefore agreeable to their state of probation, that they which are perfect may be made manifest. Now concerning these deceivers, observe here.

First. The pretences they should come under: Satan acts most mischievously when he appears as an angel of light. The colour of the greatest good is often the cover of the greatest evil. 1. There should appear false prophets, ver. 11, 24; the deceivers would pretend to Divine inspiration, an immediate mission, and a spirit of prophecy, when it was all a lie. Such there had been formerly, Jer. xxiii. 16; Eze. xiii. 6; as was foretold, Deu. xiii. 3. Some think the seducers here pointed to, were such as had been settled teachers in the church, and had gained reputation as such; but afterwards betrayed the truth they had taught, and revolved to error; and from such the danger is the greater, because least suspected. One false traitor in the garrison, may do more mischief than a thousand avowed enemies without. 2. There should appear false Christs, coming in Christ's name, ver. 5; assuming to themselves the name peculiar to him, and saying, "I am Christ," pseudo-Christs, ver. 24. There was at that time a general expectation of the appearing of the Messiah: they spoke of him, as he that should come, but when he did come, the body of the nation rejected him; which those who were ambitious of making themselves a name took advantage of, and set up for Christs. Josephus speaks of several such impostors, between this and the destruction of Jerusalem: one Theudas, that was defeated by Cuspius Fadus; another, by Felix; another, by Festus. Dositheus said he was the Christ foretold by Moses, Origen adv. Cels.: see Acts v. 36, 37; xxi. 28: Simon Magus pretended to be "the great power of God," Acts viii. 10. In after ages there have been such pretenders, one about an hundred years after Christ, that called himself Barcochebas, 'the son of a star,' but proved Barcosba, 'the son of a lie'; and about fifty years ago, Sabbati-Levi, set up for a Messiah in the Turkish empire, and was hugely caressed by the Jews, but in a short time his folly was made manifest: see Sir Paul Ricaut's History. The Popish religion doth in effect set up a false Christ: the pope comes in Christ's name as his vicar, but invades and usurps all his offices; and so is a rival with him, and as such an enemy to him, a deceiver, and an anti-Christ. 3. These false Christs, and false prophets, would have their agents and emissaries busy in all places, to draw people in to them, ver. 23; then when public troubles are great and threatening, and people will be catching at any thing that looks like deliverance, then Satan will take the advantage of imposing on them; then they will say, 'Lo, here is a Christ, or there is one, but do not mind them. The true Christ did not strive or cry, nor was it said of him, Lo here, or, Lo there, Lu. xvii. 21; therefore, if any man say so concerning him, look upon it as a temptation. The hermits, that place religion in a monastical life, say, "he is in the desert;" the priests, who make the consecrated wafer to be Christ, say he is *en tous rayons*,—"in the cupboards," "in the secret chambers;" lo, he is in this shrine, in that image. Thus some appropriate Christ's spiritual presence to one party or persuasion, as if they had the monopoly of Christ and Christianity, and the kingdom of Christ must stand and fall, must live and die with them; lo, he is in this church, in that council; whereas Christ is all in all, not here or there: but meets his people with a blessing, in every place where he records his name.

Secondly. The proofs they should offer for the making good of these pretences: "They shall shew great signs and wonders," ver. 24; not true miracles those are a Divine seal, and with those the doctrine of Christ stands confirmed, and therefore if any offer to draw us from that by signs and wonders, we must have recourse to that rule given of old, Deu. xiii. 1—3: "If the sign or wonder come to pass," yet follow not him that would draw you to serve other gods, or believe in other Christs, for "the Lord your God proveth you." But these were lying wonders, wrought by Satan, (God permitting him,) who is "the prince of the power of the air," 2 Thes. ii. 9. It is not said they shall work miracles, but "they shall shew great signs;" they are but a show; either they impose upon men's credulity by false narratives, or deceive their senses by tricks of legerdemain, or arts of divination, as the magicians of Egypt by their enchantments.

Thirdly. The success they should have in these attempts. 1. They "shall deceive many," ver. 5, and again, ver. 11. Note, The devil and his instrument may prevail far in deceiving poor souls. Few find the strait gate, but many are drawn into the broad way; many will be imposed upon by their signs and wonders, and many drawn in by the hopes of deliverance from their oppressions. Note, Neither miracles nor multitudes are certain signs of a true church, for all the world wonders after the beast, Rev. xiii. 3. 2. They shall deceive, if it were possible, "the very elect," ver. 24. This speaks, 1st. The strength of the delusion; it is such as many shall be carried away by, (so strong shall the stream be,) even those that were thought to stand fast. Men's knowledge, gifts, learning, eminent station, and long profession, will not secure them; but notwithstanding these, many will be deceived; nothing but the almighty grace of God, pursuant to his eternal purpose, will be a protection. 2nd. The safety

departed from the Temple;" with which words chap. xxiii. should have closed. The next fact, "and his disciples came to him," &c., though closely following in order of time, should have commenced the following chapter, if a chapter is needed at all. Josephus, in his "Antiquities" (book xv., chap. 11), gives a considerable account of the work of Herod upon the Temple here mentioned.

xxiv. 2. Of the actual fall of the Temple before the victorious arms of Titus, details are recorded by Josephus in his "Wars."

xxiv. 3. The word for "world" here properly signifies a period of time, and has no reference to the material structure of the globe. Hence various explanations have been suggested as to the period intended. Very likely the dispensation of Judaism was meant primarily.

xxiv. 5. Several facts occurred which fulfilled this prediction. For a single example see the account of Theudas in Josephus ("Antiq.," xi. 5).

of the elect, in the midst of this danger; which is taken for granted in that parenthesis, "if it were possible," plainly implying that it is not possible, for they are kept by the power of God, "that the purpose of God, according to the election, may stand." It is possible for those that have been enlightened to fall away, *Heb. vi. 4-6*, but not for those that were elect. If God's chosen ones should be deceived, God's choice would be defeated, which is not to be imagined, for whom he did predestinate, he called, justified, and glorified, *Rom. viii. 30*. They were given to Christ, and of all that were given to him, he will lose none, *Jno. x. 28*. Grotius will have this to be meant of the great difficulty of drawing the primitive Christians from their religion, and quotes it as used proverbially by Galen, when he would express a thing very difficult, and morally impossible, he saith, 'You may sooner draw away a Christian from Christ.'

Fourthly. The repeated cautions which our Saviour gives to his disciples to stand upon their guard against them. Therefore he gave them warning, that they might watch, *ver. 25*: "Behold, I have told you before." He that is told before where he will be assaulted, may save himself as the king of Israel did, *2 Kin. vi. 9, 10*. Note, Christ's warnings are designed to engage our watchfulness; and though the elect shall be preserved from delusion, yet they shall be preserved by the use of appointed means, and a due regard to the cautions of the Word: we are kept through faith: faith in Christ's word, which he has told us before. 1. We must not believe those that say, "Lo, here is Christ, or, Lo, he is there," *ver. 23*. We believe that the true Christ is at the right hand of God, and that his spiritual presence is where two or three are gathered together in his name; believe not those therefore who would draw you off from a Christ in heaven, by telling you he is any where on earth; or draw you off from the catholic church on earth, by telling you he is here or he is there: believe it not. Note, There is not a greater enemy to true faith than vain credulity; the simple believeth every word, and runs after every cry; *Μέμνησο ἀνθρώποι, — beware of believing.* 2. We must not go forth after those that say, "He is in the desert, or, He is in the secret chambers," *ver. 26*; we must not hearken to every empiric and pretender, nor follow every one that puts up the finger to point us to a new Christ and a new Gospel; "go not forth," for if you do, you are in danger of being taken by them: therefore keep out of harm's way; "be not carried about with every wind;" many a man's vain curiosity to go forth hath led him into a fatal apostasy; your strength at such a time is to sit still, "to have the heart established with grace."

11. *He foretells wars and great commotions among the nations*, *ver. 6, 7*. When Christ was born there was a universal peace in the empire; the temple of Janus was shut; but think not that Christ came to send or continue such a peace, *Lu. xii. 51*; no, his city and his wall are to be built even in troublesome times, and even wars shall forward his work. From the time that the Jews rejected Christ, and he left their house desolate, the sword did never depart from their house; the sword of the Lord was never quiet, because he had given it a charge against an hypocritical nation, and the people of his wrath, and by it brought ruin upon them. Here is,

First. A prediction of the event of the day; you will now shortly "hear of wars, and rumours of wars;" when wars are, they will be heard, for "every battle of the warrior is with confused noise," *Isa. ix. 5*. See how terrible it is, *Jer. iv. 19*: Thou hast heard, O my soul, the alarm of wars; even the quiet in the land, and the least inquisitive after new things, cannot but hear the rumours of wars. See what comes of refusing the Gospel; those that will not hear the messengers of peace, shall be made to hear the messengers of war. God has a sword ready to avenge the quarrel of his covenant, his new covenant. "Nation shall rise up against nation," that is, one part or province of the Jewish nation against another, one city against another, *2 Chr. xv. 5, 6*; and in the same province and city, one party or faction shall rise up against another, so that they shall be devoured by, and dashed in pieces against one another, *Isa. ix. 19, 21*.

Secondly. A prescription of the duty of the day: "See that ye be not troubled." Is that possible? To hear such sad news, and not be troubled? Yet where the heart is fixed, trusting in God, it is kept in peace, peace; and is not afraid; no, not of the evil tidings of wars and rumours of wars; no, not the noise of "Arm, arm." "Be not troubled," *Μη θροισθε*; be not put into confusion or commotion; not put into throes, as a woman with child, by a fright. "See that ye be not," *ὑμᾶς*. Note, There is need of constant care and watchfulness to keep trouble from the heart, when there are wars abroad; and it is against the mind of Christ that his people should have troubled hearts, even in troublous times. We must not be troubled, for two reasons: 1. Because we are bid to expect this. The Jews must be punished, ruin must be brought upon them; by this the justice of God and the honour of the Redeemer must be asserted, and therefore "all those things must come to pass;" the word is gone out of God's mouth, and it shall be accomplished in its season. Note, The consideration of the unchangeableness of the Divine counsels, which govern all events, would compose and quiet our spirits, whatever happens. God is but performing the thing that is appointed for us, and our inordinate trouble is an interpretative quarrel with that appointment. Let us therefore acquiesce, because these things must come to pass, not only *necessitate decreti*,—as the product of the Divine counsel, but *necessitate medii*,—as a means in order to a further end. The old house must be taken down (though it cannot be done without noise, and dust, and danger,) ere the new fabric can be erected: the things that are shaken (and ill shaken they were) must be removed, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain, *Heb. xii. 27*. 2. Because we are still to expect worse: "The end is not yet." The end of time is not, and while time lasts we must expect trouble, and that the end of one affliction will be but the beginning of another; or, the end of these troubles is not yet, there must be more judgments than one made use of to bring down the Jewish power. More vials of wrath must yet be poured out; there is but one woe passed, more woes are yet to come, more arrows are yet to be spent upon them out of God's quiver; therefore be not troubled, do not give way to fear and trouble, sink not under the present burthen, but rather gather in all the strength and spirit you have to encounter what is yet before you. Be not troubled to hear of wars and rumours of wars, for then what will become of you when the famines and pestilences come? If it be to us a vexation but to understand the report, *Isa. xxviii. 19*, what will it be to feel the stroke when it toucheth the bone and the flesh? If running with the footmen weary us, how shall we contend with horses? And if we be frightened at a little brook in our way, what shall we do in the swellings of Jordan? *Jer. xii. 5*.

III. *He foretells other judgments more immediately sent of God*: "Famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes." Famine is often the effect of war, and pestilence of famine. These were the three judgments which David was to choose one out of, and he was in a strait, for he knew not which was the worst; but what dreadful desolations will they make when they all pour in together upon a people? Besides war, and that is enough, there shall be,

First. Famine, signified by the black horse under the third seal, *Rev. vi. 5, 6*. We read of a famine in Judea, not long after Christ's time, which was very impoverishing, *Acts xi. 28, 29*; but the sorest famine was in Jerusalem during the siege. See *Lam. iv. 9, 10*.

xxiv. 6. A simple catalogue of events answering to the details of our Lord's prophecy would require more space than we can allot. The reader would do well to refer to such collections as those which have been made by Dr. Lardner, Bishop Newton, and Dr. Keith, in their published works.

xxiv. 9. The introduction of this premonition shows that the persecutions of the Church of Christ were to commence before the fall of the Temple and nation of the Jews. It was so, for, not to

Secondly. Pestilences, signified by the pale horse, and 'death upon him, and the grave at his heels, under the fourth seal, *Rev. vi. 7, 8*. This destroys without distinction, and in a little time lays heaps upon heaps.

Thirdly. Earthquakes in divers places, or from place to place, pursuing those that flee from them, as they did from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, *Zec. xiv. 5*. Great desolations have sometimes been made by earthquakes, of late, and formerly; they have been the death of many and the terror of more. In the apocalyptic visions, it is observable, that earthquakes bode good, and no evil to the church, *Rev. vi. 12*; compare *ver. 15*; *xi. 12, 13, 19*; *xvi. 17-19*. When God shakes terribly the earth, *Isa. ii. 21*, it is to shake the wicked out of it, *Job xxxviii. 13*, and to introduce the desire of all nations, *Hag. ii. 6, 7*; but here they are spoken of as dreadful judgments, and yet but "the beginning of sorrows," *ἀρχὴ πένθους*, of travailing pains, which grow even the longer the more quick and violent. Note, When God judgeth, he will overcome; when he begins in wrath, he will make a full end, *1 Sam. iii. 12*. When we look forward to the eternity of misery that is before the obstinate refusers of Christ and his Gospel, we may truly say, concerning the greatest temporal judgments, they are but the beginning of sorrows; as bad as things are with them, there is worse behind.

IV. *He foretells the persecution of his own people and ministers, and a general apostasy, and decay in religion thereupon*, *ver. 9, 10, 12, 13*. Observe,

First. The cross itself foretold, *ver. 9*. Note, Of all future events we are as much concerned, though commonly as little desirous, to know of our own sufferings as of any thing else. Then when famines and pestilences prevail, then they shall impute them to the Christians, and make that a pretence for persecuting them; *Christianos ad leones*,—away with Christians to the lions. Christ had told his disciples, when he first sent them out, what hard things they should suffer; but they had hitherto experienced little of it, and therefore he minds them of it again, that the less they had suffered, the more was behind to be filled up, *Col. i. 24*. 1. They shall be afflicted with bonds and imprisonments, cruel mockings and scourgings, as blessed Paul, *2 Cor. xi. 23-25*; not killed outright, but killed all the day long, in deaths often, killed so as to feel themselves die, made a spectacle to the world, *1 Cor. iv. 9, 11*. 2. They shall be killed; so cruel are the church's enemies, that nothing less will satisfy them than the blood of the saints, which they thirst after, suck, and shed like water. 3. They "shall be hated of all nations for Christ's name's sake," as he had told them before, *ch. x. 22*. The world was generally leavened with an enmity and malignity to Christians. The Jews, though spiteful to the heathen, yet were never persecuted by them, so as the Christians were; they were hated by the Jews that were dispersed among the nations, were the common butt of the world's malice. What shall we think of this world, when the best men had the worst usage in it? It is the cause that makes the martyr, and comforts him; it was for Christ's sake that they were thus hated. Their professing and preaching his name incensed the nations so much against them; the devil finding a fatal shock thereby given to his kingdom, and that his time was likely to be short, came down, having great wrath.

Secondly. The offence of the cross, *ver. 10, 12*. Satan thus carries on his interest by force of arms, though Christ at length will bring glory to himself out of the sufferings of his people and ministers. Three ill effects of persecution are here foretold: 1. The apostasy of some. When the profession of Christianity begins to cost men dear, "then shall many be offended;" shall first fall out with, and then fall off from, their profession; they will begin to pick quarrels with their religion, sit loose to it, grow weary of it, and at length revolt from it. Note, 1st. It is no new thing (though it is a strange thing) for those that have known the way of righteousness to turn aside out of it. Paul often complains of deserters, who began well, but something hindered them; they were with us, but go out from us, because never truly of us, *1 Jno. ii. 19*. We are told of it before. 2nd. Suffering times are shaking times, and those fall in the storm that stood in fair weather, like the stony ground, *ch. xii. 21*. Many will follow Christ in the sunshine that will shift for themselves, and leave him to do so too in the cloudy dark day. They like their religion while they can have it cheap, and sleep with it in a whole skin; but if their profession cost them any thing, quit it presently. 2. The malignity of others. When persecution is in fashion, envy, enmity, and malice are strangely diffused into the minds of men by contagion; and charity, tenderness, and moderation are looked upon as singularities, which make a man like a speckled bird; then they "shall betray one another," that is, those that have treacherously deserted their religion, shall hate and betray those who adhere to it, for whom they have pretended friendship; apostates have commonly been the most bitter and violent persecutors. Note, Persecuting times are discovering times: wolves in sheep's clothing will then throw off their disguise, and appear wolves. They "shall betray one another and hate one another." The times must needs be perilous when treachery and hatred, two of the worst things that can be, because directly contrary to two of the best, truth and love, shall have the ascendancy. This seems to refer to the barbarous treatment which the several contending factions among the Jews gave to one another; and justly were they who ate up God's people as they ate bread, left thus to bite and devour one another, till they were consumed one of another: or it may refer to the mischiefs done to Christ's disciples, by those that were nearest them, as *ch. x. 21*: "the brother shall deliver up the brother to death." 3. The general declining and cooling of most, *ver. 12*. In seducing times, when false prophets arise, in persecuting times, when the saints are hated, expect these two things: 1st. The abounding of iniquity. Though the world always lies in wickedness, yet there are some times in which it may be said, that iniquity doth in a special manner abound; as when it is more extensive than ordinary, as in the old world, when all flesh had corrupted their way; and when it is more excessive than ordinary, when violence is risen up to a rod of wickedness, *Eze. vii. 11*: so that hell seems to be broke loose in blasphemies against God, and enmities to the saints. 2nd. The abating of love. This is the consequence of the former, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold;" understand it in general of true serious godliness, which is all summed up in love: it is too common for professors of religion to grow cool in their profession, when the wicked are hot in their wickedness; as the church of Ephesus, in bad times, left her first love, *Rev. ii. 2, 4*; or more particularly of brotherly love. When iniquity abounds,—seducing iniquity, persecuting iniquity,—this grace commonly waxes cold; Christians begin to be shy and suspicious one of another, affections are alienated, distances created, parties made, and so love comes to nothing. The devil is the accuser of the brethren, not only to their enemies, which makes persecuting iniquity abound, but one to another, which makes the love of many to wax cold.

This gives a melancholy prospect of the times, that there shall be such a great decay of love; but, *First*. It is of the love of many, not of all. In the worst of times God has his remnant, that hold fast their integrity and retain their zeal, as in Elijah's days, when he thought himself left alone. *Secondly*. This love is grown cold, but not dead; it abates, but is not quite cast off. There is life in the root, which will shew itself when the winter is past. The new nature may wax cold, but shall not wax old, for then it would decay and vanish away.

Thirdly. Comfort administered in reference to this offence of the cross, for

speak of local persecutions and oppressions, the great persecutions under Nero, in which so many suffered so dreadfully, preceded the victories of Titus and Vespasian. For these see Tacitus ("Annals," book xv., sec. 44).

xxiv. 11. As a specimen of what took place during the crash of Jerusalem and the Jews, see what Josephus reports in his "Wars" (book vi., chap. 5).

xxiv. 14. The word for "world" here is of course not the same

the support of the Lord's people under it, ver. 13: "He that endures to the end shall be saved." 1. It is comfortable to those who wish well to the cause of Christ in general, that though many are offended, yet some shall endure to the end; when we see so many drawing back, we are ready to fear that the integrity of Christ will sink for want of supporters, and his name be left and forgotten for want of some to make profession of it; but "even at this time there is a remnant according to the election of grace," Rom. xi. 5. It is spoken of the same time that this prophecy has reference to; a remnant who "are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but believe" and persevere "to the saving of the soul;" they endure "to the end," to the end of their lives, to the end of their present state of probation, or to the end of these suffering, trying times; to the last encounter, though they should be called to resist unto blood. 2. It is comfortable to those who do thus endure to the end, and suffer for their constancy, that they shall be saved. Perseverance wins the crown through free grace, and shall wear it: they shall "be saved;" perhaps they may be delivered out of their troubles, and comfortably survive them in this world; but it is the eternal salvation that is here intended: they that endure to the end of their days, shall then receive the end of their faith and hope, even the salvation of their souls, 1 Pet. i. 9; Rom. ii. 7; Rev. ii. 6. The crown of glory will make amends for all, and a believing regard to that will enable us to choose rather to die at a stake with the persecuted, than to live in a palace with the persecutors.

V. *He foretels the preaching of the Gospel in all the world*, ver. 14. "This Gospel shall be preached, and then shall the end come." Observe here, 1. It is called the "Gospel of the kingdom," because it reveals the kingdom of grace, which leads to the kingdom of glory; sets up Christ's kingdom in this world, and secures ours in the other world. 2. This Gospel, sooner or later, is to be preached in all the world, to every creature, and all nations disciplined by it; for in it Christ is to be salvation to the ends of the earth: for this end the gift of tongues was the firstfruits of the Spirit. 3. The Gospel is preached "for a witness unto all nations," that is, a faithful declaration of the mind and will of God concerning the duty which God requires from man, and the recompence which man may expect from God. It is a record, 1 Jno. v. 11; it is a witness for those who believe; that they shall be saved; and against those who persist in unbelief, that they shall be damned: see Mar. xvi. 16. But how doth this come in here?

First. It is intimated that the Gospel should be, if not heard, yet at least heard of, throughout the then known world, before the destruction of Jerusalem; that the Old Testament church should not be quite dissolved till the New Testament was pretty well settled; had got considerable footing, and began to make some figure: better is the face of a corrupt degenerate church than none at all. Within forty years after Christ's death, the sound of the Gospel was gone forth to the ends of the earth, Rom. x. 18. St. Paul "fully preached the Gospel from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum;" and the other apostles were not idle. The persecuting of the saints at Jerusalem helped to disperse them, so that they "went every where preaching the Word," Acts viii. 1, 4; and when the tidings of the Redeemer are sent over all the parts of the world, then shall come the end of the Jewish state. Thus that which they thought to prevent, by putting Christ to death, they thereby procured; all men believed on him, and the Romans came and took away their place and nation, Jno. xi. 48. Paul speaks of the Gospel being come to all the world, and preached to every creature, Col. i. 6, 23.

Secondly. It is likewise intimated, that even in times of temptation, trouble, and persecution, the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached and propagated, and shall force its way through the greatest opposition; though the enemies of the church grow very hot, and many of her friends very cool, yet the Gospel shall be preached. And even then, when many fall by the sword, and by flame, and many do wickedly, and are corrupted by flatteries, yet then the people that do know their God shall be strengthened to do the greatest exploits of all, in instructing many: see Dan. xi. 32, 33; and see an instance, Phil. i. 12-14.

Thirdly. That which seems chiefly intended here is, that the end of the world shall be then, and not till then, when the Gospel has done its work in the world. The Gospel shall be preached, and that work carried on when you are dead; so that all nations, first or last, shall have either the enjoyment or the refusal of the Gospel; and "then cometh the end," when the kingdom shall be delivered up to God, even the Father. When the mystery of God shall be finished, the mystical body completed, and the nations either converted and saved, or convicted and silenced by the Gospel, "and then shall the end come," which he had said before, ver. 6, 7; "not yet," not till those intermediate counsels be fulfilled. The world shall stand as long as any of God's chosen ones remain uncalled; but when they are all gathered in, it will be set on fire presently.

VI. *He foretels more particularly the ruin that was coming upon the people of the Jews*, their city, temple, and nation, ver. 15, &c. Here he comes more closely to answer their question concerning the desolation of the temple; and what he said here would be of use to his disciples, both for their conduct and for their comfort, in reference to that great event; and here he describes the several steps of that calamity, such as is usual in war.

First. The Romans setting up "the abomination of desolation in the holy place," ver. 15. Now, 1. Some understand by this an image or statue, set up in the temple by some of the Roman governors, which was very offensive to the Jews, provoked them to rebel, and so brought the desolation upon them. The image of Jupiter Olympius, which Antiochus caused to be set up upon the altar of God, is called Βωδάνημα ἐπιώρυσεως,—"the abomination of desolation," the very word here used by the historian, 1 Mac. i. 54. Since the captivity in Babylon, nothing was or could be more distasteful to the Jews than an image in the holy place, as appeared by the mighty opposition they made when Caligula offered to set up his effigies there; which had been of fatal consequence if it had not been prevented, and the matter accommodated by the conduct of Petronius; but Herod did set up an eagle over the temple gate; and some say, the effigies of Titus were set up in the temple. 2. Others choose to expound it by the parallel place, Lu. xxi. 20; "when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies," Jerusalem was the holy city, Canaan the holy land; the mount Moriah, which lay about Jerusalem, for its nearness to the temple, was, they thought, in a particular manner, holy ground: on the country lying round about Jerusalem, the Roman army was encamped; that was the abomination that made desolate. The land of an enemy is said to be the land which thou abhorrest, Isa. vii. 16; so an enemy's army to a weak but wilful people, may well be called the abomination. Now this is said to be "spoken of by Daniel the prophet," who spoke more plainly of the Messiah and his kingdom, than any of the Old Testament prophets did: he speaks of an abomination making desolate, which should be set up by Antiochus, Dan. xi. 31; xii. 11; but this that our Saviour refers to, we have in the message that the angel brought him, Dan. ix. 27, of what should come at the end of seventy weeks, long after the former, "for the overspreading of abominations," or, as the margin reads it, "with the abominable armies," (which comes home to this here) "he shall make it desolate." Armies of idolaters may well be called abominable armies; and some think the tumults, insurrections, and abominable factions and seditions in the city and temple, may

at least be taken in as part of "the abomination making desolate." Christ refers them to that prophecy of Daniel, that they might see how the ruin of their city and temple was spoken of in the Old Testament, which would both confirm his prediction, and take off the odium of it. They might likewise from thence gather the time of it; soon after the cutting off of Messiah the Prince: the sin that procured it, their rejecting him; and the certainty of it, it is a declaration determined. As Christ by his precepts confirmed the law, so by his predictions he confirmed the prophecies of the Old Testament, and it will be of good use to compare both together. Reference being here had to a prophecy, which is commonly dark and obscure, Christ inserts this memorandum, "Whoso readeth, let him understand;" whoso readeth this memorandum, let him understand that it is to have its accomplishment now shortly in the desolations of Jerusalem. Note, Those that read the Scriptures should labour to understand the Scriptures, else their reading is to little purpose: we cannot use that which we do not understand; see Jno. v. 39; Acts viii. 30. The angel that delivered this prophecy to Daniel, stirred him up to know and understand, Dan. ix. 25; and we must not despair of understanding even dark prophecies; the great New Testament prophecy is called a revelation, not a secret. Now things revealed belong to us, and therefore must be humbly and diligently searched into; or, let him understand, not only the Scriptures, which speak of those things, but by the Scriptures let him understand the times, 1 Chr. xii. 32. "Let him observe and take notice," so some read it; let him be assured, that notwithstanding the vain hopes with which the deluded people feed themselves, the abominable armies will make desolate.

Secondly, The means of preservation which thinking men should betake themselves to, ver. 16, 20: "Then let them which be in Judea flee." Then conclude there is no other way to help yourselves but by flying for the same. We may take this, 1. As a prediction of the ruin itself, that it should be irresistible; that it would be impossible for the stoutest hearts to make head against it, or contend with it, but they must have recourse to the last shift of getting out of the way. It speaks that which Jeremiah so much insisted upon, but in vain, when Jerusalem was besieged by the Chaldeans, that it would be to no purpose to resist, but it was their wisdom to yield and capitulate; so Christ here, to show how fruitless it would be to stand it out, bids every one make the best of his way. 2. We may take it as a direction to the followers of Christ what to do; not to say a confederacy with those who fought and warred against the Romans, for the preservation of their city and nation, only that they might consume the wealth of both upon their lusts, (for to this very affair, the struggles of the Jews against the Roman power, some years before their final overthrow, the apostle refers, Jas. iv. 1-3;) but let them acquiesce in the decree that was gone forth, and with all speed quit the city and country, as they would quit a falling house, or a sinking ship, as Lot quitted Sodom, and Israel the tents of Dathan and Abiram. He shews them: 1st. Whither they must flee: from Judea to the mountains; not the mountains round about Jerusalem, but those in the remote corners of the land; which would be some shelter to them, not so much by their strength as by their secrecy. Israel is said to be scattered upon the mountains, 2 Chr. xviii. 16, and see Heb. xi. 38. It would be safer among the lions' dens, and the mountains of the leopards, than among the seditious Jews, or the enraged Romans. Note, In times of imminent peril and danger, it is not only lawful, but duty, to seek our own preservation by all good and honest means; and if God opens a door of escape, we ought to make our escape, otherwise we do not trust God, but tempt him. There may be a time when even those that are in Judea, where God is known, and his name is great, must flee to the mountains; and while we only go out of the way of danger, not out of the way of duty, we may trust God to provide a dwelling for his outcasts, Isa. xvi. 4, 5. In times of public calamity, when it is manifest we cannot be serviceable at home, and may be safe abroad, Providence calls us to make our escape: he that flees may fight again. 2nd. What haste they must make, ver. 17, 18. The life will be in danger, in imminent danger; the scourge will slay suddenly; and therefore, he that is on the housetop when alarm comes, let him not come down into the house, to look after his effects there, but go the next way down to make his escape; and so he that shall be in the field, will find it his wisest course to take to his heels immediately, and not to return to fetch his clothes, or the wealth of his house, for two reasons: First. Because the time which would be taken up in packing up his things would delay his flight. Note, When death is at the door, delays are dangerous; it was the charge to Lot, "Look not behind thee." Those that are convinced of the misery of a sinful state, and the ruin that attends them in that state, and consequently of the necessity of their fleeing to Christ, must take heed, lest after all these convictions, they perish eternally by delays. Secondly. Because the carrying of his clothes and other his movables and valuables with him, would but burden him and clog his flight. The Syrians in their flight, cast away their garments, 2 Kin. vii. 15. At such a time we must be thankful, if our lives be given us for a prey, though we can save nothing, Jer. xlv. 4, 5; for the life is more than meat, ch. vi. 25. Those who carried off least, were safest in their flight: *Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator*,—"the penniless traveller can lose nothing by robbers." It was to his own disciples that Christ recommended this forgetfulness of their house and clothes, who had an habitation in heaven; treasure there, and durable clothing, which the enemy could not plunder them of: *Omnia mea mecum porto*,—"I have all my property with me," said Bias the philosopher, in his flight empty-handed. He that has grace in his heart carries his all along with him, when stripped of all. Now those to whom Christ said this immediately, did not live to see this dismal day; none of all the twelve but John only: they needed not to be hid in the mountains; Christ hid them in heaven: but they left the direction to their successors in profession, who pursued it, and it was of use to them; for when the Christians in Jerusalem and Judea saw the ruin coming on, they all retired to a town called Pella, on the other side Jordan, where they were safe; so that of the many thousands that perished in the destruction of Jerusalem, there was not so much as one Christian; see Euseb. Eccles. Hist. l. iii. c. 5. Thus "the prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself," Pr. xxii. 3; Heb. xi. 7. This warning was not kept private; St. Matthew's Gospel was published long before that destruction, so that others might have taken the advantage of it; but their perishing through their unbelief of this, was a figure of their eternal perishing through their unbelief of the warnings Christ gave concerning the wrath to come.

Thirdly. Whom it would go hard with at that time, ver. 19; "Woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck." To this same event that saying of Christ at his death refers, Lu. xxiii. 29: they shall say, "Blessed are the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck." Happy are they that have no children to see the murder of; but most unhappy they whose wombs are then bearing, their paps then giving suck; they of all other will be in the most melancholy circumstances. 1. To them the famine would be most grievous, when they should see the tongue of the sucking child cleaving to the roof of his mouth for thirst, and themselves by the calamity made more cruel than the sea monsters, Lam. iv. 3, 4. 2. To them the sword would be most terrible, when it is in the hand of worse than brutal rage. It is a direful midwifery, when the women with child came to be ripped up by the enraged conqueror, 2 Kin. xv. 16; Hos. xiii. 16; Am. i. 13; or the children brought

in the Greek as the one found in verse 3. Here the habitable world is meant.

xxiv. 15. The reference is to Dan. ix. 27, xii. 11, from which last it appears that "the abomination of desolation" signifies "the abomination which makes desolate." Whether one or more events are included in the prophecy of Daniel is disputed by expositors but it is generally agreed that here the allusion is to the profanation of the Temple by the Romans. The words "whoso readeth let him under-

stand" are not those of Jesus, as Chrysostom and others have supposed, but those of the evangelist inviting special attention.

xxiv. 16. Eusebius records in his "History" (book iii., chap. 5), that before the fall of the city the church at Jerusalem, in obedience to a Divine revelation, retired to Pella beyond the Jordan. This was in the hilly district, which is sometimes called by the name of Perea.

xxiv. 20. Travelling in winter would expose the fugitives to great hardships; and flight on the Sabbath-day would not be much less

forth to the murderers, *How ix. 13. 3.* To them also the flight would be most afflictive: the woman with child cannot make haste, or go far; the sucking child cannot be left behind, or if it should, can a woman forget it, that she should not have compassion on it? And if it be carried along, it retards the mother's flight, and so exposeth her life, and is in danger of Mephibosheth's fate, who was lamed by a fall he got in his nurse's flight, *2 Sam. iv. 4.*

Fourthly. What they should pray against at that time, "that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the sabbath day," ver. 20. Observe, in general, it becomes Christ's disciples, in times of public trouble and calamity, to be much in prayer: that is a salve for every sore, never out of season, but in a special manner seasonable when we are distressed on every side. There is no remedy but you must flee, the decree is gone forth: so that God will not be entreated to take away his wrath; no, not if Noah, Daniel, and Job stood before him: "Let it suffice thee: speak no more unto me of this matter," but labour to make the best of that which is, and when you cannot in faith pray that you may not be forced to flee: yet pray that the circumstances of it may be graciously ordered, that though the cup may not pass from you, yet the extremity of the judgment may be prevented. Note, God has the disposing of the circumstances of events, which sometimes make a great alteration one way or other; and therefore in those our eyes must be ever towards him. Christ's bidding them pray for this favour, intimates his purpose of granting it to them; and in a general calamity we must not overlook a circumstantial kindness, but see and own wherein it might have been worse. Christ bids his disciples now and still to pray for themselves and their friends, that whenever they were forced to flee, it might be in the most convenient time. Note, When trouble is in prospect, at a great distance, it is good to lay in a stock of prayers beforehand. They must pray, 1. That their flight, if it were the will of God, might not be in the winter, when the days are short, the weather cold, the ways dirty, and therefore travelling very uncomfortable; especially for whole families. Paul nastens Timothy to come to him before winter, *2 Tim. iv. 21.* Note, Though the ease of the body is not to be mainly consulted, it ought to be duly considered; though we must take what God sends, and when he sends it; yet we may pray against bodily inconveniences, and are encouraged to do so, in that "the Lord is for the body." 2. That it might not be on the sabbath day; not on the Jewish sabbath, because travelling then would give offence to them, who were angry with the disciples for plucking the ears of corn on that day; not on the Christian sabbath, because being forced to travel on that day would be a grief to themselves. This intimates Christ's design, that a weekly sabbath should be observed in his church, after the preaching of the Gospel to all the world. We read not of any of the ordinances of the Jewish church which were purely ceremonial that Christ ever expressed any care about, because they were all to vanish; but for the sabbath he often shewed a concern. It intimates likewise that the sabbath is ordinarily to be observed as a day of rest from travel, and worldly labour; but that, according to his own explication of the fourth commandment, works of necessity were lawful on the sabbath day, as this of fleeing from an enemy, to save our lives: had it not been lawful, he would have said, Whatever becomes of you, do not flee on the sabbath day, but abide by it, though you die by it, for we must not commit the least sin to escape the greatest trouble; but it intimates likewise, that it is very uneasy and uncomfortable to a good man to be taken off, by any work of necessity, from the solemn service and worship of God on the sabbath day. We should pray that we may have quiet, undisturbed sabbaths, and may have no other work but sabbath work to do on sabbath days; that we may attend upon the Lord without distraction. It was desirable, that if they must flee, they might have the benefit and comfort of one sabbath more, to help to bear their charges. To flee in the winter, is uncomfortable to the body; but to flee on the sabbath day, is so to the soul; and the more so when it remembers former sabbaths, as *Ps. xlii. 4.*

Fifthly. The greatness of the troubles which should immediately ensue, ver. 21: "Then shall be great tribulation;" then when the measure of iniquity is full; then when the servants of God are sealed and secured, then comes the troubles; nothing can be done against Sodom, till Lot is entered into Zoar; and then look for fire and brimstone presently. There shall be great tribulation; great indeed, when within the city plague and famine raged, and, worse than either, faction and division; so that every man's sword was against his fellow: then and there it was, that the hands of the pitiful women sod their own children: without the city was the Roman army, ready to swallow them up with a particular rage against them, not only as Jews, but as rebellious Jews. War was the only one of the three sore judgments that David excepted against; but that was it by which the Jews were ruined, and famine and pestilence in extremity besides. *Josephus's History of the Wars of the Jews*, has in it more tragical passages than perhaps any history whatsoever. 1. It was a desolation unparalleled: "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be;" many a city and kingdom has been made desolate; but never any with a desolation like this. Let not daring sinners think that God has done his worst; he can heat the furnace seven times, and yet seven times hotter, and will, when he sees greater and still greater abominations. The Romans when they destroyed Jerusalem, were degenerated from the honour and virtue of their ancestors, which had made even their victories easy to the vanquished; and the wilfulness and obstinacy of the Jews themselves contributed much to the increase of the tribulation. No wonder the ruin of Jerusalem was an unparalleled ruin, when the sin of Jerusalem was an unparalleled sin—even their crucifying Christ. The nearer any people are to God in profession and privileges, the greater and heavier will his judgments be upon them, if they abuse those privileges, and be false to that profession, *Am. iii. 2.* 2. It was a desolation, which if it should continue long, would be intolerable; so that "no flesh should be saved," ver. 22; so triumphantly would death ride, in so many dismal shapes, and with such attendants, that there would be no escaping, but first or last all would be cut off: he that escaped one sword, would fall by another, *Isa. xxiv. 17, 18.* The computation which Josephus makes of those that were slain in several places amounts to above two millions. "No flesh shall be saved;" he doth not say, "no soul shall be saved;" for the destruction of the flesh may be for the saving of the spirit, in the day of the Lord Jesus; but temporal lives will be sacrificed so profusely, that one would think, if it last awhile, it would make a full end. But here is one word of comfort in the midst of all this terror, that "for the elect's sake these days shall be shortened;" not shorter than what God had determined, for "that determined shall be poured upon the desolate," *Dan. ix. 27*, but shorter than what he might have decreed, if he had dealt with them according to their sins; shorter than what the enemy designed, who would have cut all off, if God who made use of them to serve his own purpose, had not set bounds to their wrath; shorter than one that judged by human probabilities would have imagined. Note, 1st. In times of common calamity, God manifests his favour to the elect remnant; his jewels, whom he will then make up: his peculiar treasure, which he will secure when the lumber is abandoned to the spoiler. 2nd. The shortening of calamities is a kindness God often grants for the elect's sake. Instead of complaining that our afflictions last so long, if we consider our defects, we shall see reason to be thankful that they do not last always; when it is bad with us, it becomes

us to say, 'Blessed be God it is no worse; blessed be God it is not hell, endless and remediless misery.' It was a lamenting church that said, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed;" and it is for the sake of the elect, lest their spirit should fail before him, if he should contend for ever; and lest they should be tempted to put forth, if not their heart, yet their hand to iniquity. And now comes in the repeated caution, which was opened before, to take heed of being ensnared by false Christs and false prophets, ver. 23, &c. who would promise them deliverance, as the lying prophets in Jeremiah's time, *Jer. xiv. 13; xxiii. 16, 17; xxvii. 19; xxviii. 2*, but would delude them. Times of great trouble used to be times of great temptation; and therefore we have need to double our guard then. If they shall say, 'Here is a Christ, or there is one, that shall deliver us from the Romans,' do not heed them; it is all but talk; such a deliverance is not to be expected; and therefore not such a deliverance.

VII. He foretells the sudden spreading of the Gospel in the world, about the time of these great events, ver. 27, 28: "As the lightning comes out of the east, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." It comes in here as an antidote against the poison of those seducers, that said, "Lo, here is Christ, or, Lo, he is there;" compare *Lu. xvii. 23, 24*. Harken not to them, for the coming of the Son of man will be as the lightning.

First. It seems primarily to be meant of his coming to set up his spiritual kingdom in the world. Where the Gospel came in its light and power, there the Son of man came, and in a way quite contrary to the fashion of the seducers and false Christs, who came creeping in the desert, or the secret chambers, *2 Tim. iii. 6*; no, Christ comes not with such a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. The Gospel would be remarkable for two things:

1. Its swift spreading—it shall fly as the lightning; so shall the Gospel be preached and propagated. The Gospel is light, *1 Jo. i. 9*; and it is not in this as the lightning, that it is a sudden flash, and away; for it is sunlight, and daylight; but it is as lightning in these respects: 1st. It is light from heaven as the lightning. It is God, and not man, that sends the lightnings, and summons them that they may go and say, "here we are," *Job xxxviii. 35*; it is God that directs it, *Job xxxvii. 3*. To man it is one of nature's miracles, above his power to effect; and one of nature's mysteries, above his skill to account for, but it is from above: "his lightnings enlightened the world," *Ps. xcvi. 4*. 2nd. It is visible and conspicuous as the lightning. The seducers carried on their depths of Satan in the desert, and the secret chambers, shunning the light: heretics were called *lucifuge*,—"light-shunners." But truth seeks no corners, however it may sometimes be forced into them, as the woman in the wilderness, though clothed with the sun, *Rev. xii. 1, 6*. Christ preached his Gospel openly, *1 Jo. xviii. 20*, and his apostles on the housetop, *ch. x. 27*, not in a corner, *Acts xxvi. 26*. See *Ps. xcvi. 1*. It was sudden and surprising to the world as the lightning. The Jews indeed had predictions of it, but to the Gentiles it was altogether unlooked for, and came upon them with an unaccountable energy, or ever they were aware: it was light out of darkness, *ch. iv. 16; 2 Cor. iv. 6*. We read of the discomfiting of armies by lightning, *2 Sam. xxii. 15; Ps. cxlv. 6*. The powers of darkness were dispersed and vanquished by the Gospel lightning. 4th. It spread far and wide, and that quickly, and irresistibly, like the lightning, which comes (suppose) out of the east, (Christ is said to ascend from the east, *Rev. vii. 2; Isa. xli. 2*), and lighteneth to the west. The propagating of Christianity to so many distant countries, of divers languages, by such unlikely instruments, destitute of all secular advantages, and in the face of so much opposition, and this in so short a time, was one of the greatest miracles that was ever wrought for the confirmation of it. Here was Christ upon his white horse, noting speed as well as strength, and going on conquering and to conquer, *Rev. vi. 2*. Gospel light rose with the sun, and went with the same, so that the beams of it reached to the ends of the earth, *Rom. x. 18*, compare with *Ps. xix. 3, 4*. Though it was fought against, it would never be cooped up in a desert, or in a secret place, as the seducers were, but by this, according to Gamaliel's rule, proved itself to be of God, that it could not be overthrown, *Acts v. 38, 39*. Christ speaks of shining unto the west, because it spread most effectually into those countries which lay west from Jerusalem, as Mr. Herbert observes in his *Church Militant*. How soon did the Gospel lightning reach this island of Great Britain; Tertullian, who wrote in the second century, takes notice of it: *Britannorum inaccessible Romanis loca Christo tamen subdita*,—"the fastnesses of Britain, though inaccessible to the Romans, were occupied by Jesus Christ." This was the Lord's doing.

2. Another thing remarkable concerning the Gospel, was its strange success in those places to which it was spread; it gathered in multitudes, not by external compulsion, but as it were by such a natural instinct and inclination, as brings the birds of prey to their prey, "for where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together," ver. 28: where Christ is preached, souls will be gathered in to him. The lifting up of Christ from the earth, that is, the preaching of Christ crucified, which one would think should drive all men from him, will draw all men to him, *1 Jo. xii. 32*: according to Jacob's prophecy, that to him shall the gathering of the people be, *Gen. xlix. 10*: see *Isa. lx. 8*. The eagles will be where the carcass is, for it is food for them, it is a feast for them; "where the slain are, there is she," *Job xxxix. 30*. And eagles are said to have a strange sagacity and quickness of scent to find out the prey, and they fly swiftly to it, *Job ix. 26*. So those whose spirits God shall stir up will be effectually drawn to Jesus Christ to feed upon him. Whither should the eagle go but to the prey? whither should the soul go but to Jesus Christ, who has the words of eternal life? The eagles will distinguish what is proper for them from that which is not; so those who have spiritual senses exercised, will know the voice of the good Shepherd from that of a thief and a robber. Saints will be where the true Christ is, not the false Christs. This is applicable to the desires that are wrought in every gracious soul, after Christ, and communion with him. Where he is in his ordinances, there will his servants choose to be. A living principle of grace is a kind of natural instinct in all the saints, drawing them to Christ, to live upon him.

Secondly. Some understand these verses of the coming of the Son of man to destroy Jerusalem, *Mal. iii. 1, 2, 5*; so much was there of an extraordinary display of Divine power and justice in that event, that it is called the coming of Christ. Now here are two things intimated concerning it: 1. That to the most it would be as unexpected as a flash of lightning, which indeed gives warning of the clap of thunder which follows, but is itself surprising. The seducers say, Lo, here is Christ to deliver us; or there is one, a creature of their own fancies; but ere they are aware, the wrath of the Lamb, the true Christ, will arrest them, and they shall not escape. 2. That yet it might be as justly expected as that the eagles should fly to the carcasses, though they put far from them the evil day; yet the desolation will come as certainly as the birds of prey to a dead carcass that lies exposed in the open field. 1st. The Jews were so corrupt and degenerate, so vile and vicious, that they were become a carcass, obnoxious to the righteous judgment of God; they were also so factious and seditious, and every way provoking to the Romans, that they had made themselves obnoxious to their resentments, and an inviting prey to them. 2nd. The Romans were as an eagle, and the ensign of their armies was an eagle. The

inconvenient. The Jews would only travel a certain distance on that day, and would vex the Christian converts who ventured to do more.

xxiv. 28. This is understood of the Romans who crowded round Jerusalem, exultant over the assurance that it must speedily fall. "The Roman eagles" is an accepted phrase for the imperial armies, whose standards very commonly bore the figure of an eagle.

xxiv. 29. With this verse the sphere of the prediction seems to

be enlarged, and what follows appears to relate only in a subordinate sense to the overthrow of Jerusalem and the Jews. That event accomplished, the succession of occurrences proceeds without interruption until the consummation. The word "immediately" cannot mean that all which follows will be realised at once, but that it will commence forthwith, and advance to the end. But although much may intervene between the ruin of Israel and the ultimatum indicated in the prophecy, the chief stress and emphasis of the su-

army of the Chaldeans is said to fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat, *Hab. i. 8*. The ruin of the New Testament Babylon is represented by a call to the birds of prey to come feast upon the slain, *Rev. xix. 17, 18*. Notorious malefactors have their eyes eaten out by the young eagles, *Pr. xxx. 17*. The Jews were hung up in chains, *Jer. vii. 33*; *xvi. 4*. 3rd. The Jews can no more preserve themselves from the Romans, than the carcass can secure itself from the eagles. 4th. The destruction shall find out the Jews wherever they are, as the eagle scents the prey. Note, When a people do by their sin make themselves carcasses, putrid and loathsome, no other can be expected but that God should send eagles among them to devour and to destroy them.

Thirdly. It is very applicable to the day of judgment, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in that day, and our gathering together unto him, *2 Thes. ii. 1*. Now see here, 1. How he shall come: as the lightning. The time was now at hand when he should depart out of the world to go to the Father. Therefore those that inquire after Christ must not go into the desert, or the secret place, nor listen to every one that will put up the finger to invite them to a sight of Christ, but let them look upwards, for the heavens must contain him, and thence we look for the Saviour, *Phil. iii. 20*. He shall come in the clouds, as the lightning doth, and every eye shall see him, as they say it is natural for all living creatures to turn their faces towards the lightning, *Rev. i. 7*. Christ will appear to all the world, from one end of heaven to the other; nor shall any thing be hid from the light and heat of that day. 2. How the saints shall be gathered to him: as the eagles are to the carcass, by natural instinct, and with the greatest swiftness and alacrity imaginable; saints, when they shall be fetched to glory, will be carried as on eagles' wings, *Ex. xix. 4*, as on angels' wings. They shall mount up with wings like eagles, and like them renew their youth.

VIII. *He foretells his second coming at the end of time*, ver. 29—31: "The sun shall be darkened," &c.

First. Some think this is to be understood only of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation. The darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, notes the eclipse of the glory of that state, its convulsions, and the general confusion that attended that desolation. Great slaughter and devastation is in the Old Testament thus set forth, as *Isa. xiii. 10*; *xxxiv. 4*; *Eze. xxxii. 7*; *Joel ii. 31*; or, by the sun, moon, and stars, may be meant the temple, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, which should all come to ruin: and the sign of the Son of man, ver. 30, means a signal appearance of the power and justice of the Lord Jesus in it, avenging his own blood on them that imprecated the guilt of it upon them and their children; and the gathering of the elect, ver. 31, signifies the delivering of a remnant from this sin and ruin.

Secondly. It seems rather to refer to Christ's second coming. The destruction of the particular enemies of the church was typical of the complete conquest of them all; and therefore what will be done really at the great day may be applied metaphorically to those destructions, but still we must attend to the principal scope of them; and while we are all agreed to expect Christ's second coming, what need we put such strained constructions, as some do, upon these verses, which speak of it so clearly and so agreeably to other scriptures, especially when Christ is here answering an inquiry concerning his coming at the end of the world, which Christ was never shy of speaking of to his disciples? The only objection against this is, that it is said to be "immediately after the tribulation of those days." But as to that, 1. It is usual, in the prophetic style, to speak of things great and certain, as near and just at hand, only to express the greatness and certainty of them. Enoch spoke of Christ's second coming as within ken: "behold, the Lord cometh," *Jude 14*. 2. A thousand years are in God's sight but as one day, *2 Pet. iii. 8*. It is there urged, with reference to this very thing, and so it might be said to be immediately after. The tribulation of those days includes not only the destruction of Jerusalem, but all the other tribulations which the church must pass through; not only its share in the calamities of the nations, but the tribulations peculiar to itself; while the nations are torn with wars, and the church with schisms, delusions, and persecutions, we cannot say that the tribulation of those days is over: the whole state of the church on earth is militant, we must count upon that; but when the church's tribulation is over, her warfare accomplished, and what is behind of the sufferings of Christ filled up, then look for the end.

Now concerning Christ's second coming, it is here foretold, 1st. That there shall then be a great and amazing change of the creatures, and particularly the heavenly bodies, ver. 29, "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." The moon shines with a borrowed light, and therefore if the sun, from whom she borrows her light, is turned into darkness, she must fall of course, and become bankrupt. "The stars shall fall," that is, they shall lose their light, and disappear, and be as if they were fallen, and "the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." This intimates, *First*, That there shall be a great change, in order to the making of all things new. Then shall be "the restitution of all things," when the heavens shall not be cast away as a rag, but changed as a vesture, to be worn in a better fashion, *Ps. cii. 26*. They "shall pass away with a great noise," that there may be new heavens, *2 Pet. iii. 10, 13*. *Secondly*, It shall be a visible change, and such as all the world must take notice of, for so the darkening of the sun and moon cannot but be; and it will be an amazing change, for the heavenly bodies are not so liable to alteration as the creatures of this lower world are. The days of heaven, and the continuance of the sun and moon, are used to express that which is lasting and unchangeable, as *Ps. lxxxix. 29, 36, 37*, yet they shall thus be shaken. *Thirdly*, It shall be a universal change. If the sun be turned into darkness, and the powers of heaven shaken, the earth cannot but be turned into a dungeon, and its foundation made to tremble. How, fir trees, if the cedars be shaken. When the stars of heaven drop, no marvel if the everlasting mountains melt, and the perpetual hills bow. Nature shall sustain a general shock and convulsion, which yet shall be no hindrance to the joy and rejoicing of heaven and earth "before the Lord, when he cometh to judge the world," *Ps. xcvi. 11, 13*; they shall, as it were, glory in the tribulation. *Fourthly*, The darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, which were made to rule over the day, and over the night, (which is the first dominion we find of any creature, *Gen. i. 16, 18*) signifies the putting down of all rule, authority, and power, (even that which seems of the greatest antiquity and usefulness,) that the kingdom may be delivered up to God, even the Father, and he may be all in all, *1 Cor. xv. 24, 28*. The sun was darkened at the death of Christ, for then was, in one sense, the judgment of this world, *Jno. xii. 31*, an indication what would be at the general judgment. *Fifthly*, The glorious appearance of our Lord Jesus, who will then shew himself as "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person," will darken the sun and moon, as a candle is darkened in the beams of the noonday sun; they will have no glory, "because of the glory that excelleth," *2 Cor. iii. 10*. Then "the sun shall be ashamed, and the moon confounded," when God shall appear, *Isa. xxiv. 23*. *Sixthly*, The sun and moon shall then be darkened, because there will be no more occasion for them. To sinners, that choose their portion in this life, all comfort will be eternally denied; as they shall not have a drop of water, so not a ray of light. Now God causeth his sun to rise on the earth, but then *interdicto tibi sole et luna*,—"I forbid thee the light of the sun and the moon;" darkness must be

their portion: and to the saints that had their treasure above, such light of joy and comfort will be given as shall supersede that of the sun and moon, and render it useless. What need we vessels of light when we come to the fountain and Father of lights? See *Isa. lx. 19*; *Rev. xxii. 5*.

2nd. That "then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven," ver. 30; that is, the Son of man himself, as it follows here, "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds." At his first coming he was set for a sign that should be spoken against, *Lu. ii. 34*; but at his second coming, a sign that should be admired. Ezekiel was a son of man, set for a sign, *Eze. xii. 6*. Some make this a prediction of the harbingers and forerunners of his coming, giving notice of his approach: a light shining before him, and the fire devouring, *Ps. i. 3*; *1 Kin. xix. 11, 12*; the beams coming out of his hand, where had long been the hiding of his power, *Hab. iii. 4*. It is a groundless conceit of some of the ancients, that this sign of the Son of man will be the sign of the cross, displayed as a banner. It will certainly be such a clear, convincing sign, as will dash infidelity quite out of countenance, and fill their faces with shame who said, "Where is the promise of his coming?"

3rd. That then "all the tribes of the earth shall mourn," ver. 30. See *Rev. i. 7*; all the kindreds of the earth shall then wail because of him. Some of all the tribes and kindreds of the earth shall mourn,—for the greater part will tremble at his approach,—while the chosen remnant, one of a family, and two of a tribe, shall lift up their heads with joy, knowing that their redemption draws nigh, and their Redeemer. Note, Sooner or later, all sinners will be mourners: penitent sinners look to Christ, and mourn after a godly sort; and they who sow in those tears shall shortly reap in joy: impenitent sinners shall look unto him whom they have pierced, and, though they laugh now, shall mourn and weep, after a devilish sort, in endless horror and despair.

4th. That "then they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." Note, *First*, The judgment of the great day will be committed to the Son of man, both in pursuance, and in recompence, of his great undertaking for us as Mediator, *Jno. v. 22, 27*. *Secondly*, The Son of man will at that day come "in the clouds of heaven." Much of the sensible intercourse between heaven and earth is by the clouds; they are betwixt them, as it were the medium participationis,—the medium of participation, drawn by heaven from the earth, distilled by heaven upon the earth: Christ went to heaven in a cloud, and will in like manner come again, *Acts i. 9, 11*. Behold, he comes in the clouds, *Rev. i. 7*; a cloud will be the Judge's chariot, *Ps. civ. 3*; his robe, *Rev. x. 1*; his pavilion, *Ps. xviii. 11*; his throne, *Rev. xiv. 14*. When the world was destroyed by water, the judgment came in the clouds of heaven, for the windows of heaven were opened; so, when it shall be destroyed by fire. Christ went before Israel in a cloud, which had a bright side and a dark side; so will the cloud have in which Christ will come at the great day, it will bring both comfort and terror. *Thirdly*, He will come "with power and great glory;" his first coming was in weakness and great meanness, *2 Cor. xiii. 4*, but his second coming will be with power and glory, agreeable both to the dignity of his person, and to the purposes of his coming. *Fourthly*, He will be seen with bodily eyes in his coming; therefore the Son of man will be the judge that he may be seen, that sinners thereby may be the more confounded, who shall see him as Balaam did, but not nigh, *Num. xxiv. 17*; see him, but not as theirs. It added to the torment of the damned sinner, that he saw Abraham afar off. Is this he whom we have slighted, and rejected, and rebelled against; whom we have crucified to ourselves afresh; who might have been our saviour; but is our judge, and will be our enemy for ever? The desire of all nations will then be their dread.

5th. That "he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet," ver. 31. Note, *First*, The angels shall be attendants upon Christ at his second coming,—they are called his angels, which proves him to be God, and Lord of the angels,—they shall be obliged to wait upon him. *Secondly*, These attendants shall be employed by him as officers of the court in the judgment of that day: they are now ministering spirits sent forth by him, *Heb. i. 14*, and will be so then. *Thirdly*, Their ministration will be ushered in with a great sound of a trumpet, to awaken and alarm a sleeping world. This trumpet is spoken of, *1 Cor. xv. 52*, and *1 Thes. iv. 16*. At the giving of the law on mount Sinai, the sound of the trumpet was remarkably terrible, *Ex. xix. 13, 16*, but much more will it be so in the great day. By the law, trumpets were to be sounded for the calling of assemblies, *Num. x. 2*; in praising God, *Ps. lxxxi. 3*; in offering sacrifices, *Num. x. 10*; and in proclaiming the year of jubilee, *Lev. xxv. 9*; very fitly, therefore, shall there be the sound of a trumpet at the last day, when the general assembly shall be called, when the praises of God shall be gloriously celebrated, when sinners shall fall as sacrifices to Divine justice, and when the saints shall enter upon their eternal jubilee.

6th. That "they shall gather together his elect from the four winds." Note, At the second coming of Jesus Christ there will be a general meeting of all the saints. *First*, The elect only will be gathered, the chosen remnant, who are but few in comparison with the many that are only called. This is the foundation of the saints' eternal happiness, that they are God's elect; the gifts of love to eternity follow the thoughts of love from eternity; and "the Lord knows them that are his." *Secondly*, The angels shall be employed to bring them together, as Christ's servants, and as the saints' friends. We have the commission given them, *Ps. l. 5*, "gather my saints together unto me;" nay, it will be said to them, *habetis fratres*,—"these are your brethren;" for the elect will then be "equal to the angels," *Lu. xx. 36*. *Thirdly*, They shall be gathered "from one end of the heaven to the other;" the elect of God are scattered abroad, *Jno. xi. 52*; there are some in all places, in all nations, *Rev. vii. 9*; but when that great gathering day comes, there shall not one of them be missing. Distance of place shall keep none out of heaven, if distance of affection do not. *Undique ad calos tantundem est via*,—"Heaven is equally accessible from every place." See *ch. viii. 11*; *Isa. xliii. 6*; *xlix. 12*.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. 36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. 37 But as the days of Noe were,

ceeding predictions bears directly upon that ultimatum, when the Lord shall return in his glory. "Sun," "moon," "stars," &c., are certainly spoken of symbolically, and signify human dignities, authorities, and luminaries.

xiv. 32. Dr. Tristram says, "The fig-tree puts forth its earliest fruit-buds before its leaves, and is one of the earliest trees to shoot. In the hill-country it sheds its leaves in November, and we have observed in the passes of Benjamin the buds rapidly pushing as

early as the end of February, though the leaves did not unfold for a month later." The fig still flourishes near where this reference was made.

xiv. 34. If the word "generation" is to be rigidly limited to the men of that age then living, it may be questioned whether the prediction extends into a remoter future. There is a sense in which the prophecy was fulfilled in that generation; but if it is admitted that a two-fold application is involved, the question is to be answered in

so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. 45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. 48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; 49 And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We have here the practical application of the foregoing prediction; in general, we must expect and prepare for the events here foretold.

1. *We must expect them:* "Now learn a parable of the fig tree," ver. 32, 33. Now learn what use to make of the things you have heard; so observe and understand the signs of the times, and compare them with the predictions of the Word, as from thence to foresee what is at the door, that you may provide accordingly. The parable of the fig tree is no more but this, that its budding and blossoming is a presage of summer coming; for as the stork in the heaven, so the trees of the field know their appointed time: the beginning of the working of second causes assures us of the progress and perfection of it. Thus when God begins to fulfil prophecies, he will make an end. There is a certain series in the works of Providence, as there is in the works of nature. The signs of the times are compared with the prognostics of the face of the sky, *ch. xvi. 3*, so here with those of the face of the earth; when that is renewed, we foresee that summer is coming, not immediately, but at some distance: after the branch grows tender, we expect the March winds, and the April showers before the summer comes, however we are sure it is coming; "so likewise ye," when the gospel day is broke, count upon it that through this variety of events that I have told you of the perfect day will come. The things revealed must shortly come to pass, *Rev. i. 1*; they must come in their own order, in the order appointed for them. "Know that it is near." He doth not here say what, but it is that which *τὰς* hearts are upon, and which you are inquisitive after, and long for: the kingdom of God is near, so it is expressed in the parallel place, *Lu. xxi. 31*. Note, When the trees of righteousness begin to bud and blossom, when God's people promise faithfulness, it is a happy presage of good times. In them God begins his work, first prepares their heart, and then he will go on with it; for "as for God his work is perfect," and he will revive it in the midst of their years. Now touching the events foretold here, which we are to expect,

First, Christ doth here assure us of the certainty of them, ver. 35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away," they continue this day indeed according to God's ordinance, but they shall not continue for ever, *Ps. cii. 25, 26*; see *2 Pet. iii. 10*; "but my words shall not pass away." Note, The word of Christ is more sure and lasting than heaven and earth. "Hath he spoken? and shall he not do it?" We may build with more assurance upon the word of Christ, than we can upon the pillars of heaven, or the strong foundations of the earth; for when they shall be made to tremble and totter, and shall be no more, the word of Christ shall remain, and be in full force, power, and virtue. See *1 Pet. i. 24, 25*. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass," than the word of Christ; so it is expressed, *Lu. xvi. 17*; compare *Isa. liv. 10*. The accomplishment of these prophecies might seem to be delayed, and intervening events might seem to disagree with them, but do not think that therefore the word of Christ is fallen to the ground; for that shall never pass away. Though it be not fulfilled, either in the time, or in the way that we have prescribed, yet in God's time, which is the best time, and in God's way, which is the best way, it shall certainly be fulfilled. Every word of Christ is very pure, and therefore very sure.

Secondly, He here instructs us as to the time of them, ver. 34, 36. And as to this, it is well observed by the learned Grotius, that there is a manifest distinction made between the *ταῦτα*, ver. 34, and the *ἐκείνη*, ver. 36. "These things," and "that day and hour," which will help to clear this prophecy.

the affirmative, and the ultimate accomplishment is still future. To restrict the prophecy to the fall of Jerusalem and of the Jews is to do violence to the words. We therefore take "generation" as including more than the men of that age. Opinions are very much divided, however, and hence it is undesirable to speak with un-wavering certainty. Some say "generation" means the race of Israel; others, the followers of Christ; others, the human race; and others, the creation itself.

1. As to "these things," the wars, seductions, and persecutions here foretold, and especially the ruin of the Jewish nation. "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled," ver. 34. There are those now alive that shall see Jerusalem destroyed, and the Jewish church brought to an end. And because it might seem strange, he backs it with a solemn asseveration, "Verily I say unto you." You may take my word for it; these things are at the door. Christ often speaks of the nearness of that desolation, the more to affect people, and quicken them to prepare for it. Note, There may be greater trials and troubles yet before us in our own day than we are aware of. They that are old know not what sons of Anak may be reserved for their last encounters.

2. But as to "that day and hour," which will put a period to time, that "knows no man," ver. 36. Therefore take heed of confounding these two, as they did who, from the words of Christ and the apostle's letters, inferred that "the day of Christ was at hand," *2 Thes. i. 2*. No, it was not; "this generation," and many another shall pass before that day and hour comes. Note, 1st, There is a certain day and hour fixed for the judgment to come, it is called the Day of the Lord, because so unalterably fixed. None of God's judgments are adjourned *sine die*—without the appointment of a certain day. 2. That day and hour is a great secret.

Prudens futuri temporis exitum
Caliginosa nocte premit Deus.

But Heav'n has wisely hid from human sight
The dark decrees of future fate,
And sown their seeds in depth of night.—Hon.

No man knows it, not the wisest by their sagacity, not the best by any Divine discovery. We all know there shall be such a day, but none knows when it shall be. "No, not the angels." Though their capacities for knowledge are great, and their opportunities of knowing this advantageous, they dwell at the fountain head of light, and though they are to be employed in the solemnity of that day, yet they are not told when it shall be; none knows but my Father only. This is one of those secret things which belong to the Lord our God. The uncertainty of the time of Christ's coming is to those who are watchful, "a savour of life unto life," and makes them more watchful; but to those who are careless, it is "a savour of death unto death," and makes them more careless.

11. *To this end we must expect these events, that we may prepare for them;* and here we have a caution against security and sensuality, which will make it a dismal day indeed to us, ver. 37—41. In which verses we have such an idea given us of the judgment day, as may serve to startle and awaken us, that we may not sleep, as do others. It will be a surprising day, and a separating day.

First, It will be a surprising day, as the deluge was to the old world, ver. 37—39. That which he here intends to describe, is the posture of the world "at the coming of the Son of man;" besides his first coming to save, he has other comings to judge. He saith, *Jno. ix. 39*, "For judgment I am come," and for judgment he will come; for all judgment is committed to him, both that of the word, and that of the sword. Now this here is applicable,

1. To temporal judgments, particularly that which was now hastening upon the nation and people of the Jews; though they had fair warning given them of it, and there were many prodigies that were presages of it, yet it found them secure, crying, Peace and safety, *1 Thes. v. 3*. The siege was laid to Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian, when they were met at the passover in the midst of their mirth. Like the men of Laish, they dwelt careless when the ruin arrested them, *Jud. xviii. 7, 27*. The destruction of Babylon, both that in the Old Testament, and that in the New, comes when she saith, "I shall be a lady for ever," *Isa. xlvii. 7—9*; *Rev. xviii. 7*. Therefore the plagues come in a moment, in one day. Note, Men's unbelief shall not make God's threatenings of none effect.

2. To the eternal judgment; so the judgment of the great day is called, *Heb. vi. 2*. Though notice has been given of it from Enoch; yet when it comes it will be unlooked for by the most of men: the latter days, which are nearest to that day, will produce scoffers, that say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" *2 Pet. iii. 3, 4*; *Lu. xviii. 8*. Thus it will be when the world that now is shall be destroyed by fire, for thus it was when the old world being overflowed by water perished, *2 Pet. iii. 6, 7*. Now Christ here shews what was the temper and posture of the old world when the deluge came.

1st. They were sensual and worldly, "they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage." It is not said, they were killing, and stealing, and whoring, and swearing; these were indeed the horrid crimes of some of the worst of them, "the earth was full of violence;" but they were all of them, except Noah, over head and ears in the world, and regardless of the word of God, and this ruined them. Note, Universal neglect of religion is a more dangerous symptom to any people, than particular instances here and there of daring irreligion. Eating and drinking is necessary to the preservation of man's life, marrying and giving in marriage is so to the preservation of mankind; but *licitis perimus omnes*—these lawful things undo us, unlawfully managed.

First, They were unreasonable in it, inordinate and entire in the pursuit of the delights of sense, and the gains of the world; they were wholly taken up with these things, *ἤσαν τρώγοιτες*, "they were eating," they were in these things as in their element, as if they had their being for no other end but to eat and drink, *Isa. lvi. 12*.

Secondly, They were unseasonable in it; they were entire and intent upon the world and the flesh, when the destruction was at the door which they had had such fair warning of. They were eating and drinking, when they should have been repenting and praying; when God by the ministry of Noah called to weeping and mourning, then joy and gladness. This was to them, as it was to Israel afterwards, the unpardonable sin, *Isa. xxii. 12, 14*. Especially because it was in defiance of those warnings by which they should have been awakened, "Let us eat, and drink, for to-morrow we die;" if it must be a short life, let it be a merry one. The apostle James speaks of this as the general practice of the wealthy Jews before the destruction of Jerusalem, when they should have been weeping for the miseries that were coming upon them, they were living in pleasure, and nourishing their hearts, as in a day of slaughter, *Jas. v. 1, 5*.

2nd. They were secure and careless. They "knew not until the flood came," ver. 39. "Knew not?" Surely they could not but know; did not God by Noah give them fair warning of it? Did he not call them to repentance while his long-suffering waited? *1 Pet. iii. 19, 20*. But they knew not, i.e., they believed not; they might have known, but would not know. Note, What we know of the things that belong to our everlasting peace, if we do not mix faith with it, and improve it, it is all one as if we did not know it at all. Their not knowing is joined with their eating, and drinking, and marrying; for

First, therefore they were sensual because they were secure. Note, the reason why people are so eager in the pursuit, and so entangled in the pleasures of this world, is, because they do not know, and believe, and consider the eternity which they are upon the brink of. Did we know aright, that all these things must shortly be dissolved, and we must certainly survive them, we would not set our eyes and hearts so much upon them as we do

xxiv. 41. It will be remembered that in Eastern countries most families grind their own corn by means of hand-mills. The grinders appear in all ages to have been commonly the women of the house. Shaw says, in his "Travels," that when the millstone is large, or greater expedition is required, a second person is called in to assist. It is usual for women alone to be concerned in this employ, sitting themselves down over against each other with the millstones between them.

Secondly. Therefore they were secure, because they were sensual. Therefore they knew not that the flood was coming, because they were eating and drinking; were so taken up with things seen, and present, that they had neither time nor heart to mind the things not seen as yet, which they were warned of. Note, As security bolsters men up in their brutal sensuality, so sensuality rocks them asleep in their carnal security. "They knew not until the flood came." 1st. The flood did come, though they would not foresee it. Note, Those that will not know by faith, shall be made to know by feeling the wrath of God revealed from heaven against their ungodliness and unrighteousness. The evil day is never the further off for men's putting it far off from them. 2nd. They did not know it till it was too late to prevent it, as they might have done if they had known it in time, which made it so much the more grievous. Judgments are most terrible and amazing to the secure, and those that have made a jest of them.

The application of this concerning the old world we have in these words, "So shall the coming of the Son of man be." That is, 1. In such a posture shall he find people, eating and drinking, and never expecting him. Note, Security and sensuality are likely to be the epidemical diseases of the latter days. All slumber and sleep, and at midnight the bridegroom comes. All off their watch, and at their ease. 2. With such a power, and for such a purpose will he come upon them: as the flood took away the sinners of the old world, irresistibly and irrecoverably, so shall secure sinners that mocked at Christ and his coming, be taken away by the wrath of the Lamb, when the great day of his wrath comes, which will be like the coming of the deluge, a destruction which there is no fleeing from.

Secondly. It will be a separating day, ver. 40, 41. "Then shall two be in the field." Two ways this may be applied: 1. We may apply it to the success of the Gospel, especially at the first preaching of it; it divided the world; "some believed the things which were spoken," and were taken to Christ, others "believed not," and were left to perish in their unbelief. Those of the same age, place, capacity, employment, and condition in the world, "grinding in the same mill," those of the same family, nay, those that were joined in the same bond of marriage, yet one effectually called, the other passed by, and left in the gall of bitterness. This is that division, that separating fire which Christ came to send, *Lu. xii. 49, 51.* This renders free grace the more obliging, that it is distinguishing; to us, and not to the world, *Jno. xiv. 22.* Nay, to us, and not to those in the same field, the same mill, the same house.

When ruin came upon Jerusalem, a distinction was made by Divine providence, according to that which had been before made by Divine grace; for all the Christians among them were saved from perishing in that calamity by the special care of Heaven. If two were at work in the field together, and one of them was a Christian, he was taken into a place of shelter, and had his life given him for a prey, while the other was left to the sword of the enemy. Nay, if but two women were grinding at the mill, if one of them belonged to Christ, though but a woman, a poor woman, a servant, yet she was taken to a place of safety, and the other abandoned. Thus the meek of the earth are hid in the day of the Lord's anger; *Zep. ii. 3,* either in heaven, or under heaven. Note, Distinguishing preservations in times of general destruction are special tokens of God's favour, and ought so to be acknowledged. If we are safe when thousands fall on our right hand, and on our left; are not consumed, when others are consumed round about us, so that we are as brands plucked out of the fire; we have reason to say, "It is of the Lord's mercies," and it is a great mercy.

2. We may apply it to the second coming of Jesus Christ, and the separation which will be made in that day. He had said before, ver. 31, that the elect will be gathered together. Here he tells us, in order to that they will be distinguished from those that were nearest to them in this world; the choice and chosen ones taken to glory, the other left to perish eternally. Those that sleep in the dust of the earth, two in the same grave, their ashes mixed, yet shall arise one to be taken to everlasting life, the other left to shame and everlasting contempt, *1 Jan. xii. 2.* Here it is applied to them who shall be found alive. Christ will come unlooked for; will find people busy at their usual occupations, in the field, at the mill, and then, according as they are vessels of mercy, prepared for glory, or vessels of wrath, prepared for ruin, accordingly it will be with them—the one taken to meet the Lord and his angels in the air, to be for ever with him and them; the other left to the devil and his angels, who, when Christ has gathered out his own, will sweep up the residue. This will aggravate the condemnation of sinners, that others shall be taken from the midst of them to glory, and they left behind. And it speaks abundance of comfort to the Lord's people. 1st. Are they mean and despised in the world, as the manservant in the field, or the maid at the mill? *Ex. xi. 5;* yet they shall not be forgotten, or overlooked in that day. The poor in the world, if rich in faith, are heirs of the kingdom. 2nd. Are they dispersed in distant and unlikely places, where one would not expect to find the heirs of glory, in the field, at the mill? yet the angels will find them there, hid, as Saul among the stuff, when they are to be enthroned, and fetch them thence; and well may they be said to be changed, for a very great change it will be, to go to heaven from ploughing and grinding. 3rd. Are they weak, and unable of themselves to move heavenward? they shall be taken, or laid hold on, as Lot was taken out of Sodom by a gracious violence, *Gen. xix. 16.* Those whom Christ has once apprehended, and laid hold on, he will never lose his hold of. 4th. Are they intermixed with others, linked with them in the same habitations, societies, employments? let not that discourage any true Christian, God knows how to separate between the precious and the vile, the gold and dross in the same lump, the wheat and chaff in the same floor.

11. Here is a general exhortation to us to watch, and be ready against that day comes, enforced by divers weighty considerations, ver. 42, &c. Observe,

First, The duty required. Watch, and be ready, ver. 42, 44. 1. "Watch, therefore," ver. 42. Note, It is the great duty and interest of all the disciples of Christ to watch, to be awake, and keep awake, that they may mind their business. As a sinful state and way is compared to sleep, senseless and unactive, *1 Thes. v. 4;* so a gracious state and way is compared to watching and waking. We must watch for our Lord's coming; to us in particular, at our death, after which is the judgment, that is the great day with us, the end of our time; and his coming at the end of all time to judge the world, the great day with all mankind. To watch for this, is not only to believe that our Lord will come, but to desire that he would come; to be often thinking of his coming, and always looking for it, as sure, and near, and the time of it uncertain. To watch for Christ's coming, is to maintain that gracious temper and disposition of mind, which we would be willing our Lord when he comes should find us in. To watch is to be aware of the first notices of his approach, that we may immediately attend his motions, and address ourselves to the duty of meeting him. Watching is supposed to be in the night, which is sleeping time; while we are in this world it is night with us, and we must take pains to keep ourselves awake. 2. "Be ye also ready." We wake in vain, if we do not get ready. It is not enough to look for such things, but we must therefore give diligence, *2 Pet. iii. 11, 14.* We have then our Lord to attend upon, and we must have our lamps ready trimmed; a cause to be tried, and we must have our plea ready

drawn and signed by our Advocate; a reckoning to make up, and we must have our accounts ready stated, and balanced; there is an inheritance which we have then to enter upon, and we must have ourselves ready, made meet to partake of it, *Col. i. 12.*

Secondly. The reasons to induce us to this watchfulness, and diligent preparation for that day, which are two: 1. Because the time of our Lord's coming is very uncertain. This is the reason immediately annexed to the double exhortation, ver. 42, 44, and it is illustrated by a comparison, ver. 43. Let us consider, then,

1st. That we know not what hour he will come, ver. 42. We know not the day of our death, *Gen. xxvii. 2.* We may know that we have but a little time to live; *2 Tim. iv. 6,* "The time of my departure is at hand;" but we cannot know that we have a long time to live, for our souls are continually in our hands; nor can we know how little a time we have to live, for it may prove less than we expect. Much less do we know the time fixed for the general judgment. Concerning both we are kept at uncertainty, that we might expect that every day which may come any day; may never boast of a year's continuance, *Jas. iv. 13;* no, nor of to-morrow's return, as if it were ours, *Pr. xxvii. 1;* *Lu. xii. 20.*

2nd. That he may come at such an hour as we think not, ver. 44. Though there be such uncertainty in the time, there is none in the thing itself. Though we know not when he will come, we are sure he will come. His parting word was, "Surely, I come quickly," his saying, "I come," surely obligeth us to expect him; his saying, "I come quickly," obligeth us to be always expecting him; for it keeps us in a state of expectancy. "In such an hour as ye think not," that is, such an hour as they which are unready and unprepared think not, ver. 50; nay, such an hour, as the most lively expectants, perhaps, think least likely. The bridegroom came when the wise were slumbering. It is agreeable to our present state, that we should be under the influence of a constant and general expectation, rather than that of particular presages and prognostications, which we are sometimes tempted vainly to desire and wish for.

3rd. The children of this world are thus wise in their generation, that when they know of a danger approaching, they will keep awake, and stand on their guard against it. This he shews in a particular instance, ver. 43. If the master of a house had notice that a thief would come such a night, and such a watch of the night, (for they divided the night into four watches, allowing three hours to each,) and would make an attempt upon his house, though it were the midnight watch, when he was most sleepy, yet he would be up, and listen to every noise in every corner, and be ready to give him a warm reception. Now though we know not just when our Lord will come, yet knowing that he will come, and come quickly, and without any other warning than what he hath given in his word, it concerns us to watch always. Note, First. We have every one of us a house to keep, that lies exposed, in which all we are worth is laid up, and that house is our own souls, which we must keep with all diligence. Secondly. The day of the Lord comes by surprise, as a thief in the night. Christ chooseth to come when he is least expected, that the triumphs of his enemies may be turned into the greater shame, and the fears of his friends into the greater joy. Thirdly. If Christ when he comes, finds us asleep and unready, our house will be broken up, and we shall lose all we are worth; not as by a thief, unjustly, but as by a just and legal process; death and judgment will seize upon all we have, to our irreparable damage, and utter undoing. Therefore be ready, be ye also ready; as ready at all times as the good man of the house would be at the hour when he expected the thief; must put on the armour of God, that we may not only stand in that evil day, but as more than conquerors may divide the spoil.

2. Because the issue of our Lord's coming will be very happy and comfortable to those that shall be found ready, but very dismal and dreadful to those that are not, ver. 45, &c. This is represented by the different state of good and bad servants, when their lord comes to reckon with them. It is likely to be well or ill with us to eternity, according as we are found ready or unready at that day; for Christ comes to render to every man according to his works. Now this parable, with which the chapter closeth, is applicable to all Christians, who are in profession and obligation God's servants; but it seems especially intended as a warning to ministers, for the servant spoken of is a steward. Now observe what Christ here saith.

1st. Concerning the good servant; he shews here what he is, a ruler of the household; what being so he should be, faithful and wise; and what if he be so he shall be, eternally blessed. Here are good instructions and encouragements to the ministers of Christ.

First. Here is his place and office. He is one "whom his lord has made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season." Note, 1st. The church of Christ is his household, or family, standing in relation to him, as the father and master of it. It is the household of God, a family named from Christ, *Eph. iii. 15.* 2nd. Gospel ministers are appointed rulers in this household; not as princes, Christ has entered a caveat against that, but as stewards, or other subordinate officers; not as lords, but as guides; not to prescribe new ways, but to shew and lead in the ways that Christ has appointed; that is the signification of the *ἡγούμενος*, which we translate, "having rule over you," *Heb. xiii. 17.* And as overseers; not to cut out new work, but to direct in, and quicken to the work which Christ has ordered; that is the signification of *ἐπισκοπος*, bishops. They are rulers by Christ; what power they have is derived from him, and none may take it from them, or abridge it to them; he is one whom "the Lord has made ruler," Christ has the making of ministers. They are rulers under Christ, and act in subordination to him, and rulers for Christ, for the advancement of his kingdom. 3rd. The work of gospel ministers, is to give to Christ's household their meat in due season; as stewards, and therefore they have the keys delivered to them. 1. Their work is to give, not take to themselves, *Eze. xxxiv. 8;* but give to the family what the Master has bought, to dispense what Christ has purchased. And to ministers it is said, that "it is more blessed to give, than to receive," *Acts ix. 35.* 2. It is to give meat, not to give law, that is Christ's work; but to deliver those doctrines to the church which, if duly digested, will be nourishment to souls. They must give, not the poison of false doctrines, not the stones of hard and unprofitable doctrines, but the meat that is sound and wholesome. 3. It must be given in due season, *ἐν καιρῷ*, while there is time for it; when eternity comes it will be too late; we must work while it is day, or, in time, that is, whenever any opportunity offers itself; or, in the stated time, time after time; according as the duty of every day requires.

Secondly. His right discharge of this office. The good servant, if thus preferred, will be a good steward; for, 1st. He is faithful; stewards must be so, *1 Cor. iv. 2.* He that is trusted, must be trusty; and the greater the trust is, the more is expected from them: it is a great, good thing that is committed to ministers, *2 Tim. ii. 2;* and they must be faithful, as Moses was, *Heb. iii. 2.* Christ counts those ministers, and those only, that are faithful, *1 Tim. i. 12.* A faithful minister of Jesus Christ is one that sincerely designs his Master's honour, not his own; delivers the whole counsel of God, not his own fancies and conceits; follows Christ's institutions, and adheres to them; regards the meanest, reproves the greatest, and doth not respect persons. 2nd. He is wise to understand his duty, and the proper season of it; and in guiding of the flock

xxiv. 43. Some who maintain that hitherto the fall of Israel only is in view, admit that what follows concerns the general judgment.

xxiv. 51. The expression "shall cut him asunder" is commonly applied to the punishment of cutting or sawing asunder, to which reference is made in some ancient documents. (Compare *Dan. ii. 5, iii. 29.*) It may be doubted, however, whether the figure is to be interpreted so rigidly, because it follows that the criminal should have his portion with the hypocrites, who were not actually cut

asunder under any government. In any case the sense here is generally clear, namely, to inflict the severest punishment. Some have maintained that the phrase here properly means removal from office and the like, answering to the Hebrew "to cut off," when spoken of excommunication, or excision from the body of Israel.

xxv. 1-13. This whole parable is founded on the marriage customs of Oriental countries, and its chief features may be illustrated by what takes place at the present day. The following extract from Ward's

there is need, not only of the integrity of the heart, but the skilfulness of the hands. Honesty may suffice for a good servant, but wisdom is necessary to a good steward; for it is profitable to direct. 3rd. He is doing, so doing as his office requires. The ministry is a good work, and they whose office it is have always something to do; they must not indulge themselves in ease, not leave the work undone, or carelessly turn it off to others; but be doing, and doing to the purpose: so doing, giving meat to the household, minding their own business, and not meddling with that which is foreign. So doing, as the master has appointed, as the office imports, and as the case of the family doth require; not talking, but doing. It was the motto Mr. Perkins used, *Minister verbi est—be doing.* 4th. He is found doing when his master comes; which intimates, 1. Constancy at his work. At what hour soever his master comes, he is found busy at the work of the day. Ministers should not leave empty spaces in their time, lest their Lord should come in one of those empty spaces. As with a good God, the end of one mercy is the beginning of another; so with a good man, a good minister, the end of one duty is the beginning of another. When Calvin was persuaded to remit his ministerial labours, he answered with some resentment, 'What? would you have my Master find me idle?' 2. Perseverance in his work, till his Lord doth come. Hold fast till then, *Rev. ii. 25*; 'continue in these things,' *1 Tim. iv. 16*; *vi. 14*. Endure to the end.

Thirdly. The recompence of reward intended him for this, in three things: 1st. He shall be taken notice of. This is intimated in these words, 'Who then is that faithful and wise servant?' which suppose that there are but few who answer this character; such an interpreter is one of a thousand, such a faithful and wise steward. Those who thus distinguish themselves now by humility, diligence, and sincerity in their work, Christ will in the great day both dignify and distinguish by the glory conferred on them. 2nd. He shall be blessed: 'Blessed is that servant,' and Christ's pronouncing him blessed makes him so. All the dead that die in the Lord are blessed, *Rev. xiv. 13*; but there is a peculiar blessedness secured to them that approve themselves faithful stewards, and are found doing. Next to the honour of those who die in the field of battle, suffering for Christ, as the martyrs, is the honour of those that die in the field of service,—ploughing, and sowing, and reaping for Christ. 3rd. He shall be preferred, *ver. 47*: 'He shall make him ruler over all his goods;' alluding to the way of great men, who, if the stewards of their house carry themselves well in that place, commonly prefer them to be the managers of their estates; thus Joseph was preferred in the house of Potiphar, *Gen. xxxix. 4, 6*. But the greatest honour which the kindest master ever did to his most tried servants in this world, is nothing to that weight of glory which the Lord Jesus will confer upon his faithful, watchful servants in the world to come. What is here said by a similitude, is the same that is said more plainly, *Jno. xii. 26*, 'Him will my Father honour.' And God's servants, when thus preferred, shall be perfect in wisdom and holiness to bear that weight of glory; so that there is no danger from these servants when they reign.

2nd. Concerning the evil servant. Here we have, 1. First, His description given, *ver. 48, 49*; where we have the wretch drawn in his own colours. The vilest of creatures is a wicked man, the vilest of men is a wicked Christian, and the vilest of them a wicked minister. *Corruptio optimi est pessima*,—'what is best, when corrupted, becomes the worst.' Wickedness in the prophets of Jerusalem is a horrible thing indeed, *Jer. xxiii. 14*. Here is, 1st. The cause of his wickedness; and that is a practical disbelief of Christ's second coming. He hath said in his heart, 'My Lord delays his coming;' and therefore he begins to think he will never come, but has quite forsaken his church. Observe, 1. Christ knows what they say in their hearts, who with their lips cry, 'Lord, Lord,' as this servant here. 2. The delay of Christ's coming, though it is a gracious instance of his patience, yet is greatly abused by wicked people, whose hearts are thereby hardened in their wicked ways. When Christ's coming is looked upon as doubtful, or a thing at a mighty distance, the hearts of men are fully set to do evil, *Ecd. viii. 11*; see *Eze. xii. 27*. They that walk by sense are ready to say of the unseen Jesus, as the people did of Moses, when he tarried in the mount upon their errand, 'We wot not what is become of him;' and therefore 'up, make us gods;' the world a god, the belly a god, any thing but He that should be.

2nd. The particulars of his wickedness; and they are sins of the first magnitude: he is a slave to his passions and his appetites.

1. Persecution is here charged upon him. He begins 'to smite his fellow servants.' Note, 1st. Even the stewards of the house are to look upon all the servants of the house as their fellow servants, and therefore are forbidden to lord it over them. If the angel call himself fellow servant to John, *Rev. xix. 10*, no marvel if John have learned to call himself brother to the Christians of the churches of Asia, *Rev. i. 9*. 2nd. It is no new thing to see evil servants smiting their fellow servants—both private Christians and faithful ministers. He smites them, either because they reprove him, or because they will not bow and do him reverence; will not say as he saith, and do as he doth, against their consciences; smites them with the tongue, as they smote the prophet, *Jer. xviii. 18*; and if he get power into his hand, or can press those into his service that have, as the ten horns upon the head of the beast, it goes further: Pashur the priest smote Jeremiah, and put him in the stocks, *Jer. xx. 1*. The revolvers have many times been, of all others, most profound to make slaughter, *Hos. v. 2*. The steward, when he smites his fellow servants, doth it under colour of his master's authority, and in his name he saith, 'Let the Lord be glorified,' *Isa. lxvi. 5*; but he shall know that he could not put a greater affront upon his master.

2. Profaneness and immorality. He begins 'to eat and drink with the drunken.' 1st. He associates with the worst of sinners, hath fellowship with them, is intimate with them; he walks in their counsel, stands in their way, sits in their seat, and sings their songs. The drunken are the merry, jovial company, and those he is for; and thus he hardens them in their wickedness. 2nd. He doth like them, eats and drinks and is drunken; so it is in *Luke*. And this is an inlet to all manner of sin. Drunkenness is a leading wickedness; they who are slaves to that, are never masters of themselves in any thing else. The persecutors of God's people have commonly been the most vicious and immoral men. Persecuting consciences, whatever the pretensions be, are commonly the most profligate and debauched consciences. What will not they be drunk with, that will be drunk with the blood of the saints? Well, this is the description of a wicked minister, who yet may have the common gifts of learning and utterance above others; and, as hath been said of some, may preach so well in the pulpit, that it is a pity he should ever come out, and yet live so ill out of the pulpit, that it is a pity he should ever come in.

Secondly. His doom read, *ver. 50, 51*. The coat and character of wicked ministers will not only not secure them from condemnation, but will greatly aggravate it. They can plead no exemption from Christ's jurisdiction, whatever they pretend to in the church of Rome from that of the civil magistrate,—no benefit of clergy at Christ's bar. Observe,

1st. The surprisingness of his doom, *ver. 50*: 'The lord of that servant will come.' Note, 1. Our putting off the thoughts of Christ's coming will not put off his coming. Whatever fancy he deludes himself with, his Lord will come.

The unbelief of man shall not make that great promise or threatening, (call it which you will,) of none effect. 2. The coming of Christ will be a most dreadful surprise to secure and careless sinners, especially to wicked ministers: 'He shall come in a day when he looketh not for him.' Note, Those that have slighted the warnings of the Word, and silenced those of their own consciences concerning the judgment to come, cannot expect any other warning; those will be adjudged sufficient legal notice given, whether taken or not; and no unfairness can be charged on Christ if he come suddenly, without giving other notice. Behold, he has told us before.

2nd. The severity of his doom, *ver. 51*. It is not more severe than righteous, but it is a doom that carries in it utter ruin, wrapt up in two dreadful words—death and damnation.

1. Death. His lord 'shall cut him asunder,' *ἀποκομῆσαι αὐτόν*,—'he shall cut him off' from the land of the living, from the congregation of the righteous, shall separate him unto evil; which is the definition of a curse, *Deu. xxix. 21*; shall cut him down, as a tree that cumbereth the ground; perhaps it alludes to the sentence often used in the law, 'That soul shall be cut off from his people,' noting an utter extirpation. Death cuts off a good man, as a choice limb is cut off, to be grafted in a better stock; but it cuts off a wicked man as a withered branch is cut off for the fire; cut him off from this world, which he set his heart so much upon, and was, as it were, one with; or, as we read it, 'shall cut him asunder,' that is, part body and soul; send the body to the grave, to be a prey for worms, and the soul to hell, to be a prey for devils, and there is the sinner cut asunder. The soul and body of a godly man at death part fairly,—the one cheerfully lifted up to God, the other left to the dust,—but the soul and body of a wicked man at death are cut asunder, torn asunder, for to them death is the king of terrors, *Job xviii. 14*. The wicked servant divided himself between God and the world, Christ and Belial, his profession and his lusts; justly therefore will he thus be divided.

2. Damnation. He shall 'appoint him his portion with the hypocrites;' and a miserable portion it will be, for 'there shall be weeping.' Note, 1st. There is a place and state of everlasting misery in the other world, where there is nothing but 'weeping and gnashing of teeth;' which speaks the soul's tribulation and anguish under God's indignation and wrath. 2nd. The Divine sentence will appoint this place and state as the portion of those who by their own sin were fitted for it. Even he of whom he said that he was his Lord shall thus appoint him his portion. He that is now the Saviour will then be the Judge, and the everlasting state of the children of men will be as he appoints. They that choose the world for their portion in this life, will have hell for their portion in the other life: 'This is the portion of a wicked man from God,' *Job xx. 29*. 3rd. Hell is the proper place of hypocrites. This wicked servant has 'his portion with the hypocrites.' They are, as it were, the freeholders; other sinners are but as inmates with them, and have but a portion of their misery. When Christ would express the most severe punishment in the other world, he calls it 'the portion of hypocrites.' If there be any place in hell hotter than other, as it is like there is, it will be the allotment of those that have the form but hate the power of godliness. 4th. Wicked ministers will have their portion in the other world with the worst of sinners, even with the hypocrites; and justly, for they are the worst of hypocrites. The blood of Christ, which they have by their profaneness trampled under their feet, and the blood of souls, which they have by their unfaithfulness brought upon their heads, will bear hard upon them in that place of torment. 'Son, remember,' will be as cutting a word to a minister, if he perish, as to any other sinner whatsoever. Let them, therefore, who preach to others, fear, lest they themselves should be castaways.

CHAPTER XXV.

This chapter continues and concludes our Saviour's discourse, which began in the foregoing chapter, concerning his second coming, and the end of the world. This was his farewell sermon of caution, as that, *Jno. xiv. xv. and xvi.*, was of comfort to his disciples; and they had need of both in a world of so much temptation and trouble as this is. The application of that discourse was, 'Watch therefore, and be ye therefore ready.' Now in prosecution of these serious, awakening cautions, in this chapter we have three parables, the scope of which is the same—to quicken us all, with the utmost care and diligence, to get ready for Christ's second coming, which, in all his farewell to his church, mention was made of, as that before he died, *Jno. xiv. 2*; at his ascension, *Acts i. 11*; and at the shutting up of the canon of the Scripture, *Rev. xxii. 20*. Now it concerns us to prepare for Christ's coming, 1. That we may then be ready to attend upon him; and this is shewn in the parable of the ten virgins, *ver. 1–13*. 11. That we may then be ready to give up our account to him; and this is shewn in the parable of the three servants, *ver. 14–30*. 111. That we may then be ready to receive from him our final sentence, and that it may be to eternal life; and this is shewn in a more plain description of the process of the last judgment, *ver. 31–46*. These are things of awful consideration, because of everlasting concern to every one of us.



WHEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone

'View of the Hindoos' affords one of the most remarkable parallels to the parable. It relates to what the writer saw at Serampore:—'After waiting two or three hours, at length, near midnight, it was announced, as if in the very words of Scripture, 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.' All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands, to fill up their stations in the procession. Some of them had lost their lights, and were unprepared, but it was then too late to seek them; and the

cavalcade moved forward to the house of the bride, at which place the company entered a large and splendidly illuminated area before the house, covered with an awning, where a great multitude of friends, dressed in their best apparel, were seated upon mats. The bridegroom was carried in the arms of a friend, and placed on a superb seat in the midst of the company, where he sat a short time, and then went into the house, the door of which was immediately shut, and guarded by keepers. I and others expostulated with the

out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came;



BRIDEGROOMS' DRESSES.

and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Here, First. That in general which is to be illustrated is the kingdom of heaven, the state of things under the Gospel, the external kingdom of Christ, and the administration and success of it. Some of Christ's parables had shewed us what it is like now, in the present reception of it, as *ch. xiii.*; this tells us what it shall be like, when the mystery of God shall be finished, and that kingdom delivered up to the Father. The administration of Christ's government towards the ready and the unready in the great day, may be illustrated by this similitude; or, the kingdom is put for the subjects of the kingdom. The professors of Christianity shall then be likened to these ten virgins, and shall be thus distinguished.

Secondly. That by which it is illustrated is a marriage solemnity; it was a custom sometimes used among the Jews on that occasion, that the bridegroom came, attended with his friends, late in the night, to the house of the bride, where she expected him, attended with her bridesmaids, who, upon notice given of the bridegroom's approach, were to go out with lamps in their hands, to light him into the house with ceremony and formality, in order to the celebrating of the nuptials with great mirth; and some think on these occasions they had usually ten virgins; for the Jews never held a synagogue, circumcised, kept the pass-over, or contracted marriage, but ten persons at least were present. Boaz, when he married Ruth, had ten witnesses, *Ru. iv. 2.* Now in this parable, 1. The bridegroom is our Lord Jesus Christ; he is so represented in the forty-fifth Psalm, Solomon's Song, and often in the New Testament. It speaks his singular and superlative love to, and his faithful and inviolable covenant with, his spouse the church. Believers are now betrothed to Christ, *Hos. ii. 19*; but the solemnizing of the marriage is reserved for the great day, when the bride, the Lamb's wife, will have made herself completely ready, *Rev. xix. 7, 9*. 2. The virgins are the professors of religion, members of the church, but here represented as her companions, *Ps. xlv. 14*, as elsewhere her children, *Isa. liv. 1*; her ornaments, *Isa. xlix. 18*. They that follow the Lamb are said to be virgins, *Rev. xiv. 4*; noting their beauty and purity; they are to be presented as chaste virgins to Christ, *2 Cor. xi. 2*. The bridegroom is a king, so these virgins are maids of honour, virgins without number, *Cant. vi. 8*, yet here said to be ten. 3. The office of these virgins is to meet the bridegroom, which is as much their happiness as their duty. They come to wait upon the bridegroom when he appears, and in the meantime to wait for him. See here the nature of Christianity. As Christians, we profess ourselves to be, 1st. Attendants upon Christ, to do him honour as the glorious Bridegroom, to be to him for a name and a praise, especially then "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints." We must follow him as honorary servants to their masters, *Jno. xii. 26*; hold up the name, and hold forth the praise of the exalted Jesus: this is our business. 2nd. Expectants of Christ, and of his second coming. As Christians, we profess, not only to believe and look for, but to love and long for the appearing of Christ, and to act in our whole conversation with a regard to it. The second coming of Christ is the centre in which all the lines of our religion meet, and to which the whole of the Divine life hath a constant reference and tendency. 4. Their chief concern is to have lights in their hands when they attend the bridegroom, thus to do him honour and do him service. Note, Christians are children of light. The Gospel is light, and they who receive it must not only be enlightened by it themselves, but must shine as lights; must hold it forth, *Phil. ii. 15, 16*. This in general.

Now, concerning these ten virgins, we may observe,

1. Their different character, with the proof and evidence of it.

First. Their character was, that "five were wise, and five foolish," ver. 2; and "wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness," so saith Solomon, a competent judge, *Ecc. ii. 13*. Note, Those of the same profession and denomination among men, may yet be of characters vastly different in the sight of God. Sincere Christians are the wise virgins, and hypocrites the foolish ones, as in another parable they are represented by wise and foolish builders. Note, Those are wise or foolish, indeed, that are so in the affairs of their souls.

door-keepers, but in vain." With regard to the number ten in the parable, it has been noted that one of the rabbis mentions ten lamps or torches as the usual number in Jewish marriage processions. For "are gone out," in verse 8, Trench, Wordsworth, Alford, and others propose, as a better rendering, "are going out." The clause in verse 13, "wherein the Son of man cometh," is of doubtful authority, and is excluded by good modern editors and critics.

True religion is true wisdom; sin is folly, but especially the sin of hypocrisy; for those are the greatest fools that are wise in their own conceit, and those the worst of sinners that feign themselves just men. Some observe, from the equal number of the wise and foolish, what a charitable decorum (it is Archbishop Tillotson's expression) Christ observes, as if he would hope that the number of true believers were nearly equal to that of hypocrites, or at least, teach us to hope the best concerning those that profess religion, and to think of them with a bias to the charitable side. Though in judging of ourselves, we ought to remember that the gate is strait, and few find it; yet, in judging of others, we ought to remember that the Captain of our salvation brings many sons to glory.

Secondly. The evidence of this character was in the very thing which they were to attend to; by that they are judged of.

1. It was the folly of the foolish virgins that they "took their lamps, and took no oil with them," ver. 3. They had just oil enough to make their lamps burn for the present, to make a show with, as if they intended to meet the bridegroom; but no cruse or bottle of oil with them, for a recruit, if the bridegroom tarried. Thus hypocrites: 1st. They have no principle within. They have a lamp of profession in their hands, but have not in their hearts that stock of sound knowledge, rooted dispositions, and settled resolutions, which are necessary to carry them through the services and trials of the present state. They act under the influence of external inducements, but are void of spiritual life; like a tradesman that sets up without a stock, or the seed on the stony ground that wanted root. 2nd. They have no prospect of, nor make provision for, what is to come. They took lamps for a present show, but not oil for after use. This incogitancy is the ruin of many professors; all their care is to recommend themselves to their neighbours, whom they now converse with; not to approve themselves to Christ, whom they must hereafter appear before: as if any thing will serve, provided it will but serve for the present. Tell them of things not seen as yet, and you are like Lot to his sons in law, as one that mocketh. They do not provide for hereafter, as the ant doth, nor lay up for the time to come, *2 Cor. iv. 18*.

2. It was the wisdom of the wise virgins that "they took oil in their vessels with their lamps," ver. 4. They had a good principle within, which would maintain and keep up their profession. 1st. Their heart is the vessel, which it is our wisdom to get furnished; for out of a good treasure there good things must be brought: but if that root be rottenness, the blossom will be dust. 2nd. Grace is the oil which we must have in this vessel; in the tabernacle there was constant provision made of oil for the light, *Ex. xxxv. 14*. Our light must shine before men in good works; but this cannot be, or not long, unless there be a fixed, active principle in the heart, of faith in Christ, and love to God and our brethren; from which we must act in every thing we do in religion, with an eye to what is before us. They that took oil in their vessels, did it upon supposition that perhaps the bridegroom might tarry. Note, In looking forwards, it is good to prepare for the worst; to lay in for a long siege. But remember that this oil, which keeps the lamps burning, is derived to the candlestick from Jesus Christ, the great and good olive, by the golden pipes of the ordinances, as it is represented in that vision, *Zec. iv. 2, 3, 12*; which is explained, *Jno. i. 16*, "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."

1. Their common fault: during the bridegroom's delay, "they all slumbered and slept," ver. 25. Observe here,

First. "The bridegroom tarried," that is, he did not come all out so soon as they expected. What we look for as certain, we are apt to think is very near; many in the apostles' times imagined that "the day of the Lord was at hand," but it is not so; Christ as to us seems to tarry, and yet really doth not, *Hab. ii. 3*. There is good reason for the bridegroom's tarrying; there are many intermediate counsels and purposes to be accomplished; the elect must all be called in; God's patience must be manifested, and the saints' patience tried; the harvest of the earth must be ripened, and so must the harvest of heaven too. But though Christ tarry past our time, he will not tarry past the due time.

Secondly. While he tarried, those that waited for him grew careless, and forgot what they were attending; "they all slumbered and slept," as if they had given over looking for him; for when the Son of man comes, he will not find faith, *Lu. xviii. 8*. Those that inferred the suddenness of it from its certainty, when that answered not their expectation, were apt, from the delay, to infer its uncertainty. The wise virgins slumbered, and the foolish slept; so some distinguish it; however, they were both faulty. The wise virgins kept their lamps burning, but did not keep themselves awake. Note, Too many good Christians, when they have been long in profession, grow remiss in their preparations for Christ's second coming; they intermit their care, abate their zeal, their graces are not lively, nor their works found perfect before God; and though all love be not lost, yet the first love is left. If it was hard to the disciples to watch with Christ one hour, much more to watch with him an age. "I sleep," saith the spouse, "but my heart waketh." Observe, First they slumbered, and then they slept. Note, One degree of carelessness and remissness makes way for another. Those that allow themselves in slumbering, will scarce keep themselves from sleeping; therefore dread the beginning of spiritual decays: *Veniēti occurrēte morbo*,—"attend to the first symptoms of disease." The ancients generally understood the virgins' slumbering and sleeping of their dying; they all died, wise and foolish, *Ps. xlix. 10*, before judgment-day. So Ferus: *Antequam veniat sponsus, omnibus obdormiscendum est, h. e. moriendum*,—"before the bridegroom come, all must sleep, that is, die; and so Calvin:—I think it is rather to be taken as we have opened it.

11. The surprising summons given them to attend the bridegroom, ver. 6: "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh." Note,

First. Though Christ tarry long, he will come at last; though he seem slow, he is sure. In his first coming he was thought long by those that "waited for the consolation of Israel," yet in "the fulness of time" he came; so his second coming, though long deferred, is not forgotten; his enemies shall find to their cost, that forbearance is no acquittance; and his friends shall find to their comfort, that "the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and not lie." The year of the redeemed is fixed, and it will come.

Secondly. Christ's coming will be at our midnight, when we least look for him, and are most disposed to take our rest. His coming for the relief and comfort of his people, often is when the good intended seems to be at the greatest distance; and his coming to reckon with his enemies, is when they put the evil day furthest from them. It was at midnight that the firstborn of Egypt were destroyed, and Israel delivered, *Ex. xii. 22*. Death often comes when it is least expected; the soul required "this night," *Lu. xii. 20*. Christ will come when he pleaseth, to shew his sovereignty; and will not let us know when, to teach us our duty.

Thirdly. When Christ comes, we must go forth to meet him. As Christians, we are bound to attend all the motions of the Lord Jesus, and meet him in all his outgoings. When he comes to us at death, we must go forth out of the body, out of the world, to meet him with affections and workings of soul, suitable to the discoveries we then expect him to make of himself. "Go ye forth to meet him," is a call to those who are habitually prepared to be actually ready.

xxv. 14. Although the words "the kingdom of heaven" do not occur in the original of this verse, they are properly added in the translation. The words "travelling into a far country" are better rendered by Alford "leaving his home," because they do not indicate where he was going to.

xxv. 15. The word "talents" here must be understood in a general sense of a large sum of money, the exact amount being undetermined, as it is not stated whether talents of silver or of gold

Fourthly. The notice of Christ's approach, and the call to meet him will be awakening: "there was a cry made." His first coming was not with any observation at all, nor did they say, "Lo, here is Christ, or, Lo, he is there;" "he was in the world, and the world knew him not;" but his second coming will be with the observation of all the world; "every eye shall see him." There will be a cry from heaven, for he shall descend with a shout, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment;" and a cry from the earth too, a cry to rocks and mountains, *Rev. vi. 16.*

IV. The address they all made to answer this summons, ver. 7: they all "arose and trimmed their lamps," snuffed them, and supplied them with oil, and went about with all expedition to put themselves in a posture to receive the bridegroom. Now,

First. This in the wise virgins speaks an actual preparation for the bridegroom's coming. Note, Those that are best prepared for death, yet upon the immediate arrests of it have work to do to get themselves actually ready, that they may be found in peace, *2 Pet. iii. 14*; found doing, *ch. xxiv. 46*; and not found naked, *2 Cor. v. 3*: it will be a day of search and inquiry, and it concerns us to think how we shall then be found. When we see the day approaching, we must address ourselves to our dying work with all seriousness, renewing our repentance for sin, our consent to the covenant, our farewells to the world, and our souls must be carried out towards God in suitable breathings.

Secondly. In the foolish virgins it notes a vain confidence and conceit of the goodness of their state, and their readiness for another world. Note, Even counterfeit graces will serve a man to make a show of when he comes to die, as well as they have done all his life long; the hypocrite's hopes blaze when they are just expiring, like a lightening before death.

V. The distress which the foolish virgins were in for want of oil, ver. 8, 9. This speaks, 1. The apprehensions which some hypocrites have of the misery of their state, even on this side death, when God opens their eyes to see their folly, and themselves perishing with a lie in their right hand. Or, however, 2. The real misery of their state on the other side death, and in the judgment; how far their fair, but false profession of religion, will be from availing them anything in the great day; see what comes of it:

First. Their lamps are gone out. The lamps of hypocrites often go out in this life; when they who have begun in the spirit, end in the flesh, and the hypocrisy breaks out in an open apostasy, *2 Pet. ii. 20*. The profession withers, and the credit of it is lost; the hopes fail, and the comfort of them is gone; "how often is the candle of the wicked" thus "put out!" *Job xxi. 17*. Yet many an hypocrite keeps up both the credit and the comfort of his profession, such as it is, to the last; but what is it when God takes away his soul? *Job xxvii. 8*. If his candle be not put out before him, it is put out with him, *Job xviii. 5, 6*; he shall lie down in sorrow, *Isa. i. 11*. The gains of an hypocritical profession will not follow a man to judgment, *ch. vii. 22, 23*. The lamps are gone out, when the hypocrite's hope proves like the spider's web, *Job viii. 14*; and like the giving up of the ghost, *Job xi. 20*; like Absalom's mule that left him in the oak.

Secondly. They wanted oil to supply them when they were going out. Note, Those that take up short of true grace, will certainly find the want of it one time or other. An external profession, well humoured, may carry a man far, but it will not carry him through; may light him along this world, but the damps of the valley of the shadow of death will put it out.

Thirdly. They would gladly be beholden to the wise virgins for a supply out of their vessels: "Give us of your oil." Note, The day is coming when carnal hypocrites would gladly be found in the condition of true Christians. Those who now hate the strictness of religion, will at death and judgment wish for the solid comforts of it; those who care not to live the life, yet would "die the death of the righteous." The day is coming when those who now look with contempt upon humble, contrite saints, would gladly get an interest in them, and would value those as their best friends and benefactors, whom now they set with the dogs of their flock. "Give us of your oil," that is, 'speak a good word for us,' so some; but there is no occasion for vouchers in the great day; the Judge knows what is every man's true character. But is it not well that they are brought to say, "Give us of your oil?" It is so; but, 1. This request was extorted by sensible necessity. Note, Those will see their need of grace hereafter, when it should save them, that will not see their need of grace now, when it should sanctify and rule them. 2. It comes too late. God would have given them oil, had they asked in time; but there is no buying when the market is over, no bidding when the inch of candle is dropt.

Fourthly. They were denied a share in their companions' oil. It is a sad presage of a repulse with God when they were thus repulsed by good people. The wise answered, not so; that peremptory denial is not in the original, but supplied by the translators. These wise virgins would rather give a reason without a positive refusal, than (as many do) give a positive refusal without a reason. They were well inclined to help their neighbours in distress; but we must not, we cannot, we dare not do it, "lest there be not enough for us and you;" charity begins at home; but "go and buy for yourselves." Note, 1. Those that would be saved must have grace of their own. Though we have benefit by the communion of saints, and the faith and prayers of others may now redound to our advantage, yet our own sanctification is indispensably necessary to our own salvation. "The just shall live by his faith." Every man shall give account of himself, and therefore let every man prove his own work; for he cannot get another to muster for him in that day. 2. Those that have most grace have none to spare; all we have is little enough for ourselves to appear before God in. The best have need to borrow from Christ, but they have none to lend to any of their neighbours. The church of Rome, that dreams of works of supererogation, and the imputation of the righteousness of saints, forgets that it was the wisdom of the wise virgins to understand that they had but oil enough for themselves, and none for others. But observe, these wise virgins did not upbraid the foolish with their neglect, nor boast of their own forecast, nor torment them with suggestions tending to despair, but give them the best advice the case will bear, "Go ye rather to them that sell." Note, Those that deal foolishly in the affairs of their souls, are to be pitied, and not insulted over; "for who maketh thee to differ?" When ministers attend such as have been mindless of God and their souls all their days, but are under death-bed convictions, and because true repentance is never too late, direct them to repent, and turn to God, and close with Christ; yet, because late repentance is seldom true, they do but as these wise virgins did by the foolish, even make the best of bad. They can but tell them what is to be done, if it be not too late; but whether the door may not be shut before it is done, is an unspeakable hazard. It is good advice now, if it be taken in time, "Go to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." Note, Those that would have grace, must have recourse to, and attend upon the means of grace; see *Isa. lv. 1*.

VI. The coming of the bridegroom, and the issue of all this different character of the wise and foolish virgins. See what came of it.

First. "While they went to buy, the bridegroom came." Note, Those that put off their great work to the last, it is a thousand to one they have not time to do it then. Getting grace is a work of time, and cannot be done in a hurry. While the poor awakened soul addresseth itself upon a sick-bed to repentance

and prayer, in a mighty confusion, it scarce knows which end to begin at, or what to do first, and presently death comes, judgment comes; and the work is undone, and the poor sinner undone for ever. This comes of having oil to buy, when we should burn it, and grace to get, when we should use it. "The bridegroom came." Note, Our Lord Jesus will come to his people at the great day as a bridegroom, will come in pomp, and rich attire, attended with his friends: now the bridegroom is taken away from us, we fast, *ch. ix. 15*, but then will be an everlasting feast: then the bridegroom will fetch home his bride, to be where he is, *Isa. lxvii. 24*, and will rejoice over his bride, *Isa. lxii. 5*.

Secondly. "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage." Note, 1. To be eternally glorified, is to go in with Christ to the marriage, to be in his immediate presence, and in the most intimate fellowship and communion with him in a state of eternal rest, joy, and plenty. 2. Those, and those only shall go to heaven hereafter that are made ready for heaven here, that are wrought to the selfsame thing, *2 Cor. v. 5*. 3. The suddenness of death, and of Christ's coming to us then, will be no obstruction to our happiness, if we have been habitually prepared.

Thirdly. "The door was shut," as is usual, when all the company is come that are to be admitted. The door was shut, 1. To secure those that were within; that being now made pillars in the house of our God, they may go no more out, *Rev. iii. 12*. Adam was put into paradise, but the door was left open, and so he went out again; but when glorified saints are put into the heavenly paradise, they are shut in. 2. To seclude those that were out. The state of saints and sinners will then be unalterably fixed, and those that are shut out then, will be shut out for ever. Now the gate is strait, yet it is open; but then it will be shut and bolted, and a great gulf fixed. This was like the shutting of the door of the ark when Noah was in; as he was thereby preserved, so all the rest were finally abandoned.

Fourthly. The foolish virgins came when it was too late, ver. 11: "Afterward came also the other virgins." Note, 1. There are many that will seek admission into heaven when it is too late; as profane Esau, who afterwards would have inherited the blessing. God and religion will be glorified by those late solicitations, though sinners will not be saved by them; it is for the honour of Lord, that is, of fervent and importunate prayer, that those who slight it now will flee to it shortly, and it will not be called whining and canting then. 2. The vain confidence of hypocrites will carry them very far in their expectations of happiness; they go to heaven-gate, and demand entrance, and yet are shut out; lifted up to heaven in a fond conceit of the goodness of their state, and yet thrust down to hell.

Fifthly. They were rejected, as Esau was, ver. 12: "I know you not." Note, We are all concerned to "seek the Lord while he may be found;" for there is a time coming when he will not be found. Time was when, "Lord, Lord, open to us," would have sped well, by virtue of that promise, "Knock, and it shall be opened to you," but now it comes too late. The sentence is solemnly bound on with, "Verily, I say unto you," which amounts to no less than "swearing, in his wrath, that they should never enter into his rest." It speaks him resolved, and them silenced by it.

VII. Here is a practical inference drawn from this parable, ver. 13: "Watch, therefore;" we had it before, *ch. xxiv. 42*, and here it is repeated as the most needful caution. Note, 1. Our great duty is to watch, to attend to the business of our souls with the utmost diligence and circumspection; be awake, and be wakeful. 2. It is a good reason for our watching, that the time of our Lord's coming is very uncertain; "we know neither the day nor the hour." Therefore every day, and every hour we must be ready, and not off our watch any day in the year, or any hour in the day; "be thou in the fear of the Lord" every day, and "all the day long."

14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. 16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. 18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things:

are meant. A talent of gold was worth much more than one of silver.

xxv. 18. The secreting of money with a view to its security was not uncommon in ancient times, and is still resorted to in the East. The extent to which treasures have been hidden and forgotten accounts for the frequent mention by travellers of the subject. Dr. Thomson speaks of the discovery of thousands of gold pieces at Sidon, where they were dug up in a garden. The same writer says

there are hundreds of persons engaged in searching for hidden wealth all over the country. He shows that even in modern times wealth is secreted, more especially in times of danger. Of course the sin of the man in the parable consisted in hiding money when there was no need for doing so.

xxv. 24. "A hard man" is one who is harsh and severe. What the servant meant is indicated by what follows, wherein he accuses his master of gathering advantages where he had done nothing to

enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: 27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. 28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We have here the parable of the talents committed to three servants, and this speaks us in a state of work and business, as the former in a state of expectancy. That shewed the necessity of habitual preparation, this of actual diligence in our present work and service: in that we were stirred up to do well for our own souls; in this to lay out ourselves for the glory of God, and the good of others. In this parable, 1. The master is Christ, who is the absolute owner and proprietor of all persons and things, and in a special manner of his church; into his hands all things are delivered. 2. The servants are Christians, his own servants, so they are called, born in his house, bought with his money, devoted to his praise, and employed in his work. It is likely ministers are especially intended here, who are more immediately attending on him, and sent by him. St. Paul often calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ; see 2 Tim. ii. 24. We have three things in general in this parable:

I. *The trust committed to these servants*: their master "delivered to them his goods;" having appointed them to work, (for Christ keeps no servants to be idle,) he left them something to work upon. Note, 1. Christ's servants have and receive their all from him; for they are of themselves worth nothing, nor any thing they can call their own but sin. 2. Our receiving from Christ is in order to our working for him. Our privileges are intended to find us with business. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." 3. Whatever we receive to be made use of for Christ, still the property is vested in him; we are but tenants upon his land, stewards of his manifold grace, 1 Pet. iv. 10. Now observe here,

First, On what occasion this trust was committed to these servants: the master was "travelling into a far country;" this is explained, Eph. iv. 8, "When he ascended on high, he gave gifts unto men." Note, 1. When Christ went to heaven, he was "as a man travelling into a far country;" that is, he went with a purpose to be away a great while. 2. When he went, he took care to furnish his church with all things necessary for it, during his personal absence. For, and in consideration of his departure, he committed to his church truths, laws, promises, and powers: these were the *παράκαταβίση*, the great depositum, as it is called, 1 Tim. vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 14; the "good thing that is committed" to us; and he sent his Spirit, to enable his servants to teach and profess those truths, to press and observe those laws, to improve and apply those promises, and to exercise and employ those powers, ordinary or extraordinary. Thus Christ at his ascension left his goods to his church.

Secondly, In what proportion this trust was committed: 1. He gave talents. A talent of silver is computed to be, in our money, £353 11s. 10d.; so the learned Bishop Cumberland. Note, Christ's gifts are rich and valuable, the purchases of his blood inestimable, and none of them mean. 2. He gave to some more, to others less; "to one five talents, to another two, to another one; to every one according to his several ability." When Divine providence has made a difference in men's ability, as to mind, body, estate, relation, interest, Divine grace dispenseth spiritual gifts accordingly, but still the ability itself is from him. Observe, 1st. Every one had some, one talent at least; and that is not a despicable stock for a poor servant to begin with. A soul of our own is the one talent we are every one of us intrusted with, and it will find us with work. *Hoc nempe ab homine exigitur, ut prosit hominibus; si fieri potest multis; si minus, paucis; si minus, proximis; si minus, sibi: nam cum se utilem ceteris efficit, commune agit negotium. Et si quis bene de se meretur, hoc ipso aliis prodest quod aliis profuturum parat.* It is the duty of a man to render himself beneficial to those around him, to a great number, if possible; but if this is denied him, to a few; to his intimate connexions; or, at least, to himself. He that is useful to others, may be reckoned a common good. And whoever entitles himself to his own approbation, is serviceable to others, as forming himself to those habits which will result in their favour.—*Seneca de Otio Sapient.* 2nd. All had not alike, for they had not all like abilities and opportunities; God is a free agent, "dividing to every man severally as he will;" some are cut out for service in one kind, others in another, as the members of the natural body. When the householder had thus settled his affairs, he "straightway took his journey." Our Lord Jesus, when he had given commandments to his apostles, as one in haste to be gone, he went to heaven.

II. *The different management and improvement of this trust*, which we have an account of, ver. 16–18.

First, Two of the servants did well.

1. They were diligent and faithful, they "went and traded;" they put the money they were intrusted with to the use for which it was intended; laid it out in goods, and made returns of it; as soon as ever their master was gone, they immediately applied themselves to their business. Those that have so much work to do, as every Christian has, have need to set about it quickly,

and lose no time. They "went and traded." Note, 1. true Christian is a spiritual tradesman. Trades are called mysteries, "and without controversy great is the mystery of godliness." It is a manufacture trade; there is something to be done by us upon our own hearts, and for the good of others. It is a merchant trade: things of less value to us are parted with for things of greater value; wisdom's merchandise, Pr. iii. 15; ch. xiii. 45. A tradesman is one that, having made his trade his choice, and taken pains to learn it, makes it his business to follow it, lays out all he hath for the advancement of it, makes all other affairs truckle to it, and lives upon the gain of it. Thus doth a true Christian in the work of religion; we have no stocks of our own to trade with, but trade, as factors, with our Master's stock. The endowments of the mind, reason, wit, learning, must be used in subserviency to religion; the enjoyments of the world, estate, credit, interest, power, preferment, must be improved for the honour of Christ. The ordinances of the Gospel, and our opportunities of attending them, Bibles, ministers, sabbaths, sacraments, must be improved for the end for which they were instituted, and communion with God kept up by them, and the gifts and graces of the Spirit must be exercised; and this is trading with our talents.

2. They were successful; they doubled their stock, and in a little time made cent. per cent. of it: he that had five talents soon made them other five. Trading with our talents is not always successful with others, but however it shall be so to ourselves, Isa. xlix. 4. Note, The hand of the diligent makes rich in graces, and comforts, and treasures of good works. There is a great deal to be got by industry in religion. Observe, The returns were in proportion to the receivings. 1st. From those to whom God hath given five talents, he expects the improvement of five; and to reap plentifully, where he sows plentifully: the greater gifts any have, the more pains they ought to take, as those must that have a large stock to manage. 2nd. From those to whom he has given but two talents, he expects only the improvement of two, which may encourage those who are placed in a lower and narrower sphere of usefulness, if they lay out themselves to do good according to the best of their capacity and opportunity, they shall be accepted, though they do not so much good as others.

Secondly, The third did ill, ver. 18: "He that had received one talent, went and hid his lord's money." Though the parable represents but one in three unfaithful, yet, in a history that answers this parable, we find the disproportion quite the other way: when ten lepers were cleansed, nine of the ten hid the talent, and only one returned to give thanks, Lu. xvii. 17, 18. The unfaithful servant was he that had but one talent; doubtless there are many that have five talents, and bury them all; great abilities, great advantages, and yet do no good with them; but Christ would hint to us, 1. That if he that had but one talent be reckoned with thus for burying that one, much more will they be accounted offenders that have more, that have many, and bury them. If he that was but of small capacity, was cast into utter darkness, because he did not improve what he had, as he might have done, "of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy," that tramples under foot the greatest advantages? 2. That many times those who have least to do for God, do least of what they have to do. Some make it an excuse for their laziness, that they have not the opportunities of serving God that others have; and because they have not wherewithal to do what they say they would, they will not do what we are sure they can, and so sit down and do nothing: it is really an aggravation of their sloth, that when they have but one talent to take care about, they neglect that one. He "dugged in the earth," and hid the talent, for fear it should be stolen; he did not mispend or misemploy it, did not embezzle it, or squander it away, but he hid it. Money is like muck, (so my Lord Bacon used to say,) good for nothing in the heap, but it must be spread; yet it is an evil we have often seen under the sun, treasure heaped together, Jas. v. 3; Eccl. vi. 1, 2, which doth good to nobody; and so it is in spiritual gifts; many have them, and make no use of them for the end for which they were given them. Those that have estates, and do not lay out in works of piety and charity; that have power and interest, and do not with it promote religion in the places where they live; ministers, that have capacities and opportunities of doing good, but do not stir up the gift that is in them, are those slothful servants that seek their own things more than Christ's. He "hid his lord's money;" Had it been his own, he might have done as he pleased; but whatever abilities and advantages we have, they are not our own, we are but stewards of them, and must give account to our Lord, whose goods they are. It was an aggravation of his slothfulness, that his fellow-servants were busy and successful in trading, and their zeal should have provoked his. Are others active, and shall we be idle?

III. *The account of this improvement*, ver. 19. 1. The account is deferred; it is not till after a long time that they are reckoned with; not that the master neglects his affairs, or that God is slack concerning his promise, 2 Pet. iii. 9. No, he is ready to judge, 1 Pet. iv. 5; but every thing must be done in its time and order. 2. Yet the day of account comes at last; "The lord of those servants reckoneth with them." Note, The stewards of the manifold grace of God must shortly give account of their stewardship. We must all be reckoned with, what good we have got to our own souls, and what good we have done to others, by the advantages we have enjoyed; see Rom. xiv. 10, 11. Now here is,

First, The good account of the faithful servants; and there observe, The servants, giving up the account, ver. 20, 22: "Lord, thou deliverdest to me five talents;" and to me "two;" behold, "I have gained five talents," "two talents more."

1. Christ's faithful servants acknowledge with thankfulness his vouchsafements to them: "Lord, thou deliverdest to me" such and such things. Note, 1st. It is good to keep a particular account of our receivings from God, to remember what we have received, that we may know what is expected from us, and may render according to the benefit. 2nd. We must never look upon our improvements but with a general mention of God's favour to us, and the honour he has put upon us, in intrusting us with his goods, and that grace which is the spring and fountain of all the good that is in us, or is done by us; for the truth is, the more we do for God, the more we are indebted to him for making use of us, and enabling us for his service.

2. They produce, as an evidence of their faithfulness, what they have gained. Note, God's good stewards have something to shew for their diligence: "Shew me thy faith by thy works." He that is a good man, let him shew it, Jas. iii. 13. If we be careful in our spiritual trade, it will soon be seen by us, and our works will follow us, Rev. xiv. 13: not that the saints will in the great day make mention of their own good deeds; no, Christ will do that for them, ver. 35; but it intimates, that they who faithfully improve their talents, shall have "boldness in the day of Christ," 1 Jno. ii. 28; iv. 17. And it is observable, that he that had but two talents, gave up his account as cheerfully as he that had five: for our comfort in the day of account will be according to our faithfulness, not according to our usefulness; our sincerity, not our success; according to the uprightness of our hearts, not according to the degree of our opportunities.

Secondly, The master's acceptance and approbation of their account, ver. 21, 23. 1. He commended them: "Well done, good and faithful servant." Note, The diligence and integrity of those who approve themselves the good and faithful

secure them. The injustice of the charge is self-evident, because the man was a servant, and the master had given him a commission to execute, and he had failed in his duty.

xxv. 26. The language here is not really an admission that the servant was right, although it may assume such to have been the case. Some have treated it as a question, but it seems better to view it as a supposition, and merely hypothetical.

xxv. 27. What are called "exchangers" are in the Greek called by

a name derived from a word signifying a table. They are said by Jewish authorities to have sold money, and to have owed their name to the fact that they had before them a table upon which they bought and sold. It is evident, however, that the "exchanger" of the text more nearly answered to the Latin *argentarius* or *mensarius*. The *argentarius* was a private banker, who received deposits and allowed interest upon them. He acted as a money-changer for foreigners, and attended public sales as a broker or commissioner, to bid for his

servants of Jesus Christ, will certainly "be found to praise and honour and glory at his appearing," 1 *Pet.* i. 7. Those that own and honour God now, he will own and honour them shortly. 1st. Their persons will be accepted: "Thou good and faithful servant." He that knows the integrity of his servants now, will witness to it in the great day; and they that are found faithful shall be called so. Perhaps they were censured by men, as righteous overmuch; but Christ will give them their just characters, of "good and faithful." 2nd. Their performances will be accepted: "Well done." Christ will call those, and those only, good servants, that have done well; for it is by patient continuance in well doing, that we seek for this glory and honour; and if we seek, we shall find; if we do that which is good, and do it well, we shall have praise of the same. Some masters are so morose, that they will not commend their servants, though they do their work never so well; it is thought enough not to chide; but Christ will commend his servants that do well; whether their praise be of men or no, it is of him; and if we have the good word of our Master, the matter is not great what our fellow-servants say of us; if he saith, well done, we are happy, and it should then be a small thing to us to be judged of men's judgment; as on the contrary, not he that commendeth himself, or whom his neighbours commend, is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

2. He rewardeth them. The faithful servants of Christ shall not be put off with bare commendation; no, all their work and labour of love shall be rewarded. Now this reward is here expressed two ways:

1st. In one expression agreeable to the parable: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." It is usual in the courts of princes, and families of great men, to advance those to higher offices that have been faithful in lower. Note, Christ is a master that will prefer his servants who acquit themselves well. Christ has honour in store for those that honour him: a crown, 2 *Tim.* iv. 8; a throne, *Rev.* iii. 21; a kingdom, *ch.* xxv. 34. Here they are beggars, in heaven they shall be rulers; the upright shall have dominion; Christ's servants are all princes. Observe the disproportion between the work and the reward; they are but few things in which the saints are serviceable to the glory of God, but many things wherein they shall be glorified with God. What charge we receive from God, what work we do for God in this world, is but little, very little, compared with the joy set before us; put together all our services, all our sufferings, all our improvements, all the good we do to others, all we get to ourselves, and they are but a few things, next nothing, not worthy to be compared, not fit to be named the same day with the glory to be revealed.

2nd. In another expression, which slips out of the parable into the thing signified by it: "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Note, 1. The state of the blessed is a state of joy, not only because all tears shall then be wiped away, but all the springs of comfort shall be opened to them, and the fountains of joy broken up; where there is the vision and fruition of God, a perfection of holiness, and the society of the blessed, there cannot but be a fulness of joy. 2. This joy is the joy of our Lord; the joy which he himself has purchased and provided for them; the joy of the redeemed, bought with the sorrow of the Redeemer; it is the joy which he himself is in the possession of, and which he had his eye upon when he endured the cross, and despised the shame, *Heb.* xii. 2; it is the joy which he himself is the fountain and centre of; it is the joy of our Lord, for it is joy in the Lord, who is our exceeding joy. Abraham was not willing that the steward of his house, though faithful, should be his heir, *Gen.* xv. 23; but Christ admits his faithful stewards into his own joy, to be joint heirs with him. 3. Glorified saints shall enter into this joy, that is, shall have a full and complete possession of it; as the heir, when he comes to age, enters upon his estate; as they that were ready went in to the marriage feast. Here the joy of our Lord enters into the saints, in the earnest of the Spirit; shortly they shall enter into it, shall be in it to eternity, as in their element.

Secondly. The bad account of the slothful servant. Observe, 1. His apology for himself, ver. 24, 25. Though he had received but one talent, for that one he is called to account. The smallness of our receiving will not excuse us from a reckoning. None shall be called to an account for more than they have received; but for what we have, we must all account.

Observe, 1st. What he confides in; he comes to the account with a deal of assurance, relying on the plea he had to put in, that he was able to say, "Lo, there thou hast that is thine;" "if I have not made it more, as the others have done, yet this I can say, I have not made it less;" and this he thinks may serve to bring him off, if not with praise, yet with safety. Note, Many a one goes very securely to judgment, presuming upon the validity of a plea that will be overruled as vain and frivolous. Slothful professors, that are afraid of doing too much for God, yet hope to come off as well as those that take so much pains in religion. Thus "the sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason," *Pr.* xxvi. 16. This servant thought his account would pass well enough, because he could say, "There thou hast that is thine." "Lord, I was no spendthrift of my estate, no prodigal of my time, no profane of my sabbaths, no opposer of good ministers and good preaching; Lord, I never ridiculed my Bible, nor set my wits on work to banter religion, nor abused my power to persecute any good man; I never drowned my parts, nor wasted God's good creatures in drunkenness and gluttony, nor ever, to my knowledge, did injury to any body." Many that are called Christians build their hopes for heaven upon their being able to make such an account; and yet all this amounts to no more but "There thou hast that is thine;" as if no more were required, or could be expected.

2nd. What he confesseth. He owns the burying of his talent: "I hid thy talent in the earth." He speaks as if that were no great fault; nay, as if he deserved praise for his prudence, in putting it in a safe place, and running no hazards with it. Note, It is common for people to make a very light matter of that which will be their condemnation in the great day. Or, if he was conscious to himself that it was his fault, it intimates how easily slothful servants will be convicted in the judgment; there will need no great search for proof, for their own tongues shall fall upon them.

3rd. What he makes his excuse: "I knew that thou wast an hard man, and I was afraid." Good thoughts of God would beget love, and that love would make us diligent and faithful; but hard thoughts of God beget fear, and that fear makes us slothful and unfaithful. His excuse speaks,

First. The sentiments of an enemy: "I knew thee that thou art an hard man." This was like that wicked saying of the house of Israel, "The way of the Lord is not equal," *Eze.* xlviii. 25. Thus his defence is his offence; "the foolishness of man perverteth his way," and then, as if that would mend the matter, "his heart fretteth against the Lord." This is covering the transgression, as Adam, who implicitly laid the fault on God himself, "the woman which thou gavest me." Note, Carnal hearts are apt to conceive false and wicked opinions concerning God, and with them to harden themselves in their evil ways. Observe how confidently he speaks, "I knew thee to be so." How could he know him to be so? "What iniquity have we or our fathers found in him?" *Jer.* ii. 5. Wherein has he wearied us with his work, or deceived us in his wages? *Mic.* vi. 3. Hath he "been a wilderness to us, or a land of darkness?" Thus long God has governed the world, and may ask, with more reason than Samuel himself could, "Whom have I defrauded? or whom have I

oppressed?" Doth not all the world know the contrary, that he is so far from being a hard master, that the earth is full of his goodness? So far from reaping where he sowed not, that he sows a great deal where he reaps nothing; for he causeth the sun to shine, and his rain to fall upon the evil and unthankful; and fills their hearts with food and gladness, who say to the Almighty, "Depart from us." This suggestion speaks the common reproach wicked people cast upon God; as if all the blame of their sin and ruin lay at his door, for denying them his grace; whereas it is certain, never any that faithfully improved the common grace they had, perished for want of special grace; nor can any shew what could in reason have been done more for an unfruitful vineyard than God has done in it. God doth not demand brick, and deny straw; no, whatever is required in the covenant, is promised in the covenant; so that if we perish, it is alone of ourselves.

Secondly. The spirit of a slave: "I was afraid." This ill affection towards God arose from his false notions of him; and nothing is more unworthy of God, nor more hinders our duty to him, than slavish fear: this has bondage and torment, and is directly opposite to that entire love which the great commandment requires. Note, Hard thoughts of God drive us from, and cramp us in his service. Those who think it impossible to please him, and in vain to serve him, will do nothing to purpose in religion.

2. His lord's answer to this apology. His plea will stand him in no stead; it is overruled, nay, it is made to turn against him, and he is struck speechless with it, for here is his conviction, and his condemnation.

1st. His conviction, ver. 26, 27. Two things he is convicted of:

First. Slothfulness: "Thou wicked and slothful servant." Note, Slothful servants are wicked servants, and will be reckoned with as such by their master; for "he that is slothful in his work," and neglects the good that God has commanded, "is brother to him that is a great waster," by doing the evil that God has forbidden, *Pr.* xviii. 9. He that is careless in God's work is near akin to him that is busy in the devil's work. *Satis est mali nihil facisse boni*,—"to do no good, is to incur very serious blame." Omissions are sins, and must come into judgment; slothfulness makes way for wickedness; all become filthy, for there is none that doeth good, *Ps.* xiv. 3. When the house is empty, the unclean spirit takes possession. Those that are idle in the affairs of their souls, are not only idle, but something worse, 1 *Tim.* v. 13. When men sleep, the enemy sows tares.

Secondly. Self-contradiction, ver. 26, 27: "Thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers." Note, The hard thoughts which sinners have of God, though false and unjust, will be so far from justifying their wickedness and slothfulness, that they will rather aggravate and add to their guilt. Three ways this may be taken.

1st. Suppose I had been so hard a master, shouldst not thou therefore have been the more diligent and careful to please me? if not for love, yet for fear? and for that reason, thou oughtest to have minded thy work. If our God be a consuming fire, in consideration of that, let us study how to serve him. 2nd. Or thus: If thou didst think me to be a hard master, and therefore durst not trade with the money thyself, for fear of losing by it, and being made to stand to the loss, yet thou mightest have put it into the hands of the exchangers, or goldsmiths, might have brought it into the bank; and then at my coming, if I could not have had the greater improvement by trade and merchandise, (as of the other talents,) yet I might have had the lesser improvement of bare interest, and "should have received my own with usury," which it seems was a common practice at that time, and not disallowed by our Saviour. Note, If we could not, or durst not, do what we would, yet that excuse will not serve, when it will be made to appear that we did not do what we could and durst. If we could not find in our hearts to venture upon more difficult and hazardous services, yet will that justify us in balking those that were more safe and easy? Something is better than nothing; if we fail of shewing our courage in bold enterprises, yet we must not fail to testify our good will in honest endeavours; and our Master will not despise the day of small things. Or thus, 3rd. Suppose I did reap where I sowed not, yet that is nothing to thee, for I had sowed upon thee, and the talent was my money which thou wast intrusted with, not only to keep, but to improve. Note, In the day of account wicked and slothful servants will be quite left without excuse; frivolous pleas will be overruled, and every mouth will be stopped; and those who now stand so much upon their own justification, will not have one word to say for themselves.

2nd. His condemnation. The slothful servant is sentenced:

First. To be deprived of his talent, ver. 28, 29: "Take therefore the talent from him." The talents were first disposed of by the master, as an absolute owner, but this was now disposed of by him as a judge; he takes it from the unfaithful servant to punish him, and gives it to him that was eminently faithful to reward him; and the meaning of this part of the parable we have in the reason of the sentence, ver. 29: "To every one that hath shall be given." This may be applied,

1st. To the blessings of this life, worldly wealth and possessions. These we are intrusted with, to be used for the glory of God, and the good of those about us: now, he that hath these things, and useth them for these ends, he shall have abundance, perhaps abundance of the things themselves, however abundance of comfort in them, and of better things; but from him that hath not, that is, that hath these things, as if he had them not, had not the power to eat of them, or to do good with them, (*Avaro deest, tam quod habet, quam quod non habet*), the miser may be considered as destitute of what he has, as well as of what he has not; they shall be taken away. Solomon explains this, *Pr.* xi. 24: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." Giving to the poor, is trading with what we have, and the returns will be rich; it will multiply the meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruse; but those that are sordid, and niggardly, and uncharitable, will find that those riches which are so got, "perish by evil travail," *Ecc.* v. 13, 14. Sometimes Providence strangely transfers estates from those that do no good with them, to those that do; they are gathered for him that will pity the poor, *Pr.* xxviii. 8; see *Pr.* xiii. 22; *Job* xxvii. 16, 17; *Ecc.* ii. 26.

2nd. We may apply it to the means of grace. They who are diligent in improving the opportunities they have, God will enlarge them, will set before them an open door, *Rev.* iii. 8; but they who know not the day of their visitation, shall have the things that belong to their peace hid from their eyes. For proof of this, go see what God did to Shiloh, *Jer.* vii. 12.

3rd. We may apply it to the common gifts of the Spirit. He that hath these and doth good with them, shall have abundance; these gifts improve by exercise and brighten by being used: the more we do, the more we may do in religion; but those who stir not up the gift that is in them, who do not exert themselves according to their capacity, their gifts rust and decay, and go out like a neglected fire. From him that has not a living principle of grace in his soul, shall be taken away the common gifts which he hath; as the lamps of the foolish virgins went out for want of oil, ver. 8; thus the arm of the idol-shepherd, which he had sluggishly folded up in his bosom, comes to be dried up; and his right eye, which he had carelessly or wilfully shut, becomes utterly darkened, as it is threatened, *Zec.* xi. 17.

employers. The *mensarius* was a public officer appointed by the State upon certain occasions, and in times of general distress, to act as a public banker. Both classes had their tables or counters displayed in public in the colonnades of the Forum. The exchanger alluded to in the text was probably one who combined in himself the threefold character of a money-changer, a receiver of deposits on interest, and a money-lender. On the subject of usury the remarks made in "Cassell's Bible Dictionary" deserve to be quoted:—"This

was forbidden to the Jews (*Lev.* xxv. 36, 37); but the prohibition only extended to their dealings with each other (*D-ut.* xxiii. 19, 20). The violation of the law was viewed with abhorrence by holy Israelites (*Psa.* xv. 5; *Prov.* xxviii. 8; *Jer.* xv. 10). It seems, however, that after the captivity the Mosaic rule was very much neglected. Interchange with foreign nations, and the decline of zeal for the law, and other circumstances, led to the more extensive adoption of usury by the Jews, and hence, in modern times, they are

Secondly. He is sentenced to be cast into utter darkness, ver. 30. Here, 1st. His character is that of an unprofitable servant. Note. Slothful servants will be reckoned with as unprofitable servants, who do nothing to the purpose of their coming into the world, nothing to answer the end of their birth or baptism, who are no way serviceable to the glory of God, the good of others, or the salvation of their own souls. A slothful servant is a withered member in the body, a barren tree in the vineyard, an idle drone in the hive; is good for nothing. In one sense we are all unprofitable servants, *Lu. xvii. 10*; we cannot profit God, *Job xxii. 2*; but to others, and to ourselves, it is required that we be profitable; if we be not, Christ will not own us as his servants; it is not enough not to do hurt, but we must do good, must bring forth fruit; and though thereby God is not profited, yet he is glorified, *Jno. xv. 8*.

2nd. His doom is to be cast into utter darkness. Here, as in what was said to the faithful servants, our Saviour slides insensibly out of the parable into the thing intended by it, and it serves as a key to the whole; for "utter darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth," is in Christ's discourses the common periphrasis of the miseries of the damned in hell. Their state is, 1. Very dismal: it is outer darkness. Darkness is uncomfortable and frightful; it was one of the plagues of Egypt: in hell there are chains of darkness, *2 Pet. ii. 4*; in the dark, no man can work; a fit punishment for a slothful servant. It is utter darkness, out from the light of heaven, out from the joy of their Lord, into which the faithful servants were admitted, out from the feast: compare, *ch. viii. 12*; *xxii. 13*. 2. Very doleful: there is weeping, which speaks great sorrow, and gnashing of teeth, which speaks great vexation and indignation. This will be the portion of the slothful servant.

31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the



GOATS OF PALESTINE.

sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison,

and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

We have here a description of the process of the last judgment in the great day: some passages there are in it that are parabolical, as the separating between the sheep and the goats, and the dialogues between the judge and the persons judged; but there is no thread of similitude carried through the discourse; and therefore it is rather to be called a draught or delineation of the final judgment, than a parable; it is as it were the reddition of the former parables. And here we have,

I. *The placing of the judge upon the judgment seat*, ver. 30: "When the Son of man shall come." Observe here,

First. That there is a judgment to come, in which every man shall be determined to a state of everlasting happiness or misery in the world of recompence and retribution, according to what he did in this world of trial and probation, which is to be judged of by the rule of the everlasting Gospel.

Secondly. The administration of the judgment of the great day is committed to "the Son of man," for by him God will judge the world, *Acts xvii. 31*; and to him all judgment is committed; and therefore the judgment of that day, which is the centre of all. Here, as elsewhere, when the last judgment is spoken of, Christ is called the Son of man, because he is to judge the sons of men; and being himself of the same nature, he is the more unexceptionable; and because his wonderful condescension to take upon him our nature, and to become the Son of man, will be recompensed by his exaltation in that day, and an honour put upon the human nature.

Thirdly. Christ's appearing to judge the world, will be splendid and glorious. Agrippa and Bernice come to the judgment seat with great pomp, *Acts xlv. 23*; but that was (as the original word is) great fancy; Christ will come to the judgment seat in real glory: the Sun of righteousness shall then shine in his meridian lustre; and the Prince of the kings of the earth shall shew the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honours of his excellent majesty; and all the world shall see what the saints only do now believe, that he is the brightness of his Father's glory; he shall come, not only in the glory of his Father, but in his own glory, as Mediator: his first coming was under a black cloud of obscurity; his second will be in a bright cloud of glory. The assurance Christ gave his disciples of his future glory, might help to take off the offence of the cross, and his approaching disgrace and suffering.

Fourthly. When Christ comes in his glory to judge the world, he will bring all his holy angels with him. This glorious person will have a glorious retinue, his holy myriads, who will be not only his attendants, but ministers of his justice; they shall come with him both for state and service: they must come to call the court, *1 Thes. iv. 16*; to gather the elect, *ch. xxiv. 31*; to bundle the tares, *ch. xiii. 40*; to be witnesses of the saints' glory, *Lu. xii. 8*; and of sinners' misery, *Rev. xix. 20*.

Fifthly. He will then "sit upon the throne of his glory." He is now set down with the Father upon his throne, and it is a throne of grace, to which we may come boldly; it is a throne of government, the throne of his father David; he is a priest upon that throne; but then he will sit upon the throne of glory, the throne of judgment: see *Dan. vii. 9, 10*. Solomon's throne, though there was not its like in any kingdom, was but a dunghill to it. Christ, in the days of his flesh, was arraigned as a prisoner at the bar; but at his second coming, he will sit as a judge upon the bench.

II. *The appearing of all the children of men before him*, ver. 32: "Before him shall be gathered all nations." Note. The judgment of the great day will be a general judgment: all must be summoned before Christ's tribunal; all of every age of the world, from the beginning to the end of time; all of every place on earth, even from the remotest corners of the world, most obscure and distant from each other; all nations, all those nations of men that are made of one blood, to dwell on all the face of the earth.

III. *The distinction that will then be made between the precious and the vile*: "He shall separate them one from another," as the tares and wheat are separated at the harvest; the good fish and bad at the shore; the corn and chaff in the floor. Wicked and godly here dwell together in the same kingdoms, cities, churches, and families, and are not certainly distinguishable one from another; such are the infirmities of saints, such the hypocrisies of sinners, and one event to both; but in that day they will be separated, and parted for ever: "Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked," *Mal. iii. 18*. They cannot separate themselves one from another in this world, *1 Cor. v. 10*; nor can any one else separate them, *ch. xiii. 29*. But the Lord knows them that are his, and he can separate them. This separation will be so exact, that the most inconsiderable saints shall not be lost in the crowd of sinners, nor the most plausible sinner hid in the crowd of saints, *Psa. i. 5*; but every one shall go to his own place.

This is compared to a shepherd's dividing between the sheep and the goats; it is taken from *Eze. xxxiv. 17*: "Behold I judge between cattle and cattle." Note, 1. Jesus Christ is the great shepherd; he now feeds his flock like a shepherd, and will shortly distinguish between those that are his, and those that are not; as Laban divided his sheep from Jacob's, and set three days' journey between them, *Gen. xxx. 35, 36*. 2. The godly are like sheep, innocent, mild, patient, useful: the wicked are like goats, a baser kind of animal, unsavoury and unruly. These sheep and goats are here feeding all day in the same pasture, but will be coted at night in different folds.

Being thus divided, he will "set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left," ver. 33. Christ puts honour upon the godly, as we shew respect to those we set on our right hand; but the wicked shall rise to everlasting shame, *Dan. xii. 2*. It is not said, he shall put the rich on his right hand, and the poor on his left; the learned and noble on his right hand, and the unlearned and despised on his left; but the godly on his right hand, and the wicked on his left; all other divisions and subdivisions will then be abolished, but the greater distinction of men into saints and sinners, sanctified and unsanctified, will remain for ever; and men's eternal state will be determined by it. The wicked took up with left hand blessings, riches and honour; and so shall their doom be.

the greatest usurers in the world." Though the text is regarded as an admission of the principle of usury by our Lord, it is of doubtful authority as an argument either way, because our Lord was wont to introduce into parables allusions to characters and customs of which he could not approve, and which were brought in with a view to unity, and the lessons it was his design to teach. The object here is to enforce the duty of turning all our faculties to profit, because we are merely trustees and servants, and because we shall some day

have to render an account of our stewardship. There is no such distinction in reality as that which Dr. A. Clarke supposes, when he says, "With its produce—not usury; for that is unlawful interest, more than the money can properly produce." At the same time, "interest" is a better word here than "usury."

xxv. 31. On the word "holy" it must be noted that it is omitted by some of the best authorities, ancient and modern. Thus, A. Clarke says it is "omitted by many excellent manuscripts, versions,

IV. The process of the judgment concerning each of these.

First. Concerning the godly on the right hand. Their cause must be first despatched, that they may be assessors with Christ in the judgment of the wicked, whose misery will be aggravated by their seeing Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob admitted into the kingdom of heaven, *Lu. xiii. 28*. Observe here,

1. The glory conferred upon them: the sentence by which they shall be not only acquitted, but preferred and rewarded, *ver. 34*: "The King shall say unto them," He that was the shepherd, which speaks the care and tenderness wherewith he will make this disposition, is here the king, which speaks the authority wherewith he will then pronounce the sentence: where the word of this king is, there is power. Here are two things in this sentence:

1st. The acknowledging of the saints to be the blessed of the Lord: "Come ye blessed of my Father." First. He pronounceth them blessed, and his saying they are blessed makes them so; the law curseth them for their many discontinuances, but Christ having redeemed them from the curse of the law, and purchased a blessing for them, commands a blessing on them. Secondly. Blessed of his Father, reproached and cursed by the world, but blessed of God: "as the Spirit glorifies the Son," *Jno. xvi. 14*, so the Son glorifies the Father, by referring the salvation of the saints to him as the first cause; all our blessings in heavenly things flow to us from God, as "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," *Eph. i. 3*. Thirdly. He calls them to come: this come is in effect—Welcome, ten thousand welcomes to the blessed of my Father: come to me, come to be for ever with me; you that followed me, bearing my cross, now come along with me, wearing the crown. The blessed of my Father are the beloved of my soul, that have been too long at a distance from me; come now, come into my bosom, come into my arms, come into my dearest embraces. O with what joy will this fill the hearts of the saints in that day! We now come boldly to the throne of grace, but we shall then come boldly to the throne of glory; and this word holds out the golden sceptre, with an assurance that our request shall be granted to more than the half of the kingdom. Now the Spirit saith, come, in the Word; and the bride saith, come, in prayer; and the result hereof is a sweet communion, but the perfection of bliss will be when the King shall say, "come."

2nd. The admission of the saints into the blessedness and kingdom of the Father: "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you."

First. The happiness they shall be possessed of is very rich; we are told what it is by him who had reason to know it, having purchased it for them, and possessed it himself. 1st. It is a kingdom, which is reckoned the most valuable possession of earth, and includes the greatest wealth and honour. Those that inherit kingdoms, wear all the glories of the crown, enjoy all the pleasures of the court, and command the peculiar treasures of the provinces; yet this is but a faint resemblance of the felicity of the saints in heaven. They that here are beggars, prisoners, accounted as the offscouring of all things, shall then inherit a kingdom, *Ps. cxlii. 7*; *Rev. ii. 26, 27*. 2nd. It is a kingdom prepared; the happiness must needs be great, for it is the product of the Divine counsels. Note, There is great preparation made for the entertainment of the saints in the kingdom of glory. The Father designed it for them in his thoughts of love, and provided it for them in the greatness of his wisdom and power. The Son purchased it for them, and is entered as the forerunner to prepare a place, *Jno. xiv. 2*; and the blessed Spirit, in preparing them for the kingdom, in effect is preparing it for them. 3rd. It is prepared for them. This speaks, 1. The suitability of this happiness: it is in all points adapted to the nature of a soul, and to the new nature of a sanctified soul. 2. Their property and interest in it: it is prepared on purpose for them, not only for such as you, but for you, you by name, you personally and particularly, who were chosen to salvation through sanctification. 4th. It is prepared "from the foundation of the world." This happiness was designed for the saints, and they for it, before time began, from all eternity, *Eph. i. 4*. The end which is last in execution, is first in intention; infinite wisdom had an eye to the eternal glorification of the saints from the first founding of the creation: "All things are for your sakes," *2 Cor. iv. 15*; or it notes the preparation of the place of this happiness, which is to be the seat and habitation of the blessed, in the very beginning of the work of creation, *Gen. i. 1*. There, in the heaven of heavens, the morning stars were singing together when the foundations of the earth were fastened, *Job xxxviii. 4, 6, 7*.

Secondly. The tenure by which they shall hold and possess it, it is very good, they shall come and inherit it: what we come to by inheritance, is not got by any procurement of our own, but purely, as the lawyers express it, by the act of God. It is God that makes heirs, heirs of heaven. We come to an inheritance by virtue of our sonship, our adoption; "if children, then heirs;" a title by inheritance is the sweetest and surest title; it alludes to possessions in the land of Canaan, which passed by inheritance, and could not be alienated longer than till the year of jubilee. Thus is the heavenly inheritance indefeasible, and unalienable. Saints in this world, are as heirs under age, tutored and governed till the time appointed of the father, *Gal. iv. 1*; and then they shall be put in full possession of that which now through grace they have a title to: Come, and inherit it.

2. The ground of this, *ver. 35, 36*: "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat." We cannot hence infer that any good works of ours merit the happiness of heaven, by any intrinsic worth or excellency in them; our goodness extendeth not unto God; but it is plain that Jesus Christ will judge the world by the same rule by which he governs it; and therefore will reward those that have been obedient to that law, and mention will be made of their obedience, not as their title, but as their evidence of an interest in Christ, and his purchase. This happiness will be adjudged to obedient believers, not upon a *quantum meriti*,—an estimate of merit, which supposeth a proportion between the work and the reward, but upon the promise of God purchased by Jesus Christ, and the benefit of it secured under certain provisos and limitations, and it is the purchase and promise that give the title; the obedience is only the qualification of the person designed. An estate made by deed or will upon condition, when the condition is performed according to the true intent of the donor or testator, becomes absolute; and then, though the title be built purely upon the deed or will, yet the performing of the condition must be given in evidence; and so it comes in here, for Christ is "the author of eternal salvation to those only that obey him," and who patiently continue in well doing.

Now the good works here mentioned, are such as we commonly call works of charity to the poor; not but that many will be found on the right hand, who never were in a capacity to feed the hungry, or clothe the naked, but were themselves fed and clothed by the charity of others; but one instance of sincere obedience is put for all the rest, and it teacheth us this in general, that faith working by love is all in all in Christianity: "Shew me thy faith by thy works;" and nothing will abound to a good account hereafter, but the fruits of righteousness in a good conversation now. The good works here described do imply three things, which must be found in all that are saved:

1st. Self-denial and contempt of the world, reckoning the things of the world no further good things than as we are enabled to do good with them; and those who have not wherewithal to go good, must shew the same disposition, by being contentedly and cheerfully poor. These are fit for heaven that are

mortified to the earth. 2nd. Love to our brethren, which is the second great commandment: the fulfilling of the law, and an excellent preparative for the world of everlasting love. We must give proof of this love by our readiness to do good, and to communicate; good wishes are but mockeries without good works, *Jas. i. 15, 16*; *1 Jno. iii. 17*. Those that have not to give, must shew the same disposition some other way. 3rd. A believing regard to Jesus Christ. That which is here rewarded, is their relieving the poor for Christ's sake, out of love to him, and with an eye to him. This puts an excellency upon the good work, when in it we serve the Lord Christ, which those may do that work for their own living, as well as those that help to keep others alive: see *Eph. vi. 5-7*. Those good works shall then be accepted which are done "in the name of the Lord Jesus," *Col. iii. 17*.

"I was hungry," that is, my disciples and followers were so, either by the persecutions of enemies for well-doing, or by the common dispensations of Providence; for in these things there is one event to the righteous and wicked: "And you gave them meat." Note, 1. Providence doth so variously order and dispose of the circumstances of his people in this world, so that while some are in a condition to give relief, others need it. It is no new thing for those that are feasted with the dainties of heaven, to be hungry and thirsty, and to want daily food; for those that are at home in God, to be strangers in a strange land; for those that have put on Christ, to want clothes to keep them warm; for those that have healthful souls, to have sickly bodies; and for those to be in prison that Christ has made free. 2. Works of charity and beneficence, according as our ability is, are necessary to salvation; and there will be more stress laid upon them in the judgment of the great day, than is commonly imagined. These must be the proofs of our love, and of our professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ, *2 Cor. ix. 13*; but they that shew no mercy, shall have judgment without mercy. Now this reason is modestly excepted against by the righteous, but is explained by the Judge himself.

First. It is questioned by the righteous, *ver. 37-39*; not as if they were loath to inherit the kingdom, or were ashamed of their good deeds, or had not the testimony of their own consciences concerning them. But, 1st. The expressions are parabolical, designed to introduce and impress these great truths: that Christ has a mighty regard to works of charity; and is especially pleased with kindnesses done to his people for his sake. Or, 2nd. They speak the humble admiration which glorified saints will be filled with, to find such poor and worthless services as theirs are so highly celebrated and richly rewarded. "Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee?" Note, Gracious souls are apt to think meanly of their own good deeds; especially as "unworthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed." Far from this is the temper of those who said, "Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not?" *Isa. lviii. 3*. Saints in heaven will wonder what brought them thither, and that God should so regard them and their services. It even put Nathanael to the blush, to hear Christ's encomium of him, "Whence knowest thou me?" *Jno. i. 47, 48*; see *Eph. iii. 20*. "When saw we thee an hungred?" we have seen the poor in distress many a time; but "when saw we thee?" Note, Christ is more among us than we think he is: "Surely the Lord is in this place," by his word, his ordinances, his ministers, his Spirit, yea, and his poor, and we know it not; "When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee," *Jno. i. 48*.

Secondly. It is explained by the Judge himself, *ver. 40*: "Inasmuch as you have done it to these my brethren," to the least, "to one of the least" of them, "ye have done it unto me." The good works of the saints, when they are produced in the great day, 1st. Shall all be remembered, and not the least, not one of the least, overlooked; no, not a cup of cold water. 2nd. They shall be interpreted most to their advantage, and the best construction that can be put upon them. As Christ makes the best of their infirmities, so he makes the most of their services.

We see what recompences Christ has for those that feed the hungry, and clothe the naked; but what will become of the godly poor, that had not wherewithal to do so? Must they be shut out? No: 1. Christ will own them, even the least of them, as his brethren; he will not be ashamed, nor think it any disparagement to him to call them brethren, *Heb. ii. 11*. In the height of his glory he will not disown his poor relations: Lazarus is there laid in his bosom, as a friend, as a brother. Thus he will confess them, *Mat. x. 32*. 2. He will take the kindnesses done to them, as done to himself, "ye have done it to me;" which shews a respect to the poor that were relieved, as well as to the rich that did relieve them. Note, Christ espouseth his people's cause, and interests himself in their interests; and reckons himself received, and loved, and owned in them. If Christ himself were among us in poverty, how readily would we relieve him! In prison, how frequently would we visit him! We are ready to envy the honour they had, who ministered to him of their substance, *Lu. viii. 3*. Wherever poor saints, and poor ministers are, there Christ is, ready to receive our kindnesses in them, and they shall be put to his account.

Secondly. Here is the process concerning the wicked; those on the left hand. And in that we have,

1. The sentence passed upon them, *ver. 41*. It was a disgrace to be set on the left hand; but that is not the worst of it; he shall say to them, "Depart from me, ye cursed." Every word has terror in it, like that of the trumpet at mount Sinai, waxing "louder and louder;" every accent more and more doleful, and exclusive of comfort.

1st. To be so near to Christ was some satisfaction, though under his frowns, but that will not be allowed; "Depart from me." In this world they were often called to come to Christ—to come for life and rest; but they turned a deaf ear to his calls: justly, therefore, are they bid to depart from Christ, that would not come to him. Depart from me, the fountain of all good; from me the Saviour; and therefore from all hope of salvation; I will never have any thing more to say to you, or do with you. Here they said to the Almighty, "Depart from us," then he "will choose their delusions," and say to them, "Depart from me." Note, It is the hell of hell to depart from Christ.

2nd. If they must depart, and depart from Christ, might not they be dismissed with a blessing? with one kind and compassionate word at least? No, "Depart, ye cursed." They that would not come to Christ to inherit a blessing, must depart from him under the burthen of a curse; that curse of the law on every one that breaks it, *Gal. iii. 10*: "As they loved cursing, so shall it come unto them." But observe, the righteous are called, "the blessed of my Father;" for their blessedness is owing purely to the grace of God, and his blessing; but the wicked are called only "ye cursed;" for their damnation is of themselves. Hath God sold them? No, they have sold themselves; have laid themselves under the curse, *Isa. i. 1*.

3rd. If they must depart, and depart with a curse, may they not go into some place of ease and rest? will it not be misery enough for them to bewail their loss? No; there is a punishment of sense, as well as loss; they must depart into fire, that is, into a torment as grievous as that of fire is to the body; and much more. This fire is the wrath of the eternal God, fastening upon the guilty souls and consciences of sinners that have made themselves fuel for it. Our God is a consuming fire, and sinners fall immediately into his hands, *Heb. x. 31*; *Rom. ii. 8, 9*.

4th. If into fire, may it not be some light or gentle fire? No; it is prepared

and fathers. Mill and Bengel approve of the omission, and Griesbach has left it out of the text." Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Alford omit it. It is absent from the Vulgate version, the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Cambridge MSS., &c. Its antiquity is, however, shown by its presence in the Syriac Peshito and in the Alexandrian MS.

xxv. 32, 33. It is not intended, by this separation of the sheep and goats, that the two kinds of animals are not pastured together.

On the contrary, Dr. Tristram says of the districts of Palestine, where goats are very common, "The sheep and goats are here always seen under the same shepherd and in company, yet they never trespass on the domain of each other. The sheep, as they traverse the hill-side, graze closely the tender herbage and the grass which carpets the soil; the goats, generally filing in long lines a little above them, skip from rock to rock, and browse the tender twigs and the foliage of the thymes and dwarf shrubs." Although both

fire: it is a torment ordained of old, *Isa. xxx. 33.* The damnation of sinners is often spoken of as an act of the Divine power: He is able to cast into hell. In the vessels of wrath he makes his power known: it is a "destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." In it it shall be seen what a provoked God can do to make a provoking creature miserable.

5th. If into fire, prepared fire, O let it be but of short continuance; let them but pass through fire. No: the fire of God's wrath will be an everlasting fire; a fire that, fastening and preying upon immortal souls, can never go out for want of fuel; and being kindled and kept burning by the wrath of an immortal God, can never go out for want of being blown and stirred up; and the streams of mercy and grace being for ever excluded, there is nothing to extinguish it. If a drop of water be denied to cool the tongue, buckets of water will never be granted to quench this flame.

6th. If they must be doomed to such a state of endless misery, yet may they not have some good company there? No, none but "the devil and his angels;" their sworn enemies, that helped to bring them to this misery, and will triumph over them in it. They served the devil while they lived, and therefore are justly sentenced to be where he is; as those that served Christ are taken to be with him where he is. It is terrible to lie in a house haunted with devils, what will it be, then, to be companions with them for ever? Observe here, *First*. Christ intimates that there is one that is the prince of the devils; the ring-leader of the rebellion, and the rest are as his angels, his messengers, by whose agency he supports his kingdom. Christ and his angels will in that day triumph over the dragon and his kind, *Rev. xii. 7.* *Secondly*. The fire is said to be prepared, not primarily for the wicked, as the kingdom is prepared for the righteous; but it was originally intended for the devil and his angels. If sinners make themselves associates with Satan, by indulging their lusts, they may thank themselves if they become sharers in that misery which was prepared for him and his associates. Calvin notes upon this, that therefore the torment of the damned is said to be prepared for the devil and his angels, to cut off all hope of escaping it; the devil and his angels are already made prisoners in that pit, and can worms of the earth think to escape?

2. The reason of this sentence assigned. God's judgments are all just; and he will be justified in them. He is judge himself, and therefore the heavens shall declare his righteousness. Now,

1st. All that is charged upon them, on which the sentence is grounded, is omission; as before the servant was condemned, not for wasting his talent, but for burying it; so here, he doth not say, "I was hungry and thirsty, for you took my meat and drink from me; I was a stranger, for you banished me; naked, for you stripped me; in prison, for you laid me there;" but, "When I was in these distresses, you were so selfish, so taken up with your own ease and pleasure, made so much of your labour, and were so loath to part with your money, that you did not minister, as you might have done, to my relief and succour. You were like those epicures that were at ease in Zion; and were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph," *Amos vi. 4-6.* Note, Omissions are the ruin of thousands.

2nd. It is the omission of works of charity to the poor. They are not sentenced for omitting their sacrifices, and burnt-offerings; they abounded in these, *Ps. l. 8*; but for omitting the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy, and faith. The Ammonites and Moabites were excluded the sanctuary, because they met not Israel with bread and water, *Deut. xxiii. 3, 4.* Note, Uncharitableness to the poor is a damning sin. If we will not be brought to works of charity by the hope of reward, let us be influenced by fear of punishment; for they "shall have judgment without mercy, that have shewed no mercy." Observe, He doth not say, "I was sick, and ye did not cure me; in prison, and you did not release me;" perhaps that was more than they could do; but, "You visited me not; which you might have done." Note, Sinners will be condemned at the great day for the omission of that good which it was in the power of their hand to do. But if the doom of the uncharitable be so dreadful, how much more intolerable will the doom of the cruel be—the doom of persecutors? Now this reason of the sentence is,

First. Objected against by the prisoners, ver. 44: "Lord, when saw we thee an hungry, or athirst?" Condemned sinners, though they have no plea that will bear them out, yet will in vain offer at excuses. Now, 1st. The manner of their pleading speaks their present precipitation; they cut it short, as men in haste: "when saw we thee hungry, or thirsty, or naked?" They care not to repeat the charge, as conscious to themselves of their own guilt, and unable to bear the terrors of the judgment. Nor will they have time allowed them to insist upon such frivolous pleas; for it is all (as we used to say) but trifling with the court. 2nd. The matter of their plea speaks their former inconsideration of that which they might have known, but would not till now, that it was too late. They that had slighted and persecuted poor Christians, would not own that they had slighted and persecuted Christ: no, they never intended any affront to him, nor expected that so great a matter would have been made of it. They imagined it was only a company of poor, weak, silly, and contemptible people, who made more ado than needed about religion, that they put those slights upon; but they who do so, will be made to know, either in the day of their conversion, as Paul, or of their condemnation, as these here, that it was Jesus whom they persecuted. And, if they say, "Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it?" *Pr. xxiv. 11, 12.*

Secondly. Justified by the Judge; who will convince all the ungodly of the hard speeches spoken against him in those that are his, *Jude 15.* He goes by this rule, ver. 45: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." Note, What is done against the faithful disciples and followers of Christ, even the least of them, he takes as done against himself: he is reproached and persecuted in them, for they are reproached and persecuted for his sake; and in all their afflictions he is afflicted. He that touches them, touches him in a part no less tender than the apple of his eye.

Thirdly. Here is the execution of both these sentences, ver. 46. Execution is the life of the law, and Christ will take care that that be done according to the sentence.

1. The wicked "shall go away into everlasting punishment." Sentence will then be executed speedily, and no reprieve granted; nor any time allowed to move in arrest of judgment. The execution of the wicked is first mentioned; for first the tares are gathered and burned. Note, 1st. The punishment of the wicked, in the future state, will be an everlasting punishment, for the state is an unalterable state. It can neither be thought that sinners should change their own natures, nor that God should give his grace to change them, when in this world the day of grace was mis-spent, the Spirit of grace resisted, and the means of grace abused and baffled. 2nd. The wicked shall be made to go away into that punishment; not that they will go voluntarily; no, they are driven from light into darkness; but it speaks an irresistible conviction of guilt, and a final despair of mercy.

2. The righteous shall go away "into life eternal," that is, they shall inherit the kingdom, ver. 34. Note, 1st. Heaven is life; it is all happiness. The life of the soul results from its union with God, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, as that of the body from its union with the soul, by the animal spirits. The heavenly life consists in the vision and fruition of God, in a perfect conformity to

him, and an immediate uninterrupted communion with him. 2nd. It is eternal life. There is no death to put a period to the life itself, nor old age to put a period to the comfort of it, nor any sorrow to embitter it. Thus life and death, good and evil, the blessing and the curse, are set before us, that we may choose our way, and so shall our end be. Even the Heathen had some notion of these different states of good and bad in the other world. Cicero, in his *Tusculan Questions*, lib. 1. brings in Socrates thus speaking, *Duae sunt viae, duplicesque cursus e corpore exeuntium; Nam qui se vitis humanis contaminantur, et libidinis se tradiderunt, is devium quoddam iter est, seculum a consilio deorum; qui autem se integros castosque servarunt, quibusque fuerit minimus cum corporibus contagio, sicut in corporibus humanis vitam imitati deorum, is ad illos a quibus sunt profecti facile patet reditus.*—Two paths open before those who depart out of the body: Such as have contaminated themselves with human vices, and yielded to their lusts, occupy a path that conducts them far from the assembly and council of the gods; but the upright and chaste, such as have been least defiled by the flesh, and have imitated, while in the body, the gods, these find it easy to return to the sublime beings from whom they came.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The story of the death and sufferings of Christ, is more particularly and fully recorded by all the four evangelists, than any other part of his story; for what should we determine, and desire to know, but "Christ and him crucified?" and this chapter begins that famous story. The year of the redemption was now come; the seventy weeks determined were now accomplished, when transgression must be finished, reconciliation made, and an everlasting righteousness brought in, by the cutting off of the Messiah the prince, *Dan. ix. 24, 26.* That awful scene is here introduced, to be read with reverence and holy fear. In this chapter we have, 1. The preliminaries, or prefaces, to Christ's sufferings: 1. The previous notice given by him of it to his disciples, ver. 1, 2; 2. The rulers' conspiracy against him, ver. 3-5; 3. The anointing of his head at a supper in Bethany, ver. 6-13; 4. Judas's bargain with the priests to betray him, ver. 14-16; 5. Christ's eating the passover with his disciples, ver. 17-25; 6. His instituting the Lord's supper, and his discourse with his disciples after it, ver. 26-35. 11. His entrance upon them, and some of the particulars of them: 1. His agony in the garden, ver. 36-46; 2. The seizing of him by the officers, with Judas's help, ver. 47-56; 3. His arraignment before the chief priest, and his condemnation in his court, ver. 57-68; 4. Peter's denying him, ver. 69-75.



AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, 2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. 3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. 5 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

Here is, 1. *The notice Christ gave his disciples of the near approach of his sufferings*, ver. 1, 2. While his enemies were preparing trouble for him, he was preparing himself and his followers for it. He had often told them of his sufferings at a distance; now he speaks of them as at the door: "after two days." Note, After many former notices of trouble, we still have need of fresh ones. Observe,

First. The time when he gave this alarm; when he "had finished all these sayings." 1. Not till he had finished all he had to say. Note, Christ's witnesses die not till they have finished their testimony. When Christ had gone through his undertaking as a prophet, he entered upon the execution of his office as a priest. 2. After he had finished these sayings, which go immediately before; he had bid his disciples expect sad times, bounds, and afflictions, and then tells them, "the Son of man is betrayed;" to intimate that they should fare no worse than he should; and that his sufferings should take the sting out of theirs. Note, Thoughts of a suffering Christ are great supports to a suffering Christian, suffering with him, and for him.

Secondly. The thing itself he gave them notice of: "The Son of man is betrayed." The thing was not only so sure, but so near, that it was as good as done. Note, It is good to make sufferings that are yet to come as present to us. He is betrayed; for Judas was then contriving and designing to betray him.

11. *The plot of the chief priests and scribes and elders of the people against the life of our Lord Jesus*, ver. 3-5. Many consults had been held against the life of Christ, but this plot was laid deeper than any yet; for the grandees were all engaged in it. The chief priests, who presided in ecclesiastical affairs; the elders, that were judges in civil matters, and the scribes, that, as doctors of the law, were directors to both. These composed the sanhedrim, or great council that governed the nation; and these were confederate against Christ. Observe,

First. The place where they met: in "the palace of the high-priest;" who was the centre of their unity in this wicked project. *Secondly*. The plot itself; to "take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him;" nothing less than his blood—his life-blood—would serve their turn. So cruel and bloody have been the designs of Christ's and his church's enemies. *Thirdly*. The policy of the plotters: "Not on the feast-day;" Why not? Was it in regard to the holiness of the time, or because they would not be disturbed in the religious services of the day? No; but "lest there be an uproar among the people." They knew Christ had a great interest in the common people; of whom there was a great concourse on the feast-day; and they would be in danger of taking up arms against their rulers, if they should happen to lay violent hands on Christ, whom all hold for a prophet. They were not awed by the fear of God, but by the fear of the people: all their concern was for their own safety, not God's honour. They would have it done at the feast; for it was a tradition of the Jews, that malefactors should be put to death at one of the three feasts, especially rebels and impostors; that all Israel might see and fear; but "not on the feast-day."

sheep and goats are thus together, they naturally form a separation, and "when folded together at night they may always be seen gathered in distinct groups; and so, round the walls, they appear instinctively to classify themselves apart, as they wait for the troughs to be filled." Probably a complete separation of a man's sheep and goats was effected when they were counted, and on others of the numerous occasions when they had to be dealt with apart. The right hand is the post of honour, and has been such in most

ages and nations. Here Benson supposes there is an allusion to the custom which the Jews followed in capital cases, to place those who were to be acquitted on the right hand of the Sanhedrim, and those who were to receive a sentence of condemnation on the left. Of course the words "sheep" and "goats" in verse 33 denote the innocent and the guilty.

xxvi. 1. Hereupon Alford observes, in his English New Testament, "The public office of our Lord as a teacher having been now fulfilled,

6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, 7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. 8 But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? 9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. 10 When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. 11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. 12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. 13 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

In this passage of story, we have,

I. *The singular kindness of a good woman to our Lord Jesus*, In anointing his head; ver. 6, 7. It was in Bethany, a village hard by Jerusalem, and "in the house of Simon the leper." Probably he was one who had been miraculously cleansed from his leprosy by our Lord Jesus, and he would express his gratitude to Christ by entertaining him, nor did Christ disdain to converse with him, to come into him, and sup with him. Though he was cleansed, yet he was called Simon the leper. Those who are guilty of scandalous sins, though the sin be pardoned, yet the reproach will stick by them, and will hardly be wiped away. The woman that did this is supposed to have been Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus; and Dr. Lightfoot thinks it was the same that was called Mary Magdalen. She had a box of ointment, very precious, which she poured on the head of Christ, as he sat at meat. This among us would be an odd sort of compliment, but it was then accounted the highest piece of respect; for the smell was very grateful, and the ointment itself refreshing to the head. David had his head anointed, *Ps. xxiii. 5; Lu. vii. 46*. Now this may be looked upon,

First. As an act of faith in our Lord Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah, that is, the Anointed. To signify that she believed in him as God's Anointed, whom he had set King, she anointed him, and made him her King. They shall appoint themselves one Head, *Hos. i. 11*. This is kissing the Son.

Secondly. As an act of love and respect to him. Some think this was she that loved much at first, and washed Christ's feet with her tears, *Lu. vii. 47*, and she had not left her first love, but was now as affectionate in the devotions of a grown Christian, as she was in those of a young beginner. Note, Where there is true love in the heart to Jesus Christ, nothing will be thought too good, no, nor good enough, to bestow upon him.

II. *The offence which the disciples took at this*. "They had indignation," ver. 8, 9; were vexed to see this ointment thus spent, which they thought might have been better bestowed.

First. See how they expressed their offence at it; they said, "To what purpose is this waste?" Now this speaks,

1. Want of tenderness towards this good woman, in interpreting her over kindness (suppose it was so) to be wastefulness. Charity teacheth us to put the best construction upon every thing that it will bear, especially upon the words and actions of those that are zealously affected in a good thing, though we may think them not altogether so discreet in it as they might be. It is true there may be over doing in well doing; but thence we must learn to be cautious ourselves, lest we run into extremes, but not to be censorious of others; because that which we may impute to the want of prudence, God may accept as an instance of abundant love. We must not say, these do too much in religion that do more than we do, but rather aim to do as much as they.

2. Want of respect to their Master: the best we can make of it is, that they knew their Master was perfectly dead to all the delights of sense; he that was so much grieved for the affliction of Joseph, cared not for being anointed with the chief ointments, *Amos vi. 6*; and therefore they thought such pleasures ill bestowed upon one who took so little pleasure in them. But, supposing that, it did not become them to call it waste, when they perceived that he admitted and accepted it as a token of his friend's love. Note, We must take heed of thinking any thing waste which is bestowed upon the Lord Jesus, either by others, or by ourselves. We must not think that time waste that is spent in the service of Christ, or that money waste which is laid out in any work of piety; for though it seem to be cast upon the waters, to be thrown down the river, yet we shall find it again to advantage after many days, *Ecd. xi. 1*.

Secondly. See how they excused their offence at it, and what pretence they made for it. "This ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor." Note, It is no new thing for bad affections to shelter themselves under specious covers; for people to shift off works of piety, under colour of works of charity.

III. *The reproof Christ gave to his disciples for the offence at this good woman*, ver. 10, 11: "Why trouble ye the woman?" Note, It is a great trouble to good people to have their good works censured and misconstrued, and it is a thing that Jesus Christ takes very ill. He here took part with a good, honest, zealous, well-meaning woman, against all his disciples, though they seem to have so much reason on their side; so heartily doth he espouse the cause of the offended little ones, *Mat. xviii. 10*. Observe his reason, "You have the poor always with you." Note,

First. There are some opportunities of doing and getting good which are constant, and which we must give constant attendance to the improvement of, Bibles we have always with us, sabbaths always with us, and so the poor we have always with us. Note, Those who have a heart to do good, never need to complain for want of opportunity. The poor never ceased, even out of the land of Israel, *Deu. xv. 11*. Some or other we cannot but see in this world that call for our charitable assistance, who are as God's receivers; some poor members of Christ, to whom he will have kindness shewn, as to himself.

Secondly. There are other opportunities of doing and getting good, which

come but seldom, which are short and uncertain, and require a more peculiar diligence in the improvement of them, and which ought to be preferred before the other; "Me ye have not always;" therefore use me while ye have me. Note, 1. Christ's constant bodily presence was not to be expected here in this world, it was expedient he should go away; his real presence in the Eucharist is a fond and groundless conceit, and contradicts what he here said, "Me ye have not always." 2. Sometimes special works of piety and devotion should take place of common works of charity. The poor must not rob Christ; we must do good to all, but especially to the household of faith.

IV. *Christ's approbation and commendation of the kindness of this good woman*. The more his servants and their services are cavilled at by men, the more he manifests his acceptance of them. He calls it a good work, ver. 10, and saith more in praise of it than could have been imagined; particularly,

First, That the meaning of it was mystical, ver. 12: "She did it for my burial." 1. Some think she intended it so, and that the women better understood Christ's frequent predictions of his death and sufferings than the apostles did; for which they were recompensed with the honour of being the first witnesses of his resurrection. 2. However, Christ interpreted it so; and he is always willing to make the best, to make the most, of his people's well-meant words and actions. This was as it were the embalming of his body, because the doing of that after his death would be prevented by his resurrection, it was therefore done before; for it was fit it should be done some time, to shew that he was still the Messiah, even when he seemed to be triumphed over by death. The disciples thought the ointment wasted which was poured upon his head. But, saith he, if so much ointment were poured upon a dead body, according to the custom of your country, you would not grudge it, or think it waste. Now this is in effect so; the body she anoints is as good as dead, and her kindness is very reasonable for that purpose; therefore rather than call it waste, put it upon that score.

Secondly, That the memorial of it should be honourable, ver. 13: "This shall be told for a memorial." This act of faith and love was so remarkable, that the preachers of Christ crucified, and the inspired writers of the history of his passion, could not choose but take notice of this passage, proclaim the notice of it, and perpetuate the memorial of it. And being once enrolled in these records, it was "graven, as with an iron pen, and lead in the rock for ever;" and could not possibly be forgotten. None of all the trumpets of fame sound so loud and so long as the everlasting Gospel. Note, 1. The story of the death of Christ, though a tragical one, is Gospel, glad tidings, because he died for us. 2. This Gospel was to be preached in the whole world, not in Judea only, but in every nation, to every creature. Let the disciples take notice of this for their encouragement, that their sound should go to the ends of the earth. 3. Though the honour of Christ is principally designed in the Gospel, yet the honour of his saints and servants is not altogether overlooked. The memorial of this woman was to be preserved, not by dedicating a church to her, or keeping an annual feast in honour of her, or preserving a piece of her broken box for a sacred relic; but by mentioning her faith and piety, in the preaching of the Gospel, for example to others, *Heb. vi. 12*. And hereby honour redounds to Christ himself, who in this world, as well as in that to come, will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.

14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, 15 And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. 16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

Immediately after an instance of the greatest kindness done to Christ, follows an instance of the greatest unkindness; such mixture is there of good and bad among the followers of Christ: he hath some faithful friends, and some false and feigned ones. What could be more base than this agreement which Judas here made with the chief priests to betray Christ to them?

First. The traitor was Judas Iscariot; he is said to be "one of the twelve," as an aggravation of his villany. When "the number of the disciples was multiplied," *Acts vi. 1*, no marvel if there were some among them that were a shame and trouble to them; but when there were but twelve, and one of them was a devil, surely we must never expect any society perfectly pure on this side heaven. The twelve were Christ's chosen friends, that had the privilege of his special favour; they were his constant followers, that had the benefit of his most intimate converse, that upon all accounts had reason to love him, and be true to him; and yet one of them betrayed him. Note, No bonds of duty or gratitude will hold those that have a devil, *Mar. v. 3, 4*.

Secondly. Here is the proffer which he made to the chief priests: he went to them, and said, "What will ye give?" ver. 15. They did not send for him, nor make the proposal to him; they could not have thought that one of Christ's own disciples should be false to him. Note, There are those even among Christ's followers that are worse than any one can imagine them to be, and want nothing but opportunity to shew it. Observe,

1. What Judas promised, "I will deliver him unto you," that is, "I will let you know where he is, and undertake to bring you to him, at such a convenient time and place, that you may seize him without noise or danger of an uproar." In their conspiracy against Christ, this was it they were at a loss about, ver. 4, 5. They durst not meddle with him in public, and knew not where to find him in private; here the matter stuck, and the difficulty was insuperable till Judas came and offered them his service. Note, Those that give up themselves to be led by the devil, find him readier than they imagine to help them at a dead lift, as Judas did the chief priests. Though the rulers, by their power and interest, when they have him in their hands, could kill him, yet none but a disciple could betray him. Note, The greater profession men make of religion, and the more they are employed in the study and service of it, the greater opportunity they have of doing mischief, if their hearts be not right with God: if Judas had not been an apostle, he could not have been a traitor; if men had not known the way of righteousness, they could not have abused it.

"I will deliver him unto you;" he did not offer himself, nor did they tamper with him to be a witness against Christ, though they wanted evidence, ver. 59. And if there had been any thing to be alleged against him, which had but the colour of proof that he was an impostor, Judas was the likeliest person to have attested it; but this is an evidence of the innocency of our Lord Jesus, that his own disciple, who knew so well his doctrine, and manner of his life, and was false to him, yet could not charge him with any thing criminal, though it would have served to justify his treachery.

2. What he asked in consideration of this undertaking; "What will ye give me?" This was the only thing that made Judas betray his Master, he hoped

his priestly office begins to be entered upon. He had not completed all his discourses, for he delivered after this those contained in John xiv.—xvii., but not in public; only to the inner circle of his disciples. From this point commences the narrative of his passion.

xxvi. 2. It might be doubted whether the disciples knew that our Lord was to be betrayed, or rather delivered up to be crucified, but it is best to regard both clauses of the verse as dependent on the words "ye know that." Certainly the disciples had been told that

their Master would be crucified; and the only question is whether they had received any distinct intimation that it would take place at the time of the paschal feast.

xxvi. 3. The words "and the scribes" are omitted by the best ancient and modern authorities. This Caiaphas also bore the name of Joseph, as we learn from Josephus. Valerius Gratus, whose nominee Caiaphas was, had, during his procuratorship of Judea, deposed and appointed several high-priests, of whom this one was

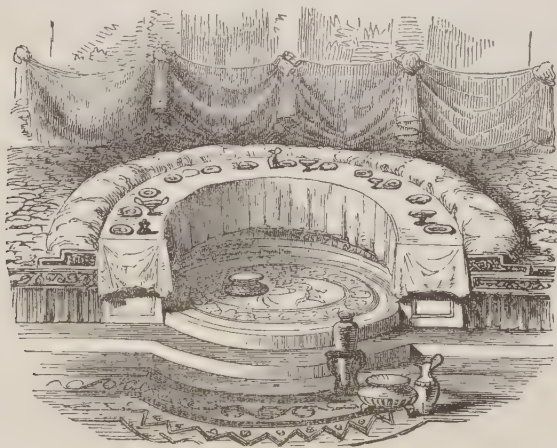
to get money by it; his master had not given him any provocation, though he knew from the first that he had a devil, yet for aught appears, he shewed the same kindness to him that he did to the rest, and put no mark of disgrace upon him that might disoblige him; he had placed him in a post that pleased him, had made him purse-bearer, and though he had embezzled the common stock, for he is called a thief, *Jno.* xii. 6, yet we do not find he was in any danger to be called to account for it; nor doth it appear he had any suspicion that the Gospel was a cheat; no, it was not the hatred of his Master, nor any quarrel with him, but purely the love of the money, that and nothing else, made Judas a traitor.

"What will ye give me?" Why, what did he want? Neither bread to eat, nor raiment to put on, neither necessities nor conveniences; was not he welcome wherever his Master was? Did he not fare as he fared? Had he not been but just now nobly entertained at a supper in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, and a little before at another, where no less a person than Martha herself waited at table? And yet this covetous wretch could not be content, but comes basely cringing to the priests, with "What will ye give me?" Note, It is not the lack of money, but the love of money, that is the root of all evil, and particularly of apostasy from Christ, witness Demas, *2 Tim.* iv. 10. Satan tempted our Saviour with this bait, "All this will I give thee," *Mat.* iv. 9. But Judas offered himself to be tempted with it; he asks, "what will ye give me?" as if his Master were a commodity that stuck on his hands.

Thirdly. Here is the bargain which the chief priests made with him; "they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver;" thirty shekels, which in our money is about 3*l.* 8*s.*, so some, 3*l.* 15*s.*, so others. It should seem Judas referred himself to them, and was willing to take what they were willing to give; he catches at the first offer, lest the next should be worse. Judas had not been wont to trade high, and therefore a little money went a great way with him. By the law, *Ex.* xxi. 32, thirty pieces of silver was the price of a slave; a goodly price at which Christ was valued, *Zec.* xi. 13. No wonder Zion's sons, though comparable to fine gold, are esteemed as earthen pitchers, when Zion's King himself was thus undervalued. "They covenanted with him," *ἔσθησαν, ἀπένδουν*—they paid it down; so some; gave him his wages in hand, to secure him and to encourage him.

Fourthly. Here is the industry of Judas, in pursuance of his bargain, *ver.* 16; "he sought opportunity to betray him;" his head was still working to find out how he might do it effectually. Note, 1. It is a very wicked thing to seek opportunity to sin, and to devise mischief, for it argues the heart fully set in them to do evil, and a malice prepossession. 2. Those that are in, think they must on, though the matter be never so bad. After he had made that wicked bargain, he had time to repent, and to revoke it, but now by his covenant, the devil has one hank more upon him than he had, and tells him he must be true to his word, though never so false to his Master; as Herod must behead John for his oath's sake.

17 Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? 18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. 19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready



ANCIENT TABLE.

the passover. 20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. 21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. 22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? 23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. 24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom

the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. 25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

We have here an account of Christ's keeping the passover; being made under the law he submitted to all the ordinances of it, and to this among the rest. It was kept in remembrance of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, the birth-day of that people. It was a tradition of the Jews, that in the days of the Messiah, they should be redeemed on the very day of their coming out of Egypt, and it was exactly fulfilled, for Christ died the day after the passover, in which day they began their march.

First. The time when Christ ate the passover was the usual time appointed by God, and observed by the Jews, *ver.* 17; "The first day of the feast of unleavened bread," which that year happened on the fifth day of the week, which is our Thursday. Some have advanced a suggestion, that our Lord Jesus celebrated the passover at this time of day sooner than other people did; but the learned Dr. Whitby has largely disproved it.

Secondly. The place where was particularly appointed by himself to the disciples, upon their inquiry, *ver.* 17; they asked, "Where wilt thou that we prepare the passover?" Perhaps Judas was one of those that asked this question, where he would eat the passover, that he might know the better how to lay his train; but the rest of the disciples asked it as usual, that they might do their duty.

1. They took it for granted, that their Master would eat the passover, though he was at this time persecuted by the chief priests, and his life sought; they knew that he would not be put by his duty, either by frightenings without, or fears within. Those do not follow Christ's example, who make it an excuse for their not attending on the Lord's supper, our gospel-passover, that they have many troubles, and many enemies, are full of care and fear; and if so they have the more need of that ordinance to help to silence their fears, and comfort them under their troubles, to help them in forgiving their enemies, and casting all their cares on God. 2. They knew very well there must be preparation made for it, and it was their business as his servants to make preparations there must be solemn preparation. 3. They knew he had no house of his own wherein to eat the passover; in this as in other things for our sakes he became poor: among all Zion's palaces there was none for Zion's King, but his kingdom was not of this world. See *Jno.* i. 11. 4. They would not pitch upon a place without direction from him, and from him they had direction; he sent them to "such a man," *ver.* 18; who probably was a friend and follower of his, and to his house he invited himself and his disciples.

1st. Tell him, "My time is at hand;" he means the time of his death, elsewhere called "his hour," *Jno.* viii. 20; xiii. 1. The time, the hour fixed in the counsel of God, and which his heart was upon, and which he had so often spoken of. He knew when it was at hand, and was busy accordingly; we know not our time, *Eccl.* ix. 12, and therefore must never be off our watch; our time is always ready, *Jno.* vii. 6, and therefore we must be always ready. Observe, Because his time was at hand, he would keep the passover. Note, The consideration of the near approach of death should quicken us to a diligent improvement of all our opportunities for our souls. Is our time at hand, and an eternity just before us? let us then keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity. Observe, When our Lord Jesus invited himself to this good man's house, he sent him this intelligence, that his time was at hand. Note, Christ's secret is with them that entertain him in their hearts. Compare *Jno.* xiv. 21, with *Rev.* iii. 20. 2nd. Tell him, "I will keep the passover at thy house;" this was an instance of his authority, as the master, which it is likely this man acknowledged; he did not beg but command the use of his house for this purpose. Thus when Christ by his Spirit comes into the heart, he demands admission, as one whose own the heart is, and cannot be denied, and gains admission, as one who has all power in the heart, and cannot be resisted; if he saith, "I will keep a feast in such a soul," he will do it, for he works, and none can hinder; his people shall be willing, for he makes them so. "I will keep the passover with my disciples." Note, Wherever Christ is welcome, he expects that his disciples should be welcome too: when we take God for our God, we take his people for our people.

Thirdly. The preparation was made by the disciples, *ver.* 19; "They did as Jesus had appointed." Note, Those who would have Christ's presence with them in the gospel-passover, must strictly observe his instructions, and do as he directs; "they made ready the passover;" they got the lamb killed in the court of the temple, got it roasted, the bitter herbs provided, bread and wine, the cloth laid, and every thing set in readiness for such a sacred, solemn feast.

Fourthly. They ate the passover according to the law, *ver.* 20. "He sat down," in the usual table gesture, not lying on one side, for it was not easy to eat, nor possible to drink in that posture, but sitting upright, though perhaps sitting low. It is the same word that is used for his posture at other meals, *Mat.* ix. 10; *Lu.* vii. 37; *Mat.* xxvi. 7. It was only the first passover in Egypt, as most think, that was eaten with "their loins girded, shoes on their feet, and staff in their hand," though all that might be in a sitting posture. His sitting down notes the composedness of his mind, when he addressed himself to this solemnity. He "sat down with the twelve," Judas not excepted. By the law they were to take a lamb for a household, *Ex.* xii. 3, 4; which were to be not less than ten, or more than twenty; Christ's disciples were his household. Note, They whom God has charged with families, must have their houses with them in serving the Lord.

Fifthly. We have here Christ's discourse with his disciples at the passover supper. The usual subject of discourse at that ordinance was the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, *Ex.* xii. 26, 27; but the great Passover is now ready to be offered, and the discourse of that swallows up all talk of the other, *Jer.* xvi. 14, 15. Here is,

1. The general notice Christ gives his disciples of the treachery that should be among them, *ver.* 21: "One of you shall betray me." Observe, 1st, Christ knew it; we know not what troubles will befall us, nor whence they will arise: but Christ knew all this, which, as it proves his omniscience, so magnifies his love, that he knew all things that should befall him, and yet did not draw back. He foresaw the treachery and baseness of a disciple of his own, and yet went on; took care of those that were given him, though he knew there was a Judas among them; would pay the price of our redemption, though he foresaw some would deny the Lord that bought them; and shed his blood, though he knew it would be trodden under foot, as an unholy thing. 2nd. When there was occasion, he let those about him know it. He had often told them that the Son of man should be betrayed, now he tells them that one of them should do it; that when they saw it they might not only be the less surprised, but have their faith in him confirmed, *Jno.* xiii. 19; xiv. 29.

left in office when Pontius Pilate was made procurator. ("Jewish Antiquities," book xviii., chap. 2, 2.)

xxvi. 5. For "not on the feast day" we may render "not during the feast," with Alford, or "not at the feast," with the American translators. The feast extended over seven days. On the feast day the Jews could not seize or put to death any one; and it was an act of prudence not to attempt such a thing during the whole of the festival. Their only safe course was to seize him before the feast,

and deliver him to the Roman power. It has been noted, however, that when Jesus was in Bethany, occasion was given for an offer to be made, and he was seized, after all, during the feast.

xxvi. 6. It is unknown who Simon the leper was, but he was some one who had apparently been a leper and had been healed.

xxvi. 7. This alabaster box was rather a flask, or phial with a narrow neck, and containing perfumed oil, as the word "poured" suggests. Of ancient alabaster vessels used for this purpose, several

2. The disciples' resentment of this, ver. 22. How did they take it?

1st. "They were exceeding sorrowful." *First.* It troubled them much to hear that their Master should be betrayed. When Peter was first told of it he said, "Be it far from thee;" and therefore it must needs be a great trouble to him, and the rest of them, to hear that it was very near to him. *Secondly.* It troubled them more to hear that one of them should do it. It would be a reproach to the fraternity for an apostle to prove a traitor, and this grieved them: gracious souls grieve for the sins of others, especially of those that have made a more than ordinary profession of religion, 2 Cor. xi. 29. *Thirdly.* It troubled them most of all that they were left at uncertainty which of them it was, and each of them was afraid for himself, lest, as Hazael speaks, 2 Kin. viii. 13, he was the dog that should do this great thing. Those that know the strength and subtlety of the tempter, and their own weakness and folly, cannot but be in pain for themselves, when they hear that "the love of many will wax cold."

2nd. They "began every one of them to say, Lord, is it I?" *First.* They were not apt to suspect Judas, though he was a thief; yet it seems he had carried it so plausibly, that those who were intimate with him were not jealous of him: none of them so much as looked upon him, much less said, "Lord, is it Judas?" Note, It is possible for an hypocrite to go through the world, not only undiscovered, but unsuspected; like bad money, so ingeniously counterfeited, that nobody questions it. *Secondly.* They were apt to suspect themselves: "Lord, is it I?" Though they were not conscious to themselves of any inclination that way,—no such thought had ever entered into their mind,—yet they feared the worst, and asked Him who knows us better than we know ourselves, "Lord, is it I?" Note, It well becomes the disciples of Christ always to be jealous over themselves with a godly jealousy, especially in trying times. We know not how strongly we may be tempted, nor how far God may leave us to ourselves; and therefore have reason not to be high-minded, but fear. It is observable that our Lord Jesus, just before he instituted the Lord's supper, put his disciples upon this trial and suspicion of themselves, to teach us to examine and judge ourselves, and "so to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

3. Further information given them concerning this matter, ver. 23, 24, where Christ tells them, 1st. That the traitor was a familiar friend: "He that dipeth his hand with me in the dish," that is, "One of you that are now with me at the table." He mentions this to make the treachery appear the more exceeding sinful. Note, External communion with Christ in holy ordinances is a great aggravation of our falseness to him. It is base ingratitude to dip with Christ in the dish, and yet betray him. 2nd. That this was according to the Scripture, which would take off the offence at it. Was Christ betrayed by a disciple? so it was written, Ps. xli. 9, "He that did eat bread with me, has lifted up the heel against me." The more we see of the fulfilling of the Scripture in our troubles, the better we may bear them. 3rd. That it would prove a very dear bargain to the traitor: "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed." This he said, not only to awaken the conscience of Judas, and bring him to repent and revoke his bargain, but for warning to all others to take heed of sinning like Judas; though God can serve his own purposes by the sins of men, that doth not make the sinner's condition the less woeful. "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." Note, The ruin that attends those who betray Christ is so great, that it were more eligible, by far, not to be at all, than to be thus miserable.

4. The conviction of Judas, ver. 25. 1st. He asked, "Is it I?" to avoid coming under the suspicion of guilt by his silence. He knew very well it was he, and yet made thus strange of it. Note, Many whose consciences condemn them, yet are very industrious to justify themselves before men, and put a good face on it, with, "Lord, is it I?" He could not but know that Christ knew, and yet trusted so much to his courtesy, because he had hitherto concealed it, that he had the impudence to challenge him to tell; or perhaps he was so much under the power of infidelity, that he imagined Christ did not know it, as those who said, "The Lord shall not see," Ps. xciv. 7; and asked, "Can he judge through the dark clouds?" 2nd. Christ soon answered his question, "Thou hast said," that is, It is as thou hast said. This is not all out so plain as Nathan's, "Thou art the man;" but it was enough to convict him, and, if his heart had not been wretchedly hardened, to have broke the neck of his plot, when he saw it discovered to his Master, and discovered by him. Note, They who are contriving to betray Christ will some time or other betray themselves, and their own thoughts will fall upon them.

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. 30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

We have here the institution of the great gospel ordinance of the Lord's supper, which was received of the Lord. Observe,

1. The time when it was instituted: "as they were eating;" at the latter end of the passover supper, before the table was drawn, because, as a feast upon a sacrifice, it was to come in the room of that ordinance. Christ is to us the passover sacrifice, by which atonement is made; 1 Cor. v. 7, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." This ordinance is to us the passover supper, by which application is made, and a commemoration celebrated of a much greater deliverance than that of Israel out of Egypt. All the legal sacrifices of propitiation being summed up in the death of Christ, and so abolished, all the legal feasts of rejoicing were summed up in this sacrament, and so abolished.

II. The institution itself. A sacrament must be instituted; it is no part of moral worship, nor is it dictated by natural light, but has both its being and significance from the institution, from a Divine institution: it is His prerogative who established the covenant to appoint the seals of it. Hence the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 23, &c., in that discourse of his concerning this ordinance, all along calls Jesus Christ the Lord, because, as Lord, as Lord of the covenant, Lord of the church, he appointed this ordinance; in which,

First. The body of Christ is signified and represented by bread. He had said formerly, Jno. vi. 35, "I am the bread of life," upon which metaphor this sacrament is built; as the life of the body is supported by bread, which is therefore put for all bodily nourishment, ch. iv. 4-6; so the life of the soul is supported and maintained by Christ's mediation.

1. He "took bread;" *ῥὸν ἄρτον*, 'the loaf,' some loaf that lay ready at hand, fit for the purpose; it is likely it was unleavened bread, but that circumstance not being taken notice of, we are not to bind ourselves to that, as some of the Greek churches do. His taking the bread was a solemn action, and, it is likely, was done in such a manner as to be observed by them that sat with him, that they might expect something more than ordinary to be done with it. Thus was the Lord Jesus set apart in the counsels of Divine love for the working out of redemption.

2. He "blessed it;" set it apart for this use by prayer and thanksgiving. We do not find any set form of words used by him upon this occasion, but what he said, no doubt, was accommodated to the business in hand—that New Testament which, by this ordinance, was to be sealed and ratified. This was like God's blessing the seventh day, Gen. ii. 3; by which it was separated to God's honour, and made to all that duly observe it a blessed day. Christ could command the blessing, and we, in his name, are emboldened to beg the blessing.

3. He "brake it;" which notes, 1st. The breaking of Christ's body for us, that it might be fitted for our use: he was bruised for our iniquities, as bread-corn was bruised, Isa. xlviii. 28; though a bone of him was not broken,—for all his breaking did not weaken him,—yet his flesh was broken with breach upon breach, and his wounds multiplied, Job xvi. 14; ix. 17, and that pained him. God complains that he is broken with the whorish heart of sinners, Eze. vi. 9; his law broken, our covenants with him broken: now justice requires breach for breach, Lev. xxiv. 20, and Christ was broken to satisfy that demand. 2nd. The breaking of Christ's body to us, as the father of the family breaks the bread to the children. The breaking of Christ to us is to facilitate the application; every thing is made ready to us, by the grants of God's word, and the operations of his grace.

4. He "gave it" to his disciples, as the master of the family, and the master of this feast; it is not said he gave it to the apostles, though they were so, and had been often called so before this; but to the disciples, because all the disciples of Christ have a right to this ordinance, and those shall have the benefit of it who are his disciples indeed; yet he gave it to them, as he did the multiplied loaves, by them to be handed to all other his followers.

5. He said, "Take, eat; this is my body." He here tells them, 1st. What they should do with it: "Take, eat;" accept of Christ as he is offered to you; receive the atonement, approve of it, consent to it, come up to the terms on which the benefit of it is proposed to you; submit to his grace and to his government. Believing on Christ is expressed by receiving him, Jno. i. 12; and feeding upon him, Jno. vi. 57, 58. Meat looked upon, or the dish never so well garnished, will not nourish us; it must be fed upon, so must the doctrine of Christ. 2nd. What they should have with it: "This is my body," not *ὅσος*,—"this bread," but *τόσος*—"this eating and drinking," that is, believing carries all the efficacy of Christ's death to our souls. "This is my body," that is, spiritually and sacramentally; 'this signifies and represents my body,' that is sacramental language, like that, Ex. xii. 11, "It is the Lord's passover." Upon a carnal and much-mistaken sense of these words, the church of Rome builds the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, which makes the bread to be changed into the substance of Christ's body, only the accidents of bread remaining; which affronts Christ, destroys the nature of a sacrament, and gives the lie to our senses. We partake of the sun, not by having the bulk and body of the sun put into our hands, but the beams of it darted down upon us; so we partake of Christ, by partaking of his grace, and the blessed fruits of the breaking of his body.

Secondly. The blood of Christ is signified and represented by the wine. To make it a complete feast, here is not only bread to strengthen, but wine to make glad the heart, ver. 27, 28. "He took the cup," the grace-cup, which was set ready to be drunk, after thanks returned, according to the custom of the Jews at the passover; this Christ took and made the sacramental cup, and so altered the property. It was intended for a cup of blessing, so the Jews call it; and therefore St. Paul studiously distinguished between the cup of blessing which we bless and that which they bless. He gave thanks to God, to teach us, not only in every ordinance, but in every part of the ordinance, to have our eyes up to God. This cup he gave to the disciples.

1. With a command, "Drink ye all of it." Thus he welcomes his guests to his table, obligeth them all to drink of his cup. Why should he so expressly command them all to drink, and to see that none let it pass them, and press that more expressly in this than in the other part of the ordinance? Surely it was because he foresaw how in after ages this ordinance would be dismembered, by the prohibition of the cup to the laity, with an express *non obstante*,—"notwithstanding," to the command.

2. With an explication; for "this is my blood of the New Testament." Therefore drink it with appetite, delight, because it is so rich a cordial. Hitherto the blood of Christ had been represented by the blood of beasts, real blood; but after it was actually shed, it was represented by the blood of grapes, metaphorical blood; so wine is called in an Old Testament prophecy of Christ, Gen. xlix. 10, 11.

Now observe what Christ saith of his blood represented in the sacrament:

1st. It is "my blood of the New Testament;" the Old Testament was confirmed by the blood of bulls and goats, Heb. ix. 16, 17; Ex. xxiv. 8; but the New Testament with the blood of Christ, which is here distinguished from that: it is "my blood of the New Testament." The covenant God is pleased to make with us, and all the benefits and privileges of it, are owing to the merits of Christ's death.

2nd. It is shed. It was not shed till next day, but it was now upon the point of being shed: it is as good as done. Before you come to repeat this ordinance yourselves, it will be shed; he was now ready to be offered, and his blood to be poured out, as the blood of the sacrifices which made atonement.

3rd. It "is shed for many;" Christ came to confirm a covenant with many, Dan. ix. 27, and the intent of his death agreed. The blood of the Old Testament was shed for a few; it confirmed a covenant, which, saith Moses, the Lord hath made with you, Ex. xxiv. 8. The atonement was made only "for the children of Israel," Lev. xvi. 34; but Jesus Christ is a propitiation "for the sins of the whole world," 1 Jno. ii. 2.

4th. It is shed "for the remission of sins," that is, to purchase remission of sins for us. The redemption we have through his blood is "the remission of sins," Eph. i. 7. The new covenant, which is procured and ratified by the blood of Christ, is a charter of pardon, an act of indemnity, in order to a reconciliation between God and man, for sin was the only thing that made the quarrel, "and without shedding of blood is no remission," Heb. ix. 22. The pardon of sin is that great blessing which is in the Lord's supper conferred upon all true believers; it is the foundation of all other blessings, and the spring of everlasting comfort, ch. ix. 2.

specimens are figured in "Cassell's Bible Dictionary," and many have been found, not only in Egypt and Assyria, but in Greek and Roman ruins. They were made at a place called Alabastron, on the Nile, and hence their name.

xxvi. 15. Thirty pieces of silver were thirty shekels. As the shekel may be reckoned at about half-a-crown, the sum was about £3 16s. English.

xxvi. 17. Unleavened bread was eaten during the paschal feast,

5. With a farewell to the fruit of the vine, ver. 29. Christ and his disciples had now feasted together with a deal of comfort, in both an Old Testament and a New Testament festival, *Fibula utriusque Testamenti*,—the connecting tie of both Testaments. How amiable were these tabernacles! How good to be here! Never such a heaven upon earth as was at this table, but it was not intended for a perpetuity. He now told them, *Ino. xvi. 17*, that yet "a little while and they should not see him, and again a little while and they should see him," which explains this here.

1st. He takes leave of such communion: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine," that is, "Now I am no more in the world," *Ino. xvii. 11*; "I have had enough of it, and am glad to think of leaving it, glad to think that this is the last meal. Farewell, this fruit of the vine, this passover cup, this sacramental wine." Dying saints take their leave of sacraments, and other the ordinances of communion, which they enjoy in this world with comfort, for the joy and glory they enter into supersedes them all; when the sun riseth, farewell the candles.

2nd. He assures them of a happy meeting again at last. It is a long, but not an everlasting farewell: "until that day when I drink it new with you." First. Some understand it of the interviews he had with them after his resurrection, which was the first step of his exaltation into the kingdom of his Father; and though, during those forty days, he did not converse with them so constantly as he had done, yet he did "eat and drink with them," *Acts x. 41*, which, as it confirmed their faith, so, doubtless, it greatly comforted their hearts, for they were rejoiced at it, *Lu. xxiv. 41*. Secondly. Others understand it of the joys and glories of the future state, which the saints shall partake of in everlasting communion with the Lord Jesus, represented here by the pleasures of a banquet of wine. That will be the kingdom of his Father, for unto him shall the kingdom be then delivered up; the wine of consolation (*Jer. xvi. 7*) will there be always new, never flat or sour, as wine with long keeping; never nauseous or unpleasant, as wine to those that have drunk much, but ever fresh. Christ will himself partake of those pleasures; it was the joy set before him, which he had in his eye, and all his faithful friends and followers shall partake with him.

3d. Here is the close of the solemnity with a hymn, ver. 30. They sung a hymn, or a psalm; whether the psalms which the Jews usually sung at the close of the passover supper, which they called the Great Hallel, viz. *Ps. cxiii.* and the five that follow it; or whether some new hymn, more closely adapted to the occasion, is uncertain; I rather think the former: had it been new, John would not have omitted to record it. Note, First. Singing of psalms is a gospel ordinance; Christ's removing the hymn from the close of the passover to the close of the Lord's supper, plainly speaks that he intended that ordinance should continue in his church; that as it had not its birth with the ceremonial law, so it should not die with it. Secondly. It is very proper, after the Lord's supper, as an expression of our joy in God through Jesus Christ, and a thankful acknowledgment of that great love wherewith God has loved us in him. Thirdly. It is not unseasonable, no, not in times of sorrow and suffering; the disciples were in sorrow, and Christ entering upon his sufferings, and yet they could sing a hymn together. Our spiritual joy should not be interrupted by outward afflictions.

When this was done, "they went out into the mount of Olives;" he would not stay in the house to be apprehended, lest he should bring the master of the house into trouble; nor would he stay in the city, lest it should occasion an uproar; but he retired into the adjacent country, "the mount of Olives," the same mount that David, in his distress, went up the ascent of, weeping, *2 Sam. xv. 30*. They had the benefit of moonlight for this walk, for the passover was always at the full moon. Note, After we have received the Lord's supper, it is good for us to retire for prayer and meditation, and to be alone with God.

31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. 32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. 33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. 34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

We have here Christ's discourse with his disciples upon the way, as they were going to the mount of Olives. Observe,

1. A prediction of the trial which both he and his disciples were now to go through. He here foretells,

First. A dismal scattering storm arising, ver. 31. 1. That they should all be offended because of Christ that very night, that is, they should all be so ill frightened with his sufferings, that they would not have the courage to stick to him in them, but would all basely desert him; "because of me this night," *ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐν ᾗ πωλεῖται τὰ πάντα*,—because of me, even because of this night; so it might be read; that is, because of what happens to me this night? Note, 1st. Offences will come among the disciples of Christ in an hour of trial and temptation; it cannot be but they should, for they are weak, Satan is busy; God permits offences; even they whose hearts are upright may sometimes be overtaken with an offence. 2nd. There are some temptations and offences, the effects of which are general and universal among Christ's disciples: "All you shall be offended." Christ had lately discovered to them the treachery of Judas, but let not the rest be secure; though there will be but one traitor, they will be all deserters. This he saith to alarm them all, that they might all watch. 3rd. We have need to prepare for sudden trials, which may come to extremity in a very little time. Christ and his disciples had eaten their supper well together in peace and quietness, yet that very night proved such a night of offence. How soon may a storm arise! We know not what a day or a night may bring forth, nor what great event may be in the teeming womb of a little time, *Pr. xxvii. 1*. 4th. The cross of Christ is the great stumblingblock to many that pass for his disciples; both the cross he bore for us, *1 Cor. i. 23*, and that which we are called out to bear for him *ch. xii. 21*.

2. That herein the scripture might be fulfilled, "I will smite the Shepherd." It is quoted from *Zec. xiii. 7*. 1st. Here is the smiting of the shepherd in the sufferings of Christ. God awakens the sword of his wrath against the Son of his love, and he is smitten. 2nd. The scattering of the sheep thereupon in the flight of the disciples. When Christ fell into the hands of his enemies, his disciples ran, one one way, and another another; it was each one's care to shift for himself, and happy he that could get furthest from the cross.

Secondly. He gives them the prospect of a comfortable gathering together again after this storm, ver. 32: "After I am risen again, I will go before you." Though you will forsake me, I will not forsake you; though you fall, I will take care you shall not fall finally; we shall have a meeting again in Galilee; I will go before you, as the shepherd before the sheep. Some make the last words of that prophecy, *Zec. xiii. 7*, a promise equivalent to this here; "and I will bring my hand again to the little ones." There is no bringing them back, but by bringing his hand to them. Note, The Captain of our salvation knows how to rally his troops, when, through their cowardice, they have been put into disorder.

11. The presumption of Peter, that he should keep his integrity whatever happened, ver. 33: "Though all men be offended, yet will I never be offended." Peter had a great stock of confidence, and was, upon all occasions, forward to speak, especially to speak for himself, and sometimes it did him a kindness, but at other times it betrayed him, as it did here. Where observe,

First. How he bound himself with a promise, that he would never be offended in Christ; not only not this night, but at no time. And if this promise had been made in an humble dependence upon the grace of Christ, it had been an excellent good word. Before the Lord's supper, Christ's discourse led his disciples to examine themselves with, "Lord, is it I?" for that is our preparatory duty, after the ordinance his discourse leads them to an engaging of themselves to close walking, for that is the subsequent duty.

Secondly. How he fancied himself better armed against temptation than any one else, and this was his weakness and folly; "though all men shall be offended, yet will not I." This was worse than Hazael's "What, is thy servant a dog?" for he supposed the thing so ill, that no man would do it; but Peter supposed it possible that some, nay, that all men might be offended, and yet he escape better than any. Note, It argues a great degree of self conceit and self confidence, to think ourselves either safe from the temptations, or free from the corruptions, that are common to men. We should rather say, If it be possible others may be offended, there is danger that I may be so. But it is common for those that think too well of themselves easily to admit suspicions of others: see *Gal. vi. 1*.

III. The particular warning Christ gave Peter of what he would do, ver. 34. He imagined that, in the hour of temptation, he should come off better than any of them, and Christ tells him he should come off worse. The warning is introduced with a solemn asseveration, "Verily, I say unto thee," take my word for it, who know thee better than thou knowest thyself. He tells him, First. That he should deny him. Peter promised he would not be so much as offended in him, not desert him; but Christ tells him he will go further, he will disown him. He said, Though all men, yet not I; and he did it sooner than any. Secondly. How quickly he should do it; this night, before to-morrow, nay, before cock crowing. Satan's temptations are compared to darts, *Eph. vi. 16*, which wound ere we are aware, suddenly doth he shoot. As we know not how near we may be to trouble, so we know not how near we may be to sin; if God leave us to ourselves, we are always in danger. Thirdly. How often he should do it; thrice. He thought he should never once do such a thing; but Christ tells him he would do it again and again: for when once our feet begin to slip, it is hard to recover our standing again. The beginnings of sin are as the letting forth of water.

IV. Peter's repeated assurances of his fidelity, ver. 35: "Though I should die with thee." He supposed the temptation strong, when he said, "though all men do it, yet will not I." But here he supposeth it stronger, when he puts it to the peril of life, "though I should die with thee." He knew what he should do—rather die with Christ than deny him: it was the condition of discipleship, *Lu. xiv. 26*. And he thought what he would do, never be false to his Master, whatever it cost him, yet it proved he was. It is easy to talk boldly and carelessly of death at a distance: I will rather die than do such a thing. But it is not so soon done as said when it comes to the setting to, and death shews itself in its own colours.

What Peter said, the rest subscribed to; "likewise also said all the disciples." Note, 1. There is a proneness in good men to be over confident of their own strength and stability. We are ready to think ourselves able to grapple with the strongest temptations, to go through the hardest and most hazardous services, and to bear the greatest afflictions for Christ, but it is because we do not know ourselves. 2. Those often fall soonest and foulest that are most confident of themselves. Those are least safe that are most secure. Satan is most active to seduce such; they are most off their guard, and God leaves them to themselves to humble them: see *1 Cor. x. 12*.

36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. 37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. 38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. 40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 42 He went away again the second time, and prayed,

xxvi. 18. The man might have been a stranger to the Lord and his disciples, because it was usual for householders at this feast to receive strangers freely, in order that they might keep the Passover, which, but for such hospitality, they might not be able to do.

xxvi. 25. The word for "master" here is *rabbi*, a different word in the original from that in verse 18, and not needing translation.

xxvi. 26—28. On some expressions here there has been a vast amount of controversy, and it has been and is believed by many that

they justify the Romish doctrine of the real presence, or transubstantiation. Truly, Jesus said, "This is my body;" but did the disciples, who saw bread in his hand, think it was his body in the sense in which that was his body which was present and visible as such? Did they think they ate his body when they ate the bread he gave to them? In verse 28 it is not simply "This is my blood," but "This is my blood of the (new) testament" or covenant. The word "new" is probably an interpolation, and is not received by

saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. 43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. 44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. 45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

Hitherto were the preparatives for Christ's sufferings, now we enter upon the bloody scene. In these verses we have the story of his agony in the garden. This was the beginning of sorrows to our Lord Jesus. Now the sword of the Lord began to awake against the Man that was his fellow; and how should it be quiet when the Lord had given it a charge? The clouds had been gathering a good while, and looked black. He had said some days before, "now is my soul troubled," *Jno. xii. 27*; but now the storm began in good earnest. He put himself into this agony before his enemies gave him any trouble, to shew that he was a free will offering, that his life was not forced from him, but he laid it down of himself, *Jno. x. 18*. Observe,

I. *The place where he underwent this mighty agony*: it was in "a place called Gethsemane." The name signifies, *torculi olei*,—"an olive mill," a press for olives, like a wine press, where they trod the olives, *Mic. vi. 15*. And this was the proper place for such a thing, at the foot of the mount of Olives. There our Lord Jesus began his passion; there "it pleased the Lord to bruise him," and crush him, that fresh oil might flow to all believers from him; that we might partake of the root and fatness of that good olive. There he trod the wine press of his Father's wrath, and trod it alone.

II. *The company he had with him when he was in this agony.*

First. He took all the eleven disciples with him to the garden, except Judas, who was at this time otherwise employed. Though it was late in the night, near bed-time, yet they stuck to him, and took this walk by moonlight with him, as Elisha, who, when he was told that his master should shortly be taken from his head, professed he would not leave him, though he led him about; so these follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes.

Secondly. He took only Peter, and James, and John with him into that corner of the garden where he suffered his agony. He left the rest at some distance, perhaps at the garden door, with this charge, "sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder;" like that of Abraham to his young men, *Gen. xxii. 5*, "abide ye here, and I will go yonder and worship." 1. Christ went to pray alone, though he had lately prayed with his disciples, *Jno. xvii. 1*. Note, Our prayers with our families must not excuse us from our secret devotions. 2. He ordered them to sit here. Note, We must take heed of giving any disturbance or interruption to those who retire for secret communion with God. He took these three with him, because they had been the witnesses of his glory in his transfiguration, *ch. xvii. 1, 2*, and that would prepare them to be the witnesses of his agony. Note, Those are best prepared to suffer with Christ, that have by faith beheld his glory, and have conversed with the glorified saints upon the holy mount. "If we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with him;" and if we hope to reign with him, why should we not expect to suffer with him?

III. *The agony itself that he was in.* "He began to be sorrowful, and very heavy." It is called an agony, *Lu. xxii. 44*; a conflict. It was not any bodily pain or torment he was in, nothing occurred to hurt him; but whatever it was, it was from within; he troubled himself, *Jno. xi. 33*. The words here used are very emphatical: he began *ἀνταρξάσθαι καὶ ἀδυνατεῖν*, "to be sorrowful, and in a consternation." The latter word signifies such a sorrow as makes a man neither fit for company nor desirous of it. He had like a weight of lead upon his spirits. Physicians use a word near akin to it, to signify the disorder a man is in in a fit of ague, or beginning of a fever. Now was fulfilled, *Ps. xxii. 14*, "I am poured out like water, my heart is like wax, it is melted;" and all those passages in the Psalms where David complains of the sorrow of his soul, *Ps. xvii. 4, 6*; *xxii. 7*; *lv. 4, 5*; *lxi. 1-3*; *lxxxviii. 3*; *cxvi. 3*; and Jonah's complaint, *ch. ii. 4, 5*. But what was the cause of all this? What was it that put him into this agony? "Why art thou cast down," blessed Jesus, and why disquieted? Certainly it was nothing of despair or distrust of his Father, much less any conflict or struggle with him. As his Father loved him because he laid down his life for the sheep, so he was entirely subject to his Father's will in it. But,

First. He engaged in an encounter with the powers of darkness; so he intimates, *Lu. xxii. 52*, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness;" and he spoke of it just before, *Jno. xiv. 30, 31*, "The prince of this world comes." I see him rallying his forces, and preparing for a general assault; "but he has nothing in me;" no garrisons in his interest, none that secretly hold correspondence with him, and therefore his attempts, though fierce, will be fruitless; but "as the Father gave me commandment, so I do;" however it be, I must have a struggle with him, the field must be fairly fought; and therefore, "arise, let us go hence," let us hasten to the field of battle and meet the enemy. Now is the close engagement in single combat between Michael and the dragon, hand to hand; "now is the judgment of this world;" the great cause is now to be determined, the decisive battle fought, in which the prince of this world will certainly be beaten and cast out, *Jno. xii. 31*. Christ, when he works salvation, is described like a champion taking the field, *Isa. lix. 16-18*. Now the serpent makes his fiercest onset on the seed of the woman, and directs his sting, the sting of death, to his very heart; *animamque in vulnere ponit*,—"and the wound is mortal."

Secondly. He was now bearing the iniquities which the Father laid upon him, and by this sorrow and amazement he accommodated himself to his undertaking. The sufferings he was entering upon were for our sins; they were all made to meet upon him, and he knew it. And therefore, as we are obliged to be sorry for our particular sins, so he was grieved for the sins of us all. So Bishop Pearson, p. 191. Now, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, where Christ now was, God gathered all nations, and pleaded with them in his Son, *Joel iii. 2, 12*. He knew the malignity of the sins that were laid upon him,—how provoking to God, how ruining to man,—and these being all set in order before him, and charged upon him, he was sorrowful, and very heavy. Now it was that iniquities took hold on him, so that he was not able to look up, as was foretold concerning him, *Ps. xl. 7, 12*.

Thirdly. He had a full and clear prospect of all the sufferings that were before him: he foresaw the treachery of Judas, the unkindness of Peter, the

malice of the Jews, and their base ingratitude. He knew that he should now in a few hours be scourged, spit upon, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross; death in its most dreadful appearances—death, in pomp, attended with all its terrors, looked him in the face, and this made him sorrowful, especially because it was the wages of our sin which he had undertaken to satisfy for. It is true, the martyrs that have suffered for Christ, have entertained the greatest torments, and the most terrible deaths, without any such sorrow and consternation; have called their prisons their delectable orchards, and a bed of flames a bed of roses; but then, 1. Christ was now denied the supports and comforts which they had, that is, he denied them to himself, and his soul refused to be comforted, not in passion, but in justice to his undertaking. Their cheerfulness under the cross was owing to the Divine favour, which, for the present, was suspended from the Lord Jesus. 2. His sufferings were of another nature from theirs. St. Paul, when he is to be offered upon the sacrifice and service of the saints' faith, can joy and rejoice with them all; but to be offered a sacrifice to make atonement for sin, is quite a different case. On the saints' cross there is a blessing pronounced which enables them to rejoice under it, *ch. v. 10, 12*; but to Christ a cross there was a curse annexed, which made him sorrowful, and very heavy under it. And his sorrow under the cross was the foundation of their joy under it.

IV. *His complaint of this agony.* Finding himself under the arrests of his passion, he goes to his disciples, ver. 38, and,

First. He acquaints them with his condition: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." It gives some little ease to a troubled spirit to have a friend ready to unbosom itself to, and give vent to its sorrows. Christ here tells them, 1. What was the seat of his sorrow: it was his soul that was now in an agony. This proves that Christ had a true human soul; for he suffered, not only in his body, but in his soul. We had sinned both against our own bodies and against our souls; both used in sin, and both wronged by it; and therefore Christ suffered in soul as well as in body. 2. What was the degree of his sorrow: he was exceeding sorrowful, *περίλυτος*, compassed about with sorrow on all hands. It was sorrow in the highest degree, even unto death; it was a killing sorrow, such sorrow as no mortal man could bear and live. He was ready to die for grief; they were sorrows of death. 3. The duration of it: it will continue even unto death. "My soul will be sorrowful as long as it is in this body; I see no other outlet but death." He now began to be sorrowful, and never ceased to be so till he said, "It is finished;" that grief is now finished which began in the garden. It was prophesied of Christ, that he should be a man of sorrows, *Isa. liii. 3*. He was so all along; we never read that he laughed; but all his sorrows hitherto were nothing to this.

Secondly. He bespeaks their company and attendance: "Tarry ye here, and watch with me." Sure he was destitute indeed of help, when he entreated theirs, who he knew would be but miserable comforters; but he would hereby teach us the benefit of the communion of saints. It is good to have, and therefore good to seek, the assistance of our brethren, when at any time we are in an agony; for two is better than one. What he said to them, he saith to all, watch, *Mar. xlii. 37*, not only watch for him in expectation of his future coming, but watch with him, in application to our present work.

V. *What passed between him and his Father when he was in this agony.* "Being in an agony, he prayed." Prayer is never out of season, but especially seasonable in an agony.

First. Observe, The place where he prayed: "He went a little further;" withdrew from them; that the scripture might be fulfilled, "I have trod the wine press alone." He retired for prayer; a troubled soul finds most ease when it is alone with God, who understands the broken language of sighs and groans. Calvin's devout remark upon this is worth transcribing: *Utile est seorsim orare, tunc enim magis familiariter sese denudat fidei animus, et simplicius sua vota, genitus, curas, pavores, spes, et gaudia in Dei sinum eonerat*,—"It is useful to pray apart; for then the faithful soul develops itself more familiarly, and with greater simplicity pours forth its petitions, groans, cares, fears, hopes, and joys, into the bosom of that God." Christ has hereby taught us, that secret prayer must be made secretly. Yet some think, that even the disciples, whom he left at the garden door, overheard him; for it is said, *Heb. v. 7*, they were strong cries.

Secondly. His posture in prayer: he "fell on his face." His lying prostrate notes, 1. The agony he was in, and the extremity of his sorrow. Job, in great grief, fell on the ground; and great anguish is expressed by rolling in the dust, *Mic. i. 10*. 2. His humility in prayer. This posture was an expression of his *ἐνλάβεια*, his reverential fear, spoken of, *Heb. v. 7*, with which he offered up these prayers; and it was in the days of his flesh, in his estate of humiliation, to which hereby he accommodated himself.

Thirdly. The prayer itself, wherein we may observe three things:

1. The title he gives to God: "O my Father." As thick as the cloud was, he could see God as a Father through it. Note, In all our addresses to God, we should eye him as a Father, as our Father; and it is in a special manner comfortable to do so when we are in an agony. It is a pleasing string to harp upon at such a time, "my Father;" whether should the child go when any thing grieves him but to his father?

2. The favour he begs: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." He calls his sufferings a cup,—not a river, not a sea, but a cup, which we shall soon see the bottom of. When we are under troubles, we should make the best, the least of them, and not aggravate them. A cup, because allotted him, as at feasts a cup was set to every mess. He begs this cup might pass from him, that is, that he might avoid the sufferings now at hand, or at least that they might be shortened. This speaks no more but that he was really and truly man, and as a man he could not but be averse to pain and suffering: this is the first and simple act of man's will, to start back from that which is sensibly grievous to us, and to desire the prevention and removal of it. The law of self-preservation is impressed upon the innocent nature of man, and rules there till overruled by some other law; therefore Christ admitted and expressed a reluctance to sufferings, to shew that he was taken from among men, *Heb. v. 1*, was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, *Heb. iv. 15*, and tempted as we are, yet without sin. Note, A prayer of faith, against an affliction, may very well consist with the patience of hope under an affliction. When David had said, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it;" yet his very next words are, "remove thy stroke away from me," *Ps. xxxix. 9, 10*. But observe the proviso, "if it be possible." If God may be glorified, man saved, and the ends of his undertaking answered without his drinking of this bitter cup, he desires to be excused; otherwise, not. What we cannot do with the securing our great end, we must reckon to be in effect impossible; Christ did so. *Id possumus quod iure possumus*,—"we can do that which we can do lawfully." We can do nothing, not only we may do nothing against the truth.

3. His entire submission to, and acquiescence in, the will of God, however: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Not that the human will of Christ was adverse, or averse to the Divine will, only in its first act diverse from it; to which, in the second act of the will, which compares and chooseth, he freely submits himself. Note, 1st. Our Lord Jesus, though he had a quick sense of the extreme bitterness of the sufferings he was to undergo, yet was

good modern authorities. The phrase itself is one with which they had all been substantially familiar, because it is practically found in Exod. xxiv. 8. Besides, in the next sentence (verse 29) Jesus sweeps away every vestige of a reason for thinking it was literally his blood, by calling it "this fruit of the vine," which can only mean wine. The phrase "which is shed" is probably the Aramaic idiom, and should be rendered "which is to be shed," or even "will be shed."

xxvi. 30. The hymn, as it is called, was in all probability one of the psalms which the Jews sung at the Passover.

xxvi. 31. "All ye shall be offended" means "all of you will stumble in your allegiance, and become backsliders and deserters." The Old Testament text quoted is found in Zech. xiii. 7, which should be studied with chap. xi. 7-14 of the same book.

xxvi. 34. Although we may translate here "before the cock crows," it is to be noted that the word "cock-crow" denoted a

freely willing to submit to them for our redemption and salvation, and offered himself, and gave himself for us. 2nd. The reason of Christ's submission to his sufferings, was his Father's will; "as thou wilt, as thou wilt," ver. 39. He grounds his own willingness upon the Father's will, and resolves the matter wholly into that; therefore he did what he did, and did it with delight, because it was the will of God, *Ps. xl. 7*. This he had often referred to as that which put him upon, and carried him through, his whole undertaking; "this is the Father's will," *Jno. vi. 39, 40*; this he sought, *Jno. v. 30*; it was his meat and drink to do it, *Jno. iv. 39*. 3rd. In conformity to this example of Christ, we must drink of the bitter cup which God puts into our hands, be it never so bitter; though nature struggle, grace must submit. We then are spirited as Christ was, when our wills are in every thing melted into the will of God, though never so displeasing to flesh and blood; "the will of the Lord be done," *Acts xxi. 14*.

4. The repetition of the prayer. "He went away again the second time and prayed," ver. 42; and again, the third time, ver. 44, and all to the same purpose; only, as it is related here, he did not in the second and third prayer expressly ask that the cup might pass from him, as he had done in the first. Note, Though we may pray to God to prevent and remove an affliction, yet our chief errand, and that which we should most insist upon, must be, that he will give us grace to bear it well. It should be more our care to get our troubles sanctified, and our hearts satisfied under them, than to get them taken away. "He prayed, saying, Thy will be done." Note, Prayer is the offering up, not only of our desires, but of our resignations, to God. It amounts to an acceptable prayer, when at any time we are in distress, to refer ourselves to God, and to commit our way and work to him. "Thy will be done;" the third time he said "the same words;" *τον αυτου λογον*, "the same word," that is, the same matter or argument; he spoke to the same purpose; we have reason to think this was not all he said, for it should seem by ver. 40, that he continued an hour in his agony and prayer; but whatever more he said, it was to this effect, resenting his approaching sufferings, and yet resigning himself to God's will in them: in the expressions of which, we may be sure he was not straitened.

But what answer had he to this prayer? For certain it was not made in vain; He that heard him always, did not deny him now; it is true the cup did not pass from him, for he withdrew that petition, and did not insist upon it, (if he had, for aught I know, the cup had passed away;) but he had an answer to his prayer, for, 1st. He was strengthened with strength in his soul, in the day when he cried, *Ps. cxxxviii. 3*; and that was a real answer, *Lu. xxii. 43*. 2nd. He was delivered from that which he feared, which was, lest by impatience and distrust he should offend his Father, and so disable himself to go on with his undertaking, *Heb. v. 7*. In answer to his prayer, God provided that he should not fail, or be discouraged.

VI. What passed between him and his three disciples at this time; and there we may observe,

First. The fault they were guilty of: that when he was in his agony, sorrowful and heavy, sweating, and wrestling, and praying, they were so little concerned that they could not keep awake; he comes and finds them asleep, ver. 40. The strangeness of the thing should have roused their spirits to turn aside now and see this great sight, the bush burning, and yet not consumed; much more should their love to their Master, and their care concerning him, have obliged them to a more close and vigilant attendance on him; yet they were so dull that they could not keep their eyes open. What had become of us, if Christ had been now as sleepy as his disciples were? It is well for us that our salvation is in the hand of one who neither slumbers nor sleeps. Christ bespoke them to watch with him, as if he expected some succour from them, and yet they slept; surely it was the unkindest thing that could be. When David wept at this mount of Olives, all his followers wept with him, *2 Sam. xv. 30*, but when the Son of David was here in tears, his followers were asleep; his enemies that watched for him were wakeful enough, *Mar. xiv. 23*; but his disciples, that should have watched with him, were asleep. Lord, what is man? What are the best of men, when God leaves them to themselves? Note, Carelessness and carnal security, especially when Christ is in his agony, is a great fault in any, but especially in those who profess to be nearest in relation to him. The church of Christ, which is his body, is often in an agony; fightings without, and fears within; and shall we be asleep then, like Gallos, that cared for none of these things; or those, *Am. vi. 6*, that lay at ease, and were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph?

Secondly. Christ's favour to them notwithstanding. Persons in sorrow are too apt to be cross and peevish with those about them, and to take it very heinously if they but seem to neglect them; but Christ in his agony is as meek as ever, and carries it as patiently towards his followers as towards his Father, and is not apt to take things ill. When Christ's disciples put this slight upon him,

1. He came to them, as if he expected to receive some comfort from them; and if they had put him in mind of what they had heard from him concerning his resurrection and glory, perhaps it might have been some help to him; but instead of that they added grief to his sorrow; and yet he came to them; more careful for them than they were for themselves; when he was most engaged, yet he came to look after them: for those that were given him were upon his heart, living and dying.

2. He gave them a gentle reproof, for as many as he loves he rebukes; he directed it to Peter, who used to speak for them; let him now hear for them. The reproof was very melting. "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? He speaks as one amazed to see them so stupid; every word is aggravating, if it were prosecuted. Consider, 1st. Who they were, "Could not ye watch?" "Ye, my disciples and followers; no wonder if others neglect me, if the earth sit still, and be at rest, *Eccl. i. 11*; but from you I expected better things." 2nd. Who he was, "watch with me;" if one of yourselves were ill, and in an agony, it would be very unkind not to watch with him; but it is unkindful not to watch with your Master, who has long watched over you for good; has led you, and fed you, and taught you; borne you, and borne with you: do you thus requite him? He awoke out of his sleep to help them when they were in distress, *Mat. viii. 26*; and could not they keep awake, at least to shew their goodwill to him, especially considering that he was now suffering for them, in an agony for them? *Jam tua res agitur*, "I am suffering in your cause." 3rd. How small a thing it was that he expected from them, only to watch with him; if he had bid them do some great thing; had bid them be in an agony with him, or die with him, they thought they could have done it, and yet they could not do it when he only desired them to watch with him, *2 Kin. v. 13*. 4th. How short a time it was that he expected it, but one hour; they were not set upon the guard whole nights, as the prophet was, *Isa. xxi. 8*, only one hour. Sometimes he "continued all night in prayer to God," but did not then expect his disciples should watch with him; only now, when he had but one hour to spend in prayer.

3. He gave them good counsel: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation," ver. 41. 1st. There was an hour of temptation drawing on, and very near; the troubles of Christ were temptations to his followers to disbelieve and distrust him, to deny and desert him, and renounce all relation to him,

certain hour. Dr. Kitto correctly says it has been objected that there were no cocks kept in Jerusalem, lest their habits of scratching among rubbish, &c., should expose the holy food to pollution. It has been shown that fowls were actually kept in Jerusalem; and Lightfoot quotes the Jerusalem Talmud for a story of a cock which was put to death by stoning, at the sentence of the council, for having killed a little child.

xxvi. 36. Gethsemane is a word meaning oil-press or oil-gardens,

2nd. There was danger of their entering into the temptation, as into a snare or trap; of their entering into a parley with it, or a good opinion of it, of their being influenced by it, and inclining to comply with it; which is the first step towards being overcome by it. 3rd. He therefore exhorts them to watch and pray: "Watch with me, and pray with me;" while they were sleeping they lost the benefit of joining in Christ's prayer. "Watch yourselves, and pray yourselves; watch and pray against this present temptation to drowsiness and security; pray that you may watch; beg of God by his grace to keep you awake now there is occasion." When we are drowsy in the worship of God, we should pray, as a good Christian once did, "The Lord deliver me from this sleepy devil!" Lord, quicken thou me in thy way. Or, "Watch and pray against the further temptation you will be assaulted with; watch and pray, lest this sin prove the inlet of many more." Note, When we find ourselves entering into temptation, we have need to watch and pray.

4. He kindly excused for them: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." We do not read of one word they had to say for themselves; sense of their own weakness stopped their mouth; but then he had a tender word to say on their behalf, for it is his office to be an advocate; in this he sets us an example of that love which "covers a multitude of sins." He considered their frame and did not chide them; for he remembered that they were but flesh, and the flesh is weak, though the spirit be willing, *Ps. lxxviii. 38*. Note, 1st. Christ's disciples, as long as they are here in this world, have bodies as well as souls, and a principle of remaining corruption, as well as of reigning grace; like Jacob and Esau in the same womb, Canaanites and Israelites in the same land, *Gal. v. 17-24*. 2nd. It is the unhappiness and burthen of Christ's disciples, that their bodies cannot keep pace with their souls in works of piety and devotion, but are many a time a cloud and clog to them: that when the spirit is free, and disposed to that which is good, the flesh is averse and indisposed. This St. Paul laments, *Rom. vii. 22*: "With my mind I serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin." Our impotency in the service of God, is the great iniquity and infidelity of our nature, and it ariseth from these sad remainders of corruption, which are the constant grief and burthen of God's people. 3rd. Yet it is our comfort that our Master graciously considers this, and accepts the willingness of the spirit, and pities and pardons the weakness and infirmity of the flesh; for we are under grace and not under the law.

5. Though they continued dull and sleepy, he did not any further rebuke them for it; for though we daily offend, yet he will not always chide. 1st. When he came to them the second time, we do not find that he said anything to them, ver. 43; he findeth them asleep again. One would have thought he had said enough to them to keep them awake; but it is hard to recover from a spirit of slumber: carnal security, when once it prevails, is not easily shaken off. "Their eyes were heavy," which intimates that they strove against it as much as they could, but were overcome by it; like the spouse, "I sleep, but my heart wakes," *Cant. v. 2*; and therefore their Master looked upon them with compassion. 2nd. When he came to them the third time he left them to be alarmed with the approaching danger, ver. 45, 46: "Sleep on now, and take your rest." This is spoken ironically; "now sleep if you can, sleep if you dare; I would not disturb you, if Judas and his band of men would not." See here how Christ deals with those that suffer themselves to be overcome by security, and will not be awakened out of it. First. Sometimes he gives them up to the power of it; "sleep on now;" he that will sleep, let him sleep still. The curse of spiritual slumber is the just punishment of the sin of it, *Rom. xi. 8*; *Hos. iv. 17*. Secondly. Many times he sends some startling judgment to awaken those that would not be wrought upon by the Word; and those who will not be alarmed by reasons and arguments, had better be alarmed by swords and spears, than left to perish in their security. Let those that would not believe be made to feel.

As to the disciples here, 1st. Their Master gave them notice of the near approach of his enemies, who, it is likely, were now within sight or hearing, for they came with candles and torches, and it is likely made a great noise: "The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners;" and again, "He is at hand that doth betray me." Note, Christ's sufferings were no surprise to him, he knew what, and when he was to suffer. By this time the extremity of his agony was pretty well over, or at least diverted; while with an undaunted courage he addresseth himself to the next encounter, as a champion to the combat. 2nd. He called them to rise, and be going. Not rise and let us flee from the danger, but rise and let us go meet it; before he had prayed he feared his sufferings, but now has got over his fears, *Eph. iv. 16*. But, 3rd. He intimates to them their folly in sleeping away the time which they should have spent in preparation; and now it found them unready, and was a terror to them.

47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. 48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. 49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. 50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. 51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. 52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. 53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? 55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are

no doubt because of the olive-trees which equally gave name to the hill at the foot of which it was. It lay to the east of Jerusalem, on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. The traditional site still bears several olive-trees of great antiquity. Dean Stanley calls these trees "the most venerable of their race on the face of the earth," though their real age is unknown. On this point Dr. Tristram, a most careful observer, says, "There is nothing in their venerable appearance to throw doubt on their antiquity, for they

ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. 56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

We are here told how the blessed Jesus was seized, and taken into custody; this followed immediately upon his agony, "while he yet spake;" for from the beginning to the close of his passion, he had not the least intermission, or breathing time, but deep called unto deep. His trouble hitherto was raised within himself; but now the scene is changed, now the Philistines are upon thee, thou blessed Samson; "the breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord is taken in their pits," *Lam. iv. 20*. Now concerning the apprehending of the Lord Jesus, observe,

I. Who the persons were that were employed in it. First. Here was "Judas, one of the twelve," in the head of this black guard. He "was guide to them that took Jesus," *Acts i. 16*; without his help they would not have found him in this retirement. Behold, and wonder; the first that appeared with his enemies is one of his own disciples, that an hour or two ago was eating bread with him!

Secondly. Here was "with him a great multitude," that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me!" *Ps. iii. 1*. This multitude was made up partly of a detachment out of the guards that were posted in the tower of Antonia by the Roman governor; these were Gentiles, sinners, as Christ calls them, *ver. 45*; partly of the servants and officers of the high priest, and they were Jews; they that were at variance with each other, agreed against Christ.

III. How they were armed for this enterprise. First. What weapons they were armed with: they came "with swords and staves." The Roman soldiers no doubt had swords; the servants of the priests, those of them that had not swords, brought staves, or clubs. *Furor arma ministrat*, "their rage supplied their arms." They were not regular troops, but a tumultuous rabble. But wherefore is this ado? If they had been ten times as many they could not have taken him, had he not yielded himself; and his hour being come for him to give up himself, all this force was needless. When a butcher goes into the field to take out a lamb for the slaughter, doth he use to raise the militia, and come armed? No, he needs not; yet is there all this force used to seize the Lamb of God.

Secondly. What warrant they were armed with: they came "from the chief priests and elders of the people;" this armed multitude was sent by them upon this errand. He was taken up by a warrant from the great sanhedrim, as a person obnoxious to them. Pilate, the Roman governor, gave them no warrant to search for him; he had no jealousy of him; but they were men who pretended to religion, and presided in the affairs of the church, that were active in this prosecution, and were the most spiteful enemies Christ had. It was a sign he was supported by a Divine power, for by all earthly powers he was not only deserted, but opposed; Pilate upbraided him with it, "Thine own nation, and the chief priests, delivered thee to me," *Jno. xviii. 35*.

III. The manner how it was done, and what passed at that time. First. How Judas betrayed him: he did his business effectually; and his resolution in this wickedness may shame us who fail in that which is good. Observe,

1. The instructions he gave to the soldiers, *ver. 48*: he "gave them a sign;" as commander of the party in this action he gives the word, or signal. He "gave them a sign," lest by mistake they should seize one of the disciples instead of him, who had so lately said in Judas's hearing, they would be willing to die for him; what abundance of caution was here not to miss him: "that same is he;" and when they had him in their hands, not to lose him, "hold him fast," for he had sometimes escaped from those who thought to secure him; as *Lu. iv. 30*. Though the Jews who frequented the temple could not but know him, yet the Roman soldiers perhaps had never seen him, and the sign was to direct them; and Judas, by his kiss, intended not only to distinguish him, but to detain him, while they came behind him and laid hands on him.

2. The dissembling compliment he gave his Master. He came close up to Jesus; sure now, if ever, his wicked heart will relent; sure, when he comes to look him in the face, he will either be awed by the majesty, or charmed by the beauty of it. Dare he come into his very sight and presence to betray him? Peter denied Christ, but when the Lord turned and looked upon him, he repented presently; but Judas comes up to his Master's face and betrays him. *Me mihi (perfidie) prodixit? ne mihi prodixit?* "Perfidious man! betrayest thou me to thyself?" He said, "Hail, Master, and kissed him." It should seem our Lord Jesus had been wont to admit his disciples to such a degree of familiarity with him, as to give them his cheek to kiss, after they had been any while absent, which Judas villainously used to facilitate his treason. A kiss is a token of allegiance and duty, profaned this sacred sign to serve his purpose. Note, There are many that betray Christ with a kiss, and hail, Master; who, under pretence of doing him honour, betray and undermine the interests of his kingdom. *Mel in ore, fel in corde*; "honey in the mouth, gall in the heart;" *καταβόλουν οὐκ ἐντι φίλῳ*, "to embrace is one thing, to kill is another."—*Philo-Jud.* Job's kiss and Judas's were much alike.

3. The entertainment his Master gave him, *ver. 50*. 1st. He calls him "friend." If he had called him villain and traitor, race, and thou fool, and child of the devil, he had not miscalled him; but he would teach us under the greatest provocation to forbear bitterness and evil speaking, and to shew all meekness. "Friend," for a friend he had been, and should have been, and seemed to be: thus he upbraids him, as Abraham, when he called the rich man in hell "son." He calls him friend, because he furthered his sufferings, and so befriended him, whereas he called Peter Satan, for attempting to hinder them.

2nd. He asks him, "Wherefore art thou come?" Is it peace, Judas? explain thyself; if thou come as an enemy, what means this kiss? If as a friend, what mean these swords and staves? Wherefore art thou come? What harm have I done thee? Wherein have I wearied thee? *εἰς τί με κάλεσας*, "Wherefore art thou present?" Why hadst thou not so much shame left thee as to keep out of sight, which thou mightest have done, and yet have given the officers notice where I was? This was an instance of great impudence, for him to be so forward and barefaced in this ill thing. But it is usual for apostates from religion to be the most bitter enemies to it; witness Julian. Thus Judas did his part.

Secondly. How the officers and soldiers secured him: "Then came they and laid hands on Jesus, and took him;" they made him their prisoner. "How were they not afraid to stretch forth their hands against the Lord's anointed?"

must reckon many centuries; but we may be pretty certain that during the siege of Titus no trees were left standing so close to the city. Still, they may date from a period not much subsequent." They are now enclosed in a garden belonging to the monks.

xxvi. 42. This prayer is thus more correctly read: "O my Father, if this may not pass except I drink it, thy will be done."

xxvi. 47. From the fact that the crowd was armed not only with swords but with sticks, it will be evident they were not all soldiers.

We may well imagine what rude and cruel hands they were which this barbarous multitude laid on Christ; and now it is probable they handled him the more roughly for their being so often disappointed, when they sought to lay hands on him. They could not have taken him, if he had not surrendered himself, and been "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," *Acts ii. 23*. He who said concerning his anointed servants, "Touch them not," and "do them no harm," *Ps. cv. 14, 15*, spared not his anointed Son, but "delivered him up for us all;" and again, "gave his strength into captivity, his glory into the enemies' hands," *Ps. lxxviii. 61*. See what was the complaint of Job, *xvi. 11*, "God hath delivered me to the ungodly," and apply that, and other passages in that book, to Job as a type of Christ.

Our Lord Jesus was made a prisoner, because he would in all things be treated as a malefactor, punished for our crime, and as a surety under arrest for our debt. The yoke of our transgressions was bound by the Father's hand upon the neck of the Lord Jesus, *Lam. i. 14*. He became a prisoner that he might set us at liberty; for he said, "If ye seek me, let these go their way," *Jno. xviii. 8*. And those are free indeed whom he makes so.

Thirdly. How Peter fought for Christ, and was checked for his pains. It is here only said to be "one of them which were with Jesus" in the garden, but, *Jno. xviii. 10*, we are told it was Peter who signalized himself upon this occasion. Observe,

1. Peter's rashness, *ver. 51*: he "drew his sword." They had but two swords among them all, *Lu. xxii. 38*, and one of them, it seems, fell to Peter's share; and now he thought it was time to draw it, and he laid about him as if he would have done some great matters, but all the execution he did was the cutting off an ear from a servant of the high priest's, designing, it is likely, to cleave him down the head, because he saw him more forward than the rest in laying hands on Christ; he missed his blow. But, if he would be striking, in my mind he should rather have aimed at Judas, and have marked him for a rogue. Peter had talked much, and more what he would do, for his Master; he would lay down his life for him. Yea, that he would, and now he will be as good as his word, and venture his life to rescue his Master; and thus far was commendable, that he had a great zeal for Christ, and his honour and safety; but it was not according to knowledge, nor guided by discretion; for, 1st. He did it without warrant; some of the disciples asked indeed, "Shall we smite with the sword?" *Lu. xxii. 49*; but Peter struck before they had an answer. We must see, not only our cause good, but our call clear, before we draw the sword; and be able to shew by what authority we do it, and who gave us that authority. 2nd. He indiscreetly exposed himself and his fellow disciples to the rage of the multitude; for what could they, with two swords, do against a band of men?

2. The rebuke which our Lord Jesus gave him, *ver. 52*: "Put up again thy sword into his place." He doth not command the officers and soldiers to put up the swords that were drawn against him; he left them to the judgment of God, who judges them that are without, but commands Peter to put up his sword; doth not chide him for what he had done, because done out of good-will, but stops the progress of his arms, and provides that it should not be drawn into a precedent. Christ's errand into the world was to make peace. Note, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal," but spiritual; and Christ's ministers, though they are his soldiers, yet do not war after the flesh, *2 Cor. x. 3, 4*. Not that the law of Christ overthrows either the law of nature or the laws of nations, as far as those warrant subjects to stand up in defence of their civil rights and liberties, and their religion, when it is incorporated with them, but it provides for the preservation of public peace and order, by forbidding private persons, *qua tales*,—"as such," to resist the powers that be; nay, we have a general precept that we "resist not evil," *ch. v. 39*; nor will Christ have his ministers propagate his religion by force and arms. *Religio cogi non potest, et defendenda non occidendo sed moriendo*,—"religion cannot be forced; and it should be defended, not by killing, but by dying."—*Lactant. Inst.* As Christ forbade his disciples the sword of justice, *ch. xx. 25, 26*, so here the sword of war. Christ bade Peter put up his sword, and never bade him draw it again; yet that which Peter is here blamed for is his doing it unseasonably; the hour was come for Christ to suffer and die; he knew, Peter knew it; the sword of the Lord was drawn against him, *Zec. xiii. 7*; and for Peter to draw his sword for him was like "Master, spare thyself."

Three reasons Christ gives to Peter for this rebuke:

1st. His drawing the sword would be dangerous to himself,—to his fellow-disciples: "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword;" they that use violence fall by violence; and men hasten and increase their own troubles by blustering, bloody methods of self-defence; they that take the sword before it is given them, that use it without warrant or call, expose themselves to the sword of war, or public justice. Had it not been for the special care and providence of the Lord Jesus, Peter and the rest of them had, for aught I know, been cut in pieces presently. Grotius gives another, and a probable sense of this blow, making those "that take the sword" to be, not Peter, but the officers and soldiers that came with swords to take Christ; they "shall perish with the sword;" "Peter, thou needest not draw thy sword to punish them, God will certainly, shortly, and severely reckon with them." They took the Roman sword to seize Christ with, and by the Roman sword, not long after, they and their place and nation were destroyed. Therefore we must not avenge ourselves, because God will repay, *Rom. xii. 19*; and therefore suffer with faith and patience, because persecutors will be paid in their own coin. See *Rev. xiii. 10*.

2nd. It was needless for him to draw his sword in defence of his Master, who, if he pleased, could summon into his service all the hosts of heaven, *ver. 53*: "Thouakest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father," and he shall send from heaven effectual succours? "Peter, if I would put by these sufferings, I could easily do it without thy hand or thy sword." Note, God has no need of us, of our services, much less of our sins, to bring about his purposes; and it argues our distrust and disbelief of the power of Christ when we go out of the way of our duty to serve his interests. God can do his work without us; if we look into the heavens and see how he is attended there, we may easily infer, that though we be righteous, he is not beholden to us, *Job xxxv. 5-7*. Though Christ "was crucified through weakness," it was a voluntary weakness; he submitted to death not because he could not, but because he would not, contend with it. This takes off the offence of the cross, and proves Christ crucified the power of God; even now, in the depth of his sufferings, he could call in the aid of legions of angels. Now, *apud*,—"yet," though the business is so far gone, I could yet with a word speaking turn the scale. Christ here lets us know,

First, What a great interest he had in his Father: "I can pray to my Father," and he will send me help from the sanctuary. I can, *κατακαίρειν*,—"demand of my Father these succours;" Christ prayed "as one having authority." Note, it is a great comfort to God's people, when they are surrounded with enemies on all hands, that they have a way open heavenwards; if they can do nothing else, they can pray to him that can do everything; and they who are much in prayer at other times, have most comfort in prayer when troublesome times come. Observe, Christ saith, not only that God could send him such a number of angels, but that if he insisted upon it he would do it: though he had undertaken the work of our redemption, yet if he had desired

xxvi. 51. As is well known, it was Peter who betook himself to the sword to repel the attack, and Malchus was the name of the man whom he wounded. The word for sword very often signifies a knife, but it also has the sense of dagger and sword, as it may have here.

xxvi. 52. These words have been regarded as a prediction of the impending ruin of the Jews. They may also be taken as a general maxim, the sense of which is that all who use violence will be exposed to peril and harm. Watson thinks the words most naturally

o be released, it should seem by this, the Father would not have held him to it; he might yet have gone out free from the service, but he loved it, and would not; so that it was only with the cords of his own love that he was bound to the altar.

Secondly. What a great interest he had in the heavenly hosts: "He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels," amounting to above seventy-two thousand. Observe here, *1st.* There is "an innumerable company of angels," *Heb. xii. 22.* A detachment of more than twelve legions might be spared for our service, and yet no miss of them from about the throne. See *Dan. vii. 10.* They are marshalled in exact order, like the well-disciplined legions; not a confused multitude, but regular troops; all know their post, and observe the word of command. *2nd.* This innumerable company of angels are all at the dispose of our heavenly Father, and do his pleasure, *Ps. ciii. 20, 21.* *3rd.* These angelic hosts were ready to come in to the assistance of our Lord Jesus in his sufferings, if he had needed or desired it. See *Heb. i. 6-14.* They would have been to him as they were to Elisha, "Chariots of fire, and horses of fire," not only to secure him, but to consume those that set upon him. *4th.* Our heavenly Father is to be eyed and acknowledged in all the services of the heavenly hosts; "He shall give them me," therefore angels are not to be prayed to, but the Lord of the angels, *Ps. xci. 11.* *5th.* It is matter of comfort to all that wish well to the kingdom of Christ, that there is a world of angels always at the service of the Lord Jesus, that can do wonders. He that has the armies of heaven at his beck, can do what he pleases among the inhabitants of the earth; He shall presently give them me. See how ready his Father was to hear his prayer, and how ready the angels were to observe orders; they are willing servants, winged messengers, they fly swiftly. This is very encouraging to those that have the honour of Christ and the welfare of his church much at heart; think they that they have more care and concern for Christ and his church than God and the holy angels have?

3rd. It was no time to make any defence at all, or to offer to put by the stroke, for "how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" *ver. 54.* It was written that Christ should be "led as a lamb to the slaughter," *Isa. liii. 7.* Should he summon the angels to his assistance he would not be led to the slaughter at all; should he permit his disciples to fight, he would not be led as a lamb, quietly, and without resistance; therefore he and his disciples must yield to the accomplishment of the predictions. Note, In all difficult cases the Word of God must be conclusive against our own counsels; and nothing must be done, nothing attempted against the fulfilling of the Scripture; if the easing of our pains, the breaking of our bonds, the saving of our lives, will not consist with the fulfilling of the Scripture, we ought to say, Let God's word and will take place, let his law be magnified and made honourable, whatever becomes of us. Thus Christ checked Peter, when he set up for his champion and captain of his life-guard.

IV. We are next told how Christ argued the case with them that came to take him, *ver. 55;* though he did not resist them, yet he did reason with them. Note, It will consist with Christian silence under our sufferings, calmly to expostulate with our enemies and persecutors, as David with Saul, *1 Sam. xxiv. 14-26, 18:* "Are ye come out,"

First, With rage and enmity, "as against a thief;" as if I were an enemy to the public safety, and deservedly suffered this. Thieves draw upon themselves the common odium, every one will lend a hand to stop a thief; and thus they fell upon Christ as the outscouring of all things. If he had been the plague of his country, he could not have been prosecuted with more heat and violence.

Secondly. With all this power and force, as against the worst of thieves, that dare the law, bid defiance to public justice, and add rebellion to their sin; you are come out as against a thief, with swords and staves, as if there were danger of resistance; whereas ye have killed the just one, and he doth not resist you, *Isa. v. 6.* If he had not been willing to suffer, it was folly to come with swords and staves, for they could not conquer him; had he been minded to resist, he would have esteemed their iron as straw, and their swords and staves would have been as briars before a consuming fire; but being willing to suffer, it was folly to come thus armed, for he would not contend with them.

He further expostulates with them, by minding them how he had behaved himself hitherto towards them, and they towards him: 1. Of his public appearance, "I sat daily with you in the temple teaching;" and, 2. Of their public connivance, "Ye laid no hold on me,"—how comes then this change? They were very unreasonable in treating him as they did: *1st.* He had given them no occasion to look upon him as a thief, for he had taught in the temple; and such was the matter and such the manner of his teaching, that he was manifested in the consciences of all that heard him, not to be an ill man. Such gracious words as came from his mouth were not the words of a thief, or one that had a devil. *2nd.* Nor had he given them occasion to look upon him as one that absconded or fled from justice, that they should come in the night to seize him; if they had any thing to say to him they might find him every day in the temple, ready to answer all challenges, all charges; and there they might do as they pleased with him, for the chief priests had the custody of the temple, and the command of the guards about it; but to come upon him thus clandestinely in the place of his retirement, was base and cowardly. Thus the greatest hero may be villainously assassinated in a corner, by one that in open field would tremble to look him in the face.

"But all this was done" (so it follows, *ver. 56,*) "that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." It is hard to say whether these are the words of the sacred historian, as a comment upon this story, and a direction to the Christian reader to compare it with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which pointed at it; or whether they are the words of Christ himself, as a reason why, though he could not but resent this base treatment, yet he submitted to it, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled, to which he had just now referred himself, *ver. 54.* Note, The Scriptures are in the fulfilling every day; and all those Scriptures which spake of the Messiah had their full accomplishment in our Lord Jesus.

V. How he was, in the midst of this distress, shamefully deserted by his disciples: "They all forsook him and fled."

First, This was their sin, and it was a great sin, for them who had left all to follow him, now to leave him, for they knew not what. There was unkindness in it, considering the relation they stood in to him, the favours they had received from him, and the melancholy circumstances he was now in. There was unfaithfulness in it, for they had solemnly promised to stick to him, and never to forsake him. He had indented for their safe conduct, *Jno. xviii. 18,* yet they could not rely upon that, but shifted for themselves by an inglorious flight. What folly was this, for fear of death to flee from Him whom they themselves knew and had acknowledged to be the fountain of life! *Jno. vi. 67, 68.* "Lord, what is man?"

Secondly. It was a part of Christ's suffering; it added affliction to his bonds to be thus deserted, as it did to Job, *ch. xix. 13,* "He hath put my brethren far from me," and to David, *Ps. xxxviii. 11,* "Lovers and friends stand aloof from my sore." They should have stayed with him, to minister to him, to countenance him, and, if need were, to be witnesses for him at his trial; but they treacherously deserted him, as at St. Paul's first answer, no man stood with

him. But there was a mystery in this: 1. Christ, as a sacrifice for sins, stood thus abandoned. The deer, that by the keeper's arrow is marked out to be hunted and run down, is immediately deserted by the whole herd. In this he was made a curse for us, being left as one separated to evil. 2. Christ, as the Saviour of souls, stood thus alone; as he needed not, so he had not the assistance of any other in working out our salvation: he bore all, and did all himself; he trod the wine press alone, and when, to admiration, there was none to uphold, then his own arm wrought salvation, *Isa. lxiii. 3, 5.* So the Lord alone did lead his Israel, and they stand still and only see this great salvation, *Deu. xxxii. 12.*

57 And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. 58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end. 59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; 60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, 61 And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. 62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. 64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. 66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. 67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, 68 Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

We have here the arraignment of our Lord Jesus in the ecclesiastical court, before the great sanhedrim. Observe,

First, The sitting of the court: "The scribes and the elders were assembled," though it was in the dead time of the night, when other people were fast asleep in their beds; yet to gratify their malice against Christ, they denied themselves that natural rest, and sat up all night, to be ready to fall upon the prey which Judas and his men, they hoped, would seize. See,

1. Who they were that were assembled: the scribes, the principal teachers, and the elders, the principal rulers, of the Jewish church. These were the most bitter enemies to Christ, our great teacher and ruler, on whom therefore they had a jealous eye, as one that eclipsed them; perhaps some of these scribes and elders were not so malicious at Christ, as some others of them were, yet in concurrence with the rest, they made themselves guilty. Now the scripture was fulfilled, *Ps. xxii. 16,* "The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me." Jeremiah complains of an assembly of treacherous men; and David, of his enemies' gathering themselves together against him, *Ps. xxxv. 15.*

2. Where they were assembled: in the palace of Caiaphas the high priest; there they were assembled two days before to lay the plot, *ver. 3,* and there they now convened again to prosecute it. The high priest was Ab-beth-din, 'the father of the house of judgment,' but is now the patron of wickedness; his house should have been the sanctuary of oppressed innocence, but is become the throne of iniquity; and no wonder, when even God's house of prayer was made a den of thieves.

Secondly. The setting of the Prisoner at the bar: "They that had laid hold on Jesus, led him away;" hurried him, no doubt, with violence; led him as a trophy of their victory, led him as a victim to the altar. He was brought into Jerusalem through that which was called the sheep gate, for that was the way into town from the mount of Olives, and it was so called because the sheep appointed for sacrifice were brought, that way to the temple; very fitly therefore is Christ led that way, who is "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Christ was led first to the high priest, for by the law all sacrifices were to be first presented to the priest, and delivered into his hand, *Lev. xvi. 5.*

Thirdly, The cowardice and faint-heartedness of Peter, *ver. 58:* "But Peter followed afar off." This comes in here with an eye to the following story of his denying him. He forsook him, as the rest did, when he was seized; and what is here said of his following him is easily reconcilable with his forsaking him; such following was no better than forsaking him; for,

1. He followed him, but it was afar off. Some sparks of love and concern for his Master there were in his breast, and therefore he followed him; but fear and concern for his own safety prevailed, and therefore he followed afar off.

refer to Peter, who was reproved for using force, by the general principle laid down, that all who took the sword, meaning as he took it, should perish by it. The expression intimates that our Lord did not desire armed intervention on behalf of himself or his cause.

xxvi. 53. Two Roman legions constituted a consular army. A legion consisted of five or six thousand, though the number varied according to circumstances. The men were heavy-armed foot soldiers drawn from the Roman citizens, who were augmented by at

least as many auxiliaries and a cavalry detachment three hundred strong. Hence the effective force of a legion in the field is usually reckoned at ten thousand men, at the least. The word legion, however, was conventionally used of any large but indefinite number.

xxvi. 58. The word "palace," both here and in verse 3, signifies a court or courtyard, which was probably open at the top. The servants were the officials employed by the high-priest, and not merely the ordinary domestics of his household establishment.

Note, It looks ill, and bodes worse, when those that are willing to be Christ's disciples, yet are not willing to be known to be so. Here began Peter's denying him; for to follow him afar off, in little and little, to go back from him. There is danger in drawing back, nay, in looking back.

2. He followed him, but he "went in and sat with the servants." He should have gone up to the court, and attended on his Master, and appeared for him; but he went in where there was a good fire, "and sat with the servants," not to silence their reproaches, but to screen himself. It was presumption in Peter thus to thrust himself into temptation; he that doth so throws himself out of God's protection. Christ had told Peter he could not follow him now, and had particularly warned him of his danger this night; and yet he would venture into the midst of this wicked crew. It helped David to walk in his integrity, that he hated the congregation of evil doers, and would not sit with the wicked.

3. He followed him, but it was only "to see the end," led more by his curiosity than by his conscience; he attended as an idle spectator rather than a disciple, a person concerned. He should have gone in to do Christ some service, or to get some wisdom and grace to himself, by observing Christ's behaviour under his sufferings; but he went in only to look about him. It is not unlikely that Peter went in expecting that Christ would have made his escape miraculously out of the hands of his persecutors; that having so lately struck them down who came to seize him, he would now have struck them dead who sat to judge him; and this he had a mind to see: if so, it was folly for him to think of seeing any other end than what Christ had foretold, that he should be put to death. Note, It is more our concern to prepare for the end, whatever it may be, than curiously to inquire what the end will be. The event is God's, but the duty is ours.

Fourthly. The trial of our Lord Jesus in this court.

1. They examined witnesses against him: though they were resolved, right or wrong, to condemn him, yet, to put the better colour upon it, they would produce evidence against him. The crimes properly punishable in their court were false doctrine and blasphemy; these they endeavoured to prove upon him. And observe here,

1st. Their search for proof; they "sought false witness against him." They had seized him, bound him, abused him, and, after all, are to seek for something to lay to his charge, and can show no cause for his commitment. They tried if any of them could allege, seemingly from their own knowledge, any thing against him; and suggested one calumny, and then another, which, if true, might touch his life. Thus evil men dig up mischief, *Pr. xvi. 27*. Here they trod in the steps of their predecessors, who devised devices against Jeremiah, *Jer. xviii. 18; xx. 10*. They made proclamation, that if any one could give information against the prisoner at the bar, they were ready to receive it; and presently many bore false witness against him, *ver. 60*; for "if a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked," and will carry false stories to him, *Pr. xxix. 12*. This is an evil often seen under the sun, *Ecc. x. 5*. If Naboth must be taken off, there are sons of Belial to swear against him.

2nd. Their success in this search. In several attempts they were baffled; they sought false testimonies among themselves, others came in to help them, and yet they found none; they could make nothing of it, could not tack the evidence together, or give it any colour of truth, or consistency with itself; no, not they, themselves being judges. The matters alleged were such palpable lies, as carried their own confutation along with them. This redounded much to the honour of Christ now, when they were loading him with disgrace. But at last they met with two witnesses, who it seems agreed in their evidence, and therefore were hearkened to, in hopes that now the point was gained. The words they swore against him were, that he should say, "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days," *ver. 61*. Now by this they designed to accuse him,

First. As an enemy to the temple, and one that sought for the destruction of it, which they could not bear to hear of; for they valued themselves by the temple of the Lord, *Jer. vii. 4*, and when they abandoned other idols, made a perfect idol of that. Stephen was accused for speaking "against this holy place," *Acts vi. 13, 14*.

Secondly. As one that dealt in witchcraft, or some such unlawful arts, by the help of which he could rear such a building in three days. They had often suggested that he was in league with Beelzebub; now as to this, 1st. The words were misquoted: he said, "Destroy ye this temple," *Jno. ii. 19*; plainly intimating that he spoke of a temple which his enemies would seek to destroy. They came and swear that he said, "I am able to destroy this temple," as if the design against it were his. He said, "In three days I will raise it up;" *εγὼ οὖν αὐτὸν, ὡς ἔπος ἐστιν, ὡς ἔπος ἐστιν, ὡς ἔπος ἐστιν*, a word properly used of a living temple, "I will raise it to life." They come and swear that he said, "I am able, οἰκοδομησάτω, 'to build it,' which is properly used of a house temple. 2nd. The words were misunderstood; "he spake of the temple of his body," *Jno. ii. 21*; and perhaps, when he said "this temple," pointed to, or laid his hand upon, his own body; but they swear that he said "the temple of God," meaning "this holy place." Note, There have been, and still are, such as wrest the sayings of Christ to their own destruction, *2 Pet. iii. 16*.

Thirdly. Make the worst they could of it, it was no capital crime, even by their own law; if it had, no question but he had been prosecuted for it when he spoke the words, in a public discourse, some years ago; nay, the words were capable of a laudable construction, and such as spoke a kindness for the temple: if it were destroyed, he would exert himself to the utmost to rebuild it. But any thing that looked criminal would serve to give colour to their malicious prosecution. Now the Scriptures were fulfilled which said, "False witnesses are risen up against me," *Ps. cxvii. 13*; and see *Ps. xxxv. 11*; "Though I have redeemed them, they have spoken lies against me," *Hos. vii. 13*; we stand justly accused, the law accuseth us, *Deut. xxvii. 26*; *Jno. v. 45*; Satan and our own consciences accuse us, *1 Jno. iii. 20*; the creatures cry against us: now to discharge us from all these just accusations, our Lord Jesus submitted to this, to be unjustly and falsely accused, that, in the virtue of his sufferings, we may be enabled to triumph over all challenges: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" *Rom. viii. 33, 34*. He was accused that we might not be condemned; and if at any time we suffer thus, have all manner of evil, not only said, but sworn, against us falsely, let us remember that we cannot expect to fare better than our Master.

3rd. Christ's silence under all these accusations, to the amazement of the court, *ver. 62*. The high priest, the judge of the court, arose in some heat, and said, "Answerest thou nothing?" "Come, you the prisoner at the bar, you hear what is sworn against you, what have you now to say for yourself? What defence can you make? or what pleas have you to offer in answer to this charge?" "But Jesus held his peace," *ver. 63*; not as one sullen, or as one self-condemned, or as one astonished and in confusion; not because he wanted something to say, or knew not how to say it; but that the Scripture might be fulfilled, *Isa. liii. 7*; as the sheep is dumb before the shearer and before the butcher, "so he opened not his mouth;" and that he might be the Son of David, who, when his enemies spake mischievous things against him, was "as a deaf man that heard not," *Ps. xxxviii. 12-14*. He was silent because his hour was

come; he would not deny the charge, because he was willing to submit to the sentence, otherwise he could as easily have put them to silence and shame now as he had done many a time before. If God had entered into judgment with us, we had been speechless, *ch. xxii. 12*, not able to answer for one of a thousand, *Job ix. 3*. Therefore, when Christ was made sin for us, he was silent, and left it to his blood to speak, *Heb. xii. 24*. He stood mute at this bar, that we might have something to say at God's bar. Well, this way will not do; *alta apprehendendum est*,—recourse must be had to some other expedient.

2. They examined our Lord Jesus himself, upon an oath like that *ex officio*; and since they could not accuse him, they will try, contrary to the law of equity, to make him accuse himself.

1st. Here is the interrogatory put to him by the high priest. Observe, First. The question itself: "Whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God?" that is, "whether thou pretend to be so, for they will by no means admit it into consideration, whether he really be so or no; though the Messiah was to be the consolation of Israel, and glorious things were spoken concerning him in the Old Testament, yet so strangely besotted were they with a jealousy of any thing that threatened their exorbitant power and grandeur, that they would never enter into the examination of the matter, whether Jesus were the Messiah or not; never once put the case, suppose he should be so; only would have him confess that he called himself so, that they might on that indictment him as a deceiver. What will not pride and malice carry men to?"

Secondly. The solemnity of the proposal of it: "I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us;" not that he had any regard to the living God, but took his name in vain; only thus he hoped to gain his point with our Lord Jesus. "If thou hast any value for the blessed name of God, and reverence for his Majesty, tell us this." If he should refuse to answer when he was thus adjured they would charge him with contempt of the blessed name of God. Thus the persecutors of good men often take advantage against them by their consciences, as Daniel's enemies did against him in the matter of his God.

2nd. Christ's answer to this interrogatory, *ver. 64*, in which, First. He owns himself to be "the Christ, the Son of God;" "Thou hast said," that is, "It is as thou hast said," for in *Mark* it is, "I am." Hitherto he seldom professed himself expressly to be the Christ, the Son of God; the tenor of his doctrine spoke it, and his miracles proved it; but now he would not omit to make a confession of it, 1st. Because that would have looked like a disowning of that truth which he came into the world to bear witness to. 2nd. It would have looked like declining his sufferings, when he knew the acknowledgment of this would give his enemies all the advantage they desired against him. He thus confessed himself, for example and encouragement to his followers, when they are called to it, to confess him before men, whatever hazards they run by it. And according to this pattern the martyrs readily confessed themselves Christians, though they knew they must die for it, as the martyrs at Thebais, *Euseb. Hist. l. viii. c. 9*. That Christ answered out of a regard to the adoration which Caiaphas had profanely used by the living God, I cannot think, any more than that he had any regard to the like adjuration in the devil's mouth, *Mark v. 7*.

Secondly. He refers himself for the proof of this to his second coming, and indeed to his whole estate of exaltation. It is probable they looked upon him with a scornful, disdainful smile, when he said, "I am;" a likely fellow, thought they, to be the Messiah, who is expected to come in so much pomp and power; and to that this "nevertheless" refers. "Though now you see me in this low and abject state, and think it a ridiculous thing for me to call myself the Messiah, nevertheless the day is coming when I shall appear otherwise."

Hereafter, *ἀπ' ἄρτι, a modo*,—shortly; for his exaltation began in a few days; now shortly his kingdom began to be set up; and "hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power," to judge the world, of which his coming shortly to judge and destroy the Jewish nation would be a type and earnest. Note, The terrors of the judgment day will be a sensible conviction to the most obstinate infidelity, not in order to conversion, that will be then too late, but in order to an eternal confusion. Observe, 1st. Whom they should see, "the Son of man." Having owned himself the Son of God, even now in his estate of humiliation, he speaks of himself as the Son of man, even in his estate of exaltation; for he had these two distinct natures in one person. The incarnation of Christ has made him Son of God and Son of man, for he is Immanuel, "God with us." 2nd. In what posture they should see him, 1. "Sitting on the right hand of power," according to the prophecy of the Messiah, *Ps. cx. 1*: "Sit thou at my right hand;" which notes both the dignity and the dominion he is exalted to. Though now he stood at the bar, they should shortly see him sit on the throne. 2. "Coming in the clouds of heaven." This refers to another prophecy concerning the Son of man, *Dan. vii. 13, 14*, which is applied to Christ, *Lu. i. 33*. When he came to destroy Jerusalem, so terrible was the judgment, and so sensible the indications of the wrath of the Lamb in it, that it might be called a visible appearance of Christ, but doubtless it has reference to the general judgment; to this day he appeals, and summons them to an appearance then and there, to answer for what they were now doing. He had spoken of this day to his disciples a while ago, for their comfort, and had bid them lift up their heads for joy in the prospect of it, *Lu. xxi. 27, 28*; now he speaks of it to his enemies for their terror; for nothing is more comfortable to the righteous, nor more terrible to the wicked, than Christ's judging the world at the last day.

Fifthly. His conviction upon this trial. "The high priest rent his clothes," according to the custom of the Jews, when they heard or saw any thing done or said which they looked upon to be a reproach to God, as *Isa. xxxvi. 22; xxxvii. 1*; *Acts xiv. 14*. Caiaphas would be thought extremely tender of the glory of God, "Come, see his zeal for the Lord of hosts," but while he pretended an abhorrence of blasphemy, he was himself the greatest blasphemer; he now forgot the law which forbade the high priest in any case to rend his clothes, unless we will suppose this an excepted case. Observe,

1. The crime he was found guilty of—blasphemy: "He hath spoken blasphemy," that is, he hath spoken reproachfully of the living God; that is the notion we have of blasphemy; because we by sin had reproached the Lord, therefore Christ, when he was made sin for us, was condemned as a blasphemer, for the truth he told them.

2. The evidence upon which they found him guilty: "Ye have heard the blasphemy," what need we trouble ourselves to examine witnesses any further? He owned the fact, that he did profess himself the Son of God, and then they made blasphemy of it, and convicted him upon his confession. The high priest triumphs in the success of the snare he had laid; "Now I think I have done his business for him: 'Aha, so would we have it.'" Thus was he judged out of his own mouth at their bar, because we were liable to be so judged at God's bar. No need of witnesses against us, our own consciences are against us instead of a thousand witnesses.

Sixthly. His sentence passed upon this conviction, *ver. 66*. Here is, 1. Caiaphas' appeal to the bench: "What think ye?" See his base hypocrisy and partiality, when he had already prejudged the cause, and pronounced him a blasphemer, then, as if he were willing to be advised, he asks the judgment of his brethren; but hide malice never so cunningly under the robe of justice,

xxvi. 59. Although the evangelist here speaks of the chief priests in the plural, it will be noted that both before and after he speaks of Caiaphas as the high-priest. It is clear, therefore, that although, as noted previously, there were priests who were called chief priests by way of distinction, there was one who was usually high-priest in a peculiar sense. Under the Roman Government, when every office was venal, or a vehicle for favouritism, the high-priests were frequently changed, and hence "there were often living at the same

time several who had filled the office. Of this a curious example occurs in the case of Annas, father of Caiaphas, mentioned in Luke iii. 2. It is further to be noted that the words "and elders" are omitted from this verse by some ancient manuscripts, as the Vatican, Sinaitic, Cambridge, &c.

xxvi. 60. There are various readings in this verse. The Sinaitic and Vatican copies read, "But found none, though many false witnesses came. At the last came two." It would appear that although

some way or other it will break out. If he would have dealt fairly, he should have collected the votes of the bench *seriatim*,—'in order,' and begun with the junior, and have delivered his own opinion last; but he knew by the authority of his place he could sway the rest, and therefore declares his judgment, and presumes they are all of his mind: he takes the crime as to Christ, *pro confesso*,—'as a crime confessed,' and the judgment as to the court, *pro concessa*,—'as a judgment agreed to.'

2. Their concurrence with him. They said, "He is guilty of death." Perhaps they did not all concur; it is certain Joseph of Arimathea, if he was present, dissented, *Lu. xxii. 51*; so did Nicodemus, and, it is likely, others with them; however, the majority carried it that way: but perhaps this being an extraordinary council, or cabal, rather, none had notice to be present but such as they knew would concur, and so it might be voted *nemine contradicente*,—'unanimously.' The judgment was, "He is guilty of death," by the law he deserves to die. Though they had not power now to put any man to death, yet by such a judgment as this they made a man an outlaw among his people, (*qui caput gerit lupinum*,—'he carries a wolf's head;') so our old law describes an outlaw, and so expose him to the fury either of a popular tumult, as Stephen was, or to be clamoured against before the governor, as Christ was. Thus was the Lord of life condemned to die, that through him there may be no condemnation to us.

Seventhly. The abuses and indignities done to him after sentence passed, *ver. 67, 68*. "Then," when he was found guilty, "they spat in his face." Because they had not power to put him to death, and could not be sure they should prevail with the governor to be their executioner, they would do him all the mischief they could now they had him in their hands. Condemned prisoners are taken under the special protection of the law, which they are to make satisfaction to, and by all civilized nations have been treated with tenderness; sufficient is this punishment. But when they had passed sentence on our Lord Jesus, he was treated as if hell had broke loose upon him, as if he were not only worthy of death, but that were too good for him, and he were unworthy of the compassion shewn to the worst malefactors. Thus he was made a curse for us. But who were they that were thus barbarous? It should seem the very same that had passed sentence upon him. "They said, He is guilty of death;" and "then did they spit in his face." The priests began, and then no wonder if the servants, who would do any thing to make sport to themselves, and curry favour with their wicked masters, carried on the humour. See how they abused him.

1. They "spat in his face:" thus the Scripture was fulfilled, *Isa. i. 6*. "He did not his face from shame and spitting." Job complained of this indignity done to him, and herein was a type of Christ, *Job iii. 10*, "they spare not to spit in my face." It is an expression of the greatest contempt and indignation possible; looking upon him as more despicable than the very ground they spit upon. When Miriam was under the leprosy, it was looked upon as a disgrace to her, like that of her father spitting in her face, *Num. xii. 14*. He that refused to raise up seed to his brother was to undergo this dishonour, *Deu. xxv. 9*; yet Christ, when he was repairing the decays of the great family of mankind, submitted to it. That face which was "fairer than the children of men," which was white and ruddy, and which angels reverence, was thus filthily abused by the basest and vilest of the children of men. Thus was confusion poured upon his face, that ours might not be filled with everlasting shame and contempt. They who now profane his blessed name, abuse his word, and hate his image in his sanctified ones, what do they better than "spit in his face?" and would do that if it were in their reach.

2. They "buffeted him, and smote him with the palms of their hands;" this added pain to the shame, for both came in with sin. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, *Isa. i. 6*: "I gave my cheek to them that plucked off my hair;" and *Lam. xxx. 30*, "He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled with reproach," and yet "keepeth silence," *ver. 28*; and *Mic. v. 1*, "They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek;" and here the margin reads it, they "smote him with rods;" for so *ῥάβδον* signifies, and this he submitted to.

3. They challenged him to tell who struck him, having first blindfolded him: "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" 1st. They made sport with him, as the Philistines did with Samson. It is grievous to those that are in misery for people to make merry about them, but much more to make merry with them and their misery. Here was an instance of the greatest pravity and degeneracy of the human nature that could be, to shew that there was need of a religion that should recover men to humanity. 2nd. They made sport with his prophetic office. They had heard him called a prophet, and that he was famed for wonderful discoveries; this they upbraided him with, and pretend to make trial of; as if the Divine omniscience must lacquey it to a piece of children's play. They put a like affront upon Christ who profanely jest with the Scripture, and make themselves merry with holy things, like Belshazzar's revels in the temple bowls.

69 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. 70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. 71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. 72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. 73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. 74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

a number came and offered to bear witness, only two were found available.

xxvi. 61. The word "fellow" is not in the Greek, and it would be better to translate "this man," though the expression is intentionally derogatory.

xxvi. 69. The high-priest's language, "I adjure thee by the living God," is as much as to say, "I put thee on thine oath before the living God."

We have here the story of Peter's denying his Master, and it comes in as a part of Christ's sufferings. Our Lord Jesus was now in the high priest's hall, not to be tried, but baited rather, and then it would have been some comfort to him to see his friends near him. But we do not find any friend he had about the court, save Peter only, and better he had been at a distance. Observe how he fell, and how he got up again by repentance.

First. His sin, which is here impartially related, to the honour of the penmen of Scripture, who dealt faithfully. Observe,

1. The immediate occasion of Peter's sin. He "sat without in the palace," among the servants of the high priest. Note, Bad company is to many an occasion of sin; and those who needlessly thrust themselves into it, go upon the devil's ground, venture into his crowds, and may expect either to be tempted and ensnared, as Peter was, or to be ridiculed and abused, as his Master was, and scarce can come out of such company without guilt, or grief, or both. He that would keep God's commandments, and his own covenants, must say to evil doers, "Depart from me," *Ps. cxix. 115*. Peter spoke from his own experience, when he warned his new converts to save themselves from that untoward generation; for he had like to have ruined himself by going but once among them.

2. The temptation of it. He was challenged as a retainer to Jesus of Galilee; first one maid, and then another, and then the rest of the servants charged it upon him: "Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee," *ver. 69*; and again, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth," *ver. 71*; and again, *ver. 73*, "Thou also art one of them, for thy speech bewrayeth thee" to be a Galilean; whose dialect and pronunciation differed from that of the other Jews. Happy he whose speech bewrays him to be a disciple of Christ; by the holiness and seriousness of whose discourse it appears that he has been with Jesus. Observe how scornfully they speak of Christ—Jesus of Galilee, and of Nazareth; upbraiding him with the country he was of; and how disdainfully they speak of Peter, "This fellow;" as if they thought it a reproach to them to have such a man in their company, and he was well enough served for coming among them; yet they had nothing to accuse him of, but that he was with Jesus, which they thought was enough to render him both a scandalous and a suspected person.

3. The sin itself. When he was charged as one of Christ's disciples, he denied it, was ashamed and afraid to own himself so, and would have all about him to believe that he had no knowledge of him, nor any kindness or concern for him.

1st. Upon the first mention of it he said, "I know not what thou sayest." This was a shuffling answer he took on him: he did not understand the charge, that he knew not who she meant by Jesus of Galilee, or what she meant by being with him; so making strange of that which his heart was now as full of as it could. First. It is a fault thus to misrepresent our own apprehensions, thoughts, and affections, to serve a turn; to take on us, we do not understand, or did not think of, or remember, that which yet we do apprehend, and did think of, and remember; this is a species of lying which we are more prone to than any other, because in this a man is not easily disproved; for who knows the spirit of a man, save he himself? But God knows it, and we must be restrained from this wickedness by a fear of him, *Pr. xxiv. 12*. Secondly. It is yet a greater fault to be shy of Christ, to dissemble our knowledge of him, and to shift off a confession of him, when we are called to it; it is in effect to deny him.

2nd. Upon the next attack, he said flat and plain, "I know not the man," and backed it with an oath, *ver. 72*. This was in effect to say, "I will not own him, I am no Christian;" for Christianity is the knowledge of Christ. "Why, Peter! canst thou look upon yonder prisoner at the bar, and say, thou dost not know him? Didst thou not quit all to follow him? And hast thou not been the man of his counsel? Hast thou not known him better than any one else? Didst thou not confess him to be the Christ the Son of the Blessed? Hast thou forgot all the kind and tender looks thou hast had from him, and all the intimate fellowship thou hast had with him? Canst thou look him in the face, and say, thou dost not know him?"

3rd. Upon the third assault he began "to curse and swear, saying, I know not the man," *ver. 74*. This was worst of all, for the way of sin is downhill. He cursed and swore, First. To back what he said, and to gain credit to it, that they might not any more call it in question; he did not only say it, but swear it, and yet what he said was false. Note, We have reason to suspect the truth of that which is backed with rash oaths and imprecations. None but the devil's sayings need the devil's proofs. He that will not be restrained by the third commandment from mocking his God, will not be kept by the ninth from deceiving his brother. Secondly. He designed it to be an evidence for him that he was none of Christ's disciples, for this was none of their language. Cursing and swearing is enough to prove a man no disciple of Christ; for it is the language of his enemies thus to take his name in vain.

This is written for warning to us, that we sin not after the similitude of Peter's transgression; that we never, either directly or indirectly, deny Christ, the Lord that bought us, by rejecting his offers, resisting his Spirit, dissembling our knowledge of him, and being ashamed of him and his words, or afraid of suffering for him, and with his suffering people.

4. The aggravations of this sin, which it may be of use to take notice of, that we may observe the like transgressions in our own sins. Consider, 1st. Who he was: an apostle; one of the first three that had been, upon all occasions, the most forward to speak to the honour of Christ. The greater profession we make of religion, the greater is our sin, if in any thing we walk unworthily. 2nd. What fair warning his Master had given him of his danger; which, if he had regarded as he ought to have done, he would not have run himself into the temptation. 3rd. How solemnly he had promised to adhere to Christ in this night of trial; he had said again and again, "I will never deny thee; no, I will die with thee first;" yet he broke these bonds in sunder, and his word was yea and nay. 4th. How soon he fell into this sin after the Lord's supper; there to receive such an inestimable pledge of redeeming love, and yet the same night, before morning, to disown his Redeemer, was indeed turning aside quickly. 5th. How weak, comparatively, the temptation was; it was not the judge, or any of the officers of the court, that charged him with being a disciple of Jesus, but a silly maid or two, that probably designed him no hurt, nor would have done him any, if he had owned it. This was but running with the footmen, *Jer. xii. 5*. 6th. How often he repeated it; even after the cock had crowed once he continued in the temptation, and a second, and third time relapsed into the sin. Is this Peter? How art thou fallen!

Thus was his sin aggravated; but on the other hand there is this to extenuate it, that what he said, he said in his haste, *Ps. cxvi. 11*. He fell into the sin by surprise; not as Judas, with design; his heart was against it; he spoke very ill, but it was unadvisedly, and before he was aware.

Secondly. Peter's repentance for this sin, *ver. 75*. The former is written for our admonition, that we may not sin; but if at any time we be overtaken, this is written for our imitation, that we may make haste to repent. Now observe,

1st. What it was that brought Peter to repentance.

1st. "The cock crew," *ver. 74*; a common contingency but Christ having

xxvi. 64. "Thou hast said" is at least equivalent to the simpler expression, "I am," and must be taken as an avowal of his Messiahship. The Greek formula rendered "hereafter" is more correctly translated "henceforth." From that time the Saviour's manifestation would be more complete. The language intimates, however, that there would be at some future time a more glorious display of his power and majesty. Our Lord here points to the judicial character in which he will appear at the last great tribunal.

mentioned the crowing of the cock, in the warning he gave him, that made it a means of bringing him to himself. The word of Christ can put a significance upon whatever sign he shall please to choose; and by virtue of that word he can make it very beneficial to the souls of his people. The crowing of a cock is to Peter instead of a John Baptist,—the voice of one calling to repentance. Conscience should be to us as the crowing of the cock; to put us in mind of what we had forgotten. When David's heart smote him, the cock crew. Where there is a living principle of grace in the soul, though for the present overpowered by temptation, a little hint will serve, only for a memorandum, when God sets in with it to recover it from a by-path. Here was the crowing of a cock made a happy occasion of the conversion of a soul. Christ comes sometimes in mercy, at cock-crowing.

2nd. He "remembered the words" of the Lord. This was it that brought him to himself, and melted him into tears of godly sorrow; a sense of his ingratitude to Christ, and the slight regard he had had to the gracious warning Christ had given him. Note, A serious reflection upon the words of the Lord Jesus, will be a powerful inducement to repentance, and will help to break the heart for sin. Nothing grieves a penitent more, than that he has sinned against the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the tokens of his love.

2. How his repentance was expressed: "He went out and wept bitterly."

1st. His sorrow was secret; "he went out;" out of the high priest's hall, vexed at himself that ever he came into it; now he found what a snare he was in, and got out of it as fast as he could. He went out into the porch before, ver. 71; and if he had gone quite off then, his second and third denial had been prevented; but then he came in again; now he went out, and came in no more. He went out to some place of solitude and retirement, where he might bemoan himself, like the doves of the valleys, *Eze. vii. 16; Jer. ix. 1, 2*. He went out that he might not be disturbed in his devotions on this sad occasion. We may then be most free in our communion with God, when we are most free from the converse and business of this world. In mourning for sin, we find the families apart, and their wives apart, *Zec. xii. 11, 12*.

2nd. His sorrow was serious: "he wept bitterly." Sorrow for sin must not be slight, but great and deep, like that for an only son. Those that have sinned sweetly, must weep bitterly, for sooner or later, sin will be bitterness. This deep sorrow is requisite, not to satisfy Divine justice; a sea of tears would not do that; but to evidence that there is a real change of mind, which is the essence of repentance; to make the pardon the more welcome, and sin for the future the more loathsome. Peter, that wept so bitterly for denying Christ, never denied him again, but confessed him often, and openly, and in the mouth of danger. So far from ever saying, "I know not the man;" that he made all the house of Israel know assuredly that this same Jesus was Lord and Christ. True repentance for any sin, will be best evidenced by our abounding in the contrary grace and duty; that is a sign of our weeping, not only bitterly, but sincerely. Some of the ancients say, "That as long as Peter lived, he never heard a crow but it set him a weeping." Those that have truly sorrowed for sin, will sorrow upon every remembrance of it; yet not so as to hinder, but rather to increase their joy in God, and in his mercy and grace.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1. Is a very affecting story which is recorded in this chapter, concerning the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus. Considering the thing itself, there cannot be a more tragical story told us; common humanity would melt the heart to find an innocent and excellent person thus misused. But considering the design and fruit of Christ's sufferings, it is gospel, it is good news that Jesus Christ was thus "delivered for our offences;" and there is nothing we have more reason to glory in than the cross of Christ. In this chapter, observe, 1. How he was prosecuted: 1. The delivering him to Pilate, ver. 1, 2; 2. The despair of Judas, ver. 3—10; 3. The arraignment and trial of Christ before Pilate, ver. 11—14; 4. The clamours of the people against him, ver. 15—25; 5. Sentence passed, and the warrant signed for his execution, ver. 26. II. How he was executed: 1. He was barbarously used, ver. 27—30; 2. Led to the place of execution, ver. 31—33; 3. There he had all possible indignities done him, and reproaches cast upon him, ver. 34—44; 4. Heaven frowned upon him, ver. 45—49; 5. Many remarkable things attended his death, ver. 50—56; 6. He was buried, and a watch set on his grave, ver. 57—66.



WHEN the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: 2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. 3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him,

when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. 5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. 6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. 7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to

bury strangers in. 8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. 9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; 10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

We left Christ in the hands of the chief priests and elders, condemned to die, but they could only shew their teeth; about two years before this the Romans had taken from the Jews the power of capital punishment; they could put no man to death; and therefore, early in the morning, another council is held, to consider what is to be done. And here we are told what was done in that morning council, after they had been for two or three hours consulting with their pillows.

First, Christ is delivered up to Pilate, that he might execute the sentence they had passed upon him. Judea having been almost a hundred years before this conquered by Pompey, had ever since been tributary to Rome, and was lately made part of the province of Syria, and subject to the government of the president of Syria, under whom there were several procurators, who chiefly attended the business of the revenues; but sometimes, as Pilate particularly, had the whole power of the president lodged in them. This was a plain evidence that the sceptre was departed from Judah, and therefore now the Shiloh must come, according to Jacob's prophecy, *Gen. xlix. 10*. Pilate is characterized by the Roman writers of that time, to be a man of a rough and haughty spirit, wilful and implacable, and extremely covetous and oppressive; the Jews had a great enmity to his person, and were weary of his government, and yet they made use of him as the tool of their malice against Christ.

1. They bound Jesus. He was bound when he was first seized; but either they took off these bonds when he was before the council, or now they added to them. Having found him guilty, they tied his hands behind him, as they usually do with convicted criminals. He was already bound with the bonds of love to man, and of his own undertaking, else he had soon broke these bonds as Samson did his. We were fettered with the bond of iniquity, held in the cords of our sins, *Pr. v. 22*, but God had bound the yoke of our transgressions upon the neck of the Lord Jesus, *Lam. i. 14*, that we might be loosed by his bonds, as we are healed by his stripes.

2. They led him away in a sort of triumph; led him "as a lamb to the slaughter;" so was he "taken from prison, and from judgment," *Isa. liii. 7, 8*. It was near a mile from Caiaphas's house to Pilate's. All that way they led him through the streets of Jerusalem, when in the morning they began to fill, to make him a spectacle to the world.

3. They delivered him to Pontius Pilate; according to that which Christ had often said, that he should be delivered to the Gentiles. Both Jews and Gentiles were obnoxious to the judgment of God, and concluded under sin; and Christ was to be the Saviour both of Jews and Gentiles, and therefore Christ was brought into the judgment both of Jews and Gentiles, and both had a hand in his death. See how these corrupt church rulers abused the civil magistrate, making use of him to execute their unrighteous decrees, and inflict the grievance which they had prescribed, *Isa. x. 1*. Thus have the kings of the earth been wretchedly imposed upon by the papal powers, and condemned to the drudgery of extirpating with the sword of war, as well as that of justice, those whom they have marked for heretics, right or wrong, to the great prejudice of their own interests.

Secondly. The money which they had paid to Judas for betraying Christ, is by him delivered back to them, and Judas in despair hangs himself. The chief priests and elders supported themselves with this, in prosecuting Christ, that his own disciples betrayed him to them; but now, in the midst of the prosecution, that string failed them, and even he is made to them a witness of Christ's innocency, and a monument of God's justice; which served, 1. For glory to Christ in the midst of his sufferings, and a specimen of his victory over Satan, who had entered into Judas. 2. For warning to his persecutors, and to leave them the more inexcusable. If their heart had not been fully set in them to do this evil, what Judas said and did, one would think, should have stopped the prosecution.

1st. See here how Judas repented; not like Peter, who repented, believed, and was pardoned; no, he repented, despaired, and was ruined. Now observe here,

First. What induced him to repent. It was "when he saw that he was condemned." It is very likely Judas expected, that either Christ would have made his escape out of their hands, or would so have pleaded his own cause at their bar, as to have come off; and then Christ would have had the honour, the Jews the shame, and he the money, and no harm done. This he had no reason to expect; because he had so often heard his Master say, he must be crucified; yet it is probable he did expect it, and when the event did not answer his vain fancy, then he fell into this horror, when he saw the stream strong against Christ, and him yielding to it. Note, Those who measure actions by the consequences of them, rather than by the Divine law, will find themselves mistaken in their measures. The way of sin is down-hill; and if we cannot easily stop ourselves, much less can we stop others, whom we have set agoing in a sinful way. He "repented himself;" that is, he was filled with grief, anguish, and indignation at himself, in reflection upon what he had done. When he was tempted to betray his Master, the thirty pieces of silver looked very fine and glittering; like the wine when it is red, and gives its colour in the cup. But when the thing was done, and the money paid, the silver was become gross; it bit like a serpent, and stung like an adder. Now his conscience flew in his face: "What have I done? What a fool—what a wretch am I, to sell my Master, and all my comfort and happiness in him for such a trifle! All these abuses and indignities done him are chargeable upon me; it is along of me that he is bound and condemned, spit upon and buffeted; I little thought it would have come to this, when I made that wicked bargain: so foolish was I, and ignorant, and so like a beast." Now he curseth the bag he carried, the money he coveted, the priests he dealt with, and the day that he was born. The remembrance of his Master's goodness to him, which he had so basely requited; the bowels of mercy he had spurned at, and the fair warnings he had slighted, steeled his convictions, and made them the more piercing. Now he found his Master's words true: "It were better for that man he had never been born." Note, Sin will soon change its taste. Though it be rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel, in the bowels it will be turned into the gall of asps, *Job xx. 12—14*, like John's book, *Rev. x. 9*.

xxvi. 66. The speakers who said, "He is guilty of death," or convicted of, or deserving death, are probably those mentioned in ver. 59.

xxvi. 75. Peter had left the palace-court, and had passed into the porch, through which entrance was gained to the entire building (verse 71).

xxvii. 1, 2. "When the morning was come" alludes, of course, to the coming of daylight, which would be somewhat before six a.m. The connection of "all" with the word chief priests is to be noted

as another indication of the use of the word high-priests or chief priests (the same term in Greek), to denote generally priests of a higher rank and position. They had apparently proceeded as far as they could without laying their case before the Roman governor, and therefore they now bind their prisoner, and conduct him to Pilate, whose usual residence was at Cæsarea, but who was then at Jerusalem, in consequence of its being the Passover season. Pontius Pilatus, whose name here occurs for the first time in the Gospels,

Secondly. What were the indications of his repentance.

1st. He made restitution. He "brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests," when they were all together publicly. Now the money burned in his conscience; and he was as sick of it as ever he had been fond of it. Note, That which is ill-gotten will never do good to those that get it, *Jer. xiii. 10; Job xx. 15*. If he had repented, and brought the money back before he had betrayed Christ, he might have done it with comfort; then he had agreed, while yet in the way; but now it was too late,—now he cannot do it without horror; wishing ten thousand times he had never meddled with it; see *Jas. v. 3*. "He brought it again." Note, What is unjustly gotten must not be kept; for that is a continuance in the sin by which it was got; and such an avowing of it as is not consistent with repentance. He brought it to those from whom he had it, to let them know that he repented his bargain. Note, Those who have served and hardened others in their sin, when God gives them repentance, should let them know it whose sins they have been partakers in, that it may be a means to bring them to repentance.

2nd. He made confession, ver. 4: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." First. To the honour of Christ, he pronounceth his blood innocent. If he had been guilty of any ill practices, Judas, as his disciple, would certainly have known it; and, as his betrayer, would certainly have discovered it; but he freely, and without being urged to it, pronounces him innocent, to the face of those who had now pronounced him guilty. Secondly. To his own shame, he confesseth that he had sinned in betraying this blood. He doth not lay the blame on any one else; doth not say, "You have sinned in hiring me to do it;" but takes it all to himself,—"I have sinned in doing it." Thus far Judas went towards his repentance; yet it was not to salvation. He confessed; but not to God: did not go to him, and say, "I have sinned, Father, against heaven." He confessed the betraying of innocent blood, but did not confess that wicked love of money, which was the root of this evil. Yet there are those who betray Christ, and yet justify themselves in it; and so come short of Judas.

2nd. See here how the chief priests and elders entertained Judas's penitential confession; they said, "What is that to us? see thou to that." He made them his confessors, and that was the absolution they gave him; more like the priests of devils, than like the priests of the holy, living God.

First. See here how carelessly they speak of the betraying of Christ. Judas had told them that the blood of Christ was innocent blood; and they say, "What is that to us?" Was it nothing to them that they had thirsted after this blood, and hired Judas to betray it, and had now condemned it to be shed unjustly? Is this nothing to them? Doth it give no check to the violence of the prosecution; no warning to take heed what they do to this just man? Thus do fools make a mock at sin, as if no harm were done, no hazard run by the commission of the greatest wickedness. Thus light do many make of Christ crucified: what is it to them that he suffered such things?

Secondly. See here how carelessly they speak of the sin of Judas; he said, "I have sinned;" and they said, "What is that to us?" What are we concerned in thy sin, that thou tellest us of it? Note, It is folly for us to think that the sins of others are nothing to us; especially those sins that we are any way accessory, or partakers in. Is it nothing to us that God is dishonoured, souls wounded, Satan gratified, and his interests served? and that we have aided and abetted it? If the elders of Jezreel, to please Jezebel, murder Naboth, is that nothing to Ahab? Yes, he has killed, for he has taken possession, *1 Kin. xxi. 19*. The guilt of sin is not so easily transferred as some people think it is. If there were guilt in the matter, they tell Judas he must look to it: he must bear it. 1st. Because he had betrayed him to them. His was indeed the greater sin, *Jno. xix. 11*; but it did not therefore follow, that theirs was no sin. It is a common instance of the deceitfulness of our hearts to extenuate our own sin by the aggravations of other people's sins. But "the judgment of God is according to truth," not according to comparison. 2nd. Because he knew and believed him to be innocent. "If he be innocent, 'see thou to it,' that is more than we know; we have adjudged him guilty, and therefore, may justly prosecute him as such." Wicked practices are buoyed up by wicked principles, and particularly by this, That sin is sin only to those that think it to be so; that it is no harm to persecute a good man, if we take him to be an ill man; but those who thus think to mock God, will but deceive and destroy themselves.

Thirdly. See how carelessly they speak of the conviction, terror, and remorse that Judas was under. They were glad to make use of him in the sin, and were then very fond of him; none more welcome to them than Judas, when he said, "What will ye give me, and I will betray him to you?" They did not say, "What is that to us?" But now his sin had put him into a fright, now they slighted him; had nothing to say to him, but turned him over to his own terrors: what! did he come to trouble them with his melancholy fancies; they had something else to do than to heed him; but why so shy? 1st. Perhaps they were in some fear lest the sparks of his conviction brought too near should kindle a fire in their own consciences; and lest his moans, listened to, should give an alarm to their own consciences. Note, Obstinate sinners stand upon their guard against convictions; and those that are resolutely impenitent, look with disdain upon the penitent. 2nd. However they were in no concern to succour Judas; when they had brought him into the snare, they not only left him, but laughed at him. Note, Sinners under convictions will find their old companions in sin but miserable comforters. It is usual for those that love the treason to hate the traitor.

Thirdly. Here is the utter despair that Judas was hereby driven into. If the chief priests had promised him to stay the prosecution, it would have been some comfort to him; but seeing no hopes of that, he grew desperate, ver. 5.

1. "He cast down the pieces of silver in the temple." The chief priests would not take the money, for fear of taking thereby the whole guilt to themselves, which they were willing Judas should bear the load of; Judas would not keep it; it was too hot for him to hold; he therefore threw it down in the temple, that whether they would or no, it might fall into the hands of the chief priests. See what a drug money was, when the guilt of sin was tacked to it, or was thought to be so.

2. He "went and hanged himself." 1st. He retired, ἀνεχώρησεν, he withdrew into some solitary place, like the possessed man that was drawn by the devil into the wilderness, *Lu. viii. 29*. Woe to him that is in despair, and is alone. Had Judas gone to Christ, or to some of the disciples, perhaps he might have had relief, as bad as the case was; but missing of it with the chief priests, he abandoned himself to despair. And the same devil, that with the help of the priests, drew him to the sin, with their help drove him to despair. 2nd. He became his own executioner; he "hanged himself." 'he was suffocated with grief.' So Dr. Hammond; but Dr. Whitby is clear that our translation is right. Judas had a sight and sense of sin, but no apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ; and so he pined away in his iniquity. His sin, we may suppose, was not in its own nature unpardonable; there were some of those saved that had been Christ's betrayers and murderers; but he concluded, as Cain, that his iniquity was greater than could be forgiven, and would rather throw himself on the devil's mercy than God's. And some have said, that Judas sinned more

in despairing of the mercy of God, than in betraying his Master's blood. Now the terrors of the Almighty set themselves in array against him. All the curses written in God's book now "come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones," as was foretold concerning him, *Ps. cix. 18, 19*, and drove him to this desperate shift, for the escaping of a hell within him, to leap into that before him, which was but the perfection and perpetuity of this horror and despair. He throws himself into the fire, to avoid the flame; but miserable is the case when a man must to hell for ease.

Now in this story, First. We have an instance of the wretched end of those into whom Satan enters, and particularly those that are given up to the love of money. This is the destruction in which many are drowned by it, *1 Tim. vi. 9, 10*. Remember what came of the swine into which, and of the traitor into whom, the devil entered, and give not place to the devil.

Secondly. We have an instance of the wrath of God revealed from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, *Rom. i. 18*. As in the story of Peter we behold the goodness of God, and the triumphs of Christ's grace in the conversion of some sinners; so in the story of Judas we behold the severity of God, and the triumphs of Christ's power and justice in the confusion of other sinners. When Judas, into whom Satan entered, was thus hung up, Christ made an open show of the principalities and powers he undertook the spoiling of, *Col. ii. 15*.

Thirdly. We have an instance of the direful effects of despair, it often ends in self-murder. Sorrow, even that for sin, if not according to God, worketh death, *2 Cor. vii. 10*; the worst kind of death; for a wounded spirit, who can bear? Let us think as bad as we can of sin, provided we do not think it unpardonable; and despair of help in ourselves, but not of help in God. He that thinks to ease his conscience by destroying his life, doth in effect dare God Almighty to do his worst; and self-murder, though prescribed by some of the heathen moralists, is certainly a remedy worse than the disease, how bad soever the disease may be. Let us watch against the beginnings of melancholy; and pray, Lord, "Lead us not into temptation."

Fourthly. The disposal of the money which Judas brought back, ver. 6—10. It was laid out in the purchase of a field, called the Potter's Field; because some potter either had owned it, or occupied it, or lived near it, or because broken potters' vessels were thrown into it. And this field was to be a burying place for strangers, that is, proselytes to the Jewish religion, who were of other nations, and coming to Jerusalem to worship, happened to die there. 1st. It looks like an instance of their humanity, that they took care for the burying of strangers; and it intimates that they themselves allowed, as St. Paul saith, *Acts xxiv. 15*; "That there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just, and of the unjust;" for we therefore take care of the dead body, not only because it has been the habitation of a rational soul, but because it must be so again. But, 2nd. It was no instance of their humility, that they would bury strangers in a place by themselves, as if they were not worthy to be laid in their burying places; strangers must keep their distance, alive and dead, and that principle must go down to the grave, "Stand by thyself, come not near me, I am holier than thou," *Isa. lxv. 5*. The sons of Heth were better affected towards Abraham, though a stranger among them, when they offered him the choicest of their own sepulchres, *Gen. xxii. 6*. But the sons of the stranger, that have joined themselves to the Lord, though buried by themselves, shall rise with all that are dead in Christ.

This buying of the potter's field was not done that day that Christ died, they were then too busy to mind any thing else but hunting him down, yet it was done not long after; for Peter speaks of it soon after Christ's ascension; yet it is here recorded,

1. To shew the hypocrisy of the chief priests and elders: they were maliciously persecuting the blessed Jesus; and now, 1st. They scruple to put that money into the treasury, or corban of the temple, with which they had hired the traitor. Though perhaps they had taken it out of the treasury, pretending it was for the public good, and though they were great sticklers for the corban, and laboured to draw all the wealth of the nation into it, yet they would not put that money into it which was the price of blood. The hire of a traitor they thought parallel to the hire of a whore, and the price of a malefactor (such a one they made Christ to be) equivalent to the price of a dog, neither of which was to be brought into the house of the Lord, *Deu. xxiii. 18*. They would thus save their credit with the people, by possessing them with an opinion of their great reverence for the temple. Thus they that swallowed a camel, strained at a gnat. 2nd. They think to atone for what they had done by this public good act, of providing a burying place for strangers, though not at their own charge. Thus in times of ignorance, people were made to believe that building churches and endowing monasteries would make amends for immoralities.

2. To signify the favour intended by the blood of Christ to strangers and sinners of the Gentiles. Through the price of his blood, a resting place is provided for them after death; thus many of the ancients apply this passage. The grave is the potter's field, where the bodies are thrown as despised, broken vessels; but Christ by his blood purchased it for those who, by confessing themselves strangers on earth, seek the better country; he has altered the property of it, (as a purchaser doth,) so that now death is ours, the grave is ours, a bed of rest for us. The Germans in their language, call burying places, 'God's fields;' for in them God sows his people as a corn of wheat, *Jno. xii. 24*; see *Hos. ii. 23*; *Isa. xvi. 19*.

3. To perpetuate the infamy of those that bought and sold the blood of Christ. This field was commonly called Aceldama, the field of blood; not by the chief priests, they hoped in this burying place to bury the remembrance of their own crime; but by the people, who took notice of Judas's acknowledgment, that he had betrayed the innocent blood, though the chief priests made nothing of it. They fastened this name upon the field, *In perpetuum rei memoriam*—for a perpetual memorial. Note, Divine providence has many ways of entailing disgrace upon the wicked practices even of great men, who, though they seek to cover their shame, are put to a perpetual reproach.

4. That we may see how the Scripture was fulfilled, ver. 9, 10; "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet;" the words quoted are found in the prophecy of Zechariah, *ch. xi. 12*; how they are here said to be spoken by Jeremiah, is a difficult question; but the credit of Christ's doctrine doth not depend upon it; for that proves itself perfectly Divine, though there should appear something human as to small circumstances in the penmen of it. The Syriac version, which is ancient, reads only 'it was spoken by the prophet,' not naming any, whence some thought Jeremy was added by some scribe; some think the whole volume of the prophets, being in one book, and the prophecy of Jeremiah put first, it might not be improper, *currente calamo*—'with a running pen,' to quote any passage out of that volume under his name. The Jews used to say, the spirit of Jeremiah was in Zechariah, and so they were as one prophet; some suggest, that it was spoken by Jeremiah, but written by Zechariah; or, that Jeremiah wrote the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters of Zechariah. Now this passage in the prophet is a representation of the great contempt of God that was found among the Jews, and the poor returns they made to him for rich receivings from him. But here that is really acted, which

was the fifth Roman procurator of Judea. The first was Coponius, sent out with Quirinus, after the banishment of Archelaus; the second was Marcus Ambivius; the third, Annus Rufus; the fourth, Valerius Gratus, who was succeeded by Pilate about A.D. 26. (See Josephus, "Antiq.," xviii., 2, 2.) Pilate continued in office about ten years; and being hated by both Jews and Samaritans for the cruelty and caprice of his administration, he was accused by them before Vitellius, then governor of Syria, and sent by him to Rome, to

answer to these complaints before the Emperor. (Josephus, "Antiq.," xviii., 3, 1; xviii., 4, 1, 2.) Tiberius was dead before the arrival of Pilate, and the latter is said to have been banished by Caligula to Vienna, in Gaul, and there to have died by his own hand about A.D. 41. (Eusebius, "Church History," ii., 7, 8.) For the part taken by Pilate in the condemnation of Jesus, compare Josephus, "Antiq.," xviii., 3, 3 ("Robinson's Lexicon to the New Testament"). In early Christian literature we find reference to the "Acts of Pilate," in which

was there but figuratively expressed. The sum of money is the same, "thirty pieces of silver," this "they weighed for his price," at this rate they valued him, "a goodly price;" and this "cast to the potter in the house of the Lord;" which was here literally accomplished. Note, We should better understand the events of providence, if we were better acquainted even with the language and expressions of Scripture, for even those also are sometimes written upon the dispensations of providence so plain, that he that runs may read them. What David spoke figuratively, *Ps. xlii. 7*, Jonah made a literal application of, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me," *Jonah ii. 3*.

The giving of "the price of him that was valued," not for him, but for the potter's field, speaks, 1st. the high value that ought to be put upon Christ. The price was given, not for him; no, when it was given for him, it was soon brought back again with disdain, as infinitely below his worth; he cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, nor this unspeakable gift bought with money. 2nd. The low value that was put upon him. "They of the children of Israel" did strangely undervalue him, when his price did but reach to buy a potter's field, a pitiful, sorry plot of ground, not worth looking upon. It added to the reproach of his being bought and sold, that it was at so low a rate: "cast it to the potter," so it is in *Zechariah*; a contemptible, petty chapman, not the merchant that deals in things of value. And, observe, "they of the children of Israel" thus undervalued him; they that were his own people, that should have known better, what estimate to put upon him; they to whom he was first sent, whose glory he was, and whom he had valued so highly, and bought so dear. He gave kings' ransoms for them, and the richest countries, so precious were they in his sight, *Isa. xliii. 3, 4*; Egypt, and Ethiopia, and Seba; but they gave a slave's ransom for him, see *Ex. xxi. 32*; and valued him but at the rate of a potter's field; so was that blood trodden under foot, which bought the kingdom of heaven for us. But all this was as the Lord appointed; so the prophetic vision was which typified this event, and so the event itself, as the other instances of Christ's sufferings, "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."

11 And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. 12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. 13 Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? 14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. 15 Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. 16 And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. 17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? 18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. 19 When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. 20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. 21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. 22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. 23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. 24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. 25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

We have here an account of what passed in Pilate's judgment hall, when the blessed Jesus was brought thither betimes in the morning. Though it was no court day, Pilate immediately took his case before him. We have here,

First. The trial Christ had before Pilate.

1. His arraignment: "Jesus stood before the governor," as the prisoner before the judge. We could not stand before God because of our sins, nor lift up our face in his presence, if Christ had not been thus made sin for us. He was arraigned, that we might be discharged. Some think this speaks his

courage and boldness, he stood undaunted, unmoved by all their rage. He thus stood in this judgment, that we might stand in God's judgment. He stood for a spectacle, as Naboth, when he was arraigned, was set on high among the people.

2. His indictment: "Art thou the king of the Jews?" The Jews were now not only under the government, but under the very jealous inspection of the Roman powers; which they were themselves to the highest degree disaffected to, and yet now pretend a concern for to serve this turn; accusing Jesus as an enemy to Cæsar, *Lu. xxiii. 2*; which they could produce no other proof of, but that he himself had newly owned he was the Christ. Now they thought, that whoever was the Christ, must be the king of the Jews, and must deliver them from the Roman power, and restore to them a temporal dominion, and enable them to trample upon all their neighbours. And according to this chimera of their own, they accused our Lord Jesus, as making himself king of the Jews, in opposition to the Roman yoke; whereas, though he said he was the Christ, he meant not such a Christ as this. Note, Many oppose Christ's holy religion upon a mistake of the nature of it; they dress it up in false colours, and then fight against it. They assuring the governor that, if he made himself Christ, he made himself king of the Jews, the governor takes it for granted, that he goes about to subvert the nation, and subvert the government. "Art thou a king?" (it was plain he was not so, *de facto*—actually;) but 'dost thou lay any claim to the government, or pretend a right to rule the Jews?' Note, it has often been the hard fate of Christ's holy religion, unjustly to fall under the suspicions of the civil powers, as if it were hurtful to kings and provinces, whereas it tends mightily to the benefit of both.

3. His plea: "Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest;" that is, 'It is as thou sayest, though not as thou meanest; I am a king, but not such a king as thou dost suspect me to be.' Thus before Pilate he witnessed a good confession, and was not ashamed to own himself a king, though it looked ridiculous; nor afraid, though at this time it was dangerous.

4. The evidence, ver. 12: "He was accused of the chief priests." Pilate found no fault in him; whatever was said, nothing was proved, and therefore what was wanting in matter, they made up in noise and violence, and followed him with repeated accusations, the same they had given in before; but by the repetition they thought to force a belief from the governor. They had learned, not only *calumniari*—to calumniate, but *fortiter calumniari*—to calumniate stoutly. The best men have often been accused of the worst crimes.

5. The prisoner's silence as to the prosecutors' accusations: "He answered nothing." 1st. Because it did not need, nothing was alleged but what carried its own confutation along with it. 2nd. He was now taken up with the great concern that lay between him and his Father, to whom he was offering up himself a sacrifice, to answer the demands of his justice, which he was so intent upon, that he minded not what they said against him. 3rd. His hour was come, and he submitted to his Father's will, "not as I will, but as thou wilt;" he knew what his Father's will was, and therefore silently "committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." We must not thus by our silence throw away our lives, because we are not lords of our lives, as Christ was of his; nor can we know, as he did, when our hour is come. But hence we must learn, not to render railing for railing, 1 *Pet. ii. 23*.

Now, First. Pilate pressed him to make some reply, ver. 13: "Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?" what these things were may be gathered from *Lu. xxiii. 3, 5*; and *Jno. xix. 7*. Pilate having no malice at all against him, was desirous he should clear himself, urge him to it, and believes he could do it. "Hearest thou not?" Yes, he did hear, and still he hears all that is witnessed unjustly against his truths and ways; but he keeps silence, because it is the day of his patience, and doth not answer, as he will shortly, *Ps. l. 3*. Secondly. He wondered at his silence; which was not interpreted so much a contempt of the court, as a contempt of himself. And, therefore, Pilate is not said to be angry at it, but to have "marvelled greatly" at it, as a thing very unusual. He believed him to be innocent, and had heard perhaps that never man spake like him, and therefore thought it strange that he had not one word to say for himself. Now,

Secondly. The outrage and violence of the people, in pressing the governor to crucify Christ. The chief priests had a great interest in the people, they called them Rabbi, rabbi, made idols of them, and oracles of all they said, and they made use of this to incense them against him, and by the power of the mob gained the point, which they could not otherwise carry. Now here are two instances of their outrage:

1. Their preferring Barabbas before him, and choosing to have him released rather than Jesus.

1st. It seems it was grown into a custom with the Roman governors, for the humouring of the Jews, to grace the feast of the passover with the release of a prisoner, ver. 15. This they thought did honour to the feast, and was agreeable to the commemoration of their deliverance, but it was an invention of their own, and no Divine institution; though some think it was ancient, and kept up by the Jewish princes, before they became a province of the empire. However, it was an ill custom, an obstruction to justice, and an encouragement to wickedness. But our gospel passover is celebrated with the release of prisoners, by him who "hath power on earth to forgive sins."

2nd. The prisoner put in competition with our Lord Jesus, was Barabbas, a notable prisoner he is here called, ver. 16, either because by birth and breeding he was of some note and quality, or because he had signalized himself by something remarkable in his crimes; whether he was so notable as to recommend himself the more to the favours of the people, and so the more likely to be begged, or whether so notable as to make himself more liable to their rage, is uncertain. Some think the latter, and therefore Pilate mentioned him, as taking it for granted, they would have desired any one's release rather than his. Treason, murder, and felony, are the three most enormous crimes that are usually punished by the sword of justice, and Barabbas was guilty of them all three, *Lu. xxiii. 17*; *Jno. xviii. 40*. A notable prisoner indeed, whose crimes were so complicated.

3rd. The proposal was made by Pilate the governor, ver. 17: "Whom will ye that I release unto you?" It is probable, the judge had the nomination of two, one of which the people were to choose: Pilate proposed to them to have Jesus released; he was convinced of his innocence, and that the prosecution was malicious, yet had not the courage to acquit him, as he ought to have done, by his own power, but would have him released by the people's election, and so he hoped to satisfy both his own conscience, and the people too; whereas finding no fault in him, he ought not to have put him upon the country, or brought him into peril of his life. But such little tricks and artifices as these, to trim the matter, and to keep in with conscience and the world too, are the common practice of those that seek more to please men than God. "What shall I do," saith Pilate, "with Jesus, which is called Christ?" He puts the people in mind of this, that this Jesus, whose release he proposed, was looked upon by some among them as the Messiah, and had given pregnant proofs of his being so: 'Do not reject one whom your nation has professed such an expectation of.' The reason why Pilate laboured thus to get Jesus discharged, was because "he knew that for envy the chief priests had delivered him up," ver. 18.

he is said to have made a full report to Tiberius of the circumstances attending the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. It has been supposed that what is now called the "Gospel of Nicodemus" in part represents the "Acts of Pilate," but such an opinion is not at all probable. There are documents still extant bearing Pilate's name, but not one of them is genuine. Cowper's "Apocryphal Gospels" contains them all, with full details.

xxvii. 9. The passage here ascribed to Jeremiah is loosely quoted

from *Zech. xi. 12, 13*, and differs both from the Septuagint and the Hebrew. The name of Jeremiah is found in most copies and versions. The Syriac Peshito reads, "that which was spoken by the prophet," and a few other authorities omit the name of Jeremiah, while a few have *Zechariah*. The difficulty was noticed by Jerome, and still earlier by Origen, and no decisive explanation of it has been discovered. One important suggestion is that the quotation originally formed part of the writings of Jeremiah, which by mistake the Jews

that it was not his guilt but his goodness that they were provoked at; and for this reason he hoped to bring him off by the people's act, and that they would be for his release. When David was envied by Saul, he was the darling of the people, and any one that heard the hosannas with which Christ was but a few days ago brought into Jerusalem, would have thought that he had been so, and that Pilate might safely have referred this matter to the commonalty, especially when so notorious a rogue was set up as rival with him for their favours. But it proved otherwise.

4th. While Pilate was thus labouring the matter, he was confirmed in his unwillingness to condemn Jesus by a message sent him from his wife, ver. 19, by way of caution, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man," together with the reason, "for I have suffered many things this day, in a dream, because of him." Probably this message was delivered to Pilate publicly, in the hearing of all that were present, for it was intended to be a warning not to him only, but to the prosecutors. Observe,

First. The special providence of God in sending this dream to Pilate's wife; it is not likely that she had heard any thing before concerning Christ, at least, not so as to occasion her dreaming of him, but it was immediately from God: perhaps she was one of the "devout and honourable women," and had some sense of religion; yet God revealed himself by dreams to some that had not, as to Nebuchadnezzar. She "suffered many things" in this dream; whether she dreamed of the cruel usage of an innocent person, or of the judgments that would fall upon those that had any hand in his death, or both, it seems it was a frightful dream, and her thoughts troubled her, as *Dan. ii. 1-5*. Note, The Father of spirits has many ways of access to the spirits of men, and "can seal their instructions in a dream, or vision of the night," *Job xxxiii. 15*; yet to those who have the written word, God more ordinarily speaks by conscience on a waking bed, than by dreams, when "deep sleep falls upon men."

Secondly. The tenderness and care of Pilate's wife in sending this caution thereupon to her husband, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man."

1st. This was an honourable testimony to our Lord Jesus, witnessing for him that he was a just man; even then when he was persecuted as the worst of malefactors, when his friends were afraid to appear in defence of him, God made even those that were strangers and enemies to speak in his favour; when Peter denied him, Judas confessed him; when the chief priests pronounced him guilty of death, Pilate declared he found no fault in him; when the women that loved him stood afar off, Pilate's wife, that knew little of him, showed a concern for him. Note, God will not leave himself without witnesses to the truth and equity of his cause, even then when it seems to be most spitefully run down by its enemies, and most shamefully deserted by its friends. 2nd. It was a fair warning to Pilate, "Have thou nothing to do with him." Note, God has many ways of giving cheeks to sinners in their sinful pursuits; and it is a great mercy to have such cheeks from providence, from faithful friends, and from our own consciences, and our great duty to hearken to them. "O do not this abominable thing which the Lord hates," is what we may hear said to us when we are entering into temptation, if we will but regard it. Pilate's lady sent him this warning out of the love she had to him; she feared not to rebuke him from him for meddling with that which belonged not to her, but let him take it how he would, she would give him the caution. Note, It is an instance of true love to our friends and relations to do what we can to keep them from sin; and the nearer any are to us, and the greater affection we have for them, the more solicitous we should be not to suffer sin to come or lie upon them, *Lev. xix. 17*. The best friendship is friendship to the soul. We are not told how Pilate turned this off; it is like with a jest, but by his proceeding against this just man it appears he did not regard it. Thus faithful admonitions are made light of when they are given as warnings against sin; but will not be so easily made light of when they shall be reflected upon as aggravations of sin.

5th. The chief priests and the elders were busy all this while to influence the people in favour of Barabbas, ver. 20: they "persuaded the multitude," both by themselves and their emissaries, whom they sent abroad among them, "that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus;" suggesting that this Jesus was a deceiver, in league with Satan, an enemy to their church and temple; that if he were let alone the Romans would come and take away their place and nation; that Barabbas, though an ill man, yet having not the interest that Jesus had, could not do so much mischief. Thus they managed the mob, who otherwise were well affected to Jesus; and if they had not been so much at the beck of their priests would never have done such a preposterous thing, as to prefer Barabbas before Jesus. Here, *First*, We cannot but look upon these wicked priests with indignation; by the law, in "matters of controversy between blood and blood," the people were to be guided by the priests, and to do as they informed them, *Deu. xviii. 8*. This great power put into their hands they wretchedly abused, and the leaders of the people caused them to err. *Secondly*, We cannot but look upon the deluded people with pity; "I have compassion on the multitude" to see them hurried thus violently to so great wickedness, to see them thus priest-ridden, and falling into the ditch with their blind leaders.

6th. Being thus overruled by the priests, at length they made their choice, ver. 21, "Whether of the twain," saith Pilate, "will ye that I release unto you?" hoping he had gained his point to have Jesus released. But to his great surprise they said, "Barabbas;" as if his crimes were less, and therefore he less deserved to die; or as if his merits were greater, and therefore he better deserved to live. The cry for Barabbas was so universal, one and all, that there was no colour to demand a poll between the candidates. "Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and thou, O earth, be horribly afraid!" Were ever men that pretended to reason or religion guilty of such prodigious madness, such horrid wickedness! This was it that Peter charged so home upon them, *Acts iii. 14*: "Ye desired a murderer to be granted you;" yet multitudes, who choose the world rather than God for their ruler and portion, thus choose their own delusions.

2. Their pressing earnestly to have Jesus crucified, ver. 22, 23. Pilate being amazed at their choice of Barabbas, was willing to hope it was rather from a fondness for him than from an enmity to Jesus, and therefore puts it to them, "What shall I do then with Jesus?" "Shall I release him likewise, for the greater honour of your feast? Or will you leave it to me?" No; "they all said, Let him be crucified." That death they desired he might die, because it was looked upon as the most scandalous and ignominious, and they hoped thereby to make his followers ashamed to own him and their relation to him. It was absurd for them to prescribe to the judge what sentence he should pass, but their malice and rage made them forget all rules of order and decency, and turned a court of justice into a riotous, routous, and seditious assembly. Now was truth fallen in the street, and equity could not enter; where one looked for judgment beheld oppression, the worst kind of oppression; for righteousness beheld a cry, the worst cry that ever was—Crucify, crucify, the Lord of glory! Though they that cried thus, perhaps, were not the same persons that the other day had cried, Hosanna; yet see what a change was made upon the face of the populary in a little time: when he rode in triumph into Jerusalem, so general were the acclamations of praise, that one would have thought he had no enemies; but now when he was led in triumph to Pilate's judgment seat, so

general were the outcries of enmity, that one would think he had no friends. Such revolutions are there in this changeable world, through which our way to heaven lies, as our Master's did, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, counter-changed, *2 Cor. vi. 8*, that we may not be lifted up by honour, as if when we are applauded and caressed we had made our nest among the stars, and should die in that nest; nor yet be dejected or discouraged by dishonour, as if when we were despised and trampled upon we were trodden to the lowest hell, from which there is no redemption. *Vides tu istos qui te laudant; omnes aut sunt hostes, aut (quod in æquo est) esse possunt*—"You observe those who applaud you—either they are all your enemies, or, which is equivalent, they may become so." *Seneca, de V. B.* Now as to this demand, we are further told,

1st. How Pilate objected against it: "Why, what evil hath he done?" A proper question to ask before we censure any in common discourse, much more for a judge to ask before he pass a sentence of death. Note, It is much for the honour of the Lord Jesus, that though he suffered as an evildoer, yet neither his judge nor his prosecutors could find that he had done any evil. Had he done any evil against God? No; he always did those things that pleased him. Had he done any evil against the civil government? No; as he did himself so he taught others to "render to Caesar the things that were Caesar's." Had he done any evil against the public peace? No; he did not strive or cry, nor did his kingdom come with observation. Had he done any evil to particular persons? "Whose ox had he taken, or whom had he defrauded?" No; so far from that, that he "went about doing good." This repeated assertion of his unspotted innocence plainly intimates that he died to satisfy for the sins of others; for if it had not been for our transgressions that he was thus wounded, and for our offences that he was delivered up, and that upon his own voluntary undertaking to atone for them, I see not how these extraordinary sufferings of a person that had never thought, said, or done, anything amiss could be reconciled with the justice and equity of that Providence that governs the world, and at least permitted this to be done in it.

2nd. How they insisted upon it: "They cried out the more, Let him be crucified." They do not go about to show any evil he had done, but, right or wrong, he must be crucified; quitting all pretensions to the proof of the premises, they resolve to hold the conclusion, and what was wanting in evidence to make up in clamour; this unjust judge was wearied by importunity into an unjust sentence, as he in the parable into a just one, *Lu. xviii. 4*, and the cause carried purely by noise.

Thirdly. Here is the devolving of the guilt of Christ's blood upon the people and priests.

1. Pilate endeavours to transfer it from himself, ver. 24.

1st. He sees it to no purpose to contend. What he said, *First*, Would do no good, "he could prevail nothing;" he could not convince them what an unjust, unreasonable thing it was for him to condemn a man whom he believed innocent, and whom they could not prove guilty. See how strong the stream of lust and rage sometimes is, neither authority nor reason will prevail to give check to it. Nay, *Secondly*, It was more likely to do hurt; he saw "that rather a tumult was made;" this rude and brutish people fell to high words, and began to threaten Pilate what they would do if he did not gratify them; and how great a matter might this fire kindle, especially when the priests, those great incendiaries, blew the coals. Now this turbulent, tumultuous temper of the Jews, by which Pilate was awed to condemn Christ against his conscience, contributed more than anything to the ruin of that nation not long after; for their frequent insurrections provoked the Romans to destroy them, though they had reduced them; and their inveterate quarrels among themselves made them an easy prey to the common enemy: thus their sin was their ruin. Observe how easily we may be mistaken in the inclination of the common people; the priests were apprehensive that their endeavours to seize Christ would have caused an uproar, especially on the feast day; but it proved that Pilate's endeavour to save him caused an uproar, and that on the feast day: so uncertain are the sentiments of the crowd.

2nd. This puts him into a great strait, betwixt the peace of his own mind and the peace of the city; he is loath to condemn an innocent man, and yet loath to disoblige the people, and raise a devil that would not be soon laid. Had he steadily and resolutely adhered to the sacred laws of justice, as a judge ought to do, he had not been in any perplexity; the matter was plain and past dispute, that a man in whom was found no fault, ought not to be crucified upon any pretence whatsoever; nor must an unjust thing be done to gratify any man or company of men in the world; the cause is soon decided: *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*—Let justice be done, though heaven and earth come together! If wickedness proceed from the wicked, though they be priests, yet my hand shall not be upon him.

3rd. Pilate thinks to trim the matter, and to pacify both the people and his own conscience too, by doing it and yet disowning it, acting the thing, and yet acquitting himself from it at the same time. Such absurdities and self-contradictions do they run upon whose convictions are strong, but their corruptions stronger; "Happy is he," saith the apostle, *Rom. xiv. 22*, "that condemneth not himself in that thing which he allows;" or, which is all one, that allows not himself in that thing which he condemns. Now Pilate endeavours to clear himself from the guilt.

First, By a sign: "He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, not as if he thought thereby to cleanse himself from any guilt contracted before God, but to acquit himself before the people, from so much as contracting any guilt in this matter; as if he should say, 'If it be done, bear witness it is none of my doing.'" He borrowed the ceremony from that law which appointed it to be used for the clearing of the country from the guilt of an undiscovered murder, *Deu. xxi. 6, 7*; and he used it the more to affect the people with the conviction he was under of the prisoner's innocence; and probably such was the noise of the rabble, that if he had not used some such surprising sign in the view of them all, he could not have been heard.

Secondly, By a saying, in which, 1st. He clears himself, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person:" what nonsense was this, to condemn him, and yet protest he is innocent of his blood! but for men to protest against a thing and yet to practise it, is only to proclaim that they sin against their consciences; and though Pilate professed his innocence, God chargeth him with guilt, *Acts iv. 27*. Some think to justify themselves by pleading that their hands were not in the sin; but David kills by the sword of the children of Ammon, and Ahab by the elders of Jezreel; Pilate here thinks to justify himself by pleading that his heart was not in the action; but that is an avowment which will never be admitted: *Protestatio non valet contra factum*—"in vain does he protest against the deed, which at the same time he perpetrates." 2nd. He cast it upon the priests and people, "See ye to it;" "if it must be done, I cannot help it, do you answer it before God and the world." Note, Sin is a brat that nobody is willing to own; and many deceive themselves with this, that they shall bear no blame if they can but find any to lay the blame upon; but it is not so easy a thing to transfer the guilt of sin as many think it is. The condition of him that is infected with the plague is not the less dangerous, either for his catching the infection from others, or his communicating the infection to others: we may be

ascribed to Zechariah. Another is that the Syriac represents the original reading, to which somebody at a very early date added wrongly the name of Jeremiah. Some have maintained that the error belongs to the evangelist himself, but the safest course is to leave it as a problem not yet clearly solved.

xvii. 11. To the very direct question of Pilate, Jesus gave as direct an answer, the words "Thou sayest" being equivalent to an affirmative.

xvii. 16. The word "notable," or distinguished, may refer to the position of Barabbas in society, or it may merely mean that he was well known and notorious. We prefer the latter explanation. The name is Syriac, meaning "a father's son," perhaps because resembling his father when an infant, perhaps because his father's favourite (*Prov. iv. 3*). Dean Alford says the name was not an uncommon one, and possibly it was not.

xvii. 19. The incident recorded here has been taken advantage

tempted to sin, but cannot be forced. The priests threw it upon Judas, "See thou to it;" and now Pilate throws it upon them, "See ye to it;" "for with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you."

2. The priests and people consented to take the guilt upon themselves; they said, "His blood be on us, and on our children;" "we are so well assured that there is neither sin nor danger in putting him to death, that we are willing to run the hazard of it;" as if the guilt would do harm to them or theirs. They saw that it was the dread of guilt that made Pilate hesitate, and that he was getting over this difficulty by a fancy of transferring it; to prevent the return of hesitation, and to confirm him in that fancy, they in the heat of their rage agreed to it rather than lose the prey they had in their hands, and cried, "His blood be upon us." Now,

1st. By this they designed to indemnify Pilate, that is, to make him think himself indemnified, by becoming bound to Divine justice to save him harmless. But those that are themselves bankrupts and beggars will never be admitted security for others, nor taken as a bail for them. None could bear the sin of others but he that had none of his own to answer for; it is a bold undertaking, and too big for any creature, to become bound for a sinner to Almighty God.

2nd. But they did really imprecate wrath and vengeance upon themselves and their posterity. What a desperate word was this, and how little did they think what was the direful import of it! nor to what an abyss of misery it would bring them and theirs! Christ had lately told them, that upon them would "come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from that of righteous Abel;" but as if that were too little, they here imprecate upon themselves the guilt of that blood, which was more precious than all the rest, and the guilt of which would lie heavier. O the daring presumption of wilful sinners, that run upon God, upon his neck, and defy his justice! *Job xv. 25, 26.* Observe.

First. How cruel they were in their imprecation; they not only imprecated the punishment of this sin upon themselves, but upon their children too, even those that were yet unborn, without so much as limiting the entail of the curse, as God himself had been pleased to limit it, to the third and fourth generation. It was madness to pull it upon themselves, but the height of barbarity to entail it on their posterity. Sure they were like the ostrich, hardened against their young ones, as though they were not theirs. What a dreadful conveyance was this of guilt and wrath to them and their heirs for ever, and this delivered by joint consent, *nemine contradicente*—unanimously, as their own act and deed, which certainly amounted to a forfeiture and defeasance of that ancient charter, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed;" their entailing the curse of the Messiah's blood upon their nation, cut off the entail of the blessings of that blood from their families, that, according to another promise made to Abraham, in him all the families of the earth might be blessed. See what enemies wicked men are to their own children and families; those that damn their own souls, care not how many they take to hell with them.

Secondly. How righteous God was in his retribution according to this imprecation; they said, "His blood be on us, and on our children," and God said Amen to it, so shall thy doom be; as they loved cursing, so it came upon them. The wretched remains of that abandoned people feel it to this day; from the time they imprecated this blood upon them they were followed with one judgment after another, till they were quite laid waste, and made an astonishment, a hissing, and a by-word; yet on some of them, and some of theirs, this blood came not to condemn them, but to save them: Divine mercy upon their repenting and believing cut off this entail; and then the promise was again to them, and to their children. God is better to us and ours than we are.

26 Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. 27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. 28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. 29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! 30 And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. 31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. 32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

In these verses we have the preparatives for, and prefaces to, the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus. Here is, First. The sentence passed and the warrant signed for his execution, and this immediately, the same hour.

1. Barabbas was released, that notorious criminal; if he had not been put in competition with Christ for the favour of the people, it is likely he had died for his crimes, but that proved the means of his escape, to intimate that Christ was condemned for this purpose, that sinners, even the chief of sinners, might be released; he was delivered up that we might be delivered, whereas the common instance of Divine providence is, that "the wicked is a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright," *Pr. xxi. 18; xi. 18.* In this unparalleled instance of Divine grace the upright is a ransom for the transgressors, the just for the unjust.

2. Jesus was scourged: this was an ignominious, cruel punishment, especially as it was inflicted by the Romans, who were not under the moderation of the Jewish law, which forbade scourgings above forty stripes, and most unreasonably inflicted on one that was sentenced to die; the rods were not to introduce the axes, but supersede them. Thus the Scripture was fulfilled: "The ploughers ploughed on my back," *Ps. cxix. 3; and Isa. l. 6, "I gave my back to the smiters;" and Isa. liii. 5, "By his stripes we are healed;"* he was chastised with whips, that we might not be for ever chastised with scorpions.

3. He was then "delivered to be crucified;" though his chastisement was in order to our peace, yet there is no peace made but by "the blood of his cross," *Col. i. 20*: therefore the scourging is not enough, he must be crucified; a kind of death used only among the Romans, the manner of it such as that it seems to be the result of wit and cruelty in combination, each putting forth itself to the utmost to make death in the highest degree terrible and miserable. A cross was set up in the ground, to which the hands and feet were nailed, on which nails the weight of the body hung, till it died of the pain. This was the death to which Christ was condemned, that he might answer the type of the brazen serpent lifted up upon a pole: it was a bloody death,—a painful, shameful, cursed death; it was so miserable a death, that merciful princes appointed those who were condemned to it by the law to be strangled first, and then nailed to the cross: so Julius Cæsar did by some pirates, *Sueton. l. 1.* Constantine, the first Christian emperor, by an edict abolished the use of that punishment among the Romans, *Sozomen. Hist. l. i. c. 8.* *Ne salutare signum subseruiet ad perniciem*—"that the symbol of salvation might not be subservient to the victims' destruction."

Secondly. The barbarous treatment which the soldiers gave him, while things were getting ready for his execution. When he was condemned, he ought to have had some time allowed him to prepare for death; there was a law made by the Roman senate in Tiberius's time, perhaps upon complaint of this and the like precipitation, that the execution of criminals should be deferred at least ten days after sentence, *Sueton. in Tiber. c. 25*; but there were scarce allowed so many minutes to our Lord Jesus; nor had he any breathing time during those minutes: it was a crisis, and there were no lucid intervals allowed him, "deep called unto deep," and the storm continued without any intermission.

When he was "delivered to be crucified," that was enough; they that kill the body, yield there is no more that they can do; but Christ's enemies will do more, and if it be possible wrap up a thousand deaths in one. Though Pilate pronounced him innocent, yet his soldiers, his guards, set themselves to abuse him, being swayed more by the fury of the people against him, than by their master's testimony for him; the Jewish rabble infected the Roman soldiery, or perhaps it was not so much in spite to him, as to make sport for themselves, that they thus abused him. They understood that he pretended to a crown, and to taunt him with that gave them some diversion, and an opportunity to make themselves and one another merry. Note, It is an argument of a base, servile, sordid spirit to insult over those that are in misery, and to make the calamities of any matter of sport and merriment. Observe,

1. Where this was done; in "the common hall." The governor's house, which should have been a shelter to the wronged and abused, is made the theatre of this barbarity. I wonder the governor, who was so desirous to acquit himself from the blood of this just person, would suffer this to be done in his house. Perhaps he did not order it to be done, but he connived at it; and those in authority will be accountable not only for the wickedness which they do, or appoint, but for that which they do not restrain, when it is in the power of their hands. Masters of families should not suffer their houses to be the places of abuse to any, nor their servants to make sport with the sins, or miseries, or religion of others.

2. Who were concerned in it. "They gathered the whole band;" the soldiers that were to attend the execution would have the whole regiment (at least five hundred, some think twelve or thirteen hundred,) to share in the diversion. If Christ was thus made a spectacle, let none of his followers think it strange to be so used, *1 Cor. iv. 9; Heb. x. 33.*

3. What particular indignities were done him:

1st. "They stripped him," ver. 28. The shame of nakedness came in with sin, *Gen. iii. 7*; and therefore Christ, when he came to satisfy for sin, and take it away, was made naked, and submitted to that shame, that he might prepare for us white raiment to cover us, *Rev. iii. 18.*

2nd. They "put on him a scarlet robe;" some old red cloak, such as the Roman soldiers wore, in imitation of the scarlet robes which kings and emperors wore, thus upbraiding him with his being called a king. This sham of majesty they put upon him in his dress, when nothing but meanness and misery appeared in his countenance, only to expose him to the spectators as the more ridiculous; yet there was something of mystery in it: this was he that was red in his apparel, *Isa. lxiii. 1, 2*; that washed his garments in wine, *Gen. xlix. 10*; therefore he was dressed in a scarlet robe. Our sins were as scarlet and crimson; Christ's being clad in a scarlet robe, signified his bearing our sins, to his shame, in his own body upon the tree, that we might wash our robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

3rd. They "platted a crown of thorns, and put it upon his head," ver. 29. This was to carry on the humour of making him a mock king; yet, had they intended it only for a reproach, they might have platted a crown of straw or rushes, but they designed it to be painful to him, and to be literally, what crowns are said to be figuratively, lined with thorns; he that invented this abuse, it is likely, valued himself upon the wit of it; but there was a mystery in it.

First. Thorns came in with sin, and were part of the curse that was the product of sin, *Gen. iii. 18*. Therefore Christ being made a curse for us, and dying to remove the curse from us, felt the pain and smart of those thorns, nay, and binds them as a crown to him, *Job xxxi. 36*, for his sufferings for us were his glory. Secondly. Now he answered the type of Abraham's ram that was caught in the thicket, and so offered up instead of Isaac, *Gen. xxii. 13*. Thirdly. Thorns signify afflictions, *2 Chr. xxxiii. 11*. These Christ put into a crown, so much did he alter the property of them to them that are his, and give them cause to "glory in tribulation," and made it to work for them a weight of glory.

Fourthly. Christ was crowned with thorns, to shew that his kingdom was not of this world, nor the glory of it worldly glory, but attended here with bonds and afflictions, while the glory of it is to be revealed. Fifthly. It was the custom of some heathen nations to bring their sacrifices to the altars crowned with garlands; these thorns were the garlands with which this great sacrifice was crowned. Sixthly. These thorns, it is likely, fetched blood from his blessed head, which trickled down his face "like the precious ointment" (typifying the blood of Christ with which he consecrated himself) "upon the head, which ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard," *Ps. cxxxiii. 2*. Thus when he came to espouse to himself his love, his dove, his undefiled church, "his head was filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night," *Cant. v. 2*.

4th. They "put a reed in his right hand;" this was intended for a mock sceptre, another of the insignia of the majesty they jeered him with, as if this were a sceptre good enough for such a king, as was like "a reed shaken with the wind," *ch. xi. 7*; like sceptre, like kingdom, both weak and wavering, and withering and worthless; but they were quite mistaken, for his throne is "for ever and ever, and the sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre," *Ps. xlv. 6*.

5th. "They bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews." Having made him a sham king, they thus made a jest of doing homage to him, thus ridiculing his pretensions to sovereignty, as Joseph's brethren, *Gen. xxxvii. 8*, "shalt thou indeed reign over us?" But as they were afterwards compelled to do obeisance to him, and enrich his dreams, so these here bowed the knee in scorn to him, who was soon after this exalted to the

of by the framers of legends, who say the wife of Pilate was called Procla, or Claudia Procula. The so-called "Gospel of Nicodemus" (chap. ii.) represents Pilate as more than hinting that his wife had embraced Jewish religious opinions. The Greek Church commemorates Procla on October 28th, and the Ethiopic calendar contains both her name and that of Pilate. The reason is, that Pilate attested the innocence of Jesus, and Procla sought to effect his deliverance from the Jews.

xxvii. 24. The use of water was enjoined upon the Jews (*Deut. xxi. 6, 7*) in purging themselves from the guilt of murder. Similar emblematic usages were known among the Greeks and Romans, but they were more frequent among the Jews, and hence probably the act of Pilate.

xxvii. 26. Crucifixion, or impalement, was practised by several ancient nations. Before execution the criminal was often scourged. Hence Lucian, "In my opinion he ought to be crucified, having been

right hand of God, that "to his name every knee might bow," or break before him. It is ill jesting with that which, sooner or later, will come in earnest.

6th. "They spit upon him:" thus he had been abused in the high priest's hall, *ch. xxvi. 67*. In doing homage, the subject kissed the sovereign in token of his allegiance; thus Samuel kissed Saul, and we are bid to "kiss the Son;" but they, in this mock homage, instead of kissing him spat in his face; that blessed face, which outshines the sun, and before which the angels cover theirs, was thus polluted. It is strange that the sons of men should ever do such a piece of villany, and that the Son of God should ever suffer such a piece of ignominy.

7th. They "took the reed, and smote him on the head." That which they had made the mock ensign of his royalty, they now make the real instrument of their cruelty, and his pain. They smote him, it is probable, upon the crown of thorns, and so struck them into his head, that they might wound it the deeper, which made the more sport for them, to whom his pain was the greatest pleasure. Thus was he "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." All this misery and shame he underwent that he might purchase for us everlasting life, and joy, and glory.

Thirdly, The conveying of him to the place of execution. After they had mocked and abused him, as long as they thought fit, they then "took the robe off from him," to signify their divesting him of all that kingly authority they had invested him with, by putting it on him; and they put his own raiment on him, because that was to fall to the soldiers' share that were employed in the execution. They took off the robe, but no mention is made of their taking off the crown of thorns, whence it is commonly supposed (though there is no certainty of it) that he was crucified with that on his head; for, as he is a priest upon his throne, so he was a king upon his cross. Christ was led to be crucified in his own raiment, because he himself was to "bear our sins in his own body upon the tree." And here,

1. They lead him away to be crucified. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter," as a sacrifice to the altar. We may well imagine how they hurried him on, and dragged him along with all the speed possible, lest any thing should intervene to prevent the glutting of their cruel rage with his precious blood. It is likely they now loaded him with taunts and reproaches, and treated him as the offscouring of all things. They led him away out of the city, for Christ, "that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate," *Heb. xiii. 12*, as if he that was the glory of them that waited for redemption in Jerusalem, were not worthy to live among them. To this he himself had an eye when, in the parable, he speaks of his being cast out of the vineyard, *ch. xxii. 39*.

2. They compelled Simon of Cyrene to bear his cross, *ver. 30*. It seems at first he carried the cross himself, as Isaac carried the wood for the burnt offering, which was to burn him. And this was intended, as other things, both for pain and shame to him. But, after a while, they took the cross off from him, either, 1st. In compassion to him, because they saw it was too great a load for him. We can hardly think they had any consideration of that; yet it teaches us that God considers the frame of his people, and will not "suffer them to be tempted above what they are able;" he gives them some breathing-time, but they must expect that the cross will return, and the lucid intervals only give them space to prepare for the next fit. But, 2nd. Perhaps it was because he could not, with the cross on his back, go forward so fast as they would have him. Or, 3rd. They were afraid lest he should faint away under the load of his cross, and die, and so prevent what their malice further intended to do against him. Thus even the tender mercies of the wicked, which seem to be so, are really cruel. Taking the cross off from him, they compelled one Simon of Cyrene, pressing him to the service by the authority of the governor or the priests. It was a reproach, and none would do it but by compulsion. Some think this Simon was a disciple of Christ, at least a well-wisher to him, and they knew it, and therefore put this upon him. Note, All that will approve themselves disciples indeed, must follow Christ, "bearing his cross," *ch. xvi. 14*; "bearing his reproach," *Heb. xiii. 13*; we must know "the fellowship of his sufferings" for us, and patiently submit to all the sufferings for him we are called out to; for those only shall reign with him that suffer with him, shall sit with him in his kingdom that drink of his cup, and are baptized with his baptism.

33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, 34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. 35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. 36 And sitting down they watched him there; 37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. 39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, 40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. 41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders said, 42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. 43 He trusted in God; let him deliver

him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. 44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. 45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. 48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. 49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

We have here the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus. First. The place where our Lord Jesus was put to death.

1. They came to a place called Golgotha, near adjoining to Jerusalem, probably the common place of execution. If he had had a house of his own in Jerusalem, probably, for his greater disgrace, they would have crucified him before his own door. But now, in the same place where criminals were sacrificed to the justice of the government, was our Lord Jesus sacrificed to the justice of God. Some think it is called the place of a skull, because it was the common charnel-house, where the bones and skulls of dead men were laid together out of the way, lest people should touch them, and be defiled thereby. Here lay the trophies of death's victory over multitudes of the children of men; and when, by dying, Christ would destroy death, he added this circumstance of honour to his victory, that he triumphed over death upon his own dunghill.

2. There they crucified him, *ver. 35*; nailed his hands and feet to the cross, and then reared it up, and him hanging on it; for so the manner of the Romans was to crucify. Let our hearts be touched with the feeling of that exquisite pain which our blessed Saviour now endured, and let us look upon him who was thus pierced, and mourn. Was ever sorrow like unto his sorrow? And when we behold what manner of death he died, let us in that behold with what manner of love he loved us.

Secondly. The barbarous and abusive treatment they gave him, in which their wit and malice vied which should excel; as if death, so great a death, were not bad enough, they contrived to add to the bitterness and terror of it.

1. By the drink they provided for him before he was nailed to the cross, *ver. 34*. It was usual to have a cup of spiced wine for those to drink of that were to be put to death, according to Solomon's direction, *Pr. xxxi. 6, 7*. "Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish;" but with that cup which Christ was to drink of, they mingled wormwood and gall, to make it sour and bitter. This signified, 1st. The sin of man, which is a root of bitterness, "bearing gall and wormwood," *Deu. xxix. 18*. The sinner perhaps rolls it under his tongue as a sweet morsel, but to God it is grapes of gall, *Deu. xxxii. 32*. It was so to the Lord Jesus when he bore our sins, and, sooner or later, it will be so to the sinner himself, bitterness at the latter end, more bitter than death, *Eccl. vii. 26*. 2nd. It signified the wrath of God; that cup which his Father put into his hand, a bitter cup indeed, like the bitter water which caused the curse, *Num. v. 18*. This drink they offered him, as was literally foretold, *Ps. lxxix. 21*. And, 3rd. He tasted thereof, and so had the worst of it; took the bitter taste into his mouth; he let no bitter cup go by him untasted, when he was making atonement for all our sinful tasting of forbidden fruit, now he was tasting death in its full bitterness. Secondly. He would not drink it, because he would not have the best of it; would have nothing like an opiate to lessen his sense of pain; for he would die so as to feel himself die, because he had so much work to do, as our high priest, in his suffering work.

2. By the dividing of his garments, *ver. 35*. When they nailed him to the cross, they stripped him of his garments, at least his upper garments; for by sin we were made naked to our shame, and thus he purchased for us white raiment to cover us. If we be at any time stripped of our comforts for Christ, let us bear it patiently; he was stripped for us. Enemies may strip us of our clothes, but cannot strip us of our best comforts; cannot take from us the garments of praise. The clothes of those that are executed are the executioner's fee. Four soldiers were employed in crucifying Christ, and they must each of them have a share. His upper garment, if it were divided, would be of no use to any of them, and therefore they agreed to cast lots for it. 1st. Some think the garment was so fine and rich that it was worth contending for; but that agreed not with the poverty Christ appeared in. 2nd. Perhaps they had heard of those that had been cured by touching the hem of his garment, and they thought it valuable for some magic virtue in it. Or, 3rd. They hoped to get money of his friends for such a sacred relic. Or, 4th. Because, in derision, they would seem to put a value upon it as royal clothing. Or, 5th. It was for diversion, to pass away the time while they waited for his death, they would play a game at dice for the clothes; but, whatever they designed, the Word of God was herein accomplished. In that famous Psalm, the first words of which Christ made use of upon the cross, it was said, "they parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture," *Ps. xxii. 18*, which was never true of David, but looks primarily at Christ, of whom David in spirit spake: then is the offence of this part of the cross ceased; for it appears to have been "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Christ stripped himself of his glories to divide them among us. They now sat down and watched him, *ver. 36*. The chief priests were careful, no doubt, in setting this guard, lest the people, whom they still stood in awe of, should rise and rescue him. But Providence so ordered it, that those who were appointed to watch him, thereby became unexceptionable witnesses for him; having the opportunity to see and hear that which extorted from them that noble confession, *ver. 34*, "Truly this was the Son of God."

3. By the title set up over his head, *ver. 37*. It was usual, for the vindicating of public justice, and putting the greater shame upon malefactors that were executed, not only by a cry to proclaim before them, but by a writing also over their heads, to notify what was the crime for which they suffered; so they set up over Christ's head, his accusation written, to give public notice of the charge against him, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." This they designed

first scourged;" and Livy, "Some, who had been ringleaders of the conspiracy at Etruria, the prætor scourged with rods and then crucified." Millington's "Testimony of the Heathen" gives other examples.

xxvii. 27. The soldiers were Roman soldiers, who at once proceeded to execute their commission. The common hall is called the Prætorium in the Greek, where the term seems to be used of the place where the guards were stationed. The residence of Pilate as a

whole was correctly called the Prætorium, and as a matter of fact, it was the former palace of Herod at Jerusalem, built with great magnificence, in a commanding position. What is here called a "band of soldiers" was, strictly speaking, a cohort, or the tenth part of a legion, but the actual number of men varied considerably.

xxvii. 29. We cannot say what thorns were employed for this crown. Many kinds of thorns are found in Palestine. Of one of them, the *sisyphus*, or jujube-tree, Dr. Tristram says, "The flexible

for his reproach, but God so overruled it, that even his accusation redounded to his honour. For, 1st. Here was no crime alleged against him. It is not said that he was a pretended Saviour, or a usurping king, though they would have it thought so, *Jno.* xix. 21. But, This is Jesus, a Saviour, to be sure that was no crime; and, This is the King of the Jews, nor was that a crime,—for they expected that the Messiah should be so,—so that, his enemies themselves being judges, he did no evil. Nay, 2nd. Here was a very glorious truth asserted concerning him, that he is Jesus, the King of the Jews, that king whom the Jews expected, and ought to have submitted to; so that his accusation amounts to this,—that he was the true Messiah, and Saviour of the world: as Balaam, when he was sent for to curse Israel, blessed them altogether, and that three times, *Num.* xxiv. 10; so Pilate, instead of accusing Christ as a criminal, proclaimed him a king, and that three times, in three inscriptions. Thus God makes men to serve his purposes quite beyond their own.

4. By his companions with him in suffering, ver. 38. "There were two thieves crucified with him" at the same time, in the same place, under the same guard. Two highwaymen, or robbers upon the road, as the word properly signifies. It is probable this was appointed to be the execution day, and therefore they hurried the prosecution of Christ in the morning, that they might have him ready to be executed with the other criminals. Some think Pilate ordered it thus, that this piece of necessary justice in executing these thieves, might atone for his injustice in condemning Christ; others, that the Jews contrived it to add to the ignominy of the sufferings of our Lord Jesus; however it was, the Scripture was fulfilled in it, *Isa.* liii. 12. "He was numbered with the transgressors."

1st. It was a reproach to him that he was crucified with them. Though, while he lived, he was separate from sinners, yet, in their deaths, they were not divided; but he was made to partake with the vilest malefactors in their plagues, as if he had been a partaker with them in their sins; for he was made sin for us, and took upon him "the likeness of sinful flesh." He was at his death numbered among the transgressors, and had his lot with the wicked, that we, at our death, might be numbered among the saints, and have our lot among the chosen.

2nd. It was an additional reproach that he was crucified in the midst between them, as if he had been the worst of the three, the principal malefactor; for among three, the middle is the place for the chief. Every circumstance was contrived to his dishonour, as if the great Saviour were of all other the greatest sinner. It was also intended to ruffle and discompose him in his last moments with the shrieks, and groans, and blasphemies of these malefactors, who, it is likely, made a hideous outcry when they were nailed to the cross; but thus would Christ affect himself with the miseries of sinners, when he was suffering for their salvation. Some of Christ's apostles were afterwards crucified, as Peter and Andrew, but none of them were crucified with him, lest it should have looked as if they had been joint undertakers with him in satisfying for man's sin, and joint purchasers of life and glory; therefore he was crucified between two malefactors, who could not be supposed to contribute any thing to the merit of his death; for he "himself bore our sins in his own body."

5. By the blasphemies and revilings with which they loaded him when he was hanging upon the cross; though we read not that they cast any reflections on the thieves that were crucified with him. One would have thought when they had nailed him to the cross, they had done their worst, and malice itself had been exhausted. Indeed, if a criminal be put in the pillory, or carted, because it is a punishment less than death, it is usually attended with such expressions of abuse; but a dying man, though an ill man, should be treated with compassion. It is an insatiable revenge, indeed, which will not be satisfied with death, so great a death. But to complete the humiliation of the Lord Jesus, and to shew that when he was dying, he was bearing iniquity, he was then loaded with reproach, and for aught appears, not one of his friends, who the other day cried hosanna to him, durst be seen to shew him any respect.

1st. The common people "that passed by reviled him." His extreme misery, and exemplary patience under it, did not mollify them, or make them to relent; but they who by their outcries brought him to this, now think to justify themselves in it by their reproaches, as if they did well to condemn him. They reviled him, *ἱσακονῶντες*; they blasphemed him, and blasphemy it was in the strictest sense, speaking evil of him who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Observe here,

First. The persons that reviled him. "They that passed by,"—the travellers that went along the road, and it was a great road, leading from Jerusalem to Gibeon,—they were possessed with prejudices against him by the reports and clamours of the high priest's creatures. It is a hard thing, and requires more application and resolution than is ordinarily met with, to keep up a good opinion of persons and things that are every where run down and spoken against. Every one is apt to say as the most say, and to throw a stone at that which is put into an ill name. *Turba Remi sequitur fortunam semper et odit damnatos*,—"the Roman rabble fluctuate with a man's fluctuating fortunes, and fail not to depress those that are sinking." *Juv.*

Secondly. The gesture they used in contempt of him; "Wagging their heads," which signifies their triumph in his fall, and their insulting over him, *Isa.* xxxvii. 22; *Jer.* xviii. 16; *Lam.* ii. 15. The language of it was, "Aha, so would we have it," *Ps.* xxxv. 25. Thus they insulted over him that was the Saviour of their country, as the Philistines did over Samson, the destroyer of their country. This very gesture was prophesied of, *Ps.* xxii. 8, "They shake the head at me;" and *Ps.* cix. 25.

Thirdly. The taunts and jeers they uttered. These are here recorded. 1st. They upbraided him with his destroying the temple. Though the judges themselves were sensible that what he had said of that was misrepresented, as appears, *Mark* xiv. 19, yet they industriously spread it among the people, to bring an odium upon him, that he had a design to destroy the temple, than which nothing would more incense the people against him. And this was not the only time that the enemies of Christ had laboured to make others believe that ill of religion, and the people of God, which they themselves have known to be false, and the charge unjust. "Thou that destroyest the temple," that vast and strong fabric, try thy strength now in plucking up that cross, and drawing those nails, and so save thyself; if thou hast the power thou hast boasted of, this is a proper time to exert it, and give proof of it; for it is supposed every man will do his utmost to save himself. This made the cross of Christ such a stumbling-block to the Jews, that they looked upon it to be inconsistent with the power of the Messiah; he was crucified in weakness, *2 Cor.* xiii. 4. So it seemed to them; but indeed Christ crucified is the power of God. 2nd. They upbraided him with his saying that he was the Son of God; if thou be so, say they, "Come down from the cross." Now they take the devil's words out of his mouth, with which he tempted him in the wilderness, *ch.* iv. 3, 6, and renew the same assault, "If thou be the Son of God." They think, now or never he must prove himself to be the Son of God; forgetting that he had proved it by the miracles he wrought, particularly his raising the dead; nor willing to wait for the complete proof of it by his own resurrection, to which he had so often referred himself and them; which, if they had observed it, would have anticipated the offence of the cross. This comes of

judging things by the present aspect of them, without a due remembrance of what is past, and a patient expectation of what may further be produced.

2nd. The chief priests and scribes, the church rulers and the elders, the rulers, they mocked him, ver. 41. They did not think it enough to invite the rabble to do it, but gave Christ the dishonour, and themselves the diversion, of reproaching him in their own proper persons. They should have been in the temple at their devotion; for it was the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, when there was to be a holy convocation, *Lev.* xxiii. 7; but they were here at the place of execution, spitting their venom at the Lord Jesus. How much below the grandeur and gravity of their character was this? Could any thing tend more to make them contemptible and base before the people? One would have thought, though they neither feared God, nor regarded man yet common prudence should have taught them, who had so great a hand in Christ's death, to keep as much as might be behind the curtain, and to play least in sight; but nothing is so mean as that malice may stick at it. Did they disparage themselves thus to do despite to Christ, and shall we be afraid of disparaging ourselves by joining with the multitude to do him honour, and not rather say, "If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile." Two things the priests and elders upbraided him with:

First. That he could not save himself, ver. 42. He had been before abused in his prophetic and kingly office, and now in his priestly office as a Saviour. 1st. They take it for granted he could not save himself, and therefore had not the power he pretended to, when really he would not save himself, because he would die to save us. They should have argued, "he saved others, therefore he could save himself; and if he do not, it is for some good reason." But, 2nd. They would insinuate, that because he did not now save himself, therefore all his pretence to save others was but sham and delusion, and was never really done; though the truth of his miracles was demonstrated beyond contradiction. 3rd. They upbraided him with being the king of Israel. They dreamed of the external pomp and power of the Messiah, and therefore thought the cross altogether disagreeable to the king of Israel, and inconsistent with that character. Many people could like the king of Israel well enough, if he would but come down from the cross,—if they could have his kingdom without the tribulation, through which they must enter into it. But the matter is settled, if no cross, then no Christ, no crown; those that would reign with him, must be willing to suffer with him, for Christ and his cross are nailed together in this world. 4th. They challenged him to come down from the cross, and so to have left his undertaking unfinished, we had been for ever undone; but his unchangeable love and resolution set him above and fortified him against this temptation, so that he did not fail, nor was discouraged. 5th. They promised, that if he would come down from the cross, they would believe him. Let him give them that proof of his being the Messiah, and they would own him to be so. When they had formerly demanded a sign, he told them the sign he would give them should be, not his coming down from the cross, but which was a greater instance of his power, his coming up from the grave, which they had not patience to wait two or three days for. If he had come down from the cross, they might with as much reason have said that the soldiers had juggled in nailing him to it, as they said, when he was raised from the dead, that the "disciples came by night and stole him away." But to promise ourselves, that we would believe, if we had such and such means and motives of faith, as we ourselves would prescribe, when we do not improve what God has appointed, is not only a gross instance of the deceitfulness of our hearts, but the sorry refuge, or subterfuge rather, of an obstinate, destroying infidelity.

Secondly. That God his Father would not save him, ver. 43: "He trusted in God," that is, he pretended to do so; for he said, "I am the Son of God." Those who call God Father, and themselves his children, thereby profess to put a confidence in him, *Ps.* ix. 10. Now they suggest, that he did but deceive himself and others, when he made himself so much the darling of Heaven; for if he had been the Son of God, (as Job's friends argued concerning him,) he would not have been abandoned to all this misery, much less abandoned in it. This was a sword in his bones, as David complains of the like, *Ps.* xlii. 10; and it was a two-edged sword, for it was intended, 1st. To vilify him, and to make the standers-by think him a deceiver and an impostor; as if his saying that he was the Son of God were now effectually disproved. 2nd. To terrify him, and drive him to distrust and despair of his Father's power and love; which some think was the thing he feared, religiously feared, prayed against, and was delivered from, *Heb.* v. 7. David complained more of the endeavours of his persecutors to shake his faith, and drive him from his hope in God, than of their attempts to shake his throne, and drive him from his kingdom; their saying, "There is no help for him in God," *Ps.* iii. 2; and "God has forsaken him," *Ps.* lxxi. 11. In this, as in other things, he was a type of Christ. Nay, these very words David, in that famous prophecy of Christ, mentions, as spoken by his enemies, *Ps.* xxii. 8: He "trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him." Sure these priests and scribes had forgot their psalter, or they would not have used these same words, so exactly to answer the type and prophecy. But "the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

3rd. To complete the reproach, "the thieves also which were crucified with him" were not only not reviled as he was, as if they had been saints, compared with him; but, though fellow sufferers with him, joined in with his persecutors, and "cast the same in his teeth," that is, one of them did, who said, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us," *Lu.* xxiii. 39. One would think, of all people, this thief had least cause, and should have had least mind to banter Christ. Partners in suffering, though for different causes, usually commiserate one another; and few, whatever they have done before, will breathe their last in revilings; but it seems the greatest mortifications of the body, and the most humbling rebukes of Providence, will not of themselves mortify the corruptions of the soul, nor suppress the wickedness of the wicked, without the grace of God.

Well, thus our Lord Jesus, having undertaken to satisfy the justice of God, for the wrong done him in his honour by sin, he did it by suffering in his honour; not only by divesting himself of that which was due to him as the Son of God, but by submitting to the utmost indignity that could be done to the worst of men; because he was made sin for us, he was thus made a curse for us, to make reproach easy to us, if at any time we suffer it, and have all manner of evil said against us falsely for righteousness' sake.

Thirdly. We have here the frowns of Heaven which our Lord Jesus was under, in the midst of all these injuries and indignities from men. Concerning which, observe,

1. How this was signified by an extraordinary and miraculous eclipse of the sun, which continued for three hours, ver. 45. There was darkness *ἐν τῷ ἡλίῳ*, "over all the earth," so most interpreters understand it, though our translation confines it to that land. Some of the ancients appealed to the annals of the nations concerning this extraordinary eclipse at the death of Christ, as a thing well known, and which gave notice to those parts of the world of something great then in doing, as the sun's going back in Hezekiah's time did. It is reported that Dionysius, at Heliopolis, in Egypt, took notice of

boughs are tough, and well suited for the purpose." He also mentions the *Paliurus aculeatus*, or Christ's thorn, which is common about Jerusalem, and has often been supposed to be the material of which the crown of thorns was made. He adds that its flexible boughs would admit of its being applied to such a purpose. Others have been suggested, but both of those we have mentioned are found close to Jerusalem. The "reed" was probably the common reed of Palestine, the *Arundo donax*.

xxvii. 31. Speaking of a crucifixion, Cicero says, "According to regular custom, the cross was erected behind the city, in the Pompeian road." Executions among the Jews took place outside the camp or city, and such we see was the practice with the Romans.

xxvii. 33. Golgotha, or "a place of a skull," was outside Jerusalem, but we have no certain knowledge why it was so called, or even where it was. The traditional site of Golgotha, or Calvary, is strongly disputed.

this darkness, and said, *Aut Deus naturæ patitur, aut mundi machina disolvitur.*—“either the God of nature is suffering, or the machine of the world is tumbling into ruin.” An extraordinary light gave intelligence of the birth of Christ, *ch. ii. 2.* and therefore it was proper an extraordinary darkness should notify his death, for he is “the light of the world.” The indignities done to our Lord Jesus made the heavens astonished, and horribly afraid, and even put into disorder and confusion: such wickedness as this the sun never saw before, and therefore withdrew, and would not see this. This surprising, amazing darkness was designed to stop the mouths of those blasphemers who were reviling Christ as he hung on the cross; and it should seem for the present to have struck such a terror upon them, that though their hearts were not changed, yet they were silent, and stood doubting what this should mean, till after three hours the darkness scattered, and then, as appears by *ver. 47.* like Pharaoh, when the plague was over, they hardened their hearts. But that which was principally intended in this darkness was,

1st. Christ’s present conflict with the powers of darkness. Now the prince of this world, and his forces, the rulers of the darkness of this world, were to be cast out, to be spoiled, and vanquished; and to make his victory the more illustrious, he fights them on their own ground, gives them all the advantage they could have against him by this darkness, lets them take the wind and sun, and yet baffles them, and so becomes more than a conqueror.

2nd. His present want of heavenly comforts. This darkness signified that dark cloud which the human soul of our Lord Jesus was now under. God makes his sun to shine upon the just and upon the unjust, but even the light of the sun was withheld from our Saviour when he was made sin for us. “A pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun;” but because now his soul was exceeding sorrowful, and the cup of Divine displeasure was filled to him without mixture, even the light of the sun was suspended. When earth denied him a drop of cold water, heaven denied him a beam of light; being to deliver us from utter darkness, he did himself, in the depth of his sufferings, walk in darkness, and had no light, *Isa. l. 10.* During the three hours that this darkness continued, we do not find that he said one word, but passed this time in a silent retirement into his own soul, which was now in an agony, wrestling with the powers of darkness, and taking in the impressions of his Father’s displeasure, not against himself, but the sin of man, which he was now making his soul an offering for. Never were there three such hours since the day that God created man upon the earth, never such a dark and awful scene; the crisis of that great affair of man’s redemption and salvation.

3. How he complained of it, *ver. 46.* “About the ninth hour,” when it began to clear up, after a long and silent conflict, “Jesus cried, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” The words are related in the Syriac tongue, in which they were spoken, because worthy of double remark, and for the sake of the perverse construction which his enemies put upon them, in putting Elias for Eli. Now observe here,

1st. Whence he borrowed this complaint, from *Ps. xxii. 1.* It is likely he did not (as some have thought) repeat the whole psalm; yet hereby he intimated, that the whole was to be applied to him, and that David in spirit there spake of his humiliation and exaltation. This, and that other word, “Into thy hands I commit my spirit,” he fetched from David’s psalms, (though he could have expressed himself in his own words,) to teach us of what use the Word of God is to us to direct us in prayer, and to recommend to us the use of Scripture expressions in prayer, which will help our infirmities.

2nd. How he uttered it, “with a loud voice;” which speaks the extremity of his pain and anguish, the strength of nature remaining in him, and the great earnestness of his spirit in this expostulation. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, *Joel iii. 15, 16.* “The sun and the moon shall be darkened. The Lord shall also roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem.” David often speaks of his crying aloud in prayer, *Ps. lv. 17.*

3rd. What the complaint was, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” A strange complaint to come from the mouth of our Lord Jesus, who, we are sure, was God’s elect, in whom his soul delighted, *Isa. xlii. 1.* and one in whom he was always well pleased. The Father now loved him, nay, he knew that therefore he loved him, because he laid down his life for the sheep; what, and yet forsaken of him, and in the midst of his sufferings too? Sure never sorrow was like unto that sorrow, which extorted such a complaint as this from one who, being perfectly free from sin, could never be a terror to himself; but the heart knows its own bitterness: no wonder that such a complaint as this made the earth to quake, and rent the rocks; for it is enough to “make both the ears of every one that hears it to tingle,” and ought to be spoken of with great reverence. Note,

First. That our Lord Jesus was, in his sufferings, for a time forsaken by his Father. So he saith himself, who we are sure was under no mistake concerning his own case. Not that the union between the Divine and human nature was in the least weakened or shocked; no, he was now, by the Eternal Spirit, offering himself. Nor, as if there were any abatement of his Father’s love to him, or his to his Father; we are sure there was upon his mind no horror of God, or despair of his favour, nor any thing of the torments of hell; but his Father forsook him, that is, 1st. He delivered him up into the hands of his enemies, and did not appear to deliver him out of their hands. He let loose the powers of darkness against him, and suffered them to do their worst, worse than against Job. Now was that scripture fulfilled, *Job xvi. 9.* “God has turned me over into the hands of the wicked,” and no angel is sent from heaven to deliver him, no friend on earth raised up to appear for him. 2nd. He withdrew from him the present comfortable sense of his complacency in him. When his soul was first troubled, he had a voice from heaven to comfort him, *Jno. xii. 27, 28.* when he was in his agony in the garden, there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening him; but now he had neither the one nor the other. God hid his face from him, and for a while withdrew his rod and staff in the darksome valley. God forsook him, not as he forsook Saul, leaving him to an endless despair, but as sometimes he forsook David, leaving him to a present dependency. 3rd. He let out upon his soul an afflicting sense of his wrath against man for sin. Christ was made sin for us, a curse for us; and therefore, though God loved him as a Son, he frowned upon him as a surety. These impressions he was pleased to admit, and to waive that resistance of them which he could have made; because he would accommodate himself to this part of his undertaking, as he had done to all the rest, when it was in his power to have avoided it.

Secondly. That Christ’s being forsaken of his Father was the most grievous of his sufferings, and that which he complained most of. Here he laid the most doleful accents; he did not say, “Why am I scourged? and why spit upon? and why nailed to the cross?” Nor did he say to his disciples, when they turned their back upon him, “Why have ye forsaken me?” But when his Father stood at a distance, he cried out thus; for this was it that put wormwood and gall into the affliction and misery. This brought the waters into the soul, *Ps. lxxix. 1-3.*

Thirdly. That our Lord Jesus, even when he was thus forsaken of his Father, yet he kept hold of him as his God notwithstanding: “My God, my God;” though forsaking me, yet mine. Christ was God’s servant in carrying on the

work of redemption; to him he was to make satisfaction, and by him to be carried through and crowned; and upon that account he calls him his God; for he was now doing his will; see *Isa. xlix. 4, 9.* This supported him, and bore him up, that even in the depth of his sufferings God was his God, and this he resolves to keep fast hold of.

3. See how his enemies impudently bantered and ridiculed this complaint, *ver. 47.* “They said, This man calleth for Elias.” Some think this was the ignorant mistake of the Roman soldiers, who had heard talk of Elias, and of the Jews’ expectation of the coming of Elias, but knew not the signification of Eli, Eli, and so made this blundering comment upon these words of Christ, perhaps not hearing the latter part of what he said, for the noise of the people. Note, Many of the reproaches cast upon the Word of God, and the people of God, take rise from gross mistakes. Divine truths are often corrupted by ignorance of the language and style of the Scripture. Those that hear by the halves, pervert what they hear. But others think it was the wilful mistake of some of the Jews, who knew very well what he said, but were minded to abuse him, and make themselves and their companions merry, and to misrepresent him as one that, being forsaken of God, was driven to trust in creatures; perhaps hinting also, that he who had pretended to be himself the Messiah, would now be glad to be beholden to Elias, who was expected to be only the harbinger and forerunner of the Messiah. Note, It is no new thing for the most pious devotions of the best men to be ridiculed and abused by profane scoffers; nor are we to think it strange, if what is well said in praying and preaching, be misconstrued, and turned to our reproach; Christ’s words were so, though he spake as never man spake.

Fourthly. The cold comfort which his enemies ministered to him in this agony, which was like all the rest.

1. Some “gave him vinegar to drink,” *ver. 48.* instead of some cordial water, to revive and refresh him under this heavy burthen, they tantalized him with that which did not only add to the reproach they were loading him with, but did too sensibly represent that cup of trembling which his Father had put into his hand. “One of them ran” to fetch it, seeming to be officious to him, but really glad of an opportunity to abuse and affront him, and afraid lest any one should take it out of his hands.

2. Others, with the same purpose of disturbing and abusing him, refer him to Elias, *ver. 49.* “Let us see whether Elias will come to save him.” “Come, let him alone, his case is desperate, neither heaven nor earth can help him; let us do nothing either to hasten his death, or to retard it; he has appealed to Elias, and to Elias let him go.”

50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. 54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. 55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: 56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee’s children.

We have here at length an account of the death of Christ, and several remarkable passages that attended it.

First. The manner how he breathed his last, *ver. 50.* Between the third and the sixth hour, that is, between nine and twelve o’clock, as we reckon, he was nailed to the cross; and soon after the ninth hour, that is, between three and four o’clock in the afternoon, he died. That was the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, and the time when the paschal lamb was killed; and Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, and offered himself in the evening of the world, a sacrifice to God, of a sweet-smelling savour. It was at that time of the day that the angel Gabriel delivered to Daniel that glorious prediction of the Messiah, *Dan. ix. 21, 24.* And some think that, from that very time when the angel spoke it, to this time when Christ died, was just seventy weeks, that is, four hundred and ninety years to a day, to an hour; as the departure of Israel out of Egypt, was at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day, *Ex. xii. 41.* Two things are here noted concerning the manner of Christ’s dying:

1. That he “cried with a loud voice,” as before, *ver. 46.* Now, 1st. This was a sign, that after all his pains and fatigues, yet his life was whole in him, and nature strong. The voice of dying men is one of the first things that fails; with a panting breath, and a faltering tongue, a few broken words are hardly spoken, and more hardly heard. But Christ, just before he expired, spoke like a man in his full strength, to shew that his life was not forced from him, but was freely delivered by him into his Father’s hands, as his own act and deed. He that had strength to cry thus when he died, could have got loose from the arrest he was under, and have bid defiance to the powers of death; but to shew that by “the Eternal Spirit he offered himself,” being the priest as well as the sacrifice, he “cried with a loud voice.”

2nd. It was significant. This loud voice shews that he attacked our spiritual enemies with an undaunted courage, and such a bravery of resolution, as speaks him hearty in the cause, and daring in the encounter. He was now spoiling principalities and powers, and in this loud voice he did as it were shout for mastery, as one mighty to save, *Isa. lxiii. 1.* and compare with this, *Isa. xlii. 13, 14.* He now bowed himself with all his might, as Samson did, when he said, “Let me die with the Philistines,” *Jud. xvi. 30.* *Animamque in vulnere ponit,*—and lays down his life.” His crying with a loud voice when

xxvii. 34. The vinegar here mentioned was probably sour wine, and is called wine by the evangelist Mark. What Matthew describes as “gall” is styled “myrrh” by Mark, and perhaps with greater exactness. Matthew appears to use the word “gall” as a general designation for a bitter ingredient, which Mark tells us was myrrh. Other explanations have been suggested, both as to the mixture and the reason of offering it to Jesus. Some say it was usual to give a stupefying drink to criminals before execution, and that this was

an example of the practice. Others, however, think that as the Romans seasoned our wines with drugs and perfumes, the drink may have simply been that of the soldiers, who had it at hand. The first view is the more common.

xxvii. 35. The words “that it might be fulfilled,” &c., to the end of the verse, are omitted by so many ancient authorities, that it is supposed they are an interpolation, and they are therefore left out by the best modern critics and editors.

he died, signified that his death should be published and proclaimed to all the world; all mankind being concerned in it, and obliged to take notice of it. Christ's loud cry was like a trumpet blown over the sacrifices.

2. That then he "yielded up the ghost;" this is the usual periphrasis of dying. To show that the Son of God, upon the cross, died truly and properly die by the violence of the pain he was put to, his soul was separated from his body, and so his body was left really and truly dead. It was certain he did die, for it was requisite he should die: "thus it was written," both in the close rolls of the Divine counsels, and in the letters patent of the Divine predictions, and therefore thus "it behoved him to suffer." Death being the penalty for the breach of the first covenant, "thou shalt surely die," the Mediator of the new covenant must make atonement by means of death, otherwise no remission. *Heb. ix. 15.* He had undertaken to make his soul an offering for sin, and he did it when he yielded up the ghost, and voluntarily resigned it.

Secondly. The miracles that attended his death. So many miracles being wrought by him in his life, we might well expect some to be wrought concerning him at his death, for his name was called Wonderful. Had he been fetched away as Elijah in a fiery chariot, that had itself been miracle enough; but being sent for away by an ignominious cross, it was requisite that his humiliation should be attended with some signal emanations of the Divine glory.

1. "Behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain." This relation is ushered in with "behold," turn aside and see this great sight, and be astonished at it. Just as our Lord Jesus expired, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, and upon a solemn day, when the priests were officiating in the temple, and might themselves be eye-witnesses of it, "the veil of the temple was rent" by an invisible power; that veil which parted between the holy place, and the most holy. They had condemned him for saying, "I will destroy this temple," understanding it literally, now by this specimen of his power he let them know, that if he had pleased he could have made his words good. In this, as in other of Christ's miracles, there was a mystery.

1st. It was in correspondence with the temple of Christ's body, which was now in the dissolving. That was the true temple, in which dwelt the fulness of the Godhead; when Christ "cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost," and so dissolved that temple, the literal temple did as it were echo to that cry, and answer the stroke by rending its veil. Note, Death is the rending of the veil of flesh which interposeth between us and the holy of holies; the death of Christ was so; the death of true Christians is so.

2nd. It signified the revealing and unfolding of the mysteries of the Old Testament. The veil of the temple was for concealment, as was that on the face of Moses, therefore it was called "the veil of the covering;" for it was highly penal for an person to see the furniture of the most holy place, except the high priest, and he but once a year, with great ceremony, and through a cloud of smoke; all which signified the darkness of that dispensation, *2 Cor. iii. 13.* But now at the death of Christ all was laid open, the mysteries unveiled, so that now he that runs may read the meaning of them. Now we see that the mercy seat signified Christ the great propitiation, the pot of manna signified Christ the bread of life. Thus "we all with open face, behold as in a glass," which helps the sight, as the veil hindered it, "the glory of the Lord." Our eyes see the salvation.

3rd. It signified the uniting of Jew and Gentile by the removing of the partition wall between them, which was the ceremonial law, by which the Jews were distinguished from all other people, as a garden enclosed, were brought near to God, whilst others were made to keep their distance; Christ in his death repealed the ceremonial law, cancelled that "handwriting of ordinances," took it out of the way, nailed it to his cross, and so "broke down the middle wall of partition;" and by abolishing those institutions, "abolished the enmity, and made in himself of twain one new man," (as two rooms are made one, and that large and lightsome, by taking down the partition,) "so making peace," *Eph. ii. 14-16.* Christ died to rend all dividing veils, and to make all his one, *Jno. xvii. 21.*

4th. It signified the consecrating and laying open of "a new and living way" to God. The veil kept people off from drawing near to the most holy place, where the Shechinah was; but the rending of it signified, that Christ by his death opened a way to God. *First.* For himself. This was the great day of atonement, when our Lord Jesus, as the great high priest, not "by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood entered once for all into the holy place;" in token of which the veil was rent, *Heb. ix. 7, &c.* Having offered his sacrifice in the outer court, the blood of it was now to be sprinkled upon the mercy seat within the veil; wherefore "lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; for the King of glory," the priest of glory, "shall come in." Now was he caused to draw near, and made to approach, *Jer. xxx. 21.* Though he did not personally ascend into the holy place not made with hands till above forty days after, yet he immediately acquired a right to enter, and had a virtual admission. *Secondly.* For us in him. So the apostle applies it, *Heb. x. 19, 20:* we have "boldness to enter into the holiest, by that new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil." He died to bring us to God, and in order thereunto to rend that veil of guilt and wrath which interposed between us and him, to take away the cherubim and flaming sword, and to open the way to the tree of life. We have free access through Christ to the throne of grace, or mercy seat, now, and to the throne of glory hereafter, *Heb. iv. 16; vi. 20.* The rending of the veil signified, (as that ancient hymn excellently expresseth it,) that "when Christ had overcome the sharpness of death, he opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." Nothing can obstruct or discourage our access to heaven, for the veil is rent: "a door is opened in heaven," *Rev. iv. 1.*

2. "The earth did quake;" not only mount Calvary where Christ was crucified, but the whole land, and the adjacent countries. This earthquake signified two things:

1st. The horrible wickedness of Christ's crucifiers. The earth by trembling under such a load, bore its testimony to the innocence of him that was persecuted, and against the impiety of those that persecuted him. Never did the whole creation before groan under such a burthen as the Son of God crucified, and the guilty wretches that crucified him. The earth quaked, as if it feared to open its mouth to receive the blood of Christ, so much more precious than that of Abel, which it had received, and was cursed for it, *Gen. iv. 11, 12;* and as if it fain would open its mouth to swallow up those rebels that put him to death, as it had swallowed up Dathan and Abiram for a much less crime. When the prophet would express God's great displeasure against the wickedness of the wicked, he asked, "Shall not the land tremble for this?" *Am. viii. 8.*

2nd. The glorious achievements of Christ's cross. This earthquake signified the mighty shock, nay, the fatal blow now given to the devil's kingdom. So vigorous was the assault Christ now made upon the infernal powers, that (as of old, when he went out of Seir, when he marched through the field of Edom,) the earth trembled, *Jud. v. 4; Ps. lxxviii. 7, 8.* God shakes all nations, when the Desire of all nations is to come, and there is a "yet once more," which perhaps refers to this shaking, *Hag. ii. 7, 21.*

3. "The rocks rent:" the hardest and firmest part of the earth was made

to feel this mighty shock. Christ had said, that if the children should cease to cry hosanna, "the stones would immediately cry out," and now in effect they did so, proclaiming the glory of the suffering Jesus, and themselves more sensible of the wrong done him, than the hardhearted Jews were, who yet will shortly be glad to find a hole in the rocks, and a cleft in the ragged rocks, to hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne: see *Rev. vi. 16; Isa. ii. 21.* But when God's fury is poured out like fire, the rocks are thrown down by him, *Nah. i. 6.* Jesus Christ is the rock, and the rending of these rocks signified the rending of that rock. 1st. That in the clefts of it we may be hid, as Moses in the cleft of the rock at Horeb, that there we may behold the glory of the Lord, as he did, *Ex. xxxiii. 22.* Christ's dove is said to be hid in the clefts of the rock, *Cant. ii. 14;* that is, as some make the allusion, sheltered in the wounds of our Lord Jesus, the rock rent. 2nd. That from the clefts of it rivers of living water may flow, and follow us in this wilderness, as from the rock which Moses smote, *Ex. xvii. 6;* and which God clave, *Ps. lxxviii. 15;* "and that rock was Christ," *1 Cor. x. 4.* When we celebrate the memorial of Christ's death, our hard and rocky hearts must be rent, the heart, and not the garments. That heart is harder than a rock that will not yield, that will not melt, where Jesus Christ is evidently set forth crucified.

4. "The graves were opened." This matter is not related so fully as our curiosity would wish; for the Scripture was not intended to gratify that; it should seem the same earthquake that rent the rocks, opened the graves, "and many bodies of the saints which slept arose;" death to the saints is but the sleep of the body, and the grave the bed it sleeps in; they awoke by the power of the Lord Jesus. "And" (ver. 53) "came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into" Jerusalem, "the holy city, and appeared unto many." Now here,

1st. We may raise many inquiries concerning it, which we cannot resolve: as *First.* Who these saints were that did arise? Some think the ancient patriarchs, that were in such care to be buried in the land of Canaan, perhaps in the believing foresight of the advantage of this early resurrection. Christ had lately proved the doctrine of the resurrection from the instance of the patriarchs, *ch. xxii. 32;* and here was a speedy confirmation of his argument. Others think, these that rose were modern saints, such as had seen Christ in the flesh, but died before him: as his father Joseph, Zacharias, Simeon, John Baptist, and others, that had been known to the disciples while they lived, and therefore were the fitter to be witnesses to them in an apparition after. What if we should suppose that they were the martyrs, who in the Old Testament times had sealed the truths of God with their blood, that were thus dignified and distinguished? Christ particularly points at them, as his forerunners *ch. xxiii. 35;* and we find, *Rev. xx. 4, 5,* that those who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, rose before the rest of the dead. Sufferers with Christ shall first reign with him. *Secondly.* It is uncertain whether, as some think, they rose to life now at the death of Christ, and disposed of themselves elsewhere, but did not go into the city till after his resurrection; or whether, as others think, though their sepulchres, which the Pharisees had built and garnished, *ch. xxiii. 29,* and so made remarkable, were shattered now by the earthquake, (so little did God matter that hypocritical respect,) yet they did not revive and rise till after his resurrection; only for brevity-sake it is mentioned here upon the mention of the opening of the graves, which seems more probable. *Thirdly.* Some think they rose only to bear witness of Christ's resurrection to those to whom they appeared; and having finished their testimony, retired to their graves again. But it is more agreeable, both to Christ's honour and theirs, to suppose, though we cannot prove, that they rose as Christ did, to die no more, and therefore ascended with him to glory. Sure they who did partake of this first resurrection, on them a second death had no power. *Fourthly.* To whom they appeared; (not to all the people, it is certain, but to many;) whether enemies or friends; in what manner they appeared; how often; what they said and did; and how they disappeared;—are secret things which belong not to us; we must not covet to be wise above what is written. The relating of this matter so briefly, is a plain intimation to us, that we must not look that way for the confirmation of our faith, "we have a more sure word of prophecy;" see *Lu. xvi. 31.*

2nd. Yet we may learn many good lessons from it. *First.* That even those who lived and died before the death and resurrection of Christ had saving benefit thereby, as well as those that have lived since; for he was the same yesterday that he is to day, and will be for ever, *Heb. xiii. 8.* *Secondly.* That Jesus Christ by dying conquered, disarmed, and disabled death. These saints that rose were the present trophies of the victory of Christ's cross over the powers of death, which he thus made a show of openly. Having by death destroyed him that had the power of death, he thus "led captivity captive," and gloried in these retaken prizes, in them fulfilling that scripture, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave." *Thirdly.* That in the virtue of Christ's resurrection, the bodies of all the saints shall in the fulness of time rise again. This was an earnest of the general resurrection at the last day, "when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God." And perhaps Jerusalem is therefore called here the holy city, because the saints at the general resurrection shall enter into the new Jerusalem; which will be indeed, what the other was in name and type only, the holy city, *Rev. xxi. 2.* *Fourthly.* That all the saints do by the influence of Christ's death, and in conformity to it, rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. They are raised up with him to a Divine and spiritual life; they go into the holy city, become citizens of it, have their conversation in it, and appear to many as persons not of this world.

Thirdly. The conviction of his enemies that were employed in the execution, ver. 54, which some make no less than another miracle, all things considered. Observe, 1. The persons convinced: "the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus;" a captain and his company, that were set on the guard on this occasion. 1st. They were soldiers, whose profession is commonly hardening, and whose breasts are commonly not so susceptible as some others of the impressions either of fear or pity. But there is no spirit too big, too bold for the power of Christ to break and humble. 2nd. They were Romans, Gentiles, who knew not the Scriptures that were now fulfilled, yet they only were convinced. A sad presage of the blindness that should happen to Israel, when the Gospel should be sent to the Gentiles to open their eyes. Here were the Gentiles softened, and the Jews hardened. 3rd. They were the persecutors of Christ, and those that but just before had reviled him, as appears, *Lu. xxiii. 36.* How soon can God, by the power he has over men's consciences, alter their language, and fetch confessions of his truths to his own glory, out of the mouths of those that have breathed nothing but threatenings, and slaughter, and blasphemies. 2. The means of their conviction: they perceived "the earthquake," which frightened them, and saw other the "things that were done." These were designed to assert the honour of Christ in his sufferings, and had their end on these soldiers, whatever they had on others. Note, The dreadful appearances of God in his providence, sometimes work strangely for the conviction and awakening of sinners. 3. The expressions of this conviction, in two things: 1st. The terror that was struck upon them, "they feared greatly;" feared lest they should have been buried in the darkness, or swallowed up in the earthquake. Note, God can easily frighten the most daring

xxvii. 44. Alford's translation of this verse is, "The robbers also, which were crucified with him, reviled him with the same words."

xxvii. 46. Our Lord's utterance is in an Aramaic dialect, and correctly represents the sense of the Hebrew words of *Psa. xxii. 1.*

xxvii. 48. This vinegar is perhaps the same as that of verse 34, and is supposed to have been the *posca*, which was a common drink among Roman soldiers on service.

xxvii. 51. The veil of the Temple was a curtain which was

xxvii. 37. It is said to have been customary with the Romans, on any extraordinary occasion, to put over the head of the malefactor, or on some part of his person, a title or inscription setting forth the crime for which he suffered. With regard to the words of the title as given by Matthew, they differ from those given by the other evangelists, and are probably a mere summary.

xxvii. 42. Ancient copies read, "He is King of Israel," which is no doubt the language of sarcasm and incredulity.

of his adversaries, and make them know themselves to be but men. Guilt puts men into fear. He that, when iniquity abounds, doth not fear always with a fear of caution, when judgments are abroad, cannot but fear greatly with a fear of amazement; whereas there are those who will not fear, though the earth be removed, *Ps. xli. 1, 2.* 2nd. The testimony that was extorted from them. They said, "truly this was the Son of God;" a noble confession: Peter was blessed for it, *ch. xvi. 16, 17.* It was the great matter now in dispute, the point upon which he and his enemies had joined issue, *ch. xxvi. 63, 64.* His disciples believed it, but at this time durst not confess it; our Saviour himself was tempted to question it, when he said, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" The Jews, now he was dying upon the cross, looked upon it as plainly determined against him, that he was not the Son of God, because he did not come down from the cross. And yet now this centurion and the soldiers make this voluntary confession of the Christian faith, "truly this was the Son of God." The best of his disciples could not have said more at any time, and at this time they had not faith and courage enough to say thus much. Note, God can maintain and assert the honour of a truth when it seems to be crushed and run down; for 'great is the truth, and will prevail.'

Fourthly. The attendance of his friends, that were witnesses of his death, *ver. 55, 56.* Observe,

1. Who they were, "many women which followed him from Galilee." Not his apostles (only elsewhere we find John by the cross, *Jno. xix. 26.*). Their hearts failed them; they durst not appear, for fear of coming under the same condemnation. But here were a company of women, some would have called them silly women, that boldly stuck to Christ, when the rest of his disciples had basely deserted him. Note, Even those of the weaker sex are often by the grace of God made strong in faith, that Christ's strength may be made perfect in weakness. There have been women martyrs, famous for courage and resolution in Christ's cause. Now of these women, it is said, 1st. That they had followed Jesus from Galilee, out of the great love they had to him, and a desire to hear him preach; otherwise the males only were obliged to come up to worship at the feast. Now having followed him such a long journey, as from Galilee to Jerusalem, eighty or an hundred miles, they resolved not to forsake him now. Note, Our former services and sufferings for Christ should be an argument with us faithfully to persevere to the end in our attendance on him. Have we followed him so far, and so long, done so much, and laid out so much for him, and shall we forsake him now? *Gal. iii. 3, 4.* 2nd. That they "ministered to him of their substance," for his necessary subsistence. How gladly would they have ministered to him now if they might have been admitted, but being forbidden that, they resolved to follow him. Note, When we are restrained from doing what we would, we must do what we can, in the service of Christ. Now he is in heaven, though he is out of the reach of our ministration, yet he is not out of the reach of our believing views. 3rd. Some of them are particularly named; for God will honour those that honour Christ. They were such as we have several times met with before, and it was their praise that we meet with them to the last.

2. What they did, they were "beholding afar off." 1st. "They stood afar off." Whether their own fear or their enemies' fury kept them at a distance, is not certain; however, it was an aggravation of the sufferings of Christ, that his "lovers and friends stood aloof from his sore." *Ps. xxxviii. 11; Job xix. 13.* Perhaps they might have come nearer if they would; but good people when they are in sufferings must not think it strange, if some of their best friends be shy of them. When Paul's danger was imminent, no man stood by him, *2 Tim. iv. 16.* If we be thus looked strangely upon, remember our Master was so before us. 2nd. They were there "beholding;" in which they shewed a concern and kindness for Christ; when they were debarred from doing any other office of love to him, they looked a look of love towards him. First. It was a sorrowful look; they

looked unto him who was now pierced, and mourned; no doubt were in bitterness for him. We may well imagine now it cut them to the heart to see him in this torment; and what floods of tears it fetched from their eyes. Let us with an eye of faith behold Christ and him crucified, and be affected with that great love wherewith he loved us. But, Secondly. It was no more but a look; they beheld him, but they could not help him. Note, When Christ was in his sufferings, the best of his friends were but spectators and lookers on, even the "angelic guards stood trembling by," saith Mr. Norris, for he "trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him; so his own arm wrought salvation."

57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: 58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. 59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. 61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre. 62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, 63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. 64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. 65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. 66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.



ARIMATEA.

We have here an account of Christ's burial, and the manner and circumstances of it, concerning which, observe, 1. The kindness and good will of his friends that laid him in the grave. 11. The malice and ill will of his enemies that were very solicitous to keep him there.

First. His friends gave him a decent burial. Observe, 1. In general, that Jesus Christ was buried: when his precious soul was gone to Paradise, his blessed body was deposited in the chambers of the grave, that he might answer the type of Jonas, and fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah, "he made his grave with the wicked." Thus "in all things" he must "be made like unto his brethren," sin only excepted; and, like us, unto dust he must return: he was buried, to make his death the more certain, and his resurrection the more illustrious. Pilate would not deliver his body to be buried till he was well assured he was really dead; while the witnesses lay unburied, there was some hopes concerning them, *Rev. xi. 8;* but Christ, the great witness, is as one "free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave." He was buried, that he might take off the terror of the grave, and make it easy to us, might warm and perfume that cold, noisome bed for us, and that we might be buried with him.

2. The particular circumstances of his burial here related. 1st. The time when he was buried: "when the even was come," the same evening that he died, before sunset, as is usual in burying malefactors. It was not deferred till the next day, because it was the sabbath; for burying the dead is not proper work either for a day of rest or for a day of rejoicing, as the sabbath is.

2nd. The person that took care of the funeral was Joseph of Arimathea. The apostles were all fled, and none of them appeared to shew this respect to their

master, which the disciples of John shewed to him after he was beheaded; they "took up his body and buried it," *ch. xiv. 12.* The women that followed him durst not move in it, then did God stir up this good man to do it; for what work God has to do, he will find out instruments to do it. Joseph was a fit man, for, First. He had wherewithal to do it, being a rich man; most of Christ's disciples were poor men, such were most fit to go about the country to preach the Gospel, but here was one that was a rich man, ready to be employed in a piece of service which required a man of estate. Note, Worldly wealth, though it is to many an obstruction in religion's way, yet in some services to be done for Christ, it is an advantage and an opportunity, and it is well for those who have it, if withal they have a heart to use it for God's glory. Secondly. He was well affected to our Lord Jesus, for he was himself his disciple, believed in him, though he did not openly profess it. Note, Christ has more secret disciples than we are aware of: "seven thousand in Israel," *Rom. xi. 4.*

3rd. The grant of the dead body procured from Pilate, *ver. 58.* "Joseph went to Pilate," the proper person to be applied to on this occasion, who had the disposal of the body, for in things wherein the power of the magistrate is concerned, due regard must be had to that power, and nothing done to break in upon it. What we do that is good, must be done peaceably, and not tumultuously. Pilate was willing to give the body to one that would inter it decently, that he might do something towards atoning for the guilt his conscience charged him with, in condemning an innocent person. In Joseph's petition, and Pilate's ready grant of it, honour was done to Christ, and a testimony borne to his integrity.

4th. The dressing of the body in its grave clothes, *ver. 59.* Though he was an honourable councillor, yet he himself took the body, as it should seem, into

suspended between the holy of holies and the holy place (*Exod. xxvi. 33*).

xxvii. 52, 53. Certain German critics have thought these verses an interpolation, but all evidence is opposed to such an opinion. Meyer says, "These dead arose, according to Epiphanius, Ambrose, Calow, &c., with a glorified body, and ascended with Christ." Bengel observes that the resurrection of the saints was subsequent to that of Jesus.

xxvii. 56. "The mother of Zebedee's children"—or, rather, of the sons of Zebedee, James and John—is called by her name, Salome, in Mark xv. 40.

xxvii. 61. The woman here called "the other Mary" is in Mark xv. 47 called Mary, the mother of Joses. Some think she was the wife of Cleophas.

xxvii. 62—66. It appears from this that the application to Pilate for a guard at the sepulchre was an after-thought. No guard was

his own arms, from the infamous and accursed tree, *Acts* xiii. 29; for where there is true love to Christ, no service will be thought too mean to stoop to for him. Having taken it, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, for burying in linen was then the common usage, which Joseph complied with. Note, Care is to be taken of the dead bodies of good men, for there is a glory intended for them at the resurrection, which we must hereby testify our belief of, and wind up the dead body as designed for a better place. This common act of humanity, if done after a godly sort, may be made an acceptable piece of Christianity.

5th. The depositing it in the sepulchre, ver. 60. Here was nothing of that pomp and solemnity, with which the grandees of the world are "brought to the grave," and laid "in the tomb," *Job* xxi. 32. A private funeral did best befit him whose kingdom came not with observation.

First. He was laid in a borrowed tomb, in Joseph's burying place; as he had not a house of his own wherein to lay his head while he lived, so he had not a grave of his own wherein to lay his body when he was dead, which was an instance of his poverty; yet in this there might be somewhat of a mystery. The grave is the peculiar heritage of a sinner, *Job* xxiv. 19; there is nothing we can truly call our own but our sins and our graves; "he returneth to his earth," *Ps.* cxlvi. 4. When we go to the grave, we go to our own place; but our Lord Jesus, that had no sin of his own, had no grave of his own; dying under imputed sin, it was fit he should be buried in a borrowed grave. The Jews designed that he should have made his grave with the wicked, should have been buried with the thieves with whom he was crucified, should have overruled it, so as that he should make it with the rich in his death, *Isa.* liii. 9.

Secondly. He was laid in a new tomb, which Joseph, it is likely, designed for himself, but it would be never the worse for his lying in it who was to rise so quickly; but a great deal the better for his lying in it, who has altered the property of the grave, and made it anew indeed, by turning it into a bed of rest, nay, into a bed of spices, for all the saints.

Thirdly. In a tomb that was hewn out of a rock. The ground about Jerusalem was generally rocky; Shebna had his sepulchre hewn out thereabouts in a rock, *Isa.* xxii. 16. Providence ordered it that Christ's sepulchre should be in a solid, entire rock, that no room might be left to suspect his disciples to have had access to it by some underground passage, or to have broke through the back wall of it to steal the body; for there was no access to it but by the door, which was watched.

Fourthly. A great stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre; this also was according to the custom of the Jews, in burying their dead, as appears by the description of the grave of Lazarus, *Jno.* xi. 38, signifying that those who are dead are separated, and cut off from all the living; if the grave were his prison, now was the door locked and bolted. The rolling of the stone to the grave's mouth, was with them as filling up the grave is with us; it completed the funeral. Having thus in silence and sorrow deposited the precious body of our Lord Jesus in the grave, the house appointed for all the living, they departed without any further ceremony. It is the most melancholy circumstance in the funerals of our Christian friends, when we have laid their bodies in the dark and silent grave, to go home and leave them behind; but alas, it is not we that go home and leave them behind; no, it is they that are gone to the better home, and have left us behind.

6th. The company that attended the funeral, and that was very small and mean; here were none of the relations in mourning to follow the corpse, no formalities to grace the solemnity, but some good women that were true mourners, "Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary," ver. 61. These, as they had attended him to the cross, so they followed him to the grave; as if they composed themselves to sorrow, they sat "over against the sepulchre," not so much to fill their eyes with the sight of what was done, as to empty them in rivers of tears. Note, True love to Christ will carry us through to the utmost in following him. Death itself cannot quench that divine fire, *Cant.* viii. 6, 7.

Secondly. His enemies did what they could to prevent his resurrection; what they did herein was "the next day that followed the day of the preparation," ver. 62. That was the seventh day of the week, the Jewish sabbath, yet not expressly called so, but described by this periphrasis, because it was now shortly to give way to the Christian sabbath, which began the day after. Now, 1. All that day Christ lay dead in the grave, having for six days laboured and done all his work, on his seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. 2. On that day the chief priests and Pharisees, when they should have been at their devotions, asking pardon for the sins of the week past, were dealing with Pilate about securing the sepulchre, and so adding rebellion to their sin: they that had so often quarrelled with Christ for works of the greatest mercy on that day, were themselves busied in a work of the greatest malice. Observe here,

1. Their address to Pilate; they were vexed that the body was given to one that would bury it decently, but since it must be so, they desire a guard may be set on the sepulchre.

1st. Their petition sets forth, that "that deceiver" (so they call him who is truth itself) "had said, After three days I will rise again." He had said so, and his disciples remembered those very words for the confirmation of their faith; but his persecutors remember them for the provocation of their rage and malice: thus the same word of Christ to the one was a savour of life unto life, to the other of death unto death. See how they compliment Pilate with the title of Sir, while they reproach Christ with the title of deceiver; thus the most malicious slanderers of good men are commonly the most sordid flatterers of great men.

2nd. It further sets forth their jealousy, "Lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say, He is risen." First. That which really they were afraid of was his resurrection. That which is most Christ's honour and his people's joy, is most the terror of his enemies: that which exasperated Joseph's brethren against him was the pre-arrangements of his rise, and of his having dominion over them, *Gen.* xxxvii. 8, and all they aimed at in what they did against him was to prevent that. "Come," say they, "let us slay him, and see what will become of his dreams;" so the chief priests and Pharisees here laboured to defeat the predictions of Christ's resurrection, saying, as David's enemies of him, *Ps.* xli. 8. "Now that he lieth he shall rise up no more;" if he should, that would break all their measures. Note, Christ's enemies, even when they have gained their point, yet are still in fear of losing it again. Perhaps the priests were surprised at the respect shewed to Christ's dead body by Joseph and Nicodemus, two honourable councillors, and looked upon it as an ill presage; nor can they forget his raising Lazarus from the dead, which so confounded them.

Secondly. That which they took on them to be afraid of was, "lest his disciples should come by night and steal him away," which was a very improbable thing; for, 1st. They had not the courage to own him while he lived, when they might have done him and themselves real service, and it was not likely that his death should put courage into such cowards. 2nd. What could they promise themselves by stealing away his body, and making people believe he was risen; when if he should not rise, and so prove himself a deceiver, his disciples, that had left all for him in this world in dependence upon a recompense

the other world, would of all other suffer most by the imposture, and would have had reason to throw the first stone at his name? What good would it do

appointed at first. "The day of the preparation" was Friday, and the next day was the Sabbath; but as it is not at all probable that the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate during the hours of the Sabbath, it may be that they did not go until the evening, when the legal Sabbath was over. This would still be the next day, or the morrow, according to Roman ideas, although it would be the eve of the first day in the Jewish sense—our Saturday evening, in fact. This circumstance explains why the women who came to the se-

them to carry on a cheat upon themselves, to steal away his body, and say, "He is risen," when if he were not risen their faith was vain, and they were "of all men the most miserable?" The chief priests apprehend, that if the doctrine of Christ's resurrection be once preached and believed, "the last error will be worse than the first;" a proverbial expression, speaking no more than this, "That we shall all be routed, all undone;" they think it was their error that they had so long connived at his preaching and miracles, which error they thought they had rectified by putting him to death; but if people should be persuaded of his resurrection, that would spoil all again; his interest would revive with him, and theirs must needs sink who had so barbarously murdered him. Note, Those that oppose Christ and his kingdom will see, not only their attempts baffled, but themselves miserably plunged and embarrassed, their errors each worse than the other, and the last worst of all, *Ps.* ii. 4, 5.

3rd. In consideration hereof they humbly move to have a guard set upon the sepulchre till the third day: "command that the sepulchre be made sure." Pilate must still be their drudge, his civil and military power must both be engaged to serve their malice; one would think death's prisoners needed no other guard, and that the grave were security enough to itself; but what will not those fear that are conscious to themselves both of guilt and impotency, in opposing the Lord and his Anointed?

2. Pilate's answer to this address, ver. 65: "Ye have a watch: make it sure, as sure as you can." He was ready to gratify Christ's friends, in allowing them the body, and his enemies in setting a guard upon it, being desirous to please all sides, whilst perhaps he laughed in his sleeve at both, for making such ado, *pro* and *con*, about the dead body of a man, looking upon the hopes of one side, and the fears of the other, to be alike ridiculous. "You have a watch;" he means the constant guard that was kept in the tower of Antonia, out of which he allows them to detach as many as they pleased for that purpose, but, as if ashamed to be himself seen in such a thing, he leaves the management of it wholly to them. Methinks that word, "make it as sure as you can," looks like a banter, either, 1st. Of their fears; Be sure to set a strong guard upon the dead man; or rather, 2nd. Of their hopes; Do your worst, try your wit and strength to the utmost, but if he be of God, he will rise, in spite of you and all your guards. I am apt to think that by this time Pilate had had some talk with the centurion, his own officer, of whom he would be apt to enquire how that just man died, whom he had condemned with such reluctance; and he would give him an account of those things, which made him conclude that "truly he was the Son of God," and Pilate would give more credit to him than to a thousand of those spiteful priests that called him a deceiver; and if so, no marvel that he tacitly derides their project, in thinking to secure the sepulchre upon him, that had so lately rent the rocks, and made the earth to quake. Tertullian speaking of Pilate, saith, *Ipsæ jam pro sua conscientia Christianus.*—In his conscience he was a Christian; and it was possible he might be under such convictions at this time, upon the centurion's report, and yet never be thoroughly persuaded, no more than Agrippa or Felix was, to be a Christian.

3. They sealed the stone, ver. 66: "They sealed the stone," probably with the great seal of their sanhedrim, whereby they interposed their authority, for who durst break the public seal? But not trusting too much to that, without they set a watch, to keep his disciples from coming to steal him away, and, if possible, to hinder him from coming out of the grave. So they intended, but God brought this good out of it, that they who were set to oppose his resurrection, thereby had an opportunity to observe it, and did so, and told the chief priests what they observed, who were thereby rendered the more inexcusable. Here was all the power of earth and hell combined to keep Christ a prisoner, but all in vain when his hour was come; death, and those sons and heirs of death, could then no longer hold him, no longer have dominion over him. To guard the sepulchre against the poor weak disciples was folly, because needless; but to think to guard it against the power of God was folly, because fruitless, and to no purpose; and yet they thought they had dealt wisely.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

In the foregoing chapters we saw the Captain of our salvation engaged with the powers of darkness, attacked by them, and vigorously attacking them; victory seemed to hover between the combatants, nay, at length it inclined to the enemies' side, and our champion fell before them; behold, God has "delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemies' hand." Christ in the grave is like the ark in Dagon's temple; the powers of darkness seemed to ride masters, but "then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine," *Ps.* lxxviii. 61—65. The Prince of our peace is in this chapter rallying again, coming out of the grave a conqueror, yea, more than a conqueror, leading captivity captive; though the ark be a prisoner, Dagon falls before it, and it proves that "none is able to stand before the holy Lord God." Now the resurrection of Christ being one of the main foundations of our religion, it is requisite that we should have infallible proofs of it; four of which proofs we have in this chapter, which are but a few of many, for Luke and John give a larger account of the proofs of Christ's resurrection than Matthew and Mark do. Here is, I. The testimony of the angel to Christ's resurrection, ver. 1—8. II. His appearance himself to the women, ver. 9, 10. III. The confession of the adversaries that were upon the guard, ver. 11—15. IV. Christ's appearance to the disciples in Galilee, and the commission he gave them, ver. 16—20.



IN the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. 2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: 4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. 5 And the

pulchre on the Sunday morning suspected no obstacle greater than the removal of the stone at the door of the tomb (*Mark* xvi. 1—3), not knowing a guard had been set. Pilate said, "Ye have a watch," as usually rendered, but the words may mean, "Have a guard," i.e., "Take a guard for your purpose." It has been said that the words recognise the guards of the Temple, but such an idea is uncalled for, and it is not likely that the Temple guards would be sent to watch the tomb of an executed criminal. The stone would be

angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. 6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. 8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. 9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. 10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

For the proof of Christ's resurrection, we have here the testimony of the angel, and of Christ himself, concerning his resurrection. Now we may think it would have done better, if the matter had been so ordered that a competent number of witnesses should have been present, and have seen the stone rolled away by the angel, and the dead body reviving, as people saw Lazarus come out of his grave, and then the matter had been past dispute; but let not us prescribe to Infinite Wisdom, which ordered that the witnesses of his resurrection should see him risen, but not see him rise. His incarnation was a mystery, so was this second incarnation, (if we may so call it), this new making of the body of Christ for his exalted state; it was therefore made in secret: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Christ gave such proofs of his resurrection as were corroborated by the Scriptures, and by the word which he had spoken, *Lu. xxiv. 6, 7, 44; Mar. xvi. 7*; for here we must "walk by faith, not by sight." We have here,

First. The coming of the good women to the sepulchre. Observe, 1. When they came: "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week," ver. 1. This fixeth the time of Christ's resurrection.

1st. He rose the third day after his death; that was the time which he had often prefixed, and he kept within it. He was buried in the evening of the sixth day of the week, and rose in the morning of the first day of the following week; so that he lay in the grave about thirty-six or thirty-eight hours. He lay so long to shew that he was really and truly dead, and no longer, that he might not see corruption. He rose the third day to answer the type of the prophet Jonas, *ch. xii. 40*, and to accomplish that prediction, *Hos. vi. 2*, "The third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

2nd. He rose after the Jewish sabbath, and it was the passover sabbath; all that day he lay in the grave, to signify the abolishing of the Jewish feasts, and the other parts of the ceremonial law, and that his people must be dead to such observances, and take no more notice of them than he did when he lay in the grave. Christ on the sixth day finished his work, he said, "It is finished;" on the seventh day he rested, and then on the first day of the next week did, as it were, begin a new world, and enter upon new work. Let no man therefore judge us now in respect of the new moons, or of the Jewish sabbaths, which were indeed a shadow of good things to come, but the substance is of Christ. We may further observe, that the time of the saints' lying in the grave is a sabbath to them, (such as the Jewish sabbath was, which consisted chiefly in bodily rest,) for there they rest from their labours, *Job iii. 17*, and it is owing to Christ.

3rd. He rose upon "the first day of the week." On the first day of the first week God "commanded the light to shine out of darkness;" on this day therefore did He who was to be the light of the world shine out of the darkness of the grave; and the seventh day sabbath being buried with Christ, it rose again in the first day sabbath, called the Lord's day, *Rev. i. 10*; and no other day of the week is from henceforward mentioned in all the New Testament but this, and this often, as the day which Christians religiously observed in solemn assemblies to the honour of Christ, *Jno. xx. 19, 26; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2*. If the deliverance of Israel out of the land of the north superseded the remembrance of that out of Egypt, *Jer. xxii. 7, 8*, much more doth our redemption by Christ eclipse the glory of God's former works. The sabbath was instituted in remembrance of the perfecting of the work of creation, *Gen. ii. 1*. Man by his revolt made a breach upon that perfect work, which was never perfectly repaired till Christ rose from the dead, and the heavens and the earth were again finished, and the disordered hosts of them modelled anew; and the day on which this was done was justly blessed and sanctified, and the seventh day from that. He who on that day rose from the dead is the same by whom, and for whom, all things were at first created, and now anew created.

4th. He rose "as it began to dawn" towards that day; as soon as it could be said that the third day was come, the time prefixed for his resurrection, he rose. After his withdrawals from his people, he returns with all convenient speed, and cuts the work as short in righteousness as may be. He had said to his disciples, that though within a little while they should not see him, yet again a little while and they should see him, and accordingly he made it as little a while as possible, *Isa. liv. 7, 8*. Christ rose when the day began to dawn, because then the day spring from on high did again visit us, *Lu. i. 78*. His passion began in the night; when he hung on the cross the sun was darkened; he was laid in the grave in the dusk of the evening; but he rose from the grave when the sun was near rising, for he is the bright and morning star, *Rev. xxii. 16*; the true light. Those who address themselves early in the morning to the religious services of the Christian sabbath, that they may take the day before them, therein follow this example of Christ, and that of David, "Early will I seek thee."

2. Who they were that came to the sepulchre: "Mary Magdalene and the other *ary*," the same that attended the funeral, and sat "over against the sepulchre," as before they sat over against the cross; still they studied to express their love to Christ, still they were inquiring after him. Then shall we know, if we thus follow on to know. No mention is made of the Virgin Mary being

with them; it is likely the beloved disciple, who had taken her to his own home hindered her from "going to the grave to weep there." Their attendance on Christ, not only to the grave, but in the grave, represents his like care for those that are his, when they have made their bed in the darkness. As Christ in the grave was beloved of the saints, so the saints in the grave are beloved of Christ; for death and the grave cannot slacken that bond of love which is between them.

3. What they came to do; the other evangelists say they came to anoint the body; Matthew saith they came "to see the sepulchre," whether it was as they left it; hearing, perhaps, but not being sure, that the chief priests had set a guard upon it. They went to shew their goodwill in another visit to the dear remains of their beloved Master, and perhaps not without some thoughts of his resurrection, for they could not have quite forgot all he had said of it. Note, Visits to the grave are of great use to Christians, and will help to make it familiar to them, and to take off the terror of it; especially visits to the grave of our Lord Jesus, where we may see sin buried out of sight, the pattern of our sanctification, and the great proof of redeeming love shining illustriously even in that land of darkness.

Secondly. The appearance of an angel of the Lord to them, ver. 2—4. We have here an account of the manner of the resurrection of Christ, as far as it was fit we should know.

1. "There was a great earthquake;" when he died, the earth that received him shook for fear; now he rose, the earth that resigned him leaped for joy in his exaltation. This earthquake did, as it were, loose the bond of death, and shake off the fetters of the grave, and introduced the "Desire of all nations," *Hag. ii. 6, 7*. It was the signal of Christ's victory; notice was hereby given of it, that when the heavens rejoiced the earth also might be glad. It was a specimen of the shake that will be given to the earth at the general resurrection, when mountains and islands shall be removed, that the earth may no longer cover her slain. There was a noise and a shaking in the valley, when the bones were to come together, "bone to his bone," *Eze. xxxvii. 7*. The kingdom of Christ which was now to be set up, made the earth to quake, and terribly shook it. Those that are sanctified, and thereby raised to a spiritual life, while it is in the doing find an earthquake in their own bosoms, as Paul, who trembled and was astonished.

2. "The angel of the Lord descended from heaven." The angels frequently attended our Lord Jesus;—at his birth, in his temptation, in his agony; but upon the cross we find no angel attending him: when his Father forsook him, the angels withdrew from him; but now he is resuming the glory he had before the foundation of the world, now, behold, "the angels of God worship him."

3. He "came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." Our Lord Jesus could have "rolled back the stone" himself, by his own power, but he chose to have it done by an angel, to signify that, having undertaken to make satisfaction for our sin, as such was imputed to him, and being under arrest pursuant to that imputation, he did not break prison, but had a fair and legal discharge, obtained from heaven; he did not break prison, but an officer was sent on purpose to roll away the stone, and so to open the prison door, which would never have been done if he had not made a full satisfaction. But being "delivered for our offences," to complete the deliverance, he "was raised again for our justification;" he died to pay our debt, and rose again to take out our acquaintance. The stone of our sins was rolled to the door of the grave of our Lord Jesus, (and we find the rolling of a great stone to signify the contracting of guilt, *1 Sam. xiv. 33*.) But to demonstrate that Divine justice was satisfied, an angel was commissioned to roll back the stone; not that the angel raised him from the dead, no more than those that took away the stone from Lazarus' grave raised him, but thus he intimated the consent of Heaven to his release, and the joy of heaven in it. The enemies of Christ had sealed the stone, resolving, like Babylon, not to open the house of his prisoners. "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty?" For this was their hour, but all the powers of death and darkness are under the control of the God of light and life. An angel from heaven has power to break the seal, though it were the great seal of Israel, and is able to roll away the stone, though never so great. Thus "the captives of the mighty are taken away." The angel's sitting upon the stone when he had rolled it away, is very observable, and speaks a secure triumph over all the obstructions of Christ's resurrection. There he sat, defying all the powers of hell to roll the stone to the grave again. Christ erects his seat of rest and seat of judgment upon the opposition of his enemies; "the Lord sitteth upon the floods." The angel sat as a guard to the grave; having frightened away the enemy's black guard, he sat expecting the women, and ready to give them an account of his resurrection.

4. That "his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow," ver. 3. This was a visible representation, by that which we call splendid and illustrious, of the glories of the invisible world, which know no difference of colours. His look upon the keepers was like flashes of lightning: "he cast forth lightning, and scattered them," *Ps. cxliv. 6*. The whiteness of his raiment was an emblem, not only of purity, but of joy and triumph. When Christ died, the court of heaven went into deep mourning, signified by the darkening of the sun; but when he arose, they again put on the garments of praise. The glory of this angel represented the glory of Christ, to which he was now risen, for it is the same description that was given of him in his transfiguration, *1. xvi. 2*. But when he conversed with his disciples after his resurrection, he drew a veil over it, and it spoke the glory of the saints in their resurrection, when they shall be "as the angels of God in heaven."

5. That "for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men," ver. 4. They were soldiers, that thought themselves hardened against fear, yet the very sight of an angel struck them with terror. Thus when the Son of God "arose to judgment, the stout-hearted were spoiled," *Ps. lxxvi. 5, 9*. Note, The resurrection of Christ, as it is the joy of his friends, so it is the terror and confusion of his enemies. "They did shake;" the word *ἐκείνησαν* is the same with that which was used for the earthquake, ver. 2, *σεισμός*; when the earth shook, these children of the earth that had their portion in it shook too; whereas those that have their happiness in things above, though the earth be removed, yet are without fear. The keepers became "as dead men" when he whom they kept guard upon became alive, and they whom they kept guard against revived with him. It struck a terror upon them to see themselves baffled in that which was their business here. They were posted here to keep a dead man in his grave, as easy a piece of service sure as ever was assigned them, and yet it proves too hard for them. They were told that they must expect to be assaulted by a company of feeble, faint-hearted disciples, who, for fear of them, would soon shake, and become as dead men; but are amazed when they find themselves attacked by a mighty angel, whom they dare not look in the face. Thus doth God frustrate his enemies, by frightening them, *Ps. ix. 20*.

Thirdly. The message which this angel delivered to the women, ver. 5—7.

1. He encourageth them against their fears, ver. 5. To come near to graves and tombs, especially in silence and solitude, has something in it frightful, much more was it so to those women to find an angel at the sepulchre; but he soon makes them easy with the word, "Fear not ye." The keepers shook, and

sealed by stretching a cord across the opening of the sepulchre, and attaching it by means of wax, the breaking of which would be an offence calling for grave punishment.

xxviii. 1. The words rendered "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week," have caused more difficulty than seems necessary. The Greek term, translated "in the end," has various meanings, such as "late," "in the evening," "after," &c., and we may therefore choose the one which gives the

best sense. Hence we should translate, "Now after the Sabbath," &c. The only other view of much importance is that which considers the Roman indications of time to be given here, and would render the words, "Now late on the Sabbath," &c. It is said that Matthew makes the first day of the week here begin at sun-rise (so Lange), but we cannot entertain such an idea, if only because it is clear from chap. xxvii. 62 that the evangelist follows the correct Jewish reckoning of time. (See also Mark xvi. 1, 2.)

became as dead men, but fear not ye. Let the sinners in Zion be afraid, for there is cause for it, but fear not, Abraham, nor any of the faithful seed of Abraham. Why should the daughters of Sarah, that do well, be afraid with any amazement? 1 *Pet.* iii. 6. "Fear not ye." Let not the news I have to tell you be any surprise to you, for you were told before your Master would rise; let it be no terror to you, for your resurrection will be your consolation. "Fear not any hurt that I will do you, nor any evil tidings I have to tell you." "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus." I know you are friends to the cause; I do not come to frighten you, but to encourage you. Note, Those that seek Jesus have no reason to be afraid, for if they seek him diligently they shall find him, and shall find him their bountiful rewarder. All our believing inquiries after the Lord Jesus are observed and taken notice of in heaven: "I know that ye seek Jesus," and shall certainly be answered as these were, "with good words, and comfortable words." Ye seek Jesus that was crucified." He mentions his being crucified, the more to commend their love to him; "ye seek him still, though he was crucified; you retain your kindness for him notwithstanding." Note, True believers love and seek Christ, not only though he was crucified, but because he was so.

2. He assures them of the resurrection of Christ, and there was enough in that to silence their fears, ver. 6: "He is not here, for he is risen." To be told he is not here would have been no welcome news to those who sought him, if it had not been added, "He is risen." Note, It is matter of comfort to those who seek Christ, and miss of finding him where they expected, that "he is risen." If we find him not in sensible comfort, yet "he is risen." We must not hearken to those who say, "Lo, here is Christ, or Lo, he is there," for he is not here, he is not there, "he is risen." In all our inquiries after Christ we must remember that he is risen, and we must seek him as one risen. 1st. Not with any gross carnal thoughts of him. There were those that knew Christ after the flesh, but now henceforth know him no more, 2 *Cor.* v. 16. It is true he had a body, but it is now a glorified body. They that make pictures and images of Christ forget that "he is not here, he is risen;" our communion with him must be spiritual, by faith in his word. *Rom.* x. 6-8. 2nd. We must seek him with great reverence and humility, and an awful regard to his glory, for "he is risen." God has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, and therefore every knee and every soul must bow before him. 3rd. We must seek him with a heavenly mind; when we are ready to make this world our home, and to say, "It is good to be here," let us remember our Lord Jesus "is not here, he is risen," and therefore let not our hearts be here, but let them rise too, and "seek the things that are above," *Col.* iii. 1-3; *Phil.* iii. 20.

Two things the angel refers these women to for the confirmation of their faith, touching Christ's resurrection: *First*. To his word, now fulfilled, which they might remember: "He is risen, as he said." This he voucheth as the proper object of faith; he said he would rise, and you know he is the truth itself, and therefore have reason to expect he should rise. Why should you be backward to believe that which he told you would be? Let us never think strange at that which the Word of Christ has raised our expectations of, whether the sufferings of this present time, or the glory that is to be revealed. If we remember what Christ hath said to us, we shall be the less surprised at what he doth with us. This angel, when he said, "He is not here, he is risen," makes it to appear that he preaches no other Gospel than what they had already received, for he refers himself to the Word of Christ as sufficient to bear him out: "He is risen, as he said." *Secondly*. To his grave now empty, which they might look into: "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Compare what you have heard with what you see, and, putting both together, you will believe. You see he is not here, and remembering what he said, you may be satisfied "he is risen; come, see the place, and you will see he is not there; you will see he could not be stolen thence, and therefore must conclude he is risen." Note, It may be of use to affect us, and may have a good influence upon us, to come, and with an eye of faith "see the place where the Lord lay." See the marks he has there left of his love, in condescending so low for us; see how easy he has made that bed, and how lightsome for us, by lying in it himself; when we look into the grave, where we expect we must lie, to take off the terror of it let us look into the grave where the Lord lay: "the place where our Lord lay," so the Syriac. The angels own him for their Lord as well as we; for the whole family, both in heaven and earth, is named from him.

3. He directs them to go carry the tidings of it to his disciples, ver. 7: "Go quickly, and tell his disciples." It is probable they were for entertaining themselves with the sight of the sepulchre and discourse with the angels. It was good to be here, but they have other work appointed them; "this is a day of good tidings," and though they have the *primer seisin* of the comfort,—"the first taste"—of it, yet they must not have the monopoly of it, must not hold their peace, no more than those lepers, 2 *Kin.* vii. 9. They must go tell the disciples. Note, Public usefulness to others must be preferred before the pleasure of secret communion with God ourselves; for "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Observe,

1st. The disciples of Christ must first be told the news; not, Go, tell the chief priests and the Pharisees, that they may be confounded; but, Tell the disciples, that they may be comforted. God anticipates the joy of his friends more than the shame of his enemies, though the perfection of both is reserved for hereafter. Tell his disciples, it may be they will believe your report, however tell them. *First*. That they may encourage themselves under their present sorrows and dispersions. It was a dismal time with them, between grief and fear; what a cordial would this be to them now to hear their Master is risen. *Secondly*. That they may inquire further into it themselves. This alarm was sent them to awaken them from that strange stupidity which had seized them, and to raise their expectations; this was to set them on seeking him, and to prepare them for his appearance to them. General hints excite to closer searches. They now shall hear of him, but shall very shortly see him. Christ discovers himself gradually.

2nd. The women are sent to tell it them, and so are made, as it were, the apostles of the apostles. This was an honour put upon them, and a recompence for their constant, affectionate adherence to him, at the cross and in the grave, and a rebuke to the disciples who forsook him. Still God chooseth the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and puts the treasure, not only into earthen vessels, but here into the weaker vessels: as the woman, being deceived by the suggestions of an evil angel, was first in the transgression, 1 *Tim.* ii. 14, so these women, being duly informed by the instructions of a good angel, were first in the belief of the redemption from transgression by Christ's resurrection, that that reproach of their sex might be rolled away, by putting this in the balance against it, which is their perpetual praise.

3rd. They were bid to "go quickly" upon this errand. Why, what haste was there? Would not the news keep cold, and be welcome to them at any time? Yes, but they were now overwhelmed with grief, and Christ would have this cordial hastened to them: when Daniel was humbling himself before God for sin, the angel Gabriel was caused to fly swiftly with a message of comfort, *Dan.* ix. 21. We must always be ready and forward, *First*. To obey the commands of God, *Ps.* cxix. 60. *Secondly*. To do good to our brethren, and to

carry comfort to them, as those that feel for their afflictions: "Say not, go and come again, and to-morrow I will give;" but now, quickly.

4. They were directed to appoint the disciples to meet him in Galilee. There were other appearances of Christ to them before that in Galilee, which were sudden and surprising, but he would have one to be solemn and public, and gave them notice of it before. Now this general rendezvous was appointed in Galilee, eighty or an hundred miles from Jerusalem, *First*. In kindness to those of his disciples that remained in Galilee, and did not, perhaps they could not, come up to Jerusalem; and therefore into that country he would go to manifest himself to his friends there. "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest." Christ knows where his disciples dwell, and will visit there. Note, The exaltation of Christ doth not make him forget the meaner and poorer sort of his disciples, but even to them that are at a distance from the plenty of the means of grace he will graciously manifest himself. *Secondly*. In consideration of the weakness of his disciples that were now at Jerusalem, who as yet were afraid of the Jews, and durst not appear publicly, and therefore this meeting was adjourned to Galilee. Christ knows our fears, and considers our frame, and made his appointment where there was least danger of disturbance.

5. The angel solemnly affirms upon his word the truth of what he had related to them, "Lo, I have told you;" you may be assured of it, and depend upon it; I have told you, who dare not tell a lie. "The word spoken by angels was stedfast," *Heb.* ii. 2. God had been wont formerly to make known his mind to his people by the ministration of angels, as at the giving of the law; but intending in gospel times to lay aside that way of communication, (for "unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come," nor appointed them to be the preachers of the Gospel,) this angel was now sent to certify the resurrection of Christ to the disciples, and so leave it in their hands to be published to the world, 2 *Cor.* iv. 7. In saying, "Lo, I have told you," he doth as it were discharge himself from the blame of their unbelief, if they should not receive this record, and throw it upon them. "I have done my errand, I have faithfully delivered my message; now look you to it, believe it at your peril; whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, 'I have told you.'" Note, Those messengers from God that discharge their trust faithfully may take the comfort of that, whatever the success be, *Acts* xx. 26, 27.

Fourthly. The women's departure from the sepulchre, to bring notice to the disciples, ver. 8. And observe,

1. What frame and temper of spirit they were in: "they departed with fear and great joy;" a strange mixture,—fear and joy at the same time, in the same soul. To hear that Christ was risen was matter of joy; but to be led into his grave, and to see and talk with an angel about it, could not but cause fear. It was good news; but they were afraid it was too good to be true. But observe, it is said of their joy, it was great joy; it is not said so of their fear. Note, 1st. Holy fear has joy attending it. They that serve the Lord with reverence serve him with gladness. 2nd. Spiritual joy is mixed with trembling, *Ps.* ii. 11. It is only perfect love and joy that will cast out all fear.

2. What haste they made: "They did run." The fear and joy together quickened their pace, and added wings to their motion; the angel bid them go quickly, and they ran. Those that are sent on God's errand must not loiter, or lose time; where the heart is enlarged with the glad tidings of the Gospel, the feet will run the way of God's commandments.

3. What errand they went upon: they did run to "bring his disciples word." Not doubting but it would be joyful news to them, they ran to comfort them with the same comforts wherewith they themselves were comforted of God. Note, The disciples of Christ should be forward to communicate to each other their experiences of sweet communion with Heaven; should tell others what God has done for their souls, and spoken to them. Joy in Christ Jesus, like the ointment of the right hand, will betray itself, and fill all places within the lines of its communication, with its odours. When Samson found honey, he brought it to his parents.

Fifthly, Christ's appearing to the women, to confirm the testimony of the angel, ver. 9, 10. These zealous, good women not only heard the first tidings of him, but had the first sight of him after his resurrection. The angel directed those that would see him to go to Galilee; but before that time came, even here also they looked after him that lives and sees them. Note, Jesus Christ is often better than his word, but never worse; often anticipates, but never frustrates the believing expectations of his people. Here is,

1. Christ's surprising appearance to the women: "As they went to tell his disciples, behold Jesus met them." Note, God's gracious visits usually meet us in the way of duty; and to those who use what they have for others' benefit, more shall be given. This interview with Christ was unexpected, or ever they were aware, *Cant.* vi. 12. Note, Christ is nearer to his people than they imagine. They needed not descend into the deep to fetch Christ thence; he was not there, he was risen; nor go up to heaven, for he was not yet ascended; but Christ was nigh them, and still Christ, in the Word, is nigh us.

2. The salutation wherewith he accosted them: "All hail," *καίρετε*. We use the old English form of salutation, wishing all health to those we meet; for so "All hail," signifies, and is expressive of the Greek form of salutation here used, answering to that of the Hebrew, 'Peace be unto you.' And it speaks, 1st. The good-will of Christ to us and our happiness, even since he entered upon his state of exaltation. Though he be advanced, he wisheth us as well as ever, and is as much concerned for our comfort. 2nd. The freedom and holy familiarity which he used in his fellowship with his disciples; for he called them friends. But the Greek word signifies, 'Rejoice ye.' They were affected both with fear and joy; what he said to them tended to encourage their joy, ver. 9, 'Rejoice ye;' and to silence their fear, ver. 10, 'Be not afraid.' Note, It is the will of Christ that his people should be a cheerful, joyful people; and his resurrection furnisheth them with abundant matter for joy.

3. The affectionate respect they paid him: "They came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him." Thus they expressed, 1st. The reverence and honour they had for him; they threw themselves at his feet, put themselves into a posture of adoration, and worshipped him with humility and godly fear, as the Son of God, and now exalted. 2nd. The love and affection they had to him: they held him, and would not let him go, *Cant.* iii. 4. How beautiful were the feet of the Lord Jesus to them, *Isa.* lii. 7. 3rd. The transport of joy they were in, now they had this further assurance of his resurrection; they welcomed it with both arms. Thus we must embrace Jesus Christ offered us in the Gospel, with reverence cast ourselves at his feet, by faith take hold of him, and with love and joy lay him near our hearts.

4. The encouraging words Christ said to them, ver. 10. We do not find they said any thing to him; their affectionate embraces and adorations spoke plainly enough; and what he said to them was no more than what the angel had said, ver. 5, 7; for he "will confirm the word of his messengers." *Isa.* xlv. 26; and his way of comforting his people is by his Spirit; to speak over again to their hearts the same that they had heard before from his angels the ministers. Now observe here,

1st. How he rebukes their fear: "Be not afraid." They must not fear being imposed upon by these repeated notices of his resurrection, nor fear any hurt by the appearance of one from the dead; for the news, though strange, was

xviii. 2-4. Some in ancient and in modern times have taken this narration as an account of the circumstances of the actual resurrection of our Saviour; but others regard it as an account of what the women actually saw, the resurrection having previously taken place. From what is said of the keepers, or guards, it is clear that they had not abandoned their post.

xviii. 7. The Greek word rendered "goeth before" corresponds in sense with the Syriac participle and the English form, "is going

before." Therefore, "he is going before you" means "he is about to go," or will go shortly. That Jesus was not yet gone, verse 9 shows. For the promise to do so, see chap. xxvi. 32.

xxviii. 9. The words "as they went to tell his disciples" are omitted by the Vatican, Sinaitic, and Cambridge MSS., by the Syriac and Vulgate versions, and by some modern editors, as Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Alford. They are found, however, in the Alexandrian and in twelve other Uncial MSS. It is supposed

both true and good. Note, Christ rose from the dead to silence his people's fears; and there is enough in that to silence them.

2nd. How he repeats their message: "Go, tell my brethren," that they must prepare for a journey into Galilee; and there they shall see me. If there be any communion between our souls and Christ, it is he that appoints the meeting, and he will observe the appointment. Jerusalem had forfeited the honour of Christ's presence; it was a tumultuous city, therefore he adjourns the meeting to Galilee: "come, my beloved, let us go forth," *Cant.* vii. 11. But that which is especially observable here is, that he calls his disciples his brethren: "Go, tell my brethren," not only those of them that were akin to him, but all the rest; for they are all his brethren, *ch.* xii. 50: but he never called them so till after his resurrection, here, and *Jno.* xx. 17. Being by the resurrection himself "declared to be the Son of God with power," all the children of God were thereby declared to be his brethren. Being "the first begotten from the dead," he is become "the firstborn among many brethren," even of all that are planted together in the likeness of his resurrection. Christ did not now converse so constantly and familiarly with his disciples as he had done before his death; but lest they should think him grown strange to them, he gives them this endearing title, Go to my brethren, that the Scripture might be fulfilled which, speaking of his entrance upon his exalted state, saith, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." They had shamefully deserted him in his sufferings; but to shew that he could forgive and forget, and to teach us to do so, he not only continues his purpose to meet them, but calls them brethren. Being all his brethren, they were brethren one to another, and must love as brethren. His owning them for his brethren, put a great honour upon them; but withal, gave them an example of humility in the midst of that honour.

11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. 12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, 13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. 14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. 15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

For the further proof of the resurrection of Christ, we have here the confession of the adversaries that were upon the guard; and there are two things which strengthen this testimony: that they were eye-witnesses, and did themselves see the glory of the resurrection, which none else did; and that they were enemies, set there to oppose and obstruct his resurrection. Now observe here,

First. How this testimony was given in to the chief priests, ver. 11. When the women were going to bring that news to the disciples, which would fill their hearts with joy, the soldiers went to bring the same news to the chief priests, which would fill their faces with shame. "Some of the watch," probably those of them that commanded in chief, "came into the city," and brought to those who employed them, the report of their disappointment. "They shewed to the chief priests all the things that were done;" told them of the earthquake, the descent of the angel, the rolling of the stone away, and the coming of the body of Jesus alive out of the grave. Thus the sign of the prophet Jonas was brought to the chief priests, with the most clear and uncontested evidence that could be; and so the utmost means of conviction were afforded them: we may well imagine what a mortification it was to them, and that, like the enemies of the Jews, they were much cast down in their own eyes, *Neh.* vi. 16. It might justly have been expected that they should now have believed in Christ, and repented their putting him to death; but they were obstinate in their infidelity, and therefore sealed up under it.

Secondly. How it was baffled and stifted by them. They called an assembly, and considered what was to be done. For their own parts they were resolved not to believe that Jesus was risen; but their care was to keep others from believing, and themselves from being quite shamed from their disbelief of it. They had put him to death, and there was no way of standing to what they had done, but by confronting the evidence of his resurrection. Thus they who have sold themselves to work wickedness, find that one sin draws on another, and they have plunged themselves into a wretched necessity of adding iniquity to iniquity, which is part of the curse of Christ's persecutors, *Psa.* lxi. 27. The result of their debate was, that those soldiers must by all means be bribed off, and hired not to tell tales.

1. They put money into their hands; and what wickedness is it which men will not be brought to by the love of money? "They gave large money;" it is likely, a great deal more than they gave to Judas, "unto the soldiers." These chief priests loved their money as well as most people did, and were as loath to part with it; and yet, to carry on a malicious design against the Gospel of Christ, they were very prodigal of it; they gave the soldiers, it is likely, as much as they asked; and they knew how to improve their advantages. Here was large money given for the advancing of that which they knew to be a lie; yet many grudge a little money for the advancement of that which they know to be the truth, though they have a promise of being reimbursed in the resurrection of the just. Let us never starve a good cause, when we see a bad one so liberally supported.

2. They put a lie into their mouths: ver. 13. "Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept;" a sorry shift is better than none; but this is a sorry one indeed. 1st. The sham was ridiculous, and carried along with it its own confutation; if they slept, how could they know any thing of the matter, or say who came? If any one of them were awake to observe it, no doubt he would awake them all to oppose it; for that was the only thing they had in charge. It was altogether improbable that a company of poor, weak, cowardly, dispirited men, should expose themselves for so inconsiderable an achievement as the rescue of the dead body. Why were not the houses where they lodged diligently searched, and other means used to discover the dead body? but this was so thin a lie as one might easily see through. But had it been never so plausible, 2nd. it was a very wicked thing for these priests and elders to hire these soldiers to tell a deliberate lie, (if it had been in a matter of never so small importance) against their consciences. Those know not what

they do that draw others to commit one wilful sin; for that may debauch conscience, and be an inlet to many. But, 3rd. Considering this as intended to overthrow the great doctrine of Christ's resurrection, this was a sin against the last remedy, and was, in effect, a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; imputing that to the rogues of the disciples which was done by the power of the Holy Ghost. But lest the soldiers should object the penalty they incurred by the Roman law, for sleeping upon the guard, which was very severe, *Acts* xii. 19, they promised to interpose with the governor: "we will persuade him, and secure you." We will use our own interest in him to get him not to take notice of it; and they had lately found how easily they could manage him. If really these soldiers had slept, and so suffered his disciples to steal him away, as they would have the world believe, it is certain the priests and elders would have been the forwardest to solicit the governor to punish them for their treachery; so that their care for the soldiers' safety plainly gives the lie to the story. They undertook to secure the sword of Pilate's justice; but could not secure them from the sword of God's justice, which hangs over the head of those that love and make a lie. They promise more than they can perform, who undertake to save a man harmless in the commission of a wilful sin. Well, thus was the plot laid; now, what success had it?

First. Those that were willing to deceive "took the money, and did as they were taught." They cared as little for Christ and his religion, as the chief priests and elders did; and men that have no religion at all can be very well pleased to see Christianity run down, and lend a hand to it, if need be to serve a turn: "They took the money;" that was it they aimed at and nothing else. Note, Money is a bait for the blackest temptation; mercenary tongues will sell the truth for it. The great argument to prove Christ to be the Son of God is his resurrection; and none could have more convincing proofs of the truth of that than these soldiers had: they saw the angel descend from heaven; saw the stone rolled away; saw the body of Christ come out of the grave, unless the consternation they felt hindered them; and yet were so far from being convinced by it themselves, that they were hired to belie him, and to hinder others from believing in him. Note, The most sensible evidences will not convince men without the concurring operation of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly. Those that were willing to be deceived, not only credited, but propagated the story. "This saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day." The sham took well enough, and answered the end. The Jews who persisted in their infidelity, when they were pressed with the argument of Christ's resurrection, had this still ready to reply, "His disciples came and stole him away." To this purpose was the solemn narrative, which (as Justin Martyr relates in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*) the great sanhedrim sent to all the Jews of the dispersion, concerning this affair, exciting them to a vigorous resistance of Christianity, that when they had crucified and buried him, the disciples came by night and stole him out of the sepulchre; designing thereby, not only to overthrow the truth of Christ's resurrection, but to render his disciples odious to the world, as the greatest villains in nature. When once a lie is raised, none knows how far it will spread, nor how long it will last, nor what mischief it will do. Some give another sense of this passage: "This saying is commonly reported;" that is, notwithstanding the artifice of the chief priests thus to impose upon the people, yet the collusion that was between them and the soldiers, and the money that was given to support the cheat, was commonly reported and whispered among the Jews; for, one way or other, truth will out.

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. 17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

This evangelist passeth over several other appearances of Christ, recorded by Luke and John, and hastens to this, which was of all other the most solemn, as being promised and appointed again and again, before his death, and after his resurrection. Observe,

First. How the disciples attended this appearance, according to the appointment, ver. 16: "They went into Galilee;" a long journey to go for one sight of Christ; but it was worth while. They had seen him several times at Jerusalem, and yet they went into Galilee to see him there. 1. Because he appointed them to do so. Though it seemed a needless thing to go into Galilee, to see him whom they might see at Jerusalem; especially when they must so soon come back again to Jerusalem, before his ascension; yet they had learned to obey Christ's commands, and not object against them. Note, Those who would maintain communion with Christ, must attend him there where he has appointed. Those that have met him in one ordinance, must attend him in another, — that have seen him at Jerusalem, must go to Galilee. 2. Because that was to be a public and general meeting. They had seen him themselves, and conversed with him in private; but that should not excuse their attendance in a solemn assembly, where many were to be gathered together to see him. Note, Our communion with God in secret must not supersede our attendance on public worship, as we have opportunity; for God loves the gates of Zion, and so must we. The place was a mountain in Galilee; probably the same mountain on which he was transfigured. There they met for privacy; and perhaps to signify the exalted state into which he was entered, and his advances towards the upper world.

Secondly. How they were affected with the appearance of Christ to them, ver. 17. Now was the time that "he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once," *1 Cor.* xv. 6. Some think they saw him at first at some distance, above in the air, *ὡς ἐν ἄνθρῳ*; — "He was seen above of five hundred brethren;" so they read it; which gave occasion to some to doubt till he came nearer, ver. 18, and then they were satisfied. We are told,

1. That "they worshipped him;" many of them did so, nay, it should seem they all did that; they gave Divine honour to him, which was signified by some outward expressions of adoration. Note, All that see the Lord Jesus with an eye of faith are obliged to worship him. "But some doubted?" some of those

that they were added by some early copyist, as required to make the sense complete.

xxviii. 10. The expression, "Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee," means "Go, tell my brethren, in order that they may go into Galilee."

xxviii. 12. As Dean Alford suggests, this meeting of the Sanhedrim was hardly an official and open one, but rather special and private.

xxviii. 14. The sense is, "And if this be heard before the governor, we will persuade him, and make you free from anxiety." Some writers understand it to refer to a judicial examination or hearing before Pilate, but others suppose it means "when the report of this shall reach his ears." The danger to the soldiers was so great that they might well be anxious, but it was probably hoped to pacify Pilate by persuasion or a bribe.

xxviii. 15. Grotius quotes passages from Justin and Tertullian to

that were then present. Note, Even among those that worship there are some that doubt. The faith of those that are sincere may yet be very weak and wavering. They doubted, *ἰσχυροῦσαν*,—they "hung in suspense," as the scales of the balance, when it is hard to say which preponderates. These doubts were afterwards removed, and their faith grew up to a full assurance; and it tended much to the honour of Christ, that the disciples doubted before they believed; so that they cannot be said to be credulous, and willing to be imposed upon, for they first questioned, and proved all things, and then held fast that which was true, and they found to be so.

Thirdly. What Jesus Christ said to them, ver. 18—20: "Jesus came and spake unto them." Though there were those that doubted, yet he did not therefore reject them, for "He will not break the bruised reed;" he did not stand at a distance, but came near, and gave them such convincing proofs of his resurrection as turned the wavering scale, and made their faith to triumph over their doubts. He came and spake familiarly to them, as one friend speaks to another, that they might be fully satisfied in the commission he was about to give them. He that drew near to God to speak for us to him, draws near to us to speak from him to us. Christ now delivered to his apostles the great charter of his kingdom in the world; was sending them out as his ambassadors, and here gives them their credentials. In opening this great charter, we may observe two things:

1. The commission which our Lord Jesus received himself from the Father; being about to authorize his apostles, if any ask, By what authority he doth it, and who gave him that authority? here he tells us, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;" a very great word, and which none but he could say. Hereby he asserts his universal dominion as Mediator; which is the great foundation of the Christian religion. He has "all power." Observe,

1st. Whence he hath this power. He did not assume it, or usurp it, but it was given him; he was legally entitled to it, and invested in it by a grant from Him who is the fountain of all being, and consequently of all power. God set him king, *Ps. ii. 6*; inaugurated and enthroned him, *Lu. i. 32*. As God, equal with the Father, all power was originally and essentially his; but as Mediator, as God-man, all power was given him, partly in recompence of his work, because he humbled himself, therefore God thus exalted him; and partly in pursuance of his design; he had this power given him over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as were given him, *Jno. xvi. 2*, for the more effectual carrying on and completing our salvation. This power he was now more signally invested in upon his resurrection, *Acts xiii. 33*. He had power before,—“power to forgive sins,” *Mat. ix. 6*, but now “all power” is given him. He is now going to receive for himself a kingdom, *Lu. xix. 12*; to sit down at the right hand, *Ps. cx. 1*. Having purchased it, nothing remains but to take possession; it is his own for ever.

2nd. Where he has this power: “in heaven and earth,” comprehending the universe. Christ is the sole, universal monarch, he is “Lord of all,” *Acts x. 36*. He hath “all power in heaven;” he has power of dominion over the angels; they are all his humble servants, *Eph. i. 20, 21*. He has power of intercession with his Father, in the virtue of his satisfaction and atonement; he intercedes, not as a suppliant, but as a demandant; “Father, I will.” He hath all power on earth too; having prevailed with God by the sacrifice of atonement, he prevails with men, and deals with them as one having authority, by the ministry of reconciliation. He is indeed, in all causes, and over all persons, supreme moderator and governor. By him kings reign. All souls are his; and to him every heart and knee must bow, and every tongue confess him to be Lord. This our Lord Jesus tells them, not only to satisfy them of the authority he had to commission them, and to bring them out in the execution of their commission, but to take off the offence of the cross; they had no reason to be ashamed of Christ crucified, when they saw him thus glorified.

2. The commission he gives to those whom he sent forth: “Go ye, therefore.” This commission is given, 1st. To the apostles primarily; the chief ministers of state in Christ's kingdom, the architects that laid the foundation of the church. Now those that had followed Christ in the regeneration were set on thrones, *Lu. xxii. 30*. “Go ye.” It is not only a word of command, like that, “Son, go work;” but a word of encouragement, “Go and fear not; have not I sent you? Go, and make a business of this work.” They must not take state, and issue out summons to the nations to attend upon them; but they must go, and bring the Gospel to their doors: “Go ye.” They had doted on Christ's bodily presence, and hung upon that, and built all their joys and hopes upon that; but now Christ dischargeth them from further attendance on his person, and sends them abroad, about other work. “As an eagle stirs up her nest, flutters over her young,” to excite them to fly, (*Deu. xxxii. 11*), so Christ stirs up his disciples to disperse themselves into all the world. 2nd. It is given to their successors, the ministers of the Gospel, whose business it is to transmit the Gospel from age to age, to the end of the world in time, as it was theirs to transmit it from nation to nation, to the end of the world in place, and no less necessary. The Old Testament promise of a gospel ministry is made to a succession, *Isa. lix. 21*; and this here must be understood; otherwise, how could Christ be with them always to the consummation of the world? Christ, at his ascension, gave not only apostles and prophets, but pastors and teachers, *Eph. iv. 11*. Now observe,

First. How far this commission is extended, “to all nations.” “Go, and disciple all nations;” not that they must go all together into every place; but, by consent, disperse themselves in such manner as might best diffuse the light of the Gospel. Now this plainly signifies it to be the will of Christ, 1st. That the covenant of peculiarity made with the Jews should now be cancelled and disannulled. This word broke down the middle wall of partition, which had so long excluded the Gentiles from a visible church state; and whereas the apostles, when first sent out, were forbidden to go into the way of the Gentiles, now they were sent “to all nations.” 2nd. That salvation by Christ should be offered to all; and none excluded that did not, by their own unbelief and impenitence, exclude themselves. The salvation they were to preach is a common salvation: “whoever will, let him come,” and take the benefit of the act of indemnity; for there is no difference of Jew or Greek in Christ Jesus. 3rd. That Christianity should be twisted in with national constitutions, that the kingdoms of the world should become Christ's kingdoms, and their kings the church's nursing fathers.

Secondly. What is the principal intention of this commission, to “disciple all nations,” *μαθητεύσατε*. “Admit them disciples, do your utmost to make the nations Christian nations.” Not, “Go to the nations, and denounce the judgments of God against them,” as Jonah against Nineveh, and the Old Testament prophets; though they had reason enough to expect it, for their wickedness; but, “Go, and disciple them.” Christ the mediator is setting up a kingdom in the world, bring the nations to be his subjects; setting up a school, bring the nations to be his scholars; raising an army for the carrying on of the war against the powers of darkness, list the nations of the earth under his banner. The work which the apostles had to do, was to set up the Christian religion in all places, and it was honourable work; the achievements of the mighty heroes of the world were nothing to it: they conquered the nations for themselves, and made them miserable; the apostles conquered them for Christ, and made them happy.

Thirdly. Their instructions for executing this commission.

1st. They must admit disciples by the sacred rite of baptism: “Go into all nations, preach the Gospel to them, work miracles among them, and persuade them to come in themselves, and bring their children with them, into the church of Christ; and then admit them and theirs into the church, by washing them with water;” either dipping them in the water, or by pouring or sprinkling water upon them, which seems the more proper, because the thing is most frequently expressed so; as *Isa. xlv. 3*, “I will pour my Spirit on thy seed;” and *Tit. iii. 5, 6*, “which he shed on us abundantly;” and *Eze. xxxvi. 25*, “I will sprinkle clean water upon you;” and *Isa. lii. 15*, “So shall he sprinkle many nations,” which seems a prophecy of this commission to baptize the nations.

2nd. This baptism must be administered “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;” that is, First, By authority from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The baptism of Jesus is from Heaven, and not of man; for his ministers act by authority from the three persons in the godhead, who all concur, as to our creation, so to our redemption; they have their commission under the great seal of Heaven, which puts an honour upon the ordinance, though to a carnal eye, like him that instituted it, it has no form or comeliness. Secondly. Calling upon the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Every thing is sanctified by prayer, and particularly the waters of baptism. The prayer of faith obtains the presence of God with the ordinance, which is its lustre and beauty, its life and efficacy. But, Thirdly. It is “into the name” (*εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*) “of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” This was intended as the summary of the first principles of the Christian religion, and of the new covenant; and according to it the ancient creeds were drawn up. By our being baptized, we solemnly profess, 1. Our assent to the Scripture revelation concerning God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We confess our belief that there is a God, that there is but one God; that, in the godhead, there is a Father that begets, a Son that is begotten, and a Holy Spirit of both. We are baptized, not into the names, but into the name of Father, Son, and Spirit, which plainly speaks that these three are one, and their name one. The distinct mentioning of the three persons in the Trinity, both in the Christian baptism here, and in the Christian blessing, *2 Cor. xiii. 14*, as it is a full proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, so it has done much towards the preserving of it pure and entire through all ages of the church; for nothing is more great and awful in Christian assemblies than these two. 2. Our consent to a covenant relation to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Baptism is a sacrament; that is, it is an oath. (*Super sacramentum dicere*, is, “to say upon oath.”) It is an oath of abjuration, by which we renounce the world and the flesh, as rivals with God for the throne in our hearts; and an oath of allegiance, by which we resign and give up ourselves to God, to be his,—our own selves, our whole selves—body, soul, and spirit,—to be governed by his will, and made happy in his favour; we become his men; so the form of homage in our law runs. Therefore baptism is applied to the person, as livery and seisin are given of the premises, because it is the person that is dedicated to God.

1st. It is into the name of the Father, believing him to be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (for that is principally intended here) by eternal generation, and our Father, as our creator, preserver, and benefactor; to whom, therefore, we resign ourselves as our absolute owner and proprietor, to act us and dispose of us—as our supreme rector and governor, to rule us, as free agents, by his law, and as our chief good, and highest end. 2nd. It is into the name of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and correlate to the Father. Baptism was in a particular manner administered in the name of the Lord Jesus, *Acts viii. 16*; *xix. 5*. In baptism we assent, as Peter did, “Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,” *ch. xvi. 16*; and consent, as Thomas did, “My Lord and my God,” *Jno. xx. 28*; we take Christ to be our prophet, priest, and king, and give up ourselves to be taught, and saved, and ruled by him. 3rd. It is into the name of the Holy Ghost. Believing the godhead of the Holy Spirit, and his agency in carrying on our redemption, we give up ourselves to his conduct and operation, as our sanctifier, teacher, guide, and comforter.

3rd. Those that are thus baptized, and enrolled among the disciples of Christ, must be taught, ver. 20: “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” This speaks two things:

First. The duty of disciples, of all baptized Christians; they must observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded; and, in order to that, must submit to the teaching of those whom he sends. Our admission into the visible church is in order to something further: when Christ hath disciplined us, he hath not done with us; he lists soldiers that he may train them up for his service. All that are baptized are thereby obliged, 1. To make the command of Christ their rule. There is a law of faith, and we are said to be under the law to Christ; we are by baptism bound, and must obey. 2. To observe what Christ has commanded. Due obedience to the commands of Christ requires a diligent observation; we are in danger of missing, if we take not good heed; and in all our obedience, we must have an eye to the command, and do what we do as unto the Lord. 3. To observe all things that he hath commanded, without exception; all the moral duties, and all the instituted ordinances. Our obedience to the laws of Christ is not sincere if it be not universal; we must stand complete in his whole will. 4. To confine themselves to the commands of Christ; and, as not to diminish from them, so not to add to them. 5. To learn their duty, according to the law of Christ, from those whom he has appointed to be teachers in his school; for therefore we were entered into his school.

Secondly. The duty of the apostles of Christ, and his ministers; and that is, to teach the commands of Christ, to expound them to his disciples, to press upon them the necessity of obedience, and to assist them in applying the general commands of Christ to particular cases. They must teach them, not their own inventions, but the institutions of Christ; to them they must religiously adhere, and in the knowledge of them Christians must be trained up. A standing ministry is hereby settled in the church, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the perfect man, *Eph. iv. 11—13*. The heirs of heaven, till they come to age, must be under tutors and governors.

3. Here is the assurance he gives them of his spiritual presence with them in the execution of this commission: “And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” This exceeding great and precious promise is ushered in with a “behold,” to strengthen their faith, and engage their observation of it: “Take notice of this; it is what you may assure yourselves of, and venture upon.” Observe here,

1st. The favour promised them, “I am with you;” not, “I will be with you;” but “I am,” *ἐγὼ εἰμι*. As God sent Moses, so Christ sent his apostles, by this name, “I am;” for he is God, to whom past, present, and to come, are the same name. *Rev. i. 8*. He was now about to leave them, his bodily presence was now to be removed from them; and this grieved them. But he assures them of his spiritual presence, which was more expedient for them than his bodily presence could be: “I am with you;” that is, “My Spirit is with you;” the Comforter shall “abide with you,” *Jno. xvi. 7*; “I am with you, and not against you; with you, to take your part, to be on your side, and to hold with you;” as Michael our prince is said to do, *Dan. x. 21*. “I am with you, and not absent from you;” not at a distance; I am a very present help, *Ps. xli. 1*. Christ was now

show that the Pharisees circulated this report by appointed messengers.

xxviii. 16. For “into a mountain,” translate “to the mountain,” as some particular mountain is intended. Some have thought Tabor is meant, others that it was a lonely mountain in the north of Galilee, while a later tradition fixes on the northern height of the Mount of Olives. This last opinion arises, perhaps, from the supposition that the incidents here recorded took place at the time of the

Ascension, which is an error. St. Matthew records neither the fact nor the manner of the Ascension, but closes his narrative abruptly with the address to the disciples. Lange thinks the Ascension is omitted because of the Saviour's promise to be always with his disciples—an omnipresence which evidently comprehends it.

xxviii. 20. The word “Amen” is omitted by some of the oldest and best manuscripts, and by some versions and fathers, as well as by some modern editors. On this word Adam Clarke says, “When

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sending them to set up his kingdom in the world, which was a great undertaking: and then doth he seasonably promise them his presence with them. *First*. To carry them on through the difficulties they were likely to meet with: "I am with you, to bear you up, to plead your cause; with you, in all your services, in all your sufferings, to bring you through them with comfort and honour. When you go through the fire, or water, I will be with you; in the pulpit, in the prison, "Lo, I am with you." *Secondly*. To succeed this great undertaking: "Lo, I am with you;" to make your ministry effectual for the discipling of the nations, for the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan, and the setting up of stronger for the Lord Jesus. It was an unlikely thing that they should unhinge national constitutions in religion, and turn the stream of so long a usage—that they should establish a doctrine so directly contrary to the genius of the age, and persuade people to become the disciples of a crucified Jesus; but, "Lo, I am with you;" and therefore you shall gain your point.

2nd. The continuance of the favour, "always, even unto the end of the world." *First*. They shall have his constant presence, "always," *παρὰς τὰς ἡμέρας*, 'all days,' every day; 'I will be with you on sabbath days, on week days, fair days and foul days, winter days and summer days.' There is no day, no hour of the day, in which our Lord Jesus is not present with his churches, and with his ministers: if there were, that day, that hour, they were undone. Since his resurrection, he had appeared to them now and then; once a week, it may be, and scarcely that. But he assures them they shall have his spiritual presence continued to them without intermission. Wherever we are, the Word of Christ is nigh us, even in our mouth, and the Spirit of Christ nigh us, even in our hearts. "The God of Israel, the Saviour," is sometimes "a God that hideth himself," *Isa. xlv. 15*, but never a God that absenteth himself; sometimes in the dark, but never at a distance. *Secondly*. They shall have his perpetual presence, "even to the end of the world." There is a world before us that will never have an end, but this is hastening towards its period; and even till then the Christian religion shall, in one part of the world or other, be kept up, and the presence of Christ continued with his ministers. 1st. "I am with you to the end of the world;" not with your persons, they died quickly, but with you and your writings. There is a Divine power going along with

the Scriptures of the New Testament, not only preserving them in being, producing strange effects by them, which will continue to the end of time. 2nd. "With you and your successors: with you, and all the ministers of the Gospel in the several ages of the church;" with all to whom this commission extends; with all that, being duly called and sent, thus baptize, and thus teach. When the end of the world is come, and the kingdom delivered up to God even the Father, there will then be no further need of ministers and their ministration; but till then they shall continue, and the great intentions of the institution shall be answered. This is an encouraging word to all the faithful ministers of Christ, that what was said to the apostles was said to them all, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Two solemn farewells we find our Lord Jesus giving to his church; and his parting word, at both of them, is very encouraging. One was here, when he closed up his personal converse with them, and then his parting word was, "Lo, I am with you always;" "I leave you, and yet still I am with you." The other was, when he closed up the canon of the Scripture by the pen of his beloved disciple; and then his parting word was, "Surely, I come quickly;" "I leave you for a while, but I will be with you again shortly," *Rev. xxii. 20*. By this it appears he did not part in anger, but in love, and that it is his will we should keep up both our communion with him, and our expectation of him.

There is one word more remaining, which must not be overlooked; and that is, "Amen," which is not a cipher, intended only for a concluding word, like "finis," at the end of a book; but it has its significance. 1. It speaks Christ's confirmation of this promise, "Lo, I am with you." It is his amen, "in whom all the promises are yea and amen;" "Verily, I am, and will be with you; I, the amen, the faithful witness, do assure you of it." Or, 2. It speaks the church's concurrence with it, in their desire, and prayer, and expectation. It is the evangelist's 'amen, so be it, blessed Lord.' Our 'amen,' to Christ's promises, turns them into prayers. Hath Christ promised to be present with his ministers,—present in his Word,—present in the assemblies of his people, though but two or three are gathered together in his name, and this "always, even to the end of the world?"—let us heartily say 'Amen' to it; believe that it shall be so, and pray that it may be so: Lord, "remember this word unto thy servants, upon which thou hast caused us to hope."



MOUNT TABOR.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES TO THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW.

CHAP. I.—17. *Carrying away into Babylon*. This refers to the captivity of Jerusalem, and the removal of the Jews to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, (*2 Chr. xxxvi.*) 588 years before Christ. 20. *Angel of the Lord*. The word angel literally signifies a messenger. It is sometimes applied to men as messengers, (*Lu. vii. 24; ix. 52; Jas. ii. 25.*) to the winds, (*Ps. civ. 4.*) to the pestilence, (*Ps. lxxviii. 49.*) or to whatever is appointed to make known or execute the will of God. It is chiefly applied, however, in the Scriptures, to those invisible, holy, and happy beings who have not fallen into sin, who live in heaven, (*1 Tim. v. 21*, compare *Jude 6.*) who are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, (*Heb. i. 13, 14; Dan. ix. 21.*) and whose only dignity and pleasure it is to do the will of God. Various ways were employed by them in making known the Divine will,—by dreams, visions, assuming a human appearance. *In a dream*. This was a common way of revealing the will of God to his ancient prophets and people, *Gen. xx. 3; xxx. 1, 11, 24; xxxvii. 5; xli. 1; 1 Kin. iii. 5; Dan. vii. 1; Job iv. 13, 15*. By what means it was ascertained that these dreams were from God, cannot now be told. It is sufficient for us to know that in this way many of the prophecies were communicated, and to remark that *now* there is no evidence that we are to put reliance on our dreams. Dreams are wild, irregular movements of the mind when it is unshackled by reason, and it is mere superstition to suppose that God ever makes known his will in this way. 23. *His name, Emmanuel—God with us*. Though the mere use of such a name would not prove that Jesus had a Divine nature, yet, as *Matthew uses it*, and meant evidently to apply it, it *does* prove that Jesus was more than a man; that he was God as well as man. And it is this which gives glory to the plan of redemption, which causes the angels to wonder, and makes

it so vast, so grand, so full of instruction and comfort to Christians: see *Phil. ii. 6–8*. It is this which sheds such peace and joy into the sinner's heart; which gives him such security of salvation, and renders the condescension of God in redemption so great, and his character so lovely.

CHAP. II.—1. *In Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Herod the king*. Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ, was a small town about six miles south of Jerusalem. The word Bethlehem denotes, "house of bread." It was also called Ephrata, a word supposed to signify fertility, *Gen. xxxv. 19; Ru. iv. 2; Ps. cxxxii. 6*. It was called the city of David, (*Lu. ii. 4.*) because it was the city of his nativity, *1 Sam. xvi. 1, 18*. The soil of Bethlehem was noted for its fertility. Ancient travellers frequently speak of its productions; and the fig trees, olives, and pomegranates, and the barley fields which cover the north side, shew that it is still capable of being made what its name signifies, the house of bread.—*Bonar & M'Cheyne's Narrative*. The town is situated on an eminence in the midst of hills and vales. At present it contains about two hundred houses, inhabited chiefly by Christians and Mohammedans. About two hundred paces east of Bethlehem there is a church and convent, and beneath the church a subterranean chapel, lighted by thirty-two lamps, which is said to have been the stable where Jesus was born; but no reliance is to be placed on this tradition. Judæa was a province of the Roman empire. It was taken about sixty-three years before Christ's birth by Pompey, and placed under tribute. Herod received his appointment from the Romans; and though permitted to be called *king*, he was in all respects dependent on the Roman emperor. At the time of the birth of Christ, he had reigned thirty-four years. *Jerusalem was the capital*

it is considered that the word 'Amen' simply means 'so be it!' we may at once perceive that it could not be added by our Lord; for our Lord could not pray that his own will might be done, or his own promise fulfilled. The word is, therefore, utterly impertinent as a part of the sacred text, and could neither have been added by our Lord nor by the evangelist. The *Amens* at the end of the sacred books have no other authority than what they derive from the transcribers of copies, and at best are only to be considered as the

pious wish of the writer, or of the Church, that the promises contained in the sacred volume may be accomplished." The same writer calls attention to the so-called subscriptions or epigraphs which appear in sundry copies and versions. He gives, for example, the following from the Arabic, as found in some copies:—"The end of the copy of the Gospel of Matthew the Apostle. He wrote it in the land of Palestine, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in the Hebrew tongue, eight years after the bodily ascension of Jesus, the

of the kingdom of Judah, and was built on the line dividing this tribe from the tribe of Benjamin. It was once called Salem, (*Gen. xiv. 18; Ps. lxxvi. 2*), and, in the days of Abraham, was the abode of Melchizedek. When the Israelites took possession of the promised land, they found this stronghold in the possession of the *Sevites*, by whom it was called *Jebus*, or *Jebust*, *Jos. xvii. 28*. The name, *Jerusalem*, was compounded probably of the two, by changing a single letter, and calling it, for the sake of the sound, Jerusalem, instead of Jebusalem. It was built upon, and is encompassed by hills, was anciently inclosed with walls, (a portion of which still stand,) and was watered by the fountain of Siloam on the east, and by the fountain of Gihon on the west of the city, and in the time of Solomon by an aqueduct, part of which remains to this day, by which water was brought from the vicinity of Bethlehem. Jerusalem had perhaps its highest splendour in the days of Solomon. About four hundred years after, it was wholly destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. It lay utterly desolate during the seventy years of the Jewish captivity. Then it was rebuilt, and restored to some degree of its former magnificence, and remained about six hundred years, when it was utterly destroyed by Titus, A.D. 70. (See Notes on Fall of Jerusalem in the Gospel of Luke, ch. xxi.) After various changes it was, in 1217, taken possession of by the Turks, who have ever since continued in possession of it. At present it contains a population of about twenty thousand, comprising Jews, Turks, Arabs, Armenians, Greeks, and Papists.

The Jews have a number of synagogues, the Romanists have one convent, the Greeks twelve, the Armenians four, three on mount Zion, one in the city; the Copts, Syrians, and Abyssinians, have each one convent; the Turks have a splendid mosque, the mosque of Omar, on the site of the temple. The streets are narrow, and the houses are of stone; most of them low and irregular, with flat roofs or terraces, and with small windows only towards the street, usually protected by iron gratings. 2. *Worship him*. This does not mean religious worship, for these men did not suppose he could be Divine, but only a prince, the king of the Jews, in which capacity they came to honour him, and pay him homage, according to the custom in the East. 12. *In a dream*. See note on ch. i. 20. 13. *The angel*. See ch. i. 20. *Flee into Egypt*. Egypt is situated to the south-west of Judaea, and is distant from Bethlehem about sixty miles. It was at this time a Roman province; the Greek language was spoken, and many Jews lived there, who had a temple and synagogue, so that Joseph would be among his own countrymen, and yet beyond the reach of Herod, whose jurisdiction extended only to the river Sihor, or river of Egypt.

16. *Slew all the children*. Though Josephus does not record the destruction of the children, he gives such a character of Herod, as an odious and bloody tyrant, as to show that he was abundantly capable of this wickedness. He tells us that Herod murdered his wife's brother—her grandfather—that his wife herself had a public execution, and that his two sons were strangled in prison by his orders. Also, that a little before he died, he commanded the presence of all the chief men of Judaea at Jericho, and when they were come together he had them all shut up in the circus, and calling for his sister Salome and her husband Alexis, he told them, "My life is now short. I know the Jewish people, and nothing will please them better than my death. You have them now in your custody. As soon as the breath is out of my body, and before my death can be known, do you let in the soldiers upon them, and kill them. All Judaea then, and every family, will, though unwillingly, mourn at my death." Nay, Josephus says, that with tears in his eyes, he conjured them, by their love to him and their fidelity to God, not to fail of doing him this honour. Three reasons may be given for the destruction of the children not being mentioned by Josephus: 1. A Jew would not be likely to record whatever would confirm the truth of Christianity. 2. Bethlehem was a small and obscure village, and the other crimes of Herod were so great and public, that it is not to be wondered at that the Jewish historians should pass over this. 3. The order was probably given in secret, and might not be known to Josephus. Besides, no argument can be drawn from the silence of the Jewish historian. No reason can be given why Matthew should not be as fully entitled to credit as Josephus; especially as, after the horrid crimes narrated above, on Josephus' own authority, there is no improbability in the account given by him. 18. *Rama*, where Samuel was born and died, was once strongly fortified; but a half-ruined Mohammedan mosque, originally a Christian church, and a few miserable dwellings, are all that remain of this once celebrated spot. It is situated on an eminence about six miles from Jerusalem. 19. *Herod was dead*. He left three sons, among whom his kingdom was thus divided: To Archelaus was given Judaea, Idumaea, and Samaria; to Philip, Batanea and Trachonitis; and to Antipas, Galilee and Perea. Each of these was also called Herod, and they are the individuals so frequently referred to in other parts of the New Testament.

22. *The parts of Galilee*. The country of Galilee. At this time the land of Palestine was divided into three parts—Galilee, on the north; Samaria, in the middle; and Judaea, on the south. 23. *Nazareth*. This was a small town situated in Galilee. It was built partly on a valley, and partly on the declivity of a hill, *Lu. iv. 29*. A hill is yet pointed out to the south of Nazareth as the one from which the people attempted to precipitate the Saviour. It was a place at that time proverbial for wickedness, *Jno. i. 46*. It is now a large village, with a convent and two churches. The population is estimated to be from three thousand to five thousand.

CHAP. III.—12. *Whose fan*. The fan is a well-known agricultural instrument which was used by the Jews, as it is at the present day, to separate grain from the chaff. *His floor*. The threshing-floor was an open space, thirty or forty paces in diameter, and on elevated ground for the purpose of keeping it dry, and for the convenience of winnowing the grain by the wind. The grain was usually trodden out by oxen. After being threshed it was winnowed. It was then separated from the dirt and coarse chaff by a sieve, and then still farther cleansed by a fan, an instrument to produce an artificial wind. This method is still practised in the East.

CHAP. IV.—1. *The devil*. This word literally means an adversary or an accuser; thence any one opposed; thence an enemy of any kind. It is given in Scripture by way of eminence to the leader of evil angels; a being characterised as full of subtlety, envy, art, and hatred to mankind. He is known also by the name of *Satan*, *Job i. 6—12; Mat. xii. 26; Beelzebub*, *Mat. xii. 24; the old serpent*, *Rev. xii. 9*; and *the prince of the power of the air*, *Eph. ii. 2*. The attentive reader of Scripture will not fail to remark that the statement of the existence, the moral propensities and the agency of Satan, is extended nearly through the whole of the sacred volume from Genesis to the Revelations; that its writers in their portraiture of our great adversary, employ the same images, and adhere to the same appellatives throughout: that a complete identity of character is exhibited, marked with the same features of force, cruelty, malignity, and fraud. He is everywhere depicted as alike the enemy of God and man; who having appeared as a serpent, in the history of the Fall, is recognised by St. Paul under the same character in express allusion to that event, and afterwards by St. John in the Apocalypse, as "that old serpent, the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world."—*Robert Hall's Works*, vol. v. p. 70. 13. *Capernaum* a city on the north-west corner of the sea of

Tiberias, once a city of renown and the metropolis of all Galilee, but the site of which is now uncertain, see Note on *Mat. xi. 20—26*. 18. *Sea of Galilee*, also called the sea of Tiberias, and the lake of Gennesareth, and the sea of Chinnereth, *Nam. xxxiv. 11; Deu. iii. 17; Jos. xii. 3*. It is about fifteen miles in length, and from six to nine in width. Many populous cities once stood on its shores, such as Tiberias, Bethsaida, Capernaum, Chorazin, Hippos, &c. There is no part of Palestine which can be compared in beauty with the environs of this lake, through which the river Jordan flows directly, it is said, without mingling with its waters, so that the course of the Jordan can be distinctly seen. 23. *Synagogues*, or places where the people assembled together to worship God. Though the sacrifices of the Jews were appointed to be held in one place, at Jerusalem, there was nothing to forbid the other services of religion to be performed in any place. When synagogues were commenced is uncertain; they are mentioned by Josephus a considerable period before the coming of Christ; and in his time they were multiplied not only in Judaea, but wherever there were ten men willing to associate for the purpose. There were no less than four hundred and eighty in Jerusalem alone, before it was taken by the Romans. The Saviour and the apostles were in the habit of attending at those places, and of speaking to the people, *Lu. iv. 15—22; Acts xiii. 14, 15*. 24. *Those possessed with devils*, meaning that the persons so possessed were under the influence of evil spirits, who had complete possession of the faculties, and who produced many symptoms of disease not unlike melancholy, and madness, and epilepsy. That there was actual possession will appear from considering, 1. That Christ and the apostles spoke to them, and of them, as if they were so possessed. 2. They spake, conversed, expressed their knowledge and their fear of Christ—things that certainly could not be said of diseases, as some pretend, *Mat. viii. 28; Lu. viii. 27*. 3. They are represented as going out of the persons possessed and entering the bodies of others, *Mat. viii. 32*. 4. Jesus spake to them and called their names, and they answered him. He threatened them, commanded them to be silent, to depart, and not to return. *Mark i. 25; v. 8; ix. 25*. 5. If it may be denied that Christ believed in such possessions, it does not appear why any other clear sentiment of his may not in the same way be disputed. For there is perhaps no subject on which he expressed himself more clearly, or acted more uniformly, or which he left more deeply impressed on the minds of his disciples. Nor is there any absurdity in the opinion that those persons were really under the influence of devils. For, 1st. It is no more absurd to suppose that an angel or many angels, should have fallen or become wicked, than that so many men should. 2nd. It is no more singular that Satan should have possession of the human faculties, or inflict diseases, than that men should do it—a thing which is done every day. What more frequent than for a wicked man to corrupt the principles and morals of others, to induce them to become unbelieving, impenitent, intemperate, and so to produce a state of body and mind quite as bad as to be possessed with the devil? 3rd. We still see a multitude of cases, that no man can prove not to be produced by the presence of an evil spirit. "Insanity seems to me to be unquestionably Satanic influence," said Sir William Knighton, (*Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 312.) and who would attempt to say that some evil being may not have much to do in the case of madmen? 4th. It afforded an opportunity for Christ to shew his power over the minds of devils and of men, and thus to evince himself qualified to meet every enemy of the race, and triumphantly to redeem his people. He came to destroy the power of Satan. *Acts xvi. 18; Rom. xvi. 20, 21*. Conceiving Satan, agreeable to the intimations of the Word of God, to be the chief or head of a spiritual dominion, we easily account for the extent of the agency he is affirmed to exert in tempting and seducing the human race; not by supposing him to be personally present wherever such an operation is carrying on, but by referring it to his auspices, and considering it as belonging to the history of his empire. As innumerable angels of light fight under the banners of the Redeemer, so there is reason to conclude, the devil also is assisted by an equally numerous host of his angels, composing those principalities and powers, over which Jesus Christ triumphed in the making a show of them openly. On this principle, the objection we are considering (that omnipresence is attributed to the apostate spirit) falls entirely to the ground, and no more ubiquity or omnipresence is attributed to Satan by our system, than to Alexander, Cæsar, or Tamerlane, whose power was felt and their authority acknowledged, far beyond the limits of their personal presence.—*Robert Hall*.

CHAP. V.—5-9. The following translation of these verses is from Wickliffe's Bible, about the year 1380. "And Jhesus seyng the people, went up to an hill: and whance he was sett, his discipulis camen to him. And he openyde his mouth and taught them, and seide, Blessid be yore men in spirit: for the kyngdom of hevenes is hereyn. Blessid ben mylde men; for thei schulen be comfortid. Blessid be thei that hungren and thirsten rigtwisnesse, for thei schal be fulfilled. Blessid ben merciful men; for thei schal get mercy. Blessid be thei that ben of cleane herte: for thei schulen se god. Blessid ben pesible men: for thei schulen be clepid goddis children." *Baber's Edition*. 22. *Raca*, means *vain fellow*, a word of contempt. *Fool*, means wretch or miscreant, a term of the greatest abhorrence; these imply greater anger than the first expression, "without a cause," or rashly. Hence three degrees of punishment are set forth by the three modes of punishment amongst the Jews: by the *judgment*, the lowest court; the *council*, or sanhedrim, who punished more severely; and the Gehenna, or valley of Hinnom, (where children were formerly sacrificed to Moloch, by the idolatrous Israelites, *2 Kin. xvi. 3; 2 Chr. xxviii. 3*), used as a place of public execution, and here as elsewhere employed as a term to the future punishment of the wicked.) The amount, then, of this difficult and important verse is this: The Jews considered but one crime a violation of the sixth commandment, viz. actual murder. But Jesus says it is much broader. It relates not only to the external act, but to the feelings and words. He specifies three forms of such violation as above, and as among the Jews there were three degrees of punishment, so, he says, there shall be grades of condemnation for the different ways of violating the sixth commandment. Not only murder shall be punished by God, but anger and contempt shall be regarded by him as a violation of the law, and visited according to the offence. And all these expressions relate to degrees of punishment proportioned to the crime in the future world—the world of justice and of woe.

CHAP. VI.—2. *Take no thought*. The word thought, when the Bible was translated, meant *anxiety*, and is so used frequently in old English authors. The word anxiety would now exactly express the sense, and is exactly the thing against which the Saviour would guard us; see *Lu. viii. 14; xxi. 34; Phil. iv. 6*.

CHAP. VII.—21. *Not every one that saith, &c.* Many may be found, in the day of judgment, who may have been endowed with powers of prophecy, or miracle, as Balaam, or the magicians of Egypt, in the same way as many men of distinguished talents may be found, yet destitute of piety, and shut out of his kingdom.—See *Mark ix. 38; Lu. ix. 19; 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 3*. In this last place, Paul says, that though he spoke with the tongue of angels, and had the gift of pro-

Messiah, into heaven, in the first year of the reign of Claudius Cæsar, king of Rome." The Syriac copies generally have, "End of the holy Gospel of the preaching of Matthew, which he preached in Hebrew in the land of Palestine." A Greek copy, as quoted by Dr. Tischendorf, has this: "The Gospel according to Matthew; it was given by him in Jerusalem eight years after the ascension of Christ." Some copies add that it was delivered in the Hebrew tongue; that it was interpreted by John, or by James, the Lord's brother; that it

was afterwards interpreted in the Greek tongue by the illustrious Apostle Bartholomew, though some say by John the Divine, &c. All these merely represent traditions of more or less antiquity. The Vatican copy only has the words, "According to Matthew," and the Sinaitic has no subscription whatever. The Alexandrian reads, "Gospel according to Matthew;" and the Cambridge MS. has, "The Gospel according to Matthew is ended." From these examples it will be gathered that these subscriptions form no part of the original.

phesy, and could remove mountains, and had not charity, or love, all would be of no avail. 22. *In that day.* That is, in the last day, the day of judgment; the time when the principles of all pretenders to prophecy and piety shall be tried. 23. *Profess unto them, say unto them, plainly declare. I never knew you.* That is, I never approved, loved, or regarded you as my friends.—See *Ps. i. 6—11*; *1 Tim. vi. 9*; *1 Cor. viii. 3*. This proves that, with all their pretensions, they had never been true followers of Christ. Jesus will not then say to false prophets, and false professors of religion, that he had once known them, and then rejected them; that they had been once Christians, and then had fallen away; that they had been pardoned, and then had apostatized; but that he had never known them, they had never been true Christians; whatever may have been their pretended joys, their raptures, their hopes, their self-confidence, their visions, their zeal, they had never been regarded by the Saviour as his true friends. There is not a more decided proof that Christians do not fall away from grace than this text. It settles the question, and proves that whatever else such men had, they never had any true religion.—See *1 Jno. ii. 19*.

CHAP. VIII.—29. *Why are ye so fearful?* You should have remembered the Son of God, the Messiah, was on board. You should not have forgotten that he had power to save, and that with him you are safe. So Christians should never fear danger, disease, or death: with Jesus they are safe. No enemy can reach him; and is He safe, so they shall be also, *Jno. xiv. 9*. *Rebuked the winds.* Reproved them, or commanded them to be still. What a power was this! What irresistible proof that he was divine! His word awed the tempest and allayed the storm! There is not anywhere a sublimer description of a display of power; nor could there be a sublimer proof that he was truly the Son of God. *Great calm.* The winds were still, and the sea ceased to dash against the vessel and to endanger their lives. 32. *Went into the herd of swine.* Why is it any more absurd to suffer a wicked spirit to do injury than a wicked man; or to suffer a legion of devils to destroy a herd of swine, than for legions of men to desolate nations, and cover fields and towns with ruin and slaughter? 34. *Besought him that he would depart.* The most grovelling employment, the most abandoned sins, the most loathsome vices, are often loved more than the presence of Jesus, and more than all the blessings of his salvation.

CHAP. IX.—16. *No man putteth a piece of new cloth, &c.* The word here translated *new*, in the original signifies rude, undressed, or not fulled or cleaned by the cloth dresser. In this state, if applied to an old garment, and if wet, it would contract and draw off a part of the garment to which it was attached, and thus make the rent worse than it was. 17. *Neither do men put new wine, &c.* Bottles in Eastern nations were, and are still, made of skins of beasts, generally taken entire from a sheep or goat, and, when properly prepared, filled with wine or water. New skins or bottles would yield to the fermenting wine, and be strong enough to prevent them from bursting. By long usage, however, they of course became tender, and would be easily ruptured; new wine put into them would ferment and swell, and burst them open. By both these illustrations Christ intimates that there is a fitness or propriety of things. It is not fit that my doctrine should be attached to, or connected with, the old and corrupt doctrines of the Pharisees. New things should be put together and made to match.

CHAP. X.—4. *Judas Iscariot.* It is probable this name was given him from his native place. Carioth was a small town in the tribe of Judah. 5. *Into the way of the Gentiles.* That is, among the Gentiles, or nowhere but among the Jews. *And into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.* Samaria was situated between Jerusalem and Galilee, so that in passing from the one to the other, it was a direct course to pass through Samaria. The people who inhabited Samaria were composed of a few of the ten tribes and a mixture of foreigners, and embraced a religion made up of Judaism and idolatry, *2 Kin. xvii. 26—28*. The Lord, though here forbidding his apostles to go into any city of the Samaritans, preached the Gospel to them afterwards; (*Jno. iv. 6—26*;) and the apostles imitated his example, *Acts viii. 25*. The Gospel was, however, first preached to the Jews. 18. *And ye shall be brought, &c.* The prediction was completely and abundantly fulfilled, *Acts v. 26*; *xii. 1—4*; *xxiii. 33*; *xxvi. 1—30*. Peter is said to have been brought before Nero, John before Domitian, Roman emperors, and others before Parthian, Scythian, and Indian kings. The fulfilment of the prophecy is a signal evidence that Christ possessed a knowledge of the future. Few things were more improbable when this was uttered, than that the fishermen of Galilee would stand before the illustrious and mighty monarchs of the East and the West.

CHAP. XI.—21. *Woe unto thee, Chorazin—Bethsaida.* The precise situation of these towns is unknown. Tyre and Sidon. These were two cities on the shores of the Mediterranean sea, and on the western part of Judaea, therefore well known to the Jews. There is great uncertainty as to the site of ancient Tyre:—"Though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again," *Eze. xxvi. 21*. Sidon also has been brought low, *Eze. xxviii. 22*. Two places called by the name of Tyre and Sidon, however, yet remain. Capernaum. We did not search out the ruins of the city, but there were pointed out to us heaps among the luxuriant timber of the plain, which some have thought to be the remains of Capernaum. There seems every probability that Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, were within the limits of the little plain of Gennesareth, but where no one can tell. The solemn woe pronounced by the Lord Jesus on these three cities, in whose streets he so often spoke the words of eternal life, has fallen with silent but exterminating power. It is more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for them. "And thou, Capernaum, which wast exalted to heaven, art brought down to hell." He took out his believing remnant from the midst of them, as he took Lot out of Sodom: Peter, Andrew, and Philip, three worthies from Bethsaida, (*Jno. i. 44*), and then he swept the unbelieving cities away with the besom of destruction. The awful voice rises from these ruined heaps of Gennesareth, warning the cities of our favoured land that a despised Gospel will bring them as low as Capernaum; "he that believeth not shall be damned."—*Bonar & M'Cheyne's Narrative*.

CHAP. XII.—1-13. The two cases related in this passage, determine what may be done on the sabbath. The one was a case of necessity, the other of mercy. The example of the Saviour, and his explanations, show that these are a part of the proper duties of that holy day. Beyond an honest and conscientious discharge of these two duties, men may not devote the sabbath to any secular purpose. If they do, they do it at their peril; they go beyond what he authorises; they do what he claimed the special right of doing, as being Lord of the sabbath; they usurp his place, and act and legislate in opposition to his authority and laws. Men may as well trample down any other law of the Bible, as that respecting the sabbath. 31. *Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.* The sin against the Holy Ghost, so far from conferring any rare distinction of wickedness on him who is guilty of it, is, in fact, the sin of all who, living under the dispensation of the Gospel, have,

by their rejection of it, made it the "savour of death unto death." It is a sin which can be charged upon every man who has put the overtures of forgiveness away from him. It is a sin which if, in the great day of examination, you are found to be free from, will argue your acceptance of the Gospel, in virtue of which its forgiveness is made sure to you. And it is a sin which, if found on that day to adhere to you, will argue your final refusal of this same Gospel, in virtue of which your forgiveness is impossible, because you are out of the only way given under heaven whereby man can be saved.—*Dr. Chalmers, sermon on this text.*

CHAP. XIII.—22. *The thorns.* These represent cares, anxieties, and the deceitful love of riches, or the way in which a desire to be rich deceives us. They take the time and attention; they leave not opportunity to think and examine the state of the soul. Besides, riches allure and promise what they do not yield; they promise to make us happy, but when gained, do it not—the soul is not satisfied; there is the same desire to possess more wealth, and to this there is no end—but death, *1 Tim. vi. 7—11*. How many, O how many, thus foolishly drown themselves in destruction and perdition! How many more might reach heaven, if it were not for this deep-rooted love of that which fills with care, deceives the soul, and finally leaves it naked, guilty, and lost.

CHAP. XIV.—25. *Fourth watch of the night.* In the time of the Saviour the Jews divided the night into four watches, the fourth having been introduced by the Romans. These watches consisted of three hours each. The first, (evening,) commenced at six, and continued till nine; the second, (midnight,) from nine to twelve; the third, (cock-crowing,) from twelve to three; and the fourth, (morning,) from three to six, *Mark xiii. 35*. It was in the last of these watches, or between three and six in the morning, that Jesus appeared to the disciples; so that he had spent most of the night alone in the mountain in prayer. *Walking on the sea.* A manifest and wonderful miracle. It was a boisterous sea; it was in a dark night; the little boat was four or five miles from the shore, tossed by the billows.

CHAP. XV.—7. *Ye hypocrites.* Hypocrisy is the concealment of some base principle under the pretence of religion. Never was there a clearer instance of it than this—an attempt to get rid of the duty of providing for needy parents, under an appearance of piety towards God.

CHAP. XVI.—18. Whichever of the views of this text mentioned in the Commentary be taken, nothing is more plain than that Christ did not mean, as the Roman Catholics say he did, to exalt Peter to supreme authority above all the other apostles, or to say that he was the only one on whom he would rear his church: see *Acts xv.*, where the advice of James, and not of Peter, is followed; see also *Gal. ii. 11*, where Paul withstood Peter to his face, because he was to be blamed; a thing which could not have happened, if Christ, as the Papists allege, meant that Peter should be absolute and infallible. More than all, it is not said here, or anywhere else in the Bible, that Peter should have infallible successors, who should be the viceregents of Christ, and the head of the church. Luther, alluding to this utter want of Scriptural evidence for such a monstrous doctrine, jestingly asked, "Where is it written, except perhaps at Rome, in St. Peter's, upon the chimney, with a coal?" But the simplest method of dealing with this idea is pointed out by the words in the 23rd verse, where our Lord says to Peter, GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN. Allowing that this term is not applied to Peter personally, it yet shews that his reproach of Christ was Satanic, or the suggestion of the great spiritual adversary, and that it could not be Peter, but Peter's profession of the true faith, which was the rock on which the church was to be built. As to Peter's infallible successors—the popes—it can be proved that many popes have contradicted each other in matters of faith,—that for long periods there have been two or even three pretenders to the popedom,—that not a few of the popes have been monsters of iniquity, and that many secured their election to the papal chair by the most atrocious means—by force and fraud—by murder and bribery, and the assistance of prostitutes; and yet all these must be acknowledged as the vicars of Christ, entitled to exercise dominion over the consciences and the conduct of all his followers!—See *Dr. Cunningham's edition of Stillingfleet on the Doctrines, &c., of the Church of Rome.* Church. The word church means literally those called out from the world, and often means an assembly or congregation; see *Acts xix. 32, Gr.*; *Acts vii. 38*. It is applied to Christians, as being called out from the world. It means sometimes the whole body of believers worshipping in one place, *Acts viii. 1*; *ix. 31*; *1 Cor. i. 2, &c.*; sometimes also a society in a single house, as *Rom. xvi. 5*. In common language, it means the church visible, that is, all who profess religion; or invisible, that is, all who are real Christians, professors or not. *And the gates of hell, &c.* Ancient cities were surrounded by walls. In the gates by which they were entered, were the principal places for holding courts, transacting business, and deliberating on public affairs. The word gates, therefore, is used for counsels, designs, machinations, evil purposes. Hell means here the place of departed spirits, particularly evil spirits. And the meaning of the passage is, that all the plots, stratagems, and machinations, of the enemies of the church should not be able to overcome it,—a prophecy that has been remarkably fulfilled.

CHAP. XVII.—1. *A high mountain apart.* It was commonly supposed that this was Tabor, a high mountain in Galilee, about a thousand feet above the plain. Its level top, about a mile in circumference, covered with groups of fine trees and brushwood, affords a spot of complete retirement in the very midst of the land. From the west it is like a truncated cone, appearing much steeper and higher, with the southern side almost destitute of trees. On all sides it is a marked and prominent object, as the prophet intimates when he says, "As Tabor is among the mountains," *Jer. xlii. 18*. If this was really the scene of the Transfiguration, there is a difficulty arising from the fact that both a fortress and a village once stood on its top, though otherwise it would not be easy to find a spot in this world more suitable for that heavenly transaction.—*Bonar and M'Cheyne's Narrative.* This fortified town existed for at least two hundred and twenty years before, and sixty years after, the birth of Christ, for which reason it is now generally thought that Tabor was not the site of the Transfiguration. This part of Galilee, however, abounds with "high mountains apart," and the above drawing of mount Tabor is given as an illustration of them all. 2. *Thou shalt find a piece of money.* In whatever way this is regarded, it is a proof that Jesus was possessed of Divine attributes. If he knew that the first fish that came up would have such a coin in its mouth, it was proof of omniscience. If he created the coin for the occasion, and placed it there, then it was proof of Divine power. The former is the more probable supposition. It is by no means absurd that a fish should have swallowed a silver coin, many of them bite eagerly at any thing bright, and would not hesitate therefore at swallowing a piece of money.—This miracle being wrought in support of religious institutions, teaches us of how much value Jesus considered them to the welfare of man. Religion promotes the purity, peace, intelligence

In concluding this note, mention may be made of an apocryphal Gospel ascribed to Matthew, and containing fictitious accounts of the birth of Mary and the infancy of our Saviour. A spurious inscription declares it to have been written in Hebrew by Matthew, and translated into Latin by Jerome. Bishop Ellicott calls it "an agglomeration of folly and fraud." It is made up from various sources, and is now only to be met with in Latin, or modern versions thereof. It was probably not written earlier than the fifth

century, and is in some copies ascribed to "James, the son of Joseph." The document was partly published by Thilo in 1832, and completely by Dr. Tischendorf in 1853. The name of Matthew is also associated with other documents, the most curious of which is in Greek, and professes to be an account of his deeds and martyrdom.

Additional Notes.—Chap. iv. 11. The precise intention of the word "ministered" here is not apparent. The word is one which commonly signifies to wait or attend upon. The verb often occurs,

and order of the community, and every man is therefore under the obligation to do his part towards its support. If any man doubts this, he has only to go to the place where there is no religion,—among scoffers, and thieves, and adulterers, and prostitutes, and pickpockets, and drunkards. No money is lost that goes in any way to suppress these vices.

CHAP. XVIII.—9. *Hell fire.* See Notes on Mark ix. 44, 46, 48. 20. *For when two or three, &c.* This is a general assertion, made to support the particular promise (ver. 19) to his apostles. He affirms that, *wherever* two or three are gathered together in his name, he is in the midst of them. *In my name:* That is, 1st. By my authority, acting for me in my church. See *Jno.* x. 25; xvi. 21. 2nd. It may mean, For my service, in the place of prayer and praise,—assembled in obedience to my command, and with a desire to promote my glory. *There am I in the midst of them.* Nothing could more clearly prove that Jesus must be everywhere present, and of course be God. Every day, perhaps every hour, two or three, or many more, may be assembled in every city or village in England, in the United States, Greenland, Africa; in Ceylon; in the Sandwich Islands; in Russia, and in Judæa—in almost every part of the world,—and in the midst of them all is Jesus the Saviour. Millions thus, at the same time, in every quarter of the globe, worship in his name, and experience the truth of the promise that he is present with them. It is impossible that he should be in all these places and not be God.

CHAP. XIX.—8. *He saith unto them, &c.* Jesus admits that divorce had been allowed, but declares that this was not the original design of marriage. Moses found the custom in use. He found a hardhearted and rebellious people. In these circumstances he did not deem it prudent to forbid a practice so universal; but that it might be regulated, and instead of suffering the husband to divorce his wife in a passion, he required him to give her a writing, to sit down deliberately and look at the matter; and, probably, also to bring the case before some scribe, or learned man, to write a divorce in a legal form. Here would then be an opportunity for reconciliation; and the man might, after all, be persuaded not to divorce his wife. This, says the Saviour, was a permission growing out of a particular state of things, and designed to remedy a prevailing evil. But at first it was not so. God intended that marriage should be between one man and one woman; and that they were only to be separated by the appointment of him who had formed the union.

CHAP. XX.—23. *Is not mine to give, &c.* The correct translation of this passage would be, "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, except to those for whom it is prepared of my Father." This, the correct, sense is seen by leaving out that part of the verse in italics; and the present is one of the places in the Bible where the sense has been obscured or perverted by the introduction of words which have nothing to correspond with them in the original. See a similar instance in *1 Jno.* ii. 23.

CHAP. XXI.—1. *Mount of Olives, or Olivet, is on the east of Jerusalem.* Between this and Jerusalem there runs a small stream, called the brook Cedron, or Cedron, which is dry in the hot season, but swells to a considerable size in the time of heavy rains. See *Jno.* xviii. 1. The Mount of Olives was so called from its producing in abundance the olive. It is about a mile in length, and about seven hundred feet in height, and overlooks Jerusalem, so that from its summit almost every part of the city can be seen. 12. *Temple of God.* The temple of God, or the temple dedicated and devoted to the service of God, was first built by Solomon on Moriah, about one thousand and five years before Christ: *1 Kin.* iv. It remained till destroyed by the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar, five hundred and eighty-four years before Christ, *2 Chr.* xxxvi. 6, 19. After the Babylonish captivity the temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, but with vastly inferior beauty, *Ezra* iii. 8, 12. This was called the second temple. It was wholly razed to the ground by the Romans under Titus and Vespasian, according to the prediction of the Saviour. See Notes on Fall of Jerusalem, on ch. xxi. of Luke's Gospel. 21. *Render therefore to Cæsar.* It is right to obey the law of the land. Conscientious Christians make the best citizens. Yet we are to obey civil rulers no farther than their commands are consistent with the law of God. God is to be obeyed rather than man. And when a civil ruler commands a thing contrary to the law of the Bible and the dictates of our consciences, we may, we must resist it.

CHAP. XXII.—45. *If David, &c.* If he was then David's lord,—if he was his superior,—if he had an existence at that time, how could he be descended from him? They could not answer him. Nor is there any way of answering the question but by the admission that the Messiah was Divine as well as human; that he had an existence at the time of David, and was his lord and master, as God and king; and that as man he was descended from him.

CHAP. XXIII.—5. *Phylacteries*—were small slips of parchment, on which were written certain portions of the Old Testament, founded on a merely literal interpretation of *Ex.* xiii. 16. (Compare *Pr.* iii. 1—3; vi. 21.) See engraving of Pharisees with phylacteries, ch. xii. 14. 6. *Rooms,* more correctly rendered places or couches at feasts; for it was the custom among the Jews not to eat sitting, as we do, but reclining on couches. 24. *Which*

strain at a gnat. A proverb. It should have been "to strain out a gnat;" and so it was, undoubtedly, rendered by the translators. The common reading is a misprint, and should be corrected. The Greek means, to strain out by a cloth or sieve.

CHAP. XXIV.—2. *There shall not be left one stone, &c.* See for fulfilment of this, and following predictions, the notes referred to on Luke's Gospel. 15. *The abomination of desolation.* This is a Hebrew expression, meaning an abominable or hateful destroyer. The Gentiles were all held in abomination by the Jews, *Acts* x. 28. The abomination of desolation means the Roman army, and is so explained by *Lu.* xxi. 20.

CHAP. XXV.—1. *Which took their lamps.* 'We wished to see the parable of the ten virgins illustrated, and our wish was gratified. The bridegroom was on his way to the house of the bride.' (Below he is figured as conducting her to his own, from her father's house.) 'According to custom, he walked in procession through several streets of the town, attended by a numerous body of friends, all in their showy Eastern garb. Persons bearing torches went first—an instrument, not unlike the bagpipe, was playing—two of the torch-bearers stood close to the bridegroom—and there was much mirth expressed by the crowd, especially when the procession stood still, which it did every few paces. We thought of the words of John, (*Jno.* iii. 29,) "The friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice."—Bonar & M Cheyne's Narrative.

CHAP. XXVI.—2. *Passover.* See Comment and Notes on *Ex.* xii. 3. *High Priest.* Holding the office that was first conferred on Aaron, *Ex.* xxviii. Herod and the Romans changed the incumbents of the office at pleasure. Hence it is said, that Caiaphas was high priest for that year, *Jno.* xi. 51. Persons who had been high priest still retained the name; and hence more than one high priest is sometimes mentioned, though strictly there was but one who held the office. 20. *He sat down.* At first the supper was eaten standing, with their loins girded, and their staff in their hand, denoting the haste with which they were about to flee from Egypt. Afterwards, however, they introduced the practice it seems of partaking of this as they did of their ordinary meals. The original word is, "he reclined," that is, he placed himself on the couch in a reclining posture, in the usual manner in which they partook of their meals. It is the more important to notice this, as the Comment on the verse speaks of his sitting upright. 36. *Then cometh, &c.* After the institution of the supper, in the early part of the night, he went out to the Mount of Olives. On his journey he passed over the brook Cedron (*Jno.* xviii. 1), which bounded Jerusalem on the east. To a place. This place was evidently on the western side of the Mount of Olives, a short distance from Jerusalem, and commanding a full view of the city. John calls it a garden, a place planted with the olive and other trees; perhaps with a fountain of water, and with walks and groves. Messrs. Fisk and King, American missionaries, were there in 1823. They tell us that the garden is about a stone's cast from the brook of Cedron, that it now contains eight large and venerable looking olives. The spot is sandy and barren, and appears like a forsaken place. A low rotten wall surrounds it. Luke says, Jesus went as he was wont, that is, accustomed, to the Mount of Olives. John, in reference to the garden, records that he oftentimes rested thither with his disciples.

CHAP. XXVII.—25. *His blood be on us, and on our children.* The Jews had no right to call down this vengeance on their children; but in the righteous judgment of God it has come upon them. In less than forty years their city and temple were overthrown and destroyed. More than a million of people perished in the siege; thousands died by famine; thousands by disease; thousands by the sword; and their blood ran down the streets like water, so that Josephus says, it extinguished things that were burning in the city. To this day, also, the curse has remained. 31, 33. *Led him away—unto a place called Golgotha.* This is the place which in Luke is called Calvary. It was probably called the place of skulls, from being a place of execution. Mount Calvary was a small eminence, usually supposed to have been on the north-west of Jerusalem, without the walls of the city, but at a short distance. Jesus was put to death out of the city, because capital punishments were not allowed within the walls. See *Num.* xv. 35; *1 Kin.* xxi. 13. This was a law among the Romans as well as the Jews. He also died there, because the bodies of the animals slain in sacrifice, as typical of him, were burned without the camp. He also, as the antitype, suffered without the gate, *Heb.* xiii. 11, 12.

CHAP. XXVIII.—13. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* The Son of God, as Creator, had an original right to all things, to control them and to dispose of them. See *Jno.* i. 3; *Col.* i. 16, 17; *Heb.* i. 8. But it is here meant that the universe is put under him more particularly as Mediator; that he might redeem his people; that he might gather and rule over a church; that he might defend his chosen; that he might subdue all their enemies, and bring them off conquerors, and more than conquerors, *Eph.* i. 20—23; *1 Cor.* xv. 25, 27; *Jno.* v. 22, 23; *Phil.* ii. 6, 11. His mediatorial government extends therefore over the material world,—over angels,—over devils,—over wicked men,—over his own people. HE IS THE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH.



EASTERN MARRIAGE PROCESSION.

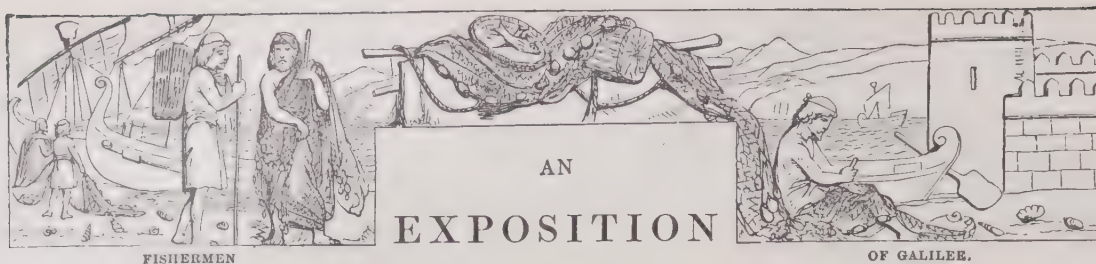
as in chap. viii. 15; xx. 28; Luke viii. 3; Acts xix. 22; Rom. xv. 25; 2 Cor. iii. 3; 1 Pet. i. 12, &c. A similar word appears in Heb. i. 14.

v. 26. The fine exacted must be paid. The farthing is the Roman *quadrans*, one of the smallest copper coins, considerably less than an English farthing.

v. 29, 30. "Offend" means cause thee to stumble or to do wrong. The word for "hell" here also is *gehenna*, by which the Jews of that time understood "hell."

vi. 22, 23. "Single" is here contrasted with "evil;" but there is no reference to what is called an evil eye. The word "evil," like our word "bad," has the sense of ill, suffering from disorder, which may include partial or total blindness. "Single," therefore, must mean sound, in a healthy condition, free from disease.

vi. 34. "Do not anticipate to-morrow's griefs, because to-morrow will have its own anxieties. Why add to-morrow's troubles to the troubles of to-day?"



AN EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK,

WITH
PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE have heard the evidence given in by the first witness to the doctrine and miracles of our Lord Jesus; and now here is another witness produced, who calls for our attention. The second living creature saith, "Come and see," *Rev. vi. 3*. Now let us inquire a little, I. Concerning this witness. His name is Mark. Marcus was a Roman name, and a very common one, and yet we have no reason to think but that he was by birth a Jew; but as Saul, when he went among the nations took the Roman name of Paul, so he of Mark; his Jewish name perhaps being Mardocai, so Grotius. We read of John, whose surname was Mark, sister's son to Barnabas, whom Paul was displeased with, *Acts xv. 37, 38*, but afterwards had a great kindness for, and not only ordered the churches to receive him, *Col. iv. 10*, but sent for him to be his assistant, with this encomium, "He is profitable to me for the ministry," *2 Tim. iv. 11*. And he reckons him among his fellow-labourers, *Phile. 24*. We read of Marcus, whom Peter calls his son, having been an instrument of his conversion, *1 Pet. v. 13*. Whether that was the same with the other, and if not, which of them was the penman of this Gospel, is altogether uncertain. It is a tradition very current among the ancients, that St. Mark wrote this Gospel under the direction of St. Peter, and that it was confirmed by his authority; so Hieron. *Catal. Script. Eccles. : Marcus discipulus et interpres Petri, juxta quod Petrum referentem audierat, legatus Roma a fratribus breve scripsit Evangelium*,—"Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, being sent from Rome by the brethren, wrote a concise Gospel, as he heard it related by Peter." And Tertullian saith, *Adv. Marcion. lib. 4, cap. 5: Marcus quod edidit, Petri affirmetur, cujus interpres Marcus*,—"Mark, the interpreter of Peter, delivered in writing the things which had been preached by Peter." But, as Dr. Whitby very well suggests, "What need we have recourse to the authority of Peter for the support of this Gospel, or to say with St. Jerome, that Peter approved of it, and recommended it to his authority to the church to be read; when, though it is true Mark was no apostle, yet we have all the reason in the world to think, that both he and Luke were of the number of the seventy disciples, who accompanied with the apostles all along, *Acts i. 21*; who had a commission like that of the apostles, *Lu. x. 19*, compared with *Mar. xvi. 18*; and who, it is highly probable, received the Holy Ghost when they did, *Acts i. 15; ii. 1*; so that it is no diminution at all to the validity or value of this Gospel, that Mark was not one of the twelve, as Matthew and John were. St. Jerome saith, that after the writing of this Gospel, he went into Egypt, and was the first that preached the Gospel at Alexandria, where he founded a church, to which he was a great example of holy living. *Constituit Ecclesiam tanta doctrina et vite continentia, ut omnes sectatores Christi ad exemplum sui cogeret*,—"He so adorned, by his doctrine and his life, the church which he founded, that his example influenced all the followers of Christ."

II. Concerning this testimony. Mark's Gospel, 1. Is but short, much shorter than Matthew's, not giving so full an account of Christ's sermons as that did, but insisting chiefly on his miracles. 2. It is very much a repetition of what we had in *Matthew*; many remarkable circumstances being added to the stories there related, but not many new matters. When many witnesses are called to prove the same fact, upon which a judgment is to be given, it is not thought tedious but highly necessary, that they should each of them relate it in their own words, again and again, that by the agreement of the testimony, the thing might be established; and therefore we must not think this book of Scripture needless, for it is written not only to confirm our belief that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," but to put us in mind of things which we have read in the foregoing Gospel; that we may "give the more earnest heed to them, lest at any time we let them slip;" and even pure minds have need to be thus stirred up by way of remembrance. It was fit that such great things as these should be spoken and written, once, yea twice, because man is so unapt to perceive them, and so apt to forget them. There is no ground for the tradition that this Gospel was written first in Latin, though it was written at Rome; it was written in Greek, as was St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, the Greek being the more universal language.

A.D. 26.

CHAPTER I.

Mark's narrative takes not rise so early as those of Matthew and Luke do, from the birth of our Saviour, but from John's baptism: from which he presently passeth to Christ's public ministry. Accordingly in this chapter, we have, I. The office of John Baptist, illustrated by the prophecy of him, ver. 1-3; and the history of him, ver. 4-8. II. Christ's baptism, and his being owned from heaven, ver. 9-11. III. His temptation, ver. 12, 13. IV. His preaching, ver. 14, 15, 21, 22, 38, 39. V. His calling disciples, ver. 16-20. VI. His praying, ver. 35. VII. His working miracles: 1. His rebuking an unclean spirit, ver. 23-28; 2. His curing Peter's mother in law, that was ill of a fever, ver. 29-31; 3. His healing all that came to him, ver. 32, 34, 35; 4. His cleansing a leper, ver. 40-45.



HE beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; 2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight. 4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judæa, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; 7 And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. 8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

We may observe here, First. *What the New Testament is*: The Divine Testament, to which we adhere above all that is human. The New Testament, to which we advance above that which was old. It is "the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God," ver. 1. 1. It is Gospel; it is God's Word, and is faithful and true; see *Rev. xix. 9; xxi. 5; xxii. 6*. It is a good Word, and well worthy of

i. 2, 3. The two prophets here quoted are Malachi iii. 1 and Isaiah xl. 3. The reading, "in the prophets," occurs in the Alexandrian and divers other manuscripts; but the reading, "in Isaiah the prophet," is better supported, being found in the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Cambridge MSS., and in the Syriac and Vulgate versions. It is therefore followed by the chief modern editors and critics. Both readings are now found in Irenæus, but that in which he agrees with our version is suspected to be an alteration. Grotius says the reading,

"in Isaiah the prophet," would not have been brought forward against the Christians by Porphyry if there had been any various reading then, neither would the Christians have found it difficult to answer Porphyry's objection. Mark names only the greater of his two authorities, having specially in view the character of the preaching of John; the words from Malachi are merely introductory.

i. 4. Here also there is a various reading. For "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach," some read, "There was John the

all acceptance; it brings us glad tidings. 2. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the anointed Saviour, the Messiah promised and expected. The foregoing Gospel began with the generation of Jesus Christ, that was but preliminary; this comes immediately to the business,—the Gospel of Christ. It is called his, not only because he is the Author of it, and it comes from him; but because he is the subject of it, and it treats wholly concerning him. 3. This Jesus is the Son of God. That truth is the foundation on which the Gospel is built, and which it is written to demonstrate; for if Jesus be not the Son of God, our faith is vain.

Secondly, *What the reference of the New Testament is to the Old, and its coherence with it.* The Gospel of Jesus Christ begins, and so we shall find it goes on, just "as it is written in the prophets," ver. 2; for it saith, "no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said should come," Acts xxvi. 22, which was most proper and powerful for the conviction of the Jews, that believed the Old Testament prophets to be sent of God, and ought to evidence that they did so by welcoming the accomplishment of their prophecies in its season; but it is of use to us all for the confirmation of our prophecies in the Old Testament and in the New, for the exact harmony that there is between both, shews that they both have the same Divine original. Quotations are here borrowed from two prophecies; that of Isaiah, which was the longest, and that of Malachi, which was the latest, (and there were above three hundred years between them,) that both spoke to the same purpose concerning "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," in the ministry of John. 1. Malachi, in whom we had the Old Testament farewell, spoke very plainly, *Mal. iii. 1.* concerning John Baptist, who was to give the New Testament welcome: "Behold I send my messenger before thy face," ver. 2. Christ himself had taken notice of this, and applied it to John, *Mat. xi. 10.* who was God's messenger sent to prepare Christ's way. 2. Isaiah, the most evangelical of all the prophets, begins the evangelical part of his prophecy with this, which points to "the beginning of the Gospel of Christ," *Isa. xl. 3*: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness," ver. 3. Matthew had taken notice of this, and applied it to John, *Mat. iii. 3*. But from these two put together here, we may observe, 1st. That Christ in his Gospel comes among us, bringing with him a treasure of grace, and a sceptre of government. 2nd. Such is the corruption of the world, that it is something to do to make room for him, and to remove that which gives not only obstruction, but opposition to his progress. 3rd. When God sent his Son into the world he took care, and when he sends him into the heart he takes care, effectual care, to prepare his way before him; for the designs of his grace shall not be frustrated, nor may any expect the comforts of that grace, but such as by conviction of sin, and humiliation for it, are prepared for those comforts, and disposed to receive them. 4th. When the paths that were crooked are made straight, (the mistakes of the judgment rectified, and the crooked ways of the affections, then way is made for Christ's comforts. 5th. It is in a wilderness—for such this world is, that Christ's way is prepared, and theirs that follow him, like that which Israel passed through to Canaan. 6th. The messengers of conviction and terror, that come to prepare Christ's way, are God's messengers, whom he sends and will own, and must be received as such. 7th. They that are sent to "prepare the way of the Lord," in such a vast howling wilderness as this is, have need to cry aloud, and not spare, and to lift up their voice like a trumpet.

Thirdly, *What the beginning of the New Testament was.* The Gospel began in John Baptist; for "the law and the prophets were, until John," the only Divine revelation, but then the kingdom of God began to be preached, *Lu. xvi. 16*. Peter begins from the baptism of John, *Acts i. 22*. The Gospel did not begin so soon as the birth of Christ, for he took time to increase in wisdom and stature, nor so late as his entering upon his public ministry, but half a year before, when John began to preach the same doctrine that Christ afterwards preached. His baptism was the dawning of the gospel day; for

1. In John's way of living there was the beginning of a gospel spirit, for it spoke great self-denial, mortification of the flesh, a holy contempt of the world, and nonconformity to it, which may truly be called "the beginning of the Gospel of Christ" in any soul, ver. 6. He "was clothed with camel's hair," not with soft raiment; was girt, not with a golden but a leathern girdle; and, in contempt of dainties and delicate things, his meat was locusts and wild honey. Note, The more we sit loose to the body, and live above the world, the better we are prepared for Jesus Christ.

2. In John's preaching and baptizing there was the beginning of the gospel doctrines and ordinances, and the firstfruits of them. 1st. He preached the remission of sins, which is the great gospel privilege, shewed people their need of it, that they were undone without it, and that it might be obtained. 2nd. He preached repentance in order to it; he told people that there must be a renovation of their hearts, and a reformation of their lives, that they must forsake their sins and turn to God, and upon those terms, and no other, their sins should be forgiven. "Repentance for the remission of sins" was what the apostles were commissioned to preach to all nations, *Lu. xxiv. 47*. 3rd. He preached Christ, and directed his hearers to expect him speedily to appear, and to expect great things from him. The preaching of Christ is pure gospel, and that was John Baptist's preaching, ver. 7, 8. Like a true gospel minister, he preacheth,

First, The great pre-eminence Christ is advanced to; so high, so great is Christ, that John, though one of the greatest that was born of woman, yet thinks himself unworthy to be employed in the meanest office about him, even to stoop down and untie his shoes. Thus industrious is he to give honour to him, and bring others to do so too. Secondly, The great power Christ is invested in. "He comes after me in time, but he is mightier than I; mightier than the mighty ones of the earth, for he is able to baptize with the Holy Ghost. He can give the Spirit of God, and by him govern the spirits of men."

Thirdly, The great promise Christ makes in his Gospel to those who have repented, and have had their sins forgiven them: they shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, shall be purified by his graces, and refreshed by his comforts. And, lastly, All those who received his doctrine, and submitted to his institution, he baptized with water, as the manner of the Jews was to admit proselytes, in token of their cleansing themselves by repentance and reformation, which was the duty required; and of God's cleansing them both by remission and sanctification, which were the blessings promised. Now this was afterwards to be advanced into a gospel ordinance, which John's using it was a preface to.

3. In the success of John's preaching, and the disciples he admitted by baptism, there was the beginning of a gospel church. He baptized in the wilderness, and declined going to the cities, but "there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem," inhabitants both of city and country, families of them, "and were all baptized of him." They entered themselves his disciples, and bound themselves to his discipline, and in token of that they confessed their sins; he admitted them his disciples, and in token of that baptized them. Here were the stamina of the gospel church, the dew of its youth from the womb of the morning, *Ps. cx. 3*. Many of these afterwards became followers of Christ, and preachers of his Gospel, and this grain of mustard seed became a tree.

Baptiser in the wilderness, preaching," &c. The Syriac may be rendered, "John was in the wilderness baptising and preaching;" so the Vulgate.

i. 5. For "and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptised," weighty authorities, ancient and modern, read, "and all they of Jerusalem, and were baptised." The Syriac has, "and all the sons of Jerusalem, and he baptised them in the river Jordan." The second reading is best.

9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. 10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: 11 And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 12 And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness. 13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

We have here a brief account of Christ's baptism and temptation, which were largely related, *Mat. iii. and iv.*

First, *His baptism*, which was his first public appearance, after he had long lived obscurely in Nazareth. O how much hidden worth is there, which in this world is either lost in the dust of contempt, and cannot be known, or wrapt up in the veil of humility, and will not be known. But sooner or later it shall be known, as Christ's was.

1. See how humbly he owned God, by coming to be baptized of John, and thus it became him "to fulfil all righteousness." Thus he took upon him the likeness of sinful flesh, that though he was perfectly pure and unspotted, yet he was washed, as if he had been polluted; and thus for our sakes he sanctified himself, that we also might be sanctified and be baptized with him, *Jno. xvii. 19*.

2. See how honourably God owned him, when he submitted to John's baptism. Those who justify God, as they are said to do who were "baptized with the baptism of John," he will glorify them, *Lu. vii. 29, 30*. 1st. "He saw the heavens opened." Thus he was owned to be the Lord from heaven, and had a glimpse of the glory and joy that was set before him, and secured to him as the recompence of his undertaking. Matthew saith, the "heavens were opened to him;" Mark saith, he saw them opened. Many have the heavens opened to receive them, but they do not see it. Christ had not only a clear foresight of his sufferings, but of his glory too. 2nd. He saw "the Spirit like a dove descending upon him." Note, Then we may see heaven opened to us, when we perceive the Spirit descending and working upon us. God's good work in us is the surest evidence of his good will towards us, and his preparations for us. Justin Martyr saith, that when Christ was baptized, a fire was kindled in Jordan; and it is an ancient tradition that a great light shone round the place, for the Spirit brings both light and heat. 3rd. He heard a voice which was intended for an encouragement to proceed in his undertaking, and therefore it is here expressed as directed to him, "Thou art my beloved Son." God lets him know, First, That he loved him never the less for that low and mean estate to which he had now humbled himself; though thus emptied and made of no reputation, yet "my beloved Son" still. Secondly, That he loved him much the more for that glorious and kind undertaking in which he had now engaged himself. God is well pleased in him as referee of all matters in controversy between him and man; and so well pleased in him as to be well pleased with us in him.

Secondly, *His temptation.* The good Spirit that descended upon him led "him into the wilderness," ver. 12. Paul mentions it as a proof that he had his doctrine from God, and not from man, that as soon as he was called he went not to Jerusalem, but went into Arabia, *Gal. i. 17*. Retirement from the world is an opportunity of more free converse with God, and therefore must sometimes be chosen for a while, even by those that are called to the greatest business. Mark observes this circumstance of his being in the wilderness, that he "was with the wild beasts." It was an instance of his Father's care of him, that he was preserved from being torn in pieces by the wild beasts, which encouraged him the more, that his Father would provide for him when he was hungry. Special protections are earnest of seasonable supplies. It was likewise an intimation to him of the inhumanity of the men of that generation whom he was to live among, no better than wild beasts in the wilderness, nay, abundantly worse. In that wilderness,

1. The evil spirits were busy with him: he was "tempted of Satan:" not by any inward injections,—the prince of this world had no'ing in him to fasten upon,—but by outward solicitations. Solitude often gives advantage to the tempter, therefore two is better than one. Christ himself was tempted, not only to teach us that it is no sin to be tempted, but to direct us whither to go for succour when we are tempted—even to him that suffered being tempted; that he might experimentally sympathize with us when we are tempted.

2. The good spirits were busy about him: "The angels ministered to him," supplied him with what he needed, and dutifully attended him. Note, The ministrations of the good angels about us is matter of great comfort in reference to the malicious designs of the evil angels against us; but much more doth it befriend us to have the indwelling of the Spirit in our hearts, which they that have are so born of God that, as far as they are so, the evil one toucheth them not, much less shall he triumph over them.

14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. 16 Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and fol-

i. 9. Matthew simply states that Jesus came from Galilee, but Mark, who is often more precise in his details, notes that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee. This indication is interesting, as it suggests that Jesus remained at Nazareth until after John the Baptist commenced his ministry. The credulous are still taught to believe that special memorials of Christ yet exist at Nazareth, but Dr. Thomson repudiates them all, saying, "I like to feel assured that the Church of the Annunciation, the cave, the kitchen of Mary,

lowed him. 19 And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. 20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him. 21 And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. 22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

Here is, First. A general account of Christ's preaching in Galilee. John gives an account of his preaching in Judæa before this, *Jno.* ii. and iii., which the other evangelists have omitted, who chiefly relate what occurred in Galilee, because that was least known at Jerusalem. Observe, 1. When Jesus began to preach in Galilee: "After that John was put in prison." When he had finished his testimony, then Jesus began his. Note, The silencing of Christ's ministers shall not be the suppressing of Christ's Gospel; if some be laid aside, others shall be raised up, perhaps mightier than they, to carry on the same work. 2. What he preached: "The Gospel of the kingdom of God." Christ came to set up the kingdom of God among men, that they might be brought into subjection to it, and might obtain salvation in it; and he set it up by the preaching of his Gospel, and a power going along with it. Observe,

1st. The great truths Christ preached: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." This refers to the Old Testament, in which the kingdom of the Messiah was promised, and time fixed for the introducing of it; they were not so well versed in those prophecies, nor did they so well observe the signs of the times, as to understand it themselves, and therefore Christ gives them notice of it. The time prefixed is now at hand; glorious discoveries of Divine light, life, and love, are now to be made; a new dispensation, far more spiritual and heavenly than that which you have hitherto been under, is now to commence. Note, God keeps time; when "the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand," for the vision is for an appointed time, which will be punctually observed, though it tarry past our time.

2nd. The great duties inferred from thence. Christ gave them to understand the times, that they might know what Israel ought to do: they fondly expected the Messiah to appear in external pomp and power, not only to free the Jewish nation from the Roman yoke, but to make it have dominion over all its neighbours; and therefore thought, when that kingdom of God was at hand, they must prepare for war, and for victory and preferment, and great things in the world; but Christ tells them, in the prospect of that kingdom approaching, they must "repent, and believe the Gospel." They had broken the moral law, and could not be saved by a covenant of innocence, for both Jew and Gentile are concluded under guilt. They must therefore take the benefit of a covenant of grace, must submit to a remedial law, and this is it, "Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." They had not made use of the prescribed preservatives, and therefore must have recourse to the prescribed restoratives. By repentance we must lament and forsake our sins, and by faith we must receive the forgiveness of them. By repentance we must give glory to our Creator, whom we have offended; by faith we must give glory to our Redeemer, who came to save us from our sins. Both these must go together; we must not think either that reforming our lives will save us, without trusting in the righteousness and grace of Christ; nor that trusting in Christ will save us, without the reformation of our hearts and lives. Christ hath joined these two together, and let no man think to put them asunder. They will mutually assist and befriend each other. Repentance will quicken faith, and faith will make repentance evangelical; and the sincerity of both together must be evidenced by a diligent, conscientious obedience to all God's commandments. Thus the preaching of the Gospel began, and thus it continues; still the call is, Repent and believe, and live a life of repentance, and a life of faith.

Secondly. Christ appearing as a teacher, here is next his calling of disciples, *ver.* 16-20. Observe, 1. Christ will have followers. If he set up a school he will have scholars; if he set up his standard he will have soldiers; if he preach he will have hearers. He has taken an effectual course to secure this, for all that the Father has given him shall without fail come to him. 2. The instruments Christ chose to employ in setting up his kingdom were the weak and foolish things of the world, not called from the great sanhedrim, or the schools of the rabbins, but picked up from among the tarpaulins by the sea side, that the excellency of the power might appear to be wholly of God, and not at all of them. 3. Though Christ needs not the help of man, yet he is pleased to make use of it in setting up his kingdom, that he might deal with us, not in a formidable, but a familiar way, and that in his kingdom the nobles and governors may be of ourselves, *Jer.* xxx. 21. 4. Christ puts honour upon those who, though mean in the world, are diligent in their business, and loving to one another; so those were whom Christ called. He found them employed, and employed together. Industry and unity are good and pleasant, and there the Lord Jesus commands the blessing, even this blessing, "Follow me." 5. The business of ministers is to fish for souls, and win them to Christ. The children of men in their natural condition are lost, and wander endlessly in the great ocean of this world, and are carried down the stream of its course and way; they are unprofitable. Like leviathan in the waters, they play therein; and often, like the fishes of the sea, they devour one another. Ministers, in preaching the Gospel, cast the net into the waters, *Mat.* xiii. 47. Some are enclosed and brought to shore, but far the greater number escape. Fishermen take great pains, and expose themselves to great perils, so do ministers; and they have need of wisdom. If many a draught bring home nothing, yet they must go on. 6. Those whom Christ calls must leave all to follow him; and by his grace he inclines them to do so. Not that we must needs go out of the world presently, but we must sit loose to the world, and forsake every thing that is inconsistent with our duty to Christ, and which cannot be kept without prejudice to our souls. Mark takes notice of James and John, that they left not only their father, which we had in *Matthew*, but the hired servants, whom perhaps they loved as their own brethren, being their fellow-labourers and pleasant comrades; not only relations, but companions, must be left for Christ, and old acquaintance. Perhaps it is an intimation of their care for their father; they did not leave him without assistance, they left the hired

servants with him. Grotius thinks it is mentioned as an evidence that their calling was painful to them, for it was worth while to keep servants in pay to help them in it, and their hands would be much missed, and yet they left it.

Thirdly. Here is a particular account of his preaching in Capernaum, one of the cities of Galilee; for though John Baptist chose to preach in a wilderness and did well, and did good, yet it doth not therefore follow that Jesus must do so too; the inclinations and opportunities of ministers may very much differ, and yet both be in the way of their duty, and both useful. Observe, 1. When Christ came into Capernaum, he straightway applied himself to his work there and took the first opportunity of preaching the Gospel. Those will think themselves concerned not to lose time who consider what a deal of work they have to do, and what a little time to do it in. 2. Christ religiously observed the sabbath day, though not by tying himself up to the tradition of the elders in all the niceties of the sabbath rest, yet (which was far better) by applying himself to, and abounding in, the sabbath work, in order to which the sabbath rest was instituted. 3. Sabbaths are to be sanctified in religious assemblies, if we have opportunity; it is a holy day, and must be honoured with a holy convocation: this was the good old way, *Acts* xiii. 27; xv. 21. On the sabbath day, *τοὺς σαββάτους*, "on the sabbath days;" every sabbath day, as duly as it returned, he went into the synagogue. 4. In religious assemblies on sabbath days the Gospel is to be preached, and those to be taught who are willing to learn the truth as it is in Jesus. 5. Christ was a non-such preacher; he did not preach as the scribes, who expounded the law of Moses by rote, as a schoolboy saith his lesson, but were neither acquainted with it, (Paul himself, when a Pharisee, was ignorant of the law,) nor affected by it; it came not from the heart, and therefore came not with authority. But Christ taught "as one that had authority," as one that knew the mind of God, and was commissioned to declare it. 6. There is much in the doctrine of Christ that is astonishing; the more we hear it, the more cause we shall see to admire it.

23 And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. 25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. 28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

As soon as Christ began to preach, he began to work miracles for the confirmation of his doctrine; and they were such as intimated the design and tendency of his doctrine, which was to conquer Satan, and cure sick souls. In these verses we have,

First. Christ's casting the devil out of a man that was possessed, in the synagogue at Capernaum. This passage was not related in *Matthew*, but is afterwards in *Luke*. *Ver.* 23, "There was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit," *ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ*,—"in an unclean spirit;" for the spirit had the man in his possession, and led him captive at his will. So the whole world is said to lie *ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ*,—"in the wicked one." And some have thought it more proper to say the body is in the soul, because it is governed by it, than the soul in the body. He was in the unclean spirit, as a man is said to be in a fever, or in a frenzy, quite overcome by it. Observe, The devil is here called "an unclean spirit," because he has lost all the purity of his nature, because he acts in direct opposition to the Holy Spirit of God, and because, with his suggestions, he pollutes the spirits of men. This man "was in the synagogue;" he did not come either to be taught or to be healed, but, as some think, to confront Christ, and oppose him, and hinder people from believing on him. Now here we have,

1. The rage which the unclean spirit expressed at Christ: "He cried out," as one in agony at the presence of Christ, and afraid of being dislodged; thus "the devils believe and tremble," have a horror of Christ, but no hope in him, nor reverence for him. We are told what he said, *ver.* 24, where he doth not go about to capitulate with him, or make terms, so far was he from being in league or compact with him; but speaks as one that knew his doom. 1st. He calls him "Jesus of Nazareth," and, for aught appears, he was the first that called him so; and he did it with design to possess the minds of people with low thoughts of him, because no good thing was expected out of Nazareth, and with prejudices against him as a deceiver, because every body knew the Messiah must be of Bethlehem. 2. Yet a confession is extorted from him that he is "the Holy One of God," as was from the damsel that had the spirit of divination concerning the apostles, that they were "the servants of the most high God," *Acts* xvi. 16, 17. Those that have only a notion of Christ, that he is the Holy One of God, and have no faith in him, or love to him, go no farther than the devil doth. 3rd. He in effect acknowledgeth that Christ was too hard for him, and that he could not stand before the power of Christ: "Let us alone," for if thou take us to task we are undone, thou canst "destroy us." This is the misery of those wicked spirits, that they persist in their rebellion, and yet know it will end in their destruction. 4th. He desires to have nothing to do with Jesus Christ, for he despairs of being saved by him, and dreads being destroyed by him. "What have we to do with thee?" "If thou wilt let us alone, we will let thee alone." See whose language they speak that "say to the Almighty, Depart from us." This being an unclean spirit, therefore hated and dreaded Christ, because he knew him to be a Holy One; for "the carnal mind is enmity against God," especially against his holiness.

2. The victory which Jesus Christ obtained over the unclean spirit: "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of

the workshop of Joseph, the dining-table of our Lord and his apostles, the synagogue where he read the prophet Isaiah, and the precipice down which his enraged fellow-villagers were determined to cast him headlong, as now shown, are all fabulous, apocryphal, and have no claims to my veneration or even respect." ("The Land and the Book," chap. 29.)

i. 11. For "in whom," which is the reading of the Alexandrian and some other MSS., the best modern editions, and the Sinaitic,

Vatican, and Cambridge MSS., the Syriac Peshito, and Latin Vulgate versions, with other authorities, read "in thee." (Compare this verse with *Matt.* iii. 17.)

i. 13. Though shorter than the accounts of Luke and Matthew, this notice of the temptation adds the remark that Jesus was with the wild beasts. At the time referred to wild beasts of a formidable character appear to have been common in the unfrequented parts of the country. Of these the lion is no longer found, the leopard and

the devil," and so he makes it to appear; nor will he be turned back from prosecuting this war, either by his flatteries, or by his menaces. It is in vain for Satan to beg and pray. "Let us alone," his power must be broken, and the poor man must be relieved; and therefore, 1st. Jesus commands. As he taught, so he healed with authority. "Jesus rebuked him;" he chid him, and threatened him, imposed silence upon him: "Hold thy peace," *ἡσυχάζει*,—"be muzzled." Christ has a muzzle for that unclean spirit when he fawns as well as when he barks; such acknowledgments of him as this was Christ disdains, so far is he from accepting them. Those that confess Christ to be "the Holy One of God," that, under the cloak of that profession, they may carry on malicious, mischievous designs, their confession is doubly an abomination to the Lord Jesus, as it sues in his name for a licence to sin, and shall therefore be put to silence and shame. But this is not all, he must not only hold his peace, but he must come out of the map; this was it he dreaded, his being restrained from doing farther mischief. But, 2nd. The unclean spirit yields, for there is no remedy, ver. 26. He tore him, put him into a strong convulsion, that one would have thought that he had been pulled in pieces; when he could not touch Christ, in fury at him, he grievously disturbed this poor creature. Thus when Christ by his grace delivers poor souls out of the hands of Satan, it is not without a grievous toss and tumult in the soul; for that spiteful enemy will disquiet those whom he cannot destroy. He "cried with a loud voice," to frighten the spectators, and make himself seem terrible; as if he would have thought, that though he was conquered, he was but just conquered, and that he hoped to rally again, and recover his ground.

Secondly. The impressions which this miracle made upon the minds of the people, ver. 27, 28.

1. It astonished them that saw it: "They were all amazed." It was evident beyond contradiction that the man was possessed; witness the tearing of him, and the loud voice with which the spirit cried. It was evident he was forced out by the authority of Christ; this was surprising to them, and put them upon considering with themselves, and inquiring of one another, "What is this new doctrine?" for it must certainly be of God which is thus confirmed. He hath certainly an authority to command us, who hath ability to command even the unclean spirits; and they cannot resist him, but are forced to obey him. The Jewish exorcists pretended, by charm or invocation, to drive away evil spirits; but this was quite another thing; with authority he commands them. Surely it is our interest to make him our friend who has the control of infernal spirits.

2. It raised his reputation among all that heard it: "Immediately his fame spread abroad into the whole adjacent region of Galilee," which was a third part of the land of Canaan. The story was presently got into every one's mouth, and people wrote it to their friends all the country over, together with the remark made upon it, "What new doctrine is this?" So that it was universally concluded that he was "a teacher come from God," and under that character he shone more bright than if he had appeared in all the external pomp and power which the Jews expected their Messiah to appear in; and thus he prepared his own way, now John, who was his harbinger, was clapped up; and the fame of this miracle spread the farther, because as yet the Pharisees, who envied his fame, and laboured to eclipse it, had not advanced their blasphemous suggestion that he cast out devils by compact with the prince of the devils.

29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her. 31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. 32 And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. 33 And all the city was gathered together at the door. 34 And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him. 35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. 36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. 37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. 38 And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth. 39 And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

In these verses we have,

First. A particular account of one miracle that Christ wrought in the cure of Peter's wife's mother, that was ill of a fever. This passage we had before in *Matthew*. Observe, 1. When Christ had done that which spread his fame throughout all parts, he did not then sit still, as some, who think they may lie in bed when their name is up. No, he continued to do good, for that was it he aimed at, and not his own honour. Nay, those who are in reputation had need be busy, and careful to keep it up. 2. When he came out of the synagogue, where he had taught and healed with a Divine authority, yet he conversed familiarly with the poor fishermen that attended him, and did not think it below him. Let the same mind, the same lowly mind be in us, that was in him. 3. He went into Peter's house, probably invited thither to such entertainment as a poor fisherman could give him, and he accepted of it. The apostles left all for Christ, so far as that what they had should not hinder

them from him, yet not so but that they might use it for him. 4. He cured his mother in law that was sick; wherever Christ comes, he comes to do good, and will be sure to pay richly for his entertainment. Observe, How complete the cure was; when the fever left her, it did not, as usual, leave her weak, but the same that healed her strengthened her, so that she was able to minister to them; the cure is in order to that, to fit for action, that we may minister to Christ, and to those that are his, for his sake.

Secondly. A general account of many cures he wrought—diseases healed, devils expelled. It was at the even of the sabbath, when the sun did set, or was set; perhaps many scrupled bringing their sick to him, till the sabbath was over, but their weakness therein was no prejudice to them in applying to Christ: though he proved it lawful to heal on the sabbath days, yet if any stumbled at it they were welcome at another time. Now observe,

1. How numerous the patients were: "All the city was gathered at the door," as beggars at a dole. That one cure in the synagogue occasioned this crowding after him. Others speeding well with Christ should quicken us in our inquiries after him. Now "the Sun of righteousness riseth with healing under his wings;" to him shall the "gathering of the people be." Observe, how Christ was flocked after in a private house, as well as in the synagogue; wherever he is, there let his servants, his patients be. And in the evening of the sabbath, when the public worship is over, we must continue our attendance upon Jesus Christ; he healed, as Paul preached, publicly, and from house to house.

2. How powerful the physician was: he healed all that were brought to him, though never so many. Nor was it some one particular disease that Christ set up for the cure of, but he healed those that were sick of divers diseases, for his word was a *panpharmacœon*—"a salve for every sore." And that miracle particularly which he wrought in the synagogue, he repeated in the house at night, "for he cast out many devils, and he suffered not the devils to speak," for he made them know who he was, and that silenced them. Or, he "suffered them not to say that they knew him," so it may be read; he would not permit any more of them to say as they did, ver. 24, "I know thee, who thou art."

Thirdly. His retirement to his private devotion, ver. 35: he prayed, prayed alone; to set us an example of secret prayer. Though as God he was prayed for, as man he prayed. Though he was glorifying God and doing good in his public work, yet he found time to be alone with his Father; and thus it became him to fulfil all righteousness. Now observe,

1. The time when Christ prayed: 1st. It was "in the morning," the morning after the sabbath day. Note, When a sabbath day is over and past, we must not think that we may intermit our devotion till the next sabbath; no, though we go not to the synagogue, we must go to the throne of grace every day in the week; and the morning after the sabbath particularly, that we may preserve the good impressions of the day. This morning was the morning of the first day of the week, which afterwards he sanctified, and made remarkable by another sort of rising early. 2nd. It was early: "a great while before day." When others were asleep in their beds, he was praying, as a genuine son of David who seeks God early, and "directs his prayer in the morning;" nay, and "at midnight will rise to give thanks." It has been said that "the morning is a friend to the muses"—*Aurora musis amica*; and it is no less so to the graces. When our spirits are most fresh and lively, then we should take time for devout exercises. He that is the first and best, ought to have the first and best.

2. The place where he prayed: He "departed into a solitary place," either out of town, or some remote garden or outbuilding. Though he was in no danger of distraction, or of temptation to vainglory, yet he retired to set us an example to his own rule, "When thou prayest enter into thy closet." Secret prayer must be made secretly. Those that have the most business in public, and of the best kind, yet must sometimes be alone with God, must retire into solitude, there to converse with God, and keep up communion with him.

Fourthly. His return to his public work: the disciples thought they were up early, but found their Master was up before them, and they inquired which way he went, followed him to his solitary place, and there found him at prayer, ver. 36, 37; and told him he was much wanted, there were a great many patients waiting for him, "All men seek for thee." They were proud that their Master was become so popular already, and would have him appear in public, yet more in that place, because it was their own city; and we are apt to be partial to the places we know, and are interested in. No, saith Christ, Capernaum must not have the monopoly of the Messiah's preaching and miracles. "Let us go into the next towns," the villages that lie about here, "that I may preach there also," and work miracles there, "for therefore came I forth," not to be constantly resident in one place, but to go "about doing good." Even the "inhabitants of the villages in Israel," shall "rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord," *Jud. v. 11*. Observe, Christ hath still an eye to the end wherefore he came forth, and closely pursued that; nor will he be drawn by importunity or the persuasions of his friends to decline from that; for ver. 39, he "preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee," and to illustrate and confirm his doctrine, he "cast out devils." Note, Christ's doctrine is Satan's destruction.

40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. 42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. 43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; 44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them. 45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more

the bear occur only in a few remote localities, and the wolf and hyæna are not abundant.

i. 14. The word rendered "put in prison" is the one for delivered up or betrayed, but like our word "committed," it may mean committed to prison. *Matthew* gives additional details, but it is apparent that our Lord left the region where John baptised, and first preached in Galilee. The expression "of the kingdom" is omitted by the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., and some modern editors, but

is found in the Alexandrian and other good MSS., as well as in the Syriac and Vulgate versions. Both readings are evidently very ancient.

i. 21. Instead of "he entered into the synagogue, and taught," some good MSS. and editions read, "he taught in the synagogue."

i. 24. The words "let us alone" do not occur in the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Cambridge MSS., nor in the Syriac and Vulgate versions.

i. 27. There are several various readings in this verse at the

openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

We have here the story of Christ's cleansing of a leper, which we had before, *Mat. viii. 2.* And it teaches us,

I. *How to apply ourselves to Christ:* come as this leper did. First. With great humility; this leper came "beseeching him, and kneeling down to him," *ver. 40.* Whether giving Divine honour to him as God, or rather a less degree of respect as a great prophet, it teaches us, that those who would receive grace and mercy from Christ, must ascribe honour and glory to Christ, and approach him with humility and reverence. Secondly. With a firm belief of his power; "thou canst make me clean." Though Christ's outward appearance was but mean, yet he had this faith in his power, which implies his belief that he was sent of God. He believes it with application, not only in general, thou canst do every thing, as *Jno. xi. 22,* but "thou canst make me clean." Note, What we believe of the power of Christ, we must bring home to our particular case; thou canst do this for me. Thirdly. With submission to the will of Christ; "Lord, if thou wilt." Not as if he had any doubt of Christ's readiness in general to help the distressed, but, with the modesty that became a poor petitioner, he refers his own particular case to him.

II. *What to expect from Christ:* that according to our faith it shall be to us. His address is not in the form of prayer, yet Christ answered it as a request. Note, Affectionate professions of faith in Christ, and resignations to him, are the most prevailing petitions for mercy from him, and shall speed accordingly. First. Christ "was moved with compassion." This is added here in *Mark*, to shew that Christ's power is employed by his pity for the relief of poor souls. That his reasons are fetched from within himself, and we have nothing in us to recommend us to his favour, but our misery makes us the objects of his mercy. And what he doth for us, he doth with all possible tenderness. Secondly. He "put forth his hand, and touched him." He exerted his power, and directed it to this creature. In healing souls, Christ toucheth them, *1 Sam. xx. 26.* When the queen toucheth for the evil, she saith, "I touch, God heals," but Christ toucheth and heals too. Thirdly. He said, "I will, be thou clean." Christ's power was put forth in and by a word, to signify in what way Christ would ordinarily work spiritual cures; he sends his word and heals, *Ps. cvii. 20; Jno. xvii. 17; xv. 3.* The poor leper put an if upon the will of Christ, "if thou wilt," but that doubt is soon put out of doubt, "I will." Christ most readily wills favours to those that most readily refer themselves to his will. He was confident of Christ's power, "thou canst make me clean," and Christ will shew how much his power is drawn out into act by the faith of his people, and therefore speaks the word as one having authority, "be thou clean." And power accompanied this word, and the cure was perfect in an instant, "immediately his leprosy" vanished, and there remained no more sign of it, *ver. 42.*

III. *What to do when we have received mercy from Christ:* We must with his favours receive his commands. When Christ had cured him, "he straitly charged him," the word here is very significant, *ἐμβριμσαμενος, gravior interminatus*—"prohibiting with threats." I am apt to think this refers not to the directions he gave him to conceal it, *ver. 44,* for those are mentioned by themselves; but that this was such a charge as he gave to the impotent man whom he cured, *Jno. v. 14,* "Go, sin no more, lest a worst thing come to thee;" for the leprosy was ordinarily the punishment of some particular sinners, as in Miriam's, Gehazi's, and Uzziah's case; now when Christ himself healed him, he warned him, he threatened him with the fatal consequence of it, if he should return to sin again. He also appointed him, First. To shew himself to the priest, that the priest by his own judgment of this leper, might be a witness for Christ, that he was the Messiah, *Mat. xi. 5.* Secondly. Until he had done that, not to say any thing of it to any man; this is an instance of the humility of Christ, and his self-denial, that he did not seek his own honour, did not strive or cry, *Isa. xlii. 2;* and it is an example to us not to seek our own glory, *Pr. xxv. 27.* He must not proclaim it, because that would much increase the crowd that followed Christ, which he thought was too great already; not as if he were unwilling to do good to all, to as many as came, but he would do it with as little noise as might be, would have no offence given to the government, no disturbance of the public peace, nor any thing done that looked like ostentation, or an affectation of popular applause. What to think of the leper's publishing it and blazing it abroad, I know not; the concealment of the good characters and good works of good men better becomes them than their friends; nor are we always bound by the modest commands of humble men. The leper ought to have observed his orders, yet no doubt it was with a good design that he proclaimed the cure, and it had no other ill effect but that it increased the multitudes that followed Christ, to that degree that he "could no more openly enter into the city;" not upon the account of persecution, there was no danger of that yet; but because the crowd was so great, that the streets would not hold them, which obliged him to go into desert places, to a mountain, *ch. iii. 13;* to the sea side, *ch. iv. 1.* This shews how expedient it was for us that Christ should go away, and send the Comforter; for his bodily presence could be but in one place at a time, and those that "came to him from every quarter" could not get near him, but by his spiritual presence, he is with his people wherever they are, and comes to them to every quarter.

CHAPTER II.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ healing a man that was sick of a palsy, *ver. 1—12.* II. His calling Matthew from the receipt of customs, and his eating upon that occasion with publicans and sinners, and justifying himself in so doing, *ver. 13—17.* III. His justifying his disciples in not fasting so much as those of the Pharisees did, *ver. 18—22.* IV. His justifying them in plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day, *ver. 23—28.* All which passages we had before, *Mat. xi. and xii.*



AND again he entered into Capernaum, after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. 2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he

preached the word unto them. 3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. 4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. 6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, 7 Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? 8 And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? 9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee;* or to say, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?* 10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins; (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) 11 I say unto thee, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.* 12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

Christ having been for some time preaching about in the country, here returns to Capernaum his head-quarters, and makes his appearance there, in hopes by this time the talk and crowd would be somewhat abated. Now observe,

First. The great resort there was to him. Though he was "in the house," either Peter's house, or some lodgings of his own which he had taken, yet people came to him as soon as it was noised that he was in town; they did not stay till he appeared in the synagogue, which they might be sure he would do on the sabbath day, but "straightway many were gathered together to him." Where the king is, there is the court; where Shiloh is, there "shall the gathering of the people be." In improving opportunities for our souls, we must take care not to lose time. One invited another, "Come, let us go see Jesus," so that his house could not contain his visitants. "There was no room to receive them," they were so numerous, "no, not so much as about the door." A blessed sight, to see people thus flying like a cloud to Christ's house, though it was but a poor one, and "as the doves to their windows."

Secondly. The good entertainment Christ gave them, the best his house would afford, and better than any other could, "he preached the word unto them," *ver. 2.* Many of them, perhaps, came only for cure, and many, perhaps, only for curiosity, to get a sight of him; but when he had them together he preached to them; though the synagogue door was open to him at proper times, he thought it not at all amiss to preach in a house on a week day, though some might reckon it both an improper place and an improper time. "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters," *Isa. xxxii. 20.*

Thirdly. The presenting of a poor cripple to him to be helped by him. The patient was "one sick of the palsy," it should seem not as that, *Mat. viii. 6,* "grievously tormented," but perfectly disabled, so that he "was borne of four," was carried upon a bed, as if he had been upon a bier, by four persons; it was his misery that he needed to be so carried, and speaks the calamitous state of human life; it was their charity who did so carry him, and speaks the compassion that it is justly expected should be in the children of men towards their fellow-creatures in distress, because we know not how soon the distress may be our own. These kind relations or neighbours thought, if they could but carry a poor man once to Christ, they should not need to carry him any more; and therefore made hard shift to get him to him, and when they could not otherwise get to him, "they uncovered the roof where he was," *ver. 4.* I see no necessity to conclude, that Christ was preaching in an upper room, though in such the Jews that had stately houses had their oratories; for then to what purpose should the crowd stand before the door? as Wisdom's clients used to do, *Pr. viii. 34;* but I rather conjecture, that the house he was in was so little and mean (agreeable to his present state) that it had no upper room, but the ground floor was open to the roof, and these petitioners for the poor paralytic, resolving not to be balked, when they could not get through the crowd at the door, get their friend by some means or other to the roof of the house, took off some of the tiles, and so let him down upon his bed with cords, into the house where Christ was preaching. This spoke both their faith and their fervency in this address to Christ. Hereby it appeared they were in earnest, and would not go away, nor let Christ go without a blessing, *Gen. xxxii. 26.*

Fourthly. The kind word Christ said to this poor patient. "He saw their faith;" perhaps not so much his, for his distemper hindered him from the exercise of faith, but theirs that brought him. In curing the centurion's servant, Christ took notice of it as an instance of his faith, that he did not bring him to Christ, but believed he could cure him at a distance; he commended their faith, because they did bring their friend through so much difficulty. Note, True faith and strong faith may work variously, conquering sometimes the objections of reason, sometimes those of sense, but it shall be accepted and approved by Jesus Christ, however. Christ said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." The appellation is very tender, "Son," intimating a fatherly care of him and concern for him; Christ owns true believers as his sons: a son, and yet sick of the palsy. Herein God deals with you as with sons. The cordial is

words, "What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he," &c. The Sinaitic MS. reads, "What is this? a new doctrine with authority? he commandeth even the unclean spirits," &c.

i. 29. Accompanied by James and John, our Lord entered the house of Simon and Andrew, from which we learn that they lived together.

i. 38. Dean Alford says, "Our Lord's present purpose was, not to

remain in any one place, but to make the circuit of Galilee; not to work miracles, but to preach." The Syriac and Vulgate have "for for this am I come," instead of "for therefore came I forth."

i. 40. The words "and kneeling down to him" are not found in the Vatican and Cambridge MSS., but are well supported.

i. 42. The words "as soon as he had spoken" do not occur in the Sinaitic, Cambridge, and Vatican MSS., nor in the Syriac version.

i. 45. The reason why Jesus could not appear openly in the city

very rich, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Note, 1. Sin is the procuring cause of all our pains and sicknesses. This word of Christ was to take his thoughts off from the disease which was the effect, and to lead them to the sin the cause, that he might be more concerned about that, to get that pardoned. 2. God doth then graciously take away the sting and malignity of sickness when he forgives sin: recovery from sickness is then a mercy indeed, when way is made for it by the pardon of sin; see *Isa. xxxviii. 17*; *Ps. ciii. 3*. The way to remove the effect, is to take away the cause: pardon of sin strikes at the root of all diseases, and either cures them, or alters their property.

Fifthly, The cavil of the scribes at that which Christ said, and a demonstration of the unreasonableness of their cavil. They were expositors of the law, and their doctrine was true, that it is blasphemy for any creature to undertake the pardon of sin: it is God's prerogative, *Isa. xliii. 25*. But, as is usual with such teachers, their application was false, and was the effect of their ignorance and enmity to Christ. It is true, "none can forgive sins but God only;" but it is false, that therefore Christ cannot, who had abundantly proved himself to have a Divine power. But Christ "perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves;" this proves him to be God, and therefore confirmed what was to be proved, that he had authority to forgive sins; for he searched the heart, and knew what was in man, *Rev. ii. 23*. God's royalties are inseparable, and he that could know thoughts, could forgive sins. And this magnifies the grace of Christ, in pardoning sin, that he knew men's thoughts, and therefore knows more than any other can know, both of the sinfulness of their sins, and the particulars of them, and yet is ready to pardon. Now he proves his power to forgive sin, by demonstrating his power to cure the man sick of the palsy, ver. 9-11. He would not have pretended to do the one, if he could not have done the other. "That ye may know that the Son of man," the Messiah, "has power on earth to forgive sins," that I have that power, thou that art sick of the palsy, "arise, take up thy bed." Now, 1. This was a suitable argument in itself. He could not have cured the disease, which was the effect, if he could not have taken away the sin, which was the cause. And besides, his curing diseases was a figure of his pardoning sin, for sin is the disease of the soul; when it is pardoned, it is healed. He that could by a word accomplish the sign, could doubtless accomplish the thing signified. 2. It was suited to them. These carnal scribes would be more affected with such a sensible effect of a pardon, as the cure of the disease, and be sooner convinced by it, than by any other more spiritual consequences; therefore it was proper enough to appeal, "Whether is it easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?" The removing of the punishment as such, was the remitting of the sin; he that could go so far in the cure, no doubt could perfect it, see *Isa. xxxiii. 24*.

Sixthly, The cure of the sick man, and the impression it made upon the people, ver. 12. He not only arose out of his bed, perfectly well, but to shew that he had perfect strength restored to him, he "took up his bed," because it lay in the way, "and went forth before them all;" and "they were all amazed," as well they might, "and glorified God," as indeed they ought; "saying, We never saw it on this fashion;" never were such wonders as these done before in our time. Note, Christ's works were without precedent. When we see what he doth in healing souls, we must own we never saw the like.

13 And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. 14 And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphæus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. 15 And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. 16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? 17 When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Here is, First, Christ's preaching "by the sea side," ver. 3, whither he went for room, because he found, upon second trial, no house or street large enough to contain his auditory; but upon the strand there might come as many as would. It should seem by this that our Lord Jesus Christ had a strong voice, and could and did speak loud; for "Wisdom crieth without, in the places of concourse." Wherever he goes, though it be to the sea side, "multitudes resort to him." Wherever the doctrine of Christ is faithfully preached, though it be driven into corners or into deserts, we must follow it.

Secondly, His calling Levi, the same with Matthew, who had a place in the custom house at Capernaum, from which he was denominated a publican; his place fixed him by the water side, and thither Christ went to meet with him, and to give him an effectual call. This Levi is here said to be son of Alphæus, or Cleophas, husband to that Mary, who was sister or near kinswoman to the Virgin Mary; and if so, he was own brother to James the Less, and Jude, and Simon the Canaanite, so that there were four brothers of them apostles. It is probable that Matthew was but a loose, extravagant young man, or else, being a Jew, he would never have been a publican. However, Christ called him to follow him. Paul, though a Pharisee, had been one of the chief of sinners, and yet was called to be an apostle. With God, through Christ, there is mercy to pardon the greatest sins, and grace to sanctify the greatest sinners. Matthew, that had been a publican, became an evangelist; the first that put pen to paper, and the fullest in writing the life of Christ. Great sin and scandal before conversion are no bar to great gifts, graces, and advancements after; nay, God may be the more glorified, *Gal. i. 6*. Christ prevented him with this call; in bodily cures ordinarily he was sought unto, but in these spiritual cures, he was found of them that sought him not. For this is the great evil and peril of the disease of sin, that those that are under it, desire not to be made whole.

Thirdly, His familiar converse with publicans and sinners, ver. 15. We are

here told, 1. That Christ "sat at meat in Levi's house, who invited him and his disciples to the farewell feast, he made to his friends, when he left all to attend on Christ. Such a feast he made as Elisha did, *1 Kin. xix. 21*, to shew not only with what cheerfulness in himself, but with what thankfulness to God, he quitted all in compliance with Christ's call. Fittingly did he make the day of his espousals to Christ a festival day. This was also to testify his respects to Christ, and the grateful sense he had of his kindness in snatching him from the receipt of custom, as a brand out of the burning. 2. That "many publicans and sinners" sat with Christ in Levi's house; "for there were many" belonging to that custom house, "and they followed him." They followed Levi, so some understand it, supposing that, like Zaccheus, he was chief among the publicans, and was rich; and for that reason, the inferior sort of them attended him for what they could get. I rather take it that they followed Jesus, because of the report they had heard of him. They did not for conscience-sake leave all to follow him, but for curiosity-sake they came to Levi's feast to see him; whatever brought them there, they were sitting with Jesus and his disciples. The publicans are here and elsewhere ranked with sinners, the worst of sinners; 1st. Because commonly they were such; so general were the corruptions in the execution of that office, oppressing, exacting, and taking bribes or fees to extortion, and accusing falsely, *Lk. iii. 13-19*. A faithful, fair-dealing publican was so rare, even at Rome, that one Sabinius, who kept a clean reputation in that office, was, after his death, honoured with this inscription, *Kαλῶς τελευτῶσαντι*,—"Here lies an honest publican." 2nd. Because the Jews had a particular antipathy to them and their office, as an affront to the liberty of their nation, and a badge of their slavery, and therefore put them into an ill name, and thought it scandalous to be seen in their company. Such as these our blessed Lord was pleased to converse with, when he appeared "in the likeness of sinful flesh."

Fourthly, The offence which the scribes and Pharisees took at this, ver. 16. They would not come to hear him preach, which they might have been convinced and edified by, but they would come themselves to see him sit with publicans and sinners, which they would be provoked by. They endeavoured to put the disciples out of conceit with their Master, as a man not of that sanctity and severe morals that became his character; and therefore put the question to them, "How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" Note, It is no new thing for that which is both well done, and well designed, to be misrepresented, and turned to the reproach of the wisest and best of men.

Fifthly, Christ's justification of himself in it, ver. 17. He stood to what he did, and would not withdraw, though the Pharisees were offended, as Peter afterwards did, *Gal. ii. 12*. Note, Those are too tender of their own good name who, to preserve it with some nice people, will decline a good work. Christ would not do so. They thought the publicans were to be hated. "No," saith Christ, "they are to be pitied; they are sick, and need a physician; they are sinners, and need a Saviour." They thought Christ's character should separate him from them: No, saith Christ, my commission directs me to them; "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." If the world had been righteous, there had been no occasion for my coming, either to preach repentance, or to purchase remission. It is to a sinful world that I am sent; and therefore my business lies most with those that are the greatest sinners in it. Or thus: "I am not come to call the righteous,"—the proud Pharisees that think themselves righteous, that ask, wherein shall we return, *Mat. iii. 7*, of what shall we repent?—but poor publicans, that own themselves to be sinners, and are glad to be invited, and encouraged to repent. It is good dealing with those that there are hopes of; now there is "more hope of a fool," than of one that is "wise in his own conceit," *Pr. xxvi. 12*.

18 And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? 19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. 21 No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. 22 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles. 23 And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. 24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? 25 And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? 26 How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the

was the inconvenience caused by the crowds which collected. That it was due to nothing more serious is clear, because when in the open country men came to him from every direction.

ii. 4. A knowledge of the structure of an Eastern house is needed in order to a correct understanding of this verse. The flat roof of such a house is much frequented, and would be easy of access. If the inner court was covered with an awning, it was only necessary to unfasten part of that in order to lower the sick man. If there was

a trap-door in the roof, the breaking of that open would give access to the lower part of the house. If the roof was merely a covering of earth over reeds and rafters, it could have been easily and literally broken through. Either of these explanations is allowable, and, as Dr. Jamieson says, suffices to remove all appearance of the marvellous and the absurd from this part of the sacred story.

ii. 14. In the corresponding passage of St. Matthew the person here called "Levi the son of Alphæus" appears to be called simply

priests, and gave also to them which were with him? 27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: 28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Christ had been put to justify himself in conversing with publicans and sinners; here he is put to justify his disciples; and in what they do, according to his will, he will justify them, and bear them out.

First, He justifies them in their not fasting, which was turned to their reproach by the Pharisees. "Why do the Pharisees and the disciples of John fast?" They used to fast; the Pharisees fasted twice in the week, *Lu. xviii. 12*; and probably the disciples of John did so too; and it should seem, this very day, when Christ and his disciples were feasting in Levi's house, was their fast day; for the word is *νηστεύοντες*, 'they do fast,' or 'are fasting,' which aggravated the offence. Thus apt are strict professors to make their own practice a standard, and to censure and condemn all that do not fully come up to it. They invidiously suggest, that if Christ went among sinners to do them good, as he had pleaded, yet the disciples went to indulge their appetites, for they never knew what it was to fast, or to deny themselves. Note, Ill-will always suspects the worst. Two things Christ pleads in excuse of his disciples' not fasting:

1. That these were easy days with them, and fasting was not so seasonable now as it would be hereafter, *ver. 19, 20*. There is a time for all things. Those that enter into the married state must expect care, and trouble in the flesh; and yet, during the nuptial solemnity, they are merry, and think it becomes them to be so; it was very absurd for Samson's bride to weep before him during the days that the feast lasted, *Jud. xiv. 17*. Christ and his disciples were but newly married; the bridegroom was yet with them; the nuptials were yet in the celebrating. Matthew's particularly; when the bridegroom should be removed from them to the far country about his business, then would be a proper time to sit as a widow, in solitude and fasting.

2. That these were early days with them, and they were not so able for the severe exercises of religion as hereafter they would be. The Pharisees had long accustomed themselves to such austerities; and John Baptist himself neither eating nor drinking, his disciples from the first inured themselves to hardships, and came the easier to bear strict and frequent fasting; but it was not so with Christ's disciples; their Master came eating and drinking, and had not bred them up to the difficult services of religion as yet, for it was all in good time. To put them upon such frequent fasting at first would be a discouragement to them, and perhaps drive them off from following Christ, would be of as ill consequence as putting new wine into old casks, or sewing new cloth to that which is worn thin and threadbare, *ver. 21, 22*. Note, God graciously considers the frame of young Christians, that are weak and tender, and so must we; nor must we expect more, but the work of the day in its day, and that day according to the strength, because it is not in our hands to give strength according to the day. Many contract an antipathy to some kind of food, otherwise good, by being surfeited with it when they are young; so many entertain prejudices against the exercises of devotion, by being burdened with them, and made to serve with an offering, at their setting out. Weak Christians must take heed of overtaking themselves, and of making the yoke of Christ otherwise than as it is, — easy, and sweet, and pleasant.

Secondly, He justifies them in plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day, which, I will warrant you, a disciple of the Pharisees would not dare to have done, for it was contrary to an express tradition of their elders. In this instance, as in that before, they reflect upon the discipline of Christ's school, as if it were not so strict as that of theirs: so common is it for those that deny the power of godliness to be jealous for the form, and censorious of those who affect not their form. Observe,

1. What a poor breakfast Christ's disciples had on a sabbath day morning, when they were going to church, *ver. 23*; they plucked ears of corn, and that was the best they had. They were so intent upon spiritual dainties, that they forgot even their necessary food; and the word of Christ was to them instead of that; and their zeal for it even ate them up. The Jews made it a piece of religion to eat dainty food on sabbath days, but the disciples were content with any thing.

2. How even this was grudging them by the Pharisees, upon supposition that it was not lawful to pluck the ears of corn on the sabbath day, that that was as much a servile work as reaping, *ver. 24*: "Why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?" Note, If Christ's disciples do that which is unlawful, Christ will be reflected upon and upbraided with it, as he was here, and dishonour will redound to his name. It is observable, that when the Pharisees thought Christ did amiss, they told the disciples, *ver. 16*; and now when they thought the disciples did amiss, they spoke to Christ: as make-bates, that did what they could to sow discord between Christ and his disciples, and make a breach in the family.

3. How Christ defended them in what they did.

1st. By example. They had a good precedent for it in David's eating the shewbread, when he was hungry; and there was no other bread to be had, *ver. 25, 26*. "Have ye never read?" Note, Many of our mistakes would be rectified, and our unjust censures of others corrected, if we would but recollect what we have read in the Scripture: appeals to that are most convincing. You have read that David, the man after God's own heart, "when he was hungry," made no difficulty of eating the shewbread, which, by the law, none might eat of but the priests and their families. Note, Ritual observances must give way to moral obligations; and that may be done in a case of necessity which otherwise may not be done. This, it is said, David did "in the days of Abiathar the high priest;" or, just before the days of Abiathar, who immediately succeeded Abimelech his father in the pontificate; and, it is probable, was at that time his father's deputy, or assistant in the office, and he it was that escaped the massacre, and brought the ephod to David.

2nd. By argument. To reconcile them to the disciples' plucking the ears of corn, let them consider,

First, Who the sabbath was made for, *ver. 27*. It "was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." This we had not in *Matthew*. The sabbath is a sacred and Divine institution, but we must receive and embrace it as a privilege and a benefit, not as a task and a drudgery. 1st. God never designed it to be an imposition upon us, and therefore we must not make it so to ourselves. "Man was not made for the sabbath," for he was made a day before the sabbath was instituted. Man was made for God, and for his honour and service, and he must rather die than deny him; but he "was not made for the sabbath," so as to be tied up by the law of it from that which is necessary to the support of life. 2nd. God did design it to be an advantage to us, and so we must make it, and improve it. He made it "for man." First, He had some regard to our bodies in the institution, that they might rest, and not be tired out with the constant business of the world, *Dea. v. 14*, "that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest." Now he that intended the sabbath rest for the repose of our bodies,

certainly never intended it should restrain us, in a case of necessity, from fetching in the necessary supports of the body; it must be construed so as not to contradict itself, for edification, and not for destruction. Secondly, He had much more regard to our souls: the sabbath was made a day of rest, only in order to its being a day of holy work, a day of communion with God, a day of praise and thanksgiving; and the rest from worldly business is therefore necessary that we may closely apply ourselves to this work, and spend the whole time in it, in public, private, and secret; but then time is allowed us for that which is necessary to the fitting of our bodies for the service of our souls in God's service, and the enabling of them to keep pace with them in that work. See here, 1. What a good master we serve, all whose institutions are for our own benefit, and if we be so wise as to observe them, we are wise for ourselves: it is not he, but we, that are gainers by our service. 2. What we should aim at in our sabbath work, even the good of our own souls. If the sabbath was made for man, we should then ask ourselves at night, What am I the better for this sabbath day? 3. What care we ought to take not to make those exercises of religion burthens to ourselves or others, which God ordained to be blessings; not only not by unreasonable strictness added to the command, but by not indulging those corruptions which are adverse to the command, for thereby we make those devout exercises a penance to ourselves, which otherwise would be a pleasure.

Secondly, Who the sabbath was made by, *ver. 28*: "The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath;" and therefore he will not see the kind intentions of the institution frustrated by your impositions. Note, The sabbath days are "days of the Son of man;" he is the Lord of the day, and to his honour it must be observed. By him God made the worlds, and so it was by him that the sabbath was first instituted; by him God gave the law at mount Sinai, and so the fourth commandment was his law; and that little alteration that was shortly to be made by the shifting of it one day forward to the first day of the week, was to be in remembrance of his resurrection, and therefore the Christian sabbath was to be called the Lord's day, *Rev. i. 10*, the Lord Christ's day; and the Son of man, Christ as mediator, is always to be looked upon as Lord of the sabbath. This argument he largely insists upon in his own justification, when he was charged with having broken the sabbath, *Jno. v. 16*.

CHAPTER III.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's healing the man that had a withered hand, on the sabbath day, and the combination of his enemies against him for it, *ver. 1—6*. II. The universal resort of people to him from all parts to be healed, and the relief they all found with him, *ver. 7—12*. III. His ordaining his twelve apostles to be attendants on him, and the preachers of his Gospel, *ver. 13—21*. IV. His answer to the blasphemous cavil of the scribes, who imputed his power to cast out devils to a confederacy with the prince of the devils, *ver. 22—30*. V. His owning his disciples for his nearest and dearest relations, *ver. 31—35*.



AND he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. 3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. 5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. 6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. 7 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judæa, 8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. 9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. 10 For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. 11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before

Matthew. By Luke he is called Levi. Since the name of Levi does not occur in the formal lists of the apostles, it has often been doubted whether this Levi is the same as *Matthew*. It is, however, next to impossible to see how different men can be meant in *Matt. ix. 9*, *Mark ii. 14*, and *Luke v. 27*. Here only is Levi, or *Matthew*, called "the son of Alphaeus," but we may infer from it that he was the brother of James and Judas, or Jude, all three being apostles. For this point compare the list of apostles in *Luke vi. 14—16*.

ii. 17. The words "to repentance" are found in some good copies, but the balance of ancient evidence is against retaining them.

ii. 18. A better reading of the first clause is, "And the disciples of John and the Pharisees were fasting," i.e., probably at that particular time. The reading of the second clause, according to our best authorities, runs thus: "Why do the disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees," &c.

ii. 22. This whole verse may be rendered on the best authorities,

him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. 12 And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

Here, as before, we have our Lord Jesus busy at work, in the synagogue first, and then by the sea side, to teach us that his presence should not be confined either to the one or to the other; but wherever any are gathered together in his name, whether in the synagogue, or any where else, there is he in the midst of them. In every place where he records his name, he will meet his people and bless them: it is his will that men pray every where. Now here we have some account of what he did.

First, When "he entered again into the synagogue," he improved the opportunity he had there of doing good, and having no doubt preached a sermon there, he wrought a miracle for the confirmation of it, or at least for the confirmation of this truth, that "it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day." We had the story, *Mat. xii. 9.*

1. The patient's case was piteous: he "had a withered hand," by which he was disabled to work for his living, and those that are so are the most proper objects of charity; let those be helped that cannot help themselves.

2. The spectators were very unkind both to the patient and to the physician, who instead of interceding for a poor neighbour, did what they could to hinder his cure; for they intimated, that if Christ cured him now on the sabbath day, they would accuse him as a sabbath breaker. It had been very unreasonable if they should have opposed a physician or surgeon in helping any poor body in misery by ordinary methods; but much more absurd was it to oppose him that cured without any labour, but by a word's speaking.

3. Christ dealt very fairly with the spectators, and dealt with them first, if possible to prevent the offence. 1st. He laboured to convince their judgment: he bade the man "stand forth," ver. 3, that by the sight of him they might be moved with compassion towards him, and might not for shame account his cure a crime: and then he appeals to their own consciences; though the thing speaks itself, yet he is pleased to speak it, "Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days," as I design to do, "or to do evil," as you design to do? Whether is it better "to save life or to kill?" What fairer question could he put? And yet because they saw it would turn against them, "they held their peace." Note, Those are obstinate indeed in their infidelity, who when they can say nothing against a truth, will say nothing to it; and when they cannot resist, say will not yield.

2nd. When they rebelled against the light he lamented their stubbornness, ver. 5: "He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." The sin he had an eye to was, the hardness of their hearts; their insensibleness of the evidence of his miracles, and their inflexible resolution to persist in unbelief. We hear what is said amiss, and see what is done amiss, but Christ looks at the root of bitterness in the heart; the blindness and hardness of that. Observe, First. How he was provoked by the sin. He looked "round upon them," for they were so many, and had so placed themselves, that they surrounded him. And he "looked with anger;" it is likely his anger appeared in his countenance; his anger was like God's, without the least perturbation to himself, but without great provocation from us. Note, The sin of sinners is very displeasing to Jesus Christ; and the way to be angry and not to sin, is to be angry, as Christ was, at nothing but sin. Let hardhearted sinners tremble to think of the anger with which he will look round upon them shortly, when the great day of his wrath comes. Secondly, How he pitied the sinners: he was "grieved for the hardness of their hearts;" as God was grieved forty years for the hardness of the hearts of their fathers in the wilderness. Note, It is a great grief to our Lord Jesus to see sinners bent upon their own ruin, and obstinately set against the methods of their good vocation and recovery, for he would not that any should perish. This is a good reason why the hardness of our own hearts, and of the hearts of others should be a grief to us.

4. Christ dealt very kindly with the patient: he bid him stretch forth his hand, and it was immediately restored. Now, 1st. Christ has hereby taught us to go on with resolution in the way of our duty, how violent soever the opposition is that we meet with in it. We must deny ourselves sometimes in our ease, pleasure, and convenience, rather than give offence even to those who causelessly take it, but we must not deny ourselves the satisfaction of serving God and doing good, though offence may unjustly be taken at it. None could be more tender of giving offence than Christ; yet, rather than send this poor man away uncured, he would venture offering all the scribes and Pharisees that compassed him about. 2nd. He hath hereby given us a specimen of the cures wrought by his grace upon poor souls; our hands are spiritually withered; the powers of our souls weakened by sin, and disabled for that which is good. The great healing day is the sabbath, and the healing place the synagogue; the healing power is that of Christ. The gospel command is like this here; and the command as rational and just as this; though our hands are withered, and we cannot of ourselves stretch them forth, we must attempt it, must as well as we can lift them up to God in prayer, lay hold on Christ and eternal life, and employ them in good works; and if we do our endeavour, power goes along with the word of Christ, he effects the cure. Though our hands be withered, yet if we will not offer to stretch them out, it is our own fault that we are not healed; but if we do and are healed, Christ, and his power and grace, must have all the glory.

5. The enemies of Christ dealt very barbarously with him. Such a work of mercy should have engaged their love to him, and such a work of wonder their faith in him. But instead of that, the Pharisees, that pretended to be oracles in the church, and the Herodians, that pretended to be the supporters of the state, though of opposite interests one to another, yet "took counsel together against him, how they might destroy him." Note, They that suffer for doing good, do but suffer as their Master did.

Secondly, When he withdrew to the sea, he did good there. Whilst his enemies sought to destroy him, he quitted the place, to teach us in troublous times to shift for our own safety; but see here,

1. How he was followed into his retirement. When some had such an enmity to him, that they drove him out of their country, others had such a value for him, that they followed him wherever he went; and the enmity of their leaders to Christ did not cool their respects to him. Great multitudes followed him from all parts of the nation; as far north as from Galilee; as far south as from Judæa and Jerusalem; nay, and from Idumæa; as far east as from beyond Jordan; and west, as from about Tyre and Sidon, ver. 7, 8. Observe, 1st. What induced them to follow him: it was the report they had of the "great things he did" for all that applied themselves to him; some wished to see one that had done such great things, and others hoped he would do great things for them. Note, The consideration of the great things Christ has done, should engage us to come to him. 2nd. What they followed him for, ver. 10: "They pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues." Diseases are here called "plagues," *μαστιγαι*,—"corrections, chastisements." So they are designed to be, to make us smart for our sins, that thereby we may be made sorry for

them, and may be warned not to return to them. Those that were under these scourgings came to Jesus; this is the errand on which sickness is sent, to quicken us to inquire after Christ, and apply ourselves to him as our physician. "They pressed upon him," each striving which should get nearest him, and which should be first served. They "fell down before him;" so Dr. Hammond, as petitioners for his favour; they desired leave but to touch him, having faith to be healed not only by his touching them, but by their touching him; which no doubt they had many instances of. 3rd. What provision he made to be ready to attend them; ver. 9, he "spoke to his disciples," who were fishermen, and had fisher boats at command, that a small ship should constantly wait on him, to carry him from place to place on the same coast, that when he had despatched the necessary business he had to do in one place, he might easily remove to another, where his presence was requisite, without pressing through the crowds of people that followed him from curiosity. Wise men, as much as they can, decline a crowd.

2. What abundance of good he did in his retirement; he did not withdraw to be idle, nor did he send back those who rudely crowded after him when he withdrew, but took it kindly, and gave them what they came for; for he never said to any that sought him diligently, "seek ye me" in vain. 1st. Diseases were effectually cured. He "healed many;" divers sorts of patients, ill of divers sorts of diseases, though numerous, though various, he healed them. 2nd. Devils were effectually conquered. Those whom unclean spirits had got possession of, "when they saw him," trembled at his presence, and they also "fell down before him," not to supplicate his favour, but to deprecate his wrath, and by their own terrors were compelled to own that "he was the Son of God," ver. 11. It is sad that this great truth should be denied by any of the children of men, who may have the benefit of it, when a confession of it has so often been extorted from devils, who are excluded from having benefit by it. 3rd. Christ sought not applause to himself in doing those great things, for "he straitly charged" those for whom he did them, "that they should not make him known," ver. 12; that they should not be industrious to spread the notice of his cures, as it were by advertisements in the newspapers, but let them leave his own works to praise him; and let the report of them diffuse itself, and make its own way. Let not those that were cured be forward to divulge it, lest it should feed their pride, who were so highly favoured, but let the standers by carry away the intelligence of it. When we do that which is praiseworthy, and yet covet not to be praised of men for it, then "the same mind is in us which was in Christ Jesus."

13 And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him.

14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: 16 And Simon he surnamed Peter;

17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges,

which is, The sons of thunder: 18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphæus, and Thad-

dæus, and Simon the Canaanite, 19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house. 20 And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. 21 And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

In these verses we have,

First, The choice Christ made of the twelve apostles to be his constant followers and attendants, and to be sent abroad as there was occasion, to preach the Gospel. Observe,

1. The introduction to this call or promotion of disciples: "He goes up into a mountain," and his errand thither was to pray. Ministers must be set apart with solemn prayer, for the pouring out of the Spirit upon them; though Christ had authority to confer the gifts of the Holy Ghost, yet to set us an example, he prayed for them.

2. The rule he went by in his choice, and that was his own good pleasure: "He called unto him whom he would." Not such as we would have thought fittest to be called, looking upon the countenance and height of the stature; but such as he thought fit to call, and determined to make fit for the service to which he called them: even so, blessed Jesus, because it seemed good in thine eyes. Christ calls whom he will, for he is a free agent, and his grace is his own.

3. The efficacy of the call. He called them to separate themselves from the crowd, and stand by him, "and they came unto him;" Christ calls those who were given him, *Jno. xvii. 6*; and all that the Father gave him, shall come to him, *Jno. vi. 37*. Those whom it was his will to call, he made willing to come; his "people shall be willing in the day of his power." Perhaps they came to him readily enough, because they were in expectation of reigning with him in temporal pomp and power, but when afterwards they were undeceived in that matter, yet they had such a prospect given them of better things, that they would not say they were deceived in their Master, or repented their leaving all to be with him.

4. The end and intention of this call: he ordained them (probably by the imposition of hands, which was a ceremony used among the Jews,) "that they should be with him" constantly, to be witnesses of his doctrine, manner of life, and patience, that they might fully know it, and be able to give an account of it; and especially that they might attest the truth of his miracles; they must be with him, to receive instructions from him, that they might be qualified to give instruction to others. It would require time to fit them for that which he designed them for; for they must be sent forth to preach: not to preach till

"And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the wine doth burst the bottles; and the wine and the bottles perish." The words "but new wine must be put into new bottles" may be omitted altogether.

ii. 26. In some MSS. the words "in the days of Abiathar the high-priest" are omitted, perhaps to get rid of the difficulty that Ahimelech was high-priest at the time referred to (1 Sam. xxi. 1). There is some uncertainty in the Old Testament itself, Ahimelech

being at one time called a son of Abiathar (2 Sam. viii. 17), and elsewhere said to have had a son called Abiathar (1 Sam. xxii. 20). We cannot offer a solution which satisfies us, but it is apparent that an error has crept into the text, and that this error must have arisen at an early date.

iii. 6. We have no distinct account of the Herodians, but it is probable that they were a party who supported the claims of the Herodian family. It is less likely that they were, as some have

They were sent, and not to be sent, till by a long and intimate acquaintance with Christ, they were fitted. Note, Christ's ministers must be much with him.

5. The power he gave them to work miracles; and hereby he put a very great honour upon them, beyond that of the great men of the earth. He ordained them "to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." This shewed that the power which Christ had to work these miracles was an original power; that he had it not as a servant, but as a Son in his own house, in that he could confer it upon others and invest them with it. They have a rule in the law, *Deputatus non potest deputare*,—"he that is only deputed himself, cannot depute another;" but our Lord Jesus had life in himself, and the Spirit without measure, for he could give this power even to the weak and foolish things of the world.

6. Their number and names: "he ordained twelve," according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. They are here named, not just in the same order as they were in *Matthæo*, nor by couples as they were there; but as there, so here, Peter is put first, and Judas last. Here Matthew is put before Thomas, it is likely, being called in that order, but in that catalogue which Matthew himself drew up, he puts himself after Thomas; so far was he from insisting upon the precedence of his consecration. But that which Mark only takes notice of in this list of the apostles is, that Christ called James and John, Boanerges, which is, "the sons of thunder;" perhaps they were remarkable for a loud, commanding voice, they were thundering preachers; or rather, it notes the zeal and fervency of their spirits, which would make them active for God above their brethren. These two (saith Dr. Hammond) were to be special, eminent ministers of the Gospel, which is called a voice shaking the earth, *Heb. xii. 26*; yet John, one of those sons of thunder, was full of love and tenderness, as appears by his epistles, and was the beloved disciple.

7. Their retirement with their Master, and close adherence to him, "they went into an house." Now this jury was empanelled, they stood together to hearken to their evidence. They went together into the house to settle the orders of their infant college, and now it is likely the bag was given to Judas, which pleased him, and made him easy.

Secondly. The continual crowds that attended Christ's motions, ver. 20. "The multitude cometh together again," unsent for, and unseasonably pressing upon him, some with one errand, and some with another; so that he and his disciples could not get time "so much as to eat bread," much less for a set and full meal. Yet he did not shut his doors against the petitioners, but bid them welcome, and gave to each of them an answer of peace. Note, They whose hearts are enlarged in the work of God, can easily bear with great inconveniences to themselves in the prosecution of it, and will rather lose a meal's meat at any time, than let slip an opportunity of doing good. It is happy when zealous hearers and zealous preachers thus meet, and encourage one another. Now the kingdom of God was preached, and men pressed into it, *Lu. xvi. 16*, this was a gale of opportunity well improving, and the disciples might well afford to adjourn their meals to lay hold on it. It is good striking while the iron is hot.

Thirdly. The care of his relations concerning him, ver. 21. "When his friends" in Capernaum heard how he was followed, and what pains he took, "they went out to lay hold on him," and fetch him home, "for they said, He is beside himself."

1. Some understand it of an absurd, preposterous care, which had more in it of reproach to him, than of respect; and so we must take it as we read it, "he is beside himself;" either they suspected it themselves, or it was suggested to them, and they gave credit to the suggestion, that he was gone distracted, and therefore his friends ought to bind him, and put him in a dark room, to bring him to his right mind again. His kindred, many of them, had mean thoughts of him, *Jno. vi. 4*; *vii. 5*, and were willing to hearken to this ill construction which some put upon his great zeal, and to conclude him crazed in his intellects, and under that pretence, to take him off from his work. The prophets were called mad fellows, *2 Kin. ix. 11*.

2. Others understand it of a well meaning care, and then they read ἐξουστῶν, "he fainteth;" he has no time to eat bread, and therefore his strength will fail him; he will be stifled with the crowd of people, and will have his spirits quite exhausted with constant speaking, and the virtue that goes out of him in his miracles; and therefore let us use a friendly violence with him, and get him a little breathing time. In his preaching work, as well as his suffering work, he was attacked with, "Master, spare thyself." Note, They who go on with vigour and zeal in the work of God, must expect to meet with hindrances, both from the groundless disaffection of their enemies, and the mistaken affection of their friends, and they have need to stand upon their guard against both.

22 And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. 23 And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. 27 No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. 28 Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: 29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: 30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

Here is, 1. *The impudent, impious brand* which the scribes fastened upon Christ's casting out devils, that they might evade and invalidate the conviction of it and have a poor excuse for not yielding to it. These "scribes came down

from Jerusalem," ver. 22: it should seem they came this long journey on purpose to hinder the progress of the doctrine of Christ. Such pains did they take to do mischief, and coming from Jerusalem, where were the most polite and learned scribes, and where they had opportunity of consulting together "against the Lord and his anointed," they were in the greater capacity to do mischief. The reputation of scribes from Jerusalem would have an influence not only upon the country people, but upon the country scribes. They had never thought of this base suggestion concerning Christ's miracles, till the scribes from Jerusalem put it in their heads. They could not deny but that he cast out devils, which plainly spoke him sent of God, but they insinuated he had Beelzebub on his side, was in league with him, and by the prince of devils cast out devils. "There is a trick in the case: Satan is not cast out, he only goes out by consent." There was nothing in the manner of Christ's casting out devils that gave any cause to suspect this; he did it as one having authority; but so they will have it who resolve not to believe him.

II. *The rational answer* which Christ gave to this objection, demonstrating the absurdity of it.

First. Satan is so subtle that he will never voluntarily quit his possession. "If Satan cast out Satan, his kingdom is divided against itself, and it cannot stand," ver. 23-25. He "called them to him," as one desirous they should be convinced; he treats them with all the freedom, friendliness, and familiarity that could be; he vouchsafes to reason the case with them, "that every mouth may be stopped." It was plain that the doctrine of Christ made war upon the devil's kingdom, and had a direct tendency to break his power, and crush his interest in the souls of men; and it was as plain that the casting of him out of the bodies of people confirmed that doctrine, and gave it the setting on; and therefore it cannot be imagined that he should come into such a design: every one knows Satan is no fool, nor will act so directly against his own interest.

Secondly. Christ is so wise, that being engaged in a war with him, he will attack his forces wherever he meets them, whether in the bodies or souls of people, ver. 27. It is plain Christ's design is to "enter into the strong man's house," to take possession of the interest he has in the world, and to "spoil his goods," and convert them to his own service; and therefore it is natural to suppose that he will thus "bind the strong man,"—will forbid him to speak when he would, and to stay where he would, and thus show that he has gained a victory over him.

III. *The awful warning* Christ gave them to take heed how they spoke such dangerous words as these; however they might make light of them, as only conjectures and the language of free thinking, if they persisted in it, it would be of fatal consequence to them; it would be found a sin against the last remedy, and consequently unpardonable: for what could be imagined possible to bring them to repentance for their sin in blaspheming Christ, that would set aside such a strong conviction with such a weak evasion? It is true, the Gospel promiseth, because Christ hath purchased forgiveness for the greatest sins and sinners, ver. 28; those who reviled Christ on the cross, which was a blaspheming of the Son of man, aggravated to the highest degree, yet many of them found mercy, and Christ himself prayed, "Father, forgive them;" but this was blaspheming the Holy Ghost; for it was by the Holy Spirit that he cast out devils, and they said it was by the unclean spirit, ver. 30. And by this method they would outface the conviction of all the gifts of the Holy Ghost after Christ's ascension, and defeat them all, after which there remained no more proof, and therefore they should never have forgiveness, but were liable to eternal damnation. They were in imminent danger of that everlasting punishment, from which there was no redemption, and in which there was no intermission,—no remission.

31 There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. 32 And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. 33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? 34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

Here is, I. *The disrespect* which Christ's "kindred according to the flesh" shewed to him when he was preaching (and they knew very well that he was then in his element); they not only stood without, having no desire to come in and hear him, but they sent in a message to call him out to them, ver. 31, 32; as if he must leave his work to hearken to their importunities. It is likely they had no business with him, only sent for him on purpose to oblige him to break off, lest he should kill himself. He knew how far his strength would go, and preferred the salvation of souls before his own life, and soon after made it appear with a witness. It was therefore an idle thing for them, under pretence of his sparing himself, to interrupt him; and it was worse, if they really had business with him, when they knew he preferred his business as a Saviour so much before any other business.

II. *The respect* which Christ shewed to his spiritual kindred upon this occasion. Now, as at other times, he put a comparative neglect upon his mother, which seemed purposely designed to obviate and prevent the extravagant respect which men in after times would be apt to pay her. Our respects ought to be guided and governed by Christ's. Now the Virgin Mary, or Christ's mother, is not equalled with, but postponed to, ordinary believers, on whom Christ here puts a superlative honour. He looked upon those who sat about him, and pronounced those of them that not only heard but did the will of God to be to him as his brother and sister and mother; as much esteemed, loved, and cared for as his nearest relations, ver. 33-35. This is a good reason why we should honour those that fear the Lord, and choose them for our people; why we should be not hearers of the word only, but doers of the work, that we may share with the saints in this honour. Surely it is good to be akin to those who are thus nearly allied to Christ, and to have fellowship with those that have fellowship with Christ; and woe to those who hate and persecute Christ's kindred, that are his bone and his flesh, every one resembling the children of a king. See *Jud. viii. 18, 19*, for he will with jealousy plead their cause, and avenge their blood.

thought, fanatics who regarded Herod as the Messiah. At a later period mention is made of a sect called Herodians, but their origin and tenets are altogether obscure.

iii. 7, 8. The enumeration of places from which men came to Jesus is not found in the other Gospels. Idumea or Edom was the cradle of the Herodian family. In the time of Christ it formed a small kingdom, which the Romans called Arabia Petrea, and which they finally subdued in A.D. 105. Under the Roman occupation it

became again important, as is apparent from history and existing ruins.

iii. 15. The words "to heal sicknesses, and" are omitted by the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS., and by some editors, as Tregelles and Tischendorf.

iii. 18. Here, for "Simon the Canaanite" the Greek reads, "Simon the Cananean." The word is Syriac, and means the same as Zelotes, or enthusiastic.

CHAPTER IV.

In this chapter we have, I. The parable of the seed, and the four sorts of ground, ver. 1-9; with the exposition of it, ver. 10-20: and the application of it, ver. 21-25. II. The parable of the seed growing gradually, but insensibly, 26-29. III. The parable of the grain of mustard seed, and a general account of Christ's parables, ver. 30-34. IV. The miracle of Christ's sudden stilling a storm at sea, ver. 35-41.



AND he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. 2 And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in

his doctrine, 3 Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: 4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. 5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: 6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. 8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. 9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10 And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. 11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: 12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. 13 And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? 14 The sower soweth the word. 15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. 18 And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, 19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it,

and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

The foregoing chapter began with Christ's entering "again into the synagogue," ver. 1, this chapter begins with Christ's teaching again "by the sea side." Thus he changed his method, that, if possible, all might be reached and wrought upon. To gratify the nice and more genteel sort of people that had seats, "chief seats in the synagogue," and did not care for hearing a sermon any where else, he did not preach always by the sea side, but having liberty went often into the synagogue, and taught there; yet to gratify the poor, the mob, that could not get room in the synagogue, he did not always preach there, but "began again to teach by the sea side," where they could come within hearing. Thus are we "debtors both to the wise and to the unwise," *Rom. i. 14.*

Here seems to be a new convenience found out, which had not been used before, though he had before preached by the sea side, *ch. ii. 13*, and that was his standing in a ship, while his hearers stood upon the land; and that inland sea of Tiberias having no tide, there was no ebbing and flowing of the waters to disturb them. Methinks Christ's carrying his doctrine into a ship, and preaching it thence, was a presage of his sending of the Gospel to the isles of the Gentiles, and the shipping off of the kingdom of God (that rich cargo) from the Jewish nation, to be sent to a people that would bring forth more of the fruits of it. Now observe here,

I. *The way of teaching that Christ used with the multitude:* ver. 2. "He taught them many things," but it was "by parables," or similitudes, which would tempt them to hear, for people love to be spoken to in their own language, and careless hearers will catch at a plain comparison, borrowed from common things, and will retain and repeat that, when they have lost, and perhaps never took, the truth which it was designed to explain and illustrate. But unless they would take pains to search into it, it would but amuse them, seeing they would see and not perceive, ver. 12, and so while it gratified their curiosity, it was the punishment of their stupidity; they wilfully shut their eyes against the light, and therefore justly did Christ put it into the dark-lantern of a parable, which had a bright side towards those who applied it to themselves, and were willing to be guided by it; but to those who were only willing for a season to play with it, it only gave a flash of light now and then, but sent them away in the dark. It is just with God to say of those that will not see, that they shall not see; and to hide from their eyes who only look about them with a great deal of carelessness, and never look before them with any concern upon the things that belong to their peace.

II. *The way of expounding that he used with his disciples.* "When he was alone," by himself, not only the twelve, but others "that were about him with the twelve," took the opportunity to ask him the meaning of the parables, ver. 10. They found it good to be about Christ; the nearer him the better; good to be with the twelve, to be conversant with those that are intimate with him. And he told them what a distinguishing favour it was to them, that they were made acquainted with "the mystery of the kingdom of God," ver. 11. "The secret of the Lord" was with them; that instructed them which others were only amused with; and they were made to increase in knowledge by every parable, and understood more of the way and method in which Christ designed to set up his kingdom in the world, while others were dismissed never the wiser. Note, Those who know "the mystery of the kingdom of heaven" must acknowledge that it is given to them; they receive both the light and the sight from Jesus Christ, who, after his resurrection, both opened the Scriptures, and opened the understanding, *Lu. xxiv. 27-45.* In particular, we have here,

First. The parable of the sower, as we had it, *Mat. xiii. 3, &c.* He begins (ver. 3) with "Hearken," and concludes (ver. 9) with "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Note, The words of Christ demand attention, and those who speak from him may command it, and should stir it up; even that which as yet we do not thoroughly understand, or not rightly, yet we must carefully attend to it, believing it to be both intelligible and weighty, that at length we may understand it; we shall find more in Christ's sayings than at first there seemed to be.

Secondly. The exposition of it to the disciples. Here is a question Christ put to them before he expounded it, which we had not in *Matthew*; ver. 13. "Know ye not this parable?" know ye not the meaning of it? "How then will ye know all parables?" 1. If ye know not this, which is so plain, how will you understand other parables that will be more dark and obscure? If you are gruelled and run aground with this, which speaks so plainly the different success of the word preached upon those that hear it, which you yourselves may see easily, how will you understand the parables which hereafter will speak of the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, which is a thing you have yet no idea of? Note, This should quicken us both to prayer and pains, that we may get knowledge; that there are a great many things we are concerned to know, and if we understand not the plain truths of the Gospel, how shall we master those that are more difficult? *Vita brevis, ars longa.*—life is short, art is long. "If we have run with the footmen, and they have wearied us," and run us down, then "how shall we contend with horses?" *Jer. xii. 5.* 2. If you know not this, which is intended for your direction in hearing the word, that ye may profit by it, how shall ye profit by what ye are farther to hear? This parable is to teach you to be attentive to the word, and affected with it, that you may understand it. If you receive not this, you will not know how to use the key by which you must be let into all the rest. If we understand not the rules we are to observe in order to our profiting by the word, how shall we profit by any other rules? Observe, Before Christ expounds the parable, 1st. He shews them how sad their case was who were not let into the meaning of the doctrine of Christ: "To you it is given, but not to them." Note, It will help us to put a value upon the privileges we enjoy as disciples of Christ, to consider the deplorable state of those who want such privileges, especially that they are out of the ordinary way of conversion, "lest they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them," ver. 12. Those only who are converted have their sins forgiven them; and it is the misery of unconverted souls that they lie under unpardonable guilt. 2nd. He shews them what a shame it was that they needed such particular explanations of the word they heard, and did not apprehend it at first. Those that would improve in knowledge must be made sensible of their ignorance.

Having thus prepared them for it, he gives them the reddition of the parable of the sower, as we had it before in *Matthew*. Let us only observe here,

First. That in the great field of the church the word of God is dispensed to all promiscuously. "The sower soweth the word," ver. 14; sows it at a venture, "beside all waters," upon all sorts of ground, *Isa. xxii. 20*; not knowing where it will light, or what fruit it will bring forth. He scatters it in order to the increase of it. Christ was a while sowing himself, when he went about teaching and preaching; now he sends his ministers, and sows by their hand: ministers are sowers; they have need of the skill and discretion of the husbandmen, *Isa. xxviii. 24-26.* They must not observe winds and clouds, *Ecc. xi. 4-6*, and must look up to God, who gives seed to the sower, *2 Cor. ix. 10.*

iii. 29. Instead of the common reading and rendering, modern editors generally read and translate "is guilty of eternal sin." Beza observes that this reading, "eternal sin," occurs in Cyprian, and explains "never to be blotted out." The same reading is found in the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS., and in the Latin Vulgate. Kuinoel thinks sin is here put for the punishment of sin, and notes that the word punishment, or chastisement, is actually put for it in some copies. Beza's idea seems most correct.

iii. 32. After the word "brethren" some copies of importance add "and thy sisters." This reading, which is favoured by Scholtz, Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Alford, occurs in the Alexandrian, Cambridge, and other MSS., and in some ancient versions.

iv. 1. "The sea-side" is the shore of the sea of Galilee. The ship was no doubt one of the fishing-boats then floating on the lake.

iv. 3. In his "New Testament for English Readers" Alford very properly suggests the rendering, "Behold, the sower went out to sow."

Secondly. That of the many that hear the word of the Gospel, and read it, and are conversant with it, there are, comparatively, but few that receive it so as to bring forth the fruits of it; here is but one in four that comes to good. It is sad to think, how much of the precious seed of the Word of God is lost, and sown in vain; but there is a day coming when lost sermons must be accounted for: many that have heard Christ himself preach in their streets yet will hereafter be bidden to depart from him; those therefore who place all their religion in hearing, as if that alone would save them, do but deceive themselves, and build their hope upon the sand, *Jas. i. 22.*

Thirdly. Many are much affected with the word for the present, that yet receive no abiding benefit by it. The motions of soul they have answerable to what they hear are but a mere flash, like the crackling of thorns under a pot. We read of hypocrites that delight to know God's ways, *Isa. lviii. 2*; of Herod, that he heard John gladly, *ch. vi. 20*; and of others, that they rejoiced in his light, *Jno. v. 35*; and of those to whom Ezekiel was a lovely song, *Eze. xxxii. 32*; and those represented here by the stony ground received the word with gladness, and yet came to nothing.

Fourthly. The reason why the word doth not leave commanding, abiding impressions upon the minds of the people is, because their hearts are not duly disposed and prepared to receive it. The fault is in themselves, not in the word: some are careless, forgetful hearers, and these get no good at all by the word—it comes in at one ear and goes out at the other; others have their convictions overpowered by their corruptions, and they lose the good impressions the word has made upon them, so that they get no abiding good by it.

Fifthly. The devil is very busy about loose, careless hearers, as the fowls of the air go about the seed that lies above ground; when the heart, like the highway, is unploughed, unhummed, when it lies common, to be trodden on by every passenger, as theirs that are great company-keepers, then the devil is like the fowls, he comes swiftly and carries away the word ere we are aware. When therefore these fowls come down upon the sacrifices, we should take care, as Abram did, to drive them away, *Gen. xv. 21*; that though we cannot keep them from hovering over our heads, we may not let them nestle in our hearts.

Sixthly. Many that are not openly scandalized, so as to throw off their profession, as they on the stony ground did, yet have the efficacy of it secretly choked and stifled, so that it comes to nothing; they continue in a barren, hypocritical profession, which brings nothing to pass, and so go down as certainly, though more plausibly, to hell.

Seventhly. Impressions that are not deep, will not be durable, but will wear off in suffering, trying times. Like footsteps on the sand of the sea, which are gone the next high tide of persecution; when that iniquity doth abound, the love of many to the ways of God waxeth cold; many that keep their profession in fair days, lose it in a storm, and do as those that go to sea only for pleasure, come back again when the wind rises. It is the ruin of hypocrites that they have no root; they do not act from a living fixed principle; they do not mind heart-work, and without that, religion is nothing, for he is the Christian that is one inwardly.

Eighthly. Many are hindered from profiting by the word of God, by their abundance of the world. Many a good lesson of humility, charity, self-denial, and heavenly-mindedness is choked and lost by that prevailing complacency in the world, which they are apt to have on whom it smiles. Thus many professors, that otherwise might have come to something, prove like Pharaoh's lean kine and thin ears.

Ninthly. Those that are not encumbered with the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, yet may lose the benefit of their profession by "the lust of other things;" this is added here in *Mark*; "by the desires which are about other things;" so Dr. Hammond. An inordinate appetite towards things that are pleasing to sense, or to the fancy. Those that have but little of the world, may yet be ruined by an indulgence of the body.

Tenthly. Fruit is the thing that God expects and requires from those that enjoy the Gospel: fruit according to the seed; a temper of mind, and a course of life agreeable to the Gospel; Christian graces daily exercised, Christian duties duly performed. This is fruit, and it will abound to our account.

Lastly. No good fruit is to be expected but from good seed. If the seed be sown on good ground, if the heart be humble, and holy, and heavenly, there will be good fruit, and it will abound; sometimes even to an hundredfold, such a crop as Isaac reaped, *Gen. xxi. 12.*

21 And he said unto them, Is a candle brought



CANDELABRA.

iv. 4. For "fowls of the air" many ancient authorities simply read "fowls," or birds. The words "of the air" are omitted by most modern editors.

iv. 9. The words "unto them" are absent from the Alexandrian, Vatican, Cambridge, and Sinaitic MSS., and others.

iv. 10. Instead of "the parable," which seems at first the better reading, the weight of evidence favours the plural, "the parables."

iv. 11. The reading of this verse adopted by Tischendorf and

to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? 22 For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad. 23 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 24 And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. 25 For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath. 26 And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; 27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. 28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. 29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. 30 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? 31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: 32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it. 33 And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. 34 But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

The lessons which our Saviour designs to teach us here, by parables and figurative expressions, are these,—

First. That those that are good, ought to consider the obligations they are under to do good; that is, as in the parable before, to bring forth fruit. God expects a grateful return of his gifts to us, and a useful improvement of his gifts in us; for ver. 21. "Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed?" No, but that it may "be set on a candlestick." The apostles were ordained to receive the Gospel, not for themselves only, but for the good of others, to communicate it to them. All Christians, as they have received the gift, must minister the same. Note,

1. Gifts and graces make a man as a candle; the candle of the Lord, *Pr. xx. 27*, lighted by the Father of lights: the most eminent are but candles, poor lights, compared with the Sun of righteousness. A candle gives light but a little while, and but a little while, and is easily blown out, and continually burning down and wasting.

2. Many that are lighted as candles, put themselves "under a bed, or under a bushel." They do not manifest grace themselves, nor minister grace to others; they have estates, and do no good with them; have their limbs and senses, wit and learning, perhaps, but nobody is the better for them. They have spiritual gifts, but do not use them; like a taper in an urn, they burn to themselves.

3. Those that are lighted as candles, should set themselves "on a candlestick;" that is, should improve all opportunities of doing good, as those that were made for the glory of God, and the service of the communities they are members of; we are not born for ourselves.

And the reason given for this, is, because "there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested," which should not be made manifest, so it might better be read, ver. 22. There is no treasure of gifts and graces lodged in any but with design to be communicated; nor was the Gospel made a secret to the apostles to be concealed, but that it should come abroad, and be divulged to all the world. Though Christ expounded the parables to his disciples privately, yet it was with design to make them the more publicly useful; they were taught that they might teach; and it is a general rule, that "the ministration of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," not himself only, but others also.

Secondly. It concerns those who hear the word of the Gospel, to mark what they hear and to make a good use of it, because their weal or woe depends upon it; what he had said before, he saith again, "If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear," ver. 23. Let him give the Gospel of Christ a fair hearing; but that is not enough; it is added, ver. 24. "Take heed what you hear," and give a due regard to that which you do hear—"consider what you hear," so Dr. Hammond reads it. Note, What we hear doth us no good, unless we consider it; those especially that are to teach others, must themselves be very observant of the things of God; must take notice of the message they are to deliver, that they may be exact. We must likewise take heed what we hear, by proving all things that we may hold fast that which is good. We must be cautious

other modern editors is, "Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God," &c. This reading is found in the Alexandrian, Vatican, and Sinaitic MSS., the Syriac-Peshito version, and other important ancient authorities.

iv. 12. For "and their sins should be forgiven them" some MSS., as the Vatican and Sinaitic, have "and it should be forgiven them."

iv. 15. For "sown in their hearts" some of the best ancient MSS., and modern editors read "sown in them."

and stand upon our guard, lest we be imposed upon. To enforce this caution, consider,

1. As we deal with God, God will deal with us. So Dr. Hammond explains these words, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you." If you be faithful servants to him, he will be a faithful Master to you: "With the upright he will shew himself upright."

2. As we improve the talents we are intrusted with, we shall increase them; if we make use of the knowledge we have for the glory of God, and the benefit of others, it shall sensibly grow, as stock in trade doth by being turned, "Unto you that hear, shall more be given; to you that have, it shall be given," ver. 25. If the disciples deliver that to the church which they have received of the Lord, they shall be led more into the secret of the Lord. Gifts and graces multiply by being exercised; and God has promised to bless the hand of the diligent.

3. If we do not use, we lose what we have: for "from him that hath not," that doth no good with what he has, and so has it in vain, as if he had it not, "shall be taken even that he has." Burying a talent is the betraying of a trust, and amounts to a forfeiture; and gifts and graces rust for want of wearing.

Thirdly. The good seed of the Gospel sown in the world, and sown in the heart, doth by degrees produce wonderful effects, but without noise, ver. 26, &c.: "So is the kingdom of God;" so is the Gospel, when it is sown, and received as seed in good ground.

1. It will come up; though it seem lost and buried under the clods, it will find or make its way through them. The seed cast into the ground will spring. Let but the word of Christ have the place it ought to have in a soul, and it will shew itself, as the wisdom from above doth, in a good conversation. After a field is sown with corn, how soon is the surface of it altered; how gay and pleasant doth it look when it is covered with green!

2. The husbandman cannot describe how it comes up; it is one of the mysteries of nature; it "springs and grows up he knows not how," ver. 27. He sees it has grown, but he cannot tell in what manner it grew, or what was the cause and method of its growth. Thus we know not how the Spirit by the word makes a change in the heart, no more than we can account for the blowing of the wind, which we hear the sound of, but cannot tell whence it comes, or whether it goes. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, how God manifested in the flesh came to be believed on in the world, 1 Tim. iii. 16.

3. The husbandman, when he hath sown the seed, doth nothing towards the springing of it up. "He sleeps and rises night and day," goes to sleep at night, gets up in the morning, and perhaps never so much as thinks of the corn he hath sown, or ever looks upon it, but follows his pleasures or other business; and yet "the earth brings forth fruit of itself," according to the ordinary course of nature, and by the concurring power of the God of nature. Thus the word of grace, when it is received in faith, is in the heart a work of grace, and the preachers contribute nothing to it. The Spirit of God is carrying it on when they sleep, and can do no business, Job xxxiii. 15, 16; or when they rise to go about other business. The prophets do not live for ever, but the word which they preached is doing its work, when they are in their graves, Zec. i. 5, 6. The dew by which the seed is brought up "tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men," Mic. v. 7.

4. It grows gradually: "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," ver. 28; when it is sprung up, it will go forward, nature will have its course, and so will grace; Christ's interest, both in the world and in the heart, is and will be a growing interest; and though "the beginning be small, the latter end will greatly increase." "Though thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, yet God will give to every seed its own body;" though at first it is but a tender blade, which the frost may nip, or the foot may crush, yet it will increase to the ear, to the full corn in the ear. *Natura nil facit per saltum*.—"Nature does nothing abruptly." God carries on his work insensibly and without noise, but insuperably and without fail.

5. It comes to perfection at last, ver. 29: "When the fruit is brought forth," that is, when it is ripe, and ready to be delivered into the owner's hand, then he puts in the sickle. This intimates, 1st. That Christ now accepts the services which are done to him by an honest heart from a good principle; from the fruit of the Gospel taking place and working in the soul, Christ gathers in a harvest of honour to himself; see *Jno.* iv. 35. 2nd. That he will reward them in eternal life. When those that receive the Gospel aright, have finished their course, the harvest comes, when they shall be gathered as wheat into God's barn, *Mat.* xiii. 30, as a shock of corn in his season.

Fourthly. The work of grace is small in its beginnings, but comes to be great and considerable at last, ver. 30-32: "Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God," as now to be set up by the Messiah? "How shall I make you to understand the designed method of it?" Christ speaks as one considering, and consulting with himself, how to illustrate it with an apt similitude. "With what comparison shall we compare it?" Shall we fetch it from the motions of the sun, or the revolutions of the moon? No, the comparison is borrowed from this earth, "it is like a grain of mustard seed;" he had compared it before to seed sown, here to that seed, intending thereby to shew,

1. That the beginnings of the gospel kingdom would be very small, like that which is "one of the least of all seeds." When a Christian church was sown in the earth for God, it was all contained in one room, and the number of the names was but one hundred and twenty, *Acts* i. 15; as the children of Israel when they went down into Egypt were but seventy souls. The work of grace in the soul is at first but the "day of small things;" "a cloud no bigger than a man's hand." Never were there such great things undertaken by such an inconsiderable handful, as that of the discipling of the nations by the ministry of the apostles; nor a work that was to end in such great glory as the work of grace, raised from such weak and unlikely beginnings: "Who hath begotten me these?"

2. That the perfection of it will be very great. "When it grows up, it becomes greater than all herbs." The gospel kingdom in the world shall increase, and spread to the remotest nations of the earth, and shall continue to the latest ages of time. The church hath shot out great branches, strong ones, spreading far, and fruitful. The work of grace in the soul has mighty products, now while it is in its growth. But what will it be, when it is perfected in heaven! The difference between a grain of mustard seed and a great tree, is nothing to that between a young convert on earth, and a glorified saint in heaven: see *Jno.* xii. 24.

After these parables thus instanced in, the historian concludes with this general account of Christ's preaching, that "with many such parables he spake the word unto them," ver. 33; probably designing to refer us to the larger account of the parables of this kind, which we had before, *Mat.* xiii. He spake in parables, "as they were able to hear them:" he fetched his comparisons from those things that were familiar to them, and level to their capacity; and delivered them in plain expressions, in condescension to their capacity. Though he did not let them into the mystery of the parables, yet his manner of expression was easy, and such as they might hereafter recollect to their edifi-

cation. But for the present, "without a parable spake he not unto them," ver. 34. The glory of the Lord was covered with a cloud, and God speaks to us in the language of the sons of men, that, though not at first, yet by degrees we may understand his meaning; the disciples themselves understood those sayings of Christ afterwards, which at first they did not rightly take the sense of; but these parables he "expounded to them when they were alone." We cannot but wish we had had that exposition, as we had of the parable of the sower; but it was not so needful, because when the church should be enlarged, that would expound these parables to us without any more ado.

35 And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. 36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. 37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. 38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? 39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

This miracle which Christ wrought for the relief of his disciples in stilling the storm, we had before, *Mat.* viii. 23, &c.; but it is here more fully related. Observe,

I. It was "the same day" that he had preached out of a ship, "when the even was come," ver. 35. When he had been labouring in the word and doctrine all day, instead of reposing himself, he exposeth himself; to teach us not to think of a constant remaining rest, till we come to heaven. The end of a toil may perhaps be but the beginning of a toss. But observe, the ship that Christ made his pulpit, is taken under his special protection, and though in danger, cannot sink. What is used for Christ, he will take particular care of.

II. He himself proposed putting to sea at night, because he would lose no time. "Let us pass over to the other side," for we shall find in the next chapter he has work to do there. Christ went about doing good, and no difficulties in his way could hinder him; thus industrious we should be in serving him and our generation, according to his will.

III. They did not put to sea till "they had sent away the multitude," that is, had given to each of them that which they came for, and answered all their requests; for he sent none home complaining that they had attended him in vain. Or, they sent them away with a solemn blessing, for Christ came into the world not only to pronounce, but to command and to give the blessing.

IV. They took him "even as he was," that is, in the same dress that he was in when he preached, without any cloak to throw over him, which he ought to have had to keep him warm, when he went to sea at night, especially after preaching. We must not from hence infer, that we may be careless of our health, but we may learn hence not to be over nice and solicitous about the body.

V. The storm was so great, that the ship was full of water, ver. 37; not by springing a leak, but perhaps partly with the shower, for the word here used signifies a tempest of wind with rain; however, the ship being little, the waves beat into it, so that it was full. Note, It is no new thing for that ship to be greatly hurried and endangered in which Christ and his disciples, Christ and his name and Gospel, are embarked.

VI. There were "with him other little ships," who no doubt shared in the distress and danger. Probably those little ships carried those who were desirous to go along with Christ, for the benefit of his preaching and miracles on the other side. The multitude went away when he put to sea, but some there were that would venture upon the water with him. Those follow the Lamb aright, that follow him wherever he goes. And those that hope for a happiness in Christ, must be willing to take their lot with him, and run the same risks that he runs. One may boldly and cheerfully put to sea in Christ's company, yea, though we foresee a storm.

VII. Christ was asleep in this storm; and here we are told that it was "in the hinder part of the ship," the pilot's place, he lay at the helm, to intimate that, as Mr. George Herbert expresseth it,—

When wind and waves assault my keel,
He doth preserve it, he doth steer,
Even when the boat seems most to reel.
Storms are the triumph of his art;
Though he may close his eyes, yet not his heart.

He had a pillow there, such a one as a fisherman's ship would furnish him with. And he slept, to try the faith of his disciples, and to stir up prayer; and upon trial, their faith appeared weak, and their prayers strong. Note, Sometimes when the church is in a storm, Christ seems as if he were asleep, unconcerned in the troubles of his people, and regardless of their prayers, and doth not presently appear for their relief. "Verily he is a God that hideth himself," *Isa.* xl. 15. But as when he carries, he doth not tarry, *Hab.* ii. 3; so when he sleeps, he doth not sleep; "the Keeper of Israel doth not" so much as "slumber," *Ps.* cxxi. 3, 4; he slept, but his heart was awake, as the spouse, *Cant.* v. 2. VIII. His disciples encouraged themselves with their having his presence, and thought it the best way to improve that, and appeal to that, and ply the oar of prayer, rather than their other oars. Their confidence lay in this, that they had their Master with them; and the ship that has Christ in it, though it may be tost, it cannot sink; the bush that has God in it, though it may burn

iv. 22. Here also there is some uncertainty as to the reading of the words rendered "which shall not be manifested." The Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. have "except that it should be manifested." For "should come abroad" render "should come to light."

iv. 24. Instead of "and unto you that hear shall more be given" there is another and better-supported reading: "and more shall be given unto you." This reading is adopted by Griesbach and later editors, and is found in the Sinaitic and other MSS.

iv. 26-29. This parable is only found in Mark. Alford says, "By commentators of the Straussian school it is strangely supposed to be the same as the parable of the tares, with the tares left out." The idea is certainly a strange one, for the parable of the tares illustrates the work of Satan and of evil, while this illustrates the operations of God and his grace.

iv. 35. The words "the same day, when the even was come," precisely indicate the occasion on which the preceding and following

shall not consume. Caesar encouraged the master of the ship that had him on board with this, *Cæsarem vehis et fortunam Cæsaris*.—Thou hast Cæsar on board, and Cæsar's fortune. They awoke Christ. Had not the necessity of the case called for it, they would not have stirred up or awoke their Master till he had pleased, *Cant. ii. 7*. But they knew he would forgive them this wrong. When Christ seems as if he slept in a storm, he is awaked by the prayers of his people; when we know not what to do, our eye must be to him, *2 Chr. xx. 12*; at our wit's end, but not at our faith's end, while we have such a Saviour to go to. Their address to Christ is here expressed very emphatically, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" I confess this sounds somewhat harsh, rather like chiding him for sleeping, than begging him to awake. I know no excuse for it, but the great familiarity which he was pleased to admit them into and the freedom he allowed them, and the present distress they were in, which put them into such a fright, that they knew not what they said. They do Christ a deal of wrong, who suspect him to be careless of his people in distress. The matter is not so; he is not willing that any should perish, much less any of his little ones. *Mat. xviii. 14*.

IX. The word of command with which Christ rebuked the storm, we have here, and had not in *Matthew*. Ver. 39, he says, "Peace, be still," *εἰπά, πεφίμωτο*,—"be silent, be dumb." Let not the wind any longer roar, nor the sea rage. Thus he stills the noise of the sea, the noise of her waves; a particular emphasis is laid upon the noisiness of them, *Ps. lxxv. 7*; *xcii. 3, 4*. The noise is threatening and terrifying; let us hear no more of it. This is, 1. A word of command to us, when our wicked hearts are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, *Isa. lvii. 20*. When our passions are up, and are unruly, think we hear the law of Christ saying, "Be silent, be dumb." Think not confusedly, speak not unadvisedly; but "be still." 2. A word of comfort to us, that be the storm of trouble never so loud, never so strong, Jesus Christ can lay it with a word's speaking. When without are fightings, and within are fears, and the spirits are in a tumult, Christ can "create the fruit of the lips, peace." If he say, "Peace, be still," there is "a great calm" presently. It is spoken of as God's prerogative to command the seas, *Isa. lvii. 15*; *Jer. xxxi. 35*. By this therefore Christ proves himself to be God. He that made the seas, can make them quiet.

X. The reproof Christ gave them for their fears is here carried farther than in *Matthew*; there it is, "Why are ye fearful?" here, "Why are ye so fearful?" Though there may be cause for some fear, yet not for fear to such a degree as this. There it is, "O ye of little faith;" here it is, "How is it that ye have no faith?" Not that the disciples were without faith. No; they believed that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;" but at this time their fears prevailed so, that they seemed to have no faith at all; it was out of the way when they had occasion for it, and so it was as if they had not had it. "How is it, that in this matter you have no faith? That you think I would not come in with seasonable and effectual relief?" Those may suspect their faith, who can entertain such a thought as that Christ careth not though his people perish; and Christ justly takes it ill.

Lastly, The impression this miracle made upon the disciples is here differently expressed. In *Matthew* it is said, "the men marvelled;" here it is said, "they feared greatly." They "feared a great fear," so the original reads it. Now their fear was rectified by their faith. When they feared the winds and the sea, it was for want of the reverence they ought to have for Christ; but now they saw a demonstration of his power over them, they feared them less, and him more. They feared lest they had offended Christ by their unbelieving fears, and therefore studied now to give him honour. They had feared the power and wrath of the Creator in the storm, and that fear had torment and amazement in it; but now they feared the power and grace of the Redeemer in the calm, they "feared the Lord and his goodness," and it had pleasure and satisfaction in it, and by it they gave glory to Christ; as Jonah's mariners, who, when the "sea ceased from her raging, feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord," *Jonah i. 16*. This sacrifice they offered to the honour of Christ, they said, "What manner of man is this?" surely more than a man, "for even the wind and the sea obey him."

CHAPTER V.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ casting the legion of devils out of the man possessed, and suffering them to enter into the swine, ver. 1—20. II. Christ's healing the woman with the bloody issue in the way, as he was going to raise Jairus' daughter to life, ver. 21—43. These three miracles we had the story of before, *Mat. viii. 28, &c.*, and *Mat. ix. 18, &c.*, but more fully related here.



AND they came over unto the other side of the sea into the country of the Gadarenes. 2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: 4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. 5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. 6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, 7 And cried with a loud voice, and

said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. 8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. 9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. 10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. 11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. 12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. 13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. 14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. 15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 16 And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. 17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. 18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. 19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. 20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.



DWELLERS AMONGST THE TOMBS.—VER. 3.

We have here an instance of Christ's dispossessing the strong man armed, and disposing of him as he pleased, to make it appear he was "stronger than he." This he did when he was come "to the other side," whither he went through a storm; and his business there was to rescue this poor creature out of the hands of Satan; and when he had done that, he returned. Thus he came from heaven to earth, and returned in a storm, to redeem a remnant of mankind out of the hands of the devil, though but a little remnant, and did not think his pains ill bestowed. In *Matthew* they were said to be two possessed with devils; here it is said to be a man possessed with an unclean spirit. If there were two, there was one, and Mark doth not say there was but one; so that this difference cannot give us any just offence; it is likely one of them was

incidents occurred. They are, however, separated by *Matthew*, who records the parable of the mustard-seed in chap. xiii. 31—35, and the storm upon the lake in chap. viii. 18, 23—27. From this and other indications it is apparent that the evangelists do not always follow the exact order of time. This remark applies to Luke in the present case, inasmuch as he inserts the parable of the mustard-seed at chap. xiii. 18, 19, and the storm at chap. viii. 22—25.

iv. 38. Calvin says, "Though Christ's sleep was natural, yet it

availed to the same use, that the disciples should the better know their own infirmity. I will not say as many do, that Christ feigned himself to be asleep, that he might try them; I do rather judge that he slept as the condition and necessity of human nature did require. Yet his Godhead did watch, so that the apostles ought not to have feared but that they should presently have been comforted, help being prepared for them from heaven."

iv. 38. "The hinder part of the ship" was the place allotted to

much more remarkable than the other, and said what was said. Now observe here.

First. The miserable condition that this poor creature was in. He was under the power of "an unclean spirit," the devil got possession of him, and the effect of it was not, as in many, a silent melancholy, but a raging frenzy; he was raving mad; his condition seems to have been worse than any of those that were possessed that were Christ's patients.

1. He "had his dwelling among the tombs," among the graves of dead people. Their tombs were out of the cities, in "desolate places," *Job* iii. 14, which gave the devil great advantage; for woe to him that is alone. Perhaps the devil drove him to the tombs, to make people fancy that the souls of the dead were turned into demons, and did what mischief was done, so to excuse themselves from it. The touch of a grave was polluting, *Nim.* xix. 16. The unclean spirit drives people into that company that is defiling, and so keeps possession of them. Christ, by rescuing souls out of Satan's power, saves the living from among the dead.

2. He was very strong and ungovernable. "No man could bind him," as it is requisite, both for their own good, and for the safety of others, that those who are distracted should be. Not only cords would not hold him, but chains and fetters of iron would not, ver. 3, 4. The case of such is very deplorable, that need to be thus bound, and of all miserable people in this world they are most to be pitied; but his case was worst of all; to whom the devil was so strong that he could not be bound. This sets forth the sad condition of those souls in which the devil has dominion; those children of disobedience, in whom that unclean spirit works. Some notoriously wilful sinners are like this madman; all are herein like the horse and the mule, that they need to be held in with bit and bridle; but some are like the wild ass, that will not be so held. The commands and curses of the law are as chains and fetters to restrain sinners from their wicked courses, but they break those bands in sunder, and it is an evidence of the power of the devil in them.

3. He was a terror and torment to himself, and to all about him, ver. 5. The devil is a cruel master to those that are led captive by him, a perfect tyrant. This wretched creature was "night and day in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones," either bemoaning his own deplorable case, or in rage and indignation against Heaven. Men, in frenzies, often wound and destroy themselves. What is a man, when reason is de-throned, and Satan enthroned? The worshippers of Baal, in their fury, cut themselves, like this madman in his. The voice of God is, "Do thyself no harm;" the voice of Satan is, "Do thyself all the harm thou canst;" yet God's word is despised, and Satan's regarded. Perhaps his "cutting himself with stones," was only cutting his feet with the sharp stones he ran barefoot upon.

Secondly. His application to Christ, ver. 6. "When he saw Jesus afar off," coming ashore, "he ran and worshipped him." He usually ran upon others with rage, but he ran to Christ with reverence. That was done by an invisible hand of Christ, which could not be done with chains and fetters, his fury was all on a sudden curbed; even the devil in this poor creature was forced to tremble before Christ, and bow to him; or rather, the poor man came and worshipped Christ, in a sense of the need he had of his help, the power of Satan in and over him being for this instant suspended.

Thirdly. The word of command Christ gave to the unclean spirit to quit his possession, ver. 8. "Come out of him, thou unclean spirit." He made the man desirous to be relieved, when he enabled him to run and worship him, and then put forth his power for his relief. If Christ work in us heartily to pray for a deliverance from Satan, he will work for us that deliverance. Here is an instance of that power and authority with which Christ "commanded the unclean spirits, and they obeyed him," *ch.* i. 27: he said, "Come out of the man." The design of Christ's Gospel is to expel unclean spirits out of the souls of people. "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit," that the Holy Spirit may enter, may take possession of the heart, and have dominion in it.

Fourthly. The dread which the devil had of Christ. The man ran and worshipped Christ; but it was the devil in the man that "cried with a loud voice," (making use of the poor man's tongue.) "What have I to do with thee?" ver. 7; just as that other unclean spirit, *ch.* i. 24. 1. He calls God "the most high God," above all other gods. By the name *Eliou*, the "most high," God was known among the Phœnicians, and other the nations that bordered upon Israel, and by that name the devil calls him. 2. He owns Jesus to be the Son of God. Note, It is no strange thing to hear the best words drop from the worst mouths. There is such a way of saying this as none can attain to but by the Holy Ghost, *1 Cor.* xii. 3; yet it may be said after a sort by the unclean spirit. There is no judging of men by their loose sayings, but "by their fruits ye shall know them." Piety from the teeth outward is an easy thing. The most fair-spoken hypocrite cannot say better than to call Jesus the Son of God, and yet that the devil did. 3. He disowns any design against Christ; "What have I to do with thee?" 4. I have no need of thee, I pretend to none; I desire to have nothing to do with thee; I cannot stand before thee, and would not fall.

4. He deprecates his wrath. "I adjure thee," that is, "I earnestly beseech thee by all that is sacred, I beg of thee for God's sake, by whose permission I have got possession of this man, that though thou drive me out hence, yet that thou torment me not, that thou do not restrain me from doing mischief somewhere else; though I know I am sentenced, yet let me not be sent to the chains of darkness, or hindered from going to and fro to devour." Fifthly. The account Christ took from this unclean spirit of his name. This we had not in *Matthew*. Christ asked him, "what is thy name?" not but that Christ could call all the fallen stars, as well as by might be affected with their names; but he demands this, that the standers by might be affected with the vast numbers and powers of those malignant, infernal spirits. As they had reason to be, when the answer was, "My name is Legion, for we are many." A legion of soldiers among the Romans consisted, some say, of six thousand men, others, of twelve thousand and five hundred; but the number of a legion with them, no more than of a regiment with us, was not always the same. Now this intimates that the devils, the infernal powers, are, 1. Military powers; a legion is a number of soldiers in arms. The devils war against God and his glory, Christ and his Gospel, men and their holiness and happiness. They are such as we are to resist and wrestle against, *Eph.* vi. 12. 2. That they are numerous; he owns, or rather he boasts, that "we are many;" as if he hoped to be too many for Christ himself to deal with. What multitudes of apostate spirits were there, and all enemies to God and man, when here were a legion posted to keep garrison in one poor wretched creature, against Christ. Many there be that rise up against us. 3. That they are unanimous; they are many devils, and yet but one legion, engaged in the same wicked cause; and therefore that cavil of the Pharisees, which supposed Satan to cast out Satan, and to be divided against himself, was altogether groundless. It was not one of this legion that betrayed the rest, for they all said as one man, "What have I to do with thee?" 4. That they are very powerful. Who can stand before a legion? We are not a match for our spiritual enemies in our own strength; but "in the Lord, and in the power of his might," we shall be able to stand against them, though there are legions of them. 5. That there is order among them, as there is in a legion; there are "principalities and

powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world;" which supposeth there are those of a lower rank,—the devil and his angels, the dragon and his; the prince of the devils and his subjects; which makes those enemies the more formidable.

Sixthly. The request of this legion, that Christ would suffer them to go into a herd of swine, that was feeding nigh unto the mountains, ver. 11, those mountains which the demoniacs haunted, ver. 5. Their request was, 1. That he would not send them away out of the country, ver. 10. Not only that he would not commit them, or confine them to their infernal prison, and so torment them before the time; but that he would not banish them that country, as justly he might, because in this poor man they had been such a terror to it, and done so much mischief. They seem to have had a particular affection for that country, or rather, a particular spite to it; and to have liberty to walk to and fro through the rest of the earth will not serve, (*Job* i. 7,) unless the range of those mountains be allowed them for their pasture, *Job* xxxix. 8. But why would they abide in that country? Grotius saith, 'Because in that country there were many apostate Jews, who had thrown themselves out of the covenant of God, and had thereby given Satan power over them.' And some suggest, that having, by experience, got the knowledge of the dispositions and manners of the people of that country, they could the more effectually do them mischief by their temptations. 2. That he would suffer them to enter into the swine, by destroying which they hoped to do more mischief to the souls of all the people of the country, than they could by entering into the body of any particular person, which therefore they did not ask leave to do, for they knew Christ would not grant it.

Seventhly. The permission Christ gave them to enter into the swine, and their immediate destruction thereby. "He gave them leave," ver. 13; he did not forbid or restrain them; let them do as they had a mind. Thus he would let the Gadarenes see what powerful, spiteful enemies devils are, that they might thereby be induced to make him their friend, who alone was able to control and conquer them, and had made it appear he was so. Immediately the unclean spirits entered into the swine," which, by the law, were unclean creatures, and naturally love to wallow in the mire, and therefore the fittest place for them. Those that, like the swine, delight in the mire of sensual lusts, are fit habitations for Satan, and are, like Babylon, the "hold of every foul spirit," and a "cage of every unclean and hateful bird," *Rev.* xviii. 2, as pure souls are habitations of the Holy Spirit. The consequent of the devils' entering into the swine was, that they all ran mad presently, and ran headlong into the adjoining sea, where they were all drowned, to the number of two thousand. The man they possessed did only cut himself, for God had said, "He is in your hands, only save his life;" but thereby it appeared that, if he had not been so restrained, the poor man would have drowned himself. See how much we are indebted to the providence of God, and the ministration of good angels, for our preservation from malignant spirits.

Eighthly. The report of all this dispersed through the country immediately. They that fed the swine hastened to the owners to give an account of their charge, ver. 14. This drew the people together to see what was done. And, 1. When they saw how wonderfully the poor man was cured, they from thence conceived a veneration for Christ, ver. 15. They saw him that was "possessed with the devil," and knew him well enough, by the same token that they had many a time been frightened at the sight of him, and were now as much surprised to see him "sitting, clothed, and in his right mind;" when Satan was cast out, he came to himself, and was his own man presently. Note, Those who are grave and sober, and live by rule, and with consideration, thereby make it appear that, by the power of Christ, the devil's power is broken in their souls. The sight of this made them afraid, that is, it astonished them, and forced them to own the power of Christ, and that he is worthy to be feared. But, 2. When they found that their swine were lost, they thence conceived a dislike of Christ, and wished to have rather his room than his company; they prayed "him to depart out of their coasts," for they think not any good he can do them sufficient to make them amends for the loss of so many swine, fat swine it may be, and ready for the market. Now the devils had what they would have; for by no handle do those evil spirits more effectually manage sinful souls, than by that of the love of the world. They were afraid of some farther punishment, if Christ should tarry among them; whereas, if they would but part with their sins, he had life and happiness for them; but being loath to quit either their sins, or their swine, they chose rather to abandon their Saviour. Thus they do, who rather than let go a base lust, will throw away their interest in Christ, and their expectations from him. They should rather have argued, "If he has such power as this over devils, and all creatures, it is good having him our friend; if the devils have leave to tarry in our country," (*ver.* 10,) let us intreat him to tarry in it too, who alone can control them." But, instead of this, they wished him farther off; such strange misconstructions do carnal hearts make of the just judgments of God; instead of being by them driven to him, as they ought, they set him at so much a greater distance; though he hath said, "Provoke me not, and I will do you no hurt," *Jer.* xxv. 6.

Ninthly. An account of the carriage of the poor man that was delivered, after his deliverance. 1. He desired that he might go along with Christ, ver. 18; perhaps for fear, lest the evil spirit should again seize him, or rather, that he might receive instruction from him, being unwilling to way among those heathenish people that desired him to depart. Those that are freed from the evil spirit, cannot but covet acquaintance and fellowship with Christ. 2. Christ "would not suffer him" to go with him, lest it should savour of ostentation, and to let him know that he could both protect and instruct him at a distance. And besides, he had other work for him to do, he must go home to his friends, and tell them what "great things the Lord had done for him," the Lord Jesus had done, that Christ might be honoured, and his neighbours and friends might be edified, and invited to believe in Christ. He must take particular notice, rather of Christ's pity than of his power; for that is it which especially he glories in; he must tell them what compassion the Lord had had on him in his misery. 3. The man, in a transport of joy, proclaimed it all the country over, what "great things Jesus had done for him," *ver.* 20. This is a debt we owe both to Christ and to our brethren, that he may be glorified, and they edified. And see what was the effect of it, "all men did marvel," but few went any farther. Many, that cannot choose but wonder at the works of Christ, yet do not, as they ought, wonder after him.

21 And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea. 22 And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at

the steersman. Dr. Kitto correctly observes that the Greek is better rendered "the pillow," the article having a peculiar force in referring to a particular part of the ship's furniture called "the pillow." "Some regard it as denoting a piece of wood framed at the stern; but others prefer to consider it as a leather stuffed cushion. The word, in its ordinary acceptation, denotes not only a pillow for the head, but a cushion on which one might lie or sit down." In the New Testament it is only found here.

v. 1. The received text here and in *Luke* viii. 26 has Gadarenes, while *Matt.* viii. 28 has Gergesenes. The manuscripts and versions, however, offer other variations, and Tischendorf in his New Testament adopts Gadarenes for *Matthew*, and Gerasenes for *Mark* and *Luke*. Differences are known to have existed as early as the time of Origen, who has a special note upon them, and says correct copies had Gergesenes. This, he says, is from Gergesa, a town of that region, whereas Gadara and Gerasa do not occur in the locality

his feet, 23 And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee*, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. 24 And *Jesus* went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him. 25 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, 26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, 27 When she had heard of *Jesus*, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. 28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. 29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague. 30 And *Jesus*, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? 31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? 32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. 33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. 34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

The Gadarenes having desired Christ to leave their country, he did not stay to trouble them long, but presently went by water, as he came, back "to the other side," ver. 21; and there "much people gathered to him." Note, If there be some that reject Christ, yet there are others that receive him, and bid him welcome. A despised Gospel will cross the water, and go where it will have better entertainment. Now, among the many that applied themselves to him,

First. Here is one that comes openly to beg a cure for a sick child; and it is no less a person than one of the rulers of the synagogue, one that presided in the synagogue worship, or, as some think, one of the judges of the consistory court, which was in every city, consisting of twenty-three. He was not named in *Matthew*; he is here, Jairus, or Jair, *Jud. x. 3*. He addressed himself to Christ, though a ruler, with great humility and reverence; "when he saw him, he fell at his feet," giving honour to him, as one really greater than he appeared to be; and with great importunity, he "besought him greatly;" as one in earnest, as one that not only valued the mercy he came for, but that knew he could obtain it no where else. The case is this: He has a "little daughter," about twelve years old, the darling of the family, and she lies a dying; but he believes if Christ will but come and lay his hands upon her, she will return even from the gates of the grave. He said at first, when he came, she "lies a dying;" so Mark; but afterwards, upon fresh information sent him, he saith, "she is even now dead;" so *Matthew*; but still prosecutes his suit: see *Lu. viii. 42, 49*. Christ readily agreed, and went with him, ver. 24.

Secondly. Here is another that comes clandestinely to steal a cure (if I may so say) for herself; and she got the relief she came for. This cure was wrought by the way, as he was going to raise the ruler's daughter, and was followed by a crowd. See how Christ improved his time, and lost none of the precious moments of it. Many of his discourses, and some of his miracles, are dated by the wayside: we should be doing good, not only when we sit in the house, but when we walk by the way, *Deu. vi. 7*. Now observe,

1. The piteous case of this poor woman: she had a constant issue of blood upon her for twelve years, which had thrown her, no doubt, into great weakness, had embittered the comfort of her life, and threatened to be her death in

a little time. She had had the best advice of physicians she could get, and had made use of the many medicines and methods they prescribed: as long as she had any thing to give them, they had kept her in hopes they could cure her; but now she had spent all she had among them, they gave her up as incurable. See here, 1st. That skin for skin, and all that a man has, will give for life and health; she spent all she had upon physicians. 2nd. It is ill with those patients whose physicians are their worst disease; that suffer by their physicians, instead of being relieved by them. 3rd. Those that are not bettered by medicines commonly grow worse, and the disease gets the more ground. 4th. It is usual that people do not apply themselves to Christ till they have tried in vain all other helpers, and find them, as certainly they will, physicians of no value. And he will be found a sure refuge, even to those who make him their last refuge.

2. The strong faith that she had in the power of Christ to heal her. She said within herself,—"though it doth not appear she was encouraged by any preceding instance to say it,—"If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be whole," ver. 28. She believed he cured not as a prophet, by virtue derived from God, but as the Son of God, by a virtue inherent in himself. Her case was such as she could not in modesty tell him publicly, as others did their grievances; and therefore a private cure was what she wished for, and her faith was suited to her case.

3. The wonderful effect produced by it. "She came in the crowd behind him," and with much ado got to touch his garment, and immediately she felt the cure wrought, ver. 29. The flux of blood was dried up, and she felt herself perfectly well all over her, as well as ever she was in her life, in an instant. By this it appears that the cure was altogether miraculous; for those that, in such cases, are cured by natural means, recover their strength slowly, and gradually, and not *per saltum*,—"at one jump;" but, "as for God, his work is perfect." Note, Those whom Christ heals of the disease of sin, that bloody issue, cannot but experience in themselves an universal change for the better.

4. Christ's inquiry after his concealed patient, and the encouragement he gave her, upon the discovery of her. Christ knew "in himself that virtue had gone out of him," ver. 30. He knew it, not by any deficiency of spirits, through the exhausting of this virtue; but rather by an agility of spirits, in the exerting of it, and the innate and inseparable pleasure he had in doing good; and being desirous to see his patient, he asked, not in displeasure, as one affronted, but in tenderness, as one concerned, "Who touched my clothes?" The disciples, not without a show of rudeness and indecency, almost ridiculed his question, ver. 31: "The multitude throng thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?" as if it had been an improper question. Christ passed by the affront, and looks round "to see her that had done this thing;" not that he might blame her for her presumption, but that he might commend and encourage her faith; and by his own act and deed might warrant and confirm the cure, and ratify to her that which she had surreptitiously obtained. He needed not that any should inform him, for he had presently his eye upon her. Note, As secret acts of sin, so secret acts of faith are known to the Lord *Jesus*, and are under his eye. If believers derive virtue from Christ never so closely, he knows it and is pleased with it. The poor woman hereupon presented herself to the Lord *Jesus*, ver. 33, "fearing and trembling," not knowing how he would take it. Note, Christ's patients are often trembling, when they have reason to be triumphing. She might have come boldly, "knowing what was done in her," yet knowing that, she fears and trembles. It was a surprise, and was not yet, as it should have been, a pleasing surprise. However she "fell down before him." Note, There is nothing better for those that fear and tremble than to throw themselves at the feet of the Lord *Jesus*; to humble themselves before him, and refer themselves to him. And she "told him all the truth." Note, We must not be ashamed to own the secret transactions between Christ and our souls, but when called to it, mention to his praise, and others' encouragement, what he has done for our souls, and the experience we have had of healing virtue derived from him. And the consideration of this, that nothing can be hid from Christ, should engage us to confess all to him. And see what an encouraging word he gave her, ver. 34, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." Note, Christ puts honour upon faith, because faith gives honour to Christ. But see how what is done by faith on earth is ratified in heaven; Christ saith, "Be whole of thy disease." Note, If our faith sets the seal of its amen to the power and promise of God, saying, so it is, and so let it be to me, God's grace will set the seal of its amen to the prayers and hopes of faith, saying, so be it, and so it shall be to thee. And, therefore, "Go in peace;" be well satisfied that thy cure is honestly come by, is effectually wrought, and take the comfort of it. Note, They that by faith are healed of their spiritual diseases, have reason to go in peace.

35 While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? 36 As soon as *Jesus* heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. 37 And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and



DEATH-BED SCENE.—FROM AN ETRUSCAN TOMB.

required. The Syriac version has Gadarenes in our text, and so have numerous other authorities, including the Alexandrian MS. The Sinaitic, Vatican, and Cambridge MSS. have Gerasenes. Alford thinks Gergesenes most likely, but we think Gerasenes has most witness in its favour.

v. 20. Upon the word Decapolis a well-known infidel writer, who cites it to prove the falsehood of Gospel geography, says the name was not so much as known before the reign of the Emperor Nero.

Even were it true that the name was unknown, it would prove no falsehood, but only that *Matthew* and *Mark* wrote no earlier than Nero's reign, and called a certain region by its accepted name. The name Decapolis originated at an unknown date, and being Greek, probably arose before the Roman supremacy, but during the prevalence of Grecian influences. *Josephus*, *Pliny* the elder, and other early writers speak of it, but no author states when the name was introduced; it is, therefore, mere audacity to say it was not known

James, and John the brother of James. 38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. 39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. 40 And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. 41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. 42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. 43 And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

Diseases and deaths came into the world by the sin and disobedience of the first Adam, but by the grace of the second Adam both are conquered. Christ having healed an incurable disease, here goes on to triumph over death, as in the beginning of the chapter he had triumphed over an outrageous devil.

First. The melancholy news is brought to Jairus that his daughter is dead, and therefore if Christ be as other physicians, he comes too late; while there is life there is hope, and room for the use of means, but when life is gone it is past recall: "Why troublest thou the Master any farther?" ver. 35. Ordinarily, the proper thought in this case is, The matter is determined, the will of God is done; and I submit, I acquiesce. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell but God will yet be gracious to me, and the child shall live; but now it is dead, wherefore should I fast? I shall go to it, but it shall not return to me." And with such words we should quiet ourselves at such a time, that our souls may be "as a child that is weaned from his mother." But here the case was extraordinary; the death of the child doth not, as usual, put an end to the narrative.

Secondly. Christ encourageth the afflicted father yet to hope that his application to Christ on behalf of his child should not be in vain. Christ had stayed to work a cure by the way, but he shall be no sufferer by that, nor loser by others' gain. "Be not afraid, only believe." We may suppose Jairus at a pause whether he should ask Christ to go on or no. But have we not as much occasion for the grace of God, and his consolations, and consequently of the prayers of our ministers and Christian friends, when death is in the house, as when sickness is? Christ therefore soon determines this matter, "Be not afraid that my coming will be to no purpose, only believe that I will make it turn to a good account." Note. 1. We must not despair concerning our relations that are dead, nor sorrow for them as those that have no hope. See what is said to Rachel, that refused to be comforted concerning her children, upon presumption that they were not: "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for there is hope in thine end that thy children shall come again." Jer. xxxi. 16, 17. Therefore fear not, faint not. 2. Faith is the only remedy against disquieting grief and fear at such a time; let that silence them, "only believe." Keep a confidence in Christ, and a dependence upon him, and he will do what is for the best. Believe the resurrection, and then be not afraid.

Thirdly. He went with a select company to the house where the dead child was. He had, by the crowd that attended him, given advantage to the poor woman he last healed, and having done that, now he shook off the crowd, and "suffered no man to follow him," to "follow with him," so the word is, but his three bosom disciples, Peter, and James, and John, a competent number to be witnesses of the miracle, but not such a number as that his taking them with him might look like vainglory.

Fourthly. He raised the dead child to life. The circumstances of the narrative here are much the same as we had them in *Matthew*; only here we may observe,

1. That the child was extremely well beloved, for the relations and neighbours "wept and wailed greatly." It is very afflictive when that which is come forth like a flower is so soon cut down, and withereth before it is grown up; when that grieves us of which we said, "This same shall comfort us."

2. That it was evident beyond dispute that the child was really and truly dead. Their laughing Christ to scorn for saying, "She is not dead, but sleepeth," though an ill thing, serves for the proof of this.

3. That Christ put those out as unworthy to be witnesses of the miracle who were noisy in their sorrow, and were so ignorant in the things of God as not to understand him when he spoke of death as a sleep, or so scornful as to ridicule him for it.

4. That he took the parents of the child to be witnesses of the miracle, because in it he had an eye to their faith, and designed it for their comfort who were the true, for they were the silent mourners.

5. That Christ raised the child to life by a word of power, which is recorded here, and recorded in *Syriac*, the language in which Christ spoke, for the greater certainty of the thing: *Talitha cumi*,—"Damsel, I say unto thee, arise." Dr. Lightfoot saith, it was customary with the Jews when they gave physic to one that was sick, they said, "Arise from thy disease," meaning, we wish thou mayest arise; but to one that was dead Christ said, "Arise from the dead," meaning, "I command that thou arise;" nay, there is more in it, the dead have not power to arise, therefore power goes along with this word to make it effectual. *Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis*,—"Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt." Christ works while he pleaseth, even the dead to arise. Such is the gospel call to those that are by nature dead in trespasses

and sins, and can no more rise from that death by their own power than this child could; and yet that word, "Awake, and arise from the dead," is neither vain, nor in vain, when it follows immediately, "Christ shall give thee life," *Eph. v. 14*. It is by the word of Christ that spiritual life is given, "I said unto thee, live," *Eze. xvi. 6*.

6. That the damsel, as soon as life returned, "arose and walked," ver. 42. Spiritual life will appear by our rising from the bed of sloth and carelessness, and our walking in a religious conversation; our walking up and down in Christ's name and strength. Even from those that are "of the age of twelve years," it may be expected that they should should walk as those whom Christ has raised to life, otherwise than in the native vanity of their minds.

7. That all who saw it and heard of it admired the miracle, and him that wrought it; "they were astonished with a great astonishment." They could not but acknowledge that there was something in it extraordinary and very great, and yet they knew not what to make of it, or to infer from it. Their wonder should have worked forward to a lively faith, but it rested in a stupor or astonishment.

8. That Christ endeavoured to conceal it: "He charged them straitly that no man should know it;" it was sufficiently known to a competent number, but he would not have it as yet proclaimed any farther, because his own resurrection was to be the great instance of his power over death, and therefore the divulging of other instances must be reserved till that great proof was given; let one part of the evidence be kept private till the other part, on which the main stress lies, be made ready.

9. That Christ took care "something should be given her to eat." By this it appeared that she was raised not only to life, but to a good state of health, that she had an appetite to her meat; even the new born babes in Christ's house desire the sincere milk, *1 Pet. ii. 1, 2*. And it is observable, that as Christ, when at first he had made man, presently provided food for him, and food out of the earth of which he was made, *Gen. i. 29*; so now, when he had given a new life, he took care that something should be given to eat; for if he have given life, he may be trusted to give livelihood, because "the life is more than meat," *Mat. vi. 25*. Where Christ hath given spiritual life, he will provide food for the support and nourishment of it unto life eternal, for he will never forsake or be wanting to the work of his own hands.

CHAPTER VI.

A great variety of observable passages we have in this chapter concerning our Lord Jesus, the substance of all which we had before in *Matthew*, but divers circumstances we have which we did not there meet with. Here is, I. Christ contemned by his countrymen, because he was one of them, and they knew, or thought they knew, his original, ver. 1-6. II. The just power he gave his apostles over unclean spirits, and an account given of their negotiation, ver. 7-13. III. A strange notion which Herod and others had of Christ, upon which occasion we have the story of the martyrdom of John Baptist, ver. 14-29. IV. Christ's retirement into a desert place with his disciples; the crowds that followed him thither to receive instruction from him, and his feeding five thousand of them with five loaves and two fishes, ver. 30-44. V. Christ's walking upon the sea to his disciples, and the abundance of cures he wrought on the other side the water, ver. 45-56.

AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. 2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. 4 But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. 5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. 6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

Here, First, Christ makes a visit to his own country, the place, not of his birth, but of his education, that was Nazareth, where his relations were. He had been in danger of his life among them, *Lu. iv. 29*, and yet he came among them again; so strangely doth he wait to be gracious, and seek the salvation of his enemies: whither he went, though it was into danger, "his disciples followed him," ver. 1, for they had left all to follow him whithersoever he went.

Secondly. There he preached in their synagogue on the sabbath day, ver. 2. It seems there was not such flocking to him there as in other places, so that he had no opportunity of preaching till they came together on the sabbath day; and then he expounded a portion of Scripture with great clearness. In religious assemblies on sabbath days the word of God is to be preached, according to Christ's example: we give glory to God by receiving instruction from him.

Thirdly. They could not but own that which was very honourable concerning him. 1. That he spoke with great wisdom, and that wisdom was given to

before the reign of Nero. The lists of the ten cities from which Decapolis took its name vary in ancient writers, and it is not unlikely that the boundaries were changed from time to time, but so changed as to allow the old name to be retained. With one exception the cities of Decapolis appear to have been on the east of the Jordan, and hence perhaps we may gather why Josephus calls it Decapolis of Syria.

v. 41. The occurrence of the Aramaic phrase, "Talitha cumi,"

signifying, "Damsel, arise," indicates the popular use of that dialect. It is maintained by some that Syro-Chaldaic, or a similar form of language, was commonly employed by our Lord and the Jewish people of that day. Others, however, argue that the ordinary language of the nation was the Greek. There is no doubt that both were used, but it is not easy to decide which predominated among the population at large. Dr. Roberts, who has written most copiously on this subject, is of opinion that our Lord and his disciples did, for

him, for they knew he had no learned education. 2. That he did mighty works, did them with his own hands, for the confirming of the doctrine he taught; they acknowledged the two great proofs of the Divine original of his Gospel, the Divine wisdom that appears in the contrivance of it, and the Divine power that was exerted for the ratifying and recommending of it; and yet, though they could not deny the premises, they would not admit the conclusion.

Fourthly. They studied to disparage him, and to raise prejudices in the minds of people against him, notwithstanding. All this wisdom, and all these mighty works, shall be of no account, because he had had a home education, had never travelled, nor been at any university, or bred up at the feet of any of their doctors, ver. 3: "Is not this the carpenter?" In *Matthew* they upbraid him with being the carpenter's son, his supposed father Joseph being of that trade. But it seems they could say farther, "Is not this the carpenter?" Our Lord Jesus, it is probable, employing himself in that business with his father before he entered upon his public ministry, at least, sometimes in journey-work. 1. He would thus humble himself, and make himself of no reputation, as one that had taken upon him the form of a servant, and came to minister. This is low did our Redeemer stoop, when he came to redeem us out of our low estate. 2. He would thus teach us to abhor idleness, and to find ourselves something to do in this world, and rather to take up with mean and laborious employments, and such as no more is to be got by but a bare livelihood, than indulge ourselves in sloth. Nothing is more pernicious for young people than to get a habit of sauntering. The Jews had a good rule for this, that their young men who were designed for scholars, yet were bred up to some trade, as Paul was a tent-maker, that they might have some business to fill up their time with, and if need were, to get their bread with. He would put an honour upon despised mechanics, and encourage those who eat the labour of their hands, though great men look upon them with contempt.

Another thing they upbraided him with was the meanness of his relations; he is "the son of Mary, his brethren and sisters are here with us, we know his family and kindred," and, therefore, though they were astonished at his doctrine, ver. 2, yet they were offended at his person, ver. 3; were prejudiced against him, and looked upon him with contempt, and for that reason would not receive his doctrine, though never so well recommended. May we think that, if they had not known his pedigree, but he had dropped among them from the clouds, without father, without mother, and without descent, they would have entertained him with any more respect? Truly, no; for in Judæa, where this was not known, that was made an objection against him, *Jno. ix. 29*, "As for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." Obstinate unbelief will never want excuses.

Fifthly. Let us see how Christ bore this contempt.

1. He partly excused it, as a common thing, and what might be expected, though not reasonably or justly, ver. 4: "A prophet is not despised anywhere but in his own country." Some exceptions there may be to this rule; doubtless many have got over this prejudice, but ordinarily it holds good, that ministers are seldom so acceptable and successful in their own country as among strangers; familiarity in the younger years breeds a contempt, and the advancement of one that was an inferior, begets envy, and men will hardly set those among the guides of their souls whose fathers they were ready to set with the dogs of their flock; in such a case therefore it must not be thought hard; it is common treatment, it was Christ's, and wisdom is profitable to direct to other soil.

2. He did some good among them, notwithstanding the slights they put upon him, for he is kind even to the evil and unthankful; he "laid his hands upon a few sick folks and healed them," ver. 13. Note, it is generous, and becoming the followers of Christ, to content themselves with the pleasure and satisfaction of doing good, though they be unjustly denied the praise of it.

3. Yet he could there do no such mighty works, at least not so many, as in other places, because of the unbelief that prevailed among the people, by reason of the prejudices which their leaders instilled into them against Christ, ver. 5. It is a strange expression, as if unbelief tied the hands of Omnipotence itself; he would have done as many miracles there as he had done elsewhere, but he could not, because people would not make application to him, nor sue for his favours; he could have wrought them, but they forfeited the honour of having them wrought for them. Note, By unbelief and contempt of Christ, men stop the current of his favours to them, and put a bar in their own door.

4. He "marvelled because of their unbelief," ver. 6. We never find Christ wondering but at the faith of the Gentiles, that were strangers, as the centurion, *Mat. viii. 10*, and the woman of Canaan, and at the unbelief of Jews, that were his own countrymen. Note, The unbelief of those that enjoy the means of grace is a most amazing thing.

5. He "weiround about the villages teaching." If we cannot do good where we would, we must do it where we can, and be glad if we may have any opportunity, though but in the villages, of serving Christ and souls. Sometimes the Gospel of Christ finds better entertainment in the country villages, where there is less wealth, and pomp, and mirth, and subtlety, than in the populous cities.

7 And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; 8 And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: 9 But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. 10 And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. 11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city. 12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

Here is, 1. *The commission given to the twelve apostles, to go preach and work miracles*; it is the same which we had more largely, *Mat. x.* Mark doth not name them here, as *Matthew* doth, because he had named them before, when they were first called into fellowship with him, *ch. iii. 16*. Hitherto they had been conversant with Christ, and had sat at his feet, had heard his doctrine, and seen his miracles; and now he determines to make some use of them; they received that they might give, had learned that they might teach, and therefore now he "began to send them forth." They must not always be studying in the academy to get knowledge, but they must go preach in the country, to do good with the knowledge they have got. Though they were not as yet so well accomplished as they will be hereafter, yet according to their present ability and capacity, they must be set to work, and make farther improvements afterwards. Now observe here,

First. That Christ sent "them forth by two and two;" this, Mark takes notice of: they went two and two to a place, that out of the mouth of two witnesses every word might be established; and that they might be company for one another when they were among strangers, and might strengthen the hands and encourage the hearts one of another; might help one another if any thing should be amiss, and keep one another in countenance; every common soldier has his comrade; and it is an approved maxim, "Two is better than one." Christ would thus teach his ministers to associate, and both lend and borrow help.

Secondly. That he "gave them power over unclean spirits." He commissioned them to attack the devil's kingdom, and empowered them, as a specimen of their breaking his interest in the souls of men by their doctrine, to cast him out of the bodies of those that were possessed. Dr. Lightfoot suggests, that they cured diseases and cast out devils by the Spirit, but preached that only which they had learned from the mouth of Christ.

Thirdly. That he commanded them not to take provisions along with them, neither victuals nor money, that they might appear wherever they came to be poor men, men not of this world, and therefore might with the better grace call people off from it to another world. When afterwards he bade them take purse and scrip, *Luk. xxii. 36*, that did not intimate (as Dr. Lightfoot observes) that his care of them was abated to what it had been; but that they should meet with worse times and worse entertainment than they met with at their first mission. In *Matthew* and *Luke*, they are forbidden to take staves with them, that is, fighting staves; but here, in *Mark*, they are bid to take nothing save a staff only, that is, a walking-staff, such as pilgrims carried. They must not put on shoes, but sandals only, which were only the soles of shoes tied under their feet, or like pumps or slippers; they must go in the readiest, plainest dress they could, and must not so much as have two coats; for their stay abroad would be short, they must return before winter; and what they wanted, those they preached to would cheerfully accommodate them with.

Fourthly. He directed them, whatever city they came to, to make that house their head quarters which happened to be their first quarters, ver. 10, "there abide till ye depart from that place." And since you know you come on an errand sufficient to make you welcome, have that charity for your friends that first invited you, as to believe they do not think you burdensome.

Fifthly. He pronounceth a very heavy doom upon those that rejected the Gospel they preached, ver. 11, "Whosoever shall not receive you," or will not so much as "hear you, depart thence,"—if one will not, another will—and "shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them." Let them know that they have had a fair offer of life and happiness made them, witness that dust; but that since they have refused it, they cannot expect ever to have another; let them take up with their own dust, for so shall their doom be. That dust, like the dust of Egypt, *Ex. ix. 9*, shall turn into a plague to them; and their condemnation in the great day will be more intolerable than that of Sodom; for the angels were sent to Sodom, and were abused there, yet that would not bring on so great a guilt and so great a ruin as the contempt and abuse of the apostles of Christ, that bring with them the offers of gospel grace.

II. *The apostles' acting in pursuance of their commission*: though they were conscious to themselves of great weakness, and expected no secular advantage by it, yet in obedience to their Master's order, and in dependence upon his strength, they went out, as Abraham, not knowing whither they went. Observe here,

First. The doctrine they preached; they preached "that men should repent," ver. 12; that they should change their minds and reform their lives, in consideration of the near approach of the kingdom of the Messiah. Note, The great design of gospel-preachers, and the great tendency of gospel-preaching should be to bring people to repentance, to a new heart and a new way. They did not amuse people with curious speculations, but told them they must repent of their sins, and turn to God.

Secondly. The miracles they wrought: the power Christ gave them "over unclean spirits," was not ineffectual, nor did they receive it in vain, but used it, for they "cast out many devils," ver. 13. And they "anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." Some think that this oil was used medicinally, according to the custom of the Jews; but I rather think it was used as a sign of miraculous healing by the appointment of Christ, though not mentioned; and it was afterwards used by those elders of the church to whom by the Spirit was given the gift of healing, *Jas. v. 14*. It is certain here, and therefore probable there, that anointing the sick with oil is appropriated to that extraordinary power which is long ceased, and therefore that sign must cease with it.

14 And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. 15 Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. 16 But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead. 17 For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias'

the most part, make use of the Greek language. This view is supported by many ingenious arguments, and justifies the occasional use of the Syro-Chaldaic.

v. 43. Grotius is of opinion that our Lord did not yet wish the world to know his empire over death. He nevertheless manifested it to a few by some tokens, preparing their minds for the full assertion of the fact by his own resurrection.

vi. 1. With regard to the words, "and he went out from thence,"

and came into his own country," the sense must be, "and he went away from Capernaum and came to Nazareth." That it is so is shown by reference to *Luke iv. 16, 23*, in the first of which verses Nazareth is named, and in the second it is called our Lord's own country, as contrasted with Capernaum. Nazareth is also called his own country in *Matt. xiii. 54*. Hence, the Greek word is explained to mean not only one's native land, but also one's native place, one's own city, and one's home.

sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. 18 For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. 19 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: 20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. 21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee; 22 And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. 23 And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. 24 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. 25 And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist. 26 And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. 27 And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, 28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. 29 And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

Here is, I. *The wild notions that the people had concerning our Lord Jesus, ver. 15.* His own countrymen could believe nothing great concerning him, because they knew his poor kindred; but others, that were not under the power of that prejudice against him, yet were willing to believe any thing rather than the truth, that he was the Son of God, and the true Messiah, they said, "He is Elias" whom they expected, or "He is a prophet," one of the Old Testament prophets raised to life and returned to this world; or, "as one of the prophets," a prophet now newly raised up, equal to those under the Old Testament.

II. *The opinion of Herod concerning him;* he heard of his name and fame, of what he said and what he did; and he said, It is certainly John Baptist, ver. 14; as sure as we are here, "it is John, whom I beheaded," ver. 16, "he is risen from the dead;" and though while he was with us he did no miracle, yet having removed for a while to another world, he is come again with greater power, and now "mighty works do shew forth themselves in him."

Note, 1. Where there is an idle faith, there is commonly a working fancy. The people said, it is a prophet risen from the dead; Herod said, it is "John Baptist risen from the dead." It seems by this, that the rising of a prophet from the dead, to do mighty works, was a thing expected, and was thought neither impossible nor improbable, and it was now readily suspected, when it was not true; but afterwards, when it was true concerning Christ, and a truth undeniably evidenced, yet then it was obstinately gainsaid and denied. Those who most wilfully disbelieve the truth are commonly most credulous of errors and fancies.

2. They who fight against the cause of God will find themselves baffled, even when they think themselves conquerors; they cannot gain their point, for the word of the Lord endures for ever. They who rejoiced when the witnesses were slain, fretted as much when in three or four days they rose again in their successors, *Rev. xi. 10, 11.* The impenitent, unreformed sinner, that escapeth the sword of Jehu, shall Elisha slay.

3. A guilty conscience needs no accuser or tormentor but itself. Herod charges himself with the murder of John, which perhaps no one else durst charge him with, "I beheaded him;" and the terror of it made him imagine that Christ was John risen. He feared John while he lived, and now he thought he had got clear of him, fears him ten times worse when he is dead. One had as good be haunted with ghosts and furies, as with the horrors of an accusing conscience; those therefore who would keep an undisturbed peace, must keep an undefiled conscience, *Acts xxiv. 16.*

4. There may be the terrors of strong conviction, where there is not the truth of a saving conversion. This Herod, that had this notion concerning Christ, afterwards sought to kill him, *Lu. xiii. 31;* and did set him at nought, *Lu. xxiii. 11;* so that he will not be persuaded, though it be by one risen from the dead; no, not by a John the Baptist risen from the dead.

III. *A narrative of Herod's putting John Baptist to death,* which is brought in upon this occasion, as it was in *Matthew*. And here we may observe,

First. The great value and veneration which Herod had sometimes had for

John Baptist, which is related only by this evangelist, ver. 20; where we see what a great way a man may go towards grace and glory, and yet come short of both, and perish eternally. 1. He "feared John, knowing that he was a just man, and a holy." It is possible that a man may have a great reverence for good men, and especially for good ministers; yea, and for that in them that is good, and yet himself be an ill man. Observe, 1st. John was a just man, and a holy; to make a complete good man there is necessary both justice and holiness; holiness towards God, and justice towards men. John was mortified to this world, and that is a good friend both to justice and holiness. 2nd. Herod knew this, not only by common fame, but by personal acquaintance with him. Those that have but little justice and holiness themselves, may yet discern it with respect in others. And 3rd. He therefore feared him, he honoured him. Holiness and justice command veneration, and many that are not good themselves, yet have respect for those that are. 2. He "observed him;" he sheltered him from the malice of his enemies, so some understand it; or rather, he had a regard to his exemplary conversation, and took notice of that in him that was praiseworthy, and commended it in the hearing of those about him; he made it appear that he observed what John said and did. 3. "He heard him" preach: which was great condescension, considering how mean John's appearance was. To hear Christ himself preach in our streets will be but a poor plea in the great day, *Lu. xiii. 26.* 4. He "did many" of those "things" which John in his preaching taught him; he was not only a hearer of the word, but in part a doer of the work. Some sins which John in his preaching reproved he forsook, and some duties he bound himself to; but it will not suffice to do many things, unless we have respect to all the commandments. 5. He "heard him gladly," he did not hear him with terror, as Felix heard Paul, but heard him with pleasure. There is a flashy joy, which an hypocrite may have in hearing the word; Ezekiel was to his hearers a lovely song, *Eze. xxxiii. 32;* and the stony ground received the word with joy, *Lu. viii. 13.*

Secondly. John's faithfulness to Herod, in telling him of his faults. Herod had married his brother Philip's wife, ver. 17. All the country no doubt cried shame on him for it, and reproached him for it, but John reproved him, told him plainly, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." This was Herod's own iniquity which he could not leave, when he did many things that John taught him; and therefore John tells him of this particularly. Though he were a king, he would not spare him, no more than Elijah did Ahab when he said, "Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?" Though John had an interest in him, and he might fear this plain dealing would lose him his interest, yet he reproved him; for "faithful are the wounds of a friend," *Pr. xxvii. 6;* and though there are some swine that will turn again and rend those that cast pearls before them, yet ordinarily "he that rebuketh a man," (if the person reproved has any thing of the understanding of a man,) "afterwards shall find more favour, than he that flattereth with his tongue," *Pr. xxviii. 23.* Though it was dangerous to offend Herod, and much more to offend Herodias, yet John would run the hazard, rather than be wanting in his duty. Note, Those ministers that would be found faithful in the work of God, must not be afraid of the face of man. If we seek to please men, farther than is for their spiritual good, we are not the servants of Christ.

Thirdly. The malice which Herodias bore to John for this, ver. 19. She "had a quarrel with him, and would have killed him;" but when she could not obtain that, she got him committed to prison, ver. 17. Herod respected him, till he touched him in his Herodias. Many that pretend to honour prophesying, are for smooth things only, and love good preaching, if it keeps far enough from their beloved sin; but if that be touched, they cannot bear it. No marvel if the world hate those who testify of it that its works are evil. But ministers had better that sinners should persecute them now for their faithfulness, than curse them eternally for their unfaithfulness.

Fourthly. The plot laid to take off John's head; and I am apt to think Herod was himself in the plot, notwithstanding his pretences to be displeased and surprised, and that the thing was concerted between him and Herodias, for it is said to be, "when a convenient day was come," ver. 21, fit for such a purpose.

1. There must be a ball at court upon the king's birthday, and a supper prepared, for "his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee." 2. To grace the solemnity, the daughter of Herodias must dance publicly, and Herod must take on him to be wonderfully charmed with her dancing; and if he be, they that sit with him cannot but, in compliment to him, be so too. 3. The king hereupon must make her an extravagant promise, to give her whatever she would ask, even to the half of the kingdom; and yet that, if rightly understood, would not have reached the end designed, for John Baptist's head was worth more than his whole kingdom. This promise is bound with an oath, that no room might be left to fly off from it; "he swore to her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask, I will give." I can scarce think he would have made such an unlimited promise, but that he knew what she would ask. 4. She being instructed by Herodias her mother, asked "the head of John Baptist;" and she must have it brought her "in a charger," as a pretty thing for her to play with, ver. 24, 25. And there must be no delay, no time lost, she must have it "by and by." 5. Herod granted it, and the execution was done immediately, while the company were together; which we can scarce think the king would have done, if he had not determined the matter before. But he takes on him,

1st. To be very backward to it, and that he would not for all the world have done it, if he had not been surprised into such a promise: "The king was exceeding sorry;" that is, he seemed to be so, he said he was so, he looked as if he had been so; but it was all sham and grimace; he was really pleased that he had found a pretence to get John out of the way: *Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare.*—"The man who cannot dissemble knows not how to reign." And yet he was not without sorrow for it; he could not do it but with great regret and reluctance; natural conscience will not suffer men to sin easily; the very commission of it is vexatious; what then will the reflection upon it be? 2nd. He takes on him to be very sensible of the obligation of his oath; whereas if the damsel had asked but a fourth part of his kingdom, I doubt not but he would have found out a way to evade his oath. The promise was rashly made, and could not bind him to do an unrighteous thing. Sinful oaths must be repented of, and therefore not performed, for repentance is the undoing of what we have done amiss, as far as is in our power. When Theodosius the emperor was urged by a suitor with a promise, he answered, "I said it, but did not promise it, if it be unjust." If we may suppose that Herod knew nothing of the design when he made that rash promise, it is likely he was hurried into the doing of it by those about him, only to carry on the humour; for he did it "for their sakes who sat with him," whose company he was proud of, and therefore would do any thing to gratify them. Thus do princes make themselves slaves to those whose respects they covet, and both value and secure themselves by. None of Herod's subjects stood in more awe of him, than he did of "his lords, high captains, and chief estates." The king sent an executioner, a soldier of his guard. Bloody tyrants have executioners ready to obey their most cruel and unrighteous decrees. Thus Saul has a Doeg at hand, to "fall upon the priests of the Lord," when his own footmen declined it.

Fifthly. The effect of this is, 1. That Herod's wicked court is all in triumphs

vi. 5. The parallel passage in *Matt. xiii. 58* reads, "and he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." Modern sceptics assert that here we have a confession of a want of power in Jesus. Only an ignorant or a perverse criticism will take this view. Bengel says, mighty works could not be done, because the people were unable to receive them. Calvin says, "Unbelievers do, as much as in them lieth, hold back the hand of God by their obstinacy; not that God is overcome as an inferior, but because they

permit him not to show his power." Grotius, with his usual acumen, says, that by "could not" here he thinks is meant that disposition in Christ which prevented him from doing many miracles at Nazareth. Christ, who had full power of working miracles, was hindered from exercising it here, not through hatred of men, but of most pertinacious incredulity. It may be noted, also, that in other languages "cannot" is applied to moral inability and resolves.

vi. 13 On the words "anointed with oil" Grotius says, "After

because this prophet tormented them; the head is made a present of to the damsel, and by her to her mother, ver. 28. 2. That John Baptist's sacred college is all in tears; the disciples of John little thought of this, but when they "heard of it, they came and took up the" neglected "corpse, and laid it in a tomb;" where Herod, if he had pleased, might have found it, when he frightened himself with the fancy, that John Baptist was "risen from the dead."

30 And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. 31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. 32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. 33 And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. 34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. 35 And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: 36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. 37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? 38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see.



EASTERN LOAVES.

And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. 39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. 40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. 41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. 42 And they did all eat, and were filled. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. 44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

In these verses we have,

1. *The return of the apostles to Christ*, whom he had sent forth, ver. 7, to preach and work miracles. They had dispersed themselves into several quarters of the country for some time; but when they had made good their several appointments, by consent they "gathered themselves together" to compare notes, and came to Jesus, the centre of their unity, to give him an account of what they had done pursuant to their commission, as the servant that was sent to invite to the feast, and had received answers from the guests, came and "shewed his lord all these things;" so did the apostles here, they "told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught." Ministers are accountable, both for what they do, and for what they teach; and must both watch over their own souls, and watch for the souls of others,

as those that must give account, *Heb. xiii. 17.* Let them not either do any thing, or teach any thing, but what they are willing should be related and repeated to the Lord Jesus. It is a comfort to faithful ministers, when they can appeal to Christ concerning their doctrine and manner of life, both which perhaps have been misrepresented by men; and he gives them leave to be free with him, and to lay open their case before him, to tell him all things, what treatment they have met with, what success, and what disappointment.

II. *The tender care Christ took for their repose*, after the fatigue they had had, ver. 31: "He said unto them," perceiving them to be almost spent, and out of breath, "Come ye yourselves apart, into a desert place, and rest a while." It should seem that John's disciples came to Christ with the mournful tidings of their master's death, much about the same time that his own disciples came to him with the report of their negotiation. Note, Christ takes cognizance of the frights of some, and the toils of others of his disciples, and provides suitable relief for both; rest for those that are tired, and refuge for those that are terrified. With what kindness and compassion doth Christ say to them, "Come and rest." Note, The most active servants of Christ cannot be always upon the stretch of business, but have bodies that require some relaxation, some breathing time; we shall not be able to serve God without ceasing, day and night, till we come to heaven, where they never rest from praising him, *Rev. iv. 8.* And the Lord is for the body; considers its frame, and not only allows it time for rest, but puts it in mind of resting: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers." "Return to thy rest." And those that work diligently and faithfully may cheerfully retire to rest. "The sleep of the labouring man is sweet." But observe, 1. Christ calls them to come themselves apart; for if they had any body with them, they would have something to say, or something to do, for their good; if they must rest, they must be alone. 2. He invites them, not to some pleasant country seat, where there were fine buildings, and fine gardens, but "into a desert place," where the accommodations were very poor, and which was fitted by nature only, not by art, for quietness and rest. But it was of a piece with all the other circumstances he was in; no wonder that he, who had but a ship for his preaching-place, had but a desert for his resting-place. 3. He calls them only to rest a while; they must not expect to rest long, only to get breath, and then go to work again. There is no remaining rest for the people of God, till they come to heaven. 4. The reason given for this, is not so much because they had been in constant work, but because they now were in a constant hurry; so that they had not their work in any order, "for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." Let but proper time be set and kept for every thing, and a great deal of work may be done with a great deal of ease; but if people are continually "coming and going," and no rule or method be observed, a little work will not be done without a deal of trouble. 5. They withdrew accordingly by ship, not crossing the water, but making a coasting voyage to the desert of Bethsaida, ver. 32. Going by water was much less toilsome than going by land would have been. They went away privately, that they might be by themselves. The most public persons cannot but wish to be private sometimes.

III. *The diligence of the people to follow him.* It was rude to do so, when he and his disciples were desirous for such good reason to retire; and yet they are not blamed for it, nor bid to go back, but bid welcome. Note, A failure in good manners will easily be excused in those who follow Christ, if it be but made up in a fulness of good affections. They followed him of their own accord, without being called upon. Here is no time set, no meeting appointed, no bell tolled, yet they thus "fly like a cloud, and as doves to their windows." They followed him "out of the cities," quitted their houses and shops, their callings and affairs, to hear him preach. They followed him "afoot," though he was gone by sea; and so to try them, seemed to put a slight upon them, and to endeavour to shake them off, yet they stuck to him. They "ran afoot," and made such haste, as that they "outwent" the disciples, "and came together to him," with an appetite to the Word of God. Nay, they followed him, though it were into a desert place, despicable, and inconvenient. The presence of Christ will turn a wilderness into a paradise.

IV. *The entertainment Christ gave them*, ver. 34: "When he saw much people," instead of being moved with displeasure, because they disturbed him when he desired to be private, as many a man, many a good man, would have been, he "was moved with compassion towards them," and looked upon them with concern, "because they were as sheep having no shepherd;" they seemed to be well inclined, and manageable as sheep, and willing to be taught, but they had "no shepherd;" none to lead and guide them in the right way, none to feed them with good doctrine; and therefore, in compassion to them, he not only "healed their sick," as it is in *Matthew*, but he taught "them many things," and we may be sure they were all true and good, and fit for them to learn.

V. *The provision he made for them all.* All his hearers he generously made his guests, and treated them at a splendid entertainment; so it might truly be called, because a miraculous one.

1. The disciples moved that they should be sent home. "When the day was now far spent," and night drew on, they said, "This is a desert place, and much time is now passed, send them away to buy bread," ver. 35, 36. This the disciples suggested to Christ, but we do not find that the multitude themselves did. They did not say, "Send us away;" no, not though they could not but be hungry, for they "esteemed the words of Christ's mouth more than their necessary food," and forgot themselves when they were hearing him; but the disciples thought it would be a kindness to them to dismiss them. Note, Willing minds will do more, and hold out longer, in that which is good, than one would expect from them.

2. Christ ordered that they should all be fed, ver. 37: "Give ye them to eat." Though their crowding after him and his disciples hindered them from eating, ver. 31, yet he would not therefore, to be even with them, send them away fasting; but, to teach us to be kind to those who are rude to us, he ordered provision to be made for them; that bread which Christ and his disciples took with them into the desert, that they might make a quiet meal of it for themselves, he will have them to partake of. Thus was he "given to hospitality." They attended on the spiritual food of his word, and then he took care they should not want corporal food. The way of duty, as it is the way of safety, so it is the way to supply. Let God alone to fill the pools with rain from heaven, and so to make a well even in the valley of Baca, for those that are going Sionwards, from strength to strength, *Psa. lxxix. 6, 7.* Providence not tempted, but duly trusted, never yet failed any of God's faithful servants, but has refreshed many with seasonable and surprising relief. It has often been seen in "the mount of the Lord, Jehovah-jireh," that "the Lord will provide" for those that wait on him.

3. The disciples objected against it as impracticable; "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?" Thus, through the weakness of faith, instead of waiting for directions from Christ, they perplex the cause with projects of their own. It was a question whether they had two hundred pence with them, and whether the country would of a sudden afford so much bread if they had, and whether that would suffice so great a

the ancient manner of the Hebrews, who, as they were accustomed to add the imposition of hands to prayers offered for any one, so they anointed with oil the sick for whom they prayed, in hope of obtaining from God alleviation and happiness, which the oil signified." It was, therefore, an emblematic action.

vi. 16. "John, whom I beheaded, is risen from the dead," is the reading of several ancient authorities, and adopted by Tischendorf and others.

vi. 20. For "observed him," we may adopt Alford's suggestion, and render "kept him safe," imprisoned him in order to protect him.

vi. 21. "Convenient" is a fair rendering of the Greek, but convenient for whom or what? It may be convenient or opportune for Herodias, who contemplated revenge. This view is taken by some older as well as more recent critics, and is probably correct. For "chief estates of Galilee," read "chief men of Galilee." Why they were specially invited is mere matter of conjecture. Herod had a residence

company; but thus Moses objected, *Num. xi. 22*, "Shall the flocks or herds be slain for them?" Christ would let them see their folly in forecasting for themselves, that they might put the greater value upon his provision for them.

4. Christ effected it to universal satisfaction. They had brought with them five loaves, for the victualling of their ship, and two fishes, perhaps they had caught as they came along, and that is the bill of fare. This was but a little for Christ and his disciples, and yet this they must give away, as the widow her two mites, and the churches of Macedonia's deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality. We often find Christ entertained at other people's tables, dining with one friend, and supping with another, but here we have him supping a great many at his own charge, which shews, that when others ministered to him of their substance, it was not because he could not supply himself otherwise. If he were hungry, he needed not tell them, but it was a piece of humiliation he was pleased to submit to; nor was it agreeable to the intention of miracles that he should work them for himself. Observe,

1st. The provision was ordinary. Here were no rarities, no varieties, though Christ, if he had pleased, could have furnished his table with them. But thus he would teach us to be content with food convenient for us, and not be desirous of dainties. If we have for necessity, it is no matter though we have not for delicacy and curiosity. God in love gives meat for our hunger, but in wrath gives meat for our lusts, *Ps. lxxviii. 18*. The promise to them that fear the Lord is, that verily they shall be fed: he doth not say they shall be feasted. If Christ and his disciples took up with mean things, sure we may. 2nd. The guests were orderly; for they "sat down by companies upon the green grass," ver. 39; they "sat down in ranks by hundreds and by fifties," ver. 40; that the provision might the more easily and regularly be distributed among them; for God is the God of order, and not of confusion. Thus care was taken that every one should have enough, and none be overlooked, nor any have more than was fitting. 3rd. A blessing was craved upon the meat: "He looked up to heaven, and blessed." Christ did not call one of his disciples to crave a blessing, but did it himself, ver. 41; and by virtue of this blessing the bread strangely multiplied, and so did the fishes, for "they did all eat and were filled," though they were to the number of five thousand, ver. 42, 44. This miracle was significant, and shews that Christ came into the world to be the great feeder, as well as the great healer; not only to restore, but to preserve and nourish spiritual life; and in him there is enough for all that come to him, enough to fill the soul, to fill the treasures; none are sent empty away from Christ, but those that come to him full of themselves. 4th. Care was taken of the fragments that remained, with which they filled twelve baskets. Though Christ had bread enough at command; he would hereby teach us not to make waste of any of God's good creatures, remembering how many there are that do want, and that we know not, but we may some time or other want such fragments as we throw away.

45 And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. 46 And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. 47 And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. 48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. 49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: 50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. 51 And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. 52 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened. 53 And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore. 54 And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him, 55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. 56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

This passage of story we had, *Mat. xiv. 22*, &c., only what was there related concerning Peter is omitted. Here we have,

First. The dispersing of the assembly. Christ "constrained his disciples" to go before by ship to Bethsaida, intending to follow them, as they supposed by

land. The people were loath to scatter, so that it cost him some time and pains to send them away. For now they had got a good supper, they were in no haste to leave him. But as long as we are here in this world, we have no continuing city, no, not in communion with Christ. The everlasting feast is reserved for the future state.

Secondly. Christ "departed into a mountain to pray." Observe, 1. He prayed; though he had so much preaching work upon his hands, yet he was much in prayer; he prayed often, and prayed long, which is an encouragement to us to depend upon that intercession he is making for us at the right hand of the Father, that continual intercession. 2. He went alone to pray; though he needed not to retire for the avoiding either of distraction or of ostentation; yet, to set us an example, and to encourage us in our secret addresses to God, he prayed alone; and for want of a closet, went up into a mountain to pray. A good man is never less alone than when alone with God.

Thirdly. The disciples were in distress at sea; "the wind was contrary," ver. 48; so that they toiled in rowing, and could not get forward. This was a specimen of the hardships they were to expect, when hereafter he should send them abroad to preach the Gospel; it would be like sending them to sea at this time, with the wind in their teeth: they must expect to toil in rowing, they must work hard to strive against so strong a stream; they must likewise expect to be tossed with waves, to be persecuted by their enemies; and by exposing them now, he intended to train them up for such difficulties, that they might learn to endure hardness. The church is often like a ship at sea, tossed with tempests, and not comforted; we may have Christ for us, and yet wind and tide against us; but it is a comfort to Christ's disciples in a storm, that their Master is in the heavenly mount interceding for them.

Fourthly. Christ made them a kind visit upon the water. He could have checked the winds where he was, or have sent an angel to their relief; but he chose to help them in the most endearing manner possible, and therefore came to them himself.

1. He did not come till the "fourth watch of the night," not till after three o'clock in the morning; but then he came. Note, If Christ's visits of his people be deferred long, yet at length he will come; and their extremity is his opportunity to appear for them so much the more seasonably. Though the salvation tarry, yet we must wait for it; at the end it shall speak, in the fourth watch of the night, and not lie.

2. He came walking upon the waters. The sea was now tossed with waves, and yet Christ came walking upon it; for though the "floods lift up their voice," the Lord on high is mightier, *Ps. xciii. 3, 4*. No difficulties can obstruct Christ's gracious appearances for his people, when the set time is come. He will either find or force a way through the most tempestuous sea for their deliverance, *Ps. xlii. 7, 8*.

3. He "would have passed by them," that is, he set his face, and steered his course, as if he would have gone farther, and took no notice of them; this he did to awaken them to call to him. Note, Providence, when it is acting designedly and directly for the succour of God's people, yet sometimes seems as if it were giving them the go-by, and regarded not their case. They thought he would, but we may be sure he would not have passed by them.

4. They were frightened at the sight of him, supposing him to have been an apparition: "they all saw him, and were troubled," ver. 50, thinking it had been some demon, or evil genius, that haunted them, and raised this storm. We often perplex and frighten ourselves with phantasms, the creatures of our own fancy and imagination.

5. He encouraged them, and silenced their fears, by making himself known to them; he talked familiarly with them, saying, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid." Note, 1st. We know not Christ till he is pleased to reveal himself to us. "It is I; I, your Master; I, your friend; I, your Redeemer and Saviour. It is I, that came to a troublesome earth, and now to a tempestuous sea, to look after you." 2nd. The knowledge of Christ as he is in himself, and near to us, is enough to make the disciples of Christ cheerful even in a storm, and no longer fearful. "If it be so, why am I thus?" If it is Christ that is with thee, "be of good cheer, be not afraid." Our fears are soon satisfied if our mistakes be but rectified, especially our mistakes concerning Christ: see *Gen. xxi. 19*; *2 Kin. vi. 15-17*. Christ's presence with us in a stormy day is enough to make us of good cheer, though clouds and darkness be round about us. He said, "It is I." He doth not tell them who he was, that needed not; they knew his voice, as the sheep know the voice of their own shepherd, *Jno. x. 4*. How readily doth the spouse say and again, "It is the voice of my beloved," *Cant. ii. 8*; v. 2. He said, *εγώ εἰμι*, "I am he;" or, "I am;" it is God's name when he comes to deliver Israel, *Ex. iii. 14*; so it is Christ's, now he comes to deliver his disciples. When Christ said to those that came to apprehend him by force, "I am he," they were struck down by it, *Jno. xviii. 6*. When he saith to those that come to apprehend him by faith, "I am he," they are raised up by it, and comforted.

6. "He went up to them into the ship," embarked in the same bottom with them, and so made them perfectly easy. Let them but have their Master with them, and all is well. And as soon as he was come into the ship, "the wind ceased." In the former storm that they were in, it is said, "He arose, and rebuked the winds, and said to the sea, Peace, be still," *ch. iv. 39*; but here we read of no such formal command given, only the wind ceased all of a sudden. Note, Our Lord Jesus will be sure to do his own work always effectually, though not always alike solemnly, and with observation. Though we hear not the command given, yet if thus the wind cease, and we have the comfort of a calm, say it is because Christ is in the ship, and his decree is gone forth or ever we are aware, *Cant. vi. 12*. When we come with Christ to heaven the wind ceaseth presently; there are no storms in the upper region.

7. They were more surprised and astonished at this miracle than did become them, and there was that at the bottom of their astonishment which was really culpable. "They were sore amazed in themselves," were in a perfect ecstasy, as if it were a new and unaccountable thing, as if Christ had never done the like before, and they had no reason to expect he should do it now. They ought to admire the power of Christ, and to be confirmed hereby in their belief of his being the Son of God; but what needed all this confusion about it? It was because "they considered not the miracle of the loaves;" had they given that its due weight, they would not have been so much surprised at this; for his multiplying the bread was as great an instance of his power as his walking on the water. They were strangely stupid and unthinking, and "their heart was hardened," or else they would not have thought it a thing incredible that Christ should command a calm. It is for want of a right understanding of Christ's former works that we are transported at the thought of his present works, as if there never were the like before.

Fifthly. When they came to the land of Gennesaret, which lay between Bethsaida and Capernaum, the people bid them very welcome. The men of that place presently knew Jesus, ver. 54, and knew what mighty works he did wherever he came, what an universal healer he was; they knew likewise that he used to stay but a little while at a place, and therefore they were concerned to improve the opportunity of this kind visit he made them: "they ran through that whole region round about," with all possible expedition, and

at Tiberias, but the death of John is rightly placed at Machærus, east of the Jordan, and recently identified.

vi. 30-44. This narrative is one which is repeated in all the four Gospels, but with characteristic differences. Professor Bleek thought Mark wrote after the Gospel of John was written and published, and relies on verse 37 of this passage for one of his proofs. Both John and Mark mention the two hundred pennyworth of bread, it is true, but the fact proves nothing for Dr. Bleek.

vi. 33. For "afoot," render "on land." The words "and came together unto him" are omitted by some of the best ancient MSS.

vi. 34. For "and Jesus, when he came out, saw," some good MSS. read, "and when he came out, he saw."

vi. 36. Instead of "buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat," we may read, "buy themselves something to eat."

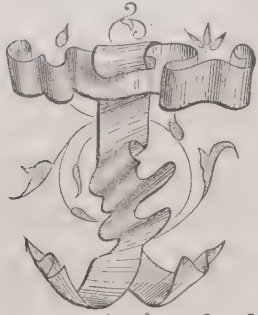
vi. 44. Ancient copies omit the word "about."

vi. 46. For "a mountain," read "the mountain."

"began to carry about in beds those that were sick," and not able to go themselves; there was no danger of their getting cold when they hoped to get a cure, ver. 55. Let him go where he would, he was crowded with patients. In the towns, in the cities, in the villages about the cities, "they laid the sick in the streets," to be in his way, and begged leave for them to "touch, if it were but the border of his garment," as the woman with the bloody issue did, by whom it should seem this method of application was first brought in, "and as many as touched were made whole." We do not find that they were desirous to be taught by him, only to be healed. If ministers could now cure people's bodily diseases, what multitudes would attend them! but it is sad to think how much more concerned the most of men are about their bodies than about their souls.

CHAPTER VII.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's dispute with the scribes and Pharisees about eating meat with unwashen hands, ver. 1—13; and the needful instructions he gave to the people upon that occasion, and farther explained to his disciples, ver. 14—23. II. His curing the woman of Canaan's daughter that was possessed, ver. 24—30. III. The relief of a man that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech, ver. 31—37.



HEN came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. 2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. 4 And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables. 5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? 6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. 9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: 11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free.* 12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; 13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye. 14 And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of *you*, and understand: 15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. 16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 17 And when he was

entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. 18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; 19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? 20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

One great design of Christ's coming was to set aside the ceremonial law which God made, and to put an end to it; to make way for which he begins with the ceremonial law which men had made, and added to the law of God's making, and dischargeth his disciples from the obligation of that; which here he doth fully upon occasion of the offence which the Pharisees took at them for the violation of it. These Pharisees and scribes with whom he had this argument are said to come from Jerusalem down to Galilee, fourscore or a hundred miles, to pick quarrels with our Saviour there, where they supposed him to have the greatest interest and reputation. Had they come so far to be taught by him, their zeal had been commendable, but to come so far to oppose him, and to check the progress of his Gospel, was great wickedness. It should seem that the scribes and Pharisees at Jerusalem pretended not only to a pre-eminence above, but to an authority over, the country clergy; and therefore kept up their visitations, and sent inquisitors among them, as they did to John when he appeared, *Jno. i. 19*. Now in this passage we may observe,

First. What the tradition of the elders was. By it all were enjoined to "wash their hands" before meat, a cleanly custom, and no harm in it; and yet, as such, to be over nice in it discovers too great a care about the body, which is of the earth; but they placed religion in it, and would not leave it indifferent, as it was in its own nature: people were at their liberty to do it or not to do it; but they interposed their authority, and commanded all to do it on pain of excommunication. This they kept up as a tradition of the elders. The Papists pretend a zeal for the authority and antiquity of the church and its canons, and talk much of councils and fathers, when really it is nothing but a zeal for their own wealth, interest, and dominion that governs them; and so it was with the Pharisees.

We have here an account of the practice of the Pharisees and all the Jews, ver. 3, 4. 1. They washed their hands often; they washed them, *πλυνον*. The critics find a great deal of work about that word, some making it to note the frequency of their washing, so we render it; others think it signifies the pains they took in washing their hands; they washed with great care, they washed their hands to their wrists, so some: they lifted up their hands when they were wet, that the water might run to their elbows. 2. They particularly washed before they ate bread, that is, before they sat down to a solemn meal; for that was the rule: they must be sure to wash before they ate the bread on which they begged a blessing. 'Whosoever eats the bread over which they recite the benediction, Blessed be He that produceth bread, must wash his hands before and after,' or else he was thought to be defiled. 3. They took special care, when they came in from the markets, to wash their hands; from the judgment halls, so some: it signifies any place of concourse, where there were people of all sorts, and it might be supposed some heathen, or Jews under a ceremonial pollution, by coming near to whom they thought themselves polluted, saying, 'Stand by thyself, come not near me, I am holier than thou,' *Isa. lxxv. 5*. They say the rule of the rabbins was, that if they washed their hands well in the morning the first thing they did, that would serve for all day, provided they kept alone; but if they went into company, they must not at their return either eat or pray till they had washed their hands. Thus the elders gained a reputation among the people for sanctity, and thus they exercised and kept up an authority over their consciences. 4. They added to this the washing of cups, and pots, and brassen vessels, which they suspected had been made use of by heathens, or persons polluted; nay, and the very tables on which they ate their meat. There were many cases in which, by the law of Moses, washings were appointed, but they added to them, and enforced the observation of their own impositions as much as of God's institutions.

Secondly. What the practice of Christ's disciples was. They knew what the law was, and the common usage; but they understood themselves so well that they would not be bound up by it. They ate bread with defiled, that is, with unwashen hands, ver. 2. Eating with unwashen hands, they called eating with defiled hands; thus men keep up their superstitious vanities, by putting every thing into an ill name that contradicts them. The disciples knew (it is probable) that the Pharisees had their eye upon them, and yet they would not humour them by a compliance with their traditions, but took their liberty, as at other times, and ate bread with unwashen hands; and herein their righteousness, however it might seem to come short, did really exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, *Mat. v. 20*.

Thirdly. The offence which the Pharisees took at this; "they found fault," ver. 2; they censured them as profane, and men of a loose conversation, or rather as men that would not submit to the power of the church to decree rites and ceremonies, and were therefore rebellious, factious, and schismatical. They brought a complaint against them to their Master, expecting that he should check them, and order them to conform; for they that are fond of their own inventions and impositions are commonly ready to appeal to Christ, as if he should countenance them, and as if his authority must interpose for the enforcing of them, and the rebuking of those that do not comply with them. They do not ask, 'Why do not thy disciples do as we do?' though that was it they meant, coveting to make themselves the standard; but, 'Why do not they walk according to the tradition of the elders?' ver. 5. To which it was easy to answer, that by receiving the doctrine of Christ they had "more understanding than all their teachers, yea, more than the ancients," *Psa. cxix. 99, 100*.

Fourthly. Christ's vindication of them; in which,

vi. 49. The Greek word for "spirit" is *phantasma*, which signifies much the same as our word "apparition."

vi. 51. The words "and wondered" occur in many MSS., but are omitted by some of the principal MSS. and editions.

vi. 52. "They considered not the miracle of the loaves" is an inexact rendering; "they did not understand about the loaves." The expression, "their heart was hardened," denotes that their sensibilities were slumbering and their perceptions unawakened

vi. 56. "The streets" here should be "the market-places." "The border" was rather the customary "fringe" attached to a Jewish dress.

vii. 2. The words "they found fault" are omitted by various important MSS. and editions. If this reading is adopted, the third and fourth verses are treated as a parenthesis, so that verse 2 ends with a comma, and its "when" answers to "then" of verse 5.

viii. 3. The word "oft" may mean "again and again," as though

1. He argues with the Pharisees concerning the authority by which this ceremony was imposed; and they were the fittest to be discoursed with concerning that, who were the great sticklers for it. But this he did not speak of publicly to the multitude, (as appears by his calling the people to him, ver. 14,) lest he should have seemed to stir them up to faction and discontent at their governors; but addressed it as a reproof to the persons concerned, for the rule is, *sum cuique*,—"let every one have his own."

1st. He reproves them for their hypocrisy, in pretending to honour God, when really they had no such design, in their religious observances, ver. 6, 7: "They honour me with their lips," they pretend it is for the glory of God that they impose those things, to distinguish themselves from the heathen, but really their heart is far from God, and is governed by nothing but ambition and covetousness. They would be thought hereby to appropriate themselves as a holy people to the Lord their God, when really it is the farthest thing in their thought. They rested in the outside of all their religious exercises, and their hearts were not right with God in them; and this was worshipping God in vain, for neither was he pleased with such sham devotions, nor were they profited by them.

2nd. He reproves them for placing religion in the inventions and injunctions of their elders and rulers. They taught "for doctrines the traditions of men;" when they should have been pressing upon people the great principles of religion, they were enforcing the canons of their church, and judged of people's being Jews, or not, according as they did or did not conform to them, without any consideration had whether they lived in obedience in God's laws or not. It was true there were divers washings imposed by the law of Moses, *Heb. ix. 10*, which were intended to signify that inward purification of the heart from worldly, fleshly lusts, which God requires as absolutely necessary to our communion with him; but instead of providing the substance, they presumptuously added to the ceremony, and were very nice in "washing pots and cups;" and observe, he adds, "many other such like things ye do," ver. 8. Note, Superstition is an endless thing. If one human invention and institution be admitted, though seemingly never so innocent, as this of washing hands, "behold, a troop comes," a door is opened for "many other such like things."

3rd. He reproves them for "laying aside the commandment of God," and overlooking that, not urging that in their preaching, and in their discipline conniving at the violation of that, as if that were no longer of force, ver. 8. Note, It is the mischief of impositions that too often they who are zealous for them have little zeal for the essential duties of religion, but can contentedly see them laid aside. Nay, they rejected "the commandment of God," ver. 9. You do fairly dissuade and abolish the commandment of God; and even by your traditions make "the Word of God of none effect," ver. 13. God's statutes shall not only lie forgotten, as antiquated, obsolete laws, but they shall in effect stand repealed, that their traditions may take place. They were intrusted to expound the law, and to enforce it; and, under pretence of using that power, they violated the law, and dissolved the bonds of it—destroying the text with the comment.

This he gives them a particular instance of, and a flagrant one: God commanded children to honour their parents, not only by the law of Moses, but antecedent to that, by the law of nature; and whoso revileth, or speaketh evil of father or mother, "let him die the death," ver. 4. From whence it is easy to infer that it is the duty of children, if their parents be poor, to relieve them according to their ability; and if those children are worthy to die that curse their parents, much more those that starve them. But if a man will but conform himself in all points to the tradition of the elders, they will find him out an expedient by which he may be discharged from this obligation, ver. 11. If his parents be in want, and he has wherewithal to help them, but has no mind to do it, let him swear by the corban, that is, by the gold of the temple, and the gift upon the altar, that his parents shall not be profited by him, that he will not relieve them; and if they ask any thing of him let him tell them this, and it is enough; as if by the obligation of this wicked vow, he had discharged himself from the obligation of God's holy law; thus Dr. Hammond understands it. And it is said to be an ancient canon of the rabbins, 'that vows take place in things commanded by the law, as well as in things indifferent;' so that if a man makes a vow which cannot be ratified without breaking a commandment, the vow must be ratified, and the commandment violated; so Dr. Whitby. Such doctrine as this the papists teach, discharging children from all obligation to their parents by their monastical vows, and their entrance into religion, as they call it. He concludes, and "many such like things do ye." Where will men stop when once they have made the Word of God give way to their tradition? These eager imposers of such ceremonies, at first only made light of God's commandments, in comparison with their traditions, but afterwards made void God's commandments, if they stood in competition with them. And all this, in effect, Isaiah prophesied of them; what he said of the hypocrites of his own day, was applicable to the scribes and Pharisees, ver. 6. Note, When we see and complain of the wickedness of the present times, yet we do not inquire wisely of that matter, if we say that all the former days were better than these, *Ecc. vii. 10*. The worst of hypocrites and evil doers have had their predecessors.

2. He instructs the people concerning the principles upon which this ceremony was grounded; and it was requisite that this part of his discourse should be public, for it related to daily practice, and was designed to rectify a great mistake which the people were led into by their elders; he therefore "called the people unto him," ver. 14, and bade them "hear and understand." Note, It is not enough for the common people to hear, but they must understand what they hear. When Christ would run down the tradition of the Pharisees about washing before meat, he strikes at the opinion which was the root of it. Note, Corrupt customs are best cured by rectifying corrupt notions. Now that which he goes about to set them right in is, what the pollution is which we are in danger of being damaged by, ver. 15. 1st. Not by the meat we eat, though it be eaten with unwashed hands, that is but from without, and goes through a man. But, 2nd. It is by the breaking out of the corruption that is in our hearts; the mind and conscience is defiled, guilt is contracted, and we become odious in the sight of God by that which comes out of us; our wicked thoughts and affections, words and actions, these defile us, and these only; our care must therefore be to wash our hearts from wickedness.

3. He gives his disciples, in private, an explication of the instructions he gave the people. They asked him when they had him by himself "concerning the parable," ver. 17; for to them it seems it was a parable. Now, in answer to their inquiry, 1st. He reproves their dullness: "Are ye so without understanding also?" Are you dull also; as dull as the people that cannot understand, as dull as the Pharisees that will not? Are ye so dull? He doth not expect they should understand every thing; but, Are ye so weak as not to understand this? 2nd. He explains this truth to them, that they might perceive it, and then they would believe it, for it carried its own evidence along with it. Some truths prove themselves, if they be but rightly explained and apprehended. If we understand the spiritual nature of God, and of his law, and what it is that is offensive to him, and disfits us for communion with him, we shall soon perceive, First. That that which we eat and drink cannot defile us so as to call

for any religious washing; it goes into the stomach, and passeth the several digestions and secretions that nature has appointed, and what there may be in it that is defiling, it is voided and gone. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them." But, Secondly. It is that which comes out from the heart, the corrupt heart, that defiles us; as by the ceremonial law, whatsoever (almost) comes out of a man, defiles him, *Lev. xv. 2; Deut. xxiii. 13*; so what comes out from the mind of a man, is that which defiles him before God, and calls for a religious washing, ver. 21. "From within, out of the heart of men," which they boast of the goodness of, and think is the best part of them, thence that which defiles doth proceed, thence comes all the mischief; as a corrupt fountain sends forth corrupt streams, so doth a corrupt heart send forth corrupt reasonings, corrupt appetites and passions, and all those wicked words and actions which are produced by them. Divers particulars are instanced in, as in *Matthew*; we had one there which is not here, and that is false witness-bearing; but here are seven mentioned here, to be added to those we had there. 1st. "Covetousnesses," for it is plural; *μακροψυχία*, "immoderate desires" of more of the wealth of the world, and the gratifications of sense, and still more, still crying, Give, give. Hence we read of a heart "exercised with covetous practices," *2 Pet. ii. 14*. 2nd. "Wickedness," *πονηρία*, malice, and hatred, and ill-will, a desire to do mischief, and a delight in mischief done. 3rd. "Deceit," which is wickedness covered and disguised, that it may be the more securely and effectually committed. 4th. "Lasciviousness," that fittiness and all wanton dalliances. 5th. The "evil eye," that is, the envious eye, and the covetous eye, grudging others the good we give them, or do for them, *Pr. xxiii. 6*; or grieving at the good they do or enjoy. 6th. "Pride," *βρογγυαία*, exalting ourselves in our own conceit above others, and looking down with scorn and contempt upon others. 7th. "Foolishness," *ἀπαισιμία*, imprudence, inconsideration; some understand it especially of vain-glorious boasting, which St. Paul calls foolishness, *2 Cor. xi. 19*, because it is here joined with pride. I rather take it for that rashness in speaking and acting which is the cause of so much evil. Ill thinking is put first, as that which is the spring of all our commissions; and unthinking put last, as that which is the spring of all our omissions. Of all these he concludes, ver. 23. First. That they "come from within," from the corrupt nature, the carnal mind, the evil treasure in the heart. Justly it is said that the "inward part is very wickedness," it must needs be so, when all this comes from within. Secondly. That "they defile the man;" they render a man unfit for communion with God; they bring a stain upon the conscience; and, if not mortified and rooted out, will shut men out of the new Jerusalem, into which no unclean thing shall enter.

24 And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid. 25 For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: 26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. 27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. 28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. 29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. 30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

See here, I. *How humbly Christ was pleased to conceal himself.* Never man was so cried up as he was in Galilee; and therefore to teach us, though not to decline any opportunity of doing good, yet not to be fond of popular applause, "he arose from thence and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon," where he was little known, and there he entered, not into a synagogue, or place of concourse, but into a private house, and he "would have no man know it," because it was foretold concerning him, "he shall not strive nor cry, neither shall his voice be heard in the streets." Not but that he was willing to preach and heal here as well as in other places, but for this he would be sought unto. Note, As there is a time to appear, so there is a time to retire; or, he would not be known, because he was upon the borders of Tyre and Sidon, among Gentiles, to whom he would not be so forward to shew himself, as to the tribes of Israel, whose glory he was to be.

II. *How graciously he was pleased to manifest himself notwithstanding.* Though he would not carry a harvest of miraculous cures into those parts, yet it should seem he came on purpose to drop a handful, to let fall this one which we have here an account of. "He could not be hid;" for though a candle may be put under a bushel, the sun cannot. Christ was too well known to be long *incognito*,—"unknown," any where; the oil of gladness which he was anointed with, like the ointment of the right hand, would betray itself, and fill the house with its odours. Those that had only heard his fame, could not converse with him but they would soon say, This must be Jesus. Now observe,

First. The application made to him by a poor woman in distress and trouble. She was a Gentile, a Greek, a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, an alien to the covenant of promise; she was, by extraction, a Syrophenician, and not in any degree proselyted to the Jewish religion; she had a daughter, a young daughter, that was possessed with the devil. How many and grievous are the calamities that young children are subject to! Her address was, 1. Very humble, pressing, and importunate; she "heard of him, and came and fell at his feet." Note, Those that would obtain mercy from Christ, must throw themselves at his feet, that is, must refer themselves to him, humble themselves before him, and give up themselves to be ruled by him. Christ never put any from him that fell at his feet, which a poor trembling soul may

one splash of water would not satisfy them. Others explain the word to mean "diligently," "rubbing them with the fist," "as far as the elbow," &c. The English version is the same as the Vulgate.

vii. 4. The Greek words for "wash" and "washing" in this verse are "baptise" and "baptisms," but they are rightly translated. The allusion is to the numerous lustrations or purifications which the ceremonialism of the Pharisees required. According to Lightfoot, these purifications could be effected in different ways.

vii. 8. Some early copies and other authorities omit the words rendered "as the washing of pots and cups; and many other such like things ye do;" so the Sinaitic, Vatican, &c. The words appear in the Alexandrian and Cambridge MSS., the clauses of the verse being inverted in the latter.

vii. 11. The sense of the latter clause is, "whatever thou mightest have been profited by from me is Corban," i.e., "a gift or oblation." The man who did not wish to render aid to his parents had only to

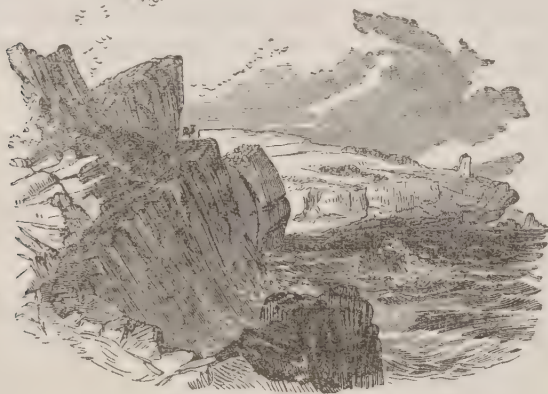
do that has not boldness and confidence to throw itself into his arms. 2. It was very particular; she tells him what she wanted; Christ gave poor supplicants leave to be thus free with him; "she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter," ver. 26. Note. The greatest blessing we can ask of Christ for our children is, that he would break the power of Satan, that is, the power of sin, in their souls; and particularly, that he would cast forth the unclean spirit, that they may be temples of the Holy Ghost, and he may dwell in them.

Secondly. The discouragement he gave to this address, ver. 27. He said unto her, "Let the children first be filled." Let the Jews have all the miracles wrought for them that they have occasion for, who are in a particular manner God's chosen people; and let not that which was intended for them be thrown to those who are not of God's family, and who have not that knowledge of him, and interest in him, which they have, and who are as dogs in comparison of them, vile and profane; and who are as dogs to them, snarling at them, spiteful towards them, and ready to worry them. Note, Where Christ knows the faith of poor supplicants to be strong, he sometimes delights to try it, and put it to the stretch. But his saying, "Let the children first be filled," intimates that there was mercy in reserve for the Gentiles, and not far off; for the Jews began already to be surfeited with the Gospel of Christ, and some of them had desired him to depart out of their coasts. The children begin to play with their meat, and their leavings, their loathings, would be a feast for the Gentiles. The apostles went by this rule, "Let the children first be filled;" let the Jews have the first offer, and if their full souls loathe this honeycomb, "I, o, we turn to the Gentiles."

Thirdly. The turn she gave to this word of Christ, which made against her, and her improvement of it to make for her, ver. 28. She said, "Yes, Lord," "I own it is true that the children's bread ought not to be cast to the dogs, but they were never denied the crumbs of that bread; nay, it belongs to them, and they are allowed a place under the table, that they may be ready to receive them. I ask not for a loaf, no, nor for a morsel, only for a crumb; do not refuse me that." This she speaks, not as undervaluing the mercy, or making light of it in itself, but magnifying the abundance of miraculous cures with which she heard the Jews were feasted, in comparison with which a single cure was but as a crumb. "Gentiles do not come in crowds, as the Jews do; I come alone." Perhaps she had heard of Christ's feeding five thousand lately at once, after which, even when they had gathered up the fragments, there could not but be some crumbs left for the dogs.

Fourthly. The grant Christ thereupon made of her request: Is she thus humble, thus earnest? "For this saying go thy way," thou shalt have what thou camest for, "the devil is gone out of thy daughter," ver. 29. This encourageth us to pray, and not to faint; to continue instant in prayer, not doubting but to prevail at last; the vision at the end shall speak and not lie. Christ's saying it was done did it effectually, as at other times his saying, "Let it be done;" for, ver. 30, she came to her house, depending upon the word of Christ that her daughter was healed; and so she found it; the devil was gone out. Note, Christ can conquer Satan at a distance; and it was not only when the demons saw him that they yielded to his power, as ch. iii. 11, but when they saw him not; for the Spirit of the Lord is not bound or bounded. She found her daughter, not in any toss or agitation, but very quietly laid on the bed, and reposing herself, waiting for her mother's return to rejoice with her, that she was so finely well.

31 And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through



THE COASTS OF TYRE AND SIDON.

the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. 32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. 33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; 34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. 35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. 36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great

deal they published it; 37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

Our Lord Jesus seldom stayed long in a place, for he knew where his work lay, and attended the changes of it. When he had cured the woman of Canaan's daughter, he had done what he had to do in that place, and therefore presently left those parts, and returned "to the sea of Galilee," whereabout his usual residence was; yet did not come directly thither, but fetched a compass "through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis," which lay mostly on the other side Jordan: such long walks did our Lord Jesus take, when he "went about doing good." Now here we have the story of a cure that Christ wrought, which is not recorded by any other of the evangelists; it is of one that was deaf and dumb.

I. *His case was sad*, ver. 32. There were those that brought "to him one that was deaf," some think born deaf, and then he must be dumb of course; others think by some distemper, or disaster, he was become deaf, or at least thick of hearing; and he "had an impediment in his speech." He was *μωγίλας*; some think he was quite dumb, others that he could not speak but with great difficulty to himself, and so as scarcely to be understood by those that heard him; he was tongue-tied, so that he was perfectly unfit for conversation, and deprived both of the pleasure and of the profit of it; he had not the satisfaction either of hearing other people talk, or of telling his own mind. Let us take occasion from hence to give thanks to God for preserving to us the sense of hearing, especially that we may be capable of hearing the word of God; and the faculty of speech, especially that we may be capable of speaking God's praises; and let us look with compassion upon those that are deaf or dumb, and treat them with great tenderness. They that brought this poor man to Christ, besought him that he would "put his hand upon him," as the prophets did upon those whom they blessed in the name of the Lord. It is not said they besought him to cure him, but "to put his hand upon him," to take cognizance of his case, and put forth his power to do to him as he pleased.

II. *His cure was solemn*, and some of the circumstances of it were singular. First, Christ "took him aside from the multitude," ver. 33. Ordinarily he wrought his miracles publicly before all the people, to shew that they would bear the strictest scrutiny and inspection; but this he did privately, to shew that he did not seek his own glory, and to teach us to avoid every thing that savours of ostentation. Let us learn of Christ to be humble, and to do good where no eye sees but his that is all eye.

Secondly, He used more significant actions in the doing of this cure than usual. 1. He "put his fingers into his ears," as if he would syringe them, and fetch out that which stopped them up. 2. He spit upon his own finger, and then "touched his tongue," as if he would moisten his mouth, and so loosen that with which his tongue was tied; these were no causes that could in the least contribute to his cure, but only signs of the exerting of that power which Christ had in himself to cure him, for the encouraging his faith, and theirs that brought him. The application was all from himself, it was his own fingers that he put into his ears, and his own spittle that he put upon his tongue; for he alone heals.

Thirdly, He looked up to heaven, to give his Father the praise of what he did; for he sought his praise, and did his will, and, as Mediator, acted in dependence on him, and with an eye to him. Thus he signified that it was by a Divine power, a power he had as the Lord from heaven, and brought with him thence, that he did this; for the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord has made, and can remake, even both of them. He also hereby directed his patient, who could see, though he could not hear, to look up to heaven for relief. Moses, with his stammering tongue, is directed to look that way, *Ex. iv. 11*. "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or blind? Have not I the Lord?"

Fourthly, He sighed; not as if he found any difficulty in working this miracle, or obtaining power to do it from his Father; but thus he expresseth his pity of the miseries of human life, and his sympathy with the afflicted in their afflictions, as one that was himself touched with the feeling of their infirmities. And as to this man, he sighed, not because he was loath to do him this kindness, or did it with reluctance; but because of the many temptations which he would be exposed to, and the sins he would be in danger of, the tongue sins, after the restoring of his speech to him, which before he was free from. He had better be tongue-tied still, unless he have grace to keep his tongue as with a bridle, *Ps. xxxix. 1*.

Fifthly, He said, "Ephphatha, that is, Be opened." This was nothing that looked like spell, or charm, such as they used that had familiar spirits, who peeped and muttered, *Isa. viii. 19*. Christ speaks as one having authority, and power went along with the word. "Be opened" served both parts of the cure; "Let the ears be opened, let the lips be opened, let him hear and speak freely, and let the restraint be taken off, and the effect was answerable, ver. 35; "straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue loosed," and all was well; and happy he who, as soon as he had his hearing and speech, had the blessed Jesus so near him to converse with.

Now this cure was, 1. A proof of Christ's being the Messiah, for it was foretold that by his power "the ears of the deaf should be unstopped, and the tongue of the dumb should be made to sing," *Isa. xxxv. 5, 6*. 2. It was a specimen of the operations of his Gospel upon the minds of men. The great command of the Gospel and grace of Christ to poor sinners is, "Ephphatha, Be opened." Grotius applies it thus, that the internal impediments of the mind are removed by the Spirit of Christ, as those bodily impediments were by the word of his power. He opens the heart, as he did Lydia's, and thereby opens the ear to receive the Word of God, and opens the mouth in prayer and praises.

Sixthly, He ordered it to be kept very private; but it was made very public. 1. It was his humility, that "he charged them they should tell no man," ver. 36. Most men will proclaim their own godness, or at least desire that others should proclaim it; but Christ, though he was himself in no danger of being puffed up with it, yet, knowing that we are, would thus set us an example of self-denial, as in other things, so especially in praise and applause. We should take pleasure in doing good, but not in its being known. 2. It was their zeal, that though he charged them to say nothing of it, yet "they published it," before Christ would have had it published; but they meant honestly, and therefore it is to be reckoned rather an act of indiscretion than an act of disobedience, ver. 37. But they that told it, and they that heard it, "were beyond measure astonished," *ὑπερπερισσῶς*, "more than above measure;" they were exceedingly affected with it, and this was said by every body, it was the common verdict, "He hath done all things well," ver. 37; whereas there were those that hated and persecuted him as an evil-doer, they are ready to witness for him, not only that he has done no evil, but that he has done a great deal of good, and has done it well, modestly and humbly, and very devoutly, and all

dedicate to God what would have been useful to them, and was exonerated from blame by traditional interpretations and inventions. The words "he shall be free" are added to the original.

vii. 16. The words of this verse are not found in the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., but are in the Alexandrian, the Cambridge, &c., as well as in the Syriac-Peshito and Philoxenian versions, the Latin Vulgate, &c. The verse is retained by very good modern editors and critics.

vii. 19. The word "draught" here has the sense of "draught-house" in 2 Kings x. 27; hence Robinson in his Lexicon, "a privy;" others, "a sewer," or cesspool. This receptacle is represented as the purifier of all that is eaten; only because what the body cannot utilise is there deposited.

vii. 26. The woman is called a Greek [*Hellenis*] as well as a Syrophenician. The former term may be used in the wider sense of Gentile, as often elsewhere in the New Testament, and hence in

gratis, "without money and without price," which added to the lustre of his good works. "He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak," and that is well; it is well for them, it is well for their relations, to whom they had been a burthen; and therefore they are inexcusable who speak ill of him.

CHAPTER VIII.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's miraculous feeding four thousand with seven loaves and a few small fishes, ver. 1-9. II. His refusing to give the Pharisees a sign from heaven, ver. 10-13. III. His cautioning his disciples to take heed of the leaven of Pharisism, and Herodianism, ver. 14-21. IV. His giving sight to a blind man at Bethsaida, ver. 22-26. V. Peter's confession of him, ver. 27-30. VI. The notice he gave his disciples of his own approaching sufferings, ver. 31-33; and the warning he gave them to prepare for sufferings likewise, ver. 34-38.



N those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, 2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:

3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. 4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness? 5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. 6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. 7 And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. 8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that



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was left seven baskets. 9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

We had the story of a miracle very like this before in this Gospel, ch. vi. 35, and of this same miracle, Mat. xv. 32; and here is little or no addition or alteration as to the circumstances; yet, observe,

I. That our Lord Jesus was mightily followed: "The multitude was very great," ver. 1; notwithstanding the wicked arts of the scribes and Pharisees to blemish him, and to blast his interest, the common people, who had more honesty, and therefore more true wisdom than their leaders, kept up their high thoughts of him. We may suppose this multitude were generally of the meaner sort of people; with such Christ conversed and was familiar; for thus he humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation, and thus encouraged the meanest to come to him for life and grace.

II. Those that followed him underwent a great deal of difficulty in following him; "they were with him three days, and had nothing to eat;" that was hard service: never let the Pharisees say that "Christ's disciples fast not." It is likely there were those that brought some food with them from home, but by this time it was all spent, and they had a great way home, and yet they con-

tinued with Christ, and did not speak of leaving him till he spoke of dismissing them. Note, True zeal makes nothing of hardships in the way of duty. They that have a full feast for their souls may be content with slender provision for their bodies. It was an old saying among the puritans, 'Brown bread and the Gospel is good fare.'

III. As Christ has a compassion for all that are in wants and straits, so he has a special concern for those that are reduced to straits by their zeal and diligence in attending on him. Christ said, "I have compassion on the multitude;" whom the proud Pharisees looked upon with disdain, the humble Jesus looked upon with pity and tenderness; and thus must we "honour all men." But that which he chiefly considers is, "they have been with me three days, and have nothing to eat." Whatever losses we sustain, or hardships we go through, for Christ's sake, and in love to him, he will take care they shall be made up to us, one way or other: "they that seek the Lord shall not" long "want any good thing," Ps. xxxiv. 10. Observe with what sympathy Christ saith, ver. 3, "If I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way" for hunger. Christ knows and considers our frame; and he is for the body; if with it we glorify him, verily we shall be fed. He considered that many "of them came from far," and had a great way home. When we see multitudes attending upon the word preached, it is comfortable to think that Christ knows whence they all come, though we do not: "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest," Rev. ii. 13. Christ would by no means have them go home fasting, for he doth not use to send those empty away from him that in a right manner attend on him.

IV. The doubts of Christians are sometimes made to work for the magnifying of the power of Christ. The disciples could not imagine whence so many men should be satisfied with bread here in this wilderness, ver. 4. That therefore must needs be wonderful, and appear so much the more so, which the disciples looked upon as impossible.

V. Christ's time to act for the relief of his people is when things are brought to the last extremity; when they were ready to faint, Christ provided for them; that he might not invite them to follow him for the loaves, he did not supply them but when they were utterly reduced, and then "he sent them away."

VI. The bounty of Christ is inexhaustible; and to evidence that, Christ repeated this miracle, to shew that he is still the same for the succour and supply of his people that attend upon him: his favours are renewed, as our wants and necessities are. In the former miracle Christ used all the bread he had, which were five loaves, and fed all the guests he had, which were five thousand; and so he did now; though he might have said, if five loaves would feed five thousand, four may feed four thousand; he took all the seven loaves, and fed with them the four thousand, for he would teach us to take things as they are, and accommodate ourselves to them; to use what we have, and make the best of that which is: here it was as in the dispensing of the manna, "he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack."

VII. In our Father's house, in our Master's house, "there is bread enough, and to spare;" there is a fulness in Christ, which he communicates to all that passeth through his hands; so that from it we receive, and "grace for grace," Jno. i. 16. Those need not fear wanting that have a Christ to live upon.

VIII. It is good for those that follow Christ to keep together; these followers of Christ continued in a body, four thousand of them together, and Christ fed them all; Christ's sheep must abide by the flock, and go forth by their footsteps, and verily they shall be fed.

10 And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha. 11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. 12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation. 13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side. 14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. 15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. 16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread. 17 And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? 18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? 19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. 20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. 21 And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

Still Christ is upon motion; now he visits the parts of Dalmanutha, that no corner of the land of Israel might say but that they had had his presence with them. He came thither by ship, ver. 13; but meeting with occasions of dispute

the Syriac version it is rendered by a word meaning a heathen or profane. We can scarcely think she was an idolater; she is called Syrophenician because she was a native of the region of Syria, which had been the home of the old Phœnicians. The same woman is called a Canaanite in Matt. xv. 22, because the Jews called Phœnicia by the name of Canaan.

vii. 31. Here the word "coasts" is both times applicable to the borders of a province, and has no reference whatever to the sea-

shore. Here the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. and other important witnesses read, "And again going forth from the borders of Tyre, he came through Sidon to the sea of Galilee," &c. If this reading is correct, our Lord journeyed from Tyre toward the north to Sidon, and then returned by a route considerably inland, until he reached the sea of Galilee. As already noted, Decapolis was mostly on the east of the upper Jordan and its lakes. Jesus, therefore, must have journeyed by a circuitous route overland to the sea of Galilee.

there, and not with opportunities of doing good, he entered into the ship again, ver. 13, and came back. In these verses we are told,

First. How he refused to gratify the Pharisees who challenged him to give them "a sign from heaven." They "came forth" on purpose to "question with him," not to propose questions to him that they might learn of him, but to cross questions with him that they might ensnare him.

1. They demanded of him "a sign from heaven," as if the signs he gave them on earth, which were more familiar to them, and were more capable of being examined and inquired into, were not sufficient. There was "a sign from heaven" at his baptism, in the descent of the dove, and the voice, *Mat. iii. 16, 17*; it was public enough; and if they had attended John's baptism, as they ought to have done, they might themselves have seen it. Afterwards, when he was nailed to the cross, they prescribed a new sign, "Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him;" thus obstinate infidelity will still have something to say, though never so unreasonable. They demanded this sign, "tempting him," not in hopes he would give it them, that they might be satisfied, but in hopes he would not, that they might imagine themselves to have a pretence for their infidelity.

2. He denied them their demand. "He sighed deeply in his spirit," ver. 12; "he groaned," so some; "being grieved for the hardness of their hearts," and the little influence that his preaching and miracles had had upon them. Note, The infidelity of those that have long enjoyed the means of conviction, is a great grief to the Lord Jesus; it troubles him that sinners should thus stand in their own light, and put a bar in their own door. 1st. He expostulates with them upon this demand: "Why doth this generation seek after a sign?" This generation, that is so unworthy to have the Gospel brought to it, and to have any sign accompanying it; "this generation," that so greedily swallows the traditions of the elders without the confirmation of any sign at all; "this generation," into which, by the calculating of the times prefixed in the Old Testament, they might easily perceive that the coming of the Messiah must fall; "this generation," that has had such plenty of sensible and merciful signs given them in the cure of their sick, what an absurdity is it for them to desire a sign? 2nd. He refuseth to answer their demand: "Verily I say unto you, there shall no sign," no such sign, "be given to this generation." When God spoke to particular persons in a particular case, out of the road of his common dispensation, they were encouraged to ask a sign, as Gideon and Ahaz; but when he speaks in general to all, as in the law and Gospel, sending each with their own evidence, it is presumption to prescribe other signs than what he has given: "Shall any teach God knowledge?" He denied them, and then left them, as men not fit to be talked with; if they will not be convinced, they shall not; leave them to their strong delusions.

Secondly. How he warned his disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. Observe here,

1. What the caution was, ver. 15: "Take heed, beware," lest you partake "of the leaven of the Pharisees," lest ye embrace the tradition of the elders, which they are so wedded to; lest ye be proud, and hypocritical, and ceremonious, like them; Matthew adds, "and of the Sadducees;" Mark adds, "and of Herod," whence some gather that Herod and his courtiers were generally Sadducees, that is, deists, men of no religion. Others give this sense: the Pharisees demanded "a sign from heaven," and Herod, he was long desirous to see some miracle wrought by Christ, *Lu. xxiii. 7*, such as he should prescribe; so that the leaven of both was the same; they were unsatisfied with the signs they had, and would have others, of their own devising; "Take heed of this leaven," saith Christ; "be convinced by the miracles you have seen, and covet not to see more."

2. How they misunderstood this caution. It seems, at their putting to sea this time, they "had forgotten to take bread, and had not in their ship more than one loaf," ver. 14. When therefore Christ bade them "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," they understood it as an intimation to them not to apply themselves to any of the Pharisees for relief when they came to the other side, for they had lately been offended at them for eating with "unwashed hands." "They reasoned among themselves" what should be the meaning of this caution, and concluded, "It is because we have no bread." He saith this to reproach us for being so careless as to go to sea, and go among strangers, with but one loaf of bread; he doth in effect tell us we must be brought to short allowance, and must eat our bread by weight. They reasoned it; *βελόρυλλον*, they disputed about it; one said, "It was along of you," and the other said, "It was along of you, that we are so ill provided for this voyage;" thus distrust of God makes Christ's disciples quarrel among themselves.

3. The reproof Christ gave them for their uneasiness in this matter, as it argued a disbelief of his power to supply them, notwithstanding the abundant experience they had had of it. The reproof is given with some warmth, for he knew their hearts, and knew they needed to be thus soundly chidden; "Perceive ye not yet, neither understand," that which you have had so many demonstrations of? "Have ye your hearts yet hardened," so as that nothing will make any impression upon them, or bring them to compliance with your Master's designs? "Having eyes, see ye not?" that which is plain before your eyes? "Having ears, hear ye not?" that which you have been so often told? How strangely stupid and senseless are you? "Do ye not remember" that which was done but the other day, "when I brake the five loaves among the five thousand," and soon after the "seven loaves among the four thousand?" Do ye not remember "how many baskets full ye took up" of the fragments? Yes, they did remember, and could tell that they took up twelve baskets full one time, and seven another. Why, then, saith he, "How is it that ye do not understand?" As if he that multiplied five loaves, and seven, could not multiply one; they seemed to suspect that that one was not matter enough to work upon, if he should have a mind to entertain his hearers a third time; and if that was their thought, it was indeed a very senseless one, as if it were not all alike to the Lord to save by many or few, and as easy to make one loaf to feed five thousand as five. It was therefore proper to mind them not only of the sufficiency, but of the overplus, of the former meals; and justly were they chidden for not understanding what Christ therein designed, and what they from thence might have learned. Note, 1st. The experiences we have had of God's goodness to us in the way of duty greatly aggravate our distrust of him, which is therefore very provoking to the Lord Jesus. 2nd. Our not understanding the true intent and meaning of God's favours to us, is equivalent to our not remembering them. 3rd. We are therefore overwhelmed with present cares and distrusts, because we do not understand and remember what we have known and seen of the power and goodness of our Lord Jesus. It would be a great support to us to consider the days of old, and we are wanting both to God and ourselves if we do not. 4th. When we thus forget the works of God, and distrust him, we should chide ourselves severely for it, as Christ doth his disciples here: "Am I thus without understanding? How is it that my heart is thus hardened?"

22 And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch

him. 23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. 24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. 25 After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. 26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

This cure is related only by this evangelist, and there is something singular in the circumstances.

First. Here is a blind man brought to Christ by his friends, with a desire that he would touch him, ver. 22. Here appears the faith of those that brought him; they doubted not but one touch of Christ's hand would recover him his sight; but the man himself shewed not that earnestness for, or expectation of a cure that other blind men did. If those that are spiritually blind do not pray for themselves, yet let their friends and relations pray for them, that Christ would be pleased to touch them.

Secondly. Here is Christ leading this blind man, ver. 23. He did not bid his friends lead him, but (which speaks his wonderful condescension) he himself "took him by the hand and led him," to teach us to be, as Job was, "eyes to the blind," *Job xxix. 15*. Never had poor blind man such a leader. He led him "out of the town;" had he herein only designed privacy, he might have led him into a house, into an inner chamber, and have cured him there; but he intended hereby to upbraid Bethsaida with the mighty works that had in vain been done in her, *Mat. xi. 21*, and was telling her in effect she was unworthy to have any more done within her walls. Perhaps Christ took the blind man "out of the town," that he might have a larger prospect in the open fields to try his sight with, than he could have in the close streets.

Thirdly. Here is the cure of the blind man, by that blessed oculist who came into the world to "preach the recovering of sight to the blind," *Lu. iv. 18*, and to give what he preached. In this cure we may observe, 1. That Christ used a sign; he "spit on his eyes," (spit into them, so some,) "and put his hands upon him." He could have cured him, as he did others, with a word speaking; but thus he was pleased to assist his faith, which was very weak, and to help him against his unbelief. And this spittle signified the eye-salve wherewith Christ anoints the eyes of those that are spiritually blind, *Rev. iii. 18*. 2. That the cure was wrought gradually, which was not usual in Christ's miracles. He "asked him if he saw ought," ver. 23; let him tell what condition his sight was in, for the satisfaction of those about him; "and he looked up," so far he recovered his sight that he could open his eyes, and he said, "I see men as trees walking;" he could not distinguish men from trees, otherwise than that he could discern them to move. He had some glimmerings of sight, and betwixt him and the sky could perceive a man erect, like a tree, but could not discern the form thereof, *Job iv. 16*. But, 3. It was soon completed: Christ never doth his work by the halves, nor leaves it till he can say, "It is finished." He put his hands again upon his eyes, "to disperse the remaining darkness," and then bade him look up again, and he "saw every man clearly," ver. 25.

Now Christ took this way, 1st. Because he would not tie himself to a method, but would shew with what liberty he acted in all he did. He did not cure by rote, as I may say, and in a road, but varied as he thought fit. Providence gains the same end in different ways, that men may attend its motions with an implicit faith. 2nd. Because it should be to the patient according to his faith; and perhaps this man's faith was at first very weak, but afterwards gathered strength, and accordingly his cure was. Not that Christ always went by this rule, but thus he would sometimes put a rebuke upon those who came to him doubting. 3rd. Thus Christ would shew how, and in what method, those are healed by his grace, who by nature are spiritually blind; at first their knowledge is confused, they "see men as trees walking," but, like the light of the morning, it "shines more and more to the perfect day," and then they "see all things clearly," *Pr. iv. 18*. Let us inquire then if we see aught of those things which faith is the substance and evidence of; and if through grace we see any thing of them, we may hope that we shall see yet more and more, for Jesus Christ will perfect for ever those that are sanctified.

Fourthly. The directions Christ gave the man he had cured, not to "tell it to any in the town" of Bethsaida, nor so much as to "go into the town," where probably there were some expecting him to come back, who had seen Christ lead him out of the town; but having been eye-witnesses of so many miracles, had not so much as the curiosity to follow him: let not such be gratified with the sight of him when he was cured, that would not shew so much respect to Christ as to go a step out of town to see this cure wrought. Christ doth not forbid him to tell it to others, but he must not "tell it to any in the town." Slighting Christ's favours is forfeiting them; and Christ will make those know the worth of their privileges by the want of them, that would not know them otherwise. Bethsaida, in the day of her visitation, would not know the things that belonged to her peace, and now they are hid from her eyes. They will not see, and therefore shall not see.

27 And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? 28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. 29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. 30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him. 31 And he began to teach them, that the

viii. 7. For "blessed," Alford says, "render, blessed them;" but this would leave it as uncertain as before whether the Saviour blessed the disciples or the fishes. The common version allows a wider latitude, and we prefer it because the verb is with its derivatives used of blessing God, (*e.g.*, *Jas. iii. 9*) and praise in general. It is used also in prayers for the blessing of God on anything. De Dieu is of opinion that the word "blessed" in this verse has the same meaning as the one for "gave thanks" in verse 6.

viii. 10. Dalmanutha is peculiar to this place. It was probably near Magdala, and hence the latter is named in *Matt. xv. 39*, or near Magada, as the best authorities have for Magdala. Dalmanutha is supposed to have been on the west shore of the lake of Tiberias, but nothing certain is known of it. It is by no means impossible that the old opinion may be correct, which makes Dalmanutha the name of the locality near the town of Magada.

viii. 16. For "saying, It is because we have no bread," some

Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. 33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. 34 And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. 36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

We have read a great deal of the doctrine that Christ preached, and the miracles he wrought, which were many, and strange, and well attested; of various kinds, wrought in several places, to the astonishment of the many that were eye-witnesses of them. It is now time for us to pause a little, and to consider what these things mean; the wondrous works, which Christ then forbade the publishing of, being recorded in these sacred writings, are thereby published to all the world, to us, to all ages. Now, what shall we think of them? Is the record of those things designed only for an amusement, or to furnish us with matter for discourse? No; certainly "these things are written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," *Jno. xx. 31*; and this discourse Christ had with his disciples, will assist us in making the necessary reflections upon the miracles of Christ, and a right use of them. Three things we are here taught to infer from the miracles Christ wrought:

1. *They prove that he is the true Messiah, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world.* This the works he did witnessed concerning him; and this his disciples, who were the eye-witnesses of those works, here profess their belief of; which cannot but be a satisfaction to us in making the same inference from them.

First. Christ inquired of them what the sentiments of the people were concerning him: "Whom do men say that I am?" *ver. 27*. Note, Though it is a small thing for us to be judged of man's day, yet it may sometimes do us good to know what people say of us; not that we may seek our own glory, but may hear of our faults. Christ asked them, not that he might be informed, but that they might observe it themselves, and inform one another.

Secondly. The account they gave him was such as plainly speaks the high opinion the people had of him. Though they came short of the truth, yet they were convinced by his miracles that he was an extraordinary person, sent from the invisible world with a Divine commission. It is probable they would have acknowledged him to be the Messiah, if they had not been possessed by their teachers with a notion that the Messiah must be a temporal prince, appearing in external pomp and power, which the figure Christ made would not comport with; yet (whatever the Pharisees said, whose copyhold was touched by the strictness and spirituality of his doctrine,) none of the people said he was a deceiver, but some said "he was John Baptist, others Elias, others one of the prophets," *ver. 28*. All agree he is one risen from the dead.

Thirdly. The account they gave him of their own sentiments concerning him, speaks their abundant satisfaction in him, and in their having left all to follow him, which now, after some time of trial, they see no reason to repent. "But whom say ye that I am?" To this they have an answer ready, "Thou art the Christ;" the Messiah often promised, and long expected, *ver. 29*. To be a Christian indeed, is sincerely to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and to act accordingly; and that he is so, plainly appears by his wondrous works. They knew, and must shortly publish and maintain; but for the present they must keep it secret, *ver. 30*, till the proof of it was completed, and they were completely qualified to maintain it by the pouring out of the Holy Ghost, and then let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made this same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ, *Acts ii. 36*.

II. *These miracles of Christ take off the offence of the cross, and assure us that Christ was in it not conquered, but a conqueror.* Now the disciples are convinced that Jesus is the Christ, they may bear to hear of his sufferings, which Christ now begins to give them notice of, *ver. 31*.

First. Christ taught his disciples that he "must suffer many things." Though they had got over the vulgar error of the Messiah's being a temporal prince, so far as to believe their Master to be the Messiah, notwithstanding his present meanness, yet still they retained it so far as to expect that he would shortly appear in outward pomp and grandeur, and "restore the kingdom to Israel;" and therefore, to rectify that mistake, Christ here gives them a prospect of the contrary; that he must "be rejected of the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes;" who they expected should be brought to own and prefer him; that instead of being crowned, he must "be killed," he must be crucified, "and after three days he must rise again," to a heavenly life, and to be no more in this world. This he spake "openly," *ver. 32*, *παρρησια*. He said it freely and plainly, and did not wrap it up in ambiguous expressions. The disciples might easily understand it, if they had not been very much under the power of prejudice. Or, it intimates that he spoke it cheerfully and without any terror,

and would have them to hear it so. He spake that saying boldly, as one that not only knew he must suffer and die, but was resolved he would, and made it his own act and deed.

Secondly. Peter opposed it. He "took him, and began to rebuke him." Here Peter shewed more love than discretion; a zeal for Christ and his safety, but not according to knowledge. He "took him," *προσλαβόμενος αὐτόν*. He took hold of him, as it were, to stop and hinder him; took him in his arms and embraced him, so some understand it; he fell on his neck, as impatient to hear that his dear Master should suffer such hard things; or he took him aside privately, and began to rebuke him. This was not the language of the least authority, but of the greatest affection, of that jealousy for the welfare of those we love which is strong as death. Our Lord Jesus allowed his disciples to be free with him, but Peter here took too great a liberty.

Thirdly. Christ checked him for his opposition, *ver. 33*: "He turned about, as one offended," and looked on his disciples," to see if the rest of them were of the same mind, and concurred with Peter in this; that if they did, they might take the reproof to themselves which he was now about to give to Peter; and he said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Peter little thought to have had such a sharp rebuke for such a kind dissuasive; but perhaps expected as much commendation now for his love as he had lately had for his faith. Note, Christ sees that amiss, in what we say and do, which we ourselves are not aware of, and knows what manner of spirit we are of, when we ourselves do not. 1. Peter spoke as one that did not rightly understand, nor had duly considered the purposes and counsels of God. When he saw such proofs, as he every day saw, of the power of Christ, he might conclude that he could not be compelled to suffer; the most potent enemies could not overpower him whom diseases and deaths, whom winds and waves, and devils themselves, were forced to obey and yield to; and when he saw so much of the wisdom of Christ every day, he might conclude that he would not choose to suffer, but for some very great and glorious purposes; and therefore he ought not thus to have contradicted him, but to have acquiesced. He looked upon his death only as a martyrdom, like that of the prophets, which he thought might be prevented, if either he would take a little care not to provoke the chief priests, or to keep out of the way; but he knew not that the thing was necessary for the glory of God, the destruction of Satan, and the salvation of man, that the Captain of our salvation must be made "perfect through sufferings," and so must bring "many sons to glory." Note, The wisdom of man is perfect folly, when it pretends to give measures to the Divine counsels; the cross of Christ, the greatest instance of God's power and wisdom, was to some a stumblingblock, and to others foolishness. 2. Peter spoke as one that did not rightly understand, nor had duly considered, the nature of Christ's kingdom; he took it to be temporal and human, whereas it is spiritual and Divine: "Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men;" *οὐ φρονεῖς*, "thou mindest not," so the word is rendered, *Rom. viii. 5*. Peter seemed to mind more the things that relate to the lower world, and the life that now is, than those which relate to the upper world, and the life to come. Minding the things of men more than the things of God—our own credit, ease, and safety, more than the things of God and his glory and kingdom—is a very great sin, and the root of much sin, and very common among Christ's disciples; and it will appear in suffering times,—those times of temptation, when those in whom the things of men have the ascendant are in danger of falling off. *Non sapis*,—"Thou art not wise" (so it may be read) "in the things of God, but in the things of men." It is considerable what generation we appear wise in, *Lu. xvi. 8*. It seems policy to shun trouble, but if with that we shun duty, it is fleshly wisdom, *2 Cor. i. 12*, and it will be folly in the end.

III. *These miracles of Christ should engage us all to follow him, whatever it cost us*; not only as they were confirmations of his mission, but as they were explications of his design, and the tendency of that grace which he came to bring; plainly intimating that by his Spirit he would do that for our blind, deaf, lame, leprous, diseased, possessed souls, which he did for the bodies of those many who in those distresses applied themselves to him. Frequent notice had been taken of the great flocking that there was to him for help in various cases. Now this is written that we may believe that he is the great Physician of souls, and may become his patients, and submit to his regimen; and here he tells us upon what terms we may be admitted; and he "called all the people to him," to hear this, who modestly stood at some distance when he was in private conversation with his disciples. This is that which all are concerned to know and consider, if they expect Christ should heal their souls.

First. They must not be indulgent of the ease of the body; for, *ver. 34*, "whosoever will come after me," for spiritual cures, as these people do for bodily cures, "let him deny himself," and live a life of self-denial, mortification, and contempt of the world; let him not pretend to be his own physician, but renounce all confidence in himself and his own righteousness and strength; and let him "take up his cross," conforming himself to the pattern of a crucified Jesus, and accommodating himself to the will of God in all the afflictions he lies under; and thus let him continue to "follow me," as many of those did whom Christ healed. Those that will be Christ's patients must attend on him, converse with him, receive instruction and reproof from him, as those did that followed him, and must resolve they will never forsake him.

Secondly. They must not be solicitous, no, not for "the life of the body," when they cannot keep it without quitting Christ, *ver. 35*. Are we invited by the words and works of Christ to follow him, let us sit down and count the cost, whether we can prefer our advantages by Christ before life itself, whether we can bear to think of losing our life "for Christ's sake and the Gospel's." When the devil is drawing away disciples and servants after him, he conceals the worst of it, tells them only of the pleasure, but nothing of the peril of his service: "Ye shall not surely die." But what there is of trouble and danger in the service of Christ, he tells us of it before; tells us we shall suffer, perhaps we shall die in the cause; and represents the discouragements not less, but greater, than commonly they prove, that it may appear he deals fairly with us; and he is not afraid we should know the worst, because the advantages of his service abundantly suffice to balance the discouragements, if we will but impartially set the one over against the other. In short,

1. We must not dread the loss of our lives, provided it be in the cause of Christ, *ver. 35*: "Whosoever will save his life," by declining Christ, and refusing to come to him, or by disowning or denying him after he has in profession come to Christ, he "shall lose it," shall lose the comforts of his natural life, the root and fountain of his spiritual life, and all his hopes of eternal life; such a bad bargain will he make for himself; "but whosoever shall lose his life," shall be truly willing to lose it, shall venture it, shall lay it down when he cannot keep it without denying Christ, he "shall save it;" that is, he shall be an unspeakable gainer; for the loss of his life shall be made up to him in a better life. It is looked upon to be some kind of recompence to those who lose their lives in the service of their prince and country, to have their memories honoured, and their families provided for; but what is that to the recompence which Christ makes in eternal life to all that die for him?

2. We must dread the loss of our souls, yea, though we should "gain the whole world" by it, *ver. 36, 37*: "For what shall it profit a man, if he should

ancient copies and modern editors have, "because they had no bread."

viii. 21. Some copies omit "How," and others read, 'Do ye not yet understand?' which is adopted in several modern critical editions.

viii. 24. For "I see men as trees, walking," the best ancient and recent authorities read, "I see men, for I see them walking, as it were trees."

viii. 25. For "every man," some read "all men," while others have "all things." Alford says, "The text is in much uncertainty."

ix. 3. The words "as snow" are omitted in some MSS. The comparison which follows is peculiar to this gospel.

ix. 5. The record of the transfiguration occurs in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In Peter's address, as given Matt. xvii. 4, the apostle calls Jesus "Lord;" in Mark it is "Rabbi" (not "Master," as in our version); and in Luke ix. 33 it is "Master." The Greek term in

gain the whole world," and all the wealth, honour and pleasure in it, by denying Christ, "and lose his own soul?" "True it is," said Bishop Hooper, the night before he suffered martyrdom, "that life is sweet, and death is bitter; but eternal death is more bitter, and eternal life is more sweet;" so that as the happiness of heaven with Christ is enough to countervail the loss of life itself for Christ, so the gain of all the world in sin, is not sufficient to countervail the ruin of the soul by sin.

What that is that men do to save their lives, and gain the world, he tells us, ver. 38; and of what fatal consequence it will be to them: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed." Something like this we had, *Mat. x. 33*; but it is here expressed more fully. Note, 1st. The disadvantage that the cause of Christ labours under in this world is, that it is to be owned and professed in an "adulterous and sinful generation;" such the generation of mankind is; gone a whoring from God, in the impure embraces of the world and the flesh, lying in wickedness; some ages, some places, are more especially adulterous and sinful, as that was in which Christ lived. In such a generation the cause of Christ is opposed and run down, and those that own it are exposed to reproach and contempt, and every where ridiculed and spoken against. 2nd. There are many who, though they cannot but own that the cause of Christ is a righteous cause, yet are ashamed of it because of the reproach that attends the professing of it; they are ashamed of their relation to Christ, and ashamed of the credit they cannot but give to his words; they cannot bear to be frowned upon and despised, and therefore throw off their profession, and go down the stream of a prevailing apostasy. 3rd. There is a day coming when the cause of Christ will appear as bright and illustrious as now it appears mean and contemptible; when the Son of man comes "in the glory of his Father with his holy angels," as the true Shechinah, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the Lord of angels. 4th. Those that are ashamed of Christ in this world, where he is despised, he will be ashamed of them in that world where he is eternally adored. They shall not share with him in his glory then, that were not willing to share with him in his disgrace now.

CHAPTER IX.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's transfiguration upon the mount, ver. 1—13. II. His casting the devil out of a child, when the disciples could not do it, ver. 14—29. III. His prediction of his own sufferings and death, ver. 30—32. IV. The check he gave to his disciples for disputing who should be greatest, ver. 33—37. And to John, for rebuking one who cast out devils in Christ's name, and did not follow with them, ver. 38—41. V. Christ's discourse with his disciples of the danger of offending one of his little ones, ver. 42; and of indulging that in ourselves which is an offence and an occasion of sin to us, ver. 43—50; most of which passages we had before, *Mat. xvii. and xviii.*



AND he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. 2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James,

and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. 3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. 4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. 5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. 7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. 8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves. 9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. 10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean. 11 And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? 12 And he answered

and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. 13 But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

Here is, I. A prediction of Christ's kingdom, now near approaching, ver. 1. That which is foretold is, 1. That the kingdom of God would come, and would come so as to be seen; the kingdom of the Messiah shall be set up in the world by the utter destruction of the Jewish polity, which stood in the way of it. This was the restoring of the kingdom of God among men, which had been in a manner lost by the woful degeneracy both of Jews and Gentiles. 2. That it would come with power, so as to make its own way, and bear down the opposition that was given to it. It came with power, when vengeance was taken on the Jews for crucifying Christ, and when it conquered the idolatry of the Gentile world. 3. That it would come while some now present were alive; "there are some standing here that shall not taste of death till they see it:" this speaks the same with *Mat. xxiv. 34*: "this generation shall not pass till all those things be fulfilled." Those that were standing here with Christ should see it, when the others could not discern it to be the kingdom of God, for it came not with observation.

II. A specimen of that kingdom, in the transfiguration of Christ, six days after Christ spoke that. He had begun to given notice to his disciples of his death and sufferings; and to prevent their offence at that, he gives them this glimpse of his glory, to shew that his sufferings were voluntary, and what a virtue the dignity and glory of his person would put into them, and to prevent the offence of the cross.

1. It was on the top of a high mountain, like the converse Moses had with God, which was on the top of mount Sinai, and his prospect of Canaan from the top of mount Pisgah. Tradition saith it was on the top of mount Tabor that Christ was transfigured; and if so, the Scripture was fulfilled, "Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name," *Ps. lxxxix. 12, 13*. Dr. Lightfoot, observing that the last place we find Christ, was in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, which was far from mount Tabor, rather thinks it was a high mountain which Josephus speaks of, near Caesarea.

2. The witnesses of it were Peter, James, and John: these were three that were to bear record on earth, answering to Moses, Elias, and the voice from heaven, the three that were to bear record from above. Christ did not take all the disciples with him, because the thing was to be kept very private. As there are distinguishing favours which are given to disciples and not to the world, so there are to some disciples and not to others. All the saints are a people near to Christ, but some lie in his bosom. James was the first of all the twelve that died for Christ, and John survived them all, to be the last eye-witness of this glory; he bore record, *1 John. i. 14*, "We beheld his glory;" and so did Peter, *2 Pet. i. 16—18*.

3. The manner of it. "He was transfigured before them;" he appeared in another manner than he used to do. This was a change of the accidents, the substance remaining the same, and it was a miracle: but transubstantiation, the change of the substance, all the accidents remaining the same, is not a miracle, but a fraud and imposture, such a work as Christ never wrought. See what a great change human bodies are capable of, when God is pleased to put an honour upon them, as he will upon the bodies of the saints at the resurrection. "He was transfigured before them;" it is likely the change was gradual, from glory to glory; so that the disciples, who had their eye upon him all the while, had the clearest and most certain evidence they could have, that this glorious appearance was no other than the blessed Jesus himself, and there was no illusion in it. John seems to refer to this, *1 John. i. 1*, when he speaks of the Word of life as that which they had "seen with their eyes, and looked upon." "His raiment became shining;" so that though probably it was sad coloured, if not black, yet it was now "exceeding white as snow," beyond what a fuller's art could do towards whitening it.

4. His companions in this glory were Moses and Elias, ver. 4. They appeared, talking with him; not to teach him, but to testify to him, and to be taught by him; by which it appears there is converse and intercourse between glorified saints; they have ways of talking one with another, which we understand not. Moses and Elias lived at a great distance of time one from another; but that breaks no squares in heaven, where "the first shall be last, and the last first," that is, all one in Christ.

5. The great delight that the disciples took in seeing this sight, and hearing this discourse, is expressed by Peter, the mouth of the rest; he said, "Master, it is good for us to be here," ver. 5. Though Christ was transfigured, and was in discourse with Moses and Elias, yet he gave Peter leave to speak to him, and to be as free with him as he used to be. Note, Our Lord Jesus, in his exaltation and glory, doth not at all abate of his condescending kindness to his people. Many when they are in their greatness oblige their friends to keep their distance; but even to the glorified Jesus true believers have access with boldness, and freedom of speech with him. Even in this heavenly discourse there was room for Peter to put in a word; and this is it, "Lord, it is good to be here," it is good for us to be here; here "let us make tabernacles," let this be our rest for ever. Note, Gracious souls reckon it good to be in communion with Christ, good to be near him, good to be in the mount with him, though it be a cold and solitary place; it is good to be here retired from the world, and alone with Christ. And if it is good to be with Christ transfigured only, upon a mountain with Moses and Elias, how good will it be to be with Christ glorified in heaven with all the saints? But observe, while Peter was forstaying here, he forgot what need there was of the presence of Christ, and the preaching of his apostles, among the people. At this very time the other disciples wanted them greatly, ver. 14. Note, When it is well with us, we are apt to be mindless of others, and in the fulness of our enjoyments to forget the necessities of our brethren; it was a weakness in Peter to prefer private communion with God before public usefulness. Paul is willing "to abide in the flesh," rather than depart to the mountain of glory, though that be "far better," when he sees it needful for the church, *Phil. i. 24, 25*. Peter talked of making three distinct tabernacles for Moses, Elias, and Christ, which was not well contrived; for such a perfect harmony there is between the law, the prophets, and the Gospel, that one tabernacle will hold them all, they dwell together in unity. But whatever was incongruous in what he said, he may be excused, "for they were all sore afraid;" and he, for his part, "wist not what to say," ver. 6; not knowing what would be the end thereof.

6. The voice that came from heaven was an attestation of Christ's mediatorship, ver. 7; "There was a cloud that overshadowed them," and was a shelter to

Luke nearly corresponds in sense with the Hebrew "Rabbi" of Mark, but the word "Lord" often points to a more comprehensive and elevated dignity. There is, however, no contradiction, the real fact being probably that Peter used the term "Rabbi," which the other evangelists paraphrased. The word for "tabernacles" means tents, which might be mere booths of boughs, or of more durable materials, as skins or cloth.

ix. 9, 10. Matthew and Mark report the charge given to the

apostles by Jesus, but only Mark and Luke record their observance of it. Mark is alone in saying that they questioned with one another what the rising from the dead should mean.

ix. 11—13. This conversation occurs only in Matthew and Mark, the latter adding the significant phrase, "as it is written of him." These words Kuinoel justly observes are to be understood of John the Baptist; but he is scarcely so correct in supposing that they point to those passages of the Old Testament in which the prophets

them: Peter had talked of making tabernacles for Christ and his friends, but "while he yet spake," see how his project was superseded; this cloud was unto them instead of tabernacles, for their shelter, *Isa. iv. 5*; while he spake of his tabernacles, God created his tabernacle not made with hands. Now out of this cloud (which was but a shade to the excellent glory Peter speaks of, from whence this voice came), it was said, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." God owns him, and accepts him as his beloved Son, and is ready to accept of us in him; we must then own and accept him as our beloved Saviour, and must give up ourselves to be ruled by him.

7. The vision being designed only to introduce this voice, when that was delivered, disappeared; ver. 8: "Suddenly, when they had looked round about," as men amazed, to see where they were, all was gone, "they saw no man any more;" Elias and Moses were vanished out of sight, and Jesus only remained with them, and he not transfigured, but as he used to be. Note, Christ doth not leave the soul when extraordinary joys and comforts leave it. Though more sensible and ravishing communions may be withdrawn, Christ's disciples have, and shall have, his ordinary presence with them always, even to the end of the world, and that is it we must depend upon. Let us thank God for daily bread, and not expect a continual feast on this side heaven.

8. We have here the discourse between Christ and his disciples, as they came down from the mount.

1st. He charged them to keep this matter very private till he was "risen from the dead," which would complete the proof of his Divine mission, and then this must be produced with the rest of the evidence, ver. 9; and besides, he being now in a state of humiliation, would have nothing publicly taken notice of that might seem disagreeable to such a state; for to that he would in every thing accommodate himself. This enjoining of silence to the disciples would likewise be of use to them, to prevent their boasting of the intimacy they were admitted to, that they might not be puffed up with "the abundance of the revelations." It is a mortification to a man to be tied up from telling of his advancements, and may help to hide pride from him.

2nd. The disciples were at a loss "what the rising from the dead should mean;" they could not form any notion of the Messiah's dying, *Lu. xviii. 34* and therefore were willing to think that the rising he speaks of was figurative, his rising from his present mean and low estate to the dignity and dominion they were in expectation of. But if so, here is another thing that embarrasseth them, ver. 11, "Why say the scribes that," before the appearing of the Messiah in his glory, according to the order settled in the prophecies of the Old Testament, "Elias must first come?" But Elias was gone, and Moses too. Now that which raised this difficulty was, that the scribes taught them to expect the person of Elias, whereas the prophecy intended one "in the spirit and power of Elias." Note, The misunderstanding of Scripture is a great prejudice to the entertainment of truth.

3rd. Christ gave them a key to the prophecy concerning Elias, ver. 17, 18. It is indeed prophesied that Elias will come, and will "restore all things," and set them to rights; and (though you will not understand it) it is also prophesied "of the Son of man that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought;" must be a reproach of men, and despised of the people. And though the scribes do not tell you so, the Scriptures do, and you have as much reason to expect that as the other, and should not make so strange of it: but as to Elias, I tell you, he is come; and if you consider a little, you will understand what I mean; it is one to whom they have done "whatsoever they listed," which was very applicable to the ill usage they had given John Baptist. Many of the ancients, and the Popish writers generally, think, that besides the coming of John Baptist in the spirit of Elias, himself in his own person is to be expected, with Enoch, before the second appearance of Christ, wherein the prophecy of Malachi will have a more full accomplishment than it had in John Baptist. But it is a groundless fancy; the true Elias, as well as the true Messiah promised, is come, and we are to look for no other. These words, "as it is written of him," refer not to their doing "to him whatever they listed," that comes in in a parenthesis, but only to his coming; he is come, and hath been, and done according as was "written of him."

14 And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. 15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. 16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them? 17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; 18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. 19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. 20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. 21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. 22 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. 23 Jesus said unto

him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. 24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. 25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. 26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; inso-much that many said, He is dead. 27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. 28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? 29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

We have here the story of Christ's casting the devil out of a child, somewhat more fully related than it was *Mat. xvii. 14, &c.* Observe here,

I. Christ's return to his disciples, and the perplexity he found them in. He laid aside his robes of glory, and came to look after his family, and to inquire what was become of them. Christ's glory above doth not make him forget the concerns of his church below, which he visits in great humility, ver. 14. And he came very seasonably, when the disciples were embarrassed and run aground; the scribes, who were sworn enemies both to him and them, had gained an advantage against them. A child possessed with a devil was brought to them, and they could not cast out the devil; whereupon the scribes insulted over them, and reflected upon their Master, and triumphed as if the day were their own. He found "the scribes questioning with them," in the hearing of the multitude, some of whom perhaps began to be shocked by it. Thus Moses, when he came down from the mount, found the camp of Israel in great disorder; so soon were Christ and Moses missed. Christ's return was very welcome, no doubt, to the disciples, and unwelcome to the scribes. But particular notice is taken of its being very surprising to the people, who perhaps were ready to say, "As for this Jesus, we wot not what is become of him; but," when they beheld him "coming to them again, they were greatly amazed;" some copies add, *καὶ ἐξέδοθησαν*, "and they were afraid," and running to him; "some copies for *προσπεσόντες* read *προσχαίροντες*, 'congratulating him,' or bidding him welcome, they saluted him. It is easy to give a reason why they should be glad to see him, but why were they amazed, 'greatly amazed,' when they beheld him? Probably there might remain something unusual in his countenance, as Moses' face shone when he came down from the mount, which made the people "afraid to come nigh him," *Ex. xxxiv. 30*; so perhaps did Christ's face, in some measure; at least, instead of seeming fatigued, there appeared a wonderful briskness and sprightliness in his looks, which amazed them.

II. The case which perplexed the disciples brought before him. He asked the scribes, who he knew were always vexations to his disciples, and teasing them upon every occasion, "What question ye with them?" what is the quarrel now? The scribes made no answer, for they were confounded at his presence; the disciples made none, for they were comforted, and now left all to him. But the father of the child opened the cause, ver. 17, 18. 1. His child is possessed with "a dumb spirit." He has the falling sickness, and in his fits is speechless; his case is very sad, for wheresoever the fit takes him, the spirit tears him, throws him into such violent convulsions as almost pull him to pieces; and which is very grievous to himself, and frightful to those about him; "he foams" at the mouth, "and gnasheth with his teeth," as one in pain and great misery; and though the fits go off presently, yet they leave him so weak that he "pines away," is worn to a skeleton, his flesh is dried away, so the word signifies, *Ps. cii. 3-5*; this was a constant affliction to a tender father. 2. The disciples cannot give him any relief: "I desired they would cast him out, as they had done many, and they would willingly have done it, but they could not; and therefore thou couldst never have come in better time; Master, I have brought him to thee."

III. The rebuke he gave to them to all, ver. 19: "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" Dr. Hammond understands this as spoken to the disciples, reproving them for not exerting the power he had given them, and because they did not fast and pray, as in some cases he had directed them to do. But Dr. Whitty takes it as a rebuke to the scribes, who gloried in this balk that the disciples met with, and hoped to run them down with it. Them he calls a "faithless generation," and speaks as one weary of being with them, and of bearing with them. We never hear him complaining, How long shall I be in this low condition, and suffer that? but, How long shall I be among these faithless people, and suffer them?

IV. The deplorable condition that the child was actually in when he was brought to Christ, and the doleful representation which the father made of it. When the child saw Christ, he fell into a fit, "straightway the spirit tare him," "boiled within him, troubled him," so Dr. Hammond; as if the devil would set Christ at defiance, and hoped to be too hard for him too, and to keep possession in spite of him. The child "fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming;" we may put another construction upon it, that the devil raged and had so much the greater wrath, because he knew that his time was short, *Rev. xii. 12*. Christ asked, "How long is it since this came to him?" and it seems the disease was of long standing; it came to him "of a child," ver. 21; which made the case the more sad, and the cure the more difficult. We are all by nature children of disobedience, and in such the evil spirit works, and has done so from our childhood, for "foolishness is bound in the heart of a child," and nothing but the mighty grace of Christ can cast it out.

V. The pressing instances which the father of the child makes with Christ for a cure, ver. 22: "Oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him." Note, The devil aims at the ruin of those in whom he rules and works, and seeks "whom he may devour." But if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." The leper was confident of Christ's

are told they will be despised by their own people. We prefer the opinion of Heinsius, that "as it is written of him" is an allusion to John's coming as the Elias of prophecy: "Elias is come, as it is written of him."

ix. 14, 15. The picture of the occupations of the multitude is peculiar to Mark. The scribes were conspicuous amid the crowd discussing with the disciples. The appearance of Jesus filled the people with surprise, not unaccompanied by reverence, as their

running to greet him indicates. "The Lord's countenance probably retained traces of the glory on the mount," says Alford, in his English notes to this passage. Lange says, "Jesus finds his nine other disciples at the foot of the mountain, not only surrounded by a multitude of people, but involved in controversy with the scribes, who have surprised them in a condition of entire impotence. The people are amazed, or are very much excited, when they see Jesus coming. They were probably in a profane and mocking state of

power, but put an if upon his will, *Mat. viii. 2*, "If thou wilt, thou canst." This poor man referred himself to his good will, but put an if upon his power because his disciples, who cast out devils in his name, had been nonplussed in this case. Thus Christ suffers in his honour by the difficulties and follies of his disciples.

VI. The answer Christ gave to his address, *ver. 23*: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Here, 1. He tacitly checks the weakness of his faith. He put it upon Christ's power, "If thou canst do any thing," and reflected on the want of power in the disciples; but Christ turns it upon him, and puts him upon questioning his own faith, and will have him impute the disappointment to the want of that; "If thou canst believe." 2. He graciously encourageth the strength of his desire; "all things are possible;" that is, will appear possible to him that believes the almighty power of God, to which all things are possible; or, that shall be done by the grace of God, for them that believe in the promise of God, which seemed utterly impossible. Note, In dealing with Christ, very much is put upon our believing, and very much promised to it; "Canst thou believe?" that is, Darest thou believe? Art thou willing to venture thy all in the hands of Christ? To venture all thy spiritual concerns with him, and all thy temporal concerns for him? Canst thou find in thy heart to do this? If so, it is not impossible but that, though thou hast been a great sinner, thou mayest be reconciled; though thou art very mean and unworthy, thou mayest get to heaven. "If thou canst believe," it is possible that thy hard heart may be softened, thy spiritual diseases may be cured, and that, weak as thou art, thou mayest be able to hold out to the end.

VII. The profession of faith which the poor man made hereupon, *ver. 24*: he cried out, "Lord, I believe;" I am fully persuaded both of thy power and of thy pity, it shall never stick at that; "Lord, I believe;" and adds a prayer for grace to enable him more firmly to rely upon the assurances he had of the ability and willingness of Christ to save. "Help thou mine unbelief." Note, 1. Even those who through grace can say, "Lord, I believe," yet have reason to complain of their unbelief, that they cannot so readily apply to themselves and their own case the word of Christ as they should, nor so cheerfully depend upon it. 2. Those that complain of unbelief, must look up to Christ for grace to help them against it, and his grace shall be sufficient for them. "Help mine unbelief," help me to a pardon for it, help me with power against it; help out what is wanting in my faith with thy grace, the strength of which is perfected in our weakness.

VIII. The cure of the child, and the conquest of this raging devil in the child. Christ "saw the people come running together," expecting to see the issue of this trial of skill, and therefore kept them in suspense no longer, but "rebuked the foul spirit," the unclean spirit, so it should be rendered, as in other places. Observe, 1. What the charge was which Christ gave to this unclean spirit, "Thou deaf and dumb spirit," that maketh the poor child dumb and deaf, but shalt thyself be made to hear thy doom, and not be able to say any thing against it, "come out of him immediately, and enter no more into him," let him not only be brought out of this fit, but let his fits never return. Note, Whom Christ cures, he cures effectually. Satan may go out himself, and yet recover possession; but if Christ cast him out, he will keep him out. 2. How the unclean spirit took it; he grew yet more outrageous, he "cried and rent him sore;" gave him such a twist at parting, that he was "as one dead;" so loath was he to quit his hold, and so exasperated at the superior power of Christ; and so malicious to the child, and so vain he would have killed him. "May I said, He is dead." Thus the toss that a soul is in at the breaking of Satan's power in it, may perhaps be frightful for the present, but opens the door to lasting comfort. 3. How the child was perfectly restored; *ver. 27*, "Jesus took him by the hand," *sperans*, took fast hold of him, and strongly bore him up, and he arose and recovered, and all was well.

IX. The reason he gave to the disciples why they could not cast out this devil. They inquired of him privately why they could not, that wherein they were defective might be made up another time, and they might not be again thus publicly shamed; and he told them, *ver. 29*, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." Whatever other difference there really might be, none appears between this and other kinds, but that the unclean spirit had had possession of this poor patient from a child, and that strengthened his interest and confirmed his hold. When vicious habits are rooted by long usage, and begin to plead prescription, like chomical diseases, they are hardly cured: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin?" The disciples must not think to do their work always with a like ease; some services call them to take more than ordinary pains; but Christ can do that with a word's speaking which they must prevail for the doing of by prayer and fasting.

30 And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. 31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. 32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him. 33 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? 34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who *should be* the greatest. 35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all. 36 And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, 37 Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever

shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me. 38 And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us. 39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. 40 For he that is not against us is on our part.

Here, First, Christ foretels his own approaching sufferings. He "passed through Galilee" with more expedition than usual, "and would not that any man should know it," *ver. 30*; because he had done many mighty and good works among them in vain, they shall not be invited to see them, and have the benefit of them, as they have been. The time of his sufferings drew nigh, and therefore he was willing to be private a while, and to converse only with his disciples, to prepare them for the approaching trial, *ver. 31*. He said to them, "The Son of man is delivered," by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, "into the hands of men," *ver. 31*, "and they shall kill him." Had he been delivered into the hands of devils, and they had worried him, it had not been so strange; but that men, who have reason, and should have love, that they should be thus spiteful to the Son of man, who came to redeem and save them, is unaccountable. But still it is observable, that when Christ spoke of his death, he always spoke of his resurrection, which took away the reproach of it from himself, and should take away the grief of it from his disciples. But they "understood not that saying," *ver. 32*. The words were plain enough, but they could not be reconciled to the thing, and therefore would suppose them to have some mystical meaning, which they did not understand; and they "were afraid to ask him," not because he was difficult of access, or stern to those who consulted him, but either because they were loath to know the truth, or because they expected to be chidden for their backwardness to receive it. Many remain ignorant because they are ashamed to inquire.

Secondly, He rebukes his disciples for magnifying themselves. When he came to Capernaum, he privately asked his disciples what it was that they disputed among themselves by the way, *ver. 33*. He knew very well what the dispute was, but he would know it from them, and would have them to confess their fault and folly in it. Note, 1. We must all expect to be called to an account by our Lord Jesus concerning what passeth while we are in the way in this state of passage and probation. 2. We must in a particular manner be called to an account about our discourses among ourselves, for by our words we must be justified or condemned. 3. As other our discourses among ourselves by the way, so especially our disputes, will be all called over again, and we shall be called to an account about them. 4. Of all disputes, Christ will be sure to reckon with his disciples for their disputes about precedency and superiority; that was the subject of the debate here, "who should be the greatest," *ver. 34*. Nothing could be more contrary to the two great laws of Christ's kingdom, lessons of his school, and instructions of his example, which are humility and love, than desiring preferment in the world, and disputing about it. This ill temper he took all occasions to check, both because it arose from a mistaken notion of his kingdom, as if it were of this world, and because it tended so directly to the debasing of the honour and the corrupting of the purity of his Gospel, and, he foresaw, would be so much the bane of the church. Now,

1st. "They were willing to cover this fault," *ver. 34*; "they held their peace." As they would not ask, *ver. 32*, because they were ashamed to own their ignorance, so here they would not answer, because they were ashamed to own their pride. 2nd. He was willing to amend this fault in them, and to bring them to a better temper; and therefore sat down, that he might have a solemn and full discourse with them about this matter. He called the twelve to him, and told them, *First*. That ambition, and affectation of dignity and dominion, instead of gaining them preferment in his kingdom, would but postpone their preferment: "If any man desire" and aim "to be first, he shall be last;" he that exalteth himself shall be abased, and men's pride shall bring them low. *Secondly*. That there is no preferment to be had under him, but an opportunity for, and an obligation to, so much the more labour and condescension. "If any man desire to be first," when he is so, he must be so much the more busy and serviceable to every body: "He that desires the office of a bishop desires a good work," for he must, as St. Paul did, labour the more abundantly, and make himself "the servant of all." *Thirdly*. That those who are most humble and self-denying do most resemble Christ, and shall be most tenderly owned by him. This he taught them by a sign: he "took a child in his arms," that had nothing of pride and ambition in it, "Look you," saith he, "whosoever shall receive one like this child, receiveth me. Those of a humble, meek, mild disposition, are such as I will own and countenance, and encourage every body else to do so too, and will take what is done to them as done to myself; and so will my Father too, for he who thus receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me; and it shall be placed to his account, and repaid with interest."

Thirdly, He rebukes them for vilifying all but themselves; while they are striving which of them should be greatest, they will not allow those who are not in communion with them to be any thing. Observe,

1. The account which John gave him of the restraint they had laid upon one from making use of the name of Christ, because he was not of their society. Though they were ashamed to own their contests for preferment, they seem to boast of this exercise of their authority, and expected their Master should not only justify them in it, but commend them for it; and hoped he would not blame them for desiring to be great, when they would thus use their power for the maintaining of the honour of the sacred college. "Master," saith John, "we saw one casting out devils in thy name, but he followeth not us," *ver. 38*. 1st. It was strange that one that was not a professed disciple and follower of Christ should yet have power to cast out devils in his name, for that seemed to be peculiar to those whom he called, *ch. vi. 7*. But some think that he was a disciple of John, who made use of the name of the Messiah, not as come, but as near at hand, not knowing that Jesus was he. It should rather seem he made use of the name of Jesus, believing him to be the Christ, as the other apostles did. And why might not he receive that power from Christ, whose Spirit, like the wind, blows where it listeth, without such an outward call as the apostles had? and perhaps there were many more such. Christ's grace is not tied to the visible church. 2nd. It was strange that one who cast out devils in the name of Christ did not join himself to the apostles, and follow Christ with them, but should continue to act in separation from them. I know of nothing that could hinder him from following them, unless because he was loath to leave all to follow them; and if so, that was an ill principle. The thing did not look

mind, in consequence of the disciples' failure to work the miracle, and of the attack of the scribes, and were disposed to indulge this inclination, when the sudden and overpowering appearance of Christ smote their consciences." Lange favours the idea above quoted from Alford.

ix. 16. Instead of "the scribes," the best critics adopt the reading "them;" "he asked them." Hence has arisen the question, whom did Jesus ask? Four answers are given: 1, the scribes; 2, the

disciples; 3, the scribes and disciples; 4, the people. We prefer the sense conveyed by the common reading, not only as in harmony with the context, especially verse 14, but as conveyed by very ancient copies and versions.

ix. 22, 23. In the second of these verses the words "if thou canst" are separated from what follows by omitting the word "believe." According to this reading, which some modern editors follow, our Lord says, "If thou canst? all things are possible to him

well, and therefore the disciples forbade him to make use of Christ's name as they did, unless he would follow him as they did. This was like the motion Joshua made concerning Eldad and Medad, that prophesied in the camp, and went not up with the rest to the door of the tabernacle, "My lord Moses, forbid them." Num. xi. 28; "restrain them, silence them, for it is a schism." Thus apt are we to imagine that those do not follow Christ at all, that do not follow him with us, and that those do nothing well, who do not just as we do. "But the Lord knoweth them that are his," however they are dispersed; and this instance gives us a needful caution to take heed lest we be carried by an excess of zeal for the unity of the church, and for that which we are sure is right and good, to oppose that which yet may tend to the enlargement of the church, and the advancement of its true interests another way.

2. The rebuke he gave to them for this, ver. 39: "Jesus said, Forbid him not" nor any other that do likewise. This was like the check Moses gave to Joshua, "Enviest thou for my sake?" Note, That which is good, and doth good, must not be prohibited, though there may be some defect or irregularity in the manner of doing it. Casting out devils, and so destroying Satan's kingdom, doing this in Christ's name, and so owning him to be sent of God, and giving honour to him as the Fountain of grace, preaching down sin, and preaching up Christ, are good things, very good things, which ought not to be forbidden to any, merely because they follow not with us. If Christ be preached, Paul therein doth and will rejoice, though he be eclipsed by it, *Phil. i. 18*.

Two reasons Christ gives why such should not be forbidden: 1st. Because we cannot suppose that any man that makes use of Christ's name in working miracles should blaspheme his name, as the scribes and Pharisees did. There were those indeed that did in Christ's name cast out devils, and yet in other respects were workers of iniquity, but they did not speak evil of Christ. 2nd. Because those that differed in communion, while they agreed to fight against Satan, under the banner of Christ, ought to look upon one another as on the same side, notwithstanding that difference; "he that is not against us, is on our part." As to the great controversy between Christ and Beelzebub, he had said, "He that is not with me, is against me," *Mat. xii. 30*. He that will not own Christ, owns Satan; but among those that own Christ, though not in the same circumstances, that follow him, though not with us, we must reckon that, though these differ from us, they are not against us, and therefore are on our part, and we must not be any hindrance to their usefulness.

41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. 42 And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. 43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. 50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Here, First, Christ promiseth a reward to all those that are any way kind to his disciples, ver. 41: "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water," when you need it, and it will be a refreshment to you, "because ye belong to Christ," and are of his family, "he shall not lose his reward." Note, 1. It is the honour and happiness of Christians that they "belong to Christ;" they have joined themselves to him, and are owned by him; they wear his livery, as retainers to his family; nay, they are more nearly related, they are members of his body. 2. They who belong to Christ may sometimes be reduced to such straits as to be glad of "a cup of cold water." 3. The relieving of Christ's poor in their distresses is a good deed, and will turn to a good account. He accepts it, and will reward it. 4. What kindness is done to Christ's poor must be done them for his sake, and because they belong to him; for that is it that sanctifies the kindness, and puts a value upon it in the sight of God. 5. This is a reason why we must not discountenance and discourage those who are serving the interests of Christ's kingdom, though they are not in every thing of our mind and way. It comes in here as a reason why those must not be hindered that cast out devils in Christ's name, though they did not follow him; for (as Dr. Hammond paraphraseth it) "it is not only the great, eminent performances which are done by you, my constant attendants and disciples, that are accepted by me, but every the least degree of sincere faith and Christian performance, proportionable but to the expressing the least kindness, as giving a cup of

water to a disciple of mine, for being such, shall be accepted and rewarded. If Christ reckons kindnesses to us services to him, we ought to reckon services to him kindnesses to us, and to encourage them, though done by those that follow not with us.

Secondly, He threatens those that offend his little ones, that wilfully are the occasion of sin or trouble to them, ver. 42; whosoever shall grieve any true Christians, though they be of the weakest, shall oppose their entrance into the ways of God, or discourage and obstruct their progress in those ways, shall either restrain them from doing good, or draw them in to commit sin, it were "better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea:" his punishment will be very great, and the death and ruin of his soul more terrible than such a death and ruin of his body would be: see *Mat. xviii. 6*.

Thirdly, He warns all his followers to take heed of ruining their own souls. This charity must begin at home; if we must take heed of doing any thing to hinder others from good, and to occasion their sin, much more careful must we be to avoid every thing that will take us off from our duty, or lead us to sin; and that which doth so, we must part with it, though it be never so dear to us. This we had twice in *Mat. v. 29, 30*; *xviii. 8, 9*. It is here urged somewhat more largely and pressingly; certainly this requires our serious regard, which is so much insisted upon. Observe,

1. The case supposed, that our own hand, or eye, or foot, offends us; that the impure corruption we indulge is as dear to us as an eye or a hand; or, that that which is to us as an eye or a hand is become an invincible temptation to sin, or occasion of it. Suppose the beloved is become a sin, or the sin a beloved; suppose we cannot keep that which is dear to us, but it will be a snare and a stumblingblock; suppose we must part with it, or part with Christ and a good conscience.

2. The duty prescribed in that case: pluck out the eye, cut off the hand and foot; mortify the darling lust, kill it, crucify it, starve it, make no provision for it. Let the idols, that have been delectable things, be cast away as delectable things; keep at a distance from that which is a temptation, though never so pleasing. It is necessary the part that is gangrened should be taken off, for the preservation of the whole: *Immedicabile vulnus ense recidendum est, ne pars sincera trahatur*.—"The part that is incurably wounded must be cut off, lest the parts that are sound be corrupted." We must put ourselves to pain, that we may not bring ourselves to ruin; self must be denied, that it may not be destroyed.

3. The necessity of doing this. The flesh must be mortified, that we may "enter into life," ver. 43, 45; into the kingdom of God, ver. 47. Though by abandoning sin we may for the present feel ourselves as if we were halt and maimed, it may seem to be a force put upon ourselves, and may create us some uneasiness, yet it is for life, and all that men have they will give for their lives; it is for a kingdom—the kingdom of God—which we cannot otherwise obtain: these halts and maims will be the marks of the Lord Jesus, will be in that kingdom scars of honour.

4. The danger of not doing this. The matter is brought to this issue, that either sin must die or we must die; if we will lay this Delilah in our bosom, it will betray us; if we be ruled by sin, we shall inevitably be ruined by it; if we must keep our two hands, and two eyes, and two feet, we must with them be cast into hell. Our Saviour often pressed our duty upon us, from the consideration of the torments of hell, which we run ourselves into if we continue in sin. With what an emphasis of terror are those words repeated three times here, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!" which is quoted from *Isa. lxvi. 24*. 1st. The reflections and reproaches of the sinner's own conscience are the worm that dieth not; which will cleave to the damned soul, as the worms do to the dead body, and prey upon it, and never leave it till it is quite devoured. "Son, remember," will set this worm a gnawing, and how terribly will it bite with that word, *Pr. v. 12, 13*, "How have I hated instruction!" The soul that is food to this worm dies not, and the worm is bred in it, and one with it, and therefore neither doth that die. Damned sinners will be to eternity accusing, condemning, and upbraiding themselves with their own follies, which, how much soever they are now in love with them, will "at the last bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder." 2nd. The wrath of God, fastening upon a guilty and polluted conscience, is the fire that is not quenched; for it is the wrath of the living God, the eternal God, into whose hands it is a fearful thing to fall. There are no operations of the Spirit of grace upon the souls of damned sinners, and therefore there is nothing to alter the nature of the fuel, which must remain for ever combustible: nor is there any application of the merit of Christ to them, and therefore there is nothing to appease or quench the violence of the fire. Dr. Whitby shews that the eternity of the torments of hell was not only the constant faith of the Christian church, but had been so of the Jewish church. Josephus saith, "that the Pharisees held that the souls of the wicked were to be punished with perpetual punishment, and that there was appointed for them a perpetual prison." And Philo saith, "the punishment of the wicked is to live for ever dying, and to be for ever in pains and griefs that never cease."

The two last verses are somewhat difficult, and interpreters agree not in the sense of them; "for every one" in general, or rather every one of them that are cast into hell, "shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." Therefore "have salt in yourselves." 1. It was appointed by the law of Moses that every sacrifice should be salted with salt; not to preserve it, for it was to be immediately consumed, but because it was the food of God's table, and no flesh is eaten without salt; it was therefore particularly required in the meat offerings, *Lev. ii. 12*. 2. The nature of man being corrupt, and, as such, being called flesh, *Gen. vi. 3*, *Ps. lxxviii. 39*, some way or other must be salted, in order to its being a sacrifice to God. The salting of fish (and, I think, of other things), they call the curing of it. 3. Our chief concern is to present ourselves living sacrifices to the grace of God, *Rom. xii. 1*; and in order to our acceptableness, we must be salted with salt, that is, our corrupt affections must be subdued and mortified, and we must have in our souls a savour of grace. Thus "the offering up," or sacrificing of the Gentiles, is said to be "acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost," as the sacrifices were salted, *Rom. xv. 16*. 4. Those that have the salt of grace must make it appear that they have it; that they have salt in themselves, a living principle of grace in their hearts, which works out all corrupt dispositions, and every thing in the soul that tends to putrefaction, and would offend our God or our own consciences, as unsavoury meat doth. Our speech must be always with grace, seasoned with this salt, that no corrupt communication may proceed out of our mouth, but we may loathe it as much as we would to put stinking meat into our mouths. 5. As this gracious salt will keep our own consciences void of offence, so it will keep our conversation with others so, that we may not offend any of Christ's little ones, but may be at peace with one another. 6. We must not only have this salt of grace, but we must always retain the relish and savour of it; for if this "salt lose its saltiness," if a Christian revolt from his Christianity, if he lose the savour of it, and be no longer under the power and influence of it, what can recover him? or "wherewith will ye season him?" This was said *Mat. v. 13*. 7. Those that present not themselves living sacrifices to God's

that believes." The received text is very ancient, being found in the Alexandrian and Cambridge MSS., the Syriac, &c., and should not be lightly abandoned. Upon the words "all things are possible to him that believeth," a weighty question rises: do they mean he who believes can do all things, or that everything can be done for him who believes? The latter view is advanced by Grotius, and maintained by later critics, and is that which we should prefer.

ix. 24. The words "with tears" are left out of some copies and

editions. The word "Lord" is also omitted by several MSS. and editors. There is some difference of opinion as to the sense of the expression, "help thou mine unbelief." The Syriac renders it, "help thou my lack of faith." Some explain it, "free me from my unbelief;" others, "what my faith lacks, by thy goodness supply;" but it may also mean, "help me who have been an unbeliever." Something may be said for each view; but if the last is adopted, the idiom is a Hebraism, of which it is said there is an important example

grace, shall be made for ever dying sacrifices to his justice; and since they would not give honour to him, he will get him honour upon them; they would not be salted with the salt of Divine grace, would not admit that to subdue their corrupt affections; no, they would not submit to the operation, could not bear the corrosives that were necessary to eat out the proud flesh; it was to them like cutting off a hand, or plucking out an eye, and therefore in hell they shall be "salted with fire;" coals of fire shall be scattered upon them, *Eze. x. 2*, as salt upon the meat; and brimstone, *Job xviii. 15*, as fire and brimstone were rained on Sodom. The pleasures they have lived in "shall eat their flesh, as it were fire," *Jas. v. 3*. The pain of mortifying the flesh now, is no more to be compared with the punishment for not mortifying it, than salting with burning. And since he had said that the fire of hell shall not be quenched, but it might be objected that the fuel will not last always, he here intimates, that by the power of God it shall be made to last always; for those that are cast into hell will find the fire to have not only the corroding quality of salt, but its preserving quality; from whence it is used to signify that which is lasting: a covenant of salt is a perpetual covenant; and Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt made her a remaining monument of Divine vengeance. Now since this will certainly be the doom of those that do not crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, let us, knowing this terror of the Lord, be persuaded to do it.

CHAPTER X.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's dispute with the Pharisees concerning divorce, ver. 1-12. II. The kind entertainment he gave to the little children that were brought to him to be blessed, ver. 13-16. III. His trial of the rich man that inquired what he must do to get to heaven, ver. 17-22. IV. His discourse with his disciples upon that occasion, concerning the peril of riches, ver. 23-27; and the advantage of being impoverished for his sake, ver. 28-31. V. The repeated notice he gave his disciples of his sufferings and death approaching, ver. 32-34. VI. The counsel he gave to James and John, to think of suffering with him, rather than of reigning with him, ver. 35-45. VII. The cure of Bartimæus, a poor blind man, ver. 46-52. All which passages of story we had the substance of before, *Mat. xix.* and *xx.*



AND he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judæa by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again. 2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him. 3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away. 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*. 11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Our Lord Jesus was an itinerant preacher; did not continue long in a place, for the whole land of Canaan was his parish or diocese, and therefore he would visit every part of it, and give instruction to those in the remotest corners of it. Here we have him in the coasts of Judæa, by the farther side of Jordan eastward, as we found him not long since, in the utmost borders westward, near Tyre and Sidon. Thus was his circuit like that of the sun, from whose light and heat nothing is hid. Now we have him,

First. Resorted to by the people, ver. 1; wherever he was, they flocked after him in crowds; they came to him again, as they had done when he had formerly been in these parts, "and, as he was wont, he taught them again." Note, Preaching was Christ's constant practice; it was what he was used to, and wherever he came, he did "as he was wont." In *Matth. vi* it is said, he healed them; here it is said, "he taught them;" his cures were to confirm his doctrine, and to recommend it; and his doctrine was to explain his cures, and illustrate them; his teaching was healing to poor souls. "He taught them again." Note, Even those whom Christ hath taught, have need to be taught again. Such is the fulness of the Christian doctrine, that there is still more to be learned; and such our forgetfulness, that we need to be minded of what we do know.

Secondly. We have him disputed with by the Pharisees, who envied the pro-

gress of his spiritual arms, and did all they could to obstruct and oppose it to divert him, to perplex him, and to prejudice the people against him. Here is

1. A question they started concerning divorce; ver. 2, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" This was a good question, if it had been well put, and with a humble desire to know the mind of God in this matter; but they proposed it "tempting him," seeking an occasion against him, and an opportunity to expose him, which side soever he should take of the question. Ministers must stand upon their guard, lest, under pretence of being advised with, they be ensnared.

2. Christ's reply to them with a question, ver. 3, "What did Moses command you?" This he asked them, to testify his respect to the law of Moses, and to shew that he came not to destroy it, and to engage them to an universal impartial respect for Moses' writings, and to compare one part of them with another.

3. The fair account they give of what they found in the law of Moses expressly concerning divorce, ver. 4. Christ asked what Moses commanded; they own Moses only suffered or permitted a man to write his wife a bill of divorce, and to put her away, *Deu. xxiv. 1*. If you will do it, you must do it in writing, delivered into her own hand, and so put her away, and never return to her again.

4. The answer that Christ gave to their question, in which he abides by the doctrine he had formerly laid down in this case, *Mat. v. 32*, "that whosoever puts away his wife, except for fornication, causeth her to commit adultery." And to clear this, he here shews, 1st. That the reason why Moses in his law permitted divorce, was such as that they ought not to make use of that permission; for it was only "for the hardness of their hearts," ver. 5; lest, if they were not permitted to divorce their wives, they should murder them; so that none must put away their wives, but such as were willing to own that their hearts were so hard as to need this permission. 2nd. That the account which Moses in this history gives of the institution of marriage, affords such a reason against divorce as amounts to a prohibition of it. So that if the question be, "What did Moses command?" ver. 3, it must be answered, Though by a temporary proviso he allowed divorce to the Jews, yet by an eternal reason he forbade it to all the children of Adam and Eve, and that is it we must abide by. Moses tells us, *First*. That God made man male and female, one male and one female; so that Adam could not put away his wife and take another, for there was no other to take, which was an intimation to all his sons that they must not. *Secondly*. When this male and this female were by the ordinance of God joined together in holy marriage, the law was, that a man must "leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife," ver. 7, which intimates not only the nearness of the relation, but the perpetuity of it: he shall so cleave to his wife as not to be separated from her. *Thirdly*. The result of the relation is, that though they are two, yet they are one; they are one flesh, ver. 8. The union between them is the most intimate that can be; and, as Dr. Hammond expresseth it, a sacred thing that must not be violated. *Fourthly*. God himself has joined them together; he has not only, as Creator, fitted them to be comforts and helps meet for each other, but he has in wisdom and goodness appointed them who are thus joined together to live together in love, till death parts them. Marriage is not an invention of men, but a Divine institution; and therefore is to be religiously observed, and the more, because it is a figure of the mystical, inseparable union between Christ and his church. Now, from all this he infers that men ought not to put their wives asunder from them, whom God has put so near to them. The bond which God himself has tied is not to be lightly untied. They who are for divorcing their wives for every offence, would do well to consider what would become of them, if God should in like manner deal with them: see *Isa. l. 1*; *Jer. iii. 1*.

5. Christ's discourse with his disciples in private about this matter, ver. 10, 11. It was an advantage to them that they had opportunity of personal converse with Christ, not only about gospel mysteries, but about moral duties, for their farther satisfaction. No more is here related of this private conference, but the law Christ laid down in this case: that it is adultery for a man to put away his wife, and marry another; it is adultery against the wife he puts away; it is a wrong to her, and a breach of his contract with her, ver. 11. He adds, "if a woman shall put away her husband," that is, elope from him, leave him by consent, and "be married to another," she "commits adultery," ver. 12; and it will be no excuse at all to her to say, that it was with the consent of her husband. Wisdom and grace, holiness and love reigning in the heart, will make those commands easy which to the carnal mind may be as a heavy yoke.

13 And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and *his* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*. 14 But when Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. 15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. 16 And he took them up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them.

It is looked upon as the indication of a kind and tender disposition to take notice of little children; and this was remarkable in our Lord Jesus, which is an encouragement not only to little children to apply themselves to Christ when they are very young, but to grown people, who are conscious to themselves of weakness and childishness, and of being, through manifold infirmities, helpless and useless, like little children. Here we have,

First. Little children brought to Christ, ver. 13. Their parents, or whoever they were that had the nursing of them, brought them to him that he should touch them, in token of his commanding and conferring a blessing on them. It doth not appear they needed any bodily cure, nor were they capable of being taught; but it seems, 1. They that had the care of them were mostly concerned about their souls, their better part, which ought to be the principal care of all parents for their children; for that is the principal part, and it is well with them if it be well with their souls. 2. They believed that Christ's blessing would do their souls good, and therefore to him they bring them, that he might touch them, knowing that he could reach their hearts, when nothing their parents could say to them, or do for them, would reach them. We may present our children to Christ now he is in heaven, for from thence he can reach them with his blessing, and therein we may act faith upon the fulness and extent of

in *Luke i. 48*, where "the low estate of his handmaiden" is explained by some, "his lowly handmaiden."

ix. 31. For "the third day" some early MSS. and modern editors have "after three days," or "within three days."

ix. 33. For "and he came," some of the oldest MSS., &c., have "and they came," which is the sense of the parallel passage in *Matt. xvii. 24*.

ix. 35. This verse does not occur in the corresponding places of

Matthew and Luke. It shows that the whole of the twelve were present.

ix. 41. For "in my name, because ye belong to Christ," some good MSS. and editors have a reading which means "by reason that ye are Christ's."

ix. 44. This verse is omitted by the Sinaitic, the Vatican, and some other copies; but the Syriac version and other early authorities have it.

his grace, the kind intimations he hath always given of favour to the seed of the faithful, the tenor of the covenant with Abraham, and the promise to us and to our children, especially that great promise of pouring his Spirit upon our seed, and his blessing upon our offspring, *Isa. xlv. 3.*

Secondly. The discouragement which the disciples gave to the bringing of children to Christ. They "rebuked those that brought them;" as if they had been sure they knew their Master's mind in this matter, whereas he had lately cautioned them not to despise the little ones.

Thirdly. The encouragement Christ gave to it. 1. He took it very ill at his disciples for keeping them off: "when he saw it, he was much displeased," *ver. 14.* "What do you mean? Will you hinder me from doing good, from doing good to the rising generation, to the lambs of the flock?" Christ is very angry with his own disciples, if they discountenance any in coming to him themselves, or in bringing their children to him. 2. He ordered that they should be brought to him, and nothing said or done to hinder them. "Suffer little children, as soon as they are capable, to come to me, to offer up their supplications to me, and to receive instructions from me." Little children are welcome betimes to the throne of grace with their hosannas. 3. He owned them as members of his church, as they had been of the Jewish church. He came to set up the kingdom of God among men, and took this occasion to declare, that that kingdom admitted little children to be the subjects of it, and gave them a title to the privilege of subjects. Nay, the kingdom of God is to be kept up by such: they must be taken in, when they are little children, that they may be secured for hereafter to bear up the name of Christ. 4. That there must be something of the temper and disposition of little children found in all that Christ will own and bless. We must receive the kingdom of God as little children, *ver. 15*; that is, we must stand affected to Christ and his grace, as little children do to their parents, nurses, and teachers. We must be inquisitive as children, must learn as children; that is the learning age; and "in learning must believe," *oportet discitum credere.* The mind of a child is as white paper, *tabula rasa*,—"a mere blank;" you may write upon it what you will; so must our minds be to the pen of the blessed Spirit. Children are under government, so must we be: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" We must receive the kingdom of God as the child Samuel did, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears." Little children depend upon their parents' wisdom and care, are carried in their arms, go where they send them, and take what they provide for them; and thus must we receive the kingdom of God, with a humble resignation of ourselves to Jesus Christ, and an easy dependence upon him, both for strength and righteousness, for tuition, provision, and a portion. 5. He received the children, and gave them what was desired: *ver. 16.* "He took them up in his arms," in token of his affectionate concern for them, "put his hands upon them," as was desired, "and blessed them." See how he outdid the desires of these parents; they begged he would touch them, but he did more.

1st. "He took them in his arms." Now the Scripture was fulfilled, *Isa. xl. 11.* "He shall gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom." Time was when Christ himself was taken up in old Simeon's arms, *Lu. ii. 28*; and now he took up these children, not complaining of the burthen, as Moses did, when he was bid to carry Israel (that peevish child) "in his bosom, as a nursing father bears the sucking child," *Num. xi. 12*, but pleased with it. If we in a right manner bring our children to Christ, he will take them up, not only in the arms of his power and providence, but in the arms of his pity and grace, as *Eze. xvi. 8*; underneath them are the everlasting arms. 2nd. He "put his hands upon them," noting the bestowing of his Spirit upon them, (for that is the hand of the Lord), and his setting them apart for himself. 3rd. He "blessed them" with the spiritual blessings he came to give. Our children are happy, if they have but the Mediator's blessing for their portion. It is true, we do not read that he baptized these children,—baptism was not fully settled as the door of admission into the church till after Christ's resurrection,—but he asserted their visible church membership, and by another sign bestowed those blessings upon them which are now appointed to be conveyed and conferred by baptism, the seal of the promise which is to us and our children.

17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. 19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. 20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. 21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. 22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. 23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than

for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? 27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible. 28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. 29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, 30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. 31 But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

Here is, I. A hopeful meeting between Christ and a young man, so he is said to be, *Mat. xix. 20, 22*, and a ruler, *Lu. xviii. 18*, a person of quality. Some circumstances here are which we had not in *Matthew*, which make his address to Christ very promising.

1. He came running to Christ, which was an indication of his humility; he laid aside the gravity and grandeur of a ruler when he came to Christ: and of his earnestness and importunity; he ran as one in haste, and longing to be in conversation with Christ. He had now an opportunity of consulting this great Prophet in the things that belonged to his peace, and he would not let slip the opportunity.

2. He came to him when he was in the way, in the midst of company; he did not insist upon a private conference with him by night, as Nicodemus did, though like him he was a ruler; but when he shall find him without, will embrace that opportunity of advising with him, and not be ashamed, *Cant. viii. 1.*

3. He kneeled to him, in token of the great value and veneration he had for him, as a teacher come from God, and his earnest desire to be taught by him. He bowed the knee to the Lord Jesus, as one that would not only do obedience to him now, but would yield obedience to him always; he bowed the knee, as one that meant to bow the soul to him.

4. His address to him was serious and weighty: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Eternal life was an article of his creed, though then denied by the Sadducees, a prevailing article. He thinks it a thing possible that he may inherit eternal life; looking upon it not only as set before us, but offered to us, he asks, what he shall do now that he may be happy for ever. Most men inquire for good to be had in this world, *Ps. iv. 6*, "any good." He asks for good to be done in this world, in order to the enjoyment of the greatest good in the other world; not who will make us to see good, but to do good; he inquires for happiness in the way of duty; the *summum bonum*,—"the chief good," which Solomon was in quest of, was that "good for the sons of men which they should do," *Ecc. ii. 3.* Now this was, 1st. A very serious question in itself; it was about eternal things, and his own concern in those things. Note, Then there begins to be some hopes of people when they begin to inquire solicitously what they shall do to get to heaven. 2nd. It was proposed to a right person, one that was every way fit to answer it, being himself "the way, the truth, and the life;" the true way to life, to eternal life; who came from heaven on purpose, first to lay open for us, and then to lay open to us—first to make, and then to make known, the way to heaven. Note, Those who would know what they shall do to be saved, must apply themselves to Christ, and inquire of him. It is peculiar to the Christian religion, both to shew eternal life, and to shew the way to it. 3rd. It was proposed with a good design to be instructed. We find this same question put by a lawyer, not kneeling, but standing up, *Lu. x. 25*, with a bad design, to pick quarrels with him; he "tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do?" It is not so much the good words, as the good intention of them, that Christ looks at.

5. Christ encouraged this address, 1st. By assisting his faith, *ver. 17.* He called him, "Good Master," and Christ would have him mean thereby, that he looked upon him to be God, since there is none good but one, that is God, who is one, and his name One, *Zec. xiv. 9.* Our English word, God, doubtless hath affinity with good; as the Hebrews name God by his power, *Elohim*, "the strong God," so we by his goodness, the good God. 2nd. By directing his practice, *ver. 19*: "Keep the commandments," and thou knowest what they are; he mentions the six commandments of the second table, which prescribe our duty to our neighbour; he inverts the order, putting the seventh commandment before the sixth, to intimate that adultery is a sin no less heinous than murder itself. The fifth commandment is here put last, as that which should especially be remembered and observed, to keep us to all the rest. Instead of the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," our Saviour here puts "defraud not." *Μη ἀποστερησῃς*, that is, saith Dr. Hammond, "Thou shalt rest contented with thy own, and not seek to increase it by the diminution of other men's." It is a rule of justice, not to advance or enrich ourselves by doing wrong or injury to any other.

6. The young man bid fair for heaven, having been free from any open gross violations of the Divine commands. Thus far he was able to say, in some measure, *ver. 20*, "Master, all these have I observed from my youth." He thought he had, and his neighbours thought so too. Note, Ignorance of the extent and spiritual nature of the Divine law makes people think themselves in a better condition than really they are. Paul was alive "without the law." But when he saw that to be spiritual, he saw himself to be carnal, *Rom. vii. 9, 14.* However, he that could say he was free from scandalous sin, went farther than many in the way to eternal life. But though we know nothing by ourselves, yet are we not thereby justified.

7. Christ had a kindness for him: "Jesus beholding him, loved him," *ver. 21.* He was pleased to find that he had lived inoffensively, and pleased to see that he was inquisitive how to live better than so. Christ particularly loves to see young people, and rich people, asking the way to heaven, with their faces thitherward.

ix. 45. The words "into the fire that never shall be quenched" are not found in all the old MSS., and are omitted by the most ancient.

ix. 46. This verse is not found in the earliest copies and some recent editions, but it is found in very ancient copies and versions.

ix. 47. The word "fire" is omitted by the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., as well as by some modern editors, but it is a very ancient reading.

x. 1. For "coasts" translate "borders." There is a various reading here: "into the borders of Judea and the other side of the Jordan." Our Lord might have reached Judea by way of the other side of the Jordan, as the common text expresses it. Strictly speaking, Judea was bounded on the east by the river Jordan, but speaking conventionally the word sometimes included more or less of the neighbouring district to the east of the Jordan. As a fact, our Lord may not have entered Judea at this time, but only came "to" the

11. Here is a *sorrowful parting* between Christ and this young man.

1. Christ gave him a command of trial, by which it would appear whether he did in sincerity aim at eternal life, and press towards it. He seemed to have his heart much upon it, and if so, he is what he should be; but has he indeed his heart upon it? Bring him to the touchstone. 1st. Can he find in his heart to part with his riches for the service of Christ? He hath a good estate; and now shortly, at the first founding of the Christian church, the necessity of the case will require that those that have lands sell them, and lay the money at the apostles' feet; and how will he dispense with that? *Acts iv. 34.* After a while, tribulation and persecution will arise, because of the Word; and he must be forced to sell his estate, or have it taken from him, and how will he like that? Let him know the worst. Now, if he will not come up to these terms, let him quit his pretensions, as good at first as at last: "Sell whatsoever thou hast," over and above what is necessary for thy support; probably he had no family to provide for; let him therefore be a father to the poor, and make them his heirs. Every man according to his ability must relieve the poor, and be content, when there is occasion, to straiten himself to do it. Worldly wealth is given us not only as maintenance, to bear our charges through this world, according to our place in it, but as a talent, to be used and employed for the glory of our great Master in the world, who hath so ordered it that the poor we should always have with us, as his receivers. 2nd. Can he find in his heart to go through the hardest, costliest services he may be called to, as a disciple of Christ, and depend upon him for a recompence in heaven? He asks Christ what he shall do more than he has done to obtain eternal life; and Christ puts it to him, whether he has indeed that firm belief of, and that high value for, eternal life that he seems to have. Doth he really believe there is a treasure in heaven sufficient to make up all he can leave, or lose, or lay out for Christ? Is he willing to deal with Christ upon trust? Can he give him credit for all he is worth? and be willing to bear a present cross in expectation of a future crown?

2. Upon this he flew off, ver. 22; "he was sad at that saying;" was sorry he could not be a follower of Christ upon any easier terms than leaving all to follow him; that he could not lay hold on eternal life, and keep hold of his temporal possessions too. But since he could not come up to the terms of discipleship, he was so far as not to pretend to it, "he went away grieved." Here appeared the truth of that, *Mat. vi. 24.* "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon;" while he held to Mammon, he did in effect despise Christ, as all those do who prefer the world before him. He bids for what he has a mind of in the market, yet goes away grieved, and leaves it, because he cannot have it at his own price. Two words to a bargain. Motions are not marriages. That which ruined this young man was, "he had great possessions;" thus "the prosperity of fools destroys them;" and those who spend their days in wealth, are tempted to say to God, Depart from us, or to their hearts, Depart from God.

III. Here is *Christ's discourse with his disciples*. We are tempted to wish that Christ had mollified that saying which frightened this young gentleman from following him, and by any explanation taken off the harshness of it; but he knew all men's hearts; he would not court him to be his follower, because he was a rich man, and a ruler; but if he will go, let him go; Christ will keep no man against his will; and therefore we do not find that Christ called him back, but took this occasion to instruct his disciples in two things:

1. The difficulty of the salvation of those that have an abundance of this world; because there are few who have a deal to leave that can be persuaded to leave it for Christ, or to lay it out in doing good.

1st. Christ asserts this here. He looked about upon his disciples, because he would have them all take notice of what he said, that by it they might have their judgments rightly informed, and their mistakes rectified concerning worldly wealth, which they were apt to overrate. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God," ver. 23. They have many temptations to grapple with, and many difficulties to get over, which lie not in the way of poor people. But he explains himself, ver. 24, where he calls the disciples children, because as such they should be taught by him, and portioned by him with better things than this young man left Christ to cleave to; and whereas he had said how hardly those that have riches will get to heaven, here he tells them that the danger arose not so much from their having riches as from their trusting to them, and placing their confidence in them, expecting protection, provision, and a portion from them, saying that to their gold which they should say only to their God, "Thou art my hope," *Job xxxi. 24.* They that have such a value as this for the wealth of the world, will never be brought to put a right value upon Christ and his grace. They that have never so much riches, but do not trust in them, that see the vanity of them, and their utter insufficiency to make a soul happy, have got over the difficulty, and can easily part with them for Christ; but they that have never so little, if they set their hearts upon that little, and place their happiness in it, it will keep them from Christ. He enforceth this assertion with, ver. 25, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man" that trusts in riches, or inclines to do so, "to enter into the kingdom of God." The disproportion here seems so great (though the more so, the more it answers the intention,) that some have laboured to bring the camel and the eye of the needle a little nearer together.

1st. Some imagine there might be some wicket-gate or door at Jerusalem, commonly known by the name of the needle's eye for its straitness, through which a camel could not be got, unless he were unloaded, and made to kneel, as those camels, *Gen. xxiv. 11.* So a rich man cannot get to heaven unless he be willing to part with the burthen of his worldly wealth, and stoop to the duties of a humble religion, and so enter in "at the strait gate." 2nd. Others suggest that the word we translate a camel, sometimes signifies a cable rope; which, though not to be got through a needle's eye, yet is of greater affinity to it. A rich man, compared with the poor, is as a cable to a single thread, stronger, but not so pliable, and it will not go through the needle's eye unless it be untwisted; so the rich man must be loosed and disentangled from his riches, and then there is some hopes of him, that thread by thread he may be got through the eye of the needle; otherwise he is good for nothing but to cast anchor in the earth.

2nd. This truth was very surprising to the disciples, they were "astonished at his words," ver. 24; "they were astonished out of measure, and said among themselves, Who then can be saved?" They knew what were generally the sentiments of the Jewish teachers, that the Spirit of God chooseth to reside upon rich men; nay, they knew what abundance of promises there were in the Old Testament of temporal good things; they knew likewise that all either are rich, or fain would be so; and that they who are rich have so much the larger opportunities of doing good, and therefore were amazed to hear that it should be so hard for rich people to go to heaven.

3rd. Christ reconciled them to it, by referring it to the almighty power of God to help even rich people over the difficulties that lie in the way of their salvation; ver. 23. He "looked upon them," to engage their attention, and said, "With men it is impossible;" rich people cannot, by their own skill or resolution, get over these difficulties; but the grace of God can do it, for "with him all things are possible." "If the righteous scarcely are saved," much

more may we say so of the rich; and therefore when any get to heaven, they must give all the glory to God, who worketh in them both to will and to do.

2. The greatness of the salvation of those that have but a little of this world, and leave it for Christ. This he speaks of upon occasion of Peter's mentioning what he and the rest of the disciples had left to follow him. "Behold," saith he, "we have left all to follow thee," ver. 28. "You have done well," saith Christ, "and it will prove in the end that you have done well for yourselves; you shall be abundantly recompensed;" and not only you shall be recompensed, who have left but little, but those that have never so much, though it were so much as this young man had, that could not persuade himself to quit it for Christ, yet they shall have much more than an equivalent for it!

1st. The loss is supposed to be very great. He instanteth, *First*. In worldly wealth, houses are here put first, and lands last; if a man quit his house, which should be for his habitation, and his land, which should be for his maintenance, and so makes himself a beggar and an outcast. This has been the choice of suffering saints: Farewell houses and lands, though never so convenient and desirable, though the inheritance of fathers, though the house which is from heaven, and the inheritance of the saints in light, where are many mansions. *Secondly*. In dear relations, "Father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters;" in these, as much as in any temporal blessing, the comfort of life is bound up; without these the world would be a wilderness; yet when we must either forsake these or Christ, we must remember that we stand in nearer relation to Christ than we do to any creature; and therefore to keep in with him, we must be content to break with all the world, and say to father and mother, as Levi did, "I have not known you." The greatest trial of a good man's constancy is, when his love to Christ comes to stand in competition with a love that is lawful, nay, that is his duty. It is easy to such a one to forsake a lust for Christ, for he hath that within him that riseth against it; but to forsake a father, a brother, a wife, for Christ, whom he knows he must love, is hard. And yet he must do so, rather than deny or disown Christ. Thus great is the loss supposed to be; but it is for Christ's sake, that he may be honoured; and the Gospels, that that may be promoted and propagated. It is not the suffering, but the cause, that makes the martyr. And therefore,

2nd. The advantage will be great. *First*. "They shall receive a hundredfold in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters;" not in kind, but that which is equivalent. He shall have abundance of comfort while he lives, sufficient to make up all his losses; his relation to Christ, his communion with the saints, and his title to eternal life, shall be to him brethren, and sisters, and houses, and all. God's providence gave Job double to what he had had; but suffering Christians shall have an hundredfold, in the comforts of the Spirit sweetening their creature comforts. But observe, it is added here, in *Mark*, "with persecutions." Even when they are gainers by Christ, let them still expect to be sufferers for him, and not to be out of the reach of persecution till they come to heaven; nay, the persecutions seem to come in here among the receivings in this present time, for unto you it is given, not only to believe in Christ, but also to "suffer for his name;" yet this is not all. *Secondly*. They shall have "eternal life in the world to come." If they receive an hundredfold in this world, one would think they should not be encouraged to expect any more. Yet, as if that were a small matter, they shall have life eternal into the bargain, which is more than ten thousandfold, ten thousand times told, for all their losses. But because they talked so much, and really more than became them, of leaving all for Christ, he tells them, though they were first called, yet there should be disciples called after them that should be preferred before them; as St. Paul, who was one born out of due time, and yet laboured more abundantly than all the rest of the apostles, *1 Cor. xv. 10.* Then the first were last, and the last first.

32 And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, 33 Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: 34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again. 35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. 36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? 37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. 38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? 39 And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: 40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be

borders of it, remaining in the Peræa, as they called the region beyond the Jordan. Between this and the previous chapter some time must have elapsed, for the transactions of which the other Gospels supply materials.

x. 32. Part of this verse is peculiar to this evangelist, who, as often, introduces minute circumstantialities which seem to proceed from an eye-witness. Nothing can be more simple and natural than the forms adopted here. They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and

Jesus was at the head, taking the lead, while his companions were amazed and followed him with fear. Our Lord is said to have been going up, and the phrase is correct, whether understood of going up to the capital, according to a common idiom, or used of the literal road on which they travelled. From the Jordan and Jericho there is a constant ascent, on some part of which this narrative must be located. Note the opposite expression in the parable of the man who "went down" from Jerusalem to Jericho. Here the word

given to them for whom it is prepared. 41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. 42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. 43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: 44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. 45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Here is, First, Christ's prediction of his own sufferings; this string he harped much upon, though in the ears of his disciples it sounded very harsh and unpleasant.

1. See here how bold he was: when they were going up to "Jerusalem, Jesus went before them," as the "Captain of our salvation," that was now to be "made perfect through sufferings," ver. 32. Thus he shewed himself forward to go on with his undertaking, even when he came to the hardest part of it; now the time was at hand, he said, "Lo, I come!" so far from drawing back, that now more than ever he pressed forwards. "Jesus went before them, and they were amazed." They began now to consider what imminent danger they ran themselves into, when they went to Jerusalem; how very malicious the Sanhedrim, which sat there, was against their Master and them; and they were ready to tremble at the thought of it. To hearten them, therefore, Christ went before them: "Come," saith he, "sure you will venture where your Master ventures." Note, When we see ourselves entering upon sufferings, it is encouraging to see our Master go before us. Or, he went before them, and therefore they were amazed; they admired to see with what cheerfulness and alacrity he went on, though he knew he was going to suffer and die. Note, Christ's courage and constancy in going on with his undertaking for our salvation, is, and will be, the wonder of all his disciples.

2. See here how timorous and faint-hearted his disciples were: "As they followed they were afraid;" afraid for themselves, as being apprehensive of their own danger; and justly might they be ashamed of their being thus afraid. Their Master's courage should have put spirit into them.

3. See here, what method he took to silence their fears: he did not go about to make the matter better than it was, nor to feed them with hopes that he might escape the storm; but told them again, what he had often told them before, the things that should happen to him. He knew the worst of it, and therefore went on thus boldly; and he will let them know the worst of it. Come, be not afraid; for, 1st. There is no remedy, the matter is determined, and cannot be avoided. 2nd. It is only the Son of man that shall suffer; their time of suffering was not at hand; he will now provide for their security. 3rd. "He shall rise again;" the issue of his sufferings will be glorious to himself, and advantageous to all that are his, ver. 33, 34. The method and particulars of Christ's sufferings are more largely foretold here than in any other of the predictions; that he shall first be delivered up by Judas "to the chief priests and the scribes, that they shall condemn him to death," but not having power to put him to death, they "shall deliver him to the Gentiles," to the Roman powers, "and they shall mock him, and scourge him, and spit upon him, and kill him." Christ had a perfect foresight, not only of his own death, but of all the aggravating circumstances of it, and yet he thus went forth to meet it.

Secondly. The check he gave to two of his disciples for their ambitious request. This story is much the same here as we had it, *Mat. xx. 20*; only there they are said to have made their request by their mother, here they are said to make it themselves; she introduced them, and presented their petition, and then they seconded it, and assented to it. Note, 1. As on the one hand there are some that do not use, so on the other hand there are some that do abuse the great encouragements Christ has given us in prayer. He hath said, "Ask, and it shall be given you;" and it is a commendable faith to ask for the great things he has promised. But it was a culpable presumption in these disciples to make such a boundless demand upon their Master: "We would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire." We had much better leave it to him to do for us what he sees fit, and he will do more than we can desire, *Eph. iii. 20*. 2. We must be cautious how we make general promises. Christ would not engage to do for them whatever they desired; but would know from them what it was they did desire: "What would ye that I should do for you?" He would have them go on with their suit, that they might be made ashamed of it. 3. Many have been led into a snare by false notions of Christ's kingdom, as if it were of this world, and like the kingdoms of the potentates of this world. James and John conclude, if Christ rise

again, he must be a king; and if he be a king, his apostles must be peers; and one of these would willingly be the *primus par regni*.—the first peer of the realm; and the other next him, like Joseph in Pharaoh's court, or Daniel in Darius's. 4. Worldly honour is a glittering thing, with which the eyes of Christ's own disciples have many a time been dazzled; whereas to be good should be more our care than to look great, or to have the pre-eminence. 5. Our weakness and shortsightedness appear as much in our prayers as in any thing. We cannot order our speech when we speak to God, by reason of darkness, both concerning him and concerning ourselves. It is folly to prescribe to God, and wisdom to subscribe. 6. It is the will of Christ that we should prepare for sufferings, and leave it to him to recompense us for them. He needs not be put in mind, as Ahasuerus did, of the services of his people; nor can forget their "work of faith, and labour of love." Our care must be, that we may have wisdom and grace to know how to suffer with him, and then we may trust him to provide in the best manner how we shall reign with him, and when and where, and what the degrees of our glory shall be.

Thirdly. The check he gave to the rest of the disciples, for their uneasiness at it; "they began to be much displeased," to have indignation about James and John, ver. 41. They were angry at them for affecting precedence; not because it did so ill become the disciples of Christ, but because each of them hoped to have it themselves. When the Cynic trampled on Alexander's foot-cloth, with, *Calco fastum Alexandri*.—Now I tread on Alexander's pride, he was seasonably checked with, *Sed majori fastu*.—But with greater pride of thine own; so these discovered their own ambition, in their displeasure at the ambition of James and John; and Christ took this occasion to warn them against it, and all their successors in the ministry of the Gospel, ver. 42, 43. He "called them to him," in a familiar way, to give them an example of condescension, then, when he was reproving their ambition, and to teach them never to bid their disciples keep their distance. He shews them,

1. That dominion was generally abused in the world, ver. 42: "They which seem to rule over the Gentiles," that have the name and title of rulers, "they exercise lordship over them," that is all they study and aim at; not so much to protect them, and provide for their welfare, as to "exercise authority upon them;" they will be obeyed, aim to be arbitrary, and to have their will in every thing: *Sic volo; sic jubeo; stat pro ratione voluntas*.—Thus I will; thus I command; my good pleasure is my law.' Their care is what they shall get by their subjects, to support their own pomp and grandeur, not what they shall do for them.

2. That therefore it ought not to be admitted into the church; "it shall not be so among you;" those that shall be put under your charge must be as sheep under the charge of the shepherd, who is to tend them and feed them, and be a servant to them; not as horses under the command of the driver, that works them and beats them, and gets his pennyworths out of them. He that affects to be great and chief, that thrusts himself into a secular dignity and dominion, "he shall be servant of all," he shall be mean and contemptible in the eyes of all that are wise and good. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased." Or rather, he that would be truly great and chief, he must lay out himself to do good to all, must stoop to the meanest services, and labour in the hardest services. Those not only shall be most honoured hereafter, but are most honourable now, who are most useful. To convince them of this, he sets before them his own example, ver. 45. The Son of man submits first to the greatest hardships and hazards, and then enters into his glory; and can you expect to come to it any other way; or to have more ease and honour than he has? 1st. He takes upon him the form of a servant, comes "not to be ministered to," and waited upon, "but to minister" and wait to be gracious. 2nd. He becomes obedient to death, and to its dominion, for he "gives his life a ransom for many." Did he die for the benefit of good people, and shall not we study to live for their benefit?

46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side begging. 47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. 48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. 49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. 50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. 51 And Jesus answered and said



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rendered "amazed" is radically the same as the one so translated in chap. ix. 15, but not so emphatic. Mr. Webster, in his "Synonyms," &c., explains the verb here to mean "amazement at our Lord's majestic bearing, solemn manner, and awful aspect." He regards the substantive as meaning "awe, surprise at a strange or unusual deed or expression." Not only were the disciples following behind, but oppressed with a vague feeling of dread, a presentiment of a solemn future, and, worse than all, they were afraid. Their fear was

not terror, however, so much as a reluctant anticipation of impending troubles.

x. 34. Instead of the common reading, "the third day," the reading "within" or "after three days" is adopted by some modern editors and critics.

x. 35. From Matt. xx. 20 we learn that James and John were accompanied by their mother, who really acted as their petitioner. Coming, as this incident does, immediately after the sad predictions

unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. 52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

This passage of story agrees with that, *Mat. xx. 29, &c.*, only that there were told of two blind men; here, and *Lu. xviii. 35*, only of one; but if there were two, there was one; this one is named here, being a blind beggar that was much talked of, Bartimæus, that is, the son of Timæus; which some think signifies, 'the son of a blind man.' He was the blind son of a blind father, which made the case the worse, and the cure the more wonderful, and the more proper to typify the spiritual cures wrought by the grace of Christ on those that not only are born blind, but are born of those that are blind.

I. This blind man sat begging, as they do with us. Note, Those who, by the providence of God, are disabled to get a livelihood by their own labour, and have not any other way of subsisting, are the most proper objects of charity; and particular care ought to be taken of them.

II. He cried out to the Lord Jesus for mercy: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David." Misery is the object of mercy; his own miserable case he recommends to the compassion of the son of David, of whom it was foretold, that when he should come to save us, "the eyes of the blind should be opened," *Isa. xxxv. 5*. In coming to Christ for help and healing, we should have an eye to him as the promised Messiah, the trustee of mercy and grace.

III. Christ encouraged him to hope that he should find mercy, for he "stood still, and commanded him to be called." We must never reckon it a hindrance to us in our way to stand still, when it is to do a good work. Those about him, who had discouraged him at first, perhaps were now the persons that handed to him the gracious call of Christ, "Be of good comfort, rise, he calls thee;" and if he call thee, he will cure thee. Note, The gracious invitations Christ gives us to come to him, are great encouragements to our hope, that we shall speed well if we come to him, and shall have what we come for. Let the guilty, the empty, the tempted, the hungry, the naked, be of good comfort, for he calls them to be pardoned, to be supplied, to be succoured, to be filled, to be clothed, to have all that done for them which their case calls for.

IV. The poor man hereupon made the best of his way to Christ. He cast away his loose upper garment, and came to Jesus, *ver. 50*; he cast away every thing that might be in danger of throwing him down, or might any way hinder him in coming to Christ, or retard his motion. Those who would come to Jesus, must cast away the garment of their own sufficiency, must strip themselves of all conceit of that, and must free themselves from every weight, and the sin that, like long garments, doth most easily beset them, *Heb. xii. 1*.

V. The particular favour he begged was, that his eyes might be opened, that so he might be able to work for his living, and might be no longer burthensome to others. It is a very desirable thing to be in a capacity of earning our own bread; and where God has given men their limbs and senses, it is a shame for men, by their foolishness and slothfulness, to make themselves in effect blind and lame.

VI. This favour he received, his eyes were opened, *ver. 52*; and two things Mark here adds, which intimate, 1. How Christ made it a double favour to him, by putting the honour of it upon his faith, "thy faith hath made thee whole;" faith in Christ, as the son of David, and in his pity and power; not thy importunity, but thy faith; setting Christ on work, or rather Christ setting thy faith on work. Those supplies are most comfortable that are fetched in by our faith. 2. How he made it a double favour to himself; when he had "received his sight, he followed Jesus by the way;" by this he made it appear that he was thoroughly cured, that he no more needed one to lead him, but could go himself; and by this he evidenced the grateful sense he had of Christ's kindness to him, that when he had his sight, he made this use of it. It is not enough to come to Christ for spiritual healing, but when we are healed, we must continue to follow him; that we may do honour to him, and receive instruction from him. Those that have spiritual eyesight see such beauty in Christ as will effectually draw them to run after him.

CHAPTER XI.

We are now come to the Passion week, the week in which Christ died; and the great occurrences of that week. I. Christ's riding in triumph into Jerusalem, *ver. 1—11*. II. His cursing the barren fig tree, *ver. 12—14*. III. His driving those out of the temple that turned it into an exchange, *ver. 15—19*. IV. His discourse with his disciples concerning the power of faith, and efficacy of prayer, on occasion of the withering of the fig tree he cursed, *ver. 20—26*. V. His reply to those who questioned his authority, *ver. 27—33*.



AND when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, 2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. 3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. 4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two

ways met; and they loose him. 5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? 6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. 8 And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. 9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: 10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. 11 And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and



THE GOLDEN GATE AT JERUSALEM.

into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

We have here the story of the public entry Christ made into Jerusalem, four or five days before his death. And he came into town thus remarkably, 1. To shew that he was not afraid of the power and malice of his enemies in Jerusalem; he did not steal into the city *incognito*, as one that durst not shew his face; no, they needed not send spies to search for him, he comes in with observation. This would be an encouragement to his disciples, that were timorous and cowed at the thought of their enemies' power and rage; let them see how bravely their Master sets them all at defiance. 2. To shew that he was not cast down or disquieted at the thoughts of his approaching sufferings, he not only came publicly, but came in cheerfully and with acclamations of joy. Though he was now but taking the field, and girding on the harness, yet, being fully assured of a complete victory, he thus triumphs as though he had put it off.

First. *The outside of this triumph was very mean*; he rode upon an ass's colt, that being an ass looked very contemptible, and made no figure; and being but a colt, whereon never man sat, we may suppose was rough and untrimmed; and not only so, but rude and ungovernable, and would disturb and disgrace the solemnity. This colt was borrowed too. Christ went upon the water in a borrowed boat, eat the passover in a borrowed chamber, was buried in a borrowed sepulchre, and here rode on a borrowed ass. Let not Christians scorn to be beholden one to another, and when need is, to go a borrowing, for our Master did not. He had no rich trappings; they threw their clothes upon the colt, and so he sat upon him, *ver. 7*. The persons that attended were mean people; and all the show they could make, was by spreading their garments in the way, and strewing branches of trees in the way, *ver. 8*, as they used to do at the feast of tabernacles. All these were marks of his humiliation; even when he would be taken notice of, he would be taken notice of for his meanness; and they are instructions to us not to mind high things, but to condescend to them of low estate. How ill doth it become Christians to take state, when Christ was so far from affecting it.

Secondly. *The inside of this triumph was very great*, not only as it was the fulfilling the Scripture, which is not taken notice of here, as it was in *Matthew*, but as there were several rays of Christ's glory shining forth in the midst of all this meanness. 1. Christ shewed his knowledge of things distant, and his power over the wills of men, when he sent his disciples for the colt, *ver. 1—4*. By this it appears he can do every thing, and no thought can be withholden from him. 2. He shewed his dominion over the creatures, in riding on a colt that was never backed. The subjection of the inferior part of the creation to

of the two preceding verses, it holds a peculiarly striking position. Their faith and expectations had crossed the yawning valley of humiliation, and seizing upon the promised resurrection beyond, were ambitious of a principal share in the glory. They had forgotten what is recorded in *chap. ix. 34, &c.*, and hence their indiscretion.

x. 46. According to *Matt. xx. 29, &c.*, there were two blind beggars by the wayside at Jericho. Here almost literally the same

words are spoken of one beggar only, with the addition of his name. On referring to *Luke xviii. 35, &c.*, we find mention of a blind beggar who sat by the wayside as they came near to Jericho. Much ingenuity has been expended upon the attempt to harmonise the three accounts, and not a few are content to believe that there were two blind men, one of whom they saw as they went into Jericho, and the other as they left the town. The name of the latter is given here only. As "bar" means "son," it would seem that "son of Timeus"

man is spoken of, with application to Christ, *Ps. viii. 5, 6*, compared with *Heb. ii. 8*; for to him it is owing, and to his mediation, that we have any remaining benefit by that grant God made to man of a sovereignty in this lower world, *Gen. i. 28*. And perhaps Christ, in riding the ass's colt, would give a shadow of his power over the spirit of man, who is born as the wild ass's colt, *Job xi. 12*. 3. The colt was brought from a place where two ways met, ver. 4, as if Christ would shew that he came to direct those into the right way who had two ways before them, and were in danger of taking the wrong. 4. Christ received the joyful hosannas of the people; that is, both the welcome they gave him, and their good wishes to the prosperity of his kingdom, ver. 9. It was God that put it into the hearts of these people to cry hosanna, who were not by art and management brought to it, as those were who afterwards cried "Crucify, crucify." Christ reckons himself honoured by the faith and praises of the multitude; and it is God that brings people to do him this honour, beyond their own intentions.

1st. They welcomed his person, ver. 9, "Blessed is he that cometh," the οἰκουμενος, "he that should come," so often promised, so long expected; he comes "in the name of the Lord," as God's ambassador to the world; "Blessed be he;" let him have our applauses, and best affections; he is a blessed Saviour, and brings blessings to us, and blessed be he that sent him. Let him be "blessed in the name of the Lord," and let all nations and ages call him blessed, and think and speak highly and honourably of him.

2nd. They wished well to his interest, ver. 10. They believed that, as mean a figure as he made, he had a kingdom, which should shortly be set up in the world, that it was the kingdom of their father David, (that father of his country,) the kingdom promised to him and his seed for ever; a kingdom that came "in the name of the Lord," supported by a Divine authority. "Blessed be this kingdom; let it take place, let it get ground, let it come in the power of it, and let all opposing rule, principality, and power be put down; let it go on conquering and to conquer." Hosanna to this kingdom; prosperity be to it; all happiness attend it. The proper signification of Hosanna is that which we find *Rev. vii. 10*, "Salvation to our God that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb;" that is, "Success to religion, both natural and revealed." "Hosanna in the highest;" "Praises be to our God, who is in the highest heavens, over all, God blessed for ever;" or, "Let him be praised by his angels, that are in the highest heavens; let our hosannas be an echo to theirs."

Christ, thus attended, thus applauded, came into the city, and went directly to the temple. Here was no banquet of wine prepared for his entertainment, nor the least refreshment, but he immediately applied himself to his work, for that was his meat and drink. He went to the temple, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple," without sending any immediate notice before him; he shall surprise you with a day of visitation, for he shall be "like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap," *Mal. iii. 1-3*. He came to the temple, and took a view of the present state of it, ver. 11. He "looked round about upon all things," but as yet said nothing. He saw many disorders there, but kept silence, *Ps. i. 21*. Though he intended to suppress them, he would not go about the doing of it all on a sudden, lest he should seem to have done it rashly; but let things be as they were for this night, intending the next morning to apply himself to the necessary reformation, and to take the day before him. We may be confident that God sees all the wickedness that is in the world, though he do not presently reckon for it, nor cast it out. Christ having made his remarks upon what he saw in the temple, retired in the evening to a friend's house at Bethany, because there he would be more out of the noise of the town, and out of the way of being suspected as designing to head a faction.

12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: 13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. 14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it. 15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; 16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. 17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. 18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. 19 And when even was come, he went out of the city. 20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. 22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. 23 For verily I say unto you,

That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. 24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. 25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Here is, I. *Christ's cursing the fruitless fig tree.* He had a convenient resting place at Bethany, and therefore thither he went at resting time, but his work lay at Jerusalem, and thither therefore he returned in the morning, at working time; and so intent was he upon his work, that he went out from Bethany without breakfast, which, before he was gone far, he found the want of, and was hungry, ver. 12, for he was subject to all the sinless infirmities of our nature. Finding himself in want of food, he went to a fig tree, which he saw at some distance; that being well adorned with green leaves, he hoped to find enriched with some sort of fruit; but "he found nothing but leaves;" he hoped to find some fruit, for the time of gathering in figs, though it was near, yet it was not yet; so that it could not be pretended that it had had fruit, but it was gathered and gone, for it was not come to that yet. Or, he found none, for indeed it was not a season of figs, it was no good fig year. But this was worse than any other fig tree, for there was not so much as one fig to be found upon it, though it was so full of leaves. However, Christ was willing to make an example of it, not to the trees, but to the men of that generation, and therefore cursed it, with that curse which is the reverse of the first blessing, "Be fruitful;" he said unto it, "Never let any man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever," ver. 14. Sweetness and good fruit is, in Jotham's parable, the honour of the fig tree, *Jud. ix. 11*; and its serviceableness therein to man, preferable to the preferment of being promoted over the trees; now to be deprived of that was a grievous curse. This was intended to be a type and figure of the doom passed upon the Jewish church, to which he came seeking fruit, but found none," *Lu. xiii. 6, 7*; and though it was not, according to the doom in the parable, immediately cut down, yet according to this in the history, blindness and hardness befell them, *Rom. xi. 8, 25*; so that they were from henceforth good for nothing. The disciples heard what sentence Christ passed on this tree, and took notice of it. Woes from Christ's mouth are to be observed and kept in mind, as well as blessings.

II. *His clearing the temple of the market people that frequented it, and of those that made it a thoroughfare.* We do not find that Christ met with food elsewhere, when he missed of it on the fig tree; but the zeal of God's house so ate him up, and made him forget himself, that he came hungry as he was to Jerusalem, and went straight to the temple, and began to reform those abuses which the day before he had marked out; to shew, that when the Redeemer came to Zion, his errand was to "turn away ungodliness from Jacob," *Rom. xi. 26*; and that he came not, as he was falsely accused, to destroy the temple, but to purify and refine it, and reduce his church to its primitive rectitude.

1. He cast out the "buyers and sellers, overthrew the tables of the money-changers," (and threw the money to the ground, the fitter place for it,) and threw down the "seats of them that sold doves." This he did as one having authority, as a Son in his own house. The filth of the daughter of Zion is purged away, not by might, nor by power, but by "the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning;" and he did it without opposition, for what he did was manifested to be right and good, even in the consciences of those that had connived at it, and countenanced it; because they got money by it. Note, It may be some encouragement to zealous reformers, that many times the purging out of corruptions, and the correcting of abuses, proves an easier piece of work than was apprehended. Prudent attempts sometimes prove successful beyond expectation; and there are not those lions found in the way that were feared to be.

2. He "would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel," any sort of goods or wares, "through the temple," or any of the courts of it, because it was the nearer way, and would save them the labour of going about, ver. 16. The Jews owned it was one of the instances of honour due to the temple, not to make the mountain of the house, or the court of the Gentiles, a road or common passage, or to come into it with any bundle.

3. He gave a good reason for this; because it was written, "My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer," *vc* 17: so it is written, *Isa. lvi. 7*. It shall pass among all people under that character; "it shall be the house of prayer of all nations;" it was so in the first institution of it. When Solomon dedicated it, it was with an eye to the sons of the strangers, *1 Kin. viii. 41*; and it was prophesied that it should be yet more so. Christ will have the temple, as a type of the gospel church, to be, 1st. A house of prayer. After he had turned out the oxen and doves, which were things for sacrifice, he revived the appointment of it as "a house of prayer," to teach us that when all sacrifices and offerings shall be abolished, the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise should continue, and remain for ever. 2nd. That it should be so "to all nations," and not to the people of the Jews only; for "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," though not of the seed of Jacob, according to the flesh. It was therefore insufferable for them to "make it a den of thieves," which would prejudice those nations against it, whom they should have invited to it. When Christ drove out the buyers and sellers at the beginning of his ministry, he only charged them with making the temple a house of merchandise, *Jno. ii. 1*; but now he charged them with making it a den of thieves, because, since then, they had twice gone about to stone him in the temple, *Jno. viii. 1*; *x. 31*; or because the traders there were grown notorious for cheating their customers, and imposing upon the ignorance and necessity of the country people, which is no better than downright thievery. Those that suffer vain worldly thoughts to lodge within them, when they are at their devotions, turn the house of prayer into a house of merchandise; but they that make loud prayers for a pretence to devour widows' houses, turn it into a den of thieves.

4. The scribes and the chief priests were extremely nettled at this, ver. 18.

is merely an explanation of Bar Timeus. The reading of the verse in the Syriac is, "And they came to Jericho: and when Jesus departed from Jericho, he and his disciples, and great multitudes, Timeus, son of Timeus, a blind man, was sitting by the wayside and begging." In the Sinaitic MS. the last clause is, "The son of Timeus, Bartimeus, blind and a beggar, was sitting by the way." We need not go far to find illustration of the custom of placing blind beggars by the wayside.

x. 51. The word here rendered "Lord" is the Hebrew "Rabboni," i.e., "my master;" it is only found elsewhere in the New Testament at John xx. 16.

xi. 1. More literally, perhaps, and as given in the Sinaitic MS., "And when they come nigh to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and to Bethany, by the Mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples." The site of Bethphage is disputed, the hamlet having long since disappeared; but Bethany is still well known, and on the

They hated him, and hated to be reformed by him, and yet they feared him, lest he should next overthrow their seats, and expel them, being conscious to themselves of the profaning and abusing of their power. They found he had a great interest, and that "all the people were astonished at his doctrine," and every thing he said was an oracle and a law to them; and what durst he not attempt, what could he not effect, being thus supported? They therefore sought not how they might make their peace with him, but "how they might destroy him." A desperate attempt, and which one would think, they themselves could not but fear was fighting against God. But they care not what they do, to support their own power and grandeur.

II. *His discourse with his disciples*, upon occasion of the fig tree's withering away, which he had cursed. At even, as usual, he "went out of the city," ver. 19, to Bethany; but it is probable it was in the dark, so that they could not see the fig tree; but the next morning, as they passed by, they observed the "fig tree dried up from the roots," ver. 20. More is included many times in Christ's curses than is expressed, as appears by the effects of them. The curse was no more but that it should never bear fruit again; but the effect goes farther, it is "dried up from the roots." If it bear no fruit, it shall bear no leaves to cheat people. Now observe,

1. How the disciples were affected with it. Peter remembered Christ's words, and said, with surprise, "Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away," ver. 21. Note, Christ's curses have wonderful effects, and make those to wither presently that flourished like the green bay tree. Those whom he curseth, they are cursed indeed. This represented the character and state of the Jewish church, which from henceforward was as a tree dried up from the roots; no longer fit for food, but for fuel only. The first establishment of the Levitical priesthood was ratified and confirmed by the miracle of a dry red, which in one night budded and blossomed, and brought forth almonds, *Num. xvii. 8*; a happy omen of the fruitfulness and flourishing of that priesthood; and now by a contrary miracle, the expiration of that priesthood was signified by a flourishing tree dried up in a night; the just punishment of those priests that had abused it. And this seemed very strange to the disciples, and scarce credible, that the Jews, that had been so long God's own, his only professing people in the world, should be thus abandoned. They could not imagine how that fig tree should so soon wither away; but this comes of rejecting Christ, and being rejected by him.

2. The good instructions Christ gave them from it, for of those even this withered tree was fruitful.

1st. Christ teacheth them from hence to pray in faith, ver. 22: "Have faith in God." They admired the power of Christ's word of command, "Why," saith Christ, "a lively active faith would put as great a power into your prayers, ver. 23, 24: "Whosoever shall say to this mountain," this mount of Olives, "Be removed, and be cast into the sea," if he has but any word of God, general or particular, to build his faith upon, and if he "shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith," according to the warrant he has from what God hath said, "shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith." Through the strength and power of God in Christ, the greatest difficulty shall be got over, and the thing shall be effected; and therefore, ver. 24, "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye" shall receive them; nay, believe that ye "do receive them," and He that has power to give them saith, "Ye shall have them." I say unto you, ye shall, ver. 24; Verily I say unto you, ye shall, ver. 23. Now this is to be applied, *First*. To that faith of miracles which the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel were endued with, which did wonders in things natural; healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils; these were in effect the removing of mountains. The apostle speaks of a faith which would do that, and yet might be found where holy love was not, *1 Cor. xiii. 2*. *Secondly*. It may be applied to that miracle of faith which all true Christians are endued with, which doth wonders in things spiritual. It justifies us, *Rom. v. 1*; and so removes mountains of guilt, and casts them into the depths of the sea, never to rise up in judgment against us, *Mic. vii. 19*. It purifies the heart, *Acts xv. 10*; and so removes mountains of corruption, and makes them plain before the grace of God, *Zec. iv. 7*. It is by faith that the world is conquered, Satan's fiery darts quenched, a soul is crucified with Christ, and yet lives; by faith we set the Lord always before us, and see him that is invisible, and have him present to our minds, and this is effectual to remove mountains; for at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, the mountains were not only moved, but removed, *Ps. cxiv. 6, 7*.

2nd. To this is added, here, that necessary qualification of the prevailing prayer, that we freely forgive those who have been any way injurious to us, and be in charity with all men, ver. 25, 26: "When ye stand praying, forgive." Note, Standing is no improper posture for prayer; it was generally used among the Jews: hence they called their prayers, their standings; when they say how the world was kept up by prayer, they expressed it thus: *Stationibus stat mundus*.—"The world is upheld by standings." But the primitive Christians generally used the more humble and reverent gesture of kneeling, especially on fasting days, though not on Lord's days. When we are at prayer, we must remember to pray for others, particularly for our enemies, and those that have wronged us; now we cannot pray sincerely that God would do them good, if we bear malice to them, and wish them ill. If we have injured others, before we pray we must go and be reconciled to them, *Mat. v. 26*; but if they have injured us, we go a nearer way to work, and must immediately from our hearts forgive them. *First*. Because this is a good step towards obtaining the pardon of our own sins: forgive, that your Father may forgive you; that is, that you may be qualified to receive forgiveness; that he may forgive you without injury to his honour, as it would be if he should suffer those to have such benefit by his mercy, as are so far from being conformable to the pattern of it. *Secondly*. Because the want of this is a certain bar to the obtaining of the pardon of our sins. "If ye do not forgive" those who have injured you, if you hate their persons, bear them a grudge, meditate revenge, and take all occasions to speak ill of them, "neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." This ought to be remembered in prayer, because one great errand we have to the throne of grace, is to pray for the pardon of our sins; and care about it ought to be our daily care, because prayer is a part of our daily work. Our Saviour often insists on this, for it was his great design to engage his disciples to love one another.

27 And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, 28 And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? 29 And Jesus answered and said

unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me. 31 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? 32 But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. 33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

We have here Christ examined by the great Sanhedrim concerning his authority; for they claimed a power to call prophets to an account concerning their mission. They came to him when he was walking in the temple, not for his diversion, but teaching the people, first one company, and then another. The cloisters or piazzas, in the courts of the temple, were fitted for this purpose. The great men were vexed to see him followed, and heard with attention; and therefore came to him with some solemnity, and did as it were arraign him at the bar with this question, "By what authority doest thou these things?" ver. 28. Now observe,

First. How they designed hereby to run him aground, and to embarrass him; if they could make it out, before the people, that he had not a legal mission, that he was not duly ordained, though he was never so well qualified, and preached never so profitably and well, they would tell the people they ought not to hear him. And this they made the last refuge of an obstinate unbelief; because they were resolved not to receive his doctrine, they were resolved to find some flaw or other in his commission, and will conclude it invalid if it be not produced and ratified in their court. Thus the papists resolve their controversy with us very much into the mission of our ministers, and if they have but any pretence to overthrow that, they think they have gained their point, though we have the Scripture never so much on our side. But this is indeed a question which all that act either as magistrates or ministers ought to be furnished with a good answer to, and often put it to themselves, By what authority do I these things? For how can men preach except they be sent? or how can they act with comfort, or confidence, or hope of success, except they be authorized? *Jer. xxxiii. 22*.

Secondly. How he effectually ran them aground, and embarrassed them with a question, what their thoughts were concerning "the baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" By what authority did John preach, and baptize, and gather disciples? "answer me," ver. 30. Deal fairly and ingenuously, and give a categorical answer, either one way or other. By the resolving of their question into this, our Saviour intimates how near akin his doctrine and baptism was to John's; they had the same original, and the same design and tendency, to introduce the gospel kingdom. Christ might with the better grace put this question to them, because they had sent a committee of their own house to examine John, *Jno. i. 19*. Now, saith Christ, what was the result of your inquiries concerning him? They knew what they thought of this question; they could not but think that John Baptist was a man sent of God. But the difficulty was, what they should say to it now; and men that oblige not themselves to speak as they think, which is a certain rule, cannot avoid perplexing themselves thus.

1. If they own the baptism of John to be "from heaven," as really it was, they shame themselves, for Christ will presently turn it upon them, "Why did ye not then believe him," and receive his baptism? They could not bear that Christ should say this, but they could bear it that their own consciences should say so, because they had an art of stifling and silencing them, and because what conscience said, though it might gail and grate them a little, it would not shame them, and then they would do well enough, who looked no farther than Saul's care when he was convicted, "Honour me now before this people," *1 Sam. xv. 30*.

2. If they say it is "of men," that he was not sent of God, but his doctrine and baptism were inventions of his own, they expose themselves, the people will be ready to do them a mischief, or at least clamour upon them; for "all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed;" and therefore they could not bear that he should be reflected on. Note, There is a carnal, slavish fear, which not only wicked subjects, but wicked rulers likewise, are liable to, which God makes use of as a means to keep the world in some order, and to suppress violence, that it shall not always grow up into a rod of wickedness. Now, by this dilemma to which Christ brought them, 1st. They were confounded and baffled, and forced to make a dishonourable retreat; to pretend ignorance, "We cannot tell," (and that was mortification enough to those proud men,) but really to discover the greatest malice and wilfulness. What Christ did by his wisdom, we must labour to do by our well-doing, "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," *1 Pet. ii. 15*. 2nd. Christ came off with honour, and justified himself, in denying to give them an answer to their imperious demand, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." They did not deserve to be told, who, it was plain, did not contend for truth, but victory; nor did he need to tell them, for the works which he did told them plainly that he had authority from God to do what he did; since no man could do those miracles which he did unless God were with him. Let them wait but three or four days, and his resurrection shall tell them who gave him his authority, for by that he will be "declared to be the Son of God with power," as by their rejecting him notwithstanding, they will be declared to be the enemies of God.

CHAPTER XII.

In this chapter we have, I. The parable of the vineyard let out to unthankful husbandmen, representing the sin and ruin of the Jewish church, ver. 1—12. II. Christ's silencing those who thought to ensnare him with a question about paying tribute to Caesar, ver. 13—17. III. His silencing the Sadducees, who attempted to perplex the doctrine of the resurrection, ver. 18—27. IV. His conference with a scribe, about the first and great command of the law, ver. 28—34. V. His puzzling the scribes with a question about Christ's being the son of David, ver. 35—37. VI. The caution he gave the people to take heed of the scribes, ver. 38—40. VII. His commendation of the poor widow that cast her two mites into the treasury, ver. 41—44.

road between Jericho and Jerusalem. Some think there was another Bethany, east of Jericho and across the Jordan.

xi. 11. The entrance of Jesus into the city is mentioned elsewhere, but only Mark expressly records his going to the Temple on this occasion; Matthew implies it.

xi. 13. The last words, "for the time of figs was not yet," or "for it was not the season of figs," have attracted attention; and it has been asked how Jesus could expect figs when the season for

them was not come. Sundry replies have been proposed, but it is clear that none will be satisfactory unless such as accord with known facts. At Engedi the fig-tree yields fruit all the year round, and the tree is an evergreen. There are trees again on which the unripe fruit remains through the winter, and attains maturity early, before the ordinary crop. Again, as figs may appear before the leaves, a tree with leaves might be expected to have fruit. Moreover, figs are often eaten before they are ripe. From all these and other



ND he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. 2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. 4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. 5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. 6 Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. 7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be our's. 8 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. 9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. 10 And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: 11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

Christ had formerly in parables shewed how he designed to set up the gospel church, now he begins in parables to shew how he would lay aside the Jewish church, which it might have been grafted into the stock of, but was built upon the ruins of. This parable we had, just as we have it here, *Mat. xxi. 33.* We may observe here.

First. They that enjoy the privileges of the visible church have a vineyard let out to them, which is capable of great improvement, and from the occupiers of which rent is justly expected. When God "shewed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel," *Ps. cxlvii. 19*, when he set up his temple among them, his priesthood, and other his ordinances, then he let out to them the vineyard he had planted, which he hedged, and in which he built a tower, *ver. 1.* Members of the church are God's tenants, and they have both a good landlord and a good bargain, and may live well upon it, if it be not their own fault.

Secondly. Those whom God lets out his vineyard to, he sends his servants to, to put them in mind of his just expectations from them, *ver. 2.* He was not hasty in his demands, nor high, for he did not send for the rent till they could make it, at the season: nor did he put them to the trouble of making money of it, but was willing to take it in kind.

Thirdly. It is sad to think what base usage God's faithful ministers have met with, in all ages, from those that have enjoyed the privileges of the church, and have not brought forth fruit answerable. The Old Testament prophets were persecuted even by those that went under the name of the Old Testament church; they "beat them and sent them empty away," *ver. 3*; that was bad; they "wounded them, and sent them away shamefully entreated," *ver. 4*; that was worse; nay, at length they came to such a pitch of wickedness that they "killed them," *ver. 5*.

Fourthly. It was no wonder if those who abused the prophets abused Christ himself. God did at length send them his "Son, his wellbeloved;" it was therefore so much the greater kindness in him to send him, as in Jacob to send Joseph to visit his brethren, *Gen. xxxvii. 14*. And it might be expected that he whom their Master loved, they also should respect and love, *ver. 6*; "they will reverence my Son," and in reverence to him will pay their rent; but, instead of reverencing him because he was the Son and heir, they therefore hated him, *ver. 7*. Because Christ, in calling to repentance and reformation, made his demands with more authority than the prophets had done, they were the more enraged against him, and determined to put him to death; that they might engross all church power to themselves, and all the respects and obedience of the people might be paid to them only; "the inheritance shall be ours;" we will be lords paramount, and bear all the sway. There is an inheritance which, if they had duly revered the Son, might have been theirs; a heavenly inheritance: but they slighted that, and would have their inheritance in the wealth, and pomp, and powers of this world. So they "took him and killed him;" they had not done it yet, but they would do it in a little time; and they "cast him out of the vineyard," that is, they refused to admit his Gospel when he was gone; it would by no means agree with their scheme, and so they threw it out with disdain and detestation.

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Fifthly. For such sinful, shameful doings, nothing can be expected but a fearful doom, *ver. 9*: "What shall therefore the Lord of the vineyard do?" It is easy to say what, for nothing could be done more provoking. 1. "He will come and destroy the husbandmen," whom he would have saved. When they only denied the fruit, he did not distrust upon them for the rent, nor dispossess them and dispossess them for nonpayment; but when they killed his servants and his Son, he determined to destroy them; and this was fulfilled when Jerusalem was laid waste, and the Jewish nation extirpated and made a desolation. 2. He will "give the vineyard to others." If he have not the rent from them, he will have it from another people; for God will be no loser by any. This was fulfilled in the taking in of the Gentiles, and the abundance of fruit which the Gospel brought forth in all the world, *Col. i. 6*. Note, If some, from whom we expected well, prove bad, it doth not follow but that others will be better. Christ encouraged himself with this in his undertaking, "Though Israel be not gathered," not gathered to him, but gathered against him, "yet shall I be glorious," *Isa. xlix. 5, 6*, as "a light to lighten the Gentiles." 3. Their opposition to Christ's exaltation shall be no obstruction to it, *ver. 10, 11*: "The stone which the builders rejected," notwithstanding that, "is become the head of the corner," is highly advanced as the head-stone, and of necessary use and influence as the corner-stone. God will set Christ as his King upon his holy hill of Zion, in spite of their project who would break his bands asunder. And all the world shall see and own this to be the Lord's doing, in justice to the Jews, and in compassion to the Gentiles. The exaltation of Christ was the Lord's doing; and it is his doing to exalt him in our hearts, and to set up his throne there; and if it be done, it cannot but be marvellous in our eyes.

Now what effect had this parable upon the chief priests and scribes, whose conviction was designed by it? "They knew he spake this parable against them," *ver. 12*. They could not but see their own faces in the glass of it; and one would think it shewed them their sin so very heinous, and their ruin so certain and great, that it should have frightened them into a compliance with Christ and his Gospel, should have prevailed to bring them to repentance, at least to make them desist from their malicious purpose against him; but instead of that, 1st. They sought to lay hold on him, and make him their prisoner immediately, and so to fulfil what he had just now said they would do to him, *ver. 8*. 2nd. Nothing restrained them from it but the awe they stood in of the people; they did not reverence Christ, nor had any fear of God before their eyes, but were afraid, if they should publicly lay hold on Christ, the mob would rise and lay hold on them and rescue him. 3rd. They "left him, and went their way;" if they could not do hurt to him, they resolved he should not do good to them; and therefore they got out of the hearing of his powerful preaching, "lest they should be converted and healed." Note, If men's prejudices be not conquered by the evidence of truth, they are but confirmed; and if the corruptions of the heart be not subdued by faithful reproofs, they are but enraged and exasperated. If the Gospel be not "a savour of life unto life," it will be "a savour of death unto death."

13 And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words. 14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? 15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it. 16 And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's. 17 And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

When the enemies of Christ, who thirsted for his blood, could not find occasion against him from what he said against them, they tried to ensnare him by putting questions to him. Here we have him tempted, or attempted rather, with a question about the lawfulness of paying tribute to Cæsar. We had this story, *Mat. xxii. 15*.

First. The persons they employed were the Pharisees and the Herodians, men that in this matter were contrary to one another, and yet concurred against Christ, *ver. 13*. The Pharisees were great sticklers for the Jews' liberty, and if he should say it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, they would incense the common people against him, and the Herodians would underhand assist them in it. The Herodians were great sticklers for the Roman power, and if he should discountenance the paying of tribute to Cæsar, they would incense the governor against him; yea, and the Pharisees, against their own principles, would join with them in it. It is no new thing for those that are at variance in other things to join in a confederacy against Christ.

Secondly. The pretence they made was, that they desired him to resolve them a case of conscience, which was of great importance in the present juncture; and they take on them to have a mighty opinion of his ability to resolve it, *ver. 14*. They complimented him at a high rate, called him "Master," owned him for a teacher of "the way of God," a teacher of it "in truth;" he taught what was good, and upon principles of truth; that he would not be brought by smiles or frowns to depart a step from the rules of equity and goodness; "thou carest for no man, nor regardest the person of men;" thou art not afraid of offending either the jealous prince on one hand, or the jealous people

facts, it follows that there was nothing unreasonable in looking for figs on so precocious a tree. This view is adopted by Dr. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book," as in harmony with well-ascertained facts.

xi. 21. The word "Master" here is a translation of "Rabbi," which occurs in the original, and is always best left untranslated.

xi. 22, 23. The Sinaitic MS. reads, "And Jesus answering saith to them, If ye have faith in God" (or, belief of God), "verily I say

to you, Whoever saith to this mountain," &c. Several important authorities omit "whatsoever he saith" from the end of verse 23.

xi. 24. For "what things soever ye desire, when ye pray," the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. read, "what things soever ye pray and desire."

xii. 4. In the Sinaitic MS. this verse reads, "And again he sent unto them another, and him they wounded in the head and shamefully handled."

on the other; thou art right, and always in the right, and dost in a right manner declare good and evil, truth and falsehood. If they spoke as they thought concerning Christ, when they said, 'We know that thou art right,' their persecuting him and putting him to death as a deceiver was a sin against knowledge; they knew him, and yet crucified him. However, a man's testimony shall be taken most strongly against himself, and out of their own mouths are they judged; they knew that he taught the way of God in truth, and yet rejected the counsel of God against themselves. The professions and pretences of hypocrites will be produced in evidence against them, and they will be self-condemned. But if they did not know or believe it, "they lied unto God with their mouth, and flattered him with their tongue."

Thirdly. The question they put was, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?" They would be thought desirous to know their duty: "as a nation that did righteousness, they ask of God the ordinances of justice;" when really they desired nothing but to know what he would say, in hopes that, which side soever he took of the question, they might take occasion from it to accuse him. Nothing more likely to ensnare ministers than bringing them to meddle with controversies about civil rights, and to settle the landmarks between the prince and the subject, which it is fit should be done, but not at all fit that they should have the doing of it. They seemed to refer the determining of this matter to Christ, and he indeed was fit to determine it, for "by him kings reign, and princes decree justice;" for they put the question fairly, "Shall we give, or shall we not give?" They seemed resolved to stand to his award: "If thou sayest we must pay tribute, we will do it, though we be made beggars by it; if thou sayest we must not, we will not, though we be made traitors for it." Many seem desirous to know their duty, that are no ways disposed to do it, as those proud men, *Jer. xlii. 20.*

Fourthly. Christ determined the question, and evaded the snare, by referring them to their national concessions already made, by which they were precluded from disputing this matter, *ver. 15-17.* "He knew their hypocrisy," the malice that was in their hearts against him, while "with their mouth they shewed all this love." Hypocrisy, though never so artfully managed, cannot be concealed from the Lord Jesus: he sees the potsherd that is covered with the silver dross. He knew they intended to ensnare him; and therefore contrived the matter so as to ensnare them, and to oblige them by their own words to do what they were unwilling to do, which was to pay their taxes honestly and quietly, and yet at the same time to screen himself against their exceptions. He made them acknowledge that the current money of their nation was Roman money, had the emperor's image on one side, and his superscription on the reverse; and if so, 1. Cæsar might command their money for the public benefit, because he has the custody and conduct of the state, wherein he ought to have his charges borne: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." The circulation of the money is from him as the fountain, and therefore it must return to him. As far as it is his, so far it must be rendered to him; and how far it is his, and may be commanded by him, is to be judged by the constitution of the government, according as it is, and hath settled the prerogative of the prince and the property of the subject. 2. Cæsar might not command their consciences, nor did he pretend to it; he offered not to make any alteration in their religion. Pay your tribute therefore without murmuring or disputing, but be sure to "render to God the things that are God's;" perhaps referring to the parable he had just now put forth, in which he had condemned them for not rendering the fruits to the Lord of the vineyard, *ver. 2.* Many that seem careful to give to men their due, are in no care to give unto God "the glory due to his name;" whereas our hearts and best affections are as much due to him as ever rent was to a landlord, or tribute to a prince. All that heard Christ marvelled at the discretion of his answer, and how ingeniously he avoided the snare; but I doubt none were brought by it, as they ought to be, to render to God themselves and their devotions. Many will commend the wit of a sermon that will not be commanded by the Divine laws of a sermon.

18 Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, 19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 20 Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. 21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise. 22 And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also. 23 In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. 24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? 25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. 26 And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

The Sadducees, that were the deists of that age, here attack our Lord Jesus: it should seem, not as the scribes, and Pharisees, and chief priests, with any malicious design upon his person; they were not bigots and persecutors, but sceptics and infidels; and their design was upon his doctrine, to hinder the spreading of that. They denied that there was any resurrection, any world of spirits, any state of rewards and punishments on the other side death. Now those great and fundamental truths which they denied, Christ had made it his business to establish and prove, and had carried the notion of them much farther than ever it was before carried; and therefore they set themselves to perplex his doctrine.

First. See here the method they take to entangle it; they quote the ancient law, by which if a man died without issue, his brother was obliged to marry his widow, *ver. 19.* They suppose a case to happen, that, according to that law, seven brothers were successively the husbands of one woman, *ver. 20.* Probably these Sadducees, according to their wonted profaneness, intended hereby to ridicule that law, and so to bring the whole frame of the Mosaic institution into contempt, as absurd and inconvenient in the practice of it. Those who deny Divine truths commonly set themselves to disparage Divine laws and ordinances. But this only by the by: their design was to expose the doctrine of the resurrection; for they suppose that if there be a future state, it must be such a one as this; and then the doctrine they think is clogged either with this invincible absurdity, that a woman in that state must have seven husbands, or else with this unsolvable difficulty, whose wife she must be. See with what subtlety these heretics undermine the truth! They do not deny it, nor say there can be no resurrection; nay, they do not seem to doubt of it; nor say, 'If there be a resurrection, whose wife shall she be?' as the devil to Christ, "If thou be the Son of God;" but, as though these beasts of the field were more subtle than the serpent himself, they pretend to own the truth, as if they were not Sadducees—no, not they!—who said they denied the resurrection? they take it for granted there is a resurrection, and would be thought to desire instruction concerning it; when really they are designing to give it a fatal stab, and think they shall do it. Note, It is the common artifice of heretics and Sadducees to perplex and entangle the truth which they have not the impudence to deny.

Secondly. See here the method Christ takes to clear and establish this truth, which they attempted to darken and give a shock to. This was a matter of moment, and therefore Christ doth not pass it over lightly, but enlargeth upon it, that if they should not be reclaimed, yet others might be confirmed.

1. He chargeth the Sadducees with error, and chargeth that upon their ignorance. They who banter the doctrine of the resurrection, as some do in our age, would be thought the only knowing men, because the only free-thinkers; when really they are the fools in Israel, and the most enslaved and prejudiced thinkers in the world. "Do ye not therefore err?" Ye cannot but be sensible of it yourselves, and that the cause of your error is, 1. "Because ye know not the Scriptures;" not but that the Sadducees had read the Scriptures, and perhaps were ready in them; and yet they might be truly said not to know the Scriptures, because they did not know the sense and meaning of them, but put false constructions upon them; or they did not receive the Scriptures as the Word of God, but set up their own corrupt reasonings in opposition to the Scripture, and would believe nothing but what they could see. Note, A right knowledge of the Scripture, as the fountain whence all revealed religion now flows, and the foundation on which it is built, is the best preservative against error. Keep the truth, the Scripture truth, and it shall keep thee. 2. Because you know not "the power of God." They could not but know that God is almighty; but they would not apply that doctrine to this matter, but gave up the truth to the objections of the impossibility of it, which would all have been answered if they had but stuck to the doctrine of God's omnipotence, to which nothing is impossible. This therefore, which God hath spoken once, we are concerned to hear twice, to hear and believe, to hear and apply—"that power belongs to God," *Ps. lxxi. 10; Rom. iv. 19-21.* The same power that made soul and body, and preserved them while they were together, can preserve the body safe, and the soul active, when they are parted, and can unite them together again; for, "Behold, the Lord's arm is not shortened." The power of God, seen in the return of the spring, *Ps. civ. 30;* in the reviving of the corn, *Jno. xii. 24;* in the restoring of an abject people to their prosperity, *Eze. xxxvii. 12-14;* in the raising so many to life miraculously, both in the Old Testament and in the New; and especially in the resurrection of Christ, *Eph. i. 19, 20;*—are all earnest of our resurrection by the same power. *Phil. iii. 21,* "according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself."

2. He sets aside all the force of their objection, by setting the doctrine of the future state in a true light, *ver. 25;* "when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage." It is folly to ask, "Whose wife shall she be of the seven?" when the relation between husband and wife, though instituted in the earthly paradise, will not be known in the heavenly one. Turks and infidels expect sensual pleasures in their fools' paradises, but Christians know better things, that "flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God," *1 Cor. xv. 50;* and expect better things, even a full satisfaction in God's love and likeness, *Ps. xvii. 14, 15.* They are as the angels of God in heaven, and we know they have neither wives nor children. It is no wonder if we confound ourselves with endless absurdities, when we measure our ideas of the world of spirits by the affairs of this world of sense.

Thirdly. He builds the doctrine of the future state, and of the blessedness of the righteous in that state, upon the covenant of God with Abraham, which God was pleased to own, long after Abraham's death, *ver. 26, 27.* He appeals to the Scriptures, "Have ye not read in the book of Moses?" We have some advantage in dealing with those that have read the Scriptures, though many that have read them "wrest them," as these Sadducees did, "to their own destruction." Now that which he refers them to is what God said to Moses at the bush, "I am the God of Abraham;" not only I was so, but I am so; I am the portion and happiness of Abraham, a God all-sufficient to him. Note, It is absurd to think that God's relation to Abraham should be continued, and thus solemnly recognised, if Abraham was annihilated, or that the living God should be the portion and happiness of a man that is dead, and must be for ever so; and therefore you must conclude, 1. That Abraham's soul exists and acts in a state of separation from the body. 2. That therefore some time or other the body must rise again, for there is such an innate inclination in a human soul towards its body, as would make a total and everlasting separation inconsistent with the ease and repose, much more with the bliss and joy, of those souls that have the Lord for their God. Upon the whole matter he concludes, "ye therefore do greatly err." Those that deny the resurrection greatly err, and ought to be told so.

28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that

xii. 6. For "having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved," the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. read, "he had yet one well-beloved son."

xii. 23. In the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. this verse begins, "In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of them?"

xii. 26. For "in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake," translate, "in the book of Moses, at the bush, how God spake."

xii. 29. The Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. read, "Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."

xii. 30. For "strength" the Alexandrian MS. reads "soul." The words "this is the first commandment" are not in the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS.

xii. 32. Some of the most ancient MSS. here read, "Thou hast said of a truth, for he is one, and there is none other but he."

xii. 33. The words "and with all the soul" are omitted by the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS., but are found in other early authorities.

xii. 34. Calvin thinks Jesus told the scribe he was not far from

he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? 29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. 31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. 32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: 33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. 34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

The scribes and Pharisees were, however had otherwise, yet enemies to the Sadducees. Now one would have expected, that when they heard Christ argue so well against the Sadducees, they should have countenanced him, as they did Paul, when he appeared against the Sadducees, Acts xxiii. 9; but it had not that effect; because he did not fall in with them in the ceremonial of religion, his agreeing with them in the essentials gained him no manner of respect with them. Only we have here an account of one of them, a scribe, who had so much civility in him as to take notice of Christ's answer to the Sadducees, and to own that he had answered well, and much to the purpose, ver. 28; and we have reason to hope he did not join with other the scribes, in persecuting Christ; for here we have his application to Christ for instruction, and it was such as became him; not tempting Christ, but desiring to improve his acquaintance with him.

First. He inquired, "Which is the first commandment of all?" ver. 28. He doth not mean the first in order, but the first in weight and dignity; which is that command which we ought to have in a special manner an eye to, and our obedience to which will lay a foundation for our obedience to all the rest. Not that any commandment of God is little, they are all the commands of a great God; but some are greater than others, moral precepts than rituals, and of some we may say they are the greatest of all.

Secondly. Christ gave him a direct answer to this inquiry, ver. 29-31. Those that sincerely desire to be instructed concerning their duty, Christ will guide in judgment, and teach his way. He tells him, 1. That the great commandment of all is, that of loving God with all our hearts. 1st. Where this is the commanding principle in the soul, there is a disposition to every other duty. Love is the leading affection of the soul; the love of God is the leading grace in the renewed soul. 2nd. Where this is not, nothing else that is good is done, or not done aright, or not accepted, or not done long. Loving God with all our heart will effectually take us off from, and arm us against, all those things that are rivals with him for the throne in our souls, and will engage us to every thing by which he may be honoured, and with which he will be pleased; and no commandment will be grievous where this principle commands and has the ascendant. Now here in Mark our Saviour prefixeth to this command the great doctrinal truth upon which it is built, ver. 29: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." If we firmly believe this, it will follow, that we shall love him "with all our heart." He is Jehovah, who has all amiable perfections in himself; he is our God, to whom we stand related and obliged, and therefore we ought to love him, to set our affections on him, let out our desire towards him, and take a delight in him; and he is one Lord, therefore he must be loved with our whole heart; he has the sole right to us, and therefore ought to have the sole possession of us. If he be one, our hearts must be one with him; and since there is no God but he, no rival must be admitted with him upon the throne. 2. That the second great commandment is to "love our neighbour as ourselves," ver. 31; as truly and sincerely as we love ourselves, and in the same instances, and we must shew it by doing as we would be done by. As we must therefore love God better than ourselves, because he is Jehovah, a being infinitely better than we are, and must love him with all our heart, because he is one Lord, and there is no other like him, so we must love our neighbour as ourselves, because he is of the same nature with ourselves; our hearts are fashioned alike, and my neighbour and myself are of one body, of one society, that of the world of mankind; and if a fellow Christian, and of the same sacred society, the obligation is the stronger. "Has not one God created us?" Mal. ii. 10. Has not one Christ redeemed us? Well might Christ say, "There is no other commandment greater than these;" for in these all the law is fulfilled; and if we make conscience of obedience to these, all other instances of obedience will follow of course.

Thirdly. The scribe consented to what Christ said, and descanted upon it, ver. 32, 33. 1. He commendeth Christ's decision of this question: "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth." Christ's assertions needed not the scribe's attestations; but this scribe, being a man in authority, thought it would put some reputation upon what Christ said to have it commended by him; and it shall be brought in evidence against those who persecuted Christ as a deceiver, that one of themselves, even a scribe of their own, confessed that he said the truth, and said it well. And thus must we subscribe to Christ's sayings; must set to our seal that they are true. 2. He comments upon it. Christ had quoted that great doctrine, that "the Lord our God is one Lord," and this he not only assented to, but added, and "there is none other but he;" and therefore we must have no other God but him. This excludes all rivals with him, and secures the throne in the heart entire for him. Christ had laid down that great law of

loving God with all our heart; and this also he explains, that it is loving him with the understanding, as those that know what abundant reason we have to love him. Our love to God, as it must be an entire, so it must be an intelligent love; we must love him with all the understanding, *ἐφ' ὅλης τῆς συνέσεως*,—"out of the whole understanding;" our rational powers and faculties must all be set on work to lead out the affections of our souls towards God. Christ had said, that to love God and our neighbour is the greatest commandment of all; Yea, saith the scribe, it is better, it "is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices;" more acceptable to God, and will turn to a better account to ourselves. There were those who held that the law of sacrifices was the greatest commandment of all; but this scribe readily agreed with our Saviour in this, that the law of love to God and our neighbour is greater than that of sacrifice, even than that of whole burnt offerings, which were intended purely for the honour of God.

Fourthly. Christ approved of what he said, and encouraged him to proceed in his inquiries of him, ver. 34. 1. He owned that he understood himself well, as far as he went; so far, so good: "Jesus saw that he understood himself well, and was the more pleased with it, because he had of late met with so many, even of the scribes, men of letters, that answered indiscreetly, as those that had no understanding, nor desired to have any. He answered *σοφως*, 'as one that had a mind;' as a rational, intelligent man; as one that had his wits about him; as one whose reason was not blinded, whose judgment was not biased, and whose forethought was not fettered by the prejudices which other scribes were so much under the power of. He answered as one that allowed himself liberty and leisure to consider, and as one that had considered. 2. He owned that he stood far for a farther advance: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God," the kingdom of grace and glory; thou art in a likely way to be a Christian,—"a disciple of Christ; for the doctrine of Christ insists most upon these things, and is designed and has a tendency direct to bring thee to this. Note, There is hope of those who make a good use of the light they have, and go as far as that will carry them, that by the grace of God they will be led farther, by the clearer discoveries God has to make to them. What came of this scribe we are not told, but would willingly hope that he took the hint Christ hereby gave him; and that having been told by him, so much to his satisfaction, what was the great commandment of the law, he proceeded to inquire of him or his apostles what was the great commandment of the Gospel too; yet, if he did not, but took up here, and went no farther, we are not to think it strange, for there are many who are "not far from the kingdom of God," and yet never come thither. Now one would think this should have invited many to consult him; but it had a contrary effect, "no man after that durst ask him any question;" every thing he said was spoken with such authority and majesty, that every one stood in awe of him; those that desired to learn were ashamed to ask, and those that designed to cavil were afraid to ask.

35 And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? 36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. 37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly. 38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, 39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: 40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

Here, First. Christ shews the people how weak and defective the scribes were in their preaching, and how unable to solve the difficulties that occurred in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which they undertook to expound. Of this he gives an instance, which is not so fully related here as it was in Matthew. Christ was teaching in the temple, and many things he said which were not written; but notice is taken of this, because it will stir us up to inquire concerning Christ, and to inquire of him; for none can have the right knowledge of him but from himself; it is not to be had from the scribes, for they will soon be run aground.

1. They told the people that the Messiah was to be the son of David, ver. 35; and they were in the right; he was not only to descend from his loins, but to fill his throne, Lu. i. 32: "The Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David." The Scripture said it often, but the people took it as what the scribes said; whereas the truths of God should rather be quoted from our Bibles than from our ministers, for there is the original of them: *Dulcis ex ipso fonte bibuntur aquæ*,—"The waters are sweetest when drawn immediately from their source."

2. Yet they could not tell them how, notwithstanding that it was very proper for David in spirit—the spirit of prophecy—to call him his Lord, as he doth, Ps. cx. 1. They had taught the people that concerning the Messiah which would be for the honour of their nation, that he should be a branch of their royal family; but had not taken care to teach them that which was the honour of the Messiah himself, that he should be the Son of God, and, as such, and not otherwise, David's Lord. Thus they held the truth in unrighteousness, and were partial in the Gospel, as well as in the law of the Old Testament. They were able to say it, and prove it, that Christ was to be David's son; but if any should object, "How then doth David call him Lord?" they would not know how to avoid the force of the objection. Note, Those are unworthy to sit in Moses' seat who, though they are able to preach the truth, are not, in some measure able to defend it when they have preached it, and to convince gain-sayers. Now this galled the scribes, to have their ignorance thus exposed, and no doubt incited them more against Christ; but "the common people heard him gladly," ver. 37. What he preached was surprising and affecting; and though it reflected upon the scribes, it was instructive to them, and they had never heard such preaching. Probably there was something more than

the kingdom of God, "because he would yield to his duty, and did wisely discern the outward profession of the worship of God from the necessary duties of neighbourhood." It was said to encourage rather than to praise him.

xii. 41. By "the treasury" Lightfoot understands the thirteen boxes for alms, &c., which were in the court of the women. "This court," he says, "was so called, not because women only were admitted, but because they might not go further; just as the court of

the Gentiles was so called, not because they only entered it, but because they might not go beyond it." "Jesus sat over against the treasury," i.e., he sat under the porch, before which the boxes were plac'd. By "the treasury," in John viii. 20, Lightfoot says the court of the women is meant.

xiii. 1. For "see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" translate, "Behold, what great stones, and what great buildings!"

ordinarily commanding and charming in his voice and way of delivery, which recommended him to the affections of the common people: for we do not find that any were wrought upon to believe in him, and to follow him; but he was to them as "a lovely song of one that could play well on an instrument," as Ezekiel was to his hearers, *Eze. xxxiii. 32*; and perhaps some of these cried, "Crucify him;" as Herod heard John Baptist gladly, and yet cut off his head.

Secondly, He cautions the people to take heed of suffering themselves to be imposed upon by the scribes, and of being infected with their pride and hypocrisy: "He said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes," *ver. 38*; stand upon your guard, that you neither imbibe their peculiar opinions, nor the opinions of the people concerning them. It was a long charge drawn up against them in the parallel place, *Mat. xxiii.*; it is here contracted.

1. They affect to appear very great; for they go in "long clothing," with vestures "down to their feet," and in those they walk about the streets, as princes, or judges, or gentlemen of the long robe. Their going in such clothing was not sinful, but their loving to go in it, priding themselves in it, valuing themselves by it, commanding respect by it, saying to their long clothes, as Saul to Samuel, "Honour me now before this people;" this was a product of pride. Christ would have his disciples go with their loins girt.

2. They affect to appear very good; for they pray, they make long prayers, as if they were very intimate with heaven, and had a deal of business there. They took care it should be known that they prayed, that they prayed long, which some think intimates that they prayed not for themselves only, but for others, and therein were very particular and very large. This they did for a pretence, that they might seem to love prayer, not only for God's sake, whom hereby they pretended to glorify, but for their neighbour's sake, whom hereby they pretended to be serviceable to.

3. They herein aimed to advance themselves; they coveted applause, and were fond of it; they loved "salutations in the marketplaces, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts;" these pleased a vain fancy: to have these given them, they thought expressed the value they had for them that did know them, and gained them respect from those that did not.

4. They herein aimed to enrich themselves; they "devoured widows' houses;" made themselves masters of their estates by some trick or other; and it was to screen themselves from the suspicion of dishonesty that they put on the mask of piety; and that they might not be thought as bad as the worst, they were studious to seem as good as the best. Let fraud and oppression be thought the worse of for their having profaned and disgraced long prayers; but let not prayers, no, nor long prayers, be thought the worse of, if made in humility and sincerity, for their having been by some thus abused. But as iniquity, thus disguised with a show of piety, is double iniquity, so its doom will be doubly heavy; "these shall receive greater damnation; greater than those that live without prayer; greater than they should have received for the wrong done to the poor widows, if it had not been thus disguised. Note, The damnation of hypocrites will be of all other the greatest damnation."

41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

This passage of story was not in *Matthew*, but is here, and in *Luke*. It is Christ's commendation of the poor widow that cast two mites into the treasury, which our Saviour, as busy as he was in preaching, found leisure to take notice of. Observe,

I. There was a public fund for charity, into which contributions were brought, and out of which distributions were made; a poor's box, and this in the temple; for works of charity and works of piety very fitly go together; where God is honoured by our worship, it is proper he should be honoured by the relief of his poor; and we often find prayers and alms in conjunction, as *Acts xx. 1, 2*. It is good to erect public receptacles of charity, for the inviting and directing of private hands in giving to the poor; nay, it is good for those who are of ability to have funds of their own, to "lay by as God has prospered them," *1 Cor. xvi. 2*, that they may have something ready to give, when an object of charity offers itself, which is before dedicated to such uses.

II. Jesus Christ had an eye upon it; he "sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into it;" not grudging either that he had none to cast in, or had not the disposal of that which was cast in, but observing what was cast in. Note, Our Lord Jesus takes notice what we contribute to pious and charitable uses; whether we give liberally, or give sparingly; whether cheerfully, or with reluctance and ill-will; nay, he looks at the heart; he observes what principles we act upon, and what our views are in giving alms; and whether we do it as unto the Lord, or only to be seen of men.

III. He saw "many that were rich cast in much;" and it was a good sight, to see rich people charitable; to see many rich people so; and to see them not only cast in, but cast in much. Note, Those that are rich ought to give richly; if God give abundantly to us, he expects we should give abundantly to the poor; and it is not enough for those that are rich to say, they give as much as others do, who perhaps have much less of the world than they have; but they must give in proportion to their estates; and if objects of charity do not present themselves that require so much, they ought to inquire them out, and to "devise liberal things."

IV. There was a poor widow that cast in two mites, which make a farthing, *ver. 42*; and our Lord Jesus highly commended her; "called his disciples" to him, and bid them take notice of it, *ver. 43*; tells them she could very ill spare that which she gave; she had scarce enough for herself; it was "all her living;" all she had to live upon for that day, and perhaps a great part of what she had earned by her labour the day before; and that, forasmuch as he knew she did it from a truly charitable disposition, he reckoned it more than all that put together which the rich people threw in; for they did "cast

in of their abundance," but she of her want, *ver. 44*. Now many would have been ready to censure this poor widow, and to think she did ill; why should she give to others, when she had little enough for herself? Charity begins at home; or, if she would give it, why did she not bestow it upon some poor body that she knew? what need she bring it to the treasury, to be disposed of by the chief priests, who, we have reason to fear, were partial in the disposal of it. It is so rare a thing to find any that would not blame this widow, that we cannot expect to find any that will imitate her; and yet our Saviour commends her, and therefore we are sure she did very well and wisely: if Christ saith "Well done," no matter who saith otherwise; and we must from hence learn, 1. That giving alms is an excellent good thing, and highly pleasing to the Lord Jesus; and if we be humble and sincere in it, he will graciously accept of it; though in some circumstances there may not be all the discretion in the world. 2. Those that have but a little, yet ought to give alms out of their little. Those that live by their labour, from hand to mouth, yet must give to those that need, *Eph. iv. 28*. 3. It is very good for us to straiten and deny ourselves, that we may be able to give the more to the poor; not only to deny ourselves superfluities, but even conveniences, for the sake of charity; we should in many cases pinch ourselves, that we may supply others' necessities; this is loving our neighbours as ourselves. 4. Public charities should be encouraged, for they bring upon a nation public blessings; and though there may be some mismanagement of them, yet that is not a good reason why we should not bring in our quota to them. 5. Though we can give but a little in charity, yet if it be according to our ability, and be given with an upright heart, it shall be accepted of Christ, who requires "according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not." Two mites shall be put upon the score, and brought to account, if given in a right manner, as if it had been two pounds. 6. It is much to the praise of charity, when we give not only "to our power, but beyond our power;" as the Macedonian churches, "whose deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality," *2 Cor. viii. 2, 3*. When we can cheerfully provide for others, out of our own necessary provision, as the widow of Sarepta for Elijah, and Christ for his five thousand guests, and trust God to provide for us some other way, this is thankworthy.

CHAPTER XIII.

We have here the substance of that prophetic sermon which our Lord Jesus preached, pointing at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the consummation of all things; it was one of the last of his sermons, and not *ad populum*,—"to the people," but *ad clerum*,—"to the clergy;" it was private, preached only to four of his disciples, with whom his secret was. Here is, I. The occasion of his prediction, his disciples admiring the buildings of the temple, *ver. 1, 2*, and their inquiry concerning the time of the desolation of them, *ver. 3, 4*. II. The predictions themselves: 1. Of the rise of deceivers, *ver. 5, 6, 21—23*. 2. Of the wars of the nations, *ver. 7, 8*. 3. Of the persecution of Christians, *ver. 9—13*. 4. Of the destruction of Jerusalem, *ver. 14—20*. 5. Of the end of the world, *ver. 24—27*. III. Some general intimations concerning the time of them, *ver. 28—32*. IV. Some practical inferences from all, *ver. 33—37*.



AND as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! 2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. 3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter



MOUNT OF OLIVES.

and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, 4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

We may here see, First, How apt many of Christ's own disciples are to idolize things that look great, and have been long looked upon as sacred: they had heard Christ com-

xiii. 3. Mark gives the names of the disciples who proposed the question which follows, and he is the only evangelist who does so.

xiii. 5. The Sinaitic, Vatican, and other ancient MSS. read, "And Jesus began to say to them." The verb "to answer" is often left out of early copies.

xiii. 6. It will be noted that the word "Christ" is not in the Greek text, which would therefore be more correctly rendered, "I am he." There is no doubt that our version gives the completed

sense, because the parallel passage in St. Matthew reads, "I am the Christ."

xiii. 8. The words "and troubles" here, which are peculiar to this Gospel, are omitted by the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS.

xiii. 10. The word "first" is understood to mean "before the end of the troubles which are here predicted."

xiii. 12. For "shall cause them to be put to death" some, both here and in Matt. x. 21, translate, "shall put them to death."

plain of those who had made the temple a den of thieves; and yet, when he quitted it, for the wickedness that remained in it they count him to be as much in love as they were with the stately structure and adorning of it. One of them said to him, "Look, Master, what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" ver. 1; we never saw the like in Galilee. O do not leave this fine place!"

Secondly. How little Christ values external pomp, where there is not real purity: "Seest thou these great buildings?" saith Christ, and admirest thou them? I tell thee the time is at hand when "there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down," ver. 2; and the sumptuousness of the fabric shall be no security to it; no, nor move any compassion in the Lord Jesus towards it. He looks with pity upon the ruin of precious souls, and weeps over them, for on them he has put a great value; but we do not find him look with any pity upon the ruin of a magnificent house, when he is driven out of it by sin, for that is of small value with him. With what little concern doth he say, "not one stone shall be left upon another." Much of the strength of the temple lay in the largeness of the stones; and if these be thrown down, no footstep, no remembrance of it will remain: while any part remained standing there might be some hopes of the repair of it; but what hope is there when not one stone is left upon another?

Thirdly. How natural it is to us to desire to know things to come, and the times of them; more inquisitive we are apt to be about that, than about our duty. His disciples knew not how to digest this doctrine of the ruin of the temple, which they thought must be their Master's royal palace, and in which they expected their preferment, and to have the posts of honour; and therefore were in pain till they got him alone, and got more out of him concerning this matter. As he was returning to Bethany therefore, "he sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple," where he had a full view of it; and there four of them agreed to ask "him privately," what he meant by the destroying of the temple, which they understood no more than they did the predictions of his own death; so inconsistent was it with their scheme. Probably, though these four proposed the question, yet Christ's discourse in answer to it, was in the hearing of the rest of the disciples, yet "privately," that is, apart from the multitude; their inquiry is, "When shall these things be?" They will not question, at least not seem to question, whether they shall be or no, for their Master has said they shall, but are willing to hope it is a great way off. Yet they ask not precisely the day and year; therein they were modest: But, "Tell us what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" what presages shall there be of them, and how may we prognosticate their approach?

5 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you: 6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. 8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows. 9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. 10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations. 11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. 12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. 13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Our Lord Jesus, in reply to their question, sets himself not so much to satisfy their curiosity, as to direct their consciences; leaves them still in the dark concerning the times and seasons, which the Father has kept in his own power, and which it was not for them to know; but gives them the cautions which were needful, with reference to the events that should now shortly come to pass.

First. They must take heed that they be not deceived by the seducers and impostors that should now shortly arise, ver. 5, 6: "Take heed lest any man deceive you;" lest having found the true Messiah, you lose him again in the crowd of pretenders; or be inveigled to embrace others in rivalry with him: "Many shall come in my name;" not in the name of Jesus, but "saying, I am Christ," and so claiming the dignities which I only am entitled to. After the Jews had rejected the true Christ, they were imposed upon, and so exposed by many false Christs, but never before; those false Christs deceived many, therefore take heed lest they deceive you. Note, When many are deceived, we should thereby be awakened to look to ourselves.

Secondly. They must take heed that they be not disturbed at the noise of wars, which they should be alarmed with, ver. 7, 8. Sin introduced wars, and

they come from men's lusts; but at some times the nations are more distracted and wasted with wars than at other times: so it shall be now. Christ was born into the world when there was a general peace, but soon after he went out of the world there were general wars. "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;" and what will become of them, then, who are to preach the Gospel to every nation? *Inter arma silent leges.*—"Amidst the clash of arms the voice of law is not heard;" but "be not troubled at it." 1. Let it be no surprise to you, you are bid to expect it, and "such things must needs be," for God has appointed them, in order to the farther accomplishment of his purposes; and by the wars of the Jews (which Josephus has given us a large account of) God will punish the wickedness of the Jews. 2. Let it be no terror to you, as if your interest were in danger of being overthrown, or your work obstructed, by these wars; you have no concern in them, and therefore need not be apprehensive of any damage by them. Note, Those that despise the smiles of the world, and do not court and covet them, may despise the frowns of the world, and need not fear them. If we seek not to rise with them that rise in the world, why should we dread falling with them that fall in the world? 3. Let it not be looked upon as an omen of the approaching period of the world, for "the end is not yet," ver. 7. Think not that these wars will bring the world to a period; no, there are other intermediate counsels to be fulfilled betwixt them and the end of all things, which are designed to prepare you for the end, but not to hasten it out of due time. 4. Let it not be looked upon as if in them God had done his worst; no, he has more arrows in his quiver, and they are "ordained against the persecutors;" be not troubled at the wars you shall hear of, for they are but "the beginnings of sorrows;" and therefore, instead of being disturbed at them, you ought to prepare for worse; for there shall also "be earthquakes in divers places," which shall bury multitudes in the ruins of their own houses, "and there shall be famines," by which many of the poor shall perish for want of bread, and troubles and commotions, so that there shall be no peace to him that goes out, or comes in. The world shall be full of troubles, but "be not ye troubled;" without are fightings, within are fears, but fear not ye their fear. Note, The disciples of Christ, if it be not their own fault, may enjoy a holy security and serenity of mind, when all about them is in the greatest disorder.

Thirdly. They must take heed that they be not drawn away from Christ, and from their duty to him by the sufferings they should meet with for Christ's sake. Again, he saith, "Take heed to yourselves," ver. 9: though you may escape the sword of war better than some of your neighbours, because you interest not yourself in the public quarrels, yet be not secure; you will be exposed to the sword of justice more than others, and the parties that contend with one another will unite against you. Take heed, therefore, lest you deceive yourselves with the hopes of outward prosperity, and such a temporal kingdom as you have been dreaming of, when it is through many tribulations that you must enter into the kingdom of God. Take heed, lest you needlessly expose yourselves to trouble, and pull it upon your own head. Take heed what you say and do, for you will have many eyes upon you. Observe,

1. What the trouble is they must expect. 1st. They "shall be hated of all men;" trouble enough! The thoughts of being hated are grievous to a tender spirit, and the fruits of that hatred must needs be a constant vexation; those that are malicious will be mischievous. It was not for any thing amiss in them, or done amiss by them, that they were hated, but for Christ's name's sake; because they were called by his name, called upon his name, preached his name, and wrought miracles in his name: the world hated them because he loved them.

2nd. Their own relations shall betray them, those to whom they were most nearly allied, and on whom therefore they depended for protection; they shall betray you, shall inform against you, and be your prosecutors. If a father has a child that is a Christian, he shall become void of natural affection; it shall all be swallowed up in bigotry, and he shall betray his own child to the persecutors, as if he were a worshipper of other gods, *Deu. xiii. 6.*

3rd. Their church rulers shall inflict their censures upon them. You shall be delivered up to the great Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, and to the inferior courts and consistories in other cities, and shall be beaten in the synagogues with forty stripes at a time, as offenders against the law, which was read in the synagogue. It is no new thing for the church's artillery, through the treachery of its officers, to be turned against some of its best friends.

4th. Governors and kings shall use their power against them. Because the Jews have not power to put them to death, they shall incense the Roman powers against them, as they did Herod against James and Peter, and they shall cause you to be put to death, as enemies to the empire. They must resist unto blood, and still resist.

2. What they shall have to comfort themselves with in the midst of these great and sore troubles.

1st. That the work they were called to should be carried on and prosper, notwithstanding all this opposition they should meet with in it, ver. 10: "The Gospel" shall, for all this, "be published among all nations;" and, before the destruction of Jerusalem, the sound of it shall go forth into all the earth; not only through all the nation of the Jews, but to all the nations of the earth. It is comfort to those who suffer for the Gospel, that though they may be crushed, and borne down, the Gospel cannot; it shall keep its ground and carry the day.

2nd. That their sufferings, instead of obstructing their work, should forward it; your being "brought before governors and kings" shall be "for a testimony to them," so some read it, ver. 9. It shall give you an opportunity of preaching the Gospel to those before whom you are brought as criminals, to whom otherwise you could not have access. Thus St. Paul being brought before Felix, and Festus, and Agrippa, and Nero, was a testimony to them concerning Christ and his Gospel. Or, as we read it, it shall be for a testimony against them, against both the judges and the prosecutors, who pursue those with the utmost rage that appear upon examination to be not only innocent, but excellent persons. The Gospel is a testimony to us concerning Christ and heaven; if we receive it, it will be a testimony for us, it will justify and save us; if not, it will be a testimony against us in the great day.

3rd. That when they were brought before kings and governors for Christ's sake, they should have special assistance from heaven to plead Christ's cause and their own, ver. 11: "Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak;" "Be not solicitous how to address yourselves to great men, so as to obtain their favour; your cause is just and glorious, and needs not to be supported by premeditated speeches and harangues;" "but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour," whatsoever shall be suggested to you, and put into your minds, and into your mouths, *pro re nata*,—"on the spur of the occasion," "that speak ye," and fear not the success of it because it is off hand, "for it is not ye that speak," purely by the strength of your own wisdom, consideration and resolution, "but it is the Holy Ghost." Note, Those whom Christ calls out to be advocates for him, shall be furnished with full instructions; and when we are engaged in the service of Christ, we may depend upon the aids of the Spirit of Christ.

4th. That heaven at last would make amends for all. "You will meet with a great deal of hardship in your way, but have a good heart on it, your warfare

xiii. 14. The words "spoken of by Daniel the prophet" are omitted by the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Cambridge MSS., and some modern editions, the Latin Vulgate, and other authorities; but they are found in the Alexandrian and other MSS., as well as in the Syriac versions, and elsewhere. By the mountains to which they who were in Judea were to flee, we may understand the hilly regions to the south and east of Judea.

xiii. 18. It is supposed that the words "neither on the Sabbath-

day," which Matthew has, are omitted by Mark because he wrote chiefly for Gentile readers.

xiii. 20. By the shortening of the days we must understand their being restricted in number.

xiii. 22. The words "false Christs and" are omitted here by some MSS., and Tischendorf thinks they have been inserted from St. Matthew; but they occur in the Alexandrian, Cambridge, Vatican, and other MSS., and in the Syriac and Vulgate versions, &c.

will be accomplished, and your testimony finished, and "he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved," ver. 13: perseverance gains the crown. The salvation here promised is more than a deliverance from evil, it is an everlasting blessedness, which will be an abundant recompense for all their services and sufferings. All this we have, *Mat. x. 17, &c.*

14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judæa flee to the mountains: 15 And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house: 16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. 17 But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. 19 For *in* those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. 20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. 21 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here *is* Christ; or, lo, *he is* there; believe *him* not: 22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect. 23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

The Jews, in rebelling against the Romans, and in persecuting the Christians, were hastening their own ruin apace; both efficiently and meritoriously were setting both God and man against them: see 1 *Thess. ii. 15*. Now here we have a prediction of that ruin which came upon them, within less than forty years after this: we had it before, *Mat. xxiv. 15, &c.* Observe,

First. What is here foretold concerning it.

1. That the Roman armies should make a descent upon Judæa, and invest Jerusalem, the holy city. These were "the abomination of desolation," which the Jews did abominate, and by which they should be made desolate. The country of thine enemy is called the "land which thou abhorrest," *Isa. vii. 16*. Therefore it was an abomination, because it brought with it nothing but desolation. They had rejected Christ as an abomination, who would have been their salvation; and now God brought upon them an abomination that would be their desolation, thus spoken of by Daniel the prophet, *Dan. ix. 27*, as that by which this sacrifice and offering should be made to cease. This army stood "where it ought not," in and about the holy city, which the heathen ought not to have approached, nor should have been suffered to do, if Jerusalem had not first profaned the crown of their holiness. This the church complains of, *Lam. i. 10*; "the heathen entered into her sanctuary, whom thou didst command that they should not enter into the congregation;" but sin made the breach, at which the glory went out, and the abomination of desolation broke in, and stood "where it ought not." Now "let him that readeth" this "understand" it, and endeavour to take it right. Prophecies should not be too plain, and yet intelligible to those that search them; and they are best understood, by comparing them first with one another, and at last with the event.

2. That when the Roman army should come into the country, there would be no safety any where but by quitting the country, and that with all possible expedition; it will be in vain to fight, the enemies will be too hard for them; in vain to abscond, the enemies will find them out; and in vain to capitulate, the enemies will give them no quarter: a man cannot have so much as his life given him for a prey, but by fleeing "to the mountains," out of Judæa; and let him take the first alarm, and make the best of his way. If he be "on the housetop," trying from thence to discover the motions of the enemy, and spies them coming, "let him not go down to take any thing out of the house," for it will lose time, which is more precious than his best goods, and will but encumber him, and embarrass his flight; if he be in the field, and there discovers the approach of the enemy, let him get away as he is, and "not turn back again to take up his garment," ver. 16. If he can save his life, let him reckon it a good bargain, though he can save nothing else; and be thankful to God, that though he is cut short, he is not cut off.

3. That it would go very hard at that time, with poor mothers and nurses, ver. 17: "Woe to them that are with child, that dare not go into strange places, that cannot shift for themselves, nor make haste, as others can; and woe to them that give suck," that know not how either to leave the tender infants behind them, or to carry them along with them. Such is the vanity of the creature, that the time may often be, when the greatest comforts may prove the greatest burthens. It would likewise be very uncomfortable, if they should be forced to flee "in the winter," ver. 18, when the weather and ways were bad, when the roads would be scarce passable, especially in those mountains to which they must flee. If there be no remedy, but that trouble must come, yet we may desire and pray that, if it be God's will, the circumstances of it may be so ordered as to be a mitigation of the trouble; and when things are bad, we ought to consider they might have been worse. It is bad to be forced to flee, but it would have been worse if it had been "in the winter."

4. That throughout all the country of the Jews there should be such destruction and desolation made as could not be paralleled in any history, ver. 19: "In those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of time,"

that is, "of the creation which God created," for time and the creation are of equal date, "unto this day, neither shall be" to the end of time, such a complication of miseries, and of such continuance. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans was very terrible, but this exceeded it. It threatened an universal slaughter of all the people of the Jews; so barbarously did they devour one another, and the Romans devour them all, that if their wars had continued a little longer, "no flesh could have been saved," not one Jew could have been left alive; but in the midst of wrath God remembered mercy; and, 1st. He "shortened the days," he let fall his controversy before he had "made a full end." As a church and nation, the ruin was complete; but many particular persons had their lives given them for a prey, by the storm taking up when it did. 2nd. It was "for the elect's sake" that those days were shortened; many among them fared the better for the sake of the few among them that believed in Christ, and were faithful to him. There was a promise that "a remnant should be saved," *Isa. x. 22*; and that God would not, for his servants' sakes, "destroy them all," *Isa. lxv. 9*; and these promises must be fulfilled; "God's own elect cry day and night to him," and their prayers must be answered, *Luk. xviii. 7*.

Secondly. What directions are given to the disciples with reference to it.

1. They must shift for the safety of their lives. "When you see the country invaded, and the city invested, flatter not yourselves with thoughts that the enemy will retire, or that you may be able to make your part good with them; but, without farther deliberation or delay, 'let them which be in Judæa flee to the mountains,' ver. 14. Meddle not with strife that belongs not to you; 'let the potsherders strive with the potsherders of the earth;' but do you go out of the ship when you see it sinking, that you die not the death of the uncircumcised in heart."

2. They must provide for the safety of their souls; seducers will be busy at that time, for they love to fish in troubled waters, and therefore then you must double your guard; "then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or, lo, he is there," you know he is in heaven, and will come again, at the end of time, to judge the world, and therefore "believe them not;" having received Christ, be not drawn into the snares of any antichrist; "for false Christs, and false prophets shall arise," ver. 22. When the gospel kingdom was in the setting up, Satan mustered all his force to oppose it, and made use of all his wiles; and God permitted it for the trial of the sincerity of some, and the discovery of the hypocrisy of others, and the confusion of those who rejected Christ when he was offered to them. False Christs shall arise, and false prophets, that shall preach them up; or such as, though they pretend not to be Christs, set up for prophets, and undertake to foretell things to come, and they shall shew signs and lying wonders; so early did the mystery of iniquity begin to work, 1 *Thess. i. 7*. They shall seduce, if it were possible, the very elect; "so plausible shall their pretences be, and so industrious shall they be to impose upon people, that they shall draw away many that were forward and zealous professors of religion, many that were very likely to have persevered; for nothing will be effectual to secure men but that foundation of God which stands immovably sure; 'the Lord knows them that are his,' who shall be preserved, when the faith of some is overthrown, 2 *Tim. ii. 18, 19*. They shall seduce, if it were possible, the very elect;" but it is not possible to seduce them; "the election shall obtain," whoever "are blinded," *Rom. xi. 7*. But in consideration hereof, let the disciples be cautious who they give credit to, ver. 23: "But take ye heed." Christ knew they were of the elect, who could not possibly be seduced, and yet he said to them, "take heed." An assurance of persevering and cautious against apostasy will very well consist. Though Christ said to them "take heed," it doth not therefore follow that their perseverance was doubtful, for they were kept by the power of God; and though their perseverance was secured, yet it doth not therefore follow that this caution was needless, because they must be kept in the use of proper means; God will keep them, but they must keep themselves. "I have foretold you all things;" I have foretold you this danger, that being forewarned, you may be forearmed; I have foretold all things which you needed to have foretold to you, and therefore take heed of hearkening to such as pretend to be prophets, and to foretell more than I have foretold. The sufficiency of the Scripture is a good argument against listening to such as pretend to inspiration.

24 But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. 26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

These verses seem to point at Christ's second coming, to judge the world. The disciples, in their question, had confounded the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, *Mat. xxiv. 3*; which was built upon a mistake, as if the temple must needs stand as long as the world stands; this mistake Christ rectifies, and shews that the end of the world, "in those days," those other days you inquire about, the day of Christ's coming, and the day of judgment, shall be "after that tribulation," and not coincident with it; let those that live to see the Jewish nation destroyed take heed of thinking that because the Son of man doth not visibly come in the clouds then, he will never so come; no, he will come after that. And here he foretells,

First. The final dissolution of the present frame and fabric of the world; even of that part of it which seems least liable to change, even the upper part, the purer and more refined part; "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall no more give her light;" for they shall be quite outshone by the glory of the Son of man, *Isa. xxiv. 23*. "The stars of heaven," that from the beginning had kept their place and regular motion, shall fall as leaves in autumn; "and the powers that are in heaven," the heavenly bodies, the fixed stars, "shall be shaken."

Secondly. The visible appearance of the Lord Jesus, to whom the judgment of that day shall be committed, ver. 26. "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds;" probably over that very place where he sat when he said this, for the clouds are in the lower region of the air. He shall come "with great power and glory," such as will be suited to the errand on which he comes. "Every eye shall then see him."

xiii. 25. The first clause should be rendered, "and the stars shall fall from heaven;" literally, "shall be falling." This is the reading of several MSS.

xiii. 28. Translate, "Now from the fig-tree learn the parable: When now her branch becometh tender, and produceth the leaves."

xiii. 32. Translate, "But of that day and hour no one knoweth, neither the angels who are in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father."

xiii. 33. The words "and pray" are not found in the Vatican and

Cambridge MSS., but they occur in other important MSS. and ancient versions.

xiii. 34. The words "for the Son of Man is" are not in the Greek, which is "like a man going from home, leaving his house, and giving authority," &c.

xiv. 1. In *Matt. xxvi. 2* we read, "Ye know that after two days is the Passover." Here the sense is generally similar: It was the Passover, and the feast of unleavened bread after two days; i.e.,

Thirdly The gathering together of all the elect to him, ver. 27: "He shall send his angels, and gather together the elect" to him, to meet him in the air, 1 *Thes.* iv. 17. They shall be fetched from one end of the world to the other, so that none shall be missing from that general assembly; they shall be fetched "from the uttermost parts of the earth," most remote from the place where Christ's tribunal shall be set, and shall be brought "to the uttermost part of heaven;" so sure, so swift, so easy shall their conveyance be, that there shall none of them miscarry, though they were to be brought from the uttermost part of the earth one way to the uttermost part of the heaven another way. A faithful Israelite shall be carried safely, though it were from the utmost border of the land of bondage to the utmost border of the land of promise.

28 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: 29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors. 30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. 31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. 32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. 33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34 *For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey,* who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockrowing, or in the morning: 36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

We have here the application of this prophetic sermon: Now learn to look forward in a right manner.

First. As to the destruction of Jerusalem, expect it to come very shortly; as when the branch of the fig tree becomes soft, and the leaves sprout forth, ye expect that summer will come shortly, ver. 28. When second causes begin to work, ye expect their effects in their proper order and time; so when "ye see these things come to pass," when you see the Jewish nation embroiled in wars, distracted by false Christs and prophets, and drawing upon them the displeasure of the Romans, especially when you see them persecuting you for your Master's sake, and thereby standing to what they did when they put him to death, and repeating it, and so filling up the measure of their iniquity, then say that their ruin "is nigh, even at the door" and provide for yourselves accordingly. The disciples themselves were indeed all of them, except John, taken away from the evil to come, but the next generation whom they were to train up would live to see it, and by these instructions Christ left behind him would be kept from sharing in it. "This generation that is now rising up, shall not all be worn off before all these things come to pass, which I have told you of, relating to Jerusalem, and they shall begin to take effect now shortly." And as this destruction is near and within ken, so it is sure; the decree is gone forth, it is a consumption determined, *Dan.* ix. 27. Christ doth not speak these things only to frighten them; no, they are the declarations of God's fixed purpose: "heaven and earth shall pass away," at the end of time, "but my words shall not pass away," ver. 31, not one of these predictions shall fail of a punctual accomplishment.

Secondly. As to the end of the world, do not inquire when it will come; for it is not a question fit to be asked; "for of that day and that hour knoweth no man;" it is a thing at a great distance, the exact time is fixed in the counsel of God, but is not revealed by any word of God, either to men on earth or to angels in heaven; the angels shall have timely notice to prepare to attend in that day, and it shall be published when it comes to the children of men with sound of trumpet; but at present men and angels are kept in the dark concerning the precise time of it, that they both attend to their proper services in the present day. But it follows, "neither the Son;" but is there any thing which the Son is ignorant of? We read indeed of a book which was sealed till the Lamb opened the seals; but did not he know what was in it before the seals were opened? Was not he conscious to the writing of it? There were those in the primitive times who taught, from this text, that there were some things that Christ, as man, was ignorant of, and from thence were called Agnotes; they said it was no more absurd to say so, than to say that his human soul suffered grief and fear; and many of the orthodox fathers approved of this. Some would evade it, by saying that Christ spoke this in a way of prudential economy, to divert the disciples from farther inquiry; but to this, one of the ancients answers, that "it is not fit to speak too nicely in this matter,"—*οὐ δὲ τὴν ἀκριβολογίαν*, so Leontius, in Dr. Hammond. "It is certain (saith Archbishop Tillotson) that Christ, as God, could not be ignorant of any thing; but the Divine wisdom which dwelt in our Saviour did communicate itself to his human soul according to the Divine pleasure; so that his human nature might at some times not know some things; therefore Christ is said to grow in wisdom, *Luke* ii. 52, which he could not be said to do, if the human nature of Christ did necessarily know all things, by virtue of its union with the Divinity." Dr. Lightfoot explains it thus: Christ calls himself the Son, as Messiah. Now the Messiah, as such, was the Father's servant, *Isa.* xlii. 1; sent and deputed by him, and as such an one, he refers himself often to his Father's will and command, and owns he did nothing of himself, *John* v. 19; and in like manner he might be said to know nothing of himself. The revelation of Jesus Christ

was what God gave unto him, *Rev.* i. 1; he thinks therefore we are to distinguish between those excellences and perfections of his which resulted from the personal union between the Divine and human nature, and those which flowed from the anointing of the Spirit; from the former flowed the infinite dignity of his person, and his perfect freedom from all sin; but from the latter flowed his power of working miracles, and his foreknowledge of things to come: what therefore (saith he) were to be revealed by him to his church, he was pleased to take, not from the union of the human nature with the Divine, but from the revelation of the Spirit, by which he yet knew not this. "But the Father" only knows it; that is, God only, the Deity; for (as Archbishop Tillotson explains it) it is not used here personally, in distinction from the Son and the Holy Ghost, but as the Father is *fons et principium Deitatis*,—"the fountain of Deity."

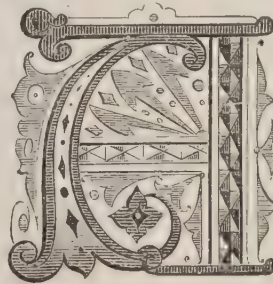
Thirdly. As to both, their duty is to "watch and pray." Therefore the time is kept a secret, that we might be engaged to stand always upon our guard, ver. 33. "Take ye heed" of every thing that would indispose you for your Master's coming, and would render your accounts perplexed, and your spirits so too; watch for his coming, that it may not at any time be a surprise to you, and pray for that grace which is necessary to qualify you for it, "for ye know not when the time is;" and we are concerned to be ready for that every day which may come any day. This he illustrates in the close by a parable.

1. Our Master is gone away, and left us something in trust, in charge, which we must give account of, ver. 34. He is "as a man taking a far journey," for he is gone to be away a great while, he has "left his house" on earth, and left his servants in their offices; gave authority to some, who were to be overseers, and work to others, that were to be labourers: they that have authority given them, in that had work assigned them, for those that have the greatest power have the most business; and to them to whom he gave work, he gave some sort of authority to do that work. And when he took his last leave, he appointed "the porter to watch," to be sure to be ready to open to him at his return; and in the mean time to take care to whom he opened his gates; not to thieves and robbers, but only to his master's friends and servants. Thus our Lord Jesus, when he ascended on high, left something for all his servants to do, expecting they should all do him service in his absence, and be ready to receive him at his return. All are appointed to work, and some authorized to rule.

2. We ought to be always upon our watch, in expectation of his return, ver. 35–37. 1st. Our Lord will come, and will come as the Master of the house, to take account of his servants, and of their work, and of the improvement they have made. 2nd. We know not when he will come; and he has very wisely kept us at uncertainty, that we might be always ready. We know not when he will come, just at what precise time; the Master of the house perhaps will come at even, at nine at night; or it may be at midnight; or at cockrowing, at three in the morning; or perhaps not till six. This is applicable to his coming to us in particular at our death, as well as to the general judgment. Our present life is a night, a dark night, compared with the other life; we know not in which watch of the night our Master will come, whether in the days of youth, or middle age, or old age; but as soon as we are born we begin to die; and therefore as soon as we are capable of expecting any thing, we must expect death. 3rd. Our great care must be that, whenever our Lord comes, he do not find us sleeping, secure in ourselves, off our guard, indulging ourselves in ease and sloth, mindless of our work and duty, and thoughtless of our Lord's coming; ready to say, He will not come, and unready to meet him. 4th. His coming will indeed be coming suddenly; it will be a great surprise and terror to those that are careless and asleep; it will come upon them as a thief in the night. 5th. It is therefore the indispensable duty of all Christ's disciples to watch, to be awake, and keep awake: "What I say unto you" four, ver. 3, "I say unto all" the twelve, or rather to you twelve, I say unto all my disciples and followers; what I say to you of this generation, I say to all that shall believe in me, through your word, in every age, Watch, watch; expect my second coming, prepare for it, that you may be found in peace, without spot, and blameless.

CHAPTER XIV.

At this chapter begins the account which this evangelist gives of the death and sufferings of our Lord Jesus, which we are all concerned to be acquainted not only with the history of, but with the mystery of. Here is, I. The plot of the chief priests and scribes against Christ, ver. 1, 2. II. The anointing of Christ's head at a supper in Bethany, two days before his death, ver. 3–9. III. The contract Judas made with the chief priests to betray him, ver. 10, 11. IV. Christ's eating the passover with his disciples, his instituting the Lord's supper, and his discourse with his disciples, at and after supper, ver. 12–31. V. Christ's agony in the garden, ver. 32–42. VI. The betraying of him by Judas, and the apprehending of him by the chief priests' agents, ver. 43–52. VII. His arraignment before the high priest, his conviction, and the indignities done him at that bar, ver. 53–65. VIII. Peter's denying him, ver. 66–72. Most of which passages we had before, *Mat.* xxvi.



FFTER two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. 2 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people. 3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. 4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said,

what is here recorded took place two days before the festival, at which the Passover was eaten, and unleavened bread alone used. The removal of leaven, as is well known, took place at least the day before the Passover.

xiv. 2. Here, as in *Matt.* xxvi. 5, the words rendered "not on the feast day" must be translated "not at the feast," or "during the feast."

xiv. 3–9. Groswell adopts the opinion that these verses are not

in their chronological order, and assigns them to a date a few days earlier. A reference to *John* xii. 1, &c., shows that Jesus went to Bethany six days before the Passover, and that Jesus was then anointed by the woman. In *Luke* vii. 36, &c., there is an account of another and an earlier anointing, as even Strauss is compelled to admit, though he tries hard to prove that the one recorded by John is different from that set forth by Matthew and Mark. His objection that these evangelists place the occurrence four days later than John

Why was this waste of the ointment made? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. 6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. 7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. 8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. 9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. 10 And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. 11 And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

We have here instances, First. Of the kindness of Christ's friends, and the provision made of respects and honours for him; and some friends he had, even in and about Jerusalem, that loved him, and never thought they could do enough for him, among whom, though Israel be not gathered, he is and will be glorious.

1. Here was one friend that was so kind as to invite him to sup with him, and he was so kind as to accept the invitation, ver. 3. Though he had a prospect of his death approaching, yet he did not abandon himself to a melancholy retirement from all company, but conversed as freely with his friends as usual.

2. Here was another friend that was so kind as to anoint his head with very precious ointment, "as he sat at meat." This was an extraordinary piece of respect paid him by a good woman, that thought nothing too good to bestow upon Christ, and to do him honour. Now the scripture was fulfilled, "when the king sits at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof," *Cant. i. 12*. Let us anoint Christ as our beloved, kiss him with a kiss of affection; and anoint him as our sovereign, kiss him with a kiss of allegiance. Did he pour out his soul unto death for us, and shall we think any box of ointment too precious to pour out upon him? And it is observable she took care to pour it all out upon Christ's head; "she brake the box," so we read it; but because it was "an alabaster box," not easily broken, nor was it necessary it should be broken to get out the ointment, some read it, she shook the box, or knocked it to the ground, to loosen what was in it, that it might be got out the better; or, she rubbed and scraped out all that stuck to the sides of it. Christ must be honoured with all we have, and we must not think to keep back any part of the price. Do we give him the precious ointment of our best affections?—let him have them all; love him with all the heart.

Now, 1st. There were those that put a worse construction upon this than it deserved; they called it a "waste of the ointment," ver. 4. Because they could not have found in their hearts to put themselves to such an expense for the honouring of Christ, they thought she was prodigal that did. Note, As the vile person ought not to be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful, *Isa. xxxii. 5*, so the liberal and bountiful ought not to be called wasteful. They pretended it might have been sold and given to the poor, ver. 5. But as a common piety to the Corban will not excuse from a particular charity to a poor parent, *ch. vii. 11*, so a common charity to the poor will not excuse from a particular act of piety to the Lord Jesus: "What thy hand finds to do" that is good, "do it with thy might."

2nd. Our Lord Jesus put a better construction upon it than for aught appears was designed. Probably she intended no more but to shew the great honour she had for him before all the company, and to complete his entertainment. But Christ makes it to be an act of great faith, as well as great love; ver. 8, "she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying," as if she foresaw that my resurrection would prevent her doing it afterwards. This funeral rite was a kind of preface of, or *prædium* to, his death approaching. See how Christ's heart was filled with the thoughts of his death, how every thing was construed with a reference to that, and how familiarly he spoke of it upon all occasions. It is usual for those who are condemned to die to have their coffins prepared, and other provision made for their funerals, while they are yet alive; and so Christ accepted this. Christ's death and burial were the lowest steps of his humiliation; and therefore, though he cheerfully submitted to them, yet he would have some marks of honour to attend them, which might help to take off the offence of the cross, and be an intimation how "precious in the sight of the Lord the death of his saints is." Christ never rode in triumph into Jerusalem but when he came thither to suffer, nor had ever his head anointed but for his burial.

3rd. He recommended this piece of heroic piety to the applause of the church in all ages: "Wherever this Gospel shall be preached, it shall be spoken of for a memorial of her," ver. 9. Note, The honour which attends well-doing, even in this world, is sufficient to balance the reproach and contempt that is cast upon it. "The memory of the just is blessed," and they that had "trial of cruel mockings" yet "obtained a good report," *Heb. xi. 36, 39*. Thus was this good woman repaid for her box of ointment, *nec oleum perdidit nec operam*,—she lost neither her oil nor her labour; she got by it that good name which is better than precious ointment. Those that honour Christ he will honour.

Secondly. Of the malice of Christ's enemies, and the preparation made by them to do him mischief.

1. The chief priests, his open enemies, consulted how they might "put him to death," ver. 1. 2. The feast of the passover was now at hand, and at that feast he must be crucified. 1st. That his death and sufferings might be the more public, and that all Israel, even those of the dispersion, who came from all parts to the feast, might be witnesses of it, and of the wonders that attended it. 2nd. That the antitype might answer the type. Christ, our passover, was

sacrificed for us, and brought us out of the house of bondage, at the same time that the paschal lamb was sacrificed, and Israel's deliverance out of Egypt commemorated. Now see, First. How spiteful Christ's enemies were; they did not think it enough to banish or imprison him; for they aimed not only to silence him, and stop his progress for the future, but to be revenged on him for all the good he had done. Secondly. How subtle they were: "Not on the feast-day," when the people are together: they do not say, lest they should be disturbed in their devotions, and diverted from them, but "lest there should be an uproar," ver. 2; lest they should rise and rescue him, and fall foul upon those that attempt any thing against him. They who desired nothing more than the praise of men, dreaded nothing more than the rage and displeasure of men.

2. Judas, his disguised enemy, contracted with them for the betraying of him, ver. 10, 11. He is said to be "one of the twelve," that were Christ's family, intimate with him, trained up for the service of his kingdom, and he "went to the chief priests" to tender his service in this affair.

1st. That which he proposed to them was to betray Christ to them, to give them notice when and where they might find him, and seize him without making "an uproar among the people," which they were afraid of, if they should seize him when he appeared in public in the midst of his admirers. Did he know, then, what help it was they wanted, and where they were run aground in their counsels? It is like he did not, for the debate was held in their close cabal; did they know that he had a mind to serve them, and make court to him? No; they could not imagine that any of his intimates should be so base; but Satan, who was entered into Judas, knew what occasion they had for him, and could guide him to be guide to them, who were contriving to take Jesus. Note, The spirit that works in all the children of disobedience knows how to bring them in to the assistance of one another in a wicked project, and then to harden them in it with the fancy that Providence favours them.

2nd. That which he proposed to himself was to get money by the bargain; he had what he aimed at, when "they promised to give him money." Covetousness was Judas' master-lust, "his own iniquity," and that betrayed him to the sin of betraying his Master; the devil suited his temptation to that, and so conquered him. It is not said they promised him preferment, (he was not ambitious of that,) but they promised him money. See what need we have to double our guard against the sin that most easily besets us. Perhaps it was Judas' covetousness that brought him at first to follow Christ, having a promise that he should be cash-keeper or purser to the society, and he loved in his heart to be fingering money; and now there was money to be got on the other side, he was as ready to betray him as ever he had been to follow him. Note, Where the principle of men's profession of religion is carnal and worldly, and the serving of a secular interest, the very same principle, whenever the wind turns, will be the bitter root of a vile and scandalous apostasy.

3rd. Having secured the money, he set himself to make good his bargain. "He sought how he might conveniently betray him," how he might seasonably deliver him up, so as to answer the intention of those who had hired him. See what need we have to be careful that we do not ensnare ourselves in sinful engagements. If at any time we be so ensnared in the words of our mouths, we are concerned to deliver ourselves by a speedy retreat, *Pr. vi. 1–5*. It is a rule in our law, as well as in our religion, that an obligation to do an evil thing is null and void; it binds to repentance, not to performance. See how the way of sin is down-hill, when men are in, they must on; and what wicked contrivances many have, in their sinful pursuits, to compass their designs conveniently; but such conveniences will prove mischiefs in the end.

12 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? 13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. 14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? 15 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. 16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. 17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. 18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. 19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, *Is it I?* and another said, *Is it I?* 20 And he answered and said unto them, *It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.* 21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born. 22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. 23 And he

assumes a chronological order which is not maintained by critics, nor required by the text. As Ebrard says, "The visit to Bethany had no immediate connection with the chain of events under review, but is introduced parenthetically, for the purpose of showing that the near approach of Christ's death in Matt. xxvi. 12 and Mark xiv. 8 was not first uttered after the resolution of the Sanhedrim, but before it, and was, therefore, truly prophetic." There are some differences of detail, but none of sufficient importance to be regarded

as essential, or involving discrepancies which cannot be reconciled. There is some doubt as to the meaning of the words rendered "spikenard, very precious," in verse 3. Some take it to be "liquid spikenard, very costly," while others think it is "pure spikenard, very costly." Whatever the precise sense, the thing itself was a well-known product, brought from India.

xiv. 12. Matthew and Mark both call the day the first of unleavened bread; but Luke simply speaks of it as the day of un-

took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. 24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. 25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. 26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. 27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. 28 But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. 29 But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. 30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. 31 But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.



BLESSING WINE.—ver. 23.

In these verses we have,

First. Christ's eating the passover with his disciples the night before he died, with the joys and comforts of which ordinance he prepared himself for his approaching sorrows, the full prospect of which did not indispose him for that solemnity. Note, No apprehension of trouble, come or coming, should put us by, or put us out of frame for our attendance on holy ordinances, as we have opportunity for it.

1. Christ ate the passover at the usual time, when the other Jews did, as Dr. Whitby has fully made out, and not, as Dr. Hammond would have it, the night before. It was on the first day of that feast which (taking in all the eight days of the feast) was called "the feast of unleavened bread," even that day "when they killed the passover," ver. 12.

2. He directed his disciples how to find the place where he intended to eat the passover; and hereby gave such another proof of his infallible knowledge of things distant and future, which to us seem altogether contingent, as he had given when he sent them for the ass on which he rode in triumph, *ch. xi. 6*: "Go into the city" (for the passover must be eaten in Jerusalem), "and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water,"—a servant sent for water to clean the rooms in his master's house,— "follow him," go in where he goes, inquire for his master, "the goodman of the house," ver. 14, and desire him to shew you a room. No doubt the inhabitants of Jerusalem had rooms fitted up to be let out for this occasion to those that came up out of the country to keep the passover, and one of those Christ made use of; not any friend's house, nor any house he had formerly frequented, for then he would have said, Go to such a friend; or, You know where we used to be, go thither, and prepare. Probably he went where he was not known, that he might be undisturbed with his disciples. Perhaps he notified it by a sign to conceal it from Judas, that he might not know till he came to the place; and by such a sign to intimate that he will dwell in the clean heart, that is washed as with pure water. Where he designs to come, a pitcher of water must go before him: see *Isa. i. 16—18*.

3. He ate the passover in an "upper room furnished," *εστρωμένον*, "laid with carpets," so Dr. Hammond. It would seem to have been a very handsome dining-room. Christ was far from affecting any thing that looked stately in eating his common meals; on the contrary, he chose that which was homely, sat down on the grass; but when he was to keep a sacred feast, in honour of that, he would be at the expense of as good a room as he could get. God looks not at outward pomp, but he looks at the tokens and expressions of inward reverence for a Divine institution, which it is to be feared those want who, to save charges, deny themselves decencies in the worship of God.

4. He ate it "with the twelve," who were his family, to teach those who have the charge of families, not only families of children, but families of servants, or families of scholars or pupils, to keep up religion among them, and worship God with them. If Christ came "with the twelve," then Judas was with them, though he was at this time contriving to betray his Master; and it is plain, by what follows, ver. 20, that he was there. He did not absent himself, lest he should

have been suspected. Had his seat been empty at this feast, they would have said, as Saul of David, "He is not clean; surely he is not clean;" *1 Sam. xx. 26*. Hypocrites, though they know it is at their peril, yet crowd into special ordinances, to keep up their reputation, and palliate their secret wickedness. Christ did not exclude him from the feast, though he knew his wickedness, for it was not as yet become public and scandalous. Christ, designing to put the keys of the kingdom of heaven into the hands of men, who can but judge according to outward appearance, he would hereby both direct and encourage them, in their admissions to his table, to be satisfied with a justifiable profession, because they cannot discern the root of bitterness till it springs up.

Secondly. Christ's discourse with his disciples as they were eating the passover. It is likely they had discourse, according to the custom of the feast, of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and the preservation of the firstborn, and were as pleasant as they used to be together on this occasion, till Christ told them that which would mix trembling with their joys.

1. They were pleasing themselves with the society of their Master; but he tells them they must now presently lose him, "the Son of man is betrayed;" and they knew, for he had often told them, what followed. If he be betrayed, the next news you will hear of him is, that he is crucified and slain. God hath determined it concerning him, and he agrees to it; "the Son of man goes, as it is written of him," ver. 21. It was written in the counsels of God, and written in the prophecies of the Old Testament, not one jot or tittle of either of which can fall to the ground.

2. They were pleasing themselves with the society one of another; but Christ casts a damp upon the joy of that, by telling them, "One of you that eateth with me shall betray me," ver. 18. Christ said this, if it might be, to startle the conscience of Judas, and to awaken him to repent of his wickedness, and to draw back (for it was not yet too late) from the brink of the pit. But, for aught appears, he was most concerned in the warning was least concerned at it. All the rest were affected with it. 1st. "They began to be sorrowful." As the remembrance of our former falls into sin, so the fear of the like again doth oftentimes much embitter the comfort of our spiritual feasts, and damp our joy. Here were the bitter herbs with which this passover feast was taken. 2nd. They began to be suspicious of themselves; they said "one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I?" They are to be commended for their charity, that they were more jealous of themselves than of one another. It is the law of charity to hope the best, *1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7*. Because we assuredly know, therefore we may justly suspect, more evil by ourselves than by our brethren. They are also to be commended for their acquiescence in what Christ said; they trusted more to his words than to their own hearts; and therefore do not say, "I am sure it is not I;" but, "Lord, Is it I?" See if there be such a way of wickedness in us, such a root of bitterness, and discover it to us, that we may pluck up that root, and stop up that way.

Now, in answer to their inquiry, Christ saith that, *First*. Which would make them easy; It is not you, nor you; it is this that now "dips with me in the dish;" the adversary and enemy is this wicked Judas. *Secondly*. Which, one would think, should make Judas very uneasy. If he go on in his undertaking, it is upon the sword's point; for "woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed;" he is undone, for ever undone; his sin will soon find him out; and it were better for him that he had never been born, had never had a being, than such a miserable one as he must have. It is very probable Judas encouraged himself in it with this thought, that his Master had often said he must be betrayed, and if it must be done, surely God will not find fault with him that doth it, for who has resisted his will? as that objector argues, *Rom. ix. 19*; but Christ tells him this will be no shelter or excuse to him: "The Son of man indeed goes, as it is written of him," as a lamb to the slaughter; "but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed." God's decrees to permit the sins of men, and bring glory to himself out of them, do neither necessitate their sins nor determine to them, nor will they be any excuse of the sin or mitigation of the punishment. Christ was delivered indeed "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" but, notwithstanding that, it is "with wicked hands that he is crucified and slain," *Acts ii. 23*.

Thirdly. The institution of the Lord's supper.

1. It was instituted in the close of a supper, when they were sufficiently fed with the paschal lamb, to shew that in the Lord's supper there is no bodily repast intended; to preface it with such a thing is to revive Moses again. But it is food for the soul only; and therefore a very little of that which is for the body, as much as will serve for a sign, is enough. It was at the close of the passover supper, which by this was evangelized, and then superseded and set aside. Much of the doctrine and duty of the eucharist is illustrated to us by the law of the passover, *Ex. xii.*; for the Old Testament institutions, though they do not bind us, yet instruct us, by the help of a gospel key to them. And these two ordinances lying here so near together, it may be good to compare them, and observe how much shorter and plainer the institution of the Lord's supper is, than that of the passover was; Christ's yoke is easy, in comparison with that of the ceremonial law, and his ordinances more spiritual.

2. It was instituted by the example of Christ himself, not with the ceremony and solemnity of a law, as the ordinance of baptism was, after Christ's resurrection, *Mat. xxviii. 19*, with "Be it enacted by the authority aforesaid," by a power given to Christ "in heaven and on earth," ver. 18, but by the practice of our Master himself, because intended for those who are already his disciples, and taken into covenant with him: but it has the obligation of a law, and was intended to remain in full force, power, and virtue till his second coming.

3. It was instituted with blessing and giving of thanks; the gifts of common providence are to be so received, *1 Tim. iv. 4, 5*; much more the gifts of special grace. "He blessed," ver. 22, "and gave thanks," ver. 23. At his other meals, he was wont to bless and give thanks, *ch. vi. 41*; *viii. 7*; so remarkably that he was known by it, *Lu. xxiv. 30, 31*; and he did the same at this meal.

4. It was instituted to be a memorial of his death; and therefore he broke the bread, to shew how it pleased the Lord to bruise him: and he called the wine, which is the blood of the grape, "the blood of the new testament." The death Christ died was a bloody death; and frequent mention is made of the blood, the precious blood, as the price of our redemption; for the blood is the life, and made "atonement for the soul," *Lev. xvii. 11, 14*. The pouring out of the blood was the most sensible indication of the pouring out of his soul, *Isa. liii. 12*. Blood has a voice, *Gen. iv. 10*; and therefore the blood is so often mentioned, because it was to speak, *Heb. xii. 24*. It is called "the blood of the new testament," for the covenant of grace became a testament, and of force by the death of Christ the testator, *Heb. ix. 16*. It is said to be "shed for many;" to justify many, *Isa. liii. 12*; to bring many sons to glory, *Heb. ii. 10*. It was sufficient for many, being of infinite value; it has been of use to many. We read of a great multitude, which no man could number, that had all "washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb," *Rev. vii. 9, 14*; and still it is a fountain opened. How comfortable is this to poor repenting sinners, that the blood of Christ is shed for many; and if for many, why not for me? If for sinners, sinners of the Gentiles, the chief of sinners, then why not for me?

5. It was instituted to be a ratification of the covenant made with us in him,

leavened bread. All mean the same day. Mark speaks of it as the time when they killed the Passover, while Luke speaks of it as the day on which the Passover ought to be killed. Luke adds the names of the two disciples whom Jesus sent to make preparations, namely, Peter and John. It is apparent from all three of the accounts that our Lord was not in Jerusalem when he gave the instructions here reported.

xiv. 17. Both Matthew and Mark intimate that the evening was

come, but Luke only says "when the hour was come." It was evening, of course, as the correct time for eating the Passover. John alone adds here the account of washing the feet of the disciples by their Master.

xiv. 22. This verse is transposed by Greswell, who, in his "Harmony," places it between verses 17 and 18.

xiv. 24. Both here and in Matthew xxvi. 28, the expression, "This is my blood of the New Testament," is better rendered, "This is my

and a sign of the conveyance of those benefits to us which were purchased for us by his death; and therefore he broke the bread to them, ver. 22, and said, "Take, eat" of it; he gave the cup to them, and ordered them to drink of it, ver. 23. Apply the doctrine of Christ crucified to yourselves, and let it be meat and drink to your souls, strengthening, and nourishing, and refreshing to you, and the support and comfort of your spiritual life.

6. It was instituted with an eye to the happiness of heaven, and to be an earnest and foretaste of that, and thereby to put our mouths out of taste to all the pleasures and delights of sense, ver. 25: "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine," as it is a bodily refreshment; I have done with it. No one having tasted spiritual delights, straightway desires sensitive ones, for he saith the spiritual is better, *Lu. v. 39*. But every one that hath tasted spiritual delights, straightway desires eternal ones, for he saith those are better still; and therefore let me drink no more of the fruit of the vine; it is dead and flat to those that have been made to drink of the river of God's pleasures; but, Lord, hasten the day when I shall drink it new and fresh "in the kingdom of God," where it shall be for ever new, and in perfection.

7. It was closed with a hymn, ver. 26. Though Christ was in the midst of his enemies, yet he did not for fear of them balk this sweet duty of singing psalms. Paul and Silas sung, when "the prisoners heard them." This was an evangelical song, and gospel times are often spoken of in the Old Testament as times of rejoicing and praise, expressed by singing. This was Christ's swan-like song, which he sung just before he entered upon his agony; probably that which was usually sung, *Ps. cxiv.* to *Ps. cxviii.*

Fourthly, Christ's discourse with his disciples as they were returning to Bethany by moonlight. When they had sung the hymn, presently they went out; it was now pretty near bedtime, but our Lord Jesus had his heart so much upon his suffering, that he would "not come into the tabernacle of his house, nor go up into his bed, nor give sleep to his eyes," when that work was to be done, *Ps. cxxxii. 3, 4*. The Israelites were forbidden to go out of their houses that night that they ate the passover, for fear of the sword of the destroying angel, *Ex. xii. 22, 23*; but because Christ the great Shepherd was to be smitten, he went out purposely to expose himself to the sword as a champion; they evaded the destroyer, but Christ conquered him, and brought destructions to a perpetual end.

1. Christ here foretells, that in his sufferings he should be deserted by all his disciples; "You will all be offended because of me this night." "I know you will," ver. 27, and "what I tell you now, is no other but what the Scripture has told you before, I will smite the shepherd, and then the sheep will be scattered." Christ knew this before, and yet welcomed them at his table; he foresees the falls and miscarriages of his disciples, and yet doth not refuse them. Nor should we be discouraged from coming to the Lord's supper by the fear of relapsing into sin afterward; but the greater our danger is, the more need we have to fortify ourselves by the diligent, conscientious use of holy ordinances. Christ tells them they would be offended in him, would begin to question whether he were the Messiah or not, when they saw him overpowered by his enemies. Hitherto they had continued with him in his temptations; though they had sometimes offended him, yet they had not been offended in him, nor turned the back upon him; but now the storm would be so great, that they would all slip their anchors, and be in danger of shipwreck. Some trials are more particular, as *Rev. ii. 10*, "the devil shall cast some of you into prison;" but others are more general, an "hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world," *Rev. iii. 10*. The smiting of the shepherd is often the scattering of the sheep: magistrates, ministers, masters of families, if these are, as they should be, shepherds to those under their charge, when any thing comes amiss to them, the whole flock suffers for it, and is endangered by it. But Christ encourages them with a promise that they shall rally again, shall return both to their duty and to their comfort, ver. 28: "After I am risen," I will "gather you in from all the places whither you are scattered," *Eze. xxxiv. 12*; "and will go before you into Galilee;" will see our friends, and enjoy one another there.

2. He foretells that he should be denied, particularly by Peter. When they went out to go to the mount of Olives, we may suppose they dropped Judas, he stole away from them, whereupon the rest began to think highly of themselves, that they stuck to their Master when Judas quitted him. But Christ tells them, that though they should be kept by his grace from Judas's apostasy, yet they would have no reason to boast of their constancy. Note, Though God keeps us from being as bad as the worst, yet we may well be ashamed to think that we are not better than we are. 1st. Peter is confident that he should not do so ill as the rest of the disciples, ver. 29: "Though all should be offended," all his brethren here present, "yet will not I." He supposeth himself not only

stronger than others, but so much stronger as to be able to receive the shock of a temptation, and bear up against it, all alone; to stand, though nobody stood by him. It is bred in the bone with us to think well of ourselves, and trust to our own hearts. 2nd. Christ tells him he will do worse than any of them. They will all desert him, but he will deny him, not once, but thrice; and that presently; "this day, even this night, before the cock crow twice," thou wilt deny that ever thou hadst any knowledge of me or acquaintance with me, as one ashamed and afraid to own me. 3rd. He stands to his promise: "If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee;" I will stick to thee, though it cost me my life, and no doubt he thought as he said. Judas said nothing like this, when Christ told him he would betray him; he sinned by contrivance, Peter, by surprise. He devised the wickedness, *Mic. ii. 1*; Peter was overtaken in this fault, *Gal. vi. 1*. It was ill done of Peter to contradict his Master; if he had said, with fear and trembling, "Lord, give me grace to keep me from denying thee, lead me not into this temptation, deliver me from this evil," it might have been prevented. But they were all thus confident; they who said "Lord, is it I?" now said, "It shall never be I;" being acquitted from their fear of betraying Christ, they were now secure. But he that thinks he stands, must learn to take heed lest he fall; and he that girdeth on the harness, not boast as though he had put it off.

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; 34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. 37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? 38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. 39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. 40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him. 41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.



GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

Christ is here entering upon his sufferings, and begins with those which were the sorest of all his sufferings, in his soul. Here we have him in his agony; this melancholy story we had in *Matthew*; this agony in soul was the wormwood and the gall in the affliction and misery; and thereby it appeared no sorrow was forced upon him, but it was what he freely admitted.

First. He retired for prayer: "Sit ye here," saith he to his disciples, while I go a little farther, and pray. He had lately prayed with them, *Jno. xvii.*, and now he appoints them to withdraw, while he goes to his Father, upon an errand peculiar to himself. Note, Our praying with our families will not excuse our neglect of secret worship: when Jacob entered into his agony, he

first sent over all that he had, and was left alone, and then there wrestled a man with him," *Gen. xxxii. 23, 24*; though he had been at prayer before, ver. 9, it is likely, with his family.

Secondly. Even into that retirement he took "with him Peter and James and John," ver. 33; three competent witnesses of this part of his humiliation; and though great spirits care not how few know any thing of their agonies, he was not ashamed they should see. These three had bragged most of their ability and willingness to suffer with him; Peter here, in this chapter, and James and John, *ch. x. 39*; and therefore Christ takes them to stand by, and see what a struggle he had with the bloody baptism and the bitter cup, to

blood, that of the new covenant;" for such is the meaning and force of the original Greek.

xiv. 27. The words "because of me this night" are omitted by some of the best ancient MSS., and several modern editions.

xiv. 30. In *Matthew* we read "before the cock crow," omitting the word "twice." The sense is, "before the second cock-crowing."

xiv. 36. The word "Abba" inserted here signifies "Father" in Aramaic, words from which language are elsewhere used by Mark.

xiv. 41. On "it is enough" Dr. Doddridge's paraphrase is, "I have been calling you to watch; but it is now enough; for this season of watching is over, and I have no further need to press you to it." In much the same sense the phrase is understood by others; though some refer it to sleep, which must be wrong, as appears from the preceding words, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." Further watching was needless.

xiv. 45. For "Master, Master," the original has "Rabbi, Rabbi,"

convince them they knew not what they said. It is fit that they who are most confident should be first tried, that they may be made sensible of their folly and weakness.

Thirdly. There he was in a mighty toss, ver. 33: "He began to be sore amazed," *ἐκθαμβήσας*, a word not used in *Matthew*, but very significant; it speaks something like that "horror of great darkness," which fell upon Abraham, *Gen. xv. 12*; or rather, something much worse, and more frightful. The "terrors of God set themselves in array against him," and he allowed himself the actual and intent contemplation of them. Never was sorrow like unto his at that time; never any had such experience as he had had from eternity of Divine favours, and therefore never any had, or could have, such a sense as he had of Divine frowns; yet there was not the least disorder or irregularity in this commotion of his spirits: his affections rose not tumultuously, but under direction, and as they were called up, for he had no corrupt nature to mix with them, as we have. If water have a sediment at the bottom, though it may be pretty clear while it stands still, yet shake it, and it goes muddy; so it is with our affections; but pure water, in a clean glass, though never so much stirred, continues clear; and so it was with Christ. Dr. Lightfoot thinks it very probable that the devil did now appear to our Saviour in a visible shape, in his own shape and proper colour, to terrify and affright him, and to drive him from his hope in God, (which he aimed at in persecuting Job, a type of Christ, to make him curse God and die,) and to deter him from the farther prosecution of his undertaking; and whatever hindered him from that, he looked upon as coming from Satan, *Mat. xvi. 23*. When the devil had tempted him in the wilderness, it is said, he "departed from him for a season," *Lu. iv. 3*: intending another grapple with him, and in another way: finding that he could not by his flatteries allure him into sin, he would try by his terrors to affright him into it, and so make void his design.

Fourthly. He made a sad complaint of this toss he was in: he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful." 1. He was made sin for us, and therefore was thus sorrowful; he fully knew the malignity of the sins he was to suffer for, and having the highest degree of love to God, who was offended by them, and of love to man, who was damaged and endangered by them, now those were set in order before him, no marvel that his soul was "exceeding sorrowful." Now he was made to serve with our sins, and was thus wearied with our iniquities. 2. He was made a curse for us; the curses of the law were transferred to him, as our surety and representative, not as originally bound with us, but as bail to the action. And when his soul was thus exceeding sorrowful, he did as it were yield to them, and lie down under the load, until by his death he had satisfied for sin, and so for ever abolished the curse; he now tasted death, as he is said to do, *Heb. ii. 9*; which is not an extenuating expression, as if he did but taste it; no, he drank up even the dregs of the cup; but it is rather aggravating, it did not go down by wholesale, but he tasted all the bitterness of it. This was that fear the apostle speaks of, *Heb. v. 7*; a natural fear of pain and death, which it is natural to human nature to startle at. Now the consideration of Christ's sufferings in his soul, and his sorrows for us, should be of use to us.

1st. To embitter our sins. Can we ever think a favourable or so much as a flighty thought of sin, when we see what impression sin (though but imputed) made upon the Lord Jesus? Shall that sit light upon our souls, which sat so heavy upon his? Was Christ in such an agony for our sins, and shall we never be in an agony about them? How should we look upon him whom we have pressed, whom we have pierced, and mourn, and be in bitterness! It becomes us to be exceeding sorrowful for sin, because Christ was so, and never to make a mock at it. If Christ thus suffered for sin, "let us arm ourselves with the same mind."

2nd. To sweeten our sorrows. If our souls be at any time "exceeding sorrowful," through the afflictions of this present time, let us remember that our Master was so before us, "and the disciple is not greater than his Lord." Why should we affect to drive away sorrow, when Christ for our sakes courted it, and submitted to it, and thereby not only took out the sting of it, and made it tolerable, but put virtue into it, and made it profitable? for "by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better;" nay, and put sweetness into it, and made it comfortable. Blessed Paul was sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing. If we be exceeding sorrowful, it is but unto death; that will be the period of all our sorrows, if Christ be ours; when the eyes are closed, all tears are wiped away from them.

Fifthly. He ordered his disciples to stick to him, not because he needed their help, but because he would have them to look upon him, and receive instruction. He said to them, "Tarry ye here, and watch:" he had bid the other disciples only "sit ye here," ver. 32; but these three he bids to tarry, "and watch," as expecting more from them than from the rest.

Sixthly. He addressed himself to God by prayer, ver. 35: He "fell on the ground and prayed." It was but a little before this that in prayer he "lift up his eyes," *Jno. xvii. 1*; but here, being in an agony, he "fell upon his face," accommodating himself to his present humiliation, and teaching us thus to abase ourselves before God; it becomes us to be low when we come into the presence of the Most High. 1. As man, he deprecated his sufferings, that "if it were possible, the hour might pass from him," ver. 35; this short, but sharp affliction; "that which I am now this hour to enter upon; let man's salvation be, if possible, accomplished without it." We have his very words, ver. 36, "Abba, Father," the Syriac word is here retained, which Christ used, and which signifies father, to intimate what an emphasis our Lord Jesus in his sorrows laid upon it, and would have us to lay. It is with an eye to this, that St. Paul retains this word, putting it into the mouths of all that have "the spirit of adoption;" they are taught to cry, "Abba, Father," *Rom. viii. 15*; *Gal. iv. 6*. "Father, all things are possible to thee." Note, Even that which we cannot expect should be done for us, we ought yet to believe God is able to do. And when we submit to his will, and refer ourselves to his wisdom and mercy, it must be with a believing acknowledgment of his power, that all things are possible to him. 2. As Mediator, he acquiesced to the will of God concerning him: "Nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt;" "I know the matter is settled, and cannot be altered; I must suffer and die, and I bid it welcome."

Seventhly. He roused his disciples, who were dropped asleep while he was at prayer, ver. 37, 38. He comes to look after them, since they did not look after him; and he "findeth them sleeping," so little affected were they with his sorrows, his complaints, and prayers. This carelessness of theirs was a presage of their farther offence in deserting him; and it was an aggravation of it, that he had so lately commended them for continuing with him in his temptations, though they had not been without their faults. Was he so willing to make the best of them, and were they so indifferent in approving themselves to him? They had lately promised not to be offended in him. What! and yet mind him so little! He particularly upbraided Peter with his drowsiness, "Simon, sleepest thou? *καὶ σὺ κοιμῇ;* What thou, my son! thou that didst so positively promise thou wouldst not deny me, dost thou slight me thus? From thee I expected better things. "Couldst thou not watch one hour?" He did not require him to watch all night with him, only for one hour. It aggravates our faintness and short-spiritedness in Christ's service that he doth not over-

task us nor weary us with it, *Isa. xlii. 23*. He puts upon us no other burthen, but to hold fast till he comes, *Rev. ii. 24, 25*; and behold he comes quickly, *Rev. iii. 11*.

As those whom Christ loves he rebukes when they do amiss, so those whom he rebukes he counsels and comforts. 1. It was a very wise and faithful word of advice which Christ here gave to his disciples, "watch, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation," ver. 38. It was bad to sleep when Christ was in his agony; but they were entering into further temptation; and if they did not stir up themselves, and fetch in grace and strength from God by prayer, they would do worse, and so they did, when "they all forsook him and fled." 2. It was a very kind and tender excuse that Christ made for them, "the spirit truly is willing;" I know it is, it is ready, it is forward; you would willingly keep awake, but you cannot. This may be taken as a reason for that exhortation, "watch, and pray;" because though "the spirit is willing," I grant it is, yet have sincerely resolved never to be offended in me; but "the flesh is weak," and if you do not "watch and pray," and use the means of perseverance, you may be overcome notwithstanding. The consideration of the weakness and infirmity of our flesh should engage and quicken us to prayer and watchfulness when we are entering into temptation.

Eighthly. He repeated his address to his Father, ver. 39: "He went again, and prayed," saying, *τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον*, "the same word," or matter, or business; he spoke to the same purpose, and again, "the third time." This teacheth us that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint," *Lu. xviii. 1*. Though the answers to our prayers do not come quickly, yet we must renew our requests, and "continue instant in prayer," for "the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and not lie," *Hab. ii. 3*. Paul, when he was "buffeted by a messenger of Satan, besought the Lord thrice," as Christ did here, before he obtained an answer of peace, *2 Cor. xii. 8*. A little before this, when Christ in the trouble of his soul prayed, "Father, glorify thy name," he had an immediate answer by a voice from heaven, "I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it yet again;" but now he must come a second and third time, for the visits of God's grace in answer to prayer come sooner or later, according to the pleasure of his will, that we may be kept depending.

Ninthly. He repeated his visits to his disciples; thus he gave a specimen of his continued care for his church on earth, even when it is half asleep, and not duly concerned for itself, while he ever lives making intercession with his Father in heaven: see how, as became a Mediator, he passeth and repasseth between both. He came the second time to his disciples, and "found them asleep again," ver. 40. See how the infirmities of Christ's disciples return upon them, notwithstanding their resolutions, and overpower them, notwithstanding their resistance; and what clogs those bodies of ours are to our souls, which should make us long for that blessed state in which they shall be no more our encumbrance. This second time he spoke to them as before, but "they wist not what to answer him;" they were ashamed of their drowsiness, and had nothing to say in excuse for it; or, they were so overpowered with it, that, like men between asleep and awake, they knew not where they were, or what they said. But the third time they were bid to sleep, if they could, ver. 41, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." I have now no more occasion for your watching; you may sleep if you will, for me. "It is enough;" we had not that word in *Matthew*. "You have had warning enough to keep awake, and would not take it, and now you shall see what little reason you had to be secure: 'Ameeke,' 'I discharge you from any farther attendance,' so some understand it. 'Now the hour is come in which I knew you would all forsake me, and even take your course,' as he said to Judas, 'What thou doest, do quickly.'" "The Son of man is" now "betrayed into the hands of sinners," the chief priests and elders, those worst of sinners, because they made a profession of sanctity. Come, "rise up," do not lie dozing there. "Let us go," and meet the enemy, for, "lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand," and I must now think of making an escape. When we see trouble at the door, we are concerned to stir up ourselves to get ready for it.

43 And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him,



ARABS SALUTING.

and lead him away safely. 45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him. 46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him. 47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

and it is to be noted that *Matthew* has in the Greek text, "Hail! Rabbi."

xiv. 51, 52. Dean Alford says, "It is impossible to determine, and therefore idle to inquire, who this was." Some think it was Mark himself. Of this opinion is Olshausen. The young man appears to have been roused from his bed, and had come out hastily in his night-dress. Some, however, object to this, and suppose it was the ordinary dress of the young man. The question is a rather

difficult one, but not important. The word "naked," which occurs twice, may or may not be taken literally. It is certain, however, that, like our word "stripped," it had sometimes the sense of partially unclothed, especially by the removal of outer garments. One might be called naked who only retained his tunic.

xiv. 53. In this passage the ordinary Greek term for high-priest is used both in the singular and in the plural. Our translators have rendered the former by "the high-priest," and the latter by "the

48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? 49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled. 50 And they all forsook him, and fled. 51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: 52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

We have here the seizing of our Lord Jesus by the officers of the chief priests. This was what his enemies had long aimed at: they had often sent to take him, but he had escaped out of their hands, because his hour was not come; nor could they now have taken him, had he not freely surrendered himself. He began first to suffer in his soul, but afterwards suffered in his body, that he might satisfy for sin, which begins in the heart, but afterwards makes the members of the body instruments of unrighteousness.

I. Here is a parcel of rude miscreants employed to take our Lord Jesus, and make him a prisoner; "a great multitude, with swords and staves." There is no wickedness so black, no villany so horrid, but there may be found among the children of men fitting tools to be used in it, that will not boggle at it; so miserably depraved and vitiated is mankind. At the head of this rabble is "Judas, one of the twelve;" one of those that had been many years intimately conversant with our Lord Jesus, had prophesied in his name, and in his name cast out devils, and yet betrayed him. It is no new thing for a very fair and plausible profession to end in a shameful and fatal apostasy: "How art thou fallen, O Lucifer!"

II. Men of no less figure than "the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders," sent them, and set them on work, who pretended to expect the Messiah, and to be ready to welcome him; and yet, when he is come, and has given undeniable proofs that it is he that should come, yet because he doth not make court to them, nor countenance and support their pomp and grandeur, because he appears not as a temporal prince, but sets up a spiritual kingdom, and preacheth repentance, reformation, and a holy life, and directs men's thoughts, and affections, and aims to another world, they set themselves against him, and, without giving the credentials he produceth an impartial examination, resolve to run him down.

III. Judas betrayed him with a kiss; abusing the freedom Christ used to allow his disciples, of kissing his cheek at their return, when they had been any time absent. He called him, "Master, master, and kissed him;" Rabbi, rabbi; as if he had been now more respectful to him than ever. It is enough to put one for ever out of conceit with being called of men Rabbi, rabbi, *Mat. xxiii. 7*, when it was with this compliment that Christ was betrayed. He bade them "take him, and lead him away safely." Some think he spoke this ironically, knowing that they could not secure him, unless he pleased; this Samson could break their bonds asunder, as threads of tow, and make his escape; and then he should get the money, and Christ the honour, and no harm done; and I should think so too, but that Satan was entered into him; so that the worst and most malicious intention of this action is not too black to be supposed. Nay, he had often heard his Master say that, being betrayed, he should be crucified, and had no reason to think otherwise.

IV. They arrested him, and made him their prisoner, *ver. 46*; "they laid their hands on him," rude and violent hands, "and took him" into custody; triumphing, it is likely, that they had done that which had been often before attempted in vain.

V. Peter laid about him in defence of his Master, and wounded one of the assailants; being for the present mindful of his promise to venture his life with his Master. He was "one of them that stood by," of them that were with him, so the word signifies, of those three disciples that were with him in the garden. He "drew a sword," and aimed, it is likely, to cut off the head, but missed his blow, and only cut off the ear, of a servant of the high priest's, *ver. 47*. It is easier to fight for Christ than to die for him; but Christ's good soldiers overcome, not by taking away other people's lives, but by laying down their own, *Rev. xii. 11*.

VI. Christ argues with them that had seized him, and shews them the absurdity of their proceedings against him. 1. That they came out against him as against a thief; whereas he was innocent of any crime; he taught daily in the temple, and if he had had any wicked design, there it would, some time or other, have been discovered: nay, these officers of the chief priests, being retainers to the temple, may be supposed to have heard his sermons there, "I was with you in the temple;" and had he not taught them an excellent doctrine, even his enemies themselves being judges? Were not "all the words of his mouth in righteousness?" Was there any thing "froward or perverse in them?" *Pr. viii. 8*. By his fruits he was known to be a good tree; why, then, did they come out against him as a thief? 2. That they came to take him thus privately; whereas he was neither ashamed nor afraid to appear publicly in the temple. He was none of those evil-doers that hate the light, neither come to the light, *Jno. iii. 20*. If their masters had any thing to say to him, they might meet him any day in the temple, where he was ready to answer all challenges, all charges; and there they might do as they pleased with him; for the priests had the custody of the temple, and the command of the guards about it: but to come upon him thus at midnight, and in the place of his retirement, was base and cowardly. This was to do as David's enemy, that "sate in the lurking-place of the villages to murder the innocent," *Ps. x. 8*. But this was not all. 3. They came "with swords and staves," as if he had been in arms against the government, and must have the *pose comitatus* raised to reduce him. There was no occasion for those weapons; but they made this ado, 1st. To secure themselves from the rage of some; they came armed because "they feared the people;" but thus "were they in great fear, where no fear was," *Ps. liii. 5*. 2nd. To expose him to the rage of others. By coming "with swords and staves to take him," they represented him to the people, who are apt to take impressions this way, as a dangerous, turbulent man; and so endeavoured to incense them against him, and make them cry out, "Crucify him, crucify him," having no other way to gain their point.

VII. He reconciled himself to all this injurious, ignominious treatment, by referring himself to the Old Testament predictions of the Messiah. I am hardly used, but I submit, for "the Scriptures must be fulfilled," *ver. 49*.

chief priests." The case is pointed out as an additional illustration of the looseness with which the term *archiereus*, or "chief priest," was then employed, and of the fact that the chief priest was only such by pre-eminence.

xiv. 54. Peter was in the court of the palace, sitting and warming himself by the fire. The latter fact is alluded to also by Luke and John. Lange observes, "It is an open hearth, which lights and heats the hall at the same time, at which they warm themselves."

1. See here what a regard Christ had to the Scriptures; he would bear any thing rather than the least jot or tittle of the Word of God should fall to the ground; and as he had an eye to them in his sufferings, so he has in his glory; for what is Christ doing in the government of the world, but fulfilling the Scriptures? 2. See what use we are to make of the Old Testament; we must search for Christ, the true treasure hid in that field: as the history of the New Testament expounds the prophecies of the Old, so the prophecies of the Old Testament illustrate the history of the New.

VIII. All Christ's disciples hereupon deserted him, *ver. 50*: "They all forsook him and fled." They were very confident they should stick to him; but even good men know not what they will do till they are tried. If it was such a comfort to him as he had lately intimated that they had hitherto continued with him in his lesser trials, *Lu. xxii. 28*, we may well imagine what a grief it was to him that they deserted him now in the greatest, when they might have done him some service; when he was abused to protect him, and when accused to witness for him. Let not those that suffer for Christ think it strange if they be thus deserted, and if all the herd shun the wounded deer; they are not better than their Master, nor can expect to be better used either by their enemies or by their friends. When St. Paul was in peril, none stood by him, but all men forsook him, *2 Tim. iv. 16*.

IX. The noise disturbed the neighbourhood, and some of the neighbours were brought into danger by the riot, *ver. 51, 52*. This passage of story we have not in any other of the evangelists. Here is an account of "a certain young man," that, as it should seem, was no disciple of Christ, nor, as some have imagined, a servant of the house wherein Christ had eaten the passover, who followed him to see what would become of him; as the sons of the prophets, when they understood that Elijah was to be taken up, went to view afar off, *2 Kin. ii. 7*; but some young man that lived near the garden, perhaps in the house to which the garden belonged. Now observe concerning him:

1. How he was frightened out of his bed, to be a spectator of Christ's sufferings. Such a multitude, so armed, and coming with so much fury, and in the dead of the night, and in a quiet village, could not but make a mighty hubbub; this alarmed our young man, who perhaps thought there was some tumult or rising in the city, some uproar among the people, and had the curiosity to go and see what the matter was; and was in such haste to inform himself, that he could not stay to dress himself, but threw a sheet about him, as if he would appear like a walking ghost in grave-clothes, to frighten those who had frightened him, and ran in among the thickest of them with this question, "What is to do here?" and being told, had a mind to see the issue; having, no doubt, heard much of the fame of this Jesus, and therefore, when all his disciples had quitted him, he continued to follow him, desirous to hear what he would say, and see what he would do. Some think his having no other garment but this linen cloth upon his naked body, intimates that he was one of those Jews who made a greater profession of piety than their neighbours; and in token of that, among other instances of austerity and mortification of the body, they used no other clothes but one linen garment, which, though contrived to be modest enough, was thin and cold: but I rather think this was not his constant wear.

2. See how he was frightened into his bed again, when he was in danger of being made a sharer in Christ's sufferings. His own disciples had outrun him; but this young man, having no concern for him, thought he might securely attend him, especially being so far from being armed that he was not so much as clothed; but "the young men," the Roman soldiers, who were called in to assist, "laid hold of him," for all was fish that came to their net. Perhaps they were now vexed at themselves that they had suffered the disciples to run away; and they being got out of their reach, they resolved to seize the first they could lay their hands on; though this young man was perhaps one of the strictest sect of the Jewish church, yet the Roman soldiers made no conscience of abusing him upon this occasion. Finding himself in danger, he "left the linen cloth," by which they had caught hold of him, "and fled away naked." This passage is recorded to shew what a barbarous crew this was that was sent to seize Christ, and what a narrow escape the disciples had of falling into their hands, out of which nothing could have kept them but their Master's care of them: "If ye seek me, let these go their way," *Jno. xviii. 8*. It also intimates that there is no hold of those who are led by curiosity only, and not by faith and conscience, to follow Christ.

53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. 54 And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire. 55 And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none. 56 For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together. 57 And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, 58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. 59 But neither so did their witness agree together. 60 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? 62 And Jesus said, I am:

xiv. 58. The expressions "made with hands" and "made without hands" are not given in the corresponding passage of Matthew's Gospel.

xiv. 61. Hebrew writers often call God "the Blessed." This is the only place of the New Testament in which this well-known rabbinical name occurs.

xiv. 63. The word for "clothes" here is different from the one used by Matthew, and is properly applicable to under garments.

and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? 64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. 65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

We have here Christ's arraignment, trial, conviction, and condemnation, in the ecclesiastical court, before the great Sanhedrim, of which the high priest was president, or judge of the court; the same Caiaphas that had lately adjudged it expedient he should be put to death, guilty or not guilty, *Jno. xi. 50*; and therefore might justly be excepted against as partial.

I. Christ was hurried away to his house; his palace it is called, such state did he live in; and there, though in the dead of the night, "all the chief priests, and elders, and scribes," that were in the secret, "were assembled," ready to receive the prey; so sure were they of it.

II. Peter followed at a distance; such a degree of cowardice was his late courage dwindled into, *ver. 54*; but when he came to the chief priest's palace he sneakingly went "and sat with the servants," that he might not be suspected to belong to Christ. The high priest's fireside was no proper place, nor his servants proper company for Peter, but it was his entrance into a temptation.

III. Great diligence was used to procure, for love or money, false witnesses against Christ. They had seized him as a malefactor, and now they had him they had no indictment to prefer against him; no crime to lay to his charge; but they "sought for witness against him," pumped some with ensnaring questions, offered bribes to others if they would accuse him, and endeavoured to frighten others if they would not, *ver. 55, 56*. The chief priests and elders were, by the law, intrusted with the prosecuting and punishing of false witnesses, *Deu. xix. 16*; yet those were now ringleaders in crime that tends to the overthrow of all justice. It is time to cry "Help, Lord," when the physicians of a land are its troublers, and those that should be the conservators of peace and equity are the corrupters of both.

IV. He was at length charged with words spoken some years ago, which, as they were represented, seemed to threaten the temple, which they had made no better than an idol of, *ver. 57, 58*. But the witnesses to this matter did not agree, *ver. 59*; for one swore that he said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and build it in three days;" so it is in *Matthew*; the other swore that he said "I will destroy this temple, that is made with hands, and within three days I will build, not it," but "another made without hands;" now these two differ much from each other, *οὐκ ἴσθη ἢ μαρτυρία*. Their testimony was not sufficient, not equal to the charge of a capital crime; so Dr. Hammond; they did not accuse him of that upon which a sentence of death might be founded; no, not by the utmost stretch of their law.

V. He was urged to be his own accuser, *ver. 60*. "The high priest stood up" in a heat, and said, "Answerest thou nothing?" This he said under pretence of justice and fair dealing, but really with a design to ensnare him, that they might accuse him, *Lu. xi. 53, 54*, and *xx. 20*. We may well imagine with what an air of haughtiness and disdain this proud high priest brought our Lord Jesus to this question: "Come you, the prisoner at the bar, you hear what is sworn against you, what have you now to say for yourself?" pleased to think that He seemed silent who had so often silenced those that picked quarrels with him. Still Christ "answered nothing," that he might set us an example.

I. Of patience under calumnies and false accusations; when we are reviled, let us not revile again, *1 Pet. ii. 22*; and, 2. Of prudence; when a man shall be made an offender for a word, *Isa. xxix. 21*, and our defence made our offence; it is an evil time indeed when the prudent shall keep silence, lest they make ill worse, and commit their cause to him that judgeth righteously. But,

VI. When he was asked whether he was the Christ, he confessed, and denied not, that he was, *ver. 61, 62*. He asked, "Art thou the Son of the Blessed?" that is, the Son of God; for, as Dr. Hammond observes, The Jews, when they named God, generally added, "blessed for ever; and thence the Blessed is the title of God,—a peculiar title,—and applied to Christ, *Rom. ix. 5*; and for the proof of his being the Son of God he binds them over to his second coming, "ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power,"—that Son of man that now appears so mean and despicable, whom you see and trample upon, *Isa. liii. 2, 3*, you shall shortly see and tremble before. Now one would think such a word as this, which our Lord Jesus seems to have spoken with a grandeur and majesty not agreeable to his present appearance, (for through the thickest cloud of his humiliation some rays of glory were still darted forth,) should have startled the court, and at least in the opinion of some of them, should have amounted to a demurrer, or arrest of judgment, and that they should have stayed process till they had considered farther of it. When Paul at the bar reasoned of the judgment to come, the judge trembled and adjourned the trial, *Acts xxiv. 25*; but these chief priests were so miserably blinded with malice and rage, that like the horse rushing into the battle, they "mocked at fear, and were not affrighted, neither believed they that it was the sound of the trumpet," *Job xxxix. 22, 23*; and see *Job xv. 25, 26*.

VII. The high priest, upon this confession of his, convicted him as a blasphemer, *ver. 63*: "He rent his clothes," *χιτῶνας αὐτοῦ*; some think the word signifies his pontifical vestments, which for the greater state he had put on, though in the night, upon this occasion. As before, in his enmity to Christ, he said he knew not what, *Jno. xi. 51, 52*, so now he did he knew not what. If Saul's rending Samuel's mantle was made to signify the rending of the kingdom from him, *1 Sam. xv. 27, 28*, much more did Caiaphas's rending his own clothes signify the rending of the priesthood from him, as the rending of the veil at Christ's death signified the throwing of all open. Christ's clothes, even when he was crucified, were kept entire, and not rent; for when the Levitical priesthood was rent in pieces, and done away, "this man, because he continues ever, has an unchangeable priesthood."

VIII. They agreed he was a blasphemer, and as such was guilty of a capital crime, *ver. 64*. The question seemed to be put fairly "What think ye?" but it was really prejudged, for the high priest had said, "ye have heard the blasphemy." He gave judgment first, who, as president of the court, ought to have voted last. So "they all condemned him to be guilty of death;" what friends he had in the great Sanhedrim did not appear; it is likely they had not notice.

xiv. 66. All the evangelists note the fact that it was a woman who first accused Peter of being a follower of Christ.

xiv. 67. Matthew has here "Jesus, the Galilean." The more precise appellation here is literally "the Nazarene, Jesus." Our translators give the sense.

xiv. 68. The words "I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest" are by some rendered "I know him not," &c., but we prefer our version.

IX. They set themselves to abuse him, and, as the Philistines with Samson, to make sport with him, *ver. 65*. It should seem some of the priests themselves that had condemned him, so far forgot the dignity as well as duty of their place, and the gravity which became them, that they helped their servants in playing the fool with a condemned prisoner. This they made their diversion, while they waited for the morning to complete their villany. The night of observations (as the passover night was called) they made a merry night of. If they did not think it below them to abuse Christ, shall we think any thing below us by which we may do him honour?

66 And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest: 67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. 68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. 69 And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. 70 And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilæan, and thy speech agreeth thereto. 71 But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak. 72 And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

We have here the story of Peter's denying Christ.

I. It began in keeping at a distance from him. Peter had followed "afar off," *ver. 54*, and now "was beneath in the palace," at the lower end of the hall. Those that are shy of Christ are in a fair way to deny him; that are shy of attending on holy ordinances, shy of the communion of the faithful, and loath to be seen on the side of despised godliness.

II. It was occasioned by his associating with the high priest's servants, and sitting among them. They that think it dangerous to be in company with Christ's disciples, because thence they may be drawn in to suffer for him, will find it much more dangerous to be in company with his enemies, because there they may be drawn in to sin against him.

III. The temptation was his being charged as a disciple of Christ: "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth," *ver. 67*; "This is one of them," *ver. 69*; "for thou art a Galilean," one may know that by thy speaking broad, *ver. 70*. It doth not appear that he was challenged upon it, or in danger of being prosecuted as a criminal for it, but only bantered upon it, and in danger of being ridiculed as a fool for it. While the chief priests were abusing the Master, the servants were abusing the disciple. Sometimes the cause of Christ seems to fall so much on the losing side that every body has a stone to throw at it, and even the "abjects gather themselves together against" it. When Job was on the dunghill, he was had in derision of those that were the "children of base men," *Job xxx. 8*. Yet, all things considered, the temptation could not be called formidable; it was only a maid that casually cast her eye upon him, and for aught appears, without design of giving him any trouble, said, "Thou art one of them," to which he needed not to have made any reply, or might have said, "And if I be, I hope that is no treason."

IV. The sin was very great; he denied Christ before men, at a time when he ought to have confessed and owned him, and to have appeared in court a witness for him. Christ had often given notice to his disciples of his own sufferings, yet when they came they were to Peter as great a surprise and terror as if he had never heard of them before. He had often told them that they must suffer for him, must take up their cross and follow him; and yet Peter is so terribly afraid of suffering, upon the very first alarm of it, that he will lie and swear, and do any thing to avoid it. When Christ was admired and flocked after, he could readily own him; but now he is deserted, and despised, and run down, he is ashamed of him, and will own no relation to him.

V. His repentance was very speedy. He repeated his denial thrice, and the third was worst of all, for then he cursed and swore to confirm his denial; and that third blow, which one would think should have stunned him, and knocked him down, startled him and roused him up; then the cock crew the second time, which put him in mind of his Master's words, the warning he had given him, with that particular circumstance of the cock crowing twice, and by recollecting that, he was made sensible of his sin and the aggravations of it; "and when he thought thereon, he wept." Some observe that this evangelist, who wrote as some have thought by St. Peter's direction, speaks as fully of Peter's sin as any of them, but more briefly of his sorrow, which Peter in modesty would not have to be magnified, and because he thought he could never sorrow enough for so great a sin. His repentance here is thus expressed, *ἐπιβαλὼν ἑλκυσά, where something must be supplied*. "He added to weep," so some, making it a Hebraism: "He wept, and the more he thought of it, the more he wept;" "he continued weeping;" "he flung out and wept;" "burst out into tears;" "threw himself down and wept;" "he covered his face and wept," so some: "Cast his garment about his head that he might not be seen to weep;" "he cast his eyes upon his Master, who turned and looked upon him," so Dr. Hammond supplies it, and it is a probable conjecture. Or, as we understand it, "fixing his mind upon it, he wept." It is not a transient thought of that which is humbling that will suffice, but we must dwell upon it: or, what if this word should mean his laying load upon himself, throwing confusion into his own face; he did as the publican that smote his breast in sorrow for sin; and this amounts to his weeping bitterly.

xiv. 69. According to Matthew, it was another woman who this time saw Peter, but the common reading of Mark here seems to mean that it was the same as before; literally it is, "and the maid, seeing him again." There is some uncertainty as to the true reading, but there is good authority for omitting the word "again," as is done by Tischendorf and other editors. In Luke the word "another" is masculine, but this is not of great importance.

xiv. 70. The words "and thy speech agreeth thereto" do not

CHAPTER XV.

What we read of the sufferings of Christ in the foregoing chapter was but the prologue or introduction, here we have the completing of them. We left him condemned by the chief priests, but they could only shew their teeth, they could not bite. Here we have him, I. Arraigned and accused before Pilate the Roman governor, ver. 1—5. II. Cried out against by the common people at the instigation of the priests, ver. 6—14. III. Condemned to be crucified immediately, ver. 15. IV. Bantered and abused as a mock king by the Roman soldiers, ver. 16—19. V. Led out to the place of execution with all possible ignominy and disgrace, ver. 20—24. VI. Nailed to the cross between two thieves, ver. 25—28. VII. Reviled and abused by all that passed by, ver. 29—32. VIII. Forsaken for a time by his Father, ver. 33—36. IX. Dying and rending the veil, ver. 37, 38. X. Attested and witnessed to by the centurion, and others, ver. 39—41. XI. Buried in the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathæa, ver. 42—47.



AND straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate. 2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it. 3 And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing. 4 And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest



ROMAN GOVERNOR WITH CONSULAR ORNAMENTS.

thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. 5 But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled. 6 Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. 7 And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. 8 And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. 9 But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. 11 But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. 12 And Pilate answered and

said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? 13 And they cried out again, Crucify him. 14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

Here we have, I. A consultation held by the great Sanhedrim, for the effectual prosecution of our Lord Jesus. They met early in the morning about it, and went into a grand committee, to find out ways and means to get him put to death; they lost no time, but followed their blow in good earnest, lest there should be an "uproar among the people." The unwearied industry of wicked people, in doing that which is evil, should shame us for our backwardness and slothfulness in that which is good. They that war against Christ and thy soul are up early: "How long then wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?"

II. The delivering of him up a prisoner to Pilate; they bound him. He was to be the great sacrifice; and sacrifices must be bound with cords, Ps. cxviii. 27. Christ was bound to make bonds easy to us, and to enable us, as Paul and Silas, to sing in bonds. It is good for us often to remember the bonds of the Lord Jesus, as bound with him who was bound for us. They led him through the streets of Jerusalem, to expose him to contempt, who, whilst he taught in the temple, but a day or two before, was had in veneration; and we may well imagine how miserably he looked, after such a night's usage as he had had; so buffeted, spit upon, and abused. Their delivering him to the Roman power was a type of the ruin of their church, which hereby they merited and brought upon themselves; it signified that the promise, and the covenant, and the oracles of God, and the visible church-state, which were the glory of Israel, and had been so long in their possession, should now be delivered up to the Gentiles. By delivering up the King, they do in effect deliver up the kingdom of God, which is therefore, as it were by their own consent, taken from them, and given to another nation. If they had delivered up Christ to gratify the desires of the Romans, or to satisfy any jealousies of theirs concerning him, it had been another matter; but they voluntarily betrayed Him that was Israel's crown, to them that were Israel's yoke.

III. The examining of him by Pilate upon interrogatories, ver. 2: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" "Dost thou pretend to be so; to be that Messiah whom the Jews expect as a temporal prince?" "Yea," saith Christ, "it is as thou sayest, I am that Messiah; but not such a one as they expect." He is the King that rules and protects his Israel according to the spirit, that are Jews inwardly by the circumcision of the spirit; and the King that will restrain and punish the carnal Jews that continue in unbelief.

IV. The articles of impeachment exhibited against him, and his silence under the charge and accusation. The chief priests forgot the dignity of their place when they turned informers, and did in person accuse Christ of many things, ver. 3, and witness against him, ver. 4. Many of the Old Testament prophets charge the priests of their times with great wickedness, in which well did they prophesy of these priests; see Eze. xxii. 26; Hos. v. 1; vi. 9; Mic. iii. 11; Zeph. iii. 4; Mal. i. 6; ii. 8. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans is said to be for the "iniquity of the priests, that shed the blood of the just," Lam. iv. 13. Note, Wicked priests are generally the worst of men. The better any thing is, the worse it is when it is corrupted. Lay persecutors have been generally found more compassionate than ecclesiastics. These priests were very eager and noisy in their accusation; but Christ "answered nothing," ver. 3. When Pilate urged him to clear himself, and was desirous he should, ver. 4, yet still he stood mute, ver. 5. "he answered nothing," which Pilate thought very strange. He gave Pilate a direct answer, ver. 2, but would not answer the prosecutors and witnesses, because the things they alleged were notoriously false, and he knew Pilate himself was convinced they were so. Note, As Christ spoke to admiration, so he kept silence to admiration.

V. The proposal Pilate made to the people to have Jesus released to them, since it was the custom of the feast to grace the solemnity with the release of one prisoner. The people expected and demanded that he should "do as he had ever done to them," ver. 8. It was an ill usage, but they would have it kept up. Now Pilate perceived that the chief priests delivered up Jesus for envy, because he had got such a reputation among the people as eclipsed theirs, ver. 10. It was easy to see, comparing the eagerness of the persecutors with the slenderness of the proofs, that it was not his guilt, but his goodness—not anything mischievous or scandalous, but something meritorious and glorious, that they were provoked at. And therefore, hearing how much he was the darling of the crowd, he thought he might safely appeal from the priests to the people, and that they would be proud of rescuing him out of the priests' hands; and he proposed an expedient for their doing it without danger of an uproar; let them demand him to be released, and Pilate will readily do it, and stop the mouths of the priests with it, that the people insisted upon his release. There was indeed another prisoner, one Barabbas, that had an interest, and would have some votes, but he questioned not but Jesus would outpoll him.

VI. The unanimous, outrageous clamours of the people to have Christ put to death, and particularly to have him crucified. It was a great surprise to Pilate, when he found the people so much under the influence of the priests, that they all agreed to desire that Barabbas might be released, ver. 11. Pilate opposed it all he could, "What will ye that I shall do to him whom ye call the King of the Jews?" "Would not you then have him released too?" ver. 12. "No," say they, "crucify him;" the priests having put that in their mouths, they insist upon it; when Pilate objected, "Why, what evil has he done?" a very material question in such a case, they do not pretend to answer it, but "cried out the more exceedingly," as they were more and more instigated and irritated by the priests, "Crucify him, crucify him." Now the priests, who were very busy dispersing themselves and their creatures among the mob, to keep up the cry, promised themselves that it would influence Pilate two ways to condemn him: 1. It might incline him to believe Christ guilty, when there was so general an outcry against him; Surely, might Pilate think, he must needs be an ill man whom all the world is weary of; he would now conclude he had been misinformed, when he was told what an interest he had in the people, and that the matter was not so. But the priests had hurried on the prosecution with so much expedition, that we may suppose they that were Christ's friends, and would have opposed this cry, were at the other end of the town, and knew nothing of the matter. Note, It has been the common artifice of Satan to put Christ and his religion into an ill name, and so to run them down. When once this sect, as they called it, comes to be "everywhere spoken against," though without cause, then that is looked upon as cause enough to condemn it. But let us judge of persons and things by their merits, and the standard of God's

appear in some very early MSS., and are omitted by several critical editors.

xiv. 72. There has been much discussion as to the real meaning of the Greek word rendered "when he thought thereon." In position it corresponds with the "went out" of Matthew and Luke. The Syriac has "and he began to weep." Many have explained it, "he covered" his head, or face; some think it means "he went on" weeping; others suppose it signifies that "he rushed out," or went

out hastily; others support our common version, and some adopt the Syriac rendering, which is also that of the Vulgate. Some think the word means that Peter cast his eyes upon the Lord at the moment, and others that "he interrupted," as it were, the crowing of the cock. On the whole, we prefer the opinion that the word refers to Peter's hasty departure.

xv. 1. "The whole council" is the entire Sanhedrim of seventy-one members, all of whom had to be present on certain occasions.

Lord, and not prejudice by common fame and the cry of the country. 2. It might induce him to condemn Christ to please the people, and indeed for fear of displeasing them. Though he was not so weak as to be governed by their opinion to believe him guilty, yet he was so wicked as to be swayed by their outrage to condemn him, though he believed him innocent; induced thereunto by reasons of state, and the wisdom of this world. Our Lord Jesus dying as a sacrifice for the sins of many, he fell a sacrifice to the rage of many.

15 And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified. 16 And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Prætorium; and they call together the whole band. 17 And they clothed him with purple, and platted a



SYRIAN ROYAL ROBE AND CROWN.

crown of thorns, and put it about his head, 18 And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! 19 And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. 21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

Here, First, Pilate, to gratify the Jews' malice, delivers Christ to be crucified, ver. 15. "Willing to content the people," "to do enough" for them, so the word is, and make them easy, that he might keep them quiet, he released Barabbas unto them, that was the scandal and plague of their nation, and delivered Jesus to be crucified, who was the glory and blessing of their nation. Though he had scourged him before, hoping that would content them, and then not designing to crucify him, yet he went on to that; for he that could persuade himself to chastise one that was innocent, *Lu. xxiii. 16*, no wonder he could by degrees persuade himself to crucify him.

Christ was crucified, for that was, 1. A bloody death; and without blood no remission, *Heb. ix. 22*. "The blood is the life," *Gen. ix. 4*; it is the vehicle of the animal spirits, which connect the soul and body, so that the exhausting of the blood is the exhausting of the life. Christ was to lay down his life for us, and therefore shed his blood. Blood made atonement for the soul, *Lev. xvii. 11*; and therefore in every sacrifice of propitiation, special order was given for the pouring out of the blood, and the sprinkling of that before the Lord: now that Christ might answer all these types, he shed his blood. 2. It was a painful death; the pains were exquisite and acute, for death made its assaults upon the vitals by the exterior parts, which are quickest of sense. Christ died so that he might feel himself die, because he was to be both the priest and the sacrifice; so as that he might be active in dying, because he was to "make his soul an offering for sin." Tully calls crucifixion, *teterrimum supplicium*,—"a most tremendous punishment." Christ would meet death in its greatest terror, and so conquer it. 3. It was a shameful death; the death of slaves and the vilest malefactors; so it was accounted among the Romans; the cross and the shame are put together. God having been injured in his honour by the sin of man, it is in his honour that Christ makes him satisfaction, not only by denying himself in, and divesting himself of, the honours due to his Divine nature for a time, but by submitting to the greatest reproach and ignominy the human nature was capable of being loaded with. Yet this was not the worst. 4. It was a cursed death; thus it was branded by the Jewish law, *Deu. xxi. 23*, "He that is hanged is accursed of God;" is under a particular mark of God's displeasure. It was the death that Saul's sons were put to, when the guilt of their

father's bloody house was to be expiated, *2 Sam. xxi. 6*; Haman and his sons were hanged, *Est. vii. 10*; *ix. 13*. We do not read of any of the prophets of the Old Testament that were hanged; but now Christ has submitted to be hanged upon a tree, the reproach and curse of that kind of death is quite rolled away, so that it ought not to be any hindrance to the comfort of those who die either innocently or penitently, nor any diminution from, but rather an addition to, the glory of those who die martyrs for Christ, to be, as he was, hanged upon a tree.

Secondly, Pilate, to gratify the gay humour of his Roman soldiers, delivered him to them to be abused and spitefully treated, while they were preparing for the execution. They called together the whole regiment that was then in waiting, and they went into an inner hall, where they ignominiously abused our Lord Jesus as a King, just as, in the high priest's hall, his servants had ignominiously abused him as a Prophet and Saviour. 1. Do kings use to wear robes of purple or scarlet? "They clothed him with purple." This abuse done to Christ in his apparel should be an intimation to Christians not to make the putting on of apparel their adorning, *1 Pet. iii. 4*. Shall a purple or scarlet robe be matter of pride to a Christian, which was matter of reproach and shame to Christ? 2. Do kings wear crowns? They "platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head." A crown of straw or rushes would have been banter enough, but this was pain also. He wore the crown of thorns which we had deserved, that we might wear the crown of glory which he merited. Let us be taught by these thorns, as Gideon taught the men of Succoth, to hate sin, and be uneasy under them, and to be in love with Jesus Christ, who is here a lily among thorns. If we be at any time afflicted with "a thorn in the flesh," let it be our comfort that our great High Priest is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having himself known what thorns in the flesh meant. 3. Are kings attended with the acclamations of their subjects? "O king, live for ever!" that also is mimicked; they saluted him with, "Hail, King of the Jews;" such a prince and such a people, even good enough for one another. 4. Kings use to have sceptres put into their hand, marks of dominion, as the crown is of dignity; and to resemble that they put a reed in his right hand. Those who despise the authority of the Lord Jesus, as not to be observed and obeyed, that regard not either the precepts of his word or the threatenings of his wrath, do in effect put a reed in his hand; nay, and, as these here, smite him on the head with it; such is the indignity they do him. 5. Subjects, when they swear allegiance, were wont to kiss their sovereign; and this they offered to do, but instead of that spit upon him. 6. Kings used to be addressed upon the knee, and this also they brought into the jest; they bowed the knee and worshipped him; this they did in scorn, to make themselves and one another laugh. We were by sin become liable to everlasting shame and contempt, to deliver us from which our Lord Jesus submitted to this shame and contempt for us. He was thus mocked, not in his own clothes, but in another's, to signify that he suffered not for his own sin; the crime was ours, the shame his. Those who pretend subjection to Christ, but at the same time give themselves up to the service of the world and the flesh, do in effect the same that they did who bowed the knee to him in mockery, and abused him with, "Hail, King of the Jews;" when they said, "We have no king but Cæsar." Those that bow the knee to Christ, but do not bow the soul, that "draw nigh to him with their mouths, and honour him with their lips, but their hearts are far from him," put the same affront upon him that these here did.

Thirdly, The soldiers, at the hour appointed, led him away from Pilate's judgment hall to the place of execution, ver. 20, as a sheep to the slaughter; "he was led forth with the workers of iniquity," though he did no sin. But lest his death under the load of his cross, which he was to carry, should prevent the farther cruelties they intended, they compelled one Simon of Cyrene to carry his cross for him: he "passed by, coming out of the country," or out of the fields, not thinking of any such matter. Note, We must not think it strange, if crosses come upon us suddenly, and we be surprised by them. The cross was a very troublesome, unwieldy load, but he that carried it a few minutes had the honour to have his name upon record in the book of God, though otherwise an obscure person; so that wherever this Gospel is preached there shall this be told for a memorial of him; so, though "no affliction," no cross, "for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous," yet afterwards it yields "a crown of glory" to them that are exercised thereby.

22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. 23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. 24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. 25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. 26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. 28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. 29 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, 30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross. 31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. 32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

xv. 5. For "yet answered nothing" we may translate "no longer answered anything." Jesus had already made one reply (verse 2).

xv. 6. The words rendered "at that feast" rather mean "during the feast," or, more precisely, "during a feast." Hence the Syriac and Arabic versions have "at every feast," which is the view of Beza. Lightfoot, however, objects, and says it was only at the Passover.

xv. 7. The details which Mark introduces respecting Barabbas show why Matthew calls him a notable prisoner. He was in prison along with his fellow-insurgents, who had committed murder; but of the sedition in which he was implicated we have no full account. But see Luke xxiii. 19.

xv. 8. This verse, which states a fact peculiar to Mark, shows that the governor had been in the habit of freeing prisoners at their request on certain occasions. While they rejected Jesus very

We have here the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus.

First. The place where he was crucified; it was called Golgotha, 'the place of a skull;' some think, because of the heads of malefactors that were there cut off; it was the common place of execution, as Tyburn for he was in all respects numbered with the transgressors. I know not how to give any credit to it, but divers of the ancients mention it as a current tradition, that in this place our first father, Adam, was buried; and they think it highly congruous that there Christ should be crucified: "for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." Tertullian, Origen, Chrysostom, and Epiphanius (great names) take notice of it; nay, Cyprian adds, *creditur a piis*,—"many good people believe" that the blood of Christ crucified did trickle down upon the skull of Adam, who was buried in the same place. Something more credible is the tradition that this mount Calvary was "that mountain in the land of Moriah" (and the land of Moriah it is certain it was, for so the country about Jerusalem was called,) on which Isaac was to be offered, and the ram was offered instead of him; and then Abraham had an eye to this day of Christ, when he called the place "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide," expecting that so it would be seen in the mount of the Lord.

Secondly. The time when he was crucified; it was the third hour, ver. 25. He was brought before Pilate about the sixth hour, *Jno. xix. 14*, according to the Roman way of reckoning, which John useth, with which ours at this day agrees, that is, at six o'clock in the morning; and then at the third hour, according to the Jews' way of reckoning, that is, about nine of the clock in the morning, or soon after, they nailed him to the cross. Dr. Lightfoot thinks the third hour is here mentioned to intimate an aggravation of the wickedness of the priests, that they were here prosecuting Christ to the death, though it was after the third hour, when they ought to have been attending the service of the temple, and offering the peace offerings, it being the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, when there was to be a holy convocation. At that very time, when they should have been, according to the duty of their place, presiding in the public devotions, were they here venting their malice against the Lord Jesus; yet these were the men that seemed so zealous for the temple, and condemned Christ for speaking against it. Note, There are many who pretend to be for the church, who yet care not how seldom they go to church.

Thirdly. The indignities that were done him when he was nailed to the cross; as if that had not been ignominious enough, they added several things to the ignominy of it.

1. It being the custom to give wine to persons that were to be put to death, they mingled his with myrrh, which was bitter, and made it nauseous; he tasted it, but would not drink it; was willing to admit the bitterness of it, but not the benefit of it.

2. The garments of those that were crucified being, as with us, the executioners' fee, the soldiers cast lots upon his garments, ver. 24, threw dice (as our soldiers used to do upon a drum-head) for them; so making themselves merry with his misery, and sitting at their sport while he was hanging in pain.

3. They set a superscription over his head, by which they intended to reproach him, but really did him both justice and honour, "The King of the Jews" ver. 26. Here was no crime alleged, but his sovereignty owned. Perhaps Pilate meant to cast disgrace upon Christ, as a baffled king, or upon the Jews, who, by their importunity, had forced him, against his conscience, to condemn Christ, as a people that deserved no better a king than he seemed to be. However, God intended it to be the proclaiming even of Christ upon the cross the King of Israel; though Pilate knew not what he wrote, no more than Caiaphas what he said, *Jno. xi. 51*. Christ crucified is King of his church, his spiritual Israel; and even then, when he hung on the cross, he was like a king conquering his and his people's enemies, and triumphing over them, *Col. ii. 15*. Now he was writing his laws in his own blood, and preparing his favours for his subjects. Whenever we look unto Christ crucified we must remember the inscription over his head, that he is a king, and must give up ourselves to be his subjects, as Israelites indeed.

4. They crucified two thieves with him, "one on his right hand, the other on his left," and he in the midst, as the worst of the three, ver. 27; so great a degree of dishonour did they hereby intend him. And no doubt it gave him disturbance too. Some that have been imprisoned in the common jails for the testimony of Jesus, have complained of the company of cursing, swearing prisoners, more than of any other of the grievances of their prison. Now in the midst of such our Lord Jesus was crucified. While he lived he had, as there was occasion, associated with sinners to do them good; and now, when he died, he was, for the same purpose, joined with them; for he came into the world, and went out of it, to save sinners, even the chief. But this evangelist takes particular notice of the fulfilling of the Scriptures in it, ver. 28. In that famous prediction of Christ's sufferings, *Isa. liii. 12*, it was foretold that he should be "numbered with the transgressors," because he was made sin for us.

5. The spectators, that is, the generality of them, instead of condoling his misery, added to it, by insulting over him. Surely never was such an instance of barbarous inhumanity towards the vilest malefactor; but thus the devil shewed the utmost rage against him, and thus he submitted to the greatest dishonours that could be done him.

1st. Even "they that passed by," that were no way concerned, yet "railed on him," ver. 29. If their hearts were so hardened that their compassions were not moved with such a spectacle, yet they should have thought it enough to have their curiosity gratified, but that will not serve; as if they were not only divested of all humanity, but were devils in human shape, they taunted him, and expressed themselves with the utmost detestation of him, and indignation at him, and shot thick at him their arrows, even bitter words. The chief priests, no doubt, put these sarcasms into their mouths: "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, now," if thou canst, "save thyself, and come down from the cross." They triumph as if, now they had got him to the cross, there were no danger of his destroying the temple; whereas the temple of which he spoke he was now destroying, and did within three days build it up; and the temple of which they spake he did, by men that were his sword and his hand, destroy not many years after. When secure sinners think the danger is over, it is then most ready to seize them: the day of the Lord comes as a thief upon those that deny his coming, and say, "Where is the promise of it?" much more upon those that defy his coming, and say, "Let him make speed, and hasten his work."

2nd. Even the chief priests, who, being taken from among men, and ordained for men, should have compassion even on those that are out of the way, should be tender of those that are suffering and dying, *Heb. v. 1, 2*; yet they poured vinegar instead of oil into his wounds, they talked to the grief of him whom God had smitten, *Ps. lxi. 26*; they mocked him; they said, "He saved others," healed and helped them, but now it appears it was not by his own power, for "himself he cannot save." They challenge him to come down from the cross if he could, ver. 32. Let them but see that, and they would believe; whereas they would not believe when he gave them a more convincing sign than that, when he came up from the grave. These chief priests, one would think, might now have found themselves other work to do: if they would not go to do

their duty in the temple, yet they might have been employed in an office not foreign to their profession; though they would not offer any counsel or comfort to the Lord Jesus, yet they might have given some help to the thieves in their dying moments; (the monks and priests in popish countries are very officious about criminals broken upon the wheel, a death much like that of the cross;) but they did not think that their business.

3rd. Even they that were crucified with him reviled him, ver. 32; one of them did, so wretchedly was his heart hardened even in the depth of misery, and at the door of eternity.

33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. 36 And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down. 37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. 38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. 39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. 40 There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joseph, and Salome; 41 (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

Here we have an account of Christ's dying, how his enemies abused him, and God honoured him at his death.

First. There was a thick "darkness over the whole land" (some think over the whole earth) for three hours, from noon till three of the clock. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, *Am. viii. 9*: "I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and will darken the earth in the clear day;" and *Jer. xv. 9*, "Her sun is gone down while it was yet day." The Jews had often demanded of Christ a sign from heaven; and now they had one, but such a one as signified the blinding of their eyes. It was a sign of the darkness that was come, and coming, upon the Jewish church and nation. They were doing their utmost to extinguish the Sun of Righteousness, which was now setting, and the rising again of which they would never own; and what then might be expected among them but a worse than Egyptian darkness? This intimated to them that the things which belonged to their peace were now hid from their eyes, and that the day of the Lord was at hand, which should be to them a "day of darkness and gloominess," *Joel ii. 1, 2*. It was the power of darkness they were now under, the works of darkness they were now doing, and such as this should their doom justly be who "loved darkness rather than light."

Secondly. Towards the close of this darkness our Lord Jesus, in the agony of his soul, cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" ver. 34. The darkness signified the present cloud which the human soul of Christ was under when he was making it an offering for sin. Mr. Fox, in his *Acts and Monuments*, vol. iii. p. 160, tells of one Mr. Hunter, a martyr in Queen Mary's time, that, being fastened to the stake to be burnt, he put up this short prayer, 'Son of God, shine upon me;' and immediately the sun in the firmament shone out of a dark cloud so full in his face, that he was forced to look another way, which was very comfortable to him. But our Lord Jesus, on the contrary, was denied the light of the sun when he was in his sufferings, to signify the withdrawing of the light of God's countenance; and this he complained of more than any thing: he did not complain of his disciples forsaking him, but of his Father's; 1. Because this wounded his spirit; and that is a thing hard to bear, *Pr. xviii. 14*. This brought the waters into his soul, *Ps. lxi. 1-3*. 2. Because in this especially he was made sin for us; our iniquities had deserved indignation and wrath upon the soul, *Rom. ii. 7*; and therefore Christ, being made a sacrifice, underwent as much of it as he was capable of; and it could not but bear hard indeed upon him who had lain in the bosom of the Father from eternity, and was always his delight. These symptoms of Divine wrath which Christ was under in his sufferings, were like that fire from heaven, which had been sent sometimes in extraordinary cases, to consume the sacrifices, as *Lev. ix. 24*; 2 *Chr. vii. 1*; 1 *Kin. xviii. 38*; and it was always a token of God's acceptance: the fire that should have fallen upon the sinner, if God had not been pacified, fell upon the sacrifice, as a token that he was so; therefore it now fell upon Christ, and extorted from him this loud and bitter cry. When Paul was to be offered as a sacrifice for the service of saints, he could joy and rejoice, *Phil. ii. 17*; but it is another thing to be offered as a sacrifice for the sins of sinners. Now at the sixth hour, and so to the ninth, the sun was darkened by an extraordinary eclipse; and if it be true, as some astronomers compute, that in the evening of this day on which Christ died there was an eclipse of the moon that was natural and expected, in which seven digits of the moon were darkened, and it continued from five o'clock till seven, it is remarkable, and yet farther significant of the darkness of the time that then was; when the sun shall be darkened, the moon also shall not give her light.

much on the plea of loyalty, they selected the representative of disloyalty and disorder.

xv. 16. "The hall, which is the pretorium," as the Greek has it, was an open court. In Matt. xxvii. 27 the word "pretorium" is translated "the common hall." The word "pretorium" is commonly used of the palace at Jerusalem, where the Roman procurators resided when they visited Jerusalem, but here it is best understood of that court of the palace where the procurator's

guards were stationed when on duty. When the word refers to other cities, it is, of course, with a different application (*Acts xxi. 35*, *Phil. i. 13*).

xv. 17. What Matthew calls "scarlet" Mark here calls "purple." The vague use of certain words is common, and causes no difficulty.

xv. 21. The fact that this Simon was a Cyrenian is observed by Luke. Cyrene was in Northern Africa, and much frequented by Jews. This Simon was most probably a Jew, as his name suggests. For other

Thirdly. Christ's prayer was bantered by them that stood by, ver. 35, 36. Because he cried, "Eli, Eli," or, as Mark has it, according to the Syriac dialect, "Eloi, Eloi," they said, "He calls for Elias," though they knew very well what he said, and what it signified, "My God, my God." Thus did they represent him as praying to saints, either because he had abandoned God, or God had abandoned him; and whereby they would make him more and more odious to the people. One of them filled a sponge with vinegar, and reached it up to him upon a reed; let him cool his mouth with that, it was drink good enough for him, ver. 36. This was intended for a farther affront and abuse to him; and whoever it was that checked him who did it, did but add to the reproach: "Let him alone," he has called for Elias; "let us see whether Elias will come to take him down;" and if not, we may conclude that he also hath abandoned him.

Fourthly. Christ did again "cry with a loud voice," and so "gave up the ghost," ver. 37. He was now commending his soul into his Father's hands; and though God is not moved with any bodily exercise, yet this loud voice signified that great strength and ardency of affection wherewith he did it, to teach us, in every thing wherein we have to do with God, to put forth our utmost vigour, and to perform all the duties of religion, particularly that of self-resignation, with our whole heart and our whole soul; and then, though speech fails, that we cannot cry with a loud voice, as Christ did, yet if God be the strength of the heart, that will not fail. Christ was really and truly dead, for he gave up the ghost; his human soul departed to the world of spirits, and left his body a breathless clod of clay.

Fifthly. Just at that instant that Christ died upon mount Calvary, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom," ver. 38. This spoke a great deal, 1. Of terror to the unbelieving Jews, for it was a presage of the utter destruction of their church and nation, which followed not long after; it was like the cutting asunder of the staff of beauty, for this veil was exceeding splendid and glorious, *Ex. xxvi. 31*; and that was done at the same time when they gave for his price "thirty pieces of silver," *Zec. xi. 10, 12*, to "break the covenant which he had made with that people." Now it was time to cry, "Ichabod, the glory is departed from Israel." Some think that story which Josephus relates of the temple door opening of his own accord with that voice, "Let us depart hence," some years before the destruction of Jerusalem, is the same with this here; but that is not probable; however this had the same signification, according to that, *Hos. v. 14*, "I will tear and go away." 2. It speaks a deal of comfort to all believing Christians, for it signified the consecrating and laying open to us "a new and living way into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus."

Sixthly. The centurion who commanded that detachment which had the oversight of the execution was convinced, and confessed that this Jesus was the Son of God, ver. 39. One thing that satisfied him was, "that he so cried out and gave up the ghost." That one who was ready to give up the ghost should be able to cry out so was very surprising. Of all the sad spectacles of this kind, he never observed the like; and that one who had strength to cry so loud, should yet immediately give up the ghost, this also made him wonder, and he said, to the honour of Christ, and the shame of those who abused him, "Truly this man was the Son of God." But what reason had he to say so? I answer, 1. He had reason to say that he suffered unjustly, and had a great deal of wrong done him. Note, He suffered for saying he was the Son of God; and it was true he did say so, so that if he suffered unjustly, as it was plain by all the circumstances of his sufferings he did, then what he said was true, and he was indeed the Son of God. 2. He had reason to say that he was a favourite of Heaven, and one for whom the Almighty Power was particularly engaged, seeing how Heaven did him honour at his death, and frowned upon his persecutors. "Surely," thinks he, "this must be some Divine person, highly beloved of God." This he expresseth by such words as speak his eternal generation as God, and his special designation to the office of Mediator, though he meant not so. Our Lord Jesus, even in the depth of his sufferings and humiliation, was the Son of God, and was declared to be so with power.

Sevently. There were some of his friends, the good women especially, that attended him, ver. 40, 41: "There were women looking on afar off." The men durst not be seen at all, the mob was so very outrageous: *Currenti cede furor*,—"Give way to the raging torrent," they thought was good counsel now. The women durst not come near; but stood at a distance, overwhelmed with grief. Some of these women are here named: Mary Magdalene was one; she had been his patient, and owed all her comfort to his power and goodness, which rescued her out of the possession of seven devils, in gratitude for which she thought she could never do enough for him. "Mary the mother of James the little," *Jacobus Parvus*, so the word is; probably he was so called because he was like Zaccheus, little of stature. This Mary was the wife of Cleophas, or Alphaeus, and sister to the Virgin Mary. These women had followed Christ from Galilee, though they were not required to attend the feast, as the males were; but it is likely they came in expectation that his temporal kingdom would now shortly be set up, and big with hopes of preferment for themselves and their relations under him. It is plain the mother of Zebedee's children was so, *Mat. xx. 21*. And now to see Him upon a cross whom they thought to have seen upon a throne, could not but be a great balk to them. Note, Those that follow Christ in expectation of great things in this world by him, and by the profession of his religion, may probably live to see themselves sadly disappointed.

42 And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. 44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. 45 And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. 46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone

unto the door of the sepulchre. 47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.

We are here attending the funeral of our Lord Jesus—a solemn, mournful funeral; O that we may by grace be planted in the likeness of it! Observe, First. *How the body of Christ was begged.* It was, as the dead bodies of malefactors use to be, at the disposal of the government. Those that hurried him to the cross designed he should make "his grave with the wicked," but God designed he should make it "with the rich," *Isa. liii. 9*, and so he did. We are here told,

1. When the body of Christ was begged, in order to its being buried, and why such haste was made with the funeral: "the even was come," and "it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath," ver. 42. The Jews were more strict in the observation of the sabbath than of any other feast; and therefore, though this day was itself a feast-day, yet they observed it more religiously as the eve of the sabbath, when they prepared their houses and tables for the splendid and joyful solemnizing of the sabbath day. Note, The day before the sabbath should be a day of preparation for the sabbath, not of our houses and tables, but of our hearts, which, as much as possible, should be freed from the cares and business of the world, and fixed and put in frame for the service and enjoyment of God. Such work is to be done, and such advantages gained, on the sabbath day, that it is requisite we should get ready for it a day before; nay, the whole week should be divided between the improvement of the foregoing sabbath, and the preparation for the following sabbath.

2. Who it was that begged the body, and took care for the decent interment of it: it was "Joseph of Arimathea," who is here called "an honourable counsellor," ver. 43; a person of character and distinction, and in an office of public trust; some think in the state, and that he was one of Pilate's privy council; his post rather seems to have been in the church; he was one of the great Sanhedrim of the Jews, or one of the high priest's council. He was *εὐχρίστου Βουλεύτης*, a counsellor that carried himself in his place as did become him. Those are truly honourable, and those only, in places of power and trust, that make conscience of their duty, and whose deportment is agreeable to their preferment. But here is a more shining character put upon him; he was one that "waited for the kingdom of God," the kingdom of grace on earth, and of glory in heaven; the kingdom of the Messiah. Note, Those who wait for the kingdom of God, and hope for an interest in the privileges of it, must shew it by their forwardness to own Christ's cause and interest, even then when it seems to be crushed and run down. Observe, Even among the honourable counsellors there were some, there was one at least, that waited for the kingdom of God, whose faith will condemn the unbelief of all the rest. This man God raised up for this necessary service, when none of Christ's disciples could or durst undertake it, having neither purse, nor interest, nor courage for it. Joseph "went in boldly unto Pilate," though he knew how much it would affront the chief priests, who had loaded him with so much reproach, to see any honour done him, yet he put on courage; perhaps at first he was a little afraid, but *τολμήσας*, "taking heart on it," he determined to shew this respect to the remains of the Lord Jesus, let the worst come to the worst.

3. What a surprise it was to Pilate to hear that he was dead, perhaps expecting that he would have saved himself, and come down from the cross; especially that he was already dead; that one who seemed to have a more than ordinary vigour should so soon yield to death. Every circumstance of Christ's dying was marvellous, for, from first to last, his name was called Wonderful. Pilate doubted (so some understand it) whether he were yet dead or not, fearing lest he should be imposed upon, and the body should be taken down alive, and recovered; whereas the sentence was, as with us, to hang till the body be dead. He therefore called the centurion, his own officer, and asked him "whether he had been any while dead," ver. 44. Whether it was so long since they perceived any sign of life in him, any breath or motion, that they might conclude he was dead, past recall. The centurion could assure him of this, for he had particularly observed how he gave up the ghost, ver. 39. There was a special providence in it, that Pilate should be so strict in examining this, that there might be no pretence to say he was buried alive, and so to take away the truth of his resurrection; and so fully was this determined, that that objection was never started. Thus the truth of Christ gains confirmation sometimes even from the enemies of it.

Secondly. *How the body of Christ was buried.* Pilate gave Joseph leave to take down the body, and do what he pleased with it. It was a wonder the chief priests were not too quick for him, and had not first begged the body of Pilate, to expose it, and drag it about the streets; but that remainder of their wrath did God restrain, and gave that invaluable prize to Joseph, who knew how to value it; and the heads of the priests were so influenced that they did not oppose it: *Sit divus modo non sit vivus*,—"We care not for his being adored, provided he be not revived."

1. Joseph "bought fine linen" to wrap the body in, though in such a case, old linen, that had been worn, might have been thought sufficient. In paying respects to Christ, it becomes us to be generous, and to serve him with the best that can be got, not with that which can be got at the best hand.

2. He took down the body, mangled and macerated as it was, "and wrapped him in the linen," as a treasure of great worth. Our Lord Jesus hath commanded himself to be delivered to us, sacramentally, in the ordinance of the Lord's supper, which we should receive in such a manner as may best express our love to Him who loved us and died for us.

3. He "laid it in a sepulchre" of his own, in a private place. We sometimes find it spoken of in the story of the kings of Judah, as a slur upon the memory of the wicked kings, that they were not buried in the sepulchres of the kings; our Lord Jesus, though he did no evil, but much good, and to him was given the throne of his father David, yet was buried in the graves of the common people; for it was not in this world, but in the other, that his rest was glorious. This sepulchre belonged to Joseph. Abraham, when he had no other possession in the land of Canaan, yet had a burying-place; but Christ died not so much as that. This sepulchre was hewn out of a rock, for Christ died to make the grave a refuge and shelter to the saints; and, being hewn out of a rock, it is a strong refuge: "O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave!" Christ himself is a hiding-place to his people, that is, "as the shadow of a great rock."

4. He "rolled a stone to the door of that sepulchre," for so the manner of the Jews was to bury. When Daniel was taken into the lions' den, a stone was laid to the mouth of it, to keep him in, as here to the door of Christ's sepulchre; but neither of them could keep off the angels' visits to the prisoners.

5. Some of the good women attended the funeral, and "beheld where he was laid," that they might come, after the sabbath, to anoint the dead body, because they had not time to do it now. When Moses, the mediator and lawgiver of the Jewish church, was buried, care was taken that no man should know of his sepulchre, *Deut. xxxiv. 6*, because the respects of the people towards his person were to die with him; but when our great Mediator and Lawgiver was buried,

references to Cyrene and Cyrenians, see Acts ii. 10, vi. 9, xi. 20, xiii. 1. The names of both Alexander and Rufus occur elsewhere in the New Testament, as in Acts xix. 33, Rom. xvi. 13, but whether the persons here named is unknown. From the way in which Mark mentions them, they seem to have been persons of some consideration, perhaps as disciples of Christ.

xv. 25. We cannot agree with those who say that this "third hour" is inconsistent with John xix. 14, where the "sixth hour" is

mentioned as the time when Jesus was shown by Pilate. It is supposed by some that, according to John's reckoning, Jesus was crucified much later than other evangelists say, because many things were done between Pilate's consent to the crucifixion and the actual crucifixion. Three hours would not be too long for the intermediate transactions, and this would carry back the "sixth hour" of John to our six in the morning, or not much later. To all this there is an easy answer: during the summer solstice, the sixth hour of the

special notice was taken of his sepulchre, because he was to rise again; and the care taken of his body speaks the care which he himself will take concerning his body the church; even then when it seems to be a dead body, and as a valley full of dry bones, it shall be preserved in order to a resurrection; as shall also the dead bodies of the saints, with whose dust there is a covenant in force which shall not be forgotten.

Our meditations on Christ's burial should lead us to think of our own, and should help to make the grave familiar to us, and so to make that bed easy which we must shortly make in the darkness. Frequent thoughts of it would not only take off the dread and terror of it, but quicken us, since the graves are always ready for us, to get ready for the graves, *Job xvii. 1*

CHAPTER XVI.

In this chapter we have a short account of the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus; and the joys and triumphs which it furnisheth all believers with, will be very acceptable to those who sympathized and suffered with Christ in the foregoing chapters. Here is, I. Christ's resurrection notified by an angel to the women that came to the sepulchre to anoint him ver. 1-8. II. His appearance to Mary Magdalene, and the account she gave of it to the disciples, ver. 9-11. III. His appearance to the two disciples going to Emmaus, and the report they made of it to their brethren, ver. 12, 13. IV. His appearance to the eleven, with the commission he gave them to set up his kingdom in the world, and full instructions and credentials in order therunto, ver. 14-18. V. His ascension into heaven, and the apostles' close application to their work, and God's owning them in it, ver. 19, 20.



AND when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? 4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. 5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. 6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. 7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. 8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

Never was there such a sabbath since the sabbath was first instituted as this was, which the first words of this chapter tell us was now past; during all this sabbath our Lord Jesus lay in the grave. It was to him a sabbath of rest, but a silent sabbath; it was to his disciples a melancholy sabbath, spent in tears and fears. Never were the sabbath services in the temple such an abomination to God, though they had been often so, as they were now, when the chief priests that presided in them had their hands full of blood, the blood of Christ. Well, this sabbath is over, and the first day of the week is the first day of a new world. We have here,

First. The affectionate visit which the good women that had attended Christ now made to his sepulchre, not a superstitious one, but a pious one. They set out from their lodgings "very early in the morning," at break of day, or sooner; but either they had a long walk, or met with some hindrance, so that it was surprising by that time they got to the sepulchre. They "had bought sweet spices" too, and came not only to bedew the dead body with their tears, for nothing could more renew their grief than this, but to perfume it with their spices, ver. 1. Nicodemus had bought a very large quantity of dry spices, myrrh and aloes, which served to dry the wounds, and dry up the blood, *Jno. xix. 39*; but these good women did not think that enough, they bought spices, perhaps of another kind, some perfumed oils, to anoint him. Note, The respects which others have shewed to Christ's name should not hinder us from shewing our respects to it.

Secondly. The care they were in about the rolling away of the stone, and the superseding of that care, ver. 3, 4. "They said among themselves," as they were coming along, and now drew near the sepulchre, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? for it was very great," more than they with their united strength could move. They should have thought of this before they came out, and then discretion would have bade them not go, unless they had those to go with them who could do it. And there was another difficulty, much greater than this, to be got over, which they knew nothing of, to wit, a guard of soldiers, set to keep the sepulchre, who, had they come before they were frightened away, would have frightened them

away. But their gracious love to Christ carried them to the sepulchre; and see how by that time they came thither both those difficulties were removed, both the stone, which they knew of, and the guard, which they knew not of. "They saw that the stone was rolled away," which was the first thing that amazed them. Note, They who are carried by a holy zeal to seek Christ diligently, will find the difficulties that lie in their way strangely to vanish, and themselves helped over them beyond their expectation.

Thirdly. The assurance that was given them, by an angel, that the Lord Jesus was risen from the dead, and had taken leave of his sepulchre, and had left him there to tell those so who came thither to inquire after him.

1. They entered "into the sepulchre," at least a little way in, and saw the body of Jesus was not there where they left it the other night. He who by his death undertook to pay our debt, in his resurrection took out our acquaintance, for it was his discharge out of prison, and it was a fair and legal discharge, by which it appeared that his satisfaction was accepted to all the purposes for which it was intended, and the matter in dispute was determined by an incontestable evidence that he was the Son of God.

2. "They saw a young man sitting on the right side" of the sepulchre; the angel appeared in the likeness of a man, of "a young man;" for angels, though created in the beginning, grow not old, but are always in the same perfection of beauty and strength, and so shall glorified saints be, when they are as the angels. This angel was "sitting on the right hand" as they went into the sepulchre, "clothed with a long white garment," a garment down to the feet, such as great men were arrayed with. The sight of him might justly have encouraged them, but "they were affrighted." Thus many times that which should be matter of comfort to us, through our own mistakes and misapprehensions, proves a terror to us.

3. He silenceth their fears, by assuring them here was cause enough for triumph, but not for trembling, ver. 6. "He saith to them, Be not affrighted." Note, Angels, as they rejoice in the conversion of sinners, so they do also in the consolation of saints. "Be not affrighted," for,

1st. You are faithful lovers of Jesus Christ, and therefore, instead of being confounded, ought to be comforted. "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified." Note, The inquiries of believing souls after Christ have a particular regard to him as crucified, *1 Cor. ii. 2*, that they may know him and the fellowship of his sufferings. His being lifted up from the earth is that which draws all men unto him. Christ's cross is the ensign to which the Gentiles seek. Observe, he speaks of Jesus as one that was crucified; the thing is past, that scene is over, you must not dwell so much upon the sad circumstances of his crucifixion as to be unapt to believe the joyful news of his resurrection. He was crucified in weakness, yet that doth not hinder but that he may be raised in power, and therefore ye that seek him be not afraid of missing of him; he was crucified, but he is glorified; and the shame of his sufferings is so far from lessening the glory of his exaltation, that that glory perfectly wipes away all the reproach of his sufferings. And therefore after his entrance upon his glory he never drew any veil over his sufferings, nor was shy of having his cross spoken of. The angel here, that proclaims his resurrection, calls him "Jesus that was crucified." He himself owns, *Rev. i. 18*, "I am he that liveth, and was dead;" and he appears in the midst of the praises of the heavenly host "as a Lamb that had been slain," *Rev. v. 6*.

2nd. It will therefore be good news to you to hear, that instead of anointing him dead, you may rejoice in him living. "He is risen, he is not here," not dead, but alive again; we cannot as yet shew you him, hereafter you will see him; but you may here see "the place where they laid him," and you see he is gone hence, not stolen either by his enemies or by his friends, but risen.

4. He orders them to give speedy notice of this to his disciples; thus they were made the apostles of the apostles, which was a recompense of their affection and fidelity to him, in attending him on the cross, to the grave, and in the grave. They first came, and were first served; no other of the disciples durst come near his sepulchre, or inquire after him; so little danger was there of their coming by night to steal him away, that none came near him but a few women, who were not able so much as to roll away the stone.

1st. They must tell the disciples that he is risen. It is a dismal time with them, their dear Master is dead, and all their hopes and joys are buried in his grave; they look upon their cause as sunk, and themselves ready to fall an easy prey into the hands of their enemies, so that there remains no more spirit in them; they are perfectly at their wit's end; every one is contriving how to shift for himself. O go quickly to them, saith the angel, tell them their Master is risen; that will put some life and spirit into them, and keep them from sinking into despair. Note, First. Christ is not ashamed to own his poor disciples, no, not now he is in his exalted state; his preferment doth not make him shy of them, for he took early care to have it notified to them. Secondly. Christ is not extreme to mark what they do amiss whose hearts are upright with him. The disciples had very unkindly deserted him, and yet he testified this concern for them. Thirdly. Seasonable comforts shall be sent to those that are lamenting after the Lord Jesus, and he will find a time to manifest himself to them.

2nd. They must be sure to tell Peter. This is particularly taken notice of by this evangelist, who is supposed to have written by Peter's direction. If it were told the disciples, it would be told Peter; for, as a token of his repentance for disowning his Master, he still associated with his disciples; yet he is particularly named, tell Peter; for, First. It will be good news to him, more welcome to him than to any of them, for he is in sorrow for sin, and no tidings can be more welcome to true penitents than to hear of the resurrection of Christ, because he rose again for their justification. Secondly. He will be afraid lest the joy of this good news do not belong to him. Had the angel said only, "Go, tell his disciples," poor Peter would have been ready to sigh and say, "But I doubt I cannot look upon myself as one of them, for I disowned him, and deserve to be disowned by him." To obviate that, "Go to Peter by name, and tell him he shall be as welcome as any of the rest to see him in Galilee." Note, A sight of Christ will be very welcome to a true penitent, and a true penitent shall be very welcome to a sight of Christ, for there is joy in heaven concerning him.

3rd. They must appoint them all, and Peter by name, to give him the meeting in Galilee, "as he said unto you," *Mat. xxvi. 32*. In their journey down into Galilee, they would have time to recollect themselves, and call to mind what he had often said to them there, that he should suffer and die, and "the third day be raised again;" whereas while they were at Jerusalem, among strangers and enemies, they could not recover themselves from the fright they had been in, nor compose themselves to the due entertainment of better tidings. Note, First. All the meetings between Christ and his disciples are of his own appointing. Secondly. Christ never forgets his appointment, but will be sure to meet his people with the promised blessing in every place where he records his name. Thirdly. In all meetings between Christ and his disciples, he is the most forward; "he goeth before you."

Fourthly. The account which the women did bring of this to the disciples, ver. 8; "they went out quickly, and ran from the sepulchre," to make all the haste they could to the disciples, trembling and amazed. See how much

Roman day in the time of Christ began at about half-past nine a.m. Mark follows the Jewish method, therefore, and calls that the "third hour" which John, according to Roman time, describes as about the "sixth hour." As exact time-keeping is not looked for, this is sufficiently near. There is another explanation, based on a various reading in John xix. 14, where some copies read "third" for "sixth;" but this is very uncertain ground, although the "third hour" is the reading in the Peshito-Syriac, the most ancient version in existence.

xv. 28. The whole of this verse is omitted by the Alexandrian, Vatican, Cambridge, and Sinaitic MSS. It is found, however, in other good MSS., and in the Syriac and Vulgate. Tischendorf and other modern critics are of opinion that it should not be retained in the text.

xv. 32. Translate this, "Let the Christ the King of Israel come down now from the cross," &c. Some connect the first part of the verse with verse 31: "Himself he cannot save; the Christ the King

are enemies to ourselves and our own comfort, in not considering and mixing faith with what Christ hath said to us. Christ had often told them that "the third day he would rise again;" had they given that its due notice and credit, they would have come to the sepulchre expecting to have found him risen, and would have received the news of it with a joyful assurance, and not with all this terror and amazement. But being or lured to tell the disciples, because they were to tell it to all the world, they would not tell it to any one else; they shewed not any thing of it to any man that they met by the way, for they were afraid, afraid it was too good news to be true. Note, Our disquieting fears often hinder us from doing that service to Christ, and to the souls of men, which if faith and the joy of faith were strong we might do.

9 Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. 10 And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. 11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. 12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. 13 And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

We have here a very short account of two of Christ's appearances, and the little credit which the report of them gained with the disciples.

First. "He appeared to Mary Magdalene," to her first in the garden, which we have a particular narrative of, *Jno. xx. 14*. It was she "out of whom he had cast seven devils;" much was forgiven her, and much was given her, and done for her, and she loved much; and this honour Christ did her, that she was the first that saw him after his resurrection. The closer we cleave to Christ, the sooner we may expect to see him, and the more to see of him. Now, 1. She brings notice of what she had seen to the disciples, not only to the eleven, but to the rest that followed him, "as they mourned and wept," *ver. 10*. Now was the time, of which Christ had told them, that they should "mourn and lament," *Jno. xvi. 20*; and it was an evidence of their great love to Christ, and the deep sense they had of their loss of him. But when their weeping had endured a night or two, comfort returned, as Christ had promised them, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." Better news cannot be brought to disciples in tears than to tell them of Christ's resurrection. And we should study to be comforters to disciples that are mourners, by communicating to them our experiences, and what we have seen of Christ. 2. They could not give credit to the report she brought them. "They heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her." The story was plausible enough, and yet they "believed not!" they would not say that she made the story herself, or designed to deceive them; but they fear she is imposed upon, and it was but a fancy that she saw him. Had they believed the frequent predictions of it from his own mouth, they would not have been now so incredulous of the report of it.

Secondly. He appeared to two of the disciples, "as they went into the country," *ver. 12*. This refers no doubt to that which is largely related, *Lu. xxiv. 13*, of what passed between Christ and the two disciples, going to Emmaus. He is here said to have appeared to them in another form, in another dress, than what he usually wore, in the form of a traveller, as in the garden, in such a dress that Mary Magdalene took him for the gardener; but that he had really his own countenance appears by this, that "their eyes were holden that they should not know him," and when that restraint on their eyes was taken off, immediately "they knew him," *Lu. xxiv. 16, 31*. Now, 1. These two witnesses gave in their testimony to this proof of Christ's resurrection; "they went and told it to the residue," *ver. 13*; being satisfied themselves, they were desirous to give their brethren the satisfaction they had, that they might be comforted as they were. 2. This did not gain credit with all, "neither believed they them." They suspected that their eyes also deceived them. Now there was a wise providence in it, that the proofs of Christ's resurrection were given in thus gradually, and admitted thus cautiously, that so the assurance with which the apostles preached this doctrine afterwards, when they ventured their all upon it, might be the more satisfying. We have the more reason to believe those who did themselves believe so slowly; had they swallowed it presently, they might have been thought credulous, and their testimony the less to be regarded; but their disbelieving at first, shews that they did not believe it afterwards but upon a full conviction.

14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. 15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Here is, I. *The conviction which Christ gave his apostles of the truth of his resurrection, ver. 14*. He appeared to them himself, when they were all together, "as they sat at meat," which gave him an opportunity to eat and drink with them for their full satisfaction, see *Acts x. 41*; and still, when he appeared to them, he "upbraided them with their unbelief, and hardness of heart," for even at the general meeting in Galilee "some doubted," as we find *Mat. xxviii. 17*. Note, The evidences of the truth of the Gospel are so full, that those who receive it not may justly be upbraided with their unbelief; and it is owing not to any weakness or deficiency in the proofs, but to the hardness of the heart, and the senselessness and stupidity of that. Though they had not till now seen him themselves, they were justly blamed, "because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen;" and perhaps it was owing in part to the pride of their hearts that they did not; for they thought, if indeed he were risen, to whom should he delight to do the honour of shewing himself but to them? And if he pass them by, and shew himself to others first, they cannot believe it is he. Thus many disbelieve the doctrine of Christ because they think it below them to give credit to such as he has chosen to be the witnesses and publishers of it. Observe, It will not suffice for an excuse of our infidelity in the great day, to say we did not see him after he was risen, for we ought to have believed the testimony of those who did see him.

II. *The commission which he gave them to set up his kingdom among men by the preaching of his Gospel, the glad tidings of reconciliation to God through a Mediator. Now observe,*

First. To whom they were to preach the Gospel. Hitherto they had been sent only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and were forbidden to go into "the way of the Gentiles, or into any city of the Samaritans." But now their commission is enlarged, and they are authorized to "go into all the world," into all parts of the world, the habitable world, and to "preach the Gospel" of Christ "to every creature," to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews, to every human creature that is capable of receiving it. Inform them concerning Christ; the history of his life, and death, and resurrection; instruct them in the meaning and intention of these, and of the advantages which the children of men have, or may have thereby, and invite them without exception to come and share in them. This is Gospel, let this be preached in all places, to all persons. These eleven men could not themselves preach it to all the world, much less to every creature in it; but they, and the other disciples, seventy in number, with those who should afterwards be added to them, must disperse themselves several ways, and wherever they went, carry the Gospel along with them. They must send others to those places whither they could not go themselves; and, in short, make it the business of their lives to send those glad tidings up and down the world with all possible fidelity and care, not as an amusement or entertainment but as a solemn message from God to men, and appointed means of making men happy. Tell as many as you can, and bid them tell others; it is a message of universal concern, and therefore ought to have a universal welcome, because it gives a universal welcome.

Secondly. What is the summary of the Gospel they are to preach, *ver. 16*. Set before the world life and death, good and evil. Tell the children of men that they are all in a state of misery and danger, condemned by their Prince, and conquered and enslaved by their enemies. This is supposed in their being saved, which they would not need to be if they were not lost. Now go and tell them, 1. That if they believe the Gospel, and give up themselves to be Christ's disciples; if they renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and be devoted to Christ as their prophet, priest, and king, and to God in Christ as their God in covenant, and evidence by their constant adherence to this covenant, their sincerity herein, they shall be saved from the guilt and power of sin; it shall not rule them, it shall not ruin them. He that is a true Christian shall be saved through Christ. Baptism was appointed to be the inaugurating rite by which those that embraced Christ owned him; but it is here put rather for the thing signified than for the sign; for Simon Magus believed and was baptized, yet not saved, *Acts viii. 13*. Believing with the heart, and confessing with the mouth the Lord Jesus, *Rom. x. 9*, seems to be much the same with this here; or thus, we must assent to gospel truths, and consent to gospel terms. 2. If they believe not, if they receive not the record God gives concerning his Son, they cannot expect any other way of salvation, but must inevitably perish. They "shall be damned," by the sentence of a despised Gospel, added to that of a broken law. And even this is Gospel; it is good news that nothing else but unbelief shall damn men, which is a sin against the remedy. Dr. Whitby here observes, that they who hence infer "that the infant seed of believers are not capable of baptism, because they cannot believe, must hence also infer that they cannot be saved; faith being here more expressly required to salvation than to baptism; and that in the latter clause baptism is omitted because it is not simply the want of baptism, but the contemptuous neglect of it, which makes men guilty of damnation, otherwise infants might be damned for the mistakes or profaneness of their parents."

Thirdly. What power they should be endowed with for the confirmation of the doctrine they were to preach, *ver. 17*: "These signs shall follow them that believe;" not that all who believe shall be able to produce these signs, but some, even as many as were employed in propagating the faith, and bringing others to it; for signs are intended for them that believe not: see *2 Cor. xiv. 22*. It added much to the glory and evidence of the Gospel that the preachers not only wrought miracles themselves, but conferred upon others a power to work miracles, which power followed some of them that believed wherever they went to preach. They shall do wonders in Christ's name, the same name into which they were baptized, in the virtue of power derived from him, and fetched in by prayer. Some particular signs are mentioned: 1. "They shall cast out devils;" this power was more common among Christians than any other, and lasted longer, as appears by the testimonies of Justin Martyr, Origen, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Minutius Felix, and others, cited by Grotius on this place. 2. "They shall speak with new tongues," which they had never learned or been acquainted with; and this was both a miracle (a miracle upon the mind) for the confirming of the truth of the Gospel, and a means of spreading the Gospel among those nations that had not heard it. It saved the preachers a vast labour in learning the languages; and no doubt they who by miracle were made masters of languages, were complete masters of them, and of all their native elegances which were proper both to instruct and affect, which would very much recommend them and their preaching. 3. "They shall take up serpents." This was fulfilled in Paul, who was not hurt by the viper that fastened on his hand, which was acknowledged a great miracle by the barbarous people, *Acts xxviii. 5, 6*; they shall be kept unhurt by that generation of vipers among whom they live, and by the malice of the old serpent. 4. If they be compelled by their persecutors to "drink any deadly" poisonous "thing, it shall not hurt them;" of which very thing some instances are found in ecclesiastical history. 5. They shall not only be preserved from hurt themselves, but they shall be enabled to do good to others; "they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," as multitudes had done by their Master's healing touch. Many of the elders of the church had this power, as appears by *Jas. v. 14*; where, as an instituted sign of this miraculous healing, they are said to "anoint the sick with oil" in the

of Israel. Let him come down now," &c. On the whole we prefer the common pointing.

xv. 34. The Greek letters in "Eloi, Eloi" are doubtless put for the Aramaic "Elohi, Elohi," because the *h* could not be represented in the Greek. The form employed by Matthew, "Eli, Eli," exactly corresponds with the Hebrew of Ps. xxii. 1, but the "sabachthani," or "shabachthani," belongs to the Aramaic alone.

xv. 39. Here and in verse 37, for "gave up the ghost," we may

translate more exactly, "expired." The words for "cried out and" are not in all the MSS.

xv. 42. This verse distinctly defines the day on which our Lord was crucified. The term rendered "preparation," adopted in Latin under the form *parasceve*, was the afternoon of Friday, and, as the name of Friday, is now common in Greece and Asia Minor, and wherever modern Greek is spoken. The explanation, "that is, the day before the Sabbath," seems to be added for the information of

name of the Lord." With what assurance of success might they go about the executing of their commission, when they had such credentials as these to produce!

19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. 20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Here is, I., *Christ welcomed into the upper world*, ver. 19: "After the Lord had spoken," what he had to say to his disciples, he went "up into heaven," in a cloud; which we have a particular account of, *Acts* i. 9; and he had not only an admission, but an abundant entrance into his kingdom there; he was received up—received in state with loud acclamations of the heavenly hosts; "and he sat on the right hand of God;" sitting in a posture of rest; for now he had finished his work; and a posture of rule, for now he took possession of his kingdom; "he sat on the right hand of God," which notes the sovereign

dignity he is advanced to, and the universal agency he is intrusted with. Whatever God doth concerning us, gives to us, or accepts from us, it is by his Son. Now he is glorified with the glory he had before the world.

II. *Christ welcomed in this lower world*. His being "believed on in the world, and received up into glory," are put together, *1 Tim.* iii. 16. 1. We have here the apostles working diligently for him; "they went forth and preached every where," far and near; though the doctrine they preached was spiritual and heavenly, and directly contrary to the spirit and genius of the world, though it met with abundance of opposition, and was utterly destitute of all secular supports and advantages, yet the preachers of it were neither afraid nor ashamed; they were so industrious in spreading the Gospel, that within a few years the sound of it went forth into the ends of the earth, *Rom.* x. 18. 2. We have here "God working" effectually "with them," to make their labours successful, by "confirming the Word with signs following," partly by the miracles that were wrought upon the bodies of people, which were Divine seals to the Christian doctrine, and partly by the influence it had upon the minds of the people, through the operation of the Spirit of God; see *Heb.* ii. 4. These were properly signs following the Word,—the reformation of the world, the destruction of idolatry, the conversion of sinners, the comfort of saints; and these signs still follow it; and that they may do so more and more, for the honour of Christ, and the good of mankind, the evangelist prays, and teaches us to say Amen. Father in heaven, thus let thy name be hallowed, and let thy kingdom come.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES TO THE BOOK OF ST. MARK.

CHAP. I.—2. *As it is written in the prophets*. He mentions prophets, without specifying them. The places are found in *Mal.* iii. 1, and *Isa.* xl. 3; see Commentary on parallel passage in *Matth.* The Spirit driveth him. The word driveth does not mean that he was compelled forcibly against his will to go there, but that he was inclined thither by the Spirit, or was led there. The Spirit of God, for important purposes, caused him to go. Compare *Mal.* ix. 25, where the same word is used in the original. "And when they were all put forth," in Greek, all driven out. 13. *And the angels ministered to him*. From *Lu.* iv. 2, we learn that in those days he did eat nothing. When Mark says, therefore, that the angels ministered to him, it means, after the days of temptation had expired, as is said by *Mat.* iv. 11. 24. *Let us alone*. Though but one impure spirit is mentioned as possessing this man, yet that spirit speaks also in the name of others. They were leagued together, and thus one knew that if he was punished, others would share the same fate. *What have we to do with thee*. This seems to mean, Have we injured thee? or, we have done nothing to injure thee. See *1 Kin.* xvii. 18. By this the spirit meant to say, that if Jesus cast him out, he would interfere unwarrantably. But this was untrue. The possession of the man was a direct assault on God and his works. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, and he had a right, therefore, to liberate the captive, and to punish him who had possessed him. So Satan still considers it an infringement of his rights, when God frees a sinner from bondage, and destroys his influence over the soul. So he still pleads to be let alone, and to be suffered to lead men captive at his will. 35. *And departed into a solitary place, and there prayed*. Here observe, 1. That the Saviour, though perfectly holy, regarded the duty of secret prayer as of great importance. 2. That he sought a solitary place for it—far away from the world, and even his disciples. 3. That it was early in the morning, always the best time, and a time when it should never be omitted. 4. If Jesus prayed, how much more important for us! If he did it in the morning, how much more important for us, before the world gets possession of our thoughts, before Satan fills us with unholy feelings; when we rise fresh from beds of repose, and while the world around us is still! David also thus prayed, *Psa.* v. 3. In short, it will be found true universally, that the religious enjoyment through the day will be according to the state of the heart in the morning, and can therefore be measured by our faithfulness in early secret prayer.

CHAP. II.—23. *To pluck the ears of corn*. They were hungry, see *Mat.*, they therefore gathered the wheat, or barley, as they walked, and rubbed it in their hands to shell it, and thus to satisfy their wants. Though our Lord was with them, and though he had all things at his command, yet he permitted them to resort to this method to meet their necessity. When Jesus thus with his disciples suffered them to be poor, we may learn that poverty is not disgraceful; that God often permits it for the good of his people, and that he will take care in some way to supply their wants. It was lawful thus to provide for them. Though the property belonged to another, yet the Mosaic law allowed the poor to satisfy their wants when hungry; see *Deu.* xxiii. 25. 27. *The sabbath was made for man*. For his rest from toil, his rest from the cares and anxieties of the world, to give an opportunity to call off his attention from earthly concerns, and to direct it to the affairs of eternity. It was a kind provision for man, that he might refresh his body by relaxing his labours; that he might have undisturbed time to seek the consolations of religion to cheer him in the anxieties and sorrows of a troubled world; and that he might render to God that homage which is most justly due to him as the Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, and Redeemer of the world. And it is easily capable of proof, that no institution has been more signally blessed to man's welfare than the Christian sabbath. "To that we owe more than to any thing else, the peace and order of a civilized community." Where there is no sabbath, there is ignorance, vice, disorder, and crime. On that holy day, the poor, and the ignorant, as well as the learned, have undisturbed time to learn the requirements of religion, the nature of morals, the laws of God, and the way of salvation. On that day, man may offer his praises to the great Giver of all good, and in the sanctuary seek the blessing of Him whose favour is life. Where that day is observed in any manner as it should be, order prevails, morals are promoted, the poor are elevated in their condition, vice flies away, and the community puts on the appearance of neatness, industry, morality, and religion. The sabbath was,

therefore, pre-eminently intended for man's welfare, and the best interests of mankind demand that it should be sacredly regarded as an appointment of merciful Heaven, intended for our best good; and, where improved aright, infallibly resulting in our temporal and eternal peace. *Not man for the sabbath*. Man was made first, and then the sabbath was appointed for his welfare, *Gen.* i. 11. The sabbath was not first made or contemplated, and then the man made with reference to that. Since, therefore, the sabbath was intended for man's real good, the law respecting it must not be interpreted so as to oppose his real welfare. It must be explained in consistency with a proper attention to the duties of mercy to the poor and the sick, and to those in peril. It must be, however, in accordance with man's real good on the whole, and with the law of God. The law of God contemplates man's real good on the whole; and we have no right, under the plea that the sabbath was made for man, to do any thing contrary to what the law of God admits. It would not be for our real good, but for our real and eternal injury, to devote the sabbath to vice, to labour, or to amusement. 28. *Therefore the Son of man, &c.* He had a right to direct the manner of its observance—undoubted proof that he is divine. See Note on *Lu.* vi. 5.

CHAP. III.—4. *Or to do evil? to save life or to kill?* It seems to have been a maxim with the Jews, that *not* to do good when we have an opportunity was to do evil; not to save life, was to kill, or to be guilty of murder. If one has an opportunity of saving a man's life when he is in danger, and does it not, he is evidently guilty of his death. On this principle the Lord puts this question to the Jews,—whether it was better for him, having the power to heal this man, to do it, or to allow him to remain in this suffering condition; and he illustrates it by an example, shewing that, in a matter of much less importance—than respecting their cattle—they would do on the sabbath just as he would, if he should heal this man. The same remark applies to all opportunities of doing good. "The ability to do good imposes an obligation to do it."—*Cotton Mather*. He who has the means of feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, and instructing the ignorant, and sending the Gospel to the destitute, and who does it not, is guilty, for he is practically doing evil; he is suffering evils to exist which he might remove. So the wicked will be condemned, in the day of judgment, because they did it not, *Mat.* xxv. 45. If this be true, what an obligation rests on the rich to do good! 5. *Hardness of their hearts*. The heart, figuratively the seat of feeling or affection, is said to be tender, when it is easily affected by the sufferings of others; by our own sin and danger; by the love and commands of God; and especially when it is susceptible of feeling on the great subjects pertaining to our eternal interests. It is hard when nothing effectually moves it, when a man is insensible to the danger of his own condition, and the commands, the gracious invitations, and the threatenings of God. It is most tender in youth, or when we have committed fewest sins. It is made harder by indulgence in sin, by long resisting the offers of life, or by opposing any great and affecting appeals which God may make to us by his Spirit or providence, by affliction, or by a revival of religion. Hence it is that the most favourable period for securing an interest in Christ, or for becoming indeed a Christian, is in youth, the first, the tenderest, the best days of life; nay, in the days of childhood, in the sabbath school, God may be found, and the soul prepared to die. But let it ever be remembered that in all men, and at every period of life, the heart is so hard that the power of God Almighty is necessary to subdue and soften it; and blessed be his name for the gracious promise to exercise that power in us, so that the stony heart may be taken away, and the heart of flesh (or, as above, the feeling heart) be given. See *Eze.* xxxvi. 26, where God reveals this gracious promise, whilst, in the 37th verse, he makes known man's duty in regard to it, which is prayer for the fulfilment of that promise. Then he says, "I will do it for them," that is, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh—and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." If, after this assurance from the faithful and omnipotent God, any one dies with a hard heart, his blood surely will be upon him. See also *Eze.* xxxviii. 29—32. 11. *Unclean spirits—cried—saying, Thou art the Son of God*. This circumstance proves the existence of evil spirits. If these were merely diseased or deranged persons, then it is strange that they should be endowed with knowledge so much superior to those in health. But if they were under the influence of an

those who were not familiar with the other term. Lightfoot observes that this "preparation," on which Jesus was crucified, was such in a double sense:—"The whole day, especially from the third hour, was the preparation for the Passover, or the whole of the ensuing week; and the evening of the day was the preparation for the coming Sabbath."

xv. 43. Joseph is called an "honourable counsellor," or counsellor, as a member of the council, or Sanhedrim (*Luke* xxiii. 51).

xv. 44. 45. These verses are peculiar to Mark. The summons to

the centurion suggests that the soldiers had returned to their post. We should render verse 44, "And Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he inquired of him whether he had been dead long."

xvi. 1. The phrase, "when the Sabbath was past," must be understood of Saturday night, after the termination of the Jewish Sabbath, or after six o'clock. Matthew mentions the two Marias, but not Salome, nor does he speak of their purchasing sweet spices

order of spirits superior to man, whose appropriate habitation was in another world, then it is not strange that they should know him, even in the midst of his poverty, to be the Messiah, the Son of God. 21. *He is beside himself.* He is delirious, or deranged. The reason why this report gained any belief was, probably, that our Lord had lived among them as a carpenter; that he was poor and unknown, and that now, at thirty years of age, he broke off from this occupation, spent much time in the deserts, denied himself the common comforts of life, and declared his claims to be the Messiah who was expected, by all the people, to come with great pomp and splendour. The charge of derangement, on account of attention to religion, has not been confined to the Saviour. Let a man be made deeply sensible of his sins, and spend much of his time in prayer, and have no relish for the ordinary amusements of life; or let a Christian be much impressed with his obligation to devote himself to God, and act as if he believed there was an eternity, and warn his neighbours of their danger; or let a minister shew uncommon zeal, and waste his strength in the service of his Maker, and the world is not slow to call it derangement. And none will be more ready to originate or believe the charge than an ungodly and infidel parent or brother, or self-righteous Pharisee or professor in the church. At the same time men may endanger themselves in the pursuit of wealth, or may plunge into the vortex of fashion, and folly, and vice, and break in upon the hours of repose, and neglect personal, domestic, and relative duties, and yet be counted of sane mind! Such is the consistency of boasted reason, such the wisdom and prudence of worldly men!

CHAP. IV.—25 *That which he hath.* That which he had already learned. By this we are taught the indispensable necessity of giving continued attention to the means of instruction. It is not sufficient that we have learned some things, or appear to have learned much. All will be in vain, unless we go forward and improve every opportunity of knowing the will of God and the way of salvation. So what children are taught will be of little use, unless they follow it up with endeavours after farther attainments, and with prayers for the Holy Spirit to bless these endeavours. Then may they expect to grow in grace.

CHAP. V.—15. *Sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind.* There could be no doubt of the reality of this miracle. The man had been well known. He had long dwelt among the tombs, an object of terror and alarm. To see him all at once peaceful, and calm, and rational, was proof that it was the power of God only that had done it. 20 *In Decapolis.* Decapolis was the name of a region of country in the bounds of the half tribe of Manasseh, mainly on the east of Jordan. It was so called because it included ten cities—the meaning of the word Decapolis in Greek. 30. *Virtue, power to heal.* The word in the original signifies power. *Who touched my clothes?* This he said, not to obtain information, for, having healed her, he must have known on whom the blessing was conferred; but he put the question in order that the woman herself might make a confession of the whole matter, by which the power of her faith, and the greatness of the miracle, might be manifested to the praise of God. 34. *Daughter.* A word of kindness, to inspire confidence and dissipate her fears. *Of the plague.* Thy disease, literally, 'thy scourge.' So a word from Jesus cures the moral malady of the sinner. 35, 36. *Why troublest thou, &c.* It seems that the people had not yet confidence that Jesus could raise the dead. He had not yet done it, and, as the child was now dead, and as they supposed that his power over her was at an end, they wished no farther to trouble him. Jesus kindly set the fears of the ruler at rest, and assured him that he had equal power over the dead as the living, and could as easily raise those who had expired, as those who were expiring. *The tumult.* The confusion and weeping of the assembled people. *Wailed.* Making inarticulate, mournful sounds; howling for the dead. *This ado.* This tumult, this bustle or confusion. *And weep.* Weep in this inordinate and improper manner. (See woodcut.) 43. *Something should be given her to eat.* 'He had raised her by extraordinary power, but he willed that she should be sustained by ordinary means.' He also in this gave full evidence that she was really restored to life and health. The changes were great, sudden, and certain. There could be no illusion. So, when the Saviour had risen, he gave evidence of his own resurrection, by eating with his disciples, *Jno. xxi. 1—13.*

CHAP. VI.—13. *And anointed with oil.* Used, probably, like the imposition of hands; or like our Saviour's anointing the eyes of the blind with clay, merely as a sign in expectation of imparting that aid and comfort from God which was sought, and which was represented by the natural soothing and gentle effect of oil. 20. *He did many things;* but he did not do the thing which was demanded of him—to break off from his sins. Probably, before John was imprisoned, he treated him kindly, or spake well of him, or aided him in his wants, and attempted in this way to silence his rebukes and destroy the effect of his faithfulness. So sinners often treat ministers kindly, and do much to make them comfortable, and hear them gladly, while they are still unwilling to do the thing which is demanded of them—to repent, and believe the Gospel. They expect that their kind attentions will be accepted in the place of what God demands—repentance and the forsaking of their sins. 52. *Their heart was hardened.* This does not mean that they were opposed to Jesus, or that they had what we denominate hardness of heart, but simply that they were slow to perceive,—they did not quickly learn, as they ought to have done, that he had all power, and could, therefore, allay the storm. The word *heart* is frequently used in this sense.—See *Eph. iv. 18* in Greek; *Rom. i. 21*; *ii. 15*; *2 Cor. iv. 6.*

CHAP. VII.—*All meats.* All food; all that is taken into the body to support life. The meaning is, that the economy, or process by which life is supported, purifies, or renders nutritious, all kinds of food. The food taken into the stomach is, by the gastric juice, converted into a thick pulp, called *chyle*. This is changed into blood, and the blood conveys nutriment and support to all parts of the system. The useless portions of the food are thrown off. 37. *Beyond measure*—exceedingly, very much; in the Greek, "very abundantly." *He hath done all things well.* All things in a remarkable manner; or, he has perfectly effected the cure of the deaf and dumb.

CHAP. VIII.—23. *Saw aught, saw any thing.* 24. *I see men as trees walking.* I see men walking, but see them so indistinctly that but for their motion I could not distinguish them from trees. I cannot distinctly see their shapes and figures. Probably our Lord did not at once restore him fully to sight, that he might strengthen his faith. Seeing that Jesus had partially recovered him, it was evidence that he could wholly, and it led him to exercise faith anew in him, and to feel more strikingly his dependence on him. 25. *Every man clearly.* Could see their form and features,—his sight was completely restored. We cannot say whether our Lord intended, by this method, to teach any lesson in regard to the way in which the mind of a sinner is enlightened; it nevertheless affords a striking illustration of it. Sinners are by nature blind, *2 Cor. iv. 4*; *1 Jno. ii. 11*; *Rom. ix. 39.* The effect of religion, or of the influence of the Holy Spirit, is to open the eyes, to shew the sinner his condition and his

danger, and to lead him to look on Him whom he has pierced. Yet at first he sees indistinctly; he does not soon learn to distinguish objects. When converted he is in a new world; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new: he sees the Scriptures, the Saviour, and the works of creation—the sun, and stars, and hills, and vales, in a new light. He sees the beauty of the plan of salvation, and wonders that he has not seen it before; yet he sees at first indistinctly. It is only by repeated applications to the Source of light that he sees all things clearly. At first religion may seem full of mysteries; doctrines and facts appear on every hand that he cannot fully comprehend. His mind is still perplexed, and he may doubt whether he has ever seen aught, or has ever been renewed; yet let him not despair. Light, in due time, will be shed on these obscure and mysterious truths. Repeated applications to the Father of lights, in faith, in prayer, and in searching the Scriptures, and in the ordinances of religion, will dissipate all these doubts, and he will see all things clearly, and the universe will appear to be filled with one broad flood of light.

CHAP. IX.—29. *But Jesus said, Forbid him not.* There is no reason to infer that John had any improper design in opposing the man. He thought it was evidence that he could not be right, because he did not join them and follow the Saviour. Our Lord thought differently: he opposed no one who gave evidence that he loved him. Whatever he might be, or whatever his work, yet if he did it in the name of Jesus, and with the approbation of God, it was evidence sufficient that he was right. Christians should rejoice in good done by their brethren of any denomination. There are men calling themselves Christians who seem to look with doubt and suspicion on all that is done by those who do not walk with them. They undervalue their labours, attempt to lessen the evidence of their success, and to diminish their influence. True likeness to the Saviour would lead us to rejoice in all the good accomplished, by whomsoever it may be done; and to rejoice that the kingdom of Christ is advanced, whether by a Presbyterian, an Episcopalian, a Baptist, an Independent, or a Methodist; compare *Phil. i. 18, 41. Whosoever shall give you a cup, &c.* None are so humble in the kingdom of Christ as not to be able to do good, and none in circumstances so poor as may not shew attachment to Him. Their feeblest service will be accepted, and acts of love that may be forgotten by man, will be remembered by Him and rewarded in heaven. 44—46. *Their worm.* This figure is clearly taken from *Isa. lxvi. 24.* In describing the great prosperity of the kingdom of the Messiah, Isaiah says that the people of God shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of men who have transgressed against God. Their enemies shall be overcome. They shall be slain. The people of God shall triumph. The figure is taken from heaps of the dead slain in battle; and the prophet says that the number shall be so great that their worm—the worm feeding on the dead—shall not die, shall live long,—as long as there are carcasses to be devoured; and that the fire which was used to burn the bodies of the dead shall continue long to burn, and shall not be extinguished till they are consumed. The figure, therefore, denotes great misery, and certain and terrible destruction. In these verses it is applied to the state beyond the grave, and is intended to denote that the destruction of the wicked will be awful, widespread, and eternal. 49. *Every one shall be salted with fire.* Perhaps no passage in the New Testament has given more perplexity to commentators than this; and it may be impossible now to fix its precise meaning. Probably it has no reference at all to future punishment; and the difficulty of interpreting it has arisen from supposing it connected with the 48th ver.—6, or given as a reason for what is said in that verse, rather than considering it as designed to illustrate the general design of the passage. The main scope of the passage was not to discourse of future punishment; that is brought in incidentally. The chief object of the passage was, 1st. To teach them that other men, not with them, might be true Christians, ver. 38, 39. 2nd. That they should be disposed to look favourably upon the slightest evidence that they might be, ver. 41. 3rd. That they ought to avoid giving offence to such feeble and obscure Christians, ver. 42. 4th. That every thing calculated to give offence, or to dishonour religion, should be removed, ver. 43; and 5th. That every thing which would endanger their salvation should be sacrificed; that they should deny themselves, and practise all self-denials, in order to obtain eternal life. In this way they would be preserved to eternal life. The word "fire" here, therefore, denotes self-denials, sacrifices, trials, in keeping ourselves from the gratification of the flesh; as if he had said, "Look at the sacrifice on the altar; it is an offering to God, about to be presented to him. It is sprinkled with salt, emblematic of purity, of preservation, and of fitting it, therefore, for a sacrifice. So you are devoted to God; you are sacrifices, victims, offerings to him in his service. To make you acceptable offerings, every thing must be done to preserve you from sin, to purify you, and to make you fit offerings. Self-denials, subduing the lusts, enduring trials, removing offences, are the proper preservatives in the service of God. Doing this, you will be acceptable offerings, and be saved; without this, you will be unfit for his eternal service, and will be lost." 50. *Lost its saltness,* that is, if it has become insipid, tasteless, or lost its preserving properties. The salt used in this country is a chemical compound—muriate of soda, and if the saltness were lost, and it were to lose its savour, there would be nothing remaining. It enters into the very nature of the substance. In Eastern countries, however, the salt used was impure, mingled with vegetable and earthy substances; so that it might lose the whole of its saltness, and a considerable quantity of earthy matter remain. This was good for nothing, except that it was used, as it is said, to place in paths or walks as we use gravel. This kind of salt is still common in the East. *Have salt in yourselves.* Have the preserving, purifying principle always—the principle of denying yourselves, of suppressing pride, ambition, contention, &c., and thus you will be an acceptable offering to God. *Have peace.* Avoid contention and quarrelling, struggling for places, honours, and office, and seek each other's welfare, and religion will be honoured and preserved in the world.

CHAP. X.—30. *A hundred fold.* A hundred times as much. In this time—in this life. In the time that he forsakes all. *Houses, &c.* This cannot be taken literally, as promising a hundred times as many mothers, sisters, &c. It means, evidently, that the loss shall be a hundred times compensated, or made up, or that in the possession of religion we have a hundred times the value of all that we forsake. This consists in the pardon of sin, in the favour of God, in peace of conscience, in support in trials and in death, and in raising up friends in the place of those who are left—spiritual brethren, and sisters, and mothers, &c. And this corresponds to the experience of all who ever became Christians. At the same time it is true that godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that is, as well as of that which is to come. The favour of God is the security for every blessing. Obedience to his law secures industry, temperance, chastity, economy, prudence, health, and the confidence of the world,—all indispensable to what is called success in life, and all connected commonly with success. Though the wicked sometimes prosper, yet the surest way of prosperity is to fear God, and keep his commandments. Thus will all needed blessings descend on us here, and eternal blessings hereafter. *With persecutions.* Persecutions, or the contempt of the world, and other sufferings

to anoint the body. The evangelists give separate accounts of the resurrection, and its attendant circumstances, with much variation of detail. Where the same facts are reported, the verbal differences are frequently so considerable as to perplex superficial readers, and even the critics sometimes. The brevity of these notes prevents a full discussion, for which reference should be made to such a work as that of Dr. R. Macpherson, "On the Resurrection of Jesus Christ."

xvi. 8. This verse is important, as having perhaps originally

formed the conclusion of this Gospel. Whether the remaining verses were added by the evangelist, or some other in the apostolic age, it is probably impossible to learn. The arguments are set forth at length by Tischendorf, who notes, "1, their omission by the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS., and others; 2, some MSS., &c., notice their occasional absence; 3, some scholars prove the same; 4, they are not reckoned by the sections of Ammonius and Eusebius." To these it is added that the verses contain various words and expressions which

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES TO ST. MARK.

on account of their religion, they must meet. Jesus did not conceal this; but he ~~reassured~~ ^{reassured} them. He assured them that *amidst* these, or perhaps it should be rendered 'after' these, they should find friends and comfort. It is well to bear trial if God be our friend. With these promises of the Bible in our hand, we may hail persecutions, and thank God that, amidst so many sorrows, he has furnished such superabundant consolation. 46 *As he went out of Jericho.* This was a large town about eight miles west of the Jordan, and about nineteen miles north-east from Jerusalem. Near to it the Israelites crossed the Jordan on entering into the land of Canaan, *Jos. iii. 16.* It was the first city taken by Joshua, who destroyed it to the foundation, and pronounced a curse on him who should rebuild it. *Jos. vi. 20, 21, 26.* This curse was literally fulfilled in the days of Ahab, nearly five hundred years after, *1 Kin. xvi. 34*; other references are made to it in *2 Kin. ii. 5, 21.* In point of size it was second only to Jerusalem. It was sometimes called the city of palm trees, from there being many palms in the vicinity: a few of them still remain, *2 Chr. xxviii. 15*; *Jud. i. 16*; *iii. 13.* At this place died Herod, *Mat. ii. 19.* It is now a small, wretched village, called Riha, or Rab, situated on the ruins of the ancient city, or as some think, three or four miles east of it. There are perhaps fifty houses, of rough stone, with roofs of bushes and mud, and the population, two or three hundred in number, is entirely Mohammedan.

CHAP. XI.—22. *Have faith in God.* Literally, Have the faith of God. This may mean, have strong faith, or have confidence in God; a strong belief that he is able to accomplish things that appear most difficult, with infinite ease, as the fig tree was made to wither by a word.

CHAP. XII.—41. *Sat over against,* opposite to, in full sight of. *The treasury.* This was in the court of the women; see note on *ch. xiii. ver. 1.* In that court were fixed a number of places or coffers, made with a large open mouth in the shape of a trumpet, for the purpose of receiving the offerings of the people; and the money thus contributed was devoted to the service of the temple,—to incense, sacrifices, &c.

CHAP. XIII.—1. *As he went out of the temple.* Temple, see notes on *Mat. xxi.* The word *temple* was given not merely to the sacred edifice or house itself, but to all the numerous chambers, courts, and rooms connected with it, on the top of mount Moriah. The temple itself was a small edifice, and was surrounded by courts and chambers half a mile in circumference. Into the sacred edifice itself our Saviour never went. The high priest only went into the holy of holies, and that but once a year; and none but priests were permitted to enter into the holy place. The Saviour was neither; he was of the tribe of Judah, and he consequently was allowed to enter no farther than the other Israelites into the temple. The works that he is said to have performed in the temple are, therefore, to be understood as having been done in the courts surrounding it. There were several such courts: the court of the Gentiles, so called because Gentiles might come into it, but durst go no farther; the court of the women, so called because women might advance thus far, but no farther,—here was the treasury where the poor widow cast in her all; it was in this court also that the Jews commonly worshipped. Besides these, was the court of the Israelites, because all the males of the Jews might advance there; and the court of the priests, because there the priests conducted the daily service of the sanctuary. *What manner of stones.* The temple was erected on mount Moriah. The space on the summit of the mount was not, however, large enough for the buildings necessary to be erected; it was therefore enlarged by building high walls from the valley below, and filling up the space within. One of these walls was six hundred feet in height. The stones above referred to were those used in the building of the temple; the blocks were of white marble, and of prodigious size. Josephus says, some of them were fifty feet long, twenty-four feet broad, and sixteen in thickness. The prophecy of our Lord, that "there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down," has been fearfully fulfilled to the very letter; for the mosque of Omar, entirely a Moslem building, stands upon the rock Moriah, probably on the very spot occupied by the temple. But some of the stones of the wall rising up from the valley, and forming a support for the buildings connected with the temple, still remain. "We counted ten courses of these massy stones one above another. One of them measured fifteen feet long by three broad; another was eight feet square; others farther south were twenty-four feet long. There are also the singular traces of an ancient arch, which Professor Robinson had discovered to be the remains of the bridge from the temple to mount Zion, mentioned frequently by Josephus as a work of the highest antiquity. The stones in the temple wall, that form the spring of this ancient bridge, are of enormous size. The discovery of the arch itself goes to prove that the large stones, in the wall referred to as still existing, are really the work of Jewish hands, and the remains of the outer wall of the temple of Solomon." See *Bonar and McCheyne's Narrative*. 32. *Neither the Son.* This text has always presented serious difficulties. But there is no more difficulty in it than that in *Luke ii. 52*, where it is said that Jesus increased in wisdom and knowledge. He had a human nature. He grew as a man in knowledge. As a man his knowledge must be finite; for the faculties of the human soul are not infinite. As a man he often spoke, reasoned, inquired, felt, feared, read, learned, ate, drank, and walked. Why are not all these, which imply that he was a man—that as a man he was not infinite—why are not these as difficult as the want of knowledge respecting the particular time of a future event, especially when that time must be made known by God, and when he chose that the man Christ Jesus should grow, and think, and speak as a man? The truth is we cannot understand many things which relate to the mysterious union of his divine and human nature, and should not further presume to pry into them.—*T. Scott.* "The Son is here considered as the prophet sent into the world to reveal his Father's will; and, therefore, as delivering to the world, not what the Logos knew or taught, but what the Spirit of God revealed to him," (*Jno. iii. 34, 35*; *v. 20*; *xii. 49*; *xiv. 10.*)—*Whitby.* "This he speaks in his human nature and in his prophetic capacity. This point was not made known to him by the Spirit, nor was he commissioned to reveal it."—*Bishop Porteus.*

CHAP. XIV.—3. *Ointment.* This word does not convey quite the proper meaning. This was a perfume used only to give a pleasant odour, and was liquid. *Of spikenard.* The *nard*, from which this perfume was made, is a plant of the East Indies, with a small slender stalk, and a heavy thick root. *And she brake the box.* This may mean no more than that she broke the seal of the box, so that it could be poured out. Boxes of perfumes are often sealed or made fast by wax, to prevent the perfume from escaping. 32. *Gethsemane.* See note on *Matthew xxvi. 36.* 41. *It is enough.* There has been much difficulty in deter-

mining the meaning of this phrase. Campbell translates it, "all is over," that is, the time when you could have been of service to me is gone by. They might have aided him by watching for him when they were sleeping, but now the time was past, and he was already, as it were, in the hands of his enemies. It is not improbable, however, that *after* his agony, sometime elapsed before Judas came. He had required them to watch, that is, to keep awake during that season of agony; after that they might have been suffered to sleep while Jesus watched alone. As he saw Judas approach he may have roused them, saying, "It is sufficient; as much repose has been taken as is allowable; the enemy is near, and the Son of man is about to be betrayed."

CHAP. XV.—16. *Called Pretorium.* The hall where the pretor or Roman governor sat to administer justice. 17. *They clothed him with purple.* Matthew says, *a scarlet robe.* The ancients gave the name purple to any colour that had a mixture of red in it, whence these different colours might be sometimes called by the same name. As we cannot suppose that Pilate put on him a new and splendid robe, we must suppose that this was one which had been worn, and cast off as useless, and was now employed to array the Son of God, as an object of ridicule and scorn! *Platted*, here, means woven together—a crown, or perhaps rather a wreath; thorns are of that species of shrubs that has sharp points of very hard wood. 43. *Joseph, an honourable counsellor.* A distinguished man, who probably held a high office among the Jews, as one of their great council, or a Jewish senator. The word honourable here is not a mere title of office, but is given in reference to his personal character, as being a man of integrity, and blameless life. *Waited for the kingdom of God.* Waited for, or expected, the coming of the Messiah. But this expression means more than an indefinite expectation that the Messiah would come, for all the Jews expected that. It implies that he believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and that he had waited for him, to build up the kingdom of God; and this agrees with what John says, *ch. xix. 38*, that he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews. He had retained his secret belief in the hope that Jesus would be proclaimed and treated as the Messiah, and then he probably proposed openly to acknowledge his attachment to him. But God called him to a public profession of attachment in a different manner, and gave this distinguished man grace to evince it. So men often delay a profession of attachment to Christ. They cherish a secret love; they indulge a hope in the mercy of God; but they conceal it for fear of man. Whereas God requires that the attachment should be made known. He that is ashamed of me, said the Saviour, and of my words, before men, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in the glory of his Father and of the holy angels. Those who love the Saviour have no right to hide their light under a bushel. As soon as they have evidence, satisfactory to their own mind, that they are Christians, or have a prevalent belief, after faithful examination, that they truly love God, and depend on the Lord Jesus for salvation, so soon are they bound to profess Christ before men. This is the command of God, and this is the way of peace. None have the prospect of comfort in religion, who do not have respect to all of the commandments of God. *Went in boldly unto Pilate.* God had raised up this distinguished counsellor and secret disciple for a special and most important vocation. The disciples of Jesus had fled, and if they had not, they had no influence with Pilate. Unless there had been a special application to Pilate in behalf of Jesus, his body would have been buried that night in the common grave with the malefactors; for it was a law of the Jews, that the body of an executed man should not remain on the cross on the sabbath. At this critical juncture God called forward this secret disciple—this friend of Jesus, though unknown as such to the world, and gave him confidence; he dared to express sympathy for the Saviour; he went in boldly, and begged the body of Jesus. It needed no small measure of courage to do this. Jesus had just been condemned, mocked, spit on, crucified—the death of a slave, or the most guilty wretch. To avow attachment for him now was proof of sincere affection; and the Holy Spirit has thought this worthy of special notice: and has set down this bold attachment of a senator for Jesus for our imitation. 47 *Beheld where he was laid.* The affection of these pious females never forsook them, in all the trials and sufferings of their Lord. They followed him to the cross; they came as near to him as they were permitted to come, in his last moments; they followed him when taken down and laid in the tomb. The strong, the mighty, the youthful, had fled; but these never forsook him, even in his deepest humiliation. This is the nature of true love. It is strongest in such scenes. While professed attachment will abound in prosperity, and live most in sunshine, it is only genuine love that will go into the dark shades of adversity, and flourish there. In scenes of poverty, want, affliction, and death, it shews its genuineness. That which lives there is genuine; that which turns away from such scenes is spurious.

CHAP. XVI.—*Shall be damned.* That is, condemned by God, and cast off from his presence, *2 Thes. i. 6–9.* It implies that they will be adjudged to be guilty by God in the day of judgment, *Rom. ii. 12, 16*; *Mat. xxv. 41*; that they will deserve to die for ever, *Rom. ii. 6, 8*; and that they will be cast out into a place of woe to all eternity, *Mat. xxv. 46.* It may be asked how it can be just in God to condemn men for ever, for not believing the Gospel. I answer, 1st. God has a right to appoint his own terms of mercy. 2nd. Man has no claim on him for heaven. 3rd. The sinner rejects the offer of salvation knowingly, deliberately, and perseveringly. 4th. He has a special disregard and contempt for the Gospel. 5th. His unbelief is produced by the love of sin. 6th. He shews by this that he has no love for God, and his law, and for eternity. 7th. He slights the objects dearest to God, and most like him; and 8th. He must be miserable. A creature who has no confidence in God, who does not believe that he is true or worthy of his regard, and who never seeks his favour, must be wretched. He rejects God, and he must go into eternity without a Father, and without a God; and he has no source of comfort in himself, and must die for ever. There is no being in eternity but God that can make man happy; and without his favour the sinner must be wretched. Thus the condition of the man who will not believe is awful indeed. The Son of God has declared that he shall be damned. He will judge the world, and there is none that can deliver out of his hand. No excuse will be allowed for not believing. Unless a man has faith, he must be lost for ever. This is the solemn assurance of the whole Bible; and in view of this awful declaration of the merciful Redeemer, how sad is the condition of him who has no confidence in Jesus, and who has never looked to him for eternal life! And how important, that without delay he should seek peace with God, and possess that faith which is connected with eternal life, and which, blessed be his name, God is ready to bestow *Mat. vii. 7.*

Mark never uses. Yet the antiquity of the passage is undoubted, and it was certainly extant in the second century.

xvi. 9. The casting out of the seven devils from Mary Magdalene is incidentally mentioned by Luke (*chap. viii. 2*), and not elsewhere.

xvi. 11. The fact that Mary told the apostles, and that they disbelieved her words, is mentioned in *Luke xxiv. 11*, with some variation of detail. John records two communications made by her, one to Peter, and a second, which corresponds in substance with this, to all the disciples.

xvi. 12. This agrees with *Luke xxiv. 13*, &c.

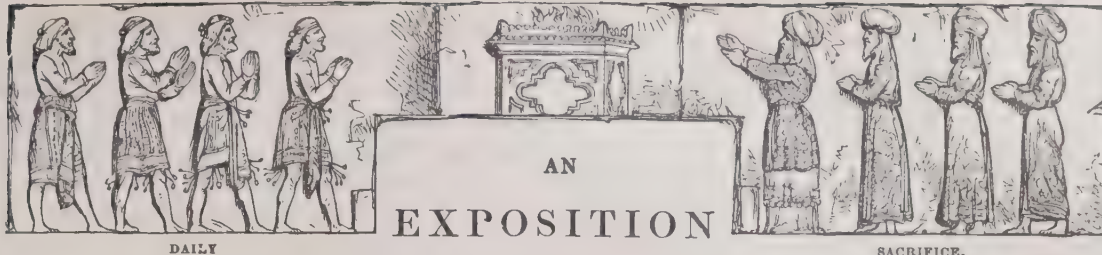
xvi. 14. This also agrees with *Luke xxiv. 33*.

xvi. 17. The signs would not be wrought by and for all who believed, but would be the special privilege of some in apostolic times.

xvi. 19. This verse conveys no intimation as to the time and place of the Ascension, but is a simple declaration of the fact.

Additional Notes.—*Chap. iv. 30.* Grotius compares this with *Isa. xl. 18.* Dean Alford calls it a rabbinical method of questioning.

v. 22. Jairus was one of the rulers of the synagogue at Capernaum, where this miracle was wrought. *Matthew (ix. 18)* merely calls him a ruler, but Luke gives a fuller description, similar to the one here. A Jewish book, quoted by Lightfoot, says, "The ruler of the synagogue is he who decides the details of the synagogue, as who shall read the prophet, who shall recite the phylacteries, who shall pass before the ark." As a public official in Capernaum, Jairus must have been acquainted with the personal word and teachings of our Lord, of whom it is said Capernaum was "his own city."



GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are now entering into the labours of another evangelist; his name Luke; which some take to be a contraction of Lucilius; born at Antioch, so St. Jerome; some think the only one of all the penmen of the Scripture that was not of the seed of Israel. He was a Jewish proselyte, and, as some conjecture, converted to Christianity by the ministry of St. Paul, at Antioch; and after his coming into Macedonia, *Acts* xvi. 10, he was his constant companion. He had employed himself in the study and practice of physic; hence Paul calls him Luke the beloved physician, *Col.* iv. 14. And some of the pretended ancients tell you he was a painter, and drew a picture of the Virgin Mary. But Dr. Whitby thinks there is nothing certain to the contrary, and that therefore it is probable he was one of the seventy disciples, and a follower of Christ when he was here upon earth; and if so, he was a native Israelite: and I see not what can be objected against this, except some uncertain traditions of the ancients, which we can build nothing upon, and against which may be opposed the testimonies of Origen and Epiphanius, who both say that he was one of the seventy disciples. He is supposed to have written this Gospel when he was associated with St. Paul in his travels, and by direction from him; and some think this is the brother whom Paul speaks of, *2 Cor.* viii. 18, "whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches of Christ;" as if the meaning of it were, that he was celebrated in all the churches for writing this Gospel; and that St. Paul means this, when he speaks sometimes of his Gospel, as *Rom.* ii. 16; but there is no ground at all for that. Dr. Cave observes, that his way and manner of writing is accurate and exact, his style polite and elegant, sublime and lofty, yet perspicuous; and that he expresseth himself in a vein of purer Greek than is to be found in the other writers of the holy story: thus he relates divers things more copiously than the other evangelists; and thus he especially treats of those things which relate to the priestly office of Christ. It is uncertain where, or about what time, this Gospel was written; some think it was written in Achaia, during his travels with Paul, seventeen years (twenty-two years say others) after Christ's ascension; others, that it was written at Rome, a little before he wrote his history of the Acts of the Apostles, (which is a continuation of this,) when he was there with Paul, while he was a prisoner, and preaching in his own hired house, with which the history of the Acts concludes; and then Paul saith only Luke was with him, *2 Tim.* iv. 11. When he was under that voluntary confinement with Paul, he had leisure to compile these two histories;—and many excellent writings the church has been indebted to a prison for;—if so, it was written about twenty-seven years after Christ's ascension, and about the fourth year of Nero. Jerome saith he died when he was eighty-four years of age, and was never married. Some write, that he suffered martyrdom; but if he did, where and when is uncertain. Nor indeed is there much more credit to be given to the Christian traditions concerning the writers of the New Testament than to the Jewish traditions concerning those of the Old Testament.

A.M. 3998.

B.C. 6.

CHAPTER I.

The narrative which this evangelist gives us, or rather God by him, of the life of Christ, begins earlier than either Matthew or Mark. We have reason to thank God for them all, as we have for all the gifts and graces of Christ's ministers, which in one, make up what is wanting in the other, while all put together make a harmony. In this chapter we have, I. Luke's preface to his Gospel, or his epistle dedicatory to his friend Theophilus, ver. 1—4. II. The prophecy and history of the conception of John Baptist, who was Christ's forerunner, ver. 5—25. III. The annunciation of the Virgin Mary, or the notice given to her that she should be the mother of the Messiah, ver. 26—38. IV. The interview between Mary the mother of Jesus, and Elisabeth the mother of John, when they were both with child of those pregnant births, and the prophecies they both uttered upon that occasion, ver. 39—56. V. The birth and circumcision of John Baptist, six months before the birth of John, and in prospect of the birth of Jesus, ver. 57—79. VI. A short account of John Baptist's infancy, ver. 80. And these do more than give us an entertaining narrative; they will lead us into the understanding of the mystery of godliness—"God manifest in the flesh."



ORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of

the word; 3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee

in order, most excellent Theophilus, 4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

Complimental prefaces and dedications, the language of flattery, and the food and fuel of pride, are justly condemned by the wise and good; but it doth not therefore follow that such as are useful and instructive are to be run down; such is this here, in which St. Luke dedicates his Gospel to his friend Theophilus, not as to his patron, though he was a man of honour, to protect it, but as to his pupil to learn it, and hold it fast. It is not certain who this Theophilus was; the name signifies 'A friend of God;' and some think it doth not mean any particular person, but every one that is a lover of God; and Dr. Hammond quotes some of the ancients understanding it so. And then it teaches us, that those who are truly lovers of God will heartily welcome the Gospel of Christ; the design and tendency of which is to bring us to God. But it is rather to be understood of some particular person, probably a magistrate; because Luke gives him here the same title of respect which St. Paul gave to Festus the governor, *κράτορε*, *Acts* xxvi. 25, which we there translate, "most noble Festus;" and here, "most excellent Theophilus." Note, Religion doth not destroy civility and good manners, but teaches us, according to the usages of our country, to "give honour to them to whom honour is due." Now observe here,

I. *Why St. Luke wrote this Gospel.* It is certain he was moved by the Holy Ghost, not only to the writing, but in the writing of it; but in both he was moved as a reasonable creature, and not as a mere machine; and he was made to consider,

First. That the things he wrote of were things that were "most surely believed among" all Christians, and therefore things which they ought to be instructed in, that they may know what they believe; and things which ought to be transmitted to posterity, who are as much concerned in them as we are; and in order to that, to be committed to writing, which is the surest way of conveyance to the ages to come. He will not write about things of doubtful dispute—things about which Christians may safely differ from one another, and hesitate within themselves; but the things which are, and ought to be, "most surely believed," *πράγματα πεπληροφρονούμενα*; the things which were performed, so some, which Christ and his apostles did, and did with such circumstances as gave a full assurance that they were really done; so that they have gained an established lasting credit. Note, Though it is not the foundation of our faith, yet it is a support to it, that the articles of our creed are things

Title.—That the author of this Gospel bore the name of Luke, or Lucas, in the primitive Church we know from the testimony of Irenæus and others in the second century. That he has been always identified with the Luke, or Lucas, mentioned by Paul is equally certain. Little is known of him except that he was a physician (*Col.* iv. 14). An idle fiction regards him as a painter, to whom various pictures are ascribed. That he was the author of the Acts of the Apostles has been almost universally admitted, and also that

he was associated with St. Paul for a considerable period. We have no trustworthy account of his origin, nor of the place, time, and manner of his death, all which are uncertain. It is gathered from *Acts* i. 1 that this Gospel was written before the Acts. There is no doubt that the original was in Greek, but we do not know when and where it was written. The probability is that it was written before A.D. 60, and in Asia Minor or Greece.

i. 1—4. This preface or introduction, recording the occasion and

that have been long "most surely believed." The doctrine of Christ is what thousands of the wisest and best of men have ventured their souls upon, with the greatest assurance and satisfaction.

Secondly. That it was requisite there should be a declaration made in order of those things—*tha*, the history of the life of Christ should be methodized and committed to writing, for the greater certainty of the conveyance. When things are put in order, we know the better where to find them for our own use, and how to keep them for the benefit of others.

Thirdly. That there were many who had undertaken to publish narratives of the life of Christ; many well-meaning people that designed well, and did well; and what they published had done good, though not done by Divine inspiration, nor so well done as might be, nor intended for perpetuity. Note, 1. The labours of others in the Gospel of Christ, if faithful and honest, we ought to commend and encourage, and not to despise, though chargeable with many deficiencies. 2. Others' services to Christ must not be reckoned to supersede ours, but rather to quicken them.

Fourthly. That the truth of the things he had to write was confirmed by the concurring testimony of those that were competent and unexceptionable witnesses of them; what had been published in writing already, and what he was now about to publish, agreed with that which had been delivered by word of mouth, over and over, by those "who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," ver. 2. Note, 1. The apostles were "ministers of the word" of Christ, who is the Word, so some understand it, or, of the doctrine of Christ; they, having received it themselves, ministered it to others, 1 *Jno.* i. 1. They had not a Gospel to make as masters, but a Gospel to preach as ministers. 2. The ministers of the word were eye-witnesses of the things which they preached, and, which is also included, ear-witnesses; they did themselves hear the doctrine of Christ, and see his miracles, and had them not by report, at second-hand; and therefore could not but speak with the greatest assurance the things they had seen and heard. *Acts* iv. 20. 3. They were so from the beginning of Christ's ministry, ver. 2. He had his disciples with him when he wrought his first miracle, *Jno.* ii. 11; they "compared with him all the time that he went in and out among them," *Acts* i. 21; so that they not only heard and saw all that which was sufficient to confirm their faith, but if there had been any thing to shock it, they had opportunity to discover it. 4. The written Gospel which we have to this day exactly agrees with the Gospel that was preached in the first days of the church. 5. That he himself had a "perfect understanding of" the "things" he wrote of "from the first," ver. 3. Some think here is a tacit reflection upon those that had written before him, that they had not a "perfect understanding" of what they wrote; and therefore, "here am I, send me;" — *facit indignatio versum*—"my wrath impels my pen;" or rather, without reflecting on them, he asserts his own ability for this undertaking: "it seemed good to me," having attained to the exact knowledge "of all things," *ἀνωθεν*,—"from above," so I think it should be rendered; for if he meant the same with "from the beginning," ver. 2, as our translation intimates, he would have used the same word. 1st. He had diligently searched into these things, had followed after them, so the word is, as the Old Testament prophets are said to have "inquired and searched diligently," 1 *Pet.* i. 10. He had not taken things so easily and superficially as others who had written before him, but made it his business to inform himself concerning particulars. 2nd. He had received his intelligence not only by tradition, as others had done, but by revelation; confirming that tradition, and securing him from any error or mistake in the recording of it. He sought it from above, so the word intimates, and from thence he had it; thus, like Elihu, he fetched his knowledge from afar. He wrote his history, as Moses wrote his, of things reported by tradition, but ratified by inspiration. 3rd. He could therefore say that he had a "perfect understanding" of these things; he knew them, *ἀκριβως*,—"accurately, exactly." Now having received this from above, it seemed good to me to communicate it; for such a talent as this ought not to be buried.

11. Observe why he sent it to Theophilus. "I wrote unto thee these things in order, not that thou mayest give reputation to the work, but that thou mayest be edified by it," ver. 4, "that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." 1. It is implied, that he had been instructed in these things either before his baptism or since, or both, according to the rule, *Mat.* xxviii. 19, 20. Probably Luke had baptized him, and knew how well instructed he was; *περὶ ὧν κατήχηθης*,—"concerning which thou hast been catechized;" so the word is; the most knowing Christians began with being catechized. Theophilus was a person of quality, perhaps of noble birth; and so much the more pains should be taken with such, when they are young, to teach them the principles of the oracles of God, that they may be fortified against the temptations, and furnished for the opportunities of a high condition in the world. 2. It was intended that he should "know the certainty of those things," should understand them more clearly, and believe them more firmly. There is a certainty in the Gospel of Christ, there is that in it, which we may build upon. And those who have been well instructed in the things of God when they were young, should afterwards give diligence to know the certainty of those things; to know not only what we believe, but why we believe it; that we may be able to "give a reason of the hope that is in us."



HERE was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. 8 And it came to pass, that while he

executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, 9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. 11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. 16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. 18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. 19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. 20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. 21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. 22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. 23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. 24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, 25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

The two preceding evangelists had agreed to begin the Gospel with the baptism of John, and his ministry, which commenced about six months before our Saviour's public ministry; (and now things were near a crisis, six months was a deal of time, which before was but a little); and therefore this evangelist, designing to give a more particular account than had been given of our Saviour's conception and birth, determines to do so of John Baptist; for in both he was his harbinger and forerunner, the morning star to the Sun of Righteousness; not only because it is commonly reckoned a satisfaction and entertainment to know something of the original extraction and early days of those who afterwards prove great men, but because in the beginning of these there were many things miraculous, and presages of what they afterwards proved; in these verses our inspired historian begins as early as the conception of John Baptist. Now observe here,

First. The account given of his parents, ver. 5; they lived "in the days of Herod the king," who was a foreigner, and a deputy for the Romans, who had lately made Judæa a province of the empire. This is taken notice of to shew that the sceptre was quite departed from Judah, and therefore now was the time for Shiloh to come, according to Jacob's prophecy, *Gen.* xlix. 10. The family of David was now sunk, when it was to rise and flourish again in the Messiah. Note, None ought to despair of the reviving and flourishing of religion, even then when civil liberties are lost; Israel is enslaved, yet then

aim of the writer, has given rise to considerable discussion. Of Theophilus, to whom both the Gospel and the Acts were addressed, we have no information. It appears that before Luke wrote many others had drawn up accounts of the same matters. Some have supposed that these other accounts were the first apocryphal Gospels; but such a view is inconsistent with the statement here made, which is rather commendatory than otherwise. Neither does the knowledge we have of early apocryphal Gospels favour the

opinion that they were either trustworthy or properly narrations of what was most surely believed in the early Church. The first intimations of the existence of apocryphal Gospels are quite against the view that they were correct historical narratives, so much as fictions and fables with a certain element of truth. It may be doubted whether the narrations here mentioned were the work of actual eye-witnesses; they seem rather to have been based upon the statements of eye-witnesses. We may doubt, therefore, whether

somes the glory of Israel. Now the father of John Baptist was a priest, a son of Aaron, his name Zacharias. No families in the world were ever so honoured of God as those of Aaron and David; with one was made the covenant of priesthood, with the other that of royalty; they had both forfeited their honour, yet the Gospel again puts honour upon both in their latter days; on that of Aaron in John Baptist, on that of David in Christ; and then they were both extinguished and lost. Christ was of David's house, his forerunner of Aaron's, for his priestly agency and influence opened the way to his kingly authority and dignity. This Zacharias was "of the course of Abia;" when in David's time the family of Aaron was multiplied, he divided them into twenty-four courses, for the more regular performance of their office, that it might never be either neglected, for want of hands, or engrossed by a few. The eighth of those was that of Abia, 1 Chr. xxiv. 10, who was descended from Eleazar, Aaron's eldest son. But Dr. Lightfoot suggests that many of the families of the priests were lost in the captivity; so that after their return they took in those of other families, but retaining the names of the heads of the respective courses. The wife of this Zacharias was of the daughters of Aaron too, and her name Elisabeth, the very same name with Elisheba the wife of Aaron, *Ex. vi. 23*. The priests, Josephus saith, were very careful to marry within their own family, that they might maintain the dignity of the priesthood, and keep it without mixture. Now that which is observed concerning Zacharias and Elisabeth is,

1. That they were a very religious couple, ver. 6, "they were both righteous before God;" they were so in his sight, whose judgment we are sure "is according to truth;" they were sincerely and really so. They are righteous indeed that are so before God, as Noah in his generation, *Gen. vii. 1*. They approved themselves to him, and he was graciously pleased to accept them. It is a happy thing when those that are joined to each other in marriage are both joined to the Lord. And it is especially requisite that the priests, the Lord's ministers, should with their yoke-fellows be righteous before God; that they may be examples to the flock, and rejoice their hearts. "They walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." 1st. Their being "righteous before God" was evidenced by the course and tenor of their conversations; they shewed it, not by their talk, but by their works; by the way they walked in, and the rule they walked by. 2nd. They were of a piece with themselves, for their devotions and their conversations agreed; they walked not only in the "ordinances of the Lord," which related to Divine worship, but "in the commandments of the Lord," which have reference to all the instances of a good conversation, and must be regarded. 3rd. They were universal in their obedience, not that they never did in any thing come short of their duty, but it was their constant care and endeavour to come up to it. 4th. Herein though they were not sinless, yet they were blameless; nobody could charge them with any open, scandalous sin; they lived honestly and inoffensively, as ministers and their families are in a special manner concerned to do, that the ministry be not blamed in their blame.

2. That they had been long childless, ver. 7. "Children are a heritage of the Lord;" but there are many of his heirs in a married state, that yet are denied this heritage; they are valuable, desirable blessings; yet many there are who are "righteous before God," and if they had children would bring them up in his fear, that yet are not thus blessed; while the "men of this world are full of children," *Psa. xvii. 14*; "and send forth their little ones like a flock," *Job xxi. 11*. "Elisabeth was barren;" and they began to despair of ever having children, for "they were both now well stricken in years," when the women that have been most fruitful leave off bearing. Many eminent persons were born of mothers that had been long childless, as Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samson, Samuel, and so here John Baptist, to make their birth the more remarkable, and the blessing of it the more valuable to their parents; and to shew that when God keeps his people long waiting for a mercy, he sometimes is pleased to recompense them for their patience, by doubling the worth of it when it comes.

Secondly, *The appearing of an angel to his father Zacharias*, as he was ministering in the temple, ver. 8, 11. Zacharias the prophet was the last of the Old Testament that was conversant with angels, and Zacharias the priest the first in the New Testament. Observe,

1. How Zacharias was employed in the service of God, ver. 8: "He executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course;" it was his week of waiting, and he was upon duty. Though his family was not built up, or made to grow, yet he made conscience of doing the work of his own place and day. Though we have not desired mercies, yet we must keep close to enjoined services; and, in our diligent and constant attendance on them, we may hope that mercy and comfort will come at last. Now it fell to Zacharias's lot to burn incense morning and evening for that week of his waiting; as other services fell to other priests by lot likewise. The services were directed by lot, that some might not decline them, and others engross them, and that, the disposal of the lot being from the Lord, they might have the satisfaction of a Divine call to the work. This was not the high priest's burning incense on the day of atonement, as some have fondly imagined, and thought by that to find out the time of our Saviour's birth; but it is plain it was the burning of the daily incense at the altar of incense, ver. 11; which was in the temple, ver. 9; not in the most holy place, into which the high priest entered. The Jews say that one and the same priest burned not incense twice in all his days, there were such a multitude of them; at least, never more than one week. It is very probable that this was upon the sabbath day, because there was a multitude of people attending, ver. 10; which ordinarily was not on a week day; and thus God usually puts honour upon his own day. And then, if, as Dr. Lightfoot reckons, with the help of the Jewish calendars, that this course of Abia fell on the seventeenth day of the third month, the month Sivan, answering to part of May and part of June, it is worth observing that the portions of the law and the prophets which were read this day in the synagogues were very agreeable to that which was doing in the temple, namely, the law of the Nazarites, *Num. vi.*, and the conception of Samson, *Jud. xiii.*

While Zacharias was burning incense in the temple, "the whole multitude of the people were praying without," ver. 10. Dr. Lightfoot saith there were constantly in the temple, at the hour of prayer, the priests of that course that then served; and if it were the sabbath day, those of that course also that had been in waiting the week before; and the Levites that served under the priests, and the men of the station, as the rabbins call them; who were the representatives of the people, in putting their hands upon the head of the sacrifices; and many besides, who, moved by devotion, left their employments for that time, to be present at the service of God, and those would make up a great multitude, especially on sabbaths and feast days. Now these all addressed themselves to their devotions, (in mental prayer, for their voice was not heard), when by the tinkling of a bell they had notice that the priest was gone in to burn incense. Now observe here, 1st. That the true Israel of God always were a praying people; and prayer is the great and principal piece of service by which we give honour to God, and fetch in favours from him, and keep up our communion with him. 2nd. That then when ritual and ceremonial appointments were in full force, as this of burning incense, yet moral and spiritual duties were required to go along with them, and were principally looked at.

David knew that when he was at a distance from the altar, his prayer might be heard without incense, for it might be directed before God as incense, *Psa. cxli. 2*; but when he was compassing the altar, the incense could not be accepted without prayer, no more than the shell without the kernel. 3rd. That it is not enough for us to be where God is worshipped, if our hearts do not join in the worship, and go along with the minister in all the parts of it. If he burn the incense never so well, in the most pertinent, judicious, lively prayer, if we be not at the same time praying in concurrence with him, what will it avail us? 4th. All the prayers we offer up to God here, in his courts, are acceptable and successful only in virtue of the incense of Christ's intercession in the temple of God above. To this usage in the temple service there seems to be an allusion, *Rev. viii. 1, 3, 4*, where we find that "there was silence in heaven," as there was in the temple, "for half an hour," while the people were silently lifting up their hearts to God in prayer; and that there was an angel, the angel of the covenant, who offered up "much incense, with the prayers of all saints, before the throne." We cannot expect an interest in Christ's intercession if we do not pray, and pray with our spirits, and continue instant in prayer. Nor can we expect that the best of our prayers should gain acceptance, and bring in an answer of peace, but through the mediation of Christ, who ever lives making intercession.

2. How, when he was thus employed, he was honoured with a messenger, a special messenger sent from heaven to him, ver. 11; "there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord." Some observe, that we never read of an angel appearing in the temple with a message from God, but only this one to Zacharias; because there God had other ways of making known his mind, as the Urim and Thummim, and by a still small voice from between the cherubims. But the ark and the oracle were wanting in the second temple; and therefore, when an express is to be sent to a priest in the temple, an angel was to be employed in it, and thereby the Gospel was to be introduced; for that, as the law, was given at first very much by "the ministry of angels," the appearance of which we often read of in the Gospels and the Acts, though the design both of the law and of the Gospel, when brought to perfection, was to settle another way of correspondence, more spiritual, between God and man. This angel stood "on the right side of the altar of incense," the north side of it, saith Dr. Lightfoot, on Zacharias's right hand; compare this with *Zec. iii. 1*; where Satan stands at the right hand of Joshua the priest, to resist him; but Zacharias has a good angel standing at his right hand, to encourage him. Some think this angel appeared coming out of the most holy place, which led him to stand at the right side of the altar.

3. What impression this made upon Zacharias; ver. 12, "when Zacharias saw him," it was a surprise upon him, even to a degree of terror, for "he was troubled, and fear fell upon him," ver. 12. Though he was righteous before God, and blameless in his conversation, yet he could not be without some frightful apprehensions at the sight of one whose visage and surrounding lustre spoke him more than human. Ever since man sinned, his mind has been unable to bear the glory of such revelations, and his conscience afraid of evil tidings brought by them; even Daniel himself could not bear it, *Dan. x. 8*; and for this reason God chooseth to speak to us by men like ourselves, whose terror shall not make us afraid.

Thirdly, *The message which the angel had to deliver to him*, ver. 13. He began his message, as angels generally did, with "Fear not." Perhaps it had never been Zacharias's lot to burn incense before; and being a very serious, conscientious man, we may suppose him full of care to do it well, and perhaps when he saw the angel, was afraid lest he came to rebuke him for some mistake or miscarriage; 'No,' saith the angel, "Fear not," 'I have no ill tidings to bring thee from heaven.' "Fear not," but compose thyself, that thou mayest with a sedate and even spirit receive the message I have to deliver to thee. Let us see what that is.

1. The prayers he has often made shall now receive an answer of peace: "Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard." 1st. If he means his particular prayer for a son, to build up his family, it must be the prayers he had formerly made for that mercy, when he was likely to have children; but we may suppose, now he and his wife "were both well stricken in years," as they had done expecting it, so they had done praying for it; like Moses, it sufficeth them, and they speak no more to God of that matter, *Deu. iii. 26*. But God will now, in giving this mercy, look a great way back, to the prayers that he had made long since, for and with his wife, as Isaac for and with his, *Gen. xxv. 21*. Note, Prayers of faith are filed in heaven, and are not forgotten, though the thing prayed for is not presently given in. Prayers made when we were young, and coming into the world, may be answered when we are old and going out of the world. But, 2nd. If he means the prayers he was now making, and offering up with his incense, we may suppose those were, according to the duty of his place, for the Israel of God and their welfare, and the performance of the promises made to them concerning the Messiah and the coming of his kingdom: This prayer of thine is now heard; for thy wife shall now shortly conceive him that is to be the Messiah's forerunner. Some of the Jewish writers themselves say that the priest, when he burnt incense, prayed for the salvation of the whole world; and now that prayer shall be heard. Or, 3rd. In general, the prayers thou now makest, and all thy prayers, are accepted of God, and come up for a memorial before him, as the angel said to Cornelius, when he visited him at prayer, *Acts x. 30, 31*. And this shall be the sign that thou art accepted of God, "Elisabeth shall bear thee a son." Note, It is very comfortable to praying people to know that their prayers are heard; and those mercies are doubly sweet that are given in answer to prayer.

2. He shall have a son in his old age, by Elisabeth his wife, who had been long barren, that by this birth, which was next due to miraculous, people might be prepared to receive and believe a virgin's bringing forth a son, which was perfectly miraculous. He is directed what name to give his son, "Call him John;" in Hebrew, *Johanan*, a name we often meet with in the Old Testament; it signifies "Gracious." The priests must beseech God that he will be gracious, *Mal. i. 9*; and must so bless the people, *Num. vi. 25*. Zacharias was now praying thus, and the angel tells him his prayer is heard, and he shall have a son, whom, in token of an answer to his prayer, he shall call Gracious; or, the Lord will be gracious, *Isa. xxx. 18, 19*.

3. This son shall be the joy of his family, and of all his relations, ver. 14; he shall be another Isaac, "thy laughter;" and some think that is partly intended in his name, John; he shall be a welcome child. "Thou" for thy part, "shalt have joy and gladness." Note, Mercies that have been long waited for, when they come at last are the more acceptable; he shall be such a son as thou shalt have reason to rejoice in. Many parents, if they could foresee what their children will prove, instead of rejoicing at their birth, would wish they had never been. But I will tell thee what thy son will be, and then thou wilt not need to rejoice with trembling at his birth, as the best must do, but mayest rejoice with triumph at it. Nay, and "many shall rejoice at his birth;" all the relations of the family will rejoice in it, and all its well-wishers, because it is for the honour and comfort of the family, ver. 58. All good people will rejoice that such a religious couple as Zacharias and Elisabeth have a son, because they will give him a good education, such as it may be hoped will make him a public blessing

the narrations in question comprised any of our present extant Gospels. They were probably unofficial accounts, without authority, and as such soon sank into oblivion; so much so, that we have no trace of one of them, except in this general allusion to them. The words in verse 3 rendered "having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first," should rather be translated, "having traced down accurately all things from the very first." Indeed, Luke gives the fullest account of the earliest events connected with

the life of our Lord. From the words "to write unto thee in order" we are not compelled to infer that a literally chronological method is followed. The history is a consecutive one, but there is reason to believe that the historical sequence of events is sometimes departed from. The truthfulness of the record is, however, plainly asserted. Luke does not profess to have been an eye-witness of the occurrences which form the subject-matter of his history. He obtained his information from other sources, probably in part from eye-witnesses

to his generation. Yea, and perhaps many shall rejoice by an unaccountable instinct, as a presage of the joyous days the Gospel will introduce.

4. This son shall be a mighty favourite of Heaven, and a mighty blessing to the earth. The honour of having a son is nothing to the honour of having such a son.

1st. "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord," and those are great indeed that are so in God's sight, not those that are so in the eye of a vain and carnal world. God will set him before his face continually, will employ him in his work, and send him on his errands, and that shall make him truly great and honourable. He shall be a prophet, yea, more than a prophet, and upon that account as great as any that ever were born of women, *Mat. xi. 11*. He shall live very much retired from the world, out of men's sight, and when he makes a public appearance it will be very mean, but he shall be much, "he shall be great in the sight of the Lord."

2nd. He shall be a Nazarite, set apart to God from every thing that is polluting; and in token of that, according to the law of Nazariteship, "he shall drink neither wine nor strong drink," or rather, "neither old wine nor new;" for most think the word here translated "strong drink" signifies some sort of wine, perhaps those that we call made wines, or any thing that is intoxicating. He shall be as Samson by the Divine precept, *Jud. xiii. 7*, and Samuel by his mother's vow, *1 Sam. i. 11*, a Nazarite for life. It is spoken of as a great instance of God's favour to his people, that he raised up of their sons for prophets, and their young men for Nazarites, *Am. ii. 11*; as if those that were designed for prophets were trained up under the discipline of the Nazarites. Samuel and John Baptist were; which intimates that those that would be eminent servants of God, and employed in eminent services, must learn to live a life of self-denial and mortification, must be dead to the pleasures of sense, and keep their minds from every thing that is darkening and disturbing to them.

3rd. He shall be abundantly fitted and qualified for those great and eminent services to which in due time he shall be called; "he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb;" and as soon as it is possible he shall appear to have been so. Observe, *First*. Those that would be filled with the Holy Ghost must be sober and temperate, and very moderate in the use of wine and strong drink; for that is it that fits him for this: "Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit," with which that is not consistent, *Eph. v. 18*. *Secondly*. It is possible that infants may be wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, even from their mother's womb, for John Baptist even then was filled with the Holy Ghost, who took possession of his heart betimes; and an early specimen was given of it, when he leaped in his mother's womb for joy at the approach of the Saviour; and afterwards it appeared very early that he was sanctified. God has promised to pour out his Spirit upon the seed of believers, *Isa. xlv. 3*; and their first springing up in a dedication of themselves betimes to God is the fruit of it, *ver. 4, 5*. Who then can forbid water that they should not be baptized, who for aught we know (and we can say no more of the adult, witness Simon Magus,) have received the Holy Ghost as well as we, and have the seeds of grace sown in their hearts? *Acts x. 47*.

4th. He shall be instrumental for the conversion of many souls to God, and the preparing of them to receive and entertain the Gospel of Christ, *ver. 16, 17*.

First. He shall be sent to the children of Israel, to the nation of the Jews, to whom the Messiah also was first sent, and not to the Gentiles; to the whole nation, and not to the family of the priests only; with which, though he was himself of that family, we do not find he had any particular intimacy, nor influence upon them.

Secondly. He shall go before the Lord their God, that is, before the Messiah, whom they must expect to be, not their king, in the sense wherein they commonly take it, a temporal prince to their nation, but their Lord and their God, to rule and defend, and serve them in a spiritual way, by his influences on their hearts. Thomas knew this when he said to Christ, "My Lord, and my God," better than Nathanael did, when he said, "Rabbi, thou art the king of Israel." John "shall go before him," a little before him, to give notice of his approach, and to prepare people to receive him.

Thirdly. "He shall go in the spirit and power of Elias." That is, 1st. He shall be such a man as Elias was, and do such work as Elias did; shall, like him, wear a hairy garment and a leathern girdle, and live retired from the world; shall, like him, preach the necessity of repentance and reformation to a very corrupt and degenerate age; shall, like him, be bold and zealous in re-proving sin, and witnessing against it even in the greatest; and be hated and persecuted for it, by a Herod and his Herodias, as Elijah was by an Ahab and his Jezebel. He shall be carried on in his work as Elijah was, by a Divine spirit and power, which shall crown his ministry with wonderful success. As Elias went before the writing prophets of the Old Testament, and did as it were usher in that signal period of the Old Testament dispensation, by a little writing of his own, *2 Chr. xxi. 12*; so John Baptist went before Christ and his apostles, and introduced the gospel dispensation, by preaching the substance of the gospel doctrine and duty, Repent, with an eye to the kingdom of heaven. 2nd. He shall be that very person who was prophesied of by Malachi, under the name of Elijah, *Mal. iv. 5*, who should be sent "before the coming of the day of the Lord." "Behold! I send you a prophet, even Elias," not Elias the Tishbite, as the Septuagint have corruptly read it, to favour the Jews' traditions, but a prophet "in the spirit and power of Elias," as the angel here expounds it.

Fourthly. "He shall turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God," that is, shall incline their hearts to receive the Messiah, and bid him welcome, by awakening them to a sense of sin, and a desire of righteousness. Whatever has a tendency to turn us from iniquity, as John's preaching and baptism had, will turn us to Christ, as our Lord and our God; for those who through grace, are wrought upon to shake off the yoke of sin, that is, the dominion of the world and the flesh, will soon be persuaded to take upon them the yoke of the Lord Jesus.

Fifthly. Hereby he shall "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," that is, of the Jews to the Gentiles; shall help to conquer the rooted prejudices which the Jews have against the Gentiles, which was done by the Gospel, as far as it prevailed; and was begun to be done by John Baptist, who came "for a witness, that all through him might believe," who baptized and taught Roman soldiers, as well as Jewish Pharisees; and who cured the pride and confidence of those Jews who gloried in their having Abraham to their father; and told them that God would "out of stones raise up children unto Abraham," *Mat. iii. 9*, which would tend to cure their enmity to the Gentiles. Dr. Lightfoot observes, that it is the constant usage of the prophets to speak of the church of the Gentiles as children to the Jewish church, *Isa. liv. 5, 6, 13; lx. 4, 9; lxii. 5; lxvi. 12*. When the Jews that embraced the faith of Christ were brought to join in communion with the Gentiles that did go too, then the heart of the fathers was turned to the children. And he shall "turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just," that is, he shall introduce the Gospel, by which the Gentiles, that are now disobedient, shall be turned,

not so much to their fathers, the Jews, but to the faith of Christ, here called "the wisdom of the just," in communion with the believing Jews; or thus, "He shall turn the hearts of the fathers with the children," that is, of old and young; shall be instrumental to bring some of every age to be religious, to work a great reformation in the Jewish nation, to bring them off from a ritual, traditional religion, which they had rested in, and to bring them up to substantial, serious godliness; and the effects of this will be, that enmities will be slain, and discord made to cease; and they that are at variance, being united in his baptism, will be better reconciled one to another. And this agrees with the account Josephus gives of John Baptist, *Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 7*, that "he was a good man, and taught the Jews the exercise of virtue, in piety towards God, and righteousness towards one another, and that they should convene and knit together in baptism." And he saith, "the people mocked after him, and were exceedingly delighted in his doctrine." Thus he turned the hearts of fathers and children to God, and one another, by "turning the disobedient to the wisdom of the just." Observe, 1st. True religion is the wisdom of just men, in distinction from the wisdom of this world. It is both our wisdom and our duty to be religious; there is both equity and prudence in it. 2nd. It is not impossible but that those who have been unbelieving and disobedient may be turned to the wisdom of the just. Divine grace can conquer the greatest ignorances and prejudices. 3rd. The great design of the Gospel is to bring people home to God, and to bring them nearer to one another; and on this errand John Baptist is sent. And in the mention that is twice made of his turning people, there seems to be an allusion to the name of the Tishbite, which is given to Elijah, which some think doth not denote the country or city he was of, but has an appellative signification; and therefore they render it Elijah the converter, one that was much employed and very successful in conversion work. The Elias of the New Testament is therefore said to turn or convert, many to the Lord their God.

5. Hereby he shall "make ready a people prepared for the Lord;" shall dispose the minds of people to receive the doctrine of Christ, that thereby they may be prepared for the comforts of his coming. Note, 1st. All that are to be devoted to the Lord, and made happy in him, must first be prepared and made ready for him. We must be prepared by grace in this world, for glory in the other; by the terrors of the law, for the comforts of the Gospel; by the spirit of bondage, for the spirit of adoption. 2nd. Nothing has a more direct tendency to prepare people for Christ than the doctrine of repentance received and submitted to. When sin is thereby made grievous, Christ will become very precious.

Fourthly. *Zacharias' unbelief of the angel's prediction*, and the rebuke he was laid under for that unbelief. He heard all that the angel had to say, and should have bowed his head, and worshipped the Lord, saying, "Be it unto thy servant according to the word" which thou hast spoken; but it was not so. We are here told.

1. What his unbelief spoke, *ver. 18*. He said to the angel, "Whereby shall I know this?" This was not a humble petition for the confirming of his faith, but a peevish objection against what was said to him, as altogether incredible; as if he should say, I can never be made to believe this. He could not but perceive that it was an angel that spake to him; the message delivered having reference to the Old Testament prophecies, carried much of its own evidence along with it. There are many instances in the Old Testament of those that had children when they were old, yet he cannot believe he shall have this child of promise, for I am an old man, and my wife "has not only been all her days barren, but is now 'well stricken in years,' and not likely ever to have children; therefore he must have a sign given him, or he will not believe. Though the appearance of an angel, which had been long disused in the church, was sign enough; though he had this notice given him in the temple, the place of God's oracles, where he had reason to think no evil angel would be permitted to come; though it was given him when he was praying, and burning incense; and though a firm belief of that great principle of religion, that God has an almighty power, and with him nothing is impossible, which he ought not only to know but to teach others, was enough to silence all objections; yet considering his own body and his wife's too much, unlike a son of Abraham, he staggered at the promise, *Rom. iv. 19, 20*.

2. How his unbelief was silenced, and he silenced for it. 1st. The angel stops his mouth, by asserting his authority. Doth he ask, "Whereby shall I know this?" Let him know it by this, "I am Gabriel," *ver. 19*. He puts his name to his prophecy, doth as it were sign it with his own hand, *teste metropo.*—take my word for it. Angels have sometimes refused to tell their names, as to Manoah and his wife; but this angel readily saith, "I am Gabriel," which signifies the power of God; or, the mighty one of God, intimating that the God who bade him say this was able to make it good. He also makes himself known by this name, to put him in mind of the notices of the Messiah's coming sent to Daniel by the man Gabriel, *Dan. viii. 16; ix. 21*: "I am the same that was sent then, and am sent now, in pursuance of the same intention." He is "Gabriel, that stands in the presence of God," an immediate attendant upon the throne of God. The prime ministers of state in the Persian court are described by this, that they saw the king's face, *Est. i. 14*. "Though I am now talking with thee here, yet 'I stand in the presence of God.' I know his eye is upon me; and I dare not say any more than I have warrant to say; but I declare 'I am sent to speak to thee,' sent on purpose, 'to shew thee these glad tidings,' which being so well worthy of all acceptance, thou oughtest to have received cheerfully."

2nd. The angel stops his mouth, indeed, by exerting his power: That thou mayest object no more, "Behold, thou shalt be dumb," *ver. 20*. If thou wilt have a sign for the support of thy faith, it shall be such a one as shall be also the punishment of thine unbelief: "thou shalt not be able to speak till the day that these things shall be performed," *ver. 20*. "Thou shalt be both dumb and deaf, the same words signify both; and it is plain that he lost his hearing as well as his speech, for his friends made signs to him, *ver. 22*, as well as he to them, *ver. 22*. Now, in striking him dumb, *First*. God dealt justly with him, because he had objected against God's word; and from hence we may take occasion to admire the patience of God, and his forbearance towards us, that we, who have so often spoke to his dishonour, yet have not been struck dumb, as Zacharias was, as we had been if God had dealt with us according to our sins. *Secondly*. God dealt kindly with him, and very tenderly and graciously. For 1st. Thus he prevented his speaking any more such distrustful, unbelieving words. If he have thought evil, and will not himself lay his hand upon his mouth, nor keep it as with a bridle, God will: it is better not to speak at all, than to speak wickedly. 2nd. Thus he confirmed his faith; and by his being disabled to speak, he is enabled to think the better. If, by the rebukes we are under for our sin, we be brought to give more credit to the Word of God, we have no reason to complain of them. 3rd. Thus he was kept from divulging the vision, and boasting of it, which otherwise he would have been apt to do; whereas it was designed, for the present, to be lodged as a secret with him. 4th. It was a great mercy that God's words should be fulfilled in their season, notwithstanding his sinful distrust. The unbelief of man shall not make the promises of God of none effect; they shall be fulfilled in their

and in part from sundry documents which then existed. When he wrote authentic accounts were easily accessible. We know from *Acts xxi. 17* that he met with James at Jerusalem, in company with Paul. Lange says, "The conjecture of a Dutch theologian that Luke, in writing the history of the Nativity, made use of an original written narrative by James, the brother of our Lord, which was afterwards lost, and replaced by the apocryphal Gospel of James, deserves mention."

i. 5. An ancient Syrian chronicle says, "It is said that Herod was one of the Gentiles (a pagan), that he was from Ascalon, and was priest of the idol Apollo." This is mere tradition, Herod was an Idumean, and from his re-construction of the Temple, and other facts, we may conclude that he professed Judaism. The priests were divided into twenty-four courses, who ministered by turns in the Temple. The course of Abia, or Abijah, was the eighth (1 Chron. xxiv. 10). Elisabeth is the same name as Elisheba (*Exod. vi. 23*).

season, and he shall not be for ever dumb, but only "till the day that these things shall be performed;" and then thy lips shall be opened, that thy mouth may shew forth God's praise. Thus, though God chasten the iniquity of his people with the rod, yet his lovingkindness he will not take away.

Fifthly. *The return of Zacharias to the people, and at length to his family; and the conception of this child of promise, the son of his old age.*

1. The people stayed, expecting Zacharias to come out of the temple, because he was to pronounce the blessing upon them, in the name of the Lord; and though he stayed beyond the usual time, yet they did not, as is too common in Christian congregations, hurry away without the blessing, but waited for him, marvelling "that he tarried so long in the temple," and afraid lest something was amiss, ver. 21.

2. When he came out he was speechless, ver. 22. He was now to have dismissed the congregation with a blessing, but is dumb, and not able to do it, that the people may be minded to expect the Messiah, who can command the blessing, who blesteth indeed, and in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed. Aaron's priesthood is now shortly to be silenced and set aside, to make way for the bringing in of a better hope.

3. He made a shift to give them to understand that he had seen a vision, by some awful signs he made, "for he beckoned to them, and remained speechless," ver. 22. This represents to us the weakness and deficiency of the Levitical priesthood, in comparison with Christ's priesthood and the dispensation of the Gospel. The Old Testament speaks by signs, gives us some intimations of Divine and heavenly things, but imperfect and uncertain; it beckons to us, but remains speechless; it is the Gospel that speaks to us articulately, and gives us a clear view of that which in the Old Testament was seen through a glass darkly.

4. He stayed out "the days of his ministration;" for his lot being to burn incense, he could do that, though he was dumb and deaf. When we cannot perform the service of God so well as we would, yet if we perform it so well as we can, God will accept of us in it.

5. He then returned to his family, and his wife conceived, ver. 23, 24. She conceived by virtue of the promise, and being sensible of it, "she hid herself five months;" she kept house, and kept it private, and did not go abroad so much as she used to do. 1st. Lest she should do herself any prejudice, so as might occasion her miscarrying, or any hurt to the conception. 2nd. Lest she should contract any ceremonial pollution which might intrench upon the Nazariteship of her child, remembering the command given to Samson's mother, in a like case, and applying it to herself, she must not touch any unclean thing while she is with child of a Nazarite, *Jud. xiii. 14*. And though five months are mentioned, because of what follows in the sixth month, yet we may suppose she did in like manner take care of herself during the whole time of her being with child. 3rd. Some think it was in an excess of modesty that she hid herself, ashamed it should be said that one of her age should be with child, "Shall she have pleasure, being old, her lord being old also?" *Gen. xviii. 12*; or, it was in a token of her humility, that she might not seem to boast of the honour God had put upon her. 4th. She hid herself for devotion, that she might spend her time in prayer and praise. The saints are God's hidden ones; she gives this reason for her retirement, for "thus hath the Lord dealt with me;" not only thus graciously, in giving me a child, but thus honourably, in giving me such a child as is to be a Nazarite; for so her husband might by writing signify to her. He hath "taken away my reproach among men." Fruitfulness was looked upon to be so great a blessing among the Jews, because of the promises of the increase of their nation, and the rising of the Messiah among them, that it was a great reproach to be barren; and those who were so, though never so blameless, yet were concluded to be guilty of some great sin unknown, for which they were so punished. Now Elisabeth triumphs, that not only this reproach is taken away, but great glory is put upon her instead of it; "Thus hath the Lord dealt with me," beyond any thought or expectation of mine, "in the days wherein he looked on me." Note, In God's gracious dealings with us, we ought to observe his gracious regards to us. He has looked on us with compassion and favour, and therefore hath thus dealt with us.

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. 29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of

the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. 36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing shall be impossible. 38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

We have here notice given us of all it was fit we should know concerning the incarnation and conception of our blessed Saviour, six months after the conception of John. The same angel, Gabriel, that was employed in making known to Zacharias God's purposes concerning his son, is employed in this also; for in this, the same glorious work of redemption, which was begun in that, is carried on. As bad angels are none of the redeemed, so good angels are none of the redeemers; yet they are employed by the Redeemer as his messengers, and they go cheerfully on his errands, because they are his Father's humble servants, and his children's hearty friends and wellwishers.

First, *We have here an account given of the mother of our Lord, of whom he was to be born, whom though we are not to pray to, yet we ought to praise God for.*

1. Her name was Mary, the same name with Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron; the name signifies exalted, and a great elevation it was to her indeed, to be thus favoured above all the daughters of the house of David.

2. She was a daughter of the royal family, lineally descended from David, and herself and all her friends knew it, for she went under the title and character of the house of David, though she was poor and low in the world; and she was enabled by God's providence, and the care of the Jews to preserve their genealogies, to make it out; and as long as the promise of the Messiah was to be fulfilled, it was worth keeping; but for those now, who are brought low in the world, to have descended from persons of honour, is not worth mentioning.

3. She was a virgin, a pure unspotted one, but espoused to one of the same royal stock, but, like her, of low estate; so that upon both accounts there was, as it is fit there should be, an equality among them. His name was Joseph; he also was "of the house of David," *Mat. i. 20*. Christ's mother was a virgin, because he was not to be born by ordinary generation, but miraculously; it was necessary he should be so, that though he must partake of the nature of man, yet not of the corruption of that nature. But he was born of a virgin espoused, made up to be married, and contracted, to put honour upon the married state, that that might not be brought into contempt, which was an ordinance in innocency, by the Redeemer's being born of a virgin.

4. She lived in Nazareth, a city of Galilee, a remote corner of the country, and in no reputation for religion or learning; but it bordered upon the heathen, and therefore was called Galilee of the Gentiles. Christ's having his relations resident there, intimates favour in reserve for the Gentile world. And Dr. Lightfoot observes, "that Jonah was by birth a Galilean, and Elijah and Elisha very much conversant in Galilee, who were all famous prophets of the Gentiles." The angel was sent to her to Nazareth. Note, No distance, or disadvantage of place, shall be a prejudice to those whom God has favours in store for. The angel Gabriel carries his message as cheerfully to Mary at Nazareth in Galilee, as to Zacharias in the temple at Jerusalem.

Secondly, *The address of the angel to her, ver. 28.* We are not told what she was doing, or how employed, when the angel came unto her; but he surprised her with this salutation, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured!" This was intended to raise in her, 1st. A value for herself; and though it is very rare that any need to have any sparks struck into their breast with such design, yet in some, who, like Mary, pore only upon their low estate, there is occasion for it. 2nd. An expectation of great news, not from abroad, but from above. Heaven designs, no doubt, uncommon favours for one whom an angel makes court to with such respect: "Hail, thou," *Xaίρε, Rejoice thou*; "it was the usual form of salutation; it expreseth an esteem of her, and goodwill to her and her posterity."

1. She is dignified: "thou art highly favoured;" God, in his choice of thee to be the mother of the Messiah, has put an honour upon thee peculiar to thyself, above that of Eve, who was the mother of all living. The vulgar Latin translates this, *gratia plena*,—"full of grace," and from thence gathers, that she had more of the inherent graces of the Spirit than ever any had; whereas it is certain this speaks no other than the singular favour done her in preferring her to conceive and bear our blessed Lord; an honour which, since he was to be "the seed of the woman," some woman must have; not for personal merit, but purely for the sake of free grace, and she is pitched upon; "even so, Father, because it seemed good unto thee."

2. She has the presence of God with her; "the Lord is with thee," though poor and mean, and perhaps now forecasting how to get a livelihood, and maintain a family, in the married state. The angel with this word raised the faith of Gideon, *Jud. vi. 12*, "the Lord is with thee." Nothing is to be despised of, not the performance of any service, not the obtaining of any favour, though never so great, if we have God with us. This word might put her in mind of the "Immanuel, God with us, which a virgin shall conceive, and bear," *Isa. vii. 14*; and why not she?

3. She has the blessing of God upon her; "blessed art thou among women;" not only thou shalt be accounted so by men, but thou shalt be so. Thou that art so highly favoured in this instance, mayest expect in other things to be blessed; she explains this herself, ver. 48, "All generations shall call me blessed;" compare it with that which Deborah saith of Jael, another that was the glory of her sex, *Jud. v. 24*: "Blessed shall she be above women in the tent."

Thirdly, *The consternation she was in upon this address, ver. 29*; "when she saw him," and the glories with which he was surrounded, "she was troubled" at the sight of him, and much more "at his saying." Had she been a proud, ambitious young woman, that aimed high, and flattered herself with the expectation of great things in the world, she would have been pleased at his saying, would have been puffed up with it, and, as we have reason to think she was a young woman of very good sense, would have had an answer ready, signifying so much but instead of that, she is confounded at it, as not conscious to herself of any thing that either merited, or promised any such great things. "and she cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be;" was it from heaven, or of men? was it to amuse her? was it to ensnare her? was

She was descended from Aaron, and, therefore, like her husband, of the tribe of Levi. There is an old tradition that Zacharias was high-priest, but there is nothing to justify it.

i. 8, 9. It was decided by lot who should perform the separate portions of the Temple services, and, therefore, who should burn the incense before the Lord morning and evening. It was a special honour to burn incense; and Josephus mentions that the high priest, John Hyrcanus, was favoured with a revelation during the per-

formance of that duty. On these occasions the priest was alone in the holy place, while the people were outside at their devotions. The altar of incense was in the holy place, which the people were not allowed to enter.

i. 19. The name of Gabriel signifies "man of God," or "hero of God," and first appears in the Old Testament, in the eighth and ninth chapters of Daniel. The rabbis say that the names of the angels were brought up from Babylon by the Jews on their return from the

It to banter her? or, was there something substantial and weighty in it? But of all the thoughts she had—what manner of salutation it should be," I believe she had not the least idea of its being ever intended, or used, for a prayer, as it is and has been for many ages by the corrupt, degenerate, and antichristian ages of the church; and to be ten times repeated for the Lord's Prayer once; so it is in the church of Rome. But her thoughtfulness upon this occasion gives a very useful intimation to young people of her sex, when addresses are made to them, to consider and cast in their minds what manner of salutations they are, whence they come, and what their tendency is, that they may receive them accordingly; and may always stand on their guard.

Fourthly, *The message itself*, which the angel had to deliver to her. Some time the angel gives her to pause; but observing that that did but increase her perplexity, he went on with his errand, ver. 30. To what he had said she made no reply; he therefore confirms it: "Fear not, Mary!" I have no other design but to assure thee that "thou hast found favour with God" more than thou thinkest of, as there are many who think they are more favoured of God than really they are. Note, Those that have "found favour with God" should not give way to disquieting, distrustful fears. Doth God favour thee? Fear not, though the world frown upon thee. Is he for thee? No matter who is against thee.

1. Though she is a virgin, she shall have the honour of being a mother; "thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son;" and thou shalt have the naming of him, thou shalt call his name Jesus," ver. 31. It was the sentence upon Eve, though she should have the honour to be "the mother of all living;" yet this mortification shall be an allay to that honour, that "her desire shall be to her husband," and "he shall rule over her," Gen. iii. 16. But Mary has the honour without the allay.

2. Though she lives in poverty and obscurity, yet she shall have the honour to be the mother of the Messiah; her son shall be named Jesus, a Saviour, such a one as the world needs, rather than such a one as the Jews expect.

1st. He will be very nearly allied to the upper world; "he shall be great," truly great, uncontestedly great; for he "shall be called the Son of the Highest," the Son of God, who is the Highest; of the same nature, as the Son of the same nature with the Father; and very dear to him, as the Son is to the Father. He shall be called, and not mis-called, the Son of the Highest; for he is himself "God over all, blessed for evermore," Rom. ix. 5. Note, Those who are the children of God, though but by adoption and regeneration, are truly great, and therefore are concerned to be very good, 1 Jno. iii. 1, 2.

2nd. He will be very highly preferred in the lower world; for though born under the most disadvantageous circumstances possible, and appearing in the form of a servant, yet "the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David," ver. 32. He puts her in mind that she was "of the house of David;" and that therefore, since neither the Salique law nor the right of primogeniture took place in the entail of his throne, it was not impossible but that she might bring forth an heir to it, and therefore might the more easily believe it, when she was told, by an angel from heaven, that she should do so. That after the sceptre had been long departed from that ancient and honourable family, it should now at length return to it again, to remain in it; not by succession, but in the same hand to eternity. His people will not give him that throne, will not acknowledge his right to rule them; but the Lord God shall give him a right to rule them, and set him as his king upon the "holy hill of Zion." He assures her, *First*, That his kingdom shall be spiritual; "he shall reign over the house of Jacob," not Israel "according to the flesh;" for they neither came into his interests, nor did they continue long a people; it must therefore be a spiritual kingdom, the house of Israel "according to promise," that he must rule over. *Secondly*, That it shall be eternal: he shall reign for ever; "and of his kingdom there shall be no end," as there had been long since of the temporal reign of David's house; and would shortly be of the state of Israel; other crowns endure not to every generation, but Christ's doth, Pr. xxvii. 4. The Gospel is the last dispensation, we are to look for no other.

Fifthly, *The farther information given her* upon her inquiry concerning the birth of this prince.

1. It is a just inquiry which she makes, "How shall this be?" ver. 34. How can I now presently conceive a child, (for so the angel meant,) "when I know not a man?" must it therefore be otherwise than by ordinary generation? If so, let me know how? She knew that the Messiah must be born of a virgin, and if she must be his mother, she desires to know how. This was not the language of her distrust, or any doubt of what the angel said, but of a desire to be farther instructed.

2. It is a satisfactory answer that is given to it, ver. 35. 1st. She shall conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, whose proper work and office it is to sanctify; and therefore to sanctify the virgin for this purpose: the Holy Ghost is called "the power of the Highest." Doth she ask how this shall be? This is enough to help her over all the difficulty there appears in it; a Divine power will undertake it, not the power of an angel employed in it, as in other works of wonder; but the power of the Holy Ghost himself. 2nd. She must ask no questions concerning the way and manner how it shall be wrought; for "the Holy Ghost," as "the power of the Highest, shall overshadow her," as the cloud covered the tabernacle, when the glory of God took possession of it, to conceal it from those that would too curiously observe the motions of it, and pry into the mystery of it. The formation of every babe in the womb, and the entrance of the spirit of life into it, is a mystery in nature; none knows "the way of the spirit, nor how the bones are formed in the womb of her that is with child," Eccl. xi. 5. We were "made in secret," Ps. cxxxix. 15, 16. Much more was the formation of the child Jesus a mystery; "without controversy, great was the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii. 16. It is "a new thing created in the earth," Jer. xxxi. 22; concerning which we must not covet to be wise above what is written. 3rd. The child she shall conceive is a holy thing, and therefore must not be conceived by ordinary generation; because he must not share in the common corruption and pollution of the human nature; he is spoken of emphatically, "that holy thing," such as never was. And he shall be called the Son of God, as the Son of the Father by eternal generation; and as an indication of that, he shall now be formed by the Holy Ghost in the present conception. His human nature must be so produced as it was fit that should be which was to be taken into union with the Divine nature.

3. It was a farther encouragement to her faith to be told that her cousin Elisabeth, though stricken in years, was with child, ver. 36. Here is an age of wonders beginning, and therefore be not surprised! Here is one among thy own relations truly great, though not altogether so great as this; it is usual with God to advance in working wonders: "greater works than these shall ye do." Though Elisabeth was, on the father's side, of the daughters of Aaron, ver. 5, yet on the mother's side she might be of the house of David; for those two families often intermarried, as an earnest of the uniting of the royalty and the priesthood in the Messiah. "This is the sixth month with her that was called barren;" this intimates, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that all the instances in the Old Testament of those having children that had been long barren, which was above nature, were designed to prepare the world for the

belief of a virgin's bearing a son, which was against nature. And, therefore, even in the birth of Isaac Abraham saw Christ's day, foresaw such a miracle in the birth of Christ. The angel assures Mary of this, to encourage her faith, and concludes with that great truth of undoubted certainty, and universal use, for "with God nothing shall be impossible," ver. 37; and if nothing, then not this. Abraham therefore staggered not at the belief of the Divine promise, because he was strong in his belief of the Divine power, Rom. iv. 20, 21. No word of God must be incredible to us, as long as no work of God is impossible to him.

Sixthly, *Her acquiescence in the will of God* concerning her, ver. 38. She owns herself, 1. A believing subject to the Divine authority: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord!" Lord, I am at thy service, at thy dispose, to do what thou commandest me. She objects not the danger of spoiling her marriage, and blemishing her reputation; but leaves the issue with God, and submits entirely to his will. 2. A believing expectant of the Divine favour. She is not only content it should be so, but humbly desires it may be so: "be it unto me according to thy word." Such a favour as this it was not for her to slight, or to be indifferent to; and for what God has promised, he will be sought unto; by prayer we must put our *amen*, or so be it, to the promise. "Remember," and perform "thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." We must, as Mary here, guide our desires by the Word of God, and ground our hopes upon it. "Be it unto me according to thy word;" just so, and no otherwise.

Hereupon "the angel departed from her;" having completed the errand he was sent upon, returned to give account of it, and receive new instructions. Converse with angels was always a transient thing, and soon over; it will be constant and permanent in the future state. And it is generally supposed, that just at this instant the virgin conceived, by the overshadowing power of the Holy Ghost; but the Scripture being decently silent concerning that, it doth not become us to be inquisitive, much less positive.

39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; 40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. 41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: 42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. 43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. 46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, 47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. 48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. 49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. 50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. 51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. 53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. 54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; 55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. 56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

We have here an interview between the two happy mothers, Elisabeth and Mary. The angel, by intimating to Mary the favour bestowed on her cousin Elisabeth, ver. 36, gave occasion for it; and sometimes it may prove a better piece of service than we think to bring good people together to compare notes. Here is,

First, *The visit which Mary made to Elisabeth*. Mary was the younger, and younger with child; and therefore, if they must come together, it was fittest that Mary should take the journey, not insisting on the preference which the greater dignity of her conception gave her, ver. 39; she arose, and left her affairs, to attend this great matter. "In those days," that is, at that time, (as it is commonly explained, Jer. xxxiii. 15; 1. 4.) in a day or two after the angel had visited her, taking some time first, as it is supposed, for her devotion, or rather hastening away to her cousin's, where she would have more leisure, and better help, in the family of a priest; she went, *μετὰ σπουδῆς*,—"with care and diligence,

captivity; from which it has been inferred that these names are of Assyrian or pagan origin. That they are not pagan is shown by their etymology; and among all the readings of Assyrian inscriptions no such names have been discovered. These two facts are sufficient to overthrow the theory of the German rationalists; and we may conclude that, if the names were not known before the captivity, they were revealed during the captivity. These names are no more derived from the Persian system than from the Assyrian, as

is shown by their etymology, which is Shemitic and not Persian. The Jews, who have no doubt invented much in regard to the angels, and who regard them as of various ranks, the chief being known as archangels, have been followed by some Christians, and Gabriel has been styled an archangel. For this there is no authority in Scripture, where the term archangel occurs but twice; once without a name (1 Thess. iv. 16), and once in connection with the name of Michael (Jude 9). The Jewish notion, adopted by many Christians,

and expedition; not as young people commonly go abroad, and visit their friends, to divert herself, but to inform herself. She went "to a city of Judah in the hill country;" it is not named, but by comparing the description of it here with *Jos. xxi. 10, 11*, it appears to be Hebron; for that is there said to be "in the hill country of Judah," and to belong to the priests, the sons of Aaron. Thither Mary hastened, though it was a long journey, some scores of miles.

1. Dr. Lightfoot offers a conjecture, that she was to conceive of our Saviour there at Hebron; and perhaps had so much intimated to her by the angel, or some other way; and therefore she made such haste thither. He thinks it probable that Shiloh, of the tribe of Judah, and the seed of David, should be conceived in a city of Judah and of David, as he was to be born in Bethlehem, another city which belonged to them both. In Hebron, the promise was given of Isaac, circumcision was instituted. Here, saith he, Abraham had his first land, and David his first crown. Here lay interred the three couple, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah; and, as antiquity has held, Adam and Eve. He therefore thinks it suits singularly with the harmony and consent which God useth in his works, that the promise should begin to take place by the conception of the Messiah even among those patriarchs to whom it was given. I see no improbability in the conjecture, but add this for the support of it, that Elisabeth said, ver. 45, "there shall be a performance;" as if it were not performed yet, but was to be performed there.

2. It is generally supposed that she went thither for the confirming of her faith, by the sign which the angel had given her, her cousin's being with child, and to rejoice with her sister favourite. And besides, she went thither perhaps that she might be more retired from company, or else might have more agreeable company than she could have in Nazareth. We may suppose she did not acquaint any of her neighbours at Nazareth with the message she had received from heaven, yet longed to talk over a thing she had a thousand times thought over, and knew no person in the world with whom she could freely converse concerning it but her cousin Elisabeth, and therefore she hastened to her. Note, It is very beneficial and comfortable for those that have a good work of grace begun in their souls, and Christ in the forming there, to consult those who are in the same case, that they may communicate experiences one to another; and they will find that, as in water face answers to face, so doth the heart of man to man, of Christian to Christian.

Secondly, *The meeting between Mary and Elisabeth.* Mary entered into the house of Zacharias, but he being dumb and deaf, it is likely he kept his chamber, and saw no company, and therefore she saluted Elisabeth, ver. 40; told her she was come to make her a visit, to know her state, and rejoice with her in her joy. Now at their first coming together, for the confirmation of the faith of both of them, there was something very extraordinary. Mary knew that Elisabeth was with child; but it doth not appear that Elisabeth had been told any thing of her cousin Mary's being designed for the mother of the Messiah; and therefore what knowledge she appears to have had of it, must come by a revelation, which would be a great encouragement to Mary.

1. "The babe leaped in her womb." It is very probable she had been several weeks quick, for she was six months gone, and that she had often felt the child stir; but this was a more than ordinary motion of the child, and which alarmed her to expect something very extraordinary, *anticipation*. It is the same word that is used by the Seventy, *Gen. xxv. 22*, for the struggling of Jacob and Esau in Rebecca's womb, and the mountains skipping, *Ps. cxiv. 4*. The babe leaped, as it were, to give a signal to his mother that he was now at hand whose forerunner he was to be; about six months in ministry, as he was in being; or, it was the effect of some strong impression made upon the mother. Now began to be fulfilled what the angel said to his father, ver. 15, that he should be "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb;" and perhaps he himself had some reference to this when he said, *Jno. iii. 29*, "the friend of the bridegroom rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice," heard, though not by him, yet by his mother.

2. "Elisabeth was herself filled with the Holy Ghost," or a spirit of prophecy; by which, as well as by the particular suggestions of the Holy Ghost she was filled with, she was given to understand that the Messiah was at hand, in whom prophecy should revive, and by whom the Holy Ghost should be more plentifully poured out than ever, according to the expectations of those who "waited for the consolation of Israel." The uncommon motion of the babe in her womb was a token of the extraordinary emotion of her spirit, under a Divine impulse. Note, Those whom Christ graciously visits may know it by their being "filled with the Holy Ghost;" for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his."

Thirdly, *The welcome which Elisabeth, by the spirit of prophecy, gave to Mary, the mother of our Lord;* not as to a common friend making a common visit, but as to one of whom the Messiah was to be born.

1. She congratulates her honour; and though perhaps she knew not of it till just now, she acknowledgeth it with the greatest assurance and satisfaction. "She spoke with a loud voice," which doth not at all intimate, as some think, that there was a floor or a wall between them, but that she was in a transport or exultation of joy, and said what she cared not who knew. And this she said, "Blessed art thou among women," the same word that the angel had said, ver. 28; for thus this will of God, concerning honouring the Son, should be done on earth as it is done in heaven. But Elisabeth adds a reason, therefore "blessed art thou," because "blessed is the fruit of thy womb;" thence it was that she derived this exalting dignity. Elisabeth was the wife of a priest, and in years, yet she grudgeth not that her kinswoman, who was many years younger than she, and every way her inferior, should have the honour of conceiving in her virginity, and being the mother of the Messiah; whereas the honour put upon her was much less; but rejoiceth in it, and is well pleased, as her son was afterwards, that she that cometh after her is preferred before her, *Jno. i. 27*. Note, While we cannot but own that we are more favoured of God than we deserve, let us by no means envy that others are more highly favoured than we are.

2. She acknowledgeth her condescension in making her this visit, ver. 43: "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Observe, 1st. She calls the virgin Mary the mother of her Lord, for David in spirit called the Messiah Lord, his Lord, for she knew he was to be Lord of all. 2nd. She not only bids her welcome to her house, though perhaps she came but in mean circumstances, but reckons this visit a great favour, which she thought herself unworthy of. "Whence is this to me?" It is in reality, and not in compliment, that she saith this is a greater favour than she could have expected. Note, Those that are filled with the Holy Ghost have low thoughts of their own merits, and high thoughts of God's favours. Her son, the Baptist, spoke to the same purpose with this when he said, "Comest thou to me?" *Mat. iii. 14*.

3. She acquaints her with the concurrence of the babe in her womb in this welcome to her, ver. 44. "Thou certainly bringest some extraordinary tidings, some extraordinary blessing with thee, for as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, not only my heart leaped for joy, though I knew

not immediately why or wherefore, but the babe in my womb, who was not capable of knowing it, did so too." He leaped, as it were, for joy that the Messiah, whose harbinger he was to be, would himself come so soon after him. This would serve very much to strengthen the faith of the virgin, that there were such assurances as these given to others; and it would be in part the accomplishment of what had been so often foretold, that there should be a universal joy before the Lord when he cometh, *Ps. cxviii. 8, 9*.

4. She commends her faith, and encourageth it, ver. 45; "blessed is she that believed;" believing souls are blessed souls, and will be found so at last; this blessedness cometh through faith, even the blessedness of being related to Christ, and having him formed in the soul. They are blessed who believe the Word of God, for that word will not fail them; "there shall," without doubt, "be a performance of those things which are told her from the Lord." Note, The inviolable certainty of the promise is the undoubted felicity of those that build upon it, and expect their all from it. The faithfulness of God is the blessedness of the faith of the saints. Those that have experienced the performance of God's promises themselves, should encourage others to hope that he will be as good as his word to them also; "I will tell you what God has done for my soul."

Fourthly, *Mary's song of praise* upon this occasion. Elisabeth's prophecy was an echo to the virgin Mary's salutation, and this song is yet a stronger echo to that prophecy, and shews her to be no less filled with the Holy Ghost than Elisabeth was. We may suppose the blessed virgin to come in very much fatigued with her journey; yet she forgets that, and is inspired with new life and vigour and joy, upon the confirmation she here meets with of her faith; and since, by this sudden inspiration and transport, she finds that this was designed to be her errand hither, as weary as she is, like Abraham's servant, she would neither eat nor drink till she had told her errand.

1. Here are the expressions of joy and praise, and God alone the object of the praise and centre of the joy. Some compare this song with that which her namesake, Miriam, the sister of Moses, sung upon the triumphant departure of Israel out of Egypt, and their triumphant passage through the Red Sea; others think it better compared with the song of Hannah, upon the birth of Samuel, which, like this, passeth from a family mercy to a public and general one. This begins like that, "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord," *1 Sam. ii. 1*. Observe how Mary here speaks of God:

1st. With great reverence of him as the Lord: "My soul doth magnify the Lord;" I never saw him so great as now I find him so good. Note, Those, and those only, are advanced in mercy, who are thereby brought to think more highly and honourably of God; whereas there are those whose prosperity and preferment makes them say, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?" The more honour God has any way put upon us, the more honour we must study to give to him; and then only are we accepted in magnifying the Lord, when our souls magnify him, and all that is within us. Praising work must be soul work.

2nd. With great complacency in him as her Saviour: "My spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour." This seems to have reference to the Messiah, whom she was to be the mother of; she calls him God her Saviour, for the angel had told her that he should be "the Son of the Highest," and that his name should be Jesus, a Saviour; this she fastened upon, with application to herself; he is "God my Saviour." Even the mother of our Lord had need of an interest in him as her Saviour, and would have been undone without it; and she glories more in that happiness, which she had in common with all believers, than in being his mother, which was an honour peculiar to herself; which agrees with the preference Christ gave to obedient believers above his mother and brethren; see *Mat. xii. 50*; *ch. xi. 27, 28*. Note, Those that have Christ for their God and Saviour have a great deal of reason to rejoice, to rejoice in spirit, that is rejoicing, as Christ did, *ch. x. 21*, with spiritual joy.

2. Here are just causes assigned for this joy and praise:

1st. Upon her own account, ver. 48, 49. First. Her spirit rejoiceth in the Lord, because of the kind things he had done for her; his condescension and compassion to her; "he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden" that is, he has looked upon her with pity, for so the word is commonly used. He has chosen me to this honour, notwithstanding my great meanness, poverty, and obscurity; nay, the expression seems to intimate, not only (to allude to that of Gideon, *Jud. vi. 12*) that her family was poor in Judah, but that she was the least in her father's house; as if she were under some particular contempt and disgrace among her relations, was unjustly neglected, and the out-cast of the family; and God put this honour upon her to balance abundantly that contempt. 1. The rather suggest this, for we find something toward such honour as this put upon others on the like consideration. Because God saw that Leah was hated he opened her womb, *Gen. xxix. 31*; because Hannah was provoked and made to fret, and insulted over by Peninnah, therefore God gave her a son, *1 Sam. i. 19*. Whom men wrongfully depress and despise God sometimes, in compassion towards them, especially if they have borne it patiently, doth prefer and advance: see *Jud. xi. 7*. So in Mary's case. And if God regard her low estate, he not only thereby gives a specimen of his favour to the whole race of mankind, whom he remembers in their low estate, as the psalmist speaks, *Ps. cxxvi. 23*, but secures a lasting honour to her, for such the honour is that God bestows, honour that fades not away; "from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed," that is, shall think me a happy woman, and highly advanced. All that embrace Christ and his Gospel will say, "Blessed was the womb that bore him, and the paps which he sucked," *ch. xi. 27*. Elisabeth had once and again called her blessed; but that is not all, saith she; all generations, of Gentiles as well as Jews, shall call me so. Secondly. Her soul magnifies the Lord because of the wonderful things he has done for her, ver. 49: "He that is mighty has done to me great things." A great thing indeed that a virgin should conceive; a great thing indeed that Messiah, who had been so long ago promised to the church, and so long expected by the church, should now at length be born. It is "the power of the Highest" that appears in this. She adds, "and holy is his name;" for so Hannah saith in her song, "There is none holy as the Lord," which she explains in the next words, "for there is none beside thee," *1 Sam. ii. 2*. God is a being by himself, and he manifests himself to be so, especially in the work of our redemption: "He that is mighty," even he whose name is holy, "has done to me great things." Glorious things may be expected from him that is both mighty and holy; who can do every thing, and will do every thing well and for the best.

2nd. Upon the account of others. The virgin Mary, as the mother of the Messiah, is become a kind of public person, wears a public character, and is therefore presently endued with another spirit, a more public spirit than before she had; and therefore looks abroad, looks about her, looks before her, and takes notice of God's various dealings with the children of men, ver. 50, &c.; as Hannah, *1 Sam. ii. 3*; and in this she has especially an eye to the coming of the Redeemer, and God's manifesting himself therein.

First. It is a certain truth that God has mercy in store, mercy in reserve, for all that have a reverence for his majesty, and a due regard to his sovereignty and authority; but never did this appear so as in sending his Son

is that there are seven archangels, whose names are variously enumerated.

i. 23. "The days of his ministration" are the week during which his attendance at the Temple was required.

i. 26. "The sixth month" is not the sixth month of the Jewish year, but the sixth month of the series mentioned in verse 24. Had it been the sixth month of the year, the question respecting the month in which Jesus was born would have been decided for ever.

i. 36. The word rendered "cousin" here signifies "kinswoman," and should be so rendered, in accordance with the modern use of the words.

i. 39. By "a city of Judah" some have thought a town called Juttah (*Josh. xxi. 16*) is meant; but the common explanation is preferable.

i. 48. The phrase "all generations shall call me blessed" has been much perverted, and is the basis of the expression, "the blessed

into the world to save us, ver. 50. "His mercy is on them that fear him," it has always been so, he has ever looked upon them with an eye of peculiar favour who have looked up to him with an eye of filial fear. But he hath manifested this mercy so as never before, in an everlasting salvation for them that fear him; and this "from generation to generation," for there are gospel privileges transmitted by entail, and intended for perpetuity. Those that fear God as their Creator and Judge, are encouraged to hope for mercy in him, through their Mediator and Advocate; and in him mercy is settled upon all that fear God—pardoning mercy, healing mercy, accepting mercy, crowning mercy, "from generation to generation"—while the world stands. In Christ he keepeth mercy for thousands.

Secondly. It has been a common observation, that God in his providence doth put contempt upon the haughty, and honour upon the humble; and this he has done remarkably in the whole economy of the work of man's redemption. As God had, with his mercy to her, shewn himself mighty also, ver. 43, 49, so he had, with his mercy on them that fear him, shewn strength likewise with his arm.

1st. In the course of his providence it is his usual method to cross the expectations of men, and proceed quite otherwise than they promise themselves. Proud men expect to carry all before them, to have their way, and have their will; but he scatters them in the imagination of their hearts, breaks their measures, blasts their projects, nay, and brings them low, and brings them down, by those very counsels with which they thought to advance and establish themselves. The mighty think to secure themselves by might in their seats, but he puts them down, and overturns their seats; while, on the other hand, those of low degree, who despaired of ever advancing themselves, and thought of no other but of being ever low, are wonderfully exalted. And this observation concerning honour holds likewise concerning riches; many that were so poor that they had not bread for themselves and their families, by some surprising turn of providence in favour of them, come to be filled with good things; while, on the other hand, those that were rich, and thought no other but that to-morrow should be as this day, that their mountain stood strong, and should never be moved, are strangely impoverished and sent away empty. Now this is the same observation that Hannah had made, and enlarged upon in her song, with application to the case of herself and her adversary, *1 Sam. ii. 4-7*, which very much illustrates this here; and compare also *Ps. ciii. 33-41*, *cxlii. 7-9*, and *Ecc. xi. 11*. God takes a pleasure in disappointing their expectations that promise themselves great things in the world, and in outdoing the expectations of those that promise themselves but a little. As a righteous God, it is his glory to abase those that exalt themselves, and strike terror on the secure; and, as a good God, it is his glory to exalt those that humble themselves, and to speak comfort to those that fear before him.

2nd. This doth especially appear in the methods of gospel grace. First. In the spiritual honours it dispenseth. When the proud Pharisees were rejected, and the publicans and sinners went into the kingdom of heaven before them,—when the Jews, that followed after the law of righteousness did not attain it, and the Gentiles, that never thought of it, attained to righteousness, *Rom. ix. 30, 31*,—when God chose not the wise men after the flesh, not the mighty or the noble, to preach the Gospel and plant Christianity in the world, but the foolish and weak things of the world, and things that were despised, *1 Cor. i. 26, 27*,—then he scattered the proud and put down the mighty, but exalted them of low degree. When the tyranny of the chief priests and elders was brought down, who had long lorded it over God's heritage, and hoped always to do so, and Christ's disciples, a company of poor despised fishermen, by the power they were clothed with, were made to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel,—when the power of the four monarchies was broken, and the kingdom of the Messiah, that stone cut out of the mountain without hands, is made to fill the earth,—then are the proud scattered, and those of low degree exalted. Secondly. In the spiritual riches it dispenseth, ver. 53. 1. Those that see their need of Christ, and are importunately desirous of righteousness and life in him, he fills those with good things, with the best things; he gives liberally to them, and they are abundantly satisfied with the blessings he gives. They that are weary and heavy laden shall find rest with Christ, and those that thirst are called to him, and drink; for they only know how to value his gifts: "to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet;" manna is angels' food, and to the thirsty fair water is honey out of the rock. 2. Those who are rich, who are not hungry, who, like Laodicea, think they have need of nothing, are full of themselves and their own righteousness, and think they have a sufficiency in themselves; those he sends away from his door; they are not welcome to him; he sends them empty away; they come full of self, and are sent away empty of Christ. He sends them to the gods whom they served, to their own righteousness and strength, which they trusted to.

Thirdly. It was always expected that the Messiah should be, in a special manner, the strength and glory of his people Israel, and so he is in a peculiar manner, ver. 54. "He hath helped his servant Israel," *Avre'el-Nisero*. He hath taken them by the hand, and helped them up that were fallen, and could not help themselves. Those that were sunk under the burthens of a broken covenant of innocence are helped up by the blessings of a renewed covenant of grace. The sending of the Messiah, on whom help was laid for poor sinners, was the greatest kindness that could be done, the greatest help that could be provided, for his people Israel; and that which magnifies it is, *1st.* That it is "in remembrance of his mercy;" the mercifulness of his nature, the mercy he has in store for his servant Israel. While this blessing was deferred, his people, who waited for it, were often ready to ask, "Has God forgotten to be gracious?" But now he made it appear that he had not forgotten, but remembered his mercy. He remembered his former mercy, and repeated that to them in spiritual blessings which he had done formerly to them in temporal favours. "He remembered the days of old; where is he that brought them out of the sea?" out of Egypt? *Isa. lxi. 11*; and therefore he will do the like again, which that was a type of. *2nd.* That it is in performance of his promise; it is a mercy not only designed but declared, ver. 55; it was what he spake to our fathers, that the seed of the woman should break the head of the serpent; that God should dwell in the tents of Shem; and particularly to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed, with the best of blessings, with the blessings that are for ever; and to the seed that shall be for ever, that is, his spiritual seed, for his carnal seed were cut off a little after this. Note, What God hath spoken he will perform; what he hath spoken to the fathers will be performed to their seed, to their seed's seed, in blessings that shall last for ever.

Lastly. *Mary's return to Nazareth*, ver. 56, after she had continued with Elisabeth about three months; so long as to be fully satisfied concerning herself, that she was with child, and to be confirmed therein by her cousin Elisabeth. Some think, though her return is here mentioned before Elisabeth's being delivered, because the evangelist would finish this passage concerning Mary before he proceeded with the story of Elisabeth, yet that Mary stayed until her cousin was, as we say, down and up again; that she might attend on

her, and be with her in her lying-in, and have her own faith confirmed by the full accomplishment of the promise of God concerning Elisabeth. But most bind themselves to the order of the story as it lies, and think she returned again when Elisabeth was near her time; because she still affected retirement, and therefore would not be there when the birth of this child of promise would draw a great deal of company to the house. Those in whose hearts Christ is formed take more delight than they used to do in sitting alone and keeping silence.

57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. 58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. 59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. 60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. 61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. 62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. 63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John.



WRITING TABLETS.—ANCIENT GREEK.

And they marvelled all. 64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. 65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judæa. 66 And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

In these verses we have, First. *The birth of John Baptist*, ver. 57. Though he was conceived in the womb by miracle, he continued in the womb according to the ordinary course of nature. So did our Saviour. "Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered, and then "she brought forth a son." Promised mercies are to be expected when the full time for them is come, and not before.

Secondly. *The great joy* that was among all the relations of the family upon this extraordinary occasion, ver. 58. "Her neighbours and her cousins heard of it," for it would be in every body's mouth, as next to miraculous. Dr. Lightfoot observes, that Hebron was inhabited by priests of the family of Aaron, and those were the cousins here spoken of; but the fields and villages about, by the children of Judah, and those were the neighbours. Now these here discovered, *1st.* A pious regard to God; they acknowledged that the Lord had magnified his mercy to her, so the word is. It was a mercy to have her reproach taken away, a mercy to have her family built up, and the more, being a family of priests, devoted to God, and employed for him. Many things concurred to make the mercy great; that she had been long barren, was now old, but especially that the child should be great in the sight of the Lord. *2nd.* A friendly regard to Elisabeth; when she rejoiced, they rejoiced with her. We ought to take pleasure in the prosperity of our neighbours and friends, and to be thankful to God for their comforts as for our own.

Thirdly. *The dispute* that was among them concerning the naming him;

Virgin Mary." The Greek simply means "all generations will account me happy," and not that the epithet "blessed" would be specially applied to her.

i. 50. The sense here is that the mercy of the Lord is extended to them that fear him, and that it reaches from generation to generation, or never ceases.

i. 58. Here, as in verse 36, the word "cousins" is not used in what is now its common sense, but is equivalent to "kindred."

i. 63. "A writing-table" was probably a tablet of wood covered with a coat of wax, upon which anything was written with a metal point or style. Such writing could easily be executed, and as easily cancelled, and therefore the tablets were very generally in use.

i. 65. There is a different spelling here (Judæa) from that in verse 39 (Juda), not only in our version, but in the ordinary Greek text. This difference is very ancient, being found in the Sinaitic, Vatican, and other early MSS., as well as in the Latin Vulgate.

ver. 59, "on the eighth day," as God had appointed, "they came together to circumcise the child;" and it was here in Hebron that circumcision was first instituted; and Isaac, who, like John Baptist, was born by promise, was one of the first that was submitted to it, at least the chief eyed in the institution of it. They that rejoiced in the birth of the child came together to the circumcising of him. Note, The greatest comfort we can take in our children is in giving them up to God, and recognising their covenant relation to him. The baptism of our children should be more our joy than their birth. Now it was the custom, when they circumcised their children, to name them; because when Abram was circumcised, God gave him a new name, and called him Abraham; and it is not unfit that they should be left nameless until they are by name given up to God. Now,

1. Some proposed that he should be called by his father's name, Zacharias; of which we have not any instance in Scripture that the child should bear the father's name; but perhaps it was of late come into use among the Jews, as it is with us; and they intended hereby to do honour to the father, who was not likely to have another child.

2. The mother opposed it, and would have him called John; having learned, either by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as is most probable, or by information in writing from her husband, that God appointed that should be his name; ver. 60, "he shall be called Johanan," "gracious;" because he shall introduce the Gospel of Christ, wherein God's grace shines more bright than ever.

3. The relations objected against that; ver. 61, "There is none of thy kindred," none of the relations of thy family that is "called by that name;" and therefore, if he may not have his father's name, yet let him have the name of some of his kindred, that will take it as a piece of respect to have such a child of wonders as this named from them. Note, As those that have friends must shew themselves friendly, so those that have relations must be obliging to them in all the usual regards that are paid to kindred.

4. They appealed to the father, and would try if they could possibly get to know his mind, for it was his office to name the child; ver. 62, "they made signs" to him, by which it appears he was deaf as well as dumb: nay, it should seem, mindless of anything else, one would think, they should at first have desired him to write down his child's name, if he had ever yet communicated any thing by writing since he was struck. However, they would carry the matter as far as they could, and gave him to understand what the dispute was, which he only could determine; whereupon he made signs to them to give him a table-book, such as they then used, and with the pencil he wrote these words, "His name is John," ver. 63. Note, It shall be so, or, I would have it so, but 'tis so; the matter is determined already; the angel had given him that name. Observe, When Zacharias could not speak he wrote. When ministers have their mouths stopped, that they cannot preach, yet they may be doing good, as long as they have not their hands tied, that they cannot write. Many of the martyrs in prison wrote letters to their friends, which were of great use; blessed Paul himself did so. Zacharias' pitching upon the same name that Elisabeth had chosen was a great surprise to the company, "they marvelled all;" for they knew not, that though by reason of his deafness and dumbness, they could not converse together, yet they were both guided by one and the same Spirit; or, perhaps they marvelled that he wrote so distinctly and intelligently, which the stroke he was under being somewhat like that of a palsy he had not done before.

5. He thereupon recovered the use of his speech; ver. 64, "his mouth was opened immediately." The time prefixed for his being silence was "till the day that these things shall be fulfilled," ver. 20; not all the things going before concerning John's ministry, but those which relate to his birth and name, ver. 13; and that time was now expired, whereupon the restraint was taken off, and God gave him the opening of the mouth again, as he did to Ezekiel, *Eze. iii. 27*. Dr. Lightfoot compares this case of Zacharias with that of Moses, *Ex. iv. 24, 26*. Moses, for distrust, is in danger of his life, as Zacharias, for the same fault, is struck dumb; but upon the circumcising of his child, and recovery of his faith, there, as here, the danger is removed. Infidelity closed his mouth, and now believing opens it again; he believes, therefore he speaks. David lay under guilt from the conception of his child till a few days after its birth, then the Lord takes away his sin; upon his repentance, he shall not die; so here, he shall be no longer dumb; "his mouth was opened, and he spake, and praised God." Note, When God opens our lips, our mouths must shew forth his praise. As good be without speech as not use it in praising God; for then our tongue is most our glory when it is employed for God's glory.

6. These things were told all the country over, to the great amazement of all that heard them, ver. 65, 66. The sentiments of the people are not to be slighted, but taken notice of. We are here told, 1st. That these sayings were discoursed of, and were the common talk all about the hill country of Judaea, and it was pity but a narrative of them had been drawn up and published in the world immediately. 2nd. That most people who heard of these things were put into a consternation by them; "fear came on all them that dwelt round about" there. If we have not a good hope, as we ought to have, built upon the Gospel, we may expect that the tidings of it will fill us with fear. They believed and trembled, whereas they should have believed and triumphed. 3rd. It raised the expectations of people concerning this child, and obliged them to have their eye upon him, to see what he would come to. They laid up these presages in their hearts, treasured them up in mind and memory, as foreseeing they should hereafter have occasion to recollect them. Note, What we hear that may be of use to us, we should treasure up, that we may be able to bring forth for the benefit of others things new and old, and when things come to perfection, may be able to look back upon the presages of it, and to say, "It was what we might expect." They said within themselves, and said among themselves, "What manner of child shall this be?" What will be the fruit, when these are the buds; or rather, when the root is out of such a dry ground? Note, When children are born into the world, it is very uncertain what they will prove; yet sometimes there have been early indications of something great, as in the birth of Moses, Samson, Samuel, and here, of John. And we have reason to think that there were some of those living at the time when John began his public ministry who could and did remember these things, and relate them to others, which contributed as much as any thing to the great flocking there was after him.

Lastly, It is said, "the hand of the Lord was with him;" that is, he was taken under the special protection of the Almighty from his birth, as one designed for something great and considerable, and there were many instances of it. It appeared, likewise, that the Spirit was at work upon his soul very early. As soon as he began to speak, or go, you might perceive something in him very extraordinary. Note, God has ways of operating upon children in their infancy which we cannot account for. God never made a soul but he knew how to sanctify it.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, 68 Blessed be

the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: 71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; 72 To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; 73 The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, 74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. 76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; 77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, 78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, 79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. 80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

We have here the song wherewith Zacharias praised God when his mouth was opened; in it he is said to prophesy, ver. 67; and so he did, in the strictest sense of prophesying, for he foretold things to come concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, to which all the prophets are witness. Observe,

I. *How he was qualified for this.* He "was filled with the Holy Ghost," was endued with more than ordinary measures and degrees of it, for this purpose. He was Divinely inspired. God not only forgave him his unbelief and distrust, which was signified by discharging of him from the punishment of it, but, as a specimen of the abounding of grace towards believers, he filled him with the Holy Ghost, and put this honour upon him, to employ him for his honour.

II. *What the matter of his song was.* Here is nothing said of the private concerns of his own family, the rolling away the reproach from it, and putting of a reputation upon it by the birth of this child, though no doubt he found a time to give thanks to God for this with his family; but, in this song, he is wholly taken up with the kingdom of the Messiah, and the public blessings to be introduced by it. He could have little pleasure in this fruitfulness of his vine, and the hopefulness of his olive plant, if herein he had not foreseen the good of Jerusalem, peace upon Israel, and blessings on both, out of Zion, *Ps. cxxviii. 3, 5, 6*. The Old Testament prophecies are expressed many times in praises and new songs; so is this beginning of New Testament prophecy, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel." "The God of the whole earth shall he be called;" yet Zacharias, speaking of the work of redemption, called him "Lord God of Israel," because to Israel the prophecies, promises, and types of the redemption had hitherto been given, and to them the first profusers and proposals of it were now to be made. Israel, as a chosen people, was a type of the elect of God out of all nations, whom God had a particular eye to in sending the Saviour; and therefore he is therein called "the Lord God of Israel." Now Zacharias here bleaseth God.

First, For the work of salvation that was to be wrought out by the Messiah himself, ver. 68—75. This is it that fills him when he is "filled with the Holy Ghost," and it is that which all that have the Spirit of Christ are full of.

1. In sending the Messiah, God has made a gracious visit to his people, whom for many ages he had seemed to neglect, and to be estranged from; he hath visited them as a friend, to take cognizance of their case. God is said to have visited his people in bondage when he delivered them, *Ex. iii. 16*; iv. 31; to have visited his people in famine when he gave them bread, *Ruth i. 6*. He had often sent to them by his prophets, and had still kept up a correspondence with them, but now he himself made them a visit.

2. He has wrought out a redemption for them; he hath "redeemed his people." This was the errand on which Christ came into the world, to redeem those that were sold for sin, and sold under sin; even God's own people, his Israel, his Son, his firstborn, his freeborn, need to be redeemed, and are undone if they be not. Christ redeems them by price out of the hands of God's justice, and redeems them by power out of the hands of Satan's tyranny, as Israel out of Egypt.

3. He has fulfilled the covenant of royalty made with the most famous Old Testament prince, that was David. Glorious things had been said of his family, that on him, as a mighty one, help should be laid, that his horn should be exalted, and his seed perpetuated, *Ps. lxxxix. 19, 20, 24, 29*. But that family had been long in a manner cast off and abhorred, *Ps. lxxxix. 38*. Now here it is gloried in, that, according to the promise, the horn of David should again be made to bud, *Ps. cxxxii. 17*; for he "hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David," ver. 69; there where it was promised, and expected to arise. David is called God's servant, not only as a good man, but as a king that ruled for God. And he was an instrument of the salvation of Israel, by being employed in the government of Israel; so Christ is "the author of eternal redemption to those" only "that obey him." There is in Christ, and in him only, salvation for us, and it is a horn of salvation; for, 1st. It is an honourable salvation, it is raised up above all other salvations, none of which are to be compared with it. In it the glory both of the Redeemer and of the

See verse 39 with respect to the expression, "the hill country;" it is generally and rightly understood here and in verse 39 of the hill district south of Jerusalem.

i. 80. The "deserts" must here mean the wilderness region of Judaea, which bordered on the hill country referred to in the previous note.

ii. 1—3. In these verses the word for "taxed" means "enrolled" or registered, and correctly represents a census. The time intended

in verse 1 must be not long before that of verse 3. There has, however, been much dispute both as to the historical accuracy of the passage and as to its real meaning. The Emperor Augustus probably issued a number of decrees, of which we have no record, and the one mentioned by the evangelist is otherwise almost unknown. The phrase "all the world" may mean the whole Roman empire, or it may mean no more than our "everybody," i.e., everybody in the Roman province of Palestine. Verse 2 is variously rendered and ex.

redeemed are advanced, and their horn exalted with honour. 2nd. It is a plentiful salvation; it is a *cornucopia*,—a horn of plenty; a salvation in which we are blessed with spiritual blessings in heavenly things abundantly. 3rd. It is a powerful salvation; the strength of the beast is in his horn; he has raised up such a salvation as shall pull down our spiritual enemies, and protect us from them. In the chariots of this salvation the Redeemer shall go forth, and go on conquering, and to conquer.

4. He hath fulfilled all the precious promises made to the church by the most famous Old Testament prophets, ver. 70, "as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets." His doctrine of salvation by the Messiah is confirmed by an appeal to the prophets, and the greatness and importance of that salvation thereby evidenced and magnified; it is the same they spoke of, which therefore ought to be expected and welcomed; it is what they inquired and searched diligently after, 1 *Pet. i. 10, 11*, and therefore ought not to be slighted, or thought meanly of. God is now doing that which he has long ago spoken of, and therefore "be silent. O all flesh, before him," and attend to him. See 1st. How sacred the prophecies of this salvation were. The prophets who delivered them were "holy prophets," who durst not deceive, and who aimed at promoting holiness among men, and it was the holy God himself that spake by them. 2nd. How ancient they were; ever "since the world began;" God having promised, when the world began, that "the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head;" that promise was echoed to, when Adam called his wife's name Eve, "life," for the sake of that seed of hers; when Eve called her first son Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man from the Lord;" and another son, Seth, "settled;" when Noah was called "Rest," and foretold that God should dwell in the tents of Shem. And it was not long after the new world began in Noah, that the promise was made to Abraham, that in his seed the nations of the earth should be blessed. 3rd. What a wonderful harmony and concert there was among them; God spake the same thing by them all, and therefore it is said to be *ὁμοῦ* *στοματός*, not "by the mouths," but "by the mouth" of the prophets, for they all spake of Christ as it were with one mouth.

Now what is this salvation which was prophesied of?

First. It is a rescue from the malice of our enemies. It is *συντριβὴν ἐξ ἐχθρῶν ἡμῶν*, "a salvation out of our enemies," from among them, and "out of the power of them that hate us," ver. 71. It is a salvation from sin, and the dominion of Satan over us, both by corruptions within, and temptations without. The carnal Jews expected to be delivered from under the Roman yoke, but intimation was betimes given that it should be a redemption of another nature: "He shall save his people from their sins," that they may not have dominion over them, *Mat. i. 21*.

Secondly. It is a restoration to the favour of God; it is "to perform the mercy promised to our forefathers," ver. 72. The Redeemer shall not only break the serpent's head, that was the author of our ruin, but he shall reinstate us in the mercy of God, and re-establish us in his covenant; he shall bring us, as it were, into a paradise again, which was signified by the promises made to the patriarchs, and the holy covenant made with them, "the oath which he sware to our father Abraham," ver. 73. Observe, 1st. Then which was promised to the fathers, and is performed to us, is mercy, pure mercy; nothing in it is owing to our merit—we deserve wrath and the curse—but all to the mercy of God, which designed us grace and life; *ex mero motu*,—"of his own good pleasure;" he loved us, because he would love us. 2nd. God herein had an eye to his covenant, his holy covenant, that covenant with Abraham, "I will be a God to thee and thy seed." This his seed had really forfeited by their transgressions; this he seemed to have forgotten in the calamities brought upon them; but he will now remember it, will make it appear that he remembers it, for upon that is grounded all his returns of mercy, *Lev. xxvi. 42*, "then will I remember my covenant."

Thirdly. It is a qualification for, and an encouragement to, the service of God. This was "the oath he sware to our father Abraham," that he would give us power and grace to serve him, in an acceptable manner to him, and a comfortable manner to ourselves, ver. 74, 75. Here seems to be an allusion to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, which God tells Moses was in pursuance of the covenant he made with Abraham, *Ex. iii. 6-8*; and that this was the design of his bringing them out of Egypt, "that they might serve God upon this mountain," *Ex. iii. 12*. Note, The great design of gospel grace is, not to discharge us from, but to engage us to, and encourage us in, the service of God. Under this notion Christianity was always to be looked upon as intended to make us truly religious, to admit us into the service of God, to bind us to it, and to quicken us in it. We are therefore delivered from the iron yoke of sin, that our necks may be put under the sweet and easy yoke of the Lord Jesus: the very bonds which he has loosed do bind us faster unto him, *Ps. cxvi. 16*; see *Rom. vi. 18, 19*. We are hereby enabled, 1st. To serve God "without fear," *ἄφρονος*; we are therefore put into a state of holy safety, that we might serve God with a holy security and serenity of mind, as those that are quiet from the fears of evil. God must be served with a filial fear, a reverent, obedient fear, an awakening, quickening fear; but not with a slavish fear, like that of the slothful servant, who represented him to himself as a hard master, and unreasonable; not with that fear that has torment and amazement in it; not with the fear of a legal spirit, a spirit of bondage, but with the boldness of an evangelical spirit, a spirit of adoption. 2nd. To serve him in holiness and righteousness, which includes the whole duty of man towards God and our neighbour. It is both the intention and the direct tendency of the Gospel to renew upon us that image of God in which man was at first made, which consisted "in righteousness and true holiness," *Eph. iv. 24*. Christ redeemed us that we might serve God, not in the legal services of sacrifices and offerings, but in the spiritual services of holiness and righteousness, *Ps. i. 14*. 3rd. To serve before him in the duties of his immediate worship, wherein we present ourselves before the Lord; to serve him as those that have an eye always upon him, and see his eye always upon us, upon our inward man; that is serving him "before him." 4th. To serve him "all the days of our life." The design of the Gospel is to engage us to constancy and perseverance in the service of God, by shewing us how much depends upon it, that we do not draw back; and by shewing us how Christ loved us to the end, and thereby engaged us to love him to the end.

Secondly. He bleaseth God for the work of preparation for this salvation, which was to be done by John Baptist; ver. 76, "Thou child," though now but a child of eight days old, "shalt be called the prophet of the Highest;" Jesus Christ is the Highest, for he is "God over all, blessed for evermore," *Rom. ix. 5*, equal with the Father; John Baptist was his prophet, as Aaron was Moses' prophet, *Ex. vii. 1*. What he said was as his mouth, what he did was as his harbingers. Prophecy had now long ceased, but in John it revived, (as it had done in Samuel, who was born of an aged mother, as John was,) after a long cessation. John's business was,

1. To prepare people for the salvation, by preaching repentance and reformation as great gospel duties: "Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord," and but a little before him, "to prepare his ways;" to call people to make room for him, and get ready for his entertainment. Let every thing that may obstruct his progress, or embarrass it, or may hinder people from coming to him, be taken away; see *Isa. xl. 3, 4*: Let valleys be filled, and hills be brought low.

2. To give people a general idea of the salvation, that they might know not only what to do, but what to expect; for the doctrine he preached was, that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. There are two things in which you must know this salvation consists:

1st. The forgiveness of what we have done amiss; it is salvation "by the remission of sins," those sins which stand in the way of the salvation, and by which we were all become liable to ruin and condemnation, ver. 77. John Baptist gave people to understand, that though their case was sad by reason of sin, it was not desperate, for pardon might be obtained "through the tender mercy of our God;" "the bowels of mercy," so the word is. There was nothing in us but a piteous case to recommend us to the Divine compassion.

2nd. Direction to do better for the time to come. The gospel salvation not only encourageth us to hope that the works of darkness shall be forgiven us, but sets up a clear and true light, by which we may order our steps aright. In it "the dayspring hath visited us from on high," ver. 78; and this also is owing to "the tender mercy of our God:" Christ is *ἀνατολή*, the morning light, the rising sun, *Mal. iv. 2*. The Gospel brings light with it, *John. iii. 19*; leaves us not to wander in the darkness of pagan ignorance, or in the moonlight of the Old Testament types or figures; but in it the day dawns; in John Baptist it began to break, but increased apace, and shone more and more to the perfect day. We have as much reason to welcome the gospel day, who enjoy it, as those have to welcome the morning who have long waited for it. First. The Gospel is discovering; it shews us that which before we were utterly in the dark about, ver. 79; it is "to give light to them that sit in darkness," "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" the dayspring visited this dark world to lighten the Gentiles, *Acts xxvi. 18*. Secondly. It is reviving; it brings light to them that sit in the shadow of death, as condemned prisoners in the dungeon, to bring them the tidings of a pardon, at least of a reprieve, and opportunity of procuring a pardon; it proclaims "the opening of the prison," *Isa. lxi. 1*; brings the light of life; how pleasant is that light! Thirdly. It is directing; it is "to guide our feet into the way of peace," into that way which will bring us to peace at last. It is not only a light to our eyes, but a light to our feet, *Ps. cxix. 105*; it guides us into the way of making our peace with God, of keeping up a comfortable communion; that way of peace which, as sinners, we have wandered from, and have not known, *Rom. iii. 17*, nor could ever have known of ourselves.

In the last verse we have a short account of the younger years of John Baptist. Though he was the son of a priest, he did not, like Samuel, go up when he was a child to minister before the Lord; for he was to prepare the way for a better priesthood. But we are here told,

1. Of his eminency as to the inward man. "The child grew" in parts, and the capacities of his mind, much more than other children; so that he "waxed strong in spirit" had a strong judgment, and strong resolution. Reason and conscience (both which are the candle of the Lord) were so strong in him that he had the inferior faculties of appetite and passion in complete subjection betimes. By this it appeared he was betimes "filled with the Holy Ghost;" for those that are strong in the Lord are strong in spirit.

2. Of his obscurity as to the outward man: he was "in the deserts." Not that he lived a hermit, cut off from the society of men; no, we have reason to think he went up to Jerusalem at the feasts, and frequented the synagogues on the sabbath day; but his constant residence was in some of those scattered houses that were in the wildernesses of Zuph or Maon, which we read of in the story of David. There he spent most of his time in contemplation and devotion, and had not his education in the schools, or at the feet of the rabbins. Note, There is many a one qualified for great usefulness who yet is buried alive; and many are long so, who are designed, and are thereby in the fitting for so much greater usefulness at last; as John Baptist, who was "in the desert" only "till the day of his shewing to Israel," when he was in the thirtieth year of his age. Note, There is a time fixed for the shewing of those favours to Israel, which are reserved; "the vision" of them "is for an appointed time; and at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie."

CHAPTER II.

In this chapter we have an account of the birth and infancy of our Lord Jesus: having had notice of his conception, and of the birth and infancy of his forerunner, in the former chapter. The First-begotten is here brought into the world; let us go meet him with our hosannas, "Blessed is he that cometh." Here is, I. The place and other circumstances of his birth, which spoke him the true Messiah, and such a one as we needed, but not such a one as the Jews expected, ver. 1-7. II. The notifying of his birth to the shepherds in that neighbourhood by an angel, the song of praise which the angels sung upon that occasion, and the spreading of the report of it by the shepherds, ver. 8-20. III. The circumcision of Christ, and the naming of him, ver. 21. IV. The presenting of him in the temple, ver. 22-24. V. The testimonies of Simeon, and Anna the prophetess, concerning him, ver. 25-39. VI. Christ's growth and pregnancy, ver. 40, 52. VII. His observing the passover at twelve years old, and his disputing with the doctors in the temple, ver. 41-51. And this, with what we have met with, *Mat. i. and ii.*, is all we have concerning our Lord Jesus till he entered upon his public work, in the thirtieth year of his age.



AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great

plained: "This census was first made when Cyrenius was governor;" "This first census was made when Cyrenius was governor;" or "This census was the first made when Cyrenius was governor." The last explanation accords with the ancient Syriac version. The Latin Vulgate has, "This first census was made by Cyrenius, governor of Syria." Modern critics have expended great labour on endeavours to make the text harmonise with the admitted fact that Cyrenius was governor several years after the birth of our Lord, who it is

alleged was born when Sentius Saturninus was governor of Syria. The German critic, Dr. Zumpt, has met the problem in another way, and shown that Cyrenius was twice governor of Syria. This was, then, the first census, during his first term of office. That he held office more than once was conjectured by Baronius, but the evidence was not forthcoming until Zumpt collected it. It renders other explanations unnecessary, but we add one to the foregoing, viz., "This census was made before Cyrenius was governor of Syria."

with child. 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.



BETHLEHEM.—VER. 4.

"The fulness of time" was now come, when God would send "forth his Son, made of a woman, and made under the law;" and it was foretold that he should be born at Bethlehem. Now here we have an account of the time, place, and manner of it.

First. The time when our Lord Jesus was born; and several things may be gathered out of these verses, which intimate to us that it was the proper time.

1. He was born at the time when the fourth monarchy was in its height, just when it was become, more than any of the three before it, a universal monarchy. He was born in the days of Augustus Cæsar, when the Roman empire extended itself farther than ever before or since, including Parthia one way and Britain another way; so that it was then called *terrarum orbis impertum*,—"the empire of the whole earth;" and here that empire is called "all the world," ver. 1; for there was scarce any part of the civilised world but what was dependent on it. Now this was the time when the Messiah was to be born, according to Daniel's prophecy, *Dan. ii. 44*: "In the days of these kings," the kings of the fourth monarchy, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed."

2. He was born when Judæa was become a province of the empire, and tributary to it; as appears evidently by this, that when all the Roman empire was taxed, the Jews were taxed among the rest; Jerusalem was taken by Pompey, the Roman general, about sixty years before this, who granted the government of the church to Hircanus, but not the government of the state; and by degrees it was more and more reduced, till now at length it was quite subdued; for Judæa was ruled by Cyrenius, the Roman governor of Syria, ver. 2: the Roman writers call him Sulpitius Quirinius. Now just at this juncture the Messiah was to be born, for so was dying Jacob's prophecy, "that Shiloh should come when the sceptre was departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet," *Gen. xlix. 10*. This was the first taxing that was made in Judæa, the first badge of their servitude; therefore, now Shiloh must come to set up his kingdom.

3. There is another circumstance as to the time, which is implied in this general enrolment of all the subjects of the empire; which is, that there was now a universal peace in the empire: the temple of Janus was now shut, which it never used to be, if any wars were on foot. And now it was fit for the Prince of peace to be born, in whose days swords should be beaten into ploughshares.

Secondly. **The place where our Lord Jesus was born** is very observable; he was born at Bethlehem; so it was foretold, *Mic. v. 2*; the scribes so understood it, *Mat. ii. 5, 6*; so did the common people, *Jno. vii. 42*. The name of the place was significant; Bethlehem signifies, "the house of bread;" a proper place for him to be born in, who is the bread of life, "the bread that came down from heaven." But that was not all; Bethlehem was the city of David, where he was born, and therefore there he must be born who was the Son of David. Zion was also called the city of David, *2 Sam. v. 7*, yet Christ was not born there; for Bethlehem was that city of David where he was born in meanness, to be a shepherd; and that our Saviour, when he humbled himself, chose for the place of his birth; not Zion, where he ruled in power and prosperity,—that was to be a type of the church of Christ, that mount Zion. Now when the virgin Mary was with child, and near her time, Providence so ordered it, that by order from the emperor all the subjects of the Roman empire were to be taxed; that is, they were to give in their names to the proper officers, and they were to be registered and enrolled according to their families, which is the proper signification of the word here used, and their being taxed was but secondary; it is supposed they made profession of subjection to the Roman empire, either by some set form of words, or at least by payment of some small tribute, a penny suppose, in token of their allegiance, like a man's attuning tenant. Thus are they vassals upon record, and may thank themselves.

Now according to this decree, the Jews, who were now nice in distinguishing their tribes and families, provided that in their enrolments particular care should be had to preserve the memory of them. Thus foolishly are they solicitous to save the shadow when they had lost the substance.

Now that which Augustus designed, was either to gratify his pride, in knowing the numbers of his people, and proclaiming it to the world, or he did it in policy, to strengthen his interest, and make his government appear the more formidable; but Providence had another reach in it. All the world shall be at the trouble of being enrolled, only that Joseph and Mary may; this brought them up from Nazareth in Galilee, to Bethlehem in Judæa, because they were

"of the stock and lineage of David," ver. 4, 5: and perhaps being poor and low, they thought the royalty of their extraction rather a burthen and expense to them than a matter of pride. Because it is difficult to suppose that every Jew (women as well as men) was obliged to repair to the city of which their ancestors were, and there be enrolled, now at a time when they kept not to the bounds of their tribes as formerly. It may be offered as a conjecture, that this great exactness was used only with the family of David, concerning which it is probable the emperor gave particular orders, it having been the royal family; and still talked of as designed to be so, that he might know the number and strength of that. And divers ends of Providence were served by this.

1. Hereby the virgin Mary was brought big with child to Bethlehem, to be delivered there, according to the prediction; whereas she had designed to lie-in at Nazareth. See how man purposeth and God disposeth; and how Providence orders all things for the fulfilling of the Scripture; and makes use of the projects men have for the serving their own purposes, quite beyond their intention, to serve his.

2. Hereby it appeared that Jesus Christ was of the seed of David; for else what brings his mother to Bethlehem now, but because she "was of the stock and lineage of David?" And this was a material thing to be proved, and required such an authentic proof as this. Justin Martyr and Tertullian, two of the most early advocates for the Christian religion, appeal to these rolls or records of the Roman empire, for the proof of Christ's being born of the house of David.

3. Hereby it appeared that he was "made under the law;" for he became a subject of the Roman empire as soon as he was born, "a servant of rulers," *Isa. xlix. 7*. Many suppose, that being born during the time of the taxing, he was enrolled as well as his father and mother, that it might appear how "he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant;" instead of having kings tributaries to him, when he came into the world he was himself a tributary.

Thirdly. **The circumstances of his birth**, which were very mean, and under all possible marks of contempt. He was indeed a firstborn son, but it was poor honour to be the firstborn of such a poor woman as Mary was, who had no inheritance to which he might be entitled as firstborn, but what was in nativity.

1. He was under some abasements in common with other children; he was "wrapped in swaddling clothes," as other children are, when they are new born, as if he could be bound, or needed to be kept straight. He that makes darkness a swaddling band for the sea, was himself wrapped in swaddling bands, *Job xxxviii. 9*. The everlasting Father became a child of time, and men said of him, whose outgoings were of old from everlasting, "We know this man whence he is," *Jno. vii. 27*. The Ancient of Days became an infant of a span long.

2. He was under some abasements peculiar to himself.

1st. He was born at an inn. That son of David that was the glory of his father's house, had no inheritance that he could command, no, not in the city of David; no, nor a friend that would accommodate his mother in distress with lodgings, to be brought to bed in. Christ was born in an inn, to intimate that he came into the world but to sojourn here for a while, as in an inn, and to teach us to do likewise. An inn receives all comers, and so doth Christ. He hangs out the banner of love for his sign, and whoever comes to him, he will win no wise cast out; only unlike other inns, he welcomes those that come "without money and without price," all on free cost.

2nd. He was born in a stable: so some think the word signifies which we translate a manger, a place for cattle to stand to be fed in; because there was "no room in the inn;" and for want of conveniences, nay, for want of necessities, he was laid in the manger, instead of a cradle. And the word which we render swaddling clothes, some derive from a word that signifies to rend or tear, and thence infer, that he was so far from having a good suit of childbed linen, that his very swaddles were ragged and torn. His being born in a stable, and laid in a manger, was an instance, **First**. Of the poverty of his parents; had they been rich, room would have been made for them; but, being poor, they must shift as they could. **Secondly**. Of the corruption and degeneracy of manners in that age; that a woman in reputation for virtue and honour should be used so barbarously. If there had been any common humanity among them they would not have turned a woman in travail into a stable. **Thirdly**. It was an instance of the humiliation of our Lord Jesus. We were become by sin like an outcast infant, helpless and forlorn; and such a one Christ was. Thus he would answer the type of Moses, the great prophet and lawgiver of the Old Testament, who was in his infancy cast out in an ark of bulrushes, as Christ in a manger. Christ would hereby put a contempt upon all worldly glory, and teach us to slight it. Since "his own received him not," let us not think strange if they receive us not.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. 15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem,

which was the view adopted by Schmidius and others after him. Every difficulty is not removed by Zumpt's theory, but it has been very generally received by critics. For "all the world," in verse 1, the Syriac-Peshito has "all the people of his dominion," which is in accordance with ascertained fact.

ii. 4, 5. Hereupon Dean Alford notes the mixture of Jewish and Roman customs. The Roman census was made where people actually lived, and not at the place of their extraction. The decree included

all persons, but among the Jews, "inasmuch as it was made under a Jewish king, it was done after the Jewish manner, in taking this account of each at his own place of extraction." As a married woman, Mary accompanied her husband, but she might also have gone to Bethlehem, because she was of the lineage of David also.

ii. 7. It was an ancient opinion that our Lord was born in a cave, and he may have been, as caves were often used for stables.

ii. 8. This verse renders it highly probable that Jesus was not

and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and



EASTERN INN, OR CARAVANSARY.

the babe lying in a manger. 17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

The meanest circumstances of Christ's humiliation were all along attended with some discoveries of his glory, to balance them, and take off the offence of them; for even when he humbled himself, God did in some measure exalt him, and gave him earnest of his future exaltation. When we saw him wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, we were tempted to say, 'Sure this cannot be the Son of God; but see his birth attended as it is here, with a choir of angels, and we shall say, 'Surely it can be no other but the Son of God, concerning whom it was said, when he was brought into the world, "Let all the angels of God worship him,"' *Heb. i. 6.*

We had in *Matthæw* an account of the notice given of the arrival of this Ambassador, this Prince from heaven, to the wise men, who were Gentiles, by a star; here we are told of the notice given of it to the shepherds, who were Jews, by an angel: to each God chose to speak in the language they were most conversant with.

First. See here how the shepherds were employed; they were "abiding in the fields" adjoining to Bethlehem, and "keeping watch over their flocks by night," *ver. 5.* The angel was not sent to the chief priests or the elders; they were not prepared to receive these tidings; but to a company of poor shepherds, that were, like Jacob, plain men, dwelling in tents; not like Esau, cunning hunters. The patriarchs were shepherds; Moses and David particularly were called from keeping sheep to rule God's people; and by this instance God would shew that he had still a favour for those of that innocent employment. Tidings were brought to Moses of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, when he was keeping sheep; and to these shepherds, who it is probable were devout, pious men, the tidings were brought of a greater salvation. Observe, 1. They were not sleeping in their beds when this news was brought them, (though many had very acceptable intelligence from Heaven in slumbering upon the bed,) but abiding in the fields, and watching. Those that would hear from God, must stir up themselves. They were broad awake, and therefore could not be deceived in what they saw and heard, as those may who are half asleep. 2. They were not now employed in acts of devotion, but in the business of their calling; they were "keeping watch over their flock," to secure them from thieves and beasts of prey, it probably being in the summer time, when they kept their cattle out all night, as we do now, and did not house them. Note, We are not out of the way of Divine visits, when we are sensibly employed in an honest calling, and abide with God in it.

Secondly. How they were surprised with the appearance of an angel to them, *ver. 9:* "Behold an angel of the Lord came upon them," of a sudden, ἐφίπτε, 'stood over them;' most probably in the air over their heads, as coming immediately from heaven. We read it 'the angel,' as if it were the same that appeared once and again in the chapter before, the angel Gabriel, that was caused to fly swiftly, but that is not certain. The angel's coming upon them intimates that they little thought of such a thing, or expected it; for it is in a preventing way that gracious visits are made us from heaven, or ever we are aware. That they might be sure it was an angel from heaven, they saw and heard the glory of the Lord round about them, such as made the night as bright as day; such a glory as used to attend God's appearance; a heavenly glory, or, an exceeding great glory, such as they could not bear the dazzling lustre of. This made them sore afraid, put them into a mighty consternation, as fearing some evil tidings. While we are conscious to ourselves of so much guilt, we have reason to fear lest every express from heaven be a messenger of wrath.

Thirdly. What the message was which the angel had to deliver to the shepherds, *ver. 10-12.* 1. He gives a *supersedeas* to their fears; "fear not," for we have nothing to say to you that needs be a terror to you; you need not fear your enemies, and should not fear your friends. 2. He furnisheth them with abundant matter for joy: 'Behold, I evangelize to you great joy, I solemnly declare it, and you have reason to bid it welcome, for it shall bring "joy to all people," and not to the people of the Jews only; that "unto you is born this day," at this time, "a Saviour;" the Saviour that has been so long expected,

"which is Christ the Lord, in the city of David," *ver. 11.* Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed; he is the Lord, Lord of all; is a Sovereign Prince nay, he is God, for the Lord in the Old Testament answers to Jehovah. He is a Saviour, and he will be a Saviour to those only that accept of him for their Lord. The Saviour is born—he is born this day; and since it is matter of "great joy to all people," it is not to be kept secret; you may proclaim it—may tell it to whom you please. He is born in the place where it was foretold he should be born,—in the city of David: and he is born to you, to you Jews he is sent, in the first place to bless you; to you shepherds, though poor and mean in the world. This refers to *Isa. ix. 6,* "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." To you men, not to us angels; he took not on him our nature. This is matter of joy indeed to all people, great joy, long looked for, come at last. Let heaven and earth rejoice before this Lord, for he cometh. 3. He gives them a sign for the confirming of their faith in this matter. 'How shall we find out this child in Bethlehem, which is now full of the descendants from David?' 'You will find him by this token; he is lying in a manger, where sure never any new-born infant was laid before.' They expected to be told, 'You shall find him, though a babe, dressed up in robes, and lying in the best house in the town, lying in state, with a numerous train of attendants in rich liveries.' No; 'you will find him wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.' When Christ was here upon earth he distinguished himself, and made himself remarkable, by nothing so much as the instances of his humiliation.

Fourthly. The angels' doxology to God, and congratulations of men upon this solemn occasion, *ver. 13, 14.* The message was no sooner delivered by one angel—that was sufficient to go express, but suddenly there was with that angel, "a multitude of the heavenly hosts;" enough, we may be sure, to make a chorus, that were heard by the shepherds praising God; and to be sure, their song was not like that, *Rev. xiv. 3,* which no man could learn, for it was designed we should all learn it. 1. Let God have the honour of this work; "Glory to God in the highest." God's goodwill to men, manifested in sending the Messiah, redounds very much to his praise; and angels in the highest heavens, though not immediately interested in it themselves, yet will celebrate it to his honour, *Rev. v. 11, 12;* "Glory to God," whose kindness and love designed this favour, and whose wisdom contrived it in such a way as that one Divine attribute should not be glorified at the expense of another, but the honour of all effectually secured and advanced. Other works of God are for his glory, but the redemption of the world is for his "glory in the highest." 2. Let men have the joy of it; "on earth peace, goodwill towards men." God's goodness in sending the Messiah introduced peace in this lower world, slew the enmity that sin had raised between God and man, and resettled a peaceable correspondence. If God be at peace with us, all peace results from thence; peace of conscience, peace with angels, peace between Jew and Gentile. Peace is here put for all good; all that good which flows to us from the incarnation of Christ: all the good we have or hope is owing to God's goodwill; and if we have the comfort of it, he must have the glory of it. Nor must any peace, any good, be expected in a way inconsistent with the glory of God; therefore not in any way of sin, nor in any way but by a Mediator. Here was the peace proclaimed with great solemnity; whoever will, let them come and take the benefit of it: it is on earth peace, 'to men of goodwill,' so some copies read it, ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκίας; to men that have a goodwill to God, and are willing to be reconciled; or, to men whom God has a goodwill to, though vessels of his mercy. See how well affected the angels are to man, and to his welfare and happiness; how well pleased they were in the incarnation of the Son of God, though he passed by their nature; and ought not we much more to be affected with it. "This is a faithful saying," attested by an innumerable company of angels, and well "worthy of all acceptance," that "the goodwill of God towards men is glory to God in the highest, and peace on the earth."

Fifthly. The visit which the shepherds made to the new-born Saviour. 1. They consulted about it, *ver. 15;* while the angels were singing their hymn, they could attend to that only; but "when they were gone away from them into heaven"—for angels, when they appeared, never made any long stay, but returned as soon as they had despatched their business,—the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go to Bethlehem. Note, When extraordinary messages from the upper world are no more to be expected, we must set ourselves to improve the advantages we have for the confirming of our faith, and the keeping up of our communion with God in this lower world. And it is no reflection upon the testimony of angels, no, nor upon a Divine testimony itself, to get it corroborated by observation and experience. But observe, these shepherds do not speak doubtfully, Let us go see whether it be so or no; but with assurance, "Let us go see this thing which is come to pass;" for what room was left to doubt of it, when the Lord had thus made it known to them? the word spoken by angels was steadfast and unquestionably true. 2. They immediately made the visit, *ver. 16;* they lost no time, but came with haste to the place, (which probably the angel directed them to more particularly than is recorded, Go to the stable of such an inn,) and there "they found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger;" and the poverty and meanness in which they found Christ the Lord was no shock to their faith, who themselves knew what it was to live a life of comfortable communion with God, in very poor and mean circumstances. We have reason to think that the shepherds told Joseph and Mary of the vision of the angels they had seen, and the song of the angels they had heard, which was a great encouragement to them; more than if a visit had been made them by the best ladies in the town. And it is probable Joseph and Mary told the shepherds what visions they had had concerning the child; and so, by communicating their experiences to each other they greatly strengthened one another's faith.

Sixthly. The care which the shepherds took to spread the report of it; *ver. 17,* "when they had seen it," though they saw nothing in the child that should induce them to believe that he was "Christ the Lord;" yet the circumstances, how mean soever they were, agreeing with the sign that the angel had given them, they were abundantly satisfied; and, as the lepers argued, *2 Kin. vii. 9,* this being "a day of good tidings," they dare not "hold their peace," but "make known abroad" the whole story of what was told them, both by the angels and by Joseph and Mary, concerning this child, that he was the Saviour, even Christ the Lord,—that in him there is peace on earth, and that he was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, and born of a virgin. This they told to every body, and agreed in their testimony concerning it; and now, if when he is in the world, the world knows him not, it is their own faults, for they have sufficient notice given them. And what impression did it make upon the people? Why truly, "all they that heard it wondered at those things told them by the shepherds," *ver. 18.* The shepherds were plain, downright honest men, and they could not suspect them guilty of any design to impose upon them; what they said, therefore, it is likely might be true; and if it were true, they could not but wonder at it; that the Messiah should be born in a stable, and not in a palace; that angels should bring news of it to poor shepherds, and not to the chief priests. They wondered, but never inquired any farther about the Saviour, their duty to him, or advantages by him, but let the thing drop, as a nine days' wonder. O the amazing stupidity of the men of that

born in winter, but in spring or summer; because it is not the custom for shepherds to be out in the fields with their flocks in the winter months. Mr. Greswell concludes that our Lord was born in April, on the 5th of the month. Other dates have been fixed, but the only thing which can be regarded as nearly certain is that the nativity did not take place in winter. As Albert Barnes says, "God has concealed the time of his birth. There is no way to ascertain it. By different learned men it has been placed at each month in the

year. Nor was it of consequence to know the time." Here, the fact is everything.

ii. 14. Instead of the common reading, "and on earth peace, good will toward men," some ancient authorities read, "and on earth peace to men of his good will," i.e., to men in whom God is well pleased. Whichever reading is followed, "good will" means Divine favour.

ii. 21. The rite of circumcision was ordered by the law to take

generation! Justly were the things which belonged to their peace hid from their eyes, when they thus wilfully shut their eyes against them.

Seventhly. The use which those made of those things who did believe them, and receive the impression of them. 1. The virgin Mary made them the matter of her private meditation. She said little, but "kept all these things and pondered them in her heart," ver. 19; she laid the evidences together, and kept them in reserve, to be compared with the discoveries that should after be made her. As she had silently left it to God to clear up her honesty, when that was suspected, so she silently leaves it to him to publish her honour, now when it was veiled; and it is satisfaction enough to find that if nobody else takes notice of the birth of her child, angels do. Note. The truths of Christ are worth keeping; and the way to keep them safe is to ponder them: meditation is the best help to memory. 2. The shepherds made them the matter of their more public praises. If others were not affected with those things, yet they themselves were, ver. 20; they "returned glorifying and praising God," in concurrence with the holy angels. If others would not regard the report they made to them, God would accept the thanksgivings they offered to him. They praised God for what they had heard from the angel, and for what they had seen—the babe in the manger, and just then in the swaddling, when they came in, as it had been spoken to them. They thanked God they had seen Christ though in the depth of his humiliation; as afterwards the cross of Christ, so, now his manger, though to some it was foolishness and a stumblingblock, yet others saw in it and admired and praised the wisdom of God and the power of God.

21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. 22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; 23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) 24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

Our Lord Jesus, being "made of a woman," was "made under the law," Gal. iv. 4. He was not only, as the son of a daughter of Adam, made under the law of nature, but as the son of a daughter of Abraham, he was made under the law of Moses; he puts his neck under that yoke, though it was a heavy yoke, and "a shadow of good things to come;" and though its institutions were beggarly elements, and rudiments of this world, as the apostle calls them, Christ submitted to it, that he might with the better grace cancel it, and set it aside for us. Now here we have two instances of his being made under that law, and submitting to it:

First. He was circumcised on the very day that the law appointed, ver. 21: "When eight days were accomplished," that day seven-night that he was born, they circumcised him. 1. Though it was a painful operation, "surely a bloody husband thou hast been," saith Zipporah to Moses, "because of the circumcision." Ex. iv. 25, yet Christ would undergo it for us; nay, therefore he submitted to it, to give an instance of his early obedience—his obedience unto blood. Then he shed his blood by drops, which afterwards he poured out in purple streams. 2. Though it supposed him a stranger, that was by that ceremony to be admitted into covenant with God, whereas he had always been his beloved Son; nay, though it supposed him a sinner, that needed to have his filthiness taken away, whereas he had no impurity, or superfluity of naughtiness to be cut off, yet he submitted to it; nay, therefore he submitted to it, because he would be made in the likeness not only of flesh, but of sinful flesh, Rom. viii. 3. 3. Though thereby he made himself a debtor to the whole law, Gal. v. 3, yet he submitted to it; nay, therefore he submitted to it, because he would take upon him the form of a servant, though he was freeborn. Christ was circumcised, 1st. That he might own himself of the seed of Abraham, and of that nation "of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came," and who was to "take on him the seed of Abraham," Heb. ii. 17. 2nd. That he might own himself a surety for our sins, and an undertaker for our safety. Circumcision, saith Dr. Goodwin, was our bond whereby we acknowledged ourselves debtors to the law; and Christ, by being circumcised, did as it were set his hand to it, being "made sin for us." The ceremonial law consisted much in sacrifices; Christ hereby obliged himself to offer not the blood of bulls or goats, but his own blood, which none that ever were circumcised could oblige themselves to, but he only. 3rd. That he might justify and put an honour upon the dedication of the infant seed of the church to God by that ordinance which is the instituted seal of the covenant, and of the righteousness which is by faith, as circumcision was, Rom. iv. 11, and baptism is; and certainly his being circumcised at eight days' old, doth make much more for the dedicating of the seed of the faithful by baptism in their infancy, than his being baptized at thirty years' old doth for the deferring of it till they are grown up. The change of the ceremony alters not the substance.

At his circumcision, according to the custom, he had his name given him: he was called Jesus, or Joshua, for he was "so named of the angel" to his mother Mary, "before he was conceived in the womb," ch. i. 31; and to his supposed father Joseph, after, Mat. i. 21. First. It was a common name among the Jews, as John was, Col. iv. 11; and in this he would be made like unto his brethren. Secondly. It was the name of two eminent types of him in the Old Testament; Joshua, the successor of Moses, that was commander of Israel, and conqueror of Canaan; and Joshua the high priest, who was therefore purposely crowned, that he might prefigure Christ as "a priest upon his throne," Zec. vi. 11, 13. Thirdly. It was very significant of his undertaking. Jesus signifies a Saviour. He would be denominated, not from the glories of his divine nature, but from his gracious designs as Mediator, he brings salvation.

Secondly. He was presented in the temple. This was done with an eye to the law, and at the time appointed by the law, when he was forty days' old; "when the days of her purification were accomplished," ver. 22; many copies, and authentic ones, read *after* for *within*,—the days of their purification; the purification both of the mother and of the child; for so it was intended to be

by the law; and our Lord Jesus, though he had no impurity to be cleansed from, yet submitted to it, as he did to circumcision, because he was made sin for us; and that as by the circumcision of Christ we might be circumcised, in the virtue of our union and communion with him, with a spiritual circumcision made without hands, Col. ii. 11, so in the purification of Christ we might be spiritually purified from that filthiness and corruption which we brought into the world with us. Now according to the law,

1. The child Jesus being a firstborn son, was "presented to the Lord," in one of the courts of the temple. The law is here recited, ver. 23, "Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;" because, by a special writ of protection, the firstborn of Israel were preserved when the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain by the destroying angel; so that Christ, as firstborn, was a priest by a title surer than that of Aaron's house. Christ was the firstborn among many brethren, and was called holy to the Lord, so as never any other was, yet he was "presented to the Lord," as other firstborn were, and no otherwise. Though he was newly come out of the bosom of the Father, yet he was presented to him by the hands of a priest, as if he had been a stranger that needed one to introduce him. His being "presented to the Lord" now signified his presenting himself to the Lord as Mediator, when he was caused to draw near and approach unto him, Jer. xxx. 21; but according to the law he was redeemed, Num. xviii. 15, "the firstborn of man shalt thou redeem;" and five shekels was the value, Lev. xxvii. 6; Num. xviii. 16; but probably, in case of poverty, the priest was allowed to take less, or perhaps nothing, for no mention is made of it here. Christ was presented to the Lord, not to be brought back, for his ear was bored to God's doopost, to serve him for ever; and though he is not left in the temple as Samuel was, to minister there, yet like him he is given to the Lord as long as he lives, and ministers to him in the true temple "not made with hands."

2. The mother brought her offering, ver. 24; when she had presented that son of hers unto the Lord, who was to be the great sacrifice, she might have been excused from offering any other; but so "it is said in the law of the Lord," that law which was yet in force, and therefore so it must be done; she must offer "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons;" had she been of ability, she must have brought "a lamb for a burnt offering," and a "dove for a sin offering;" but being poor, and not able to reach the price of a lamb, she brings two doves, one for a "burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering;" see Lev. xii. 7, 8; to teach us in every address to God, and particularly in those upon special occasions, both to give thanks to God for his mercies to us, and to acknowledge with sorrow and shame our sins against him, and in both we must give glory to him; nor do we ever want matter for both. Christ was not conceived and born in sin, as others are; so there was not that occasion in his case that is in others; yet, because he was made under the law, he complied with it; "thus it became him to fulfil all righteousness." Much more doth it become the best of men to join in confessions of sin, for "who can say, I have made my heart clean?"

25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. 26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, 28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: 30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. 33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. 34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; 35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. 36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; 37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. 38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. 39 And

place on the eighth day after the birth of every Hebrew male child.

ii. 22. According to the law, the rite of purification for a woman after the birth of a male child was forty days, and sixty-six days for a female child. Instead of "her" purification, some copies have "his," others "their," and some "of both" (the purification of both). Adam Clarke says, "A needless scrupulosity was, in my opinion, the origin of these various readings." The best supported are "their"

and "his;" very little real authority exists for "her." Nearly all the modern critical editions have "the days of their purification;" and with good reason, because both mother and infant took part in the ceremonies which were followed. As an altogether ritual service it was observed by Jesus equally with other legal ordinances, equally with that of baptism, because he was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh."

ii. 25. It cannot be certainly known who this Simeon was, but

when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. 40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Still Christ has honour done to him then when he humbles himself, to balance the offence of it; that we might not be stumbled at the meanness of his birth, angels then did him honour; and now, that we may not be offended at his being presented in the temple, like other children born in sin, and without any manner of solemnity peculiar to him, but silently, and in the crowd of other children, Simeon and Anna now do him honour, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

First. *A very honourable testimony is borne to him by Simeon*, which was both a reputation to the child and an encouragement to the parents, and might have been a happy introducing of the priests into an acquaintance with the Saviour, if those watchmen had not been blind. Now observe here.

1. The account that is given us concerning this Simeon, or Simon. He dwelt now in Jerusalem, and was eminent for his piety and communion with God. Some learned men, that have been conversant with the Jewish writers, find that there was at this time one Simeon, a man of great note in Jerusalem, the son of Hillel, and the first to whom they gave the title of rabban, the highest title that they gave to their doctors, and which was never given but to seven of them. He succeeded his father Hillel as president of the college which his father founded, and of the great Sanhedrim. The Jews say he was endued with a prophetic spirit, and that he was turned out of his place because he witnessed against the common opinion of the Jews concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah; and they likewise observe, that there is no mention of him in their *Mishna*, or book of traditions, which intimates that he was no patron of those fooleries. One thing objected against this conjecture is, that at this time his father Hillel was living, and that he himself lived many years after this, as appears by the Jewish histories; but, as to that, he is not here said to be old; and his saying, Now let thy servant depart, intimates that he was willing to die now, but doth not conclude that therefore he died quickly. St. Paul lived many years after he had spoken of his death as near, *Acts* xx. 25. Another thing objected is, that the son of Simeon was Gamaliel, a Pharisee, and an enemy to Christianity; but, as to that, it is no new thing for a faithful lover of Christ to have a son a bigoted Pharisee.

The account given of him here is, 1st. That he was "just and devout," just towards men, and devout towards God; these two must always go together, and each will befriend the other, but neither will atone for the defect of the other. 2nd. That he "waited for the consolation of Israel," that is, for the coming of the Messiah, in whom alone the nation of Israel, that was now miserably harassed and oppressed, would find consolation. Christ is not only the author of his people's comfort, but the matter and ground of it, "the consolation of Israel." He was long coming, and they who believed he would come, continued waiting, desiring his coming, and hoping for it with patience; I had almost said, with some degree of impatience, waiting till it came. He understood by books, as Daniel, that the time was at hand, and therefore was now, more than ever, big with expectation of it. The unbelieving Jews, who still expect that which is already come, use it as an oath or solemn protestation, "As ever I hope to see the consolation of Israel," so and so it is. Note, The consolation of Israel is to be waited for, and it is worth waiting for, and it will be very welcome to those who have waited for it, and continue waiting. 3rd. The Holy Ghost was upon him, not only as a spirit of holiness, but as a spirit of prophecy; he was "filled with the Holy Ghost," and enabled to speak things above himself. 4th. He had a gracious promise made him, that before he died he should have a sight of the Messiah, *ver.* 26. He was searching what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, in the Old Testament prophets, did signify, and whether it were not now at hand; and he received this oracle (for so the word signifies), "that he should not see death before he had seen" the Messiah, "the Lord's anointed." Note, Those, and those only, can with courage see death, and look it in the face without terror, that have had by faith a sight of Christ.

2. The seasonable coming of Simeon into the temple at the time when Christ was presented there, *ver.* 27. Just then, when Joseph and Mary brought in the child to be registered, as it were, in the church book, among the first-born, Simeon came by direction of the Spirit into the temple. The same Spirit that had provided for the support of his hope, now provided for the transport of his joy. It was whispered in his ear, Go to the temple now, and you shall see what you have longed to see. Note, Those that would see Christ must go to his temple, for there the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to meet you, and there you must be ready to meet him.

3. The abundant satisfaction wherewith he welcomed this sight; he "took him up in his arms," *ver.* 28, he embraced him with the greatest affection imaginable, laid him in his bosom, as near his heart as he could, which is as full of joy as it can hold. He "took him up in his arms" to present him to the Lord, so some think, either to do the parent's part, or the priest's part; for divers of the ancients say he was himself a priest. When we receive the record which the Gospel gives us of Christ with a lively faith, and the offer it makes us of Christ with love and resignation, then we take Christ in our arms. It was promised him he should have a sight of Christ, but more is performed than was promised; he has him in his arms.

4. The solemn declaration he made hereupon; he "blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," *ver.* 29-32.

1st. He has a pleasant prospect concerning himself, and (which is a great attainment) is got quite above the love of life, and fear of death; nay, he is arrived to a holy contempt of life, and desire of death: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart, for mine eyes have seen the salvation." I was promised a sight of before I died. Here is, *First*, An acknowledgment that God had been as good as his word; there has not failed one tittle of his good promises, as Solomon owns, *1 Kin.* viii. 56. Note, Never any that hoped in God's word were made ashamed of their hope. *Secondly*, A thanksgiving for it; he "blessed God" that he saw that salvation in his arms which many prophets and kings desired to see, and might not. *Thirdly*, A confession of his faith, that this child in his arms was the Saviour, the salvation itself; "thy salvation," the salvation of "thine appointing"; the salvation "which thou hast prepared" with a great deal of contrivance; and while it has been thus long in the coming, it hath still been in the preparing. *Fourthly*, It is a farewell to this world: "Now let thy servant depart;" now mine eyes have been blessed with this sight, let them be closed, and see no more in this world. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, *Ecc.* i. 8, till it hath seen Christ, and then it is. What a poor thing doth this world look to one that hath Christ in his arms, and salvation in his eye. Now adieu to all my friends and relations, all my enjoyments and employments here, even the temple itself. *Fifthly*, It is a welcome to death: "Now let thy ser-

vant depart." Note, Death is a departure, the soul's departure out of the body, from the world of sense to the world of spirits. We must not depart till God gives us our discharge, for we are his servants, and must not quit his service till we have accomplished our time. Moses was promised that he should see Canaan, and then die; but he prayed that that word might be altered, *Deu.* iii. 24, 25. Simeon is promised that he should not see death till he had seen Christ, and he is willing to construe that beyond what was expressed, as an intimation that when he had seen Christ he should die: "Lord, be it so," saith he; "now let me depart." See here, 1st. How comfortable the death of a good man is; he departs, as God's servant, from the place of his toil to that of his rest. He departs in peace; peace with God, peace with his own conscience; in peace with death, well reconciled to it, well acquainted with it. He departs according to God's word; as Moses, at the mouth of the Lord, *Deu.* xxxiv. 5; the word of precept, "Go up, and die," the word of promise, "I will come again, and receive you to myself." 2nd. What is the ground of this comfort? "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." This speaks more than a great complacency in the sight, like that of Jacob, *Gen.* xlii. 30, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face;" it speaks a believing expectation of a happy state on the other side death, through this salvation he now had a sight of, which not only takes off the terror of death, but makes it gain, *Phil.* i. 21. Note, Those that have welcomed Christ, may welcome death.

2nd. He has a pleasant prospect concerning the world, and concerning the church. This salvation shall be, *First*, A blessing to the world. It is "prepared before the face of all people;" not to be hid in a corner, but to be made known; to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles," that now sit in darkness; they shall have the knowledge of him, and of God and another world through him. This has reference to *Isa.* xlix. 6, "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles;" for Christ came to be the light of the world, not a candle in the Jewish candlestick, but the Sun of Righteousness. *Secondly*, A blessing to the church; "the glory of thy people Israel." It was an honour to the Jewish nation that the Messiah sprang out of one of their tribes, and was born, and lived, and died among them. And of those who were Israelites indeed, of the spiritual Israel, he was indeed the glory, and will be so to eternity, *Isa.* lx. 19; they shall glory in him, "in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory," *Isa.* xlv. 25. When Christ ordered his apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations, therein he made himself "a light to lighten the Gentiles;" and when he added, "beginning at Jerusalem," he made himself "the glory of his people Israel."

5. The prediction concerning this child, which he delivered with his blessing to Joseph and Mary. They " marvelled at these things," which were still more and more fully and plainly spoken concerning this child, *ver.* 33; and because they were affected with, and had their faith strengthened by that which was said to them, here is more said to them.

1st. Simeon shews them what reason they had to rejoice; for he "blessed them," *ver.* 34; he pronounced them blessed who had the honour to be related to this child, and were intrusted with the bringing him up; he prayed for them that God would bless them, and would have others do so too. They had reason to rejoice, for this child should be not only a comfort and honour to them, but a public blessing; he is set "for the rising again of many in Israel," that is, for the conversion of many to God that are dead and buried in sin, and for the consolation of many in God that are sunk and lost in sorrow and despair. And those whom he is set for the fall of, may be the same with those whom he is set for the rising again of; he is set *αὐτῶν καὶ ὑψώσας*, for their fall, in order to their rising again; to humble and abase them, and bring them off from all confidence in themselves, that they may be exalted by relying on Christ; he wounds and then heals. Paul falls and rises again.

2nd. He shews them likewise what reason they had to rejoice with trembling, according to the advice given of old, with reference to the Messiah's kingdom, *Ps.* ii. 11. Lest Joseph, and Mary especially, should be lifted up with the abundance of the revelations, here is a thorn in the flesh for them, an alloy to their joy; and it is what we sometimes need. *First*, It is true, Christ shall be a blessing to Israel; but there are those in Israel whom he is "set for the fall" of, whose corruptions will be provoked, who will be prejudiced and enraged against him, and offended, and whose sin and ruin will be aggravated by the revelation of Jesus Christ; many that will extract poison to themselves out of the Balm of Gilead, and split their souls on the Rock of Salvation, to whom this precious Foundation Stone will be a stone of stumbling. This refers to that prophecy, *Isa.* viii. 14, 15; he shall be for a sanctuary to some, and yet for a snare to others, *1 Pet.* ii. 7, 8. Note, As it is pleasant to think how many there are to whom Christ and his Gospel are "a savour of life unto life," so it is sad to think how many there are to whom it is "a savour of death unto death." He is set for a sign, to be admired by some, but by others, by many, spoken against. He had many eyes upon him during the time of his public ministry, he was a sign; but he had many tongues against him, the contradiction and reproach of sinners; he was continually cavilled at and abused; and the effects of this will be, "that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed," *ver.* 35, that is, upon this occasion men will shew themselves, will discover and so distinguish themselves. The secret good affections and dispositions in the minds of some will be revealed by their embracing Christ, and closing with him; the secret corruptions and vicious dispositions of others, that otherwise would never have appeared so bad, will be revealed by their enmity to Christ, and their rage against him. Men will be judged of by the thoughts of their hearts, their thoughts concerning Christ; are they for him, or are they for his adversaries? "The word of God is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart," and by it we are discovered to ourselves, and shall be judged hereafter. *Secondly*, It is true, Christ shall be a comfort to his mother; but be not thou too proud of it, for "a sword shall pass through thine own soul also." He shall be a suffering Jesus; and, 1st. Thou shalt suffer with him, by sympathy, more than other of his friends, because of the nearness of thy relation, and strength of affection to him. When he was abused, it was a sword in her bones. When she stood by his cross, and saw him dying, we may well think her inward grief was such that it might truly be said a sword pierced through her soul, it cut her to the heart. 2nd. Thou shalt suffer for him; many understand it as a prediction of her martyrdom; and some of the ancients say it had its accomplishment in that. Note, In the midst of our greatest delights and advancements in this world, it is good for us to know that bonds and afflictions abide us.

Secondly, He is taken notice of by one Anna, or Ann, a prophetess, that one of each sex might bear witness to Him in whom both men and women are invited to believe, that they may be saved. Observe.

1. The account here given of this Anna, who she was: she was, 1st. "A prophetess." The spirit of prophecy now began to revive, which had ceased in Israel above three hundred years. Perhaps no more is meant but that she was one who had understanding in the Scriptures above other women, and made it her business to instruct the younger women in the things of God. Though it was a very degenerate age of the church, yet God "left not himself without witness."

some have been of opinion that he was son of Hillel, one of the most famous Jewish doctors, and that he was at the head of the Sanhedrim. Some have thought Simeon was the father of Gamaliel.

ii. 27. The words "to do for him after the custom of the law" refer to the offering for the redemption of the first-born, his presentation to the Lord, and the service generally as it was customary on such occasions. One item was the payment of five shekels; about 12s. 6d. English.

ii. 33. For "Joseph and his mother" good ancient authorities read "his father and mother," which several modern critics adopt. There is reason to think that the word "father" was removed and Joseph substituted by some early copyist, who feared some misunderstanding.

ii. 34. "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many;" i.e., he would be to many the occasion of stumbling, and to many the means of raising them up to a higher and better faith and life.

2nd. She was "the daughter of Phanneel." Her father's name, saith Grotius, is mentioned to put us in mind of Jacob's Phaneel, or Penuel, *Gen. xxxii. 30*, that now the mystery of that should be unfolded, when in Christ we should as it were see God face to face, and our lives be preserved and her name signifies 'gracious.'

3rd. She was "of the tribe of Asher," which was in Galilee. This, some think, is taken notice of to refute those who said, "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet;" when no sooner did prophecy revive, but it appeared from Galilee.

4th. "She was of a great age," a widow of about eighty-four years; some think she had now been eighty-four years a widow, and then she must be considerably above a hundred years old; others, rather than suppose that a woman so very old should be capable of fasting and praying, as she did, suppose that she was only eighty-four years of age, and had been long a widow; though she was a young widow, and had lived with her husband but seven years, yet she never married again, but continued a widow to her dying day, which is mentioned to her praise.

5th. She was a constant resident in, or at least attendant on, the temple. Some think she had lodgings in the courts of the temple, either in an alms house, being maintained by the temple charities, or, as a prophetess, she was lodged there, as in a proper place to be consulted and advised with by those that desired to know the mind of God. Others think her not departing from the temple means no more but that she was constantly there at the time of Divine service; when any good work was to be done, she was ready to join with it. It is most probable she had an apartment of her own among the out-buildings of the temple; and, besides her constant attendance on the public worship, abounded in private devotions, for she "served God with fastings and prayers night and day." Having no secular business to employ herself in, or being past it, she gave up herself wholly to her devotions, and not only fasted twice in the week, but always lived a mortified life, and spent that time in religious exercises which others spent in eating, and drinking, and sleeping; she not only observed the hours of prayer, but prayed night and day, was always in a praying frame, lived a life of prayer, gave herself to prayer, frequent in ejaculations, large in solemn prayers, and very particular in her intercessions. And in those she "served God;" that was it that put a value upon them, and an excellency into them. The Pharisees fasted oft, and made long prayers; but they served themselves, and their own pride and covetousness, in their fastings and prayers; but this good woman not only did that which was good, but did it from a good principle, and with a good end; she served God, and aimed at his honour, in "fastings and prayers." Note, *First*, Devotion is a thing we ought to be constant in; other duties are in season now and then, but we must pray always. *Secondly*, It is a pleasant sight to see aged Christians abounding in acts of devotion, as those that are not weary of well doing, that do not think themselves above their exercises, or past them, but that take more and more pleasure in them, and see more and more need of them, till they come to heaven. *Thirdly*, Those who are diligent and faithful in improving the light and means they have, shall have farther discoveries made them. Anna is now at length abundantly recompensed for her attendance so many years in the temple.

2. The testimony she bore to our Lord Jesus, ver. 38; "she came in at that instant," when the child was presented, and Simeon discoursed concerning him. She who was so constant to the temple, could not miss the opportunity. Now,

1st. She "gave thanks likewise to the Lord;" just as Simeon; perhaps like him, wishing now to depart in peace. Note, Those to whom Christ is made known, have reason enough to give thanks to the Lord for so great a favour; and we should be excited to that duty by the praises and thanksgivings of others; why should not we give thanks likewise, as well as they? Anna concurred with Simeon, and helped to make up the harmony; she confessed unto the Lord, so it may be read; she made an open profession of her faith concerning this child.

2nd. She, as a prophetess, instructed others concerning him: she "spoke of him to all them that believed the Messiah would come, and with him 'looked for redemption in Jerusalem.'" Redemption was the thing wanted, waited for, and wished for; "redemption in Jerusalem" for from thence the word of the Lord was to go forth, *Isa. ii. 3*. Some there were in Jerusalem that looked for redemption, yet but a few; for Anna, it should seem, had acquaintance with them all that were joint expectants with her of the Messiah; she knew where to find them, or they where to find her, and she told them all the good news, that she had seen the Lord; and it was great news: this of his birth now, as afterwards that of his resurrection. Note, Those that have got an acquaintance with Christ themselves, should do all they can to bring others acquainted with him.

Lastly. Here is a short account of the infancy and childhood of our Lord Jesus.

1. Where he spent it, ver. 39. When the ceremony of presenting the child and purifying the mother was all over, "they returned into Galilee." Luke relates no more concerning them they were returned into Galilee; but it appears by St. Matthew's gospel, *ch. ii.*, that from Jerusalem they returned to Bethlehem, where the wise men of the East found them, and there they continued till they were directed to flee into Egypt, to escape the malice and rage of Herod; and returning from thence, when Herod was dead, they were directed to go to their old quarters in Nazareth, from whence they had been perhaps some years absent. It is here called "their own city," because there they had lived a great while, and their relations were there. He was ordered farther from Jerusalem, because his kingdom and priesthood were to have no affinity with the present government of the Jewish church or state. He is sent into a place of obscurity and reproach, for in this, as in other things, he must humble himself, and make himself of no reputation.

2. How he spent it, ver. 40. "In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren," and therefore he passed through infancy and childhood as other children did, yet without sin; nay, yet with manifest indications of a Divine nature in him. As other children, he grew in stature of body, and the improvement of understanding in his human soul, that his natural body might be a figure of his mystical body, which, though animated by a perfect spirit, yet maketh increase of itself till it comes to the perfect man, *Eph. iv. 13, 16*. But, 1st. Whereas other children are weak in understanding and resolution, he was "strong in spirit;" by the Spirit of God his human soul was endued with extraordinary vigour, and all his faculties performed their offices in an extraordinary manner; he reasoned strongly, and his judgment was penetrating. 2nd. Whereas other children have foolishness bound in their hearts, which appears in what they say or do, he was "filled with wisdom;" not by any advantages of instruction and education, but by the operation of the Holy Ghost: every thing he said and did was wisely said, and wisely done, above his years. 3rd. Whereas other children shew that the corruption of nature is in them, and the tares of sin grow up with the wheat of reason, he made it appear that nothing but "the grace of God was upon him," the wheat sprang up without tares; and that, whereas other children are by nature children of wrath, he was greatly beloved, and high in the favour of God; that God loved him, and cherished him, and took a particular care of him.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. 43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. 44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. 45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. 46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. 47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. 48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. 49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? 50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. 51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

We have here the only passage of story recorded concerning our blessed Saviour from his infancy to the day of his shewing to Israel at twenty-nine years old, and therefore we are concerned to make much of this, for it is in vain to wish we had more. Here is,

First, Christ's going up with his parents to Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover, ver. 41, 42.

1. It was their constant practice to attend there, according to the law though it was a long journey, and they were poor, and perhaps not well able, without straitening themselves, to bear the expenses of it. Note, Public ordinances must be frequented, and we must not forsake the assembling ourselves together, as the manner of some is: worldly business must give way to spiritual concerns. Joseph and Mary had a son in the house with them that was able to teach them better than all the rabbins at Jerusalem, yet they went up thither "after the custom of the feast;" "the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob," and so should we. We have reason to suppose that Joseph went up likewise at the feasts of pentecost and tabernacles, for all the males were to appear there thrice a year, but Mary only at the passover, which was the greatest of the three feasts, and had most gospel in it.

2. The child Jesus, at twelve years old, went up with them. The Jewish doctors say that, at twelve years old, children must begin to fast from time to time, that they may learn to fast on the day of atonement; and at thirteen years old a child begins to be "a son of the commandment," that is, obliged to the duties of adult church membership, having been from his infancy, by virtue of his circumcision, "a son of the covenant." It is not said that this was the first time that Jesus went up to Jerusalem to worship at the feast; probably he had done it for some years before, having spirit and wisdom above his years; and all should attend on public worship that can "hear with understanding," *Neh. viii. 2*. Those children that are forward in other things should be put forward in religion. It is for the honour of Christ that children should attend on public worship, and he is pleased with their hosannas. And those children that were in their infancy dedicated to God should be called upon, when they are grown up, to come to the gospel passover—to the Lord's supper—that they may make it their own act and deed to join themselves to the Lord.

Secondly, Christ's tarrying behind his parents at Jerusalem, unknown to them, in which he designed to give an early specimen of what he was reserved for.

1. His parents did not return till "they had fulfilled the days," had stayed there all the seven days at the feast, though it was not absolutely necessary they should stay longer than the two first days, after which many went home. Note, It is good to stay to the conclusion of an ordinance, as becomes those who say, "It is good to be here," and not to hasten away, as if we were, like Doeg, detained before the Lord.

2. The child "tarried behind in Jerusalem," not because he was loath to go home, or shy of his parents' company, but because he had business to do there, and would let his parents know that he had a Father in heaven, whom he was to be observant of, more than of them; and respect to him must not be construed into disrespect to them. Some conjecture that he tarried behind in the temple, —for it was the custom of the pious Jews, that morning that they were to go home, to go first to the temple to worship God,—and there he stayed behind, and found entertainment there till they found him again; or perhaps he stayed at the house where they lodged, or some other friend's house, (and such a child as he was could not but be the darling of all that knew him, and every one

Some think that the humiliation and exaltation refer to the same persons.

ii. 35. This verse has been explained of the sorrows which the mother would endure in consequence of the sufferings of her Son. Some have thought it means that Mary would herself be a martyr, and others that it refers to her inward struggles in attaining to faith.

ii. 36, 37. Anna had one husband, who survived his marriage seven years. She was now eighty-four years of age.

ii. 39. This verse raises one of the greatest difficulties in the four Gospels. Matthew records that the family went into Egypt at this time, and did not return to Nazareth until long after. Luke wholly omits the murder of the children at Bethlehem, as well as the visit of the magi and the flight into Egypt. The real difficulty lies in the latter. Some believe that Joseph and Mary did return to Nazareth after the presentation, but this only causes fresh difficulties, and we prefer to leave the problem unsolved. All we would say is,

would court his company,) and went up to the temple only at church time; but so it was that he stayed behind. It is good to see young people willing to "dwell in the house of the Lord;" they are then like Christ.

3. His parents went the first day's journey without any suspicion that he was left behind, for "they supposed him to have been in the company," ver. 44. On these occasions the crowd was very great, especially the first day's journey, and the roads full of people; and they concluded he came along with some of their neighbours; "and they sought him among their kindred and acquaintance," that were upon the road going down. "Pray, did you see our son?" or, "Did you see him?" like the spouse's inquiry, "Saw you him whom my soul loveth?" This was a jewel worth seeking after. They knew every one would be desirous of his company, and he would be willing to do good among "his kinsfolks and acquaintance;" but among them they "found him not," ver. 45. There are many, too many, who are our kinsfolk and acquaintance, that we cannot avoid conversing with, among whom we find little or nothing of Christ. When they could not hear of him in this and the other company upon the road, yet they hoped they should meet with him at the place where they lodged at night, but there they could learn no tidings of him. Compare this with Job xlii. 8, 9.

4. "When they found him not" at their quarters at night, "they turned back again," next morning, "to Jerusalem seeking him." Note, Those that would find Christ must seek till they find, for he will at length be found of those that seek him, and will be found their bountiful rewarder. They that have lost their comforts in Christ, and the evidences of their interest in him, must bethink themselves where, and when, and how they lost them, and must turn back again to the place where they last had them; must remember whence they are fallen, and repent, and do their first works, and return to their first love, Rev. ii. 4, 5. Those that would recover their lost acquaintance with Christ must go to Jerusalem, the city of our solemnities, the place which he has chosen to put his name there; must attend upon him in his ordinances, in the gospel passover; there they may hope to meet him.

5. The third day "they found him in the temple," in some of the apartments belonging to the temple, where the doctors of the law kept, not their courts, but their conferences rather, or their schools for disputation; and there they found him "sitting in the midst of them," ver. 46; not standing, as a catechumen, to be examined or instructed by them, for he had discovered such measures of knowledge and wisdom that they admitted him to sit among them as a fellow or member of their society. This is an instance, not only that he was "filled with wisdom," ver. 40, but that he had both a desire to increase it and a readiness to communicate it; and herein he is an example to children and young people, who should learn of Christ to delight in the company of those they may get good by, and choose to sit in the midst of the doctors, rather than in the midst of the players. Let them begin at twelve years old, and sooner, to inquire after knowledge, and to associate with those that are able to instruct them; it is a hopeful and promising presage in youth to be desirous of instruction. Many a youth at Christ's age now would have been playing with the children in the temple, but he was sitting with the doctors in the temple. 1st. He heard them. Those that would learn must be swift to hear. 2nd. He asked them questions; whether as a teacher he had authority so to ask, or as a learner he had humility so to ask, I know not; or whether as an associate, or joint searcher after truth, which must be found out by mutual amicable disquisitions. 3rd. He returned answers to them, which were very surprising and satisfactory, ver. 47; and his wisdom and understanding appeared as much in the questions he asked as in the answers he gave; so that all that heard him were astonished. They never heard one so young, nor indeed any of their greatest doctors, talk sense at that rate that he did; like David, he had more understanding than all his teachers, yea, than the ancients, Ps. cxix. 99, 100. Now Christ shewed forth some rays of his glory, which were presently drawn in again; he gave them a taste, saith Calvin, of his Divine wisdom and knowledge. Methinks this public appearance of Christ in the temple as a teacher was like Moses' early attempt to deliver Israel, which Stephen put this construction upon, that "he supposed his brethren would have understood" by that "how God by his hand would deliver them," Acts vii. 24, 25. They might have taken the hint, and been delivered then, but "they understood not," so they here might have had Christ, for aught I know, to enter upon his work now; but they were only astonished, and understood not the indication; and therefore, like Moses, he retires into obscurity again, and they hear no more of him for many years after.

6. His mother talked with him privately about it; when the company broke up she took him aside, and examined him about it with a deal of tenderness and affection, ver. 48. Joseph and Mary were both amazed to find him there, and to find that he had so much respect shewn him as to be admitted to sit among the doctors, and to be taken notice of. His father knew he had only the name of a father, and therefore said nothing. But, 1st. His mother told him how ill they took it: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?" Why didst thou put us into such a fright? They were ready to say, as Jacob of Joseph, "a wild beast has devoured him;" or, he is fallen into the hands of some more cruel enemy, who at length found out that he was that young child whose life Herod had sought some years ago: a thousand imaginations we may suppose they had concerning him, each more frightful than another. 'Now, why hast thou given us occasion for these fears? "thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing;" not only troubled that we lost thee, but vexed at ourselves that we did not take more care of thee, to bring thee along with us.' Note, Those may have leave to complain of their losses that think they have lost Christ. But their weeping did not hinder sowing; they did not sorrow and sit down in despair, but sorrowed and sought. Note, If we would find Christ, we must seek him sorrowing—sorrowing that we have lost him, that we have provoked him to withdraw, and that we have sought him no sooner. They that thus seek him in sorrow shall find him at length with so much the greater joy. 2nd. He gently reproved their inordinate solicitude about him, ver. 49: "How is it that ye sought me?" You might have depended upon it I would have followed you home when I had done the business I have to do here; I could not be lost in Jerusalem. Wist ye not that I ought to be ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Πατρὸς μου,—"in my Father's house?" so some read it; where else should the Son be, who "abideth in the house for ever?" I ought to be, First. Under my Father's care and protection; and therefore you should have cast the care of me upon him, and not have burdened yourselves with it. Christ is a shaft hid in his Father's quiver, Isa. xlix. 2; he takes care of his church likewise, and therefore let not us ever despair of its safety. Secondly. "At my Father's work;" so we take it: I must be "about my Father's business," and therefore could not go home so soon as you might. "Wist ye not?" Have you not already perceived that concerning me, that I have devoted myself to the service of religion, and therefore must employ myself in the affairs of it? Herein he hath left us an example; for it becomes the children of God, in conformity to Christ, to attend their heavenly Father's business, and to make all other business give way to it. This word of Christ we now think we understand very well, for he hath explained it in what he hath done and said; it was his errand into the world, and his meat and drink in the world,

to do his Father's will, and finish his work; and yet at that time his parents "understood not this saying," ver. 50: they did not understand what business he had to do then in the temple for his Father; they believed him to be the Messiah, that should have the throne of his father David, but they thought that should rather bring him to the royal palace than to the temple; they understood not his prophetic office; and he was to do much of his work in that.

Lastly. Here is their return to Nazareth. This glimpse of his glory was to be short; it was now over; and he did not urge his parents either to come and settle at Jerusalem, or to settle him there, though that was the place of improvement and preferment, and where he might have the best opportunities of shewing his wisdom; but very willingly retired into his obscurity at Nazareth, where for many years he was as it were buried alive. Doubtless he came up to Jerusalem to worship at the feasts three times a year; but whether he ever went again into the temple, to dispute with the doctors there, we are not told; it is not improbable but he might. But here we are told.

1. That he was subject to his parents; though once, to shew that he was more than a man, he withdrew himself from his parents to attend his heavenly Father's business, yet he did not as yet make that his constant practice, nor for many years after; but was subject to them, observed their orders, and went and came as they directed, and, as it should seem, worked with his father at the trade of a carpenter. Herein he hath given an example to children to be dutiful and obedient to their parents in the Lord. Being made of a woman, he was made under the law of the fifth commandment, to teach the seed of the faithful thus to approve themselves to him a faithful seed. Though his parents were poor and mean, though his father was only his supposed father, yet he "was subject to them;" though he was "strong in spirit," and "filled with wisdom," nay, though he was the Son of God, yet he was subject to his parents; how then will they answer it, who, though foolish and weak, yet are disobedient to their parents?

2. That his mother, though she did not perfectly understand her son's sayings, yet kept them in her heart, expecting that hereafter they would be explained to her, and she should fully understand them, and know how to make use of them. However we may neglect men's sayings because they are obscure, (*si non vis intelligi, debes negligi*),—"if it be not intelligible, it is not valuable," yet we must not think so of God's sayings. That which at first is dark, and we know not what to make of it, may afterwards become plain and easy; we should therefore lay it up for hereafter; see Jno. ii. 22; we may find use for that another time which now we see not how it can be made useful to us. A scholar keeps those grammar rules in memory which at present he understands not the use of, because he is told they will hereafter be of use to him; so we must do by Christ's sayings.

3. That he improved and came on to admiration, ver. 52: he "increased in wisdom and stature." In the perfections of his Divine nature there could be no increase, but this is meant of his human nature; his body increased in stature and bulk, he grew in the growing age; and his soul increased in wisdom, and in all the endowments of a human soul. Though the Eternal Word was united to the human soul from his conception, yet the divinity that dwelt in him manifested itself to his humanity by degrees, *ad modum recipientis*,—"in proportion to his capacity;" as the faculties of his human soul grew more and more capable, the gifts it received from the Divine nature were more and more communicated; and he increased in "favour with God and man," that is, in all those graces that rendered him acceptable both to God and man. Herein Christ accommodated himself to his estate of humiliation, that as he condescended to be an infant, a child, a youth, so the image of God shone brighter in him when he grew up to be a youth than it did or could while he was an infant and a child. Note, Young people, as they grow in stature should grow in wisdom; and then, as they grow in wisdom, they shall grow "in favour with God and man."

CHAPTER III.

Nothing is related concerning our Lord Jesus from his twelfth year to his entrance on his thirtieth year; we often think it would have been a pleasure and advantage to us if we had journals, or at least annals, of occurrences concerning him; but we have as much as Infinite Wisdom thought fit to communicate to us, and if we improve not that, neither would we have improved more if we had had it. The great intention of the evangelists was to give us an account of the Gospel of Christ, which we are to believe, and by which we hope for salvation. Now that began in the ministry and baptism of John, and therefore they hasten to give us an account of that. We could wish, perhaps, that Luke had wholly passed by what was related by Matthew and Mark, and had written only what was new, as he had done in his two first chapters; but it was the will of the Spirit that some things should be established, not only out of the mouth of two, but of three witnesses; and we must not reckon it a needless repetition, nor will we do so, if we renew our meditations upon these things with suitable affections. In this chapter we have, I. The beginning of John's baptism, and the scope and intention of it, ver. 1-6; his exhortation to the multitude, ver. 7-9; and the particular instructions he gave to those who desired to be told their duty, ver. 10-14. II. The notice he gave them of the approach of the Messiah, ver. 15-18; to which is added (though it happened after what follows) the mention of his imprisonment, ver. 19, 20. III. Christ coming to be baptized of John, and his entrance therein upon the execution of his prophetic office, ver. 21, 22. IV. His pedigree and genealogy recorded up to Adam, ver. 23-38.

OW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, 2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the



that this verse is a summary conclusion of what Luke had to record of the first days of the life of Jesus.

ii. 40. The words "in spirit" are omitted by good ancient authorities, though a large number of early MSS. have them.

ii. 46. It is said to have been usual in the Hebrew schools for the scholars to ask the questions and the teachers to answer them. There were rooms attached to the Temple, or within its enclosure, where the rabbis taught, and such are meant here.

ii. 49. The words rendered "about my Father's business" have been otherwise explained. One early interpretation is that it means "in the house of my Father." It is so in the Syriac version, and the explanation has been endorsed by many since.

ii. 52. Jesus increased in "stature;" but the word so rendered also conveys the idea of age, and therefore may include the following eighteen years.

iii. 1. The chronological indications here given for the commence-

baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways *shall be* made smooth; 6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. 7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? 11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. 12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? 13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. 14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely; and be content with your wages.



TIBERIUS CÆSAR.—see ver. 1.

John's baptism introducing a new dispensation, it was requisite we should have a particular account of it. Glorious things were said of John, what a mighty favourite of Heaven he should be, and what a blessing to this earth, *ch. i. 15, 17*; but we lost him in the desert, and there he remains "until the day of his shewing unto Israel," *ch. i. 80*; and now at last that day dawns; and a welcome day it was to them that waited for it more than they that waited for the morning. Observe here,

First. *The date of the beginning of John's baptism*, when it was that he appeared; this is here taken notice of, which was not by the other evangelists, that the truth of the thing might be confirmed by the exact fixing of the time; and it is dated,

1. By the government of the heathen, which the Jews were under, to shew that they were a conquered people; and therefore it was time for the Messiah to come, to set up a spiritual kingdom, and an eternal one, upon the ruins of all the temporal dignity and dominion of David and Judah.

2d. It is dated by the reign of the Roman emperor; it was "in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar," the third of the twelve Cæsars, a very ill man, given to covetousness, drunkenness, and cruelty. Such a man is mentioned first, saith Dr. Lightfoot, as it were to teach us what to look for from that cruel and

abominable city, wherein Satan reigned in all ages and successions. The people of the Jews, after a long struggle, were of late made a province of the empire, and were under the dominion of this Tiberius; and that country, which, when time was, had made so great a figure, and had many nations tributaries to it, in the reigns of David and Solomon, is now itself an inconsiderable, despicable part of the Roman empire, and rather trampled upon than triumphed in: *En quo discordia cives perduxit miseros!*—"What dire effects from civil discord flow." The lawgiver was now departed from between Judah's feet; and as an evidence of that, their public acts are dated by the reign of the Roman emperor; and therefore now Siloh must come.

2d. It is dated by the governments of the viceroys that ruled in the several parts of the Holy Land, under the Roman emperor, which was another badge of their servitude, for they were all foreigners, which speaks a sad change with that people whose governors used to be of themselves, *Jer. xxx. 21*; and it was their glory. "How is the gold become dim!" First, Pilate is here said to be the governor, president, or procurator of Judæa. This character is given of him by some other writers; that he was a wicked man, and one that made no conscience of a lie. He reigned ill, and at last was displaced by Vitellius, president of Syria, and sent to Rome to answer for his mal-administrations. Secondly. The other three are called tetrarchs; some think from the countries which they had the command of, each of them being over a fourth part of that which had been entirely under the government of Herod the Great. Others think they are so called from the post of honour they were in in the government; they had the fourth place, or were fourth-rate governors. The emperor was the first; the proconsul, that governed a province, the second; a king, the third; and a tetrarch, the fourth; so Dr. Lightfoot.

3. By the government of the Jews among themselves, to shew that they were a corrupt people; and therefore it was time the Messiah should come to reform them, *ver. 2*. Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests. God had appointed that there should be but one high priest at a time; but here were two, to serve some ill turn or other: one served one year, and the other the other year; so some. One was the high priest; and the other the *sagan*, as the Jews called him, to officiate for him when he was disabled; or, as others say, one was high priest, and represented Aaron, and that was Caiaphas; Annas, the other, was *nasi*, or head of the Sanhedrim, and represented Moses. But to us there is but one High Priest, one Lord of all, to whom all judgment is committed.

Secondly. *The original and tendency of John's baptism.*

1. The original of it was from heaven: "the word of God came unto John," *ver. 2*. He received full commission, and full instructions from God, to do what he did; it is the same expression that is used concerning the Old Testament prophets, *Jer. i. 2*; for John was a prophet, yea, more than a prophet, and in him prophecy revived, which had been long suspended. We are not told how the word of the Lord came to John, whether by an angel, as to his father, or by dream, or vision, or voice; but it was to his satisfaction, and ought to be ours. John is here called "the son of Zacharias," to refer us to what the angel said to his father, when he assured him he should have this son. The word of the Lord came to him "in the wilderness;" for those whom God fits he will find out, wherever they are; as the word of the Lord is not bound in a prison, so it is not lost in a wilderness. The word of the Lord made its way to Ezekiel among his captives, by the river of Chebar; and to John in the isle Patmos. John was the son of a priest, now entering upon the thirtieth year of his age; and therefore, according to the custom of the temple, he has now to be admitted into the temple service, where he should have attended as a candidate five years before; but God had called him to a more honourable ministry; and therefore the Holy Ghost enrolls him here, since he was not enrolled in the archives of the temple; "John the son of Zacharias began his ministration" such a time.

2. The scope and design of it, was to bring all the people of his country off from their sins, and home to their God, *ver. 3*: "He came" first "into all the country about Jordan," the neighbourhood wherein he resided, that part of the country which Israel took possession of first, when they entered the land of promise under Joshua's conduct: there was the banner of the Gospel first displayed. John resided in the most solitary part of the country, but, when the word of the Lord came to him, he quitted his deserts, and came into the inhabited country; those that are best pleased in their retirements must cheerfully exchange them when God calls them into places of concourse. "He came" out of the wilderness "into all the country," with some marks of distinction, preaching a new baptism; not a sect, or party, but a profession, or distinguishing badge; the sign, or ceremony, such as was ordinarily used among the Jews, washing with water, by which proselytes were sometimes admitted, or disciples to some great master. But the meaning of it was "repentance for the remission of sins;" that is, all that submitted to his baptism,

1st. Were thereby obliged to repent of their sins, to be sorry for what they had done amiss, and to go and do so no more; the former they professed, and were concerned to be sincere in their professions; the latter they promised, and were concerned to make good what they promised. He bound them not to such ceremonious observances as were imposed by the tradition of the elders, but to change their mind, and change their way; to cast away from them all their transgressions, and to make them new hearts, and to live new lives. The design of the Gospel, which now began, was to make men devout and pious, holy and heavenly, humble and meek, sober and chaste, just and honest, charitable and kind, and good in every relation, who had been much otherwise; and this is to repent.

2d. They were thereby assured of the pardon of their sins, upon their repentance. As the baptism he administered bound them not to submit to the power of sin, so it sealed to them a gracious and pleasurable discharge from the guilt of sin: "Turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin;" agreeing with the word of the Lord by the Old Testament prophets, *Eze. xviii. 30*.

Thirdly. *The fulfilling of the Scripture in the ministry of John.* The other evangelists had referred us to the same text that is here referred to, that of Esaias, *ch. xl. 3*. It is "written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet," which he heard from God, which he spoke for God; those words of his which were written for the generations to come; among them it is found, that there should be "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," and John is that voice, a clear, distinct voice, a loud voice, an articulate one; he cries, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight." John's business is to make way for the entertainment of the Gospel in the hearts of people, to bring them into such a frame and temper, as that Christ might be welcome to them, and they welcome to Christ. Luke goes farther on with the quotation than Matthew and Mark had done, and applies the following words likewise to John's ministry, *ver. 5, 6*: "Every valley shall be filled." Dr. Hammond understands this as a prediction of the desolation coming upon the people of the Jews for their infidelity. The land should be made plain by the pioneers for the Roman army, and should be laid waste by it; and there should then be a visible distinction made between the impenitent, on the one

ment of the public ministration of John the Baptist have been closely investigated by many writers. It has been alleged that there are some errors in the sacred record, but this has been sufficiently disproved. Of the many modern works in which this text is investigated, it may be enough to mention Dr. Ebrard's "Gospel History," Dr. Wieseler's "Chronological Synopsis of the Four Gospels," and Mr. Lewin's "Fasti Sacri." With regard to the statements made in this verse, it is generally admitted that they

chronologically coincide, with one exception. Pontius Pilate, Ebrard says, was governor of Judea from about the year A.D. 25 to 36—i.e., from the twelfth to the twenty-third year of Tiberius. Herod Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee during the whole of the reign of Tiberius, and some time previously. The reign of Philip continued to the nineteenth year of Tiberius. With regard to Lysanias, it is alleged that he was put to death thirty-four years before the Christian era. But apart from the improbability that a writer so

side, and the receivers of the Gospel, on the other side; but it seems rather to be meant of the immediate tendency of John's ministry, and of the Gospel of Christ, which that was the introduction of.

1. The humble shall by it be enriched with grace; for every valley that lies low and moist shall be filled and be exalted. 2. The proud shall by it be humbled; the self-confident, that stand upon their own bottom, and the self-conceited, that lift up their own top, shall have contempt put upon them, for "every mountain and hill shall be brought low;" if they repent, they are brought to the dust; if not, to the lowest hell. 3. Sinners shall be converted to God; for the crooked ways, and the crooked spirits shall be made straight; for though none can make that straight which God hath made crooked, *Ecc. vii. 13*, yet God by his grace can make that straight which sin hath made crooked. 4. Difficulties, that were hindering and discouraging in the way to heaven, shall be removed; "the rough ways shall be made smooth," and they that love God's law shall have great peace, and "nothing shall offend them." The Gospel has made the way to heaven plain and easy to be found, smooth and easy to be walked in. 5. The great salvation shall be more fully discovered than ever, and the discovery of it shall spread farther, *ver. 6*; "all flesh shall see the salvation of God;" not the Jews only, but the Gentiles; all shall see it; that is, they shall have it set before them, and offered to them; and some of all sorts shall see it; that is, enjoy it, and have the benefit of it. When way is made for the Gospel into the heart, by the captivating of high thoughts, and bringing them into obedience to Christ, by the levelling of the soul, and the removing of all obstructions that stand in the way of Christ and his grace, then prepare to bid the salvation of God welcome.

Fourthly. *The general warnings and exhortations* which he gave to those who submitted to his baptism, *ver. 7-9*. In *Matthew* he is said to have preached these same things to many of the Pharisees and Sadducees that came to his baptism, *Mat. iii. 7-10*; but here he is said to have spoken them "to the multitude, that came forth to be baptized of him," *ver. 7*. This was the purport of his preaching to all that came to him, and he did not alter it in compliment to the Pharisees and Sadducees when they came, but dealt as plainly with them as with any other of his hearers; and as he did not flatter the great, so neither did he compliment the many, or make his court to them, but gave the same reproofs of sin and warnings of wrath to the multitude that he did to the Sadducees and Pharisees; for if they had not the same faults, they had others as bad. Now observe here,

1. That the guilty, corrupted race of mankind is become a generation of vipers; not only poisoned, but poisonous; hateful to God, hating one another. This magnifies the patience of God, in continuing the race of mankind upon the earth, and not destroying that nest of vipers. He did once by water, and will again by fire.

2. This generation of vipers is fairly warned to "flee from the wrath to come," which is certainly before them, if they continue such; and their being a multitude will not be at all their security, for it will be neither reproach nor loss to God to cut them off. We are not only warned of this wrath, but are put into a way to escape it, if we look about us in time.

3. There is no way of fleeing from the wrath to come but by repentance. They that submitted to the baptism of repentance, thereby evidenced that they were warned to flee from the wrath to come, and took the warning; and we by our baptism profess to have fled out of Sodom, for fear of what is coming upon it.

4. Those that profess repentance are highly concerned to live like penitents, *ver. 8*: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance;" else, notwithstanding your professions of repentance, you cannot escape the wrath to come. By the fruits of repentance it will be known whether it be sincere or not. By the change of our way must be evidenced the change of our mind.

5. If we be not really holy both in heart and life, our profession of religion, and relation to God and his church, will stand us in no stead at all: "Begin now to frame excuses from this great duty of repentance, by saying 'within yourselves, We have Abraham our father.' What will it avail us to be the children of godly parents, if we be not godly; to be within the pale of the church, if we be not brought into the bond of the covenant?"

6. We have therefore no reason to depend upon our external privileges and professions of religion, because God has no need of us, or of our services, but can effectually secure his own honour and interest without us. If we were cut off and ruined, he could raise up to himself a church out of the most unlikely; children to Abraham even out of stones.

7. The greater professions we make of repentance, and the greater assurances and encouragements are given us in repentance, the nearer and the sooner will our destruction be, if we do not "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Now the Gospel begins to be preached, now the kingdom is at hand, "now the axe is laid to the root of the trees;" threatenings to the wicked and penitent are now more terrible than before, as encouragements to the penitent are now more comfortable. Now you are upon your behaviour, look to yourselves.

8. Barren trees will be cast into the fire at length; it is the fittest place for them. "Every tree that doth not bring forth fruit, good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire." If it serve not for fruit, to the honour of God's grace, let it serve for fuel, to the honour of his justice.

Fifthly. *The particular instructions* he gave to several sorts of persons, that inquired of him concerning their duty; the people, the publicans, and the soldiers. Some of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism, but we do not find them asking, "What shall we do?" for they thought they knew what they had to do as well as he could tell them; or were determined to do what they pleased, whatever he told them. But the people, the publicans, and the soldiers, that knew they had done amiss, and knew they should do better, and were conscious to themselves of great ignorance, and unacquaintedness with the Divine law, were particularly inquisitive, "What shall we do?" Note, 1st. Those that are baptized must be taught; and those that have baptized them are concerned, as they have opportunity, to teach them, *Mat. xxviii. 19, 20*. 2nd. Those that profess and promise repentance in general, must evidence it by particular instances of reformation, according as their place and condition is. 3rd. They that would do their duty must desire to know their duty, and inquire concerning it. The first good word Paul said when he was converted was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" These here inquire, not "What shall this man do?" but "What shall we do?" what fruits meet for repentance shall we bring forth? Now John gives answer to each according to their place and station.

1. He tells the people their duty, and that is to be charitable, *ver. 11*: "He that has two coats, and consequently one to spare, 'let him give,' or lend at least, 'to him that has none,' to keep him warm. Perhaps he saw among his hearers some that were overloaded with clothes, while others were ready to perish in rags, and he puts those who had superfluities upon contributing to the relief of those that had not necessities. The Gospel requires mercy, and not sacrifice; and the design of it is to engage us to do all the good we can. Food and raiment are the two supports of life: he that hath meat to spare, let him give to him that is destitute of daily food, as well as he that has clothes

to spare: what we have, we are but stewards of, and must use it accordingly as our Master directs.

2. He tells the publicans their duty, the collectors of the emperor's revenue, *ver. 13*: "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." They must do justice between the government and the merchant, and not oppress the people in levying the taxes, nor any way make them heavier or more burthensome than the law had made them. They must not think, that because it was their office to take care that the people did not defraud the prince, they might therefore, by the power they had, bear hard upon the people; as those that have never so little a branch of power are apt to abuse it; no, keep to your book of rates, and reckon it enough that you collect for Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and do not enrich yourselves by taking more. The public revenues must be applied to the public service, and not to gratify the avarice of private persons. Observe, He doth not direct the publicans to quit their places, and to go no more to the receipt of custom; the employment is in itself lawful and necessary, but let them be just and honest in it.

3. He tells the soldiers their duty, *ver. 14*. Some think these soldiers were of the Jewish nation and religion, others think they were Romans; for it was not likely either that the Jews would serve the Romans, or the Romans trust the Jews in their garrisons, in their own nation; and then it is an early instance of Gentiles embracing the Gospel, and submitting to it. Military men seldom seem inclined to religion, yet these submitted even to the Baptist's strict profession, and desired to receive the word of command from him, "What must we do?" Those who, more than other men, have their lives in their hands, and are in deaths oft, are concerned to inquire what they shall do, that they may be found in peace. In answer to this inquiry, John does not bid them lay down their arms, and desert the service, but cautions them against the sins that soldiers were commonly guilty of; for this is fruit meet for repentance, to keep ourselves from our iniquity. 1st. They must not be injurious to the people among whom they were quartered, and over whom indeed they were set, "Do violence to no man." Your business is to keep the peace, and prevent men's doing violence to one another, but do not you do violence to any; 'shake no man, so the word signifies; do not put people into fear; for the sword of war, as well as that of justice, is to be a terror only to evildoers, but a protection to those that do well. Be not rude in your quarters; force not money from people by frightening them; shed not the blood of war in peace; offer no incivility either to man or woman; nor have any hand in the barbarous devastations that armies sometimes make. Nor must they "accuse any falsely" to the government, thereby to make themselves formidable, and get bribes. 2nd. They must not be injurious to their fellow soldiers; for some think that caution, not to accuse falsely, has special reference to them. Be not forward to complain one of another to your superior officers, that you may be revenged on those you have a pique against, or undermine those above you, and get into their places. 'Do not oppress any,' so some think the word here signifies, as used by the Seventy in several passages of the Old Testament. 3rd. They must not be given to mutiny, nor contend with the general about their pay; 'be content with your wages.' While you have what you agreed for, do not murmur that it is not more. It is discontent with what they have that makes men oppressive and injurious; they that never think they have enough themselves, will not stick at any the most irregular practices to make it more, by defrauding others. It is a rule to all servants that they be content with their wages, for they that indulge themselves in discontents expose themselves to many temptations, and it is wisdom to make the best of that which is.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; 16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: 17 Whose fan



WINNOWER WITH THE FAN.

is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. 18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people. 19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, 20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

well informed as Luke should make such a mistake, there is evidence to show that there was a later Lysanias, who reigned about the time referred to in the Gospel. The kingdom of this later Lysanias was transferred to Agrippa about A.D. 52, as stated by Josephus ("Wars," ii. 12, 8). The province of Ituræa was to the south-east of Hermon, and is mentioned by several Greek and Roman writers. The district is still called Jedur by the Arabs. Trachonitis was on the east of the Jordan, and is now called the Ledja. Abilene was named from

its chief city, Abila, which appears to have been eighteen or twenty miles north-west of Damascus. On the term tetrarch, Hug observes that it was not introduced into Palestine until after the death of Herod. This fact is an additional confirmation of the accuracy of Luke, whose mention of a tetrarchy of Lysanias is otherwise established.

iii. 2. For "Annas and Caiaphas being the high-priests" we may translate, "when Annas was high-priest and Caiaphas," the word

We are now drawing near to the appearance of our Lord Jesus publicly; the sun will not be long after the morning star. We are here told,

First. How the people took occasion, from the ministry and baptism of John, to think of the Messiah, and to think of him as at the door, as now come. Thus the way of the Lord was prepared, and people were prepared to bid Christ welcome; for when men's expectations are raised, that which they are in expectation of becomes doubly acceptable. Now when they observed what an excellent doctrine John Baptist preached, what a Divine power went along with it, and what a tendency it had to reform the world,

1. They began presently to consider that now was the time for the Messiah to appear; the sceptre was departed from Judah, for they had no king but Cæsar; nay, and the lawgiver too was gone from between his feet, for Herod had lately slain the Sanhedrim; Daniel's seventy weeks were now expiring, and therefore it was but three or four years after this that they looked that the kingdom of heaven should appear presently, *ch. xix. 11*. Never did the corrupt state of the Jews more need a reformation, nor their distressed state more need a deliverance, than now.

2. Their next thought was, Is not this he that should come? "All" thinking "men mused," or reasoned "in their hearts," concerning "John, whether he were the Christ or not." He had indeed nothing of that external pomp and grandeur in which they generally expected the Messiah to appear; but his life was holy and strict, his preaching powerful, and with authority; and therefore why may we not think him to be the Messiah, and that he will shortly throw off this disguise, and appear in more glory? Note, That which puts people upon considering, reasoning with themselves, prepares the way for Christ.

Secondly. How John disowned all pretensions to the honour of being himself the Messiah, but confirmed them in their expectations of him that really was the Messiah, *ver. 16, 17*. John's office, as a crier or herald, was to give notice that the kingdom of God, and the King of that kingdom, was at hand; and therefore, when he had told all manner of people severally what they must do,—you must do this, and you must do that,—he tells them one thing more, which they must all do, they must expect the Messiah now shortly to appear. And this serves as an answer to their musings and debates concerning himself. Though he knew not their thoughts, yet, in declaring this, he answered them.

1. He declares, the utmost he could do was to baptize them with water; he had no access to the spirit, nor could command that, or work upon that; he could only exhort them to repent, and assure them of forgiveness upon repentance; he could not work repentance in them, nor confer remission on them.

2. He consigns them, and turns them over, as it were to Jesus Christ, for whom he was sent to prepare the way, and to whom he was ready to transfer all the interest he had in the affections of the people, and would have them no longer to debate whether John was the Messiah or not, but to look for him that was really so.

1st. John owns the Messiah to have a greater excellency than he had, and that he was in all things preferable to him; he is one the latchet of whose shoe he doth not think himself worthy to unloose; he doth not think himself worthy to be the meanest of his servants, to help him on and off with his shoes. John was a prophet, yea, more than a prophet, more so than any of the Old Testament prophets; but Christ was a prophet more than John; for it was both by the spirit of Christ, and of the grace of Christ, that all the prophets prophesied, and John among the rest, *1 Pet. i. 10, 11*. This was a great truth which John came to preach; but the manner of his expressing it speaks his humility; and in it he not only doth justice to our Lord Jesus, but doth him honour: he is one I am not worthy to approach, or draw nigh to, no, not as a servant. Thus highly doth it always become us to speak of Christ, and thus humbly of ourselves.

2nd. He owns him to have a greater energy than he had: he is "mightier than I," and doth that which I cannot do, both for the comfort of the faithful and for the terror of hypocrites and dissemblers. They thought a wonderful power went along with John, but what that compared with the power which Jesus would come clothed with? First. John can do no more but "baptize with water," in token of this, that they ought to purify and cleanse themselves; but Christ can and will "baptize with the Holy Ghost;" he can give the Spirit to cleanse and purify the heart, not only as water washes off the dirt on the outside, but as fire purges out the dross that is within, and melts down the metal, that it may be cast into a new mould. Secondly. John can only preach a distinguishing doctrine, and by word and sign "separate between the precious and the vile;" but Christ hath his "fan in his hand," with which he can and will perfectly part between the wheat and the chaff; he will "thoroughly purge his floor;" it is his own, and therefore he will purge it, and will cast out of his church the unbelieving, impenitent Jews, and confirm in his church all that faithfully follow him. Thirdly. John can only speak comfort to those that receive the Gospel, and, like other prophets, "say to the righteous that it shall be well with them;" but Jesus Christ will give them comfort. John can only promise them they shall be safe, but Christ will make them so; he will "gather the wheat into his garner." Good, serious, solid people he will gather now into his church on earth, which shall be made up of such; and he will shortly gather them into his church in heaven, where they shall be for ever sheltered. Fourthly. John can only threaten hypocrites, and tell the barren trees that they shall be hewn down and cast into the fire; but Christ can execute that threatening; those that are as chaff—light, and vain, and worthless—"he will burn with fire unquenchable." John refers here to *Mal. iii. 18*; *iv. 1, 2*: "Then, when the floor is purged, shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; for the day cometh that shall burn as an oven."

The evangelist concludes his account of John's preaching with an *et cetera*, *ver. 18*; "many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people," which are not recorded. 1. John was an affectionate preacher; he was *παρηκολούθῳ*, "exhorting," beseeching; he pressed things home upon his hearers, followed his doctrine close, as one in earnest. 2. He was a practical preacher; much of his preaching was exhortation, quickening them to their duty, and directing them in it, and not amusing them with matters of nice speculation. 3. He was a popular preacher, though he had scribes and Pharisees, men of polite learning, attending his ministry, and Sadducees, men of free thought, as they pretended, yet he addressed himself "to the people," *πρὸς τὸν λαόν*, to the laity, and accommodated himself to their capacity, as promising himself best success among them. 4. He was an evangelical preacher, for so the word here used signifies, *εὐαγγελίζετο*, he preached the Gospel to the people; in all his exhortations he directed people to Christ, and excited and encouraged their expectations of him. When we press duty upon people, we must direct them to Christ, both for righteousness and strength. 5. He was a copious preacher; "many other things he preached," *πολλά μὲν καὶ ἕτερα*, "many things and different." He preached a great deal, shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God; and he varied in his preaching, that those who were not reached, and touched, and wrought upon by one truth, might by another.

Thirdly. How a full stop was put to John's preaching; when he was in the midst of his usefulness, going on thus successfully, he was imprisoned by the malice of Herod, *ver. 19, 20*: "Herod the tetrarch being reproved by him," not only for living in incest with his brother Philip's wife, but for the many other

"evils which Herod had done,"—for those that are wicked in one instance are commonly so in many others,—he could not bear it, but contracted an antipathy to him for his plain dealing, and added this wickedness to all the rest, which was indeed above all, that he "shut up John in prison;" put that burning and shining light under a bushel: because he could not bear his reproofs, others should be deprived of the benefit of his instructions and counsels. Some little good he might do to those who had access to him when he was in prison, but nothing to what he might have done, if he had had liberty to go about all the country as he had done. We cannot think of Herod's doing this, without the greatest compassion and lamentation; nor of God's permitting it, without admiring the depth of the Divine counsels, which we cannot account for. Must he be silenced who is "the voice of one crying in the wilderness?" Must such a preacher be shut up in prison, who ought to have been set up in the courts of the temple? But thus the faith of his disciples must be tried; the unbelief of those who rejected him must be punished. Thus he must be Christ's forerunner in suffering as well as preaching; and thus, having been for about a year and half preparing people for Christ, he must now give way to him; and the sun being risen, the morning star must of course disappear.

21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, 22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. 23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, 24 Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph, 25 Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge, 26 Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda, 27 Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri, 28 Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er, 29 Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, 30 Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim, 31 Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattathia, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David, 32 Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson, 33 Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda, 34 Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor, 35 Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalec, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala, 36 Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech, 37 Which was the son

"high-priest" being in the singular number in the best MSS. From this it might be inferred that they were not high-priests in the same sense; they were, however, both at the head of the Jewish priesthood at that time. We learn that Annas had been officially high-priest, but had been deposed, and that Caiaphas was the recognised holder of the office. In answer to the question why Annas is still called high-priest, it may be noted that the term often occurs, to denote the chief priests or heads of the Sanhedrim. of

whom Annas would be one. And again, Annas having been really high-priest would in popular language retain his title. In Acts iv. 6 Annas is again called high-priest, while Caiaphas, who really held the office, is not so styled. In John xviii. 13 it is distinctly said that Caiaphas was high-priest, but the importance of his father-in-law Annas is shown by the fact that to him Jesus was led by his enemies. As Ebrard remarks, "On account of his influence Annas was regarded as high-priest, as well as Caiaphas, even after his deposition."

of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan, 38 Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

The evangelist mentioned John's imprisonment before Christ's being baptized, though it was near a year after it, because he would finish the story of John's ministry, and then introduce that of Christ. Now here we have,

First. A short account of Christ's baptism, which had been more fully related by St. Matthew. Jesus came to be baptized of John, and he was so, ver. 21, 22.

1. It is here said, that "when all the people were baptized," then "Jesus was baptized;" all that were then present. Christ would be baptized last, among the common people, and in the rear of them; thus he humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation, as one of the least, nay, as less than the least. He saw what multitudes were hereby prepared to receive him, and then he appeared.

2. Notice is here taken of Christ's praying when he was baptized, which was not in Matthew; "being baptized, and praying." He did not confess sin, as others did, for he had none to confess; but he prayed as others did, for he would thus keep up communion with his Father. Note, The inward and spiritual grace, which sacraments are the outward and visible signs of, must be fetched in by prayer, and therefore prayer must always accompany them. We have reason to think that Christ now prayed for this manifestation of God's favour to him, which immediately followed; he prayed for the discovery of his Father's favour to him, and the descent of the Spirit. What was promised to Christ, he must obtain by prayer: "Ask of me, and I will give thee," &c. Thus he would put an honour upon prayer, would tie us to it, and encourage us in it.

3. When he prayed, "the heaven was opened." He that by his power parted the waters to make a way through them to Canaan, now by his power parted the air, another fluid element, to open a correspondence with the heavenly Canaan. Thus was there opened to Christ, and by him to us, "a new and living way into the holiest;" sin had shut up heaven, but Christ's prayer opened it again. Prayer is an ordinance that opens heaven; "knock, and it shall be opened to you."

4. "The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him." Our Lord Jesus was now to receive greater measures of the Spirit than before, to qualify him for his prophetic office; Isa. lxi. 1, when he begins to preach, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon him." Now this is here expressed by a sensible evidence, for his encouragement in his work, and for the satisfaction of John Baptist, for he was told before, that by this sign it should be notified to him which was the Christ. Dr. Lightfoot suggests that the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, that he might be revealed to be a personal substance, and not merely an operation of the Godhead: and thus, saith he, "was made a full, clear, and sensible demonstration of the Trinity, at the beginning of the Gospel, and very fitly is this done at Christ's baptism, who was to make the ordinance of baptism a badge of the profession of that faith in the doctrine of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

5. There "came a voice from heaven," from God the Father, from the "excellent glory," so it is expressed, 2 Pet. i. 17, "Thou art my beloved Son." Here, and in Mark, it is expressed as spoken to Christ; in Matthew, as spoken of him, "This is my beloved Son." It comes all to one; it was intended to be a notification to John, and as such, properly expressed by "this is my beloved Son;" and likewise an answer to his prayer, and so it is most fitly expressed by "thou art." It was foretold concerning the Messiah, "I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son," 2 Sam. vii. 14; "I will make him my firstborn," Ps. lxxix. 27; that he should be God's elect, in whom his soul delighted, Isa. xlii. 1; and accordingly it is here declared, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Secondly. A long account of Christ's pedigree, which had been more briefly related by St. Matthew. Here is,

1. His age. He now "began to be about thirty years of age." So old Joseph was when he stood before Pharaoh, Gen. xli. 46; David, when he began to reign, 2 Sam. v. 4; and at this age the priests were to enter upon the full execution of their office, Num. iv. 3. Dr. Lightfoot thinks it is plain, by the manner of expression here, that he was just twenty-nine years old complete, and entering upon his thirtieth year, in the month Tisri. After this he lived three years and a half, and died when he was thirty-two years old and a half. Three years and a half, the time of Christ's ministry, is a period of time very remarkable in Scripture; three years and six months the heavens were shut up in Elijah's time, ch. iv. 25; Jas. v. 17. This was the half week in which the Messiah was to confirm the covenant, Dan. ix. 27. This period is expressed in the prophetic writings by a time, times, and half a time, Dan. xii. 7; Rev. xii. 14, and by forty-two months, and a thousand two hundred and threescore days, Rev. xi. 2, 3, where it is the time fixed for the witnesses' prophesying in sackcloth, in conformity to Christ's preaching in his humiliation just so long.

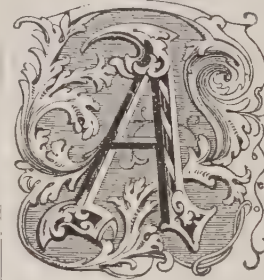
2. His pedigree, ver. 23, &c. Matthew had given us somewhat of this; he goes no higher than Abraham, but Luke brings it as high as Adam. Matthew designed to shew that Christ was the son of Abraham, in whom "all the families of the earth are blessed," and that he was heir to the throne of David; and therefore he begins with Abraham, and brings the genealogy down to Jacob, who was the father of Joseph, an heir male of the house of David; but Luke, designing to shew that Christ was the seed of the woman, that should break the serpent's head, traceth his pedigree upwards as high as Adam, and begins it with Eli, or Heli, who was the father, not of Joseph, but of the virgin Mary. And some suggest that the supply which our translators all along insert here, is not right, and that it should not be read "which" that is, "which Joseph was the son of Heli," but "which Jesus, he was the son of Joseph, of Eli, of Matthat," &c., and he, that is, "Jesus, was the son of Seth, of Adam, of God," ver. 38. The difference between the two evangelists in the genealogy of Christ has been a stumblingblock to infidels that cavil at the Word, but such a one as has been removed by the labours of learned men, both in the early ages of the church and in latter times, to which we refer ourselves. Matthew draws the pedigree from Solomon, whose natural line ending in Jehonias, the legal right was transferred to Salathiel, who was of the house of Nathan, another son of David, which line Luke here pursues, and so leaves out all the kings of Judah. It is well for us that our salvation doth not depend upon our being able to solve all these difficulties, nor is the Divine authority of the Gospels at all weakened by them, for the evangelists are not supposed to write these genealogies either of their own knowledge or by Divine inspiration, but to have copied them out of the authentic records of the genealogies among the Jews, the heralds' books, which therefore they were obliged to follow; and in them they found the pedigree of Jacob, the

father of Joseph, to be as it is set down in Matthew; and the pedigree of Heli, the father of Mary, to be as it is set down here in Luke; and this is the meaning of *ἐννοήσας*, ver. 23; not, "as it was supposed," referring only to Joseph, but *uti sanctum est lege*, "as it is entered into the books," as we find it upon record, by which it appeared that Jesus was both by father and mother's side the son of David, witness this extract out of their own records, which any one might at that time have liberty to compare with the original, and farther the evangelists needed not to go; nay, had they varied from that, they had not gained their point. And its not being contradicted at that time, is satisfaction enough to us now that it is a true copy; as it is farther worthy our observing, that when those records of the Jewish genealogies had continued thirty or forty years after these extracts out of them, long enough to justify the evangelists therein, they were all lost and destroyed with the Jewish state and nation, for now there was no more occasion for them.

Here is one difficulty occurs between Abraham and Noah, which gives us some perplexity, ver. 35, 36. Sala is said to be the son of Cainan, and he the son of Arphaxad; whereas Sala was the son of Arphaxad, Gen. x. 24; xi. 12; and there is no such man as Cainan found there. But as to that, it is sufficient to say that the seventy interpreters who, before our Saviour's time, translated the Old Testament into Greek, for reasons best known to themselves, inserted that Cainan; and St. Luke, writing among the Hellenist Jews, was obliged to make use of that translation, and therefore to take it as he found it. The genealogy concludes with this, "who was the son of Adam, the son of God." 1st. Some refer it to Adam; he was in a peculiar manner the son of God, being, more immediately than any of his offspring, the offspring of God by creation. 2nd. Others refer it to Christ, and so make the last words of this genealogy to speak his Divine and human nature; he was both the son of Adam and the Son of God, that he might be a proper Mediator between God and the sons of Adam, and might bring the sons of Adam to be, through him, the sons of God.

CHAPTER IV.

We left Christ newly baptized, and owned by a voice from heaven and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him. Now in this chapter we have, I. A farther preparation of him for his public ministry, by his being tempted in the wilderness, which we had the same account of before, in Matthew, which we have here. II. His entrance upon his public work in Galilee, ver. 14, 15; particularly, 1. At Nazareth, the city where he had been bred up, ver. 16—30, which we had no account of before in Matthew. 2. At Capernaum, where having preached to admiration, ver. 31, 32, he cast the devil out of a man that was possessed, ver. 33—37; cured Peter's mother in law of a fever, ver. 38, 39; and many others that were sick and possessed, ver. 40, 41; and then went and did the same in other cities of Galilee, ver. 42—44.



AND Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. 3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. 4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. 5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. 8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down from hence: 10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: 11 And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

iii. 4. Instead of the common arrangement here, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord," some adopt a different pointing, and, perhaps, a better one, "The voice of one crying, In the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord."

iii. 10—14. In these verses we have illustrated what is meant by the "fruits worthy of repentance" of verse 8. The people were to be benevolent, the publicans were to be just, and the soldiers were not to be oppressive and exacting, as they were often tempted to be.

iii. 19. This Herod is the same as is mentioned in verse 1, being tetrarch of Galilee, in which province John fulfilled his ministry. His father was Herod the Great, and his mother Malthace, a Samaritan woman. He had married as his first wife the daughter of King Aretas, but had formed a base and wicked connection with the wife of his brother Philip. In other respects his conduct was disreputable. Some further details occur in Mark vi. 17—20. Josephus says Herod imprisoned John at a place called Machærus.

The last words of the foregoing chapter, that Jesus was the son of Adam, speak him to be the seed of the woman. Being so, we have him here, according to the promise, breaking the serpent's head, baffling and foiling the devil in all his temptations; who by one temptation had baffled and foiled our first parents. Thus in the beginning of the war he made reprisals upon him, and conquered the conqueror. In this story of Christ's temptation, observe,

I. How he was prepared and fitted for it. He that designed him the trial, furnished him accordingly; for though we know not what exercises may be before us, nor what encounters we may be reserved for, Christ did, and was provided accordingly; and God doth for us, and we hope will provide accordingly.

First. He was "full of the Holy Ghost," who had descended on him like a dove; had now greater measures of the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Holy Ghost than ever before. Note, Those are well armed against the strongest temptations that are full of the Holy Ghost.

Secondly. He was newly "returned from Jordan," where he was baptized, and owned by a voice from heaven to be the beloved Son of God, and thus he was prepared for this combat. Note, When we have had the most comfortable communion with God, and the clearest discoveries of his favour to us, we may expect that Satan will set upon us,—the richest ship is the pirate's prize,—and that God will suffer him to do so, that the power of his grace may be manifested and magnified.

Thirdly. He was "led by the Spirit into the wilderness," by the good Spirit, who led him as a champion into the field, to fight the enemy that he was sure to conquer. His being led into the wilderness, 1. Gave some advantage to the tempter, for there he had him alone; no friend with him, by whose prayers and advice he might be assisted in the hour of temptation: "Woe to him that is alone!" He might give Satan advantage who knew his own strength; we may not, who know our own weakness. 2. He gained some advantage to himself during his forty days' fasting in the wilderness; we may suppose that he was wholly taken up in proper meditation, and in the consideration of his own undertaking, and the work he had before him; that he spent all this time in immediate converse with his Father, as Moses in the mount, without any diversion, distraction, or interruption. Of all the days of Christ's life in the flesh, these seem to come nearest to the angelic perfection, and the heavenly life, and this prepared him for Satan's assaults, and hereby he was fortified against them.

Fourthly. He continued fasting, ver. 2: "in those days he did eat nothing." This fast was altogether miraculous, like those of Moses and Elijah, and shews him to be, like them, a prophet sent of God. It is probable it was in the wilderness of Horeb, the same wilderness in which Moses and Elijah fasted. As by retiring into the wilderness he shewed himself perfectly indifferent to the world, so by this fasting he shewed himself perfectly indifferent to the body; and Satan cannot easily take hold of those who are thus loosened from, and dead to, the world and the flesh. The more we keep under the body, and bring it into subjection, the less advantage Satan has against us.

II. How he was assaulted by one temptation after another, and how he defeated the design of the tempter in every assault, and became more than a conqueror. During the forty days he was "tempted of the devil," ver. 2, not by any inward suggestions, for the prince of this world had nothing in Christ by which to inject any such, but by outward solicitations, perhaps in the likeness of a serpent, as he tempted our first parents; but at the end of the forty days he came nearer him, and did as it were close with him, when he perceived that he was an hungered, ver. 2. Probably our Lord Jesus then began to look about among the trees, to see if he could find any thing that was eatable; from whence the devil took occasion to make the following proposal to him:

First. He tempted him to distrust his Father's care of him, and to set up for himself, and shift for provision for himself in such a way as his Father had not appointed for him, ver. 3: "If thou be the Son of God," as the voice from heaven declared, "command this stone that it be made bread." 1. "I counsel thee to do it, for God, if he be thy Father, has forgotten thee, and it will be long enough ere he sends either ravens or angels to feed thee." If we begin to think of being our own carvers, and of living by our own forecast, without depending upon Divine providence, of getting wealth by our might and the power of our hands, we must look upon it as a temptation of Satan's, and reject it accordingly; it is Satan's counsel to think of an independency upon God. 2. "I challenge thee to do it, if thou canst; if thou dost not do it, I will say thou art not the Son of God; for John Baptist said lately that "God is able of stones to raise up children to Abraham," which is the greater; thou therefore hast not the power of the Son of God, if thou dost not of stones make bread for thyself when thou needest it, which is the lesser." Thus was God himself tempted in the wilderness; "Can he furnish a table? Can he give bread?" *Ps. lxxviii. 19, 20.*

Now, **First.** Christ yielded not to the temptation; he would not turn that stone into bread, no, not though he was hungry. 1st. Because he would not do what Satan bid him do, for that would have looked as if there had been indeed a compact between him and the prince of devils. Note, We must not do any thing that looks like giving place to the devil. Miracles were wrought for the confirming of faith, and the devil had no faith to be confirmed, and therefore he would not do it for him. He did his signs, "in the presence of his disciples," *Jno. xx. 30*; and particularly the "beginning of his miracles," turning water into wine, which he did that his disciples might believe on him, *Jno. ii. 11*; but here in the wilderness he had no disciples with him. 2nd. He wrought miracles for the ratification of his doctrine; and, therefore, till he began to preach, he would not begin to work miracles. 3rd. He would not work miracles for himself, and his own supply, lest he should seem impatient of hunger, whereas he came not to please himself, but to suffer grief, and that grief among others; and because he would shew that he pleased not himself, he would rather turn water into wine, for the credit and convenience of his friend, than stones into bread for his own necessary supply. 4th. He would reserve the proof of his being the Son of God for hereafter, and would rather be upbraided by Satan with being weak, and not able to do it, than be persuaded by Satan to do that which it was not fit for him to do; thus he was upbraided by his enemies, as if he could not save himself, and come down from the cross, when he could have come down, but would not, because it was not fit he should. 5th. He would not do any thing that looked like distrust of his Father, or acting separately from him, or any thing disagreeable to his present state; being "in all things made like unto his brethren," he would, like other the children of God, live in a dependence upon the Divine providence and promise, and trust him either to send him supply into the wilderness, or lead him to a city of habitation, where there was supply, as he used to do, *Ps. cxlii. 5-7*; and in the meantime would support him, though he was hungry, as he had done these forty days past.

Secondly. He returned a Scripture answer to it; ver. 4, "It is written." This is the first word recorded as spoken by Christ after his instalment in his prophetic office, and it is a quotation out of the Old Testament, to shew that he came to assert and maintain the authority of the Scripture, as uncontrollable even by Satan himself. And though he had the Spirit without

measure, and a doctrine of his own to preach, and a religion to found, yet it agreed with Moses and the prophets, whose writings he therefore lays down as a rule to himself, and recommends to us as a reply to Satan and his temptations. The Word of God is our sword, and faith in that Word is our shield; we should therefore be mighty in the Scriptures, and go in that might, go forth and go on in our spiritual warfare. Know what is written, for it is for our learning, for our use. The text of Scripture he makes use of, is quoted from *Deu. viii. 3*, "Man shall not live by bread alone;" "I need not turn the stone into bread, for God can send manna for my nourishment, as he did for Israel." Man can live "by every Word of God," that is, by whatever God will appoint that he shall live. How had Christ lived, lived comfortably, these forty days last past? Not by bread, but by the Word of God; by meditation upon that Word, and communion with it, and with God in and by it; and in like manner he could live yet, though now he began to be an hungered. God has many ways of providing for his people without the ordinary means of subsistence, and therefore he is not at any time to be distrusted, but at all times to be depended upon in the way of duty. If meat be wanting, God can take away the appetite, or give such degrees of patience as will enable a man even to laugh at destruction and famine, *Job v. 22*; or make pulse and water more nourishing than all the portion of the king's meat, *Dan. i. 12, 13*; and enable his people to rejoice in the Lord, when the fig tree doth not blossom, *Hab. iii. 17, 18*. She was an active believer that said she had many a meal's meat of the promises when she wanted bread.

Secondly. He tempted him to accept from him the kingdom which, as the Son of God, he expected to receive from his Father, and to do him homage for it, ver. 5-7. This evangelist puts this temptation second, which Matthew had put last, and which it should seem was really the last; but Luke was full of it, as the blackest and most violent, and therefore hastened to it. In the devil's tempting our first parents, he represented to them the forbidden fruit, first as good for food, and then as pleasant to the eyes, and they were overpowered by both these charms. Satan here first tempted Christ to turn the stones into bread, which would be good for food, and then shewed him the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, which was pleasant to the eyes; but in both these he overpowered Satan, and perhaps with an eye to that Luke calleth the order. Now observe,

1. How Satan managed this temptation, to prevail with Christ to become a tributary to him, and to receive his kingdom by delegation from him.

1st. He gave him a prospect of "all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time," an airy representation of them, such as he thought most likely to strike the fancy, and seem a real prospect; and to humour the thing, he "took him up" for this purpose "into a high mountain;" and because we next, after the temptation, find Christ on the other side Jordan, some think it probable that it was to the top of Pisgah that the devil took him, from whence Moses had a sight of Canaan. And that it was but a phantasm that the devil here presented our Saviour with, as the prince of the power of the air, is confirmed by that circumstance which Luke here takes notice of, that it was done "in a moment of time;" whereas if a man take a prospect of but one country, he must do it successively, must turn himself round, and take a view first of one part, and then of another. Thus the devil thought to impose upon our Saviour with a fallacy, a *deceptio visus*; and by making him believe that he could shew him all the kingdoms of the world, would draw him into an opinion that he could give him all those kingdoms.

2nd. He boldly alleged that these kingdoms were all delivered to him, that he had power to dispose of them, and all their glory, and to give it to whomsoever he would, ver. 6. Some think herein he pretended to be an angel of light; and that, as one of the angels that was set over the kingdoms, he had bought out, or fought out, all the rest, and so was intrusted with the disposal of them all, and in God's name would give them him, knowing they were designed for him; but clogged with this condition, that he should fall down and worship him; which a good angel would have been so far from demanding, that he would not have admitted it, no, not upon shewing much greater things than these, as appears, *Rev. xiv. 10*; *xxii. 9*. But I rather take it that he claimed this power as Satan, and as delivered to him, not by the Lord, but by the kings and people of these kingdoms, who gave their power and honour to the devil, *Eph. ii. 2*. Hence he is called "the god of this world," and "the prince of this world." It was promised to the Son of God that he should have "the heathen for his inheritance," *Ps. ii. 8*. "Why," saith the devil, "the heathen are mine, are my subjects and votaries; but, however, they shall be thine; I will give them thee, upon condition that thou worship me for them, and say they are the rewards which I have given thee, as others have done before thee, (*Hos. ii. 12*), and consent to have and hold them by, from, and under me."

3rd. He demanded of him homage and adoration: "If thou wilt worship me, all shall be thine," ver. 7. **First.** He would have him worship him himself; perhaps he doth not mean so as never to worship God, but let him worship him in conjunction with God; for the devil knows if he can but once come in a partner, he shall soon be sole proprietor. **Secondly.** He would indent with him, that when, according to the promise made to him, he had got possession of the kingdoms of this world, he should make no alteration of religions in them, but permit and suffer the nations, as they had done hitherto, to sacrifice to devils, *1 Cor. x. 20*; that he should still keep up demon-worship in the world; and let him take all the power and glory of the kingdoms, if he pleased. Let who will take the wealth and grandeur of this earth, Satan has all he would have, if he can but have men's hearts, and affections, and adorations; can but work in the children of disobedience, for then he effectually devours them.

2. How our Lord Jesus triumphed over this temptation; he gave it a peremptory repulse, rejected it with abhorrence; ver. 8. "Get thee behind me, Satan;" I cannot bear the mention of it. What! worship the enemy of God, whom I came to serve? and of man, whom I came to save? No; I will never do it. Such a temptation as this was not to be reasoned with, but immediately refused. It was presently knocked on the head with one word, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God;" and not only so, but him only, him and no other. And therefore Christ will not worship Satan; nor when he has the kingdoms of the world delivered to him by his Father, as he expects shortly to have, will he suffer any remains of the worship of the devil to continue in them. No, it shall be perfectly rooted out and abolished wherever his Gospel comes; he will make no composition with him. Polytheism and idolatry must go down, as Christ's kingdom gets up; men must be "turned from the power of Satan unto God;" from the worship of devils to the worship of the only living and true God; this is the great Divine law that Christ will re-estabish among men, and by his holy religion reduce men to the obedience of, "that God only is to be served and worshipped;" and therefore whoever set up any creature as the object of religious worship, though it were a saint, or an angel, or the virgin Mary herself, they directly thwart Christ's design, and relapse into heathenism.

Thirdly. He tempted him to be his own murderer, in a presumptuous confidence of his Father's protection, such as he had no warrant for. Observe,

1. What he designed in this temptation: "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down," ver. 4. 1st. He would have him seek for a new proof of his

iii. 36. This Cainan is not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, but is found in the Septuagint version of Gen. x. 24, xi. 12, 13, which Luke probably follows. It is the opinion of some, however, that the name crept in here through the error of some copyist from verse 37, where it is certainly correct.

iv. 4. From this verse the word "saying," and the expression, "but by every word of God," are omitted by the Sinaitic, Vatican, and other MSS.

iv. 5. In some of the best ancient copies this verse reads, "And taking him up he showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world," &c. In the Gospel of Matthew the order of the temptations is different, this display of the world's kingdoms occupying the third place instead of the second.

iv. 8. The Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. omit the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan," which are also left out by some modern editors.

iv. 9. For "a pinnacle" we should read "the pinnacle;" supposed

being the Son of God, as if that which his Father had given him, by the voice from heaven and the descent of the Spirit upon him, were not sufficient; which would have been a dishonour to God, as if he had not chosen the most proper way of giving him the assurance of it; and it would have argued a distrust of the Spirit's dwelling in him, which was the great and most convincing proof to himself of his being the Son of God, *Heb. i. 8, 9.* 2nd. He would have him seek a new method of proclaiming and publishing this to the world. The devil in effect suggests, that it was in an obscure corner that he was attested to be the Son of God—among a company of ordinary people, who attended John's baptism, that his honours were proclaimed; but if he would now declare from "the pinnacle of the temple," among all the great people who attended the temple service, that he was the Son of God, and then, for proof of it, throw himself down unhurt, he would presently be received by every body as a messenger sent from heaven. Thus Satan would have him seek honours of his devising, in contempt of those which God had put on him, and manifest himself in the temple at Jerusalem; whereas God designed he should be more manifest among John's penitents, to whom his doctrine would be more welcome than to the priests. 3rd. It is likely he had some hopes, that though he could not throw him down to do him the least mischief, yet if he would but throw himself down, the fall might be his death, and then he should have got him finely out of the way.

2. How he backed and enforced this temptation. He suggested, "It is written," *ver. 10.* Christ had quoted Scripture against him, and he thought he would be quits with him, and would shew that he could quote Scripture as well as he. It has been usual with heretics and seducers to pervert Scripture, and to press the sacred writings into the service of the worst of wickednesses. "He will give his angels charge over thee," if thou be his Son, "and in their hands they shall bear thee up." And, now he was upon the pinnacle of the temple, he might especially expect this ministration of angels; for, if he were the Son of God, the temple was the proper place for him to be in, *Lu. ii. 41*; and if any place under the sun had a guard of angels constantly, it must needs be that, *Ps. lxxviii. 17.* It is true God has promised the protection of angels, to encourage us to trust him, not to tempt him; as far as the promise of God's presence with us, so far the promise of the angels' ministration goes, but no farther; they shall keep thee when thou goest on the ground, where thy way lies, but not if thou wilt presume to fly in the air.

3. How he was baffled and defeated in the temptation, *ver. 12.* Christ quoted *Deu. vi. 16*, where it is said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," by desiring a sign for the proof of Divine revelation, when he has already given that which is sufficient; for so Israel did when they "tempted God in the wilderness," saying, "He gave us water out of the rock, but can he give flesh also?" This Christ would be guilty of, if he should say, "He did indeed prove me to be the Son of God, by sending the Spirit upon me, which is the greater; but can he also give his angels a charge concerning me, which is the lesser?"

III. What was the result and issue of this combat, *ver. 13.* Our victorious Redeemer kept his ground, and came off a conqueror, not for himself only, but for us also.

First. The devil emptied his quiver; he "ended all the temptation;" Christ gave him opportunity to say, and do all he could against him; he let him try all his force, and yet defeated him. Did Christ suffer being tempted till all the temptation was ended; and must not we expect also to pass all our trials, to go through the hour of temptation assigned us?

Secondly. He then quitted the field; "he departed from him;" he saw it was to no purpose to attack him; he had nothing in him for his fiery darts to fasten upon; he had no blind side, no weak or unguarded part in his wall, and therefore gave up the cause. Note, If we resist the devil, he will flee from us.

Thirdly. Yet he continued his malice against him, and departed with a resolution to attack him again; he departed but "for a season," *ἀχρι καιρου*,—till a season; or, till the season when he was again to be let loose upon him, not as a tempter, to draw him to sin, and so to strike at his head, which was what he now aimed at, and was wholly defeated in it; but as a persecutor, to bring him to suffer, by Judas and other the wicked instruments whom he employed, and so to bruise his heel, which it was told him, *Gen. iii. 15*, he should have power to do, and would do, though it would be the breaking of his own head. He departed now, till that season came which Christ calls the power of darkness, *Lu. xxii. 53*; and when the prince of this world would again come, *Jno. xiv. 30*.

14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. 16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto

them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. 22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? 23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. 24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. 25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and sixth months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. 28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. 30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,



READING THE LAW.—MODERN JEWISH.

After Christ had vanquished the evil spirit, he made it appear how much he was under the influence of the good Spirit; and having defended himself against the devil's assaults, he now begins to act offensively, and to make those attacks upon him by his preaching and miracles which he could not resist or repel. Observe,

I. What is here said in general of his preaching, and the entertainment it met with in Galilee, a remote part of the country, distant from Jerusalem. It was a part of Christ's humiliation that he began his ministry there. But, 1st. Thither he came "in the power of the Spirit;" the same Spirit that qualified him for the exercise of his prophetic office, strongly inclined him to it. He was not to wait for a call from men, for he had light and life in himself. 2nd. There "he taught in their synagogues," their places of public worship; where they met, not, as in the temple, for ceremonial services, but for the moral acts of devotion—to read, and expound, and apply the Word, to pray and praise, and for church discipline. These came to be more frequented since the captivity, when the ceremonial worship was near expiring. 3rd. This he did so as that he gained a great reputation, "a fame of him went through all that region," *ver. 14*; and it was a good fame, for, *ver. 15*, he was "glorified of all;" every body admired him, and cried him up; they never heard such preaching in all their lives. Now at first he met with no contempt or contradiction; all glorified him, and there were none as yet that vilified him.

II. Of his preaching at Nazareth, the city where he was brought up, and the entertainment it met with there. And here we are told how he preached there, and how he was persecuted.

First. How he preached there; and in that observe, 1. The opportunity he had for it. "He came to Nazareth," when he had gained a reputation in other places, in hopes that thereby something at least of the contempt and prejudice

to be an erection on one of the Temple buildings, a sort of turret overlooking the Kidron valley. Dr. Oosterzee says, "Although, considered in itself, it might be very probable that the Lord should spend a single day really at Jerusalem during this period, yet it seems to us more probable that he did not corporally quit the wilderness till the conflict was over. To his inward consciousness, he undoubtedly seemed to stand upon the pinnacle; and with regard to the power of the Evil One to place him in spirit in a place so

different from that occupied by his body, we may here recall the words of Gregory: 'It is no wonder if Christ permitted himself to be led about by the devil, by whose members he permitted himself to be crucified.'" But surely Gregory understood the narrative in a literal sense, which has been the view of most expositors, except in reference to seeing the kingdoms of the world in a moment.

iv. 16. From the expression, "as his custom was," Bengel and others infer that the Lord had been in the habit of reading in public

with which his countrymen would look upon him might be worn off. There he took occasion to preach, 1st. In the synagogue, the proper place; where it had been his custom to attend when he was a private person, ver. 16. We ought to attend on the public worship of God as we have opportunity. But now he was entered upon his public ministry, there he preached. Where the multitudes of fish were, there this wise Fisherman would cast his net. 2nd. On the sabbath day, the proper time, which the pious Jews spent, not in a mere ceremonial rest from worldly labour, but in the duties of God's worship, as of old they frequented the schools of the prophets, on the new moons and the sabbaths. Note. It is good to keep sabbaths in solemn assemblies.

2. The call he had to it. 1st. He "stood up to read." They had in their synagogues seven readers every sabbath; the first a priest, the second a Levite, and the other five Israelites of that synagogue. We often find Christ preaching in other synagogues, but never reading, but only in this synagogue at Nazareth, of which he had been many years a member. Now he offered his service, as he had perhaps often done; he read one of the lessons out of the prophets, *Acts* xiii. 13, 15. Note. Reading the Scriptures is very proper work to be done in religious assemblies; and Christ himself did not think it any disparagement to him to be employed in it. 2nd. "The book of the prophet *Isaiah* was delivered to him," either by the ruler of the synagogue, or by the minister mentioned ver. 20; so that he was no intruder, but duly authorized *pro hac vice*,—"on this occasion." The second lesson for that day being in the prophecy of *Isaiah*, they gave him that volume to read in.

3. The text he preached upon. He stood up to read, to teach us reverence in reading and hearing the Word of God. When Ezra opened the book of the law all the people stood up, *Neh.* viii. 5; so did Christ here, when he read in the book of the prophets. Now the book being delivered to him, 1st. He opened it. The books of the Old Testament were in a manner shut up until Christ opened them, *Isa.* xxix. 11. Worthy "is the Lamb that was slain to take the book and open the seals," for he can open, not the book only, but the understanding. 2nd. He found the place that was appointed to be read that day in course, which he needed not be directed to; he soon found it, and read it, and took it for his text. Now his text was taken out of *Isa.* lxi. 1, 2, which is here quoted at large, ver. 18, 19. There was a providence in that that portion of Scripture should be read that day, which speaks so very plainly of the Messiah, that they might be left inexcusable who knew him not, though they heard the voices of the prophets read every sabbath day, which bare witness of him, *Acts* xiii. 27.

This text gives a full account of Christ's undertaking, and the work he came into the world to do. Observe, *First*. How he was qualified for the work; "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me;" all the gifts and graces of the Spirit were conferred upon him, not by measure, as upon other prophets, but without measure, *Jno.* iii. 34. He now came "in the power of the Spirit," ver. 14.

Secondly. How he was commissioned; "because he has anointed me," and "sent me." And this extraordinary qualification amounted to a commission; his being anointed signifies both his being fitted for the undertaking and called to it. Those whom God appoints to any service he anoints for it; "because he hath sent me, he hath sent his Spirit along with me."

Thirdly. What his work was. He was qualified and commissioned, 1st. To be a great prophet; he was anointed to preach, that is three times mentioned here, for that was the work he was now entering upon. Observe, *First*. To whom he was to preach: to the poor; to those that were poor in the world, whom the Jewish doctors disdain to undertake the teaching of, and spoke of with contempt; to those that were poor in spirit, to the meek and humble, and to those that are truly sorrowful for sin. To them the Gospel and the grace of it will be welcome, and they shall have it, *Mat.* xi. 5. *Secondly*. What he was to preach; in general, he must preach the Gospel. He is sent *evangelizantia*,—"to evangelize them;" not only to preach to them, but to make that preaching effectual; to bring it not only to their ears, but to their hearts, and deliver them into the mould of it. Three things he is to preach: 1. "Deliverance to the captives," the Gospel is a proclamation of liberty, like that to Israel in Egypt, in Babylon. By the merit of Christ sinners may be loosed from the bonds of guilt, and by his Spirit and grace, from the bondage of corruption. It is a deliverance from the worst of thralldoms, which all those shall have the benefit of that are willing to make Christ their head, and are willing to be ruled by him. 2. "Recovering of sight to the blind;" he came, not only by the word of the Gospel to bring light to them that sat in the dark, but, by the power of his grace, to give sight to them that were blind; not only the Gentile world, but every unregenerate soul, that is not only in bondage, but in blindness, like Samson and Zedekiah. Christ came to tell us that he has eyesalve for us, which we may have for the asking; that if our prayer be, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened," his answer shall be, "Receive your sight." 3. "The acceptable year of the Lord," ver. 19. He came to let the world know that the God whom they had offended was willing to be reconciled to them, and to accept of them upon new terms; that there was yet a way of making their services acceptable to him; that there is now a time of good will towards men. It alludes to the year of release, or that of jubilee, which was an acceptable year to servants, that were then set at liberty; to debtors, against whom all actions then dropped; and to those who had mortgaged their lands, for then they returned to them again. Christ came to sound the jubilee trumpet, and blessed were they that heard the joyful sound, *Ps.* lxxxix. 15; it was an accepted time, for it was a day of salvation.

2nd. Christ came to be a great physician; for he was sent to "heal the broken-hearted," to comfort and cure afflicted consciences, and to give peace to those that were troubled and humbled for sins, and under a dread of God's wrath against them for them; and to bring them to rest who were weary and heavy laden under the burthen of guilt and corruption.

3rd. To be a great Redeemer; he not only proclaims liberty to the captives, as Cyrus did to the Jews in Babylon,—whoever will, may go up; but he sets at liberty them that are bruised, he doth by his Spirit incline and enable them to make use of the liberty granted, as then none did but those whose spirits God stirred up, *Ezr.* i. 5. He came in God's name to discharge poor sinners, that were debtors and prisoners to Divine justice; the prophets could but proclaim liberty, but Christ, as one having authority, as one that had power on earth to forgive sins, came to set at liberty; and therefore this clause is added here; and Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that according to a liberty the Jews allowed their readers, to compare scripture with scripture in their reading, for the explication of the text, Christ added it from *Isa.* lviii. 6, where it is made the duty of the acceptable year to let the oppressed go free, where the phrase the Seventy use is the same with this here.

4. Here is Christ's application of this text to himself, ver. 21; when he had read it, he "rolled up the book," and gave it again to the minister or clerk that attended, and sat down, according to the custom of the Jewish teachers; he "sat daily in the temple teaching," *Mat.* xxvi. 55. Now he began his discourse thus, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." "This," which *Isaiah* wrote by way of prophecy, I have now read to you by way of history. It now began to be fulfilled in Christ's entrance upon his public ministry; now, in the report they heard of his preaching and miracles in other places; now, in

his preaching to them in their own synagogue. It is most probable Christ went on, and shewed particularly how this scripture was fulfilled in the doctrine he preached concerning the kingdom of heaven at hand, that that was preaching liberty, and sight, and healing, and all the blessings of the acceptable year of the Lord. Many other gracious words proceeded out of his mouth, which these were but the beginning of; for Christ often preached long sermons which we have but a short account of. This was enough to introduce a great deal, "This day is this scripture fulfilled." Note, 1st. All the Scriptures of the Old Testament that were to be fulfilled in the Messiah, had their full accomplishment in the Lord Jesus, which abundantly proves that this was "he that should come." 2nd. In the providences of God it is fit to observe the fulfilling of the Scriptures. The works of God are not only the accomplishment of his secret word, but of his word revealed; and it will help us to understand both the Scriptures and the providences of God to compare them one with another.

5. Here is the attention and admiration of the auditors.

1st. Their attention, ver. 20: "the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue," and probably there were a great many, "were fastened on him," big with expectation what he would say, having heard so much of late concerning him. Note. It is good, in hearing the Word, to keep the eye fixed upon the minister by whom God is speaking to us; for as the eye affects the heart, so usually the heart follows the eye, and is wandering or fixed as that is. Or rather, let us learn hence to keep the eye fixed upon Christ speaking to us in and by the minister. "What saith my Lord unto my servant?"

2nd. Their admiration, ver. 22: they "all bare him witness" that he spoke admirably well, and to the purpose; they all commended him, and "wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth;" and yet, as appears by what follows, they did not believe in him. Note. It is possible that those who are admirers of good ministers and good preaching may yet be themselves no true Christians. Observe, *First*. What it was they admired: "the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth;" the words of grace; good words, and spoken in a winning, melting way. Note, Christ's words are words of grace; for, grace being poured into his lips, *Ps.* xlv. 2, words of grace poured from them; and these words of grace are to be wondered at. Christ's name was wonderful, and in nothing was he more so than in his grace, in the words of his grace, and the power that went along with those words. We may well wonder that he should speak such words of grace to such graceless wretches as we are. *Secondly*. What it was that increased their wonder; and that was the consideration of his original; they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" and therefore his extraction mean, and his education mean. Some from this suggestion took occasion perhaps so much the more to admire his gracious words, concluding he must needs be taught of God, for they knew no one else had taught him; while others, perhaps, with this consideration corrected their wonder at his gracious words, and concluded there could be nothing really admirable in them, whatever appeared, because he was the son of Joseph. Can any thing great, or worthy our regard, come from one so mean?

6. Christ's anticipating an objection, which he knew to be in the minds of many of his hearers. Observe,

1st. What the objection was, ver. 33: "Ye will surely say to me, Physician, heal thyself;" that is, "Because ye know that I am the son of Joseph, your neighbour, you will expect that I should work miracles among you, as I have done in other places; as one would expect that a physician, if he be able, should heal not only himself, but those of his own family and fraternity. Most of Christ's miracles were cures. 'Now why should not the sick in thine own city be healed, as well as those in other cities?' They were designed to cure people of their unbelief. 'Now why should not the disease of unbelief, if it be indeed a disease, be cured in those of thine own city, as well as in those of others?' 'Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum,' that has been so much talked of, 'do here also in thine own country.' They were pleased with Christ's gracious words, only because they hoped they were but the introduction to some wondrous works of his; they wanted to have their lame, and blind, and sick, and lepers healed and helped, that the charge of their town might be eased; and that was the chief thing they looked at; they thought their own town as worthy to be the stage of miracles as any others; and why should not his neighbours and acquaintance have the benefit of his preaching and miracles rather than any other?"

2nd. How he answers this objection against the course he took.

First. By a plain and positive reason, why he would not make Nazareth his head-quarters, ver. 24; because it generally holds true, "that no prophet is accepted in his own country;" at least not so well, nor with such probability of doing good, as in some other country; experience seals to this. When prophets have been sent with messages and miracles of mercy, few of their own countrymen, that have known their extraction and education, have been fit to receive them; so Dr. Hammond. Familiarity breeds contempt; and we are apt to think meanly of those whose conversation we have been accustomed to; and they will scarcely be duly honoured as prophets who were well known when they were in the rank of private men; that is most esteemed that is far fetched and dear bought, above what is homebred, though really more excellent. This ariseth likewise from the envy which neighbours commonly have towards one another, so that they cannot endure to see him their superior whom a while ago they took to be every way their inferior. For this reason Christ declined working miracles or doing any thing extraordinary at Nazareth, because of the rooted prejudices they had against him there.

Secondly. By pertinent examples of two of the most famous prophets of the Old Testament, who chose to dispense their favours among foreigners rather than among their own countrymen, and that, no doubt, by Divine direction.

1st. Elijah maintained a widow of Sarepta, a city of Sidon, one that was a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, when there was a famine in the land, ver. 25, 26. The story we have, *1 Kin.* xvii. 9; it is said here, that the heaven was shut up three years and six months; whereas it is said, *1 Kin.* xviii. 1, that in the third year Elijah shewed himself to Ahab, and there was rain; but that was not the third year of the drought, but the third year of Elijah's sojourning with the widow of Sarepta. As God would hereby shew himself a "Father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows," so he would shew that he was rich in mercy to all, even to the Gentiles.

2nd. Elisha cleansed Naaman the Syrian of his leprosy, though he was a Syrian, and not only a foreigner, but an enemy to Israel, ver. 27: "Many lepers were in Israel in the days of Eliseus," four particularly, that brought the news of the Syrians raising the siege of Samaria with precipitation, and leaving the plunder of their tents to enrich Samaria, when Elisha was himself in the besieged city, and this was the accomplishment of his prophecy too: see *2 Kin.* vii. 1, 3, &c. And yet we do not find that Elisha cleansed them, no, not for a reward of their service, and the good tidings they brought; but only this Syrian; for none but he had faith to apply himself to the prophet for a cure. Christ himself often met with greater faith among Gentiles than in Israel. And here he mentions both these instances, to shew that he did not dispense the favour of his miracles by private respects, but according to God's will

before his baptism, and while still a youth at Nazareth. Alford says, "It is doubtful whether the Rabbinical cycle of Sabbath readings, or lessons from the law and prophets, were as yet in use; but some regular plan was adopted, and according to that plan, after the reading of the law, which always preceded, the portion from the prophets came to be read, which for that Sabbath fell in the prophet *Isaiah*."

iv. 20. Our Lord stood up to read, but sat down in order to

expound the Scripture, such being the ordinary postures on those occasions. "The minister" was the official whose duty it was to take charge of the sacred books, to remove them from the chest, and to return them when done with.

iv. 23. It is apparent from this reference to previous miracles at Capernaum, that these events occurred some time after the temptation.

iv. 26. The place here called Sarepta is called Zarephath in *1 Kings* xvii. 9. it was between Tyre and Sidon, as Josephus says.

appointment; and the people of Israel might as justly have said to Elijah or Elisha, as the Nazarenes to Christ, "Physician, heal thyself." Nay, Christ wrought his miracles, though not among his townsmen, yet among Israelites; whereas these great prophets wrought theirs among Gentiles. The examples of the saints, though they will not make a bad action good, yet will help to free a good action from the blame of exceptionable people.

Secondly, *How he was persecuted at Nazareth.*

1. That which provoked them was his taking notice of the favour which God, by Elijah and Elisha, shewed to the Gentiles: "when they heard these things, they were filled with wrath," ver. 28; they were all so; a great change since ver. 22, when they "wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth;" thus uncertain are the opinions and affections of the multitude, and so very fickle. If they had mixed faith with those gracious words of Christ which they wondered at, they would have been awakened, by these latter words of his, to take heed of sinning away their opportunities; but those only pleased the ear, and went no farther; and therefore these grated on the ear, and irritated their corruptions. They were angry that he should compare himself, whom they knew to be the son of Joseph, with those great prophets, and compare them with the men of that corrupt age when all had bowed the knee to Baal. But that which especially exasperated them was, that he intimated some kindness God had in reserve for the Gentiles, which the Jews could by no means bear the thoughts of, *Acts xxii. 21.* Their pious ancestors pleased themselves with the hopes of adding of the Gentiles to the church; witness many of David's Psalms, and Isaiah's prophecies. But this degenerate race, when they had forfeited the covenant themselves, hated to think that any others should be taken in.

2. They were provoked to that degree that they made an attempt upon his life. This was a severe trial, now at his setting out, but a specimen of the usage he met with, when he came to his own and they received him not. 1st. They rose up in a tumultuous manner against him; interrupted him in his discourse, and themselves in their devotions, for they could not stay till their synagogue worship was over. 2nd. They "thrust him out of the city," as one not worthy to have a residence among them, though there he had had a settlement so long; they thrust from them the Saviour and the salvation, as if he had been the offscouring of all things. How justly might he have called for fire from heaven upon them; but this was the day of his patience. 3rd. They "led him unto the brow of the hill," with a purpose to "throw him down headlong," as one not fit to live. Though they knew how inoffensively he had for so many years lived among them, how shining his conversation had been; though they had heard such a fame of him, and had but just now themselves admired his gracious words; though in justice he ought to have been allowed a fair hearing, and liberty to explain himself, yet they hurried him away in a popular fury, or frenzy rather, to put him to death in a most barbarous manner. Sometimes they were ready to stone him for the good works he did, *Jno. x. 32*; here, for not doing the good works they expected from him: to such a height of wickedness was violence sprung up.

3. Yet he escaped, because his hour was not yet come: "he passed through the midst of them" unhurt; either he blinded their eyes, as the Sodomites and Syrians were, or he bound their hands, or filled them with confusion, so that they could not do what they designed; for his work was not done, it was but just begun; his hour was not yet come; when it was come he freely surrendered himself. They drove him from them, and he went his way. He would have gathered Nazareth, but they would not; and therefore their house is left to them desolate. This added to the reproach of his being Jesus of Nazareth, that not only it was a place whence no good thing was expected, but that it was such a wicked, rude place, and so unkind to him; yet there was a providence in it, that he should not be much respected by the men of Nazareth, for that would have looked like a collusion between him and his old acquaintance; but now, though they received him not, there were those that did.

31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. 32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power. 33 And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, 34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. 35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. 36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. 37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about. 38 And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. 39 And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them. 40 Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him;

and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. 41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ. 42 And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them. 43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent. 44 And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

When Christ was expelled Nazareth, he came to Capernaum, another city of Galilee. The account we have in these verses, of his preaching and miracles there, we had before, *Mar. i. 21, &c.* Observe,

I. *His preaching.* He "taught them on the sabbath days," ver. 31. In hearing the word preached, as an ordinance of God, we worship God, and it is a proper work for sabbath days. Christ's preaching much affected people, ver. 31; they were "astonished at his doctrine;" there was weight in every word he said, and admirable discoveries were made to them by it; the doctrine itself was astonishing, and not only as it came from one that had not had a liberal education; "his word was with power," there was a commanding force in it, and a working power went along with it to the consciences of men. The doctrine Paul preached hereby proved itself to be of God, that it came "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

II. *His miracles.* Of these we have here,

First. Two particularly instanced in, shewing Christ to be, 1. A controller and conqueror of Satan in the world of mankind, and in the souls of people, by his power to cast them out of the bodies of those he had taken possession of; for "for this purpose was he manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Observe, 1st. The devil is an unclean spirit, his nature directly contrary to that of the pure and holy God, and degenerated from what it was at first. 2nd. This unclean spirit works in the children of men, in the souls of many, as then in men's bodies. 3rd. It is possible that those who are very much under the power and working of Satan may yet be found in the synagogue, among the worshippers of God. 4th. Even the devils know and believe that Jesus Christ is the Holy One of God, is sent of God, and is a holy one. 5th. They believe and tremble; this unclean spirit "cried out with a loud voice," under a "certain fearful looking for of judgment," and apprehensive that Christ was now come to destroy him. Unclean spirits are subject to continual frights. 6th. The devils have "nothing to do with Jesus Christ," nor desire to have anything to do with him, for he took not on him the nature of angels. 7th. Christ has the devil under check; "he rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace;" and this word he spake "with power," *φύλαττε*,—be muzzled; Christ did not only enjoin him silence, but stopped his mouth, and forced him to be silent against his will. 8th. In the breaking of Satan's power, both the enemy that is conquered shews his malice, and Christ the conqueror shews his overruling grace. Here, *First*, The devil shewed what he would have done, when he "threw the man in the midst" with force and fury, as if he would have dashed him to pieces. But, *Secondly*, Christ shewed what a power he had over him, in that he not only forced him to leave him, but to leave him without so much as hurting him, without giving him a parting blow, a parting gripe. Whom Satan cannot destroy, he will do all the hurt he can to; but this is a comfort, he can harm them no farther than Christ permits; nay, he shall not do them any real harm. "He came out, and hurt him not," that is, the poor man was perfectly well in an instant, though the devil left him with so much rage, that all that were present thought he had torn him to pieces. 9th. Christ's power over devils was universally acknowledged and adored, ver. 36. No one doubted of the miracle; it was evident beyond contradiction; nor was any thing suggested to diminish the glory of it, for they were "all amazed, saying, What a word is this!" They that pretended to cast out devils did it with abundance of charms and spells, to pacify the devil, and lull him asleep as it were; but Christ commanded them "with authority and power," which they could not gainsay or resist; even the "prince of the power of the air" is his vassal, and trembles before him. 10th. This, as much as any thing, gained Christ a reputation, and spread his fame. This instance of his power, which many now-a-days make light of, was then, by them that were eye-witnesses of it—and those no fools neither, but men of penetration—magnified, and was looked upon as greatly magnifying him, ver. 37; upon the account of this, "the fame of him went out" more than ever, "into every place of the country round about." Our Lord Jesus, when he set out at first in his public ministry, was mightily talked of, more than afterwards, when people's admiration wore off with the novelty of the thing.

2. Christ shewed himself to be a healer of diseases. In the former he struck at the root of man's misery, which was Satan's enmity, the origin of all the mischief; in this he strikes at one of the most spreading branches of it, one of the most common calamities of human life, and that is bodily diseases, which came in with sin, are the most common and sensible corrections for it in this life, and contribute as much as any thing towards the making our few days full of trouble. These our Lord Jesus came to take away the sting of; and as an indication of that intention, when he was on earth, chose to confirm his doctrine by such miracles mostly as took away the diseases themselves. Of all bodily diseases none more common or fatal to grown people than fevers: these come suddenly, and suddenly cut off the number of men's months in the midst; are sometimes epidemical, and slay their thousands in a little time. Now here we have Christ's curing of a fever with a word's speaking. The place was in Simon's house; his patient was Simon's wife's mother, ver. 38, 39. Observe, 1st. Christ is a guest that will pay well for his entertainment; those that bid him welcome into their hearts and houses shall be no losers by him; he comes with healing. 2nd. Even families that Christ visits, yet may be visited with sickness; houses that are blessed with his distinguishing favours, yet are liable to the common calamities of this life. Simon's wife's mother was ill of a fever; "Lord, behold she whom thou lovest is sick!" 3rd. Even good people may sometimes be exercised with the sharpest afflictions, more grievous than others; she was "taken with a great fever," very acute, and high threatening; perhaps it seized her head, and made her delirious; the most gentle fevers may

For Sidon in the text some copies read Sidonia, which form of the word indicates the region in which Sidon stood.

iv. 29. Dean Stanley says, "Most readers probably from these words imagine a town built on the summit of a mountain, from which summit the intended precipitation was to take place. This is not the situation of Nazareth, yet its position is still in accordance with the narrative. It is built 'upon,' that is, on the side of 'a mountain,' but the 'brow' is not beneath but over the town;

and such a cliff as is here implied is to be found, as all modern travellers describe, in the abrupt face of the limestone rock, about thirty or forty feet high, overhanging the Maronite convent at the south-west corner of the town." The traditional "mount of precipitation" is two or three miles distant, and has no claim to notice.

iv. 31. Nazareth occupied a much more elevated position than Capernaum, the one being among the hills, and the other on the shore of Gennesaret.

by degrees prove dangerous; but this was at first a great fever. 4th. No age can exempt from diseases. It is likely Peter's mother in law was in years, and at in a fever. 5th. When our relations are sick, we ought to apply ourselves to Christ by faith and prayer on their account. "They besought him for her;" and there is a particular promise, that the prayer of faith shall benefit the sick. 6th. Christ has a tender concern for his people when they are in sickness and distress; he "stood over her," as one concerned for her, and compassionating her case. 7th. Christ had, and still has, a sovereign power over bodily diseases; he "rebuked the fever," and with a word's speaking commanded it away, and "it left her." He saith to diseases, "Go," and they go; "Come," and they come; and can still rebuke fevers, even great fevers. 8th. This proves Christ's cures to be miraculous, that they were done in an instant; "immediately she arose." 9th. Where Christ gives a new life, in recovery from sickness, he designs and expects that it should be a new life indeed, spent more than ever in his service, to his glory. If distempers be rebuked, and we arise from a bed of sickness, we must set ourselves to minister to Jesus Christ. 10th. Those that minister to Christ, must be ready to minister to all that are sick, for his sake. She "ministered to them," not only to him that had cured her, but to them that had "besought him for her;" we must study to be grateful to them that have prayed for us.

Secondly. A general account given, by wholesale, of many other miracles of the same kind, which Christ did.

1. He "cured many that were diseased," even all, without exception, that made their application to him, ver. 40; it was "when the sun was setting," ver. 40, in the evening of that sabbath day which he had spent in the synagogue. Note, It is good to do a full sabbath day's work, to abound in the work of the day, in some good work or other, even till sunset; as those that call the sabbath and the business of it a delight. Observe, He cured "all that were sick," poor as well as rich, and though they were sick of divers diseases; so that there was no room to suspect that he had only a specific for some one disease; he had a remedy for every malady. The sign he used in healing was, laying his hands on the sick, not lifting up his hands for them; for he healed as having authority, he healed by his own power; and thus he would put honour upon that sign which was afterwards used in conferring the Holy Ghost.

2. He cast the devil out of many that were possessed, ver. 41. Confessions were extorted from the demons; they said, "Thou art Christ the Son of God!" but they said it crying with rage and indignation; it was a confession upon the rack, and therefore was not admitted in evidence; Christ "rebuked them," and did not "suffer them to say that they knew him to be the Christ," that it might appear beyond all contradiction that he had obtained a conquest over them, and not a compact with them.

III. *Here is his removal from Capernaum, ver. 42, 43.*

First. He retired for a while into a place of solitude. It was but a little while that he allowed himself for sleep; not only because a little served him but because he was content with a little, and never indulged himself in ease; but "when it was day, he went into a desert place," not to live constantly like an hermit, but to be sometimes alone with God, as even those should be, and contrive to be, that are most engaged in public work, or else their work will go on but poorly, and they will find themselves never less alone than when thus alone.

Secondly. He returned again to the places of concourse, and to the work he had to do there. Though a desert place may be a convenient retreat, yet it is not a convenient residence, because we were not sent into this world to live to ourselves; no, not to the best part of ourselves only, but to glorify God, and do good in our generation.

1. He was extremely courted to Capernaum again. The people were mighty fond of him; I doubt more because he had healed their sick than because he had preached repentance to them; they sought him—inquired which way he went, and though it was in a desert place, they came unto him,—a desert is no desert if we be with Christ there,—and they stayed him, that he should not depart from them; so that if he would go, it should not be for want of invitation. His old neighbours at Nazareth had driven him from them, but his new acquaintance at Capernaum were very importunate for his continuance with them. Note, It ought not to discourage the ministers of Christ that some reject them, for they will meet with others that will welcome them and their message.

2. He chose rather to diffuse the light of his Gospel to many places than to fix it to one, that no one might pretend to be a mother church to the rest. Though he was welcome at Capernaum, and had done abundance of good there, yet he is "sent to preach the Gospel to other cities also;" and Capernaum must not insist upon his stay there. They that enjoy the benefit of the Gospel must be willing that others also should share in that benefit, and not covet the monopoly of it. And those ministers who are not driven from one place, may yet be drawn to another, by a prospect of greater usefulness. Christ, though he preached not in vain in the synagogue at Capernaum, yet would not be tied to that, but "preached in the synagogues of Galilee," ver. 44: *Bonum est sui diffusum*.—"What is good is self-diffusive." It is well for us that our Lord Jesus has not tied himself to any one place or people; but wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he will be in the midst of them; and even in Galilee of the Gentiles, his special presence is in the Christian synagogues.

CHAPTER V.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's preaching to the people out of Peter's ship, for want of a better pulpit, ver. 1—3. II. The recompence he made to Peter for the loan of his boat, in a miraculous draught of fishes; by which he intimated to him and his partners his design to make them, as apostles, fishers of men, ver. 4—11. III. His cleansing the leper, ver. 12—15. IV. A short account of his private devotion and public ministry, ver. 16, 17. V. His cure of the man sick of the palsy, ver. 18—26. VI. His calling Levi the publican, and conversing with publicans on that occasion, ver. 27—32. VII. His justifying his disciples in not fasting so frequently as the disciples of John and the Pharisees did, ver. 33—39.



AND it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesaret, 2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. 3 And he

entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. 4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. 6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. 7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. 9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: 10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. 11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

This passage of story fell, in order of time, before the two miracles we had in the close of the foregoing chapter, and is the same with that which was more briefly related by Matthew and Mark, of Christ's calling Peter and Andrew to be fishers of men, *Mat. iv. 18*, and *Mar. i. 16*. They had not related this miraculous draught of fishes at that time, having only in view the calling of his disciples; but Luke gives us that story, as one of the many signs which Jesus did in the presence of his disciples, which had not been written in the foregoing books, *Jno. xx. 30, 31*. Observe here,

1. *What vast crowds attended Christ's preaching*; "the people pressed upon him to hear the Word of God," ver. 1, inasmuch that no house would contain them, but he was forced to draw them out to the strand, that they might be minded of the promise made to Abraham, that his seed should be "as the sand upon the sea shore," *Gen. xxii. 17*; and yet of them but "a remnant shall be saved," *Rom. ix. 27*. The people "flocked about him," so the word signifies; they shewed respect to his preaching, though not without some rudeness to his person, which was very excusable, for they "pressed upon him." Some would reckon this a diminution to him, to be thus cried up by the vulgar, when none of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him; but he reckoned it an honour to him, for their souls were as precious as the souls of the grandees; and it is his aim to bring not so much the mighty as the many sons to God; and it was foretold concerning him, that "to him should the gathering of the people be." Christ was a popular preacher, and though he was able at twelve to dispute with the doctors, yet he chose at thirty to preach to the capacity of the vulgar. See how the people relished good preaching, though under all external disadvantages; they pressed to "hear the Word of God;" they could perceive it to be the Word of God by the Divine power and evidence that went along with it, and therefore they coveted to hear it.

II. *What poor conveniences Christ had for preaching*; "he stood by the lake of Genesaret," ver. 1, upon the level with the crowd, so that they could not see him, or hear him; he was lost among them; and every one striving to get near him, he was crowded, and in danger of being crowded into the water. What must he do? It doth not appear that his hearers had any contrivance to give him advantage; but "there were two ships," or fisher-boats, brought to shore; one belonged to Simon and Andrew, the other to Zebedee and his sons, ver. 2. At first Christ saw Peter and Andrew fishing at some distance, so Matthew tells us, *Mat. iv. 18*; but he waited until they came to land, and until the fishermen, that is the servants, were gone out of them, having washed their nets and thrown them by for that time; so Christ entered into that ship that belonged to Simon, and begged of him that he would lend it him for a pulpit; and though he might have commanded him, yet, for love's sake, he rather "prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land," which would be the worse for his being heard; but Christ would have it so, that he might the better be seen; and it is his being lifted up that draws men to him. Wisdom cries in the top of high places, *Pr. viii. 2*. It intimates that Christ had a strong voice,—strong indeed, for he made the dead to hear it,—and that he did not desire to favour himself. There "he sat down, and taught the people" the good knowledge of the Lord.

III. *What a particular acquaintance Christ hereupon fell into with these fishermen*. They had had some conversation with him before, which began at John's baptism, *Jno. i. 40, 41*; they were with him at Cana of Galilee, *Jno. ii. 2*; and in Judaea, *Jno. iv. 2*; but as yet they were not called to attend him constantly, and therefore here we have them at their calling; and now it was that they were called into a more intimate fellowship with Christ.

First. When Christ had done preaching, he ordered Peter to apply himself to the business of his calling again: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets," ver. 4. It was not the sabbath day; and therefore, as soon as the lecture was over, he set them to work. Time spent on week days in the public exercises of religion may be but little hindrance to us in time, and a great furtherance to us in temper of mind in our worldly business. With what cheerfulness may we go about the duties of our calling, when we have been in the mount with God, and from thence fetch a double blessing into our worldly employments,

v. 1. It has been questioned whether the occurrence recorded in the first eleven verses of this chapter is the same as that in *Matt. iv. 18—22*, *Mark i. 16—20*, or whether it is different and subsequent. The question is not easily settled, and the names of eminent critics appear on both sides.

v. 2. The washing of the nets after the fishermen had come ashore from their toil is one of those minute incidents which reveal the accuracy of the record. The boats were "standing," or, as we

should say, lying close in shore, and had apparently been anchored, or otherwise made fast.

v. 5. From this verse we infer that it was morning. According to a common custom fishing operations had been carried on at night. "There are certain kinds of fishing always carried on at night," Dr. Thomson says. "It is a beautiful sight. With blazing torch, the boat glides over the flashing sea, and the men stand gazing keenly into it until their prey is sighted, when, quick as lightning, they

and thus have them sanctified to us by the word and prayer. It is our wisdom and duty so to manage our religious exercises as that they may befriender our worldly business, and so to manage our worldly business as that it may be no enemy to our religious exercises.

Secondly, Peter having attended upon Christ in his preaching, Christ will accompany him in his fishing; he stayed with Christ at the shore, and now Christ will launch out with him into the deep. Note, Those that will be constant followers of Christ shall have him a constant guide to them.

Thirdly, Christ orders Peter and his ship's crew to "cast their net into the sea," which they do in obedience to him, though they had been hard at it all night, and had caught nothing, ver. 4, 5. We may observe here,

1. How melancholy their business had now been: "Master, we have toiled all the night," when we should have been asleep in our beds, "and have taken nothing," but have had our labour for our pains. One would have thought that should have excused them from hearing the sermon; but such a love had they to the Word of God, that it was more refreshing and reviving to them, after a wearisome night, than the softest slumbers. But they mention it to Christ when he bids them go a fishing again.

Note, 1st. Some callings are much more toilsome than others, and more perilous; yet Providence has so ordered it, for the common good, that there is no useful calling so discouraging but some or other have a genius for it. Those that follow their business, and get abundance by it with a great deal of ease, should think with compassion of those who cannot follow theirs but with a great fatigue, and hardly get a bare livelihood by it. When we have rested all night, let us not forget those who have "toiled all night," as Jacob when he kept Laban's sheep. 2nd. Be the calling never so laborious, it is good to see people diligent in it, and make the best of it. These fishermen that were thus industrious Christ singled out for his favourites; they were fit to be preferred, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, that had thus learned to endure hardness. 3rd. Even those that are most diligent in their business yet often meet with disappointments; they that "toiled all night yet caught nothing;" for the race is not always to the swift. God will have us to be diligent, purely in duty to his command, and dependence upon his goodness, rather than with an assurance of worldly success: we must do our duty, and then leave the event to God. 4th. When we are tired with our worldly business, and crossed in our worldly affairs, we are welcome to come to Christ and spread our case before him, who will take cognizance of it.

2. How ready their obedience was to the command of Christ: "nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." 1st. Though they had toiled all night, yet if Christ bid them, they will renew their toil, for they know that they that wait on him shall renew their strength, as work is renewed upon their hands; for every fresh service they shall have a fresh supply of grace sufficient. 2nd. Though they have taken nothing, yet if Christ bid them let down for a draught, they will hope to take something. Note, We must not presently quit the callings wherewith we are called, because we have not the success in them we promised ourselves. The ministers of the Gospel must continue to let down that net, though they have perhaps toiled long and caught nothing; and this is thankworthy, to continue unwearied in our labours, though we see not the success of them. 3rd. In this they have an eye to the word of Christ, and a dependence upon that; "at thy word I will let down the net," because thou dost enjoin it, and thou dost encourage it. We are then likely to speed well, when we follow the conduct of Christ's word.

Fourthly. The draught of fish they caught was so much beyond what was ever known, that it amounted to a miracle, ver. 6. They "enclosed a great multitude of fishes," so that "their net brake;" and yet, which is strange, they did not lose their draught. It was so great a draught that they had not hands enough to draw it up; but they were fain to beckon to their partners, who were at a distance, out of call, to come and help them, ver. 7. But the greatest evidence of the vastness of the draught was, that they filled both the ships with fish to that degree that they overloaded them, and they began to sink, so that the fish had like to have been lost again with their own weight; as many an overgrown estate, raised out of the water, returns to the place from whence it came. Suppose these ships were but five or six tons apiece, what a vast quantity of fish must there be to load, nay to overload, them both.

Now by this vast draught of fishes, 1. Christ intended to shew his dominion in the seas as well as on the dry land—over its wealth as over its waves; thus he would shew that he was that Son of man under whose feet all things were put, and particularly "the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas," Ps. viii. 8. 2. He intended hereby to confirm the doctrine he had just now preached out of Peter's ship. We may suppose that the people on the shore, who heard the sermon, having a notion that the preacher was a prophet sent of God, carefully attended his motions afterwards, and stayed halting about there, to see what he would do next; and this miracle immediately following would be a confirmation to their faith of his being at least a teacher come from God. 3. He intended hereby to repay Peter for the loan of his boat; for Christ's Gospel now, as his ark formerly in the house of Obed-Edom, will be sure to make amends, rich amends, for its kind entertainment. None shall shut a door or kindle a fire in God's house for nought, Mal. i. 10. Christ's recomences for services done to his name are abundant—they are superabundant. 4. He intended hereby to give a specimen to those who were to be his ambassadors to the world, of the success of their embassy, that though they might for a time, and in one particular place, toil and catch nothing, yet that they should be instrumental to bring in many to Christ, and enclose many in the Gospel net.

Fifthly. The impression which this miraculous draught of fishes made upon Peter was very remarkable.

1. All concerned were astonished, and the more astonished for their being concerned. All the boat's crew were astonished "at the draught of fishes which they had taken," ver. 9; they were all surprised; and the more they considered it, and all the circumstances of it, the more they were wonder-struck, I had almost said thunder-struck, at the thought of it; "and so were also James and John, which were partners with Simon," ver. 10; and who, for aught appears, were not so well acquainted with Christ before this as Peter and Andrew were. Now they were the more affected with it,

1st. Because they understood it better than others did; they that were well acquainted with this sea, and it is likely had plied upon it many years, had never seen such a draught of fishes fetched out of it, nor any like it, any thing near it, and therefore could not be tempted to diminish it, as others might, by suggesting that it was accidental at this time, and what might as well have happened at any time. It greatly corroborates the evidence of Christ's miracles, that those who were best acquainted with them most admired them.

2nd. Because they were most interested in it, and benefited by it. Peter and his part owners were gainers by this great draught of fishes; it was a rich booty for them, and therefore it transported them, and their joy was a helper to their faith. Note, When Christ's works of wonder are to us in particular works of grace, then especially they command our faith in his doctrine.

filing their net or fly their spear; and often you see the tired fisherman come sullenly into harbour in the morning, having toiled all night in vain.

v. 6. For "their net brake" some read and render, "their nets were bursting." The expression means that the nets were too full to be hauled in, and perhaps that they had already begun to give way. "It naturally denotes only the beginning of such a catastrophe." The nets now used are of different kinds. One resembles our cast-

2. Peter, above all the rest, was astonished to such a degree, that "he fell down at Jesus' knees," as he sat in the stern of the boat, and said, as one in an ecstasy or transport, that knew not where he was, or what he said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," ver. 8; not that he feared the weight of the fish would sink him because he was a sinful man, but that he thought himself unworthy of the favour of Christ's presence in his boat, and worthy that it should be to him a matter rather of terror than of comfort. This word of Peter's came from the same principle with theirs that, under the Old Testament, so often said they did exceedingly fear and quake at the extraordinary displays of the Divine glory and majesty. It was the language of Peter's humility and self-denial, and had not the least tincture of the devil's dialect. "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God!"

1st. His acknowledgment was very just, and what becomes us all to make "I am a sinful man, O Lord." Note, Even the best men are sinful men, and should be ready upon all occasions to own it, and especially to own it to Jesus Christ; for to whom else but to him who came into the world to save sinners should sinful men apply themselves? 2nd. His inference from it was what might have been just, though really it was not so. If I be a sinful man, as indeed I am, I ought to say, Come to me, O Lord, or, let me come to thee, or I am undone, for ever undone. But considering what reason sinful men have to tremble before the holy Lord God, and to dread his wrath, Peter may well be excused, if in a sense of his own sinfulness and vileness, he cry out on a sudden, "Depart from me." Note, Those whom Christ designs to admit to the most intimate acquaintance with him, he first makes sensible that they deserve to be set at the greatest distance from him. We must all own ourselves sinful men, and that therefore Jesus Christ might justly depart from us; but we must therefore fall down at his knees, to pray him that he would not depart; for woe unto us if he leave us—if the Saviour depart from the sinful man.

Sixthly. The occasion which Christ took from hence to intimate to Peter, ver. 10, and soon after to James and John, Mat. iv. 21, his purpose to make them his apostles, and instruments of planting his religion in the world. "He said unto Simon," who was in the greatest surprise of any of them at this prodigious draught of fishes, Thou shalt both see and do greater things than these; "fear not," let not this astonish thee; be not afraid, that after having done thee this honour, it is so great that I shall never do thee more: no, "from henceforth thou shalt catch men," by inclosing them in the Gospel net, and that shall be a greater instance of the Redeemer's power, and his favour to thee, than this is; that shall be a more astonishing miracle, and infinitely more advantageous than this. When by Peter's preaching three thousand souls were in one day added to the church, then the type of this great draught of fishes was abundantly answered.

Lastly. The fishermen's farewell to their calling, in order to their constant attendance on Christ, ver. 11: "When they had brought their ships to land," instead of going to seek for a market for their fish, that they might make the best hand they could of this miracle, "they forsook all, and followed him," being more solicitous to serve the interests of Christ than to advance any secular interests of their own. It is observable that they left all to follow Christ when their calling prospered in their hands more than ever it had done, and they had had uncommon success in it. When riches increase, and we are therefore most in temptation to set our hearts upon them, then to quit them for the service of Christ, this is thankworthy.

12 And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 13 And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. 14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. 15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. 16 And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

Here is, I. The cleansing of a leper, ver. 12-14. This story we had both in Matthew and Mark. It is here said to have been "in a certain city," ver. 12 it was in Capernaum; but the evangelist would not name it, perhaps because it was a reflection upon the government of the city, that a leper was suffered to be in it. This man is said to be "full of leprosy;" he had that distemper in a high degree, which doth the more fitly represent our natural pollution by sin: we are full of that leprosy; from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness in us. Now let us learn here,

First. What we must do in the sense of our spiritual leprosy. 1. We must see Jesus, inquire after him, and acquaint ourselves with him, and reckon the discoveries made us of Christ by the Gospel the most acceptable and welcome discoveries that could be made us. 2. We must humble ourselves before him, as this leper, seeing Jesus, "fell on his face." We must be ashamed of our pollution, and in the sense of it, blush to lift up our faces before the holy Jesus. 3. We must earnestly desire to be cleansed from the defilement, and cured of the disease of sin, which renders us unfit for communion with God. 4. We must firmly believe Christ's ability and sufficiency to cleanse us; "Lord, thou canst make me clean," though I be full of leprosy; no doubt is to be made of the merit and grace of Christ. 5. We must be importunate in prayer for pardoning mercy and renewing grace; "he fell on his face and besought him;" they that would be cleansed must reckon it a favour worth wrestling for. 6. We must refer ourselves to the good will of Christ: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst." This is not so much the language of his diffidence, or distrust of the good will of Christ, as of his submission, and reference of himself and his case to the will, to the good will of Jesus Christ.

Secondly. What we may expect from Christ, if we thus apply ourselves to

net, being leaved and thrown into the water over a shoal of fish, and then drawn in by the line which the fisherman holds. Another is a long drag-net, one end of which is held on shore, and the other taken round by the men in a boat. The whole is then drawn to land with whatever it may enclose. Again, there is a kind of bag-net made for catching fish in deep water. This last is probably the sort of net with which Peter and his friends were provided on the occasion before us

him. 1. We shall find him very condescending, and forward to take cognizance of our case, ver. 13: "he put forth his hand, and touched him." When Christ visited 'his leprous world, unasked, unsought unto, he shewed how low he could stoop to do good. His touching the leper was wonderful condescension; but it is much greater to us when he is himself "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." 2. We shall find him very compassionate, and ready to relieve us; he said, "I will," never doubt of that; whosoever comes to me to be healed, "I will in no wise cast out;" he is as willing to cleanse leprous souls, as they can be to be cleansed. 3. We shall find him all-sufficient, and able to heal and cleanse us, though we be never so full of this loathsome leprosy. One word, one touch from Christ did the business, "immediately the leprosy departed from him." If Christ saith, "I will, be thou justified, be thou sanctified," it is done; for he has power on earth to forgive sin, and power to give the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

Thirdly. What he requires from those that are cleansed, ver. 14. Has Christ sent his word and healed us? 1. We must be very humble, ver. 12: "he charged him to tell no man." It should seem this did not forbid him telling it to the honour of Christ, but he must not tell it to his own honour. Those whom Christ hath healed and cleansed, must know that he hath done it in such a way as doth for ever exclude boasting. 2. We must be very thankful, and make a grateful acknowledgment of the Divine grace; "Go, and offer for thy cleansing," Christ did not require him to give him a fee, but bring the sacrifice of praise to God; so far was he from using his power to the prejudice of the law of Moses. 3. We must keep close to our duty; "go to the priest," and those that attend him. The man whom Christ had made whole he found in the temple, *Jno. v. 14*. Those that by any affliction have been detained from public ordinances, when the affliction is removed, should attend on them the more diligently, and adhere to them the more constantly.

II. *Christ's public serviceableness to men, and his private communion with God*; these are put together here to give lustre to each other.

First. Though never any had so much pleasure in his retirements as Christ had, yet he was much in a crowd to do good, ver. 15. Though the leper should altogether hold his peace, yet the thing could not be hid, "so much the more went there a fame abroad of him;" the more he sought to conceal himself, under a veil of humility, the more notice did people take of him; for honour is like a shadow, which flees from those that pursue it,—"for a man to seek his own glory, is not glory,"—but it follows those that decline it, and draw from it. The less good men say of themselves, the more will others say of them. But Christ reckoned it a small honour to him that his fame went abroad; it was much more so, that hereby multitudes were brought to receive benefit from him. 1. By his preaching; "they came together to hear him," and to receive instruction from him concerning the kingdom of God. 2. By his miracles; they "came to be healed by him of their infirmities," and that invited them to come to hear him, confirmed his doctrine, and recommended it.

Secondly. Though never any did so much good in public, yet he found time for pious and devout retirements, ver. 16: "He withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed;" not that he needed to avoid either distraction or ostentation, but he would set us an example, who need to order the circumstances of our devotion so as to guard against both. It is likewise our wisdom so to order our affairs as that our public work, and our secret work, may not intrench upon or interfere with one another. Note. Secret prayer must be performed secretly; and those that have never so much to do of the best business in this world, must keep up constant, stated times for it.

17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. 18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. 19 And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. 20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. 21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? 22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? 23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? 24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. 25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. 26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled

with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.



COVERED GALLERIES OF AN EASTERN HOUSE.—ver. 19.

Here is, I. *A general account of Christ's preaching and miracles, ver. 17*. First. He was teaching on a certain day, not on the sabbath day, then he would have said so, but on a week day; "six days shalt thou labour," not only for the world, but for the soul, and the welfare of that. Preaching and hearing the word of God is good work, if it be done well, any day in the week, as well as on sabbath days. It was not in the synagogue, but in a private house; for even there, where we ordinarily converse with our friends, it is not improper to give and receive good instruction.

Secondly. There he taught, he healed, as before, ver. 15; and the power of the Lord was to heal them, *ἡ ἐν αὐτῷ δύναμις*; it was mighty to heal them, it was exerted and put forth to heal them; to heal them whom he taught; (we may understand it so); to heal their souls, to cure them of their spiritual diseases, and to give them a new life, a new nature. Note. Those who receive the word of Christ in faith, will find a Divine power going along with that word to heal them; for Christ came with his comforts to heal the broken hearted, *ch. iv. 18*. The power of the Lord is present with the Word, present to those that pray for it, and submit to it, present to heal them; or it may be meant (and so it is generally taken) of the healing of those that were diseased in body, who came to him for cures. Whenever there was occasion, Christ was not to seek for his power, it was present to heal.

Thirdly. There were some grandees present in this assembly, and as it should seem, more than usual; "there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by," not sitting at his feet to learn of him, then I should have been willing to take the following clause as referring to them, who were spoken of immediately before, "the power of the Lord was present to heal them," and why might not the word of Christ reach their hearts? But by what follows, ver. 21, it appears they were not healed, but cavilled at Christ, which forceth us to make that to refer to others, not to them; for they sat by, as persons unconcerned, as if the word of Christ were nothing to them. They sat by as spectators, and censors, and spies, to pick up something on which to ground a reproach, or accusation. How many are there in the midst of our assemblies, where the Gospel is preached, that do not sit under the Word, but sit by? It is to them as a tale that is told them, not as a message that is sent them; they are willing we should preach before them, not that we should preach to them. These Pharisees and scribes (or doctors of the law) "came out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem" they came from all parts of the nation; it is likely they appointed to meet at this time and place, to see what remarks they could make upon Christ, and what he said and did. They were in a confederacy, as those that said, "Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah," and agree to "smite him with the tongue," *Jer. xviii. 18*; "Report, and we will report it," *Jer. xx. 10*. Observe, Christ went on with his work of preaching and healing, though he saw these Pharisees and Dons of the Jewish church sitting by, who he knew despised him, and watched to ensnare him.

II. *A particular account of the cure of the man sick of the palsy*, which was related much as it is here, by both the foregoing evangelists; let us therefore only observe in short,

First. The doctrines that are taught us, and confirmed to us by the story of this cure. 1. That sin is the fountain of all sickness, and the forgiveness of sin is the only foundation upon which a recovery from sickness can comfortably be built. They presented the sick man to Christ, and he said, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee," ver. 20. That is the blessing thou art most to prize and seek; for if thy sins be forgiven thee, though the sickness be continued, it is in mercy; if they be not, though the sickness be removed, it is in wrath. They are the cords of our iniquity, that are the bands of our affliction. 2. That Jesus Christ has power on earth to forgive sins, and his healing diseases was an incontestable proof of it: this was the thing intended to be proved, ver. 24: "That ye may know" and believe "that the Son of man," though now upon earth, in his state of humiliation, "hath power to forgive sins," and to release sinners upon gospel terms from the eternal punishment of sin," he saith to the sick of the palsy, Arise and walk," and he is cured immediately. Christ claims one of the prerogatives of the King of kings, when he undertakes to forgive

v. 12. Avicenna speaks of leprosy as a sort of universal cancer of the whole body. The traveller Maundrell describes it as a distemper so noisome, that it might well pass for the utmost corruption of the human body on this side the grave. Dr. Thomson says, "There is nothing in the entire range of human phenomena which illustrates so impressively the Divine power of the Redeemer, and the nature and extent of his work of mercy on man's behalf, as this leprous." We may gather from such language what "full of leprosy" means.

v. 17. The interesting details of this verse are peculiar to Luke. Mark intimates (*chap. ii. 1, 2*) that the house was crowded, but here we see that it was no common assembly—Pharisees, whose zeal was genuine, even if misguided in many things; teachers of the law, whose studies and profession were mainly devoted to religious matters. They had assembled from the villages of Galilee, and from Judæa, and from Jerusalem itself. Our version seems to suggest that the Pharisees and doctors came to be healed, but this is im-

sin, and it is justly expected he should produce a good proof it: 'Well,' saith he, 'I will put it upon this issue; here is a man struck with a palsy, and for his sin, if I do not with a word's speaking cure his disease in an instant, which cannot be done by nature or art, but purely by the immediate power and efficacy of the God of nature, then say I am not entitled to the prerogative of forgiving sin, am not the Messiah, am not the Son of God, and King of Israel; but if I do, you must own I have power to forgive sins.' Thus was it put upon a fair trial, and one word of Christ determined it. He did but say, 'Arise, take up thy couch,' and that chronic disease had an instantaneous cure, 'immediately he arose before them;' they must all own there could be no cheat or fallacy in it; they that brought him could attest how perfectly lame he was before; they that saw him, could attest how perfectly well he was now; inasmuch that he had strength enough to take up and carry away the bed he lay upon. How well is it for us, that this most comfortable doctrine of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Saviour, has power to forgive sin, has such a full attestation. 3. That Jesus Christ is God. He appears to be so, 1st. By knowing the thoughts of the scribes and Pharisees, ver. 22, which it is God's prerogative to do; though those scribes and Pharisees knew as well how to conceal their thoughts, and keep their countenances as most men, and probably were industrious to do it at this time, for they lay in wait secretly. 2nd. By doing that which their thoughts owned none could do but God only, ver. 21. 'Who can forgive sins,' say they, 'but only God?' 'I will prove,' saith Christ, 'that I can forgive sins; and what follows then, but that he is God? What horrid wickedness then were they guilty of, who charged him with speaking the worst of blasphemies then when he spoke the best of blessings, "Thy sins be forgiven thee!"'

Secondly. The duties that are taught us, and recommended to us, by this story: 1. In our applications to Christ, we must be very pressing and urgent; that is an evidence of faith, and is very pleasing to Christ, and prevailing with him. They that were the friends of this sick man, 'sought means to bring him in before Christ,' ver. 23, and when they were baffled in their endeavour, yet did not give up the cause; but when they could not get in by the door, it was so crowded, they untiled the house, and let the poor patient down through the roof, 'into the midst before Jesus,' ver. 19: in this Jesus Christ 'saw their faith,' ver. 19. Now here he has taught us (and it were well if we could learn the lesson) to put the best construction upon words and actions that they will bear. When the centurion, and the woman of Canaan, were in no care at all to bring the patients they interceded for into Christ's presence, but believed that he could cure them at a distance, he commended their faith. But though in these there seemed to be a different notion of the thing, and an apprehension that it was requisite the patient should be brought into his presence, yet he did not censure and condemn their weakness; did not ask them, 'What need you give this disturbance to the assembly? Are you under such a degree of infidelity, as to think I could not have cured him though he had been out of doors?' but he made the best of it, and even in this he saw their faith. It is a comfort to us that we serve a Master that is willing to make the best of us. 2. When we are sick, we should be more in care to get our sins pardoned than to get our sickness removed. Christ, in what he said to this man, taught us when we seek to God for health, to begin with seeking to him for pardon. 3. The mercies which we have the comfort of, God must have the praise of. The man 'departed to his own house, glorifying God,' ver. 25. To him belong the escapes from death, and in them therefore he must be glorified. 4. The miracles which Christ wrought were amazing to them that saw them, and we ought to glorify God in them, ver. 26. They said, 'We have seen strange things to-day,' such as we never saw before, nor our fathers before us, they are altogether new. But they glorified God, who had sent into their country such a benefactor to it; and were filled with fear, with a reverence of God, with a jealousy that this was the Messiah, and that he was not treated by their nation as he ought to be, which might prove in the end the ruin of their state; perhaps they were some such thoughts as these that filled them with fear, and a concern likewise for themselves.

27 And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. 28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him. 29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. 30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? 31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. 32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. 33 And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? 34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? 35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. 36 And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken

out of the new agreeth not with the old. 37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. 38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. 39 No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

All this, except the last verse, we had before in *Matthew* and *Mark*; it is not the story of any miracle in nature, wrought by our Lord Jesus, but it is an account of some of the wonders of his grace, which to those who understand things aright, are no less cogent proofs of Christ's being sent of God than the other.

I. *It was a wonder of his grace*, that he would call a publican from the receipt of custom to be his disciple and follower, ver. 27. It was wonderful condescension that he would admit poor fishermen to that honour, men of the lowest rank; but much more wonderful that he would admit publicans, men of the worst reputation, men of ill fame. In this Christ humbled himself, and appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh; by this he exposed himself, and got the invidious character of a friend of publicans and sinners.

II. *It was a wonder of his grace*, that that call was made effectual, became immediately so, ver. 28. This publican, though those of that employment commonly had little inclination to religion, yet, for his religion's sake, he left a good place in the custom-house, which probably was his livelihood, and where he stood fair for better preferment, and 'rose up and followed Christ.' There is no heart too hard for the Spirit and grace of Christ to work upon, nor any difficulties in the way of a sinner's conversion insuperable to his power.

III. *It was a wonder of his grace*, that he would not only admit a converted publican into his family, but would keep company with unconverted publicans, that he might have an opportunity of doing their souls good; and justified himself in it, as agreeing with the great design of his coming into the world. Here is a wonder of grace indeed, that Christ undertakes to be the physician of souls distempered by sin, and ready to die of the distemper, ver. 31, (he is a healer by office) that he has a particular regard to the sick, to sinners as his patients, convinced, awakened sinners, that see their need of the physician: that he came to call sinners, the worst of sinners, to repentance, and to assure them of pardon upon repentance, ver. 32. This is glad tidings of great joy indeed.

IV. *It was a wonder of his grace*, that he did so patiently bear 'the contradiction of sinners against himself' and his disciples, ver. 30. He did not express his resentments of the cavils of the scribes and Pharisees, as he justly might have done, but answered them with reason and meekness; and instead of taking that occasion to shew his displeasure against the Pharisees, as afterwards he did, or of recriminating upon them, he took that occasion to shew his compassion to poor publicans, another sort of sinners, and to encourage them.

V. *It was a wonder of his grace*, that in the discipline which he trained his disciples up under, he considered their frame, and proportioned their services to their strength and standing, and to the circumstances they were in. It was objected, as a blemish upon his conduct, that he did not make his disciples to fast so often as those of the Pharisees and John Baptist did, ver. 33. He insisted most upon that which is the soul of fasting, the mortification of sin, the crucifying of the flesh, and living a life of self-denial, which is as much better than fasting and corporal penances as mercy is than sacrifice.

VI. *It was a wonder of his grace*, that Christ reserved the trials of his disciples for their latter times, when, by his grace, they were in some good measure better prepared and fitted for them than they were at first. Now they were as 'the children of the bridechamber, when the bridegroom is with them,' when they have plenty, and joy, and every day is a festival; Christ was welcomed wherever he came, and they for his sake, and as yet they met with little or no opposition; but this will not last always, 'the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them,' ver. 35; when Christ shall leave them with their hearts full of sorrow, their hands full of work, and the world full of enmity and rage against them; 'then shall they fast,' shall not be so well fed as they are now: 'We both hunger and thirst, and are naked,' 1 Cor. iv. 11. Then they shall keep many more religious fasts than they do now, for Providence will call them to it: they will then serve the Lord with fastings, Acts xiii. 2.

VII. *It was a wonder of his grace*, that he proportioned their exercises to their strength. He would not 'put new cloth unto an old garment,' ver. 36, nor 'new wine into old bottles,' ver. 37, 38; would not, as soon as ever he had called them out of the world put them upon the strictness and austerities of discipleship, lest they should be tempted to fly off. When God brought Israel out of Egypt, he would not bring them by the way of the Philistines, lest they should repent when they saw war, and return into Egypt, Ex. xiii. 17; so Christ would train up his followers gradually to the discipline of his family; for no man having drunk old wine, will of a sudden straightway desire new, or relish it, but will say, 'The old is better,' because he has been used to it, ver. 39. The disciples will be tempted to think their old way of living better, till they are by degrees trained up to this way whereunto they are called. Or, turn it the other way; let them be accustomed awhile to religious exercises, and then they will abound in them as much as you do; but we must not be too hasty with them. Calvin takes it as an admonition to the Pharisees, not to boast of their fasting, and the noise and show they made with it, nor to despise his disciples, because they did not in like manner signalize themselves; for the profession the Pharisees made was indeed pompous and gay, like new wine, that is brisk and sparkling, whereas all wise men say the old is better, which, though it doth not give its colour so well in the cup, yet is more warming in the stomach, and more wholesome. Christ's disciples, though they had not so much of the form of godliness, yet they had more of the power of it.

CHAPTER VI.

In this chapter we have Christ's exposition of the moral law, which he came not to destroy, but to fulfil, and to fill up, by his Gospel. I. Here is a proof of the lawfulness of works of necessity and mercy on the sabbath day: the former, in vindication of his disciples' plucking the ears of corn; the latter, in vindication of himself healing the withered hand on that day, ver. 1-11. II. His retirement for secret prayer, ver. 12. III. His calling his twelve apostles, ver. 13-16. IV. His curing the multitudes of those under various diseases, who made their application to him, ver. 17-19. V. The sermon that he preached to his disciples and the multitude, instructing them in their duty both to God and man, ver. 20-49.

probable; they rather came to see the manifestations of his healing power, and to hear his words for themselves. In accordance with this view, we find that the word 'them' is omitted by the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. 'The power of the Lord was present to heal,' or shown in healing.

v. 18. Celsus says, 'They who are attacked with violent palsy of all the limbs are usually carried off quickly, or if not, though their lives are prolonged, they seldom recover their health, but linger out

a miserable existence, and also lose their memory. The illness of those who are locally attacked is never, indeed, violent, but often tedious, and almost always incurable.'

v. 19. See the note on Mark ii. 4. The difficulty raised by this passage is in the word rendered 'tiling.' The original word is explained to mean: 1, potter's clay; 2, any earthen vessel; 3, a tile. At present, Dr. Kitto says, the roofs of Oriental houses have no tiling; but of course tiles may have been used in ancient times,



AND it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands. 2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days? 3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him; 4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone? 5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath. 6 And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. 7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him. 8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. 9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it? 10 And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other. 11 And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

These two passages of story we had both in *Matthew* and *Mark*, and they were there laid together, *Matt.* xii. 1; *Mar.* ii. 23; iii. 1; because, though happening at some distance of time from each other, yet both were designed to rectify the mistakes of the scribes and Pharisees concerning the sabbath day, on the bodily rest of which they laid greater stress, and required greater strictness, than the Lawgiver intended. Here,

First, Christ justifies his disciples in a work of necessity for themselves on that day, and that was plucking the ears of corn when they were hungry on that day. This story here has a date, which we had not in the other evangelists, it was "on the second sabbath after the first," ver. 1; that is, as Dr. Whitby thinks is pretty clear, "the first sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread," from which day they reckoned the seven weeks to the feast of pentecost, the first of which they called *Σάββατον δευτεροπρωτον*, the second *δευτεροδευτερον*, and so on. Blessed be God, we need not be critical in this matter; whether this circumstance be mentioned to intimate that this sabbath was thought to have some peculiar honour upon it, which aggravated the offence of the disciples, or only to intimate, that being the first sabbath after the offering of the firstfruits, it was the time of the year when corn was near ripe, is not material. We may observe,

1. Christ's disciples ought not to be nice and curious in their diet, not at any time, especially not on sabbath days; but take up with what is easiest got, and be thankful. These disciples "plucked the ears of corn, and did eat," ver. 1; a little served them, and that which had no delicacy in it.

2. Many that are themselves guilty of the greatest crimes, are forward to censure others for the most innocent and inoffensive actions, ver. 2. The Pharisees quarrelled with them as doing that which it was "not lawful to do on the sabbath days," when it was their own practice to feed deliciously on sabbath days, more than on all other days.

3. Jesus Christ will justify his disciples when they are unjustly censured, and will own and accept of them in many a thing, which men tell them it is not lawful for them to do. How well is it for us that men are not to be our judges, and that Christ will be our advocate!

4. Ceremonial appointments may be dispensed with in cases of necessity: as the appropriating of the shewbread to the priests was dispensed with, when David was, by Providence, brought into such a strait that he must either have that or none, ver. 3, 4. And if God's own appointments might be thus set aside for a greater good, much more may the traditions of men.

5. Works of necessity are particularly allowable on the sabbath day; but we must take heed that we turn not this liberty into licentiousness, and abuse

and especially under the Roman government, though we are not bound to such a conclusion. On the whole, we should not press the literal sense of the word, but understand it of the portion which was removed, whatever the material might be. The Peshito-Syriac version, which so often gives the true sense, renders the clause, "they let him down with his bed from the roof into the midst before Jesus," using the same word for "roof" as in *Mark* ii. 4. The other Syriac version has, "from the roof of tiles."

God's favourable concessions and condescensions, to the prejudice of the work of the day.

6. Jesus Christ, though he allowed works of necessity on the sabbath day, yet will have us to know, and remember, that it is his day, and therefore is to be spent in his service, and to his honour, ver. 5: "The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath;" that is, in the kingdom of the Redeemer, the sabbath day is to be turned into a Lord's day; the property of it is, in some respects, to be altered, and it is to be observed chiefly in honour of the Redeemer, as it had been before in honour of the Creator, (*Jer.* xvi. 14, 15,) and in token of this, it shall not only have a new name, the Lord's day, (yet not forgetting the old, for it is a sabbath of rest still,) but shall be transferred to a new day, the first day of the week.

Secondly, He justifies himself in doing works of mercy for others on the sabbath day. Observe in this,

1. That Christ on the sabbath day "entered into the synagogue." Note, It is our duty, as we have opportunity, to sanctify sabbaths in religious assemblies. On the sabbath there ought to be a holy convocation; and our place must not be empty without very good reason.

2. In the synagogue on the sabbath day he taught. Giving and receiving instruction from Christ is very proper work for a sabbath day, and for a synagogue. Christ took all opportunities to teach, not only his disciples, but the multitude.

3. That Christ's patient was one of his hearers. There was "a man whose right hand was withered," he came to learn from Christ; whether he had any expectation to be healed by him doth not appear; but those that would be cured by the grace of Christ, must be willing to learn the doctrine of Christ.

4. That among those that were the hearers of Christ's excellent doctrine, and the eye-witnesses of his glorious miracles, there were some who came with no other design but to pick quarrels with him, ver. 7. The scribes and Pharisees would not, as became generous adversaries, give him fair warning, that if he did heal on the sabbath day, they would construe it as a violation of the fourth commandment, which they ought in honour and justice to have done, because it was a case without precedent, none having ever cured as he did, and therefore could not be an adjudged case; but basely watched him, as the lion doth his prey, whether he would "heal on the sabbath day, that they might find an accusation against him," and surprise him with a prosecution.

5. That Jesus Christ was neither ashamed nor afraid to own the purposes of his grace, in the face of those who he knew confronted them, ver. 8. "He knew their thoughts," and what they designed, and he bid the man "rise and stand forth," hereby to try the patient's faith and boldness.

6. He appealed to his adversaries themselves, and to the convictions of natural conscience, whether it was the design of the fourth commandment to restrain men from doing good on the sabbath day, that good which their hand finds to do, which they have an opportunity for, and which cannot so well be put off to another time, ver. 9. "Is it lawful to do good or evil on the sabbath days?" No wicked men are such absurd and unreasonable men as persecutors are, who study to do evil to men for doing good.

7. He healed the poor man, and restored him to the present use of his right hand, with a word's speaking, though he knew his enemies would not only take offence at it, but take advantage against him for it, ver. 10. Let not us be drawn off, either from duty or usefulness, by the oppression we meet with in it.

8. His adversaries were hereby enraged so much the more against him, ver. 11; instead of being convinced by this miracle, as they ought to have been, that he was a teacher come from God; instead of being brought to be in love with him as a benefactor to mankind, "they were filled with madness," vexed that they could not frighten him from doing good, or hinder the growth of his interest in the affections of the people. They were mad at Christ, mad at the people, mad at themselves. Anger is a short madness, malice is a long one; impotent malice, especially disappointed malice, such was theirs. When they could not prevent his working this miracle, they "communed one with another what they might do to Jesus," what other way they might take to run him down. We may well stand amazed at it, that the sons of men should be so wicked as to do thus, and that the Son of God should be so patient as to suffer it.

12 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. 13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; 14 Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, 15 Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon called Zelotes, 16 And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor. 17 And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judæa and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; 18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed. 19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

In these verses we have our Lord Jesus in secret, in his family, and in public, and in all three acting like himself.

First, *In secret* we have him praying to God, ver. 12. This evangelist takes frequent notice of Christ's retirements, to give us an example of secret prayer, by which we must keep up our communion with God daily, and without which

v. 27. The Levi of this verse is called Levi the son of Alphæus in *Mark* ii. 14, and *Matthew* in *Matt.* ix. 9. It will be observed that the same person appears to be called *Matthew* in *Mark* iii. 18 and *Luke* vi. 15. It seems to have been quite common in those times for one person to have two names. One of these might be Greek or Latin, and the other Shemitic; or both, as in *Matthew's* case, might be Shemitic.

v. 32. The words "to repentance" are, according to the best

It is impossible the soul should prosper. "In those days," when his enemies were filled with madness against him, and were contriving what to do to him, he went out to pray, that he might answer the type of David, *Ps. civ. 4*. "For my love they are my adversaries, but I give myself unto prayer." Observe, 1. He was alone with God; "he went out into a mountain to pray," where he might have no disturbance or interruption given him: we are never less alone than when we are thus alone. Whether there was any convenient place built upon this mountain, for devout people to retire to for their private devotions, as some think, and that that oratory, or place of prayer, is meant here by *ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, to me seems very uncertain. He went into a mountain for privacy, and therefore probably would not go to a place frequented by others. 2. He was long alone with God; "he continued all night in prayer." We think one half hour a great deal to spend in the duties of the closet; but Christ continued a whole night in meditation and secret prayer. We have a great deal of business at the throne of grace, and we should take a great delight in communion with God, and by both these may be kept sometimes long at prayer.

Secondly, *In his family* we have him nominating his immediate attendants, that should be the constant auditors of his doctrines, and eye-witnesses of his miracles, that hereafter they might be sent forth as apostles, his messengers to the world, to preach his Gospel to it, and plant his church in it, *ver. 13*. After he had "continued all night in prayer" one would have thought that "when it was day" he should have refreshed himself, and got some sleep. No, as soon as any body was stirring, he "called unto him his disciples." In serving God, our great care should be not to lose time, but to make the end of one good duty the beginning of another. Ministers are to be ordained with prayer more than ordinarily solemn. The number of the apostles was twelve; their names are here recorded; and it is the third time we have met with them, and in each of the three places the order of them differs; to teach both ministers and Christians not to be nice in precedence, not in giving it, much less in taking it; but look upon it as a thing not worth taking notice of, let it be as it lights. He that in *Mark* was called Thaddeus, in *Matthew* Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus, is here called Judas, the brother of James, the same that wrote the Epistle of *Jude*. Simon, that in *Matthew* and *Mark* was called the Canaanite, is here called Simon Zelotes, perhaps for his great zeal in religion. Concerning these twelve here named, we have reason to say, as the queen of Sheba did of Solomon's servants, "Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants, that stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom;" never were men so privileged, and yet one of them had a devil, and proved a traitor, *ver. 16*; yet Christ, when he chose him, was not deceived in him.

Thirdly, *In public* we have him preaching and healing, the two great works between which he divided his time, *ver. 17*: "He came down" with the twelve from the mountain, "and stood in the plain," ready to receive those that resorted to him; and there were presently gathered about him, not only "the company of his disciples," who used to attend him, but also "a great multitude of people," a mixed multitude, "out of all Judaea and Jerusalem," though it was some scores of miles from Jerusalem to that part of Galilee where Christ now was; though at Jerusalem they had abundance of famous rabbins, that had great names, and bore a mighty sway, yet they came to hear Christ. They came also "from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon;" though they who lived there were generally men of business, and though they bordered upon Canaanites, yet there were some well affected to Christ; such there were dispersed in all parts, here and there one.

1. "They came to hear him," and he preached to them. Those that have not good preaching near them, had better travel far for it than be without it. It is worth while to go a great way to hear the word of Christ, and to go out of the way of other business for it.

2. They came to be cured by him, and he healed them. Some were troubled in body, and some in mind; some had diseases, some had devils; but both the one and the other, upon their application to Christ, were healed; for he has power over diseases and devils, *ver. 17, 18*, over the effects and over the causes. Nay, it should seem, those that had no particular diseases to complain of, yet found it a great confirmation and renovation to their bodily health and vigour to partake of the virtue that went out of him; for, *ver. 19*, "the whole multitude sought to touch him," those that were in health as well as those that were sick; and they were all, one way or other, the better for him, he "healed them all." And who is there that doth not need, upon some account or other, to be healed? Note, There is a fullness of grace in Christ, and healing virtue in him, and ready to go out from him, that is enough for all, enough for each.

20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for your's is the kingdom of God. 21 Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. 22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. 23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. 24 But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. 25 Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. 26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

Here begins a practical discourse of Christ, which is continued to the end of the chapter, most of which is found in the sermon upon the mount, *Mat. v. and vii.* Some think this was preached at some other time and place; and there are other instances of Christ's preaching the same things, or to the

same purpose, at different times; but it is probable that this is only the evangelist's abridgment of that sermon; and perhaps that in *Matthew* too is but an abridgment; the beginning and the conclusion is much the same; and the story of the cure of the centurion's servant follows presently upon it, both there and here; but it is not material. In these verses we have,

1. *Blessings pronounced upon suffering saints, as happy people, though the world pities them*, *ver. 20*. He "lift up his eyes upon his disciples," not only the twelve, but the whole company of them, *ver. 17*, and directed his discourse to them; for when he had healed the sick in the plain, he went up again to the mountain to preach; there he sat as one having authority, and thither they came to him, *Mat. v. 1*; and to them he directed his discourse, to them he applied it, and taught them to apply it to themselves. When he had laid it down for a truth, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," he added, "Blessed are ye poor." All believers that take the precepts of the Gospel to themselves, and live by them, may take the promises of the Gospel to themselves, and live upon them. And the application, as it is here, seems especially designed to encourage the disciples, with reference to the hardships and difficulties they were likely to meet with in following Christ.

First. You are poor, you have left all to follow me, are content to live upon alms with me, are never to expect any worldly preferment in my service; you must work hard and fare hard, as poor people do; but you are blessed in your poverty, it should be no prejudice at all to your happiness; nay, you are blessed for it; all your losses shall be abundantly made up to you, for "yours is the kingdom of God;" all the comforts and graces of his kingdom here, and all the glories and joys of his kingdom hereafter; yours it shall be, nay, yours it is. Christ's poor are rich in faith, *Jas. ii. 5*.

Secondly. You hunger now, *ver. 21*; you are not fed to the full, as others are; many times rise hungry, your commons are so short; or are so intent upon your work, that you have not time to eat bread, are glad of a few ears of corn for a meal's meat; thus you hunger now in this world, but in the other world you shall be filled, shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more.

Thirdly. You weep now, are often in tears, tears of repentance, tears of sympathy, you are of them that mourn in Zion. But blessed are ye; your present sorrows are no prejudices to, but preparatories for, your future joy; ye shall laugh. You have triumphs in reserve; you are but sowing in tears, and shall shortly reap in joy, *Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6*. They that now sorrow after a godly sort, are treasuring up comforts for themselves, or rather, God is treasuring up comforts for them; and the day is coming when their "mouth shall be filled with laughing, and their lips with rejoicing," *Job viii. 21*.

Fourthly. You now undergo the world's ill-will; you must expect all the base treatment that a spiteful world can give you, for Christ's sake, because you serve him and his interests; you must expect that wicked men will hate you, because your doctrine and life convicts and condemns them; and those that have church power in their hands will separate you, will force you to separate yourselves, and then excommunicate you for so doing, and lay you under the most ignominious censures; will pronounce anathemas against you, as scandalous and incorrigible offenders; and will do this with all possible gravity and solemnity, and the pomp and pageantry of appeals to Heaven, to make the world believe, and almost you yourselves too, that it is ratified in Heaven; thus will they endeavour to make you odious to others, and a terror to yourselves. This is supposed to be the proper notion of ἀπορίστων υἱῶν, they shall "cast you out of their synagogues." And they that have not this power, will not fail to shew their malice to the utmost of their power, for they shall reproach you, shall charge you with the blackest crimes, which you are perfectly innocent of, shall fasten upon you the blackest characters, which you do not deserve; they shall "cast out your name as evil," your name as Christians, as apostles, they shall do all they can to render these names odious. This is the application of the eighth beatitude, *Mat. v. 10-12*.

Such usage as this seems hard, but "blessed are ye" when ye are so used; it is so far from depriving you of your happiness, that it will greatly add to it; it is an honour to you, as it is to a brave hero to be employed in the wars, in the service of his prince, and therefore "rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy," *ver. 23*. Do not only bear it, but triumph in it; for, 1. You are hereby highly dignified in the kingdom of grace, for you are treated as the prophets were before you, and therefore not only need not be ashamed of it, but may justly rejoice in it, for it will be an evidence for you that you walk in the same spirit, and in the same steps, are engaged in the same cause, and employed in the same service with them. 2. You will for this be abundantly recompensed in the kingdom of glory, not only your services for Christ, but your sufferings, will come into the account; "your reward is great in heaven." Venture upon your sufferings, in a full belief that the glory of heaven will abundantly countervail all these hardships; so that though you may be losers for Christ, you shall not be losers by him in the end.

II. *Woes denounced against prospering sinners, as miserable people, though the world envies them*. These we had not in *Matthew*: it should seem the best exposition of these woes, compared with the foregoing blessings, is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; Lazarus had the blessedness of those that are poor, and hunger, and weep now, for in Abraham's bosom all the promises made to them who did so, were made good to him; but the rich man had the woes that follow here, as he had the character of those on whom these woes are entailed.

First. Here is a woe to them that are rich; that is, that trust in riches, that have abundance of this world's wealth, and instead of serving God with it, serve their lusts with it; woe to them, for "they have received their consolation," that which they placed their happiness in, and were willing to take up with for a portion, *ver. 24*. They in their lifetime received their good things, which in their account were the best things, and all the good things they are ever likely to receive from God. You that are rich are in temptation to set your heart upon a smiling world, and to say, Soul, take thine ease in the embraces of it; "this is my rest for ever, here will I dwell;" and "then woe unto you." 1. It is the folly of carnal worldlings that they make the things of this world their consolation, which were only intended for their convenience; they please themselves with them, pride themselves in them, and make them their heaven upon earth; and to them the consolations of God are small and of no account. 2. It is their misery that they are put off with them, as their consolation. Let them know it to their terror, when they are parted from these things, there is an end of all their comfort, a final end of it, and nothing remains to them but everlasting misery and torment.

Secondly. Here is a woe to them that are full, *ver. 25*; that are fed to the full, and "have more than heart could wish," *Ps. lxxiii. 7*, that have their "bellies filled with the hid treasures of this world," *Ps. xvii. 14*; that when they have abundance of these are full, and think they have enough, they need no more, they desire no more, *Rev. iii. 17*. "Now ye are full, now ye are rich," *1 Cor. iv. 8*; they are full of themselves, without God and Christ; woe to such, for they shall hunger; they shall shortly be stripped and emptied of all those things they are so proud of; and when they shall have left behind them in the world all those things which are their fulness, they shall carry away with them such appetites and desires as the world they remove to will afford

readings, found only in Luke; but they may be implied in Matthew and Mark.

vi. 1. The expression rendered "the second Sabbath after the first" is difficult, and not found elsewhere. The Greek literally means "the second first Sabbath." The Syriac version simply has "the Sabbath." The Philoxenian version is "the second Sabbath of the first," meaning probably "the second Sabbath of the first month," i.e., the second Sabbath of Nisan, the first month of the ecclesiastical

year. Some think it was the first Sabbath of the month Nisan; others, that it was the first Sabbath after the second Passover; others, that it was the first Sabbath before the new moon of Nisan. There are other opinions, but these will show how completely the critics must have recourse to conjecture. On the whole, we prefer the sense conveyed by the Philoxenian version.

vi. 5. Alford says, "In one of our ancient authorities, the Cambridge MS., the following is the form of verse 5: 'On the same

them no gratifications of; for all the delights of sense, which they are now so full of, will in hell be denied, and in heaven superseded.

Thirdly. Here is a woe to them that laugh now, that have always a disposition to be merry, and always something to make merry with; that know no other joy but that which is carnal and sensual, and know no other use of this world's goods, but purely to indulge that carnal, sensual joy; that banish sorrow, even godly sorrow, from their minds, and are always entertaining themselves with the laughter of the fool; woe unto such, for it is but now, for a little time, that they laugh, they shall mourn and weep shortly, shall mourn and weep eternally, in a world where there is nothing but weeping and wailing, endless, easeless, and remediless sorrow.

Fourthly. Here is a woe to them whom all men speak well of; that is, that make it their great and only care to gain the praise and applause of men, that value themselves by that, more than by the favour of God and his acceptance; ver. 26, "woe unto you;" that is, it would be a bad sign that you were not faithful to your trust, and to the souls of men, if you preached so as that nobody would be disgusted; for your business is to tell people of their faults, and if you do that as you ought, you will get that ill-will which never speaks well. The false prophets, indeed, that flattered your fathers in their wicked ways, that prophesied smooth things to them, were caressed and spoken well of; and if you be in like manner cried up, you will be justly suspected to deal deceitfully, as they did. We should desire to have the approbation of those that are wise and good, and not be indifferent what people say of us; but as we should despise the reproaches so we should also despise the praises of the fools in Israel.

27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, 28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. 29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. 30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. 32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. 33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. 34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. 36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

These verses agree pretty much with *Mat. v. 38*, to the end of that chapter; "I say unto you which hear," ver. 27; to all you that hear, and not to disciples only, for these are lessons of universal concern; "He that has an ear to hear, let him hear." Those that diligently hearken to Christ shall find he has something to say to them well worth their hearing. Now the lessons Christ here teacheth us are,

First. That we must render to all their due, and be honest and just in all our dealings; ver. 31, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise," for this is loving our neighbour as ourselves; what we would expect in reason to be done to us, either in justice or charity, by others, if they were in our condition, and we in theirs, that, as the matter stands, we must do to them. We must put our souls into their souls' stead, and then pity and succour them, as we would desire and justly expect to be ourselves pitied and succoured.

Secondly. That we must be free in giving to them that need; ver. 30, "Give to every man that asketh of thee," to every one that is a proper object of charity, that wants necessities, which thou hast wherewithal to supply out of thy superfluities. Give to those that are not able to help themselves, to those that have not relations in a capacity to help them. Christ would have his disciples ready to distribute, and willing to communicate to their power in ordinary cases, and beyond their power in extraordinary.

Thirdly. That we must be generous in forgiving those that have been any way injurious to us.

1. We must not be extreme in demanding our right, when it is denied us; "him that taketh away thy cloke," either forcibly or fraudulently, "forbid him not," by any violent means, "to take thy coat also," ver. 29; let him have that too, rather than fight for it; and ver. 30, "of him that taketh thy goods," so Dr. Hammond thinks it should be read, that borrows them, or that takes them up from thee upon trust, of such do not exact them; if Providence have made such insolvent, do not take the advantage of the law against them, but rather lose it than take them by the throat, *Mat. xviii. 28*. If a man run away in thy debt, and take away thy goods with him, do not perplex thyself, nor be incensed against him.

2. We must not be rigorous in revenging a wrong when it is done us; "unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek," instead of bringing an action against him, or sending for a writ for him, or bringing him before a justice, "offer also the other;" that is, pass it by, though thereby thou shouldst be in danger of bringing upon thyself another like indignity, which is commonly pretended in excuse of taking the advantage of the law in such a case. If any one "smite

thee on the cheek," rather than give another blow to him, be ready to receive another from him; that is, leave it to God to plead thy cause, and do thou sit down silent under the affront; and, when we do thus, God will "smite our enemies," as far as they are his, "upon the cheekbone," so as to "break the teeth of the ungodly," *Ps. iii. 7*; for he hath said, "Vengeance is mine," and he will make it appear that it is so, when we leave it to him to take vengeance.

3. Nay, we must "do good to them that do evil to us;" this is that which our Saviour in these verses chiefly designs to teach us, as a law peculiar to his religion, and a branch of the perfection of it.

1st. We must be kind to those from whom we have received injuries; we must not only love our enemies, and bear a good-will to them, but we must do good to them, be as ready to do any good office to them as to any other person, if their case call for it, and it be in the power of our hands to do it. We must study to make it appear by positive acts, if there be an opportunity for them, that we bear them no malice, nor seek revenge. Do they curse us, speak ill of us, and wish ill to us? Do they despitefully use us in word or deed? Do they endeavour to make us contemptible or odious? Let us bless them, and pray for them, speak well of them, the best we can, wish well to them, especially to their souls, and be intercessors with God for them. This is repeated, ver. 35, "Love ye your enemies, and do them good." To recommend this difficult duty to us, it is represented as a generous thing, and an attainment few arrive to.

To love those that love us has nothing uncommon in it, nothing peculiar to Christ's disciples, for sinners will love those that love them; there is nothing self-denying in that, it is but following nature, even in its corrupt state, and puts no force at all upon it, ver. 32; it is no thanks to us to love those that say and do just as we would have them. And, ver. 33, "if ye do good to them which do good to you," and return their kindnesses, it is from a common principle of custom, honour, and gratitude, and therefore "what thank have ye?" what credit are ye to the name of Christ, or what reputation do you bring to it? for "sinners also," that know nothing of Christ and his doctrine, "do even the same." But it becomes you to do something more excellent and eminent, herein to outdo your neighbours, to do that which sinners will not do, and which no principle of theirs can pretend to reach to; you must render good for evil; not that any thanks is due to us, but then we are to our God for a name and a praise, and he will have the thanks.

2nd. We must be kind to those from whom we expect no manner of advantage; ver. 35, "lend, hoping for nothing again." It is meant of the rich lending to the poor a little money for their necessity, to buy daily bread for themselves and their families, or to keep them out of prison; in such a case we must lend, with a resolution not to demand interest for what we lend, as we may most justly from those that borrow money to make purchases with, or to trade with; but that is not all; we must lend, though we have reason to suspect that what we lend we lose. Lend to those that are so poor that it is not probable they will be able to pay us again. This precept will be best illustrated by that law of Moses, *Deu. xv. 7-10*, which obliges them to lend to a poor brother as much as he needed, though the year of release was at hand. Here are two motives to this generous charity.

First. It will redound to our profit, for our reward shall be great, ver. 35; what is given, or laid out, or lent and lost on earth, from a true principle of charity, it will be made up to us in the other world, unspcakably to our advantage; you shall not only be repaid, but rewarded, greatly rewarded; it will be said to you, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom."

Secondly. It will redound to our honour, for herein we shall resemble God in his goodness, which is his greatest glory; "ye shall be the children of the Highest," shall be owned by him as his children, being like him. It is the glory of God that he is "kind to the unthankful and to the evil," bestows the gifts of common providence even upon the worst of men, who are every day provoking him and rebelling against him, and using those very gifts to his dishonour. Hence he infers, ver. 36, "Be merciful, as your Father is merciful;" this explains *Mat. v. 48*, "Be perfect, as your Father is perfect." Imitate your Father in those things that are his brightest perfections. Those that are merciful as God is merciful, even to the evil and the unthankful, are perfect as God is perfect; so he is pleased graciously to accept it, though infinitely falling short. Charity is called the bond of perfectness, *Col. iii. 14*; and this should strongly engage us to be merciful to our brethren, even such as have been injurious to us; not only that God is so to others, but that he is so to us, though we have been and are evil and unthankful; it is of his mercies that we are not consumed.

37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: 38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. 39 And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? 40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. 41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye. 43 For a good tree bringeth not

day he beheld a certain man working on the Sabbath, and said unto him, O man, if thou knowest what thou art doing, blessed art thou; but if thou knowest not, accursed and a transgressor of the law. This remarkable substitution seems to be an interpolation, but hardly an invention of later times. Its form and contents speak for its originality, and, I am disposed to believe, its authenticity. On this extraordinary criticism it is enough to observe, that the Cambridge MS. is alone in its strange reading here, as it is in some

other very eccentric examples. No ancient copy, translation, or author shows any trace of the existence of this reading elsewhere.

vi. 15. The word "Zelotes" is the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic Cananite, which is wrongly spelled Canaanite in *Matt. x. 4*, *Mark iii. 18*.

vi. 16. He who in our version is here called "Judas the brother of James" is clearly the same as is styled Thaddæus by Mark, and "Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus," by Matthew. For

forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 44 For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. 45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. 46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? 47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: 48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. 49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

All these sayings of Christ we had before in *Matthew*, some of them *ch. vii.*, others in other places. They were sayings Christ often used, they needed only to be mentioned; it was easy to apply them. Grotius thinks we need not be critical here in seeking for the coherence; they are golden sentences, like Solomon's proverbs, or parables. Let us observe here,

First. That we ought to be very candid in our censures of others, because we need grains of allowance ourselves. Therefore judge not others, because then you yourselves shall not be judged; therefore condemn not others, because then you yourselves shall not be condemned, *ver. 37.* Exercise towards others that charity which thinketh no evil, which bears all things, believes and hopes all things, and then others will exercise that charity towards you. God will not judge and condemn you, men will not. They that are merciful to other people's names shall find others merciful to theirs.

Secondly. That if we are of a giving and a forgiving spirit, we shall ourselves reap the benefit of it: "forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." They that forgive others' injuries, others will forgive them their inadvertencies. They that forgive others' trespasses against them, God will forgive them their trespasses against him; and he will be no less mindful of the liberal, that devise liberal things, *ver. 38*; "give, and it shall be given to you." God in his providence will recompense it to you; it is lent to him, and he is not unrighteous to forget it, *Heb. vi. 10*, but he will pay it again. Men shall return it into your bosom; for God makes use of men many times as instruments, not only of his avenging, but of his rewarding justice. If we in a right manner give to others when they need, God will incline the hearts of others to give to us when we need, and to give liberally, "good measure, pressed down and shaken together;" "they that sow plentifully shall reap plentifully." Whom God recompenseth he abundantly recompenseth.

Thirdly. That we must expect to be dealt with ourselves as we deal with others; "with the same measure that ye mete it shall be measured to you again." Those that deal hardly with others must acknowledge, as Adoni-bezek did, *Jud. i. 7*, that God is righteous, if others deal hardly with them, and they may expect to be paid in their own coin; but they that deal kindly with others have reason to hope that, when they have occasion, God will raise them up friends that will deal kindly with them. Though Providence doth not always go by this rule, because the full and exact retributions are reserved for another world, yet ordinarily it observes a proportion sufficient to deter us from all acts of rigour, and to encourage us in all acts of beneficence.

Fourthly. That those who put themselves under the conduct of the ignorant and erroneous, are likely to perish with them, *ver. 39*: "Can the blind lead the blind?" Can the Pharisees, that are blinded with pride, and prejudice, and bigotry, "lead the blind" people into the right way? "shall not both fall" together "into the ditch?" How can they expect any other? Those that are led by the common opinion, course, and custom of this world, are themselves blind, and are led by the blind, and will perish with the world, that sits in darkness. They that ignorantly, and at a venture, follow the multitude to do evil, follow the blind in the broad way that leads the many to destruction.

Fifthly. That Christ's followers cannot expect better treatment in the world than their Master had, *ver. 40*. Let them not promise themselves more honour or pleasure in the world than Christ had, nor aim at that worldly pomp and grandeur which he never was ambitious of, but always declined; nor affect that power in secular things which he would not assume; but every one that would shew himself perfect, an established disciple, let him be as his Master, dead to the world, and every thing in it, as his Master is; let him live a life of labour and self-denial, as his Master doth, and make himself a servant of all; let him stoop, and let him toil, and do all the good he can, and then he will be a complete disciple.

Sixthly. That those who take upon them to rebuke and reform others are concerned to look to it that they be themselves blameless, and harmless, and without rebuke, *ver. 41, 42*. 1. Those with a very ill grace censure the faults of others who are not aware of their own faults. It is very absurd for any to pretend to be so quick-sighted as to spy small faults in others, like a mote in the eye, when they are themselves so perfectly past feeling as not to perceive "a beam in their own eye." 2. Those are altogether unfit to help to reform others, whose reforming charity doth not begin at home. How canst thou offer thy service to thy brother to "pull out the mote from his eye," which requires a good eye, as well as a good hand, when thou thyself hast a "beam in thine own eye," and makest no complaint of it? 3. Those therefore that would be serviceable

to the souls of others, must first make it appear that they are solicitous about their own souls. To help to pull the mote out of our brother's eye is a good work, but then we must qualify ourselves for it, by beginning with ourselves; and our reforming our own lives may, by the influence of example, contribute to others reforming theirs.

Seventhly. That we may expect men's words and actions will be according as they are, according as their hearts are, and according as their principles are.

1. The heart is the tree, and the words and actions are fruit according to the nature of the tree, *ver. 43, 44*. If a man be really a good man, if he is a principle of grace in his heart, and the prevailing bent and bias of the soul be towards God and heaven, though perhaps he may not abound in fruit, though some of his fruits be blasted, and though he may be sometimes like a tree in winter, yet he doth not bring forth corrupt fruit; though he may not do you all the good he should, yet he will not in any material instance do you hurt; if he cannot reform ill manners, he will not corrupt good manners. If the fruit man brings forth be corrupt, if a man's devotion tends to debauch the mind and conversation, if a man's conversation be vicious, if he be a drunkard or fornicator, if he be a swearer or liar, if he be in any instance unjust or unnatural, his fruit is corrupt, and you may be sure he is not a good tree. On the other hand, a "corrupt tree doth not bring forth good fruit," though he may bring forth green leaves, "for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble do they gather grapes." You may, if you please, stick figs upon thorns, and hang a bunch of grapes upon a bramble, but they neither are nor can be the natural product of the trees; so neither can you expect any good carriage from those that have justly an ill character. If the fruit be good, you may conclude the tree is so; if the conversation be holy, and heavenly, and regular, though you cannot infallibly know the heart, yet you may charitably hope that that is upright with God, for "every tree is known by its own fruit;" but "the vile person will speak villany," *Isa. xxxii. 6*; and the experience of the moderns herein agrees with the proverb of the ancients, that "wickedness proceedeth from the wicked," *1 Sam. xxiv. 13*.

2. The heart is the treasure, and the words and actions are the expenses or produce from that treasure, *ver. 45*: this we had, *Mat. xii. 34, 35*. The reigning love of God and Christ in the heart denominates a man "a good man," and it is "a good treasure in the heart," it enricheth a man, it furnisheth him with a good stock to spend upon for the benefit of others; out of such a good treasure a man may bring forth that which is good; but where the love of the world and the flesh reign, there is an evil treasure in the heart, out of which an evil man is continually bringing forth that which is evil; and by what is brought forth you may know what is in the heart, as you may know what is in the vessel, water or wine, by what is drawn out from it, *Jno. ii. 8*; "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." What the mouth doth ordinarily speak, doth speak with relish and delight, generally agrees with what is innermost and uppermost in the heart; "he that speaks of the earth is earthly," *Jno. iii. 31*: not but that a good man may possibly drop an ill word, and a wicked man make use of a good word to serve an ill turn; but, for the most part, the heart is as the words are, vain or serious; it therefore concerns us to get our hearts filled, not only with good, but with abundance of it.

Eighthly. That it is not enough to hear the sayings of Christ, but we must do them; not enough to profess relation to him, as his servants, but we must make conscience of obeying him.

1. It is putting an affront upon him, to call him "Lord, Lord," as if we were wholly at his command, and had devoted ourselves to his service, if we do not make conscience of conforming to his will, and serving the interests of his kingdom. We do but mock Christ, as they that in scorn said, "Hail, King of the Jews," if we call him never so often "Lord, Lord," and yet walk in the way of our own hearts, and in the sight of our own eyes. Why do we call him "Lord, Lord," in prayer, (compare *Mat. vii. 21, 22*), if we do not obey his commands? He that "turns away his ear from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abomination."

2. It is putting a cheat upon ourselves, if we think that a bare profession of religion will save us, that hearing the sayings of Christ will bring us to heaven without doing them. This he illustrates by a similitude, *ver. 47—49*, which shews,

1st. That those only make sure work for their souls and eternity, and take the course that will stand them in stead in a trying time, who do not only come to Christ as his scholars, and hear his sayings, but do them; who think, and speak, and act, in every thing, according to the established rules of his holy religion. They are like a house built on a rock; these are they that take pains in religion, as they do that build on a rock; that begin low, as they do that dig deep; that found their hope upon Christ, who is the Rock of Ages, and other foundation can no man lay; these are they who provide for hereafter, who get ready for the worst, who lay up in store a good foundation for the time to come, for the eternity to come, *1 Tim. vi. 19*. They that do thus, do well for themselves; for, *First*. They shall keep their integrity in times of temptation and persecution; when others fall from their own steadfastness, as the seed on the stony ground, they shall stand fast in the Lord. *Secondly*. They shall keep their comfort, and peace, and hope, and joy, in the midst of the greatest distresses. The storms and streams of affliction shall not shock them, for their feet are set upon a rock, a rock higher than they. *Thirdly*. Their everlasting welfare is secured. In death and judgment they are safe. Obedient believers "are kept by the power of Christ through faith unto salvation," and shall never perish.

2nd. That those who rest in a bare hearing of the sayings of Christ, and do not live up to them, are but preparing for a fatal disappointment. "He that heareth and doth not," that knows his duty, but lives in the neglect of it, he is like a man that built a house without a foundation. He pleaseth himself with hopes that he has no ground for, and his hopes will fail him when he most needs the comfort of them; and when he expects the crowning of them, when the stream beats vehemently upon his house, it is gone; the sand it is built upon is washed away, and immediately it falls. Such is the "hope of the hypocrite, though he has gained, when God takes away his soul;" it is as the spider's web, and the giving up of the ghost.

CHAPTER VII.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ confirming the doctrine he had preached in the former chapter with two glorious miracles, the curing of one at a distance, and that was the centurion's servant, *ver. 1—10*; and the raising of one to life that was dead, the widow's son at Nain, *ver. 11—18*. II. Christ confirming the faith of John, who was now in prison, and of some of his disciples, by sending him a short account of the miracles he wrought, in answer to a question he received from him, *ver. 19—23*; to which he adds an honourable testimony concerning John, and a just reproof to the men of that generation, for the contempt they put upon him and his doctrine, *ver. 24—35*. III. Christ comforting a poor penitent that applied herself to him, all in tears of godly sorrow for sin, assuring her that her sins were pardoned; and justifying himself in the favour he shewed her against the cavils of a proud Pharisee, *ver. 36—50*.

"brother of James" we incline to receive the explanation, "son of James." His relation to James is not defined by the Greek, and hence the doubt. Jerome calls him "the three-named apostle."

vi. 20. In the clause "blessed be ye poor," it is important to note that "be" is used in the sense of "are," which is correctly used in the succeeding verses. The Greek words here, and in *Matt. v. 3*, are literally the same so far, but the first evangelist adds the explanatory phrase "in spirit," to show that material poverty is not declared to

be a blessed condition in itself. The metaphorical sense of many of the forms of speech in this summary can scarcely be overlooked by an intelligent student who remembers its spiritual bearings.

vi. 35. "Hoping for nothing again" is a doubtful rendering, and one which cannot be justified. We have no doubt the sense is, "not disappointing hope;" i.e., "if the poor look to you for aid, help them, do not disappoint them;" or, as the Syriac says, "do not cut off the hope of a man."



NOW when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. 2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. 3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: 5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. 6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: 7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. 8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

Some difference there is between this story of the cure of the centurion's servant, as it is related here, and as we had it *Mat. viii. 5, &c.*: for there it was said that the centurion came to Christ; here it is said that he sent to him, first some of the "elders of the Jews," ver. 3, and afterwards some other friends, ver. 6. But it is a rule that "we are said to do that which we do by another," *quod facimus per alium id ipsum facere dicamur*. The centurion might be said to do that which he did by his proxies, as a man takes possession by his attorney. But it is probable the centurion himself came at last, when Christ said to him, *Mat. viii. 13*, "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." This miracle is here said to have been wrought by our Lord Jesus "when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people," ver. 1. What Christ said he said publicly; whoever would, might come and hear him; "in secret have I said nothing," *Jno. xviii. 20*. Now to give an undeniable proof of the authority of his preaching word, he here gives an incontestable proof of the power and efficacy of his healing word. He that had such a commanding empire in the kingdom of nature, that he could command away diseases, no doubt has such a sovereignty in the kingdom of grace as to enjoin duties displeasing to flesh and blood, and bind under the highest penalties to the observance of them. This miracle was wrought in Capernaum, where most of Christ's mighty works were done, *Mat. xi. 23*. Now observe.

First. That the centurion's servant that was sick was dear to his master, ver. 2. It was the praise of the servant, that by his diligence and faithfulness, and a manifest concern for his master and for his interest, as for himself and for his own, he recommended himself to his master's esteem and love. Servants should study to endure themselves to their masters. It was likewise the praise of the master, that when he had a good servant he knew how to value him. Many masters, that are haughty and imperious, think it favour to enjoin to the best servants they have not to rate them, and beat them, and be cruel to them; whereas they ought to be kind to them, and tender of them, and solicitous for their welfare and comfort.

Secondly. That the master, "when he heard of Jesus," was for making application to him, ver. 3. Masters ought to take particular care of their servants when they are sick, and not to neglect them then. This centurion begged that Christ would come and heal his servant; we may now by faithful and fervent prayer apply ourselves to Christ in heaven, and ought to do so when sickness is in our families; for Christ is still the great Physician.

Thirdly. That he sent some of the elders of the Jews to Christ, to represent the case and solicit for him, thinking that a greater piece of respect to Christ than if he had come himself, because he was an uncircumcised Gentile, whom he thought Christ, being a prophet, would not care for conversing with. For that reason he sent Jews, whom he acknowledged to be favourites of Heaven; and not ordinary Jews neither, but elders of the Jews, persons in authority, that the dignity of the messengers might give honour to him to whom they were sent: Balak sent princes to Balaam.

Fourthly. That the elders of the Jews were hearty intercessors for the centurion, "they besought him instantly," ver. 4: were very urgent with him, pleading for the centurion that which he would never have pleaded for himself, "that he was worthy for whom he should do this." If any Gentile was qualified to receive such a favour, sure he was. The centurion said, "I am not so much as worthy of a visit," *Mat. viii. 8*; but the elders of the Jews thought him

worthy of the cure; thus honour shall uphold the humble in spirit: "Let another man praise thee, and not thy own mouth." But that which they insisted upon in particular was, that though he was a Gentile, yet he was a hearty well-wisher to the Jewish nation and religion, ver. 5: they thought there needed as much with Christ as there did with them to remove the prejudices against him as a Gentile, and a Roman, and an officer of the army; and therefore mention this, 1. That he was well affected to the people of the Jews; "he loveth our nation," which few of the Gentiles did. Probably he had read the Old Testament, from whence it was easy to advance a very high esteem of the Jewish nation, as favoured by Heaven above all people. Note, Even conquerors and those in power ought to keep up an affection for the conquered, and those they have power over. 2. That he was well affected to their worship; he built them a new synagogue at Capernaum, finding that what they had was either gone to decay or not large enough to contain the people, and that the inhabitants were not of ability to build one for themselves. Hereby he testified his veneration for the God of Israel, and his belief of his being the one only living and true God, and his desire, like that of Darius, to have an interest in the prayers of God's Israel, *Ezr. vi. 10*. This centurion built a synagogue at his own proper costs and charges, and probably employed his soldiers, that were in the garrison there, in the building, to keep them from idleness. Note, Building places of meeting for religious worship is a very good work, is an instance of love to God and his people; and those who do good works of that kind are worthy of double honour.

Fifthly. That Jesus Christ was very ready to shew kindness to the centurion. He presently went with them, ver. 6, though he was a Gentile; for "is he the Saviour of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also," *Rom. iii. 39*. The centurion did not think himself worthy to visit Christ, ver. 7, yet Christ thought him worthy to be visited by him; for those that humble themselves shall be exalted.

Sixthly. That the centurion, when he heard that Christ was doing him the honour to come to his house, gave farther proofs both of his humility and of his faith. Thus, the graces of saints are quickened by Christ's approaches towards them. "When he was now not far from the house," and the centurion had notice of it, instead of setting his house in order for his reception, he sends friends to meet him with fresh expressions, 1. Of his humility: "Lord, trouble not thyself," for I am unworthy of such an honour, because I am a Gentile. This speaks not only his low thoughts of himself, notwithstanding the greatness of his figure, but his high thoughts of Christ, notwithstanding the meanness of his figure, in the world. He knew how to honour a prophet of God, though he was despised and rejected of men. 2. Of his faith: "Lord, trouble not thyself," for I know it doth not need; thou canst cure my servant without coming under my roof, by that almighty power from which so thought can be withholden; "say in a word, and my servant shall be healed;" so far was this centurion from Naaman's fancy, that he should come to him, and stand and strike his hand over the patient, and so recover him, *2 Km. v. 11*. He illustrates this faith of his by a comparison taken from his own profession, and is confident Christ can as easily command away the distemper as he can command any of his soldiers; can as easily send an angel, with commission to cure this servant of his, as he can send a soldier on an errand, ver. 8. Christ hath a sovereign power over all the creatures, and all their actions, and can change the course of nature as he pleaseth, can rectify its disorders, and repair its decays in human bodies, for all power is given to him.

Seventhly. That our Lord Jesus was wonderfully well pleased with the faith of the centurion, and the more surprised at it because he was a Gentile; and the centurion's faith having thus honoured Christ, see how he honoured it, ver. 9: "he turned him about," as one amazed, "and said to the people that followed him, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Note, Christ will have those that follow him, to observe, and take notice of the great examples of faith that are sometimes set before them, especially when any such are found among those that do not follow Christ so closely as they do in profession; that we may be shamed, by the strength of their faith, out of the weaknesses and waverings of ours.

Eighthly. That the cure was presently and perfectly wrought, ver. 10. They that were sent, knew they had their errand, and therefore went back, and found the servant well, and under no remains at all of his distemper. Christ will take cognizance of the distressed case of poor servants, and be ready to relieve them, for there is no respect of persons with him. Nor are the Gentiles excluded from the benefit of his grace; nay, this was a specimen of that much greater faith which would be found among the Gentiles, when the Gospel would be published, than among the Jews.

11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his



VIEW OF NAIN.

vi. 38. The phrase "running over" scarcely conveys the force of the original, which, with Dr. Hammond, we understand to mean "abundantly poured out."

vi. 40. The word "perfect" has various shades of meaning. As the word "disciple" here means a "learner," and "master" one who teaches, "perfect" has been understood of a well or fully instructed learner. The same Greek term occurs elsewhere, as in 2 Cor. xiii. 11, Rom. ix. 22, Mark i. 19. It generally conveys the

idea of setting or being set in order; hence, to repair, prepare, constitute; hence, to be in good condition, thoroughly qualified.

vi. 44. The word for thorns is sufficiently generic to include various kinds of thorny plants and shrubs, which are common in Palestine. "Bramble bush" is a very free rendering of a word which means a bush. The same word occurs in chap. xx. 37.

vi. 49. The liability to sudden rushes of water in time of rain is very common in many countries, and it is matter of observation that

disciples went with him, and much people. 12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And



EASTERN BIER.

he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. 15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. 16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people. 17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about. 18 And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

We have here the story of Christ's raising to life a widow's son at Nain, that was dead, and in the carrying out to be buried; which Matthew and Mark had made no mention of, only, in the general, Matthew had recorded it in Christ's answer to the disciples of John, that the dead were raised up, *Mat. xi. 5.* Observe,

First. Where and when this miracle was wrought. It was the next day after he had cured the centurion's servant, *ver. 11.* Christ was doing good every day, and never had cause to complain that he had lost a day. It was done at the gate of a small city, or town, called Nain, not far from Capernaum. Probably the same with a city called Nais, which Jerome speaks of.

Secondly. Who were the witnesses of it. It is as well attested as can be, for it was done in the sight of two crowds, that met in or near the gate of the city. There was a crowd of disciples and other people attending Christ, *ver. 11;* and a crowd of relations and neighbours attending the funeral of the young man, *ver. 12.* Thus there were a sufficient number to attest the truth of this miracle; for it was a greater proof of Christ's Divine authority than his healing of diseases, for by no power of nature or any means can the dead be raised.

Thirdly. How it was wrought by our Lord Jesus.

1. The person raised to life was a young man, cut off by death in the beginning of his days; a common case: "Man comes forth like a flower, and is cut down." That he was really dead was universally agreed; there could be no collusion in the case, for Christ was entering into the town, and had not seen him till now that he met him upon the bier. He was carried out of the city, for the Jews' burying-places were without their cities, and at some distance from them. This young man was "the only son of his mother, and she a widow." She depended upon him to be the staff of her old age; but he proves a broken reed; every man, at his best estate, is so. How numerous, how various, how very calamitous, are the afflictions of the afflicted in this world! What a vale of tears is it! What a *Bochim*, a place of weepers! We may well think how deep the sorrow of this poor mother was for her only son; that is used to express the greatest grief, *Zec. xii. 10;* and the deeper in that she was a widow, broken with breach upon breach, and a full end made of her comforts. "Much people of the city was with her," by condoling her loss, to comfort her.

2. Christ shewed both his pity and his power in raising him to life, that he might give a specimen of both, which shine so bright in man's redemption.

1st. See how tender his compassions are towards the afflicted, *ver. 13:* "When the Lord saw the poor widow" following her son to the grave, "he had compassion on her." Here was no application made to him for her, not so much as that he would speak some words of comfort to her, but, *ex mero motu*,—purely from the goodness of his nature; he was troubled for her. The case was piteous, and he looked upon it with pity. His eye affected his heart; and he said unto her, "Weep not." Note, Christ has a concern for the mourners, for the miserable, and often "prevents them with the blessings of his goodness." He undertook the work of our redemption and salvation "in his love and in his pity," *Isa. lxiii. 9.* What a pleasing idea doth this give us of the compassions of the Lord Jesus, and the multitude of his tender mercies, which may be very comfortable to us, when at any time we are in sorrow. Let poor

widows comfort themselves in their sorrows with this, that Christ pities them, and knows their souls in adversity; and if others despise their grief, he does not. Christ said, "Weep not;" and he could give her a reason for it, which no one else could; weep not for a dead son, for he shall presently become a living one. This was a reason peculiar to her case; yet there is a reason common to all that sleep in Jesus, which is of equal force against inordinate and excessive grief for their death, that they shall rise again—shall rise in glory; and therefore we must not sorrow as those that have no hope, *1 Thes. iv. 13.* Let "Rachel, that weeps for her children, refrain her eyes from tears, for there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border," *Jer. xxxi. 17;* and let our passion at such a time be checked and calmed by the consideration of Christ's compassion.

2nd. See how triumphant his commands are over even death itself, *ver. 14:* "he came and touched the bier" or coffin, in or upon which the dead body lay: for to him it would be no pollution; hereby he intimated to the bearers that they should not proceed; he had something to say to the dead young man; "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom," *Job xxxii. 24.* Hereupon "they that bare him stood still," and probably let down the bier from their shoulders to the ground, and opened the coffin, if it were closed up; and then, with solemnity, as one that had authority, and to whom belonged the issues from death, he said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." The young man was dead, and could not arise by any power of his own; no more can those that are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins; yet it was no absurdity at all for Christ to bid him arise, when a power went along with that word to put life into him. The Gospel call to all people, to young people particularly, is, "Arise, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light and life. Christ's dominion over death was evidenced by the immediate effect of his word, *ver. 15:* "he that was dead sat up" without any help. When Christ put life into him, he made it to appear by his sitting up. Have we grace from Christ? let us shew it. Another evidence of life was, that he "began to speak;" for whenever Christ gives us spiritual life, he opens the lips in prayer and praise. And lastly, he would not oblige this young man, to whom he had given a new life, to go along with him, either as his disciple, to minister to him, though he owed him even his own self, much less as a trophy or a show to get honour by him, but "delivered him to his mother," to attend her as became a dutiful son; for Christ's miracles were miracles of mercy; and a great act of mercy this was to this widow: now she was comforted, according to the time in which she had been afflicted, and much more, for she could now look upon this son as a particular favourite of Heaven, with more pleasure than if he had not died.

Fourthly. What influence it had upon the people, *ver. 16:* "There came a fear on all;" it frightened them all to see a dead man start up alive out of his coffin in the open street, at the command of a man; they were all struck with wonder at this miracle, "and glorified God." The Lord and his goodness, as well as the Lord and his greatness, are to be feared. The inference they drew from it was, "that a great prophet is risen up among us," the great Prophet that we have been long looking for; doubtless he is one divinely inspired, who can thus breathe life into the dead; and that in him "God had visited his people" to redeem them, as was expected, *ch. i. 68.* This would be life from the dead indeed, to all them that waited for the consolation of Israel. When dead souls are thus raised to spiritual life, by a Divine power going along with the Gospel, we must glorify God, and look upon it as a gracious visit to his people. The report of this miracle was carried, *1.* In general all the country over, *ver. 17:* "this rumour of him," that he was the great Prophet, "went forth" upon the wings of fame "through all Judæa," which lay a great way off, and throughout all Galilee, which was "the region round about." Most got this notion of him, yet few believed in him, and gave up themselves to him. Many have the rumour of Christ's Gospel in their ears, that have not the savour and relish of it in their souls. *2.* In particular, it was carefully brought to John Baptist, who was now in prison, *ver. 18:* "his disciples came" and gave him an account of all things, that he might know, that though he was bound, yet the word of the Lord was not bound; God's work was going on, though he was laid aside.

19 And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? 20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? 21 And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. 22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things he have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. 23 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. 24 And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? 25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts. 26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

houses which are not substantially built upon a good foundation are undermined and destroyed within a very short space of time.

vii. 2. A similar narrative occurs in *Matt. viii. 5, &c.*, but with differences which have occupied the attention of the critics. In particular, Matthew states that the centurion came to Jesus, while here we read that certain Jewish elders were sent. The common rule in such a case would lead us to take this as the literally exact account. What a man does by means of his agents he is regarded

as doing himself, and this principle is recognised in records of every kind. "Thus is Christ said to have preached peace to the Ephesians (*Eph. ii. 17*), which personally he did not; and repentance to the old world (*1 Pet. iii. 19*), which he did by Noah. So James and John are said to come unto Christ, and petition him (*Mark x. 35*), which, in *Matt. xx. 20*, their mother is said to do for them." The term "elders," in verse 3, must be understood of those persons who took part in the management of public affairs at Capernaum. They may

27 This is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. 29 And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. 30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. 31 And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? 32 They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and



PIPING AND DANCING.—FROM AN EGYPTIAN PAINTING.

ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. 33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. 34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! 35 But wisdom is justified of all her children.

All this discourse concerning John Baptist, occasioned by his sending to ask whether he were the Messiah or no, we had, much as it is here related, *Mat. xi. 2-19*.

First. We have here the message John Baptist sent to Christ, and the return he made to it. Observe,

1. The great thing we are to inquire concerning is, whether he be he that should come to redeem and save sinners, or whether we are to look for another, *ver. 19, 20*. We are sure God has promised that a Saviour shall come, an anointed Saviour; we are as sure, that what he has promised he will perform in its season. If this Jesus be that promised Messiah, we will receive him, and will look for no other; but if not, we will continue our expectations, and, though he tarry, will wait for him.

2. The faith of John Baptist himself, or at least of his disciples, wanted to be confirmed in this matter; for Christ had not yet publicly declared himself to be indeed the Christ; nay, he would not have his disciples, who knew him to be so, to speak of it till the proofs of his being so were completed in his resurrection. The great men of the Jewish church had not owned him, nor had he gained any interest that was like to set him upon the throne of his father David. Nothing of that power and grandeur was to be seen about him, in which it was expected the Messiah would appear; and therefore it is not strange that they should ask, 'Art thou the Messiah?' not doubting but that, if he were not, he would direct them what other to look for.

3. Christ left it to his own works to praise him in the gates, to tell what he was, and to prove it. While John's messengers were with him he wrought many miraculous cures, "in that same hour;" which perhaps intimates, that they stayed but an hour with him; and what a deal of good work did Christ do in a little time, *ver. 21*: "He cured many of their infirmities and plagues" in body, and of evil spirits that affected the mind, either with frenzy or melancholy; "and unto many that were blind, he gave sight." He multiplied the cures, that there might be no ground left to suspect a fraud. And then, *ver. 22*, he bade them "go tell John what they had seen." And he and they might easily argue, as even the common people did, *Jno. vii. 31*, "When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" These cures, which they saw him work, were only not confirmations of his commission, but explanations of it. The Messiah must come to cure a diseased world, to give light and sight to them that sit in darkness, and to restrain and conquer evil spirits;

you see that Jesus doth this to the bodies of people, and therefore must conclude this is he that should come to do it to the souls of people; and you are to look for no other. To his miracles in the kingdom of nature he adds this in the kingdom of grace, *ver. 22*: "to the poor the Gospel is preached;" which they knew was to be done by the Messiah, for he was anointed to "preach the Gospel to the meek," *Isa. lxi. 1*; and to "save the souls of the poor and needy," *Ps. lxxii. 13*; judge therefore whether you can look for any other that will more fully answer the characters of the Messiah, and the great intentions of his coming.

4. He gave them an intimation of the danger people were in of being prejudiced against him, notwithstanding these evident proofs of his being the Messiah, *ver. 23*: "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me," or scandalized at me. We are here in a state of trial and probation, and it is agreeable to such a state, that as there are sufficient arguments to confirm the truth to those that are honest and impartial in searching after it, and have their minds prepared to receive it; so there should be also objections to cloud the truth to those that are careless, and worldly, and sensual. Christ's education at Nazareth, his residence in Galilee, the meanness of his family and relations, his poverty, and the despicableness of his followers; these and the like, were stumblingblocks to many, which all the miracles he wrought could not help them over. He is blessed, for he is wise, and humble, and well disposed, that is not overcome by these prejudices. It is a sign God blesseth him, for it is by his grace that he is helped over these stumblingstones; and he shall be blessed indeed, blessed in Christ.

Secondly. We have here the high encomium which Christ gave of John Baptist; not while his messengers were present, lest he should seem to flatter him, but when they were departed, *ver. 24*; to make the people sensible of the advantages they had enjoyed in John's ministry, and were deprived of by his imprisonment. Let them now consider what they went out in the wilderness to see; who that was about whom there had been so much talk, and such a great and general amazement. Come, saith Christ, I will tell you.

1. He was a man of unshaken self-consistence; a man of steadiness and constancy; he was not "a reed shaken with the wind," first in one sway, and then in another, shifting with every wind; he was as firm as a rock, not fickle as a reed; if he could have bowed like a reed to Herod, and have complied with the court, he might have been a favourite there; but none of these things moved him.

2. He was a man of unparalleled self-denial; a great example of mortification and contempt of the world; he was not "a man clothed in soft raiment," nor did he live delicately, *ver. 25*; but on the contrary, he lived in a wilderness, and was clad and fed accordingly; instead of adorning and pampering the body, he brought it under, and kept it in subjection.

3. He was a prophet, had his commission and instructions immediately from God, and not of man, or by man. He was by birth a priest, but that is never taken notice of, for his glory as a prophet eclipsed the honour of his priesthood; nay, he was more, he was "much more than a prophet," *ver. 26*, than any of the Old Testament, for they spake of Christ as at a distance, he spake of him as at the door.

4. He was the harbinger and forerunner of the Messiah, and he was himself prophesied of in the Old Testament, *ver. 27*: "This is he of whom it is written," *Mal. iii. 1*, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face." Before he sent the Master himself, he sent a messenger to give notice of his coming, and prepare people to receive him. Had the Messiah been to appear as a temporal prince, under which character the carnal Jews expected him, his messenger would have appeared either in the pomp of a general, or the gaiety of a herald at arms; but it was a previous indication, plain enough, of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, that the messenger he sent before him to prepare his way, did it by preaching repentance and reformation of men's hearts and lives; certainly that kingdom was not of this world which was thus ushered in.

5. He was upon this account so great, that really there was not a greater prophet than he. Prophets were really the greatest that were born of women, more honourable than kings and princes, and John was the greatest of all the prophets; the country was not sensible what a valuable, what an invaluable man it had in it, when John Baptist went about preaching and baptizing; and yet "he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." The least Gospel minister that has obtained mercy of the Lord to be skilful and faithful in his work, or the meanest of the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel, being employed under a more excellent dispensation, are in a more honourable office than John Baptist; the meanest of those that follow the Lamb far excel the greatest of those that went before him. Those, therefore, who live under the Gospel dispensation have so much the more to answer for.

Thirdly. We have here the just censure of the men of that generation, that were not wrought upon by the ministry either of John Baptist or of Jesus Christ himself.

1. Christ here shews what contempt was put upon John Baptist, while he was preaching and baptizing. 1st. Those that did shew him any respect were but the common, ordinary sort of people, that in the eye of the gay part of mankind were rather a disgrace to him than any credit, *ver. 29*. The people indeed, the vulgar herd, of whom it was said, "this people who knoweth not the law are cursed," *Jno. vii. 49*; and the publicans, men of ill fame, as being generally men of ill morals, or taken to be so, these were baptized with his baptism, and became his disciples; and these, though glorious monuments of Divine grace, yet did not magnify John in the eye of the world; but by their repentance and reformation they justified God; justified his conduct, and the wisdom of it, in appointing such a one as John Baptist to be the forerunner of the Messiah; they hereby made it to appear that it was the best method that could be taken, for it was not in vain to them, whatever it was to others. 2nd. The great men of their church and nation, the polite and the politicians, that would have done him some credit in the eye of the world, did him all the dishonour they could; they heard him indeed, but they were not baptized of him, *ver. 30*. The Pharisees, that were most in reputation for religion and devotion, and the lawyers, that were celebrated for their learning, especially for their knowledge of the Scriptures, they "rejected the counsel of God against themselves;" they frustrated it; they received the grace of God in the baptism of John in vain. God, in sending that messenger among them, had a kind purpose of good to them, designed their salvation by it; and if they had closed with the counsel of God, it had been for themselves, they had been made for ever; but they rejected it, would not comply with it; and it was against themselves, it was to their own ruin; they came short of the benefit intended them, and not only so, but forfeited the grace of God, put a bar in their own door, and by refusing that discipline which was to fit them for the kingdom of the Messiah, shut themselves out of it; and they not only excluded themselves, but hindered others, and stood in their way.

2. He here shews the strange perverseness of the men of that generation, in their cavils both against John and Christ, and the prejudices they conceived against them.

1st. They made but a jesting matter of the methods God took to do them good; *ver. 31*, "Whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation?" 'What

have been connected with the synagogue there, as they refer to it (verse 5).

vii. 11. Nain was a village in Galilee, situated at no great distance from Mount Tabor, according to Eusebius, and near Endor. A place of the same name is mentioned by Jewish writers, as in the tribe of Issachar, but this is not named elsewhere in the Bible. It is now called Nein. Robinson says, "The crusaders recognised it, and it has been since mentioned by most travellers to the present day. It

has now dwindled to a small hamlet, occupied at most by a few families." The site is "on the northern slope of the rugged and barren ridge of Little Hermon."

vii. 12. Coffins were not used by the Jews. The deceased was covered with a dress of some kind, except the face, which was exposed. The body was laid upon a bier, very soon after death, and carried to the place of interment with lamentations. Burials took place outside the towns.

can I think of, absurd enough to represent them by?" They are, then, "like children sitting in the marketplace," that mind nothing that is serious, but are as full of play as they can hold; as if God were but in jest with them in all the methods he takes to do them good, as children are with one another in the marketplace, ver. 32; they turn it all off with a banter; and are no more affected with it than a piece of pagentry. This is the ruin of multitudes; they can never persuade themselves to be serious in the concerns of their souls; old men sitting in the Sanhedrim were but as "children sitting in the marketplace;" and no more affected with the things that belonged to their everlasting peace than people are with children's play. O the amazing stupidity and vanity of the blind and ungodly world! The Lord awakes them out of their security!

2nd. They still found something or other to carp at. First, John Baptist was a reserved, austere man; lived much in solitude; and ought to have been admired for being such a humble, sober, self-denying man; and hearkened to, as a man of thought and contemplation; but this, which was his praise, was turned to his reproach; because he "came neither eating nor drinking," so freely, and plentifully, and cheerfully as others did, "ye say, he has a devil;" he is a melancholy man; he is possessed, as the demoniac whose dwelling was among the tombs, though he be not all out so wild. Secondly, Our Lord Jesus was of a more free and open conversation; he "came eating and drinking," ver. 34; he would go and dine with Pharisees, though he knew they did not care for him; and with publicans, though he knew they were no credit to him; yet in hopes of doing good both to the one and the other, he conversed familiarly with them. By this it appears that the ministers of Christ may be of very different tempers and dispositions, very different ways of preaching and living, and yet all good and useful; diversity of gifts, but each given to profit withal; therefore none must make themselves a standard to all others, nor judge hardly of those that do not do just as they do. John Baptist bore witness to Christ, and Christ applauded John Baptist, though they were the reverse of each other in their way of living; but the common enemies of them both reproached them both. The very same men that had represented John as crazed in his intellect, because "he came neither eating nor drinking," represented our Lord Jesus as corrupt in his morals, because he came eating and drinking; he is "a gluttonous man and a winebibber." Ill-will never speaks well; see the malice of wicked people, and how they put the worst construction upon every thing they meet with in the Gospel, and in the preachers and professors of it; and hereby they think to diminish them, but really destroy themselves.

Lastly, He shews that, notwithstanding this, God will be glorified in the salvation of a chosen remnant; ver. 35, "wisdom is justified of all her children." There are those who are given to wisdom as her children; and they shall be brought by the grace of God to submit to wisdom's conduct and government, and thereby to justify wisdom in the ways she takes of bringing them to that submission, for to them they are effectual, and thereby appear well chosen. Wisdom's children are herein unanimous, one and all; they have all a complacency in the methods of grace which Divine Wisdom takes, and think never the worse of them for their being ridiculed by some.

36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. 37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. 40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. 41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? 43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman

hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? 50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

When and where this passage of story happened doth not appear; this evangelist doth not observe order of time in his narratives so much as the other evangelists do; but it comes in here upon occasion of Christ's being reproached as a "friend to publicans and sinners," to shew that it was only for their good, and to bring them to repentance, that he conversed with them; and that those he admitted near him were reformed, or in a hopeful way to be so. Who this woman was, that here testified so great an affection for Christ, doth not appear; it is commonly said to be Mary Magdalene, but I find no ground in Scripture for it; she is described, *ch. viii. 2.* and *Mar. xvi. 9.* to be one "out of whom Christ had cast seven devils;" but that is not mentioned here; and therefore it is probable it was not she. Now observe here,

I. *The civil entertainment which a Pharisee gave to Christ*, and his gracious acceptance of that entertainment, ver. 36; "one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him;" either because he thought it would be a reputation to him to have such a guest at his table, or because his company would be an entertainment to him and his family and friends. It appears that this Pharisee did not believe in Christ, for he will not own him to be a prophet, ver. 36; and yet our Lord Jesus accepted his invitation, "went into his house, and sat down to meat" that they might see he took the same liberty with Pharisees that he did with publicans, in hopes of doing them good. And those may venture farther into the society of such as are prejudiced against Christ and his religion, who have wisdom and grace sufficient to instruct and argue with them, than others may.

II. *The great respects which a poor penitent sinner shewed him*, when he was at meat in the Pharisee's house. It was "a woman in the city, that was a sinner," a Gentile, I doubt a harlot, known to be so, and infamous; "she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house," and having been converted from her wicked course of life by his preaching, she came to acknowledge her obligations to him, having no opportunity of doing it any other way, by washing his feet, and anointing them with some sweet ointment that she brought with her for that purpose. The way of sitting at table then was such as that their feet were partly behind them: now this woman did not look Christ in the face, but came behind him, and did the part of the maidservant, whose office it was to wash the feet of the guests, *1 Sam. xxv. 41.* and to prepare the ointments, *1 Sam. viii. 13.* Now in what this good woman did, we may observe,

First, Her deep humiliation for sin; she stood behind him weeping; her eyes had been the inlets and outlets of sin, and now she makes them fountains of tears; her face is now blubbered, that perhaps used to be painted; her hair now made a towel of, which before had been plaited and adorned. We have reason to think she had before sorrowed for sin; but now she had an opportunity of coming into the presence of Christ, the wound bled afresh, and her sorrow renewed. Note, It well becomes penitents, upon all their approaches to Christ, to renew their godly sorrow and shame for sin, when he is pacified, *Eze. xvi. 63.*

Secondly, Her strong affection to the Lord Jesus: this was it that our Lord Jesus took special notice of, that she loved much, ver. 42, 47. She washed his feet, in token of her ready submission to the meanest office in which she might do him honour; nay, she washed them with her tears, tears of joy; she was in a transport to find herself so near her Saviour, whom her soul loved; she kissed his feet, as one unworthy of the kisses of his mouth, which the spouse coveted, *Cant. i. 2.*; it was a kiss of adoration, as well as affection; she wiped them with her hair, as one entirely devoted to his honour; her eyes shall yield water to wash them, and her hair be a towel to wipe them; and she anointed his feet with the ointment, owning him hereby to be the Messiah, the anointed; she anointed his feet, in token of her consent to God's design in anointing his head with the oil of gladness. Note, All true penitents have a dear love to the Lord Jesus.

III. *The offence which the Pharisee took at Christ*, for admitting the respects which this poor penitent paid him, ver. 39; "he spake within himself," little thinking that Christ knew what he thought, "This man, if he were a prophet," would then have so much knowledge as to perceive that this woman is a sinner, is a Gentile, is a woman of ill fame; and so much sanctity as therefore not to suffer her to come so near him, for can one of such a character approach a prophet, and his heart not rise at it? See how apt proud and narrow souls are to think that others should be as haughty and censorious as themselves. Simon, if she had touched him, would have said, "Stand by thyself, come not near me; I am holier than thou!" *Isa. lvi. 5.*; and he thought Christ should say so too.

IV. *Christ's justification of the woman*, in what she did to him, and of himself, in admitting it. Christ knew what the Pharisee spake within himself, and made answer to it: "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee," ver. 41. Though he was kindly entertained at his table, yet even there he reproved him for what he saw amiss in him, and would not suffer sin upon him. Those whom Christ hath something against, he hath something to say to, for his Spirit shall reprove. Simon is willing to give him the hearing; "he saith, Master, say on." Though he could not believe him to be a prophet, because he was not so nice and precise as he was, yet he can compliment him with the title of Master, among those that cry, "Lord, Lord," but do not the things which he saith. Now Christ in his answer to the Pharisee reasons thus: it is true this woman has been a sinner, he knows it; but she is a pardoned sinner, which supposeth her to be a penitent sinner; that what she did to him was an expression of her great love to her Saviour, by whom her sins were forgiven; that if she was pardoned, who had been so great a sinner, it might reasonably be expected that she should love her Saviour more than others, and should give greater proofs of it than others; and if this was the fruit of her love, and flowing from a sense of the pardon of her sins, it became him to accept of it, and it ill became the Pharisee to be offended at it. Now Christ has a further reach in this; the Pharisee doubted whether he was a prophet or no; nay, he did in effect deny it; but Christ shews that he was more than a prophet, for he is one that has power on earth to forgive sins, and to whom are owing the affections

vii. 18, 19. The reference to John the Baptist shows that the occurrence recorded in the preceding verses took place at an early period in our Lord's ministry. Verse 19 shows that the time corresponds with the message detailed in Matt. xi. 2, &c. For "Jesus," in verse 19, the Vatican MS. reads "the Lord."

vii. 18. The word "for" should probably be omitted, as it is in the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. The Sinaitic has, "Verily, I say." In what follows, both Sinaitic and Vatican read, "there is none

greater than John, but he that is least," &c. The word "prophet" is omitted by several old authorities.

vii. 37. A very questionable tradition identifies this woman with Mary Magdalene, and many writers have sought to show that she could not be the person intended. It is conjectured by some that the woman was a Gentile, which may or may not be true; but, as Dr. Hammond says, "That this woman, whosoever she was, was not Mary Magdalene is probable, first, by the no-argument on that side,

and thankful acknowledgments of penitent, pardoned sinners. Now in his answer,

First. He doth, by a parable, force Simon to acknowledge that the greater sinner this woman had been, the greater love she ought to shew to Jesus Christ when her sins were pardoned, ver. 41-43. A man had two debtors that were both insolvent; but one of them owed him ten times more than the other; he very freely forgave them both, and did not take the advantage of the law against them, did not order them and their children to be sold, or "deliver them to the tormentors." Now they were both sensible of the great kindness they had received, but "which of them will love him most?" Certainly, saith the Pharisee, "he to whom he forgave most;" and herein he rightly judged. Now we being obliged to forgive, as we are and hope to be forgiven, we may from hence learn the duty between debtor and creditor. 1. The debtor, if he have any thing to pay, ought to make satisfaction to his creditor. No man can reckon that his own, or have any comfortable enjoyment of it, but that which is so when all his debts are paid. 2. If God in his providence hath disabled the debtor to pay his debt, the creditor ought not to be severe with him, nor to go to the utmost rigour of the law with him, but freely to forgive him: *summum jus est summa injuria*,—"the law stretched into rigour becomes unjust." Let the unmerciful creditor read that parable, *Mat. xviii. 23, &c.*, and tremble; for they shall have judgment without mercy that shew no mercy. 3. The debtor that has found his creditors merciful ought to be very grateful to them; and, if he cannot otherwise recompense them, ought to love them. Some insolvent debtors, instead of being grateful, are spiteful to their creditors that lose by them, and cannot give them a good word, only because they complain, whereas losers may have leave to speak. But this parable speaks of God as the creditor, or rather the Lord Jesus himself, for he it is that forgives, and is beloved by the debtor; and sinners are the debtors. And so we may learn here,

1st. That sin is a debt, and sinners are debtors to God Almighty. As creatures, we owe a debt of obedience to the precept of the law; and for non-payment of that, as sinners, we become liable to the penalty. We have not paid our rent; nay, we have wasted our Lord's goods, and so we become debtors. God has an action against us for the injury we have done him, and the omission of our duty to him.

2nd. That some are deeper in debt to God, by reason of sin, than others are; "one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty." The Pharisee was the less debtor; yet he was a debtor too, which was more than he thought himself, but rather that God was his debtor, *Luz. xviii. 10, 11*; this woman, that had been a scandalous, notorious sinner, was the greater debtor. Some sins are in themselves greater debts than others; and some sinners, by reason of divers aggravating circumstances, greater debtors; as those that have sinned most openly and scandalously, that have sinned against greater light and knowledge, more convictions and warnings, and more mercies and means.

3rd. That whether our debt be more or less, it is more than we are able to pay; "they had nothing to pay," nothing at all to make a composition with; for the debt is great, and we have nothing at all to pay it with; silver and gold will not pay our debt, nor will sacrifice and offering; no, not "thousands of rams." No righteousness of our own will pay it; no, not our repentance and obedience for the future, for it is what we are already bound to, and it is God that works it in us.

4th. That the God of heaven is ready to forgive, frankly to forgive, poor sinners upon Gospel terms, though their debt be never so great. If we repent and believe in Christ, our iniquity shall not be our ruin, it shall not be laid to our charge. God has proclaimed his name gracious and merciful, and ready to forgive sin; and his Son having purchased pardon for penitent believers, his Gospel promiseth it to them, and his Spirit seals it, and gives them the comfort of it.

5th. That those who have their sins pardoned are obliged to love him that pardoned them; and the more is forgiven them, the more they should love him. The greater sinners any have been before their conversion the greater saints they should be after; the more they should study to do for God, and the more their hearts should be enlarged in obedience. When a persecuting Saul became a preaching Paul, he laboured more abundantly.

Secondly. He applies this parable to the different temper and carriage of the Pharisee and the sinner towards Christ. Though the Pharisee would not allow Christ to be a prophet, Christ seems ready to allow him to be in a justified state; and that he was one forgiven, though to him less was forgiven. He did indeed shew some love to Christ in inviting him to his house, but nothing to what this poor woman shewed. "Look thee, saith Christ to him, 'she is one that has much forgiven her; and therefore, according to thine own judgment, it might be expected she should love much more than thou dost; and so it appears, ver. 41: "Seest thou this woman?" Thou lookest upon her with contempt; but consider what a kinder friend she is to me than thou art; should I then accept thy kindness, and refuse hers? 1. Thou didst not so much as order a basin of water to be brought to wash my feet in, when I came in weary and dirtied with my walk, which would have been some refreshment to me; but she has done much more, "she hath washed my feet with tears," tears of affection to me, tears of affliction for sin, and has "wiped them with the hairs of her head," in token of her great love to me. 2. Thou didst not so much as kiss my cheek, which was a usual expression of a hearty and affectionate welcome to a friend, but "this woman hath not ceased to kiss my feet," ver. 45, thereby expressing both a humble and an affectionate love. 3. Thou didst not provide me a little common oil, as usual, to anoint my head with; but she has bestowed a box of precious ointment upon my feet, ver. 46; so far hath she outdone thee." The reason why some people blame the pains and expense of zealous Christians in religion is, because they are not willing themselves to come up to it, but resolve to rest in a cheap and easy religion.

Thirdly. He silenced the Pharisee's cavil: ver. 47, "I say unto thee, Simon, her sins, which are many, are forgiven." He owns she had been guilty of many sins, but they are forgiven her, and therefore it is no way unbecoming in me to accept her kindness. "They are forgiven, for she loved much." It should be rendered, therefore she loved much; for it is plain, by the tenor of Christ's discourse, that her loving much was not the cause, but the effect, of her pardon, and of her comfortable sense of it; for "we love God because he first loved us;" he did not forgive us because we first loved him. But "to whom little is forgiven," as is to thee, "the same loveth little," as thou dost. Hereby he intimates to the Pharisee that his love to Christ was so little, that he had reason to question whether he loved him at all in sincerity; and consequently, whether indeed his sins, though comparatively little, were forgiven him. Instead of grudging great sinners the mercy they find with Christ upon their repentance, we should be stirred up by their example to examine ourselves, whether we be indeed forgiven, and do love Christ.

Fourthly. He silenced her fears, who probably was discouraged by the Pharisee's offence, and yet would not so far yield to the discouragement as to fly off. 1. Christ said unto her, "Thy sins are forgiven," ver. 48. Note, The more we express our sorrow for sin, and our love to Christ, the clearer evidence we have of the forgiveness of our sins; for it is by the experience of a work of

grace wrought in us, that we obtain the assurance of an act of grace wrought for us. How well was she paid for her pains and cost when she was dismissed with this word from Christ, "Thy sins are forgiven," and what an effectual prevention would this be of her return to sin again. 2. Though there were those present who quarrelled with Christ in their own minds for presuming to forgive sin and pronounce sinners absolved, ver. 40, as those had done, *Mat. ix. 3*, yet he stood to what he had said; for as he had there proved that he had power to forgive sin, by curing the man sick of the palsy, and therefore would not here take notice of the cavil, so he would now shew that he had pleasure in forgiving sin, and it was his delight; he loves to speak pardon and peace to penitents, ver. 50: "He said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee." This would confirm and double her comfort in the forgiveness of her sin, that she was justified by her faith. All these expressions of sorrow for sin, and love to Christ, were the effects and products of faith; and therefore, as faith of all graces doth most honour God, so Christ doth of all graces put most honour upon faith. Note, They who know their faith hath saved them may go in peace, may go on their way rejoicing.

CHAPTER VIII.

Most of this chapter is a repetition of divers passages of Christ's preaching and miracles, which we had before in *Matthew* and *Mark*, and they are all of such weight that they are worth repeating, and therefore they are repeated, that out of the mouth, not only of two, but of three witnesses, every word may be established. Here is, I. A general account of Christ's preaching, and how he had subsistence for himself and his numerous family by the charitable contributions of good people, ver. 1-3. II. The parable of the sower and the four sorts of ground, with the exposition of it, and some inferences from it, ver. 4-18. III. The preference which Christ gave to his obedient disciples before his nearest relations according to the flesh, ver. 19-21. IV. His stilling a storm at sea with a word's speaking, ver. 22-25. V. His casting a legion of devils out of a man that was possessed of them, ver. 26-40. VI. His healing the woman that had the bloody issue, and raising Jairus' daughter to life, ver. 41-56.



AND it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, 2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, 3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

We are here told,

First. What Christ made the constant business of his life, and that was preaching; in that work he was indefatigable, and went about doing good, ver. 1 "afterward," *ἐν τῷ κατεῖναι, ordine*,—"in the proper time or method." Christ took his work before him, and went about it regularly; he observed a series, or order of business, so as that the end of one good work was the beginning of another. Now observe here,

1. Where he preached. He "went about," *διὰ δόξου, peragrabat*. He was an itinerant preacher, did not confine himself to one place, but diffused the beams of his light. *Circuibat*,—"he went his circuit" as a judge, having found his preaching perhaps most acceptable where it was new. He went about "through every city," that none might plead ignorance. Hereby he set an example to his disciples; they must traverse the nations of the earth, as he did the cities of Israel. Nor did he confine himself to the cities, but went into the villages among the plain country people to preach, to the inhabitants of the villages, *Jud. v. 11*.

2. What he preached. He shewed "the glad tidings of the kingdom of God," that it was now set up among them. Tidings of the kingdom of God are glad tidings, and those Jesus Christ came to bring; to tell the children of men that God was willing to take all those under his protection that were willing to return to their allegiance; it was glad tidings to the world, that there were hopes of its being reformed and reconciled.

3. Who were his attendants. "The twelve were with him;" not to preach, if he were present, but to learn of him what and how to preach hereafter; and if occasion were, to be sent to places where he could not go. Happy were these his servants that heard his wisdom.

Secondly. Whence he had the necessary supports of life. He lived upon the kindness of his friends. There were "certain women" who frequently attended his ministry, that "ministered to him of their substance," ver. 23. Some of them are named, but there were "many others," who were zealously affected to the doctrine of Christ, and thought themselves bound in justice to encourage it, having themselves found benefit, and in charity hoping that many others might find benefit by it too.

1. They were such for the most part as had been Christ's patients, and were the monuments of his power and mercy; they "had been healed" by him "of evil spirits and infirmities." Some of them had been troubled in mind, and melancholy, others of them afflicted in body, and he had been to them a powerful healer. He is the physician both of body and soul, and those who have been healed by him ought to study what they shall render to him. We are bound in interest to attend him, that we may be ready to apply ourselves to him for help in case of a relapse; and we are bound in gratitude to serve him and his Gospel, who hath served us and saved us by it.

2. One of them was "Mary, Magdalene, out of whom had been cast seven devils;" a certain number for an uncertain. Some think she was one that had been very wicked; and then we may suppose her to be the woman that was a sinner, mentioned just before, *ch. vii.*; and Dr. Lightfoot, finding in some of the Talmudists' writings that Mary Magdalene signified Mary the plaiter of hair, thinks it applicable to her, she having been noted, in the days of her iniquity and infamy, for that plaiting of hair which is opposed to modest apparel, *1 Tim. ii. 9*;

but only the mention of the name of Mary in John xii. 3, which presently shall appear to be Martha's and Lazarus's sister, and that another story; secondly, by the words in the chapter here following (*chap. viii. 2*), where, when it is said that Mary Magdalene was with Christ, she is described by another character, taken from that remarkable mercy wrought on her by Christ, that she had seven devils cast out of her, the very mark which is again given her, *Mark xvi. 9*, &c. What is here called an alabaster-box by our

translators is the same as that in *Matt. xxvi. 7*. In both cases we understand it to have been a bottle-shaped vessel, with a narrow neck, and that its form more nearly corresponds with what we call a flask or cruse. The vessel was wont to be closed with a stopper, and the contents were either poured out or removed by means of a spatula or little stick. The oils and perfumes were not always liquid, though such was probably the state of that mentioned in the text. It was the custom of several ancient nations to apply perfumed

but though she had been an immodest woman, upon her repentance and reformation, she found mercy, and became a zealous disciple of Christ. Note, The greatest of sinners must not despair of pardon; and the worse any have been before their conversion, the more they should study to do for Christ after. Or rather, she was one that had been very melancholy; and then probably it was Mary the sister of Lazarus, who was a woman of a sorrowful spirit; might be originally of Magdala, but removed to Bethany. This Mary Magdalene was attending on Christ's cross and his sepulchre, and if she were not Mary the sister of Lazarus, either that particular friend and favourite of Christ's did not attend then, or the evangelists did not take notice of her, neither of which we can suppose; thus Dr. Lightfoot argues; yet there is this to be objected against it, that Mary Magdalene is reckoned among the women that followed Jesus from Galilee, *Mat. xxvii. 55, 56*; whereas Mary the sister of Lazarus had her residence in Bethany.

3. Another of them was Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; she had been his wife, so some, but was now a widow, and left in good circumstances; if she was now his wife, we have reason to think that her husband, though preferred in Herod's court, had received the Gospel, and was very willing that his wife should be both a hearer of Christ and a contributor to him.

4. There were many of them that "ministered to Christ of their substance." It was an instance of the meanness of that condition to which our Saviour humbled himself that he needed it, and his great humility and condescension that he accepted it. "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor," and lived upon alms. Let none say they scorn to be beholden to the charity of their neighbours, when Providence has brought them into straits; but let them ask it, and be thankful for it as a favour. Christ would rather be beholden to his known friends for a maintenance for himself and his disciples, than be burdensome to strangers in the cities and villages whither he came to preach. Note, It is the duty of those who are taught in the Word, to communicate to them who teach them, in all good things; and those who are herein liberal and cheerful, honour the Lord with their substance, and bring a blessing upon it.

4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: 5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. 8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? 10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. 11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. 16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. 17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. 18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall

be taken even that which he seemeth to have. 19 Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press. 20 And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. 21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

The former paragraph began with an account of Christ's industry in preaching, ver. 1; this begins with an account of the people's industry in hearing, ver. 4. He went into every city to preach; so they, one would think, should have contented themselves to hear him when he came to their own city; we know those that would: but there were those here that came to him out of every city, would not stay till he came to them, nor think they had had enough when he left them, but met him when he was coming towards them, and followed him when he was going from them. Nor did he excuse himself with this from going to the cities, that there were some from the cities that came to him; for though there were, yet the most had not zeal enough to bring them to him; and therefore, such is his wonderful condescension, that he will go to them; for "he is found of those that sought him not," *Isa. lvi. 1*. Here was, it seems, a vast concourse; "much people were gathered together;" abundance of fish to cast the net among; and he was as ready and willing to teach as they were to be taught. Now in these verses we have,

First. Necessary and excellent rules and cautions for hearing the Word, in the parable of the sower, and the reddition and application of it, all which we had twice before more largely. When Christ had put forth this parable, 1st. The disciples were inquisitive concerning the meaning of it, ver. 9; they asked him, "What might this parable be?" Note, We should covet earnestly to know the true intent and full extent of the Word we hear, that we may neither be mistaken in our own knowledge, nor defective in it. 2nd. Christ made them sensible of what great advantage it was to them, that they had opportunity of acquainting themselves with the mystery and meaning of his word, which others had not; ver. 10, "Unto you it is given." Note, Those who would receive instruction from Christ must know and consider what a privilege it is to be instructed by him, what a distinguishing privilege to be led into the light, such a light, when others are left in darkness, such a darkness. Happy are we, and for ever indebted to free grace, if the same thing that is a parable to others, with which they are only amused, is a plain truth to us, by which we are enlightened and governed, and into the mould of which we are delivered. Now from the parable itself, and the explication of it, observe,

1. The heart of man is as soil to the seed of God's Word; it is capable of receiving it, and bringing forth the fruits of it; but, unless that seed be sown in it, it will bring forth nothing valuable; our care therefore must be to bring the seed and the soil together. To what purpose have we the seed in the Scripture, if it be not sown? and to what purpose have we the soil in our own hearts, if it be not sown with that seed?

2. The success of the seedness is very much according to the nature and temper of the soil, and as that is or is not disposed to receive the seed. The Word of God is to us as we are; a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death.

3. The devil is a subtle and spiteful enemy, that makes it his business to hinder our profiting by the Word of God. He takes the Word out of the hearts of careless hearers, ver. 12, "lest they should believe and be saved." That is added here to teach us, 1st. That we cannot be saved unless we believe: the word of the Gospel will not be a saving word to us, unless it be mixed with faith. 2nd. That therefore the devil doth all he can to keep us from believing, to make us not heed the Word when we read and hear it; or if we heed it for the present, to make us forget it again, and let it slip, (*Heb. ii. 1*;) or, if we remember it, to create prejudices in our minds against it, or divert our minds from it to something else; and all is, "lest we should believe and be saved," lest we should believe and rejoice, while he believes and trembles.

4. Where the Word of God is heard carelessly, there is commonly a contempt put upon it too. It is added here in the parable, that the seed which fell by the way side was trodden down, ver. 5. They that wilfully shut their ears against the Word, do in effect trample it under their feet; they "despise the commandment of the Lord."

5. Those on whom the Word makes some impressions, but they are not deep and durable ones, will shew their hypocrisy in a time of trial, as the seed sown upon the rock, where it gains no root, ver. 13; these for a while believe, a little while; their profession promiseth something, but "in time of temptation they fall away," from their good beginnings; whether the temptation arise from the smiles or from the frowns of the world, they are easily overcome by it.

6. That the "pleasures of this life" are as dangerous and mischievous thorns to choke the good seed of the Word as any other. That is added here, ver. 14, which was not in the other evangelists. Those that are not entangled in the cares of this life, nor inveigled with the deceitfulness of riches, but boast that they are dead to them, yet may be kept from heaven by an affected indolence and the love of ease and pleasure. The delights of sense may ruin the soul, even lawful delights indulged, and too much delighted in.

7. That it is not enough that the fruit be brought forth, but it must be brought to perfection, it must be fully ripened; if it be not, it is as if there were no fruit at all brought forth; for that which in *Matthew* and *Mark* is said to be "unfruitful," is the same that here is said to bring forth none to perfection: for *factum non dicitur quod non perseverat*, — "perseverance is necessary to the perfection of a good work."

8. The good ground which brings forth good fruit, is "an honest and good heart," well disposed to receive instruction and commandment, ver. 19; a heart free from sinful pollutions, and firmly fixed for God and duty; an upright heart, a tender heart, and a heart that trembles at the Word, is an honest and good heart; that having heard the Word, understands it, so it is in *Matthew*; receives it, so it is in *Mark*; and keeps it, so it is here, as the soil not only receives but keeps the seed; and the stomach not only receives but keeps the food or physic.

9. Where the Word is well kept, there is fruit brought forth with patience; that also is added here. There must be both bearing patience, and waiting patience; patience to suffer the tribulation and persecution which may arise because of the Word; patience to continue to the end in well-doing.

10. In consideration of all this we ought to take heed how we hear, ver. 18; take heed of those things that will hinder our profiting by the Word we hear

oils, &c., to their persons, on a variety of occasions, festivities among the rest.

vii. 44. The washing of the feet of guests is a custom as old as the days of Abraham, and is still known in the East. Mr. Jowett says of his reception at a house in Lebanon, "Before supper the master of the house directed his servant to bring in a large brass pan, full of warm water, in which, for the first and indeed the only time that I ever experienced such attention, he illustrated the

ancient custom of washing the feet of strangers, and no compliment could have been more seasonable." Dr. Robinson speaks of a case in which he experienced the same hospitable attentions; and several other travellers have left similar records.

vii. 45. In modern times it is usual for the Orientals to salute each other with a kiss, as Mr. Carne says the Arabs do.

viii. 3. This is the first place in which mention is made of Joanna, whose husband, Chuza, was or had been the steward of Herod. It

watch over our hearts in hearing, and take heed lest they betray us; take heed lest we hear carelessly and slightly, lest we entertain prejudices against the Word we hear upon any account; and take heed to the frame of our spirits after we have heard the Word, lest we lose what we have gained.

Secondly, Needful instructions given to those that are appointed to preach the Word, and to those also that have heard it.

1. Those that have received the gift must minister the same. Ministers that have the dispensing of the Gospel committed to them, people that have profited by the Word, and are thereby qualified to profit others, must look upon themselves as lighted candles; ministers must, in solemn, authoritative preaching, and people in brotherly, familiar discourse, diffuse their light; for a candle must not be covered with a vessel, or put under a bed, ver. 16. Ministers and Christians are to be lights in the world, "holding forth the Word of life;" their light must shine before men; they must not only be good, but do good.

2. We must expect that what is now done in secret, and from unseen springs, will shortly be manifested and made known, ver. 17. What is committed to you in secret should be made manifest by you; for your Master did not give you talents to be buried, but to be traded with. Let that which is now hid be made known, for if it be not manifested by you, it will be manifested against you, will be produced in evidence of your treachery.

3. The gifts we have will either be continued to us or taken from us, according as we do or do not make use of them, for the glory of God and the edification of our brethren, ver. 18; "whosoever hath, to him shall be given;" he that hath gifts, and doth good with them, shall have more; he that buries his talent shall lose it. From him that has shall not be taken away even "that which he hath," so it is in *Mark*; that which he "seemeth to have," so it is in *Luke*. Note. The grace that is lost was but seeming grace, was never true. Men do but seem to have what they do not use, and shows of religion will be lost and forfeited; "they went out from us because they were not of us," *1 Jno.* ii. 19. Let us see to it that we have grace in sincerity, the root of the matter found in us; and that is a good part which shall never be taken away from those that have it.

Thirdly, Great encouragement given to those that prove themselves faithful hearers of the Word by being doers of the work, in a particular instance of Christ's respect to his disciples, in preferring them even before his nearest relations, ver. 19—21, which passage of story we had twice before. Observe,

1. What crowding there was after Christ; there was no coming near for the throng of people that attended him; who, though they were crowded never so much, would not be crowded out from his congregation. 2. That some of his nearest kindred were least solicitous to hear him preach. Instead of getting within, as they might easily have done if they had come in time, desiring to hear him, they stood without desiring to see him; and probably, out of a foolish fear, lest he should spend himself with too much speaking, designing nothing but to interrupt him, and oblige him to break off. 3. That Jesus Christ would rather be busy at his work than conversing with his friends. He would not leave his preaching to speak with his mother and his brethren, for it was his meat and drink to be so employed. 4. That Christ is pleased to own those as his nearest and dearest relations "that hear the Word of God, and do it;" they are to him more than his mother and brethren.

22 Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. 23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. 24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. 25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him. 26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. 27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. 29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) 30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. 31 And they besought him that

he would not command them to go out into the deep. 32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. 33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked. 34 When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. 35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 36 They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. 37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again. 38 Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

We have here two illustrious proofs of the power of our Lord Jesus, which we had before; his power over the winds, and his power over the devils.

First. His power over the winds, those powers of the air that are so much a terror to men, especially upon sea, and occasion the death of such multitudes. Observe.

1. Christ ordered his disciples to put to sea, that he might shew his glory upon the water in stilling the waves, and might do an act of kindness to a poor possessed man on the other side of the water, ver. 22; "he went into a ship with his disciples." They that observe Christ's orders may assure themselves of his presence. If Christ sends his disciples, he goes with them; and those may safely and boldly venture any whither that have Christ accompanying them. "He said, Let us go over unto the other side," for he had a piece of good work to do there. He might have gone by land, a little way about, but he chose to go by water, that he might shew his wonders in the deep.

2. Those that put to sea in a calm, yea, and at Christ's word, yet must prepare for a storm, and for the utmost peril in that storm; ver. 23, "there came down a storm of wind on the lake," as if it were there, and no where else; and presently their ship was so tossed that it was filled with water, and they were in jeopardy of their lives. Perhaps the devil, who is "the prince of the power of the air," and who raiseth winds by the permission of God, had some suspicion, perhaps from some words that Christ might let fall, that he was coming over the lake now on purpose to cast that legion of devils out of the poor man on the other side; and therefore poured this storm upon the ship he was in, designing, if possible, to have sunk him, and prevented that victory.

3. Christ was asleep in the storm, ver. 23. Some bodily refreshment he must have, and chose to take it then, when it would be least a hindrance to him in his work. The disciples of Christ may really have his gracious presence with them at sea, and in a storm, and yet he may seem as if he were asleep; may not presently appear for their relief, no, not when things seem to be brought even to the last extremity. Thus he will try their faith and patience, and quicken them by prayer to awake, and make their deliverance the more welcome when it comes at last.

4. A complaint to Christ of our danger, and the distress his church is in, is enough to engage him to awake, and appear for us, ver. 24. They cried, "Master, master, we perish." The way to have our fears silenced is to bring them to Christ, and lay them before him. Those that in sincerity call Christ Master, and with faith and fervency call upon him as their Master, may be sure he will not let them perish. No relief for poor souls that are under sense of guilt and fear of wrath like this, to go to Christ and call him Master, and say, "I am undone if thou do not help me."

5. Christ's business is to lay storms, as it is Satan's business to raise them. He can do it, he has done it, he delights to do it, for he came to proclaim peace on earth; ver. 24, "he rebuked the wind and the raging of the waters," and immediately "they ceased;" not, as at other times, by degrees; but all of a sudden "there was a great calm." Thus Christ shewed, that though the devil pretends to be the prince of the power of the air, yet even there he has him in a chain.

6. When our dangers are over, it becomes us to take to ourselves the shame of our own fears, and to give to Christ the glory of his power. When Christ had turned the storm into a calm, "then were they glad, because they were quiet," *Ps.* cvii. 30. And then, 1. Christ gives them a rebuke for their inordinate fear, ver. 25, "Where is your faith?" Note, Many that have true faith, have it to seek when they have occasion to use it; they tremble, and are discouraged if second causes frown upon them; a little thing disheartens them, and where is their faith then? 2. They gave him the glory of his power; "they being afraid wondered." Those that had feared the storm, now the danger

is thought that she was a widow by some, but by others that her husband may have been the nobleman mentioned in John iv. 46, whose son was healed by the Saviour. Joanna may have been an old acquaintance of Mary Magdalene, with whom she is again named in chap. xxiv. 10, after the resurrection. For "ministered unto him" we prefer another and better reading, "ministered unto them." From this circumstance it may be inferred that the little band of women who so early combined to show their confidence and affection

were not in reduced circumstances. They contributed to the support of Jesus and the twelve. The Greek word for "ministered," however, often conveys the idea of service, and especially of waiting upon guests at table.

viii. 14. The phrase "bring no fruit to perfection" signifies "do not mature their fruit, but let it fall or wither while yet unripe."

viii. 16. In the corresponding passage of Mark, the word "bushel" is used where "vessel" is introduced here. There is no reason to

was over, with good reason feared him that had stilled it; and "said one to another, What manner of man is this?" They might as well have said, "Who is a God like unto thee?" For it is God's prerogative to "still the noise of the sea, the noise of the waves," *Ps. lxxvii.*

Secondly, His power over the devil, "the prince of the power of the air." In the next passage of story he comes into a closer grapple with him than he did when he commanded the winds. Presently after the winds were stilled, they were brought to their desired haven, and "arrived at the country of the Gadarenes," and there went ashore, *ver. 26, 27*; and he soon met with that which was his business over, and thought it worth his while to go through a storm to it. We may learn a great deal out of this story concerning the world of infernal, malignant spirits, which, though not working now, ordinarily, in the same way as here, yet we are all concerned at all times to stand upon our guard against.

1. These malignant spirits are very numerous. They that had taken possession of this one man called themselves Legion, *ver. 20*, "because many devils were entered into him;" he had "had devils a long time," *ver. 27*. But perhaps those that had been long in possession of him, upon some foresight of our Saviour's coming to make an attack upon them, and finding they could not prevent it by the storm they had raised, sent for recruits, intending this to be a decisive battle, and hoping now to be too hard for him that had cast out so many unclean spirits, and to give him a defeat; and either were, or at least would be thought to be, a legion of them, formidable as an army with banners; and now at least, to be what the twentieth legion of the Roman army, which was long quartered at Chester, was styled, *legio victrix*,—"a victorious legion."

2. They have an inveterate enmity to man, and all his conveniences and comforts. This man in whom the devils had got possession, and kept it long, being under his influence, "wore no clothes, neither abode in any house," *ver. 27*, though clothing and a habitation are two of the necessary supports of this life; nay, and because man has a natural dread of the habitations of the dead, he forced this man to abide in the tombs, to make him so much the more a terror to himself and to all about him; so that his soul had as much cause as ever any man's had to be weary of his life, and to choose strangling and death rather.

3. They are very strong, and fierce, and unruly, and hate and scorn to be restrained; *ver. 29*, "he was kept bound with chains and in fetters," that he might not be mischievous either to others or to himself; but he "broke the bands." Note, Those that are ungovernable by any other, thereby shew that they are under Satan's government; and this is the language of those that are so, even concerning God and Christ, their best friends, that would not either bind them from, or bind them to, any thing but for their own good. "Let us break their bands in sunder." "He was driven of the devils." Those that are under Christ's government are sweetly led with the cords of a man and the bands of love; those that are under the devil's government are furiously driven.

4. They are much enraged against our Lord Jesus, and have a great dread and horror of him. "When the man" whom they had possession of, and who spake as they would have him, "saw Jesus," he roared out as one in an agony, and "fell down before him" to deprecate his wrath, and owned him to be "the Son of God most high," that was infinitely above him, and quite too hard for him; but protested against having any league or confederacy with him, (which might sufficiently have silenced the blasphemous cavils of the scribes and Pharisees), "What have I to do with thee?" The devils have neither inclination to do service to Christ, nor expectation to receive benefit by him: "What have we to do with thee?" But they dreaded his power and wrath: "I beseech thee, torment me not." They do not say, "I beseech thee, save me," but only, "torment me not." See whose language they speak that have only a dread of hell as a place of torment, but no desire of heaven as a place of holiness and love.

5. They are perfectly at the command and under the power of our Lord Jesus, and they knew it, for they "besought him that he would not command them to go (*εἰς τὸν ἄβυσσον*), into the deep," the place of their torment, which they acknowledge he could easily and justly do. O what a comfort is this to the Lord's people, that all the powers of darkness are under the check and control of the Lord Jesus! He has them all in a chain. He can send them to their own place when he pleaseth.

6. They delight in doing mischief. When they found there was no remedy, but they must quit the hold of this poor man, they begged they might have leave to take possession of a herd of swine, *ver. 32*. When the devil at first brought man into a miserable state, he brought a curse likewise upon the whole creation, and that became subject to enmity; and here, as an instance of that extensive enmity of his, when he could not destroy the man, he would destroy the swine. If he could not hurt them in their bodies, he would hurt them in their goods, which sometimes proves a great temptation to men to draw them from Christ, as here. Christ "suffered them to enter into the swine," to convince the country what mischief the devil could do in it, if he should suffer him. No sooner had the devils leave, but they entered into the swine; and no sooner had they entered into them, but the herd ran violently "down a steep place into the lake, and were drowned." For it is a miracle of mercy, if those whom Satan possesseth are not brought to destruction and perdition. This and other instances shew that that roaring lion and red dragon seeks what and whom he may devour.

7. When the devil's power is broke in any soul, that soul recovers itself, and returns into a right frame; which supposeth that those whom Satan gets possession of, are put out of the possession of themselves. "The man out of whom the devils were departed sat at the feet of Jesus," *ver. 35*; while he was under the devil's power, he was ready to fly in the face of Jesus; but now he sits at his feet, which is a sign that he is come to his right mind. If God have possession of us, he preserves to us the government and enjoyment of ourselves; but if Satan have possession of us, he robs us of both; let his power therefore in ourselves be overturned, and let Him come whose right our hearts are, and give them him; for we are never more our own than when we are his.

Let us now see what was the effect of this miracle of casting the legion of devils out of this man.

1. What effect it had upon the people of that country, who had lost their swine by it; "the swineherds went and told it both in city and country," *ver. 34*; perhaps with a design to incense people against Christ; they told "by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed," *ver. 36*; that it was by sending the devils into the swine, which was capable of an invidious representation, as if Christ could not otherwise have delivered the man out of their hands, but by delivering the swine into them. "The people came out to see what was done," and to inquire into it, "and they were afraid," *ver. 35*; "they were taken with great fear," *ver. 37*; they were surprised and amazed at it, and knew not what to say to it. They thought more of the destruction of the swine than of the deliverance of their poor afflicted neighbour, and of the country from the terror of his frenzy, for it was become a public nuisance; and therefore "the whole multitude besought Christ to depart from them," for fear he should bring some other judgment upon them; whereas indeed none need

to be afraid of Christ that are willing to forsake their sins, and give up themselves to him. But Christ took them at their word; he "went up into the ship, and returned back again." Those lose their Saviour, and their hopes in him, that love their swine better.

2. What effect it had upon the poor man who had recovered himself by it; he desired Christ's company as much as others dreaded it; he besought Christ that "he might be with him," as others were, "that had been healed by him of evil spirits and infirmities," *ver. 2*; that Christ might be to him a protector and teacher, and that he might be to Christ for a name and a praise. He was loath to stay among those rude and brutish Gadarenes, that desired Christ to depart from them: "O gather not my soul with these sinners!" But Christ would not take him along with him, but sent him home, to publish among those that knew him the great things God had done for him, and so might be a blessing to his country, as he had been a burthen to it. We must sometimes deny ourselves the satisfaction even of spiritual benefits and comforts, to gain an opportunity of being serviceable to the souls of others. Perhaps Christ knew that when the resentment of the loss of their swine was a little over, they would be better disposed to consider the miracle, and therefore left the man among them, to be a standing monument and monitor to them of it.

40 And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him. 41 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: 42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him. 43 And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, 44 Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd. 45 And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? 46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. 47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. 48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. 49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. 50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. 51 And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. 52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. 53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. 54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. 55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. 56 And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

Christ was driven away by the Gadarenes: they were weary of him, and willing to be rid of him; but when he had crossed the water, and returned to the Galileans, they "gladly received him," wished and waited for his return, and welcomed him with all their hearts when he did return, *ver. 40*. If some

suppose that candles, in the modern sense, were in use in Palestine. The Greek word merely means a light, more commonly a lamp or lantern. The household lamp was placed upon a stand, here called a candlestick, which appears to have been varied in form, and often rendered ornamental as well as useful. Sometimes the lamp was suspended from the ceiling like a modern chandelier, and consisted of one or several lights. One of the common portable lamps might easily have been placed under a bed, or rather couch, which was

frequently supported at some height above the ground, like a modern bedstead or sofa.

viii. 22. It is noticeable that Luke uses the word "lake" three times in this chapter and twice elsewhere, where the other evangelists regularly use the word "sea." They wrote in accordance with Hebrew ideas, which gave the name of "sea" to any capacious reservoir of water, whether natural or artificial; hence they called even the great laver of the temple "a sea."

will not accept the favours Christ offers them, others will: if the Gadarenes be not gathered, yet there are many among whom Christ shall be glorious. When Christ had done his work on the other side of the water, he returned and found work to do in the place whence he came, fresh work. They that will lay out themselves to do good shall never want occasion for it; the wanting you have always with you.

We have here two miracles interwoven, as they were in *Matthew* and *Mark*: the raising of Jairus' daughter to life, and the cure of the woman that had an issue of blood, as he was going in a crowd to Jairus' house. We have here,

First. A public address made to Christ by "a ruler of the synagogue," whose name was Jairus, on the behalf of a little daughter of his that was very ill, and in the apprehension of all about her, lay a dying. This address was very humble and reverent: Jairus, though a ruler, "fell down at Jesus' feet," as owning him to be a ruler above him. It was very importunate; he "besought him that he would come into his house;" not having the faith, at least not having the thought of the centurion, that desired Christ only to speak the healing word at a distance. But Christ complied with his request—he went along with him; strong faith shall be applauded, and yet weak faith shall not be rejected. In the houses where sickness and death is, it is very desirable to have the presence of Christ. When Christ was going, "the people thronged him;" some out of curiosity to see him, others out of an affection to him. Let us not complain of a crowd, and a throng, and a hurry, as long as we are in the way of our duty and doing good; but otherwise, it is what every wise man will keep himself out of as much as he can.

Secondly. Here is a secret application made to Christ by a woman ill of a bloody issue, which had been the consumption of her body, and the consumption of her purse too, for "she had spent all her living upon physicians," and was never the better, ver. 43. The nature of her disease was such, that she did not care for making a public complaint of it; it was agreeable to the modesty of her sex to be very shy of speaking of it; and therefore she took this opportunity of coming to Christ in a crowd; and the more people were present, the more likely she thought it was that she should be concealed. Her faith was very strong, for she doubted not but, by the touch of the hem of his garment, she should derive from him healing virtue sufficient for her relief: looking upon him, to be such a full fountain of mercies that she could steal a cure, and he not miss it. Thus there is many a poor soul healed, and helped, and saved by Christ, that is lost in a crowd, and that nobody takes notice of. The woman found an immediate change for the better in herself, and that her disease was cured, ver. 44. As believers have comfortable communion with Christ, so they have comfortable communications from him, *incognito*,—secretly; meat to eat that the world knows not of, and joy that a stranger doth not intermeddle with.

Thirdly. Here is a discovery of this secret cure, to the glory both of the physician and the patient.

1. Christ takes notice that there is a cure wrought: "virtue is gone out of me," ver. 46. Those that have been healed by virtue derived from Christ must own it, for he knows it. He speaks of it here not in a way of complaint, as if he were hereby either weakened or wronged, but in a way of complacency; it was his delight that virtue was gone out of him to do any good, and he did not grudge it to the meanest; they were as welcome to it as to the light and heat of the sun; nor had he the less virtue in him for the going out of virtue from him, for he is an overflowing fountain.

2. The poor patient owns her case, and the benefit she had received, ver. 47: "when she saw that she was not hid, she came and fell down before him." Note, The consideration of this, that we cannot be hid from Christ, should engage us to pour out our hearts before him, and to shew before him all our sin, and all our trouble. "She came trembling," and yet her faith saved her, ver. 48. Note, There may be trembling where yet there is saving faith. She "declared before all the people for what cause she had touched him," because she believed that a touch would cure her, and it did so. Christ's patients should communicate their experiences one to another.

3. The great Physician confirms her cure, and sends her away with the comfort of it, ver. 48: "Be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." Jacob got the blessing from Isaac clandestinely, and by a wife; but when the fraud was discovered, Isaac ratified it designedly; and was obtained surreptitiously and underhand, but it was secured and seconded above board; so was the cure here. "He is blessed, and he shall be blessed;" so here, she is healed, and she shall be healed.

Fourthly. Here is an encouragement to Jairus not to distrust the power of Christ, though his daughter was now dead, and they that brought him the tidings advised him not to give the Master any farther trouble about her. "Fear not," saith Christ; "believe only." Note, Our faith in Christ should be bold and daring, as well as our zeal for him. And they that are willing to do any thing for him, may depend upon his doing great things for them, above what they are able to ask or think. When the patient is dead there is no room for prayer, or the use of means; but here, though the child is dead, yet believe, and all shall be well. *Post mortem medicus*,—a physician after death, is an absurdity; but not, *Post mortem Christus*,—Christ after death.

Fifthly. The preparatives for the raising of her to life again. 1. The choice Christ made of witnesses that should see the miracle wrought. A crowd followed him; but perhaps they were rude and noisy. However, it was not fit to let such a multitude come into a gentleman's house, especially now they were all in sorrow, and therefore he sent them back; and not because he was afraid to let the miracle pass their scrutiny, for he raised Lazarus and the widow's son publicly. He took none with him but Peter and James, and John, that triumvirate of his disciples that he was most intimate with, designing them three, with the parents, to be the only spectators of the miracle; they being a competent number to attest the truth of it. 2. The check he gave to the mourners; "they all wept and bewailed her." For it seems she was a very agreeable, hopeful child, and dear not only to the parents, but to all the neighbours. But Christ bade them weep not, for "she is not dead, but sleepeth." He means, as to her peculiar case, that she was not dead for good and all, but that she should now shortly be raised to life, so that it would be to her friends but as if she had been but a few hours asleep. But it is applicable to all that die in the Lord; therefore we should not sorrow for them as those that have no hope; because death is but a sleep to them; not only as it is a rest from all the toils of the days of time, but as there will be a resurrection—a waking and rising again to all the glories of the days of eternity. This was a comfortable word which Christ said to these mourners, yet they wickedly ridiculed it, and "laughed him to scorn" for it; here was a pearl cast before swine. They were ignorant of the Scriptures of the Old Testament who bantered it as an absurd thing to call death a sleep; yet this good came out of that evil, that hereby the truth of the miracle was evinced, for they knew "that she was dead;" they were certain of it, and therefore nothing less than a Divine power could restore her to life. We find not any answer that he made them; but he soon explained himself, I hope to their conviction, and that they would never again laugh at any word of his. But "he put them all out," ver. 54. They were

unworthy to be the witnesses of this work of wonder; they who in the midst of their mourning were so merrily disposed as to laugh at him for what he said would, it may be, have found something to laugh at in what he did, and therefore are justly shut out.

Sixthly. Her return to life, after a short visit to the congregation of the dead, ver. 55. "He took her by the hand," as we do by one that we would awake out of sleep, and help up, "and he called, saying, Maid, arise." Thus the hand of Christ's grace goes along with the calls of his Word, to make them effectual. Here it is expressed what was only implied in the other evangelists,—that "her spirit came again;" her soul returned again to animate her body. This plainly proves that the soul exists and acts in a state of separation from the body, and therefore is immortal; that death doth not extinguish this candle of the Lord, but take it out of a dark lantern. It is not, as Grotius well observes, the *κράσις*, or 'temperament' of the body, or any thing that dies with it; but it is *ὑψιότατον τι*,—something that subsists by itself, which after death is somewhere else than where the body is. Where the soul of this child was in this interval we are not told: it was in the hand of the Father of spirits, to whom all souls at death return. When her spirit came again, she arose, and made it appear she was alive by her motion, as she did also by her appetite, for Christ "commanded to give her meat." As babes newborn, so those that are newly raised desire spiritual food, that they may grow thereby. In the last verse we need not wonder to find "her parents astonished;" but if that implies that they only were so, and not the other bystanders, who had laughed Christ to scorn, we may well wonder at their stupidity, which perhaps was the reason why Christ would not have it proclaimed, as well as to give an instance of his humility.

CHAPTER IX.

In this chapter we have, I. The commission Christ gave his twelve apostles to go out for some time to preach the Gospel, and confirm it by miracles, ver. 1—6. II. Herod's terror at the growing greatness of our Lord Jesus, ver. 7—9. III. The apostles' return to Christ; his retirement with them into a place of solitude; the great resort of people to them notwithstanding, and his feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, ver. 10—17. IV. His discourse with his disciples concerning himself, and his own sufferings for them, and theirs for him, ver. 18—27. V. Christ's transfiguration, ver. 28—36. VI. The cure of a lunatic child, ver. 37—42. VII. The repeated notice Christ gave his disciples of his approaching sufferings, ver. 43—45. VIII. His check to the ambition of his disciples, ver. 46—48; and to their monopolizing of their power over devils to themselves, ver. 49, 50. IX. The rebuke he gave them for an overdue resentment of an affront given him by a village of the Samaritans, ver. 51—56. X. The answers he gave to several that were inclined to follow him, but not considerably, or not zealously and heartily so inclined, ver. 57—62.



WHEN he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. 2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. 3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. 4 And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. 5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. 6 And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where. 7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead; 8 And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. 9 And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.

Here is, I. *The method Christ took to spread his Gospel*—to diffuse and enforce the light of it. He had travelled about himself, preaching and healing; but he could be only in one place at a time; and therefore now he sent his twelve disciples abroad, who by this time were pretty well instructed in the nature of the present dispensation, and able to instruct others, and to deliver to them what they had received from the Lord. Let them disperse themselves, some one way, and some another, "to preach the kingdom of God," as it was now about to be set up by the Messiah; to bring people acquainted with the spiritual nature and tendency of it, and to persuade them to come into the interests and measures of it. And for the confirming of their doctrine, because it was new and surprising, and very different from what they had been taught by the scribes and Pharisees, and because so much depended upon men's receiving or not receiving it, he empowered them to confirm it by miracles, ver. 1, 2. He "gave them authority over all devils," to dispossess them, and cast them out, though never so numerous, so subtle, so fierce, so obstinate,

viii. 31. The demons besought Jesus not to "command them to go out into the deep," which some say means here "the pit of hell." That the word "abyss," which is here used, usually means as much in the New Testament, will be admitted, and some of our critical interpreters maintain that as its sense in this place. The only ancient version which certainly conveys such an idea is the Ethiopic in Walton's Polyglott. Tartarus was regarded as the proper home of evil spirits, though sometimes they were found on earth. Erasmus

and some others held that the "deep" in this place means the deep water or the depths of the lake.

viii. 37. Both here and in verse 26 there are various readings, and modern critics prefer "Gerasenes" for "Gadarenes" in each case. The people were afraid of Jesus, but it does not appear that they made any formal complaint against him for causing or permitting the destruction of the swine. It is worthy of note that only on two occasions was the Lord's power shown in the destruction of anything.

Christ designed a total rout and ruin to the kingdom of darkness, and therefore gave them power over all devils. He authorized and appointed them likewise "to cure diseases and to heal the sick," which would make them welcome wherever they came; and not only convince people's judgments, but gain their affections. This was their commission. Now observe,

First. What Christ directed them to do, in prosecution of this commission, at this time, when they were not to go far, or be out long.

1. They must not be solicitous to recommend themselves to people's esteem by their outward appearance. Now they begin to set up for themselves, they must have no dress, nor study to make any other figure than what they had made while they followed him; they must go as they were, and not change their clothes, or so much as put on a pair of new shoes.

2. They must depend upon Providence, and the kindness of their friends, to furnish them with what was convenient for them. They must not take with them either bread or money, and yet believe they should not want. Christ would not have his disciples shy of receiving the kindnesses of their friends, but rather to expect them. Yet St. Paul saw cause not to go by this rule, when he laboured with his hands rather than be burthensome.

3. They must not change their lodgings, as suspecting that those that entertained them were weary of them; they have no reason to be so, for the ark is a guest that always pays well for its entertainment; ver. 4, "Whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide," that people may know where to find you; that your friends may know you are not backward to serve them, and your enemies may know you are not ashamed or afraid to face them; there abide, till you depart out of that city: stay with those you are used to.

4. They must put on authority, and speak warning to those who refused them, as well as comfort to those that received them, ver. 5. If there be any place that will not entertain you; if the magistrates deny you admission, and threaten to treat you as vagrants, leave them; do not force yourselves upon them, nor run yourselves into danger among them; but at the same time bind them over to the judgment of God for it: "shake off the dust of your feet, for a testimony against them;" that will, as it were, be produced in evidence against them, that the messengers of the Gospel had been among them to make a fair offer of grace and peace, for this dust they left behind there; so that when they perish at last in their infidelity, this will lay and leave their blood upon their own heads. "Shake off the dust of your feet;" as much as to say you abandon their city, and will have no more to do with them.

Secondly. What they did in prosecution of this commission; ver. 6, "they departed," though from their Master's presence, yet having still his spiritual presence with them, — his eye and his arm going along with them; and thus borne up in their work, they went through the towns, some or other of them, all the towns within the circuit appointed them, preaching the Gospel, and healing every where: their work was the same with their Master's, doing good, both to souls and bodies.

11. *Here is Herod's perplexity and vexation at this.* The deriving of Christ's power to those who were sent forth in his name, and acted by authority from him, was an amazing and convincing proof of his being the Messiah, above any thing else; that he could not only work miracles himself, but empower others to work miracles too; this spread his fame more than any thing, and made the rays of this Sun of Righteousness the stronger by the reflection of them, even from the earth, from such mean, illiterate men as the apostles were, who had nothing else to recommend them, or to raise any expectations from them, but "that they had been with Jesus," Acts iv. 13. When the country sees such as these healing the sick in the name of Jesus, it gives it an alarm. Now observe,

First. The various speculations it raised among the people; who, though they thought not rightly, yet could not but think honourably, of our Lord Jesus, and that he was an extraordinary person — one come from the other world; that either John Baptist, who was lately persecuted and slain for the cause of God, or one of the old prophets, that had been persecuted and slain long since in that cause, was risen again, to be recompensed for his sufferings by this honour put upon him; or that Elias, who was taken alive to heaven in a fiery chariot, had appeared as an express from heaven, ver. 7, 8.

Secondly. The great perplexity it created in the mind of Herod: when he had "heard of all that was done by Christ," his guilty conscience flew in his face, and he was ready to conclude with them that said "John was risen from the dead." He thought he had got clear of John, and should be never more troubled with him; but it seems he is mistaken; either John is come to life again, or here is another in his spirit and power, for God will never leave himself without witness. "What shall I do now?" saith Herod, "John have I beheaded, but who is this?" Is he carrying on John's work, or is he come to avenge John's death? John baptized, but he doth not: "John did no miracle," but he doth; and therefore appears more formidable than John. Note, Those who oppose God will find themselves more and more embarrassed. However, "he desired to see him," whether he resembled John or no; but he might soon have been put out of this pain, if he would but have informed himself of that which thousands knew, that Jesus preached and wrought miracles a great while before John was beheaded, and therefore could not be John raised from the dead. "He desired to see him;" and why did he not go and see him? It is likely because he thought it below him either to go to him, or to send for him; he had enough of John Baptist, and cared not for having to do with any more such reprovers of sin. He desired to see him, but we do not find that ever he did, till he saw him at his bar, and then he "and his men of war set him at nought," Lu. xxiii. 11. Had he prosecuted his convictions now, and gone to see him, who knows but a happy change might have been wrought in him? but delaying it now, his heart was hardened; and when he did see him he was as much prejudiced against him as any other.

10 And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. 11 And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing. 12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here

in a desert place. 13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people. 14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. 15 And they did so, and made them all sit down. 16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. 17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

Here is, I. *The account which the twelve gave their Master of the success of their ministry.* They were not long out, but "when they returned, they told him all that they had done," as became servants who were sent on an errand; they told him "what they had done," that if they had done any thing amiss they might mend it next time.

II. *Their retirement for a little breathing.* "He took them, and went aside privately into a desert place," that they might have some relaxation from business, and not be always upon the stretch. Note, He that hath appointed our man servant and maid servant to rest, would have his servants to rest too. Those in the most public stations, and that are most publicly useful, yet must sometimes go aside privately, both for the repose of their bodies, to recruit them, and for the furnishing of their minds, by meditation, for farther public work.

III. *The resort of the people to him, and the kind reception he gave them.* They followed him, though it were in a desert place; for that is no desert where Christ is; and though they hereby disturbed the repose he designed here for himself and his disciples, yet he welcomed them, ver. 11. Note, Pious zeal may excuse a little rudeness; it did with Christ, and should with us: though they came unseasonably, yet Christ gave them what they came for. 1. He "spoke unto them of the kingdom of God," the laws of that kingdom, with which they must be bound, and the privileges of that kingdom, with which they might be blessed. 2. He "healed them that had need of healing," and in a sense of their need made their application to him. Though the disease was never so inveterate, and incurable by the physicians, though the patient were never so poor and mean, yet Christ healed them. There is healing in Christ for all that need it, whether for soul or body. Christ hath still a power over bodily diseases, and heals his people that need healing. Sometimes he sees that we need the sickness for the good of our souls, more than the healing for the ease of our bodies; and then we must be willing for a season, because there is need, to be in heaviness; but when he sees we need healing, we shall have it. Death is his servant, to heal the saints of all diseases. He heals spiritual maladies by his grace, by his comforts, and has for each what their case calls for: relief for every exigence.

IV. *The plentiful provision Christ made for the multitude that attended him:* with five loaves of bread and two fishes he fed five thousand men. This story we had twice before, and shall meet with again; and it is the only miracle of our Saviour's that is recorded by all the four evangelists. Let us only observe, out of it,

First. That those who diligently attend upon Christ in the way of duty, and deny, or expose themselves, or are made to forget themselves and their outward conveniences, by their zeal for God's house, are taken under his particular care, and may depend upon Jehovah-jireh, "the Lord will provide." He will not see those that fear him, and serve him faithfully, want any good thing.

Secondly. That our Lord Jesus was of a free and generous spirit. His disciples said, "Send them away, that they may get victuals;" but Christ said, "No, 'give ye them to eat,'" let what we have go as far as it will reach, and they are welcome to it. Thus he has taught both ministers and Christians to "use hospitality without grudging," 1 Pet. iv. 9. Those that have but a little, let them do what good they can with that little, and that is the way to make it more. "There is that scatters, and yet increases."

Thirdly. Jesus Christ has not only physic, but food, for all those that by faith apply themselves to him; he not only heals them that need healing, cures the diseases of the soul, but feeds them too that need feeding, supports the spiritual life, relieves the necessities of it, and satisfies the desires of it. Christ has provided not only to save the soul from perishing by its diseases, but to nourish the soul unto life eternal, and strengthen it for all spiritual exercises.

Fourthly. All the gifts of Christ are to be received by the church in a regular orderly manner; "make them sit down by fifties in a company." The number of each company is taken notice of here, ver. 14, which Christ appointed for the better distribution of the meat, and the easier computation of the number of the guests.

Fifthly. When we are receiving our creature comforts, we must look up to Heaven; Christ did so, to teach us to do so. We must acknowledge that we receive them from God, and that we are unworthy to receive them; that we owe them all, and all the comfort we have in them, to the mediation of Christ, by whom the curse is removed, and the covenant of peace settled; that we depend upon God's blessing upon them, to make them serviceable to us, and desire that blessing.

Sixthly. The blessing of Christ will make a little to go a great way, and the "little that the righteous man has, better than the riches of many wicked; a dinner of herbs better than a stalled ox."

Seventhly. Those whom Christ feeds, he fills; to whom he gives, he gives enough; as there is in him enough for all, so there is enough for each. He replenishes every hungry soul, abundantly satisfies it with the goodness of his house. Here were fragments taken up, to assure us that in our Father's house there is bread enough, and to spare. We are not straitened or stinted in him.

18 And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them,

once upon the inanimate, when the fig-tree withered; and once upon the irrational and unclean, when the swine rushed into the sea. Hence the remark is just that the word of Jesus, that he came not to destroy but to save, applies to men, but not to animals.

viii. 48. The words "be of good comfort" are omitted by many ancient authorities, and Alford says were probably inserted from Matt. ix. 22. There is a story, which is recorded by Eusebius, that this woman was a native of Paneas, and that she erected a monument

to commemorate her cure. It represented a woman on her bended knee, and stretching out her hands on the one side; and on the other a man standing, and holding out his hand towards the woman. The images were of brass; and Eusebius says that he himself saw the statue of Christ, as it was called. Sozomen says the statue of Jesus was thrown down and broken by Julian and the pagans, and that his own statue was set up instead of it. From this story the Papists infer the use of images in the early Church, but it contains

saying, Whom say the people that I am? 19 They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again. 20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. 21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing; 22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day. 23 And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? 26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. 27 But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

In these verses we have Christ discoursing with his disciples about the great things that pertained to the kingdom of God; and one circumstance of this discourse is taken notice of here, which we had not in the other evangelists, that Christ was alone praying, and his disciples with him when he entered into this discourse, ver. 18. Observe, 1st. Though Christ had much public work to do, yet he found some time to be alone in private, for converse both with himself, and with his Father, and with his disciples. 2nd. When Christ was alone he was praying. It is good for us to improve our solitudes for devotion, that when we are alone we may not be alone, but may have the Father with us. 3rd. When Christ was alone praying, his disciples were with him, to join with him in his prayer; so that this was a family prayer. Housekeepers ought to pray with their households, parents with their children, masters with their servants, teachers and tutors with their scholars and pupils. 4th. Christ prayed with them before he examined them, that they might be directed and encouraged to answer him, by his prayers for them. Those we give instructions to, we should put up prayers for and with. He discoursed with them, 1. Concerning himself; and inquires,

First. What the people said of him: "Whom say the people that I am?" Christ knew better than they did, but would have his disciples made sensible, by the mistakes of others concerning him, how happy they were that were led into the knowledge of him, and of the truth concerning him. We should take notice of others' ignorances and errors, that we may be the more thankful to Him who has manifested himself to us, and not unto the world, and may pity them, and do what we can to help them, and to teach them better. They tell him what conjectures concerning him they had heard in their converse with the common people: and ministers would know how the better to suit their instructions, reproofs, and counsels to the case of ordinary people, if they did but converse more frequently and familiarly with them; they would then be the better able to say what is proper to rectify their notions, and correct their irregularities, and remove their prejudices. The more conversant the physician is with his patient, the better he knows what to do for him. Some said he was John Baptist, who was beheaded but the other day; others Elias, or one of the old prophets; any thing but what he was.

Secondly. What they said of him. "Now see what an advantage you have by your discipleship, you know better things." "So we do," saith Peter, "thanks be to our Master for it; we know that thou art 'the Christ of God,' the anointed of God, the Messiah promised." It is matter of unspeakable comfort to us that our Lord Jesus is God's anointed, for thus he has an unquestionable authority and ability for his undertaking; for his being anointed signifies his being both appointed to it, and qualified for it. Now one would have expected that Christ should have charged his disciples, who were so fully apprised and assured of this truth, to publish it to every one they met with; no, he straitly charged them to tell no man that thing, as yet, because there is a time for all things: after his resurrection, which completed the proof of it, Peter made the temple ring of it, that "God has made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ," Acts ii. 36; but as yet the evidence was not ready to be summed up, and therefore it must be concealed; and while it was so, we may conclude that the believing of it was not necessary to salvation.

III. Concerning his own sufferings and death, of which he had yet said little; but, now his disciples were well established in the belief of his being the Christ, and able to bear it, he speaks to them expressly, and with great assurance, ver. 22. It comes in as a reason why they must not yet preach that he was the Christ, because the wonders that would attend his death and resurrection would be the most convincing proof of his being "the Christ of God." It was by his exaltation to the right hand of the Father, that he was fully declared to be the Christ, and by the sending of the Spirit thereupon, Acts ii. 33; and therefore wait till that is done.

First. We must accustom ourselves to all instances of self-denial and patience, ver. 23. This is the best preparative for martyrdom: we must live a life of self-denial, and mortification, and contempt of the world; we must not indulge our ease and appetite for then it will be hard to bear toil, and wear-

ness, and want, for Christ. We are daily subject to affliction, and we must accommodate ourselves to it, and acquiesce in the will of God in it, and must learn to endure hardship. We frequently meet with crosses in the way of duty; though we must not pull them upon our own heads, yet when they are laid for us, we must take them up, carry them after Christ, and make the best of them.

Secondly. We must prefer the salvation and happiness of our souls before any secular concern whatsoever. Reckon upon it, 1. That he who, to preserve his liberty or estate, his power or preferment, nay, or to save his life, denies Christ and his truths, wilfully wrongs his conscience, and sins against God; will not only be not a sinner, but an unspeakable loser in the issue, when profit and loss come to be balanced: "He that will save his life," upon those terms, "will lose it," shall lose that which is of infinitely more value, his precious soul. 2. We must firmly believe also, that if we lose our lives for cleaving to Christ and our religion, we shall save them, to our unspeakable advantage; for it shall be abundantly recompensed in the resurrection of the just, when we shall have it again, a new and eternal life. 3. That the gain of all the world, if we should forsake Christ, and fall in with the interests of the world, would be so far from countervailing the eternal loss and ruin of the soul, that it would bear no manner of proportion to it, ver. 25. If we could be supposed to gain all the wealth, honour, and pleasure in the world, by denying Christ, yet when by so doing we lose ourselves to all eternity, and are cast away at last, what good will our worldly gain do us? Observe, in *Matthew* and *Mark* the dreadful issue is a man's "losing his own soul," here it is losing "himself," which plainly intimates that our souls are ourselves; *animus cuiusque est corpusque*,—"the soul is the man;" and it is well or ill with us, according as it is well or ill with our souls. If they perish for ever under the weight of their own guilt and corruption, it is certain we are undone; the body cannot be happy, if the soul be miserable, in the other world; but the soul may be happy though the body be greatly afflicted and oppressed, in this world. If a man be himself cast away, *ἢ ἐμυώσεται*,—"if he be damaged;" or if he be punished; *ἢ μολέσεται*,—"if he have a mulet" put upon his soul by the righteous sentence of Christ, whose cause and interest he has treacherously deserted; if it be adjudged a forfeiture of all his blessedness, and the forfeiture be taken, where is his gain? what is his hope?

Thirdly. We must therefore never be ashamed of Christ and his Gospel, nor of any disgrace or reproach that we may undergo for our faithful adherence to him and it. For, ver. 26, "whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed," and justly. When the service and honour of Christ called for his testimony and agency, he denied them, because the interest of Christ was a despised interest, and every where spoken against; and therefore he can expect no other but that in the great day, when his case calls for Christ's appearance on his behalf, Christ will be ashamed to own such a cowardly, worldly, sneaking spirit, and will say, "He is none of mine, he belongs not to me." As Christ had, so his cause has, a state of humiliation and of exaltation; they, and they only, that are willing to suffer with it when it suffers, shall reign with it when it reigns; but those that cannot find in their hearts to share with it in its disgrace, and to say, "If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile," it is certain they shall have no share with it in its triumphs.

Observe here, how Christ, to support himself and his followers under present disgraces, speaks magnificently of the lustre of his second coming, in prospect of which he "endured the cross, despising the shame." 1. "He shall come in his own glory." This was not mentioned in *Matthew* and *Mark*. He shall come in the glory of the Mediator; all that glory which the Father restored to him, which he had with God before the worlds were; which he had deposited and put in pledge as it were, for the accomplishing of his undertaking, and demanded up again, when he had gone through it: "Now, O Father, glorify thou me," *Jno.* xvii. 4, 5. He shall come in all that glory which the Father conferred upon him when he set him at his own right hand, and gave him to be head over all things to the church; in all the glory that is due to him, as the assessor of the glory of God, and the author of the glory of all the saints. This is his own glory. 2. He shall come in his Father's glory; the Father will judge the world by him, having committed all judgment to him, and therefore will publicly own him in the judgment, as "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." 3. He shall come in the glory of the holy angels; they shall all attend him, and minister to him, and add every thing they can to the lustre of his appearance. What a figure will the blessed Jesus make in that day! Did we believe it, we would never be ashamed of him or his words now.

Lastly. To encourage them in suffering for him, he assures them that the kingdom of God would now shortly be set up, notwithstanding the great opposition that was made to it, ver. 27. Though the second coming of the Son of man is at a great distance, the kingdom of God shall come in its power in the present age, while some here present are alive. They saw the kingdom of God when the Spirit was poured out, when the Gospel was preached to all the world, and nations brought to Christ by it; they saw the kingdom of God triumph over the Gentile nations in their conversion, and over the Jewish nation in its destruction.

28 And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. 29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. 30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: 31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. 33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and

nothing to indicate more than that the woman superstitiously erected the memorial. The fact that the narrative stands alone proves the absence of such images as the Romish Church now upholds. The woman figures in some of the Apocryphal books under the name of Veronica, as in the so-called Gospel of Nicodemus, where she declares the innocence of Jesus.

ix. 1. For "his twelve disciples" some copies read "the twelve," and the Sinaitic MS. and others have "the twelve apostles."

ix. 3. *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke* all give the instructions to the apostles, but with sundry differences of detail. As Oosterzee says, "The spirit of the command is, however, the same in all. The Lord is speaking of what they must provide for their journey. If they already had a staff, they were at liberty to take it (*Mark*); if they had none they were not now to buy one."

ix. 5. The shaking off the dust was a symbolical action, as a witness against them, as it is said in *Theophylact*. Some sceptical

one for Elias: not knowing what he said. 34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. 35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. 36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

We have here the story of Christ's transfiguration, which was designed for a specimen of that glory of his in which he will come to judge the world, of which he had lately been speaking, and consequently an encouragement to his disciples to suffer for him, and never to be ashamed of him. We had this story before in *Matthew* and *Mark*, and it is well worthy to be repeated to us, and reconsidered by us, for the confirmation of our faith in the Lord Jesus, as the brightness of his Father's glory, and the light of the world; for the filling of our minds with high and honourable thoughts of him, notwithstanding his being clothed with a body; and the giving of us some idea of the glory which he entered into at his ascension, and in which he now appears within the veil; and the raising and encouraging of our hopes and expectations concerning the glory reserved for all believers in the future state.

First. Here is one circumstance of the story that seems to differ from the other two evangelists that related it. They said it was six days after the foregoing sayings; Luke saith it was "about eight days after;" that is, it was that day or night, six whole days intervening, and it was the eighth day. Some think it was in the night that Christ was transfigured, because the disciples were sleepy, as in his agony, and in the night his appearance in splendour would be the more illustrious; and if in the night, the computation of the time would be the more doubtful and uncertain; probably in the night, between the seventh and eighth day, and so about eight days.

Secondly. Here are divers circumstances added and explained, which are very material.

1. We are here told, that Christ had this honour put upon him when he was praying: "He went up into the mountain to pray," as he frequently did, ver. 28; and as he prayed he was transfigured; when Christ humbled himself to pray, he was thus exalted. He knew before that this was designed for him at this time, and therefore seeks it by prayer. Christ himself must sue out the favours that were purposed for him and promised to him: "Ask of me, and I will give thee," *Ps. ii. 8*. And thus he intended to put an honour upon the duty of prayer, and to recommend it to us. It is a transfiguring, transforming duty; if our hearts be elevated and enlarged in it, so as in it to behold the glory of the Lord, we shall be "changed into the same image, from glory to glory," *2 Cor. iii. 18*. By prayer we fetch in that wisdom, and grace, and joy, which make the face to shine.

2. Luke doth not use the word transfigured, μεταμορφώθη, which *Matthew* and *Mark* used, perhaps because it had been used so much in the pagan theology, but makes use of a phrase equivalent, τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου ἑτέρον, 'the fashion of his countenance was another thing from what it had been;' his face shone far beyond what Moses did when he came down from the mount; and "his raiment was white and glistening;" it was ἐξαστράπτειν, a word used only here; 'bright like lightning;' so that he seemed to be arrayed all with light, to "cover himself with light as with a garment."

3. It was said in *Matthew* and *Mark*, that Moses and Elias appeared to them; here it is said, they "appeared in glory;" to teach us that saints departed are in glory; are in a glorious state; they shine in glory; he being in glory, they "appeared with him in glory," as all the saints shall shortly do.

4. We are here told what was the subject of the discourse between Christ and the two great prophets of the Old Testament; "they spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." ἔλεγον τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ, 'his exodus, his departure; that is, his death.' The death of Christ is here called his exit, his going out, his leaving the world. Moses and Elias spoke of it to him under that notion, to reconcile him to it, and to make the foresight of it the more easy to his human nature. The death of the saints is their exodus, their departure out of the Egypt of this world, their release out of a house of bondage. Some think the ascension of Christ is included here in his departure; for the departure of Israel out of Egypt was a departure in triumph; so was his, when he went from earth to heaven. 2nd. This departure of his he must accomplish, for thus it was determined, the matter was immutably fixed in the counsel of God, and could not be altered. 3rd. He must accomplish it at Jerusalem, though his residence was mostly in Galilee; for his most spiteful enemies were at Jerusalem, and there the Sanhedrim sat, that took upon them to judge of prophets. 4th. Moses and Elias spake of this, to intimate that the sufferings of Christ, and his entrance into his glory, was what Moses and the prophets had spoken of; see *Ch. xxiv. 26, 27*; *1 Pet. i. 11*. 5th. Our Lord Jesus, even in his transfiguration, was willing to enter into a discourse concerning his death and sufferings; to teach us that meditations on death, as it is our departure out of this world to another, are never unseasonable, but in a special manner seasonable when at any time we are advanced, lest we should be lifted up above measure. In our greatest glories on earth, let us remember that here "we have no continuing city."

5. We are here told, which we were not before, that the disciples "were heavy with sleep," ver. 32. When the vision first began, Peter and James and John were drowsy, and inclined to sleep: either it was late, or they were weary, or had been disturbed in their rest the night before; or perhaps a charming, composing air, or some sweet, melodious sounds which disposed them to soft and gentle slumbers, were a preface to the vision; or perhaps it was owing to a sinful carelessness; when Christ was at prayer with them, they did not regard his prayer as they should have done; and to punish them for that, they were left to sleep on now, when he began to be transfigured, and so slipped an opportunity of seeing how that work of wonder was wrought. These three were now asleep, when Christ was in his glory, as afterwards they were, when he was in his agony; see the weakness and frailty of human nature, even in the best, and what need they have of the grace of God. Nothing could be more affecting to these disciples, one would think, than the glories and the agonies of their Master, and both in the highest degree, and yet neither the one nor the other would serve to keep them awake. What need have we to pray to God for quickening grace, to make us not only alive, but lively! Yet that they might be competent witnesses of this sign from heaven, to those that demanded one, after a while they recovered themselves, and became perfectly awake; and then they took an exact view of all those glories, so that they were able to give a particular account, as we find one of

them doth, of all that passed when they "were with Christ in the holy mount," *2 Pet. i. 17*.

6. It is here observed, that it was when Moses and Elias were now about to depart, that Peter said, "Lord, it is good to be here: let us make three tabernacles." Thus many times we are not sensible of the worth of our mercies till we are about to lose them; nor covet and court their continuance till they are upon the departure. Peter said this, "not knowing what he said." Those know not what they say, that talk of making tabernacles on earth for glorified saints in heaven, who have better mansions in the temple there, and long to return to them.

7. It is here added concerning the cloud that overshadowed them, that "they feared as they entered into the cloud." The cloud was a token of God's more peculiar presence; it was in a cloud that God of old took possession of the tabernacle and temple, and when the cloud covered the tabernacle, Moses was not able to enter, *Ex. xl. 34, 35*; and when it filled the temple, the priests could not stand to minister by reason of it, *2 Chr. v. 14*; such a cloud was this; and then no wonder the disciples were afraid to enter into it. But never let any be afraid to enter into a cloud with Jesus Christ, for he will be sure to bring them safe through it.

8. The voice which came from heaven is here, and in *Mark*, related not so fully as in *Matthew*: "This is my beloved Son, hear him." Though these words "in whom I am well pleased," which we have both in *Matthew* and *Peter*, are not expressed, they are implied in that, "this is my beloved Son;" for whom he loves, and in whom he is well pleased, comes all to one; "we are accepted in the beloved."

Lastly. The apostles are here said to have kept this vision private; they "told no man in those days;" reserving the discovery of it for another opportunity, when the evidences of Christ's being the Son of God were completed, in the pouring out of the Spirit, and that doctrine was to be published to all the world. As there is a time to speak, so there is a time to keep silence. Every thing is beautiful and useful in its season.

37 And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. 38 And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. 39 And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. 40 And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. 41 And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. 42 And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

This passage of story in *Matthew* and *Mark* follows immediately upon that of Christ's transfiguration, and his discourse with his disciples after it; but here it is said to be "on the next day, as they were coming down from the hill;" which confirms the conjecture that Christ was transfigured in the night; and it should seem, though they did not make tabernacles, as Peter proposed, yet they found some shelter to repose themselves in all night, for it was not till next day that they came down from the hill; and then he found things in some disorder among his disciples, though not so bad as Moses did when he came down from the mount. When wise and good men are in their beloved retirements, they would do well to consider whether they are not wanted in their public stations. In this story here, observe,

First. How forward the people were to receive Christ at his return to them; though he had been but a little while absent, "much people met him," as at other times much people followed him; for so it was foretold concerning him, that "to him should the gathering of the people be."

Secondly. How importunate the father of the lunatic child was with Christ, for help for him, ver. 38: "I beseech thee, look upon my son," that is his request, and it is a very modest one; one compassionate look from Christ is enough to set every thing to rights. Let us bring ourselves and our children to Christ to be looked upon. His plea is, "he is mine only child." They that have many children may balance their affliction in one with their comfort in the rest; yet if it be an only child that is a grief, the affliction in that may be balanced with the love of God in giving his only begotten Son for us.

Thirdly. How deplorable the case of the child was, ver. 39: he was under the power of an evil spirit, that took him; and diseases of that nature are more frightful than such as arise merely from natural causes; when the fit seized him, without any warning given, he suddenly cried out, and many a time his shrieks had pierced the heart of his tender father. This malicious spirit tare him, and bruised him, and departed not from him, but with great difficulty, and a deadly gripe at parting. O the afflictions of the afflicted in this world! And what mischief doth Satan do, where he gets possession! But happy they that have access to Christ.

Fourthly. How defective the disciples were in their faith. Though Christ had given them power over unclean spirits, yet they could not cast out this evil spirit, ver. 40. Either they distrusted the power they were to fetch in strength from, or the commission given to them, or did not exert themselves in prayer as they ought; for this Christ reproved them: "O faithless and perverse generation." Dr. Clark understands this as spoken to his disciples; 'will ye be yet so faithless and full of distrust, that ye cannot execute the commission I have given you?'

Fifthly. How effectual the cure was which Christ wrought upon this child, ver. 42. Christ can do that for us which his disciples cannot. "Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit," then when he raged most. The devil "threw the child down and tare him," distorted him, so as if he would have pulled him to pieces; but one word from Christ "healed the child," and made good the damage the

writers have fancied a spirit of persecution in this precept, but without cause, as it is not persecution to leave the company of the wicked, and even to publicly declare one's repudiation of communion with them. Once only do we find the apostles doing this literally.

ix. 7. This Herod is the one mentioned in chap. iii. 1. His anxiety is indicated by St. *Matthew* (chap. xiv. 1, 2), and in *Mark* vi. 14, &c.

ix. 10. "A desert place of a city called Bethsaida" (for so the

Greek is literally rendered) refers to a locality near Bethsaida, which is said to be not the western, but another town of the name, on the north-eastern shore of the lake. Some copies read that Jesus "went aside privately into the city called Bethsaida." This place was, we are told, "in the jurisdiction of Philip, who beautified it considerably, and gave it the name of Julias." *Matthew* and *Mark* state that Jesus went there by ship, but Luke does not mention this fact.

ix. 13. The fish were naturally derived from the lake of Genne-

devil had done him. And it is here added, that he "delivered him again to his father." Note, When our children are recovered from sickness, we must receive them as delivered to us again, receive them as life from the dead, and as when we first received them. It is comfortable to receive them from the hand of Christ, to see him delivering them to us again: 'Here, take this child and be thankful; take it, and bring it up for me, for thou hast it again from me; take it, and do not set thy heart too much upon it.' With such cautions as these parents should receive their children from Christ's hands, and then with comfort put them again into his hands.

43 And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples, 44 Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. 45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying. 46 Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. 47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, 48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great. 49 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. 50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.

We may observe here,

First. *The impression which Christ's miracles made upon all that beheld them*, ver. 43; "they were all amazed at the mighty power of God," which they could not but see in all the miracles Christ wrought. Note, The works of God's almighty power are amazing, especially those that were wrought by the hand of the Lord Jesus; for he is the power of God, and his name is Wonderful. Their wonder was universal,—"they wondered every one;" and so were the causes of it,—"they wondered at all things which Jesus did;" all his actions had something uncommon and surprising in them.

Secondly. *The notice Christ gave to his disciples of his approaching sufferings*; "the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men," wicked men, men of the worst character; they shall be permitted to abuse him at their pleasure. That is here implied which is expressed by the other evangelists, "they shall kill him." But that which is peculiar here is,

1. The connexion of this with what goes next before, of the admiration with which the people were struck, at beholding of Christ's miracles, ver. 43. While they all wondered at all things which Jesus did, he said this to his disciples. They had a fond conceit of his temporal kingdom, and that he should reign, and they with him, in secular pomp and power; and now they thought this mighty power of his would easily effect the thing, and his interest gained by his miracles in the people would contribute to it; and therefore Christ, who knew what was in their hearts, takes this occasion to tell them again, what he told them before, that he was so far from having men delivered into his hands, that he must "be delivered into the hands of men;" so far from living in honour, that he must die in disgrace; and all his miracles, and the interest he has by them gained in the hearts of the people, will not be able to prevent it.

2. The solemn preface with which it is introduced: "Let these sayings sink down into your ears;" that is, "take special notice of what I say, and mix faith with it; let not the notions you have of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah stop your ears against it, nor make you unwilling to believe it. Admit what I say, and submit to it." Let it sink down into your hearts; so the Syriac and Arabic read it. The word of Christ doth us no good unless we let it sink down into our heads and hearts.

3. The unaccountable stupidity of the disciples, with reference to this prediction of Christ's sufferings. It was said in *Mark*, "they understood not that saying;" it was plain enough; but they would not understand it in the literal sense, because it agreed not with their notions; and they could not understand it in any other, "and were afraid to ask him," lest they should be undeceived and awakened out of their pleasing dream; but it is here added, that "it was hid from them, that they perceived it not," through the weakness of faith and the power of prejudice. We cannot think it was in mercy hid from them, lest they should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow at the prospect of it; but that it was a paradox, because they made it so to themselves.

Thirdly. *The rebuke Christ gave to his disciples for their disputing among themselves which should be greatest*, ver. 46-48. This passage we had before, and the more is the pity, shall meet with the like again. Observe here,

1. That ambition of honour, and strife for superiority and precedence, is a sin that doth most easily beset the disciples of our Lord Jesus, for which they deserve to be severely rebuked; and it flows from corruptions which they are highly concerned to subdue and mortify, ver. 46. They that expect to be great in this world commonly aim high, and nothing will serve them short of being greatest, which exposeth them to a great deal of temptation and trouble, which they are safe from that are content to be little, to be least, to be less than the least.

2. That Jesus Christ is perfectly acquainted with the thoughts and intents of our hearts, ver. 47; he perceived their thoughts; they are words to him, and whispers, loud cries. It is a good reason why we should keep up a strict government of our thoughts, because Christ takes a strict cognizance of them.

zaret. Dr. Tristram says, in his "Natural History of the Bible," "Very similar in character to the fishes of the Nile are the species of the Jordan and its affluents, abounding most of all in the lake of Galilee. Josephus remarks upon this fact (*Bell. Jud.* iii. 10, 8), and says that the country people thought it to be connected with the Nile, because of the identity of the *coracine* (sheat-fish) found in it. The density of the shoals of fish in the sea of Galilee can scarcely be conceived by those who have not witnessed it. Frequently these

3. That Christ will have his disciples to aim at that honour that is to be obtained by a quiet and condescending humility, and not at that which is to be obtained by a restless and aspiring ambition. Christ "took a child and set him by him;" ver. 47; for he always expressed a tenderness and kindness for little children; and he proposed this child to them for an example. 1st. Let them be of the temper of this child,—humble, and quiet, and easy to itself; let them not affect worldly pomp, or grandeur, or high titles, but be as dead to them as this child; let them bear no more malice to their rivals and competitors than this child did; let them be willing to be the least, if that would contribute any thing to their usefulness, to stoop to the meanest office whereby they might do good. 2nd. Let them assure themselves that this was the way to preferment, for this would recommend them to the esteem of their brethren; they that loved Christ would therefore receive them in his name, because they did most resemble him; and they would likewise recommend themselves to his favour; for Christ would take the kindnesses done to them as done to himself: "Who-soever shall receive one such child," a preacher of the Gospel that is of such a disposition as this, he placeth his respects aright, and receiveth me; and who-soever receiveth me," in such a minister, "receiveth him that sent me." And what greater honour can any man attain to in this world, than to be received by men as a messenger of God and Christ, and to have God and Christ own themselves received and welcomed in him? This honour have all the humble disciples of Jesus Christ; and thus they shall be truly great that are least among them.

Fourthly. *The rebuke Christ gave to his disciples for discouraging one that honoured him*, and served him, but was not of their communion; not only not one of the twelve, or one of the seventy, but not one of those that ever associate with them, or attend on them; but upon occasional hearing of Christ believed in him, and made use of his name with faith and prayer, in a serious manner, for the casting out of devils. Now,

1. This man they rebuked and restrained; they would not let him pray and preach, though it was to the honour of Christ, though it did good to men, and weakened Satan's kingdom, because he did not follow Christ with them; he separated from their church, was not ordained as they were, paid them no respect, nor gave them the right hand of fellowship. Now if ever any society of Christians in this world had reason to silence those that were not of their communion, the twelve disciples at this time had; and yet,

2. Jesus Christ chid them for what they did, and warned them not to do the like again, nor any that profess to be the successors of the apostles; "Forbid him not," ver. 50; but rather encourage him, for he is carrying on the same design that you are, though, for reasons best known to himself, he doth not follow with you; and he will meet you in the same end, though he do not accompany you in the same way. You do well to do as you do; but it doth not therefore follow that he doth ill to do as he doth, and that you do well to put him under an interdict, for "he that is not against us is for us," and therefore ought to be countenanced by us. We need not lose any of our friends, while we have so few, and so many enemies. Those may be found faithful followers of Christ, and as such may be accepted of him, though they do not follow with us: see *Mar.* ix. 38, 39. O what a great deal of mischief to the church, even from those that boast of relation to Christ, and pretend to envy for his sake, would be prevented, if this passage of story were but duly considered.

51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, 52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. 53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? 55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. 56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

This passage of story we have not in any other of the evangelists, and it seems to come in here, for the sake of its affinity with that next before, for in this also Christ rebuked his disciples, because they envied for his sake; there, under colour of zeal for Christ, they were for silencing and restraining separatists; here, under the same colour, they were for putting infidels to death; and as for that, so for this also, Christ reprimanded them; for a spirit of bigotry and persecution is directly contrary to the spirit of Christ and Christianity. Observe here,

First. *The readiness and resolution of our Lord Jesus in prosecuting his great undertaking for our redemption and salvation*. Of this we have an instance, ver. 51; "when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." Observe,

1. There was a time fixed for the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus, and he knew well enough when it was, and had a clear and certain foresight of it, and yet was so far from keeping out of the way, that then he appeared most publicly of all, and was most busy, knowing that his time was short.

2. When he saw his death and sufferings approaching, he looked through them, and beyond them, to the glory that should follow; he looked upon it as the time when he should be "received up into glory," 1 *Tim.* iii. 16, received up into the highest heavens, to be enthroned there. Moses and Elias spoke of his death as his departure out of this world, which made it not formidable; but he went farther, and looked upon it as his translation to a better world, which made it very desirable. All good Christians may frame to themselves the same notion of death, and may call it their being received up, to be with Christ where he is; and when the time of their being received up is at hand, let them lift up their heads, knowing that their redemption draws nigh.

3. On this prospect of the joy set before him, "he stedfastly set his face to go to

shoals cover an acre or more of the surface. . . . We obtained fourteen species of fishes in the lake, and probably the number inhabiting it is at least three times as great."

ix. 19. There was a prevalent opinion, based on Micah iv. v., &c., that in the time of the Messiah some of the prophets would appear again.

ix. 28. What Luke calls "about an eight days" is defined by Matthew and Mark as six days. There is no contradiction, as Luke

Jerusalem," the place where he was to suffer and die. He was fully determined to go, and would not be dissuaded. He went directly to Jerusalem, because there now his business lay, and he did not go about to other towns, or fetch a compass, which if he had done, as commonly he did, he might have avoided going through Samaria. He went cheerfully and courageously thither, though he knew the things which should befall him there. He did not fail, nor was discouraged, but set his face as a flint, knowing that he should be not only justified, but glorified, *Isa. l. 7*; not only not run down, but received up. How should this shame us for, and shame us out of, our backwardness to do and suffer for Christ: we draw back, and turn our faces another way from his service who steadfastly set his face against all opposition to go through with the work of our salvation.

Secondly. *The rudeness of the Samaritans* in a certain village, not named, nor deserving to be so, who would not receive him, nor suffer him to bait in their town, though his way lay through it. Observe here.

1. How civil he was to them: "he sent messengers before his face," some of his disciples, that went to take up lodgings, and to know whether he might have leave to accommodate himself and his company among them; for he would not come to give offence; or if they took any umbrage at the number of his followers. He sent some "to make ready for him," not for state, but convenience, and that his coming might be no surprise.

2. How uncivil they were to him, ver. 53: they did not receive him, would not suffer him to come into their village, but ordered their watch to keep him out. He would have paid for all he bespoke, and been a generous guest among them; would have done them good, and preached the Gospel to them, as he had done some time ago to another city of the Samaritans, *Jno. iv. 41*. He would have been, if they pleased, the greatest blessing that ever came to their village, and yet they forbade him entrance: Such treatment his Gospel and ministers have often met with. Now the reason was, "because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem:" they observed by his motions that he was steering his course that way. The great controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans was about the place of worship, whether Jerusalem or mount Gerizim near Sychar; see *Jno. iv. 20*; and so hot was the controversy between them, that "the Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans," nor they with them, *Jno. iv. 9*. Yet we may suppose they did not deny other Jews lodgings among them; no, not when they went up to the feasts; for if that had been their constant practice, Christ would not have attempted it; and it would have been a great way about for some of the Galileans to go to Jerusalem any other way but through Samaria. But they were particularly incensed against Christ, who was a celebrated teacher, for owning and adhering to the temple at Jerusalem, when the priests of that temple were such bitter enemies to him, which they hoped would have driven him to come and worship at their temple, and bring that unto reputation; but when they saw he would go forward to Jerusalem notwithstanding this, they would not shew him the common civility which probably they used formerly to shew him in his journey thither.

Thirdly. *The resentment which James and John had of this affront*, ver. 54. When these two heard this message brought, they were all in a flame presently, and nothing will serve them but Sodom's doom upon this village; "Lord," say they, "give us leave to command fire to come down from heaven, not to frighten them only, but 'to consume them.'" Here indeed they shewed,

1. A great confidence in the power they had received from Jesus Christ; though this had not been particularly mentioned in their commission, yet they could with a word's speaking fetch fire from heaven; *Θέλεις ἐπιταμεν*,—"wilt thou that we speak the word, and the thing, will be done."

2. A great zeal for the honour of their Master; they took it very heinously that he who did good wherever he came, and found hearty welcome, should be denied the liberty of the road by a parcel of paltry Samaritans; they could not think of it without indignation that their Master should be thus slighted.

3. A submission, notwithstanding, to their Master's good will and pleasure; they will not offer to do such a thing, unless Christ give leave; "Wilt thou that we do it?"

4. A regard to the examples of the prophets that were before them: it is doing "as Elias did;" they would not have thought of such a thing, if Elijah had not done it upon the soldiers that came to take him, once and again, *2 Kin. i. 10, 12*; they thought this precedent would be their warrant; so apt are we to misapply the examples of good men, and to think to justify ourselves by them in the irregular liberties we give ourselves, when the case is not parallel.

But though there was something well in what they said, yet there was much more amiss. 1st. This was not the first time, by a great many, that our Lord Jesus had been in like manner affronted; witness the Nazarenes thrusting him out of their city, and the Gadarenes desiring him to depart out of their coast, and yet he never called for any judgment upon them, but patiently put up the injury. 2nd. These were Samaritans, from whom better was not to be expected; and perhaps they had heard that Christ had forbidden his disciples to enter into any of the cities of the Samaritans, *Mat. x. 5*; and therefore it was not so bad in them as in others, that knew more of Christ, and had received so many favours from him. 3rd. Perhaps it was only some few of the town that knew any thing of the matter, or that sent that rude message to him; while, for aught they knew, there were many in the town who, if they had heard of Christ's being so near them, would have gone to meet him, and welcomed him. And must the whole town be laid in ashes for the wickedness of a few? Will they have the righteous destroyed with the wicked? 4th. Their Master had never yet upon any occasion called for fire from heaven; nay, he had refused to give the Pharisees any sign from heaven when they demanded it, *Mat. xvi. 1, 2*; and why should they think to introduce it? James and John were the two disciples whom Christ had called "Boanerges, sons of thunder," *Mar. iii. 17*; and will not that serve them, but they must be sons of lightning too? 5th. The example of Elias did not reach the case. Elijah was sent to display the terrors of the law, and to give proof of that, and to witness as a bold reprover against the idolatries and wickednesses of the court of Ahab; and it was agreeable enough to him to have his commission thus proved; but it is a dispensation of grace that is now to be introduced, to which such a terrible display of Divine justice will not be at all agreeable. Archbishop Tillotson suggests that their being now near Samaria, where Elijah called for fire from heaven, that might help to put it in their heads; perhaps at the very place; but though the place was the same, the times were altered.

Fourthly. *The reproach he gave to James and John* for their fiery, furious zeal, ver. 55. "He turned" with a just displeasure, ver. 55, "and rebuked them;" for as many as he loves he rebukes and chastens, particularly for what they do that is irregular and unbecoming them under the colour of zeal for him.

1. He shews them in particular their mistake: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," that is, 1st. Ye are not aware what an evil spirit and disposition ye are of; how much there is of pride and passion and personal revenge covered under this pretence of zeal for your Master. Note, There may be much corruption lurking—nay, and stirring too—in the hearts of good people, and they themselves not be sensible of it. 2nd. Ye do not consider

what a good spirit, directly contrary to this, ye should be of. Surely you are yet to learn, though you have been so long learning, "what the spirit of Christ and Christianity is. Have you not been taught to 'love your enemies,'" and to "bless them that curse you," and to call for grace from heaven, not fire from heaven, upon them? You know not how contrary your disposition herein is to that which it was the design of the Gospel you should be delivered into. You are not now under the dispensation of bondage, and terror, and death, but under the dispensation of love, and liberty, and grace, which was ushered in with a proclamation of "peace on earth," and "good will towards men," to which you ought to accommodate yourselves, and not by such imprecations as these oppose yourselves.

2. He shews them the general design and tendency of his religion, ver. 56: "The Son of man is not 'himself' 'come,' and therefore doth not send you abroad, 'to destroy men's lives, but to save them.'" He designed to propagate his holy religion by love and sweetness, and every thing that is inviting and endearing, not by fire and sword, and blood and slaughter; by miracles of healing, not by plagues and miracles of destruction, as Israel was brought out of Egypt. Christ came to slay all enmities, not to foster them. Those are certainly destitute of the spirit of the Gospel that are for anathematizing and rooting out by violence and persecution all that are not of their mind and way, that cannot in conscience say as they say, and do as they do. Christ came not only to save men's souls, but to save their lives too: witness the many miracles he wrought for the healing of diseases that would otherwise have been mortal. By which, and a thousand other instances of beneficence, it appears that Christ would have his disciples do good to all, to the utmost of their power, but hurt to none; to draw men into his church with the cords of a man, and the bands of love, but not think to drive men into it with a rod of violence, or the scourge of the tongue.

Fifthly. *His retreat from this village*. Christ would not only not punish them for their rudeness, but would not insist upon his right of travelling the road, which was as free to him as to other his neighbours; would not attempt to force his way, but quietly and peaceably "went to another village," where they were not so stingy and bigoted, and there refreshed himself and went on his way. Note, When a stream of opposition is strong, it is wisdom to get out of the way of it, rather than to contend with it. If some be more rude, instead of revenging it, we should try whether others will not be more civil.

57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. 58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. 59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. 61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. 62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

We have here an account of three several persons that offered themselves to follow Christ, and the answers that Christ gave to each of them; the two former we had an account of, *Mat. xix. 21*.

First. Here is one that is extremely forward to follow Christ immediately; but seems to have been too rash, and hasty, and inconsiderate, and not to have sitten down and counted the cost.

1. He makes Christ a very large promise, ver. 57: "as they went in the way," going up to Jerusalem, where it was expected Christ would first appear in his glory, one said to him, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." This must be the resolution of all that will be found Christ's disciples indeed; they "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes," *Rev. xiv. 4*, though it be through fire and water, to prisons and deaths.

2. Christ gives him a necessary caution, not to promise himself great things in the world in following him; but on the contrary to count upon poverty and meanness, for "the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

We may look upon this, 1st. As setting forth the very low condition that our Lord Jesus was in in this world. He not only wanted the delights and ornaments that great princes use to have, but even such accommodations for mere necessity as the foxes have, and the birds of the air. See what a depth of poverty our Lord Jesus submitted to for us, to increase the worth and merit of his satisfaction, and to purchase for us a larger allowance of grace, "that we through his poverty might be rich," *2 Cor. viii. 8, 9*. He that made all, did not make a dwelling-place for himself, not a house of his own to put his head in, but what he was beholden to others for. He here calls himself the Son of man, a son of Adam, partaker of flesh and blood. He glories in his condescension towards us, not only to the meanness of our nature, but to the meanest condition in that nature, to testify his love to us, and to teach us a holy contempt of the world, and of great things in it; and a continual regard to another world. Christ was thus poor to sanctify and sweeten poverty to his people; the apostles had no certain dwelling-place, *1 Cor. iv. 11*: which they might the better bear, when they knew their Master had not: see *2 Sam. xi. 11*. We may well be content to fare as Christ did.

2nd. As proposing this to the consideration of those who intend to be his disciples. If we mean to follow Christ, we must lay aside the thoughts of great things in the world, and not reckon upon making any thing more than heaven of our religion, as we must resolve not to take up with any thing less. Let us not go about to compound the profession of Christianity with secular advantages; Christ has put them asunder, let not us think of joining them together. On the contrary, we must expect to enter into the kingdom of heaven through many tribulations, must deny ourselves and take up our cross. Christ tells this man what he must count upon if he followed him—to lie cold and uneasy, to fare hard, and live in contempt; if he could not submit to that, let

may include the first and last days of the series, which the other two evangelists appear to omit in their accounts.

ix. 31. The word for "decease" here is *exodos*, which bears the sense of "departure" in its various acceptations. It is the same word as is used by Peter (*2 Pet. i. 15*), and by Paul in *Heb. xi. 22*, where, instead of being translated "departing," it might have been retained "the exodus."

ix. 37. The word rendered "hill" here is the same which in verse 286

28 is translated "mountain," and more in accordance with common usage.

ix. 44. The connection of the two clauses of this verse is not at first sight apparent. Probably the idea is, "Listen attentively to what I say, for I shall not be long with you; in a little time you will not hear my voice, as I shall soon be betrayed and taken away."

ix. 45. Kuinoel says, "The words of Christ were obscure to them; they did not see how to make this prediction agree with the pre-

him not pretend to follow Christ. This word sent him back, for aught appears; but it will be no discouragement to any that know what there is in Christ and heaven to set in the scale against this.

Secondly. Here is another that seems resolved to follow Christ, but he begs a day, ver. 55. To this man Christ first gave the call; he said to him, "Follow me." He that proposed the thing of himself, fled off when he heard of the difficulties that attended it; but this man, to whom Christ gave a call, though he hesitated at first, yet as it should seem afterwards yielded: so true was that of Christ, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," *Jno. xv. 16*. "It is not of him that willeth and of him that runneth," as that forward spark in the foregoing verses, "but of God that sheweth mercy," that gives the call, and makes it effectual, as to this man here. Observe.

1. The excuse he made: "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." "I have an aged father at home, who cannot live long, and will need me while he doth live; let me go and attend on him till he is dead, and I have performed my last office of love to him, and then I will do any thing." We may here see three temptations by which we are in danger of being drawn and kept from following Christ; which therefore we should guard against: 1st. We are tempted to rest in a discipleship at large, in which we may be at a loose end, and not to come close and give up ourselves to be strict and constant. 2nd. We are tempted to defer the doing of that which we know to be our duty, and to put it off to some other time. When we have got clear of such a care and difficulty, when we have despatched such a business, raised an estate to such a pitch, then we will begin to think of being religious; and so we are cozened of all our time, by being cozened of the present time. 3rd. We are tempted to think that our duty to our relations will excuse us from our duty to Christ. It is a plausible excuse indeed, "Let me go bury my father, let me take care of my family, and provide for my children, and then I will think of serving Christ;" whereas the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, must be sought and minded in the first place.

2. Christ's answer to it, ver. 60: "Let the dead bury their dead." Suppose, which is not likely, that there were none but the dead to bury their dead, or none but those that are themselves aged and dying, who are as good as dead, and fit for no other service, yet thou hast other work to do, "Go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Not that Christ would have his followers or his ministers to be unnatural; our religion teaches us to be kind and good in every relation, to shew piety at home, and to requite our parents; but we must not make these offices an excuse from our duty to God. If the nearest and dearest relation we have in the world stand in our way to keep us from Christ, it is necessary we have a zeal that will make us forget father and mother, as Levi did, *Deut. xxxiii. 9*. This disciple was called to be a minister, and therefore must not entangle himself with the affairs of this world, *2 Tim. ii. 4*. And it is a rule, that whenever Christ calls to any duty, we must not consult with flesh and blood, *Gal. i. 15, 16*. No excuses must be admitted against a present obedience to the call of Christ.

Thirdly. Here is another that is willing to follow Christ, but he must have a little time to talk with his friends about it. Observe,

1. His request for a dispensation, ver. 61: he said, "Lord, I will follow thee," I design no other, I am determined to do it, "but let me first go bid them farewell that are at home." This seemed reasonable; it was what Elisha desired when Elijah called him, "Let me kiss my father and my mother;" and it was allowed him: but the ministry of the Gospel is preferable, and the service of it more urgent than that of the prophets, and therefore here it would not be allowed. Suffer me, *ἀφαισθήτω τοῖς εἰς οἶκόν μου*,—"let me go and set in order my household affairs," and give direction concerning them; so some understand it. Now that which was amiss in this is, 1st. That he looked upon his following Christ as a melancholy, troublesome, dangerous thing; it was to him as if he were going to die; and therefore he must take dear leave of all his friends, never to see them again, or never with any comfort; whereas, in following Christ, he might be more a comfort and blessing to them than if he had continued with them. 2nd. That he seemed to have his worldly concerns more upon his heart than he ought to have, and than would consist with a close attendance to his duty as a follower of Christ. He seemed to hanker after his relations and family concerns, and he could not part easily and cleverly from them, but they stuck to him. It may be he had bidden them farewell once; but loath to depart bids off farewell; and therefore he must bid them farewell once more, for they "are at home, at my house." 3rd. That he was willing to enter into a temptation from his purpose of following Christ. To go bid them farewell that were at home at his house, would be to expose himself to the strongest solicitations imaginable to alter his resolution, for they would all be against it, and would beg and pray that he would not leave them. Now it was presumption in him to thrust himself into such a temptation. Those that resolve to walk with their Maker, and follow their Redeemer, must resolve that they will not so much as parley with their tempter.

2. The rebuke which Christ gave him for this request; ver. 62, "No man, having put his hand to the plough," and designing to make good work of his ploughing, will look back, or look behind him, for then he makes balks with his plough, and the ground he ploughs is not fit to be sown; so thou, if thou hadst designed to follow me, and to reap the advantages of those that do so, if thou lookest back to a worldly life again, and hankerest after that, if thou lookest back as Lot's wife did to Sodom, which seems to be alluded to here, "thou art not fit for the kingdom of God." 1st. Thou art not soil fit to receive the good seed of the kingdom of God, if thou art thus ploughed by halves, and not gone through with. 2nd. Thou art not a sower fit to scatter the good seed of the kingdom, if thou canst hold the plough no better. Ploughing is in order to sowing. As those are not fit to be sown with Divine comforts whose fallow ground is not first broken up, so those are not fit to be employed in sowing that know not how to break up the fallow ground, but when they have laid their hand to the plough, upon every occasion look back, and think of quitting it. Note, Those who begin with the work of God must resolve to go on with it, or they will make nothing of it. Looking back inclines to drawing back, and drawing back is to perdition. Those are not fit for heaven who, having set their faces heavenward, face about; but he, and he only, that endures to the end shall be saved.

CHAPTER X.

In this chapter we have, I. The ample commission which Christ gave to the seventy disciples to preach the Gospel, and to confirm it by miracles; and the full instructions he gave them how to manage themselves in the execution of their commissions, and great encouragements therein, ver. 1—6. II. The reports which the seventy disciples made to their Master of the success of their negotiation, and his discourse thereupon, ver. 17—24. III. Christ's discourse with a lawyer concerning the way to heaven, and the instructions Christ gave him, by a parable, to look upon every one as his neighbour whom he had occasion to shew kindness to, or receive kindness from, ver. 25—37. IV. Christ's entertainment at Martha's house, the reproof he gave to her for her care about the world, and his commendation of Mary for her care about her soul, ver. 38—42.

conceived opinions which they entertained concerning the Messiah and his dignity."

ix. 46. It is supposed by some that the "reasoning" here referred to was not an open discussion, but the inward thought of their hearts. In favour of this view the language of the next verse is appealed to: Jesus perceived the thought of their hearts. Some, however, think there was an actual discussion between them. This view certainly seems to be justified by the form of the narrative in Mark ix. 33, 34.



AFTER these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. 2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray

ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. 3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. 4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. 5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. 6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. 7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. 8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: 9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, 11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 12 But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. 13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. 15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. 16 He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

We have here the sending forth of seventy disciples, two and two, into divers parts of the country, to preach the Gospel, and to work miracles in those places which Christ himself designed to visit, to make way for his entertainment. This is not taken notice of by the other evangelists; but the instructions here given them are much the same with those given to the twelve. Observe,

I. Their number: they were seventy. As in the choice of twelve apostles Christ had an eye to the twelve patriarchs, the twelve tribes, and the twelve princes of those tribes, so here he seems to have an eye to the seventy elders of Israel. So many went up with Moses and Aaron to the mount, and "saw the glory of the God of Israel," *Ex. xxiv. 1, 9*; and so many were afterwards chosen to be assisting to Moses in the government, in order to which the spirit of prophecy came upon them, *Num. xi. 24, 25*. The twelve wells of water, and the seventy palm trees that were at Elim, were a figure of the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples, *Ex. xv. 27*. They were seventy elders of the Jews that were employed by Ptolemy, king of Egypt, in turning the Old Testament into Greek, whose translation is thence called the Septuagint. The great Sanhedrim consisted of this number. Now,

First. We are glad to find that Christ had so many followers fit to be sent forth. His labour was not altogether in vain, though he met with much opposition. Note, Christ's interest is a growing interest, and his followers, like Israel in Egypt, though afflicted, shall multiply. These seventy, though they did not attend him so closely and constantly as the twelve did, yet they were the constant hearers of his doctrine, and witnesses of his miracles, and believed in him. Those three mentioned in the close of the foregoing chapter might have been of the seventy, if they would have applied themselves in good earnest to their business. These seventy were those whom Peter speaks of, as "the men which

ix. 51. The translation of the first part of this verse is somewhat doubtful. More literally it might be rendered, "Now it came to pass, when the days were being fulfilled for his taking up," i.e., when the time for his being taken up was at hand. The question has been raised whether the allusion is to the ascension or to the crucifixion, or simply to his going up to Jerusalem. We think the ascension is meant.

ix. 53. If the Samaritans did not receive Jesus because he was

accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us," and were part of the one hundred and twenty there spoken of, *Acts* i. 15, 21. Many of those that were the companions of the apostles, whom we read of in the *Acts* and the *Epistles*, we may suppose were of these seventy disciples.

Secondly. We are glad to find there was work for so many ministers—hearers for so many preachers. Thus the grain of mustard seed began to grow, and the savour of the heaven to diffuse itself in the meal, in order to the leavening of the whole.

III. *Their work and business.* He "sent them two and two," that they might strengthen and encourage one another: if one fall, the other will help to raise him up. He sent them, not to all the cities of Israel, as he did the twelve, but only to every city and place whither he himself would come" ver. 1, as his harbingers; and we must suppose, though it be not recorded, that Christ did soon after come to all those places whither he now sent them, though he could stay but a little while in a place. Two things they were ordered to do, the same that Christ did wherever he came: 1st. They must heal the sick, ver. 9; heal them in the name of Jesus; which would make people to long to see that Jesus, and ready to entertain him whose name was so powerful. 2nd. They must publish the approach of the kingdom of God, its approach to them. Tell them this, "The kingdom of God is come nigh to you," and you now stand fair for an admission into it, if you will but look about you. Now is the day of your visitation, know and understand it. It is good to be made sensible of our advantages and opportunities, that we may lay hold on them. When the kingdom of God comes nigh us, it concerns us to go forth to meet it.

III. *The instructions he gives them.*

First. They must set out with prayer, ver. 2; and in prayer, 1st. They must be duly affected with the necessities of the souls of men, which called for their help. They must look about and see how great the harvest was, what abundance of people there were that wanted to have the Gospel preached to them, and were willing to receive it; nay, that had at this time their expectations raised of the coming of the Messiah, and of his kingdom. There was corn ready to shed and be lost for want of hands to gather it in. Note, Ministers should apply themselves to their work under a deep concern for precious souls, looking upon them as the riches of this world, which ought to be secured for Christ. They must likewise be concerned that the labourers were so few. The Jewish teachers were indeed many, but they were not labourers; they did not gather in souls to God's kingdom, but to their own interest and party. Note, These that are good ministers themselves wish there were more good ministers, for there is work for more. It is common for tradesmen not to care how few there are of their own trade; but Christ would have the labourers in his vineyard reckon it a matter of complaint when the labourers are few. 2nd. They must earnestly desire to receive their mission from God, that he would send them forth as "labourers into his harvest," who is "the Lord of the harvest," and that he would send others forth; for if God send them forth, they may hope he will go along with them, and give them success. Let them therefore say as the prophet, *Isa.* vi. 8, "Here am I; send me." It is desirable to receive our commission from God, and then we may go on boldly.

Secondly. They must set out with an expectation of trouble and persecution: "Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves" but, go your ways, and resolve to make the best of it. Your enemies will be as wolves, bloody and cruel, and ready to pull you to pieces; in their threatenings and revilings they will be as howling wolves to terrify you; in their persecutions of you, they will be as ravening wolves to tear you. But you must be as lambs, peaceable and patient, though made an easy prey of. It would have been very hard thus to be sent forth as sheep among wolves, if he had not endued them with his spirit and courage.

Thirdly. They must not encumber themselves with a load of provisions, as if they were going a long voyage, but depend upon God and their friends to provide what was convenient for them. Carry neither a purse for money, nor a scrip or knapsack for clothes or victuals, nor new shoes, as before to the twelve, *ch.* ix. 3; and "salute no man by the way." This command Elisha gave to his servant when he sent him to visit the Shunamite's dead child, *2 Kin.* iv. 29. Not that Christ would have his ministers to be rude, and morose, and unmannered; but, 1st. They must go as men in haste, that had their particular places assigned them where they must deliver their message, and in their way directly to those places must not hinder or retard themselves with needless ceremonies or compliments. 2nd. They must go as men of business, business that relates to another world, which they must be intent in, and intent upon, and therefore must not entangle themselves with conversation about secular affairs. *Minister verbi es, hoc age*,—"You are a minister of the Word; attend to your office." 3rd. They must go as serious men, and men in sorrow. It was the custom of mourners, in the seven first days of their mourning, not to salute any, *Job* ii. 13. Christ was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and it was fit that, by this and other signs, his messengers should resemble him, and likewise shew themselves affected with the calamities of mankind, which they came to relieve, and touched with a feeling of them.

Fourthly. They must shew not only their good will, but God's good will, to all to whom they came, and leave the issue and success to him that knows the heart, ver. 5, 6.

1st. The charge given them was, whatsoever house they entered into, they must say, "Peace be to this house." Here, 1st. They are supposed to enter into private houses, for being not admitted into the synagogues, they were forced to preach where they could have liberty. And as their public preaching was driven into houses, so thither they carried it: like their Master, wherever they visited, they preached from house to house, *Acts* v. 42; *xx.* 20. Christ's church was at first very much a church in the house. 2nd. They are instructed to say, "Peace be to this house," to all under this roof, to this family, and all that belong to it. "Peace be to you," was the common form of salutation among the Jews; they must not use it in formality, according to custom, to those they meet on the way, because they must use it with solemnity to those whose houses they entered into; "salute no man by the way" in compliment, but those into whose house ye enter, say to them, "Peace be to you," with seriousness and in reality; for this is intended to be more than a compliment. Christ's ministers go into all the world, to say, in Christ's name, "Peace be unto you." First. We are to propose peace to all; to preach peace by Jesus Christ, to proclaim the Gospel of peace, the covenant of peace, "peace on earth," and to invite the children of men to come and take the benefit of it. Secondly. We are to pray for peace to all. We must earnestly desire the salvation of the souls of those we preach to, and offer up those desires to God in prayer; and it may be well to let them know we do thus pray for them, and bless them, in the name of the Lord.

2. The success was different, according to the different disposition of those they preached to and prayed for. According as the inhabitants are sons of peace or not, accordingly our peace will, or will not, rest upon the house; *recipitur ad modum recipientis*,—"the quality of the receiver determines the nature of the reception." 1st. You will meet with some that are the sons of peace, that by the operations of the Divine grace, pursuant to the designations of the Divine counsel, are ready to admit the Word of the Gospel in the light and love of it,

and have their hearts made as soft wax to receive the impressions of it. Those are qualified to receive the comforts of the Gospel in whom there is a good work of grace wrought; and as to those, your peace shall find them out, and rest upon them; your prayers for them shall be heard, the promises of the Gospel shall be confirmed to them, the privileges of it conferred on them, and the fruit of both shall remain and continue with them; a good part, that shall not be taken away. 2nd. You will meet with others that are no ways disposed to hear or heed your message; whole houses that have not one son of peace in them. Now it is certain our peace shall not come upon them; they have no part or lot in the matter; the blessing that rests upon the sons of peace shall never come upon the sons of Belial; nor can any expect the blessings of the covenant that will not come under the bonds of it. But it shall return to us again; that is, we shall have the comfort of having done our duty to God, and discharged our trust. Our prayers, like David's, shall return into our own bosom, *Psa.* xxxv. 13, and we shall have commission to go on in the work. Our peace shall return to us again, not only to be enjoyed by ourselves, but to be communicated to others, to the next we meet with, them that are sons of peace.

Fifthly. They must receive the kindnesses of those that did entertain them, and bid them welcome, ver. 7, 8. Those that receive the Gospel will receive you that preach it, and give you entertainment. You must not think to raise estates, but you may depend upon a subsistence; and, 1. Be not shy; do not suspect your welcome, nor be afraid of being troublesome, but "eat and drink" heartily "such things as they give;" for whatever kindness they shew you, it is but a small return for the kindness you do them, in bringing the glad tidings of peace. You well deserve it, for "the labourer is worthy of his hire," the labourer in the work of the ministry is so, if he be indeed a labourer; and it is not an act of charity, but of justice, in them who are taught in the Word to communicate to them that teach them. 2. Be not nice and curious in your diet; "eat and drink such things as they give," ver. 7; "such things as are set before you," ver. 8. Be thankful for plain food, and do not find fault though it be not dressed according to art. It ill becomes Christ's disciples to be desirous of dainties. As he has not tied them up to the Pharisees' superstitious fasts, so he has not allowed them the luxurious feasts of the epicures. Probably Christ here refers to the traditions of the elders about their meat, which were so many that those who observed them were extremely critical, you could hardly set a dish of meat before them but there was some scruple or other concerning it; but Christ would not have them to regard those things, but eat what was given them, "asking no question for conscience sake."

Sixthly. They must denounce the judgments of God against those who rejected them and their message. If you enter into a city, and they do not receive you, if there be none there disposed to hearken to your doctrine, leave them, ver. 10. If they will not give you welcome into their houses, do you give them warning in their streets; he orders them to do, as *ch.* ix. 5, he had ordered the apostles to do,—say to them, not with rage, or scorn, or resentment, but with compassion to their poor perishing souls, and a holy dread of the ruin which they are bringing upon themselves, "Even the dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you," ver. 11; from them do not receive any kindnesses at all; be not beholden to them: it cost that prophet of the Lord dear who accepted a meal's meat with a prophet in Bethel, *1 Kin.* xiii. 21, 22. Tell them you will not carry away with you the dust of their city; let them take it to themselves, for dust they are. It shall be a witness for Christ's messengers, that they had been there according to their Master's order; tender and refusal was a discharge of their trust: but it shall be a witness against the recusants, that they would not give Christ's messengers any entertainment, no, not so much as water to wash their feet with, but they were forced to wipe off the dust. But tell them plainly, and bid them be sure of it, "the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." Here is a fair offer made you; if you have not the benefit of it, it is your own fault. The Gospel is brought to your doors; if you shut your doors against it, your blood is upon your own head. Now "the kingdom of God is come nigh to you;" if you will not come up to it, and come into it, your sin will be inexcusable, and your condemnation intolerable. Note, The fairer offers we have of grace and life by Christ, the more we shall have to answer for another day, if we slight these offers. "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom, and for that city," ver. 12. The Sodomites indeed rejected the warning given them by Lot; but rejecting the Gospel is a more heinous crime, and will be punished accordingly in that day; he means the day of judgment, ver. 14; but calls it, by way of emphasis, that day, because it is the last and great day, the day when we must account for all the days of time, and have our state determined for the days of eternity.

Upon this occasion the evangelist repeats,

1. The particular doom of those cities wherein most of Christ's mighty works were done, which we had *Mat.* xi. 21, &c. Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum, all bordering upon the sea of Galilee, where Christ was most conversant, are the places here mentioned. 1st. They enjoyed greater privileges; Christ's mighty works were done in them, and they were all gracious works, works of mercy. They were hereby exalted to heaven; not only dignified and honoured, but put into a fair way of being happy; they were brought as near heaven as external means could bring them. 2nd. God's design in favouring them thus was to bring them to repentance and reformation of life; to sit in sackcloth and ashes, both in humiliation for the sins they had committed, and in humility, and a meek subjection to God's government. 3rd. Their frustrating this design, and their receiving the grace of God therein in vain; it is implied that they repented not, they were not wrought upon by all the miracles of Christ to think the better of him, or the worse of sin. They did not bring forth fruits agreeable to the advantages they enjoyed. 4th. There was reason to think, morally speaking, that if Christ had come to Tyre and Sidon, Gentile cities, and had preached the same doctrine to them, and wrought the same miracles among them, that he did in these cities of Israel, they would have repented long ago, so speedy would their repentance have been, and that in sackcloth and ashes, so deep would it have been. Now to understand the wisdom of God, in giving the means of grace to those who would not improve them, and denying them to those that would, we must wait for the great day of discovery. 5th. The doom of those who thus received the grace of God in vain will be very fearful; they that were thus exalted, not making use of their elevation, will be thrust down to hell, thrust down with disgrace and dishonour: they will thrust in to get into heaven, in the crowd of professors, but in vain; they shall be thrust down, to their everlasting grief and disappointment, into the lowest hell, and hell will be hell indeed to them. 6th. In the day of judgment Tyre and Sidon will fare better, and it will be more tolerable for them than for these cities.

2. The general rule which Christ would go by, as to those to whom he sent his ministers; he will reckon himself treated according as they treated his ministers, ver. 16. What is done to the ambassador is done as it were to the prince that sends him. 1st. "He that heareth you," and regardeth what you say, "heareth me," and therein doth me honour. But, 2nd, "He that despiseth you," doth in effect despise me, and shall be reckoned with as having put an affront upon me; nay, he "despiseth Him that sent me." Note, Those that condemn the Christian religion do in effect put a slight upon natural religion,

resolved to proceed to Jerusalem, the explanation is obvious. It was not so much because of the known antipathy between Samaritans and Jews; it was rather because, by his decision to go to Jerusalem in his Messianic character, he refused to recognise their pretensions in favour of Gerizim, where their temple was. Their temper and opinions are fairly represented in the Bereshith Rabba, where we read, "Rabbi Ishmael, son of Rabbi Joseph, when going to Jerusalem to pray, passed by this mountain (Gerizim). A certain Samaritan

seeing him said to him, Would it not be better to pray in this blessed mountain than in that cursed one?" (See also *John* iv. 20, &c.; *Josephus*, "Antiquities," *xx.* 5.)

ix. 62. Our Lord's words here are in the form of a proverb. To put the hand to the plough is to enter upon an undertaking. To look back is in heart to abandon an undertaking, to lose faith. For a fine illustration of the opposite virtue, see *St. Paul's* words in *Phil.* iii. 13, 14.

which it is perfective of. And they who despise the faithful ministers of Christ, who, though they do not hate and persecute them, yet think meanly of them, look scornfully upon them, and turn their backs upon their ministry, will be reckoned with as despisers of God and Christ.

17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. 18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and



SCORPIONS.

nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. 21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. 22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. 23 And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: 24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Christ sent forth the seventy disciples as he was going up to Jerusalem to the feast of the tabernacles, when he went up not openly, but as it were in secret, *Jno. vii. 10*, having sent abroad so great a part of his ordinary retinue: and Dr. Lightfoot thinks it was before his return from that feast, and while he was yet at Jerusalem or Bethany, which was hard by, (for there he was, *ver. 38*.) that they, or at least some of them, returned to him. Now here we are told,

First. What account they gave him of the success of their expedition, *ver. 17*; they "returned again with joy;" not complaining of the fatigue of their journeys, or of the opposition and discouragement they met with, but rejoicing in their success, especially in casting out unclean spirits: "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." Though the healing of the sick only was mentioned in their commission, *ver. 9*, yet no doubt the casting out of devils was included; and in this they had wonderful success.

1. They give Christ the glory of this; it is "through thy name." Note, All our victories over Satan are obtained by power derived from Jesus Christ. We must in his name enter the lists with our spiritual enemies, and whatever advantages we gain, he must have all the praise; if the work be done in his name, the honour is due to his name.

2. They entertain themselves with the comfort of it; they speak of it with an air of exultation; "even the devils," those potent enemies, "are subject to us." Note, The saints have no greater joy or satisfaction in any of their triumphs than in those over Satan. If devils are subject to us, what can stand before us?

Secondly. What acceptance they found with him, and how he entertained this account.

1. He confirmed what they said, as agreeing with his own observation, *ver. 18*. "My heart and eye went along with you; I took notice what success you had, and 'I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven.'" Note, Satan and his kingdom fell before the preaching of the Gospel. "I see how it is," saith Christ; "as you get ground, the devil loseth ground;" he falls as lightning falls from heaven; so suddenly, so irrecoverably, so visibly, that all may perceive it, and say, "See how Satan's kingdom totters, see how it tumbles." They triumphed in the casting of devils out of the bodies of people; but Christ sees and rejoiceth in the fall of the devil, from the interest he has in the souls of men, which is called his power in high places, *Eph. vi. 12*. He foresees this to be but an earnest of what should now be shortly done, and was already begun—the destroying of Satan's kingdom in the world, by the extirpating of idolatry, and the turning of the nations to the faith of Christ. Satan falls from heaven

when he falls from the throne in men's hearts, *Acts xxvi. 18*. And Christ foresaw that the preaching of the Gospel, which would fly like lightning through the world, would, wherever it went, pull down Satan's kingdom: "Now is the prince of this world cast out." Some have given another sense of this, as looking back to the fall of the angels, and designed for a caution to these disciples, lest their success should puff them up with pride: "I saw angels turned into devils by pride; that was the sin for which Satan was cast down from heaven, where he had been an angel of light; I saw it, and give you an intimation of it, lest you, being lifted up with pride, should fall into that condemnation of the devil, who fell by pride," *1 Tim. iii. 6*.

2. He repeated, ratified, and enlarged their commission, *ver. 19*: "Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents." Note, To him that hath, and useth well what he hath, more shall be given. They had employed their power vigorously against Satan, and now Christ intrusts them with greater power. 1st. An offensive power: "power to tread on serpents and scorpions," that is, devils, malignant spirits, the old serpents: you shall bruise their heads in my name, according to the first promise, *Gen. iii. 15*. Come, set your feet on the necks of these enemies; you shall tread upon these lions and adders, wherever you meet with them, you shall trample them under foot, *Ps. xci. 13*. You shall tread upon "all the power of the enemy," and the kingdom of the Messiah shall be every where set up upon the ruins of the devil's kingdom; as the devils have now been subject to you, so they shall still be. 2nd. A defensive power. "nothing shall by any means hurt you;" not serpents or scorpions, if you should be chastised with them, or thrown into prisons or dungeons among them; you shall be unhurt by the most venomous creatures, as St. Paul was, *Acts xviii. 5*, and as is promised, *Mat. xvi. 18*. If wicked men be as serpents to you, and you dwell among those scorpions, as *Eze. ii. 6*, you may despise their rage, and tread upon it; it need not disturb you, for they have no power against you but what is given them from above; they may hiss, but they cannot hurt. You may play upon the hole of the asp, for death itself shall not hurt or destroy, *Isa. xi. 8, 9*; *xv. 8*.

3. He directed them to turn their joy into the right channel, *ver. 20*: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you;" that they have been so, and shall be still so. Do not rejoice in this only as it is your honour, and a confirmation of your mission, and as it sets you a degree above other good people; do not rejoice in this only, or in this chiefly, "but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven," that is, because you are chosen of God to eternal life, and are the children of God through faith. Christ, who knew the counsels of God, could tell them that their names were written in heaven, for it is the Lamb's book of life that they are written in. All believers are through grace entitled to the inheritance of sons, and have received the adoption of sons, and the spirit of adoption, which is the earnest of that inheritance, and so are enrolled among his family; now this is matter of joy, greater joy than casting out devils. Note, Power to become the children of God is to be valued more than a power to work miracles; for we read of those who did in Christ's name cast out devils, as Judas did, and yet will be disowned by Christ in the great day; but they whose names are written in heaven shall never perish; they are Christ's sheep, to whom he will give eternal life. Saving graces are more to be rejoiced in than spiritual gifts; holy love is a more excellent way than speaking with tongues.

4. He offered up a solemn thanksgiving to his Father, for employing such mean people as his disciples were in such high and honourable services, *ver. 21, 22*. This we had before, *Mat. xi. 25–27*; only here it is prefixed, that "in that hour Jesus rejoiced." It was fit particular notice should be taken of that hour, because there were so few such, for he was a man of sorrows; in that hour he saw Satan fall, and heard of the good success of his ministers; "in that hour he rejoiced." Note, Nothing rejoiceth the heart of the Lord Jesus so much as the progress of the Gospel, and its getting ground of Satan, by the conversion of souls to Christ. Christ's joy was a solid, substantial joy, an inward joy; "he rejoiced in spirit;" but his joy, like deep waters, made no noise; it was joy that a stranger did not intermeddle with. Before he applied himself to thank his Father, he stirred up himself to rejoice; for as thankful praise is the genuine language of holy joy, so holy joy is the root and spring of thankful praise. Two things he gives thanks for:

1st. For what was revealed by the Father through the Son, *ver. 21*: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." In all our adorations of God, we must have an eye to him both as the Maker of heaven and earth, and as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him our Father. Now that which he gives thanks for is, First. That the counsels of God concerning man's reconciliation to himself were revealed to some of the children of men, who might be fit also to teach others; and it is God that by his Son hath spoken these things to us, and by his Spirit hath revealed them in us; he hath revealed that which had been kept secret from the beginning of the world. Secondly. That they were revealed to babes, to those that were of mean parts and capacities, whose extraction and education had nothing in it promising, who were but children in understanding, till God by his Spirit elevated their faculties, and furnished them with this knowledge, and an ability to communicate it. We have reason to thank God, not so much for the honour he has hereby put upon the babes, as for the honour he has hereby done himself in perfecting strength out of weakness. Thirdly. That at the same time when he revealed them unto babes he hid them from the wise and prudent, the Gentile philosophers, the Jewish rabbins. He did not reveal the things of the Gospel to them, nor employ them in preaching up his kingdom. Thanks be to God that the apostles were not fetched from their schools; for, 1st. They would have been apt to mingle their notions with the doctrine of Christ, which would have corrupted it, as afterwards it proved; for Christianity was much corrupted by the Platonists' philosophy, in the first ages of it, and by the Peripatetic in its latter ages, and by the Judaizing teachers at the first planting of it. 2nd. If rabbins and philosophers had been made apostles, the success of the Gospel would have been ascribed to their learning and wit, and the force of their reasonings and eloquence; and therefore they must not be employed, lest they should have taken too much to themselves, and others should have attributed too much to them; they were passed by for the same reason that Gideon's army was reduced, "the people are yet too many," *Jud. vii. 4*. Paul indeed was bred a scholar, among the wise and prudent, but he became a babe when he became an apostle, and laid aside the "enticing words of man's wisdom," forgot them all, and made neither show nor use of any other knowledge but that of Christ and him crucified, *1 Cor. ii. 2, 4*. Fourthly. That God herein acted in it by way of sovereignty; "even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." If God gives his grace and the knowledge of his Son to some that are less likely, and do not give it to others, who we would think better able to deliver it with advantage, this must satisfy—so it pleaseth God, whose thoughts are infinitely above ours. He chooseth to intrust the dispensing of his Gospel in the hands of those who with a Divine energy will give it the setting on, rather than in theirs who with human art will give it the setting off.

2nd. For what was secret between the Father and the Son, *ver. 22*. First. The vast confidence that the Father puts in the Son: "All things are delivered to me of my Father;" all wisdom and knowledge; all power and authority; all that grace and comfort which is intended for the chosen remnant; it is all

x. 1. The phrase "other seventy" conveys an erroneous idea to the popular mind. The Greek should be rendered, "Now after these things the Lord also appointed seventy others," i.e., seventy more, or in addition to the twelve. There are copies in which the number is given as seventy-two, but the word "two" is supposed to have been interpolated by some one who thought that the Jewish Sanhedrim consisted of seventy-two members, and that our Lord fixed the same number. Seventy is a remarkable number in Jewish history.

Seventy persons went down to Egypt as the family of Jacob; seventy elders were chosen by Moses; and seventy was the number of the Sanhedrim. It was also a popular opinion that the Septuagint version was so called because it was made by seventy translators. Although the names of the seventy appointed by Jesus are not given, attempts were made in after times to ascertain who they were, but of course with no real success. There seems to be no reason for supposing that the appointment of the seventy was a permanent

delivered into the hands of the Lord Jesus; in him all fulness must dwell, and from him it must be derived. He is the great trustee that manageth all the concerns of God's kingdom. *Secondly*. The good understanding that there is between the Father and the Son, and their mutual consciousness, such as no creature can be admitted to: "No man knows who the Son is," nor what his mind is, "but the Father," who possessed him in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old, *Pr. viii. 22*: "nor who the Father is," and what his counsels are, "but the Son," who lay in his bosom from eternity, was by him as one brought up with him, and was daily his delight, *Pr. viii. 20*: "and he to whom the Son," by the Spirit, "will reveal him." The Gospel is the revelation of Jesus Christ, and to him we owe all the discoveries made us of the will of God for our salvation; and here he speaks of it as that which was a great pleasure to himself, and for which he was very thankful to his Father to be so intrusted.

5. He told his disciples how well it was for them that they had these things revealed to them, *ver. 23, 24*. Having addressed himself to his Father, he "turned him to his disciples," designing to make them sensible how much it was for their happiness, as well as for the glory and honour of God, that they knew the mysteries of the kingdom, and were employed to lead others into the knowledge of them, considering,

1st. What a step it is towards something better; though the bare knowledge of these things is not saving, yet it puts us in the way of salvation; "blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see." God therein blesseth them, and, if it be not their own fault, it will be an eternal blessedness to them.

2nd. What a step it is above those that went before them, even the greatest saints, and those that were most the favourites of heaven; "many prophets and righteous men," so it is *Mat. xiii. 17*, "many prophets and kings," so it is here, have desired to see and hear those things which you are daily and intimately conversant with, and have not seen and heard them. The honour and happiness of the New Testament saints far exceeds that even of the prophets and kings of the Old Testament, though they also were highly favoured. The general ideas which the Old Testament saints had, according to the intimations given them of the graces and glories of the Messiah's kingdom, made them wish a thousand times that their lot had been reserved for those blessed days, and that they might see the substance of those things which they had faint shadows of. Note. The consideration of the great advantages which we have in the New Testament light, above what they had who lived in Old Testament times, should awaken our diligence in the improvement of it; for if it do not, it will aggravate our condemnation for the non-improvement of it.

25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? 27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and

with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. 28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. 29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? 30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, 34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. 36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.



PASS IN JUDÆA.

We have here Christ's discourse with a lawyer about some points of conscience, which we are all concerned to be rightly informed in, and are so here from Christ, though the questions were proposed with no good intention.

1. We are concerned to know what that good is which we should do in this life in order to our attaining eternal life. A question to this purpose was proposed to our Saviour, by a certain lawyer or scribe, only with a design to try him, not with a desire to be instructed by him, *ver. 25*; the lawyer stood up, and asked him, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" If Christ had any thing peculiar to prescribe, by this question he would get it out of him, and perhaps expose him for it; if not, he would expose his doctrine as needless, since it would give no other direction for obtaining happiness than what they had already received, or, perhaps he had no malicious design against Christ, as some of the scribes had, only he was willing to have a little talk with him, just as people go to church to hear what the minister will say. This was a good question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" but it lost all its goodness when it was proposed with an ill design, or a very mean one. Note, It is not enough to speak of the things of God, and to inquire about them, but we must do it with an agreeable concern. If we speak of eternal life, and the way to it, in a careless manner, merely as matter of discourse, especially as matter of dispute, we do but take the name of God in vain, as the lawyer here did. Now this question being started, observe,

First. How Christ turned him over to the Divine law, and bid him follow the direction of that. Though he knew the thoughts and intents of his heart, he doth not answer him according to the folly of that, but according to the wisdom and goodness of the question he asked. He answered him with a question, "What is written in the law, how readest thou?" *ver. 26*. He came to catechise Christ, and to know him; but Christ will catechise him, and make him know himself. He talks to him as a lawyer; as one conversant in the law, the studies of his profession would inform him; let him practise according to his knowledge, and he should not come short of eternal life. Note, It will be of great use to us, in our way to heaven, to consider what is written in the law, and what we read there. We must have recourse to our Bibles, to the law, as it is now in the hand of Christ, and walk in the way that is shewed us there. It is a great mercy that we have the law written, that we have it thereby reduced to a certainty, and that thereby it is capable of spreading the farther

and lasting the longer. Having it written, it is our duty to read it, and to read it with understanding, and to treasure up what we read, so that when there is occasion, we may be able to tell what is written in the law, and how we read. And to this we must appeal, by this we must try doctrines, and end disputes; this must be our oracle, our touchstone, our rule, our guide, what is written in the law, how do we read. If there be light in us, it will have regard to this light.

Secondly. What a good account he gave of the law, of the principal commandments of the law, which we must bind ourselves to the observance of, if we would inherit eternal life. He did not, like a Pharisee, refer himself to the tradition of the elders; but, like a good textuary, fastened upon the two first and greatest commandments of the law, as those which he thought must be most strictly observed in order to the obtaining of eternal life, and which included all the rest, *ver. 27*. 1. We must love God with all our hearts; must look upon him as the best of beings in himself, most amiable, and infinitely perfect and excellent, as one whom we lie under the greatest obligations to, both in gratitude and interest. We must prize him, and value ourselves by our relation to him; must please ourselves in him, and devote ourselves entirely to him. Our love in him must be sincere, and hearty, and fervent; it must be a superlative love, a love that is as strong as death; but an intelligent love, and such as we can give a good account of the grounds and reasons of. It must be an entire love; he must have our whole souls, and must be served with all that is within us; we must love nothing beside him, but what we love for him, and in subordination to him. 2. We must love our neighbours as ourselves, which we shall easily do, if, as we ought, we love God better than ourselves. We must wish well to all, and ill to none; must do all the good we can in the world, and no hurt, and must fix it as a rule to ourselves to do to others as we would they should do to us; and this is to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Thirdly. Christ's approbation of what he said, *ver. 28*. Though he came to tempt him, yet what he said that was good Christ commended; "Thou hast answered right." Christ himself fastened upon those as the two great commandments of the law, *Mat. xxii. 37*; both sides agreed in this. Those who do well shall have praise of the same; and so should those have that speak well; so far is right; but the hardest part of this work yet remains, "This do, and thou shalt live;" thou shalt "inherit eternal life."

one, as we find no trace of their continuance as an association. The appointment was for a specific object, and the mission a temporary one, which was completed in a few days, or a few weeks at furthest.

x. 2. The resemblance between the instructions given to the seventy and those to the twelve are worthy of note, but it is observable that there are important differences. The miraculous powers of the seventy were less extensive than those of the twelve, and their commission less comprehensive.

x. 6. "The son of peace" is a peaceful man; here one who has a friendly feeling or sympathy towards the messengers, and is willing to hear and receive them. "Your peace" is "your salutation," or "the good which you desire by your salutation." He who cordially entertained them would be blessed.

x. 7. They were not to go from house to house; ordinary hospitality was all they needed, and they were not to indulge themselves in any way.

Fourthly. His care to avoid the conviction, which was now ready to fasten upon him. When Christ said, "This do, and thou shalt live," he began to be aware that Christ intended to draw from him an acknowledgment that he had not done this, and therefore an inquiry what he should do, and which way he should look, to get his sins pardoned; and likewise an acknowledgment that he could not do this perfectly, for the future, by any strength of his own, and therefore an inquiry by which way he might fetch in strength to enable him to do it: but he was "willing to justify himself," and therefore cared not for carrying on that discourse, but saith, in effect, as another did, *Matt. xix. 30.* "All these things have I kept from my youth up." Note, Many ask good questions with a design rather to justify themselves than to inform themselves; rather proudly to shew what is good in them than humbly to see what is bad in them.

II. We are concerned to know who is our neighbour; whom, by the second great commandment, we are obliged to love. And this is another of this lawyer's queries, which he started only that he might drop the former, lest Christ should have forced him, in the prosecution of it, to condemn himself, when he was resolved to justify himself. As to loving God he was willing to say no more of it; but, as to his neighbour, he was sure there he had come up to the rule, for he had always been very kind and respectful to all about him. Now observe,

First. What was the corrupt notion of the Jewish teachers in this matter. Dr. Lightfoot quotes their own words to this purpose; "where he saith, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour,' he excepts all Gentiles, for they are not our neighbours, but those only that are of our own nation and religion;" they would not put an Israelite to death for killing a Gentile, for he was not his neighbour. Indeed they say they ought not to kill a Gentile that they were not at war with; but if they saw a Gentile in danger of death, they thought themselves under no obligation to help to save his life. Such wicked inferences did they draw from that holy covenant of peculiarity which God had distinguished them by; and by abusing it thus, they had forfeited it; and God justly took the forfeiture, and transferred covenant favours to the Gentile world, to whom they brutishly denied common favours.

Secondly. How Christ corrected this inhuman notion, and shewed, by a parable, that whoever we have need to receive kindness from, and find ready to shew us the kindness we need, we cannot but look upon as our neighbour; and therefore ought to look upon all those as such who need our kindness, and to shew them kindness accordingly, though they be not of our own nation and religion. Now observe,

1. The parable itself; which represents to us a poor Jew, in distressed circumstances, succoured and relieved by a good Samaritan. Let us see here,

1st. How he was abused by his enemies; the honest man was travelling peaceably upon his lawful occasions, in the road, and it was a great road, that leads from Jerusalem to Jericho, ver. 30. The mentioning of those places intimates that it was matter of fact, and not a parable, and probably it happened lately, just as it is here related. The occurrences of Providence would yield us many good instructions, if we would carefully observe and improve them; and would be equivalent to parables framed on purpose for instruction, and be more affecting. This poor man "fell among thieves." Whether they were Arabians, Rapparees, that lived by spoil, or some profligate wretches of his own nation, or some of the Roman soldiers, who, notwithstanding the strict discipline of their army, did this villany, doth not appear; but they were very barbarous; they not only took his money, but stripped him of his clothes; and that he might not be able to pursue them, or only to gratify a cruel disposition, (for otherwise what profit was there in his blood?) they wounded him, and left him half dead, ready to die of his wounds. We may here conceive a just indignation at highwaymen, that have divested themselves of all humanity, and are as natural brute beasts, beasts of prey, made to be taken and destroyed; and at the same time we cannot but think with compassion on those that fall into the hands of such wicked and unreasonable men, and be ready, when it is in our power, to help them. And what reason have we to thank God for our preservation from perils by robbers!

2nd. How he was slighted by those that should have been his friends, who were not only men of his own nation and religion, but one a priest, and the other a Levite, men of a public character and station; nay, they were men of professed sanctity, whose offices obliged them to tenderness and compassion, *Heb. v. 2*: who ought to teach others their duty in such a case as this, which was to deliver them that were drawn unto death; yet they would not themselves do it. Dr. Lightfoot tells us that many of the courses of the priests had their residence in Jericho, and from thence came up to Jerusalem, when it was their turn to officiate there, and so back again, which occasioned abundance of passing and repassing of priests that way, and Levites, their attendants; they came this way, and saw the poor wounded man; it is likely he heard his groans; and could not but perceive that if he were not helped, he must quickly perish. The Levite not only saw him, but "came and looked on him," ver. 32; but they "passed by on the other side;" when they saw his case, they got as far off him as ever they could, as if they would have had a pretence to say, "Behold, we knew it not." It is sad when those who should be examples of charity are prodigies of cruelty, and when those who should, by displaying the mercies of God, open the bowels of others' compassion, shut up their own.

3rd. How he was succoured and relieved by a stranger; a certain Samaritan, of that nation which, of all other, the Jews despised and detested, and would have no dealings with: this man had some humanity in him, ver. 33. The priest had his heart hardened against one of his own people; but the Samaritan had his opened towards one of another people; "when he saw him, he had compassion on him," and never took into consideration what country he was of: though he was a Jew, he was a man, and a man in misery, and he has learned to honour all men. He knows not how soon this poor man's case may be his own, and therefore pities him, as he himself would desire and expect to be pitied in the like case. That so great love should be found in a Samaritan, was perhaps thought as that great faith which Christ admired in a Roman, in a woman of Canaan; but really was not so, for pity is the work of a man, but faith is the work of Divine grace.

The compassion of this Samaritan was not an idle compassion; he did not think it enough to say, Be healed, be helped, *Jas. ii. 16*; but when he drew out his soul, he reached forth his hand also to this poor needy creature, *Isa. lviii. 7, 10*; *Pr. xxi. 20*. See how friendly this good Samaritan was. First. He went to the poor man, whom the priest and Levite kept at a distance from; he inquired, no doubt, how he came into this deplorable condition, and condoled him. Secondly. He did the surgeon's part, for want of a better; he "bound up his wounds," making use of his own linen, it is likely, for that purpose; and poured "in oil and wine," which perhaps he had with him; wine to wash the wound, and oil to mollify it, and close it up. He did all he could to ease the pain, and prevent the peril, of his wounds, as one whose heart bled with them. Thirdly. He "set him on his own beast," and went on foot himself, and "brought him to an inn." And a great mercy it is to have inns upon the road, where we may be furnished for our money with all conveniences for food and rest. Perhaps the Samaritan, if he had not met with this hindrance, would have got that night to his journey's end; but, in compassion to that poor man, he takes up short at an inn. Some think the priest and Levite pretend they could not stay

to help the poor man, because they were in haste to go and attend the temple service at Jerusalem. We suppose this Samaritan went upon business; but he understood that both his own business and God's sacrifice too must give place to such an act of mercy as this. Fourthly. He "took care of him" in the inn; got him to bed, had food for him that was proper, and due attendance, and, it may be, prayed with him. Nay, Fifthly. As if he had been his own child, or one he was obliged to look after, when he left him next morning, he left money with the landlord to be laid out for his use, and passed his word for what he should spend more. Two pence of their money was about fifteen pence of ours, which, according to the rate of things then, would go a great way; however, here it was an earnest of content to the full of all demands. Now all this was kind and generous, and as much as one could have expected from a friend or a brother; and yet here it is done by a stranger and foreigner.

Now this parable is applicable to another purpose than that for which it was intended; and doth excellently set forth the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards sinful, miserable man. We were like this poor distressed traveller; Satan, our enemy, had robbed us, stripped us, wounded us; such is the mischief that sin hath done us; we are by nature more than half dead, twice dead in trespasses and sins; utterly unable to help ourselves, for we were without strength. The law of Moses, like the priest and Levite, the ministers of that law, looks upon us, but has no compassion on us, gives us no relief; it passes by on the other side, as having neither pity nor power to help us. But then comes the blessed Jesus, that good Samaritan, (and they said of him by way of reproach, he is a Samaritan,) he has compassion on us; he binds up our bleeding wounds, *Ps. cxlvii. 3*; *Isa. lxi. 1*; pours in, not oil and wine, but that which is infinitely more precious, his own blood; he takes care of us, and bids us put all the expenses of our cure upon his account; and all this, though he was none of us, till he was pleased by his voluntary condescension to make himself so, but infinitely above us. This magnifies the riches of his love, and obligeth us all to say, "How much are we indebted, and what shall we render?"

2. The reddition or application of the parable. 1st. The truth contained in it is extorted from the lawyer's own mouth. Now tell me, saith Christ, "which of these three was neighbour to him that fell among thieves?" ver. 36, the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan?—which of those did the neighbour's part? To this the lawyer would not answer, as he ought to have done, Doubtless the Samaritan was; but "He that sheweth mercy on him;" doubtless he was a good neighbour to him, and very neighbourly, and he could not but say it was a good work thus to save an honest Jew from perishing.

2nd. The duty inferred from it is pressed home upon the lawyer's own conscience; "Go, and do thou likewise." The duty of relations is mutual and reciprocal; the titles of friends, brethren, neighbours, &c., as Grotius here speaks, *τῶν πρὸς τῷ*, equally binding on both sides; if one side be bound, the other cannot be loose, as is agreed in all contracts. If a Samaritan doth well that helps a distressed Jew, certainly a Jew doth not well if he do not in like manner help a distressed Samaritan; *petimusque damusque vicissim*—these kind offices are to be reciprocated; and, therefore, Go thou, and do as the Samaritan did; whenever occasion offers, shew mercy to those that need thy help, and do it freely, and with concern and compassion, though they be not of thy own nation, and thy own profession, opinion, and communion in religion. Let thy charity be thus extensive before thou boastest of having conformed thyself to that great commandment of loving thy neighbour. This lawyer valued himself much upon his learning, and his knowledge of the laws, and in that he thought to have puzzled Christ himself; but Christ sends him to school to a Samaritan to learn his duty; Go, and do like him. Note, It is the duty of every one of us, in our places, and according to our ability, to succour, help, and relieve all that are in distress and necessity, and of lawyers particularly; and herein we must study to excel many that are proud of their being priests and Levites.

38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. 40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. 41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: 42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

We may observe in this story, First. The entertainment which Martha gave to Christ and his disciples at her house, ver. 38. Observe,

1. Christ's coming to the village where Martha lived. "As they went," (Christ and his disciples together,) he, and they with him, "entered into a certain village." This village was Bethany, nigh to Jerusalem, whither Christ was now going up, and he took this in his way. Note, 1st. Our Lord Jesus went about doing good, *Acts x. 38*; scattering his benign beams and influences as the true light of the world. 2nd. Wherever Christ went, his disciples went along with him. 3rd. Christ honoured the country villages with his presence and favour, and not the great and populous cities only; for as he chose privacy, so he countenanced poverty.

2. His reception at Martha's house; "a certain woman named Martha received him into her house," and bade him welcome, for she was the house-keeper. Note, 1st. Our Lord Jesus, when he was here upon earth, was so poor that he was necessitated to be beholden to his friends for a subsistence. Though he was Sion's King, he had no house of his own, either in Jerusalem or near it. 2nd. There were some that were Christ's particular friends, whom he loved more than other of his friends, and them he visited most frequently. He loved this family, *Jno. xi. 5*, and often invited himself to them. Christ's visits are the tokens of his love, *Jno. xiv. 22*. 3rd. There were those who kindly received Christ into their houses, when he was here upon earth. It is called Martha's house, for probably she was a widow, and was the housekeeper. Though it was chargeable to entertain Christ, for he did not come alone, but

x. 11. To wipe off the dust was to indicate by a symbolical action that there was no fellowship possible with such as rejected the Gospel. (See Note on chap. ix. 5.)

x. 13—15. This denunciation also occurs in *Matt. xi. 20—24*, but it is not there intimated exactly under what circumstances it was uttered.

x. 17. The fact that the seventy returned so soon quite favours the opinion that their appointment was not a permanent one.

x. 20. "Written in heaven," or, as the Greek is, "written in the heavens," is an allusion to the well-known idea which represents the names of good men as inscribed in a book, the book of life. God will not lose sight of one of his faithful servants; all are registered in his book of remembrance.

x. 26. Instead of answering the question directly, our Lord put a question to the lawyer, who rehearsed a passage from the Old Testament (*Deut. vi. 4*) which the Jews were wont to repeat twice a day.

brought his disciples with him, yet she would not stick at the expense of it. How can we spend what we have better than in Christ's service! Nay, though at this time it was grown dangerous to entertain him, especially so near Jerusalem, yet she cared not what hazard she ran for his name's sake; though there were many that rejected him, and would not entertain him, yet there was one that bade him welcome. Though Christ is every where spoken against, yet there is a remnant to whom he is dear, and that are dear to him.

Secondly. The attendance which Mary, the sister of Martha, gave upon the word of Christ, ver. 20. 1. She "heard his word." It seems our Lord Jesus, as soon as he came into Martha's house, even before entertainment was got for him, addressed himself to his great work of preaching the Gospel. He presently took the chair with solemnity, for Mary sat to hear him, which intimates that it was a continued discourse. Note, A good sermon is never the worse for being preached in a house; and the visits of our friends should be so managed as to make them turn to spiritual advantage. Mary having this price put into her hands, set herself to improve it, not knowing when she should have such another. Since Christ is forward to speak, we should be swift to hear. 2. She sat to hear, which notes a close attention; her mind was composed, and she resolved to abide by it; not to catch a word now and then, but to receive all that Christ delivered. She sat at his feet, as scholars at the feet of their tutors, when they read their lectures; hence Paul is said to be "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel." Our sitting at Christ's feet, when we hear his word, signifies a readiness to receive his word, and a submission and entire resignation of ourselves to the conduct of it. We must either sit at Christ's feet, or be made his footstool; but if we sit with him at his feet now, we shall sit with him on his throne shortly.

Thirdly. The care of Martha about her domestic affairs; "but Martha was cumbered about much serving," ver. 40; and that was the reason why she was not where Mary was,—sitting at Christ's feet to hear his word. She was providing for the entertainment of Christ, and those that came with him. Perhaps she had no notice before of his coming, and she was unprovided; but was in care to have every thing handsome upon this occasion: she had not such guests every day; and housekeepers know what care and bustle there must be when a great entertainment is to be made. Observe here,

1. Something commendable, which must not be overlooked. 1st. Here was a commendable respect to our Lord Jesus; for we have reason to think it was not for ostentation, but purely to testify her good will to him, that she made this entertainment. Note, Those who truly love Christ, will think that well bestowed that is laid out for his honour. 2nd. Here was a commendable care of her household affairs. It appears, by the respects shewed to this family among the Jews, *Jno. xi. 19*, that they were persons of some charity and distinction; and yet Martha herself did not think it a disparagement to her to lay her hand even to the service of the family, when there was occasion for it. Note, It is the duty of those who have the charge of families to look well to the ways of their household. The affectation of state, and the love of ease, makes many families neglected.

2. Here was something culpable, which we must take notice of too. 1st. She was for much serving; her heart was upon it to have a very sumptuous and splendid entertainment; great plenty, great variety, and great exactness, according to the fashion of the place. She was in care, *περί πολλήν διακονίαν*,—"concerning much attendance." Note, It doth not become the disciples of Christ to affect much serving—to affect varieties, dainties, and superfluities in eating and drinking; what needs much serving, when much less will serve? 2nd. She was cumbered about it, *περισπᾶτο*, she was just distracted with it. Note, Whatever cares the providence of God casts upon us, we must not be cumbered with them, nor be disquieted and perplexed by them. Care is good, and duty; but cumber is sin and folly. 3rd. She was then cumbered about much serving when she should have been with her sister, sitting at Christ's feet, to hear his word. Note, Worldly business is then a snare to us, when it hinders us from serving God, and getting good to our souls.

Fourthly. The complaint which Martha made to Christ, against her sister Mary, for not assisting her upon this occasion in the business of the house, ver. 40; "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister," who is concerned as well as I to have things done well, "has left me to serve alone?" therefore dismiss her from attending thee, and bid her come help me. Now,

1. This complaint of Martha's may be considered as a discovery of her worldliness: it was the language of her inordinate care and cumber. She speaks as one in a mighty passion with her sister, else she would not have troubled Christ with the matter. Note, The inordinacy of worldly cares and pursuits is often the occasion of disturbance in families, and of strife and contention among relations; and those that are eager upon the world themselves, are apt to blame and censure those that are not so too; and while they justify themselves in their worldliness, and judge of others by their serviceableness to them in their worldly pursuits, they are ready to condemn those who addict themselves to the exercises of religion, as if they neglected the main chance, as they call it. Martha, being angry at her sister, appealed to Christ, and would have him to say she did well to be angry: "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?" It should seem as if Christ had sometimes expressed himself tenderly concerned for her, and her ease and comfort, and would not have her go through so much toil and trouble; and she expected he should now bid her sister take her share in it. When Martha was caring, she must have Mary, and Christ, and all, to care too, or else she is not pleased. Note, Those are not always in the right that are most forward to appeal to God: we must therefore take heed lest we at any time expect that Christ should espouse our unjust and groundless quarrels. The cares he casts upon us we may cheerfully cast upon him; but not those which we foolishly draw upon ourselves. He will be the patron of the poor and injured, but not of the turbulent and injurious.

2. It may be considered as a discouragement of Mary's piety and devotion. Her sister should have commended her for it: should have told her that she was in the right; but instead of that, she condemns her as wanting in her duty. Note, It is no strange thing for those that are zealous in religion to meet with hindrances and discouragements from those that are about them; not only with opposition from enemies, but with blame and censure from their friends. David's fasting, and his dancing before the ark, were turned to his reproach.

Fifthly. The reproof which Christ gave to Martha for her inordinate care, ver. 41; she appealed to him, and he gives judgment against her: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things," whereas "but one thing is needful."

1. He reproved her, though he was her guest, and her fault was her oversolicitude to entertain him, and she expected he should justify her in it; yet he publicly checked her for it. Note, "As many as Christ loves he rebukes and chastens." Even those that are dear to Christ, if any thing be amiss in them, shall be sure to hear of it: "Nevertheless I have something against thee."

2. When he reproved her, he called her by her name, "Martha;" for reproofs are then most likely to do good when they are particular,—applied to particular persons and cases, as Nathan's to David, "Thou art the man." He repeated her name, "Martha, Martha;" he speaks as one in earnest, and deeply concerned for her welfare. Those that are entangled in the cares of this life

are not easily disentangled: to them we must call again and again, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord."

3. That which he reproved her for, was her being "careful, and troubled about many things." He was not pleased that she should think to please him with a rich and splendid entertainment, and with perplexing herself to prepare it for him; whereas he would teach us, as not to be sensual in using such things, so not to be selfish in being willing others be troubled, no matter who or how many, so we may be gratified. Christ reproves her both for the intemperance of her care,— "thou art careful, and troubled," divided and disturbed by thy care,—and for the extensiveness of it, "about many things;" thou dost grasp at many enjoyments, and so art troubled at many disappointments. Poor Martha, thou hast many things to fret at, and that puts thee out of humour; whereas less ado would serve. Note, Inordinate care and trouble about many things in this world is a common fault among Christ's disciples, and is very displeasing to Christ; and it is that for which they often come under the rebukes of Providence. If they fret for no just cause, it is just with him to order them something to fret at.

4. That which aggravated the sin and folly of her care was, that "but one thing is needful." It is a low construction which some put upon this, that whereas Martha was in care to provide many dishes of meat, there was occasion for but one; one would be enough. "There is need but of one thing," *ἑὸς δὲ κατὰ χρειαί*. If we take it so, it furnisheth us with a rule of temperance, not to affect varieties and dainties, but be content to sit down to one dish of meat; to half one, *Pr. xxiii. 1—3*. It is a forced construction which some of the ancients put upon it; but oneness is needful, in opposition to distractions. There is need of one heart to attend upon the Word; not divided and hurried to and fro, as Martha's was at this time. But "the one thing needful" is certainly meant of that which Mary made her choice,—sitting at Christ's feet to hear his word; she was troubled about many things, when she should have applied herself to one: godliness unites the heart, which the world had divided. The many things she was troubled about were needless; while the one thing she neglected was needful. Martha's care and work was good in its proper season and place; but now she had something else to do, which was unspeakably more needful, and therefore should be done first, and most minded. She expected Christ to have blamed Mary for not doing as she did; but he blamed her for not doing as Mary did; and we are sure the judgment of Christ is according to truth; and the day will come when Martha will wish she had sitten where Mary did.

Sixthly. Christ's approbation and commendation of Mary for her serious piety; "Mary hath chosen that good part." Mary said nothing in her own defence; but since Martha has appealed to the Master, to him she is willing to refer it, and will abide by his award; and here we have it.

1. She had justly given the preference to that which best deserved it. For "one thing is needful;" this one thing that she hath done, to give up herself to the conduct of Christ, and receive the law from his mouth. Note, Serious godliness is a needful thing; it is the one thing needful; for nothing without this will do us any real good in this world, and nothing but this will go with us into another world.

2. She had herein wisely done well for herself. Christ justified Mary against her sister's clamours. However we may be censured and condemned by men for our piety and zeal, our Lord Jesus will take our part; "but thou shalt answer, Lord, for me." Let not us, then, condemn the pious zeal of any, lest we set Christ against us; never be discouraged if we be censured for our pious zeal, for we have Christ for us. Note, Sooner or later Mary's choice will be justified; and all those who make that choice, and abide by it. But this was not all; he applauded her for her wisdom; "she hath chosen the good part," for she chose to be with Christ,—to take her part with him; she chose the better business, and the better happiness, and took the better way of honouring Christ, and of pleasing him, by receiving his Word into her heart, than Martha did by providing for his entertainment in her house. Note, 1st. A part with Christ is a good part; it is a part for the soul and eternity; the part Christ gives to his favourites, *Jno. xiii. 8*; who are partakers of Christ, *Heb. iii. 14*; and partakers with Christ, *Rom. viii. 17*. 2nd. It is a part that shall never be taken away from those that have it. A portion in this life will certainly be taken away from us, at the farthest, when we shall be taken away from it; but nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ, and our part in that love. Men and devils cannot take it away from us; and God and Christ will not. 3rd. It is the wisdom and duty of every one of us to choose this good part; to choose the service of God for our business, and the favour of God for our happiness, and an interest in Christ in order to both. In particular cases we must choose that which has a tendency to religion; and reckon that best for us that is best for our souls. Mary was at her choice whether she would partake with Martha in her care, and get the reputation of a fine housekeeper; or sit at the feet of Christ, and approve herself a zealous disciple; and by her choice in this particular, Christ judgeth of her general choice. 4th. Those who choose this good part shall not only have what they choose, but shall have their choice commended in the great day.

CHAPTER XI.

In this chapter, I. Christ teacheth his disciples to pray, and quickens and encourageth them to be frequent, and instant, and importunate in prayer, ver. 1—13. II. He fully answereth the blasphemous imputation of the Pharisees, who charged him with casting out devils by virtue of a compact and confederacy with Beelzebub, the prince of the devils; and shews the absurdity and wickedness of it, ver. 14—26. III. He shews the honour of obedient disciples to be greater than that of his own mother, ver. 27, 28. IV. He upbraids the men of that generation for their infidelity and obstinacy, notwithstanding all the means of conviction offered to them, ver. 29—36. V. He severely reproved the Pharisees and lawyers for their hypocrisy, pride, and their oppressing of the consciences of those that submitted to them; and their hating and persecuting those that witnessed against their wickedness, ver. 37—54.



AND it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. 2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy

The reply of Jesus could not be objected to, and the questioner had to devise another mode of attack.

x. 30. As Lightfoot and many since him have observed, Jericho was a considerable place in our Saviour's days. The road from Jerusalem was somewhat frequented, as it was the high road over the Jordan to Perea. Among the foot passengers would be Jewish priests, who, residing at Jericho, as many of them did, had to go to and fro on account of their duties at the Temple in Jerusalem. There

was, therefore, much propriety in placing the Levite and the priest in this parable. The road was generally down-hill from Jerusalem to Jericho, and in some places through rocky and wild localities. The wilderness on the route was regarded as dangerous. (See Josephus, "Wars," iv. 8, 3; Jerome on Jeremiah iii. 2; and Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine," chap. xiii.) Dean Stanley suggests that the robbers would be Bedouins, "who from a very early time gave this road a proverbial celebrity for its deeds of blood, and who now make

kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. 5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? 7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. 8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. 9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. 10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? 12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Prayer is one of the great laws of natural religion. That man is a brute, is a monster, that never prays,—that never gives glory to his Maker, nor feels his favour, nor owns his dependence upon him. One great design, therefore, of Christianity is to assist us in prayer, to enforce the duty upon us, and to instruct us in it, and encourage us to expect advantage by it. Now here we find Christ himself "praying in a certain place;" probably where he used to pray, ver. 1. As God he was prayed to; as man he prayed; and though he were a Son, yet learned he this obedience. This evangelist has taken particular notice of Christ's prayer often, more than other of the evangelists; when he was baptized, *ch. iii. 21*, he was "praying;" "he withdrew into the wilderness and prayed," *ch. v. 16*; "he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer," *ch. vi. 12*; "he was alone praying," *ch. ix. 18*. And soon after he "went up into a mountain to pray, and as he prayed he was transfigured," *ch. ix. 28, 29*; and here "he was praying in a certain place;" thus, like a genuine son of David, he gave himself unto prayer, *Ps. cix. 4*. Whether Christ was now alone praying, and the disciples only knew that he was so, or whether he prayed with them, is uncertain: it is most probable they were joining with him.

Secondly, His disciples applied themselves to him for direction in prayer; when he was praying they asked, "Lord, teach us to pray." Note, The gifts and graces of others should excite us to covet earnestly the same; their zeal should provoke us to a holy imitation and emulation: why should we not do as well as they? Observe, They came to him with this request "when he ceased;" for they would not disturb him when he was at prayer; no, not with this good motion. "Every thing is beautiful in its season." "One of his disciples," in the name of the rest, and perhaps by their appointment, said, "Lord, teach us." Note, Though Christ is apt to teach, yet he will for this be inquired of, and his disciples must attend him for instruction. Now,

1. Their request is, "Lord, teach us to pray;" give us a rule or model by which to go in praying, and put words into our mouths. Note, It becomes the disciples of Christ to apply themselves to him for instruction in prayer. "Lord, teach us to pray," is itself a good prayer, and a very needful one, for it is a hard thing to pray well; and it is Jesus Christ only that can teach us by his Word and Spirit how to pray. "Lord, teach me what it is to pray; Lord, excite and quicken me to the duty; Lord, direct me what to pray for; Lord, give me praying graces, that I may serve God acceptably in prayer; Lord, teach me to pray in proper words; give me a mouth and wisdom in prayer, that I may speak as I ought; teach me what I shall say."

2. Their plea is, "as John also taught his disciples." He took care to instruct his disciples in this necessary duty, and we would be taught as they were; for we have a better Master than they had. Dr. Lightfoot's notion of this is, that whereas the Jews' prayers were generally adorations and praises of God, and doxologies, John taught his disciples such prayers as were more filled up with petitions and requests; for it is said of them that they did *dehotes monein*,—"make prayers," *ch. v. 33*. The word signifies such prayers as are properly petitionary. Now, Lord, teach us those, to be added to those benedictions of the name of God which we have been accustomed to from our childhood. And according to this sense, Christ did there teach them a prayer consisting wholly of petitions, and even omitting the doxology which had been affixed, and the Amen, which was usually said in the giving of thanks, *1 Cor. xiv. 16*, and in the Psalms is added to doxologies only. This disciple needed not to have urged John Baptist's example: Christ was more ready to teach than ever John Baptist was; and particularly taught to pray better than John did or could teach his disciples.

Thirdly, Christ gave them direction; much the same that he had given them before in his sermon upon the mount, *Mat. vi. 9*. We cannot think that they had forgot it, but they thought to have had farther and fuller instructions, and he did not as yet think fit to give them any; when the Spirit should be poured out upon them from on high, they would find all their requests couched in these few, and would be able in words of their own to expatiate and enlarge upon them. In *Matthew* he had directed them to pray "after this manner;" here, "when ye pray, say;" which intimates that the Lord's prayer was intended to be used both as a form of prayer and a directory.

1. There are some differences between the Lord's prayer in *Matthew* and in *Luke*, by which it appears it was not the design of Christ that we should be tied up to these very words, for then there would have been no variation. Here is one difference in the translation only, which ought not to have been, when there is none in the original, and that is in the third petition, "as in heaven, so in earth;" whereas the words are the very same, and in the same order, as in *Matthew*. But there is a difference in the fourth petition; in *Matthew* we pray, give us daily bread "this day;" here, give us "day by day," *καθ' ἡμέραν*; "day by day" is, give us each day the bread which our bodies require, as they call for it; not, give us this day bread for many days to come; but, as the Israelites had manna, let us have bread to day for to day, and to morrow for to morrow, that thus we may be kept in a continual dependence upon God, as children upon their parents, and may have our mercies fresh from his hand daily, and may find ourselves under fresh obligations to do the work of every day in the day, according as the duty of the day requires, because we have from God the supplies of every day in the day, according as the necessity of the day requires. Here is likewise some difference in the fifth petition; in *Matthew* it is, "forgive us our debts, as we forgive;" here it is, "forgive us our sins," which proves that our sins are our debts, "for we forgive;" not that our forgiving those that have offended us can merit pardon from God, or be an inducement to him to forgive us; he forgives for his own name's sake, and his Son's sake; but this is a very necessary qualification for forgiveness; and if God have wrought it in us, we may plead that work of his grace for the enforcing of our petitions for the pardon of our sins; "Lord, forgive us, for thou hast thyself inclined us to forgive others." Here is another addition here; we plead not only in general, we forgive "our debtors," but in particular we profess "to forgive every one that is indebted to us" without exception. We so "forgive our debtors," as not to bear malice or ill-will to any, but true love to all, without any exception whatsoever. Here also the doxology in the close is wholly omitted, and the Amen; for Christ would leave them at liberty to use that or any other doxology fetched out of David's Psalms; or rather, he left a vacuum here for to be filled up by a doxology more peculiar to the Christian institutes, ascribing glory to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

2. Yet it is for substance the same; and we shall therefore here only gather up some general lessons from it.

1st. That in prayer we ought to come to God, as children to a father, a common Father to us and all mankind, but in a peculiar manner a Father to all the disciples of Jesus Christ. Let us therefore in our requests, both for others and for ourselves, come to him with a humble boldness, confiding in his power and goodness.

2nd. That at the same time, and in the same petitions wherein we address God for ourselves, we should take in with us all the children of men, as God's creatures, and our fellow-creatures. A rooted principle of catholic charity and of Christian sanctified humanity, should go along with us and dictate to us throughout this prayer, which is so worded as to be accommodated to that noble principle.

3rd. That in order to the confirming of the habit of heavenly-mindedness in us, which ought to act and govern us in the whole course of our conversation, we should, in all our devotions, with an eye of faith look heavenwards, and eye the God we pray to as our Father in heaven, that we may make the upper world more familiar to us, and may ourselves become better prepared for the future state.

4th. That in prayer, as well as in the tenor of our lives, we must "seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof," by ascribing honour to his name, his holy name, and power to his government, both that of his providence in the world, and that of his grace in the church. O that both the one and the other may be more manifested, and we and others more manifestly brought into subjection to both.

5th. That the principles and practices of the upper world, the unseen world (which therefore by faith only we are apprised of), are the great original (the ἀρχή) to which we should desire the principles and practices of this lower world, both in others and in ourselves, may be more conformable. Those words, "as in heaven, so on earth," refer to all the three first petitions; "Father, let thy name be sanctified and glorified, and thy kingdom prevail, and thy will be done on this earth, that is now alienated from thy service, as it is in yonder heaven, that is entirely devoted to thy service."

6th. That those who faithfully and sincerely mind the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, may humbly hope that "all other things," as far as to Infinite Wisdom seems good, "shall be added to them;" and they may in faith pray for them. If our first and chief desire and care be that God's name may be sanctified, and his kingdom come, and his will be done, we may then come boldly to the throne of grace for our daily bread, which will then be sanctified to us when we are sanctified to God, and God is sanctified by us.

7th. That in our prayers for temporal blessings we must moderate our desires, and confine them to a competency. The expression here used of "day by day," is the very same with "our daily bread;" and therefore some think we must look for another signification of the word *ἐκαστα*, than that of daily, which we give it, and that it means our necessary bread; the bread that is suited to the cravings of our nature; the fruit that is brought out of the earth for our bodies, that are made of the earth, and are earthly, *Ps. civ. 14*.

8th. That sins are debts we are daily contracting, and which therefore we should every day pray for the forgiveness of. We are not only going behind of our rent every day, by omissions of duty, and in duty, but are daily incurring the penalty of the law, as well as the forfeiture of our bond, by our commissions; every day adds to the score of our guilt, and it is a miracle of mercy that we have so much encouragement given us to come every day to the throne of grace to pray for the pardon of our sins of daily infirmity. God multiplies to pardon beyond seventy times seven.

9th. That we have no reason to expect, nor can with any confidence pray, that God would forgive our sins against him, if we do not sincerely, and from a truly Christian principle of charity, forgive those that have at any time affronted us, or been injurious to us. Though the words of our mouth be even this prayer to God, if the meditation of our heart at the same time be, as often as it is, malice and revenge to our brethren, we are not accepted, nor can we expect an answer of peace.

10th. That temptations to sin should be as much dreaded and deprecated by us as ruin by sin; and it should be as much our care and prayer to get the power of sin broken in us, as to get the guilt of sin removed from us; and though temptation may be a charming, flattering thing, we must be as

it impossible for even the vast host of pilgrims to descend to the Jordan without a Turkish guard. Sharp turns of the road, projecting spurs of rock, everywhere facilitate the attack and escape of the plunderers." The name of the place to which the incidents of the parable are traditionally assigned is Adummim, the ill-repute of which is truly recorded by Cotovius, who calls it "a place formerly, as also now, infamous for its frequent murders and robberies." Cotovius wrote this in a book published in 1619.

x. 38. A reference to John xi. will show the village of Bethany is meant here. Our Lord was now rapidly approaching Jerusalem.

xi. 2. Critics are divided in opinion as to whether our Lord gave this form of prayer on two occasions, or only on one. That St. Luke describes an actual incident is undoubted. Some MSS., as the Vatican and Sinaitic, omit the words "which art in heaven," and "thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth;" these passages are therefore left out by some modern editors.

earnest with God that we may not be led into that, as that we may not be led by that to sin, and by sin to ruin.

11th. That God is to be depended upon, and sought unto for our deliverance from all evil; and we should pray not only that we may not be left to ourselves to run into evil, but that we may not be left to Satan to bring evil upon us. Dr. Lightfoot understands it of being delivered from the evil one, that is, the devil, and suggests that we pray particularly against the apparitions of the devil and his possessions. The disciples were employed to cast out devils, and therefore were concerned to pray that they might be guarded against the particular spite he would always be sure to have against them.

Fourthly. He stirs up and encourageth importunity, fervency, and constancy in prayer; by shewing,

1. That importunity will go far in our dealings with men, ver. 5-8. Suppose a man upon a sudden emergency goes to borrow a loaf or two of bread of a neighbour, at an unreasonable time of night, not for himself, but for his friend that came unexpectedly to him; his neighbour will be loath to accommodate him, for he has awakened him with his knocking, and put him out of humour, and he has a great deal to say in his excuse; the door is shut and locked, his children are asleep in bed, in the same room with him, and if he make a noise he shall disturb them; his servants are asleep, and he cannot make them hear; and for his own part he shall catch cold if he riseth to give him; but his neighbour will have no nay, and therefore he continues knocking still, and tells him he will do so till he has what he comes for; so that he must give it him to be rid of him. "He will rise and give him as many as he needs, because of his importunity." He speaks this parable with the same intent that he speaks that, *ch. xviii. 1*, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;" not that God can be wrought upon by importunity, we cannot be troublesome to him, nor by being so change his counsels: we prevail with men by importunity, because they are displeased with it, but with God because he is pleased with it. Now this similitude may be of use to us,

1st. To direct us in prayer. *First*. We must come to God with boldness and confidence for what we need, as a man doth to the house of his neighbour or friend, who he knows loves him, and is inclined to be kind to him. *Secondly*. We must come for bread, for that which is needful, and which we cannot be without. *Thirdly*. We must come to him by prayer for others, as well as for ourselves. This man did not come for bread for himself, but for his friend. The Lord accepted Job when he prayed for his friends, *Job xlii. 10*. We cannot come to God on a more pleasing errand than when we come to him for grace to enable us to do good; to feed many with our lips; to entertain and edify those that come to us. *Fourthly*. We may come with the more boldness to God in a strait, if it be a strait that we have not brought ourselves into by our own folly and carelessness, but Providence has led us into it. This man would not have wanted bread if his friend had not come in unexpectedly. The rare which Providence casts upon us, we may with cheerfulness cast back upon Providence. *Fifthly*. We ought to continue instant in prayer, and watch in the same with all perseverance.

2nd. To encourage us in prayer. If importunity could prevail thus with a man, that was angry at it, much more with a God, who is infinitely more kind and ready to do good to us than we are to one another, and is not angry at our importunity, but accepts it, especially when it is for spiritual mercies that we are importunate. If he do not answer our prayers presently, yet he will in due time, if we continue to pray.

2. That God hath promised to give us what we ask of him. We have not only the goodness of his nature to take comfort from, but the word which he hath spoken, ver. 9, 10, "Ask, and it shall be given you;" either the thing itself you shall ask, or that which is equivalent; either the thorn in the flesh removed, or grace sufficient given in. We had this before, *Mat. vii. 7, 8*, "I say unto you;" we have it from Christ's own mouth, who knows his Father's mind, and in whom all promises are yea and amen. We must not only ask, but we must seek in the use of means, must second our prayers with our endeavours. And in asking and seeking, we must continue pressing, still knocking at the same door, and we shall at length prevail, not only by our prayers in concert, but by our particular prayers; "every one that asketh receiveth," even the meanest saint that asks in faith; "this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him," *Psa. xxxiv. 6*. When we ask of God those things which Christ had just now directed us to ask, that his name may be sanctified, that his kingdom may come, and his will be done; in these requests we must be importunate, must "never hold our peace day or night;" we must "not keep silence, nor give God any rest, until he establish, until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth," *Isa. lxii. 6*.

Fifthly. He gives us both instruction and encouragement in prayer, from the consideration of our relation to God as a Father. Here is,

1. An appeal to the bowels of earthly fathers: "Let any of you that 'is a father,' and knows the heart of a father, a father's affection to a child, and care for a child, tell me 'if his son ask bread' for his breakfast, 'will he give him a stone' to breakfast on? 'If he ask a fish' for his dinner, (when it may be it is a fish-day,) 'will he for a fish give him a serpent,' that will poison and sting him? Or 'if he shall ask an egg' for his supper, an egg and to bed, 'will he offer him a scorpion?' You know you could not be so unnatural to your own children," ver. 11, 12.

2. An application of this to the blessings of our heavenly Father, ver. 13: "If ye then, being evil," give and know how to "give good gifts to your children, much more shall God give you the Spirit;" he shall give "good things," so it is in *Matthew*. Observe,

1st. The direction he gives us, what to pray for; we must ask for the Holy Spirit, not only as necessary in order to our praying well, but as inclusive of all the good things we are to pray for; we need no more to make us happy, for the Spirit is the worker of spiritual life, and the earnest of eternal life. Note, The gift of the Holy Ghost is a gift we are every one of us concerned earnestly and constantly to pray for.

2nd. The encouragement he gives us to hope that we shall speed in this prayer; "your heavenly Father will give." It is in his power to give the Spirit; he has all good things to bestow, wrapped up in that one, but that is not all, it is in his promise; the gift of the Holy Ghost is in the covenant, *Acts xxiii.*; and it is here inferred from parents' readiness to supply their children's needs, and gratify their desires, when they are natural and proper. If the child ask for a serpent or a scorpion, the father in kindness denies him, but not if he asks for what is needful and will be nourishing. When God's children ask for the Spirit, they do in effect ask for bread, for the Spirit is the staff of life; nay, he is the author of the soul's life. If our earthly parents, though evil, be yet so kind; if they, though weak, be yet so knowing, that they not only give, but give with discretion, give what is best, in the best manner and time, much more shall your heavenly Father, who infinitely excels the fathers of our flesh both in wisdom and goodness, give you his Holy Spirit. If earthly parents are willing to lay out for the education of their children, to whom they design to leave their estates, much more will your heavenly Father give the spirit of sons to all those whom he has predestinated to the inheritance of sons.

xi. 4. The words "but deliver us from evil" are not found in the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS., and are omitted by some editors.

xi. 7. On the words "my children are with me in bed" Harmer observes that in the East it is usual among the poor for the whole family to sleep in one room, on separate beds or mattresses laid on the ground. But the expression may only mean, "my children as well as myself are in bed," or "I and my family have retired to rest." This we think is the correct explanation of the passage.

14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. 15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. 16 And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. 17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. 18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. 19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. 20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. 21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: 22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. 23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. 24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. 25 And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. 26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

The substance of these verses we had *Mat. xii. 22*, and Christ is here giving a general proof of his Divine mission, by a particular proof of his power over Satan; his conquest of whom was an indication of his great design in coming into the world, which was to destroy the works of the devil; and an earnest of the success of that undertaking. He is here casting out a devil that made the poor possessed man dumb; in *Matthew* we are told he was blind and dumb; and when the devil was forced out by the word of Christ, the dumb spake immediately, echoed to Christ's word, and the lips were opened to shew forth his praise. Now,

I. Some were affected with this miracle: "the people wondered;" they admired the power of God, and specially that it should be exerted by the hand of one who made so small a figure, that one who did the work of the Messiah should have so little of that pomp of the Messiah they expected.

II. Others were offended at it, and to justify their infidelity, suggested that it was by virtue of a league with Beelzebub the prince of the devils that he did this, ver. 15. It seems in the devil's kingdom there are chiefs, which supposeth that there are subalterns. Now they would have it thought, or said at least, that there was a correspondence settled between Christ and the devil, that the devil should have the advantage in the main, and be victorious at last; but that in order hereto, in particular instances he should yield Christ the advantage, and retire by consent. And some, to corroborate this suggestion, and confront the evidence of Christ's miraculous power, challenged him to "give them a sign from heaven," ver. 16; to confirm his doctrine by some appearance in the clouds, such as was upon mount Sinai, when the law was given; as if "a sign from heaven," not disprovable by any sagacity of theirs, could not have been given them as well by a compact and collusion with "the prince of the power of the air, who works with power and lying wonders," as the casting out of a devil; nay that would not have been any present prejudice to his interest, which this manifestly was. Note, Obstinate infidelity will never be to seek for something to say in its own excuse, though never so frivolous and absurd. Now Christ here returns a full and direct answer to this cavil of theirs; in which he shews,

First, That it can by no means be imagined that such a subtle prince as Satan is, should ever give into measures that had such a direct tendency to his own overthrow, and the undermining of his own kingdom, ver. 17, 18. What they objected they kept to themselves, afraid to speak it, lest it should be answered and baffled; but Jesus knew their thoughts, even when they industriously sought to conceal them, and he said, "You yourselves cannot but see the groundlessness, and consequently the spitefulness of this charge; for it is an allowed maxim, confirmed by every day's experience, that no interest can stand that is divided against itself; not the more public interest of a kingdom; not the private interest of a house or family; if either the one or the other be divided against itself, it cannot stand. Satan would herein act against himself, not only by the miracle, which turned him out of possession of the bodies of people, but much more in the doctrine which the miracle was wrought for the explication and confirmation of, which had a direct tendency to the ruin of Satan's interest in the minds of men, by mortifying sin, and turning men to the service of God. Now if Satan should thus be divided against

xi. 14. This miracle is not parallel with that recorded in *Matt. ix. 32-34*, but rather with the one in *Matt. xii. 22*, &c.

xi. 15. For "Beelzebub," which signifies the "fly-god," the Greek text reads "Beelzeboul," which means the "dung-hill-god." The Syriac reads "Beelzebub." It is apparent from the context and other passages that the term "Beelzebub," or "Beelzeboul," was used by the Jews as a synonym for Satan.

xi. 19. Dr. Oosterzee says, "By the 'sons' of the Pharisees we can

himself, he would hasten his own overthrow, which you cannot suppose an enemy to do, that acts so subtly for his own establishment, and is so solicitous to have his kingdom stand."

Secondly. That it was a very partial, ill-natured thing for them to impute that in him to a compact with Satan, which yet they applauded and admired in others, that were of their own nation, ver. 19: "By whom do your sons cast them out?" "Some of their own kindred as Jews, nay, and some of their own followers as Pharisees, have undertaken in the name of the God of Israel to cast out devils, and they were never charged with such a hellish combination as I am charged with." Note, It is gross hypocrisy to condemn that in those who reprove us which yet we allow of in those that flatter us.

Thirdly. That in opposing the conviction of this miracle, they were enemies to themselves, stood in their own light, and put a bar in their own door, for they thrust from them the kingdom of God, ver. 20: "If I with the finger of God cast out devils," as you may assure yourselves I do, "no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you;" the kingdom of the Messiah offers itself and all its advantages to you, and if you receive it not, it is at your peril. In *Matthew* it is "by the Spirit of God;" here, "by the finger of God;" the Spirit is "the arm of the Lord," *Isa. liii. 1*. His most great and mighty works were wrought by his Spirit; but if the Spirit in this work is said to be the finger of the Lord, which perhaps may intimate how easily Christ did and could conquer Satan, even with "the finger of God," the exerting of the Divine power in a less and lower degree than in many other instances, he needed not make bare his everlasting arm; that roaring lion, when he pleaseth, is crushed like a moth with the touch of a finger. Perhaps here is an allusion to the acknowledgment of Pharaoh's magicians, when they were run aground, *Ex. viii. 19*; "this is the finger of God." Now if the kingdom of God be herein come to you, and you be found by those cavils and blasphemies fighting against it, it will come upon you as a victorious force, which you cannot stand before.

Fourthly. That his casting out of devils was really the destroying of them and their power, for it confirmed a doctrine which had a direct tendency to the ruining of his kingdom, ver. 21, 22. Perhaps there had been some who had cast out the inferior devils by compact with Beelzebub their chief; but that was without any real damage or prejudice to Satan and his kingdom; what he lost one way he gained another. The devil and such exorcists played booty, as we say; and while the forlorn hope of his army gave ground, the main body thereby gained ground; the interest of Satan in the souls of men was not weakened by it in the least. But when Christ cast out devils, he needed not do it by any compact with them, for he was stronger than they, and could do it by force, and did it so as to ruin Satan's power, and blast his great design by a doctrine and grace that breaks the power of sin, and so routs Satan's main body, takes from him all his armour, and divides his spoils, which no one devil ever did to another, or ever will. Now this is applicable to Christ's victories over Satan, both in the world and in the hearts of particular persons, by that power which went along with the preaching of his Gospel, and doth still. And so we may observe here,

1. The miserable condition of an unconverted sinner. In his heart, which was fitted to be a habitation of God, the devil has his palace; and all the powers and faculties of the soul, being employed by him in the service of sin, are his goods. Note, 1st. The heart of every unconverted sinner is the devil's palace, where he resides, and where he rules; he "works in the children of disobedience." The heart is a palace, a noble dwelling; but the unsanctified heart is the devil's palace; his lusts are done, his interests are served, and the militia is in his hands; he usurps the throne in the soul. 2nd. The devil, as a strong man armed, keeps this palace, doth all he can to secure it to himself, and to fortify it against Christ. All the prejudices with which he hardens men's hearts against truth and holiness are the strongholds which he erects for the keeping of his palace; this palace is his garrison. 3rd. There is a kind of peace in the palace of an unconverted soul, while the devil as a strong man armed keepeth it.

The sinner hath a good opinion of himself, is very secure and merry, has no doubt concerning the goodness of his state, nor any dread of the judgment to come; he flatters himself in his own eyes, and cries peace to himself. Before Christ appeared all was quiet, because all went one way; but the preaching of the Gospel disturbed the peace of the devil's palace.

2. The wonderful change that is made in conversion, which is Christ's victory over this usurper. Satan is as a strong man armed; but our Lord Jesus is stronger than he, as God, as Mediator; "if we speak of strength, he is strong;" more are with us than against us. Observe, 1st. The manner of this victory. He comes upon him by surprise—when his goods are in peace, and the devil thinks it is all his own for ever—and overcomes him. Note. The conversion of a soul to God is Christ's victory over the devil and his power in that soul, restoring the soul to its liberty, and recovering his own interest in it, and dominion over it. 2nd. The evidences of this victory. First. "He taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted." The devil is a confident adversary; he trusts to his armour, as Pharaoh to his rivers, *Eze. xxxix. 3*; but Christ disarms him. When the power of sin and corruption in the soul is broken, when the mistakes are rectified, the eyes opened, the heart humbled and changed, and made serious and spiritual, then Satan's armour is taken away. Secondly. He divideth the spoils: he takes possession of them for himself, all the endowments of mind or body, the estate, power, interest, which before were made use of in the service of sin and Satan, are now converted to Christ's service, and employed for him: yet that is not all; he makes a distribution of them among his followers, and, having conquered Satan, gives to all believers the benefit of that victory.

Now from hence he infers, that seeing the whole drift of his doctrine and miracles was to break the power of the devil, that great enemy of mankind, it was the duty of all to join with him, and to follow his conduct, to receive his Gospel, and come heartily into the interests of it, for otherwise they would justly be reckoned as siding with the enemy, ver. 23: "he that is not with me, is against me." Those therefore who rejected the doctrine of Christ, and slighted his miracles, were looked upon as adversaries to him, and in the devil's interest.

Fifthly. That there was a vast difference between the devil's going out by compact, and his being cast out by compulsion. Those out of whom Christ cast him he never entered into again; for so was Christ's charge, *Mar. ix. 25*; whereas if he had gone out whenever he saw fit, he would have made a re-entry; for that is the way of the unclean spirit when he voluntarily and with design goes out of a man, ver. 24–26; the prince of the devils may give leave, nay, may give order, to his forces to retreat or make a feint, to draw the poor deluded soul into an ambush; but Christ, as he gives a total, so he gives a final defeat to the enemy. And in this part of the argument he has a farther reach, which is to represent the state of those who have had fair offers made them, among whom, and in whom, God has begun to break the devil's power, and overthrow his kingdom; but they reject his counsel against themselves, and relapse into a state of subjection to Satan. Here we have,

1. The condition of a formal hypocrite; his bright side, and his dark side: his heart still remains the devil's house; he calls it his own, and he retains his interest in it; and yet, 1st. The unclean spirit is gone out; he was not driven out by the power of converting grace, there was none of that violence which

the kingdom of heaven suffers; but he went out, withdrew for a time, so that the man seems not to be under the power of Satan, as formerly, nor so followed with his temptations; Satan is gone, or has turned himself into an angel of light. 2nd. The house is swept from common pollutions, by a forced confession of sin, as Pharaoh's; a feigned contrition for it, as Ahab's; and a partial reformation, as Herod's. There are those that have escaped the pollutions of the world, and yet are still under the power of the God of this world, *2 Pet. ii. 20*: the house is swept, but it is not washed, and Christ has said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me;" the house must be washed, or it is none of his. Sweeping takes off only the loose dirt, while the sin that besets the sinner, the beloved sin, is untouched; it is swept from the filth that lies open to the eye of the world, but it is not searched and ransacked for secret filthiness, *Matt. xxiii. 25*; it is swept, but the leprosy is in the wall, and will be, till something more be done. 3rd. The house is garnished with common gifts and graces: it is not furnished with any true grace, but garnished with the pictures of all graces; Simon Magus was garnished with faith, Balaam with good desires, Herod with a respect for John, the Pharisees with many external performances; it is garnished, but it is like a potsherd covered with silver dross, it is all paint and varnish, not real, not lasting. The house is garnished, but the property is not altered; it was never surrendered to Christ, nor inhabited by the Spirit. Let us therefore take heed of resting in that which a man may have, and yet come short.

2. Here is the condition of a final apostate, into whom the devil returns after he had gone out, ver. 26: "Then he goeth and taketh seven other spirits, more wicked than himself;" a certain number for an uncertain, as seven devils are said to be cast out of Mary Magdalene; seven wicked spirits are opposed to the seven spirits of God, *Rev. iii. 1*; these are said to be "more wicked than himself." It seems even devils are not all alike wicked; probably the degrees of their wickedness, now they are fallen, are as the degrees of their holiness were while they stood. When the devil would do mischief most effectually he employs those that are more mischievous than himself; these enter in without any difficulty or opposition; they are welcomed, and they dwell there where they work, there they rule; "and the last state of that man is worse than the first." Note, 1st. Hypocrisy is the high road to apostasy. If the heart remains in the interest of sin and Satan, the shows and shadows will come to nothing; those that have not set that right will not long be steadfast; where secret haunts of sin are kept up under the cloak of a visible profession, conscience is debauched, God is provoked to withdraw his restraining grace, and the close hypocrite commonly proves an open apostate. 2nd. The last state of such is worse than the first, in respect both of sin and punishment. Apostates are usually the worst of men, the most vain and profligate, the most bold and daring; their consciences are seared, and their sins, of all others, the most aggravated. God often sets marks of his displeasure upon them in this world, and in the other world they will receive the greater damnation. Let us therefore hear and fear, and hold fast our integrity.

27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. 28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

We had not this passage in the other evangelists; nor can we tack it, as Dr. Hammond does, to that of Christ's mother and brethren, desiring to speak with him; for this evangelist also had related that some time ago, *ch. viii. 19*; but it contains an interruption much like that, and, like that, occasion is taken from it for an instruction.

First. The applause which an affectionate, honest, well-meaning woman gave to our Lord Jesus, upon hearing his excellent discourses. While the scribes and Pharisees despised and blasphemed them, this good woman—and probably she was a person of some quality—admired them, and the wisdom and power with which he spake; ver. 27, "as he spake these things," with a convincing force and evidence, "a certain woman of the company" was so pleased to hear how he had confounded the Pharisees, and conquered them, and put them to shame, and cleared himself from their vile insinuations, that she could not forbear crying out, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee!" "What an admirable, what an excellent man is this; surely never was there greater or better born of a woman; happy the woman that hath him for her son. I should have thought myself very happy to be the mother of one that speaks as never man spake; that hath so much of the grace of heaven in him, and is so great a blessing to this earth." This was well said, as it expressed her high esteem of Christ, and that for the sake of his doctrine; and it was not amiss that it reflected honour upon the Virgin Mary his mother, for it agreed with what she herself had said, *ch. i. 45*, "all generations shall call me blessed;" some even of this generation, as bad as it was. Note, To all that believe the Word of Christ, the person of Christ is precious, and he is an honour, *1 Pet. ii. 7*. Yet we must be careful lest, as this good woman, we too much magnify the honour of his natural kindred, and so know him after the flesh, whereas we must now henceforth know him so no more.

Secondly. The occasion which Christ took from thence to pronounce them more happy who are his faithful and obedient followers, than she was who bare and nursed him. He doth not deny what this woman said, nor refuse her respects to him and his mother, but leads her from this to that which was of a higher consideration, and which more concerned her: "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it," ver. 28. He thinks them so; and his saying they are so, makes them so, and should make us of his mind. This is intended partly as a check to her, for doting so much upon his bodily presence and his human nature; partly as an encouragement to her to hope that she might be as happy as his own mother, whose happiness she was ready to envy, if she would hear the Word of God and keep it. Note, Though it is a great privilege to hear the Word of God, yet those only are truly blessed, that is, blessed of the Lord, that hear it and keep it; that keep it in memory, and keep to it as their way and rule.

29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. 30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son

understand none other than their spiritual sons, their disciples, the exorcists (compare *Acts xix. 13*). For want of sufficient information, it is difficult to come to a perfectly fair decision respecting this casting out of devils by the disciples of the Pharisees. He thinks the Jewish exorcists really did often succeed in expelling demons.

xi. 27, 28. This curious incident is recorded nowhere else. The woman pronounced the mother of Jesus blessed. The word for blessed conveys the sense of fortunate or happy. The reply of the

Saviour does not deny this, but declares the obedient hearers of God's word rather blessed. The peculiar importance of the passage in our day is its implicit condemnation of Popish Mariolatry.

xi. 29. The Sinaitic text reads, "This generation is an evil generation; it seeketh a sign, and a sign shall not be given to it, except the sign of Jonas."

xi. 30. With the words of this verse it would be well to compare the corresponding passage in *Matt. xiii. 40, 41*.

of man be to this generation. 31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. 32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.



NINEVEH.

33 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. 34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. 35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. 36 If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

Christ's discourse in these verses shews two things:

1. *What is the sign we may expect from God for the confirmation of our faith.* The great and most convincing proof of Christ's being sent of God, and which they were yet to wait for, after the many signs that had been given them, was the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Here is,

First. A reproof to the people for demanding other signs than what had already been given them in great plenty; ver. 29, "the people were gathered thick together," a vast crowd of them, expecting not so much to have their consciences informed by the doctrine of Christ, as to have their curiosity gratified by his miracles. And Christ knew what brought such a multitude together; they came seeking a sign, they came to gaze, to have something to talk of when they came home; and it is an evil generation which nothing will awaken and convince, no, not the most sensible demonstrations of Divine power and goodness.

Secondly. A promise that yet there should be one sign more given them, different from any that had yet been given them, even "the sign of Jonas the prophet," which in *Matthew* is explained as meaning the resurrection of Christ. As Jonas being cast into the sea, and lying there three days, and then coming up alive, and preaching repentance to the Ninevites, was a sign to them, upon which they turned from their evil way, so shall the death and resurrection of Christ, and the preaching of his Gospel immediately after to the Gentile world, be the last warning to the Jewish nation. If they be provoked to a holy jealousy by that, well and good; but if that do not work upon them, let them look for nothing else but utter ruin. "The Son of man shall be a sign to this generation," ver. 30; a sign, speaking to them, though a sign spoken against by them.

Thirdly. A warning to them to improve this sign, for it was at their peril if they did not.

1. The queen of Sheba would rise up in judgment against them, and condemn their unbelief, ver. 31. She was a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, and yet so readily gave credit to the report she heard of the glories of a king of Israel, that notwithstanding the prejudices we are apt to conceive against foreigners, she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear his wisdom; not only to satisfy her curiosity, but to inform her mind, especially in the knowledge of the true God and his worship, which is upon record to her honour; "and behold a greater than Solomon is here;" *ἄλειον Σολομῶντος*, "more than a Solomon is here;" that is, saith Dr. Hammond, more of wisdom, and more heavenly Divine doctrine, than ever was in all Solomon's words or writings; and yet these wretched Jews will give no manner of regard to what Christ saith to them, though he be in the midst of them.

2. The Ninevites would rise up in judgment against them, and condemn their impenitency, ver. 32; "they repented at the preaching of Jonas," but here is preaching which far exceeds that of Jonas, is more powerful and awakening, and threatens a much sorer ruin than that of Nineve; and yet none are startled by it to turn from their evil way, as the Ninevites did.

11. He shews, *what is the sign that God expects from us for the evidencing of our faith*; and that is the serious practice of that religion which we profess to believe, and a readiness to entertain all Divine truths, when brought to us in their proper evidence. Now observe,

First. That they had the light, with all the advantage they could desire; for God having lighted the candle of the Gospel, did not put it in a secret place, or under a bushel,—Christ did not preach in corners. The apostles were ordered to preach the Gospel to every creature; and both in Christ and his ministers wisdom and her maidens cry in the chief places of concourse, ver. 33. It is a great privilege that the light of the Gospel is put on a candlestick, so that all that come in may see it, and may see by it where they are, and whither they are going; and what is the true, and sure, and only way to happiness.

Secondly. That having the light, their concern was to have the sight; or else to what purpose had they the light? Be the object never so clear, if the organ be not right, we are never the better; ver. 34, "the light of the body is the eye," which receives the light of the candle when it is brought into the room; so the light of the soul is the understanding and judgment, and its power of discerning between good and evil, truth and falsehood. Now according as this is, accordingly the light of Divine revelation is to us, and our benefit by it; accordingly it is a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death.

1. If this eye of the soul be single, if it see clear—see things as they are,—and judge impartially concerning them,—if it aim at truth only, and seek it for its own sake, and have not any sinister by-looks and intentions,—the whole body, that is the whole soul, is full of light; it receives and entertains the Gospel, which will bring along with it into the soul both knowledge and joy. This speaks the same thing with that of the good ground receiving the Word, and understanding it. If our understanding admit the Gospel in its full light, it fills the soul, and it has enough to fill it; and if the soul be thus filled with the light of the Gospel, "having no part dark,"—if all its powers and faculties be subjected to the government and influence of the Gospel, and none left unsanctified, then "the whole soul shall be full of light," full of holiness and comfort; it was darkness itself, but is now light in the Lord, "as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light," ver. 36. Note, The Gospel will come into those souls whose doors and windows are thrown open to receive it; and where it comes it will bring light with it. But,

2. If the eye of the soul be evil, if the judgment be bribed and biassed by the corrupt and vicious dispositions of the mind, by pride and envy, by the love of the world and sensual pleasures, if the understanding be prejudiced against Divine truths, and resolved not to admit them, though brought with never so convincing an evidence, it is no wonder that the whole body, the whole soul, is full of darkness, ver. 34. How can they have instruction, information, direction, or comfort from the Gospel that wilfully shut their eyes against it? and what hope is there of such, what remedy for them? The inference from hence therefore is, ver. 35, "Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness." Take heed that the eye of the mind be not blinded by partiality? and prejudice, and sinful aims. Be sincere in your inquiries after truth, and ready to receive it in the light and love and power of it; and not as the men of this generation whom Christ preached to, that never sincerely desired to know God's will, or designed to do it; and therefore no wonder they walked on in darkness, wandered endlessly, and perished eternally.

37 And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. 38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. 39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. 40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? 41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you. 42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. 44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them. 45 Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also. 46 And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. 47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them

xi. 33. From the occurrence of substantially the same language in chap. viii. 16, we may infer that our Lord sometimes repeated his sayings, with such modifications and new applications as circumstances called for. This explains some of the cases in which we find utterances closely alike in different positions, so that *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke* especially, seem sometimes not to agree when they really do not disagree.

xi. 37. Bishop Pearce and others have observed that the word for

"dine" here signifies in the Greek the first meal of the day. The Jews were wont to take but two meals, properly so called—this one, which was at about mid-day, and supper in the evening.

xi. 38. In controversies on the mode of baptism it is noted that the word for "washed" here is literally "baptised." Hence it is argued that the word in itself may not mean immersion, especially as the Orientals were wont to wash their hands by having water poured upon them. On the other hand, it is argued that the word may mean

48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. 49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute: 50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; 51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. 52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. 53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: 54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

Christ here saith many of those things to a Pharisee and his guests, in a private conversation at table, which he afterwards said in a public discourse in the temple, *Mat. xxiii.*, for what he said in public and private was of a piece. He would not say that in a corner which he durst not repeat and stand to in the great congregation; nor would he give those reproofs to any sort of sinners in general, which he durst not apply to them in particular as he met with them, for he was and is the faithful witness. Here is,

First, *Christ's going to dine with a Pharisee*, that very civilly invited him to his house: ver. 37, "As he spake," even while he was speaking, "a certain Pharisee" interrupted him with a request to him to come and dine with him; to come forthwith, for it was dinner-time. We are willing to hope the Pharisee was so well pleased with his discourse, that he was willing to shew him respect, and desirous to have more of his company, and therefore gave him this invitation, and bid him truly welcome. And yet we have some cause to suspect that it was with an ill design to break off his discourse to the people, and to have an opportunity of ensnaring him, and getting something out of him which might serve for matter of accusation or reproach, ver. 53, 54. We know not the mind of this Pharisee; but whatever it was, Christ knew it. If he meant ill, he shall know Christ doth not fear him; if well, he shall know Christ is willing to do him good; so "he went in, and sat down to meat." Note, Christ's disciples must learn of him to be conversible, and not morose. Though we have need to be cautious what company we keep, yet we need not be rigid, nor must we therefore go out of the world.

Secondly, *The offence which the Pharisee took at Christ*, as those of that sort had sometimes done at the disciples of Christ, for not washing before dinner, ver. 38. He wondered that a man of his sanctity,—a prophet, a man of so much devotion, and such a strict conversation,—would sit down to meat and not first wash his hands, especially being newly come out of a mixed company, and there being in the Pharisee's dining-room, no doubt, all accommodations set ready for it, so that he need not fear being troublesome; and the Pharisee himself, and all his guests, no doubt, washing, so that he could not be singular;—what, and yet not wash? What harm had it been if he had washed? Was it not strictly commanded by the canons of their church? It was so, and therefore Christ would not do it, because he would witness against their assuming a power to impose that as a matter of religion which God commanded them not. The ceremonial law consisted in divers washings, but this was none of them, and therefore Christ would not practise it, no, not in complaisance to the Pharisee who invited him, nor though he knew that offence would be taken at his omitting it.

Thirdly, *The sharp reproof which Christ upon this occasion gave to the Pharisees*, without begging pardon even of the Pharisee whose guest he now was; for we must not flatter our best friends in any evil thing.

1. He reproves them for placing religion so much in those instances of it that are only external, and fall under the eye of man, while those were not only postponed, but quite expunged, which respect the soul, and fall under the eye of God, ver. 39, 40. Now observe here,

1st. The absurdity they were guilty of: "You Pharisees make clean the outside" only, you wash your hands with water, but do not wash your hearts from wickedness; those are full of covetousness and malice—covetousness of men's goods, and malice against good men. Those would never be reckoned cleanly servants that wash only the outside of the cup their master drinks out of, or the platter he eats out of, and take no care to make the inside clean, which immediately affects the meat and drink, and mingles it with it, if there be any filth. The frame and temper of the mind in every religious service is the inside of the cup and platter; the impurity of that affects the services; and therefore to keep ourselves free from scandalous enormities, and yet to live under the dominion of spiritual wickedness, is as great an affront to God, as it would be for a servant that gives the cup into his master's hand, clean wiped from all the dust on the outside, but within full of cobwebs and spiders. Ravening and wickedness, that is, reigning worldliness and reigning spitefulness, which men think they can find some cloak and cover for, are the dangerous, damning sins of many, who have made the outside of the cup clean from the more gross, and scandalous, and inexcusable sins of whoredom and drunkenness.

2nd. A particular instance of the absurdity of it: ver. 40, "Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?" Did not that God, who in the law of Moses appointed divers ceremonial washings, with which you justify yourselves in these practices and impositions, appoint also that you should cleanse and purify your hearts? He who made laws for that which is without, did not he, even in those laws, farther intend something within? and by other laws shew how little he regarded the purifying of the flesh, and the putting away of the filth of that, if the heart be not made clean? Or it may have regard to God, not only as a lawgiver but (which the words

seem rather to import) as a creator. Did not God, who made us these bodies, (and they are fearfully and wonderfully made,) make us these souls also, which are more fearfully and more wonderfully made? Now if he made both, he justly expects we should take care of both; and therefore not only wash the body, which he is the former of, and make the hands clean in honour of his work, but wash the spirit, which he is the Father of, and get the leprosy in the heart cleansed.

To this he subjoins a rule for making of our creature comforts clean to us: ver. 41. Instead of washing your hands before you go to meat, "give alms of such things as you have," *τὰ εὐεργα*, "of such things as are set before you," and present with you, let the poor have their share out of them, and then all things are clean to you, and you may use them comfortably. Here is a plain allusion to the law of Moses, by which it was provided that certain portions of the increase of their land should be given "to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow;" and when that was done, what was reserved for their own use was clean to them, and they could in faith pray for a blessing upon it, *Deut. xxvi. 12-15*. Then we can with comfort enjoy the gifts of God's bounty ourselves, when we send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared, *Neh. viii. 10*. Job ate not his morsel alone, but the fatherless ate thereof, and so it was clean to him, *Job xxxi. 17*; clean, that is, permitted and allowed to be used, and then only it can be used comfortably. Note, What we have is not our own, unless God have his dues out of it; and it is by liberality to the poor that we clear up to ourselves our liberty to make use of our creature comforts.

2. He reproves them for laying stress upon trifles, and neglecting the weighty matters of the law, ver. 42. 1st. Those laws which related only to the means of religion they were very exact in the observance of, as particularly those concerning the maintenance of the priests: "Ye pay tithe of mint and rue, pay it in kind, and to the full, and will not put off the priests with a *modus decimandi*, or 'compound' for it; by this they could gain a reputation with the people as strict observers of the law, and would make an interest in the priests, in whose power it was many a time to do them a kindness; and no wonder if the priests and the Pharisees contrived how to strengthen one another's hands. Now Christ doth not condemn them for being so exact in paying tithes,—“these things ought ye to have done,”—but for thinking that that would atone for the neglect of their greater duties; for, 2nd. Those laws which relate to the essentials of religion they made nothing of; “ye pass over judgment and the love of God,” you make no conscience of giving men their dues and God your hearts.

3. He reproves them for their pride and vanity, and affectation of precedence, and praise of men: ver. 43, “ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues,” or consistories, where the elders met for government: if you have not those seats, you are ambitious of them; if you have, you are proud of them; and ye love greetings in the markets, to be complimented by the people, and to have their cap and knee. It is not sitting uppermost, or being greeted, that is reproved, but loving it.

4. He reproves them for their hypocrisy, and their colouring over the wickedness of their hearts and lives with specious pretences: ver. 44, “ye are as graves” overgrown with grass, “which therefore appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them,” and so they contract the ceremonial pollution, which by the law arose from the touch of a grave. These Pharisees were within full of abominations, as a grave of putrefaction—full of covetousness, envy, and malice; and yet they concealed it so artfully with a profession of devotion, that it did not appear, so that they who conversed with them and followed their doctrine, were defiled with sin, infected with their corruptions and ill morals; and yet they, making a show of piety, suspected no danger by them. The contagion insinuated itself and was insensibly caught, and those that caught it thought themselves never the worse.

Fourthly, *The testimony which he bore also against the lawyers or scribes*, who made it their business to expound the law according to the tradition of the elders, as the Pharisees did to observe the law according to that tradition.

1. There was one of that profession who resented what he said against the Pharisees: ver. 45, “Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also,” for we are scribes; and are we therefore hypocrites? Note, It is a common thing for unhumiliated sinners to call and count reproofs reproaches. It is the wisdom of those that desire to have their sin mortified, to make a good use of reproaches that come from ill-will, and to turn them into reproofs; if we can, that way hear of our faults, and amend them, it is well; but it is the folly of those who are wedded to their sins, and resolved not to part with them, to make an ill use of the faithful and friendly admonitions given them, which come from love, and to have their passions provoked by them, as if they were intended for reproaches, and therefore fly in the face of their reprovers, and justify themselves in rejecting the reproof. Thus the prophet complained, *Jer. vi. 10*, “the word of the Lord is to them a reproach, they have no delight in it.” This lawyer espoused the Pharisee's cause, and so made himself partaker of his sins.

2. Our Lord Jesus thereupon took them to task: ver. 46, “Woe unto you also, ye lawyers!” and again, ver. 52, “Woe unto you, lawyers!” They blessed themselves in the reputation they had among the people, who thought them happy men because they studied the law, and were always conversant with that, and had the honour of instructing people in the knowledge of that; but Christ denounced woes against them, for he sees not as man sees. This was just upon him for taking the Pharisee's part, and quarrelling with Christ, because he reproved them. Note, Those who quarrel with the reproofs of others, and suspect them to be reproaches to them, do but get woes of their own by so doing.

1st. The lawyers are reproved for making the services of religion more burthensome to others, but more easy to themselves, than God had made them: ver. 45, “ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne,” by your traditions, which bind them out from many liberties God has allowed them, and bind them up to many slaveries which God never enjoined them, to shew your authority, and to keep people in awe; “but ye yourselves touch them not with one of your fingers;” that is,

First, You will not burthen yourselves with them, nor be yourselves bound by those restraints with which you hamper others. They would seem, by the hedges they pretended to make about the law, to be very strict for the observance of the law; but if you could see their practices, you would find not only that they make nothing of those hedges themselves, but make nothing of the law itself neither: thus the confessors of the Romish church are said to do with their penitents.

Secondly, You will not lighten them to those you have power over: “you will not touch them;” that is, either to repeal them, or to dispense with them, when you find them to be burthensome and grievous to the people. They would come in with both hands to dispense with a command of God, but not with a finger to mitigate the rigour of any of the traditions of the elders.

2nd. They are reproved for pretending a veneration for the memory of the prophets, whom their fathers killed, when yet they hated and persecuted those in their own day, who were sent to them on the same errand, to call them to repentance, and direct them to Christ, ver. 47—49.

First, These hypocrites, among other pretences of piety, built the sepulchres of the prophets; that is, they erected monuments over their graves, in honour

immersion here, because the hands to which it refers may have been dipped in water.

xi. 42. The word for “rue” only occurs here in the New Testament. There are several species of the plant in Palestine, one at least being cultivated.

xi. 52. Dr. Tillotson says, “The metaphor of ‘key of knowledge’ is undoubtedly an allusion to the custom among the Jews in the admission of their doctors; for those to whom they gave authority to

interpret the law and the prophets were solemnly admitted by giving them a key and a table-book.” So that by the “key of knowledge” is here meant the interpretation and understanding of the Scriptures.

xi. 53. Instead of “as he said these things unto them,” some of the best authorities have “when he had departed thence.”

xii. 5. This verse and the one before it correspond with *Matt. x. 28*, and show that God is the object proposed for our fear. In *Matthew* it is said he is able to destroy both soul and body in hell,

of them, probably with large inscriptions, containing high encomiums of them; they were not so superstitious as to enshrine their relics, or to think their devotions the more acceptable to God for their being paid at the tombs of the martyrs; they did not burn incense or pray to them, or plead their merits with God; they did not add that iniquity to their hypocrisy; but, as if they owed themselves the children of the prophets, their heirs and executors, they repaired and beautified the monuments sacred to their pious memory.

Secondly. Notwithstanding this, they had an inveterate enmity to those in their own day that came to them in the spirit and power of those prophets; and though they had not yet had an opportunity of carrying it far, yet they would soon do it, for the wisdom of God said, that is, Christ himself would so order it, and did now foretell it, that they would slay and persecute the prophets and apostles that should be sent them. The wisdom of God would thus make trial of them, and discover their odious hypocrisy, by sending them prophets to reprove them for their sins, and warn them of the judgments of God. Those prophets should prove themselves apostles or messengers sent from heaven by signs and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost; or, I will send them prophets under the style and title of apostles, who yet shall produce as good an authority as any of the old prophets did; and those they shall not only contradict and oppose, but slay and persecute, and put to death. Christ foresaw this, and yet did not otherwise than as became the wisdom of God in sending them; for he knew how to bring glory to himself in the issue, by the recompences reserved both for the persecutors and the persecuted in the future state.

Thirdly. That therefore God will justly put another construction upon their building the tombs of the prophets than what they would be thought to intend, and it shall be interpreted, their allowing the deeds of their fathers, ver. 48; for since by their present actions it appeared they had no true value for their prophets, their building their sepulchres shall have this sense put upon it, that they resolved to keep them in their graves whom their fathers had hurried thither. Josiah, that had a real value for prophets, thought it enough not to disturb the grave of the man of God at Beth-el, "Let no man move his bones," 2 *Kin.* xxiii. 17, 18. If these lawyers will carry the matter farther, and will build their sepulchres, it is such a piece of overdoing as gives cause to suspect an ill design in it, and that it is meant as a cover for some design against prophecy itself, like the kiss of a traitor, as "he that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him," *Pr.* xxvii. 14.

Fourthly. That they must expect no other but to be reckoned with as the fillers-up of the measure of persecution, ver. 50, 51. They keep up the trade, as it were, in succession, and therefore are responsible for the debts of the company, even those it has been contracting all along, from the blood of Abel, when the world began, to that of Zacharias, and so forward to the end of the Jewish state, it shall all be required of this generation, this last generation of the Jews, whose sin in persecuting Christ's apostles would exceed any of the sins of that kind that their fathers were guilty of, and so would bring wrath upon them to the uttermost, 1 *Thes.* ii. 15, 16; and their destruction by the Romans was so terrible as might well be reckoned the completing of God's vengeance upon that persecuting nation.

3rd. They are reprov'd for opposing the Gospel of Christ, and doing all they could to obstruct the progress and success of it, ver. 52.

First. They had not, according to the duty of their place, faithfully expounded to the people those Scriptures of the Old Testament which pointed at the Messiah, which, if they had been led into the right understanding of by the lawyers, they would readily have embraced him and his doctrine; but instead of that, they had perverted those texts, and had cast a mist before the eyes of the people, by their corrupt glosses upon them, and this is called the taking away the key of knowledge; instead of using that key for the people, and helping them to use it aright, they hid it from them; this is called in *Matthew* shutting up the kingdom of God against men, *Mat.* xxiii. 13. Note. Those who take away the key of knowledge shut up the kingdom of heaven.

Secondly. They themselves did not embrace the Gospel of Christ, though, by their acquaintance with the Old Testament, they could not but know that the time was fulfilled, and the kingdom of God was at hand; they saw the prophecies accomplished in that kingdom which our Lord Jesus was about to set up, and yet would not themselves enter into it. Nay,

Thirdly. Them that without any conduct or assistance of theirs were entering in they did all they could to hinder and discourage, by threatening to cast them out of the synagogue, and otherwise terrifying them. It is bad for people to be averse to revelation, but much worse to be adverse to it.

Lastly. In the close of the chapter we are told how *spitefully and maliciously* the Scribes and Pharisees contrived to draw him into a snare, ver. 53, 54. They could not bear those cutting reproofs which they must own to be just; but since what he had said against them in particular would not bear an action, nor could they ground upon it any criminal accusation, and therefore, as if, because his reproofs were warm, they hoped to stir him up to some intemperate heat and passion, so as to put him off his guard, they "began to urge him vehemently," to be very fierce upon him, and to "provoke him to speak of many things"—to propose dangerous questions to him, laying wait for something which might serve the design they had, of making him either odious to the people or obnoxious to the government, or both. Thus did they seek occasion against him, like David's enemies, that did every day wrest his words, *Ps.* lvi. 5. "Evil men dig up mischief." Note. Faithful reprovers of sin must expect to have many dig up mischief. The prophet complains of those in his time who "make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate," *Isa.* xlii. 21. That we may bear trials of this kind with patience, and get through them with prudence, let us "consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself."

CHAPTER XII.

In this chapter we have divers excellent discourses of our Saviour's upon various occasions, many of which are to the same purpose with what we had in *Matthew* upon other the like occasions; for we suppose our Lord Jesus preached the same doctrines, and pressed the same duties at several times, in several companies; and one of the evangelists took them as he delivered them at one time, and another at another time; and we need thus to have precept upon precept, line upon line. Here, I. Christ warns his disciples to take heed of hypocrisy, and of cowardice, in profane Christianity and preaching the Gospel, ver. 1—12. II. He gives a caution against covetousness, upon occasion of a covetous motion made to him, and illustrates that caution by a parable of a rich man suddenly cut off by death in the midst of his worldly projects and hopes, ver. 13—21. III. He encourageth his disciples to cast all their care upon God, and to live easy in a dependence upon his providence, and exhorteth them to make religion their main business, ver. 22—34. IV. He stirr'd them up to watchfulness for their Master's coming, from the consideration of the reward of those who are then found faithful, and the punishment of them who are found unfaithful, ver. 35—48. V. He bids them expect trouble and persecution, ver. 49—53. VI. He warns the people to observe and improve the day of their opportunities, and to make their peace with God in time, ver. 54—59.

which can only mean perdition after resurrection. Here, however the power is that of one who can kill and afterwards consign to hell. Both passages set forth the prerogative of God to punish in a future state of being. As Jortin says, "From his power even the grave cannot shelter us, and he can make death not the end but the beginning of woe."

xii. 11. "Take ye no thought," here as elsewhere, where a similar locution is found, signifies "be not anxious," "do not be troubled in



N the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. 3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. 4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? 7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. 8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: 9 But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. 10 And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven. 11 And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: 12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

We find here, I. *A vast auditory that was got together to hear Christ preach.* The scribes and Pharisees sought to accuse him, and do him mischief; but the people that were not under the bias of their prejudices and jealousies still admired him, attended on him, and did him honour; ver. 1, "In the mean time," while he was in the Pharisee's house, contending with them that sought to ensnare him, the people got together for an afternoon sermon—a sermon after dinner with a Pharisee; and he would not disappoint them. Though in the morning sermon, when they "were gathered thick together," *ch.* xi. 29, he had severely reprov'd them as "an evil generation that seek a sign," yet they renewed their attendance on him; so much better could the people bear their reproofs than the Pharisees theirs. The more the Pharisees strove to drive the people from Christ, the more flocking there was to him. Here was an "innumerable multitude of people gathered together, so that they trode one upon another," in labouring to get foremost, and to come within hearing. It is a good sight to see people thus forward to hear the word, and venture upon inconvenience and danger rather than miss an opportunity for their souls. "Who are these that thus fly like the doves to their windows?" *Isa.* lx. 8. When the net is cast where there is such a multitude of fish, it may be hoped that some will be enclosed.

11. *The instructions which he gave his followers in the hearing of this auditory.*

First. He began with a caution against hypocrisy. This he said "to his disciples first of all;" either to the twelve, or to the seventy. These were his more peculiar charge, his family, his school; and therefore he particularly warned them, as his beloved sons. They made more a profession of religion than others, and hypocrisy in that was the sin they were most in danger of. They were to preach to others, and if they pervert, corrupt the word, and deal deceitfully, hypocrisy would be worse in them than in others. And besides, there was a Judas among them, that was an hypocrite; and Christ knew it, and would hereby startle him, or leave him inexcusable. Christ's disciples were, for aught we know, the best men then in the world, yet need to be cautioned against hypocrisy. Christ said this to the disciples in the hearing of this great multitude, rather than privately when he had them by themselves, to add the greater weight to the caution, and to let the world know that he would not countenance hypocrisy, no, not in his own disciples. Now observe,

1. The description of that sin which he warns them against; it is "the leaven

mind as to how or what you shall answer." There is nothing to forbid previous reflection and consideration, much to commend calmness and prudence. The Christian apologist was not to distress his soul before appearing in the presence of persecuting judges, for he would be divinely helped.

xii. 15. There is very little doubt that we should here read "beware of all covetousness," which is supported by the highest authorities. The conclusion of the verse is not very clear in the

of the Pharisees." 1st. It is "leaven," it is spreading as leaven, insinuates itself into the whole man, and all that it doth; it is swelling and souring as leaven, for it puffs men up with pride, and embitters them with malice, and makes their service unacceptable to God. 2nd. It is "the leaven of the Pharisees," that is, it is the sin they are most of them found in. Take heed of imitating them; be not you of their spirit; do not you disseminate in Christianity, as they do in Judaism; make not your religion a cloak of maliciousness, as they do theirs.

2. A good reason against it, ver. 2, 3: "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed." It is to no purpose to dissemble, for sooner or later truth will come out; and "a lying tongue is but for a moment." If you speak in darkness that which is unbecoming you, and is inconsistent with your public professions, it "shall be heard in the light," somehow or other it will be discovered, "a bird of the air shall carry the voice," *Ecc. x. 20*; and your folly and falsehood will be made manifest. The iniquity that is concealed with a show of piety will be discovered, perhaps in this world, as Judas' was, and Simon Magus'; however in the great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest, *Ecc. xii. 14*; *Rom. ii. 16*. If men's religion prevail not to conquer and cure the wickedness of their hearts, it shall not always serve for a cloak; the day is coming when hypocrites will be stripped of their fig leaves.

Secondly. To this he added a charge to them, to be faithful to the trust reposed in them, and not to betray it through cowardice or base fear. Some make ver. 2, 3 to be a caution to them not to conceal those things which they had been instructed in, and were employed to publish to the world. Whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, tell them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; what has been spoken to you, and you have talked of among yourselves privately and in corners, that do you preach publicly, whoever is offended; for if you please men you are not Christ's servants, nor can you please him, *Gal. i. 10*. But this was not the worst of it; it was likely to be a suffering cause, though never a sinking one; let them therefore arm themselves with courage, and divers arguments here are to steel them with a holy resolution in their work. Consider,

1. The power of your enemies is a limited power, ver. 4: "I say unto you, my friends." Christ's disciples are his friends, he calls them friends, and gives them this friendly advice, "Be not afraid;" do not disquiet yourselves with tormenting fears of the power and rage of men. Note, Those whom Christ owns for his friends need not be afraid of any enemies. "Be not afraid," no, not "of them that kill the body;" let it not be in the power, not only not of scoffers, but not of murderers, to drive you off from your work; for you, that have learned to triumph over death, may say even of them, Let them do their worst; "after that there is no more that they can do;" the immortal soul lives and is happy, and enjoys itself and its God, and sets them all at defiance. Note, Those can do Christ's disciples no real harm, and therefore ought not to be dreaded, who can but kill the body, for they only send that to its rest, and the soul to its joy the sooner.

2. God is to be feared more than the most powerful men, ver. 5: "I will forewarn you whom you shall fear;" that you may fear man less, fear God more. Moses conquers his fear of the wrath of the king, by having an eye to him that is invisible. By owning Christ you may incur the wrath of men, which can reach no farther than to put you to death, and without God's permission they cannot do that; but by denying Christ, and disowning him, you will incur the wrath of God, which has power to send you to hell, and there is no resisting it. Now of two evils the least is to be chosen, and the greatest to be dreaded; and therefore, "I say unto you, Fear him." 'Tis true, said that blessed martyr, Bishop Hooper, 'life is sweet, and death bitter; but eternal life is more sweet, and eternal death more bitter.'

3. The lives of good Christians and good ministers are the particular care of the Divine providence, ver. 6, 7. To encourage us in times of difficulty and danger, we must have recourse to our first principles, and build upon them. Now a firm belief of the doctrine of God's universal providence, and the extent of it, would be satisfying to us, when at any time we are in peril, and encourage us to trust God in the way of duty. 1st. Providence takes cognizance of the meanest creatures, even of the sparrows. Though they are of such small account, that five of them are sold for two farthings, yet not one of them is forgotten of God, but is provided for, and notice is taken of its death. Now, "ye are of more value than many sparrows," and therefore you may be sure you are not forgotten, though imprisoned, though banished, though forgotten by your friends; much more "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of saints" than the death of sparrows. 2nd. Providence takes cognizance of the meanest interest of the disciples of Christ, ver. 7; even "the very hairs of your head are all numbered," much more are your sighs and tears numbered, and the drops of your blood you shed for Christ's name's sake. An account is kept of all your losses, that they may be, and without doubt they shall be, recompensed unspeakably to your advantage.

4. You will be owned or disowned by Christ in the great day, according as you now own or disown him, ver. 8, 9. 1st. To engage us to confess Christ before men, whatever we may lose or suffer for our constancy to him, and how dear soever it may cost us, we are assured that they who confess Christ now, shall be owned by him in the great day "before the angels of God," to their everlasting comfort and honour. Jesus Christ will confess, not only that he suffered for them, and they are to have the benefit of his sufferings, but that they suffered for him; and his kingdom and interest on earth was advanced by their sufferings; and what greater honour can be done them? 2nd. To deter us from denying Christ, and a cowardly deserting of his truths and ways, we are here assured that those who deny Christ, and treacherously depart from him, whatever they may save by it, though it were life itself, and whatever they may gain by it, though it were a kingdom, will be vast losers at last, for they shall be "denied before the angels of God;" Christ will not know them, will not own them, will not shew them any favour, which will turn to their everlasting terror and contempt. By the stress here laid upon their being confessed or denied before the angels of God, it should seem to be a considerable part of the happiness of glorified saints, that they will not only stand right, but stand high, in the esteem of the holy angels; they will love them, and honour them, and own them; if they be Christ's servants, they are their fellow-servants, and they will take them for their companions; and on the contrary, a considerable part of the misery of damned sinners will be, that the holy angels will abandon them, and will be the pleased witnesses, not only of their disgrace, as here, but of their misery, for they shall be "tormented in the presence of the holy angels," *Rev. xiv. 10*, who will give them no relief.

5. The errand they were shortly to be sent out upon, was of the highest and last importance to the children of men, to whom they were sent, ver. 10. Let them be bold in preaching the Gospel, for a sorer and heavier doom would attend those that rejected them, after the Spirit was poured out upon them, which was to be the last method of conviction, than those that now rejected Christ himself and opposed him. "Greater works than these shall ye do," and consequently greater will be the punishment of those that blaspheme the gifts and operations of the Holy Ghost in you. "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man," that shall stumble at the meanness of his appearance,

and speak slightly and spitefully of him, it is capable of some excuse; "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do;" "out unto him that blasphemeth the Holy Ghost," that blasphemeth the Christian doctrine, and maliciously opposeth it after the pouring out of the Spirit, and his attestation of Christ's being glorified, (*Acts ii. 33*; v. 32): the privilege of the forgiveness of sin shall be denied; he shall have no benefit by Christ and his Gospel; you may shake off the dust of your feet against those that do so, and give them over as incurable; they have forfeited that repentance and remission which Christ was exalted to give, and which you are commissioned to preach. The sin, no doubt, was the more daring, and consequently the case the more desperate, during the continuance of the extraordinary gifts and operations of the Spirit in the church, which were intended for a sign to them who believed not 1 *Cor. xiv. 22*. Those who, though they were not convinced by them at first, yet admired them, there were hopes of, but those who blasphemed them were given over.

6. Whatever trials they should be called out to, they should be sufficiently furnished for them, and honourably brought through them, ver. 11, 12. The faithful martyr for Christ has not only sufferings to undergo, but a testimony to bear, a good confession to witness, and is concerned to do that well, so as that the cause of Christ may not suffer, though he suffer for it; and if this be his care, let him cast it upon God: "when they bring you unto the synagogues," before church rulers, before the Jewish courts, or before "magistrates and powers," Gentile rulers, rulers in the state, to be examined about your doctrine what it is, and what the proof of it, "take no thought what ye shall answer," 1st. That you may save yourselves; do not study by what art or rhetoric to mollify your judges, or by what tricks in law to bring yourselves off; if it be the will of God that you should come off, and your time is not yet come, he will bring it about effectually. 2nd. That you may serve your Master; aim at this, but do not perplex yourselves about it, "for the Holy Ghost," as a spirit of wisdom, "shall teach you what ye ought to say," and how to say it, so as it may be for the honour of God and his cause.

13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. 14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? 15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. 16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

We have in these verses,

First. The application that was made to Christ, very unseasonably, by one of his hearers, desiring him to interpose between him and his brother, in a matter that concerned the estate of the family, ver. 9: "Master, speak to my brother;" speak as a prophet, speak as a king, speak with authority; he is one that will have a regard to what thou sayest; speak to him, "that he divide the inheritance with me." Now,

1. Some think his brother did him wrong, and he appeals to Christ to right him, because he knew the law was costly. His brother was such a one as the Jews called *Ben-hamtan*,—"a son of violence," that took not only his own part of the estate but his brother's too, and forcibly detained it from him. Such brethren there are in the world, that have no sense at all either of natural equity or natural affection; who make a prey of those whom they ought to patronize and protect. They who are so wronged have a God to go to, who will execute judgment and justice for those that are oppressed.

2. Others think he had a mind to do his brother wrong, and would have Christ to assist him; that whereas the law gave the elder brother a double portion of the estate, and the father himself could not dispose of what he had but by that rule, *Deu. xxi. 16, 17*; he would have Christ to alter that law, and to oblige his brother, who perhaps was a follower of Christ at large, to divide the inheritance equally with him in gavel-kind, share and share like, and to allot him as much as his elder brother. I suspect that this was the case, because Christ takes occasion from it to warn against covetousness, *κακωφιλία*; a desire of having more, more than God in his providence has allotted us. It was not a lawful desire of getting his own, but a sinful desire of getting more than his own.

Secondly. Christ's refusal to interpose in this matter, ver. 14: "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" In matters of this nature Christ would not assume either a legislative power to alter the settled rule of inheritances, or a judicial power to determine controversies concerning them. He could have done the judge's part, and the lawyer's, as well as he did the physician's, and have ended suits at law as happily as he did diseases, but he would not, for it was not in his commission: "Who made me a judge?" Probably he refers to the indignity done to Moses by his brethren in Egypt, which Stephen upbraided the Jews with, *Acts vii. 27, 35*. "If I should offer to do this you would taunt me as you did Moses. Who made thee a judge or a divider?"

Greek, and cannot be rendered with literal exactness. The sense appears to be that a man's life does not consist in or depend on what he possesses, even when he has abundance; what life is worth having for is independent of wealth.

xii. 18. The commentators compare with this passage one in the Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus (ii. 18, 19): "There is that waxeth rich by his wariness and pinching, and this is the portion of his reward: Whereas he saith, I have found rest, and now will eat

continually of my goods; and knoweth not what time shall come upon him, and that he must leave those things to others and die." As the resemblance is after all only casual, and does not extend to the whole of the parable, we need not infer with some that Jesus referred to the Apocrypha. There is a partial coincidence of thought and of figure, which probably corresponds with popular ideas and expression then current. On the mention of "barns," Dr. Kitto says, "It shows quite clearly that the Jews of this time had granaries as

He corrects the man's mistake, will not admit his appeal, (it was *coram non iudice*—not before the proper judge,) and so dismisseth his bill. If he had come to him to desire him to assist his pursuits of the heavenly inheritance, Christ would have given him his best help; but as to this matter he has nothing to do: "Who made me a judge?" Note, Jesus Christ was no usurper, he took no honour, no power to himself, but what was given him, *Heb. v. 5*. Whatever he did, he could tell by what authority he did it, and who gave him that authority.

Now this shews us what is the nature and constitution of Christ's kingdom; it is a spiritual kingdom, and not of this world. 1. It doth not interfere with civil powers, nor take the authority of princes out of their hands. Christianity leaves the matter as it found it as to civil power. 2. It doth not intermeddle with civil rights; it obligeth all to do justly, according to the settled rules of equity, but dominion is not founded in grace. 3. It doth not encourage our expectations of worldly advantages by our religion. If this man will be a disciple of Christ, and expects that in consideration of that Christ should give him his brother's estate, he is mistaken; the rewards of Christ's disciples are of another nature. 4. It doth not encourage our contests with our brethren, and our being rigorous and high in our demands, but rather for peace' sake to recede from our right. 5. It doth not allow ministers to entangle themselves in the affairs of this life, *2 Tim. iii. 4*, to "leave the Word of God to serve tables." There are those whose business it is, let it be left to them: *tractant fabrilis fabri*—each workman to his proper craft.

Thirdly, The necessary caution which Christ took occasion from hence to give to his hearers. Though he came not to be a divider of men's estates, he came to be a director of their consciences about them, and would have all take heed of harbouring that corrupt principle which they saw to be in others the root of so much evil. Here is,

1. The caution itself, ver. 15: "Take heed and beware of covetousness;" *ἐπιμενετε*, 'observe yourselves, keep a jealous eye upon your own hearts, lest covetous principles steal into them; and *φυλάσσετε*, 'preserve yourselves, keep a strict hand upon your own hearts, lest covetous principles rule and give law in them. Covetousness is a sin which we have need constantly to watch against, and therefore frequently to be warned against.

2. The reason of it, or an argument to enforce this caution: "for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;" that is, our happiness and comfort doth not depend upon our having a great deal of this world. 1st. The life of the soul to be sure doth not depend upon it, and the soul is the man. The things of the world will not suit the nature of a soul, nor supply its needs, nor satisfy its desires, nor last so long as it will last. Nay, 2nd. Even the life of the body, and the happiness of that, doth not consist in an abundance of these things; for many live very contentedly and easily, and get through the world very comfortably, that have but little of the wealth of it: "a dinner of herbs, with holy love," is better than a feast of fat things." And on the other hand, many live very miserably, that have a great deal of the things of this world; they possess abundance, and yet have no comfort of it: they bereave their souls of good, *Ecccl. iv. 8*. Many that have abundance are discontented and fretting, as Ahab and Haman; and then what good doth their abundance to them?

3. The illustration of this by a parable; the sum of which is to shew the folly of carnal worldlings while they live, and their misery when they die; which is intended not only for a check to that man who came to Christ with an address about his estate, while he was in no care about his soul and another world, but for the enforcing of that necessary caution to us all, to "take heed of covetousness." The parable gives us the life and death of a rich man, and leaves us to judge whether he was a happy man.

1st. Here is an account of his worldly wealth and abundance, ver. 16: "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully," *καρπάζει, regio*. He had a whole country to himself, a lordship of his own; he was a little prince. Observe, His wealth lay much in the fruits of the earth, for "the king himself is served of the field," *Ecccl. i. 9*. He had a great deal of ground, and his ground was fruitful; much would have more, and he had more. Note, The fruitfulness of the earth is a great blessing, but it is a blessing which God often gives plentifully to wicked men, to whom it is a snare, that they may not think to judge of his love or hatred by what is before us.

2nd. Here are the workings of his heart in the midst of this abundance. We are here told what "he thought within himself," ver. 17. Note, The God of heaven knows and observes whatever we think within ourselves, and we are accountable to him for it; he is both a discerner and judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart. We mistake if we imagine thoughts are hid, and thoughts are free. Let us here observe,

First. What his cares and concerns were. When he saw an extraordinary crop upon his ground, instead of thanking God for it, or rejoicing in the opportunity it would give him of doing the more good, he afflicts himself with this thought, "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" He speaks as one at a loss, and full of perplexity. "What shall I do now?" The poorest beggar in the country, that did not know where to have a meal's meat, could not have said a more anxious word. Disquieting care is the common fruit of an abundance of this world, and the common fault of those that have abundance. The more men have, the more perplexity they have with it, and the more solicitous they are to keep what they have, and to add to it, how to spare, and how to spend; so that even the abundance of the rich will not suffer them to sleep, for thinking what they shall do with what they have, and how they shall dispose of it. The rich man seems to speak it with a sigh, "what shall I do?" And if you ask, Why, what is the matter? truly he has abundance of wealth, and wants a place to put it in; that is all.

Secondly. What his projects and purposes were, which were the result of his cares, and were indeed absurd and foolish like them; ver. 18, "This will I do," and it is the wisest course I can take, "I will pull down my barns," for they are too little, "and I will build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods," and then I shall be at ease. Now here, 1st. It was folly for him to call the fruits of his ground, his fruits, and his goods; he seems to lay a pleasing emphasis upon that, "my fruits, and my goods," whereas what we have is but lent us for our use, the property is still in God; we are but stewards of our Lord's goods, tenants at will of our Lord's land. It is my corn, saith God, and my wine, *Hos. ii. 8, 9*. 2nd. It was folly for him to hoard up what he had, and then to think it well bestowed. There will I bestow it all; as if none must be bestowed upon the poor, none upon his family, none upon the Levite and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, but all in the great barn. 3rd. It was folly for him to let his mind rise with his condition; when his ground brought forth more plentifully than usual, then to talk of bigger barns, as if the next year must needs be as fruitful as this, and much more abundant; whereas the barn might be as much too big the next year as it was too little this. Years of famine commonly follow years of plenty, as they did in Egypt; and therefore he had better to have stacked some of his corn this once. 4th. It was folly for him to think to ease his care by building new barns, for the building of them would but increase his care; those know that, who know any thing of the spirit of building. The way that God prescribes for the cure of inordinate care is certainly successful, but the way of the world doth but increase

it. And besides, when he had done this, there were other cares would still attend him; the greater the barns, still the greater the cares, *Ecccl. v. 10*. 5th. It was folly for him to contrive and resolve all this absolutely, and without reserve. "This I will do, I will pull down my barns, and I will build greater," yea, that I will,—without so much as that necessary proviso, "If the Lord will, I shall live," *Jas. iv. 13, 14*. Peremptory projects are foolish projects, for our times are in God's hand, and not in our own; and we do not so much as "know what shall be on the morrow."

Thirdly. What his pleasing hopes and expectations were, when he had made good those projects: then "I will say to my soul," upon the credit of this security, whether God say it or no, "Soul," mark what I say, "thou hast much goods laid up for many years," in these barns, now "take thine ease," enjoy thyself, "eat, drink, and be merry," ver. 19; and here also appears his folly, as much in the enjoyment of his wealth as in the pursuit of it. 1st. It was folly for him to put off his comfort in his abundance till he had compassed his projects concerning it. When he has built bigger barns and filled them, which will be a work of time, then he will take his ease; and might he not as well have done that now? Grotius here quotes the story of Pyrrhus, that was projecting to make himself master of Sicily, Africa, and other places, in the prosecution of his victories. "Well," saith his friend Cineas, "and what must we do then?" *Postea vivemus*, saith he, "Then we shall live," *At hoc jam licet*, saith Cineas, "We may live now, if we please." 2nd. It was folly for him to be confident that his goods were "laid up for many years;" as if his bigger barns would be safer than those he had; whereas in an hour's time they might be burnt to the ground, perhaps by lightning, which there is no defence against, and all that was laid up in them. A few years may make a great change: moth and rust may corrupt, or thieves break through and steal. 3rd. It was folly for him to count upon certain ease, when he had laid up abundance of the wealth of this world; whereas there are many things that may make people uneasy in the midst of their greatest abundance; one dead fly may spoil a whole pot of precious ointment; and one thorn a whole bed of down. Pain and sickness of body, disagreeableness of relations, and especially a guilty conscience, may rob a man of his ease that has never so much of the wealth of this world. 4th. It was folly for him to think of making no other use of his plenty, but to eat and drink and to be merry; to indulge the flesh, and gratify the sensual appetite, without any thought of doing good to others, and being put thereby into a better capacity of serving God and his generation; as if we did live to eat, and not eat to live, and the happiness of man consisted in nothing else but in having all the gratifications of sense wound up to the height of pleasurable. 5th. It was the greatest folly of all to say all this to his soul. If he had said, "Body, take thine ease, for thou hast goods laid up for many years," there had been sense in it; but the soul, considered as an immortal spirit, separable from the body, was no way interested in a barn full of corn, or a bag full of gold. If he had had the soul of a swine, he might have blessed it with the satisfaction of eating and drinking; but what is this to the soul of a man, that has exigencies and desires which these things will be no ways suited to? It is the great absurdity which the children of this world are guilty of, that they portion their souls in the wealth of the world and the pleasures of sense.

3rd. Here is God's sentence upon all this; and we are sure that his judgment is according to truth. He said to himself, said to his soul, "Take thine ease;" and if God had said so too, the man had been happy, as his Spirit witnesseth with the spirit of believers, to make them easy; but God said quite otherwise; and by his judgment of us we must stand or fall, not by ours of ourselves, *2 Cor. x*. His neighbours blessed him, *Ps. x. 3*; praised him, as doing well for himself, *Ps. xlix. 18*; but God said he did ill for himself, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee," ver. 20. "God said to him," that is, decreed this concerning him, and let him know it, either by his conscience or by some awakening providence, or rather by both together. This was said when he was in the fulness of his sufficiency, *Job xx. 22*, when his eyes were held waking upon his bed with his cares and contrivances about enlarging his barns, not by adding a bay or two more of building to them, which might serve to answer the end, but by pulling them down and building greater, which was requisite to please his fancy; when he was forecasting this, and had brought it to an issue, and then lulled himself asleep again, with a pleasing dream of many years' enjoyment of his present improvements, then God said this to him. Thus Belshazzar was struck with terror, by the handwriting on the wall, in the midst of his jollity. Now observe what God said. First. The character he gave him, "Thou fool," thou Nabal, alluding to the story of Nabal, that fool; "Nabal is his name, and folly is with him," whose heart was struck dead as a stone, when he was regaling himself in the abundance of his provision for his sheep-shearers. Note, Carnal worldlings are fools, and the day is coming when God will call them by their own name, "thou fool," and they will call themselves so. Secondly. The sentence he passed upon him, a sentence of death: "This night thy soul shall be required of thee," they shall require thy soul; so the words are, and "then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" He thought he had goods that should be his many years, but he must part from them this night; he thought he should enjoy them himself, but he must leave them to he knows not who. Note, The death of carnal worldlings is miserable in itself, and terrible to them. 1st. It is a force, an arrest; it is the requiring of the soul, that soul that thou art making such a fool of; what hast thou to do with a soul, that canst use it no better? "Thy soul shall be required;" that intimates that he is loath to part with it. A good man, that has taken his heart off from this world, cheerfully resigns his soul at death, and gives it up; but a worldly man has it torn from him with violence, it is a terror to him to think of leaving this world. "They shall require thy soul;" God shall require it; that is, he shall require an account of it; Man, woman, what hast thou done with thy soul? give an account of that stewardship. "They shall," that is, evil angels, as the messengers of God's justice. As good angels receive gracious souls, to carry them to their joy, so evil angels receive wicked souls, to carry them to the place of torment; they shall require it, as a guilty soul, to be punished. The devil requires the soul as his own, for it did in effect give itself to him. 2nd. It is a surprise, an unexpected force. It is in the night, and terrors in the night are most terrible. The time of death is day-time to a good man, it is his morning; but it is night to a worldling, a dark night, he lies down in sorrow. It is "this night," this present night, without delay; there is no giving bail, or begging day; this pleasant night, when thou art promising thyself many years to come, now thou must die and go to judgment; thou art entertaining thyself with the fancy of many a merry day, and merry night, and merry feast, but, in the midst of all, here is an end of all, *Isa. xxi. 4*. 3rd. It is the leaving of all those things behind which they have provided, which they have laboured for, and prepared for hereafter, with abundance of toil and care. All that which they have placed their happiness in, and built their hope upon, and raised their expectations from, they must leave behind; their pomp shall not descend after them, *Ps. xlix. 17*; but they shall go as naked out of the world as they came into it; and they shall have no benefit at all by what they have hoarded up, either in death, in judgment, or in their everlasting state. 4th. It is leaving them to they know not who: "then whose shall those things be?" Not thine, to be sure; and thou knowest not

constructed edifices. It does not, however, follow that they had altogether relinquished the older and still common custom of depositing the grain in subterranean store-houses."

xii. 24. In illustration of this verse, some expositors quote the following passages from the Hebrew rabbinical writings. In the Mishnah, Rabbi Simeon Ben Eleazar says, "Did you ever see a beast or a fowl that had a trade? but they are fed without trouble." On which the Gemara says, "Did you ever see a lion bearing burdens? a hart

gathering summer fruits? a fox a money-changer? or a wolf selling pots? and yet they are nourished without labour. And wherefore are they created? to serve me; and I am created to serve my Maker. And lo, these things have in them an argument; for if these, which are created to serve me in this manner, are supported without trouble, I, who am created to serve my Maker, is it not fit that I should be supplied without trouble? And what is the reason that I am supplied with trouble? My sins."

what they will prove for whom thou didst design them, thy children and relations; whether they will be wise or fools, *Ecc.* ii. 18, 19, whether such as will bless thy memory or curse it, be a credit to thy family, or a blemish; do good or hurt with what thou leavest them, keep it or spend it; nay, thou knowest not but those for whom thou dost design it, may be prevented from the enjoyment of it, and it may be turned to somebody else thou little thinkest of. Nay, though thou knowest to whom thou leavest it, thou knowest not to whom they will leave it, nor into whose hand it will come at last. If many a man could have foreseen to whom his house would have come after his death, he would rather have burnt it than beautified it. 5th. It is a demonstration of his folly. Carnal worldlings are fools while they live; "this their way is their folly," *Ps.* xlix. 13, but their folly is made most evident when they die, "at his end he shall be a fool," *Jer.* xvii. 11; for then it will appear he took pains to lay up treasure in a world he was hastening from, but took no care to lay it up in the world he was hastening to.

Lastly. Here is the reddition of this parable, ver. 21: "so is he," such a fool, a fool in God's judgment, a fool upon record, "that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God." This is the way, and this the end, of such a man. Observe here,

1. The description of a worldly man; he "lays up treasure for himself," for the body, for the world; for himself, in opposition to God, for that self that is to be denied. 1st. It is his error that he counts his flesh himself, as if the body were the man. If self be rightly stated and understood, it is only the true Christian that lays up treasure for himself, and is wise for himself, *Pr.* ix. 12. 2nd. It is his error, that he makes it his business to lay up for the flesh, which he calls laying up for himself. All his labour is for his mouth, *Ecc.* vi. 7, making provision for the flesh. 3rd. It is his error, that he counts those things his treasure which are thus laid up for the world, and the body, and the life that now is; they are the wealth he trusts to and spends upon, and lets out his affections towards. 4th. The greatest error of all is, that he is in no care to be rich towards God, rich in the account of God, whose accounting us rich makes us so, *Rev.* ii. 9; rich in the things of God, rich in faith, *Jas.* ii. 5; rich in good works, in the fruits of righteousness, *1 Tim.* vi. 18; rich in graces and comforts and spiritual gifts. Many that have abundance of this world, are wholly destitute of that which will enrich their souls, which will make them rich towards God, rich for eternity.

2. The folly and misery of a worldly man; "so is he." Our Lord Jesus Christ, who knows what the end of things will be, has here told us what his end will be. Note, It is the unspeakable folly of the most of men to mind and pursue the wealth of this world more than the wealth of the other world, that which is for the body only and for time, more than that which is for the soul and eternity.

22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. 23 The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. 24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? 25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? 26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? 27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? 29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. 31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. 32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 35 Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; 36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto

him immediately. 37 Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. 38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. 39 And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. 40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Our Lord Jesus is here inculcating some needful, useful lessons upon his disciples, which he had before taught them, and had occasion afterwards to press upon them; for they needed to have precept upon precept, and line upon line; "therefore," because there are so many that are ruined by covetousness and an inordinate affection to the wealth of this world, "I say unto you," my disciples, take heed of it; "thou, O man of God, flee these things," as well as thou, O man of the world, *1 Tim.* vi. 11.

First. He chargeth them not to afflict themselves with disquieting, perplexing cares about the necessary supports of life, ver. 22: "Take no thought for your life." In the foregoing parable he had given us warning against that branch of covetousness which rich people are most in danger of, and that is a sensual complacency in the abundance of this world's goods. Now his disciples might think they were in no danger of that, for they had no plenty or variety to glory in; and therefore he here warns them against another branch of covetousness, which they are most in temptation to, that have but a little of this world, which was the case of the disciples at best, and much more now they had left all to follow Christ; and that was an anxious solicitude about the necessary supports of life. "Take no thought for your life," either for the preservation of it, if it be in danger, or for the provision that is to be made for it, either of food or clothing, "what ye shall eat, or what ye shall put on." This is the caution he had largely insisted upon, *Mat.* vi. 25, &c.; and the arguments here used are much the same, designed for our encouragement to cast all our care upon God, which is the right way to ease ourselves of it. Consider then,

1. God, that has done the greater for us, may be depended upon to do the lesser; he hath, without any care or forecast of our own, given us life and a body, and therefore we may cheerfully leave it to him to provide meat for the support of that life, and raiment for the defence of that body.

2. God, that provides for the inferior creatures, may be depended upon to provide for good Christians. Trust God for meat, for he feeds the ravens; "they neither sow nor reap," they take neither care nor pains beforehand to provide for themselves, and yet they are fed, and never perish for want. Now consider "how much better ye are than the fowls," than the ravens. Trust God for clothing, for he clothes the lilies, ver. 26, 28; they make no preparation for their own clothing, "they toil not, they spin not;" the root in the ground is a naked thing, and without ornament, and yet as the flower grows up it appears wonderfully beautified. Now, if God has so clothed the flowers, which are fading, perishing things, "shall he not much more clothe you" with such clothing as is fit for you, and with clothing suited to your nature, as theirs is? When God fed Israel with manna in the wilderness, he also took care for their clothing; for though he did not furnish them with new clothes, yet (which came all to one) he provided that those they had should not wax old upon them, *Deu.* viii. 4. Thus will he clothe his spiritual Israel, but then let not them be of little faith. Note, Our inordinate cares are owing to the weakness of our faith; for a powerful, practical belief of the all-sufficiency of God, his covenant relation to us as a Father, and especially his precious promises, relating both to this life and that to come, would be mighty, through God, the pulling down of the strongholds of these disquieting, perplexing imaginations.

3. Our cares are fruitless, and vain, and insignificant; and therefore it is folly to indulge them; they will not gain us our wishes, and therefore ought not to hinder our repose; ver. 25, "Which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?" no, nor one inch; can add to his age one year? no, nor one hour. Now, "if ye be not able to do that which is least," if it be not in your power to alter your statures, why should you perplex yourselves about other things, that are as much out of your power, and about which it is as necessary that we refer ourselves to the providence of God? Note, As in our stature, so in our state, it is our wisdom to take it as it is, and make the best of it; for fretting and vexing, carking and caring, will not mend it.

4. An inordinate, solicitous pursuit of the things of this world, even necessary things, doth very ill become the disciples of Christ, ver. 29, 30. Whatever others do, "seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink;" do not ye afflict yourselves with perplexing cares, nor weary yourselves with constant toils; do not ye hurry yourselves hither and thither with inquiries what you shall eat or drink, as David's enemies, that wandered up and down for meat, *Ps.* lix. 15; or as the eagle that seeks the prey afar off, *Job* xxxix. 29. Let not the disciples of Christ thus seek their food, but ask it of God, day by day; let not them be "of doubtful mind," *μη μετεωρίζεσθε*, "be not as meteors in the air," that are blown hither and thither with every wind; do not, like them, rise and fall, but maintain a consistency with yourselves; be even and steady, and have your hearts fixed; "live not in careful suspense;" let not your minds be continually perplexed between hope and fear, ever upon the rack. Let not the children of God make themselves uneasy; for,

1st. This is to make themselves like the children of this world; "all these things do the nations of the world seek after," ver. 30. They that take care for the body only, and not for the soul—for this world only, and not for the other, look no farther than what they shall eat and drink; and, having no all-sufficient God to seek to, and confide in, they burden themselves with anxious cares about those things; but it ill becomes you to do so; you, who are called out of the world, ought not to be thus conformed to the world, and to "walk in the way of this people," *Isa.* viii. 11, 12. When inordinate cares prevail over us, we should think, "What am I? a Christian or a heathen? baptized or not baptized? If a Christian, if baptized, shall I rank myself with Gentiles, and join with them in their pursuits?"

xii. 25. The word rendered "stature" may mean age, or practically lifetime.

xii. 31. A better reading of this verse is, "But seek ye his kingdom (your Father's); and these things shall be added unto you."

xii. 32. "Your Father's good pleasure" refers not to a sovereign decree, but to the gracious will and favour of God to his children.

xii. 34. Bishop Pearce quotes a passage from Plautus to this effect: "I am here, but my mind is at home, that is, with my money."

xii. 37. On "he shall gird himself," &c., Adam Clarke says, "Alluding to the long garments which were worn in Eastern countries, and which, in travelling and serving, were tucked up in their belts." He shows, by a reference to Horace, that among the Romans the host himself sometimes performed the office of waiter, having girded up his garments for the purpose. Here, however, the master serves the servants.

xii. 41. The occurrence of this verse shows that the discourse is

2nd. It is needless for them to disquiet themselves with care about the necessary supports of life, for they have a Father in heaven who doth and will take care for them; "your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things," and considers it, and "will supply your needs according to his riches in glory," for he is your Father, who made you subject to these necessities, and therefore will suit his compassions to them; your Father, who maintains you, educates you, and designs an inheritance for you, and therefore will take care that you want no good thing.

3rd. They have better things to mind and pursue, ver. 31: "but rather seek ye the kingdom of God," and mind that, you, my disciples, that are to "preach the kingdom of God." Let your hearts be upon your work, and your great care how to do that well, and that will effectually divert your thoughts from inordinate care about the things of the world. And let all that have souls to save, "seek the kingdom of God," in which only they can be safe; seek admission into it, seek advancement in it; seek the kingdom of grace, to be subjects in that; the kingdom of glory, to be princes in that; and then "all these things shall be added to you;" mind the affairs of your souls with diligence and care, and then trust God with all your other affairs.

4th. They have better things to expect and hope for, ver. 32: "Fear not, little flock." For the banishing of inordinate cares, it is necessary that fears should be suppressed; when we frighten ourselves with an apprehension of evil to come, we put ourselves upon the stretch of care how to avoid it; when, after all, perhaps it is but the creature of our own imagination; therefore, "fear not, little flock," but hope to the end, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." This comfortable word we had not in *Matthew*. Note, *First*. Christ's flock in this world is a little flock, his sheep are but few and feeble. The church is as Israel, *1 Kin. xx. 27*, a small spot, compared with the wilderness of this world, as Israel, *1 Kin. xx. 27*, a small spot, compared with the wilderness of this world, as the Syrians filled the country. *Secondly*. Though it be a little flock, quite over numbered, and therefore in danger of being overpowered by its enemies, yet it is the will of Christ that they should not be afraid. "Fear not, little flock," but see yourselves safe under the protection and conduct of the great and good Shepherd, and lie easy. *Thirdly*. God has a kingdom in store for all that belong to Christ's little flock; a crown of glory, *1 Pet. v. 4*; a throne of power, *Rev. iii. 21*; unsearchable riches, far exceeding the peculiar treasures of kings and provinces. The sheep on the right hand are called to come and inherit the kingdom; it is theirs for ever; a kingdom for each. *Fourthly*. The kingdom is given according to the good pleasure of the Father; it is your Father's good pleasure; it is given not of debt, but of grace—free grace, sovereign grace; "even so, Father, because it seemed good unto thee." The kingdom is his, and may he not do what he will with his own? *Fifthly*. The believing hopes and prospects of the kingdom should silence and suppress the fears of Christ's little flock in this world. Fear no trouble; for though it should come, it shall not come between you and the kingdom: that is sure; it is near: that is not an evil worth trembling at the thought of, which cannot separate us from the love of God. Fear not the want of any thing that is good for you; for if it be "your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," you need not question but he will bear your charges thither.

Secondly. He chargeth them to make sure work for their souls, by laying up their treasure in heaven, ver. 33, 34. And those who have done this may be very easy as to all the events of time.

1. Sit loose to this world, and to all your possessions in it: "sell that ye have, and give alms;" that is, rather than want wherewith to relieve those that are truly necessitous, sell that which you have superfluous, all that you can spare from the support of yourselves and families, and give it to the poor; "sell that ye have," if ye find it a hindrance from, or incumbrance in, the service of Christ. Do not think yourselves undone, if, by being fined, imprisoned, or banished for the testimony of Jesus, you be forced to sell your estates, though they be the inheritance of your fathers. Do not sell to hoard up the money, or because you can make more of it by usury, but sell and give alms; and what is given in alms in a right manner is put out to the best interest, upon the best security.

2. Set your hearts upon the other world, and your expectations from that world. "Provide yourselves bags that wax not old," that wax not empty, not of gold, but of grace in the heart, and good works in the life: these are bags that will last; grace will go with us into another world, for it is woven into the soul, and our good works will follow us, for God is not unrighteous to forget them. These will be treasures in heaven that will enrich us to eternity. 1st. It is treasure that will not be exhausted; we may spend upon it to eternity, and it will not be at all the less; there is no danger of seeing the bottom of it. 2nd. It is treasure that we are in no danger of being robbed of, for no thief approacheth near it; what is laid up in heaven is out of the reach of enemies. 3rd. It is treasure that will not spoil with keeping, no more than it will waste with spending; the moth doth not corrupt, as it doth our garments we now wear. Now by this it doth appear that we have laid up our treasure in heaven, if our hearts be there while we are here, ver. 34. If we think much of heaven, and keep our eye upon it; if we quicken ourselves with the hopes of it, and keep ourselves in awe with the fear of falling short of it. But if your hearts be set upon the earth, and the things of it, it is to be feared you have your treasure and portion in it, and are undone when you leave it.

Thirdly. He chargeth them to get ready, and to keep in a readiness for Christ's coming; when all those who have laid up their treasure in heaven shall enter upon the enjoyment of it, ver. 35, &c.

1. Christ is our Master, and we are his servants; not only working servants, but waiting servants, servants that are to do him honour, in waiting on him, and attending his motions. "If any man serve me, let him follow me;" follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes. But that is not all, they must do him honour in waiting for him, and expecting his return; we must be as men that wait for their lord, that sit up late while he stays out late, to be ready to receive him.

2. Christ our Master, though now gone from us, will return again, return from the wedding, from solemnizing the nuptials abroad, to complete them at home. Christ's servants are now in a state of expectation, looking for their Master's glorious appearing, and doing every thing with an eye to that, and in order to that. He will come to take cognizance of his servants; and that being a critical day, they shall either stay with him or be turned out of doors, according as they are found in that day.

3. The time of our Master's return is uncertain; it will be in the night; it will be far in the night, when he has long deferred his coming, and when many have done looking for him; in the second watch, just before midnight; or in the third watch, next after midnight, ver. 38. His coming to us at our death is uncertain, and to many it will be a great surprise; for, ver. 40, "the Son of man cometh at an hour that ye think not," without giving notice beforehand. This speaks not only the uncertainty of the time of his coming, but the prevailing security of the greatest part of men, that are unthinking, and altogether regardless of the notices given them; so that, whenever he comes, it is at "an hour that they think not."

4. That which he expects and requires from his servants is, that they be "ready to open to him immediately," whenever he comes, ver. 36; that is, that

they be in a frame fit to receive him, or rather to be received by him; that they be found, as his servants, in the posture that becomes them, with their loins girded about, alluding to servants that are ready to go where their master sends them, and do what their master bids them, having their long garments tucked up; which otherwise would hang about them, and hinder them; and their lights burning, with which to light their master into this house, and up to his chamber.

5. Those servants will be happy who are found ready and in a good frame when their Lord comes, ver. 37: "Blessed are those servants" who, after having waited long, continue in a waiting frame, till the hour that their Lord comes, and are then found awake, and aware of his first approach, of his first knock; and again, ver. 38, "blessed are those servants," for then will be the time of their preferment. And here is such an instance of honour done them as is scarce to be found among men; he "shall make them sit down to meat, and serve them;" for the bridegroom to wait upon his bride at table is not uncommon, but to wait upon his servants is not the manner of men; yet Jesus Christ was among his disciples as one that served, and did once, to shew his condescension, gird himself and serve them, when he washed their feet, *Jno. xiii. 4, 5*; and it signified the joy with which they shall be received into the other world by the Lord Jesus, who is gone before to prepare for them, and has told them that his Father will honour them, *Jno. xii. 26*.

6. We are therefore kept at uncertainty concerning the precise time of his coming, that we may be always ready; for it is no thanks to a man to be ready for an attack if he know beforehand just the time when it will be made. "The Goodman of the house, if he had known what hour the thief would come," though he were never so careless a man, yet "would have watched," and have frightened away the thieves, ver. 39. But we do not know at what hour the alarm will be given us, and therefore are concerned to watch at all times, and never to be off our guard. Or this may intimate the miserable ease of those who are careless and unbelieving in this great matter. If the Goodman of the house had notice of his danger of being robbed such a night, he would have sat up and saved his house; but we have notice of the day of the Lord's coming, as a thief in the night, to the confusion and ruin of all secure sinners, and yet do not thus watch. If men will take such care of their houses, O let us be thus wise for our souls; "be ye therefore ready also," as ready as the Goodman of the house would be, if he knew "what hour the thief would come."

41 Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? 42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. 45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; 46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. 47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. 49 I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? 50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! 51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: 52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. 53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

Here is, *I. Peter's question*, which he put to Christ upon occasion of the foregoing parable, ver. 41: "Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us," that are thy constant followers, to us that are ministers, "or also to all" that come to

a connected one, and not a collection of scattered sayings of our Lord.

xii. 45. The expression "but and if" means "but if," and is probably a more modern form of the ancient phrase "but an' if."

xii. 46. For "cut him in sunder" the margin has "or, cut him off." We prefer to understand the words of very severe punishment, the form of which is not defined. That capital punishment is not intended has been inferred from the subsequent position of the

culprit, who will have his place with the unbelievers, or rather, the unfaithful, "the hypocrites," as we have it in *Matt. xxiv. 51*.

xii. 48. A man's accountability is the measure of his responsibility, and both are determined by the trust and confidence reposed in him. The idea is doubtless here the same as in the parable of the talents. Judgment will be regulated by works, and works estimated by opportunities.

xii. 49. The Greek of this verse is variously explained in the

be taught by thee, to all the hearers, and in them to all Christians? Peter was now, as often, spokesman for the disciples. We have reason to bless God that there are some such forward men, that have a gift of utterance; and let those that are such take heed of being proud. Now Peter desires Christ to explain himself, and to direct the arrow of the foregoing parable to the mark he intended. He calls it a parable, because it was not only figurative, but weighty, solid, and instructive. 'Lord,' saith Peter, 'was it intended for us, or for all?' To this Christ gives a direct answer, *Mat. xiii. 6*, "What I say unto you I say unto all." Yet here he seems to shew that the apostles were primarily concerned in it. Note, We are all concerned to take to ourselves what Christ in his word designs for us, and to inquire accordingly concerning it. "Speakest thou this to us?"—"to me?" Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears. Dost this word belong to me, speak it to my heart.

II. *Christ's reply to this question*, directed to Peter and the rest of the disciples. If what Christ had said before did not so peculiarly concern them, but in common with other Christians, who must all watch and pray for Christ's coming, as his servants; yet this that follows is peculiarly adapted to ministers, who are the stewards in Christ's house. Now our Lord Jesus here tells them,

First. What was their duty as stewards, and what the trust committed to them. 1. They are made "rulers of God's household," under Christ, whose own the house is. Ministers derive an authority from Christ to preach the Gospel, and to administer the ordinances of Christ, and apply the seals of the covenant of grace. 2. Their business is to give God's children and servants "their portion of meat," that which was proper for them, and allotted to them; convictions and comfort to those to whom they respectively belong; *sum cuique*,—"to every one his own." This is "rightly to divide the word of truth," *2 Tim. ii. 15*. 3. To give it them "in due season," at that time, and in that way, the most suitable to the temper and condition of those that are to be fed; "a word in season to him that is weary." 4. Herein they must approve themselves faithful and wise; faithful to their Master, by whom this great trust is reposed in them, and faithful to their fellow-servants, for whose benefit they are put in trust; and wise to improve an opportunity of doing honour to their Master, and service in the family. Ministers must be both skilful and faithful.

Secondly. What would be their happiness if they approved themselves faithful and wise, ver. 43: "Blessed is that servant," 1. That is doing, and is not idle nor indulgent of his ease; even the rulers of the household must be doing, and make themselves servants of all. 2. That is so doing, doing as he should be, giving them their portion of meat, by public preaching, and personal application. 3. That is found so doing when his Lord comes; that perseveres to the end, notwithstanding the difficulties he may meet with in the way. Now his happiness is illustrated by the performance of a steward that has approved himself within a lower and narrower degree of service; he shall be preferred to a larger and higher, ver. 44: "he will make him ruler over all that he has," which was Joseph's preferment in Pharaoh's court. Note, Ministers that obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful, shall obtain farther mercy to be abundantly rewarded for their faithfulness in the day of the Lord.

Thirdly. What a dreadful reckoning there would be, if they were treacherous and unfaithful, ver. 45, 46. If that servant began to be quarrelsome and profane, he shall be called to an account, and severely punished. We had all this before in *Matthew*, and therefore shall here only observe, 1. Our looking upon Christ's second coming as a thing at a distance, is the cause of all those irregularities which render the thought of it terrible to us; "he saith in his heart, My lord delays his coming." Christ's patience is very often misinterpreted his delay, to the discouragement of his people, and the encouragement of his enemies. 2. The persecutors of God's people are commonly abandoned to security and sensuality; "they beat their fellow-servants," and then "eat and drink with the drunken," altogether unconcerned either at their own sin or their brethren's sufferings; as the king and Haman, that sat down to drink when the city Shusan was perplexed. Thus they drank to drown the clamours of their own consciences, and baffle them, which otherwise would fly in their faces. 3. Death and judgment will be very terrible to all wicked people, but especially to wicked ministers; it will be a surprise to them, "at an hour when they are not aware," it will be the determining of them to endless misery, they shall be cut in sunder, and have their portion assigned them with the unbelievers.

Fourthly. What an aggravation it would be of their sin and punishment, that they knew their duty, and did not do it, ver. 47, 48. For "that servant that knew his lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes," shall fall under a sorer punishment; and "he that knew not shall be beaten with few stripes," his punishment shall, in consideration of that, be mitigated. Here seems to be an allusion to the law, which made a distinction between sins committed through ignorance, and presumptuous sins, *Lev. v. 15*; *Num. xv. 29, 30*; as also to another law, concerning the number of stripes given to a malefactor, to be according to the nature of the crime, *Deu. xxv. 2*. Now, 1. Ignorance of our duty is an extenuation of sin. He "that knew not his lord's will," through carelessness and neglect, and his not having such opportunities as some others had of coming to the knowledge of it, and "did things worthy of stripes," he shall "be beaten," because he might have known his duty better, but "with few stripes," his ignorance excuseth in part, but not in whole. Thus, through ignorance, the Jews put Christ to death, *Acts iii. 17*; *1 Cor. ii. 8*; and Christ pleaded that ignorance in their excuse, "they know not what they do." 2. The knowledge of our duty is an aggravation of our sin: "That servant that knew his lord's will," and yet did his own will, "shall be beaten with many stripes." God will justly inflict more upon him for abusing the means of knowledge he afforded him, which others would have made a better use of, and because it argues a great degree of wilfulness and contempt to sin against knowledge; of how much sorer punishment then shall they be thought worthy, besides the many stripes that their own consciences will give them? Son, remember! Here is a good reason for this added; "to whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required," especially when it is committed as a trust he is to account for. Those that have greater capacities of mind than others, more knowledge and learning, more acquaintance and converse with the Scriptures, to them much is given, and their account will be accordingly.

III. *A farther discourse concerning his own sufferings*, which he expected, and concerning the sufferings of his followers, which he would have them also to live in expectation of. In general, ver. 49, "I am come to send fire on the earth;" by which some understand the preaching of the Gospel, and the pouring out of the Spirit, holy fire; this Christ came to send with a commission to refine the world, to purge away its dross, to burn up its chaff; and it was already kindled; the Gospel was begun to be preached. Some prefaces there were to the pouring out of the Spirit; Christ baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; this Spirit descended in fiery tongues; but, by what follows, it seems rather to be understood of the fire of persecution: Christ is not the author of it, as it is the sin of the incendiaries, the persecutors; but he permits it; nay, he commissions it, as a refining fire for the trial of the persecuted. This fire was already kindled in the enmity of the carnal Jews to Christ and his

followers; "what will I, if it be already kindled?"—"what thou doest, do quickly." "If it be already kindled, what will I?" Shall I wait the quenching of it? No, for it must fasten upon myself, and upon all, and glory will redound to God from it.

First. He must himself suffer many things; he must pass through this fire that was already kindled, ver. 50: "I have a baptism to be baptized with." Afflictions are compared both to fire and water, *Ps. lxxi. 12*; *lxxix. 1, 2*; Christ's sufferings were both; he calls them a baptism, *Mat. xx. 22*; for he was watered or sprinkled with them, as Israel was baptized in the cloud; and dipped into them, as Israel was baptized in the sea, *1 Cor. x. 2*. He must be sprinkled with his own blood, and with the blood of his enemies, *Isa. lixiii. 3*. See here, 1. Christ's foresight of his sufferings; he knew what he was to undergo, and the necessity of undergoing it: "I am to be baptized with a baptism;" he calls his sufferings by a name that mitigates them, it is a baptism, not a deluge; I must be dipped in them, not drowned in them; and by a name that sanctifies them, for baptism is a sacred rite. Christ in his sufferings devoted himself to his Father's honour, and consecrated himself a Priest for evermore, *Heb. vii. 27, 28*. 2. Christ's forwardness to his sufferings: "How am I straitened till it be accomplished?" He doth long for the time when he should suffer and die, having an eye to the glorious issue of his sufferings; it is an allusion to a woman in travail, that is pained to be delivered, and welcomes her pains, because they hasten the birth of her child, and wishes them sharp and strong, that the work may be cut short. Christ's sufferings were the travail of his soul, which he cheerfully underwent, in hope that he should by them see his seed, *Isa. liii. 10, 11*. So much was his heart upon the redemption and salvation of man.

Secondly. He tells those about him that they also must bear with hardships and difficulties, ver. 51: "Suppose ye that I came to give peace on earth?" that is, to give you a peaceable possession of the earth, and outward prosperity on the earth? It is intimated that they were ready to entertain such a thought as this; nay, that they went upon this supposition, that the Gospel would meet with a universal welcome, that people would unanimously embrace it, and would therefore study to make the preachers of it easy and great; that Christ, if he did not give them pomp and power, would at least give them peace; and herein they were encouraged by divers passages of the Old Testament, which speak of the peace of the Messiah's kingdom, which they were willing to understand of external peace. But, saith Christ, you will be mistaken, the event will declare the contrary; and therefore do not flatter yourselves into a fool's paradise. Ye will find,

1. That the effect of the preaching of the Gospel will be division. Not but that the design of the Gospel and its proper tendency is to unite the children of men to one another, to knit them together in holy love; and if all would receive it, this would be the effect of it: but there being multitudes that not only will not receive it, but oppose it, and have their corruptions exasperated by it, and are enraged at those that do receive it; it proves, though not the cause, yet the occasion of division: "While the strong man armed kept his palace," in the Gentile world, "his goods were at peace," all was quiet, for all went one way; the sects of philosophers agreed well enough; so did the worshippers of different deities; but when the Gospel was preached, and man were enlightened by it, and turned from the power of Satan to God, then there was a disturbance, a noise and a shaking, *Eze. xxxvii. 7*. Some distinguished themselves by their embracing the Gospel, and others were angry that they did so. Yea, and among them that received the Gospel, there would be different sentiments in lesser things, which would occasion division; and Christ permits it, for holy ends, *1 Cor. xi. 19*; that Christians may learn and practise mutual forbearance, *Rom. xiv. 1, 2*.

2. That this division will reach into private families, and the preaching of the Gospel will give occasion for discord among the nearest relations, ver. 53: "The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father;" when the one turns Christian, and the other doth not; for that which doth turn Christian will be zealous by arguments and endearments to turn the other too, *1 Cor. vii. 16*; as soon as ever Paul was converted, he disputed *Acts ix. 29*. And that which continues in unbelief will be provoked, and will hate and persecute that which by his faith and obedience witnesseth against and condemneth his unbelief and disobedience. A spirit of bigotry and persecution will break through the strongest bonds of relation and natural affection: see *Mat. x. 34*; *xxiv. 7*. Even mothers and daughters fall out about religion; and those that believe not, are so violent and outrageous that they are ready to deliver up into the hands of the bloody persecutors those that believe, though otherwise very near and dear to them. We find in the *Acts* that wherever the Gospel came, persecution was angry that it was "every where spoken against," and there was "no small stir about that way." Therefore let not the disciples of Christ promise themselves "peace upon earth," for they are sent forth "as sheep in the midst of wolves."

54 And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. 55 And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. 56 Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? 57 Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? 58 When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. 59 I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.

Having given his disciples their lesson in the foregoing verses, here Christ turns to the people and gives them theirs, ver. 54: "He said so to the people:" he preached *ad populum*,—"to the people," as well as *ad clero*,—"to the clergy;" and in general he would have them be as wise in the affairs of their souls as they are in their outward affairs. Two things he instanteth in:

second clause. Grotius has, "What is it that I wish? would that it were already kindled!" He regards the fire as that of persecution, which is to try and purify the flock of Christ. Some of the best modern critics adopt substantially his translation. But what fire is meant? Some say, not persecution, but contention; others, the power of the Holy Spirit. In favour of the latter view an appeal is made to verse 50, *Matt. iii. 11*, *Acts ii. 1—3*.

xii. 54. Dr. Thomson, describing a storm as likely to continue in

the Holy Land, writes, "The wind is full and strong from the proper rain quarter, the south-west, and while it holds to that point the storm will continue. It will not clear until the wind shifts round towards the north, which it is often slow to do, and will not now till the air becomes colder, and Lebanon is covered deep with snow. As in ancient times, the west wind brings rain, and the north drives it away." This fact is further illustrated by *1 Kings xviii. 44*.

xii. 55. By the "south wind" here we are probably to understand

First. *Let them learn to discern the way of God towards them, that they may prepare accordingly.* They were weatherwise, and, by observing the winds and clouds, could foresee when there would be rain, and when there would be hot weather, ver. 54, 55; and they did accordingly, either house their hay and corn, or throw it abroad, and equipped themselves for a journey according as they foresaw the weather would be. Even in the change of the weather God gives warning to us what is coming, and art has improved those notices of nature in weather glasses. These preparations here spoken of, were made by repeated observations upon the chain of causes; from what has been we conjecture what will be. See the benefit of experience; by taking notice, we may come to give notice; whoso is wise will observe and learn. See now,

1. The particulars of the presages: "Ye see a cloud arising out of the west;" the Hebrew would say, "Out of the sea;" perhaps it is at first "no bigger than a man's hand," 1 Kin. xviii. 44; but you say there is a shower in the womb of it, and it proves so. "When ye observe the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat;" for the hot countries of Africa lay not far south from Judea, and it came to pass ordinarily; yet nature has not tied itself to such a track but that sometimes we are out in our prognostics.

2. The inferences from them: ver. 56, "Ye hypocrites," who pretend to be wise, but really are not so, who pretend to expect the Messiah and his kingdom, (for so the generality of the Jews did,) and yet are no way disposed to receive and entertain it—"how is it that ye do not discern this time?" that ye do not discern that, according to the indications given in the Old Testament prophecies, now is the time for the Messiah to appear, and that, according to the marks given of him, I am he? Why are ye not aware that you have now an opportunity, which you will not have long, and which you may never have again, of securing to yourselves an interest in the kingdom of God, and the privileges of that kingdom? Now is the accepted time, now or never. It is the folly and misery of man that he "knows not his time," Eccl. ix. 12. This was the ruin of the men of that generation, that they "knew not the day of their visitation," Lu. xix. 44. But "a wise man's heart discerns time and judgment;" such was the wisdom of the men of Issachar, who "had understanding of the times," 1 Chr. xii. 32. He adds, ver. 57, "Yea, and why even of yourselves," though you had not these loud alarms given you, "judge ye not what is right?" You are not only stupid and regardless in matters that are purely of Divine revelation, and take not the hints which that gives you, but you are so even in the dictates of the very light and law of nature. Christianity has reason and natural conscience on its side; and if men would allow themselves the liberty of judging what is right, they would soon find that all Christ's precepts concerning all things are right; and there is nothing more equitable in itself, nor better becoming us, than to submit to them, and be ruled by them.

Secondly. *Let them hasten to make their peace with God in time, before it be too late,* ver. 58, 59. This we had upon another occasion, Mat. v. 26.

1. We reckon it our wisdom in our temporal affairs to compound with those with whom we cannot contend, to agree with our adversary upon the best terms we can, before the equity be foreclosed, and we be left to the rigour of the law. "When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate," to whom the appeal is made, and knowest that he has an advantage against thee, and thou art in danger of being cast, you know it is the most prudent course to make the matter away between yourselves: "As thou art in the way, give diligence to be delivered from him," to get a discharge, lest judgment be given, and execution awarded according to law. Wise men will not let their quarrels go to an extremity, but accommodate them in time.

2. Let us do thus in the affairs of our souls; we have by sin made God our adversary, have provoked his displeasure against us, and he has both right and might on his side; so that it is to no purpose to think of carrying on the controversy with him, either at bar or in battle. Christ, to whom all judgment is committed, is the magistrate before whom we are hastening to appear; if we stand a trial before him, and insist upon our own justification, the cause will certainly go against us; the judge will deliver us to the officer, the ministers of his justice, and we shall be cast into the prison of hell, and the debt will be exacted to the utmost; though we cannot make a full satisfaction for it, it will be continually demanded, "till the last mite be paid," which will not be to all eternity. Christ's sufferings were short, yet the value of them made them fully satisfactory. In the sufferings of damned sinners, what is wanting in value must be made up in an endless duration. Now, in consideration of this, let us give diligence to be delivered out of the hands of God as an adversary, into his hands as a Father, and this as we are in the way, which has the chief stress laid upon it here. While we are alive we are in the way; and now is our time, by repentance and faith through Christ, (who is the Mediator as well as the Magistrate,) to get the quarrel taken up, while it may be done before it be too late. Thus "was God in Christ reconciling the world to himself, beseeching us to be reconciled." Let us take hold on the arm of the Lord stretched out in this gracious offer, that we may make peace, and we shall make peace, Isa. xxvii. 4, 5, for we cannot walk together till we be agreed.

CHAPTER XIII.

In this chapter we have, I. The good improvement Christ made of a piece of news that was brought him concerning some Galileans that were lately massacred by Pilate, as they were sacrificing in the temple at Jerusalem, ver. 1—5. II. The parable of the fruitless fig-tree, by which we are warned to bring forth fruits meet for that repentance which he had in the foregoing passage called us to, ver. 6—9. III. Christ's healing a poor infirm woman on the sabbath day, and justifying himself in it, ver. 11—17. IV. A repetition of the parables of the grain of mustard seed, and the leaven, ver. 18—22. V. His answer to the question concerning the number of the saved, ver. 23—30. VI. The slight he put upon Herod's malice and menaces, and the doom of Jerusalem read, ver. 31—35.



HERE were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such

things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Here is, First. *Tidings brought to Christ of the death of some Galileans lately;*

"whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices," ver. 1. Let us consider, 1. What this tragical story was: it is briefly related here, and is not met with in any of the historians of those times. Josephus indeed mentions Pilate's killing of some Samaritans, who, under the conduct of a factious leader, were going in a tumultuous manner to mount Gerizim, where the Samaritans' temple was; but we can by no means allow that story to be the same with this. Some think these Galileans were of the faction of Judas Gaulonita, who is called Judas of Galilee, Acts v. 37, who disowned Caesar's authority, and refused to pay tribute to him; or perhaps these, being Galileans, were only suspected by Pilate to be of that faction, and barbarously murdered, because those who were in with that pretender were out of his reach. The Galileans, being Herod's subjects, it is probable this outrage committed upon them by Pilate occasioned the quarrel that was between Herod and Pilate, which we read of ch. xxiii. 15. We are not told what number they were; perhaps but a few, whom Pilate had some particular pique against; and therefore the story is overlooked by Josephus. But the circumstance remarked is, that he mingled their blood with their sacrifices in the court of the temple. Though perhaps they had reason to fear Pilate's malice, yet they would not, under pretence of that fear, keep away from Jerusalem, whither the law obliged them to go up with their sacrifices. Dr. Lightfoot thinks it probable that they were themselves killing their sacrifices, which was allowed; for the priest's work, they said, began with the sprinkling of the blood; and Pilate's officers came upon them by surprise, just at that time, when they were off their guard, (for otherwise the Galileans were mettled men, and generally well armed,) and mingled the blood of the sacrificers with the blood of the sacrifices, as if it had been equally acceptable to God. Neither the holiness of the place nor of the work would be a protection to them from the fury of an unjust judge, that neither feared God nor regarded man. The altar that used to be a sanctuary, and place of shelter, is now become a snare and a trap, a place of danger, of slaughter.

2. Why it was related at this season to our Lord Jesus. 1st. Perhaps merely as a matter of news, which they supposed he had not heard before; and as a thing which they lamented, and believed he would do so too; for the Galileans were their countrymen. Note, Sad providences ought to be observed by us, and the knowledge of them communicated to others, that they and we may be suitably affected with them, and make a good use of them. 2nd. Perhaps it was intended as a confirmation of what Christ had said, in the close of the foregoing chapter, concerning the necessity of making our peace with God in time, before we be delivered to the officer—that is, to death—and so cast into prison, and then it will be too late to make agreements. Now, say they, Master, here is a fresh instance of some that were very suddenly delivered to the officer, that were taken away by death when they little expected it; and therefore we have all need to be ready. Note, It will be of good use to us, both to explain the Word of God, and to enforce it upon ourselves by observing the providences of God. 3rd. Perhaps they would stir him up, being himself of Galilee, and a prophet, and one that had a great interest in that country, to find out a way to revenge the death of these Galileans upon Pilate. If they had any thought of this kind they were quite out, for Christ was now going up to Jerusalem to be delivered into the hands of Pilate, and to have his blood, not mingled with his sacrifice, but itself made a sacrifice. 4th. Perhaps this was told Christ to deter him from going up to Jerusalem to worship, ver. 22, lest he should serve him as he had served these Galileans, and should suggest against him, as probably he had insinuated against those Galileans in vindication of his cruelty, that they came to sacrifice as Absalom did, with a seditious design, under colour of sacrificing to raise rebellion. Now lest Pilate, when his hand was in, should proceed farther, they think it advisable that Christ should for the present keep out of the way. 5th. Christ's answer intimates that they told him this with a spiteful inuendo, that though Pilate was unjust in killing them, yet that without doubt they were secretly ill men, else God would not have permitted Pilate thus barbarously to cut them off. It was very invidious; rather than they would allow them to be martyrs, though they died sacrificing, and perhaps suffered for their devotion, they will, without any colour of proof, suppose them to be malefactors; and it may be for no other reason but because they were not of their party and denomination, differed from them, or had difference with them: this fate of theirs, which was capable not only of a favourable, but an honourable construction, shall be called a just judgment of God upon them, though they know not for what.

Secondly. *Christ's reply to this report;* in which,

1. He seconded it with another story, which, like it, gave an instance of people being taken away by sudden death: it is not long since the tower in Siloam fell, and there were eighteen persons killed and buried in the ruins of it. Dr. Lightfoot's conjecture is, that this tower adjoined to the pool of Siloam, which was the same with the pool of Bethesda, and that it belonged to those porches which were by the pool, in which the impotent folk lay that waited for the stirring of the water, Jno. v. 3; and they who were killed were some of them, or some of those who in this pool used to purify themselves for the temple service, for it was near the temple. Whoever they were, it was a sad story; yet such melancholy accidents we often hear of: for "as the birds are caught in a snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them," Eccl. ix. 12. Towers, that were built for safety, often prove men's destruction.

2. He cautioned his hearers not to make an ill use of these and such like events, nor from thence to censure great sufferers, as if they were therefore to be accounted great sinners: "Suppose ye that these Galileans," who were slain as they were sacrificing, "were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay," ver. 2, 3. Perhaps they that told him the story of the Galileans were Jews, and were glad of any thing that furnished them with matter of reflection upon the Galileans; and therefore Christ retorted upon them the story of the men of Jerusalem that came to an untimely end; for with what measure of that kind we mete, it shall be measured to us again. Now suppose ye that those eighteen who met with their death from the tower of Siloam, while perhaps they were expecting their cure from the pool of Siloam, that they were debtors to Divine justice "above all men that dwelt at Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay." Whether it make for us or against us, we must abide by this rule, that we cannot judge of men's sins by their sufferings in this world; for many are thrown into the furnace as gold, to be purified, not as

the well-known sirocco. The name was originally applied to the sultry south-east winds, then to all hot and sultry winds blowing from any quarter between the south-east and the south west. This sirocco is sometimes very violent. Thus Lynch says, on one occasion, "The sirocco blew fiercely until midnight, during which time we lay upon the ground with our heads wrapped up, to screen them from the blistering wind."

xii 59. In the corresponding place, Matt. v. 26, the word

"farthing" occurs for "mite" here. The mite was a very small brass or copper coin.

xiii. 1. This is understood to mean that while certain Galileans had been offering sacrifice, Pilate had caused them to be slain. There is no extant account of the details of this event, but there is everything in the circumstances of the time to justify our belief in it. The Galileans were given to seditious outbreaks, and the Romans were not slow to punish them in the most summary and sanguinary way.

cross and chaff to be consumed. We must therefore not be harsh in our censures of those that are afflicted more than their neighbours, as Job's friends were in their censures of him, lest we add sorrow to the sorrowful; nay, lest we condemn the generation of the righteous, *Ps. lxxiii. 14*. If we will be judging, we have enough to do to judge ourselves; nor indeed can we "know love or hatred by all that is before us," because "all things come alike to all," *Ecc. ix. 1, 2*. And we might as justly conclude that the oppressors, and Pilate among the rest, on whose side there is power and success, are the greatest saints, as that the oppressed, and those Galileans among the rest, that are all in tears,—and they have no comfort, no, not the priests and Levites that attended the altar,—are the greatest sinners. Let us, in our censures of others, do as we would be done by; for as we do, we shall be done by: "Judge not, that ye be not judged," *Mat. vii. 1*.

3. On these stories he founded a call to repentance, adding to each of them this awakening word, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," *ver. 3, 4*. 1st. This intimates that we all deserve to perish as much as they did; and had we been dealt with according to our sins, according to the iniquity of our holy things, our blood had been long ere this mingled with our sacrifices, by the justice of God. It must moderate our censures, not only that we are sinners, but that we are as great sinners as they, have as much sin to repent of, as they had to suffer for. 2nd. That therefore we are all concerned to repent, to be sorry for what we have done amiss, and to do so no more. The judgments of God upon others are loud calls to us to repent. See how Christ improved every thing for the pressing of that great duty, which he came not only to gain room for, and give hopes to, but to enjoin upon us, and that is, to repent. 3rd. That repentance is the way to escape perishing, and it is a sure way; so iniquity shall not be your ruin; but upon no other terms. 4th. That if we repent not, we shall certainly perish, as others have done before us. Some lay an emphasis upon the word "likewise," and apply it to the destruction that was coming upon the people of the Jews, and particularly upon Jerusalem, who were destroyed by the Romans at the time of their passover; and so, like the Galileans, they had their blood "mingled with their sacrifices;" and many of them, both in Jerusalem and in other places, were destroyed by the fall of walls and buildings, which were battered down about their ears, as those that died by the fall of the tower of Siloam. But certainly it looks farther; except we repent we shall perish eternally, as they perished out of this world. The same Jesus that bade us "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," bade us repent, for otherwise we shall perish; so that he hath set before us life and death, good and evil, and put us to our choice. 5th. The perishing of those in their impenitency will be in a particular manner aggravated who have been most harsh and severe in judging others.

6 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. 7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? 8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: 9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.



FIG TREE.

This parable is intended to enforce that word of warning, immediately going before, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;" except ye be reformed, you will be ruined; as the barren tree, except it bring forth fruit, it will be cut down.

1. This parable primarily refers to the nation and people of the Jews. God chose them for his own, made them a people near to him, gave them advantages for knowing and serving him above any other people, and expected answerable returns of duty and obedience from them; which, turning to his praise and honour, he would have accounted fruit. But they disappointed his expectations; they did not do their duty, they were a reproach instead of being a credit to their profession. Upon this he justly determined to abandon them, and cut them off; to deprive them of their privileges, to unchurch and unpeople them; but upon Christ's, as of old upon Moses', intercession, he graciously gave them farther time, and farther mercy; tried them as it were another year, by sending his apostles among them to call them to repentance, and in Christ's name to offer them pardon upon repentance; and some of them were wrought upon to repent, and bring forth fruit, and with them all was well; but the body of the nation continued impenitent and unfruitful, and ruin without remedy came upon them; about forty years after they were cut down and cast

into the fire, as John Baptist had told them, *Mat. iii. 10*; which saying of his this parable enlargeth upon.

11. Yet it has, without doubt, a farther reference, and is designed for the awakening of all that enjoy the means of grace, and the privileges of the visible church; to see to it, that the temper of their minds and the tenor of their lives be answerable to their professions and opportunities, for that is the fruit required. Now observe here,

First. The advantages which this fig tree had; it was planted in a vineyard, in better soil, and where it had more care taken of it, and more pains taken with it, than other fig trees had, that commonly grew, not in vineyards (those are for vines), but by the way side, *Mat. xxi. 19*. This fig tree belonged to a certain man that owned it, and was at expense upon it. Note, The church of God is his vineyard, distinguished from the common, and fenced about, *Isa. v. 1, 2*. We are fig trees planted in this vineyard by our baptism; we have a place and a name in the visible church, and it is our privilege and happiness that we have so; it is a distinguishing favour: he has not dealt so with other nations.

Secondly. The owner's expectation from it; "he came and sought fruit thereon," and he had reason to expect it; he did not send, but came himself, noting his desire to find fruit. Christ came into this world, came to his own, to the Jews, seeking fruit. Note, The God of heaven requires and expects fruit from those that have a place in his vineyard. He has his eye upon those that enjoy the Gospel, to see whether they live up to it; he seeks evidences of their getting good by the means of grace they enjoy. Leaves will not serve—crying, "Lord, Lord;" blossoms will not serve—beginning well, and promising fair; there must be fruit. Our thoughts, words, and actions, must be according to the Gospel light and love.

Thirdly. The disappointment of his expectation; he "found none," none at all, not one fig. Note, It is sad to think how many enjoy the privileges of the Gospel, and yet do nothing at all to the honour of God, nor to answer the end of his intrusting them with those privileges; and it is a disappointment to him, and a grief to the Spirit of his grace. 1. He here complains of it to the dresser of the vineyard; "I come, seeking fruit, but am disappointed, I find none; looking for grapes, but behold, wild grapes." He is grieved with such a generation. 2. He aggravates it with two considerations: 1st. That he had waited long, and yet was disappointed; as he was not high in his expectations—he only expected fruit, not much fruit—so he was not hasty, he came three years, year after year. Applying it to the Jews, he came one space of time before the captivity, another after that, and another in the preaching of John Baptist and of Christ himself; or it may allude to the three years of Christ's public ministry, which were now expiring. In general, it teacheth us that the patience of God is stretched out to long-suffering with many that enjoy the Gospel, and do not bring forth the fruits of it; and this patience is wretchedly abused, which provokes God to so much the greater severity. How many times three years has God come to many of us, seeking fruit, but has found none, or next none, or worse than none. 2nd. That this fig tree did not only not bring forth fruit, but it did hurt, it cumbered the ground; it took up the room of a fruitful tree, and was injurious to all about it. Note, Those who do not do good, commonly do hurt, by the influence of their bad example; they grieve and discourage those that are good, they harden and encourage those that are bad. And the mischief is the greater, and the ground the more cumbered, if it be a high, large, spreading tree, and if it be an old tree of long standing.

Fourthly. The doom passed upon it; "cut it down," he saith, "to the dresser of the vineyard," to Christ, to whom all judgment is committed,—to the ministers, who are in his name to declare this doom. Note, No other can be expected concerning barren trees, but that they should be cut down. As the unfruitful vineyard is dismantled, and thrown open to the common, *Isa. v. 5, 6*, so the unfruitful trees in the vineyard are cast out of it, and wither, *Jno. xv. 6*; it is cut down by the judgments of God, especially spiritual judgments, such as those on the Jews that believed not, *Isa. vi. 9, 10*; it is cut down by death, and cast into the fire of hell; and good reason, for "why cumbereth it the ground?" What reason is there why it should have a place in the vineyard to no purpose?

Fifthly. The dresser's intercession for it. Christ is the great intercessor, he ever lives interceding: ministers are intercessors; they that dress the vineyard should intercede for it: those we preach to, we should pray for, for we must give ourselves to the word of God and to prayer. Now observe,

1. What it is he prays for, and that is a reprieve; "Lord, let it alone this year also." He doth not pray, "Lord, let it never be cut down;" but, "Lord, not now; do not remove the dresser; do not withhold the dew; do not pluck up the tree. Note, 1st. It is desirable to have a barren tree reprieved: those that have not yet grace to repent, yet it is a mercy to them to have space to repent, as it was to the old world to have one hundred and twenty years allowed them to make their peace with God. 2nd. We owe it to Christ, the great intercessor, that barren trees are not cut down presently: had it not been for his interposal, the whole world had been cut down upon the sin of Adam; but he said, "Lord, let it alone;" and it is he that upholds all things. 3rd. We are encouraged to pray to God for the merciful reprieve of barren fig trees: Lord, let them alone, continue them yet a while in their probation; bear with them a little longer, and wait to be gracious. Thus must we stand in the gap to turn away wrath. 4th. Reprieves of mercy are but for a time: "let it alone this year also;" a short time, but a sufficient time to make trial. When God has borne long, we may hope he will bear yet a little longer; but we cannot expect he should bear always. 5th. Reprieves may be obtained by the prayers of others for us, but not pardons; there must be our own faith, and repentance, and prayers, else no pardon.

2. How he promiseth to improve this reprieve, if it be obtained; "till I shall dig about it, and dung it." Note, 1st. In general, our prayers must always be seconded with our endeavours. The dresser seems to say, "Lord, it may be I have been wanting in that which is my part; but let it alone this year, and I will do more than I have done towards its fruitfulness." Thus in all our prayers we must request God's grace with a humble resolution to do our duty; else we mock God, and shew that we do not rightly value the mercies we pray for. 2nd. In particular, when we pray to God for grace for ourselves or others, we must follow our prayers with diligence in the use of the means of grace. The dresser of the vineyard engageth to do his part, and therein teacheth ministers to do theirs; he will dig about the tree, and will dung it. Unfruitful Christians must be awakened by the terrors of the law, which break up the fallow ground; and then encouraged by the promises of the Gospel, which are warming and fattening, as manure to the tree; both methods must be tried; the one prepares for the other, and all little enough.

3. Upon what foot he leaves the matter: Let us try it, and try what we can do with it one year more, "and if it bear fruit, well," *ver. 19*: it is possible, nay, there is hope, that yet it may be fruitful; and in that hope the owner will have patience with it, and the dresser will take pains with it, and if it should have the desired success, both will be pleased that it was not cut down. The word "well" is not in the original, but the expression is apt, "if it bear fruit;" supply it how you please, so as to express how wonderful well pleased both the owner and dresser will be, if it bear fruit; there will be cause of rejoicing; we have what we would have; but it cannot be better expressed than as we

xiii. 4. This occurrence is also not mentioned elsewhere. Siloam was a pool outside Jerusalem, in the valley of Cedron. The modern fountain of Siloam is beneath the south-east angle of the city wall, and the water issues from the rock and flows into a basin.

xiii. 6. Fruit trees were not considered barren until they had stood for a few years. It was considered wrong to cut them down until after a certain time. Lightfoot quotes a rabbi who says his son would not have died if he had not cut down a fig-tree before its time.

xiii. 8. The Gemara, as quoted by Dr. Kitto, says, "They lay dung in their gardens to moisten the earth. They dig about the roots of their trees, they pluck up the suckers, they take off the leaves, they sprinkle ashes, and they make a smoke under their trees to destroy the worms."

xiii. 11. Interpreters generally have understood by the phrase "a spirit of infirmity" some kind of demoniacal possession. "As the evangelists have given the appellation of a 'dumb and deaf spirit'"

do, "well." Note, Unfruitful professors of religion, if after long unfruitfulness they will repent and amend, and bring forth fruit, all shall be well: God will be pleased, for he will be praised; ministers' hands will be strengthened, and such penitents will be their joy now, and their crown shortly; nay, there will be joy in heaven for it; the ground will be no longer cumbered, but bettered the vineyard beautified, and the good trees in it made better. And as for the *evil* itself, it is well for it; it shall not only not be cut down, but it shall receive blessing from God, *Heb. vi. 7*; it shall be purged, and shall bring forth more fruit, for the Father is its husbandman, *Jno. xv. 2*; and it shall at last be transplanted from the vineyard on earth to the paradise above.

But he adds, "if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." Observe here, 1st. That though God bear long, he will not bear always with unfruitful professors; his patience will have an end; and if it be abused, will give way to that wrath which will have no end. Barren trees will certainly be cut down at last, and cast into the fire. 2nd. The longer God hath waited, and the more cost he has been at upon them, the greater will their destruction be. To be cut down after that, after all these expectations from it, these debates concerning it, this concern for it, will be sad indeed, and will aggravate the condemnation. 3rd. Cutting down, though it is work that shall be done, yet it is work that God doth not take pleasure in: for, observe here, the owner said to the dresser, "Do thou cut it down, for it cumbereth the ground." "Nay," said the dresser, "if it must be done at last, 'thou shalt cut it down;' let not my hand be upon it." 4th. Those that now intercede for barren trees, and take pains with them, if they persist in their unfruitfulness, will be even content to see them cut down, and will not have one more word to say for them. Their best friends will acquiesce in, nay, they will approve and applaud, the righteous judgment of God, in the day of the manifestation of it, *Rev. xv. 3, 4*.

10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. 11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. 12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. 13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. 14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. 15 The Lord then answered him, and said, *Thou* hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? 16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? 17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Here is, I. *The miraculous cure of a woman that had been long under a spirit of infirmity.* Our Lord Jesus spent his sabbaths in the synagogues, ver. 10. We should make conscience of doing so, as we have opportunity; and not think we can spend the sabbath as well at home in reading a good book, for religious assemblies are a Divine institution, which we must bear our testimony to, though but of two or three. And when he was in the synagogues on the sabbath day, he was teaching there, *ἐν διδασκῶν*: it notes a continued act; he still taught the people knowledge. He was in his element when he was teaching. Now to confirm the doctrine he preached, and recommend it as faithful and well worthy of all acceptance, he wrought a miracle, a miracle of mercy.

First. The object of charity that presented itself was a woman in the synagogue, that "had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years," ver. 11; that is, she had an infirmity, which an evil spirit by Divine permission had brought upon her, which was such as that she "was bowed together" by strong convulsions, "and could in no wise lift up herself;" and having been so long thus, the disease was incurable; she could not stand erect, which is reckoned man's honour above the beasts. Observe, Though she was under this infirmity, by which she was much deformed, and made to look mean, and not only so, but, as is supposed, motion was very painful to her, yet she went to the synagogue on the sabbath day. Note, Even bodily infirmities, unless they be very grievous indeed, should not keep us from public worship on sabbath days; for God can help us beyond our expectation.

Secondly. The offer of this cure, to one that sought it not, speaks the preventing mercy and grace of Christ; ver. 12, "when Jesus saw her, he called her to him." It doth not appear that she made any application to him, or had any expectation from him, but before she called he answered. She came to him to be taught, and to get good to her soul, and then Christ gave this relief to her bodily infirmity. Note, Those whose first and chief care is for their souls do best befriend the true interests of their bodies likewise, for other things shall be added to them. Christ in his Gospel calls and invites those to come to him for healing that labour under spiritual infirmities; and if he call us, he will undoubtedly help us when we come to him.

Thirdly. The cure, effectually and immediately wrought, speaks his almighty power: "He laid his hands on her," and said, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." "Though thou hast been long labouring under it, thou art

at length released from it. Let not those despair whose disease is inveterate, who have been long in affliction. God can at length relieve them; therefore though he tarry, wait for him. Though it was "a spirit of infirmity," an evil spirit, that she was under the power of, Christ has a power superior to that of Satan, is stronger than he. Though "she could in no wise lift up herself," Christ could lift her up, and enable her to lift up herself; she that had been crooked was immediately made straight; and the Scripture was fulfilled, *Ps. cxlvi. 8*, "The Lord raiseth them that are bowed down."

And this cure represents the work of Christ's grace upon the souls of people. 1. In the conversion of sinners. Unsanctified hearts are under this spirit of infirmity; they are distorted, the faculties of the soul are quite out of place and order: they are bowed down towards things below; *O curvæ, in terram animæ*.—Base souls, that bend toward the earth; they can in no wise lift up themselves to God and heaven; the bent of the soul in its natural state is quite the contrary way: such crooked souls seek not to Christ, but he calls them to him; lays the hand of his power and grace upon them; speaks a healing word to them, by which he looseth them from their infirmity; makes the soul straight, reduceth it to order, raiseth it above worldly regards, and directs its affections and aims heavenwards. Though man cannot make that straight which God has made crooked, *Ecc. vii. 13*, yet the grace of God can make that straight which the sin of man has made crooked. 2. In the consolation of good people. Many of the children of God are long under a spirit of infirmity, a spirit of bondage; through prevailing grief and fear, their souls are cast down and disquieted within them; they are troubled, they are bowed down greatly, they go mourning all the day long, *Ps. xxxviii. 6*. But Christ, by his spirit of adoption, looseth them from this infirmity in due time, and raiseth them up.

Fourthly. The present effect of this cure upon the soul of the patient, as well as upon her body; she "glorified God;" gave him the praise of the cure, to whom all praise is due. When crooked souls are made straight, they will shew it by their glorifying God.

II. *The offence that was taken at this*, by "the ruler of the synagogue," as if our Lord Jesus had committed some heinous crime in healing this poor woman. He had indignation at it, because it was on the sabbath day, ver. 14. One would think the miracle should have convinced him, and that the circumstance of its being done on the sabbath day could not have served to evade the conviction; but what light can shine so clear, so strong, which a spirit of bigotry and enmity to Christ and his Gospel will not serve to shunt men's eyes against? Never was such honour done to the synagogue he was ruler of, as Christ had now done it; and yet he had indignation at it. He had not indeed the impudence to quarrel with Christ; but he said to the people, reflecting upon Christ in what he said, "There are six days in which men ought to work, in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." See here how light he made of the miracles Christ wrought, as if they were things of course, and no more but what quacks and mountebanks did every day: "You may come and be healed any day of the week." Christ's cures were become in his eyes cheap and common things. See also how he stretcheth the law beyond its intention, or any just construction that could be put upon it, in making either healing or being healed with a touch of the hand, or a word's speaking, to be that work which is forbidden on the sabbath day. This was evidently the work of God; and when God tied us out from working that day, did he tie himself out? The same word in Hebrew signifies both godly and merciful, (*chesed*)—to intimate that works of mercy and charity are in a manner works of piety, *1 Tim. v. 4*, and are therefore very proper on sabbath days.

III. *Christ's justification of himself in what he had done*, ver. 15: "The Lord then answered him," as he had answered others, who in like manner cavilled at him: "Thou hypocrite." Christ, who knows men's hearts, may call those hypocrites whom it would be presumption for us to call so, who must judge charitably, and can judge but according to the outward appearance. Christ knew he had a real enmity to him and to his Gospel, and he did but cloak that with a pretended zeal for the sabbath day; and that when he had the people come on the six days and be healed, he really would not have them be healed any day. Christ could have told him this; but he vouchsafes to reason the case with him. And,

First. He appeals to the common practice among the Jews, which was never disallowed, that of watering their cattle on the sabbath day; those cattle that are kept up in the stable are constantly loosed from the stall on the sabbath day, and led away to watering; it would be a barbarous thing not to do it, for "a merciful man regardeth the life of his beast," his own beast that serves him. Letting the cattle rest on sabbath day, as the law directed, would be worse than working them, if they must be made to fast on that day, as the Ninevites' cattle on their fast day, that were not permitted to feed or drink water, *Jonah iii. 7*.

Secondly. He applies this to the present case, ver. 10. "Must an ox or an ass have compassion shewed them on the sabbath day, and have so much time and pains bestowed upon them every sabbath, to be loosed from the stall, led away, perhaps a great way, to the water, and then back again, and shall not this woman, only with a touch of the hand and a word's speaking, be loosed from a much greater grievance than that which the cattle undergo, when they are kept without water? For consider, 1. She is a daughter of Abraham, whom you all pride yourselves in a relation to; she is your sister; and shall she be denied a favour that you grant to an ox or an ass, dispensing a little with the supposed strictness of the sabbath day? She is a daughter of Abraham, and therefore is entitled to the Messiah's blessings, to the bread which belongs to the children. 2. She is one whom Satan has bound; he had a hand in the affliction; and therefore it was not only an act of charity to the poor woman, but of piety to God, to break the power of the devil, and baffle him. 3. She has been in this deplorable condition, lo, these eighteen years; and therefore, now there is an opportunity of delivering her it ought not to be deferred a day longer, as you would have it; for any of you would have thought eighteen years' affliction full long enough."

IV. *The different effect that this had upon those that heard him.* He had sufficiently made it out, not only that it was lawful, but that it was high; fit and proper, to heal this poor woman on the sabbath day, and thus publicly in the synagogue, that they might all be witnesses of the miracle. And now observe,

First. What a confusion this was to the malice of his persecutors; "when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed," ver. 17; they were put to silence, and were vexed that they were so, that they had not a word to say for themselves; it was not a shame that worked repentance, but indignation rather. Note, Sooner or later, all the adversaries of Christ and his doctrine and miracles will be made ashamed.

Secondly. What a confirmation this was to the faith of his friends; "all the people," who had a better sense of things, and judged more impartially than their rulers, "rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him." The shame of his foes was the joy of his followers; the increase of his interest was what the one fretted at, and the other triumphed in. The things Christ did were glorious things; they were all so; and, though now clouded, perhaps will appear so; and we ought to rejoice in them. Every thing that is the honour of Christ is the comfort of Christians.

to the demon which made the possessed, in which he was, both deaf and dumb (Mark ix. 25), St. Luke in the same manner here calls the evil spirit which possessed this woman 'a spirit of infirmity,' to show that the malady of this woman was caused by the devil (ver. 16)." Calvin says her body was bowed down by contraction of the nerves. Some think it was a case in which Satanic influence was the cause of physical evil, but in which there was no actual possession.

xiii. 14. "The ruler of the synagogue" was its principal officer.

Dr. Barrow says, "The ancient, like the modern synagogue, had a regular organisation. First of all, there was the college of elders, who constituted the local council, and managed the affairs of the synagogue, in subordination to the Sanhedrim, or grand council of the nation. There were the rulers of the synagogue, called also pastors and rulers, terms that naturally passed over to the Christian congregations. Their presiding officer was called, by way of eminence, the ruler of the synagogue."

18 Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? 19 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. 20 And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? 21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. 22 And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

Here is, First, The Gospel's progress foretold, in two parables, which we had before, *Mat. xiii. 31, 33*. The kingdom of the Messiah is the kingdom of God, for its advancement his glory: this kingdom was yet a mystery, and people were generally in the dark, and under mistakes about it. Now when we would describe a thing to those that are strangers to it, we choose to do it by similitudes; such a person you know not, but I will tell you who he is like; so Christ undertakes here to shew what the kingdom of God is like, ver. 18; and "whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?" ver. 20; it will be quite another thing from what you expect, and will operate and gain its point in quite another manner.

1. You expect it will appear great, and will arrive at its perfection all of a sudden; but you are mistaken; "it is like a grain of mustard seed," a little thing, takes up but little room, makes but a little figure, and promiseth but little; and yet, when sown in soil proper to receive it, it "waxes a great tree," ver. 19. Many perhaps were prejudiced against the Gospel, and loath to come in to the obedience of it, because its beginning was so small; they were ready to say of Christ, "Can this man save us?" and of his Gospel, "Is this likely ever to come to anything?" Now Christ would remove this prejudice, by assuring them, that though "its beginning was small, its latter end should greatly increase," so that many should come, should come upon the wing, should fly like a cloud, to lodge in the branches of it, with more safety and satisfaction than in the branches of Nebuchadnezzar's tree, *Dan. ix. 21*.

2. You expect it will make its way by external means, by subduing nations, and vanquishing armies; though it shall work like leaven, silently and insensibly, and without any force or violence, ver. 21; "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump;" so the doctrine of Christ will strangely diffuse its relish into the world of mankind; in this it triumphs, that the savour of the knowledge of it is unaccountably made manifest in every place, beyond what one could have expected, *2 Cor. ii. 14*. But you must give it time; wait what will be the issue of the preaching of the Gospel to the world, and you will find it doth wonders, and alters the property of the souls of men. By degrees the whole will be leavened, even as many as are, like the meal to the leaven, prepared to receive the savour of it.

Secondly, Christ's progress towards Jerusalem recorded, ver. 22; "he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying." Here we find Christ an itinerant, but an itinerant preacher, journeying towards Jerusalem, to the feast of dedication, which was in the winter, when travelling was uncomfortable; yet he would be about his Father's business; and therefore, whatever cities or villages he could make in his way, he gave them a sermon or two; not only in the cities, but in the country villages. Wherever Providence brings us we should endeavour to be doing all the good we can.

23 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, 24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: 26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. 27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. 28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. 29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

We have here, I. A question put to our Lord Jesus; who it was that put it, we are not told, whether a friend or a foe; for he gave both a great liberty of questioning with him, and returned answers to the thoughts and intents of the heart. The question was, "Are there few that be saved?" ver. 23, *εἰ ὀλίγοι οἱ σωζόμενοι*;—"If the saved be few," Master, I have heard thou shouldst say so; is it true?

First, Perhaps it was a captious question; that he put it to him tempting him, with design to ensnare him, and lessen his reputation. If he should say many would be saved, they would reproach him as too loose, and making salvation too cheap; if few, they would reproach him as precise, and making salvation too strict. The Jewish doctors said that all Israel should have a place in the world to come, and would he dare to contradict that? Those that have sucked in a corrupt notion are ready to make it the standard by which to measure all men's judgments; and in nothing do men more betray their ignorance, presumption, and partiality than in judging of the salvation of others.

Secondly, Perhaps it was a curious question, a nice speculation, which he had lately been disputing upon with his companions, and they all agreed to refer it to Christ. Note, Many are more inquisitive who shall be saved, and who not, than what they shall do to be saved. It is commonly asked, May such and such be saved? But it is well we may be saved without knowing that.

Thirdly, Perhaps it was an admiring question. He had taken notice how strict the law of Christ was, and how bad the world was; and comparing these together, cries out, 'How few are there that will be saved?' Note, We have reason to wonder that, of the many to whom the Word of salvation is sent, there are so few to whom it is indeed a saving Word.

Fourthly, Perhaps it was an inquiring question. 'If there be few that be saved, what then? what influence should this have upon me?' Note, It concerns us all, seriously to improve the great truth of the fewness of those that are saved.

II. Christ's answer to this question, which directs us what use to make of this truth. Our Saviour did not give a direct answer to his inquiry, for he came to guide men's consciences, not to gratify their curiosity. Ask not how many shall be saved; but, be they more or fewer, shall I be one of them? Not, what shall become of such and such? and "what shall this man do?" but, what shall I do? and, what will become of me? Now in Christ's answer observe,

First, A quickening exhortation and direction: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." This is directed not to him only that asked the question, but to all, to us; it is in the plural number, strive ye. Note, 1. All that will be saved must enter in at the strait gate, must undergo a change of the whole man, such as amounts to no less than being born again; and must submit to a strict discipline. 2. Those that would enter in at the strait gate must strive to enter. It is a hard matter to get to heaven, and a point that will not be gained without a great deal of care and pains, of difficulty and diligence. We must strive with God in prayer, wrestle as Jacob, strive against sin and Satan; we must strive in every duty of religion, strive with our own hearts, *ἀγωνίζεσθε*,—be 'in agony,' strive, as those that run for a prize; excite and exert yourselves to the utmost.

Secondly, Divers awakening considerations to enforce this exhortation. O that we may be all awakened and quickened by them! They are such considerations as will serve to answer the question, "Are there few that shall be saved?"

1. Think how many take some pains for salvation, and yet perish because they do not take enough; and you will say that there are few that will be saved, and that it highly concerns us to strive; "many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able;" they seek, but they do not strive. Note, The reason why many come short of grace and glory is, because they rest in a lazy seeking of that which will not be attained without a laborious striving; they have a good mind of happiness, and a good opinion of holiness, and take some good steps towards both; but their convictions are weak, they do not consider what they know and believe; and consequently their desires are cold, and their endeavours feeble, and there is no strength or steadiness in their resolutions; and thus they come short, and lose the prize, because they do not press forward. Christ avers this upon his own word, "I say unto you;" and we may take it upon his word, for he knows both the counsels of God, and the hearts of the children of men.

2. Think of the distinguishing day that is coming, and the decisions of that day, and you will say there are few that shall be saved, and that we are concerned to strive. The Master of the house will rise up, and shut to the door, ver. 25; Christ is the Master of the house, that will take cognizance of all that frequent his house, and are retainers to it; will examine comers and goers, and those that pass and repass. Now he seems as if he left things at large; but the day is coming when he will rise up and shut to the door. What door? 1st. A door of distinction. Now within the temple of the church there are carnal professors, who worship in the outer court, and spiritual professors, who worship within the veil; between these the door is now open, and they meet promiscuously in the same external performances; but when the Master of the house is risen up, the door will be shut between them, that those who are in the outer court may be kept out, and left to be trodden under foot with the Gentiles, *Rev. xi. 2*. They that are filthy, shut the door upon them, and let them be filthy still; and that those who are within may be kept within; that are holy, may be holy still. The door is shut, to separate between the precious and the vile, that sinners may no longer stand in the congregation of the righteous; then you shall return and discern between them. 2nd. A door of denial and exclusion. The door of mercy and grace hath long stood open to them, but they would not come in by it, would not be beholden to the favour of that door; they hoped to climb up some other way, and to get to heaven by their own merits. And therefore, when the Master of the house is risen up, he will justly shut that door; let them not expect to enter by it; but let them take their own measures. Thus when Noah was safe in the ark, God shut the door, to exclude all those that depended upon shelters of their own in the approaching flood.

3. Think how many, that were very confident they should be saved, will be rejected in the day of trial; and their confidences will deceive them; and you will say there are few that shall be saved, and we are all concerned to strive; considering,

1st. What an assurance they had of admission, and how far their hope carried them, even to heaven's gate; there they stand and knock; knock, as if they had authority; knock, as those that belong to the house, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us," for we think we have a right to enter; take us in among the saved ones, for we joined ourselves to them. Note, Many are ruined by an ill-grounded hope of heaven, which they never distrusted or called in question, and therefore conclude their state is good, because they never doubted it. They call Christ "Lord," as if they were his servants; nay, in token of their importunity, they double it, "Lord, Lord." They are desirous now to enter in by that door which they had formerly made light of, would now gladly come in among those serious Christians whom they had secretly despised.

2nd. What grounds they had for this confidence. Let us see what their plea is, ver. 26. First, They had been Christ's guests, had had an intimate converse with him, and had shared in his favours; "we have eaten and drunk in thy presence," at thy table. Judas ate bread with Christ, dipped with him in the dish. Hypocrites, under the disguise of their external profession, receive the Lord's supper, and in it partake of the children's bread, as if they were children. Secondly, They had been Christ's hearers; had received instruction from him, and were well acquainted with his doctrine and law; "thou hast taught in our streets;" a distinguishing favour, which few had; and sure it might be taken as a pledge of distinguishing favour now; for wouldst thou teach us, and not save us?

xiii. 15. Lightfoot, Wetstein, and others have proved that the Jews were allowed on the Sabbath to water their cattle. According to the Talmud, a beast at such a time was to bear no burden but its collar and a halter. Water might be drawn and put into a trough, but not carried away from the pool, river, or well. The healing of the sick was not absolutely forbidden, but guarded by frivolous distinctions.

xiii. 21. Some hold that leaven here is an emblem of the evil

influence which was to work in the Church, and cause the corruption of the Christian faith and practice. More commonly and correctly, the leaven is regarded as symbolic of the spread of the Gospel in the world. We cannot endorse the view of Stier, that the three measures of meal refer to the descendants of the three sons of Noah, and also to the three ancient divisions of the world. Equally untenable is the view that the reference is to man, as made up of body, soul, and spirit. The word for measures seems to refer to the Hebrew *seah*

3rd. How their confidence will fail them, and all their pleas be rejected as frivolous. Christ will say to them, "I know you not whence you are," ver. 25; and again, ver. 26, "I tell you, I know you not; depart from me." He doth not deny but that which they pleaded was true, they had eaten and drunk in his presence, by the same token that they had no sooner eaten of his bread but they lift up the heel against him. He had taught in their streets, by the same token that they had despised his instruction, and would not submit to it. And therefore, *First*, He disowns them, "I know you not;" you do not belong to my family. "The Lord knows them that are his;" but them that are not, he doth not know; he has nothing to do with them: "I know you not whence you are." You are not of me, you are not from above, you are not branches of my house, of my vine. *Secondly*, He discards them: "Depart from me." It is the hell of hell to depart from Christ! the principal part of the misery of the damned. "Depart from my door; here is nothing for you, no, not a drop of water." *Thirdly*, He gives them such a character as is the reason of this doom: "Ye are workers of iniquity." This is their ruin, that under a pretence of piety they kept up secret haunts of sin, and did the devil's drudgery in Christ's livery. 4th. How terrible their punishment will be, ver. 28; "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;" the utmost degree of grief and indignation; and that which is the cause of it, and contributes to it, is a sight of the happiness of those that are saved; ye shall see "the patriarchs and prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out." Observe here, *First*, That the Old Testament saints are in the kingdom of God; those had benefit by the Messiah who died before his coming; for they saw his day at a distance, and it reflected comfort upon them. *Secondly*, That New Testament sinners will be thrust out of the kingdom of God. It intimates that they will be thrusting in, and will presume upon admission, but in vain; they shall be thrust out with shame, as having no part or lot in the matter. *Thirdly*, That the sight of the saints' glory will be a great aggravation of sinners' misery; they shall thus far see the kingdom of God, that they shall see the prophets in it, whom they hated and despised; and themselves, who thought themselves sure of it, thrust out. This is that at which they will gnash their teeth, *Ps. cxii. 10.*

4. Think who are they that shall be saved notwithstanding, ver. 29, 30; "they shall come from the east and the west; and the last shall be first."

1st. By what Christ had said, it appeared that but few should be saved of those that we think most likely, and that bid fairest for it: yet do not say then that the Gospel is preached in vain; for though Israel be not gathered, Christ will be glorious. There shall come many from all parts of the Gentile world, that shall be admitted into the kingdom of grace in this world, and of glory in the other. Plainly thus, when we come to heaven we shall meet a great many there whom we little thought to have met there, and miss a great many thence whom we verily expected to have found there.

2nd. Those that "sit down in the kingdom of God" are such as had taken pains to get thither, for they came from far, "from the east, and from the west; from the north, and from the south;" had passed through different climates, had broke through many difficulties and discouragements; which shews that they who would enter into that kingdom must strive, as the queen of Sheba, that "came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon." They that travel now in the service of God and religion, shall sit down to rest shortly in the kingdom of God.

3rd. Many that stood fair for heaven came short; and others, that seemed cast behind, and thrown quite out of the way, will win and wear this prize; and therefore it concerns us to strive to enter. Let us be provoked, as Paul desired the Jews might be, to a holy emulation by the zeal and forwardness of the Gentiles, *Rom. xi. 14.* Shall I be outstripped by my juniors? Shall I, that started first, and stood nearest, miss of heaven, when others, less likely, enter into it? If it be got by striving, why should I not strive?

31 The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. 32 And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. 33 Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. 34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! 35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Here is, *First*, A suggestion to Christ of his danger by Herod, now he was in Galilee, within Herod's jurisdiction, ver. 31; "certain of the Pharisees" (for there were those of that sect dispersed all the nation over) they came to Christ, pretending friendship and a concern for his safety, and said, "Get thee out" of this country, "and depart hence, for" otherwise "Herod will kill thee," as he did John. Some think those Pharisees had no ground at all for this; that drive him out of Galilee, where he had a great and growing interest, and to drive him into Judea, where they knew there were those that really sought his life; but Christ's answer being directed to Herod himself, it should seem the Pharisees had ground for what they said, and that Herod was enraged against Christ, and designed him a mischief for the honourable testimony he had borne to John Baptist, and to the doctrine of repentance, which John preached. Herod was willing to get rid of Christ out of his dominions; and when he durst not put him to death, he hoped to frighten him away by sending him this threatening message.

Secondly, His defiance of Herod's rage, and the Pharisees' too; he fears neither the one nor the other; "Go ye and tell that fox" &c. ver. 32. In calling

him a fox, he gives him his true character; for he was subtle as a fox, noted for his craft, and treachery, and baseness, and prying, as they say of a fox, farthest from his own den; and though it be a black and ugly character, yet it did not ill become Christ to give it him, nor was it in him a violation of that law, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of the people;" for Christ was a prophet, and prophets always had a liberty of speech in reproving princes and great men: nay, Christ was more than a prophet, he was a king, he was King of kings, and the greatest of men were accountable to him; and therefore it became him to call this proud king by his own name; but it is not to be drawn into an example by us. Go and tell that fox, yea, and this fox too, — for so it is in the original — *τινὸν ἀνθρώπου τσίφρα*, — that Pharisee, whoever he is that whispers this in my ear, let him know that I do not fear him, nor regard his menaces; for,

1. I know I must die, and must die shortly; I expect it, and count upon it, "the third day," that is, very shortly; my hour is at hand. Note, It will help us very much above the fear of death, and of them that have the power of death, to make death familiar to us; to expect it, think of it, and converse with it, and see it at the door. If Herod should kill me, he will not surprise me.

2. I know that death will be not only no prejudice to me, but it will be my preferment; and therefore tell him I do not fear him; when I die "I shall be perfected;" I shall then have finished the hardest part of my undertaking; I shall have completed my business, *τελειωθῶμαι*, "I shall be consecrated." When Christ died, he is said to have sanctified himself: he consecrated himself to his priestly office with his own blood.

3. I know that neither he nor any one else can kill me till I have done my work. God, and tell him I value not his impotent rage. I will "cast out devils, and do cures, to day and to morrow," that is, now, and for some little space of time yet to come, in spite of him and all his threats. "I must walk;" I must go on in my intended journey; and it is not in his power to hinder me. I must go about, as I do now, preaching and healing, "to day, and to morrow, and the day following." Note, It is good for us to look upon the time we have before us as but a little; two or three days, perhaps, may be the utmost; that we may thereby be quickened to do the work of the day in its day. And it is a comfort to us, in reference to the power and malice of our enemies, that they can have no power to take us off, as long as God has any work for us to do. The witnesses were not slain till they had finished their testimony.

4. I know that Herod can do me no harm; not only because my time is not yet come, but because the place appointed for my death is Jerusalem, which is not within his jurisdiction; "it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem;" that is, any where else but at Jerusalem. If a true prophet was put to death, he was prosecuted as a false prophet. Now none undertook to try prophets, and to judge concerning them, but the great Sanhedrim, which always sat at Jerusalem; it was a cause which the inferior courts did not take cognizance of; and therefore if a prophet be put to death, it must be at Jerusalem.

Thirdly, His lamentation for Jerusalem, and his denunciation of wrath against that city, ver. 34, 35. This we had, *Mat. xxiii. 37–39*; perhaps this was not said now in Galilee; but the evangelist, not designing to bring it in in its proper place, inserts it here, upon occasion of Christ's mentioning his being put to death at Jerusalem.

Note, 1. The wickedness of persons and places that more eminently than others profess religion and relation to God, is in a particular manner provoking and grieving to the Lord Jesus. How pathetically doth he speak of the sin and ruin of that holy city, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem."

2. Those that enjoy great plenty of the means of grace, if they are not provoked by them, many times are prejudiced against them. They that would not hearken to the prophets, nor welcome those whom God sent to them, killed them, and stoned them. If men's corruptions are not conquered, they are provoked.

3. Jesus Christ has shewed himself willing, freely willing, to receive and entertain poor souls that come to him, and put themselves under his protection: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings," with such care and such tenderness.

4. The reason why sinners are not protected and provided for by the Lord Jesus, as the chickens are by the hen, is because they will not. "I would," I often would, "and ye would not." Christ's willingness aggravates sinners' unwillingness, and leaves their blood upon their own heads.

5. The house that Christ leaves is left desolate. The temple, though richly adorned, though hugely frequented, yet is desolate, if Christ have deserted it. He leaves it to them; they had made an idol of it, and let them take it to themselves, and make their best of it; Christ will trouble it no more.

6. Christ justly withdraws from those that drive him from them. They would not be gathered by him, and therefore saith he, "You shall not see me;" you shall not hear me any more. As Moses said to Pharaoh when he forbade him his presence, *Ex. x. 28, 29.*

7. The judgment of the great day will effectually convince unbelievers, that would not now be convinced; then you will say, "Blessed is he that cometh," that is, will be glad to be among those that say so, and will not see me to be the Messiah till then, when it is too late.

CHAPTER XIV.

In this chapter we have, I. The cure which our Lord Jesus wrought upon a man that had the dropsy, on the sabbath day, and his justifying himself therein against those who were offended at his doing it on that day, ver. 1–6. II. A lesson of humility given to those who were ambitious of the highest rooms, ver. 7–11. III. A lesson of charity to those who feasted the rich, and did not feed the poor, ver. 12–14. IV. The success of the Gospel offer foretold, in the parable of the guests invited to a feast, signifying the rejection of the Jews and all others that set their hearts upon this world, and the entertainment of the Gentiles and all others that come empty of self to be filled with Christ, ver. 15–24. V. The great law of discipleship laid down, with a caution to all that will be Christ's disciples, to undertake it deliberately and with consideration, and particularly to ministers, to retain their savour, ver. 25–35.



AND it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him. 2 And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. 3 And Jesus answering spake unto

which is said by Jahn to have been equal to about one English peck and a pint.

xiii. 23, 24. Note here how the idle curiosity of the inquisitive is dealt with. The questioner wants to know whether few will be saved, probably supposing such would be the case. Our Lord answers that many would come short of salvation. He does not say, with modern seep ic, that the majority would perish, or that only a minority would be saved, but gives an answer which goes home to the conscience.

Dr. Oosterzee says, "We may safely suppose that the inquirer was more or less surprised at the small number of the followers of Jesus; but he would certainly consider himself safe to inherit eternal life, according to the popular belief of the Jews, 'Every Israelite will have a portion in the world to come.'" The "strait gate" is the narrow gate, or, as a good various reading has it, "the narrow door."

xiii. 25. "The parable is not derived from a marriage-feast to which individuals come too late, but from a family, whose head,

the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? 4 And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; 5 And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day? 6 And they could not answer him again to these things.

In this passage of story we find,

First. That "the Son of man came eating and drinking," conversing familiarly with all sorts of people; not declining the society of publicans, though they were of ill-fame, nor of Pharisees, though they bore him ill-will; but accepting the friendly invitations both of the one and of the other, that, if possible, he might do good to both. Here "he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees," a ruler it may be, and a magistrate in his country, "to eat bread on the sabbath day," ver. 1. See how favourable God is to us, that he allows us time, even on his own day, for bodily refreshments; and how careful we should be not to abuse that liberty, or turn it into licentiousness. Christ went only to eat bread; to take such refreshment as was necessary, on the sabbath day. Our sabbath meals must, with a particular care, be guarded against all manner of excess. On sabbath days we must do as Moses and Jethro did, "eat bread before God," *Ex. xviii. 12*; and, as it is said of the primitive Christians, on the Lord's day must eat and drink as those that must pray again before we go to rest, that we may not be unfit for that.

Secondly. That he "went about doing good." Wherever he came he sought opportunities to do good, and not only improved those that fell in his way. Here "was a certain man before him, which had the dropsy," ver. 2. We do not find that he offered himself, or that his friends offered him, to be Christ's patient; but Christ prevented him with the blessings of his goodness, and before he called he answered him. Note, It is a happy thing to be where Christ is, to be present before him, though we be not presented to him. This man had the dropsy, it is probable in a high degree, and that he appeared much swelled with it; probably he was some relation of the Pharisees, that now lodged in his house, which is more likely than that he should be an invited guest at the table.

Thirdly. That he "endured the contradiction of sinners against himself," ver. 1, "they watched him." The Pharisee that invited him, it should seem, did it with a design to pick some quarrel with him. If it were so, Christ knew it, and yet went; for he knew himself a match for the most subtle of them, and how to order his steps, with an eye to his observers. Those that are watched had need to be wary. It was, as Dr. Hammond observes, contrary to all laws of hospitality to seek advantage against one that you invited to be your guest; for such a one you have taken under your protection. These lawyers and Pharisees, like the fowler that lies in wait to ensnare the birds, "held their peace," and acted very silently. When Christ asked them whether they thought it lawful to heal on the sabbath day, (and herein he is said to answer them, for it was an answer to their thoughts, and thoughts are words to Jesus Christ,) they would say neither yea nor no, for their design was to inform against him, not to be informed by him. They would not say it was lawful to heal, for then they would preclude themselves from imputing it to him as a crime; and yet the thing was so plain and self-evident that they could not for shame say it was not lawful. Note, Good men have often been persecuted for doing that which even their persecutors, if they would but give their consciences leave to speak out, could not but own to be lawful and good. Many a good work Christ did, for which they cast stones at him and his name.

Fourthly. That Christ would not be hindered from doing good by the opposition and contradiction of sinners; ver. 4, "he took him, and healed him, and let him go." Perhaps he took him aside into another room, and healed him there; because he would neither proclaim himself, such was his humility, nor provoke his adversaries, such was his wisdom, his meekness of wisdom. Note, Though we must not be driven off from our duty by the malice of our enemies, yet we should order the circumstances of it so as to make it the least offensive. Or, he took him, that is, he laid hands on him to cure him; *ἐπιλαβόμενος, complezus*, "he embraced him;" took him in his arms, big and unwieldy as he was, for so dropsical people used to be, and reduced him to shape. The cure of a dropsy, as much as of any disease, one would think should be gradual, yet Christ cured even that disease, perfectly cured it, in a moment. He then let him go, lest the Pharisees shall fall upon him for being healed, though he was purely passive; for what absurdities would not such men as they were be guilty of?

Fifthly. That our Lord Jesus did nothing but what he could justify, to the conviction and confusion of those that quarreled with him, ver. 5, 6. He still answered their thoughts, and made them hold their peace for shame, who before held their peace for subtlety, by an appeal to their own practice, as he had been used to do upon such occasions, that he might shew them how in condemning him they condemned themselves. "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit," by accident, "and will not pull him out on the sabbath day?" and that straightway, not deferring it till the sabbath be over, lest it perish. Observe, It is not so much out of compassion to the poor creature that they do it, but a concern for their own interest. It is their own ass, and their own ass, that is worth money, that they will dispense with the law of the sabbath for the saving of. Now this was an evidence of their hypocrisy, and that it was not out of any real regard to the sabbath that they found fault with Christ for healing on the sabbath day, that was only the pretence; but really they were angry at the miraculous good works which Christ wrought; the proof he thereby gave of his Divine mission, and the interest he thereby gained among the people. Many can easily dispense with that for their own interest which they cannot dispense with for God's glory and the good of their brethren. This question silenced them, "they could not answer him again to these things," ver. 6. Christ will be justified when he speaks, and every mouth stopped before him.

7 And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, 8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou

be bidden of him; 9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. 10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. 11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. 12 Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. 13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Our Lord Jesus here sets us an example of profitable, edifying discourse at our tables, when we are in company with our friends. We find him, when he had none but his disciples, that were his own family, with him at his table, his discourse with them was "good, and to the use of edifying;" and not only so, but when he was in company with strangers, nay, with enemies that watched him, he took occasion to reprove what he saw amiss in them, and to instruct them; though the wicked were before him, he did not keep silence from good, as David did, *Ps. xxxix. 1, 2*; for notwithstanding the provocation given him, he had not his heart hot within him, nor was his spirit stirred. We must not only not allow any corrupt communication at our tables, such as that of the hypocritical mockers at feasts, but we must not content ourselves with common, harmless talk, but we should take occasion, from God's goodness to us at our tables, to speak well of him, and learn to spiritualize common things. The lips of the righteous should then feed many. Our Lord Jesus was among persons of quality; yet, as one that had not respect of persons,

First. He takes occasion to reprove the guests, for striving to sit uppermost, and from thence gives us a lesson of humility.

1. He observed how these lawyers and Pharisees affected the highest seats towards the head-end of the table, ver. 7. He had charged that sort of men with this in general, *ch. xi.*; here he brings home the charge to particular persons; for Christ will give every man his own. "He marked how they chose out the chief rooms;" every man, as he came in, got as near the best seat as he could. Note, Even in the common actions of life Christ's eye is upon us, and he marks what we do, not only in our religious assemblies, but at our tables, and makes remarks upon it.

2. He observed how those who were thus aspiring oftentimes exposed themselves, and came off with a slur; whereas those that were modest, and seated themselves in the lowest seats, oftentimes gained respect by it. 1st. Those that, when they come in, assume the highest seats, perhaps may be degraded, and forced to come down, to give place to one more honourable, ver. 8, 9. Note, It ought to check our high thoughts of ourselves, to think how many there are that are more honourable than we, not only in respect of worldly dignities, but personal merits and accomplishments. Instead of being proud that so many give place to us, it should be humbling to us that there are so many that we must give place to. The master of the feast will marshal his guests, and will not see the more honourable kept out of the seat that is his due, and therefore will make bold to take him lower that usurped it: "Give this man place;" and this will be a disgrace to him that would be thought more deserving than really he was, before all the company. Note, Pride will have shame, and will at last have a fall. 2nd. Those that, when they come in, content themselves with the lowest seats, are likely to be preferred, ver. 10. Go and seat thyself in the lowest room, as taking it for granted that thy friend who invited thee has guests to come that are of better rank and quality than thou art; but perhaps it may not prove so, and then it will be said to thee, "Friend, go up higher." The master of the feast will be so just to thee as not to keep thee at the lower end of the table, because thou wast so modest as to seat thyself there. Note, The way to rise high is to begin low, and this recommends a man to those about him. Thou shalt have honour and respect before those that sit with thee. They will see thee to be an honourable man, beyond what at first they thought, and honour appears the brighter for shining out of obscurity. And they will likewise see thee to be a humble man, which is the greatest honour of all. Our Saviour here refers to that advice of Solomon, *Pr. xxv. 6, 7*, "Stand not in the place of great men, for better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, than that thou shouldst be put lower." And Dr. Lightfoot quotes a parable out of one of the rabbins, somewhat like this, "Three men," said he, "were bidden to a feast; one sat highest, for, said he, I am a prince; the other next, for, said he, I am a wise man; the other lowest, for, said he, I am a humble man. The king seated the humble man highest, and put the prince lowest."

3. He applied this generally, and would have us all learn not to mind high things, but to content ourselves with mean things; as for other reasons, so for this, because pride and ambition are disgraceful before men, for "whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased;" but humility and self-denial are really honourable; "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," ver. 11. We see it in other instances, that "a man's pride will bring him low," but "honour shall uphold the humble in spirit; and before honour is humility."

Secondly. He takes occasion to reprove the master of the feast for inviting so many rich people, who had wherewithal to dine very well at home, when he should rather have invited the poor or, which was all one, have sent portions to them for whom nothing is prepared, and who could not afford themselves a good meal's meat: see *Neh. viii. 10*. And our Saviour here teacheth us, that

having awaited as long as possible the return of such members of the household as were wandering about, now that the appointed time for admission is expired, inexorably refuses them entrance."

xiii. 31. It is apparent from this that Jesus was still within the territory which owned the jurisdiction of Herod the Tetrarch. We may doubt whether the Pharisees really meant that Herod wished to kill Christ, or whether they said so in order to persuade him to leave them.

xiii. 32. That the word "fox" here applies to Herod, and refers to his craft and cunning, is generally admitted. Grotius and others show that he well deserved the epithet; and it may be added that "fox" is employed in a similar way by several ancient writers. It has been objected that our Lord committed a breach of courtesy on this occasion; but we must remember that the customs of that age differed much from ours, that the answer was applicable, and that it was quite in accordance with Oriental notions.

the using of what we have in works of charity is better, and will turn to a better account, than using it in works of generosity, and in magnificent house-keeping.

1. Covet not to treat the rich, ver. 12; invite not thy friends, and brethren, and neighbours, that are rich. This doth not prohibit the entertaining of such, when there may be occasion for it, for the cultivating of friendship among relations and neighbours; but, 1st. Do not use it; spend as little as thou canst that way, that thou mayest not disabie thyself to lay out a much better way, in almsgiving. Thou wilt find it very expensive and troublesome; one feast for the rich will make a great many meals for the poor. Solomon saith, "He that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want," *Pr. xxii. 16*. "Give," saith Pliny, *Epist.*, "to thy friends, but let it be to thy poor friends, not to those that need thee not." 2nd. Be not proud of it. Many make feasts only to make a show, as Ahasuerus did, *Est. i. 3, 4*; and it is no reputation to them, they think, if they have not persons of quality to dine with them, and thus rob their families to please their fancies. 3rd. Aim not at being paid again in your own coin. This is that which our Saviour blames: In making such entertainments, you commonly do it in hopes you will be invited by them, and so a recompence will be made you; you will be gratified with such dainties and varieties as you treat your friends with, and this will feed your sensuality and luxury, and you will be no real gainer at last.

2. Be forward to relieve the poor, ver. 13, 14; "when thou makest a feast," instead of furnishing thyself with what is rare and nice, get thy table spread with a competency of plain and wholesome meat, which will not be so costly, and invite the poor and maimed; such as have nothing to live upon, nor are able to work for their living. These are objects of charity; they want necessities; furnish them, and they will recompense thee with their prayers; they will commend thy provisions, which the rich, it may be, will despise. They will go away and thank God for thee, when the rich will go away and reproach thee. Say not thou art a loser, because they cannot recompense thee, thou art so much out of pocket; no, it is so much set out to the best interest, on the best security, for "thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." There will be a resurrection of the just, a future state of the just. There is a state of happiness reserved for them in the other world; and we may be sure the charitable will be remembered in the resurrection of the just, for alms are righteousness. Works of charity perhaps may not be rewarded in this world, for the things of this world are not the best things, and therefore God doth not pay the best men in those things; but they shall in no wise lose their reward; they shall be recompensed in the resurrection. And it will be found that the longest voyages make the richest returns, and the charitable will be no losers, but unspeakable gainers, by having their recompence adjourned till the resurrection.

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 16 Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: 17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. 18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. 19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. 20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. 22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. 23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Here is another discourse of our Saviour's, in which he spiritualizeth the feast he was invited to; which is another way of keeping up good discourse in the midst of common actions.

1. The occasion of the discourse was given by one of the guests, who, when Christ was giving rules about feasting, said to him, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," ver. 15, which some tell us was a saying commonly used among the rabbins. But with what design doth this man bring it in here? 1. Perhaps this man, observing that Christ reproved, first the guests, and then the master of the house, fearing he should put the company out of humour, started this, to divert the discourse to something else. Or, 2. Admiring the good rules of humility and charity which Christ had now given, but despairing to see them lived up to in the present degenerate state of things, he longs for the kingdom of God, when these and other good laws shall obtain, and pronounceth them blessed who shall have a place in that kingdom. Or, 3. Christ having mentioned the resurrection of the just, as a recompence for acts of charity to the poor, he here confirms what he had said, 'Yea, Lord, they that shall be recompensed in the resurrection of the just shall eat bread

in the kingdom, and that is a greater recompence than being reinvited to the table of the greatest man on earth.' Or, 4. Observing Christ to be silent after he had given the foregoing lessons, he was willing to draw him in again to farther discourse, so wonderfully well pleased was he with what he said; and he knew nothing more likely to engage him than to mention the kingdom of God. Note, Those that are not of ability to carry on good discourse themselves, yet ought to put in a word now and then to countenance it, and help it forward.

Now that which this man said was a plain and acknowledged truth, and it was quoted very appositely now they were sitting at meat; for we should take occasion from common things to think and speak of those heavenly and spiritual things which in Scripture are compared to them; for that is one end of borrowing similitudes from them. And it will be good for us, when we are receiving the gifts of God's providence, to pass through them to the consideration of the gifts of his grace, those better things. This thought will be very seasonable when we are partaking of bodily refreshments, "Blessed are they that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." 1st. In the kingdom of grace, in the kingdom of the Messiah, which was expected now shortly to be set up. Christ promised his disciples that they should eat and drink with him in his kingdom. They that partake of the Lord's supper eat bread in the kingdom of God. 2nd. In the kingdom of glory, at the resurrection. The happiness of heaven is an everlasting feast; blessed are they that shall sit down at that table, whence they shall rise no more.

II. The parable which our Lord Jesus put forth upon this occasion, ver. 16, &c. Christ joins with the good man in what he said; 'It is very true, blessed are they that shall partake of the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom. But who are they that shall enjoy that privilege? You Jews, that think to have the monopoly of it, will generally reject it, and the Gentiles will be the greatest sharers in it.' This he shews by a parable, for if he had spoken it plainly the Pharisees would not have borne it. Now in the parable we may observe,

First. The free grace and mercy of God shinning in the Gospel of Christ. It appears, 1. In the rich provision he has made for poor souls, for their nourishment, refreshment, and entertainment, ver. 16: "A certain rich man made a great supper." There is that in Christ and the grace of the Gospel which will be food and a feast for the soul of man, that knows its own capacities; for the soul of a sinner, that knows its own necessities and miseries. It is called a supper, because in those countries supper time was the chief feasting time, when the business of the day was over. The manifestation of the gospel grace to the world was the evening of the world's day; and the fruition of the fullness of that grace in heaven is reserved for the evening of our day. 2. In the gracious invitation given us to come and partake of this provision. Here is, 1st. A general invitation given, he "bade many." Christ invited the whole nation and people of the Jews to partake of the benefits of his Gospel. There is provision enough for as many as come; it was prophesied of as a feast for all people, *Isa. xxv. 6*. Christ, in the Gospel, as he keeps a good house, so he keeps an open house. 2nd. A particular memorandum given when the supper time was at hand; the servant was sent round to put them in mind of it, "Come, for all things are now ready." When the Spirit was poured out, and the gospel church planted, those who before were invited were more closely pressed to come in presently. Now all things are ready, the full discovery of the gospel mystery is now made, all the ordinances of the Gospel are now instituted, the society of Christians is now incorporated, and, which crowns all, the Holy Ghost is now given. This is the call now given to us: "All things are now ready," "now is the accepted time;" it is now, and has not been long; it is now, and will not be long; it is a season of grace, that will be soon over; and therefore come now; do not delay; accept the invitation; believe yourselves welcome; "eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

Secondly. The cold entertainment which the grace of the Gospel meets with. The invited guests declined coming; they did not say flat and plain they would not come, but "they all with one consent began to make excuse," ver. 18. One would have expected they should all with one consent have come to a good supper, when they were so kindly invited to it; who would have refused such an invitation? Yet, on the contrary, they all found out some pretence or other to shift off their attendance. This speaks the general neglect of the Jewish nation to close with Christ, and accept of the offers of his grace, and the contempt they put upon the invitation. It speaks also the backwardness there is in most people to close with the gospel call. They cannot for shame avow their refusal, but they desire to be excused; they all *ἀπό μίας*, some supply *ἀπορίας*,—all straightway; they could give an answer extempore, and needed not to study for it; were not to seek for an excuse. Others supply *ἑνήμετος*, they were unanimous in it, 'with one voice.'

1. Here, two were purchasers, and were in such haste to go see their purchases, that they could not find time to go to this supper. One had purchased land, he had bought a piece of ground, which was represented to him to be a good bargain, and he must needs go see whether it was so or no, and therefore "I pray thee have me excused." His heart was so much upon the enlarging of his estate, that he could neither be civil to his friend nor kind to himself. Note, Those that have their hearts full of the world, and fond of laying house to house, and field to field, have their ears deaf to the gospel invitation. But what a frivolous excuse was this! He might have deferred going to see his piece of ground till the next day, and have found it in the same place and plight it was now in, if he had so pleased. Here was another had purchased stock for his land, "I have bought five yoke of oxen" for the plough, and I must just now go prove them, must go try whether they be fit for my purpose, and therefore excuse me for this time. The former intimates that inordinate complacency in the world, this, that inordinate care and concern about the world, which keeps people from Christ and his grace; both intimate a preference given to the body above the soul, and to the things of time above those of eternity. Note, It is an ill thing, when we are called to any duty, to make excuses for our neglect of it. It is a sign there are convictions that it is a duty, but no inclination to it. These things here, that were the matter of the excuses, were, 1st. Little things, and of small concern. It had better become them to have said, 'I am invited to eat bread in the kingdom of God, and therefore must be excused from going to see the ground or the oxen.' 2nd. Lawful things. Note, Things lawful in themselves, when the heart is too much set upon them, prove fatal hindrances in religion,—*licitis perimus omnes*. It is a hard matter so to manage our worldly affairs that they may not divert us from spiritual pursuits; and this ought to be our great care.

2. Here was one that was newly married, and could not leave his wife to go out to supper, nor, not for once, ver. 20: "I have married a wife, and therefore," in short, "I cannot come." He pretends he cannot, when the truth is he will not. Thus many pretend inability for the duties of religion, when really they have an aversion to them. He has married a wife; it is true, he that was married was excused by the law from going to war for the first year, *Deu. xxiv. 5*; but would that excuse him from going up to the feasts of the Lord, which all the males were yearly to attend? Much less will it excuse from the gospel feast, which the other were but types of. Note, Our affection to our relations often proves a hindrance to us in our duty to God. Adam's

xiii. 33. The sense of the first clause is, "Nevertheless I must continue my journey to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following." He would not take to flight, but go on his way towards Jerusalem itself. The words rendered "it cannot be that," &c., convey much the same idea as "a prophet, who must needs perish, cannot do so away from Jerusalem." Our Lord refers to the fact that prophets who had been condemned by unjust judges had perished for the most part at Jerusalem.

xiv. 7. Dr. Justin Perkins describes a Persian wedding to which he was once invited. The ordinary residence of the father-in-law was given up to the ladies, and the gentlemen were entertained at the brother's house next door. The guest chamber was spacious, and elegantly carpeted. A row of nobles sat shoulder to shoulder round the room. At the head were the principal person and the chief guests, then came the rest on the right and left, in descending order, according to their station. The utmost precision is observed in

excuse was, 'the woman that thou gavest me persuaded me to eat;' this here was, 'the woman persuaded me not to eat.' He might have gone, and taken his wife along with him; they should both have been welcome.

Thirdly. The account which was brought to the master of the feast of the affront put upon him by his friends whom he had invited, who now shewed how little they valued him; ver. 21, "That servant came and shewed his lord these things;" told him with surprise that he was likely to sup alone, for the guests that were invited, though they had had timely notice a good while before, that they might order their affairs accordingly, yet were now engaged to some other business. He made the matter neither better nor worse, but related it just as it was. Note, Ministers must give account of the success of their ministry. They must do it now at the throne of grace; if they see of the travail of their soul, they must go to God with their thanks; if they labour in vain, they must go to God with their complaints. They will do it hereafter at the judgment-seat of Christ; they shall be produced as witnesses against those who persist and perish in their unbelief to prove that they were fairly invited; and for those who accepted the call, "Behold, I and the children thou hast given me." The apostle urges this as a reason why people should give ear to the Word of God, sent them by his ministers, "for they watch for your souls, as those that must give account," *Heb. xiii. 17*.

Fourthly. The master's just resentment of this affront: "he was angry," ver. 21. Note, The ingratitude of those that slight gospel offers, and the contempt they put upon the God of heaven thereby, is a very great provocation to him, and justly so. Abused mercy turns into the greatest wrath. The doom he passed upon them was, "none of the men that were bidden shall taste of my supper." This was like the doom passed upon ungrateful Israel, when they despised the pleasant land, "God swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest." Note, Grace despised, is grace forfeited, like Esau's birthright. They that will not have Christ when they may, shall not have him when they would. Even those that were bidden, if they slight the invitation, shall be forbidden; when the door is shut, the foolish virgins will be denied entrance.

Fifthly. The care that was taken to furnish the table with guests, as well as meat. Go, saith he to the servants, Go first "into the streets and lanes of the city," and invite, not the merchants, that are going from the custom-house, or the tradesmen, that are shutting up their shops, they will desire to be excused: one is going to his counting-house to cast up his books, another to the tavern to drink a bottle with his friend; but that you may invite those that will be glad to come, "bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, the halt, and the blind;" pick up the common beggars. The servants object not that it will be a disparagement to the master and his house to have such guests at his table, for they knew his mind, and they soon gather enough such guests; "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded." Many of the Jews are brought in, not of the scribes and Pharisees, such as Christ was now at dinner with, who thought themselves most likely to be guests at the Messiah's table, but publicans and sinners; these are "the poor and the maimed." But "yet there is room" for more guests, and provision enough for them all. Go, then, "into the highways and hedges;" go out into the country, and pick up the vagrants, or those that are returning now in the evening from their work in the field, from hedging and ditching there, "and compel them to come in," not by force of arms, but by force of arguments; be earnest with them, for in this case it would be necessary to convince them that the invitation was sincere, and not a banter; they will be shy and modest, and will hardly believe that they shall be welcome, and therefore be importunate with them, and do not leave them till you have prevailed with them. This refers to the calling of the Gentiles, to whom the apostles were to turn when the Jews refused the offer, and with them the church was filled.

Now observe here, 1. That the provision made for precious souls in the Gospel of Christ shall appear not to have been made in vain; for if some reject it, yet others will thankfully accept the offer of it. Christ comforts himself with this, that though Israel be not gathered, yet he shall be glorious, as a light to the Gentiles, *Isa. xlii. 5, 6*. God will have a church in the world, though there are those that are unchurched, for the unbelief of man shall not make the promise of God of none effect. 2. Those that are very poor and low in the world, shall be as welcome to Christ as the rich and great; nay, and many times the Gospel has greatest success among those that labour under worldly disadvantages, as "the poor," and bodily infirmities, as "the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." Christ here plainly refers to what he had said just before, in direction to us, to invite to our tables "the poor, and maimed, the lame, and blind," ver. 13. For the consideration of the countenance which Christ's Gospel gives to the poor, should engage us to be charitable to them. His condescensions and compassions towards them should engage ours. 3. Many times the Gospel hath the greatest success among those that are least likely to have the benefit of it, and whose submission to it was least expected. The publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of God before the scribes and Pharisees; "so the last shall be first, and the first last." Let us not be confident concerning those that are most forward, nor despair of those that are least promising. 4. Christ's ministers must be both very expeditious and very importunate in inviting to the Gospel feast. "Go out quickly," ver. 21, lose no time, because "all things are now ready;" call to them to come "to-day, while it is called to-day;" and "compel them to come in," by speaking them fair, and drawing them with the cords of a man, and the bands of love. Nothing can be more absurd than fetching an argument from hence for compelling men's consciences, nay, for compelling men against their consciences, in matters of religion. You shall receive the Lord's supper, or you shall be fined and imprisoned, and ruined in your estate. Certainly nothing like this was the compulsion here meant, but only that of reason and love; for "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." 5. Though many have been brought in to partake of the benefits of the Gospel, yet still there is room for more; for the riches of Christ are unsearchable and inexhaustible; there is in him enough for all, and enough for each; and the Gospel excludes none that do not exclude themselves. 6. Christ's house, though it be large, it shall at last be filled; it will be so when the number of the elect is completed, and as many as were given him are brought to him.

25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, 26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intend-

ing to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. 34 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? 35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

See how Christ in his doctrine suited himself to those to whom he spake, and gave every one their portion of meat. To Pharisees he preached humility and charity. He is in these verses directing his discourse to the multitudes that crowded after him, and seemed zealous in following him, and his exhortation to them is to understand the terms of discipleship before they undertook the profession of it, and to consider what they did. See here.

I. How zealous people were in their attendance on Christ: ver. 25, "there went great multitudes with him," many for love, and more for company; for where there are many there will be more. Here was a mixed multitude, like that which went with Israel out of Egypt; such we must expect there will always be in the church, and it will therefore be necessary that ministers should carefully separate between the precious and the vile.

II. How considerate he would have them to be in their zeal. Those that undertake to follow Christ must count upon the worst, and prepare accordingly.

First. He tells them what the worst is they must count upon; much the same with what he had gone through before them, and for them. He takes it for granted they had a mind to be his disciples, that they might be qualified for preferment in his kingdom. They expected he should say, If any man come to me, and be my disciple, he shall have wealth and honour in abundance, let me alone to make him a great man; but he tells them the quite contrary.

1. That they must be willing to quit that which was very dear, and therefore must come to him thoroughly weaned from all their creature comforts, and dead to them, so as cheerfully to part with them, rather than quit their interest in Christ, ver. 26. A man cannot be Christ's disciple, he will not be constant and persevering, unless he love Christ better than any thing in this world, and be willing to part with that which he may and must leave, either as a sacrifice, when Christ may be glorified by our parting with it,—so the martyrs who loved not their lives to death,—or as a temptation, when, by our parting with it, we are put into a better capacity of serving Christ: thus Abraham parted with his own country, and Moses with Pharaoh's court. Mention is not made here of houses and lands; philosophy will teach a man to look upon those with contempt; but Christianity carries it higher. 1st. Every good man loves his relations; and yet if he be a disciple of Christ, he must comparatively hate them, must love them less than Christ, as Leah is said to be hated when Rachel was better loved. Not that their persons must be in any degree hated, but our comfort and satisfaction in them must be lost and swallowed up in our love to Christ, as Levi's was, when he said to his father, "I have not seen him," *Deu. xxiii. 9*. When our duty to our parents comes in competition with our evident duty to Christ, we must give Christ the preference. If we must either deny Christ, or be banished from our families and relations, (as many of the primitive Christians were,) we must rather lose their society than his favour. 2nd. Every man loves his own life, no man ever yet hated it; and we cannot be Christ's disciples if we do not love him better than our own lives, so as rather to have our lives embittered by cruel bondage, nay, and taken away by cruel deaths, than to dishonour Christ, or depart from any of his truths and ways. The experience of the pleasures of the spiritual life, and the believing hopes and prospects of eternal life, will make this hard saying easy. When tribulation and persecution arise because of the Word, then chiefly the trial is whether we love better Christ or our relations and lives; yet even in days of peace this matter is sometimes brought to the trial. Those that decline the service of Christ, and opportunities of converse with him, and are ashamed to confess him, for fear of disobliging a relation or friend, or losing a customer, give cause to suspect they love them better than Christ.

2. That they must be willing to bear that which was very heavy: ver. 27, "whosoever doth not bear his cross," as those did that were condemned to be crucified, in submission to the sentence, and in expectation of the execution of it, and so "come after me," whithersoever I shall lead him, he "cannot be my disciple;" that is, saith Dr. Hammond, "he is not for my turn; and my service, being so sure to bring persecution along with it, will not be for his. Though the disciples of Christ are not all crucified, yet they all bear their cross, as if they counted upon being crucified. They must be content to be put into an ill name, and to be loaded with infamy and disgrace; for no name is more ignominious than *furcifer*,—"the bearer of the gibbet." He must bear his cross, and come after Christ: that is, he must bear it in the way of his duty, whenever it lies in that way. He must bear it when Christ calls him to it; and in bearing it he must have an eye to Christ, and fetch encouragements from him, and live in hope of a recompence with him.

Secondly. He bids them count upon it, and then consider of it. Since he has been so just to us as to tell us plainly what difficulties we shall meet with in following him, let us be so just to ourselves as to weigh the matter seriously before we take upon us a profession of religion. Joshua obliged the people to consider what they did when they promised to serve the Lord, *Jos. xxiv. 18*.

Persia, says Dr. Perkins; so that the company being seated according to rank, gives peculiar vividness to this passage of Scripture.

xiv. 12. The injunction, "call not (or invite not) thy friends," &c., affords another illustration of an idiom not unfrequent in the New Testament, by which a negative injunction is used in a comparative sense. Jesus never meant that men should not work, when he said, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but," &c. So here he does not intend that kindred and friends should not be invited, so much

as that they were not to be the only objects of favour; and that in some senses it was less important to entertain them than others who might be more in need of generosity, and less able to return it in the same form.

xiv. 23. The words rendered "compel them to come in" have been abused by being made to justify the coercion of so-called heretics. The Rhemish version of the New Testament says on these words, "St. Augustine referreth this compelling to the penal laws

CHAPTER XV.

It is better never begin than not proceed; and therefore, before we begin, we must consider what it is to proceed. This is to act rationally, and as becomes men, and as we do in other cases. And the cause of Christ will bear a scrutiny. Satan shews the best, but hides the worst, because his best will not countervail his worst; but Christ's will abundantly. Thus considering of the case is necessary to perseverance, especially in suffering times. Our Saviour here illustrates the necessity of it by two similitudes: the former shewing that we must consider the expenses of our religion; the latter, that we must consider the perils of it.

1. When we take upon us a profession of religion, we are like a man that undertakes to build a tower, and therefore must consider the expense of it; ver. 28-30, "Which of you intending to build a tower, or stately house, for himself, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost?" and he must be sure to count upon a great deal more than his workmen will tell him it will lie him in; let him compare the charge with his purse, lest he make himself to be laughed at, by beginning to build what he is not able to finish. Note, 1st. All that take upon them a profession of religion, undertake to build a tower, not as the tower of Babel, in opposition to Heaven, which therefore was left unfinished, but in obedience to Heaven, which therefore shall have its top stone brought forth. Begin low, and lay the foundation deep; lay it on the rock, and make sure work, and then aim as high as heaven. 2nd. Those that intend to build this tower, must "sit down and count the cost;" let them consider, it will cost them the mortifying of their sins, even the most beloved lusts; it will cost them a life of self-denial and watchfulness, and a constant course of holy duties: it may perhaps cost them their reputation among men, their estates and liberties, and all that is dear to them in this world, even life itself. And if it cost us all this, what is it in comparison with what it cost Christ to purchase the advantages of religion for us, which come to us without money and price? 3rd. Many that begin to build this tower do not go on with it, nor persevere in it, and it is their folly; they have not courage and resolution, have not a rooted, fixed principle, and so bring nothing to pass. It is true we have none of us in ourselves sufficient to finish this tower: but Christ hath said, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and that grace shall not be wanting to any of us, if we seek for it, and make use of it. Nothing is more shameful than for those that have begun well in religion to break off; every one will justly mock him, as having lost all his labour hitherto for want of perseverance. We lose the things we have wrought, 2 *Jno.* 8, and all we have done and suffered is in vain, *Gal.* iii. 4, 5.

2. When we undertake to be Christ's disciples, we are like a man that goes to war, and therefore must consider the hazard of it, and the difficulties that are to be encountered, ver. 31, 32. A king that proclaims war with a neighbouring prince, considers whether he have strength wherewith to make his part good; and if not, he will lay aside his thoughts of war. Note, 1st. The state of a Christian in this world is a military state. Is not the Christian life a warfare? We have many passes in our way that must be disputed with dint of sword; nay, we must fight every step we go, so restless are our spiritual enemies in their opposition. 2nd. We ought to consider whether we can endure the hardness which a good soldier of Jesus Christ must expect and count upon, before we list ourselves under Christ's banner; whether we are able to encounter the forces of hell and earth, which come against us twenty thousand strong. 3rd. Of the two, it is better make the best terms we can with the world than pretend to renounce it, and afterwards, when tribulation and persecution ariseth because of the Word, to return to it. That young man that could not find in his heart to part with his possessions for Christ, did better to go away from Christ sorrowing, than to have stayed with him dissembling.

This parable is another way applicable, and may be taken as designed to teach us to begin speedily to be religious, rather than to begin cautiously, and may mean the same with *Mat.* v. 25, "agree with thine adversary quickly." Note, 1st. Those that persist in sin make war against God, the most unnatural, unjustifiable war; they rebel against their lawful sovereign, whose government is perfectly just and good. 2nd. The proudest and most daring sinner is no equal match for God; the disproportion of strength is much greater than that here supposed between ten thousand and twenty thousand. "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?" No, sure; "who knows the power of his anger?" In consideration of this, it is our interest to make peace with him: we need not send to desire conditions of peace; they are offered to us, and are unexceptionable, and highly to our advantage; let us acquaint ourselves with them, and be at peace; do this in time, "while the other is yet a great way off," for delays in such a case are highly dangerous, and make after applications difficult.

But the application of this parable here, ver. 33, is to the consideration that ought to be when we take upon us a profession of religion. Solomon saith, "with good advice make war," *Pr.* xx. 18; for he that draws the sword, throws away the scabbard; so, with good advice enter upon a profession of religion, as those that know that except you forsake all you have, you cannot be Christ's disciples; that is, except you count upon forsaking all, and consent to it; for all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution, and yet continue to live godly.

Thirdly, He warns them against apostasy and a degeneracy of mind from the truly Christian spirit and temper, for that would make them utterly useless, ver. 34, 35. 1. Good Christians are the salt of the earth, and good ministers especially, *Mat.* v. 13, and this salt is good, and of great use; by their instructions and examples they season all they converse with, to keep them from putrefying, and to quicken them and make them savoury. 2. Degenerate Christians, that, rather than part with what they have in the world, will throw up their profession, and then of course become carnal and worldly, and wholly destitute of a Christian spirit, they are like salt that has lost its savour; like that which chemists call the *caput mortuum*, that has all its salts drawn from it, that is the most useless, worthless thing in the world; it has no manner of virtue or good property in it. 1st. It can never be recovered: "wherewith shall it be seasoned?" You cannot salt it: this intimates that it is extremely difficult, and next to impossible, to recover an apostate, *Heb.* vi. 4-6. If Christianity will not prevail to cure men of their worldliness and sensuality, if that remedy have been tried in vain, their case must even be concluded desperate. 2nd. It is of no use; it is not fit, as dung is, for the land, to manure that, nor will it be the better if it be laid in the dunghill to rot—there is nothing to be got out of it. A professor of religion, whose mind and manners are depraved, is the most insipid animal that can be. If he do speak of the things of God, which he hath had some knowledge of, it is so awkwardly that none are the better for it: it is a parable in the mouth of a fool. 3rd. It is abandoned: "men cast it out" as that which they will have no more to do with. Such scandalous professors ought to be cast out of the church, not only because they have forfeited all the honours and privileges of their church membership, but because there is danger that others will be infected by them. Our Saviour concludes this with a call to all to take notice of it, and to take warning: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Now, can the faculty of hearing be better employed than in attending to the Word of Christ; and particularly to the alarms he has given us, of the danger we are in of apostasy, and the danger we run ourselves into by apostasy?

which Catholic princes do justly use against heretics and schismatics, proving that they who are by their former profession and baptism subject to the Catholic Church, and are departed from the same after other sects, may and ought to be compelled into the unity and society of the universal Church again. . . . They promised in baptism, and therefore are to be revoked, not only by gentle means, but by just punishment also." The doctrine of persecuting heretics, thus explained, has often been applied, though to infer it from this text

Evil manners, we say, beget good laws; so in this chapter, the murmuring of the scribes and Pharisees at the grace of Christ, and the favour he shewed to publicans and sinners, gave occasion for a more full discovery of that grace than perhaps otherwise we should have had, in these three parables which we have in this chapter; the scope of all which is the same, to shew, not only what God had said and sworn in the Old Testament, that he had no pleasure in the death and ruin of sinners, but that he has great pleasure in their return and repentance, and rejoiceth in the gracious entertainment he gives them thereupon. Here is, 1. The offence which the Pharisees took at Christ for conversing with heathen men and publicans, and preaching his Gospel to them, ver. 1, 2. 11. His justifying himself in it by the design and proper tendency of it, and which with many had been the effect of it, and that was, the bringing of them to repent and reform their lives, than which there could not be a more pleasing and acceptable service done to God; which he shews in the parable, 1. Of the lost sheep that was brought home with joy, ver. 4-7; 2. Of the lost silver that was found with joy, ver. 8-10; 3. Of the lost son that had been a prodigal, but returned to his father's house, and was received with great joy, though his elder brother, like these scribes and Pharisees, was offended at it, ver. 11-32.



HEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. 3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying, 4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. 7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. 8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? 9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. 10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Here is, 1. *The diligent attendance of the publicans and sinners upon Christ's ministry.* Great multitudes of Jews went with him, *ch. xiv.* 25, with such an assurance of admission into the kingdom of God, that he found it requisite to say that to them which would shake their vain hopes; here multitudes of publicans and sinners drew near to him, with a humble, modest fear of being rejected by him, and to them he found it requisite to give encouragement, especially because there were some haughty, supercilious people that frowned upon them. The publicans, that collected the tribute paid to the Romans, were perhaps some of them ill men, but they were all industriously put into an ill name, because of the prejudices of the Jewish nation against their office; they are sometimes ranked with harlots, *Mat.* xxi. 31, here and elsewhere with sinners, such as were openly vicious, that traded with harlots, known rakes. Some think the sinners here were heathen, and that Christ was now on the other side Jordan, or in Galilee of the Gentiles. These drew near, when perhaps the multitude of the Jews that had followed him were, upon his discourse in the close of the foregoing chapter, dropped off; thus afterwards the Gentiles took their turn in hearing the apostles, when the Jews had rejected them. They drew near to hear him, being afraid of drawing nearer than just to come within hearing. They drew near to him, not as some did, for curiosity, to see him, nor as others did, to solicit for cures, but to hear his excellent doctrine. Note, In all our approaches to Christ, this we must have in our eye, to hear him, to hear the instructions he gives us, and his answers to our prayers.

11. *The offence which the scribes and Pharisees took at this, ver. 2;* they murmured, and turned it to the reproach of our Lord Jesus, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." 1. They were angry that publicans and heathen had the means of grace allowed them, were called to repent, and encouraged to hope for pardon upon repentance; for they looked upon their case as desperate, and that none but Jews had the privilege of repenting and being pardoned, though the prophets preached repentance to the nations, and Daniel particularly to Nebuchadnezzar. 2. They thought it a disparagement to Christ, and inconsistent with the dignity of his character, to make himself familiar with such sort of people, to admit them into his company, and to eat with them. They could not for shame condemn him for preaching to them, though that

violates the first principles of sound criticism. Whatever the words mean in themselves, they are part of a parable, and as such they must be taken parabolically. Besides, the only service acceptable to God is willing service, which men will not and cannot render who are driven to a church like sheep to a fold. It might be consistent with Oriental rules to force men to a feast, but it is only consistent with a spiritual religion to employ moral influences.

xiv. 26. Here and elsewhere our Lord seems to use the word

was the thing they were most enraged at, and therefore they reproached him for eating with them, which was more expressly contrary to the tradition of the elders. Censure will fall not only upon the most innocent and the most excellent persons, but upon the most innocent and most excellent actions, and we must not think it strange.

III. *Christ's justifying of himself in it*, by shewing that the worse these people were to whom he preached, the more glory would redound to God, and the more joy there would be in heaven, if, by his preaching, they were brought to repentance. It would be a more pleasing sight in heaven to see Gentiles brought to the worship of the true God, than to see Jews go on in it; and to see publicans and sinners live an orderly sort of life, than to see scribes and Pharisees go on in living such a life. This he here illustrates by two parables, the reddition of both which is the same.

First. The parable of the lost sheep. Something like it we had *Mat. xviii. 12*; there it was designed to shew the care God takes for the preservation of saints, as a reason why we should not offend them; here it is designed to shew the pleasure God takes in the conversion of sinners, as a reason why we should rejoice in it. We have here,

1. The case of a sinner that goes on in sinful ways; he is like a lost sheep, a sheep gone astray; lost to God, who has not the honour and service he should have from him; lost to the flock, that has not communion with him; lost to himself, he knows not where he is, wanders endlessly, is continually exposed to the beasts of prey, subject to frights and terrors, from under the shepherd's care, and wanting the green pastures; and it cannot of itself find the way back to the fold.

2. The care the God of heaven takes of poor wandering sinners. He continues his care of the sheep that did not go astray, they are safe in the wilderness; but there is a particular care to be taken of this lost sheep; and though he has a hundred sheep, a considerable flock, yet he will not lose that one, but he goes after it, and shews abundance of care, 1st. In finding it out; he follows it, inquiring after it, and looking about for it, till he finds it. God follows backsliding sinners with the calls of his Word, and the strivings of his Spirit, till at length they are wrought upon to think of returning. 2nd. In bringing it home; though he finds it weary, and perhaps worried, and worn away with its wanderings, and not able to bear being driven home, yet he doth not leave it to perish, and say, It is not worth carrying home; but "lays it on his shoulders," and with a great deal of tenderness and labour, brings it to the fold. This is very applicable to the great work of our redemption; mankind was gone astray, *Isa. liii. 6*. The value of the whole race to God was not so much as that of one sheep to him that had a hundred; what loss would it have been to God, if they had all been left to perish? There is a world of holy angels, that are as the ninety-nine sheep, a noble flock, yet God sends his Son to "seek and save that which was lost," *ch. xix. 10*. Christ is said to "gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom," noting his pity and tenderness towards poor sinners; here he is said to bear them upon his shoulder, noting the power wherewith he supports and bears them up; those can never perish whom he carries upon his shoulders.

3. The pleasure that God takes in repenting, returning sinners; "he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing" that he had not lost his labour in seeking; and the joy is the greater, because he began to be out of hope of finding it. And he "calls his friends and neighbours," the shepherds that kept their flocks about him, "saying, Rejoice with me;" perhaps among the pastoral songs which the shepherds used to sing, there was one for such an occasion as this, which these words might be the burden of, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost;" whereas they never sung, "Rejoice with me, for I have lost none." Observe, he calls it his sheep, though a stray, a wandering sheep; he has a right to it, "all souls are mine;" and he will claim his own, and recover his right; therefore he looks after it himself; I have found it; did not send a servant, but his own Son, the great and good Shepherd, who will find what he seeks, and will be found of those that seek him not.

Secondly. The parable of the lost piece of silver.

1. The loser is here supposed to be a woman, who will more passionately grieve for her loss, and rejoice in the finding of what she lost, than perhaps a man would do, and therefore it the better serves the purpose of the parable. She hath ten pieces of silver, and out of them loses only one. Let this keep up in us high thoughts of the Divine goodness, notwithstanding the sinfulness and misery of the world of mankind, that there is nine to one, nay, in the foregoing parable there are ninety-nine to one of God's creation that retain their integrity, in whom God is praised, and never was dishonoured. O the numberless beings, for aught we know, numberless worlds of beings, that never were lost, or stepped aside from the laws and ends of their creation!

2. That which is lost is a piece of silver, *δραχμήν*, the fourth part of a shekel. The soul is silver, of intrinsic worth and value; not of base metal, as iron or lead, but of silver, the mines of which are royal mines. The Hebrew word for silver is taken from the desirableness of it. It is silver coin, for so the drachma was; it is stamped with God's image and superscription, and therefore must be rendered to him. Yet it is comparatively but of small value; it was but seven pence halfpenny; intimating, that if sinful men be left to perish, God would be no loser. This silver was lost in the dirt; a soul plunged in the world, and overwhelmed with the love of it, and care about it, is like a piece of money in the dirt; any one would say, It is a thousand pities it should lie there.

3. Here is a great deal of care and pains taken in quest of it. The woman lights a candle, to look behind the door, under the table, and in every corner of the house, sweeps the house, and seeks diligently till she find it. This represents the various means and methods God makes use of to bring lost souls home to himself; he hath lighted the candle of the Gospel, not to shew himself the way to us, but to shew us the way to him, to discover us to ourselves; he hath swept the house by the convictions of the Word; he seeks diligently, his heart is upon it, to bring lost souls to himself.

4. Here is a great deal of joy for the finding of it; ver. 9, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost." Those that rejoice, desire that others should rejoice with them; that are merry, would have others merry with them; she was glad she had found the piece of money, though she should spend it in entertaining those whom she called to make merry with her. The pleasing surprise of finding it, put her for the present into a kind of transport, *εὐρηκα, εὐρηκα*, "I have found, I have found," is the language of joy.

Thirdly. The reddition of these two parables is to the same purpose, ver. 7, 10: "There is joy in heaven, joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth," as those publicans and sinners did, some of them at least, (and if but one of them did repent, Christ would reckon it worth his while,) more than over a great number of "just persons which need no repentance." Observe,

1. The repentance and conversion of sinners on earth is matter of joy and rejoicing in heaven. It is possible that the greatest sinners may be brought to repentance; while there is life there is hope, and the worst are not to be despaired of; and the worst of sinners, if they repent and turn, shall find mercy. Yet that is not all, 1st. God will delight to shew them mercy; will reckon their conversion a return for all the expence he has been at upon them.

"hate" in the sense of disregard. Men are to hate, i.e., to disregard their nearest and dearest relations, and even life itself, when they come into competition with Christ, and interfere with duty to him.

xiv. 31, 32. This passage has been discussed in connection with the question whether the Gospel is favourable to human warfare. It contains an illustration drawn from human affairs, and intended to teach caution and prudence. We do not think, however, that it has any bearing upon the war question, because our Lord was accustomed

There is always joy in heaven; God rejoiceth in all his works, but particularly in the works of his grace; he rejoiceth to do good to penitent sinners with his whole heart and his whole soul. He rejoiceth not only in the conversion of churches and nations, but even over "one sinner that repenteth," though but one. 2nd. The good angels will be glad that mercy is shewn them, so far are they from repining at it, though those of their nature that sinned be left to perish, and no mercy shewed to them; though those sinners that repent, that are so mean, and have been so vile, are upon their repentance to be taken into communion with them, and shortly to be made like them, and equal to them. The conversion of sinners is the joy of angels, and they gladly become ministering spirits to them for their good, upon their conversion. The redemption of mankind was matter of joy in the presence of the angels, for they sung "Glory to God in the highest," *ch. ii. 14*.

2. There is more joy over one sinner that repenteth, and turns to be religious, from a course of life that had been notoriously vile and vicious, than there is "over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance." 1st. More joy for the redemption and salvation of fallen man than for the preservation and confirmation of the angels that stand, and did indeed need no repentance. 2nd. More joy for the conversion of the sinners of the Gentiles, and of those publicans that now heard Christ preach, than for all the praises and devotions, and all the "God, I thank thee," of the Pharisees and other the self-justifying Jews, who thought that they needed no repentance, and that therefore God should abundantly rejoice in them, and make his boast of them, as those that were most his honour; but Christ tells them it was quite otherwise, that God was more praised in, and pleased with, the penitent, broken heart of one of those despised, envied sinners, than all the long prayers which the scribes and Pharisees made, that could not see any thing amiss in themselves. Nay, 3rd. More joy for the conversion of one such great sinner, such a Pharisee as Paul had been in his time, than for the regular conversation of one that had always carried himself decently and well, and comparatively needs no repentance, needs not such a universal change of the life as those great sinners need. Not but that it is best not to go astray; but the grace of God, both the power and the pity of that grace, is most manifested in the reducing of great sinners, more than in the conducting of those that never went astray. And many times those that have been great sinners before their conversion, prove more eminently and zealously good after; of which Paul is an instance, and therefore in him God was greatly glorified, *Gal. i. 24*. They to whom much is forgiven, will love much. It is spoken after the manner of men; we are moved with a more sensible joy for the recovery of what we had lost, than for the continuance of what we had always enjoyed; for health out of sickness, than for health from sickness; it is a life from the dead. A constant course of religion may in itself be more valuable; and yet a sudden return from an evil course and way of sin may yield a more surprising pleasure. Now if there is such joy in heaven for the conversion of sinners, then the Pharisees were very much strangers to a heavenly spirit, who did all they could to hinder it, and were grieved at it, and who were exasperated at Christ when he was doing a piece of work that was of all other most grateful to Heaven.

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:
12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.
13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.
14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.
15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.
16 And he would fain have filled his belly



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with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 And when he came to himself,

to introduce circumstances good and bad into his teaching. Every parable embodies a principle and enforces it, and for the sake of this principle it was uttered. Accessories and details must therefore be cautiously dealt with.

xv. 4. "A man who loses one sheep out of a hundred will leave the rest of his flock for awhile, to seek for the one that is astray." In this parable, as in the next, Jesus draws his lessons from the analogies of human nature and daily life.

he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. 25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. 26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. 28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. 29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. 31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. 32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

We have here the parable of the prodigal son; the scope of which is the same with those before, to shew how pleasing to God the conversion of sinners is, of great sinners, and how ready he is to receive and entertain such upon their repentance; but the circumstances of the parable do much more largely and fully set forth the riches of gospel grace than those did; and it has been, and will be while the world stands, of unspeakable use to poor sinners, both to direct and to encourage them in repenting and returning to God. Now,

1. The parable represents God as a common Father to all mankind, to the whole family of Adam; we all are his offspring; have all one father, and one God created us, *Mal. ii. 10*. From him we had our being, in him we still have it, and from him we receive our maintenance: he is our Father, for he has the educating and portioning of us, and will put us in his testament, or leave us out, according as we are or are not dutiful children to him. Our Saviour hereby intimates to those proud Pharisees that these publicans and sinners whom they thus despised were their brethren, partakers of the same nature, and therefore they ought to be glad of any kindness shewn them. God is the God, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles, *Rom. iii. 29*, the "same Lord over all, that is rich in mercy to all that call upon him."

2. It represents the children of men as of different characters, though all related to God as their common Father. He had two sons, one of them a solid, grave youth, reserved and austere, sober himself, but not at all good humoured to those about him; such a one would adhere to his education, and not be easily drawn from it; but the other volatile and mercurial, and impatient of restraint, roving, and willing to try his fortune, and, if he fall into ill hands, likely to be a rake, notwithstanding his virtuous education. Now this latter represents the publicans and sinners, whom Christ is endeavouring to bring to repentance, and the Gentiles, whom the apostles were to be sent forth to preach repentance to; the former, the Jews in general, and particularly the Pharisees, whom he was endeavouring to reconcile to that grace of God which was offered to and bestowed upon sinners. The younger son is the prodigal, whose character and case is here designed to represent that of a sinner, that of every one of us in our natural state, but especially of some. Now we are to observe concerning him,

First. His riot and ramble, when he was a prodigal, and the extravagances and miseries he fell into. We are told,

1. What his request to his father was, ver. 12: "He said to his father," proudly and pertly enough, "Father, give me," (he might have put a little more in his mouth, and have said, "Pray, give me," or, "Sir, if you please, give me," but he makes an imperious demand,) "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me;" not so much as you think fit to allot me, but that which falls to me as my due. Note. It is ill, and the beginning of worse, when men look upon God's gifts as due debts. "Give me the portion," all my child's part that falls to me; not, Try me with a little, and see how I can manage that, and accordingly trust me with more, but, Give it me all at present in possession, and I will never expect any thing in reversion, any thing hereafter. Note. The great folly of sinners, and that which ruins them is, being content to have their portion in hand; now in this lifetime to receive their good things. They look only at the things that are seen, that are temporal, and covet only a present gratification, but have no care for a future felicity, when that is spent and gone.

And why did he desire to have his portion in his own hands? Was it that he might apply himself to business, and trade with it, and so make it more? No, he had no thought of that. But, 1st. He was weary of his father's government; sick of the good order and discipline of his father's family, and was fond of liberty, falsely so called; but indeed the greatest slavery, for so a liberty to sin is. See the folly of many young men, that are religiously educated, but are impatient of the confinement of their education, and never think themselves their own masters, their own men, till they have broke all God's bands in sunder, and cast away his cords from them, and, instead of them, bound themselves with the cords of their own lust. Here is the original of the apostasy of sinners from God; they will not be tied up to the rules of God's government; will themselves be as gods, knowing no other good and evil but what themselves please. 2nd. He was willing to get from under his father's eye, for that was always a check upon him, and often gave a check to him. A shyness of God, and a willingness to disbelieve his omniscience, is at the bottom of the wickedness of the wicked. 3rd. He was distrustful of his father's management; he would have his portion of goods himself, for he thought his father would be laying up for hereafter for him; and in order to that would limit him in his present expenses, and that he did not like. 4th. He was proud of himself, and had a great conceit of his own sufficiency. He thought if he had but his portion in his own hands, he could manage it better than his father did, and make a better figure with it. There are more young people ruined by pride than by any one lust whatsoever. Our first parents ruined themselves, and all theirs, by a foolish ambition to be independent, and not to be beholden to God himself; and this is at the bottom of sinners' persisting in their sin, they will be for themselves.

2. How kind his father was to him: "He divided unto them his living." He computed what he had to dispose of between his sons, and gave the younger son his share, and offered the elder his, which ought to be a double portion; but it should seem he desired his father to keep it in his own hands still, and we may see what he got by it, ver. 31: "All that I have is thine." He got all, by staying for something in reserve. He gave the younger son what he asked, and the son had no reason to complain that he did him any wrong in the dividend; he had as much as he expected, and perhaps more. 1st. Thus he might now see his father's kindness, how willing he was to please him, and make him easy; and that he was not such an unkind father as he was willing to represent him, when he wanted an excuse to be gone. 2nd. Thus he would in a little time be made to see his own folly, and that he was not such a wise manager for himself as he would be thought to be. Note. God is a kind father to all his children, and gives to them all "life and breath, and all things," even to the evil and unthankful; *δίδωκεν αὐτοῖς τὸν βίον*, "he divided to them life;" God's giving us life is putting us in a capacity to serve and glorify him.

3. How he managed himself when he had got his portion in his own hands; he set himself to spend it as fast as he could, and, as prodigals use to do, in a little time he made himself a beggar: "not many days after," ver. 13. Note, If God leaves us never so little to ourselves, it will not be long ere we depart from him. As soon as ever the bridle of restraining grace is taken off, we are soon gone. That which the younger son determined was, to be gone presently, and in order to that, "he gathered all together." Sinners that go astray from God venture their all.

Now the condition of the prodigal in this ramble of his represents to us a sinful state, that miserable state into which man is fallen.

1st. A sinful state is a state of departure and distance from God. *First*. It is the sinfulness of sin that it is an apostasy from God. He "took his journey" from his father's house. Sinners are fled from God, they go a whoring from him; they revolt from their allegiance to him, as a servant that outruns his service, or a wife that treacherously departs from her husband, and they say unto God, Depart. They get as far off him as they can. This world is the far country in which they take up their residence, and are as at home; and in the service and enjoyment of it they spend their all. *Secondly*. It is the misery of sinners that they are afar off from God, from him who is the fountain of all good, and are going farther and farther from him. What is hell itself but being afar off from God?

2nd. A sinful state is a spending state. There he "wasted his substance with riotous living," ver. 13; devoured it "with harlots," ver. 30; and in a little time "he had spent all," ver. 14. He bought fine clothes, spent a deal in meat and drink, treated high, conversed with those that helped him to make an end of what he had in a little time. As to this world, they that live riotously waste what they have, and will have a great deal to answer for, that they spend that upon their lusts which should be for the necessary subsistence of themselves and their families;—but this is to be applied spiritually; wilful sinners waste their patrimony, for they misemploy their thoughts and all the powers of their souls, misspend their time and all their opportunities, do not only bury, but embezzle the talents they are intrusted to trade with for their Master's honour; and the gifts of Providence, which were intended to enable them to serve God, and do good with, are made the food and fuel of their lusts. The soul that is made a drudge, either to the world or to the flesh, wastes its substance, and lives riotously: "One sinner destroys much good," *Eccl. ix. 18*. The good he destroys is valuable, and it is none of his own; they are his Lord's goods that he wastes, which must be accounted for.

3rd. A sinful state is a wanting state. "When he had spent all" upon his harlots, they left him, to seek such another prey; and "there arose a mighty famine in that land," every thing was scarce and dear, "and he began to be in want," ver. 14. Note, Wilful waste brings woful want. Riotous living in little time, perhaps in a little time, brings men to a morsel of bread; especially when ill times hasten on the consequences of ill husbandry, which good husbandry would have provided for. This represents the misery of sinners, who have thrown away their own mercies, the favour of God, their interest in Christ, the strivings of the Spirit, the admonitions of conscience; these they game away for the pleasures of sense, and the wealth of the world, and then are ready to perish for want of them. Sinners want necessities for their souls; they have neither food nor raiment for them, nor any provision for hereafter. A sinful

xv. 12. The portion of his father's property which the younger son was entitled to was one-third. The elder son took the other two-thirds. (See *Deut. xxi. 17*.)

xv. 15. To feed swine would be in the eyes of a Jew almost as low a stage of degradation as could well be imagined.

xv. 16. The word for "husks" is not to be understood of husks in the common sense, but of the pods of the carob or locust-tree. They contain a seed like a bean, which becomes too hard to be crushed

between the teeth. The pods are sweet, and used to feed cattle with; they are neither unwholesome nor unpleasant, and to this day are often eaten by the poor in Spain, Africa, and the East.

xv. 23. As meat was not habitually eaten daily, it was customary to mark any specially joyous event by the killing of an animal for food.

xv. 25. The musicians and dancers would be hired for the purpose, as it was not customary for the host and his guests to play and

state is like a land where famine reigns—a mighty famine; for the heaven is as brass, the dews of God's favour and blessing are withheld, and we must needs want good things if God deny them us; and the earth is as iron; the sinner's heart, that should bring forth good things, is dry and barren, and has no good in it; those sinners are wretchedly and miserably poor; and what aggravates it, they brought themselves into that condition, and keep themselves in it by refusing the supplies offered.

4th. A sinful state is a vile, servile state. When this young man's riot had brought him to want, his want brought him to servitude, ver. 15: "he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country." The same wicked life that is before represented by riotous living, is here represented by servile living; for sinners are perfect slaves. The devil is the citizen of that country, for he is both in city and country; sinners join themselves to him, hire themselves into his service, to do his work, to be at his beck, and to depend upon him for maintenance and a portion. They that commit sin are the servants of sin, *Jno. viii. 34*. How did this young gentleman debase and disparage himself, when he hired himself into such a service, and under such a master as this. He "sent him into the fields," not to feed sheep,—there had been some credit in that employment; Jacob, and Moses, and David kept sheep,—but "to feed swine." The business of the devil's servants, is to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof; and that is no better than feeding greedy, dirty, noisy swine; and how can rational, immortal souls more disgrace themselves?

5th. A sinful state is a state of perpetual dissatisfaction. When the prodigal began to be in want, he thought to help himself by going to service; and he must be content with the provision which, not the house, but the field afforded; but it is poor provision, ver. 16: "he would fain have filled his belly," satisfied his hunger, and nourished his body "with the husks that the swine did eat." A fine pass my young master had brought himself to, to be fellow-commoner with the swine. Note, That which sinners when they depart from God promise themselves satisfaction in, will certainly disappoint them; they are labouring for that which satisfies not, *Isa. lv. 2*. That which is the stumbling-block of their iniquity will never satisfy their souls, nor fill their bowels, *Eze. vii. 19*; husks are food for swine, but not for men. The wealth of the world, and the entertainments of sense, will serve for bodies; but what are those to precious souls? They neither suit their nature, nor satisfy their desires, nor supply their needs. He that takes up with them feeds on wind, *Hos. xii. 1*; feeds on ashes, *Isa. xlv. 20*.

6th. A sinful state is a state which cannot expect relief from any creature. This prodigal, when he could not earn his bread by working, took to begging; but "no man gave unto him," because they knew he had brought all this misery upon himself, and because he was rakish and provoking to every body: such poor are least pitied. This, in the application of the parable, intimates that those who depart from God cannot be helped by any creature. In vain do we cry to the world and the flesh, those gods we have served; they have that which will poison a soul, but have nothing to give it which will feed and nourish it. If thou refuse God's help, whence shall any creature help thee?

7th. A sinful state is a state of death, ver. 24, 32: "This my son was dead." A sinner is not only dead in law, as he is under sentence of death, but dead in state too, dead in trespasses and sins, destitute of spiritual life; no union with Christ, no spiritual senses exercised, no living to God, and therefore dead. The prodigal in the far country was dead to his father and his family, cut off from them, as a member from the body, or a branch from the tree; and therefore dead, and it is his own doing.

8th. A sinful state is a lost state: "This my son was lost," lost to every thing that was good, lost to all virtue and honour, lost to his father's house; they had no joy of him. Souls that are separated from God, are lost souls, lost as a traveller that is out of his way; and, if Infinite Mercy prevent not, will soon be lost as a ship that is sunk at sea, lost irrecoverably.

9th. A sinful state is a state of madness and frenzy. This is intimated in that expression, ver. 17: "when he came to himself," which intimates that he had been beside himself; sure he was so when he left his father's house, and much more so when he joined himself to the citizen of that country. Madness is said to be in the heart of sinners, *Ecc. ix. 3*. Satan has got possession of the soul, and how raging mad was he that was possessed by Legion! Sinners, like those that are mad, destroy themselves with foolish lusts, and yet at the same time deceive themselves with foolish hopes; and they are, of all diseased persons, most enemies to their own cure.

Secondly. We have here his return from this ramble, his penitent return to his father again. When he was brought to the last extremity, then he bethought himself how much it was his interest to go home. Note, We must not despair of the worst, for while there is life there is hope. The grace of God can soften the hardest heart, and give a happy turn to the strongest stream of corruption. Now observe here,

1. What was the occasion of his return and repentance; it was his affliction; when he was in want, then he "came to himself." Note, Afflictions, when they are sanctified by Divine grace, prove happy means of turning sinners from the error of their ways. By them the ear is opened to discipline, and the heart disposed to receive instruction; and they are sensible proofs both of the vanity of the world and of the mischievousness of sin. Apply it spiritually; when we find the insufficiency of creatures to make us happy, and having tried all other ways of relief for our poor souls in vain, then it is time to think of returning to God. When we see what miserable comforters, what physicians of no value, all but Christ are, for a soul that groans under the guilt and power of sin, and no man gives unto us what we need, then sure we will apply ourselves to Jesus Christ.

2. What was the preparative in it; and that was consideration. He said within himself, he reasoned within himself, when he recovered his right mind, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough? Note, Consideration is the first step towards conversion, *Eze. xviii. 28*. He considers and turns. To consider, is to retire into ourselves, to reflect upon ourselves, and to compare one thing with another, and determine accordingly. Now observe what it was that he considered. 1st. He considered how bad his condition was; "I perish with hunger." Not only, I am hungry, but, "I perish with hunger," for I see not what way to expect relief. Note, Sinners will not come to the service of Christ till they are brought to see themselves just ready to perish in the service of sin, and the consideration of that should drive us to Christ: "Master, save us, we perish." And though we be thus driven to Christ, he will not therefore reject us, nor think himself dishonoured by our being forced to him, but rather honoured by his being applied to in a desperate case. 2nd. He considered how much better it might be made if he would but return: "How many hired servants of my father's," the meanest in his family, the very day labourers, "have bread enough and to spare," such a good house doth he keep. Note, *First*, In our Father's house there is bread for all his family; this was taught by the twelve loaves of shewbread that were constantly upon the holy table in the sanctuary, a loaf for every tribe. *Secondly*, There is enough and to spare, enough for all, enough for each, enough to spare to such as will join themselves to his domestics; enough, and to spare for charity. Yet

there is room; there are crumbs that fall from his table, which many would be glad of, and thankful for. *Thirdly*, Even the hired servants in God's family are well provided for; the meanest that will but hire themselves into his family to do his work, and depend upon his rewards, shall be well provided for. *Fourthly*, The consideration of this should encourage sinners that have gone astray from God to think of returning to him. Thus that adulteress reasons with herself, when she is disappointed in her new lovers: "I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now," *Hos. ii. 7*.

3. What was the purpose of it. Since it is so, that his condition is so bad, and may be bettered by returning to his father, his consideration issues at length in this conclusion, "I will arise, and go to my father." Note, Good purposes are good things, but still good performances are all in all. 1st. He determined what to do; "I will arise, and go to my father." He will not take any longer time to consider of it, but will forthwith arise and go. Though he be in a far country, a great way off from his father's house, yet, as far as it is, he will return. Every step of backsliding from God, must be a step back again in return to him. Though he be joined to a citizen of this country, he makes no difficulty of breaking his bargain with him; we are not debtors to the flesh, we are under no obligation at all to our Egyptian taskmasters, to give them warning, but are at liberty to quit the service when we will. Observe with what resolution he speaks; "I will arise, and go to my father;" I am resolved I will, whatever the issue be, rather than stay here and starve. 2nd. He determined what to say. True repentance is a rising and coming to God: "Behold we come unto thee." But what words shall we take with us? He here considers what to say. Note, In all our addresses to God, it is good to deliberate with ourselves beforehand what we shall say, that we may order our cause before him, and fill our mouth with arguments. We have liberty of speech, and we ought to consider seriously with ourselves how we may use that liberty to the utmost, and yet not abuse it. Let us observe what he purposed to say.

First, He would confess his fault and folly; "I have sinned." Note, Forasmuch as we have all sinned, it behoves and well becomes us to own that we have sinned. The confession of sin is required and insisted upon as a necessary condition of peace and pardon. If we plead, not guilty, we put ourselves upon a trial by the covenant of innocence, which will certainly condemn us. If we plead, guilty, with a contrite, penitent, and obedient heart, we refer ourselves to the covenant of grace, which offers forgiveness to those that confess their sins.

Secondly, He would aggravate it, and would be so far from extenuating the matter, that he would lay load upon himself for it: "I have sinned against heaven and before thee." Let those that are undutiful to their earthly parents think of this; they sin against heaven, and before God. Offences against them are offences against God. Let us all think of this, as that which renders our sin exceeding sinful, and should render us exceeding sorrowful for it. 1st. That sin is committed in contempt of God's authority over us; we have sinned against heaven. God is here called heaven, to signify how highly he is exalted above us, and the dominion he has over us, for the heavens do rule. The malignity of sin aims high, it is against heaven. The daring sinner is said to have set his mouth against the heavens, *Ps. lxxiii. 9*. Yet it is impotent malice, for we cannot hurt the heavens; nay, it is foolish malice; what is shot against the heavens will return upon the head of him that shoots it, *Ps. vii. 16*. Sin is an affront to the God of heaven; it is a forfeiture of the glories and joys of heaven; and a contradiction to the designs of the kingdom of heaven. 2nd. It is committed in contempt of God's eye upon us: "I have sinned against heaven," and yet "before thee," and under thine eye, than which there could not be a greater affront put upon him.

Thirdly, He would judge and condemn himself for it, and acknowledge himself to have forfeited all the privileges of the family; "I am no more worthy to be called thy son," ver. 29. He doth not deny the relation, for that was all he had to trust to; but he owns his father might justly deny the relation, and shut his doors against him. He had at his own demand the portion of goods that belonged to him, and had reason to expect no more. Note, It becomes sinners to acknowledge themselves unworthy to receive any favour from God, and to humble and abase themselves before him.

Fourthly, He would nevertheless sue for admission into the family, though it were into the meanest post there: "Make me as one of thy hired servants;" that is good enough, and too good for me. Note, True penitents have a high value for God's house, and the privileges of it, and will be glad of any place, so they may but be in it, though it be but as doorkeepers, *Ps. lxxxix. 10*. If it be imposed on him as a mortification to sit with the servants, he will not only submit to it, but count it a preferment in comparison with his present state. Those that return to God, from whom they have revolted, cannot but be desirous some way or other to be employed for him, and put into a capacity of serving and honouring him: "Make me as a hired servant," that I may shew I love my father's house as much as ever I slighted it.

Fifthly, In all this he would have an eye to his father as a father: "I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father." Note, Eyeing God as a Father, and our Father, will be of great use in our repentance and return to him. It will make our sorrow for sin genuine; our resolutions against it strong, and encourage us to hope for pardon. God delights, both by penitents and petitioners, to be called Father. Is not Ephraim a dear son?

4. What was the performance of this purpose; "He arose and came to his father." His good resolve he put in execution without delay; he struck while the iron was hot; and did not adjourn the thought to some more convenient season. Note, It is our interest speedily to close with our convictions. Have we said, we will arise and go? let us immediately arise and come. He did not come half way, and then pretend he was tired, and could get no farther; but, weak and weary as he was, he made a thorough business of it. "If thou wilt return, O Israel, return unto me," and "do thy first works."

Thirdly, We have here his reception and entertainment with his father. "He came to his father;" but was he welcome? Yes, heartily welcome. And by the way, it is an example to parents whose children have been foolish and disobedient, if they repent and submit themselves, not to be harsh and severe with them, but to be governed in such a case by the wisdom that is from above, which is gentle and easy to be intreated; herein let them be followers of God, and merciful as he is. But it is chiefly designed to set forth the grace and mercy of God to poor sinners that repent and return to him, and his readiness to forgive them. Now here observe,

1. The great love and affection wherewith the father received the son, ver. 20: "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him." He expressed his kindness before the son expressed his repentance; for God prevents us with the blessings of his goodness; even before we call, he answers; for he knows what is in our hearts: "I said, I will confess, and thou forgavest." How lively are the images of this here! 1st. Here were eyes of mercy, and those eyes quick-sighted; "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him," before any other of the family were aware of him, as if from the top of some high tower he had been looking that way that his son was gone, with such a thought

an answer. The phrase "that they may receive me," &c., is equivalent to "that I may be received into the houses of my friends."

xvi. 6. "A hundred measures" here would be "a hundred baths." The bath, according to Arbuthnot, was the same as the ephah, and equal to seven gallons and four pints. Hence a hundred measures of oil would be seven hundred and fifty gallons.

xvi. 7. "A hundred measures" here would be "a hundred cors." The cor was a Hebrew measure for corn, and, according to Arbuthnot,

dance in Oriental towns. At present the hired musicians are men, and the dancers usually women trained for the purpose.

xv. 31. Burckhardt notes of a tribe in Lebanon that it is customary for the sons, as soon as they are fifteen or sixteen years of age, to demand their share of the family property. The father retains one share for himself, which is disposed of at his death.

xvi. 4. The steward does not say who are to receive him, nor need we ask, although the creditors to be mentioned might supply

as this, O that I could see yonder wretched son of mine coming home! This intimates God's desire of the conversion of sinners, and his readiness to meet them that are coming towards him. He looketh on men when they are gone astray from him, to see whether they will return to him, and he is aware of the first inclination towards him. 2nd. Here were bowels of mercy, and those bowels turning within him, and yearning at the sight of his son, "he had compassion." Misery is the object of pity; even the misery of a sinner, though he has brought it upon himself, yet God compassionates; "his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel," *Hos. xi. 8*; *Jud. x. 16*. 3rd. Here were feet of mercy, and those feet quick-paced; "he ran;" this notes how swift God is to shew mercy. The prodigal son came slowly, under a burthen of shame and fear; but the tender father ran to meet him with his encouragements. 4th. Here were arms of mercy, and those arms stretched out to embrace him; "he fell on his neck," though guilty, and deserving to be beaten; though dirty, and newly come from feeding swine, that any one that had not the strongest and tenderest compassions of a father would have loathed to touch him; yet he thus takes him in his arms, and lays him in his bosom. Thus dear are true penitents to God, thus welcome to the Lord Jesus. 5th. Here are lips of mercy, and those lips dropping as a honeycomb, "he kissed him;" this kiss not only assured him of his welcome, but sealed his pardon; his former follies shall be all forgiven, and not mentioned against him, nor is one word said by way of upbraiding. This was like David's kissing Absalom, *2 Sam. xiv. 33*; and all this speaks how ready, and free, and forward the Lord Jesus is to receive and entertain poor returning, repenting sinners, according to his Father's will.

2. The penitent submission which the poor prodigal made to his father, ver. 21; "he said unto him, Father, I have sinned." As it commends the good father's kindness, that he shewed it before the prodigal expressed his repentance; so it commends the prodigal's repentance, that he expressed it after his father had shewed him so much kindness. When he had received the kiss which sealed his pardon, yet he said, "Father, I have sinned." Note, Even those that have received the pardon of their sins, and the comfortable sense of their pardon, yet must have in their hearts a sincere contrition for it, and with their mouths must make a penitent confession of it, even of those sins which they have reason to hope are pardoned. David penned *Psal. li.* after Nathan had said, "The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." Nay, the comfortable sense of the pardon of sin should increase our sorrow for it; and that is ingenious evangelical sorrow which is increased by such a consideration; see *Eze. xvi. 6*, "Thou shalt be ashamed and confounded, when I am pacified towards thee." The more we see of God's readiness to forgive us, the more difficult it should be to us to forgive ourselves.

3. The splendid provision which this kind father made for the returning prodigal. He was going on in his submission, but one word we find in his purpose what to say, ver. 19, which we do not find he did say, ver. 21, and that was, "make me as one of the hired servants." We cannot think he forgot it, much less that he changed his mind, and was now either less desirous to be in the family, or less willing to be a hired servant there, than when he made that purpose; but his father interrupted him, prevented his saying it; Hold, son, talk no more of this unworthiness, thou art heartily welcome, and though not worthy to be called a son, shalt be treated as a dear son, as a pleasant child. He who is thus entertained at first, needs not ask to be made as a hired servant. Thus when Ephraim bemoaned himself, God comforted him, *Jer. xxxi. 18, 20*. It is strange that here is not one word of rebuke, Why did you not stay with your harlots and your swine? You could never find the way home until beaten hither with your own rod. No, here is nothing like this; which intimates, that when God forgives the sins of true penitents, he forgets them, he remembers them no more, they shall not be mentioned against them, *Eze. xviii. 22*.

But this is not all; here is rich and royal provision made for him, according to his birth and quality, far beyond what he did or could expect. He would have thought it sufficient, and been very thankful, if his father had but taken notice of him, and bid him go to the kitchen and get his dinner with the servants; but God doth for those who return to their duty, and cast themselves upon his mercy, abundantly above what they are able to ask or think. The prodigal came home between hope and fear; fear of being rejected, and hope of being received; but his father was not only better to him than his fears, but better to him than his hopes; not only received him, but received him with respect.

1st. He came home in rags; and his father not only clothed him, but adorned him; "he said to the servants" who all attended their master, upon notice that his son was come, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." The worst old clothes in the house might have served, and had been good enough for him; but the father calls not for a coat, but for a robe, the garment of princes and great men; the best robe, *την ἀριστην τὴν πρώτην*, there is a double emphasis, "that robe, that principal robe," you know which I mean; "the first robe," so it may be read, the robe he wore before he ran his ramble. When backsliders repent, and do their first works, they shall be received and dressed in their first robes. Bring hither that robe, and put it on him; he will be ashamed to wear it, and think it ill becomes him, who comes home in such a dirty pickle; but put it on him, and do not offer it him only; and "put a ring on his hand," a signet ring, with the arms of the family, in token of his being owned as a branch of the family. Rich people wore rings, and his father hereby signified, that though he had spent one portion, yet upon his repentance he intended him another. He came home barefoot; his feet perhaps sore with travel, and therefore "put shoes on his feet," to make him easy.

Thus doth the grace of God provide for true penitents. First. The righteousness of Christ is the robe, that principal robe with which they are clothed; they "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," are clothed with that sun. The robe of righteousness is the garment of salvation, *Isa. lxi. 10*. A new nature is this best robe; true penitents are clothed with that, being sanctified throughout. Secondly. The earnest of the Spirit, "by whom we are sealed to the day of redemption," is the ring on the hand; "after that ye believed, ye were sealed." They that are sanctified, are adorned and dignified; are put in power, as Joseph was by Pharaoh's giving him a ring. "Put a ring on his hand," to be before him a constant memorial of his father's kindness, that he may never forget it. Thirdly. The preparation of the Gospel of peace is shoes for our feet, *Eph. vi. 15*; so that compared with this here signifies, saith Grotius, that God when he receives true penitents into his favour, makes use of them for the convincing and converting of others by their instructions, at least, by their examples. David, when pardoned, will teach transgressors God's ways; and Peter, when he is converted, will strengthen his brethren. Or, it intimates that they shall go on cheerfully, and with resolution in the way of religion; as a man doth when he hath shoes on his feet, over as he doth when he is barefoot.

2nd. He came home hungry; and his father not only fed him, but feasted him; ver. 23, "Bring hither the fatted calf," that has been stall fed, and long reserved for some special occasion; and kill it, that my son may have his bellyful of the best we have. Cold meat might have served, or the leavings of the last meal, but he shall have fresh meat, and hot meat, and the fatted calf can never be better bestowed. Note. There is excellent food provided by our

heavenly Father for all those that arise and come to him. Christ himself is the bread of life; his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; in him there is a feast for souls, a feast of fat things. It was a great change with the prodigal, who but a while ago "would fain have filled his belly with husks." How sweet will the supplies of the new covenant be, and the relishes of its comforts, to those who have been labouring in vain for satisfaction in the creature! Now he found his own words made good, "In my father's house there is bread enough and to spare."

4. The great joy and rejoicing that there was for his return. The bringing of the fatted calf was designed to be not only a feast for him, but a festival for the family; "Let us all eat and be merry," for it is a good day; "for this my son was dead," when he was in his ramble, but his return is as life from the dead, "he is alive again;" we thought he was dead, having heard nothing from him of a long time, but behold he lives; "he was lost," we gave him up for lost, we despaired of hearing of him, "but he is found." Note, 1st. The conversion of a soul from sin to God, is the raising of that soul from death to life, and the finding of that which seemed to be lost. It is a great, and wonderful, and happy change. What was in itself dead, is made alive; what was lost to God and his church, is found; and what was unprofitable becomes profitable, *Phil. 11*; it is such a change as that upon the face of the earth when the spring returns. 2nd. The conversion of sinners is greatly pleasing to the God of heaven, and all that belong to his family ought to rejoice in it; those in heaven do, and those on earth should. Observe, it was the father that began the joy, and set all the rest on rejoicing; therefore we should be glad of the repentance of sinners, because it accomplishes God's designs, it is the bringing of those to Christ whom the Father had given him, and in whom he will be for ever glorified. "We joy for your sakes before our God," with an eye to him, *1 Thes. iii. 9*; and "ye are our rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ," who is the master of the family, *1 Thes. ii. 19*. The family complied with the master, "they began to be merry." Note, God's children and servants ought to be affected with things as he is.

Fourthly. We have here the repining and envying of the elder brother, which is described by way of reproof to the scribes and Pharisees, to shew them the folly and wickedness of their discontent at the repentance and conversion of the publicans and sinners, and the favour Christ shewed them; and he represents it so as not to aggravate the matter, but as allowing them still the privileges of elder brethren; the Jews had so, though the Gentiles were favoured, for the preaching of the Gospel must begin at Jerusalem. Christ, when he reproves them for their fault, yet spoke them fair, to smooth them into a good temper towards the poor publicans. But by the elder brother here, we may understand those that are really good, and have been so from their youth up, and never went astray into any vicious course of living, who comparatively need no repentance. And to such these words in the close, "Son, thou art ever with me," are applicable without any difficulty, but not to the scribes and Pharisees. Now concerning the elder brother, observe,

1. How foolish and fretful he was upon occasion of his brother's reception, and how he was disgusted at it. It seems he was abroad in the field, in the country, when his brother came, and by that time he was returned home the mirth was begun; when "he drew nigh to the house he heard music and dancing," either while the dinner was in getting ready, or rather after they had eaten and were full, ver. 25. He inquired "what those things meant," ver. 26, and was informed that his brother was come, and his father had made him a feast for his welcome home, and great joy there was, "because he had received him safe and sound," ver. 27. It is but one word in the original, he had received him *ἐν ὑγιαίνοντι*, "in health," well both in body and mind. He received him not only well in body, but a penitent; returned to his right mind, and well reconciled to his father's house, cured of his vices and his rakish disposition, else he had not been received safe and sound. Now this disoblinded him to the highest degree; "he was angry, and would not go in," ver. 28; not only because he was resolved he would not himself join in the mirth, but because he would shew his displeasure at it, and would intimate to his father that he should have kept out his younger brother. This shews, what is a common fault, 1st. In men's families, that those who have been a comfort to their parents think they should have the monopoly of their parents' favours, and are apt to be too sharp upon those who have transgressed, and to grudge their parents' kindness to them. 2nd. In God's family, those that are comparatively innocents seldom know how to be compassionate towards those that are manifestly penitents. The language of such we have here in what the elder brother said, ver. 29, 30; and it is written for warning to those that by the grace of God are kept from scandalous sin, and kept in the way of virtue and sobriety, that they sin not after the similitude of this transgression. Let us observe the particulars of it.

First. He boasted of himself, and of his own virtue and obedience. He had not only not outrun his father's house, as his brother did, but had made himself as a servant in it, and had done so long; "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment." Note, It is too common for those that are better than their neighbours to brag of it, yea, and to make their boasts of it before God himself, as if he were indebted to them for it. I am apt to think this elder brother said more than was true, when he gloried that he had never transgressed his father's commands, for then I believe he would not have been so obstinate as now he was to his father's entreaties. However, we will admit it comparatively, he had not been so disobedient as his brother had been. O, what need have good men to take heed of pride, a corruption that ariseth out of the ashes of other corruptions. Those that have long served God, and been kept from gross sin, have a great deal to be humbly thankful for, but nothing proudly to boast of.

Secondly. He complained of his father, as if he had not been so kind to him as he ought to have been, who had been so dutiful; "thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends." He was out of humour now, else he would not have made this complaint; for, no question, if he had asked such a thing at any time, he might have had it at first word; and we have reason to think he did not desire it; but the killing of the fatted calf put him upon making this peevish reflection. When men are in passion they are apt to reflect so as they would not if they were in their right mind. He had been fed at his father's table, and had many a time been merry with him and the family, but his father had never given him so much as a kid, which was but a small token of love compared with the fatted calf. Note, Those that think highly of themselves and their services, are apt to think hardly of their master, and meanly of his favours. We ought to own ourselves utterly unworthy of those mercies which God hath thought fit to give us, much more of those that he hath not thought fit to give us, and therefore we must not complain. He would have had a kid to make merry with his friends abroad; whereas the fatted calf he grudged so much, was given to his brother, not to make merry with his friends abroad, but with the family at home. The mirth of God's children should be with their Father and his family, in communion with God and his saints, and not with any other friends.

Thirdly. He was very ill-humoured towards his younger brother, and harsh in what he thought and said concerning him. Some good people are apt to be overtaken in this fault; nay, and to indulge themselves too much in it, to look with disdain upon those who have not preserved their reputation so clean as

was equal to a homer, or thirty-two pecks and one pint. A hundred cors, therefore, equal somewhat over one hundred English quarters.

xvi. 8. Our version is unhappy in the phrase "the lord," which perverse men pounce upon to prove that the Lord Jesus commended an unjust man and deed. All through the passage the word "lord" means the man's master, and so here "his master." Here again we have an example of illustrations conveying moral lessons, while based upon utterly unjustifiable conduct. No praise is conveyed by

the word "wisely," which merely means "ingeniously." In the next clause it has no other signification. With respect to the last clause, "for the children," &c., we see no reason to doubt that it is a comment made by the Saviour himself.

xvi. 9. To the popular mind the precept here causes little difficulty, unless warped by some prejudice. Yet the passage is one from which the most opposite conclusions have been drawn. The "mammon of unrighteousness" here is the "unrighteous mammon" of verse 11.

they have done, and to be sour and morose towards them; yea, though they have given very good evidences of their repentance and reformation: this is not the spirit of Christ, but of the Pharisees. Let us observe the instances of it:

1st. "He would not go in," except his brother be turned out; one house shall not hold him and his own brother, no, not his father's house. The language of this was that of the Pharisee, *Isa. lxxv. 5*, "Stand by thyself, come not near me, for I am holier than thou;" and *ch. xviii. 11*, "I am not as other men are, nor even as this publican." Note, Though we are to shun the society of those sinners whom we are in danger of being infected by, yet we must not be shy of the company of penitent sinners, whom we may get good by. He saw his father had taken him in, and yet he would not go in to him. Note, We think too well of ourselves, if we cannot find in our hearts to receive those God hath received; and to admit those into favour and friendship and fellowship with us whom we have reason to think God has a favour for, and are taken into friendship and fellowship with him.

2nd. He would not call him brother; but, "this thy son," which sounds arrogantly, and not without reflection upon his father, as if his indulgence had made him a prodigal; he is thy son, thy darling. Note, Forgetting the relation we stand in to our brethren, as brethren, and disowning that, is at the bottom of all our neglects of our duty to them, and our contradictions to that duty. Let us give our relations, both in the flesh and in the Lord, the titles that belong to them. Let the rich call the poor brethren, and let the innocents call the penitents so.

3rd. He aggravated his brother's faults, and made the worst of them, endeavouring to incense his father against him; he is "thy son, who hath devoured thy living with harlots." It is true he had spent his own portion foolishly enough, whether upon harlots or no, we are not told before; perhaps that was only the language of his elder brother's jealousy and ill-will; but that he had devoured all his father's living was false; the father had still a good estate. Now this shews how apt we are, in censuring our brethren, to make the worst of every thing, and to set it out in the blackest colours; which is not doing as we would be done by, nor as our heavenly Father doth by us, who is not extreme to mark iniquities.

4th. He grudged him the kindness that his father shewed him; "thou hast killed for him the fatted calf," as if he were such a son as should be. Note, It is an ill thing to envy penitents the grace of God, and to have our eye evil because his is good. As we must not envy those that are the worst of sinners the gifts of common providence, "Let not thine heart envy sinners," so we must not envy those that have been the worst of sinners the gifts of covenant love, upon their repentance; we must not envy them their pardon, and peace, and comfort, no, nor any extraordinary gift God bestows upon them, which makes them eminently acceptable or useful. Paul, before his conversion, had been a prodigal, had devoured his heavenly Father's living by the havoc he made of the church; yet, when after his conversion he had greater measures of grace given him, and more honour put upon him than the other apostles, they who were the elder brethren, that had been serving Christ when he was persecuting him, and had not transgressed at any time his commandments, did not envy him his visions and revelations, nor his more extensive usefulness, but glorified God in him, which ought to be an example to us, as the reverse of this elder brother.

2. Let us now see how favourable and friendly his father was in his carriage towards him, when he was thus sour and ill-humoured; and this is as surprising as the former. Methinks the mercy and grace of our God in Christ shine almost as bright in his tender and gentle bearing with peevish sinners, represented by the elder brother here, as before, in his reception of prodigal sinners upon their repentance, represented before by the younger brother. The disciples of Christ themselves had many infirmities, and were men subject to like passions as others, yet Christ bare with them, as a nurse with her children: see *1 Thes. ii. 7*.

1st. When he would not come in, "his father came out and entreated him," spoke him fair, gave him good words, and desired him to come in. He might justly have said, "If he will not come in, let him stay out; shut the doors against him, and send him to seek a lodging where he can find it. Is not the house my own, and may I not do what I please in it? the fatted calf my own, and may I not do what I please with it?" No, as he went to meet the younger son, so now he goes to court the elder; did not send a servant out with a kind message to him, but went himself. Now, *First*, This is designed to represent to us the goodness of God; how strangely gentle and winning he has been towards those that were strangely froward and provoking. He reasoned with Cain, "Why art thou wroth?" He bare Israel's manners in the wilderness, *Acts xv. 18*. How mildly did God reason with Elijah, when he was upon the fret, *1 Kin. xix. 4-6*; and especially with Jonah, whose case was very parallel with this here, for he was there disquieted at the repentance of Nineveh, and the mercy shewn it, as the elder brother here; and those questions, "Dost thou well to be angry?" and, "Should not I spare Nineveh?" are not unlike these expostulations of the father with the elder brother here. *Secondly*, It is to teach all superiors to be mild and gentle with their inferiors, even when they are in a fault, and passionately justify themselves in it, than which nothing can be more provoking; and yet even in that case let fathers not provoke their children to more wrath, and masters forbear threatening, and both shew all meekness.

2nd. His father assured him that the kind entertainment he gave his younger brother neither was any reflection upon him, nor should be any prejudice to him, ver. 31. Thou shalt far never the worse for it, nor have ever the less for it; "son, thou art ever with me," the reception of him is no rejection of thee, nor what is laid out on him any sensible diminution of what I design for thee; thou shalt still remain entitled to the *pars emtia*, so our law calls it; a double portion, so the Jewish law called it; "thou shalt be *heres ex asse*," so the Roman law called it; "all that I have is thine," by an indefeasible title. If he had not given him a kid to make merry with his friends, he had eaten bread at his table continually; and it is better he should be happy with our Father in heaven, than merry with any friend we have in this world. Note, *First*, It is the unspeakable happiness of all the children of God, who keep close to their Father's house, that they are and shall be ever with him; they are so in this world by faith, they shall be so in the other world by fruition, and all that he has is theirs; for if children, then heirs, *Rom. viii. 17*. *Secondly*, Therefore we ought not to envy others God's grace to them, because we shall have never the less for their sharing in it. If we be true believers, all that God is, and all that he has, is ours; and if others come to be true believers, all that he is, and all that he has, is theirs too; and yet we have not the less. As they that walk in the light and warmth of the sun have all the benefit they can have by it, and yet not the less for others having as much; for Christ in his church is like as thry say of the soul in the body, it is *tota in toto*,—"the whole in the whole," and yet *tota in qualibet parte*,—"the whole in each part."

3rd. His father gave him a good reason for this uncommon joy in the family: ver. 32, "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad." He might have insisted upon his own authority; "It was my will that the family should make merry and be glad," *stat pro ratione voluntas*,—"my reason is, I will it to be so." But it doth not become even those that have authority to be vouching and

appealing to it upon every occasion; that doth but make it cheap and common; it is better give a convincing reason, as the father doth here; "it was meet," and very becoming, "that we should make merry" for the return of a prodigal son, more than for the perseverance of a dutiful son; for, though the latter be a greater blessing to a family, yet the former is a more sensible pleasure. Any family would be much more transported with joy at the raising of a dead child to life, yea, or at the recovery of a child from a sickness that was adjudged mortal, than for the continued life and health of many children. Note, God will be justified when he speaks, and all flesh shall sooner or later be silent before him. We do not find any reply that the elder brother made to what his father said, which intimates that he was entirely satisfied, and acquiesced in his father's will, and was well reconciled to his prodigal brother; and his father put him in mind that he was his brother; "this thy brother." Note, A good man, though he have not such command of himself at all times as to keep his temper, yet will, with the grace of God, recover his temper; "though he fall, yet shall he not be utterly cast down;" but as for the scribes and Pharisees, for whose conviction it was primarily intended, for aught appears, they continued the same disaffection to the sinners of the Gentiles, and to the Gospel of Christ because it was preached to them.

CHAPTER XVI.

The scope of Christ's discourse in this chapter is to awaken and quicken us all so to use this world as not to abuse it; so to manage all our possessions and enjoyments here as that they may make for us, and may not make against us, in the other world; for they will do either the one or the other, according as we use them now. I. If we do good with them, and lay out what we have in works of piety and charity, we shall reap the benefit of it in the world to come; and this he shews in the parable of the unjust steward, who made so good a hand of his lord's goods, as that, when he was turned out of his stewardship, he had a comfortable subsistence to betake himself to. The parable itself we have, ver. 1-8; the reddition and application of it, ver. 9-13; and the contempt which the Pharisees put upon the doctrine which Christ preached to them, for which he sharply reproved them, adding some other weighty sayings, ver. 14-18. II. If, instead of doing good with our worldly enjoyments, we make them the food and fuel of our lusts, of our luxury and sensuality, and deny relief to the poor, we shall certainly perish eternally, and the things of this world which were thus abused will but add to our misery and torment. This he shews in the other parable, of the rich man and Lazarus, which has likewise a farther reach, and that is, to awaken us all to take the warning given us by the written Word, and not to expect immediate messages from the other world, ver. 19-31.



AND he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. 2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. 3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. 4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. 5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? 6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. 7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. 8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. 9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. 10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. 11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12 And if

and is worldly wealth, which is too often associated with injustice. The possessor of this wealth is bidden so to use it as to conciliate friends by means of it. For "when ye fail," the better reading is "when it fails," i.e., the wealth, the endurance of which is uncertain. On its failure the friends secured will welcome its former owner into everlasting habitations, or tabernacles, as the Greek is. It would be contrary to the spirit of the Gospel to infer from this that all who are made friends by means of wealth either go to heaven, and that

before those who have made them friends, or have the power to receive them there. Nor can we infer that rich men who make friends by their money are sure to go to heaven. If it were so, then beggary and almsgiving would be more than virtues, they would give a title to salvation. True, our Lord mentions neither alms nor paupers, and the preceding parable favours the introduction of neither. There the friends are made by bribery, and are not poor. Hence we must conclude the general leading idea of this verse to be such a prudent

ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? 13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. 14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. 15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. 16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. 17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. 18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

We mistake if we imagine that the design of Christ's doctrine and holy religion was either to amuse us with notions of Divine mysteries, or to entertain us with notions of Divine mercies. No, the Divine revelation of both those in the Gospel is intended to engage and quicken us to the practice of Christian duties, and as much as any one thing, to the duty of beneficence, and doing good to those who stand in need of any thing that either we have or can do for them. This our Saviour is here pressing us to, by minding us that we are but "stewards of the manifold grace of God;" and since we have in divers instances been unfaithful, and have forfeited the favour of our Lord, it is our wisdom to think how we may some other way make what we have in the world turn to a good account. Parables must not be forced beyond their primary intention, and therefore we must not hence infer that any one can befriend us if we lie under the displeasure of our Lord; but that, in the general, we must so lay out what we have in works of piety and charity, as that we may meet it again with comfort on the other side death and the grave. If we would act wisely, we must be as diligent and industrious to employ our riches in the acts of piety and charity, in order to promote our future and eternal welfare, as worldly men are in laying them out to the greatest temporal profit, in making to themselves friends with them, and securing other secular interests. So Dr. Clark. Now let us consider,

First. The parable itself, in which all the children of men are represented as stewards of what they have in this world; and we are but stewards; whatever we have, the property of it is God's; we have only the use of it, and that according to the direction of our great Lord, and for his honour. Rabbi Kimchi, quoted by Dr. Lightfoot, saith, 'This world is a house, heaven the roof; the stars the lights; the earth, with its fruits, a table spread; the master of the house is the holy and blessed God; man is the steward, into whose hands the goods of this house are delivered; if he behave himself well, he shall find favour in the eyes of his Lord; if not, he shall be turned out of his stewardship.' Now,

1. Here is the dishonesty of this steward; he "wasted his lord's goods," embezzled them, misapplied them, or, through carelessness, suffered them to be lost and damaged; and for this he was accused to his lord, ver. 1. We are all liable to the same charge; we have not made a due improvement of what God has intrusted us with in this world, but have perverted his purpose; and that we may not be for this judged of our Lord, it concerns us to judge ourselves.

2. His discharge out of his place: "His lord called for him, and said, How is it that I hear this of thee?" "I expected better things from thee." He speaks as one sorry to find himself disappointed in him, and under a necessity of dismissing him from his service. It troubles him to hear it, but the steward cannot deny it, and therefore there is no remedy; he must make up his accounts, and be gone in a little time, ver. 2. Now this is designed to teach us, 1st. That we must all of us shortly be discharged from our stewardship in this world; we must not always enjoy those things we now enjoy. Death will come and dismiss us from our stewardship, will deprive us of the abilities and opportunities we now have of doing good, and others will come in our places and have the same. 2nd. That our discharge from our stewardship at death is just, and what we have deserved; for we have wasted our Lord's goods, and thereby forfeited our trust; so that we cannot complain of any wrong done us. 3rd. That when our stewardship is taken from us, we must give an account of it to our Lord; "after death the judgment;" both which, both our discharge and our account, we are fairly warned of, and ought to be frequently thinking of.

3. His after-wisdom; now he began to consider, "What shall I do?" ver. 3. He would have done well to have considered that before he had so foolishly thrown himself out of a good place by his unfaithfulness; but it is better to consider late than never. Note, Since we have all received notice that we must shortly be turned out of our stewardship, we are concerned to consider what we shall do then. He must live; which way shall he have a livelihood?

1st. He knows he has not such a degree of industry in him as to get his living by work; "I cannot dig;" "I cannot earn my bread by my labour." But why can he not dig? It doth not appear that he was either old or lame; but the truth is, he is lazy; his cannot is a will not; it is not a natural, but a moral disability that he labours under; if his master, when he turned him out of the stewardship, had continued him in his service as a labourer, and set a taskmaster over him, he would have made him dig. He cannot dig, for he was never used to it. Now this intimates that we cannot get a livelihood for our souls by any labour for this world, nor indeed can do any thing to purpose for our souls by any ability of our own.

2nd. He knows he has not such a degree of humility as to get his bread by begging: "to beg I am ashamed." This was the language of his pride, as the

former of his slothfulness; those whom God in his providence has disabled to help themselves should not be ashamed to ask relief of others. This steward had more reason to be ashamed of his cheating his master than of begging his bread.

3rd. He therefore determines to make friends of his lord's debtors, or his tenants that were behind of their rent, and had given notes under their hand for it; ver. 4, "I am resolved what to do." My lord turns me out of his house; I have none of my own to go to; I am acquainted with my lord's tenants, have done them many a good turn, and now I will do them one more, which will so oblige them that they will bid me welcome to their houses and the best entertainment they afford; and so long as I live, at least till I can better dispose of myself, I will quarter upon them, and go from one good house to another. Now the way he would take to make them his friends was, by striking off a considerable part of their debt to his lord, and giving it in his accounts so much less than it was. Accordingly he sent for one that owed his lord "a hundred measures of oil;" in that commodity he paid his rent: "Take thy bill," said he; here it is, "and sit down quickly, and write fifty," ver. 6; so he reduced his debt one half. Observe, He was in haste to have it done: "sit down quickly" and do it, lest we be taken treating, and suspected. He took another, that owed his lord an hundred measures of wheat, and from his bill he cut off a fifth part, and bid him write fourscore, ver. 7; and probably he did the like by others; abating more or less, according as he expected kindness from them. See here what uncertain things our worldly possessions are, and most so to those that have most of them, who devolve upon others all the care concerning them, and so put it into their power to cheat them, because they will not trouble themselves to see with their own eyes. See also what treachery is to be found even among those in whom trust is reposed. How hard is it it to find one that a confidence can be reposed in! "Let God be true, but every man a liar." Though this steward is turned out for dealing dishonestly, yet still he doth so. So rare is it for men to mend a fault, though they smart for it.

4. The approbation of this: ver. 8, "The lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely." Whether it be meant of his lord, the lord of that servant, who, though he could not but be angry at his knavery, yet was pleased with his ingenuity and policy for himself; but taking it so, the latter part of the verse must be the words of our Lord, and therefore I think the whole is meant of him. Christ did as it were say, 'Now commend me to such a man as this, that knows how to do well for himself, how to improve a present opportunity, and how to provide for a future necessity.' He doth not commend him because he had done falsely to his master, but because he had done wisely for himself. Yet perhaps herein he did well for his master too, and but justly with the tenants. He knew what hard bargains he had set them, so that they could not pay their rent, but, having been screwed up by his rigour, were thrown behindhand, and they and their families were likely to go to ruin; and in consideration of this, he now, at going off, did as he ought to do, both in justice and charity; not only easing them of part of their arrears, but abating of their rent for the future. "How much owest thou?" may be meant, 'What rent dost thou sit upon?' 'Come,' saith he, 'I will set thee an easier bargain, and yet no easier than what thou oughtest to have.' He had been all for his lord, but now he begins to consider the tenants, that he might have their favour when he had lost his lord's. The abating of their rent would be a lasting kindness, and more likely to engage them than abating their arrears only.

Now this forecast of his, for a comfortable subsistence in this world, shames our improvidence for another world. "The children of this world," that choose and have their portion in it, "are wiser for their generation," act more considerately, and better consult their worldly interest and advantage, "than the children of light," who enjoy the Gospel in their generation, that is, in the concerns of their souls and eternity. Note, 1st. The wisdom of worldly people in the concerns of this world is to be imitated by us in the concerns of our souls; it is their principle to improve their opportunities, to do that first which is most needful; in summer and harvest to lay up for winter; to take a good bargain when it is offered them; to trust the faithful, and not the false. O that we were thus wise in our spiritual affairs! 2nd. The children of light are commonly outdone by the children of this world. Not that the children of this world are truly wise, but only in their generation; but in that they "are wiser than the children of light" in theirs; for though we are told that we must shortly be turned out of our stewardship, yet we do not provide as we should for such a day; we live as if we were to be here always, and as if there were not another life after this, and are not solicitous, as this steward was, to provide for hereafter; though as children of light, that light to which life and immortality are brought by the Gospel, we cannot but see another world before us, yet do not prepare for it, do not send our best effects and best affections thither, as we should.

5. The application of this parable, and the inferences drawn from it, ver. 9: "I say unto you," you my disciples, for to them this parable is directed, ver. 1, though you have but little in this world, consider how you may do good with that little. Observe,

1st. What it is that our Lord Jesus here exhorts us to; to provide for our comfortable reception to the happiness of another world, by making good use of our possessions and enjoyments in this world; "make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," as the steward with his lord's goods made his lord's tenants his friends. It is the wisdom of the men of this world so to manage their money as that they may have the benefit of it hereafter, and not for the present only; therefore they put it out to interest, buy land with it, put it into this or the other fund. Now we should learn of them to make use of our money so as that we may be the better for it hereafter in another world, as they do in hopes to be the better for it hereafter in this world; so cast it upon the waters as that we may find it again after many days, Eccl. xi. 1. And in our case, though whatever we have is our Lord's goods, yet as long as we dispose of them among our Lord's tenants, and for their advantage, it is so far reckoned from being a wrong to our Lord, that it is duty to him, as well as policy for ourselves.

Note, First. The things of this world are the mammon of unrighteousness, or the false mammon; not only because often got by fraud and unrighteousness, but because those who trust to it for satisfaction and happiness will certainly be deceived; for riches are perishing things, and will disappoint those that raise their expectations from them. Secondly. Though this mammon of unrighteousness is not to be trusted to for a happiness, yet it may and must be made use of, in subserviency to our pursuit of that which is our happiness. Though we cannot find true satisfaction in it, yet we may make to ourselves friends with it, not by way of purchase or merit, but recommendation; so we may make God and Christ our friends, the good angels and saints our friends, and the poor our friends; and it is a desirable thing to be befriended in the account and state to come. Thirdly. At death we must all fail, *ὅταν ἐκλίνωμεν*, "when ye suffer an eclipse;" death eclipseth us. A tradesman is said to fail when he becomes a bankrupt; we must all thus fail shortly; death shuts up the shop, seals up the hand. Our comforts and enjoyments on earth will all fail us; flesh and heart fail. Fourthly. It ought to be our great concern to make it sure to ourselves, that when we fail, at death, we may be received into

use of wealth as shall be of advantage when the wealth itself shall depart, be it soon or be it late. Yet it is usual to limit the application of the passage to gifts bestowed upon the poor. This has given occasion to a materialising exegesis, which has confounded poverty of spirit with literal poverty, and excluded the greater by glorifying the lesser. Almsgiving is in truth a virtuous deed and a Christian duty; but when it is made a means of pardon and salvation, it is put in the place of Christ. The annotators of the

Rhemish version have done all this and more; they have gathered from this text the doctrine that dead saints pray for their living benefactors. Nay, they make it teach that "alms bestowed specially upon holy men, who by their merits and prayers are great in God's grace, may much more help us than our charitable deeds done upon vulgar men in necessity, though that be of exceeding great merit also." Such doctrine tends directly to turn aside Christian charity from the sinners whom Christ came to call, and makes almsgiving a

everlasting habitations in heaven. The habitations in heaven are everlasting; not made with hands, but eternal, 2 Cor. v. 1. Christ is gone before, to prepare a place for those that are his, and is there ready to receive them; the bosom of Abraham is ready to receive them; and when a guard of angels carries them thither, a choir of angels is ready to receive them there. The poor saints, that are gone before to glory, will receive those that in this world distributed to their necessities. *Fifthly.* This is a good reason why we should use what we have in the world for the honour of God and the good of our brethren, that thus we may with them lay up in store a good bond, a good security, "a good foundation for the time to come," for an eternity to come: see 1 Tim. vi. 17—19, which explains this here.

2nd. With what arguments he presseth this exhortation to abound in works of piety and charity.

First. If we do not make a right use of the gifts of God's providence, how can we expect from him those present and future comforts which are the gifts of his spiritual grace? Our Saviour here compares these, and shews that though our faithful use of the things of this world cannot be thought to merit any favour at the hand of God, yet our unfaithfulness in the use of them may be justly reckoned a forfeiture of that grace which is necessary to bring us to glory, and that is it which our Saviour here shews, ver. 10—12. 1st. The riches of this world are the less; grace and glory are the greater. Now if we be unfaithful in the less, if we use the things in this world to other purposes than those for which they were given us, it may justly be feared we shall be so in the gifts of God's grace, that we will receive them also in vain, and therefore they will be denied us: "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." He that serves God, and doth good with his money, will serve God, and do good with the more noble and valuable talents of wisdom and grace, and spiritual gifts, and the earnestness of heaven; but he that buries the one talent of this world's wealth, will never improve the five talents of spiritual riches. God withholdeth his grace from covetous worldly people more than we are aware of. 2nd. The riches of this world are deceitful and uncertain; it is "the unrighteous mammon," which is hastening from us apace, and which, if we will make any advantage of, we must bestir ourselves quickly; but if we do not, how can we expect to be intrusted with spiritual riches, which are the only true riches? ver. 11. Let us be convinced of this, that those are truly rich, and very rich, who are rich in faith, and rich towards God, rich in Christ, and in the promises, and in the earnestness of heaven; and therefore let us lay up our treasure in them, and expect our portion from them, and mind them in the first place, "the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof," and then, if other things be added to us, use them *in ordine ad spiritualia*,—with a spiritual reference; so as that, by using them well, we may take the faster hold of the true riches, and may be qualified to receive yet more grace from God, for "God giveth to a man that is good in his sight," that is, to a free-hearted, charitable man, "wisdom, and knowledge, and joy," Eccl. ii. 26; that is, to a man that is faithful in the unrighteous mammon he gives the true riches. 3rd. The riches of this world are another man's; they are *τά ἀλλότρια*, not 'our own,' for they are foreign to the soul and its nature and interest: they are not our own, for they are God's; his title to them is prior and superior to ours, the property remains in him; we are but usufructuaries, they are another man's; we have them from others, we use them for others; and what good has the owner from his goods that increase, save the beholding of them with his eyes, while still they are increased that eat them? and we must shortly leave them to others, and we know not who. But spiritual and eternal interests are our own; they enter into the soul that becomes possessed of them, and inseparably; they are a good part, that will never be taken away from us: if we make Christ our own, and the promises our own, and heaven our own, we have that which we may truly call our own. But how can we expect God should enrich us with these, if we do not serve him with our worldly possessions, which we are but stewards of?

Secondly. We have no other way to prove ourselves the servants of God, but by giving up ourselves so entirely to his service as to make mammon, that is, all our worldly gain, serviceable to us in his service; ver. 13. "no servant can serve two masters," whose commands are so inconsistent as those of God and mammon are. If a man will love the world, and hold to that, it cannot be but he will hate God, and despise him: he will make all his pretensions of religion truckle to his secular interests and designs, and the things of God shall be made to help him in serving and seeking the world; but on the other hand, if a man will love God, and adhere to him, he will comparatively hate the world, (whenever God and the world come in competition,) and will despise it, and make all his business and success in the world some way or other conducive to the furtherance of him in the business of religion; and the things of the world shall be made to help him in serving God, and working out his salvation. The matter is here laid plainly before us, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon;" so divided are their interests, that their services can never be compounded. If therefore we be determined to serve God, we must disclaim and abjure the service of the world.

3rd. We are here told what entertainment this doctrine of Christ met with among the Pharisees, and what rebuke he gave them.

First. They wickedly ridiculed him, ver. 14. The "Pharisees, who were covetous, heard all these things," and could not contradict him, but "they derided him." Let us consider this, 1st. As their sin, and the fruit of their covetousness, which was their reigning sin, their own iniquity. Note, Many that make a great profession of religion, have much knowledge, and abound in the exercise of devotion, yet are ruined by the love of the world; nor doth any thing harden the heart more against the word of Christ. These covetous Pharisees could not bear to have that touched which was their Delilah, their darling lust, for this they derided him; *ἐξευκρίνον αὐτόν*,—they snuffed up their noses at him, or blew their noses on him; it is an expression of the utmost scorn and disdain imaginable; "the word of the Lord was to them a reproach," Jer. vi. 10. They laughed at him for going so contrary to the opinion and way of the world, for endeavouring to recover them from a sin which they were resolved to hold fast. Note, It is common for those to make a jest of the word of God who are resolved they will not be ruled by it; but they will find at last it cannot be turned off so. 2nd. As his suffering. Our Lord Jesus endured not only the contradiction of sinners, but their contempt; they had him in derision all the day. He that spake as never man spake, yet was bantered and ridiculed, that his faithful ministers, whose preaching is unjustly derided, may not be disheartened at it. It is no disgrace to a man to be laughed at, but to deserve to be laughed at: Christ's apostles were mocked, and no wonder; "the disciple is not greater than his Lord."

Secondly. He justly reproved them; not for deriding him, he knew how to despise the shame; but for deceiving themselves with the shows and colours of piety, when they were strangers to the power of it, ver. 15. Here is, 1st. Their specious outside; nay, it was a splendid one. First. They justified themselves before men; they denied whatever ill was laid to their charge, even by Christ himself; they claimed to be looked upon as men of singular sanctity and devotion, and justified themselves in that claim. "You are they that" do that so as none ever did, that make it your business to court the opinion of men, and right or wrong will "justify yourselves" before the world; so you are

notorious for this. Secondly. They were highly esteemed among men; men did not only acquit them from any blame they were under, but applauded them, and had them in veneration, not only as good men, but as the best of men. Their sentiments were esteemed as oracles, their directions as laws, and their practices as inviolable prescriptions. 2nd. Their odious inside, which was under the eye of God: he knows your heart; and it is in his sight an abomination, for it is full of all manner of wickedness. Note, First. It is folly to justify ourselves before men, and to think this enough to bear us out, and bring us off in the judgment of the great day, that men know no ill by us; for God, who knows our hearts, knows that ill by us which no one else can know. This ought to check our value for ourselves, and our confidence in ourselves, that God knows our hearts, and how much there is there; for we have reason to abase and distrust ourselves. Secondly. It is folly to judge of persons and things by the opinion of men concerning them, and to go down with the stream of vulgar estimate; "for that which is highly esteemed among men," who judge according to outward appearance, "is," perhaps, "an abomination in the sight of God," who sees things as they are, and whose judgment we are sure is according to truth; and on the contrary there are those whom men despise and condemn, that yet are accepted and approved of God, 2 Cor. x. 18.

Thirdly. He turned from them to the publicans and sinners, as more likely to be wrought upon by his Gospel than those covetous, conceited Pharisees; ver. 16. "The law and the prophets were" indeed "until John." The Old Testament dispensation, which was confined to you, Jews, continued till John Baptist appeared; and you seemed to have the monopoly of righteousness and salvation, and you are puffed up with this; and this gains you esteem among men, that you are students in the law and the prophets. But since John Baptist appeared, "the kingdom of God is preached," a New Testament dispensation, which doth not value men at all for their being doctors of the law; but "every man presseth into" the Gospel kingdom, Gentiles as well as Jews; and no man thinks himself bound in good manners to let his betters go before him into it, or to stay till the rulers and the Pharisees have led him that way. It is not so much a political, national constitution as the Jewish economy was, when salvation was of the Jews; but it is made a particular personal concern, and therefore every man that is convinced he has a soul to save, and an eternity to provide for, thrusts to get in, lest he should come short by trifling and complimenting. Some give this sense of it; they derided Christ for speaking in contempt of riches; for, thought they, were there not many promises of riches and other temporal good things in the law and the prophets; and were not many of the best of God's servants very rich, as Abraham and David? It is true, saith Christ, so it was; but now the kingdom of God is begun to be preached, things take a new turn; now, blessed are the poor, and the mourners, and the persecuted. The Pharisees, to requite the people for their high opinion of them, allowed them in a cheap, easy, formal religion; but, saith Christ, now the Gospel is preached, the eyes of the people are opened, and as they cannot now have a veneration for the Pharisees, as they have had, so they cannot content themselves with such an indifferency in religion as they have been trained up in, but they press with a holy violence into the kingdom of God. Note, Those that would go to heaven must take pains, must strive against the stream, must press against the crowd that are going the contrary way.

Fourthly. Yet still he protests against any design to invalidate the law, ver. 17; "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass,"—*παρελθεῖν*, 'to pass by, to pass away,' (though the foundations of the earth, and the pillars of heaven are so firmly established,)—"than one tittle of the law to fail." The moral law is confirmed and ratified, and not one tittle of that fails; the duties enjoined by it are duties still; the sins forbidden by it are sins still: nay, the precepts of it are explained and enforced by the Gospel, and made to appear more spiritual. The ceremonial law is perfected in the Gospel, and its shades filled up with the Gospel colours; not one tittle of that fails, for it is found printed off in the Gospel, where, though the force of it as a law is taken off, yet the figure of it as a type shines very bright; witness the epistle to the *Hebrews*. And there were some things which were connived at by the law, for the preventing of greater mischiefs, which the Gospel has indeed taken away the permission of, but without any detriment or disparagement to the law, for it has thereby reduced them to the primitive intention of the law, as in the case of divorce, ver. 18, which we had before, *Mat. v. 32; xix. 9*. Christ will not allow divorces, for his Gospel is intended to strike at the bitter root of men's corrupt appetites and passions, to kill them, and pluck them up; and therefore they must not be so far indulged as that permission did indulge them; for the more they are indulged, the more impetuous and headstrong they grow.

19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain



EASTERN BEGGARS.

beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate

mere commercial speculation and matter of investment and dividends. This transforms charity itself into pure selfishness. On the whole, we infer our Lord's meaning is, that the just and even generous use of wealth is one of the virtues which is required of us; and that hereafter our conduct will be testified to, and our uprightness in this regard reckoned among the proofs of our fidelity to God. That our works will be brought into judgment is taught in many texts, and this we take to be the doctrine here. We do not find in it the

Pelagian and Popish doctrine that alms confer merit on us, nor the Ebionite doctrine that a Christian cannot hold wealth, but the best use of wealth is enjoined. There is probably a temporal application of the words to this effect, that he who uses his wealth well while he has it will profit from it when it fails.

xvi. 12. They who are unfaithful in the employment of worldly wealth and talents are not fit to receive the riches of truth and grace.

xvi. 15. "That which is highly esteemed among men" is not

full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

As the parable of the prodigal son set before us the grace of the Gospel, which is encouraging to us all; so this sets before us the wrath to come, and is designed for our awakening; and very fast asleep those are in sin that will not be awakened by it. The Pharisees made a jest of Christ's sermon against worldliness: now this parable was intended to make those mockers serious. The tendency of the Gospel of Christ is both to reconcile us to poverty and affliction, and to arm us against temptations to worldliness and sensuality: now this parable, by drawing the curtain, and letting us see what will be the end of both in the other world, goes very far in prosecuting those two great intentions.

This parable is not like Christ's other parables, in which spiritual things are represented by similitudes borrowed from worldly things, as those of the sower and the seed, except that of the sheep and goats, the prodigal son, and indeed all the rest but this. But here the spiritual things themselves are represented in a narrative or description of the different state of good and bad in this world and the other: yet we need not call it a history of a particular occurrence; but is matter of fact, that is true every day; that poor godly people, whom men neglect and trample upon, die away out of their miseries, and go to heavenly bliss and joy, which is made the more pleasant to them by their preceding sorrows; and that rich epicures, that live in luxury, and are unmerciful to the poor, die and go into a state of insupportable torment, which is the more grievous and terrible to them, because of the sensual lives they lived, and that there is no gaining any relief for their torments. Is this a parable? What similitude is there in this? The discourse indeed between Abraham and the rich man is only an illustration of the description, to make it the more affecting, like that between God and Satan in the story of Job. Our Saviour came to bring us acquainted with another world, and to shew us the reference which this world has to that; and here he doth it. In this description (for so I shall choose to call it) we may observe,

First. The different condition of a wicked rich man, and a godly poor man, in this world. We know that as some of late, so the Jews of old, were ready to make prosperity one of the marks of a true church, of a good man, and a favourite of Heaven; so that they could hardly have any favourable thoughts of a poor man. This mistake Christ, upon all occasions, set himself to correct; and here very fully; where we have,

1. A wicked-man, and one that will be for ever miserable, in the height of prosperity, ver. 19: "There was a certain rich man," from the Latin we commonly call him Dives, a rich man; but, as Bishop Tillotson observes, he has no name given him, as the poor man has, because it had been invidious to have named any particular rich man in such a description as this, and apt to provoke and gain ill-will. But others observe, that Christ would not do the rich man so much honour as to name him; though when perhaps he called his lands by his own name, he thought it should long survive that of the beggar at his gate, which yet is here preserved, when that of the rich man is buried in oblivion. Now we are told concerning this rich man, 1st. That he "was clothed in purple and fine linen;" and that was his adorning. He had fine linen for pleasure, and clean, no doubt, every day; night linen, and day linen. He had purple for state, for that was the wear of princes; which has made some conjecture that Christ had an eye to Herod in it. He never appeared abroad but it was in great magnificence. 2nd. "He fared" deliciously and "sumptuously every day." His tables were furnished with all the varieties and dainties that nature and art could furnish him with. His side-table richly adorned with

plate, and his servants that waited at table in rich liveries; and the guests at his table, no doubt, such as he thought graced it.

Well, and what harm was there in all this? It is no sin to be rich, no sin to wear purple and fine linen, nor to keep a plentiful table, if a man's estate will afford it. Nor are we told that he got his estate by fraud, oppression, or extortion; no, nor that he was drunk, or made others drunk. But, *First*, Christ would hereby shew, that a man may have a great deal of the wealth, and pomp, and pleasure of this world, and yet lie and perish for ever under God's wrath and curse. We cannot infer from men's living great, either that God loves them, in giving them so much, or that they love God, for giving them so much. Happiness consists not in these things. *Secondly*, That plenty and pleasure is a very dangerous, and to many a fatal, temptation to luxury and sensuality, and forgetfulness of God and another world. This man might have been happy if he had not had great possessions and enjoyments. *Thirdly*, That the indulgence of the body, and the ease and pleasure of that, is the ruin of many a soul, and the interests of it. It is true, eating good meat, and wearing good clothes, is lawful; but it is as true, that it often becomes the food and fuel of pride and luxury, and so turns into sin to us. *Fourthly*, That feasting ourselves and our friends, and at the same time forgetting the distresses of the poor and afflicted, is very provoking to God, and damning to the soul. The sin of this rich man was not so much his dress or his diet, but his providing for himself only.

2. Here is a godly man, and one that will be for ever happy, in the depth of adversity and distress, ver. 20: "there was a certain beggar named Lazarus;" a beggar of that name, eminently devout, and in great distress, was probably well known among good people at that time. A beggar, suppose such a one as Eleazar or Lazarus. Some think Eleazar a proper name for any poor man, for it signifies the help of God, which they must fly to that are destitute of other helps. This poor man was reduced to the last extremity, as miserably as you can lightly suppose a man to be in this world as to outward things. 1st. His body was full of sores, like Job. To be sick and weak in body is a great affliction; but sores are more painful to the patient, and more loathsome to those about him. 2nd. He was forced to beg his bread, and to take up with such scraps as he could get at rich people's doors. He was so sore and lame that he could not go himself, but he was carried by some compassionate hand or other, and laid at the rich man's gate. Note, Those that are not able to help the poor with their purses, should help them with their pains; that cannot lend them a penny, should lend them a hand; that have not wherewithal to give to them themselves, should either bring them, or go for them, to those that have. Lazarus, in his distress, had nothing of his own to subsist on, no relation to go to, nor did the parish take care of him. It is an instance of the degeneracy of the Jewish church at this time, that such a godly man as Lazarus was should be suffered to perish for want of necessary food. Now observe,

First. His expectations from the rich man's table; "he desired to be fed with the crumbs," ver. 21. He did not look for a mess from off his table, though he ought to have had one, one of the best; but would be thankful for the crumbs from under the table, the broken meat, which was the rich man's leavings; nay, the leavings of his dogs. "The poor useth entreaties," and must be content with such as they can get. Now this is taken notice of to shew, 1st. What was the distress, and what the disposition, of the poor man. He was poor, but he was poor in spirit, contentedly poor. He did not lie at the rich man's gate complaining, and howling, and making a noise, but silently and modestly desiring to be fed with the crumbs. This miserable man was a good man, and in favour with God. Note, It is often the lot of some of the dearest of God's saints and servants to be greatly afflicted in this world, while wicked people prosper and have abundance; see Ps. lxxiii. 7, 10, 14. Here is a child of wrath, and an heir of hell, sitting in the house, faring sumptuously; and a child of love, and an heir of heaven, lying at the gate, perishing for hunger. And is men's spiritual state to be judged of, then, by their outward condition? 2nd. What was the temper of the rich man towards him. We are not told that he abused him, or forbade him his gate; or did him any harm; but it is intimated that he slighted him, he had no concern for him, took no care about him. Here was a real object of charity, and a very moving one, which spoke for itself; it was presented to him at his own gate; the poor man had a good character, and a good carriage, and every thing that could recommend him. A little thing would be a great kindness to him, and yet he took no cognizance of his case, did not order him to be taken in and lodged in the barn, or some of the outbuildings, but let him lie there. Note, It is not enough not to oppress and trample upon the poor; we shall be found unfaithful stewards of our Lord's goods in the great day if we do not succour and relieve them. The reason given for the most fearful doom is, "I was hungry, and you gave me no meat." I wonder how those rich people, that have read the Gospel of Christ, and say they believe it, can be so unconcerned, as they often are, in the necessities and miseries of the poor and afflicted.

Secondly. The usage he had from the dogs; "the dogs came and licked his sores." The rich man kept a kennel of hounds, it may be, or other dogs, for his diversion, and to please his fancy; and those were fed to the full, when poor Lazarus could not get enough to keep him alive. Note, Those will have a great deal to answer for hereafter, that feed their dogs, but neglect the poor; and it is a great aggravation of the uncharitableness of many rich people, that they bestow that upon their fancies and follies which would supply the necessity, and rejoice the heart, of many a good Christian in distress. Those offend God, nay, and they put a contempt upon the human nature, that pamper their dogs and horses, and let the families of their poor neighbours starve. Now, those "dogs came and licked the sores" of poor Lazarus, which may be taken, 1st. As an aggravation of his misery. His sores were bloody, which tempted the dogs to come and lick them, as they did the blood of Naboth and Ahab, 1 Kin. xxi. 19. And we read of the tongue of the dogs dipped in the blood of enemies, Ps. lxxviii. 22. They attacked him while he was yet alive, as if he had been already dead; and he had not strength himself to keep them off, nor would any of the servants be so civil as to check them. The dogs were like their master, and thought they fared sumptuously when they regaled themselves with human gore. Or it may be taken, 2nd. As some relief to him in his misery; ἀλλὰ καὶ, the master was hard-hearted towards him, but the dogs came and licked his sores, which mollified and eased him; it is not said they sucked them, but licked them, which was good for them. The dogs were more kind to him than their master was.

Secondly. Here is the different condition of this godly poor man, and this wicked rich man, at and after death. Hitherto the wicked man seems to have the advantage, but *exitus acta probat*,—"let us wait a while, to see the end hereof."

1. They both die, ver. 22; "the beggar died: the rich man also died." Death is the common lot of rich and poor, godly and ungodly; there they meet together. "One dieth in his full strength, and another in the bitterness of his soul," but "they shall lie down alike in the dust," Job xxi. 23, 25, 26. Death favours not, either the rich man for his riches, or the poor man for his poverty. Saints die, that they may bring their sorrows to an end, and may enter upon their joys; sinners die, that they may go to give up their account. It concerns

everything which stands high in human opinion. The sense rather is, that some things stand high among men which before God are abominable; what is said of things is equally applicable to men.

xvi. 18. This may have an allusion to Herod, as was suspected by Tertullian, but it may be a reference to the laxity of the times. Thus Josephus says of his wife, "I put away my wife, who did not please me by her manners, when she had been the mother of three children."

xvi. 19. Here also Tertullian supposes Herod is alluded to. Mr. Prescott says, "The idea of Schleiermacher and others, that Herod and the Baptist are represented by the two characters, has nothing to support it; and the interpretation of Augustine, Theophylact, and their followers, concerning the relations of Jew and Gentile, is also quite beside the purpose of the parable." The name of Lazarus has been explained to mean "without help;" but the proper sense, as shown by the Syriac form of the word, is "God is my help;" i.e.,

b. th rich and poor to prepare for death, for it waits for them both. *Mors aequa ligonibus aequat.*—Death blends the sceptre with the spade.
Aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,
Regumque turres.

With equal pace, impartial fate
 Knocks at the palace as the cottage gate.

2. The beggar died first. God many times takes godly people out of the world, when he leaves the wicked to flourish still. It was an advantage to the beggar that such a speedy end was put to his miseries; and, since he could find no other shelter or resting-place, he was hid in the grave, where the weary are at rest.

3. "The rich man died, and was buried." Nothing is said of the interment of the poor man; they digged a hole any where, and tumbled his body in without any solemnity; he was "buried with the burial of an ass." Nay, it is well, if they that let the dogs lick his sores did not let them gnaw his bones. But the rich man had a pompous funeral, lay in state, had a train of mourners to attend him to his grave, and a stately monument set up over it; probably he had a funeral oration, in praise of him and his generous way of living, and the good table he kept, which those would commend that had been feasted at it. It is said of the wicked man, that he is "brought to the grave" with no small ado, and laid in the tomb; and "the clouds of the valley," were it possible, are made "sweet to him," *Job xxi. 32, 33.* How foreign is the ceremony of a funeral to the happiness of the man!

4. "The beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom." How much did the honour done to his soul, by this convey of it to its rest, exceed the honour done to the rich man, by the carrying of his body with so much magnificence to its grave! Observe, 1st. His soul existed in a state of separation from its body. It did not die or fall asleep with the body: his candle was not put out with him, but lived and acted, and knew what it did, and what was done to it. 2nd. His soul removed to another world, to the world of spirits; it returned to God who gave it, to its native country; this is implied in its being carried. The spirit of a man goes upward. 3rd. Angels took care of it, it was carried by angels. They are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, not only while they live, but when they die; and have a charge concerning them, to bear them up in their hands, not only in their journeys to and fro on earth, but in their great journey to their long home in heaven, to be both their guide and their guard through regions unknown and unsafe. The soul of man, if not chained to this earth, and clogged by it, as unsanctified souls are, has in itself an elastic virtue, by which it springs upward as soon as it gets clear of the body; but Christ will not trust those that are his to that, and therefore will send special messengers to fetch them to himself. One angel, one would think, were sufficient; but here are more, as were sent for Elijah. Amasis, king of Egypt, had his chariot drawn by kings; but what was that honour to this? Saints ascend in the virtue of Christ's ascension, but this convey of angels is added for state and decorum; saints shall be brought home, not only safely, but honourably. What were the bearers at the rich man's funeral, though probably those of the first rank, compared with Lazarus' bearers? The angels were not shy of touching him, for his sores were on his body, not on his soul; that was presented to God "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." "Now, blessed angels," said a good man, just expiring, "now come, and do your office." 4th. It was carried into Abraham's bosom. The Jews expressed the happiness of the righteous at death three ways: they go to the garden of Eden, they go to be under the throne of glory, and they go to the bosom of Abraham; and that is it our Saviour here makes use of. Abraham was the father of the faithful; and whither should the souls of the faithful be gathered but to him who, as a tender father, lays them in his bosom, especially at their first coming, to bid them welcome, and to refresh them when newly come from the sorrows and fatigues of this world? He was carried to his bosom, that is, to feast with him, for at feasts the guests are said to lean on one another's breasts; and the saints in heaven "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob." Abraham was a great and rich man, yet in heaven he doth not disdain to lay poor Lazarus in his bosom. Rich saints and poor meet in heaven. This poor Lazarus, that might not be admitted within the rich man's gate, is conducted into the dining-room, into the bed-chamber of the heavenly palace; and he is laid in the bosom of Abraham whom the rich glutton scorned to set with the dogs of his flock.

5. The next news you hear of the rich man, after the account of his death and burial is, that "in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment," ver. 23.

1st. His state is very miserable; he is in hell, in Hades, in the state of separate souls, and there he is in the utmost misery and anguish possible. As the souls of the faithful, immediately after they are delivered from the burthen of the flesh, are in joy and felicity, so wicked and unsanctified souls, immediately after they are fetched from the pleasures of the flesh by death, are in misery and torment—endless, useless, and remediless, and which will be much increased and completed at the resurrection. This rich man had entirely devoted himself to the pleasures of the world of sense, was wholly taken up with them, and took up with them for his portion; and therefore was wholly unfit for the pleasures of the world of spirits; and to such a carnal mind as his they would indeed be no pleasure, nor could he have any relish of them, and therefore he is of course excluded from them. Yet that is not all, he was hardened to God's poor; and therefore he is not only cut off from mercy, but he has judgment without mercy, and falls under a punishment of sense, as well as a punishment of loss.

2nd. The misery of his state is aggravated by his knowledge of the happiness of Lazarus: "He lift up his eyes, and sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." It is the soul that is in torment, and they are the eyes of the mind that are lifted up. He now began to consider what was become of Lazarus; he doth not find him where he is; nay, he plainly sees him, and with as much assurance as if he had seen him with his bodily eyes, afar off in the bosom of Abraham. This same aggravation of the miseries of the damned we had before, *ch. xiii. 28*, "Ye shall see Abraham, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out." First. He "saw Abraham afar off." To see Abraham we would think a pleasing sight, but to see him afar off was a tormenting sight. Near him he saw devils and damned companions, frightful sights, and painful ones; afar off he saw Abraham. Note, Every sight in hell is aggravating. Secondly. He saw "Lazarus in his bosom;" that same Lazarus whom he had looked upon with so much scorn and contempt, as not worthy his notice, he now sees preferred, and to be envied. The sight of him brought to his mind his own cruel and barbarous carriage towards him; and the sight of him in that happiness made his own misery the more grievous.

Thirdly. Here is an account of what passed between the rich man and Abraham, in the separate state—a state of separation one from another, and of both from this world; and though it is probable there will not be, nor are, any such dialogues or discourses between glorified saints and damned sinners, yet it is very proper, and what is usually done in descriptions, especially such as are designed to be pathetic and moving, by such dialogues to represent what will be the mind and sentiments both of the one and of the other. And since we find damned sinners tormented in the presence of the Lamb, *Rev. xiv. 10*, and the faithful servants of God looking upon them that have transgressed the covenant,

there "where their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched," *Isa. lxxvi. 23, 24*, such a discourse as this is not incongruous to be supposed. Now in this discourse we have,

1. The request which the rich man made to Abraham for some mitigation of his present misery, ver. 24. Seeing Abraham afar off, "he cried to him;" cried aloud, as one in earnest, and as one in pain and misery, mixing shrieks with his petitions, to enforce them by moving compassion. He that used to command aloud, now begs aloud, louder than ever Lazarus did at his gate. The songs of his riot and revels are all turned into lamentations. Observe here,

1st. The title he gives to Abraham: "Father Abraham." Note, There are many in hell that can call Abraham father, that were Abraham's seed after the flesh; nay, and many that were in name and profession the children of the covenant made with Abraham. Perhaps this rich man, in his carnal mirth, had ridiculed Abraham, and the story of Abraham, as the scoffers of the latter days do; but now he gives him a title of respect, "Father Abraham." Note, The day is coming when wicked men will be glad to scrape acquaintance with the righteous, and to claim kindred to them, though now they slight them. Abraham, in this description, represents Christ, for to him all judgment is committed, and it is his mind that Abraham here speaks. Those that now slight Christ will shortly make their court to him, "Lord, Lord."

2nd. The representation he makes to him of his present deplorable condition: "I am tormented in this flame." It is the torment of his soul that he complains of, and therefore such a fire as will operate upon souls; and such a fire the wrath of God is, fastening on a guilty conscience; such a fire horror of mind is, and the reproaches of a self-accusing, self-condemning heart. Nothing more painful and terrible to the body than to be tormented with fire; by that therefore the miseries and agonies of damned souls are represented.

3rd. His request to Abraham, in consideration of this misery: "Have mercy on me." Note, The day is coming when those that make light of Divine mercy will beg hard for it. O for mercy, mercy; when the day of mercy is over, and offers of mercy no more made. He that had no mercy on Lazarus, yet expects Lazarus should have mercy on him; 'for,' thinks he, 'Lazarus is better natured than ever I was.' The particular favour he begs is, "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue."

First. Here he complains of the torment of his tongue particularly, as if he were more tormented there than in any other part, the punishment answering the sin. The tongue is one of the organs of speech, and by the torment of that he is put in mind of all the wicked words that he had spoken against God and man; his cursing, and swearing, and blasphemy; all his hard speeches, and filthy speeches; by his words he is condemned, and therefore in his tongue he is tormented. The tongue is also one of the organs of tasting, and therefore the torments of that will mind him of his inordinate relish of the delights of sense, which he had rolled under his tongue.

Secondly. He desires a drop of water to cool his tongue. He doth not say, 'Father Abraham, send for me to thy bosom, to lie where Lazarus lies;' unsanctified souls do not, cannot truly desire the happiness of heaven; nay, he doth not say, 'Father Abraham, order me a release from this misery, help me out of this pit,' for he utterly despaired of that; but he asks as small a thing as could be asked, a drop of water, to cool his tongue for one moment.

Thirdly. He desires that Lazarus might bring it. I have sometimes suspected that he had herein an ill design upon Lazarus, and hoped, if he could get him within his reach, he would keep him from returning to the bosom of Abraham again. The heart that is filled with rage against God is filled with rage against the people of God. But we will think more charitably even of a damned sinner, and suppose he intended here to shew respect to Lazarus, as one whom he would now gladly be beholden to; he names him, because he knows him, and thinks Lazarus will not be unwilling to do him this good office for old acquaintance sake. Grotius here quotes Plato, describing the torments of wicked souls; and, among other things, he saith they are continually raving on those whom they have murdered, or been any way injurious to, calling upon them to forgive them the wrongs they did them. Note, There is a day coming when those who now hate and despise the people of God would gladly receive kindness from them.

2. The reply which Abraham gave to this request. In general, he did not grant it; he would not allow him one drop of water to cool his tongue. Note, The damned in hell shall not have any the least abatement or mitigation of their torment. If we now improve the day of our opportunities, we may have a full and lasting satisfaction in the streams of mercy; but if we now slight the offer, it will be vain in hell to expect the least drop of mercy. See how justly this rich man is paid in his own coin. He that denied a crumb is denied a drop. Now it is said to us, "Ask, and it shall be given you;" but if we let slip this accepted time, we may ask and it shall not be given us. But this is not all; had Abraham only said, 'You shall have nothing to abate your torment,' it had been sad; but he saith a great deal which would add to his torment, and make the flame the hotter, for every thing in hell will be tormenting.

1st. He calls him son, a kind and civil title, but here serves only to aggravate the denial of his request, which shut up the bowels of the compassion of a father from him. He had been a son, but a rebellious one, and now an abandoned, disinherited one. See the folly of those who rely on that plea, "we have Abraham to our father," when we find one in hell, and likely to be there for ever whom Abraham calls son.

2nd. He puts him in mind of what had been both his own condition and the condition of Lazarus in their lifetime: "Son, remember." This is a cutting word. The memories of damned souls will be their tormentors, and conscience will then be awakened and stirred up to do its office, which here they would not suffer it to do. Nothing will bring more oil to the flames of hell than "son, remember." Now sinners are called upon to remember; but they do not, they will not, they find ways to avoid it: 'Son, remember thy Creator, thy Redeemer; remember thy latter end;' but they turn a deaf ear to these mementos, and forget that for which they have their memories; justly therefore will their everlasting misery arise from a "son, remember," which they will not be able to turn a deaf ear to. What a dreadful peal will this ring in our ears, 'Son, remember the many warnings that were given thee not to come to this place of torment, which thou wouldst not regard; remember the fair offers made thee of eternal life and glory, which thou wouldst not accept?' But that which he is here put in mind of is,

First. That "thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things." He doth not tell him he had abused them, but he had received them. 'Remember what a bountiful benefactor God has been to thee, how ready he was to do thee good; thou canst not therefore say he owes thee any thing, no, not a drop of water. What he gave thee thou receivest, and that was all; thou never gavest him a receipt for them, in a thankful acknowledgment of them, much less didst thou ever make any grateful return for them, or improvement of them; thou hast been the grave of God's blessings, in which they were buried, not the field of them, in which they were sown. "Thou receivest thy good things;" that is, thou receivest them, and usdest them, as if they had been thine own, and thou hadst not been at all accountable for them; or rather, they were the things which thou didst choose for thy good things, which were in thine eye the best things, which thou didst content thyself with, and portion thyself in: thou hadst meat

and refreshment hereafter. By a common figure, heaven was spoken of as a banquet-house, over which Abraham in a manner presided with other patriarchs. The whole parable may be compared with *Matt. viii. 11, 12*. The imagery here employed can scarcely be viewed as representing more than the current opinions of the Jews in the time of Christ.

xvi. 23. "In hell" is literally "in hades," which word denotes the separate state, irrespective of the condition of its inhabitants.

Elazar. The rich man is sometimes called "Dives," which is only the Latin word for "rich." No name is given him. "Purple" was a colour chiefly confined to royal, noble, and wealthy persons. Tyre was famous for its production. "Fine linen" was very generally obtained from Egypt.

xvi. 20, 22. The word for "beggar" in these two verses simply signifies "poor," or a "poor man," and should have been so translated. The phrase "into Abraham's bosom" means the place of rest

and drink, and clothes of the richest and finest, and those were the things thou didst place thine happiness in; they were thy reward, thy consolation, the penny thou didst agree for, and thou hast had it. Thou wast for the good things of thy lifetime, and hadst no thoughts of better things in another life, and therefore hast no reason to expect them. The day of thy good things is past and gone, and now is the day of thine evil things—of recompence for all thine evil deeds. Thou hast already had the last drop of the vials of mercy that thou couldst expect to fall to thy share, and there remains nothing but vials of wrath without mixture.

Secondly. Remember, too, what evil things Lazarus received. Thou enviest him his happiness here, but think what a large share of miseries he had in his lifetime. Thou hadst as much good as could be thought to fall to the lot of so ill a man, and he as much evil as could be thought to fall to the lot of so good a man. He received his evil things, that is, he bore them patiently; received them from the hand of God, as Job ii. 10, "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil also?" He received them as physic appointed for the cure of his spiritual distempers, and the cure was effected. As wicked people have good things only in this life, and at death they are for ever separated from all good; so godly people have evil things only in this life, and at death they are for ever put out of the reach of them. Now Abraham, by putting him in mind of both these together, awaking his conscience to mind him how he had carried it towards Lazarus when he was revelling in his good things, and Lazarus groaning under his evil things: he cannot forget that then he would not help Lazarus, and then how could he expect that Lazarus should now help him? Had Lazarus in his lifetime afterwards grown rich, and he poor, Lazarus would have thought it his duty to relieve him, and not to have upbraided him with his former unkindness: but in the future state of recompence and retribution, those that are now dealt with, both by God and man, better than they deserve, must expect to be rewarded "every man according to his works."

3rd. He puts him in mind of Lazarus' present bliss, and his own misery. "But now" the tables are turned, and so they must abide for ever; now "he is comforted, and thou art tormented." He did not need to be told that he was tormented, he felt it to his cost; he knew likewise that one that lay in the bosom of Abraham could not but be comforted there; yet Abraham puts him in mind of it, that he might, by comparing one thing with another, observe the righteousness of God, in recompensing tribulation to them who trouble his people, and to those who are troubled, rest, 2 *Thes. i. 6, 7*. Observe, *First*. Heaven is comfort, and hell is torment: heaven is joy, hell is weeping and wailing, and pain in perfection. *Secondly*. The soul, as soon as it leaves the body, goes either to heaven or hell, to comfort or torment immediately, and doth not sleep or go into purgatory. *Thirdly*. Herein will be heaven indeed to those that go thither through many and great calamities in this world; those that had grace, but little of the comfort of it here; perhaps their souls refused to be comforted; yet, when they are fallen asleep in Christ, you may truly say, Now they are comforted; now all their tears are wiped away, and all their fears are vanished. In heaven there is everlasting consolation. And, on the other hand, hell will be hell indeed to those that go thither from the midst of the enjoyment of all the delights and pleasures of sense; to them the torture is the greater, as temporal calamities are described to be to the "tender and delicate woman that would not set so much as the sole of her foot to the ground for tenderness and delicacy," *Deu. xxviii. 56*.

4th. He assures him it was to no purpose to think of having any relief by the ministry of Lazarus; for, ver. 26, "beside all this," worse yet, "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed," an impassable one, a great chasm, that so there can be no communication between glorified saints and damned sinners. *First*. The kindest saint in heaven cannot make a visit to the congregation of the dead and damned, to comfort or relieve any there, that, when time was, were their friends; "they that would pass from hence to you cannot;" they cannot leave beholding the face of their father, nor the work about his throne, to fetch water for you; that is no part of their business. *Secondly*. The most daring sinner in hell cannot force his way out of that prison, cannot get over that great gulf; "they cannot pass to us that would come from thence." It was not to be expected, for the door of mercy is shut, the bridge is drawn; there is no coming upon parole or bail, no, not for one hour. In this world, blessed be God, there is no gulf fixed between a state of nature and grace; but we may pass from the one to the other, from sin to God; but if we die in our sins, if we throw ourselves into the pit of destruction, there is no coming out. It is a pit in which there is no water, and out of which there is no redemption. The decree and counsel of God has fixed this gulf, which all the world cannot unfix. This abandons this miserable creature to despair; it is now too late for any change of his condition, or any the least relief; it might have been prevented in time, but it cannot now be remedied to eternity. The state of damned sinners is fixed by an irreversible and unalterable sentence. A stone is rolled to the door of the pit, which cannot be rolled back.

3. The farther request he had to make to his father Abraham; not for himself, his mouth is stopped, and he has not a word to say in answer to Abraham's denial of a drop of water. Damned sinners are made to know that the sentence they are under is just, and they cannot alleviate their own misery by making any objection against it. Since he cannot obtain a drop of water to cool his tongue, we may suppose he gnawed his tongue for pain, as those are said to do on whom one of the vials of God's wrath is poured out, *Rev. xvi. 10*; and hideous shrieks and outcries we may suppose to be now uttered by him; but since he has an opportunity of speaking to Abraham, he will improve it for his relations whom he had left behind, since he cannot improve it for his own advantage. Now as to this.

1st. He begs that Lazarus might be sent to his father's house, upon an errand thither; ver. 27, "I pray thee therefore, father." Again he calls Abraham father; and in this request he is importunate, "I pray thee;" "O deny me not this." When he was on earth he might have prayed and been heard, but now he prays in vain. Therefore, because thou hast denied me the former request, surely thou wilt be so compassionate as not to deny this. Or, therefore, because there is a great gulf fixed, seeing there is no getting out hence when they are once here, O send to prevent their coming hither. Or, though there is a great gulf fixed between you and me, yet since there is no such gulf fixed between you and them, send him thither; send him back to my father's house; he knows well enough where it is, has been there many a time by the same token that he was denied the crumbs that fell from the table. He knows I have five brethren there; if he appear to them they will know him, and will regard what he saith, for they knew him to be an honest man. Let him testify to them; let him tell them what condition I am in, and that I brought myself to it by my luxury and sensuality, and my unmercifulness to the poor. Let him warn them not to tread in my steps, nor to go on in the way wherein I led them, and left them, "lest they also come into this place of torment," ver. 28. Some observe that he speaks of five brethren only; whence they infer that he had no children, else he would have mentioned them; and then it was an aggravation of his uncharitableness, that he had no children to provide for. Now he would have them stopped in their sinful course. He doth not say, Give me leave to go to them, that I may testify to them, for he knew that there was a gulf fixed, and despaired of a permission so favourable to him-

self: his going would frighten them out of their wits; but send Lazarus, whose address will be less terrible, and yet his testimony sufficient to frighten them out of their sins.

Now he desired the preventing of their ruin, partly in tenderness to them, for whom he could not but retain a natural affection; he knew their temper, their temptations, their ignorance, their infidelity, their inconsideration, and wished to prevent the destruction they were running into. Partly in tenderness to himself, for their coming to him to that place of torment would but aggravate the misery to him, who had helped to shew them the way thither, as the sight of Lazarus helped to aggravate his misery. When partners in sin come to be sharers in woe, as tares bound in bundles for the fire, they will be a terror to one another.

2nd. Abraham denies him this favour too. There is no request granted in hell. Those who make the rich man's praying to Abraham a justification of their praying to saints departed, as they are far to seek for proofs, when the practice of a damned sinner must be valued for an example, so they have little encouragement to follow the example, when all his prayers are made in vain. Abraham leaves them to the testimony of Moses and the prophets, the ordinary means of conviction and conversion; they have the written Word, which they may read, and hear read; let them attend to that sure Word of prophecy, for God will not go out of the common method of his grace for them. Here is their privilege, "they have Moses and the prophets;" and their duty, "let them hear them," and mix faith with them, and that will be sufficient to keep them from this place of torment. By this it appears that there is sufficient evidence in the Old Testament, in Moses and the prophets, to convince those that will hear them impartially that there is another life after this, and a state of rewards and punishments for good and bad men, for that was the thing which the rich man would have his brethren assured of, and for that they are turned over to Moses and the prophets.

3rd. He urgeth his request yet farther, ver. 30, "Nay, father Abraham;" Give me leave to press this. It is true, they have Moses and the prophets, and if they would but give a due regard to them, it would be sufficient; but they do not, they will not; yet it may be hoped "if one went to them from the dead, they would repent;" that would be a more sensible conviction to them. They are used to Moses and the prophets, and therefore regard them the less, but this would be a new thing, and more startling; surely that would bring them to repent, and to change their wicked habit and course of life. Note, Foolish men are apt to think any method of conviction better than that which God has chosen and appointed.

4th. Abraham insists upon the denial of it, with a conclusive reason, ver. 31, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets," and will not believe the testimony, nor take the warning they give, "neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." If they regard not the public revelation which is confirmed by miracles, neither would they be wrought upon by a private testimony to themselves. *First*. The matter was long since settled upon trial, that God should speak by Moses, and such prophets, and not by immediate messengers from heaven. Israel chose it, in mount Sinai, because they could not bear the terrors of such expresses. *Secondly*. A messenger from the dead could say no more than what is said in the Scriptures, nor say it with more authority. *Thirdly*. There would be every jot as much reason to suspect that to be a cheat and a delusion, as to suspect the Scriptures to be so, and much more; and infidels in one case would certainly be so in another. *Fourthly*. The same strength of corruption that breaks through the convictions of the written Word, would certainly triumph over those by a witness from the dead; and though a sinner might be frightened at first by such a testimony, when the fright was over, he would soon return to his hardness. *Fifthly*. The Scripture is now the ordinary way of God's making known his mind to us, and it is sufficient, and it is presumption for us to prescribe any other way, nor have we any ground to expect or pray for the grace of God to work upon us in any other way, abstracted from that, and when that is rejected and set aside. This that our Saviour here said was soon after verified in the unbelieving Jews, who would not hear Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, and then would not be persuaded though Lazarus "rose from the dead;" (and perhaps it was with some eye to him that Christ named this poor man Lazarus;) nay, they consulted to put him to death, and did put him that raised him to death, and would not be persuaded by Him neither, though he also rose from the dead. When Eutychus was raised to life, the people that were present continued to hear Paul preach, but did not turn to inquire of him, *Acts xx. 10, 11*. Let us not therefore desire visions and apparitions, nor seek to the dead, but "to the law and to the testimony," *Isa. viii. 19, 20*, for that is "the more sure word of prophecy," which we may depend upon.

CHAPTER XVII.

In this chapter we have, I. Some particular discourses Christ had with his disciples, in which he teaches them to take heed of giving offence, and to forgive the injuries done them, ver. 1-4: encourageth them to pray for the increase of their faith, ver. 5, 6; and then teacheth them humility, whatever service they had done for God, ver. 7-10. II. His cleansing of ten lepers, and the thanks he had from one of them only, and a Samaritan, ver. 11-19. III. His discourse with his disciples upon occasion of an inquiry of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should appear, ver. 20-37.



HEN said he unto his disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! 2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. 3

Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4 And if he trespass against thee seven times

Among the Jews, *sheol* or *hades* included Paradise as well as Gehenna; just as the Greeks *hades* included Elysium and Tartarus.

xvi. 31. This verse is the application of a large part of the previous parable: They who disobey a divine revelation, and especially such as do not question its divinity, are not likely to be turned away from a course of worldly indifference by a messenger from eternity. The notions of a future state advocated by Swedenborg, and promulgated

by modern spiritualists, are quite inconsistent with this parable in many important respects. This subject is one, however, which cannot here be gone into, though we must refer to it.

xvii. 6. It is well known that the mustard-seed was employed in the East as the emblem of something very small. Our Lord uses it not only for this purpose, but to illustrate the great effects which may result from apparently minute causes. On the sycamine-tree Mr. Prescott says, "The sycamine, which is the regular mulberry,

in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. 5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. 6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. 7 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? 8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? 9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. 10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

We are here taught,

First. *That giving offences is a great sin, and that which we should every one of us avoid, and carefully watch against;* ver. 1, 2, we can expect no other but that offences will come, considering the perverseness and frowardness that is in the nature of man, and the wise purpose and counsel of God, which will carry on his work even by those offences, and bring good out of evil. "It is," almost "impossible but that offences will come," and therefore we are concerned to provide accordingly; "but woe to him through whom they come;" his doom will be heavy, ver. 2, more terrible than that of the worst of the malefactors, who are condemned to be thrown into the sea, for they perish under a load of guilt more ponderous than that of millstones.

This speaks a woe, 1. To persecutors, that offer any injury to the least of Christ's little ones, in word or deed, by which they are discouraged in serving Christ, and doing their duty, or in danger of being driven off from it. 2. To seducers, that corrupt the truths of Christ and his ordinances, and so trouble the minds of the disciples, for they are those by whom offences come. 3. To those that under the profession of the Christian name live scandalously, and thereby weaken the hands, and sadden the hearts, of God's people, for by them the offence comes; and it is no abatement of their guilt, nor will be any of their punishment, that it is impossible but offences will come.

Secondly. *That forgiving offences is a great duty, and that which we should every one of us make conscience of;* ver. 3, "Take heed to yourselves." This may refer either to what goes before, or to what follows; "take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones." Ministers must be very careful not to say or do any thing that may be a discouragement to weak Christians; there is need of great caution, and they ought to speak and act very considerably for fear of this; or, when your brother trespasseth against you, doth you any injury, puts any slight or affront upon you, if he be accessory to any damage done you in your property or reputation, take heed to yourselves at such a time, lest you be put into a passion—lest when your spirits are provoked, you speak unadvisedly, and rashly vow revenge, *Pr. xxiv. 29*, "I will do so to him as he hath done to me." Take heed what you say at such a time, lest you say amiss.

1. If you are permitted to rebuke him, you are advised to do so; smother not the resentment, but give it vent; tell him his faults, shew him wherein he has not done well, nor fairly by you, and it may be you will perceive (and you must be very willing to perceive it) that you mistook him; that it was not a trespass against you, or not designed, but an oversight; and then you will beg his pardon for misunderstanding him, as *Jos. xxii. 30, 31*.

2. You are commanded, upon his repentance, to forgive him, and to be perfectly reconciled to him: "If he repent, forgive him;" forget the injury, never think of it again, much less upbraid him with it. Though he do not repent, you must not therefore bear malice to him, or meditate revenge; but if he do not at least say he repents, you are not bound to be so free and familiar with him as you have been. If he be guilty of gross sin, to the offence of the Christian community he is a member of, let him be gravely and mildly reproved for his sin, and upon his repentance received into friendship and communion again. This the apostle calls forgiveness, *2 Cor. ii. 7*.

3. You are to repeat this every time he repeats his trespass, ver. 4; if he could be supposed to be either so negligent or so impudent as to "trespass against thee seven times in a day," and as often professes himself sorry for his fault, and promiseth not again to offend in like manner, continue to forgive him: *humanum est errare*,—"to err is human." Note, Christians should be of a forgiving spirit, willing to make the best of every body, and all about them easy; forward to extenuate faults, and not to aggravate them, and should contrive as much to shew that they have forgiven an injury, as others to shew that they resent it.

Thirdly. *That we have all need to get our faith strengthened,* because as that grace grows, all other graces grow. The more firmly we believe the doctrine of Christ, and the more confidently we rely upon the grace of Christ, the better it will be with us every way. Now observe here,

1. The address which the disciples made to Christ for the strengthening of their faith, ver. 5. The apostles themselves, so they are here called, though they were prime ministers of state in Christ's kingdom, yet acknowledged the weakness and deficiency of their faith, and saw the need of Christ's grace for the improvement of it; they "said unto the Lord, Increase our faith," and perfect what is lacking in it. Let the discoveries of faith be more clear, the desires of faith more strong, the dependencies of faith more firm and fixed, the dedications of faith more entire and resolute, and the delights of faith more pleasing. Note, The increase of our faith is what we should earnestly desire, and offer up that desire to God in prayer. Some think they put up this prayer to Christ upon occasion of his pressing upon them the duty of forgiving injuries;

"Lord, Increase our faith," or we shall never be able to practise such a difficult duty as this. Faith in God's pardoning mercy will enable us to get over the greatest difficulties that lie in the way of our forgiving our brother. Others think it was upon some other occasion, when the apostles were run aground in working some miracle, and were reproved by Christ for the weakness of their faith, as *Mat. xvii. 16*. To him that blamed them they must apply themselves for grace to mend them; to him they cry, "Lord, Increase our faith."

2. The assurance Christ gave them of the wonderful efficacy of true faith; ver. 6, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed," so small as mustard seed,—but yours is yet less than the least,—or so sharp as mustard seed, so pungent, so exciting to all other graces, as mustard to the animal spirits, and therefore used in palsies, you might do wonders much beyond what you now do; nothing would be too hard for you, that were fit to be done for the glory of God and the confirmation of the doctrine you preach; yea, though it were the transplanting of a tree from the earth to the sea; see *Mat. xvii. 20*. As with God nothing is impossible, so are all things possible to him that can believe.

Fourthly. *That whatever we do in the service of Christ, we must be very humble, and not imagine that we can merit any favour at his hand, or claim it as a debt;* even the apostles themselves, who did so much more for Christ than others, must not think they had thereby made him their debtor.

1. We are all God's servants, his apostles and his ministers, are in a special manner so, and, as servants, are bound to do all we can for his honour; our whole strength and our whole time are to be employed for him; for we are not our own, not at our own dispose, but at our Master's.

2. As God's servants, it becomes us to fill up our time with duty; and we have a variety of work appointed us to do; we ought to make the end of one service the beginning of another. The servant that has been ploughing, or feeding cattle in the field, when he comes home at night has work to do still, he must wait at table, ver. 7, 8. When we have been employed in the duties of a religious conversation, that will not excuse us from the exercises of devotion; when we have been working for God, still we must be waiting on God, waiting on him continually.

3. Our principal care here must be to do the duty of our religion; and leave it to our Master to give us the comfort of it, when and how he thinks fit. No servant expects that his Master should say to him, "Go and sit down to meat," it is time enough to do that when we have done our day's work. Let us be in care to finish our work, and to do that well, and then the reward will come in due time.

4. It is fit Christ should be first served before us: "Make ready wherewith I may sup, and afterwards they shall eat and drink." Doubting Christians say they cannot give to Christ the glory of his love as they should, because they have not yet obtained the comfort of it: but this is wrong; first let Christ have the glory of it, let us attend him with our praises, and then we shall eat and drink in the comfort of that love, and in that there is a feast.

5. Christ's servants, when they are to wait upon him, must gird themselves, must free themselves from every thing that is entangling and encumbering, and fit themselves with a close application of mind to go on and go through with their work, must gird up the loins of their mind. When we have prepared for Christ's entertainment, have made ready wherewith he may sup, we must then gird ourselves to attend him. This is expected from servants, and Christ might require it from us, but he doth not insist upon it. He was among his disciples as one that served; and came not as other masters, to take state, and to be ministered unto, but to minister; witness his washing his disciples' feet.

6. Christ's servants do not so much as merit his thanks for any service they do him: "Doth he thank that servant?" Doth he reckon himself indebted to him for it? No, by no means. No good works of ours can merit any thing at the hand of God. We expect God's favour, not because we have by our services made him a debtor to us, but because he has by his promises made himself a debtor to his own honour, and that we may plead with him, but cannot sue for a *quantum meruit*—"according to merit."

7. Whatever we do for Christ, though it should be more perhaps than some others do, yet it is no more than is our duty to do; though we should do all things that are commanded us,—and, alas! in many things we come short of that,—yet there is no work of supererogation; it is but what we are bound to by that first and great commandment of loving God with all our heart and soul, which includes the utmost.

8. The best servants of Christ, even when they do the best services, must humbly acknowledge that they are unprofitable servants, though they are not those unprofitable servants that bury their talent, and shall be cast into utter darkness; yet, as to Christ, and any advantage that can accrue to him by their services, they are unprofitable; our goodness extendeth not unto God, neither if we are righteous is he the better, *Ps. xvi. 2; Job xxii. 2; xxxv. 7*. God cannot be a gainer by our services, and therefore cannot be made a debtor by them. He has no need of us, nor can our services make any addition to his perfections; it becomes us therefore to call ourselves unprofitable servants, but to call his service a profitable service; for God is happy without us, but we are undone without him.

11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem,



COUNTRY NEAR SAMARIA.

that he passed through the midst of Samaria and

and by no means, as has been asserted, uncommon in Palestine, is only mentioned here in the New Testament; but there seems to be a confusion with the sycamore in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. The Egyptian fig, or fig-mulberry (sycamore), so called from the form of its leaves, bears fruit of much value as a food for the poor, and its wood was used in Egypt for mummy-cases. Its great size and strong roots were not at all necessary to give point to our Saviour's words here, although they have led commentators into

error." Our sycamore is quite a different tree, and is not meant in the Gospels, where the word sometimes stands for sycamore.

xvii. 11. This verse is remarkable on several accounts. It says that as our Lord went to Jerusalem, "he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee." The direct route from the north to Jerusalem lay through Galilee and Samaria. If this was the course followed, why is Samaria put first? A reference to other places, as *Matt. xix. 1, Mark x. 1*, will show that Jesus went to Jerusalem by

Galilee. 12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: 13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. 14 And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. 17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine? 18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. 19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

We have here an account of the cure of ten lepers, which we had not in any other of the evangelists. The leprosy was a disease which the Jews supposed to be inflicted for the punishment of some particular sin, and to be, more than other diseases, a mark of God's displeasure; and therefore Christ, who came to take away sin, and turn away wrath, took particular care to cleanse the lepers that fell in his way. Christ was now in his way to Jerusalem, about the mid-way, where he had least acquaintance, in comparison with what he had either at Jerusalem or in Galilee; he was now in the frontier country, the marches that lay between Samaria and Galilee; he went that road to find out these lepers, and to cure them, for he is found of them that sought him not. Observe,

First. The address of these lepers to Christ; they were ten in a gang. For though they were shut out from society with others, yet those that were infected were at liberty to converse with one another, which would be some comfort to them, as giving them an opportunity to compare notes, and to condole with one another. Now observe,

1. They met Christ "as he entered into a certain village:" they did not stay till he had refreshed himself for some time after the fatigue of his journey, but met him as he entered the town, weary as he was, and yet he did not put them off, or adjourn their cause. They stood afar off, knowing that by the law their disease obliged them to keep their distance. Sense of our spiritual leprosy should make us very humble in all our approaches to Christ: We are we, that we should draw near to him that is infinitely pure? Who are impure.

2. Their request was unanimous and very importunate; ver. 13, "they lifted up their voices," being at a distance, and cried, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Those that expect help from Christ, must take him for their Master, and be at his command. If he be Master, he will be Jesus, a Saviour, and not otherwise. They ask not in particular to be cured of their leprosy, but "have mercy on us;" and it is enough to refer ourselves to the compassions of Christ, for they fail not. They had heard the fame of this Jesus, though he had not been much conversant in that country, and that was such as encouraged them to make application to him; and if but one of them began in so cheap and easy an address, they would all join.

3. Christ sent them to the priests, to be inspected by him, who was the judge of the leprosy. He did not tell them positively they should be cured, but bade them go shew themselves to the priests, ver. 14. This was a trial of their obedience; and, it was fit it should be so tried, as Naaman's in a like case, "Go wash in Jordan." Note. Those that expect Christ's favours, must take them in his way and method. Some of these lepers perhaps would be ready to quarrel with the prescription, Let him either cure or say he will not, and not send us to the priests on a fool's errand, but, overruled by the rest, they all went to the priest. While the ceremonial law was yet in force, Christ took care it should be observed, and the reputation of it kept up, and due honour paid to the priests in things pertaining to their function; but probably he had here a farther design, which was to have the priest's judgment of, and testimony to the perfectness of the cure, and that the priest might be awakened, and others by him, to inquire after one that had such a commanding power over bodily diseases.

4. "As they went, they were cleansed;" and so became fit to be looked upon by the priest, and to have a certificate from him that they were clean. Observe, Then we may expect God to meet us with mercy, when we are found in the way of duty. If we do what we can, God will not be wanting to do that for us which we cannot. Go, attend upon instituted ordinances, go and pray, and read the Scriptures; "Go, shew thyself to the priest," go and open thy case to a faithful minister, and though the means will not heal thee of thyself, God will heal thee, in the diligent use of those means.

5. "One of them," and but one, returned to give thanks; ver. 15, "when he saw that he was healed," instead of going forward to the priest, to be by him declared clean, and so discharged from his confinement, which was all that the rest aimed at, he turned back towards him that was the author of his cure, who he is desirous should have the glory of it, before he received the benefit of it. He appears to have been very hearty and affectionate in his thanksgiving, "with a loud voice he glorified God;" acknowledging it to come originally from him; and he lifted up his voice in his praises, as he had done in his prayers, ver. 13. Those that have received mercy from God should publish it to others; that they may praise God too, and may be encouraged by our experiences to trust in him. But he also made a particular address of thanks to Christ, ver. 16, "he fell down at his feet," put himself into the most humble, reverent posture he could, and gave him thanks. Note. We ought to give thanks for the favours Christ bestows upon us; and particularly for recoveries from sickness; and we ought to be speedy in our returns of praise, and not to defer them, lest time wear out the sense of the mercy. And it becomes us to be very humble in our thanksgivings, as well as in our prayers. It becomes the seed of Jacob, like him, to own themselves less than the least of all God's mercies, when they have received them, as well as when they are in pursuit of them.

6. Christ took notice of this one that had thus distinguished himself, for it seems he was a Samaritan, whereas the rest were Jews, ver. 16. The Samaritans

were separatists from the Jewish church, and had not that pure knowledge and worship of God among them that the Jews had; and yet it was one of them that glorified God, when the Jews forgot, or, when it was moved to them, refused to do it. Now observe here,

1st. The particular notice Christ took of him; of the grateful return he made, and the ingratitude of those that were sharers with him in the mercy—that he, who was a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, was the only one that returned to give glory to God, ver. 17, 18. See here, *First*. How rich Christ is in doing good: "Were there not ten cleansed?" Here was a cure by wholesale, a whole hospital healed with one word's speaking. Note. There is an abundance of healing, cleansing virtue in the blood of Christ, sufficient for all his patients, though never so many. Here is ten at a time cleansed; we shall have never the less grace for others' sharing. *Secondly*. How poor we are in our returns: "Where are the nine?" why did they not return to give thanks? This intimates that ingratitude is a very common sin. Of the many that receive mercy from God, there are but few, very few, that return to give thanks in a right manner; scarce one in ten, who render according to the benefit done unto them. *Thirdly*. How those often prove most grateful from whom it was least expected; a Samaritan gives thanks, and a Jew doth not. Thus many who profess revealed religion are outdone and quite shamed by some that are governed only by natural religion, not only in moral virtue, but in piety and devotion. This serves here to aggravate the ingratitude of those Jews of whom Christ speaks, as taking it very ill that his kindness was so slighted; and it intimates how justly he resents the ingratitude of the world of mankind, for whom he had done so much, and from whom he has received so little.

2nd. The great encouragement Christ gave him, ver. 19. The rest had their cure, and had it not revoked, as justly it might have been for their ingratitude, though they had such a good example of gratitude set before them; but he had his cure confirmed particularly with an encomium, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." The rest were made whole by the power of Christ, in compassion to their distress, and in answer to their prayer; but he was made whole by his faith, which Christ saw him differentiated by from the rest. Note. Temporal mercies are then doubled and sweetened to us when they are fetched in by the prayers of faith, and returned by the praises of faith.

20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. 22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. 23 And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after *them*, nor follow *them*. 24 For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one *part* under heaven, shineth unto the other *part* under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. 25 But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. 26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all. 30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. 31 In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. 32 Remember Lot's wife. 33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. 34 I tell you, in that night there shall be two *men* in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. 35 Two *women* shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 36 Two *men* shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 37 And they answered and said unto him,

the road east of the Jordan, and not southward through Samaria. At first all seems confused and discrepant, but the explanation is easy. Jesus went first northwards, by way of Samaria, into Galilee; then turning eastward, he crossed the Jordan and came to Jerusalem by the course described by Matthew and Mark, who on this theory mention a later stage of the journey or circuit here introduced by Luke. That this theory is the right one seems proved by the incidental mention of Jericho in chap. xviii. 35, xix. 1.

xvii. 14. Romish divines, and all who draw from this and like passages a plea for auricular confession as needful to pardon, strangely err. They say leprosy means sin, and going to the priest means confession; but these men were healed by Christ before they went to the priests. And in the Mosaic system, it was the leper already cleansed who had to appear before the priests to perform the customary rites which commemorated the healing as already past.

Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

We have here a discourse of Christ's concerning the kingdom of God, that is, the kingdom of the Messiah, which was now shortly to be set up, and of which there was great expectation.

1. Here is, *The demand of the Pharisees* concerning it, which occasioned this discourse; they asked "when the kingdom of God should come." Forming a notion of it as a temporal kingdom, which should advance the Jewish nation above the nations of the earth, they were impatient to hear some tidings of its approach; they understood perhaps that Christ had taught his disciples to pray for the coming of it, and they had long preached that it was at hand. Now say the Pharisees, when will that glorious view open? when shall we see this long-looked-for kingdom?

2. *Christ's reply to that demand*, directed to the Pharisees first, and afterwards to his own disciples, who knew better how to understand it, ver. 22; what he said to both, he saith to us.

First. That the kingdom of the Messiah was to be a spiritual kingdom, and not temporal and external. They asked when it would come; You know not what you ask, saith Christ; it may come, and you not be aware of it: for it has not an external show, as other kingdoms have, the advancements and revolutions of which are taken notice of by the nations of the earth, and fill the newspapers; so they expected this kingdom of God would do. No, saith Christ,

1. It will have a silent entrance; without pomp, without noise; it "cometh not with observation;" *μετὰ παύτης φωνῆς*, "with outward show." They desired to have their curiosity satisfied concerning the time of it, to which Christ doth not give them any answer, but will have their mistakes rectified concerning the nature of it. "It is not for you to know the times" of this kingdom, those are secret things which belong not to you; but the great intentions of this kingdom, those are things revealed. When Messiah the Prince comes to set up his kingdom, they shall not say, "Lo here, or lo there;" as when a prince goes in progress to visit his territories, it is in everybody's mouth, he is here, or he is there; for where the king is there is the court. Christ will not come with all that talk; it will not be set up in this or that particular place; nor will the court of that kingdom be here or there. Nor will it be here or there, what country men are of, or where they dwell, as if that would place them nearer to, or farther from, that kingdom. Those who confine Christianity and the church to this place, or that party, cry, "Lo here, or lo there;" than which nothing is more contrary to the designs of catholic Christianity; so do they who make prosperity and external pomp a mark of the true church.

2. It has a spiritual influence; "the kingdom of God is within you." It is not of this world, *Jno. xviii. 36*; its glory doth not strike men's fancies, but affect their spirits; and its power is over their souls and consciences, and from them it receives homage, and not their bodies only. The kingdom of God will not change men's outward condition, but their hearts and lives; then it comes when it makes those humble, and serious, and heavenly, that were proud, vain, and carnal; when it weans those from the world that were wedded to the world; and therefore look for the kingdom of God in the revolutions of the heart, not of the civil government. "The kingdom of God is among you," so some read it; you inquire when it will come, and are not aware that it is already begun to be set up in the midst of you. The Gospel is preached, it is confirmed by miracles, it is embraced by multitudes, so that it is in your nation, though not in your hearts. Note, It is the folly of many curious inquirers concerning the times to come, that they look for that before them which is already among them.

Secondly. That the setting up of this kingdom was a work that would meet with a great deal of opposition and interruption, ver. 22. The disciples thought they should carry all before them, and expected a constant series of success in their work; but Christ tells them it would be otherwise; "the days will come," before you have finished your testimony, and done your work, "when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man," one such day as we now have, of the prosperity and progress of the Gospel, "and shall not see it." At first, indeed, you will have wonderful success; so they had, when thousands were added to the church in a day; but do not think it will be always so; no, you will be persecuted and scattered, silenced and imprisoned, so that you will not have opportunities of preaching the Gospel without fear, as you now have; people will grow cool to it when they have enjoyed it awhile, so that you will not see such harvests of souls gathered in to Christ afterwards, as at first; nor such multitudes flocking to him, as doves to their windows. This looks forward to his disciples in after ages; they must expect much disappointment; the Gospel will not be always preached with like liberty and success. Ministers and churches will sometimes be under outward restraints; teachers will be removed into corners, and solemn assemblies scattered; then they will wish to see such days of opportunity as they have formerly enjoyed, sabbath days, sacrament days, preaching days, praying days; those are days of the Son of man, in which we hear from him, and converse with him; the time may come when we may in vain wish for such days. God teacheth us to know the worth of such mercies by the want of them; it concerns us, while they are continued, to improve them, and in the years of plenty to lay up in store for the years of famine. Sometimes they will be under inward restraints, will not have such tokens of the presence of the Son of man with them, as they have sometimes had; the Spirit is withdrawn from them, they see not their signs, the angel comes not down to stir the waters, there is a great stupidity among the children of men, and a great lukewarmness among the children of God; then we would wish to see such victorious, triumphant days of the Son of man as we have sometimes seen, when he has ridden forth with his bow and his crown, conquering and to conquer, but we cannot see them. Note, We must not think that Christ's church and cause are lost, because not always alike visible and prevailing.

Thirdly. That Christ and his kingdom are not to be looked for in this or that particular place, but his appearance will be general, in all places at once, ver. 23, 24. "They will say to you, See here, or see there;" here is one that will deliver the Jews out of the hands of the oppressing Romans, or there is one that will deliver the Christians out of the hands of the oppressing Jews; here is the Messiah, and there is his prophet; here, in this mountain, or there, at Jerusalem, you will find the true church. "Go not after them, or follow them;" do not heed such suggestions; the kingdom of God was not designed to be the glory of one people only, but to give light to the Gentiles; "for as the lightning that lightens out of one part under heaven, shines," all on a sudden, irresistibly, "to the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day."

1. The judgments that are to destroy the Jewish nation, to lay them waste, and to deliver the Christians from them, shall fly like lightning through the land, shall lay all waste from one end of it to another; and those that are marked for this destruction can no more avoid it or oppose it than they can a flash of lightning.

xvii. 18. It has been noted, with reference to the Samaritan mentioned in this narrative, "The Samaritans were Gentiles; not a mixed race, as is sometimes erroneously supposed. They had a mixed religion, but were themselves originally from other countries (see 2 Kings xvii. 24-41). There may have been a reason for the nine Jews not returning—that they held the ceremonial duty imposed on them to be paramount, which the Samaritans might not rate so highly;" so Alford. The Samaritan went back to Christ before he

2. The Gospel, that is to set up Christ's kingdom in the world, shall fly like lightning through the nations; the kingdom of the Messiah is not to be a local thing, but is to be dispersed far and wide over the face of the whole earth; it shall shine from Jerusalem to all parts about, and that in a moment; the kingdoms of the earth shall be leavened by the Gospel ere they are aware of it. The trophies of Christ's victories shall be erected on the ruins of the devil's kingdom, even in those countries that could never be subdued to the Roman yoke. The design of the setting up Christ's kingdom was not to make one nation great, but to make all nations good, some at least of all nations; and this point shall be gained, though the nations rage, and the kings of the earth set themselves with all their might against it.

Fourthly. That the Messiah must suffer before he must reign, ver. 25: "first must he suffer many things," many hard things, "and be rejected of this generation;" and if he be thus treated, his disciples must expect no other but to suffer and be rejected too, for his sake. They thought of having the kingdom of the Messiah set up in external splendour: No, saith Christ, we must go by the cross to the crown. The Son of man must suffer many things; pain, and shame, and death, are those many things; he must be rejected by this generation of unbelieving Jews, before he be embraced by another generation of believing Gentiles; that his Gospel might have the honour of triumphing over the greatest opposition from those who ought to have given it the greatest assistance; and thus the excellency of the power would appear to be of God, and not of man; for though Israel be not gathered, yet he will be glorious to the ends of the earth.

Fifthly. That the setting up the kingdom of the Messiah would introduce the destruction of the Jewish nation, whom it would find in a dead sleep of security, and drowned in sensuality, as the old world was in the days of Noah, and Sodom in the days of Lot, ver. 26, &c. Observe,

1. How it had been with sinners formerly, and what posture the judgments of God, which they had been fairly warned of, did at length find them in. Look as far back as the old world, when all flesh had corrupted their way, and the earth was filled with violence; come a little lower, and think how it was with the men of Sodom, who were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly. Now observe concerning both these, 1st. That they had fair warning given them of the ruin that was coming upon them for their sins. Noah was a preacher of righteousness to the old world, so was Lot to the Sodomites; they gave them timely notice what would be in the end of their wicked ways, and that it was not far off. 2nd. That they did not regard the warning given them, and gave no credit, no heed to it; they were very secure, went on in their business as unconcerned as you would imagine; "they did eat, they drank," indulged themselves in their pleasures, and took no care of any thing else but to make provision for the flesh; counted upon the perpetuity of their present flourishing state, and therefore married wives and were given in marriage, that their families might be built up; they were all very merry; so were the men of Sodom, and yet very busy too; "they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded." These were lawful things, but the fault was, they minded these inordinately, and their hearts were entirely set upon them, so that they had no heart at all to prepare against the threatened judgments; when they should have been, as the men of Nineveh, fasting and praying, repenting and reforming, upon warning given them of an approaching judgment, they were going on securely, eating flesh and drinking wine, when God called to weeping and to mourning, *Isa. xxii. 12, 13*. 3rd. That they continued in their security and sensuality till the threatened judgment came; until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and Lot went out of Sodom, nothing said or done to them served to alarm or awaken them. Note, The stupidity of sinners in a sinful way, though it is as strange as it is without excuse, yet we are not to think it strange, for it is not without example. It is the old way that wicked men have trodden, that have gone slumbering to hell, as if their damnation slumbered while they did. 4th. That God took care for the preservation of those that were his, who believed and feared and took the warning themselves which they gave to others. Noah entered into the ark, and there he was safe; Lot went out of Sodom, and so went out of harm's way. If some run on heedless and headlong into destruction, that shall be no prejudice to the salvation of them that believe. 5th. That they were surprised with the ruin which they would not fear, and were swallowed up in it, to their unspeakable horror and amazement. The flood came, and destroyed all the sinners of the old world; fire and brimstone came, and destroyed all the sinners of Sodom. God has many arrows in his quiver, and useth which he will in making war upon his rebellious subjects, for he can make which he will effectual. But that which is especially intended here is, to shew what a dreadful surprise destruction will be to those who are secure and sensual.

2. How it will be with sinners still, ver. 30: "Thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed;" when Christ comes to destroy the Jewish nation by the Roman armies, the generality of that nation will be found under such a reigning security and stupidity as this. They have warning given by Christ now, and will have it repeated to them by the apostles after him, as they had by Noah and Lot, but it will be all in vain. They will continue secure will go on in their neglect and opposition of Christ and his Gospel, till all the Christians are withdrawn from among them, and gone to the place of refuge—God will provide for them on the other side Jordan, and then a deluge of judgments shall flow in upon them, which shall destroy all the unbelieving Jews. One would have thought this discourse of our Saviour's, which was public, and not long after published to the world, should have awakened them; but it did not, for the hearts of that people were hardened to their destruction. And in like manner, when Jesus Christ shall come to judge the world at the end of time, sinners will be found in the same secure and careless posture, altogether regardless of the judgment approaching, which will therefore come upon them as a snare; and in like manner the sinners of every age go on securely in their evil ways, and remember not their latter end, nor the account that they must give: "Woe to them that are thus at ease in Zion."

Sixthly. That it ought to be the care of his disciples and followers to distinguish themselves from the unbelieving Jews in that day, and leaving them, their city and country, to themselves, to flee at the signal given, according to the direction that should be given; let them retire as Noah to his ark, and Lot to his Zoar. You "would have healed Jerusalem," as of old Babylon, "but she is not healed;" and therefore "forsake her, flee out of the midst of her, and deliver every man his soul," *Jer. li. 6, 9*.

1. This flight of theirs from Jerusalem must be expeditious, and must not be retarded by any concern about their worldly affairs, ver. 31: "He that shall be on the housetop," when the alarm is given, "let him not come down to take his stuff away," both because he cannot spare so much time, and because the carrying away of his effects will but encumber him and retard his flight. Let him not regard his stuff at such a time, when it will be next to a miracle of mercy if he have his life given him for a prey. Better leave his stuff behind him, than stay to look after it, and perish with them that believe not. It will be their concern to do as Lot and his family were charged to do, "escape for thy life." "Save yourselves from this untoward generation."

2. When they have made their escape, they must not think of returning ver. 32. "Remember Lot's wife," and take warning by her, not only to flee

went on to the priest; the Jews went on to the priest, apparently more anxious to recover their social status than grateful for the gracious interposition of Christ on their behalf.

xvii. 20. The phrase, "and when he was demanded of the Pharisees," means "and when he was asked by the Pharisees."

xvii. 21. "The kingdom of God is within you," or, as some prefer, "among you," though on the whole we think the common rendering best. "The kingdom of God" is God's dominion, the government

from this Sodom, for so Jerusalem is become, *Isa. i. 10*, but to persevere in your flight; and do not look back, as she did; be not loath to leave a place marked for destruction, whoever or whatever you leave behind you that is ever so dear to you. Those who have left the Sodom of a natural state, let them go forward, and not so much as look a kind look towards it again. Let them not look back, lest they should be tempted to go back; nay, lest that be construed a going back in heart, or an evidence that the heart was left behind. Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt, that she might remain a lasting monument of God's displeasure against apostates, that begin in the spirit, and end in the flesh.

3. There would be no other way of saving their lives but by quitting the Jews; and if they thought to save themselves by a coalition with them, they would find themselves mistaken, *ver. 31*: "Whosoever shall seek to save his life," by declining from his Christianity, and complying with the Jews, he "shall lose it," with them, and perish in the common calamity; but whosoever is willing to venture his life with the Christians, upon the same bottom on which they venture, to take his lot with them, in life and in death, he shall preserve his life, for he shall make sure of eternal life, and is in a likelier way at that time to save his life than those who embark in a Jewish bottom, or ensure upon their securities. Note, Those do best for themselves that trust God in the way of duty.

Seventhly. That all good Christians should certainly escape, but many of them very narrowly, from that destruction, *ver. 34-36*. When God's judgments are laying all waste, he will take an effectual course to preserve those that are his, by remarkable providences, distinguishing between them and others that were nearest to them: "Two in a bed; one taken, and the other left," one snatched out of the burning, and taken into a place of safety, while the other is left to perish in the common ruin. Note, Though the sword devours one as well as another, and all things seem to come alike to all, yet, sooner or later, it shall be made to appear that the Lord knows them that are his, and are not, and how to take out the precious from the vile. We are sure the Judge of all the earth will do right; and therefore when he sends a judgment on purpose to avenge the death of his Son upon those that crucified him, he will take care that none of those who glorified him, and gloried in his cross, shall be taken away by that judgment.

Lastly. That this distinguishing, dividing, discriminating work, shall be done in all places, as far as the kingdom of God shall extend, *ver. 37*. "Where, Lord?" They had inquired concerning the time, and he would not gratify their curiosity with any information concerning that; they therefore tried him with another question, "Where, Lord?"—where shall those be safe that are taken?—where shall those perish that are left? The answer is proverbial, and may be explained so as to answer each side of the question, "Whosoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together."

1. Wherever the wicked are, that are marked for perdition, they shall be found out by the judgments of God; as wherever a dead carcase is, the birds of prey will smell it out, and make a prey of it. The Jews having made themselves a dead and putrefied carcase, odious to God's holiness, and obnoxious to his justice, wherever any of that unbelieving generation is, the judgments of God shall fasten upon them, as the eagles do upon the prey, "thine hand shall find out all thine enemies," *Ps. cxi. 9*, "though they set their nests among the stars," *Obad. 4*. The Roman soldiers will hunt the Jews out of all their recesses and fastnesses, and none shall escape.

2. Wherever the godly are, that are marked for preservation, they shall be found happy in the enjoyment of Christ. As the dissolution of the Jewish church shall be extended to all parts, so shall the constitution of the Christian church; wherever Christ is, believers will flock to him, and meet in him, as eagles about the prey, without being directed or shewed the way, by the instinct of the new nature. Now Christ is where his Gospel and his ordinances and church are; "for where two or three are gathered in his name, there is he in the midst of them," and thither therefore others will be gathered to him. The kingdom of the Messiah is not to have one particular place for its metropolis, such as Jerusalem was to the Jewish church, to which all Jews were to resort; but wherever the body is, wherever the Gospel is preached, and ordinances are ministered, thither will pious souls resort, there they will find Christ, and by faith feast upon him. Wherever Christ records his name, he will meet his people and bless them, *Jno. iv. 21*; *1 Tim. ii. 8*. Many good interpreters understand it of the gathering of the saints together to Christ in the kingdom of glory. Ask not where the carcase will be, and how they shall find the way to it; for they shall be under an infallible conduct to Him who is their living, quickening head, and the centre of their unity; to him shall the gathering of the people be.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In this chapter we have, I. The parable of the importunate widow, designed to teach us fervency in prayer, *ver. 1-8*. II. The parable of the Pharisee and publican, designed to teach us humility, and humiliation for sin in prayer, *ver. 9-14*. III. Christ's favour to little children that were brought to him, *ver. 15-17*. IV. The trial of a rich man that had a mind to follow Christ, whether he loved better Christ or his riches, his coming short upon that trial, and Christ's discourse with his disciples upon that occasion, *ver. 18-30*. V. Christ's foretelling of his own death and sufferings, *ver. 31-34*. VI. His restoring sight to a blind man, *ver. 35-43*. And these four passages we had before, in *Matthew* and *Mark*.



AND he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 Yet because this widow troubleth

me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. 7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

This parable has its key hanging at the door; the drift and design of it is prefixed; Christ spoke it with this intent, to teach us that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint," *ver. 1*. It supposeth that all God's people are praying people; all God's children keep up both a constant and an occasional correspondence with him; send to him steadily, and upon every emergence. It is our privilege and honour that we may pray; it is our duty, we ought to pray, we sin if we neglect it. It is to be our constant work, we "ought always to pray;" it is that which the duty of every day requires; we must pray, and never grow weary of praying, nor think of giving it off till it comes to be swallowed up in everlasting praise. But that which seems particularly designed here is, to teach us constancy and perseverance in our requests for some spiritual mercies that we are in pursuit of, relating either to ourselves or to the church of God; when we are praying for strength against our spiritual enemies, our lusts and corruptions, which are our worst enemies; we must continue instant in prayer, must pray and not faint; for we shall not seek God's face in vain. So we must likewise in our prayers for the deliverance of the people of God out of the hands of their persecutors and oppressors.

First. Christ shews, by a parable, the power of importunity among men, who will be swayed by that, when nothing else will influence, to do that which is just and right. He gives you an instance of an honest cause that was carried before an unjust judge, not by the equity or compassionableness of it, but purely by dint of importunity. Observe here,

1. The ill character of the judge that was in a certain city, he "neither feared God nor regarded man," that is, he had no manner of concern either for his conscience or for his reputation; he stood in no awe either of the wrath of God against him, or of the censures of men concerning him. Or he took no care to do his duty either to God or man. He was a perfect stranger both to godliness and honour, and had no notion of either. Those that have cast off the fear of their Creator, it is not strange if they be altogether regardless of their fellow creatures; where no fear of God is, no good is to be expected. Such a prevalency of irreligion and inhumanity is bad in any, but very bad in a judge that has power in his hand, in the use of which he ought to be guided by the principles of religion and justice; and if he be not, instead of doing good with his power, he will be in danger of doing hurt. Wickedness in the place of judgment was one of the sorest evils Solomon saw under the sun, *Ecc. iii. 16*.

2. The distressed case of a poor widow that was necessitated to make her appeal to him, being wronged by some one that thought to bear her down with power and terror: she had manifestly right on her side; but it should seem, in soliciting to have right done her, she tied not herself to the formalities of the law, but made personal application to the judge from day to day at his own house, still crying, "Avenge me of mine adversary;" that is, Do me justice against mine adversary; not that she desired to be revenged on him for any thing he had done against her; but that he might be obliged to restore what effects he had of hers in his hands, and might be disabled any more to oppress her. Note, Poor widows have often many adversaries, who barbarously take advantage of their weak and helpless state, to invade their rights, and defraud them of what little they have; and magistrates are particularly charged, not only not to do "violence to the widow," *Jer. xlii. 3*, but to "judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow," *Isa. i. 17*, to be their patrons and protectors; then they are as gods, for God is so, *Ps. lxxviii. 5*.

3. The difficulty and discouragement she met with in her cause; "he would not for a while;" according to his usual practice, he frowned upon her, took no notice of her cause, but connived at all the wrong her adversary did her; for she had no bribe to give him, no great man whom he stood in any awe of to speak for her; so that he did not at all incline to redress her grievances; and he himself was conscious of the reason of his dilatoriness, and could not but own within himself that he "neither feared God nor regarded man:" it is said a man should know so much amiss by himself, and be in no care to amend it.

4. The gaining of her point by continual dunning of this unjust judge; *ver. 5*, "because this widow troubles me," gives me a continual toil, I will hear her cause, and do her justice; not so much lest by her clamour against me she bring me into an ill name, as lest by her clamour to me she weary me; for she is resolved she will give me no rest till it is done, and therefore I will do it to save myself farther trouble: as good at first as at last. Thus she got justice done by her continual craving; she begged it at his door, followed him in the streets, solicited him in open court, and still her cry was, "Avenge me of my adversary;" which he was forced to do, to get rid of her; for his conscience, as bad as he was, would not suffer him to send her to prison for an affront upon the court.

Secondly. He applies this for the encouragement of God's praying people, to pray with faith and fervency, and to persevere therein.

1. He assures them that God will at length be gracious to them; *ver. 7*, "Hear what the unjust judge saith;" how he owns himself quite overcome by a constant importunity, and from thence infers, "Shall not God avenge his own elect?" Observe,

1st. What is it that they desire and expect? That God would "avenge his own elect." Note, First. There is a people in the world that are God's people, his elect, his own elect, a choice people, a chosen people; and this he has an eye to in all he doth for them: it is because they are his chosen, and in pursuance of the choice he has made of them. Secondly. God's own elect meet with a great deal of trouble and opposition in this world; there are many adversaries that fight against them: Satan is their great adversary. Thirdly. That which is wanted and waited for, is God's preserving and protecting them, and the work of his own hands in them; his securing the interest of the church in the world, and of his grace in the heart.

2nd. What is it that is required of God's people in order to the obtaining of this; they must "cry day and night to him;" not that he needs their remonstrances, or can be moved by their pleadings; but this he has made their duty, and to this he has promised mercy. We ought to be particular in praying against our spiritual enemies, as St. Paul was: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me," like this importunate widow. Lord, mortify this corruption; Lord, arm me against this temptation. We ought to concern ourselves for the persecuted and oppressed churches, and to pray that God would do them justice, and set them in safety. And

which he exercises, and its seat is in the souls of men, not in outward array. If the kingdom of God here means specifically the Messianic dispensation, we may still regard it as rather an empire of souls than an external and visible institution. Whatever it was intended to become, at that time it was not in any sense a regular organisation.

xvii. 22. "One of the days of the Son of Man" is one of the days on which he manifests himself.

xvii. 23. On this verse and those which follow there has been

much speculation. Two opinions especially have been advocated. One is that Luke here collects utterances which fell from the lips of Jesus on various occasions; the other is, that Jesus himself spoke the same things at different times. The question is one of considerable difficulty, and is not of much practical importance.

xviii. 2. "According to Deut. xvi. 18, the Israelites were to have judges in all the gates of their towns, who were bound to judge the people with just judgment, without respect of persons (see Exod.

herein we must be very urgent; ~~we~~ must cry with earnestness; we must "cry day and night," as those that believe prayer will be heard at last; we must wrestle with God, as those that know how to value the blessing, and will have no nay. God's praying people are bid to give him no rest, *Isa. lxii. 6, 7*.

3rd. What discouragements they may perhaps meet with in their prayers and expectations; he may "bear long with them," and may not presently appear for them, in answer to their prayers. He is μακροθυμῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς,—he "exerciseth patience towards the adversaries of his people," and doth not take vengeance on them; and he exerciseth the patience of his people, and doth not plead for them: he bore long with the cry of the sin of the Egyptians that oppressed Israel, and with the cry of the sorrows of those that were oppressed.

4th. What assurance they have that mercy will come at last, though it be delayed; and how it is supported by what the unjust judge saith: if this widow prevail by being importunate, much more shall God's elect prevail. For, *First*. This widow was a stranger, nothing related to the judge; but God's praying people are his own elect, whom he knows, and loves, and delights in, and has always concerned himself for. *Secondly*. She was but one, but the praying people of God are many; that all come to him on the same errand, and agree to ask what they need, *Mat. xviii. 19*. As the saints of heaven surround the throne of glory with united praises, so saints on earth besiege the throne of grace with their united prayers. *Thirdly*. She came to a judge that bade her keep her distance: we come to a Father that bids us come boldly to him, and teaches us to cry, Abba, Father. *Fourthly*. She came to an unjust judge: we come to a righteous Father, *Jno. xvii. 25*; one that regards his own glory, and the comforts of his poor creatures, especially those in distress, as widows and fatherless. *Fifthly*. She came to this judge purely upon her own account; but God is himself engaged in the cause which we are soliciting; and we can say, "Arise, O Lord, plead thine own cause;" and "what wilt thou do to thy great name?" *Sixthly*. She had no friend to speak for her, to add force to her petition, and to use interest for her more than her own; but "we have an Advocate with the Father," his own Son, "who ever lives to make intercession for us," and has a powerful, prevailing interest in heaven. *Seventhly*. She had no promise of speeding, no, nor any encouragement given her to ask; but we have the golden sceptre held out to us, are bid to ask, and it is promised it shall be given us. *Eighthly*. She could have access to the judge only at some certain times; but we may cry to God "day and night," at all hours; and therefore may the rather hope to prevail by importunity. *Ninthly*. Her importunity was provoking to the judge, and she might fear lest it should set him more against her; but our importunity is pleasing to God, "the prayer of the upright is his delight," and therefore we may hope shall avail much, if it be an effectual, fervent prayer.

2. He intimates to them that, notwithstanding this, they will begin to be weary of waiting for him, ver. 8; "Nevertheless," though such assurances are given, that God will avenge his own elect, yet "when the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth?" The Son of man will come to avenge his own elect—to plead the cause of persecuted Christians against the persecuting Jews; he will come in his providence to plead the cause of his injured people in every age; and at the great day he will come finally to determine the controversies of Zion; now when he comes, "will he find faith in the earth?" The question implies a strong negation; No, he shall not; he himself foresees it. *1st*. This supposeth that it is on earth only that there is occasion for faith; for sinners in hell are feeling that which they would not believe, and saints in heaven are enjoying that which they did believe. *2nd*. It supposeth that faith is the great thing that Jesus Christ looks for. He looks down upon the children of men, and doth not ask, Is there innocence? but, Is there faith? He inquired concerning the faith of those who applied themselves to him for cures. *3rd*. It supposeth that if there were faith, though never so little, he would discover it, and find it out. The weakest believer, and most obscure, his eye is upon. *4th*. It is foretold, that when Christ comes to plead his people's cause, he will find but little faith in comparison with what one might expect; that is,

First. In general, he will find but few good people; few that are really and truly good: many that have the form and fashion of godliness, but few that have faith, that are sincere and honest; nay, he will find little fidelity among men: the faithful fail, *Ps. xii. 1, 2*; even to the end of time there will still be occasion for the same complaint; the world will grow no better, no, not when it is drawing towards its period. Bad it is, and bad it will be, and worst of all, just before Christ's coming; the last times will be the most perilous.

Secondly. In particular, he will find few that have faith concerning his coming. When he comes to avenge his own elect, he looks if there be any faith to help and to uphold, and wonders that there is none, *Isa. lix. 16*; *lxiii. 5*. It intimates that Christ, both in his particular comings for the relief of his people, and in his general coming at the end of time, may and will delay his coming so long as that, *1st*. Wicked people will begin to defy it, and to say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" *2 Pet. iii. 4*; they will challenge him to come, *Isa. v. 19*; *Am. v. 18*; and his delay will harden them in their wickedness, *Mat. xxiv. 48*. *2nd*. Even his own people will begin to despair of it, and to conclude he will never come, because he has passed their reckoning. God's time to appear for his people is when things are brought to the last extremity, and when Sion begins to say, "The Lord has forsaken me;" see *Isa. xlix. 14*; *xl. 27*. But this is our comfort, that when the time appointed comes, it will appear that the unbelief of man has not made the promise of God of none effect.

9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other:

for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The scope of this parable likewise is prefixed to it; and we are told ver. 9, who they were that it was levelled at, and for whom it was calculated. He designed it for the conviction of some who "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." They were such as had, 1. A great conceit of themselves, and of their own goodness: they thought themselves as holy as they needed to be, and holier than all their neighbours; and such as might serve for examples to them all. But that was not all: 2. They had a confidence in themselves before God; and not only had a high opinion of their own righteousness, but depended upon the merit of it, whenever they addressed God, as their plea: they "trusted in themselves, as being righteous;" they thought they had made God their debtor, and might demand any thing from him. And, 3. They "despised others," and looked upon them with contempt; as not worthy to be compared with them. Now Christ, by this parable, would shew such their folly, and that thereby they shut themselves out from acceptance with God. This is called a parable, though there be nothing of similitude in it; but it is rather a description of the different temper and language of those that proudly justify themselves, and those that humbly condemn themselves, and their different standing before God. It is matter of fact every day.

First. Here are both these addressing themselves to the duty of prayer, at the same place and time; ver. 10, "Two men went up into the temple" (for the temple stood upon a hill) "to pray." It was not the hour of public prayer, but they went thither to offer up their personal devotions; as was usual with good people at that time, when the temple was not only the place but the medium of worship; and God had promised, in answer to Solomon's request, that whatever prayer was made in a right manner in or towards that house, it should therefore the rather be accepted. Christ is our temple, and to him we must have an eye in all our approaches to God. The Pharisee and the publican both went to the temple to pray. Note, Among the worshippers of God in the visible church, there is a mixture of good and bad,—of some that are accepted of God, and some that are not; and so it has been ever since Cain and Abel brought their offering to the same altar. The Pharisee, as proud as he was, could not think himself above prayer; nor could the publican, as humble as he was, think himself shut out from the benefit of it; but we have reason to think these went with different views.

1. The Pharisee went to the temple to pray, because it was a public place, more public than the corners of the streets; and therefore he should have many eyes upon him, who would applaud his devotion; which perhaps was more than was expected. The character Christ gave of the Pharisees, that "all their works they did to be seen of men," gives us occasion for this suspicion. Note, Hypocrites keep up the external performances of religion only to save or gain credit. There are many we see every day at the temple, whom it is to be feared we shall not see in the great day at Christ's right hand.

2. The publican went to the temple, because it was appointed to be "a house of prayer for all people," *Isa. lvi. 7*. The Pharisee came to the temple upon a compliment, the publican upon business; the Pharisee to make his appearance, the publican to make his request. Now God sees with what disposition and design we come to wait upon him in holy ordinances, and will judge of us accordingly.

Secondly. Here is the Pharisee's address to God, (for a prayer I cannot call it,) he "stood and prayed thus with himself," ver. 11, 12; "standing by himself he prayed thus," some read it; he was wholly intent upon himself; had nothing in his eye but self; his own praise, and not God's glory; or, standing in some conspicuous place, where he distinguished himself, or setting himself in print with a great deal of state and formality, he prayed thus. Now that which he is here supposed to say is that which shews,

1. That he trusted to himself that he was righteous. A great many good things he saith of himself, which we will suppose to be true: that he was free from gross and scandalous sins; he was not an extortioner, not a usurer, not oppressive to debtors or tenants; but fair and kind to all that had dependence upon him: he was not unjust in any of his dealings; did no man any wrong: he could say as Samuel, "Whose ox or ass have I taken?" He was no adulterer, but had possessed his vessel in sanctification and honour. Yet this was not all; he "fasted twice in the week;" partly as an act of temperance, partly of devotion: the Pharisees and their disciples fasted twice a week, Monday and Thursday: thus he glorified God with his body. Yet that was not all: he gave tithes of all that he possessed, according to the law, and so glorified God with his worldly estate. Now all this was very well and commendable. Miserable is the condition of those who come short of the righteousness of this Pharisee; and yet he was not accepted; and why was he not? *1st*. His giving God thanks for this, though in itself a good thing, yet seems to be a mere formality. He doth not say, "By the grace of God, I am what I am," as Paul did; but turns it off with a slight, "God I thank thee;" which is intended but for a plausible introduction to a proud, vainglorious ostentation of himself. *2nd*. He makes his boast of this, and dwells with delight upon this subject; as if all his business to the temple was to tell God Almighty how very good he was; and he is ready to say, with those hypocrites that we read of, *Isa. viii. 3*, "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?" *3rd*. He trusted to it as a righteousness; and not only mentioned it, but pleaded it; as if hereby he had merited at the hands of God, and made him his debtor. *4th*. Here is not one word of prayer in all he saith. He "went up into the temple to pray," but forgot his errand; was so full of himself and his own goodness, that he thought he had need of nothing, no, not of the favour and grace of God; which it should seem he did not think worth asking.

2. That he "despised others." *1st*. He thought meanly of all mankind but himself: "I thank thee that I am not as other men are." He speaks indefinitely, as if he were better than any. We may have reason to thank God that we are not as some men are, that are notoriously wicked and vile; but to speak at random thus, as if we only were good, and all beside us were reprobates, is to judge by wholesale. *2nd*. He thought meanly in a particular manner of this publican, whom he had left behind, it is probable, in the court of the Gentiles, and whose company he had fallen into as he came to the temple. He knew he was a publican, and therefore very uncharitably concluded that he was an extortioner, unjust, and all that is naught. Suppose it had been so, and he had known it, what business had he to take notice of it? Could not he say his prayers, (and that was all the Pharisees did,) without reproaching his neighbours? Or was this a part of his, "God, I thank thee?" And was he as much pleased with the publican's badness as with his own goodness? There could not be a plainer evidence, not only of the want of humility and charity, but of reigning pride and malice, than this was.

Thirdly. Here is the publican's address to God, which was the reverse of the Pharisee's; as full of humility and humiliation as his was of pride and ostentation; and of repentance for sin, and desire towards God, as his was of confidence in himself, and his own righteousness and sufficiency.

1. He expressed his repentance and humility in what he did; and his gesture

lxiii. 6—9; *Lev. xix. 15*). Such town tribunals existed in our Lord's days (*Matt. v. 21, 22*); and it is not improbable that the narrative in question was taken from life" (*Oostersee on Luke*, English translation).

xviii. 3. The words "avenge me of mine adversary" are equivalent to "do me justice in opposition to one who unjustly prosecutes me."

xviii. 6. The emphasis of the verse is upon the word "unjust." The unjust judge is contrasted with the righteous judge.

xviii. 7. This verse may be rendered, "And will not God effect the vindication of his elect who cry to him day and night, and toward whom he is long-suffering?" This, we think, gives the real meaning, which has been partly missed by the translators. The ordinary version seems inconsistent with the declaration of speedy vindication contained in the following verse.

xviii. 8. It must be noted that our Lord speaks to some who suppose the Son of Man is not come, hence the question proposed in

when he addressed himself to his devotion, was expressive of great seriousness and humility, and the proper clothing of a broken, penitent, and obedient heart. 1st. He stood afar off. The Pharisee stood, but crowded up as nigh as he could to the upper end of the court. The publican, in a sense of his unworthiness to draw near to God, kept at a distance; and perhaps for fear of offending the Pharisee, whom he observed to look scornfully upon him, and of disturbing his devotions. Hereby he owned that God might justly behold him afar off, and send him into a state of eternal distance from him; and that it was a great favour that God was pleased to admit him thus nigh. 2nd. He "would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven," much less his hands, as was usual in prayer. He did lift up his heart to God in the heavens, in holy desires; but, through prevailing shame and humiliation, he did not lift up his eyes in holy confidence and courage. His iniquities are gone over his head, as a heavy burthen, so that he is not able to look up, *Ps. xl. 12*. The dejection of his looks is an indication of the dejection of his mind at the thought of sin. 3rd. He smote upon his breast, in a holy indignation at himself for sin: Thus would I smite this wicked heart of mine; the poisoned fountain, out of which flow all the streams of sin, if I could come at it. The sinner's heart first smites him in a penitent rebuke, *2 Sam. xxiv. 10*; David's heart smote him; Sinner, what hast thou done?—and then he smites his heart with penitent remorse, "O wretched man that I am!" Ephraim is said to smite upon his thigh, *Jer. xxxi. 19*. Great mourners are represented tabering upon their breasts, *Nah. ii. 7*.

2. He expressed it in what he said. His prayer was short; fear and shame nindered him from saying much; sighs and groans swallowed up his words; but what he said was to the purpose, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" And blessed be God that we have this prayer upon record, as an answered prayer, and that we are sure he that prayed it went to his house justified; and so shall we, if we pray as he did, through Jesus Christ, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" the God of infinite mercy be merciful to me; for if he be not, I am for ever undone, for ever miserable: God be merciful to me, for I have been cruel to myself. 1st. He owns himself a sinner by nature, by practice, guilty before God; "Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee?" The Pharisee denied himself to be a sinner; none of his neighbours can charge him, and he sees no reason to charge himself, with any thing amiss; he is clean, he is pure from sin; but the publican gives himself no other character but that of a sinner, a convicted criminal at God's bar. 2nd. He has no dependence but upon the mercy of God; that, and that only, he relies upon. The Pharisee had insisted upon the merit of his fastings and tithes; but the poor publican disclaims all thought of merit, and flies to mercy, as his city of refuge, and takes hold of the horn of that altar: Justice condemns me; nothing will save me but mercy, mercy. 3rd. He earnestly prays for the benefit of that mercy; "O God, be merciful, be propitious to me; forgive my sins, be reconciled to me; take me into thy favour; receive me graciously; love me freely." He comes as a beggar for an alms, when he is ready to perish for hunger. Probably he repeated this prayer with renewed affections, and perhaps said more to the same purpose; made a particular confession of his sins, and mentioned the particular mercies he wanted, and waited upon God for; but still this was the burthen of the song, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Fourthly. Here is the publican's acceptance with God. We have seen how differently these two addressed themselves to God: it is now worth while to inquire how they sped. There were those who would cry up the Pharisee, and by whom he would go to his house applauded, and who would look with contempt upon this sniggling, whining publican. But our Lord Jesus, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secret is hid, who is perfectly acquainted with all proceedings in the court of heavenly affairs, assures us that this poor penitent, broken-hearted publican "went to his house justified rather than the other." The Pharisee thought if one of them two must be justified, and not the other, certainly it must be he, rather than the publican. No, saith Christ, "I tell you, I affirm it with the utmost assurance, and declare it to you, with the utmost concern, I tell you, it is the publican rather than the Pharisee. The proud Pharisee goes away rejected of God; his thanksgivings are so far from being accepted, that they are an abomination. He is not justified, his sins are not pardoned, nor is he delivered from condemnation. He is not accepted as righteous in God's sight, because he is so righteous in his own sight; but the publican, upon this humble address to heaven, obtains the remission of his sins; and he whom the Pharisee would not set with the dogs of his flock, God sets with the children of his family. And the reason given for this is, because God's glory is to resist the proud, and give grace to the humble. 1. Proud men that exalt themselves, are rivals with God, and therefore they shall certainly be abased. God, in his discourse with Job, appeals to this proof, that he is God, that he "looks upon every one that is proud, and brings him low," *Job xl. 12*. 2. Humble men that abase themselves are subjects to God, and they shall be exalted. God has preferment in store for those that will take it as a favour, not for those that demand it as a debt. He shall be exalted into the love of God, and communion with him; shall be exalted into a satisfaction in himself, and exalted at last as high as heaven. See how the punishment answers the sin, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased;" see how the recompence answers the duty, "He that humbles himself shall be exalted." See also the power of God's grace, in bringing good out of evil. The publican had been a great sinner, and out of the greatness of his sin was brought the greatness of his repentance; "out of the eater came forth meat;" and on the contrary, the power of Satan's malice, in bringing evil out of good. It was good that the Pharisee was no extortioner, or unjust; but the devil made him proud of this to his ruin.

15 And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. 17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

This passage of story we had both in *Matthew* and *Mark*; it very fitly follows here after the story of the publican, as a confirmation of the truth which was to be illustrated by that parable, that those shall be accepted with God, and honoured, who humble themselves; and for them Christ has blessings in store, the choicest and best of blessings. Observe here,

I. That those who are themselves blessed in Christ, should desire to have their children also blessed in him, and should hereby testify the true honour they have for Christ, by their making use of him, and the true love they have

for their children, by their concern about their souls. They brought to him infants very young, not able to go; sucking children, as some think. None too little, too young, to bring to Christ, who knows how to shew kindness to them that are not capable of doing service to him.

II. One gracious touch of Christ's will make our children happy. "They brought infants to him, that he might touch them," in token of the application of his grace and Spirit to them, for that always makes way for his blessing, which likewise they expected: see *Isa. xlv. 3*; "I will" first "pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and" then "my blessing upon thine offspring."

III. It is no strange thing for those that make their application to Jesus Christ for themselves, or for their children, to meet with discouragement, even from those that should countenance and encourage them. "When the disciples saw it," they thought, if this were admitted, it would bring an endless trouble upon their Master, and therefore "they rebuked them," and frowned upon them. The spouse complained of the watchmen, *Cant. iii. 3-5, 7*.

IV. Many whom the disciples rebuke, the Master invites. "Jesus called them unto him," when upon his disciples' check they were retiring. They did not appeal from the disciples to the Master, but the Master took cognizance of their despised cause.

V. It is the mind of Christ that little children should be brought to him, and presented as living sacrifices to his honour: "Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not;" let nothing be done to hinder them, for they shall be as welcome as any. The promise is to us, and to our seed; and therefore he that has the dispensing of promised blessings will bid them welcome to him with us.

VI. The children of those that belong to the kingdom of God do likewise belong to that kingdom, as the children of freemen are freemen. If the parents be members of the visible church, the children are so too; for if the root be holy, the branches are so.

VII. So welcome are children to Christ, that those grown people are most welcome to him that have in them most of the disposition of children, ver. 17: "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child," that is, receive the benefits of it with humility and thankfulness, not pretending to merit them, as the Pharisee did, but gladly owning himself indebted to free grace for them, as the publican did,—unless a man be brought to this self-denying frame, he "shall in no wise enter into that kingdom." They must receive the kingdom of God as children receive their estates, by descent and inheritance, not by purchase, and call it their Father's gift.

18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. 20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. 21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. 22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. 23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. 24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? 27 And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. 28 Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. 29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, 30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

In these verses we have,

First. Christ's discourse with a ruler, that had a good mind to be directed by him in the way to heaven; in which we may observe,

1. It is a blessed sight to see persons of distinction in the world distinguish themselves from others of their rank by their concern about their souls and another life. Luke takes notice of it, that he was a ruler; few of the rulers had any esteem for Christ; but here was one that had, whether a church or state ruler doth not appear, but he was one in authority.

2. The great thing we are every one of us concerned to inquire after is, what we shall do to get to heaven; "what we shall do to inherit eternal life;" which implies such a belief of an eternal life, after this, as atheists and infidels have not; such a concern to make it sure, as a careless, unthinking world have not; and such a willingness to comply with any terms, that it may be made sure, as those have not that are resolvedly devoted to the world and the flesh.

3. Those that would inherit eternal life must apply themselves to Jesus

this verse. The people of God are oppressed, and deliverance is nigh; but when the Christ appears, will he be received or rejected?

xviii. 11. We may translate either, as our version, "the Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself," or "the Pharisee stood by himself and prayed thus." The common rendering is generally preferred.

xviii. 12. Only one fast, and that an annual one, was prescribed by the Mosaic law, but others had come to be observed with the

growth of tradition and ritual; and among them two weekly fasts, one on Monday and one on Thursday. In common with all ceremonialists, the Pharisees attached special importance and merit to the observation of what God had not commanded. It was so in respect to the tithes. The Divine law did not require a tithe of all a man gained, but only of certain things, as cattle and the produce of the soil. In this case the man should be understood to say that he gave tithes of all he acquired—i.e., gave a tenth part of his whole income.

Christ as their master, their teaching master, so it signifies here, διδάσκαλε, and their ruling master here, and so they shall for certain find him. There is no learning the way to heaven but in the school of Christ, by those that enter themselves into it, and stick to it.

4. Those that come to Christ as their master, must believe him to have not only a Divine mission, but a Divine goodness. Christ would have this ruler know, that if he understood himself aright in calling him good, he did in effect call him God; and indeed he was so, ver. 19: "Why callest thou me good?" thou knowest "there is none good but one, and that is God;" and dost thou then take me for God? If so, thou art in the right.

5. Our Master, Christ himself, has not altered the way to heaven from what it was before his coming; but only has made it more plain and easy and comfortable, and provided for our relief, in case we take any false step. "Thou knowest the commandments;" Christ came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to establish them. Wouldst thou inherit eternal life, govern thyself by the commandments.

6. The duties of the second table must be conscientiously observed, in order to our happiness, and we must not think that any acts of devotion, how plausible soever, will atone for the neglect of them. Nor is it enough to keep ourselves free from the gross violations of these commandments; but we must know these commandments, as Christ has explained them in his sermon upon the mount, in their extent and spiritual nature, and so observe them.

7. Men think themselves innocent, because they are ignorant: so this ruler did; he said, "All these things have I kept from my youth," ver. 21. He knows no more of evil by himself than the Pharisee did, ver. 11. He boasts that he began early in a course of virtue, that he had continued in it to this day, and that he had not in any instance transgressed. Had he been acquainted with the extent and spiritual nature of the Divine law, and with the workings of his heart—had he been but Christ's disciple a while, and learned of him, he would have said the quite contrary; All these have I broken from my youth up, in thought, word, and deed.

8. The great things by which we are to try our spiritual state are, how we stand affected to Christ and to our brethren—to this world, and to the other: by these this man was tried. For, 1st. If he have a true affection to Christ, he will come and follow him, will attend to his doctrine, and submit to his discipline, whatever it cost him. None shall inherit eternal life who are not willing to take their lot with the Lord Jesus, to follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes. 2nd. If he have a true affection to his brethren, he will, as there is occasion, distribute to the poor, who are God's receivers of his dues out of our estates. 3rd. If he think meanly of this world, as he ought, he will not stick at selling what he has, if there be a necessity for it, for the relief of God's poor. 4th. If he think highly of the other world, as he ought, he will desire no more but to have treasure in heaven, and will reckon that a sufficient, abundant recompence for all that he has left or lost or laid out for God in this world.

9. There are many that have a great deal in them that is very commendable, and yet they perish for lack of some one thing; so this ruler here, he broke with Christ upon this: he liked all his terms very well but this, which would part between him and his estate: In this, I pray thee, have me excused; if this be the bargain, it is no bargain.

10. Many that are loath to leave Christ, yet do leave him. After a long struggle between their convictions and their corruptions, their corruptions carry the day at last; they are very sorry they cannot serve God and mammon both; but if one must be quitted, it shall be their God, not their worldly gain.

Secondly. Christ's discourse with his disciples upon this occasion; in which we may observe,

1. That riches are a great hindrance to many in the way to heaven. Christ took notice of the reluctance and regret with which the rich man broke off from him; he "saw that he was very sorrowful," and was sorry for him; but from thence he infers, "how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?" ver. 24. If this ruler had had but as little of the world as Peter, and James, and John had, in all probability he would have left it to follow Christ, as they did; but having a great estate, it had a great influence upon him, and he chose rather to take his leave of Christ than to lay himself under an obligation to dispose of his estate in charitable uses. Christ asserts the difficulty of the salvation of rich people very emphatically, ver. 25: "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." It is a proverbial expression, that speaks the thing extremely difficult.

2. That such a general affection there is in the hearts of all people to this world, and the things of it, that since Christ has required it as necessary to salvation that we should sit loose to this world, it is really very hard for any to get to heaven. If we must sell all, or break with Christ, "who then can be saved?" ver. 25. They do not find fault with what Christ required, as hard and unreasonable. No, it is very fit that they who expect an eternal happiness in the other world, should be willing to forego all that is dear to them in this world, in expectation of it; but they know how closely the hearts of the most of men cleave to this world, and are ready to despair of their being ever brought to this.

3. That there are such difficulties in the way of our salvation as could never be got over but by pure omnipotence, by that grace of God which is almighty, and to which that is possible which exceeds all created power and wisdom. "The things which are impossible with men," and utterly impossible it is that men should work such a change upon their own spirits as to turn them from the world to God,—it is like dividing the sea and driving Jordan back,—these things "are possible with God." His grace can work upon the soul, so as to alter the bent and bias of it, and give it a contrary ply; and it is he that works in us both to will and to do.

4. That there is an aptness in us to speak too much of what we have left and lost, of what we have done and suffered, for Christ. This appears in Peter, ver. 28: "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee;" when it came in his way, he could not forbear magnifying his own and his brethren's affection to Christ in quitting all to follow him. But this we should be so far from boasting of, that we should rather acknowledge it not worth taking notice of, and be ashamed of ourselves that there has been any regret and difficulty in the doing of it, and any hankerings towards those things afterwards.

5. That whatever we have left or laid out for Christ, it shall without fail be abundantly made up to us, in this world, and that to come, notwithstanding our weaknesses and infirmities, ver. 29, 30: "There is no man that has left" the comfort of his estate or relations "for the kingdom of God's sake," rather than they should hinder either his services to that kingdom or his enjoyments of it, "who shall not receive manifold more in this present time," in the graces and comforts of God's Spirit, in the pleasures of communion with God, and of a good conscience—advantages which, to those who know how to value and improve them, will abundantly countervail all their losses. Yet that is not all; in the world to come, they shall receive life everlasting, which is the thing that the ruler seemed to have his eye and heart upon.

31 Then he took unto him the twelve, and said

xviii. 13. The publican, as a Jew, was not required to remain in the court of the Gentiles, but his humility led him to occupy a position remote from the most holy place.

xviii. 15. It may be that these infants were the children of some of our Lord's disciples, and that they were brought to receive his blessing when he was about to depart and pursue his journey to Jerusalem. This view accords with a custom which prevailed among the Jews.

unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. 32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: 33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. 34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

Here is, First, The notice Christ gave to his disciples of his sufferings and death approaching, and of the glorious issue of them, which he himself had a perfect sight and foreknowledge of, and thought it necessary to give them warning of, that it might be the less surprise and terror to them. Two things here are, which we had not in the other evangelists: 1. That the sufferings of Christ are here spoken of as the fulfilling of the Scriptures, with which consideration Christ reconciled himself to them, and would reconcile them. "All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man," especially the hardships he should undergo, "shall be accomplished." Note, The Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament prophets, "testified beforehand his sufferings, and the glory that should follow." 1 Pet. i. 11. This proves that the Scriptures are the Word of God, for they had their exact and full accomplishment; and that Jesus Christ was sent of God, for they had their accomplishment in him; this was he that should come; for whatever was foretold concerning the Messiah was verified in him; and he would submit to any thing for the fulfilling of Scripture, that not one jot or tittle of that should fall to the ground. This makes the offence of the cross to cease, and puts an honour upon it; "thus it was written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer;" thus it became him. 2. That the ignominy and disgrace done to Christ in his sufferings, is here most insisted upon. The other evangelists had said, he should be mocked; but here it is added, 'he shall be spitefully treated,' *ὀνειδισθήσεται*, he shall be loaded with contumely and contempt, shall have all possible reproach put upon him. This was that part of his sufferings by which, in a spiritual manner, he satisfied God's justice for the injury we had done him in his honour by sin. Here is one particular instance of disgrace done him, that he was spit upon, which had been particularly foretold, *Isa. l. 6*; but here, as always, when Christ spoke of his sufferings and death, he foretold the resurrection, as that which took off both the terror and reproach of his sufferings; "the third day he shall rise again."

Secondly. The confusion that the disciples were hereby put into. This was so contrary to the notions they had had of the Messiah and his kingdom, such a balk to their expectations from their Master, and such a breaking of all their measures, that "they understood none of these things," ver. 34. Their prejudices were so strong that they would not understand them literally, and they could not understand them otherwise, so that they did not understand them at all; it was a mystery, it was a riddle to them; it must be so; but they think it impossible to be reconciled with the glory and honour of the Messiah, and the designs of setting up his kingdom. This saying was 'hid from them,' *κεκρυμμένον ἀπ' αὐτῶν*, it was apocrypha to them, they could not receive it; for their parts they had read the Old Testament many a time, but they could never see any thing in it that should be accomplished in the disgrace and death of this Messiah. They were so intent upon the prophecies that spoke of his glory, that they overlooked those that spoke of his sufferings, which the scribes and doctors of the law should have directed them to take notice of, and should have brought into their creeds and catechisms, as well as the other; but they did not suit their scheme, and therefore were laid aside. Note, Therefore it is that people run into mistakes, because they read their Bibles by the halves, and are as partial in the prophets as they are in the law; they are only for the smooth things, *Isa. xxx. 10*; thus now we are too apt, in reading the prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled, to have our expectations raised of the glorious state of the church in the latter days; but we overlook its wilderness, sackcloth state, and are willing to fancy that is over, and nothing is reserved for us but the halycon days; and then when tribulation and persecution ariseth, we do not understand it, neither know we the things that are done; though we are told, as plainly as can be, that "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God."

35 And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: 36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. 37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. 38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. 39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. 40 And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him; and when he was come near, he asked him, 41 Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. 42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. 43 And immediately he received his sight, and

xviii. 18. Both Matthew and Mark give this relation, but neither of them states that the man who came was a "ruler." He may have been a synagogue ruler.

xviii. 29, 30. The Mormons justify polygamy from this passage, by saying that our Lord promises those who leave wife for his sake "more"—i.e., a plurality. But, 1, this could only apply to those who had actually forsaken wives; 2, "manifold more" wives and parents, &c., is an incoherent phrase; and, 3, the Greek for "manifold more"

followed him, glorifying God : and all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise unto God.

Christ came not only to bring light to a dark world, and so to set before us the objects we are to have in view, but also to give sight to blind souls, and by healing the organ to enable them to view those objects; as a token of this, he cured many of their bodily blindness. We have now an account of one to whom he gave sight near Jericho. Mark gives us an account of one, and names him, whom he cured "as he went out of Jericho," *Mar. x. 46*; Matthew speaks of two whom he cured "as they departed from Jericho," *Mat. xx. 30*; Luke saith it was, *ἐν τῇ ἐξόδῳ αὐτῶν*, "when he was near to Jericho," which might be when he was going out of it as well as when he was coming into it. Observe,

I. This poor "blind man sat by the way side begging," *ver. 35*. It seems he was not only blind, but poor, had nothing to subsist on, nor any relations to maintain him; the sinner emblem of the world of mankind which Christ came to heal and save; they are therefore wretched and miserable, for they are both poor and blind. *Rev. iii. 17*. He sat begging, for he was blind, and could not work for his living. Note, Those ought to be relieved by charity whom the providence of God has any way disabled to get their own bread; such objects of charity by the way side ought not to be overlooked by us. Christ here cast a favourable eye upon a common beggar; and though there are cheats among such, yet they must not therefore be all thought so.

II. Hearing the noise of a multitude passing by, "he asked what it meant," *ver. 36*. This we had not before. It teacheth us that it is good to be inquisitive, and those who are so, some time or other, find the benefit of it. Those that want their sight, should make so much the better use of their hearing; and when they cannot see with their own eyes should, by asking questions, make use of other people's eyes; so this blind man did, and by that means came to understand that Jesus of Nazareth passed by, *ver. 37*. It is good being in Christ's way; and when we have an opportunity of applying ourselves to him, not to let it slip.

III. His prayer has in it a great deal both of faith and fervency: "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!" *ver. 38*. He owns Christ to be the son of David, the Messiah promised,—he believes him to be Jesus, a Saviour; he believes he is able to help and succour him, and earnestly begs his favour: "Have mercy on me;" "pardon my sin, pity my misery." Christ is a merciful king; those that apply themselves to him as the son of David shall find him so; and ask enough for themselves when they pray, "Have mercy on us;" for Christ's mercy includes all.

IV. Those that are in good earnest for Christ's favours and blessings, will not be put by from the pursuit of them, though they meet with opposition and rebuke. They that went along chiding him as troublesome to the Master,—noisy and impertinent,—and bade him hold his peace; but he went on with his petition, nay, the check given him was but as a dam to a full stream, which makes it swell so much the more; he cried the louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me." Those that would speed in prayer, must be importunate in prayer. This history, in the close of the chapter, speaks the same thing with the parable in the beginning of the chapter, that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

V. Christ encourageth poor beggars, whom men frown upon, and invites them to come to him, and is ready to entertain them, and bid them welcome: "He commanded them to be brought to him." Note, Christ has more tenderness and compassion for distressed supplicants than any of his followers have. Though Christ was upon his journey, yet he stopped, and "stood, and commanded him to be brought to him." Those that had checked him must now lend him their hands to lead him to Christ.

VI. Though Christ knows all our wants, he will know them from us; *ver. 41*. "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" By spreading our case before God, and a particular remembrance of our wants and burthens, we teach ourselves to value the mercy we are in pursuit of; and it is necessary we should, else we are not fit to receive it. This man poured out his soul before Christ when he said, "Lord, thou hast said, I may receive my sight." Thus particular should we be in prayer upon particular occasions.

VII. The prayer of faith, guided by Christ's encouraging promises, and grounded on them, shall not be in vain; nay, it shall not only receive an answer of peace, but of honour, *ver. 42*. Christ said, "Receive thy sight; thy faith hath made thee whole." True faith will produce fervency in prayer, and both together will fetch in abundance of the fruits of Christ's favour; and they are then doubly comfortable when they come in that way, when we are saved by faith.

VIII. The grace of Christ ought to be thankfully acknowledged to the glory of God, *ver. 43*. I. The poor beggar himself, that had his sight restored, "followed Christ, glorifying God." Christ made it his business to glorify his Father; and those whom he healed then pleased him best when they praised God, as those shall please God best that praise Christ, and do him honour, for in confessing that he is Lord we give glory to God the Father. It is for the glory of God, if we follow Christ; as those will do whose eyes are opened. 2. The people that saw it could not forbear giving praise to God, who had given such power to the Son of man, and by him had conferred such favours on the sons of men. Note, We must give praise to God for his mercies to others as well as for mercies to ourselves.

CHAPTER XIX.

In this chapter we have, I. The conversion of Zacchæus the publican, at Jericho, *ver. 1—10*. II. The parable of the pounds which the king intrusted with his servants; and of his rebellious citizens, *ver. 11—27*. III. Christ's riding in triumph (such a triumph as it was) into Jerusalem; and his lamentation in prospect of the ruin of that city, *ver. 28—44*. IV. His teaching in the temple, and casting the buyers and sellers out of it, *ver. 45—48*.



AND Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. 2 And, behold, *there was* a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was

little of stature. 4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. 6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. 8 And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold. 9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Many, no doubt, were converted to the faith of Christ, of whom no account is kept in the Gospels; but the conversion of some, whose case had something in it extraordinary, is recorded, as this of Zacchæus. Christ passed through Jericho, *ver. 1*; that city was built under a curse, yet Christ honoured it with his presence; for the Gospel takes away the curse. Though it ought not to have been built, yet it was not therefore a sin to live in it when it was built. Christ was now going from the other side Jordan to Bethany, near Jerusalem, to raise Lazarus to life; when he was going to do one good work he contrived to do many by the way. He did good both to the souls and to the bodies of people; we have here an instance of the former. Observe,

First. Who and what this Zacchæus was. His name speaks him a Jew; Zaccai was a common name among the Jews; they had a famous rabbin, much about this time, of that name. Observe,

1. His calling, and the post he was in; "he was the chief among the publicans," receiver-general; other publicans were officers under him; he was, as some think, farmer of the customs. We often read of publicans coming to Christ; but here was one that was chief of the publicans, was in authority, that inquired after him. God has his remnant among all sorts; Christ came to save even the chief of sinners, and therefore even the chief of publicans.

2. His circumstances in the world were very considerable; "he was rich." The inferior publicans were commonly men of broken fortunes, and low in the world, but he that was chief of the publicans had raised a good estate. Christ had lately shewed how hard it is for rich people to enter into the kingdom of God, yet presently produceth an instance of one rich man, that had been lost, and was found, and that not as the prodigal, by being reduced to want.

Secondly. How he came in Christ's way, and what was the occasion of his acquaintance with him.

1. He had a great curiosity to see Jesus, what kind of man he was, having heard great talk of him, *ver. 3*. It is natural to us to come in sight of those whose fame has filled our ears, as being apt to imagine there is something extraordinary in their countenances; at least he would be able to say hereafter he had seen such and such great men: "but the eye is not satisfied with seeing." We should now seek to see Jesus with an eye of faith; to see who he is, should address ourselves in holy ordinances with this in our eye, "We would see Jesus."

2. He could not get his curiosity gratified in this matter, because he was little, and the crowd was great. Christ did not study to shew himself, was not carried on men's shoulders, as the pope is, in procession, that all men might see him; neither he nor his kingdom came with observation; he did not ride in an open chariot, as princes do, but as one of us, he was lost in a crowd; for that was the day of his humiliation. Zacchæus was low of stature, and overtopped by all about him, so that he could not get a sight of Jesus; many that are little of stature have large souls, and are lively in spirit. Who would not rather be a Zacchæus than a Saul, though he was higher by head and shoulders than all about him? Let not those that are little of stature take thought of adding cubits to it.

3. Because he would not balk his fancy, he forgot his gravity, as chief of the publicans, and "ran before" like a boy, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him. Note, Those that sincerely desire a sight of Christ will use the proper means for gaining a sight of him, and will break through a deal of difficulty and opposition, and be willing to take pains to see him. Those that find themselves little, must take all the advantages they can get to raise themselves to a sight of Christ, and not be ashamed to own that they need them, and all little enough. Let not dwarfs despair, with good help, by aiming high to reach him.

Thirdly. The notice Christ took of him, and the call he gave him to a farther acquaintance, *ver. 5*, and the efficacy of that call, *ver. 6*.

1. Christ invited himself to Zacchæus' house, not doubting of his hearty welcome there; nay wherever Christ comes, as he brings his own entertainment along with him, so he brings his own welcome; he opens the heart and inclines it to receive him. Christ looked up into the tree, and saw Zacchæus; he came to look upon Christ, and resolved to take particular notice of him, but little thought of being taken notice of by Christ; that was an honour too great, and too far above his merit, for him to have any thought of. See how Christ prevented him with the blessings of his goodness, and outdid his expectations; and see how he encouraged very weak beginnings, and helped them forward. He that had a mind to know Christ, shall be known of him: that only counted to see him, shall be admitted to converse with him. Note, Those that are faithful in a little, shall be intrusted with more. And sometimes those that come to hear the word of Christ, as Zacchæus did, only for curiosity, beyond what they thought of, have their consciences awakened, and their hearts changed. Christ called him by name, "Zacchæus," for he knows his chosen by name; are they not in his book? He might ask, as Nathanael did, *Jno. i. 45*: "Whence knowest thou me?" But before he climbed the sycamore tree Christ saw him, and knew him. He bade him "make haste, and come down;" those

is a neuter plural, signifying things, but not specifying their nature. To all which it may be added that our Lord is not wont to promise temporal wealth to his disciples, but spiritual gifts of greater value.

xviii. 31—33. To those who believe in the Divine sonship of Jesus, these verses will sufficiently prove that the prophecies refer extensively to him. Matthew and Mark both record this address, but they both omit the allusion to the prophets. (See *Matt. xx. 17—19*; *Mark x. 32—34*.)

xviii. 35. A reference to chap. xix. 1 renders it tolerably certain that the miracle ensuing was performed as Jesus approached Jericho from the direction of the Jordan, which had now been crossed at the usual ford. *Matt. xx. 29*, &c., places the miracle after leaving Jericho, and relates it of two blind men. *Mark x. 46* also places the miracle after leaving Jericho, but he speaks, like Luke, of one blind man only. On these peculiarities much has been written with a view to harmonise them, on the one hand, or, on the other, to prove them

that Christ calls must come down, must humble themselves, and not think to climb to heaven by any righteousness of their own; and they must make haste and come down, for delays are dangerous. Zacchæus must not hesitate, but hasten; he knows it is not a matter that needs consideration whether he should welcome such a guest to his house. He must come down, for Christ intends this day to bait at his house, and stay an hour or two with him: "behold, he stands at the door and knocks."

2. Zacchæus was overjoyed to have such an honour put upon his house, ver. 6; "he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully." And his receiving him into his house was an indication and token of his receiving him into his heart. Note, When Christ calls to us, we must make haste to answer his calls; and when he comes to us, we must receive him joyfully: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates." We may well receive him joyfully who brings all good along with him; and when he takes possession of the soul, opens springs of joy there which shall flow to eternity. How often has Christ said to us, "Open to me," when we have, with the spouse, made excuses, *Cant. v. 2, 3*. Zacchæus' forwardness to receive Christ will shame us. We have not now Christ to entertain in our houses, but we have his disciples; and what is done to them he takes as done to himself.

Fourthly. The offence which the people took at this kind greeting between Christ and Zacchæus. Those narrow-souled, censorious Jews "murmured, saying, that he was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner;" *καὶ διαμαρτυροῦντο αὐτῷ*,—"with a sinful man." And were not they themselves sinful men? Was it not Christ's errand into the world to seek and save men that are sinners? But Zacchæus they think to be a sinner above all men that dwell in Jericho; such a sinner as was not fit to be conversed with.

Now this was very unjust, to blame Christ for going to his house; for, 1. Though he was a publican, and many of the publicans were ill men, it did not therefore follow that they were all so. We must take heed of condemning men in the lump, or by common fame, for at God's bar every man will be judged as he is. 2. Though he had been a sinner, it did not therefore follow that he was now as bad as he had been; though they knew his past life to be bad, Christ might know his present frame to be good. God allows room for repentance, and so must we. 3. Though he was now a sinner, they ought not to blame Christ for going to him, because he was in no danger of getting hurt by a sinner, but in great hopes of doing good to a sinner. Whether should the physician go, but to the sick? Yet see how that which is well done may be ill construed.

Fifthly. The proofs which Zacchæus gave publicly, that though he had been a sinner, he was now a penitent, and a true convert, ver. 8. He doth not expect to be justified by his works, as the Pharisee, who boasted of what he had done; but by his good works he will, through the grace of God, evidence the sincerity of his faith and repentance; and here he declares what his determination was. He makes this declaration standing, that he might be seen and heard by those who murmured at Christ for coming to his house; with the mouth confession is made of repentance as well as faith. He stood, which notes his saying "I" deliberately, and with solemnity, in the nature of a vow to God. He addressed himself to Christ in it, not to the people—they were not to be his judges,—but to the Lord; and he stands as it were at his bar. What we do that is good, we must do as unto him; we must appeal to him, and approve ourselves to him in our integrity, in all our good purposes and resolutions. He makes it appear that there is a change in his heart, and that is repentance, for there is a change in his way.

His resolutions are of second table duties; for Christ upon all occasions laid great stress on them; and they are such as are suited to his condition and character, for in them will best appear the truth of our repentance.

1. Zacchæus had a good estate, and whereas he had been in it hitherto laying up treasure for himself, and doing hurt to himself, now he resolves that for the future he will be all towards God, and do good to others with it: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor;" not, I will give it, by my will when I die, but I do give it now. Probably he had heard of the command or trial Christ gave to another rich man, to sell what he had and give to the poor, *Mat. xix. 21*, and how he broke with Christ upon it. "But so will not I," saith Zacchæus; "I agree to it at the first word; though hitherto I have been uncharitable to the poor, now I will relieve them, and give so much the more for having neglected the duty so long, even the half of my goods, which is a very large proportion, to be set apart for works of piety and charity. The Jews used to say that a fifth part of a man's income yearly was very fair to be given to pious uses; and about that share the law directed; but Zacchæus would go farther, and give the one moiety to the poor; which would oblige him to retrench all his extravagant expenses, as his retrenching those would enable him to relieve many with his superfluities. If we were but more temperate and self-denying, we should be more charitable; and were we content with less ourselves, we should have the more to give to them that need. This he mentions here as a fruit of his repentance. Note, It well becomes converts to God to be charitable to the poor."

2. Zacchæus was conscious to himself that he had not gotten all he had honestly and fairly, but some by indirect and unlawful means; and of what he had gotten by such means he promiseth to make restitution: "If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation," or, "if I have wronged any man in the way of my business as a publican, exacting more than was appointed, I do promise to restore him fourfold," the restitution that a thief was to make, *Ex. xxii. 1*. 1st. He seems plainly to own that he had done wrong; his office as a publican gave him opportunity to do wrong, of imposing upon the merchants to curry favour with the government. True penitents will own themselves not only in general guilty before God, but will particularly reflect upon that which has been their own iniquity, and which, by reason of their business and employment in the world, has most easily beset them. 2nd. That he had done wrong by false accusation. This was the temptation of the publicans, which John Baptist had warned them of particularly, *Lu. iii. 14*. They had the ear of the government, and every thing would be stretched in favour of the revenue; which gave them an opportunity of gratifying their revenge, if they bore a man an ill-will. 3rd. He promiseth to restore fourfold, as far as he could recollect, or find by his books, that he had wronged any man. He doth not say, If I be sued, and compelled to it, I will make restitution; some are honest when they cannot help it; but he will do it voluntarily; it shall be my own act and deed. Note, Those who are convinced of having done wrong, cannot evidence the sincerity of their repentance but by making restitution. Observe, he doth not think his giving half his estate to the poor will atone for the wrong he has done; God hates robbery by burnt-offerings; and we must first do justly, and then love mercy. It is no charity, but hypocrisy, to give that which is none of our own; and we are not to reckon that our own which we have not come honestly by; nor that our own which is not so, when all our debts are paid, and restitution made for wrong done.

Sixthly. Christ's approbation and acceptance of Zacchæus' conversion, by which also he cleared himself from any imputation in going to be a guest with him, ver. 9, 10.

1. Zacchæus is declared to be now a happy man; now he is turned from sin to God, now he has bid Christ welcome to his house, and has become an

honest, charitable, good man: "This day is salvation come to this house." Now he is converted, he is in effect saved; saved from his sins, from the guilt of them, from the power of them; all the benefits of salvation are his; Christ is come to his house, and where Christ comes he brings salvation along with him; he is and will be the Author of eternal salvation to all that own him, as Zacchæus did. Yet this is not all; salvation this day comes to his house, 1st. When Zacchæus becomes a convert, he will be, more than he had been, a blessing to his house. He will bring the means of grace and salvation to his house; for he is a son of Abraham indeed now; and therefore, like Abraham, will teach his household to keep the way of the Lord. "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house," and brings a curse upon it, *Hab. ii. 9*; but he that is charitable to the poor doth a kindness to his own house, and brings a blessing upon it, and salvation to it, temporal at least, *Ps. cxii. 3*. 2nd. When Zacchæus is brought to Christ himself, his family also became related to Christ, and his children are admitted members of his church, and so "salvation comes to his house, for that he is a son of Abraham," and therefore interested in God's covenant with Abraham, that blessing of Abraham which comes upon the publicans, upon the Gentiles through faith, that God will be a God to them and to their children; and therefore, when he believes, salvation comes to his house, as to the jailor's, to whom it was said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thine house," *Acts xvi. 31*. Zacchæus is by birth a son of Abraham, but being a publican he was deemed a heathen; they are put upon a level, *Mat. xviii. 17*, and as such the Jews were shy of conversing with him, and expected Christ should be so; but he shews that, being a true penitent, he is become *rectus in curia*,—"upright in court;" as good a son of Abraham as if he had never been a publican, which therefore ought not to be mentioned against him.

2. What Christ had done to make him in particular a happy man, was consonant to the great design and intention of his coming into the world, ver. 10; with the same argument he had before justified his conversing with publicans, *Mat. ix. 13*; there he pleaded that he came to call sinners to repentance; now, that he came "to seek and save that which was lost;" *τὸ ἀπολωλός*,—"the lost thing." Observe, 1st. The deplorable case of the sons of men; they were lost; but here the whole race of mankind is spoken of as one body. Note, The whole world of mankind by the fall is become a lost world. Lost, as a city is lost when it has revolted to the rebels; as a traveller is lost when he has missed his way in a wilderness; lost, as a sick man is lost when his disease is incurable; or, as a prisoner is lost when sentence is passed upon him. 2nd. The gracious design of the Son of God; he came to seek and save, to seek in order to saving. He came from heaven to earth (a long journey!) to seek that which was lost, that is, which had wandered and gone astray, and to bring it back, *Mat. xviii. 11, 12*; and to save that which was lost, that is, which was perishing; and in a manner destroyed and cut off. Christ undertook the cause when it was given up for lost; undertook to bring those to themselves that were lost to God and all goodness. Observe, Christ came into this lost world to seek and save it. His design was to save, when there was not salvation in any other; and in prosecution of that design he sought, took all probable means, to effect that salvation. He seeks those that were not worth seeking to; he seeks to those that sought him not, and asked not for him, as to Zacchæus here.

11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. 12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. 13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. 15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. 17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. 18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. 19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. 20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: 21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. 22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I

contradictory. In this place we can only say that modern critics are as divided in opinion as the older ones. There is apparently a growing disposition to own that the difficulty remains unsolved, and one or two critics quote Chrysostom's saying, "This very thing is the greatest evidence of their truth: for if they had exactly agreed in all things, none of our enemies would have believed that they did not write what they wrote after coming together by some human arrangement." (See Note on chap. xix. 5, 6.)

xix. 2. Zacchæus was a chief publican—i.e., he was at the head of the department in that division, and the ordinary publicans or tax-collectors were accountable to him, as he was to the Roman authorities. Zacchæus was not "the chief among the publicans," as our version says, in imitation of the Latin Vulgate. There would be many similar officers, one for each district. As superintendent of the Jericho collection, Zacchæus probably had unusual opportunities of enriching himself, because the district was fertile, and its produc-

did not sow: 23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? 24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. 25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) 26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. 27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

Our Lord Jesus is now upon his way to Jerusalem to his last passover, when he was to suffer and die. Now here we are told:

I. How the expectations of his friends were raised upon this occasion; "they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear," ver. 11. The Pharisees expected it about this time, *ch. xvii. 20*; and it seems so did Christ's own disciples; but they both had a mistaken notion of it. The Pharisees thought it must be introduced by some other temporal prince or potentate; the disciples thought their Master should introduce it, but with temporal pomp and power, which with the power he had to work miracles, they knew he could clothe himself with in a short time, whenever he pleased. Jerusalem they concluded must be the seat of his kingdom; and therefore, now he is going directly thither, they doubt not but in a little time to see him upon the throne there. Note, Even good men are subject to mistakes concerning the kingdom of Christ, and to form wrong notions of it, and are ready to think that should immediately appear, which is reserved for hereafter.

II. How their expectations were checked, and the mistakes rectified upon which they were founded; and this he doth in three things:

First. They expected that he should appear in his glory now presently; but he tells them he must not be publicly installed in his kingdom of a great while yet; he is like "a certain nobleman," *ἀνθρώπος τις εὐγενής*,—"a certain man of high birth," so Dr. Hammond, for he is the Lord from heaven, and is entitled by birth to the kingdom; but he goes "into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom." Christ must go to heaven to sit down at the right hand of the Father there, and to receive from him honour and glory, before the Spirit was poured out, by which his kingdom was to be set up on earth, and before a church was to be set up for him in the Gentile world; he must receive the kingdom, "and then return." Christ returned when the Spirit was poured out—when Jerusalem was destroyed; by which time that generation, both of friends and enemies, which he had personally conversed with, was wholly worn off by death, and gone to give up their account: but his chief return here meant, is that at the great day, which we are yet in expectation of. That which they thought should immediately appear, Christ tells them will not appear, till this same Jesus, which is taken into heaven, shall in like manner come again: see *Acts i. 11*.

Secondly. They expected that his apostles and immediate attendants should be advanced to dignity and honour; that they should all be made princes and peers, privy councillors and judges, and have all the pomp and preferments of the court, and of the town; but Christ here tells them, that instead of that he designed them to be men of business; they must expect no other preferment in this world, but that of the trading end of the town. He would set them up with a stock under their hands, that they might employ it and themselves in serving him, and the interest of his kingdom among men. That is the true honour of a Christian and a minister; which, if we be, as we ought to be, truly ambitious of, we shall be able to look upon all temporal honours with a holy contempt. The apostles had dreamed of sitting on his right hand and on his left, in his kingdom, enjoying ease after their present toil, and honour after the present contempt put upon them, and were pleasing themselves with this dream; but Christ tells them that which, if they understood it aright, would fill them with care and concern, and serious thoughts, instead of those aspiring ones they filled their heads with.

1. They have a great work to do now; their Master leaves them to receive his kingdom, and at parting he gives each of them a pound, which the margin of our common Bibles tells us amounts in our money to three pounds and half a crown; this signifies the same thing with the talents in the parable that is parallel to this, *Mat. xxv.*; all the gifts with which Christ's apostles were endued, and the advantages and capacities they had of serving the interests of Christ in the world, and others, both ministers and Christians, like them, in a lower degree; but perhaps it is in the parable thus represented to make them the more humble. Their honour in this world is only that of traders, and that not of topping merchants, that have vast stocks to begin upon, but that of poor traders, that must take a great deal of care and pains to make any thing of what they have.

He gave these pounds to his servants, not to buy rich liveries, much less robes, and a splendid equipage for themselves to appear in, as they expected, but with this charge, "Occupy till I come," or, as it might much better be translated, "Trade till I come," *παραμάτευσαθε*,—"be busy," so the word properly signifies: you are sent forth to preach the Gospel, to set up a church for Christ in the world, to bring the nations to the obedience of faith, and to build them up in it: "ye shall receive power" to do this, for ye shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, *Acts i. 8*. When Christ breathed on the eleven disciples, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," then he delivered them ten pounds; 'Now,' saith he, 'mind your business, and make a business of it; set about it in good earnest, and stick to it; lay out yourselves to do all the good you can to the souls of men, and to gather them in to Christ.' Note, 1st. All Christians have business to do for Christ in this world, and ministers especially: the one was not baptized, nor the other ordained, to be idle. 2nd. Those that are called to business for Christ, he furnisheth with gifts necessary for their business; and on the other hand, those to whom he gives power, from them he expects service. He delivers the pounds with this charge, Go work, go trade. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," *1 Cor. xii. 7*; and "as every one has received the gift, so let him minister the same," *1 Pet. iv. 10*. 3rd. We must continue to mind our business till our Master comes, whatever difficulties or oppositions we may meet with in it; those only that endure to the end shall be saved.

2. They have a great account to make shortly. These servants are called

to him, to shew what use they made of the gifts they were dignified with, what service they had done to Christ, and what good to the souls of men, "that he might know what every man had gained by trading." Note, 1st. They that trade diligently and faithfully in the service of Christ shall be gainers; we cannot say so of the business of the world; many a labouring tradesman has been a loser; but those that trade for Christ shall be gainers: though Israel be not gathered, yet they will be glorious. 2nd. The conversion of souls is the winning of them; every true convert is clear gain to Jesus Christ. Ministers are but factors for him, and to him they must give account what fish they have enclosed in the Gospel net, what guests they have prevailed with to come to the wedding supper, that is, what they have gained by trading. Now in the account given up, observe,

First. The good account which was given by some of the servants, and the master's approbation of them. Two such are instanced, ver. 16–19.

1st. They had both made considerable improvements, but not both alike, one had gained ten pounds by his trading, and another five. Those that are diligent and faithful in serving Christ, are commonly blessed in being made blessings to the places where they live. They shall see the travail of their soul, and not labour in vain. And yet all that are alike faithful are not alike successful. And perhaps though they were both faithful, it is intimated that one of them took more pains, and applied himself more closely to his business than the other, and sped accordingly. Blessed Paul sure was this servant that gained ten pounds, double to what any of the rest did, for he "laboured more abundantly than they all," and fully preached the Gospel of Christ.

2nd. They both acknowledged their obligations to their master for intrusting them with these abilities and opportunities to do him service: Lord, it is not my industry, but thy pound, that has gained ten pounds. Note, God must have all the glory of all our gains; not unto us, but unto him must be the praises, *Ps. cxv. 1*. Paul, who gained the ten pounds, acknowledges, "I laboured, yet not I," "by the grace of God, I am what I am," and do what I do, "and his grace was not in vain," *1 Cor. xv. 10*; and will not speak of what he had done, but of what God had done by him, *Rom. xv. 18*.

3rd. They were both commended for their fidelity and industry; "Well done, thou good servant," ver. 17; and to the other he said likewise, ver. 19. Note, They who do that which is good, shall have praise of the same. Do well, and Christ will say to thee, Well done; and if he saith, Well done, the matter is not great who saith otherwise: see *Gen. iv. 7*.

4th. They were preferred in proportion to the improvement they had made. "Because thou hast been faithful in a very little," and didst not say, As good still as go to trade with one pound; what can one do with so small a stock? but didst humbly and honestly apply thyself to the improvement of that,—"Have thou authority over ten cities." Note, Those are in a fair way to rise who are content to begin low: "He that has used the office of a deacon well, purchaseth to himself a good degree," *1 Tim. iii. 13*. Two things are hereby promised the apostles: First, That when they have taken pains to plant many churches, they shall have the satisfaction and honour of presiding in them, and governing among them; they shall have great respect paid them, and have a great interest in the love and esteem of good Christians: "He that keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof," and "he that laboureth in the Word and doctrine shall be counted worthy of double honour." Secondly. That when they have served their generation according to the will of Christ, though they pass through this world despised and trampled upon, and perhaps pass out of it under disgrace and persecution, as the apostles did, yet in the other world they shall reign as kings, with Christ; shall sit with him on his throne; shall have power over the nations, *Rev. ii. 26*. The happiness of heaven will be a much greater advancement to a good minister or Christian than it would be to a poor tradesman, that with much ado had cleared ten pounds, to be made governor of ten cities. He that had gained but five pounds, had dominion over five cities. This intimates that there are degrees of glory in heaven; every vessel will be alike full, but not alike large. And the degrees of glory there will be according to the degrees of usefulness here.

Secondly. The bad account that was given by one of them, and the sentence passed upon him for his slothfulness and unfaithfulness, ver. 20, &c.

1st. He owned that he had not traded with the pound with which he had been intrusted, ver. 20: "Lord, behold, here is thy pound." It is true I have not made it more, but withal I have not made it less; "I have kept it" safe, "laid up in a napkin." This represents the carelessness of those who have gifts, but never lay out themselves to do good with them; it is all one to them whether the interests of Christ's kingdom sink or swim, go backward or forward; for their parts they will take no care about it, no pains, be at no expense, run no hazard; those are the servants that lay up their pound in a napkin; who think it is enough to say, they have done no hurt in the world, but did no good.

2nd. He justified himself in his omission, with a plea that made the matter worse, and not better, ver. 21: "I feared thee, because thou art an austere man," rigid and severe, *ἀνθρώπος αυστηρός εἰ*; austere is the Greek word itself; a sharp man; "thou takest up that thou laidst not down." He thought his master put a hardship upon his servants, when he required and expected the improvement of their pounds, that it was reaping where he did not sow; whereas really it was reaping where he had sown, and, as the husbandman expects, in proportion to what he had sown. He had no reason to fear his master's austerity, nor blame his expectations; but this was a mere sham; a frivolous, groundless excuse for his idleness, which there was no manner of colour for. Note, The pleas of slothful professors, when they come to be examined, will be found more to their shame than in their justification.

3rd. His excuse is turned upon him, ver. 22 "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant." He will be condemned by his crime, but self-condemned by his plea. If thou didst look upon it as hard that I should expect the profits of thy trading, which would have been the greater profit, yet if thou hadst had any regard to my interest, thou mightest have put it into the bank, into some of the funds, that I might have had not only mine own, but "mine own with usury;" which, though a less advantage, would have been some. If he durst not trade for fear of losing the principal, and so being made accountable to his lord for it, though it was lost, which he pretends, yet that would be no excuse for his not setting it out to interest, where it would be sure. Note, Whatever may be the pretences of slothful professors in excuse of their slothfulness, the true reason of it is a reigning indifference to the interests of Christ and his kingdom, and their coldness therein. They care not whether religion gets ground or loses ground, so they can but live at ease.

4th. His pound is taken from him, ver. 24. It is fit those should lose their gifts, that will not use their gifts; and those who have dealt falsely, should be no longer trusted. Those that will not serve their master with what he bestows upon them, why should they be suffered to serve themselves with it? "Take from him the pound."

5th. It is given to him that had got the ten pounds. And when this was objected against by the standers-by, because he had so much already, "Lord, he has ten pounds," ver. 25, it is answered, ver. 26, "Unto every one that hath shall be given." It is the rule of justice, First. That those should be most encouraged that have been most industrious, and that those who have laid

tions included valuable commodities—e.g., the balm or balsam of Gilead, then only grown in that locality.

xix. 4. We have already pointed out the difference between the sycamore, or fig-mulberry, and the sycamine, or simple mulberry-tree (see Note on chap. xvii. 6). From references contained in Jewish writers, we learn that the sycamore flourished near Jericho, though not now found there.

xix. 5, 6. From these verses we may infer that our Lord re-entered

Jericho, which may have some bearing on the point raised by chap. xviii. 35.

xix. 8. "If I have taken anything," &c., is an expression which implies, not doubt, but a confession that extortion had been practised by him. The word rendered "taken by false accusation" originally described the conduct of those informers who reported persons that exported figs from Athens contrary to the law. Hence it came to be used contemptuously of false accusation, fraud, and extortion.

out themselves most to do good, should have their opportunities of doing good enlarged, and be put into a higher and more extensive sphere of usefulness: to him that hath gotten shall more be given, that he may be in a capacity to get more. Secondly. That those who have their gifts as if they had them not, that have them to no purpose, that do no good with them, should be deprived of them. Those that endeavour to increase the grace they have, God will increase it; those that neglect it, and suffer it to decline, can expect no other but that God should do so too. This needful warning Christ gives to his disciples, lest while they were gazing for honours on earth they should neglect their business, and so come short of their happiness in heaven.

Thirdly. Another thing they expected was, that when the kingdom of God should appear, the body of the Jewish nation should immediately fall in with it and submit to it, and all their aversions to Christ and his Gospel should immediately vanish; but Christ tells them, that after his departure the generality of them would persist in their obstinacy and rebellion, and it would be their ruin. This is shewed here,

1. In the message which his citizens sent after him, ver. 14. They not only opposed him while he was in obscurity, but when he was gone in glory to be invested in his kingdom, then they continued their enmity to him, protested against his dominion, and said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." 1st. This was fulfilled in the prevailing infidelity of the Jews after the ascension of Christ, and the setting up of the gospel kingdom; they would not submit their necks to his yoke, nor touch the top of his golden sceptre. They said, "Let us break his bands in sunder," *Ps. ii. 1-3; Acts iv. 26*. 2nd. It speaks the language of all unbelievers; they could be content that Christ should save them, but they will not have him to reign over them; whereas Christ is a Saviour to those only to whom he is a prince, and who are willing to obey him.

2. In the sentence passed upon them at his return, ver. 27: "Those mine enemies, bring hither." When his faithful subjects are preferred and rewarded, then he will take vengeance on his enemies; and particularly of the Jewish nation, the doom of which is here read. When Christ had set up his gospel kingdom, and thereby put reputation upon the gospel ministry, then he comes to reckon with the Jews; then it is remembered against them that they had particularly disclaimed and protested against his kingly office, when they say, "We have no king but Cæsar," nor would own him for their king; they appealed to Cæsar, and to Cæsar they shall go; Cæsar shall be their ruin. Then the kingdom of God appeared, when vengeance was taken on those irreconcilable enemies to Christ and his government; they were brought forth and slain before him. Never was so much slaughter made in any war as in the wars of the Jews. That nation lived to see Christianity victorious in the Gentile world, in spite of their enmity and opposition to it, and then it was taken away as dross. The wrath of Christ came upon them to the uttermost, *1 Thes. ii. 25, 26*; and their destruction redounded very much to the honour of Christ, and the peace of the church. But this is applicable to all others who persist in their infidelity, and will undoubtedly perish in it. Note, 1st. Utter ruin will certainly be the portion of all Christ's enemies; in the day of vengeance they shall all be brought forth and slain before him: "Bring them hither," to be made a spectacle to saints and angels: see *Jos. x. 22, 24*. "Bring them hither," that they may see the glory and happiness of Christ and his followers, whom they hated and persecuted. "Bring them hither," to have their frivolous pleas overruled, and to receive sentence according to their merits. Bring them "and slay them before me," as Agag before Samuel. The Saviour whom they have slighted, will stand by and see them slain, and not interpose on their behalf. 2nd. Those that will not have Christ to reign over them, shall be reputed and dealt with as his enemies. We are ready to think none are Christ's enemies but persecutors of Christianity, or scoffers at least; but you see those will be accounted so that dislike the terms of salvation, will not submit to Christ's yoke, but will be their own masters. Note, Whoever will not be ruled by the grace of Christ, will inevitably be ruined by the wrath of Christ.

28 And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. 29 And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, 30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. 31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him. 32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. 33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? 34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him. 35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. 36 And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. 37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; 38 Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory

in the highest. 39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. 40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

We have here the same account of Christ's riding in some sort of triumph (such as it was) into Jerusalem, which we had before in *Matthew* and *Mark*; let us therefore here only observe,

I. That Jesus Christ was forward and willing to suffer and die for us. He went forward "bound in the spirit to Jerusalem," knowing very well the things that should befall him there; and yet "he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem," ver. 28. He was the foremost of the company, as if he longed to be upon the spot,—longed to engage,—to take the field,—and to enter upon action. Was he so forward to suffer and die for us, and shall we draw back from any service we are capable of doing for him?

II. It was no ways inconsistent, either with Christ's humility, or with his present state of humiliation, to make a public entry into Jerusalem a little before he died. Thus he made himself to be the more taken notice of, that the ignominy of his death might appear the greater.

III. Christ is entitled to a dominion over all the creatures, and may use them when and as he pleaseth. No man has a property in his estate against Christ, but that his title is prior and superior. Christ sent to fetch an ass and her colt from their owner's and master's crib, when he had occasion for their service; and might do so, for all the beasts of the forests are his, and the tame beasts too.

IV. Christ has all men's hearts, both under his eye and in his hand. He could influence those to whom the ass and the colt belonged to consent to their taking them away, as soon as they were told the Lord had occasion for them.

V. Those that go on Christ's errands are sure to speed, ver. 32; "they that were sent found" what he told them they should find, and the owners willing to part with them. It is a comfort to Christ's messengers that what they are sent for, if indeed the Lord has occasion for it, they shall bring it.

VI. The disciples of Christ, no fetch that for him from others which he has occasion for, and which they have not, should not think that enough; but whatever they have themselves, wherewith he may be served and honoured, they should be ready to serve him with it. Many can be willing to attend Christ at other people's expense, that care not at being at any charge upon him themselves; but those disciples not only fetched the ass colt for him, but "cast their own garments upon the colt," and were willing those should be used for his trappings.

VII. Christ's triumphs are the matter of his disciples' praises. When Christ came nigh to Jerusalem, God put it of a sudden into the hearts of "the whole multitude of the disciples," not to the twelve only, but abundance more that were disciples at large—"to rejoice and praise God," ver. 37; and their spreading "their clothes in the way," ver. 36, was a common expression of joy, as at the feast of tabernacles. Observe, 1. What was the matter or occasion of their joy and praise; they praised God "for all the mighty works they had seen," all the miracles Christ had wrought, especially the raising of Lazarus, which is particularly mentioned, *Jno. xii. 17, 18*; that brought others to mind, for fresh miracles and mercies should revive the remembrance of the former. 2. How they expressed their joy and praise, ver. 38: "Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord." Christ is the king; he comes in the name of the Lord, clothed with a Divine authority, commissioned from Heaven to give law, and treat of peace; blessed be he. Let us praise him, let God prosper him, He is blessed for ever, and we will speak well of him. "Peace in heaven," that is, let the God of heaven send peace and success to his undertaking, and then there will be "glory in the highest." It will redound to the glory of the most high God; and the angels, the glorious inhabitants of the upper world, will give him the glory of it. Compare this song of the saints on earth with that of the angels, *ch. ii. 14*; they both agree to give glory to God in the highest; there the praises of both centre; the angels say, "On earth peace," rejoicing in the benefit which men on earth have by Christ; the saints say, "Peace in heaven," rejoicing in the benefit which the angels have by Christ. Such is the communion we have with the holy angels, that as they rejoice in the peace on earth, so we rejoice in the peace in heaven, the peace God makes in his high places, *Job xxv. 2*; and both in Christ, "who hath reconciled all things to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven."

VIII. Christ's triumphs, and his disciples' joyful praises of them, are the vexation of proud Pharisees, and are enemies to him and his kingdom. There were some Pharisees among the multitude that were so far from joining with them, that they were enraged at them; and Christ being a famous example of humility, they thought he would not admit such acclamations as these; and therefore expected that he should rebuke his disciples, ver. 39; but it is the honour of Christ that as he despiseth the contempt of the proud, so he accepts the praises of the humble.

IX. Whether men praise Christ or no, he will and shall and must be praised, ver. 40: "If these should hold their peace," and not speak the praises of the Messiah's kingdom, "the stones would immediately cry out," rather than that Christ should not be praised; which was in effect literally fulfilled, when upon men's reviling Christ upon the cross, instead of praising him, and his own disciples sinking into a profound silence, "the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." Pharisees would silence the praises of Christ; but they cannot gain their point; for as God can "out of stones raise up children unto Abraham," so he can out of the mouths of those children perfect praise.

41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, 42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. 43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, 44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not

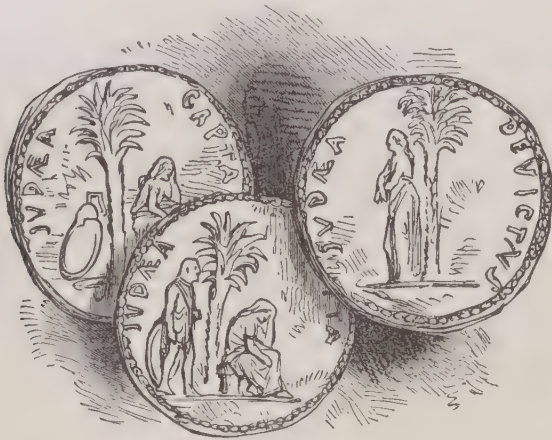
xix. 12. T. H. Horne is of opinion that this parable "alludes to a case which no long time before had actually occurred in Judea. Those who, by hereditary succession or by interest, had pretensions to the Jewish throne, travelled to Rome in order to have it confirmed to them." This happened in the instance of Herod the Great, who went to Rome to receive the kingdom from Antony, and then to Rhodes to obtain confirmation from Cæsar. Archelaus, the son and successor of Herod, did much the same. Similar examples could be adduced,

showing that our Lord drew his illustration from recognised customs.

xix. 13. The word for "pound" is *mina*, or *mina*, and denotes the sixtieth part of a talent, or perhaps about three guineas English money.

xix. 20. To this day an Oriental will wrap up and lay by anything valuable in a napkin, and Jewish writers show that money was so kept.

leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. 45 And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; 46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. 47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, 48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.



ROMAN MEDALS.—"JUDAEA CAPTA."

The great Ambassador from heaven is here making his public entry into Jerusalem, not to be respected there, but to be rejected; he knew what a nest of vipers he was throwing himself into; and yet see here two instances of his love to that place, and his concern for it.

First. The tears he shed for the approaching ruin of the city, ver. 41; "when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it." Probably it was when he was coming down the descent of the hill from the mount of Olives, where he had a full view of the city, the large extent of it, and the many stately structures in it, and his eye affected his heart, and his heart his eye again. See here, 1. What a tender spirit Christ was of; we never read that he laughed, but we often find him in tears. In this very place his father David wept, and those that were with him, though he and they were men of war. There are cases in which it is no disparagement to the stoutest of men to melt into tears. 2. That Jesus Christ wept in the midst of his triumphs, wept when all about him were rejoicing, to shew how little he was elevated with the applause and acclamation of the people. Thus he would teach us to rejoice with trembling, and as though we rejoice not. If Providence do not stain the beauty of our triumphs, we may ourselves see cause to sully it with our sorrows. 3. That he wept over Jerusalem. Note, There are cities to be wept over, and none to be more lamented than Jerusalem—that had been the holy city, and the joy of the whole earth—if it be degenerated. But why did Christ weep at the sight of Jerusalem? was it because yonder is the city in which I must be betrayed and bound, scourged and spit upon, condemned and crucified? No, he himself gives us the reason of his tears.

1st. Jerusalem has not improved the day of her opportunities. He wept, and said, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day,"—if thou wouldst but yet know, while the Gospel is preached to thee, and salvation offered thee by it,—if thou wouldst at length bethink thyself, and understand "the things that belong to thy peace," the making of thy peace with God, and the securing of thine own spiritual and eternal welfare; but thou dost not know the day of thy visitation, ver. 44. The manner of speaking is abrupt; "If thou hadst known." "O that thou hadst," so some take it; like that, "O that my people had hearkened unto me," *Ps. lxxxi. 13; Isa. xlviii. 18*. Or, "If thou hadst known," well; like that of the fig tree, *ch. xiii. 9*; how happy had it been for thee. Or, "If thou hadst known," thou wouldst have wept for thyself, and I should have no occasion to weep for thee, but should have rejoiced rather; but what he saith lays all the blame of Jerusalem's impending ruin upon herself. Note, *First*. There are things that belong to our peace, which we are all concerned to know and understand; the way how peace is made, the offers made of peace, the terms on which we may have the benefit of peace. The things that belong to our peace are those things that relate to our present and future welfare; these we must know with application. *Secondly*. There is a time of visitation, when those things which belong to our peace may be known by us, and known to good purpose. When we enjoy the means of grace in great plenty, as powerfully preached to us, when the Spirit strives with us, and our own consciences are startled and awakened, then is the time of visitation, which we are concerned to improve. *Thirdly*. Those that have long neglected the time of their visitation, if at length, if at last, in this thy day, their eyes be opened, and they bethink themselves, all will be well yet. Those shall not be refused that come into the vineyard at the eleventh hour. *Fourthly*. It is the amazing folly of multitudes that enjoy the means of grace, and it will be of fatal consequence to them, that they do not improve the day of their opportunities. The things of their peace are revealed to them, but are not minded or regarded by them; they hide their eyes from them, as if they were not worth taking notice of. They are not aware of the accepted time, and the day of salvation, and so let it slip, and perish through mere carelessness. None so blind as those that

xix. 21. The word "austere" in this verse and in verse 22 signifies "harsh," in much the same sense as we use the term of a man's character.

xix. 27. This is a passage which the sceptics of our time quote as if it was a precept spoken by Jesus. It requires no acuteness to perceive that the language forms part of the parable, and is put into the mouth of the prince who is speaking to his servants. The actual allusion is to verse 14. and therefore the "enemies" are those who

will not see, nor have any the things of their peace more certainly hid from their eyes than those that turn their back upon them. *Fifthly*. The sin and folly of those that persist in a contempt of gospel grace is a great grief to the Lord Jesus, and should be so to us. He looks with weeping eyes upon lost souls, that continue impenitent, and run headlong upon their own ruin; he had rather they would turn and live, than go and die, for he is not willing any should perish.

2nd. Jerusalem cannot escape the day of her desolation. The things of her peace are now in a manner hid from her eyes; they will be shortly: not but that after this the Gospel was preached to them by the apostles, all the house of Israel were called to know assuredly that Christ was their peace, *Acts ii. 36* and multitudes were convinced and converted. But as to the body of the nation, and the leading part of it, it was sealed up under unbelief; God had given them the spirit of slumber, *Rom. ii. 8*. They were so prejudiced and enraged against the Gospel, and those few that did embrace it then, that nothing less than a miracle of Divine grace (like that which converted Paul) would work upon them; and it could not be expected such a miracle should be wrought, and so they were justly given up to judicial blindness and hardness. The peaceful things are not hid from the eyes of particular persons; but it is too late to think now of the nation of the Jews, as such, becoming a Christian nation, by embracing Christ. And therefore they are marked for ruin, which Christ here foresees and foretels, as the certain consequence of their rejecting Christ. Note, Neglecting the great salvation often brings temporal judgments upon a people; it did so upon Jerusalem in less than forty years after this, when all that Christ here foretold was exactly fulfilled. *First*. The Romans besieged the city, cast a trench about it, compassed it round, and kept the inhabitants in on every side. Josephus relates that Titus ran up a wall in a very short time, which surrounded the city, and cut off all hopes of escaping. *Secondly*. They laid it even with the ground. Titus commanded his soldiers to dig up the city, and the whole compass of it was levelled, except three towers: see *Josephus' History of the Wars of the Jews*, lib. v. cap. 27; lib. vii. cap. 1. Not only the city, but the citizens, were laid even with the ground, "thy children within thee," by the cruel slaughters that were made of them; and there was scarce one stone left upon another. This was for their crucifying Christ, this was because they knew not the day of their visitation. Let other cities and nations take warning.

Secondly. The zeal he shewed for the present purifying of the temple. Though it must be destroyed ere long, it doth not therefore follow that no care must be taken of it in the mean time.

1. Christ cleared it of those who profaned it. He went straight to the temple, and "began to cast out the buyers and sellers," ver. 45; hereby (though he was represented as an enemy to the temple, and that was the crime laid to his charge before the high priest,) he made it to appear that he had a truer love for the temple than they had, who had such a veneration for its Corban, its treasury, as a sacred thing; for its purity was more its glory than its wealth was. Christ gave a reason for his dislodging the temple merchants, ver. 46. The temple is a house of prayer, set apart for communion with God. The buyers and sellers made it a den of thieves, by the fraudulent bargains they made there; which was by no means to be suffered, for it would be a distraction to those who came there to pray.

2. He put it to the best use that ever it was put to, for he "taught daily in the temple," ver. 47. Note, It is not enough that the corruptions of a church be purged out, but the preaching of the Gospel must be encouraged. Now when Christ preached in the temple, observe here, 1st. How spiteful the church rulers were against him; how industrious to seek an opportunity, or pretence rather, to do him a mischief, ver. 47: "The chief priests and scribes and the chief of the people," that is, the great Sanhedrim, that should have attended him, and summoned the people too to attend him, they "sought to destroy him," and put him to death. 2nd. How respectful the common people were to him: they "were very attentive to hear him;" he spent most of his time in the country, and did not then preach in the temple; but when he did, the people paid him great respect, attended on his preaching with diligence, and let no opportunity slip of hearing him; attended to it with care, and would not lose a word. Some read it, "all the people as they heard him took his part;" and so it comes in very properly, as a reason why his enemies "could not find what they might do" against him; they saw the people ready to fly in their faces if they offered him any violence. Till his hour was come, his interest in the common people protected him; but when his hour was come, the chief priests' influence upon the common people delivered him up.

CHAPTER XX.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's answer to the chief priests' question concerning his authority, ver. 1—8. II. The parable of the vineyard let out to the unjust and rebellious husbandmen, ver. 9—19. III. Christ's answer to the question proposed to him, concerning the lawfulness of paying tribute to Caesar, ver. 20—26. IV. His vindication of that great fundamental doctrine of the Jewish and Christian institutes, the resurrection of the dead, and the future state, from the foolish cavils of the Sadducees, ver. 27—38. V. His puzzling the scribes with a question concerning the Messiah's being the son of David, ver. 39—44. VI. The caution he gave his disciples to take heed of the scribes, ver. 45—47. All which passages we had before in *Matthew and Mark*, and therefore need not enlarge upon them here, unless on those particulars which we had not there.



AND it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders, 2 And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? 3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me: 4 The baptism of John,

have declared their hatred of his government. If it is said that it must point to the punishment of those who reject the Saviour, we have no reason to deny the fact. Yet it may be well to remind the hostile critic that the Gospel nowhere authorises men to punish men for unbelief in this world, nor at all. According to some expositors, the reference is to the overthrow of the Jewish nation, as such, for the rejection of the Messiah.

xix. 28, 29. The topographical indications here are perfectly

was it from heaven, or of men? 5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not? 6 But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. 7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was. 8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

In this passage of story nothing is added here to what we had in the other evangelists, but only in the first verse, where we are told,

First. That he was now "teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the Gospel." Note, Christ was a preacher of his own Gospel. He not only purchased the salvation for us, but published it to us, which is a great confirmation of the truth of the Gospel, and gives abundant encouragement to us to receive it; for it was a sign the heart of Christ was much upon it to have it received. This likewise puts an honour upon the preachers of the Gospel, and upon their office and work, how much soever it is despised by a vain world. It puts an honour upon the popular preachers of the Gospel. Christ condescended to the capacities of the people in preaching the Gospel, and taught them. And observe, when he was preaching the Gospel to the people, he had this interruption given him. Note, Satan and his agents do all they can to hinder the preaching the Gospel to the people; for nothing weakens the interest of Satan's kingdom more.

Secondly. That his enemies are here said to "come upon him," *ἐπισηναι*: that word is used only here, and it intimates, 1. That they thought to surprise him with this question; they "came upon him" suddenly, hoping to catch him unprovided with an answer, as if this were not a thing he had himself thought of. 2. That they thought to frighten him with this question. They "came upon him" in a body, with violence. But how could he be terrified with the wrath of men, when it was in his own power to restrain it, and make it turn to his praise? From this story itself we may learn,

1st. That it is not to be thought strange, if even that which is evident to a demonstration be disputed and called into question as a doubtful thing, by those that shall shut their eyes against the light. Christ's miracles plainly shewed by what authority he did these things, and sealed his commission, and yet this is that which is here arraigned.

2nd. Those that question Christ's authority, if they be but catechised themselves, in the plainest and most evident principles of religion, will have their folly made manifest unto all men. Christ answered these priests and scribes with a question concerning the baptism of John; a plain question, which the meanest of the common people could answer; "was it from heaven, or of men?" They all knew it was from heaven; there was nothing in it that had an earthly relish or tendency, but it was all heavenly and divine. And this question gruelled them, and run them aground, and served to shame them before the people.

3rd. Those that are governed by reputation and secular interest, it is not strange if they imprison the plainest truths, and smother and stifle the strongest convictions, as these priests and scribes did, who, to save their credit, would not own that John's baptism was from heaven, and had no other reason why they did not say it was of men, but because they feared the people. What good can be expected from men of such a spirit?

4th. Those that bury the knowledge they have, are justly denied farther knowledge. They who knew the baptism of John to be from heaven, and would not believe in him, nor own their knowledge, it was just with Christ to refuse to give them an account of his authority, ver. 7, 8.

9 Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let



VINEYARDS.

it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. 10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husband-

men beat him, and sent him away empty. 11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. 12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out. 13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. 14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be our's. 15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? 16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. 17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? 18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. 19 And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

Christ spoke this parable against those who were resolved not to own his authority, though the evidence of it was never so full and convincing; and it comes in very seasonably, to shew, that by questioning his authority, they forfeited their own. Their disowning the Lord of their vineyard, was a defeasance of their lease of the vineyard, and a giving up all their title.

First. The parable has nothing added here to what we had before in *Matthew* and *Mark*. The scope of it is to shew that the Jewish nation, by persecuting the prophets, and at length Christ himself, had provoked God to take away from them all their church privileges, and to abandon them to ruin. It teacheth us,

1. That those who enjoy the privileges of the visible church are as tenants and farmers, that have a vineyard, to look after, and rents to pay for it. God, by setting up revealed religion and instituted orders in the world, hath planted a vineyard, which he lets out to those people among whom his tabernacle is, ver. 9; and they have vineyard work to do, needful and constant work, but pleasant and profitable. Whereas man was, for sin, condemned to till the ground, they that have a place in the church are restored to that which was Adam's work in innocency, to dress the garden, and to keep it; for the church is a paradise, and Christ the tree of life in it. They have also vineyard fruits to present to the Lord of the vineyard. There are rents to be paid, and services to be done, which, though bearing no proportion to the value of the premises, yet must be done, and must be paid.

2. That the work of God's ministers is to call upon those that enjoy the privileges of the church to bring forth fruit accordingly. They are God's rent gatherers, to put the husbandmen in mind of their arrears; or rather, to put them in mind that they have a landlord, who expects to hear from them, and to receive some acknowledgment of their dependence on him, and obligations to him, ver. 10. The Old Testament prophets were sent on this errand to the Jewish church, to demand from them the duty and obedience they owed to God.

3. It has often been the lot of God's faithful servants to be wretchedly abused by his own tenants; they have been beaten and treated shamefully by those that resolved to send them empty away. They that are resolved not to do their duty to God, cannot bear to be called upon to do it. Some of the best men in the world have had the hardest usage from it, for their best services.

4. God sent his Son into the world to carry on the same work that the prophets were employed in, to gather the fruits of the vineyard for God; and one would have thought he should have been revered and received. The prophets spoke as servants, "Thus saith the Lord;" but Christ, as a Son, among his own, "Verily I say unto you." Putting such an honour as this upon them, to send him, one would have thought should have won upon them.

5. Those that reject Christ's ministers would reject Christ himself, if he should come to them; for it has been tried, and found that the persecutors and murderers of his servants the prophets, were the persecutors and murderers of him himself. They said, "This is the heir: come, let us kill him." When they slew the servants, there were other servants sent; but if we can but be the death of the Son, there is never another Son to be sent, and then we shall be no longer molested with these demands; we may have a quiet possession of the vineyard for ourselves. The scribes and Pharisees promised themselves that, if they could but get Christ out of the way, they should for ever ride masters in the Jewish church; and therefore they took that bold step, they "cast him out of the vineyard and killed him."

6. The putting of Christ to death filled up the measure of the Jewish iniquity, and brought upon them ruin without remedy. No other could be expected but that God should "destroy those wicked husbandmen." They began in not paying their rent, but then proceeded to beat and kill the servants, and at length their young master himself. Note, Those that live in the neglect of their duty to God, know not what degrees of sin and destruction they are running themselves into.

xix. 42. Some treat "if thou hadst known," &c., as an elliptical sentence, but there is no doubt it is a Hebraism, equivalent to "oh, that thou hadst known!" or "would that thou hadst known!" The idea is that the city had not known what would conduce to its peace or welfare—another Hebraism. (See Heb. iv. 3, 5.)

xix. 43, 44. The singular accuracy of detail in this prophetic passage has driven sceptics to the supposition that it must have been written after the fall of Jerusalem. The date of the book is a

exact. From Jericho the traveller literally ascends to Jerusalem, which is much more elevated. The site of Bethphage is uncertain, but the proximity of it and Bethany to the Mount of Olives is unquestioned.

xix. 41. It is observed by Epiphanius, that certain rash and sensitive people, who thought it unworthy of Christ he should weep, struck out from their copies the words "and wept over it." No copies without the words are now in existence.

Secondly. To the application of the parable is added here, which we had not before, their deprecation of the doom included in it, ver. 16; "when they heard it, they said, God forbid;" *μή γένοιτο*, 'Let not this be done,' so it should be read; though they could not but own that for such a sin such a punishment was just, and what might be expected, yet they could not bear to hear of it. Note, It is an instance of the folly and stupidity of sinners that they proceed and persevere in their sinful ways, though at the same time they have a foresight and dread of the destruction that is at the end of those ways. And see what a cheat they put upon themselves, to think to avoid it by a cold "God forbid," when they do nothing towards the preventing of it; but will this make the threatening of none effect? No, they shall know whose word shall stand, God's or theirs.

Now observe what Christ said in answer to this childish deprecation of their ruin. 1. "He beheld them." That is taken notice of only by this evangelist, ver. 17. He looked upon them with pity and compassion; grieved to see them cheat themselves thus in their own ruin. "He beheld them," to see if they would blush at their own folly, or if he could discern in their countenances any show of relenting. 2. He referred them to the Scripture, "What is this then that is written?" How can you escape the judgment of God, when you cannot prevent the exaltation of him whom you despise and reject? The word of God hath said it, that "the stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner." The Lord Jesus will be exalted to the Father's right hand; he has all judgment and all power committed to him; he is the corner stone and top stone of the church; and if so, his enemies can expect no other but to be destroyed; for even those that slight him, that stumble at him, and are offended in him, they "shall be broken," it will be their ruin; but those that not only reject him, but hate and persecute him, as the Jews did, he will fall upon them, and crush them to pieces, "will grind them to powder." The condemnation of spiteful persecutors will be much sorer than that of careless unbelievers.

Lastly. We are told how the chief priests and scribes were exasperated by this parable, ver. 19; "they perceived that he spoke this parable against them," and so he did; a guilty conscience needs no accuser; but they, instead of yielding to the convictions of conscience, fell into a rage at him who awakened that sleeping lion in their bosoms, and "sought to lay hands on him." Their corruptions rebelled against their convictions, and got the victory; and it was not because they had any fear of God or of his wrath before their eyes, but only because "they feared the people," that they did not now fly in his face, and take him by the throat. They were just ready to make his words good, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him." Note, When the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil, the fairest warnings, both of the sin they are about to commit, and of the consequences of it, make no impression upon them. Christ tells them, that instead of kissing the Son of God, they would kill him; upon which they should have said, "What, is thy servant a dog?" But they do in effect say this, 'And so we will; have at him now.' And though they deprecate the punishment of the sin, in the next breath they are projecting the commission of it.

20 And they watched *him*, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor. 21 And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of *any*, but teachest the way of God truly: 22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no? 23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? 24 Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Cæsar's. 25 And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's. 26 And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

We have here Christ's evading a snare which his enemies laid for him, by proposing a question to him about tribute. We had this passage before, both in *Matthew* and *Mark*. Here is,

First. *The mischief designed him*; and that is more fully related here than before. The plot was to "deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor," ver. 20. They could not themselves put him to death by course of law, nor otherwise than by a popular tumult, which they could not depend upon; and since they cannot be his judges, they will willingly condescend to be his prosecutors and accusers, and will themselves inform against him. They hoped to gain their point, if they could but incense the governor against him. Note, It has been the common artifice of persecuting church rulers to make the secular powers the tools of their malice, and oblige the kings of the earth to do their drudgery, who, if they had not been instigated, would have let their neighbours live quietly by them, as Pilate did Christ, till the chief priests and the scribes presented Christ to him. But thus Christ's word must be fulfilled by their cursed policies, that he should be "delivered into the hands of the Gentiles."

Secondly. *The persons they employed*. *Matthew* and *Mark* told us they were disciples of the Pharisees, with some Herodians; here it is added, that they were "spies, which should feign themselves just men." Note, It is no new thing for ill men to feign themselves just men, and to cover the most wicked projects with most specious and plausible pretences. The devil can transform himself into an angel of light, and a Pharisee appear in the garb and speak the language of a disciple of Christ. A spy must go in disguise. These spies must take on them to have a value for Christ's judgment, and to depend upon "as an oracle, and therefore must desire his advice in a case of conscience."

literary question, and no believer in the Son of God can object to the received opinion, because of a very distinct prophecy like this. Until the Messiahship of Jesus is disproved, there is no room for such an objection. The exactness of the details may be proved from *Josephus* and others.

xix. 45. In some of the best copies this verse ends with the word "sold," or "therein," and some modern critics leave out the remainder.

Note, Ministers are concerned to stand upon their guard against some that feign themselves to be just men, and to be wise as serpents when they are in the midst of a generation of vipers and scorpions.

Thirdly. *The question they proposed*, with which they hoped to ensnare him. 1. Their preface is very courtly, "Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly," ver. 21. Thus they thought to flatter him into an incautious freedom and openness with them, and so to gain their point. They that are proud, and love to be commended, will be brought to do any thing for those that will but flatter them, and speak them fair; but they were much mistaken who thought thus to impose upon the humble Jesus. He was not pleased with the testimony of such hypocrites, nor thought himself honoured by it. It is true that he accepts not the person of any, but it is as true, that he knows the hearts of all, and knew theirs, and the seven abominations that were there, though they spake fair. It was certain that he taught the way of God truly; but he knew that they were unworthy to be taught by him, who came to take hold of his words, not to be taken hold of by them. 2. Their case is very nice: "Is it lawful for us" (that is added here in *Luke*) "to give tribute to Cæsar?" for us Jews; us, the freeborn seed of Abraham; us, that pay the Lord's tribute; may we give tribute to Cæsar? Their pride and covetousness made them loath to pay taxes, and then they would have it a question whether it was lawful or no. Now, if Christ should say it was lawful, the people would take it ill, who expected that he who set up to be the Messiah should in the first place free them from the Roman yoke, and stand by them in denying tribute to Cæsar; but if he should say it was not lawful, as they expected he would, (for if he had not been of that mind, they thought he could not have been so much the darling of the people as he was,) then they should have something to accuse him of to the governor, which was what they wanted.

Fourthly. *His evading of the snare which they laid for him*: "He perceived their craftiness," ver. 23. Note, Those that are most crafty in their designs against Christ and his Gospel, cannot, with all their art, conceal them from his cognizance. He can see through the most political disguises, and so break through the most dangerous snare; for "surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird." He did not give them a direct answer, but reproved them for offering to impose upon him, "Why tempt ye me?" and called for a piece of money, current money with the merchants: "Shew me a penny;" and asked them whose money it was; whose stamp it bore; who coined it? They own it is Cæsar's money. Why then, saith Christ, you should first have asked whether it was lawful to pay and receive Cæsar's money among yourselves, and to admit that to be the instrument of your commerce; but you, having granted that by a common consent, you are concluded by your own act, and no doubt you ought to give tribute to him who furnished you with this convenience for your trade, protects you in it, and lends you the sanction of his authority for the value of your money; you must therefore "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." In civil things you ought to submit to the civil powers; and so, if Cæsar protects you in your civil rights, by laws and the administration of justice, you ought to pay him tribute; but in sacred things, God only is your King; you are not bound to be of Cæsar's religion; you must "render to God the things that are God's," must worship and adore him only, and not any golden image that Cæsar sets up; and we must worship and adore him in such a way as he has appointed, and not according to the inventions of Cæsar. It is God only that has authority to say, "My son, give me thy heart."

Fifthly. *The confusion they were hereby put into*, ver. 26. 1. The snare is broke; "they could not take hold of his words before the people." They could not fasten upon any thing wherewith to incense either the governor or the people against him. 2. Christ is honoured; even the wrath of man is made to praise him. "They marvelled at his answer," it was so discreet and unexceptionable, and such an evidence of that wisdom and sincerity which make the face to shine. 3. Their mouths are stopped; they "held their peace;" they had nothing to object; and durst ask him nothing else, lest he should shame and expose them.

27 Then came to *him* certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him, 28 Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 29 There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. 30 And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. 31 And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. 32 Last of all the woman died also. 33 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife. 34 And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: 35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: 36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. 37 Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God

xix. 47. "Daily" here means "every day"—i.e., on each of the few days which concluded his regular ministry, and closed with his betrayal.

xx. 1. "One of those days," or, as we may read, "one of the days," is an allusion to the days indicated in chap. xix. 47. (See the previous Note.)

xx. 2. Even Strauss is forced to say, "These discussions are truly genuine passages, being carried on so entirely in the spirit and tone

of Jacob. 38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

This discourse with the Sadducees we had before, just as it is here, only that the description Christ gives of the future state is somewhat more full and large here. Observe here,

First. That in every age there have been men of corrupt minds, that have endeavoured to subvert the fundamental principles of revealed religion. As there are deists now, who call themselves free-thinkers, but are really false-thinkers, so there were Sadducees in our Saviour's time, that bantered the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come, though they were plainly revealed in the Old Testament, and were articles of the Jewish faith. The Sadducees "deny that there is any resurrection," any 'future state'; so *ἀνάστασις* may signify; not only no return of the body to life, but no continuance of the soul in life; no world of spirits, no state of recompence and retribution for what was done in the body. Take away this, and all religion falls to the ground.

Secondly. It is common for those that design to undermine any truth of God to perplex it, and load it with difficulties; so those Sadducees here did; when they would weaken people's faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, they put a question upon the supposition of it, which they thought could not be answered either way to satisfaction. The case, perhaps, was matter of fact, however it might be so, of a woman that had seven husbands: now in the resurrection whose wife shall she be? Whereas it was not at all material whose she was, for when death puts an end to that relation, it is not to be resumed again.

Thirdly. There is a great deal of difference between the state of the children of men on earth and that of the children of God in heaven; a vast unlikeness between "this world" and "that world;" and we wrong ourselves, and wrong the truth of Christ, when we form our notions of that world of spirits by our present enjoyments in this world of sense.

1. The children of men in this world "marry, and are given in marriage," *οἱ τοῦ αἵματος τούτου*, 'the children of this age,' this generation, both good and bad, marry themselves, and give their children in marriage. Much of our business in this world is to raise and build up families, and to provide for them; much of our pleasure in this world is in our relations, our wives and children; nature inclines to it. Marriage is instituted for the comfort of human life here in this state, where we carry bodies about with us. It is likewise a remedy against fornication, that natural desires might not become brutal, but be under direction and control. "The children of this world" are dying and going off the stage, and therefore they marry, and give their children in marriage, that they may furnish the world of mankind with needful recruits, that as one generation passeth away, another may come; and that they may have some of their offspring to leave the fruit of their labours to, especially that the chosen of God in future ages may be introduced, for it is a godly seed that is sought by marriage, *Mal. ii. 15*; a seed to serve the Lord, that shall be a generation to him.

2. The world to come is quite another thing; it is called "that world," by way of emphasis and eminency. Note, There are more worlds than one: a present miserable world, and a future invisible world; and it is the concern of every one of us to compare worlds, "this world" and "that world," and give the preference in our thoughts and cares to that which deserves it. Now observe,

1st. Who shall be the inhabitants of that world: they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain it, that is, that are interested in Christ's merit, who purchased it for us, and have a holy meanness for it wrought in them by the Spirit, whose business it is to prepare us for it. They have not a legal worthiness, upon the account of any thing in them, or done by them, but an evangelical worthiness, upon the account of the inestimable price which Christ paid for "the redemption of the purchased possession." It is a worthiness imputed, by which we are glorified, as well as righteousness imputed, by which we are justified; *κατακληθήντες*, they are 'made agreeable to that world.' The disagreeableness that there is in the corrupt nature, is taken away, and the dispositions of the soul are, by the grace of God, conformed to that state; they are by grace made and "counted worthy to obtain that world." It intimates some difficulty in reaching after it, and danger of coming short: we must so run as that we may obtain. They shall obtain "the resurrection from the dead," that is, the blessed resurrection; for that of condemnation, as Christ calls it, *1 Jno. v. 29*, is rather a resurrection to death,—a second death, an eternal death,—than from death.

2nd. What shall be the happy state of the inhabitants of that world, we cannot conceive or express it, *1 Cor. ii. 9*. See what Christ here saith of it:

First. They "neither marry, nor are given in marriage." Those that are entered into the joy of their Lord are entirely taken up with that, and need not the joy of the bridegroom in his bride. The love in that world of love is all seraphic, and such as eclipseth and loseth the purest and most pleasing loves we entertain ourselves with in this world of sense; where the body itself shall be a spiritual body, the delights of sense are all vanished; and where there is a perfection of holiness there is no occasion for marriage as a preservative from sin; into that new Jerusalem there enters nothing that defiles.

Secondly. They cannot "die any more;" and this comes in as a reason why they do not marry. In this dying world there must be marriage, in order to the filling up of the vacancies made by death; but where there are no burials, there needs no weddings. This crowns the comfort of that world, that there is no more death there, which sullies all the beauty and damps all the comfort of this world. Here death reigns, but thence it is for ever excluded.

Thirdly. "They are equal unto the angels." In the other evangelists it was said they are "as the angels," *ὡς ἄγγελοι*, but here they are said to be "equal to the angels," *ἰσάγγελοι*, 'angels' peers; they have a glory and bliss no way inferior to that of the holy angels. They shall see the same sight, be employed in the same work, and share in the same joys with the holy angels. Saints, when they come to heaven, shall be naturalized; and though by nature strangers, yet, having obtained this freedom with a great sum, which Christ paid for them, they have in all respects equal privileges with them that were freeborn, the angels that are the natives and aborigines of that country. They shall be companions with the angels, and converse with those blessed spirits that love them dearly, and to an innumerable company of whom they are now come in faith, hope, and love.

Fourthly. They "are the children of God," and so they are as the angels, who are called the sons of God. In the inheritance of sons, the adoption of sons will be completed. Hence believers are said to wait for the adoption, even the redemption of the body, *Rom. viii. 23*; for till the body is redeemed from the grave, the adoption is not completed. "Now are we the sons of God," *1 Jno. iii. 2*. We have the nature and disposition of sons, but that will not be perfected till we come to heaven.

Fifthly. They are "the children of the resurrection," that is, they are made capable of the employments and enjoyments of the future state; they are born

to that world, belong to that family, and their education for it here, and shall there have their inheritance in it. They "are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Note, God owns those only for his children that are the children of the resurrection, that are born from above, are allied to the world of spirits, and prepared for that world, who are the children of that family.

Fourthly. It is an undoubted truth that there is another life after this, and there were eminent discoveries made of this truth in the early ages of the church, ver. 37, 38. "Moses shewed" this, as it was shewn to Moses, "at the bush," and he hath shewn it to us, "when he calleth the Lord," as the Lord calleth himself, "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were then dead as to our world; they were departed out of it many years before, and their bodies were turned into dust in the cave of Macpelah: how then could God say, not 'I was,' but, "I am the God of Abraham?" It is absurd that the living God and fountain of life should continue related to them as their God, if there were no more of them in being but what lay in that cave, undistinguished from common dust: we must therefore conclude that they were then in being in another world, "for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Luke here adds, "for all live unto him;" that is, all that, like them, are true believers; though they are dead, yet they do live; their souls, which return to God that gave them, *Ecccl. xii. 7*, live to him as the Father of spirits; and their bodies shall live again, at the end of time, by the power of God, for he calleth things that are not as though they were, because he is the God that quickens the dead, *Rom. iv. 17*. But there is more in it yet; when God called himself the God of these patriarchs, he meant that he was their felicity and portion, a God all-sufficient to them, *Gen. xvii. 1*; their exceeding great reward, *Gen. xv. 1*. Now it is plain, by their story, that he never did that for them in this world which would answer the true intent and full extent of that great undertaking, and therefore there must be another life after this, in which he will do that for them that will amount to a discharge in full of that promise, that he would be to them a God; which he is well able to do, for all live to him, and he has wherewithal to make every soul happy that lives to him; enough for all, enough for each.

39 Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said. 40 And after that they durst not ask him any question at all. 41 And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son? 42 And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 43 Till I make thine enemies thy footstool. 44 David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son? 45 Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples, 46 Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; 47 Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

The scribes were students in the law, and expositors of it to the people, men in reputation for wisdom and honour; the generality of them were enemies to Christ and his Gospel. Now here we have some of them attending him, and four things we have in these verses concerning them, which we had before.

First. We have them here commending the reply which Christ made to the Sadducees concerning the resurrection; ver. 39, "Certain of the scribes said, Master, thou hast well said." Christ had the testimony of his adversaries that he said well, and therefore the scribes were his enemies, because he would not conform to the traditions of the elders; but yet, when he vindicated the fundamental practices of religion, and appeared in defence of them, even the scribes commended his performance, and owned he said well. Many that call themselves Christians come short even of that spirit.

Secondly. We have them here struck with an awe of Christ, and of his wisdom and authority; ver. 40, "they durst not ask him any question at all," because they saw that he was too hard for all that contended with him. His own disciples, though weak, yet being willing to receive his doctrine, durst ask him any question; but the Sadducees, who contradicted and cavilled at his doctrine, durst ask him none.

Thirdly. We have them here puzzled and run aground with a question concerning the Messiah, ver. 41. It was plain by many scriptures that Christ was to be the son of David; even the blind man knew that, *ch. xiii. 39*; and yet it was plain that David called the Messiah his Lord, ver. 42, 43, his owner, and ruler, and benefactor; "the Lord said to my Lord," God said it to the Messiah, *Psa. cx. 1*. Now if he be his son, why doth he call him his Lord? if he be his Lord, why doth he call him his son? This he left them to consider of, but they could not reconcile this seeming contradiction; thanks be to God we can; that Christ, as God, was David's Lord; but Christ, as man, was David's son: he was both the root and the offspring of David, *Rev. xxi. 16*. By his human nature he was the offspring of David, a branch of his family; by his Divine nature he was the root of David, from whom he had his being and life, and all the supplies of grace.

Fourthly. We have them here described in their black characters, and a public caution given to the disciples to take heed of them, ver. 45-47. This we had just as it is here, *Mar. xii. 38*, and more largely, *Mat. xxiii*. Christ bade his disciples beware of the scribes; that is, 1. Take heed of being drawn into sin by them, of learning their way, and going into their measures; beware of such a spirit as they are governed by. Be not you such in the Christian church as they are in the Jewish church. 2. Take heed of being brought into trouble by them; in the same sense that he had said, *Mat. x. 17*, "Beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils;" beware of the scribes, for they do so. Beware of them, for,

1. They are proud and haughty; they desire to walk about the streets in long robes, as those that are above business, (for men of business went with

of the rabbinical dialectics of the time." The questioning of the chief priests and the rest seems to have had a semi-official character.

xx. 9. Strange as the incidents of this parable may appear to such as are only familiar with what takes place under regular European governments, an acquaintance with ancient and Oriental conditions of society will show that it corresponds with facts which might have happened. The arrangements made agree with those which were usual, and the refusal to fulfil engagements may have been common

also. It is apparent that the parable as a whole had a distinct application to the Jews.

xx. 19. While applicable to the Jews as a whole, we perceive that the parable bore most directly upon the priests and scribes.

xx. 20. Though foiled, the enemies of Jesus were not defeated, and they devised means whereby they might give a political turn to their action. The governor here meant is Pilate, who, as a Roman, would readily take cognisance of any seditious speech. Hence the

their loins girt up,) and as those that take state and take place; *cedant arma togæ*—let arms yield to the gown.' They loved in their hearts to have people make their honours to them in the markets, that many might see what respect was paid them; and were very proud of the precedence that was given them in all places of concourse; "they loved the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;" and when they were placed in them, looked upon themselves with great conceit, and upon all about them with great contempt. "I sit as a queen."

2. They are covetous and oppressive, and make their religion a cloak and cover for it. They "devour widows' houses;" get their estates into their hands, and then, by some trick or other, make them their own; or, they live upon them, and eat up what they have. And widows are an easy prey to them, because they are apt to be deluded by their specious pretences; "for a show, they make long prayers," perhaps long prayers with the widows when they are in sorrow, as if they had not only a piteous but a pious concern for them, and thus endeavour to ingratiate themselves with them, and get their money and effects into their hands. Such devout men surely may be trusted with untold gold; but they will give such an account of it as they think fit.

Christ reads them their doom in a few words: "These shall receive a more abundant judgment," a double damnation; both for their abuse of the poor widows, whose houses they devoured, and for their abuse of religion, and particularly of prayer, which they had made use of as a pretence for the more plausible and effectual carrying on of their worldly and wicked projects; for *dissembled piety* is double iniquity.

CHAPTER XXI.

an this chapter we have, I. The notice Christ took, and the approbation he gave, of a poor widow that cast two mites into the treasury, ver. 1—4. II. A prediction of future events, in answer to his disciples' inquiries concerning them, ver. 5—7. 1. Of what should happen between that and the destruction of Jerusalem; false Christs arising, bloody wars and persecutions of Christ's followers, ver. 8—19. 2. Of that destruction itself, ver. 20—24. 3. Of the second coming of Jesus Christ to judge the world, under the type and figure of that, ver. 25—33. III. A practical application of this, by way of caution and counsel, ver. 34—36; and an account of Christ's preaching, and the people's attendance on it, ver. 37, 38.



ND he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. 2 And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. 3 And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:

4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.



MITES, OR HALF FARTHING.

This short passage of story we had before in *Mark*. It is thus recorded twice, to teach us,

I. That charity to the poor is a main matter in religion; our Lord Jesus took all occasions to commend it and recommend it. He had just mentioned the barbarity of the scribes, that devoured poor widows, *ch. xx.*; and perhaps this is designed as an aggravation of it, that the poor widows were the best benefactors to the public funds, which the scribes had the disposal of.

II. That Jesus Christ has his eye upon us, to observe what we give to the poor, and what we contribute to works of piety and charity. Christ, though intent upon his preaching, looked up to see what gifts were cast into the treasury, ver. 1. He observes whether we give largely and liberally, in proportion to what we have, or whether we are sneaking and paltry in it; nay, his eye goes farther, he observes whether we give charitably, and with a willing mind, or grudgingly, and with reluctance. This should make us afraid of coming short of our duty in this matter; men may be deceived with excuses which Christ knows to be frivolous; and this should encourage us to be abundant in it, without desiring that men should know it; it is enough that Christ doth; he seeth in secret, and will reward openly.

III. That Christ observes and accepts the charity of the poor in a particular manner. Those that have nothing to give, may yet do a great deal in charity by ministering to the poor, and helping them, and begging for them, that cannot help themselves, or beg for themselves; but here was one that was herself poor, and yet gave what little she had to the treasury. It was but two mites, which make a farthing; but Christ magnified it as a piece of charity exceeding all the rest, "she has cast in more than they all." Christ doth not blame her for indiscretion, in giving what she wanted herself, nor for vanity in giving among "the rich to the treasury; but commended her liberality, and her willingness to part with what little she had for the glory of God; which proceeded from a belief of, and a dependence upon, God's providence, to take care of her; *Jehovah-jireh*—the Lord will provide."

IV. That whatever may be called the offerings of God, we ought to have a respect for; and to our power, yea, and beyond our power, to contribute cheerfully to: These have "cast in unto the offerings of God." What is given to the support of the ministry of the Gospel, to the spreading and propagating of religion, the education of youth, the release of prisoners, the relief of widows and strangers, and the maintenance of poor families, is given to the offerings of God, and it shall be so accepted and recompensed.

5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, 6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. 7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? 8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. 9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. 10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: 11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. 12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. 13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony. 14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: 15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. 16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. 17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. 18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish. 19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

See here, I. With what admiration some spake of the external pomp and magnificence of the temple; and they were some of Christ's own disciples too; and they took notice of it to him, "how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts," ver. 5. The outside was built up with goodly stones, and within it was beautified and enriched with the presents that were offered up for that purpose, and were hung up in it. They thought their Master should be as much affected with those things as they were, and should as much regret the destruction of them as they did. When we speak of the temple, it should be of the presence of God in it, and of the ordinances of God administered in it, and the communion which his people there have with him. It is a poor thing, when we speak of the church, to let our discourse dwell upon its pomps and revenues, and the dignities and powers of its officers and rulers; for "the king's daughter is all glorious within."

II. With what contempt Christ spoke of them, and with what assurance of their being all made desolate very shortly, ver. 6: "As for those things which ye behold," those dear things which you are so much in love with, "behold the days will come," and some now living may live to see them, "in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another." This building, which seems so beautiful that one would think none could for pity pull it down, and which seems so strong that one would think none should be able to pull it down, yet shall be utterly ruined; and this shall be done as soon as ever the spiritual temple of the gospel church (the substance of that shadow) begins to flourish in the world. Did we by faith foresee the blasting and withering of all external glory, we should not set our hearts upon it, as those do that cannot see, or will not look, so far before them.

III. With what curiosity those about him inquire concerning the time when this great desolation should be; ver. 7, "Master, when shall these things be?" It is natural to us to covet to know future things, and the time of them, which it is not for us to know, when we are more concerned to ask what is our duty in the prospect of these things, and how we may prepare for them: this it is for us to know. They inquire "what sign there shall be when these things shall come to pass." They ask not for a present sign to confirm the prediction itself, and to induce them to believe it; Christ's word was enough for that; but what the future signs will be of the approaching accomplishment or the prediction, by which they may be put in mind of it. These signs of the times Christ had taught them to observe.

Saviour was narrowly watched, and informers were employed to endeavour to catch him in some of his words.

xx. 24. Here, as in other cases where the term occurs, "penny" is a Roman denarius, worth a quarter of a shekel, or about sevenpence-halfpenny.

xx. 27. After the repulse of priests, scribes, elders, and spies, the Sadducees come and resume the attack upon a question of doctrine. The word "resurrection" in this verse seems to include the Sadducee

opinion respecting both the revivifying of the body and the state of the soul after death. There was a popular belief that the resurrection of the dead would occur at the coming of the Messiah.

xx. 33. The phrase "in the resurrection" may be limited so as to mean "at the resurrection," but we prefer to understand it of the condition introduced by the resurrection. The Sadducees did not believe in this condition, but they knew that our Lord taught it, and put this question to perplex him. They assumed the alleged future

IV. With what clearness and fulness Christ answers their inquiries, as far as was necessary to direct them in their duty; for all knowledge is desirable as far as it is in order to practice.

First. They must expect to hear of false Christs, and false prophets, appearing, and false prophecies given out; ver. 8, "many shall come in my name." He doth not mean in the name of Jesus, though there were some deceivers who pretended commissions from him, as *Acts* xix. 13; but usurping the title and character of the Messiah. Many pretended to be the deliverers of the Jewish church and nation from the Romans, and to fix the time when the deliverance should be wrought; by which multitudes were drawn into a snare, to their ruin. They shall say, *ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι*,—"that I am he," or, "I am;" as if they would assume that incommunicable name of God by which he made himself known when he came to deliver Israel out of Egypt, "I am;" and to encourage people to follow them, they added, "the time draws near when the kingdom shall be restored to Israel; and if they will follow me they shall share in it."

Now as to this he gives them a needful caution: 1. "Take heed that ye be not deceived." Do not you imagine that I shall myself come again in external glory to take possession of the throne of kingdoms; no, you must not expect any such thing, for my kingdom is not of this world. When they asked solicitously and eagerly, "Master, when shall these things be?" the first word Christ said was, "Take heed that ye be not deceived." Note, Those that are most inquisitive in the things of God, (though it is very good to be so,) yet are in most danger of being imposed upon, and have most need to be upon their guard. 2. "Go ye not after them." You know the Messiah is come, and you are not to look for any other; and therefore do not so much as hearken after them, nor have any thing to do with them. If we are sure that Jesus is the Christ, and his doctrine is the Gospel of God, we must be deaf to all intimations of another Christ, and another gospel.

Secondly. They must expect to hear of great commotions in the nations, and many terrible judgments inflicted upon the Jews and their neighbours. 1. There shall be bloody wars; ver. 10, "Nation shall rise against nation;" one part of the Jewish nation against another; or rather, the whole against the Romans. Encouraged by the false Christs, they shall wickedly endeavour to throw off the Roman yoke, by taking up arms against the Roman powers. When they had rejected the liberty with which Christ would have made them free, they were left to themselves, to grasp at their civil liberty in ways that were sinful, and therefore could not be successful. 2. There shall be earthquakes, great earthquakes, in divers places, which shall not only frighten people, but destroy towns and houses, and bury many in the ruins of them. 3. There shall be famines and pestilences; the common effects of war, which destroy the fruits of the earth; and by exposing men to ill weather, and reducing them to ill diet, occasions infectious diseases. God has various ways of punishing a provoking people. The four sorts of judgments which the Old Testament prophets so often speak of, are threatened by the New Testament prophets too; for though spiritual judgments are more commonly inflicted in gospel times, yet God makes use of temporal judgments also. 4. There shall be fearful sights, and great signs from heaven; uncommon appearances in the clouds, comets and blazing stars, which frighten the ordinary sort of beholders, and have always been looked upon as ominous, and portending something bad.

Now as to these, the caution he gives them is, "Be not terrified;" others will be frightened at them, be not you frightened, ver. 9. As to the fearful sights, let not them be fearful to you, who look above the visible heavens to the throne of God's government in the highest heavens; "Be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them," *Jer.* x. 2. And as to the famines and pestilences, you fall into the hands of God, who has promised to those who are his, that "in the days of famine they shall be satisfied," and that he will keep them from the noisome pestilence. Trust therefore in him, and be not afraid; nay, when you hear of wars, when without are fightings, and within are fears, yet then be not you terrified. You know the worst that any of these judgments can do you, and therefore be not afraid of them. For, 1st. It is your interest to make the best of that which is, for all your fears cannot alter it; "these things must first come to pass," there is no remedy. It will be your wisdom to make yourselves easy, by accommodating yourselves to them. 2nd. There is worse behind. Flatter not yourselves with a fancy that you will soon see an end of these troubles; no, not so soon as you think of; "the end is not by and by," not suddenly. Be not terrified; for if you begin so quickly to be discouraged, how will you bear up under what is yet before you?

Thirdly. They must expect to be themselves for signs and wonders in Israel; their being persecuted would be a prognostic of the destruction of the city and temple, which he had now foretold; nay, this should be the first sign of their ruin coming; "before all these they shall lay their hands on you;" the judgment shall begin at the house of God; you must smart first, for warning to them; that, if they have any consideration, they may consider, "if this be done to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry?" see *1 Pet.* iv. 17, 18. But that is not all; this must be considered not only as the suffering of the persecuted, but as the sin of the persecutors; before God's judgments are brought upon them, they shall fill up the measure of their iniquity, by laying their hands on you. Note, The ruin of a people is always introduced by their sin; and nothing introduces a surer and sorer ruin than the sin of persecution. This is a sign that God's wrath is coming upon a people to the uttermost, when their wrath against the servants of God comes to the uttermost. Now as to this,

1. Christ tells them what hard things they should suffer for his name's sake; much to the same purpose with what he had told them when he first called them to follow him, *Mat.* x.; they should know the wages of it, that they might sit down and count the cost. St. Paul, who was the greatest labourer and sufferer of them all, not being now among them, was told by himself what "great things he should suffer for Christ's name's sake," *Acts* ix. 16; so necessary is it that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus should count upon persecution. The Christians having themselves been originally Jews, and still retaining an equal veneration with them for the Old Testament, and all the essentials of their religion, and differing only in ceremony, might expect fair quarter with them; but Christ bids them not expect it; no, they shall be the most forward to persecute you. 1st. They shall use their own church power against you; "they shall deliver you up to the synagogues, to be scourged there, and stigmatized with their anathemas. 2nd. They shall incense the magistrates against you; they shall "deliver you into prisons," that you may be "brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake," and be punished by them. 3rd. Your own relations will betray you, ver. 16, "your parents, brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends;" so that you will not know whom to put confidence in, nor where to be safe. 4th. Your religion will be made a capital crime, and you will be called to resist unto blood; "some of you shall they cause to be put to death;" so far must you be from expecting honour and wealth, that you must expect nothing but death in its most frightful shapes, death in all its dreadful pomp. Nay, 5th. "You shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." This is worse than death itself; and was fulfilled when the apostles were not "only appointed to death," but made a "spectacle to the world," and counted as the "filth of the world," and the "off-scouring

of all things," which every body loathes, *1 Cor.* iv. 9, 13. They were hated of all men, that is, of all ill men, who could not bear the light of the Gospel, because it discovered their evil deeds; and therefore hate those who brought in that light, flew in their faces, and would have pulled them to pieces. The wicked world, that hated to be reformed, hated Christ the great reformer, and all that were his, for his sake. The rulers of the Jewish church, knowing very well that if the Gospel obtained among the Jews, their usurped, abused power was at an end, raised all their forces against it, put it into an ill name, filled people's minds with prejudices against it, and so made the preachers and professors of it odious to the mob.

2. He encourageth them to bear up under their trials, and to go on in their work, notwithstanding the opposition they would meet with.

1st. God will bring glory to himself and them out of their sufferings; ver. 13, "it shall turn to you for a testimony." Your being set up thus for a mark, and publicly persecuted, will make you and your doctrine and miracles the more taken notice of and inquired into; your "being brought before kings and rulers" will give you an opportunity of preaching the Gospel to them, who otherwise would never have come within hearing of it; your suffering such severe things, and being so hated by the worst of men, of the most vicious lives, will be a testimony that you are good, else you would not have such ill men your enemies; your courage, and cheerfulness, and constancy under your sufferings will be a testimony for you that you believe what you preach, and that you are supported by a Divine power, and the Spirit of God and glory rests upon you.

2nd. God will stand by you, and own you, and assist you in your trials; you are his advocates, and you shall be well furnished with instructions, ver. 14, 15. Instead of setting your hearts on work to contrive an answer to informations, indictments, articles, accusations, and interrogatories, that will be exhibited against you in the ecclesiastical and civil courts, on the contrary, "settle it in your hearts," impress it upon them, take pains with them to persuade them "not to meditate before what ye shall answer;" that is, do not depend upon your own wit and ingenuity, your own prudence and policy; and do not distrust or despair of the immediate and extraordinary aids of the Divine grace. Think not to bring yourselves off in the cause of Christ, as you would in a cause of your own, by your own parts and application, with the common assistances of Divine providence; but promise yourselves—for I promise you—the special assistance of Divine grace; "I will give you a mouth and wisdom." This proves Christ to be God; for it is God's prerogative to give wisdom; and he it is that made man's mouth. Note, *First*, "A mouth and wisdom," together, completely fit a man both for services and sufferings; wisdom to know what to say, and a mouth wherewith to say it as it should be said. It is a great happiness to have both matter and words wherewith to honour God and do good; to have in the mind a storehouse well furnished with things new and old, and a door of utterance by which to bring them forth. *Secondly*, Those that plead Christ's cause may depend upon him to give them a mouth and wisdom, "which way soever they are called to plead it; especially when they are brought before magistrates for his name's sake. It is not said, he will send an angel from heaven to answer for them, though he could do that; but he will give them "a mouth and wisdom" to enable them to answer for themselves; which puts a greater honour upon them, which requires them to use the gifts and graces Christ furnisheth them with, and redounds the more to the glory of God, who stills the enemy and the avenger out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. *Thirdly*, When Christ gives to his witnesses "a mouth and wisdom," they are enabled to say that, both for him and themselves, "which all their adversaries are not able to gainsay or resist;" so that they are silenced and put to confusion. This was remarkably fulfilled presently after by the pouring out of the Spirit, by whom Christ gave his disciples this mouth and wisdom, when the apostles were brought before the priests and rulers, and answered them so as to make them ashamed, *Acts* iv. 5, 6.

3rd. You shall suffer no real damage by all the hardships they shall put upon you; ver. 18, "there shall not a hair of your head perish." Shall some of them lose their heads, and yet not lose a hair? It is a proverbial expression, speaking the greatest indemnity and security imaginable; it is frequently used, both in the Old Testament and New Testament, in that sense. Some think it refers to the preservation of the lives of all the Christians that were among the Jews when they were cut off by the Romans; historians tell us there was not one Christian perished in that desolation. Others reconcile it with the deaths of multitudes in the cause of Christ, and take it figuratively in the same sense that Christ saith, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Not a hair of your head shall perish; but, *First*, I shall take cognizance of it. To this end he had said, *Mat.* x. 30, "the hairs of your head are all numbered," and an account is kept of them; so that none of them shall perish but he will miss it. *Secondly*, It shall be upon a valuable consideration. We do not reckon that lost or perishing which is laid out for good purposes, and will turn to a good account. If we drop the body itself for Christ's name sake, it doth not perish, but is well bestowed. *Thirdly*, It shall be abundantly recompensed. When you come to balance profit and loss, you will find there is nothing perished; but, on the contrary, you have great gain in present comforts, especially in the joys of a life eternal; so that, though we may be losers for Christ, we shall not, we cannot be losers by him in the end.

4th. It is therefore your duty and interest, in the midst of your own sufferings and those of the nation, to maintain a holy sincerity and serenity of mind, which will keep you always easy; ver. 19, "In your patience possess ye your souls;" get and keep possession of your souls. Some read it as a promise; You may, or shall, possess your souls; it comes all to one. Note, *First*, It is our duty and interest at all times, especially in perilous, trying times, to secure the possession of our own souls; not only that they be not destroyed and lost for ever, but that they be not distempered now, nor our possession of them disturbed and interrupted. "Possess your souls;" that is, Be your own men, keep up the authority and dominion of reason, and keep under the tumults of passion, that neither grief nor fear may tyrannize over you, or turn you out of the possession and enjoyment of yourselves. In difficult times, when we can keep possession of nothing else, then let us make that sure which may be made sure, and keep possession of our souls. *Secondly*, It is by patience, Christian patience, that we keep possession of our own souls. In suffering times, set patience upon the guard, for the preserving of your souls; by it keep your souls composed and in a good frame, and keep out all those impressions which would ruffle you, and put you out of temper.

20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are

world to be a continuation of this in so wide a sense as to include the permanence of the marriage bond.

xx. 34. There are some points in this reply which are not found in the other gospels. Where men die, marriage is a necessity; but where they die no more, wedlock is superfluous. In the better world earthly relations, as husband and wife, parent and child, are merged into the higher relationship of children of God. Beyond this nothing is told, but it removes the difficulty raised by the Sadducees.

xx. 47. The word for "show" signifies display or pretence. The term rendered "damnation" denotes a sentence of condemnation.

xxi. 1. According to the Talmudists, the treasury was in the court of the women, and consisted of thirteen chests with openings for gifts.

xxi. 2. The mite was the smallest Jewish coin, and equal in value to about the fifth part of an English halfpenny.

xxi. 5. "Goodly stones" are handsome, fine, or magnificent stones.

in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. 25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Having given them an idea of the times for about thirty-eight years next ensuing, he here comes to shew them what all those things would issue in at last; namely, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the utter dispersion of the Jewish nation; which would be a little day of judgment, a type and figure of Christ's second coming, which was not so fully spoken of here as in the parallel place, *Mat. xxiv.*, yet glanced at; for the destruction of Jerusalem would be as it were the destruction of the world, to those whose hearts were bound up in it.

I. He tells them that they should see Jerusalem besieged, "compassed with armies," ver. 20, the Roman armies; and when they saw that, they might conclude that its desolation was nigh, for in that the siege would infallibly end, though it might be a long siege. Note, As in mercy, so in judgment; when God begins, he will make an end.

II. He warns them upon the signal given to shift for their own safety; ver. 21, "Then let them which are in Judæa quit the country, and flee to the mountains; let them which are in the midst of it" that is, of Jerusalem, "depart out," before the city be closely shut up, and (as we say now) before the trenches be opened; and let not them that are in the countries and villages about enter into the city, thinking to be safe there. Do you abandon a city and country which you see God has abandoned and given up to ruin. "Come out of her, my people."

III. He foretells the terrible havoc that should be made of the Jewish nation; ver. 22, "Those be the days of vengeance," so often spoken of by the Old Testament prophets, which would complete the ruin of that provoking people; all their predictions must now be fulfilled; and the blood of all the Old Testament martyrs must now be required; "all things that are written must be fulfilled" at length. After days of patience long abused there will come "days of vengeance;" for reprieves are not pardons. The greatness of that destruction is set forth. 1. By the inflicting cause of it; it is "wrath upon this people," the wrath of God, that will kindle this devouring, consuming fire. 2. By the particular terror it would be to women with child, and poor mothers that are nurses; "woe to them," not only because they are most subject to frights, and least able to shift for their own safety, but because it will be a very great torment to them to think of having borne and nursed children for the murderers. 3. By the general confusion that should be all the nation over; there "shall be great distress in the land," for men will not know what course to take, nor how to help themselves.

IV. He describes the issue of the struggles between the Jews and the Romans, and what they will come to at last. In short, 1. Multitudes of them "shall fall by the edge of the sword." It is computed, in those wars of the Jews, there fell by the sword above eleven hundred thousand; and the siege of Jerusalem was in effect a military execution. 2. The rest "shall be led away captive;" not into one nation, as when they were conquered by the Chaldeans, which gave them an opportunity of keeping together, but "into all nations," which made it impossible for them to correspond with each other, much less to incorporate. 3. Jerusalem itself was "trodden down of the Gentiles;" the Romans, when they had made themselves masters of it, laid it quite waste, as a "rebellious and bad city, hurtful to kings and provinces," and therefore hateful to them.

V. He describes the great frights that people should generally be in; many frightful sights shall be in the sun, moon, and stars, prodigies in the heavens, and here in this lower world, "the sea and the waves roaring," with terrible storms and tempests, such as had not been known, and above the ordinary working of natural causes; the effect of which shall be a universal confusion and consternation "upon the earth, distress of nations with perplexity," ver. 25. Dr. Hammond understands "by the nations," the several governments or tetrarchies of the Jewish nation—Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee; these shall be brought to the last extremity. "Men's hearts shall fail them for fear," ver. 26; ἀπολυγίσσαντο ἡνθρώπων, "men being quite examined,"—dispirited, unsouled, dying away for fear. Thus they "are killed all the day long," (by whom Christ's apostles were so, *Rom. viii. 36*); that is, they are all the day long in fear of being killed, sinking under that which lies upon them, and yet still trembling for fear of worse, and "looking after those things which are coming upon the earth." When "judgment begins at the house of God," it will not end there; it shall be as if all the world were falling in pieces, and where can any be secure then? "The powers of heaven shall be shaken," and then the pillars of the earth cannot but tremble. Thus shall the present Jewish policy, religion, laws, and government be all entirely dissolved by a series of unparalleled calamities, attended with the utmost confusion; so Dr. Clark. But our Saviour

makes use of these figurative expressions because at the end of time they shall be literally accomplished, when the "heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll," and all their powers not only shaken, but broken, and "the earth and all the works that are therein shall be burned up," 2 *Pet. iii. 10, 12*. As that day was all terror and destruction to the unbelieving Jews, so the great day will be to all unbelievers.

VI. He makes this to be a kind of appearing of the Son of man; ver. 27, "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." The destruction of Jerusalem was in a particular manner an act of Christ's judgment, the judgment committed to the Son of man; his religion could never be thoroughly established but by the destruction of the temple, and the abolishing of the Levitical priesthood and economy, after which even the converted Jews, and many of the Gentiles too, were still hankering, till they were destroyed; so that it might justly be looked upon as a coming of the Son of man in power and great glory; yet not visibly, but in the clouds, for in executing such judgments as these, "clouds and darkness are round about him." Now this was, 1. An evidence of the first coming of the Messiah, so some understand it. Then the unbelieving Jews shall be convinced, when it is too late, that Jesus was the Messiah. They that would not see him coming in the power of his grace to save them, shall be made to see him coming in the power of his wrath to destroy them—that would not have him to reign over them, shall have him to triumph over them. 2. It was an earnest of his second coming; then, in the terrors of that day, "they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud," and all the terrors of the last day: they shall see a specimen of it, a faint resemblance of it; if this be so terrible, what will that be?

VII. He encourageth all the faithful disciples in reference to the terrors of that day; ver. 28, "When these things begin to come to pass," when Jerusalem is besieged, and every thing is concurring to the destruction of the Jews, then do you look up, when others are looking down; look heavenwards in faith, hope, and prayer, and "lift up your heads" with cheerfulness and confidence, "for your redemption draweth nigh." 1. When Christ came to destroy the Jews, he came to redeem the Christians that were persecuted and oppressed by them; "then had the churches rest." 2. When he comes to judge the world at the last day, he will redeem all that are his from all their grievances. And the foresight of that day is as pleasant to all good Christians as it is terrible to the wicked and ungodly. Their death itself is so; when they see that day approaching, they can "lift up their heads with joy," knowing that "their redemption draws nigh—their remove to their Redeemer."

VIII. Here is one word of prediction that looks farther than the destruction of the Jewish nation, which is not easily understood; we have it, ver. 24, that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." 1. Some understand it of what is past, so Dr. Hammond. The Gentiles that have conquered Jerusalem shall keep possession of it, and it shall be purely Gentile, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled—till a great part of the Gentile world is become Christian; and then, after Jerusalem is rebuilt by Adrian the emperor, with an exclusion of all the Jews from it, many of the Jews shall turn Christians—shall join with the Gentile Christians to set up a church in Jerusalem, which shall flourish there for a long time. 2. Others understand it of what is yet to come, so Dr. Whitby. Jerusalem shall be possessed by the Gentiles, of one sort or other, for the most part, till the time comes when the nations that yet remain infidels shall embrace the Christian faith; when the kingdoms of this world shall become Christ's kingdoms, and then all the Jews shall be converted; Jerusalem shall be inhabited by them, and neither they nor their city any longer trodden down by the Gentiles.

29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; 30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. 31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. 32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. 33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. 34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. 35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. 37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives. 38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

Here, in the close of this discourse,

I. Christ appoints his disciples to observe the signs of the times, which they might judge by, if they had an eye to the foregoing directions, with as much certainty and assurance as they could judge of the approach of summer by the budding forth of the trees, ver. 29–31. As in the kingdom of nature there is a chain of causes, so in the kingdom of providence there is a consequence of one event upon another. When we see a nation filling up the measure of their iniquity, we may conclude their ruin is nigh; when we see the ruin of persecuting powers hastening on, we may from thence infer that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand, that when the opposition given to it is removed, it shall gain ground. As we may lawfully prognosticate the change of the seasons,

It is well known that many of them were exceedingly large. The "gifts," or offerings, were probably the ornaments given as presents. The splendour of the building is attested by Tacitus, and also by Josephus, who gives valuable details in Book xv. chap. 11 of his "Jewish Antiquities." See also "Wars of the Jews," vi. 4.

xxi. 8. As pointed out by some of the expositors, the words "the time draweth near" are spoken by the "many" who come in the name of Christ. It is said that no impostors pretending to be the

Messiah appeared before the fall of Jerusalem. Barchochaba, who is reckoned as the first of more than sixty seducers, did not appear till some time after (*Osterzee*). There were, however, numerous deceivers who pretended to be inspired prophets, or otherwise divinely commissioned. The names of some of these are very well known.

xxi. 10, 11. The critic last named says, "The tumults, earthquakes, famines, and other calamities here mentioned, were by no means so unimportant before the destruction of Jerusalem as some

when second causes have begun to work, so we may, in the disposal of events, expect something uncommon, when God is already raised up "out of his holy habitation," *Zec. ii. 13*; then "stand still and see his salvation."

II. He chargeth them to look upon those things neither as doubtful nor distant, for then they would not make a due impression on them; but as sure, and very near. The destruction of the Jewish nation, 1. Was near; ver. 32, "This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled;" there were some now alive that should see it, some that now heard the prediction of it. 2. It was sure; the sentence was irreversible, it was a consumption determined, the decree was gone forth; ver. 33, "Heaven and earth shall pass away," sooner than any word of mine; nay, they certainly shall pass away, "but my words shall not;" whether they take hold or no, they will take effect, and not one of them fall to the ground, 1 *Sam. iii. 19*.

III. He cautions them against security and sensuality, by which they would disfit themselves for the trying times that were coming on, and make them to be a great surprise and terror to them; ver. 34, 35, "Take heed to yourselves." This is the word of command given to all Christ's disciples, "Take heed to yourselves," that you be not overpowered by temptations, nor betrayed by your own corruptions. Note, We cannot be safe, if we be secure. It concerns us at all times, but especially at some times, to be very cautious.

See here, 1. What our danger is, that the day of death and judgment should come upon us unawares, when we do not expect it, and are not prepared for it, —lest when we are called to meet our Lord, that be found the farthest thing in our thoughts which ought always to be laid nearest our hearts, lest it come upon us as a snare; for so it will come upon the most of men who dwell upon the earth, and mind earthly things only, and have no converse with Heaven, to them it will be as a snare; see *Ecc. ix. 12*. It will be a terror and a destruction to them; it will put them into an inexpressible fright, and hold them fast for a doom yet more frightful. 2. What our duty is in consideration of this danger; we must take heed lest our hearts be overcharged, lest they be burthened and overloaded, and so disfigured and disabled to do what must be done in preparation for death and judgment. Two things we must watch against, lest our hearts be overcharged with them. 1st. The indulging of the appetites of the body, and allowing ourselves in the gratifications of sense to an excess; "Take heed lest you be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness," the immoderate use of meat and drink, which burthen the heart, not only with the guilt thereby contracted, but by the ill influence which such disorders of the body have upon the mind; they make men dull and lifeless to their duty, dead and listless in their duty; they stupefy the conscience, and make the mind unaffected with those things that are most affecting. 2nd. The inordinate pursuit of the good things of this world; the heart is overcharged with "the cares of this life." The former is the snare of those that are given to their pleasures; this is the snare of the men of business that will be rich. We have need to guard on both hands; not only lest at the time when death comes, but lest at any time, our hearts should be thus overcharged: our caution against sin, and our care of our own souls, must be constant.

IV. He counsels them to prepare and get ready for this great day, ver. 36: where see, 1. What should be our aim: that we "may be accounted worthy to escape all those things;" that when the judgments of God are abroad, we may be preserved from the malignity of them, that either we may not be involved in the common calamity, or it may not be that to us that it is to others; that in the day of death we may escape the sting of it, which is the wrath of God and the damnation of hell. Yet we must aim, not only to escape that, but "to stand before the Son of man;" not only to stand acquitted before him as our Judge, *Ps. i. 5*, to have boldness in the day of Christ, that is supposed in our escaping all those things,—but to stand before him, to attend on him as our Master, to stand continually before his throne, and serve him day and night in his temple, *Rev. vii. 15*; always to behold his face, as the angels, *Mat. xviii. 10*. The saints are here said to be accounted worthy, as before, *ch. x. 35*. God, by the good work of his grace in them, makes them meet for this happiness; and by the good will of his grace towards them, accounts them worthy of it. But, as Grotius here saith, a great part of our worthiness lies in an acknowledgment of our own unworthiness. 2. What should be our actings in these aims: "Watch therefore, and pray always." Watching and praying must go together, *Neh. iv. 9*. Those that would escape the wrath to come, and make sure the joys to come, must watch and pray, and must do it always, must make it the constant business of their lives; 1st. To keep a guard upon themselves; watch against sin, watch to every duty, and to the improvement of every opportunity of doing good. Be awake, and keep awake, in expectation of your Lord's coming, that you may be in a right frame to receive him, and bid him welcome. 2nd. To keep up their communion with God, "pray always;" be always in habitual disposition to that duty; keep up stated times for it, abound in it; pray upon all occasions. Those shall be accounted worthy to live a life of praise in the other world, that live a life of prayer in this world.

In the two last verses we have an account how Christ disposed of himself during those three or four days betwixt his riding in triumph into Jerusalem and the night in which he was betrayed. 1. He was all day teaching in the temple; Christ preached on week days as well as sabbath days. He was an indefatigable preacher; he preached in the face of opposition, and in the midst of those that he knew sought occasion against him. 2. At night he went out to lodge at a friend's house, in the mount of Olives, about a mile out of town. It is likely he had some friends in the city that would gladly have lodged him, but he was willing to retire in the evening out of the noise of the town, that he might have more time for secret devotion, now his hour was at hand. 3. Early in the morning he was in the temple again, where he had a morning lecture for those that were willing to attend it, and the people were forward to hear one that they saw forward to preach, ver. 38. They all came early in the morning flocking to the temple, like doves to their windows, for to hear him, though the chief priests and scribes did all they could to prejudice them against him. Sometimes the taste and relish which serious, honest, plain people have of good preaching is more to be valued and judged by, than the opinion of the witty and learned, and those in authority.

CHAPTER XXII.

All the evangelists, whatever they omit, give us a particular account of the death and resurrection of Christ, because he died for our sins, and rose for our justification; and this evangelist as fully as any, and with many circumstances and passages added, which we had not before. In this chapter we have, I. The plot to take Jesus, and Judas' coming into it, ver. 1–6. II. Christ's eating the passover with his disciples, ver. 7–18. III. The instituting of the Lord's supper, ver. 19, 20. IV. Christ's discourse with his disciples, after supper, upon several heads, ver. 21–38. V. His agony in the garden, ver. 39–46. VI. The apprehending of him by the assistance of Judas, ver. 47–53. VII. Peter's denying him, ver. 54–62. VIII. The indignities done to Christ by those that had him in custody, and his trial and condemnation in the ecclesiastical court, ver. 63–71.

(for instance De Wette) have maintained. If we consider the massacres at Caesarea of Syrians and Jews, in which 20,000 of the latter perished, while in Syria almost every city was divided into two parties, who opposed each other as mortal enemies; the quick succession, within a few years, of the five emperors Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, and the more or less extensive disturbances connected with their accessions; the famine in the reign of Claudius (*Acts xi. 28*); the earthquakes in Campania and Asia Minor, whereby



NOW the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. 2 And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people. 3 Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. 4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. 5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. 6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

The year of the redeemed is now come, which had been from eternity fixed in the Divine counsels, and long looked for by them that waited for the consolation of Israel; after the revolutions of many ages, it is at length come, *Isa. lxiii. 4*; and it is observable, it is in the very first month of that year, that the redemption is wrought out, so much in haste was the Redeemer to perform his undertaking, so was he straitened till it was accomplished. It was in the same month, and at the same time of the month, (in the beginning of months, *Ex. xii. 2*) that God by Moses brought Israel out of Egypt, that the antitype might answer the type. Christ is here delivered up, when "the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh," ver. 1. About as long before that feast as they began to make preparation for it, here was preparation making for our Passover's being offered for us.

First. Here we have his sworn enemies contriving it, ver. 2: the chief priests, men of sanctity, and the scribes, men of learning, seeking how they might kill him, either by force or fraud: could they have had their will, it had been soon done; but "they feared the people," and the more for what they now saw of their diligent attendance upon his preaching.

Secondly. A treacherous disciple joining in with them, and coming to their assistance, Judas surnamed Iscariot. He is here said to be "of the number of the twelve," that dignified, distinguished number. One would wonder that Christ, who knew all men, should take a traitor into that number; and that one of that number, who could not but know Christ, should be so base as to betray him; but Christ had wise and holy ends in taking Judas to be a disciple, and how he who knew Christ so well, yet came to betray him, we are here told, ver. 3. Satan entered into Judas; it was the devil's work, who thought hereby to ruin Christ's undertaking, to have broke his head; but it proved only the bruising of his heel. Whoever betrays Christ, or his truths, or ways, it is Satan that puts them upon it. Judas knew how desirous the chief priests were to get Christ into their hands, and that they could not do it safely without the assistance of some that knew his retirements, as he did. He therefore went himself, and made the motion to them, ver. 4. Note, It is hard to say whether more mischief is done to Christ's kingdom by the power and policy of its open enemies, or by the treachery and self-seeking of its pretended friends. Nay, without that, its enemies could not gain their point as they do. When you see Judas communing with the chief priests, be sure some mischief is in hatching; it is for no good that they are laying their heads together.

The issue of the treaty between them is, 1. That Judas must betray Christ to them—must bring them to a place where they might seize him without danger of tumult; and this they would be glad of. 2. They must give him a sum of money for doing it; and that he would be glad of, ver. 5. They "covenanted to give him money." When the bargain was made, Judas "sought opportunity to betray him;" probably he silly inquired of Peter and John, who were more intimate with their Master than he was, where he would be at such a time, and whether he would retire after the passover; and they were not sharp enough to suspect him. Somehow or other, in a little time, he gained the advantage he sought; and fixed the time and place where it might be done, "in the absence of the multitude," and without tumult.

7 Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. 8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. 9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? 10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. 11 And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? 12 And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. 13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. 14 And

whole cities were destroyed; in Nero's reign, the strange and terrible signs in Judea spoken of by Tacitus and Josephus, we shall find in the history of those times an adequate solution of our Lord's enigmatical expressions." It would be easy to add to this summary, which, nevertheless, well illustrates our Lord's words.

xxi. 21. Alford takes the word rendered "countries" in the sense of "fields," but it may mean the country places round about Jerusalem.

when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. 15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: 16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. 17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: 18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

What a hopeful prospect had we of Christ's doing a great deal of good by his preaching in the temple during the feast of unleavened bread, which continued seven days, when the people were every morning, and early in the morning, so attentive to hear him; but here is a stop put to it; he must enter upon work of another kind; but in that he shall do more good than in the other, for neither Christ's nor his church's suffering days are their idle, empty days. Now here we have,

First. The preparation that was made for Christ's eating the passover with his disciples, upon the very "day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed," according to the law, ver. 7. Christ was made under the law, and observed the ordinances of it, and particularly that of the passover, to teach us in like manner to observe his gospel institutions, particularly that of the Lord's supper, and not to neglect them. It is probable he went to the temple to preach in the morning, when he sent Peter and John another way, into the city, to prepare the passover. Those who have attendants about them, to do their secular business for them in a great measure, must not think that that allows them to be idle, but it engageth them to employ themselves more in spiritual business, or service to the public. He directed those whom he employed whither they should go, ver. 9, 10; they must follow a man bearing a pitcher of water, and he must be their guide to the house. Christ could have described the house to them; probably it was a house they knew, and he might have said no more but, go to such a one's house, or to a house in such a street, with such a sign, &c.; but he directed them thus, to teach them to depend upon the conduct of Providence, and to follow that step by step. They went, not knowing whither they went, but whom they followed. Being come to the house, they must desire the master of the house to shew them a room, ver. 11, and he will readily do it, ver. 12. Whether it was a friend's house, or a public house, doth not appear; but the disciples found their guide, and the house, and the room, just as he had said to them, ver. 13; for they need not fear a disappointment who go upon Christ's word; and, according to the orders given them, they got every thing ready for the passover, ver. 13.

Secondly. The solemnizing of the passover according to the law. "When the hour was come," that they should go to supper, "he sat down," it is likely, at the head end of the table, "and the twelve apostles with him," Judas not excepted; for it is possible that they whose hearts are filled with Satan and all manner of wickedness, may yet continue a plausible profession of religion, and be found in the performance of its external services; and while it is in the heart, and doth not break out into any thing scandalous, such cannot be denied the external privileges of their external profession. Though Judas has already been guilty of an overt act of treason, yet, it not being publicly known, Christ admits him to sit down with the rest at the passover. Now observe,

1. How Christ bids this passover welcome, to teach us in like manner to welcome his passover, the Lord's supper, and to come to it with an appetite, ver. 15: "With desire I have desired," "I have most earnestly desired," "to eat this passover with you, before I suffer." He knew it was to be the prologue to his sufferings, and therefore he desired it, because it was in order to his Father's glory, and man's redemption; he delighted to do even this part of the will of God concerning him as Mediator. Shall we be backward to any service for him who was so forward in the work of our salvation? See the love he had to his disciples; he desired to eat it with them, that he and they might have a little time together, themselves, and none but they, for private conversation, which they could not have in Jerusalem but upon this occasion. He was now about to leave them, but was very desirous to eat this passover with them before he suffered, as if the comfort of that would carry him the more cheerfully through his sufferings, and make them the easier to him. Note. Our gospel passover, eaten by faith, with Jesus Christ, will be an excellent preparation for sufferings, and trials, and death itself.

2. How Christ in it takes his leave of all passovers, thereby signifying his abrogating of all the ordinances of the ceremonial law, of which that of the passover was one of the earliest, and one of the most eminent; ver. 16, "I will not any more eat thereof," nor shall it be any more celebrated by my disciples," "until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 1st. It was fulfilled, when Christ our passover was sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. v. 7; and therefore that type and shadow was laid aside, because now in the kingdom of God the substance was come, which superseded them. 2nd. It was fulfilled in the Lord's supper, an ordinance of the gospel kingdom, in which the passover had its accomplishment, and which the disciples, after the pouring out of the Spirit, did frequently celebrate; as we find Acts ii. 42, 46. They ate of it, and Christ might be said to eat with them, because of the spiritual communion they had with him in that ordinance; he is said to sup with them, and they with him, 1 Cor. xiii. 20. But, 3rd. The complete accomplishment of that commemoration of liberty will be in the kingdom of glory, when all God's spiritual Israel shall be released from the bondage of death and sin, and be put in possession of the land of promise.

What he had said of his eating of the paschal lamb, he repeats concerning his drinking of the passover wine—the cup of blessing or of thanksgiving, in which all the company pledged the master of the feast, at the close of the passover supper. This cup he took, according to the custom, and gave thanks

for the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and the preservation of their firstborn, and then said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves," ver. 17. This is not said afterwards of the sacramental cup; probably that being of much more weight and value, being the new testament in his blood, he might give that into every one's hand, to teach them to make a particular application of it to their own souls; but as for the paschal cup, which is to be abolished, it is enough to say, "Take it, and divide it among yourselves," "do what you will with it, for we shall have no more occasion for it;" ver. 18, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine" any more, "I will not have it any more drunk of," "until the kingdom of God shall come," till the Spirit be poured out, and then you shall in the Lord's supper commemorate a much more glorious redemption, of which both the deliverance out of Egypt, and the passover commemoration of it, were types and figures. The kingdom of God is now so near being set up, that you will not need to eat or drink any more till it comes. Christ dying next day opened it. As Christ with a great deal of pleasure took leave of all the legal feasts (which fell of course with the passover) for the evangelical ones, both spiritual and sacramental, so may good Christians, when they are called to remove from the church militant to that which is triumphant, cheerfully exchange even their spiritual repasts, much more their sacramental ones, for the eternal feast.

Thirdly. The institution of the Lord's supper, ver. 19, 20. The passover and the deliverance out of Egypt were typical and prophetic signs of a Christ to come, that should by dying deliver us from sin and death, and the tyranny of Satan; but they shall no more say, "the Lord liveth that brought us up out of the land of Egypt;" a much greater deliverance shall eclipse the lustre of that, and therefore the Lord's supper is instituted to be a commemorative sign or memorial of a Christ already come, that has by dying delivered us and it is his death that is in a special manner set before us in that ordinance.

1. The breaking of Christ's body, as a sacrifice for us, is here commemorated by the breaking of bread; and the sacrifices under the law were called the bread of our God, Lev. xxi. 6, 8, 17, "This is my body, which is given for you." And there is a feast upon that sacrifice instituted, in which we are to apply it to ourselves, and to take the benefit and comfort of it; this bread, that was given for us, is given to us, to be food to our souls; for nothing can be more nourishing and satisfying to our souls than the doctrine of Christ's making atonement for sin, and the assurance of our interest in that atonement; this bread, that was broken and given for us, to satisfy for the guilt of our sins, is broken and given to us, to satisfy the desire of our souls. And this we do in remembrance of what he did for us when he died for us, and for a memorial of what we do in making ourselves partakers of him, and joining ourselves to him in an everlasting covenant; like the stone Joshua set up for a witness, Jos. xxiv. 27.

2. The shedding of Christ's blood, by which the atonement was made, (for the blood made atonement for the soul, Lev. xvii. 11.) as represented by the wine in the cup; and that cup of wine is a sign and token of the new testament, or new covenant made with us. It commemorates the purchase of the covenant by the blood of Christ, and confirms the promises of the covenant, which are all yea and amen in him. This will be reviving and refreshing to our souls, as wine that makes glad the heart. In all our commemorations of the shedding of Christ's blood, we must have an eye to it as shed for us; we needed it; we take hold of it; we hope to have benefit by it; "who loved me, and gave himself for me." And in all our regards to the new testament, we must have an eye to the blood of Christ, which gave life and being to it, and seals to us all the promises of it. Had it not been for the blood of Christ, we had never had the new testament; and had it not been for the new testament, we had never known the meaning of Christ's blood shed.

21 But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. 22 And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed! 23 And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. 24 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. 25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. 26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. 27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. 28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. 29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; 30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. 33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison,

xxi. 24. The same Greek word is here translated "nations" and "Gentiles," with no difference of meaning. The oppression of the Jews would continue as long as successive Gentile nations ruled over their country. Some think "the times of the Gentiles" are the periods before appointed for the accomplishment of the judgment threatened. Other explanations have been suggested.

xxi. 34, 35. These verses are peculiar to Luke, and embody important warnings against a careless and worldly spirit. Some copies

read, "come upon you unawares as a snare. For it shall come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth."

xxi. 37, 38. This passage is peculiar to Luke, and shows the manner in which the Lord was occupied during these last days. The Cambridge MS. transposes the final words, and reads, "to hear him in the Temple." Four MSS. insert after verse 38 the passage respecting the adulteress, now found in John vii. 53—viii. 11. If, however, that celebrated record is genuine, it belongs to John and not Luke.

and to death. 34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. 35 And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. 36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. 37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. 38 And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

We have here Christ's discourse with his disciples after supper, much of which is new here; and in St. John's Gospel we shall find more that is new still. We should take example from him to entertain and edify our family and friends with such discourse at table as is good and to the use of edifying, which may minister grace to the hearers; but especially after we have been at the Lord's table, by Christian conference to keep one another in a suitable frame. The matters Christ here discoursed of were of weight, and to the present purpose.

First. He discoursed with them concerning him that should betray him, who was now present.

1. He signifies to them that the traitor was now among them, and one of them, ver. 21. By the placing of this after the institution of the Lord's supper, which in *Matthew* and *Mark* is placed before it, it seems plain that Judas did receive the Lord's supper, did eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; for after the solemnity was over, Christ said, "Behold the hand of him that betrayeth me, is with me on the table." There have been those that have eaten bread with Christ, and yet have betrayed him.

2. He foretells that the treason would take effect; ver. 22. "truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined," goeth to the place where he will be betrayed, for he is delivered up by the counsel and foreknowledge of God, else Judas could not have delivered him up. Christ was not driven to his sufferings, but cheerfully went to them; he said, "Lo, I come!"

3. He threatens the traitor; "woe to that man by whom he is betrayed." Note, Neither the patience of the saints under their sufferings, nor the counsel of God concerning their sufferings, will be any excuse for those that have any hand in their sufferings, or that persecute them. Though God has determined that Christ shall be betrayed, and he himself has cheerfully submitted to it, yet Judas's sin or punishment is not at all the less.

4. He frightens the rest of the disciples into a suspicion of themselves, by saying it was one of them, and not naming which; ver. 23, "they began to inquire among themselves," to interrogate themselves, to put the question to themselves, "who it was that should do this thing," that could be so base to so good a Master. The inquiry was not, Is it you? or, Is it such a one? but, Is it I?

Secondly. Concerning the strife that was among them, for precedency or supremacy.

1. See what the dispute was, "which of them should be accounted the greatest." Such and so many contests as we find among the disciples for dignity and dominion, before the Spirit was poured upon them, was a sad presage of the like strifes for and affectations of supremacy in the churches, after the Spirit should be provoked to depart from them. How inconsistent is this with that in the verse before! There they were inquiring which would be the traitor, and here, which should be the prince. Could such an instance of humility, and such an instance of pride and vanity, be found in the same men, so near together? This is like sweet waters and bitter, proceeding at the same place out of the same fountain; what a self-contradiction is the deceitful heart of man!

2. See what Christ said to this dispute. He was not sharp upon them, as might have been expected, he having so often reproved them for this very thing, but mildly shewed them the sin and folly of it.

1st. This was to make themselves like the kings of the Gentiles, that affect worldly pomp, and worldly power, ver. 25; they exercise lordship over their subjects, and are ever and anon striving to exercise lordship too over the princes that are about them, though as good as themselves, if they think them not so strong as themselves. Note, The exercising of lordship better becomes the kings of the Gentiles than the ministers of Christ. But observe, "they that exercise authority," and take upon themselves to bear sway, and give law, they are called benefactors, *Ευεργετας*; they call themselves so, and so their flatterers call them, and those that set themselves to serve their interests. It is pretended, that they have been benefactors, and upon that account they should be admitted to have rule; nay, that in exercising authority they are benefactors; however they really serve themselves, they would be thought to serve their country. One of the Ptolemies was surnamed *Euergetes*,—"the benefactor." Now our Saviour, by taking notice of this, intimates, *First*. That to do good is much more honourable than to look great; for these princes, that were the terror of the mighty, yet would not be called so, but rather the benefactors of the needy; so that, by their own confession, a benefactor to his country is much more valued than a ruler of his country. *Secondly*. That to do good is the surest way to be great, else they that aimed to be rulers would not have been so solicitous to be called benefactors. This therefore he would have his disciples to believe, that their greatest honour would be to do all the good they could in the world. They would indeed be benefactors to the world, by bringing the Gospel to it. Let them value themselves upon that title, which they would indeed be entitled to; and then they need not strive which should be the greatest, for they would be all greater—greater blessings to mankind—than the kings of the earth, that exercise lordship over them. If they have that which is confessedly the greater honour, of being benefactors, let them despise the lesser, of being rulers.

2nd. It was to make themselves unlike the disciples of Christ, and unlike

Christ himself; ver. 26, 27, "ye shall not be so." It was never intended that you should rule any otherwise than by the power of truth and grace, but that you should serve. When church rulers affect external pomp and power, and bear up themselves by secular interests and influences, they debase their office; and it is an instance of degeneracy, like that of Israel, when they would have a king like the nations that were round about them, whereas the Lord was their king.

See here, *First*. What is the rule Christ gave to his disciples. He that is greater among you, that is senior, to whom precedency is due upon the account of his age, let him be as the younger, both in point of lowliness of place,—let him condescend to sit with the younger, and be free and familiar with them,—and in point of labour and work. We used to say, *Juniores ad labores, seniores ad honores*,—"Let the young work, and the aged receive their honours;" but let the elder take pains as well as the younger; their age and honour, instead of warranting them to take their ease, binds them to double work. And he that is chief, *ὁ ἡγούμενος*, the president of the college or assembly, let him be as he that doth serve, *ὡς ὁ διακονῶν*, as the deacon, let him stoop to the meanest and most toilsome services for the public good, if there be occasion.

Secondly. What was the example which he himself gave to this rule, "Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth?"—he that attendeth, or he that is attended on? Now Christ was among his disciples just like one that waited at table; he was so far from taking state, or taking his ease, by commanding their attendance upon him, that he was ready to do any office of kindness and service for them; witness his washing their feet. Shall they take upon them the form of princes, who call themselves followers of him that "took upon him the form of a servant?"

3rd. They ought not to strive for worldly honour and grandeur, because he had better honours in reserve for them, of another nature; a kingdom, a feast, a throne for each of them, wherein they should be all share and share alike, and should have no occasion to strive for precedency, ver. 28—30. Where observe,

First. The commendation Christ gives of the disciples for their faithfulness to him; and this was honour enough for them; they needed not to strive for any greater. It is spoken with an air of encomium and applause, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations;" you are they which have stood by me and stuck to me when others deserted me, and turned their backs upon me. Christ had his temptations; he was despised and rejected of men, reproached and reviled, and endured the contradiction of sinners. But his disciples continued with him, and were afflicted in all his afflictions. It was but little help that they could give him, or service that they could do him; but, however, he took it kindly that they continued with him, and he here owns their kindness, though it was by the assistance of his own grace that they did continue. Christ's disciples had been very defective in their duty; they find their guilt of many mistakes and weaknesses; they were very dull, and very forgetful, and often blundered, yet their Master has passed all by and forgotten it; doth not upbraid them with their infirmities, but gives them this memorable testimonial, "Ye are they which have continued with me." Thus doth he praise at parting, to shew how willing he is to make the best of those whose hearts he knows to be upright with him.

Secondly. The recompence he designed them for their fidelity. And "I appoint," *ἀποτίθημαι*, "I bequeath," "unto you a kingdom;" or thus, "I appoint to you, as my Father has appointed a kingdom to me, that you may eat and drink at my table." Understand it,

1st. Of what should be done for them in this world. God gave his Son a kingdom among men; the gospel church, which he is the living, quickening, ruling head of; this kingdom he appointed to his apostles and their successors in the ministry of the Gospel, that they should enjoy the comforts and privileges of the Gospel, and help to communicate them to others, by gospel ordinances; and should sit on thrones, as officers of the church, not only declaratively, but exhortatively, "judging the tribes of Israel" that persist in their infidelity, and denouncing the wrath of God against them, and ruling the gospel Israel, the spiritual Israel, by the instituted discipline of the church, administered with gentleness and love. This is the honour reserved for you, Or,

2nd. Of what should be done for them in the other world, which I take to be chiefly meant. Let them go on in their services in this world, their preferences shall be in the other world; God will give them the kingdom, in which they shall be sure to have, *First*. The richest dainties; for they shall eat and drink at Christ's table in his kingdom, of which he had spoken, ver. 16, 18; they shall partake of those joys and pleasures which were the recompence of his services and sufferings. They shall have a full satisfaction of soul in the vision and fruition of God; and herein they shall have the best society, as at a feast, in the perfection of love. *Secondly*. The highest dignities. You shall not only be provided for at the royal table, as *Mephibosheth* at David's, but you shall be preferred to the royal throne—shall sit down with me on my throne, *Rev. iii. 21*. In the great day you shall sit on thrones, as assessors with Christ, to approve of and applaud his judgment of the twelve tribes of Israel. If the saints shall judge the world, *1 Cor. vi. 2*, much more the church.

Thirdly. Concerning Peter's denying of him. And in this part of the discourse we may observe,

1. The general notice Christ gives to Peter of the devil's design upon him and the rest of the apostles; ver. 31, "the Lord said, Simon, Simon," observe, what I say, "Satan hath desired to have you," to have you all in his hands, "that he may sift you as wheat." Peter, that used to be the mouth of the rest in speaking to Christ, is here made the ear of the rest; and what is designed for warning to them all, "all you shall be offended because of me," is directed to Peter, because he was principally concerned, being in a particular manner struck at by the tempter. "Satan has desired to have you." Probably Satan had accused the disciples to God as mercenary in following Christ, and aiming at nothing else therein but enriching and advancing themselves in this world, as he accused Job; "No," saith God, "they are honest men, and men of integrity." "Give me leave to try them," saith Satan, "and Peter particularly." He desired to have them, that he might sift them, that he might shew them to be chaff, and not wheat. The troubles that were now coming upon them were sifting, would try what there was in them; but that was not all; Satan desired to sift them by his temptations, and endeavoured by those troubles to draw them into sin; to put them into a loss and hurry, as corn when it is sifted, to bring the chaff uppermost, or rather, to shake out the wheat, and leave nothing but the chaff. Observe, Satan could not sift them unless God gave him leave; he desired to have them, as he begged of God a permission to try and tempt Job. *Εἰς τῆς αὐτοῦ*. He hath challenged you, has undertaken to prove you a company of hypocrites, and Peter especially, the forwardest of you. Som suggest that Satan demanded leave to sift them, as their punishment for striving who should be greatest, in which contest Peter perhaps was very warm: "Leave them to me to sift them for it."

2. The particular encouragement he gave to Peter in reference to this trial: "I have prayed for thee," because, though he desired to have them all, was permitted to make his strongest onset upon thee only; thou wilt be most violently assailed, "but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not," that

xxii. 1. The whole period covered by the feast of unleavened bread was called "the Passover." (See Josephus, "Antiquities," xviii. 2, 2.)

xxii. 4. The persons here called "captains" are said to have been the officers of the guards whose duty was to watch the Temple. They seem to be the same as are called "captains of the Temple" in ver. 52. The guards were Jewish priests and Levites.

xxii. 7. "The day of unleavened bread" here indicates the first

day of the festival called "the feast of unleavened bread" in ver. 1. The removal of all leaven was of course effected on the preceding day. On this day the Jews began to eat unleavened bread, and on this day the law required them to sacrifice the Passover. This was therefore the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, and the fifth day of the week, or Thursday. The same time is indicated by Mark xiv. 12 and Matt. xvi. 17; compare also John xiii. 1.

xxii. 10. It has been acutely suggested that the fetching and

t may not totally and finally fail. Note, 1st. If faith be kept up in an hour of temptation, though we may fail, yet we shall not be utterly cast down. Faith will quench Satan's fiery darts. 2nd. Though there may be many failings in the faith of true believers, yet there shall not be a total and final failure of their faith. It is their seed, their root remaining in them. 3rd. It is owing to the mediation and intercession of Jesus Christ, that the faith of his disciples, though sometimes sadly shaken, yet is not sunk. If they were left to themselves they would fail, but they "are kept by the power of God," and the prayer of Christ. The intercession of Christ is not only general, for all that believe, but for particular believers; "I have prayed for thee," which is an encouragement for us to pray for ourselves, and an engagement upon us to pray for others too.

3. The charge he gives to Peter to help others, as he should himself be helped of God; "when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren;" when thou art recovered by the grace of God, and brought to repentance, do what thou canst to recover others; when thou hast found thy faith kept from failing, labour also to confirm the faith of others, and to establish them. When thou hast found mercy with God thyself, encourage others to hope that they shall find mercy. Note, 1st. Those that are fallen into sin, must be converted from it; that have turned aside, must return; that have left their first love, must do their first works. 2nd. Those that through grace are converted from sin, must do what they can to strengthen their brethren that stand, and to prevent their falling: see *Ps. li. 11-13*; *1 Tim. i. 13*.

4. Peter's declared resolution to cleave to Christ, whatever it cost him; ver. 33, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death." This was a great word, and yet I believe no more than he thought at this time, and thought he should make good too. Judas never protested thus against denying Christ, though often warned of it; for his heart was as fully set in him to the evil as Peter's was against it. Note, All the true disciples of Christ sincerely desire and design to follow him whithersoever he goes, and whithersoever he leads them, though into a prison, though out of the world.

5. Christ's express prediction of his denying him thrice; ver. 34, "I tell thee, Peter," thou dost not know thine own heart, but must be left to thyself a little, that thou mayest know it, and mayest never trust to it again, and then "the cock shall not crow this day, before thou even deny that thou knowest me." Note, Christ knows us better than we know ourselves, and knows the evil that is in us, and will be done by us, which we ourselves do not suspect. It is well for us that Christ knows where we are weak better than we do, and therefore where to come in with grace sufficient; that he knows how far a temptation will prevail, and therefore when to say, Hitherto shall it come, and no farther.

Fourthly. Concerning the condition of all the disciples.

1. He appeals to them concerning what had been, ver. 35. He had owned that they had been faithful servants to him, ver. 28; now he expects, at parting, that they should acknowledge that he had been a kind and careful Master to them ever since they left all to follow him: "When I sent you without purse, lacked you any thing?" 1st. He owns that he had sent them out in a very poor and bare condition, barefoot, and no money in their purses, because they were not to go far, nor be out long, and he would thus teach them to depend upon the providence of God, and under that, upon the kindness of their friends. If God thus send us out into the world, remember, better than we have thus begun low. 2nd. Yet he will have them own that, notwithstanding this, they had lacked nothing; they then lived as plentifully and comfortably as ever, and they readily acknowledged it; "nothing, Lord," I have all and abound. Note, *First*. It is good for us often to review the providences of God that have been concerning us all our days, and to observe how we have got through the straits and difficulties we have met with. *Secondly*. Christ is a good master, and his service a good service; for though his servants may sometimes be brought low, yet he will help them; and though he try them, yet will not he leave them. *Jehovah-jireh*. *Thirdly*. We must reckon ourselves well done by, and must not complain, but be thankful, if we have had the necessary supports of life, though we have had neither dainties nor superfluities, though we have been led from hand to mouth, and lived upon the kindness of our friends. The disciples lived upon contributions, and yet did not complain that their maintenance was precarious, but owned, to their Master's honour, that it was sufficient, they had wanted nothing.

2. He gives them notice of a very great change of their circumstances now approaching. For,

1st. He that was their Master was now entering upon his suffering, which he had often foretold; ver. 37, now "that which is written must be fulfilled in me," that among the rest, "he was numbered among the transgressors;" he must suffer and die as a malefactor, and in company with some of the vilest of malefactors. This is that which is yet to be accomplished, after all the rest, and then "the things concerning me," the things written concerning me, will "have an end;" then I shall say, "It is finished." Note, It may be the comfort of suffering Christians, as it was of a suffering Christ, that their sufferings were foretold and determined in the counsels of Heaven, and will shortly determine in the joys of heaven. They were written concerning them, and they will have an end, and will end well, everlastingly well.

2nd. They must therefore expect troubles, and must not think now to have such an easy, fair life as you have had; no, the scene will alter. They must now in some degree suffer with their Master; and when he is gone, they must expect to suffer like him. The servant is not better than his Lord. *First*. They must not now expect that their friends would be so kind and generous to them as they had been, and therefore "he that has a purse let him take it," for he may have occasion for it, and for all the good husbandry he can use. *Secondly*. They must now expect that their enemies would be more fierce upon them than they had been, and they would need magazines as well as stores. "He that has no sword," wherewith to defend himself against robbers and assassins, (*2 Cor. xi. 26*.) will find a great want of it, and will be ready to wish, some time or other, that he had sold his garment and bought one. This is intended only to shew that the times would be very perilous, so that no man would think himself safe if he had not a sword by his side. But the sword of the Spirit is the sword which the disciples of Christ must furnish themselves with; Christ having suffered for us, we must arm ourselves with the same mind, *1 Pet. iv. 1*; arm ourselves with an expectation of trouble, that it may not be a surprise to us, and with a holy resignation to the will of God in it, that there may be no contradiction in us to it; and then we are better prepared than if we had sold a coat to buy a sword. The disciples hereupon inquire what strength they had, and find they had among them two swords, ver. 38, of which one was Peter's. The Galileans generally travelled with swords. Christ wore none himself, but he was not against his disciples' wearing them. But how little he would have them depend upon that, he intimates, when he saith, "It is enough," which some think is spoken ironically. Two swords among twelve men! you are bravely armed indeed, when our enemies are now coming out against us in great multitudes, and every one a sword. Yet two swords are enough to those who need none, having God himself to be the shield of their help, and the sword of their excellency, *Deu. xxxii. 29*.

39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. 40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. 41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. 43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, 46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

We have here the awful story of Christ's agony in the garden, just before he was betrayed, which was largely related by the other evangelists. In it Christ accommodated himself to that part of his undertaking which he was now entering upon, the making of his soul an offering for sin: he afflicted his own soul with grief for the sin he was to satisfy for, and an apprehension of the wrath of God, to which man had by sin made himself obnoxious, which he was pleased, as a sacrifice, to admit the impressions of, — the consuming of a sacrifice with fire from heaven being the surest token of its acceptance; in it Christ entered the lists with the powers of darkness, gave them all the advantages they could desire, and yet conquered them. That which we have here in this story, which we had before, is,

1. That when Christ went out, though it was in the night, and a long walk, yet his disciples followed him, eleven of them, for Judas had given them the slip. Having continued with him hitherto in his temptations, they would not leave him now.

2. That he went to the place where he was wont to be private, which intimates that Christ accustomed himself to retirement, was often alone, to teach us to be so, for freedom of converse with God and our own hearts. Though Christ had no convenience for retirement but a garden, yet he retired. This should particularly be our practice, after we have been at the Lord's table; we have then work to do which requires us to be private.

3. That he exhorted his disciples to pray, that though the approaching trial could not be avoided, yet that they might not in it enter into temptation to sin; that when they were in the greatest fright and danger, yet they might not have any inclination to desert Christ, nor take a step towards it. Pray that we may be kept from sin.

4. That he withdrew from them, and prayed himself; they had their errands at the throne of grace, and he had his, and therefore it was fit they should pray separately, as sometimes, when they had joint errands, they prayed together. He withdrew about a stone-cast farther into the garden, which some reckon about fifty or sixty paces, and there he kneeled down, so it is here, upon the bare ground; but the other evangelists say, that afterwards he fell on his face, and there prayed that if it were the will of God this cup of suffering, this bitter cup, might be removed from him. This was the language of that innocent dread of suffering which, being really and truly man, he could not but have in his nature.

5. That he, knowing it to be his Father's will that he should suffer and die, and that, as the matter was now settled, it was necessary for our redemption and salvation, presently withdrew that petition, did not insist upon it, but resigned himself to his heavenly Father's will: "Nevertheless, not my will be done," not the will of my human nature, but the will of God, as it is written concerning me in the volume of the book, which I delight to do; let that be done, *Ps. xl. 7, 8*.

6. That his disciples were asleep when he was at prayer, and when they should have been themselves praying, ver. 45. When he rose from prayer he found them sleeping, unconcerned in his sorrows; but see what a favourable construction is here put upon it, "which we had not in the other evangelists, — they were 'sleeping for sorrow.'" The great sorrow they were in upon the mournful farewells their Master had been this evening giving them had exhausted their spirits, and made them very dull and heavy, which, it being now late, disposed them to sleep. This teaches us to make the best of our brethren's infirmities, and if there be one cause better than another, charitably impute them to that.

7. That when he waked them, then he exhorted them to pray, ver. 46: "Why sleep ye?" — why do you allow yourselves to sleep? "Rise and pray." Shake off your drowsiness, that you may be fit to pray; and pray for grace, that you may be able to shake off your drowsiness. This was like the shipmaster's call to Jonah in a storm, *Jonah i. 6*, "Arise, call upon thy God." When we find ourselves, either by our outward circumstances or our inward dispositions, entering into temptation, it concerns us to rise and pray, "Lord, help me in this time of need."

But here are three things in this passage which we had not in the other evangelists:

First. That when Christ was in his agony "there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him," ver. 43. 1. It was an instance of the deep humiliation of our Lord Jesus, that he needed the assistance of an angel, and would admit it. The influence of the Divine nature withdrew for the present, and then, as to his human nature, he was for a little while lower than the angels, and was capable of receiving help from them. 2. When he was not delivered from his sufferings, yet he was strengthened and supported under them, and that was equivalent. If God proportion the shoulders to the burden, we shall have no reason to complain, whatever he is pleased to lay upon us. David owns this a sufficient answer to his prayer, in the day of trouble, that God strengthened him with strength in his soul, and so doth the Son of David, *Ps. cxxxviii. 3*. 3. The angels ministered to the Lord Jesus in his sufferings. He could have had legions of them to rescue him; nay, this one could have done it, could have chased and conquered the whole band of men

carrying of water point perhaps to the domestic preparation for the approaching Passover, and would, in this case, so far serve as a subsidiary proof that it was the usual Passover day.

xxii. 19, 20. The symbolical nature of the Lord's Supper, and therefore the figurative character of these words, is proved by the fact that the Lord's Supper was instituted before Jesus was crucified. The first supper could in no proper sense be a sacrifice; and if not that, none after. The first supper foreshadowed a sacrifice, and was

the pattern of a solemn rite which should be commemorative of a sacrifice. The paschal lamb itself at once commemorated the redemption from Egypt and foreshadowed the redemption of the Gospel.

xxii. 25. The name "Euergetes," or "benefactor," was a title adopted by some ancient heathen kings, as Ptolemy Euergetes, &c.

xxii. 27. The language of this verse associates it with the washing of the feet of the apostles, as recorded in John xiii. 1-16.

xxii. 31, 32. Some of the ancient MSS., as the Vatican, omit the

that came to take him; but he made use of his ministrations only to strengthen him; and the very visit which this angel made him now in his grief, when his enemies were awake, and his friends asleep, was such a seasonable token of the Divine favour as would be a very great strengthening to him. Yet this was not all: he probably said something to him to strengthen him; put him in mind that his sufferings were in order to his Father's glory, to his own glory, and to the salvation of those that were given him; represented to him the joy set before him, the seed he should see: with these and the like suggestions he encouraged him to go on cheerfully; and what is comforting is strengthening. Perhaps he did something to strengthen him, wiped away his sweat and tears; perhaps ministered some cordial to him, as after his temptation; or, it may be, took him by the arm and helped him off the ground, or bore him up when he was ready to faint away; and in these services of the angel the Holy Spirit was *ἐνισχυὶς αὐτόν*, "putting strength into him," for so the word signifies. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him" indeed; yet, did he plead against him with his great power? No, but he put strength in him, *Job xxiii. 6*, as he had promised, *Ps. lxxxix. 21; Isa. xlix. 8; 1. 7.*

Secondly. That "being in an agony he prayed more earnestly," ver. 44. As his sorrow and trouble grew upon him, he grew more importunate in prayer; not that there was before any coldness or indifference in his prayers, but there was now a greater vehemency in them, which was expressed in his voice and gesture. Note, Prayer, though never out of season, is in a special manner seasonable when we are in an agony; and the stronger our agonies are, the more lively and frequent our prayers should be. Now it was that Christ offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, and was heard in that he feared, *Heb. v. 7*, and in his fear wrestled, as Jacob with the angel.

Thirdly. That in this agony "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Sweat came in with sin, and was a branch of the curse, *Gen. iii. 19*; and therefore, when Christ was made sin and a curse for us, he underwent a grievous sweat, that in the sweat of his face we might eat bread, and that he might sanctify and sweeten all our trials to us. It is some dispute among the critics whether this sweat is only compared to drops of blood, being much thicker than drops of sweat commonly are, the pores of the body being more than ordinarily opened, or that real blood out of the capillary veins mingled with it, so that it was in colour like blood, and might truly be called a bloody sweat: the matter is not great. Some reckon this one of the times when Christ shed his blood for us: for "without shedding of blood there is no remission." Every pore was as it were a bleeding wound, and his blood stained all his raiment. This shewed the travail of his soul. He was now abroad in the open air, in a cool season, upon the cold ground, far in the night, which one would think had been enough to strike in a sweat, yet now he breaks out into a sweat, which speaks the extremity of the agony he was in.

47 And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. 48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? 49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? 50 And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. 51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. 52 Then Jesus said unto the chief priests and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? 53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

Satan, finding himself baffled in his attempt to terrify our Lord Jesus, and so to put him out of the possession of his own soul, betakes himself (according to his usual method) to force and arms, and brings a party into the field to seize him; and Satan was in them. Here is,

First. The marking of him by Judas. Here a numerous party appears, and Judas at the head of them, for he "was guide to them that took Jesus;" they knew not where to find him, but he brought them to the place; when they were there, they knew not which was he; but Judas told them that whoever he should kiss, that same was he; so he drew near to him to kiss him, according to the wonted freedom and familiarity which our Lord Jesus admitted his disciples to. Luke takes notice of the question Christ asked him, which we have not in the other evangelists, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" What, is that the signal? ver. 48. Must the Son of man be betrayed, as if any thing could be concealed from him, and a plot carried on against him unknown to him? Must one of his disciples betray him, as if he had been a hard master to them, or deserved ill at their hands? Must he be betrayed with a kiss? Must the badge of friendship be the instrument of treachery? Was ever a love-token so desecrated and abused? Note, Nothing can be a greater affront or grief to the Lord Jesus than to be betrayed, and betrayed with a kiss, by those that profess relation to him, and an affection for him. Those do so who, under pretence of zeal for his honour, persecute his servants; who, under the cloak of a seeming affection for the honour of free grace, give a blow to the root of holiness and strictness of conversation. Many instances there are of Christ's being betrayed with a kiss, by those who, under the form of godliness, fight against the power of it. It were well if their own consciences would put this question to them, which Christ here puts to Judas, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" And will he not avenge it? Will he not revenge it?

Secondly. The effort which his disciples made for his protection; ver. 49, "when they saw what would follow," that those armed men were come to seize him, they said, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" Thou didst

allow us to have two swords, shall we now make use of them? Never more occasion; and to what purpose should we have them, if we do not use them? They asked the question, as if they would not have drawn the sword without commission from their Master, but they were in too much haste, and too much heat, to stay for an answer; but Peter, aiming at the head of one of the servants of the high priest, missed his blow, "and cut off his right ear." As Christ by throwing them to the ground that came to take him, shewed what he could have done, so Peter by this exploit shewed what he could have done too in so good a cause, if he had had leave. The other evangelists tell us what was the check Christ gave to Peter for it. Luke here tells us,

1. How Christ excused the blow, "Suffer ye thus far," ver. 51. Dr. Whitby thinks he said this to his enemies, who came to take him, to qualify them, they might not be provoked by it to fall upon the disciples whom he had undertaken the preservation of. Pass by this injury and affront, it was without warrant from me, and there shall not be another blow struck. Though Christ had power to have struck them down, and struck them dead, yet he speaks them fair, and as it were begs their pardon for an assault made upon them by one of his followers, to teach us to give good words even to our enemies.

2. How he cured the wound, which was more than amends sufficient for the injury; "he touched his ear and healed him;" fastened his ear on again, that he might not so much as go away stigmatized, though he well deserved it. Christ hereby gave them a proof, 1st. Of his power. He that could heal, could destroy if he pleased, which should have obliged them in interest to submit to him. Had they returned the blow upon Peter, he would immediately have healed him; and what could not a small regiment do that had such a surgeon to it, immediately to help the sick and wounded? 2nd. Of his mercy and goodness. Christ here gave an illustrious example to his own rule of doing good to them that hate us, as afterwards he did of praying for them that despitefully use us: those who render good for evil, do as Christ did. One would have thought this generous piece of kindness should have overcome them, that such coals heaped on their heads should have melted them, that they could not have bound him as a malefactor, who had approved himself such a benefactor; but their hearts were hardened.

Thirdly. Christ's expostulation with the officers of the detachment that came to apprehend him, to shew what an absurd thing it was for them to make all this rout and noise, ver. 52, 53. Matthew relates it as said to the multitude; Luke tells us it was said "to the chief priests and captains of the temple," who commanded the several orders of the priests, and therefore are here put between the chief priests and the elders; so that they were all ecclesiastics, retainers to the temple, who were employed in this odious piece of service: and some of the first rank too disparaged themselves so far as to be seen in it. Now see here,

1. How Christ reasons with them concerning their proceedings. What needed they come out in the dead of night, and with swords and staves? 1st. They knew that he was one that would not resist, or raise the mob against them; he never had done anything like that: why then are ye come out as against a thief? 2nd. They knew he was one that would not abscond, for he was daily with them in the temple, in the midst of them, and never sought to conceal himself, nor did they offer to lay hands on him. Before his hour was come, it was folly for them to think to take him; and when his hour was come, it was folly for them to make all this ado to take him.

2. How he reconciles himself to their proceedings; and this we had not before; "but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." How hard soever it may seem that I should be thus exposed, I submit, for so it is determined; this is the hour allowed you to have your will against me; there is an hour appointed me to reckon for it. Now is the power of darkness; Satan, the ruler of the darkness of this world, is permitted to do his worst, to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, and I resolve to acquiesce; let him do his worst; "the Lord shall laugh at him, for he sees that his day," his hour, "is coming," *Ps. xxxvii. 13*. Let this quiet us under the prevalency of the church's enemies; let it quiet us in a dying hour, that, 1st. It is but an hour that is permitted for the triumph of our adversary; a short time, a limited time. 2nd. It is their hour, which is appointed them, and in which they are permitted to try their strength, that Omnipotence may be the more glorified in their fall. 3rd. It is the power of darkness that rides master, and darkness must give way to light, and the power of darkness be made to truckle to the Prince of light. Christ was willing to wait for his triumphs till his warfare was accomplished, and we must be so too.

54 Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. 55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. 56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. 57 And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. 58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. 59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean. 60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. 61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. 62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

We have here the melancholy story of Peter's denying his Master, at the time

words "and the Lord said," but they appear in others, as the Alexandrian and Sinaitic. The Syriac-Peshito reads, "And Jesus said to Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asks that he may winnow you as wheat." The plural "you" clearly means all the apostles. The Lord prayed specially for Simon, in view of the imminent peril in which his faith would be placed by his temporary backsliding in denying his Master. "When thou art converted" means "when thou art restored," or brought back to the faith.

xxii. 38. Much has been written on the words, "It is enough." Alford says they mean "not 'they are sufficient,' but 'it is well,' 'we are sufficiently provided,' 'it was not to this that my words referred.'" Another critic exclaims, "Two swords to oppose all the powers of the world, of hell, and of death, which were about to attack him! He esteems it impossible to make the whole absurdity of the idea as evident to them as he feels it to be, and hence breaks off the conversation on this subject, in the tone of one who is conscious that he

when he was arraigned before the high priest, with those that were of the cabal, that were ready to receive the prey, and to prepare the evidence for his arraignment, "as soon as it was day," before the great Sanhedrim, ver. 66. But notice is not taken here, as was in the other evangelists, of Christ's being now upon his examination before the high priest, only of his being brought "into the high priest's house," ver. 54. But the manner of expression is observable, "they took him, and led him, and brought him;" which methinks is like that concerning Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 13, "he is gone about, and passed on, and gone down," and intimates that even though they had seized their prey they were in confusion, and for fear of the people, or rather struck with inward terror upon what they had seen and heard, they took him the farthest way about, or rather knew not which way they hurried him; such a hurry were they in in their own bosoms. Now observe,

First. Peter's falling.

1. It began in sneaking. He followed Christ when he was had away prisoner; that was well, and shewed a concern for his Master; but he followed afar off, that he might be out of danger. He thought to trim the matter; to follow Christ, and so to satisfy his conscience; but to follow afar off, and so to save his reputation, and sleep in a whole skin.

2. It proceeded in keeping his distance still, and associating himself with the high priest's servants, when he should have been at his Master's elbow. The servants "kindled a fire in the midst of the hall," and sat down together to talk over their night expedition. Probably Malchus was among them, and "Peter sat down among them," as if he had been one of them, at least would be thought to be so.

3. His fall itself was disclaiming all acquaintance with Christ, and relation to him; disowning him, because he was now in distress and danger. He was charged by a sorry simple maid that belonged to the house with being a retainer to this Jesus, about whom there was now so much noise. She looked wistly upon him as he sat by the fire, only because he was a stranger, and one whom she had not seen before; and concluding that at this time of night there were no neutrals there, and knowing him not to be any of the retinue of the high priest, she concludes him to be one of the retinue of this Jesus; or perhaps she had been, some time or other, looking about her in the temple, and had seen Jesus there, and Peter with him, officious about him, and remembered him; and this man was with him, saith she. And Peter, as he had not the courage to own the charge, so he had not the wit and presence of mind to turn it off, as he might have done many ways, and therefore flat and plain denies it: "Woman, I know him not."

4. His fall was repeated a second time; ver. 58, "after a little while," before he had time to recollect himself; "another saw him, and said, Even thou art one of them," as slyly as thou sittest here among the high priest's servants. Not I, saith Peter, "Man, I am not." And a third time, "about the space of an hour after," for, saith the tempter, when he is down, down with him; let us follow the blow, till we get him past recovery,—another confidently affirms, strenuously asserts it, "Of a truth this fellow also was with him;" let him deny it if he can; for you may all perceive he is a Galilean. But he that has once told a lie is strongly tempted to persist in it; the beginning of that sin is as the letting forth of water. Peter now not only denies that he is a disciple of Christ, but that he knows any thing of him; ver. 60, "Man, I know not what thou sayest; I never heard of this Jesus."

Secondly, Peter's getting up again. See how happily he recovered himself; or rather, the grace of God recovered him. See how it was brought about.

1. "The cock crew" just as he was the third time denying that he knew Christ; and this startled him, and put him upon thinking. Note, Small accidents may have great influences.

2. "The Lord turned and looked upon him." This circumstance we had not in the other evangelists, but it is a very remarkable one. Christ is here called the Lord, for there was much of Divine knowledge, power, and grace appearing in this. Observe, Though Christ had now his back upon Peter, and was upon his trial, when one would think he had something else to mind, yet he knew all that Peter said. Note, Christ takes more notice of what we say and do than we think he doth. When Peter disowned Christ, yet Christ did not disown him, though he might justly have cast him off, and never looked upon him more, but have denied him before his Father. It is well for us that Christ doth not deal with us as we deal with him. Christ looked upon Peter, not doubting but that Peter would soon be aware of it; for he knew, that though he had denied him with his lips, yet his eye would still be towards him.

Observe, Though Peter had now been guilty of a very great offence, and which was very provoking, yet Christ would not call to him, lest he should shame him or expose him; only gave him a look, which none but Peter would understand the meaning of; and it had a great deal in it. 1st. It was a convincing look. Peter said he did not know Christ: Christ turned and looked upon him, as if he would say, Dost thou not know me, Peter? Look me in the face, and tell me so. 2nd. It was a chiding look; we may suppose he looked upon him and frowned, or some way signified his displeasure. Let us think with what an angry countenance Christ justly looks upon us when we have sinned. 3rd. It was an expostulating, upbraiding look. What, Peter, art thou he that disownest me now, when thou shouldst come and witness for me? What, thou a disciple? thou that wast the most forward to confess me to be the Son of God, and didst solemnly promise thou wouldst never disown me? 4th. It was a compassionate look; he looked upon him with tenderness. Poor Peter, how weak is thine heart! how art thou fallen and undone, if I do not help thee. 5th. It was a directing look. Christ guided him with his eye, gave him a wink to go out from that sorry company; to retire, and bethink himself a little, and then he would soon see what he had to do. 6th. It was a significant look; it signified the conveying of grace to Peter's heart, to enable him to repent. The crowing of the cock would not have brought him to repentance without this look; nor will the external means, without special, efficacious grace. Power went along with this look, to change the heart of Peter, and to bring him to himself, to his right mind.

3. "Peter remembered the words of the Lord." Note, The grace of God works in and by the Word of God; brings that to mind, and sets that home upon the conscience, and so gives the soul the happy turn: *tolle et lege*,—take it up and read.

4. Then "Peter went out and wept bitterly." One look from Christ melted him into tears of godly sorrow for sin. The candle was newly put out, and then a little thing lighted it again. Christ looked upon the chief priests, and made no impression upon them, as he did on Peter, who had the Divine seed remaining in him to work upon. It was not the look from Christ, but the grace of God with it, that recovered Peter, and brought him to rights.

63 And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. 64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying,

Prophesy, who is it that smote thee? 65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him. 66 And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, 67 Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: 68 And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. 69 Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. 70 Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. 71 And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

We are here told, as before in the other gospels, I. How our Lord Jesus was abused by the servants of the high priest; "the abjects gathered themselves together against him." The rude and barbarous servants, they that held Jesus, that had him in custody till the court sat, they "mocked him, and smote him," ver. 63; they would not allow him to repose himself one minute, though he had had no sleep of all night; nor to compose himself, though he was hurried to his trial, and no time given him to prepare for it. They made sport with him; this sorrowful night to him shall be a merry night to them; and the blessed Jesus, like Samson, is made the fool in the play. They hoodwinked him, and then, according to the common play that young people have among them, "they struck him on the face," and continued to do so till he named the person that smote him, ver. 64; intending hereby an affront to his prophetic office, and that knowledge of secret things which he was said to have. We are not told that he said any thing, but bore every thing; hell was let loose, and he suffered it to do its worst. A greater indignity could not be done to the blessed Jesus; yet this was but one instance of many, for, ver. 65, "many other things blasphemously spake they against him." They that condemned him for a blasphemer were themselves the vilest blasphemers that ever were.

II. How he was accused and condemned by the great Sanhedrim, consisting of "the elders of the people, the chief priests, and the scribes;" who were all up betimes, and got together "as soon as it was day," about five o'clock in the morning, to prosecute this matter. They were working this evil upon their beds, and as soon as ever the morning was light practised it, *Mic. ii. 1*. They would not have been up so early for any good work. It is but a short account that we have here of his trial in the ecclesiastical court.

First. They ask him, "Art thou the Christ?" He was generally believed by his followers to be the Christ, but they could not prove it upon him that he had ever said so, *totidem verbis*,—in so many words, and therefore urge him to own it to them, ver. 67. If they had asked him this question with a willingness to admit that he was the Christ, and to receive him accordingly, if he could give sufficient proof of his being so, it had been well, and might have been for ever well with them. But they asked it with a resolution not to believe him, but a design to ensnare him.

Secondly. He justly complained of their unfair and unjust usage of him, ver. 67, 68. They all, as Jews, professed to expect the Messiah, and to expect him at this time; no other appeared, or had appeared, that pretended to be the Messiah; he had no competitor, nor likelihood of any; he had given amazing proofs of a Divine power going along with him, which made his claims very well worthy of a free and impartial inquiry. It had been but just for these leaders of the people to have taken him into their council, and examined him there as a candidate for the Messiahship, not at the bar as a criminal. "But saith he, 1. 'If I tell you,' that I am the Christ, and give you never such convincing proofs of it, you are resolved 'you will not believe.' Why should the cause be brought on before you, who have already prejudged it, and are resolved, right or wrong, to run it down, and to condemn it? 2. 'If I ask you' what you have to object against the proofs I produce, 'you will not answer me.' Here he refers to their silence when he put a question to them which would have led them to own his authority, *ch. xx. 5-7*. They were neither fair judges nor fair disputants, but, when they were pinched with an argument, would rather be silent than own their conviction; 'you will neither answer me, nor let me go.' If I be not the Christ, you ought to answer the arguments with which I prove that I am; if I be, you ought to let me go; but you will do neither.

Thirdly. He referred them to his second coming for the full proof of his being the Christ, to their confusion, since they would not now admit the proof of it to their conviction; ver. 69, "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit," and be seen to sit, "on the right hand of the power of God," and then you will not need to ask whether he be the Christ or no.

Fourthly. Hence they inferred that he set up himself as the Son of God, and asked him whether he were so or no; ver. 70, "Art thou then the Son of God?" He called himself the Son of man, referring to Daniel's vision of the Son of man that came near before the Ancient of days, *Dan. vii. 13, 14*; but they understood so much as to know, that if he was that Son of man, he was also the Son of God. "And art thou so?" By this it appears to have been the faith of the Jewish church that the Messiah should be both Son of man and Son of God.

Fifthly. He owns himself to be the Son of God; "Ye say that I am;" that is, 'I am as ye say;' compare *Mar. xiv. 62*, "Jesus said, I am." This confirms Christ's testimony concerning himself, that he was the Son of God, that he stood to it, when he knew he should suffer for standing to it.

Sixthly. Upon this they ground his condemnation, ver. 71, "What need we any further witness?" It was true they needed not any farther witness to prove that he said he was the Son of God, they had it from his own mouth; but did they not need proof that he was not so, before they condemned him as a blasphemer for saying that he was so? Had they no apprehension that it was possible he might be so; and then what horrid guilt they should bring upon themselves in putting him to death? No, "they know not, neither will they understand." They cannot think it possible he should be the Messiah, though never so evidently clothed with Divine power and grace, if he appear not, as they expect, in worldly pomp and grandeur. Their eyes being blinded with the admiration of that, they rush on in this dangerous prosecution, as the horse into the battle.

xxii. 51. "Suffer ye thus far" has no reference to bodily suffering. The Greek word for "suffer" here means to allow or permit; and the Lord's meaning is "allow," or "give me leave, to this extent"—i.e., to touch the wounded man's ear and to heal him.

xxii. 54. According to some it was Annas who is here meant by "high-priest," while others believe it was Caiaphas. It was Annas, we have no doubt, because John xviii. 13 expressly says they "led him away to Annas first." He was afterwards sent on to Caiaphas.

shall not be understood, and therefore esteems all further discussion useless." The sense may be, "That is enough: say no more."

xxii. 43, 44. These verses, though not found in some of the oldest MSS., are found in others, as in the Sinaitic MS. Though not in the Vatican MS., they are in the Syriac-Peshito, and are appealed to by Justin Martyr as part of the sacred record ("Dialogue with Trypho," *cap. 103*). With regard to the sweating of blood, cases strictly analogous have been observed and reported by modern physicians.

CHAPTER XXIII.

This chapter carries on and concludes the history of Christ's sufferings and death. We have here, I. His arraignment before Pilate the Roman governor, ver. 1-5. II. His examination before Herod, who was tetrarch of Galilee, under the Romans likewise, ver. 6-12. III. Pilate's struggle with the people to release Jesus, his repeated testimonies concerning his innocence, but his yielding at length to their importunity, and condemning him to be crucified, ver. 13-25. IV. An account of what passed as they led him to be crucified, and his discourse to the people that followed, ver. 26-31. V. An account of what passed at the place of execution, and the indignities done him there, ver. 32-38. VI. The conversion of one of the thieves, as Christ was hanging on the cross, ver. 39-43. VII. The death of Christ, and the prodigies that attended it, ver. 44-49. VIII. His burial, ver. 50-56.



AND the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a King. 3 And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it. 4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. 5 And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. 6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilæan. 7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. 8 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. 9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. 11 And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. 12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

Our Lord Jesus was condemned as a blasphemer in the spiritual court, but it was the most impotent malice that could be that that court was acted by, for when they had condemned him they knew they could not put him to death, and therefore take another course.

First. They accuse him before Pilate; "the whole multitude of them arose," when they saw they could go no farther with him in their court, "and led him unto Pilate," though it was no judgment day, no assizes or sessions; and they demand justice against him, not as a blasphemer, that was no crime that he took cognizance of, but as one disaffected to the Roman government, which they in their hearts did not look upon as any crime at all, or if it were one, they themselves were much more chargeable with it than he was; only it would serve the turn, and answer the purpose of their malice. And it is observable, that that which was the pretended crime for which they employed the Roman powers to destroy Christ, was the real crime for which the Roman powers, not long after, destroyed them.

1. Here is the indictment drawn up against him, ver. 2, in which they pretended a zeal for Cæsar only to ingratiate themselves with Pilate; but it was all malice against Christ, and nothing else. They misrepresented him, 1st. As making the people rebel against Cæsar. It was true, and Pilate knew it, that there was a general uneasiness in the people under the Roman yoke, and they wanted nothing but an opportunity to shake it off. Now they would have Pilate believe that this Jesus was active to foment that general discontent, which, if the truth were known, they themselves were the aiders and abettors of; "we have found him perverting the nation," as if converting them to God's government were perverting them from the civil government; whereas nothing tends more to make men good subjects than making them Christ's faithful followers. Christ had particularly taught that they ought to give tribute to Cæsar, though he knew there were those that would be offended at him for it; and yet he is here falsely accused as "forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar." Innocency is no fence against calumny. 2nd. As making himself a rival with Cæsar; though the very reason why they rejected him, and would not own him

to be the Messiah, was because he did not appear in worldly pomp and power and did not set up for a temporal prince, nor offer to do any thing against Cæsar; yet that is it they charge him with, that he said "he himself is Christ a king." He did say he was Christ; and if so, then a king; but not such a king as was ever likely to give disturbance to Cæsar. When his followers would have made him a king, *Jno. vi. 15*, he declined it; though by the many miracles he wrought he made it appear, that if he would have set up in competition with Cæsar he would have been too hard for him.

2. His pleading to the indictment. "Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews?" ver. 3; to which he answered, "Thou sayest it," that is, It is as thou sayest, that I am entitled to the government of the Jewish nation, but in rivalry with the scribes and Pharisees, who tyrannize over them in matters of religion, not in rivalry with Cæsar, whose government relates only to their civil interests. Christ's kingdom is wholly spiritual, and will not interfere with Cæsar's jurisdiction. Or, "Thou sayest it;" but canst thou prove it? what evidence hast thou for it? All that knew him knew the contrary, that he never pretended to be the King of the Jews, in opposition to Cæsar as supreme, or to the governors that were sent by him, but the contrary.

3. Pilate's declaration of his innocency; ver. 4, he "said to the chief priests, and the people" that seemed to join with them in the prosecution, "I find no fault in this man." What breaches of your law he may have been guilty of I am not concerned to inquire, but I find nothing proved upon him that makes him obnoxious to our court.

4. The continued fury and outrage of the prosecutors, ver. 5. Instead of being moderated by Pilate's declaration of his innocency, and considering, as they ought to do, whether they were not bringing the guilt of innocent blood upon themselves, they were the more exasperated, more exceeding fierce. We do not find that they have any particular fact to produce, much less any evidence to prove it; but they resolve to carry it with noise and confidence, and say it, though they cannot prove it, "He stirs up the people" to rebel against Cæsar, "teaching throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee, to this place." He did stir up the people, but it was not to any thing factious or seditious, but to every thing that was virtuous and praiseworthy. He did teach, but they could not charge him with teaching any doctrine that tended to disturb the public peace, or make the government uneasy or jealous.

Secondly. They accuse him before Herod.

1. Pilate removed him and his cause to Herod's court. The accusers mentioned Galilee, the northern part of Canaan; "Why," saith Pilate, "is he of that country? Is he a Galilæan?" ver. 6. "Yes," said they, "that is his head-quarters; there he hath spent most of his time." Let us send him to Herod, then, saith Pilate, "for Herod is now in town, and it is but fit he should have cognizance of his cause, since he belongs to Herod's jurisdiction." Pilate was already sick of the cause, and desirous to rid his hands of it, and that seems to be the true reason of sending him to Herod. But God ordered it so for the more evident fulfilling of the Scripture, as appears, *Acts iv. 26, 27*, where that of David, *Ps. ii. 2*, "the kings of the earth and the rulers set themselves against the Lord and his anointed," is expressly said to be fulfilled in Herod and Pontius Pilate.

2. Herod was very willing to have the examining of him; ver. 8, "when he saw Jesus he was exceeding glad," and perhaps the more glad because he saw him a prisoner, saw him in bonds; "he had heard many things of him," in Galilee, where his miracles had for a great while been all the talk of the country, and he longed to see him; not for any affection he had for him or his doctrine, but purely out of curiosity; and it was only to gratify that, that he "hoped to have seen some miracle done by him," which would serve him to talk of as long as he lived. And in order to this, he "questioned with him in many things," that at length he might bring him to something in which he might shew his power. Perhaps he pumped him concerning things secret or things to come, or concerning his curing of diseases. But Jesus "answered him nothing," nor would he gratify him so much as with the repetition of one miracle. The poorest beggar that asked a miracle for the relief of his necessity was never denied, but this proud prince, that asked a miracle merely for the gratifying of his curiosity, is denied. He might have seen Christ and his wondrous works many a time in Galilee, and would not; and therefore it is justly said, Now he would see them, and shall not; they are hid from his eyes, because he knew not the day of his visitation. Herod thought, now he had him in bonds, he might command a miracle; but miracles must not be made cheap, nor Omnipotence be at the beck of the greatest potentate.

3. His prosecutors appeared against him before Herod, for they were restless in the prosecution; "they stood and vehemently accused him," ver. 10, impudently and boldly, so the word signifies. They would make Herod believe that he had poisoned Galilee too with his seditious notions. Note, It is no new thing for good men and good ministers, that are real and useful friends to the civil government, to be falsely accused as factious and seditious, and enemies to government.

4. "Herod" was very abusive to him; he, "with his men of war" his attendants, and officers, and great men, "set him at nought." They made nothing of him, so the word is. Horrid wickedness! to make nothing of Him who made all things. They laughed at him as a fool; for they knew he had wrought many miracles to befriend others, and why would he not now work one to befriend himself? or else, as one that had lost his power, and was become weak as other men. Herod, that had been acquainted with John Baptist, and had more knowledge of Christ too than Pilate had, was more abusive to Christ than Pilate was; for knowledge without grace doth but make men the more ingeniously wicked. Herod arrayed Christ in a gorgeous robe, some gaudy painted clothes, as a mock-king; and so he taught Pilate's soldiers afterwards to do him the same indignity. He was ringleader in that abuse.

5. Herod returned him to Pilate, and it proved an occasion of the making of them friends, they having been for some time before at variance. Herod could not get sight of a miracle, but would not condemn him neither as a malefactor; and therefore "sent him again to Pilate," ver. 11, and so returned Pilate's civility and respect in sending the prisoner to him; and this mutual obligation, with the messages that passed between them on this occasion, brought them to a better understanding, one of another, than there had been of late between them, ver. 12. They had been "at enmity between themselves," probably upon Pilate's killing the Galileans, who were Herod's subjects, *ch. xiii. 1*, or some other such matter or controversy as used to be among princes and great men. Observe how those that quarrelled with one another, yet could unite against Christ, as Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, though divided among themselves, were confederate against the Israel of God, *Ps. lxxxiii. 7*. Christ is the great Peacemaker; both Pilate and Herod owned his innocency, and their agreeing in that cured their disagreeing in other things.

13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, 14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as

xxii. 55. Oosterzee observes that it is well known the nights in Palestine, especially in spring, are very cold. Hence the need of a fire.

xxii. 56. John xviii. 18 says Peter stood, while the other evangelists say he sat. In his restless condition of mind he doubtless did both.

xxii. 61. The court in which Peter was may have been separated from the hall of justice by a sort of colonnade, which enabled those

who were in one room to see and hear much that took place in the other. This view is taken by eminent authorities. As to the possibility of Peter's hearing a cock crow when fowls were not allowed in Jerusalem, we have noted that sometimes they were kept there. Besides, as the Romans were in authority, it is evident that animals reckoned not clean might be kept by them. In various other cases, as in this, it is necessary to remember the Roman supremacy.

xxii. 66. Our version misses the exact sense of part of this verse;

one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: 15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. 16 I will therefore chastise him, and release *him*. 17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) 18 And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this *man*, and release unto us Barabbas: 19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.) 20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. 21 But they cried, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify him. 22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let *him* go. 23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. 24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. 25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

We have here the blessed Jesus run down by the mob, and hurried to the cross in the storm of a popular noise and tumult, raised by the malice and artifice of the chief priests, as agents for the prince of the power of the air.

First. Pilate solemnly protests that he believes he has done nothing worthy of death or of bonds. And if he did believe so, he ought immediately to have discharged him; and not only so, but to have protected him from the fury of the priests and rabble, and to have bound his prosecutors to their good behaviour for their insolent carriage; but being himself an ill man, he had no kindness for Christ; and, having made himself otherwise obnoxious, was afraid of displeasing either the emperor or the people; and therefore, for want of integrity, he "called together the chief priests and rulers and people," (whom he should have dispersed, as a riotous, routous, and seditious assembly, and forbid them to come near him,) and will hear what they have to say to whom he should have turned a deaf ear, for he plainly saw what spirit acted them, ver. 14. "You have brought," saith Pilate, "this man to me," and because I have a respect for you, "I have examined him before you," and have heard all you have to allege against him, and I can make nothing of it, "I find no fault in him," you cannot prove the things whereof you accuse him.

Secondly. He appeals to Herod concerning him; ver. 15, "I sent you to him" who is supposed to have known more of him than I have done, and he hath sent him back, not convicted of any thing, nor under any mark of his displeasure; in his opinion his crimes are not capital. He has laughed at him as a weak man, but has not stigmatized him as a dangerous man: he thought Bedlam a fitter place for him than Tyburn.

Thirdly. He proposeth to release him, if they will but consent to it. He ought to have done it without asking leave of them; *fiat justitia, ruat cælum*,—"let justice have its course, though the heavens should be desolated;" but the fear of man brings many into this snare, that whereas justice should take place, though heaven and earth come together, they will do an unjust thing against their consciences rather than pull an old house about their ears. Pilate declares him innocent, and therefore has a mind to release him; yet to please the people, 1. He will release him under the notion of a malefactor, because "of necessity he must release one," ver. 17; so that whereas he ought to have been released by an act of justice, and thanks to nobody, he would have him released by an act of grace, and be beholden to the people for it. 2. He will chastise him and release him. If no fault be to be found in him, why should he be chastised? There is as much injustice in scourging as in crucifying an innocent man; nor would it be justified by pretending that this would satisfy the clamours of the people, and make him the object of their pity who was now to be the object of their envy. We must not do evil that good may come.

Fourthly. The people chose rather to have Barabbas released; a wretched fellow, that had nothing to recommend himself to their favour but the daring-ness of his crimes: he was imprisoned for a sedition made in the city, and for murder, of all crimes among men the least pardonable, yet this was the criminal that was preferred before Christ; ver. 18, 19, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas;" and no wonder that such a man is the favourite and darling of such a mob; he that was really seditious, rather than he that was really loyal, and falsely accused of sedition.

Fifthly. When Pilate urged the second time that Christ should be released, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him," ver. 20, 21. They not only will have him die, but will have him die so great a death; nothing less will serve but he must be crucified: "Crucify him, crucify him."

Sixthly. When Pilate the third time reasoned with them, to shew them the unreasonableness and injustice of it, they were the more peremptory and outrageous; ver. 22, "Why, what evil hath he done?" Name his crime: "I have found no cause of death," and you cannot say what cause of death you have found in him; and therefore, if you will but speak the word, "I will chastise him and let him go." But popular fury, the more it is complimented, the more furious it grows: "they were instant with loud voices," with great noises, or outcries, not requesting, but "requiring that he might be crucified;" as if they

the sense is, "And when it became day, the presbytery (or council) of the people, comprising both chief priests and scribes, was assembled, and led him away to their Sanhedrim," &c. Here the word "presbytery" denotes the members of the Sanhedrim, which consisted of "chief priests and scribes," and a certain number of elders. In this verse the word "Sanhedrim" means the meeting or session of that body in its hall assembled; in other words, the meeting and the place of meeting.

had as much right at the feast to demand the crucifying of one that was innocent, as the release of one that was guilty.

Seventhly. Pilate's yielding at length to their importunity. "The voices of the people and of the chief priests prevailed," and were too hard for Pilate, and overruled him to go contrary to his convictions and inclination. He had not courage to go against so strong a stream, but "gave sentence that it should be as they required," ver. 24. Here is judgment turned away backward, and justice standing afar off, for fear of popular fury: "Truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter," *Isa. lix. 14*; "Judgment was looked for, but behold oppression; righteousness, but behold a cry," *Isa. v. 7*. This is repeated, ver. 25, with the aggravating circumstance of the release of Barabbas; "he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison," who hereby would be hardened in his wickedness, and do the more mischief, because him they had desired, being altogether such an one as themselves; "but he delivered Jesus to their will," and he could not deal more barbarously with him than to deliver him to their will who hated him with a perfect hatred, and whose tender mercies were cruelty.

26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. 27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. 28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. 29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. 30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. 31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

We have here the blessed Jesus, the Lamb of God, led as a lamb to the slaughter, to the sacrifice. It is strange with what expedition they went through his trial; how they could do so much work in so little time, though they had so many great men to deal with, attendance on whom used to be a work of time. He was brought before the chief priests at break of day, *ch. xxii. 26*, after that to Pilate, then to Herod, then to Pilate again; and there seems to have been a long struggle between Pilate and the people about him. He was scourged and crowned with thorns, and contumeliously used; and all this was done in four or five hours' time, or six at most; for he was crucified between nine o'clock and twelve. Christ's persecutors resolve to lose no time, for fear lest his friends at the other end of the town should get notice of what they were doing, and should rise to rescue him. Never any one was so chased out of the world as Christ was; but so he himself said, "Yet a little while, and ye shall not see me," a very little while indeed.

Now as they led him away to death, we find, First. One that was a bearer, that carried his cross, Simon by name, a Cyrenian, who probably was a friend of Christ, and was known to be so, and this was done to put a reproach upon him; they laid Christ's cross upon him, "that he might bear it after Jesus," ver. 26, lest Jesus should faint under it, and die away, and so prevent the farther instances of malice they designed. It was pity, but a cruel pity, that gave him this ease.

Secondly. Many that were mourners, true mourners, who followed him bewailing and lamenting him. These were not only his friends and well-wishers, but the common people that were not his enemies, and were moved with compassion towards him, because they had heard the fame of him, and what an excellent, useful man he was, and had reason to think he suffered unjustly; this drew a great crowd after him, as is usual at executions, especially of those that have been persons of distinction; "a great company of people followed him," especially of women, ver. 27; some led by pity, others by curiosity; but they also (as well as those that were his particular friends and acquaintance) "bewailed and lamented him." Though there were many that reproached and reviled him, yet there were some that valued him, and pitied him, and were sorry for him, and were partakers with him in his sufferings. The dying of the Lord Jesus may, perhaps, move natural affections in many that are strangers to devout affections: many bewail Christ that do not believe in him, and do not love him above all.

Now here we are told what Christ said to these mourners, though one would think he should be wholly taken up with his own concern; yet he found time and heart to take cognizance of their tears. Christ died lamented, and has a bottle for the tears of those that lamented him. He turned to them, though they were strangers to him, and bade them not weep for him, but for themselves; he diverts their lamentation into another channel, ver. 28.

1. He gives them a general direction concerning their lamentations: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me;" not that they were to be blamed for weeping for him, but commended rather: those hearts were hard indeed that were not affected with such sufferings of such a person; but they must not weep only for him—those were profitless tears that they shed for him—but rather let them weep for themselves and for their children, with an eye to the destruction that was coming upon Jerusalem, which some of them might live to see, and share in the calamities of; or at least their children would, for whom they ought to be solicitous. Note, When with an eye of faith we behold Christ crucified, we ought to weep, not for him, but for ourselves. We must not be affected with the death of Christ as with the death of a common person, whose calamity we pity, or of a common friend, whom we are like to part with. The death of Christ was a thing peculiar; it was his victory and triumph over his enemies; it was our deliverance, and the purchase of eternal life for us; and therefore weep not for him, but let us weep for our own sins, and the sins of our children, that were the cause of his death; and weep for fear (such were the tears here prescribed) of the miseries we shall bring upon ourselves if we slight his love, and reject his grace, as the Jewish nation did, which brought upon them the ruin here foretold. When our dear relations and friends die in Christ, we have no reason to weep for them, who have put off the burthen of

xxii. 69. "Hereafter" is scarcely correct, because the Greek rather signifies "henceforth"—i.e., from this time. The preceding words, "nor let me go," are omitted by the Sinaitic, Vatican, and other MSS., but are found in numerous ancient copies and authorities.

xxiii. 1. "The whole multitude of them arose"—i.e., the whole company of the Sanhedrim, which consisted of seventy members.

xxiii. 2. The accusers begin with a deceitful and false utterance, hoping to create a prejudice in Pilate's mind against Jesus and in

the flesh, are made perfect in holiness, and are entered into perfect rest and joy; but for ourselves and our children, who are left behind in a world of sins, and sorrows, and snares.

2. He gives them a particular reason why they should weep for themselves and for their children: "For, behold," sad times are coming upon your city; it will be destroyed, and you will be involved in the common destruction. When Christ's own disciples sorrowed after a goodly sort for his leaving them, he wiped away their tears with the promise that he would see them again, and they should rejoice, *Jno. xvi. 22*; but when these daughters of Jerusalem bewailed him only with a worldly sorrow, he turned their tears into another channel, and told them they should have something given them to cry for. Let them be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, *Jas. iv. 9*. He had lately wept over Jerusalem himself, and now he bids them weep over it: Christ's tears should set us a weeping. Let the daughters of Zion, that own Christ for their king, rejoice in him, for he comes to save them; but let the daughters of Jerusalem, that only weep for him, but do not take him for their king, weep and tremble to think of his coming to judge them.

Now the destruction of Jerusalem is here foretold by two proverbial sayings, that might then fitly be used, which both speak it very terrible, that what people commonly dread they would then desire—to be written childless, and to be buried alive.

1st. They would wish to be written childless; whereas, commonly, those that have no children envy those that have, as Rachel envied Leah; then those that have children will find them such a burthen in attempting to escape, and such a grief when they see them either fainting for famine, or falling by the sword, that they will envy those that have none, and say, "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare," that have no children to be given up to the murderer, or to be snatched out of his hands. It would not only go ill with those who at that time were with child or giving suck, as Christ had said, *Mat. xxiv. 19*, but it would be terrible to those who ever had had children, and suckled them, and had them now alive: see *Hos. ix. 11–14*. See the vanity of the creature, and the uncertainty of its comforts; for such may be the changes of Providence concerning us, that those very things may become the greatest burthens, cares, and griefs to us, which we have delighted in as the greatest blessings.

2nd. They would wish to be buried alive, ver. 30; "they shall begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." This also refers to a passage in the same prophecy with the former, *Hos. x. 8*; they shall wish to be hid in the darkest caves, that they might be out of the noise of these calamities; they will be willing to be sheltered upon any terms, though with the hazard of being crushed to pieces: this would be the language especially of the great and mighty men, *Rev. vi. 16*. They that would not flee to Christ for refuge, and put themselves under his protection, will in vain call to hills and mountains to shelter them from his wrath.

3. He shews how natural it was for them to infer that desolation from his sufferings; ver. 31, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Some think this is borrowed from *Eze. xx. 47*, "The fire shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree." These words may be applied.

1st. More particularly to the destruction of Jerusalem, which Christ here foretold, and which the Jews by putting him to death brought upon themselves. "If they," that is, the Jews, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "do these things upon the green tree," if they do thus abuse an innocent and excellent person for his good works, how may they expect God to deal with them, for their so doing, who have made themselves a dry tree, a corrupt and wicked generation, and good for nothing? If this be their sin, what do you think will be their punishment? Or take it thus: If they (that is the Romans, their judges and their soldiers, abuse me thus,) who have given them no provocation, who am to them as a green tree, which you seem to be as much enraged at, what will they do by Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, who will be so very provoking to them, and make themselves as a dry tree, as fuel to the fire of their resentments? If God suffer those things to be done to me, what will he appoint to be done to those barren trees, of whom it had been often said, that they should be hewn down and cast into the fire? *Mat. iii. 10; vii. 19*.

2nd. It may be applied more generally to all the revelations of God's wrath against sin and sinners. If God deliver me up to such sufferings as these, because I am made a sacrifice for sin, what will he do with sinners themselves? Christ was a green tree, fruitful and flourishing; now if such things were done to him, we may from thence infer what should have been done to the whole race of mankind if he had not interposed, and what shall be done to those that continue dry trees, notwithstanding all that is done to make them fruitful. If God did this to the Son of his love, when he found but sin imputed to him, what shall he do to the generation of his wrath, when he finds sin reigning in them? If the Father were pleased in doing these things to the green tree, why should he be loath to do it to the dry? Note, The consideration of the bitter sufferings of our Lord Jesus should engage us to stand in awe of the justice of God, and to tremble before him. The best saints, compared with Christ, are dry trees; if he suffer, why may not they expect to suffer; and what then shall the damnation of sinners be?

32 And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. 33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. 34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. 35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. 36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar. 37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. 38 And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin,

and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

In these verses we have,

First. Divers passages which we had before in *Matthew* and *Mark*, concerning Christ's sufferings.

1. That there were "two other, malefactors, led with him" to the place of execution, who it is probable had been for some time under sentence of death, and were designed to be executed as this day; which was probably the pretence for making such haste in the prosecution of Christ, that he and these two malefactors might be executed together, and one solemnity might serve.

2. That he was crucified at a place called Calvary, *Kparion*, the Greek name for Golgotha, the place of a skull; an ignominious place, to add to the reproach of his sufferings; but significant, for there he triumphed over death as it were upon his own dunghill. He was crucified, that is, his hands and feet were nailed to the cross, as it lay upon the ground; and then it was lifted up, and fastened into the earth, or some socket to receive it. This was a painful and shameful death, above any other.

3. That he was crucified in the midst between two thieves, as if he had been the worst of the three: thus he was not only treated as a transgressor, but numbered with them, the worst of them.

4. That the soldiers, who were employed in the execution, seized his garments as their fee, and divided them among themselves by lot; "they parted his raiment and cast lots;" it was worth so little, that if it were divided it would come to next nothing, and therefore they cast lots for it.

5. That he was reviled, and reproached, and treated with all the scorn and contempt imaginable, when he was lifted up upon the cross. It was strange that so much barbarity should be found in the human nature. "The people stood beholding," not at all concerned, but rather pleasing themselves with the spectacle; "and the rulers," whom from their office one would take to be men of sense and men of honour, they stood among the rabble "and derided him," to set those on that were about them to do so too; and they said, "He saved others, let him save himself." Thus is he upbraided for the good works he had done, as if it were indeed for these that they crucified him. They triumph over him as if they had conquered him; whereas he was himself then more than a conqueror: they challenge him to save himself from the cross, when he was saving others by the cross; "If he be the Christ, the chosen of God, let him save himself." They knew that the Christ is the chosen of God, designed by him, and dear to him. If he, as the Christ, would deliver our nation from the Romans, (and they could not form any other idea but that of the Messiah,) let him deliver himself from the Romans, that have him now in their hands. Thus the Jewish rulers jeered him as captured by the Romans, instead of subduing them: the Roman soldiers jeered him as the king of the Jews; a people good enough for such a prince, and a prince good enough for such a people. They mocked him, ver. 36, 37; they made sport with him, and made a jest of his sufferings; and when they were drinking sharp, sour wine themselves, such as was generally allotted them, they triumphantly asked him if he would pledge them, or drink with them; and they said, "If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself;" for as the Jews prosecuted him under the notion of a pretended Messiah, so the Romans under the notion of a pretended king.

6. That the superscription over his head, setting forth his crime, was, "This is the King of the Jews," ver. 38. He is put to death for pretending to be the king of the Jews, so they meant it; but God intended it to be a declaration of what he really was, notwithstanding his present disgrace: he is the King of the Jews, the King of the church; and his cross is the way to his crown. This was written in those that are called the three learned languages—Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew; for those are best learned that have learned Christ. It was written in these three languages that it might be known and read of all men; but God designed by it to signify that the Gospel of Christ should be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and be read in all languages. The Gentile philosophy made the Greek tongue famous; the Roman laws and government made the Latin tongue so; and the Hebrew excelled them all, for the sake of the Old Testament. In these three languages is Jesus Christ proclaimed king. Young scholars, that are taking pains at school to make themselves masters of these three languages, should aim at this, that in the use of them they may increase their acquaintance with Christ.

Secondly. Here are two passages which we had not before; and they are very remarkable ones.

1. Christ's prayer for his enemies; ver. 34, "Father, forgive them." Seven remarkable words Christ spoke after he was nailed to the cross, and before he died, and this is the first. One reason why he died the death of the cross was, that he might have liberty of speech to the last, and so might glorify his Father, and edify those about him. As soon as ever he was fastened to the cross, or while they were nailing him, he prayed this prayer; in which observe,

1st. The petition, "Father, forgive them." One would think he should have prayed, "Father, consume them; the Lord look upon it, and requite it." The sin they were now guilty of might justly have been made unpardonable, and justly might they have been excepted by name out of the act of indemnity. No: these are particularly prayed for; now he made intercession for transgressors, as was foretold, *Isa. liii. 12*; and it is to be added to his prayer, *Jno. xvii.*, to complete the specimen he gave of his intercession within the veil; that for saints, this for sinners. Now the sayings of Christ upon the cross, as well as his sufferings, had a farther reach than they seemed to have. This was a mediatorial word, and expiatory of the intent and meaning of his death, "Father, forgive them;" not only these, but all that shall repent and believe the Gospel; and he did not intend that these should be forgiven upon any other terms. Father, that which I am now suffering and dying for, is in order to this, that poor sinners may be pardoned. Note, *First* The great thing

favour of themselves. In their hearts the high priests would have been but too glad to get rid of Cæsar and all his agents, and to set up as king one of their own nation. Their sole reason for giving a political turn to the charge was their inability to succeed by other means.

xxiii. 7. "Herod's jurisdiction," or authority, included Galilee, as stated in chap. iii. 1. Herod had come to Jerusalem for the Passover, and he would but too readily show his religious zeal by

listening to the charges of blasphemy. On other grounds he might wish to recover Pilate's favour.

xxiii. 15. From this it would seem that even Herod was not convinced of the truth of the accusations made against Jesus. In any case, he agreed with Pilate that he had done nothing deserving of death. For "nothing worthy of death is done unto him" real "nothing worthy of death is done by him." With this conclusion Pilate is satisfied, and proposes to chastise and release the prisoner.

which Christ died to purchase and procure for us is, the forgiveness of sin. *Secondly*. This is that which Christ intercedes for, for all that repent, and believe in the virtue of his satisfaction; his blood speaks this, "Father, forgive them." *Thirdly*. The greatest sinners may, through Christ, upon their repentance, hope to find mercy: "Father, forgive them;" though they were his persecutors and murderers.

2nd. The plea; "for they know not what they do;" for if they had known, they would not have crucified him, 1 *Cor.* ii. 8. There was a veil upon his glory, and upon their understandings; and how could they see through two veils? They wished his blood on them and their children, but had they known what they did, they would have wished it again. Note, *First*. The crucifiers of Christ, "know not what they do;" it is because they will not know it. *Secondly*. There is a kind of ignorance, that doth in part excuse sin,—ignorance through want of the means of knowledge, or of a capacity to receive instruction, through the infelicities of education, or inadvertency. The crucifiers of Christ were kept in ignorance by their did against Christ and his doctrine, they thought into them, so that, in what they did against Christ and his doctrine, they thought they did God service, *Jno.* xvi. 2. Such are to be pitied and prayed for. This prayer of Christ was answered not long after, when many of those that had a hand in his death were converted by Peter's preaching.

This is written also for example to us. *1st*. We must in prayer call God Father; and come to him with reverence and confidence, as children to a father. *2nd*. The great thing we must beg of God, both for ourselves and others, is the forgiveness of sins. *3rd*. We must pray for our enemies, and those that hate and persecute us; must extenuate their offences, and not aggravate them, as we must our own, "they know not what they do;" peradventure it was an oversight;—and must be earnest with God in prayer for the forgiveness of their sins, their sins against us. This is Christ's example to his own rule, *Mat.* v. 44, 45, "Love your enemies;" and it very much strengthens the rule; for if Christ loved and prayed for such enemies, what enemies can we have which we are not obliged to love and pray for?

II. The conversion of the thief upon the cross, which is an illustrious instance of Christ's triumphing over principalities and powers, then when he seemed to be triumphed over by them. Christ was crucified between two thieves; and in them was represented the different effects which the cross of Christ would have upon the children of men, to whom it would be brought near in the preaching of the Gospel. They are all malefactors, all guilty before God. Now the cross of Christ is to some a savour of life unto life; to others, of death unto death. To them that perish it is foolishness; but to them that are saved it is the wisdom of God and the power of God.

1st. Here was one of these malefactors that was hardened to the last. At the cross of Christ he railed on him, as others did, *ver.* 39; he said, "If thou be the Christ," as they say thou art, "save thyself and us." Though he was now in pain and agony, and in the valley of the shadow of death, yet that did not humble his proud spirit, nor teach him to give good language; no, not to his fellow sufferer: "though thou bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his foolishness depart from him;" no troubles will of themselves work a change in a wicked heart; but sometimes they irritate the corruption, which one would think they should mortify. He challengeth Christ to save both himself and them. Note, There are some that have the impudence to rail upon Christ, and yet the confidence to expect to be saved by him; nay, and to conclude that if he do not save them, he is not to be looked upon as the Saviour.

2nd. Here was the other of them that was softened at the last. It was said in *Matthew* and *Mark*, that both the thieves, even "they that were crucified with him, reviled him," which some think is by a figure put for one of them, but others think they both reviled him at first, till the heart of one of them was wonderfully changed, and with it his language, on a sudden. This malefactor, when just ready to fall into the hands of Satan, was snatched as a brand out of the burning, and made a monument of Divine mercy and grace; and Satan was left to roar, as a lion disappointed of his prey. This gives no encouragement to any to put off their repentance to their deathbed, or to hope that then they shall find mercy; for though it is certain that true repentance is never too late, it is as certain that late repentance is seldom true. None can be sure that they shall have time to repent at death; but every man may be sure he cannot have the advantages that this penitent thief had, whose case was altogether extraordinary. He never had any offer of Christ, nor day of grace before now; he was designed to be made a singular instance of the power of Christ's grace, now at a time when he was crucified in weakness. Christ, having conquered Satan, in the destruction of Judas and the preservation of Peter, erects this farther trophy of his victory over him, in the conversion of this malefactor, as a specimen of what he would do. We shall see the case extraordinary, if we observe,

First. The extraordinary operations of God's grace upon him, which appeared in what he said. Here were so many evidences given, in a short time, of a blessed change wrought in him, as that more could not have been given in so little compass.

1st. See what he said to the other malefactor, *ver.* 40, 41.

First. He reproved him for railing on Christ, as destitute of the fear of God, and having no sense at all of religion: "Dost not thou fear God?" This implies that it was the fear of God, which restrained him from following the multitude to do this evil: "I fear God, and therefore dare not do it; and dost not thou?" All that have their eyes opened see this to be at the bottom of the wickedness of the wicked, that they have not the fear of God before their eyes: "If thou hadst any humanity in thee, thou wouldest not insult over one that is thy fellow sufferer; thou art in the same condition; thou art a dying man too; and therefore, whatever these wicked people do, it ill becomes thee to abuse a dying man."

Secondly. He owns that he deserved what was done to him: "We indeed justly." It is likely they both suffered for one and the same crime, and therefore he spake with the more assurance, "We receive the due reward of our deeds." This magnifies Divine grace, as acting in a distinguishing way. These two had been comrades in sin and suffering, and yet one is saved, and the other perisheth; two that had gone together all along hitherto, and yet now "one taken, and the other left." He doth not say, Thou indeed justly, but, We. Note, True penitents acknowledge the justice of God in all the punishments of their sin; God has done right, but we have done wickedly.

Thirdly. He believes Christ to have suffered wrongfully. Though he was condemned in two courts, and run upon as if he had been the worst of malefactors, yet this penitent thief is convinced by his carriage in his sufferings that he "has done nothing amiss." The chief priests would have him crucified between the malefactors, as one of them; but this thief has more sense than they, and owns his none of them. Whether he had before heard of Christ, and of his wondrous works, doth not appear, but the Spirit of grace enlightened him with this knowledge, and enabled him to say, "This man hath done nothing amiss;"—*οὐδὲν ἁμαρτία*—nothing absurd, or unbecoming his character.

2nd. See what he said to our Lord Jesus, *ver.* 42: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." This is the prayer of a dying sinner to a dying Saviour. It was the honour of Christ to be thus prayed to, though he was upon the cross, reproached and reviled; it was the happiness of the thief thus

to pray; perhaps he never prayed before, and yet now was heard and saved at the last gasp. While there is life there is hope; and while there is hope there is room for prayer.

First. Observe his faith in this prayer. In his confession of sin, *ver.* 44, he discovered repentance towards God; in this petition he discovered faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. He owns him to be Lord, and to have a kingdom, and that he was going to that kingdom; that he should have authority in that kingdom, and that those should be happy whom he favours; and to believe and confess all this was a great thing at this time of day. Christ was now in the depth of disgrace—deserted by his own disciples, reviled by his own nation, suffering as a pretender, and not delivered by his Father. He made this profession before those prodigies happened which put honour upon his sufferings, and which startled the centurion; yet verily we have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. He believed another life after this, and desired to be happy in that life; not as the other thief, to be saved from the cross, but to be well done for when the cross had done its worst.

Secondly. Observe his humility in this prayer. All his request is, "Lord, remember me." He doth not pray, Lord, prefer me, as they did, *Mat.* xx. 21; though he having the honour, so as none of the disciples had, to drink of Christ's cup, and to be baptized with his baptism, either on his right hand or on his left in his sufferings, when his own disciples had deserted him, he might have had some colour to ask, as they did, to sit on his right hand and on his left in his kingdom; acquaintance in sufferings hath sometimes gained such a point, *Jer.* lii. 31, 32. But he is far from the thought of it; all he begs is, "Lord, remember me," referring himself to Christ in what way to remember him. It is a request like that of Joseph to the chief butler, "Think on me," *Gen.* xl. 14; and it sped better; the chief butler forgot Joseph, but Christ remembered this thief.

Thirdly. There is an air of importunity and fervency in this prayer; he doth as it were breathe out his soul in it: "Lord, remember me," and I have enough, I desire no more; into thy hands I commit my case. Note, To be remembered by Christ, now he is in his kingdom, is what we should earnestly desire and pray for; and it will be enough to secure our welfare, living and dying. Christ is in his kingdom interceding: "Lord, remember me," and intercede for me. He is there ruling: "Lord, remember me," and rule in me by thy Spirit. He is there preparing places for those that are his: "Lord, remember me," and prepare a place for me; remember me at death; remember me in the resurrection." See *Job* xiv. 13.

Secondly. The extraordinary grants of Christ's favour to him: "Jesus said unto him," in answer to his prayer, "Verily I say unto thee," "I, the Amen,—the faithful witness,—I say amen to this prayer; put my fiat to it. Nay, thou shalt have more than thou didst ask, 'This day thou shalt be with me in paradise,'" *ver.* 43. Observe.

1st. To whom this was spoken; to the penitent thief,—to him, and not to his companion. Christ upon the cross is like Christ upon the throne; for "now is the judgment of this world;" one departs with a curse, the other with a blessing. Though Christ was now himself in the greatest struggle and agony, yet he had a word of comfort to speak to a poor penitent, that committed himself to him. Note, Even great sinners, if they be true penitents, shall, through Christ, obtain not only the pardon of their sins, but a place in the paradise of God, *Heb.* ix. 15. This magnifies the riches of free grace, that rebels and traitors shall not only be pardoned, but preferred, thus preferred.

2nd. By whom this was spoken. This was another mediatorial word which Christ spoke, though upon a particular occasion, yet with a general intention, to explain the true intent and meaning of his sufferings; as he died to purchase the forgiveness of sins for us, *ver.* 34, so also to purchase eternal life for us. By this word we are given to understand, that Jesus Christ died to "open the kingdom of heaven to all penitent, obedient believers."

First. Christ here lets us know that he was going to paradise himself,—to Hades, to the invisible world; his human soul was removing to the place of separate souls; not the place of the damned, but to paradise, the place of the blessed. By this he assures us that his satisfaction was accepted, and the Father was well pleased in him, else he had not gone to paradise; that was the beginning of the joy set before him, which he comforted himself with the prospect of. He went by the cross to the crown, and we must not think of going any other way, or of being perfected but by sufferings.

Secondly. He lets all penitent believers know that when they die they shall go to be with him there. He was now, as a priest, purchasing this happiness for them; and is ready, as a king, to confer it upon them, when they are prepared and made ready for it. See here how the happiness of heaven is set forth to us. 1. It is paradise, a garden of pleasure, the paradise of God, *Rev.* ii. 7, alluding to the garden of Eden, in which our first parents were placed when they were innocent. In the second Adam we are restored to all we lost in the first Adam; and more, to a heavenly paradise, instead of an earthly one. 2. It is being with Christ there; that is the happiness of heaven, to see Christ, and sit with him, and share in his glory, *Jno.* xvii. 24. 3. It is immediate upon death: "This day thou shalt be with me;" to-night, before to-morrow. The souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, immediately are in joy and felicity; the spirits of just men immediately made perfect. Lazarus departs, and is comforted presently; and Paul with Christ immediately, *Phil.* i. 23.

44 And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. 46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. 47 Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. 48 And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. 49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

xxiii. 17. This verse is omitted by the Vatican, Alexandrian, and other MSS., but occurs in the Sinaitic, Cambridge, and other ancient copies.

xxiii. 23. "They were instant;" that is, "were urgent." "Of them"—i.e., of the people, who were present, as already mentioned in *verse* 13.

xxiii. 26. Later times professed to know the actual road taken on this occasion, and the exact spots where various incidents occurred.

It is scarcely needful to say that the havoc made with Jerusalem after its surrender to Titus would effectually destroy any landmarks which the first Christians associated with the incidents actually recorded. Superstition has invented and added to them.

xxiii. 28. The expression "daughters of Jerusalem," meaning "women of Jerusalem," fairly teaches that these were not the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee, but part of the crowd which had come together, as is usual at public executions and spectacles.

In these verses we have three things.

First, *Christ's dying magnified*, by the prodigies that attended it. Only two are here mentioned, which we had an account of before.

1. The darkening of the sun at noonday: "It was now about the sixth hour;" that is, according to our computation, twelve o'clock at noon; "and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour;" the sun was eclipsed, and the air exceedingly clouded at the same time, both which concurred to this thick darkness, which continued three hours, not three days, as that of Egypt did.

2. The rending of the veil of the temple. The former prodigy was in the heavens, this in the temple; for both these are the houses of God, and could not but feel it when the Son of God was thus abused, and thus signify their resentment of it. By this rending of the veil was signified the taking away of the ceremonial law, which was a wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, and of all other difficulties and discouragements in our approach to God, so that now we may come boldly to the throne of grace.

Secondly, *Christ's dying explained*, ver. 46, by the words with which he breathed out his soul. Jesus had cried with a loud voice, when he said, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" so we are told in *Matthew* and *Mark*; and it should seem it was with a loud voice that he said this too, to shew his earnestness, and that all the people might take notice of it. And this he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

1. He borrowed these words from his father David, *Ps. cxxi. 5*; not that he needed to have words put into his mouth; but he chose to make use of David's words, to shew that it was the Spirit of Christ that testified in the Old Testament prophets, and that he came to fulfil the Scripture. Christ died with Scriptures in his mouth; thus he directs us to make use of Scripture language in our addresses to God.

2. In this address to God he calls him Father; when he complained of being forsaken, he cried, "Eli, Eli, my God;" but to shew that that dreadful agony of his soul was now over, he here calls God Father. When he was giving up his life and soul for us, he did for us call God Father, that we through him might receive the adoption of sons.

3. Christ made use of these words in a sense peculiar to himself as Mediator. He was now to "make his soul an offering for our sin," *Isa. liii. 10*; to "give his life a ransom for many," *Mat. xx. 28*; "by the eternal Spirit to offer himself," *Heb. ix. 14*. He was himself both the priest and the sacrifice; our souls were forfeited, and his must go to redeem the forfeiture; the price must be paid into the hands of God, the party offended by sin; to him he had undertaken to make full satisfaction. Now by these words he offered up the sacrifice; did as it were lay his hand upon the head of it, and surrender it; "I deposit it," I pay it down into thy hands; Father, accept of my life and soul, instead of the lives and souls of the sinners I die for. The *animus offerentis*, "the goodwill of the offerer," was requisite to the acceptance of the offering. Now Christ here expresseth his cheerful willingness to offer himself, as he had done when it was first proposed to him, *Heb. x. 9, 10*; "Lo, I come to do thy will," "by the which will we are sanctified."

4. Christ here signifies his dependence upon his Father for his resurrection, by the reunion of his soul and body. He commends his spirit into his Father's hand, to be received into paradise, and returned the third day. By this it appears that our Lord Jesus, as he had a true body, so he had a reasonable soul, which existed in a state of separation from the body, and thus he was made like unto his brethren: this soul he lodged in his Father's hand, committed to his custody, resting in hope that it should not be left in Hades, in its state of separation from the body; no, not so long as that the body might see corruption.

5. Christ has hereby left us an example; has fitted those words of David to the purpose of dying saints, and hath as it were sanctified them for their use. In death, our great care should be about our souls; and we cannot more effectually provide for their welfare than by committing them now into the hands of God, as a Father, to be sanctified and governed by his Spirit and grace; and at death, committing them into his hands to be made perfect in holiness and happiness. We must shew that we are freely willing to die, that we firmly believe another life after this, and are desirous of it, by saying, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit."

Thirdly, *Christ's dying improved*, by the impressions it made upon those that attended him.

1. The centurion, that had command of the guard, was much affected with what he saw, ver. 47. He was a Roman, a Gentile, a stranger to the consolations of Israel, and yet he glorified God. He never saw such amazing instances of Divine power, and therefore took occasion from thence to adore God as the Almighty. And he bore a testimony to the patient sufferer: "Certainly this was a righteous man," and was unjustly put to death. God's manifesting his power so much to do him honour, was a plain evidence of his innocency. His testimony in *Matthew* and *Mark* goes farther: "Truly this was the Son of God." But in this case this amounts to the same; for if he was a righteous man, he said very truly when he said he was the Son of God; and therefore that testimony of his concerning himself must be admitted; for if it were false, he was not a righteous man.

2. The disinterested spectators could not but be concerned. This is taken notice of only here, ver. 48; "all the people that came together to that sight," as is usual upon such occasions, "beholding the things which were done," could not but go away very serious for the time, whatever they were when they came home; "they smote their breasts, and returned." 1st. They laid the thing very much to heart for the present; they looked upon it as a wicked thing to put him to death, and could not but think that some judgment of God would come upon their nation for it. Probably those very people, were of those that had cried, "Crucify him, crucify him;" and when he was nailed to the cross, reviled and blasphemed him; but now were so terrified with the darkness and earthquake, and the uncommon manner of his expiring, that they had not only their mouths stopped, but their consciences startled; and in remorse for what they had done, as the publican, they "smote upon their breasts," beat upon their own hearts, as those that had indignation at themselves. And some think this was a happy step towards that good work which was afterwards wrought upon them, when they were pricked to the heart, *Acts ii. 37*. 2nd. Yet it should seem the impression soon wore off; they "smote their breasts, and returned." They did not shew any farther token of respect to Christ, nor inquire more concerning him; but went home, and, we have reason to fear, in a little time they quite forgot it. Thus many that see Christ evidently set forth, crucified among them in the Word and sacraments, are a little affected for the present, but it doth not continue; they smite their breast, and return; they see Christ's face in the glass of the ordinances, and admire him; but they go away, and straightway forget what manner of man he is, and what reason they have to love him.

3. His own friends and followers were forced to keep their distance, and yet got as near as they could and durst, to see what was done, ver. 49; "all his acquaintance," that knew him, and were known of him, "stood afar off," for fear lest, if they had been near him, they should have been taken up as favourites of him. This was part of his sufferings, as of Job's, *Job xix. 13*, "He has

put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me;" *Ps. lxxxviii. 18*. And "the women that followed him" together "from Galilee were beholding these things," not knowing what to make of them, nor so ready as they should have been to take them for certain preludes of his resurrection. Now was Christ "set for a sign that should be spoken against," as Simeon foretold, "that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed," *ch. ii. 34, 35*.

50 And, behold, *there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just*: 51 (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) *he was of Arimathæa, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.* 52 This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. 53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. 54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. 55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. 56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.

We have here an account of Christ's burial; for he must be brought not only to death, but to the dust of death, *Ps. xxii. 15*, according to the sentence, *Gen. iii. 19*, "unto the dust shalt thou return." Observe,

I. *Who buried him*. His acquaintance stood afar off; they had neither money to bear the charge, nor courage to bear the odium, of burying him decently; but God raised up one that had both; "a man named Joseph," ver. 50. His character is, that "he was a good man, and a just;" a man of unspotted reputation for virtue and piety; was not only just to all, but good to all that needed him; and care to bury the dead, as becomes the hope of the resurrection of the dead, is one instance of goodness and beneficence. He was a person of quality, a counsellor, a senator, a member of the Sanhedrim, one of the elders of the Jewish church. Having said this of him, it was necessary to add, that though he was of that body of men who had put Christ to death, yet he "had not consented to their counsel and deed," ver. 51; though it was carried by the majority, yet he entered his protest against it, and followed not the multitude to do evil. Note, That evil counsel and deed shall not be reckoned our act which we have not consented to; nay, he not only dissented openly from those that were enemies to Christ, but he consented secretly with those that were his friends. He "himself waited for the kingdom of God;" he believed the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah and his kingdom, and expected the accomplishment of them. This was the man that appears upon this occasion to have a true respect for the Lord Jesus. Note, There are many who are hearty in Christ's interests, who, though they do not make any show in their outward profession of it, yet will be more ready to do him a piece of real service, when there is occasion, than others that make a greater figure and noise.

II. *What he did towards the burying of him*. 1. He "went to Pilate," the judge that condemned him, "and begged the body of Jesus," for it was at his dispose; and though he might have raised a party sufficient to have carried off the body by violence, yet he would take the regular course, and do it peaceably. 2. He "took it down," it should seem with his own hands, "and wrapped it in linen." They tell us it was the manner of the Jews (and that the word here used signifies so much) to roll the bodies of the dead, as we do little children in their swaddling clothes; so that the piece of fine linen, which he bought whole, he cut into many pieces for that purpose. It is said of Lazarus, he was bound hand and foot, *Jno. xi. 44*. Grave clothes are to the saints as swaddling clothes, which they shall outgrow, and put off when they come to the perfect man.

III. *Where he was buried*; "in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone;" that the prison of the grave might be made strong, as the church, when she was brought into darkness, had her way enclosed with hewn stone, *Lam. iii. 2, 9*; but it was a sepulchre in which "never man before was laid," for he was buried on such an account as never any one before him was buried, only in order to his rising again the third day by his own power; and he was to triumph over the grave, so as never any man did.

IV. *When he was buried*, ver. 54; "on the day of the preparation, when the sabbath drew on." This is given as a reason why they made such haste with the funeral, because the sabbath drew on, which required their attendance to other work, preparing for the sabbath, and going forth to welcome it. Note, Weeping must not hinder sowing. Though they were in tears for the death of Christ, yet they must apply themselves to the sanctifying of the sabbath. And when the sabbath draws on, there must be preparation; our worldly affairs must be so ordered as that they may not hinder us from our sabbath work; and our holy affections must be so excited as that they may carry us on in it.

V. *Who attended the funeral*, ver. 55; not any of the disciples, but only "the women that came with him from Galilee," ver. 55; who as they stayed by him while he hung on the cross, so they followed him, all in tears no doubt, "and beheld the sepulchre," where it was, what was the way to it, "and how his body was laid" in it. They were led to this, not by their curiosity, but by their affection to the Lord Jesus, which was strong as death, cruel as the grave, and which many waters could not quench. Here was a silent funeral, and not a solemn one, and yet his rest was glorious.

VI. *What preparation was made for the embalming of his body*, after he was buried, ver. 56; "they returned, and prepared spices and ointments," which was more an evidence of their love than of their faith; for had they remembered and believed what he had so often told them, that he should rise again the third day, they would have spared their cost and pains herein, as knowing that in a short time there would be a greater honour put upon his body by the glory of his resurrection, than they could put honour upon it with *air most*

xxiii. 31. Proverbial in form. Green wood, retaining sap and vitality, is less likely to be uprooted and less easily burned than that which is dry and dead.

xxiii. 33. "Calvary" is from the Latin Vulgate. The Greek in all the evangelists has the word *Kranion*, another form of the Latin *cranium*, "a skull." It is impossible to say why the place was so called, though common to suppose it was a knoll or small round hill.

xxiii. 34. This verse is omitted by the Vatican MS., as far as

the words "what they do." It is also left out by some other authorities, but the majority have it.

xxiii. 38. The words, "in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew," are not contained in some of the oldest copies, but are in the Sinaitic and Peshito.

xxiii. 43. Neander says Paradise is "a symbolical name for the regions of bliss," and regards the promise as one of "immediate bliss."

precious ointments; but as busy as they were in this preparation, they "rested the sabbath day," and did none of this servile work thereon, not only according to the custom of their nation, but "according to the commandment" of their God; which, though the day be altered, is still in full force; "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Our Lord Jesus went gloriously down to death, in spite of the malice of his enemies, who did all they could to make his death ignominious; but he rose again more gloriously; of which we have an account in this chapter; and the proofs and evidences of Christ's resurrection are more fully related by this evangelist than they were by Matthew and Mark. Here is, I. Assurances given by two angels, to the women who visited the sepulchre, that the Lord Jesus was risen from the dead, according to his own word, which the angels refer them to, ver. 1-7; and the report of this to the apostles, ver. 8-11. II. The visit which Peter made to the sepulchre, and his discoveries there, ver. 12. III. Christ's conference with the two disciples that were going to Emmaus, and his making of himself known to them, ver. 13-35. IV. His appearing to the eleven disciples themselves, the same day at evening, ver. 36-48. V. The farewell he gave them, and his ascension into heaven, and the joy and praise of his disciples whom he left behind, ver. 49-53.



NOW upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. 3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: 5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, 7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. 8 And they remembered his words, 9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told these things unto the apostles. 11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. 12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

The manner of the reuniting of Christ's soul and body in his resurrection is a mystery, one of the secret things that belong not to us; but the infallible proofs of his resurrection, that he did indeed rise from the dead, and was thereby proved to be the Son of God, are things revealed, which belong to us, and to our children; and some of them we have here in these verses, which relate the same story for substance that we had in *Matthew* and *Mark*.

I. We have here the affection and respect which the good women that had followed Christ shewed to him, after he was dead and buried, ver. 1. As soon as ever they could, after the sabbath was over, they came to the sepulchre to embalm his body; not to take it out of the linen in which Joseph had wrapped it, but to anoint the head and face, and perhaps the wounded hands and feet, and to scatter sweet spices upon and about the body; as it is usual with us to strew flowers about the dead bodies and graves of our friends, only to shew our goodwill towards the taking off the deformity of death, if we could, and to make them somewhat the less loathsome to those that are about them. The zeal of those good women for Christ did continue; the spices which they had prepared the evening before the sabbath at a great expense; they did not upon the second thoughts, when they slept upon it, dispose of otherwise, suggesting "to what purpose is this waste?" but they brought them to the sepulchre on the morning after the sabbath, early, very early. It is a rule of charity, "every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give," 2 *Cor.* ix. 7; what is prepared for Christ, let it be used for him. Notice is taken of the names of these women, "Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James;" grave, matronly women, it should seem they were. Notice is also taken of certain others with them, ver. 1; and again, ver. 10; these, that had not joined in preparing the spices, yet would go along with them to the sepulchre; as if

the number of Christ's friends increased when he was dead, *Jno.* xii. 24, 32. The daughters of Jerusalem, when they saw how inquisitive the spouse was after her beloved, were desirous to seek him with her, *Cant.* vi. 1; so were these other women. The zeal of some provokes others.

II. The surprise they were in, when they found the stone rolled away, and the grave empty, ver. 2, 3. They were much perplexed at that, ver. 4, which they had much reason to rejoice in, that "the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre," by which it appeared that he had a legal discharge, and leave to come out; and that they "found not the body of the Lord Jesus," by which it appeared he had made use of his discharge, and was come out. Note, Good Christians often perplex themselves about that with which they should comfort and encourage themselves.

III. The plain account which they had of Christ's resurrection from two angels, that appeared to them in shining garments, not only white, but bright, and casting a lustre about them; they first saw one angel without the sepulchre, who presently went in and sat with another angel in the sepulchre, "one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain;" so the evangelists may be reconciled. The women when they saw the angels were afraid, lest they had some ill news for them; but instead of inquiring of them, "bowed down their faces to the earth," to look for their dear Master in the grave; they would rather find him in his grave clothes, than angels themselves in their shining garments; a dying Jesus has more beauty in the eyes of a believer than angels themselves. These women like the spouse, when found by the watchmen, (and angels are called watchmen,) enter not into any other conversation with them, but "saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" Now here, 1. They upbraid the women with the absurdity of the search they were making, ver. 5: "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" witness is hereby given to Christ that he is living; of him "it is witnessed that he liveth," *Heb.* vii. 8; and it is the comfort of all the saints, "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" for because he lives we shall live also; but a reproof is given to those that look for him "among the dead," among the dead heroes, that the Gentiles worshipped, as if he were but like one of them; that look for him in an image, or a crucifix, the work of men's hands; or among unwritten traditions, and the inventions of men; and indeed, all they that expect happiness and satisfaction in the creature, or perfection in this imperfect state, may be said to seek the living among the dead.

2. They assure them that he is risen from the dead, ver. 6: "He is not here, but is risen," is risen by his own power. He has quitted his grave, to return no more to it. These angels were competent witnesses, for they had been sent express from heaven with orders for his discharge; and we are sure that their record is true, they durst not tell a lie.

3. They refer them to his own words; "remember what he spake to you when he was yet in Galilee." If they had duly believed and observed the prediction of it, they would easily have believed the thing itself, when it came to pass; and therefore, that the tidings might not be such a surprise to them as it seemed to be, he repeats to them what Christ had often said in their hearing; "The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men;" and though it was done by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, yet they that did it were not the less sinful for doing it. He told them that he must be crucified; surely they could not forget that which they had with so much concern seen fulfilled; and would not that bring to their mind, that which always followed, the "third day he shall rise again?" Observe, these angels from heaven bring not any new gospel, but put them in mind, as the angels of the churches do, of the sayings of Christ, and teach them how to improve and apply them.

IV. Their satisfaction in this account, ver. 8. The women seemed to acquiesce; they "remembered his words," when they were thus put in mind of them, and concluded from thence, if he were risen, it was no more than they had reason to expect; and now were ashamed of the preparations they had made to embalm him on the third day who had often said he would on the third day rise again. Note, A reasonable remembrance of the words of Christ will help us to a right understanding of his providence.

V. The report they brought of this to the apostles; "they returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest" of Christ's disciples, ver. 9. It doth not appear that they were together in a body; they were "scattered every one to his own;" perhaps scarce two or three of them together in the same lodgings; but one went to some of them, and another to others of them, so that in a little time that morning they got them all notice of it. But we are told, ver. 11, how the report was received, "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." They thought it was only the fancy of the women, and imputed it to the power of imagination; for they also had forgotten Christ's words, and wanted to be put in mind of them; not only what he had said to them in Galilee, some time ago, but what he had said very lately, in the night wherein he was betrayed; "again a little while and ye shall see me. I will see you again." One would be amazed at the stupidity of these disciples, who had themselves so often professed that they believed Christ to be the Son of God, and the true Messiah, had been so often told he must die and rise again, and then enter into his glory, had seen him more than once raise the dead, that they should be so backward to believe his raising himself. Surely it would seem the less strange to them, when hereafter this complaint would justly be taken up by them, to remember, that when time was it might justly have been taken up against them: "Who hath believed our report?"

VI. The inquiry which Peter made hereupon, ver. 12. It was Mary Magdalene that brought the report to him, as appears *Jno.* xx. 1, 2; where this story of his running to the sepulchre is more particularly related. 1. Peter hastened to the sepulchre, upon the report; perhaps ashamed of himself, to think that Mary Magdalene should have been there before him; and yet perhaps he had not been so ready to go thither now, if the women had not told him among other things that the watch was fled. Many that are swift-footed enough when there is no danger, are but cow-hearted when there is. Peter now ran to the sepulchre, who but the other day ran from his Master. 2. He looked into the sepulchre, and took notice how orderly the linen clothes in which Christ was wrapped were taken off, and folded up, and laid by themselves, but the body gone. He was very particular in making his observations, as if he would rather credit his own eyes than the testimony of the angels. 3. He went away, as he thought, not much the wiser, "wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." Had he remembered the words of Christ, even this was enough to satisfy him that he was risen from the dead; but having forgotten them, he is only amazed with the thing, and knows not what to make of it. There is many a thing puzzling and perplexing to us, which would be both plain and profitable, if we did but rightly understand the words of Christ, and had them ready to us.

13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusa-

xxiii. 44, 45. Julius Africanus says the heathen historian Thallus calls this darkness an eclipse of the sun; this, however, it could not be. It is stated in the Gemara that the folding doors of the Temple, though locked, suddenly burst open about forty years before the fall of Jerusalem.

xxiii. 54. The sense of this verse is, "and the day was Friday, and Sabbath (Saturday) was approaching." The time answered to our Friday afternoon. The Greek word rendered "drew on" literally

signifies "was dawning," but the meaning of the evangelist is that of our version.

xxiv. 1. The women had purchased the aromatics on Friday evening, and came to the tomb with them on the Sunday morning. The apparently different account of the purchase in *Mark* xvi. 1 is to be explained in accordance with the clearer statement here. The expression, "and certain others with them," is not found in the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS., and is omitted in some modern editions.

lem about threescore furlongs. 14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. 16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. 17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? 18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? 19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. 21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. 22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; 23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. 24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. 25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. 28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. 29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. 30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. 32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? 33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, 34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. 35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

This appearance of Christ to the two disciples going to Emmaus was mentioned, and but just mentioned, before, *Mar. xvi. 12*; here it is largely related. It happened the same day that Christ rose, the first day of the new world that rose with him. One of these two disciples was Cleopas, or Alpheus, said by the ancients to be the brother of Joseph, Christ's supposed father; who the other was is not certain; some think it was Peter. It should seem indeed that Christ did appear particularly to Peter that day, which the eleven spoke

of among themselves, ver. 34, and Paul mentions, *1 Cor. xv. 5*; but it could not be Peter that was one of the two, for he was one of the eleven to whom the two returned. And besides, we know Peter so well as to think, that if he had been one of the two, he would have been the chief speaker, and not Cleopas. It was one of those that were associate with the eleven, mentioned ver. 9. Now in this passage of story we may observe,

First, *The walk and talk of these two disciples*: "they went to a village called Emmaus," which is reckoned to be about two hours' walk from Jerusalem. It is here said to be about sixty furlongs, seven measured miles, ver. 13. Whether they went thither upon business, or to see some friend, doth not appear. I suspect they were going homewards to Galilee, with an intention not to inquire more after this Jesus; that they were meditating a retreat, and stole away from their company, without asking leave, or taking leave; for the accounts brought them that morning of their Master's resurrection seemed to them as idle tales; and if so, no wonder they began to think of making the best of their way home.

But as they travelled they "talked together of all these things which had happened," ver. 14. They had not courage to confer of these things, and consult what was to be done in the present juncture at Jerusalem, for fear of the Jews; but when they were got out of the hearing of the Jews, they could talk it over with more freedom: they talked over these things, reasoning with themselves concerning the probabilities of Christ's resurrection; for according as these appeared they would either go forward or return back to Jerusalem. Note, It well becomes the disciples of Christ, when they are together, to talk of his death and resurrection; thus they may improve one another's knowledge, refresh one another's memory, and stir up one another's devout affections.

Secondly, *The good company they met with upon the road*, when Jesus himself came and joined himself to them; ver. 15, "they communed together and reasoned," and perhaps were warm at the argument; one hoping, that their Master was risen, and would set up his kingdom, the other despairing, "that Jesus himself drew near," as a stranger that, seeing them travel the same way that he went, told them he should be glad of their company.

We may observe it for our encouragement to keep up Christian conference and edifying discourse among us, that where but two together are well employed in work of that kind, Christ will come to them and make a third. When they that fear the Lord speak one to another, the Lord hearkens and hears, and is with them of a truth; so that two thus twisted in faith and love become a threefold cord, not easily broken, *Ecc. iv. 12*. They, in their communings and reasonings together, were searching for Christ, comparing notes concerning him, that they might come to more knowledge of him; and now Christ comes to them. Note, They who seek Christ shall find him; he will manifest himself to those that inquire after him, and give knowledge to those who use the helps for knowledge which they have. When the spouse inquired of the watchmen concerning her Beloved, it was but a little that she passed from them but she found him, *Cant. iii. 4*.

But though they had Christ with them, they were not at first aware of it; ver. 16, "their eyes were holden that they should not know him." It should seem there was both an alteration in the object,—for it is said in *Mark* that now "he appeared in another form,"—and a restraint upon the organ; for here it is said that their eyes were held by a Divine power; or, as some think, there was a confusion in the medium, the air was so disposed that they could not discern who it was. No matter how it was, but so it was, they did not know him; Christ so ordering it that they might the more freely discourse with him, and he with them; and that it might appear that his Word, and the influence of it, did not depend upon his bodily presence, which the disciples had too much doted upon, and must be weaned from. But he could teach them and warm their hearts by others, who should have his spiritual presence with them, and should have his grace going along with them unseen.

Thirdly, *The conference that was between Christ and them*, when he knew them, and they knew not him. Now Christ and his disciples, as is usual when friends meet *incognito*, or in a disguise, are here crossing questions.

1. Christ's first question to them is concerning their present sadness, which plainly appeared in their countenances, ver. 17: "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" It is a very kind and friendly inquiry. Observe,

1st. They were sad; it appeared to a stranger that they were so. First. They had lost their dear Master, and were, in their own apprehensions, quite disappointed in their expectations from him. They had given up the cause, and knew not what course to take to retrieve it. Note, Christ's disciples have reason to be sad when he withdraws from them; to fast when the Bridegroom is taken from them. Secondly. Though he was risen from the dead, yet either they did not know it, or did not believe it, and so they were still in sorrow. Note, Christ's disciples are often sad and sorrowful, even then when they have reason to rejoice, but through the weakness of their faith, they cannot take the comfort that is offered to them. Thirdly. Being sad, they had communications one with another concerning Christ. Note, 1st. It becomes Christians to talk of Christ. Were our hearts as full of him, and of what he has done and suffered for us, as they should be, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth would speak, not only of God and his providence, but of Christ and his grace and love. 2nd. Good company and good converse is an excellent antidote against prevailing melancholy. When Christ's disciples were sad, they did not each one get by himself, but continued as he sent them out, two and two, for two is better than one, especially in times of sorrow. Giving vent to the grief may perhaps give ease to the grieved; and by talking it over, we may talk ourselves, or our friends may talk us, into a better frame. Joint-mourners should be mutual comforters; comforts sometimes come best from such.

2nd. Christ came up to them and inquired into the matter of their talk, and the cause of their grief: "What manner of communications are these?" Though Christ was now entered into his state of exaltation, yet he continued tender of his disciples, and concerned for their comfort. He speaks as one troubled to see their melancholy: "Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day," *Gen. xl. 7*. Note, Our Lord Jesus takes notice of the sorrow and sadness of his disciples, and is afflicted in their afflictions. Christ has hereby taught us, First. To be conversable. Christ here fell into discourse with two grave, serious persons, though he was a stranger to them, and they knew him not; and they readily embraced it. It doth not become Christians to be morose and shy, but to take pleasure in good society. Secondly. We are hereby taught to be compassionate. When we see our friends in sorrow and sadness, we should, like Christ here, take cognizance of their grief, and give them the best counsel and comfort we can; "weep with them that weep."

2. In answer to this, they put a question to him concerning his strangeness, ver. 18: "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that are come to pass there in these days?" Observe,

1st. Cleopas gave him a civil answer; he doth not rudely ask him, "What is that to you what we are talking of?" and bid him go about his business. Note, We ought to be civil to those who are civil to us, and to carry ourselves obligingly to all, both in word and deed. It was a dangerous time now with Christ's disciples, yet he was not jealous of this stranger, that he had any design upon

xxiv. 4. The sense of the Greek words rendered "stood by them" is explained by eminent critics to be, "suddenly appeared before them." The angels are described according to the form in which they appeared. Matthew xxviii. 5 speaks of an angel in the singular number; Mark, too (xvi. 5), speaks of an angel as a young man; from which some have inferred that the narratives are inconsistent with each other. Lessing says, "First one appeared, and then another; first in this place, then in that; now in company, now alone." On

this and other presumed discrepancies in the Gospel narratives of the resurrection, it is impossible to dwell in these brief notes. The subject has been ably treated of by the more recent critical commentators, and by the best writers upon the life of Christ. The incidental variations are no more than must be expected in accounts of events which followed one another rapidly, and were related by persons whose mental condition must have been one of great anxiety and excitement.

them, to inform against them, or bring them into trouble. Charity is not forward to think evil, nor, not of strangers.

2nd. He is full of Christ himself, and of his death and sufferings, and wonders that every body else is not so too. "What, art thou such a stranger in Jerusalem as not to know what has been done to our Master there?" Note, Those are strangers indeed in Jerusalem that know not of the death and sufferings of Christ. What, are they daughters of Jerusalem, and yet so little acquainted with Christ, as to ask, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?"

3rd. He is very willing to inform this stranger concerning Christ, and to draw on farther discourse with him upon this subject. He would not have any one that had the face of a man to be ignorant of Christ. Note, Those who have themselves the knowledge of Christ crucified should do what they can to spread that knowledge, and lead others into an acquaintance with him. And it is observable, these disciples that were so forward to instruct the stranger were instructed by him; for to him that has, and uses what he has, shall be given.

4th. It appears, by what Cleopas saith, that the death of Christ made a mighty noise in Jerusalem, so that it could not be imagined any man should be such a stranger in the city as not to know of it. It was all the talk of the town, and discoursed of in all companies. Thus the matter of fact came to be universally known, which, after the pouring out of the Spirit, was to be explained.

3. Christ, by way of reply, asks concerning their knowledge; ver. 19, "he said unto them, What things?" thus making himself yet more a stranger. Observe, 1st. Jesus Christ made light of his own sufferings in comparison with the joy set before him, which was the recompence of it. Now he was entering upon his glory, see with what unconcernedness he looks back upon his sufferings. "What things?" He had reason to know what things, for to him they were bitter things, and heavy things; and yet he asks, "What things?" The sorrow was forgotten for joy that the Manchild of our salvation was born. He took pleasure in infirmities for our sakes, to teach us to do so for his sake. 2nd. Those whom Christ will teach he will first examine how far they have learned; they must tell him what things they know, and then he will tell them what was the meaning of these things, and lead them into the mystery of them.

4. They hereupon give him a particular account concerning Christ, and the present posture of his affairs. Observe the story they tell, ver. 19, &c.

1st. Here is a summary of Christ's life and character. The things they are full of are "concerning Jesus of Nazareth;" so he was commonly called, "who was a prophet," a teacher come from God; he preached a true and excellent doctrine, which had manifestly its rise from heaven, and its tendency towards heaven; he confirmed it by many glorious miracles, miracles of mercy, so that he was "mighty in deed and word before God and all the people," that is, he was both a mighty favourite of Heaven and a mighty blessing to this earth. He was, and appeared to be, greatly beloved of God, and much the darling of his people. He had great acceptance with God, and a great reputation in the country. Many are great before all the people, and are caressed by them, who are not so before God, as the scribes and Pharisees; but Christ was mighty both in his doctrine and in his doings, "before God and all the people." Those were strangers in Jerusalem that did not know this.

2nd. Here is a modest narrative of his sufferings and death, ver. 20. Though he was so dear both to God and man, yet "the chief priests and our rulers," in contempt of both, "delivered him" to the Roman power, "to be condemned to death, and they have crucified him." It is strange they did not aggravate the matter more, and lay more load upon those that had been guilty of crucifying Christ; but perhaps, because they spoke to one that was a stranger, they thought it prudent to avoid all reflections upon the chief priests and their rulers, how just soever.

3rd. Here is an intimation of their disappointment in him, as the reason of their sadness; "we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel," ver. 21; we are of those who not only looked upon him to be a prophet, like Moses, but, like him, a redeemer too. He was depended upon, and great things expected from him, by them that looked for redemption, and in it for the consolation of Israel. Now if "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," hope disappointed, especially such a hope, kills the heart dead. But see how they made that the ground of their despair which, if they had understood it aright, was the surest ground of their hope, and that was the dying of the Lord Jesus; "we trusted," say they, "that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel." And is it not he that doth redeem Israel? Nay, is he not by his death paying the price of their redemption? was it not necessary, in order to his saving Israel from their sins, that he should suffer? So that now that most difficult part of his undertaking was got over, they had more reason than ever to trust that this is he that shall deliver Israel; yet now they are ready to give up the cause.

4th. Here is an account of their present amazement with reference to his resurrection. *First*, "This is the third day" since he was crucified and died, and that was the day when it was expected, if ever, that he should rise again, and rise in glory and outward pomp, and shew himself as publicly in honour as he had been shewn three days before in disgrace; but we see no sign of it. Nothing appears, as we expected, to the conviction and confusion of his prosecutors, and the consolation of his disciples; but all is silent. *Secondly*, They own that there was a report among them that he was risen, but they seem to speak of it very slightly, and as what they gave no credit at all to; ver. 22, 23, "certain women also of our company made us astonished," and that was all, "which were early at the sepulchre, and found the body gone;" and they said they had "seen a vision of angels, which said he was alive." But we are ready to think it was only their fancy, and no real thing, for angels would have been sent to the apostles, not to the women, and women are easily imposed upon. *Thirdly*, They acknowledge that some of the apostles had made a visit to the sepulchre, and found it empty; ver. 24, but "him they saw not," and therefore we have reason to fear that he is not risen; for if he were, surely he would have shewn himself to them. So that, upon the whole matter, we have no great reason to think that he is risen, and therefore have no expectations from him now. Our hopes were all nailed to his cross, and buried in his grave.

5th. Our Lord Jesus, though not known by face to them, makes himself known to them by his word.

First, He reproves them for their incogitancy, and the weakness of their faith in the Scriptures of the Old Testament; ver. 25, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe." When Christ forbade us to say to our brother, "Thou fool," it was intended to restrain us from giving unreasonable reproaches, not from giving just reproofs. Christ called them fools, not as it signifies wicked men, in which sense he forbade it us, but as it signifies weak men. He might call them fools, for he knows our foolishness, the foolishness that is bound in our hearts. They are fools that act against their own interest; so they did who would not admit the evidence given them that their Master was risen, but put away the comfort of it. That which is condemned in them as their foolishness is, 1st. Their slowness to believe. Believers are branded as fools by

atheists, and infidels, and free-thinkers, and their most holy faith censured as a fond credulity; but Christ tells us that those are fools who are slow of heart to believe, and are kept from it by prejudices never impartially examined. 2nd. Their slowness to believe the writings of the prophets. He doth not so much blame them for their slowness to believe the testimony of the women and of the angels, but for that which was the cause thereof—their slowness to believe the prophets; for if they had given the prophets of the Old Testament their due weight and consideration, they would have been as sure of Christ's rising from the dead that morning, being the third day after his death, as they were of the rising of the sun; for the series and succession of events, as it is settled by prophecy, is no less certain and inviolable than as it is settled by providence; were we but more conversant with the Scripture, and the Divine counsels as far as they are made known in the Scripture, we should not be subject to such perplexities as we often entangle ourselves in.

Secondly, He shews them that the sufferings of Christ, which were such a stumblingblock to them, and made them unfit to believe his glory, were really the appointed way to his glory, and he could not go to it any other way; ver. 26, "Ought not Christ" (the Messiah) "to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" was it not decreed, and was not that decree declared, that the promised Messiah must first suffer and then reign? that he must go by his cross to his crown? Had they never read the 53rd of *Isaiah* and the 9th of *Daniel*, where the prophets speak so very plainly of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow? 1 *Pet.* i. 11. The cross of Christ was it that they could not reconcile themselves to; now here he shews them two things, which take off the offence of the cross: 1st. That the Messiah ought to suffer these things; and therefore his sufferings were not only no objection against his being the Messiah, but really a proof of it,—as the afflictions of the saints are an evidence of their sonship,—and they were so far from ruining their expectations, that really they were the foundation of their hopes. He could not have been a Saviour if he had not been a sufferer. Christ's undertaking our salvation was voluntary, but having undertaken it, it was necessary he should suffer and die. 2nd. That when he had suffered these things, he should enter into his glory, which he did at his resurrection; that was his first step upwards. Observe, It is called his glory, because he was duly entitled to it, and it was the glory he had before the world was; he ought to enter into it, for in that, as well as in his sufferings, the Scripture must be fulfilled. He ought to suffer first, and then to enter into his glory; and thus the reproach of the cross is for ever rolled away; and we are directed to expect the crown of thorns, and then that of glory.

Thirdly, He expounded to them the Scriptures of the Old Testament which spake of the Messiah, and shewed them how they were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, and now can tell them more concerning him than they could before tell him; ver. 27, "beginning at Moses," the first inspired writer of the Old Testament, he went in order through "all the prophets," and "expounded to them the things concerning himself," shewing that the sufferings he had now gone through were so far from defeating the prophecies of the Scripture concerning him, that they were the accomplishment of them. He began at Moses, who recorded the first promise, in which it was plainly foretold that the Messiah should have his heel bruised, but that by it the serpent's head should be incurably broken. Note, 1st. There are things dispersed throughout all the Scriptures concerning Christ which it is of great advantage to have collected and put together. You cannot go far in any part of Scripture but you meet with something that has reference to Christ, some prophecy, some promise, some prayer, some type or other; for he is the true treasure hid in the field of the Old Testament. A golden thread of gospel grace runs through the whole web of the Old Testament; there is an eye of that white to be discerned in every place. 2nd. The things concerning Christ need to be expounded. The eunuch, though a scholar, would not pretend to understand them except some man should guide him, *Acts* viii. 31; for they were delivered darkly according to that dispensation; but now the veil is taken away, the New Testament expounds the Old. 3rd. Jesus Christ is himself the best expositor of Scripture, particularly the Scriptures concerning himself; and even after his resurrection it was in this way that he led people into the knowledge of the mystery concerning himself; not by advancing new notions independent upon the Scripture, but by shewing how the Scripture was fulfilled, and turning them over to the study of them. Even the *Apocalypse* itself is but a second part of the Old Testament prophecies, and has continually an eye to them. "If men believe not Moses and the prophets," they are incurable. 4th. In studying the Scriptures it is good to be methodical, and to take them in order; for the Old Testament light shone gradually to the perfect day; and it is good to observe how, at sundry times and in divers manners, (subsequent predictions improving and giving light to the preceding ones,) God spake to the fathers concerning his Son, by whom he has now spoken to us. Some begin their Bible at the wrong end, that study the *Revelations* first; but Christ has here taught us to begin at Moses. Thus far the conference between them.

Fourthly, Here is the discovery which Christ at length made of himself to them. One would have given a great deal for a copy of the sermon Christ preached to them by the way, of that exposition of the Bible he gave them, but it is not thought fit we should have it, we have the substance of it in other Scriptures; the disciples are so charmed with it, that they think they are come too soon to their journey's end; but so it is: "they drew nigh to the village whither they went," ver. 28, where, it should seem, they determined to take up for that night. And now,

1. They courted his stay with them. "He made as though he would have gone further." He did not say he would, but he seemed to them to be going further, and did not readily turn in to their friend's house, which it would not be decent for a stranger to do unless he were invited: he would have gone further if they had not courted his stay; so that here was nothing like dissimulation in the case. If a stranger be shy, every one knows the meaning of it; he will not thrust himself rudely upon your house or company; but if you make it appear that you are freely desirous of him for your guest or companion, he knows not but he may accept your invitation. And this was all that Christ did when "he made as though he would have gone further." Note, Those that would have Christ dwell with them must invite him, and be importunate with him. Though he is often found of those that seek him not, yet those only that seek can be sure to find; and if he seem to draw off from us, it is but to draw out our importunity; as here, "they constrained him;" both of them laid hold on him with a kind and friendly violence, saying, "Abide with us." Note, Those that have experienced the pleasure and profit of communion with Christ, cannot but covet more of his company, and beg of him, not only to walk with them all day, but to abide with them at night. When "the day is far spent," and "it is towards evening," we begin to think of retiring for our repose, and then it is proper to have our eye to Christ, and beg of him to "abide with us," to manifest himself to us, and to fill our minds with good thoughts of him, and good affections to him. Christ yielded to their importunity; "he went in to tarry with them." Thus ready is Christ to give farther instructions and comforts to those who improve what they have received. He has promised, that if any man open the door to bid him welcome, he will come in to him, *Rev.* iii. 10.

xxiv. 10. Although three names only are mentioned here, the reader must note that the evangelist refers to "other women." Matt. xxviii. 1 only names two women—two of the Maries. Mark xvi. 1 also names the two Maries, and adds Salome. John xx. 1 only mentions Mary Magdalene. Thus we find the names of four women, and an intimation that there were more. It is therefore mere idleness to say that the evangelists contradict each other in this matter. Each records some of the facts, and all the records agree.

xxiv. 13. This beautiful episode is peculiar to Luke, although the fact is referred to in Mark xvi. 12. The village of Emmaus was about sixty furlongs (between seven and eight miles) from Jerusalem, according to the ordinary reading. There is, however, another reading, which makes the distance a hundred and sixty furlongs, or over twenty miles from the city. The smaller number is most in accordance with internal probability, and by far the best supported by the evidence of MSS. and versions. The difference is important only as

2. He manifested himself to them, ver. 30, 31. We may suppose he continued his discourse with them, which he began upon the road; for thou must talk of the things of God "when thou sittest in the house, as well as when thou walkest by the way." While supper was a getting ready, which perhaps was soon done, the provision was so small and mean, it is likely he entertained them with such communication as was good and to the use of edifying; and so likewise as they sat at meat, his lips fed them. But still they little thought that it was Jesus himself that was all this while talking with them, till at length he was pleased to throw off his disguise, and then to withdraw.

1st. They began to suspect it was he, when, as they sat down to meat, he undertook the office of the master of the feast, which he performed so like himself, and like what he used to do among his disciples, that by it they discerned him; "he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them." This he did with his usual air both of authority and affection, with the same gestures and mien, with the same expressions, perhaps, in craving a blessing, and in giving the bread to them. This was not a miraculous meal, like that of the five loaves, nor a sacramental meal, like that of the eucharist, but a common meal, yet Christ here did the same as he did in those, to teach us to keep up our communion with God through Christ in common providences, as well as in special ordinances, and to crave a blessing and give thanks at every meal, and to see our daily bread provided for us, and broken to us, by the hand of Jesus Christ, the Master, not only of the great family, but of all our families. Wherever we sit down to eat, let us set Christ at the upper end of the table, take our meat as blessed to us by him, and eat and drink to his glory, and receive contentedly and thankfully what he is pleased to carve out to us, be the fare never so coarse and mean; we may well receive it cheerfully, if we can by faith see it coming to us from Christ's hand, and with his blessing.

2nd. Presently "their eyes were opened," and then they saw who it was, and knew him well enough; whatever it was which had hitherto concealed him from them, it was now taken out of the way; the mists were scattered, the veil taken off, and then they made no question but it was their Master. He might, for wise and holy ends, put on the shape of another, but no other could put on his, and therefore it must be he. See how Christ, by his Spirit and grace, makes himself known to the souls of his people. *First*. He opens the Scriptures to them, for they are they which testify of him, to those who search them, and search for him in them. *Secondly*. He meets them at his table in the ordinance of the Lord's supper, and commonly there makes farther discoveries of himself to them; is "known to them in the breaking of bread;" but, *Thirdly*. The work is completed by the opening of the eyes of their mind, and causing the scales to fall off from them, as from Paul's in his conversion. If he that gives the revelation do not give the understanding, we are in the dark still.

3rd. He immediately disappeared; "he vanished out of their sight:" ἀφαντος ἐγένετο.—he withdrew himself from them; slipped away of a sudden, and went out of sight: or, he became not visible by them; was made inconspicuous from them. It should seem that though Christ's body, after his resurrection, was the very same body in which he suffered and died, as appeared by the marks in it, yet it was so far changed as to become either visible or not visible, as he thought fit to make it, which was a step towards its being made a glorious body. As soon as he had given his disciples one glimpse of him, he was gone presently. Such short and transient views have we of Christ in this world, we see him, but in a little while lose the sight of him again; when we come to heaven, the vision of him will have no interruptions.

Fifthly. Here is the reflection which these disciples made upon this conference, and the report they made of it to their brethren at Jerusalem.

1. The reflection they each of them made upon the influence which Christ's discourse had upon them; ver. 32, "they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us?" I am sure mine did, saith one; and so did mine, saith the other; I never was so affected with any discourse in all my life. Thus do they not so much compare notes as compare hearts, in review of the sermon Christ had preached to them. They found the preaching powerful, even when they knew not the preacher; it made things very plain and clear to them; and, which was more, brought a Divine heat, with a Divine light, into their souls, such as put their hearts into a glow, and kindled a holy fire of pious and devout affections in them. Now this they take notice of for the confirming of their belief, that it was indeed, as at last they saw, Jesus himself that had been talking with them all along: What fools were we that we were not sooner aware who it was! for none but he, no word but his, could make our hearts burn within us as they did; it must be he that has the key of the heart, it could be no other. See here,

1st. What preaching is likely to do good, such as Christ's was; plain preaching, and that which is familiar and level to our capacity; "he talked with us by the way;" and scriptural preaching; he "opened to us the Scriptures," the Scriptures relating to himself. Ministers should shew people their religion in their Bibles, and that they preach no other doctrine to them but what is there; must shew that they make that the fountain of their knowledge, and the foundation of their faith. Note, The expounding of those Scriptures which speak of Christ has a direct tendency to warm the hearts of his disciples, both to quicken them and to comfort them.

2nd. What hearing is likely to do good; that which makes the heart burn; when we are much affected with the things of God, especially with the love of Christ in dying for us, and have our hearts thereby drawn out in love to him, and drawn up in holy desires and devotions, then "our hearts burn within us," when our hearts are raised and elevated, and are as the sparks which fly upward towards God; and when they are kindled and carried out with a holy zeal and indignation against sin, both in others and in ourselves, and we are in some measure refined and purified from it by the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning, then we may say, through grace our hearts are thus inflamed.

3. The report they brought of this to their brethren at Jerusalem: ver. 33, "they rose up the same hour;" so transported with joy at this discovery Christ had made of himself to them, that they could not stay to make an end of their supper, but returned with all speed to Jerusalem, though it was towards evening. If they had had any thoughts of quitting their relation to Christ, this soon banished all such thoughts out of their mind, and there needed no more to send them back to his flock. However, it should seem they intended at least to take up their quarters to-night at Emmaus, but now they had seen Christ, they could not rest till they had brought the good news to the disciples, both for the confirmation of their trembling faith, and for the comfort of their sorrowful spirits, with the same comforts wherewith they were comforted of God. Note, It is the duty of those to whom Christ hath manifested himself to let others know what he has done for their souls. When thou art converted, instructed, comforted, strengthen thy brethren. These disciples were full of this matter themselves, and must go to their brethren to give vent to their joys, as well as to give them satisfaction that their Master was risen. Observe,

1st. How they found them, just when they came in among them, discoursing on the same subject, and relating another proof of the resurrection of Christ. They found the eleven, and those that were their usual companions gathered together late in the night, to pray together, it may be, and to consider what was to be done in this juncture; and they found them saying among them-

selves, (λέγοντες, it is the saying of the eleven, not of the two, as is plain by the original,) and when these two came in, they repeated to them, with joy and triumph, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon," ver. 34. That Peter had a sight of him before the rest of the disciples had, appears, 1 Cor. xv. 5, where it is said, "he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve." The angel having ordered the women to tell Peter of it particularly, Mar. xvi. 7, for his comfort, it is highly probable that our Lord Jesus did himself presently the same day appear to Peter, though we have no particular narrative of it, to confirm the word of his messengers. This he had related to his brethren; but observe, Peter doth not here proclaim it, and boast of it himself; he thought that did not become a penitent; but the other disciples speak of it with exultation, "The Lord is risen indeed;" ὁ ὢντος, 'really,' it is now past dispute; no room is left to doubt it, for he has appeared not only to the women, but to Simon.

2nd. How they seconded their evidence with an account of what they had seen: ver. 35, "they told what things were done in the way." The words that were spoken by Christ to them in the way having a wonderful effect and influence upon them, are here called the things that were done in the way; for the words that Christ speaks are not an empty sound, but "they are spirit, and they are life," and wondrous things are done by them; done by the way, by the by, as it were, where it is not expected. They told also how he was at length "known to them in the breaking of bread;" then, when he was carrying out blessings to them, God opened their eyes to discern who it was. Note, It would be of great use for the discovery and confirmation of truth, if the disciples of Christ would compare their observations and experiences, and communicate to each other what they know and have felt in themselves.

36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. 38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. 40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? 42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. 43 And he took it, and did eat before them. 44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And ye are witnesses of these things. 49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Five times Christ was seen the same day that he rose: by Mary Magdalene alone in the garden, Jno. xx. 14; by the women, as they were going to tell the disciples, Mat. xxviii. 9; by Peter alone; by the two disciples going to Emmaus, and now, at night, by the eleven, which we have an account of in these verses, as also, Jno. xx. 19. Observe,

1. The great surprise which his appearing gave them. He came in among them very reasonably, as they were comparing notes concerning the proofs of his resurrection: "as they thus spake," and were ready perhaps to put it to the question, whether the proofs produced amounted to evidence sufficient of their Master's resurrection, or no, and how they should proceed, "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them," and put it out of question. Note, Those who make the best use they can of their evidences for their comfort, may expect farther assurances, and that the Spirit of Christ will witness with their spirits (as Christ here witnessed with the disciples, and confirmed their testimony,) that they are the children of God, and risen with Christ. Observe,

1. The comfort Christ spoke to them: "Peace be unto you." This intimates in general, that it was a kind visit which Christ now made them, a visit of love and friendship. Though they had very unkindly deserted him in his sufferings, yet he takes the first opportunity of seeing them together; for he deals not with us as we deserve. They did not credit those who had seen him, therefore he comes himself, that they might not continue in their disconsolate incredulity. He had promised that after his resurrection he would see them in Galilee; but so desirous was he to see them, and satisfy them, that he anticipated the appointment, and sees them at Jerusalem. Note, Christ is often better than his word, but never worse. Now his first word to them was,

connected with the site of Emmaus. One Emmaus is represented by Amwas, the Greek Nicopolis, twenty-two Roman miles from Jerusalem, and this has been regarded as the place intended by Luke, from the time of Eusebius at least. Dr. Robinson says this view prevailed for thirteen centuries, and was not questioned till modern times. The writer mentioned gives the arguments on both sides, and concludes in favour of Nicopolis ("Biblical Researches," vol. iii. 146, &c.). Another claimant to the honour is a place now called El-

Kubeibeh, which is about nine miles from Jerusalem. In favour of the more distant locality we now have the authority of the Sinaitic MS., which herein differs from the Vatican MS., the Peshito-Syriac, and the weight of documentary evidence.

xiv. 18. We learn from this that one of the two disciples was named Cleopas, but who the other was is unknown. Origen thought it was Simon; Epiphanius calls him Nathanael; Theophylact believed it was Luke himself, and so Lange thinks.

"Peace be to you," not in a way of compliment, but of consolation. This was a common form of salutation among the Jews, and Christ would thus express his usual familiarity with them, though he was now entered into his state of exaltation. Many, when they are advanced, forget their old friends, and take state upon them, but we see Christ as free with them as ever. Thus Christ would at the first word intimate to them that he did not come to quarrel with Peter for denying him, and the rest for outrunning him; no, he came peaceably, to signify to them that he had forgiven them, and was reconciled to them.

2. The fright which they put themselves into upon it; ver. 37, "they were terrified, supposing that they had seen a spirit," because he came in among them without any noise, and was in the midst of them ere they were aware. The word used, *Mat. xiv. 26*, when they said, "It is a spirit," is *φάντασμα*. It is a spectre, an apparition; but the word here used is *πνεῦμα*, the word that properly signifies a spirit; they supposed it to be a spirit not clothed with a real body. Though we have an alliance and correspondence with the world of spirits, and are hastening to it, yet while we are here in this world of sense and matter, it is a terror to us to have a spirit so far change its own nature as to become visible to us, and conversable with us, for it is something and bodes something very extraordinary.

11. The great satisfaction which his discourse gave them, wherein we have,

First. The reproof he gave them for their causeless fears; ver. 38, "Why are ye troubled, and why do frightful thoughts arise in your hearts?" Observe here, 1. That when at any time we are troubled, thoughts are apt to rise in our hearts that do us hurt. Sometimes the trouble is the effect of the thoughts that arise in our hearts; our griefs and fears take rise from those things that are the creatures of our own fancy. Sometimes the thoughts arising in the heart are the effect of the trouble; without are fightings, and then within are fears. Those that are melancholy and troubled in mind, have thoughts arising in their hearts which reflect dishonour upon God, and create disquiet to themselves: "I am cut off from thy sight." "The Lord has forsaken and forgotten me."

2. That many of the troublesome thoughts with which our minds are disquieted arise from our mistakes concerning Christ. They here thought they had seen a spirit when they saw Christ, and that put them into this fright. We forget that Christ is our elder brother, and look upon him to be at as great a distance from us as the world of spirits is from this world, and therewith terrify ourselves. When Christ is by his Spirit convincing and humbling us, when he is by his providence trying and converting us, we mistake him, as if he designed our hurt, and that troubles us.

3. That all the troublesome thoughts which rise in our hearts at any time are known to the Lord Jesus, even at the first rise of them, and they are displeasing to him. He chid his disciples for such thoughts, to teach us to chide ourselves for them. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou troubled? why do thoughts arise that are neither true nor good, that have neither foundation nor fruit, but hinder our joy in God, disfit us for our duty, give advantage to Satan, and deprive us of the comforts laid up for us.

Secondly. The proof he gave them of his resurrection, both for the silencing of their fears, by convincing them that he was not a spirit, and for the strengthening of their faith in that doctrine which they were to preach to the world, by giving them a full satisfaction concerning his resurrection, which, if not true, their faith and preaching was all vain. Two proofs he gives them:

1. He shews them his body, particularly "his hands and his feet." They saw that he had the shape and features and exact resemblance of their Master; but is it not his ghost? No, saith Christ, "Behold my hands and feet; you see I have hands and feet, and therefore have a true body; you see I can move these hands and feet, and therefore have a living body; and you see the marks of the nails in my hands and feet, and therefore it is my own body, the same that you saw crucified, and not a borrowed one. He lays down this principle, that "a spirit has not flesh and bones;" it is not compounded of gross matter, shaped into various members, and consisting of divers heterogeneous parts, as our bodies are. He doth not tell us what a spirit is,—it is time enough to know that when we go to the world of spirits,—but what it is not, it "has not flesh and bones." Now hence he infers, it is I myself, whom you have been so intimately acquainted with, and have had such familiar conversation with; it is I myself, whom you have reason to rejoice in, and not to be afraid of. Those who know Christ aright, and know him as theirs, will have no reason to be terrified at his appearances, at his approaches.

He appeals to their sight, shews them his hands and his feet, which were pierced with the nails. Christ retained the marks of them in his glorified body, that they might be proofs that it was he himself, and he was willing they should be seen. He afterwards shewed them to Thomas, for he is not ashamed of his sufferings for us; little reason then have we to be ashamed of them, or of ours for him. As he shewed his wounds here to his disciples for the enforcing of his instructions to them, so he shewed them to his Father for the enforcing of his intercessions with him. He appears in heaven "as a Lamb that had been slain," *Rev. v. 6*; his blood speaks, *Heb. xii. 24*. He makes intercession in the virtue of his satisfaction; he saith to the Father, as here to the disciples, "Behold my hands and my feet," *2 Cor. xiii. 6, 7*.

He appeals to their touch; "handle me, and see." He would not let Mary Magdalene touch him at that time, *Jno. xx. 17*; but the disciples here are intrusted to do it, that they who were to preach his resurrection, and to suffer for doing so, might be themselves abundantly satisfied concerning it. He bade them handle him, that they might be convinced that he was not a spirit. If there were really no spirits, or apparitions of spirits, as by this and other instances it is plain the disciples did believe there were, now had been a proper time for Christ to have undeceived them, by telling them there were no such things; but he seems to take it for granted that there have been, and may be, apparitions of spirits, else what need so much pains to prove that he was not one? There were many heretics in the primitive times,—atheists, I rather think they were, who said that Christ had never any substantial body, but that it was a mere phantasm, which was neither really born, nor truly suffered. Such wild notions as these, we are told, the Valentians and Manichees had, and the followers of Simon Magus; they were called *δοκίμας* and *φαντασμάτις*. Blessed be God, these heresies are long since buried; and we know, and are sure, that Jesus Christ was no spirit or apparition, but had a true and real body, even after his resurrection.

2. He eats with them, to shew that he had a real and true body; and that he was willing to converse freely and familiarly with his disciples, as one friend with another. St. Peter lays a great stress upon this, *Acts x. 41*, "We did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead."

1st. When they saw his hands and his feet, yet they knew not what to say; "they believed not for joy, and wondered," ver. 14. It was their infirmity that they believed not, that yet they believed not, *ἐν τῇ ἀπιστοῦντων αὐτῶν*, "they as yet being unbelievers." This very much corroborates the truth of Christ's resurrection, that the disciples were so slow to believe it. Instead of stealing away his body, and saying he is risen when he is not, as the chief priests suggested they would do, they are ready to say again and again, he is not risen when he is. Their being incredulous of it at first, and insinuating upon the utmost proofs of it, shews, that when afterwards they did believe it, and ventured their all upon it, it was not but upon the fullest demonstration of the

thing that could be. But though it was their infirmity, yet it was an excusable one; for it was not from any contempt of the evidence offered them that they believed not; but, *First*, "They believed not for joy;" as Jacob, when he was told that Joseph was alive; they thought it too good news to be true. When the faith and hope are therefore weak, because the love and desires are strong, that weak faith shall be helped, and not rejected. *Secondly*, They wondered; they thought it not only too good but too great to be true, forgetting both the Scriptures and the power of God.

2nd. For their farther conviction and encouragement he called for some meat. He sat down to meat with the two disciples at Emmaus, but it is not said that he did eat with them; now lest that should be made an objection, he here did actually eat with them and the rest, to shew that his body was really and truly returned to life; though he did not eat and drink, and converse constantly with them as he had done, (and as Lazarus did after his resurrection, who not only returned to life, but to his former state of life, and to die again,) because it was not agreeable to the economy of that state he was risen to. "They gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb," ver. 42. The honeycomb perhaps was used as sauce to the broiled fish, for Canaan was a land flowing with honey. This was mean fare; yet if it be the fare of the disciples, their Master will fare as they do, because in the kingdom of our Father they shall fare as he does, shall eat and drink with him in his kingdom.

Thirdly. The insight he gave them into the word of God, which they had heard and read, by which faith in the resurrection of Christ is wrought in them, and all the difficulties cleared.

1. He refers them to the word which they had heard from him, when he was with them, and puts them in mind of that, as the angel had done, ver. 44: "These are the words which I said unto you," in private, many a time, "while I was yet with you." We should better understand what Christ doth, if we did but remember what he hath said, and had but the art of comparing them together.

2. He refers them to the word they had read in the Old Testament, which the word they had heard from him directed them to; "all things must be fulfilled which were written." Christ had given them this general hint, for the regulating of their expectations, that whatever they found written concerning the Messiah in the Old Testament must be fulfilled in him, what was written concerning his sufferings, as well as what was written concerning his kingdom, those God had joined together in the prediction, and it could not be thought they should be put asunder in the event. All things must be fulfilled, even the hardest, even the heaviest, even the vinegar; he could not die till he had that, because he could not till then say, "It is finished." The several parts of the Old Testament are here mentioned, as containing each of them things concerning Christ: "the law of Moses," that is, the Pentateuch, or the five books written by Moses; "the prophets," containing not only the books that are purely prophetic, but those historical books that were written by prophetic men. "The Psalms" contain also the other writings, which they called the Hagiographa. See in what various ways of writing God did of old reveal his will; but all proceeded from one and the selfsame Spirit, who by them gave notice of the coming and kingdom of the Messiah; for "to him bare all the prophets witness."

3. By an immediate present work upon their minds, which they themselves could not but be sensible of; he gave them to apprehend the true intent and meaning of the Old Testament prophecies of Christ, and to see them all fulfilled in him, ver. 45: "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." In his discourse with the two disciples, he took the veil from off the text by opening the Scriptures; here he took the veil from off the heart by opening the mind. Observe here, 1st. That Jesus Christ by his Spirit operates on the minds of men, on the minds of all that are his. He has access to our spirits, and can immediately influence them. It is observable how he did now, after his resurrection, give a specimen of those two great operations of his Spirit upon the spirits of men: his enlightening the intellectual faculties with a Divine light, when he opened the understandings of his disciples, and his invigorating of the active powers with a Divine heat, when he made their hearts burn within them. 2nd. Even good men need to have their understandings opened; for though they are not darkness, as they were by nature, yet in many things they are in the dark. David prays, "Open mine eyes; give me an understanding;" and St. Paul, that knows so much of Christ, sees his need to learn more. 3rd. Christ's ways of working faith in the soul, and gaining the throne there, is by opening the understanding to discern the evidence of those things that are to be believed. Thus he comes into the soul by the door, while Satan, as a thief and a robber, climbs up some other way. 4th. The design of opening the understanding is that we may understand the Scriptures; not that we may be wise above what is written, but that we may be wiser in what is written, and may be made wise to salvation by it. The Spirit in the Word, and the Spirit in the heart, say the same thing. Christ's scholars never learn above their Bibles in this world; but they need to be learning still more and more out of their Bibles, and to grow more ready and mighty in the Scriptures. That we may have right thoughts of Christ, and our mistakes concerning him rectified, there needs no more but to be made to understand the Scriptures.

Fourthly. The instructions he gave them as apostles, who were to be employed in setting up his kingdom in the world. They expected, while their Master was with them, that they should be preferred to posts of honour, which they thought themselves quite disappointed of when he was dead. "No," saith he, "you are now to enter upon them;" "ye are to be witnesses of these things," ver. 48; to carry the notice of them to all the world; not only to report them as matter of news, but to assert them as evidence given upon the trial of the great cause that has been so long depending between God and Satan, the issue of which must be the casting down and casting out of the prince of this world. You are fully assured of these things yourselves, you are eye and ear witnesses of them, go and assure the world of them; and the same Spirit that has enlightened you shall go along with you for the enlightening of others. Now here they are told,

1. What they must preach. They must preach the Gospel, must preach the New Testament, as the full accomplishment of the Old, as the continuation and conclusion of Divine revelation. They must take their Bibles along with them, (especially when they preached to the Jews; nay, and Peter in his first sermon to the Gentiles, directed them to consult the prophets, *Acts x. 43*;) and must shew people how it was written of old concerning the Messiah, and the glories and graces of his kingdom, and then must tell them how upon their certain knowledge all this was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus.

2. The great gospel truth concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ must be published to the children of men, ver. 46: "Thus it was written," in the sealed book of the Divine counsels from eternity, the volume of that book of the covenant of redemption, and thus it was written in the open book of the Old Testament, among the things revealed, and therefore "thus it behoved Christ to suffer," for the Divine counsels must be performed, and care taken that no word of God fall to the ground. Go and tell the world, *First*, That Christ suffered, as it was written of him. Go preach Christ crucified; be not ashamed of his cross, not ashamed of a suffering Jesus. Tell them

xxiv. 22. It is generally and with reason believed that the speakers were not of the apostolic number; verse 33 must be regarded as conclusive on that point. But it is evident that they were among the devoted and faithful adherents to Christ.

xxiv. 23. Here, what are spoken of, as "two men" in ver. 4, are expressly called angels, though without specifying the number.

xxiv. 27. De Wetts remarks, "It were much to be wished that we knew what prophecies of the death and triumph of Christ are here

meant; there are but few that point to the subject." Upon which Dean Alford well says, "I take the things concerning him to mean something very different from mere prophetic passages. The whole Scriptures are a testimony to him; the whole history of the chosen people, with its types, and its law, and its prophecies, is a showing forth of him; and it was here the whole—all the Scriptures—that he laid out before them." The Hebrew canon was the same as our own for the Old Testament, to the exclusion of books called apocryphal.

what he suffered, and why he suffered, and how all the Scriptures of the Old Testament were fulfilled in his sufferings. Tell them that it behoved him to suffer, that it was necessary to the taking away of the sin of the world, and the deliverance of mankind from death and ruin; nay, it became him to be perfected through sufferings, *Heb. ii. 10*. Secondly, That he rose from the dead on the third day, by which not only all the offence of the cross was rolled away, but he was declared to be the Son of God with power; and in this also the Scriptures were fulfilled: see *1 Cor. xv. 3, 4*. Go tell the world how often you saw him after he rose from the dead, and how intimately you conversed with him. "Your eyes see," (as Joseph said to his brethren, when his discovering of himself to them was as life from the dead,) "that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you," *Gen. xlv. 12*. Go and tell them, then, that he that was dead is alive, and lives for evermore, and has the keys of death and the grave.

2nd. The great gospel duty of repentance must be pressed upon the children of men. Repentance for sin must be preached in Christ's name, and by his authority, *ver. 47*; all men, everywhere must be called and commanded to repent, *Acts xvii. 30*. Go and tell people that the God that made them, and the Lord that bought them, expect and require that, immediately upon this notice given, they turn from the worship of the gods they have made, to the worship of the God that made them; and not only so, but from serving the interests of the world and the flesh, they must turn to the service of God in Christ—must mortify all sinful habits, and forsake all sinful practices; their hearts and lives must be changed, and they must be universally renewed and reformed.

3rd. The great Gospel privilege of the remission of sins must be proposed to all, and assured to all that repent and believe the Gospel. Go tell a guilty world, that stands convicted and condemned at God's bar, that there is an act of indemnity passed the royal assent, which all that repent and believe shall have the benefit of, and not only be pardoned, but preferred by. Tell them there is hope concerning them.

2. To whom they must preach. Whither must they carry these proposals, and how far doth their commission extend? They are here told,

1st. That they must preach this among all nations; they must disperse themselves, like the sons of Noah after the flood, some one way and some another, and carry this light along with them, wherever they went. The prophets had preached repentance and remission to the Jews, but the apostles must preach them to all the world. None are exempted from the obligations the Gospel lays upon men to repent; nor are any excluded from those inestimable benefits which are included in the remission of sins, but those that by their unbelief and impenitency put a bar in their own door.

2nd. That they must begin at Jerusalem: there they must preach their first Gospel sermon; there the Gospel church must be first formed; there the Gospel day must dawn, and thence that light shall go forth which must take hold on the ends of the earth. And why must they begin there? First. Because thus it was written, and therefore it behoved them to take this method. The word of the Lord must go forth from Jerusalem, *Isa. ii. 3*. And see *Joel ii. 32*; *iii. 16*; *Obad. 21*; *Zec. xiv. 8*. Secondly. Because there the matters of fact on which the Gospel was founded were transacted; and therefore there they were first attested, where, if there had been any just cause for it, they might be best contested and disproved. So strong, so bright, is the first shining forth of the glory of the risen Redeemer, that it dares face those daring enemies of his that had put him to an ignominious death, and sets them at defiance. Begin at Jerusalem, that the chief priests may try their strength to crush the Gospel, and may rage to see themselves disappointed. Thirdly. Because he would give us a farther example of forgiving enemies. Jerusalem had put the greatest affronts imaginable upon him, both the rulers and the multitude, for which that city might justly have been excepted by name out of the act of indemnity. No, so far from that, the first offer of gospel grace is made to Jerusalem; and thousands there are in a little time brought to partake of that grace.

3. What assistance they should have in preaching. It is a vast undertaking they are here called to, a very large and difficult province, especially considering the opposition this service would meet with, and the sufferings it would be attended with. If therefore they ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?" here is an answer ready, *ver. 49*. "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, and ye shall be endued with power from on high." He here assures them that in a little time the Spirit should be poured out upon them in greater measures than ever, and they should thereby be furnished with all those gifts and graces which were necessary to their discharge of this great trust; and therefore they must tarry at Jerusalem, and not enter upon it till this be done. Note, 1st. Those who receive the Holy Ghost are thereby endued with a power from on high, a supernatural power—a power above any of their own. It is from on high, and therefore draws the soul upward, and makes it to aim high. 2nd. Christ's apostles could never have planted his Gospel, and set up his kingdom in the world, as they did, if they had not been endued with such a power; and their admirable achievements prove that there was an excellency of power going along with them. 3rd. This power from on high was the promise of the Father, the great promise of the New Testament, as the promise of the coming of Christ was of the Old Testament; and if it be the promise of the Father, we may be sure that the promise is inviolable, and the thing promised invaluable. 4th. Christ would not leave his disciples till the time was just at hand for the performing of this promise. It was but ten days after the ascension of Christ that there came the descent of the Spirit. 5th. Christ's ambassadors must stay till they have their powers, and not venture upon their embassy till they have received full instructions and credentials; though one would think never was such haste as now for the preaching of the Gospel, yet the preachers must tarry till they be endued with power from on high; and tarry at Jerusalem, though a place of danger, because there this promise of the Father was to find them, *Joel ii. 28*.

50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. 51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: 53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

xxiv. 31. The sudden disappearance of our Lord must imply his bodily removal, and not merely that he became invisible. We agree with Hammond that in what manner or by what means he disappeared is unknown; the words do not necessarily imply a miracle.

xxiv. 33. This shows that the two were not of the number of apostles, and favours the opinion that Emmaus was not over twenty miles from Jerusalem, but a moderate walking distance. The apostles and their friends were talking of the strange events of the past day.

xxiv. 36. The Saviour had followed the two disciples back to Jerusalem, and unexpectedly appeared in the company.

xxiv. 37—39. They supposed they saw a ghost or spectre. In their actual state of mind, they could not realise the bodily presence

This evangelist omits the solemn meeting between Christ and his disciples in Galilee; but what he said to them there, and at other interviews, he tacks to what he said to them at the first visit he made them, on the evening of the day he rose; and has now nothing more to account for but his ascension into heaven, which we have a very brief narrative of in these verses; in which we are told.

First. How solemnly Christ took leave of his disciples. Christ's design being to reconcile heaven and earth, and continue a days-man between them, it was necessary he should lay his hands on them both, and in order thereunto that he should pass and repass. He had business to do in both worlds, and accordingly came from heaven to earth in his incarnation, to despatch his business here, which, when he had finished, he returned to heaven to reside there, and negotiate our affairs with the Father. Observe,

1. From whence he ascended; from Bethany, near Jerusalem, adjoining to the mount of Olives. There he had done eminent services for his Father's glory, and there he entered upon his glory. There was the garden in which his sufferings began; there he was in his agony; and Bethany signifies 'the house of sorrow.' Those that would go to heaven must ascend thither from the house of sufferings and sorrows,—must go by agonies to their joys. The mount of Olives was pitched upon long since to be the place of Christ's ascension, *Zec. xiv. 4*; "his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives." And here it was that a while ago he began his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, *ch. xix. 29*.

2. Who were the witnesses of his ascension. He "led out his disciples" to see him. Probably it was very early in the morning that he ascended, before people were stirring, for he never shewed himself openly to all the people after his resurrection, but only to chosen witnesses. The disciples did not see him rise out of the grave, because his resurrection was capable of being proved by their seeing him alive afterwards; but they saw him ascend into heaven, because they could not otherwise have an ocular demonstration of his ascension; they were led out on purpose to see him ascend, had their eye upon him when he ascended, and were not looking another way.

3. What was the farewell he gave them. "He lifted up his hands and blessed them." He did not go away in displeasure, but in love; he left a blessing behind him; "he lifted up his hands," as the high priest did when he blessed the people; see *Lev. ix. 22*. He blessed as one having authority, commanded the blessing, which he had purchased; he blessed them as Jacob blessed his sons. The apostles were now as the representatives of the twelve tribes, so that in blessing them he blessed all his spiritual Israel, and put his Father's name upon them. He blessed them as Jacob blessed his sons, and Moses the tribes at parting, to shew that having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

4. How he left them; while "he was blessing them he was parted from them," not as if he were taken away before he had said all he had to say, but to intimate that his being parted from them did not put an end to his blessing of them; for the intercession which he went to heaven to make for all his is a continuation of that blessing; he began to bless them on earth, but he went to heaven to go on with it. Christ was now sending his apostles to preach his Gospel to the world, and he gives them his blessing, not for themselves only, but to be conferred in his name upon all that should believe on him through their word, for in him "all the families of the earth were to be blessed."

5. How his ascension is described. 1st. "He was parted from them," was taken from their head, as Elijah from Elisha's. Note, The dearest friends must part; those that love us, and pray for us, and instruct us, must be parted from us. The bodily presence of Christ himself was not to be expected always in this world; those that knew him after the flesh must now henceforth know him so no more. 2nd. He was "carried up into heaven," not by force, but by his own act and deed. As he rose, so he ascended by his own power, yet attended by angels. There needed no chariot of fire, or horses of fire; he knew the way, and being the Lord from heaven, could go back himself. He ascended in a cloud, as the angel in the smoke of Manoa's sacrifice, *Jud. xiii. 20*.

Secondly. How cheerfully his disciples continued their attendance on him, and on God through him, even now he was parted from them.

1. They paid their homage to him at his going away, to signify, that though he was going into a far country, yet they would continue his loyal subjects, that were willing to have him reign over them; "they worshipped him," *ver. 52*. Note, Those that receive blessings from Christ he expects adorations from. He blessed them, in token of gratitude for which they worshipped him. This fresh display of Christ's glory drew from them fresh acknowledgment and adorations of it. They knew, that though he was parted from them, yet he could and did take notice of their adorations of him; the cloud that received him out of their sight did not put them or their services out of his sight.

2. They "returned to Jerusalem with great joy." There they were ordered to continue till the Spirit should be poured out upon them; and thither they went accordingly, though it was into the mouth of danger. Thither they went, and there they stayed with great joy. This was a wonderful change, and an effect of the opening of their understandings. When Christ told them he must leave them, sorrow filled their hearts; yet now they see him go, they are filled with joy, being convinced at length that it was expedient for them and for the church that he should go away to send the Comforter. Note, The glory of Christ is the joy, the exceeding joy, of all true believers, even while they are here in this world; much more will it be so when they go to the new Jerusalem, and find him there in his glory.

3. They abounded in acts of devotion, while they were in expectation of the promise of the Father, *ver. 53*. 1st. They attended the temple service at the hours of prayer; God had not as yet quite forsaken it, and therefore they did not: they "were continually in the temple," as their Master was, when he was at Jerusalem. "The Lord loves the gates of Zion," and so should we. Some think they had their place of meeting, as disciples, in some of the chambers of the temple, which belonged to some Levite that was well affected to them; but others think it is not likely that that either could be concealed from, or would be connived at, by the chief priests and rulers of the temple. 2nd. Temple sacrifices they knew were superseded by Christ's sacrifice, but the temple songs they joined in. Note, While we are waiting for God's promises, we must go forth to meet them with our praises; praising and blessing God is work that is never out of season; and nothing doth better prepare the mind for the receiving of the Holy Ghost than holy joy and praise. Fears are silenced, sorrows sweetened and allayed, and hopes kept up.

The amen that concludes seems to be added by the church and every believer to the reading of the Gospel; signifying an assent to the truths of the Gospel, and a hearty concurrence with all the disciples of Christ in praising and blessing God. "Amen." Let him be continually praised and blessed.

of their risen Lord. Without refuting the once popular notion about ghosts, he proved that it was himself in his own proper person. We learn from John xx. 19, that the doors were closed when Jesus entered, but whether they were locked, as some think, is an open question. If he entered through the doors while locked, the appearance was miraculous, but in any case the occurrence was startling and unlooked-for.

xxiv. 41, 42. The request for food and the partaking of it was a conclusive evidence that Jesus had risen bodily from the dead. The words "and of an honeycomb" are omitted by several ancient authorities, as the Sinaitic, Vatican, Cambridge, and Alexandrian MSS.; but they are in various other uncial MSS., and in the Peshito and Vulgate versions, and were known to Justin Martyr.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES TO THE GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE.

CHAP. I.—3. *Having had perfect understanding.* The literal translation of the original would be, 'having exactly traced every thing from the first;' or, 'having, by diligent and careful investigation, followed up every thing to the source, to obtain an accurate account of the matter.' This much better expresses the idea. 33. *Over the house of Jacob.* The house of Jacob means the same thing as the family of Jacob, or the descendants of Jacob, that is, the children of Israel. This was the name by which the ancient people of God were known, and it is the same as saying that he shall reign over his own church and people for ever. This he does by giving them laws, by defending them, and by guiding them; and this he will do for ever in the kingdom of his glory. *Of his kingdom there shall be no end.* He shall reign among his people on earth until the end of time, and still be their King in heaven. His is the only kingdom that shall never have an end. He is the only King that shall never lay aside his diadem and robes, and that shall never die. He is the only King that can defend us from all our enemies, sustain us in death, and reward us in eternity. Oh, how important, then, to have an interest in his kingdom; and how unimportant, compared with his favour, is the favour of all earthly monarchs! 35. *The power of the Highest.* This evidently means that the body of Jesus should be created by the direct power of God. It was not by ordinary generation; but, as the Messiah came to redeem sinners—to make atonement for others, and not for himself—it was necessary that his human nature should be pure, and freed from the corruption of the fall. God therefore prepared him a body by direct creation, that should be pure and holy: see *Heb. x. 5*. 45. *Blessed is she that believed.* That is, Mary, who believed what the angel spoke to her. She was blessed, not only in the act of believing, but because the thing promised would certainly be fulfilled. From these expressions of Elizabeth we may learn: 1st. That the spirit of prophecy had not entirely ceased among the Jews. 2nd. That the Holy Ghost is the source of light, comfort, and joy. 3rd. That every thing about the birth of Jesus is remarkable, and that he must have been more than a mere man. 4th. That the prospect of the coming of the Messiah was one of great joy and rejoicing to ancient saints; and, 5th. That it was a high honour to be the mother of him that should redeem mankind. It is from that honour that the Roman Catholics have determined that it is right to worship the Virgin Mary, and to offer prayers to her: an act of worship as idolatrous as any that could be offered to a creature. For, 1st. It is not any where commanded in the Bible. 2nd. It is expressly forbidden to worship any being but God, *Ex. xxxiv. 14*; *xx. 4, 5*; *Deu. vi. 13, 14*; *Isa. xlv. 20*: it is idolatry to worship or pray to a creature. 4th. It is absurd to suppose that the Virgin Mary can be in all places at the same time, to hear the prayers of thousands at once, or that she can aid them. There is no idolatry more gross, and of course more wicked, than to worship the creature more than the Creator, *Rom. i. 25*. 48. *All generations.* All men,—all posterity. *Call me blessed.* Pronounce me highly favoured, or happy in being the mother of the Messiah. It is right to consider her as highly favoured, or happy; but this certainly does not warrant us to worship her, or to pray to her. Abraham was blessed in being the father of the faithful; Paul, in being the apostle to the Gentiles; Peter, in first preaching the Gospel to them; but who would think of worshipping or praying to Abraham, Paul, or Peter? 50. *From generation to generation.* From one age to another. That is, it is unceasing; it continues, and abounds. But it means also more than this. It means, that God's mercy will descend on the children, and children's children, of those that fear him, and keep his commandments, *Ex. xx. 6*. In this respect, it is an unspeakable privilege to be descended of pious parents; to have been the subject of their prayers, and to have received their blessing. And it is also a matter of vast guilt not to copy their example, and to walk in their steps. If God is disposed to shew mercy to thousands of generations, how heavy will be the condemnation if they do not avail themselves of it, and early seek his favour! 68. *And redeemed.* That is, was about to redeem, or had given the pledge that he would redeem. This was spoken under the belief that the Messiah, the Redeemer, was about to appear, and would certainly accomplish his work. The literal translation of this passage is, 'He hath made redemption, or ransom, for his people.' A ransom was the price paid to deliver a captive taken in war. A is a prisoner taken in war by B. B has a right to detain him a prisoner by the laws of war, but C offers B a price if he will release A, and suffer him to go at liberty. The price which he pays, and which must be satisfactory to B,—that is, be a reason to B why he should release him,—is called a price, or ransom. Men are sinners: they are bound over to just punishment by the law. The law is holy, and God, as a just governor, must see that the law is honoured, and the wicked punished. But if any thing can be done which will have the same good effect as the punishment of the sinner, or will be an equivalent for it,—that is, be of equal value to the universe,—God may consistently release him. If he can shew the same hatred of sin, and deter others from sinning, and accomplish the purity of the sinner, the sinner may be released. Whatever will accomplish this is called a ransom, because it is, in the eye of God, a sufficient reason why the sinner should not be punished; it is an equivalent for his sufferings, and God is satisfied. The blood of Jesus, that is, his death, in the place of sinners, constitutes such a ransom. It is in their stead; it is for them; it is equivalent to their punishment. It is not itself a punishment, for that always supposes personal crime; but it is what God is pleased to accept in the place of eternal sufferings of the sinner. The king of the Locrians made a law that an adulterer should be punished with the loss of his eyes. His son was the first offender, and the father decreed that his son should lose one eye, and he himself should lose one also: this was the ransom. He shewed his love, his regard for the honour of his law, and the determination that the guilty should not escape. So God gave his Son a ransom, to shew his love, his regard to justice, and his willingness to save men; and his Son, in his death, was a ransom. He is often so called in the New Testament, *Mat. xx. 28*; *Mar. x. 45*; *Tit. ii. 14*; *Heb. ix. 12*.

CHAP. II.—2. *And this taxing was first made.* This verse has given as much perplexity, perhaps, as any one in the New Testament. The difficulty has consisted in the fact that Cyrenius, or Quirinius, was not governor of Syria until twelve or fifteen years after the birth of Jesus. Jesus was born during the reign of Herod, at that time Varus was president of Syria. Herod was succeeded by Archelaus, who reigned eight or nine years; and after he was removed, Judea was annexed to the province of Syria, and Cyrenius was sent

as the governor, *Josephus, Ant.*, b. xvii. sec. 5. The difficulty has been to reconcile this account with that in *Luke*: various attempts have been made to do this; the one that seems most satisfactory is that proposed by Dr. Lardner. According to his view, it means, 'This was the first census of Cyrenius, governor of Syria.' It is called the first, to distinguish it from one afterwards taken by Cyrenius, *Acts v. 37*. It is said to be the census taken by Cyrenius, governor of Syria; not that he was then governor, but that it was taken by him who was afterwards familiarly known as governor. Cyrenius, governor of Syria, was the name by which the man was known; and it was not improper to say that the taxing was made by Cyrenius, the governor of Syria, though he might not have been actually governor for many years afterwards. Thus Herodian says, that 'to Marcus the emperor were born several daughters and two sons,' though several of those children were born to him before he was emperor. According to this, Augustus sent Cyrenius, an active, enterprising man, to take this census. At that time he was a Roman senator: afterwards he was made governor of the same country, and received the title which *Luke* gives him. 34. *And for a sign.* The word sign here denotes a conspicuous or distinguished object; and the Lord Jesus was such an object of contempt and rejection by all the people. He was despised, and his religion has been the common mark or sign for all the wicked, the profligate, and the profane, to curse, and ridicule, and oppose: compare *Isa. viii. 18*, and *Acts xxviii. 22*; never was a prophecy more exactly fulfilled than this. Thousands have rejected the Gospel and fallen into ruin, thousands are still falling of those who are ashamed of Jesus, thousands blaspheme him, deny him, speak all manner of evil against him, and would crucify him again if he were in their hands. But thousands also by him are renewed, justified, and raised up to life and peace. 35. *That the thoughts.* This is connected with the preceding verse: "He shall be a sign, a conspicuous object to be spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts may be made manifest:" that is, that they might shew how much they hated holiness. Nothing so brings out the feelings of sinners as to tell them of Jesus Christ. Many treat him with silent contempt; many are ready to gnash their teeth; many curse him;—all shew how much by nature the heart is opposed to religion, and thus are really, in spite of themselves, fulfilling the Scriptures and the prophecies: so true is it that "none can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost," *1 Cor. xii. 3*.

CHAP. III.—1, 2. *Fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor.* There is one remark to be made here about the manner in which the Gospels were written. They have every mark of openness and honesty. An impostor does not mention names, and times, and places particularly: it would be easily seen that he was an impostor. But the sacred writers describe objects and men as if they were perfectly familiar with them; they never appear to be guarding themselves: they speak of things most minutely; and if they had been impostors, it would have been easy to detect them. If, for example, John did not begin to preach in the fifteenth year of Tiberias; if Philip was not tetrarch of Iturea; if Pontius Pilate was not governor of Judea, how easy would it have been to detect them in falsehood! Yet it was never done. Nay, we have evidence of that age in *Josephus*, that these descriptions are strictly true; and consequently the Gospels must have been written by men who were personally acquainted with what they wrote; who were not impostors, and who were honest men. If they were honest, then the Christian religion is true.

CHAP. IV.—16. *And, as his custom was, he went, &c.* From this it appears that the Saviour regularly attended the service of the synagogue. In that service, the scriptures of the Old Testament were read, prayers were offered, and the Word of God was explained. There was great corruption in doctrine and practice at that time; but Christ did not, on that account, keep away from the place of public worship. From this we may learn: 1st. That it is our duty regularly to attend public worship. 2nd. That it is better to attend a place which is not entirely pure, or where just such doctrines are not delivered as we would wish, than not attend at all. It is of vast importance that the public worship of God should be maintained; and it is our duty to assist in maintaining it, to shew by our example that we love it, and to win others also to love it: see *Heb. x. 25*. At the same time, this remark should not be construed as enjoining it as our duty to attend a place where the true God is not worshipped, or where he is worshipped by pagan rites and pagan prayers. If, therefore, the Unitarian does not worship the true God,—and if the Roman Catholic worships God in a manner forbidden, and offers homage to the creatures of God also, thus being guilty of idolatry—it cannot be the duty of a man to attend on such a place of worship. 17. *When he had opened the book.* Literally, 'when he had unrolled the book.' Books, among the ancients, were written on parchments, or vellum, that is, skins of beasts, and were rolled together on two rollers, beginning at each end; so that while reading they rolled off from one to the other. Different forms of books were indeed used, but this was the most common. When used, the reader unrolled the MS. as far as the place which he wished to find, and kept before him just so much as he would read. When the roller was done, it was carefully deposited in a case. 18. *Hath anointed me.* Anciently, kings and prophets, and the high priests, were set apart to other work by anointing with oil, *1 Kin. xix. 15, 16*; *Ex. xxix. 7*; *1 Sam. ix. 16*, &c. This oil or ointment was made of various substances, and it was forbidden to imitate it, *Ex. xxx. 34—38*. Hence those who were set apart to the work of God, as king, or prophet, or priest, were called the Lord's anointed, *1 Sam. xvi. 6*; *Ps. lxxxix. 9*; *Isa. xlv. 1*. Hence the Son of God is called the Messiah,—a Hebrew word, signifying the Anointed; or the Christ,—a Greek word, signifying the same thing; and by his being anointed is not meant that he was literally anointed, for he was never set apart in that manner: but that God hath set him apart for this work; that he had constituted or appointed him to be the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people. 30. *Passing through the midst of them, he went his way.* This escape was very remarkable. It is remarkable that he should escape out of their hands when the very object was to destroy him; that he should escape in so peaceful a manner, without violence or conflict. A similar case is recorded in *Jno. viii. 59*. There are but two ways of accounting for this: 1st. That other Nazarenes, who had not been present in the synagogue, heard what was doing, and came to rescue him, and in the contest that rose between the two parties, Jesus silently escaped. 2nd. More probably, Jesus, by Divine power, by the force of a word, or look, stilled

xxiv. 43. The Vulgate adds to this verse, "taking the remains, he gave to them." The same appears in some Greek authorities. Jerome refers to some copies in which there was a still longer addition. Although a manifest interpolation, it is curious: "And they made excuse, saying, The word of iniquity and unbelief is substance which suffices not the true excellence of God to be apprehended by unclean spirits, therefore even now reveal thy righteousness." When or by whom this was first written is unknown.

xxiv. 44. From this point we have a bare summary of incidents which occurred between the resurrection-day and that of the ascension. There are no indications of time, and hence a captious criticism might suggest that *Luke* places the ascension immediately after the resurrection. A reference to *Acts i. 2—9*, however, shows that the evangelist was acquainted with many details which are not here included, among the rest the fact that the ascension did not occur until forty days after the resurrection. The sayings which follow, to the

their passions, arrested their purposes, and passed silently through them. That he had such a power over the spirits of men, we learn from the occurrence in Gethsemane, when he said, "I am he; and they went backward, and fell to the ground," *Jno. xviii. 6.*

CHAP. V.—5. *At thy word.* At thy command. Though it seemed so improbable that they should take any thing, after having in vain toiled all night, and still more improbable by launching into the deep; yet he was willing to trust the word of Jesus, and make the trial. This was a remarkable instance of faith. Peter, as it appears, knew little then of Jesus. He was not then a chosen apostle. Jesus came to them almost a stranger, and unknown; and yet at his command, Peter resolved to make another trial, and go once more out into the deep. Oh, if all would as readily obey Jesus, all would be in like manner blessed! If sinners would thus obey him, they would find all his promises sure. He never disappoints: he asks only that we have confidence in him, and he will give to us every needful blessing. 23. *And he left all.* Luke here mentions a circumstance favourable to Matthew, or Levi, as he is here called, which Matthew himself has omitted. Luke says, "he left all." Had Matthew said this, it would have been a commendation of himself, utterly unlike the evangelists. No men were ever farther from praising themselves than they were. 29. *And Levi made him a great feast.* This circumstance Matthew, or Levi, as he is here called, has omitted. It shews how little inclined the evangelists are to say any thing in favour of themselves, or to praise themselves. True religion does not seek to commend itself, or to speak of what it does, even when it is done for the Son of God. It seeks retirement; delights rather in the consciousness of doing well, than in its being known; and leaves its good deeds to be spoken of, if spoken of at all, by others. This is agreeable to the direction of Solomon; *Pr. xxvii. 2*, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth." This feast was made expressly for our Lord, and attended by many publicans, probably men of wicked character; and it is not improbable that Matthew got them together for the purpose of bringing them into contact with our Lord, to do them good. Our Saviour did not refuse to go, and to go, too, at the risk of being accused as a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, *Mat. xi. 19*. But his motives were pure: in the thing itself there was no harm. It afforded an opportunity of doing good; and we have no reason to doubt that it was improved by the Lord Jesus. Happy would it be if all the great feasts that are made were made in honour of our Lord. Happy, if he would be a welcome guest there! and happy if ministers and pious people who attend them, demeaned themselves as the Lord Jesus did, and they were made the means of advancing his kingdom. But, alas! there are few places where our Lord would be so unwelcome as at great feasts; and few places that serve so much to render the mind more gross, dissipated, and irreligious.

CHAP. VI.—5. *The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.* In *Mark ii. 27*, the Lord said unto them, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." The declaration in the text is to be understood in connexion with this statement, and the meaning of it appears to be "not that, the institution being Jewish and temporary, he had authority to set it aside, with other ceremonial observances," seeing it is not as an institution for Israel, but for man, that he speaks of it; but rather, that the sabbath having been instituted in subordination to the great moral ends of man's being, and his own mission, and the "work which he is to do," as "the Son of man," being, above all the other plans and plings of Jehovah, intended to promote those ends,—he had full authority, as the commissioned King of Zion, to introduce any such changes in the observance as might coincide with the special nature of the moral purposes of God, with respect to man, in its institution. Such, for example, was the coming change of the day.—*Dr. Wardlaw, on the Sabbath.* "Do these explanations make void the law of the sabbath? Do they not rather establish it? Can it be imagined that our Lord would have thus spoken of this institution if it had been his intention to abolish or supersede it? The very pains he takes to place it on its right footing, may shew the light in which he regarded it as a standing commandment of God, of perpetual obligation in the church. In all his conversations on this subject,—often as he had occasion to denounce the superstitious observance of the sabbath, and to define the true doctrine respecting it,—he never gives a single hint of its being a legal or ceremonial rite, about to pass away. On the contrary, all the principles and rules which he lays down, assume, not only its Divine origin, but its continued obligation, and unequivocally imply that, whatever change might be made as to the day of its observance, (*Ps. cxviii. 24*; and perhaps, also, *Isa. lxxv. 17*) and in honour of his resurrection, (*Jno. xx. 1, 26*; *1 Cor. xvi. 2*; *Rev. i. 10*) there was to be no change in the real and essential character of the ordinance."—*The Son of man Lord of the Sabbath, a Sermon, by Dr. Candlish.* See also Supplementary Note on *Deu. v. 15*. 17. *Tyre and Sidon.* Supplementary Note, *Mat. xi. 21*.

CHAP. VII.—11. *A city called Nain, &c.* This city was in Galilee, in the boundaries of the tribe of Issachar. It was about two miles south of mount Tabor, and not far from Capernaum. It is now a small village inhabited by Jews, Mahometans, and Christians.—The raising of this young man was one of the most decisive and instructive of our Lord's miracles. There was no doubt that he was dead: there could be no delusion, and no agreement to impose on the people. He came near to the city with no reference to this young man; he met the funeral procession, as it were, by accident; and by a word he restored him to life. All those who had the best opportunity of judging—the mother, the friends,—believed him to be dead, and were about to bury him. The evidence that he came to life was decisive: he sat up, he spoke, and all were impressed with the full assurance that God had raised him to life. Many witnesses were present, and none doubted that Jesus, by a word, had restored him to his weeping mother. The whole scene was affecting: here was a widowed mother, who was following her only son, her stay and hope, to the grave; he was borne along, one in the prime of life, and the only comfort of his parent,—impressive proof that the young, the useful, the vigorous, and the lovely may die. Jesus met them, apparently a stranger: he approached the procession, as if he had something important to say: he touched the bier, and the procession stood still. He was full of compassion for the weeping parent; and, by a word, restored the youth, stretched upon the bier, to life: he sat up, and spoke. Jesus therefore had power over the dead. He also has power to raise sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, to life. He can speak the word; and, though in their death of sin they are borne along towards ruin, he can open their eyes and raise them up, and restore them revived to real life, or to their friends. Often he raises up children in this manner, and gives them, converted to God, to their friends; imparting as real joy as he gave to the widow of Nain, by raising her son from the dead. And every child should remember, if he has pious parents, that there is no way in which he can give so much joy to them as by embracing Him who is the resurrection and the life, and resolving to live in his glory. 36. *Sat down to meat.* The original word here means only that he placed himself, or reclined, at the table. The notion of sitting at meals is taken from modern customs, and was not practised by the Jews. 38. *Stand at his feet.* They reclined, at their meals on their left side, and their feet therefore were

extended from the table, so that persons could easily approach them: see Supplementary Note, *Mat. xxvi. 20*. *Began to wash his feet.* Among Eastern people it was customary, before eating, to wash the feet. The reason for this was, that they wore sandals, which covered only the bottom of the feet, and that when they ate they reclined on couches, or sofas. Among them it was also reckoned an act of hospitality and kindness to wash the feet, or bring water for it: see *Gen. xviii. 4*; *Jud. xix. 21*. The woman therefore began to shew her love for Christ, and at the same time her humility and penitence, by pouring forth a flood of tears, and washing his feet, in the manner of a servant. 48. *Thy sins are forgiven.* What a gracious assurance to the weeping, loving penitent! How that voice, spoken to the troubled sinner, stills his anguish, allays his troubled feelings, and produces peace to the soul! And how manifest is it, that he that could say this must be God! No man has a right to forgive sin. No man can speak peace to the soul, and give assurance that its transgressions are pardoned. Here, then, Jesus gave indubitable proof that he was God, as well as man—that he was the Lord of the conscience, as well as the pitying friend; and that he was as able to read the heart, and give peace there, as to witness the external expression of sorrow for sin. 49. *Who is this?* A very pertinent question. Who could he be but God? Man could not do it; and there is no wonder that they were amazed.

CHAP. VIII.—3. *Ministered* [imparted for his support] *of their substance*; their property; their possessions. Christians then believed, when they professed to follow Christ, that it was proper to give all up to him—their property, as well as their hearts. And the same thing is still required; that is, to commit all that we have to his disposal; to be willing to part with it for the promotion of his glory; and to leave it when he calls us away from it. Behold, ye poor and afflicted of the Lord—tried ones,—how Jesus, the Son of God, when he humbled himself to be made man, condescended to have his wants supplied by the bounty of his people. Oh! how hath he dignified the path of honest poverty by his bright example! Never, then, forget what Paul was commanded to tell the church, "*Ye know,*" said he, "*the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich.*"—*Hawker.*

CHAP. IX.—45. *It was hid from them.* They had imbibed the common notions of the Jews that he was to be a prince and a conqueror, to deliver the nation. They could not understand how that could be, if he was soon to be delivered into the hands of his enemies to die. In this way it was hid from them, not by God, but by their previous false belief; and from this we learn, that the plainest truths of the Bible are unintelligible to many, because they have embraced some belief or opinion before, which is erroneous, and which they are unwilling to abandon. The proper way of reading the Bible is to lay aside all previous opinions and submit entirely to God. The apostles should have supposed that their previous notions of the Messiah were wrong, and should have renounced them; they should have believed that what Jesus then said was consistent with his being the Christ: so we should believe that all that God says is consistent with truth, and should forsake all other opinions.

CHAP. X.—4. *Salute no man by the way.* Salutations among the Orientals did not consist, as among us, of a slight bow, or extension of the hand, but was performed by many embraces, and inclinations, and even prostrations of the body on the ground. All this required much time; and as the business on which the seventy were sent was urgent, they were required not to delay their journey by long and formal salutations of the persons whom they met. "If two Arabs of equal rank meet each other, they extend to each other the right hand, and having clasped, they elevate them, as if to kiss them. Each one then draws back his hand and kisses it instead of his friend's, and then places it upon his forehead. The parties then continue the salutation by kissing each other's beard. They give thanks to God that they are once more permitted to see their friend; they pray to the Almighty in his behalf. Sometimes they repeat not less than ten times the ceremony of grasping hands and kissing." The salutation of friends, therefore, was a ceremony which consumed much time; and it was on this account that our Lord, on this occasion, forbade them to delay their journey to greet others. A similar direction is found in *2 Kin. iv. 29*. 17. *The devils are subject to us through thy name.* "There," *Waltsgenius* says, "Christ cast out devils by a virtue residing in himself: his disciples only in the name and by the power of the Lord." Seeing, then, this power accompanied them to all parts of the world, it is necessary that Christ's presence should be with them every where. Now such a presence is a certain indication of the Deity, *1 Kin. viii. 27*; *Ps. cxxxix. 7*; *Jer. xxiii. 24*; *Am. ix. 2, 3*. 18. *I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven.* Satan, being spoiled of his dominion, may be said to fall from heaven, by a phrase familiar both to sacred and profane writers. So of the fall of the king of Babylon, the prophet says, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer!" *Isa. xiv. 12*. Of the fall of the colleague of Antoninus, Cicero says, "Thou hast pulled him down from heaven." And when Pompey was overthrown, he is said, by him, "to have fallen from the stars."—*Whitby.* Satan had thus instantaneously (as lightning) been cast down from heaven; or his original apostacy, and his usurped dominion on earth, with the idolatrous worship which he had devised to establish, was about to be thrown down in the same sudden and surprising manner, by means of the Gospel preached to the nations, in which work the seventy disciples would, in a short time, be employed; so that their success in casting out devils was only an emblem of a far more decisive victory, which they and their coadjutors and successors would by his power obtain over Satan, the ruler of the whole multitude of evil spirits.—*Scott.*

CHAP. XI.—4. *For we also forgive, &c.* This is somewhat different from the expression in *Matthew*, though the sense is the same. The idea is, that unless we forgive others, God will not forgive us; and unless we come to him really forgiving all others, we cannot expect pardon. It does not mean, that by forgiving others we deserve forgiveness ourselves, or merit it, but that it is a disposition without which God cannot consistently pardon us. *Every one that is indebted to us.* Every one that has injured us. It does not refer to pecuniary transactions, but to offences similar to those which we have committed against God, and for which we ask forgiveness. Besides the variations in the expressions in this prayer, Luke has omitted the doxology, or close, altogether; and this shews that Jesus did not intend that we should always use just this form, but that it was a general direction how to pray; or rather, that we were to pray for these things, though not always using the same words. 37. *Dine with him.* The Jews, as well as the Greeks and Romans, had but two principal meals. The first was a slight repast, and was taken about ten or eleven o'clock of our time, and consisted chiefly of fruit, milk, cheese, &c. The second meal was partaken of about three o'clock, p.m., and was their principal meal. 52. *Key of knowledge.* A key is made to open a lock or door. By their false interpretation of the Old Testament, they had taken away the true key of understanding it. They had hindered the people from understanding the Scriptures respecting the Messiah; and those who were coming to me ye hindered. If there be any sin of peculiar magnitude, it is that of keeping the people in

end of verse 49, were probably uttered on various occasions, and are not to be viewed as a consecutive discourse. They represent the topics upon which the Lord spoke from time to time. The phrase, "the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms," includes the whole of the Old Testament as divided by the Jews.

xxiv. 46. A better reading here is, "Thus it is written that Christ should suffer and rise from the dead on the third day."

xxiv. 47. Some ancient copies, as the Sinaitic and Vatican, here

have "repentance for remission of sins," or "in order to remission."

xxiv. 53. "Amen" is omitted in several MSS. About ninety years after the resurrection, Marcion, the heretic, published an abridged and altered copy of St. Luke's Gospel in his own name.

Additional Notes.—Chap. ix. 39. By "teareth" here and in verse 42, where the form of the Greek word is stronger, we must understand throwing into convulsions or spasms.

ignorance. And few men are so guilty as they who by false instructions prevent them from coming to a knowledge of the truth, and embracing it as it is in Jesus. 54. *Laying wait for him.* Or, rather, laying snares for him. It means that they endeavoured to entangle him in his talk; that they did as men do who catch birds—who lay snares, and deceive them, and take them unawares. That they might accuse him. Before the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, and thus secure his being put to death. From this we may learn, 1st. That faithful reproofs must be expected to excite opposition and hatred. Though the conscience may be roused, and may testify against the man that is reproofed, yet that does not prevent his hating the reproof and the reprover. 2nd. We see here the manner in which wicked men will endeavour to escape the reproofs of conscience. Instead of repenting, they seek vengeance, and resolve to put the reprover to shame, or to death. 3rd. We see the exceeding malignity which men may have against the Lord Jesus. Well it was said that he was set for the fall of many in Israel, that thereby the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed! Men, now, are not by nature less opposed to Jesus than they were then. 4th. We see the wisdom, purity, and firmness of the Saviour. To their souls he had been faithful. He had boldly reproofed them for their sins. They sought his life. Multitudes of the artful and learned gathered around him, to endeavour to draw out something of which they might accuse him. Yet in vain. Not a word fell from his lips of which they could accuse him. Every thing that he said was calm, mild, peaceful, wise, and lovely. Even his cunning and bitter adversaries were always confounded, and retired in shame and confusion. Here surely must have been something more than man. None but God manifest in the flesh could have known all their designs, seen all their wickedness and their wiles, and escaped the cunning stratagems that were laid to confound and entangle him in his conversation. 5th. The same infinitely wise Saviour can still meet and confound all his own enemies, and those of his people, and deliver all his followers, as he did himself, from all the snares laid by a wicked world to lead them to sin and death.

CHAP. XII.—33. *Sell that ye have.* Sell your property. Exchange it for that which ye can use in distributing charity. This was the condition of their being disciples. Their property they gave up; they forsook it; or they put it into common stock, for the sake of giving alms to the poor, Acts ii. 44; iv. 32; Jno. xii. 6; Acts v. 2. *Bags which wax not old.* The word bags here means purses, or the bags attached to their girdles, in which they carried their money. By bags which wax not old, Jesus means that we should lay up treasure in heaven; that our aim should be to be prepared to enter there, where all our wants will be for ever provided for. Purses, here, grow old and useless. Wealth takes to itself wings. Riches are easily scattered, or we must soon leave them; but that wealth which is in heaven abides for ever. It never is corrupted, never flies away, never is to be left. *Wax.* This word is from an old Saxon word, and in the Bible means to grow. 47. *Many stripes.* Shall be severely and justly punished. They who have many privileges, who are often warned, who have the Gospel, and do not repent and believe, and do good works, shall be far more severely punished than others. They who are early taught in Sunday schools, or by pious parents, or in other ways, and grow up in sin and impenitence, will have much more to answer for than they who have no such privileges. They will justly suffer more than almost any other class of mankind. 49. *And what will I?* This passage might be better expressed in this manner: 'And what would I, but that it were kindled? Since it is necessary for the advancement of religion that such divisions should take place; since the Gospel cannot be established without conflicts, and strifes, and hatreds; I am even desirous that they should come. Since the greatest blessing of mankind must be attended with such unhappy divisions, I am willing, nay desirous, that they should come.' He did not wish evil in itself; but as it was the occasion of good, he was desirous that, if it must take place, it should take place soon. From this we learn, 1st. That the promotion of religion may be expected to produce many contests, and bitter feelings. 2nd. That the heart of man must be exceedingly wicked, or it would not oppose a work like the Christian religion. 3rd. That though God cannot look on evil with approbation, yet, for the sake of the benefit which may grow out of it, he is willing to permit it, and suffer it to come into the world.

CHAP. XIII.—14. *Answered with indignation, because, &c.* Opposition to the work of Jesus often puts on the appearance of great professed regard for religion. Many men oppose conversions, revivals, missions, Bible societies, and Sunday schools—strange as it may seem—from professed regard to the purity of religion. They, like the ruler here, have formed their notions of religion as consisting in something very different from doing good, and they oppose those who are attempting to spread the Gospel throughout the world. 16. *Whom Satan hath bound.* Satan is the name given to the prince or leader of evil spirits, called also the devil, Beelzebub, and the old serpent, Mat. xii. 24; Rev. xii. 9; xx. 2. By his binding her, is meant that he had inflicted this disease upon her. It was not properly a possession of the devil—for that commonly produced derangement; but God had suffered him to afflict her in this manner—similar to the way in which he was permitted to try Job, Job i. 12; ii. 6, 7. It is no more improbable that God would suffer Satan to inflict pain, than that he would suffer a wicked man to do it. Yet nothing is more common than for man to be the occasion of bringing on a disease in another, which may terminate only with the life. He that seduces a virtuous man, and leads him to intemperance, or he that wounds him, or strikes him, may disable him as much as Satan did this woman. If God permits it in one case, he may, for the same reason, in another.

CHAP. XIV.—1. *To eat bread.* To dine; to partake of the hospitalities of his house. *On the sabbath day.* It may seem strange that our Saviour should have gone to dine with a man of influence, and wickedness, and a stranger, on the sabbath. But we are to remember, 1st. That he was travelling, having no home of his own, and that it was no more improper to go there than to any other place. 2nd. That he did not go there for the purpose of feasting and amusement, but to do good. 3rd. That as several of them were together, it gave him an opportunity to address them on the subject of religion, and to reprove their vices. If therefore the example of Jesus should be pleaded to authorize accepting an invitation to dine on the sabbath, it should be pleaded just as it was. If we can go just as he did, it is right. If when away from home, if we go to do good, if we make it an occasion to discourse on the subject of religion, and to persuade men to repent, then it is not improper. Farther than this we cannot plead the example of Christ. And surely this should be the last instance in the world to be adduced to justify dinner parties, and scenes of riot and gluttony, on the sabbath. 7. *Chief rooms.* The word rooms here does not at all express the meaning of the original. It does not mean apartments, but the higher places at the table, those which were nearest the head of the table, and to him who had invited them. See Note, Mat. xxiii. 6. That this was the common character of the Pharisees appears from Mat. xxiii. 6. 22. *Yet there is room.* He went out and invited all he found in the lanes, and yet the table was not full. This he also reported unto his master. There is room! What a glorious declaration is this in regard to the Gospel! Millions have been saved, but

there yet is room. Millions have been invited, and have come, and have gone to heaven; but heaven is not yet full. There is a banquet there which no number can exhaust; there are fountains which no number can drink dry; there are harps there which other hands may strike; and there are seats there which others may occupy. Heaven is not full, and yet there is room. The sabbath school teacher may say to his class, Yet there is room; the parent may say to his children, Yet there is room; the minister of the Gospel may go and say to the wide world, Yet there is room. The mercy of God is not exhausted; the blood of the atonement has not lost its efficacy; heaven is not full. What a sad message it would be if we were compelled to go and say, 'There is no more room; heaven is full. No other one can be saved. No matter what their prayers, or tears, or sighs, they cannot be saved. Every place is filled; every seat is occupied!' But, thanks be to God! this is not the message which we are to bear; and if there yet is room, Come sinners, young and old, and enter into heaven. Fill up that room, that heaven may be full of the happy and the blessed. If any part of the universe is to be vacant, O let it be the dark world of woe! 24. *For I say unto you.* These may be considered as the words of Jesus, making an application of the parable to the Pharisees before him. None of those men. This cannot be understood as meaning that no Jews should be saved, but none of those who had treated him in that manner—none who had so decidedly rejected the offer of the Gospel—should be saved. We may here see how dangerous it is once to reject the Gospel; how dangerous to grieve away the Holy Spirit. How often God forsakes for ever the sinner who has been once awakened and invited, and who grieves the Spirit and rejects him. The invitation is full and free; but when it is rejected, and men turn wilfully away from it, God leaves them to their chosen way, and they are drowned in destruction and perdition. How important, then, is it to embrace the Gospel at once; to accept the gracious invitation, and enter without delay the path that conducts to the heaven above! 35. *He that hath ears to hear, &c.* See Mat. xi. 15. You are to understand that he that has not grace in his heart, who merely makes a profession of religion, and who sustains the same relation to true piety that this insipid and useless mass does to good salt, is useless in the church, and will be rejected. Real piety, true religion, is of vast value in the world. It keeps it pure, it saves it from corruption, as salt does meat. But a mere profession of religion is fit for nothing. It does no good. It is a mere encumbrance, and all such professors are fit only to be cast out and rejected. All such must be rejected by the Son of God, and cast into a world of wretchedness and despair. Compare Mat. vii. 22, 23; viii. 12, xlii. 33; xxv. 30; Rev. iii. 16; Job viii. 13; xxxvi. 13.

CHAP. XV.—7. *Just persons.* The word persons is not in the original. It means, simply, just ones, or those who have not sinned. It may refer to angels as well as to men. There are no just men on earth who need no repentance. There have been none, and there will be none. Eccl. vii. 20; Ps. xiv. 2, 3; Rom. iii. 10–18. Our Saviour did not mean to imply that there were any such. He was speaking of what took place in heaven, in the view of the angels, and of their emotions when they contemplate the creatures of God. And he says that they rejoiced in the repentance of one sinner more than in the holiness of many who had not fallen. We are not to suppose that our Saviour meant to teach that there were just ninety-nine holy angels to one sinner. He means merely that they rejoice more over the repentance of one sinner than they do over many who have not fallen. By this our Saviour vindicated his own conduct. The Jews did not deny the existence of angels. They would not deny that their feelings were proper. If they rejoiced in this manner, it was not improper for him to shew similar joy, and especially to seek their conversion and salvation. If they rejoice also, it shews how desirable is the repentance of a sinner. They know of how much value is an immortal soul. They see what is meant by eternal death; and they do not feel too much, or have too much anxiety about the soul, that can never die. O that men saw it as they see it; and O that they would make an effort, such as angels see to be proper, to save the souls from eternal death! 25. *Music and dancing.* Dancing was not uncommon among the Hebrews, and was used on various occasions. Thus Miriam celebrated the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt in dances as well as songs, Ex. xv. 20. David danced before the ark, 2 Sam. vi. 14. It was common at Jewish feasts, (Jud. xxi. 19–21,) and in public triumphs, (Jud. xi. 34,) and at all seasons of mirth and rejoicings, Ps. xxx. 11; Jer. xxxi. 4, 13. It was also used in religious services by the idolaters, (Ex. xxxii. 19,) and also by the Jews at times in their religious services, Ps. cxlix. 3; cl. 4. In this case, it was an expression of rejoicing. Our Lord expresses no opinion about its propriety; he simply states the fact; nor was there occasion for comment on it. His mentioning it cannot be pleaded for its lawfulness or propriety, any more than his mentioning the vice of the younger son, or the wickedness of the Pharisees, can be pleaded to justify their conduct. It is an expressive image used in accordance with the known customs of the country to express joy. It is farther to be remarked, that if the example of persons in Scripture be pleaded for dancing, it can be only for just such dances as they practised—for sacred or triumphal occasions.

CHAP. XVI.—8. *The lord commended.* Praised, or expressed admiration at his wisdom. These are not the words of Jesus, as commending him, but a part of the narrative or parable. His master commended him—saw that he was wise and considerate, though he was dishonest. *The unjust steward.* It is not said that his master commended him because he was unjust, but because he was wise. This is the only thing in his conduct of which there is any approbation expressed, and this approbation was expressed by his master. This passage cannot be brought therefore to prove that Jesus meant to commend his dishonesty. It was the commendation expressed of his cunning or forethought; and the master could no more approve this conduct than he could the first act of cheating him. *The children of this world.* Those who are devoted to this world, who live for this world only, and who are careful only to obtain property, and to provide for their temporal necessities. It does not mean that they are peculiarly wicked and profligate, but only that they are worldly, and anxious about earthly things: see Mat. xiii. 22; 2 Tim. iv. 10. *Children of light.* Those who have been enlightened from above, who are Christians. Those who, once spiritually blind, have been made to see—who have been enlightened not only by the Word, but by the Spirit of God, who opens their eyes, and enables them to understand and receive the message which the Word conveys. 9. *They may receive you.* This is a form of expression denoting merely, that you may be received. The plural form is used, because it was used in the corresponding place in the parable, ver. 4. The direction is, so to use our worldly goods that we may be received into heaven when we die. God will receive us there, and we are to employ our property so that he will not cast us off for abusing it. 22. *Abraham's bosom.* This is a phrase taken from the practice of reclining at meals, where the head of one lay on the bosom of another, and it denoted, therefore, intimacy and friendship: see Jno. xiii. 23; xxi. 20. The Jews had no doubt that Abraham was in paradise. To say that Lazarus was in his bosom was, therefore, the same as to say that he was admitted to heaven, and made happy there. The Jews, moreover, boasted very much of being the friends of Abraham and his descendants, Mat. iii. 9. To be

ix. 55, 56. The Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrian MSS. omit the words "and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." The Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. also omit the reference to Elias in verse 54. In consequence of these omissions in manuscripts of great authority, the passages have been left out of several modern editions.

ix. 58. The peculiar force of these words appears by a reference to

the circumstances in which they were spoken. The Saviour had been refused a lodging by the inhabitants of one Samaritan village, and was now with his disciples on the way to another village, seeking for hospitality there. At that time, therefore, Jesus could say with literal truth that he had not where to lay his head.

ix. 62. Our Lord's words here are in the form of a proverb. To "put the hand to the plough" is to enter upon an undertaking. To "look back" is in heart to abandon an undertaking, to lose faith. For

his friend, was a their view the highest honour and happiness. Our Saviour therefore shewed them that this poor and afflicted man might be raised to the highest happiness; while the rich, who prided themselves on their being descended from Abraham, might be cast away, and lost for ever.

CHAP. XVII.—6. See *Mat. xvii. 20. Sycamine tree.* This name, as well as sycamore, is given among us to the large tree commonly called the buttonwood. But the tree here mentioned is different. The Latin *Vulgate* and the Syriac versions translate it mulberry tree. It is said to have been a tree that commonly grew in Egypt, of the size and appearance of a mulberry tree, but bearing a species of figs. This tree was common in Palestine also. It is probable that our Lord was standing by one as he addressed these words to his disciples. 17, 18. *Where are the nine?* Jesus had commanded them to go to the priest; and they were probably literally obeying the commandment. They were impatient to be healed, and selfish in wishing it, and had no gratitude to God, or their benefactors. Jesus did not forbid their expressing gratitude to him for his mercy. He rather seems to reprove them for not doing it. One of the first feelings of the sinner cleansed from sin is a desire to praise his great benefactor. And a real willingness to obey his commandments is not inconsistent with a wish to render thanks to him for his mercy. With what singular propriety may this question now be asked—Where are the nine? And what a striking illustration is this of human nature, and of the ingratitude of men! One had come back to give thanks for the favour bestowed on him; the others were heard of no more. So now. When men are restored from dangerous sickness, here and there one comes to give thanks to God; but “where are the nine?” When men are defended from danger; when they are recovered from the perils of the sea; when a steam-boat is destroyed and a large part of the crew and passengers perish, here and there one of those who are saved acknowledges the goodness of God, and renders him praise. But where are the mass of them? They give no thanks; they offer no praise. They go about their usual employments, to mingle in the scenes of pleasure and of sin, as if nothing had occurred. Few, few of all who have been rescued from “threatening graves,” feel their obligation to God, or ever express it. They forget their Great Benefactor; perhaps the mention of his name is unpleasant, and they scorn the idea that they are under any obligations to God. Such, alas, is man, ungrateful man! *This stranger.* This foreigner; or rather this alien, or this man of another tribe. In the Syriac version, “this one who is of a foreign people;” this man, who might have been least expected to have expressed this gratitude to God. The most unlikely characters are often found to be most consistent and grateful. Men from whom we would expect least in religion are often so entirely changed as to disappoint all our expectations, and to put to shame those who have been most highly favoured. The poor often thus put to shame the rich; the ignorant the learned; and even the young the aged. 28—30. *They did eat, &c.* They were busy in the affairs of this life, as if nothing were about to happen. *The same day, &c.* see *Gen. xix. 23—25. It rained.* The word might have been rendered “he rained.” In *Genesis* it is said that the Lord did it. *Fire and brimstone.* God destroyed Sodom on account of its great wickedness. He took vengeance on it for its sins; and the example of Sodom is set before men to deter them from committing great transgressions, and as a full proof that God will punish the guilty: see *Jude 7*; also *Isa. i. 10*; *Jer. i. 40*. Yet in overthrowing it, God used natural means. He is not to be supposed to have created fire and brimstone for the occasion, but to have directed the natural means at his disposal for their overthrow;—as he did not create the waters to drown the world, but merely broke up the fountains of the great deep, and opened the windows of heaven. Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, (*Deu. xxix. 23*), were four great cities on a plain where is now the Dead sea, at the south-east of Palestine, and into which the river Jordan flows. They were built on a plain which abounded, doubtless, as all that region now does, in bitumen, or naphtha, which is easily kindled, and which burns with great intensity. The phrase “fire and brimstone” is a Hebrew form of expression, denoting sulphureous fire, or fire having the smell of sulphur; and may denote a volcanic eruption, or any burning like that of naphtha. There is no improbability in supposing that this destruction was accomplished by lightning, which ignited the naphtha; or that it was a volcanic eruption, which by direction of God overthrew the wicked cities. *From heaven.* By command of God, or from the sky. To the people of Sodom it had the appearance of coming from heaven, as all volcanic eruptions would have. Hundreds of towns have been overthrown in this way; and all by the agency of God. He rules the elements, and makes them his instruments, at his pleasure, in accomplishing the destruction of the wicked.

CHAP. XVIII.—7. *His own elect.* People of God, saints, Christians; so called, because God has chosen them to be his. The term is usually given to the true followers of God in the Scriptures, and is a term of affection, denoting his great and peculiar love in choosing them out of a world of sinners, and conferring on them grace, and mercy, and eternal life: see *1 Ths. i. 4*; *Col. iii. 12*; *1 Pet. i. 2*; *Eph. i. 4*. It signifies here that they are peculiarly dear to him; that he feels a deep interest in their welfare, and that he will therefore be ready to come forth to our aid. The judge felt no special interest in that widow, yet he heard her. God feels a particular regard, a tender love, for his elect, and therefore he will hear and save. *Which cry day and night.* This expresses one striking characteristic of the elect of God; they pray, and pray constantly. None can have evidence that he is chosen of God who is not a man of prayer. One of the best marks by which the electing love of God is known is, that it disposes us to prayer. This passage supposes that when the elect of God are in trouble, and pressed down with calamities, they will cry unto him; and it affirms that, if they do, he will hear their cries, and answer their requests. 12. *I fast twice in the week.* The religion of the Pharisee consisted, 1st. In abstaining from injustice to others, in pretending to live a harmless, innocent, and upright life; and, 2nd. In a regular observance of all the external duties of religion. His fault consisted in relying on this kind of righteousness; in not feeling and acknowledging that he was a sinner; in not seeking a religion that should dwell in the heart and regulate the feelings; and in making public and ostentatious professions of his own goodness. Most of all was this abominable in the sight of God, who looks into the heart, and who sees wickedness there when the external actions may be blameless. And we may learn from the case of the Pharisee, 1st. That it is not the man who has the most orthodox belief that has of course the most piety. 2nd. That men may be externally moral, and not be righteous in the sight of God. 3rd. That they may be very exact in the external duties of religion, and even go beyond the strict letter of the law; that they may assume a great appearance of sanctity, and still be strangers to true piety; and 4th. That ostentation in religion, or a boasting before God of what we are, and of what we have done, is abominable in his sight. This spoils every thing, even if the life should be tolerably blameless, and if there should be real piety.

CHAP. XIX.—12. *A certain nobleman.* A prince; a man descended from kings, and having a title therefore to succeed in the kingdom. *Went into a far country, &c.* This expression is derived from the state of things in Judaea in

the time of our Saviour. Judaea was subject to the Romans, having been conquered by Pompey about sixty years before Christ. It was, however, governed by Jews, who held the government under the Romans. It was necessary that the prince or king should receive a recognition of his right to the kingdom by the Roman emperor, and in order to this that he should go to Rome; or, as it is said here, “that he might receive to himself a kingdom.” This actually occurred several times. Archelaus, a son of Herod the Great, about the time of the birth of Jesus, went to Rome to obtain a confirmation of the title which his father had left him, and succeeded in doing it. Herod the Great, his father, had done the same thing before to implore the aid and countenance of Antony. Agrippa the younger, grandson of Herod the Great, went to Rome also to obtain the favour of Tiberius, and to be confirmed in his government. Such instances, having frequently occurred, would make this parable perfectly intelligible to those to whom it was addressed. By the nobleman here is undoubtedly represented the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ: by his going into a far country, is denoted his going to heaven, to the right hand of his Father, before he should fully set up his kingdom and establish his reign among men. 14. *Sent a message, saying, &c.* His discontented subjects, fearing what would be the character of his reign, sent an embassy to remonstrate against his being appointed as the ruler. This actually took place. Archelaus went to Rome to obtain from Augustus a confirmation of his title to reign over that part of Judaea which had been left him by his father, Herod the Great. The Jews, knowing his character, (compare *Mat. ii. 22*), sent an embassy of fifty men to Rome to prevail on Augustus not to confer the title on him; but they could not succeed. He received the kingdom, and reigned in Judaea in the place of his father. As this fact was fresh in the memory of the Jews, it makes this parable much more striking. By this part of it, Christ designed to denote that the Jews would reject him—the Messiah—and would say that they did not desire him to reign over them: see *Jno. i. 11*. So it is true of all sinners that they do not wish Jesus to reign over them; they reject him; and, if it were possible, would cast him off, and never submit to his reign. 41—44. *He wept over it.* Shewing his compassion for the guilty city, and his strong sense of the evils that were about to come upon it: see *Mat. xxiii. 37—39*. As he entered the city, he passed over the mount of Olives. From that mountain there was a full and magnificent view of the city: see *Supp. Notes on Mat. xxi. 1*. *For the days shall come, &c.* This took place under Titus, the Roman general, A.D. 70, about thirty years after this was spoken. *Cast a trench about thee.* The word trench now means commonly a pit or ditch. When the Bible was translated, it meant also earth thrown up to defend a camp.—*Johnson’s Dictionary.* This is the meaning of the original here. It is not a pit, or large ditch, but a pile of earth, stones, or wood, thrown up to guard a camp, and to defend it from the approach of an enemy. This was done at Jerusalem. Josephus informs us that Titus, in order that he might compel the city to surrender by famine, built a wall around the whole circumference of the city. This wall was nearly five miles in length, and furnished with thirteen castles or towers. This work was completed with incredible labour in ten days. The professed design of this wall was to keep the city in on every side. Never was a prophecy more strikingly accomplished. *Shall lay thee even with the ground.* This was literally done. Titus caused a plough to pass over the place where the temple stood.

CHAP. XXI.—37, 38. See *Mat. xxi. 17. Came early in the morning.* He returned early from the mount of Olives, and taught in the temple. Our Saviour did not waste his mornings in idleness or sleep. He rose early and repaired to the temple. The people also flocked to the sanctuary to hear him. This example is at once an encouragement to early rising, and to the early worship of God. It is a reproof of those who spend the part of the day best fitted for devotion in unnecessary sleep. And it shews the propriety, where it can be done, of assembling early in the morning for prayer and the worship of God. Early prayer meetings have the countenance of the Saviour, and will be found to be eminently conducive to the promotion of religion. The whole example of Jesus goes to shew the importance of beginning the day with God, and of lifting up the heart to him for direction and for the supply of our wants, and for preservation from temptation, before the mind is engrossed by the cares, and distracted by the perplexities, and led away by the temptations of this life. Commencing the day with God is like arresting evil at the fountain: prayer at any other time, without this, is an attempt to arrest it when it has swollen to a stream, and rolls on like a torrent.

CHAP. XXII.—24. *A strife.* A contention, or debate. *Which of them should be the greatest.* The apostles, in common with the Jews generally, had supposed that the Messiah would come as a temporal prince, and in the manner of other princes of the earth; of course, that he would have officers of his government, ministers of state, &c. Their contention was founded on this expectation, and they were disputing which of them should be raised to the highest office; they had before had a similar contention: see *Mat. xviii. 1*; *xx. 20—28*. Nothing can be more humiliating than that the disciples should have had such contentions, and in such a time and place. That just as Jesus was contemplating his own death, and labouring to prepare them for it, they should strive and contend about offices and rank, shews how deeply seated is the love of power how ambition will find its way into the most secret and sacred places; and how even the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus are sometimes actuated by this most base and wicked feeling. 38. *Are two swords.* The Galileans, it is said, often went armed. The Essenes did so also. The reason was, that the country was full of robbers and wild beasts, and it was necessary to carry in their travels some means of defence. It seems that the disciples followed the customs of the country, and had with them some means of defence, though they had but two swords among the twelve. *It is enough.* It is to be observed that he did not say “the two swords are enough,” but “it is enough;” perhaps meaning simply, enough has been said. Other matters press on, and you will yet understand what I mean. 43. *Strengthening him—his human nature,* to sustain the great burden that was upon his soul. Some have supposed from this that he was not Divine as well as human; for if he was God, how could an angel give any strength and comfort, and why did not the Divine nature alone sustain the human? But the fact that he was Divine does not affect the case at all. It might be asked with the same propriety, if he was, as all admit, the friend of God, and beloved of God, and holy, why, if he was a mere man, did not God sustain him alone, without an angel’s intervening? But the objection in neither case would have any force. The man, Christ Jesus, was suffering. His human nature was in agony; and it is the manner of God to sustain the afflicted by the intervention of others. Nor was there any more unfitness in sustaining the human nature of his Son in this manner than any other sufferer. 48. *Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* By the Son of man was evidently meant there the Messiah. Judas had had the most satisfactory evidence of that, and did not doubt it. A kiss was the sign of affection. By that slight artifice Judas thought to conceal his base purpose. Jesus, with severity, reproaches him for it. Every word is emphatic. *Betrayest thou—dost thou violate all thy obligations of fidelity, and deliver thy Master up to death? Betrayest thou—thou, so long with him, so much favoured, so sure that this is the Messiah? Betrayest thou the Son of man—the Messiah, the hope of th*

a fine illustration of the opposite virtue, see St. Paul’s words in *Phil. iii. 13, 14*.

x. 4. “Salute no man by the way” is supposed to refer to the fact that Oriental salutations were prolix and complicated, involving delay. As their mission required haste, they were not to consume their time over the formalities implied by such salutations.

x. 18. When did our Lord behold Satan fall from heaven? Some think the reference is to the original fall of Satan; others understand

the words of the sudden humiliation to which Satan was subjected by the miraculous powers conferred on the seventy disciples; others, again, regard the expression as pointing to the final and complete victory over Satan which Jesus will gain at the end of the world.

x. 19. We need not understand serpents and scorpions here literally, but such enemies as may be compared to venomous and deadly reptiles. It is victory over spiritual and moral evil, and such like, that is promised, and a complete triumph over the enemy.

nations, the desire of all people, the world's Redeemer? Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss—the sign of friendship and affection, employed in a base and wicked purpose, intended to add deceit, disguise, and a prostitution of a mark of affection to the crime of treason? Every word of this must have gone to the very soul of Judas! Perhaps few reproofs of crime more resemble the awful searchings of the souls of the wicked in the day of judgment.

CHAP. XXIII.—2. *This fellow.* The word fellow is not in the original. It conveys a notion of contempt, which no doubt they felt, but which is not expressed in the Greek, and which it is not proper should be expressed in the translation. It might be translated, "We found this man." 4. *I find no fault.* I see no evidence that he is guilty of what you charge him with. This was after Pilate had taken Jesus into the judgment-hall by himself, and examined him privately, and been satisfied in regard to the nature of his kingdom: see *Jno.* xviii. 33—38. He was then satisfied that, though he claimed to be a king, yet his kingdom was not of this world, and that his claims did not interfere with those of Cæsar. 12. *Made friends together, &c.* What had been the cause of the quarrel is unknown. It is commonly supposed that it was Pilate's slaying the Galileans in Jerusalem, as related in *ch.* xiii. 1, 2. The occasion of their reconciliation seems to have been the civility and respect which Pilate shewed to Herod in this case. It was not because they were united in hating Jesus, as is often the case with wicked men, for Pilate was certainly desirous of releasing him, and both considered him merely as an object of ridicule and sport. It is true, however, that wicked men, at variance in other things, are often united in opposing and ridiculing Christ and his followers; and that enmities of long standing are sometimes made up, and the most opposite characters brought together, simply to oppose religion. Compare *Ps.* lxxviii. 5—7. 31. *For if they do these things in a green tree, &c.* This seems to be a proverbial expression. A green tree is one that is not easily set on fire. A dry one is easily kindled, and burns rapidly. By a green tree is represented evidently a man of truth and purity. And the meaning of the passage is: 'If they, the Romans, do these things to me, who am innocent and blameless, if they punish me in this manner in the face of justice, what will they not do in relation to this guilty nation? What security have they that heavier judgments will not come upon them? What desolations and woes may not be expected when injustice and oppression have taken the place of justice, and have set up a rule over this wicked people?' Our Lord alludes evidently to the calamities that would come upon them by the Romans in the destruction of their city and temple. The passage may be applied, however, without impropriety, and with great beauty and force, to the punishment of the wicked in the future world. Thus applied, it means that the sufferings of the Saviour, compared with the sufferings of the guilty, were like the burning of a green tree compared with the burning of one that is dry. A green tree is not adapted to burn; a dry one is. So the Saviour—innocent, pure, and holy—stood in relation to suffering. There were sufferings which an innocent being could not endure. There was remorse of conscience, the sense of guilt, punishment properly so called, and the eternity of woes. He had the consciousness of innocence, and he would not suffer for ever. He had no passions to enkindle that would rage and ruin the soul. The sinner is adapted to sufferings, like a dry tree to the fire. He is guilty, and will suffer all the horrors of remorse of conscience. He will be punished literally. He has raging and impetuous passions, and they will be enkindled in hell, and will rage for ever and ever. The meaning is, that if the innocent Saviour suffered so much, the sufferings of the sinner for ever in hell must be more unspeakably dreadful. Yet who could endure the sufferings of the Redeemer on the cross for a single day? Who could bear them for ever and ever—aggravated by all the horrors of a guilty conscience, and all the terrors of unrestrained anger, and hate, and fear, and wrath?—*Why will the wicked die?* 43. *Paradise.* This is a word of Persian origin, and means a garden, and particularly a garden of pleasure, filled with trees, and shrubs, and fountains, and flowers. In hot climates, such gardens were peculiarly pleasant, and hence they were attached to the mansions of the rich, and to the palaces of princes. They came thence to denote any place of happiness, and particularly the word was used to denote the abodes of the blessed in another world. The Romans spoke of their Elysium, and the Greeks of the gardens of Hesperides, where the trees bore golden fruit. The garden of Eden means also the garden of pleasure; and in *Gen.* ii. 8, the Septuagint renders the word Eden by Paradise. Hence this name in the Scriptures comes to denote the abodes of the blessed in the other world.

CHAP. XXIV.—21. *Besides all this.* It is to be observed that Cleopas states things just as they occurred to his own mind. There is little connexion; his mind is confused and distracted. There were so many things that were remarkable in Jesus—there was so much evidence that he was the Messiah—their hopes had been so suddenly dashed by his death, and the succeeding events had been so remarkable, that his mind was confused, and he knew not what to think. The things which he now stated, served to increase his perplexity. The expressions here are perfectly natural; they bespeak an agitated mind; they are among the simple touches of nature. *To day is the third day, &c.* Jesus had foretold them that he would rise on the third day. This they did not understand; but it is not improbable that they looked to this day expecting something wonderful, and that the visit to the sepulchre had called it to their recollection; and they were more and more amazed when they put all these things together. As if they had said, 'The third day is come, and we have not seen him. Yet we begin to remember his promise; the

angels have informed us that he is alive; but we do not know how to put these things together, and what to make of them.' 25. *O fools.* The word fool sometimes is a term of reproach denoting wickedness. In this sense we are forbidden to employ it in addressing another, *Mat.* v. 22. That, however, is a different word in the Greek from this here. The one there used implies contempt, but that in this place denotes weakness or dullness. He reproached them for not seeing what he had himself so clearly predicted, and what had been foretold by the prophets. It does not in the original imply as much reproach as the word fool does among us. It was not an expression of contempt, it was an expression denoting merely that they were thoughtless, and that they did not properly attend to the evidence that he must die, and rise again. 27. *The things concerning himself.* Concerning the Messiah. It does not appear that he applied them to himself, but left them, probably, to make the application. He shewed what the Scriptures foretold; and they saw that these things applied to Jesus of Nazareth; and began to be satisfied that he was the Messiah. The most striking passages foretelling the character and sufferings of Christ are the following, which we may suppose it possible our Saviour dwelt upon, to convince them that though he was crucified, yet he was the Christ, *Gen.* iii. 15; *Deu.* xviii. 15; *Gen.* xlix. 10. *Nam.* xxi. 8, 9; compare *Jno.* iii. 14; *Isa.* liii.; *Dan.* ix. 25—27; *Isa.* ix. 6, 7; *Ps.* cx. xvi. xxii. 3; *Mat.* iv. 2—6. 31. *And their eyes were opened.* Here was convincing evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. This was but one of many instances where Jesus convinced his disciples contrary to their previous belief. In this case the evidence was abundant. He first satisfied them from the Old Testament that the very things which had happened were foretold; he then dissipated every doubt, by shewing himself to them, and convincing them that he was truly the Christ. There was no chance here for deception and juggling. Who would have met them, and talked with them, in this way, but the real Saviour? Who would have thought of writing this narrative to help an imposture? What impostor would have recorded the dullness of the disciples as to the plain declarations of the Old Testament, and then have thought of this device to prop up the narrative? Every thing about this narrative—its simplicity—its tenderness—its particularity—its perfect nature—and its freedom from all appearance of trick—shews that it was taken from real life; and if so, then the Christian religion is true; for here is evidence that Jesus rose from the dead. 44. *Which were written in the law of Moses, &c.* This division of the Old Testament was in use long before the time of Christ, and was what he referred to here. And he meant to say that in each of these divisions of the Old Testament there were prophecies respecting himself. The particular subject before them was, his resurrection from the dead. A most striking prediction of this is contained in *Ps.* xvi. 9—11; compare it with *Acts* ii. 24—32; xiii. 35—37. 45. *Opened he their understanding.* Enabled them fully to comprehend the meaning of the prophecies that foretold his death and resurrection. They had seen him die; they now saw him risen. Their prejudices, by his instructions, and by the facts which they could no longer call in question, were removed, and they no longer doubted that he was the Messiah, and that all the facts in the case, which had before confounded them, could be easily accounted for. Here we may learn, 1st. That facts or truths will yet remove the mysteries that we now see in religion. 2nd. That our prejudices and our preconceived opinions are one cause of our seeing so many mysteries in the Bible. If a man is willing to take the plain declarations of the Bible, he will be little perplexed with mysteries. 3rd. That God only can open the mind so as fully to comprehend the Scriptures. He only can overcome our prejudices—open our hearts—and dispose us to receive the engrafted word with meekness, and with the simplicity of a child: see *Acts* xvi. 14; *Jas.* i. 21; *Mar.* x. 15. 4th. The design of God's opening the understanding is, that we may be acquainted with the Scriptures. It is not that we may be made wise above what is written, but that we may submit ourselves wholly to the Word of God. 48. *Are witnesses of these things.* Of my life, my sufferings, my death, and my resurrection. How solemn was their office, to testify these things to the world, and in the face of sufferings and death to go and proclaim them to all nations! In like manner, all Christians are witnesses for Christ; they are the evidences of his mercy and his love; and they should live so that others might also be brought to see and love the Saviour. 50. *To Bethany.* Bethany was on the eastern declivity of the mount of Olives, from which our Lord was taken up to heaven, *Acts* i. 12. Bethany was a favoured place. It was the abode of Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus, and our Saviour delighted to be there. From this place also he ascended to his Father and our Father, and to his God and our God. 52. *They worshipped him.* The word worship does not always denote religious homage. But here it is to be remarked, 1st. That they offered this worship to an absent Saviour. It was after he had left them, and had vanished out of their sight. It was therefore an act of religion; and was the first religious homage that was paid to Jesus after he had left the world. 2nd. If they worshipped an absent Saviour—a Saviour unseen by the bodily eye—it is right for us to do it; it was an example which we may and should follow. If worship may be rendered to Jesus, he is divine: see *Ex.* xx. 4, 5. 53. *Were continually in the temple.* Until the day of pentecost; that is, about ten days after: see *Acts* ii. Praising and blessing God. Chiefly for the full proof that the Messiah had come, had redeemed them, and had ascended to heaven. 'Thus the days of their mourning were ended: they were filled with happiness at the assurance of redemption; and expressed, what every Christian should feel, fulness of joy at the glad tidings that a Saviour has died, and risen, and ascended to God; and an earnest desire to pour forth in the sanctuary prayers and thanksgivings to the God of grace for his mercy to a lost and ruined world.'

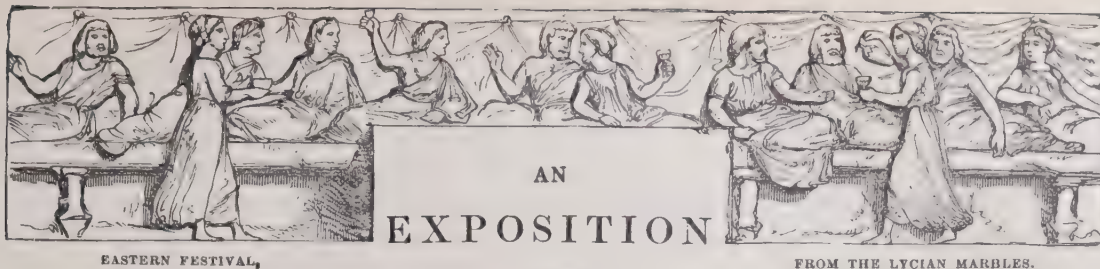


RUINS OF THE CITIES OF THE COASTS OF TYRE AND SIDON.—*Ch.* vi. 17.

x. 29. The lawyer wished to justify himself—i.e., he wished to make it appear that he had not asked a trivial or captious question. He may also have desired, by putting a second question, to induce Jesus to give an interpretation of the word "neighbour" which was not in accordance with rabbinical explanations. These, it is said, were so limited as to exclude both Samaritans and Gentiles from the list of neighbours.

xxi. 18. We do not infer from this that Christians would not suffer even unto death, because it is expressly said they would (verse 16). The disciples were "in deaths often," but they never "perished." Christ, the Saviour of his people, will save them completely and eternally.

xxiii. 5. "Jewry" is Judea, where our Lord concluded the earthly ministry which he had commenced in Galilee.



GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN,

WITH
PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is not material to inquire when and where this Gospel was written; we are sure it was given by inspiration of God, to John the brother of James, one of the twelve apostles, distinguished by the honourable character of "that disciple whom Jesus loved;" one of the first three of the worthies of the Son of David, whom he took to be the witnesses of his retirements, particularly of his transfiguration and agony. The ancients tell us that John lived longest of all the twelve apostles, and was the only one of them that died a natural death,—all the rest suffering martyrdom; and some of them say he wrote this Gospel at Ephesus, at the request of the ministers of the several churches of Asia, in opposition to the heresy of Cerinthus, and the Ebionites, who held that our Lord was a mere man. It seems most probable that he wrote it before his banishment into the isle of Patmos, for there he wrote his *Apocalypse*, the close of which seems designed for the closing up of the Canon of Scripture; and if so, this Gospel was not written after. I cannot therefore give credit to those latter fathers who say he wrote it in his banishment, or after his return from it, many years after the destruction of Jerusalem; when he was ninety years old, saith one of them; when he was an hundred, saith another of them. However, it is clear he wrote last of the four evangelists; and comparing his Gospel with theirs, we may observe— I. That he relates what they had omitted; he brings up the rear, and his Gospel is as the rearward, or gathering host; it gleans up what they had passed by. Thus there was a later collection of Solomon's wise sayings, *Pr.* xxv. 1; and yet far short of what he delivered, 1 *Kin.* iv. 32. II. That he gives us more of the mystery of that which the other evangelists gave us only the history of. It was necessary that the matters of fact should be first settled, which was done in their declarations of those things which Jesus began both to do and teach, *Lu.* i. 1; *Acts* i. 1; but that being done out of the mouth of two or three witnesses, John goes on to perfection, *Heb.* vi. 1; not laying again the foundation, but building upon it; leading us more within the veil. Some of the ancients observe that the other evangelists wrote more of the *τα σωματικά*,—"the bodily things of Christ;" but John writes of the *τα πνευματικά*,—"the spiritual things of the Gospel,"—the life and soul of it: therefore some have called this Gospel the key of the evangelists. Here it is that a door is opened in heaven, and the first voice we hear is, "Come up hither; come up higher;" some of the ancients, that supposed the four living creatures in John's vision to represent the four evangelists, make John himself to be the flying eagle; so high doth he soar, and so clearly doth he see into divine and heavenly things.

A.D. 30.

CHAPTER I.

The scope and design of this chapter is to confirm our faith in Christ as the eternal Son of God, and the true Messiah and Saviour of the world, that we may be brought to receive him, and rely upon him, as our prophet, priest, and king, and to give up ourselves to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him. In order to this, we have here, I. An account given of him by the inspired penman himself, fairly laying down in the beginning what he designed his whole book should be the proof of, ver. 1—5; and again, ver. 10—14; and again, ver. 16—18. II. The testimony of John Baptist concerning him, ver. 6—9; and again, ver. 15; but most fully and particularly, ver. 19—37. III. His own manifestation of himself to Andrew and Peter, ver. 38—42, to Philip and Nathanael, ver. 43—51.



IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Austin saith (*De Civ. Dei*, lib. x. c. 29.) that his friend Simplicianus told him he had heard a Platonic philosopher say that these first verses of St. John's Gospel were worthy to be written in letters of gold. The learned Francis Junius, in the account he gives of his own life, tells how he was in his youth infected with loose notions in religion, and, by the grace of God, was wonderfully recovered by reading accidentally these verses in a Bible which his father had designedly laid in his way. He saith that he observed such a Divinity in the argument, such an authority and majesty in the style, that his flesh trembled, and he was struck with such an amazement, that for a whole day he scarce knew where he was, or what he did; and from thence he dates the beginning of his being religious. Let us inquire what there is in those strong lines. The evangelist here lays down the great truth he is to prove, that Jesus Christ is God, one with the Father. Observe,

A.D. 30.

First. *Who he speaks of.* "The Word," ὁ Λόγος. This is an idiom peculiar to John's writings; see 1 *Jno.* i. 1; v. 7; *Rev.* xix. 13; yet some think Christ is meant by "the Word," *Acts* xx. 32; *Heb.* iv. 12; *Lu.* i. 2. The Chaldee paraphrase very frequently calls the Messiah (Memra) the Word of Jehovah, and speaks of many things in the Old Testament, said to be done by the Lord, as done by that Word of the Lord; even the vulgar Jews were taught that the Word of God was the same with God. The evangelist, in the close of his discourse, ver. 18, plainly tells us why he calls Christ the Word, because he is "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, and has declared him." Word is twofold: λόγος ἐνδιδάκτωρ, word conceived; and λόγος προφορικός, word uttered. The λόγος ὁ ἔσω and ὁ ἔξω, ratio and oratio,—"intelligence" and "utterance."

1. There is the word conceived, that is, thought, which is the first and only immediate product and conception of the soul, all the operations of which are performed by thought, and it is one with the soul. And thus the second person in the Trinity is fitly called the Word; for he is "the first begotten of the Father;" that eternal and essential Wisdom which "the Lord possessed," as the soul doth its thought, "in the beginning of his way," *Pr.* viii. 22. There is nothing we are more sure of than that we think, yet nothing we are more in the dark about than how we think. Who can declare the generation of thought in the soul? Surely then the generations and births of the eternal Mind may well be allowed to be great mysteries of godliness, the bottom of which we cannot fathom, while yet we adore the depth.

2. There is the word uttered, and that is speech, the chief and most natural indication of the mind. And thus Christ is the Word, for by him God has in these last days spoken to us, *Heb.* i. 1, and has directed us to hear him, *Mat.* xvii. 5. He has made known God's mind to us, as a man's word or speech makes known his thoughts, as far as he pleaseth, and no farther. Christ is called that wonderful Speaker, *Dan.* viii. 13; the speaker of things hidden and strange. He is the Word speaking from God to us, and to God for us. John Baptist was the voice, but Christ the Word; being the Word, he is the Truth, the Amen, the faithful Witness of the mind of God.

Secondly. *What he saith of him*, enough to prove beyond contradiction that he is God. He asserts,

1. His existence in the beginning: "In the beginning was the Word." This speaks his existence, not only before his incarnation, but before all time. The beginning of time, in which all creatures were produced and brought into being, found this eternal Word in being. The world was from the beginning, but the Word was in the beginning. Eternity is usually expressed by being "before the foundation of the world." The eternity of God is so described, *Ps.* xc. 2. "Before the mountains were brought forth;" so *Pr.* viii. 23. The Word had a being before the world had a beginning. He that was in the beginning never begun, and therefore ever was, ἀρχόντος. So Nonnus.

2. His co-existence with the Father: "the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Let none say, that when we invite them to Christ, we would draw them from God; for Christ is with God, and is God. It is repeated again, ver. 2: the same, the very same, that we believe in and preach, was in the beginning with God, that is, he was so from eternity. In the beginning the world was from God, as it was created by him; but the Word was with God, as ever

Introductory Note.—The authorship of this Gospel has never been seriously questioned till recent times, and the preponderance of authorities is still largely in favour of its having been written by St. John. It was probably written at Ephesus, about the year A.D. 78, i.e., a few years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and some time before the apostle's banishment to Patmos. This exile is supposed to have taken place in the reign of Domitian, who condemned him to labour in the mines, for the word of the Lord and the testimony of Jesus

Christ (*Rev.* i. 9). He is believed to have returned from Patmos in the reign of Nerva, and to have taken up his residence at Ephesus, where he died at an advanced age. In early life he was distinguished, with James his brother, for energy, zeal, and even impetuosity of character, hence the name "Boanerges" given them by Christ (*Mark* iii. 17). For examples of this feature of their character see *Luke* ix. 49, 54; *Matt.* xx. 20—23. The gospels represent him as sharing in a special manner the friendship and confidence of our Lord. He

with him. "The Word was with God," 1st. In respect of essence and substance; for "the Word was God;" a distinct person or subsistence, for he was with God; and yet the same in substance, for he was God, *Heb. i. 3*. 2nd. In respect of complacency and felicity; there was a glory and happiness which Christ had with God before the world was, *Jno. xvii. 5*; the Son infinitely happy in the enjoyment of his Father's bosom, and no less the Father's delight, the Son of his love, *Pr. viii. 30*. 3rd. In respect of counsel and design. The mystery of man's redemption, by this Word incarnate, was hid in God (1 *Pet. iii. 18*) was himself from eternity with God; so that this grand affair of man's reconciliation to God was concerted between the Father and Son from eternity, and they understand one another perfectly well in it, *Zec. vi. 13*; *Mat. xi. 27*. He was by him as one brought up with him for this service, *Pr. viii. 30*. He was with God, and therefore is said to come forth from the Father.

3. His agency in making the world, ver. 3. This is here, 1st. Expressly asserted, "all things were made by him." He was with God, not only so as to be acquainted with the Divine counsels from eternity, but to be active in the Divine operations in the beginning of time; "then was I by him," *Pr. viii. 30*. God made the world by a word, *Ps. xxxiii. 6*, and as a co-ordinate agent, God made him, not as a subordinate instrument, but as a co-ordinate agent, God made the world, *Heb. i. 2*; not as the workman cuts by his axe, but as the body sees by the eye. 2nd. The contrary is denied: "without him was not any thing made that was made," from the highest angel to the meanest worm; God the Father did nothing without him in that work. Now, *First*, This proves that he is God; for he that built all things is God, *Heb. iii. 4*. The God of Israel often proved himself to be God with this, that he made all things, *Isa. xl. 12, 28*; *xlii. 5*; and see *Jer. x. 11, 12*. *Secondly*, This proves the excellency of the Christian religion; the author and founder of it is the same who was the author and founder of the world. How excellent must that constitution needs be, which derives its institution from him who is the Fountain of all excellency. When we worship Christ we worship him to whom the patriarchs gave honour, as the Creator of the world, and on whom all creatures depend. *Thirdly*, This shews how well qualified he was for the work of our redemption and salvation; help was laid upon one that was mighty indeed, for it was laid upon him that made all things; and he is appointed the author of our bliss that was the author of our being.

4. The original of life and light that is in him, ver. 4. "In him was life." This farther proves that he is God, and every way qualified for his undertaking; for, 1st. He has "life in himself," not only the true God, but the living God. God is life; he swears by himself, when he saith, "As I live." 2nd. All living creatures have their life in him; not only all the matter of the creation was made by him, but all the life too that is in the creation is derived from him, and supported by him. It was the Word of God that produced the moving creatures having life, *Gen. i. 20*; *Acts xvii. 25*. He is that Word by which man lives more than by bread, *Mat. iv. 4*. 3rd. Reasonable creatures have their light from him; that life, which is "the light of men," comes from him. Life in man is something greater and nobler than it is in other creatures; it is rational, and not merely animal; when man became a living soul, his life was light, his capacities such as distinguished him from, and dignified him above, the beasts that perish. The "spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord," and it was the eternal Word that lighted this candle. The light of reason, as well as the life of sense, is derived from him, and depends upon him. This proves him fit to undertake our salvation; for life and light, spiritual and eternal life and light, are the two great things that fallen man, who lies so much under the power of death and darkness, has need of. From whom may we better expect the light of Divine revelation than from Him who gave us the light of human reason? And if, when God gave us natural life, that life was in his Son, how readily should we receive the gospel record, that he hath given us eternal life, and that life too is in his Son.

5. The manifestation of him to the children of men. It might be objected if this eternal Word was all in all thus in the creation of the world, whence is it that he has been so little taken notice of and regarded? To this he answers, ver. 5, "The Light shines, but the darkness comprehends it not." Observe,

1st. The discovery of the eternal Word to the lapsed world, even before he was manifested in the flesh; "the Light shineth in darkness." Light is self-evidencing, and will make itself known: this Light, from whence the light of men comes, hath shined, and doth shine. *First*, The eternal Word, as God, shines in the darkness of natural conscience. Though men, by the fall, are become darkness, yet that which may be known of God is manifested in them; see *Rom. i. 19*. The light of nature is this Light shining in darkness. Something of the power of the Divine Word, both as creating and as commanding, all mankind has an innate sense of; were it not for that, this earth would be a hell, a place of utter darkness; blessed be God, it is not so yet. *Secondly*, The eternal Word, as Mediator, shone in the darkness of the Old Testament types and figures, and the prophecies and promises which were of the Messiah, from the beginning. He that had commanded the light of this world to shine out of darkness, was himself long a light shining in darkness; there was a veil upon this light, *2 Cor. iii. 13*.

2nd. The disability of the degenerate world to receive this discovery: "the darkness comprehended it not;" the most of men received the grace of God in these discoveries in vain. *First*, The world of mankind comprehended not the natural light that was in their understandings, "but became vain in their imaginations" concerning the eternal God, and the eternal Word, *Rom. i. 21, 27*. The darkness of error and sin overpowered and quite eclipsed this light. God spoke once, yea twice, but man perceived it not, *Job xxxiii. 14*. *Secondly*, The Jews, that had the light of the Old Testament, yet comprehended not Christ in his heart. As there was a veil upon Moses' face, so there was upon the people's hearts. In the darkness of the types and shadows the Light shone; but such was the darkness of their understandings that they could not see it. It was therefore requisite that Christ should come, both to rectify the errors of the Gentile world, and to improve the truths of the Jewish church.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own

received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The evangelist designs to bring in John Baptist, bearing an honourable testimony to Jesus Christ. Now in these verses, before he doth that,

First. He gives us some account of this witness he is about to produce. His name is John, which signifies gracious; his conversation was austere, but he was not the less gracious. Now,

1. We are here told concerning him, in general, that he was a man sent of God. The evangelist had said concerning Jesus Christ, that he was with God, and that he was God; but here concerning John, that he was a man, a mere man. God is pleased to speak to us by men like ourselves. John was a great man, but he was a man, a son of man; he was sent from God, he was God's messenger; so he is called, *Mal. iii. 1*. God gave him both his mission and his message, both his credentials and his instructions. John wrought no miracle, nor do we find that he had visions and revelations; but the strictness and purity of his life and doctrine, and the direct tendency of both to reform the world, and to revive the interests of God's kingdom among men, were plain indications that he was sent of God.

2. We are here told what his office and business was; ver. 7, "the same came for a witness," an eye-witness, a leading witness. He came *εὐαγγελιστὴς*,—"for a testimony." The legal institutions had been long a testimony for God in the Jewish church; by them revealed religion was kept up; hence we read of the "tabernacle of the testimony," "the ark of the testimony," "the law and the testimony;" but now Divine revelation is to be turned into another channel; now the testimony of Christ is the testimony of God, *1 Cor. i. 6*; and *ii. 1*. Among the Gentiles God indeed had "not left himself without witness," *Acts xv. 17*; but the Redeemer had no testimonies borne him among them. There was a profound silence concerning him till John Baptist came for a witness to him. Now observe,

1st. The matter of his testimony; he came "to bear witness of the Light." Light is a thing which witnesseth for itself, and carries its own evidence along with it. But to those who shut their eyes against the light, it is necessary there should be those that bear witness to it. Christ's light needs not man's testimony; but the world's darkness doth. John was like the night watchman that goes round the town proclaiming the approach of the morning light to those that have closed their eyes, and are not willing themselves to observe it; or like that watchman that was set to tell those who asked, "What of the night?" "The morning comes; and if ye will enquire, enquire ye," *Isa. xxi. 11, 12*. He was sent of God to tell the world that the long-looked-for Messiah was now come, who should be "a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel;" and that dispensation at hand which would bring life and immortality to light.

2nd. The design of his testimony; "that all men through him might believe;" not in him, but in Christ; whose way he was sent to prepare. He taught men to look through him, and pass through him, to Christ; through the doctrine of repentance for sin, to that of faith in Christ. He prepared men for the reception and entertainment of Christ and his Gospel, by awakening them to a sight and sense of sin; and their eyes being thereby opened, they might be ready to admit those beams of Divine light which in the person and doctrine of the Messiah were now ready to shine in their faces. If they would but receive this witness of man, they would soon find that the witness of God was greater, *1 Jno. v. 9*; see *ch. x. 41*. Observe, It was designed that all men through him might believe, excluding none from the kind and beneficial influences of his ministry that did not exclude themselves, as multitudes did, who rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and so received the grace of God in vain.

3. We are here cautioned not to mistake him for the Light, who only came to bear witness to it; ver. 8, "he was not that Light," that was expected and promised, but only was sent to bear witness of that great and ruling Light. He was a star, like that which guided the wise men to Christ; a morning star, but he was not the sun; not the bridegroom, but a friend of the bridegroom; not the prince, but his harbinger. There were those who rested in John's baptism, and looked no farther, as those Ephesians, *Acts xix. 3*; to rectify whose mistake, the evangelist here, when he speaks very honourably of him, yet shews that he must veil to Christ. He was great, as the prophet of the Highest, but not the Highest himself. Note, We must take heed of overvaluing ministers, as well as of undervaluing them; they are not our lords, nor have they dominion over our faith; but ministers, by whom we believe; stewards of our Lord's house. We must not give up ourselves by an implicit faith to their conduct, for they are not that Light; but we must attend to, and receive their testimony, for they are sent "to bear witness of that Light;" so then let us esteem of them, and not otherwise. Had John pretended to be that Light, he had not been so much as a faithful witness of that Light. Those who usurp the honour of Christ, forfeit the honour of being the servants of Christ: yet John was very serviceable as a witness to the Light, though he was not that Light. Those may be of great use to us who yet shine with a borrowed light.

Secondly. Before he goes on with John's testimony, he returns to give us a farther account of this Jesus, to whom John bore record. Having shewed in the beginning of the chapter the glories of his Godhead, he here comes to shew the graces of his incarnation, and his favours to man as Mediator.

1. Christ was the true Light, ver. 9; not as if John Baptist were a false light, but in comparison with Christ he was a very small light; Christ is that great Light, that deserves to be called so. Other lights are but figuratively and equivocally called so; Christ is the true Light. The fountain of all knowledge and of all comfort must needs be the true Light. He is the true Light, and for the proof of it he doth not refer us to the emanations of his glory in the invisible world, the beams with which he enlightens that, but to those rays of his light which are darted downwards, and with which this dark world of ours is enlightened. But how doth Christ "lighten every man that comes into the world?"

1st. By his creating power, he lightens every man with the light of reason; that life which is the light of men is from him; all the discoveries and directions of reason, all the comfort it gives us, and all the beauty it puts upon us, is from Christ.

is styled the disciple whom Jesus loved; and, together with Peter and James, was admitted to witness the higher manifestations of Christ's glory and suffering (*Mark ix. 2*; *Matt. xxvi. 37*); and to him the dying Saviour entrusted the care of his mother (*John xix. 25-27*). His constant association with Peter appears to indicate a warm friendship between them (*Luke v. 10*, *xxii. 8*; *John xviii. 16*, *xxi. 20*; *Acts iii. 1*, *viii. 14*).

i. 1. This opening may be compared with that of Genesis. The

"Word;" this name for Christ is characteristic of St. John. The term is used in the Old Testament (*Psa. xxxiii. 6*), a kindred expression is found in *Prov. viii.*, and is truly applicable to Him in whom God has revealed himself to us (*John i. 18*, *xiv. 9*), and through whom he has spoken to us (*Heb. i. 2*). "Was with God"—observe distinctness of person (*John i. 18*, *xvii. 5*); "was God"—unity of substance (*John x. 30*).

i. 4. "Life," "light;" perhaps directed against errors of those

2nd. By the publication of his Gospel to all nations, he doth in effect lighten every man. John Baptist was a light, but he enlightened only Jerusalem and Judaea; and the region round about Jordan like a candle that enlightens one room; but Christ is the true Light, for he is "a Light to lighten the Gentiles." His everlasting Gospel is to be preached to every nation and language, *Rev. xiv. 6*; like the sun which lightens every man that will open his eyes and receive its light, *Ps. xix. 6*; to which the preaching of the Gospel is compared, *Rom. x. 18*. Divine revelation is not now to be confined, as it had been, to one people, but to be diffused to all people, *Mat. v. 15*.

3rd. By the operation of his Spirit and grace he lighteth all those that are enlightened to salvation; and those that are not enlightened by him perish in darkness. "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God" is said to be "in the face of Jesus Christ;" and is compared with that light which was at the beginning commanded to shine out of darkness, and which lighteth every man that comes into the world. Whatever light any man has, he is indebted to Christ for it, whether it be natural or supernatural.

II. Christ was in the world, ver. 10. He was in the world as the essential Word before his incarnation, upholding all things; but this speaks of his being in the world when he took our nature upon him, and dwelt among us; see *ch. xvi. 28*, "I am come into the world." The Son of the Highest was here in this lower world; that Light in this dark world; that Holy Thing in this sinful, polluted world. He left a world of bliss and glory, and was here in this melancholy, miserable world. He undertook to reconcile the world to God, and therefore was in the world to treat about it, and settle that affair; to satisfy God's justice for the world, and discover God's favour to the world. He was in the world, but not of it, and speaks with an air of triumph, when he can say, Now I am no more in it, *ch. xvii. 11*. The greatest honour that ever was put upon this world, which is so mean and inconsiderable a part of the universe, was, that the Son of God was once in the world; and as it should engage our affections to things above, that there Christ is, so it should reconcile us to our present abode in this world, that once Christ was here. He was in the world for a while, but it is spoken of as a thing past; and so it will be said of us shortly, we were in the world. Oh, that when we are here no more, we may be where Christ is. Now observe here,

1st. What reason Christ had to expect the most affectionate and respectful welcome possible into this world, for "the world was made by him;" therefore he came to save a lost world, because it was a world of his own making. Why should not he concern himself to revive the light that was of his own kindling, to restore a life of his own infusing, and to renew the image that was originally of his own impressing? The world was made by him, and therefore ought to do him homage.

2nd. What cold entertainment he met with notwithstanding; "the world knew him not." The great Maker, Ruler, and Redeemer of the world was in it, and few or none of the inhabitants of the world were aware of it: "the ox knows his owner," but the more brutish world did not; they did not own him, did not bid him welcome, because they did not know him; and they did not know him, because he did not make himself known in that way that they expected, in external glory and majesty. His kingdom came not with observation, because it was to be a kingdom of trial and probation. When he shall come as a judge the world shall know him.

III. "He came unto his own," ver. 11; not only to the world, which was his own, but to the people of Israel, that were peculiarly his own above all people; of them he came, among them he lived, and to them he was first sent. The Jews were at this time a mean, despicable people; the crown was fallen from their head; yet in remembrance of the ancient covenant, as bad as they were, and as poor as they were, Christ was not ashamed to look upon them as his own: *αὐτοῦ*, "his own things," *not τοῦ ἰδίου*, "his own persons," as true believers are called, *ch. xiii. 1*. The Jews were his, as a man's house, and lands, and goods are his, which he useth and possesseth; but believers are his, as a man's wife and children are his own, which he loves and enjoys. He came to his own, to seek and save them, because they were his own. He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; for it was he whose own the sheep were. Now observe,

1st. That the generality rejected him; "his own received him not." He had reason to expect that those who were his own should have bidden him welcome, considering how great the obligations were which they lay under to him; and how fair the opportunities were which they had of coming to the knowledge of him. They had the oracles of God, which told them beforehand when and where to expect him, and of what tribe and family he should arise. He came among them himself, introduced with signs and wonders, and himself the greatest; and therefore it is not said of them, as it was of the world, ver. 10, that "they knew him not;" but his own, though they could not but know him yet "they received him not;" did not receive his doctrine, did not welcome him as the Messiah, but fortified themselves against him. The chief priests, that were in a particular manner his own, for the Levites were God's tribe, were ring-leaders in this contempt put upon him. Now this was very unjust, because they were his own, and therefore he might command their respects; and it was very unkind and ungrateful, because he came to them to seek and save them, and so court their respects. Note, Many who in profession are Christ's own, yet do not receive him, because they will not part with their sins, nor have him to reign over them.

2nd. That yet there was a remnant who owned him, and were faithful to him. Though his own received him not, yet there were those that received him; ver. 12, "but as many as received him;" though Israel were not gathered, yet Christ was glorious. Though the body of that nation persisted and perished in unbelief, yet there were many of them that were wrought upon to submit to Christ, and many more that were not of that fold. Observe here,

First. The true Christian's description and property: and that is, that he receives Christ, and believes on his name; the latter explains the former. Note, 1st. To be a Christian indeed, is to believe on Christ's name; it is to assent to the Gospel discovery, and consent to the Gospel proposal concerning him. His name is the Word of God; the King of kings; the Lord our Righteousness; Jesus, a Saviour. Now, to believe on his name, is to acknowledge that he is what these great names speak him, and to acquiesce in it that he be so to us. 2nd. Believing in Christ's name, is receiving him as a gift from God. We must receive his doctrine as true and good; receive his law as just and holy; receive his offers as kind and advantageous; and we must receive the image of his grace, and impressions of his love, as the governing principle of our affections and actions.

Secondly. The true Christian's dignity and privilege are twofold: 1st. The privilege of adoption, which takes them into the number of God's children; "to them gave he power to become the sons of God." Hitherto the adoption pertained to the Jews only, "Israel is my son, my firstborn;" but now, by faith in Christ, Gentiles are the children of God, *Gal. iii. 26*; they have power, *ἐξουσίαν*, "authority;" for no man taketh this power to himself, but who is authorized by the Gospel charter: to them gave he a right; to them gave he this pre-eminence; this power have all the saints. Note, First. It is the unspeakable privilege of all good Christians that they are become the children of God. They were by nature children of wrath; children of

this world. If they be the children of God, they become so, are made so, *Fiunt non nascuntur Christiani*.—"Persons are not born Christians, but made so."—*Tertullian*. "Behold, what manner of love" is this, *1 Jno. iii. 1*. God calls them his children, they call him Father, and are entitled to all the privileges of children; those of their way, and those of their home. Secondly. The privilege of adoption is entirely owing to Jesus Christ; he gave this power to them that believe on his name. God is his Father, and so ours; and it is by virtue of our espousals to him, and union with him, that we stand related to God as a Father. It was in Christ that we were predestinated to the adoption; from him we receive both the character and the spirit of adoption, and he is "the firstborn among many brethren." The Son of God became a son of man, that the sons and daughters of men might become the sons and daughters of God Almighty.

2nd. The privilege of regeneration; ver. 13, "which were born." Note, All the children of God are born again; all that are adopted are regenerated: this real change evermore attends that relative one. Wherever God confers the dignity of children, he creates the nature and disposition of children; men cannot do so when they adopt. Now here we have an account of the original of this new birth. First. Negatively: 1. It is not propagated by natural generation from our parents; it is "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh," nor "of corruptible seed." *1 Pet. i. 23*. Man, is called flesh and blood, because thence he has his original; but we do not become the children of God, as we become the children of our natural parents. Note, Grace doth not run in a blood, as corruption doth. Man, polluted, "begat a son in his own likeness," *Gen. v. 3*; but man, sanctified and renewed, doth not beget a son in that likeness. The Jews gloried much in their parentage, and the noble blood that ran in their veins; "we are Abraham's seed," and therefore to them "pertained the adoption," because they were born of that blood; but this New Testament adoption is not founded in any such natural relation. 2. It is not produced by the natural power of our own will. As it is "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh," so neither is it of the will of man, that labours under a moral impotency of determining itself to that which is good; so that the principles of the Divine life are not of our own planting, it is the grace of God that makes us willing to be his. Nor can human laws or writings prevail to sanctify and regenerate a soul; if they could, the new birth would be by the will of man. But, Secondly. Positively: It is of God. This new birth is owing to the Word of God, as the means, *1 Pet. i. 23*, and to the Spirit of God, as the great and sole author. True believers are born of God, *1 Jno. iii. 9*; and v. 1: and this is necessary to their adoption; for we cannot expect the love of God if we have not something of his likeness, nor claim the privileges of adoption if we be not under the power of regeneration.

IV. "The Word was made flesh," ver. 14. This expresseth Christ's incarnation more closely than those before. By his Divine presence he always was in the world, and by his prophets he came to his own; but now the fullness of time was come, he was sent forth after another manner, "made of a woman," *Gal. iv. 4*; God manifested in the flesh, according to the faith and hope of holy Job, *Job xix. 26*; "yet in my flesh shall I see God." Observe here,

1st. The human nature of Christ with which he was veiled; and that expressed two ways:

First. "The Word was made flesh;" "Forasmuch as the children" who were to become the sons of God, "were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same," *Heb. ii. 14*. The Socinians agree that Christ is both God and man; but they say he was man, and was made God, as Moses, *Ex. vii. 1*; directly contrary to John here, who saith, *ὁ λόγος ἦν*, "he was God" but, *καὶ ἐγένετο*, "he was made flesh;" compare ver. 1 with this. This speaks not only that he was really and truly man, but that he subjected himself to the miseries and calamities of the human nature. He was made flesh, the meanest part of man; flesh speaks man weak, and he was crucified through weakness, *2 Cor. xiii. 4*; flesh speaks man mortal and dying, *Ps. lxxviii. 39*; and Christ was put to death in the flesh, *1 Pet. iii. 18*. Nay, flesh speaks man tainted with sin, *Gen. vi. 3*; and Christ, though he was perfectly holy and harmless, yet appeared "in the likeness of sinful flesh," *Rom. viii. 3*, "and was made sin for us," *2 Cor. v. 6*. When Adam had sinned, God said to him, "Dust thou art," not only because made out of the dust, but because by sin he was sunk into dust: his fall did, *συνμαρτυροῦν τῇ ψυχῇ*, "turn him as it were all into body, made him earthy: therefore he said that was made a curse for us, was made flesh, and condemned sin in the flesh," *Rom. viii. 3*. Wonder at this, that the eternal Word should be made flesh, when flesh was come into such an ill name; that He who made all things should himself be made flesh, one of the meanest things, and submit to that from which he was at the greatest distance. The voice that ushered in the Gospel cried, "All flesh is grass," *Isa. xl. 1*, to make the Redeemer's love the more wonderful, who to redeem and save us was made flesh, and withered as grass; but the Word of the Lord, who was made flesh, endures for ever; when made flesh, he ceased not to be the Word of God.

Secondly. He "dwelt among us," here in this lower world. Having taken upon him the nature of man, he put himself into the place and condition of other men. The Word might have been made flesh, and dwelt among the angels; but having taken a body of the same mould with us, in it he came and resided in the same world with us. He "dwelt among us," us worms of the earth; us, that he had no need of; us, that he got nothing by; us, that were corrupt, and depraved, and revolted from God. The Lord God came and dwelt even among the rebellious, *Ps. lxxviii. 18*; he that had dwelt among angels, those noble and excellent beings, came and dwelt among us, that are a generation of vipers; us sinners, which was worse to him than David's dwelling in Mesech and Kedar, or Ezekiel's dwelling among scorpions, or the church of Pergamos dwelling where Satan's seat is. When we look upon the upper world, the world of spirits, how mean and contemptible doth this flesh, this body appear, which we carry about with us, and this world in which our lot is cast; and how hard is it to a contemplative mind to be reconciled to them. But that the eternal Word was made flesh, was clothed with a body as we are, and dwelt in this world as we do; this has put an honour upon them both, and should make us willing to abide in the flesh while God has any work for us to do; for Christ dwelt in this lower world, as bad as it is, till he had finished what he had to do there, *ch. xvii. 4*. He "dwelt among us," Jews, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "He shall dwell in the tents of Shem," *Gen. ix. 27*; and see *Zec. ii. 10*. Though the Jews were unkind to him, yet he continued to dwell among them; though, as some of the ancient writers tell us, he was invited to better treatment by Abgarus, king of Edessa, yet he removed not to any other nation.

He "dwelt among us," He was in the world, not as a wayfaring man, that tarries but for a night, but he "dwelt among us," made a long residence; the original word is observable, *κατασκηνώσας ἐν ἡμῖν*, he dwelt among us, he dwelt "as in a tabernacle," which intimates, 1st. That he dwelt here in very mean circumstances, as shepherds that dwell in tents. He did not dwell among us as in a palace, but as in a tent; for he had not where to lay his head, and was always upon the remove. 2nd. That his state here was a military state; soldiers dwell in tents; he had long since proclaimed war with the seed of the serpent, and now he takes the field in person; sets up his standard, and

who in early times made a distinction between life and light in the Godhead. On the contrary, St. John affirms both to be found in Christ. He has life (John v. 26) in himself: he imparts it to others. Connection between verses 3 and 4 is thus given by Olshausen: "All was made through him, for in him resides the all-producing, creative power." (Compare *Psa. xxxvi. 9*, where the same words are used with reference to God.) Thus the words, besides indicating the divinity of our Lord, are appropriately applied to him in his capacities of

Creator, Sustainer, Teacher, and Saviour. (See John xv. 4, 5; Heb. i. 3; Eph. v. 13, 14; 1 John i. 1-5, v. 11, 12.)

i. 6. "There was a man," &c.: observe the contrast. John the Baptist is designated "man" simply; Christ, the "word," John "became" and "was sent;" Christ "was" &c., "pre-existed."

i. 10. St. John is not speaking merely of the acts of Christ during the days of his flesh, but, as Olshausen says, "He (the Light) had already been in the world, but had not been acknowledged by it."

pitcheth his tent to prosecute this war. 3rd. That his stay among us was not to be perpetual. He dwelt here as in a tent, not as at home. The patriarchs, by dwelling in tabernacles, "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth," and sought the better country; and so did Christ, leaving us an example, *Heb. xiii. 13, 14.* 4th. That as of old God dwelt in the tabernacle of Moses, by the Shechinah between the cherubim, so now he dwells in the human nature of Christ; that is now the true Shechinah, the symbol of God's peculiar presence. And we are to make all our addresses to God through Christ, and from him to receive Divine oracles.

2nd. The beams of his Divine glory, that darted through this veil of flesh: "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The sun is still the fountain of light, though eclipsed or clouded; so Christ was still the brightness of his Father's glory, even then when he "dwelt among us," in this lower world. And how slightly soever the Jews thought of him, there were those that saw through the veil. Observe,

First. Who were the witnesses of this glory. We, his disciples and followers, that conversed most freely and familiarly with him; we among whom he dwelt. Other men discover their weaknesses to those that are most familiar with them, but it was not so with Christ; those that were most intimate with him saw most of his glory. As it was with his doctrine, the disciples knew the mysteries of it, while others had it under the veil of parables, so it was with his person, they saw the glory of his divinity, while others saw only the veil of his human nature. He manifested himself to them, and not unto the world. These witnesses were a competent number,—twelve of them,—a whole jury of witnesses: men of plainness and integrity, and far from any thing of design or intrigue.

Secondly. What evidence they had of it: We saw it. They had not their evidence by report, at second hand, but were themselves eye-witnesses of those proofs on which they built their testimony, that he was the Son of the living God. We saw it. The word signifies a fixed, abiding sight, such as gave them an opportunity of making their observations. This apostle himself explains this; what we declare unto you of the Word of life is what we have seen with our eyes, and what we have looked upon, *1 Jno. i. 1.*

Thirdly. What the glory was; "the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." The glory of the Word made flesh was such a glory as became the only begotten Son of God, and could not be the glory of any other. Note, 1st. Jesus Christ is the only begotten of the Father; believers are the children of God by the special favour of adoption, and the special grace of regeneration; they are in a sense *ὑιοὶ θεοῦ*, 'of a like nature,' *2 Pet. i. 4.* and have the image of his perfections; but Christ is *ὑιόμορφος*, 'of the same nature,' and is the express image of his person, and the Son of God by an eternal generation. Angels are sons of God, but he never said to any of them, "This day have I begotten thee," *Heb. i. 5.* 2nd. He was evidently declared to be the only begotten of the Father, by that which was seen of his glory, when he dwelt among us. Though he was in the form of a servant in respect of outward circumstances, yet in respect of graces his form was as that of the fourth in the fiery furnace, like the Son of God. His Divine glory appeared in the holiness and heavenliness of his doctrine; in his miracles, which extorted from many this acknowledgment, that he was the Son of God; it appeared in the purity, and goodness, and beneficence of his whole conversation. God's goodness is his glory, and he went about doing good; he spoke and acted in every thing as an incarnate Deity. Perhaps the evangelist has a particular regard to the glory of his transfiguration, which he was an eye-witness of; see *2 Pet. i. 16-18.* God's calling him his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased, spoke him "the only begotten of the Father;" but the full proof of this was at his resurrection.

Fourthly. What advantage those he dwelt among had from this. He dwelt among them "full of grace and truth." In the old tabernacle, wherein God dwelt, was the law; in this, was grace; in that were types, in this was truth. The incarnate Word was every way qualified for his undertaking as Mediator, for he was full of grace and truth, the two great things that fallen man stands in need of; and this proved him to be the Son of God, as much as the Divine power and majesty that appeared in him. 1st. He has a fulness of grace and truth for himself; he had the Spirit without measure. He was full of grace, that is, fully acceptable to his Father, and therefore qualified to intercede for us; and full of truth, that is, fully apprised of those things he was to reveal, and therefore fit to instruct us. He had a fulness of knowledge and a fulness of compassion. 2nd. He has a fulness of grace and truth for us. He received that he might give; and God was well pleased in him, that he might be well pleased with us in him; and this was the truth of the legal types.

15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. 16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

In these verses. First. The evangelist begins again to give us John Baptist's testimony concerning Christ, ver. 15. He had said, ver. 7, that he "came for a witness;" now here he tells us that he did accordingly bear witness. Here observe.

1. How he expressed his testimony; he cried, according to the prediction, that he should be "the voice of one crying." The Old Testament prophets cried aloud to shew people their sins, this New Testament prophet cried aloud to shew people their Saviour. This intimates, 1st. That it was an open, public testimony, proclaimed, that all manner of persons might take notice of it, for all are concerned in it. False teachers entice secretly, but wisdom publisheth her dictates in the chief places of concourse. 2nd. That he was free and hearty in bearing this testimony. He cried as one that was both well assured of, and well affected to, the truth he witnessed of. He that had leaped in his mother's womb for joy of Christ's approach, when newly conceived, doth now, with a like exultation of spirit, welcome his public appearance.

2. What his testimony was. He appeals to what he had said at the beginning of his ministry, when he had directed them to expect one that should come after him, whose forerunner he was, and never intended any other but to lead them to him, and to prepare his way. This he had given them notice of from

the first. Note. It is very comfortable to a minister to have the testimony of his conscience for him, that he set out in his ministry with honest principles and sincere intentions, with a single eye to the glory and honour of Christ. Now what he had then said he applies to this Jesus whom he had lately baptized, and who was so remarkably owned from heaven: "This was he of whom I spake." John did not tell them there would shortly appear such a one among them, and then leave them to find him out; but in this he went beyond all the Old Testament prophets, that he particularly specified the person—"this was he;" that is the very man I told you of, and to him all I said is to be accommodated. Now what was it he said?

1st. He had given the preference to this Jesus: "He that comes after me," in the time of his birth and public appearance, that succeeds me in preaching and making disciples, yet "is preferred before me," is a more excellent person upon all accounts; as the prince or peer that comes after is preferred before the harbinger or gentleman-usher that makes way for him. Note, Jesus Christ, who was to be called "the Son of the Highest," *Lu. i. 31.* was preferred before John Baptist, who was to be called only "the prophet of the Highest," *Lu. i. 76.* John was a minister of the New Testament, but Christ was the Mediator of the New Testament. And observe, Though John was a great man, and had a great name and interest, yet he was forward to give the preference to Him to whom it belonged. Note, All the ministers of Christ must prefer him and his interest before themselves and all their own interests. They will make an ill account that seek their own things, not the things of Christ, *Phil. ii. 21.* He comes after me, and yet is preferred before me. Note, God dispenseth his gifts according to his good pleasure, and many times crosseth hands, as Jacob did, preferring the younger before the elder. Paul far outstripped those that were in Christ before him.

2nd. He here gives a good reason for it; "for he was before me;" *ἡμεῖς ἔμελλεν ἔμελλεν*, 'he was my first,' or, 'first to me;' he was my first cause, my original. The First is one of God's names, *Isa. xlv. 6.* He is before me, is my first. First, in respect of seniority; "he was before me," for he was before Abraham, *Jno. viii. 58.* Nay, he was before all things, *Col. i. 17.* I but of yesterday, he from eternity. It was but in those days that John Baptist came, *Mat. iii. 1;* but the goings forth of our Lord Jesus were of old, from everlasting, *Mic. v. 2.* This proves two natures in Christ; Christ, as man, came after John, as to his public appearance; Christ, as God, was before him; and how could he otherwise be before him but by an eternal existence? Secondly. In respect of supremacy, for he was my Prince; so some princes are called the first, *παῖς αὐτοῦ*: It is He for whose sake and service I am sent; he is my Master, I am his minister and messenger.

Secondly. He presently returns again to speak of Jesus Christ, and cannot go on with John Baptist's testimony till ver. 19. The 16th verse has a manifest connexion with ver. 14, where the incarnate Word was said to be "full of grace and truth." Now here he makes this not only the matter of our adoration, but of our thankfulness; because from that fulness of his "we all have received." He received gifts for men, *Ps. lxxviii. 18.* that he might give gifts to men, *Eph. iv. 8.* He was filled, that he might fill all in all, *Eph. i. 23;* might fill our treasures, *Pr. vii. 21.* He has a fountain of fulness overflowing. "We all have received;" all we apostles, so some; we have received the favour of this apostleship, that is grace; and a fitness for it, that is truth. Or rather, all we believers; many as received him, ver. 17, received from him. Note, All true believers receive from Christ's fulness; the best and greatest saints cannot live without him, the meanest and weakest may live by him. This excludes proud boasting; that we have nothing but we have received it; and silenceth perplexing fears, that we want nothing but we may receive it. Let us see what it is that we have received.

1. We have received "grace for grace." Our receivings by Christ are all summed up in this one word, grace; we have received *καὶ χάριν*, 'even grace,' so great a gift, so rich, so invaluable; we have received no less than grace; that is a gift to be spoken of with an emphasis. It is repeated, "grace for grace;" for to every stone in this building, as well as to the topstone, we must cry, Grace, grace. Observe.

1st. The blessing received: it is grace; the good will of God towards us, and the good work of God in us. God's good will works the good work, and then the good work qualifies us for farther tokens of his good will. As the cistern receives water from the fulness of the fountain, the branches sap from the fulness of the root, and the air light from the fulness of the sun, so we receive grace from the fulness of Christ.

2nd. The manner of its reception; "grace for grace," *χάριν ὑπὲρ χάριτος*. The phrase is singular, and interpreters put different senses upon it, each of which will be of use to illustrate the unsearchable riches of the grace of Christ. "Grace for grace" speaks,

First. The freeness of this grace; it is grace for grace' sake; so Grotius. We receive grace, not for our sakes, he it known to us, but "even so, Father, because it seemed good in thy sight." It is a "gift according to grace," *Rom. xii. 6.* It is grace to us for the sake of grace to Jesus Christ. God was well pleased in him, and is therefore well pleased with us in him, *Eph. i. 6.*

Secondly. The fulness of this grace. "Grace for grace" is abundance of grace; "grace upon grace," so Camero; "one grace heaped upon another;" as "skin for skin" is skin after skin, even all that a man has, *Job ii. 4.* It is a blessing poured out that there shall not be room to receive it, plenteous redemption. One grace a pledge of more grace. "Joseph, he will add." It is such a fulness as is called the fulness of God which we are filled with. We are not straitened in the grace of Christ if we be not straitened in our own bosoms.

Thirdly. The serviceableness of this grace. "Grace for grace" is grace for the promoting and advancing of grace; grace to be exercised by ourselves, gracious habits for gracious acts; grace to be ministered to others, gracious vouchers for gracious performances: grace is a talent to be traded with. The apostles received grace, *Rom. i. 5, Eph. iii. 8.* that they might communicate it, *1 Pet. iv. 16.*

Fourthly. The substitution of New Testament grace in the room and stead of Old Testament grace; so Beza. And this sense is confirmed by what follows, ver. 17; for the Old Testament had grace in type, the New Testament has grace in truth. There was a grace under the Old Testament; the Gospel was preached then, *Gal. iii. 8;* but that grace is superseded, and we have gospel grace instead of it, a "glory which excelleth," *2 Cor. iii. 10.* Discoveries of grace are now more clear, distributions of grace far more plentiful; this is grace instead of grace.

Fifthly. It speaks the augmentation and continuance of grace. "Grace for grace" is one grace to improve, confirm, and perfect another grace. We are changed into the Divine image, "from glory to glory," from one degree of glorious grace to another, *2 Cor. iii. 18.* Those that have true grace have that for more grace, *Jas. iv. 6;* when God gives grace, he saith, Take this in part, for he which hath promised will perform.

Sixthly. It speaks the agreeableness and conformity of grace in the saints to the grace that is in Jesus Christ; so Mr. Clerk. "Grace for grace" is grace in us answering to grace in him, as the impression upon the wax answers the seal, line for line. The grace we receive from Christ "changeth us into the same

i. 11. "His own . . . his own:" the first is in the neuter, and signifies his own things, his own peculiar property—his own lands, city, temple, Messianic rights and possessions, even his own world. The second "his own" is in the masculine, and signifies his own people. We may thus see one difference between man and the rest of creation, viz., that he has the awful power of accepting or rejecting the light. Along with his higher capacity and intelligence is linked a greater responsibility. (Compare John xv. 4, where, after drawing

a comparison between himself and the vine, he adds, "Abide in me.") See John viii. 40-47 for some of the causes of his rejection.

i. 12. "Power:" right, or authority (see Rev. xxii. 14). "To become:" observe the words. Jesus is the Son of God, he is never said to have become such (see Note on verse 6). "His name:" Hengstenberg remarks, "That Christ has a name indicates that he, like the Jehovah of the Old Testament, in distinction from the nameless gods of the heathen, has not come with empty preten-

image," 2 Cor. iii. 18, the image of the Son, Rom. viii. 29, "the image of the heavenly," 1 Cor. xv. 49.

2. We have received "grace and truth," ver. 17. He had said, ver. 14, that Christ was "full of grace and truth;" now here he saith, that by him grace and truth come to us. From Christ we receive grace; this is a string he delights to harp upon, he cannot go off from it. Two things he farther observes in this verse concerning this grace:

1st. Its preference above the law of Moses. "The law was given by Moses," and it was a glorious discovery, both of God's will concerning man and his good will to man; but the Gospel of Christ is a much clearer discovery, both of duty and happiness. That which was given by Moses was purely terrifying and threatening, and bound with penalties, a law which could not give life, which was given with abundance of terror, Heb. xii. 18. But that which is given by Jesus Christ is of another nature; it has all the beneficial uses of the law, but not the terror, for it is grace; grace teaching, Tit. ii. 11; grace reigning, Rom. v. 21. It is a law, but a remedial law. The endearments of love are the genius of the Gospel, not the affrightments of law and the curse.

2nd. Its connexion with truth; "grace and truth." In the Gospel we have the discovery of the greatest truths to be embraced by the understanding, as well as of the richest grace to be embraced by the will and affections. It is "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation," that is, it is grace and truth. The offers of grace are sincere, and what we may venture our souls upon; they are made in earnest, for it is "grace and truth." It is "grace and truth" with reference to the law that was given by Moses; for it is, *First*. The performance of all the Old Testament promises. In the Old Testament we often find mercy and truth put together; that is, mercy according to promise; see Lu. i. 72; 1 Kin. viii. 56. *Secondly*. It is the substance of all the Old Testament types and shadows. Something of grace there was both in the ordinances that were instituted for Israel, and the providences that were concerning Israel; but they were only shadows of good things to come, even of that grace that is to be brought to us by "the revelation of Jesus Christ." He is the true paschal Lamb, the true scapegoat, the true manna, &c. They had grace in the picture, we have grace in the person, that is "grace and truth." "Grace and truth came," ἐγένετο, 'was made;' the same word that was used, ver. 3, concerning Christ's making all things. The law was only made known by Moses, but the being of this grace and truth, as well as the discovery of it, is owing to Jesus Christ; this was made by him, as the world at first was; and by him this "grace and truth" do consist.

3. Another thing we receive from Christ, is a clear revelation of God to us, ver. 18. He hath declared God to us, whom no man hath seen at any time. This was the grace and truth which came by Christ, the knowledge of God, and an acquaintance with him. Observe,

1st. The insufficiency of all other discoveries; "no man hath seen God at any time." This speaks, *First*. That the nature of God being spiritual, he is invisible to bodily eyes; he is a being "whom no man hath seen or can see," 1 Tim. vi. 16; we have therefore need to live by faith, by which we see Him that is invisible, Heb. xi. 27. *Secondly*. That the revelation which God made of himself in the Old Testament was very short and imperfect, in comparison with that which he has made by Christ; "no man hath seen God at any time," that is, what was seen and known of God before the incarnation of Christ was nothing to that which is now seen and known; life and immortality are now brought to a much clearer light than they were then. *Thirdly*. That none of the Old Testament prophets were so well qualified to make known the mind and will of God to the children of men as our Lord Jesus was, for none of them had "seen God at any time." Moses beheld the similitude of the Lord, Num. xii. 8, but was told he could not see his face, Ex. xxxiii. 20. But this recommends Christ's holy religion to us, that it was founded by one that had seen God, and knew more of his mind than any one else ever did; for he had seen him, which they never did.

2nd. The all-sufficiency of the gospel discovery, proved from its Author; "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him." Observe here,

First. How fit he was to make this discovery, and every way qualified for it. He, and none but he, was "worthy to take the book and open the seals," Rev. v. 9. For, 1st. He is "the only begotten Son;" and who so likely to know the Father as the Son? or, in whom is the Father better known than in the Son? Mat. xi. 27. He is of the same nature with the Father; so that he who hath seen him hath seen the Father, ch. xiv. 9. The servant is not supposed to know so well what his lord doth as the son, ch. xv. 15. "Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ as a Son." 2nd. He is "in the bosom of the Father." He had lain in his bosom from eternity; when he was here upon earth, yet still, as God, he was in the bosom of the Father, and thither he returned when he ascended. "In the bosom of the Father;" that is, *First*. In the bosom of his special love, dear to him, in whom he was well pleased, always his delight. All God's saints are in his hand, but his Son was in his bosom; one in nature and essence, and therefore in the highest degree one in love. *Secondly*. In the bosom of his secret counsels. As there was a mutual complacency, so there was a mutual consciousness between the Father and Son, Mat. xi. 27; none so fit as he to make known God, for none knew his mind so as he did. Our most secret counsels we are said to hide "in our bosom," — in *petto*; Christ was privy to the bosom counsels of the Father. The prophets sat down at his feet as scholars, Christ lay in his bosom as a friend: see Eph. iii. 11.

Secondly. How free he was in making this discovery; "he hath declared;" "him" is not in the original. He has declared that of God which no man had at any time seen or known; not only that which was hid of God, but that which was hid in God, Eph. iii. 9; ἐκκεκρυμμενο: it signifies a plain, clear, and full discovery; not by general and doubtful hints, but by particular explications. He that runs may now read the will of God, and the way of salvation. This is the grace, this the truth, that came by Jesus Christ.

19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? 20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. 21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. 22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? 23 He

said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. 24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? 26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; 27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. 28 These things were done in Beth-abara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

We have here the testimony of John, which he delivered to the messengers which were sent from Jerusalem to examine him. Observe here,

First. Who they were that sent to him, and who they were that were sent. 1. They that sent to him were the Jews at Jerusalem; the great Sanhedrim, or high commission court, which sat at Jerusalem, and was the representative of the Jewish church, who took cognizance of all matters relating to religion. One would think they that were the fountains of learning, and the guides of the church, should have by books understood the times so well as to know that the Messiah was at hand, and therefore should presently have known him that was his forerunner, and readily embraced him; but instead of that, they sent messengers to cross questions with him. Secular learning, honour, and power seldom dispose men's minds to the reception of Divine light.

2. They that were sent were, 1st. Priests and Levites, probably members of the council, men of learning, gravity, and authority. John Baptist was himself a priest of the seed of Aaron, and therefore it was not fit he should be examined by any but priests. It was prophesied concerning John's ministry, that it should purify the sons of Levi, Mal. iii. 3; and therefore they were jealous of him and his reformation. 2nd. They were of the Pharisees; proud self-judicialists, that thought they needed no repentance; and therefore could not bear one that made it his business to preach repentance.

Secondly. On what errand they were sent. It was to inquire concerning John and his baptism. They did not send for John up to them, probably because they feared the people; lest the people, where John was, should be provoked to rise; or, lest the people, where they were, should be brought acquainted with him; they thought it was good keeping him at a distance. They inquire concerning him, 1. To satisfy their curiosity; as the Athenians inquired concerning Paul's doctrine for the novelty of it, Acts xvii. 19, 20. Such a proud conceit they had of themselves, that the doctrine of repentance was to them strange doctrine. 2. It was to shew their authority; they thought they looked great, when they called him to account whom all men counted as a prophet, and arraigned him at their bar. 3. It was with a design to suppress him, and silence him, if they could find any colour of it, for they were jealous of his growing interest; and his ministry agreed neither with the Mosaic dispensation, which they had been long under, nor with the notions they had formed of the Messiah's kingdom.

Thirdly. What was the answer he gave them; and his account, both concerning himself and concerning his baptism, in both which he witnessed to Christ.

1. Concerning himself, and what he professed himself to be. They asked him, *ὅτι εἶ*, 'Thou, who art thou?' John's appearing in the world was surprising; he "was in the wilderness till the day of his shewing unto Israel." His spirit, his converse, his doctrine had something in them which commanded and gained respect; but he did not, as seducers do, give out himself to be some great one. He was more industrious to do good than to appear great; and therefore waived saying any thing of himself till he was legally interrogated. Those speak best for Christ that say least of themselves; whose own works praise them, not their own lips. He answers their interrogatory,

1st. Negatively. He was not that great one whom some took him to be. God's faithful witnesses stand more upon their guard against undue respects, than against unjust contempts. Paul writes as warmly against those that overvalued him, and said, "I am of Paul," as against those that undervalued him, and said his bodily presence was weak; and rent his clothes when he was called a god.

First. John disowns himself to be the Christ; ver. 20, he said, "I am not the Christ," who was now expected and waited for. Note. The ministers of Christ must remember that they are not Christ; and therefore must not usurp his powers and prerogatives, nor assume the praises due to him only. They are not Christ, and therefore must not lord it over God's heritage, nor pretend to a dominion over the faith of Christians. They cannot create grace and peace; they cannot enlighten, convert, quicken, comfort, for they are not Christ. Observe how emphatically this is here expressed concerning John; "he confessed, and denied not, but confessed," it notes his vehemence and constancy, in making this protestation. Note. Temptations to pride, and assuming that honour to ourselves which doth not belong to us, ought to be resisted with a great deal of vigour and earnestness. When John was taken to be the Messiah, he did not connive at it with a *Si populus vult decipi, decipitur*; — If the people will be deceived, let them; but openly, and solemnly, without any ambiguities, confessed, "I am not the Christ;" *ὅτι οὐκ εἰμι ὁ Χριστός*; "I am not the Christ, not I;" another is at hand who is he, but I am not. His disowning himself to be the Christ, is called his confessing, and not denying, Christ. Note. Those that humble and abase themselves, thereby confess Christ, and give honour to him; but those that will not deny themselves do in effect deny Christ.

Secondly. He disowns himself to be Elias, ver. 21. The Jews expected the person of Elias to return from heaven, and to live among them, and promised themselves great matters from it; and hearing of John's character, doctrine, and baptism, and observing that he appeared as one dropped from heaven, in the same part of the country from which Elijah was carried to heaven, it is no wonder that they were ready to take him for this Elijah; but he disowned this honour too. He was indeed prophesied of, under the name of Elijah, Mal. iv. 5; and he came in the spirit and power of Elias, Lu. i. 17; and was the Elias that was to come, Mat. xi. 14; but he was not the person of Elias; not that Elias that went to heaven in the fiery chariot, as he was that met Christ in his transfiguration. He was the Elias that God had promised, not the Elias they foolishly dreamed of. Elias did come, and they knew him not, Mat. xvii. 12; nor did he make himself known to them as the Elias, because they had promised themselves such an Elias as God never promised them.

sions, but has made known his nature in deeds of power and love, and has in this way erected a banner around which his church may rally."

i. 14. "Was made flesh;" i.e., became man. The phrase may be compared with the word "was," used (verse 1) with reference to his divinity (see Note on verse 6). These words may have been directed against those who held that Christ was not really man, but only apparently such. "Dwelt;" tabernacled. The word means to dwell in a tent, and probably reference is here made to the Shekinah

dwelling in the tabernacle. This verse may be regarded as the text of the narrative following; the Gospel of St. John being a record of the words and acts whereby the Word made flesh showed forth the glory of the only-begotten of the Father.

i. 15. "Cried;" i.e., made loud and bold proclamation. "He that cometh after me," &c.: Webster and Wilkinson render the passage, "He that succeeds me takes precedence of me." "For he was before me:" explaining the former sentence, by showing that he was not

Thirdly. He disowns himself to be that prophet, or the prophet. 1st. He was not that prophet which Moses said the Lord would raise up to them of their brethren, like unto him. If they meant that, they needed not ask that question, for that prophet was no other than the Messiah, and he had said already, "I am not the Christ." 2nd. He was not such a prophet as they expected and wished for; who, like Samuel and Elijah, and some other of the prophets, would interpose in public affairs, and rescue them from under the Roman yoke. 3rd. He was not one of the old prophets raised from the dead, as they expected one to come before Elias, as Elias before the Messiah. 4th. Though John was a prophet, yea, more than a prophet, yet he had his revelation not by dreams and visions, as the Old Testament prophets had theirs; his commission and work was of another nature, and belonged to another dispensation. If John had said that he was Elias, and was a prophet, he might have made his words good; but ministers must upon all occasions express themselves with the utmost caution, both that they do not confirm people in any mistakes, and particularly that they give not occasion to any to think of them above what is meet.

2nd. Affirmatively. The committee that was sent to examine him pressed for a positive answer, ver. 22; urging the authority of them that sent them, which they expected he should pay a deference to. "Tell us," what art thou?" Not that we may believe thee, and be baptized by thee, but that we may give an answer to them that sent us, and it may not be said that we were sent on a fool's errand! John was looked upon as a man of sincerity, and therefore they believed he would not give an evasive, ambiguous answer, but would be fair and aboveboard, and give a plain answer to a plain question; "What sayest thou of thyself?" and he did so, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness," Observe.

First. He gives his answer in the words of Scripture, to shew that the Scripture was fulfilled in him; and that his office was supported by a Divine authority. What the Scripture saith of the office of the ministry should be often thought of by those of that high calling, who must look upon themselves as that, and that only, which the Word of God makes them.

Secondly. He gives in his answer a very humble, modest, self-denying expressions; he chooseth to apply that Scripture to himself, which spoke not his dignity, but his duty and dependence, which speaks him little: "I am the voice," as if he were, *vox, et præterea nihil*, — a voice, and nothing more.

Thirdly. He gives such an account of himself as might be profitable to them, and might excite and awaken them to hearken to him, for he was "the voice," see Isa. xl. 3; a voice to alarm, an articulate voice, to instruct. Ministers are but the voice, the vehicle, by which God is pleased to communicate his mind; what are Paul and Apollos, but messengers? Observe, 1st. He was a human voice; the people were prepared to receive the law by the voice of thunder, and a trumpet exceeding loud, such as made them tremble; but they were prepared for the Gospel by the voice of a man like ourselves; a still small voice, such as that in which God came to Elijah, 1 Kin. xix. 12. 2nd. He was "the voice of one crying," which notes, First. His earnestness and importunity in calling people to repentance; he cried aloud, and did not spare. Ministers must preach as those that are in earnest, and are themselves affected with those things which they desire to affect others with. Those words are not likely to thaw the hearers' hearts that freeze between the speaker's lips. Secondly. His open publication of the doctrine he preached; he was "the voice of one crying," that all manner of persons might hear and take notice: "Doth not wisdom cry?" Ps. viii. 3. 3rd. It was in the wilderness that this voice was crying; in a place of silence and solitude, out of the noise of the world, and the hurry of its business; the more retired we are from the tumult of secular affairs, the better prepared we are to hear from God. 4th. That which he cried was, "Make straight the way of the Lord;" that is, First. He came to rectify the mistakes of people concerning the ways of God. It is certain they are right as yet; but the scribes and Pharisees with their corrupt glosses upon the law, had made them crooked. Now John Baptist calls people to return to the original rule. Secondly. He came to prepare and dispose people for the reception and entertainment of Christ and his Gospel. It is an allusion to the harbingers of a prince, or great man, that cry, Make room. Note. When God is coming towards us, we must prepare to meet him; and let the Word of the Lord have a free course; see Ps. xxiv. 7.

II. Here is his testimony concerning his baptism.

1st. The inquiry which the committee made about it; ver. 25, "Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet?"

First. They readily apprehended baptism to be fitly and properly used as a sacred rite or ceremony; for the Jewish church had used it, with circumcision, in the admission of proselytes, to signify the cleansing of them from the pollutions of their former state. That sign was made use of in the Christian church, that it might be the more passable. Christ did not affect novelty, nor should his ministers.

Secondly. They expected it would be used in the days of the Messiah, because it was promised that then there should be a fountain opened, Zec. xiii. 1, and clean water sprinkled, Eze. xxxvi. 25. It is taken for granted that Christ and Elias, and that prophet, would baptize, for they come to purify a polluted world. Divine justice drowned the old world in its filth, but Divine grace has provided for the cleansing of this new world from its filth.

Thirdly. They would therefore know by what authority John baptized. His denying himself to be Elias, or that prophet, subjected him to this farther question, "Why baptizest thou?" Note. It is no new thing for a man's modesty to be turned against him, and improved to his prejudice; but it is better men should take advantage of our low thoughts of ourselves, to trample upon us, than the devil take advantage of our high thoughts of ourselves, to tempt us to pride, and draw us into his condemnation.

2nd. The account he gave of it, ver. 26, 27.

First. He owned himself to be only the minister of the outward sign; "I baptize with water," and that is all; I am no more, and do no more than what you see; I have no other title but John the Baptist. I cannot confer the spiritual grace signified by it. Paul was in care that none should think of him above what they saw him to be, 2 Cor. xii. 6; so was John Baptist. Ministers must not set up for masters.

Secondly. He directed them to one that was greater than himself, and would do that for them, if they pleased, which he could not do. "I baptize with water," and that is the utmost of my commission; I have nothing to do, but by this to lead you to one that comes after me, and consign you to him. Note. The great business of Christ's ministers is to direct all people to him; "we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." John gave the same account to this committee that he had given to the people; ver. 15, "This was he of whom I spake." John was constant and uniform in his testimony, not as a reed shaken with the wind. The Sanhedrim were jealous of his interest in the people; but he is not afraid to tell them that there is one at the door that will go beyond him.

1st. He tells them of Christ's presence among them, now at this time; "there standeth one among you," at this time, "whom you know not." Christ stood among the common people, and was as one of them. Note, First. There is much true worth lies hid in this world; obscurity is often the lot of real

excellency. Saints are God's hidden ones, therefore the world knows them not. Secondly. God himself is often nearer us than we are aware of; "The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." They were gazing in expectation of the Messiah, "Lo he is here, or he is there," when the kingdom of God was abroad, and already among them, Lu. xvii. 21.

2nd. He tells them of his preference above himself; he comes after me, and yet is preferred before me. This he had said before; he adds here, "whose shoe latchet I am not worthy to unloose," I am not fit to be named the same day with him; it is an honour too great for me to pretend to be in the meanest office about him; alluded to, 1 Sam. xxv. 41. Those to whom Christ is precious, reckon his service, even the most despised instances of it, an honour to them; see Ps. lxxxiv. 10. If so great a man as John accounted himself unworthy of the honour of being near Christ, how unworthy then should we account ourselves! Now one would think these chief priests and Pharisees, upon this intimation given concerning the approach of the Messiah, should presently have asked who and where this excellent person was; and who more likely to tell them than he who had given them this general notice? No, they did not think that was any part of their business or concern; they came to molest John, not to receive any instructions from him; so that their ignorance was wilful; they might have known Christ, and would not.

Lastly. Notice is taken of the place where all this was done; ver. 28, "in Bethabara, beyond Jordan." Bethabara signifies the house of passage; some think it was the very place where Israel passed over Jordan into the land of promise, under the conduct of Joshua; there was opened the way into the gospel state by Jesus Christ. It was a great distance from Jerusalem, beyond Jordan; probably because what he did there would be least offensive to the government. Amos must go prophesy in the country, not near the court; but it was sad that Jerusalem should put so far from her the things that belonged to her peace. He made this confession in the same place where he was baptizing, that all those who attended his baptism might be witnesses of it, and none might say they knew not what to make of him.

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. 30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. 35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; 36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

We have in these verses an account of John's testimony concerning Jesus Christ, which he witnessed to his own disciples that followed him. As soon as ever Christ was baptized, he was immediately hurried into the wilderness to be tempted; there he was forty days; during his absence, John had continued to bear testimony to him, and to tell the people of him; but now at last he sees Jesus coming to him, returning from the wilderness of temptation. As soon as that conflict was over, Christ presently returned to John, who was preaching and baptizing. Now Christ was tempted, for example and encouragement to us; and this teacheth us 1. That the hardships of a tempted state should engage us to keep close to ordinances, to go into the sanctuary of God, Ps. lxxiii. 17. Our combats with Satan should oblige us to keep close to the communion of saints: two is better than one. 2. That the honours of a victorious state must not set us above ordinances; Christ had triumphed over Satan, and been attended by angels; and yet, after all, he returns to the place where John was preaching and baptizing. As long as we are on this side heaven, whatever extraordinary visits of Divine grace we may have here at any time, we must still keep close to the ordinary means of grace and comfort, and walk with God in them.

Now here are two testimonies borne by John to Christ, but those two agree in one.

First. Here is his testimony to Christ on the first day that he saw him coming from the wilderness; and here four things are witnessed by him concerning Christ, when he had him before his eyes.

1. That he is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," ver. 29. Let us learn here,

1st. That Jesus Christ is "the Lamb of God," which speaks him the great sacrifice by whom atonement is made for sin, and man reconciled to God. Of all the legal sacrifices, he chooseth to allude to the lambs that were offered, not only because a lamb is an emblem of meekness, and Christ must be "led as a lamb to the slaughter," Isa. liii. 7; but with a special reference. First. To the daily sacrifice which was offered every morning and evening continually, and that was always a lamb, Ex. xxix. 38; which was a type of Christ, as the everlasting propitiation, whose blood continually speaks. Secondly. To the paschal lamb, the blood of whose destroying angel. Christ is our passover, 1 Cor. v. 7. He is the lamb of God; he is appointed by him, Rom. iii. 25; he was devoted to him, ch. xvii. 19; and he was accepted with him; in him he was well pleased. The lot which fell on the goat that was to be offered for a sin offering, is called the Lord's lot, Lev. xvi. 8, 9. So Christ, who was to make atonement for sin, is called the Lamb of God.

2nd. That Jesus Christ, as the Lamb of God, takes away the sin of the world. This was his undertaking, he appeared to "put away sin by the sacri-

the Baptist's successor, but predecessor, and that by pre-existence. This may be taken as elucidating the Notes on verses 6, 14, showing how he who "was," i.e., pre-existed, also "became," i.e., was incarnate.

i. 16. These are the words of the Evangelist, and a continuation and expansion of ver. 14. "Grace for grace:" i.e., grace in the room of, instead of, grace. "A greater for less, higher for lower, as when a man attains successive degrees of rank" (see 1 Peter i. 5—8). Olshausen says, "The more we receive from the streams of grace, the

more we may yet receive; as it is inexhaustible in the giver, the believer may take it without measure."

i. 17. The statement in verse 16 is supported by the contrast here drawn between Moses, as the mediator of the law, and Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant, the impartor of grace and truth.

i. 18. "No man hath seen," &c.: passages asserting that God is invisible to man are frequent in Scripture (see Ex. xxxiii. 20; 1 Tim. vi. 16; 1 John iv. 12). Those places in the Old Testament (Gen. xvi. 13,

face of himself," *Ileb. ix. 26*: John Baptist had called people to repent of their sins, in order to the remission of them. Now here he shews how and by whom that remission was to be expected; what ground of hope have we that our sins shall be pardoned upon our repentance, though our repentance makes no satisfaction for them? This ground of hope we have, Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God.

First. He takes away sin. He being Mediator between God and man takes away that which is above any thing offensive to the holiness of God, and destructive to the happiness of man. He came, *1st.* To take away the guilt of sin by the merit of his death, to vacate the judgment, and reverse the attainder which mankind lay under, by an act of indemnity, which all penitent, obedient believers may claim the benefit of. *2nd.* To take away the power of sin by the Spirit of his grace, so that it shall not have dominion, *Rom. vi. 14*. Christ, as the Lamb of God, washeth us from our sins in his own blood, that is, he both justifies and sanctifies us; he taketh away sin; he is *ὁ αἰσων*, he is 'taking away' the sin of the world, which speaks it not a single, but a continued act; it is his constant work and office to take away sin, which is such a work of time that it will never be completed till time shall be no more. He is always taking away sin by the continual intercession of his blood in heaven, and the continual influence of his grace on earth.

Secondly. He takes away the sin of the world; purchased pardon for all those that repent and believe the Gospel, of what country, nation, or language soever they be. The legal sacrifices had reference only to the sins of Israel, to make atonement for them; but the Lamb of God was offered to be a propitiation "for the sin of the whole world;" see *1 Jno. ii. 1, 2*. This is encouraging to our faith; if Christ takes away the sin of the world, then why not my sin? Christ levelled his force at the main body of sin's army; struck at the root, and aimed at the overthrow of that wickedness which the whole world lay in. God was in him reconciling the world to himself.

Thirdly. He doth this by taking it upon himself. He is the Lamb of God that 'bears the sin of the world,' so the margin reads it. He bore sin for us, and so bears it from us; he bore the sin of many, as the scape goat had the sins of Israel put upon his head, *Lev. xvi. 21*. God would have taken away the sin, by taking away the sinner, as he took away the sin of the old world; but he has found out a way of abolishing the sin, and yet sparing the sinner, by making his Son sin for us.

3rd. That it is our duty with an eye of faith to behold the Lamb of God thus taking away the sin of the world. See him taking away sin, and let that increase our hatred of sin, and resolutions against it; let not us hold that fast which the Lamb of God came to take away; for Christ will either take our sins away, or take us away. Let it increase our love to Christ, 'who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,' *Rev. i. 5*. Whatever God is pleased to take away from us, if withal he take away our sins, we have reason to be thankful, and no reason to complain.

II. That this was he of whom he had spoken before, *ver. 30, 31*: "This is he"—this person whom I now point at; you see where he stands—"this is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man." Observe,

1st. This honour John had above all the prophets, that whereas they spoke of him as one that should come, he saw him already come: "This is he;" he sees him now, he sees him nigh, *Num. xxiv. 17*. Such a difference there is between present faith and future vision. Now we love one whom we have not seen, then we shall see Him whom our souls love; shall see him and say, This is he of whom I said, My Christ, and my all; my beloved, and my friend.

2nd. John calls Christ a man; "after me comes a man," *ὄντις*, 'a strong man;' like the man, the branch, or the man of God's right hand.

3rd. He refers himself to what he had said of him before, "This is he of whom I said." Note, Those who have said the most honourable things of Christ will never see cause to unsay them; but the more they know him, the more they are confirmed in their esteem of him. John still thinks as meanly of himself, and as highly of Christ, as ever. Though Christ appeared not in any external pomp or grandeur, yet John is not ashamed to own, This is he I meant, that is preferred before me. And it was necessary that John should thus shew them the person, otherwise they could not have believed that one who made so mean a figure should be he of whom John had spoken such great things.

4th. He protests against any confederacy or combination with this Jesus; "And I knew him not." Though there was some relation between them, Elizabeth was cousin to the Virgin Mary, yet there was no acquaintance at all between them; John had no personal knowledge of Jesus till he saw him come to his baptism. Their manner of life had been different; John had spent his time in the wilderness, in solitude, Jesus at Nazareth, in conversation. There was no correspondence, no interviews between them, that the matter might appear to be wholly carried on by the direction and disposal of Heaven, and not by any design or concert of the persons themselves. And as he hereby disowns all collusion, so also all partiality and sinister regard in it; he could not be supposed to favour him as a friend, for there was no friendship or familiarity between them. Nay, as he could not be biassed to speak honourably of him, because he was a stranger to him; so, really being such a stranger to him, he was not able to say any thing of him but what he received from above, to which he appeals, *ch. iii. 27*. Note, They who are taught, believe and confess One whom they have not seen; and blessed are they who yet have believed.

5th. That the great intention of John's ministry and baptism was to introduce Jesus Christ; "that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." Observe, *First.* Though John did not know Jesus by face, yet he knew that he should be made manifest. Note, We may know the certainty of that which yet we do not fully know the nature and intention of. We know that the happiness of heaven shall be made manifest to Israel, but cannot describe it. *Secondly.* The general assurance John had that Christ should be made manifest, served to carry him with diligence and resolution through his work, though he was kept in the dark concerning particulars; "therefore am I come." Our assurance of the reality of things, though they are unseen, is enough to quicken us to our duty. *Thirdly.* God reveals himself to his people by degrees. At first John knew no more concerning Christ but that he should be made manifest; in confidence of that he came baptizing, and now he is favoured with a sight of him. They that, upon God's word, believe what they do not see, shall shortly see what they now believe. *Fourthly.* The ministry of the word and sacraments is designed for no other end but to lead people to Christ, and to make him more and more manifest. *Fifthly.* Baptism with water made way for the manifesting of Christ, as it supposed our corruption and filthiness, and signified our cleansing by him who is the Fountain opened.

III. That this was he upon whom the Spirit descended from heaven like a dove. For the confirming of his testimony concerning Christ, he here voucheth the extraordinary appearance at his baptism, in which God himself bore witness to him. This was a considerable proof of Christ's mission. Now to assure us of the truth of it, we are here told, *ver. 32, 33*.

1st. That John Baptist saw it; he bare record; did not relate it as a story, but solemnly attested it, with all the seriousness and solemnity of witness-bearing. He made affidavit of it; "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven;" John could not see the Spirit, but he saw the dove, which was a sign and

representation of the Spirit. The Spirit came now upon Christ, both to make him fit for his work, and to make him known to the world. Christ was notified not by the descent of a crown upon him, or by a transfiguration, but by the descent of the Spirit, as a dove, upon him, to qualify him for his undertaking. Thus the first testimony given to the apostles was by the descent of the Spirit upon them. God's children are made manifest by their graces, their glories are reserved for their future state. Observe, *First.* The Spirit descended from heaven; "for every good and perfect gift is from above." *Secondly.* He descended like a dove, an emblem of meekness, and mildness, and gentleness, which makes him fit to teach. The dove brought the olive branch of peace, *Gen. viii. 11*. *Thirdly.* The Spirit that descended upon Christ "abode upon him," as was foretold, *Isa. xi. 2*. The Spirit did not move him at times, as Samson, *Jud. xiii. 25*, but at all times. The Spirit was given to him without measure; it was his prerogative to have the Spirit always upon him; so that he could at no time be found either unqualified for his work, or unfurnished for the supply of those that seek to him for his grace.

2nd. That he was bidden to expect it, which very much corroborates the proof. It was not John's bare conjecture, that surely he on whom he saw the Spirit descending was the Son of God; but it was an instituted sign given him before, by which he might know it for certain; *ver. 33*, "I knew him not." This he insists much upon, that he knew no more of him than other people did, otherwise than by revelation; "but he that sent me to baptize" gave me this sign, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, the same is he."

First. See here what sure grounds John went upon in his ministry and baptism, that he might proceed with all imaginable satisfaction. *1st.* He did not run without sending; God sent him to baptize; he had a warrant from heaven for what he did. When a minister's call is clear, his comfort is sure, though his success is not always so. *2nd.* He did not run without speeding; for when he was sent to baptize with water, he was directed to one that should baptize with the Holy Ghost; under that notion John Baptist was taught to expect Christ, as one who would give that repentance and faith which he called people to, and would carry on and complete that blessed structure which he was now laying the foundation of. Note, It is a great comfort to Christ's ministers, in their administration of the outward signs, that he whose ministers they are, can confer the grace signified thereby, and so put life, and soul, and power into their ministrations; can speak to the heart what they speak to the ear, and breathe upon the dry bones on which they prophesy.

Secondly. See what sure grounds he went upon in his designation of the person of the Messiah. God had before given him a sign, as he did to Samuel concerning Saul, On whom thou shalt see the Spirit descend, "that same is he." This not only prevented any mistakes, but gave him boldness in his testimony; when he had such assurance as this given him, he could speak with assurance.

When John was told this before, his expectations could not but be very much raised; and when the event exactly answered the prediction, his faith could not but be much confirmed. And these things are written that we may believe.

IV. That he is the Son of God. This is the conclusion of John's testimony, that in which all the particulars centre, as the *quod erat demonstrandum*, "the fact to be demonstrated;" *ver. 34*, "I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God."

1st. The truth asserted is, "that this is the Son of God." The voice from heaven proclaimed him, and John subscribed to it; not only that he should baptize with the Holy Ghost, by a Divine authority, but that he has a Divine nature. This was the peculiar Christian creed, that Jesus is the Son of God, *Mat. xvi. 16*, and here is the first framing of it. *2nd.* John's testimony to it, "I saw and bare record." Not only I now bear record of it, but I did so as soon as I had seen it. Observe, *First.* What he saw he was forward to bear record of, as they, *Acts iv. 20*, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen." *Secondly.* What he bare record of, was what he saw. Christ's witnesses were eye-witnesses, and therefore the more to be credited; they did not speak by hearsay and report, *2 Pet. i. 16*.

Secondly. Here is John's testimony to Christ the next day after, *ver. 35, 36*; where observe,

1. He took every opportunity that offered itself to lead people to Christ. John stood looking upon Jesus as he walked." It should seem John was now retired from the multitude, and was in close conversation with two of his disciples. Note, Ministers should not only in their public preaching, but in their private converse, witness to Christ, and serve his interests. He saw Jesus walking at some distance, yet did not go to him himself, because he would shun every thing that might give the least colour to suspect a combination. He was "looking upon Jesus," *εμβλεψας*, he looked stedfastly, and fixed his eyes upon him. Those that would lead others to Christ must be diligent and frequent in the contemplation of him themselves. John had seen Christ before, but now looked upon him, *1 Jno. i. 1*.

2. He repeated the same testimony which he had given to Christ the day before, though he could have delivered some other great truth concerning him; but thus he would shew that he was uniform and constant in his testimony, and consistent with himself. His doctrine was the same in private that it was in public, as Paul's was, *Acts xx. 21*. It is good to have that repeated which we have heard, *Phil. iii. 1*. The doctrine of Christ's sacrifice, for the taking away of the sin of the world, ought especially to be insisted upon by all good ministers. Christ the Lamb of God, "Christ, and him crucified."

3. He intended this especially for his two disciples that stood with him; he was willing to turn them over to Christ; for to this end he bore witness to Christ in their hearing, that they might leave all to follow him, even that they might leave him. He did not reckon that he lost those disciples that went over from him to Christ, any more than the schoolmaster reckons that scholar lost whom he sends to the university. John gathered disciples, not for himself, but for Christ, to prepare them for the Lord, *Lu. i. 17*. So far was he from being jealous of Christ's growing interest, that there was nothing he was more desirous of. Humble, generous souls will give others their due praise, without fear of diminishing themselves by it. What we have of reputation, as well as of other things, will not be the less for our giving every body their own.

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? 39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him,

This use of the words "the Jews" is characteristic of St. John, and is regarded by Hengstenberg as showing that he "is writing at a distance from Palestine, and especially for believers from among the heathen." This seems to have been a formal deputation from the Sanhedrim, which, as the highest ecclesiastical court, exercised the right of inquiring as to the office and authority of the Baptist.

i. 20. The coming of the Messiah was evidently looked for at this time (see *Luke iii. 15*). The answer of John shows either that other

xxiii. 30; *Ex. xxiv. 10*) in which God is said to have been seen, must be interpreted of appearances under the form of an angel or messenger, as *Num. xii. 8*; *Josh. v. 13—15*; *Judg. xiii. 22*, or other manifestations of glory, as the *Shekinah*. "Bosom" denotes nearness, union, intimacy, love. "Declared him;" *i.e.*, revealed.

i. 19. "The Jews . . . from Jerusalem:" these words should be connected, the verse being, "The Jews of Jerusalem sent," &c. By the term "the Jews" St. John means the chief of the Jews.

was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. 42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

We have here the turning over of two disciples from John to Jesus, and one of them fetching in a third, and these are the first fruits of Christ's disciples; see how small the church was in its beginnings, and what the dawning of the day of its great things was.

First, Andrew, and another with him, were the two that John Baptist had directed to Christ, ver. 37; who the other was we are not told; some think it was Thomas, comparing *ch. xxi. 2*; others, that it was John himself, the penman of this Gospel, who useth industriously to conceal his name, *ch. xiii. 23*; *xx. 3*.

1. Here is their readiness to go over to Christ; they heard John speak of Christ as the Lamb of God, "and they followed Jesus." Probably they had heard John say the same thing the day before, and then it had not the effect upon them which now it had. See the benefit of repetition, and of private, personal converse. They heard him speak of Christ as "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world," and that made them follow him. Note. The strongest and most prevailing argument with a sensible, awakened soul to follow Christ is, that it is he and he only that takes away sin.

2. The kind notice Christ took of them, ver. 38; they came behind him; but though he had his back towards them, he was soon aware of them, and "turned and saw them following." Note, Christ takes early cognizance of the first motions of a soul towards him, and the first step taken in the way to heaven: see *Isa. lxiv. 5*; *Lu. xv. 20*. He did not stay till they begged leave to speak with him, but spoke first. What communion there is between a soul and Christ, it is he that begins the discourse. He saith unto them, "What seek ye?" This was not a reprimand for their boldness in intruding into his company; he that came to seek us, never checked any for seeking him; but, on the contrary, it is a kind invitation of them into his acquaintance, whom he saw bashful and modest. Come, what have you to say to me? What is your petition? What is your request? Note, They whose business it is to instruct people in the affairs of their souls, should be humble, and mild, and easy of access, and should encourage those that apply to them. The question Christ put to them is, what we should all put to ourselves, when we begin to follow Christ, and take upon us the profession of his holy religion. "What seek ye?" What do we design and desire? Those that follow Christ, and yet seek the world, or themselves, or the praise of men, deceive themselves. What seek we in seeking Christ? do we seek a teacher, ruler, and reconciler? In following Christ, do we seek the favour of God and eternal life? If our eye be single in this, we are full of light.

3. Their modest inquiry concerning the place of his abode: "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" 1st. In calling him Rabbi, they intimate that their design in coming to him was to be taught by him. Rabbi signifies master, a teaching master. The Jews called their doctors, or learned men, rabbies. The word comes from *rab, multus* or *magnus*, a great man, and one that, as we say, hath much in him. Never was there such a rabbi as our Lord Jesus, such a great one, in whom were "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." These came to Christ to be his scholars, so must all those that apply themselves to him. John had told them he was the Lamb of God; now this Lamb is worthy to take the book, and open the seals, as a rabbi. *Rev. v. 9*. And unless we give up ourselves to be ruled and taught by him, he will not take away our sins. 2nd. In asking where he dwelt, they intimate a desire to be better acquainted with him. Christ was a stranger in this country, so that they mean, where was his inn, where he lodged. For there they would attend him at some seasonable time when he should appoint, to receive instruction from him; they would not press rudely upon him when it was not proper. Civility and good manners well become those who follow Christ. And besides, they hoped to have more from him. Than they could have in a short conference now by the way. They resolved to make a business, not a by-business, of conversing with Christ. Those that have had some communion with Christ, cannot but desire, *First*, A farther communion with him; they follow on to know more of him. *Secondly*, A fixed communion with him; where they may sit down at his feet, and abide by his instructions. It is not enough to take a turn with Christ now and then, but we must lodge with him.

4. The courteous invitation, Christ gave them to his lodgings: "He saith unto them, Come and see." Thus shall good desires towards Christ, and communion with him be countenanced. *First*, He invites them to come to his lodgings. The nearer we approach to Christ, the more we see of his beauty and excellency. Deceivers maintain their interest in their followers by keeping them at a distance; but that which Christ desired to recommend him to the esteem and affections of his followers was, that they would come and see; come and see what a mean lodging I have, what poor accommodations I take up with, that you may not expect any worldly advantage by following me, as they did who made their court to the scribes and Pharisees, and called them rabbis. Come and see what you must come presently, and without delay. They asked where he lodged, that they might wait upon him at a more convenient season; but Christ invites them immediately to come and see; never in better time than now. Hence learn, 1st. As to others, that it is best taking people when they are in a good mind; strike while the iron is hot. 2nd. As to ourselves, that it is wisdom to embrace the present opportunities: "Now is the accepted time," *2 Cor. vi. 2*.

5. Their cheerful and, no doubt, thankful acceptance of his invitation: "they came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day." It had been more modesty and manners than had done them good, if they had refused this offer. 1st. They readily went along with him; "they came and saw where he dwelt." Gracious souls cheerfully accept Christ's gracious invitations; as David, *Ps. xxvii. 8*. They inquired not how they might be accommodated with him, but would put that to the venture, and make the best of what they found. It is good being where Christ is, wherever it be. 2nd. They were so well pleased with what they found, that they "abode with him that day." Master, it is good to be here, and he bade them welcome. "It was about the tenth hour." Some think that John reckons according to the Roman computation, and that it was about ten o'clock in the morning, and they stayed with him till night; others think that John reckons as the other evangelists did, according to the Jewish computation, and that it was four o'clock in the afternoon, and they abode with him that night, and the next day. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures that this next day

that they spent with Christ was a sabbath day, and it being late, they could not get home before the sabbath. As it is our duty, wherever we are, to contrive to spend the sabbath as much as may be to our spiritual benefit and advantage, so they are blessed who, by the lively exercise of faith, love, and devotion, spend their sabbaths in communion with Christ. These are Lord's days indeed, days of the Son of man.

Secondly, Andrew brought his brother Peter to Christ. If Peter had been the firstborn of Christ's disciples, the papists would have made a noise with it: he did indeed, afterwards, come to be more eminent in gifts, but Andrew had the honour first to be acquainted with Christ, and to be the instrument of bringing Peter to him. Observe,

1. The information which Andrew gave to Peter, with an intimation to come to Christ.

1st. He found him: "He first findeth his own brother, Simon." His finding implies his seeking him. Simon came along with Andrew to attend John's ministry and baptism, and Andrew knew where to look for him. Perhaps the other disciple that was with him went out to seek some friend of his, at the same time, but Andrew sped first; he first findeth Simon, who came only to attend on John, but has his expectations outdone, he meets with Jesus.

2nd. He told him whom they had found: "We have found the Messiah." Observe, *First*, He speaks humbly; not, I have found, assuming the honour of the discovery to himself, but we have; rejoicing that he had shared with others in it. *Secondly*, He speaks exultingly, and with triumph; "We have found" that pearl of great price, that true treasure; and having found it, he proclaims it, as those lepers, *2 Kin. viii. 9*, for he knows he shall never have the less in Christ for others sharing. *Thirdly*, He speaks intelligently: "We have found the Messiah," which was more than had yet been said. John had said he is the Lamb of God, and the Son of God, which Andrew compares with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and comparing them together, concludes he is the Messiah promised to the fathers; for it is now that the fullness of time is come. Thus by making God's testimonies his meditation, he speaks more clearly concerning Christ than ever his teacher had done, *Ps. cxix. 99*.

3rd. "He brought him to Jesus;" would not undertake to instruct him himself, but brought him to the fountain head; persuaded him to come to Christ; and introduced him. Now this was, *First*, An instance of true love to his brother, his own brother, so he is called here, because he was very dear to him. Note, We ought, with a particular concern and application, to endeavour the spiritual welfare of those that are related to us; for their relation to us adds both to the obligation and to the opportunity of doing good to their souls. *Secondly*, It was an effect of his day's conversation with Christ. Note, The best evidence of our profiting by the means of grace is the piety and usefulness of our conversation afterwards. Hereby it appeared that Andrew had been with Jesus, that he was so full of him; that he had been in the mount, for his face shone. He knew there was enough in Christ for all; and having tasted that he is gracious, could not rest till those he loved had tasted it too. Note, True grace hates monopolies, and loves not to eat its morsels alone.

2. The entertainment that Jesus Christ gave to Peter, who was never the less welcome for his being influenced by his brother to come, ver. 43. Observe, 1st. Christ called him by his name: "When Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jona." It should seem that Peter was utterly a stranger to Christ; and if so, *First*, It was a proof of Christ's omniscience, that upon the first sight, without any inquiry, he could tell the name, both of him and of his father: "the Lord knows them that are his," and their whole case. However, *Secondly*, It was an instance of his condescending grace and favour, that he did thus freely and affably call him by his name, though he was of mean extraction, and, *vir nullius in nomis*, "a man of no name." It was an instance of God's favour to Moses that he knew him by name, *Ex. xxxiii. 17*. Some observe the signification of these names, Simon, "obedient;" Jona, "a dove." An obedient, dove-like spirit qualifies us to be the disciples of Christ.

2nd. He gave him a new name, Cephas. *First*, His giving him a name speaks Christ's favour to him. A new name speaks some great dignity, *Rev. ii. 17*; *Isa. lxiii. 2*. By this, Christ not only wiped off the reproach of his mean and obscure parentage, but adopted him into his family, as one of his own. *Secondly*, The name which he gave him speaks his fidelity to Christ; "thou shalt be called Cephas," that is Hebrew for a stone, "which is by interpretation, Peter," so it should be rendered; as *Acts ix. 39*, "Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas;" the former Hebrew, the latter Greek, for a young roe. Peter's natural temper was stiff, and hardy, and resolute, which I take to be the principal reason why Christ called him Cephas, "a stone." When Christ afterwards prayed for him, that his faith might not fail, that so he might be firm to Christ himself, and at the same time bade him strengthen his brethren, and lay out himself for the support of others, then he made him what he here called him, Cephas, a stone. Those that come to Christ must come with a fixed resolution to be firm and constant to him; like a stone, solid and steadfast; and it is by his grace that they are so: his saying, Be thou steady, makes them so. Now, this doth no more prove that Peter was the singular or only rock upon which this church is built, than the calling of James and John Boanerges proves them the only sons of thunder, or the calling of Jesus Barnabas proves him the only son of consolation.

43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. 44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. 46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. 49 Nathanael

questions of a more definite character followed, or that he understood the question as referring to the Christ. There is no reason to suppose that this deputation was from the first hostile to John.

i. 21. "Elias:" the Jews expected the return of Elijah himself (see *Mal. iv. 5*); and our Lord, in *Matt. xi. 14*, speaks of John as the Elias promised. *Luke i. 17* gives the explanation of the apparent contradiction by speaking of John as one who should work "in the spirit and power of Elias." "That prophet?" like the Prophet

(see *Deut. xviii. 15*); from which the Jews seem to have expected a prophet to precede the Messiah, though some seem to have regarded the prophet as the same as the Messiah. John replies that he is not the prophet, for that long-expected prophet was in reality the Christ.

i. 23. See *Isa. xl. 3*. The first positive answer which John gives. Note his self-abnegation. He came to bear witness to another, so he keeps himself in the background, and points his inquirers to another. It is his message which is important.

answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. 50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. 51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

We have here the call of Philip and Nathanael.

First. Philip was called immediately to Christ himself; not as Andrew, who was directed to Christ by John, or Peter, who was invited by his brother. God has various methods of bringing his chosen ones home to himself: but whatever means he uses, he is not tied to any.

1. Philip was called in a preventing way; Jesus "findeth Philip." Christ sought us, and found us, before we made any inquiries after him. The name Philip is of a Greek original, and much used among the Gentiles; which some make an instance of the degeneracy of the Jewish church at this time, and their conformity to the nations; yet Christ changed not his name.

2. He was called "the day following." See how closely Christ applied himself to his business. When work is to be done for God, we must not lose a day. Yet observe, Christ now called one or two a day, but after the Spirit was poured out, there were thousands a day effectually called, in which was fulfilled, *ch. xiv. 12*.

3. "Jesus would go forth into Galilee" to call him. Christ will find out all those that are given to him, wherever they are, and none of them shall be lost.

4. Philip was brought to be a disciple by the power of Christ going along with that word, "Follow me." See the nature of true Christianity; it is following Christ, devoting ourselves to his converse and conduct, attending his motions, and treading in his steps. See the efficacy of the grace of Christ making the call of his Word to prevail; it is the rod of his strength.

5. We are told that Philip was of Bethsaida, and Andrew and Peter were so too, *ver. 44*. These eminent disciples received not honour from, but reflected honour upon, the place of their nativity. Bethsaida signifies the house of nets, because inhabited mostly by fishermen; thence Christ chose disciples, who were to be furnished with extraordinary gifts, and therefore needed not the ordinary advantages of learning. Bethsaida was a wicked place, *Mat. xi. 21*; yet even there was a remnant according to the election of grace.

Secondly. Nathanael was invited to Christ by Philip, and much is said concerning him. In which we may observe,

1. What passed between Philip and Nathanael; in which appears an observable mixture of pious zeal with weakness, such as is usually found in beginners that are yet but "asking the way to Zion." Here is,

1st. The joyful news that Philip brought to Nathanael, *ver. 45*. As Andrew before, so Philip here, having got some knowledge of Christ himself, rests not till he has made manifest the saviour of that knowledge. Philip, though newly come into an acquaintance with Christ himself, yet steps aside to seek Nathanael. Note, When we have the fairest opportunities of getting good to our own souls, yet even then we must seek opportunities of doing good to the souls of others; remembering the words of Christ, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," *Acts xx. 35*. O, saith Philip, "we have found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write." Observe here, *First*, What a transport of joy Philip was in upon this new acquaintance with Christ: We have found him whom we have so often talked of, so long wished and waited for; at last he is come, he is come, and we have found him. *Secondly*, What an advantage it was to him that he was so well acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which prepared his mind for the reception of evangelical light, and made the entrance of it much the more easy: "Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write." What was written entirely, and from eternity, in the book of the Divine counsels, was in part, at sundry times and in divers manners, copied out into the book of the Divine revelations. Glorious things were written there concerning the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, Shiloh, the prophet like Moses, the Son of David, Immanuel, the Man, the Branch, the Messiah, the Prince; Philip had studied these things, and was full of them, which made him readily welcome Christ. *Thirdly*, What mistakes and weaknesses he laboured under; he called Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, whereas he was of Bethlehem; and the Son of Joseph, whereas he was but his supposed son: young beginners in religion are subject to mistakes, which time and the grace of God will rectify. It was his weakness to say, "We have found him," for Christ found them, before they found Christ: he did not yet apprehend, as Paul did, how he was apprehended of Christ Jesus, *Phil. iii. 12*.

2nd. The objection which Nathanael made against this; *ver. 46*, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Here, *First*, His caution was commendable, that he did not lightly assent to every thing that was said, but took it into examination; our rule is to prove all things. But, *Secondly*, His objection arose from ignorance. If he meant that no good thing could come out of Nazareth, it was owing to his ignorance of the Divine grace; as if that were less affected to one place than another, or tied itself to men's foolish and ill-natured observations. If he meant that the Messiah, that great, good thing, could not come out of Nazareth, so far he was right. Moses, in the law, said that he should come out of Judah, and the prophets had assigned Bethlehem for the place of the nativity; but then he was ignorant of the matter of fact that this Jesus was born at Bethlehem, so that the blunder Philip made in calling him Jesus of Nazareth, occasioned this objection. Note, The mistakes of preachers often give rise to the prejudices of hearers.

3rd. The short reply which Philip gave to this objection, "Come and see." *First*, It was his weakness that he could not give a satisfactory answer to it; yet it is the common case of young beginners in religion: we may know enough to satisfy ourselves, and yet not be able to say enough to silence the cavils of a subtle adversary. *Secondly*, It was his wisdom and zeal, that when he could not answer the objection himself, he would have him go to one that could: "Come and see." Let not us stand arguing here, and raising difficulties to ourselves, which we cannot get over; let us go and converse with Christ himself, and these difficulties will all vanish presently. Note, It is folly to spend that time in doubtful disputation, which might be better spent, and to much better purpose, in the exercises of piety and devotion. "Come and see;" not, "Go and see;" but "Come, and I will go along with thee;" as *Isa. ii. 3*; *Jer. i. 5*. From this parley between Philip and Nathanael, we may observe, *1st*, That many people are kept from the ways of religion by the unreasonable pre-

judices they have conceived against religion, upon the account of some foreign circumstances which do not all touch the merits of the cause. *2nd*, The best way to remove those prejudices they have entertained against religion is, to prove themselves, and make trial of it. Let us not answer this matter before we hear it.

2. What passed between Nathanael and our Lord Jesus. He came and saw, not in vain.

1st. Our Lord Jesus bore a very honourable testimony to Nathanael's integrity: "Jesus saw him coming," and met him with favourable encouragement; he said of him to those about him, Nathanael himself being within hearing, "Behold an Israelite indeed." Observe,

First, That he did commend him; not to flatter him, or puff him up with a good conceit of himself; but perhaps, because he knew him to be a modest man, if not a melancholy man, one that had mean and hard thoughts of himself; was read, to doubt his own sincerity; and Christ, by this testimony, put the matter out of doubt. Nathanael had, more than any of the candidates, objected against Christ; but Christ hereby shewed that he excused it, and was not extreme to mark what he said amiss, because he knew his heart was upright. He did not retort upon him, "Can any good thing come out of Cana, *ch. xxi. 2*, an obscure town in Galilee; but kindly gives him this character, to encourage us to hope for acceptance with Christ, notwithstanding our weakness, and to teach us to speak honourably of those who without cause have spoken slightly of us, and to give them their due praise.

Secondly, That he commended him for his integrity. *1st*, "Behold an Israelite indeed." It is Christ's prerogative to know what men are indeed; we can but hope the best. The whole nation were Israelites in name, but "all are not Israel that are of Israel," *Rom. ix. 6*; but here was "an Israelite indeed." *First*, A sincere follower of the good example of Israel, whose character it was, that he was a plain man, in opposition to Esau's character of a cunning man: he was a genuine son of honest Jacob; not only of his seed, but of his spirit. *Secondly*, A sincere professor of the faith of Israel; he was true to the religion he professed, and lived up to it; he was really as good as he seemed, and his practice of a piece with his profession: "He is the Jew that is one inwardly," *Rom. ii. 29*; so he the Christian. *2nd*, He is one "in whom is no guile;" that is the character of an Israelite indeed, a Christian indeed: no guile towards men; a man without trick or design; a man that one may trust: no guile towards God, that is sincere in his repentance for sin; sincere in his covenanting with God; in whose spirit is no guile, *Ps. xxxii. 2*; he doth not say without guilt, but without guile; though in many things he is foolish and forgetful, yet in nothing false, nor wickedly departing from God; there is no allowed, approved guilt in him; not painted, though he have his spots: "Behold this Israelite indeed." *First*, Take notice of him, that you may learn his way, and do like him. *Secondly*, Admire him; behold and wonder. The hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees had so leavened the Jewish church and nation, and their religion was so degenerated into formality, or state policy, that an Israelite indeed was a man wondered at; a miracle of Divine grace, like *Job. i. 8*.

2nd. Nathanael is much surprised at this, upon which Christ gives him a farther proof of his omniscience, and a kind memorial of his former devotion.

First, Here is Nathanael's modesty, in that he was soon put out of countenance at the kind notice Christ was pleased to take of him. "Whence knowest thou me?"

2nd. Me that am unworthy of thy cognizance, "who am I, O Lord God?" *2 Sam. vii. 28*. This was an evidence of his sincerity, that he did not catch at the praise he met with, but declined it. Christ knows us better than we know ourselves; we know not what is in a man's heart by looking in his face, but all things are naked and open before Christ, *Heb. iv. 12, 13*. Doth Christ know us? Let us covet to know him.

Secondly, Here is Christ's farther manifestation of himself to him: "Before Philip called thee, I saw thee." *1st*, He gives him to understand that he knew him, and so manifests his divinity. It is God's prerogative infallibly to know all persons and all things; by this Christ proved himself to be God upon many occasions. It was prophesied concerning the Messiah, that he should be of "quick understanding in the fear of the Lord;" that is, in judging the sincerity and degree of the fear of God in others; and that he should not judge after the sight of his eyes, *Isa. xi. 2, 3*. Here he answers that prediction: see *2 Tim. ii. 19*. *2nd*, That before Philip called him, he saw him under the fig tree. This manifests a particular kindness for him. *First*, His eye was towards him before Philip called him, which was the first time that ever Nathanael was acquainted with Christ. Christ has knowledge of us before we have any knowledge of him; see *Isa. xlv. 4*; *Gal. iv. 9*. *Secondly*, His eye was upon him when he was "under the fig tree." *1st*, This was a private token, which nobody understood but Nathanael. When thou wast retired under the fig tree, in thy garden, and thought no eye saw thee, I had then mine eye upon thee, and saw that which was very acceptable. It is most probable Nathanael, under the fig tree, was employed, as Isaac in the field, in meditation, and prayer, and communion with God. Perhaps, then and there it was that he solemnly joined himself to the Lord in an inviolable covenant. Christ saw in secret, and, by this public notice of it, did in part reward him openly. Sitting under the fig tree notes quietness and composedness of spirit, which much befriends communion with God: see *Mic. iv. 4*; *Zec. iii. 10*. Nathanael herein was an Israelite indeed, that, like Israel, he wrestled with God alone, *Gen. xxxii. 24*: prayed, not like the hypocrites, in the corners of the streets, but under the fig tree.

3rd. Nathanael hereby obtained a full assurance of faith in Jesus Christ, expressed in that noble acknowledgment, *ver. 49*, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel;" that is, in short, thou art the true Messiah. Observe here,

First, How firmly he believed with the heart. Though he had lately laboured under some prejudices concerning Christ, they were now all vanished. Note, The grace of God in working faith casts down imaginations. Now he asks no more, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" for he believes Jesus of Nazareth to be the chief good, and embraceth him accordingly.

Secondly, How freely he confessed with the mouth. And his confession is made in form of an adoration, directed to our Lord Jesus himself, which is a proper way of confessing our faith. *1st*, He confesseth Christ's prophetic office, in calling him Rabbi, a title which the Jews commonly gave to their teachers: Christ is the great Rabbi, at whose feet we must all be brought up. *2nd*, He confesseth his Divine nature and mission, in calling him the Son of God, that Son of God spoken of, *Ps. ii. 7*; though he had but a human form and aspect, yet having a Divine knowledge, the knowledge of the heart, and of things distant and secret, from thence he concludes him to be the Son of God. *3rd*, He confesseth, "Thou art the King of Israel;" that King of Israel whom we have been long waiting for. If he be the Son of God, he is King of the Israel of God. Nathanael hereby proves himself an Israelite indeed, that he so readily owns and submits to the King of Israel.

4th. Christ hereupon raiseth the hopes and expectations of Nathanael to something farther, and greater than all this, *ver. 50, 51*. Christ is very tender of young converts, and will encourage good beginnings, though weak, *Mat. xii. 20*.

i. 25. Lightfoot notes that the surprise indicated in this question was not at the rite of baptism, but at John's administering it; and adds, "The reason of this was that the rite and custom of baptism had been in common and ordinary practice and use among that nation many hundreds of years before John appeared among them."

i. 37. "Two disciples:" the one whose name is not mentioned is generally supposed to have been John the Evangelist, who never mentions his own name.

i. 38. "Rabbi:" "my Master." John alone gives the explanation of this word. "Where dwellest thou?" i.e., "Where art thou staying?"

i. 39. "The tenth hour:" i.e., 4 p.m. of our time. The division of the day varied in different nations—the Babylonians reckoning from sunrise to sunrise; the Romans from midnight to midnight; the Hebrews and Athenians from sunset to sunset.

i. 43. "The day following:" i.e., the day after the naming of Peter, and the fourth day after the visit of the deputation from Jerusalem.

First. He here signifies his acceptance, and, it should seem, his admiration, of the ready faith of Nathanael: "Because I said, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou?" He wonders that such a small indication of Christ's Divine knowledge should have such an effect; it was a sign Nathanael's heart was prepared beforehand, else the work had not been done so suddenly. Note, It is much for the honour of Christ and his grace when the heart is surrendered to him at the first summons.

Secondly. He promiseth him much greater helps for the confirmation and increase of his faith than he had had for the first production of it. 1st. In general, "thou shalt see greater things than these," stronger proofs of my being the Messiah,—the miracles of Christ and his resurrection. Note, First. To him that hath, and makes good use of what he hath, more shall be given. Secondly. Those who truly believe the Gospel will find its evidences grow upon them; and will see more and more cause to believe it. Thirdly. Whatever discoveries Christ is pleased to make of himself to his people, while they are here in this world, he hath still greater things than these to make known to them—a glory yet farther to be revealed. 2nd. In particular; not thou only, but ye, all you my disciples, whose faith this is intended for the confirmation of, "ye shall see heaven opened;" that is more than telling Nathanael of his being under the fig tree. This is introduced with a solemn preface: "Verily, verily, I say unto you;" this commands both a fixed attention to what is said, as very weighty, and a full assent to it as undoubtedly true; I say it, whose word you may rely upon, Amen, amen. None used this word at the beginning of a sentence but Christ, though the Jews often used it at the close of prayer, and sometimes doubled it. It is a solemn asseveration. Christ is called "the Amen," Rev. iii. 14; and so some take it here, "I, the Amen, the Amen, say unto you; I, the faithful witness." Note, The assurances we have of the glory to be revealed, are built upon the word of Christ.

Now see what it is that Christ assures them of: "Hereafter," or "within a while," or "ere long," or "from henceforth," "ye shall see heaven opened."

1. It is a mean title that Christ here takes to himself, "the Son of man;" a title frequently applied to him in the Gospel, but always by himself. Nathanael had called him the Son of God, and king of Israel. He calls himself Son of man. 1st. To express his humility in the midst of the honours done him. 2nd. To teach his humanity, which is to be believed as well as his divinity. 3rd. To intimate his present state of humiliation, that Nathanael might not expect this king of Israel to appear in external pomp.

2. Yet they are great things he here foretells: "ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

1st. Some understand it literally, as pointing at some particular event. Either, *First.* There was some vision of Christ's glory, in which this was exactly fulfilled, which Nathanael was an eye-witness of, as Peter and James and John were of his transfiguration. There were many things which Christ did, and those in the presence of his disciples, which were not written, ch. xx. 30, and why not that? Or, *Secondly.* It was fulfilled in the many ministrations of the angels to our Lord Jesus, especially that at his ascension, when heaven was opened to receive him, and the angels ascended and descended to attend him, and to do him honour, and this in the sight of the disciples. Christ's ascension was the great proof of his mission, and much confirmed the faith of his disciples, ch. vi. 62. Or, *Thirdly.* It may refer to Christ's second coming to judge the world, when the heavens shall be open, and every eye shall see him, and the angels of God shall ascend and descend about him, as attendants on him, every one employed, and a busy day it will be. See 2 Thes. i. 10.

2nd. Others take it figuratively as speaking of a state, or series of things, to commence from henceforth; and so we may understand it, *First.* Of Christ's miracles. Nathanael believed because Christ, as the prophets of old, could tell him things secret. But what is this? Christ is now beginning a dispensation of miracles much more great and strange than this, as if heaven were opened; and such a power shall be exerted by the Son of man, as if the angels, which excel in strength, were continually attending his orders. Immediately after this, Christ began to work miracles, ch. ii. 11. Or, *Secondly.* Of his mediation, and that blessed intercourse which he hath settled between heaven and earth, which his disciples should by degrees be let into the mystery of. 1st. By Christ, as mediator, they shall see heaven opened, that we may enter into the holiest, by his blood, Heb. x. 19, 20. Heaven opened, that by faith we may look in, and at length may go in; may now behold the glory of the Lord, and hereafter enter into the joy of our Lord. And, 2nd. They shall "see angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Through Christ we have communion with, and benefit by, the holy angels; and things in heaven and things on earth are reconciled and gathered together. Christ is to us as Jacob's ladder, Gen. xxviii. 12, by whom angels continually ascend and descend for the good of the saints.

CHAPTER II.

In the close of the foregoing chapter we had an account of the first disciples whom Jesus called, Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael; these were the firstfruits to God and to the Lamb, Rev. xiv. 4. Now in this chapter we have, I. The story of the first miracle which Jesus wrought, turning water into wine, at Cana of Galilee, ver. 1—11; and his appearing at Capernaum, ver. 12. II. The story of the first passover he kept at Jerusalem, after he began his public ministry. His driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, ver. 13—17; and the sign he gave to those who quarrelled with him for it, ver. 18—22; with an account of some half-thick believers that followed him thereupon, for some time, ver. 23—25, but he knew them too well to put any confidence in them.



AND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: 2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. 3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. 4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother saith

unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. 6 And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with



HOUSE AND WATER-POTS AT CANA.—SUPPOSED SITE OF THE MIRACLE.

water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. 9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, 10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

We have here the story of Christ's miraculous converting of water into wine, at a marriage in Cana of Galilee. There were some few so well disposed as to believe in Christ, and to follow him, when he did no miracle; yet it was not likely many should be wrought upon till he had something wherewith to answer those that asked, "What sign shewest thou?" He could have wrought miracles before, could have made them the common actions of his life, and the common entertainments of his friends; but miracles being designed for the sacred and solemn seals of his doctrine, he began not to work any till he began to preach his doctrine. Now observe,

First. The occasion of this miracle. Maimonides observes it to be to the honour of Moses, that all the signs he did in the wilderness, he did them upon necessity; we needed food, he brought us manna, and so did Christ. Observe,

1. The time, "the third day," after he came into Galilee. The evangelist keeps a journal of occurrences, for no day passed without something extraordinary done or said. Our Master filled up his time better than his servants do, and never lay down at night complaining as the Roman emperor did, that he had lost a day.

2. The place; it was at Cana in Galilee, in the tribe of Asher, Jos. xix. 28; of which before it was said, that "he shall yield royal dainties," Gen. xlix. 20. Christ began to work miracles in an obscure corner of the country remote from Jerusalem, which was the public scene of action, to shew that he "sought not honour from men," ch. v. 41, but would put honour upon the lowly. His doctrine and miracles would not be so much opposed by the plain, honest Galileans, as they would be by the proud and prejudiced rabbins, politicians, and grandees at Jerusalem.

3. The occasion itself was a marriage: probably one or both of the parties were akin to our Lord Jesus. The mother of Jesus is said to be there, and not to be called, as Jesus and his disciples were, which intimates that she was there as one at home. Observe the honour which Christ hereby put upon the ordinance of marriage, that he graced the solemnity of it not only with his presence, but with his first miracle: because it was instituted and blessed in innocence; because by it he would still seek a godly seed; because it resembles the mystical union between him and his church; and because he foreaw that in the papal kingdom, while the marriage ceremony would be unduly dignified, and advanced into a sacrament, the married state would be unduly vilified, as inconsistent with any sacred function. There was a marriage, *γάμος*,—a marriage feast, to grace the solemnity. Marriages were usually celebrated with festivals, Gen. xxix. 22; Jud. xiv. 10, in token of joy and friendship, and for the disciples were principal guests at this entertainment. "The mother of Jesus" (that was her most honourable title) "was there;" no mention being made of Joseph, we conclude him dead before this. Jesus was called, and he came, accepted the invitation, and feasted with them,

i. 45. "Nathanael:" "the gift of God" (1 Sam. i. 20), usually identified with Bartholomew; Nathanael being the proper, Bartholomew the surname. "The son of Joseph:" Philip expresses the popular opinion in the ordinary language.

i. 46. The whole of Galilee, in which Nazareth was situated, was held in contempt by the Jews of Jerusalem (John vii. 52). Some notion of the character of the Nazarenes may be gathered from the violence which they showed to our Lord (Luke iv. 29)

i. 51. Allusion is here evidently made to Jacob's dream. The meaning of our Lord is simple but profound. The harmony between heaven and earth is restored in himself. He is the Mediator between man and God—the ladder set up between heaven and earth, by which the blessings of God descend to man, and man's prayer and aspirations ascend to God.

ii. 1. "Third day:" i.e., the third day after our Lord's interview with Nathanael

to teach us to be respectful to our relations, and sociable with them, though they be mean. Christ was to come in a way different from that of John Baptist, who came "neither eating nor drinking," *Mat. xi. 18, 19*. It is the wisdom of the prudent to study how to improve conversation, rather than how to decline it.

"There was a marriage, and Jesus was called." Note, 1. It is very desirable, when there is a marriage, to have Jesus Christ at it,—to have his spiritual, gracious presence,—to have the marriage owned and blessed by him,—the marriage is then honourable indeed. And they that marry in the Lord, *1 Cor. vii. 39*, do not marry without him. 2. They that would have Christ with them at their marriage, must invite him by prayer; that is the messenger that must be sent to heaven for him, and he will come; "thou shalt call, and I will answer;" and he will turn the water into wine.

The disciples also were invited; those five whom he had called, *ch. i.*, for as yet he had no more; they were his family, and were invited with him. They had thrown themselves upon his care; and they soon find, though he had no wealth he had good friends. Note, 1. Those that follow Christ shall feast with him; they shall fare as he fares, so he has bespoken for them, *ch. xii. 26*, "Where I am, there shall my servant be." 2. Love to Christ is testified by a love to those that are his for his sake; our goodness extendeth not to him, but to the saints. Calvin observes, how generous the maker of the feast was, though he seems to be but of small substance to invite four or five strangers more than he thought of, because they were followers of Christ; which shews, saith he, there is more of freedom and liberality, and true friendship, in the conversation of some meaner persons than among many of higher rank.

Secondly, *The miracle itself.* In which observe, 1. They wanted wine, *ver. 3*. 1st. There was want at a feast; though much provided, yet all spent. While we are in this world we sometimes find ourselves in straits, even then when we think ourselves in the fulness of our sufficiency. If always spending, perhaps all is spent ere we are aware. 2nd. There was want at a marriage feast. Note, They that, being married, are come to care for the things of the world, must expect trouble in the flesh, and count upon disappointment. 3rd. It should seem the occasion of this want was, Christ and his disciples being there were more company than they expected when the provision was made; but they who straiten themselves for Christ shall not lose by him.

2. The mother of Jesus solicited him to assist her friends in this strait. We are told, *ver. 3–5*, what passed between Christ and his mother upon this occasion.

1st. She acquaints him with the plunge they were at, *ver. 3*; "she saith unto him, They have no wine." Some think she did not expect from him any miraculous supply, he having as yet wrought no miracle, but that she would have him make some decent excuse to the company, and make the best of it, to save the bridegroom's reputation, and keep him in countenance. Or, as Calvin suggests, would have him make up the want of wine with some holy, profitable discourse. But most probably she looked for a miracle; for she knew he was now appearing as the great prophet, like unto Moses, who so often seasonably supplied the wants of Israel; and though this was his first public miracle, perhaps he had sometimes relieved her and her husband in their low estate. The bridegroom might have sent out for more wine, but she was for going to the fountain head. Note, *First*. We ought to be concerned for the wants and straits of our friends, and not seek our own things only. *Secondly*. In our own and our friends' straits, it is our wisdom and duty to apply ourselves to Christ by prayer. *Thirdly*. In our addresses to Christ, we must not prescribe to him, but humbly spread our case before him, and then refer ourselves to him, to do as he pleaseth.

2nd. He gave her a reprimand for it; for he saw more amiss in it than we do, else he had not treated it thus.

Here is, *First*. The rebuke itself: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" As many as Christ loves, he rebukes and chastens. He calls her woman, not mother; when we begin to be assuming, we should be minded what we are,—men and women, frail, foolish, and corrupt. The question, *τι εστις και σοι*; might be read, "what is that to me and thee?" what is it to us if they do want; but it is always used as we render it, "What have I to do with thee?" as *Jud. xi. 12*; *2 Sam. xvi. 10*; *Ezr. iv. 3*; *Mat. viii. 29*. And therefore speaks a resentment, yet not at all inconsistent with that reverence and subjection which he paid to his mother, according to the fifth commandment, *Lu. ii. 51*; for there was a time when it was Levi's praise that he said to his father, "I have not known him," *Deut. xxxii. 9*. Now this was intended to be, 1st. A check to his mother, for interposing in a matter which was the act of his Godhead, which had no dependence on her, and which she was not the mother of. Though, as man, he was David's son and hers; yet as God, he was David's Lord and hers, and he would have her know it. The greatest advancements must not make us forget ourselves and our place; nor the familiarity to which the covenant of grace admits us breed contempt, irreverence, or any kind or degree of presumption. 2nd. It was an instruction to others of his relations, many of whom were present here, that they must never expect him to have any regard to his kindred according to the flesh, in his working miracles, or that therein he should gratify them who, in this matter, were no more to him than other people. In the things of God we must not know faces. 3rd. It is a standing testimony against that idolatry which he foresaw his church would in after ages sink into, in giving undue honours to the Virgin Mary; a crime which the Roman Catholics, as they call themselves, are notoriously guilty of, when they call her the queen of heaven, the salvation of the world, their mediatrix, their life and hope; not only depending upon her merit and intercession, but beseeching her to command her Son to do them good; *monstra te est matrem*.—"shew that thou art his mother;" *jussu matris impera Salvatori*.—"lay thy maternal commands on the Saviour." Doth he not here expressly say, when a miracle was to be wrought, even in the days of his humiliation, and his mother did but tacitly hint an intercession, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" which was plainly designed either to prevent or aggravate such gross idolatry, such horrid blasphemy. The Son of God is appointed our advocate with the Father, but the mother of our Lord was never designed to be our advocate with the Son.

Secondly. The reason of this rebuke; "mine hour is not yet come;" for every thing Christ did and that was done to him, he had his hour, the fixed time, and the fittest time, which was punctually observed. 1st. Mine hour for working miracles is not yet come; yet afterwards he wrought this, before the hour, because he foresaw it would confirm the faith of his infant disciples, *ver. 11*, which was the end of all his miracles; so that this was an earnest of the many miracles he would work when his hour was come. 2nd. Mine hour for working miracles openly is not yet come; therefore do not talk of it thus publicly. 3rd. Is not the hour of my exemption from thine authority yet come, now I have begun to act as a prophet? So Gregory Nyssen. 4th. Mine hour for working this miracle is not yet come. His mother moved him to help them "when the wine began to fail," so it may be read, *ver. 2*; but his hour was not come till it was quite spent, and there was a total want, not only to prevent any suspicion of mixing some of the wine that was left with the water, but to teach us that man's extremity is God's opportunity to appear

for the help and relief of his people. Then his hour *is* come when we are reduced to the utmost strait, and know not what to do. This encouraged those that waited for him to believe, that though his hour was not yet come, it would come. Note, The delays of mercy are not to be construed the denials of prayer: "at the end it shall speak."

3. Notwithstanding this, she encouraged herself with expectation that he would help her friends in this strait, for she bade the servants observe his orders, *ver. 5*.

1st. She took the reproof very submissively, and did not reply to it. It is best not to deserve reproof from Christ, but next best to be meek and quiet under it, and to count it a kindness, *Ps. cxli. 5*.

2nd. She kept her hope in Christ's mercy, that he would yet grant her desire. When we come to God in Christ for any mercy, two things discourage us. *First*. Sense of our own follies and infirmities; Surely such imperfect prayers as ours cannot speed. *Secondly*. Sense of our Lord's frowns and rebukes; afflictions are continued, deliverances delayed, and God seems angry at our prayers. This was the case of the mother of our Lord here, and yet she encouraged herself with hope that he will at length give in an answer of peace; to teach us to wrestle with God by faith and fervency in prayer, even then when he seems in his providence to walk contrary to us. We must, "against hope, believe in hope," *Rom. iv. 18*.

3rd. She directed the servants to have an eye to him immediately, and not to make their applications to her, as it is probable they had done. She quits all pretensions to an influence upon him, or intercession with him; let their souls wait only on him, *Ps. lxii. 5*.

4th. She directed them punctually to observe his orders, without disputing or asking questions. Being conscious to herself of a fault in prescribing to him, she cautions the servants to take heed of the same fault, and to attend both his time and his way for supply; "whatsoever he saith unto you, do it," though you may think it never so improper. If he saith, Give the guests water when they call for wine, do it; if he saith, Pour out from the bottoms of the vessels that are spent, do it; he can make a few drops of wine multiply to so many draughts. Note, Those that expect Christ's favours must with an implicit obedience observe his orders. The way of duty is the way to mercy; and Christ's methods must not be objected against.

4. Christ did at length miraculously supply them, for he is often better than his word, but never worse.

1st. The miracle itself was turning water into wine. The substance of water acquiring a new form, and having all the accidents and qualities of wine. Such a transformation is a miracle; but the popish transubstantiation, the substance changed but the accidents remaining the same, is a monster. By this Christ shewed himself to be the God of nature, who maketh the earth to bring forth wine, *Ps. civ. 14, 15*. The extracting the blood of the grape every year from the moisture of the earth is no less a work of power, though, being according to the common law of nature, it is not such a work of wonder as this. The beginning of Moses' miracles was turning water into blood, *Ex. iv. 9*; *vi. 20*; the beginning of Christ's miracles was turning water into wine, which intimates the difference between the law of Moses and the Gospel of Christ. The curse of the law turns water into blood, common comforts into bitterness and terror, the blessing of the Gospel turns water into wine. Christ hereby shewed that his errand into the world was to lighten and improve creature comforts to all believers, and make them comforts indeed. Shiloh is said to wash his garments in wine, *Gen. xlix. 11*; the water for washing being turned into wine. And the Gospel call is, "Come ye to the waters, and buy wine," *Isa. lv. 1*.

2nd. The circumstances of it magnified it, and freed it from all suspicion of cheat or collusion; for,

First. It was done in water-pots; *ver. 6*, "There were set there six water-pots of stone." Observe, 1st. For what use these water-pots were intended, namely, for their legal purifications from ceremonial pollutions, enjoined by the law of God, and many more by the tradition of the elders. The Jews eat not except they wash oft," *Mar. vii. 3*; and they used much water in their washing, for which reason here were six large water-pots provided. It was a saying among them, *Qui multa utitur aqua in lavando, multus consequetur in hoc mundo divitias*.—He who uses much water in washing will gain much wealth in this world. 2nd. To what use Christ put them; quite different from what they were intended; to be the receptacles of the miraculous wine. Thus Christ came to bring in the grace of the Gospel, which is as wine, that cheereth God and man, *Jud. ix. 13*; instead of the shadows of the law, which were as water, weak and beggarly elements. These were water-pots that had never been used to have wine in them; and of stone, which is not apt to retain the scent of former liquors, if ever they had had wine in them. They contained "two or three firkins apiece;" two or three measures, baths, or ephahs; the quantity is uncertain, but very considerable. We may be sure it was not intended to be all drunk at this feast, but for a farther kindness to the new-married couple, as the multiplied oil was to the poor widow, out of which she might pay her debt, and live of the rest, *2 Kin. iv. 7*. Christ gives like himself; gives abundantly, according to his riches in glory. It is the penman's language to say they contained two or three firkins, for the Holy Spirit could have ascertained just how much; thus, *ch. vi. 19*, to teach us to speak cautiously, and not confidently, of those things whereof we have not good assurance.

Secondly. The water-pots were filled up to the brim by the servants, at Christ's word, *ver. 7*. As Moses the servant of the Lord, when God bade him, went to the rock to draw water, so these servants, when Christ bade them, went to the water to fetch wine. Note, Since no difficulties can be opposed to the arm of God's power, no improbabilities are to be objected against the word of his command.

Thirdly. The miracle was wrought suddenly, and in such a manner as greatly magnified it. As soon as they had filled the water-pots, presently he said, "Draw out now," *ver. 8*. It was done, 1st. Without any ceremony in the eye of the spectators. One would have thought, as Naaman, he should have come out and stood, and called on the name of God, *2 Kin. v. 11*; no, he sits still in his place, saith not a word, but wills the thing, and so works it. Note, Christ doth great things and marvellous without noise, works manifest changes in a hidden way. Sometimes Christ, in working miracles, used words and signs, but it was for their sakes that stood by, *ch. xi. 47*. 2nd. Without any hesitation or uncertainty in his own breast. He did not say, "Draw out now," and let me taste it, questioning whether the thing were done as he willed it, or no; but with the greatest assurance imaginable, though it was his first miracle, he recommends it to the master of the feast first. As he knew what he would do, so he knew what he could do, and made no essays in his work; but all was good, very good, even in the beginning.

Our Lord Jesus directed the servants, *First*. To draw it out; not let it alone in the vessel to be admired, but draw it out to be drunk. Note, 1. Christ's works are all for use; he gives no man a talent to be buried, but to be traded with. Has he turned thy water into wine, given thee knowledge and grace? It is to profit withal, and therefore draw out now. 2. Those that would know Christ must make trial of him; must attend upon him in the use of ordinary means, and then may expect extraordinary influences. That which is laid up for all that fear God, is wrought for those that trust in him, *Ps. xxxi. 19*, that, by the

ii. 6. A "firkin" is equal to the Hebrew "bath" (*2 Chron. iv. 5*), containing, according to Jewish measure, 7½ gallons; according to Attic measure, 9. Each of these jars, therefore, held about 20 gallons, and were used for washings at such feasts. The number of guests usually invited and the length of the festivities may well account for the quantity of wine thus supplied.

ii. 9. "Governor of the feast:" probably a friend of the bridegroom.

ii. 12. "Not many days:" mentioned to show that Christ lost no time in publicly exercising his ministry.

ii. 13. "Jews' Passover:" this was the first Passover during our Lord's ministry.

ii. 22. "When therefore he was risen from the dead:" observe that the full depths of a prediction are not understood till the fulfilment; not till the predicted event has germinated can the full meaning of the prophecy be fathomed. Hence the mistake of those

exercise of faith, draw out what is laid up. Secondly. To present it to the governor of the feast. Some think this governor of the feast was only the chief guest, that sat at the upper end of the table; and if so, surely our Lord Jesus should have had that place, for he was upon all accounts the principal guest; but it seems another had the uppermost room, probably one that loved it, *Mat. xxiii. 6*, and chose it, *Lu. xiv. 7*; and Christ, according to his own rule, sat down in the lowest room. But though he was not treated as the master of the feast, he kindly approved himself a friend to the feast; and if not its founder, yet its best benefactor. Others think this governor was the inspector and monitor of the feast: the same with Plutarch's *symposiarcha*, whose office it was to see that each had enough, and none did exceed, and that there were no indecencies or disorders. Note, Feasts have need of governors, because too many, when they are at feasts, have not the government of themselves. Some think this governor was the chaplain, some priest or Levite, that craved a blessing, and gave thanks; and Christ would have the cup brought to him, that he might bless it, and bless God for it; for the extraordinary tokens of Christ's presence and power were not to supersede or jostle out the ordinary rules and methods of piety and devotion.

Fourthly. The wine which was thus miraculously provided was of the best and richest wine, which was acknowledged by the governor of the feast; and that it was really so, and not his fancy, is certain, because he knew not whence it was, *ver. 9, 10*. 1st. It was certain this was wine. The governor knew that when he drank it, though he knew not whence it was; the servants knew whence it was, but had not yet tasted it. If the taster had seen the drawing of it, or the drawers had had the tasting of it, something might have been imputed to fancy; but now no room is left for suspicion. 2nd. That it was the best wine. Note, Christ's works commend themselves even to those that know not their author. The products of miracles were always the best in their kind. This wine had a stronger body, and better flavour, than ordinary. This the governor of the feast takes notice of to the bridegroom, with an air of easiness, as uncommon. First. The common method was otherwise. Good wine is brought out to the best advantage at the beginning of a feast, when the guests have their heads clear, and their appetites fresh, and can relish it, and will commend it; but when they have well drunk, when their heads are muddy and their appetites palled, good wine is but thrown away upon them, worse will serve them. See the vanity of all the pleasures of sense, they soon surfeit, but never satisfy; the longer they are enjoyed, the less pleasant they grow. Secondly. This bridegroom obliged his friends with a reserve of the best wine for the grace-cup: "Thou hast kept the good wine till now;" not knowing whom they were indebted to for this good wine, he returns the thanks of the table to the bridegroom. "She did not know that I gave her corn and wine," *Hab. ii. 8*. Now,

1. Christ, in providing thus plentifully for the guests, though he hereby allows a sober, cheerful use of wine, especially in times of rejoicing, *Neh. viii. 10*, yet he doth not invalidate his own caution, nor invade it in the least, which is, that our hearts be not "at any time," no, not at a marriage feast, "overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness," *Lu. xxi. 34*. When Christ provided so much good wine for them that had well drunk, he intended to try their sobriety, and to teach them how to abound, as well as how to want. Temperance perforce is a thankless virtue; but if Divine providence give us abundance of the delights of sense, and Divine grace enable us to use them moderately, this is self-denial that is praiseworthy. He also intended that some should be left for the confirmation of the truth of the miracle to the faith of others. And we have reason to think that the guests at this table were so well taught, or at least were now so well awed by the presence of Christ, that none of them abused this wine to excess. And those two considerations drawn from this story may be sufficient at any time to fortify us against temptations to intemperance: 1st. That our meat and drink are the gifts of God's bounty to us, and we owe our liberty to use them, and our comfort in the use of them, to the mediation of Christ: it is therefore ungrateful and impious to abuse them. 2nd. That, wherever we are, Christ has his eye upon us; we should eat bread before God, *Ex. xviii. 12*, and then we should not feed ourselves without fear.

2. He hath given us a specimen of the method he takes in dealing with those that deal with him, which is to reserve the best for the last; and therefore they must deal upon trust. The recompence of their services and sufferings is reserved for the other world; it is a glory to be revealed. The pleasures of sin give their colour in the cup, but at the last bite; but the pleasures of religion will be pleasures for evermore.

In the conclusion of this story, *ver. 11*, we are told, 1st. That this was "the beginning of miracles" which Jesus did. Many miracles had been wrought concerning him at his birth and baptism, and he himself was the greatest miracle of all; but this was the first that was wrought by him. He could have wrought miracles when he disputed with the doctors, but his hour was not come. He had power, but there was a time of the hiding of his power. 2nd. That herein he manifested his glory; hereby he proved himself to be the Son of God, and his glory to be that of the only begotten of the Father. He also discovered the nature and end of his office; the power of a God, and the grace of a Saviour appearing in all his miracles, and particularly in this, manifested the glory of the long-expected Messiah. 3rd. That "his disciples believed on him." Those whom he had called, *ch. i.*, who had seen no miracle, and yet followed him, now saw this, shared in it, and had their faith strengthened by it. Note, First. Even the faith that is true, at first is but weak. The strongest men were once babes, so were the strongest Christians. Secondly. The manifesting of the glory of Christ is the great confirmation of the faith of Christians.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days. 13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, 14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; 16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these

things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. 17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. 18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? 19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Here we have,

First. The short visit Christ made to Capernaum, *ver. 12*. It was a large and populous city, about a day's journey from Cana; it is called his own city, *Mat. ix. 1*, because he made it his head-quarters in Galilee, and what little rest he had was there. It was a place of concourse, and therefore Christ chose it, that the fame of his doctrine and miracles might from thence spread the further. Observe,

1. The company that attended him thither; "his mother, his brethren, and his disciples." Wherever Christ went, 1st. He would not go alone, but would take those with him who had put themselves under his conduct, that he might instruct them, and they might attest his miracles. 2nd. He should not go alone, but they would follow him, because they liked the sweetness either of his doctrine or of his wine, *ch. vi. 26*. His mother, though he had lately given her to understand that, in the works of his ministry, he should pay no more respect to her than to any other person, yet followed him; not to intercede with him, but to learn of him. His brethren also, and relations, that were at the marriage, and were wrought upon by the miracle there; and his disciples, who attended him wherever he went. It should seem people were more affected with Christ's miracles at first than they were afterwards, when custom made them seem less strange.

2. His continuance there, which was at this time "not many days," designing now only to begin the acquaintance he would afterwards improve there. Christ was still upon the remove, would not confine his usefulness to one place, because many needed him; and he would teach his followers to look upon themselves but as sojourners in this world, and his ministers to follow their opportunities, and go where their work led them. We do not now find Christ in the synagogues, but he privately instructed his friends, and thus entered upon his work by degrees. It is good for young ministers to accustom themselves to pious and edifying discourse in private, that they may with the better preparation and greater awe approach their public work. He did not stay long at Capernaum, because the passover was at hand, and he must attend it at Jerusalem, for every thing is beautiful in its season. The less good must give way to the greater; and all the dwellings of Jacob must veil to the gates of Zion.

Secondly. The passover he kept at Jerusalem; it is the first after his baptism; and the evangelist takes notice of all the passovers he kept henceforward, which were four in all; the fourth, that at which he suffered, (three years after this,) and half a year was now past since his baptism. Christ, being made under the law, observed the passover at Jerusalem: see *Ex. xxiii. 17*. Thus he taught us by his example a strict observance of Divine institutions, and a diligent attendance on religious assemblies. He went up to Jerusalem when the passover was at hand, that he might be there with the first. It is called the Jews' passover, because it was peculiar to them; Christ is our passover; now shortly God will no longer own it for his. Christ kept the passover at Jerusalem yearly, ever since he was twelve years old, in obedience to the law; but, now he is entered upon his public ministry, we may expect something more from him than before; and two things we are here told he did there:

1. He purged the temple, *ver. 14-17*. Observe here,

1. The first place we find him in at Jerusalem was the temple, and it shod ld seem he did not make any public appearance till he came thither; for his presence and preaching there was that glory of the latter house which was to exceed the glory of the former, *Hag. ii. 9*. It was foretold, *Mal. iii. 1*, "I will send my messenger," John Baptist; he never preached in the temple, but "the Lord, whom ye seek," he "shall suddenly come to his temple," suddenly after the appearing of John Baptist; so that this was the time, and the temple the place, when and where the Messiah was to be expected.

2. The first work that we find him at in the temple was the purging of it, for so it was foretold there, *Mal. iii. 2, 3*, "He shall sit as a refiner, and purify the sons of Levi." Now was come the time of reformation, Christ came to be the great reformer; and according to the method of the reforming kings of Judah, he first purged out what was amiss, (and that used to be passover work too, as in Hezekiah's time, *2 Chr. xxx. 14, 15*, and Josiah's, *2 Kin. xxiii. 4, &c.*) and then taught them to do well; first purge out the old leaven, and then keep the feast. Christ's design in coming into the world was to reform the world, and he expects that all who come to him should reform their hearts and lives, *Gen. xxxv. 2*. And this he has taught us by purging the temple. See here,

1st. What were the corruptions that were to be purged out. He found a market in one of the courts of the temple, that which was called the court of the Gentiles, within the mountain of that house. There, First. They sold oxen, and sheep, and doves for sacrifice, we will suppose, not for common use, but for the convenience of those who came out of the country, and could not bring their sacrifices in specie along with them: see *Deu. xiv. 24-26*. This market perhaps had been kept by the pool of Bethesda, *ch. v. 2*, but was admitted into the temple by the chief priests for filthy lucre; for no doubt the rents for standing there, and fees for searching the beasts sold there, and certifying that they were without blemish, would be a considerable revenue to them. Great corruptions in the church owe their rise to the love of money, *1 Tim. vi. 5, 10*. Secondly. They changed money for the convenience of those that were to pay a half shekel in specie every year, by way of poll, for the service of the tabernacle, *Ex. xxx. 12*; and no doubt they got by it.

who anticipate too minutely by human interpretations the unfolding of the Divine purposes.

ii. 24. "Did not commit himself," &c.: did not trust himself to them; i.e., did not regard them as sincere disciples.

ii. 25. "What was in man:" i.e., man in the abstract—man universally.

iii. 1. "Nicodemus:" a Greek name. He is mentioned three times (*John vii. 50, xix. 39*). "In these three notices a noble candour and

a simple love of truth shine out in the midst of hesitation and the fear of man. We can, therefore, easily believe the tradition that after the resurrection . . . he became a professed disciple of Christ, and received baptism at the hands of Peter and John." "Ruler of the Jews:" a member of the Sanhedrim. He was also a teacher (*verse 10*).

iii. 2. "We know:" with regard to the plural here used, two opinions are held—1, That Nicodemus expresses the opinion which

2nd. What course our Lord took to purge out those corruptions. He had seen these in the temple formerly, when he was in a private station, but never went about to drive them out till now, when he had taken upon him the public character of a prophet. He did not complain to the chief priests, for he knew they countenanced those corruptions; but he himself.

First. Drove out the sheep and oxen, and those that sold them, out of the temple. He never used force to drive any into the temple, but only to drive those out that profaned it. He did not seize the sheep and oxen for himself, did not restrain and impound them, though he found them *damage faisant*,—“actual trespassers,” upon his Father’s ground; but only drove them out, and their owners with them. “He made a scourge of small cords,” which probably they had left their sheep and oxen with, and thrown them away upon the ground, thence Christ gathered them. Sinners prepare the scourges with which they themselves will be driven out from the temple of the Lord. He did not make a scourge to chastise the offenders, his punishments are of another nature, but only to drive out the cattle; he aimed no farther than at reformation: see *Rom. xiii. 3, 4*. 2 *Cor. x. 8*.

Secondly. He “poured out the changers’ money,” *τὸ σέμα*,—“the small money,”—the *nummorum famulus*. In pouring out the money, he shewed his contempt of it; he threw it to the ground, to the earth, as it was. In overthrowing the tables he shewed his displeasure against those that make religion a matter of worldly gain. Money-changers in the temple are the scandal of it. Note, In reformation it is good to make thorough work. He drove them all out; and not only threw out the money, but in overturning the tables, threw out the trade too.

Thirdly. He “said to them that sold doves,” (sacrifices for the poor,) “Take these things hence.” The doves, though they took up less room, and were a less nuisance, than the oxen and sheep, yet must not be allowed there. The sparrows and swallows were welcome, but were left to God’s providence, *Ps. lxxxiv. 3*, but not the doves that were appropriated to man’s profit. God’s temple must not be made a pigeon-house. But see Christ’s prudence in his zeal. When he drove out the sheep and oxen, the owners might follow them; when he poured out the money, they might gather it up again; but if he had turned the doves flying, perhaps they could not have been retrieved: therefore to them that sold doves he said, “Take these things hence.” Note, Discretion must always guide and govern our zeal, that we do nothing unbecoming ourselves, or mischievous to others.

Fourthly. He gave them a good reason for what he did: “Make not my Father’s house a house of merchandise.” Reason for conviction should accompany force for correction.

1st. Here is a reason why they should not profane the temple; because it was the house of God, and not to be made a house of merchandise. Merchandise is a good thing in the exchange, but not in the temple. This was, First. To alienate that which was dedicated to the honour of God; it was sacrilege; it was robbing God. Secondly. It was to debase that which was solemn and awful, and to make it mean. Thirdly. It was to disturb and distract those services in which men ought to be most solemn, serious, and intent. It was particularly an affront to the sons of the stranger in their worship to be forced to herd themselves with the sheep and oxen, and to be distracted in their worship by the noise of a market, for this market was kept in the court of the Gentiles. Fourthly. It was to make the business of religion subservient to a secular interest; for the holiness of the place must advance the market, and promote the sale of their commodities. Those make God’s house a house of merchandise, 1. Whose minds are filled with cares about worldly business when they are attending on religious exercises, as those, *Am. vii. 5*; *Eze. xxxiii. 31*. 2. Who perform Divine offices for filthy lucre, and sell the gifts of the Holy Ghost, *Acts viii. 18*.

2nd. Here is a reason why he was concerned to purge it; because it is my Father’s house. And, First. Therefore he had authority to purge it, for he was faithful as a Son over his own house, *Heb. iii. 5, 6*. In calling God his Father, he intimates that he was the Messiah, of whom it was said, “he shall build a house for my name, and I will be his father,” 2 *Sam. vii. 12, 13*. Secondly. Therefore he had a zeal for the purging of it. It is my Father’s house, and therefore I cannot bear to see it profaned, and him dishonoured. Note, If God be our Father in heaven, and it be therefore our desire that his name may be sanctified, it cannot but be our grief to see it polluted.

Christ’s purging the temple thus may justly be reckoned among his wonderful works: *Inter omnia signa quæ fecit Dominus, hoc mihi videtur esse mirabilissimum*.—Of all Christ’s wonderful works, this appears to me the most wonderful.—*Jerome*. Considering, 1. That he did it without the assistance of any of his friends. Probably it had been no hard matter to have raised the mob, who had a great veneration for the temple, against the profaners of it; but Christ never countenanced any thing that was tumultuous or disorderly. There was none to uphold, but his own arm did it. 2. That he did it without the resistance of any of his enemies, either the market people themselves, or the chief priests, that gave them their licences, and had the *posse templi*,—“the temple force,” at their command. But the corruption was too plain to be justified. Sinners’ own consciences are reformers’ best friends. Yet that was not all; there was a Divine power put forth herein, a power over the spirits of men; and in this non-resistance of theirs, that Scripture was fulfilled, *Mal. iii. 2, 3*, “who shall stand when he appeareth?”

3. Here is the remark which his disciples made upon it; ver. 17, “they remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” They were somewhat surprised at first to see him whom they were directed to as the Lamb of God in such a heat; and him whom they believed to be the King of Israel take so little state upon him as to do this himself; but one Scripture came to their thoughts, which taught them to reconcile this action both with the meekness of the Lamb of God, and with the majesty of the King of Israel; for David, speaking of the Messiah, takes notice of his zeal for God’s house, as so great, that it even ate him up; it made him forget himself, *Ps. lxxix. 9*. Observe,

1st. The disciples came to understand the meaning of what Christ did, by remembering the Scriptures; “they remembered” now “that it was written.” Note, The word of God, and the works of God, do mutually explain and illustrate each other. Dark Scriptures are expounded by their accomplishment in Providence, and difficult providences are made easy by comparing them with the Scriptures. See of what great use it is to the disciples of Christ to be ready and mighty in the Scriptures, and to have their memories well stored with Scripture truths, by which they will be furnished for every good work.

2nd. The Scripture they remembered was very apposite; “the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” David was in this a type of Christ, that he was zealous for God’s house, *Ps. cxxii. 2, 3*; what he did for it was with all his might; see 1 *Chr. xxix. 2*; the latter part of that verse, *Ps. lxxix. 9*, is applied to Christ, *Rom. xv. 3*, as the former part of it here. All the graces that were to be found among the Old Testament saints were eminently in Christ, and particularly this of zeal for the house of God; and in them, as they were patterns to us, so they were types of him. Observe, First. Jesus Christ was zealously affected to the house of God; his church loved it, and was always jealous for its honour and welfare. Secondly. This zeal did even eat him up; it made him

humble himself, and spend himself, and expose himself: “My zeal has consumed me,” *Ps. cxix. 139*. Zeal for the house of God forbids us to consult our own credit, ease, and safety, when they come in competition with our duty and Christ’s service, and sometimes carries on our souls in our duty so far, and so fast, that our bodies cannot keep pace with them, and makes us as deaf as our Master was to those who suggest, “spare thyself.” The grievances here redressed might seem but small, and such as should have been connived at; but such was Christ’s zeal, that he could not bear even them that sold and bought in the temple: *Si ibi ebrios inveniret quid faceret Dominus!* saith St. Austin,—“If he had found drunkards in the temple, how much more would he have been displeased!”

11. Christ, having thus purged the temple, gave a sign to those who demanded it to prove his authority for so doing. Observe here,

1. Their demand of a sign. “Then answered the Jews,” that is, the multitude of the people, with their leaders. Being Jews, they should rather have stood by him, and assisted him to vindicate the honour of their temple; but instead of that, they objected against it. Note, They who apply themselves in good earnest to the work of reformation, must expect to meet with opposition. And when they could object nothing against the thing itself, they questioned his authority to do it; “What sign shewest thou unto us,” to prove thyself authorized and commissioned to do these things? It was indeed a good work to purge the temple; but what had he to do to undertake it, who was in no office there? They looked upon it as an act of jurisdiction, and that he must prove himself “a prophet, yea, more than a prophet.” But was not the thing itself sign enough? His ability to drive so many from their posts without opposition, was a proof of his authority: he that was armed with such a Divine power, sure was armed with a Divine commission. What alleged these buyers and sellers that they fled, that they were driven back? Surely it was at the presence of the Lord, *Ps. cxiv. 5, 7*; no less a presence.

2. Christ’s answer to this demand, ver. 19. He did not immediately work a miracle to convince them, but gives them a sign in something to come, the truth of which must appear by the event, according to *Deu. xviii. 21*. Now,

1st. The sign that he gives them is his own death and resurrection. He refers them to that which would be, First. His last sign. If they would not be convinced by what they saw and heard, let them wait. Secondly. The great sign to prove him to be the Messiah; for concerning him, it was foretold that he should be bruised, *Isa. liii. 5*; cut off, *Dan. ix. 6*; and yet that he should not see corruption, *Ps. xvi. 10*. These things were fulfilled in the blessed Jesus; and therefore, “truly he was the Son of God,” and had authority in the temple, his Father’s house.

2nd. He foretells his death and resurrection, not in plain terms, as he often did to his disciples, but in figurative expressions, as afterwards, when he gave this for a sign, he called it the sign of the prophet Jonas; so here, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” Thus spake he to them who were willingly ignorant, in parables, that they might not perceive, *Mat. xiii. 13*. They that will not see, shall not see. Nay, this figurative speech used here proved such a stumblingblock to them, that it was produced in evidence against him at his trial, to prove him a blasphemer, *Mat. xxvi. 60, 61*. Had they humbly asked him the meaning of what he said, he would have told them, and it had been a savour of life unto life to them; but they were resolved to cavil, and it proved a savour of death unto death. They that would not be convinced were hardened; and the manner of the expression of this prediction occasioned the accomplishment of the prediction itself. First. He foretells his death by the Jews’ malice, in these words, “Destroy ye this temple;” that is, ye will destroy it, I know ye will; I will permit you to destroy it. Note, Christ, even at the beginning of his ministry, had a clear foresight of all his sufferings at the end of it, and yet went on cheerfully in it. It is good at setting out to expect the worst. Secondly. He foretells his resurrection by his own power: “in three days I will raise it up.” There were others that were raised, but Christ raised himself, resumed his own life.

Now he chose to express this by destroying and re-edifying the temple, 1st. Because he was now to justify himself in purging the temple which they had profaned; as if he should say, You that defile one temple will destroy another, and I will prove my authority to purge what you have defiled, by raising what you will destroy. The profaning of the temple is the destroying of it, and its reformation its resurrection. 2nd. Because the death of Christ was indeed the destruction of the Jewish temple, the procuring cause of it; and his resurrection was the raising up of another temple, the gospel church, *Zec. vi. 12*. The ruin of their place and nation, *ch. xi. 48*, were the riches of the world: see *Am. ix. 11*; *Acts xv. 16*.

3. Their cavil at this answer; ver. 20, “Forty and six years was this temple in building,”—“temple work was always slow work,”—and canst thou make such quick work of it? Now here, 1st. They shew some knowledge; they could tell how long the temple was in building. Dr. Lightfoot computes that it was just forty-six years from the founding of Zerubbabel’s temple, in the second year of Cyrus, to the complete settlement of the temple service, in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes; and also, that from Herod’s beginning to build this temple, in the eighteenth year of his reign, to this very time, when the Jews said this, was just forty-six years. “Forty and six years,” *ῥηκοδονία*, hath this temple been built.” 2nd. They shew more ignorance, First. Of the meaning of Christ’s words. Note, Men often run into gross mistakes by understanding literally what the Scripture speaks figuratively. What abundance of mischief has been done by interpreting “This is my body,” after a corporal and carnal manner. Secondly. Of the almighty power of Christ, as if he could do no more than another man. Had they known that this was he who built all things in six days, they would not have made it such an absurdity that he should build a temple in three days.

4. A vindication of Christ’s answer from their cavil. The difficulty is soon solved by explaining the terms; “he spake of the temple of his body,” ver. 21. Though Christ had discovered a great respect for the temple, in purging it, yet he will have us know that the holiness of it, which he was so jealous for, was but typical, and leads us to the consideration of another temple, which that was but a shadow of, the substance being Christ, *Heb. ix. 9*; *Col. ii. 17*. Some think, when he said, Destroy this temple, he pointed to his own body, or laid his hand upon it; however, it is certain “he spake of the temple of his body.” Note, The body of Christ is the true temple, of which that at Jerusalem was a type. 1st. Like the temple, it was built by immediate Divine direction, 1 *Chr. xxviii. 19*; “a body hast thou prepared me.” 2nd. Like the temple, it was a holy house; it is called “that holy thing.” 3rd. It was like the temple, the habitation of God’s glory; there the eternal Word dwelt, the true Shechinah. He is Emmanuel, “God with us.” 4th. The temple was the place and medium of intercourse between God and Israel; there God revealed himself to them, there they presented themselves and their services to him. Thus by Christ God speaks to us, and we speak to him. Worshipers looked towards that house, 1 *Kin. viii. 30, 35*; so we must worship God with an eye to Christ.

5. A reflection which the disciples made upon this long after, inserted here to illustrate the story; ver. 22, “when he was risen from the dead,” some years after, “his disciples remembered that he had said this.” We found them, ver. 17, remembering what had been written before of him, and here remem-

was gaining currency among the rulers, that Jesus was divinely sent; 2, That he uses the plural in order to avoid committing himself to an expression of his own personal convictions. “These miracles,” i.e., those mentioned in chap. ii. 23. “Teacher,” Alfred notices the cautiousness which pervades the whole of this passage, both in his addressing our Lord only as a “teacher,” whereas the Jews looked for the Messiah as a king and prophet, and also in the words, “No man can do, &c., except God be with him,” which

form a disappointing explanation of the former expression, “come from God.”

iii. 3. “Born again,” or anew, afresh—from the very beginning. The Rabbins designated the proselyte “a new creature.” Christ’s answer is not to be considered irrelevant. It bears directly upon the question of Nicodemus, and notably the weakness it manifested; and shows that life, not knowledge, is the requisite of Christ’s kingdom. As Luther says, “My teaching is not of doing, leaving undone, but

bering what they had heard from him. Note, The memories of Christ's disciples should be like the treasure of the good householder, furnished with things both new and old, *Mat. xiii. 52*. Now observe,

1st. When they remembered that saying: "when he was risen from the dead." It seems they did not at this time fully understand Christ's meaning, for they were as yet but babes in knowledge, but they laid it up in their hearts, and afterwards it became both intelligible and useful. Note, It is good to hear for the time to come, *Isa. xlii. 23*. The juniors in years and profession should treasure up those truths which at present they do not well understand either the meaning or use of, for they will be serviceable to them hereafter, when they come to greater proficiency. It was said of the scholars of Pythagoras that his precepts seemed to freeze in them till they were forty years old, and then they began to thaw; so this saying of Christ revived in the memories of his disciples "when he was risen from the dead;" and why then? First, Because then the Spirit was poured out to bring things to their remembrance which Christ had said to them, and to make them both easy and ready to them, *ch. xiv. 26*. That very day that Christ rose from the dead, he opened their understandings, *Lu. xxiv. 45*. Secondly, Because then this saying of Christ was fulfilled when the temple of his body had been destroyed and was raised again, and that upon the third day, then they remembered this among other words Christ had said to this purpose. Note, It contributes much to the understanding of the Scripture to observe the fulfilling of the Scripture. The event will expound the prophecy.

2nd. What use they made of it; "they believed the Scripture, and the word that Jesus had said;" that is, their belief of these was confirmed, and received fresh support and vigour. They were slow of heart to believe, *Lu. xxiv. 25*, but they were sure. The Scripture and the word of Christ are here put together, not because they concur, and exactly agree together, but because they mutually illustrate and strengthen each other. When the disciples saw both what they had read in the Old Testament, and what they had heard from Christ's own mouth, fulfilled in his death and resurrection, they were the more confirmed in their belief of both.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. 24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, 25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

We have here an account of the success, the poor success, of Christ's preaching and miracles at Jerusalem, while he kept the passover there. Observe,

First. That our Lord Jesus, when he was at Jerusalem, at the passover, did preach and work miracles. People's believing on him implied that he preached; and it is expressly said, they saw the miracles he did. He was now in Jerusalem, the holy city, whence the Word of the Lord was to go forth; his residence was mostly in Galilee, and therefore when he was in Jerusalem he was very busy. The time was holy time, the feast day, time appointed for the service of God; at the passover the Levites taught the good knowledge of the Lord, *2 Chr. xxx. 22*, and Christ took that opportunity of preaching, when the concourse of people was great, and thus he would own and honour the Divine institution of the passover.

Secondly. That hereby many were brought to believe in his name, to acknowledge him a teacher come from God, as Nicodemus did, *ch. iii. 2*, a great prophet; and probably some of those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem, believed him to be the Messiah promised; so ready were they to welcome the first appearance of that bright and morning star.

Thirdly. That yet "Jesus did not commit himself unto them," *ver. 24*; *οὐκ ἐπιτίθειν ἑαυτὸν αὐτοῖς*;—he did not trust himself with them. It is the same word that is used for believing in him. So that to believe in Christ, is to commit ourselves to him, and to his conduct. Christ did not see cause to repose any confidence in these new converts at Jerusalem, where he had many enemies that sought to destroy him, either, 1. Because they were false, at least some of them, and would betray him if they had an opportunity, or were strongly tempted to it. He had more disciples that he could trust among the Galileans, than among the dwellers at Jerusalem. In dangerous times and places, it is wisdom to take heed who you confide in; *μὴ μένῃς ἀμαρτεῖν*;—learn to distrust. Or, 2. Because they were weak, and I would hope that this was the worst of it; not that they were treacherous, and designed him a mischief; but, 1st. They were timorous, and wanted zeal and courage, and might perhaps be frightened to do an ill thing. In times of difficulty and danger, cowards are not fit to be trusted. Or, 2nd. They were tumultuous, and wanted discretion and conduct. These in Jerusalem perhaps had their expectations more raised than others of the temporal reign of the Messiah, and in that expectation would be ready to give some bold strokes at the government, if Christ would have committed himself to them, and put himself at the head of them; but he would not, for his kingdom is not of this world. We should be shy of turbulent, unquiet people, as our Master here was, though they profess to believe in Christ, as these did.

Fourthly. That the reason why he did not commit himself to them was, because he knew them, *ver. 25*, knew the wickedness of some, and weakness of others. The evangelist takes this occasion to assert Christ's omniscience.

1. "He knew all men," not only their names and faces, as it is possible for us to know many, but their nature, dispositions, affections, designs, so as we do not know any man, scarce ourselves. He knows all men, for his powerful hand made them all, his piercing eye sees them all, sees into them. He knows his subtle enemies, and all their secret projects; his false friends, and their true characters; what they really are, whatever they pretend to be. He knows them that are truly his, knows their integrity, and knows their infirmity too. He knows their frame.

2. He "needed not that any should testify of man." His knowledge was not by information from others, but by his own infallible intuition. It is the infelicity of earthly princes, that they must see with other men's eyes, and hear with other men's ears, and take things as they are represented to them; but Christ goes purely upon his own knowledge. Angels are his messengers, but not his spies, for his own eyes run to and fro through the earth, *2 Chr. xvi. 9*. This may comfort us in reference to Satan's accusations, that Christ will not take men's characters from him.

3. "He knew what was in man;" in particular persons, in the nature and race of man. We know what is done by men, Christ knows what is in them, tries the heart and the reins. This is the prerogative of that essential, eternal Word, *Heb. iv. 12, 13*; we invade his prerogative if we presume to judge men's hearts. How fit is Christ to be the Saviour of men; very fit to be the physician, who hath such a knowledge of the patient's state and case, temper and dis-

temper; knows what is in him. How fit also to be the judge of all, for the judgment of him who knows all men, all in men, must needs be according to truth.

Now this is all the success of Christ's preaching and miracles at Jerusalem in this journey. The Lord comes to his temple, and none come to him but a parcel of weak, simple people, that he can neither have credit from, nor put confidence in; yet he shall at length "see of the travail of his soul."

CHAPTER III.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's discourse with Nicodemus, a Pharisee, concerning the great mysteries of the Gospel, which he here privately lets him into, *ver. 1—21*. II. John Baptist's discourse with his disciples concerning Christ, upon occasion of his coming into the neighbourhood where he was, *ver. 22—36*, in which he fairly and faithfully resigns all his honour and interest to him.



HERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with

him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? 13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and

of a change in the man; so that it is not new works done, but a new man to do them—not another life only, but another birth." It is what to be, rather than what to do, which is so conspicuous in New Testament teaching. "Cannot see," or understand. On "the kingdom of God," see *Rom. xiv. 17*. Webster and Wilkinson remark: "The two ideas most familiar to the mind of every Jew, and especially of every Jewish teacher at this time, were: 1. The kingdom of God promised in prophecy, expected under the Messiah, and

recently proclaimed as near by John the Baptist; 2. Birth in the family of Abraham as the indispensable and indeed sole qualification for the inheritance of the privileges of this kingdom. Our Lord's words were addressed to both of these ideas, especially the latter. By this single sentence he swept away the erroneous, and established the true doctrine of the kingdom of God, and of the qualification for it."

iii. 8. "The wind:" rather, a gentle breeze. "Bloweth," or better,

men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

We found in the close of the foregoing chapter, that few were brought to Christ at Jerusalem; yet here was one, a considerable one; it is worth while to go a great way for the salvation though but of one soul. Observe,

First. Who this Nicodemus was. Not many mighty and noble are called; yet some are, and here was one. Not many of the rulers, or of the Pharisees; yet, 1. This was a man of the Pharisees, bred to learning, a scholar; let it not be said that all Christ's followers are unlearned and ignorant men. The principles of the Pharisees, and the peculiarities of their sect, were directly contrary to the spirit of Christianity; yet there were some, in whom even those high thoughts were cast down, and brought into obedience to Christ. The grace of Christ is able to subdue the greatest opposition. 2. He was a ruler of the Jews, a member of the great Sanhedrim, a senator, a privy-counsellor, a man of authority in Jerusalem. As bad as things were, there were some rulers well inclined, who yet could do little good, because the stream was so strong against them; they were overruled by the majority, and yoked with those that were corrupt, so that the good which they would do, they could not do it; yet Nicodemus continued in his place, and did what he could, when he could not do what he would.

Secondly. His solemn address to our Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 2. See here, 1. *When he came.* "He came to Jesus by night." Observe,

1st. He made a private and particular address to Christ, and did not think it enough to hear his public discourses. He resolved to talk with him by himself, where he might be free with him. Personal converse with skilful, faithful ministers about the affairs of our souls would be of great use to us, *Mal. ii. 7.*

2nd. He made this address by night, which may be considered either, *First.* As an act of prudence and discretion. Christ was engaged all day in public work, and he would not interrupt him then, nor expect his attendance then, but observed Christ's hour, and waited on him when he was at leisure. Note, Private advantages to ourselves and our own families, must give way to those that are public, and of more general use. The greater good must be preferred before the less. Christ had many enemies; and therefore Nicodemus came incognito to him, lest if the chief priests had known it, they should have been the more enraged against Christ. *Secondly.* As an act of zeal and forwardness. Nicodemus was a man of business, and could not spare time all day to make Christ a visit, and therefore he would rather take time from the diversions of the evening, or the rest of the night, than not converse with Christ. When others were sleeping, he was getting knowledge, as David by meditation, *Ps. lxxiii. 6; cxix. 148.* Probably it was the very next night after he saw Christ's miracles, and he would not slip the first opportunity of pursuing his convictions. He knew not how soon Christ might leave the town, nor what might happen betwixt that and another feast, and therefore would lose no time. In the night his converse with Christ would be more free, and less liable to disturbance; these were *noctes Christianae*,—Christian nights, much more instructive than the *noctes Atticæ*,—Attic nights. Or, *Thirdly.* As an act of fear and cowardice. He was afraid or ashamed to be seen with Christ, and therefore came in the night. When religion is out of fashion, there are many Nicodemites, especially among the rulers, who have a better affection to Christ and his religion than they would be known to have. But observe, 1st. Though he came by night, Christ bade him welcome, accepted his integrity, and pardoned his infirmity; considered his temper, which perhaps was timorous, and the temptation he was in from his place and office; and thereby taught his ministers to become all things to all men, and to encourage good beginnings though they are weak. Paul preached "privately to them of reputation," *Gal. ii. 2.* 2nd. Though now he came by night, yet afterwards, when there was occasion, he owned Christ publicly, *ch. vii. 50; xix. 30.* The grace which is at first but a grain of mustard seed may grow to be a gr at tree.

2. *What he said.* He did not come to talk with Christ about politics, and state affairs, though he was a ruler; but about the concerns of his own soul and its salvation, and without circumspection comes presently to the business; he calls Christ, Rabbi, which signifies a great man, see *Isa. xix. 20*: "He shall send them a Saviour, and a great one;" a Saviour and a Rabbi; so the word is. There is hopes of those who have a respect for Christ, and think and speak honourably of him. He tells Christ how far he had attained; "we know that thou art a teacher." Observe,

1st. His assertion concerning Christ: "thou art a teacher come from God;" not educated or ordained by men, as other teachers, but supported with Divine inspiration, and Divine authority. He that was to be the sovereign ruler came first to be a teacher, for he would rule with reason, not with rigour,—by the power of truth, not of the sword. The world lay in ignorance and mistake; the Jewish teachers were corrupt, and caused them to err; "It is time for the Lord to work." He came a teacher from God, from God as the Father of mercies, in pity to a dark deceived world; from God as the Father of lights, and fountain of truth; all that light and truth which we may venture our souls upon.

2nd. His assurance of it; "we know," not only I, but others; so he took it for granted, the thing being so plain and self-evident; perhaps he knew that there were divers of the Pharisees and rulers with whom he conversed, that were under the same convictions, but had not the grace to own it. Or, we may suppose he speaks in the plural number, we know, because he brought with him one or more of his friends and pupils, to receive instructions from Christ, knowing them to be of common concern. Master, saith he, we come with a desire to be taught, to be thy scholars, for we are fully satisfied thou art a Divine teacher.

3rd. The ground of this assurance; "no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Here, *First.* We are assured of the truth of Christ's miracles, and that they were not counterfeit. Here was Nicodemus, a judicious, sensible, inquisitive man, one that had all the reason and opportunity imaginable to examine them, was so fully satisfied they were real miracles, that he was wrought upon by them to go contrary to his interest, and the stream of those of his own rank, who were prejudiced against Christ. *Secondly.* We are directed what inference to draw from Christ's miracles; therefore we are to receive him as "a teacher come from God." His miracles were his credentials. The course of nature could not be altered but by the power of the God of nature, who we are sure is the God of truth and goodness, and would never set his seal to a lie, or a cheat.

Thirdly. The discourse between Christ and Nicodemus hereupon, or rather

the sermon Christ preached to him; the contents of it, and that perhaps an abstract of Christ's public preaching; see ver. 11, 12. Four things our Saviour here discoursed of:

1. Concerning the necessity and nature of regeneration, or the new birth, ver. 3–8. Now we must consider this,

1. As pertinently answered to Nicodemus' address. "Jesus answered," ver. 3. This answer was either, 1st. A rebuke of what he saw defective in the address of Nicodemus. It was not enough for him to admire Christ's miracles, and acknowledge his mission, but he must be born again. It is plain he expected the kingdom of heaven, that is, the kingdom of the Messiah, now shortly to appear; is betimes aware of the dawning of that day; and, according to the common notion of the Jews, he expects it to appear in external pomp and power; doubts not but this Jesus who works these miracles, is either the Messiah, or his prophet; and therefore makes his court to him, compliments him, and so hopes to secure a share to himself of the advantages of that kingdom. But Christ tells him he can have no benefit by that change of the state, unless there be a change of the spirit, of the principles and dispositions, equivalent to a new birth. Nicodemus came by night; but this will not do, saith Christ. His religion must be owned before men; so Dr. Hammond. Or, 2nd. A reply to what he saw designed in his address. When Nicodemus owned Christ a teacher come from God, one intrusted with an extraordinary revelation from heaven, he plainly intimated a desire to know what it was, and a readiness to receive it, and Christ gives it him.

2. We may consider this as positively and vehemently asserted by our Lord Jesus; "Verily, verily, I say unto thee," "I, the Amen, the Amen, say it;" so it may be read; I, the faithful and true witness. The matter is settled irreversibly, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" I say it unto thee, though a Pharisee, though a master of Israel. Observe,

1st. What it is that is required,—to be born again: that is, *First.* We must live a new life. Birth is the beginning of life; to be born again is to begin anew, as those that have hitherto lived either much amiss, or to little purpose. We must not think to patch up the old building, but begin from the foundation. *Secondly.* We must have a new nature, new principles, new affections, new aims. We must be born *anew*, which signifies both *denovo*,—again, and *desuper*,—from above. 1st. We must be born anew, so the word is taken, *Gal. iv. 9, and ab initio*,—from the beginning, *Lu. i. 3.* By our first birth we were corrupt, shapen in sin and iniquity, we must therefore undergo a second birth; our souls must be fashioned and enlivened anew. 2nd. We must be born from above, so the word is used by the evangelist, *ch. iii. 31; xix. 11*; and I take it to be especially intended here, not excluding the other; for to be born from above supposeth being born again. But this new birth has its rise from heaven, *ch. i. 13*, and its tendency to heaven. It is to be born to a divine and heavenly life, a life of communion with God and the upper world, and in order to this, it is to partake of a divine nature, and bear the image of the heavenly.

2nd. The indispensable necessity of this; "except a man" (any one that partakes of the human nature, and consequently of the corruptions of that, except he) "be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,"—the kingdom of the Messiah, begun in grace and perfected in glory. Except we be born from above, we cannot see this. That is, *First.* We cannot understand the nature of it. Such is the nature of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, (in which Nicodemus desired to be instructed,) that the soul must be new modelled and moulded; the natural man must become a spiritual man, before he is capable of receiving and understanding them, *1 Cor. ii. 14.* *Secondly.* We cannot receive the comfort of it; cannot expect any benefit by Christ and his Gospel, nor have any part or lot in the matter. Note, Regeneration is absolutely necessary to our happiness here and hereafter. Considering what we are by nature, how corrupt and sinful; and that God is in whom alone we can be happy, and what heaven is to which the perfection of our happiness is reserved, it will appear in the nature of the thing that we must be born again; because it is impossible we should be happy if we be not holy; see *1 Cor. vi. 11, 12.*

This great truth of the necessity of regeneration, being thus solemnly laid down,

1. It is objected against by Nicodemus, ver. 4: "How can a man be born when he is old?" old as I am, *ἡλικίας μου*,—being an old man; "Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Herein appears,

1st. His weakness in knowledge; what Christ spoke spiritually he seems to have understood after a corporal and carnal manner, as if there were no other way of regenerating and new moulding an immortal soul but by new framing the body, and bringing that back to the rock out of which it was hewn; as if there were such a connexion between the soul and the body, that there could be no fashioning the heart anew but by forming the bones anew. Nicodemus, as others of the Jews, valued himself, no doubt, very much by his first birth, and the dignities and privileges of that; the place of it, the holy land, perhaps the holy city; his parentage, such as that which Paul could have gloried in, *Phil. iii. 5*; and therefore it is a great surprise to him to hear of being born again. Could he be better bred and born, than bred and born an Israelite? Or by any other birth stand fairer for a room in the kingdom of the Messiah? Indeed they looked upon a proselyted Gentile to be as one born again, or born anew; but could not imagine how a Jew, a Pharisee, could ever better himself by being born again; he therefore thinks if he must be born again, it must be of her that bare him first. They that are proud of their first birth are hardly brought to a new birth.

2nd. His willingness to be taught. He doth not turn his back upon Christ because of this hard saying, but ingenuously acknowledges his ignorance, which implies a desire to be better informed; and so I take this, rather than that he had such gross notions of the new birth Christ spoke of. Lord, make me to understand this, for it is a riddle to me; I am such a fool as to know no other way for a man to be born, but of his mother. When we meet with that in the things of God which is dark, and hard to be understood, we must with humility and industry continue our attendance upon the means of knowledge, till God shall reveal even that unto us.

2. It is opened and farther explained by our Lord Jesus, ver. 5–8. From the objection he takes occasion,

1st. To repeat and confirm what he had said, ver. 5: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee," the very same that I said before. Note, The word of Christ is not yea and nay, but yea and amen; what he said he will abide by, whoever saith against it; nor will he retract any of his sayings for the ignorance and mistakes of men. Though Nicodemus understood not the mystery of regeneration, yet Christ asserts the necessity of it as positively as before. Note, It is folly to think of evading the obligation of evangelical precepts, by pleading that they are unintelligible, *Rom. iii. 3, 4.*

2nd. To expound and clear what he had said concerning regeneration; for the explication of which he farther shews,

First. The author of this blessed change, and who it is that works it. To be born again is to be "born of the Spirit," ver. 5, 6. It is not wrought by any wisdom or power of our own, but by the power and influence of the blessed Spirit of grace. It is the "sanctification of the Spirit," *1 Pet. i. 2*; and "renewing

"breatheth." It is worth observing that our Lord, in speaking of the operation of the Divine in the sphere of the Spirit, uses illustrations from Nature. The breeze, the water, the flame are all used. The outer world is but the type of the inner, the material the figure of the spiritual. The things of Nature, as the ordinances of the Mosaic sanctuary, are the pattern of things in the mount of God. (See Acts vii. 44.)

iii. 12. "Earthly things," "heavenly things:" by the former may

be meant the simpler and more elementary truths of Christ's revelation; by the latter the profounder mysteries.

iii. 13. "No man hath ascended;" Olshausen remarks, "The creature cannot by his own power penetrate into the eternal world. . . . But eternal love itself has indeed stooped, and in itself discloses to the humble all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. ii. 3). Lücke and Tholuck justly remark that the coming of the Son does not annul his existence in heaven, as if he were

of the Holy Ghost." *Tit.* iii. 5. The Word he works by is his inspiration, and the heart to be wrought on he has access to.

Secondly. The nature of this change; and what that is which is wrought; it is spirit, *ver.* 6. Those that are regenerated are made spiritual, and refined from the dross and dregs of sensuality. The dictates and interests of the rational and immortal soul have retrieved the dominion they ought to have over the flesh. The Pharisees placed their religion in external purity, and external performances; and it would be a mighty change indeed with them, no less than a new birth, to become spiritual.

Thirdly. The necessity of this change.

1st. Christ here shews that it is necessary in the nature of the thing, for we are not fit to enter into the kingdom of God till we are born again; *ver.* 6. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Here is our malady, and the cause of it, which are such as speak plain, that there is no remedy but we must be born again. First, We are here told what we are; we are flesh, not only corporeal but corrupt, *Gen.* vi. 3. The soul is still a spiritual substance, but so wedded to the flesh, so captivated by the will of the flesh, so in love with the delights of the flesh, so employed in making provision for the flesh, that it is justly called flesh; it is carnal. And what communion can there be between God who is a spirit, and a soul in this condition? Secondly. How we came to be so, by being born of the flesh. It is a corruption that is bred in the bone with us; and therefore we cannot have a new nature, but we must be born again. The corrupt nature which is flesh, takes rise from our first birth; and therefore, the new nature which is spirit, must take rise from a second birth. Nicodemus spoke of entering again into his mother's womb and being born; but if he could do so, to what purpose? If he were born of his mother a hundred times that would not mend the matter, for still "that which is born of the flesh is flesh;" a clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean. He must seek for another original, must be born of the Spirit, or he cannot become spiritual. The case is in short this; man, though made to consist of body and soul, yet his spiritual part had then so much the dominion over his corporeal part, that he was denominated a living soul, *Gen.* ii. 7; but by indulging the appetite of the flesh in eating forbidden fruit, he prostituted the just dominion of the soul to the tyranny of sensual lust, and became no longer a living soul, but flesh; "dust thou art." The living soul became dead and inactive; thus in the day he sinned he surely died, and sadly; he became earthy. In this degenerated state, "he begat a son in his own likeness," he transmitted the human nature, which had been entirely deposited in his hands, thus corrupted and depraved; and in the same plight it is still propagated. Corruption and sin are woven into our nature; we are shapen in iniquity, which makes it necessary that the nature be changed. It is not enough to put on a new coat, or a new face, but we must put on the new man; we must be new creatures.

2nd. Christ makes it farther necessary by his own word; *ver.* 7. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." First. Christ hath said it, and as he himself never did nor ever will unsay it, so all the world cannot gainsay it, that we must be born again. He who is the great Lawgiver, whose will is a law; he who is the great Mediator of the new covenant, and has full power to settle the terms of our reconciliation to God, and happiness in him; he who is the great Physician of souls, knows their case, and what is necessary to their cure; he hath said, "Ye must be born again." I said unto thee that which all are concerned in, ye must, ye all, one as well as another, "ye must be born again." Not only the common people, but the rulers, the masters in Israel. Secondly. We are not to marvel at it; for when we consider the holiness of the God with whom we have to do, the great design of our redemption, the pravity of our nature, and the constitution of the happiness set before us, we shall not think it strange that so much stress is laid upon this as the one thing needful,—that we must be born again.

Fourthly. This change is illustrated by two comparisons:

1st. The regenerating work of the Spirit is compared to water, *ver.* 5. To be born again is to "be born of water, and of the Spirit," that is, of the Spirit working like water, as *Mat.* iii. 11, "with the Holy Ghost and with fire," means, with the Holy Ghost as with fire. First. That which is primarily intended here, is to shew that the Spirit in sanctifying a soul, 1. Cleanseth and purifieth it as water; takes away its filth by which it was unfit for the kingdom of God. It is the "washing of regeneration" *Tit.* iii. 2. "Ye are washed," *1 Cor.* vi. 11: see *Eze.* xxxvi. 25. 2. Cools and refresheth it as water doth the hunted hart, and the weary traveller. The Spirit is compared to water, *Isa.* xlv. 3; *ch.* vii. 38, 39. In the first creation the fruits of heaven were born of water, *Gen.* i. 20; in allusion to which, perhaps, they that are born from above are said to be born of water. Secondly. It is probable Christ had an eye to the ordinance of baptism which John had used, and he himself had begun to use. You must be born again of the Spirit, which regeneration by the Spirit should be signified by washing with water, as the visible sign of that spiritual grace. Not that all they and they only that are baptized are saved, but without that new birth which is wrought by the Spirit, and signified by baptism, none shall be looked upon as the protected, privileged subjects of the kingdom of heaven. The Jews cannot partake of the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom they had so long looked for, unless they quit all expectation of being justified by the works of the law, and submit to "the baptism of repentance," the great Gospel duty, "for the remission of sins," the great Gospel privilege.

2nd. It is compared to wind; *ver.* 8. "The wind blows where it listeth, . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The same word, *πνευμα*, signifies both the wind and the Spirit. The Spirit came upon the apostles in "a rushing mighty wind," *Acts* ii. 2. His strong influences on the hearts of sinners are compared to the breathing of the wind, *Eze.* xxxvii. 9; and his sweet influences on the souls of saints, to the north and south wind, *Cant.* iv. 16. This comparison is here used to shew, First. That the Spirit in regeneration works arbitrarily, and as a free agent. "The wind blows where it listeth" for us, and doth not attend our order, nor is subject to our command; God directs it, it fulfils his word, *Ps.* cxlviii. 8. The Spirit dispenseth his influences where, and when, on whom, and in what measure and degree he pleaseth, "dividing to every man severally as he will," *1 Cor.* xii. 11. Secondly. That he works powerfully, and with evident effects; "thou hearest the sound thereof;" though its causes are hidden, its effects are manifest. When the soul is brought to mourn for sin, to groan under the burden of corruption, to breathe after Christ, to cry, Abba, Father, then we hear the sound of the Spirit; we find he is at work, as *Acts* ix. 11, "Behold, he prays." Thirdly. That he works mysteriously, and in secret hidden ways; "thou canst not tell whence it comes, or whither it goes;" how it gathers, and how it spends its strength, is a riddle to us; so the manner and methods of the Spirit's working is a mystery: "which way went the Spirit?" *1 Kin.* xxii. 24; see *Ecl.* ix. 5, and compare it with *Ps.* cxxxix. 14.

II. Here is a discourse concerning the certainty and sublimity of Gospel truths, which Christ takes occasion for, from the weakness of Nicodemus. Here is,

1. The objection which Nicodemus still made; *ver.* 9, "How can these things be?" Christ's explication of the doctrine of the necessity of regeneration, it should seem, made it never the clearer to him. The corruption of nature

which makes it necessary, and the way of the Spirit, which makes it practicable, are as much mysteries to him as the thing itself. Though he had in general owned Christ a Divine teacher, yet he was unwilling to receive his teachings, when they did not agree with the notions he had imbibed. Thus many profess to admit the doctrine of Christ in general, and yet will neither believe the truths of Christianity, nor submit to the laws of it farther than they please: Christ shall be their teacher, provided they may choose their lesson.

Now here, 1st. Nicodemus owns himself ignorant of Christ's meaning after all; "How can these things be?" They are things I do not understand, my capacity will not reach them. Thus "the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man;" he is not only estranged from them, and therefore they are dark to him, but prejudiced against them, and therefore they are foolishness to him. 2nd. Because this doctrine was unintelligible to him (so he was pleased to make it) he questions the truth of it; as if, because it was a paradox to him, it was a chimera in itself. Many have such an opinion of their own capacity, as to think that that cannot be proved which they cannot believe; by wisdom they knew not Christ.

2. The reproof which Christ gave him for his dulness and ignorance; "Art thou a master in Israel;" *διδάσκαλος*,—"a teacher, a tutor;" one that sits in Moses's chair, and yet, not only unacquainted with the doctrine of regeneration, but incapable of understanding it? This word is a reproof, 1st. To those that undertake to teach others and yet are ignorant and unskilful in the Word of righteousness themselves. 2nd. To those that spend their time in learning and teaching notions and ceremonies in religion, niceties and criticisms in the Scripture, and neglect that which is practical, and tends to reform the heart and life. Two words in the reproof are very emphatical. First. The place where his lot was cast, "in Israel;" where there was such great plenty of the means of knowledge, where Divine revelation was. He might have learned this out of the Old Testament. Secondly. The things he was thus ignorant in; "these things" these necessary things, these great things, these Divine things; had he never read, *Ps.* i. 5, 10; *Eze.* xviii. 13; xxxvi. 25, 26?

3. Christ's discourse hereupon, of the certainty and sublimity of Gospel truths, *ver.* 11–13, to shew the folly of those who make strange of these things and to recommend them to our search. Observe here,

1st. That the truths Christ taught were very certain, and what we may venture upon; *ver.* 11, "We speak that we do know;" we; whom doth he mean besides himself? Some understand it of those that bore witness to him, and with him on earth; the prophets, and John Baptist, they spoke what they knew, and had seen, and were themselves abundantly satisfied in: Divine revelation carries its own proof along with it. Others, of those that bore witness from heaven, the Father and the Holy Ghost; the Father was with him, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; therefore he speaks in the plural number, as *ch.* xiv. 13, "We will come unto him." Observe, First. That the truths of Christ are of undoubted certainty. We have all the reason in the world to be assured that the sayings of Christ are faithful sayings, and such as we may venture our souls upon; for he is not only a credible witness, who would not go about to deceive us, but a competent witness, who could not himself be deceived: "we testify that we have seen." He spoke not upon hearsay, but upon the clearest evidence, and therefore with the greatest assurance. What he spoke of God, of the invisible world, of heaven and hell, of the Divine will concerning us, and the counsels of peace, was what he knew and had seen, for he was by him as one brought up with him, *Pr.* viii. 30. Whatever Christ spoke, he spoke of his own knowledge. Secondly. That the unbelief of sinners is greatly aggravated by the infallible certainty of the truths of Christ. The things are thus sure, thus clear, and yet "ye receive not our witness." Multitudes to be unbelievers of that, which yet (so cogent are the motives of credibility) they cannot disbelieve!

2nd. The truths Christ taught, though communicated in language and expressions borrowed from common and earthly things, yet in their own nature were most sublime and heavenly; this is intimated, *ver.* 12, "If I have told them earthly things," that is, have told them the great things of God in similitudes taken from earthly things, to make them the more easy and intelligible, as that of the new birth, and the wind; if I have thus accommodated myself to your capacities, and listened to you in your own language, and cannot make you to understand my doctrine, what would you do if I should accommodate myself to the nature of the things, and speak with the tongue of angels, that language which mortals cannot utter; if such familiar expressions be stumblingblocks, what would abstract ideas be, and spiritual things painted proper?

Now we may learn hence, First. To admire the height and depth of the doctrine of Christ; it is a great mystery of godliness. The things of the Gospel are heavenly things, out of the road of the inquiries of human reason, and much more out of the reach of its discoveries. Secondly. To acknowledge with thankfulness the condescension of Christ; that he is pleased to suit the manner of the Gospel revelation to our capacities; to speak to us as to children. He considers our frame, that we are of the earth; and our place, that we are on the earth; and therefore speaks to us earthly things, and makes things sensible the vehicle of things spiritual, to make them the more easy and familiar to us; thus he has done both in parables, and in sacraments. Thirdly. To lament the corruption of our nature, and our great unaptness to receive and entertain the truths of Christ. Earthly things are despised because they are vulgar, and heavenly things because they are abstruse; and so whatever method is taken, still some fault or other is found with it, *Mat.* xi. 17; but wisdom is, and will be, justified of her children notwithstanding.

3rd. Our Lord Jesus, and none but he, was fit to reveal to us a doctrine thus certain, thus sublime; *ver.* 13, "no man hath ascended up into heaven but he." First. None but he was able to reveal to us the will of God for our salvation. Nicodemus addressed to Christ as a prophet, but he must know that he is greater than all the Old Testament prophets, for none of them had ascended into heaven. They wrote by Divine inspiration, but not of their own knowledge; see *ch.* i. 18. Moses ascended into the mount, but not into heaven; no man hath attained to the certain knowledge of God and heavenly things so as Christ has; see *Mat.* xi. 27. It is not for us to send to Heaven for instructions, we must wait to receive what instructions Heaven will send to us; see *Pr.* xxx. 4; *Deu.* xxx. 12. Secondly. Jesus Christ is able and fit, and every way qualified to reveal the will of God to us; for it is "he that came down from heaven," and "is in heaven." He had said, *ver.* 12, "how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" Now here, 1st. He gives them an instance of those heavenly things which he could tell them of, when he tells them of one that came down from heaven, and yet is the Son of man; is the Son of man, and yet is in heaven. If the regeneration of the soul of man was such a mystery, what then is the incarnation of the Son of God? these are Divine and heavenly things indeed. We have here an intimation of Christ's two distinct natures in one person; his Divine nature, in that he came down from heaven; his human nature, in that he is the Son of man; and that union of those two, in that, while he is the Son of man, yet he is in heaven. 2nd. He gives them a proof of his ability to speak to them heavenly things, and to lead them into the arcanes of the kingdom of heaven, by telling them,

1. That he "came down from heaven." The intercourse settled between

dependent on locality, but that even at his incarnation he ceased not to be with the Father in eternal presence."

iii. 14. "Serpent:" for the use of this symbol by Moses two explanations have been offered—1. That the serpent (*Gen.* iii. 1) signified the power of evil; its impalement represented evil conquered. 2. That the symbol was derived from Egypt, where the serpent was worshipped as the symbol of life and health. An attempt has been made to combine both views, by taking the serpent to

signify wisdom, apart from the Divine rule, allying itself to man's lower nature, and degenerating into cunning; and its impalement to represent the same wisdom restored to the service of God, and thenceforward becoming the source of healing influence.

iii. 22. "Land of Judaea:" i.e., rural districts, in distinction from the metropolis. "Baptized:" see *chap.* iv. 2, from whence it is plain that the baptism was administered by Christ through the medium of his disciples.

God and man began above; the first motion towards it did not arise from this earth, but "came down from heaven." We love him, and send to him, because he first loved us, and sent to us. Now this speaks, 1st. Christ's Divine nature. He that came down from heaven is certainly more than a mere man; he "is the Lord from heaven," 1 Cor. xv. 47. 2nd. His intimate acquaintance with the Divine counsels; for, coming from the court of heaven, he had been from eternity conversant with them. 3rd. It speaks God manifest. Under the Old Testament, God's favours to his people are expressed by his hearing from heaven, 2 Chr. vii. 14; looking from heaven, Ps. lxxx. 14; speaking from heaven, Neh. ix. 13; sending from heaven, Ps. lviii. 3; but the New Testament shews us God coming down from heaven to teach and save us. That he thus descended is an admirable mystery, for the Godhead cannot change places, nor did he bring his body from heaven; but that he thus condescended for our redemption is a more admirable mercy; herein he commended his love.

2. That he is "the Son of man," that Son of man spoken of by Daniel, Dan. vii. 13, by which the Jews always understand to be meant the Messiah. Christ in calling himself the Son of man, shews that he is the second Adam; for the first Adam was the father of man. And of all the Old Testament titles of the Messiah, he chose to make use of this, because it was the most expressive of his humility, and most agreeable to his present state of humiliation.

3. That he "is in heaven." Now at this time, when he is talking with Nicodemus on earth, yet, as God, he is in heaven; the Son of man, as such, was not in heaven till his ascension; but he that was the Son of man, by his Divine nature, was now every where present, and particularly in heaven. Thus the Lord of glory, as such, could not be crucified, nor God, as such, shed his blood, yet that person who was the Lord of glory was crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 8; and God purchased the church with his own blood, Acts xx. 28; so close is the union of the two natures in one person, that there is a communication of properties. He doth not say, *ὁ θεός*, but *ὁ υἱὸς ἐν τῷ ὁπαύῳ*. God is the *ὁ υἱός*—He that is; and heaven is the habitation of his holiness.

III. Christ here discourseth of the great design of his own coming into the world, and the happiness of those that believe in him, ver. 14–18. Here we have the very marrow and quintessence of the whole Gospel; that faithful saying, 1 Tim. i. 15, that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the children of men from death, and recover them to life. Now sinners are dead men upon a twofold account. 1. As one that is mortally wounded, or sick of an incurable disease, is said to be a dead man, for he is dying; and so Christ came to save us, by healing us, as the brazen serpent healed the Israelites, ver. 14, 15. 2. As one that is justly condemned to die for an unpardonable crime is a dead man, he is dead in law; and in reference to this part of our danger, Christ came to save as a prince or judge, publishing an act of indemnity, or general pardon under certain provisos; this saving here is opposed to condemning, ver. 16–18.

First. *Jesus Christ came to save us, by healing us*, as the children of Israel that were stung with fiery serpents, were cured, and lived, by looking up to the brazen serpent; we have the story of it, Num. xxi. 6–9. It was the last miracle that past through the hand of Moses before his death. Now in this type of Christ we may observe,

1. The deadly and destructive nature of sin, that is implied here. The guilt of sin is like the pain of the biting of a fiery serpent; the power of corruption is like the venom diffused thereby. The devil is the old serpent, subtle at first, Gen. iii. 1, but ever since fiery, and his temptations fiery darts; his assaults terrifying, his victories destroying. Ask awakened consciences, ask damned sinners, and they will tell you, how charming soever the allurements of sin are, "at the last it bites like a serpent," Pr. xxiii. 30, 31. God's wrath against us for sin, is as those fiery serpents which God sent among the people to punish them for their murmurings. The curses of the law are as fiery serpents, so are all the tokens of Divine wrath.

2. The powerful remedy provided against this fatal malady. The case of poor sinners is deplorable, but is it desperate? Thanks be to God it is not; there is balm in Gilead. The Son of man is lifted up, as the serpent of brass was by Moses, which cured the stung Israelites. 1st. It was a serpent of brass that cured them. Brass is bright; we read of Christ's feet shining like brass, Rev. i. 15. It is durable; Christ is the same. It was made in the shape of a fiery serpent, and yet had no poison, no sting; fitly representing Christ, who was "made sin for us," and yet knew no sin; was "made in the likeness of sinful flesh," and yet not sinful; as harmless as a serpent of brass. The serpent was a cursed creature; Christ was made a curse. That which cured them minded them of their plague; so in Christ sin is set before us most fiery and formidable. 2nd. It was lifted up upon a pole, and so must the Son of man be lifted up; thus it behoved him, Lu. xxiv. 26, 46. No remedy now. Christ is lifted up. First. In his crucifixion; he was lifted up upon the cross. His death is called his being lifted up, ch. xii. 32, 33; he was lifted up as a spectacle, as a mark; lifted up between heaven and earth, as if he had been unworthy of either, and abandoned by both. Secondly. In his exaltation; he was lifted up to the Father's right hand to give repentance and remission; he was lifted up to the cross, to be farther lifted up to the crown. Thirdly. In the publishing and preaching of his everlasting Gospel, Rev. xiv. 6. The serpent was lifted up that all the thousands of Israel might see it, Christ in the Gospel is exhibited to us, evidently set forth; Christ is lifted up as an ensign, Isa. xi. 10. 3rd. It was lifted up by Moses; Christ was made under the law of Moses, and Moses testified of him. 4th. Being thus lifted up, it was appointed for the cure of those that were bitten by fiery serpents; he that sent the plague provided the remedy; none could redeem and save us but he whose justice had condemned us. It was God himself that found the ransom, and the efficacy of it depends upon his appointment. The fiery serpents were sent to punish them for their tempting Christ, so the apostle saith, 1 Cor. x. 9, and yet they were healed by virtue derived from him. He whom we have offended is our peace.

3. The way of applying this remedy, and that is, by believing; which plainly alludes to the Israelites' looking up to the brazen serpent in order to their being healed by it. If any stung Israelite was either so little sensible of his pain and peril, or had so little confidence in the word of Moses, as not to look up to the brazen serpent, justly did he die of his wound; but every one that looked up to it did well, Num. xxi. 9. If any so far slight either their disease by sin, or the method of cure by Christ, as not to embrace Christ upon his own terms, their blood is upon their own head; he hath said, Look, and be saved, Isa. xlv. 22; look and live. We must take a complacency in, and give consent to, the methods which Infinite Wisdom has taken of saving a guilty world, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, as the great sacrifice and intercessor.

4. The great encouragements given us by faith to look up to him: 1st. It was for this end that he was lifted up, that his followers might be saved; and he will pursue his end. 2nd. The offer that is made of salvation by him is general, that whosoever believes in him, without exception, might have benefit by him. 3rd. The salvation offered is complete. First. "They shall not perish," shall not die of their wounds, though they may be pained, and ill-frightened; iniquity shall not be their ruin. But that is not all, Secondly. They shall "have eternal life." They shall not only not die of their wound in the wilderness, but they shall reach Canaan, (which they were then just ready to enter into,) they shall enjoy the promised rest.

Secondly. *Jesus Christ came to save us by pardoning us*, that we might not

die by the sentence of the law, ver. 16, 17. Here is Gospel indeed, good news, the best that ever came from heaven to earth: here is much, here is all in a little; the word of reconciliation in miniature.

1. Here is God's love in giving his Son for the world, ver. 16; where we have three things:

1st. The great Gospel mystery revealed: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." The love of God the Father, is the original of our regeneration by the Spirit, and our reconciliation by the lifting up of the Son. Note, First. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. This magnifies his love in giving him for us, in giving him to us: now know we that he loves us, when he has given his only begotten Son for us; which speaks not only his dignity in himself, but his cleanness to his Father; he was always his delight. Secondly. In order to the redemption and salvation of man, it pleased God to give his only begotten Son. He not only gave him, that is, sent him into the world, with full and ample power to negotiate a peace between heaven and earth, but he gave him, that is, he gave him up, to suffer and die for us, as the great propitiation, or expiatory sacrifice. It comes in here as a reason why he must be lifted up, for so it was determined and designed by the Father, who gave him for this purpose, and prepared him a body in order to it. His enemies could not have taken him, if his Father had not given him. Though he was not yet crucified, yet in the determinate counsel of God he was given up, Acts ii. 23. Nay farther, God hath given him, that is, he hath made an offer of him to all, and given him to all true believers, to all the intents and purposes of the new covenant. He has given him to be our prophet, a witness to the people; the high priest of our profession; to be our peace; to be head of the church, and head over all things to the church; to be to us all we need. Thirdly. Herein God has commended his love to the world; "God so loved the world," so really, so richly. Now his creatures shall see that he loves them, and wishes them well; so loved the world of fallen man, as he did not love that of fallen angels; see Rom. v. 8; 1 Jno. iv. 10. Behold and wonder, that the great God should love such a worthless world! That the holy God should love such a wicked world, with a love of good will, when he could not look upon it with any complacency! This was a time of love indeed, Eze. xvi. 6, 8. The Jews vainly conceived that the Messiah should be sent only in love to their nation, and to advance that upon the ruins of their neighbours; but Christ tells them he came in love to the whole world, Gentiles as well as Jews, 1 Jno. ii. 2. Though many of the world of mankind perish, yet God's giving his only begotten Son was an instance of his love to the whole world, because through him there is a general offer of life and salvation made to all. It is love to the revolted, rebellious province, to issue out a proclamation of pardon and indemnity to all that will come in, to plead it upon their knees, and return to their allegiance. So far God loved the apostate, lapsed world, that he sent his Son with this fair proposal, "That whosoever believeth in him," one or other, "shall not perish." Salvation has been of the Jews; but now Christ is known for salvation to the ends of the earth; a common salvation.

2nd. Here is the great Gospel duty, and that is, to believe in Jesus Christ, whom God hath thus given, given for us, given to us. To accept the gift, and answer the intention of the Giver, we must yield an unfeigned assent and consent to the record God hath given in his Word concerning his Son. God having given him to us to be our Prophet, Priest, and King, we must give up ourselves to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him.

3rd. Here is the great Gospel benefit, that whosoever believes in Christ, shall not perish; this he had said before, and here repeats it. It is the unspeakable happiness of all true believers, which they are eternally indebted to Christ for. First. That they are saved from the miseries of hell, delivered from going down to the pit, they shall not perish. God has taken away their sin, they shall not die; a pardon is purchased, and so the attainder is reversed. Secondly. They are entitled to the joys of heaven, they shall have everlasting life. The convicted traitor is not only pardoned, but preferred, and made a favourite, and treated as one whom the King of kings delights to honour. Out of prison he cometh to reign, Eccl. iv. 14. If believers, then children; and if children, then heirs.

2. Here is God's design in sending his Son into the world; it was, "that the world through him might be saved." He came into the world with salvation in his eye, with salvation in his hand. Therefore the aforementioned offer of life and salvation is sincere, and shall be made good to all that by faith accept it; ver. 47, "God sent his Son into the world," this guilty, rebellious, apostate world; sent him as his agent, or ambassador, not as sometimes he had sent angels into the world as visitants, but as resident. Ever since man sinned he has dreaded the approach and appearance of any special messenger from heaven, as being conscious of guilt, and looking for judgment; "we shall surely die, for we have seen God." If therefore the Son of God himself come, we are concerned to inquire on what errand he comes, "Is it peace?" or, as they asked Samuel, trembling, "Comest thou peaceably?" And this Scripture returns the answer, "Peaceably."

1st. He did not come to condemn the world; we had reason enough to expect he should, for it is a guilty world; it is convicted, and what cause can be shewn why judgment should not be given, and execution awarded according to law? That one blood of which all nations of men are made, Acts xvii. 26, is not only tainted with an hereditary disease, like Gehazi's leprosy, but it is attainted with an hereditary guilt, like that of the Amalekites, with whom God had war from generation to generation; and justly may such a world as this be condemned: and if God would have sent to condemn it, he had angels at command to pour out the vials of his wrath; a cherubim with a flaming sword ready to do execution. "If the Lord had been pleased to kill us," he would not have sent his Son among us; He came with full powers indeed to execute judgment, ch. v. 22–27; but did not begin with a judgment of condemnation, did not proceed upon the outlawry, nor take advantage against us for the breach of the covenant of innocency, but puts us upon a new trial before a throne of grace.

2nd. He came "that the world through him might be saved;" that a door of salvation might be opened to the world, and whoever would might enter in by it. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself," and so saving it. An act of indemnity is passed and published, through Christ a remedial law made; and the world of mankind dealt with, not according to the rigours of the first covenant, but according to the riches of the second. "That the world through him might be saved," for it could never be saved but through him; there is not salvation in any other. This is good news to a convicted conscience; healing to broken bones, and bleeding wounds, that Christ our Judge came not to condemn, but to save.

Thirdly. From all this is inferred, the happiness of true believers; ver. 18, "He that believeth on him is not condemned." Though he have been a sinner, a great sinner, and stands convicted, (*habes confitentem reum*—by his own confession;) yet upon his believing, process is stayed, judgment is arrested, and he is not condemned. This speaks more than a reprieve; he is not condemned, that is, he is acquitted; he stands upon his deliverance, as we say, and if he be not condemned, he is discharged; *ὁὐ κρίνεται*, 'he is not judged; not dealt with in strict justice according to the desert of his sins. He is accused, and he cannot plead not guilty to the indictment; but he can plead

iii. 23. "Enon," "Salim:" the exact situation of these places is uncertain. Jerome and Eusebius concur in placing Salim near the Jordan, eight Roman miles south of Scythopolis.

iii. 25. "Jews:" rather, "a Jew" (so best MSS.); one of the Jews. The precise nature of the dispute is a matter of conjecture. It seems, however, to have originated with John's disciples, and to have turned on the question of the relative values of the baptism of John and of Jesus. This appears probable from the fact that we find

John's disciples coming to him with a half-complaining announcement of the increasing following of Jesus (verse 26). The explanatory language of John confirms the supposition (verse 30).

iii. 31. Some have supposed that the verses from 31 to the end of the chapter are not the words of the Baptist, but of the Evangelist. But, as Alford says, it seems more natural to take them as containing the reasons given by the Baptist explaining why Christ must increase, while he himself decreased.

in bar, can plead a *noli prosequi* upon the indictment, as blessed Paul doth, "Who is he that condemns? it is Christ that died." He is afflicted, chastened of God, persecuted by the world, but he is not condemned. The cross perhaps lies heavy upon him, but he is saved from the curse. Condemned by the world, it may be, but not condemned with the world, *Rom. viii. 1*; *1 Cor. xi. 32*.

IV. Christ, in the close, discourseth concerning the *deplorable condition of those that persist in unbelief, and wilful ignorance*, ver. 18—21.

1. Read here the doom of those that will not believe in Christ, they are condemned already. Observe, 1st. How great the sin of unbelievers is: it is aggravated from the dignity of the person they slight; they believe not in the name of the only begotten Son of God, who is infinitely true, and deserves to be believed; infinitely good, and deserves to be embraced. God sent one to save us that was dearest to himself, and shall not he be dearest to us? Shall not we believe on his name, who has a name above every name? 2nd. How great the misery of unbelievers is; they are condemned already, which speaks, *First*. A certain condemnation; they are as sure to be condemned in the judgment of the great day, as if they were condemned already. *Secondly*. A present condemnation; the curse has already taken hold of them, the wrath of God now fastens upon them. They are condemned already, for their own hearts condemn them. *Thirdly*. A condemnation grounded upon the former guilt; he is condemned already, for he lies open to the law for all his sins; the obligation of the law is in full force, power, and virtue against him, because he is not by faith interested in the Gospel defeasance; "He is condemned already, because he has not believed." Unbelief may truly be called the great damning sin, because it leaves us under the guilt of all our other sins; it is a sin against the remedy, against our appeal.

2. Read also the doom of those that would not so much as know him, ver. 19; many inquisitive people had knowledge of Christ, and his doctrine, and miracles, but they were prejudiced against him, and would not believe in him, while the generality were sottishly careless and stupid, and would not know him. "And this is the condemnation," the sin that ruined them, "that light is come into the world, and they loved darkness rather." Now here observe,

1st. That the Gospel is light, and when the Gospel came, light came into the world. Light is self-evidencing, so is the Gospel; it proves its own Divine original. Light is discovering, and truly the light is sweet, and rejoiceth the heart. It is a light shining in a dark place, and a dark place indeed the world would be without it. It is come into all the world, *Col. i. 6*; and not confined to one corner of it, as the Old Testament light was.

2nd. It is the unspeakable folly of the most of men, that they loved darkness rather than light, rather than this light. The Jews loved the dark shadows of their law, and the instructions of their blind guides, rather than the doctrine of Christ. The Gentiles loved their superstitious services of an unknown god, whom they ignorantly worshipped, rather than the reasonable service which the Gospel enjoins. Sinners that were wedded to their lusts, loved their ignorance and mistakes, which supported them in their sins, rather than the truths of Christ, that would have parted them from their sins. Man's apostasy began in an affectation of forbidden knowledge, but is kept up by an affectation of forbidden ignorance. Wretched man is in love with his sickness, in love with his slavery; and will not be made free, will not be made whole.

3rd. The true reason why men love darkness rather than light is, "because their deeds are evil." They love darkness, because they think it is an excuse for their evil deeds; and they hate the light, because it robs them of the good opinion they had of themselves, by shewing them their sinfulness and misery. Their case is sad, and because they are resolved they will not mend it they are re-olved they will not see it.

4th. Wilful ignorance is so far from excusing sin, that it will be found at the great day to aggravate the condemnation. "This is the condemnation," this is it that ruins souls, that they shut their eyes against the light, and will not so much as admit a parley with Christ and his Gospel; they set God so much at defiance, that they desire not the knowledge of his ways, *Job xxi. 14*. We must account in the judgment, not only for the knowledge we had and used not, but for the knowledge we might have had and would not; not only for the knowledge we sinned against, but for the knowledge we sinned away.

For the farther illustration of this, he shews, ver. 20, 21, that according as men's hearts and lives are good or bad, accordingly they stand affected to the light Christ has brought into the world.

First. It is not strange, if those that do evil, and resolve to persist in it, hate the light of Christ's Gospel, for it is a common observation, that "every one that doeth evil hateth the light," ver. 20. Evil doers seek concealment, out of sense of shame, and fear of punishment; see *Job xiv. 13*, &c. Sinful works are works of darkness; sin from the first affected concealment, *Job xxxi. 33*. The light shakes the wicked, *Job xxxviii. 12, 13*. Thus the Gospel is a terror to the wicked world; "they come not to this light" but keep as far off it as they can, "lest their deeds should be reproved." Note, 1st. The light of the Gospel is sent into the world to reprove the evil deeds of sinners, to make them manifest, *Eph. v. 13*; to shew people their transgressions, to shew that to be sin which was not thought to be so; and to shew them the evil of their transgressions, that sin by the new commandment might appeatations exceeding sinful. The Gospel has its convictions to make way for its consolations. 2nd. It is for this reason that evil doers hate the light of the Gospel. There were those that had done evil, and were sorry for it, who bade this light welcome, as the publicans and harlots. But he that doth evil, that doth it and resolves to go on in it, hates the light; cannot bear to be told of his faults. All that opposition which the Gospel of Christ has met with in the world, comes from the wicked heart, influenced by the wicked one; Christ is hated, because sin is loved. 3rd. They who do not come to the light, thereby evidence a secret hatred of the light. If they had not an antipathy to saving knowledge, they would not sit down so contentedly in damning ignorance.

Secondly. On the other hand, upright hearts that approve themselves to God in their integrity, bid this light welcome; ver. 21. "He that doeth truth comes to the light." It seems then, though the Gospel had many enemies, it had some friends; it is a common observation, that truth seeks no corners. They who mean and act honestly dread not a scrutiny, but desire it rather; now this is applicable to the Gospel light, as it convinceth and terrifies evil doers, so it confirms and comforts those that walk in their integrity. Observe here,

1st. The character of a good man. First. He is one that doeth truth; that is, he acts truly and sincerely in all he doth. Though sometimes he comes short of doing good, the good he would do, yet he doeth truth; he aims honestly; he has his infirmities, but holds fast his integrity; as Gaius, that did faithfully, *3 Jno. 5*; as Paul, *2 Cor. i. 12*; as Nathanael, *ch. i. 47*; as Asa, *1 Kin. xv. 14*. Secondly. He is one that cometh to the light; he is ready to receive and entertain Divine revelation, as far as it appears to him to be so, what uneasiness soever it may create him. He that doeth truth is willing to know the truth by himself, and to have his deeds made manifest. A good man is much in trying himself, and desirous that God would try him, *Ps. xxvi. 2*. He is solicitous to know what the will of God is, and resolves to do it, though never so contrary to his own wills and interests.

2nd. Here is the character of a good work; it is wrought in God, in union with him by a covenanting faith, and in communion with him by devout affec-

tions. Our works are then good, and will bear the test when the will of God is the rule of them and the glory of God the end of them; when they are done in his strength, and for his sake, to him, and not to men. And if by the light of the Gospel it be manifest to us that our works are thus wrought, then shall we have rejoicing, *Gal. vi. 4*; *2 Cor. i. 12*.

Thus far we have Christ's discourse with Nicodemus; it is likely much more passed between them, and it had a good effect, for we find, *ch. xix. 39*, that Nicodemus, though he was puzzled at first, yet afterwards became a faithful disciple of Christ.

22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. 23 And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. 24 For John was not yet cast into prison. 25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. 26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. 27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease. 31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. 32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. 33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. 34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. 35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. 36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

In these verses we have,

First. Christ's removal into the land of Judæa, ver. 22; and there he tarried with his disciples. Observe,

1. Our Lord Jesus, after he entered upon his public work, travelled much, and removed often, as the patriarchs in their sojournings. As it was a good part of his humiliation, that he had no certain dwelling place, but was as Paul, in journeyings often, so it was an instance of his unwearied industry in the work for which he came into the world, that he went about in prosecution of it; many a weary step he took to do good to souls. This Sun of righteousness took a large circuit, to diffuse his light and heat, *Ps. xix. 6*.

2. He was not wont to stay long at Jerusalem; though he went frequently thither, yet he soon returned into the country, as here, "After these things," after he had had this discourse with Nicodemus, he came into the land of Judæa; not so much for greater privacy, (though mean and obscure places best suited the humble Jesus in his humbled state,) but for greater usefulness; his preaching and miracles perhaps made most noise at Jerusalem, the fountain head of news, but did least good there, where the topping men of the Jewish church had so much the ascendancy.

3. When he came into the land of Judæa, his disciples came with him, for these were they that continued with him in his temptations. Many that flock to him at Jerusalem would not follow his motions into the country, they had no business there, but his disciples attended him. If the ark remove, it is better remove and go after it, (as they did *Jos. iii. 3*.) than sit still without it, though it be in Jerusalem itself.

4. "There he tarried with them," *διετρεψε*; he conversed with them, discoursed with them. He did not retire into the country for his ease and pleasure, but for more free conversation with his disciples and followers; see *Cant. vii. 11, 12*. Note, Those that are ready to go with Christ, shall find him as ready to stay with them. It is supposed he now stayed five or six months in this country.

5. There he baptized; he admitted disciples, such as believed in him, and had more honesty and courage than those had at Jerusalem, *ch. ii. 24*. John began to baptize in the land of Judæa, *Mat. iii. 1*; therefore Christ began there, for John had said, "There comes one after me." He baptized not himself, with his own hand, but his disciples by his order and directions, as appears, *ch. iv. 4*.

iii. 33. "Hath set to his seal:" a thing is sealed in common life for two objects—either to render it inaccessible, and to place it under seal (*Matt. xxvii. 65*), or to confirm it; and thus there is in Scripture a double figurative and symbolical use of sealing. On the latter application of the seal, which alone can be regarded here, see the following passages: *John vi. 27*; *Rev. vii. 2*; *Rom. iv. 11*; *1 Cor. ix. 2*; *2 Cor. i. 22*; *Eph. i. 13*. In how far he who receives the testimony of Christ confirms that God is true is declared in

what follows—viz., because God is revealed in Christ, and speaks through him. According to this, he who makes Christ a liar makes God one also, who speaks through him (*1 John v. 10*).

iii. 34. "Giveth," present tense, indicates the perpetual communication of the Spirit by the Father to the Son. "Not by measure:" pointing out a distinction between all inspired human teachers and Him in whom all fulness dwells, who is essentially the Christ, the anointed, and out of whose fulness we receive a.

But his disciples' baptizing was his baptizing. Holy ordinances are Christ's, though administered by weak men.

Secondly. John's continuance in his work as long as his opportunities lasted, ver. 23, 24. Here we are told,

1. That John was baptizing; Christ's baptism was for substance the same with John's, for he bore witness to Christ, and therefore they did not at all clash or interfere with one another. But, 1st. Christ began to preach and baptize before John laid it down, that he might be ready to receive John's disciples when he should be taken off, and so the wheels might be kept a going. It is a comfort to useful men, when they are going off the stage, to see those rising up who are likely to fill up their room. 2nd. John continued to preach and baptize, though Christ had taken it up; for he would still, according to the measure given to him, advance the interests of God's kingdom. There was still work for John to do, for Christ was not yet generally known, nor the minds of people thoroughly prepared for him by repentance. From heaven John had received his command, and he would go on in his work till from thence he received his countermand, and would have his dismission from the same hand that gave him his commission. He doth not come in to Christ, lest what had formerly passed should look like a combination between them, but he goes on with his work till Providence lays him aside. The greater gifts of some do not render the labours of others that come short of them needless and useless; there is work enough for all hands. They are sullen that will sit down and do nothing when they see themselves outshone. Though we have but one talent, we must account for that; and when we see ourselves going off, yet must go on to the last.

2. That he baptized in Ænon, near Salim, places we find nowhere else mentioned, and therefore the learned are altogether at a loss where to find them; wherever it was, it seems John removed from place to place; he did not think there was any virtue in Jordan, because Jesus was baptized there, which should engage him to stay there, but, as he saw cause, removed to other waters. Ministers must follow their opportunities; and he chose a place where there was much water; ὕδατα πολλὰ, 'many waters,' that is, many streams of water; so that wherever he met with any that were willing to submit to his baptism, water was at hand to baptize them with; shallow, perhaps, as is usual where there are many brooks, but such as would serve his purpose. And in that country plenty of water was a valuable thing.

3. That thither people came to him, and were baptized. Though they did not come in such vast crowds as they did when he first appeared, yet now he was not without encouragement, but there were still those that attended and owned him. Some refer this both to John and to Jesus; "they came and were baptized," that is, some came to John, and were baptized by him; some to Jesus, and were baptized by him; and as their baptism was one, so were their hearts.

4. It is noted, ver. 4, that "John was not yet cast into prison," to clear the order of the story, and to shew that these passages related here, *ch. ii.* and *iii.*, in the harmony are to come in before *Mat. iv. 12.* John never desisted from his work as long as he had his liberty; nay, he seems to have been the more industrious because he foresaw his time was short; he was not yet cast into prison, but he expected it ere long, *ch. ix. 4.*

Thirdly. A contest between John's disciples and the Jews about purifying, ver. 25. See how the Gospel of Christ came not to send peace upon earth, but division. Observe,

1. Who were the disputants; some of John's disciples, and the Jews who had not submitted to his baptism of repentance. Penitents and impenitents divide this sinful world. In this contest, it should seem, John's disciples were the aggressors, and gave the challenge; and it is a sign they were novices that had more zeal than discretion. The truths of God have often suffered by the rashness of some that have undertaken to defend them before they were able to do so.

2. What was the matter in dispute; about purifying, about religious washing. 1st. We may suppose that John's disciples cried up his baptism, his purifying, as *instar omnium*, 'superior to all others,' and gave the preference to that as perfecting and superseding all the purifications of the Jews; and they were in the right; but young converts are too apt to boast of their attainments, whereas he that has found the treasure should hide it till he is sure he has it, and not talk of it too much at first. 2nd. No doubt but the Jews, with as much assurance, applauded the purifications that were in use among them, both those that were instituted by the law of Moses, and those that were imposed by the tradition of the elders; for the former they had a Divine warrant, and for the latter the usage of the church. Now it is very likely that the Jews in this dispute, when they could not deny the excellent nature and design of John's baptism, raised an objection against it from Christ's baptism, which gave occasion for the complaint that follows here, ver. 26. Here is John baptizing in one place, say they, and Jesus at the same time baptizing in another place; and therefore John's baptism, which his disciples so much applaud, is either, *First*, Dangerous, and of ill consequence to the peace of the church and state, for you see it opens a door to endless parties. Now John has begun, we shall have every little teacher set up for a baptist presently. Or, *Secondly*, That, at the best, it was defective and imperfect. If John's baptism, which you cry up thus, have any good in it, yonder is the baptism of Jesus goes beyond it; so that, for your parts, you are shaded already by a greater light, and your baptism is soon gone out of request. Thus objections are made against the Gospel from the advancement and improvement of gospel light, as if childhood and manhood were contrary to each other, and the superstructure were against the foundation. There was no reason to object Christ's baptism against John's, for they consisted very well together.

Fourthly. A complaint which John's disciples made to their master concerning Christ and his baptism, ver. 26. They, being nonplussed by the forementioned objection, and probably ruffled, and put into a heat by it, come to their master, and tell him, "Rabbi, he that was with thee," and was baptized of thee, is now set up for himself; he "baptizeth, and all men come to him," and wilt thou suffer it? Their itch of disputing occasioned this. It is common for men, when they find themselves run aground in the heat of disputation, to fall foul upon those that do them no harm. If these disciples of John had not undertaken to dispute about purifying before they understood the doctrine of baptism, they might have answered the objection without being put into a passion. In their complaint they speak respectfully to their own master, "Rabbi"; but speak very slightly of our Saviour, though they do not name him.

1. They suggest that Christ's setting up a baptism of his own was a piece of presumption, very unaccountable; as if John, having first set up this rite of baptizing, he must have the monopoly of it, and as it were a patent for the invention. "He that was with thee beyond Jordan," as a disciple of thine, "behold" and wonder, "the same," the very same, "baptizeth," and takes thy work out of thy hand. Thus the voluntary condescensions of the Lord Jesus, as that of his being baptized by John, are often unjustly and very unkindly turned to his reproach.

2. They suggest that it was a piece of ingratitude to John. He "to whom thou hast witness" baptizeth; as if Jesus owed all his reputation to the honourable character John gave of him, and yet had very unworthily improved

it to the prejudice of John. But Christ needed not John's testimony, *ch. v. 36.* He reflected more honour upon John than he received from him; yet thus it is incident to us to think that others are more indebted to us than really they are. And besides, Christ's baptism was not in the least an impeachment, but indeed the greatest improvement of John's baptism, which was but to lead the way to Christ's. John was just to Christ in bearing witness to him, and Christ's answering his testimony did rather enrich than impoverish John's ministry.

3. They conclude that it would be a total eclipse to John's baptism, for "all men come to him;" they that used to follow with us now flock after him; it is therefore time for us to look about us. It was not indeed strange that "all men came to him." As far as Christ is manifested he will be magnified; but why should John's disciples grieve at that? Note, Aiming at the monopoly of honour and respect has been in all ages the bane of the church, and the shame of its members and ministers; as also a vieing of interests, and a jealousy of rivalry and competition. We mistake if we think that the excelling gifts, and graces, and labours, and usefulness, of one, is a diminution and disparagement to another that has obtained mercy to be faithful; for the Spirit is a free agent, dispensing to every one severally as he will. Paul rejoiced in the usefulness even of those that opposed him, *Phil. i. 18.* We must leave it to God to choose, employ, and honour his own instruments as he pleaseth, and not covet to be placed alone.

Fifthly. Here is John's answer to this complaint which his disciples made, ver. 28, &c. His disciples expected he should have resented this matter as they did; but Christ's manifestation to Israel was no surprise to John, but what he looked for; it was no disturbance to him, but what he wished for. He therefore checked the complaint, as Moses, "Enviest thou for my sake?" and took this occasion to confirm the testimonies he had formerly borne to Christ as superior to him, cheerfully consigning and turning over to him all the interest he had in Israel. In this discourse here, the first minister of the Gospel (for so John was) is an excellent pattern to all ministers to humble themselves and to exalt the Lord Jesus.

1. John here abaseth himself in comparison with Christ, ver. 27–30. The more others magnify us, the more we must humble ourselves; and fortify ourselves against the temptation of flattery and applause, and the jealousy of our friends for our honour, by remembering our place and what we are, *1 Cor. iii. 5.*

1. John acquiesceth in the Divine disposal, and satisfieth himself with that; ver. 27, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven," whence every good gift comes, *Jas. i. 18*, a general truth very applicable in this case. Different employments are according to the direction of Divine providence; different endowments according to the distribution of the Divine grace. No man can take any true honour to himself, *Heb. v. 4.* We have as necessary and constant a dependence upon the grace of God in all the motions and actions of the spiritual life, as we have upon the providence of God for all the motions and actions of the natural life. Now this comes in here as a reason,

1st. Why we should not envy those that have a larger share of gifts than we have, or move in a larger sphere of usefulness. John minds his disciples that Jesus had not thus excelled him, except he had received it from heaven, for as man and Mediator he received gifts; and if God gave him the Spirit without measure, ver. 34, shall they grudge at it? The same reason will hold as to others. If God is pleased to give to others more ability and success than to us, shall we be displeased at it, and reflect upon him as unjust, unwise, and partial? see *Mat. xx. 15.*

2nd. Why we should not be discontented, though we be inferior to others in gifts and usefulness, and be eclipsed by their excellences. John was ready to own that it was the gift, the free gift of Heaven, that made him a preacher, a prophet, a baptist; it was God that gave him the interest he had in the love and esteem of the people; and if now his interest decline, God's will be done! He that gives may take. What we receive from Heaven we must take as it is given. Now John never received a commission for a standing, perpetual office, but only for a temporary one, which must soon expire; and therefore when he has fulfilled his ministry, he can contentedly see it go out of date. Some give quite another sense of these words; John had taken pains with his disciples to teach them the reference which his baptism had to Christ, who should come after him, and yet be preferred before him, and do that for them which he could not do; and yet after all they dote upon John, and grudge this preference of Christ above him. Well, saith John, I see "a man can receive," that is, perceive, "nothing, except it be given him from heaven." The labours of ministers is all lost labour, unless the grace of God make it effectual. Men do not understand that which is made most plain, nor believe that which is made most evident, unless it be given them from heaven to understand and believe it.

2. John appeals to the testimony he had formerly given concerning Christ, ver. 18; You can bear me witness that I said again and again, "I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him." See how steady and constant John was in his testimony to Christ, and not as "a reed shaken with the wind;" neither the frowns of the chief priests, nor the flatteries of his own disciples, could make him change his note. Now this serves here,

1st. As a conviction to his disciples of the unreasonableness of their complaint. They had spoken of the witness which their master bore to Jesus, ver. 26. "Now," saith John, "do not you remember what the testimony was that I did bear? Call that to mind, and you will see your own civil answered. Did I not say, "I am not the Christ?" why then do you set me up as a rival with him that is? Did I not say, "I am sent before him?" why then doth it seem strange to you that I should stand by and give way to him?"

2nd. It is a comfort to himself that he had never given his disciples any occasion thus to set him up in competition with Christ; but, on the contrary, had particularly cautioned them against this mistake, though he might have made a hand of it for himself. It is a satisfaction to faithful ministers, if they have done what they could in their places, to prevent any extravagances that their people ran into. John had not only not encouraged them to hope that he was the Messiah, but had plainly told them the contrary, which was now a satisfaction to him. It is a common excuse for those who have undue honour paid them, *Si populus vult decipi, decipiat.* "If the people will be deceived, let them;" but that is an ill maxim for them to go by whose business it is to undeceive people. "The lip of truth shall be established."

3. John professeth the great satisfaction he had in the advancement of Christ and his interest. He was so far from regretting it, as his disciples did, that he rejoiced in it. This he expresseth, ver. 29, by an elegant similitude.

1st. He compares our Saviour to the bridegroom: "He that has the bride is the bridegroom." Do all men come to him? It is well; whether else should they go? Has he got the throne in men's affections? who else should have it? It is his right; to whom should the bride be brought but to the bridegroom? Christ was prophesied of in the Old Testament as a bridegroom, *Ps. xlv.*; "the Word was made flesh, that the disparity of nature might not be a bar to the match; provision is made for the purifying of the church, that the defilement of sin might be no bar; Christ espouseth his church to himself; he has the bride, for he has her love: he has her promise, the church is subject to Christ

iv. 1. "When the Lord knew," &c.: it would appear that the increasing popularity of Christ had occasioned great jealousy on the part of the Pharisees. Perhaps signs of a persecuting spirit had shown themselves among them. If this be so, it lends some probability to the opinion of those who hold that John the Baptist was about this time cast into prison.

iv. 4. "Samaria:" i.e., the whole district, for the city does not appear to be mentioned in the New Testament. The only passage

which seems to do so (*Acts viii. 5*), should be translated "a city of Samaria."

iv. 5. "Sychar:" named here only. Generally believed to be a name applied to the town of Shechem, distant upwards of thirty miles from Jerusalem, and afterwards called Neapolis, or Nablous.

iv. 6. "Jacob's well:" not mentioned in the Old Testament, but it was the custom of the patriarchs to dig wells (see *Gen. xxi., xxvi*). The object of digging a well in a neighbourhood so abundantly

As far as particular souls are devoted to him in faith and love, so far the bridegroom has the bride.

2nd. He compares himself to "the friend of the bridegroom," who attends upon him to do him honour and service, assists him in prosecuting the match, speaks a good word for him, useth his interest on his behalf, rejoiceth when the match goes on, and most of all when the point is gained, and he hath the bride. All that John had done in preaching and baptizing was to introduce him, and now He was come, he had what he wished for. "The friend of the bridegroom stands and hears him," stands expecting him, and waiting for him; "rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom's voice," because he is come to the marriage after he had been long expected. Note, *First*, Faithful ministers are friends of the bridegroom, to recommend him to the affections and choice of the children of men; to bring letters and messages from him, for he courts by proxy; and herein they must be faithful to him. *Secondly*, The friends of the bridegroom must stand and hear the bridegroom's voice, must receive instructions from him, and attend his orders; must desire to have proofs of Christ's speaking in them and with them, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 3; that is the bridegroom's voice. *Thirdly*, The espousing of souls to Jesus Christ in faith and love, is the fulfilling of the joy of every good minister. If the day of Christ's espousals be the day of the gladness of his heart, *Cant.* iii. 11, it cannot but be theirs too, who love him, and wish well to his honour and kingdom. Surely they have no greater joy.

4. He owns it highly fit and necessary that the reputation and interest of Christ should be advanced and his own diminished; ver. 30. "He must increase, but I must decrease." If they grieve at the growing greatness of the Lord Jesus, they will have more and more occasion to grieve, as they have that indulge themselves in envy and emulation. John speaks of Christ's increase and his own decrease, not only as necessary and unavoidable, which could not be helped, and therefore must be borne, but as highly just and agreeable, and is entirely satisfied in it. 1st. He was well pleased to see the kingdom of Christ getting ground. "He must increase." You think he has gained a deal, but it is nothing to what he will gain. Note, The kingdom of Christ is and will be a growing kingdom, like the light of the morning, like the grain of mustard seed. 2nd. He was not at all displeased that the effect of this was the diminishing of his own interest: "I must decrease." Created excellences are under this law, they must decrease; "I have seen an end of all perfection." Note, *First*, The shining forth of the glory of Christ eclipseth the lustre of all other glory. The glory that stands in competition with Christ, that of the world and the flesh, decreaseth and loseth ground in the soul, as the knowledge and love of Christ increase and get ground; but it is here spoken of that which is subservient to him. As the light of the morning increaseth that of the morning star decreaseth. *Secondly*, If our diminution and abasement may but in the least contribute to the advancement of Christ's name, we must cheerfully submit to it, and be content to be any thing, to be nothing, so that Christ may be all.

11. John Baptist here advanceth Christ, and instructs his disciples concerning him, that they might be so far from grieving that so many come to him, that they might come to him themselves.

1. He instructs them concerning the dignity of Christ's person; ver. 31, "He that cometh from above," that "cometh from heaven, is above all." Here, 1st. He supposeth his Divine original,—that he came from above, from heaven, which speaks not only his Divine extraction, but his Divine nature. He had a being before his conception, a heavenly being. None but he that came from heaven was fit to shew us the will of Heaven or the way to heaven. When God would save man he sent from above. 2nd. Hence he infers his sovereign authority,—he is above all; above all things, and all persons. "God over all, blessed for evermore." It is daring presumption to dispute precedence with him. When we come to speak of the honours of the Lord Jesus, we find they transcend all conception and expression, and we can say but this, He is above all. It was said of John Baptist, "There is not a greater among them that are born of women," but the descent of Christ from heaven put such a dignity upon him as he was not divested of by his being made flesh; still he was above all.

This he farther illustrates by the meanness of those who stood in competition with him, "He that is of the earth is earthly," *ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐστίν*, "he that is of the earth is of the earth," he that has his original of the earth, has his food out of the earth, has his converse with earthly things, and his concern is for them. Note, *First*, Man has his rise out of the earth; not only Adam at first, but we also still are formed out of the clay, *Job* xxxiii. 6. Look to the rock whence we were hewn. *Secondly*, Man's constitution is therefore earthly; not only his body frail and mortal, but his soul corrupt and carnal, and its bent and bias strong towards earthly things. The prophets and apostles were of the same mould with other men; they were but earthen vessels, though they had a rich treasure lodged in them; and shall these be set up as rivals with Christ? "Let the pottersherds strive with the pottersherds of the earth," but let them not cope with him that came from heaven.

2. Concerning the excellency and certainty of his doctrine. His disciples were displeased that Christ's preaching was admired and attended upon more than his; but he tells them there was reason enough for it; for,

1st. He for his part spoke of the earth, and so do all those that are of the earth. The prophets were men, and spoke like men; of themselves they could not speak, but of the earth, 2 *Cor.* iii. 5. The preaching of the prophets and of John was but low and flat compared with Christ's preaching; as heaven is high above the earth, so were his thoughts above theirs. By them God spoke on earth, but in Christ he speaketh from heaven.

2nd. But he that cometh from heaven is not only in his person, but in his doctrine, above all the prophets that ever lived on earth; none teacheth like him. The doctrine of Christ is here recommended to us,

First, As infallibly sure and certain, and to be entertained accordingly; ver. 32, "what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth." See here, 1st. Christ's Divine knowledge; he testified nothing but "what he had seen and heard," what he was perfectly apprized of, and thoroughly acquainted with. What he discovered of the Divine nature, and of the invisible world, was what he had seen; what he revealed of the mind of God, was what he had heard immediately from him, and not at second-hand. The prophets testified what was made known to them in dreams and visions, by the mediation of angels, but not what they had seen and heard. John was the crier's voice, that said, Make room for the witness, and keep silence, while the charge is given, but then leaves it to the witness to give in his testimony himself, and the judge to give the charge himself. The Gospel of Christ is not a doubtful opinion, like an hypothesis or new notion in philosophy, which every one is at liberty to believe or not; but it is a revelation of the mind of God, which is of eternal truth in itself, and of infinite concern to us. 2nd. His Divine grace and goodness; that which he had seen and heard, because he knew it nearly concerned us, he was pleased to make known to us. What Paul had seen and heard in the third heavens he could not testify, 2 *Cor.* xii. 4; but Christ knew how to utter what he had seen and heard. Christ's preaching is here called his testifying, to note, *First*, The convincing evidence of it; it was not reported, as news, by hearsay, but it was testified as evidence given in court, with great caution and assurance. *Secondly*, The affectionate earnestness of the delivery of it; it was testified with concern and importunity, as *Acts* xviii. 5.

From the certainty of Christ's doctrine John takes occasion, 1. To lament the infidelity of the most of men; though he testifies what is infallibly true, yet "no man receiveth his testimony;" that is, very few, next none, none in comparison with those that refuse it. They receive it not, they will not hear it; they do not heed it, or give credit to it. This he speaks of, not only as matter of wonder that such a testimony should not be received,—who hath believed our report? how stupid and foolish is the greatest part of mankind, what enemies to themselves!—but as a matter of grief; John's disciples grieved that all men came to Christ, ver. 26; they thought his followers too many. But John grieves that no man came to him, he thought them too few. Note, The unbelief of sinners is the grief of saints. It was for this that St. Paul had great heaviness, *Rom.* ix. 2. 2. He takes occasion to commend the faith of the chosen remnant; ver. 37, "He that hath received his testimony" (and some such there were, though very few), "hath set to his seal that God is true." God is true, though we do not set our seal to it; "let God be true, and every man a liar." His truth needs not our faith to support it; but by faith we do ourselves the honour and justice to subscribe to his truth, and hereby God reckons himself honoured. God's promises are all yea and amen; by faith we put our amen to them; as *Rev.* xii. 20. Observe, He that receives the testimony of Christ, subscribes not only to the truth of Christ, but to the truth of God; for his name is the Word of God; the commandments of God, and the testimony of Christ, are put together, *Rev.* xii. 17. By believing in Christ we set to our seal, 1st. That God is true to all the promises which he has made concerning Christ, that which he spake by the mouth of all his holy prophets; what he sware to our fathers is all accomplished, and not one iota or tittle of it fallen to the ground, *Lu.* i. 70, &c.; *Acts* xiii. 32, 33. 2nd. That he is true to all the promises he has made in Christ; we venture our souls upon God's veracity, being satisfied that he is true, we are willing to deal with him upon trust, and to quit all in this world for a happiness in reversion, and out of sight. By this we greatly honour God's faithfulness. Whom we give credit to, we give honour to.

Secondly, It is recommended to us as a Divine doctrine; not his own, but his that sent him, ver. 39; "for he whom God hath sent, speaks the word of God," which he was sent to speak, and enabled to speak, "for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." The prophets were as messengers that brought letters from heaven; but Christ came under the character of an ambassador, and treats with us as such; for, 1st. He spoke the words of God, and nothing he said savoured of human infirmity; both substance and language were divine. He proved himself sent of God, *ch.* iii. 1; and therefore his words are to be received as the words of God. By this rule we may try the spirits; those that speak as the oracles of God, and prophesy according to the proportion of faith, are to be received as sent of God. 2nd. He spoke so as no other prophet did; "for God giveth not the Spirit by measure to him." None can speak the words of God, without the Spirit of God, 1 *Cor.* ii. 10, 11. The Old Testament prophets had the Spirit, and in different degrees, 2 *Kin.* ii. 9, 10; but whereas God gave them the Spirit by measure, 1 *Cor.* xii. 4, he gave him to Christ without measure; all fulness dwelt in him, the fulness of the Godhead, an unmeasurable fulness. The Spirit was not in Christ as in a vessel, but as in a fountain, as in a bottomless ocean. "The prophets that had the Spirit in a limited manner, only with respect to some particular revelation, sometimes spake of themselves; but he that had the Spirit always residing in him without stint, always spake the words of God;" so Dr. Whitby.

3. Concerning the power and authority he is invested with, which gives him the pre-eminence above all others, and a more excellent name than they.

1st. He is the beloved Son of the Father, ver. 35: "the Father loveth the Son." The prophets were faithful as servants, but Christ as a Son; they were employed as servants, but Christ beloved as a Son, always his delight, *Pr.* viii. 30. The Father was well pleased in him; not only he did love him, but he doth love him; he continued his love to him even in his estate of humiliation, loved him never the less for his poverty and sufferings.

2nd. He is Lord of all. The Father, as an evidence of his love to him, "hath given all things into his hand." Love is generous. The Father took such a complacency, and had such a confidence in him, that he constituted him the great feoffee in trust for mankind. Having given him the Spirit without measure, he gave him all things; for he was thereby qualified to be master and manager of all. Note, It is the honour of Christ, and the unspeakable comfort of all Christians, that the Father hath given all things into the hand of the Mediator. *First*, All power; so it is explained, *Mat.* xxviii. 18. All the works of creation being put under his feet, all the affairs of redemption are put into his hand; he is Lord of all. Angels are his servants, devils are his captives. He has power over all flesh; the heathen given him for his inheritance. The kingdom of providence is committed to his administration. He has power to settle the terms of the covenant of peace, as the great plenipotentiary; to govern his church, as the great lawgiver; to dispense Divine favours, as the great almoner; and to call all to account, as the great judge. Both the golden sceptre and the iron rod are given into his hand. *Secondly*, All grace is given into his hand, as the channel of conveyance; all things, that is, all those good things which God intended to give to the children of men—eternal life, and all its preliminaries. We are unworthy that the Father should give those things into our hands, for we have made ourselves the children of his wrath; he hath therefore appointed the Son of his love to be trustee for us; and the things he intended for us, he gives into his hands, who is worthy, and has merited both honours for himself, and favours for us. They are given into his hands, by him to be given into ours. This is a great encouragement to faith, that the riches of the new covenant are deposited in so sure, so kind, so good a hand, the hand of him that purchased them for us, and us for himself; who is able to keep all that which both God and believers have agreed to commit to him.

3rd. He is the object of that faith which is made the great condition of eternal happiness; and herein he has the pre-eminence above all others, ver. 36: "He that believeth on the Son hath life." We have here the application of what he had said concerning Christ and his doctrine; and it is the conclusion of the whole matter. If God has put this honour upon the Son, we must, by faith, give honour to him. As God offers and conveys good things to us by the testimony of Jesus Christ, whose word is the vehicle of Divine favours, so we receive and partake of those favours, by believing the testimony, and entertaining that word as true and good; this way of receiving fitly answers that way of giving. We have here the sum of that Gospel, which is to be preached to every creature, *Mar.* xvi. 16. Here is,

First, The blessed state of all true Christians: "He that believes on the Son hath everlasting life." Note, 1st. It is the character of every true Christian, that he believes on the Son of God; not only believes him, that what he saith is true, but believes on him, consents to him, and confides in him. 2nd. The benefit of true Christianity is no less than everlasting life; that is it which Christ came to purchase for us, and confer upon us; it can be no less than the happiness of an immortal soul in an immortal God. 3rd. True believers, even now, have everlasting life; not only they shall have it hereafter, but they have it now. For, *First*, They have very good security for it. The deed by which it passeth, is sealed and delivered to them, and so they have it; it is put into

supplied with water was in all probability to secure an independent supply. Robinson says, "The well lay apparently before the city, and at some distance from it. In passing along the Eastern plain, Jesus had halted at the well, and sent his disciples to the city, situated in the narrow valley, intending on their return to proceed along the plain on his way to Galilee, without himself visiting the city." "Sixth hour;" mid-day.

iv. 9. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans;" rather

omit the article before Jews and Samaritans. This is the language of the evangelist, explaining the words of the woman. On the animosity between Jews and Samaritans, it must be borne in mind that when Israel was carried away captive, other nations were placed in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel (2 *Kings* xvii. 23, 24). It would seem that these new Samaritans were Assyrians by birth or subjugation, and were utterly strangers in the cities of Samaria. They were regarded as an alien race by the Jews, who

the hands of their guardian for them, and so they have it, though the use be not yet transferred into possession. They have the Son of God, and in him they have life, and the Spirit of God the earnest of this life. Secondly. They have the comfortable foretastes of it, in present communion with God, and the tokens of his love. Grace is glory begun.

Secondly. The wretched and miserable condition of unbelievers: "he that believeth not the Son" is undone, *ἀπολλύται*. The word includes both incredulity and disobedience. An unbeliever is one that gives not credit to the doctrine of Christ, nor is in subjection to the government of Christ. Now, those that will neither be taught nor ruled by Christ, 1st. They cannot be happy in this world, or that to come; "he shall not see life," that life which Christ came to bestow. He shall not enjoy it, he shall not have any comfortable prospect of it, shall never come within ken of it, except to aggravate his loss of it. 2nd. They cannot but be miserable; the wrath of God abides upon an unbeliever. He is not only under the wrath of God, which is as surely the soul's death, as his favour is its life; but it abides upon him. All the wrath he has made himself liable to by the violation of the law, if not removed by the grace of the Gospel, is bound upon him. God's wrath for his daily actual transgressions lights and lies upon him. Old scores lie undischarged, and new ones added; something done every day to fill the measure, and nothing to empty it. Thus the wrath of God abides, for it is treasured up against the day of wrath.

CHAPTER IV.

It was more than any thing else the glory of the land of Israel, that it was Emmanuel's land, *Isa. viii. 9*, not only the place of his birth, but the scene of his preaching and miracles. This land, in our Saviour's time, was divided into three parts: Judæa in the south, Galilee in the north, and Samaria lying between them. Now in this chapter we have Christ in each of these three parts of that land. I. Departing out of Judæa, ver. 1-3. II. Passing through Samaria, which, though a visit *in transitu*, here takes up most room. 1. His coming into Samaria, ver. 4-6. 2. His discourse with the Samaritan woman at a well, ver. 7-26. 3. The notice which the woman gave of him to the city, ver. 27-30. 4. Christ's talk with his disciples in the meantime, ver. 31-38. 5. The good effect of this among the Samaritans, ver. 39-42. III. We find him residing for some time in Galilee, ver. 43-46; and his curing of a nobleman's son there that was at death's door, ver. 46-54.



HEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) 3 He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee.

We read of Christ's coming into Judæa, *ch. iii. 22*, after he had kept the feast at Jerusalem; and now he left Judæa four months before harvest, as is said here, ver. 35; so that it is computed he stayed in Judæa about six months, to build upon the foundation John had laid there. We have no particular account of his sermons and miracles there, only in general, ver. 1.

First. That he made disciples; he prevailed with many to embrace his doctrine, and to follow him as a teacher come from God; his ministry was successful, notwithstanding the opposition it met with, *Ps. cx. 3*; *μαθηταὶ ποιεῖ*; it signifies the same with *μαθητεύω*, to disciple. Compare *Gen. xii. 5*, "The souls which they had gotten;" which they had 'made,' so the word is, which they had made proselytes. Note, It is Christ's prerogative to make disciples; first to bring them to his foot, and then form and fashion them to his will. *Fili non nascitur Christianus*,—the Christian is made such, not born such.

Secondly. That he baptized those whom he made disciples; admitted them by washing them with water; not himself, but by the ministry of his disciples, ver. 2. 1. Because he would put a difference between his baptism and that of John, who baptized all himself; for he baptized as a servant, Christ as a master. 2. He would apply himself more to preaching work, which was the more excellent, *1 Cor. i. 17*. He would put honour upon his disciples, by empowering and employing them to do it; and so train them up to farther services. 4. If he had baptized some himself, they would have been apt to value themselves upon that, and despise others, which he would prevent, as Paul, *1 Cor. i. 13, 14*. 5. He would reserve himself for the honour of baptizing with the Holy Ghost, *Acts i. 5*. 6. He would teach us that the efficacy of sacraments depends not on any virtue in the hand that administers them; as also, that what is done by his ministers, according to his direction, he owns as done by himself.

Thirdly. That he "made and baptized more disciples than John;" not only more than John did at this time, but more than he had done at any time Christ's converse was more winning than John's; his miracles were convincing, and the cures he wrought gratis very inviting.

Fourthly. That the Pharisees were informed of this; they heard what multitudes he baptized, for they had, from his first appearing, a jealous eye upon him, and wanted not spies to give them notice concerning him. Observe, 1. When the Pharisees thought they had got rid of John, (for he was by this time clapped up,) and were pleasing themselves with that, Jesus appears, who was a greater vexation to them than ever John had been. The witnesses will rise again. 2. That which grieved them was, that Christ made so many disciples. The success of the Gospel exasperates its enemies; and it is a good sign it is getting ground, when the powers of darkness are enraged against it.

Fifthly. That our Lord Jesus knew very well what informations were given in against him to the Pharisees. It is likely the informers were willing to have their names concealed, and the Pharisees loath to have their designs known; but none can dig so deep as to hide their counsels from the Lord, *Isa. xxix. 15*; and Christ is here called the Lord. He knew what was told the Pharisees, and how much it is likely it exceeded the truth; for it is not likely that Jesus had yet baptized more than John; but so the thing was represented, to make him appear the more formidable; see *2 Kin. vi. 12*.

Sixthly. That hereupon our Lord Jesus left Judæa, and departed again to go to Galilee.

1. He left Judæa, because he was likely to be persecuted there, even to the death, such was the rage of the Pharisees against him, and such their impious politics to devour the man-child in his infancy. To escape their designs, Christ quitted the country, and went thither, where what he did would be less provoking than just under their nose. For, 1st. His hour was not yet come, *ch. vii. 38*, the time fixed in the counsels of God, and the Old Testament prophecies for Messiah's being cut off. He had not finished his testimony, and therefore would not surrender or expose himself. 2nd. The disciples he had gathered in Judæa were not able to bear hardships, and therefore he would not expose them. 3rd. Hereby he gave an example to his own rule; "when they persecute you in one city, flee to another." We are not called to suffer, while we may avoid it without sin; and therefore, though we may not for our own preservation change our religion, yet we may change our place. Christ secured himself, not by miracle, but in a way common to men, for the direction and encouragement of his suffering people.

2. He departed into Galilee, because he had work to do there, and many friends, and fewer enemies. He went to Galilee now, 1st. Because John's ministry had now made way for him there; for Galilee, which was under Herod's jurisdiction, was the last scene of John's baptism. 2nd. Because John's imprisonment had now made room for him there. That light being now put under a bushel, the minds of people would not be divided between him and Christ. Thus both the liberties and restraints of good ministers are for the furtherance of the Gospel, *Phil. i. 12*. But to what purpose doth he go into Galilee for safety? Herod, the persecutor of John, will never be the protector of Jesus. Chennitius here notes, *Pu in hac vita quos fugiant habent; ad quos vero fugiant ut in tuto sint non habent, nisi ad te, Deus, qui solus refugium nostrum es*,—the pious have those in this life to whom they can flee, but they have none to flee to who can afford them refuge except thee, O God.

4 And he must needs go through Samaria. 5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. 7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) 9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. 10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and



JACOB'S WELL, NEAR SAMARIA.

refused their aid in rebuilding the Temple (*Ezra iv. 2, 3*), although they had to a large extent adopted Jewish rites and worship. After this refusal on the part of the Jews, they erected an independent Temple on Mount Gerizim. Their faith and practice were founded solely on the Pentateuch, and they rejected all other inspired writings. Christ himself makes a distinction between them and the lost sheep of the house of Israel (*Matt. x. 5, 6*). The antipathy extended to all matters of friendly intercourse or kindness; they did

not refuse to enter into commercial relations with each other. This hostility gives point to the parable of the good Samaritan. (See also *Luke xvii. 16-18*.)

iv. 20. "This mountain:" i.e., Mount Gerizim.

iv. 21. "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem:" Alford renders, "Ye shall worship the Father, but not (only) in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem."

iv. 22. "Ye worship ye know not what," &c.: they had confused

he would have given thee living water. 11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? 12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? 13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. 15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. 16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. 17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: 18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. 19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. 21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. 25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

We have here an account of the good Christ did in Samaria, when he passed through that country in his way to Galilee. The Samaritans, both in blood and religion, were mongrel Jews; the posterity of those colonies which the king of Assyria planted there after the captivity of the ten tribes, with whom the poor of the land that were left behind, and many other Jews, afterwards incorporated themselves. They worshipped the God of Israel only, to whom they erected a temple on mount Gerizim, in competition with that at Jerusalem. There was great enmity between them and the Jews; the Samaritans would not admit Christ when they saw he was going to Jerusalem, *Lu. ix. 53*. The Jews thought they could not give him a worse name, than to say, "He is a Samaritan." When the Jews were in prosperity, the Samaritans claimed kindred to them, *Ezr. iv. 2*; but when they were in distress they were Medes and Persians; *Josephus Antiq. lib. xi. c. 8; lib. xii. c. 7*. Now observe,

First, Christ's coming into Samaria. He charged his disciples not to enter into any city of the Samaritans, *Matt. x. 5*, namely, not to preach the Gospel, or work miracles; nor did he here preach publicly, or work any miracle, his eye being to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But what kindness he here did them was accidental; it was only a crumb of the children's bread that casually fell from the master's table.

1. His road from Judæa to Galilee lay through the country of Samaria; ver. 4. "He must needs go through Samaria." There was no other way, unless he would have fetched a compass on the other side Jordan, a great way about. The wicked and profane are at present so intermixed with God's Israel, that, unless we will go out of the world, we cannot avoid going through the company of such, *1 Cor. v. 10*. We have therefore need of the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, that we may neither give provocation to them, nor contract pollution by them. We should not go into places of temptation but when we needs must; and then we should not reside in them, but hasten through them. Some think that therefore Christ must needs go through Samaria, because of the good work he had to do there: a poor woman to be converted, a lost sheep to be sought, and saved; this was work his heart was upon, and therefore he must needs go this way. It was happy for Samaria that it lay in Christ's way, which gave him an opportunity of calling on them. "When I passed by thee, I said unto thee, Live," *Eze. xvi. 6*.

2. His baiting place happened to be at a city of Samaria. Now observe, 1st. The place described. It was called Sychar; probably the same with *Shechem*, or *Shechem*, a place which we read much of in the Old Testament:

thus are the names of places commonly corrupted by tract of time. *Shechem* yielded the first proselytes that ever came into the church of Israel, *Gen. xxxiv. 29*, and *xxxv. 2*, and now it is the first place where the Gospel is preached out of the commonwealth of Israel; so Dr. Lightfoot observes; as also that the valley of Achor, which was given for a door of hope,—hope to the poor Gentiles,—ran along by this city, *Hos. ii. 15*. Abimelech was made king here; it was Jeroboam's royal seat; but the evangelist, when he would give us the antiquities of the place, takes notice of Jacob's interest there, which was more its honour than its crowned heads. First. Here lay Jacob's ground, "the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph," whose bones were buried in it; *Gen. xlviii. 22; Jos. xxiv. 32*. Probably this is mentioned to intimate that Christ, when he reposed himself hard by here, took occasion from the ground which Jacob gave Joseph, to meditate on the good report which the elders by faith obtained. Jerome chose to live in the land of Canaan, that the sight of the places might affect him the more with Scripture stories. Secondly. Here was Jacob's well which he digged, or at least used, for himself and his family. We find no mention of this well in the Old Testament, but the tradition was that it was Jacob's well.

2nd. The posture of our Lord Jesus at this place: "Being wearied with his journey, he sat thus on the well." We have here our Lord Jesus,

First. Labouring under the common fatigue of travellers: he was "wearied with his journey." Though it was yet but the sixth hour, and he had performed but half his day's journey, yet he was weary; or, because it was the sixth hour,—the time of the heat of the day,—therefore he was weary. Here we see, 1st. That he was a true man, and subject to the common infirmities of the human nature. Toil came in with sin, *Gen. iii. 19*, and therefore Christ, having made himself a curse for us, submitted to it. 2nd. That he was a poor man, else he might have travelled on horseback, or in a chariot. To this instance of meanness and mortification he humbled himself for us, that he went all his journeys on foot. When servants were on horses, princes walked as servants on the earth, *Ecc. x. 7*. When we are carried easily, let us think on the weariness of our Master. 3rd. It should seem he was but a tender man, and not of a robust constitution; it should seem his disciples were not tired, for they went into the town without any difficulty, when their Master sat down, and could not go a step farther. Bodies of the finest mould are most sensible of fatigue, and can worst bear it.

Secondly. We have him here betaking himself to the common relief of travellers; "being wearied, he sat thus on the well." 1st. He sat on the well, an uneasy place, cold and hard; he had no couch, no easy chair to repose himself in, but took to that which was next hand, to teach us not to be nice and curious in the conveniences of this life, but content with mean things. 2nd. He sat thus, in an uneasy posture; "sat carelessly,"—*incuriosus et neglectus*; or, he sat so as people that are wearied with travelling used to sit.

Secondly. His discourse with a Samaritan woman, which is here recorded at large, while Christ's dispute with the doctors, and his discourse with Moses and Elias on the mount are buried in silence.

This discourse is reducible to four heads.

1. They discourse concerning the water, ver. 7—15. Notice is first taken of the circumstances that gave occasion to this discourse.

1. "There comes a woman of Samaria to draw water." This intimates her poverty, she had no servant to be a drawer of water; and her industry, she would do it herself. See here, 1st. How God owns and approves of honest, humble diligence in our places. Christ was made known to the shepherds when they were keeping their flock. 2nd. How the Divine providence brings about glorious purposes by events which seem to us fortuitous and accidental. This woman's meeting with Christ at the well, may mind us of the stories of Rebekah, Rachel, and Jethro's daughter, who all met with husbands, good husbands, no worse than Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, when they came to the wells for water. 3rd. How the preventing grace of God sometimes brings people unexpectedly under the means of conversion and salvation. He is found of them that sought him not.

2. His disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat. Hence learn a lesson, 1st. Of justice and honesty: the meat Christ ate he bought and paid for, as Paul, *2 Thes. iii. 8*. 2nd. Of daily dependence upon Providence: "take no thought for the morrow." Christ did not go into the city to eat, but sent his disciples to fetch his meat thither; not because he scrupled eating in a Samaritan city, but, First. Because he had a good work to do at that well, which might be done while they were catering. It is wisdom to fill up our vacant minutes with that which is good, that the fragments of time may not be lost. Peter, while his dinner was in getting, fell into a trance, *Acts x. 10*. Secondly. Because it was more private and retired, more cheap and homely, to have his dinner brought him hither, than to go into the town for it. Perhaps his purse was low, and he would teach us good husbandry; to spend according to what we have, and not go beyond it; however, he would teach us not to affect great things. Christ could eat his dinner as well upon a draw well as in the best inn in the town. Let us comport with our circumstances.

Now this gave Christ an opportunity of discoursing with this woman about spiritual concerns, and he improved it; he often preached to multitudes that crowded after him for instruction, yet here he condescends to teach a single person, a woman, a poor woman, a stranger, a Samaritan, to teach his ministers to do likewise; as those that know what a glorious achievement it is to help to save, though but one soul, from death. Let us observe the particulars of this discourse.

First. Jesus begins with a modest request for a draught of water; "Give me to drink." He that for our sakes became poor, here becomes a beggar, that they who are in want, and cannot dig, may not be ashamed to beg. Christ asked for it, not only because he needed it, and needed her help to come at it, but because he would draw on farther discourse with her, and teach us to be willing to be beholden to the meanest when there is occasion. Christ is still begging in his poor members, and a cup of cold water, like this here, given to them in his name, shall not lose its reward.

Secondly. The woman, though she doth not deny his request, yet quarrels with him because he did not carry on the humour of his own nation; ver. 9, "How is it?" Observe,

1st. What a mortal feud there was between the Jews and the Samaritans; "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." The Samaritans were the adversaries of Judah, *Ezr. iv. 1*; were upon all occasions mischievous to them. The Jews were extremely malicious against them, "looked upon them as having no part in the resurrection; excommunicated and cursed them by the sacred name of God; by the glorious writing of the tables, and by the curse of the upper and lower house of judgment; with this law, 'That no Israelite eat of any thing that is a Samaritan's, for it is as if he ate swine's flesh.'" So Dr. Lightfoot, out of Rabbi Tanchum. Note, Quarrels about religion are usually the most implacable of all other. Men were made to have dealings one with another; but if men, because one worships at one temple and another at another, will deny the offices of humanity and charity and common civility, will be proud and unnatural, scornful and censorious, and this under colour of zeal for religion, they plainly shew that however their religion may be true, they are not truly religious; but, pretending to stickle for religion, subvert the design of it.

notions of God, arising partly from their rejection of a large portion of revelation, and partly from the many superstitions derived from their heathen ancestors which had mingled with their worship. "Salvation is of the Jews:" according to the promise that the Messiah should be of the tribe of Judah (*Gen. xlix. 10*), and of the family of David (*Rom. i. 3*). Compare the recognition on the part of the Syrophenician woman (*Matt. xv. 22*).

iv. 26. "Messiah:" the Samaritans looked forward to the coming

of a great teacher, whom they called "the Converter." Their views seem to have been less tainted by those political expectations which the Jews cherished. It is perhaps for this reason that our Lord declares his Messianic character more plainly here than among the Jews.

iv. 30. "Came unto him:" i.e., were coming, but had not yet arrived. This fits in with the phrase in the next verse, "In the meanwhile," &c.

2nd. How ready the woman was to upbraid Christ with the haughtiness and ill-nature of the Jewish nation; "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me?" By his dress or dialect, or both, she knew him to be a Jew, and thinks it strange that he runs not to the same excess of riot against the Samaritans with other Jews. Note, Moderate men of all sides are (like Joshua and his fellows, *Zec. iii. 8.*) "men wondered at." Two things this woman wonders at: First, That he should ask this kindness; for it was the pride of the Jews that they would endure any hardship rather than be beholden to a Samaritan. It was part of Christ's humiliation that he was born of the Jewish nation, which was now not only in an ill state, subject to the Romans, but in an ill name among the nations; with what disdain did Pilate ask, "Am I a Jew?" Thus he made himself not only of no reputation, but of ill reputation; but herein he has set us an example of swimming against the stream of common corruptions. We must, like our Master, put on goodness and kindness, though it should be never so much the genius of our country, or the humour of our party, to be morose and ill-natured. This woman expected that Christ should be as other Jews were; but it is unjust to charge upon every individual person even the common faults of the community: no rule but has some exceptions. Secondly, She wonders he should expect to receive this kindness from her that was a Samaritan: You Jews would deny it to one of our nation, and why should we grant it to one of yours? Thus quarrels are propagated endlessly by revenge and retaliation.

Thirdly. Christ takes this occasion to instruct her in Divine things: ver. 10, "If thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldst have asked." Observe, 1st. He waives her objection of the feud between the Jews and the Samaritans, and takes no notice of it. Some differences are best healed by being slighted, and by avoiding all occasions of entering into dispute about them. Christ will convert this woman, not by shewing her that the Samaritan worship was schismatical, though really it was so, but by shewing her her own ignorance and immoralities, and her need of a Saviour. 2nd. He possesseth her with an apprehension that she had now an opportunity, a fairer opportunity than she was aware of, of gaining that which would be of unspeakable advantage to her. She had not the helpings that the Jews had to discern: the signs of the times, and therefore Christ tells her expressly she had now a season of grace; this was the day of her visitation.

(1.) He hints to her what she should know, but was ignorant of; "If thou knewest the gift of God," that is, as the next words explain it, "who it is that saith, Give me to drink." If thou knewest who I am; she saw him to be a Jew, a poor, weary traveller, but he would have her know something more concerning him than did yet appear. Note, (1st.) Jesus Christ is the gift of God; the richest token of God's love to us, and the richest treasure of all good for us: a gift, not a debt which we could demand from God; not a loan, which he will demand from us again, but a gift, a free gift, *ch. iii. 16.* (2nd.) It is an unspeakable privilege to have this gift of God proposed and offered to us; to have an opportunity of embracing it. He who is the gift of God is now set before thee, and addresseth himself to thee; it is he that saith, "Give me to drink;" this gift comes begging to thee. (3rd.) Though Christ is set before us, and sues to us in and by his Gospel, yet there are multitudes that know him not; they know not who it is that speaks to them in the Gospel, that saith, "Give me to drink;" they perceive not that it is the Lord that calls them.

(2.) He hopes concerning her what she would have done if she had known him; to be sure she would not have given him such a rude and uncivil answer; nay, she would have been so far from affronting him, that she would have made her addresses to him; "Thou wouldst have asked." Note, (1st.) Those that would have any benefit by Christ, must ask for it, must be earnest in prayer to God for it. (2nd.) Those that have a right knowledge of Christ will seek to him; and if we do not seek unto him, it is a sign we do not know him, *Pe. ix. 10.* (3rd.) Christ knows what they that want the means of knowledge would have done if they had had them, *Mat. xi. 21.*

(3.) He assures her what he would have done for her if she had applied herself to him: "He would have given thee" (and not have upbraided thee, as thou dost me) "living water." By this living water is meant the Spirit, who is not like the water in the bottom of the well, which he asked for some of, but like living, or running water, which was much more valuable. Note, (1st.) The Spirit of grace is as living water; see *ch. vii. 38.* under this similitude the blessings of the Messiah had been promised in the Old Testament, *Isa. xii. 3.*; *xxxv. 7.*; *xlv. 3.* and *lv. 1.*; *Zec. xiv. 8.* The graces of the Spirit, and his comforts, satisfy the thirsting soul that knows its own nature and necessity. (2nd.) Jesus Christ can and will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him; for he received that he might give.

Fourthly. The woman objects against, and cavils at the gracious intimation Christ gave her; ver. 11, 12, "Thou hast nothing to draw with;" and besides, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" What he spoke figuratively she took literally; Nicodemus did so too. See what confused notions they have of spiritual things who are wholly taken up with the things that are sensual. Some respect she pays to his person, in calling him Sir, or Lord; but little respect to what he said, which she doth but banter.

1. She doth not think him capable of furnishing her with any water, no, not this in the well that is just at hand; "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep." This she said, not knowing the power of Christ; for he who causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth, needs nothing to draw: but there are those who will trust Christ no farther than they can see him, and will not believe his promise unless the means of the performance of it be visible; as if he were tied to our methods, and could not draw water without our buckets. She asks scornfully, "Whence hast thou this living water?" I see not whence thou canst have it. Note, The springs of that living water which Christ has for those that come to him, are secret and undiscovered: the fountain of life is hid with Christ. Christ has enough for us, though we see not whence he hath it.

2. She doth not think it possible he should furnish her with any better water than this, which she could come at, but he could not. "Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well?"

1st. We will suppose the tradition true, that "Jacob himself, and his children, and cattle did drink of this well;" and we may observe from it, **First.** The power and providence of God in the continuance of the fountains of water from generation to generation, by the constant circulation of the rivers, like the blood in the body, *Ecc. i. 7.*; to which circulation, perhaps the flux and reflux of the sea, like the pulses of the heart, doth contribute. **Secondly.** The plainness of the patriarch Jacob; his drink was water, and he and his children drank of the same well with his cattle.

2nd. Yet allowing that to be true, she was out in several things; as, **First.** In calling Jacob "father." What authority had the Samaritans to reckon themselves of the seed of Jacob? they were descended from that mixed multitude which the king of Assyria had placed in the cities of Samaria; what have they to do then with Jacob? Because they were the invaders of Israel's rights, and the unjust possessors of Israel's lands, were they therefore the inheritors of Israel's blood and honour? How absurd were those pretensions! **Secondly.** She is out in claiming this well as Jacob's gift, whereas he did no more give it than Moses gave the manna, *ch. vi. 32.*; but thus we are apt to call the mes-

sengers of God's gifts the donors of them, and to look so much at the hands they pass through, as to forget the Hand they come from. Jacob gave it to his sons, not to them; yet thus the church's enemies not only usurp, but monopolize the church's privileges. **Thirdly.** She was out in speaking of Christ as not worthy to be compared with our father Jacob. An over fond veneration for antiquity makes God's graces in the good people of our own day to be slighted.

Fifthly. Christ answers this cavil, and makes it out that the living water he had to give was far better than that of Jacob's well, ver. 13, 14. Though she spoke perversely, Christ did not cast her off, but instructed and encouraged her. He shews her,

1. That the water of Jacob's well yielded but a transient satisfaction, and supply; "Whoso drinketh of this water shall thirst again." It is no better than other water; it will quench the present thirst, but the thirst will return, and in a few hours a man will have as much need and as much desire of water as ever he had. This speaks, 1st. The infirmities of our bodies in this present state; they are still necessitous and ever craving. Life is a fire, a lamp which will soon go out, without continual supplies of fuel and oil: the natural heat preys upon itself. 2nd. The imperfections of all our comforts in this world, they are not lasting, nor our satisfaction in them remaining; whatever waters of comfort we drink of we shall thirst again. Yesterday's meat and drink will not do to day's work.

2. That the living waters he would give should yield a lasting satisfaction and bliss, ver. 14. Christ's gifts appear most valuable when they come to be compared with the things of this world; for there will appear no comparison between them. Whoever partakes of the Spirit of grace, and the comforts of the everlasting Gospel, 1st. He shall never thirst; he shall never want that which will abundantly satisfy his soul's desires; they are longing, but not languishing; a desiring thirst he has, nothing more than God, but still more and more of God; but not a despairing thirst. 2nd. Therefore he shall never thirst, because this water that Christ gives "shall be in him a well of water." He can never be reduced to extremity that has in himself a fountain of supply and satisfaction. **First.** Ever ready; for it shall be in him. The principle of grace planted in him is the spring of his comfort; see *ch. vii. 38.* A good man is satisfied from himself, for Christ dwells in his heart; the anointing abides in him; he needs not sneak to the world for comfort; the work, and the witness of the Spirit in the heart, furnisheth him with a firm foundation of hope, and an overflowing fountain of joy. **Secondly.** Never failing; for it shall be in him a well of water. He that has at hand but a bucket of water, needs not thirst as long as that lasts, but that will soon be exhausted; but believers have in them a well of water, overflowing, ever flowing.

The principles and affections which Christ's holy religion forms in the souls of those that are captivated to the power of it, are this well of water. 1st. It is springing up, ever in motion, which speaks the actings of grace strong and vigorous. If good truths stagnate in our souls, like standing water, they do not answer the end of our receiving them: if there be a good treasure in the heart, we must thence bring forth good things. 2nd. It is springing up unto everlasting life; which speaks, (1.) The aims of gracious actings. A sanctified soul has its eye upon heaven; means that, designs that, doth all for that, will take up with nothing short of that. Spiritual life springs up towards its own perfection in eternal life. (2.) The constancy of those actings; it will continue springing up till it come to perfection. (3.) The crown of them; eternal life at last. The living water riseth from heaven, and therefore riseth towards heaven; see *Ecc. i. 7.* And now, is not this water better than that of Jacob's well?

Sixthly. The woman (whether in jest or earnest is hard to say) begs of him to give her some of this water; ver. 13, "Give me this water, that I thirst not."

1. Some think she speaks tauntingly, and ridicules what Christ had said as mere stuff; and in derision of it, not desiring, but challengeth him to give her some of this water: A rare invention! it will save me a deal of pain if I thirst not, and a deal of pains if I never come hither to draw. But, 2. Others think it was a well meant but weak and ignorant desire. She apprehended that he meant something very good and useful, and therefore saith Amen, at a venture; whatever it be, let me have it; who will shew me any good? and ease, or saving of labour is a valuable good to poor, labouring people. Note, 1st. Even those that are weak and ignorant, may yet have some faint and fluctuating desires towards Christ and his gifts, and some good wishes of grace and glory. 2nd. Carnal hearts, in their best wishes, look no higher than carnal ends: Give it me, saith she, not that I may have everlasting life, which Christ proposed, but that I come not hither to draw.

11. The next subject of discourse with this woman is, **concerning her husband.** Ver. 16-18. It was not to let fall the discourse of the water of life that Christ started this, as many, who will bring in any impertinence in conversation that they may drop a serious subject; but it was with a gracious design that Christ mentioned it. What he had said concerning his grace and eternal life, he found had made little impression upon her, because she had not been convinced of sin; therefore, waiving the discourse about the living water, he sets himself to awaken her conscience, to open the wound of guilt, and then she would more easily apprehend the remedy by grace. And this is the method of dealing with souls; they must first be made weary and heavy laden under the burthen of sin, and then brought to Christ for rest; first pricked to the heart, and then healed. This is the course of spiritual physic, and if we proceed not in this order, we begin at the wrong end. Observe,

1. How discreetly and decently Christ introduceth this discourse, ver. 16: "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." Now, 1st. This order Christ gave her had a very good colour. "Call thy husband," that he may teach thee, and help thee to understand these things, which thou art so ignorant of. The wives that will learn, must ask their husbands, 1 *Cor. xiv. 35.* who must dwell with them as men of knowledge, 1 *Pet. iii. 7.* "Call thy husband," that he may learn with thee; that then ye may be heirs together of the grace of life. "Call thy husband," that he may be witness to what passeth between us, Christ would thus teach us to provide things honest in the sight of all men, and to study that which is of good report. 2nd. As it had a good colour, so it had a good design, for from hence he would take occasion to call her sin to remembrance. There is need of art and prudence in giving reproofs, to fetch a compass; as the woman of Tekoa, 2 *Sam. xiv. 20.*

2. How industriously the woman seeks to evade the conviction, and yet insensibly convicts herself, and, ere she is aware, owns her fault; she said, "I have no husband." Her saying this intimated no more but that she did not care to have her husband spoken of, nor that matter mentioned any more. She would not have her husband come thither, lest in farther discourse the truth of the matter should come out, to her shame; and therefore, Pray go on to talk of something else; "I have no husband." She would be thought a maid or a widow; whereas, though she had no husband, she was neither. The carnal mind is very ingenious to shift off convictions, and to keep them from fastening; careful to cover the sin.

3. How closely our Lord Jesus brings home the conviction to her conscience. It is probable he said more than is here recorded, for she thought he told her all that ever she did, ver. 29; but that which is here recorded is concerning her husbands. Here is, 1st. A surprising narrative of her past conversation;

principles." It is probable, Hengstenberg thinks, that Jesus pointed to the approaching Samaritans. Augustine remarks on the contrast between the state of the natural harvest and the spiritual. "You reckon," are his words of paraphrase, "four months to the harvest; I show you another harvest white and ready."

iv. 36. "Rejoice together;" alluding to the festivities of harvest, not without a hint, perhaps, of the quick succession of sowing and reaping in spiritual matters, where, as the prophet foretold, "the

iv. 35. "Four months;" "It was still winter, or early spring—four months yet to the harvest—and the bright golden ears of those fields had not yet whitened their unbroken expanse of verdure. But as he gazed upon them, they served to suggest the glorious vision of the distinct harvest of the Gentile world, which, with each successive turn of the conversation, unfolded itself more and more distinctly before him, as he sate (so we gather from the narrative) absorbed in the opening prospect, silent amidst his silent and astonished dis-

"thou hast had five husbands." Doubtless it was not her affliction, the burying of so many husbands, but her sin, that Christ intended to upbraid her with; either she had eloped, (as the law speaks,) had overrun her husbands, and married others, or by her undutiful, unclean, disloyal carriage, had provoked them to divorce her; or by indirect means had, contrary to law, divorced them. Those who make light of such scandalous practices as these, as no more but nine days' wonder, and as if the guilt were over as soon as the talk is over, should remember that Christ keeps account of all. 2nd. A severe reproof of her present state of life; "he whom thou now hast is not thy husband;" either she was never married to him at all, or he had some other wife; or, which is most probable, her former husband, or husbands, were living; so that, in short, she lived in adultery. Yet observe how mildly Christ tells her of it: he doth not call her a whore, but tells her, "he with whom thou livest is not thy husband;" and then leaves it to her own conscience to tell her so. Note, Reproofs are ordinarily most profitable when they are least provoking. 3rd. Yet in this he puts a better construction than it would well bear upon what she said by way of shuffle and evasion; "Thou hast well said, I have no husband;" and again, "in that saidst thou truly." What she intended as a denial of the fact, that she had none with whom she lived as a husband, he favourably interpreted, or at least turned upon her as a confession of the fault. Note, Those who would win souls should make the best of them, whereby they may hope to work upon their good nature; for if they make the worst of them, they certainly exasperate their ill nature.

III. The next subject of discourse with this woman is concerning the place of worship, ver. 19-24; where we may observe,

1. A case of conscience proposed to Christ, by the woman, concerning the place of worship, ver. 19, 20. And there,

1st. The inducement she had to put this case: "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." She doth not deny the truth of what he had charged her with, but by her silence owns the justice of the reproof; nor is she put into a passion by it, as many are when they are touched in a sore place; doth not impute his censure to the general disgust the Jews had to the Samaritans; but (which is a rare thing) can bear to be told of a fault. But that is not all, she goes farther; *First*, She speaks respectfully to him, calls him, Sir. Thus should we honour those that deal faithfully with us. This was the effect of Christ's meekness in reproving her; he gave her no ill language, and then she gave him none. *Secondly*, She acknowledges him to be a prophet, one that had a correspondence with Heaven. Note, The power of the Word of Christ in searching the heart, and convincing the conscience of secret sins, is a great proof of its Divine authority, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. *Thirdly*, She desires some farther instruction from him. Many that are not angry at their reprovers, nor fly in their faces, yet are afraid of them, and keep out of their way; but this woman was willing to have some more discourse with him that told her of her faults.

2nd. The case itself that she propounded concerning the place of religious worship in public. Some think she started this to shift off farther discourse concerning her sin. Controversies in religion often prove great prejudices to serious godliness; but it should seem she proposed it with a good design; she knew she must worship God, and desired to do it aright; and therefore meeting with a prophet begs his direction. Note, It is our wisdom to improve all opportunities of getting knowledge in the things of God. When we are in company with those that are fit to teach, let us be forward to learn; and have a good question ready to put to those who are able to give a good answer. It was agreed between the Jews and the Samaritans that God is to be worshipped; (those who were such fools as to worship false gods, yet were not such brutes as to worship none); and that religious worship is an affair of great importance; men would not contend about it, if they were not concerned about it. But the matter in variance was, where they should worship God. Observe how she states the case:

First, As for the Samaritans. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," near adjoining to this city, and this well; there the Samaritan temple was built by Sanballat; in favour of which she insinuates, 1st. That whatever the temple was, the place was holy; it was mount Gerizim, the mountain on which the blessings were pronounced; and some think the same on which Abraham built his altar, Gen. xii. 6, 7; and Jacob his, Gen. xxxiii. 18. 2nd. That it might plead prescription; for our fathers worshipped here. She thinks they have antiquity, tradition, and succession on their side. A vain conversation often supports itself with this, that it was received by tradition from our fathers. But she had little reason to boast of their fathers; for when Antiochus persecuted the Jews, the Samaritans, for fear of sharing with them in their sufferings, not only renounced all relation to the Jews, but surrendered their temple to Antiochus, with a request that it might be dedicated to Jupiter Olympius, and called by his name.—*Jos. Antiq. lib. xii. c. 7.*

Secondly, As to the Jews. Ye say that "in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." The Samaritans governed themselves by the five books of Moses, and some think, received them only as canonical; now though they found frequent mention there of the place God would choose, yet they did not find it named there; and they saw the temple at Jerusalem stripped of many of its ancient glories, and therefore think themselves at liberty to set up another place; altar against altar.

2. Christ's answer to this case of conscience, ver. 21, &c. Those that apply themselves to Christ for instruction, shall find him meek, to teach the meek his way. Now here,

1st. He puts a slight upon the question, as she had proposed it, concerning the place of worship; ver. 21, "Woman, believe me," as a prophet, and mark what I say, thou art expecting the hour to come when, either by some Divine revelation, or some signal providence, this matter shall be decided in favour either of Jerusalem or of mount Gerizim; but I tell thee, the hour is at hand when it shall be no more a question; that which thou hast been taught to lay so much weight on shall be set aside as a thing indifferent. Note, It should cool us in our contentments to think that those things which now fill us, and which we make such a noise about, shall shortly vanish and be no more; and the very things we are striving about are passing away: "the hour comes, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father."

First, The object of worship is supposed to continue still the same, God, as a Father; under that notion the very heathen worshipped God; the Jews did so, and probably the Samaritans.

Secondly, But a period shall be put to all niceness and all differences about the place of worship. The approaching dissolution of the Jewish economy, and the erecting of the evangelical state, shall set this matter at large, and lay all in common, so that it shall be a thing perfectly indifferent whether in either of these places, or any other, men worship God, for they shall not be tied to any place; neither here nor there, but both, and any where, and every where. Note, The worship of God is not now, under the Gospel, appropriated to any place, as it was under the law, but it is God's will that men pray every where, 1 Tim. ii. 8; *Mal. i. 11.* Our reason teacheth us to consult decency and convenience in the places of our worship; but our religion gives no preference to one place above another in respect of holiness, and acceptableness to God. They who prefer any worship, merely for the sake of the house or building in which it is performed, though it were as magnificent and as solemnly conse-

crated as ever Solomon's temple was, forget that the hour is come when there should be no difference put in God's account; no, not between Jerusalem, which had been so famous for sanctity, and the mountain of Samaria, which had been so infamous for impiety.

2nd. He lays a stress upon other things in the matter of religious worship. When he made so light of the place of worship, he did not intend to lessen our concern about the thing itself, which therefore he takes occasion to discourse of more fully.

First, As to the present state of the controversy, he determines against the Samaritan worship, and in favour of the Jews, ver. 22. He tells her here,

1st. That the Samaritans are certainly in the wrong; not merely because they worshipped in this mountain—though while Jerusalem's choice was in force, that was sinful—but because they were out in the object of their worship; if the worship itself had been as it should be, its separation from Jerusalem might have been connived at, as the high places were in the best reigns; but "ye worship ye know not what;" or, "that which ye do not know." They worshipped the God of Israel, the true God, *Ezr. iv. 2*; *2 Kin. xvii. 32*; but they were sunk into gross ignorance; they worshipped him as the God of that land, *2 Kin. xvii. 27, 33*; as a local deity, like the gods of the nations; whereas God must be served as God, as the universal cause and Lord. Note, Ignorance is so far from being the mother of devotion, that it is the murderer of it. Those that worship God ignorantly, offer the blind for sacrifice; and it is the sacrifice of fools.

2nd. That the Jews were certainly in the right. For, *First*, "We know what we worship." We go upon sure grounds in our worship, for our people are catechised and trained up in the knowledge of God, as he has revealed himself in the Scripture. Note, Those who by the Scriptures have obtained some knowledge of God, (a certain, though not a perfect knowledge,) may worship him comfortably to themselves, and acceptably to him, for they know what they worship. Christ elsewhere condemns the corruptions of the Jews' worship, *Mat. xv. 9*, and yet here defends the worship itself; the worship may be true, where yet it is not pure and entire. Observe, Our Lord Jesus was pleased to reckon himself among the worshippers of God; "we worship."

"Though he were a Son," (and then are the children free) "yet learned he this obedience" in the days of his humiliation. Let not the greatest of men think the worship of God below them, when the Son of God himself did not. *Secondly*, "Salvation is of the Jews," and therefore they know what they worship, and what ground they go upon in their worship. Not that all the Jews were saved, or that it was not possible but that many of the Gentiles and Samaritans might be saved, for "in every nation he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of him;" but, 1. The Author of eternal salvation comes of the Jews, and appears among them, *Rom. ix. 8*, and is sent first to bless them. 2. The means of eternal salvation are afforded to them; the word of salvation (*Acts xiii. 26*) was of the Jews; it was delivered to them, and was through them derived to other nations. This was a sure guide to them in their devotions; and they followed it, and therefore knew what they worshipped. "To them were committed the oracles of God," *Rom. iii. 2*; "and the service of God," *Rom. ix. 4*. The Jews therefore being thus privileged and advanced, it was presumption for the Samaritans to vie with them.

Secondly, He describes the evangelical worship, and which only God would accept of, and be well pleased with; having shewed that the place is indifferent, he comes to shew what is necessary and essential. That we worship God in spirit and in truth, ver. 23, 24. The stress is not to be laid upon the place where we worship God, but with what mind we worship him. Note, The most effectual way to take up differences in the lesser matters of religion, is to be more zealous in the greater. They who daily make it the matter of their care to worship in the spirit, one would think should not make it the matter of their strife, whether he should be worshipped here or there. Christ had justly preferred the Jewish worship before the Samaritan; yet here he intimates the imperfection of that. The worship was ceremonial, *Heb. ix. 1, 10*; the worshippers were generally carnal, and much strangers to the inward part of Divine worship. Note, It is possible we may be better than our neighbours, and yet not so good as we should be. It concerns us to be right, not only in the objects of our worship, but in the manner of it; and that is it which Christ here instructs us in. Observe,

1st. The great and glorious revolution which should introduce this change: "the hour cometh, and now is." The fixed stated time, concerning which it was of old determined when it should come, and how long it should last. The time of its appearance is fixed to an hour, so punctual and exact are the Divine counsels; the time of its continuance is limited to an hour, so close and pressing is the opportunity of Divine grace, *2 Cor. vi. 2*. This hour cometh; it is coming in its full strength, lustre, and perfection; it now is in the embryo and infancy. The perfect day is coming, and now it dawns.

2nd. The blessed change itself. In Gospel times the "true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth;" as creatures we worship the Father of all; as Christians we worship the Father of our Lord Jesus.

Now the change shall be, *First*, In the nature of the worship; Christians shall worship God, not in the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic institution, but in spiritual ordinances; consisting less in bodily exercise, and animated and invigorated more with a Divine power and energy. The way of worship Christ has instituted is rational and intellectual, and refined from those external rites and ceremonies with which the Old Testament worship was both clouded and clogged. This is called true worship, in opposition to that which was typical: the legal services were figures of the true, *Heb. ix. 9, 24*. They that revolted from Christianity to Judaism, are said to begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh, *Gal. iii. 3*. Such was the difference between Old Testament and New Testament institutions. *Secondly*, In the temper and disposition of the worshippers; and so the true worshippers are good Christians, distinguished from hypocrites; all should, and they will, worship God "in spirit and truth."

It is spoken of, ver. 23, as their character, and ver. 24, as their duty. Note, It is required of all that worship God that they "worship him in spirit and in truth." 1. We must worship God in spirit, *Phil. iii. 3*. We must depend upon God's Spirit for strength and assistance, laying our souls under his influences and operations; we must devote our own spirits to, and employ them in, the service of God, *Rom. i. 9*; must worship him with fixedness of thought, and a flame of affection—with all that is within us. Spirit is sometimes put for the new nature, in opposition to the flesh, which is the corrupt nature; and so to worship God with our spirit, is to worship him with our graces, *Heb. xii. 28*. 2. In truth, that is, in sincerity. God requires not only the inward part in our worship, but truth in the outward part, *Ps. li. 6*. We must mind the power more than the form: must aim at God's glory, and not to be seen of men; draw near with a true heart, *Heb. x. 22*.

Thirdly, The reasons why God must be thus worshipped.

1st. Because in Gospel times they, and they only, are accounted the true worshippers. The Gospel erects a spiritual way of worship; so that the professors of the Gospel are not true in their profession, do not live up to gospel light and laws, if they do not worship God "in spirit and in truth."

2nd. Because the Father seeketh such worshippers of him. This intimates, *First*, That such worshippers are very rare, and seldom met with, *Jer. xxx. 21*.

ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed" (*Amos ix. 13*).

iv. 38. "Other men laboured;" i.e., prophets (*Heb. xi. 39, 40*; *1 Pet. i. 12*); John the Baptist (*Luke i. 17, iii. 4, 5*); pre-eminent Christ himself, the sower, according to his own interpretation.

iv. 40. "Besought him that he would tarry," &c.: contrast the conduct of those other Samaritans who, influenced by their prejudices, refused to receive him. These rejoiced in one who was the

Saviour of the world; those rejected him because he seemed about to bestow favour on others beside themselves (*Luke ix. 51-53*).

iv. 42. "Saying:" the Greek word here is not the same as that used in verse 39. The word here signifies "talking," "chat," "gossip;" the word in verse 39 has reference more to the substance of what was said than to the form in which it was said. Alford, however, says the words are perhaps not to be distinguished. But it is hardly possible not to see in the word (verse 42) something of the woman's

The gate of spiritual worshipping is strait. Secondly. That such worship is necessary, and what the God of heaven insists upon. When God comes to inquire for worshippers, the question will not be, who worshipped at Jerusalem, but who worshipped in spirit; that will be the touchstone. Thirdly. That God is greatly well pleased with, and graciously accepts of, such worship, and such worshippers; "I have desired it," *Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14; Cant. ii. 14*. Fourthly. That there has been, and will be to the end, a remnant of such worshippers; his seeking such worshippers, implies his taking them such. God is in all ages gathering in to himself a generation of spiritual worshippers.

3rd. Because "God is a spirit." Christ came to declare God to us, *ch. i. 18*; and this he has declared concerning him: He declared it to this poor Samaritan woman, for the meanest are concerned to know God; and with this design, to rectify her mistakes concerning religious worship; to which nothing would contribute more than the right knowledge of God. Note, First, "God is a spirit;" for he is an infinite and eternal mind; an intelligent being, incorporeal, immaterial, invisible, incorruptible. It is easier to say what God is not, than what he is: "a spirit has not flesh and bones;" but who knows the way of a spirit? If God were not a spirit, he could not be perfect, nor infinite, nor eternal, nor independent, nor the Father of spirits. Secondly. The spirituality of the Divine nature is a very good reason for the spirituality of Divine worship. If we do not worship God, who is a spirit, in the spirit, we neither give him the glory due to his name,—and so do not perform the act of worship,—nor can we hope to obtain his favour and acceptance; and so we miss the end of worship, *Mat. xv. 8, 9*.

IV. The last subject of discourse with this woman is concerning the Messiah, *ver. 25, 26*. Observe here,

1. The faith of the woman, by which she expected the Messiah; "I know that Messiah cometh . . . and he will tell us all things." She had nothing to object against what Christ had said; his discourse was, for aught she knew, what might become the Messiah then expected; but from him she would receive it, and in the mean time thinks best to suspend her belief. Thus many have no heart to the price in their hand, *Pr. xvii. 16*, because they think they have a better in their eye, and deceive themselves with a promise that they will learn that hereafter which they neglect now. Observe here,

1st. Whom she expects; "I know that Messiah cometh." The Jews and Samaritans, though so much at variance, agreed in the expectation of the Messiah and his kingdom. The Samaritans received the writings of Moses, and were no strangers to the prophets, nor to the hopes of the Jewish nation; those who knew least, knew this, that Messiah was to come; so general and uncontested was the expectation of him; and at this time more raised than ever, for the sceptre was departed from Judah; Daniel's weeks were near expiring; so that he concludes, not only he will come, but *ερχεται*, 'he comes'; he is just at hand, "Messias, which is called Christ." The evangelist, though he retains the Hebrew word Messiah, which the woman used, in honour to the holy language, and to the Jewish church, that used it familiarly, yet writing for the use of the Gentiles, he takes care to render it by a Greek word of the same signification, "which is called Christ," 'Anointed;' giving an example to the apostle's rule, that whatever is spoken in an unknown, or less vulgar tongue, should be interpreted, *1 Cor. xiv. 27, 28*.

2nd. What she expects from him; "he will tell us all things," relating to the service of God, which are needful for us to know; will tell us that which will supply our defects, rectify our mistakes, and put an end to all our disputes. He will tell us the mind of God fully and clearly, and keep back nothing. Now this implies an acknowledgment, *First*. Of the deficiency and imperfection of the discovery they now had of the Divine will, and the rule they had of the Divine worship. It "could not make the comers thereunto perfect;" and therefore they expected some great advance and improvement in matters of religion, a time of reformation. *Secondly*. Of the sufficiency of the Messiah to make this change. "He will tell us all things" which we want to know, and about which we wrangle in the dark. He will introduce peace, by leading us into all truth, and dispelling the mists of error. It seems this was the comfort of good people in those dark times, that light would arise; if they found themselves at a loss, and run aground, it was a satisfaction to them to say, "When Messiah comes, he will tell us all things;" as it may be to us now, with reference to his second coming; now we see through a glass, but then face to face.

2. The favour of our Lord Jesus in making himself known to her, *ver. 26*; "I that speak unto thee am he." Christ did never make himself known so expressly to any, as he did here to this poor Samaritan, and to the blind man, *ch. ix. 37*; no, not to John Baptist, when he sent to him, *Mat. xi. 4, 5*; no, not to the Jews, when they challenged him to tell them whether he was the Christ, *ch. x. 24*. But, 1st. Christ would thus put an honour upon such as were poor and despised, *Jas. ii. 6*. 2nd. This woman, for aught we know, had never any opportunity of seeing Christ's miracles, which were then the ordinary method of conviction. Note, To those who have not the advantage of the external means of knowledge and grace, God hath secret ways of making-up the want of them; we must therefore judge charitably concerning such. God can make the light of grace shine into the heart, even where he doth not make the light of the Gospel shine in the face. 3rd. This woman was better prepared to receive such a discovery than others were; she was big with expectation of the Messiah, and ready to receive instruction from him. Christ will manifest himself to those who, with an honest humble heart, desire to be acquainted with him; "I that speak unto thee am he." See here, *First*. How near Jesus Christ was to her, when she knew not who he was, *Gen. xxviii. 16*; many are lamenting Christ's absence, and longing for his presence, when at the same time he is speaking to them. *Secondly*. How Christ makes himself known to us, by speaking to us; "I that speak unto thee," so closely, so convincingly, with such assurance, with such an authority, "I am he."

27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? 28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? 30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. 31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. 32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. 33 Therefore

said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat? 34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. 35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. 36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. 37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. 38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. 39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. 40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his own word; 42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.



WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

We have here the remainder of the story of what happened when Christ was in Samaria, after the long conference he had with the woman.

First. The interruption given to this discourse by the disciples' coming. It is likely much more was said than is recorded; but just when the discourse was brought to a head, when Christ had made himself known to her as the true Messiah, "then came the disciples." The daughters of Jerusalem shall not stir up nor awake my love till he please. 1st. They admired at Christ's converse with this woman: marvelled that he talked thus earnestly (as perhaps they observed at a distance) with a woman, a strange woman, alone; he used to be more reserved, especially with a Samaritan woman, that was not of the lost sheep of the house of Israel; they thought their Master should be as shy of the Samaritans as the other Jews were, at least that he should not preach the Gospel to them. They wondered he should condescend to talk with such a poor contemptible woman, forgetting what despicable men they themselves were when Christ first called them into fellowship with himself. 2nd. Yet they acquiesced in it; they knew it was for some good reason, and some good end, which he was not bound to give them an account of, and therefore none of them asked, "What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?" Thus when particular difficulties occur in the word and providence of God, it is good to satisfy ourselves with this in general, that all is well which Jesus Christ saith and doth. Perhaps there was something amiss in their marvelling that Christ talked with the woman, and that it was something like the Pharisees being offended at his eating with publicans and sinners; but whatever they thought, they said nothing: "If thou hast thought evil," at any time, "lay thy hand upon thy mouth," to keep that evil thought from turning into an evil word, *Pr. xxx. 32; Ps. xxxix. 1-5*.

Secondly. The notice which the woman gave to her neighbours, what an extraordinary person she had happily met with, ver. 28, 29. Observe here,

1. How she forgot her errand to the well, *ver. 28*. Therefore because the disciples were come, and broke up the discourse, and perhaps she observed they were not pleased with it, she went her way. She withdrew in civility to Christ, that he might have leisure to eat his dinner; she delighted in his discourse, but would not be rude: every thing is beautiful in its season. So

eager and diffuse report to them. See John viii. 43, where the two words are used. The word which is there translated "speech" is the same as that used here in verse 42—"saying." The word there translated "word" is that which is employed in verse 39 of this chapter. The whole might better be rendered thus: "No longer do we believe because of thy story, for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world." The word "Christ" is omitted in the best MSS., and the word rendered here

"no longer" (the "not" of the Authorised Version) implies that they believed now on different grounds.

iv. 43. "After two days:" rather "the two days"—i.e., at the close of the two days spent among the Samaritans (verse 40).

iv. 44. "Testified that a prophet," &c.: a difficulty has been felt in the reason that the evangelist assigns for Christ going into Galilee—viz., that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. The usual explanation is that the word "Galilee" does not include

supposed that Jesus, when he had dined, would go forward on his journey, and therefore hastened to tell her neighbours, that they might come quickly: "Yet a little while is the light with you." See how she improved time; when one good work was done, she applied herself to another. When opportunities of getting good cease, or are interrupted, we should seek opportunities of doing good; when we have done hearing the word, then is a time to be speaking of it.

Notice is taken of her leaving her waterpot, or pail. 1st. She left it in kindness to Christ, that he might have to drink with his dinner; and fair water was his drink; he turned water into wine for others, but not for himself. Compare this with Rebecca's civility to Abraham's servant, *Gen. xxiv. 18*, and see that promise, *Mat. x. 42*. 2nd. She left it, that she might make the more haste into the city, to carry thither these good tidings. Those whose business it is to publish the name of Christ, must not encumber or entangle themselves with any thing that will retard or hinder them therein. When the disciples were to be made fishers of men, they must forsake all. 3rd. She left her waterpot as one careless of it, being wholly taken up with better things. Note, Those who are brought to the knowledge of Christ will shew it by a holy contempt of the things of this world and the things of it. And those who are newly acquainted with the things of God, must be excused if at first they be so taken up with that new world into which they are brought, that the things of this world seem to be for a time wholly neglected. Mr. Hildersham, in one of his sermons on this verse, from this instance largely justifies those who leave their worldly business on week-days to go hear sermons.

2. How she minded her errand to the town, for her heart was upon it; "she went into the city, and said to the men," probably the aldermen, the men in authority, whom, it may be, she found met together upon some public business; or to the men, that is, to every man she met in the streets; she proclaimed it in the chief places of concourse, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Observe,

1st. How solicitous she was to bring her friends and neighbours acquainted with Christ. When she had found that treasure, she called together her friends and neighbours, as *Lu. xv. 4*, not only to rejoice with her, but to share with her; knowing there was enough to enrich herself and all that would partake with her. Note, They that have been themselves with Jesus, and have found comfort in him, should do all they can to bring others to him; has he done us the honour to make himself known to us? let us do him the honour to make him known to others; nor can we do ourselves a greater honour. This woman becomes an apostle; *quæ scortum fuerat egressa, repredicatur magistra evangelica*;—she who went forth a specimen of impurity, returns a teacher of evangelical truth, saith Aretius. Christ had bid her call her husband, which she thought was warrant enough to call every body. She went into the city, the city where she dwelt, among her kinsfolk and acquaintance. Though every man is my neighbour that I have opportunity of doing good to, yet I have most opportunity, and therefore lie under the most obligations, to do good to those that live near me. Where the tree falls, there let it be made useful.

2nd. How fair and ingenuous she was in the notice she gave them concerning this stranger she had met with.

First. She tells them plainly what induced her to admire him; "he has told me all things that ever I did." No more is recorded but what he told her of her husbands; but it is not improbable he had told her more of her faults; or, his telling her of that which she knew he could not by any ordinary means come to the knowledge of, convinced her that he could have told her of all that ever she did. If he has a Divine knowledge, it must be omniscience. He told her that which none knew but God and her own conscience. Two things affected her: 1st. The extent of his knowledge; we ourselves cannot tell all things that ever we did, many things pass unheeded, and more pass away and are forgotten; but Jesus Christ knows all the thoughts, words, and actions of all the children of men; see *Heb. iv. 13*; he hath said, "I know thy works." 2nd. The power of his word; this made a great impression upon her, that he told her her secret sins, with such an unaccountable power and energy, that being told of one, she is convicted of all, and judged of all. She doth not say, Come see a man that has told me strange things concerning religious worship, and the laws of it; that has decided the controversy between this mountain and Jerusalem; a man that calls himself the Messiah; but, Come see a man that has told me of my sins; she fastens upon that part of Christ's discourse, which one would think she should have been most shy of repeating; but experimental proofs of the power of Christ's word and Spirit are, of all other, the most cogent and convincing; and that knowledge of Christ, into which we are led by the conviction of sin and humiliation, is most likely to be sound and saving.

Secondly. She invites them to come and see him whom she had conceived so high an opinion of. Not barely come and look upon him,—she doth not invite them to him as a show,—but come and converse with him; come and hear his wisdom, as I have done, and you will be of my mind. She would not undertake to manage the arguments which had convinced her, in such a manner as to convince others; all that see the evidence of truth themselves are not able to make others see it; but come and talk with him, and you will find such a power in his word as far exceeds all other evidence. Note, Those who can do little else towards the conviction and conversion of others, may and should bring them to those means of grace which they themselves have found effectual. Jesus was now at the town's end: Now come, see him. When opportunities of getting the knowledge of God are brought to our doors, we are inexcusable if we neglect them; shall we not go over the threshold to see Him whose day prophets and kings desired to see?

Thirdly. She resolves to appeal to themselves, and their own sentiments, upon the trial; "Is not this the Christ?" She doth not peremptorily say, "he is the Messiah," how clear soever she was in her own mind; and yet she very prudently mentions the Messiah, whom otherwise they would not have thought of, and then refers it to themselves; she will not impose her faith upon them, but only propose it to them. By such fair but forcible appeals as these, men's judgments and consciences are sometimes taken hold of, ere they are aware.

3rd. What success she had in this invitation, ver. 30: they "went out of the city, and came to him." Though it might seem very improbable that a woman of so small a figure and so ill a character should have the honour of the first discovery of the Messiah among the Samaritans; yet it pleased God to incline their hearts to take notice of her report, and not to slight it as an idle tale. Time was when lepers were the first that brought tidings to Samaria of a great deliverance, *2 Kin. vii. 3, &c.* They came unto him; did not send for him into the city to them; but in token of their respect to him, and the earnestness of their desire to see him, they went out to him. Those that would know Christ, must meet him where he records his name.

Fourthly. Christ's discourse with his disciples, while the woman was absent, ver. 31—34. See how industrious our Lord Jesus was to redeem time, to husband every minute of it, and to fill up the vacancies of it. When the disciples were gone into the town, his discourse with the woman was edifying, and suited to her case; when she was gone into the town, his discourse with

them was no less edifying, and suited to their case; it were well if we could thus gather up the fragments of time, that none of it may be lost. Two things are observable in this discourse:

1. How Christ expresseth the delight which he himself had in his work. His work was to seek and save that which was lost; to go about doing good. Now this work we here find him wholly taken up with; for,

1st. He neglected his meat and drink for his work. "When he sat down upon the well, he was weary, and needed refreshment; but this opportunity of saving souls made him forget his weariness and hunger; and he minded his food so little that, First. His disciples were forced to invite him to it; they prayed him, they pressed him, saying, 'Master, eat.' It was an instance of their love to him, that they invited him, lest he should be faint and sick for want of some support; but it was a greater instance of his love to souls, that he needed invitation. Let us learn hence a holy indifference even to the needful supports of life, in comparison with spiritual things. Secondly. He minded it so little, that they suspected he had meat brought him in their absence, ver. 33: "Has any man brought him ought to eat?" he had so little stomach to his dinner that they were ready to think he had dined already. They that make religion their business, when any of its affairs are to be attended, will prefer them before their food; as Abraham's servant, that would not eat till he had told his errand, *Gen. xxiv. 33*; and Samuel, that would not sit down till David was anointed, *1 Sam. xvi. 11*.

2nd. He made his work his meat and drink. The work he had done in instructing the woman; the work he had to do among the Samaritans; the prospect he now had of doing good to many,—this was meat and drink to him, it was the greatest pleasure and satisfaction imaginable. Never did a hungry man, or an epicure, expect a plentiful feast with so much desire, nor feed upon its dainties with so much delight, as our Lord Jesus expected and improved an opportunity of doing good to souls. Concerning this he saith,

First. That it was such meat as the disciples knew not of: they did not imagine that he had any design or prospect of planting his Gospel among the Samaritans; this was a piece of usefulness they never thought of. Note, Christ by his Gospel and Spirit doth more good to the souls of men than his own disciples know of, or expect. This may be said of good Christians too who live by faith, that they have meat to eat which others know not of,—joy which a stranger doth not intermeddle with. Now this word made them ask, "Has any man brought him ought to eat?" so apt were even his own disciples to understand him after a corporal and carnal manner when he used similitudes.

Secondly. That the reason why his work was his meat and drink was, because it was his Father's work, his Father's will; ver. 34, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." Note, 1st. The salvation of sinners is the will of God, and the instruction of them in order thereunto is his work; see *1 Tim. ii. 4*. There is a chosen remnant, whose salvation is in a particular manner his will. 2nd. Christ was sent into the world on this errand, to bring people to God; to know him, and to be happy in him. 3rd. He made this work his business and delight. When his body needed food, his mind was so taken up with this, that he forgot both hunger and thirst, both meat and drink. Nothing could be more grateful to him than doing good; when he was invited to meat, he went that he might do good, for that was his meat always. 4th. He was not only ready upon all occasions to go to his work, but he was earnest and in care to go through it, and to finish his work, in all the parts of it. He resolved never to quit it, or lay it down, till he could say, "It is finished." Many have zeal to carry them out at first, but not zeal to carry them on to the last; but our Lord Jesus was intent upon finishing his work. Our Master has herein left us an example, that we may learn to do the will of God as he did. First. With diligence and close application, as those that make a business of it. Secondly. With delight and pleasure in it, as in our element. Thirdly. With constancy and perseverance; not only minding to do but aiming to finish, our work.

2. See here how Christ, having expressed his delight in his work, excites his disciples to diligence in their work: they were workers with him, and therefore should be workers like him, and make their work their meat, as he did. The work they had to do was to preach the Gospel, and by it to set up the kingdom of the Messiah. Now this work he here compares to harvest work, which is the gathering in of the fruits of the earth; and this similitude he prosecutes throughout this discourse, ver. 35—38. Note, Gospel time is harvest time, and gospel work harvest work. The harvest is before appointed and expected, so was the Gospel. Harvest time is busy time; all hands must be then at work; every one must work for himself, that he may reap of the graces and comforts of the Gospel: ministers must work for God, to gather in souls to him. Harvest time is opportunity, a short and limited time, which will not last always; and harvest work is work that must be done then, or not at all; so the time of the enjoyment of the Gospel is a particular season, which must be improved for its proper purposes; for once past, it cannot be recalled. The disciples were to gather in a harvest of souls for Christ. Now he here suggests three things to them, to quicken them to diligence:

1st. That it was necessary work, and the occasion for it very urgent and pressing, ver. 35: "Ye say, It is four months to harvest; but I say, The fields are already white." Here is, First. A saying of Christ's disciples concerning the corn-harvest; "there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest," which may be taken either generally, You say, for the encouragement of the sower at seed time, that it will be but four months to the harvest. With us it is but about four months between the barley seedness and the barley harvest; probably it was so with them as to other grain; or particularly, Now at this time you reckon it will be four months to next harvest, according to the ordinary course of providence. The Jews' harvest began at the passover, about Easter, much earlier in the year than ours; by which it appears that this journey of Christ from Judæa to Galilee was in the winter, about the end of November, for he travelled all weathers to do good. God has not only promised us a harvest every year, but has appointed the weeks of harvest, so that we know when to expect it, and take our measures accordingly. Secondly. Here is a saying of Christ's concerning the gospel harvest; his heart was as much upon the fruits of his Gospel as the hearts of others were upon the fruits of the earth; and to that he would lead the thoughts of his disciples: "Look, the fields are already white unto the harvest."

1st. Here, in this place, where they now were, there was harvest work for him to do. They would have him to eat, ver. 31. "Eat!" saith he; "I have other work to do, that is more needful. Look what crowds of Samaritans are coming out of the town, over the fields, that are ready to receive the Gospel." Probably there were many now in view. People's forwardness to hear the Word is a great excitement to ministers' diligence and liveliness in preaching it.

2nd. In other places, all the country over, there was harvest work enough for them all to do. Consider the regions, think of the state of the country, and you will find there are multitudes as ready to receive the Gospel as a field of corn that is fully ripe is ready to be reaped. The fields were now made white to the harvest. First. By the decree of God, revealed in the prophecies of the Old Testament. Now was the time when the gathering of the people should be to Christ, *Gen. xlix. 10*; when great accessions should be made to the church, and the bounds of it should be enlarged; and therefore it was time for them to

Nazareth, but is employed to designate the country of Samaria, in contradistinction from the town of Nazareth. Thus the statement would amount to this, that he went into the province, avoiding Nazareth, where he knew his reception would not be favourable. Alford, however, is of opinion that our Lord left Judæa to escape the publicity that was gathering round him; and to avoid fame, betook himself to Galilee, where, as a prophet, he was least likely to be honoured.

iv. 45. "The Galileans received him:" see chap. n. 23. "For they also," &c.: inserted for the benefit of those readers who might not be aware that the Galileans frequented the feasts at Jerusalem.

iv. 46. "Nobleman:" probably an officer belonging to the household of Herod Antipas. It has been conjectured that he was Chuza, Herod's steward (*Luke viii. 3*). He was most likely a Jew. "Capernaum:" "a town choicely situated on the north-west shore of the Sea of Galilee. Its position at the head of the lake gave it a

be busy. It is a great encouragement to us to engage in any work for God, if we understand by the signs of the times that this is the proper season for that work, for then it will prosper. Secondly. By the disposition of men. John Baptist had made ready a people prepared for the Lord, *Lu. i. 17*; since he began to preach the kingdom of God every man pressed into it, *Lu. xvi. 16*; this, therefore, was a time for the preachers of the Gospel to apply themselves to their work with the utmost vigour, to thrust in their sickle when the harvest was ripe, *Rev. xiv. 15*. It was necessary to work now; pity such a season should be let slip. If the corn that is ripe be not reaped, it will shed, and be lost, and the fowls will pick it up; if souls that are under convictions, and have some good inclinations, be not helped now, their hopeful beginnings will come to nothing, and they will be a prey to pretenders. It was also easy to work now; when the people's hearts are prepared, the work will be done suddenly, *2 Chr. xxix. 36*. It cannot but quicken ministers to take pains in preaching the Word, when they observe that people take pleasure in hearing it.

2nd. That it was profitable and advantageous work, which they themselves would be gainers by; ver. 36, "he that reapeth receiveth wages," and so shall you. Christ has undertaken to pay those well whom he employs in his work, for he will never do as Jehoiakim did, that used his neighbours' service without wages, *Jer. xxii. 13*, or those who by fraud kept back the hire of those particularly who reaped down their corn fields, *Jas. v. 4*. Christ's reapers, though they cry to him day and night, shall never have cause to cry against him, nor to say they served a hard master: he that reapeth, not only shall receive wages, but death receive it: there is a present reward in the service of Christ, and his work is its own wages. First. Christ's reapers have fruit; "he gathereth fruit unto life eternal;" that is, he shall both save himself and those that hear him, *1 Tim. iv. 16*. If the faithful reaper save his own soul, that is fruit abounding to his account; it is fruit gathered to life eternal; and if over and above this he be instrumental to save the souls of others too, there is fruit gathered. Souls gathered to Christ are fruit, good fruit, the fruit that Christ seeks for, *Rom. i. 13*; it is gathered for Christ, *Cant. viii. 11, 12*; it is gathered to life eternal. This is the comfort of faithful ministers, that their work has a tendency to the eternal salvation of precious souls. Secondly. They have joy; "that he that sows and they that reap may rejoice together." The minister who is the happy instrument of beginning a good work is he that sows, as John Baptist was; he that is employed to carry it on and perfect it is he that reaps, and both shall rejoice together. Note, 1st. Though God is to have all the glory of the success of the Gospel, yet faithful ministers may take themselves the comfort of it. The reapers share in the joy of harvest, though the profits belong to the master, *1 Thes. ii. 19*. 2nd. Those ministers who are variously gifted and employed should be so far from envying one another, that they should rather mutually rejoice in each other's success and usefulness. Though all Christ's ministers are not alike serviceable, nor alike successful, yet, if they have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful, they shall all enter together into the joy of their Lord at last.

3rd. That it was easy work, and work that was half done to their hands by those that were gone before them; ver. 37, 38, "One soweth and another reapeth." This sometimes speaks a grievous judgment upon him that sows, *Nic. vi. 15*; *Deu. xxviii. 30*; "Thou shalt sow, and another shall reap;" as *Deu. vi. 11*, "houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not." So here, Moses, and the prophets, and John Baptist, had paved the way to the Gospel, had sown the good seed which the New Testament ministers did in effect but gather the fruit of; "I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed," in compassion, "no labour" *Isa. xl. 3-5*.

This speaks two things concerning the Old Testament ministry: First. That it was very much short of the New Testament ministry. Moses and the prophets sowed, but they could not be said to reap, so little did they see of the fruit of their labours. Their writings have done much more good since they left us than ever their preaching did. Secondly. That it was very much serviceable to the New Testament ministry, and made way for it. The writings of the prophets, which were read in the synagogues every sabbath day, raised people's expectations of the Messiah, and so prepared them to bid him welcome. Had it not been for the seed sown by the prophets, this Samaritan woman could not have said, "We know that the Messiah cometh." The writings of the Old Testament are in some respects more useful to us than they could be to those to whom they were first written, because better understood by the accomplishment of them, see *1 Pet. i. 12*; *Heb. iv. 2*; *Rom. xvi. 25, 26*.

This also speaks two things concerning the ministry of the apostles of Christ: First. That it was a fruitful ministry. They were reapers that gathered in a great harvest of souls to Jesus Christ; and did more in seven years towards the setting up of the kingdom of God among men than the prophets of the Old Testament had done in twice so many ages. Secondly. That it was much facilitated, especially among the Jews, to whom they were first sent, by the writings of the prophets. The prophets sowed in tears, crying out, We have laboured in vain; the apostles reaped in joy, saying, "Thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph." Note, From the labours of ministers that are dead and gone, much good fruit may be reaped by the people that survive them, and the ministers that succeed them. John Baptist, and those that assisted him, had laboured; and the disciples of Christ entered into their labours, built upon their foundation, and reaped the fruit of what they sowed. See what reason we have to bless God for those that are gone before us, for their preaching and their writing, for what they did and suffered in their day, for we are entered into their labours; their studies and services have made our work the easier. And when the ancient and modern labourers, those that came into the vineyard at the third hour, and those that came in at the eleventh, meet in the day of account, they will be so far from envying one another the honour of their respective services, that both they that sowed and they that reaped shall rejoice together; and the great Lord of the harvest shall have the glory of all.

Fourthly. The good effect which this visit Christ made to the Samaritans (en passant) had upon them, and the fruit which was now presently gathered among them, ver. 39, 42. See what impressions were made on them:

1. By the woman's testimony concerning Christ. Though a single testimony, and one of no good report, and the testimony no more but this, "He told me all that ever I did," yet it had a good influence upon many. One would have thought his telling the woman of her secret sins should have made them afraid of coming to him, lest he should tell them also of their faults; but they will venture that, rather than not be acquainted with one that they had reason to think was a prophet. And two things they were brought to,

1st. To credit Christ's words; ver. 39, "Many" of the Samaritans "of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman." So far they believed on him that they took him for a prophet, and were desirous to know the mind of God from him: this is favourably interpreted a believing on him. Now observe, First. Who they were that believed; many of the Samaritans, who were not of the house of Israel. Their faith was not only an aggravation of the unbelief of the Jews, from whom better might have been expected, but an earnest of the faith of the Gentiles, who would welcome that which the Jews rejected. Secondly. Upon what inducement they believed; "for the saying of the woman." See here, 1st. How God is sometimes pleased to use very weak and unlikely instruments for the beginning and carrying on of a good work. A little maid directed a

great prince to Elsha, *2 Kin. v. 2*. 2nd. How great a matter a little fire kindles; our Saviour, by instructing one poor woman, spread instruction to a whole town. Let not ministers be either careless in their preaching, or discouraged in it, because their hearers are few and mean; for by doing good to them, good may be conveyed to more, and those that are more considerable; if they teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, a great number may learn at second hand. Philip preached the Gospel to a single gentleman, in his chariot, upon the road; and he not only received it himself, but carried it into his country, and propagated it there. 3rd. See how good it is to speak experimentally of Christ and the things of God. This woman could say little of Christ, but what she did say she spoke feelingly; "he told me all that ever I did." Those are most likely to do good that can tell what God has done for their souls, *Ps. lxxi. 16*.

2nd. They were brought to court his stay among them; ver. 40, when they were come to him, "they besought him that he would tarry with them." Upon the woman's report they believed him to be a prophet, and came to him; and when they saw him, the meanness of his appearance and the manifest poverty of his outward condition did not lessen their esteem of him, and expectations from him, but still they respected him as a prophet. Note, There are hopes of those who are got over the vulgar prejudices that men have against true worth in a low estate. Blessed are they that are not offended in Christ at first sight. So far were they from being offended in him, that they begged he would tarry with them. First. That they might testify their respects to him, and treat him with the honour and kindness due to his character. God's prophets and ministers are welcome guests to all those who sincerely embrace the Gospel; as to Lydia, *Acts xvi. 15*. Secondly. That they might receive instruction from him. Those that are taught of God are truly desirous to learn more, and to be better acquainted with Christ. Many would have flocked to one that would tell them their fortune, but these flocked to one that would tell them their faults—tell them of sin and duty. The historian seems to put an emphasis upon their being Samaritans, as *Lu. x. 33*; *xvii. 16*. The Samaritans had not that reputation for religion that the Jews had; yet the Jews, who saw Christ's miracles, drove him from them; while the Samaritans, who saw not his miracles, nor shared in his favours, invited him to them. The proof of the Gospel's success is not always according to the probability; nor what is experienced, according to what is expected, either way. The Samaritans were taught by the custom of their country to be shy of conversation with the Jews; there were Samaritans that refused to let Christ go through their town, *Lu. ix. 52*; yet these begged him to tarry with them. Note, it adds much to the praise of our love to Christ and his Word, if it conquers the prejudices of education and custom, and sets light by the censures of men.

Now we are told that Christ granted their request; "he abode there." Though it was a city of the Samaritans, near adjoining to their temple, yet, when he was invited, he tarried there; though he was upon a journey, and had farther to go, yet, when he had an opportunity of doing good, "he abode there." That is no real hindrance which will further our account; yet he abode there but two days, because he had other places to visit, and other work to do; and those two days were as many as came to the share of this city, out of the few days of our Saviour's sojourning upon earth.

2. We are told what impressions were made upon them by Christ's own word, and his personal converse with them, ver. 41, 42; what he said and did there is not related; whether he healed theirsick or no; but it is intimated in the effect that he said and did that which convinced them he was the Christ; and the labours of a minister are best told by the good fruit of them. Their hearing of him had a good effect, but now their eyes see him, and the effect of that was,

1st. That their number grew; ver. 41, "Many more believed;" many that would not be persuaded to go out of the town to him, yet when he came among them were wrought upon to believe in him. Note, It is comfortable to see the number of believers; and sometimes the zeal and forwardness of some may be a means to provoke many, and to stir them up to a holy emulation, *Rom. xi. 14*.

2nd. That their faith grew. Those who had been wrought upon by the report of the woman now saw cause to say, "Now we believe, not for thy saying," ver. 42. Here are three things in which their faith grew:

First. In the matter of it, or that which they did believe. Upon the testimony of the woman they believed him to be a prophet, or some extraordinary messenger from heaven; but now they have conversed with him, they believe that he is the Christ—the anointed one—the very same that was promised to the fathers, and expected by them; and that, being the Christ, he is "the Saviour of the world," for that was the work to which he was anointed, to "save his people from their sins." They believed him to be the Saviour, not only of the Jews, but of the world, which they hoped would take them in, though Samaritans, for it was promised that he should be salvation to the ends of the earth, *Isa. xlii. 6*.

Secondly. In the certainty of it. Their faith now grew up to a full assurance; we "know that this is indeed the Christ;" *ἀληθῶς*; not a pretended Christ, but a real one; not a typical Saviour, as many under the Old Testament, but truly one. Such an assurance as this of Divine truths is what we should labour after; not only we think it probable, and are willing to suppose, that Jesus may be the Christ, but we know that he is indeed the Christ.

Thirdly. In the ground of it, which was a kind of spiritual sensation and experience. "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves." They had before believed for her saying; and it was well—it was a good step; but now they find farther and much firmer footing for their faith: Now we believe, because we have heard him ourselves, and have heard such excellent and divine truths, accompanied with such commanding power and evidence, that we are abundantly satisfied and assured that this is the Christ. This is like what the queen of Sheba said of Solomon, *1 Kin. x. 6, 7*; "the one half was not told me." These Samaritans who believed for the woman's saying, now gained farther light; for to him that hath shall be given; he that is faithful in a little shall be trusted with more.

In this instance we may see how faith comes by hearing. 1st. Faith comes to the birth by hearing the report of men. These Samaritans, for the sake of the woman's saying, believed so far as to come and see—to come and make a trial; thus the instructions of parents and preachers, and the testimony of the church and our experienced neighbours, recommend the doctrine of Christ to our acquaintance, and incline us to entertain it as highly probable. But, 2nd. Faith comes to its growth, strength, and maturity, by hearing the testimony of Christ himself; and this goes farther, and recommends his doctrine to our acceptance, and obligeth us to believe it as undoubtedly certain. We were induced to look into the Scripture by the saying of those who told us that in them they had found eternal life; but when we ourselves found it in them too, have experienced the enlightening, convincing, regenerating, sanctifying, comforting power of the Word, now we believe, not for their saying, but because we have searched them ourselves; and our faith stands "not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," *1 Cor. ii. 5*; *1 Jno. v. 9, 10*.

Thus was the seed of the Gospel sown in Samaria; what effect there was of this afterwards doth not appear; but we find that four or five years after, when Philip preached the gospel in Samaria, he found such blessed remains of this good work now wrought, that "the people with one accord gave heed to those things which Philip spoke," *Acts viii. 5, 6, 8*; but as some were pliable

large share in the profits of the Galilean fisheries. The plain of Gennesaret, in which it was situated, was not only prolific of agricultural advantages, but also brought to the city a very dependable source of wealth from the manufactories—the mills, tanneries, and potteries which had been erected there. In addition, the highway between Damascus and the heart of Palestine ran through the district, and brought a very extensive general traffic to the city, which became the centre of commercial and manufacturing life in

the provinces. C added in the lap of a prodigal nature, a focus of mercantile and trading interests, steeped in the bounteous and varied prosperity which fortune had showered upon her, Capernaum was exalted unto heaven."

iv. 54. "Second miracle:" i.e., in Cana (see chap. ii. 23), the first having been wrought when he made the water wine. The words here mean that Jesus performed this second miracle on his return into Galilee.

to good so were others to evil, whom Simon Magus bewitched with his sorceries, ver. 9, 10.

13 Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. 44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. 45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast. 46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. 48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. 49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. 50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. 51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. 52 Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. 53 So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. 54 This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judæa into Galilee.

In these verses we have, First. Christ's coming into Galilee, ver. 43. Though he was as welcome among the Samaritans as he could be any where, and had better success, yet after two days he left them; not so much because they were Samaritans, and he would not confirm those in their prejudices against him who said, "he is a Samaritan," ch. viii. 48, but because he must preach to other cities, *Lu. iv. 43*. He went into Galilee, for there he spent much of his time. Now see here,

1. Whither Christ went; into Galilee, into the country of Galilee; but not to Nazareth, which was strictly his own country; he went among the villages, but declined going to Nazareth, the head city, for a reason here given, which Jesus himself testified, who knew the temper of his countrymen, the hearts of all men, and the experiences of all prophets; and it is this, that "a prophet hath no honour in his own country." Note, 1st. Prophets ought to have honour, because God has put honour upon them, and we do or may receive benefit by them. 2nd. The honour due to the Lord's prophets has very often been denied them, and contempt put upon them. 3rd. This due honour is most frequently denied them in their own country; see *Lu. iv. 24*; *Mat. xiii. 57*; not that it is universally true; no rule but hath some exceptions, but it holds for the most part. Joseph, when he began to be a prophet, was most hated by his brethren; David disdained by his brother, *1 Sam. xvii. 28*; Jeremiah malign'd by the men of Anathoth, *Jer. xi. 21*; Paul by his countrymen, the Jews; and Christ's near kinsmen spoke most slightly of him, *ch. vii. 5*. Men's pride and envy makes them scorn to be instructed by those that, when time was, were their school-fellows and playfellows. Desire of novelty, and of that which is far fetched and dear bought, and seems to drop out of the sky to them, makes them despise those persons and things which they have been long used to and know the rise of. 4th. It is a great discouragement to a minister to go among a people that have no value for him or his labours. Christ would not go to Nazareth, because he knew how little respect he should have there. 5th. It is just with God to deny his Gospel to those that despise the ministers of it: they that mock the messengers forfeit the benefit of the message, *Mat. xxi. 35, 41*.

2. What entertainment he met with among the Galileans in the country; ver. 45, they received him, bade him welcome, and cheerfully attended on his doctrine. Christ and his Gospel are not sent in vain; if they have not honour with some, they shall have with others. Now the reason given why these Galileans were so ready to receive Christ is, because they had "seen the miracles he did at Jerusalem," ver. 45. Observe, 1st. They went up to Jerusalem at the feast, the feast of the passover. The Galileans lay very remote from Jerusalem, and their way thither lay through the country of the Samaritans, which was very troublesome for a Jew to pass through, worse than Bala's valley of old; yet, in obedience to God's command, they went up to the feast, and there they became acquainted with Christ. Note, They that are diligent and constant in attending on public ordinances, some time or other meet with more spiritual benefit than they expect. 2nd. At Jerusalem they saw Christ's miracles, which recommended him and his doctrine very much to their faith and affections. The miracles were wrought for the benefit of them at Jerusalem; yet the Galileans were accidentally there, got more advantage by them than they did for whom they were chiefly designed. Thus the Word preached to a mixed multitude may perhaps edify occasional hearers more than the constant auditory.

3. What city he went to; when he would go to a city, he chose to go to Cana of Galilee, "where he had made the water wine," ver. 46: thither he went to see if there were any good fruits of that miracle remaining; and if there were, to confirm their faith, and to water what he had planted. The evangelist mentions this miracle here, to teach us to keep in remembrance what we have seen of the works of Christ.

Secondly. His curing of the nobleman's son that was sick of a fever. This story is not recorded by any other of the evangelists; it comes in *Mat. iv. 23*. Observe,

1. Who the petitioner was, and who the patient. The petitioner was a nobleman, the patient was his son; "there was a certain nobleman;" *regulus*, so the Latin, 'a little king'; so called, either for the largeness of his estate, or the extent of his power, or the royalties that belonged to his manor. Some understand it as speaking his preferment; he was a courtier, in some office about the king; others, as speaking his party; he was an Herodian, a royalist, a prerogative man, one that espoused the interest of the Herods, father and son; perhaps it was Chuza, Herod's steward, *Lu. viii. 3*, or Manaen, Herod's foster brother, *Acts xiii. 1*. There were saints in Caesar's household. The father a nobleman, and yet the son sick; for dignities and titles of honour will be no security to persons and families from the assaults of sickness and death. It was fifteen miles from Capernaum, where this nobleman lived, to Cana, where Christ now was, yet this affliction in his family sent him so far to Christ.

2. How the petitioner made his application to the Physician. Having heard that "Jesus was now come out of Judæa into Galilee," and finding that he did not come towards Capernaum, but turned off towards the other side of the country, he went to him himself, and "besought him to come and heal his son," ver. 47. See here, 1st. His tender affection to his son, that when he was sick he would spare no pains to get help for him. 2nd. His great respect to our Lord Jesus; that he would come himself to wait upon him, when he might have sent a servant; and that he besought him, when, as a man in authority, some would think he might have ordered his attendance. The greatest men, when they come to God, must become beggars, and sue *sub forma pauperis*,— 'as paupers.'

As to the errand he came upon, we may observe a mixture in his faith. First. There was sincerity in it; he did believe that Christ could heal his son, though his disease was dangerous. It is likely he had physicians to him, who had given him over; but he believed that Christ could cure him when the case seemed deplorable. Secondly. Yet there was infirmity in his faith; he believed that Christ could heal his son, but, as it should seem, he thought he could not heal at a distance; and therefore he besought him that he would come down and heal him, expecting, as Naaman did, that he will come and strike his hand over the patient, as if he could not cure him but by a physical contact. Thus we are apt to limit the Holy One of Israel, and to stint him to our forms. The centurion, a Gentile, a soldier, was so strong in faith as to say, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof," *Mat. viii. 8*. This nobleman, a Jew, must have Christ to come down, though it was a good day's journey, and despaired of a cure unless he come down; as if he must teach Christ how to work. We are encouraged to pray, but we are not allowed to prescribe; Lord, heal me, but whether with a word, or a touch, "thy will be done."

3. The gentle rebuke he met with in this address, ver. 48: "Jesus said to him, I see how it is, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe,' as the Samaritans did, though they saw no signs and wonders; and therefore I must work miracles among you. Though he was a nobleman, and now in grief about his son, and had shewed great respect to Christ in coming so far to him, yet Christ gives him a reproof. Men's dignity in the world shall not exempt them from the rebukes of the Word or Providence; for Christ reproves not after the hearing of his ears, but with equity, *Isa. xl. 3*. Observe, Christ first shews him his sin and weakness, to prepare him for mercy, and then grants him his request. Christ humbles those first with his frowns whom he intends to honour with his favours. The Comforter shall first convince. Herod longed to see some miracle, *Lu. xxiii. 8*, and this courtier was of the same mind, and the generality of the people too.

Now that which is blamed is, 1st. That whereas they had heard by credible and incontestable report of the miracles he had wrought in other places, they would not believe except they saw them with their own eyes, *Lu. iv. 23*; they must be honoured, and they must be humoured, or they will not be convinced. Their country must be graced, and their curiosity gratified, with signs and wonders, or else, though the doctrine of Christ be sufficiently proved by miracles wrought elsewhere, they will not believe; like Thomas, they will yield to no method of conviction but what they shall prescribe. 2nd. That whereas they had seen divers miracles, which they could not gain say the evidence of, but which sufficiently proved Christ a teacher come from God, and should now have applied themselves to him for instruction in his doctrine, which by its native excellency would have gently led them on in believing to a spiritual perfection; instead of this, they would go no farther in believing than they were driven by signs and wonders. The spiritual power of the Word did not affect them, did not attract them, but only the sensible power of miracles, which were for them who believe not, but prophesying for them that believe, *1 Cor. xiv. 22*. Those that admire miracles only, and despise prophesying, rank themselves with unbelievers.

4. His continued importunity in his address; ver. 49, "Sir, come down, ere my child die." *Kuipo*, 'Lord,' so it should be rendered. In this reply of his we have,

1st. Something that was commendable; he took the reproof patiently, he spoke to Christ respectfully; though he was one of those that wore soft clothing, yet he could bear this reproof. It is none of the privileges of peerage to be above the reproofs of the word of Christ; but it is a sign of a good temper and disposition in men, especially in great men, when they can be told of their faults and not be angry. And as he did not take the reproof for an affront, so he did not take it for a denial, but still prosecuted his request, and continued to wrestle till he prevailed. Nay, he might argue thus, If Christ heal my soul, sure he will heal my son; if he cure my unbelief, he will cure his fever. This is the method Christ takes, first to work upon us, and then to work for us; and there is hopes, if we find him entering upon his method.

2nd. Here is something that was blameworthy; that was his infirmity; for, First. He seems to take no notice of the reproof Christ gave him, saith nothing to it, either by way of confession or excuse; for he is so wholly taken up with concern about his child that he can mind nothing else. Note, The sorrow of the world is a great prejudice to our profiting by the word of Christ; inordinate care and grief are thorns that choke the good seed; see *Ex. vi. 9*. Secondly. He still discovered the weakness of his faith in the power of Christ. 1st. He must have Christ to come down, thinking else he could do the child no kindness. It is hard to persuade ourselves that distance of time and place are no obstructions to the knowledge and power of our Lord Jesus; yet so it is, he sees afar off, for his eyes run to and fro; and he acts afar off, for his word, the word of his power, runs very swiftly. 2nd. He believes Christ could heal a sick child, but not that he could raise a dead child; and therefore, O "come down, ere my child die;" as if then it would be too late; whereas Christ has the same power over death that he has over bodily diseases. He forgot that

v. 1. "After this:" rather, "after these things." The expression implies that some interval had elapsed since the events mentioned in the close of the last chapter. "A feast:" various conjectures have been made as to what feast is here meant. Almost every Jewish feast has been suggested, but it seems impossible to determine with any degree of certainty what feast it was. Alford says, "No reason need be given why John does not name the feast; it is quite in accordance with his practice of mentioning nothing that does not

concern his subject-matter. Thus the Passover is mentioned, chap. ii. 13, because of the buying and selling in the Temple; again, chap. vi. 4, to account for the great multitude, and as eminently suiting his discourse there; the Feast of Tabernacles, vii. 2, because of the practice alluded to by our Lord in verse 37; that of the Dedication, x. 22, to account for his being in Solomon's Porch, because it was winter; but in this chapter, where there is nothing alluding to the time or nature of the feast, it is not specified." "Jesus:" we need

Elijah and Elisha had raised dead children; and is Christ's power inferior to theirs? Observe what haste he is in; "Come down, ere my child die;" as if there were danger of Christ's slipping his time. "He that believeth doth not make haste," but refers himself to Christ; Lord, what, and when, and how thou pleasest.

5. The answer of peace which Christ gave to his request at last; ver. 50, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." Christ here gives us an instance,

1st. Of his power; that he not only could heal, but could heal with so much ease, without the trouble of a visit. Here is nothing said, nothing done, nothing ordered to be done, and yet the cure wrought; "thy son liveth." The healing beams of the Sun of righteousness dispense benign influences from one end of heaven to another, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. Though Christ is now in heaven, and his church on earth, he can send from above. This nobleman would have Christ come down, and heal his son; Christ will heal his son, and not go down; and thus the cure is the sooner wrought, and the nobleman's mistakes rectified, and his faith confirmed; so that the thing was better done in Christ's way. When he denies what we ask, he gives what is much more to our advantage; we ask for ease, he gives patience. Observe, His power was exerted by his word; in saying, thy son lives, he shewed that he has life in himself, and power to quicken whom he will. Christ's saying, thy soul lives, makes it alive.

2nd. Of his pity; he observed the nobleman to be in pain about his son, and his natural affection discovered itself in that word, ere my child, my dear child, die; and therefore Christ dropped the reproof, and gave him assurance of the recovery of his child; for he knows how a father pities his children.

6. The nobleman's belief of the word of Christ; he believed, and went away. Though Christ did not gratify him so far as to go down with him, he is satisfied with the method Christ took, and reckons he has gained his point. How quickly, how easily is that which is lacking in our faith perfected by the word and power of Christ. Now he sees no sign or wonder, and yet believes the wonder done.

1st. Christ said, "thy son liveth," and the man believed him; not only believed the omniscience of Christ, that he knew the child recovered, but the omnipotence of Christ, that the cure was effected by his word. He left him dying; yet, when Christ said, he lives, like the father of the faithful, "against hope he believed in hope, and staggered not through unbelief."

2nd. Christ said, "Go thy way," and, as an evidence of the sincerity of his faith, "he went his way," and gave neither Christ nor himself any farther disturbance. He did not press Christ to come down; did not say, if he do recover, yet a visit will be acceptable; no, he seems no farther solicitous; but, like Hannah, he goes his way, and his countenance is no more sad. As one entirely satisfied, he made no great haste home; did not hurry home that night, but returned leisurely, as one that was perfectly easy in his own mind.

7. The farther confirmation of his faith, by comparing notes with his servants at his return.

1st. His servants met him with the agreeable news of the child's recovery, ver. 51. Probably they met him not far from his own house; and knowing what their master's cares were, they were willing, as soon as they could, to make him easy. David's servants were loath to tell him when the child was dead. Christ said, "thy son liveth," and now the servants say the same. Good news will meet those that hope in God's word.

2nd. He inquired what hour the child began to recover, ver. 52; not as if he doubted the influence of Christ's word upon the child's recovery, but he was desirous to have his faith confirmed, and might be able to satisfy any to whom he should relate it; for it was a material circumstance. Note, (1.) It is good to furnish ourselves with all the corroborating proofs and evidences that may be, to strengthen our faith in the word of Christ, that it may grow up to a full assurance: "shew me a token for good." (2.) The diligent comparing of the works of Christ with his word will be of great use to us for the confirming of our faith. That was the course this nobleman took; "he enquired of the servants the hour when he began to amend," and they told him, "yesterday, at the seventh hour," (at one o'clock in the afternoon, or, as some think this evangelist reckons, at seven o'clock at night,) "the fever left him;" not only he began to amend, but he was perfectly well on a sudden; so "the father knew that it was at the same hour" when Jesus said to him, "thy son liveth." As the word of God, well studied, will help us to understand his providences, so the providence of God, well observed, will help us to understand his word; for God is every day fulfilling the Scripture.

Two things would help to confirm his faith. *First*. That the child's recovery was sudden, and not gradual. They name the precise time to an hour, "yesterday," not about, but "at the seventh hour, the fever left him;" not it abated, or began to decrease, but left him in an instant. The word of Christ did not work like physic, which must have time to operate, and produce the effect, and perhaps cures by expectation only; no, with Christ it was *dictum, factum*—he spake, and it was done; not, he spake, and it was set a doing. *Secondly*. That it was just at the same time that Christ spoke to him, "at that very hour." The synchronisms and coincidences of events add very much to the beauty and harmony of providence. Observe the time, and the thing itself will be more illustrious; for every thing is beautiful in its time; at the very time when it is promised, as Israel's deliverance, *Ex. xii. 41*; at the very time when it is prayed for, as Peter's deliverance, *Acts xii. 12*. In men's works, distance of place is the delay of time, and the retarding of business; but it is not so in the works of Christ. The pardon, and peace, and comfort, and spiritual healing, which he speaks in heaven, is, if he pleases, at the same time effected and wrought in the souls of believers; and when these two come to be compared in the great day, Christ will "be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe."

8. The happy effect and issue of this. The bringing of the cure to the family brought salvation to it.

1st. The nobleman himself believed. He had before believed the word of Christ with reference to this particular occasion, but now he believed in Christ as the Messiah promised, and became one of his disciples. Thus the particular experience of the power and efficacy of one word of Christ may be a happy means to introduce and settle the whole authority of Christ's dominion in the soul. Christ has many ways of gaining the heart, and by the grant of a temporal mercy may make way for better things.

2nd. His whole house believed likewise. *First*. Because of the interest they all had in the miracle, which preserved the blossom and hopes of the family; this affected them all, and endeared Christ to them, and recommended him to their best thoughts. *Secondly*. Because of the influence the master of the family had upon them all. A master of a family cannot give faith to those under his charge, nor force them to believe; but he may be instrumental to remove external prejudices which obstruct the operation of the evidence, and then the work is more than half done. Abraham was famous for this, *Gen. xviii. 19*, and Joshua, *Jos. xxiv. 15*. This was a nobleman, and probably had a great household; but when he comes into Christ's school he brings them all along with him. What a blessed change was here in this house, occasioned by the sickness of the child! This should reconcile us to afflictions, we know not what good may follow from them. Probably the conversion of this nobleman, and his family at Capernaum, might invite Christ to come afterward and settle at

Capernaum as his head-quarters in Galilee. *Then* great men receive the Gospel, they may be instrumental to bring it to the places where they live.

Lastly. Here is the evangelist's remark upon this cure, ver. 54: "This is the second miracle," referring to *ch. ii. 11*, where the turning water into wine is said to be the first; that was soon after his first return out of Judaea, this soon after his second. In Judaea he had wrought many miracles, *ch. iii. 2*; *iv. 45*; they had the first offer; but being driven thence he wrought miracles in Galilee. Somewhere or other Christ will find a welcome. People may, if they please, shut the sun out of their own houses, but cannot shut it out of the world. This is not to be the second miracle, 1st. To remind us of the first, wrought in the same place some months before. Fresh mercies should revive the remembrance of former mercies, as former mercies should encourage our hopes of farther mercies. Christ keeps account of his favours, whether we do or no. 2nd. To let us know that this cure was before those many cures which the other evangelists mention to be wrought in Galilee, *Mat. iv. 23*; *Mar. i. 34*; *Lu. iv. 40*. Probably this cure, the patient being a person of quality, was the more talked of for that reason, and sent him crowds of patients; when this nobleman applied himself to Christ, multitudes followed. What abundance of good may great men do, if they be good men.

CHAPTER V.

We have in the Gospels a faithful record of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, *Acts i. 1*. These two are interwoven, because what he taught explained what he did, and what he did confirmed what he taught. Accordingly, we have in this chapter a miracle and a sermon. 1. The miracle was the cure of an impotent man, that had been diseased thirty-eight years, with the circumstances of that cure, ver. 1-16. 2. The sermon was Christ's vindication of himself before the Sanhedrim, when he was prosecuted as a criminal for healing the man on the sabbath day; in which, 1. He asserts his authority as Messiah, and Mediator between God and man, ver. 17-29. 2. He proves it by the testimony of his Father, of John Baptist, of his miracles, and of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and condemns the Jews for their unbelief, ver. 30-47.



AFTER this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first



POOL OF BETHESDA.

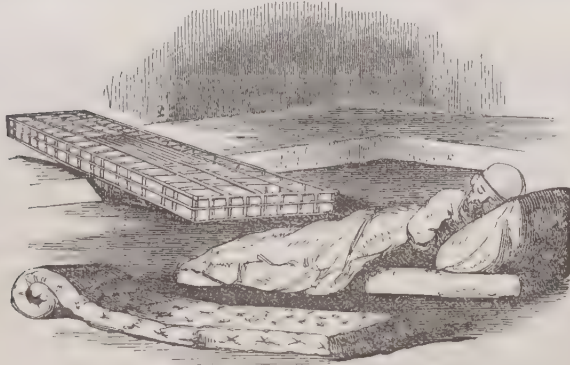
after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. 5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no

not suppose that he went up by himself without his disciples. See *chap. ii. 13*, where no mention is made of the disciples, and yet in *iii. 22* we read, "came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea."

v. 2. "There is at Jerusalem;" from the use of the present tense, some have supposed that St. John wrote his gospel before the destruction of Jerusalem, and was thus stating what was then in existence at Jerusalem. But the form of a narrative is frequently thrown into the present tense, even when the things described happened some

time before, so that no argument as to the date of the gospel can be drawn from what is here said. "Sheep market:" rather, "sheep gate." It was probably that mentioned in *Neh. iii. 1*, where we read, "Then Eliashib the high-priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate." (See *Neh. iii. 3, xii. 39*, where mention is made of the "fish gate.") It is not improbable that these gates received their names from the sheep market and fish market which were before them. "A pool;" literally, a place for

man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. 10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed. 11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed,



EASTERN BEDS.

and walk. 12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? 13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place. 14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. 15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. 16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

This miraculous cure is not recorded by any other of the evangelists, who confine themselves mostly to the miracles wrought in Galilee, but John relates those wrought at Jerusalem. Concerning this, observe,

First. The time when this cure was wrought: it was at "a feast of the Jews," that is, the passover, for that was the most celebrated feast. Christ, though residing in Galilee, yet "went up to Jerusalem" at the feast, ver. 1;

1. Because it was an ordinance of God, which as a subject he would observe, being made under the law; though, as a Son, he might have pleaded an exemption. Thus he would teach us to attend religious assemblies, *Heb. x. 25*.

2. Because it was an opportunity of good; for, 1st. There were great numbers gathered together there at that time; it was a general rendezvous, at least, of all serious, thinking people, from all parts of the country, beside strangers from other nations; and wisdom must cry in the places of concourse, *Pr. i. 21*. 2nd. It was to be hoped they were in a good frame, for they came together to worship God, and to spend their time in religious exercises. Now a mind inclined to devotion, and sequestering itself to the exercises of piety, lies very open to the farther discoveries of Divine light and love, and to it Christ will be acceptable.

Secondly. The place where this cure was wrought: at the pool of Bethesda, which had a miraculous healing virtue in it, and is here particularly described, ver. 2-4.

1. Where it was situated; "at Jerusalem by the sheep market;" ἐν τῇ προβάτῳ; it might as well be rendered, the sheep cot, where the sheep were kept; or the sheep gate, which we read of, *Neh. iii. 1*, through which the sheep were brought, as the sheep market, where they were sold. Some think it was near the temple; and if so, it yielded a melancholy but profitable spectacle to those that went up to the temple to pray.

2. How it was called; it was "a pool," (a pond, or bath,) "which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda," 'the house of mercy;' for therein appeared much of the mercy of God to the sick and diseased. In a world of so much misery as this is, it is well there are some Bethsadas, houses of mercy; remedies against these maladies; that the scene is not all melancholy: an alms-house, so Dr. Hammond. Dr. Lightfoot's conjecture is, that this was the upper pool, *Isa. vii. 3*; and the old pool, *Isa. xxii. 11*; that it had been used for washing from ceremonial pollutions, for convenience of which the porches were built to dress and undress in, but was lately become medicinal.

3. How it was fitted up; it had five porches, cloisters, or piazzas, or roofed walks, in which the sick lay. Thus the charity of men concurred with the

mercy of God for the relief of the distressed. Nature has provided remedies, but men must provide hospitals.

4. How it was frequented with sick and cripples; ver. 3, "in these lay a great multitude of impotent folk." How many are the afflictions of the afflicted in this world! How full of complaints are all places, and what multitudes of impotent folk! It may do us good to visit the hospitals sometimes, that we may take occasion, from the calamities of others, to thank God for our comforts. The evangelist instances in three sorts of diseased people that lay here, "blind, halt, and withered," or sinew shrunk, either in one particular part, as the man with the withered hand, or all over paralytic. These are mentioned because, being least able to help themselves into the water, they lay longest waiting in the porches. Those that were sick of these bodily diseases, took the pains to come far, and had the patience to wait long, for a cure. Any of us would have done the same; and we ought to do so. But oh that men were as wise for their souls, and as solicitous to get their spiritual diseases healed! We are all by nature "impotent folk" in spiritual things; "blind, halt, and withered;" but effectual provision is made for our cure, if we will but observe orders.

5. What virtue it had for the cure of these impotent folk; ver. 4, "an angel went down and troubled the water; and whose first stepped in was made whole." That this strange virtue in the pool was natural, or artificial rather, and was the effect of the washing of the sacrifices, which impregnated the water with I know not what healing virtue, even for blind people, and that this angel was a messenger, a common person, sent down to stir the water, is altogether groundless; there was a room in the temple on purpose to wash the sacrifices in. Expositors generally agree that the virtue this pool had was supernatural. It is true, the Jewish writers, who do not use to be sparing in recounting the praises of Jerusalem, do none of them make the least mention of this healing pool; of which silence in this matter, perhaps this was the reason, that it was taken for a presage of the near approach of the Messiah; and therefore they, who denied him to be come, industriously concealed such an indication of his coming; so that this here is all the account we have of it. Observe,

1st. The preparation of the medicine by an angel, who went down into the pool, and stirred the water. Angels are God's servants, and friends to mankind; and perhaps are more active in the removing of diseases, as evil angels in the inflicting of them, than we are aware of. Raphael, the apocryphal name of an angel, signifies, *medicina Dei*,—'God's physic,' or physician, rather; see what mean offices the holy angels condescend to, for the good of men. If we would do the will of God as the angels do it, we must think nothing below us but sin. The troubling of the water, was the signal given of the descent of the angel; as the going upon the tops of the mulberry trees was to David, and then they must bestir themselves. The waters of the sanctuary are then healing, when they are put in motion. Ministers must stir up the gift that is in them: when they are cold and dull in their ministrations, the waters settle, and are not apt to heal. The angel descended to stir the water, not daily, perhaps not frequently, but at a certain season; some think at the three solemn feasts, to grace those solemnities; or, now and then, as Infinite Wisdom saw fit. God is a free agent in dispensing his favours.

2nd. The operation of the medicine; "whoever first stepped in was made whole." Here is, (1.) A miraculous extent of the virtue, as to the diseases cured; what disease soever it was, this water cured it. Natural and artificial baths are as hurtful in some cases as they are useful in others; but this was a remedy for every malady, even for those that came from contrary causes. The power of miracles succeeds, where the power of nature succumbs. (2.) A miraculous limitation of the virtue, as to the persons cured: he that first stepped in had the benefit; that is, he or they that stepped in, presently were cured; not those that lingered and came in after. This teaches us to observe and improve our opportunities, and to look about us, that we slip not a season which may never return. The angel stirred the waters, but left the diseased to themselves to get in. God has put virtue into the Scriptures and ordinances, for he would have healed us; but if we do not make a due improvement of them, it is our own fault, we would not be healed.

Now this is all the account we have of this standing miracle; it is uncertain when it began, and when it ceased. Some conjecture it began when Eliashib, the high priest, began the building of the wall about Jerusalem, and sanctified it with prayer; and that God testified his acceptance, by putting this virtue into the adjoining pool. Some think it began now lately, at Christ's birth; nay, others at his baptism. Dr. Lightfoot, finding in *Josephus, Antiq. lib. xv. c. 7*, mention of a great earthquake in the seventh year of Herod, thirty years before Christ's birth, supposeth, that since there used to be earthquakes at the descent of angels, that then the angel first descended to stir this water. Some think it ceased with this miracle; others, at Christ's death; however, it is certain it had a gracious signification.

First. It was a token of God's good will to that people, and an indication, that though they had been long without prophets and miracles, yet God had not cast them off; though they were now an oppressed, despised people, and many were ready to say, "Where are all the wonders that our fathers told us of?" God did hereby let them know that he had still a kindness for the city of their solemnities. We may from hence take occasion to acknowledge with thankfulness God's power and goodness in the mineral waters that contribute so much to the health of mankind; for God made the fountains of water, *Rev. xiv. 7*.

Secondly. It was a type of the Messiah, who is the fountain opened; and was intended to raise people's expectations of him who is the Sun of righteousness, that ariseth with healing under his wings. These waters had formerly been used for purifying, now for healing; to signify both the cleansing and curing virtue of the blood of Christ, that incomparable bath, which heals all our diseases. The waters of Siloam, which filled this pool, signified the kingdom of David, and of Christ the Son of David, *Isa. viii. 6*; fitly therefore have they now this sovereign virtue put into them. The laver of regeneration is to us as Bethesda's pool, healing our spiritual diseases; not at certain seasons, but at all times: whoever will, let him come.

Thirdly. The patient on whom this cure was wrought; ver. 5, one that had been infirm thirty-eight years.

1. His disease was grievous; he had an infirmity, a weakness; he had lost the use of his limbs, at least on one side, as is usual in palsies. It is sad to have the body so disabled, that instead of being the soul's instrument, it is become, even in the affairs of this life, its burthen. What reason have we to thank God for bodily strength, and to use it for him, and pity those who are his prisoners!

2. The duration of it was tedious, thirty-eight years; he was lame longer than most live. Many are so long disabled for the offices of life that, as the Psalmist complains, they seem to be made in vain; for suffering, not for service; born to be always dying. Shall we complain of one wearisome night, or one ill fit, who perhaps for many years have scarce known what it has been to be a day sick; when many others, better than we, have scarce known what it has been to be a day well. Mr. Baxter's note on this passage is very affecting: "How great a mercy was it to live thirty-eight years under God's wholesome discipline. . . O my God," saith he, "I thank thee for the like discipline of

diving—a swimming-bath; the word being derived from a verb signifying to dive. "Called in the Hebrew tongue:" the Hebrew tongue here mentioned was the Syro-Chaldaic, which had been spoken ever since the return from Babylon (see *Acts xxi. 40*). "Bethesda:" house of mercy, or place of the flowing of water. Its situation is uncertain. The five porches were probably arches or porticoes, which surrounded the pool and opened upon it, and under the protection of which the sick could repose.

v. 3. "Impotent:" i.e., sick or weak. The word does not refer to a special kind of sickness, but is used to include all the sick lying by the pool. By the "halt" are meant the lame; and by "withered," such as had shrivelled or withered limbs. The man on whom the miracle was wrought was most probably of this last class.

v. 3, 4. The words from "waiting for the moving of the waters," down to the end of verse 4, are not found in the great majority of the ancient MSS.

Eighty-eight years; how safe a life is this, in comparison of full prosperity and pleasure!

Fourthly. The cure, and the circumstances of it briefly related, ver. 6-9.

1. "Jesus saw him lie." Observe, when Christ came up to Jerusalem, he visited not the palaces, but the hospitals; which is an instance of his humility and condescension, and tender compassion; and an indication of his great design in coming into the world, which was to seek and save the sick and wounded. There was a great multitude of poor cripples here at Bethesda, but Christ fastened his eye upon this one, and singled him out from the rest, because he was senior of the house, and in a more deplorable condition than any of the rest; and Christ delights to help the helpless; and hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. Perhaps his companions in tribulation insulted over him, because he had been often disappointed of a cure; therefore Christ took him for his patient: it is his honour to side with the weakest, and bear up those whom he sees run down.

2. He knew and considered how long he had lain in this condition. Those that have been long in affliction may comfort themselves with this, that God keeps account how long, and knows our frame.

3. He asked him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" a strange question to be asked one that had been so long so ill. Some indeed would not be made whole, because their sores serve them to beg by, and serve them for an excuse for idleness; but this poor man was as unable to go a begging as to work; yet Christ put it to him, 1st. To express his own pity and concern for him. Christ is tenderly inquisitive concerning the desires of those that are in affliction, and is willing to know what is their petition; what shall I do for you? 2nd. To try him, whether he would be beholden to him for a cure, whom the great people were so prejudiced against, and sought to prejudice others. 3rd. To teach him to value the mercy, and to excite in him desires after it. In spiritual cases, people are not willing to be cured of their sins, are loath to part with them. If this point therefore were but gained—if people were willing to be made whole, the work were half done, for Christ is willing to heal, if we be but willing to be healed, *Mat. viii. 3.*

4. The poor impotent man takes this occasion to renew his complaint, and to set forth the misery of his case, which makes his cure the more illustrious; ver. 7. "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool." He seems to take Christ's question as an imputation of carelessness and neglect: If thou hadst had a mind to be healed, thou wouldst have looked better to thy hits, and have got into the healing waters long before now. No, Master, saith the poor man, it is not for want of a good will, but of a good friend, that I am unhealed; I have done what I could to help myself, but in vain, for no one else will help me. 1st. He doth not think of any other way of being cured, but by these waters, and desires no other friendship, but to be helped into them; therefore when Christ cured him, his imagination or expectation could not contribute to it, for he thought of no such thing. 2nd. He complains for want of friends to help him in: "I have no man," no friend, to do me that kindness. One would think some of those that had been themselves healed, should have lent him a hand; but it is common for the poor to be destitute of friends; "no man careth for their soul." To the sick and impotent, it is as true a piece of charity to work for them, as to relieve them; and thus the poor are capable of being charitable to one another, and ought to be so, though we seldom find that they are so; I speak it to their shame. 3rd. He bewails his infelicity, that very often when he was coming, another stepped in before him; but a step between him and a cure, and yet he continues impotent. None had the charity to say, Your case is worse than mine; do you go in now, and I will stay till the next time; for there is no getting over the old maxim, 'Every one for himself.' Having been so often balked, he begins to despair, and now is Christ's time to come in to his relief; he delights to help in desperate cases. Observe how mildly this man speaks of the unkindness of those about him, without any peevish reflections. As we should be thankful for the least kindness, so we should be patient under the greatest contempts; and let our resentments be never so just, yet our expressions should ever be calm. And observe farther, to his praise, that though he had waited so long in vain, yet still he continued lying by the pool side, hoping that some time or other help would come, *Hab. ii. 3.*

5. Our Lord Jesus hereupon cures him with a word speaking, though he neither asked it, nor thought of it. Here is,

1st. The word he said; ver. 8, "Rise, take up thy bed."

First. He is bidden to rise and walk; a strange command to be given to an impotent man, that had been long disabled; but this Divine word was to be the vehicle of a Divine power; it was a command to the disease, to be gone; to nature, to be strong; but it is expressed as a command to him to bestir himself. He must rise and walk, that is, attempt to do it; and in the essay he should receive strength to do it. The conversion of a sinner is the cure of a chronic disease: this is ordinarily done by the word, a word of command, Arise and walk; Turn and live; Make ye a new heart; which no more supposes a power in us to do it, without the grace of God, distinguishing grace, than this supposed such a power in the impotent man. But if he had not attempted to help himself, he had not been cured, and he must have borne the blame; yet it doth not therefore follow that, when he did rise and walk, it was by his own strength; no, it was by the power of Christ, and he must have all the glory. Observe, Christ did not bid him rise and go into the waters, but rise and walk. Christ did that for us which the law could not do, and set that aside.

Secondly. He is bidden to take up his bed. 1st. To make it to appear that it was a perfect cure, and purely miraculous, for he did not recover strength by degrees; from the extremity of weakness and impotency, he suddenly stepped into the highest degree of bodily strength; so that he was able to carry as great a load as any porter, that had been as long used to it as he had been disused: he who this minute was not able to turn him in his bed, the next minute was able to carry his bed. The man sick of the palsy, *Mat. ix. 6*, was bidden to go to his house; but probably this man had no house to go to, the hospital was his home; therefore he is bidden to arise and walk. 2nd. It was to proclaim the cure, and make it public; for, being the sabbath day, whoever carried a burthen through the streets made himself very remarkable, and every one would inquire what was the meaning of it; thereby the notice of the miracle would spread, to the honour of God. 3rd. Christ would thus witness against the tradition of the elders, which had stretched the law of the sabbath beyond its intention; and would likewise shew that he was Lord of the sabbath, and had power to make what alterations he pleased about it, and to overrule the law. Joshua and the host of Israel marched about Jericho on the sabbath day, when God commanded them; so did this man carry his bed in obedience to a command. The case may be such, that it may become a work of necessity or mercy to carry a bed on the sabbath day; but here it was more, it was a work of piety, being designed purely for the glory of God. 4th. He would hereby try the faith and obedience of his patient. By carrying his bed publicly, he exposed himself to the censure of the ecclesiastical court, and was liable, at least, to be scourged in the synagogue. Now, will he run the venture of that in obedience to Christ? Yes, he will. Those that have been healed by Christ's word should be ruled by his word, whatever it cost them.

2nd. The efficacy of this word, ver. 9: a Divine power went along with it; "and immediately he was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked."

First. He felt the power of Christ's word healing him, "immediately he was made whole." What a joyful surprise was this to the poor cripple, to find himself all of a sudden, so easy, so strong, so able to help himself; what a new world was he in, in an instant. Nothing is too hard for Christ to do. Secondly. He obeyed the power of Christ's word commanding him; he "took up his bed and walked," and did not care who blamed him, or threatened him for it. The proof of our spiritual cure is, our rising and walking. Hath Christ healed our spiritual diseases? let us go whithersoever he sends us, and take up whatever he is pleased to lay upon us, and walk before him.

Fifthly. What came of the poor man after he was cured. We are here told, 1. What passed between him and the Jews, who saw him carry his bed on the sabbath day; for on that day this cure was wrought, and it was the sabbath that fell within the passover week, and therefore a high day, *ch. xix. 31*. Christ's work was such as that he needed not make any difference between sabbath days and other days, for he was always about his Father's business; but he wrought many remarkable cures on that day, perhaps to encourage his church to expect those spiritual favours from him, in their observance of the Christian sabbath, which were typified by his miraculous cures. Now here,

1st. The Jews quarrel with the man for carrying his bed on the sabbath day, telling him it was not lawful, ver. 10. It doth not appear whether they were magistrates, who had power to punish him, or common people, who could only inform against him; but thus far was commendable, that while they knew not by what authority he did it, they were jealous for the honour of the sabbath, and could not unconcernedly see it profaned; like Nehemiah, *Neh. xiii. 17*.

2nd. The man justifies himself in what he did, by a warrant that would bear him out, ver. 11: I do not do it in contempt of the law and the sabbath, but in obedience to one who, by making me whole, hath given an undeniable proof that he is greater than either. He that could work such a miracle, as to make me whole, no doubt might give me such a command, as to carry my bed; he that could overrule the powers of nature, no doubt might overrule a positive law, especially in an instance not of the essence of the law; he that was so kind as to make me whole, would not be so unkind as to bid me do what is sinful. Christ by curing another paralytic, proved his power to forgive sin, here to give law; if his pardons are valid, his edicts are so; and his miracles prove both.

3rd. The Jews inquire farther, who it was that gave him this warrant; ver. 12. "What man is that?" Observe, How industriously they overlooked that which might be a ground of their faith in Christ. They inquire not, no, not for curiosity, who is that that made thee whole? while they industriously caught at that which might be a ground of reflection upon Christ; "What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed?" They would fain subpoena the patient to be a witness against his physician, and to be his betrayer. In their question observe, First. They resolve to look upon Christ as a mere man; "What man is that?" For though he gave never such convincing proofs of it, they were resolved they would never own him to be the Son of God. Secondly. They resolve to look upon him as an ill man, and take it for granted that he who bade this man carry his bed, whatever Divine commission he might produce, was certainly a delinquent, and as such they resolve to prosecute him; "What man is that," who durst give such orders?

4th. The poor man was unable to give them any account of him; ver. 13, "he wist not who he was." First. Christ was unknown to him when he healed him. Probably he had heard of the name of Jesus, but had never seen him, and therefore could not tell that this was he. Note, Christ doth many a good turn for those that know him not, *Isa. xlv. 4, 5*; he enlightens, strengthens, quickens, comforts us, and we wist not who it is, nor are aware how much we receive daily by his mediation. This man being unacquainted with Christ, could not actually believe in him for a cure; but Christ knew the dispositions of his soul, and suited his favours to them, as to the blind man in a like case, *ch. ix. 36*. Our covenant and communion with God takes rise, not so much from our knowledge of him, as from his knowledge of us. We know God, or rather are known of him, *Gal. iv. 9*. Secondly. For the present he kept himself unknown; for as soon as he had wrought the cure he conveyed himself away, he made himself unknown, so some read it, "a multitude being in that place." This is mentioned to shew, either, 1st. How Christ conveyed himself away, by retiring into the crowd, so as not to be distinguished from a common person; he that was the chief of ten thousand often made himself one of the throng; it is sometimes the lot of those who have by their services signalized themselves, to be levelled with the multitude, and overlooked; or, 2nd. Why he conveyed himself away; because there was a multitude there; and he industriously avoided both the applause of those who would admire the miracle, and cry that up, and the censure of those who would censure him as a sabbath-breaker, and run him down. Those that are active for God in their generation must expect to pass by evil report and good report; and it is wisdom, as much as may be, to keep out of the hearing of both, lest by the one we be exalted, and by the other depressed above measure. Christ left the miracle to commend itself, and the man on whom it was wrought to justify it.

2. What passed between him and our Lord Jesus, at their next interview ver. 14. Observe here,

1st. Where Christ found him, in the temple, the place of worship, public worship. In our attendance on public worship we may expect to meet with Christ, and improve our acquaintance with him. Observe, First. Christ went to the temple; though he had many enemies, yet he appeared in public, because there he bore his testimony to Divine institutions, and had opportunity of doing good. Secondly. The man that was cured went to the temple; there Christ found him the same day, as it should seem, that he was healed; thither he straightway went, 1st. Because he had by his infirmity been so long detained thence; perhaps he had not been there for thirty-eight years; and therefore, as soon as ever the embargo is taken off, his first visit shall be to the temple, as Hezekiah intimates his shall be; *Isa. xxxviii. 22*, "What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?" 2nd. Because he had, by his recovery, a good errand thither; he went up to the temple to return thanks to God for his recovery. When God has at any time restored us our health, we ought to attend him with solemn praises, *Ps. cxvi. 18, 19*; and the sooner the better, while the sense of the mercy is fresh. 3rd. Because he had, by carrying his bed, seemed to put a contempt upon the sabbath. He would thus shew that he had an honour for it, and made conscience of sabbath sanctification, in that on which the chief stress of it is laid, which is the public worship of God. Works of necessity and mercy are allowed; but when they are over, we must go to the temple.

2nd. What he said to him. When Christ has cured us, he has not done with us. He now applies himself to the healing of his soul, and this by the word too. First. He gives him a memorandum of his cure: "Behold, thou art made whole." He found himself made whole; yet Christ calls his attention to it: Behold, consider it seriously, how sudden, how strange, how cheap, how easy the cure was; admire it, behold and wonder; remember it, let the impressions of it abide and never be lost, *Isa. xxxviii. 9*. Secondly. He gives him a caution against sin: In consideration hereof, being made whole, "sin no more." This implies that his disease was the punishment of sin; whether

v. 8. "Bed:" a rough mat, or padded quilt.

v. 10. "The Jews:" not the multitude, but those in authority.

v. 13. "Conveyed himself away:" the word means literally to "swim out and away," and expresses the rapidity and quietness with which Jesus had moved away from the spot. Alford says, "Passed on unobserved; just spoke the healing words, and then went on among the crowd, so that no particular attention was attracted to himself, either by the sick man or others."

v. 17. These words of Christ are designed to answer the cavils of those who charged him with breaking the Sabbath day. Trench well observes, "He is no more a breaker of the Sabbath than God is, when he upholds with an energy that knows no pause the work of his creation from hour to hour, and from moment to moment. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work:' my work is but the reflex of his work. Abstinence from an outward work belongs not to the idea of a Sabbath; it is only more or less the necessary condition of

of some remarkable, flagrant sin, or only of sin in general, we cannot tell; but we know that sin is the procuring cause of sickness, *Ps. cvii. 17, 18*. Some observe that Christ did not make mention of sin to any of his patients, but only to this impotent man, and to one other, who was in like manner diseased, *Mar. ii. 5*. While those chronic diseases lasted they prevented the outward acts of many sins; and therefore, now the disability was removed, they had the more need to be watchful. Christ intimates to him, that those who are made whole—that are eased of the present sensible punishment of sin—are in danger of returning to sin, when the terror and restraint of that is over, unless Divine grace dry up the fountain. When the trouble, which only dammed up the current, is over, the waters will return to their old course, and therefore there is need of great watchfulness, lest after healing mercy we return again to folly. The misery we were made whole from, warns us to sin no more, having felt the smart of sin; the mercy we were made whole by, is an engagement upon us not to offend him who healed us. This is the voice of every providence, "Go, sin no more." This man began his new life very hopefully, in the temple; yet Christ saw it necessary to give him this caution; for it is common for people when they are sick to promise much, when newly recovered to perform something, but after a while to forget all. *Thirdly*. He gives him warning of his danger, in case he should return to his former sinful course, "lest a worse thing come to thee." Christ, who knows all men's hearts, knew that he was one of those that must be frightened from sin. Thirty-eight years' lameness, one would think, was a thing ill enough; yet there is something worse that will come to him, if he relapse into sin after God has given him such a deliverance as this, *Ezr. ix. 13, 14*. The hospital where he lay was a melancholy place, but hell much more so. The doom of apostates is a worse thing than thirty-eight years' lameness.

Now after this interview between Christ and his patient, observe, in the two following verses,

1st. The notice which the poor simple man gave to the Jews concerning Christ; ver. 15, he told them it was Jesus that had made him whole. We have reason to think he intended this for the honour of Christ, and the benefit of the Jews, little thinking that he that had so much power and goodness could have any enemies; but those that wish well to Christ's kingdom must have the wisdom of the serpent, lest they do more hurt than good with their zeal, and not cast pearls before swine.

2nd. The rage and enmity of the Jews against him; "therefore did the" rulers of the "Jews persecute Jesus." See, *First*. How absurd and unreasonable their enmity to Christ was. Therefore, because he had made a poor sick man well, and so eased the public charge, upon which it is likely he had subsisted, therefore they persecuted him, because he did good in Israel. *Secondly*. How bloody and cruel it was. They "sought to slay him;" nothing less than his blood, his life, would satisfy them. *Thirdly*. How it was varnished over with a colour of zeal for the honour of the sabbath; for this was the pretended crime, "because he had done these things on the sabbath day;" as if that circumstance were enough to vitiate the best and most Divine actions, and to render him obnoxious, whose deeds were otherwise most meritorious. Thus hypocrites often cover their real enmity against the power of godliness with a pretended zeal for the form of it.

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. 19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. 20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. 21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. 22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. 26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 28 Marvel not at this: for the

hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice. 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. 30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

We have here Christ's discourse upon occasion of his being accused as a sabbath-breaker; and it seems to be his vindication of himself before the Sanhedrim, when he was arraigned before them; whether on the same day, or two or three days after, doth not appear; probably the same day. Observe,

First. The doctrine laid down, by which he justified what he did on the sabbath day; ver. 17, he "answered them." This supposeth that he had something laid to his charge; or what they suggested one to another, when they sought to slay him, ver. 16, he knew, and gave this reply to: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." At other times, in answer to the like charge, he had pleaded the example of David eating the shewbread, of the priests slaying the sacrifices, and of the people's watering their cattle on the sabbath day; but here he goes higher, and allegeth the example of his Father, and his Divine authority; waiving all other pleas, he insists upon that which was *instar omnium*,—"equivalent to the whole," and abides by it, which he had mentioned, *Mat. xii. 8*, "the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day;" but here enlarges on it.

1. He pleads that he was the Son of God, plainly intimated in his calling God his Father; and if so, his holiness was unquestionable, and his sovereignty incontestable; and he might make what alterations he pleased of the Divine law. Surely they will reverence the Son, the heir of all things.

2. That he was a worker together with God.

1st. "My Father worketh hitherto." The example of God's resting on the seventh day from all his work is in the fourth commandment made the ground of our observing it as a sabbath, or day of rest. Now God rested only from such work as he had done the six days before; otherwise he worketh hitherto; he is every day working, sabbath days and week days; upholding and governing all the creatures, and concurring, by his common providence, to all the motions and operations of nature, to his own glory: therefore when we are appointed to rest on the sabbath day, yet we are not restrained from doing that which has a direct tendency to the glory of God, as the man's carrying his bed had.

2nd. "I work;" not only therefore I may work, like him, in doing good on sabbath days, as well as other days, but I also work with him. As God created all things by Christ, so he supports and governs all by him, *Heb. i. 3*. This sets what he doth above all exception; he that is so great a worker, must needs be an uncontrollable governor; he that doth all, is Lord of all, and therefore Lord of the sabbath; which particular branch of his authority he would now assert, because he was shortly to shew it farther in the change of the day from the seventh to the first.

Secondly. The offence that was taken at his doctrine; ver. 18, "the Jews sought the more to kill him." His defence was made his offence, as if by justifying himself he had made ill worse. Note, Those that will not be enlightened by the word of Christ, will be enraged and exasperated by it; and nothing more vexeth the enemies of Christ than his asserting his authority: *Ps. ii. 3-5*. They "sought to kill him."

1. "Because he had broken the sabbath;" for let him say what he would in his own justification, they are resolved, right or wrong, to find him guilty of sabbath-breaking. When malice and envy sit upon the bench, reason and justice may even be silent at the bar, for whatever they can say will undoubtedly be overruled.

2. Not only so, "but he had said also, that God was his Father." Now they pretend a jealousy for God's honour, as before for the sabbath day, and charge Christ with it as a heinous crime that he made himself equal with God; and a heinous crime it had been if he had not really been so; it was the sin of Lucifer: "I will be like the Most High." Now,

1st. This was justly inferred from what he said, that he was the Son of God, and that God was his Father, *πατήρ ἰσθός*,—"his own Father,"—his, so as he was no one's else. He had said that he worked with his Father, by the same authority and power, and hereby he made himself equal with God: *Ecce intelligunt Judæi, quod non intelligunt Ariani*,—"Behold, the Jews understand what the Arians do not!"

2nd. Yet it was unjustly imputed to him as an offence, that he equalled himself with God; for he was, and is, God, equal with the Father, *Phil. ii. 6*; and therefore Christ, in answer to this charge, doth not except against the imputation as strained or forced, but makes out his claim, and proves that he is equal with God in power and glory.

Thirdly. Christ's discourse upon this occasion, which continues without interruption to the end of the chapter. In these verses he explains, and afterwards confirms, his commission as Mediator, and plenipotentiary in the treaty between God and man. And as the honours he is hereby entitled to, are such as it is not fit for any creature to receive, so the work he is hereby intrusted with, is such as it is not possible for any creature to go through with, and therefore he is God equal with the Father.

1. In general; he is one with the Father in all he doth as Mediator; and there was a perfect good understanding between them in the whole matter. It is ushered in with a solemn preface, ver. 19, "Verily, verily, I say unto you: 'I, the Amen, the Amen, say it.' This speaks what is said to be, 1. Very awful and great, and such as commands the most serious attention. 2. Very sure, and such as commands an unfeigned assent. 3. It intimates, that they are matters purely of Divine revelation; things which Christ has told us, and which we could not otherwise have come to the knowledge of. Two things he saith in general concerning the Son's oneness with the Father in working:

1st. That the Son conforms to the Father; ver. 19, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do," for "these things doeth the Son." The Lord Jesus, as Mediator, is, *First*. Obedient to his Father's will; so entirely obedient, that he can do nothing of himself, in the same sense as it is said, God cannot lie, cannot deny himself, which speaks the perfection of his truth, not any imperfection in his strength; so here, Christ was so entirely devoted to his Father's will that it was impossible for him, in any thing, to act separately. *Secondly*. He is observant of his Father's counsel; he can, he will do nothing "but what he sees the Father do." No man can find out the work of God, but the only begotten Son, who lay in his bosom, sees what he doth, and is intimately acquainted with his purposes, and has the plan of them ever before him. What he did as Mediator throughout his whole undertaking

it, for beings so framed and constituted as ever to be in danger of losing the true collection and rest of the spirit in the multiplicity of earthly toil and business. Man indeed must cease from his work, if a higher work is to find place in him. He scatters himself in his work, and therefore must collect himself anew, and have seasons for so doing. But with him who is one with the Father it is otherwise. In him the deepest rest is not excluded by the highest activity; nay, rather, in God, in the Son as in the Father, they are one and the same."

v. 20. "That ye may marvel:" rather, "so that ye shall marvel."
v. 21. "Whom he will:" in these words our Lord opposes the thought of the Jews who believed that, as descendants of Abraham, they had of necessity a right to eternal life. To this right is opposed the will of God (see Lücke in Olshausen). On the extent of this will see 1 Tim. ii. 4, where the same Greek word for "will" is used. Alford points out, in the verse connected with the preceding, the distinction between the working of the eternal Son as he is in

was the exact transcript or counterpart of what the Father did; that is, what he designed when he formed the plan of our redemption in his eternal counsels, and settled those measures in every thing, which never could be broken, nor ever needed to be altered; it was the copy of that great original; it was Christ's faithfulness, as it was Moses', that he did all according to the pattern shewed him in the mount. This is expressed in the present tense, "what he seeth the Father do," for the same reason that when he was here upon earth, it was said he "is in heaven," *ch. iii. 13*, and "is in the bosom of the Father," *ch. i. 18*, as he was even then by his Divine nature present in heaven, so the things done in heaven were present to his knowledge. What the Father did in his counsels the Son had ever in his view, and still he had his eye upon it, as David in spirit spake of him, "I have set the Lord always before me," *Ps. xvi. 8*. Thirdly. Yet he is equal with the Father in working, "for what things soever the Father doth these also doth the Son likewise;" he did the same things, not such things, but *ταυτα*—"the same things;" and he did them in the "same manner,"—*ὁμοίως*, likewise, with the same authority, and liberty, and wisdom, the same energy and efficacy. Doth the Father enact, repeal, and alter positive laws? doth he overrule the course of nature, know men's hearts? So doth the Son. The power of the Mediator is a Divine power.

2nd. That the Father communicates to the Son, *ver. 20*. Observe, *First*. The Inducement to it: "the Father loveth the Son;" he declared, "This is my beloved Son." He had not only a good will to the undertaking, but an infinite complacency in the undertaker. Christ was now hated of men, one whom the nation abhorred, *Isa. xlix. 7*; but he comforted himself with this, that his Father loved him. *Secondly*. The instances of it. He sheweth it, *1st*. In what he doth communicate to him: "he sheweth him all things that himself doeth;" the Father's measures, in making and ruling the world, are shewed to the Son, that he may take the same measures in framing and governing the church, which work was to be a duplicate of the work of creation and providence, and is therefore called the world to come. He sheweth him all things, *αὐτὰ πάντα*—"which he doth," that is, which the Son doth, so it might be construed; all that the Son doth is by direction from the Father; he shews him, *2nd*. In what he will communicate: "he will shew him," that is, will appoint and direct him to do "greater works than these." *First*. Works of greater power than the curing of the impotent man, for he should raise the dead, and should himself rise from the dead. By the power of nature, with the use of means, a disease may possibly in time be cured, but nature can never, by the use of any means, in any time, raise the dead. *Secondly*. Works of greater authority than warranting the man to carry his bed on the sabbath day. They thought that a daring attempt; but what was that to his abrogating the whole ceremonial law, and instituting new ordinances, which he would shortly do, "that ye may marvel!" Now they looked upon his works with contempt and indignation, but he will shortly do that which they will look upon with amazement, *Lu. vii. 16*. Many are brought to marvel at Christ's works, whereby he has the honour of them, that are not brought to believe, by which they would have the benefit of them.

11. In particular; he proves his equality with the Father, by instancing in some of those works which he doth, that are the peculiar works of God. This is enlarged upon, *ver. 21-30*. 1. He doth, and shall do, that which is the peculiar work of God's almighty power—raising the dead, and giving life, *ver. 21, 25, 26, 28*. 2. He doth, and shall do, that which is the peculiar work of God's sovereign dominion and jurisdiction—judging, and executing judgment, *ver. 22-24, 27*. These two are interwoven, as being nearly connected; and what is said once is repeated and inculcated; put both together, and they will prove that Christ said not amiss when he made himself equal with God.

First. Observe what is here said concerning the Mediator's power to raise the dead, and give life. See,

1. His authority to do it; *ver. 21*, "as the Father raiseth up the dead, so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

1st. It is God's prerogative to raise the dead, and give life, even his who first breathed into man the breath of life, and so made him a living soul: see *Deu. xxxii. 30*; *1 Sam. ii. 6*; *Ps. lxxvii. 20*; *Rom. iv. 17*. This God had done by the prophets Elijah and Elisha, and it was a confirmation of their mission. A resurrection from the dead never lay in the common road of nature, nor ever fell within the thought of those that studied only the compass of nature's power, one of whose received axioms was point blank against it: *A privatione ad habitum non datur regressus*—"Existence, when once extinguished, cannot be rekindled." It was therefore ridiculed at Athens as an absurd thing, *Acts xvii. 22*. It is purely the work of a Divine power, and the knowledge of it purely by Divine revelation. This the Jews would own.

2nd. The Mediator is invested with this prerogative; he "quickeneth whom he will;" raiseth whom he pleaseth to life, and when he pleases. He doth not enliven things by natural necessity, as the sun doth, whose beams revive of course; but he acts as a free agent, has the dispensing of his power in his own hand, and is never either constrained or restrained in the use of it. As he has the power, so he has the wisdom and sovereignty of a God; "has the keys of the grave, and of death," *Rev. i. 18*; not as a servant, to open and shut as he is bidden; for he has it as the key of David, which he is master of, *Act. iii. 7*. An absolute prince is described by this, *Dan. v. 19*; whom he would he slew, or kept alive. It is true of Christ without an hyperbole.

3. His ability to do it. Therefore he has power to quicken whom he will, as the Father doth, because "he hath life in himself, as the Father has," *ver. 26*.

1st. It is certain "the Father has life in himself;" not only he is a self-existent being, who doth not derive from, or depend upon, any other, *Ex. iii. 14*; but he is a sovereign giver of life; he has the disposal of life in himself, and of all good, for so life sometimes signifies: it is all derived from him, and dependent on him; he is to his creatures the fountain of life, and all good; author of their being and wellbeing; the living God, and the God of all living.

2nd. It is as certain that he hath "given to the Son to have life in himself." As the Father is the original of all natural life and good, being the great Creator, so the Son, as Redeemer, is the original of all spiritual life and good; is that to the church that the Father is to the world: see *1 Cor. vii. 6*; *Col. i. 19*. The kingdom of grace, and all the life in that kingdom, is as fully and absolutely in the hand of the Redeemer, as the kingdom of providence is in the hand of the Creator; and as God, who gives being to all things, has his being of himself, so Christ, who gives life, raised himself to life by his own power, *Jno. x. 18*.

3. His acting according to this authority and ability. Having life in himself, and being authorized to quicken whom he will, by virtue hereof there are accordingly two resurrections performed by his powerful word; both which are here spoken of:

1st. A resurrection that now is, *ver. 29*; a resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, by the power of Christ's grace; "the hour is coming, and now is." It is a resurrection begun already, and farther to be carried on; "when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God." This is plainly distinguished from that, *ver. 28*, which speaks of the resurrection at the end of time. This saith nothing, as that doth, of the dead in their graves, and of all them, and their coming forth. Now, *First*. Some think this was ful-

filled in those whom he miraculously raised to life, Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus; and it is observable, that all that Christ raised were spoken to, as, "Damsel, arise;" "Young man, arise;" "Lazarus, come forth;" whereas those raised under the Old Testament, were raised, not by a word, but other applications, *1 Kin. xvii. 21*; *2 Kin. iv. 34*; *xii. 21*. Some understand it of those saints that rose with Christ; but we do not read of "the voice of the Son of God" calling them. But, *Secondly*. I rather understand it of the power of the doctrine of Christ for the recovering and quickening of those that were dead in trespasses and sins, *Eph. i. 5, 6*. The hour was coming when dead souls should be made alive by the preaching of the Gospel, and a spirit of life from God accompanying it; nay, it then was while Christ was upon earth. I may refer especially to the calling of the Gentiles, which is said to be as life from the dead, and some think was prefigured by Ezekiel's vision, *Eze. xxxvii. 1*, and foretold, *Isa. xxvi. 19*, "thy dead men shall live." But it is to be applied to all the wonderful success of the Gospel, both among Jews and Gentiles; an hour which still is, and is still coming, till all the elect be effectually called. Note, *1st*. Sinners are spiritually dead, destitute of spiritual life, sense, strength, and motion; dead to God, miserable; but neither sensible of their misery, nor able to help themselves out of it. *2nd*. The conversion of a soul to God is its resurrection from death to life; then it begins to live, when it begins to live to God, to breathe after him, and move towards him. *3rd*. It is by "the voice of the Son of God" that souls are raised to spiritual life; it is wrought by his power, and that power conveyed and communicated by his word; "the dead shall hear," shall be made to hear, to understand, receive, and believe "the voice of the Son of God;" to hear it as his voice; then the Spirit by it gives life, otherwise the letter kills. *4th*. The voice of Christ must be heard by us, that we may live by it; "they that hear," and attend to what they hear, "shall live." "Hear, and your soul shall live," *Isa. lv. 3*.

2nd. A resurrection yet to come. This is spoken of, *ver. 28, 29*; introduced with, "Marvel not at this," which I have said of the first resurrection; do not reject it as incredible and absurd, for at the end of time you shall all see a more sensible and amazing proof of the power and authority of the Son of man. As his own resurrection was reserved to be the final and concluding proof of his personal commission, so the resurrection of all men is reserved to be a like proof of his commission to be executed by his Spirit. Now observe here,

First. When this resurrection shall be; "the hour is coming;" it is fixed to an hour, so very punctual is this great appointment. The judgment is not adjourned *sine die*—"to some time not yet pitched upon;" no, "he hath appointed a day," "the hour is coming." *1st*. It is not yet come; it is not the hour spoken of at *ver. 5*, that is coming, and now is. Those erred dangerously who said the resurrection was passed already, *2 Tim. ii. 18*. But, *2nd*. It will certainly come; it is coming on, nearer every day than another; it is at the door. How far off it is we know not, but we know that it is infallibly designed, and unalterably determined.

Secondly. Who shall be raised? "All that are in the graves," all that have died from the beginning of time, and all that shall die to the end of time. It was said, *Dan. xii. 2*, many shall arise; Christ here tells us those many shall be all. All must appear before the Judge, and therefore all must be raised; every person, and the whole of every person; every soul shall return to its body, and every bone to its bone. The grave is the prison of dead bodies, where they are detained; their furnace, where they are consumed, *Job xiv. 19*; yet, in prospect of their resurrection, we may call it their bed, where they sleep, to be awaked again; their treasury, where they are laid up, to be used again. Those that are not put into graves yet shall arise; but because most are put into graves, Christ useth this expression, "all that are in the graves." The Jews used the word *sheol* for the grave, which signifies the state of the dead; all that are in that state shall hear.

Thirdly. How they shall be raised. Two things are here told us:

1st. The efficient of this resurrection; "they shall hear his voice;" that is, he shall cause them to hear it, as Lazarus was made to hear that word, "Come forth;" a Divine power shall go along with the voice, to put life into them, and enable them to obey it. When Christ rose there was no voice heard, not a word spoken, because he rose by his own power; but at the resurrection of the children of men we find three voices spoken of, *1 Thes. iv. 16*. The Lord shall descend with a shout, the shout of a King, with the voice of the archangel; either Christ himself, the prince of the angels, or the commander-in-chief, under him, of the heavenly hosts; and with the trumpet of God. The soldier's trumpet sounding the alarm of war, the judge's trumpet publishing the summons to the court.

2nd. The effect of it. They shall come forth out of their graves, as prisoners out of their prison-house; they shall arise out of the dust, and shake themselves from it: see *Isa. lii. 1, 2*. But that is not all; they shall appear before Christ's tribunal; shall come forth as those that are to be tried; come forth to the bar, publicly to receive their doom.

Fourthly. To what they shall be raised; to a different state, of happiness or misery, according to their different character; to a state of retribution, according to what they did in a state of probation.

1st. "They that have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life;" they shall live again, to live for ever. Note, *First*. Whatever name men are called by, or whatever plausible profession they make, it will be well in the great day with those only that have done good, have done that which is pleasing to God, and profitable to others. *Secondly*. The resurrection of the body will be a resurrection of life to all those, and those only, that have been sincere and constant in doing good. They shall not only be publicly acquitted, as a pardoned criminal, we say, has his life; but they shall be admitted into the presence of God, and that is life, it is better than life; they shall be attended with comforts in perfection. To live is to be happy, and they shall be advanced above the fear of death; that is life indeed, in which mortality is for ever swallowed up.

2nd. "They that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation;" they shall live again, to be for ever dying. The Pharisees thought the resurrection pertained only to the just; but Christ here rectifies that mistake. Note, *First*. Evil-doers, whatever they pretend, will be treated in the day of judgment as evil men. *Secondly*. The resurrection will be to evil-doers, that did not by repentance undo what they had done amiss, a resurrection of damnation. They shall come forth to be publicly convicted of rebellion against God, and publicly condemned to everlasting punishment; to be sentenced to it, and immediately sent to it without reprieve. Such will the resurrection be.

Secondly. Observe what is here said concerning the Mediator's authority to execute judgment, *ver. 22-24, 27*. As he hath an almighty power, so he has a sovereign jurisdiction; and who so fit to preside in the great affairs of the other life, as he who is the Father and fountain of life? Here is,

1. Christ's commission, or delegation to the office of a judge, which is twice spoken of here, *ver. 22*; he "hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" and again, *ver. 27*, "hath given him authority."

1st. "The Father judgeth no man;" not that the Father has resigned the government, but he is pleased to govern by Jesus Christ; so that man is not

heaven with God, and his working in the state of his humiliation, in which the Father should by degrees advance him to exaltation; and that the former of these (*verse 21*) is mentioned in the present tense, and the latter (*verse 20*) in the future.

v. 19-26. The Jews had charged our Lord with making himself equal with God. The charge implied self-exaltation, and that to a blasphemous degree. Our Lord's reply meets both these implications. He merely claimed that oneness with the Father which was

his by reason of his eternal Sonship. And as to self-exaltation this was false, for he claimed no more than was the simple truth; while in the very relationship of Sonship was implied the very opposite to self-exaltation.

v. 31. On the apparent contradiction between this verse and the words of our Lord in chap. viii. 12-14, Alford observes that here our Lord is asserting that his own unsupported witness (supposing that possible) would not be trustworthy, but that his testimony is sup-

under the terror of dealing with God immediately but hath the comfort of access to him by a Mediator. "The Father judgeth no man; *First*, He doth not rule us by the mere right of creation, but by covenant, and upon certain terms settled by a Mediator. Having made us, he may do what he pleaseth with us, as the potter with the clay; but he doth not do so, he draws us with the cords of a man. *Secondly*, He doth not determine our everlasting condition by the covenant of innocency, nor take the advantage he has against us for the violation of that covenant; the Mediator having undertaken to make a vicarious satisfaction, upon which the matter is referred to him, and God is willing to enter upon a new treaty; not under the law of the Creator, but the grace of the Redeemer.

2nd. "He hath committed all judgment to the Son," hath constituted him Lord of all, *Acts* x. 36; *Rom.* xiv. 9; as Joseph in Egypt, *Gen.* xl. 40. This was prophesied of, *Ps.* lxxii. 1; *Isa.* xi. 3, 4; *Jer.* xxiii. 5; *Mic.* v. 1, 4; *Ps.* lxxvii. 4; xvi. 13; xcviii. 9. All judgment is committed to our Lord Jesus; for, *First*, He is intrusted with the administration of the providential kingdom, is head over all things, *Eph.* i. 20; head of every man, *1 Cor.* xi. 3; all things consist by him, *Col.* i. 17. *Secondly*, He is empowered to make laws, immediately to bind conscience. "I say unto you" is now the form in which the statutes of the kingdom of Heaven run; be it enacted by the Lord Jesus, and by his authority. All the acts now in force are touched with his sceptre. *Thirdly*, He is authorized to appoint and settle the terms of the new covenant, and to draw up the articles of peace between God and man. It is God in Christ that reconciles the world, and to him he has given power to confer eternal life. The book of life is the Lamb's book; by his award we must stand or fall. *Fourthly*, He is commissioned to carry on and complete the war with the powers of darkness; to cast out, and give judgment against the prince of this world, *ch.* xii. 31. He is commissioned, not only to judge, but to make war, *Rev.* xix. 12. All that fight for God against Satan, must enlist themselves under his banner. *Fifthly*, He is constituted sole manager of the judgment of the great day. The ancients generally understood these words of that crowning act of his judicial power. The final and universal judgment is committed to the Son of man; the tribunal is his, it is "the judgment-seat of Christ;" the retinue is his, his mighty angels; he will try the causes, and pass the sentence, *Acts* xvii. 31.

3rd. "He hath given him authority to execute judgment also," ver. 27. Observe, *First*, What the authority is which our Redeemer is invested with; an authority to execute judgment; he has not only a legislative and judicial power, but an executive power too. The phrase here is used particularly for the judgment of condemnation, *Jude* 15, *ποινικα κριτες*, "to execute judgment upon all," the same with his taking vengeance, *2 Thes.* i. 8. The ruin of impenitent sinners comes from the hand of Christ; he that executes judgment upon them is the same that would have wrought salvation for them, which makes the sentence unexceptionable; and there is no relief against the sentence of the Redeemer: salvation itself cannot save those whom the Saviour condemns, which makes the ruin remediless. *Secondly*, Whence he has that authority; the Father gave it him. Christ's authority as Mediator is delegated and derived; he acts as the Father's viceroy, as the Lord's anointed, the Lord's Christ.

Now all this redounds very much to the honour of Christ, acquitting him from the guilt of blasphemy, in making himself equal with God; and very much to the comfort of all believers, who may with the greatest assurance venture their all in such hands.

2. Here are the reasons (reasons of state) for which this commission was given him. He hath all judgment committed to him for two reasons:

1st. "Because he is the Son of man;" which speaks these three things: *First*, His humiliation and gracious condescension. Man is a worm, the Son of man a worm; yet this was the nature, this the character, which the Redeemer assumed, in pursuance of the counsels of love; this low estate he stooped to, and submitted to all the mortifications attending it, because it was his Father's will; in recompense therefore of this wonderful obedience God did thus dignify him; because he condescended to be the Son of man, his Father made him Lord of all, *Phil.* ii. 8, 9. *Secondly*, His affinity and alliance to us. The Father has committed the government of the children of men to him, because, being the Son of man, he is of the same nature with those whom he is set over, and therefore the more unexceptionable, and the more acceptable, as a judge; "their governor shall proceed from the midst of them," *Jer.* xxx. 21. Of this that law was typical, "One of thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee," *Deu.* xvii. 15. *Thirdly*, His being the Messiah promised. In that famous vision of his kingdom and glory, *Dan.* vii. 13, 14, he is called the Son of man; and, *Ps.* viii. 4-6, Thou hast made the Son of man have "dominion over the works of thy hands." He is the Messiah, and therefore is invested with all this power. The Jews usually called Christ the son of David; but Christ usually called himself the Son of man; which was the more humble title, and speaks him a Prince and Saviour, not to the Jewish nation only, but to the whole race of mankind.

2nd. "That all men should honour the Son," ver. 23. The honouring of Jesus Christ is here spoken of, *First*, As God's great design. The Son intended to glorify the Father, and therefore the Father intended to glorify the Son, *ch.* xiii. 32. *Secondly*, As man's great duty, in compliance with that design. If God will have the Son honoured, it is the duty of all those to honour him to whom he is made known. Observe here,

1st. The dignity that is to be done to our Lord Jesus. We must honour the Son, must look upon him as one that is to be honoured, both upon the account of his transcendent excellences and perfections in himself, and the relations he stands in to us, and must study to give him honour accordingly; must confess that he is Lord, and worship him; must honour him who was dishonoured for us.

2nd. The degree of it; "even as they honour the Father." This supposeth our duty to honour the Father, for revealed religion is founded on natural religion, and directs us to honour the Son, to honour him with Divine honour; we must honour the Redeemer with the same honour that we honour the Creator with. So far was it from blasphemy that he made himself equal with God, that it is the highest injury that can be for us to make him otherwise. The truths and laws of the Christian religion, as far as they are revealed, are as sacred and honourable as those of natural religion, and to be equally had in estimation; for we lie under the same obligations to Christ, the author of our wellbeing, that we lie under to the Author of our being; and have as necessary a dependence upon the Redeemer's grace as upon the Creator's providence, which is a sufficient ground for this law, to "honour the Son as we honour the Father."

To enforce this law it is added, "He that honours not the Son honours not the Father which hath sent him." Some pretend a reverence for the Creator, and speak honourably of him, who make light of their Redeemer, and speak contemptibly of him; but let such know that the honours and interests of the Father and Son are so inseparably twisted and interwoven, that the Father never reckons himself honoured by any that dishonour the Son. Note, *First*, Indignities done to the Lord Jesus reflect upon God himself, and will so be construed and reckoned for in the court of Heaven: the Son having so far

espoused the Father's honour as to take to himself the reproaches cast on him, *Rom.* xv. 3, the Father doth no less espouse the Son's honour, and counts himself struck at through him. *Secondly*, The reason of this is, because the Son is sent and commissioned by the Father; it is "the Father which hath sent him." Affronts to an ambassador are justly resented by the prince that sends him; and by this rule, those who truly "honour the Son, honour the Father also;" see *Phil.* ii. 11.

3. Here is the rule by which the Son goes in executing this commission, so those words seem to come in, ver. 24, "He that heareth, and believeth, hath everlasting life;" where we have the substance of the whole Gospel. The preface commands attention to a thing most weighty, and assent to a thing most certain; "Verily, verily, I say unto you;" I, to whom you hear all judgment is committed; I, in whose lips is a Divine sentence: take from me the Christian's character and charter.

1st. The character of a Christian; "he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me." To be a Christian indeed is, *First*, To hear the word of Christ. It is not enough to be within hearing of it; but we must attend on it, as scholars on the instructions of their teachers; and attend to it, as servants to the commands of their masters; we must hear and obey it, must abide by the Gospel of Christ as the fixed rule of our faith and practice. *Secondly*, To believe on him that sent him, for Christ's design is to bring us to God; and as he is the first original of all grace, so he is the last object of all faith. Christ is our way, God is our rest. We must believe on God as having sent Jesus Christ, and recommended himself to our faith and love, by manifesting his glory in the face of Jesus Christ, *2 Cor.* iv. 6, as his Father and our Father.

2nd. The charter of a Christian, which all those are interested in that are Christians indeed. See what we get by Christ; *First*, A charter of pardon, "he shall not come into condemnation;" the grace of the Gospel is a full discharge from the curse of the law. A believer shall not only not lie under condemnation eternally, but not come into condemnation now; not come into the danger of it, *Rom.* viii. 11; not come into judgment; not be so much as arraigned. *Secondly*, A charter of privileges. He is passed out of death to life; is invested in a present happiness in spiritual life, and entitled to a future happiness in eternal life. The tenor of the first covenant was, "Do this, and live;" the man that doth them shall live in them. Now this proves Christ equal with the Father, that he has power to propose the same benefit to the hearers of his word that had been proposed to the keepers of the old law, namely, life; "hear and live, believe and live," is what we may venture our souls upon, when we are disabled to "do and live;" see *ch.* xvii. 2.

4. Here is the righteousness of his proceedings pursuant to this commission, ver. 3. All judgment being committed to him, we cannot but ask how he manageth it? And here he answers, "My judgment is just." All Christ's acts of government, both legislative and judicial, are exactly agreeable to the rules of equity; see *Pr.* viii. 8. There can be no exceptions against any of the determinations of the Redeemer; and therefore, as there shall be no repeal of any of his statutes, so there shall be no appeal from any of his sentences. His judgments are certainly just, for they are directed,

1st. By the Father's wisdom: "I can of my own self do nothing," nothing without the Father; "but as I hear, I judge." As he had said before, ver. 19, "the Son can do nothing but what he sees the Father do," so here, nothing but what he hears the Father say; "as I hear," *First*, From the secret, eternal counsels of the Father, "so I judge." Would we know what we may depend upon in our dealing with God? Hear the word of Christ; we need not dive into the Divine counsels, those secret things which belong not to us, but attend to the revealed dictates of Christ's government and judgment, and those will furnish us with an unerring guide; for what Christ has adjudged is an exact copy or counterpart of what the Father has decreed. *Secondly*, From the published records of the Old Testament. Christ, in all the execution of his undertaking, had an eye to the Scripture, and made it his business to conform to that, and fulfil that, as it was written in the volume of the book. Thus he has taught us to do nothing of ourselves; but as we hear from the Word of God, so to judge of things, and act accordingly.

2nd. By the Father's will: "My judgment is just," and cannot be otherwise, "because I seek not mine own will, but his who sent me." Not as if the will of Christ were contrary to the will of the Father, as the flesh is contrary to the spirit in us. But, *First*, Christ had, as man, the natural and innocent affections of the human nature, sense of pain and pleasure, an inclination to life, an aversion to death; yet he pleased not himself; did not confer with these, nor consult these, when he was to go on in his undertaking, but acquiesced entirely in the will of his Father. *Secondly*, What he did as Mediator was not the result of any peculiar, particular purpose and design of his own; what he did seek to do, was not for his own mind's sake, but he was therein guided by his Father's will, and the purpose which he had purposed to himself. Thus our Saviour did upon all occasions refer himself to, and govern himself by.

Thus our Lord Jesus has opened his commission (whether to the conviction of his enemies, or no,) to his own honour, and the everlasting comfort of all his friends, who here see him able to save to the uttermost.

31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. 32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. 33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. 34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. 35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. 36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. 37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. 38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye

ported by, and in fact coincides with, that of the Father; and that the very same argument is used in viii. 12-14, but the other side of it presented to us. He does witness of himself, because his testimony is the testimony of the Father; he being the word of God, and the Father witnessing in him."

v. 32. "There is another"—not John the Baptist; see verses 34, 36, where our Lord says he receives not testimony from man, and that he has greater witness than that of John. By "another" is meant

the Father. See chap. viii. 50, where a similar mode of expression is used; also viii. 18, where our Lord says distinctly, "The Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

v. 33-37. The connection and sense seems to be, "Ye sent unto John, and he told you the truth; and yet, great prophet though he was, I depend not on his testimony; I have greater witness. The works that I do are none other than the works of the Father, and so his testimony."

believe not. 39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. 40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. 41 I receive not honour from men. 42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. 44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? 45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. 46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. 47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

In these verses our Lord Jesus proves and confirms the commission he had produced, and makes it out that he was sent of God to be the Messiah.

I. He sets aside his own testimony of himself: ver. 31, "If I bear witness of myself" though it is infallibly true, *ch. viii. 14*, yet, according to the common rule of judgment among men, you will not admit it as a legal proof, nor allow it to be given in evidence. Now, 1. This reflects reproach upon the sons of men, and their veracity and integrity. Surely we may say deliberately, what David said in haste, "all men are liars," else it would never have been such a received maxim, that a man's testimony of himself is suspicious, and not to be relied on; it is a sign that self-love is stronger than the love of truth. And yet, 2. It reflects honour on the Son of God, and speaks his wonderful condescension, that though he is the faithful witness, the truth itself, who may challenge to be credited upon his honour, and his own single testimony, yet is pleased to waive his privilege, and, for the confirmation of our faith, refers himself to his vouchers, that we might have full satisfaction.

II. He produceth other witnesses, that bear testimony to him that he was sent of God.

First, The Father himself bore testimony to him: ver. 32, "there is another that beareth witness," which I take to be meant of God the Father; for Christ mentions his testimony with his own, *ch. viii. 18*, "I bear witness of myself, and the Father beareth witness of me." Observe.

1. The seal which the Father put to his commission. He "beareth witness of me," not only hath done so, by a voice from heaven, but still doth so, by the tokens of his presence with me. See who they are to whom God will bear witness: 1st. To those whom he sends and employs; where he gives commissions, he gives credentials. 2nd. To those who bear witness to him; so Christ did. God will own and honour those that own and honour him. 3rd. To those who decline bearing witness of themselves; so Christ did. Those that humble and abase themselves, and seek not their own glory, God will take care they shall not lose by it.

2. The satisfaction Christ had in this testimony: "I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true." I am very well assured that I have a Divine mission, and do not in the least hesitate concerning it. Thus he had the witness in himself. The devil tempted him to question his being the Son of God, but he never yielded.

Secondly, John Baptist witnessed to Christ, ver. 33, &c. "John came to bear witness of the Light," *ch. i. 7*. His business was to prepare his way, and direct people to him: "Behold the Lamb of God." Now the testimony of John was 1. A solemn and public testimony. "Ye sent an embassy of priests and Levites to John, which gave him an opportunity of publishing what he had to say." It was not a popular, but a judicial testimony. 2. It was a true testimony. "He bore witness to the truth," as a witness ought to do; the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Christ doth not say, he bore witness to me, though every one knew he did; but, like an honest man, "he bore witness to the truth." Now John was confessedly such a holy, good man, so mortified to the world, and so conversant with Divine things, that it could not be imagined he should be guilty of such a forgery and imposture as to say what he did concerning Christ, if it had not been so, and if he had not been sure of it. Two things are added concerning John's testimony.

1st. That it was a testimony, *ex abundanti*, "more than he needed to vouch;" ver. 34, "I receive not testimony from man." Though Christ saw fit to quote John's testimony, it is with a protestation that it shall not be deemed or construed so as to prejudice the prerogative of his self-sufficiency. Christ needs no letters of commendation, no testimonials or certificates but what his own worth and excellency brings with him; why then did Christ here urge the testimony of John? Why, "these things I say, that ye might be saved." This he aimed at in all his discourses, to save, not his own life, but others' souls; he produced John's testimony because, being one of themselves, it was to be hoped they would hearken to it. Note, *First*, Christ desires and designs the salvation even of his enemies and persecutors. *Secondly*, The word of Christ is the ordinary means of salvation. *Thirdly*, Christ, in his word, considers our infirmities, and condescends to our capacities; consulting not so much what it befits so great a prince to say, as what we can bear, and what will be most likely to do us good.

2nd. That it was a testimony, *ad hominem*, "to the man;" because John Baptist was one whom they had a respect for; ver. 35, he was a light among you. Observe.

First, The character of John Baptist: "he was a burning and a shining light." Christ often spoke honourably of John; he was now in prison, under a cloud, yet Christ gives him his due praise; which we must be ready to do to all that faithfully serve God. 1st. He was a light, not *phos*, "lux," light; (so Christ was the Light); but *lucerna*, "a luminary," a derived, subordinate light. His office was to enlighten a dark world with notices of the Messiah's approach, to whom he was as the morning star. 2nd. He was a burning light, which notes sincerity. Painted fire may be made to shine, but that which burns is true fire. It notes also his activity, zeal, and fervency, burning in love to God and the souls of men. Fire is always working on itself, or something else; so is a good minister. 3rd. He was a shining light, which notes either his exemplary conversation, in which our light shines, *Mat. v. 18*, or, an eminent, diffusive

influence. He was illustrious in the sight of others; though he affected obscurity, retirement, and was in the deserts, yet such was his doctrine, his baptism, his life, that he became very remarkable, and attracted the eyes of the nation.

Secondly, The affections of the people to him; "ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." 1st. It was a transport they were in upon the appearing of John; "ye were willing," *ηθελησατε*, "ye delighted" to rejoice in his light; you were very proud that you had such a man among you, that was the honour of your country; ye were willing *αγαλλιασθηναι*, willing to dance, and make a noise about this light, as boys about a bonfire. 2nd. It was but transient, and soon over; ye were fond of him, *ποσιν ωραν*, "for an hour," for a season, as little children are fond of a new thing; ye were pleased with John a while, but soon grew weary of him and his ministry, and said he had a devil; and now you have him in prison. Note, Many that seem to be affected and pleased with the Gospel at first, afterwards despise and reject it: it is common for forward and noisy professors to cool and fall off. These here rejoiced in John's light, but never walked in it, and therefore did not stick to it, like the stony ground. While Herod was a friend to John Baptist, the people caressed him; but when he fell under Herod's frowns, he lost their favours. Ye were willing to countenance John, *ποσιν ωραν*, that is, for temporal ends, so some take it; you were glad of him, in hopes to make a tool of him, by his interest; and under the umbrage of his name to have shaken off the Roman yoke, and recovered the civil liberty and honour of your country. Now, *First*, Christ mentions their respects to John, to condemn them for their present opposition to him to whom John bore witness. If they had continued their veneration for John, as they ought to have done, they would have embraced Christ. *Secondly*, He mentions the passing away of their respects, to justify God in depriving them, as he had now done, of John's ministry, and putting that light under a bushel.

Thirdly, Christ's own witness to him; ver. 36, "I have a testimony greater than that of John;" for "if we believe the witness of men" sent of God, as John was, "the witness of God" immediately, and not by the ministry of men, "is greater," 1 *Jno. v. 9*. Observe, Though the witness of John was a less cogent and less considerable witness, yet our Lord was pleased to make use of it. We must be glad of all the supports that offer themselves for the confirmation of our faith, though they may not amount to a demonstration, and not invalidate any, under pretence there are others more conclusive; we have occasion for them all. Now this greater witness was, "the works which his Father had given him to finish." That is,

1. In general; the whole course of his life and ministry: his revealing God and his will to us; setting up his kingdom among men; reforming the world; destroying Satan's kingdom; restoring fallen man to his primitive purity and felicity; and shedding abroad in men's hearts the love of God, and one another. All that work of which he said, when he died, "It is finished," it was all, from first to last, *opus Deo dignum*, "a work worthy of God;" all he said and did was holy and heavenly; and a Divine purity, power, and grace shone in it, and proved abundantly that he was sent of God.

2. In particular; the miracles he wrought for the proof of his Divine mission witnessed of him. Now it is here said, 1st. That these works were given him by the Father, that is, he was both appointed and empowered to work them; for, as Mediator, he derived both commission and strength from his Father. 2nd. They were given him to finish. He must do all those works of wonder which the counsel and foreknowledge of God had before determined to be done; and his finishing them proves a Divine power; for, "as for God, his work is perfect." 3rd. These works did bear witness of him, did prove that he was sent of God, and that what he said concerning himself was true; see *Heb. ii. 4*, *Acts ii. 22*; that the Father had sent him, as a father, not as a master, sends his servant on an errand, but as a father sends his son to take possession for himself; if God had not sent him, he would not have seconded him, would not have sealed him, as he did, by the works he gave him to do; for the world's Creator will never be its deceiver.

Fourthly, He produceth, more fully than before, his Father's testimony concerning him; ver. 37, "the Father that sent me hath borne witness of me." The prince doth not use to follow his ambassador himself to confirm his commission, *viva voce*, "by speaking;" but God was pleased to bear witness of his Son himself, by a voice from heaven at his baptism, *Mat. iii. 17*. This is my ambassador, "This is my beloved Son." The Jews reckoned *Bath-kol*, "the daughter of a voice," a voice from heaven, one of the ways by which God made known his mind; in that way he had owned Christ publicly and solemnly, and repeated it, *Mat. xii. 5*. Note, 1. Those whom God sends, he will bear witness of; where he gives a commission, he will not fail to seal it; that he never "left himself without witness," *Acts xiv. 17*, will never leave any of his servants so, who go upon his errand. 2. Where God demands belief, he will not fail to give sufficient evidence, as he has done concerning Christ. That which was to be witnessed concerning Christ, was chiefly this, that the God we had offended was willing to accept of him as Mediator. Now, concerning this, he has himself (and he was fittest to do it) given us full satisfaction, declaring himself well pleased in him. If we be so, the work is done.

Now it might be suggested, if God himself thus bore witness of Christ, how came it to pass that he was not universally received by the Jewish nation and their rulers? To this Christ here answers, that it was not to be thought strange, nor their infidelity weaken his credibility, for two reasons:

1st. Because they were not acquainted with such extraordinary revelations of God and his will: "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape," or appearance. They shewed themselves to be as ignorant of God, though they professed relation to him, as we are of a man we never either saw or heard. But what do I talk to you of God's bearing witness of me? He is one you know nothing of, nor have any acquaintance or communion with. Note, Ignorance of God is the true reason of men's rejecting the record he has given concerning his Son. A right understanding of natural religion would discover to us such admirable congruities in the Christian religion as would greatly dispose our minds to the entertainment of it. Some give this sense of it: "The Father bore witness of me by a voice, and the descent of a dove, which is such an extraordinary thing that you never saw or heard the like; and yet, for my sake, there was such a voice and appearance; yea, and you might have heard that voice, you might have seen that appearance, as others did, if you had closely attended the ministry of John; but, by slighting it, you missed of that testimony."

2nd. Because they were not affected, no, not with the ordinary ways by which God had revealed himself to them; ver. 38, "ye have not his word abiding in you." They had the Scriptures of the Old Testament; might they not by them be disposed to receive Christ? Yes, if they had had their due influence upon them. But, *First*, The word of God was not in them; it was among them—in their country, in their hands—but not in them, in their hearts; not ruling in their souls, but only shining in their eyes, and sounding in their ears. What did it avail them that they had the oracles of God committed to them, *Rom. iii. 2*, when they had not these oracles commanding in them? if they had, they would readily have embraced Christ. *Secondly*, It did not abide. Many have the word of God coming into them, and making some impressions for a while, but it doth not abide with them; it is not constantly in them, as a

v. 35. "He was a burning and a shining light:" from the use of the past tense ("was") we may perhaps infer that the ministry of John had come to an end, owing to his having been cast into prison. "A burning and a shining light:" literally, "a lit-up and shining lamp or torch." Compare with this the phrase applied to our Lord, viz., "the Light." He was the source of light to others, John's was but a derived light. "For a season to rejoice," &c.: the light, frivolous, and false spirit in which they received the Baptist is alluded to.

v. 37–40. The following is Alford's connection and rendering of these verses: "The works of which I have spoken are only indirect testimonies; the Father himself, who sent me, has given direct testimony concerning me. Now that testimony cannot be derived by you nor by any man by direct communication with him; for ye have never heard his voice nor seen his shape (or perhaps have not heard his voice as your fathers did from Sinai, nor seen his vision appearance, as the prophets did), nor (verse 38) in your case has it

man at home, but only now and then, as a wayfaring man. If the word abide in us, if we converse with it by frequent meditation, consult with it upon every occasion, and conform to it in our conversation, we shall then readily receive the witness of the Father concerning Christ: see *ch. vii. 17*.

But how did it appear that they had not the word of God abiding in them? It appeared by this, "whom he hath sent, him ye believe not." There was so much said in the Old Testament concerning Christ, to direct people when and where to look for him, and so to facilitate the discovery of him, that if they had duly considered those things, they could not have avoided the conviction of Christ's being sent of God; so that their not believing in Christ was a certain sign that the word of God did not abide in them. Note, The indwelling of the word, and Spirit, and grace of God in us, is best tried by the effects of it, particularly by our receiving what he sends; the commands he sends, the messengers, the providences he sends, especially Christ, whom he hath sent.

Fifthly. The last witness he calls is the Old Testament, which witnessed of him; and to it he appeals, *ver. 39, &c.* "Search the Scriptures," *pericope*. It may be read either, 1. "Ye do search the Scriptures," and ye do well to do so; you read them daily in your synagogues; you have rabbins, and doctors, and scribes, that make it their business to study them, and criticise upon them. The Jews boasted of the flourishing of the Scripture learning in the days of Hillel, who died about twelve years after Christ's birth, and reckoned some of those who were then members of the Sanhedrim the beauties of their wisdom, and the glories of their law; and Christ owns that they did indeed search the Scriptures, but it was in search of their own glory; "Ye do search the Scriptures; and therefore, if ye were not willfully blind, you would believe in me." Note, It is possible for men to be very studious in the letter of the Scripture, and yet to be strangers to the power and influence of it. Or, 2. As we read it, "Search the Scriptures," and so, 1st. It was spoken to them in the nature of an appeal. "You profess to receive and believe the Scriptures; there I will join issue with you: let that be the judge, provided you will not 'rest in the letter,' (*herere in cortice*.) but will search into it." Note, When appeals are made to the Scriptures, they must be searched. Search the whole book of Scripture throughout; compare one passage by another, and explain one by another. We must likewise search particular passages to the bottom, and see, not what they seem to say *prima facie*,—at the first appearance, but what they say indeed. 2nd. It is spoken to us in the nature of an advice, or command, to all Christians to search the Scriptures. Note, All those who would find Christ, must "search the Scriptures;" not only read them, and hear them, and study, and a close application of mind. *First*, Diligence in seeking, labour and study, and a close application of mind. *Secondly*, Desire and design of finding. We must aim at some spiritual benefit and advantage in reading and studying the Scripture, and often ask, What am I now searching for? We must search as for hid treasures, *Pr. ii. 4*: as those that sink for gold or silver, or that dive for pearl, *Job xxviii. 1-11*. This ennobled the Bereans, *Acts xvii. 11*.

Now there are two things which we are here directed to have in our eye in our searching of the Scripture; heaven our end, and Christ our way.

1st. We must search the Scriptures for heaven, as our great end; "for in them ye think ye have eternal life." The Scripture assures us of an eternal state set before us, and offers to us an eternal life in that state. It contains the chart that describes it, the charter that convey it, the direction in the way that leads to it, and the foundation upon which the hope of it is built; and this is worth searching for, there where we are sure to find it. But to the Jews Christ saith only, "Ye think ye have eternal life" in the Scripture; because, though they did retain the belief and hope of eternal life, and grounded their expectations of it upon the Scriptures; yet herein they missed it, that they looked for it by the bare reading and studying of the Scriptures. It was a common but corrupt saying among them, "He that has the words of the law, has eternal life; they thought they were sure of heaven if they could say by heart, or rather by rote, such and such passages of Scripture as they were directed to by the tradition of the elders; as they thought all the vulgar cursed, because they did not thus know the law, *ch. vii. 49*; so they concluded all the learned undoubtedly blessed.

2nd. We must search the Scriptures for Christ, as the new and living way that leads to this end. Those are they, the great and principal witnesses, that testify of me. Note, *First*, The Scriptures, even those of the Old Testament, testify of Christ, and by them God bears witness to him. The Spirit of Christ in the prophets, testified beforehand of him (*1 Pet. i. 11*) the purposes and promises of God concerning him, and the previous notices of him. The Jews knew very well that the Old Testament testified of the Messiah, and were critical in their remarks upon the passages that looked that way; and yet were careless, and wretchedly overseen in the application of them. *Secondly*, Therefore we must "search the Scriptures," and may hope to find eternal life in that search, because they testify of Christ; for this is eternal life, to know him: see *1 Jno. v. 11*. Christ is the treasure hid in the field of the Scriptures; the water in those wells, the milk in those breasts.

To this testimony he annexeth a reproof of their infidelity and wickedness in four instances; particularly,

1. Their neglect of him and his doctrine; *ver. 40*, "ye will not come to me that ye might have life;" you search the Scriptures, you believe the prophets, which you cannot but see testify of me, and yet you will not come to me, to whom they direct you. Their estrangement from Christ was not so much the fault of their understandings as of their wills. This is expressed as a complaint; Christ offered life, and it would not be accepted. Note, 1st. There is life to be had with Jesus Christ; and it is not for poor souls; we may have life, the life of pardon and grace, and comfort and glory. Life is the perfection of our being, and inclusive of all happiness; and Christ is our life. 2nd. Those that would have this life, must come to Jesus Christ for it; we may have it for the coming for. It supposeth an assent of the understanding to the doctrine of Christ, and the record given concerning him; it lies in the consent of the will to his government and grace; and it produceth an answerable compliance in the affections and actions. 3rd. The only reason why sinners die, is because they will not come to Christ for life and happiness. It is not because they cannot, but because they will not. They will neither accept of the life offered, because spiritual and Divine; nor use of the appointed means; they will not be cured, for they will not observe the methods of cure. 4th. The wilfulness and obstinacy of sinners, in rejecting the tenders of grace, is a great grief to the Lord Jesus, and what he complains of.

Those words, *ver. 41*, "I receive not honour from men," come in in a parenthesis, to obviate an objection against him, as if he sought his own glory, and made himself the head of a party, in obliging all to come to him and applaud him. Note, 1st. He did not covet or court the applause of men; did not in the least affect that worldly pomp and splendour which the carnal Jews expected their Messiah to appear in. He charged those he cured not to make him known, and withdrew from those that would have made him king. 2nd. He had not the applause of men; instead of receiving honour from men, he received a great deal of dishonour and disgrace from men; for he made himself of no reputation. 3rd. He needed not the applause of men; it was no addition to his glory, whom all the angels of God worship; nor was he any otherwise pleased

with it, than as it was according to his Father's will, and for the happiness of those who, in giving honour to him, received much greater honour from him.

2. Their want of the love of God; *ver. 42*, "I know you" very well, "that you have not the love of God in you." Why should I wonder that you do not come to me, when you want even the first principle of natural religion, which is the love of God? Note, The reason why people slight Christ, is because they do not love God; for if we did indeed love God, we would love him who is his express image, and hasten to him, by whom only we may be restored to the favour of God. He had charged them, *ver. 37*, with ignorance of God, and here with want of love to him; therefore men have not the love of God, because they desire not the knowledge of him. Observe,

1st. The crime charged upon them; "ye have not the love of God in you." They pretended a great love to God, and thought they proved it by their zeal for the law, the temple, and the sabbath; and yet they were really without the love of God. Note, There are many who make a great profession of religion, that yet shew they want the love of God, by their neglect of Christ, and their contempt of his commandments: they hate his holiness and undervalue his goodness. Observe, It is the love of God in us—the love that is seated in the heart, and is a living, active principle there—that God will accept; the love shed abroad there, *Rom. v. 5*.

2nd. The proof of this charge, by the personal knowledge of Christ, who searcheth the heart, *Rev. ii. 23*, and knows what is in man; "I know you." Christ sees through all our disguises, and can say to each of us, "I know thee." *First*, Christ knows men better than their neighbours know them. The people thought that the scribes and Pharisees were very devout and good men; but Christ knew they had nothing of the love of God in them. *Secondly*, Christ knows men better than they know themselves. These Jews had a very good opinion of themselves; but Christ knew how corrupt their inside was, notwithstanding the plausible shows of their outside: we may deceive ourselves, but we cannot deceive him. *Thirdly*, Christ knows men that do not and I will not know him; he looks on those who industriously look off him, and calls them by their own name, their true name, who have not known him.

3. Another crime charged upon them is, their readiness to entertain false Christs and false prophets, while they obstinately opposed him who was the true Messiah; *ver. 43*, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." "Be astonished," O heavens, at this! *Jer. ii. 12, 13*; "for my people have committed two evils;" great evils indeed: 1st. "They have forsaken the fountain of living waters;" for they would not receive Christ, who came in his Father's name, had his commission from his Father, and did all for his glory. 2nd. They have hewn out broken cisterns, "they hearken to every one that will set up in his own name. They forsake their own mercies, that is bad enough; and it is for lying vanities, that is worse. Observe here, *First*, Those are false prophets who come in their own name, who run without being sent, and set up for themselves only. *Secondly*, It is just with God to suffer those to be deceived with false prophets who receive not the truth in the love of it, *2 Thes. ii. 10, 11*.

The errors of antichrist are the just punishment of those who obey not the doctrine of Christ. They that shut their eyes against the true light, are by the judgment of God given up to wander endlessly after 'false lights,' and to be led aside after every *ignis fatuus*. *Thirdly*, It is the gross folly of many, that while they nauseate ancient truths, they are fond of upstart errors; they loathe manna, and at the same time feed upon ashes. After the Jews had rejected Christ and his Gospel, they were continually haunted with spectres, with false Christs and false prophets, *Mat. xxiv. 24*; and their proneness to follow such occasioned those distractions and seditions that hastened their ruin.

4. They are here charged with pride and vainglory, and unbelief the effect of it, *ver. 44*. Having sharply reprov'd their unbelief, like a wise physician he here searcheth into the cause—lays the axe to the root; they therefore slighted and undervalued Christ, because they admired and overvalued themselves. Here is,

1st. Their ambition of worldly honour. Christ despised it, *ver. 41*; they set their hearts upon it; "ye receive honour one of another;" that is, ye look for a Messiah in outward pomp, and promise yourselves worldly honour by him. "Ye receive honour;" that is, *First*, You desire to receive it, and aim at that in all you do. *Secondly*, Ye give honour to others, and applaud them, only that they may return it, and may applaud you; *petimus dabimusque vicissim*—"we ask, and we bestow." It is the proud man's art to throw honour upon others, only that it may rebound upon himself. *Thirdly*, You are very careful to keep all the honours to yourselves, and confine them to your own party, as if you had the monopoly of that which is honourable. *Fourthly*, What respects are shewed you, you receive them yourselves, and do not transmit them to God, as Herod. Idolizing men and their sentiments, and affecting to be idolized by them and their applauses, are pieces of idolatry as directly contrary to Christianity as any other.

2nd. Their neglect of spiritual honour, called here "the honour that comes from God only;" this they sought not, nor minded. Note, *First*, True honour is that which comes from God only—that is real and lasting honour; those are honourable indeed whom he takes into covenant and communion with himself. *Secondly*, "This honour have all the saints." All that believe in Christ, through him receive the honour that comes from God; he is not partial, but will give glory wherever he gives grace. *Thirdly*, This honour that comes from God we must seek, must aim at it, and act for it, and take up with nothing short of it, *Rom. ii. 1*; we must account it our reward, as the Pharisees accounted the praise of men. *Fourthly*, Those that will not come to Christ, and those that are ambitious of worldly honour, make it appear that they seek not the honour that comes from God; and it is their folly and ruin.

3rd. The influence this had upon their infidelity; "How can ye believe," who are thus affected? Observe here, *First*, The difficulty of believing ariseth from ourselves, and our own corruption; we make our work hard to ourselves, and then complain it is impracticable. *Secondly*, The ambition and affectation of worldly honour is a great hindrance to faith in Christ. How can they believe who make the praise and applause of men their idol? When the profession and practice of serious godliness is unfashionable, "is every where spoken against"—when Christ and his followers are men wondered at—and to be a Christian is to be like a speckled bird, (and this is the common case), how can they believe, the top of whose ambition is "to make a fair show in the flesh?"

Sixthly. The last witness here called is Moses, *ver. 45, &c.* The Jews had a great veneration for Moses, and valued themselves upon their being the disciples of Moses, and pretended to adhere to Moses in their opposition to Christ, but Christ here shews them,

1. That Moses was a witness against the unbelieving Jews, and accused them to the Father; "there is one that accuseth you, even Moses." This may be understood either, 1st. As shewing the difference between the law and the Gospel. Moses—that is, the law—accuseth you, for by the law is the knowledge of sin; it condemns you; it is to those that trust to it a ministration of death and condemnation; but it is not the design of Christ's Gospel to accuse us: "Think not that I will accuse you." Christ did not come into the world as a Mosaic, to find fault and pick quarrels with every body, or as a spy upon the

been given by that inward witness (*chap. iii. 33*; *1 John iv. 13, 14*) which those have (and had in a measure even before the gift of the Spirit) in whom his word abides; for ye have not his word abiding in you, nor believe on him whom he hath sent. Yet (*verse 39*) there is a form of this direct testimony of the Father accessible even to you; "Search the scriptures." "Observe," continues Alford, "that the testimony in the Scriptures is not the only nor the chief one intended in *verse 37*, but the direct testimony in the heart of the

believer, which, as the Jews have not, they are directed to another form of the Father's testimony, that in the Scriptures." The word "search" is taken by Alford as in the imperative mood. "Search" may be taken in the indicative, as asserting a fact. If it be thus taken, "the logical connection of the three sentences in *verses 39, 40* is easy and obvious: 'Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think in them ye have eternal life, and they are the witnesses to which I appeal as bearing testimony concerning me; and withal (or yet) ye

actions of men, or a promoter to fish for crimes; no, he came to be an advocate, not an accuser: to reconcile God and man, and not to set them more at variance. What fools were they then that adhered to Moses against Christ, and desired to be under the law, *Gal. iv. 21*. Or, 2nd. As shewing the manifest unreasonableness of their infidelity. Think not that I will appeal from your bar to God's, and challenge you to answer there for what you do against me, as injured innocency uses to do; no, I do not need; you are already accused and cast in the court of Heaven; Moses himself saith enough to convict you of, and condemn you for, your unbelief. Let them not mistake concerning Christ; though he was a prophet, he did not improve his interest in Heaven against those that persecuted him; did not, as Elias, make intercession against Israel, *Rom. xi. 2*; or as Jeremiah, desire to see God's vengeance on them, *Jer. xx. 12*. Instead of accusing his crucifiers to his Father, he prayed, "Father, forgive them." Nor let them mistake concerning Moses, as if he would stand by them in rejecting Christ; no, "there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust." Note, *First*. External privileges and advantages, are commonly the vain confidence of those who reject Christ and his grace. The Jews trusted in Moses, and thought their having his laws and ordinances would save them. *Secondly*. Those that confide in their privileges, and do not improve them, will find not only that their confidence is disappointed, but that those very privileges will be witnesses against them.

2. That Moses was a witness for Christ, and to his doctrine; *ver. 46, 47*, "he wrote of me." Moses did particularly prophesy of Christ, as the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the Shiloh, the great Prophet; the ceremonies of the law of Moses were figures of Him that was to come. The Jews made Moses the patron of their opposition to Christ; but Christ here shews them their error, that Moses was so far from writing against Christ, that he wrote for him, and of him. But,

1st. Christ here charges it on the Jews that they did not believe Moses. He had said, *ver. 45*, that they trusted in Moses, and yet here undertakes to make out that they did not believe Moses; they trusted to his name, but they did not receive his doctrine in its true sense and meaning; they did not rightly understand nor give credit to what there was in the writings of Moses concerning the Messiah.

2nd. He proves this charge from their disbelief of him; "had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me." Note, *First*. The surest trial of faith is by the effects it produceth: many say they believe, whose actions give their words the lie; for had they believed the Scriptures, they would have done otherwise than they did. *Secondly*. Those who rightly believe one part of Scripture will receive every part. The prophecies of the Old Testament were so fully accomplished in Christ, that they who rejected Christ, did in effect deny those prophecies, and set them aside.

3rd. From their disbelief of Moses, he infers that it was not strange they rejected him: "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" how can it be thought ye should? *First*. If ye do not believe sacred writings, those oracles which are in black and white, which is the most certain way of conveyance, "how shall ye believe my words," which use to be less regarded? *Secondly*. If you do not believe Moses, for whom you have such a profound veneration, how is it likely you should believe me, whom you look upon with so much contempt? see *Ex. vi. 12*. *Thirdly*. If ye believe not what Moses spake and wrote of me, which is a strong and cogent testimony for me, how shall ye believe me and my mission? If we admit not the premises, how shall we admit the conclusion? The truth of the Christian religion,—it being a matter purely of Divine revelation,—depends upon the Divine authority of the Scripture; if therefore we believe not the Divine inspiration of those writings, how shall we receive the doctrine of Christ?

Thus ends Christ's plea for himself, in answer to the charge exhibited against him: what effect it had we know not. It should seem to have had this,—their mouths were stopped for the present, and they could not for shame but drop the prosecution; and yet their hearts were hardened.

CHAPTER VI.

In this chapter we have, I. The miracle of the loaves, *ver. 1—14*. II. Christ's walking upon the water, *ver. 15—21*. III. The people's flocking after him at Capernaum, *ver. 22—23*. IV. His conference with them, occasioned by the miracle of the loaves; in which he reproves them for seeking carnal food, and directs them to spiritual food, *ver. 26, 27*; shewing them how they must labour for spiritual food, *ver. 28, 29*; and what that spiritual food is, *ver. 30—59*. V. Their discontent at what he said, and the reproof he gave them for it, *ver. 60—65*. VI. The apostasy of many from him, and his discourse with his disciples that adhered to him upon that occasion, *ver. 66—71*.



AFTER these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. 2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. 3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. 5 When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? 6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. 7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. 8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, 9 There is a lad here, which

hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? 10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. 12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. 13 Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. 14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

We have here an account of Christ's feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes; which miracle is in this respect remarkable, that it is the only passage of the actions of Christ's life that is recorded by all the four evangelists. John, who useth not to relate what had been recorded by those who wrote before him, yet relates this, because of the reference the following discourse has to it. Observe,

First. The place and time, where and when this miracle was wrought, which are noted for the greater evidence of the truth of the story. It is not said that it was done once upon a time, no body knows where; but the circumstances are specified, that the fact might be inquired into.

1. The country that Christ was in; *ver. 1*, he "went over the sea of Galilee," called elsewhere the lake of Gennesaret; here, the sea of Tiberias, from a city adjoining, which Herod had lately enlarged and beautified, and called so in honour of Tiberius the emperor, and probably had made his metropolis. Christ did not go directly over, across this inland sea, but made a coasting voyage to another place on the same side. It is not tempting God to choose to go by water, when there is convenience for it, even to those places whither we might go by land; for Christ never tempted the Lord his God, *Mat. iv. 7*.

2. The company that he was attended with, "a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles," *ver. 2*. Note, 1st. Our Lord Jesus, while he went about doing good, lived continually in a crowd, which gave him more trouble than honour. Good and useful men must not complain of a hurry of business, when they are serving God and their generation; it will be time enough to enjoy ourselves when we come to that world where we shall enjoy God. 2nd. Christ's miracles drew many after him, that were not effectually drawn to him. They had their curiosity gratified by the strangeness of them, who had not their consciences convinced by the power of them.

3. Christ's posting himself advantageously to entertain them; *ver. 3*, he "went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples," that he might the more conveniently be seen and heard by the multitude that crowded after him. This was a natural pulpit, and not, like Ezra's, made for the purpose. Christ was now driven to be a field preacher; but his word was never the worse, nor the less acceptable for that, to those who knew how to value it—who followed him still, not only when he went out to a desert place, but when he went up to a mountain, though up-hill be against heart. He sat there, as teachers use to do, *in cathedra*,—in the chair of instruction; he did not sit at ease, nor sit in state, but sat as one having authority; sat ready to receive addresses that were made to him, whoever would might come and find him there. He sat with his disciples; he condescended to take them to sit with him, to put a reputation upon them before the people, and give them an earnest of the glory in which they should shortly sit with him. We are said to sit with him, *Eph. ii. 6*.

4. The time when it was. The first words, "after those things," do not signify that this immediately followed what was related in the foregoing chapter; for it was a considerable time after; and they signify no more but, in process of time; but we are told, *ver. 4*, that it was when the passover was at hand; which is here noted, *First*. Because, perhaps, that had brought in all the apostles from their respective expeditions, whither they were sent as itinerant preachers, that they might attend their Master to Jerusalem to keep the feast. *Secondly*. Because it was a custom with the Jews religiously to observe the approach of the passover thirty days before, with some sort of solemnity; so long before they had it in their eye; repaired the roads, mended bridges, if occasion were, and discoursed of the passover, and the institution of it. *Thirdly*. Because, perhaps, the approach of the passover, when every one knew Christ would go up to Jerusalem, and be absent for some time, made the multitude flock the more after him, and attend the more diligently on him. Note, The prospect of losing our opportunities should quicken us to improve them with double diligence. And when solemn ordinances are approaching, it is good to prepare for them, by conversing with the word of Christ.

Secondly. The miracle itself. And there observe, 1. The notice Christ took of the crowd that attended him; *ver. 5*, "he lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come to him;" poor, mean, ordinary people, no doubt, for such make up the multitudes, especially in such remote corners of the country; yet Christ shewed himself pleased with their attendance, and concerned for their welfare; to teach us to condescend to them of low estate, and not to set those with the dogs of our flock whom Christ hath set with the lambs of his. The souls of the poor are as precious to Christ and should be so to us, as those of the rich.

2. The inquiry he made concerning the way of providing for them. He directed himself to Philip, who had been his disciple from the first, and had seen all his miracles, and particularly that of his turning water into wine; and therefore it might be expected that he should have said, Lord, if thou wilt, it is easy to thee to feed them all. Those that, like Israel, have been witnesses of Christ's works, and have shared in the benefit of them, are inexcusable if they say, "Can he furnish a table in the wilderness?" Philip was of Bethsaida, in

refuse to come unto me.' The argument from the testimony of the Scriptures thus closely corresponds with that from the testimony of John. "Ye sent to John—ye search the Scriptures; ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light—ye think that in the Scriptures ye have eternal life. John bare witness to the truth—the Scriptures are they that testify of me." In these words our Lord points out to the Jews their inconsistency; they thought they had eternal life in the Scriptures, and yet did not come to him to whom those Scriptures

bore witness, and who had this eternal life which they professed to desire. "Ye will not;" the words signify an act of the will, and are tantamount to saying "ye refuse."

v. 42. "But I know you," &c.: the "but" draws a distinction between himself and them. "The love of God" is their love for God. The words are not spoken of a sinful state of mind and heart, but simply of the absence of that love for God which should have been in them (see *Deut. vi. 5*).

the neighbourhood of which town Christ now was; and therefore he was most likely to help them to provision at the best hand; and probably much of the company was known to him, and he concerned for them. Now Christ asked, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" *First*. He takes it for granted that they must all eat with him. One would think, when he had taught and healed them, he had done his part; and now they should rather have been contriving how to treat him and his disciples; for some of the people it is likely were rich, and we are sure that Christ and his disciples were poor; yet he is solicitous to entertain them. Those that will accept Christ's spiritual gifts, instead of paying for them, shall be paid for their acceptance of them. Christ having fed their souls with the bread of life, feeds their bodies also with food convenient, to shew that the Lord is for the body, and to encourage us to pray for our daily bread, and to set us an example of compassion to the poor, *Ias. ii. 15*. *Secondly*. His inquiry is, "Whence shall we buy bread?" One would think, considering his poverty, he should rather have asked, where shall we have money to buy for them? But he will rather lay out all he has than they shall want. He will buy to give; and we must labour, that we may give, *Eph. iv. 28*.

3. The design of this inquiry; it was only to try the faith of Philip, "for he himself knew what he would do," *ver. 6*. Note, 1st. Our Lord Jesus Christ is never at a loss in his counsels; but how difficult soever the case is, he knows what he has to do, and what course he will take, *Acts xv. 18*. He knows the thoughts he has towards his people, *Jer. xxix. 11*; and is never at uncertainty; when we know not, he himself knows what he will do. 2nd. When Christ is pleased to puzzle his people, it is only with a design to prove them. The question put Philip to a nonplus; yet Christ proposed it to try whether he would say, Lord, if thou wilt exert thy power for them, we need not buy bread.

4. Philip's answer to this question, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient," *ver. 7*. "Master, it is to no purpose to talk of buying bread for them, for neither will the country afford so much bread, nor can we afford to lay out so much money; ask Judas else, who carries the bag." Two hundred pence of their money amounts to about six pounds of ours; and if they lay out all that at once, it will exhaust their fund, and break them; and they must starve themselves. Grotius computes that two hundred pennyworth of bread would scarce reach to two thousand; but Philip would go as near as he could, will have every one to take a little; and nature, we say, is content with a little. See the weakness of Philip's faith; that in this strait, as if the Master of the family had been an ordinary person, he looked for supply only in an ordinary way. Christ might now have said to him, as he did afterwards, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" or, as God to Moses, in a like case, "Is the Lord's hand waxed short?" We are apt thus to distrust God's power, when visible and ordinary means fail; that is, to trust him no farther than we can see him.

5. The information which Christ received from another of his disciples concerning the provision they had. It was Andrew, here said to be Simon Peter's brother; though he was senior to Peter in discipleship, and instrumental to bring Peter to Christ, yet Peter afterwards so far outshone him, that he is described by his relation to Peter. He acquainted Christ with what they had at hand; and in that we may see,

1st. The strength of his love to those whom he saw his Master concerned for, in that he was willing to bring out all they had, though he knew not but they might want themselves, and any one would have said, "Charity begins at home." He did not go about to conceal it, under pretence of being a better husband of their provision than the Master was, but honestly gives in an account of all they had. "There is a lad here," *παῖς ἄνθρωπος*, "a little lad," probably one that used to follow this company, as suters do the camp, with provisions to sell; and the disciples had bespoke what he had for themselves; and it was "five barley loaves, and two small fishes." Here, *First*. The provision was coarse and ordinary; they were barley loaves. Canaan was a land of wheat, *Deut. viii. 8*; its inhabitants were commonly fed with the finest wheat, *Ps. lxxxi. 16*; the kidneys of wheat, *Deut. xxxii. 14*; yet Christ and his disciples were glad of barley bread. It doth not follow hence that we should tie ourselves to such coarse fare, and place religion in it, when God brings that which is finer to our hands, let us receive it and be thankful. But it doth follow, that therefore we must not be desirous of dainties, *Pr. xxiii. 5*; nor murmur if we be reduced to coarse fare; but be content and thankful, and well reconciled to it. Barley bread is what Christ had, and better than we deserve; nor let us despise the mean provision of the poor, nor look upon it with contempt, remembering how Christ was provided for. *Secondly*. It was but short and scanty; there were but five loaves, and those so small that one little lad carried them all; and we find, *2 Kin. iv. 42, 43*, that twenty barley loaves, with some other provision to help out, would not dine a hundred men without a miracle. There were but two fishes, and those small ones, *δύο ὀνείρια*, so small that one of them was but a morsel, *pisciculi assati*. I take the fish to be pickled or soured, for they had not fire to dress them with. The provision of bread was little; but that of the fish was less, in proportion to it; so that many a bit of dry bread they must eat before they could make a meal of this provision; but they were content with it. Bread is meat for our hunger; but they that murmured for flesh, it is said, they asked meat for their lusts, *Ps. lxxviii. 18*. Well, Andrew was willing the people should have this as far as it would go. Note, A distrustful fear of wanting ourselves should not hinder us from needful charity to others.

2nd. See here the weakness of his faith, in that word, "but what are they among so many?" "To offer that to such a multitude is but to mock them," Philip and he had not that actual consideration of the power of Christ, which they had had such large experience of, as they should have had. Who fed the camp of Israel in the wilderness? He that could make one man chase a thousand, could make one loaf feed a thousand.

6. The directions Christ gave the disciples to seat the guests, *ver. 10*: "Make the men sit down," though ye have nothing to set before them, and trust me for that; this was like sending providence to market, and going to buy without money. Christ would thus try their obedience. Observe, 1st. The furniture of the dining-room; "there was much grass in that place," though a desert place. See how bountiful nature is, makes grass to grow upon the mountains, *Ps. cxlvii. 8*. This grass was uneaten: God gives not only enough, but more than enough. Here was this plenty of grass where Christ was preaching. The Gospel brings other blessings along with it; "then shall the earth yield her increase," *Ps. lxxvii. 6*. This plenty of grass made the place the more commodious for them that must sit on the ground, and served them for cushions, or beds, as they called what they sat on at meat, *Est. i. 6*; and considering what Christ saith of the grass of the field, *Mat. vi. 29, 30*, these beds excelled those of Ahasuerus. Nature's pomp is the most glorious. 2nd. The number of the guests, "about five thousand;" a great entertainment, representing that of the Gospel, which is a feast for all nations, *Isa. xxv. 6*; a feast for all comers.

7. The distribution of the provision, *ver. 11*. Observe, 1st. It was done with thanksgiving; he gave thanks. Note, *First*. We ought to give thanks to God for our food; for it is a mercy to have it, and we have it from the hand of God, and must receive it with thanksgiving, *1 Tim. iv. 4, 5*. And this is the sweetness of our creature comforts, that they

will furnish us with matter, and give us occasion for that excellent duty of thanksgiving. *Secondly*. Though our provision be coarse and scanty, though we have neither plenty nor dainty, yet we must give thanks to God for what we have.

2nd. It was distributed from the hand of Christ by the hands of his disciples, *ver. 11*. Note, *First*. All our comforts come to us originally from the hand of Christ; whoever brings them, it is he that sends them; he distributes to them who distribute to us. *Secondly*. In distributing the bread of life to those that follow him, he is pleased to make use of the ministration of his disciples; they are the servants at Christ's table, or rather, rulers in his household, to give to every one their portion of meat in due season.

3rd. It was done to universal satisfaction. They did not every one take a little, but all had as much as they would; not a short allowance, but a full meal; and considering how long they had fasted, with what an appetite they sat down, how agreeable this miraculous food may be supposed to be above common food,—it was not a little that served them, when they ate as much as they would, and on free cost. Those whom Christ feeds with the bread of life he doth not stint, *Ps. lxxxi. 10*. There were but two small fishes, and yet they had of them too "as much as they would." He did not reserve them for better sort of guests, and put off the poor with dry bread, but treated them all alike, for they were all alike welcome. They who call feeding upon fish fasting, reproach the entertainment Christ here made, which was a full feast.

8. The care that was taken of the broken meat.

1st. The orders Christ gave concerning it, *ver. 12*: "When they were filled," and every man had within him a sensible witness to the truth of the miracle, Christ, "said to the disciples," the servants he employed, "Gather up the fragments." Note, We must always take care that we make no waste of any of God's good creatures; for the grant we have of them, though large and full, is with this proviso, "wilful waste only excepted." It is just with God to bring us to the want of that which we make waste of. The Jews were very careful not to lose any bread, or let it fall to the ground to be trodden upon: *Qui panem contemnit in gravem incidit pauperatem*.—He who despises bread falls into the depths of poverty, was a saying among them. Though Christ could command supplies whenever he pleased, yet he would have the fragments gathered up. When we are filled, we must remember that others want, and we may want. Those that would have wherewith to be charitable, must be provident. Had this broken meat been left upon the grass, the beasts and fowls would have gathered it up; but that which is fit to be meat for men, is wasted and lost if it be thrown to the brute creatures. Christ did not order the broken meat to be gathered up till all were filled; we must not begin to hoard and lay up till all is laid out that ought to be; for that is withholding more than is meet. Mr. Baxter notes here, "How much less should we lose God's word, or helps, or our time, or such greater mercies."

2nd. The observance of these orders, *ver. 13*: "they filled twelve baskets with the fragments;" which was an evidence, not only of the truth of the miracle, that they were fed, not with fancy, but with real food, (witness those remains,) but of the greatness of it; they were not only filled, but there was all this over and above. See how large the Divine bounty is; it not only fills the cup, but makes it run over; bread enough, and to spare, in our Father's house. The fragments filled twelve baskets, one for each disciple; they were thus repaid with interest for their willingness to part with what they had for public service: see *2 Chr. xxxi. 10*. The Jews lay it as a law upon themselves, when they have eaten a meal, to be sure to leave a piece of bread upon the table, upon which the blessing after meat may rest; for it is a curse upon the wicked man, *Job xx. 21*, that there shall none of his meat be left.

Thirdly. Here is the influence which this miracle had upon the people, who tasted of the benefit of it, *ver. 14*; they said, "This is of a truth that prophet." Note, 1st. Even the vulgar Jews with great assurance expected the Messiah to come into the world, and to be a great prophet: they speak here with assurance of his coming. The Pharisees despised them as not knowing the law; but it should seem they knew more of Him that is the end of the law than they did. 2nd. The miracles which Christ wrought did clearly demonstrate that he was the Messiah promised, a teacher come from God, the great Prophet, and could not but convince the amazed spectators that this was he that should come. 3rd. There were many who were convinced he was that prophet which should come into the world, who yet did not cordially receive his doctrine, for they did not continue in it. Such a wretched incoherence and inconsistency there is between the faculties of the corrupt, unsanctified soul, that it is possible for men to acknowledge that Christ is that prophet, and yet turn a deaf ear to him.

15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. 16 And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, 17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. 18 And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. 19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. 20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. 21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

Here is, *First*. Christ's retirement from the multitude.

1. Observe what induced him to retire; because he perceived that they who acknowledged him to be that prophet that should come into the world, would come and take him by force to make him a king, *ver. 15*. Now here we have an instance.

1st. Of the irregular zeal of some of Christ's followers: nothing would serve but they would make him a king. Now, *First*. This was an act of zeal for the honour of Christ, and against the contempt which the ruling part of the Jewish church put upon him. They were concerned to see so great a benefactor to the world so little esteemed of in it; and therefore, since royal

v. 43, 44. They had not the love of God in their hearts, they therefore did not receive him who came in God the Father's name; there was nothing in common between what he revealed and what was in their hearts and minds. On the contrary, so given up are they to worldly, selfish love, that they would welcome one coming in this spirit, coming in his own name, and seeking his own exaltation. "Nothing is a greater hindrance to simple belief and faith in God than desire and cultivation of men's approbation of ourselves as re-

ligious persons, in order to advance our worldly interests. Hence the strong expression, 'How can ye believe which, &c.' "From God only," Alford translates, "from the only God," and says these words are "in contradistinction to the idolatry of the natural heart, which is ever setting up for itself other sources of honour, worshipping man or self, instead of God. The words 'of the only God' are very important, because they form the point of passage to the next verses, in which the Jews are accused of not believing the

titles are counted the most illustrious, they would make him a king, knowing that the Messiah was to be a king; and if a prophet like Moses, then a sovereign prince and lawgiver like him; and if they cannot set him up upon the holy hill of Zion, a mountain in Galilee shall serve for the present. Those whom Christ has feasted with the royal dainties of heaven, should in return for his favour make him their king, and set him upon the throne in their souls. Let him that has fed us rule us. But, *Secondly*. It was an irregular zeal; for, 1st. It was grounded upon a mistake concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom, as if it were to be of this world; and he must appear with outward pomp, a crown on his head, and an army at his foot; such a king as this they would make him, which was as great a disparagement to his glory as it would be to lacker gold, or paint a ruby. Right notions of Christ's kingdom would keep us to right methods for the advancing of it. 2nd. It was excited by the love of the flesh; they would make him their king who could feed them so plentifully without their toil, and save them from the curse of eating their bread in the sweat of their face. 3rd. It was intended to carry on a secular design; they hoped this might be a fair opportunity of shaking off the Roman yoke, which they were weary of. If they had one to head them who could victual an army cheaper than another could provide for a family, they were sure of the sinews of the war, and could not fail of success, and the recovery of their ancient liberties. Thus is religion often prostituted to a secular interest, and Christ is served only to serve a turn, *Rom. xvi. 18; vir queritur Jesus, propter Jesum, sed propter aliud.* Jesus is usually sought after for something else, not for his own sake. *Aug.* Nay, 4th. It was a tumultuous, seditious attempt, and a disturbance of the public peace; it would make the country a seat of war, and expose it to the resentments of the Roman power. 5th. It was contrary to the mind of our Lord Jesus himself; for they would take him by force, whether he would or no. Note, Those who force honours upon Christ which he has not required at their hands, displease him, and do him the greatest dishonour. They that say, "I am of Christ," in opposition to those that are of Apollos and Cephas, so making Christ the head of a party, take him by force to make him a king, contrary to his own mind.

2nd. Here is an instance of the humility and self-denial of the Lord Jesus, that when they would have made him a king, he departed; so far was he from countenancing the design, that he effectually quashed it. Herein he has left a testimony, *First*. Against ambition, and affectation of worldly honour, to which he was perfectly mortified, and has taught us to be so. Had they come to take him by force, and make him a prisoner, he could not have been more industrious to abscond than he was when they would make him a king. Let not us then covet to be the idols of the crowd, nor be desirous of vain-glory. *Secondly*. Against faction and sedition, treason and rebellion, and whatever tends to disturb the peace of kings and provinces. By this it appears he was no enemy to Caesar, nor would have his followers be so, but the quiet in the land; that he would have his ministers decline every thing that looks like sedition, or looks towards it, and improve their interest only for their works' sake.

2. Observe whither he retired; he "departed again into a mountain," εἰς τὸ ὄρος, 'into the mountain,' the mountain where he had preached, ver. 3; whence he came down into the plain to feed the people, and then returned to it alone, to be private. Christ, though so useful in the places of concourse, yet chose sometimes to be alone, to teach us to sequester ourselves from the world now and then, for the more free converse with God and our own souls; and never less alone, saith the serious Christian, than when alone. Public services must not jostle out private devotions.

Secondly. Here is the disciples' distress at sea: "They that go down to the sea in ships, these see the works of the Lord; for he raiseth the stormy wind," *Ps. cvii. 23*. Apply that to these disciples.

1. Here is their going down to the sea in a ship, ver. 16, 17. "When even was come," and they had done their day's work, it was time to look homewards, and therefore they went aboard, and set sail for Capernaum. This they did by particular direction from their Master, with design, as it should seem, to get them out of the way of the temptation of countenancing those that would have made him a king.

2. Here is the stormy wind arising, and fulfilling the word of God. They were Christ's disciples, and were now in the way of their duty, and Christ was now in the mount praying for them, and yet in this distress. The perils and afflictions of this present time may very well consist with our interest in Christ and his intercession. They had lately been feasted at Christ's table; but after the sunshine of comfort expect a storm. 1st. "It was now dark;" this made the storm the more dangerous and uncomfortable. Sometimes the people of God are in trouble, and cannot see their way out; in the dark concerning the cause of their trouble, concerning the design and tendency of it, and what the issue will be. 2nd. "Jesus was not come to them." When they were in that storm, *Mat. viii. 21*, Jesus was with them; but now their beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone. The absence of Christ is the great aggravation of the troubles of Christians. 3rd. "The sea arose by reason of a great wind." It was calm and fair when they put to sea; they were not so presumptuous as to launch out in a storm, but it arose when they were at sea. In times of tranquillity we must prepare for trouble; for it may arise when we little think of it. Let it comfort good people, when they happen to be in storms at sea, that the disciples of Christ were so; and let the promises of a gracious God balance the threats of an angry sea: though in a storm, and in the dark, so were Christ's disciples. Clouds and darkness sometimes surround the children of the light and of the day.

3. Here is Christ's seasonable approach to them when they were in this peril, ver. 19, "they had rowed" (being forced by the contrary winds to betake themselves to their oars) "about twenty-five or thirty furlongs." The Holy Spirit, that indited this, could have ascertained the number of furlongs precisely; but being only circumstantial, that is left to be expressed according to the

conjecture of the penman. And when they were got off a good way at sea, "they see Jesus walking on the sea." See here, 1st. The power Christ has over the laws and customs of nature, to control and dispense with them at his pleasure. It is natural for heavy bodies to sink in water; but Christ walked upon the water, as upon dry land, which was more than Moses' dividing the water, and walking through the water. 2nd. The concern Christ has for his disciples in distress: "he drew nigh to the ship;" for therefore he walked upon the water, as he rides upon the heavens, for the help of his people, *Deu. xxxiii. 26*. He will not leave them comfortless, when they seem to be tossed with tempests, and not comforted. When they are banished, as John, into remote places, or shut up, as Paul and Silas, in close places, he will find access to them, and will be nigh them. 3rd. The relief Christ gives to his disciples in their fears. "They were afraid," more afraid of an apparition, for so they supposed him to be, than of the winds and waves. It is more terrible to wrestle with the rulers of the darkness of this world than with a tempestuous sea. When they thought a demon haunted them, and perhaps was instrumental to raise the storm, they were more terrified than they had been while they saw nothing in it but what was natural. Note, *First*. Our real distresses are often much increased by our imaginary ones, the creatures of our own fancy. *Secondly*. Even the approaches of comfort and deliverance are often so misconstrued as to become the occasions of fear and perplexity. We are often not only worse frightened than hurt, but then most frightened when we are ready to be helped. But when they were in this fright, how affectionately did Christ silence their fears with that compassionate word, ver. 20, "It is I, be not afraid." Nothing more powerful to convince sinners than that word, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest;" nothing more powerful to comfort saints than this, "I am Jesus whom thou lovest." It is I, that love thee, and seek thy good; be not afraid of me, no, nor of the storm. When trouble is nigh, Christ is nigh.

4. Here is their speedy arrival at the port they were bound for, ver. 17. 1st. They welcomed Christ into the ship; "they willingly received him." Note, Christ's absenting himself for a time, is but so much the more to endear himself at his return to his disciples, that value his presence above any thing: see *Can. iii. 4*. 2nd. Christ landed them safe at the shore; "immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." Note, *First*. The ship of the church, in which the disciples of Christ have embarked themselves and their all, may be much shattered and distressed, yet it shall come safe to the harbour at last; tossed at sea, but not lost; cast down, but not destroyed; the bush burning, but not consumed. *Secondly*. The power and presence of the church's King shall expedite and facilitate her deliverance, and conquer the difficulties which have baffled the skill and industry of all her other friends. The disciples had rowed hard, but could not make their point till they had got Christ in the ship, and then the work was done suddenly. If we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, have received him willingly, though the night be dark, and the wind high, yet we may comfort ourselves with this, we shall be at shore shortly, and are nearer to it than we think we are. Many a doubting soul is fetched to heaven by a pleasing surprise, or ever it is aware.

22 The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; 23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks :) 24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. 25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? 26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.



LAKE AND COUNTRY NEAR CAPERNAUM

writings of Moses, the very pith and kernel of which was the unity of God and the having no other gods but him."

v. 45. Compare verse 22. Mark the difference between accusing and judging.

v. 46. "For he wrote of me:" Alford points out a twofold importance in these words: "(1) A testimony by our Lord to the subject of the whole Pentateuch; and (2) to the fact of Moses having written those books, which were then and are still known by his name."

v. 47. "The meaning is, 'Men give greater weight to what is written or published, the letter of a book, than to mere word of mouth; and ye in particular give greater honour to Moses than to me. If, then, ye believe not what he has written, which comes down to you hallowed by the reverence of ages, how can you believe the words which are uttered by me, to whom you are hostile?' This, however, is not all. Moses leads to Christ, is one of the witnesses by which the Father hath testified of him. 'If, then, ye have rejected the means,

In these verses we have,

First. The careful inquiry which the people made after Christ, ver. 23, 24. They saw the disciples go to sea, they saw Christ retire to the mountain, probably with an intimation that he desired to be private for some time; but their hearts being set upon it to make him a king, they waylaid his return; and the day following, the hot fit of their zeal still continuing,

1. They are here much at a loss for him; he was gone, and they wot not what was become of him; they saw there was no other boat there, but that in which the disciples went off, Providence so ordering it, for the confirming of the miracle of his walking on the sea, for there was no boat for him to go in. They observed also that "Jesus did not go with his disciples," but they went off alone, and had left him among them on their side of the water. Note. Those who would find Christ, must diligently observe all his motions, and learn to understand the tokens of his presence and absence, that they may steer accordingly.

2. They are very industrious in seeking him. They searched the places thereabouts, and "when they saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples," neither he nor any one that could give tidings of him, they resolved to search elsewhere. Note. Those that would find Christ, must accomplish a diligent search; must seek till they find; must go from sea to sea to seek the word of God, rather than live without it. And those whom Christ has feasted with the bread of life, should have their souls carried out in earnest desires towards him. Much would have more in communion with Christ. Now, 1st. They resolved to go to Capernaum in quest of him; there was his head-quarters, where he usually resided. Thither his disciples were gone, and they knew he would not be long absent from them. They that would find Christ, must go forth by the footsteps of the flock. 2nd. Providence favoured them with an opportunity of going thither by sea, which was the speediest way; for "there came other boats from Tiberias," that lay farther off upon the same shore, "nigh," though not so nigh, "to the place where they did eat bread," in which they might soon make a trip to Capernaum, and probably the boats were bound for that port. Note. Those that in sincerity seek Christ, and seek opportunities of converse with him, are commonly owned and assisted by Providence in those pursuits. The evangelist having occasion to mention their eating the multiplied bread, adds, "after that the Lord had given thanks," ver. 11. So much were the disciples affected with their Master's giving thanks, that they can never forget the impressions made upon them by it, but took a pleasure in remembering the gracious words that then proceeded out of his mouth. That was the grace and beauty of that meal, and made it remarkable; their hearts burned within them.

3. They laid hold on the opportunity that offered itself; and "they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus." They did not defer, in hopes to see him again on this side the water; but, their convictions being strong, and their desires warm, they followed him presently. Good motions are often crushed, and come to nothing, for want of being prosecuted in time. They came to Capernaum, and, for aught appears, these unsound, hypocritical followers of Christ had a calm and pleasant passage, while his sincere disciples had a rough and stormy one. It is not strange if it fare worst with the best men in this evil world. They came "seeking for Jesus." Note. Those that would find Christ, and find comfort in him, must be willing to take pains, and, as those here, compass sea and land to seek and serve Him who came from heaven to earth to seek and save us.

Secondly. The success of this inquiry; ver. 25. "they found him on the other side of the sea." Note. Christ will be found of those that seek him, first or last; and it is worth while to cross a sea, nay, to go from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, to seek Christ, if we may but find him at last. Those people appeared afterwards to be unsound, and not acted by any good principle, and yet were thus zealous. Note. Hypocrites may be very forward in their attendance on God's ordinances. If men have no more to shew for their love to Christ, but only their running after sermons and prayers, and their pangs of affection to good preaching, they have reason to suspect themselves no better than this eager crowd. But though these people were no better principled, and Christ knew it, yet he was willing to be found of them, and admitted them into fellowship with him. If we could know the hearts of hypocrites, yet while their profession is plausible, we must not exclude them our communion, much less when we do not.

Thirdly. The question they put to him when they found him: "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" It should seem, by ver. 59, that they found him in the synagogue. They knew that was the likeliest place to seek Christ in, for it was his custom to attend public assemblies for religious worship, *Lu. iv. 16*. Note. Christ must be sought, and will be found, in the congregations of his people, and in the administration of his ordinances; public worship is what Christ chooseth to own and grace with his presence and the manifestations of himself. There they found him, and all they had to say to him was, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" They saw he would not be made a king, and therefore say no more of that, but call him Rabbi, their teacher. Their inquiry refers not only to the time, but to the manner of his conveying himself thither; not only when, but how, camest thou hither? for there was no boat for him to come in. They were curious in asking concerning Christ's motions, but not solicitous to observe their own.

Fourthly. The answer Christ gave them, not direct to their question, (What was it to them, when and how he came thither?) but such an answer as their case required.

1. He discovers the corrupt principle that they acted from, in their following of him, ver. 26: "Verily, verily, I say unto you;" I, that search the heart, and know what is in man; I, the Amen, the faithful Witness, *Rev. iii. 14, 15*; "ye seek me," that is well; but it is not from a good principle. Christ knows not only what we do, but why we do it. These followed Christ, 1st. Not for his doctrine's sake, "not because ye saw the miracles." The miracles were the great confirmation of his doctrine. Nicodemus sought for him for the sake of them, *ch. iii. 2*, and argued from the power of his works to the truth of his word; but these here were so stupid and mindless that they never considered that. But, 2nd. It was for their own bellies' sake, "because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled;" not because he taught them, but because he fed them. He had given them, *First*. A full meal's meat, "they did eat, and were filled;" and some of them perhaps were so poor that they had not known of a long time before now what it was to have their bellies full, to eat and leave. *Secondly*. A dainty meal's meat. It is probable, as the miraculous wine was the best wine, so was the miraculous food more than ordinary pleasant. *Thirdly*. A cheap meal's meat, that cost them nothing, no reckoning brought in. Note. Many follow Christ for loaves, and not for love. Thus they do who aim at secular advantages in their profession of religion, and follow it because by this craft they got their preferments: *Quanti profuit nobis hæc fabula de Christo*,—"This fable respecting Christ, what a gainful concern we have made of it," said one of the popes. These people complimented Christ with "rabbi," and shewed him great respect; yet he told them thus faithfully of their hypocrisy. His ministers must hence learn not to flatter those that flatter them, nor to be bribed by fair words not to give faithful reproofs where there is cause for them; nor cry peace to all that cry rabbi to them.

2. He directs them to better principles, ver. 27: "Labour for that meat that endureth to everlasting life." He had discoursed with the woman of Samaria under the similitude of water; here he speaks of the same things under the similitude of meat, taking occasion from the loaves they had eaten. His design is,

1st. To moderate our worldly pursuits: "Labour not for the meat that perisheth." This doth not forbid honest labour for food convenient, *2 Thes. iii. 12*; but we must not make the things of this world our chief care and concern. Note. *First*. The things of the world are meat that perisheth. Worldly wealth, honour, and pleasure, these are meat, they feed the fancy, and many times that is all, and fill the belly; things which men hunger after as meat, and glut themselves with, and which a carnal heart, as long as they last, may make a shift to live upon; but they perish, are of a perishing nature, wither of themselves, and are exposed to a thousand accidents; those that have the largest share of them are not sure to have them while they live, but are sure to leave them, and lose them when they die. *Secondly*. It is therefore folly for us inordinately to labour after them. 1st. We must not labour in religion, nor work the works thereof, for this perishing meat; with an eye to this; must not make our religion subservient to a worldly interest, nor aim at secular advantages in sacred exercises. 2nd. We must not at all labour for this meat; that is, we must not make these perishing things our chief good, nor make our care and pains about them our chief business; not seek those things first and most, *Pr. xlii. 45*.

2nd. To quicken and excite our gracious pursuits. Bestow your pains to better purpose, and labour for that meat which belongs to the soul; of which he shews,

First. That it is unspeakably desirable: it is "meat which endureth to everlasting life;" it is a happiness which will last as long as we must, which not only itself endures eternally, but will nourish us up to everlasting life. The blessings of the new covenant are our preparative for eternal life, our preservative to it, and the pledge and earnest of it.

Secondly. It is undoubtedly attainable. Shall all the treasures of the world be ransacked, and all the fruits of the earth gathered together, to furnish us with provisions that will last to eternity? No. "The sea saith, It is not in me," among all the treasures hid in the sand; "it cannot be gotten for gold;" "it is that which the Son of man shall give;" *ἡν δίδωκε*, either which meat, or which life, the Son of man shall give. Observe here, 1. Who gives this meat; the Son of man, the great Householder, and Master of the stores, who is intrusted with the administration of the kingdom of God among men, and the dispensation of the gifts, graces, and comforts of that kingdom, and has power to give eternal life, with all the means of it, and preparations for it. We are bid to labour for it, as if it were to be got by our own industry, and sold upon that valuable consideration, as the heathen said; *Dū laboribus omnia vendunt*,—"The gods sell all advantages to the industrious." But when we have laboured never so much for it, we have not merited it as our hire, but the Son of man gives it. And what more free than gift? It is an encouragement, that he who has the giving of it is the Son of man; for then we may hope the sons of men that seek it, and labour for it, shall not fail to have it. 2. What authority he has to give it; "for him hath God the Father sealed;" *τούτων γὰρ ὁ Πατήρ ἐσφράγισεν ὁ Θεός*, "for him the Father hath sealed (that is, proved and evidenced), to be God," so some read it; he has declared himself to be the Son of God with power. He hath sealed him, that is, hath given him full authority to deal between God and man, as God's ambassador to man, and man's intercessor with God; and has proved his commission by miracles; having given him authority, he hath given us assurance of it; having intrusted him with unlimited powers, he hath satisfied us with undoubted proofs of them; so that, as he might go on with confidence in his undertaking for us, so may we in our resignations to him. God the Father sealed him with the Spirit that rested on him, by the voice from heaven, by the testimony he bore to him in signs and wonders. Divine revelation is perfected in him; in him the vision and prophecy is sealed up, *Dan. ix. 24*; to him all believers seal that he is true, *ch. iii. 33*, and in him they are all sealed, *2 Cor. i. 22*.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. 30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? 31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. 36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. 37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me,

how shall ye reach the end?" "If your unbelief has stopped the path, how shall ye arrive at him to whom it leads?"—*Alford*.

vi. 1. Nearly a year elapsed between the delivery of the discourse recorded in chap. v. and the event with which chap. vi. opens. During this time occurred most of the incidents recorded in Matt. v.—xiv. 12; Mark ii. 23—vi. 29; Luke vi.—ix. 9. The second year of Christ's ministry was now near its close.

vi. 1—13. A comparison of the parallel passages (Matt. xiv. 13—21;

Mark vi. 32—44; Luke ix. 10—17) is necessary, to understand fully the circumstances which led to this miracle. The apostles had returned, probably to Capernaum as their rendezvous, after their mission (Mark vi. 12, 13, 30, 31). About the same time the news of the murder of John the Baptist was brought. The number of those who were coming and going became exhausting; everything pointed out the need of a little leisure. Under the influence of these reasons our Lord departed to the other side. The scene of the miracle was

that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. 41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? 43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. 47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Whether this conference was with the Capernaïtes, in whose synagogue Christ now was, or with those who came from the other side of the sea, is not certain nor material. However, it is an instance of Christ's condescension, that he gave them leave to ask him questions, and did not resent the interruption as an affront; no, not from his common hearers, though not his immediate followers. Those that would be apt to teach, must be swift to hear, and study to answer. It is the wisdom of teachers, when they are asked even impertinent, unprofitable questions, from thence to take occasion to answer that which is profitable, that the question may be rejected, but not the querist.

Now, First, Christ having told them that they must work for the meat he spoke of, must labour for it, they inquire what work they must do; and he answers them, ver. 28, 29.

1. Their inquiry was pertinent enough; ver. 28, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" Some understand it as a pert question: "What works of God can we do more and better than those we do in obedience to the law of Moses?" But I rather take it as a humble, serious question, speaking them to be, at least for the present, in a good mind, and willing to know and do their duty; and I take it that they who asked this question, how and what, ver. 30, and made that request, ver. 34 were not the same persons with those

that murmured, ver. 41, 42, and strove, ver. 52, for those are expressly called the Jews which came out of Judaea (for those were strictly called Jews) to civil; whereas these were of Galilee, and came to be taught. This question here intimates that they were convinced that they who would obtain this everlasting meat, 1st. They must aim to do something great; they that look high in their expectations, and hope to enjoy the glory of God, must aim high in those endeavours, and study to "do the works of God," works which he requires, and will accept of,—works of God, distinguished from the works of worldly men in their worldly pursuits. It is not enough to speak the words of God, but we must do the works of God. 2nd. That they must be willing to do any thing: "What shall we do?" "Lord, I am ready to do whatever thou appointest, though never so displeasing to flesh and blood, Acts ix. 6.

2. Christ's answer was plain enough; ver. 29, "This is the work of God, that ye believe." Note, 1st. The work of faith is the work of God: they inquire after the works of God, in the plural number, being careful about many things; but Christ directs them to one work, which includes all, the one thing needful, "that ye believe," which supersedes all the works of the ceremonial law; the work which is necessary to the acceptance of all the other works, and which produceth them; for without faith you cannot please God. It is God's work; for it is of his working in us, it subjects the soul to his working on us, and quickens the soul in working for him. 2nd. That faith is the work of God, which closeth with Christ, and relies upon him. It is to believe on him, as one whom God hath sent; as God's commissioner in the great affair of peace between God and man; and, as such, to rest upon him, and resign ourselves to him: see *ch. xiv. 1*.

Secondly, Christ having told them that the Son of man would give them this meat, they inquire concerning him, and he answers their inquiry.

1. Their inquiry is after a sign; ver. 30, "What sign shewest thou?" Thus far they were right, that since he required them to give him credit, he should produce his credentials, and make it out by miracle that he was sent of God. Moses having confirmed his mission by signs, it was requisite that Christ, who came to set aside the ceremonial law, should in like manner confirm his. "What dost thou work?" what dost thou drive at? what lasting characters of a Divine power dost thou design to leave upon thy doctrine? But herein they missed it: 1st. That they overlooked the many miracles which they had seen wrought by him, and which amounted to an abundant proof of his Divine mission. Is this a time of day to ask, "What sign shewest thou?" especially at Capernaum, the staple of miracles, where he had done so many mighty works; signs so significant of his office and undertaking. Were not these very persons but the other day miraculously fed by him? None so blind as they that will not see; for they may be so blind as to question whether it be day or no, when the sun shines in their faces. 2nd. That they preferred the miraculous feeding of Israel in the wilderness before all the miracles Christ wrought, ver. 31; "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert;" and to strengthen the objection, they quote a Scripture for it, "He gave them bread from heaven," taken from *Ps. lxxviii. 24*; he gave them of the corn of heaven. What a good use might be made of this story which they here refer to! It was a memorable instance of God's power and goodness, often mentioned to the glory of God, *Neh. ix. 20, 21*; yet see how these people perverted it, and made an ill use of it.

First, Christ reproved them for their fondness of the miraculous bread, and bade them not set their hearts upon meat which perisheth. Why, say they, meat for the belly was the great good thing that God gave to our fathers in the desert, and why should not we then labour for that meat? If God made much of them, why should not we be for those that will make much of us?

Secondly, Christ had fed five thousand men with five loaves; and had given them that as one sign, to prove him sent of God; but, under colour of magnifying the miracles of Moses, they tacitly undervalue that miracle of Christ, and evade the evidence of it. Christ fed his thousands, but Moses his hundred thousands. Christ fed them but once, and then reproved those who followed him in hope to be still fed, and put them off with a discourse of spiritual food; but Moses fed his followers forty years; and miracles were not their rarities, but their daily bread. Christ fed them with bread out of the earth, barley bread, and fishes out of the sea; but Moses fed Israel with bread from heaven, angels' food. Thus big did these Jews talk of the manna which their fathers did eat; but their fathers had slighted it, as much as they did now the barley loaves, and called it light bread, *Num. xxi. 5*. Thus apt are we to slight and overlook the appearances of God's power and grace in our own times, while we pretend to admire the wonders which our fathers told us of. Suppose this miracle of Christ was outdone by that of Moses, yet there were other instances in which Christ's miracles outshone his; and besides, all true miracles prove a Divine doctrine, though not equally illustrious in the circumstances, which were ever diversified according as the occasion did require. As much as the manna excelled the barley loaves, so much, and much more, did the doctrine of Christ excel the law of Moses, and his heavenly institutions the carnal ordinances of that dispensation.

2. Here is Christ's reply to this inquiry; wherein,

First, He rectifies their mistake concerning the typical manna. It was true their fathers did eat manna in the desert; but, 1st. It was not Moses that gave it them, nor were they obliged to him for it; he was but the instrument, and therefore they must look beyond him, to God. We do not find that Moses did so much as pray to God for the manna; and he spoke unadvisedly when he said, "Must we fetch water out of the rock?" for Moses gave them not either that bread or that water. 2nd. It was not given them, as they imagined, from heaven, from the highest heavens, but only from the clouds; and therefore not so much excelling that which had its rise from the earth as they thought. Because the Scripture saith he gave them bread from heaven, it doth not follow that it was heavenly bread, or was intended to be the nourishment of souls. Misunderstanding Scripture language, occasions many mistakes in the things of God.

Secondly, He informs them concerning the true manna, of which that was a type; "but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven;" that which is truly and properly the bread from heaven, of which that was but a shadow and figure, is now given, not to your fathers, who are dead and gone, but to you of this present age, for whom the better things were reserved. He is now giving you that bread from heaven which is truly so called. As much as the throne of God's glory is above the clouds of the air, so much doth the spiritual bread of the everlasting Gospel excel the manna. In calling God his Father, he speaks himself greater than Moses; for Moses was faithful but as a servant, Christ as a Son, *Heb. iii. 5*.

Now this objection of theirs, concerning the manna, gave farther occasion to Christ to discourse of himself under the similitude of bread, and of believing under the similitude of eating and drinking; to which, together with his putting of both together, in the eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood, with the remarks made upon it by the hearers, the rest of this conference may be reduced.

1. Christ having spoken of himself as the great gift of God, and the true bread, ver. 32, largely explains and confirms this, that we may rightly know him.

First, He here shews that he is the true bread; this he repeats again and again, ver. 33, 35, 48—51. Observe,

the neighbourhood of a city called Bethsaida. There seems but little doubt that there were two cities of this name, one the city of Philip, Andrew, and Peter—this was in Galilee (*John xii. 21*); the other was in Gaulonitis, on the eastern or north-eastern shores of the lake, near the spot where the Jordan flows into it. This city was under the jurisdiction of Philip the Tetrarch, and not Herod Antipas. Hence another reason for Christ seeking such a spot, after Herod had put John the Baptist to death. Philip had raised the place from a

village to the dignity of a city, and had named it Julius, after Julia, the daughter of Augustus. Bethsaida means "the house of the hunter," or "hunter's place."

vi. 3. "A mountain:" rather, "the mountain." A range of hills runs close along the eastern shore of the lake, falling off to the east, near the head of the lake, where the Jordan enters.

vi. 4. "The Passover:" it seems generally held that our Lord purposely abstained from going up to the feast at this time.

1. That Christ is bread; is that to the soul which bread is to the body; nourisheth and supporteth the spiritual life, is the staff of it, as bread doth the bodily life; it is the staff of life. The doctrine of the Gospel concerning Christ: that he is the Mediator between God and man; that he is our peace, our Righteousness, our Redeemer; "by these things do men live." Our bodies could better live without food, than our souls without Christ. Bread corn is bruised, *Isa. xxviii. 28*, so was Christ; he was born at Bethlehem, "the house of bread," and typified by the shewbread.

2. That he is "the bread of God," *ver. 33*; Divine bread; it is he that is of God, *ver. 46*; bread which my Father gives, *ver. 32*; which he has made to be the food of our souls; the bread of God's family, his children's bread. The Levitical sacrifices are called the bread of God, *Lev. xxi. 21, 22*; and Christ is the great sacrifice; Christ, in his word and ordinances, the feast upon the sacrifice.

3. That he is "the bread of life," *ver. 35*; and again, *ver. 48*, "that bread of life," alluding to the tree of life in the midst of the garden of Eden; which was to Adam the seal of that part of the covenant, Do this; and live, of which he might eat, and live. Christ is the bread of life; for he is the fruit of the tree of life. 1st. He is the living bread, so he explains himself; *ver. 51*, "I am the living bread." Bread is itself a dead thing, and nourisheth not, but by the help of the faculties of a living body; but Christ is himself living bread, and nourisheth by his own power. Manna was a dead thing; if kept but one night it putrefied, and bred worms; but Christ is ever living, everlasting bread, that never moulds, or waxeth old. The doctrine of Christ crucified is now as strengthening and comforting to a believer as ever it was, and his mediation still of as much value and efficacy as ever. 2nd. He gives life unto the world, *ver. 33*, spiritual and eternal life; the life of the soul in union and communion with God here, and in the vision and fruition of him hereafter; a life that includes in it all happiness. The manna did only preserve and support life, did not preserve and perpetuate life, much less restore it; but Christ gives life to those that were dead in sin. The manna was ordained only for the life of the Israelites; but Christ is given for the life of the world; none are excluded from the benefit of this bread, but such as exclude themselves. Christ came to put life into the minds of men—principles productive of acceptable performances.

4. That he is the "bread which came down from heaven;" this is often repeated here, *ver. 33, 50, 51, 58*. This notes, 1st. The divinity of Christ's nature. As God, he had a being in heaven, from whence he came to take our nature upon him; "I came down from heaven;" from whence we may infer his antiquity, he was in the beginning with God; his ability, for heaven is the firmament of power; and his authority, he came with a Divine commission. 2nd. The Divine original of all that good which flows to us through him. He cometh, not only *καταβάς*,—"that came down," *ver. 51*, but *καταβάντων*,—"that comes down;" he is descending, noting a constant communication of light, life, and love from God to believers, through Christ; as the manna descended daily; see *Eph. i. 3*; *omnia de super*,—"all things from above."

5. That he is that bread of which the manna was a type and figure, *ver. 58*; that bread, the true bread, *ver. 32*. As the rock that they drank of was Christ; so was the manna they ate of spiritual bread, *1 Cor. x. 3, 4*. Manna was given to Israel; so Christ to the spiritual Israel. There was manna enough for them all; so in Christ, a fulness of grace for all believers. He that gathers much of this manna will have none to spare when he comes to use it; and he that gathers little, when his grace comes to be perfected in glory, shall find that he has no lack. Manna was to be gathered in the morning; and those that would find Christ, must seek him early. Manna was sweet, and as the author of the Wisdom of Solomon tells us, *ch. xvi. 20*, was agreeable to every palate; and to them that believe, Christ is precious. Israel lived upon manna till they came to Canaan; and Christ is our life. There was a memorial of the manna preserved in the ark; so of Christ in the Lord's supper, as the food of souls.

Secondly. He here shews what his undertaking was, and what his errand into the world. Laying aside the metaphor, he speaks plainly, and speaks no proverb, giving us an account of his business among men, *ver. 38-40*.

1. He assures us in general that he came from heaven upon his Father's business, *ver. 38*; not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him. He came from heaven, which speaks him an intelligent, active being, who voluntarily descended to this lower world, a long journey, and a great step downwards. Considering the glories of the world he came from, and the calamities of the world he came to, we may well ask with wonder, what moved him to such an expedition? And here he tells us, he did not come to do his own will, but the will of his Father; not that he had any will that stood in competition with the will of his Father, but they to whom he spoke suspected he might. No, saith he, my own will is not the spring I act from, nor the rule I go by, but I am come to do the will of him that sent me. That is, 1st. Christ did not come into the world as a private person, that acts for himself only; but under a public character, to act for others; as an ambassador or plenipotentiary, authorized by a public commission; he came into the world as God's great agent, and the world's great physician. It was not any business that brought him hither, but he came to settle affairs between parties no less considerable than the great Creator and the whole creation. 2nd. Christ, when he was in the world, did not carry on any private design, nor had any separate interest at all, distinct from theirs for whom he acted. The scope of his whole life was to glorify God, and do good to men; he therefore never consulted his own ease, safety, or quiet; but when he was to lay down his life, though he had a human nature which startled at it, he set aside the consideration of that, and resolved his will, as man, into the will of God; "not as I will, but as thou wilt."

2. He acquaints us in particular with that will of the Father which he came to do; he here declares the decree, the instructions he was to pursue.

First. The private instructions given to Christ, that he should be sure to save all the chosen remnant; and this is the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son; *ver. 38*, "this is the Father's will which hath sent me," this is the charge I am intrusted with, "that of all which he hath given me I should lose none."

Note, 1st. There is a certain number of the children of men given by the Father to Jesus Christ to be his care, and so to be to him for a name and a praise; given him for an inheritance, for a possession. Let him do all that for them which their case requires; teach them, and heal them, pay their debt, and plead their cause; prepare them for, and preserve them to, eternal life, and then let him make his best of them. The Father might dispose of them as he pleased: as creatures, their lives and beings were derived from him; as sinners, their lives and beings were forfeited to him: he might have sold them for the satisfaction of his justice, and delivered them to the tormentors; but he pitched upon them to be the monuments of his mercy, and delivered them to the Saviour. Those whom God chose to be the objects of his special love he lodged as a trust in the hands of Christ.

2nd. Jesus Christ has undertaken that he will lose none of those that were thus given him of the Father. The many sons whom he was to bring to glory shall all be forthcoming, and none of them missing, *Mat. xviii. 14*. None of them shall be lost for want of a sufficient price to purchase them, or sufficient grace to sanctify them. "If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, let me bear the blame for ever," *Gen. xliii. 9*.

vi. 5. "A great company:" in verse 2 we read that they followed him. They recognised him and went afoot, says another evangelist. They came probably from Capernaum, and other adjacent places. They passed round the head of the lake, crossing the Jordan, which at this point is fordable. "Come," or perhaps "kept coming." The day was rapidly passing away; the people kept arriving.

vi. 10. A distinction between two words used in this verse does not appear in the English, as both are translated "men." Alford has,

3rd. Christ's undertaking for those that are given him extends to the resurrection of their bodies. "I will raise it up again at the last day," which supposeth all that goes before, but this is to crown and complete the undertaking. The body is a part of the man, and therefore a part of Christ's purchase and charge; it pertains to the promises, and therefore it shall not be lost. The undertaking is not only that he shall lose none, no person, but that he shall lose nothing, no part of the person, and therefore not the body. Christ's undertaking will never be accomplished till the resurrection, when the souls and bodies of the saints shall be reunited, and gathered to Christ, that he may present them to the Father; "Behold I and the children that thou hast given me," *Heb. ii. 13*; *2 Tim. i. 12*.

4th. The spring and original of all this is the sovereign will of God; the counsels of his will, according to which he worketh all this. This was the commandment he gave to his Son when he sent him into the world, and to which the Son always had an eye.

Secondly. The public instructions which were to be given to the children of men, in what way, and upon what terms, they might obtain salvation by Christ; and this is the covenant of grace between God and man. Who the particular persons were that were given to Christ is a secret; "the Lord knows them that are his;" we do not, nor is it fit we should; but, though their names are concealed, their characters are published. An offer is made of life and happiness upon gospel terms, that by it those that were given to Christ might be brought to him, and others left inexcusable; *ver. 40*, "this is the will," the revealed will, "of him that sent me," the method agreed upon, upon which to proceed with the children of men, "that every one, Jew or Gentile, that sees the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up." This is the Gospel indeed, good news.

Is it not reviving to hear this? 1st. That eternal life may be had, if it be not our own fault; that whereas, upon the sin of the first Adam, the way of the tree of life was blocked up, by the grace of the second Adam it is laid open again. The crown of glory is set before us as the prize of our high calling, which we may run for and obtain. 2nd. Every one may have it. This Gospel is to be preached, this offer made, to all, and none can say, "It belongs not to me," *Rev. xxii. 17*. 3rd. This everlasting life is sure to all those who believe in Christ, and to them only. He that sees the Son, and believes on him, shall be saved. Some understand this seeing as a limitation of this condition of salvation to those only that have the revelation of Christ and his grace made to them. Every one that has the opportunity of being acquainted with Christ, and improves that so well as to believe in him, shall have everlasting life; so that none shall be condemned for unbelief, however they may for other sins, but those who have had the Gospel preached to them, who, like these Jews here, *ver. 36*, have seen, and yet have not believed; have known Christ, and yet not trusted in him. But I rather understand seeing here to mean the same thing with believing, for it is *θεωρῶν*, which signifies, not so much the sight of the eye (as *ver. 36*, *ὥρασαντες* *με*), as the contemplation of the mind. "Every one that sees the Son," that is, believes on him, sees him with an eye of faith, by which we come to be duly acquainted and affected with the doctrine of the Gospel concerning him. It is to look upon him, as the stung Israelites upon the brazen serpent. It is not a blind faith that Christ requires, that we should be willing to have our eyes put out, and then follow him; but that we should see him, and see what ground we go upon in our faith. It is then right, when it is not taken up upon hearsay, believing as the church believes, but is the result of a due consideration of, and insight into, the motives of credibility. "Now mine eye sees thee;" "we have heard him ourselves." 4th. Those who believe in Jesus Christ, in order to their having everlasting life, shall be raised up by his power at the last day. He had it in charge as the Father's will, *ver. 39*; and here he solemnly makes it his own undertaking, "I will raise him up;" which signifies not only the return of the body to life, but the putting of the whole man into a full possession of the eternal life promised.

Now Christ, discoursing thus concerning himself, as the bread of life that came down from heaven, let us see what remarks his hearers made upon it.

First. When they heard of such a thing as the bread of God, which gives life, they heartily prayed for it; *ver. 34*, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." I cannot think that this is spoken scoffingly, and in a way of derision, as most interpreters understand it: "Give us such bread as this if thou canst; let us be fed with it, not for one meal, as with the five loaves, but evermore;" as if this were no better a prayer than that of the impenitent thief, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." But I take this request to be made, though ignorantly, yet honestly, and to be well meant; for they call him "Lord," and desire a share in what he gives, whatever he means by it. General and confused notions of Divine things produce in carnal hearts some kind of desires towards them, and wishes of them; like Balaam's wish, to die the death of the righteous. Those who have an indistinct knowledge of the things of God, who see men as trees walking, make, as I may call them, inarticulate prayers for spiritual blessings. They think the favour of God a good thing, and heaven a fine place, and cannot but wish them their own, while they have no value or desire at all for that holiness which is necessary both to the one and to the other. Let this be the desire of our souls. Have we tasted that the Lord is gracious, been feasted with the Word of God, and Christ in the Word, let us say, "Lord, evermore give us this bread;" let the bread of life be our daily bread, the heavenly manna our continual feast, and let us never know the want of it.

Secondly. But when they understood that by this bread of life Jesus meant himself, then they despised it. Whether they were the same persons that had prayed for it, *ver. 34*, or some others of the company, doth not appear. It seems to be some others, for they are called Jews. Now it is said, *ver. 41*, they "murmured at him." This comes in immediately after that solemn declaration Christ had made of God's will, and his own undertaking concerning man's salvation, *ver. 39, 40*; which certainly were some of the most weighty and gracious words that ever proceeded out of the mouth of our Lord Jesus, the most faithful, and best worthy of all acceptance; one would think that, like Israel in Egypt, when they heard that God had thus visited them, they should have bowed their heads and worshipped; but, on the contrary, instead of closing with the offer made them, they murmured, quarrelled with what Christ said; and though they did not openly oppose and contradict it, yet they privately whispered among themselves in contempt of it, and instilled into one another's minds prejudices against it. Many that will not professedly contradict the doctrine of Christ, (their cavils are so weak and groundless that they are either ashamed to own them, or afraid to have them silenced,) yet say in their heart they do not like it. Now,

1. That which offended them was Christ's asserting his original to be from heaven, *ver. 41, 42*. "How is it that he saith, I came down from heaven?" They had heard of angels coming down from heaven, but never of a man; overlooking the proofs he had given them of his being more than a man.

2. That which they thought justified them herein was, that they knew his extraction on earth: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" They took it heinously that he should say he came down from heaven, when he was one of them. They speak slightly of his blessed name, Jesus; "Is not this Jesus?" They take it for granted that Joseph was really his father, though he was only reputed to be so. Note. Mistakes

"Make the people sit down. . . . So the 'men' sat down." A comparison of *Matt. xiv. 21* will show that the men are distinguished from the women and children. It seems that the men alone sat in ranks, and thus were counted. "Much grass:" at this time of year, just before the feast of the Passover, the grass would be abundant.

vi. 11. The oldest MSS. omit the mention of the disciples, and read simply, "He distributed to them that were set down."

vi. 15. "When Jesus perceived:" or, "Jesus knowing that they

concerning the person of Christ, as if he were a mere man, conceived and born by ordinary generation, occasion the offence that is taken at his doctrine and offices. Those who set him on a level with other the sons of men, whose father and mother we know, no wonder if they derogate from the honour of his satisfaction, and the mysteries of his undertaking; and, like the Jews here, murmur at his promise to raise us up at the last day.

II. Christ having spoken of faith as the great work of God, ver. 29, discoursed largely concerning this work, instructing and encouraging us in it.

First. He shews what it is to believe in Christ.

1. To believe in Christ is to come to Christ; he that comes to me is the same with he that believes in me, ver. 35; and again, ver. 37, "he that comes unto me," so ver. 44, 45. Repentance towards God is coming to him, *Jer. iii. 22*, as our chief good and highest end; and so faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ is coming to him, as our prince and Saviour, and our way to the Father. It notes the outgoings of our affections towards him, for those are the motions of the soul, and actions agreeable; it is to come off from all those things that stand in opposition to him, or competition with him, and to come up to those terms upon which life and salvation are offered to us through him. When he was here on earth it was more than barely coming where he was; so it is now, more than coming to his Word and ordinances.

2. It is to feed upon Christ; ver. 51, "If any man eat of this bread; the former notes applying ourselves to Christ, this notes applying Christ to ourselves, with appetite and delight, that we may receive life, and strength, and comfort from him; to feed on him, as the Israelites on the manna, having quitted the flesh-pots of Egypt, and not depending on the labour of their hands to eat of that, but living purely on the bread given them from heaven.

Secondly. He shews what is to be got by believing in Christ. What will he give us if we come to him? What shall we be the better if we feed upon him? Want and death are the chief things we dread; may we but be assured of the comforts of our being, and the continuance of it in the midst of those comforts, we have enough. Now these two are here secured to true believers.

1. They shall never want, never hunger, never thirst, ver. 35. Desires they have, earnest desires; but those so suitably, so seasonably, so abundantly satisfied, that they cannot be called hunger and thirst, which is uneasy and painful. Those that did eat manna, and drank of the rock, hungered and thirsted afterwards; manna surfeited them, water out of the rock failed them; but there is such an overflowing fulness in Christ as can never be exhausted, and such overflowing communications from him as can never be interrupted.

2. They shall never die, not die eternally; for, 1st. He that believeth on Christ hath everlasting life, ver. 47; he hath the assurance of it, the grant of it, the earnest of it; he has it in the promise and firstfruits. Union with Christ, and communion with God in Christ, is everlasting life begun. 2nd. Whereas they that did eat manna died, Christ is such bread as man may eat of and never die, ver. 49, 50. Observe here,

First. The insufficiency of the typical manna: "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead." There may be much good use made of the death of our fathers; their graves speak to us, and their monuments are our memorials, particularly of this, that the greatest plenty of the most dainty food will neither prolong the thread of life nor put by the stroke of death. Those that did eat manna, angels' food, yet died like other men. There could be nothing amiss in their diet to shorten their days, nor could their deaths be hastened by the toils and fatigues of life, for they neither sowed nor reaped, and yet they died. 1st. Many of them died by the immediate strokes of God's vengeance for their unbelief and murmurings; for though they did eat that spiritual meat, yet with many of them God was not well pleased, but they were overthrown in the wilderness, *1 Cor. x. 3-5*. Their eating manna was no security to them from the wrath of God, as believing in Christ is to us. 2nd. The rest of them died in a course of nature, and their carcasses fell under a Divine sentence, in that wilderness where they did eat manna. In that very age when miracles were daily bread was the life of man reduced to the stint it now stands at, as appears, *Ps. xc. 10*. Let them not boast so much of manna then.

Secondly. The all-sufficiency of the true manna, of which the other was a type: "this is the bread that cometh down from heaven," that truly Divine and heavenly food, "that a man may eat thereof and not die;" that is, not fall under the wrath of God, which is killing to the soul; not die the second death, no, nor the first death, finally and irrecoverably; not die, that is, not perish, nor come short of the heavenly Canaan, as the Israelites did of the earthly, for want of faith, though they had manna. This is farther explained by that promise in the next words; "if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever," ver. 58. That is the meaning of his never dying; though he go down to death, he shall pass through it, to that world where there shall be no more death. To live for ever is not to be for ever, (the damned in hell shall be for ever, the soul of man was made for an endless state,) but to be happy for ever. And because the body must needs die, and be as water spilt upon the ground, Christ here undertakes for the gathering of that up too, as before, ver. 44, "I will raise him up at the last day;" and even that shall live for ever.

Thirdly. He shews what encouragements we have to believe in Christ. Christ here speaks of some who had seen him and yet believed not, ver. 36. They saw his person and miracles, and heard him preach, and yet were not wrought upon to believe in him. Faith is not always the effect of sight; the soldiers were eye-witnesses of his resurrection; and yet, instead of believing in him, belied him; so that it is a difficult thing to bring people to believe in Christ. And by the operation of the Spirit of grace, those that have not seen, yet have believed.

Two things we are here assured of, to encourage our faith:

1. That the Son will bid all those welcome that come to him; ver. 37, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." How welcome should this word be to our souls, which bids us welcome to Christ! Him that comes; it is in the singular number, speaking favour, not only to the body of believers in general, but to every particular soul that applies itself to Christ. Here, 1st. The duty required is a pure gospel duty; to come to Christ, that we may come to God by him. His beauty and love, those great attractions, must draw us to him; sense of need and fear of danger must drive us to him; any thing to bring us to Christ. 2nd. The promise is a pure gospel promise, "I will in no wise cast out," *οὐ μὴ ἐκβάλω ἔξω*; there are two negatives, "I will not; no, I will not." 1st. Much favour is expressed here. We have reason to fear that he should cast us out; considering our meanness, our vileness, our unworthiness to come, our weakness in coming, we may justly expect that he should frown upon us, and shut his doors against us; but he obviates these fears with this assurance, he will not do it; will not disdain us, though we are mean; will not reject us, though we are sinful. Do poor scholars come to him to be taught? though they be dull and slow he will not cast them out. Do poor patients come to him to be cured? poor clients come to him to be advised? though their case be bad, and though they come empty-handed, he will in no wise cast them out. But, 2nd. More favour is implied than is expressed: when it is said he will not cast them out, the meaning is, he will receive them and entertain them, and give them all that which they come to him for: as he will not

would," &c. He not only withdrew himself, but he constrained his disciples (compare Matt. xiv. 22) to leave the spot. Perhaps he thought it well to separate them from the multitude, who contemplated a popular movement.

vi. 17. "Went over;" better, "were going over." "Toward Capernaum;" Mark has "unto Bethsaida"—i.e., the town of that name on the western shore. The apparent discrepancy is solved when it is observed that a different preposition is used. They

refuse them at their first coming, so he will not afterwards, upon every displeasure, cast them out. His gifts and callings are without repentance.

2. That the Father will without fail bring all those to him in due time that were given him. In the federal transactions between the Father and the Son, relating to man's redemption, as the Son undertook for the justification, sanctification, and salvation of all that should come to him,—let me have them put into my hands, and then leave the management of them to me;—so the Father, the fountain, and the original of being, life, and grace, undertook to put into his hand all that were given him, and bring them to him. Now,

First. He here assures us that this shall be done; ver. 37, "all that the Father giveth me shall come to me." Christ had complained, ver. 36, of those who, though they had seen him, yet would not believe on him; and then he adds this, 1st. For their conviction and awakening; plainly intimating that their not coming to him, and believing on him, if they persisted in it, would be a certain sign that they did not belong to the election of grace; for how can we think that God gave us to Christ, if we give ourselves to the world and the flesh? *2 Pet. i. 10*. 2nd. For his own comfort and encouragement; "though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious." The election has obtained, and shall, though multitudes be blinded, *Rom. xi. 7*, though he lose many of his creatures, yet none of his charge; "all that the Father gives him shall come to him" notwithstanding. Here we have,

1st. The election described: "all that the Father giveth me." *πᾶν ὃ δίδωμι μοι*, every thing which the Father gives to me. The persons of the elect, and all that belongs to them; all their services, all their interests; as all that he hath is theirs, so all that they have is his, and he speaks of them as his all: they were given him in full recompence of his undertaking. Not only all persons, but all things, are gathered together in Christ, *Eph. i. 10*, and reconciled, *Col. i. 20*. The giving of the chosen remnant to Christ is spoken of, ver. 39, as a thing done—he hath given them; here it is spoken of as a thing in the doing—he giveth them; because, when the First-begotten was brought into the world, it should seem there was a renewal of the grant: see *Heb. x. 5*, &c. God was now about to give him the heathen for his inheritance, *Ps. ii. 8*; to put him in possession of the desolate heritages, *Isa. xlix. 8*; to divide him a portion with the great, *Isa. liii. 12*; and though the Jews who saw him believed not on him, yet these, saith he, shall come to me; the other sheep which are not of this fold shall be brought, *ch. x. 15*; see *Acts xiii. 45-48*.

2nd. The effect of it secured; "they shall come to me." This is not in the nature of a promise, but a prediction, that as many as were in the counsel of God ordained to life shall be brought to life by being brought to Christ. They are scattered, are mingled among the nations, yet none of them shall be forgotten; not a grain of God's corn shall be lost, as is promised, *Am. ix. 9*. They are by nature alienated from Christ, and averse to him, and yet "they shall come." As God's omnipotence is engaged for the finding of them all out, so is his omnipotence for the bringing of them all in. Not, they shall be driven to me, but they shall come freely, shall be made willing.

Secondly. He here acquaints us how it shall be done. How shall those who are given to Christ be brought to him? Two things are to be done in order to it:

1st. Their understandings shall be enlightened; that is promised, ver. 45, 46. "It is written in the prophets," who spake of these things before, "And they shall be all taught of God;" this we find, *Isa. liv. 13*, and *Jer. xxxi. 34*; "they shall all know me." Note. In order to our believing in Jesus Christ it is necessary we be taught of God; that is, 1st. That there be a Divine revelation made to us, discovering to us both what we are to believe concerning Christ, and why we are to believe it. There are some things which even nature teacheth, but to bring us to Christ there is need of a higher light. 2nd. That there be a Divine work wrought in us, enabling us to understand and receive these revealed truths, and the evidence of them. God, in giving us reason, teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth; but in giving us faith, he teacheth us more than the natural man. Thus all the church's children, all that are genuine, are taught of God; he hath undertaken their education.

It follows then, by way of inference from this, that "every man that has heard and learned of the Father comes to Christ," ver. 45. 1st. It is here implied that none will come to Christ but those that have heard and learned of the Father. We shall never be brought to Christ but under a Divine conduct. Except God, by his grace, enlighten our minds, inform our judgments, and rectify our mistakes; and not only tell us, that we may hear, but teach us, that we may learn, the truth as it is in Jesus, we shall never be brought to believe in Christ. 2nd. That this Divine teaching doth so necessarily produce the faith of God's elect, that we may conclude that those who do not come to Christ have never heard or learned of the Father; for if they had, doubtless they would have come to Christ. In vain do men pretend to be taught of God, if they believe not in Christ, for he teacheth no other lesson, *Gal. i. 8, 9*. See how God deals with men as reasonable creatures, draws them with the cords of a man, opens the understanding first, and then by that, in a regular way, influenceth the inferior faculties; thus he comes in by the door; but Satan, as a robber, climbs up another way.

But lest any should dream of a visible appearance of God the Father to the children of men, to teach them these things, and entertain any gross conceptions about hearing and learning of the Father, he adds, ver. 46, "Not that any man hath seen the Father;" it is implied, nor can see him with bodily eyes, or may expect to learn of him, as Moses did, to whom he spake face to face; but God, enlightening men's eyes, and teaching them, works in a spiritual way. The Father of spirits hath access to, and influence upon, men's spirits undiscerned. Those that have not seen his face have felt his power; and yet there is one intimately acquainted with the Father, "he which is of God," that is, Christ himself, "he hath seen the Father," *ch. i. 18*. Note. 1st. Jesus Christ is of God in a peculiar manner, God of God, Light of Light; not only sent of God, but begotten of God before all worlds. 2nd. It is the prerogative of Christ to have seen the Father, perfectly to know him and his counsels. 3rd. Even that illumination which is preparative to faith is conveyed to us through Christ. Those that learn of the Father, forasmuch as they cannot see him themselves, must learn of Christ, who alone hath seen him. As all Divine discoveries are made through Christ, so through him all Divine powers are exerted.

2nd. Their wills shall be bowed. If the soul of man had now its original rectitude, there needed no more to influence the will but the illumination of the understanding; but in the depraved soul of fallen man there is a rebellion of the will against the right dictates of the understanding—a carnal *μαρ*, which is enmity itself to the Divine light and law: it is therefore requisite that there be a work of grace wrought upon the will, which is here called drawing; ver. 44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." The Jews murmured at the doctrine of Christ; not only would not receive it themselves, but were angry that others did. Christ overheard their secret whisperings, and said, ver. 43, "Murmur not among yourselves;" lay not the fault of your dislike of my doctrine one upon another, as if it is because you find it generally distasteful; no, it is along of yourselves, and your own corrupt dispositions, which are such as amount to a moral impotency: your antipathies to the truths of God, and prejudices against them, are so strong

went towards ("over against" is the marginal rendering in Mark) Bethsaida; but they went to Capernaum, for it was there they landed. The west or south-west wind which was blowing is quite enough to account for any deviation of course to the northward. St. Mark tells us that Jesus did not lose sight of his disciples: "he saw them toiling in rowing."

vi. 18. "The sea was rising, for a strong wind was blowing" (Alford). From Matthew and Mark we learn that the wind was contrary.

that nothing less than a Divine power can conquer them. And this is the case of all mankind; "no man can come to me," can persuade himself to come up to the terms of the Gospel, "except the Father which hath sent me draw him," ver. 44. Observe.

1st. The nature of the work; it is drawing; which speaks not a force put upon the will, but a change wrought in the will, whereby of unwilling we are made willing, and a new bias given to the soul, by which it inclines to God. This seems to be more than a moral suasion, for by that it is in the power of man to draw; yet it is not to be called a physical impulse, for it lies out of the road of nature; but he that formed the spirit of man within him by his creating power, and fashioned the hearts of men by his providential influence, knows how to new-mould the soul, and to alter its bent and temper, and make it conformable to himself and his own will, without doing any wrong to its natural liberty. It is such a drawing as works not only a compliance, but a cheerful compliance, a complacency; "Draw us, and we will run after thee."

2nd. The necessity of it: no man in this weak and helpless state can come to Christ without it. As we cannot do any natural action without the concurrence of common providence, so we cannot do any action morally good without the influence of special grace, in which the new man lives, and moves, and has its being, as much as the mere man has in the Divine providence.

3rd. The author of it; "the Father which hath sent me." The Father having sent Christ, will succeed him; for he would not send him on a fruitless errand. Christ having undertaken to bring souls to glory, God promised him, in order thereunto, to bring them to him, and so to give him possession of those whom he had given him a right to. God, having by promise given the kingdom of Israel to David, did at length draw the hearts of the people to him; so having sent Christ to save souls, he sends souls to him to be saved by him.

4th. The crown and perfection of this work; and "I will raise him up at the last day." This is four times mentioned in this discourse, and doubtless it includes all the intermediate and preparatory workings of Divine grace. When he raises them up at the last day, he will put the last hand to his undertaking, will bring forth the topstone. If he undertake this, sure he can do any thing, and will do every thing that is necessary in order to it. Let our expectations be carried out towards a happiness reserved for the last day, when all the years of time shall be fully complete and ended.

III. Christ, having thus spoken of himself as the bread of life, and of faith as the work of God, comes more particularly to shew what of himself is this bread, namely, his flesh; and that to believe is to eat of that, ver. 51—53, where he still prosecutes the metaphor of food. Observe.

First. The preparation of this food; "the bread that I will give is my flesh," ver. 51; "the flesh of the Son of man, and his blood," ver. 53; "his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed," ver. 55.

Secondly. The participation of this food; we must "eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood," ver. 53; and again, ver. 54, "whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood," and the same words, ver. 56, 57, "he that eateth me." This is certainly a parable, or figurative discourse, wherein the actings of the soul, upon things spiritual and Divine, are represented by bodily actions about things sensible; which made the truths of Christ more intelligible to some, and less so to others, *Mar. iv. 12*. Now let us see,

1. How this discourse of Christ was liable to mistake and misconstruction, that "men might see and not perceive."

1st. It was misconstrued by the carnal Jews, to whom it was first delivered, ver. 2, "they strove among themselves;" they whispered in each other's ears their dissatisfaction. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Christ spoke, ver. 51, of giving his flesh for us to suffer and die; but they, without due consideration, understood it of his giving it to us to be eaten, which gave occasion to Christ to tell them that, however what he had said was otherwise intended, yet even that also of eating his flesh, was no such absurd thing, if rightly understood, as *prima facie*,—in the first instance, they took it to be.

2nd. It has been wretchedly misconstrued by the church of Rome, for the support of their monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, which gives the lie to our senses, contradicts the nature of a sacrament, and overthrows all convincing evidence. They, like these Jews here, understand it of a corporal and carnal eating of Christ's body; like Nicodemus, *ch. iii. 4*. The Lord's supper was not yet instituted, and therefore it could have no reference to that; it is a spiritual eating and drinking that is here spoken of, not a sacramental.

3rd. It is misunderstood by many ignorant, carnal people, who from hence infer, that if they take the sacrament when they die, they shall certainly go to heaven; which, as it makes many that are weak causelessly uneasy if they want it, so it makes many that are wicked causelessly easy if they have it. Let us see therefore.

2. How this discourse of Christ's is to be understood.

1st. What is meant by the flesh and blood of Christ. It is called, ver. 53, "the flesh of the Son of man, and his blood;" his, as Messiah and Mediator, the flesh and blood which he assumed in his incarnation, *Heb. ii. 14*, and which he gave up in his death and sufferings; "my flesh which I will give" to be crucified and slain. It is said to be given "for the life of the world," that is, *First*. Instead of the life of the world, which was forfeited by sin, Christ gives his own flesh as a ransom or counter price. Christ was our bail, bound body for body (as we say), and therefore his life must go for ours, that ours may be spared; "Here am I, let these go their way." *Secondly*. In order to "the life of the world," to purchase a general offer of eternal life to all the world, and the special assurances of it to all believers. So that the flesh and blood of the Son of man, is the Redeemer incarnate, and dying; it is Christ and him crucified, and the redemption wrought out by him, with all the precious benefits of redemption—pardon of sin, acceptance with God, the adoption of sons, access to the throne of grace, the promises of the covenant, and eternal life—these are called the flesh and blood of Christ. *1st*. Because they are purchased by his flesh and blood, by the breaking of his body, and the shedding of his blood. Well may the purchased privileges be denominated from the price that was paid for them, for it puts a value upon them; write upon them *pretium sanguinis*,—the price of blood. *2nd*. Because they are meat and drink to our souls. Flesh with the blood was prohibited, *Gen. ix. 4*; but the privileges of the Gospel are as flesh and blood to us, prepared for the nourishment of our souls. He had before compared himself to bread, which is necessary food; here to flesh, which is delicious. It is a feast of fat things, *Isa. xxv. 6*; the soul is satisfied with Christ as with marrow and fatness, *Psa. lxxiii. 5*. It is meat indeed, and drink indeed; truly so, that is, spiritually, so Dr. Whitby; as Christ is called the true vine, or truly meat, in opposition to the shows and shadows with which the world shams off those that feed upon it. In Christ and his Gospel there is real supply, and solid satisfaction; that is meat indeed, and drink indeed, which satiates and replenisheth, *Jer. xxxi. 25, 26*.

2nd. What is meant by eating this flesh, and drinking this blood, which is so necessary and beneficial; it is certain it means neither more nor less than believing in Christ. As we partake of meat and drink by eating and drinking, so we partake of Christ and his benefits by faith. And believing in Christ includes these four things, which eating and drinking doth: *First*. It implies an appetite to Christ. This spiritual eating and drinking begins with hunger-

ing and thirsting, *Mat. v. 6*; earnest and importunate desires after Christ, not willing to take up with any thing short of an interest in him: "Give me Christ, or else I die." *Secondly*. An application of Christ to ourselves. Meat looked upon will not nourish us; but meat fed upon, and so made our own, and as it were one with us. We must so accept of Christ as to appropriate him to ourselves; "my Lord, and my God," *ch. xx. 28*. *Thirdly*. A delight in Christ and his salvation. The doctrine of Christ crucified must be meat and drink to us, most pleasant and delightful. We must feast upon the dainties of the New Testament in the blood of Christ, taking as great a complacency in the methods which Infinite Wisdom has taken to redeem and save us, as ever we did in the most needful supplies or grateful delights of nature. *Fourthly*. A derivation of nourishment from him, and a dependence upon him for the support and comfort of our spiritual life, and the strength, growth, and vigour of the new man. To feed upon Christ, is to do all in his name, in union with him, and by virtue drawn from him; it is to live upon him as we do upon our meat. How our bodies are nourished by our food we cannot describe, but that they are so we know and find; so it is with this spiritual nourishment. Our Saviour was so well pleased with this metaphor, as very significant and expressive, that when afterward he would institute some outward sensible signs, by which to represent our communicating of the benefits of his death, he chose those of eating and drinking, and made them sacramental actions.

Having thus explained the general meaning of this part of Christ's discourse, the particulars are reducible to two heads:

First. The necessity of our feeding upon Christ; ver. 53, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;" that is, 1. It is a certain sign you have no spiritual life in you, if you have no desire towards Christ, nor delight in him. If the soul doth not hunger and thirst, certainly it doth not live. It is a sign we are dead indeed, if we are dead to such meat and drink as this. When artificial bees, that by curious springs were made to move to and fro, were to be distinguished from natural ones, they say it was by putting honey among them, which the natural bees only flocked to; but the artificial ones minded it not, for they had no life in them. 2. It is certain you can have no spiritual life, unless you derive it from Christ by faith; separated from him you can do nothing. Faith in Christ is the *primum vivens*—the first living principle of grace; without it we have not the truth of spiritual life, nor any title to eternal life: our bodies may as well live without meat, as our souls without Christ.

Secondly. The benefit and advantage of it, in two things:

1. We shall be one with Christ, as our bodies are with our food when it is digested; ver. 56, "he that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood," that lives by faith in Christ crucified, (it is spoken of as a continued act,) he "dwelleth in me, and I in him." By faith we have a close and intimate union with Christ; he is in us, and we in him, *ch. xvii. 21—23*; *1 Jno. iii. 24*. Believers dwell in Christ as their stronghold, or city of refuge; Christ dwells in them as the master of the house, to rule it, and provide for it. Such is the union between Christ and believers, that he shares in their griefs, and they share in his graces and joys; he saps with them upon their bitter herbs, and they with him upon his rich dainties. It is an inseparable union, like that between the body and the digested food, *Rom. viii. 35*; *1 Jno. iv. 13*.

2. We shall live, live eternally by him, as our bodies by our food. 1st. We shall live by him; ver. 57, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." We have here the series and order of the Divine life. *First*. God is the living Father; hath life in and of himself: "I am that I am" is his name for ever. *Secondly*. Jesus Christ, as Mediator, lives by the Father; he has life in himself, *ch. v. 26*, but he has it of the Father; he that sent him, not only qualified him with that life which was necessary to so great an undertaking, but constituted him the treasury of Divine life to us; breathed into the second Adam the breath of spiritual lives, as into the first Adam the breath of natural lives. *Thirdly*. True believers receive this Divine life by virtue of their union with Christ, which is inferred from the union between the Father and the Son, as it is compared to it, *ch. xvii. 21*, for therefore "he that eateth me," or feeds on me, "even he shall live by me." Those that live upon Christ shall live by him. The life of believers is had from Christ, *ch. i. 16*; it is hid with Christ, *Col. iii. 4*; we live by him as the members by the head, the branches by the root; because he lives we shall live also. 2nd. We shall live eternally by him; ver. 54, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood," as it is prepared in the Gospel to be the food of souls, "he hath eternal life;" he hath it now, as, ver. 40, he hath that in him which is eternal life begun; he has the earnest and foretaste of it, and the hope of it, he "shall live for ever," ver. 58. His happiness shall run parallel with the longest line of eternity itself.

The historian concludes with an account where Christ had this discourse with the Jews; ver. 59, "in the synagogue, as he taught;" implying that he taught them many other things besides these, but this was that in his discourse which was new. He adds this, that "he said these things in the synagogue," to shew, 1. The credit of Christ's doctrine. His truths sought no corners, but were publicly preached in mixed assemblies, as able to abide the most severe and impartial test. Christ pleaded this upon trial, *ch. xviii. 20*, "I ever taught in the synagogue." 2. The credibility of this narrative of it. To assure you that the discourse was fairly represented, he appeals to the synagogue at Capernaum, where it might be examined.

60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 From that

vi. 19. "Five-and-twenty or thirty furlongs:" this would be about half way across the lake, which is seven miles wide. Some idea of the slowness of their progress against the heavy seas and contrary winds may be gathered from the fact that it was the fourth watch (*i.e.*, about 3 A.M.) when Jesus came to them (*Mark vi. 48*). As they started about sunset, they could only have made three and a half miles in some eight or nine hours.

vi. 23. "Howbeit there came other boats:" or, "yet other boats

came from Tiberias." This verse furnishes an undesigned coincidence between St. John and St. Mark. John does not mention the "contrary" wind; but this account of the arrival of the boats from Tiberias exactly coincides with the direction of the wind, which would carry vessels coming from the south-west, and land them at the eastern Bethsaida.

vi. 24. "Took shipping:" or, "entered into the boats"—*i.e.*, those mentioned in verse 23.

time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. 70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71 He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

We have here an account of the effect of Christ's discourse; some were offended, and others edified by it; some driven from him, and others brought nearer to him.

1. To some it was a savour of death unto death, not only to the Jews, who were professed enemies to him and his doctrine, but even to many of his disciples, such as were disciples at large, that were his frequent hearers, and followed him in public; a mixed multitude, like those among Israel, that began all the discontents. Now here we have,

First. Their murmurings at the doctrine they heard, ver. 60; not a few, but many of them, were offended at it. Of the several sorts of ground that received the seed, only one in four brought forth fruit. See what they say to it; ver. 60, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" 1st. They do not like it themselves: What stuff is this? Eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of man! If it be understood figuratively, it is not intelligible; if literally, not practicable. What! must they turn cannibals? Can they not be religious but they must be barbarous? *Si Christiani adorant quod comedunt*, (said Averroes,) *sit anima mea cum philosophis*.—If Christians adore what they eat, my mind shall continue with the philosophers. Now, when they found it a hard saying, if they had humbly begged of Christ to have declared unto them this parable, he would have opened it, and their understandings too,—for the meek will he teach his way; but they were not willing to have Christ's sayings explained to them, because they would not lose this pretence for rejecting them, that they were "hard sayings." 2nd. They think it impossible any one else should like it; "Who can hear it?" surely none can. Thus the scoffers at religion are ready to undertake that all the intelligent part of mankind concur with them; they conclude, with great assurance, that no man of sense will admit the doctrine of Christ, nor any man of spirit submit to his laws; because they cannot bear to be so tutored, so tied up themselves, they think none else can. "Who can hear it?" Thanks be to God, thousands have heard these sayings of Christ, and have found them not only easy, but pleasant as their necessary food.

Secondly. Christ's animadversions upon their murmurings.

1. He well enough knew their murmurings, ver. 61. Their cavils were secret in their own breasts, or whispered among themselves in a corner. But, 1st. Christ knew them, he saw them, he heard them. Note, Christ takes notice not only of the bold and open defiance that are done to his name and glory by daring sinners, but of the secret slights that are put upon his doctrine by carnal professors. He knows that which the fool saith in his heart, and cannot for shame speak out; he observes how his doctrine is resented by those to whom it is preached; who rejoice in it, and who murmur at it; who are reconciled to it, and bow before it; and who quarrel with it, and rebel against it, though never so secretly. 2nd. He knew it "in himself;" not by any information given him, or any external indication of the thing, but by his own Divine omniscience: he knew it, not as the prophets, by a Divine revelation made to him,—that which the prophets desired to know was sometimes hid from them, as 2 *Kin. iv. 27*.—but by a Divine knowledge in him. He is that essential Word that discerns the thoughts of the heart, *Heb. iv. 12, 13*. Thoughts are words to Christ; we should therefore take heed, not only what we say and do, but what we think.

2. He well enough knew how to answer them: "Doth this offend you?" Is this a stumbling-block to you? See how people by their own wilful mistakes create offences to themselves: they take offence where there is none given, and make it even there where there is nothing to make it of. Note, We may justly wonder that so much offence should be taken at the doctrine of Christ, for so little cause. Christ speaks of it here with wonder, "Doth this offend you?" How unreasonable are your quarrels!

Now, in answer to those who condemned his doctrine as intricate and obscure, (*Si non vis intelligi debes negligi*,—"If you are unwilling to be understood, you ought to be neglected.")

First. He gives them a hint of his ascension into heaven, as that which would give an irresistible evidence of the truth of his doctrine; ver. 62. "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" And what then? 1st. If I should tell you of that, surely it would much more offend you, and you would think my pretensions too high indeed. If this be so hard a saying that you cannot hear it, how will you digest it when I tell you of my returning to heaven, from whence I came down? see *ch. iii. 12*. Those who stumble at smaller difficulties should consider how they will get over greater. 2nd. "When you see the Son of man ascend, this will much more offend you, for then my body will be less capable of being eaten by you in that gross sense wherein you now understand it;" so Dr. Whitby. Or, 3rd. When you see that, or hear it from those that shall see it, surely then you will be satisfied. You think I take too much upon me, when I say, "I came down from heaven," for that was it you quarrelled with, ver. 42; but will you think so when you see me return to heaven? If he ascended, certainly he descended; *Eph. iv. 9, 10*; Christ did often refer himself thus to subsequent proofs, as *ch. i. 50, 51*; *ii. 14*; *Mat. xii. 40*; *xvii. 64*. Let us wait awhile till the mystery of God shall be finished, and then we shall see there was no reason to be offended at any of Christ's sayings.

Secondly. He gives them a general key to this, and all such parabolical discourses; teaching them that they are to be understood spiritually, and not after a corporal and carnal manner; ver. 63. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." As it is in the natural body, the animal spirits quicken and enliven it, and without these the most nourishing food would profit nothing; what would the body be the better for bread, if it were not quickened and animated by the spirit? so it is with the soul. 1st. The bare participation of ordinances, unless the Spirit of God work with them, and quicken the soul by them, profiteth nothing; the Word and ordinances, if the Spirit work with them, are as food to a living man; if not, they are as food to a dead man. Even the flesh of Christ, the sacrifice for sin, will avail us nothing unless the blessed Spirit quicken our souls thereby, and enforce the

powerful influences of his death upon us, till we by his grace are planted together in the likeness of it. 2nd. The doctrine of eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood, if it be understood literally, profits nothing, but rather leads us into mistakes and prejudices; but the spiritual sense and meaning of it quickens the soul, makes it alive, and lively, for so it follows, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." To eat the flesh of Christ, is a hard saying, but to believe that Christ died for man, and to derive from that doctrine strength and comfort in my approaches to God, my oppositions of sin, and preparations for a future state, this is the spirit and life of that saying, and construing it thus it is an excellent saying. The reason why men dislike Christ's sayings is, because they mistake them. The literal sense of a parable doth us no good, we are never the wiser for it, but the spiritual meaning is instructive. 3rd. The flesh; that is, those that are in the flesh, (so some understand it,) that are under the power of a carnal mind, they profit nothing by Christ's discourses; but the Spirit, that is, those that have the Spirit, that are spiritual, they are quickened and enlivened by them, for they are received *ad modum recipientis*,—so as to correspond with the state of the receiver's mind. They found fault with Christ's sayings, whereas the fault was in themselves; it is only to sensual minds that spiritual things are senseless and sapless; spiritual minds relish them; see 1 *Cor. ii. 14, 15*.

Thirdly. He gives them an intimation of his knowledge of them, and that he had expected no better from them, though they called themselves his disciples, ver. 64, 65. Now was fulfilled that of the prophet, speaking of Christ and his doctrine, *Isa. liii. 1*. "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Both these Christ here takes notice of.

1st. They did not believe his report. "There are some of you" who said you would leave all to follow me, "who yet believe not;" and this was the reason why the Word preached did not profit them, because it was not mixed with faith, *Heb. iv. 2*. They did not believe him to be the Messiah, else they would have acquiesced in the doctrine he preached, and not have quarrelled with it, though there were some things in it dark, and hard to be understood; *oportet discipulum credere*,—"young beginners in learning must take things upon their teacher's word." Note, 1. Among those who are nominal Christians there are many that are real infidels. 2. The unbelief of hypocrites, before it discovers itself to the world, is naked and open before the eyes of Christ. He knew from the beginning who they were of the multitudes that followed him, that believed; and who of the twelve should betray him; he knew from the beginning of their acquaintance with him, and attendance on him, when they were in the hottest pang of their zeal, who were sincere, as Nathanael, *ch. i. 47*, and who were not. Before they distinguished themselves by any overt act, he could infallibly distinguish who believed, and who did not; whose love was counterfeited, and whose cordial. We may gather hence, 1st. That the apostasy of those who have long made a plausible profession of religion, is a certain proof of their constant hypocrisy, and that from the beginning they believed not; but is not a proof of the possibility of the total and final apostasy of any true believers. Such revolts are not to be called the fall of real saints, but the discovery of pretended ones: see 1 *Jno. ii. 19*; *stella cadens non stella fuit*,—"the star that falls never was a star." 2nd. That it is Christ's prerogative to know the heart; he knows who they are that believe not, but dissemble in their profession, and yet continues them room in his church, the use of his ordinances, and the credit of his name, and doth not discover them in this world, unless they by their own wickedness discover themselves; because such is the constitution of his visible church, and the discovering day is yet to come; but if we pretend to judge men's hearts, we step into Christ's throne, and anticipate his judgment. We are often deceived in men, and see cause to change our sentiments of them; but this we are sure of, that Christ knows all men, and his judgment is according to truth.

2nd. The reason why they did not believe his report was, because the arm of the Lord was not revealed unto them; for, ver. 65, "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come to me, except it were given unto him of my Father," referring to ver. 44; Christ therefore could not but know who believed, and who did not, because faith is the gift and work of God, and all his Father's gifts and works could not but be known to him, for they all passed through his hands. There he had said, none could "come to him except the Father draw him;" here he saith, "except it were given him of my Father;" which shews that God draws souls by giving them grace and strength, and a heart to come; without which, such is the moral impotency of man in his fallen state, that he cannot come.

Thirdly. We have here their final apostasy from Christ hereupon; ver. 66, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." When we admit into our minds hard thoughts of the word and works of Christ, and conceive a secret dislike, and are willing to hear insinuations tending to their reproach, we are then entering into temptation: it is as the letting forth of water, it is looking back, which, if infinite mercy prevent not, will end in drawing back; therefore, *obsta principii*,—"take heed of the beginnings of apostasy."

1. See here the backsliding of these disciples. Many of them went back: to their houses, and families, and callings, which they had left for a time to follow him; went back, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise; went back, as Orpah did, to their people, and to their gods, *Ru. i. 15*. They had entered themselves in Christ's school, but they went back,—did not only play truant for once, but took leave of him and his doctrine for ever. Note, The apostasy of Christ's disciples from him, though really a strange thing, yet has been such a common thing that we need not think strange at it. Here were many that went back. It is often so, when some backslide, many backslide with them; the disease is infectious.

2. The occasion of this backsliding. "From that time," from the time that Christ preached this comfortable doctrine, that he is the bread of life, and those who by faith feed upon him shall live by him, which one would think should have engaged them to cleave the more closely to him, "from that time" they withdrew. Note, The corrupt and wicked heart of man often makes that an occasion of offence, which is indeed matter of the greatest comfort. Christ foresaw that they would thus take offence at what he said, and yet he said it. That which is the undoubted word and truth of Christ must be faithfully delivered, whoever are offended at it. Men's humours must be captivated to God's Word, and not that accommodated to men's humours.

3. The degree of their apostasy; "they walked no more with him" returned no more to him, and attended no more upon his ministry. It is hard for those "who have been once enlightened, and have tasted the good Word of God, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance," *Heb. vi. 4-6*.

4. This discourse was to others a savour of life unto life. "Many went back," but, thanks be to God, all did not; even then the twelve stuck to him. Though the faith of some be overthrown, yet the foundation of God stands sure. Observe here,

First. The affectionate question which Christ put to the twelve, ver. 67, "Will ye also go away?" He saith nothing to them which went back; "if the unbelieving depart, let them depart;" it was no great loss of those whom he never had; light come, light go. But he takes this occasion to speak to the twelve, to confirm them; and by trying their steadfastness the more to fix them.

vi. 27. "For him hath God the Father sealed:" rather read, "For him the Father sealed, even God." Sealed is equivalent to "designated" or "appointed" for that end.

vi. 32. Lightfoot has an interesting note on this verse. The Gemarists, he says, affirm that manna was given for the merits of Moses. "There were three good shepherds of Israel—Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; and there were three good things given us by their hands—a well, a cloud, and manna: the well for the merits of Miriam,

the pillar of the cloud for the merits of Aaron, manna for the merits of Moses." Contrary, therefore, to this opinion of theirs, it may well be said, "Moses did not give you this bread"—i.e., it was by no means for any merit of his.

vi. 34. "Lord, evermore give us this bread:" there seemed to be a half-awakening of their thoughts at this point.

vi. 35. It should be noted that from this point the discourse is conducted in the first person. It has been reckoned that "I" or

"Will ye also go away?" 1. It is at your choice whether ye will or no; if ye will forsake me, now is the time, when so many do. It is an hour of temptation; if ye will go back, go now. Note, Christ will detain none with him against their wills; his soldiers are volunteers, not pressed men. The twelve had now had time enough to try how they liked Christ and his doctrine; and that none of them might afterwards say they were trepanned into discipleship, and if it were to do again they would not do it, he here allows them a power of revocation, and leaves them at their liberty, as *Jos. xxiv. 15; Ru. i. 15. 2*. It is at your peril if you do go away. If there were any secret inclination in the heart of any of them to depart from him now, he stops it with this awakening question, "Will you also go away?" Think not that you hang at as loose an end as they did, and may go away as easily as they can; they have not been so intimate with me as you have been, nor received so many favours from me; they are gone, but will you go? Remember your character, and say, whatever others do, we will never go away: "Should such a man as I flee?" *Neh. vi. 11*. Note, The nearer we have been to Christ, and the longer we have been with him,—the more mercies we have received from him, and the more engagements we have laid ourselves under to him,—the greater will be our sin if we desert him. 3. I have reason to think you will not. "Will you go away?" No; I have faster hold of you than so; I hope better things of you, *Heb. vi. 9*; for you are they that have continued with me, *Lu. xxii. 28*. When the apostasy of some is a grief to the Lord Jesus, the constancy of others is so much the more his honour, and he is pleased with it accordingly. Christ and believers know one another too well to part upon every displeasure.

Secondly, The believing reply which Peter, in the name of the rest, made to this question, ver. 68, 69. Christ put the question to them, as Joshua put Israel to their choice, whom they would serve, with design to draw out from them a promise to adhere to him, and it had the like effect: "Nay, but we will serve the Lord." Peter was, upon all occasions, the mouth of the rest, not so much because he had more of his Master's ear than they, but because he had more tongue of his own; and what he said was sometimes approved, and sometimes reprimanded, *Mat. xvi. 17, 23*; the common lot of those who are swift to speak. This here was well said, admirably well; and probably he said it by the direction, and with the express assent, of his fellow-disciples; at least he knew their mind, and spoke the sense of them all, and did not except Judas; for we must hope the best.

1. Here is a good resolution to adhere to Christ; and so expressed as to intimate that they would not entertain the least thought of leaving him: "Lord, to whom shall we go?" "it were folly to go from thee, unless we knew where to mend ourselves. No, Lord, we like our choice too well to change." Note, Those who leave Christ would do well to consider whom they will go to, and whether they can expect to find rest and peace any where but in him: see *Ps. lxxiii. 27, 28; Hos. ii. 9*. "Whither shall we go?" Shall we make our court to the world? It will certainly deceive us. Shall we return to sin? It will certainly destroy us. Shall we leave the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns? The disciples resolve to continue their pursuit of life and happiness; and will have a guide to it,—and will adhere to Christ as their guide,—for they can never have a better. "Shall we go to the heathen philosophers, and become their disciples? They are become vain in their imaginations; and, professing themselves to be wise in other things, are become fools in religion. Shall we go to the scribes and Pharisees, and sit at their feet? What good can they do us, who have made void the commandments of God by their traditions? Shall we go to Moses? He will send us back again to thee. Therefore, if ever we find the way to happiness, it must be in following thee. Note, Christ's holy religion appears to great advantage when it is compared with other institutions, for then it will be seen how far it excels them all. Let them who find fault with this religion, before they quit it, find a better. A Divine teacher we must have; can we find a better than Christ? A Divine revelation we cannot be without; if the Scripture be not such a one, where else may we look for it?"

2. Here is a good reason for this resolution. It was not the inconsiderate resolve of a blind affection, but the result of mature deliberation. The disciples were resolved never to go away from Christ.

1st. Because of the advantage they promised themselves by him; "thou hast the words of eternal life." They themselves did not fully understand Christ's discourse, for as yet the doctrine of the cross was a riddle to them; but in the general they were satisfied that he had "the words of eternal life;" that is, *First*. That the word of his doctrine shewed the way to eternal life, set it before us, and directed us what to do that we may inherit it. *Secondly*. That the word of his doom and determination must confer eternal life. His having the words of eternal life, is the same with his having power to give eternal life to as many as were given him, *ch. xvii. 2*. He had, in the foregoing discourse, assured eternal life to his followers. These disciples fasten upon that plain saying, and therefore resolved to stick to him, when the other overlooked that, and fastened upon the hard sayings, and therefore forsook him. Though we cannot account for every mystery, every obscurity in Christ's doctrine, yet we know in the general it is the word of eternal life, and therefore must live and die by it; for if we forsake Christ, we forsake our own merits.

2nd. Because of the assurance they had concerning him; ver. 69. "We know, and are sure, that thou art that Christ." If he be the promised Messiah, he must bring in an everlasting righteousness, *Dan. ix. 24*, and therefore has the words of eternal life, for righteousness reigns to eternal life, *Rom. v. 21*. Observe, *First*. The doctrine they believed: that this Jesus was the Messiah promised to the fathers, and expected by them; and that he was not a mere man, but the Son of the living God, the same to whom God had said, "Thou art my Son," *Ps. ii. 7*. In times of temptation to apostasy it is good to have recourse to our first principles, and stick to them; and, if we faithfully abide by that which is past dispute, we shall be the better able both to find and to keep the truth in matters of doubtful disputation. *Secondly*. The degree of their faith: it rose up to a full assurance; "we are sure," we have known it by experience, that is the best knowledge. We should take occasion, from others' wavering, to be so much the more established, especially in that which is the present truth. When we have so strong a faith in the Gospel of Christ as boldly to venture our souls upon it, knowing whom we have believed, then, and not till then, we shall be willing to venture every thing else for it.

Thirdly. The melancholy remark which our Lord Jesus made upon this reply of Peter's: ver. 70, 71. "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" And the evangelist tells us who he meant; "he spake of Judas Iscariot." Peter had undertaken for them all that they would be tight to their Master. Now Christ doth not condemn his charity,—it is always good to hope the best,—but he tacitly corrects his confidence. We must not be too sure concerning any. God knows them that are his, we do not. Observe here,

1. Hypocrites and betrayers of Christ are no better than devils. Judas not only had a devil, but he was a devil; "one of you is a false accuser," so *διαβολος* sometimes signifies, *1 Tim. iii. 11*; and it is probable that Judas, when he sold his Master to the chief priests, represented him to them as an ill man, to justify himself in what he did. But I rather take it as we read it, 'he is a devil,' a devil incarnate; a fallen apostle, as the devil a fallen angel. He is Satan, an adversary, an enemy to Christ. He is Abaddon, and Apollyon, a son of perdition. He was of his father, the devil; did his lusts, was in his interests,

as Cain, *1 Jno. iii. 12*. Those whose bodies were possessed by the devil, are never called devils (demoniacs, but not devils); but Judas, into whose heart Satan entered, and filled it, is called a devil.

2. Many that are seeming saints are real devils. Judas had as fair an outside as many of the apostles; his venom was, like that of the serpent, covered with a fine skin. He cast out devils, and appeared an enemy to the devil's kingdom, and yet was himself a devil all the while. Not only he will be one shortly, but he is one now. It is strange, and to be admired; Christ speaks of it with wonder, "Have not I?" It is sad, and to be lamented, that ever Christianity should be made a cloak to diabolism!

3. The disguises of hypocrites, however they may deceive men, and put a cheat upon them, cannot deceive Christ, for his piercing eye sees through them. He can call those devils that call themselves Christians; like the prophet's greeting to Jeroboam's wife, when she came to him in masquerade, *1 Kin. xiv. 6*, "Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam." Christ's divine sight, far better than any double sight, can see spirits.

4. There are those who are chosen by Christ to special services, that yet prove false to him: "I have chosen you to the apostleship; for, it is expressly said, Judas was not chosen to eternal life, *ch. xiii. 18*;" and yet one of you is a devil." Note, Advancement to places of honour and trust in the church is no certain evidence of saving grace: "We have prophesied in thy name."

5. In the most select societies on this side heaven, it is no new thing to meet with those that are corrupt. Of the twelve that were chosen to an intimate conversation with an incarnate Deity,—as great an honour and privilege as ever men were chosen to,—one was an incarnate devil. The historian lays an emphasis upon this, that Judas was one of the twelve that were so dignified and distinguished. Let us not therefore reject and unchurch the twelve because one of them is a devil; nor say they are all cheats and hypocrites, because one of them was so: let those that are so, bear the blame, and not those who, while they are undiscovered, incorporate with them. There is a society within the veil, into which no unclean thing shall enter,—a church of firstborn, in which are no false brethren.

CHAPTER VII.

In this chapter we have, 1. Christ's declining for some time to appear publicly in Judæa, ver. 1. 11. His design to go up to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles; and his discourse with his kindred, in Galilee, concerning his going up to this feast, ver. 3—13. III. His preaching publicly in the temple at that feast: 1. In the midst of the feast, ver. 14, 15, we have his discourse with the Jews, 1st. Concerning his doctrine, ver. 16—18; 2nd. Concerning the crime of sabbath-breaking laid to his charge, ver. 19—24; 3rd. Concerning himself, both whence he came, and whither he was going, ver. 25—36. 2. On the last day of the feast: 1st. His gracious invitation to poor souls to come to him, ver. 37—39. 2nd. The reception that it met with. *First*. Many of the people disputed about it, ver. 40—44. *Secondly*. The chief priests would have brought him into trouble for it, but were first balked by their officers, ver. 45—49, and then silenced by one of their own court, ver. 50—53.



AFTER these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. 2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. 3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa,

that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. 4 For *there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly*. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. 5 For neither did his brethren believe in him. 6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. 7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. 8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. 9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. 10 But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. 11 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? 12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. 13 Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

We have here,
First. The reason given why Christ spent more of his time in Galilee than in

"me" occurs no less than five-and-thirty times. This is not egotism. There are times when the frequent use of the first person on the part of a mere creature is not egotism; when used by the Divine Redeemer, the very form heightens the promise, and helps the heart of the hearer. "For, as the great master of the philosophy of language, William Humboldt, observes, they (i.e., the pronouns 'I' and 'thee') are not mere substitutes for the persons for whom they stand (they are not, that is to say, mere pronouns), but involve the personality

of the speaker, and of the person spoken to, and the relation between them" ("Guesses at Truth").

vi. 36. "Ye also have seen:" rather, "ye have even seen me." This rendering gives force to verse 40, and serves to illustrate the language used in chap. xx. 29. (Compare 1 Pet. i. 8.)

vi. 49. "Did eat . . . and are dead:" or, "ate the manna in the wilderness, and died."

vi. 70. "A devil:" the answer of Peter was in the plural, "we

Judaea, ver. 1; because the Jews, the people in Judaea and Jerusalem, sought to kill him, for curing the impotent man on the sabbath day, *ch. v. 16*. They thought to be the death of him, either by a popular tumult or by a legal prosecution. In consideration of this he kept at a distance, in another part of the country, very much out of the lines of Jerusalem's communication. It is not said he durst not, but, he would not, walk in Jewry. It was not through fear and cowardice that he declined it, but in prudence, because his hour was not yet come. Note, 1st, Gospel light is justly taken away from those that endeavour to extinguish it and blow it out. Christ will withdraw from those that drive him from them, and hide his face from those that spit in it, and justly shut up his bowels from those that spurn at them. 2nd. In times of imminent peril, it is not only allowable, but advisable, to withdraw and abscond for our own safety and preservation, and to choose the service of those places which are least perilous, *Mat. x. 23*. Then, and not till then, we are called to expose and lay down our lives, when we cannot save them without sin. 3rd. If the providence of God casts persons of merit into places of obscurity and little note, it must not be thought strange; it was the lot of our Master himself; he who was fit to have sat in the highest of Moses' seats willingly "walked in Galilee" among the ordinary sort of people. Observe, He did not sit still in Galilee, nor bury himself alive there, but "walked," he "went about doing good." When we cannot do what and where we would, we must do what and where we can.

Secondly. The approach of the feast of tabernacles, ver. 2, one of the three solemnities which called for the personal attendance of all the males at Jerusalem: see the institution of it, *Lev. xxiii. 34, &c.*, and the revival of it, after a long disuse, *Neh. viii. 14*. It was intended to be both a memorial of the tabernacle state of Israel in the wilderness, and a figure of the tabernacle state of God's spiritual Israel in this world. This feast, which was instituted so many hundred years before, was still religiously observed. Note, Divine institutions are never antiquated, nor go out of date by length of time; nor must wilderness mercies ever be forgotten. But it is called the Jews' feast, because it was now shortly to be abolished, as a mere Jewish thing, and left to them that served the tabernacle.

Thirdly. Christ's discourse with "his brethren," some of his kindred, whether by his mother or his supposed father is not certain; but they were such as pretended to have an interest in him, and therefore interposed to advise him in his conduct. And observe,

1st. Their ambition and vainglory in urging him to make a more public appearance than he did. "Depart hence," said they, "and go into Judaea," ver. 3, where thou wilt make a better figure than thou canst here. Two reasons they give for this advice:

First. That it would be an encouragement to those in and about Jerusalem, who had a respect for him; for, expecting his temporal kingdom, the royal seat of which they concluded must be at Jerusalem, they would have disciples there to be particularly countenanced; and thought the time he spent among his Galilean disciples wasted and thrown away, and his miracles turning to no account, unless they at Jerusalem saw them. Or, that thy disciples, that is, all of them in general, who will be gathered at Jerusalem to keep the feast, may see thy works; and not, as here, a few at one time, and a few at another.

Secondly. That it would be for the advancing of his own name and honour; "there is no man that doth any thing in secret, if he himself seeks to be known openly." They take it for granted that Christ sought to make known himself, and therefore thought it absurd for him to conceal his miracles. "If thou do these things," if thou be so well able to gain the applause of the people, and the approbation of the rulers, by thy miracles, venture abroad, and "shew thyself to the world." Supported with these credentials, thou canst not fail of acceptance, and therefore it is high time to set up for an interest, and think of being great.

Now one would not think there was any harm in this, and yet the evangelist notes it as an evidence of their infidelity; for "neither did his brethren believe in him," ver. 5; if they had, they would not have said this. Observe, 1st. It was an honour to be of the kindred of Christ, but no saving honour; they that hear his word, and keep it, are the kindred he values. Sure grace runs in no blood in the world, when not in that of Christ's family. 2nd. It was a sign Christ did not aim at any secular interest; for then his kindred would have struck in with him, and he would have secured them first. 3rd. There were those that were akin to Christ according to the flesh, who did believe in him—three of the twelve were his brethren; and yet others, as nearly allied to him as they, did not believe on him. Many that have the same external privileges and advantages do not make the same use of them.

But what was there amiss in this advice which they gave him? I answer, 1. It was a piece of presumption for them to prescribe to Christ, and to teach him what measures to take; it was a sign they did not believe him able to guide them, when they did not think him sufficient to guide himself. 2. They discovered a great carelessness of his safety, when they would have him go to Judaea, where they knew the Jews sought to kill him. They that believed in him, and loved him, dissuaded him from Judaea, *ch. xi. 8*. 3. Some think, they hoped that if his miracles were wrought at Jerusalem, the Pharisees and rulers would try them, and discover some cheat in them, which would justify their unbelief. So Dr. Whitby. 4. Perhaps they were weary of his company in Galilee; (for are not all these that speak Galileans?) and this was in effect a desire "that he would depart out of their coasts." 5. They causelessly insinuate that he neglected his disciples, and denied them such a sight of his works as was necessary to the support of their faith. 6. They tacitly reproach him as mean-spirited; that he durst not enter the lists with the great men, nor thrust himself upon the stage of public action; which, if he had any thing of courage, and a great soul, he would do, and not sneak thus and skulk in a corner. Thus Christ's humility, and his humiliation, and the small figure which his religion has usually made in the world, have been often turned to the reproach both of him and it. 7. They seem to question the truth of the miracles he wrought, in saying, "If thou do these things;" if they will bear the test of a public scrutiny in the courts above, produce them there. 8. They think Christ altogether such a one as themselves,—as subject as they to the politics of the world, and as desirous as they to make a fair show in the flesh; whereas he sought not honour from men. 9. Self was at the bottom of all; they hoped, if he would make himself as great as he might, they, being his kinsmen, should share in his honour, and have respect paid them for his sake. Note, 1st. Many carnal people go to public ordinances, to worship at the feast, only to shew themselves; and all their care is to make a good appearance, and to present themselves handsomely to the world. 2nd. Many that seem to seek Christ's honour, do really therein seek their own, and make it serve a turn for themselves.

2nd. The prudence and humility of our Lord Jesus, which appeared in his answer to the advice his brethren gave him, ver. 6—8; though there were so many base insinuations in it, he answered them mildly. Note, Even that which is said without reason, yet should be answered without passion; we should learn of our Master to reply with meekness, even to that which is most impertinent and imperious; and where it is easy to find much amiss, to seem not to see it, and walk at the affront.

They expected Christ's company with them to the feast, perhaps hoping he would bear their charges. But here,

First. He shews the difference between himself and them, in two things:

1st. His time was set, so was not theirs; "my time is not yet come, but your time is always ready." Understand it of the time of his going up to this feast. It was an indifferent thing to them when they went, for they had nothing of moment to do, either where they were, to detain them there, or where they were going, to hasten them thither. But every minute of Christ's time was precious, and had its own particular business allotted to it. He had some work yet to be done in Galilee, before he left the country; in the harmony of the Gospels, betwixt this motion made by his kindred, and his going up to this feast, comes in the story of his sending forth the seventy disciples, *Lu. x. 1, &c.*, which was an affair of very great consequence; his time is not yet, for that must be done first. Those that live useless lives have their time always ready; they can go and come when they please: but those whose time is filled up with duty will often find themselves straitened; and they have not yet time for that which others can do at any time. Those that are made the servants of God, as all men are, and that have made themselves the servants of all, as all useful men have, must not expect nor covet to be masters of their own time. The confinement of business is a thousand times better than the liberty of idleness. Or it may be meant of the time of his appearing publicly at Jerusalem. Christ, who knows all men and all things, knew that the best and most proper time for it would be about the middle of the feast. We, who are ignorant and short-sighted, are apt to prescribe to him, and to think he should deliver his people, and so shew himself, now, just now. The present time is our time, but he is fittest to judge, and it may be his time is not yet come; his people are not yet ready for deliverance, nor his enemies ripe for ruin: let us therefore wait with patience for his time, for all he doth will be most glorious in its season.

2nd. His life was sought; so was not theirs, ver. 7. They, in shewing themselves to the world, did not expose themselves; "the world cannot hate you," for ye are of the world—its children, its servants, and in with its interests; and no doubt the world will love its own: see *ch. xv. 19*. Unholy souls, whom the holy God cannot love, the world that lies in wickedness cannot hate; but he, in shewing himself to the world, laid himself open to the greatest danger, for "me it hateth." Christ was not only slighted as inconsiderable in the world,—"the world knew him not,"—but hated, as if he had been hurtful to the world; thus ill was he requited for his love to the world: reigning sin is a rooted antipathy and enmity to Christ.

But why did the world hate Christ? what evil had he done it? Had he, like Alexander, under colour of conquering it, laid it waste? No; but because, saith he, "I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." Note, 1. The works of an evil world are evil works; as the tree is, so are the fruits. It is a dark world, and an apostate world, and its works, works of darkness and rebellion. 2. Our Lord Jesus, both by himself and by his ministers, did and will, both discover and testify against the evil works of this wicked world. 3. It is a great uneasiness and provocation to the world to be convicted of the evil of its works. It is for the honour of virtue and piety that those who are impious and vicious do not care for hearing of it, for their own consciences make them ashamed of the turpitude there is in sin, and afraid of the punishment that follows after sin. 4. Whatever is pretended, the real cause of the world's enmity to the Gospel is the testimony it bears against sin and sinners. Christ's witnesses, by their doctrine and conversation, torment them that dwell on the earth, and therefore are treated so barbarously, *Rev. xi. 10*; but it is better incur the world's hatred by our testifying against its wickedness, than gain its good-will by going down the stream with it.

Secondly. He dismisseth them, with a design to stay behind for some time in Galilee; ver. 8. "Go ye up to this feast: I go not up yet." 1st. He allows their going to the feast, though they were carnal and hypocritical in it. Note, Even those who go not to holy ordinances with right affections and sincere intentions, yet must not be hindered or discouraged from going; who knows but they may be wrought upon there? 2nd. He denies them his company when they went to the feast, because they were carnal and hypocritical. Those that go to ordinances for ostentation, or to serve some secular purpose, go without Christ, and will speed accordingly. How sad is the condition of that man, though he reckon himself akin to Christ, to whom he saith, "Go up to such an ordinance, Go pray, Go hear the Word, Go receive the sacrament, but I go not up with thee. Go thou and appear before God, but I will not appear for thee; as *Ex. xxxiii. 1, 3*; but if the presence of Christ go not with us, to what purpose should we go up? "Go ye up: I go not up." When we are going to, and coming from, solemn ordinances, it concerns us to be careful what company we have and choose, and to avoid that which is vain and carnal, lest the coal of good affections be quenched by corrupt communication. "I go not up yet to this feast." He doth not say, "I will not go up at all," but, not yet. There may be reason for deferring a particular duty, which yet must not be wholly omitted or laid aside: see *Num. ix. 11*. The reason he gives is, "My time is not yet full come." Note, Our Lord Jesus is very exact and punctual in knowing and keeping his time; and as it was the time fixed, so it was the best time.

3rd. Christ's continuance in Galilee till his full time was come, ver. 9. He, saying these things to them, (*ταῦτα δὲ εἰπὼν*) abode still in Galilee; because of this discourse he continued there; for, 1. He would not be influenced by those that advised him to seek honour from men, nor go along with those that put him upon making a figure; he would not seem to countenance the temptation. 2. He would not depart from his own purpose. He had said, upon a clear foresight and mature deliberation, that he would not go up yet to this feast, and therefore he "abode still in Galilee." It becomes the followers of Christ thus to be steady, and not to use lightness.

4th. His going up to the feast when his time was come. Observe, First. When he went; "when his brethren were gone up." He would not go up with them, lest they should have made a noise and disturbance, under pretence of shewing him to the world; whereas it agreed both with the prediction and with his spirit not to strive or cry, or let his voice be heard in the streets, *Isa. xlii. 2*; but he went up after them. We may lawfully join in the same religious worship with those that yet we should decline an intimate acquaintance and converse with; for the blessing of ordinances depends upon the grace of God, and not upon the grace of our fellow-worshippers. His carnal brethren went up first, and then he went. Note, In the external performances of religion, it is possible that formal hypocrites may get the start of those that are sincere. Many come first to the temple that are brought thither by vainglory, and go thence unjustified, as he, *Lu. xviii. 11*. It is not who comes first, that will be the question, but who comes fittest. If we bring our hearts with us, it is no matter who gets before us.

Secondly. How he went, *ὡς ἐν κρυπτῷ*, as if he were hiding himself; "not openly, but as it were in secret," rather for fear of giving offence than of receiving injury. He went up to the feast, because it was an opportunity of honouring God and doing good; but he went up "as it were in secret," because he would not provoke the government. Note, Provided the work of God be done effectually, it is best done when it is done with least noise. The kingdom of God needs not come with observation, *Lu. xvii. 20*. We may do the work of God privately, and yet not do it deceitfully.

5th. The great expectation that there was of him among the Jews at Jerusalem, ver. 11—13. Having formerly come up to the feasts, and signalized himself by

believe." Hence the real force of the reply given by Christ: "Not all are included in that 'we,' for one of you twelve is a Diabolos." The word means "false accuser," "informer." A comparison of other passages (*chap. xiii. 2, 27*), where Satan or the devil is said to have entered into Judas, is relied on as vindication of the usually adopted rendering, "a devil."

vii. 1. "After these things:" the events of *chap. v.* are alluded to. The determination of the Jews to kill him (see *chap. v. 18*) is the

reason why he confined his ministry so much to Galilee: "he would not walk," &c.

vii. 2. "Feast of Tabernacles:" it was celebrated on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, or September. It was the last of the three annual feasts. Connected with this feast there was the celebration of the vintage. (Compare *Lev. xxiii. 1*; *Deut. xvi.*)

vii. 3. "His brethren:" it has been frequently assumed that this is a general expression, meaning his relatives. This may be so, but

the miracles he wrought, he had made himself the subject of much discourse and observation.

First. They could not but think of him; ver. 11, "the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?" 1st. The common people longed to see him there, that they might have their curiosity gratified with the sight of his person and miracles. They did not think it worth while to go to him into Galilee; though if they had they would not have lost their labour; but they hope the feast will bring him to Jerusalem, and then they shall see him. If an opportunity of acquaintance with Christ come to their door, they can like it well enough. They "sought him at the feast." When we attend upon God in his holy ordinances, we should seek Christ in them, seek him at the Gospel feasts; and those who would see Christ at a feast, must seek him there. Or, 2nd. Perhaps it was his enemies that were thus waiting an opportunity to seize him, and, if possible, to give an effectual stop to his progress. They said, "Where is he?" *οὐκ ἔστιν ὁκεῖνος*—"Where is that fellow?" Thus scornfully and contemptibly do they speak of him. Or it intimates how full their hearts were with thoughts of him, and their town with talk of him; they needed not name him. When they should have welcomed the feast as an opportunity of serving God, they were glad of it as an opportunity of persecuting Christ: thus Saul hoped to slay David at the new moon, 1 Sam. xx. 27. Those that seek opportunity to sin in solemn assemblies for religious worship, profane God's ordinances to the last degree, and defy him upon his own ground; it is like striking within the verge of the court.

Secondly. The people differed much in their sentiments concerning him; ver. 12, "there was much murmuring," or muttering rather, "among the people concerning him." The enmity of the rulers against Christ, and their inquiries after him, made him to be so much the more talked of and observed among the people. This ground the Gospel of Christ hath got by the opposition made to it, that it has been the more inquired into; and, by being every where spoken against, it has come to be every where spoken of; and by that means has been spread the farther, and the merits of his cause have been the more searched into. This murmuring was not against Christ, but concerning him; some murmured at the rulers, because they did not countenance and encourage him; others murmured at them, because they did not silence and restrain him. Some murmured that he had so great an interest in Galilee; others, that he had so little interest in Jerusalem. Note, Christ and his religion have been, and will be, the subject of much controversy and debate, Lu. xii. 51, 52. If all would agree to entertain Christ as they ought, there would be perfect peace; but when some receive the light, and others resolve against it, there will be murmuring. The bones in the valley, while they were dead and dry, lay quiet; but when it was said unto them, Live, there was a noise and shaking, Eze. xxxvii. 7. But the noise and encounter of liberty and business are preferable, surely, to the silence and agreement of a prison.

Now what were the sentiments of the people concerning him?

1st. "Some said, He is a good man." This was truth, but it was far short of being the whole truth. He was not only a good man, but more than a man,—he was the Son of God. Many that have no ill thoughts of Christ, yet have low thoughts of him, and scarce honour him, even when they speak well of him, because they do not say enough. Yet indeed it was his honour, and the reproach of those that persecuted him, that they would not believe him to be the Messiah, yet could not but own he was "a good man."

2nd. "Others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the people;" and if that had been true, he had been a very ill man. The doctrine he preached was sound, and could not be contested; his miracles real, and could not be disproved; his conversation manifestly holy and good; and yet it must be taken for granted, notwithstanding, that there is some undiscovered cheat at the bottom, because it is the interest of the chief priests to oppose him and run him down. Such murmuring as there was among the Jews concerning Christ there is still among us: the Socinians say, 'He is a good man,' and further they say not; the Deists will not allow this, but say, 'He deceived the people.' Thus some diminish him, others abuse him; but great is the truth.

3rd. They were frightened by their superiors from speaking much of him; ver. 13, "no man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews;" either, 1. They durst not openly speak well of him: whilst any one was at liberty to censure and reproach him, none durst vindicate him. Or, 2. They durst not speak at all of him openly: because nothing could justly be said against him, they would not suffer any thing to be said of him; it was a crime to name him. Thus many have aimed to suppress truth, under colour of silencing disputes about it; and would have all talk of religion hushed, in hopes thereby to bury in oblivion religion itself.

14 Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. 15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? 16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. 18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. 19 Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? 20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? 21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. 22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumsise a man. 23 If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should

not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? 24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. 25 Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? 26 But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? 27 Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. 28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. 29 But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me. 30 Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. 31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done? 32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. 33 Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. 34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come. 35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? 36 What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?

Here is, I. Christ's public preaching in the temple, ver. 14; he "went up into the temple, and taught," according to his custom when he was at Jerusalem. His business was to preach the Gospel of the kingdom, and he did it in every place of concourse. His sermon is not recorded, because, probably, it was to the same purport with the sermons he had preached in Galilee, which were recorded by the other evangelists: for the Gospel is the same to the plain and to the polite. But that which is observable here is, that it was "about the midst of the feast"—the fourth or fifth day of the eight. Whether he did not come up to Jerusalem till the middle of the feast, or whether he came up at the beginning, but kept private till now, is not certain. But, query, why did he not go to the temple sooner to preach? Answer, 1. Because the people would have more leisure to hear him, and, it might be hoped, would be better disposed to hear him, when they had spent some days in their booths, as they did at the feast of tabernacles. 2. Because he would choose to appear then, when both his friends and his enemies had done looking for him, and so give a specimen of the method he would observe in his appearances, which is to come at midnight, Mat. xxv. 6. But why did he appear thus publicly now? Surely it was to shame his persecutors, the chief priests and elders: 1st. By shewing that, though they were very bitter against him, yet he did not fear them, nor their power: see Isa. l. 7, 8. 2nd. By taking their work out of their hands. Their office was to teach the people in the temple, and particularly at the feast of tabernacles, Neh. viii. 17, 18; but they either did not teach them at all, or taught for doctrines the commandments of men; and therefore he goes up to the temple and teaches the people. When the shepherds of Israel made a prey of the flock it was time for the chief shepherd to appear, as was promised, Eze. xxxiv. 22, 23; Mat. iii. 1.

II. His discourse with the Jews hereupon; and the conference is reducible to four heads:

First. Concerning his doctrine. See here, 1. How the Jews admired it; ver. 15, "they marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" Observe here, 1st. That our Lord Jesus was not educated in the schools of the prophets, or at the feet of the rabbins; not only did not travel for learning, as the philosophers did, but did not make any use of the schools and academies in his own country. Moses was taught the learning of the Egyptians, but Christ was not taught so much as the learning of the Jews. Having received the Spirit without measure, he needed not receive any knowledge from man, or by man. At the time of Christ's appearing, learning flourished, both in the Roman empire and in the Jewish church, more than in any age before or since; and in such a time of inquiry Christ chose to establish his religion; not in an illiterate age, lest it should look like a design to impose upon the world; yet he himself studied not the learning then in vogue. 2nd. That Christ had letters, though he had never learned them; was mighty in the Scriptures, though he never had any doctor of the law for his tutor. It is necessary Christ's ministers should have learning, as he had; and since they cannot expect to have it as he had it, by inspiration, they must take pains to get it in an ordinary way. 3rd. That Christ's having learning, though he had not been taught it, made him truly great and

it must not therefore be supposed that the brothers, properly so called, are not included. The question concerning what is meant by "the brethren" of the Lord has very commonly been settled by accepting the tradition that they were our Lord's first cousins—the sons of Alphaeus (or Clopas) and Mary, the sister of the Virgin. On the other hand, the language of Matt. xiii. 55, 56—"Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and his sisters, are they not

all with us?"—has been thought to link the brethren and the mother so closely together as to imply that James, Joses, &c., were literally sons of the Virgin Mary. To this it has been added that the expression, "her first-born," taken in connection with the words of Matt. i. 25, and the fact that the brethren are frequently associated with the Virgin Mary (see Matt. xii. 46; Mark iii. 31), would convey to an ordinary reader the impression that these were really the children of Joseph and Mary. The opinion concerning the perpetual virginity

wonderful: the Jews speak of it here with wonder. *First*. Some, it is likely, took notice of it to his honour; he that had no human learning, and yet so far excelled all that had, certainly must be endued with a Divine knowledge. *Secondly*. Others, probably, mentioned it in diminution and contempt of him. 'Whatever he seems to have, he cannot have any true learning, for he was never at the university, nor took his degree.' *Thirdly*. Some, perhaps, suggested that he had got his learning by magic arts, or some unlawful means or other; since they know not how he could be a scholar, they will think him a conjuror.

2. What he asserted concerning it; three things:

1st. That his doctrine is Divine; ver. 16, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." They were offended because he undertook to teach, though he had never learned; in answer to which he tells them that his doctrine was such as was not to be learned, for it was not the product of human thought, and natural powers enlarged and elevated by reading and conversation, but it was a Divine revelation. As God, equal with the Father, he might truly have said, My doctrine is mine, and his that sent me; but being now in his state of humiliation, and being, as Mediator, God's servant, it was more congruous to say, "My doctrine is not mine," not mine only, or mine originally, as man and mediator, "but his that sent me;" it doth not centre in myself, or lead ultimately to myself, but to him that sent me. God had promised concerning the great Prophet that he would put his words into his mouth, *Deut. xviii. 18*; to which Christ seems here to refer. Note, It is the comfort of those who embrace Christ's doctrine, and the condemnation of those who reject it, that it is a Divine doctrine; it is of God, and not of man.

2nd. That the most competent judges of the truth and Divine authority of Christ's doctrine are those that with a sincere and upright heart desire and endeavour to do the will of God, ver. 17: "If any man be willing to do the will of God," hath his will melted into the will of God, "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Observe here,

First. What the question is concerning the doctrine of Christ, whether it be of God or no; whether the Gospel be a Divine revelation or an imposture. Christ himself was willing to have his doctrine inquired into, whether it were of God or no; much more should his ministers; and we are concerned to examine what grounds we go upon; for if we be deceived, we are miserably deceived.

Secondly. Who are likely to succeed in this search: those that do the will of God, at least, are desirous to do it. Now see, 1st. Who they are that will do the will of God; they are such as are impartial in their inquiries concerning the will of God, and are not biased by any lust or interest; and such as are resolved, by the grace of God, when they find out what the will of God is, to conform to it; they are such as have an honest principle of regard to God, and are truly desirous to glorify and please him. 2nd. Whence it is that such a one shall know of the truth of Christ's doctrine. 1. Christ has promised to give knowledge to such; he hath said, ye shall know; and he can give an understanding. Those who improve the light they have, and carefully live up to it, shall be secured by Divine grace from destructive mistakes. 2. They are disposed and prepared to receive that knowledge. He that is inclined to submit to the rules of the Divine law, is disposed to admit the rays of Divine light; "to him that hath shall be given;" those have a good understanding, that do his commandments, *Ps. cxi. 10*, those who resemble God, are most likely to understand him.

3rd. That hereby it appeared Christ, as a teacher, did not speak of himself; because he did not seek himself, ver. 18. *First*. See here the character of a deceiver: he seeketh his own glory, which is a sign he speaks of himself, as the false Christs and false prophets did. Here is the description of the cheat; they speak of themselves, and have no commission or instructions from God; no warrant but their own will; no inspiration but their own imagination, their own politics and artifice. Ambassadors speak not of themselves, those ministers disclaim that character who glory in this—that they speak of themselves. But see the discovery of the cheat; by this their pretensions are disproved; they consult purely their own glory; self-seekers are self-speakers; they who speak from God will speak for God; and for his glory; they who aim at their own preferment and interest make it to appear they had no commission from God. *Secondly*. See the contrary character Christ gives of himself and his doctrine: He that seeketh his glory that sent him, as I do, maketh it to appear that he is true: 1st. He was sent of God. These teachers, and those only, who were sent of God, are to be received and entertained by us; those that bring a Divine message, must prove to be a Divine mission, either by special revelation or regular institution. 2nd. He sought the glory of God. It was both the tendency of his doctrine, and the tenor of his whole conversation, to glorify God. 3rd. This was a proof that he was true, and there was unrighteousness in him. False teachers are most unrighteous; and they are unjust to God whose name they abuse, and unjust to the souls of men whom they impose upon: there cannot be a greater piece of unrighteousness than this. But Christ made it appear that he was true; that he was really what he said he was; that there was no unrighteousness in him; no falsehood in his doctrine; no fallacy or fraud in his dealings with us.

Secondly. They discourse concerning the crime that was laid to his charge, for curing the impotent man, and bidding him carry his bed on the sabbath day, for which they had formerly prosecuted him, and which was still the pretence of their enmity to him.

1. He argues against them, by way of recrimination, convicting them of far worse practices, ver. 19. How could they for shame censure him for a breach of the law of Moses, when they themselves were such notorious breakers of it? "Did not Moses give you the law?" and it was their privilege that they had the law; no nation had such a law; but it was their wickedness that none of them kept the law, that they rebelled against it, and lived contrary to it. Many that have the law given them, when they have it do not keep it. Their neglect of the law was universal; none of you keep it; neither those of them that were in posts of honour, who should have been most knowing, nor those that were in posts of subjection, that should have been most obedient. They boasted of the law, and pretended a zeal for it, and were enraged at Christ for seeming to transgress it; and yet none of them kept it; like those that say they are for the church, and yet never go to church. It was an aggravation of their wickedness in persecuting Christ for breaking the law, that they themselves did not keep it. "None of you keepeth the law;" why then go ye about to kill me for not keeping it? Note, Those are commonly most censorious of others who are most faulty themselves: thus hypocrites, that are forward to pull a mote out of their brother's eye, are not aware of a beam in their own. "Why go ye about to kill me?" Some make this to be the instance of their not keeping the law. "Ye keep not the law; if ye did, ye would understand yourselves better than to go about to kill me for doing a good work." Those that support themselves and their interest by persecution and violence, whatever they pretend, (though they may call themselves *custodes utriusque tabulae*, the guardians of both tables,) are not keepers of the law of God. Chennutius understands this as a reason why it is time to supersede the law of Moses by the Gospel, because the law was found insufficient to restrain sin. "Moses gave you the law, but you do not keep it; nor are kept by it from the greatest wickedness; there is, therefore, need of a

clearer light and better law to be brought in; why then do you aim to kill me for introducing it?"

Here the people rudely interrupted him in his discourse, and contradicted what he said, ver. 20: "Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?" This speaks, 1. The good opinion they had of their rulers; who, they think, would never attempt so ill a thing as to kill him; no, such a veneration they had for their elders and chief priests, that they would swear for them they would do no harm to an innocent man. Probably the rulers had their little emissaries among the people, who suggested this to them. Many deny that wickedness which at the same time, they are contriving. 2. The ill opinion they had of our Lord Jesus: "Thou hast a devil;" thou art possessed with a lying spirit; and art an ill man for saying so; so some; or, rather, Thou art melancholy, and art a weak man; thou frightenest thyself with causeless fears, as hypochondriacal people use to do. Not only open frenzies, but silent melancholies, were then commonly imputed to the power of Satan. "Thou art crazed—hast a dis-tempered brain." Let us not think it strange if the best of men be put under the worst of characters. To this vile calumny our Saviour returns no direct answer; but seems as if he took no notice of it. Note, Those who would be like Christ must put up with affronts, and pass by the indignities and injuries done them; must not regard them, much less resent them; and, least of all, revenge them: "I, as a deaf man, heard not." When Christ was reviled, he reviled not again.

2. He argues by way of appeal and vindication:

1st. He appeals to their own sentiments of this miracle; ver. 21, "I have done one work, and ye all marvel;" ye cannot choose but marvel at it, as truly great and altogether supernatural; you must all own it to be marvellous; or, though I have done but one work that you have any colour to find fault with yet you marvel—that is, you are offended and displeased, as if I had been guilty of some heinous or enormous crime.

2nd. He appeals to their own practice in other instances. "I have done one work on the sabbath, and it was done easily—with a word's speaking; and you all marvel—you make a mighty strange thing of it, that a religious man should dare to do such a thing; whereas you yourselves many a time do that which is a much more servile work on the sabbath day, in the case of circumcision: if it be lawful for you—nay, and your duty—to circumcise a child on the sabbath day, when it happens to be the eighth day, (as no doubt it is), much more was it lawful and good for me to heal a diseased man on that day. Observe,

First. The rise and original of circumcision: "Moses gave you circumcision"—gave you the law concerning it. Here, 1. Circumcision is said to be given you;" and, ver. 23, they are said to receive it: it was not imposed upon them as a yoke, but conferred upon them as a favour. Note, The ordinances of God, and particularly those which are seals of the covenant, are gifts given to men, and are to be received as such. 2. Moses is said to give it, because it was a part of that law which was given by Moses; yet, as Christ said of the manna, *ch. vi. 32*, Moses did not give it them, but God; nay, and it was not of Moses first, but of the fathers, ver. 22: though it was incorporated into the Mosaic institution, yet it was ordained long before; for it was a seal of the righteousness of the faith, and therefore commenced with the promise, four hundred and thirty years before, *Gal. iii. 17*. The church-membership of believers and their seed was not of Moses or his law; and therefore did not fall within it; but was of the fathers; belonged to the patriarchal church; and was part of that blessing of Abraham which was to come upon the Gentiles, *Gal. iii. 14*.

Secondly. The respect had to the law of circumcision, above that of the sabbath, in the constant practice of the Jewish church. The Jewish casuists frequently take notice of it; (*circumcisio et ejus sanatio pellit sabbatum*),—circumcision and its cure drive away the sabbath; so that if a child was born one sabbath day, it was, without fail, circumcised the next. If then, when the sabbath rest was more strictly insisted on, yet those works were allowed, which were in *ordine ad spiritualia*,—for the keeping up of religion, much more are they allowed now, under the Gospel, when the stress is laid more upon the sabbath work.

Thirdly. The inference Christ draws from hence, in justification of himself, and of what he had done; ver. 23, "A man-child on the sabbath day receives circumcision, that the law of circumcision might not be broken;" or, as the margin reads it, 'without breaking the law,' namely, of the sabbath. Divine commands must be construed so as to agree with each other. Now, if this be allowed by yourselves, how unreasonable are you, who are "angry with me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day;" *ἐμοὶ χολαίτε*; the word is used only here, from *χολή*, *fel*,—'gall.' They were angry at him with the greatest indignation; it was a spiteful anger; anger with gall in it. Note, It is very absurd and unreasonable for us to condemn others for that which we justify ourselves in. Observe the comparison Christ here makes between their circumcising a child, and his healing a man, on the sabbath day. 1st. Circumcision was but a ceremonial institution; it was of the fathers indeed, but not from the beginning; but what Christ did was a good work by the law of nature; a more excellent law than that which made circumcision a good work. 2nd. Circumcision was a bloody ordinance, and made sore; but what Christ did was healing, and made whole. The law works pain, and if that work may be done on a sabbath day, much more a gospel work, which works peace. 3rd. Especially, considering that whereas when they had circumcised a child, yet care was only to heal up that part which was circumcised, which might be done and yet the child remain under other illnesses, Christ had made this man every whit whole, *ὅλον ἀνθρώπον ὑγιή*.—'I have made the whole man healthful and sound.' The whole body was healed, for the disease affected the whole body; and it was a perfect cure, such as left no relics of the disease behind. Nay, Christ not only healed his body, but his soul too, by that admonition, "Go, and sin no more," and so indeed made the whole man sound; for the soul is the man. Circumcision indeed was intended for the good of the soul, and to make the whole man as it should be; but they had perverted it, and turned it into a mere carnal ordinance; but Christ accompanied his outward cures with inward grace, and so made them sacramental, and healed the whole man.

He concludes this argument with that rule, ver. 24, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." This may be applied either, 1. In particular, to this work, which they quarrelled with as a violation of the law: "Be not partial in your judgment; judge not, *κατ' ὄψιν*, with respect of persons;" knowing faces, as the Hebrew phrase is, *Deut. i. 17*. It is contrary to the law of justice as well as charity to censure those who differ in opinion from us as transgressors, in taking that liberty which yet in those of our own party and way and opinion we allow of; as it is also to commend that in some as necessary strictness and severity which in others we condemn as imposition and persecution. Or, 2. In general, to Christ's person and preaching, which they were offended at, and prejudiced against. Those things that are false, and designed to impose upon men, commonly appear best when they are judged of according to the outward appearance; they appear most plausible, *prima facie*,—at the first glance. This was it that gained the Pharisees such an interest and reputation, that they appeared right unto men, *Mat. xxiii. 27, 28*; and men judged of them by that appearance, and so were sadly mistaken in them. "But," saith Christ, "be not too confident that all are real saints who are

of the Virgin Mary has no doubt largely influenced the views of many in dealing with this subject of the "brethren of the Lord."

vii. 4. "To the world:" Galilee, as compared with Judea and Jerusalem, was "out of the world," as we say. His brethren urged him to display his powers in a more public and important sphere; but their language expresses at least doubt, if not unbelief.

vii. 10. "As it were in secret:" i.e., not with the ordinary caravan company, but in as private a way as possible.

vii. 12. "Murmuring:" the word expresses the buzzing talk and gossip of a crowd.

vii. 14. "And taught:" began to teach; commenced a course of teaching. From the surprise which was felt, it has been thought that in his teaching at this time Christ showed how intimately he was acquainted with the ancient Scriptures. (Compare Sermon on the Mount.)

vii. 15. "Having never learned:" they knew that he had not

seeming ones. And with reference to himself, his outward appearance was far short of his real dignity and excellency, for he took upon him the form of a servant, *Phil. ii. 7*; was in the likeness of sinful flesh, *Rom. viii. 3*; had no form or comeliness, *Isa. liii. 2*; so that they who undertook to judge whether he were the Son of God or no by his outward appearance, were not likely to judge righteous judgment. The Jews expected the outward appearance of the Messiah to be pompous and magnificent, and attended with all the ceremonies of secular grandeur; and judging of Christ by that rule, their judgment was, from first to last, a continual mistake; for the kingdom of Christ was not to be of this world, nor to come with observation. If a Divine power accompanied him, and God bare him witness, and the Scriptures were fulfilled in him, though his appearance was never so mean, they ought to receive him, and to judge by faith, and not by the sight of the eye: see *Isa. xi. 3*, and *1 Sam. xvi. 7*. Christ and his doctrine and doings desire nothing but righteous judgment. If truth and justice may but pass the sentence, Christ and his cause will carry the day. We must not judge concerning any by their outward appearance; not by their titles, the figure they make in the world, and their fluttering show, but by their intrinsic worth, and the gifts and graces of God's spirit in them.

Thirdly, Christ discoursed with them here concerning himself, whence he came, and whither he was going, ver. 25—36.

1. Whence he came, ver. 25—31. In the account of this, observe, 1st. The objection concerning this started by some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who seem to have been of all other the most prejudiced against him, ver. 25. One would think that they who lived at the fountain head of knowledge and religion should have been most ready to receive the Messiah; but it proved quite contrary. Those that have plenty of the means of knowledge and grace, if they are not made better by them, are commonly made worse; and our Lord Jesus has often met with the least welcome from those that one would expect the best from. But it was not without some just cause that it came into a proverb, "the nearer the church, the farther from God."

These people of Jerusalem shewed their ill will to Christ, *First*. By their reflecting on the rulers, because they let him alone: "Is not this he whom they seek to kill?" The multitude of the people that came up out of the country to the feast did not suspect there was any design on foot against him, and therefore they said, "Who goeth about to kill thee?" ver. 20. But they of Jerusalem knew the plot, and irritated their rulers to put it into execution: "Is not this he whom they seek to kill?" Why do they not do it, then?—who hinders them? They say they have a mind to get him out of the way, and yet, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing to him: "Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?" ver. 26. Here they slyly and maliciously insinuate two things to exasperate the rulers against Christ; when, indeed, they needed no spur. 1st. That by conniving at his preaching, they brought their authority into contempt. Must a man that is condemned by the Sanhedrim as a deceiver be permitted to speak boldly, without any check or contradiction? This makes their sentence to be but *brutum fulmen*,—a vain menace. If our rulers will suffer themselves to be thus trampled upon, they may thank themselves if none stand in awe of them and their laws. Note, The worst of persecutions have often been carried on under colour of the necessary support of authority and government. 2nd. That hereby they brought their judgment into suspicion: "Do they know that this is the Christ?" It is spoken ironically. How came they to change their mind? What new discovery have they lighted on? They give people occasion to think that they believe him to be the Christ, and are concerned to act vigorously against him, to clear themselves from the suspicion. Thus the rulers, who had made the people enemies to Christ, made them seven times more the children of hell than themselves, *Mat. xxiii. 15*. When religion and the profession of Christ's name are out of fashion, and consequently out of repute, many are strongly tempted to persecute and oppose them, only that they may not be thought to favour them and incline to them. And for this reason apostates, and the degenerate offspring of good parents, have been sometimes worse than others, as it were to wipe off the stain of their profession. It was strange the rulers, thus irritated, did not seize Christ: but his hour was not yet come; and God can tie men's hands to admiration, though he do not turn their hearts.

Secondly. By their exception against his being the Christ, in which appeared more malice than matter, ver. 27. If the rulers think him to be the Christ, we neither can nor will believe him to be so; for we have this argument against it, that "we know this man whence he is;" but when Christ comes, no man knows whence he is. Here is a fallacy in the argument, for the propositions are not both *ad idem*,—adapted to the same view of the subject. 1st. If they speak of his Divine nature, it is true that, when Christ comes, no man knows whence he is, for he is a priest after the order of Melchizedec, who was without descent, and his goings forth have been of old, from everlasting, *Mic. v. 2*. But then it was not true, that as for this man they knew whence he was, for they knew not his Divine nature, nor how the Word was made flesh. 2nd. If they speak of his human nature, it was true that they knew whence he was,—who was his mother, and where he was bred up; but then it was false that ever it was said of the Messiah, that none should know whence he was, for it was known before where he should be born, *Mat. ii. 4, 5*. Observe, 1st. How they despised him because they knew whence he was. Familiarity breeds contempt; and we are apt to disdain the use of those whom we know the rise of. Christ's own received him not, because he was their own, for which very reason they should the rather have loved him, and been thankful that their nation and their age was honoured with his appearance. 2nd. How they endeavoured unjustly to fasten the ground of their prejudice upon the Scriptures, as if they countenanced them, when there was no such thing. Therefore people err concerning Christ, because they know not the Scriptures.

2nd. Christ's answer to this objection, ver. 28, 29; he spoke freely and boldly; he "cried in the temple as he taught;" he spoke this louder than the rest of his discourse. 1. To express his earnestness, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts. There may be a vehemency in contending for the truth, where yet there is no intemperate heat or passion. We may instruct gainsayers with warmth, and yet with meekness. 2. The priests, and those that were prejudiced against him, did not come near enough to hear his preaching, and therefore he must speak louder than ordinary what he will have them to hear. "Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear" this.

Now Christ's answer to their cavil is, *First*. By way of concession, granting that they did or might know his original as to the flesh, "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am." You know I am of your own nation, and one of yourselves. It is no disparagement to the doctrine of Christ, that there is that in it which is level to the capacities of the meanest; plain truths, discovered even by nature's light, of which we may say we know whence they are. "Ye know me;" that is, ye think ye know me, but ye are mistaken; ye take me to be the carpenter's son, and born at Nazareth, but it is not so.

Secondly. By way of negation, denying that that which they did see in him, and know of him, was all that was to be known; and therefore if they looked no farther than that, they judged by the outward appearance only. They knew whence he came, perhaps, and where he had his birth; but he will tell them what they knew not, from whom he came. 1st. That he did not come of him-

self; that he did not run without sending, nor come as a private person, but with a public character. 2nd. That he was sent of his Father. This is twice mentioned: "He hath sent me;" and again, "he hath sent me," to say what I say, and do what I do. This he was himself well assured of, and therefore knew that his Father would bear him out; and it is well for us that we are assured of it too, that we may with holy confidence go to God by him. 3rd. That he was from his Father, *παρ' αὐτοῦ εἰμι*; not only sent from him as a servant from his master, but from him by eternal generation; as a Son from his Father, by essential emanation; as the beams from the sun. 4th. That the Father who sent him "is true." He had promised to give the Messiah; and though the Jews had forfeited the promise, yet he that made the promise is true, and has performed it; he had promised that the Messiah should see his seed, and be successful in his undertaking; and though the generality of the Jews reject him and his Gospel, yet he is true, and will fulfil the promise in the calling of the Gentiles. 5th. That these unbelieving Jews did not know the Father: "He that sent me, whom ye know not." There is much ignorance of God even with many that have a form of knowledge; and the true reason why people reject Christ is because they do not know God; for there is such a harmony of the Divine attributes in the work of redemption, and such an admirable agreement between natural and revealed religion, that the right knowledge of the former would not only admit, but introduce the latter. 6th. Our Lord Jesus was intimately acquainted with the Father that sent him: "But I know him." He knew him so well that he was not at all in doubt concerning his mission from him, but perfectly assured of that; nor at all in the dark concerning the work he had to do, but perfectly apprised of that, *Mat. xi. 27*.

3rd. The provocation which this gave to his enemies, who therefore hated him because he told them the truth; ver. 30, "they sought therefore to take him," to lay violent hands on him, not only to do him a mischief, but some way or other to be the death of him; but by the restraint of an invisible power it was prevented; nobody touched him, "because his hour was not yet come." That was not their reason why they did it not, but God's reason why he hindered them from doing it. Note, 1. The faithful preachers of the truths of God, though they behave themselves with never so much prudence and meekness, yet must expect to be hated and persecuted by those who think themselves tormented by their testimony, *Rev. xi. 10*. 2. God has wicked men in a chain; and whatever mischief they would do, yet they can do no more than God will suffer them to do. The malice of persecutors is impotent, even then when it is most impetuous; and when Satan fills their hearts, yet God ties their hands. 3. God's servants are sometimes wonderfully protected by undiscernible, unaccountable means: their enemies do not the mischief they designed, and yet neither they themselves, nor any one else, can tell why they do not. 4. Christ had his hour set, which was to put a period to his day and work on earth, and so have all his people, and all his ministers; and till that hour comes, the attempts of their enemies against them are ineffectual, and their day shall be lengthened as long as their Master has any work for them to do; nor can all the powers of hell and earth prevail against them till they have finished their testimony.

4th. The good effect which Christ's discourse had, notwithstanding this, upon some of his hearers; ver. 31, "many of the people believed on him." As he was set for the fall of some, so for the rising again of others: even there where the Gospel meets with opposition, yet there may be a great deal of good done, *1 Thes. ii. 2*. Observe here,

First. Who they were that believed? Not a few, but "many;" more than one would have expected, when the stream ran so strong the other way. But these many were of the people, *ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου*, of the multitude, the crowd, the inferior sort, the mob, the rabble, some would have called them. We must not measure the prosperity of the Gospel by its success among the great ones, nor must ministers say they labour in vain, though none but the poor, and those of no figure, receive the Gospel, *1 Cor. i. 26*.

Secondly. What induced them to believe; "the miracles which he did," which were not only the accomplishment of the Old Testament prophecies, *Isa. xxxv. 5, 6*, but an argument of a Divine power. He that had an ability to do that which none but God can do, control and overrule the powers of nature, no doubt had authority to enact that which none but God can enact, a law that shall bind conscience, and a covenant that shall give life.

Thirdly. How weak their faith was. They do not positively assert, as the Samaritans did, "This is indeed the Christ;" but they only argue, "When Christ comes, will he do more miracles than these?" They take it for granted that Christ will come; and when he comes, will do many miracles; and "Is not this he, then?" In him we see, though not all that worldly pomp we have fancied, yet all that Divine power we have believed the Messiah should appear in, and therefore why may not this be he?" They believe it, but have not courage to own it. Note, Even weak faith may be true faith, and so accounted, so accepted, by the Lord Jesus, who despises not the day of small things.

2. Whither he was going, ver. 32—36. Where observe,

1st. The design of the Pharisees and chief priests against him, ver. 32. *First*. The provocation given them was, they had information brought them by their spies, who insinuated themselves into the conversation of the people, and gathered stories to carry to their jealous masters, that the people murmured such things concerning him; that there were many who had a respect and value for him, notwithstanding all they had done to make him odious. Though the people did but whisper these things, and had not courage to speak out, yet the Pharisees were enraged at it. The equity of that government is justly suspected by others, which is so suspicious of itself as to take notice of, or be influenced by, the secret, various, and uncertain mutterings of the common people. The Pharisees valued themselves very much upon the respects of the people, and were sensible that if Christ did thus increase, they must decrease.

Secondly. The project they laid hereupon was to seize Jesus, and take him into custody: they "sent officers to take him;" not to take up those who murmured concerning him, and frighten them; no, the most effectual way to disperse the flock is to smite the shepherd. The Pharisees seem to be the ring-leaders in this prosecution; but they, as such, had no power; and therefore they got the chief priests, the judges of the ecclesiastical court, to join with them, who were ready enough to do so. The Pharisees were the great pretenders to learning, and the chief priests to sanctity. As the world by wisdom knew not God,—but the greatest philosophers were guilty of the greatest blunders in natural religion,—so the Jewish church, by their wisdom, knew not Christ, but their greatest rabbins were the greatest fools concerning him; nay, they were the most inveterate enemies to him. Those wicked rulers had their officers, officers of their court, church officers, whom they employed to take Christ, and who were ready to go on their errand, though it was an ill errand. If Saul's footmen will not, he has a herdsman that will turn, and fall upon the priests of the Lord, *1 Sam. xxii. 18*.

2nd. The discourse of our Lord Jesus hereupon; ver. 33, 34, "Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go to him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come." These words, like the pillar of cloud and fire, have a bright side and a dark side.

First. They have a bright side towards our Lord Jesus himself, and speak

been trained as a Rabbi. On the knowledge which the people had of his early life, compare *Matt. xiii. 54*; *Luke iv. 22, 32*.

vii. 17. "Will do:" render "if any man be willing to do." The principle involved in this statement is of wide application. It calls our attention to the influence of a man's moral condition on his belief. The love of sin indulged in will incapacitate men from apprehending the truth. The desire after holiness unseals the avenues of faith. The appeal of the Gospel is to the conscience

(see *2 Cor. iv. 2*). "The capacity for knowledge is conditional upon man's inclination. If the inclination follows that which is not pleasing to God, it bedclouds the capacity for knowledge, the mirror of the soul becomes obscured, and lusts destroy in error (*Eph. iv. 22*); but if the desire be directed towards that which is divine, the ability to know it increases" (Olshausen, who quotes Pascal's saying, "In order to love human objects, it is necessary to know them; in order to know those which are divine, it is necessary to love them").

abundance of comfort to him, and all his faithful followers, that are exposed to difficulties and dangers for his sake. Three things Christ here comforted himself with:

1st. That he had but a little time to continue here in this troublesome world. He sees he is never likely to have a quiet day among them; but the best of it is, his warfare will shortly be accomplished, and then he shall be no more in this world, *ch. xvii. 11*. Whoever we are with in this world, friends or foes, it is but a little while we shall be with them; and it is matter of comfort to those who are in the world, but not of it, and therefore are hated by it, and sick of it, that they shall not be in it always, they shall not be in it long. We must be a while with those that are pricking briars, and grieving thorns; but, thanks be to God, it is but a little while, and we shall be out of their reach. Our days being evil, it is well they are few.

2nd. That when he should quit this troublesome world, he should go to him that sent him. "I go," not, I am driven away by force, but I voluntarily go; having finished my embassy, I return to him on whose errand I came. Then, when I have done my work with you, then, and not till then, I go to him that sent me, and will receive me, will prefer me, as ambassadors are when they return. Their rage against him would not only not hinder him from, but hasten him to, the glory and joy that was set before him. Let those who suffer for Christ comfort themselves with this, that they have a God to go to, and are going to him, going apace, to be for ever with him.

3rd. That though they persecuted him here, wherever he went, yet that none of their persecutions could follow him to heaven: "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me." It appears by their enmity to his followers when he was gone, that if they could have reached him, they would have persecuted him; but ye cannot come into that temple, as ye do into this, "Where I am," that is, where I then shall be; but he expresseth it thus, because even when he was on earth, by his Divine nature, and Divine affections, he was in heaven, *ch. iii. 13*. Or it notes that he should be so soon there, that he was as good as there already. Note, it adds to the happiness of glorified saints, that they are out of the reach of the devil and all his wicked instruments.

Secondly. These words have a black and dark side towards these wicked Jews that hated and persecuted Christ. They now longed to be rid of him: "Away with him from the earth." But let them know,

1st. That according to their choice, so should their doom be. They were industrious to drive him from them, and their sin shall be their punishment. He will not trouble them long; "yet a little while," and he will depart from them. It is just with God to forsake those that think his presence a burthen. They that are weary of Christ need no more to make them miserable than to have their wish.

2nd. That they would certainly repent their choice when it was too late. 1. They should in vain seek the presence of the Messiah: "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me." "Ye shall expect the Christ to come, but your eyes shall fail with looking for him, and ye shall never find him." They who rejected the true Messiah when he did come, were justly abandoned to a miserable and endless expectation of one that should never come. Or it may refer to a final rejection of sinners from the favour and grace of Christ at the great day. Those who now seek Christ shall find him; but the day is coming when those who now refuse him, shall seek him, and shall not find him, see *Pr. i. 28*; they will in vain cry, Lord, Lord, open to us. Or, perhaps, these words might be fulfilled in the despair of some of those Jews who possibly might be convinced, and not converted—who would wish in vain to see Christ, and to hear him preach again; but the day of grace is over, *Lu. xvii. 22*. Yet that is not all: 2. They should in vain expect a place in heaven; "where I am," and where all believers shall be with me, "thither ye cannot come," not only because they are excluded by the just and irreversible sentence of the Judge, and the sword of the angel at every gate of the new Jerusalem, to keep the way of the tree of life against those who have no right to enter, but because they are disabled by their own iniquity and infidelity: "ye cannot come," because ye will not. Those that hate to be where Christ is, in his word and ordinances on earth, are very unfit to be where he is in his glory in heaven; for, indeed, heaven would be no heaven to them, such are the antipathies of an unsanctified soul to the felicities of that state.

3rd. Their descent upon this discourse: ver. 35, 36, they "said among themselves, Whither will he go?" See here,

First. Their wilful ignorance and blindness. He had expressly said whither he would go—to him that sent him, to his Father in heaven; and yet they ask, "Whither will he go?" and, "What manner of saying is this?" None so blind as those that will not see, that will not heed. Christ's sayings are plain to him that understandeth, and difficult only to those that are minded to quarrel.

Secondly. Their daring contempt of Christ's threatenings. Instead of trembling at that terrible word, "ye shall seek me, and not find me," which speaks the utmost degree of misery, they banter it and make a jest of it, as those sinners that mock at fear, and are not affrighted, *Isa. v. 19*; *Am. v. 18*; "Let him make speed. But be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong."

Thirdly. Their inveterate malice and rage against Christ. All they dreaded in his departure was, that he would be out of the reach of their power: "Whither will he go, that we shall not find him?" If he be above ground we will have him; we will leave no place unsearched, as Ahab in quest of Elijah, *1 Kin. xviii. 10*.

Fourthly. Their proud disdain of the Gentiles, whom they here call "the dispersed of the Gentiles;" meaning either the Jews that were scattered abroad among the Greeks, (*Jas. i. 1*; *1 Pet. i. 1*; "Will he go and make an interest among those silly people?") or, the Gentiles dispersed over the world, in distinction from the Jews who were incorporated into one church and nation, "Will he make his court to them?"

Fifthly. Their jealousy of the least intimation of favour to the Gentiles; "Will he go and teach the Gentiles? will he carry his doctrine to them?" Perhaps they had heard of some items of respect shewed by him to the Gentiles, as in his sermon at Nazareth, and in the case of the centurion, and the woman of Canaan; and there was nothing they dreaded more than the comprehension of the Gentiles. So common is it for those who have lost the power of religion, to be very jealous for the monopoly of the name. They now made a jest of his going to teach the Gentiles; but not long after he did it in good earnest, by his apostles and ministers, and gathered those dispersed people, sorely to the grief of the Jews, *Rom. x. 19*. So true is that of Solomon, "the fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him."

37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this

spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) 40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. 41 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? 42 Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? 43 So there was a division among the people because of him. 44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

In these verses we have,

1. Christ's discourse, with the explication of it, ver. 37—39. It is likely these are only short hints of what he enlarged upon, but they have in them the substance of the whole Gospel. Here is a gospel invitation to come to Christ, and a gospel promise of comfort and happiness in him. Now observe,

First. When he made this invitation; on "the last day" of the feast of tabernacles, "that great day." The eighth day, which concluded that solemnity, was to be a holy convocation, *Lev. xxiii. 36*. Now on this day Christ published this gospel call; because, 1. Much people were gathered together; and if the invitation was given to many, it might be hoped some would accept of it, *Pr. i. 7*. Numerous assemblies give opportunity of doing the more good. 2. The people were now returning to their homes, and he would give them this to carry away with them as his parting word. When a great congregation is to be dismissed, and is about to scatter, as here, it is affecting to think that in all probability they will never come all together again in this world; and therefore, if we can say or do any thing to help them to heaven, that must be the time. It is good to be lively at the close of an ordinance. Christ made this offer on the last day of the feast: 1st. To those who had turned a deaf ear to his preaching on the foregoing days of this sacred week; he will try them once more, and if they will yet hear his voice, they shall live. 2nd. To those who perhaps might never have such another offer made them, and therefore were concerned to accept of this. It would be half a year before there would be another feast, and in that time they would many of them be in their graves: "Behold, now is the accepted time."

Secondly. How he made this invitation: "Jesus stood, and cried;" which notes, 1. His great earnestness and importunity; his heart was upon it, to bring poor souls in to himself. The erection of his body, and the elevation of his voice, were indications of the intenseness of his mind. Love to souls will make preachers lively. 2. His desire that all might take notice, and take hold of this invitation. He "stood and cried," that he might the better be heard; for this is what every one that hath ears is concerned to hear. Gospel truth seeks no corners, because it fears no trials. The heathen oracles were delivered clandestinely, by them that peeped and muttered; but the oracles of the Gospel were proclaimed by one that "stood and cried." How sad is the case of man, that he must be importuned to be happy; and how wonderful the grace of Christ, that he will importune him, "Ho, every one" *Isa. lv. 1*.

Thirdly. The invitation itself; which is, 1. Very general: "If any man thirst," whoever he be, he is invited to Christ; be he high or low, rich or poor, young or old, bond or free, Jew or Gentile. 2. Very gracious: "If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink." "If any man desires to be truly and eternally happy, let him apply himself to me and be ruled by me, and I will undertake to make him so."

1. The persons invited are such as thirst; which may be understood either, First. Of the indigence of their cases; either as to their outward condition,—If any man be destitute of the comforts of this life, or fatigued with the crosses of it, let his poverty and affliction draw him to Christ, for that peace which the world can neither give nor take away,—or, as to their inward state, If any man want spiritual blessings, he may be supplied by me;—or, Secondly. Of the inclination of their souls and their desires towards a spiritual happiness: If any man hunger and thirst after righteousness, that is, truly desire the good will of God towards him, and the good work of God in him.

2. The invitation itself; "let him come unto me;" let him not go to the ceremonial law, which would neither pacify the conscience nor purify it, and therefore could not make the comers thereunto perfect, *Heb. x. 1*. Nor let him go to the heathen philosophy, that doth but beguile, lead them into a wood, and leave them there; but let him go to Christ, admit his doctrine, submit to his discipline, believe in him; come to him as the fountain of living waters, the giver of all comfort.

3. The satisfaction promised; "let him come and drink." He shall have what he comes for, and abundantly more; shall have that which will not only refresh, but replenish, a soul that desires to be happy.

Fourthly. A gracious promise annexed to this gracious call, ver. 38: "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow."

1. See here what it is to come to Christ. It is to believe on him, as the Scripture hath said; it is to receive and entertain him, as he is offered to us in the Gospel. We must not frame a Christ according to our fancy, but believe in a Christ according to the Scripture.

2. See how thirsty souls, that come to Christ, shall be made to drink. Israel, that believed Moses, drank of the rock that followed them—the streams followed; but believers drink of a Rock in them, "Christ in them;" he is in them a well of living water, *ch. iv. 14*. Provision is made not only for their present satisfaction, but for their continual, perpetual comfort. Here is, 1st. "Living water," running water, which the Hebrew language calls "living," because still in motion. The graces and comforts of the Spirit are compared to living, meaning running water, because they are the active, quickening principles of spiritual life, and the earnest and beginnings of eternal life: see *Jer. ii. 12*. 2nd. Rivers of living water, which notes both plenty and constancy: the comfort flows in both plentifully and constantly, as a river—strong as a stream, to bear down the oppositions of doubts and fears. There is a fulness in Christ, of grace for grace. 3rd. These flow "out of his belly," that is, out of his heart and soul; that is the subject of the Spirit's working, and the seat of his government. These gracious principles are planted; and out of the heart, in which the Spirit dwells, flow the issues of life, *Pr. iv. 23*; there Divine comforts are lodged, and the joy that a

vii. 21. "I have done:" rather, "I did." This is usually taken as a reference to the miracle recorded in chap. v. This, however, took place a year and a half before. Olshausen inclines to make it refer to a more recent and parallel miracle, which gave rise to the whole conversation. The connection between the miracle and the law of Moses to which our Lord refers, is not to be found in an endeavour of Christ to convict the Jews of a wicked neglect of the law; it is an appeal to a practice among them which was legitimate and intelli-

gible. If nothing was to be done on the Sabbath-day, their practice of circumcising on the Sabbath was a wrong one. But the object of such a practice was clear; it was to avoid the breach of a law they deemed higher. Christ's act of healing was, in the same way, in obedience to a higher law, the law of love.

vii. 26. "Do the rulers know?" The apparent cessation of the hostility of the authorities led the people to imagine that some new information favourable to Christ's claims had been acquired.

stranger doth not intermeddle with. He that believes, has the witness in himself, 1 *Jno.* v. 10; *Sat lucis infus.*—Light abounds within.

Observe farther, where there are springs of grace and comfort in the soul, they will send forth streams; "out of his belly shall flow rivers." 1. That grace and comfort will evidence itself; good affections will produce good actions, and a holy heart will be seen in a holy life; the tree is known by its fruits, and the fountain by its streams. 2. It will communicate itself for the benefit of others; a good man is a common good. His mouth is a well of life, *Pr.* x. 11. It is not enough that we drink waters out of our own cistern, that we ourselves take the comfort of the grace given us, but we must let our fountains be dispersed abroad, *Pr.* v. 15, 16.

Those words, "as the Scripture hath said," seem to refer to some promise in the Old Testament to this purpose, and there are many; as that God would pour out his Spirit, which is a metaphor borrowed from waters, *Pr.* i. 23; *Joel* ii. 28; *Isa.* xlv. 3; *Zec.* xii. 10; that the dry land should become springs of water, *Isa.* xli. 18; that there should be rivers in the desert, *Isa.* xliii. 19; that gracious souls should be like a spring of water, *Isa.* lviii. 11; and the church, a well of living water, *Cant.* iv. 15. And here may be an allusion to the waters issuing out of Ezekiel's temple, *Eze.* xlvii. 1; compare *Rev.* xxi. 1, and see *Zec.* xiv. 8. Dr. Lightfoot and others tell us it was a custom of the Jews, which they received by tradition, on the last day of the feast of tabernacles to have a solemnity which they called *Libatio aque*,—"the pouring out of water." They fetched a golden vessel of water from the pool of Siloam, brought it into the temple with sound of trumpet and other ceremonies, and, upon the ascent to the altar, poured it out before the Lord with all possible expressions of joy. Some of their writers make the water to signify the law, and refer to *Isa.* xii. 3, and *lv.* 1; others, the Holy Spirit. And it is thought our Saviour might here allude to this custom. Believers shall have the comfort, not of a vessel of water fetched from a pool, but of a river flowing from themselves. The joy of the law, and the pouring out of the water, which signified that, are not to be compared with the joy of the Gospel in the wells of salvation.

Fifthly. Here is the evangelist's exposition of this promise; *ver.* 39; "this spake he of the Spirit," not of any outward advantages accruing to believers, as perhaps some misunderstood him, but of the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Spirit. See how Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture. Observe,

1. It is promised to all that believe on Christ, that they shall receive the Holy Ghost. Some received his miraculous gifts, *Mar.* xvi. 17, 18; all receive his sanctifying graces. The gift of the Holy Ghost is one of the great blessings promised in the new covenant, *Acts* ii. 39; and if promised, no doubt performed to all that have an interest in that covenant.

2. The Spirit, dwelling and working in believers, is as a fountain of living, running water, out of which plentiful streams flow; cooling and cleansing as water, mollifying and moistening as water; making them fruitful, and others joyful: see *ch.* iii. 5. When the apostles spoke so fluently of the things of God as the Spirit gave them utterance, *Acts* ii. 4, and afterwards preached and wrote the Gospel of Christ with such a flood of Divine eloquence, then this was fulfilled, "out of his belly shall flow rivers."

3. This plentiful effusion of the Spirit was yet the matter of a promise; "for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." See here,

1st. That "Jesus was not yet glorified." It was certain he should be glorified; and he was ever worthy of all honour, but he was as yet in a state of humiliation and contempt. He had never forfeited the glory he had before all worlds; nay, he had merited a further glory, and, besides his hereditary honours, might claim the achievement of a mediatorial crown; and yet all this is in reversion. Jesus is now upheld, *Isa.* xlii. 1; is now satisfied, *Isa.* liii. 11; is now justified, *1 Tim.* iii. 16; but he is "not yet glorified." And if Christ must wait for his glory, let not us think much to wait for ours.

2nd. That "the Holy Ghost was not yet given;" *οὐπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα ἅγιον*, "for the Holy Ghost was not yet." The Spirit of God was from eternity, for in the beginning he moved upon the face of the waters. He was in the Old Testament prophets and saints; and Zacharias and Elizabeth were both filled with the Holy Ghost. This therefore must be understood of that eminent, plentiful, and general effusion of the Spirit which was promised, *Joel* ii. 28, and accomplished, *Acts* ii. 1; the Holy Ghost was not yet given in that visible manner that was intended. If we compare the clear knowledge and strong grace of the disciples of Christ themselves after that day of Pentecost, with their darkness and weakness before, we shall understand in what sense "the Holy Ghost was not yet given;" the earnest and firstfruits of the Spirit were given, but the full harvest was not yet come. That which is most properly called the dispensation of the Spirit, did not yet commence. The Holy Ghost was not yet given in such rivers of living water as should issue forth to water the whole earth, even the Gentile world; not in the gift of tongues, to which perhaps this promise principally refers.

3rd. That the reason why "the Holy Ghost was not yet given," was "because Jesus was not yet glorified." First. The death of Christ is sometimes called his glorification, *ch.* xiii. 31; for in his cross he conquered and triumphed. Now the gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased by the blood of Christ; that was the valuable consideration upon which the grant was grounded; and therefore till that price was paid (though many other gifts were bestowed upon its being secured to be paid) the Holy Ghost was not given. Secondly. There was not so much need of the Spirit while Christ was himself here upon earth, as there was when he was gone, to supply the want of him. Thirdly. The giving of the Holy Ghost was to be both an answer to Christ's intercession, *ch.* xiv. 16, and an act of his dominion; and therefore till he is glorified, and enters upon both these, the Holy Ghost is not given. Fourthly. The conversion of the Gentiles was the glorifying of Jesus. When certain Greeks began to inquire after Christ, he said, "Now is the Son of man glorified," *ch.* xii. 23. Now the time for that was not yet come, when the Gospel should be propagated in the nations; and therefore there was as yet no occasion for the gift of tongues, that "river of living water." But observe, though the Holy Ghost was not yet given, yet he was promised; it was now the great promise of the Father, *Acts* i. 4. Though the gifts of Christ's grace are long deferred, yet they are well secured; and while we are waiting for the good promised, we have the promise to live upon, which shall speak and shall not lie.

11. The consequences of this discourse; what entertainment it met with; in general, it occasioned differences; *ver.* 43, "there was a division among the people because of him;" "there was a schism," so the word is; there were diversities of opinions, and those managed with heat and contention; various sentiments, and those such as set them at variance. Think we that Christ came to send peace, that all would unanimously embrace his Gospel? No; but the effect of the preaching of his Gospel would be division; for while some are gathered to it, others will be gathered against it; and this will put things into a ferment, as here. But this is no more the fault of the Gospel than it is the fault of a wholesome medicine that it stirs up the peccant humours in the body, in order to the discharge of them. Observe what the debate was:

First. Some were taken with him, and well affected to him: "Many of the people, when they heard this saying,"—heard him with such compassion and kindness invite poor sinners to him, and with such authority engage to make

them happy,—they could not but think highly of him. 1. Some of them said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet;" that prophet which Moses spake of to the fathers, who should be like unto him; or, this is the prophet who, according to the received notions of the Jewish church, is to be the harbinger and forerunner of the Messiah, or, this is truly a prophet, one Divinely inspired, and sent of God. Others went farther, and said, "This is the Christ," *ver.* 41; not the prophet of the Messiah, but the Messiah himself. The Jews had at this time a more than ordinary expectation of the Messiah, which made them ready to say upon every occasion, *I.o.* here is Christ; or, *Lo*, he is there; and this seems to be only the effect of some such confused and floating notions, which caught at the first appearance; for we do not find that these people became his disciples and followers. A good opinion of Christ is far short of a lively faith in Christ; many give Christ a good word, that gave him no more. These here said, This is the Prophet, and, This is the Christ; but could not persuade themselves to leave all and follow him; and so this their testimony to Christ was but a testimony against themselves.

Secondly. Others were prejudiced against him. No sooner was this great truth started, that Jesus is the Christ, but immediately it was contradicted, and argued against; and this one thing, that his rise and original was (as they took it for granted) out of Galilee, was thought enough to answer all the arguments for his being the Christ; for, "shall Christ come out of Galilee?" Has not the Scripture said that "Christ cometh of the seed of David?" See here,

1. A laudable knowledge of the Scripture: they were so far in the right, that the Messiah was to be a rod out of the stem of Jesse, *Isa.* xi. 1; that out of Bethlehem should arise the governor, *Mic.* v. 2. This even the common people knew, by the traditional expositions which their scribes gave them. Perhaps, these people who had these Scriptures so ready to object against Christ, were not alike knowing in other parts of Holy Writ, but had had these put into their mouths by their leaders, to fortify their prejudices against Christ. Many that espouse some corrupt notions, and spend their zeal in defence of them, seem to be very ready in the Scriptures; when indeed they know little more than those Scriptures which they have been taught to pervert.

2. A culpable ignorance of our Lord Jesus: they speak of it as certain, and past dispute, that Jesus was of Galilee; whereas by inquiring of himself, or his mother, or his disciples, or by consulting the genealogies of the family of David, or the register at Bethlehem, they might have known that he was the son of David, and a native of Bethlehem; but, this they willingly are ignorant of. Thus gross falsehoods, in matters of fact concerning persons and things, are often taken up by prejudiced and partial men, and great resolves founded upon them, even in the same place and the same age wherein the persons live and the things are done, while the truth might easily be found out.

Thirdly. Others were enraged against him; and they "would have taken him," *ver.* 44. Though what he said was most sweet and gracious, yet they were exasperated against him for it. Thus did our Master suffer ill, for saying and doing well. They "would have taken him;" they hoped somebody or other would seize him, and if they thought no one else would, they would have done it themselves; they "would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him," being restrained by an invisible power, because his hour was not come. As the malice of Christ's enemies is always unreasonable, so sometimes the suspension of it is unaccountable.

45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. 47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? 48 Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? 49 But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. 50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) 51 Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? 52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. 53 And every man went unto his own house.

The chief priests and Pharisees are here in a close cabal, contriving how to suppress Christ; though this was the great day of the feast, they attended not the religious services of the day, but left that to the vulgar, to whom it was common for those great ecclesiastics to consign and turn over the business of devotion, while they thought themselves better employed in the affairs of church policy. They sat in the council chamber, expecting Christ to be brought a prisoner to them; they having issued out warrants for the apprehending of him, *ver.* 32. Now here we are told,

First. What passed between them and their own officers, who returned without him; *re infecta*,—"having done nothing." Observe,

1. The reproff they gave the officers for not executing the warrant they gave them: "Why have ye not brought him?" He appeared publicly; the people were many of them disgusted, and would have assisted them in taking him; this was the last day of the feast, and they would not have such another opportunity; "why then did you neglect your duty?" It vexed them that those who were their own creatures, who depended on them, and on whom they depended, into whose minds they had instilled prejudices against Christ, should thus disappoint them. Note, Mischievous men fret that they cannot do the mischief they would, *Ps.* cxii. 10; *Neh.* vi. 16.

2. The reason which the officers gave for the non-execution of their warrant, *ver.* 46, "Never man spake like this man." Now, 1st. This was a very great truth, that never any man spake with that wisdom, and power, and grace, that convincing clearness, and that charming sweetness, wherewith Christ spoke; none of the prophets; no, not Moses himself. 2nd. The very officers that were sent to take him were taken with him, and acknowledged this. Though it is likely they were men that had no quick sense of reason or eloquence, and it is certain had no inclination to think well of Jesus, yet so much self-evidence was there in what Christ said, that they could not but prefer him before all those that sat in Moses' seat. Thus Christ was preserved by the power God has upon the consciences even of bad men. 3rd. They said this to their lords and masters, who could not endure to hear any thing that tended

vii. 35. "Gentiles" in this verse is rendered "Greeks" by Alford. The words do not refer to the Jews of the dispersion. The word used for foreign Jews is generally translated Grecians (see *Acts* vi. 1). The question of the multitude is, "Will he teach the Greeks?" This explains how the phrase, "dispersed among the Greeks," is to be understood.

vii. 37. "That great day," &c.: it was a Sabbath-day. The rejoicings on this day were very striking, especially at the moment when,

according to the daily custom of the feast, the priest brought forth, in golden vessels, water from the stream of Siloah, which flowed under the Temple-mount, and solemnly poured it upon the altar; as he did so, the words "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" were sung.

vii. 39. "For the Holy Ghost;" better "Spirit," the word in both clauses of the verse being the same. "Was not yet given:" "That 'was not yet' has no reference to existence is self-evident; for

to the honour of Christ, and yet could not avoid hearing this. Providence ordered it so that this should be said to them, that it might be a vexation in their sin, and an aggravation of their sin. Their own officers are witnesses against them, who could not be suspected to be biased in favour of Christ. This testimony of theirs should have made them reflect upon themselves with this thought, Do we know what we are doing, when we are hating and persecuting one that speaks so admirably well?

3. The Pharisees endeavour to secure their officers to their interest, and to heget in them prejudices against Christ, whom they saw them begin to be well affected to; to prevent which they suggest two things:

1st. That if they embrace the Gospel of Christ they will deceive themselves; ver. 47, "Are ye also deceived?" Christianity has from its first rise been represented to the world as a great cheat upon it, and they that embraced it as men deceived, then when they began to be undeceived. They that looked for a Messiah in external pomp thought them deceived who believed in a Messiah that appeared in poverty and disgrace; but the event declares that none were more shamefully deceived, nor put a greater cheat upon themselves, than those who promised themselves worldly wealth and secular dominion with the Messiah. Observe what a compliment the Pharisees put upon these officers, "Are ye also deceived?" What! Men of your sense, and thought, and figure; men that know better things than to be imposed upon by every pretender and upstart teacher. They endeavour to prejudice them against Christ, by persuading them to think well of themselves.

2nd. That they will disparage themselves. Most men, even in their religion, are willing to be governed by the example of those of the first rank: these officers therefore, whose preferences, such as they were, gave them a sense of honour, are desired to consider,

First. That if they become disciples of Christ, they go contrary to those who were persons of quality and reputation: "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" You know they have not, and you ought to be bound up by their judgment, and to believe and do in religion according to the will of your superiors; will you be wiser than they? Some of the rulers did embrace Christ, *Mat. ix. 18; ch. iv. 53*; and more believed in him, but wanted courage to confess him, *ch. xii. 42*; but, when the interest of Christ runs low in the world, it is common for its adversaries to represent it as lower than really it is. But it was too true that few, very few, of them did. Note, 1st. The cause of Christ hath seldom had rulers and Pharisees on its side. It needs not secular supports, nor proposes secular advantages; and therefore neither courts nor is courted by the great men of this world. Self-denial and the cross are hard lessons to rulers and Pharisees. 2nd. This has confirmed many in their prejudices against Christ and his Gospel, that the rulers and Pharisees have been no friends to them. Shall secular men pretend to be more concerned about spiritual things than spiritual men themselves? or to see farther into religion than those who make its study their profession? If rulers and Pharisees do not believe in Christ, they that do believe in him will be the most singular, unfashionable, ungenteel people in the world, and quite out of the way of preferment. Thus are people foolishly swayed by external motives in matters of eternal moment, are willing to be damned for fashion's sake, and go to hell in compliment to the rulers and Pharisees.

Secondly. That they will link themselves with the despicable, vulgar sort of people; ver. 49, "But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed;" meaning especially those that were well affected to the doctrine of Christ. Observe,

1st. How scornfully and disdainfully they call them; "this people." It is not *laos*, this lay-people, distinguished from them that were clergy; but *ὁ λαός οὗτος*, this rabble people,—this pitiful, scandalous, scoundrel people,—whom they disdained to set with the dogs of their flock, though God had set them with the lambs of his. If they mean the commonalty of the Jewish nation, they were the seed of Abraham, and in covenant with God, and not to be spoken of with such contempt. The church's common interests are betrayed when any one part of it studies to render the other mean and despicable. If they mean the followers of Christ, though they were generally persons of small figure and fortune, yet, by owning Christ, they discovered such a sagacity, integrity, and interest in the favours of Heaven as made them truly great and considerable. Note, As the wisdom of God hath often chosen base things, and things which are despised, so the folly of men has commonly debased and despised those whom God has chosen.

2nd. How unjustly they reproach them as ignorant of the Word of God; "they know not the law," as if none knew the law but those that knew it from them; and no Scripture-knowledge were current but what came out of their mint; and as if none knew the law but such as were observant of their canons and traditions. Perhaps many of those whom they thus despised knew the law, and the prophets too, better than they did. Many a plain, honest, unlearned disciple of Christ, by meditation, experience, prayers, and especially obedience, attains to a more clear, sound, and useful knowledge of the Word of God than some great scholars, with all their wit and learning. Thus David came to understand more than the ancients and all his teachers, *Psa. cxix. 99, 100*. If the common people did not know the law, yet the chief priests and Pharisees, of all men, should not have upbraided them with it; for whose fault was it but theirs who should have taught them better? but instead of that, took away the key of knowledge, *Lu. xi. 52*.

3rd. How magisterially they pronounce sentence upon them; they are "cursed;" hateful to God and all wise men; *ἐπικαταρατοί*, an execrable people. It is well their saying they were cursed did not make them so, for "the curse causeless shall not come." It is a usurpation of God's prerogative, as well as great uncharitableness, to say of any particular persons, much more of any body of people, that they are reprobates. We are unable to try, and therefore unfit to condemn; and our rule is, "bless, and curse not." Some think they mean no more than they are apt to be deceived and made fools of; but they use this odious word, "they are cursed," to express their own indignation, and to frighten their officers from having any thing to do with them. Thus the language of hell, in our profane age, calls every thing that is displeasing cursed, and damned, and confounded. Now, for aught appears, these officers had their convictions baffled and stifled by these suggestions, and they never inquire farther after Christ: one word from a ruler or Pharisee will sway more, with many, than the true reason of things, and the great interests of their souls.

Secondly. What passed between them and Nicodemus, a member of their own body, ver. 50, &c. Observe,

1. The just and rational objection which Nicodemus made against their proceedings. Even in their corrupt and wicked Sanhedrim, God left not himself quite without witness against their enmity; nor was the vote against Christ carried *nemine contradicente*—without contradiction. Observe,

1st. Who it was that appeared against them; it was Nicodemus, "he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them," ver. 50. Observe concerning him, First. That though he had been with Jesus, and taken him for his teacher, yet he retained his place in the council, and his vote among them. Some impute this to his weakness and cowardice, and think it was his fault that he did not quit his place; but Christ had never said to him, "Follow me,"

else he would have done as others, that left all to follow him. Therefore it seems rather to have been his wisdom not presently to throw up his place, because there he might have opportunity of serving Christ and his interest, and stemming the tide of the Jewish rage, which perhaps he did more than we are aware of. He might there be, as Hushai among Absalom's counsellors, instrumental to turn their counsels into foolishness. Though we must in no case deny our Master, yet we may wait for an opportunity of confessing him to the best advantage. God has his remnant among all sorts, and many times finds, or puts, or makes, some good in the worst places and societies; there was Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar's court, and Nehemiah in Artaxerxes's. Secondly. That though at first he came to Jesus by night, for fear of being known, and still continued in his post, yet when there was occasion he boldly appeared in defence of Christ, and opposed the whole council that were set against him. Thus many believers, who at first were timorous, and ready to flee at the shaking of a leaf, have at length, by Divine grace, grown courageous, and able to laugh at the shaking of a spear. Let none justify the disguising of their faith by the example of Nicodemus, unless, like him, they be ready, upon the first occasion, openly to appear in the cause of Christ, though they stand alone in it, for so Nicodemus did here, and *ch. xix. 39*.

2nd. What he alleged against their proceedings; ver. 51, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him," (*ἀκούσῃ παρ' αὐτοῦ*, 'hear from himself,') "and know what he doeth?" By no means, nor doth the law of any civilized nation allow it. Observe, First. He prudently argues from the principles of their own law, and an incontestable rule of justice, that no man is to be condemned unheard. Had he urged the excellency of Christ's doctrine, or the evidence of his miracles, or repeated to them his Divine discourse with him, *ch. iii.*, it had been "but to cast pearls before swine, who would trample them under their feet, and would turn again and rend him; therefore he waves them." Secondly. Whereas they had reproached the people, especially the followers of Christ, as ignorant of the law, he here tacitly retorts the charge upon themselves, and shews how ignorant they were of some of the first principles of the law; so unfit were they to give law to others. Thirdly. The law is here said to judge, and hear, and know; when magistrates that govern, and are governed by it, judge, and hear, and know; for they are the mouth of the law; and whatsoever they bind and loose according to the law, is justly said to be bound and loosed by the law. Fourthly. It is highly fit that none should come under the sentence of the law till they have first, by a fair trial, undergone the scrutiny of it. Judges, when they receive the complaints of the accuser, must always reserve in their minds room for the defence of the accused; for they have two ears, to mind them to hear both sides. This is said to be the manner of the Romans, *Acts xxv. 18*. The method of our law is *oyer* and *terminer*, first to hear, and then to determine. Fifthly. Persons are not to be judged, not by what is said of them, but by what they do. Our law will not ask what men's opinions are of them, or outcries against them, but, what have they done?—what overt acts can they be convicted of? Sentence must be given, *secundum allegata et probata*,—according to what is alleged and proved. Facts, and not faces, must be known in judgment; and the scale of justice must be used before the sword of justice.

Now we may suppose the motion Nicodemus made in the house upon this was, that Jesus should be desired to come and give them an account of himself and his doctrine, and they should favour him with an impartial, unprejudiced hearing. But though none of them could gainsay his maxim, none of them would second his motion.

2. What was said to this objection. Here is no direct reply given to it; but when they could not resist the force of his argument, they fell foul upon him, and what was to seek in reason they made up in railing and reproach. Note, It is a sign of a bad cause when men cannot bear to hear reason, and take it as an affront to be minded of its maxims. Whoever are against reason give cause to suspect that reason is against them. See how they taunt him; "Art thou also of Galilee?" ver. 52. Some think he was well enough served for continuing among them, whom he knew to be enemies to Christ; and for his speaking no more on the behalf of Christ than what he might have said on behalf of the greatest criminal, that he should not be condemned unheard. Had he said, 'As for this Jesus, I have heard him myself, and know he is a teacher come from God, and you, in opposing him, fight against God,' as he ought to have said, he could not have been worse abused than he was for this feeble effort of his tenderness for Christ.

As to what they said to Nicodemus, we may observe, First. How false the grounds of their arguing are; for, 1st. They suppose that Christ was of Galilee, and that was false; and if they would have been at the pains of an impartial inquiry, they might have found it so. 2nd. They suppose that because most of his disciples were Galileans, they were all such; whereas he had abundance of disciples in Judæa. 3rd. They suppose that out of Galilee no prophet had risen, and for this appeal to Nicodemus' search; yet this was false too; Jonah was of Gath-hepher, Nahum an Elkoshite, both of Galilee. Thus do they make lies their refuge. Secondly. How absurd their arguments were upon these grounds, such as were a shame to rulers and Pharisees. 1st. Is any man of worth and virtue ever the worse for the poverty and obscurity of his country? The Galileans were the seed of Abraham; barbarians and Scythians are the seed of Adam; and have we not all one Father? 2nd. Supposing no prophet had risen out of Galilee, yet it is not impossible that any should arise hence. If Elijah was the first prophet of Gilead, as perhaps he was, and if the Gileadites were called fugitives, must it therefore be questioned whether he was a prophet or no?

3. The hasty adjournment of the court hereupon; they broke up the assembly in confusion, and with precipitation, and "every man went to his own house." They met to take "counsel together against the Lord and his anointed," but they imagined a vain thing; and not only He that sits in heaven laughed at them, but we may sit on earth and laugh at them too, to see all the politics of the close cabal broken to pieces with one plain, honest word. They were not willing to hear Nicodemus, because they could not answer him. As soon as they perceived they had one such man among them, they saw it was to no purpose to go on with their design, and therefore put off the debate to a more convenient season, when he was absent. Thus the counsel of the Lord is made to stand, in spite of the devices in the hearts of men.

CHAPTER VIII.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's evading the snare which the Jews laid for him, in bringing to him a woman taken in adultery, ver. 1—11. II. Divers discourses or conferences of his with the Jews that cavilled at him, and sought occasion against him, and made every thing he said a matter of controversy: 1. Concerning his being the light of the world, ver. 12—20. 2. Concerning the ruin of the unbelieving Jews, ver. 21—30. 3. Concerning liberty and bondage, ver. 31—37. 4. Concerning his Father and their Father, ver. 38—47. 5. Here is his discourse, in answer to their blasphemous reproaches, ver. 48—50. 6. Concerning the immortality of believers, ver. 51—59. And in all this he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself.

the Holy Spirit is to be conceived of as eternal, just as much as the Father and the Son" (Olshausen).

vii. 41, 42. The objection appeared a valid one; but further inquiry would have led to a ground of confidence instead of doubt. The same sort of thing has occurred often since.

vii. 48. "Have any of the rulers?" &c.: "rulers," i.e., persons in office, members of the Sanhedrim. Many of these did believe, e.g., Nicodemus and Joseph. (Compare chap. xii. 42.)

vii. 50. "Came to Jesus by night," or 'ne that came to him before.' "Nicodemus gently retorts upon them the charge (see verse 49) of ignorance and neglect of their law. His conscience perhaps urged him to say thus much, being aroused by the challenge, 'Have any of the rulers, &c.'" (Webster and Wilkinson).

viii. 1. Verses 1—11 inclusive are not found in the best MSS. Those MSS. in which they are found vary considerably from each other. The Cambridge MS. presents the most perfect text. The first



JESUS went unto the mount of Olives. 2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. 3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not*. 7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9 And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Though Christ was basely abused in the foregoing chapter, both by the rulers and by the people, yet here we have him still at Jerusalem, still in the temple. How often would he have gathered them. Observe,

First. His retirement in the evening out of the town, ver. 1; he "went into the mount of Olives;" whether to some friend's house, or to some booth pitched there, now at the feast of tabernacles, is not certain; whether he rested there, or, as some think, continued all night in prayer to God, we are not told. But he went out of Jerusalem, perhaps, because he had never a friend there that had either kindness or courage enough to give him a night's lodging; while his persecutors had houses of their own to go to, *ch. vii. 1*, he could not so much as borrow a place to lay his head on, but what he must go a mile or two out of town for. He retired, as some think, because he would not expose himself to the peril of a popular tumult in the night. It is prudence to go out of the way of danger whenever we can do it without going out of the way of duty. In the daytime, when he had work to do in the temple, he willingly exposed himself, and was under special protection, *Isa. xlix. 2*; but in the night, when he had not work to do, he withdrew into the country, and sheltered himself there.

Secondly. His return in the morning to the temple, and to his work there, ver. 2. Observe here,

1. What a diligent preacher Christ was: "early in the morning" he came again and taught. Though he had been teaching the day before, he taught again to-day: Christ was a constant preacher, in season and out of season. Three things are taken notice of here concerning Christ's preaching: 1st. The time, "early in the morning." Though he lodged out of town, and perhaps had spent much of the night in secret prayer, yet he came early. When a day's work is to be done for God and souls, it is good to begin betimes, and take the day before us. 2nd. The place, "in the temple;" not so much because it was a consecrated place (for then he would have chosen it at other times) as because it was now a place of concourse; and he would hereby countenance solemn assemblies for religious worship, and encourage people to come up to the temple, for he had not yet left it desolate. 3rd. His posture; "he sat down and taught," as one having authority, and as one that intended to abide by it for some time.

2. How diligently his preaching was attended upon; "all the people came unto him;" and perhaps many of them were the country people, who were this day to return home from the feast, and were desirous to hear one sermon more from the mouth of Christ before they returned. They came to him, though he came early. They that seek him early shall find him. Though the rulers were displeased at those that came to hear him, yet they would come; and he taught them, though they were angry at him too. Though there were few or none among them that were persons of any figure, yet Christ bade them welcome, and taught them.

Thirdly. His dealing with those that brought to him the woman taken in adultery, tempting him. The scribes and Pharisees would not only not hear Christ patiently themselves, but they disturbed him when the people were attending on him. Observe here,

1. The case proposed to him by the scribes and Pharisees, who herein contrived to pick a quarrel with him, and bring him into a snare, ver. 3-6.

1. They set the prisoner to the bar, ver. 3; "they brought him a woman taken

in adultery;" perhaps now lately taken, during the time of the feast of tabernacles, when it may be their dwelling in booths, and their feasting and joy, might, by wicked minds, which corrupt the best things, be made occasions of sin. Those that were taken in adultery were, by the Jewish law, to be put to death, which the Roman powers allowed them the execution of, and therefore she was brought before the ecclesiastical court. Observe, she was taken in her adultery. Though adultery is a work of darkness, which the criminals commonly take all the care they can to conceal, yet sometimes it is strangely brought to light. Those that promise themselves secrecy in sin, deceive themselves. The scribes and Pharisees bring her to Christ, and set her in the midst of the assembly, as if they would leave her wholly to the judgment of Christ, *he* having sat down as a judge upon the bench.

2. They prefer an indictment against her, ver. 4: "Master, this woman was taken in adultery." Here they call him master whom but the day before they had called a deceiver, in hopes with their flatteries to have ensnared him, as those, *Lu. xx. 20*. But though men may be imposed upon with compliments, he that searcheth the heart cannot. 1st. The crime for which the prisoner stands indicted is no less than adultery, which, even in the patriarchal age, before the law of Moses, was looked upon as "an iniquity to be punished by the judges," *Job xxxi. 9, 11*; *Gen. xxxviii. 24*. The Pharisees, by their vigorous prosecution of this offender, seemed to have a great zeal against the sin, when it appeared afterwards that they themselves were not free from it; nay, they were within full of all uncleanness, *Mat. xxiii. 27, 28*. Note, It is common for those that are indulgent to their own sin, to be severe against the sins of others. 2nd. The proof of the crime was from the notorious evidence of the fact—an incontestable proof—she was taken in the act; so that there was no room left to plead not guilty. Had she not been taken in this act, she might have gone on to another, till her heart had been perfectly hardened; but sometimes it proves a mercy to sinners to have their sin brought to light, that they may do no more presumptuously. Better our sin should shame us than damn us, and be set in order before us for our conviction than for our condemnation.

3. They produce the statute in this case made and provided, and upon which she was indicted; ver. 5, "Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned." Moses commanded that they should be put to death, *Lev. xx. 10*; *Deu. xxii. 22*; but not that they should be stoned, unless the adulteress was espoused, not married, or was a priest's daughter, *Deu. xxii. 21*. Note, Adultery is an exceeding sinful sin; for it is the rebellion of a vile lust, not only against the command, but against the covenant, of our God. It is the violation of a Divine institution in innocency, by the indulgence of one of the basest lusts of man in his degeneracy.

4. They pray his judgment in the case; "but what sayest thou?" who pretend to be a teacher come from God to repeal old laws, and enact new ones: what hast thou to say in this case? If they had asked this question in sincerity with a humble desire to know his mind, it had been very commendable. They that are intrusted with the administration of justice should look up to Christ for direction. But "this they said tempting him, that they might have to accuse him," ver. 6. 1st. If he should confirm the sentence of the law, and let it take its course, they would censure him as inconsistent with himself, he having received publicans and harlots, and with the character of the Messiah, who should be meek, and have salvation, and proclaim a year of release; and perhaps they would accuse him to the Roman governor, for countenancing the Jews in the exercise of a judicial power. But, 2nd. If he should acquit her, and give his opinion that the sentence should not be executed, as they expected he would, they would represent him, *First*. As an enemy to the law of Moses, and as one that usurped an authority to correct and control it; and would confirm that prejudice against him which his enemies were so industrious to propagate, that he came to destroy the law and the prophets. *Secondly*. As a friend to sinners, and consequently a favourer of sin; if he should seem to connive at such wickedness, and let it go unpunished, they would represent him as countenancing it, and being a patron of offences, if he were a protector of offenders; than which no reflection could be more invidious upon one that professed the strictness, purity, and business of a prophet.

11. The method he took to resolve this case, and so to break this snare.

1. He seemed to slight it, and turned a deaf ear to it; he "stooped down, and wrote on the ground." It is impossible to tell, and therefore needless to ask, what he wrote; but it is the only mention made, in the Gospels, of Christ's writing. Eusebius indeed speaks of his writing to Abgarus, king of Edessa. Some think they have a liberty of conjecture what he wrote here. Grotius saith it was some grave, weighty saying; and that it was usual for wise men, when they were very thoughtful concerning any thing, to do so. Jerome and Ambrose suppose he wrote, "Let the names of these wicked men be written in the dust." Others this, "The earth accuseth the earth, but the judgment is mine." Christ, by this, teacheth us to be slow to speak when difficult cases are proposed to us, not quickly to shoot our bolt; and when provocations are given us, or we are bantered, to pause and consider before we reply; think twice before we speak once; "the heart of the wise studies to answer." Our translation from some Greek copies, which add, *μη προσποιούμενος*, though the most copies have it not, give this account of the reason of his writing on the ground, "as though he heard them not." He did, as it were, look another way, to shew that he was not willing to take notice of their address, saying in effect, "Who made me a judge or a divider?" It is safe in many cases to be deaf to that which it is not safe to answer, *Ps. xxxviii. 13*. Christ would not have his ministers to be entangled in secular affairs; let them rather employ themselves in any lawful studies, and fill up their time with writing on the ground, which nobody will heed, than busy themselves in that which doth not belong to them. But when Christ seemed as though he heard them not, he made it appear that he not only heard their words, but knew their thoughts.

2. When they importunately, or rather importunately, pressed him for an answer, he turned the conviction of the prisoner upon the prosecutors, ver. 7.

1st. They "continued asking him," and his seeming not to take notice of them, made them the more vehement, for now they thought sure enough they had run him aground, and that he could not avoid the imputation of contradicting either the law of Moses, if he should acquit the prisoner, or his own doctrine of mercy and pardon, if he should condemn her; and therefore they pushed on their appeal to him with vigour; whereas they should have construed his disregard of them as a check to their design, and an intimation to them to desist, as they tendered their own reputation.

2nd. At last he put them all to shame and silence with one word; "he lifted up himself," awaking as one out of sleep, *Ps. lxxviii. 55*, and "said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

First. Here Christ avoided the snare which they laid for him, and effectually saved his own reputation. He neither reflected upon the law, nor excused the prisoner's guilt; nor did he, on the other hand, encourage the prosecution, or countenance their heat. See the good effect of consideration; when we cannot make our point by steering a direct course, it is good to fetch a compass.

Secondly. "In the net which they spread is their own foot taken." They

verse should be associated with the last verse of chap. vii. The contrast between Christ going to the Mount of Olives and the people going to their own homes may suggest some touching reflections, whether we suppose our Lord to have remained all night on the Mount of Olives (compare Luke xxi. 37, 38) in prayer, or to have partaken of the hospitality of the family at Bethany.

viii. 3. "Taken in adultery:" Alford, following the Cambridge MS., renders "taken in sin."

viii. 4. Following the same authority, we must read verse 4, "The priests say unto him, tempting him that they might have to accuse him," &c. The additions afford us some explanation of the incident. The authors of the transaction are seen to be the priests; their motive, not a love of purity, but a desire to entangle Christ.

viii. 5. "Be stoned:" Moses did not command stoning, save in exceptional cases. It seems, however, that, at any rate in later times, the method of putting to death was by stoning.

came with design to accuse him, but they were forced to accuse themselves. Christ owns it was fit the prisoner should be prosecuted; but appeals to their consciences, whether they were fit to be the prosecutors.

1st. He here refers to that rule which the law of Moses prescribed in the execution of criminals, that the "hand of the witnesses must be first upon them," *Deu. xvii. 7*, as in the stoning of Stephen, *Acts vii. 58*. The scribes and Pharisees were the witnesses against this woman. Now Christ puts it to them, whether, according to their own law, they would dare to be the executioners. Durst they take away that life with their hands, which they were now taking away with their tongues; would not their own consciences fly in their faces, if they did?

2nd. He builds upon an uncontested maxim in morality, that it is very absurd for men to be zealous in punishing the offences of others, while they are every whit as guilty themselves; and they are no better than self-condemned, who judge others, and yet themselves do the same thing. If there be any of you that is without sin, that is, without sin of this nature, that has not some time or other been guilty of fornication or adultery, let him cast the first stone at her. Not that magistrates, who are conscious of guilt themselves, should therefore connive at others' guilt. But therefore, First. Whenever we find fault with others, we ought to reflect upon ourselves, and to be more severe against sin in ourselves than in others. Secondly. We ought to be favourable, though not to the sins, yet to the persons of those that offend, and to restore them with a spirit of meekness, considering ourselves and our own corrupt nature. *Aut sumus, aut fuimus, vel possumus esse quod hic est.*—We either are, or have been, or may be, what he is. Let this restrain us from throwing stones at our brethren, and proclaiming their faults. "Let him that is without sin" begin such discourse as that, and then those that are truly humbled for their own sins will blush at it, and be glad to let it fall. Thirdly. *Qui alterum incusat probrum, ipsum se intueri oportet.*—Those who are any way obliged to animadvert upon the faults of others, are concerned to look well to themselves, and keep themselves pure. *Mat. vii. 5*. The snuffers of the tabernacle were of pure gold.

3rd. Perhaps he refers to the trial of the suspected wife, by the jealous husband, with the waters of jealousy. The man was to bring her to the priest, *Num. v. 15*, as the scribes and Pharisees brought this woman to Christ. Now it was a received opinion among the Jews, and confirmed by experience, that if the husband who brought his wife to that trial, had himself been at any time guilty of adultery, *aque non explorant ejus uxorem*,—the bitter water had no effect upon the wife. "Come, then," saith Christ, "according to your own tradition will I judge you. If you are without sin, stand to the charge, and let the adulteress be executed; but if not, though she be guilty, while you that present her are equally so, according to your own rule she shall be free."

4th. In this he attended to the great work which he came into the world about, and that was to bring sinners to repentance; not to destroy, but to save. He aimed to bring, not only the prisoner to repentance, by shewing her his mercy, but the prosecutors too, by shewing them their sins; they sought to ensnare him, he sought to convince and convert them. Thus "the blood-thirsty hate the upright, but the just seek his soul."

5. Having given them this startling word, he left them to consider of it, and "again stooped down, and wrote on the ground," *ver. 8*. As when they made their address he seemed to slight their question, so now he had given them an answer, he slighted their resentment of it, not caring what they said to it; nay, they needed not to make any reply; the matter was lodged in their own breasts, let them make the best of it there. Or, he would not seem to wait for an answer, lest they should on a sudden justify themselves, and then think themselves bound in honour to persist in it; but gives them time to pause, and to commune with their own hearts. God saith, "I hearkened and heard."

6. Some Greek copies here read, "he wrote on the ground," *ἐκείνους ἀντὶ τῆς ἀναγραφῆς*, "the sins of every one of them." This he could do, for he sets our iniquities before him; and this he will do, for he will set them in order before us too; he seals up our transgressions, *Job xiv. 16*. But he doth not write men's sins in the sand; no, they are written as with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond. *Jer. xvii. 1*, never to be forgotten till they are forgiven.

7. The scribes and Pharisees were so strangely thunderstruck with the word of Christ, that they let fall their persecution of Christ, whom they durst no farther tempt; and their prosecution of the woman, whom they durst no longer accuse; *ver. 9*, "they went out one by one." 1st. Perhaps his writing on the ground frightened them, as the handwriting on the wall frightened Belshazzar; they concluded he was writing bitter things against them, writing their doom. Happy they who have no reason to be afraid of Christ's writing. 2nd. However, what he said frightened them, by sending them to their own consciences. He had shewed them to themselves; and they were afraid, if they should stay till he lift up himself again, his next word should shew them to the world, and shame them before men, and therefore they thought it best to withdraw. They went out one by one, that they might go out softly, and not by a noisy fight disturb Christ; they gat them away by stealth, as "people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle," *2 Sam. xix. 3*. The order of their departure is taken notice of, "beginning at the eldest," either because they were most guilty, or first aware of the danger they were in of being put to the blush; and if the eldest quit the field, and retreat ingloriously, no marvel if the younger follow them. Now see here,

First. The force of the word of Christ for the conviction of sinners; "they which heard it were convicted by their own consciences." Conscience is God's deputy in the soul, and one word from him will set it on work, *Heb. iv. 12*. Those that had been old in adulteries, and long fixed in a proud opinion of themselves, yet the eldest of them were here startled by the word of Christ; even scribes and Pharisees, that were most conceited of themselves, yet, by the power of Christ's word, are made to sneak.

Secondly. The folly of sinners under these convictions, which appears in these scribes and Pharisees. 1st. It is folly for those that are under convictions to make it their principal care to avoid shame, as Judah, *Gen. xxxviii. 23*, "lest we be shamed." Our care should be more to save our souls than to save our credit. Saul evidenced his hypocrisy, when he said, "I have sinned; yet now honour me, I pray thee." There is no way to get the honour and comfort of penitents, but by taking the shame of penitents. 2nd. It is folly for those that are under convictions to contrive how to shift off their convictions, and to get rid of them. These scribes and Pharisees had the wound opened, and now they should have been desirous to have it searched, and then it might have been healed; but that was the thing they dreaded and declined. 3rd. It is folly for those that are under convictions to get away from Jesus Christ, as these here did; for he is the only one that can heal the wounds of conscience, and speak peace to us. Those that are convicted by their consciences, will be condemned by their Judge, if they be not justified by their Redeemer; and will they then go from him? To whom will they go?

5. When the self-conceited prosecutors quitted the field, and fled for the same, the self-condemning prisoner stood her ground, with a resolution to abide by the judgment of our Lord Jesus. "Jesus was left alone" from the company of the scribes and Pharisees, free from their molestations, "and the woman standing in the midst" of the assembly that were attending on Christ's

preaching, where they set her, *ver. 3*. She did not seek to make her escape, though she had opportunity for it; but her prosecutors had appealed unto Jesus, and to him she would go, on him she would wait for her doom. Note. Those whose cause is brought before our Lord Jesus will never have occasion to remove it into any other court, for he is the refuge of penitents. The law which accuses us, and calls for judgment against us, is by the Gospel of Christ made to withdraw; its demands are answered, and its clamours silenced, by the blood of Jesus. Our cause is lodged in the Gospel court, we are left with Jesus alone; it is him only we have now to deal with, for to him all judgment is committed; let us therefore secure our interest in him, and we are made for ever. Let his Gospel rule us, and it will intally save us.

6. Here is the conclusion of the trial, and the issue it was brought to, *ver. 10, 11*: "Jesus lifted up himself, and he saw none but the woman." Though Christ may seem to take no notice of what is said and done, but leave it to the contending sons of men to deal it out among themselves, yet, when the hour of his judgment is come, he will no longer keep silence. When David had appealed to God, he prayed, "Lift up thyself," *Psa. vii. 6*; *xciv. 2*. The woman, it is likely, stood trembling at the bar, as one doubtful of the issue. Christ was without sin, and might cast the first stone; but though none more severe than he against sin, for he is infinitely just and holy, none more compassionate than he to sinners, for he is infinitely gracious and merciful, and this poor malefactor finds him so, now she stands upon her deliverance. Here is the method of courts of judicature observed.

1st. The prosecutors are called, "Where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" Not but that Christ knew where they were, but he asked that he might shame them who declined his judgment, and encourage her who resolved to abide by it. St. Paul's challenge is like this, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Where are these their accusers? The accuser of the brethren shall be fairly cast out, and all indictments legally and regularly quashed.

2nd. They do not appear when the question was asked: "Hath no man condemned thee?" she said, No man, Lord. She speaks respectfully to Christ; calls him Lord; but is silent concerning her prosecutors; saith nothing in answer to that question which concerned them, "Where are those thine accusers?" Doth not triumph in their retreat, or insult over them, as witnesses against themselves, not against her. If we hope to be forgiven by our Judge, we must forgive our accusers; and if their accusations, how invidious soever, were the happy occasion of awakening our consciences, we may easily forgive them this wrong. But she answered the question which concerned herself, "Has no man condemned thee?" True penitents find it enough to give account of themselves to God, and will not undertake to give account of other people.

3rd. The prisoner is therefore discharged, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more." Consider this,

First. As her discharge from the temporal punishment. "If they do not condemn thee to be stoned to death, neither do I." Not that Christ came to disarm the magistrate of his sword of justice, or that it is his will that capital punishments should not be inflicted on malefactors; so far from that, the administration of public justice is established by the Gospel, and made subservient to Christ's kingdom; "by me kings reign." But Christ would not condemn this woman, 1st. Because it was none of his business; she was no judge, or divider, and therefore would not intermeddle in secular affairs. His kingdom was not of this world. *Tractent fabrilis fabri*.—Let every one act in his own province. 2nd. Because she was prosecuted by those that were more guilty than she, and could not for shame insist upon their demand of justice against her. This law appointed the hands of the witnesses to be first upon the criminal, and afterward the hands of all the people; so that if they fly off, and do not condemn her, the prosecution drops. The justice of God, in inflicting temporal judgments, sometimes takes notice of a comparative righteousness, and spares those who are otherwise obnoxious, when the punishing of them would gratify those that are worse than they, *Deu. xxxii. 26*. But when Christ dismissed her, it was with this caution, "Go, and sin no more." Impunity emboldens malefactors, and therefore those who are guilty, and yet have found means to escape the edge of the law, need to double their watch, lest Satan get advantage; for the fairer the escape was, the fairer the warning was, to go and sin no more. They who help to save the life of a criminal, should, as Christ here, help to save the soul, with this caution.

Secondly. As her discharge from the eternal punishment. For Christ to say, I do not condemn thee, is, in effect, to say, I do forgive thee; and the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins, and could, upon good grounds, give this absolution; for as he knew the hardness and impenitent hearts of the prosecutors, and therefore said that which would confound them, so he knew the tenderness and sincere repentance of the prisoner, and therefore said that which would comfort her, as he did to that woman that was a sinner, such a sinner as this, who was likewise looked upon with disdain by a Pharisee, *Luz. vii. 48*, "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace." So here, "Neither do I condemn thee." Note, 1st. They are truly happy whom Christ doth not condemn, for his discharge is a sufficient answer to all other challenges; they are all *coram non judice*,—before an authorized judge. 2nd. Christ will not condemn those who, though they have sinned, will "go, and sin no more," *Psa. lxxxv. 8*; *Isa. lv. 7*. He will not take the advantage he has against us for our former rebellions, if we will but lay down our arms, and return to our allegiance. 3rd. Christ's favour to us in the remission of the sins that are past, should be a prevailing argument with us to "go and sin no more," *Rom. vi. 1, 2*. Will not Christ condemn thee? Go, then, and sin no more.

12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. 13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. 14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. 15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. 16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

viii. 6. "Stooped down:" Jesus was sitting at the time. "Wrote on the ground:" the explanatory words, "as though he heard them not," which have been added in the Authorised Version, have been taken to imply that Jesus pretended not to have heard. The whole scene rather suggests that it was the silence of rebuke—the silence of one who felt what an intolerable reproach the conduct of these priests brought on religion.

viii. 7. "He that is without sin:" not meaning "sinless," but

"let him whose conscience acquits him of any such sin;" referring, of course, to more than outward act.

viii. 12. "The light of the world:" compare chap. i. 4. These words are parallel to those in chap. vii. 37, where Christ compares himself to the "water of life." He who can satisfy the thirsty soul can guide the wandering. (Compare the imagery of *Psa. cvii. 7, 9*.) But the form of instruction in both cases seems to have been suggested by the circumstances. The drawing water from Siloah

17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. 19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. 20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

The rest of this chapter is taken up with debates between Christ and contradicting sinners, who cavilled at the most gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. It is not certain whether these disputes were the same day that the adulteress was discharged; it is probable they were, for the evangelist mentions no other day, and takes notice, ver. 2, how early Christ began that day's work. Though those Pharisees that accused the woman were absconded, yet there were other Pharisees, ver. 13, to confront Christ, who had brass enough in their foreheads to keep them in countenance, though some of their party were put to such a shameful retreat; nay, perhaps that made them the more industrious to pick quarrels with him; if possible, to retrieve the reputation of their baffled party. In these verses we have,

I. A great doctrine laid down, with the application of it.

First. The doctrine is, that Christ is the light of the world; ver. 12, "Then spake Jesus again unto them," though he had spoken a great deal to them to little purpose, and what he had said was opposed; "yet he spake again, for he speaketh once, yea twice." They had turned a deaf ear to what he said, and yet he spoke again to them, saying, "I am the light of the world." Note, Jesus Christ is the light of the world. One of the rabbins saith, Light is the name of the Messiah; as it is written, *Dan. ii. 22*, "and light dwelleth with him." God is light, and Christ is "the image of the invisible God;" God of gods, Light of lights. He was expected to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles," *Lu. ii. 22*; and so the light of the world, and not of the Jewish church only. The visible light of the world is the sun; and Christ is the Sun of righteousness. One sun enlightens the whole world; so doth one Christ, and there needs no more: Christ's being the light, speaks, 1. What he is in himself, most excellent and glorious. 2. What he is to the world, the fountain of light, enlightening every man. What a dungeon would the world be without the sun! so would it be without Christ, by whom light came into the world, *ch. iii. 19*.

Secondly. The inference from this doctrine is: "He that followeth me," as a traveller follows the light in a dark night, "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." If Christ be the light, then, 1. It is our duty to follow him; to submit ourselves to his conduct, and in every thing take directions from him, in the way that leads to happiness. Many follow false lights; there are *ignes fatui*, false lights, that lead them to destruction; but Christ is the true light. It is not enough to look at this light, and to gaze upon it,—but we must follow it, believe in it, and walk in it,—for it is a light to our feet, not our eyes only. 2. It is the happiness of those who follow Christ, that "they shall not walk in darkness." They shall not be left destitute of those instructions in the way of truth which are necessary to keep them from destroying error, and those directions in the way of duty which are necessary to keep them from damning sin. They "shall have the light of life," that knowledge and enjoyment of God which will be to them the light of spiritual life in this world, and of everlasting life in the other world, where there will be no death nor darkness. Follow Christ, and we shall undoubtedly be happy in both worlds; follow Christ, and we shall follow him to heaven.

II. The objection which the Pharisees made against this doctrine, and it was very trifling and frivolous; ver. 13, "Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true." In this objection they went upon the suspicion which we commonly have of men's self commendation, which is concluded to be the native language of self-love; such as we are all ready to condemn in others, but few are willing to own in themselves. But in this case the objection was very unjust; for, 1. They made that his crime, and a diminution to the credibility of his doctrine, which, in the case of one who introduced a Divine revelation, was necessary and unavoidable. Did not Moses and all the prophets bear witness of themselves, when they avouched themselves to be God's messengers? Did not the Pharisees ask John Baptist, what sayest thou of thyself? 2. They overlooked the testimony of all the other witnesses which corroborated the testimony he bore of himself. Had he only borne record of himself, his testimony had indeed been suspicious, and the belief of it might have been suspended; but his doctrine was attested by more than two or three credible witnesses, enough to establish every word of it.

III. Christ's reply to this objection, ver. 14; he doth not retort upon them, as he might, "You profess yourselves to be devout and good men, but your witness is not true; but plainly vindicates himself; and though he had waived his own testimony, *ch. v. 31*, yet here he abides by it, that it did not derogate from the credibility of his other proofs, but was necessary to shew the force of them. He is the light of the world; and it is the property of light to be self-evidencing. First principles prove themselves. He urgeth three things to prove that his testimony, though of himself, was true and cogent.

First. That he was conscious to himself of his own authority, and abundantly satisfied in himself concerning it. He did not speak as one at uncertainty, nor propose a disputable notion which he himself hesitated about, but declared a decree, and gave such an account of himself as he would abide by; "I know whence I came, and whither I go." He was fully apprised of his own undertaking from first to last; knew whose errand he went upon, and what his success would be; he knew what he was before his manifestation to the world, and what he should be after; that he came from the Father, and was going to him, *ch. xvi. 23*; came from glory, and was going to glory, *ch. xvii. 5*. This is the satisfaction of all good Christians, that though the world know them not, as it knew him not, yet they know whence their spiritual life comes, and whether it tends, and go upon sure grounds.

Secondly. That they were very incompetent judges of him and of his doctrine, and not to be regarded.

1. Because they were ignorant, willingly and resolvedly ignorant; "ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go." To what purpose is it to talk with those who know nothing of the matter, nor desire to know. He had told them of his coming from heaven, and returning to heaven; but it was foolishness to them, they received it not, it was what the brutish man knows not, *Ps. xcii. 6*.

They took upon them to judge of that which they did not understand, which lay quite out of the road of their acquaintance. They that despise Christ's dominions and dignities, speak evil of what they know not, *Jude 8, 10*.

2. Because they were partial; ver. 15, "Ye judge after the flesh." When fleshly wisdom gives the rule of judgment, and outward shows and appearances only are given in evidence, and the case decided according to them, then men "judge after the flesh;" and when the consideration of a secular interest turns the scale in judging of spiritual matters,—when we judge in favour of that which pleases the carnal mind, and recommends us to a carnal world,—we judge after the flesh; and the judgment cannot be right when the rule is wrong. The Jews judged of Christ and his Gospel by outward appearances; and, because he appeared so mean, thought it impossible he should be the light of the world; as if the sun under a cloud were no sun.

3. Because they were unjust and unfair towards him; intimated in that, "I judge no man." "I neither make nor meddle with your political affairs; nor doth my doctrine or practice at all intrench upon, or interfere with, your civil rights, or secular powers." He thus judged no man. Now, if he did not war after the flesh, it was very unreasonable for them to judge him after the flesh, and to treat him as an offender against the civil government. Or, "I judge no man," that is, not now, in my first coming; that is deferred till I come again, *ch. iii. 17*. *Prima dispensatio Christi medicinalis est, non judicialis*.—The first coming of Christ was for the purpose of administering, not justice, but medicine.—August.

Thirdly. That his testimony of himself was sufficiently supported and corroborated by the testimony of his Father with him, and for him; ver. 16, "And yet if I judge, my judgment is true." He did in his doctrine judge, *ch. ix. 39*, though not politically. Consider him then,

1. As a judge, and his own judgment was valid; "If I judge;" I, who have authority to execute judgments; I, to whom all things are delivered; I, who am the Son of God, and have the Spirit of God,—"if I judge, my judgment is true;" of incontestable rectitude, and uncontrollable authority, *Rom. ii. 2*. "If I should judge, my judgment must be true, and then you would be condemned. But the judgment-day is not yet come; you are not yet to be condemned, but spared; and therefore, now, 'I judge no man,'" so Chrysostom. Now that which makes his judgment unexceptionable is,

1st. His Father's concurrence with him; "I am not alone, but I and the Father." He had the Father's concurring counsels to direct; as he was with the Father before the world, in forming the counsels, so the Father was with him in the world, in prosecuting and executing those counsels; and never left him, *Inops consilii*.—without advice, *Isa. xi. 2*. All 'the counsels of peace' (and of war too) 'were between them both,' *Zec. vi. 13*. He had also the Father's concurring power to authorize and confirm what he did: see *Ps. lxxxix. 21, &c.*; *Isa. xlii. 1*. He did not act separately; but in his own name, and his Father's, and by the authority aforesaid, *ch. v. 17*; and *xiv. 9, 10*.

2nd. His Father's commission to him; it is "the Father that sent me." Note. God will go along with them that he sends: see *Ex. iii. 10, 12*, "Come, and I will send thee, and certainly I will be with thee." Now if Christ had a commission from the Father, and the Father's presence with him in all his administrations, no doubt his judgment was true and valid; no exception lay against it, no appeal lay from it.

2. Look upon him as a witness; and now he appeared no otherwise, (having not as yet taken the throne of judgment,) and as such his testimony was true and unexceptionable; this he shews, ver. 17, 18, where,

1st. He quotes a maxim of the Jewish law, ver. 17, that "the testimony of two men is true." Not as if it were always true in itself, for many a time hand has joined in hand to bear a false testimony, 1 *Kin. xxi. 10*; but it is allowed as sufficient evidence, upon which to ground a verdict, (*verum dictum*), and if nothing appear to the contrary, it is taken for granted to be true. Reference is here had to that law, *Deu. xvii. 6*, "At the mouth of two witnesses shall he that is worthy of death be put to death;" and see *Deu. xix. 5*; *Num. xxxv. 30*. It was in favour of life that in capital cases two witnesses were required; as with us in case of treason: see *Heb. vi. 18*.

2nd. He applies this to the case in hand; ver. 18, "I am one that bears witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bears witness of me." Behold, two witnesses! Though in human courts, where two witnesses are required, the criminal, or candidate, is not admitted to be a witness for himself, yet in a matter purely Divine, which can be proved only by a Divine testimony, and God himself must be the witness, if the formality of two or three witnesses be insisted on, there can be no other than the eternal Father, the eternal Son of the Father, and the eternal Spirit. Now if the testimony of two distinct persons that are men, and therefore may deceive, or be deceived, is conclusive, much more ought the testimony of the Son of God concerning himself, backed with the testimony of his Father concerning him, to command assent: see 1 *Jno. v. 7, 9–11*. Now this proves, not only that the Father and the Son are two distinct persons,—for their respective testimonies are here spoken of as the testimonies of two several persons,—but that these two are one; not only one in their testimony, but equal in power and glory, and therefore the same in substance. St. Austin here takes occasion to caution his hearers against Sabellianism on the one hand, which confounded the persons in the Godhead, and Arianism on the other, which denied the Godhead of the Son and Spirit. *Alius est Filius, et alius Pater, non tamen aliud, sed hoc ipsum est et Pater, et Filius, scilicet unus Deus est*.—The Son is one person, and the Father is another; they do not, however, constitute two beings, but the Father is the same being that the Son is, that is, the only true God.—*Tract xxxv. in Joann.*

Christ here speaks of himself and the Father as witnesses to the world, giving in evidence to the reason and conscience of the children of men, whom he deals with as men. And these witnesses to the world now, will in the great day be witnesses against those that persist in unbelief, and their word will judge men.

This was the sum of the first conference between Christ and these carnal Jews; in the conclusion of which we are told how their tongues were let loose, and their hands tied.

1. How their tongues were let loose, (such was the malice of hell,) to cavil at his discourse, ver. 19. Though in what he said there appeared nothing of human policy or artifice, but a Divine security, yet they set themselves to cross questions with him. None so incurably blind as those that resolve they will not see. Observe, 1st. How they evaded the conviction with a cavil; "Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father?" They might easily have understood, by the tenor of this and his other discourses, that when he spoke of his Father he meant no other but God himself; yet they pretend to understand him of a common person; and since he had appealed to his testimony, they bid him call his witness, and challenge him, if he could, to produce him; "Where is thy Father?" Thus, as Christ said of them, ver. 15, they "judge after the flesh." Perhaps they hereby intend a reflection upon the meanness and obscurity of his family; "Where is thy Father?" that he should be fit to give evidence in such a case as this? Thus they turn it off with a taunt, when they "could not resist the wisdom and spirit with which he spake." 2nd. How he evaded the cavil with a farther conviction; he did not tell them where his Father was, but charged them with wilful ignorance; "ye neither know me nor my Father."

gave rise to the first comparison; another custom called forth the comparison, "I am the light." "In the Court of the Women there stood two colossal candlesticks, decorated with a multitude of lamps. Towards evening these were lighted up, and the people danced around them with great rejoicing." Even this usage was symbolical. (Compare *Zech. xiv. 7–16*.) Jerusalem was represented as the city that enlightened the world, and the light symbolised the element of joy and pleasure. "Now nothing is more appropriate than that the

Lord, in allusion to the chandelier which was then about to be lighted up (for after the lighting, the jubilation of the multitude would not have permitted him to discourse), should say, 'I am the light of the world; all that is symbolically represented in the sacred rites of the Temple is actually fulfilled in me' (Olshausen).

viii. 20. "Treasury:" a division of the fore-court of the Temple; part of the Court of the Women.

viii. 21. "And shall die in your sins:" it is better to translate,

It is to no purpose to discourse to you about Divine things, who talk of them as blind men do of colours. Poor creatures, ye know nothing of the matter."

First. He chargeth them with ignorance of God; "ye know not my Father." "In Judah was God known," *Ps. lxxvi. 1*; they had some knowledge of him as the God that made the world; but their eyes were darkened that they could not see the light of his glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ. The little children of the Christian church know the Father, know him as a Father, *1 Jno. ii. 13*; but these rulers of the Jews did not, because they would not so know him.

Secondly. He shews them the true cause of their ignorance of God; "if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." The reason why men are ignorant of God, is because they are unacquainted with Jesus Christ. Did we know Christ, 1st. In knowing him we should know the Father, whose person he is the express image of, *ch. xiv. 9*. Chrysostom proves hence the Godhead of Christ, and his equality with his Father. We cannot say, he that knows a man knows an angel, or he that knows a creature knows the Creator; but he that knows Christ knows the Father. 2nd. By him we shall be instructed in the knowledge of God, and introduced into an acquaintance with him. If we knew Christ better, we should know the Father better; but where the Christian religion is slighted and opposed, natural religion will soon be lost and laid aside. Deism makes way for Atheism. Those become vain in their imaginations concerning God that will not learn of Christ.

2. See how their hands were tied, though their tongues were thus let loose; such was the power of Heaven to restrain the malice of hell. "These words spake Jesus," these bold words, these words of conviction and reproof, "in the treasury," an apartment of the temple; where to be sure the chief priests, whose gain was their godliness, were mostly resident, attending the business of the revenue. Christ taught in the temple; sometimes in one part, sometimes in another, as he saw occasion. Now the priests, who had so great a stake in the temple, and looked upon it as their demesne, might easily, with the assistance of their janizaries, that were at their beck, either have seized him, and exposed him to the rage of the mob, and that punishment which they called the beating of the rebels, or at least have silenced him, and stopped his mouth there; as Amos, though tolerated in the land of Judah, was forbidden to prophesy in the king's chapel, *Am. vii. 12, 13*. Yet even in the temple, where they had him in their reach, "no man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come."

See here, 1st. The restraint laid upon his persecutors by an invisible power; none of them durst meddle with him. God can set bounds to the wrath of men, as he doth to the waves of the sea. Let us not therefore fear danger in the way of duty; for God hath Satan and all his instruments in a chain. 2nd. The reason of this restraint; "his hour was not yet come." The frequent mention of this intimates how much the time of our departure out of the world depends upon the fixed counsel and decree of God. It will come, it is coming; not yet come, but it is at hand. Our enemies cannot hasten it any sooner, nor our friends delay it any longer, than the time appointed of the Father; which is very comfortable to every good man, who can look up, and say with pleasure, "My times are in thy hands," and better there than in our own. His hour was not yet come, because his work was not done, nor his testimony finished. To all God's purposes there is a time.

21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. 22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. 23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. 25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. 26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. 27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. 28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. 29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. 30 As he spake these words, many believed on him.

Christ here gives fair warning to the careless, unbelieving Jews, to consider what would be the consequence of their infidelity, that they might prevent it before it was too late; for he spake words of terror as well as words of grace. Observe here,

1. The wrath threatened; ver. 21, "Jesus said again unto them," that which might be likely to do them good. He continued to teach in kindness to those few who received his doctrine, though there were many that resisted it, which is an example to ministers to go on with their work, notwithstanding opposition, because a remnant shall be saved. Here Christ changes his voice; he had piped to them, in the offers of his grace, and they had not danced; now he mourns to them, in the denunciations of his wrath, to try if they would lament.

"in your sin;" the sin being the one of unbelief in Christ. The complete harmony of the passage is then maintained; for in verse 24 "as sin which Christ indicates is, "If ye believe not that I am he." (See also Note on that verse.)

viii. 22. These words involve a bitter reproach, since among the Jews suicide was regarded as a crime which inevitably involved the punishment of hell.

viii. 24. "I said therefore . . . ye shall die in your sins:" "Your

He said, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins; whither I go, ye cannot come." Every word is terrible, and speaks spiritual judgments, which are the sorest of all others; worse than war, pestilence, and captivity, which the Old Testament prophets denounced. Four things are here threatened against the Jews:

First. Christ's departure from them: "I go my way;" that is, It shall not be long but I will go; you need not take so much pains to drive me from you, I shall go of myself. They said to him, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;" and he takes them at their word; but woe to those from whom Christ departs. Ichabod,—"the glory is gone;" our defence is departed when Christ goes. Christ frequently warned them of his departure before he left them; he bade often farewell, as one loath to depart, and willing to be invited, and that would have them stir up themselves to take hold on him.

Secondly. Their enmity to the true Messiah, and their fruitless and infatuated inquiries after another Messiah, when he was gone away, which were both their sins and their punishments. "Ye shall seek me;" which speaks either, 1. Their enmity to the true Christ; "Ye shall seek to ruin my interest, by persecuting my doctrine and followers, with a fruitless design to root them out; (this was a continual vexation and torment to themselves, made them incurably ill-natured, and brought wrath upon them, God's and their own, to the uttermost); or, 2. Their inquiries after false Christs. Ye shall continue your expectations of the Messiah, and be the self-perplexing seekers of a Christ to come 'when he is already come;' like the Sodomites, who being struck with blindness, wearied themselves to find the door, *Rom. ix. 31, 32*.

Thirdly. Their final impenitency: "Ye shall die in your sins." Here is an error in all our English Bibles, even the old Bishops' translation, and that of Geneva, the Rheimsists only excepted; for all the Greek copies have it in the singular number, *ἐν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ὑμῶν*, 'in your sin;' so all the Latin versions; and Calvin has a note upon the difference between this and ver. 24, where it is plural, *ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις*,—that here it is meant especially of the sin of unbelief, *in hoc peccato vestro*, 'in this sin of yours.' Note, Those that live in unbelief are for ever undone, if they die in unbelief. Or, it may be understood in general, "Ye shall die in your iniquity," as *Eze. iii. 19*; xxxiii. 9. Many that have long lived in sin, yet by a timely repentance, through grace, are saved from dying in sin; but to those who go out of this world of probation, into that of retribution, under the guilt of sin unpardoned, and the power of sin unbroken, there remaineth no relief; salvation itself cannot save them, *Job xx. 11*; *Eze. xxxii. 27*.

Fourthly. Their eternal separation from Christ and all happiness in him: "whither I go ye cannot come." When Christ left the world, he went to a state of perfect happiness, he went to paradise; thither he took the penitent thief with him, that did not die in his sins; but the impenitent not only shall not come to him, but they cannot; it is morally impossible, for heaven would not be heaven to those that die unsanctified, and unmeet for it. Ye cannot come, because ye have no right to enter into that Jerusalem, *Rev. xxii. 14*; "whither I go ye cannot come," to fetch me thence, so Dr. Whitby; and the same is the comfort of all good Christians, that when they are got to heaven, they will be out of the reach of their enemies' malice.

II. The jest they made of this threatening. Instead of trembling at this word, they bantered it, and turned it into ridicule; ver. 22, "Will he kill himself?" See here, 1. What slight thoughts they had of Christ's threatenings; they could make themselves and one another merry with them, as those that mocked the messengers of the Lord, and turned the burthen of the word of the Lord into a by-word, and precept upon precept, line upon line, into a merry song, *Isa. xxviii. 13*. But "be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong." 2. What ill thoughts they had of Christ's meaning, as if he had an inhuman design upon his own life, to avoid the indignities done him, like Saul. "This is indeed," say they, "to go whither we cannot follow him, for we will never kill ourselves." Thus they make him not only such a one as themselves, but worse; yet, in the calamities brought by the Romans upon the Jews, many of them in discontent and despair did kill themselves. They had put a much more favourable construction upon this word of his, *ch. vii. 34, 35*, "Will he go to the dispersed Gentiles?" But see how indulged malice grows more and more malicious.

III. The confirmation of what he said.

First. He said, "whither I go ye cannot come;" and here he gives a reason for that; ver. 23, "ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world." Ye are, *ἐκ τῶν κάτω*, of 'those things which are beneath;' noting, not so much their rise from beneath, as their affection to these lower things: "Ye are in with these things, as those that belong to them; how can you come where I go, when your spirit and disposition is so directly contrary to mine?" See here, 1. What the spirit of the Lord Jesus was; not of this world, but from above. He was perfectly dead to the wealth of the world, the ease of the body, and the praise of men, and was wholly taken up with divine and heavenly things; and none shall be with him but those who are born from above, and have their conversation in heaven. 2. How contrary to this their spirit was: "Ye are from beneath, and of this world." The Pharisees were of a carnal, worldly spirit; and what communion could Christ have with them?

Secondly. He had said, "Ye shall die in your sins," and here he stands to it; Therefore I said, ye shall die in your sins, because "ye are from beneath;" and he gives this farther reason for it, "if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins," ver. 24. See here,

1. What we are required to believe, "that I am he." *ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι*, 'that I am,' which is one of God's names, *Ex. iii. 14*. It was the Son of God that there said, *Ehejeh asher Ehejeh*,—"I will be what I will be;" for the deliverance of Israel was but a figure of good things to come; but now he saith, "I am he;" he that should come; he that you expect the Messiah to be, that you would have me to be to you. I am more than the bare name of the Messiah; I do not only call myself so, but I am he. True faith doth not amuse the soul with an empty sound of words, but affects it with the doctrine of Christ's mediation as a real thing, that has real effects.

2. How necessary it is that we believe this; if we have not this faith we shall die in our sins; for the matter is so settled, that without this faith, 1st. We cannot be saved from the power of sin while we live, and therefore shall certainly continue in it to the last. Nothing but the doctrine of Christ's grace will be an argument powerful enough, and none but the Spirit of Christ's grace will be an agent powerful enough, to turn us from sin to God; and that Spirit is given, and that doctrine given, to be effectual to those only who believe in Christ; so that if Satan be not by faith dispossessed, he has a lease of the soul for its life; if Christ do not cure us, our case is desperate, and we shall die in our sins. 2nd. Without faith we cannot be saved from the punishment of sin when we die; for the wrath of God remains upon them that believe not, *Mar. xvi. 16*. Unbelief is a damning sin, it is a sin against the remedy. Now this implies the great Gospel promise; if we believe that Christ is he, and receive him accordingly, we shall not die in our sins. The law saith absolutely to all, as Christ said, ver. 21, "ye shall die in your sin," for we are all guilty before God; but the Gospel is a defeasance of the obligation, upon condition of believing; the curse of the law is vacated and annulled to all that submit to the grace of the Gospel. Believers die in Christ,—in his love, in his arms,—and so are saved from dying in their sins.

carnal-mindedness hinders your believing in me; and continuance in sins (the plural here) is the inevitable consequence of continuance in the one sin—unbelief."

viii. 25. The latter clause is rendered by Alford, "In very deed the same which I also speak unto you." The interpretations of the passage are numerous. The best seems to be that which understands our Lord to say, "I am what now (and from the first) I have been telling you." In verse 23 he said, "I am from above."

IV. Here is a farther discourse concerning himself, occasioned by his requiring faith in himself as the condition of salvation, ver. 25—29. Observe, First. The question which the Jews put to him, ver. 25: "Who art thou?" This they asked tauntingly, and not with any desire to be instructed. He had said, ye must believe "that I am he." By his not saying expressly who he was, he plainly intimated, that in his person he was such a one as could not be described by any, and in his office such a one as was expected by all that looked for redemption in Israel; yet this awful manner of speaking, which had so much significance in it, they turned to his reproach, as if he knew not what to say of himself. "Who art thou?" that we must with an implicit faith believe in thee, that thou art some mighty he, we know not who, or what, nor are worthy to know?

Secondly. His answer to this question, wherein he directs them three ways for information:

1. He refers himself to what he had said all along. Do you ask who I am? "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning." The original here is a little intricate, *τὴν ἀρχὴν ὃ, τι καὶ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁμῶν*, which some read thus, 'I am the beginning, which also I speak unto you;' so Austin takes it. Christ is called *ἀρχή*, 'the Beginning,' Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 8; xxi. 6; iii. 14; and so it agrees with ver. 24, "I am he;" compare Isa. xli. 4, "I am the first," "I am he." Those who object that it is the accusative case, and therefore not properly answering to *τίς εἶ*, must undertake to construe by grammar rules that parallel expression, Rev. i. 8, ὁ ὢν. But most interpreters agree with our version. Do you ask who I am? 1st. "I am the same that I said to you from the beginning" of time, in the scriptures of the Old Testament, the same that from the beginning was said to be the seed of the woman, that should break the serpent's head. The same that in all ages of the church was the Mediator of the covenant, and the faith of the patriarchs. 2nd. From the beginning of my public ministry. The account he had already given of himself he resolved to abide by; he had declared himself to be the Son of God, ch. v. 16, to be the Christ, ch. iv. 26, and the Bread of Life; and had proposed himself as the object of that faith which is necessary to salvation, and to this he refers himself for an answer to their question. Christ is one with himself; what he had said from the beginning he saith still. His is an everlasting Gospel.

2. He refers himself to his Father's judgment, and the instructions he had from him, ver. 26: "I have many things," more than you think of, "to say, and, in them," to judge of you: but (why should I trouble myself any farther with you?) I know very well "he that sent me is true," and will stand by me, and bear me out; for "I speak to the world," to which I am sent as an ambassador, "those things," all those, and those only, "which I have heard of him." Here, 1st. He suppresseth his accusations of them. He had many things to charge them with, and many evidences to produce against them, but for the present he had said enough. Note. Whatever discoveries of sin are made to us, he that searcheth the heart hath still more to judge of us, 1 Jno. iii. 20. How much soever God reckons with sinners in this world, there is still a farther reckoning yet behind, Deu. xxxii. 34. Let us learn hence not to be forward to say all we can say, even against the worst of men; we may have many things to say by way of censure, which yet it is better to leave unsaid, for what is it to us? 2nd. He enters his appeal against them to his Father, "he that sent me." Here two things comfort him:

First. That he had been true to his Father, and to the trust reposed in him: "I speak to the world"—for his Gospel was to be preached to every creature—"those things which I have heard of him." Being given for a witness to the people, Isa. lv. 4, he was Amen, a faithful witness, Rev. iii. 14. He did not conceal his doctrine, but spoke it to the world; being of common concern, it was to be of common notice; nor did he change or alter it, nor vary from the instructions he received from Him that sent him.

Secondly. That his Father would be true to him; true to the promise, that he would make his mouth like a sharp sword; true to his purpose concerning him, which was a decree, Ps. ii. 7; true to the threatenings of his wrath against those that should reject him. Though he should not accuse them to his Father, yet the Father that sent him would undoubtedly reckon with them, and would be true to what he had said, Deu. xviii. 19, that whosoever would not hearken to that prophet whom God would raise up, he would require it of him. Christ would not accuse them; for, saith he, "he that sent me is true," and will pass judgment on them, though I should not demand judgment against them. Thus when he lets fall the present prosecution, he binds them over to the judgment day when it will be too late to dispute what they will not now be persuaded to believe. "I, as a deaf man, heard not, for thou wilt hear," Ps. xxxviii. 14, 15.

Upon this part of our Saviour's discourse, the evangelist has a melancholy remark; ver. 27, "they understood not that he spake to them of the Father." See here, 1st. The power of Satan to blind the minds of them which believe not. Though Christ spoke so plainly of God as his Father in heaven, yet they did not understand who he meant, but thought he spoke of some father he had in Galilee. Thus the plainest things are riddles and parables to those who are resolved to hold fast their prejudices; day and night are alike to the blind. 2nd. The reason why the threatenings of the Word make so little impression upon the minds of sinners. It is because they understand not whose the wrath is that is revealed in them. When Christ told them of the truth of Him that sent him, as a warning to them to prepare for his judgment, which is according to truth, they slighted the warning, because they understood not whose judgment it was that they made themselves obnoxious to.

3. He refers himself to their own convictions hereafter, ver. 28, 29. He finds they will not understand him, and therefore adjourns the trial till farther evidence should come in; they that will not see, yet shall see, Isa. xxvi. 11. Now observe here,

1st. What they should ere long be convinced of: "ye shall know that I am he," that Jesus is the true Messiah. Whether you will own it or no, before men, you shall be made to know it in your own consciences,—the convictions of which, though you may stifle, yet you cannot baffle,—"that I am he;" not which you represent me to be, but he that I preach myself to be; he that should come! Two things they should be convinced of, in order to this: First. That he did nothing of himself; not of himself as man, of himself alone, of himself without the Father, with whom he was one. He doth not hereby derogate from his own inherent power, but only denies their charge against him as a false prophet, of whom it is said that they prophesied out of their own hearts, and followed their own spirits. Secondly. That as his Father taught him, so he spake these things; that he was not *αὐτοδιδάκτος*, 'self-taught,' but *θεοδιδάκτος*, 'taught of God.' The doctrine he preached was the counterpart of the counsels of God, which he was intimately acquainted with, *καθὼς ἐδίδου ἐν ταῖς λαλήσιν*. "I speak those things not only which he taught me, but as he taught me," with the same Divine power and authority.

2nd. When they should be convinced of this; "when ye have lifted up the Son of man," lifted him up upon the cross, as the brazen serpent upon the pole, ch. iii. 14; as the sacrifices under the law, (for Christ is the great Sacrifice,) which, when they were offered, were said to be elevated or lifted up; hence the burnt offerings, the most ancient and honourable of all, were called *εlevationes*; (*Gnoluth* from *Gnoluth*, *ascendit*,—'he ascended'); and in many

other offerings they used the significant ceremony of heaving the sacrifice up, and moving it before the Lord; thus was Christ lifted up. Or it notes that death was his exaltation; they that put him to death, thought thereby for ever to have sunk him and his interest; but it proved to be the advancement of both, ch. xii. 24. When the Son of man was crucified, the Son of man was glorified. Christ had called his dying his going away; here, his being lifted up. Thus the death of the saints, as it is their departure out of this world, so it is their advancement to a better. Observe, he speaks of those he is now talking with as the instruments of his death; "when ye have lifted up the Son of man;" not that they were to be the priests to offer him up; no, that was his own act, "he offered up himself;" but they would be his betrayers and murderers; see Acts ii. 23; they lifted him up to the cross, but then he lifted up himself to his Father. Observe with what tenderness and mildness Christ here speaks to those who he certainly knew would put him to death, to teach us not to hate or seek the hurt of any, though we may have reason to think they hate us and seek our hurt.

Now Christ speaks of his death as that which would be a powerful conviction of the infidelity of the Jews; "when ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know" this. And why then? First. Because careless and unthinking people are often taught the worth of mercies by the want of them, Lu. xvii. 22. Secondly. The guilt of their sin in putting Christ to death would so awaken their consciences that they would be put upon serious inquiries after a Saviour, and then would know that Jesus was he who alone could save them. And so it proved when, being told that with wicked hands they had crucified and slain the Son of God, they cried out, "What shall we do?" and were made to know assuredly that this Jesus was Lord and Christ, Acts ii. 37. Thirdly. There would be such signs and wonders attending his death, and the lifting of him up from death in his resurrection, as would give a stronger proof of his being the Messiah than any that had been yet given; and multitudes were hereby brought to believe that Jesus is the Christ, who had before contradicted and opposed him. Fourthly. By the death of Christ, the pouring out of the Spirit was purchased, who would convince the world that Jesus is he, ch. xvi. 7, 8. Fifthly. The judgments which the Jews brought upon themselves, by putting Christ to death, which filled up the measure of their iniquity, were a sensible conviction to the most hardened among them that Jesus was he. Christ had often foretold that desolation, as the just punishment of their invincible unbelief and when it came to pass, (lo, it did come,) they could not but know that the great Prophet had been among them, Eze. xxxiii. 33.

3rd. What supported our Lord Jesus in the mean time; ver. 29, "He that sent me is with me," in my whole undertaking; "for the Father," the fountain and first spring of this affair, from whom, as its great cause and author, it is derived, "hath not left me alone," to manage it myself, nor deserted the business or me in the prosecution of it, "for I do always those things that please him." Here is,

First. The assurance which Christ had of his Father's presence with him; which includes both a Divine power going along with him, to enable him for his work, and a Divine favour manifested to him, to encourage him in it. "He that sent me is with me," Isa. xlii. 1; Ps. lxxxix. 21. This greatly emboldens our faith in Christ, and our reliance upon his word, that he had, and knew he had, his Father with him, to confirm the word of his servant, Isa. xlv. 26. The King of kings accompanied his own ambassador, to attest his mission, and assist his management; and never left him alone, either solitary or weak. It also aggravated the wickedness of those that opposed him, and was an intimation to them of the *premunire* they ran themselves into by resisting him, for thereby they were found fighters against God. How easily soever they might think to crush him, and run him down, let them know he had one to back him, with whom it is the greatest madness that can be to contend.

Secondly. The ground of this assurance; "for I do always those things that please him;" that is, 1st. That great affair which our Lord Jesus was continually engaged in, was an affair which the Father that sent him was highly well pleased with. His whole undertaking is called the pleasure of the Lord, Isa. liii. 10, because of the counsels of the eternal mind about it, and the complacency of the eternal mind in it. 2nd. His management of that affair was in nothing displeasing to his Father. In executing his commission, he punctually observed all his instructions, and did in nothing vary from them. No mere man since the fall could say such a word as this: "for in many things we offend all." But our Lord Jesus never offended his Father in any thing; but, as became him, he fulfilled all righteousness; and this was necessary to the validity and value of the sacrifice he was to offer up; for if he had in any thing displeased the Father himself, and so had had any sin of his own to answer for, the Father could not have been pleased with him as a propitiation for our sins. But such a priest, and such a sacrifice, became us, as was perfectly pure and spotless. We may likewise learn hence that God's servants may then expect God's presence with them when they choose and do those things that please him, Isa. lxvi. 4, 5.

V. Here is the good effect which this discourse of Christ's had upon some of his hearers; ver. 30, "As he spake these words, many believed on him." Note, 1. Though multitudes perish in their unbelief, yet there is a remnant, according to the election of grace, who believe to the saving of the soul. If Israel, the whole body of the people, be not gathered, yet there are those of them in whom Christ will be glorious, Isa. xlix. 5. This the apostle insists upon, to reconcile the Jews' rejection with the promises made unto their fathers: there is a remnant, Rom. xi. 5. 2. The words of Christ, and particularly his threatening words, are made effectual, by the grace of God, to bring in poor souls to believe in him. When Christ told them that, if they believed not, they should die in their sins, and never get to heaven, they thought it was time to look about them, Rom. i. 16, 18. 3. Sometimes there is a wide door opened, and an effectual one, even there where there are many adversaries. Christ will carry on his work though the heathen rage. The Gospel gains great victories sometimes there where it meets with great opposition. Let this encourage God's ministers to preach the Gospel, though it be with much contention, for they shall not labour in vain. Many may be secretly brought home to God by those endeavours which are openly contradicted and cavilled at by men of corrupt minds. Austin has an affectionate ejaculation in his lecture upon these words, *Utinam et, me loquenti, multi credant; non in me, sed mecum in eo!*—'I wish that, when I speak, many may believe, not on me, but with me on Him!'

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall

viii. 26. "To judge:" probably referring to the work of the Spirit. (See chap. xvi. 8, 9.) The sin which the Spirit was to convince of is that explicitly stated here in verse 24: "because they believe not on me." This completes the harmony of the passage.

viii. 28. "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man;" the crucifixion verified this prediction, and so far proved Christ's truth; but more so, the outpouring of the Spirit to convince

viii. 31. "Jews which believed on him;" it does not appear that

this was a very sincere belief. At any rate, our Lord's language seems designed to test it, before committing himself to them. (Compare chap. ii. 23, 24.) The test is twofold—he insists on constancy; he promises them freedom. The promise of this would be welcome to those who really felt spiritual bondage.

viii. 33. The way in which the promise was received by some shows the need of such a test-promise. They were blind; their sin remained. (Compare chap. ix. 40, 41.)

be made free? 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

We have in these verses,

I. A comfortable doctrine laid down concerning the spiritual liberty of Christ's disciples, intended for the encouragement of those Jews which believed. Christ, knowing that his doctrine began to work upon some of his hearers, and perceiving that virtue had gone out of him, turned his discourse from the proud Pharisees, and addressed himself to those weak believers; then, when he had denounced wrath against those that were hardened in unbelief, then he spoke comfort to those few feeble Jews which believed on him. See here, 1. How graciously the Lord Jesus looks to those that tremble at his word, and are ready to receive it; he hath something to say to those who have hearing ears, and will not pass by those who set themselves in his way without speaking to them. 2. How carefully he cherisheth the beginnings of grace, and meets those that are coming towards him. These Jews that believed were yet but weak, but Christ did not therefore cast them off, for he gathers the lambs in his arms. When faith is in its infancy, he hath knees to prevent it, breasts for it to suck, that it may not die from the womb. In what he said to them we have two things, which he saith to all that should at any time believe:

First. The character of a true disciple of Christ: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." When they believed on him as the great Prophet, they gave up themselves to be his disciples. Now, at their entrance into his school, he lays down this for a settled rule, that he would own none for his disciples but those that continued in his word. 1. It is implied that there are many who profess themselves Christ's disciples that are not his disciples indeed, but only in show and name. 2. It highly concerns those that are not strong in faith, yet to see to it that they be sound in the faith; that though they be not disciples of the highest form, yet that they be disciples indeed. 3. Those that seem willing to be Christ's disciples ought to be told that they had as good never come to him, unless they come with a resolution by his grace to abide by him. Let those that have thoughts of covenanting with Christ, have no thoughts of reserving a power of revocation. Children are set to school and bound apprentices only for a few years; but those only are Christ's that are willing to be bound to him for term of life. 4. They only that continue in Christ's word shall be accepted as his disciples indeed; that adhere to his word in every instance, without partiality, and abide by it to the end, without apostasy. It is *perpetuum*, to dwell in Christ's word, as a man doth at home, which is centre, and rest, and refuge. Our converse with the Word, and conformity to it, must be constant. If we continue disciples to the last, then, and not otherwise, we approve ourselves disciples indeed.

Secondly. The privilege of a true disciple of Christ. Here are two precious promises made to those who thus approve themselves disciples indeed, ver. 32:

1. "Ye shall know the truth," shall know all that truth which it is needful and profitable for you to know, and shall be more confirmed in the belief of it, shall know the certainty of it. Note, 1st. Even those who are true believers and disciples indeed, yet may be, and are, much in the dark concerning many things which they should know. God's children are but children, and understand and speak as children. Did we not need to be taught, we should not need to be disciples. 2nd. It is a very great privilege to know the truth; to know the particular truths which we are to believe, in their mutual dependencies and connexions, and the grounds and reasons of our belief; to know what is truth, and what proves it to be so. 3rd. It is a gracious promise of Christ, to all who continue in his Word, that they shall know the truth as far as it is needful and profitable for them. Christ's scholars are sure to be well taught.

2. "The truth shall make you free;" that is, 1st. The truth which Christ teacheth tends to make men free, *Isa. lxi. 1*. Justification makes us free from the guilt of sin, by which we were bound over to the judgment of God, and bound under amazing fears; sanctification makes us free from the bondage of corruption, by which we were restrained from that service which is perfect freedom, and constrained to that which is perfect slavery. Gospel truth frees us from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and the more grievous burthens of the traditions of the elders; it makes us free from our spiritual enemies, free in the service of God, free to the privileges of sons, and free of the Jerusalem which is from above, which is free. 2nd. The knowing, entertaining, and believing of this truth, doth actually make us free; free from prejudices, mistakes, and false notions, than which nothing doth more enslave and entangle the soul; free from the dominion of lust and passion; and restores the soul to the government of itself, by reducing it into obedience to its Creator. The mind, by admitting the truth of Christ in the light and power, is vastly enlarged, and hath scope and compass given it, is greatly elevated and raised above things of sense, and never acts with so true a liberty as when it acts under a Divine command, *2 Cor. iii. 17*. The enemies of Christianity pretend to free-thinking, whereas really those are the freest reasonings that are guided by faith, and those are men of free thought whose thoughts are captivated and brought into obedience to Christ.

II. The offence which the carnal Jews took at this doctrine, and their objection against it. Though it was a doctrine that brought glad tidings of liberty to the captives, yet they cavilled at it, ver. 33. The Pharisees, who grudging this comfortable word to them that believed, the standers by, who had no part or lot in this matter,—they thought themselves reflected upon and affronted by the gracious charter of liberty granted to them that believed; and therefore with a great deal of pride and envy they answered him, "We" Jews "be Abraham's seed," and therefore are freeborn, and have not lost our birthright freedom; "we were never in bondage to any man, how sayest thou," to us Jews, "Ye shall be made free?"

1. See here "that it was that they were aggrieved at. It was an innuendo in those words, "Ye shall be made free;" as if the Jewish church and nation were in some sort of bondage, which reflected on the Jews in general; and as if all that did not believe in Christ continued in that bondage, which reflected on the Pharisees in particular. Note, The privileges of the faithful are the envy and vexation of unbelievers, *Ps. cxii. 10*.

2. See what it was that they alleged against it. Whereas Christ intimated that they needed to be made free; they urge,

1st. "We be Abraham's seed," and Abraham was a prince, and a great man; though we live in Canaan, we are not descended from Canaan, nor under his doom, "a servant of servants shall he be;" we hold in *frank-almoign*,—free alms, and not in *villenage*,—by a servile tenure. It is common for a sinking, decaying family to boast of the glory and dignity of its ancestors, and to borrow honour from that name to which they repay disgrace; so the Jews here did. But this was not all: Abraham was in covenant with God, and his children by his right, *Rom. xi. 28*. Now that covenant no doubt was a free charter, and invested them in privileges not consistent with a state of slavery, *Rom. ix. 4*; and therefore they think they had no occasion, with so great a sum as they reckoned faith in Christ to be, to obtain this freedom, when they were thus freeborn. Note, It is the common fault and folly of those that have pious parentage and education to trust to it, and boast of it, as if it would atone for the want of real holiness. They were Abraham's seed; but what would that avail them, when we find one in hell that could call Abraham, Father? Saving benefits are not like common privileges, conveyed by entail to us and our issue; nor can a title to heaven be made by descent; neither may we claim as heirs at law, by making out our pedigree: our title is purely by purchase,—not our own, but our Redeemer's for us,—under certain provisos and limitations, which if we do not observe, it will not avail us to be Abraham's seed. Thus many, when they are pressed with the necessity of regeneration, turn it off with this, We are the church's children. But "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel."

2nd. "We were never in bondage to any man." Now observe, 1st. How false this allegation was. I wonder how they could have the confidence to say a thing in the face of a congregation which was so notoriously untrue. Was not the seed of Abraham in bondage to the Egyptians? Were they not often in bondage to the neighbour nations in the time of the judges? Were they not seventy years captives in Babylon? Nay, were they not at this time tributaries to the Romans; and though not in a personal, yet in a national, bondage to them, and groaning to be made free? And yet, to confront Christ, they have the impudence to say, "We were never in bondage." Thus they would expose Christ to the ill-will both of the Jews, who were very jealous for the honour of their liberty, and of the Romans, who would not be thought to enslave the nations they conquered. Secondly. How foolish the application was. Christ had spoken of the liberty wherewith the truth would make them free, which must be meant of a spiritual liberty; for truth, as it is the enriching, so it is the enfranchising, of the mind, and the enlarging of that from the captivity of error and prejudice; and yet they plead, to the offer of spiritual liberty, that they were never in corporal thralldom; as if, because they were never in bondage to any man, they were never in bondage to any lust. Note, Carnal hearts are sensible of no other grievances but those that molest the body, and distress the secular affairs. Talk to them of encroachments upon their civil liberty and property,—tell them of waste committed upon their lands, or damage done to their houses, and they understand you very well, and can give you a sensible answer; the thing toucheth them, and affects them; but discourse to them of the bondage of sin, a captivity to Satan, and a liberty by Christ,—tell them of wrong done to their precious souls, and the hazard of their eternal welfare, and you bring certain strange things to their ears; they say of it, as they did, *Eze. xx. 49*, "Doth he not speak parables?" This here was much like the blunder Nicodemus made about being born again.

III. Our Saviour's vindication of this doctrine from these objections, and the farther explication of it, ver. 34—37, where he doth these four things:

First. He shews that, notwithstanding their civil liberties, and their visible church-membership, yet it was possible they might be in a state of bondage; ver. 34, "Whosoever committeth sin," though he be of Abraham's seed, and never in bondage to any man, yet he "is the servant of sin." Observe, Christ doth not upbraid them with the falsehood of their plea, or their present bondage, but farther explains what he had said for their edification. Thus ministers should with meekness instruct those that oppose them, that they may recover themselves; not with passion provoke them to entangle themselves yet more. Now here,

1. The preface is very solemn; "Verily, verily, I say unto you;" an awful asseveration, which our Saviour often used to command a reverent attention, and a ready assent. The style of the prophets was "Thus saith the Lord," for they were faithful as servants; but Christ being a Son, speaks in his own name, "I say unto you," I, the amen, the faithful witness; he pawns his veracity upon it. I say it to you, who boast of your relation to Abraham, as if that would save you.

2. The truth is of universal concern, though here delivered upon a particular occasion, "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin," and sadly wants to be made free. A state of sin is a state of bondage. 1st. See who it is on whom this brand is fastened; on him who commits sin; *ἡς ὁ νόμος ἀπαργίας*,—"every one that makes sin." There is not a just man upon earth, that lives and sins not; yet every one that sins is not a servant of sin, for then God would have no servants; but he that makes sin, that makes choice of sin, prefers the way of wickedness before the way of holiness, *Jer. xlv. 16, 17*, that makes a covenant with sin, enters into league with it, and makes a marriage with it; that makes contrivances of sin, makes provision for the flesh, and deviseth iniquity; and that makes a custom of sin, who walks after the flesh, and makes a trade of sin. 2nd. See what the brand is which Christ fastens upon them that thus commit sin; he stigmatizeth them, gives them a mark of servitude; they are servants of sin, imprisoned under the guilt of sin, under an arrest, in hold for it, concluded under sin, and they are subject to the power of sin. He is a "servant of sin," that is, he makes himself so, and is so accounted; he hath sold himself to work wickedness; his lusts give law to him; he is at their beck, and is not his own master. He doth the work of sin, supports its interest, and accepts its wages, *Rom. vi. 16*.

Secondly. He shews them that, being in a state of bondage, their having a room in the house of God would not entitle them to the inheritance of sons, for, ver. 35, "the servant," though he be in the house for a while, yet being but a servant, "abideth not in the house for ever;" services, we say, are no inheritances; they are but temporary, and not for a perpetuity; "but the Son" of the family "abideth ever." Now,

1. This points primarily at the rejection of the Jewish church and nation. Israel had been God's son, his firstborn; but they wretchedly degenerated into a servile disposition, were enslaved to the world and the flesh; and therefore, though by virtue of their birthright they thought themselves secure of their church-membership, Christ tells them that, having thus made themselves servants, they should not abide in the house for ever. Jerusalem, by opposing the Gospel of Christ, which proclaimed liberty, and adhering to the Sinai covenant, which gendered to bondage, after its term was expired, came to be in bondage with her children, *Gal. iv. 24, 25*; and therefore was unchurch'd and disfranchis'd, her charter seized and taken away, and she was cast out as the son of the bondwoman, *Gen. xxi. 20*. Chrysostom gives this sense of this place. Think not to be made free from sin by the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, for Moses was but a servant, and had not that perpetual authority in the church which the Son had; but, if the Son make you free, it is well, ver. 36. But,

2. It looks farther, to the rejection of all that are the servants of sin, and

viii. 34. "Is the servant (rather, bondsman) of sin:" "Sin is the predominating element in spiritual slavery, and to do sin is at once its consequence and the sign by which it is betrayed. Accordingly, he who is really free ('free indeed') appears entirely freed from the control of sin" (Olshausen). This perfect freedom Christ promises, and will in the end be obtained by those who entrust themselves to his discipline. (Compare chap. xv. 2.)

viii. 37. "Hath no place in you;" Alford translates, "gaineth

no ground in you." This suits better the case of those who were disposed to believe, but who did not appreciate the more spiritual aspects of truth unfolded in verses 31, 32. This idea is well expressed in Wycliffe's version, "My word taketh not with you."

viii. 38. "I have seen:" expressive of knowledge by actual and personal perception. (Compare chap. iii. 11, 32.) "With my Father:" along with him; while abiding with him.

viii. 39. "Abraham's children:" Olshausen notices the antithesis

receive not the adoption of the sons of God: though those unprofitable servants may be in God's house a while, as retainers to his family, yet there is a day coming when the children of the bondwoman and of the free shall be distinguished. True believers only, who are the children of the promise, and of the covenant, are accounted free, and shall abide for ever in the house, as Isaac; they shall have a nail in the holy place on earth, *Jer. ix. 8*, and mansions in the holy place in heaven, *ch. xiv. 2*.

Thirdly, He shews them the way of deliverance out of this state of bondage, into the glorious liberty of the children of God, *Rom. viii. 21*. The case of those that are the servants of sin is sad, but, thanks be to God, it is not hopeless, it is not hopeless. As it is the privilege of all the sons of the family, and their dignity above the servants, that they abide in the house for ever,—so he, who is the Son, the Firstborn among many brethren, the Heir of all things, he has a power both of manumission and of adoption; ver. 36, "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." Note.

1. Jesus Christ, in the Gospel, offers us our freedom. He has authority and power to make free: 1st. To discharge prisoners: this he doth in justification, by making satisfaction for our guilt, on which the gospel offer is grounded, which is to all a conditional act of indemnity, and to all true believers, upon their believing, an absolute charter of pardon; and for our debts, for which we were by the law arrested and in execution, Christ, as our surety, or rather our bail, (for he was not originally bound with us, but, upon our insolvency, bound for us,) compounds with the Creditor, answers the demands of injured justice with more than an equivalent, takes the bond and judgment into his own hands, and gives them up cancelled, to all that by faith and repentance give him (if I may so say) a counter security, to save his honour harmless,—and so they are made free; and from the debt, and every part thereof, they are for ever acquitted, exonerated, and discharged, and a general release sealed of all actions and claims; whilst against those who refuse to come up to these terms, the securities lie still in the Redeemer's hands in full force. 2nd. He has a power to rescue bond-slaves, and this he doth in sanctification; by the powerful arguments of his Gospel, and the powerful operations of his Spirit, he breaks the power of corruption in the soul, rallies the scattered forces of reason and virtue, and fortifies God's interest against sin and Satan, and so the soul is made free. 3rd. He has a power to naturalize strangers and foreigners, and this he doth in adoption. This is a farther act of grace; we are not only forgiven and healed, but preferred; there is a charter of privileges as well as pardon, and thus the Son makes us free denizens of the kingdom of priests, the holy nation, the new Jerusalem.

2. Those whom Christ makes free are free indeed. It is not ἀληθῶς, the word used, ver. 31, for disciples 'indeed,' but ὀντως, 'really.' It notes, 1st. The truth and certainty of the promise; the liberty which the Jews boasted of was an imaginary liberty, they boasted of a false gift; but the liberty which Christ gives is a certain thing, it is real, and has real effects; the servants of sin promise themselves liberty, and fancy themselves free, when they have broken religion's bands asunder; but they cheat themselves; none are free indeed but those whom Christ makes free. 2nd. It notes the singular excellency of the freedom promised; it is a freedom that deserves the name, in comparison with which all other liberties are no better than slaveries; so much doth it turn to the honour and advantage of those that are made free by it. It is a glorious liberty; it is that which is, (so ὀντως signifies;) it is substance, *Pr. viii. 21*, while the things of the world are shadows, things that are not.

Fourthly, He applies this to these unbelieving, cavilling Jews. In answer to their boasts of relation to Abraham, ver. 37, "I know" very well "that ye are Abraham's seed, but now ye seek to kill me," and therefore have forfeited the honour of your relation to Abraham, "because my word hath no place in you." Observe here,

1. The dignity of their extraction allowed them; "I know that ye are Abraham's seed," every one knows it, and it is your honour. He grants them what was true; and in what they said that was false, that they "were never in bondage to any," he doth not contradict them, for he studied to profit them, and not to provoke them, and therefore said that which would please them, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed." They boasted of their descent from Abraham, as that which aggrandized their names, and made them exceeding honourable; whereas really it did but aggravate their crimes, and make them exceeding sinful. Out of their own mouths will he judge vainglorious hypocrites, who boast of their parentage and education: "Are you Abraham's seed? why then did you not tread in the steps of his faith and obedience?"

2. The disagreeableness of their practice with this dignity; "but ye seek to kill me." They had attempted it several times, and were now designing it, which quickly appeared, ver. 59, when "they took up stones to cast at him." Christ knows all the wickedness not only which men do, but which they seek and design, and endeavour to do. To seek to kill any innocent man is a crime black enough, but to compass and imagine the death of him that was King of kings, was a crime which we want words to express the heinousness of.

3. The reason of this inconsistency; why were they that were Abraham's seed so very inveterate against Abraham's promised seed, in whom they and "all the families of the earth should be blessed?" Our Saviour here tells them it is because "my word hath no place in you,"—ὅτι χωρεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, *non capit in vobis*, so the Vulgate; "my word doth not take with you; you have no inclination to it, no relish of it; other things are more taking, more pleasing; or, it doth not take hold of you; it hath no power over you; makes no impression upon you." Some of the critics read it, "my word doth not penetrate into you;" it descended as the rain, but it came upon them as the rain upon the rock, which it runs off, and did not soak into their hearts, as the rain upon the ploughed ground. The Syriac reads it, "because ye do not acquiesce in my word; you are not persuaded of the truth of it, nor pleased with the goodness of it." Our translation is very significant; it "has no place in you." They "sought to kill him," and so effectually to silence him, not because he had done them any harm, but because they could not bear the convincing, commanding power of his word. Note, 1st. The words of Christ ought to have a place in us, the innermost and uppermost place; a dwelling-place, as a man at home, and not as a stranger or sojourner; a working place,—it must have room to operate, to work sin out of us, and to work grace in us; it must have a ruling place,—its place must be upon the throne, it must dwell in us richly. 2nd. There are many that make a profession of religion, in whom the word of Christ has no place; they will not allow it a place, for they do not like it; Satan doth all he can to displace it, and other things possess the place it should have in us. 3rd. Where the word of God has no place, no good is to be expected; for room is left there for all wickedness. If the unclean spirit find the heart empty of Christ's word, he enters in and dwells there.

38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. 39 They answered and said unto him,

between the term "children" here, and "seed" in verse 37. They were Abraham's descendants (children by birth); they were not Abraham's children spiritually: the family likeness was wanting.

viii. 42. As the resemblance to Abraham was wanting, so also were the marks of their being sons of God. Their incapacity to perceive that which was divine in Christ proved their alienation from God. "The sight of a kindred object awakens responses; in Christ the pure revelation of Deity was given, and therefore he

Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. 41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. 42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. 46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

Here Christ and the Jews are still at it; he sets himself to convince and convert them, while they still set themselves to contradict and oppose him.

I. He here traceth the difference between his sentiments and theirs, to a different rise and original; ver. 38, "I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father." Here are two fathers spoken of, according to the two families into which the sons of men are divided, God and the devil; and, without controversy, these are contrary the one to the other.

First, Christ's doctrine was from heaven; it was copied out of the counsels of infinite Wisdom, and the kind intentions of eternal Love. 1. "I speak that which I have seen." The discoveries Christ has made us, of God and another world, are not grounded upon guess and hearsay, but upon ocular inspection; so that he was thoroughly apprised of the nature, and ascertained of the truth, of all he said. He that is given to be a witness to the people is an eye-witness, and therefore unexceptionable. 2. It is what "I have seen with my Father." The doctrine of Christ is not a plausible hypothesis, supported by probable arguments, but it is an exact counterpart of the incontestable truths lodged in the eternal Mind. It was not only what he had heard from his Father, but what he had seen with him, when the counsel of peace was between them both. Moses spake what he heard from God, but he might not see the face of God; Paul had been in the third heaven, but what he had seen there he could not, he must not utter; for it was Christ's prerogative to have seen what he spoke, and to speak what he had seen.

Secondly, Their doings were from hell; "Ye do that which ye have seen with your father." Ye do by your own works father yourselves, for it is evident whom ye resemble, and therefore easy to find out your original. As a child that is trained up with his father, learns his father's words and fashions, and grows like him by an affected imitation, as well as by a natural image, so these Jews, by their malicious opposition to Christ and the Gospel, made themselves as like the devil as if they had industriously set him before them for their pattern.

II. He takes off, and answers, their vainglorious boasts of relation to Abraham and to God, as their fathers, and shews the vanity and falsehood of their pretensions.

First, They pleaded relation to Abraham, and he replied to that plea; they said, "Abraham is our father," ver. 39. In this they intended, 1. To do honour to themselves, and to make themselves look great. They had forgot the mortification given them by that acknowledgment prescribed them, *Deu. xxvi. 5*, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father." And the charge exhibited against their degenerate ancestors, whose steps they trod in, and not those of the first founder of the family,—"thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite," *Eze. xvi. 3*. As it is common for those families that are sinking and going to decay to brag most of their pedigree, so it is common for those churches that are corrupt and depraved to value themselves upon their antiquity, and the eminence of their first planters: *Fuimus Troes fuit Ilium*,—"We have been Trojans, and there once was Troy." 2. They designed to cast an odium upon Christ, as if he reflected upon the patriarch Abraham, in speaking of their father as one they had learned evil from. See how they sought an occasion to quarrel with him.

Now Christ overthrows this plea, and discovers the vanity of it, by a plain and cogent argument. Abraham's children will do the works of Abraham, but ye do not do Abraham's works, therefore ye are not Abraham's children.

1. The proposition is plain; "If ye were Abraham's children," such children of Abraham as could claim an interest in the covenant made with him and his seed, which would indeed put an honour upon you, then "ye would do the works of Abraham;" for to those only of Abraham's house who kept the way of the Lord, as Abraham did, would God perform what he had spoken, *Gen. xviii. 19*. Those only are reckoned the seed of Abraham, to whom the promise belongs, that tread in the steps of his faith and obedience, *Rom. iv. 12*. Though the Jews had their genealogies, and kept them exact, yet they could not by them make out their relation to Abraham, so as to take the benefit of the old entail, *per formam domi*,—"according to the form of the gift," unless they walked in the same spirit; good women's relation to Sarah is proved only by this, "whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well," and no longer, *1 Pet. iii. 6*. Note, Those who would approve themselves Abraham's

who knew God would certainly recognise him as the Holy One of God" (Olshausen).

viii. 43. "Speech," "word:" the contrast between these two must not be overlooked. "Speech" refers to what he had been saying; "word" to the spiritual doctrine or truth, which he all along was revealing. They could not understand his "sayings," because they had no sympathy with the truth.

viii. 44. "Your father the devil:" Alford sees in this verse "one

seed, must not only be of Abraham's faith, but do Abraham's works, *Jas. ii. 21, 22*; must come at God's call, as he did; must follow God wherever he leads them; must resign their dearest comforts to him; must be strangers and sojourners in this world; must keep up the worship of God in their families, and always walk before God in their uprightness, for these were the works of Abraham.

2. The assumption is evident likewise: But ye do not do the works of Abraham, for "ye seek to kill me, a man that has told you the truth, which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham," *ver. 40*.

1st. He shews them what their work was—their present work, which they were now about; they "sought to kill him," and three things are intimated as an aggravation of their intention: *First*. They were so unnatural as to seek the life of a man,—a man like themselves, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh,—who had done them no harm, nor given them any provocation; "ye imagine mischief against a man," *Ps. lxi. 3*. *Secondly*. They were so ungrateful as to seek the life of one that had told them the truth; had not only done them no injury, but done them the greatest kindness that could be; had not only not imposed upon them with a lie, but had instructed them in the most necessary and important truths; was he therefore become their enemy? *Thirdly*. They were so ungodly as to seek the life of one that told them the truth, which he had heard from God, who was a messenger sent from God to them; so that their attempt against him was *quasi* *Deicidium*,—"an act of malice against God himself." This was their work, and they persisted in it.

2nd. He shews them that this did not become the children of Abraham; for "this did not Abraham." *First*. He did nothing like this. He was famous for his humanity,—witness his rescue of the captives; and for his piety,—witness his obedience to the heavenly vision in many instances, and some tender ones. Abraham believed God, these were obstinate in unbelief; Abraham followed God, these fought against him; so that he would be ignorant of them, and would not acknowledge them, they were so unlike him, *Isa. lxiii. 16*; see *Jer. xx. 15—17*. *Secondly*. He would not have done thus, if he had lived now, or I had lived then; *hoc Abraham non fecisset*,—"He would not have done this," so some read it. We should thus reason ourselves out of any way of wickedness; would Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob have done so? We cannot expect to be ever with them, if we be never like them.

3. The conclusion follows of course, *ver. 41*: "Whatever your boasts and pretensions be, you are not Abraham's children, but father yourselves upon another family, *ver. 41*. There is a father, whose deeds you do, whose spirit ye are of, and whom ye resemble." He doth not yet say plainly that he means the devil, till they by their continued cavils forced him so to explain himself; which teacheth us to treat even bad men with civility and respect, and not to be forward to say that of them, or to them, which, though true, sounds harsh. He tried whether they would suffer their own consciences to infer, from what he said, that they were the devil's children; and it is better to hear it from them now we are called to repent, that is, to change our father and change our family, by changing our spirit and way, than hear it from Christ in the great day.

Secondly. So far were they from owning their unworthiness of relation to Abraham, that they plead relation to God himself as their father: "We be not born of fornication," we are not bastards, but legitimate sons; "we have one Father, even God."

1. Some understand this literally. They were not the sons of the bond-woman, as the Ishmaelites were; nor begotten in incest, as the Moabites and Ammonites were; *Deu. xxiii. 3*; nor were they a spurious brood in Abraham's family, but Hebrews of the Hebrews; and being born in lawful wedlock, they might call God Father, who instituted that honourable estate in innocence; for a legitimate seed, not tainted with divorces, or the plurality of wives, is called "a seed of God," *Mal. iii. 15*.

2. Others take it figuratively. They begin to be aware now, that Christ spoke of a spiritual, not a carnal fatherhood—of the father of their religion; and so.

1st. They deny themselves to be a generation of idolaters; "we be not born of fornication," are not the children of idolatrous parents, nor have been bred up in idolatrous worship. Idolatry is often spoken of as spiritual whoredom, and idolaters as children of whoredoms, *Hos. ii. 4*; *Jer. lvi. 3*. Now if they mean that they were not the posterity of idolaters, the allegation was false, for no nation was more addicted to idolatry than the Jews before the captivity. If they mean no more but that they themselves were not idolaters, what then? A man may be free from idolatry, and yet perish in another iniquity, and be shut out of Abraham's covenant. If thou commit no idolatry, (apply it to this spiritual fornication,) yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the covenant. A rebellious, prodigal son will be disinherited, though he be not born of fornication.

2nd. They boast themselves to be true worshippers of the true God. We have not many fathers, as the heathen had,—gods many, and lords many,—and yet were without God; as *filius populi*,—"a son of the people," has many fathers, and yet none certain; no, "the Lord our God is one Lord," and one Father, and therefore it is well with us. Note, Those flatter themselves, and put a damning cheat upon their own souls, who imagine that their professing the true religion, and worshipping the true God, will save them, though they worship not God in spirit and in truth, nor are true to their profession.

Now our Saviour gives a full answer to this fallacious plea, *ver. 42, 43*; and proves by two arguments, that they had no right to call God father:

First. They did not love Christ. "If God were your Father, you would love me." He had disproved their relation to Abraham, by their going about to kill him, *ver. 40*; but here he disproves their relation to God, by their not loving and owning him. A man may pass for a child of Abraham, if he do not appear an enemy to Christ by gross sin; but he cannot approve himself a child of God unless he be a faithful friend and follower of Christ. Note, All that have God for their Father, have a true love to Jesus Christ; an esteem of his person, a grateful sense of his love, a sincere affection to his cause and kingdom, a complacency in the salvation wrought out by him, and in the method and terms of it, and a care to keep his commandments, which is the surest evidence of our love to him. We are here in a state of probation, upon our trial, how we will carry ourselves towards our Maker, and accordingly it will be with us in the state of retribution. God has taken various methods to prove us, and this was one; he sent his Son into the world with sufficient proofs of his sonship and mission, concluding that all that called him Father would "kiss his Son," and bid him welcome, who was the firstborn among many brethren: see *1 Jno. v. 1*. By this our adoption will be proved or disproved, did we love Christ or not? If any man do not, he is so far from being a child of God, that he is *anathema*,—"accursed," *1 Cor. xvi. 22*.

Now our Saviour proves, that if they were God's children they would love him; for, saith he, I proceeded forth and came from God." They will love him; for, 1. He was the Son of God: "I proceeded forth from God: *ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*;" this means his Divine essence, or original from the Father, by the communication of the Divine essence, and also the union of the Divine *λογος* to his human nature: so Dr. Whitby. Now this could not but recommend him to the affections of all that were born of God. Christ is called the beloved,

because, being the beloved of the Father, he is certainly the beloved of all the saints, *Eph. i. 6*. 2. He was "sent of God," came from him as an ambassador to the world of mankind. He did not come of himself, as the false prophets, who had not either their mission or their message from God, *Jer. xxiii. 21*. Observe the emphasis he lays upon this, "I came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." He had both his credentials and his instructions from God; he came to "gather together in one the children of God," *ch. xi. 52*; "to bring many sons to glory," *Heb. ii. 10*. And would not all God's children embrace with both arms a messenger sent from their Father on such errands? But these Jews made it appear they were nothing akin to God, by their want of affection to Jesus Christ.

Secondly. They did not understand him. It was a sign they did not belong to God's family, that they did not understand the language and dialect of the family; "Why do ye not understand my speech?" *ver. 43*: *τὴν λαλῶσαν τὴν ἑμὴν*. Christ's speech was Divine and heavenly, but intelligible enough to those that were acquainted with the voice of Christ in the Old Testament; those that had made the word of the Creator familiar to them, needed no other key to the dialect of the Redeemer; and yet these Jews make strange of the doctrine of Christ, and find knots in it, and I know not what stumbling-stones. Could a Galilean be known by his speech? an Ephraimite by his "Sibboleth?" and would any have the confidence to call God Father, to whom the Son of God was a barbarian? even when he spoke the will of God in the words of the Spirit of God? Note, Those who are not acquainted with the Divine speech have reason to fear that they are strangers to the Divine nature. Christ spoke the words of God (*ch. iii. 34*) in the dialect of the kingdom of God, and yet they who pretended to belong to the kingdom understood not the idioms and the proprieties of it, but, like strangers, and rude ones too, ridiculed it. And the reason why they did not understand Christ's speech made the matter much worse; "even because ye cannot hear my word," that is, you cannot persuade yourselves to hear it attentively, impartially, and without prejudice, as it should be heard. The meaning of this, "cannot" is an obstinate "will not," as the Jews could not hear Stephen, (*Acts vii. 57*), nor Paul, (*Acts xxii. 22*). Note, The rooted antipathy of men's corrupt hearts to the doctrine of Christ, is the true reason of their ignorance of it, and their errors and mistakes about it: they do not like it, nor love it, and therefore they will not understand it; like Peter, who pretended he "knew not what the damsel said," *Mat. xxvi. 70*, when in truth he knew not what to say to it. "Ye cannot hear my words," for you have stopped your ears, *Ps. lviii. 4, 5*; and God, in a way of righteous judgment, has made your ears heavy, *Isa. vi. 10*.

III. Having thus disproved their relation, both to Abraham and to God, he comes next to tell them plainly whose children they were; "ye are of your father the devil," *ver. 44*. If they be not God's children they are the devil's; for God and Satan divide the world of mankind. The devil is therefore said to work "in the children of disobedience," *Eph. ii. 2*. All wicked people are the devil's children, "children of Belial," *2 Cor. vi. 15*; the serpent's seed, *Gen. iii. 15*; children of the wicked one, *Mat. xiii. 38*; they partake of his nature, bear his image, obey his commands, and follow his example. Idolaters said to a stock, "Thou art my father," *Jer. ii. 27*.

This is a high charge, and sounds very harsh and horrid, that any of the children of men, especially the church's children, should be called children of the devil; and therefore our Saviour fully proves it:

First. By a general argument; "the lusts of your father you will do,"—*ὁ ἐκ τούτου ποιεῖτε*. 1. You do the devil's lusts, the lusts which he would have you to fulfil; you gratify and please him, and comply with his temptations, and are "led captive by him at his will," say, you do those lusts which the devil himself fulfils. Fleshly lusts and worldly lusts the devil tempts men to, but, being a spirit, he cannot fulfil them himself. The peculiar lusts of the devil are spiritual wickednesses; the lusts of the intellectual powers, and their corrupt reasonings; pride, and envy, and wrath, and malice; enmity to that which is good, and enticing others to that which is evil; these are lusts which the devil fulfils; and those who are under the dominion of these lusts resemble the devil, as the child doth the parent. The more there is of contemplation and contrivance, and secret complacency in sin, the more it resembles the lusts of the devil. 2. You will do the devil's lusts. The more there is of the will in these lusts, the more there is of the devil in them. When sin is committed of choice, and not by surprise,—with pleasure, and not with reluctance,—when it is persisted in with daring presumption, and a desperate resolution, like theirs that said, "We have loved strangers, and after them we will go," then the sinner will do the devil's lusts. "The lusts of your father you delight to do," so Dr. Hammond; they are rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel.

2. By two particular instances, wherein they manifestly resembled the devil,—murder and lying. The devil is an enemy to life, because God is the God of life, and life is the happiness of man; and an enemy to truth, because God is the God of truth, and truth is the bond of human society.

1st. He was a murderer from the beginning; not from his own beginning, for he was created an angel of light, and had a first estate, which was pure and good, but from the beginning of his apostasy, which was soon after the creation of man. He was *ἀνθρωποκτόνος*, *homicida*,—"a manslayer." *First*. He was a hater of man, and so in affection and disposition, a murderer of him. He has his name, Satan, from *satana*,—"hatred." He maligned God's image upon man, envied his happiness, and earnestly desired his ruin,—was an avowed enemy to the whole race. *Secondly*. He was man's tempter to that sin which brought death into the world, and so he was effectually the murderer of all mankind, which in Adam had but one neck. He was a murderer of souls, deceived them into sin, and by it slew them, *Rom. vii. 11*; poisoned man with the forbidden fruit, and to aggravate the matter made him his own murderer: thus he was not only at the beginning, but from the beginning; which intimates that thus he has been ever since; as he began, so he continues the murderer of men by his temptations: the great tempter is the great destroyer. The Jews called the devil, the angel of death. *Thirdly*. He was the first wheel in the first murder that ever was committed by Cain, "who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother," *1 Jno. iii. 12*. If the devil had not been very strong in Cain, he could not have done such an unnatural thing as to kill his own brother. Cain killing his brother by the instigation of the devil, the devil is called the murderer; which doth not speak Cain's personal guilt the less, but the devil's the more, whose torments we have reason to think will be the greater, when the time comes, for all that wickedness which he has drawn men into. See what reason we have to stand upon our guard, "against the wiles of the devil," and never to hearken to him, for he is a murderer, and certainly aims to do us a mischief, even when he speaks fair; and to wonder that he who is the murderer of the children of men should yet be, by their own consent, so much their master. Now herein these Jews were followers of him, and were murderers like him; murderers of souls which they led blindfold into the ditch, and made the children of hell, sworn enemies to Christ, and now ready to be his betrayers and murderers, for the same reason that Cain killed Abel. These Jews were that seed of the serpent that were to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman; now "ye seek to kill me."

2nd. He was a liar. A lie is opposed to truth, *1 Jno. ii. 21*; and accordingly the devil is here described to be,

of the most decisive testimonies to the objective personality of the devil. It is quite impossible to suppose an accommodation to Jewish views, or a metaphorical form of speech, in so solemn an assertion as this. "Ye will do" here, as in chap. vii. 17, the English word "will" may mislead us. Render, "ye are willing (or glad) to do;" "ye love to do" (Alford). "Murderer:" when? At the fall of man. The reference to Cain may illustrate the effects of the earlier destruction, but the force of the thought is lost, if the reference is

confined to the first murder among men. "Abode not," &c.: strictly, abideth not, or standeth not in the truth. The idea of continuance is implied in the word, and thus a previous existence in the truth is hinted. So Olshausen. "Of his own:" the word here is plural—out of his own resources or treasures. (Compare *Matt. xii. 35*).

viii. 45—47. "Because I tell you the truth," &c.: the truth was not in them; they felt no spiritual need (compare *1 John i. 8*), therefore they did not believe. His unchallenged holiness ("which of you

First. An enemy to truth, and therefore to Christ. 1st. He is a deserter from the truth; he "abode not in the truth,"—did not continue in the purity and rectitude of his nature wherein he was created, but left his first state; when he degenerated from goodness he departed from truth, for his apostasy was founded in a lie. The angels were the hosts of the Lord; those that fell were not true to their commander and sovereign; they were not to be trusted, being charged with folly and defection, *Job iv. 18*. By the truth here we may understand the revealed will of God, concerning the salvation of man, by Jesus Christ; the truth which Christ was now preaching, and which the Jews opposed. Herein they did like their father the devil, who seeing the honour put upon the human nature in the first Adam, and foreseeing the much greater honour intended it in the second Adam, would not be reconciled to that counsel of God, nor stand in the truth concerning it; but, from a spirit of pride and envy, set himself to resist it, and to thwart the designs of it; and so did these Jews here, as his children and agents. 2nd. He is destitute of the truth; "there is no truth in him." His interest in the world is supported by lies and falsehoods, and there is no truth, nothing you can confide in, in him, nor in any thing he saith or doth. The notions he propagates concerning good and evil, are false and erroneous, his proofs are lying wonders, his temptations are all cheats; he has great knowledge of the truth, but having no affection to it,—but on the contrary, being a sworn enemy to it,—he is said to have "no truth in him."

Secondly. He is a friend and patron of lying; "when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own." Three things are here said of the devil, with reference to the sin of lying: 1st. That "he is a liar;" his oracles were lying oracles, his prophecies lying prophecies, and the images in which he was worshipped, teachers of lies; he tempted our first parents with a downright lie; all his temptations are carried on by lies, calling evil good, and good evil, and promising impunity in sin; he knows them to be lies, and suggests them with an intention to deceive, and so to destroy. When he now contradicted the Gospel in the scribes and Pharisees, it was by lies, and when afterwards he corrupted it in the man of sin, it was by strong delusions, and a great complicated lie. 2nd. That "when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own," *ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων*. It is the proper idiom of his language; "of his own" not of God; his Creator never put it into him. When men speak a lie, they borrow it from the devil; Satan fills their hearts to lie, *Acts v. 3*; but when the devil speaks a lie, the model of it is of his own framing, the motives to it from himself, which speaks the desperate depth of wickedness into which those apostate spirits are sunk; as in their first defection they had no tempter, so their sinfulness is still their own. 3rd. That he is "the father of it," *αὐτοῦ*. 1. He is the father of every lie; not only of the lies which he himself suggests, but of those which others speak; he is the author and founder of all lies; when men speak lies, they speak from him, and as his mouth; they come originally from him, and bear his image. 2. He is the father of every liar; so it may be understood. God made men with a disposition to truth. It is congruous to reason and natural light, to the order of our faculties, and the laws of society, that we should speak truth; but the devil, the author of sin, "the spirit that works in the children of disobedience," hath so corrupted the nature of man, that the wicked are said to be "estranged from the womb, speaking lies," *Ps. lviii. 3*; he hath taught them "with their tongues to use deceit," *Rom. iii. 13*. He is the father of liars, that begat them, that trained them up in the way of lying, whom they resemble and obey, and with whom all liars shall have their portion for ever.

IV. Christ having thus proved all murderers, and all liars, to be the devil's children, he leaves it to the consciences of his hearers to say, "Thou art the man." But he comes, in the following verses, to assist them in the application of it to themselves. He doth not call them liars, but shews them that they were no friends to truth; and therein resembled him who "abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." Two things he chargeth upon them.

First. That they would not believe the word of truth; *ver. 45*, *οὐ πιστεύετε μοι*. Two ways it may be taken: 1. Though I tell you the truth, yet you will not believe me (*ἐγώ*) that I do so. Though he gave abundant proof of his commission from God, and his affection to the children of men, yet they would not believe that he told them the truth. Now was truth fallen in the street, and could not enter, *Isa. lix. 14, 15*; the greatest truths with some gained not the least credit; for they "rebelled against the light," *Job xxiv. 13*. Or, 2. "Because I tell you the truth," (so we read it,) therefore "ye believe me not." They would not receive him, nor entertain him as a prophet, because he told them some unpleasant truths, which they did not care to hear of; told them the truth concerning themselves, and their own case; shewed them their faces in a glass that would not flatter them; therefore they would not believe a word he said. Miserable is the case of those to whom the light of Divine truth is become a torment.

Now to shew them the unreasonableness of their infidelity, he condescends to put the matter to this fair issue, *ver. 46*. He and they being contrary, either he was in an error, or they were. Now take it either way.

1. If he were in an error, why did not they convince him? The falsehood of pretending prophets was discovered either by the ill tendency of their doctrines, *Deut. xiii. 2*, or by the ill tenor of their conversation, "ye shall know them by their fruits;" but, saith Christ, which of you, of the Sanhedrim, that take upon you to judge of prophets, "which of you convinceth me of sin?" They accused him of some of the worst of crimes,—gluttony, drunkenness, blasphemy, sabbath-breaking, confederacy with Satan, and what not. But they were all malicious, groundless calumnies, and such as every one that knew him knew to be utterly false. When they had done their utmost, by trick and artifice, subornation and perjury, to prove some crime upon him, the very judge that condemned him owned he "found no fault in him." The sin he here challengeth them to convict him of is, 1st. An inconsistent doctrine. They had heard his testimony; could they shew any thing in it absurd, or unworthy to be believed? any contradiction, either of himself or of the Scriptures, or any corruption of truth or manners insinuated by his doctrine? *ch. xviii. 20*. Or, 2. An incongruous conversation. Which of you can justly charge me with any thing, in word or deed, unbecoming a prophet? See the wonderful condescension of our Lord Jesus, that he demanded not credit any farther than the allowed motives of credibility support his demands: see *Jer. ii. 5, 31*; *Mic. vi. 3*. Ministers may from hence learn, 1. To walk so circumspectly as that it may not be in the power of their most strict observers to convince them of sin, that the ministry be not blamed. The only way not to be convicted of sin, is not to sin. 2. To be willing to admit a scrutiny, though we are confident in many things that we are in the right, yet we should be willing to have it tried whether we be not in the wrong: see *Job vi. 24*.

2. If they were in an error, why were not they convinced by him? "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" If you cannot convince me of error, you must own that I say the truth; and why do ye not then give me credit? why will ye not deal with me upon trust? Note, If men would but inquire into the reasons of their infidelity, and examine why they do not believe that which yet they cannot gainsay, they would find themselves reduced to such absurdities as they could not but be ashamed of; for it will be found that the reason why we believe not in Jesus Christ is, because we are not willing to part with our sins, and deny ourselves, and serve God faithfully; that we are not of

the Christian religion, because we would not, indeed be of any; and unbelief of our Redeemer resolves itself into a downright rebellion against our Creator.

Secondly. Another thing charged upon them is, that they would not hear the words of God, *ver. 47*; which farther shews how groundless their claim of relation to God was. Here is,

1. A doctrine laid down; "He that is of God heareth God's words;" that is, 1st. He is willing and ready to hear them; is sincerely desirous to know what the mind of God is; and cheerfully embraceth whatever he knows to be so. God's words have such an authority over, and such an agreeableness, with all that are born of God, that they meet them, as the child Samuel did, with, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Let the Word of the Lord come. 2nd. He apprehends and discerns them; he so hears them as to perceive the voice of God in them, which the natural man doth not, *1 Cor. ii. 14*. He that is of God, is soon aware of the discoveries he makes of himself, of the nearness of his name, *Ps. lxxv. 1*; as they of the family know the master's tread, and the master's knock, and "open to him immediately," *Lu. xii. 36*; as the sheep know the voice of their shepherd from that of a stranger, *ch. x. 4, 5*; *Cant. ii. 8*.

2. The application of this doctrine, for the conviction of these unbelieving Jews: "ye therefore hear them not;" that is, ye heed not, ye understand not, ye believe not the words of God, nor care to hear them, "because ye are not of God;" your being thus deaf and dead to the words of God is a plain evidence that ye are not of God. It is in his Word that God manifests himself, and is present among us; we are therefore reckoned to be well or ill affected to God, according as we are well or ill affected to God's word: see *2 Cor. iv. 4*; *1 Jno. iv. 6*. Or, their not being of God was the reason why they did not profitably hear the words of God, which Christ spoke; therefore they did not understand and believe him, not because the things themselves were obscure, or wanted evidence, but because the hearers were not of God,—were not born again. If the word of the kingdom do not bring forth fruit, the blame is to be laid upon the soil, not upon the seed, as appears by the parable of the sower, *Mat. xiii. 3*.

48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? 49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. 50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

Here is, **First.** The malice of hell breaking out in the base language which the unbelieving Jews gave to our Lord Jesus. Hitherto they had cavilled at his doctrine, and had made invidious remarks upon that; but having shewed themselves uneasy when he complained (*ver. 43, 47*) that they would not hear him, now at length they fall to downright railing, *ver. 48*. They were not the common people, but, as it should seem, the scribes and Pharisees,—the topping men, who, when they saw themselves convicted of an obstinate infidelity, scornfully turned off the conviction with this, "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" See here,—see it an dwonder, see it and tremble,—

1. What was the blasphemous character commonly given of our Lord Jesus among the wicked Jews, to which they refer. 1st. That he was a Samaritan, that is, that he was an enemy to their church and nation—one that they hated, and could not endure. Thus they exposed him to the ill-will of the people, with whom you could not put a man into a worse name than to call him a Samaritan; if he had been a Samaritan, he had been punishable, by the "beating of the rebels," (as they called it,) for coming into the temple. They had often called him a Galilean,—a mean man; but as if that were not enough, though it contradicted the other, they will have him a Samaritan,—an ill man. The Jews to this day call the Christians, in reproach, *Cuthaei*,—"Samaritans." Note, Great endeavours have in all ages been used to make good people odious, by putting them under black characters; and it is easy to run that down with a crowd and a cry which is once put into an ill name. Perhaps because Christ justly inveighed against the pride and tyranny of the priests and elders, they hereby suggest that he aimed at the ruin of their church, in aiming at its reformation, and was falling away to the Samaritans. 2nd. That "he had a devil." Either, **First.** That he was in league with the devil; having reproached his doctrine as tending to Samaritanism, here they reflect upon his miracles as done in combination with Beelzebub. Or rather, **Secondly.** That he was possessed with a devil,—that he was a melancholy man, whose brain was clouded, or a mad man, whose brain was heated, and that which he said was no more to be believed than the extravagant rambles of a distracted man, or one in a delirium. Thus the Divine revelation of those things which are above the discovery of reason, have been often branded with the charge of enthusiasm, and the prophet was called a mad fellow, *2 Kin. ix. 11*; *Hos. ix. 7*. The inspiration of the pagan oracles and prophets was indeed a frenzy, and those that had it were for the time beside themselves; but that which was truly Divine was not so: "Wisdom is justified of her children," as wisdom indeed.

2. How they undertook to justify this character, and applied it to the present occasion; "Say we not well that thou art" so? One would think his excellent discourses should have altered their opinion of him, and have made them recant; but, instead of that, their hearts were more hardened, and their prejudices confirmed. They value themselves by their enmity to Christ, as if they had never spoken better than when they spoke the worst they could of Jesus Christ. Those have arrived to the highest pitch of wickedness who avow their impiety, repeat what they should retract, and justify themselves in that for which they ought to condemn themselves. It is bad to say and do ill; but it is worse to stand to it: "I do well to be angry." When Christ spoke with so much boldness against the sins of the great men, and thereby incensed them against him, they who were sensible of no interest but what is secular and sensual, concluded him beside himself; for they think none but a mad man will lose his preferment, and hazard his life, for his religion and conscience.

Secondly. Here is the meekness and mercifulness of heaven shining in Christ's reply to this vile calumny, *ver. 49, 50*.

1. He denies their charge against him; "I have not a devil;" as Paul, *Acts xxvi. 25*, "I am not mad." The imputation is unjust; I am neither acted by a devil, nor in compact with one; and this he evidenced by what he did against the devil's kingdom. He takes no notice of their calling him a Samaritan, because it was a calumny that disproved itself; it was a personal reflection, and not worth taking notice of; but saying he had a devil, reflected on his commission, and therefore he answered that. St. Augustine gives this descent upon his not saying any thing to their calling him a Samaritan, that he was indeed that good Samaritan spoken of in the parable, *Lu. x. 35*.

2. He asserts the sincerity of his own intentions; "but I honour my Father." They suggested that he took undue honours to himself, and derogated from the honour due to God only; both which he denies here, in saying that he made it

convinceth or convicteth me of sin?") bore an unimpeachable evidence of his truth to those who were of God (*verse 47*), or, which is the same thing, were of the truth (*chap. xviii. 37*). The moral conditions of spiritual insight come out here again, as in *chap. vii. 17*. (See Notes there, and on *verse 43* of this chapter.)

viii. 48. "Say we not well?" The reference seems to be to *chap. vii. 20*. "Samaritan:" the Samaritans were looked upon as those that were in error in matters of faith; hence the term is equivalent

lent to heretic. "They charge him with heresy and madness" (Olshausen).

viii. 49. "Ye do dishonour me:" in dishonouring him they dishonoured God. (Compare *chap. v. 23*.)

viii. 50. "There is one:" i.e., God. (Compare *chap. v. 32*.) Christ could commit himself to his Father, who judged righteously.

viii. 51, 52. "My saying:" rather, "word." The rendering "saying" confuses the passage (see *verse 43*). The keeping of his word is

his business to honour his Father, and him only. It also proves that he had not a devil; for if he had, he would not honour God. Note, They who can truly say they make it their constant care to honour God, are sufficiently armed against the censures and reproaches of men.

3. He complains of the wrong they did him by their calumnies; "ye do dishonour me." By this it appears that, as man, he had a tender sense of the disgrace and indignity done him; reproach was a sword in his bones, and yet he underwent it for our salvation. It is the will of God, that "all men should honour his Son;" yet there are many that dishonour him: such a contradiction is there in the carnal mind to the will of God. Christ honoured his Father so as never man did, and yet was himself dishonoured so as never man was; for though God has promised that those that honour him he will honour, he never promised that men should honour them.

4. He clears himself from the imputation of vainglory, in saying this concerning himself, ver. 50. See here,

1st. His contempt of worldly honour; "I seek not mine own glory;" he did not aim at that in what he had said of himself, or against his persecutors; he did not court the applause of men, nor covet preferment in the world, but industriously declined both. He did not seek his own glory distinct from his Father's, nor had any separate interest of his own: for men to search their own glory, is not glory indeed, *Pr. xxv. 27*, but their shame rather, to be so much out in their aim. This comes in here as a reason why Christ made so light of their reproaches; "you do dishonour me," but cannot disturb me; shall not disquiet me, for "I seek not mine own glory." Note, Those that are dead to men's praise, can safely bear their contempt.

2nd. His comfort under worldly dishonour; "there is one that seeketh and judgeth." In two things Christ made it appear he sought not his own glory, and here he tells us what satisfied him as to both. First. He did not court men's respects, but was indifferent to them; and in reference to this he saith, "There is one that seeketh," that will secure and advance my interest in the esteem and affections of the people, while I am in no care about it. Note, God will seek their honour that do not seek their own; for "before honour is humility." Secondly. He did not revenge men's affronts, but was unconcerned at them; and in reference to this he saith, "there is one that judgeth," that will vindicate my honour, and severely reckon with those that trample upon it. Probably he refers here to the judgments that were coming upon the nation of the Jews, for the indignities they did to the Lord Jesus: see *Ps. xxxviii. 13-15*, "I heard not, for thou wilt hear." If we undertake to judge for ourselves, whatever damage we sustain, our amends is in our own hands; but if we be, as we ought to be, humble appellants, and patient expectants, we shall find, to our comfort, "there is one that judgeth."

51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. 52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. 53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? 54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: 55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. 57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? 58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. 59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

In these verses we have,

1. The doctrine of the immortality of believers laid down, ver. 51. It is ushered in with the usual solemn preface, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," which commands both attention and assent; and this is it he saith, "If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death." Where we have,

First. The character of a believer: he is one that keeps the sayings of the Lord Jesus, *τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐμὸν*, "my word;" that word of mine which I have delivered to you. This we must not only receive, but keep; not only have, but hold. We must keep it in mind and memory, keep it in love and affection; so keep it as in nothing to violate it, or go contrary to it; keep it without spot, *1 Tim. vi. 19*; keep it as a trust committed to us; keep in it as our way; keep to it as our rule.

Secondly. The privilege of a believer: "he shall by no means see death for ever." So it is in the original. Not as if the bodies of believers were secured from the stroke of death; no, even the children of the Most High must die like men; and the followers of Christ have been, more than other men, in deaths often, and killed all the day long. How then is this promise made good, that they shall not see death? Answer, 1. The property of death is so altered to them, that they do not see it as death, they do not see the terror of death, it is quite taken off; their sight doth not terminate in death, as theirs doth who live by sense; no, they look so clearly, so comfortably through death, and beyond death, and are so taken up with their state on the other side death, that they overlook death, and see it not. 2. The power of death is so broken, as that though there is no remedy but they must see death, yet they shall not see

death for ever—shall not be always shut under its arrests: the day will come when "death shall be swallowed up in victory." 3. They are perfectly delivered from eternal death, shall not be hurt of the second death; that is the death especially meant here, that death which is for ever, which is opposed to everlasting life; this they shall never see, for they "shall never come into condemnation." They shall have their everlasting lot, where there will be no more death, where they cannot die any more, *Lu. xx. 36*; though now they cannot avoid seeing death, and tasting it too, yet they shall shortly be there where it will be seen no more for ever, *Ec. xiv. 13*.

II. The Jews cavil at this doctrine. Instead of laying hold on this precious promise of immortality, which the nature of man has an ambition of,—who is there that doth not love life, and dread the sight of death?—they lay hold on this occasion to reproach him that makes them so kind an offer: "Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead." Observe here,

First. Their railing: "Now we know that thou hast a devil," that thou art a madman; thou ravest, and sayest thou knowest not what. See how these swine trample under foot the precious pearls of gospel promises. If now at last they had evidence to prove him mad, why did they say, ver. 48, before they had that proof, "thou hast a devil;" but this is the method of malice, first to fasten an invidious charge, and then to fish for evidence of it; "now we know that thou hast a devil." If he had not abundantly proved himself a teacher come from God, his promises of immortality to his credulous followers might justly have been ridiculed, and charity itself would have imputed them to a crazed fancy. But his doctrine was evidently Divine, his miracles confirmed it; and the Jews' religion taught them to expect such a prophet, and to believe in him. For them, therefore, thus to reject him, was to abandon that promise, to which their twelve tribes hoped to come, *Acts xxvi. 7*.

Secondly. Their reasoning, and the colour they had to run him down thus. In short, they look upon him as guilty of an insufferable piece of arrogance, in making himself greater than Abraham and the prophets. "Abraham is dead, and the prophets," they are dead too; very true, by the same token that these Jews were the genuine offspring of those that killed them. Now, 1. It is true that Abraham and the prophets were great men, great in the favour of God, and great in the esteem of all good men. 2. It is true that they kept God's sayings, and were obedient to them; and yet, 3. It is true they died; they never pretended to have, much less to give, immortality; but every one in his own order was gathered to his people. It was their honour that they died in faith, but die they must. Why should a good man be afraid to die, when Abraham is dead, and the prophets dead? They have tracked the way through that darksome valley, which should reconcile us to death, and help to take off the terror of it. Now they think Christ talks madly, when he saith, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death." Tasting death means the same thing with seeing it; and well may death be represented as grievous to several of the senses, which is the destruction of them all. Now their arguing goes upon two mistakes:

1st. They understood Christ of an immortality in this world, and that was a mistake. In the sense that Christ spoke, it was not true that Abraham and the prophets were dead, for God is still "the God of Abraham," and "the God of the holy prophets," *Rev. xxii. 6*. Now "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" therefore Abraham and the prophets are still alive, and, as Christ meant it, they had not seen nor tasted death.

2nd. They thought none could be greater than Abraham and the prophets; whereas they could not but know that the Messiah would be greater than Abraham or any of the prophets, who did virtuously, but he excelled them all; nay, they borrowed their greatness from him. It was the honour of Abraham that he was the father of the Messiah; and the honour of the prophets that they testified beforehand concerning him; so that he certainly obtained a far more excellent name than they. Therefore, instead of inferring from Christ's making himself greater than Abraham, that he had a devil, they should have inferred, from his proving himself so, by doing the works which neither Abraham nor the prophets ever did, that he was the Christ. But their eyes were blinded; they scornfully asked, "Whom makest thou thyself?" as if he had been guilty of pride and vainglory; whereas he was so far from making himself greater than he was, that he now drew a veil over his own glory, emptied himself, and made himself less than he was, and was the greatest example of humility that ever was.

III. Christ's reply to this cavil. Still he vouchsafes to reason with them, that every mouth may be stopped. No doubt he could have struck them dumb or dead upon the spot; but this was the day of his patience.

First. In his answer he insists not upon his own testimony concerning himself, but waives it, as not sufficient or conclusive; ver. 54, "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing;" *ἐν ἐμῷ δόξαζω*, "If I glorify myself." Note, Self-honour is no honour; and the affection of glory is both the forfeiture and the defeasance of it; it is not glory, *Pr. xxv. 27*; but so great a reproach, that there is no sin which men are more industrious to hide than this; he that most affects praise, yet would not be thought to do it. Honour of our own creating is a mere chimera, has nothing in it, and therefore is called vainglory. Self-admirers are self-deceivers. Our Lord Jesus was not one that honoured himself, as they represented him: he was crowned by him who is the Fountain of honour, and "glorified not himself to be made a high priest," *Heb. v. 4, 5*.

Secondly. But he refers himself to his Father, God; and to their father Abraham.

1. To his Father, God; "it is my Father that honoureth me." By this he means, 1st. That he derived from his Father all the honour he now claimed. He had commanded them to believe in him, to follow him, and to keep his word, all which put an honour upon him; but it was the Father that laid help upon him, that lodged all fulness in him, that sanctified him, and sealed him, and sent him into the world to receive all the honours due to the Messiah; and this justified him in all these demands of respect. 2nd. That he depended upon his Father for all the honour he farther looked for. He courted not the applauses of the age, but despised them, for his eye and heart were upon the glory which the Father had promised him, and which he had with the Father before the world was. He aimed at an advancement with which the Father was to exalt him, a name he was to give him, *Phil. ii. 8, 9*. Note, Christ and all that are his depend upon God for their honour; and he that is sure of honour where he is known, cares not though he be slighted where he is in disguise. Appealing thus often to his Father, and his Father's testimony of him, which yet the Jews did not admit or give credit to, he here takes occasion to shew,

First. The reason of their incredulity, notwithstanding this testimony, and that was their unacquaintedness with God; as if he should say, "But what should I talk to you of my Father's honouring me, when he is one you know nothing of? You say of him that he is your God, yet you have not known him. Where observe,

1st. The profession they made of relation to God; "ye say he is your God," the God you have chosen, and are in covenant with; ye say ye are Israel, but all are not so indeed that are of Israel, *Rom. ix. 6*. Note, Many pretend to have an interest in God, and say he is theirs, who yet have no just cause to say so. They who called themselves the temple of the Lord, having profaned the excellency of Jacob, did but trust in lying words. What will it avail us to say

not to be referred to the mere retaining of the instruction in the memory, or the carrying it out in action, but to the embracing and retaining that word, which is a spiritual power, infusing new life into the whole being. "See death," "taste of death:" these figures are not uncommon. The Jews turn their thoughts upon physical death, the words of Christ to refer to a spiritual death. Those quickened by his word would be kept from the only death to be dreaded—viz., subjugation of the will to sin. "Abraham is dead:" in this verse

and the following render, with Alford, "died." "Abraham died," &c., not "is dead."

viii. 53. The drift of the passage is thus expressed by Webster and Wilkinson: "If Abraham died, who kept God's word most faithfully of all men; and if the prophets died, who delivered God's word to men; but they who keep your word shall never die, who, then, must you be? and what have you to say of yourself in regard to death?"

he is our God, if we be not in sincerity his people, nor such as he will own? Christ mentions here their profession of relation to God, as that which was an aggravation of their unbelief. All people will honour those whom their God honours; but these Jews, who said that the Lord was their God, yet studied how to put the utmost disgrace upon one whom their God put honour upon. Note, The profession we make of a covenant relation to God, and interest in him, if it be not improved by us, will be improved against us.

2nd. Their ignorance of him, and estrangement from him, notwithstanding this profession: "yet ye have not known him." First, "Ye know him not at all." These Pharisees were so taken up with the study of their traditions concerning things foreign and trifling, that they never minded the most needful and useful knowledge; like the false prophets of old, who caused people to forget God's name by their dreams, *Jer. xxiii. 27*. Or, Secondly, "Ye know him not aright," but mistake concerning him; and that is as bad as not knowing him at all, or worse. Men may be able to dispute subtly concerning God, and yet may think him such a one as themselves, and not know him. Ye say he is yours, and it is natural to us to desire to know our own, yet ye know him not. Note, There are many who claim kindred to God, who yet have no acquaintance with him. It is only the name of God which they have learned to talk of, and to hector with; but for the nature of God, his attributes and perfections, and relations to his creatures, they know nothing of the matter; we speak this to their shame, *1 Cor. xv. 34*. Multitudes satisfy themselves, but deceive themselves, with a titular relation to an unknown God. This Christ chargeth upon the Jews here, 1. To shew how vain and groundless their pretensions of relation to God were. "You say he is yours, but you give yourselves the lie, for it is plain you do not know him; and we reckon a cheat is effectually convicted, if it be found that he is ignorant of the persons he pretends alliance to." 2. To shew the true reason why they were not wrought upon by Christ's doctrine and miracles: they knew not God, and therefore perceived not the image of God, nor the voice of God, in Christ. Note, The reason why men receive not the Gospel of Christ, is because they have not the knowledge of God: men therefore submit not to the righteousness of Christ, because they are ignorant of God's righteousness, *Rom. x. 3*. They that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of Christ, are put together, *2 Thes. i. 8*.

Secondly. He gives them the reason of his assurance, that his Father would honour him, and own him; "but I know him;" and again, "I know him," which speaks not only his acquaintance with him, having lain in his bosom, but his confidence in him, to stand by him, and bear him out in his whole undertaking, as was prophesied concerning him, *Isa. l. 7, 8*, "I know that I shall not be ashamed, for he is near that justifies;" and as Paul, "I know whom I have believed," *2 Tim. i. 12*: "I know him to be faithful, and powerful, and heartily engaged in the cause which I know to be his own." Observe,

1st. How he professeth his knowledge of his Father with the greatest certainty, as one that was neither afraid nor ashamed to own it: "If I should say I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you." He would not deny his relation to God to humour the Jews, and to avoid their reproaches, and prevent farther trouble; nor would he retract what he had said, or confess himself either deceived or a deceiver; if he should, he would be found a false witness against God and himself. Note, They who disown their religion, and relation to God, as Peter, are liars, as much as hypocrites are, who pretend to know him when they do not; see *1 Tim. vi. 13, 14*. Mr. Clark observes well upon this, that it is a great sin to deny God's grace in us.

2nd. How he proves his knowledge of his Father: "I know him, and keep his saying;" or, "his word." Christ, as man, was obedient to the moral law; and, as Redeemer, to the mediatorial law; and in both he kept his Father's word, and his own word with the Father. Christ requires of us, ver. 15, that we keep his sayings; and he hath set before us a copy of obedience, a copy without a blot; he kept his Father's sayings; well might he, who learned obedience, teach it; see *Heb. v. 8, 9*. Christ by this evidenceth that he knew the Father. Note, The best proof of our acquaintance with God is our obedience to him. Those only know God aright that keep his word; it is a ruled case, *1 Jno. ii. 3*: "Hereby we know that we know him," (and do not only fancy it,) "if we keep his commandments."

3. Christ refers them to their father, whom they boasted so much of a relation to, and that was Abraham; and this closeth the discourse.

1st. Christ asserts Abraham's prospect of him, and respect to him: ver. 56, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." And by this he proves that he was not at all out of the way when he made himself greater than Abraham. Two things he here speaks of as instances of that patriarch's respect to the promised Messiah:

First. The ambition he had to see his day; "he rejoiced," *ἡγαλλιάσατο*,—"he leaped at it." The word, though it commonly signifies rejoicing, yet here must signify rather a transport of desire than of joy; for otherwise the latter part of the verse would be a tautology; "he saw it, and was glad;" "he reached out, or stretched himself forth, that he might see my day;" as Zacchæus, that ran before and climbed the tree to see Jesus. The notices he had received of the Messiah to come, had raised in him an expectation of something great, which he earnestly longed to know more of. The dark intimation of that which is considerable, puts men upon inquiry, and makes them earnestly ask, who? and what? and where? and when? and how? And thus the prophets of the Old Testament, having a general idea of a grace that should come, searched diligently, *1 Pet. i. 10*; and Abraham was as industrious herein as any of them. God told him of a land that he would give his posterity, and of the wealth and honour he designed them, *Gen. xv. 14*; but he never leaped thus to see that day, as he did to see the day of the Son of man. He could not look with so much indifference upon the promised Seed, as he did upon the promised land; in that he was, but to the other he could not be, contentedly, a stranger. Note, Those who rightly know any thing of Christ, cannot but be earnestly desirous to know more of him. Those who discern the dawning of the light of the Sun of righteousness, cannot but wish to see his rising. The mystery of redemption is that which angels desire to look into; much more should we, that are more immediately concerned in it. Abraham desired to see Christ's day, though it was at a great distance; but this degenerate seed of his discerned not his day, nor bade it welcome when it came. The appearing of Christ, which gracious souls love, and long for, carnal hearts dread and loath.

Secondly. The satisfaction he had in what he did see of it; "he saw it, and was glad." Observe here,

1st. How God gratified the pious desire of Abraham; he longed to see Christ's day, and he saw it. Though he saw it not so plainly, and fully, and distinctly, as we now see it under the Gospel, yet he saw something of it, more afterwards than he did at first. Note, To him that hath, and to him that asks, shall be given; to him that useth and improveth what he hath, and that desireth and prayeth for more of the knowledge of Christ, God will give more. But how did Abraham see Christ's day? First. Some understand it of the sight he had of it in the other world. The separate soul of Abraham, when the veil of flesh was rent, saw the mysteries of the kingdom of God in heaven. Calvin mentions this sense of it, and doth not much disallow it. Note, The longings of gracious souls after Jesus Christ, will be fully satisfied when they come to heaven, and not till then. But, Secondly. It is more commonly understood of some

sight he had of Christ's day in this world. They that received not the promises yet saw them afar off, *Heb. xi. 13*. Balaam saw Christ, but not now, not nigh. There is room to conjecture that Abraham had some vision of Christ and his day for his own private satisfaction, which is not, nor must be, recorded in his story; like that of Daniel's, which must be shut up, and sealed, unto the time of the end, *Dan. xii. 4*. Christ knew what Abraham saw better than Moses did. But there are divers things recorded, in which Abraham saw more of that which he longed to see, than he did when the promise was first made to him. He saw in Melchizedek one made like unto the Son of God, and a priest for ever; he saw an appearance of Jehovah attended with two angels in the plains of Mamre. In the prevalence of his intercession for Sodom, he saw a specimen of Christ's intercession; in the casting out of Ishmael, and the establishment of the covenant with Isaac, he saw a figure of the gospel day, which is Christ's day, for these things were an allegory. In offering Isaac, and the ram instead of Isaac, he saw a double type of the great sacrifice; and his calling the place Jehovah-jireh, "it shall be seen," intimates that he saw something more in it than others did, which time would produce; and in making his servant put his hand under his thigh when he swore, he had a regard to the Messiah.

2nd. How Abraham entertained these discoveries of Christ's day, and bade them welcome; "he saw it, and was glad." He was glad of what he saw of God's favour to himself, and glad of what he foresaw of the mercy God had in store for the world. Perhaps this refers to Abraham's laughing when God assured him of a son by Sarah, *Gen. xvii. 16, 17*, for that was not a laughter of distrust, as Sarah's, but of joy; in that promise he saw Christ's day, and it filled him with joy unspeakable. Thus he embraced the promises. Note, A believing sight of Christ and his day will put gladness into the heart. No joy like the joy of faith; we are never acquainted with true pleasure till we are acquainted with Christ.

2nd. The Jews cavil at this, and reproach him for it; ver. 57, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Here, First. They suppose that if Abraham saw him and his day, he also had seen Abraham, which yet was not a necessary innuendo; but this turn of his words would best serve to expose him; yet it was true that Christ had seen Abraham, and had talked with him as a man talks with his friend. Secondly. They suppose it a very absurd thing for him to pretend to have seen Abraham, who was dead so many ages before he was born. The state of the dead is an invisible state; but here they run upon the old mistake, understanding that corporally which Christ spoke spiritually. Now this gave them occasion to despise his youth, and to upbraid him with it, as if he were but of yesterday, and knew nothing; "Thou art not yet fifty years old;" they might as well have said, thou art not forty; for he was now but thirty-two or thirty-three years old. As to this, Irenæus, one of the first fathers, with this passage supports the tradition, which he saith he had from some that had conversed with St. John, that our Saviour lived to be fifty years old, which he contends for, *Advers. Hæres. lib. ii. cap. 39, 40*; see what little credit is to be given to tradition; and as to this here, the Jews spoke at random; some year they would mention, and therefore pitched upon one that they thought he was far enough short of; he did not look to be forty, but they were sure he could not be fifty, much less contemporary with Abraham. Old age is reckoned to begin at fifty, *Num. iv. 47*; so that they mean no more but, "Thou art not to be reckoned an old man." Many of us are much thy seniors, and yet pretend not to have seen Abraham." Some think that his countenance was so altered with grief and watching, that, together with the gravity of his aspect, it made him look like a man of fifty years old; "his visage was so marred," *Isa. lii. 14*.

3rd. Our Saviour gives an effectual answer to this cavil, by a solemn asserting of his own seniority even to Abraham himself: ver. 58, "Verily, verily, I say unto you;" I do not only say it in private to my own disciples, who will be sure to say as I say, but to you, my enemies and persecutors; I say it to your faces, take it how you will, "Before Abraham was, I am;" *πριν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι, ἐγὼ εἰμι*, "Before Abraham was made or born, I am." The change of the word is observable, and speaks Abraham a creature, and himself the Creator; well therefore might he make himself greater than Abraham. Before Abraham he was, First. As God. "I am," is the name of God, *Ex. iii. 14*. It speaks his self-existence. He doth not say, I was, but "I am," for he is the first and the last, immutably the same, *Rev. i. 8*. Thus he was not only before Abraham, but before all worlds, *Pr. viii. 23*; *Jno. i. 1*. Secondly. As Mediator. He was the appointed Messiah long before Abraham: "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," *Rev. xiii. 8*; the channel of conveyance of light, life, and love from God to man. This supposeth his Divine nature, that he is the same in himself from eternity, *Heb. xiii. 8*, and adds, that he is the same to man ever since the fall; he was made of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to Adam, and Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Shem, and all the patriarchs that lived and died by faith in him, before Abraham was born. Abraham was the root of the Jewish nation, the rock out of which they were hewn. If Christ was before Abraham, his doctrine and religion was no novelty, but was in the substance of it prior to Judaism, and ought to take place of it.

4th. This great word ended the dispute abruptly, and put a period to it: they could bear to hear no more from him, and he needed to say no more to them, having witnessed this good confession, which was sufficient to support all his claims. One would think Christ's discourse, in which shone so much both of grace and glory, should have captivated them all; but their inveterate prejudice against the holy spiritual doctrine and law of Christ, which were so contrary to their pride and worldliness, baffled all the methods of conviction. Now was fulfilled that prophecy, *Mal. iii. 1, 2*, that when the Messenger of the covenant should come to his temple, they would not abide the day of his coming, because he would be like a refiner's fire. Observe here,

First. How they were enraged at Christ for what he said; "they took up stones to cast at him," ver. 59. Perhaps they looked upon him as a blasphemer, and such were indeed to be stoned, *Lev. xxiv. 16*; but they must first be legally tried and convicted. Farewell justice and order, if every man pretend to execute a law at his pleasure. Besides, they had said but just now that he was a distracted, crack-brained man; and if so, it was against all reason and equity to punish him as a malefactor for what he said. "They took up stones." Dr. Lightfoot will tell you how they came to have stones so ready in the temple; they had workmen at this time repairing the temple, or making some additions, and the pieces of stone which they hewed off served for this purpose. See here the desperate power of sin and Satan in and over the children of disobedience. Who would think that ever there should be such wickedness as this in men?—such an open and daring rebellion against one that undeniably proved himself to be the Son of God? Thus every one has a stone to throw at his holy religion, *Acts xxviii. 22*.

Secondly. How he made his escape out of their hands.

1st. He absconded; "Jesus hid himself;" *ἐκρύβη*, "he was hid;" either by the crowd of those that wished well to him, to shelter him;—(He that ought to have been upon a throne, high and lifted up, is content to be lost in a crowd;)—or perhaps he concealed himself behind some of the walls, or pillars of the temple; "in the secret of his tabernacle he shall hide me," *Ps. xxvii. 5*; or, by a Divine power, casting a mist before their eyes, he made himself invisible to them: "When the wicked rise, a man is hidden," a wise and good man,

viii. 56. "Saw my day:" the previous interpretation makes the word "saw" equivalent to "foresaw." This is hardly permissible. The words must be referred to communion which Abraham enjoyed during his pilgrimage on earth. He foresaw the advent of the Messiah, for promises and types were given; but, besides this, he saw and rejoiced in personal intercourse with him who was the Word. This view harmonises with verse 58, which then comes in naturally, and explains that as the eternal Word it was possible for Jesus Christ

to have held communion with Abraham. "To see a person's day" is a common phrase for "living at a certain time."

viii. 59. The words "going through the midst of them, and so passed by," are not found in the best MSS.

ix. 1. The events in this chapter seem to follow immediately on the conversation recorded in chap. viii. This is the view adopted by Archbishop Thomson. "As Jesus passed by:" on his way from the Temple. The blind man was near the Temple gate, probably for the

Pr. xxviii. 12, 28. Not that Christ was afraid or ashamed to stand by what he had said, but "his hour was not yet come;" and he would countenance the flight of his ministers and people in times of persecution, when they are called to it. The Lord had Jeremiah and Baruch, *Jer. xxxvi. 26.*

2nd. He departed; "he went out of the temple, going through the midst of them" undiscovered, "and so passed by." This was not a cowardly, inglorious flight, nor such as argued either guilt or fear. It was foretold concerning him, that he should not fail nor be discouraged, *Isa. xlii. 4.* But, First. It was an instance of his power over his enemies, and that they could do no more against him than he gave them leave to do; by which it appears, that when afterwards he was taken in their pits, he offered himself, *ch. x. 18.* They now thought they had him sure, and yet he passed through the midst of them, either their eyes blinded, or their hands tied, and thus he left them to vex like a lion disappointed of his prey. Secondly. It was an instance of his prudent provision for his own safety, when he knew his work was not done, nor his testimony finished. Thus he gave an example to his own rule, "when they persecute you in one city, flee to another;" nay, if occasion be, to a wilderness, for so Elijah did, *1 Km. xiv. 3, 4;* and the woman of the church, *Rev. xii. 6.* When they took up loose stones to throw at Christ, he could have commanded the fixed stones, which did cry out of the wall against them, to avenge his cause, or the earth to open and swallow them up; but he chose to accommodate himself to the state he was in, to make the example imitable by the prudence of his followers without a miracle. Thirdly. It was a righteous deserting of those that (worse than the Gadarenes, who prayed him to depart, stoned him from among them. Christ will not long stay with those that bid him be gone. Christ did again visit the temple after this; as one loath to depart, he bade often farewell; but at last he abandoned it for ever, and left it desolate. Christ now went through the midst of the Jews, and none of them courted his stay, or stirred up themselves to take hold on him, but were even content to let him go. Note, God never forsakes any till they have first provoked him to withdraw, and will have none of him. Calvin observes that these chief priests, when they had driven Christ out of the temple, valued themselves by the possession they kept of it: "But," saith he, "those deceive themselves that are proud of a church or temple which Christ has forsaken;"—*longe falluntur, cum templum se habere putant Deo vacuum* When Christ left them, it is said, he so passed by, silently and unobserved; *παρηγεν οὐτως*, so that they were not aware of him. Note, Christ's departures from a church, or a particular soul, are often secret, and not soon taken notice of. As the kingdom of God comes not, so it goes not, with observation: see *Jud. xvi. 20*, "Samson wist not that the Lord was departed from him." Thus it was with these forsaken Jews; God left them, and they never missed him.

CHAPTER IX.

After Christ's departure out of the temple, in the close of the foregoing chapter, and before this happened which is recorded in this chapter, he had been for some time abroad in the country,—it is supposed about two or three months,—in which interval of time, Dr. Lightfoot, and other harmonists, place all the passages that occur from *Lu. x. 17* to *Lu. xiii. 17*. What is recorded *ch. vii. and viii.* was at the feast of tabernacles, in September; what is recorded in this and the following chapter was at the feast of dedication, in December, *ch. x. 22.* Mr. Clark and others place this immediately after the foregoing chapter. In this chapter we have, 1. The miraculous cure of a man that was born blind, *ver. 1–7.* II. The discourses which were occasioned by it: 1. A discourse of the neighbours among themselves, and with the man, *ver. 8–12;* 2. Between the Pharisees and the man, *ver. 13–34;* 3. Between Christ and the poor man, *ver. 35–38;* 4. Between Christ and the Pharisees, *ver. 39–41.*



AND as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, 7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

We have here sight given to a poor beggar that had been blind from his birth. Observe,

1. The notice which our Lord Jesus took of the piteous case of this poor blind man: *ver. 1.* "As Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth." The first words seem to refer to the last of the foregoing chapter, and countenance their opinion who, in the harmony, place this story immediately after that. There, it was said, *παρηγεν*, 'he passed by;' and here, without so much as repeating his name, (though our translators supply it,) *και παρηγεν*, and as he passed by." 1. Though the Jews had so basely abused him, and both by word and deed gave him the higher provocation imaginable, yet he did not slip any opportunity of doing good among them, nor take up a resolution, as justice might have done, never to have favoured them with any good offices. The cure of this blind man was a kindness to the public, enabling him to work for his living, who before was a charge and burthen to the neighbourhood. It is

noble and generous, and Christ-like, to be willing to serve the public, even when we are slighted and disobliged by it, or think ourselves so. 2. Though he was in his flight from a threatening danger, and escaping for his life, yet he willingly halted and stayed a while to shew mercy to this poor blind beggar. Some of the ancients make this a figure of the bringing of the Gospel to the Gentiles, who sat in darkness, when the Jews had rejected it, and driven it from them. 4. Christ took this poor blind man in his way, and cured him *in transitu*,—as he passed by. Thus should we take occasions of doing good, even as we pass by, wherever we are. Now,

First. The condition of this poor man was very sad; he was blind, and had been so from his birth. If the light is sweet, how melancholy must it needs be for a man all his days to eat in darkness! He that is blind has no enjoyment of the light, but he that is born blind has no idea of it. Methinks such a one would give a great deal to have his curiosity satisfied with but one day's sight of light and colours, shapes and figures, though he were never to see them more. Why is the light of life given to one that is in this misery, that is deprived of the light of the sun; whose way is thus hid, and whom God hath thus hedged in? *Job iii. 20, 23.* Let us bless God that it was not our case. The eye is one of the most curious parts of the body, its structure exceeding nice and fine. In the formation of animals, it is said to be the first part that appears distinctly discernible. What a mercy is it that there was no miscarriage in the making of ours! Christ cured many that were blind by disease or accident, but here he cured one that was born blind. 1. That he might give an instance of his power to help in the most desperate cases, and to relieve when none else can. 2. That he might give a specimen of the power of his grace upon the souls of sinners, which gives sight to those that were by nature blind.

Secondly. The compassions of our Lord Jesus towards him were very tender. He saw him, that is, he took cognizance of his case, and looked upon him with concern. When God is about to work deliverance, he is said to see the affliction; so Christ saw this poor man. Others saw him, but not as he did. This poor man could not see Christ, but Christ saw him, and anticipated both his prayers and expectations with a surprising cure. Christ is often found of those that seek him not, nor see him, *Isa. lxv. 1.* And if we know or apprehend any thing of Christ, it is because we were first known of him, *Gal. iv. 9.* and apprehended by him, *Phil. iii. 12.*

II. The discourse between Christ and his disciples concerning this man. When he departed out of the temple, they went along with him, for these were they that continued with him in his temptations, and followed him whithersoever he went; and they lost nothing by their adherence to him, but gained experience abundantly. Observe,

First. The question which the disciples put to their Master upon this blind man's case, *ver. 2.* When Christ looked upon him, they had an eye to him too: Christ's compassions should kindle ours. It is probable Christ told them that this poor man was born blind, or they knew it by common fame; but they did not move Christ to heal him; instead of that, they started a very odd question concerning him: "Rabbi, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" Now this question of theirs was, 1. Uncharitably censorious. They take it for granted that this extraordinary calamity was the punishment of some extraordinary, uncommon wickedness, and that this man was a sinner above all men that dwelt at Jerusalem, *Lu. xiii. 14.* For the barbarous people to infer, "surely this man is a murderer," was not so strange; but it was inexcusable in them that knew the Scriptures, who had read that all things come alike to all, and knew how it was adjudged in Job's case, that the greatest sufferers are not therefore to be looked upon as the greatest sinners. The grace of repentance calls our own afflictions punishments; but the grace of charity calls the afflictions of others trials, unless the contrary is very evident. 2. It was unnecessarily curious. Concluding this calamity to be inflicted for some very heinous crime, they ask who were the criminals, "this man, or his parents?" And what was this to them? or what good would it do them to know it? We are apt to be more inquisitive concerning other people's sins than concerning our own; whereas, it is more our concern to know wherefore God contends with us, than wherefore he contends with others; for to judge ourselves is our duty, but to judge our brother is our sin.

They inquire, 1st. Whether this man was punished thus for some sin of his own, either committed or foreseen before his birth. Some think the disciples were tainted with the Pythagorean notion of the pre-existence of souls, and their transmigration from one body to another. Was this man's soul condemned to the dungeon of this blind body, to punish it for some great sin committed in another body, which it had before animated? The Pharisees seem to have had the same opinion of his case, when they said, "thou wast altogether born in sin," *ver. 34.* as if all those, and those only, were born in sin, whom nature had stigmatized. Or, 2nd. Whether he was punished for the wickedness of his parents, which God sometimes visits upon the children. It is a good reason why parents should take heed of sin, lest their children smart for them when they are gone. Let not us thus be cruel to our own, as the ostrich in the wilderness. Perhaps the disciples asked this, not as believing that this was the punishment of some actual sin of his own, or his parents, but Christ having intimated to another patient, that his impotency was the effect of his sin, *ch. v. 14.* "Master," say they, "whose sin is the cause of this impotency?" Being at a loss what construction to put upon this providence, they desire to be informed. The equity of God's dispensations is always certain, for his righteousness is as the great mountains, but not always to be accounted for, for his judgments are a great deep.

Secondly. Christ's answer to this question. He was always apt to teach, and to rectify his disciples' mistakes.

1. He gives the reason of this poor man's blindness: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents;" but therefore he was born blind, and hath continued so to this day, that now at last "the works of God should be made manifest in him," *ver. 3.* Here Christ, who perfectly knew the secret springs of the Divine counsels, has told two things concerning such uncommon calamities: 1st. That they are not always inflicted as punishments of sin. The sinfulness of the whole race of mankind doth indeed justify God in all the miseries of human life, so that they who have the least share of them must say that God is kind, and they who have the largest share must not say he is unjust. But many are made much more miserable than others, in this life, who are not at all more sinful. Not but that this man was a sinner, and his parents sinners, but it was not any uncommon guilt that God had an eye to in inflicting this upon him. Note, We must take heed of judging any to be great sinners, merely because they are great sufferers; lest we be found not only persecuting those whom God has smitten, *Ps. lxxix. 26.* but accusing those whom he hath justified, and condemning those for whom Christ died, which is daring and dangerous, *Rom. vii. 33, 34.* 2nd. That they are sometimes intended purely for the glory of God, and the manifesting of his works. God has a sovereignty over all his creatures, and a propriety in them, and may make them serviceable to his glory in such a way as he thinks fit, in doing or suffering; and if God be glorified, either by us or in us, we were not made in vain.

This man was born blind, and it was worth while for him to be so, and to

same reason as the lame man (*Acts iii. 2.*), for he was, like him, a beggar (see verse 8).

ix. 2. "Master (or Rabbi), who did sin, this man," &c.: some think that the Jews allude to sins the man had committed, and for which he was punished by anticipation in his being born blind. Monstrous as the notion is, there appears to be some ground for believing that a view of the kind was held by Jews, at least in later times. Olshausen inclines to think that the reference is to sins before birth,

not in a prior state of existence. The rabbis supported the possibility of such sins by citing *Gen. xxv. 22.* Casually, St. Paul declares against such a theory (*Rom. ix. 11*).

ix. 3. "That the works of God," &c.: the dignity with which Christ invests suffering is worth noticing. While narrow minds degraded God by dark and inhuman thoughts, Jesus shows that the infirm man has, in fact, a noble mission in the world—the love of God, the true character of his works shown to mankind in him.

continue thus long dark, "that the works of God might be manifest in him;" that is, *First*. That the attributes of God might be manifested in him: his justice, in making sinful man liable to such grievous calamities; his ordinary power and goodness, in supporting a poor man under such a grievous and tedious affliction; especially, that his extraordinary power and goodness might be manifested in curing him. Note, The difficulties of Providence, otherwise unaccountable, may be resolved into this: God intends in them, to shew himself, to declare his glory, to make himself to be taken notice of. Those who regard him not in the ordinary course of things, are sometimes alarmed by things extraordinary. How contentedly, then, may a good man be a loser in his comforts, while he is sure that thereby God will be, one way or other, a gainer in his glory. *Secondly*. That the counsels of God concerning the Redeemer might be manifested in him. He was born blind, that our Lord Jesus might have the honour of curing him, and might therein prove himself sent of God to be the light of the world. Thus the fall of man was permitted, and the blindness that followed it, that the works of God might be manifest in opening the eyes of the blind. It was now a great while since this man was born blind, and yet it never appeared till now why he was so. Note, The intentions of Providence commonly do not appear till a great while after the event, perhaps many years after. The sentences in the book of Providence are sometimes long, which you must read a great way before you can apprehend the sense of.

2. He gives the reason of his own forwardness and readiness to help and heal him, ver. 4, 5. It was not for ostentation, but in pursuance of his undertaking: "I must work the works of him that sent me," of which this is one, "while it is day," and working time; "the night cometh," the period of that day, "when no man can work." This is not only a reason why Christ was constant in doing good to the souls and bodies of men, but why particularly he did this, though it was the sabbath day, on which works of necessity might be done, and he proves this to be a work of necessity.

1st. It was his Father's will: "I must work the works of him that sent me." Note, *First*. The Father, when he sent his Son into the world, gave him work to do; he did not come into the world to take state, but to do business; whom God sends he employs, for he sends none to be idle. *Secondly*. The works Christ had to do were the works of him that sent him; not only appointed by him, but done for him; he was a worker together with God. *Thirdly*. He was pleased to lay himself under the strongest obligations to do the business he was sent about; "I must work." He engaged his heart in the covenant of redemption to draw near and approach to God, as Mediator, *Jer. xxx. 21*. Shall we be willing to be loose, when Christ was willing to be bound? *Fourthly*. Christ having laid himself under obligations to do his work, laid out himself with the utmost vigour and industry in his work: he worked the works he had to do; and did (*ἐργαζομαι τὰ ἔργα*) make a business of that which was his business. It is not enough to look at our work, and talk over it, but we must work it.

2nd. Now was his opportunity: "I must work while it is day;" while the time lasts which is appointed to work in, and while the light lasts which is given to work by. Christ himself had his day. *First*. All the business of the mediatorial kingdom was to be done within the limits of time, and in this world; for at the end of the world, when time shall be no more, "the kingdom shall be delivered up to God, even the Father," and the mystery of God finished. *Secondly*. All the work he had to do in his own person, here on earth, was to be done before his death; the time of his living in this world is the day here spoken of. Note, The time of our life is our day, in which it concerns us to do the work of the day. Daytime is the proper season for work, *Ps. civ. 22, 23*; during the day of life we must be busy, not waste daytime, nor play by daylight; it will be time enough to rest when our day is done, for it is but a day.

3rd. The period of his opportunity was at hand, and therefore he would be busy: "the night comes, when no man can work." Note, The consideration of our death approaching should quicken us to improve all the opportunities of life, both for doing and getting good. "The night cometh," it will come certainly, may come suddenly, is coming nearer and nearer. We cannot compute how high our sun is, it may go down at noon; nor can we promise ourselves a twilight, between the day of life, and the night of death. When the night comes we cannot work, because the light afforded us to work by is extinguished; the grave is a land of darkness, and our work cannot be done in the dark. And besides, our time allotted us for our work will then be expired; when our Master tied us to duty, he tied us to time too; when night comes, call the labourers; we must then shew our work, and receive according to the things done. In the world of retribution we are no longer probationers; it is too late to bid when the inch of candle is dropped. Christ useth this as an argument with himself to be diligent, though he had no opposition from within to struggle with; much more need have we to work upon our hearts these and the like considerations, to quicken us.

4th. His business in the world was to enlighten it: ver. 5, "As long as I am in the world," and that will not be long, "I am the light of the world." He had said this before, *ch. viii. 12*. He is the Sun of righteousness, that has not only light in his wings for those that can see, but healing in his wings, or beams, for those that are blind and cannot see; therein far exceeding in virtue that great light which rules by day. Christ would therefore cure this blind man, the representative of a blind world, because he came to be the light of the world; not only to give light, but to give sight. Now this gives us, *First*. A great encouragement to come to him, as a guiding, quickening, refreshing light. To whom should we look, but to him? Which way should we turn our eyes, but to the light? We partake of the sun's light, and so we may of Christ's grace, without money, and without price. *Secondly*. A good example of usefulness in the world. What Christ saith of himself, he saith of his disciples, "Ye are lights in the world;" and if so, "Let your light shine." What were candles made for, but to burn?

III. The manner of the cure of the blind man, ver. 6, 7. The circumstances of the miracle are singular, and no doubt significant: "When he had thus spoken," for the instruction of his disciples, and the opening of their understandings, then he addressed himself to the opening of the blind man's eyes. He did not defer it till he could do it either more privately, for his greater safety, or more publicly, for his greater honour, or till the sabbath was passed, when it would give less offence. What good we have opportunity of doing, we should do it quickly. He that will never do a good work till there is nothing to be objected against it, will leave many a good work for ever undone, *Ecc. xi. 4*. In the cure observe,

First. The preparation of the eye-salve. Christ "spit on the ground, and made clay of the spittle." He could have cured him with a word, as he did others; but he chose to do it this way, to shew that he is not tied to any method. He made clay of his own spittle, because there was no water near; and he would teach us not to be nice or curious; but what we have at any time occasion to use, to be willing to take up with that which is next hand, if it will but be made to serve the turn. Why should we go about for that which may as well be had and done a nearer way? Christ's making use of his own spittle intimates that there is healing virtue in every thing that belongs to Christ; clay made of Christ's spittle was much more precious than the balm of Gilead.

Secondly. The application of it to the place; "he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay;" or, as the margin reads it, 'he spread.' (*ἐπέχρισεν*)

ix. 4. "I must work," "day," "night:" it is best to understand the words to mean that a time was approaching (viz., after Christ's death) when the dark powers of evil would seem to gain. (Compare Luke xxii. 53.) The progress of the good which Jesus was promoting would be for a while, as it were, arrested; he, as the light, would be withdrawn. "As before the raising of Lazarus (*chap. xi. 25*), he announces himself as the 'resurrection and the life,' so now he sets himself forth as the source of the archetypal spiritual light, of which

'he daubed, the clay upon the eyes of the blind man' like a tender physician, he did it himself, with his own hand, though the patient was a beggar. Now Christ did this, 1. To magnify his power in making a blind man to see by that method which one would think more likely to make a seeing man blind. Daubing clay on the eyes would close them up, but never open them. Note, The power of God offends works by contraries; and he makes men feel their own blindness before he gives them sight. 2. To give an intimation that it was his mighty hand, the very same that at first made man out of the clay; for by him God made the worlds, both the great world, and man, the little world. Man was formed out of the clay, and moulded like the clay; and here Christ used the same materials to give sight to the body, that at first he used to give being to it. 3. To represent and typify the healing and opening the eyes of the mind, by the grace of Jesus Christ. The design of the Gospel is to open men's eyes, *Acts xxvi. 18*. Now the eye-salve that doth the work is of Christ's preparing; it is made up, not as this, of his spittle, but of his blood, the blood and water that came out of his pierced side: we must come to Christ for the eye-salve, *Rev. iii. 18*. He only is able, and he only appointed, to make it up, *Lu. iv. 18*. The means used in this work are very weak and unlikely, and are made effectual only by the power of Christ. When a dark world was to be enlightened, and nations of blind souls to have their eyes opened, God chose the foolish things, and weak, and despised, for the doing of it: and the method Christ takes is, first to make men feel themselves blind, as this poor man did, when his eyes were daubed with clay, and then to give them sight. Paul, in his conversion, was struck blind for three days, and then the scales fell from his eyes. The way prescribed for getting spiritual wisdom is, let a man become a fool, that he may be wise, *1 Cor. iii. 18*. We must be made uneasy with our blindness, as this man here, and then healed.

Thirdly. The directions given to the patient, ver. 7. His physician said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." Not that this washing was needful to effect the cure; but, 1. Christ would hereby try his obedience, and whether he could with an implicit faith obey the orders of one he was so much a stranger to. 2. He would likewise try how he stood affected to the tradition of the elders, which taught, and perhaps had taught him, (for many that are blind are very knowing,) that it was not lawful to wash the eyes, no, not with spittle, medicinally, on the sabbath day, much less to go to a pool of water to wash them. 3. He would hereby represent the method of spiritual healing, in which, though the effect is owing purely to his power and grace, yet there is duty to be done by us. Go, search the Scriptures, attend upon the ministry, converse with the wise; this is like washing in the pool of Siloam. Promised graces must be expected in the way of instituted ordinances. The waters of baptism were, to them who had been trained up in darkness, like the pool of Siloam, in which they might not only wash and be clean, but wash and have their eyes opened. Hence they that were baptized, are said to be *φωτισθέντες*, 'enlightened;' and the ancients called baptism *φωτισμός*, 'illumination.'

Concerning the pool of Siloam, observe, 1st. That it was supplied with water from mount Zion, so that these were the waters of the sanctuary, *Ps. xli. 4*; living waters, which were healing, *Eze. xlvii. 9*. 2nd. That the waters of Siloam had of old signified the throne and kingdom of the house of David, pointing at the Messiah, *Isa. viii. 6*, and the Jews, who refused the waters of Siloam, Christ's doctrine and law, and rejoiced in the tradition of the elders. Christ would try this man, whether he would cleave to the waters of Siloam or no. 3rd. The evangelist takes notice of the signification of the name: it is, being interpreted, "Sent." Christ is often called the sent of God; the messenger of the covenant, *Mal. iii. 1*. So that when Christ sent him to the pool of Siloam, he did in effect send him to himself, for Christ is all in all to the healing of souls. Christ, as a prophet, directs us to himself as a priest: Go, wash in the Fountain opened a Fountain of life, not a pool.

Fourthly. The patient's obedience to these directions; "he went his way therefore,"—probably led by some friend or other; or perhaps he was so well acquainted with Jerusalem that he could find the way himself; nature often supplies the want of sight with an uncommon sagacity,—and he washed his eyes. Probably the disciples, or some other stander-by, informed him that he who bade him do it was that Jesus whom he had heard so much of; else he would not have gone, at his bidding, on that which looked so like a fool's errand. In confidence of Christ's power, as well as in obedience to his command, he went and washed.

Fifthly. The cure effected; he "came seeing." There is more glory in this concise narrative, "he went and washed, and came seeing," than in Caesar's *Veni, vidi, vici*,—"I came, I saw, I conquered." When the clay was washed off from his eyes, all the other impediments were done away with it: so when the pains and struggles of the new birth are over, and the pains and terrors of conviction past, the bands of sin fly off with them, and a glorious light and liberty succeed. See here an instance, 1. Of the power of Christ. What cannot he do, who could not only do this, but do it thus? With a lump of clay laid on either eye, and washed off again, he couched those cataracts immediately, which the most skilful oculist with the finest instrument, and the most curious hand, could not remove. No doubt this is he that should come, for by him the blind receive their sight. 2. It is an instance of the virtue of faith and obedience. This man let Christ do what he pleased, and did what he appointed him to do, and so was cured. They that would be healed by Christ must be ruled by him. He came back from the pool to his neighbours and acquaintance, wondering, and wondered at—he "came seeing." This represents the benefit gracious souls find in attending on instituted ordinances, according to Christ's appointment: they have gone to the pool of Siloam weak, and have come away strengthened; have gone doubting, and come away satisfied; have gone mourning, and come away rejoicing; gone trembling, and come away triumphing; have gone blind, and come away seeing, come away singing, *Isa. lii. 8*.

8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? 9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. 10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? 11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. 12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

the natural now about to be conferred is only a derivation and symbol" (Alford).

ix. 6, 7. The appropriateness of the meaning of Siloam evidently struck St. John's mind. The whole action of Christ seems to have been designedly symbolical. The clay spread on the eyes hindered, as the night (see verse 4) seemed to hinder Christ's work; the washing in Siloam restored, as the streams of the outpoured Spirit illumined the obedient and waiting disciples. (Compare Acts i. 4.)

Such a wonderful event as the giving of sight to a man born blind, could not but be the talk of the town, and many heeded it no more than they do other town talk, that is but nine days' wonder; but here we are told what the neighbours said of it, for the confirmation of the matter of fact. That which at first was not believed without scrutiny, may afterwards be admitted without scruple. Two things are debated in this conference about it:

First. Whether this were the same man that had before been blind, ver. 8. The neighbours that lived near the place where he was born and bred, and knew that he had been blind, could not but be amazed when they saw that he had his eyesight, had it on a sudden, and perfectly, and they said, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" It seems this blind man was a common beggar, being disabled to work for his living, and so discharged from the obligation of the law, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. When he could not go about, he sat. If we cannot work for God, we must sit still quietly for him. When he could not labour, his parents being not able to maintain him, he begged. Note, Those who cannot otherwise subsist, must not, like the unjust steward, be ashamed to beg: let no man be ashamed of any thing but sin. There are some common beggars that are objects of charity, that should be distinguished; and we must not let the bees starve for the sake of the drones or wasps that are among them.

As to this man, 1. It was well ordered by Providence, that he on whom this miracle was wrought should be a common beggar, and so generally known, and remarkable, by which means the truth of the miracle was the better attested, and there were the more to witness against those infidel Jews, who would not believe that he had been blind, than if he had been maintained in his father's house. 2. It was the greater instance of Christ's condescension, that he seemed as I may say) to take more pains about the cure of a common beggar than of others. When it was for the advantage of his miracles that they should be wrought on those that were remarkable, he pitched upon those that were made so by their poverty and misery, not by their dignity.

In answer to their inquiry, 1st. Some said, "This is he," the very same man, and these are witnesses to the truth of the miracle, for they had long known him stone blind. 2nd. Others, who could not think it possible that a man born blind should thus on a sudden receive his sight, for that reason, and no other, said, he is not he, but "is like him," and so by their confession, if it be he, it is a great miracle that is wrought upon him. Hence we may take occasion to think, First. Of the wisdom and power of Providence in ordering such a universal variety of the faces of men and women, so that no two are so like, but that they may be distinguished, which is necessary to society and commerce, and the administration of justice. And, Secondly. Of the wonderful change which the converting grace of God makes upon some, who before were very wicked and vile, but are thereby so universally and visibly altered, that one would not take them to be the same persons.

This controversy was soon decided by the man himself; "he said, I am he," the very man that so lately sat and begged; I am he that was blind, and was an object of the charity of men, but now see, and am a monument of the mercy and grace of God. We do not find that the neighbours appealed to him in this matter, but he, hearing the debate, interposed, and put an end to it. It is a piece of justice we owe to our neighbours to rectify their mistakes, and to set things before them, as far as we are able, in a true light. Applying it spiritually, it teacheth us, that those who are savingly enlightened by the grace of God, should be ready to own what they were before that blessed change was wrought, 1 *Tim.* i. 13, 14.

Secondly. How he came to have his eyes opened, ver. 10-12. They will now turn aside and see this great sight, and inquire farther concerning it. He did not sound a trumpet when he did these alms, nor perform his cures upon a stage, and yet, like a city upon a hill, they could not be hid. Two things these neighbours inquire after:

1. The manner of the cure; "How were thine eyes opened?" The works of the Lord being great, they ought to be sought out, *Ps.* cxi. 2. It is good to observe the way and method of God's works, and they will appear the more wonderful. We may apply it spiritually: it is strange that blind eyes should be opened, but more strange when we consider how they are opened; how weak the means are that are used, and how strong the opposition that is conquered. In answer to this, he gives them a plain and full account of the matter, ver. 11, "A man that is called Jesus, made clay, . . . and I received sight." Note, Those who have experienced special instances of God's power and goodness in temporal or spiritual things, should be ready upon all occasions to communicate their experiences for the glory of God, and the instruction and encouragement of others: see David's collection of his experiences, his own and others, *Ps.* xxiv. 4-6. It is a debt we owe to our benefactor, and to our brethren. God's favours are lost upon us when they are lost with us, and go no farther.

2. Concerning the author of it; ver. 12 "Where is he?" Some perhaps asked this question out of curiosity, Where is he, that we may see him? A man that did such cures as these might well be a show, which one would go a good way for the sight of. Others, perhaps, asked out of ill-will, Where is he, that we may seize him? There was a proclamation out for the discovering and apprehending of him, *ch.* xi. 57; and the unthinking crowd, in spite of all reason and equity, will have ill thoughts of those that are put into an ill name. Some, we hope, asked this question out of good-will, Where is he, that we may be acquainted with him? where is he, that we may come to him, and share in the favours he is so free of? In answer to this he could say nothing, "I know not." As soon as Christ had sent him to the pool of Siloam, it should seem he withdrew immediately, as he did, *ch.* v. 1, and did not stay till the man returned, as if he either doubted of the effect, or waited for the man's thanks. Humble souls take more pleasure in doing good than in hearing of it again: it will be time enough to hear of it in the resurrection of the just. The man had never seen Jesus, for by that time he had gained his sight, he had lost his physician; and he asked, it is probable, Where is he? None of all the new and surprising objects that presented themselves could be so grateful to him as one sight of Christ; but as yet he knew no more of him but that he was called, and rightly called, Jesus, a Saviour. Thus in the work of grace wrought upon the soul, we see the change, but see not the hand that makes it; for the way of the Spirit is like that of the wind, which thou hearest the sound of, but canst not tell whence it comes, or whither it goes.

13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. 14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. 16

ix. 13. "They brought to the Pharisees," &c.: the object in doing this may have been that they might substantiate an accusation of Sabbath-breaking against our Lord; so verse 14 seems to hint.

ix. 16. Two parties divide the Sanhedrim on this subject. The one rely wholly on a preconceived opinion; because they considered Christ's conduct a transgression of the fourth commandment, they rejected his message. They are illustrations of Locke's remark: "Some one or two rules, on which their conclusions

Therefore said some of the Pharisees, 'This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. 17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?' He said, He is a prophet. 18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? 20 His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: 21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. 22 These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. 24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. 25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. 26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? 27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? 28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. 29 We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. 30 The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. 31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. 32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. 33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. 34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

One would have expected that such a miracle as Christ wrought upon the blind man should have settled his reputation, and silenced and shamed all opposition; but it had the contrary effect; instead of being embraced as a prophet for it, he is prosecuted as a criminal.

First. Here is the information that was given in to the Pharisees concerning this matter; ver. 13, "They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind." They brought him to the great Sanhedrim, which consisted chiefly of Pharisees, at least, the Pharisees in the Sanhedrim were most active against Christ.

Some think they that brought this man to the Pharisees, did it with a good design, to shew them that this Jesus whom they persecuted was not what they represented him to be, but really a great man, and one that gave considerable proofs of a Divine mission. What hath convinced us of the truth and excellency of religion, and hath removed our prejudices against it, we should be forward, as we have opportunity, to offer to others for their conviction. 2. It should seem rather they did it with an ill design, to exasperate the Pharisees the more against Christ, and that needed not, for they were bitter enough of themselves. They brought him with such a suggestion as that, *ch.* xi. 47, 48, "If ye let him thus alone, all men will believe on him." Note, Those rulers

depend, you will find, in most men, have governed all their thoughts; these, true or false, are the maxims they have been guided by." Of the opposite party we can believe were Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. The answer, "How can a man that is a sinner," &c., sounds like an echo of the words of the former (*chap.* iii. 2).

ix. 22. "Put out of the synagogue" should be "excommunicate." The phrase denotes not merely the fact of his expulsion from the synagogue, but the character he would bear in consequence.

that are of a persecuting spirit shall never want ill instruments about them that will blow the coals and make them worse.

Secondly. The ground which was pretended for this information, and the colour given to it. That which is good was never maligning but under the imputation of something evil; and the crime objected here, ver. 14, was, that "it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes." The profanation of the sabbath day is certainly an ill thing, and gives a man a very ill character; but the traditions of the Jews had made that to be a violation of the law of the sabbath which was far from being so; and many a time this matter was contested between Christ and the Jews that it might be settled for the benefit of the church in all ages. But it may be asked, Why would Christ not only work miracles on the sabbath day, but work them in such a manner as he knew would give offence to the Jews? When he had healed the impotent man, why would he bid him carry his bed? Could he not have cured this blind man without making clay? I answer, 1. He would not seem to yield to the usurped power of the scribes and Pharisees; their government was illegal, their impositions arbitrary, and their zeal for the rituals consumed the substantial of religion, and therefore Christ would not give place to them by subjection, no, not for an hour. Christ was made under the law of God, but not under their law. 2. He did it that he might, both by word and action, expound the law of the fourth commandment, and vindicate it from their corrupt glosses, and so teach us, both that a weekly sabbath is to be perpetually observed in the church one day in seven—for what need was there to explain that law if it must be presently abrogated?—and that it is not to be so ceremonially observed by us as it was by the Jews. Works of necessity and mercy are allowed, and the sabbath rest to be kept, not so much for its own sake as in order to the sabbath work. 3. Christ chose to work his cures on the sabbath day to dignify and sanctify the day, and to intimate that spiritual cures should be wrought mostly on the Christian sabbath day. How many blind eyes have been opened by the preaching of the Gospel, that blessed eye-salve, on the Lord's day; how many impotent souls cured on that day!

Thirdly. The trial and examination of this matter by the Pharisees, ver. 15; and here appears so much passion, and prejudice, and ill humour, and so little reason, that the discourse is nothing but crossing questions. One would think when a man in these circumstances was brought before them, they should have been so taken up in admiring the miracle, and congratulating the happiness of the poor man, that they could not have been peevish with him; but their enmity to Christ had divested them of all manner of humanity, and divinity too. Let us see how they teased this man.

1. They interrogated him concerning the cure itself.

1st. They doubted whether he had indeed been born blind, and demanded proof of that, which even the prosecutors had acknowledged; ver. 18, "they did not believe," that is, they would not, that he was born blind. Men that seek occasion to quarrel with the clearest truths may find it if they please; and they that resolve to hold fast deceit will never want a handle to hold it by. This was not a prudent caution, but a prejudiced infidelity; however, it was a good way they took for the clearing of this, "they called the parents of the man that had received his sight." This they did in hopes to disprove the miracle. These parents were poor and timorous, and if they had said they could not be sure that this was their son, and that it was only some weakness or dimness in his sight that he had been born with, which, if they had been able to get help for him, might have been cured long since; or had otherwise prevaricated for fear of the court, the Pharisees had gained their point, had robbed Christ of the honour of this miracle, which would have lessened the reputation of all the rest; but God so ordered and overruled this counsel of theirs that it turned to the more effectual proof of the miracle, and left them under a necessity of being either convinced or confounded. Now in this part of the examination we have,

First. The questions that were put to them: ver. 19, they asked them in an imperious, threatening way, "Is this your son?" Dare you swear it? Do "you say he was born blind?" Are you sure of it? Or did he but pretend to be so to have an excuse for his begging? "how then doth he now see?" That is impossible, and therefore you had better unsay it. Those who cannot bear the light of truth do all they can to eclipse it, and hinder the discovery of it: thus the managers of evidence, or mismanagers rather, lead witnesses out of the way, and teach them how to conceal or disguise the truth, and so involve themselves in a double guilt, like that of Jeroboam, who sinned, and made Israel to sin.

Secondly. Their answers to these interrogatories; in which, 1st. They fully attest that which they could safely say in this matter; safely, that is, upon their own knowledge; and safely, that is, without running themselves into a *pre-judice*; ver. 20, "We know that this is our son," for they were daily conversant with him, and had such a natural affection to him as the true mother had, 1 *Kin.* iii. 26, which made them know it was their own, and "we know that he was born blind." They had reason to know it, by the same token that it had cost them many a sad thought, and many a careful, troublesome hour about him. How often had they looked upon him with grief, and lamented their child's blindness more than all the burthens and inconveniences of their poverty, and wished he had never been born, rather than be born to such an uncomfortable life. Those who are ashamed of their children, or any of their relations, because of their bodily infirmities, may take a reproof from these parents, who freely owned, "this is our son," though he was born blind, and lived upon alms. 2nd. They cautiously decline giving any evidence concerning his cure, partly because they were not themselves eye-witnesses of it, and could say nothing to it of their own knowledge; and partly because they found it was a tender point, and could not bear to be meddled with; and therefore, having owned that he was their son, and was born blind, further these deponents say not.

(1.) Observe how warily they express themselves, ver. 21, "by what means he now seeth we know not, or who hath opened his eyes we know not," otherwise than by hearsay; can give no account either by what means, or by whose hand, it was done. See how the wisdom of this world teacheth men to trim the matter in critical junctures. Christ was accused as a sabbath-breaker, and as an impostor. Now these parents of the blind man, though they were not eye-witnesses of the cure, yet were fully assured of it, and were bound in gratitude to have borne their testimony to the honour of the Lord Jesus, who had done their son so great a kindness; but they had not courage to do it, and then thought it might serve to atone for their not appearing in favour of him that they said nothing to his prejudice; whereas, in the day of trial, he that is not apparently for Christ is justly looked upon as really against him, *Lu.* xi. 23, *Mar.* viii. 38. That they might not be farther urged in this matter, they refer themselves and the court to him, "he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself." This implies, that when children are not of age, (while they are *infants*, such as cannot speak,) it is incumbent upon their parents to speak for them: speak to God for them in prayer, speak to the church for them in baptism; but when they are of age it is fit they should be asked whether they be willing to stand to that which their parents did for them, and let them speak for themselves. This man, though he was born blind, yet seems to have been of quick understanding above many, which enabled him to speak for himself better than his friends could speak for him. Thus God often, by

a kind providence, makes up in the mind what is wanting in the body, 1 *Cor.* xii. 23, 24. His parents turning him over to them was only to save themselves from trouble, and expose him; whereas they that had so great an honour in his mercies had reason to embark with him in his hazards for the honour of that Jesus who had done so much for them.

(2.) See the reason why they were so cautious; ver. 22, 23, "Because they feared the Jews." It was not because they would put an honour upon their son by making him his own advocate, or because they would have the matter cleared by the best hand, but because they would shift trouble off from themselves, as most people are in care to do, no matter on whom they throw it. Near is my friend, and near is my child, and perhaps near is my religion, "but nearer is myself;—*proximus egomet mihi*; but Christianity teacheth another lesson, 1 *Cor.* x. 24; *Est.* viii. 6. Here is,

(1st.) The late law which the Sanhedrim had made. It was agreed and enacted by their authority, that if any man within their jurisdiction did confess that Jesus was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Observe,

(1st.) The crime designed to be punished, and so prevented by this statute, and that was embracing Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah, and discovering this by an overt act, which amounted to a confessing of him. They themselves did expect a Messiah, but they could by no means bear to think that this Jesus should be he, nor admit the question whether he were or no for two reasons. First. Because his precepts were all so contrary to their traditional laws. The spiritual worship he prescribed overthrew their formalities, nor did any thing more effectually destroy their singularity and narrow-spiritedness than that universal charity which he taught; humility and mortification, repentance and self-denial, were lessons new to them, and sounded harsh and strange in their ears. Secondly. Because his promises and appearances were so contrary to their traditional hopes. They expected a Messiah in outward pomp and splendour, that should not only free the nation from the Roman yoke, but advance the grandeur of the Sanhedrim, and make all the members of it princes and peers; and now to hear of a Messiah whose outward circumstances were all mean and poor, whose first appearance, and principal residence, was in Galilee, a despised province; who never made his court to them, nor sought their favour; whose followers were neither swordsmen nor gowmen, nor any men of honour, but contemptible fishermen; who proposed and promised no other redemption but from sin; no other consolation of Israel but what is spiritual and divine; and at the same time bade his followers expect the cross, and count upon persecution. This was such a reproach to all the ideas they had formed and filled the minds of their people with, such a blow to their power and interest, and such a disappointment to all their hopes, that they could never be reconciled to it, not so much as to give it a fair or patient hearing, but right or wrong it must be crushed.

(2nd.) The penalty to be inflicted for this crime. If any should own himself a disciple of Jesus, he should be deemed and taken as an apostate from the faith of the Jewish church, and a rebel and a traitor against the government of it, and should therefore be put out of the synagogue, as one that had rendered himself unworthy of the honours, and incapable of the privileges, of their church; he should be excommunicated, and expelled the commonwealth of Israel. Nor was this merely an ecclesiastical censure, which a man that made no conscience of their authority might slight, but it was in effect an outlawry, which excluded a man from civil commerce, and deprived him of his liberty and property. Note, First. Christ's holy religion, from its first rise, has been opposed by penal laws made against the professors of it; as if men's consciences would otherwise naturally embrace it, this unnatural force has been put upon them. Secondly. The church's artillery, when the command of it has fallen into ill hands, has often been turned against itself; and ecclesiastical censures made to serve a carnal, secular interest. It is no new thing to see those cast out of the synagogue that were the greatest beauties and blessings of it, and to hear those that expelled them say, "The Lord be glorified," *Isa.* lvi. 5.

Now of this edict it is said, 1. That the Jews had agreed it, or conspired it. Their consultation and communion herein was a perfect conspiracy against the crown and dignity of the Redeemer—against the Lord and his anointed. 2. That they had already agreed it. Though he had been but a few months in any public character among them, and one would think in so short a time could not have made them jealous of him, yet thus early were they aware of his growing interest, and already agreed to do their utmost to suppress it. He had lately made his escape out of the temple, and when they saw themselves baffled in their attempts to take him, they presently took this course, to make it penal for any body to own him. Thus unanimous, and thus expeditious, are the enemies of the church and their counsels; but He that sits in heaven laughs at them, and has them in derision, and so may we.

(2nd.) The influence which this law had upon the parents of the blind man. They declined saying any thing of Christ, and shuffled it off to their son, "because they feared the Jews;" Christ had incurred the frowns of the government to do their son a kindness, but they would not incur them to do him any honour. Note, "The fear of man brings a snare," *Pr.* xxix. 25, and often makes people deny and disown Christ and his truths and ways, and act against their consciences. Well, the parents have thus disentangled themselves, and are discharged from any farther attendance, let us now go on with the examination of the man himself; their doubt whether he was born blind was put of doubt by them, and therefore,

2nd. They inquired of him concerning the manner of the cure, and made their remarks upon it, ver. 15, 16.

First. The same question which his neighbours had put to him now again the Pharisees asked him, how he had received his sight? This they inquired, not with any sincere desire to find out the truth by tracing the report to the original, but with a desire to find an occasion against Christ; for if the man should relate the matter fully, they would prove Christ a sabbath-breaker; if he should vary from his former story, they would have some colour to suspect the whole to be a collusion.

Secondly. The same answer in effect which he had given to his neighbours he here repeats to the Pharisees, "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see." He doth not here speak of the making of the clay, for indeed he had not seen it made; that circumstance was not essential, and might give the Pharisees most occasion against him, and therefore he waives it. In the former account he said, "I washed and received sight," but lest they should think it was only a glimpse for the present, which a heated imagination might fancy itself to have, he now saith, "I do see," it is a complete and lasting cure.

Thirdly. The remarks made upon this story were very different, and occasioned a debate in the court, ver. 16.

1st. Some took this occasion to censure and condemn Christ for what he had done. Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not of God," as he pretends, "because he keepeth not the sabbath day." First. The doctrine upon which this censure is grounded is very true, that those are not of God—those pretenders to prophesy not sent of God—those pretenders to saintship not born of God—who do not keep the sabbath day; they that are of God will keep the commandments of God, and this is his commandment, that we sanctify the sabbath. They

ix. 24. "Give God the praise:" i.e., let our praise be to God, not to this man, whom we know to be a sinner. This opinion of Christ was that expressed by the majority. (Compare verse 16.)

ix. 27 "Ye did not hear:" i.e., you did not pay attention to my words. (Compare chap. viii. 43.)

ix. 34. "Thou wast altogether born," &c.: thou wast "wholly" (i.e., the whole of thee) born in sins. His infirmity was, in their estimation, a proof of especial sinfulness in him or his parents.

"They cast him out:" turned him out forcibly, intimating his excommunication.

ix. 35. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out," &c.: in the action of Christ seeking the man whom men had cast out, we have an illustration of the Good Shepherd seeking the lost. This prepares the way for the parable in chap. x. Christ here, as in chap. v. 14, follows up and seeks to deepen the impression.

ix. 36. "Who is he, Lord?" &c.: "I must know who he is, that I

that are of God keep up communion with God, and delight to hear from him, and speak to him, and therefore will observe the sabbath, which is a day appointed for intercourse with Heaven. The sabbath is called a sign, for the sanctifying of it is a sign of a sanctified heart; and the profaning of it a sign of a profane heart. But, Secondly. The application of it to our Saviour is very unjust, for he did religiously observe the sabbath day, and never in any instance violated it—never did otherwise than well on the sabbath day. He did not keep the sabbath according to the tradition of the elders, and the superstitious observances of the Pharisees, but he kept it according to the command of God, and therefore, no doubt he was of God, and his miracles proved him to be "Lord also of the sabbath day." Note, Much unrighteous and uncharitable judging is occasioned by men's making the rules of religion more strict than God has made them, and adding their own fancies to God's appointments, as the Jews here, in the case of sabbath sanctification. We ourselves may forbear such and such things on the sabbath days as we find a distraction to us, and we do well, but we must not therefore tie up others to the same strictness. Every thing that we take for a rule of practice must not presently be made a rule of judgment.

2nd. Others spoke in his favour, and very pertinently urged, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" It seems even in this council of the ungodly there were some that were capable of a free thought, and were witnesses for Christ even in the midst of his enemies. The matter of fact was plain, that this was a true miracle; the more it was searched into the more it was cleared; and this brought his former like works to mind, and gave occasion to speak magnificently of them, *ταῦτα σημεῖα*, 'so great signs,' so many, so evident; and the inference from it is very natural, 'such things as these could never be done by a man that is a sinner;' that is, not by any mere man, in his own name, and in his own power; or rather, not by one that is a cheat or an impostor, and by that sense a sinner: such a one may indeed shew some signs and lying wonders, but not such signs and true wonders as Christ wrought. How could a man produce such Divine credentials, if he had not a Divine commission? Thus "there was a division among them," a schism, so the word is; they clashed in their opinion, a warm debate arose, and the house divided upon it. Thus God defeats the counsels of his enemies, by dividing them, and by such testimonies as these given against the malice of persecutors, and the ruses they meet with, their designs against the church are sometimes rendered ineffectual, and always inexcusable.

11. After their inquiry concerning the cure, we must observe their inquiry concerning the author of it. And here observe,

1st. What the man said of him in answer to their inquiry: they ask him, ver. 17, "What sayest thou of him, seeing that he has opened thine eyes?" What dost thou think of his doing this? And what idea hast thou of him that did it? If he should speak slightly of Christ in answer to this, as he might be tempted to do to please them, now he was in their hands,—as his parents had done,—if he should say, 'I know not what to make of him, he may be a conjuror for aught I know, or some mountebank,' they would have triumphed in it. Nothing confirms Christ's enemies in their enmity to him so much as the slights put upon him by those that have passed for his friends. But if he should speak honourably of him, they would prosecute him upon their new law, which did not except, no, not his own patient; would make him an example, and so deter others from applying themselves to him for cures, which, though they came cheap from Christ, they would make them pay dear for; or perhaps, Christ's friends proposed to have the man's own sentiments concerning his physician, and were willing to know, since he appeared to be a sensible man, what he thought of him. Note, Those whose eyes Christ has opened, know best what to say of him, and have great reason upon all occasions to say well of him. What think we of Christ?

To this question the poor man makes a short, plain, and direct answer; "He is a prophet," he is one inspired and sent of God to preach and work miracles, and delivers to the world a Divine message. There had been no prophets among the Jews of three hundred years past, yet they did not conclude they should have no more; for they knew He was yet to come who should seal up vision and prophecy, *Dan. ix. 24*. It should seem this man had not any thoughts that he was the Messiah, the great Prophet, but one of the same rank with the other prophets; the woman of Samaria concluded he was a prophet, before she had any thought of his being the Messiah, *ch. iv. 19*. So this blind man thought well of Christ according to the light he had, though he did not think well enough of him; but being faithful in what he had already attained to, God revealed even that unto him. This poor blind beggar had a clearer judgment of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and saw farther into the proofs of a Divine mission, than the masters in Israel that assumed an authority to judge of prophets.

2nd. What they said of him in reply to the man's testimony: having in vain attempted to invalidate the evidence of the fact, and finding that indeed a notable miracle was wrought, and they could not deny it; they renew their attempt to banter it, and run it down, and do all they can to shake the good opinion the man had of him that opened his eyes; and to convince him that he was an ill man; ver. 24, "Give God the glory, we know that this man is a sinner." Two ways this is understood, either,

First. By way of advice, to take heed of ascribing the praise of his cure to a sinful man, but to give it all to God, to whom it was due. Thus, under colour of zeal for the honour of God, they rob Christ of his honour, as those do who will not worship Christ as God, under pretence of zeal for this great truth, that there is but one God to be worshipped; whereas this is his declared will, "that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father;" and in confessing that Christ is Lord, we give glory to God the Father. When God makes use of men that are sinners as instruments of good to us, we must give God the glory, for every creature is that to us that he makes it to be, and yet there is a gratitude owing to the instruments. It was a good word, "Give God the praise;" but here it was ill used, and there seems to be this farther in it, "This man is a sinner," an ill man, and therefore give the praise so much the more to God, who could work by such an instrument.

Secondly. Or by way of adjuration, so some take it. "We know" (though thou dost not, who hast but lately come as it were into a new world,) "that this man is a sinner," that is, a great impostor, that cheats the country; this we are sure of, therefore give God praise (as Joshua said to Achan) by making an ingenuous confession of the fraud and collusion which we are confident there is in this matter; in God's name, man, tell the truth. Thus is God's name abused in Papal inquisitions, when by oaths *ex officio*, they extort accusations of themselves from the innocent, and of others from the ignorant. See how basely they speak of the Lord Jesus; "We know that this man is a sinner," is a man of sin. In which we may observe, 1st. Their insolence and pride; they would not have it thought, when they asked the man what he thought of him, that they needed information; nay, they know very well that he is a sinner, and nobody can convince them of the contrary. He had challenged them to their faces, *ch. viii. 46*, to convince him of sin, and they had nothing to say; but now behind his back they speak of him as a malefactor, convicted upon the notorious evidence of the fact. Thus false accusers make up in confidence what is wanting in proof. 2nd. The injury and indignity hereby done to the Lord

Jesus. When he became man he not only took upon him the form of a servant but of a sinner, *Rom. viii. 3*; and passed for a sinner in common with the rest of mankind. Nay, he was represented as a sinner of the first magnitude, a sinner above all men; and being made sin for us, he despised even this shame.

111. The debate that arose between the Pharisees and this poor man concerning Christ: they say, "He is a sinner;" he saith, "He is a prophet." As it is an encouragement to those who are concerned for the cause of Christ, to hope that it shall never be lost for want of witnesses, when they find a poor blind beggar picked up from the way side, and made a witness for Christ, to the faces of his most impudent enemies; so it is an encouragement to those who are called out to witness for Christ, to find with what prudence and courage this man manageth his defence; according to the promise, "It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." Though he had never seen Jesus, he had felt his grace. Now in the parley between the Pharisees and this poor man, we may observe three steps:

1st. He sticks to the certain matter of fact, which they endeavour to shake the evidence of. That which is doubtful, is best resolved into that which is plain, and therefore,

First. He adheres to that which to himself at least, and to his own satisfaction, was past dispute; ver. 25, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not." I will not now stand to dispute, nor need I; the matter is plain, and though I should altogether hold my peace, would speak for itself; or, as it might better be rendered, 'If he be a sinner, I know it not;' I see no reason to say so, but the contrary, for this "one thing I know" and can be more sure of than you can be of that which you are so confident of, "that, whereas I was blind, now I see;" and therefore must not only say, that he has been a good friend to me, but that he is a prophet; I am both able and bound to speak well of him. Now here, First. He tacitly reproves their great assurance of the ill character they gave of the blessed Jesus, 'You say you know him to be a sinner; I, that know him as well as you do, cannot give him any such character.' Secondly. He boldly relies upon his own experience of the power and goodness of the holy Jesus, and resolves to abide by it. There is no disputing against experience, nor arguing a man out of his senses; here is one that is properly an eye-witness of the power and grace of Christ, though he had never seen him. Note, As Christ's mercies are most valued by those that have felt the want of them, that have been blind and now see; so the most powerful and durable affections to Christ are those that arise from an experimental knowledge of him, *1 Jno. i. 1*; *Acts iv. 2*.

He doth not here give a nice account of the method of the cure, nor pretend to describe it philosophically; but in short, "whereas I was blind, now I see." Thus in the work of grace in the soul, though we cannot tell when and how, by what instruments, and by what steps and advances the blessed change was wrought; yet we may take the comfort of it, if we can say through grace, "whereas I was blind, now I see." I did live a carnal, worldly, sensual life, but thanks be to God, it is now otherwise with me, *Eph. v. 8*.

Secondly. They endeavour to baffle and stifle the evidence by a needless repetition of their inquiries into it; ver. 26, "What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes?" They asked these questions, First. Because they wanted something to say, and would rather speak impertinently, than seem to be silenced, or run aground. Thus eager disputants, that resolve they will have the last word by such vain repetitions to avoid the shame of being silenced, make themselves accountable for many idle words. Secondly. Because they hoped by putting the man upon repeating his evidence, to catch him tripping in it, or wavering, and then they would think they had gained a good point.

2nd. He upbraids them with their obstinate infidelity, and invincible prejudices; and they revile him as a disciple of Jesus, ver. 27—29, where the man is more bold with them, and they more sharp upon him than before.

First. The man boldly upbraids them with their wilful and unreasonable opposition of the evidence of this miracle, ver. 27. He would not gratify them with a repetition of the story, but bravely replied, "I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would you hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?" Some think he spoke seriously, and really expecting that they would be convinced. 'He has many disciples; I will be one; will you also come in among them?' Some zealous young Christians see so much reason for religion, that they are ready to think every one should presently be of their mind. But it rather seems to be spoken ironically, "will you be his disciples?" No; I know you abhor the thoughts of it, why then should you desire to hear that which will either make you his disciples, or leave you inexcusable if you be not? Those that wilfully shut their eyes against the light, as these Pharisees here did. First. They make themselves contemptible and base, as these here did, who were justly exposed by this poor man for denying the conclusion, when they had nothing to object against either of the premises. Secondly. They forfeit all the benefit of farther instructions and means of knowledge and conviction. They that have been told once and would not hear, why should they be told it again? *Jer. li. 9*; see *Mat. x. 14*. Thirdly. They hereby receive the grace of God in vain: this is implied in that, "Will ye be his disciples?" No; you resolve you will not, why then would you hear it again? only that you may be his accusers and persecutors? Those who will not see cause to embrace Christ, and join with his followers; yet one would think should see cause enough not to hate, and persecute him and them.

Secondly. For this they scorn and revile him, ver. 28; when they could not resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke, they broke out into a passion, and scolded him, began to call names, and give him ill language. See what Christ's faithful witnesses must expect from the adversaries of his truth and cause; let them count upon all manner of evil to be said of them, *Mat. v. 11*. It is the method commonly taken by unreasonable men, what is wanting in truth and reason, to make it out with railing.

1st. They taunted this man for his affection to Christ; they said, "Thou art his disciple," as if that were reproach enough, and they could not say worse of him. We scorn to be his disciples, and will leave that preference to thee, and such scoundrels as thou art. They do what they can to put Christ's religion in an ill name, and to represent the professor of it as a contemptible scandalous character. "They reviled him;" the Vulgar reads it, *Maledixerunt enim*, "they cursed him;" and what was their curse? It was this, 'Be thou his disciple.' May such a curse, saith St. Austin here, ever be on us and on our children! If we take our measures of credit and disgrace from the sentiment, or clamours rather, of a blind deluded world, we shall glory in our shame, and be ashamed of our glory. They had no reason to call this man a disciple of Christ; he had never seen him or heard him preach, only he had spoken favourably of a kindness he had done him, and this they could not bear.

2nd. They gloried in their relation to Moses as their master; "We are Moses' disciples," and do not either need or desire any other teacher. Note, First. Carnal professors of religion are very apt to trust to, and be proud of the dignities and privileges of their profession, while they are strangers to the principles and powers of their religion. These Pharisees had before boasted of their good parentage, "We are Abraham's seed;" here of their good education, "We are Moses' disciples;" as if these would save them. Secondly. It is sad to see how much one part of religion is opposed, under colour of zeal for another part; there was a perfect harmony between Christ and Moses;

may be able to believe in him." The object of our faith being a person, it is necessary that we possess a personal knowledge of him. This inquiry is an instance of the sober caution recommended (1 Pet. iii. 15). "God will give a power of discernment by reason, as Coleridge renders ('an understanding that we,' &c.) 1 John v. 20."

ix. 39. "For judgment:" "I am come to reveal every man's innermost state. I, as the highest revelation of God, must bring out men's love, and their hatred of what is divine, as none other could."

I am the touchstone; much that seemed true shall at my touch be proved false, to be merely dross; much that for its little sightliness was nothing accounted of, shall prove true metal; many whom men esteemed to be seeing, such as the spiritual chiefs of this nation, shall be shown to be blind; many whom men counted altogether unenlightened, shall, when my light touches them, be shown to have powers of spiritual vision undreamt of before. These words call out a further contradiction on the part of the

consciousness. But it seems rather to be a judicial act; they excommunicated him, it is likely, with the highest degree of excommunication; they cut him off from being a member of the church of Israel. This poor man, saith Dr. Lightfoot, was the first confessor, as John Baptist was the first martyr, of the Christian church. There was a law made, that if any confessed Jesus to be the Christ, he should be cast out of the synagogue, ver. 22; but this man had only said of Jesus that he was a prophet, was of God, and yet they stretch the law to bring him under the lash of it, as if he had confessed him to be the Christ. To be justly excommunicated, and cast out of a pure church,—*clave non errante*—when the key commits no error,—is a very dreadful thing; for what is so bound on earth, is bound in heaven; but to be cast out of a corrupt church, which it is our duty to go out of, and that unjustly, though cast out with an anathema, and all the bugbear ceremonies of bell, book, and candle, is what we have no reason at all to dread or be aggrieved at: “the curse causeless shall not come.” If they cast Christ’s followers out of their synagogues, as he foretells, *ch. xvi. 2*, there is no harm done, when they are become synagogues of Satan.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? 36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. 38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

In these verses we may observe,

First. The tender care which our Lord Jesus took of this poor man; ver. 35, when “Jesus heard that they had cast him out,” for it is likely the town-rang of it, and every body cried out shame upon them for it, then he found him, which implies his seeking him, and looking after him, that he might encourage and comfort him; 1. Because he had, to the best of his knowledge, spoken so very well, so bravely, so boldly, in defence of the Lord Jesus. Note, Jesus Christ will be sure to stand by his witnesses, and own those that own him, and his truth, and ways. Earthly princes neither do nor can take cognizance of all that vindicate them, and their government, and administration; but our Lord Jesus knows and observes all the faithful testimonies we bear to him at any time, and a book of remembrance is written, and it shall redound not only to our credit hereafter, but our comfort now. 2. Because the Pharisees had cast him out, and abused him. Besides the common regard which the righteous Judge of the world has to those who suffer wrongfully, *Ps. ciii. 6*, there is a particular notice taken of those that suffer in the cause of Christ, and for the testimony of a good conscience. Here was one poor man suffering for Christ, and he took care that, as his afflictions abounded, his consolations should much more abound. Note, 1st. Though persecutors may exclude good men from their communion, yet they cannot exclude them from communion with Christ, nor put them out of the way of his visits. Happy they who have a friend that men cannot debar them from. 2nd. Jesus Christ will graciously find and take up those who for his sake are unjustly rejected and cast out by men. He will be a hiding-place to his outcasts, and appear to the joy of those whom their brethren hated and cast out.

Secondly. The comfortable converse Christ had with him, wherein he brings him acquainted with the consolation of Israel. He had well improved his knowledge he had, and now Christ gives him farther instruction, for he that is faithful in a little shall be intrusted with more, *Mat. xiii. 12*.

1. Our Lord Jesus examines his faith: “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” Dost thou give credit to the promises of the Messiah, dost thou expect his coming, and art thou ready to receive and embrace him when he is manifested to thee? This was that faith of the Son of God which they lived by, who lived before his manifestation. Observe, 1st. The Messiah is here called the Son of God, and so the Jews had learned to call him from the prophecies, *Ps. ii. 7*; *lxxxix. 27*; see *Jno. i. 49*, “Thou art the Son of God,” that is, the true Messiah. They that expected the temporal kingdom of the Messiah delighted rather in calling him the son of David, which gave more countenance to that expectation, *Mat. xxii. 42*; but Christ, that he might give us an idea of his kingdom, as purely spiritual and Divine, calls himself the Son of God, and rather Son of man in general than of David in particular. 2nd. The desires and expectations of the Messiah, which the Old Testament saints had, guided by and grounded upon the promise, were graciously interpreted and accepted as their believing on the Son of God. This faith Christ here inquires after, “Dost thou believe?” Note, The great thing which is now required of us, *1 Jno. iii. 23*, and will shortly be inquired after concerning us, is our believing on the Son of God, and by this we must stand or fall for ever.

2. The poor man solicitously inquires concerning the Messiah he was to believe in, professing his readiness to embrace him, and close with him; ver. 36, “Who is he, Lord, that I might believe in him?” 1st. Some think he did know that Jesus, who cured him, was the Son of God, but did not know which was Jesus; and therefore supposing this that talked with him to be a follower of Jesus, desired him to do him the favour to direct him to him; not that he might satisfy his curiosity with the sight of him, but that he might the more firmly believe in him, and profess his faith, and know whom he had believed: see *Cant. v. 6, 7*; *iii. 2, 3*. It is Christ only that can direct us to himself. 2nd. Others think he did know that this person who talked with him was Jesus, the same that cured him, whom he believed a great and good man, and a prophet, but did not yet know that he was, or was to be, the Son of God, and the true Messiah. Lord, I believe there is a Christ to come; thou hast given me bodily sight; tell me, O tell me, who and where this Son of God is. Christ’s question intimated that the Messiah was come, and was now among them, which he presently takes the hint of, and asks, “Where is he, Lord?” The question was rational and just, “Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?” for how could he believe on one of whom he had not heard? The work of ministers is to tell us who the Son of God is, that we may believe on him, *ch. xx. 31*.

3. Our Lord Jesus graciously reveals himself to him as that Son of God, on whom he must believe; ver. 37, “Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.” Thou needest not go far to find out the Son of God, “Behold, the word is nigh thee.” We do not find that Christ did thus expressly, and in so many words, reveal himself to any other, as to this man here, and to the woman of Samaria, “I that speak unto thee am he;” he left others to find out by arguments who he was; but to these weak and foolish things of the world he chose to manifest himself so as not to the wise and prudent. Christ here describes himself to this man by two things, which express his great favour to him:

1st. “Thou hast seen him;” and he was much indebted to the Lord Jesus for opening his eyes, that he might see him. Now he was made sensible more than ever what an unspeakable mercy it was to be cured of his blindness, that he might see the Son of God—a sight which rejoiced his heart more than that of the light of this world. Note, The greatest comfort of bodily eyesight is its serviceableness to our faith, and the interests of our souls. How contentedly might this man have returned to his former blindness, like old Simeon, now his eyes had seen God’s salvation. If we apply it to the opening of the eyes of the mind, it intimates that spiritual sight is given principally for this end, that we may see Christ, *2 Cor. iv. 6*. Can we say that by faith we have seen Christ, seen him in his beauty and glory, in his ability and willingness to save,—so seen him as to be satisfied concerning him, to be satisfied in him? Let us give him the praise that opened our eyes.

2nd. “It is he that talketh with thee;” and he was indebted to Christ for condescending to do this. He was not only favoured with a sight of Christ, but was admitted into fellowship and communion with him. Great princes are willing to be seen by those whom yet they will not vouchsafe to talk with; but Christ, by his Word and Spirit, talks with those whose desires are towards him; and in talking with them, manifests himself to them, as he did to the two disciples, when he talked their hearts warm, *Lu. xxiv. 32*. Observe, This poor man was solicitously inquiring after the Saviour, when at the same time he saw him, and was talking with him. Note, Jesus Christ is oftentimes nearer the souls that seek him than they themselves are aware of. Doubting Christians are sometimes saying, “Where is the Lord?” and fearing they are cast out from his sight, when, at the same time, it is he that talketh with them, and puts strength into them.

4. The poor man readily entertains this surprising revelation, and, in a transport of joy and wonder, he said, “Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him.” 1st. He professeth his faith in Christ: “Lord, I believe” thee to be the Son of God. He would not dispute any thing that he said who had shewn such mercy to him, and wrought such a miracle for him; nor doubt of the truth of a doctrine which was confirmed by such signs. Believing with the heart, he thus confessed with the mouth; and now the bruised reed was become a cedar. 2nd. He paid his homage to him: “He worshipped him,” not only gave him the civil respects due to a great man, and the acknowledgments owing to a kind benefactor; but herein gave him Divine honour, and worshipped him as the Son of God manifested in the flesh. None but God is to be worshipped; so that, in worshipping Jesus he owned him to be God. Note, True faith will shew itself in a humble adoration of the Lord Jesus. They who believe in him will see all the reason in the world to worship him. We never read any more of this man, but it is very likely from henceforth he became a constant follower of Christ.

39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. 40 And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? 41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Christ, having spoken comfort to the poor man that was persecuted, here speaks conviction to his persecutors, a specimen of the distributions of trouble and rest at the great day, *2 Thes. i. 6, 7*. Probably this was not immediately after his discourse with the man, but he took the next opportunity that offered itself to have a saying to the Pharisees.

First. Here is the account Christ gives of his design in coming into the world, ver. 39, “For judgment I am come,” to order and administer the great affairs of the kingdom of God among men; and am invested with a judicial power, in order thereunto, to be executed in conformity to the wise counsels of God, and in pursuance of them. What Christ spoke, he spoke not as a preacher in the pulpit, but as a king upon the throne, and a judge upon the bench. His business into the world was great—he came to keep the assizes and general gaol-delivery; he came for judgment; that is, 1. To preach a doctrine and law which would try men, and effectually discover and distinguish them; and would be completely fitted, in all respects, to be the rule of government now, and of judgment shortly. 2. To put a difference between men, by revealing the thoughts of many hearts, and laying open men’s true characters by this one test, whether they were well or ill affected to him. 3. To change the face of government in his church, to abolish the Jewish economy, to take down that fabric, which, though erected for the time by the hand of God himself, yet by tract of time was antiquated, and, by the incurable corruptions of the managers of it, was become rotten and dangerous; and to erect a new building by another model, to institute new ordinances and offices, to abrogate Judaism, and enact Christianity: for this judgment he came into the world, and it was a great revolution. This great truth he explains by a metaphor, borrowed from the miracle he had lately wrought; “that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.” Such a difference of Christ’s coming is often spoken of; to some his Gospel is a savour of life unto life, to others of death unto death.

1. This is applicable to nations and people, that the Gentiles, who had long been destitute of the light of Divine revelation, might see it; and the Jews, who had long enjoyed it, might have the things of their peace hid from their eyes, *Hos. i. 10*; *ii. 23*. The Gentiles see a great light, while blindness is happened unto Israel, and their eyes are darkened.

2. To particular persons. Christ came into the world, 1st. Intentionally and designedly to give sight to them that were spiritually blind; by his Word to reveal the object, and by his Spirit to heal the organ, that many precious souls might be turned from darkness to light. He came for judgment; that is, to set those at liberty from their dark prison that were willing to be released, *Isa. lxi. 1*. 2nd. Eventually, and in the issue, “that those which see might be made blind;” that those who have a high conceit of their own wisdom, and set that up in contradiction to Divine revelation, might be sealed up in ignorance and infidelity. The preaching of the cross was foolishness and an infatuating thing to them who by wisdom knew not God. Christ came into the world for this judgment, to administer the affairs of a spiritual kingdom seated in men’s minds; whereas in the Jewish church the blessings and judgments of God’s government were mostly temporal. Now the method of administration should be changed; and as the good subjects of his kingdom should be blessed with spiritual blessings in heavenly things, such as arise from a due illumination of the mind, so the rebels should be punished with spiritual plagues,—*1 Co.*

subject is that which he had introduced in speaking of the Pharisees—viz., his claim to be their master, teacher, and guide. A comparison between himself and them—the blind guides and unfaithful pastors of Israel—appears to be the leading idea of the discourse from verses 1—13.”

x. 1. “Thief and a robber:” our Lord used on other occasions language similar to this when speaking of the scribes and Pharisees, who were the legitimate teachers of the people. (Compare *Matt. xxiii. 13*;

Mark xii. 38—40; *Luke xii. 1, &c.*) Sitting in Moses’ seat, they had all the external sanction that was needed to exercise their office; but they had not entered by the door, for their hearts were not in harmony with the Divine law, and they lacked, therefore, spiritual sanction. The thief and robber are alike in this, that they seek to appropriate what is not theirs; but the thief by fraud and in secret (compare *Matt. xxiv. 43*; *John xii. 6*), the robber by violence and openly (*2 Cor. xi. 26*). There are several passages in our version

war, famine, and pestilence, as formerly,—but such as arise from a judicial infatuation—hardness of heart, terror of conscience, strong delusions, vile affections. In this way Christ will judge between cattle and cattle, *Eze. xxxiv. 17*.

Secondly. Here is the Pharisees' cavil at this. They were with him,—not desirous to learn any good from him, but to form evil against him; and they said, "Are we blind also?" When Christ said, "that they which see" should, by his coming, be made blind, they apprehended that he meant them, who were the seers of the people, and valued themselves by their insight and foresight. Now, say they, we know that the common people are blind, but "are we blind also?" What, we?—the rabbins, the doctors, the learned in the laws, the graduates in the schools, are we blind too? This is *scandalum magnatum*,—"a libel on the great." Note, Many times those that need reproof most, and deserve it best, though they have wit enough to discern a tacit one, yet have not grace enough to bear a just one. These Pharisees took this reproof for a reproach, as those lawyers, *Lu. xi. 45*, "Are we blind also?" Darest thou say that we are blind, whose judgment every one has such a veneration for, values, and vails to. Note, Nothing fortifies men's corrupt hearts more against the convictions of the Word, nor more effectually repels them, than the good opinion—especially if it be a high opinion—which others have of them; as if all that had gained applause with men must needs obtain acceptance with God; than which nothing is more false and deceitful, for God sees not as man sees.

Thirdly. Here is Christ's answer to this cavil, which, if it did not convince them, yet silenced them: "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth." They gloried in it that they were not blind, as the common people; were not so credulous and manageable as they; but would see with their own eyes, having abilities, as they thought, sufficient for their own conduct, so that they needed not any body to lead them. This very thing, which they gloried in, Christ here tells them was their shame and ruin. For,

1. "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin." 1st. If you had been really ignorant, your sin had not been so deeply aggravated, nor should you have had so much sin to answer for as now you have. If you were blind, as the poor Gentiles are, and many of your own poor subjects, from whom you have taken the key of knowledge, you should have had comparatively no sin. The times of ignorance God winked at: invincible ignorance, though it do not justify sin, excuseth it, and lessens the guilt. It will be more tolerable with those that perish for lack of vision, than for those who rebel against the light. 2nd. If you had been sensible of your own blindness—if, when you would see nothing else, you could have seen the need of one to lead you,—you would soon have accepted Christ as your guide, and then you would have had no sin,—you would have submitted to an evangelical righteousness, and have been put into a justified state. Note, Those who are convinced of their disease are in a fair way to be cured, for there is not a greater hindrance to the salvation of souls than self-sufficiency.

2. "But now ye say, We see." Now you have knowledge, and are instructed out of the law, your sin is highly aggravated; and now you have a conceit of that knowledge, and think you see your way better than any body can shew it you, "therefore your sin remains;" your case is desperate, and your disease incurable. As those are most blind who will not see, so their blindness is most dangerous who fancy they do see. No patients are so hardly managed as those in a frenzy, who say they are well, and nothing ails them. The sin of those that are self-conceited and self-confident remains, for they reject the Gospel of grace, and therefore the guilt of their sin remains unpardoned; and they forfeit the Spirit of grace, and therefore the power of their sin remains unbroken. "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit?"—Hearest thou the Pharisees say, "We see?"—"there is more hope of a fool," of a publican and a harlot, "than of such."

CHAPTER X.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's parabolical discourse concerning himself, as the door of the sheep, and the shepherd of the sheep, ver. 1—18. II. The various sentiments of people upon it, ver. 19—21. III. The dispute Christ had with the Jews in the temple at the feast of dedication, ver. 22—39. IV. His departure into the country thereupon, ver. 40—42.



VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep

hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. 6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. 7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear

them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. 17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

It is not certain whether this discourse was at the feast of dedication in the winter, spoken of, ver. 22, which may be taken as the date, not only of what follows, but of what goes before—that which countenanceth this is, that Christ in his discourse there carries on the metaphor of the sheep, ver. 26, 27, from whence it seems that that discourse and this were at the same time;—or whether this was a continuation of his parley with the Pharisees, in the close of the foregoing chapter. The Pharisees supported themselves in their opposition to Christ with this principle, that they were the pastors of the church; and that Jesus, having no commission from them, was an intruder and an impostor; and therefore the people were bound in duty to stick to them, against him. In opposition to this, Christ here describes who were the false shepherds, and who the true, leaving them to infer what they were.

First. Here is the parable or similitude proposed, ver. 1—5; it is borrowed from the custom of that country, in the management of their sheep. Similitudes used for the illustration of Divine truths should be taken from those things that are most familiar and common, that the things of God be not clouded by that which should clear them. The preface to this discourse is solemn, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." Amen, amen. This vehement asseveration speaks the certainty and weight of what he said. We find amen doubled in the church's praises and prayers, *Ps. xli. 13; lxxii. 19; lxxxix. 52*. If we would have our amens accepted in heaven, let Christ's amens be prevailing on earth, his repeated amens. In the parable we have,

1. The evidence of a thief and a robber, that comes to do mischief to the flock, and damage to the owner, ver. 1. He enters not by the door, as having no lawful cause of entry, "but climbs up some other way," at a window, or some breach in the wall. How industrious are wicked people to do mischief; what plots will they lay; what pains will they take; what hazards will they run in their wicked pursuits; which should shame us out of our slothfulness and cowardice in the service of God.

2. The character that distinguisheth the rightful owner, who has a propriety in the sheep, and a care of them; he "enters in by the door," as one having authority, ver. 2; and he comes to do them some good office or other, to "bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick," *Eze. xxxv. 16*. Sheep need man's care, and in return for it, are serviceable to man, *1 Cor. ix. 7*; they clothe and feed those by whom they are cotted and fed.

3. The ready entrance that the shepherd finds; ver. 3, "to him the porter openeth." Anciently they had their sheepfolds within the outer gates of their houses, for the greater safety of their flocks, so that none could come to them the right way, but such as the porter opened to, or the master of the house gave the keys to.

4. The care he takes, and the provision he makes, for his sheep; "the sheep hear his voice," when he speaks familiarly to them, when they come into the fold, as men now do to their dogs and horses; and, which is more, "he calls his own sheep by name," so exact is the notice he takes of them, the account he keeps of them; and he leads them out from the fold to the green pastures. And (ver. 4, 5) when he turns them out to graze, he doth not drive them, but (such was the custom in those times) he goes before them, to prevent any mischief or danger that might meet them; and they, being used to it, follow him and are safe.

5. The strange attendance of the sheep upon the shepherd; "they know his voice," so as to discern his mind by it, and to distinguish it from that of a stranger; for the ox knows his owner, *Isa. i. 3*, and a stranger will they not follow, but, "as suspecting some ill design, will flee from him," not knowing his voice, but that it is not the voice of their own shepherd. This is the parable; we have the key to it, *Eze. xxxiv. 31*, "Ye my flock are men, and I am your God."

Let us observe something from the parable itself. 1st. That good men are fitly compared to sheep. Men, as creatures depending on their Creator, are called "the sheep of his pasture." Good men, as new creatures, have the good qualities of sheep—harmless and inoffensive as sheep; meek and quiet, without noise; patient as sheep under the hand both of the

where one cannot but regret that we do not read "robbers" instead of "thieves"—e.g., *Matt. xxi. 13*. (Compare *Jer. vii. 11; Matt. xxvi. 55; Luke x. 30*.) In each of these passages the idea of some bold, violent robber is lost sight of in the presence of the feebleness of word, "thief." The same applies even more strongly to *Luke xxiii. 39—43*. "The penitent thief" suggests a far different past history than the proper rendering, "robber."

x. 12. "An hireling:" the hireling and the thief have one feature

in common—they have no regard for the sheep, but only for their own profit. The good shepherd is distinguished from these in that he seeks the sheep (compare "not yours, but you," *2 Cor. xii. 14*); the hirelings seek their own, not the things that are Christ's (*Phil. ii. 21*). The wolf is taken by some to be Satan; but while we need not so limit the meaning, we may recognise him as the murderer from the beginning—the first that invaded the fold.

x. 14, 15. The connection as these verses stand is obscure. Substi-

shearer and of the butcher; useful and profitable; tame and tractable to the shepherd, and sociable one with another; and much used in sacrifices.

2nd. The church of God in the world is a sheepfold, into which the children of God that were scattered abroad are gathered together, *ch. xi. 52*, and in which they are united and incorporated: it is a good fold, *Eze. xxxiv. 14*; see *Mic. ii. 12*. This fold is well fortified, for God himself is as a wall of fire about it, *Zec. ii. 5*.

3rd. This sheepfold lies much exposed to thieves and robbers, crafty seducers, that debauch and deceive, and cruel persecutors, that destroy and devour; grievous wolves, *Acts xx. 29*; thieves that would steal Christ's sheep from him, to sacrifice them to devils, or steal their food from them, that they might perish for lack of it; wolves in sheep's clothing, *Mat. vii. 16*.

4th. The great Shepherd of the sheep has a wonderful care of the flock, and of all that belong to it. God is the great shepherd, *Ps. cxlii. 1*; *lxxx. 1*. He knows them that are his, calls them by name, marks them for himself, leads them out to fat pastures, makes them both feed and rest there; speaks comfortably to them, guards them by his providence, guides them by his Spirit and Word, and goes before them to set them in the way of his steps.

5th. The under shepherds, who are intrusted to feed the flock of God, ought to be careful and faithful in the discharge of that trust. Magistrates must defend them, and protect and advance all their secular interests; ministers must serve them in their spiritual interests, must feed their souls with the Word of God faithfully opened and applied, and with gospel ordinances duly administered, taking the oversight of them; they must enter by the door of a regular ordination, and to such the porter will open. The Spirit of Christ will set before them an open door, give them authority in the church, and assurance in their own bosoms. They must know the members of their flocks by name, and watch over them; must lead them into the pastures of public ordinances, preside among them, be their mouth to God, and God's to them; and in their conversation must be examples to the believers.

6th. Those who are truly the sheep of Christ will be very observant of their shepherd, and very cautious and shy of strangers. First. They follow their shepherd, for they know his voice, having both a discerning ear and an obedient heart. Secondly. They flee from a stranger, and dread following him, because they know not his voice. It is dangerous following those in whom we discern not the voice of Christ, and who would draw us from faith in him, to fancies concerning him. And they that have experienced the power and efficacy of Divine truths upon their souls, and have the savour and relish of them, have a strange sagacity to discover Satan's wiles, and to discern between good and evil.

Secondly. The Jews' ignorance of the drift and meaning of this discourse; *ver. 6*, "Jesus spake this parable to them,"—this figurative, but wise, elegant, and instructive discourse; "but they understood not what the things were which he spake unto them;" were not aware whom he meant by the thieves and robbers, and whom by the good shepherd. It is the sin and shame of many who hear the word of Christ, that they do not understand it; and they do not, because they will not, and because they will misunderstand it; they have no acquaintance with, nor taste of, the things themselves, and therefore do not understand the parables and comparisons with which they are illustrated. The Pharisees had a great conceit of their own knowledge, and could not bear that it should be questioned; and yet they had not sense enough to understand the things that Jesus spoke of; they were above their capacity. Many times the greatest pretenders to knowledge are most ignorant in the things of God.

Thirdly. Christ's explication of this parable, opening the particulars of it fully. Whatever difficulties there may be in the sayings of the Lord Jesus, we shall find him ready to explain himself, if we be but willing to understand him; we shall find one scripture expounding another, and the blessed Spirit interpreter to the blessed Jesus. Christ in the parable had distinguished the shepherd from the robber by this, that he enters in by the door. Now in the reddition of the parable he makes himself to be both the door by which the shepherd enters, and the shepherd that enters in by the door. Though it may be a solecism in rhetoric to make the same person to be both the door and the shepherd, it is no solecism in divinity to make Christ to have his authority from himself, as he has life in himself, and himself to enter by his own blood, as the door, into the holy place.

1. Christ is the door. This he saith to them who pretended to seek for righteousness, but, like the Sodomites, wearied themselves to find the door, where it was not to be found. He saith it to the Jews, who would be thought God's only sheep, and to the Pharisees, who would be thought their only shepherds, "I am the door" of the sheepfold; the door of the church. 1. He is as a door shut, to keep out thieves and robbers, and such as are not fit to be admitted. The shutting of the door is the securing of the house; and what greater security has the church of God than the interposal of the Lord Jesus, and his wisdom, power, and goodness betwixt it and all its enemies? 2. He is as a door open, for passage and communication. 1st. By Christ, as the door, we have our first admission into the flock of God, *ch. xiv. 6*. 2nd. We go in and out, in a religious conversation, assisted by him, accepted in him; walking up and down in his name, *Zec. x. 12*. 3rd. By him God comes to his church, visits it, and communicates himself to it. 4th. By him, as the door, the sheep are at last admitted into the heavenly kingdom, *Mat. xxv. 34*. More particularly,

First. Christ is the door of the shepherds; so that none who come not in by him are to be accounted pastors, but, according to the rule laid down, *ver. 1*, "thieves and robbers;" though they pretended to be shepherds, "but the sheep did not hear them." All those that had the character of shepherds in Israel, whether magistrates or ministers, that exercised their office without any regard to the Messiah, or any other expectations of him than what were suggested by their own carnal interest. Observe,

1st. The character given of them; they are thieves and robbers, *ver. 8*. All that went before him,—not in time, many of them were faithful shepherds,—but all that anticipated his commission, and went before he sent them, *Jer. xxiii. 21*; that assumed a precedence and superiority above him, as the antichrist is said to exalt himself, *2 Thes. ii. 4*. The scribes and Pharisees, and chief priests, "all, even as many as have come before me," that have endeavoured to forestall my interest, and to prevent my gaining any room in the minds of people, by prepossessing them with prejudices against me, they are thieves and robbers, and steal those hearts which they have no title to, defrauding the right owner of his property. They condemned our Saviour as a thief and robber, because he did not come in by them as the door, nor take out a license from them; but he shews that they ought to have received their commission from him, and to have been admitted by him, and to have come after him, which, because they did not, but stepped before him, they were thieves and robbers. They would not come in as his disciples, and therefore were condemned as usurpers, and their pretended commissions vacated and superseded. Note, Rivals with Christ are robbers: 1. his church, however they pretend to be shepherds, nay shepherds of shepherds.

2nd. The care taken to preserve the sheep from them: "but the sheep did not hear them." Those that had a true savour of piety, that here spiritual and heavenly, and sincerely devoted to God and godliness, could by no means

approve of the traditions of the elders, nor relish their formalities. Christ's disciples, without any particular instructions from their Master, made no conscience of eating with unwashed hands, or plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day; for nothing is more opposite to true Christianity than Pharisaism is, nor any thing more disrelishing to a soul truly devout than their hypocritical devotions.

Secondly. Christ is "the door of the sheep," *ver. 9*, "By me," *δ' ἐγώ*,—"through me," as the door, "if any man enter into the sheepfold," as one of the fold, "he shall be saved;" shall not only be safe from thieves and robbers, but he shall be happy, "he shall go in and out." Here is,

1st. Plain direction given how to come into the fold; we must come in by Jesus Christ as the door. By faith in him, as the great Mediator between God and man, we come into covenant and communion with God. No entering into God's church, but by coming into Christ's church; nor are any looked upon as members of the kingdom of God among men, but those that are willing to submit to the grace and government of the Redeemer. We must now enter by the door of faith, *Acts xiv. 27*, since the door of innocence is shut against us, and that pass became unpassable, *Gen. iii. 24*.

2nd. Precious promises to those who observe this direction. First. They "shall be saved," hereafter; that is the privilege of their home: these sheep shall be saved from being distrained and impounded by Divine justice for trespass done, satisfaction being made for the damage by their great Shepherd; saved from being a prey to the roaring lion; they shall be for ever happy. Secondly. In the mean time they "shall go in and out, and find pasture;" that is the privilege of their way. They shall have their conversation in the world by the grace of Christ; shall be in his fold, as a man at his own house, where he has free ingress, egress, and regress. True believers are at home in Christ, when they go out, they are not shut out as strangers, but have liberty to come in again; when they come in, they are not shut in as trespassers, but have liberty to go out. They go out to the field in the morning, they come into the fold at night; and in both the shepherd leads and keeps them, and they find pasture in both; grass in the field, fodder in the fold. In public, in private, they have the Word of God to converse with, by which their spiritual life is supported and nourished, and out of which their gracious desires are satisfied. They are replenished with the goodness of God's house.

11. Christ is the shepherd, *ver. 10*, &c. He was prophesied of, under the Old Testament, as a shepherd, *Isa. xl. 11*; *Eze. xxxiv. 23*; *xxxvii. 24*; *Zec. xiii. 7*. In the New Testament he is spoken of as "the great shepherd," *Heb. xiii. 20*; "the chief shepherd," *1 Pet. v. 4*; "the shepherd and bishop of our souls," *1 Pet. ii. 25*. God our great owner, the sheep of whose pasture we are by creation, hath constituted his Son Jesus to be our shepherd; and here again he owns the relation. He hath all that care of his church, and every believer, that a good shepherd has of his flock; and expects all that attendance and observance from the church, and every believer, which the shepherds in those countries had from their flocks.

1. Christ is a shepherd, and not as the thief, not as those that came not in by the door. Observe,

1st. The mischievous design of the thief; *ver. 10*, "the thief cometh not" with any good intent, "but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." First. Those whom they steal—whose hearts and affections they steal from Christ and his pastures—they kill and destroy spiritually, for the heresies they privily bring in are damnable: deceivers of souls are murderers of souls. They that steal away the Scripture, by keeping it in an unknown tongue, steal away the sacraments, by maiming them, and altering the property of them; that steal away Christ's ordinances, to put their own inventions in the room of them, they kill and destroy: ignorance and idolatry are destructive things. Secondly. Those whom they cannot steal, whom they can neither lead, drive, nor carry away from the flock of Christ, they aim by persecutions and massacres to kill and destroy corporally. He that will not suffer himself to be robbed, is in danger to be slain.

2nd. The gracious design of the Shepherd; he is come,

First. To give life to the sheep. In opposition to the design of the thief, which is to kill and destroy,—which was the design of the scribes and Pharisees,—Christ saith, I am come among men, 1st. "That they might have life." He came to put life into the flock,—the church in general,—which had seemed rather like a valley full of dry bones than like a pasture covered over with flocks; Christ came to vindicate Divine truths, to purify Divine ordinances, to redress grievances, and revive dying zeal, to seek them of his flock that were lost, to "bind up that which was broken," *Eze. xxxiv. 16*; and this to his church is as life from the dead. He came to give life to particular believers; life is inclusive of all good, and stands in opposition to the death threatened, *Gen. ii. 17*; that we might have life, as a criminal has when he is pardoned, as a sick man when he is cured, a dead man when he is raised; that we might be justified, sanctified, and at last glorified. 2nd. "That they might have it more abundantly," *καὶ περισσού τινος*. As we read it, it is comparative, that they might have a life more abundant than that which was lost and forfeited by sin; more abundant than that which was promised by the law of Moses—length of days in Canaan; more abundant than could have been expected, or than we are able to ask or think. But it may be construed, without a note of comparison, "that they might have abundance," or, "might have it abundantly." Christ came to give life, and *περισσὸν τι*, something more, something better—life with advantage. That in Christ we might not only live, but live comfortably, live plentifully, live and rejoice; life in abundance is eternal life—life without death, or fear of death—life, and much more.

Secondly. To give his life for the sheep, and this that he might give life to them; *ver. 11*, "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." 1st. It is the property of every good shepherd to hazard and expose his life for the sheep. Jacob did so, when he would go through such a fatigue to attend them, *Gen. xxxi. 40*; so did David, when he slew the lion and the bear. Such a shepherd of souls was St. Paul, who would gladly spend and be spent for their service, and counted not his life dear to him, in comparison with their salvation. But, 2nd. It was the prerogative of the great Shepherd to give his life to purchase his flock, *Acts xx. 28*, to satisfy for their trespass, and to shed his blood to wash and cleanse them.

2. Christ is a good shepherd, and not as a hireling. There were many, that were not thieves, aiming to kill and destroy the sheep, but passed for shepherds, yet were very careless in the discharge of their duty, and through their neglect the flock was greatly damaged; "foolish shepherds, idle shepherds," *Zec. xi. 15, 17*. In opposition to these,

1st. Christ here calls himself "the good shepherd," *ver. 11*, and again, *ver. 13*; *ὁ ποιὴν ὁ καλός*,—"that shepherd, that good shepherd," whom God had promised. Note, Jesus Christ is the best of shepherds,—the best in the world to take the oversight of souls; none so skilful, so faithful, so tender as he; no such feeder and leader, no such protector and healer of souls as he.

2nd. He proves himself so, in opposition to all hirelings, *ver. 12–14*; where observe,

First. The carelessness of the unfaithful shepherd described, *ver. 12, 13*; "he that is a hireling," that is employed as a servant, and is paid for his pains, "whose own the sheep are not," who has neither profit nor loss by them—he

tute a comma for a full stop after verse 14; and for "even so," in verse 15, read "and." "Am known of mine, as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father." The thought then becomes clear. The verses declare that the mutual love and knowledge of the shepherd and the sheep is the counterpart of that between the Father and the Son. The sentiment is similar to that taught in John xvii. 21–23.

x. 16. "There shall be one fold," rather, "they shall become one flock, one shepherd."

x. 17. "Therefore doth my Father love me." "For this reason, that I accomplish his will for the salvation of men." (Compare *Heb. x. 7*; *Psa. xl. 7, 8*.) The laying down of his life, and perhaps even more, the taking it again, were steps in the fulfilment of the Father's will.

x. 18. "No man (or better, none) taketh it from me;" the death of Christ was voluntary; though accomplishing the Father's will, it was Christ's own free act to die. "This commandment have I," &c.,

"sees the wolf coming," or some other danger threatening, and he leaves the sheep to the wolf, for in truth he "careth not for them." Here is plain reference to that of the idol shepherd, *Zec. xi. 17*. Here is the description of bad shepherds, magistrates or ministers, both their bad principles and bad practices.

1st. Their bad principles, the root of their bad practices. What makes those that have the charge of souls, in trying times, betray their trust, and in quiet times not to mind it? What makes them false and trifling, and self-seeking? It is because they are hirelings, and care not for the sheep. That is, First. The wealth of the world is the chief of their good; it is because they are hirelings: they undertook the shepherd's office as a trade to live and grow rich by, not as an opportunity of serving Christ and doing good. It is the love of money, and of their own bellies, that carries them on in it. Not that those are hirelings who while they serve at the altar live, and live comfortably upon the altar: the labourer is worthy of his meat; and a scandalous maintenance will soon make a scandalous ministry; but those are hirelings that love the wages more than the work, and set their hearts upon that, as the hireling is said to do, *Deu. xxiv. 15*: see *1 Sam. ii. 29*; *Isa. lvi. 11*; *Mic. iii. 5, 11*. Secondly. The work of their place is the least of their care; they value not the sheep, are unconcerned in the souls of others; their business is, to be their brothers' lords, not their brothers' keepers or helpers; they seek their own things, and not, like Timothy, naturally care for the state of souls; what can be expected, but that they will flee when the wolf comes? He "careth not for the sheep," for he is one "whose own the sheep are not;" in one respect we may say of the best of the under shepherds, that the sheep are not their own, they have not dominion over them, or property in them. "Feed my sheep and my lambs," saith Christ; but in respect of dearness and affection, they should be their own. Paul looked upon those as his own whom he called his "dearly beloved and longed-for." Those who do not cordially espouse the church's interests, and make them their own, will not long be faithful to them.

2nd. Their bad practices, the effect of these bad principles, *ver. 12*. See here, First. How basely the hireling deserts his post when he sees the wolf coming; though there is most need of him, he leaves the sheep, and flees. Note, Those who mind their safety more than their duty, are an easy prey to Satan's temptations. Secondly. How fatal the consequences are; the hireling fancied the sheep might look to themselves, but it doth not prove so; "the wolf catcheth them, and scatters the sheep," and woful havoc is made of the flock, which will all be charged upon the treacherous shepherd. The blood of perishing souls is required at the hand of the careless watchmen.

Secondly. See here the grace and tenderness of the good Shepherd, set over against the former, as it was in the prophecy, *Eze. xxxiv. 21, 22*, "I am the good shepherd." It is matter of comfort to the church and all her friends, that however she may be damaged and endangered by the treachery and mismanagement of her under officers, the Lord Jesus is, and will be, as he ever has been, the good shepherd.

Here are two great instances of the shepherd's goodness:

First. His acquainting himself with his flock, with all that belong or in any wise appertain to his flock, which are of two sorts, both known to him.

1. He is acquainted with all that are now of his flock, *ver. 14, 15*; as the good shepherd, *ver. 3, 4*, "I know my sheep, and am known of mine." Note, There is a mutual acquaintance between Christ and true believers; they know one another very well, and knowledge notes affection.

1st. Christ knows his sheep; he knows with a distinguishing eye who are his sheep, and who are not; he knows the sheep under their many infirmities, and the goats under their most plausible disguises. He knows with a favourable eye those that in truth are his own sheep; he takes cognizance of their state, concerns himself for them, has a tender and affectionate regard to them, and is continually mindful of them in the intercession he ever lives to make within the veil; and visits them graciously by his Spirit, and has communion with them. He knows them, that is, he approves and accepts of them, as *Ps. i. 6*; *xxxvii. 18*; *Ex. xxxiii. 17*.

2nd. He is known of them; he observes them with an eye of favour, and they observe him with an eye of faith. Christ's knowing his sheep is put before their knowing him, for he knew and loved us first, *1 Jno. iv. 21*; and it is not so much our knowing him, as our being known of him, that is our happiness, *Gal. iv. 8*; yet it is the character of Christ's sheep that they know him; know him from all pretenders and intruders; they know his mind, know his voice, know by experience the power of his death. Christ speaks here as if he gloried in being known by his sheep, and thought their respects an honour to him.

Upon this occasion Christ mentions (*ver. 15*) the mutual acquaintance between his Father and him: "As the Father knows me, even so know I the Father." Now this may be considered, either, First. As the ground of that intimate acquaintance and relation, which is between Christ and believers. The covenant of grace, which is the bond of that relation, is founded in the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, which we may be sure stands firm; for the Father and the Son understood one another perfectly well in that matter, and there could be no mistake which might leave the matter at any uncertainty, or bring it into any hazard. The Lord Jesus knows whom he hath chosen, and is sure of them, *ch. xiii. 18*; and they also know whom they have trusted, and are sure of him, *2 Tim. i. 12*; and the ground of both is the perfect knowledge which the Father and Son had of one another's mind, when "the counsel of peace was between them both." Or, Secondly. As an apt similitude illustrating the intimacy that is between Christ and believers, it may be connected with the foregoing words, thus, "I know my sheep, and am known of mine, even as the Father knows me, and I know the Father;" compare *ch. xvii. 21*. 1st. As the Father knew the Son, and loved him and owned him in his sufferings, when he was led as a sheep to the slaughter, so Christ knows his sheep, and has a watchful, tender eye, upon them, will be with them when they are left alone, as he was with those. 2nd. As the Son knew the Father, loved and obeyed him, and always did those things that pleased him, and confided in him as his God, even when he seemed to forsake him, so believers know Christ with an obediential, fiducial regard.

2. He is acquainted with those that are hereafter to be of his flock; *ver. 16*, "Other sheep I have," have a right to, and an interest in, "which are not of this fold," of the Jewish church; "them also I must bring." Observe,

1st. The eye that Christ had to the poor Gentiles. He had sometimes intimated his special concern for "the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" to them indeed his personal ministry was confined; but, saith he, "I have other sheep." Those who in process of time should believe in Christ, and be brought into obedience to him from among the Gentiles, are here called sheep, and he is said to have them, though as yet they were uncalled, and many of them unborn, because they were chosen of God, and given to Christ in the counsels of Divine love from eternity. Christ has a right to many a soul, by virtue of the Father's donation, and his own purchase, which he has not, yet the possession of; thus he had much people in Corinth, when as yet it lay in wickedness, *Acts xviii. 10*. Those other sheep I have, saith Christ, I have them on my heart, have them in my eye; am as sure to have them as if I had them already. Now Christ speaks of those other sheep, First. To take off the contempt that was put

upon him, as having few followers, as having but a little flock; and therefore, if a good shepherd, yet a poor shepherd; but, saith he, I have more sheep than you see. Secondly. To take down the pride and vainglory of the Jews, who thought the Messiah must gather all his sheep from among them. No, saith Christ, I have others, whom I will set with the lambs of my flock, though you disdain to set them with the dogs of your flock.

2nd. The purposes and resolves of his grace concerning them: "them also I must bring," bring home to God, bring into the church, and in order to that, bring off from their vain conversation, bring them back from their wanderings, as that lost sheep, *Lu. xv. 5*. But why must he bring them? What was the necessity? First. The necessity of their case required it; I must bring, or they must be left to wander endlessly; for, like sheep, they will never come back of themselves, and no other can or will bring them. Secondly. The necessity of his own engagements required it; he must bring them, or he would not be faithful to his trust, and true to his undertaking. They are my own, bought and paid for, and therefore I must not neglect them, or leave them to perish: he must in honour bring those whom he was intrusted with.

3rd. The happy effect and consequent of this, in two things; First. "They shall hear my voice." Not only my voice shall be heard among them; whereas they have not heard, and therefore could not believe, now the sound of the Gospel shall go to the ends of the earth, but it shall be heard by them: I will speak, and give to them to hear. Faith comes by hearing; and our diligent observance of the voice of Christ, is both a means and an evidence of our being brought to Christ, and to God by him. Secondly. "There shall be one fold, and one shepherd;" as there is one shepherd, so there shall be one fold. Both Jews and Gentiles, upon their turning to the faith of Christ, shall be incorporated in one church, be joint and equal sharers in the privileges of it without distinction. Being united to Christ, they shall unite in him; two sticks shall become one in the hand of the Lord. Note, One shepherd makes one fold; one Christ makes one church. As the church is one in its constitution, subject to one head, animated by one Spirit, and guided by one rule, so the members of it ought to be one in love and affection, *Eph. iv. 3-6*.

Secondly. Christ's offering himself up for his sheep, is another proof of his being a good shepherd; and in this he yet more commended his love, *ver. 15, 17, 18*.

1. He declares his purpose of dying for his flock; *ver. 15*, "I lay down my life for the sheep." He not only ventured his life for them; in such a case, the hope of saving it may balance the fear of losing it; but he actually deposited it, and submitted to a necessity of dying for our redemption, *τὴν αἰώνιον*, "I put it," as a pawn or pledge, as purchase-money paid down. Sheep appointed for the slaughter, ready to be sacrificed, were ransomed with the blood of the shepherd. He laid down his life, *ἵνα τὸν πρόβατον*, not only "for the good" of the sheep, but "in their stead." Thousands of sheep have been offered in sacrifice for their shepherds, as sin offerings; but here, by a surprising reverse, the Shepherd is sacrificed for the sheep. When David, the shepherd of Israel, was himself guilty, and the destroying angel drew his sword against the flock for his sake, with good reason did he plead, "These sheep, what evil have they done? let thine hand be against me," *2 Sam. xxiv. 17*. But the Son of David was sinless and spotless; and his sheep, what evil have they not done? Yet he saith, "Let thine hand be against me." Christ here seems to refer to that prophecy, *Zec. xiii. 17*, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd;" and though the smiting of the shepherd be for the present the scattering of the flock, it is in order to the gathering of them in.

2. He takes off the offence of the cross, which to many is a stone of stumbling, by four considerations:

1st. That his laying down his life for the sheep was the condition, the performance of which entitled him to the honours and powers of his exalted state; *ver. 17*, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life." Upon these terms I am, as Mediator, to expect my Father's acceptance and approbation, and the glory designed me, that I become a sacrifice for the chosen remnant. Not but that, as the Son of God, he was beloved of his Father from eternity, but as God-man, as Emmanuel, he was therefore beloved of the Father because he undertook to die for the sheep; therefore God's soul delivered in him as his elect, because herein he was his faithful servant, *Isa. xlii. 1*; therefore he said, "This is my beloved Son." What an instance is this of God's love to man, that he loved his Son the more for loving us! See what a value Christ puts upon his Father's love, that to recommend himself to that, he would lay down his life for the sheep. Did he think God's love recompense sufficient for all his services and sufferings, and shall we think it too little for ours, and court the smiles of the world to make it up? "Therefore doth my Father love me," that is, me, and all that by faith become one with me,—me, and the mystical body,—"because I lay down my life;" Christ's death was the purchase of his Father's love both to him and us.

2nd. That his laying down his life was in order to his resuming it; "I lay down my life, that I may receive it again." First. This was the effect of his Father's love, and the first step of his exaltation, the fruit of that love. Because he was God's holy one, he must not see corruption, *Ps. xvi. 10*. God loved him too well to leave him in the grave. Secondly. This he had in his eye in laying down his life, that he might have an opportunity of declaring himself to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection, *Rom. i. 4*. By a Divine stratagem (like that before *Ab. Jos. viii. 15*.) he yielded to death, as if he were smitten before it, that he might the more gloriously conquer death, and triumph over the grave. He laid down a vilified body, that he might resume a glorified one, fit to ascend to the world of spirits; laid down a life adapted to this world, but resumed one adapted to the other, like a corn of wheat, *ch. xii. 24*.

3rd. That he was perfectly voluntary in his sufferings and death; *ver. 18*, "No one" doth, or can, force my life from me against my will; "but I" freely "lay it down of myself;" I deliver it, as my own act and deed, "for I have" (which no man has) "power to lay it down, and take it again." First. See here the power of Christ, as the Lord of life, particularly of his own life, which he had in himself. 1st. He had power to keep his life against all the world, so that it could not be wrested from him without his own consent. Though Christ's life seem to be taken by storm, yet really it was surrendered; otherwise it had been impregnable, and never taken. The Lord Jesus did not fall into the hands of his persecutors because he could not avoid it, but threw himself into their hands, because his hour was come. "No man taketh my life from me;" this was such a challenge as was never given by the most daring hero. 2nd. He had power to lay down his life. First. He had ability to do it; he could when he pleased slip the knot of union between soul and body, and without any act of violence done to himself, could disengage them from each other; having voluntarily taken up a body, he could voluntarily lay it down again; which appeared when he cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. Secondly. He had authority to do it, *ἡθελούμην*. Though we could find instruments of cruelty wherewith to make an end of our own lives, yet—*id possumus quod jure possumus*,—"we can do that, and that only, which we can do lawfully"—we are not at liberty to do it; but Christ had a sovereign authority to dispose of his own life as he pleased; he was no debtor, as we are, either to life or death, but perfectly *sui juris*. 3rd. He had power to take it again; we have not; our life, once laid down, is "as water spilt upon the

or "this is the appointment I have received;" i.e., "thus do I fulfil the will of my Father."

x. 20. "He hath a devil, and is mad;" some have thought that, as demoniacal possession is here connected with madness, the phrase "to have a devil" may be usually taken as equivalent to being mad. The theory scarcely accords with the general drift, or with the phraseology of the New Testament.

x. 21. The charge is met by two considerations—(1) that his words

were so full of wisdom, truth, and soberness, that he could not be mad or possessed; (2) that a demon could not perform the miracle of John ix. (Webster and Wilkinson).

x. 22. "Feast of the dedication:" the mention of this carries us to a date two months later than the "feast of tabernacles" (John vii. 2, 37). In the interval of these two months, it is by some thought most probable that he remained at Jerusalem; though some harmonists suppose a journey into Galilee about this time. In one

ground;" but Christ, when he laid down his life, still had it within reach, within call, and could resume it again; parting with it by a voluntary conveyance, he might limit the surrender at pleasure; and he did it with a power of revocation, which was necessary to preserve the intentions of the surrender. Secondly. See here the grace of Christ, since none could demand his life of him by law, or extort it by force, he laid it down of himself for our redemption. He offered himself to be the Saviour, "Lo, I come;" and then, the necessity of our case calling for it, he offered himself to be a sacrifice, "Here am I; let these go their way;" "by the which will we are sanctified," *Heb. x. 10*; he was both the offerer and the offering; so that his laying down his life was his offering up himself.

4th. That he did all this by the express order and appointment of his Father, into which he ultimately resolves the whole affair: "This commandment have I received of my Father;" not such a commandment as made what he did necessary, prior to his own susception and undertaking; but this was the law of mediation, which he was willing to have written in his heart, so as to delight in doing the will of God according to it, *Ps. xl. 8*.

19 There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. 20 And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? 21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

We have here an account of the people's different sentiments concerning Christ, on occasion of the foregoing discourse. There was a division, a schism, among them; they differed in their opinions, which threw them into heats and parties. Such a ferment as this they had been in before, *ch. vii. 43*; *ix. 16*; and where there has once been a division, a little thing will make a division again. Rents are sooner made than made up or mended. This division was occasioned by the sayings of Christ, which, one would think, should rather have united them all in him as their centre; but they set them at variance, as Christ foresaw, *Lu. xii. 42*; but it is better men should be divided about the doctrine of Christ than united in the service of sin, *Lu. xi. 21*. See what the debate was in particular.

First. Some upon this occasion spoke ill of Christ and of his sayings, either openly in the face of the assembly—for his enemies were very impudent—or privately among themselves; they said, "He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?"

1. They reproach him as a demoniac. The worst of characters is put upon the best of men. He is a distracted man; he raves and is delirious, and no more to be heard than the rambles of a man in Bedlam. Thus still, if a man preaches seriously and pressingly of another world, he shall be said to talk like an enthusiast, and it is all imputed to fancy, a heated brain, and a crazy imagination.

2. They ridicule his hearers; "why hear ye him?" why do ye so far encourage him as to take notice of what he saith. Note, Satan ruins many by putting them out of conceit with the Word and ordinances, and representing it as a weak and silly thing to attend upon them. Men would not be thus laughed out of their necessary food, and yet suffer themselves thus to be laughed out of what is more necessary. They that hear Christ, and mix faith with what they hear, will soon be able to give a good account why they hear him.

Secondly. Others stood up in defence of him and his discourse, and, though the stream run strong, dared to swim against it; and though perhaps they did not believe on him as the Messiah, yet they could not bear to hear him thus abused. If they could say no more of him, this they would maintain, that he was a man in his wits; that he had not a devil; that he was neither senseless nor graceless. The absurd and most unreasonable reproaches that have sometimes been cast upon Christ and his Gospel have excited those to appear for him and it who otherwise had no great affection to either. Two things they plead:

1. The excellency of his doctrine: "These are not the words of him that hath a devil." They are not idle words; distracted men do not use to talk at this rate; these are not the words of one that is either violently possessed with a devil, or voluntarily in league with the devil. Christianity, if it be not the true religion, is certainly the greatest cheat that ever was put upon the world; and if so, it must be of the devil, who is the father of all lies; but it is certain the doctrine of Christ is no doctrine of devils, for it is levelled directly against the devil's kingdom, and Satan is too subtle to be divided against himself. So much of holiness there is in the words of Christ, that we may conclude they are "not the words of him that hath a devil," and therefore are the words of one that was sent of God; are not from hell, and therefore must be from heaven.

2. The power of his miracles: "Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" that is, a man that has a devil. Neither mad nor ill men use to work miracles. Devils are not such lords of the power of nature as to be able to work such miracles; nor are they such friends to mankind as to be willing to work them, if they were able. The devil will sooner put out men's eyes than open them; therefore Jesus had not a devil.

22 And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. 23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. 24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. 25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. 26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never

perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one. 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? 37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

We have here another encounter between Christ and the Jews in the temple; in which it is hard to say which is more strange, the gracious words that came out of his mouth, or the spiteful ones that came out of theirs.

I. We have here the time when this conference was; "it was at the feast of dedication, and it was winter;" a feast that was annually observed, by consent, in remembrance of the dedication of a new altar, and the purging of the temple,—by Judas Maccabæus, after the temple had been profaned, and the altar defiled; we have the story of it at large, in the *History of the Maccabees*, lib. i. cap. 4; we have the prophecy of it in *Dan. viii. 13, 14*; see more of the feast, *2 Mac. i. 18*. The return of their liberty was to them as life from the dead; and in remembrance of it they kept an annual feast on the twenty-fifth day of the month Cisleu,—about the beginning of December,—and seven days after. The celebrating of it was not confined to Jerusalem, as that of the Divine feasts was, but every one observed it in his own place, not as a holy time,—it is only a Divine institution that can sanctify a day,—but as a good time; as the days of Purim, *Est. ix. 18*. Christ forecasted to be now at Jerusalem, not in honour of the feast, which did not require his attendance there, but that he might improve those eight days of vacation for good purposes.

II. The place where it was; ver. 23, "Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch," so called, *Acts iii. 11*, not because built by Solomon, but in the same place with that which had borne his name in the first temple; and the name was kept up for the greater reputation of it. Here Christ walked to observe the proceedings of the great Sanhedrim that sat here, *Ps. lxxxii. 1*; he walked, ready to give audience to any that should apply themselves to him, to offer them his service. He walked, as it should seem, for some time alone, as one neglected; walked pensive, in the foresight of the ruin of the temple. Those that have any thing to say to Christ may find him in the temple, and walk with him there.

III. The conference itself; in which observe,

First. A weighty question put to him by the Jews, ver. 24. They came round about him to tease him; he was waiting for an opportunity to do them a kindness, and they took the opportunity to do him a mischief: ill-will for good-will is no rare and uncommon return. He could not enjoy himself,—no, not in the temple, his Father's house,—without disturbance; they came about him as it were to lay siege to him; encompassed him about like bees. They came about him as if they had a joint and unanimous desire to be satisfied—came as one man—pretending an impartial and importunate inquiry after truth, but intending a general assault upon our Lord Jesus; and seemed to speak the sense of their nation, as if they were the mouth of all the Jews, "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us."

1. They quarrel with him, as if he had unfairly held them in suspense hitherto. *Την ψυχὴν ἡμῶν αἰεὶς*;—"How long dost thou steal away our hearts?" or, "take away our souls?" so some read it; basely intimating, that what share he had of the people's love and respect he did not come fairly by it, but by indirect methods; as Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel, and as seducers deceive the hearts of the simple, and so draw away disciples after them, *Rom. xvi. 18*; *Acts x. 30*. But most interpreters understand it as we do, "How long dost thou keep us in suspense?" How long are we kept debating whether thou be the Christ or no, and not able to determine the question? Now, 1st. It was the effect of their infidelity and powerful prejudices, that, after our Lord Jesus had so fully proved himself to be the Christ, they were still in doubt concerning it; this they willingly hesitated about, when they might easily have been satisfied. The struggle was between their convictions, which told them he was the Christ, and their corruptions, which said no, because he was not such a Christ as they expected. Those who choose to be sceptics may, if they please, hold the balance so as that the most cogent arguments may not weigh down the most trifling objections, but the scales may still hang even. 2nd. It was an instance of their impudence and presumption that they laid the blame of their doubting upon Christ himself, as if he made them to doubt by inconsistency with himself; whereas in truth they made themselves doubt, by their indulging their prejudices. If wisdom's sayings appear doubtful, the fault is not in the object,—they are all plain to him that understandeth,—but in the eye. Christ would make us to believe; we make ourselves to doubt.

2. They challenge him to give a direct and categorical answer, whether he were the Messiah or no: "If thou be the Christ," as many believe thou art, "tell us plainly," not by parables, as, "I am the light of the world," and "the

harmony the events recorded in Luke x. 17—xviii. 14 are inserted between verse 21 and verse 22 of this chapter. A journey of some kind is hinted in Luke xiii. 22. The feast of dedication was instituted to commemorate the purging of the Temple, and the rebuilding of the altar after Judas Maccabæus had driven out the Syrians (B.C. 164). It commenced on the 25th of Chisleu, which it should be noted was the anniversary of the pollution of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes (B.C. 167). It was celebrated with great rejoicings,

in nearly the same manner as the feast of tabernacles, with the carrying of branches of trees and much singing. It was called "lights," as signifying the joy of the nation (Josephus). It was a custom to light each house with one candle on the first day, two on the second, and so on.

x. 23. "Walked:" or, was walking, or used to walk. "Solomon's porch:" the porch was near the principal entrance (*Acts iii. 2, 11*), and on the eastern side. It was reckoned part of the Temple, though

good shepherd," &c., and the like, but *totidem verbis*,—"in so many words," either that thou art the Christ, or, as John Baptist, that thou art not, *ch. i. 20*. Now this pressing query of theirs was seemingly good; they pretended to be desirous to know the truth, as if they were ready to embrace it; but it was really bad, and put with an ill design; for if he should tell them plainly that he was the Christ, there needed no more to make him obnoxious to the jealousy and severity of the Roman government. Every one knew the Messiah was to be a king; and therefore whoever pretended to be the Messiah would be prosecuted as a traitor, which was the thing they would have been at; for let him tell them never so plainly that he was the Christ, they would have this to say presently, "Thou bearest witness of thyself," as they had, *ch. viii. 13*.

Secondly, Christ's answer to this question; in which, 1. He justifies himself, as not at all accessory to their infidelity and scepticism; referring them, 1st. To what he had said; "I have told you." He had told them that he was the Son of God, the Son of man; that he had life in himself; that he had authority to execute judgment, &c.: and is not this the Christ, then? These things he had told them, and they believed not; why then should they be told them again merely to gratify their curiosity? "Ye believed not." They pretended that they only doubted, but Christ tells them they did not believe. Scepticism in religion is no better than downright infidelity. It is not for us to teach God how he should teach us, nor prescribe to him how plainly he should tell us his mind; but be thankful for Divine revelation as we have it, which, if we do not believe, neither would we be persuaded if it were never so much adapted to our humour. 2nd. He refers them to his works,—to the example of his life,—which was not only perfectly pure, but highly beneficent, and of a piece with his doctrine; and especially to his miracles, which he wrought for the confirmation of his doctrine. It was certain no man could do these miracles except God were with him, and God would not be with him to attest a forgery.

2. He condemns them for their obstinate unbelief, notwithstanding all the most plain and powerful arguments used to convince them: "Ye believed not," and again, "ye believed not." You still are what you always were, obstinate in your unbelief. But the reason he gives is very surprising; "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep;" "you believe not in me, because you belong not to me." 1st. You are not disposed to be my followers; are not of a tractable, teachable temper; have no inclination to receive the doctrine and law of the Messiah; you will not herd yourselves with my sheep; will not come and see, come and hear my voice. Rooted antipathies to the Gospel of Christ are the bonds of iniquity and infidelity. 2nd. You are not designed to be my followers; you are not of those that were given me by my Father to be brought to grace and glory; you are not of the number of the elect, and your unbelief, if you persist in it, will be a certain evidence that you are not. Note, Those to whom God never gives the grace of faith, were never designed for heaven and happiness. What Solomon saith of immorality is true of infidelity; it is "a deep ditch, and he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein," *Pr. xxii. 14*. *Non esse electum, non est causa incredulitatis proprie dicta, sed causa per accidens: fides autem est donum Dei et effectus predestinationis.*—The not being included among the elect, is not the proper cause of infidelity, but merely the accidental cause; but faith is the gift of God, and the effect of predestination. So Janseus distinguisheth well here.

3. He takes this occasion to describe both the gracious disposition and the happy state of those that are his sheep; for such there are, though they be not.

1st. To convince them that they were not his sheep, he tells them what were the characters of his sheep. First. They hear his voice, *ver. 27*; for they know it to be his, *ver. 4*; and he has undertaken that they shall hear it, *ver. 16*. They discern it; "it is the voice of my beloved," *Cant. ii. 8*. They delight in it; are in their element when they are sitting at his feet to hear his word. They do according to it, and make his word their rule. Christ will not account those his sheep that are deaf to his calls, deaf to his charms, *Ps. lviii. 5*. Secondly. They follow him, they submit to his conduct, by a cheerful obedience to all his commands, and a pleasant conformity to his spirit and pattern. The word of command hath always been, "Follow me." We must eye him as our leader and captain, and "tread in his steps," and walk as he walked, follow the prescriptions of his word, the intimations of his providence, and the directions of his Spirit; "follow the Lamb," the *dux gregis*,—"the leader of the flock," "whithersoever he goes." In vain do we hear his voice, if we do not follow him.

2nd. To convince them that it was their great unhappiness and misery not to be of Christ's sheep, he here describes the blessed state and ease of those that are, which would likewise serve for the support and comfort of his poor despised followers, and keep them from envying the power and grandeur of those that were not of his sheep.

First. Our Lord Jesus takes cognizance of his sheep; "they hear my voice, and I know them;" he distinguisheth them from others, *2 Tim. ii. 19*; hath a particular regard to every individual, *Ps. xxiv. 6*; he knows their wants and desires; knows their souls in adversity, where to find them, and what to do for them. He knows others afar off, but knows them near at hand.

Secondly. He has provided a happiness for them, suited to them: "I give unto them eternal life," *ver. 28*. 1st. The estate settled upon them is rich and valuable; it is life, eternal life. Man has a living soul, therefore the happiness provided is life, suited to his nature; man has an immortal soul, therefore the happiness provided is eternal life, running parallel with his duration. Life eternal is the felicity and chief good of a soul immortal. 2nd. The manner of conveyance is free; I give it to them; it is not bargained and sold upon a valuable consideration, but given by the free grace of Jesus Christ. The donor has power to give it: he who is the Fountain of life, and Father of eternity, has authorized Christ to give eternal life, *ch. xvii. 2*. Not I will give it, but I do give it; it is a gift in present. He gives the assurance of it; the pledge and earnest of it; the firstfruits and foretastes of it; that spiritual life, which is eternal life begun, heaven in the seed, in the bud, in the embryo.

Thirdly. He hath undertaken for their security and preservation to this happiness. 1st. They shall be saved from everlasting perdition; "they shall by no means perish for ever," so the words are. As there is an eternal life, so there is an eternal destruction; the soul not annihilated, but ruined; its being continued, but its comfort and happiness irrecoverably lost. All believers are saved from this; whatever cross they may come under, they shall not come into condemnation; a man is never undone till he is in hell, and they shall not go down to that. Shepherds that have large flocks often lose some of the sheep, and suffer them to perish; but Christ has engaged that none of his sheep shall perish,—not one. 2nd. They cannot be kept from their everlasting happiness; it is in reserve; but he that gives it them will preserve them to it.

1. His own power is engaged for them; "neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." A mighty contest is here supposed about these sheep. The shepherd is so careful of their welfare that he has them not only within his fold, and under his eye, but in his hand, interested in his special love, and taken under his special protection; "all his saints are in thy hand," *Deu. xxxiii. 3*; yet their enemies are so daring that they attempt to pluck them out of his hand; his, whose own they are, whose care they are; but they cannot, they shall not.

Note, Those are safe who are in the hands of the Lord Jesus. The

saints are preserved in Christ Jesus; and their salvation is not in their own keeping, but in the keeping of a Mediator. The Pharisees and rulers did all they could to frighten the disciples of Christ from following him; reproving and threatening them; but Christ saith they should not prevail.

2. His Father's power is likewise engaged for their preservation, *ver. 29*. He now appeared in weakness; and lest his security should therefore be thought insufficient, he brings in his Father as a farther security. Observe,

1st. The power of the Father; "My Father is greater than all;" greater than all the other friends of the church, all the other shepherds, magistrates or ministers, and able to do that for them which they cannot do. Those shepherds slumber and sleep, and it will be easy to pluck the sheep out of their hands; but he keeps his flock day and night. Greater than all the enemies of the church, all the opposition given to her interests, and able to secure his own against all their insults; he is greater than all the combined force of hell and earth. He is greater in wisdom than the old serpent, though noted for subtlety; greater in strength than the great red dragon, though his name be legion, and his title principalities and powers. The devil and his angels have had many a push, many a pluck for the mastery, but have never yet prevailed, *Rev. xii. 7*, "the Lord on high is mightier."

2nd. The interest of the Father in the sheep, for the sake of which his power is engaged for them; it is "my Father that gave them me," and he is concerned in honour to uphold his gift. They were given to the Son as a trust to be managed by him, and therefore God will still look after them. All the Divine power is engaged for the accomplishment of all the Divine counsels.

3rd. The safety of the saints inferred from these two. If this be so, then "none" (neither man nor devil) "is able to pluck them out of the Father's hand," not able to deprive them of the grace they have, or to hinder them from the glory that is designed them; not able to put them out of God's protection, nor get them into their own power. Christ had himself experienced the power of his Father upholding and strengthening him, and therefore puts all his followers into his hand too. He that secured the glory of the Redeemer will secure the glory of the redeemed.

Farther to corroborate the security, that the sheep of Christ may have strong consolation, he asserts the union of these two undertakers, "I and my Father are one," and have jointly and severally undertaken for the protection of the saints, and their perfection. This speaks not only the harmony and consent and good understanding that was between the Father and the Son in the work of man's redemption,—every good man is so far one with God as to concur with him; therefore it must be meant of the oneness of the nature of Father and Son, that they are the same in substance, and equal in power and glory. The fathers urged this, both against the Sabellians, to prove the distinction and plurality of the persons, that the Father and the Son are two, and against the Arians, to prove the unity of the nature, that these two are one. If we should altogether hold our peace concerning this sense of the words, even the stones which the Jews took up to cast at him would speak it out, for they understood him as hereby making himself God, *ver. 33*; and he did not deny it. He proves that none could pluck them out of his hand, because they could not pluck them out of the Father's hand; which had not been a conclusive argument, if the Son had not had the same almighty power with the Father, and consequently been one with him in essence and operation.

Thirdly. The rage, the outrage of the Jews against him for this discourse: "the Jews took up stones again," *ver. 31*. It is not the word that is used before, *ch. viii. 59*, but *ἐβλάστησαν λίθους*, they 'carried stones,' great stones, stones that were a load, such as they used in stoning malefactors; they brought them from some place at a distance, as it were preparing things for his execution without any judicial process; as if he were convicted of blasphemy upon the notorious evidence of the fact, which needed no farther trial. The absurdity of this assault the Jews made upon Christ will appear, if we consider, 1. That they had imperiously, not to say impudently, challenged him to tell them plainly whether he were the Christ or no; and yet now he not only said it, but proved himself so, they condemn him for it as a malefactor. If the preachers of the truth propose it modestly, they are branded as cowards; if boldly, as insolent; "but wisdom is justified of her children." 2. That when they had made the like attempt before it was in vain, he escaped "through the midst of them," *ch. viii. 59*; yet they repeat their baffled attempt. Daring sinners will throw stones at Heaven, though they return upon their own heads; and will strengthen themselves against the Almighty, though never any hardened themselves against him and prospered.

Fourthly. Christ's tender expostulation with them upon occasion of this outrage, *ver. 32*. "Jesus answered" what they did; for we do not find that they said any thing, unless perhaps they stirred up the crowd that yet had gathered about him to join with them, crying, "Stone him, stone him;" as afterwards, "Crucify him, crucify him." When he could have answered them with fire from heaven, he mildly replied, "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me?" Words so very tender, that one would think they should have melted a heart of stone. In dealing with his enemies he still argued from his works: men evidence what they are by what they do. His good works, *καλὰ ἔργα*, excellent, eminent works; *opera eximia vel præclara*; it signifies both 'great works,' and 'good works.'

1. The Divine power of his works convicted them of the most obstinate infidelity. They were works from his Father, so far above the reach and course of nature as to prove him that did them sent of God, and acting by commission from him. These works he shewed them; he did them openly before the people, and not in a corner; his works would bear the test, and refer themselves to the testimony of the most inquisitive and impartial spectators. He did not shew his works by candle light, as they that do them only for show; but he shewed them at noonday, before the world, *ch. xviii. 20*; see *Ps. cxi. 6*. His works so undeniably demonstrated, that they were an incontestable demonstration of the validity of his commission.

2. The Divine grace of his works convicted them of the most base ingratitude. The works he did among them were not only miracles, but mercies; not only works of wonder, to amaze them, but works of love and kindness, to do them good, and so make them good, and endear himself to them; he healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, cast out devils; which were favours, not only to the persons concerned, but to the public: these he had repeated, and multiplied: "Now, for which of these do ye stone me?" Ye cannot say I have done you any harm, or given you any just provocation; if, therefore, you will pick a quarrel with me, it must be for some good work, some good turn done you; tell me for which. Note, 1st. The horrid ingratitude that there is in our sins against God and Jesus Christ, is a great aggravation of them, and makes them appear exceeding sinful. See how God argues to this purpose, *Deu. xxxii. 6*; *Jer. ii. 5*; *Mic. vi. 3*. 2nd. We must not think it strange if we meet with those who not only hate us without cause, but are our adversaries for our love, *Ps. xxxv. 12*; *xli. 9*. When he asks, "for which of these do ye stone me?" as he intimates the abundant satisfaction he had in his own innocency, which gives a man courage in a suffering day, so he puts his persecutors upon considering what was the true reason of their enmity, and asking, as all those should do that create trouble to their neighbour, "Why persecute we him?" as Job adviseth his friends to do, *Job xix. 28*.

used as a place of public resort (*Acts v. 12, 21, 25*). It was said to be part of the original structure of Solomon's Temple. Most probably, the foundations alone belonged to the old building.

x. 28, 29. "Pluck them," &c.: for "pluck" Alford has "tear." The word used alludes to the act of the wild beast (*verse 12*) or the thief (*verse 10*). "No man shall do this:" rather, "none shall do it," for the danger is from more than man. (Compare *Rom. viii. 35*.)

x. 34—36. "Ye are gods;" "whom the Father hath sanctified,"

&c.: there is a comparison and a contrast in the passage. The comparison lies in the fact that God's messengers and ministers had, as well as Christ, a divine work to do. The contrast is in the nature of these men and our Lord. To them the word of God came; Christ was the word of God, sanctified and sent into the world.

x. 40. "The place where John," &c.: i.e., Bethabara or Bethany. (Compare *chap. i. 28*.) Its selection as the scene of our Lord's ministry for a season may account for the remarks of the people.

Fifthly. Their vindication of the attempt they made upon Christ, and the cause upon which they grounded their prosecution, ver. 33. What sin will want fig leaves with which to cover itself, when even the bloody persecutors of the Son of God could find something to say for themselves?

1. They would not be thought such enemies to their country as to persecute him for a good work; "For a good work we stone thee not;" for indeed they would scarce allow any of his works to be so. His curing the impotent man, *ch. v.*, and the blind man, *ch. ix.*, were so far from being acknowledged good services to the town, and meritorious, that they were put upon the score of his crimes, because done on the sabbath day. But if he had done any good works, they would not own that they stoned him for them, though these were really the things that did most exasperate them, *ch. xi. 47*; thus, though most absurd, they could not be brought to own their absurdities.

2. They would be thought such friends to God and his glory as to prosecute him for blasphemy, "because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Here is,

1st. A pretended zeal for the law. They seem mightily concerned for the honour of the Divine majesty, and to be seized with a religious horror at that which they imagined to be a reproach to it. A blasphemer was to be stoned, *Lev. xxiv. 16*; this law they thought did not only justify, but sanctify, what they attempted, as *Acts xxvi. 9*. Note, The vilest practices are often varnished with plausible pretences. As nothing is more courageous than a well-informed conscience, so nothing more outrageous than a mistaken one. See *Isa. lxvi. 5*; *ch. xvi. 2*.

2nd. A real enmity to the Gospel, on which they could not put a greater affront than by representing Christ as a blasphemer. It is no new thing for the worst of characters to be put upon the best of men, by those that resolve to give them the worst of treatment. First. The crime laid to his charge is blasphemy—speaking reproachfully and despitefully of God. God himself is out of the sinner's reach, and not capable of receiving any real injury; and therefore enmity to God spits its venom at his name, and so shews its ill-will. Secondly. The proof of the crime; "thou, being a man, makest thyself God;" and as it is God's glory that he is God, which we rob him of, when we make him altogether such a one as ourselves; so it is his glory, that besides him there is no other, which we rob him of, when we make ourselves, or any creature, altogether like him. Now, 1st. Thus far they were in the right, that what Christ said of himself amounted to this, that he was God, for he had said that he was "one with the Father," and that he would give eternal life; and Christ doth not deny it, which he would have done if it had been a mistaken inference from his words. But, 2nd. They were much mistaken when they looked upon him as a mere man, and that the Godhead he claimed was a usurpation, and of his own making. They thought it absurd and impious that such a one as he, who appeared in the fashion of a poor, mean, despicable man, should profess himself the Messiah, and entitle himself to the honours confessedly due to the Son of God. Note, 1. Those who say that Jesus is a mere man, and only a man of God, as the Socinians say, do in effect charge him with blasphemy, but do effectually prove it upon themselves. 2. He who being a man, a sinful man, makes himself a god, as the pope doth, who claims Divine powers and prerogatives, is without question a blasphemer, and that antichrist.

Sixthly. Christ's reply to their accusation of him, for so their vindication of themselves was, and his making good of those claims which they imputed to him as blasphemous, ver. 34, &c.; where he proves himself to be no blasphemer, by two arguments:

1. By an argument taken from God's Word. He appeals to what was written in their law, that is, in the Old Testament: whoever opposeth Christ, he is sure to have the Scripture on his side. It is written, *Ps. lxxxii. 6*, "I have said ye are gods;" it is an argument *a minore ad majus*,—from the less to the greater; If they were gods, much more am I. Observe,

1st. How he explains the text, ver. 35. "He called them gods to whom the word of God came; and the Scripture cannot be broken." The word of God's commission came to them, appointing them to their offices, as judges, and therefore they are called gods, *Ex. xxii. 28*. To some the word of God came immediately, as to Moses; to others, in the way of an instituted ordinance. Magistracy is a Divine institution; and magistrates are God's delegates, and therefore the Scripture calleth them gods; and we are sure "the Scripture cannot be broken," or broken in upon, or found fault with. Every word of God is right; the very style and language of Scripture is unexceptionable, and not to be corrected, *Matt. v. 18*.

2nd. How he applies it. Thus much in general is easily inferred, that they were very rash and unreasonable who condemned Christ as a blasphemer, only for calling himself the Son of God, when yet they themselves called their rulers so; and therein the Scripture warranted them. But the argument goes farther, ver. 36; if magistrates were called gods, because they were commissioned to administer justice in the nation, "say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, thou blasphemest?" We have here two things concerning the Lord Jesus:

First. The honour done him by the Father, which he justly glories in; he sanctified him, and sent him into the world. Magistrates were called the sons of God, though the word of God only came to them, and the spirit of government came upon them by measure, as upon Saul; but our Lord Jesus was himself the Word, and had the Spirit without measure; they were constituted for a particular country, city, or nation; but he was sent into the world, vested with a universal authority as Lord of all: they were sent to, as persons at a distance; he was sent forth, as having been from eternity with God. The Father sanctified him, that is, designed him, and set him apart to the office of Mediator, and qualified and fitted him for that office; sanctifying him is the same with sealing him, *ch. vi. 27*. Note, Whom the Father sends he sanctifies; whom he designs for holy purposes, he prepares with holy principles and dispositions: the holy God will reward, and therefore will employ, none but such as he finds or makes holy. The Father's sanctifying and sending him is here vouched as sufficient warrant for his calling himself the Son of God; for because he was a holy thing he was called the Son of God, *Lu. i. 35*. See *Rom. i. 4*.

Secondly. The dishonour done him by the Jews, which he justly complains of, that they impiously said of him whom the Father had thus dignified, that he was a blasphemer, because he called himself the Son of God. Say ye of him so and so? Dare you say so? Dare you thus set your mouths against the heavens? Have you brow and brass enough to tell the God of truth he lies; or to condemn him that is most just? Look me in the face, and say it if you can. What! say ye of the Son of God that he is a blasphemer? If devils had said so of him, whom he came to condemn, it had not been so strange; but that men should say so of him, whom he came to teach and save, "be astonished, O heavens, at this!" See what is the language of an obstinate unbelief; it doth in effect call the holy Jesus a blasphemer. It is hard to say which is more to be admired, that men who breathe in God's air should yet speak such things, or that men who have spoken such things should yet still be suffered to breathe in God's air. The wickedness of man, and the patience of God, as it were contend which shall be most wonderful.

2 By an argument taken from his own works, ver. 37, 38. In the former he

only answered the charge of blasphemy by an argument *ad hominem*,—"turning a man's own argument against himself;" but he here makes out his own claims, and proves that he and the Father are one, ver. 37, 38; "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." Though he might justly have abandoned such blasphemous wretches as incurable, yet he vouchsafes to reason with them. Observe,

1st. From what he argues—from his works, which he had often vouched as his credentials, and the proofs of his mission. As he proved himself sent of God by the divinity of his works, so we must prove ourselves allied to Christ by the Christianity of ours. First. The argument is very cogent, for the works he did were the works of his Father, which the Father only could do, and which could not be done in the ordinary course of nature, but only by the sovereign, overruling power of the God of nature; *opera Dei propria*,—"works peculiar to God," and *opera Deo digna*,—"works worthy of God;" the works of a Divine power. He that can dispense with the laws of nature, repeal, alter, and overrule them at his pleasure, by his own power, is certainly the Sovereign Prince who first instituted and enacted those laws. The miracles which the apostles wrought in his name, and by his power, and for the confirmation of his doctrine, corroborated this argument, and continued the evidence of it when he was gone. Secondly. It is proposed as fairly as can be desired, and put to a short issue.

1st. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." He doth not demand a blind and implicit faith, nor an assent to his Divine mission farther than he gave proof of it. He did not wind himself into the affections of people, or wheedle them by sly insinuations, nor impose upon their credulity by bold assertions; but, with the greatest fairness imaginable, quitted all demands of their faith farther than he produced warrants for these demands. Christ is no hard master, who expects to reap in assents, where he has not sown in arguments. None shall perish for the disbelief of that which was not proposed to them with sufficient motives of credibility, Infinite Wisdom itself being judge.

2nd. "But if I do" the works of my Father—if I work undeniable miracles for the confirmation of a holy doctrine, "though you believe not me," though you are so scrupulous as not to take my word, "yet believe the works;" believe your own eyes, your own reason; the thing speaks itself plain enough. As the invisible things of the Creator are clearly seen by his works of creation and common providence, *Rom. i. 20*, so the invisible things of the Redeemer were seen by his miracles, and by all his works, both of power and mercy; so that they who were not convinced by these works were without excuse.

2nd. For what he argues—"that ye may know, and believe," may believe it intelligently, and with an entire satisfaction, "that the Father is in me, and I in him;" which is the same with what he had said, ver. 30, "I and my Father are one." The Father was so in the Son, as that in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead, and it was by a Divine power that he wrought his miracles; the Son was so in the Father, as that he was perfectly acquainted with the whole of his mind, not by communication, but by consciousness, having lain in his bosom. This we must know; not know and explain, for we cannot by searching find it out to perfection, but know and believe it; acknowledging and adoring the depth, when we cannot find the bottom.

39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, 40 And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. 41 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. 42 And many believed on him there.

We have here the issue of the conference with the Jews. One would have thought it should have convinced and melted them; but their hearts were hardened. Here we are told,

First. How they attacked him by force; "therefore they sought again to take him," ver. 39. Therefore, 1. Because he had fully answered their charge of blasphemy, and wiped off that imputation, so that they could not for shame go on with their attempt to stone him; therefore they contrived to seize him, and prosecute him as an offender against the state. When they were constrained to drop their attempt by a popular tumult, they would try what they could do under colour of a legal process: see *Rev. xii. 13*. Or, 2. Because he persevered in the same testimony concerning himself, they persisted in their malice against him. What he had said before he did in effect say again, for the faithful witness never runs in from what he has once said; and therefore having the same provocation, they express the same resentments, and justify their attempt to stone him by another attempt to take him. Such is the temper of a persecuting spirit, and such its politics; *male facta male factis tegere ne perphant*,—"to cover one set of bad deeds with another, lest the former should fall through."

Secondly. How he avoided them by flight; not an inglorious retreat, in which there was any thing of human infirmity, but a glorious retirement, in which there was much of a Divine power: "He escaped out of their hands;" not by the interposal of any friend that helped him, but by his own wisdom he got clear of them; either drew a veil over him, or cast a mist before their eyes; or tied the hands of those whose hearts he did not turn. Note, No weapon formed against our Lord Jesus shall prosper, *Ps. ii. 5*. He escaped, not because he was afraid to suffer, but because his hour was not come. And he who knew how to deliver himself, no doubt knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to make a way for them to escape.

Thirdly. How he disposed of himself in his retirement; he "went away again beyond Jordan," ver. 40. The Bishop of our souls came not to be fixed in one see, but to go about from place to place doing good. This great Benefactor was never out of his way, for wherever he came there was work to be done. Though Jerusalem was the royal city, yet he made many a kind visit to the country; not only his own country, Galilee, but to other parts, even those that lay most remote, beyond Jordan. Now observe,

1. What shelter he found there. He went into a private part of the country, "and there he abode," there he found some rest and quietness, when in Jerusalem he could find none. Note, Though persecutors may drive Christ and his Gospel out of their own city or country, they cannot drive him or it out of the world. Though Jerusalem was not gathered, nor would be, yet Christ was glorious, and would be. Christ's going now beyond Jordan was a figure of the taking of the kingdom of God from the Jews, and bringing it to the Gentiles. Christ and his Gospel have often found better entertainment among the plain country people than among the wise, the mighty, the noble, *1 Cor. i. 26, 27*.

2. What success he found there. He did not go thither merely for his own security, but to do good there; and therefore he chose to go thither, "where

xi. 1. "Lazarus;" it has been conjectured that he was younger than Martha and Mary. The sisters are described (verse 1) as better known. The house (Luke x. 38) is said to be theirs, and in the narrative given there his name is not mentioned. There are some coincidences which have suggested that he may perhaps be identical with the young ruler who had great possessions (*Matt. xix.*; *Mark x.*; *Luke xviii.*). The coincidences are—the age of the young man (*Matt. xix. 20, 22*); the wealth, which agrees with what we know of the

family at Bethany, e.g., the costly offering of spikenard, their possession of a burying-place, the social position of their friends (verse 19); the similarity of the language used to the ruler (compare *Mark x. 21* with *Luke x. 42*); the same word used of Christ's feeling ("loved" him—compare *Mark x. 21* with *John xi. 5*), and used of none else in the Gospel history except of the beloved disciple. The harmony of Greswell destroys this conjecture, but that adopted by Archbishop Thomson, &c., admits it. "Bethany;" "house of dates." The

John at first baptized," *ch. i. 28*, because there could not but remain some impressions of John's ministry and baptism thereabouts, which would dispose them to receive Christ and his doctrine; for it was not three years since John was baptizing, and Christ was himself baptized here at Bethabara. Christ came hither now to see what fruit there was of all the pains John Baptist had taken among them, and what they retained of the things they then heard and received. And the event in some measure answered expectation, for we are told,

1st. That they flocked after him, ver. 41, "many resorted to him." The return of the means of grace to a place, after they have been for some time intermitted, commonly occasions a great stirring of affections. Some think Christ chose to abide at Bethabara, the 'house of passage,' where the ferry-boats lay, by which they crossed the river Jordan, that the confluence of people thither might give an opportunity of teaching many who would come and hear him when it lay in their way, that would scarce go a step out of the road for an opportunity of attending on his word.

2nd. That they reasoned in his favour, and sought arguments to induce them to close with him as much as they at Jerusalem sought objections against him. They said, very judiciously, "John did no miracle, but all things that John spake of this man were true." Two things they considered, upon recollecting what they had seen and heard from John, and comparing it with Christ's ministry:

First, That Christ far exceeded John Baptist's power, for "John did no miracle," but Jesus both many; whence it is easy to infer that Jesus is greater than John. And if John were so great a prophet, how great then is this Jesus? Christ is best known and acknowledged by such a comparison with others as sets him superlatively above others. Though John came in the spirit and power of Elias, yet he did not work miracles, as Elias did, lest the minds of people should be made to hesitate between him and Jesus; therefore the honour of working miracles was reserved for Jesus, as a flower of his crown, that there might be a sensible demonstration, and an undeniable one, that though he came after John, yet he was preferred far before him.

Secondly, That Christ exactly answered John Baptist's testimony. John not only did no miracle, to divert people from Christ, but he said a great deal to direct them to Christ, and to turn them over as apprentices to him, and that came to their minds now; "all things that John said of this man were true;" that he should be "the Lamb of God"—should "baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Great things John had said of him, which raised their expectations; so that, though they had not zeal enough to carry them into his country, to inquire after him,—yet when he came into theirs, and brought his Gospel to their doors, they acknowledged him as great as John had said he would be. When we get acquainted with Christ, and come to know him experimentally, we find all things that the Scripture saith of him to be true; nay, and that the reality exceeds the report. 1 *Kin. x. 6, 7*. John Baptist was now dead and gone, and yet his hearers profited by what they had heard formerly; and by comparing what they heard then, with what they saw now, they gained a double advantage; for, 1st. They were confirmed in their belief that John was a prophet, who foretold such things, and spoke of the eminency to which this Jesus would arrive, though his beginning was so small. 2nd. They were prepared to believe that Jesus was the Christ, in whom they saw those things accomplished which John foretold. By this we see that the success and efficacy of the Word preached, is not confined to the life of the preacher, nor doth it expire with his breath; but that which seemed as water spilled upon the ground may afterward be gathered up again. See *Zec. i. 5, 6*.

3rd. That "many believed on him there." Believing that he who wrought such miracles, and in whom John's predictions were fulfilled, was what he declared himself to be, the Son of God, they gave up themselves to him as his disciples, ver. 42. An emphasis is here to be laid, *First*. Upon the persons that believed on him; they were many. While they that received and embraced his doctrine at Jerusalem were but as the grape gleanings of the vintage, they that believed on him in the country beyond Jordan were a full harvest gathered in to him. *Secondly*. Upon the place where this was; it was there where John had been preaching and baptizing, and had had great success; there many believed on the Lord Jesus. Where the preaching of the doctrine of repentance has had success as desired, there the preaching of the doctrine of reconciliation and gospel grace is most likely to be prosperous. Where John has been acceptable, Jesus will not be unacceptable. The jubilee trumpet sounds sweetest in the ears of those who in the day of atonement have afflicted their souls for sin.

CHAPTER XI.

In this chapter we have the history of that illustrious miracle which Christ wrought a little before his death—the raising of Lazarus to life; which is recorded only by this evangelist, for the other three confine themselves to what Christ did in Galilee, where he resided most, and scarce ever carried their history into Jerusalem till the passion week; whereas John's memoirs relate chiefly to what passed at Jerusalem; this passage therefore was reserved for his pen. Some suggest, that when the other evangelists wrote Lazarus was alive, and it would not well agree either with his safety or with his humility to have it recorded till now, when it is supposed he was dead. It is more largely recorded than any other of Christ's miracles, not only because there are many circumstances of it so very instructive, and the miracle itself so very great a proof of Christ's mission, but because it was an earnest of that which was to be the crowning proof of all—Christ's own resurrection. Here is, I. The tidings sent to our Lord Jesus of the sickness of Lazarus, and his entertainment of those tidings, ver. 1—16. II. The visit he made to Lazarus' relations when he had heard of his death, and their entertainment of the visit, ver. 17—32. III. The miracle wrought in the raising of Lazarus from the dead, ver. 33—44. IV. The effect wrought by this miracle upon others, ver. 45—57.



AOW a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) 3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord,

behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. 4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. 5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. 6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. 7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judæa again. 8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? 9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. 10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. 11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. 12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. 13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. 14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. 16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

We have in these verses,

1. A particular account of the parties principally concerned in this story, ver. 1, 2. 1. They lived at Bethany, a village not far from Jerusalem, where Christ usually lodged when he came up to the feasts. It is here called the town of Mary and Martha, that is, the town where they dwelt, as Bethesda is called the city of Andrew and Peter, *ch. i. 44*; for I see no reason to think, as some do, that Martha and Mary were owners of the town, and the rest were their tenants. 2. Here was a brother named Lazarus; his Hebrew name probably was Eleazar, which, being contracted, and a Greek termination put to it, is made Lazarus. Perhaps, in prospect of this history, our Saviour made use of the name of Lazarus in that parable wherein he designed to set forth the blessedness of the righteous in the bosom of Abraham immediately after death, *Lu. xvi. 20*. 3. Here were two sisters, Martha and Mary, who seem to have been the housekeepers, and to have managed the affairs of the family; while perhaps Lazarus lived a retired life, and gave himself to study and contemplation. Here was a decent, happy, well-ordered family, and a family that Christ was very much conversant in, where yet there was neither husband nor wife, (for aught appears,) but the house kept by a brother and his sisters, dwelling together in unity. 4. One of the sisters is particularly described to be "that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment," ver. 2; some think it was that woman that we read of, *Lu. vii. 37, 38*, who had been a sinner, an ill woman. I rather think it refers to that anointing of Christ which this evangelist relates, *ch. xii. 3*, for the evangelists do never refer one to another, but John frequently refers in one place of his gospel to another. Extraordinary acts of piety and devotion, that come from an honest principle of love to Christ, will not only find acceptance with him, but gain reputation in the church, *Mat. xxvi. 13*. This was she "whose brother Lazarus was sick;" and the sickness of those we love is our affliction. The more friends we have, the more frequently we are thus afflicted by sympathy; and the dearer they are, the more grievous it is. The multiplying of our comforts is but the multiplying of our cares and crosses.

II. The tidings that were sent to our Lord Jesus of the sickness of Lazarus, ver. 3. His sisters knew where Jesus was,—a great way off, beyond Jordan,—and they sent a special messenger to him to acquaint him with the affliction of their family; in which they manifest, 1. The affection and concern they had for their brother. Though it is likely his estate would come to them after his death, yet they earnestly desired his life, as they ought to do. They shewed their love to him now he was sick, for a brother is born for adversity, and so is a sister too. We must weep with our friends when they weep, as well as rejoice with them when they rejoice. 2. The regard they had to the Lord Jesus, whom they were willing to make acquainted with all their concerns, and, like Jephthah, to utter all their words before him. Though God knows all our wants, and griefs, and cares, he will know them from us, and is honoured by our laying them before him.

The message they sent was very short, not petitioning, much less prescribing or pressing, but barely relating the case with the tender insinuation of a powerful plea, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." They do not say, 'he whom we love,' but, 'whom thou lovest.' Our greatest encouragements in prayer are fetched from God himself, and from his grace. They do not say, 'Lord, behold, he who loveth thee,' but, 'whom thou lovest;' for 'herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.' Our love to him is not worth speaking of, but his to us can never be enough spoken of. Note, 1. There are some of the friends and followers of the Lord Jesus whom he hath a special kindness for above others. Among the twelve there was one whom Jesus loved. 2. It is no new thing for those whom Christ loves to be sick; all things come alike to all; bodily distempers correct the corruptions, and try the

notices of it in Scripture are scanty. Its site appears never to have been doubted. It is now known by a name which links it with the history of this chapter, "El'Azariyeh," or "Lazarieh." "It lies on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, fully a mile beyond the summit, and not very far from the point at which the road to Jericho begins its more sudden descent towards the Jordan valley. The spot is a woody hollow, more or less planted with fruit-trees—olives, almonds, pomegranates—as well as oaks and

carobs; the whole lying below a secondary ridge or hump of sufficient height to shut out the village from the summit of the mount." "Of" Bethany: rather, "from Bethany, of the town," &c., for two prepositions are used. On this fact Greswell argues that St. John intends to specify Bethany as the place of present residence; but that the term "of the town," or village, refers to the birthplace, viz., the "certain village" mentioned in Luke x. 38.

xi. 2. "It was that Mary:" not to be confounded with Mary

graces, of God's people. 3. It is a great comfort to us, when we are sick, to have those about us that will pray for us. 4. We have great encouragement in our prayers for those who are sick, if we have ground to hope that they are such as Christ loves; and we have reason to love and pray for those whom we have reason to think Christ loves and cares for.

III. An account how Christ entertained the tidings brought him of the illness of his friend.

1. He prognosticated the event and issue of the sickness, and probably sent it as a message to the sisters of Lazarus by the express, to support them while he delayed to come to them. Two things he prognosticated:

1st. "This sickness is not unto death." It was mortal, proved fatal, and no doubt but Lazarus was truly dead for four days; but, *First*, That was not the errand upon which this sickness was sent; it came not, as in a common case, to be a summons to the grave, but there was a farther intention in it. Had it been sent on that errand, his rising from the dead would have defeated it. *Secondly*, That was not the final effect of this sickness. He died, and yet it might be said he did not die, for, *factum non dicitur quod non perseverat*,—that is not said to be done which is not done for a perpetuity. Death is an everlasting farewell to this world, it is the way whence we shall not return; and in this sense it was "not unto death;" the grave was not his long home, his house of eternity. Thus Christ said of the maid whom he purposed to restore to life, "She is not dead." The sickness of good people, who threatening soever, is not unto death, for it is not to eternal death. The body's death to this world is the soul's birth into another world; when we or our friends are sick, we make it our principal support that there is hopes of a recovery, but in that we may be disappointed; therefore it is our wisdom to build upon that in which we cannot be disappointed: if they belong to Christ, let the worst come to the worst, they cannot be hurt of the second death, and then not much hurt of the first.

2nd. But it is "for the glory of God," that an opportunity may be given for the manifesting of God's glorious power. The afflictions of the saints are designed for the glory of God, that he may have opportunity of shewing them favour; for the sweetest mercies, and the most affecting, are those which are occasioned by trouble. Let this reconcile us to the darkest dispensations of Providence, they are all for the glory of God: this sickness, this loss, this disappointment is so; and if God be glorified, we ought to be satisfied, *Lev. x. 3*. It was "for the glory of God," for it was "that the Son of God might be glorified thereby," as it gave him occasion to work that glorious miracle, the raising him from the dead. As before, the man was born blind, that Christ might have the honour of curing him, *ch. ix. 3*,—so Lazarus must be sick, and die, that Christ may be glorified as the Lord of life. Let this comfort those whom Christ loves, under all their grievances, that the design of them all is, "that the Son of God may be glorified thereby;" his wisdom, power, and goodness glorified in supporting and relieving them; see *2 Cor. xii. 9, 10*.

2. He deferred visiting his patient, *ver. 5, 6*. They had pleaded, "Lord, it is he whom thou lovest;" and the plea is allowed, *ver. 5*, "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Thus the claims of faith are ratified in the court of Heaven. Now one would think it should follow, "when he heard therefore that he was sick," he made all the haste that he could to him; if he loved them, now was a time to shew it, by hastening to them, for he knew they impatiently expected him. But he took the contrary way to shew his love. It is not said he loved them, and yet he lingered; but, he loved them, and therefore he lingered; when he heard his friend was sick, instead of coming post to him, "he abode two days still in the same place where he was." 1st. He loved them, that is, had a great opinion of Martha and Mary, of their wisdom and grace, of their faith and patience, above others of his disciples; and therefore he deferred coming to them, that he might try them, that their trial might at last be found to praise and honour. 2nd. He loved them, that is, he designed to do something great and extraordinary for them, to work such a miracle for their relief as he had not wrought for any of his friends; and therefore he delayed coming to them, that Lazarus might be dead and buried before he came. If Christ had come presently, and cured the sickness of Lazarus, he had done no more than he did for many; if he had raised him to life when newly dead, no more than he had done for some; but deferring his relief so long, he had an opportunity of doing more for him than for any. Note, God hath gracious intentions even in seeming delays, *Isa. liv. 7, 8*; *xlix. 14*. Christ's friends at Bethany were not out of his thoughts, though, when he heard of their distress, he made no haste to them. When the work of deliverance, temporal or spiritual, public or personal, stands at a stay, it doth but stay the time, and "every thing is beautiful in its season."

IV. The discourse he had with his disciples, when he was about to go visit his friends at Bethany, *ver. 7—16*; and the conference is so very free and familiar as to make out what Christ saith, "I have called you friends." Two things he discourses about—his own danger, and Lazarus' death.

First, His own danger in going into Judaea, *ver. 7—10*.

1. Here is the notice which Christ gave his disciples of his purpose to go into Judaea towards Jerusalem. His disciples were the men of his counsel, and to them he saith, *ver. 7*, "Let us go into Judaea again," though they are unworthy of such a favour. Thus Christ repeats the tenders of his mercy to those that have often rejected them. Now this may be considered, 1st. As a purpose of his kindness to his friends at Bethany, whose affliction, and all the aggravating circumstances of it, he knew very well, though no more expresses were sent to him; for he was present in spirit, though absent in body. When he knew they were brought to the last extremity, when the brother and sisters have given and taken a final farewell, now, saith he, "Let us go to Judaea." Christ will arise in favour of his people, when "the time to favour them, yea, the set time, is come;" and the worst time is commonly the set time. When "our hope is lost, we are cut off for our part," then they shall "know that I am the Lord, when I have opened the graves," *Eze. xxxvii. 11, 13*. In the depths of affliction, let this therefore keep us out of the depths of despair, that man's extremity is God's opportunity, *Jehovah-jireh*. Or, 2nd. As a trial of the courage of the disciples, whether they would venture to follow him thither, where they had so lately been frightened with an attempt upon their Master's life, which they looked upon as an attempt upon theirs too. To go to Judaea, which was so lately made too hot for them, was a saying that proved them. But Christ did not say, "Go ye into Judaea, and I will stay and take shelter here;" no, "Let us go." Note, Christ never brings his people into any peril, but he accompanies them in it, and is with them, even then when they "walk through the valley of the shadow of death."

2. Their objection against this journey, *ver. 13*, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and guest thou thither again?" Here, 1st. They mind him of the danger he had been in there not long since. Christ's disciples are apt to make a greater matter of sufferings than their Master doth, and to remember injuries longer. He had put up the affront; it was over, and gone, and forgotten; but his disciples could not forget it: "of late," *now*, as if it were this very day, they "sought to stone thee." Though it was at least two months ago, the remembrance of the fright was fresh in their minds. 2nd. They marvel he will go thither again. "Wilt thou favour those with thy presence that have expelled thee out of their coasts?" Christ's ways in passing

by offences are above our ways. Wilt thou expose thyself among a people that are so desperately enraged against thee? "Guest thou thither again," where thou hast been so ill used? Here they shewed great care for their Master's safety, as Peter did, when he said, "Master, spare thyself." Had Christ been minded to shift off suffering, he did not want friends to persuade him to it; but he had opened his mouth to the Lord, and he would not, he could not, go back. Yet while his disciples shew a concern for his safety, they discover at the same time, *First*, A distrust of his power; as if he could not secure both himself and them now in Judaea, as well as he had done formerly. Is his arm waxen short? When we are solicitous for the interests of Christ's church and kingdom in the world, yet we must rest satisfied in the wisdom and power of the Lord Jesus, who knows how to secure a flock of sheep in the midst of a herd of wolves. *Secondly*, A secret fear of suffering themselves, for they count upon that, if he suffer. When our own private interests happen to run in the same channel with the public, we are apt to think ourselves zealous for the Lord of hosts, when really we are only zealous for our own wealth, credit, ease, and safety, and seek our own things, under colour and umbrage of seeking the things of Christ: we have therefore need nicely to distinguish upon our principles.

3. Christ's answer to this objection, *ver. 9, 10*, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" The Jews divided every day into twelve hours, and made their hours longer or shorter according as the days were; so that an hour with them was a twelfth part of the time between sun and sun; so some. Or, they lying much more south than we, their days were nearer twelve hours long than ours. The Divine providence has given us daylight to work by, and lengthens it out to a competent time; and, reckoning the year round, very country has just as much daylight as night, and so much more as the twilight amount to. Man's life is a day; this day is divided into divers ages, states, and opportunities, as into hours, shorter or longer, as God has appointed, the consideration of this should make us not only very busy, as to the work of life, —if there were twelve hours in the day, each of them ought to be filled up with duty, and none of them trifled away,—but also very easy as to the perils of life, our day shall be lengthened out till our work be done, and our testimony finished. This Christ applies to his case, and shews why he must go to Judaea, because he had a clear call to go. For the opening of this,

1st. He shews the comfort and satisfaction which a man has in his own mind, while he keeps in the way of his duty, as it is in general prescribed by the Word of God, and particularly determined by the providence of God: "If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not;" that is, if a man keep close to his duty, and mind that, and set the will of God before him as his rule, with an impartial respect to all God's commandments, he doth not hesitate in his own mind, but, walking uprightly, walks surely, and with a holy confidence. As he that walks in the day stumbles not, but goes on steadily and cheerfully in his way, "because he sees the light of this world," and by it sees his way before him,—so a good man, without any collateral security or sinister aim, relies upon the Word of God as his rule, and regards the glory of God as his end: because he sees those two great lights, and keeps his eye upon them, he is furnished with a faithful guide in all his doubts, and a powerful guard in all his dangers, *Gal. vi. 4*; *Ps. cxix. 6*. Christ, wherever he went, walked in the day, and so shall we, if we follow his steps.

2nd. He shews the pain and peril a man is in who walks not according to this rule; *ver. 10*, "If a man walk in the night, he stumbleth." If a man walk in the way of his heart, and the sight of his eyes, and according to the course of this world—if he consult his own carnal reasonings more than the will and glory of God, he falls into temptations and snares, is liable to great uneasiness, and frightful apprehensions, trembles at the shaking of a leaf, and flees when none pursues; while an upright man laughs at the shaking of a spear, and stands undaunted when ten thousand invade: see *Ps. xxxiii. 14—16*. He stumbles, because there is no light in him, for light in us is that to our moral actions which light about us is to our natural actions. He has not a good principle within; he is not sincere; his eye is evil. Thus Christ not only justifies his purpose of going into Judaea, but encourageth his disciples to go along with him, and fear no evil.

Secondly, The death of Lazarus is here discoursed of between Christ and his disciples, *ver. 11—16*, where we have,

1. The notice Christ gave his disciples of the death of Lazarus, and an intimation that his business into Judaea was to look after him, *ver. 11*. After he had prepared his disciples for this dangerous march into an enemy's country, he then gives them,

1st. Plain intelligence of the death of Lazarus, though he had received no advice of it; "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." See here how Christ calls a believer, and a believer's death. *First*, He calls a believer his friend; "our friend Lazarus." Note, 1st. There is a covenant of friendship between Christ and believers, and a friendly affection and communion pursuant to it, which our Lord Jesus will own, and not be ashamed of. His secret is with the righteous. 2nd. Those whom Christ is pleased to own as his friends, all his disciples should take for theirs. Christ speaks of Lazarus as their common friend, "our friend." 3rd. Death itself doth not break the bond of friendship between Christ and a believer. Lazarus is dead, and yet he is still our friend. *Secondly*, He calls the death of a believer a sleep; "he sleepeth." It is good to call death by such names and titles as will help to make it more familiar and less formidable to us. The death of Lazarus was in a peculiar sense a sleep, as that of Jairus' daughter, because they were to be raised again speedily; and since we are sure to rise again, at last, why should that make any great difference? And why should not the believing hope of that resurrection to eternal life make it, upon this matter, as easy to us to put off the body and die, as it is to put off our clothes and go sleep? A good Christian, when he dies doth but sleep; he rests from the labours of the day past, and is refreshing himself for the next morning. Nay, herein death has the advantage of sleep, that sleep is only the parenthesis, but death is the period of our care and toils. The soul doth not sleep, but becomes more active; but the body sleeps without any toss, without any terror; not disturbed nor disturbed. The grave to the wicked is a prison, and its graveclothes as the shackles of a criminal reserved for execution; but to the godly it is a bed, and all its bands as the soft and downy fetters of an easy, quiet sleep. Though the body corrupt, it will rise in the morning, as if it had never seen corruption; it is but putting off our clothes to be mended and trimmed up for the marriage day, the coronation day, to which we must rise; see *Isa. lvii. 2*; *1 Thes. iv. 14*. The Greeks called their burying-places dormitories, κοιμητήρια.

2nd. Particular intimations of his favourable intentions concerning Lazarus; "but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." He could have done it, and yet have stayed where he was; he that recovered, at a distance, one dying, *ch. iv. 50*, could have raised, at a distance, one dead; but he would put this honour upon the miracle, to work it by the grave-side, "I go to awake him." As sleep is a resemblance of death, so a man's waking out of sleep, when he is called, especially when he is called by his own name, is an emblem of the resurrection, *Job xiv. 15*; Then "thou shalt call." Christ had no sooner said, "our friend sleeps," but presently he adds, "I go that I may awake him." When Christ tells his people at any time how bad the case is, he lets them know in

Magdalene. The anointing alluded to is that of *Matt. xxvi. 6—13*; *Mark xiv. 3—9*, which should not, we think, be identified with the act of the sinner woman mentioned in *Luke vii*.

xi. 4. "Glory of God;" Trench observes that "this certainly includes the perfecting for Lazarus of his own spiritual being. The Son of God was first glorified in Lazarus, and then on and through him to the world (compare the exact parallel, *John ix. 2, 3*)."

xi. 5. The word rendered "loved," in this verse, is not the same as

that used in verse 3, "whom thou lovest." The distinction between the two words is noted by Trench, who says that it would have been contrary to the fine decorum of language to use the word of verse 3 (the word expressive of a more personal love) now that the sisters are included in his love.

xi. 9. "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" or, rather, "Are not the hours of the day twelve?" "So long as the day, the time appointed by my Father for my earthly walk, endures, so long as

the same breath, how easily, how quickly he can mend it. Christ's telling his disciples that this was his business to J. dea, might help to take off their fear of going with him thither. He did not go upon a public errand to the temple, but a private visit, which would not so much expose him and them; and besides, it was to do a kindness to a family they were all obliged to.

2. Their mistake of the meaning of this notice, and the blunder they made about it, ver. 12, 13; they said, "Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well." This speaks.

1st. Some concern they had for their friend Lazarus; they hoped he would recover, *autihera*, he 'shall be saved,' from dying at this time. Probably they had understood, by the messenger who brought the news of his illness, that one of the most threatening symptoms he was under was, that he was restless, and could get no sleep; and now they heard he slept, they concluded the fever was going off, and the worst was past. Sleep is often nature's physic, and reviving to its weak and weary powers. This is true of the sleep of death; if a good Christian so sleep, he shall do well, better than he did here.

2nd. Yet it speaks a greater concern for themselves; for hereby they insinuate that it was now needless for him to go to him, and expose himself and them. "If he sleep," he will be quickly well, and we may stay where we are. Thus we are willing to hope that good work, which we are called to do, will do itself, or will be done by some other hand, if there be peril in the doing of it.

This mistake of theirs is here rectified, ver. 13: "Jesus spake of his death." See here, *First*. How dull of understanding Christ's disciples as yet were. Let us not therefore condemn all those for heretics who mistake the sense of some of Christ's sayings. It is not good to aggravate our brethren's mistakes; yet this was a gross one; for it had easily been prevented, if they had remembered how frequently death is called a sleep in the Old Testament; they should have understood Christ when he spoke Scripture language. Besides, it would sound odd for their Master to undertake a journey of two or three days only to awake a friend out of a natural sleep, which any one else might awake him out of. What Christ undertakes to do, we may be sure is something great and uncommon, and a work worthy of himself. *Secondly*. How carefully the evangelist corrects this error, "Jesus spake of his death." Those that speak in an unknown tongue, or use similitudes, should learn hence to explain themselves, and pray that they may interpret, to prevent mistakes.

3. The plain and express declaration which Jesus made to them of the death of Lazarus, and his resolution to go to Bethany, ver. 14, 15.

1st. He gives them notice of the death of Lazarus; what he had before said darkly, he now saith plainly, and without a figure; "Lazarus is dead," ver. 14. Christ takes cognizance of the death of his saints, for it is precious in his sight, *Ps. cxvi. 15*; and is not pleased if we do not consider it, and lay it to heart. See what a compassionate teacher Christ is, and how he condescends to those that are out of the way; and by his subsequent sayings and doings, explains the difficulties of what went before.

2nd. He gives them the reason why he had delayed so long to go and see him; "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there." If he had been there time enough, he would have healed his disease, and prevented his death, which would have been much for the comfort of Lazarus' friends; but then his disciples would have seen no farther proof of his power than what they had often seen, and consequently their faith had received no improvement; but now he went and raised him from the dead, as there were many brought to believe on him who before did not, ver. 45, so there was much done towards the perfecting of what was lacking in the faith of those that did, which Christ aimed at, "to the intent that ye may believe."

3rd. He resolves now to go to Bethany, and take his disciples along with him, "Let us go unto him;" not, "Let us go to his sisters, to comfort them, which is the utmost we can do, but "let us go to him;" for Christ can shew wonders to the dead. Death, which will separate us from all our other friends, and cut us off from correspondence with them, yet cannot separate us from the love of Christ, nor put us out of the reach of his calls: as he will maintain his covenant with the dust, so he can make visits to the dust. Lazarus is dead, but let us go to him; though perhaps those who said, "If he sleep, there is no need to go," were ready to say, "If he be dead, it is to no purpose to go."

4. Thomas exciting his fellow disciples cheerfully to attend their Master's motions, ver. 16: "Thomas, which is called Didymus." Thomas, in Hebrew, and Didymus, in Greek, signify a twin. It is said of Rebekah, *Gen. xxv. 24*, that there were "twins in her womb;" the word is *thomin*; probably Thomas was a twin. He said "to his fellow disciples," who probably looked with fear and concern upon one another, when Christ said so positively, "Let us go to him,"—he said, very courageously, "Let us also go, that we may die with him;" with him, that is,

1st. With Lazarus, who was now dead; so some take it. Lazarus was a dear and loving friend both to Christ and his disciples and perhaps Thomas had a particular intimacy with him. Now, if he be dead, saith he, "let us even go and die with him." For, *First*. If we survive, we know not how to live without him. Probably Lazarus had done them many good offices, sheltered them, and provided for them, and been to them instead of eyes; and now he was gone, they had no man like-minded; and therefore, saith he, we had as good die with him. Thus we are sometimes ready to think our lives bound up in the lives of some that were dear to us. But God will teach us to live, and to live comfortably, upon himself, when those are gone whom we thought we could not have lived without. But that is not all. *Secondly*. If we die, we hope to be happy with him. Such a firm belief he has of a happiness on the other side death, and such good hope through grace of their own and Lazarus' interest in it, that he is willing they should all go and die with him. It is better to die, and go along with our Christian friends to that world which is enriched by their removal to it, than stay behind in a world that is impoverished by their departure out of it. The more of our friends are translated hence, the fewer cords we have to bind us to this earth, and the more to draw our hearts heavenwards. How pleasantly doth the good man speak of dying, as if it were but undressing and going to bed!

2nd. Let us go and die with our Master, who is now exposing himself to death by venturing into Judaea; and so I rather think it is meant. If he will go into danger, let us also go and take our lot with him, according to the command we received, "Follow me." Thomas knew so much of the malice of the Jews against him, and the counsels of God concerning him, which he had often told them, that it was no foreign supposition that he was now going to die. And now Thomas discovers, *First*. A gracious readiness to die with Christ himself, flowing from strong affections to him, though his faith was weak, as appeared afterward, *ch. xiv. 5*; *xx. 25*. "Where thou diest, I will die," *Ru. i. 17*. *Secondly*. A zealous desire to help his fellow disciples into the same frame, "Let us go," one and all, "and die with him." If they stone him, let them stone us; who would desire to survive such a Master? Thus in difficult times Christians should animate one another. We may each of us say, "Let us die with him." Note, The consideration of the dying of the Lord Jesus should make us willing to die whenever God calls for us.

17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had

lain in the grave four days already. 18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: 19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. 21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. 23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. 24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. 25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? 27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. 28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. 29 As soon as she had heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. 30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. 31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. 32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

The matter being determined that Christ will go to Judaea, and his disciples with him, they address themselves to their journey; and in this journey some passages happened which the other evangelists record, as the healing of the blind man at Jericho, and the conversion of Zacchæus. We must not reckon ourselves out of our way while we are in the way of doing good; nor be so intent upon one good office as to neglect another. At length he comes near to Bethany, which is said to be about fifteen furlongs off from Jerusalem, about two measured miles, ver. 18. Notice is taken of this, that this miracle was in effect wrought in Jerusalem, and so was put to her score. Christ's miracles in Galilee were more numerous, but those in or near Jerusalem were more illustrious; there he healed one that had been diseased thirty-eight years, another that had been blind from his birth, and raised one that had been dead four days. To Bethany Christ came; and observe,

First. What posture he found his friends there in. When he had been last with them, it is likely he left them well, in health and joy; but when we part from our friends, (though Christ knew,) we know not what changes may be concerning us or them before we meet again.

1. He found his friend Lazarus in the grave, ver. 17. When he came near the town, probably by the burying-place belonging to the town, he was told by the neighbours, or some he met, that Lazarus had been four days buried. Some think Lazarus died the same day that the messenger came to Jesus with the tidings of his sickness, and so reckon two days for his abode in the same place, and two days for his journey. I rather think that Lazarus died at that very instant that Jesus said, "Our friend sleepeth," he is now newly fallen asleep; and the time between his death and burial, which among the Jews was but short, with the four days of his lying in the grave, were taken up in this journey; for Christ travelled publicly, as appears by his passing through Jericho, and his abode at Zacchæus' house took up some time. Promised salvations, though they always come surely, yet they often come slowly.

2. He found his friends that survived in grief. Martha and Mary were almost swallowed up with sorrow for the death of their brother, which is intimated where it is said that "many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them." Note, 1st. Ordinarily where death is, there are mourners, especially when those that were agreeable and amiable to their relations, and serviceable to their generation, are taken away. The house where death is, is called "the house of mourning," *Ecc. vii. 2*. When "man goes to his long home, the mourners go about the streets," *Ecc. xii. 5*; or rather, sit alone, and keep silence. Here was Martha's house, a house where the fear of God was, and on which his blessing rested, yet made a house of mourning. Grace will keep sorrow from the heart, *ch. xiv. 1*, not from the house. 2nd. Where there are mourners, there ought to be comforters. It is a duty we owe to those that are in sorrow, to mourn with them, and to comfort them; and our mourning with them will be some comfort to them. When we are under the present impressions of grief, we are apt to forget those things which would minister comfort

there is any work for me yet to do, I am safe, and you are safe in my company." "The passage which yields the most helps to fix the meaning is the very similar one, spoken under similar circumstances of danger, John ix. 4" (Trench).

xi. 13. "Of his death:" the use of the word "sleep" to express death is common in the New Testament, as Matt. xxvii. 52; Acts vii. 60, xiii. 36; 1 Cor. xi. 30, xv. 6; 1 Thess. iv. 13—15; 2 Pet. iii. 4. "The image belongs to the natural symbolism of all nations."

The mistake of the disciples in misunderstanding Christ's words is similar to that made by them about the leaven and the bread.

xi. 16. "Thomas, called Didymus," or "the twin:" the facts recorded about Thomas are very few. He is only mentioned three times, except where his name occurs in lists of the apostles; but what is mentioned about him is very suggestive. His sad and almost morbid temperament gave an under-tone of melancholy to all his words. Keener far than his fellow-apostles to foresee the gloomy

to us, and therefore have need of remembrancers. It is a mercy to have such when we are in sorrow, and our duty to be such to them who are in sorrow. The Jewish doctors laid great stress upon this, obliging their disciples to make conscience of comforting the mourners after the burial of the dead: they comforted them "concerning their brother," that is, by speaking to them of him, not only of the good name he left behind, but the happy state he was gone to. When godly relations and friends are taken from us, whatever occasion we have to be afflicted concerning ourselves, who are left behind, and miss them, we have reason to be comforted concerning them who are gone before us to a happiness where they have no miss of us.

This visit which the Jews made to Martha and Mary is an evidence that they were persons of distinction, and made a figure, as also that they carried themselves obligingly to all; so that though they were followers of Christ, yet those that had no respect for him, were civil to them. There was also a providence in it, that so many Jews—Jewish ladies, it is probable,—should come together just at this time to comfort the mourners, that they might be unexceptionable witnesses of the miracle; and see what miserable comforters they were, in comparison with Christ. Christ did not use to send for witnesses to his miracles; and yet, if none were by but relations, it would have been excepted against; therefore God's counsel so ordered it that these should come together accidentally to bear their testimony to it, that all infidelity might stop her mouth.

Secondly. What passed between him and his surviving friends at this interview. When Christ defers his visits for a time, they are thereby made the more acceptable, much the more welcome; so it was here. His departure endears his return, and his absence teacheth us how to value his presence.

1. We have here the interview between him and Martha; she "went and met him," ver. 20.

1st. It should seem that Martha was earnestly expecting Christ's arrival, and inquiring for it; either she had sent out messengers to bring her tidings of his first approach, or she had so often asked, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" that the first who discovered him ran to her with the welcome news. However it was, she heard of his coming before he was come. She had waited long, and often asked, Is he come? and could hear no tidings of him; but long-looked-for came at last; at the end the vision will speak, and not lie.

2nd. Martha, when the good news was brought that Jesus was coming, threw all aside, and went and met him, in token of a most affectionate welcome. She waived all ceremony and compliment to the Jews who came to visit her, and hastened to go meet Jesus. Note, When God, by his grace or providence, is coming towards us in ways of mercy and comfort, we should go forth, by faith, hope, and prayer, to meet him. Some suggest that Martha went out of the town to meet Jesus, to let him know that there were several Jews in the house who were no friends to him, that, if he pleased, he might keep out of the way of them.

3rd. When Martha went to meet Jesus, "Mary sat still in the house." Some think she did not hear the tidings, being in her withdrawing-room, receiving visits of condolence; while Martha, who was busied in the household affairs, had early notice of it. Perhaps Martha would not tell her sister that Christ was coming, being ambitious of the honour of receiving him first. *Sancta est prudentia clam fratribus clam parentibus ad Christum esse conferre*—Holy prudence conducts us to Christ, while brethren and parents know not what we are doing.—*Maldonat. in loc.* Others think she did hear that Christ was come, but was so overwhelmed with sorrow that she did not care for stirring, choosing rather to indulge her sorrow, and to sit poring upon her affliction, and saying, I do well to mourn. Comparing this story with that, *Lu. x. 38, 39*, we may observe the different tempers of these two sisters, and the temptations and advantages of each. Martha's natural temper was active and busy, she loved to be here and there, and at the end of every thing; and this had been a snare to her, when by it she was not only careful, and cumbered about many things, but hindered from the exercises of devotion; but now, in a day of affliction, this active temper did her a kindness, kept the grief from her heart, and made her forward to meet Christ, and so she received comfort from him the sooner. On the other hand, Mary's natural temper was contemplative and reserved; this had been formerly an advantage to her, when it set her at Christ's feet to hear his word, and enabled her there to attend upon him without those distractions which Martha was cumbered with; but now in the day of affliction, that same temper proved a snare to her, and made her less able to grapple with her grief, and disposed her to melancholy; "but Mary sat still in the house." See here how much it will be our wisdom carefully to watch against the temptations, and improve the advantages, of our natural temper.

Here is fully related the discourse between Christ and Martha.

1. Martha's address to Christ, ver. 21, 22.

1. She complains of Christ's long absence and delay: she said it not only with grief for the death of her brother, but some resentment of the seeming unkindness of the Master, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Here is, 1st. Some evidence of faith. She believed Christ's power, that though her brother's sickness was very grievous, yet he could have cured it, and so have prevented his death; she believed his pity, that if he had but seen Lazarus in his extreme illness, and his dear relations all in tears about him, he would have had compassion, and have prevented so sad a breach, for his compassions fail not. But, 2nd. Here are sad instances of unbelief; her faith was true, but weak as a bruised reed; for she lacked the power of Christ, in saying, "if thou hadst been here;" whereas she ought to have known that Christ could cure at a distance, and his gracious operations are not limited to his bodily presence. She reflects likewise upon the wisdom and kindness of Christ, that he did not hasten to them when they sent for him, as if he had not timed his business well, and now might as good have stayed away, and not have come at all, as come too late; and as for any help now, she can scarce entertain the thought of it.

2. Yet she corrects and comforts herself with the thoughts of the prevailing interest Christ had in Heaven; however, she blames herself for blaming her Master, and for suggesting that he comes too late; for "I know that even now," as desperate as the case is, "whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." Observe, 1st. How willing her hope was; though she has not courage to ask of Jesus that he should raise him to life again, there having been no precedent as yet of any one raised to life that had been so long dead, yet, like a modest petitioner, she humbly recommends the case to the wise and compassionate consideration of the Lord Jesus. When we know not what in particular to ask or expect, let us in general refer ourselves to God—let him do as seemeth him good. *Judicii tui est, non presumptionis mea*—I leave it to thy judgment, not to my presumption.—*Aug. in loc.* When we know not what to pray for, it is our comfort that the great Intercessor knows what to ask for, and is always heard. 2nd. How weak her faith was; she should have said, Lord, thou canst do whatsoever thou wilt; but she only said, Thou canst obtain whatever thou prayest for. She had forgot that the Son has life in himself, that he wrought miracles by his own power. Yet both these considerations must be taken in for the encouragement of our faith and hope, and neither excluded; the dominion Christ has on earth, and his interest and intercession in heaven. He has in the one hand the golden sceptre; and in the other the golden censer; his power always predominant, his intercession always prevalent.

II. The comfortable word which Christ gave to Martha, in answer to her pathetic address; ver. 23, "Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again." Martha, in her complaint, looked back, reflecting with regret that Christ was not there; for then, thinks she, my brother had been now alive. We are apt, in such cases, to add to our own trouble, by fancying what might have been. If such a method had been taken, such a physician employed, my friend had not died, which is more than we know; but what good doth this do, when God's will is done, and our business is to submit to it? But Christ directs Martha, and us in her, to look forward, and to think what shall be, for that is a certainty, and yields sure comfort; "Thy brother shall rise again."

1. This was true of Lazarus in a sense peculiar to him; he was now presently to be raised; but Christ speaks of it in general as a thing to be done, not which he himself would do; so humbly did our Lord Jesus speak of what he did. He also expresseth it ambiguously, leaving her uncertain, at first, whether he would raise him presently, or not till the last day, that he might try her faith and patience.

2. It is applicable to all the saints, and their resurrection at the last day. Note, It is matter of comfort to us, when we have buried our godly friends and relations, to think that they shall rise again. As the soul at death is not lost, but gone before, so the body is not lost, but laid up. Think you hear Christ saying, Thy parent, thy child, thy yoke-fellow, shall rise again; "these dry bones shall live."

III. The faith which Martha mixed with this word, and the unbelief mixed with this faith, ver. 24.

1. She accounted it a faithful saying that "he shall rise again at the last day." Though the doctrine of the resurrection was to have its full proof from Christ's resurrection, yet, as it was already revealed, she firmly believed it, *Acts xxiv. 15*. 1st. That there shall be a last day; with which all the days of time shall be numbered and finished. 2nd. That there shall be a general resurrection at that day, when the earth and sea shall give up their dead. 3rd. There shall be a particular resurrection of each one; I know that I shall rise again, and this and the other relation that was dear to me. As bone shall return to its bone in that day, so friend to his friend.

2. Yet she seems to think this saying not so well worthy of all acceptance as really it was; "I know he shall rise again at the last day," but what are we the better for that now? As if the comforts of the resurrection to eternal life were not worth speaking of, or yielded no satisfaction sufficient to balance her affliction. See our weakness and folly, that we suffer present sensible things to make a deeper impression upon us, both of grief and joy, than those things which are the objects of faith. "I know that he shall rise again at the last day;" and is not that enough? She seems not to think it is. Thus by our discontent under present crosses, we greatly undervalue our future hopes, and put a slight upon them, as if not worth regarding.

IV. The farther instruction and encouragement which Jesus Christ gave her; for he will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed. He said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life," ver. 25, 26. Two things Christ possesseth her with the belief of, in reference to the present distress; and they are the things which our faith should fasten upon in the like cases:

1. The power of Christ, his sovereign power; "I am the resurrection and the life," the fountain of life, and the head and author of the resurrection. Martha believed that at his prayer God would give any thing, but he would have her know that by his word he could work any thing. Martha believed a resurrection at the last day; Christ tells her that he had that power lodged in his own hand, that the dead were to hear his voice, *ch. v. 25*; whence it was easy to infer, he that could raise a world of men that had been dead many ages, could doubtless raise one man that had been dead but four days. Note, It is an unspeakable comfort to all good Christians that Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life, and will be so to them. Resurrection is a return to life; Christ is the author of that return, and of that life to which it is a return. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come, and Christ is both; the author and principle of both, and the ground of our hope of both.

2. The promises of the new covenant, which give us farther ground of hope that we shall live. Observe,

1st. To whom these promises are made; to them that believe in Jesus Christ, to them that consent to, and confide in, Jesus Christ, as the only mediator of reconciliation and communion between God and man; that receive the record God has given in his Word concerning his Son, sincerely comply with it, and answer all the great intentions of it. The condition of the latter promise is thus expressed, "Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me," which may be understood either, *First*. Of natural life; whosoever lives in this world, whether he be Jew or Gentile, wherever he lives, if he believe in Christ, he shall live by him. Yet it limits the time, whoever during life, while he is here in this state of probation, believes in me, shall be happy in me; but after death it will be too late. Whoever lives and believes, that is, lives by faith, *Gal. ii. 20*, has a faith that influences his conversation. Or, *Secondly*. Of spiritual life; he that lives and believes, is he that by faith is born again to a heavenly and divine life, to whom to live is Christ, that makes Christ the life of his soul.

2nd. What the promises are; ver. 25, "though he were dead, yet shall he live;" nay, ver. 26, "he shall never die." Man consists of body and soul, and provision is made for the happiness of both. *First*. For the body here is the promise of a blessed resurrection. Though the body be dead because of sin, (there is no remedy but it will die,) yet it shall live again, "though he were dead." All the difficulties that attend the state of the dead are here overlooked, and made nothing of. Though the sentence of death was just, though the effects of death be dismal, though the bands of death be strong, though he be dead and buried, dead and putrefied,—though the scattered dust be so mixed with common dust that no art of man can distinguish, much less separate them,—put the case as strongly as you will on that side,—yet we are sure he shall live again; the body shall be raised a glorious body. *Secondly*. For the soul here is the promise of a blessed immortality. He that liveth and believeth, who being united to Christ by faith, lives spiritually by virtue of that union, he "shall never die;" that spiritual life shall never be extinguished, but perfected in eternal life. As the soul, being in its nature spiritual, is therefore immortal; so if by faith it live a spiritual life, consonant to its nature, its felicity shall be immortal too. It shall never die, shall never be otherwise but easy and happy; and there is not any intercession or interruption of its life, as there is of the life of the body. The mortality of the body shall at length be swallowed up of life; but the life of the soul, the believing soul, shall be immediately at death swallowed up of immortality. "He shall not die," *eis ton aionon*; "for ever"—*non morietur in aeternum*, so Cyprian quotes it; the body shall not be for ever dead in the grave; it dies (like the two witnesses) but for a time, times, and the dividing of time; and when time shall be no more, and all the divisions of it shall be numbered and finished, a spirit of life from God shall enter into it. But that is not all: the soul shall not die that death which is for ever, shall not die eternally. "Blessed and holy," that is, blessed and happy, is he that by faith "has part in the first resurrection," has part in Christ, who is that resurrection; for "on such the second death," which is a death for ever, "shall have no power;" see *ch. vi. 40*.

end which was approaching, the mists gathered round his spirit; precisely because he saw farther than they, he felt a perplexity from which their very dulness or carnal views exempted them (*John xiv. 5*), and was tempted by the sceptical spirit which is often born of sadness (*John xx. 24–29*). "Let us also go, that we may die with him:" i.e., with Jesus—not with Lazarus. Chrysostom (quoted in Trench) says, "He who now would hardly venture to go with Jesus as far as the neighbouring Bethany, afterwards, without him,

travelled to the ends of the world, to the furthest India, daring all the perils of remote and hostile nations."

xi. 17. "Four days:" these are to be reckoned probably from the day on which the intelligence of the illness reached our Lord. If Lazarus died on that day, then the two days' delay, and the time occupied in the journey from Perea, would make up what in Jewish reckoning would be called four days. The burial, according to Jewish custom, took place on the same day as the death (see verse 49).

Christ asks her, "Believest thou this?" Canst thou assent to it with application? Canst thou take my word for it? Note, When we have read or heard the word of Christ concerning the great things of the other world, we should seriously put it to ourselves, Do we believe this? This truth, in particular, this which is attended with so many difficulties, this which is suited to my case? Doth my belief of it realize it to me, and give my soul an assurance of it? so that I can say, not only this I believe, but thus I believe it? Martha was doing upon her brother's being raised to life in this world; before Christ gave her hopes of that, he directed her thoughts to another life, another world. 'No matter for that; but believest thou this that I tell thee concerning the future state? The crosses and comforts of this present time would not make that impression upon us that they do, if we did but believe the things of eternity as we ought.

V. Martha's unfeigned assent yielded to what Christ said, ver. 27. We have here Martha's creed; the good confession she witnessed, the same with that for which Peter was commended, *Mat. xvi. 16, 17*; and it is the conclusion of the whole matter.

1. Here is the guide of her faith, and that is, the word of Christ; without any alteration, exception, or proviso, she takes it entire, as Christ had said it; "Yea, Lord;" whereby she subscribes to the truth of all and every part of that which Christ had promised, in his own sense; even so. Faith is as an echo to Divine revelation, returns the same words, and resolves to abide by them; "Yea, Lord." As the Word did make it, so I believe and take it," said queen Elizabeth.

2. The ground of her faith, and that is, the authority of Christ; she therefore believes this, because she believes that he who saith it is Christ. She has recourse to the foundation, for the support of the superstructure; "I believe," *πιστεύω*, "I have believed," that thou art Christ, and therefore I do believe this. Observe here.

1st. What she believed and confessed concerning Jesus; three things, all to the same effect. *First*. That he was the Christ, or Messiah promised and expected, under this name and notion, the Anointed One. *Secondly*. That he was the Son of God, so the Messiah was called, *Ps. ii. 7*; not by office only, but by nature. *Thirdly*. That it was he "which should come into the world," the *ὁ ἐρχόμενος*; that blessing of blessings which the church had for so many ages waited for as future, she embraced as present.

2nd. What she inferred hence, and what she alleged this for; if she admits this, that Jesus is the Christ, there is no difficulty in believing that he is the resurrection and the life; for if he be the Christ, then, *First*. He is the fountain of light and truth; and we may take all his sayings for faithful and divine, upon his own word. If he be the Christ, he is that Prophet whom we are to hear in all things. *Secondly*. He is the fountain of life and blessedness; and we may therefore depend upon his ability as well as upon his veracity. How shall bodies turned to dust, live again? How shall souls clogged and clouded as ours are, live for ever? We could not believe this, but that we believe him that undertakes it to be the Son of God, who has life in himself, and has it for us.

11. We have here the interview between Christ and Mary, the other sister. And there observe,

1st. The notice which Martha gave her of Christ's coming; ver. 28, "when she had so said," as one that needed to say no more, "she went her way," easy in her mind, "and called Mary her sister." *First*. Martha, having received instruction and comfort from Christ himself, called her sister to share with her. Time was when Martha would have drawn Mary from Christ to come help her in much serving, *Lu. x. 40*; but to make her amends for that, here she is industrious to draw her to Christ. *Secondly*. She called her secretly, and whispered it in her ear, because there was company by, Jews, that were no friends to Christ. The saints are called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ by an invitation that is secret and distinguishing, given to them, and not to others; they have meat to eat that the world knows not of, joy that a stranger doth not intermeddle with. *Thirdly*. She called her by order from Christ, he bade her go call her sister. The call that is effectual, whoever brings it, it is Christ that sends it. "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." 1st. She calls Christ the Master, *διδάσκαλος*, "a teaching master;" by that title he was commonly called and known among them. Mr. George Herbert took pleasure in calling Christ, 'My Master.' 2nd. She triumphs in his arrival; "the Master is come," he whom we have long wished and waited for, he is come, he is come. This was the best cordial in the present distress.—Lazarus is gone, and our comfort in him gone,—but "the Master is come," who is better than the dearest friend, and has that in him which will abundantly make up all our losses. He is come, who is our teacher, who will teach us how to get good by our sorrow, *Ps. xciv. 17*; who will teach, and so comfort. 3rd. She invites her sister to go meet him; he "calls for thee," inquires what is become of thee, and would have thee sent for. Note, When Christ our Master comes, he calls for us. He comes in his word and ordinances; and calls us to them, calls us by them, calls us to himself. He calls for thee in particular, for thee by name, *Ps. xxvii. 8*; and if he call thee, he will cure thee, he will comfort thee.

2nd. The haste which Mary made to Christ upon this notice given her; ver. 29, "As soon as she heard" this good news, that the Master was come, "she arose quickly, and came to him." She little thought how near he was to her; for he is often nearer to them that mourn in Zion than they are aware of; but when she knew how near he was, she starts up, and, in a transport of joy, runs to meet him. The least intimation of Christ's gracious approaches is enough to a lively faith, which stands ready to take the hint, and answer the first call. When Christ was come, *First*. She did not consult the decorum of her mourning; but, forgetting ceremony and the common usage in such cases, she runs through the town to meet Christ. Let not nice punctilios of decency and honour deprive us at any time of opportunities of conversing with Christ. *Secondly*. She did not consult her neighbours the Jews, that were with her comforting her; she left them all to come to him; and did not only not ask their advice, but not so much as ask their leave, or beg their pardon for her rudeness.

We are told, ver. 30, where she found the Master; he was not yet come into Bethany, but was at the town's end, "in that place where Martha met him." See here, 1st. Christ's love to his work; he stayed near the place where the grave was, that he might be ready to go to it; and would not go into the town to refresh himself, after the fatigue of his journey, till he had done the work he came to do; nor would he go into the town, lest it should look like ostentation, and a design to levy a crowd to be spectators of the miracle. 2nd. Mary's love to Christ; still she loved much. Though Christ had seemed unkind in his delays, yet she can take nothing amiss from him. Let us go thus to Christ without the camp, *Heb. xiii. 13*.

3rd. The misconception which the Jews that were with Mary made of her going away so hastily, ver. 31. They said, "She goeth unto the grave to weep there!" Martha bore up better under this affliction than Mary did, who was a woman of a tender and sorrowful spirit, such was her natural temper. Those that are so, have need to watch against melancholy, and ought to be pitied and helped. Those comforters found that their formalities did her no service, but that she hardened herself in sorrow, and therefore concluded, when she went out and turned that way, it was to go to the grave, and weep there. See, *First*. What often is the folly and fault of mourners; they contrive how to aggravate

their own grief, and to make ill worse. We are apt in such cases to take a strange pleasure in our own pain, and to say we do well to be passionate in our grief, even unto death; apt to fasten upon those things that aggravate the affliction; and what good doth it do us, when it is our duty to reconcile ourselves to the will of God in it? What need mourners go to the grave to weep there, when they sorrow not as those that have no hope? Affliction of itself is grievous, why should we make it more so? *Secondly*. What is the wisdom and duty of comforters; and that is to prevent as much as may be, in those who grieve inordinately, the revival of the sorrow, and to divert it. Those Jews that followed Mary were thereby led to Christ, and became the witnesses of one of his most glorious miracles. It is good cleaving to Christ's friends, in their sorrows, for thereby we may come to know him better.

4th. Mary's address to our Lord Jesus, ver. 32; she came, attended with her train of comforters, and "fell down at his feet," as one overwhelmed with a passionate sorrow, and said, with many tears, (as appears, ver. 33), "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;" as Martha said before, for they had often said it to one another. Now here,

First. Her posture is very humble and submissive, "she fell down at his feet;" which was more than Martha did, who had a greater command of her passions. She fell down as a sinking mourner, but fell down at his feet, as a humble petitioner. This Mary had sat at Christ's feet to hear his word, *Lu. x. 39*; and here we find her there on another errand. Note, Those that in a day of peace set themselves at Christ's feet, to receive instructions from him, may with comfort and confidence in a day of trouble cast themselves at his feet with hope to find favour with him. She fell at his feet, as one submitting to his will in what was done, and referring herself to his good will in what was now to be done. When we are in affliction, we must cast ourselves at Christ's feet in a penitent sorrow and self-abasement for sin, and a patient resignation of ourselves to the Divine conduct. Mary's casting herself at Christ's feet was in token of the profound respect and veneration she had for him. Thus they were wont to give honour to their kings and princes; but our Lord Jesus, not appearing in secular glory as an earthly prince, they who by this posture of adoration gave honour to him, certainly looked upon him as more than a man, and intended hereby to give him Divine honour. Mary hereby made profession of the Christian faith as truly as Martha did, and in effect said, "I believe that thou art the Christ;" bowing the knee to Christ, and confessing him with the tongue, are put together as equivalent, *Rom. xiv. 11*; *Phil. ii. 11*. This she did in presence of the Jews that attended her, who though friends to her and her family, yet were bitter enemies to Christ; yet, in their sight she fell at Christ's feet, as one that was neither ashamed to own the veneration she had for Christ, nor afraid of disoblighing her friends and neighbours by it. Let them resent it as they pleased, she falls at his feet; and if this be to be vile, will be yet more vile; see *Cam. viii. 1*. We serve a Master, whom we have no reason to be ashamed of, and whose acceptance of our services is sufficient to balance the reproach of men, and all their revilings.

Secondly. Her address is very pathetic; "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Christ's delay was designed for the best, and proved so; yet both the sisters very indecently cast the same in his teeth, and in effect charge him with the death of their brother. This repeated challenge he might justly have resented, might have told them he had something else to do, than to be at their beck, and to attend them; he must come when his business would permit him. But not a word of this; he considered the circumstances of their affliction, and that losers think they may have leave to speak, and therefore overlooked the rudeness of this welcome; and gave us an example of mildness and meekness in such cases. Mary added no more, as Martha did; but it appears, by what follows, that what she fell short in words, she made up in tears; she said less than Martha, but wept more; and tears of devout affection have a voice, a loud prevailing voice, in the ears of Christ: no rhetoric like that.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, 34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. 35 Jesus wept. 36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! 37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of



SEPULCHREAL CAVE, WITH STONE AT ENTRANCE.

the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? 38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a

xi. 19. "Many of the Jews:" an expression which seems to imply persons belonging to the upper and ruling classes; hence an inference confirming the conjecture that Martha and Mary belonged to the more wealthy classes. "To comfort them:" it was part of the Jewish ceremonial of grief, which was most accurately defined, that there should be numerous visits of condolence. The days of mourning were to be thirty—of these the three first were to be days of weeping; the seven next, days of lamentation;

and the remainder, till the thirtieth, more generally of mourning" (*Trench*).

xi. 20. "Mary sat (or was sitting) in the house:" it has been remarked (comparing this passage with *Luke x. 38, 39*) that these undesigned touches not only charmingly illustrate the minute historic fidelity of both narratives, but their inner harmony.

xi. 22. The word here rendered "ask" is one never used by our Lord to express his own asking of the Father. The word used by

stone lay upon it. 39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. 40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? 41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. 43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.



GRAVECLOTHES.

Here we have,

First, Christ's tender sympathy with his afflicted friends, and the share he took to himself in their sorrows, which appeared three ways.

1. By the inward groans and troubles of his spirit; ver. 33, "Jesus saw Mary weeping," for the loss of a loving brother, "and the Jews that came with her weeping," for the loss of a good neighbour and friend; when he saw what a Bochim, "a place of weepers," this was, "he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." See here, 1st. The griefs of the sons of men represented in the tears of Mary and her friends. What an emblem was here of this world—this vale of tears! Nature itself teacheth us to weep over our dear relations, when they are removed by death. Providence thereby calls to weeping and mourning. It is likely Lazarus' estate devolved upon his sisters, and was a considerable addition to their fortunes; and in such a case, people say, now-a-days, though they cannot wish their relations dead, (that is, they do not say they do,) yet if they were dead they would not wish them alive again; but these sisters, whatever they got by their brother's death, heartily wished him alive again. Religion teacheth us likewise to weep with them that weep, as these Jews here with Mary, considering that we ourselves also are in the body. They that truly love their friends will share with them in their joys and griefs; for what is friendship but a communication of affections? Job xvi. 5. 2nd. The grace of the Son of God, and his compassion towards those that are in misery. In all their afflictions he is afflicted, Isa. lxiii. 9; Jud. x. 16. When Christ saw them all in tears, First, "He groaned in the spirit;" he suffered himself to be tempted, (as we are when we are disturbed by some great affliction,) "yet without sin." This was an expression either, 1st. Of his displeasure at the inordinate grief of those about him, as Mar. v. 39, "Why make ye this ado, and weep?" What a hurry is here! Doth this become those that believe in a God, a heaven, and another world? Or, 2nd. Of his resentment of the calamitous state of human life, and the power of death, which fallen man is subject to. Being now to make a vigorous attack upon death and the grave, he thus stirred up himself to the encounter, put on the garments of vengeance, and his fury it upheld him; and that he might the more resolutely undertake the redress of our grievances, and the cure of our griefs, he was pleased to make himself sensible of the weight of them, and under the burthen of them he now groaned in spirit. Or, 3rd. It was an expression of his kind sympathy with his friends that were in sorrow. Here was the sounding of the bowels, and the mercies which the afflicted church so earnestly solicits for, Isa. lxiii. 15. Christ not only seemed concerned, but he "groaned in the spirit;" he was inwardly and sincerely affected with the case. David's pretended friends counterfeited sympathy to disguise their enmity, Ps. xli. 6; but we must learn of Christ to have our love and sympathy without dissimulation; Christ's was a deep and hearty sigh. Secondly, He "was troubled;" he troubled himself, so the phrase is, very significantly. He had all the passions and affections of the human nature, for in all things he must be like to his brethren; but he had a perfect command of them, so that they were never up but when and as they were called; he was never troubled but when he troubled himself, as he saw cause; he often composed himself to trouble, but was never discomposed or disordered by it; he was voluntary both in his passion and in his compassion; he had power to lay down his grief, and power to take it again.

2. His concern for them appeared by his kind inquiry after the poor remains of his deceased friend; ver. 34, "Where have ye laid him?" He knew where he was laid, and yet asks, because, 1st. He would thus express himself as a man, even then when he was going to exert the power of a God. Being found in fashion as a man, he accommodates himself to the way and manner of the sons of men. Non nescit, sed quasi nescit.—"He is not ignorant, but he makes as if he were," saith Austin here. 2nd. He inquired where the grave was, lest,

if he had gone straight to it of his own knowledge, the unbelieving Jews should thence have taken occasion to suspect a collusion between him and Lazarus, and a trick in the case. Many expositors observe this from Chrysostom. 3rd. He would thus divert the grief of his mourning friends by raising their expectations to something great, as if he had said, "I did not come here with an address of condolence, to mingle a few fruitless, insignificant tears with yours; no, I have other work to do; come, let us adjourn to the grave, and go about our business there." Note, A serious address to our work is the best remedy against inordinate grief. 4th. He would thereby intimate to us the special care he takes of the bodies of the saints while they lie in the grave; he takes notice where they are laid, and will look after them; there is not only a covenant with the dust, but a guard upon it.

3. It appeared by his tears. Those about him did not tell him where the body was buried, but desired him to "come and see," and led him directly to the grave, that his eye might yet more affect his heart with the calamity. As he was going to the grave, as if he had been following the corpse thither, "Jesus wept," ver. 35; a very short verse, but affords many useful instructions. 1st. That Jesus Christ was really and truly man, and partook with the children, not only of flesh and blood, but of a human soul, susceptible of the impressions of joy and grief, and other affections. Christ gave this proof of his humanity in both senses of the word; that, as a man, he could weep, and as a merciful man, he would weep, before he gave this proof of his divinity. 2nd. That he was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," as was foretold, Isa. lili. 3. We never read that he laughed, but more than once we have him in tears; thus he shews not only that a mournful state will consist with the love of God, but that they who sow to the Spirit must sow in tears. 3rd. Tears of compassion will become Christians, and make them most to resemble Christ. It is a relief to those who are in sorrow to have their friends sympathize with them, especially such a friend as the Lord Jesus. Different constructions were put upon Christ's weeping.

First. Some made a kind and candid interpretation of it, and what was very natural; ver. 35, "Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!" They seem to admire he should have so strong an affection for one whom he was not related to, and whom he had not any long acquaintance with; for Christ spent most of his time in Galilee, a great way from Lazarus. It becomes us, according to this example of Christ, to shew our love to our friends both living and dying; we must sorrow for our brethren that sleep in Jesus as those that are full of love, though not void of hope, as the devout men that buried Stephen, Acts viii. 2. Though our tears profit not the dead, they embalm their memory. These tears were indications of his particular love to Lazarus; but he has given proofs no less evident of his love to all the saints, in that he died for them. When he only dropped a tear over Lazarus they said, See how he loved him! Much more reason have we to say so, for whom he hath laid down his life. See how he loved us! "Greater love has no man than this."

Secondly. Others made a peevish, unfair reflection upon it, as if these tears spoke his inability to help his friend; ver. 37, "Could not this man, that opened the eyes of the blind, have prevented the death of Lazarus?" Here it is slyly insinuated, 1st. That the death of Lazarus being, as it seemed by his tears, a great grief to him, if he could have prevented it he would; and therefore, because he did not, they are inclined to think he could not; as when he was dying they concluded he could not, because he did not, save himself, and come down from the cross; not considering that Divine power is always directed in its operations by Divine wisdom; not merely according to his will, but according to the counsel of his will, wherein it becomes us to acquiesce. If Christ's friends whom he loves die,—if his church whom he loves be persecuted and afflicted,—we must not impute it to any defect either in his power or love, but conclude it is because he sees it for the best. 2nd. That therefore it might justly be questioned whether he did indeed open the eyes of the blind; that is, whether it was not a sham. His not working this miracle they thought enough to invalidate the former; at least, it should seem he had a limited power, and therefore not a Divine one. Christ soon convinced these whisperers, by raising Lazarus from the dead,—which was the greater work,—that he could have prevented his death; but therefore did not, because he would glorify himself the more.

Secondly. Christ's approach to the grave, and the preparation that was made for working this miracle.

1. Christ repeats his groans upon his coming near the grave; ver. 38, "again groaning in himself," he "cometh to the grave." He groaned, 1st. Being displeased at the unbelief of those who spoke doubtfully of his power, and blamed him for not preventing the death of Lazarus; he was "grieved for the hardness of their hearts." He never groaned so much for his own pains and sufferings as for the sins and follies of men, particularly Jerusalem's, Mat. xxiii. 37. 2nd. Being affected with the fresh lamentations which it is likely the mourning sisters made when they came near the grave, more passionately and pathetically than before, his tender spirit was sensibly touched with their wailings. 3rd. Some think he groaned in spirit because, to gratify the desires of his friends, he was to bring Lazarus again into this sinful, troublesome world, from that rest into which he was newly entered; it would be a kindness to Martha and Mary, but it would be to him like thrusting one out to a stormy sea again that was newly got into a safe and quiet harbour. If Lazarus had been let alone, Christ would quickly have gone to him into the other world; but being restored to life, Christ quickly left him behind in this world. 4th. Christ groaned as one that would affect himself with the calamitous state of the human nature—as subject to death, from which he was now about to redeem Lazarus. Thus he stirred up himself to take hold on God in the prayer he was to make, that he might offer it up "with strong crying," Heb. v. 7. Ministers, when they are sent by the preaching of the Gospel to raise dead souls, should be much affected with the deplorable condition of those they preach to, and pray for, and groan in themselves to think of it.

2. The grave is here described, wherein Lazarus lay; "it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it." The graves of the common people probably were dugged, as ours are; but persons of distinction were, as with us, interred in vaults; so Lazarus was; and such was the sepulchre in which Christ was buried. Probably this fashion was kept up among the Jews in imitation of the patriarchs, who buried their dead in the cave of Machpelah, Gen. xxiii. 19. This care taken of the dead bodies of their friends intimates their expectation of their resurrection: they reckoned the solemnity of the funeral ended when the stone was rolled to the grave; or, as here, laid upon it, like that upon the mouth of the den into which Daniel was cast, Dan. vi. 17; that the purpose might not be changed; intimating that the dead are separated from the living, and gone the "way whence they shall not return." This stone was probably a gravestone, with an inscription upon it, which the Greeks called *μνημειον*,—"a memorandum," because it is both a memorial of the dead and a memento to the living, putting them in remembrance of that which we are all concerned to remember. It is called by the Latins, *monumentum*, a *monendo*, because it gives "warning."

3. Orders are given to remove the stone; ver. 39, "Take ye away the stone." He would have this stone removed, that all the standers-by might see the body lie dead in the sepulchre, and that way might be made for its coming out, and

Christ has a certain familiarity, and even authority, which this used by Martha has not. She thinks of him as obtaining by prayer that which indeed he has by the oneness of his nature with God.

xi. 33. "Groaned in the spirit;" Alford translates, "was greatly moved in spirit." The word rendered "groaned" expresses rather feelings of indignation and displeasure than grief. Different explanations of this indignation have been given. Some thought it betokened the strong effort to subdue rising tears and pity; some

interpreted it of indignation at the hostile spirit of the Jews; others saw in it displeasure at the unbelief of Martha and Mary. Trench's view seems much to be preferred. He takes it to be the token of the "indignation which the Lord of life felt at all which sin had wrought. He beheld death in all its fearfulness, as the wages of sin; the woes of a whole world, of which this was but a sample, rose up before his eyes; all its mourners and all its graves were present to him."

It might appear to be a true body, and not a ghost or spectre. He would have some of the servants to remove it, that they might be witnesses, by the smell of the putrefaction of the body, and that therefore it was truly dead. It is a good step towards the raising of a soul to spiritual life, when the stone is taken away, when prejudices are removed and got over, and way made for the word to the heart, that it may do its work there, and say what it has to say.

4. An objection made by Martha against the opening of the grave: "Lord, by this time he stinketh," or is become noisome, "for he hath been dead four days." *τετραήμερος γὰρ ἔστιν, —quadriduarius est*,—he 'is four days old' in the other world; a citizen and inhabitant of the grave of four days' standing. Probably Martha perceived the body to smell as they were removing the stone, and therefore cried out thus.

1st. It is easy from hence to observe the nature of human bodies. Four days is but a little while, yet what a great change will that make with the body of a man, if it be but so long without food, much more if so long without life! Dead bodies, saith Dr. Hammond, after a revolution of the humours, which is completed in seventy-two hours, naturally tend to putrefaction; and the Jews say that by the fourth day after death the body is so altered that one cannot be sure it is such a person; so Maimonides, in *Lightfoot*; therefore Christ rose the third day, because he was not to see corruption.

2nd. It is not so easy to say what was Martha's design in saying this. *First*. Some think she said it in a due tenderness, and such as decency teaches to the dead body; now it began to putrefy she did not care it should be thus publicly shewn and made a spectacle of. *Secondly*. Others think she said it out of a concern for Christ, lest the smell of the dead body should be offensive to him. That which is very noisome is compared to an open sepulchre, *Ps. v. 9*. If there were any thing noisome she would not have her Master near it; but he was none of those tender and delicate ones that cannot bear an ill smell; if he had, he would not have visited the world of mankind, which sin had made a perfect dunghill, altogether stinking, *Ps. xiv. 3*. *Thirdly*. It should seem, by Christ's answer, that it was the language of her unbelief and distrust: "Lord, it is too late now to attempt any kindness to him; his body begins to rot, and it is impossible this putrid carcase should live." She gives up his case as helpless and hopeless, there having been no instances, either of late or formerly, of any raised to life after they had begun to see corruption. When our bones are dried we are ready to say, "Our hope is lost;" yet this distrustful word of hers served to make the miracle both the more evident and the more illustrious: by this it appeared he was truly dead, and not in a trance; for though the posture of a dead body might be counterfeited, the smell could not. Her suggesting that it could not be done, puts the more honour upon Him that did it.

5. The gentle reproof Christ gave to Martha for the weakness of her faith; *ver. 40*. "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" This word of His to her was not before recorded; it is probable he said it to her when she had said, *ver. 27*, "Lord, I believe;" and it is enough that it is recorded here, where it is repeated. Note, 1st. Our Lord Jesus has given us all the assurances imaginable that a sincere faith shall at length be crowned with a blessed vision. If thou believe, thou shalt see God's glorious appearances for thee in this world, and to thee in the other world. If we will take Christ's word, and rely on his power and faithfulness, we shall see the glory of God, and be happy in the sight. 2nd. We have need to be often minded of these sure mercies with which our Lord Jesus hath encouraged us. Christ doth not give a direct answer to what Martha had said, nor any particular promise of what he would do, but orders her to keep hold of the general assurances he had already given,—only believe. We are apt to forget what Christ hath spoken, and need him to put us in mind of it by his Spirit: "Said I not unto thee so and so?" And dost thou think he will ever unsay it.

6. The opening of the grave, in obedience to Christ's order, notwithstanding Martha's objection; *ver. 41*, "then they took away the stone;" then, when Martha was satisfied, and had waived her objection, then they proceeded. If we will see the glory of God, we must let Christ take his own way, and not prescribe, but subscribe to him. "They took away the stone," and that was all they could do; Christ only could give life. What man can do is but "to prepare the way of the Lord," to fill the valleys, and level the hills, and, as here, to take away the stone.

Thirdly. The miracle itself wrought. The spectators, invited by the rolling away of the stone, gathered about the grave, not to commit 'dust to dust, earth to earth,' but to receive dust from the dust, and earth from the earth again; and their expectations being raised, our Lord Jesus addresses himself to his work.

1. He applies himself to his living Father in heaven; so he had called him, *ch. vi. 57*, and so eyes him now.

1st. The gesture he used was very significant; "he lifted up his eyes," an outward expression of the elevation of his mind, and to shew them who stood by from whence he derived his power, and to set us an example. This outward sign is hereby recommended to our practice, see *ch. xvii. 1*; look how they will answer it who profanely ridicule it. But that which is especially charged upon us hereby is to lift up our hearts to God in the heavens. What is prayer, but the ascent of the soul to God, and the directing of its affections and motions heavenwards. He lift up his eyes, as looking above, and looking beyond the grave where Lazarus lay, and overlooking all the difficulties that arose from thence, that he might have his eyes fixed upon the Divine omnipotence; to teach us to do as Abraham, who "considered not his own body now dead, nor the deadness of Sarah's womb," never took those into his thoughts, and so gained such a degree of faith as not to stagger at the promise, *Rom. iv. 20*.

2nd. His address to God was with great assurance, and such a confidence as became him: "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." He hath here taught us by his own example, *First*. In prayer to call God Father, and to draw nigh to him as children to a father, with a humble reverence, and yet with a holy boldness. *Secondly*. In our prayers to praise him: and when we come to beg for farther mercy, thankfully to acknowledge former favours. Thanksgivings that speak God's glory, (not our own, like the Pharisee's "God, I thank thee,") are decent forms into which to put our supplications.

But our Saviour's thanksgiving here was intended to express the unshaken assurance he had of the effecting of this miracle, which he had in his own power to do, in concurrence with his Father. "Father, I thank thee" that my will and thine are in this matter, as always, the same. Elijah and Elisha raised the dead, as servants, by intreaty; but Christ, as a Son, by authority, having 'life in himself, and power to quicken whom he would; and he speaks of it as his own act, *ver. 11*: "I go, that I may awake him;" yet he speaks of it as what he had obtained by prayer, for his Father heard him. Probably he put up the prayer for it when he groaned in spirit, once and again, *ver. 33–38*, in a mental prayer, with groanings which could not be uttered. Now Christ speaks of this miracle as an answer to prayer: 1st. Because he would thus humble himself; though he were a Son, yet learned he this obedience, to ask and receive. His mediatorial crown was granted him upon request, though it is of right, *Ps. ii. 8*; and *ch. xvii. 5*, he prays for the glory he had before the world, though, having never forfeited it, he might have demanded it. 2nd. Because he was pleased

thus to honour prayer, making it the key wherewith even he unlocked the treasures of Divine power and grace. Thus he would teach us in prayer, by the lively exercise of faith, to enter into the holiest.

Now, Christ being assured his prayer was answered, (1.) He professeth his thankful acceptance of this answer, "I thank thee that thou hast heard me." Though the miracle was not yet wrought, yet the prayer was answered, and he triumphs before the victory. No other can pretend to such an assurance as Christ had; yet we may, by faith in the promise, have a prospect of mercy before it be actually given in, and may rejoice in that prospect, and give God thanks for it. In David's devotions, the same psalm which begins with prayer for mercy closes with thanksgivings for it. Note, (1st.) Mercies in answer to prayer ought in a special manner to be acknowledged with thankfulness. Besides the grant of the mercy itself, we are to value it as a great favour to have our poor prayers taken notice of. (2nd.) We ought to meet the first appearances of the return of prayer with early thanksgivings. As God answers us with mercy, even before we call, and hears while we are yet speaking, so we should answer him with praise, even before he grants, and give him thanks while he is yet speaking good words, and comfortable words. (2.) He professeth his cheerful assurance of a ready answer at any time; *ver. 47*, "and I know that thou hearest me always." Let none think that this was some uncommon favour granted him now, such as he never had before, nor should ever have again; no, he had the same Divine power going along with him in his whole undertaking, and undertook nothing but what he knew to be agreeable to the counsel of God's will. I give thanks, saith he, for being heard in this, because I am sure to be heard in every thing. See here, (1st.) The mighty interest our Lord Jesus had in Heaven: the Father heard him always; he had access to the Father upon every occasion, and success with him in every errand; and we may be sure his interest is not the less for his going to heaven, which may encourage us to depend upon his intercession, and put all our petitions into his hand, for we are sure that him the Father hears always. (2nd.) The confidence he had of that interest: "I knew" it. He did not in the least hesitate or doubt concerning it, but had an entire satisfaction in his own mind of the Father's complacency in him, and concurrence with him in every thing. We cannot have such a particular assurance as he had; but this we know, "that whatsoever we ask according to his will, he heareth us," *1 Jno. v. 14, 15*.

But why should Christ give this public intimation of his obtaining this miracle by prayer? He adds, it is "because of the people which stand by, that they may believe that thou hast sent me;" for prayer may preach. 1. It was to obviate the objections of his enemies and their reflections. It was blasphemously suggested by the Pharisees, and their creatures, that he wrought his miracles by compact with the devil; now, to evidence the contrary, he openly made his address to God, using prayers, and not charms, not peeping and muttering as they did that used familiar spirits, *Isa. viii. 19*; but with elevated eyes and voice professing his communication with Heaven, and dependence on Heaven. 2. It was to corroborate the faith of those that were well inclined to him, "that they may believe that thou hast sent me, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Moses, to shew that God sent him, made the earth open and swallow men up, *Num. xvi. 10*; Elijah, to shew that God sent him, made fire come from heaven and devour men; for the law was a dispensation of terror and death; but Christ proves his mission by raising to life one that was dead. Some give this sense; had Christ declared his doing it freely by his own power, some of his weak disciples, who as yet understood not his Divine nature, would have thought he took too much upon him, and have been stumbled at it; these babes could not bear that strong meat; therefore he chooses to speak of his power as received and derived; he speaks self-denyingly of himself, that he might speak the more plainly to us; *non ita respexit ad suam dignitatem atque ad nostram salutem*.—In what he said, he consulted not so much his dignity as our salvation.—*—ansen.*

3. He now applies himself to his dead friend in the earth: "He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth." He could have raised Lazarus by a silent exerting of his power and will, and the indiscernible operations of the Spirit of life; but he did it by a call, a loud call. 1st. To be significant of the power then put forth for the raising of Lazarus; how he created this new thing; "he spake, and it was done." He cried aloud, to signify the greatness of the work, and of the power employed in it, and to excite himself as it were to this attack upon the gates of death, as soldiers engage with a shout. Speaking to Lazarus, it was proper to cry with a loud voice; for, *First*. The soul of Lazarus, which was to be called back, was at a distance; not hovering about the grave, as the Jews fancied, but removed to Hades, the world of spirits: now it is natural to speak as loud when we call to those at a distance. *Secondly*. The body of Lazarus, which was to be called up, was asleep; and we use to speak loud when we would awake any out of sleep. He cried with a loud voice, that the scripture might be fulfilled, *Isa. xiv. 19*: "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth." 2nd. To be typical of other works of wonder, and particularly other resurrections, which the power of Christ was to effect. This loud call was a figure, *First*. Of the gospel call, by which dead souls were to be brought out of the grave of sin; which resurrection Christ had formerly spoken of, *ch. v. 25*; and of his word as the means of it, *ch. vi. 63*; and now he gives a specimen of it. By his word, he saith to souls, Live, yea, he saith to them, Live, *Eze. xvi. 6*; "Arise from the dead" *Eph. v. 14*. The Spirit of life from God entered into those that had been dead and dry bones, when Ezekiel prophesied over them, *Eze. xxxvii. 10*. They who infer, from the commands of the Word to turn and live, that man has a power of his own to convert and regenerate himself, might as well infer from this call to Lazarus, that he had a power to raise himself to life. *Secondly*. Of the sound of the archangel's trumpet at the last day, with which they that sleep in the dust shall be awakened, and summoned before the great tribunal, when Christ shall descend with a shout to call, or command, like this here, "Come forth." See *Ps. l. 4*, "He shall call both 'to the heavens' for their souls, 'and to the earth' for their bodies, 'that he may judge his people'."

This loud call here was but short, yet mighty through God to the battering down of the strongholds of the grave. 1st. He calls him by name, "Lazarus," as we call those by their names whom we would awake out of a fast sleep. God said to Moses, as a mark of his favour, "I know thee by name." The naming of him intimates that the same individual person that died shall rise again at the last day. He that calls the stars by their names, can distinguish by name his stars that are in the dust of the earth, and will lose none of them. 2nd. He calls him out of the grave, speaking to him as if he were already alive, and had nothing to do but to come out of his grave. He doth not say unto him, Live, for he himself must give life; but he saith to him, Move; for when by the grace of Christ we live spiritually, we must stir up ourselves to move; the grave of sin and this world is no place for those whom Christ has quickened, and therefore they must come forth. 3rd. The event was according to the intention, "he that was dead came forth," *ver. 44*. Power went along with the word of Christ to reunite the soul and body of Lazarus, and then he came forth. The miracle is described, not by its invisible springs, to satisfy our curiosity, but its visible effects, to confirm our faith. Do any ask where the soul of Lazarus was during the four days of its separation? We are not told, but have reason to think it was in paradise—in joy and felicity. But you will say

xi. 35. "Jesus wept:" perhaps it would have been more accurately rendered, "shed tears." Thus the distinction between the word used in verse 33 of the weeping of others and that used here of the weeping of Christ is preserved.

xi. 36, 37. The view concerning the language of verse 37 adopted in the Commentary receives confirmation from the original; for verse 37 should read "but some," not "and some," as in our version.

xi. 38. "A stone lay upon it:" Alford has "against it." The

purpose of the stone was mainly to prevent the entrance of beasts of prey, and especially the numerous jackals.

xi. 48. "Our place:" i.e., probably the Temple, round which all their hopes gathered, and which would naturally be uppermost in the minds of the Sanhedrim.

xi. 49. "Ye know nothing at all:" probably many half measures had been proposed for arresting the growing inclination of the people to recognise Jesus as the Christ. These had proved inade-

It not then really an unkindness to it, to return it into the prison of the body? And if it were, yet, being for the honour of Christ, and the serving of the interests of his kingdom, it was no more an injury to him than it was to St. Paul to continue in the flesh when he knew that to depart to Christ was so much better. If any ask whether Lazarus, after he was raised, could give any account or description of his soul's removal out of the body, or return to it, or what he saw in the other world, I suppose both those changes were so unaccountable to himself, that he must say with Paul, "whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell;" and of what he saw and heard, that it was not lawful or possible to express it. In a world of sense we cannot frame to ourselves, much less communicate to others, any adequate ideas of the world of spirits, and the affairs of that world. Let us not covet to be wise above what is written; and this is all that is written concerning the resurrection of Lazarus, that "he that was dead came forth." And some have observed that though we read of many that were raised from the dead, who no doubt conversed familiarly with men afterwards, yet the Scripture has not recorded one word spoken by any of them, except by our Lord Jesus only.

This miracle was wrought, 1. Speedily: nothing intervenes between the command, "Come forth," and the effect, "he came forth;" *dictum factum*,—"no sooner said than done." Let there be life, and there was life. Thus the change in the resurrection will be "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," 1 Cor. xv. 52. The Almighty power, that can do it, can do it in an instant: "Then shalt thou call, and I will answer," will come at the call, as Lazarus, Here am I. 2. Perfectly: he was so thoroughly revived, that he got up out of his grave as strongly as ever he got up out of his bed; and returned not only to life, but health. He was not raised to serve a present turn, but to live as other men; with this additional miracle, as some reckon it, that he came out of his grave, though he was fettered with his graveclothes, with which he was "bound hand and foot, and his face bound about with a napkin;" for so the manner of the Jews was to bury; and he came forth in the same dress wherein he was buried, that it might appear it was he himself, and not another, and that he was not only alive, but strong, and able to walk, after a sort, even in his graveclothes. The binding of his face with a napkin proved that he had been really dead; for otherwise, in less than so many days' time, that would have smothered him. And the standers-by in unbinding him, would handle him, and see him, that it was he himself, and so be witnesses of the miracle.

Now see here, 1st. How little we carry away with us when we leave the world, only a winding sheet and a coffin; there is no change of raiment in the grave, nothing but a single suit of graveclothes. 2nd. What condition we shall be in in the grave. What wisdom or device can there be, where the eyes are hoodwinked, or what working, where the hands and feet are fettered? and so it will be in the grave, whither we are going. Lazarus being come forth, hampered and embarrassed with his graveclothes, we may well imagine that those about the grave were exceedingly surprised and frightened at it; we would be so, if we should see a dead body rise; but Christ, to make the thing familiar, sets them to work: Loose him; slacken his graveclothes, that they may serve for day clothes till he comes to his house; and then he will go himself, so clad, without guide or supporter to his own house. As in the Old Testament, the translations of Enoch and Elias were sensible demonstrations of an invisible and future state, the one about the middle of the patriarchal age, the other of the Mosaic economy, so the resurrection of Lazarus was, in the New Testament, designed for the confirmation of the doctrine of the resurrection.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. 46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. 47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. 48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. 49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. 53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. 54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples. 55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. 56 Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they

stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? 57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.

We have here an account of the consequences of this glorious miracle, which were as usual; to some it was a savour of life unto life, to others of death unto death.

First. Some were invited by it, and induced to believe; "many of the Jews" when they saw "the things that Jesus did, believed on him;" and well they might, for it was an incontestable proof of his Divine mission. They had often heard of his miracles, and yet evaded the conviction of them, by calling in question the matter of fact; but now they had themselves seen this done, their unbelief was conquered, and they yielded at last. But "blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." The more we see of Christ, the more cause we shall see to love him and confide in him; these were some of those Jews that came to Mary to comfort her. When we are doing good offices to others, we put ourselves in the way of receiving favours from God, and have opportunities of getting good when we are doing good.

Secondly. Others were irritated by it, and hardened in their unbelief.

1. The informers were so, ver. 46: "Some of them," who were eye-witnesses of the miracle, were so far from being convinced, that they "went to the Pharisees," whom they knew to be his implacable enemies, "and told them what things Jesus had done;" not merely as a matter of news worthy their notice, much less as an inducement to them to think more favourably of Christ, but with a spiteful design to excite those who needed no spur the more vigorously to persecute him. Here is a strange instance, 1st. Of a most obstinate infidelity, refusing to yield to the most powerful means of conviction; and it is hard to imagine how they could evade the force of this evidence, but that the god of this world had blinded their minds. 2nd. Of a most inveterate enmity. If they would not be satisfied that he was to be believed in as the Christ, yet one would think they should have been mollified, and persuaded not to persecute him; but, if the water be not sufficient to quench the fire, it will inflame it. They told what Jesus had done, and told no more but what was true; but their malice gave a tincture of diabolism to their information, equal to that of lying; perverting what is true is as bad as forging what is false. Doeg is called a false, lying, and deceitful tongue, (Ps. cxx. 2, 3; lii. 2-4) though what he said was true.

2. The judges, the leaders, the blind leaders of the people, were no less exasperated by the report made to them; and here we are told what they did.

1st. A special council is called and held, ver. 47: "Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council," as was foretold, Ps. ii. 3: "the rulers take counsel together against the Lord." Consults of the Sanhedrim were intended for the public good; but here, under colour of that, the greatest injury and mischief is done to the people. The things that belong to the nation's peace were hid from the eyes of those that were intrusted with its counsels. This council was called, not only for joint advice, but for mutual irritation; that as iron sharpens iron, and as coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire, so they might exasperate and inflame one another with enmity and rage against Christ and his doctrine.

2nd. The case is proposed, and shewed to be weighty and of mighty consequence.

First. The matter to be debated was what course they should take with this Jesus, to stop the growth of his interest; they said, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles." The information given about the raising of Lazarus was produced, and the men, brethren, and fathers are called in to help, as solicitously as if a formidable enemy had been with an army in the bowels of their country. 1st. They own the truth of Christ's miracles, and that he had wrought many of them; they are therefore witnesses against themselves, for they acknowledged his credentials, and yet denied his commission. 2nd. They consider what was to be done, and chide themselves that they had not done something sooner effectually to crush him. They do not take it at all into their consideration whether they should not receive him, and own him as the Messiah, though they professed to expect him, and Jesus gave pregnant proofs of his being so; but they take it for granted he is an enemy, and as such is to be run down. "What do we?" Have we no care to support our church? Is it nothing to us that a doctrine so destructive to our interest spreads thus? Shall we tamely yield up the ground we have got in the affections of the people? Shall we see our authority brought into contempt, and the craft by which we get our living ruined, and not bestir ourselves? What have we been doing all this while? And what are we now thinking of? Shall we be always talking, and bring nothing to pass?

Secondly. That which made this matter weighty was the peril they apprehended their church and nation to be in from the Romans, ver. 48. If we do not silence him, and take him off, "all men will believe on him," and, this being the setting up of a new king, the Romans will take umbrage at it, and will come with an army, "and take away our place and nation," and therefore it is no time to trifle. See what an opinion they have, 1st. Of their own power. They speak as if they thought Christ's progress and success in his work depended upon their connivance, as if he could not go on to work miracles, and make disciples, unless they let him alone; as if it were in their power to conquer Him who had conquered death; or as if they could fight against God and prosper. But He that sits in heaven laughs at the fond conceit which impotent malice has of its own omnipotence. 2nd. Of their own politics. They fancy themselves to be men of mighty insight, and foresight, and great sagacity in their moral prognostications. 1. They take on them to prophesy that, in a little time, if he have liberty to go on, "all men will believe on him;" hereby owning, when it was to serve their purpose, that his doctrine and miracles had a very convincing power in them, such as could not be resisted, but that all men would become his proselytes and votaries. Thus do they now make his interest formidable, though, to serve another turn, these same men strove to make it contemptible, ch. vii. 48: "Have any of the rulers believed on him?" This was the thing they were afraid of, that men would believe on him, and then all their measures were broke. Note, The success of the Gospel is the dread of its adversaries; if souls be saved they are undone. 2. They foretel that if the generality of the nation be drawn after him, the rage of the Romans will be drawn upon them; "they will come and take away our place;" the country in general, especially Jerusalem; or the temple, the holy place, and their place—their darling, their idol; or, their preferments in the temple, their places of power and trust.

Now it was true that the Romans had a very jealous eye upon them, and knew they wanted nothing but power and opportunity to shake off their yoke. It was likewise true, that if the Romans should pour an army in upon them, it would be very hard for them to make any head against it; yet here

quate. In the words of Caiaphas "we hear the voice of the bold, bad man, silencing by ill-suppressed contempt his weak and vacillating colleagues, who could see the common danger, and yet shrunk, though from no righteous principle, from applying the effectual remedy."

xi. 53, 54. It was determined to put Christ to death; the only question now was as to the way this might be done. Christ's hour was not yet come; hence he withdrew. "Ephraim:" a city in the

neighbourhood of the desert country lying northward of Jerusalem, and between that city and Jericho. Here our Lord remained till the approach of the Passover should bring him back to the city, to supply at length the true Paschal Lamb, at which all that went before had pointed.

xi. 56. "That he will not come;" these words seem to imply an expectation that he rather would come. Verse 57 accounts for the prevalence of the conjectures whether he would come in spite of the

appeared a cowardice, which one would not have found in the priests of the Lord, if they had not by their wickedness forfeited their interest in God, and all good men. Had they kept their integrity, they needed not have feared the Romans. But they speak like a dispirited people; as the men of Judah, when they basely said to Samson, "Knowest thou not that the Philistines rule over us?" *Jud. xv. 11*. When men lose their piety they lose their courage. But,

1. It was false that there was any danger of the Romans being irritated against their nation by the progress of Christ's Gospel, for it was no way hurtful to kings and provinces, but highly beneficial. The Romans had no jealousy at all of his growing interest; for he taught men to give tribute to Cæsar, and not to resist evil, but take up the cross. The Roman governor, at his trial, could find no fault in him. There was more danger of the Romans being incensed against the Jewish nation by the priests than by Christ. Note, Pretended fears are often the colour of malicious designs.

2. Had there really been some danger of displeasing the Romans by tolerating Christ's preaching, yet that would not justify their hating and persecuting a good man. Note, 1st. The enemies of Christ and his Gospel have often coloured their enmity with a seeming care for the public good, and the common safety, and in order to that have branded his prophets and ministers as trouble-makers of Israel, and men that turn the world upside down. 2nd. Carnal policy commonly sets up reasons of state, in opposition to rules of justice. When men are concerned for their own wealth and safety more than for truth and duty, it is wisdom from beneath, which is "earthly, sensual, and devilish." But see what was the issue: they pretended to be afraid that their tolerating Christ's Gospel would bring desolation upon them by the Romans; and therefore, right or wrong, set themselves against it. But it proved that their persecuting the Gospel brought upon them that which they feared, filled up the measure of their iniquity; and the Romans came and took away their place and nation, and their place knows them no more. Note, That calamity which we seek to escape by sin we take the most effectual course to bring upon our own heads; and they who think by opposing Christ's kingdom to secure or advance their own secular interest, will find Jerusalem a more burdensome stone than they think it is, *Zec. xii. 3*; "the fear of the wicked it shall come upon them."

3rd. Caiaphas makes a malicious but mystical speech in the council upon this occasion.

First. The malice of it appears evident at first view, ver. 49, 50. He being the high priest, and so president of the council, took upon him to decide the matter before it was debated: "You know nothing at all," your hesitating betrays your ignorance, for it is not a thing that will bear a dispute; it is soon determined, if you consider that received maxim, "that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people." Here,

1st. The counsellor was Caiaphas, who was "high priest that same year." The high priesthood was by the Divine appointment settled upon the heir male of the house of Aaron, for and during the term of his natural life, and then to his heir-male; but in those degenerate times it was become, though not an annual office, like a consulship, yet frequently changed, as they could make an interest with the Roman powers. Now it happened that this year Caiaphas wore the mitre.

2nd. The drift of the advice was in short this, that some way or other must be found out to put Jesus to death. We have reason to think that they strongly suspected him to be indeed the Messiah; but his doctrine was so contrary to their darling traditions and secular interest, and his design did so thwart their notions of the Messiah's kingdom, that they resolve, be he who he will, he must be put to death. Caiaphas doth not say, Let him be silenced, imprisoned, banished,—though that is sufficient for the restraint of one they thought dangerous,—but die he must. Note, Those that have set themselves against Christianity, have commonly divested themselves of humanity, and been infamous for cruelty.

3rd. This is insinuated with all the subtlety as well as malice of the old serpent. 1. He suggests his own sagacity, which we must suppose him, as high priest, to excel in, though the Urim and Thummim was long since lost. How scornfully doth he say, "You know nothing," that are but common priests; but you must give me leave to see farther into things than you do. Thus it is common for those in authority to impose their corrupt dictates by virtue of that; and because they should be the wisest and best, to expect that every body should believe they are so. 2. He takes it for granted that the case is plain and past dispute, and those are very ignorant that do not see it to be so. Note, Reason and justice are often run down with a high hand; "truth is fallen in the streets," and when it is down, down with it; "and equity cannot enter," and when it is out, out with it, *Isa. lix. 14*. 3. He insists upon a maxim in politics, that the welfare of communities is to be preferred before that of particular persons: "It is expedient for us," as priests, whose all lies at stake, "that one man die for the people." Thus far it holds true, that it is expedient, and more than so, it is truly honourable, for a man to hazard his life in the service of his country, *Phil. ii. 17*; *1 Jno. iii. 16*; but to put an innocent man to death, under colour of consulting the public safety, is the devil's politics. Caiaphas craftily insinuates that the greatest and best man, though *major singulis*,—greater than any one individual, is *minor universis*,—less than the collected mass, and ought to think his life well spent, nay, well lost, to save his country from ruin; but what is this to the murdering of one that was evidently a great blessing, under pretence of preventing an imaginary mischief to the country? The case ought to have been put thus: Was it expedient for them to bring upon themselves, and upon their nation, the guilt of blood, a prophet's blood, for the securing of their civil interests from a danger which they had no just reason to be afraid of? Was it expedient for them to drive God and their glory from them, rather than venture the Romans' displeasure, who could do them no harm if they had God on their side? Note, Carnal policy, which steers only by secular considerations, while it thinks to save all by sin, ruins all at last.

Secondly. The mystery that was in this counsel of Caiaphas doth not appear at first view, but the evangelist leads us into it; ver. 51, 52, "this spake he not of himself;" it was not only the language of his own enmity and policy, but in these words he prophesied, though he himself was not aware of it, "that Jesus should die for that nation." Here is a precious comment upon a pernicious next; the counsel of cursed Caiaphas so construed as to fall in with the counsels of the blessed God. Charity teaches us to put the most favourable construction upon men's words and actions that they will bear; but piety teacheth us to make a good improvement of them, even contrary to that which they were intended for. If wicked men, in what they do against us, are God's hand to humble and reform us, why may they not in what they say against us be God's mouth to instruct and convince us? But in this of Caiaphas, there was an extraordinary direction of Heaven prompting him to say that which was capable of a very sublime sense. As the hearts of all men are in God's hand, so are their tongues. They are deceived who say, "Our tongues are our own, so that either we may say what we will, and are not accountable to God's judgment, or we can say what we will, and are not restrainable by his providence and power. Balaam could not say what he would when he came to curse Israel, nor Laban when he pursued Jacob.

4th. The evangelist explains and enlarges upon Caiaphas' words.

First. He explains what he said, and shews how it not only was, but was intended to be, accommodated to an excellent purpose. He did not speak it of himself,—as it was an artifice to stir up the council against Christ, he spoke it of himself, or of the devil rather,—but as it was an oracle, declaring it the purpose and design of God by the death of Christ to save God's spiritual Israel, from sin and wrath, he did not speak it of himself, for he knew nothing of the matter; "he meant not so, neither did his heart think so;" for nothing was in his heart but to destroy and cut off, *Isa. x. 7*.

1st. He prophesied; and those that prophesied, in their prophesying, did not speak of themselves. But is Caiaphas also among the prophets? He is so, *pro hac vice*,—"this once," though an ill man, and an implacable enemy to Christ and his Gospel. Note, 1. God can and often doth make wicked men instruments to serve his own purposes, even contrary to their own intentions; for he has them not only in a chain, to restrain them from doing the mischief they would, but in a bridle, to lead them to do the service they would not. 2. Words of prophecy in the mouth are no infallible evidence of a principle of grace in the heart. "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" will be rejected as a frivolous plea.

2nd. He prophesied, "being high priest that year;" not that his being high priest did at all dispose or qualify him to be a prophet; we cannot suppose the pontifical mitre to have first inspired with prophecy the basest head that ever wore it; but, 1. Being high priest, and therefore of note and eminence in the conclave, God was pleased to put this significant word into his mouth, rather than into the mouth of any other, that it might be the more observed, or the non-observance of it the more aggravated. The apophthegms of great men have been thought worthy of special regard; "a divine sentence is in the lips of the king;" therefore this divine sentence was put into the lips of the high priest, that even out of his mouth this word might be established, that Christ died for the good of the nation, and not for any iniquity in his hands. He happened to be high priest that year, which was fixed to be the year of the redeemed, when Messiah the prince must be cut off, but not for himself, *Dan. ix. 26*, and he must own it. 2. Being high priest that year, that famous year, in which there was to be such a plentiful effusion of the Spirit, more than had ever been yet, according to the prophecy, *Joel ii. 28, 29*, compared with *Acts ii. 17*, some drops of the blessed shower light upon Caiaphas, as the crumbs, saith Dr. Lightfoot, of the children's bread, which fall from the table among the dogs. This year was the year of the expiration of the Levitical priesthood; and out of the mouth of him who was that year high priest was extorted an implicit resignation of it to Him who should not, as they had done for many ages, offer beasts for that nation, but offer himself, and so make an end of the sin offering. This resignation he made unwittingly, as Isaac gave the blessing to Jacob.

3rd. The matter of his prophecy was, "that Jesus should die for that nation," the very thing to which all the prophets bare witness, who "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ," *1 Pet. i. 11*, that the death of Christ must be the life and salvation of Israel. He meant, by that nation, those who obstinately adhered to Judaism, but God meant those in it that would receive the doctrine of Christ, and become followers of him—all believers, the spiritual seed of Abraham. The death of Christ, which Caiaphas was now projecting, proved the ruin of that interest in the nation which he intended it should be the security and establishment of, for it brought wrath upon them to the uttermost; but it proved the advancement of that interest which he hoped it would have been the ruin of; for Christ, being lifted up from the earth, drew all men unto him. It is a great thing that is here prophesied, that Jesus should die, die for others, not only for their good, but in their stead; die for that nation, for they had the first offer made them of salvation by his death. If the whole nation of the Jews had unanimously believed in Christ, and received his Gospel, they had been not only saved eternally, but saved as a nation, from their grievances. The fountain was first opened to the house of David, *Zec. xiii. 1*. He so died for that nation, as that the whole nation should not perish, but that a remnant should be saved, *Rom. xi. 5*.

Secondly. The evangelist enlargeth upon this word of Caiaphas; ver. 52, "not for that nation only," how much soever it thought itself, the darling of Heaven, "but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." Observe here,

1st. The persons Christ died for; not for the nation of the Jews only; it would have been comparatively but a light thing for the Son of God to go through so vast an undertaking only to restore the preserved of Jacob and the outcasts of Israel; no, he must be salvation to the ends of the earth, *Isa. xlix. 6*; he must die for "the children of God that were scattered abroad." 1. Some understand it of the children of God that were then in being, scattered abroad in the Gentile world, devout men of every nation, *Acts ii. 5*; that feared God, *Acts x. 2*, and worshipped him, *Acts xvi. 4*; proselytes of the gate, who served the God of Abraham, but submitted not to the ceremonial law of Moses; persons that had a savour of natural religion, but were dispersed in the nations, had no solemn assemblies of their own, nor any peculiar profession to unite in, or distinguish themselves by. Now Christ died to incorporate these in one great society, to be denominated from him, and governed by him; and this was the setting up a standard, to which all that had a regard to God, and a concern for their souls, might have recourse, and under which they might list themselves. 2. Others take in with these all that belong to the election of grace, who are called the children of God, though not yet born, because they are predestinated to the adoption of children, *Eph. i. 5*. Now these are scattered abroad in several places of the earth, out of all kindreds and tongues, *Rev. vii. 9*; and in several ages of the world, to the end of time, there are those that fear him throughout all generations; to all those he had an eye in the atonement he made by his blood; as he prayed so he died, "for all that should believe on him."

2nd. The purpose and intention of his death concerning those persons. He died to gather them in who wandered, and to gather them together in one who were scattered; to invite them to him that were at a distance from him, and to unite them in him that were at a distance from each other. Christ's dying is, 1. The great attractive of our hearts. For this end he is lifted up, to draw men to him. The conversion of souls is the gathering of them in to Christ as their ruler and refuge, as the doves to their windows; and he died to effect this. By dying he purchased them to himself, and the gift of the Holy Ghost for them. His love, in dying for us, is the great loadstone of our love. 2. The great centre of our unity. He gathers them together in one, *Eph. i. 10*: they are one with him; one body, one spirit, and one with each other in him. All the saints, in all places and ages, meet in Christ, as all the members in the head, and all the branches in the root. Christ, by the merit of his death, recommended all the saints in one to the grace and favour of God, *Heb. ii. 11–13*; and by the motive of his death recommends them all severally to the love and affection of one of another, *ch. xiii. 34*.

5th. The result of this debate is a resolve of the council to put Jesus to death; ver. 53, "from that day they took counsel together to put him to death." They now understand one another's minds, and so each was fixed in his own, that Jesus must die; and it should seem a committee was appointed to sit, *de die in diem*,—"from day to day," to consider of it, and consult about it, and

determination to seize him. On the other hand, it is not probable that this command was made very public, for no attempt was made to seize our Lord when he appeared openly in Bethany.

xii. 1. "Six days:" our Lord entered Bethany on Friday, 8th of Nisan, the eve of the Sabbath, and remained over the Sabbath. The supper (verse 2) took place most likely on the Sabbath—i.e., the Saturday.—The Jews were fond of having entertainments on that day. That the incident recorded here is identical with that narrated

in Matt. xxvi. 6 and Mark xiv. 3 is now almost universally admitted. The difficulty is the apparent discrepancy in the date. The narratives of Matthew and Mark seem to suggest that Wednesday was the day on which the supper was made in Simon's house; but it is not necessary to suppose that these two evangelists observed an exact chronological order. They do not employ any term which marks its immediate succession to the occurrence before related. St. John marks the time clearly. The visit to Jerusalem on the

receive proposals for the effecting of it. Note, The wickedness of the wicked ripens by degrees, *Jas. i. 15; Eze. vii. 10*. Two considerable advances were now made in their accused design against Christ: *First*, What before they had thought of severally, now they jointly concurred in, and so strengthened the hands one of another in this wickedness, and proceeded with the greater assurance. Ill men confirm and encourage themselves and one another in ill practices, by comparing notes; men of corrupt minds bless themselves when they find others of the same mind. Then the wickedness, which before seemed impracticable, appears not only possible, but easy to be effected: *vis unita fortior*,—energies, when united, become more efficient. *Secondly*, What before they wished done, but wanted a colour for, now they are furnished with a plausible pretence to justify themselves in, which will serve, if not to take off the guilt—that is the least of their care—yet to take off the odium, and so satisfy, if not the personal, yet the political conscience, as some subtly distinguish. Many will go on very securely in doing an ill thing, as long as they have but something to say in excuse for it. Now this resolution of theirs to put him to death, right or wrong, shews that all the formality of a trial, which they afterwards brought him upon, was but show and grimace; they were before determined what to do.

6th. Christ hereupon absconded, knowing very well what was the vote of their close cabal, ver. 54. *First*, He suspended his public appearances; “he walked no more openly among the Jews;” that is, among the inhabitants of Judæa, who were properly called Jews, especially those at Jerusalem; *ὁ περιπατῶν*, ‘he did not walk up and down among them,’ did not go from place to place preaching and working miracles with that freedom and openness that he had done, but while he stayed in Judæa he was there incognito,—‘in disguise.’ Thus the chief priests put the light of Israel under a bushel. *Secondly*, He withdrew into an obscure part of the country, so obscure, that the name of the town he retired to is scarce met with any where else. He went to a country near the wilderness, as if he were driven out from among men; or rather, wishing with Jeremiah, that he might have in the wilderness a lodgingplace of wayfaring men, *Jer. ix. 2*. He entered into a city called Ephraim, some think Ephratah, that is, Bethlehem, where he was born, and which bordered upon the wilderness of Judah; others think, Ephron, or Ephraim, mentioned *2 Chr. xiii. 19*. Thither his disciples went with him; neither would they leave him in solitude, nor would he leave them in danger. There he continued, *ἀειρούμενος*, there he ‘conversed;’ he knew how to improve this time of retirement in private conversation, when he had not opportunity of preaching publicly. He conversed with his disciples, which were his family, when he was forced from the temple, and his *ἀειρούμενος*, or ‘discourses’ there, no doubt, were very edifying. We must do the good we can, when we cannot do the good we would.

But why would Christ abscond now? It was not because he either feared the power of his enemies, or distrusted his own power: he had many ways to save himself, and was neither averse to suffering, nor unprepared for it; but he retired, 1. To put a mark of displeasure upon Jerusalem, and the people of the Jews. They rejected him and his Gospel; justly therefore did he remove himself and his Gospel from them. The prince of teachers was now removed into a corner, *Isa. xxx. 20*, and there was no open vision of him; and it was a sad presage of that thick darkness which was shortly to come upon Jerusalem, because she knew not the day of her visitation. 2. To render the cruelty of his enemies against him the more inexcusable. If that which was grievous to them, and thought dangerous to the public, was his public appearances, he would try whether their anger would be turned away by his retirement into privacy. When David was fled to Gath, Saul was satisfied, and sought no more for him, *1 Sam. xxvii. 4*. But it was the life, the precious life, that these wicked men hunted after. 3. His hour was not yet come, and therefore he declined danger, and did it in a way common to men, both to warrant and encourage the flight of his servants in time of persecution, and to comfort those who are forced from their usefulness, and buried alive in privacy and obscurity: “the disciple is not better than his Lord.” 4. His retirement for a while was to make his return into Jerusalem, when his hour was come, the more remarkable and illustrious. This increased the acclamations of joy with which his well-wishers welcomed him at his next public appearance, when he rode triumphantly into the city.

7th. The strict inquiry made for him during his recess, ver. 55—57.

First, The occasion of it was the approach of the passover, at which they expected his presence, according to custom; ver. 55. “the Jews’ passover was nigh at hand,” a festival which shone bright in their calendar, and which there was great expectation of for some time before. This was Christ’s fourth and last passover since he entered upon his public ministry, and it might be truly said, as *2 Chr. xxxv. 18*, there never was such a passover in Israel, for in it “Christ, our passover, was sacrificed for us.” Now the passover being at hand, many went out of all parts of the country to Jerusalem, to purify themselves. This was either, 1st. A necessary purification of those who had contracted any ceremonial pollution; they came to be sprinkled with the water of purification, and to perform the other rites of cleansing, according to the law, for they might not eat the passover in their uncleanness, *Num. ix. 6*. Thus, before our gospel passover we must renew our repentance, and by faith wash in the blood of Christ, and so compass God’s altar. Or, 2nd. A voluntary purification, or self-sequestration, by fasting and prayer, and other religious exercises, which many that were more devout than their neighbours spent some time in before the passover, and chose to do it at Jerusalem, because of the advantage of the temple service. Thus must we, by solemn preparation, set bounds about the mount on which we expect to meet with God.

Secondly, The inquiry was very solicitous; “they said, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?” ver. 56.

1st. Some think this was said by those that wished well to him, and expected his coming, that they might hear his doctrine, and see his miracles. They that came early out of the country, that they might purify themselves, were very desirous to meet with Christ, and perhaps came up the sooner with that expectation; and therefore, as they stood in the temple, the place of their purification, they inquired what news of Christ? Could any body give them hopes of seeing him? If there were those, and those of the most devout people, and best affected to religion, who shewed this respect to Christ, it was a check to the enmity of the chief priests, and a witness against them.

2nd. It should rather seem they were his enemies that made this inquiry after him, who wished for an opportunity to lay hands on him. They seeing the town begin to fill with devout people out of the country, wondered they did not find him among them. When they should have been assisting them that came to purify themselves, according to the duty of their place, they were plotting against Christ. How miserably degenerate was the Jewish church, when the priests of the Lord were become like the priests of the calves, “a snare on Mizpeh, and a net spread upon Tabor,” and were “profound to make slaughter,” *Hos. v. 1, 2*—when, instead of keeping the feast with unleavened bread, they were themselves soured with the leaven of the worst malice! Their asking, “What think ye, will he not come up to the feast?” implies, 1. An invidious reflection upon Christ, as if he would omit his attendance on the feast of the Lord for fear of exposing himself. If others, through irreligion be absent,

they are not animadverted upon; but if Christ be absent for his own preservation, (for God will have mercy, and not sacrifice,) it is turned to his reproach, as it was to David’s, that his seat was empty at the feast, though Saul wanted him only that he might have an opportunity of nailing him to the wall with his javelin, *1 Sam. xx. 26, 27*. It is sad to see holy ordinances prostituted to such unholly purposes. 2. A fearful apprehension they had of missing their game. “Will he not come up to the feast?”—If he do not, our measures are broken, and we are all undone; for there is no sending a pursuivant into the country to fetch him up.

Thirdly, The orders issued out by the government for the apprehending of him were very strict, ver. 57. The great Sanhedrim issued out a proclamation, strictly charging and requiring, that if any person in city or country knew where he was, pretending that he was a criminal, and had fled from justice, they should shew it, that he might be taken, probably promising a reward to any that would discover him, and imposing a penalty on such as harboured him. So that hereby he was represented to the people as an obnoxious, dangerous man; an outlaw, whom any one might have a blow at. Saul issued out such a proclamation for apprehending of David, and Ahab of Elijah. See, 1st. How intent they were upon this prosecution, and how indefatigably they laboured in it, now at a time when if they had had any sense of religion, and the duty of their function, they would have found themselves something else to do. 2nd. How willing they were to involve others in the guilt with them. If any were capable of betraying Christ, they would have him think himself bound to do it. Thus was the interest they had in the people abused to the worst purposes. Note, It is an aggravation of the sins of wicked rulers that they commonly make those that are under them instruments of their unrighteousness. But notwithstanding this proclamation, though doubtless many knew where he was, yet such was his interest in the affections of some, and such God’s hold of the consciences of others, that he continued undiscovered, for the Lord hid him.

CHAPTER XII.

It was a melancholy account which we had, in the close of the foregoing chapter, of the disgrace done to our Lord Jesus, when the scribes and Pharisees proclaimed him a traitor to their church, and put upon him all the marks of ignominy they could; but the story of this chapter balanceth that, by giving us an account of the honour done to the Redeemer, notwithstanding all that reproach thrown upon him; thus the one was set over against the other. Let us see what honours were heaped on the head of the Lord Jesus, even in the depths of his humiliation. I. Mary did him honour by anointing his feet at the supper in Bethany, ver. 1—11. II. The common people did him honour with their acclamations of joy, when he rode in triumph into Jerusalem, ver. 12—19. III. The Greeks did him honour, by inquiring after him, with a longing desire to see him, ver. 20—26. IV. God the Father did him honour, by a voice from heaven, bearing testimony to him, ver. 27—36. V. He had honour done him by the Old Testament prophets, who foretold the infidelity of those that heard the report of him, ver. 37—41. VI. He had honour done him by some of the chief rulers, whose consciences witnessed for him, though they had not courage to own it, ver. 42, 43. VII. He claimed honour to himself, by asserting his Divine mission, and the account he gave of his errand into the world, ver. 44—50.

THEN Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. 2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. 3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. 4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, which should betray him, 5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred



BETHANY.—VER. 1.

Sunday gave ample opportunities to Judas for his interview with the chief priests. The supper was held at Simon’s house. It seems not improbable that there was some relationship between Simon and the family at Bethany. Among the conjectures on the subject, Professor Plumtree appears to favour the one which regards Simon as the father of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. He is called the leper (Matthew and Mark); not that he then had the leprosy, but that he had once been leprous, and had been healed probably by our Lord.

“Between the raised Lazarus and the healed leper the Lord probably sits, as between two trophies of his glory” (Stier).

xii. 3. “A pound of ointment of spikenard:” the *nardos* of the Greeks has been identified with the *sunbul* of the Arabians, and this again with the Hindoo *jatamansae*, which was annually brought from the mountains which overhang the Ganges and the Jumna. “Pound:” possibly a Syrian weight, whose value is unknown. The Roman pound is thought to be too large to suit the circumstance.

pence, and given to the poor? 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. 8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. 9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; 11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.



SPIKENARD.—ver. 3.

In these verses we have, First. The kind visit our Lord Jesus made to his friends at Bethany, ver. 1. He came up out of the country "six days before the passover," and took up at Bethany, a town that, according to the computation of our metropolis, lay so near Jerusalem, as to be within the bills of mortality. He lodged here with his friend Lazarus, "whom he" had lately "raised from the dead." His coming to Bethany may now be considered,

1. As a preface to the passover he intended to celebrate, to which relation it had in the date of the time, "six days before the passover." Devout men set time apart before, to prepare themselves for that solemnity, and thus it became our Lord Jesus to fulfil all righteousness; and thus he hath set us an example of solemn self-sequestration before the solemnities of the gospel passover. Let us hear the voice crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

2. As a voluntary exposing himself to the fury of his enemies. Now his hour was at hand, he came within their reach, and freely offered himself to them, though he had shewed them how easily he could evade all their snares. Note, 1st. Our Lord Jesus was voluntary in his sufferings; his life was not forced from him, but resigned; "Lo, I come." As the strength of his persecutors could not overpower him, so their subtlety could not surprise him, but he died because he would. 2nd. As there is a time when we are allowed to shift for our own preservation, so there is a time when we are called to jeopard our lives in the cause of God, as St. Paul, when he went bound in the spirit to Jerusalem.

3. As an instance of his kindness to his friends at Bethany, whom he loved, and from whom he was shortly to be taken away. This was a farewell visit; he came to take leave of them, and to leave with them words of comfort against the day of trial that was approaching. Note, Though Christ depart for a time from his people, he will give them intimations that he parts in love, and not in anger. Bethany is here described to be the town "where Lazarus was, whom he raised from the dead." That miracle wrought here put a new honour upon the place, and made it remarkable. Christ came hither to observe what improvement was made of that miracle; for where Christ works wonders, and shews signal favours, he looks after them to see whether the intention of them be answered. Where he has sown plentifully, he observes whether it comes up again.

Secondly. The kind entertainment which his friends there give him; "they made him a supper," ver. 2, a great supper, a feast. It is queried whether this was the same with that which is recorded, *Mat. xxvi. 6, &c.*, in the house of Simon: most think they were; for the substance of the story and many of the circumstances agree; but that comes in after what was said two days before the passover, whereas this was done six days before: nor is it likely that Martha should serve in any house but her own; and therefore I incline with Dr. Lightfoot to think them different: that that in Matthew was on the third day of the passover week, but this here the seventh day of the week before, being the Jewish sabbath, the night before he rode in triumph into Jerusalem: that in the house of Simon, this of Lazarus. These two being the most public and solemn entertainments given him in Bethany, Mary graced them both with this token of respect; and what she left of her ointment this first time, when she spent but a pound of it, ver. 3, she used that second time, when she poured it all out, *Mar. xiv. 3*. Let us see the account of this entertainment.

1. "They made him a supper;" for with them ordinarily supper was the best meal. This they did in token of their respect and gratitude, for a feast is made

for friendship; and that they might have an opportunity of free and pleasant conversation with him, for a feast is made for fellowship. Perhaps in allusion to this and the like entertainments given to Christ in the days of his flesh, it is that he promiseth to such as open the door of their hearts to him, that he will sup with them, *Rev. iii. 20*.

2. "Martha served;" she herself waited at table, in token of her great respect to the Master; though a person of some quality, she did not think it below her to serve when Christ sat at meat; nor should we think it a dishonour or disparagement to us to stoop to any service whereby Christ may be honoured. Christ had formerly reproved Martha for being "troubled with much serving;" but she did not therefore leave off serving, as some, who, when they are reproved for one extreme, peevishly run into another; no, still she served; not as then, at a distance, but within hearing of Christ's gracious words, reckoning those happy who, as the queen of Sheba said concerning Solomon's servants, stood continually before him to hear his wisdom. Better be a waiter at Christ's table than a guest at the table of a prince.

3. "Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat." It proved the truth of his resurrection, as it did of Christ's, that there were those who did eat and drink with them, *Acts x. 41*. Lazarus did not retire into a wilderness after his resurrection, as if when he had made a visit to the other world, he must ever after be a hermit in this; no, he conversed familiarly with people, as others did. He sat at meat, as a monument of the miracle Christ had wrought. Those whom Christ has raised up to a spiritual life, are made to sit together with him; see *Eph. ii. 5, 6*.

Thirdly. The particular respect which Mary shewed him above the rest, in anointing his feet with sweet ointment, ver. 3: she had "a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly," which probably she had by her for her own use; but the death and resurrection of her brother had quite weaned her from the use of all such things, and with this she "anointed the feet of Jesus;" and as a farther token of her reverence for him, and negligence of herself, she "wiped them with her hair;" and this was taken notice of by all that were present, for "the house was filled with the odour of the ointment;" see *Pr. xxvii. 16*. Doubtless she intended this as a token of her love to Christ, who had given real tokens of his love to her and her family; and thus she studies what she shall render. Now by this her love to Christ appears to have been,

1. A generous love. So far from sticking at necessary charges in his service, she is as ingenious to create an occasion of expense in religion as most are to avoid it. If she had any thing more valuable than other, that must be brought out for the honour of Christ. Note, Those who love Christ truly, love him so much better than this world as to be willing to lay out the best they have for him.

2. A condescending love. She not only bestowed her ointment upon Christ, but poured it upon him with her own hands, which she might have ordered one of her servants to have done; nay, she did not, as usual, anoint his head with it, but his feet. True love, as it doth not stick at charges, so it doth not stick at pains in honouring Christ. Considering what Christ has done and suffered for us, we are very ungrateful if we think any service too hard to do, or too mean to stoop to, whereby he may really be glorified.

3. A believing love. There was faith working by this love; faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, that is, the Anointed, who, being both priest and king, was anointed as Aaron and David were. Note, God's anointed should be our anointed; has God poured on him the oil of gladness above his fellows? let us pour on him the ointment of our best affections above all competitors. By consenting to Christ as our king, we must comply with God's designs, appointing him our Head whom he has appointed, *Hos. i. 11*.

The filling of the house with the pleasant odour of the ointment may intimate to us, 1st. That those who entertain Christ in their hearts and houses bring a sweet odour into them. Christ's presence brings with it an ointment and perfume which rejoice the heart. 2nd. Honours done to Christ are comforts to all his friends and followers; they are to God and good men an offering of a sweet-smelling savour.

Fourthly. Judas's dislike of Mary's compliment or token of her respect to Christ, ver. 4, 5; where observe,

1. The person that carped at it was Judas, "one of his disciples;" not one of their nature, but only one of their number. It is possible for the worst of men to lurk under the disguise of the best profession; and there are many who pretend to stand in relation to Christ that really have no kindness for him. Judas was an apostle, a preacher of the Gospel, and yet one that discouraged and checked this instance of pious affection and devotion. Note, It is sad to see the life of religion and holy zeal frowned upon and discountenanced by such as are obliged by their office to assist and encourage it. But this was he that should betray Christ. Note, Coldness of love to Christ, and a secret contempt of serious piety, when they appear in professors of religion, are sad presages of a final apostasy. Hypocrites, by lesser instances of worldliness, discover themselves to be ready for a closure with greater temptations.

2. The pretence with which he covered his dislike; ver. 5, "Why was not this ointment," since it was designed for a pious use, "sold for three hundred pence," which is eight pounds ten shillings of our money, "and given to the poor?" Here is, 1st. A foul iniquity gilded over with a specious and plausible pretence; for Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. 2nd. Here is worldly wisdom passing a censure upon pious zeal, as guilty of imprudence and mismanagement. Those who value themselves upon their secular policy, and undervalue others for their serious piety, have more in them of the spirit of Judas than they would be thought to have. 3rd. Here is charity to the poor made a colour for opposing a piece of piety to Christ, and secretly made a cloak for covetousness. Many excuse themselves from laying out in charity, under pretence of laying up for charity; whereas, if the clouds be full of rain, they will empty themselves. Judas asked, "Why was it not given to the poor?" To which it is easy to answer, because it was better bestowed upon the Lord Jesus. Note, We must not conclude that those do no acceptable piece of service, who do not do it in our way, and just as we would have them; as if every thing must be adjudged imprudent and unfit which doth not take its measures from us and our sentiments. Proud men think all ill advised that do not advise with them.

3. The detection and discovery of Judas's hypocrisy herein, ver. 6. Here is the evangelist's remark upon it, by the direction of Him who searcheth the heart. "This he said, not that he cared for the poor," as he pretended "but because he was a thief, and had the bag." 1st. It did not come from a principle of charity; "not that he cared for the poor." He had no compassion towards them, no concern for them; what were the poor to him, any farther than he might serve his own ends, by being overseer of the poor? Thus some warmly contend for the power of the church, others for its purity, when perhaps it may be said, not that they care for the church; it is all one to them whether its true interest sink or swim; but under the umbrage of this they are advancing themselves. Simeon and Levi pretended zeal for circumcision, "not that they cared" for the seal of the covenant, any more than Jehu for the Lord of hosts, when he said, "Come, see my zeal." 2nd. It did come from a principle of covetousness. The truth of the matter was, this ointment being designed for his Master, he would rather have had it in money, to be put in the common

xii. 4. "Simon's son:" it does not appear what Simon was the father of Judas.

xii. 5, 6. "Three hundred pence:" equivalent to between £9 and £10. "The bag:" the word here used was originally the name of a box containing the mouth or tongue-piece of wind instruments.

xii. 7. "Against the day," &c.: the English version might be taken to imply that Mary intended the ointment for the day of Christ's burial; this, however, is not meant. All such idea is

removed if we render (with Alford), "Let her alone, that she may keep it against the day of my burying."

xii. 11. "Went away:" rather, "were going away." The Pharisees feared when they saw so many going off to Bethany, and becoming believers in Jesus.

xii. 12. "The next day:" i.e., the Sabbath, the 10th of Nisan, which was "the day for the separation of the paschal lamb. Jesus, the Lamb of God, entered Jerusalem and the Temple on this day; and

stock which he was intrusted with, and then he knew what to do with it.

Observe.

First. Judas was treasurer of Christ's household, whence some think he was called Iscariot, the bag-bearer. 1st. See what estate Jesus and his disciples had to live upon; it was but little; they had neither farms nor merchandises, neither barns nor storehouses, only a bag; or, as some think the word signifies, a box or coffer, wherein they kept just enough for their subsistence, giving the surplus, if any were, to the poor: to the poor they carried about with them wherever they went: *Omnia mea cum me porto*.—"I carry all my property about me." This bag was supplied with the contributions of good people, and the Master and his disciples had all in common. Let this lessen our esteem of worldly wealth, and deaden us to the punctilios of state and ceremony, and reconcile us to a mean and despicable way of living, if that be our lot, that it was our Master's lot, for our sakes he became poor. 2nd. See who was the steward of the little they had; it was Judas, he was purse-bearer; it was his office to receive and pay; and we do not find that he gave any account what markets he made. He was appointed to this office, either, 1. Because he was the least and lowest of all the disciples; it was not Peter or John that was made steward, though it was a place of trust and profit, but Judas, the meanest of them. Note, Secular employments, as they are a diversion, so they are a diminution to a minister of the Gospel: see 1 Cor. vi. 4. The prime ministers of state in Christ's kingdom refused to be concerned in the revenue, Acts vi. 2. 2. Because he was desirous of the place. He loved in his heart to be fingering money, and therefore had the money-bag committed to him; either, 1st. As a kindness, to please him, and thereby oblige him to be true to his Master. Subjects are sometimes disaffected to the government, because balked in their preferment; but Judas had no cause to complain of that, the bag he chose, and the bag he had. Or, 2nd. In judgment upon him, to punish him for his secret wickedness, that was put into his hands which would be a snare and trap to him. Note, Strong inclinations to sin within, are oftentimes justly punished with strong temptations to sin without. We have little reason to be fond of the bag, or proud of it, for at the best we are but stewards of it; and it was Judas, one of an ill character, and born to be hanged, (pardon the expression,) that was steward of the bag. The prosperity of fools destroys them, that was Judas's ruin.

Secondly. Being trusted with the bag, he was a thief; that is, he had a thievish disposition. The reigning love of money is heart-thief, as much as anger and revenge is heart-murder. Or, perhaps he had been really guilty of embezzling his Master's stores, and converting that to his own use which was given to the public stock. And some conjecture that he was now contriving to fill his pockets, and then run away and leave his Master, having heard him speak so much of troubles approaching, which he could by no means reconcile himself to. Note, They whom the management and disposal of public money is committed, have need to be governed by steady principles of justice and honesty, that no blot cleave to their hands; for though some make a jest of cheating the government, or the church, or the country, if cheating be thieving, and communities being more considerable than particular persons, if robbing them be the greater sin, the guilt of theft, and the portion of thieves, will be found no jesting matter. Judas, that had betrayed his trust, soon after betrayed his Master.

Fifthly. Christ's justification of what Mary did, ver. 7, 8: "Let her alone." Hereby he intimated, 1st. His acceptance of her kindness. Though he was perfectly mortified to all the delights of sense, yet, as it was a token of her good-will, he signified himself well pleased with it. 2nd. His care that she should not be molested in it. 'Pardon her,' so it may be read; excuse her this once; if it be an error, it is an error of her love. Note, Christ would not have them censured or discouraged that sincerely desire to please him, though in their honest endeavours there be not all the discretion that may be, Rom. xiv. 3. Though we would not do as they do, yet let them alone. For Mary's justification.

1. Christ puts a favourable construction upon what she did, which they that condemned it were not aware of: "Against the day of my burying she has kept this;" or, 'she hath reserved this for the day of my embalming'; so Dr. Hammond. "You do not grudge the ointment used for the embalming of your dead friends, nor say that should be sold and given to the poor. Now this anointing either was so intended, or at least may be so interpreted, for the day of my burying is now at hand, and she has anointed a body that is already as good as dead." Note, 1st. Our Lord Jesus thought much and often of his own death and burial; it would be good for us to do so too. 2nd. Providence doth often so open a door of opportunity to good Christians, and the Spirit of grace doth so open their hearts, as that the expressions of their pious zeal proves to be more seasonable and more beautiful, than any foresight of their own could make them. 3rd. The grace of Christ puts kind comments upon the pious words and actions of good people, and not only makes the best of what is amiss, but makes the most of what is good.

2. He gives a sufficient answer to Judas' objection, ver. 8. 1st. It is so ordered in the kingdom of providence that the poor we have always with us, some or other that are proper objects of charity, *Deu. xv. 11*; such there will be as long as there is in this lapsed state of mankind so much folly and so much affliction. 2nd. It is so ordered in the kingdom of grace that the church should not always have the bodily presence of Jesus Christ; "me ye have not always," but only now for a little time. Note, We need wisdom, when two duties come in competition, to know which to give the preference to, which must be determined by the circumstances. Opportunities are to be improved, and those opportunities first and most vigorously which are likely to be of the shortest continuance, and which we see most speedily hastening away. That good duty which may be done at any time ought to give way to that which cannot be done but just now.

Sixthly. The public notice which was taken of our Lord Jesus here at this supper in Bethany; ver. 9, "much people of the Jews knew that he was there," for he was the talk of the town, and they came flocking thither; the more because he had lately absconded, and now broke out as the sun from behind a dark cloud.

1. They came to see Jesus, whose name was very much greatened, and made considerable by the late miracle he had wrought in raising Lazarus. They came not to hear him, but to gratify their curiosity with a sight of him here at Bethany, fearing he would not appear publicly, as he used to do, this passover. They came, not to seize him, or inform against him, though the government had prosecuted him to an outlawry, but to see him, and shew him respect. Note, There are some in whose affections Christ will have an interest, in spite of all the attempts of his enemies to misrepresent him. It being known where Christ was, multitudes came to him. Note, Where the king is, there is the court; where Christ is, there will be the gathering of the people be, *Lu. xvii. 37*.

2. They came to see Lazarus and Christ together, which was a very inviting sight. Some came for the confirmation of their faith in Christ; to have the story perhaps from Lazarus' own mouth; others came only for the gratifying of their curiosity, that they might say they had seen a man who been dead and buried, and yet lived again; so that Lazarus served for a show these holidays, to those who, like the Athenians, spent their time in telling and hearing new

things. Perhaps some came to put curious questions to Lazarus about the state of the dead,—to ask what news from the other world; we ourselves have sometimes said, it may be, we would have gone a great way for one hour's discourse with Lazarus. But if any came on this errand, it is probable Lazarus was silent, and gave them no account of his voyage. However the Scripture is silent, and gives us no account of it; and we must not covet to be wise above what is written. But our Lord Jesus was present, who was a much fitter person for them to apply to than Lazarus; for if we hear not Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles,—if we heed not what they tell us concerning another world,—neither would we be persuaded though Lazarus rose from the dead. "We have a more sure word of prophecy."

Seventhly. The indignation of the chief priests at the growing interest of our Lord Jesus, and their plot to crush it; ver. 10, 11, "they consulted" (or decreed) "how they might put Lazarus also to death, because that by reason of him," that is, of what was done to him,—not of anything he said or did,—"many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus." Here observe,

1. How vain and unsuccessful their attempts against Christ had hitherto been. They had done all they could to alienate the people from him, and exasperate them against him, and yet many of the Jews, their neighbours, their creatures, their admirers, were so overcome by the convincing evidence of Christ's miracles, that they went away from the interest and party of the priests,—went off from obedience to their tyranny, and believed on Jesus. And it was by reason of Lazarus; his resurrection put life into their faith, and convinced them that this Jesus was undoubtedly the Messiah, and had life in himself, and power to give life. This miracle confirmed them in the belief of his other miracles which they had heard he wrought in Galilee; what was impossible to him that could raise the dead?

2. How absurd and unreasonable this day's vote was, that Lazarus must be put to death. This is an instance of the most brutish rage that could be; they were like a wild bull in a net, full of fury, and laying about them without any consideration. It was a sign they neither feared God nor regarded man, for,

1st. If they had feared God, they would not have done such an act of defiance to him. God will have Lazarus to live by miracle, and they will have him die by malice; they cry, "Away with such a fellow, it is not fit he should live," when God had so lately sent him back to the earth, declaring it highly fit he should live. What was this but walking contrary to God? They would put Lazarus to death, and challenge Almighty Power to raise him again; as if they could contend with God, and try titles with the King of kings! Who has the keys of death and the grave; he or they? *O cæca malitia! Christus qui suscitare potuit mortuum, non possit occisum.*—Blind malice, to suppose that Christ, who could raise one that had died a natural death, could not raise one that had been slain!—*Aug. in loc.* Lazarus is singled out to be the object of their special hatred, because God has distinguished him by the tokens of his peculiar love; as if they had made a league, offensive and defensive, with death and hell, and resolved to be severe upon all deserters. One should think they should rather have consulted how they might have joined in friendship with Lazarus and his family, and by their mediations have reconciled themselves to this Jesus whom they had persecuted; but the god of this world had blinded their minds.

2nd. If they had regarded man, they would not have done such an act of injustice to Lazarus, an innocent man, to whose charge they could not pretend to lay any crime. What bands are strong enough to hold those who can so easily break through the most sacred ties of common justice, and violate the maxims which even nature itself teacheth? But the support of their own tyranny and superstition were thought sufficient, as in the church of Rome, not only to justify, but to consecrate, the greatest villainies, and make them meritorious.

12 On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 Took branches of palm trees, and



PALM TREES.

went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. 14 And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, 15 Fear not,

although none but he knew that he was the Paschal Lamb, the coincidence is not undesigned" (Archbishop Thomson).

xii. 13. "Palm-trees:" John alone mentions the palm. Matthew and Mark say "took branches," &c. The tree referred to is the date palm. The word Bethany ("house of dates") reminds us that the palm grew in the neighbourhood of the Mount of Olives. This recollection may aid us in realising the scene. It may also aid us to understand the instruction given when the first feast of tabernacles

after the captivity was celebrated: "Go forth into the mount, and fetch palm branches" (Neh. viii. 15). From the striking beauty of the tree, many of the most expressive comparisons of Scripture are drawn. (Compare Cant. vii. 7; Psa. xcii. 12.) The custom of celebrating triumphs by carrying palms seems to have been Jewish as well as classic. Simon Maccabeus, after the surrender of the tower of Jerusalem, is described as entering it with music and thanksgiving, and "branches of palm-trees;" similarly when Judas had

daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. 16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him. 17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. 18 For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. 19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

This story of Christ's riding in triumph through Jerusalem is recorded by all the evangelists, as worthy of special remark; and in it we may observe, First. The respects that were paid to our Lord Jesus by the common people, ver. 12, 13, where we are told,

1. Who they were that paid him these respects, 'much people,'—*ὄχλος πολλός*, a great crowd of those that came up to the feast; not the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but the country people, that came from remote parts to worship at the feast. The nearer the temple of the Lord, the farther from the Lord of the temple. They were such as came up to the feast. 1st. Perhaps they had been Christ's hearers in the country, and great admirers of him there, and therefore were forward to testify their respects to him at Jerusalem, where they knew he had many enemies. Note, Those that have a true value and veneration for Christ will neither be ashamed nor afraid to own him before men, in any instance whereby they may do him honour. 2nd. Perhaps they were those more devout Jews that came up to the feast some time before to purify themselves, that were more inclined to religion than their neighbours, and those were they that were so forward to honour Christ. Note, The more regard men have to God and religion, in general, the better disposed they will be to entertain Christ and his religion, which is not destructive, but perfective, of all previous discoveries and institutions. They were not the rulers, or the great men, that went out to meet Christ, but the commonalty; some would have called them a mob, a rabble; but Christ has chosen the weak and foolish things, 1 Cor. i. 27; and is honoured more by the multitude than by the magnificence of his followers; for he values men by their souls, not their names and titles of honour.

2. On what occasion they did it; "they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem." They had inquired for him, ch. xi. 55, 56, "Will he not come up to the feast?" and now they hear he is coming; for none that seek Christ seek in vain. Now when they heard he was coming, they bestirred themselves to give him an agreeable reception. Note, Tidings of the approach of Christ and his kingdom should awaken us to consider what is the work of the day, that it may be done in the day. Israel must prepare to meet their God, Am. iv. 12, and the virgins to meet the bridegroom.

3. In what way they expressed their respects: they had not the keys of the city to present to him, nor the sword or mace to carry before him; none of the city music to compliment him with; but such as they had they gave him. And even this despicable crowd was a faint resemblance of that glorious company which John saw "before the throne, and before the Lamb," Rev. vii. 9, 10. Though these were not before the throne, they were before the Lamb, the paschal Lamb, who now, according to the usual ceremony, four days before the feast, was set apart to be sacrificed for us. There it is said of that celestial choir, 1st. That they had palms in their hands, and so had these branches of palm-trees. The palm-tree has ever been an emblem of victory and triumph; Cicero calls one that had won many prizes, *plurimum palmarum homo*,—"a man of many palms." Christ was now by his death to conquer principalities and powers, and therefore it was fit he should have the victor's palm borne before him; though he was but girding on the harness, yet he could boast as though he had put it off. But this was not all, the carrying of palm branches was part of the ceremony of the feast of tabernacles, Lev. xxiii. 40; Neh. viii. 15; and their using of this expression of joy in the welcome given to our Lord Jesus, intimates that all the feasts pointed at his Gospel, and had their accomplishment in it, and particularly that of the feast of tabernacles, Zec. xiv. 16. 2nd. That they "cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God," Rev. vii. 10; so did these here; they shouted before him, as is usual in popular welcomes, "Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord;" and hosanna signifies salvation; it is fetched from Ps. cxviii. 25, 26. See how well acquainted these common people were with the Scripture, and how pertinently they apply it to the Messiah. High thoughts of Christ will be best expressed in Scripture words. Now in their acclamations,

First. They acknowledge our Lord Jesus to be the king of Israel, that comes in the name of the Lord. Though he went now in poverty and disgrace, yet, contrary to the notions their scribes had given them of the Messiah, they own him to be a king, which speaks both his dignity and honour, which we must adore, and his dominion and power, which we must submit to. They own him to be, 1st. A rightful king, coming in the name of the Lord, Ps. ii. 6; sent of God, not only as a prophet, but as a king. 2nd. The promised and long-expected King, Messiah the Prince, for he is the King of Israel. According to the light they had, they proclaimed him King of Israel in the streets of Jerusalem; and they themselves being Israelites, hereby they avouched him for their King.

Secondly. They heartily wish well to his kingdom; that is the meaning of hosanna; let the king of Israel prosper; as when Solomon was crowned, they cried, "God save King Solomon," 1 Kin. i. 38. In crying hosanna, they prayed for three things: 1st. That his kingdom might come, in the light and knowledge of it, and in the power and efficacy of it; God speed the gospel plough. 2nd. That it might conquer, and be victorious over all opposition, Rev. vi. 2; 3rd. That it might continue. Hosanna is, "Let the king live for ever;" though his kingdom may be disturbed, let it never be destroyed, Ps. lxxix. 17.

Thirdly. They bid him welcome into Jerusalem; welcome as they might say; "welcome is he that cometh;" we are heartily glad to see him; "come in thou blessed of the Lord." And well may we attend him with our blessings who meets us with his. This welcome is like that, Ps. xxiv. 7, 9; "Lift up your heads, O ye gates." Thus we must every one of us bid Christ welcome into our hearts, that is, we must praise him, and be well pleased in him. As

we should be highly pleased with the being and attributes of God, and his relation to us, so we should be with the person and offices of the Lord Jesus, and his mediation between us and God. Faith saith, "Blessed is he that comes."

Secondly. The posture Christ put himself into for the receiving of the respects that were paid him; ver. 14, "when he had found," or procured, "a young ass, he sat thereon." It was but a poor sort of figure he made; he alone upon an ass, and a crowd of people about him, shouting hosanna.

1. This was much more of state than he used to take; he used to travel on foot, but now was mounted. Though his followers should be willing to take up with mean things, and not affect any thing that looks like grandeur, yet it is allowed them to use the service of the inferior creatures, according as God in his providence gives particular possession of those things over which, by his covenant with Noah and his sons, he has given to man a general dominion.

2. Yet it was much less of state than the great ones of the world used to take. If he would have made a public entry according to the state of a man of high degree, he should have rode in a chariot like that of Solomon's, Cant. iii. 9, 10, "with pillars of silver, the bottom of gold, and the covering of purple." But if we judge according to the fashion of this world, to be introduced thus was rather a disparagement than any honour to the King of Israel; for it seemed as if he would look great, and knew not how. His kingdom was not of this world, and therefore came not with outward pomp. He was now humbling himself; but in his exalted state John sees him in vision on a white horse, with a bow and a crown.

Thirdly. The fulfilling of the Scripture in this; "as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion," ver. 15. This is quoted from Zec. ix. 9. To him bare all the prophets witness, and particularly to this concerning him.

1. It was foretold that Zion's king should come, should come thus, "sitting on an ass's colt;" even this minute circumstance was foretold, and Christ took care it should be punctually fulfilled. Note, 1st. Christ is Zion's king; the holy hill of Zion was of old destined to be the metropolis, or royal city, of the Messiah. 2nd. Zion's king doth and will look after her, and come to her; though for a short time he retires, in due time he returns. 3rd. Though he comes but slowly,—an ass is slow-paced,—yet he comes surely, and with such expressions of humility and condescension as greatly encourage the addresses and expectations of his loyal subjects. Humble supplicants may reach to speak with him. If this be a discouragement to Zion, that her king appears in no greater state or strength, let her know, that though he comes to her riding on an ass's colt, yet he goes forth against her enemies riding on the heavens for her help, Deu. xxxiii. 26.

2. The daughter of Zion is therefore called upon to behold her king, to take notice of him and his approaches; behold and wonder, for he comes with observation, though not with outward show, Cant. iii. 11. "Fear not." In the prophecy, Zion is told to rejoice greatly, and to shout; but here it is rendered, "fear not." Unbelieving fears are enemies to spiritual joys; if they be cured,—if they be conquered,—joy will come of course; therefore Christ comes to his people to silence their fears. If the case be so that we cannot reach to the exultations of joy, yet we should labour to get from under the oppressions of fear; "rejoice greatly," at least, "fear not."

Fourthly. The remark made by the evangelist upon the disciples' understanding of this, ver. 16. They understood not at first why Christ did this, and how the Scripture was fulfilled; but "when Jesus was glorified," and thereupon the Spirit poured out, "then they remembered that these things were written of him" in the Old Testament, "and that they" and "others" had in pursuance thereof "done these things to him."

1. See here the imperfection of the disciples, now in their infant state; even they understood not these things at first; did not consider, when they fetched him the ass, and set him thereon, that they were performing the ceremony of the inauguration of Zion's King. Now observe, 1st. The Scripture is often fulfilled by the agency of those who have not themselves an eye to the Scripture in what they do, Isa. xlv. 4. 2nd. There are many excellent things, both in the word and providence of God, which the disciples themselves do not at first understand,—not at their first acquaintance with the things of God, while they see men as trees walking,—not at the first proposal of the things to their view and consideration. That which afterwards is clear, at first was dark and doubtful. 3rd. It well becomes the disciples of Christ, when they are grown up to maturity in knowledge, frequently to reflect upon the follies and weaknesses of their first beginning, that free grace may have the glory of their proficiency, and they may have compassion on the ignorant: "when I was a child, I spake as a child."

2. See here the improvement of the disciples in their adult state. Though they had been children, they were not always so, but went on to perfection. Observe,

1st. When they understood it; "when Jesus was glorified," for, First. Till then they did not rightly apprehend the nature of his kingdom, but expected it to appear in external pomp and power, and therefore knew not how to apply the scriptures which spoke of it, to so mean an appearance. Note, The right understanding of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, of its powers, glories, and victories, would prevent our misinterpreting and misapplying the scriptures that speak of it. Secondly. Till then the Spirit was not poured out, who was to lead them into all truth. Note, The disciples of Christ are enabled to understand the Scriptures by the same Spirit that indited the Scriptures. The spirit of revelation is to all the saints a spirit of wisdom, Eph. i. 17, 18.

2nd. How they understood it. They compared that prophecy with the event, and put them together, that they might mutually receive light from each other, and so they came to understand both; "then remembered they that these things were written of him" by the prophets, consonant to which they were done to him. Note, Such an admirable harmony there is between the word and works of God, that the remembrance of what is written will enable us to understand what is done; and the observation of what is done will help us to understand what is written; "as we have heard, so have we seen." The Scripture is every day in the fulfilling.

Fifthly. The reason which induced the people to pay this respect to our Lord Jesus, upon his coming into Jerusalem, though the government was so much set against him. It was because of that illustrious miracle he had lately wrought in raising Lazarus.

1. See here what account and what assurance they had of this miracle. No doubt the city rang of it; the report of it was in all people's mouths. But they who considered it as a proof of Christ's mission, and a ground of their faith in him, that they might be well satisfied of the matter of fact, traced the report to those who were eye-witnesses of it, that they might know the certainty of it by the utmost evidence the thing was capable of. "The people therefore that" stood by "when he called Lazarus out of his grave," being found out and examined, "bare record," ver. 17; they unanimously averred the thing to be true, beyond dispute or contradiction; and were ready, if called to it, to depose it upon oath; for so much is implied in the word *μαρτυρία*. Note. The truth of Christ's miracles was evidenced by incontestable proofs.

recovered the Temple and the city. Thus palm-branches were used by Jews as tokens of victory and peace.

xii. 20. "Greeks:" i.e., proselytes from heathenism, who had entirely conformed to the whole Jewish law; proselytes of righteousness, such as the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts viii. 27). Philip is the only one of the apostles who had an ordinary Greek name; the name Andrew, however, is of obviously Greek origin. It is worthy of remark that Philip was the person to whom these Greeks applied, and

that he immediately communicated their wishes to Andrew. Possibly Philip and Andrew may have been brought up, or may have resided, in one of the Hellenistic cities of Syria, Asia Minor, or Egypt, and so acquired these Greek names and a knowledge of the Greek language.

xii. 25. "His life:" Alford has "his soul." The verse is the enunciation of a great law. Self-sacrifice is self-preservation; but this law cannot work well apart from Christ. The man who sacrifices self, or renounces self, can only do so really by abandoning

It is probable those who had seen this miracle did not only assert it to those that asked them, but published it unasked, that this might add to the triumphs of this solemn day; and Christ's coming in now from Bethany, where it was done, would put them in mind of it. Note, They who wish well to Christ's kingdom should be forward to proclaim what they know that may redound to his honour.

2. What improvement they made of it, and what influence it had upon them; ver. 18, "for this cause," as much as any other, "the people met him." 1st. Some out of curiosity were desirous to see one that had done such a wonderful work. Many a good sermon he had preached in Jerusalem, which drew not such crowds after him as this one miracle did. But, 2nd. Others, out of conscience, studied to do him honour, as one sent of God. This miracle was reserved for one of the last, that it might confirm those which went before, and might gain him this honour just before his sufferings. Christ's works were all not only well done, (*Mar. vii. 37.*) but well timed.

Sixthly. The indignation of the Pharisees at all this. Some of them probably saw, and they all soon heard of Christ's public entry. The committee appointed to find out expedients to crush him, thought they had gained their point when he was retired into privacy, and that he would soon be forgotten in Jerusalem, but now rage and fret, when they see they imagined but a vain thing.

1. They own that they had got no ground against him; it was plainly to be perceived that they prevailed nothing: they could not, with all their insinuations, alienate the people's affections from him, nor with their menaces restrain them from shewing their affection to him. Note, They who oppose Christ, and fight against his kingdom, will be made to perceive that they prevail nothing. God will accomplish his own purposes in spite of them and the little efforts of their impotent malice; "ye prevail nothing," *οὐκ ἀνέχετε*,—"you profit nothing." Note, There is nothing got by opposing Christ.

2. They own that he had got ground; "the world is gone after him;" there is a vast crowd attending him,—a world of people; an hyperbole common in most languages. Yet here, like Caiaphas, ere they were aware, they prophesied that the world would go after him; some of all sorts,—some from all parts,—nations shall be disciples. But to what intent was this said? 1st. Thus they express their own vexation at the growth of his interest; their envy makes them fret. If the horn of the righteous be exalted with honour, the wicked see it, and are grieved, *Ps. cxii. 9, 10*. Considering how great these Pharisees were, and what abundance of respect was paid them, one would think they needed not grudge Christ so inconsiderable a piece of honour as was now done him; but proud men would monopolize honour, and have none share with them, like Haman. 2nd. Thus they excite themselves and one another to a more vigorous carrying on of the war against Christ; as if they should say, Dallying and delaying thus will never do; we must take some other and more effectual course to put a stop to this infection; it is time to try our utmost skill and force before the grievance grows past redress. Thus the enemies of religion are made more resolute and active by being baffled; and shall its friends be disheartened with every disappointment, who know its cause is righteous, and will at last be victorious?

20 And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: 21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. 22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. 23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. 26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

Honour is here done to Christ by certain Greeks, that inquired for him with respect. We are not told what day of Christ's last week this was, probably not the same day he rode into Jerusalem, for that day was taken up in public work, but a day or two after.

First. We are told who they were that did this honour to our Lord Jesus; "certain Greeks among" the people who "came up to worship at the feast;" ver. 20. Some think they were Jews of the dispersion, some of the twelve tribes that were scattered among the Gentiles, and were called Greeks, Hellenist Jews; but others think they were Gentiles, those whom they called proselytes of the gate, such as the eunuch, and Cornelius. Pure natural religion met with the best assistance among the Jews; and therefore those among the Gentiles who were piously inclined joined with them in their solemn meetings, as far as was allowed them. There were devout worshippers of the true God even among them that were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. It was in the later ages of the Jewish church that there was this flocking of the Gentiles to the temple at Jerusalem: a happy presage of the taking down of the partition wall between Jews and Gentiles. The forbidding of the priests to accept of any oblation or sacrifice from a Gentile, (which was done by Eleazar the son of Ananias, the high priest,) Josephus saith was one of those things that brought the Romans upon them,—*De Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 30*. Though these Greeks, if uncircumcised, were not admitted to eat the pass-over, yet they "came to worship at the feast." We must thankfully use the privileges we have, though there may be others from which we are shut out.

Secondly. What was the honour they did him; they desired to be acquainted with him, ver. 21; being come to worship at the feast, they desired to make the best use they could of their time; and therefore applied themselves to Philip, desiring that he would put them in a way to get some personal converse with the Lord Jesus.

himself to Christ. This seems the force of verse 26, and may be illustrated by reference to St. Paul's words, *Gal. ii. 20, &c. &c.*

xii. 34. The people understood to "be lifted" according to the known signification of the word, as denoting crucifixion. This is evidently implied by the antithesis, "abideth for ever," and by the following answer of Christ, "yet a little while." "John regarded the crucifixion of Jesus as a symbol. His elevation from earth on the cross is to the evangelist an emblem of his being set

1. Having a desire to see Christ, they were industrious in the use of proper means. They did not conclude it impossible, because he was so much crowded, to get to speak with him, nor rest in bare wishes, but resolved to try what could be done. Note, They that would have the knowledge of Christ must seek it.

2. They made their application to Philip, one of his disciples. Some think they had acquaintance with him formerly, and that they lived near Bethsaida in Galilee of the Gentiles; and then it teacheth us that we should improve our acquaintance with good people for our increase in the knowledge of Christ. It is good to know those who know the Lord. But if these Greeks had been near Galilee, it is probable they would have attended Christ there, where he mostly resided; therefore I think they applied themselves to him only because they saw him a close follower of Christ, and he was the first they could get to speak with. It was an instance of the veneration they had for Christ, that they made an interest with one of his disciples for an opportunity to converse with him; a sign they looked upon him as some great one, though he appeared mean. Those that would see Jesus by faith, now he is in heaven, must apply themselves to his ministers, whom he hath appointed for this purpose, to guide poor souls in their inquiries after him: Paul must send for Ananias, and Cornelius for Peter. The bringing of these Greeks to the knowledge of Christ by the means of Philip, signified the agency of the apostles, and the use made of their ministry in the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith, and the discipling of the nations.

3. Their address to Philip was in short this: "Sir, we would see Jesus." They give him a title of respect, as one worthy of honour, because he was in relation to Christ. Their business is, they "would see Jesus;" not only see his face, that they might be able to say, when they came home, they had seen one that was so much talked of; it is likely they had seen him when he appeared publicly; but they would have some free conversation with him, and be taught by him, which it was no easy thing to find him at leisure for, his hands were so full of public work. Now they were come to worship at the feast, they "would see Jesus." Note, In our attendance upon holy ordinances, and particularly the gospel passover, the great desire of our souls should be to "see Jesus;" to have our acquaintance with him increased, our dependence on him encouraged, our conformity to him carried on; to see him as ours, to keep up communion with him, and derive communications of grace from him; we miss of our end in coming, if we do not "see Jesus."

4. Here is the report which Philip made of this to his Master, ver. 22. He tells Andrew, who was of Bethsaida likewise, and was a senior fellow in the college of the apostles, contemporary with Peter, and consults him what was to be done,—whether he thought the motion would be acceptable or no, because Christ had sometimes said that he was "not sent but to the house of Israel." They agree it must be made; but then he would have Andrew go along with him, remembering the favourable acceptance Christ had promised them, in case two of them should agree touching any thing they should ask, *Mat. xviii. 19*. Note, Christ's ministers should be helpful to one another, and concur in helping souls to Christ: "two are better than one." It should seem Andrew and Philip brought this message to Christ, when he was teaching in public, for we read, ver. 29, of the people "that stood by;" but he was seldom alone.

Thirdly. Christ's acceptance of this honour done him, signified by what he said to the people hereupon, ver. 23, &c., where he foretells both the honour which he himself should have in being followed, ver. 23, 24, and the honour which they should have that followed him, ver. 25, 26. This was intended for the direction and encouragement of these Greeks, and all others that desired acquaintance with him.

1. He foresees that plentiful harvest, in the conversion of the Gentiles, which this was as it were the firstfruits of: ver. 23, Christ said to those two disciples, who spake a good word for those Greeks, but doubted whether they should speed or no, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified," by the accession of the Gentiles to the church; and in order to that, he must be rejected of the Jews. Observe,

1st. The end designed hereby, and that is the glorifying of the Redeemer. 'And is it so? Do the Gentiles begin to inquire after me? Doth the morning star appear to them, and that blessed day-spring, which knows its place, and time too, doth that begin to take hold of the ends of the earth? Then the hour is come for the glorifying of the Son of man.' This was no surprise to Christ, but a paradox to those about him. Note, First. The calling, the effectual calling, of the Gentiles into the church of God greatly redounded to the glory of the Son of man. The multiplying of the redeemed was the magnifying of the Redeemer. Secondly. There was a time, a set time, an hour, a certain hour, for the glorifying of the Son of man, which did come at last, when the days of his humiliation were numbered and finished; and he speaks of the approach of it with exultation and triumph; "the hour is come."

2nd. The strange way in which this end was to be attained, and that was by the death of Christ, intimated in that similitude, ver. 24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," you, to whom I have spoken of my death and sufferings, that "Except a corn of wheat fall," not only to, but "into the ground, and die," and be buried and lost, "it abideth alone," and you never see any more of it; "but if it die," according to the course of nature, (otherwise it would be a miracle,) "it bringeth forth much fruit;" God giving to every seed its own body. Christ is this corn of wheat; the most valuable, useful grain. Now here is,

First. The necessity of Christ's humiliation intimated. He had never been the living, quickening head and root of the church if he had not descended from heaven to this accursed earth, and ascended from earth to the accursed tree, and so accomplished our redemption. He must pour "out his soul unto death," else he cannot "divide a portion with the great," *Isa. liii. 12*. He shall have a seed given him, but he must shed his blood to purchase them and purify them; must win them, and wear them. It was necessary likewise, as a qualification for that glory, which he was to have by the accession of multitudes to his church; for if he had not by his sufferings made satisfaction for sin, and so brought in an everlasting righteousness, he had not been sufficiently provided for the entertainment of those that should come to him, and therefore must abide alone.

Secondly. The advantage of Christ's humiliation illustrated. He fell to the ground in his incarnation, seemed to be buried alive in this earth; so much was his glory veiled; but that was not all, he died; this immortal seed submitted to the laws of mortality, he lay in the grave like seed under the clods; but as the seed comes up again, green and fresh and flourishing, and with a great increase; so one dying Christ gathered to himself thousands of living Christians, and he became their root. The salvation of souls hitherto, and henceforward to the end of time, is all owing to the dying of this Corn of Wheat. Hereby the Father and Son are glorified, the church replenished, the mystical body kept up, and will at length be completed; and when time shall be no more, the Captain of our salvation, bringing many sons to glory, by the virtue of his death, and being so made perfect by sufferings, shall be celebrated for ever with the admiring praises of saints and angels, *Heb. ii. 10, 13*.

2. He foretells and promises an abundant recompence to them who should cordially embrace him and his Gospel and interest, and should make it appear they do so, by their faithfulness in suffering for him, or in serving of him.

up as an ensign (*Isa. xi. 10*), around which the nations should rally; and he would describe the attractive power of the cross as so great, that those who are susceptible follow it, although in the case of every one of them the way to Christ should lead again to death." The idea of the Messiah's continuance naturally arose from such passages as are quoted in the Commentary; but the Jews failed to perceive that in the Old Testament two advents are spoken of, though often so blended as not to be clearly distinguishable.

1st. In suffering for him: ver. 25, "He that loveth his life," better than Christ, "shall lose it;" but "he that hateth his life in this world," and prefers the favour of God, and an interest in Christ before it, "shall keep it unto life eternal." This doctrine Christ much insisted on, it being the great design of his religion to wean us from this world, by setting before us another world.

First. See here the fatal consequence of an inordinate love of life; many a man hugs himself to death, and loseth his life by overloving it. He that so loves his animal life as to indulge his appetite, and make "provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof," shall thereby shorten his days—shall lose the life he is so fond of, and another infinitely better. He that is so much in love with the life of the body, and the ornaments and delights of it, as, for fear of exposing it or them, to deny Christ, he shall lose it, that is, lose a real happiness in the other world, while he thinks to secure an imaginary one in this. Skin for skin a man may give for his life, and make a good bargain; but he that gives his soul, his God, his heaven for it, buys life too dear, and is guilty of his folly who sold a birthright for a mess of pottage.

Secondly. See also the blessed recompence of a holy contempt of life. He that so hates the life of the body as to venture that for the preserving of the life of his soul, shall find both with unspeakable advantage in eternal life. Note, 1st. It is required of the disciples of Christ that they hate their "life in this world;" a life in this world supposeth a life in the other world, and this is hated when it is loved less than that. Our "life in this world" includes all the enjoyments of our present state—riches, honours, pleasures, and long life in the possession of them; these we must hate, that is, despise them as vain and insufficient to make us happy; dread the temptations that are in them, and cheerfully part with them whenever they come in competition with the service of Christ, Acts xx. 24; xxi. 13; Rev. xii. 11. See here much of the power of godliness, that it conquers the strongest natural affections; and much of the mystery of godliness, that it is the greatest wisdom, and yet makes men hate their own lives. 2nd. Those who in love to Christ hate their own lives in this world, shall be abundantly recompensed in the resurrection of the just: "He that hateth his life shall keep it;" that is, he puts it into the hands of one that will "keep it to life eternal," and restore it with as great an improvement as the heavenly life can make of the earthly one.

2nd. In serving of him: ver. 26, "If any man" profess to "serve me, let him follow me," as a servant doth his master; "and where I am," ἐκεῖ καὶ δακνοῦν ὁ ἐμὸς ἔσται, "there let my servant be," (so some read it,) as part of the duty, there let him be to attend upon me; we read it, as part of the promise, "there shall he be" in happiness with me; and lest this should seem a small matter, he adds, "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour;" and that is enough, more than enough.

The Greeks desired to see Jesus, ver. 21; but Christ lets them know it was not enough to see him, they must serve him. He did not come into the world to be a show for us to gaze at, but a king to be ruled by; and he saith this for the encouragement of those who inquired after him to become his servants. In taking servants, it is usual to fix both the work and the wages; Christ doth both here.

1. Here is the work which Christ expects from his servants, and it is very easy and reasonable, and such as becomes them. 1st. Let them attend their Master's motions: "If any man serve me, let him follow me." Christians must follow Christ, follow his methods and prescriptions, do the things that he saith; follow his example and pattern, walk as he also walked; follow his conduct by his providence and Spirit. We must go whither he leads us, and in the way he leads us; must follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes before us. "If any man serve me," that is, if he put himself into that relation to me, let him apply himself to the business of my service, and be always ready at my call; or, if any man do indeed serve me, let him make an open and public profession of his relation to me by following me, as the servant owns his master by following him in the streets. 2nd. Let them attend their Master's repose; where I am, there let my servant be, to wait upon me. Christ is where his church is, in the assemblies of his saints, where his ordinances are administered; and there let his servants be, to present themselves before him, and receive instructions from him. Or, where I am to be, in heaven, whither I am now going, there let the thoughts and affections of my servants be—there let their conversation be, where Christ sitteth, Col. iii. 1, 2.

2. Here are the wages which Christ promiseth to his servants, and they are very rich and noble. 1st. They shall be happy with him; "where I am, there shall also my servant be." To be with him when he was here in poverty and disgrace would seem but poor preferment, and therefore doubtless he means being with him in paradise, sitting with him at his table above, on his throne there. It is the happiness of heaven to be with Christ there, ch. xvii. 24. Christ speaks of heaven's happiness as if he were already in it, "where I am;" because he was sure of it, and near to it, and it was still upon his heart, and in his eye. And the same joy and glory which he thought recompence enough for all his services and sufferings, is proposed to his servants as the recompence of theirs: they that follow him in the way, shall be with him in the end. 2nd. They shall be honoured by his Father; he will make them amends for all their pains and loss, by conferring an honour upon them, such as becomes a great God to give, but far beyond what such worthless worms of the earth could expect to receive. The rewarder is God himself, who takes the services done to the Lord Jesus as done to himself. The reward is honour—true, lasting honour—the highest honour; it is the honour that comes from God. It is said, Pr. xxvii. 18, "He that waits on his master," humbly and diligently, "shall be honoured." Those that wait on Christ, God will put honour upon, such as will be taken notice of another day, though now under a veil. They that serve Christ must humble themselves, and are commonly vilified by the world; in recompence of both which they shall be exalted in due time.

Thus far Christ's discourse has reference to those Greeks who desired to see him, encouraging them to serve him. What became of those Greeks we are not told, but are willing to hope that they who thus asked the way to heaven with their faces thitherward, found it, and walked in it.

27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. 28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. 29 The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. 30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. 31 Now is the judgment

of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33 This he said, signifying what death he should die. 34 The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? 35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. 36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

Honour is here done to Christ by his Father, in a voice from heaven, occasioned by the following part of his discourse, and which gave occasion to a farther conference with the people. In these verses we have,

First. Christ's address to his Father upon occasion of the trouble which seized his spirit at this time; ver. 27, "Now is my soul troubled." A strange word to come from Christ's mouth; and at this time surprising, for it cometh in the midst of divers pleasing prospects, in which one would think he should have said, Now is my soul pleased. Note, Trouble of soul sometimes follows after great enlargements of spirit. In this world of mixture and change we must expect damps upon our joy, and the highest degree of comfort to be the next degree to trouble. When Paul had been in the third heavens he had a thorn in the flesh. Observe,

1. Christ's dread of his approaching sufferings; "Now is my soul troubled." Now the black and dismal scene began; now were the first throes of the travail of his soul; now his agony began, his soul "began to be exceeding sorrowful." Note, 1st. The sin of our soul was the trouble of Christ's soul, when he undertook to redeem and save us, and to make his soul an offering for our sin. 2nd. The trouble of his soul was designed to ease the trouble of our souls; for after this, he said to his disciples, ch. xiv. 1, "Let not your hearts be troubled;" what need yours be troubled and mine too? Our Lord Jesus went on cheerfully in his work, in prospect of the joy set before him, and yet submitted to a trouble of soul. Holy mourning is consistent with spiritual joy, and the way to eternal joy. Christ was now troubled, now in sorrow, now in fear, now, for a season; but it would not be so always, it would not be so long. The same is the comfort of Christians in their troubles; they are but for a moment, and will be turned into joy.

2. The strait he seems to be in hereupon, intimated in those words, "and what shall I say?" This doth not speak him consulting with any other, as if he needed advice, but considering with himself what was fit to be said now. When our souls are troubled, we must take heed of speaking unadvisedly, but debate with ourselves what we shall say. Christ speaks like one at a loss, as if what he should choose he wot not. There was a struggle between the work he had taken upon him, which required sufferings, and the nature he had taken upon him, which dreaded them; between these two he here pauseth with "what shall I say?" He looked, and there was none to help; which put him to a stand. Calvin observes this as a great instance of Christ's humiliation, that he should speak thus like one at a plunge. *Quo se magis exinanivit glorie Dominus, eo luculentius habemus erga nos amoris specimen.*—The more entirely the Lord of glory emptied himself, the brighter is the proof of the love he bore us. Thus he "was in all points tempted like as we are," to encourage us, when we know not what to do, to have our eyes to him.

3. His prayer to God in this strait; "Father, save me from this hour," ἐκ τῆς ὥρας ταύτης,—"out of this hour;" praying not so much that it might not come, as that he might be brought through it. "Save me from this hour;" this was the language of innocent nature, and its resentments poured forth in prayer. Note, It is the duty and interest of troubled souls to have recourse to God by faithful and fervent prayer, and in prayer to eye him as a Father. Christ was voluntary in his sufferings, and yet prayed to be saved from them. Note, Prayer against a trouble may very well consist with patience under it, and submission to the will of God in it. Observe, He calls his suffering "this hour," meaning the expected events of the time now at hand; hereby he intimates that the time of his suffering was, 1st. A set time, set to an hour, and he knew it. It was said twice before that his hour was not yet come; but it was now so near that he might say it was come. 2nd. A short time; an hour is soon over, so were Christ's sufferings; he could see through them to "the joy set before him."

4. His acquiescence in his Father's will notwithstanding. He presently corrects himself, and as it were recalls what he had said; "but for this cause came I to this hour." Innocent nature got the first word, but Divine wisdom and love got the last. Note, They who would proceed regularly must go upon second thought: the complainant speaks first; but if we would judge righteously, we must hear the other side. The second thought he checked himself with was, "for this cause came I to this hour." He doth not silence himself with this, that he could not avoid it, there was no remedy; but satisfies himself with this, that he would not avoid it; for it was pursuant to his own voluntary engagement, and was to be the crown of his whole undertaking: should he now fly off, it would frustrate all that had been done hitherto. Reference is here had to the Divine counsels concerning his sufferings, by virtue of which thus it becometh him to submit and suffer. Note, This should reconcile us to the darkest hours of our lives, that we were all along designed for them: see 1 Thes. iii. 3.

5. His regard to his Father's honour herein. Upon the withdrawing of his former petition, he presents another, which he will abide by, "Father, glorify thy name;" to the same purpose with, "Father, thy will be done;" for God's will is for his own glory. This speaks more than barely a submission to the will of God; it is a consecration of his sufferings to the glory of God. It was a mediatorial word, and was spoken by him as our surety, who had undertaken to satisfy Divine justice for our sin. The wrong which by sin we have done to God is in his glory—his declarative glory; for in nothing else are we capable of doing him injury. We were never able to make him satisfaction for this wrong done to him, nor any creature for us; nothing therefore remained, but

xii. 35. "Lest darkness come upon you," &c.: "Exert yourselves, that darkness overtake you not." Through him they might obtain certain knowledge and guidance, and become (so Alford) sons of light. Leaving him, or refusing his aid, they would soon be left to their own ignorance and error.

xii. 37. As the public ministry of Christ here closed, John appends some concluding remarks on the unbelief of the people. First, he speaks of those who seemed quite unsusceptible, and then

(verses 42, 43) of those who were impressed, but were restrained by the fear of men from free confession. The design of the observations is to show that this unbelief did not at all set aside the purposes of God, but, on the contrary, fulfilled them. The first passage quoted (Isa. liii. 1) refers to the actual result of the preaching of the suffering Redeemer. The second passage (Isa. vi. 10) expresses in the strongest possible manner the sentiment conveyed in the words, "they could not believe." Many among the people

that God should get him honour upon us in our utter ruin. Here, therefore, our Lord Jesus interposed, undertook to satisfy God's injured honour, and he did it by his humiliation; he denied himself in, and divested himself of, the honours due to the Son of God incarnate, and submitted to the greatest reproach. Now here he makes a tender of this satisfaction as an equivalent, "Father, glorify thy name;" let thy justice be honoured upon the sacrifice, not upon the sinner; let the debt be levied upon me; I am solvent, the principal is not: thus he restored that which he took not away.

Secondly. The Father's answer to this address; for he heard him always, and doth still. Observe,

1. How this answer was given, by "a voice from heaven." The Jews speak much of a *Bath-kol*,—"the daughter of a voice;" as one of those divers manners by which God in time past spake to the prophets; but we do not find any instance of his speaking thus to any but to our Lord Jesus; it was an honour reserved for him, *Mat. iii. 17*; *xvii. 5*; and here probably this audible voice was introduced by some visible appearance, either of light or darkness, for both have been used as vehicles of the Divine glory.

2. What the answer was; it was an express return to that petition, "Father, glorify thy name." "I have glorified it" already, "and I will glorify it yet again." When we pray as we are taught, "Our Father, hallowed be thy name," this is a comfort to us, that it is an answered prayer—answered to Christ here, and in him to all true believers. 1st. The name of God had been glorified in the life of Christ, in his doctrine and miracles, and all the examples he gave of holiness and goodness. 2nd. It should be farther glorified in the death and sufferings of Christ: his wisdom and power, his justice and holiness, his truth and goodness, were greatly glorified; the demands of a broken law were fully answered; the affront done to God's government satisfied for; and God accepted the satisfaction, and declared himself well pleased. What God has done, for the glorifying of his own name, is an encouragement to us to expect what he will yet farther do. He that has secured the interests of his own glory, will still.

Thirdly. The opinion of the standers by, concerning this voice, *ver. 28*. We may hope there were some among them whose minds were so well prepared to receive a Divine revelation, that they understood what was said, and they bare record of it. But notice is here taken of the perverse suggestion of the multitude: some of them said it thundered; others, who took notice that there was plainly an articulate, intelligible voice, said, For certain "an angel spake to him." Now this shews,

1. That it was a real thing, even in the judgment of those that were not at all well affected to him.

2. That they were loath to admit so plain a proof of Christ's Divine mission: they would rather say it was this, or that, or any thing, than that God spake to him in answer to his prayer; and yet, if it thundered with articulate sounds, (as *Rev. x. 3, 4*), was not that God's voice? or, if angels spake to him, are not they God's messengers? But thus "God speaks once, yea twice, and man perceives it not."

Fourthly. The account which our Saviour himself gives of this voice. 1. Why it was sent, *ver. 30*. It "came not because of me," not merely for my encouragement and satisfaction;—then it might have been whispered in his ear privately,—"but for your sakes." 1st. That all you who heard it may believe that the Father hath sent me. What is said from heaven concerning our Lord Jesus, and the glorifying of the Father in him, is said for our sakes, that we might be brought to submit to him, and rest upon him. 2nd. That you, my disciples, who are to follow me in sufferings, may therein be comforted with the same comforts that carry me on. Let this encourage them to part with life itself, for his sake, if they were called to it, that it should redound to the honour of God. Note, The promises and supports granted to our Lord Jesus in his sufferings were intended for our sakes; for our sakes he sanctified himself, and comforted himself.

2. What was the meaning of it. He that lay in the Father's bosom, knew his voice, and what was the meaning of it: and two things God intended when he said that he would glorify his own name.

1st. That, by the death of Christ, Satan shall be conquered: *ver. 31*. "Now is the judgment." He speaks with a Divine exultation and triumph. Now the year of my redeemed is come, and the time prefixed for the breaking of the serpent's head, and giving a total rent to the powers of darkness; now for that glorious achievement; now—now, that great work is to be done which has been so long thought of in the Divine counsels, so long talked of in the written word; which has been so much the hope of saints, and the dread of devils. The matter of the triumph is,

First. That "now is the judgment of the world." *κρίσις*, take it as a physical term, now is the crisis of this world. The sick and diseased world is now upon the turning point; this is the critical day upon which the trembling scale will turn for life or death to all mankind: all that are not recovered by this will be left helpless and hopeless. Or rather, it is a law term, as we take it; now judgment is entered, in order to the taking out of execution against the prince of this world. Note, The death of Christ was the judgment of this world. 1st. It is a judgment of discovery and distinction; *judicium discretivum*,—so Austin. Now is the trial of this world; for men shall have their character according as the cross of Christ is to them: to some it is foolishness and a stumblingblock; to others it is the wisdom and power of God; of which there was a figure in the two thieves that were crucified with him. By this men are judged, what they think of the death of Christ. 2nd. It is a judgment of favour and absolution to the chosen ones that are in the world. Christ upon the cross interposed between a righteous God and a guilty world, as a sacrifice for sin, and a surety for sinners; so that when he was judged, and iniquity laid upon him, and he was wounded for our transgressions, it was as if it were the judgment of this world; for an everlasting righteousness was thereby brought in, not for Jews only, but for the whole world, *1 Jno. ii. 1, 2*; *Dan. ix. 24*. 3rd. It is a judgment of condemnation given against the powers of darkness: see *ch. xvi. 11*. Judgment is put for vindication and deliverance,—the asserting of an invaded right. At the death of Christ there was a famous trial between Christ and Satan,—the serpent and the promised seed; the trial was for the world, and the lordship of it: the devil had long borne sway among the children of men, time out of mind; he now pleads prescription, grounding his claim also upon the forfeiture incurred by sin. We find him willing to have come to a composition, *Lx. iv. 6, 7*; he would have given the kingdoms of this world to Christ, provided he would hold them by, from, and under him. But Christ would try it out with him: by trying he takes off the forfeiture to Divine justice; and then fairly disputes the title, and recovers it in the court of Heaven. Satan's dominion is declared to be a usurpation, and the world adjudged to the Lord Jesus as his right, *Ps. ii. 6, 8*. The judgment of this world is, that it belongs to Christ, and not to Satan: to Christ, therefore, let us all attain tenants.

Secondly. That "now is the prince of this world cast out." 1st. It is the devil that is here called "the prince of this world;" because he rules over the men of the world by the things of the world: he is "the ruler of the darkness of this world;" that is, of this dark world, of those in it that walk in darkness, *2 Cor. iv. 4*; *Eph. vi. 12*.

2nd. He is said to be cast out, to be now cast out; for whatever had been done hitherto towards the weakening of the devil's kingdom, was done in the

virtue of a Christ to come, and therefore is said to be done now. Christ, reconciling the world to God by the merit of his death, broke the power of death, and cast out Satan as a destroyer; Christ, reducing the world to God by the doctrine of his cross, broke the power of sin, and cast out Satan as a deceiver: the bruising of his heel was the breaking of the serpent's head, *Gen. iii. 15*. When his oracles were silenced, his temples forsaken, his idols furnished, and the kingdoms of the world become Christ's kingdoms, then was the prince of this world cast out; as appears by comparing this with John's vision, *Rev. xii. 8—11*; where it is said to be done by the blood of the Lamb. Christ's frequent casting of devils out of the bodies of people was an indication of the great design of his whole undertaking. Observe with what assurance Christ here speaks of the victory over Satan; it is as good as done; and even when he yields to death, he triumphs over it.

2nd. That, by the death of Christ, souls should be converted; and that would be the casting out of Satan: *ver. 32*. "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me." Where observe two things:

First. The great design of our Lord Jesus, which was to draw all men to him; not the Jews only, who had been long in profession a people near to God, but the Gentiles also, who had been afar off; for he was to be "the desire of all nations," *Hag. ii. 7*; and to him must "the gathering of the people be." That which his enemies dreaded was, that the world would go after him, and he would draw them to him, notwithstanding their opposition. Observe here how Christ himself is all in all, in the conversion of a soul. 1st. It is Christ that draws; "I will draw." It is sometimes ascribed to the Father, *ch. vi. 44*; but here to the Son, who is the arm of the Lord. He doth not drive by force, but draw with the cords of a man, *Hos. xi. 4*; *Jer. xxxi. 3*; draws as the loadstone: the soul is made willing, but it is in a day of power. 2nd. It is in Christ that we are drawn; "I will draw them to me," as the centre of their unity. The soul that was at a distance from Christ is brought into an acquaintance with him; that was shy and distrustful of him, is brought to love him and trust him; drawn up to his terms, into his arms. Christ was now going to heaven, and he would draw men's hearts to him thither.

Secondly. The strange method he took to accomplish his design, by being "lifted up from the earth." What he meant by that, to prevent mistakes, we are told, *ver. 33*. "This he said, signifying what death he should die," namely, the death of the cross; though they had designed and attempted to stone him to death. He that was crucified was first nailed to the cross, and then lifted up upon it; he was lifted up as a spectacle to the world; lifted up between heaven and earth, as unworthy of either; yet the word here used signified an honourable advancement, *ἐν ὑψώθῃ*,—"if I be exalted;" he reckoned his sufferings his honour. Whatever death we die, if we die in Christ, we shall be lifted up out of this dungeon, this den of lions, into the regions of light and love. We should learn of our Master to speak of dying with a holy pleasantness, and to say, we shall then be lifted up.

Now Christ's drawing all men to him, followed his being "lifted up from the earth." 1st. It followed after it in time. The great increase of the church was after the death of Christ: while Christ lived, we read of thousands at a sermon miraculously fed; but it was after his death that we read of thousands at a sermon added to the church, which should be saved. Israel began to multiply in Egypt after the death of Joseph. 2nd. It followed upon it, as a blessed consequence of it. Note, There is a powerful virtue and efficacy in the death of Christ, to draw souls to him. The cross of Christ, though to some it is a stumblingstone, to others it is a loadstone. Some make it an allusion to the drawing of fish into a net; the lifting up of Christ was as the spreading of the net, *Mat. xiii. 47, 48*; or to the setting up of a standard, which draws soldiers together; or rather, it refers to the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness, which drew all those to it that were stung with fiery serpents; as soon as ever it was known that it was lifted up, and there was healing virtue in it, oh! what flocking was there to it: so there was to Christ, when salvation through him was preached to all nations: see *ch. iii. 14, 15*. Perhaps it has some reference to the posture in which Christ was crucified, with his arms stretched out, to invite all to him, and embrace all that come. They that put Christ to that ignominious death, thought thereby to drive all men from him; but the devil was outshot in his own bow; "out of the eater came forth meat."

Fifthly. The people's exception against what he said, and their cavil at it, *ver. 34*. Though they had heard the voice from heaven, and the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, yet they object and pick quarrels with him. Christ had called himself the Son of man, *ver. 23*, which they knew to be one of the titles of the Messiah, *Dan. vii. 13*. He had also said, that "the Son of man must be lifted up;" which they understood of his dying, and probably he explained himself so; and some think, repeated what he said to Nicodemus, *ch. iii. 14*, "so must the Son of man be lifted up." Now against this,

1. They allege those Scriptures of the Old Testament which speak of the perpetuity of the Messiah; that he should be so far from being cut off in the midst of his days, that he should be a priest for ever, *Ps. cx. 4*, and a king for ever, *Ps. lxxxix. 29*, &c.; that he should have length of days for ever and ever, and his years as many generations, *Ps. xx. 4*; *Isa. ix. 6*: from all this they inferred that the Messiah should not die: thus great knowledge in the letter of the Scripture, if the heart be unsanctified, is capable of being abused to serve the cause of infidelity, and to fight against Christianity with its own weapons. Their perverseness in opposing this to what Jesus had said, will appear, if we consider, 1st. That when they vouched the Scripture to prove that the Messiah abideth for ever, they took no notice of those texts which speak of the Messiah's death and sufferings; they had "heard out of the law that Messiah abideth for ever," and had they never heard out of that law, that "Messiah shall be cut off?" *Dan. ix. 26*; and that he shall pour "out his soul unto death," *Isa. liii. 12*; and particularly that his hands and feet should be pierced? why then do they make so strange of the lifting up of the Son of man? Note, We often run into great mistakes, and then defend them with Scripture arguments, by putting those things asunder which God, in his word, has put together; and opposing one truth, under pretence of supporting another. We have heard out of the Gospel that which exalts free grace; we have heard also that which enjoins duty; and we must cordially embrace both, and not separate them, or set them at variance. 2nd. That when they opposed what Christ said concerning the sufferings of the Son of man, they took no notice of what he had said concerning his glory and exaltation. They had "heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever;" and had they not heard our Lord Jesus say that he should be glorified; that he should bring forth much fruit, and draw all men to him? had he not just now promised immortal honours to his followers, which supposed his abiding for ever? but this they overlook. Thus unfair disputants oppose some parts of the opinion of an adversary, which, if they would but take entire, they could not but subscribe to: and in the doctrine of Christ there are paradoxes which, to men of corrupt minds, are stones of stumbling; as Christ crucified, and yet glorified; lifted up from the earth, and yet drawing all men to him.

2. They ask, hereupon, "who is this Son of man?" This they asked, not with a desire to be instructed, but tauntingly, and insultingly; as if now they had baffled him, and run him down. "Thou sayest the Son of man must die;

had lost all susceptibility of belief. Impressions neglected, wickedness indulged in, harden the heart, sear the conscience, and even blessings become curses (*Mal. ii. 2*).

xii. 41. "And spake of him:" rather, "and he spake of him." The importance of this verse lies in the fact that St. John declares Isaiah to have spoken of Christ. Hence (as Olshausen says) John recognised the majestic appearance seen by Isaiah as a manifestation of the *Logos*, the Son of God. This necessarily follows

from the essential relation of the Son to the Father; for the Son is the revelation of the Father, as language is the disclosure of the hidden mind in man. Such passages as *1 Cor. x. 4*; *Heb. xi. 26*; *1 Pet. i. 11*, show that the same view respecting the Son as the one revealer of the Father was entertained by the other writers of the New Testament.

xii. 42. "The chief rulers also:" better, "Even of the rulers many believed in him."

we have proved the Messiah must not; and where is then thy Messiahship? This Son of man, as thou callest thyself, cannot be the Messiah; thou must therefore think of something else to pretend to.' Now that which prejudiced them against Christ, was his meanness and poverty; they would rather have no Christ than a suffering one.

Sixthly. What Christ said to this exception; or rather, what he said upon it. The objection was a perfect cavil; they might, if they pleased, answer it themselves. Man dies, and yet is immortal, and abideth for ever; so the Son of man; therefore, instead of answering these fools according to their folly, he gives them a serious caution to take heed of trifling away the day of their opportunities in such vain and fruitless cavils as these: ver. 35, 36, "Yet a little while," and but a little while, "is the light with you;" therefore be wise for yourselves, and "walk while ye have the light."

In general we may observe here, 1st. The concern Christ has for the souls of men, and his desire of their welfare. With what tenderness doth he here admonish those to look well to themselves who were contriving ill against him; even when he endured the contradiction of sinners, he endeavoured their conversion: see *Pr.* xxix. 10. 2nd. The method he takes with those objectors; "with meekness instructing those that opposed themselves," 2 *Tim.* ii. 25. Were but men's consciences awakened with a due concern about their everlasting state, and did they consider how little time they have to spend, and none to spare, they would not waste precious thoughts and time in trifling cavils. Particularly we have here,

1. The privilege and advantage they enjoyed in having Christ and his Gospel among them, with the shortness and uncertainty of their enjoyment of it: "Yet a little while is the light with you." Christ is this light; and some of the ancients suggest, that in calling himself the light, he gives a tacit answer to their objection. His lying upon the cross was as consistent with his abiding for ever, as the setting of the sun every night is with his perpetuity; the duration of Christ's kingdom is compared to that of the sun and moon, *Ps.* lxxii. 17; *lxxxix.* 36, 37. The ordinances of heaven are unchangeably fixed, and yet the sun and moon set and are eclipsed; so Christ, the sun of righteousness, abides for ever, and yet was eclipsed by his sufferings, and was but a little while within our horizon. Now, 1st. The Jews at this time had the Light with them; they had Christ's bodily presence, heard his preaching, saw his miracles; the Scripture is to us a light shining in a dark place. 2nd. It was to be but a little while with them: Christ would shortly leave them; their visible church state would soon after be dissolved, and the kingdom of God taken from them, and blindness and hardness would happen unto Israel. Note, It is good for us all to consider what a little while we are to have the light with us: time is short, and perhaps opportunity not so long; the candlestick may be removed; however, we must be removed shortly. Yet a little while is the light of life with us; yet a little while is the light of the Gospel with us,—the day of grace, the means of grace, the Spirit of grace, yet a very little while.

2. The warning given them to make the best of these advantages while they enjoyed them, because of the danger they were in of losing them: "Walk while ye have the light," as travellers who make the best of their way forward, that they may not be benighted in their journey; because travelling in the night is uncomfortable and unsafe. 'Come,' say they, 'let us mend our pace, and get forward while we have daylight;' thus wise should we be for our souls, who are journeying towards eternity. Note, 1st. It is our business to walk, to press forward towards heaven, and to get nearer it, by being made fitter for it: our life is but a day, and we have a day's journey to go. 2nd. The best time of walking is, while we have the light: the day is the proper season for work, as the night is for rest. The proper time for getting grace is, when we have the word of grace preached to us, and the Spirit of grace striving with us; and therefore then is the time to be busy. 3rd. We are highly concerned thus to improve our opportunities, for fear lest our day be finished before we have finished our day's work, and day's journey; "lest darkness come upon you," lest you lose your opportunities, and can neither recover them, nor despatch the business you have to do without them. Then darkness comes; that is, such an utter incapacity to make sure the great salvation as renders the state of the careless sinner quite deplorable; so that, if his work be undone then, it is like to be undone for ever.

3. The sad condition of those who have sinned away the Gospel, and are come to the period of their day of grace. They walk in darkness, and know neither where they go, nor whither they go; neither the way they are walking in, nor the end they are walking towards. He that is destitute of the light of the Gospel, and is not acquainted with its discoveries and directions, he wanders endlessly in mistakes and errors, and a thousand crooked paths, and is not aware of it. Set aside the instructions of the Christian doctrine, and we know little of the difference between good and evil. He is going to destruction, and knows not his danger, for he is either sleeping or dancing at the pit's brink.

4. The great duty and interest of every one of us, inferred from all this, ver. 36: "While ye have light, believe in the light." The Jews had now Christ's presence with them, let them improve it; afterwards they had the first offers of the Gospel made to them by the apostles, wherever they came. Now this is an admonition to them not to outstand their market, but to accept the offer when it was made them. The same Christ saith to us all who enjoy the Gospel. Note, 1st. It is the duty of every one of us to believe in the Gospel light, to receive it as a Divine light, to subscribe to the truths it discovers, for it is a light to our eyes; and to follow its conduct, for it is a light to our feet. Christ is the light, and we must believe in him as he is revealed to us; as a true light, that will not deceive us; a sure light, that will not misguide us. 2nd. We are concerned to do this while we have the light; to lay hold on Christ while we have the Gospel to shew the way to him, and direct us in that way. 3rd. They that believe in the light shall be the children of light; they shall be owned as Christians, who are called children of light, *Lu.* xvi. 8; *Eph.* v. 8; and of the day, 1 *Thes.* v. 5. They that have God for their Father are children of light, for God is light; they are born from above, and heirs of heaven, and children of light, for heaven is light.

Seventhly. Christ's retiring from them hereupon: "These things spake Jesus," and said no more at this time, but left this to their consideration, "and departed, and did hide himself from them." And this he did, 1. For their conviction and awakening. If they will not regard what he hath said, he will have nothing more to say to them; they are joined to their infidelity, as Ephraim to idols; let them alone. Note, Christ justly removes the means of grace from those that quarrel with them, and hides his face from a froward generation, *Deu.* xxxii. 21. 2. For his own preservation. He hid himself from their rage and fury, retreating, it is probable, to Bethany, where he lodged. By this it appears that what he said irritated and exasperated them, and they were made worse by that which should have made them better.

37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be

fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

We have here the honour done to our Lord Jesus by the Old Testament prophets, who foretold and lamented the infidelity of the many that believed not on him. It was indeed a dishonour and grief to Christ, that his doctrine met with so little acceptance, and so much opposition; but this takes off the wonder and reproach, makes the offence of it to cease, and made it no disappointment to Christ, that herein the Scriptures were fulfilled. Two things are here said concerning this untractable people, and both were foretold by the evangelical prophet Esaias,—that they *did not believe*, and that they *could not believe*.

First. They did not believe, ver. 37, "though he had done so many miracles before them," which one would think should have convinced them, "yet they believed not," but opposed him. Observe,

1. The plenty of the means of conviction which Christ afforded them; he did miracles, so many miracles, *σοφιστὰ ἐνδεία*, it signifies both so many, and so great. It refers to all the miracles he had wrought formerly; nay, the blind and lame now came to him into the temple, and he healed them, *Mat.* xxi. 14. His miracles were the greatest proof of his mission, and on the evidence of them he relied. Two things concerning them he here insists upon: 1st. The number of them, they were many; various, and of divers kinds; numerous, and often repeated; and every new miracle confirmed the reality of all that went before. The multitude of his miracles was not only a proof of his unexhausted power, but gave the greater opportunity to examine them; and if there had been a cheat in them, it was morally impossible but that in some or other of them it would have been discovered; and being all miracles of mercy, the more there were, the more good was done. 2nd. The notoriety of them. He wrought these miracles before them, not at a distance, nor in a corner, but before many witnesses, appealing to their own eyes.

2. The inefficacy of these means; "yet they believed not on him;" they could not gainsay the premises, and yet would not grant the conclusion. Note, The most plentiful and powerful means of conviction will not of themselves work faith in the depraved, prejudiced hearts of men. These saw, and yet believed not.

3. The fulfilling of the Scripture in this; ver. 38, "that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled;" not that that these infidel Jews designed the fulfilling the Scripture; they rather fancied those scriptures which speak of the church's best sons to be fulfilled in themselves; but the event exactly answered the prediction, 'so that' (*ut for ita ut*) this saying of Esaias was fulfilled. The more improbable any event is, the more doth a Divine foresight appear in the prediction of it. One could not have imagined that the kingdom of the Messiah, supported with such pregnant proofs, should have met with so much opposition among the Jews; and therefore their unbelief is called a marvellous work, and a wonder, *Isa.* xxix. 9, 14. Christ himself marvelled at it; but it was what Esaias foretold, *Isa.* liii. 1; and now it is accomplished. Observe, 1st. The Gospel is here called their report; "who has believed," *ἡ ἀκοή ἡμῶν*, 'our hearing,' which we have heard from God, and which you have heard from us. Our report is the report that we bring; like the report of a matter of fact, or the report of a solemn resolution in the senate. 2nd. It is foretold that few, comparatively, of those to whom this report is brought, will be persuaded to give credit to it: many hear it, but few heed it, and embrace it. Who hath believed it? Here and there one, but none to speak of; not the wise, not the noble; it is to them but a report which wants confirmation. 3rd. It is spoken of as a thing to be greatly lamented, that so few believe the report of the Gospel. "Lord" is here prefixed from the Seventy, but is not in the Hebrew; and it intimates a sorrowful account brought to God, by the messengers, of the cold entertainment which they and their report had; as "the servant came and shewed his lord all these things" *Lu.* xiv. 21. 4th. The reason why men believe not the report of the Gospel is, because the arm of the Lord is not revealed to them: that is, because they do not acquaint themselves with, and submit themselves to, the grace of God; they do not experimentally know the virtue and fellowship of Christ's death and resurrection, in which the arm of the Lord is revealed: they saw Christ's miracles, but did not see the arm of the Lord revealed in them.

Secondly. They could not believe, and therefore they could not, "because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes." This is a hard saying, who can explain it? We are sure God is infinitely just and merciful, and therefore cannot think there is in any such an impotency to good, resulting from the counsels of God, as lays them under a fatal necessity of being evil. God damns none by mere sovereignty; yet it is said, "they could not believe." St. Austin, coming in course to the exposition of these words, expresseth himself with a holy fear of entering upon an inquiry into this mystery: *Iusta sunt iudicia ejus, sed occulta*.—His judgments are just, but hidden.

1. They could not believe; that is, they would not; they were obstinately resolved in their infidelity: thus Chrysostom and Austin incline to understand it; and the former gives divers instances of Scripture of the putting of an impotency to signify the invincible refusal of the will, as *Gen.* xxvii. 4, "they could not speak peaceably to him;" and *ch.* vii. 7. This is a moral impotency, like that of one that is accustomed to do evil, *Jer.* xiii. 23. But,

2. "They could not, because Esaias had said, He hath blinded their eyes." Here the difficulty increaseth; it is certain God is not the author of sin, and yet,

1st. There is a righteous hand of God sometimes to be acknowledged in the blindness and obstinacy of those who persist in impenitency and unbelief, by which they are justly punished for their former resistance of the Divine light, and rebellion against the Divine law. If God withhold abused grace, and give men over to indulged lusts; if he permit the evil spirit to do his work on them that resisted the good Spirit; and if in his providence he lay stumblingblocks in sinners' way, which confirm their prejudices, then he blinds their eyes, and hardens their hearts, and these are spiritual judgments, like the giving up of idolatrous Gentiles to vile affections, and degenerate Christians to strong delusions.

Observe the method of conversion implied here, and the steps taken in it. First. Sinners are brought to see with their eyes, to discern the reality of

them to the death. Even at the moment when the mind would be most naturally absorbed with the prospect of his coming sorrow, his heart and thoughts were at leisure, and ready to think and plan for his disciples' good. John xvii. 6—26 may be read as an expansion of these words.

xiii. 2. "Being ended," or rather, "being prepared:" Alford has "when supper was begun." It was not ended, as we may see from verse 26. "The devil;" "This observation is introduced to keep

xii. 43. "The praise of men," "the praise of God:" rather, "They loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God" (Alford).

xiii. 1. In the interval between the conclusion of chap. xii. and this chapter—i.e., from Sunday night to Thursday night—occurred the events and discourses related in Mark xi. 12—xiv. 2; Matt. xxi. 23—xxvi. 5; Luke xx. 1—xxii. 6. "He loved them unto the end" means not simply that he loved them as long as he lived, but that he loved

Divine things, and to have some knowledge of them. *Secondly*. To understand with their heart, to apply these things to themselves; not only to assent and approve, but to consent and accept. *Thirdly*. To be converted, and effectually turned from sin to Christ, from the world and the flesh to God, as their felicity and portion. *Fourthly*. Then God will heal them, will justify and sanctify them; will pardon their sins, which are as bleeding wounds, and mortify their corruptions, which are as lurking diseases. Now, when God denies his grace, nothing of this is done; the alienation of the mind from, and its aversion to God and the Divine life, grows into a rooted and invincible antipathy, and so the case becomes desperate.

2nd. This judicial blindness and hardness is, in the word of God, threatened against those who wilfully persist in wickedness, and was particularly foretold concerning the Jewish church and nation. Known unto God are all his works, and all ours too. Christ knew before who would betray him, and spoke of it, *ch. vi. 70*. This is a confirmation of the truth of Scripture prophecies, and thus even the unbelief of the Jews may help to strengthen our faith. It is also intended for caution to particular persons, to "beware lest that come upon them which was spoken of in the prophets," *Acts xiii. 40*.

3rd. What God has foretold will certainly come to pass; and so by a necessary consequence, in order of arguing, it might be said, that therefore they could not believe, because God by the prophets had foretold they would not; for such is the knowledge of God, that he cannot be deceived in what he foresees; and such his truth, that he cannot deceive in what he foretells; so that the Scripture cannot be broken. Yet be it observed, that the prophecy did not name particular persons; so that it might not be said, therefore such a one, and such a one, could not believe, because Isaiah had said so and so; but it pointed at the body of the Jewish nation, which would persist in their infidelity, "Until their cities were wasted without inhabitant," as it follows, *Isa. vi. 11, 12*; yet still reserving a remnant, *ver. 13*, "in it shall be a tenth;" which reserve was sufficient to keep a door of hope open to particular persons; for each one might say, Why may not I be of that remnant?

Lastly. The evangelist having quoted the prophecy, shews, *ver. 41*, that it was intended to look farther than the prophet's own days, and that its principal reference was to the days of the Messiah; "these things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him."

1. We read in the prophecy that this was said to Isaiah, *Isa. vi. 8*; but here we are told it was said by him to the purpose; for nothing was said by him as a prophet which was not first said to him; nor any thing said to him which was not afterwards said by him to those to whom he was sent: see *Isa. xxi. 10*.

2. The vision which the prophet there had of the glory of God, is here said to be his seeing the glory of Jesus Christ; "he saw his glory." Jesus Christ therefore is equal in power and glory with the Father, and his praises equally celebrated. Christ had a glory before the foundation of the world, and Isaiah saw this.

3. It is said that the prophet there spake of him. It seems to have been spoken of the prophet himself, for to him the commission and instructions were there given; and yet it is here said to be spoken of Christ, for as all the prophets testified of him, so they all typified him. This they spake of him, that as to many, his coming would be not only fruitless, but fatal, a savour of death unto death. It might be objected against his doctrine, if it was from Heaven, why did not the Jews believe it? But this is an answer to it; it was not for want of evidence, but because their heart was made fat, and their ears heavy. It was spoken of Christ, that he should be glorified in the ruin of an unbelieving multitude, as well as in the salvation of a distinguished remnant.

42 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Some honour was done to Christ by these rulers, for they believed on him, were convinced that he was sent of God, and received his doctrine as divine; but they did not do him honour enough, for they had not courage to own their faith in him. Many professed more kindness for Christ than really they had, these had more kindness for him than they were willing to profess. See here what a struggle was in these rulers between their convictions and their corruptions.

First. See the power of the Word in the convictions that many of them were under, who did not wilfully shut their eyes against the light. They believed on him as Nicodemus, received him as a teacher come from God. Note, The truth of the Gospel hath perhaps a better interest in the consciences of men than we are aware of. Many cannot but approve of that in their hearts, which yet outwardly they are shy of. Perhaps these chief rulers were true believers, though very weak, and their faith like smoking flax. Note, It may be there are more good people than we think there are. Elijah thought he was left alone, when God had seven thousand faithful worshippers in Israel. Some are really better than they seem to be; their faults are known, but their repentance is not. A man's goodness may be concealed by a culpable, yet pardonable weakness, which he himself truly repents of. The kingdom of God comes not in all with a like observation; nor have all they that are good the faculty of shewing it, as some have.

Secondly. See the power of the world in the smothering of these convictions. They believed in Christ; but because of the Pharisees, who had it in their power to do them a diskindness, they durst not confess him, for fear of being excommunicated. Observe here,

1. Wherein they failed, and were defective; "they did not confess Christ." Note, There is cause to question the sincerity of that faith which is either afraid or ashamed to shew itself; for those who believe with the heart, ought to confess with the mouth, *Rom. x. 8*.

2. What they feared; being "put out of the synagogue," which they thought would be a disgrace and damage to them; as if it would do them any harm to be expelled a synagogue that had made itself a synagogue of Satan, and from which God was departing.

3. What was at the bottom of this fear; "they loved the praise of men;" chose it as a more valuable good, and pursued it as a more desirable end, "than the praise of God;" which was an implicit idolatry, like that, *Rom. i. 25*, of "worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator." They set these two in the scale one against another, and having weighed them, they proceeded accordingly. 1st. They set the praise of men in one scale, and considered how good it was to give praise to men, and to pay a deference to the opinion of the Pharisees, and to receive praise from men, to be commended by the chief priests, and applauded by the people as good sons of the church, the Jewish church; and they would not confess Christ, lest they should thereby derogate from the reputation of the Pharisees, and forfeit their own, and balk their own preferment. And besides, the followers of Christ were put into an

ill name, and were looked upon with contempt, which they, who had been used to honour, could not bear. Yet perhaps if they had known one another's minds, they would have had more courage; but each one thought, if he should declare himself in favour of Christ, he should stand alone, and have nobody to back him; whereas, if any one had had resolution to break the ice, he would have had more seconds than he thought of. 2nd. They put the praise of God in the other scale; they were sensible that by confessing Christ they should both give praise to God and have praise from God; that he would be pleased with them, and say, Well done. But, 3rd. They gave the preference to the praise of men, and that turned the scale; sense prevailed above faith, and represented it more desirable to stand right in the opinion of the Pharisees than to be accepted of God. Note, Love of the praise of men is a very great prejudice of the power and practice of religion and godliness. Many come short of the glory of God, by having a regard to the applause of men, and a value for that. Love of the praise of men, as a by-end in that which is good, will make a man a hypocrite when religion is in fashion, and credit is to be got by it; and, as a base principle in that which is evil, it will make a man an apostate when religion is in disgrace, and credit is to be lost for it, as here: see *Rom. ii. 29*.

44 Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. 45 And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. 46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. 47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. 49 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. 50 And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

We have here the honour Christ—not assumed, but—asserted to himself, in the account he gave of his mission and his errand into the world. Probably this discourse was not at the same time with that before, for then he departed: *ver. 36*; but some time after, when he made another public appearance; and, as this evangelist records it, it was Christ's farewell sermon to the Jews, and his last public discourse; all that follows was private with his disciples. Now observe how our Lord Jesus delivered this parting word: he "cried and said." "Doth not wisdom cry?" *Pr. viii. 1*; cry without, *Pr. i. 20*. The raising of his voice, and crying, intimates, 1. His boldness in speaking; though they had not courage openly to profess faith in his doctrine, he had courage openly to publish it: if they were ashamed of it, he was not, but set his face as a flint, *Isa. i. 7*. 2. His earnestness in speaking. He cried, as one that was serious and importunate, and in good earnest in what he said; and was willing to impart to them not only the Gospel of God, but even his own soul. 3. It notes his desire that all might take notice of it. This being the last time of the publication of his Gospel by himself, in his person, he makes proclamation, Whoever will hear me, let them come now. Now what is this conclusion of the whole matter? this closing summary of all Christ's discourses? It is much like that of Moses, *Deu. xxx. 15*; "See, I have set before you life and death." So Christ here takes leave of the temple with a solemn declaration of three things:

First. The privileges and dignities which they have that believe. This gives great encouragement to us to believe in Christ, and to profess that faith. It is a thing of that nature that we need not be either shy of doing it, or shy of owning it. For,

1. By believing in Christ we are brought into an honourable acquaintance with God; *ver. 44, 45*, "He that believeth on me," and so sees me, "believeth on him that sent me," and so sees him. He that believes on Christ, 1st. He doth not believe in a mere man,—such a one as he seemed to be, and was generally taken to be,—but he believeth in one that is the Son of God, and equal in power and glory with the Father. Or rather, 2nd. His faith doth not terminate in Christ, but through him it is carried out to the Father that sent him, to whom, as our end, we come by Christ, as our way. The doctrine of Christ is believed and received as the truth of God; the rest of a believing soul is in God through Christ as Mediator, for its resignation to Christ is in order to its being presented to God. Christianity is made up not of philosophy or politics, but pure divinity. This is illustrated, *ver. 45*; "he that seeth me seeth him that sent me;" which is the same with believing in him, for faith is the eye of the soul. In getting acquaintance with Christ, we come to the knowledge of God; for, *First*. God makes himself known in the face of Christ, *2 Cor. iv. 6*, who is the express image of his person, *Heb. i. 3*. *Secondly*. All that have a believing sight of Christ are led by him to the knowledge of God, whom Christ has revealed to us by his Word and Spirit. Christ, as God, was the image of his Father's person; but Christ, as Mediator, was his Father's representative in his relation to man, the Divine light, law, and love being communicated to us in and through him; so that in seeing him, we may read the Father: in eyeing him as our Saviour, Prince, and Lord, in the right of redemption, we see and eye the Father as our owner, ruler, benefactor, in the right of creation; for God is pleased to deal with fallen man by proxy.

2. We are hereby brought into a comfortable enjoyment of ourselves; *ver. 46*, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me," Jew or Gentile, "should not abide in darkness." Observe,

1st. The character of Christ: "I am come a light into the world," to be a light to it. It implies that he had a being, and a being as light, before he came into the world, as the sun is before it rises. The prophets and apostles were made lights to the world; but it was Christ only that came a light into this world, having before been a glorious light in the upper world, *ch. iii. 19*.

2nd. The comfort of Christians: they do "not abide in darkness." *First*. They do not continue in that dark condition in which they were by nature; they "are light in the Lord." They were without any true comfort, or joy, or hope, but

before the mind the idea that not only was the time come (*verse 1*) for our Lord's departure, but that the agency by which it was to be effected had been put in operation. It is also prospective—preparatory to *verses 10, 11, and 21–31*. Judas himself is called "a devil"—*diabolos* (*John vi. 70*); but the word is so employed here as evidently to denote a being quite distinct from Judas's own mind or spirit. See *verse 27*; *Luke xxii. 3* (Webster and Wilkinson).

xii. 3. "Knowing," &c.: this verse distinctly affirms our Lord's

consciousness of his own pre-existence and power. Though his humanity was a true one, it did not cloud or obscure his knowledge of his essential union with his Father.

xiii. 4. "He riseth from supper;" or, rather, "from the supper," which was now served. There had been a contest among the apostles (see *Luke xxii. 24*) which of them should be greatest. The position of precedence at the supper-table may have been the occasion of it (compare *Luke xiv. 7*); or, even more probably, as the *pediluvium*,

do not continue in that condition; light is sown for them. *Secondly.* What darkness of affliction, disquietment, or fear they may afterwards be in, provision is made that they may not abide long in that darkness. *Thirdly.* They are delivered from the darkness which is perpetual, and which abideth for ever; that utter darkness, where is not the least gleam of light or hope of it.

Secondly. The peril and danger they are in that believe not, which may hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not," not I only, or not now, lest I should be looked upon as unfair, in being judge in my own cause; yet let not infidelity think therefore to go unpunished; "though I judge him not, there is one that judgeth him." So that we have here the doom of unbelief. Observe,

1. Who they are whose unbelief is here condemned. *Those who hear Christ's words, and yet believe them not;* those shall not be condemned for their infidelity that never had or could have the Gospel; every man shall be judged according to the dispensation of light he was under; "they that have sinned without law, shall be judged without law;" but those that have heard, or might have heard, and would not, lie open to this doom.

2. What is the constructive malignity of their unbelief: not receiving Christ's word; it is interpreted, ver. 48, a rejecting of Christ, *ô uderaw êut*; it notes a rejection with scorn and contempt. Where the banner of the Gospel is displayed, no neutrality is admitted; every man is either a subject or an enemy.

3. The wonderful patience and forbearance of our Lord Jesus exercised towards those who slighted him when he was come here upon earth. "I judge him not," not now. Note, Christ was not quick or hasty to take advantage against those who refused the first offers of his grace, but continued waiting to be gracious. He did not strike those dumb or dead who contradicted him, never made intercession against Israel, as Elias did; though he had authority to judge, he suspended the execution of it, because he had work of another nature to do first, and that was to save the world. 1st. To save effectually those that were given him, before he came to judge the degenerate body of mankind. 2nd. To offer salvation to all the world, and thus far to save them, that it is their own fault if they be not saved. He was to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Now the executing of the power of a judge was not congruous with that undertaking, *Acts viii. 33.* "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away," it was suspended for a time.

4. The certain and unavoidable judgment of unbelievers at the great day, the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God; unbelief will certainly be a damning sin. Some think when Christ saith, "I judge no man," he means they are condemned already: there needs no process, they are self-judged; no execution, they are self-ruined; judgment goes against them of course, *Heb. ii. 3.* Christ needs not appear against them as their accuser; they are miserable if he do not appear for them as their advocate: however, he tells them plainly when and where they will be reckoned with.

1st. "There is one that judgeth them." Nothing more dreadful than abused patience, and grace trampled on; though for a while mercy rejoiceth against judgment, yet there will be judgment without mercy.

2nd. Their final judgment is reserved to the last day; to that day of judgment Christ here binds over all unbelievers, to answer then for all the contempt they have put upon him. Divine justice has appointed a day, and adjourns the sentence to that day, as *Mat. xxvi. 64.*

3rd. The word of Christ will judge them then. "The words that I have spoken," how light soever you have made of them, "the same shall judge" the unbeliever "in the last day;" as the apostles, the preachers of Christ's word, are said to judge, *Lu. xxii. 30.* Christ's word will judge unbelievers two ways: *First.* As the evidence of their crime, they will convict them. Every word Christ spoke, every sermon, every argument, every kind offer, will be produced as a testimony against those who slighted all he said. *Secondly.* As the rule of their doom, they will condemn them; they shall be judged according to the tenor of that covenant which Christ procured and published. The word of Christ, "he that believes not shall be damned," will judge all unbelievers to eternal ruin; and there are many such like words.

Thirdly. A solemn declaration of the authority Christ had to demand our faith, and require us to receive his doctrine, upon pain of damnation, ver. 49, 50, where observe,

1. The commission which our Lord Jesus received from the Father to deliver his doctrine to the world; ver. 49, "I have not spoken of myself," as a mere man, much less a common man, "but the Father gave me a commandment what I should say." This is the same with what he had said, *ch. vii. 17.* "My doctrine is," 1st. "Not mine," for "I have not spoken of myself." Christ, as Son of man, did not speak that which was of human contrivance or composure; as Son of God, he did not act separately, or by himself alone, but what he said was the result of the counsels of peace; as Mediator, his coming into the world was voluntary, and with his full consent, but not arbitrary, and of his own head. But, 2nd. It was his that sent him. God the Father gave him, *First.* His commission; God sent him as his agent and plenipotentiary to concert matters between him and man, to set a treaty of peace on foot, and to settle the articles. *Secondly.* His instructions, here called a commandment, for they were like those given an ambassador, directing him not only what he may say, but what he must say. The Messenger of the covenant was intrusted with an errand which he must deliver. Note, Our Lord Jesus learned obedience himself before he taught it us, though he were a Son. The Lord God commanded the first Adam, and he by his disobedience ruined us; he commanded the second Adam, and he by his obedience saved us. God commanded him what he should say, and what he should speak; two words signifying the same thing, to note that every word was Divine. The Old Testament prophets sometimes spoke of themselves, but Christ spoke by the Spirit at all times. Some make this distinction: he was directed what he should say in his set sermons, and what he should speak in his familiar discourses. Others this: he was directed what he should say in his preaching now, and what he should speak in his judging at the last day, for he had commission and instructions for both.

2. The scope, design, and tendency of that commission; ver. 50, "I know that his commandment is life everlasting." The commission given to Christ had a reference to the everlasting state of the children of men, and was in order to their everlasting life and happiness in that state. The instructions given to Christ as a prophet, were to reveal eternal life, *1 Jno. v. 10*; the power given to Christ as a king, was to give eternal life, *ch. xvii. 2.* Thus the command given him was life everlasting. This Christ saith he knew: I know it is so, which intimates how cheerfully, and with what assurance, Christ pursued his undertaking, knowing very well that he went upon a good errand, and that which would bring forth fruit unto life eternal. It intimates likewise how justly they will perish who reject Christ and his word; those who disobey Christ despise everlasting life, and renounce it; so that not only Christ's words will judge them, but even their own; so shall their doom be, themselves have decided it, and who can except against it?

3. Christ's exact observance of the commission and instructions given him, and his steady acting in pursuance of them: "Whatsoever I speak," it is "as the Father said unto me." Christ was intimately acquainted with the counsels of God, and was faithful in discovering so much of them to the children of men

as it was agreed should be discovered, and kept back nothing that was profitable. As the faithful witness delivereth souls, so did he, and spoke the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Now, 1st. This is a great encouragement to faith; the sayings of Christ, rightly understood, are what we may venture our souls upon. 2nd. It is a great example of obedience. Christ said as he was bidden, and so must we; communicated what the Father had said to him, and so must we: see *Acts iv. 20.* In the midst of all the respects paid him, this is the honour he values himself upon, that what the Father had said to him, that he spoke, and in the manner as he was directed, so he spoke. This was his glory, that as a Son, he was faithful to him that appointed him; and by an unfeigned belief of every word of Christ, and an entire subjection of soul to it, we must give him the glory due to his name.

CHAPTER XIII.

Our Saviour having finished his public discourses, in which he endured the contradiction of sinners, he now applies himself to a private conversation with his friends, in which he designed the consolation of saints. Henceforward we have an account of what passed between him and his disciples, who were to be intrusted with the affairs of his household when he was gone into a far country; the necessary instructions and comforts he furnished them with; his hour being at hand, he applies himself to set his house in order. In this chapter, I. He washeth his disciples' feet, ver. 1—17. II. He foretells who should betray him, ver. 18—30. III. He instructs them in the great doctrine of his own death, and the great duty of brotherly love, ver. 31—35. IV. He foretells Peter's denying of him, ver. 36—39.



OW before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. 2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; 3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; 4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10 And Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. 12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. 16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

It has generally been taken for granted that Christ's washing his disciples' feet, and the discourse that followed it, was the same night in which he was

or feet-washing, was ordinarily performed before the meal and by a servant, this may have raised the question who was or was not to perform the menial office. Christ solves the question by doing it himself. This may help us to realise the force of Peter's words (verse 6), and the reproof implied in verse 14.

xiii. 5. "Into a bason:" rather, "into the bason," for the definite article is in the Greek, and shows that there was a bason ordinarily provided for the purpose of washing.

xiii. 6. "Then cometh he to Simon Peter:" Alford translates, "he cometh therefore to Simon Peter;" i.e., in the course of this action he came to Peter. It has been thought by some that he came to Peter last, or, at any rate, not among the first. The supposition suits the tenor of the story and the language used, and throws into striking relief the character and conduct of the apostle.

xiii. 7. "Hereafter:" afterwards; literally, "after these things." The passage is often quoted as though "hereafter" referred to

betrayed, and at the same sitting wherein he ate the passover, and instituted the Lord's supper; but whether before the solemnity began, or after it was all over, or between the eating of the passover and the institution of the Lord's supper, they are not agreed. This evangelist, making it his business to gather up those passages which the others had omitted, industriously omits those which the others had recorded, which occasions some difficulty in putting them together. And if it were then, we suppose that Judas went out, ver. 30, to get his men ready that were to apprehend the Lord Jesus in the garden. But Dr. Lightfoot is clearly of opinion that this was done and said, even all that is recorded to the end of *ch. xiv.*, not at the passover supper, for it is here said, ver. 1, to be "before the feast of the passover;" but at the supper in Bethany, two days before the passover, of which we read, *Mat. xxvi. 2-6*, at which Mary the second time anointed Christ's head with the remainder of her box of ointment. Or, it might be at some other supper the night before the passover, not, as that was, in the house of Simon the leper, but in his own lodgings, where he had none but his disciples about him, and could be more free with them.

In these verses we have the story of Christ's washing his disciples' feet; it was an action of a singular nature, no miracle, but a miracle of humility. Mary had now newly anointed his head; now, lest his acceptance of that should look like taking state, he presently balanceth it with this act of abasement. But why would Christ do this? If the disciples' feet needed washing, they could do it themselves: a wise man will not do a thing that looks odd and unusual but for very good causes and considerations. We are sure it was not in a humour or a frolic that this was done; no, the transaction was very solemn, and carried on with a deal of seriousness; and four reasons are here intimated why Christ did this: 1. That he might testify his love to his disciples, ver. 1, 2. 2. That he might give an instance of his own voluntary humility and condescension, ver. 3-5. 3. That he might signify to them spiritual washing, which is referred to in his discourse with Peter, ver. 6-11. 4. That he might set them an example, ver. 12-17. And the opening of these four reasons for it will take in the exposition of the whole story.

First. Christ washed his disciples' feet, that he might give a proof of that great love wherewith he loved them, "loved them to the end," ver. 1, 2.

1. It is here laid down as an undoubted truth, that our Lord Jesus, "having loved his own which were in the world, loved them to the end," ver. 1.

1st. This is true of the disciples that were his immediate followers, in particular the twelve. These were his own in the world, his family, his school, his bosom friends. Children he had none to call his own, but he adopted them, and took them as his own. He had those that were his own in the other world, but he left them for a time to look after his own in this world. These he loved, he called them into fellowship with himself, conversed familiarly with them, was always tender of them, and of their comfort and reputation. He allowed them to be very free with him, and bore with their infirmities. He loved them to the end, continued his love to them as long as he lived, and after his resurrection; he never took away his lovingkindness. Though there were some persons of quality that espoused his cause, he did not lay aside his old friends to make room for new ones, but still stuck to his poor fishermen. They were weak and defective in knowledge and grace, dull and forgetful; and yet, though he reproved them often, he never ceased to love them, and take care of them.

2nd. It is true of all believers, for these twelve patriarchs were the representatives of all the tribes of God's spiritual Israel. Note, *First*. Our Lord Jesus hath a people in the world that are "his own;" his own, for they were given him by the Father; he has purchased them, and paid dear for them, and he hath set them apart for himself; his own, for they have devoted themselves to him as a peculiar people. "His own." Where his own were spoken of that received him not, it is *τὰ ἴδια*, 'his own things,' as a man's cattle are his own, which yet he may, when he pleaseth, alter the property of. But here it is, *τοὺς ἰδίους*, 'his own persons,' as a man's wife and children are his own, to whom he stands in a constant relation. *Secondly*. Christ has a dear love for his own that are in the world. He did love them with a love of good will when he gave himself for their redemption. He doth love them with a love of complacency, when he admits them into communion with himself. Though they are in this world, a world of darkness and distance, of sin and corruption, yet he loves them. He was now going to his own in heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect there, but he seems most concerned for his own on earth, because they most needed his care: the sickly child is most indulged. *Thirdly*. Those whom Christ loves he loves to the end; he is constant in his love to his people; he rests in his love. He loves with an everlasting love, *Jer. xxxi. 3*; from everlasting in the counsels of it, to everlasting in the consequences of it. Nothing can separate a believer from the love of Christ; he loves his own, *εἰς τέλος*, unto perfection, for he will perfect what concerns them, will bring them to that world where love is perfect.

2. Christ manifested his love to them by washing their feet, as that good woman (*Lu. vii. 42*) shewed her love to Christ by washing his feet, and wiping them. Thus he would shew, that as his love to them was constant, so it was condescending, and that in prosecution of the designs of it, he was willing to humble himself; and that the glories of his exalted state, which he was now entering upon, should be no obstruction at all to the favour he bare to his chosen. And thus he would confirm the promise he had made to all the saints, that he would "make them sit down to meat, and would come forth and serve them," *Lu. xii. 37*; would put honour upon them as great and surprising as for a lord to serve his servants. The disciples had just now betrayed the weakness of their love to him, in grudging the ointment that was poured upon his head, *Mat. xxvi. 28*, yet he presently gives this proof of his love to them. Our infirmities are foils to Christ's kindnesses, and set them off.

3. He chose this time to do it, a little before his last passover, for two reasons:

1st. Because now he "knew that his hour was come," which he had long expected, "when he should depart out of this world to the Father." Observe here,

First. The change that was to pass over our Lord Jesus; he must depart. This began at his death, but was completed at his ascension. As Christ himself, so all believers, by virtue of their union with him, when they depart out of the world, are absent from the body, go to the Father, are present with the Lord. It is a departure out of the world; this unkind, injurious world; this faithless, treacherous world; this world of labour, toil, and temptation; this vale of tears; and it is going to the Father, to the vision of the Father of spirits, and the fruition of him as ours.

Secondly. The time of this change; "his hour was come." It is sometimes called his enemies' hour, *Lu. xxii. 53*, the hour of their triumph; sometimes his hour, the hour of his triumph; the hour he had had in his eye all along. The time of his sufferings was fixed to an hour, and the continuance of them but for an hour.

Thirdly. His foresight of it: he "knew that his hour was come;" he knew from the beginning that it would come, and when, but now he knew that it was come. We know not when our hour will come, and therefore what we have to do, in habitual preparation for it, ought never to be undone; and when we know by the harbingers that our hour is come, we must vigorously

the world to come. Christ means that he will explain his act to the apostle presently. This, however, does not interfere with the illustration which the incident affords of those dark providences for whose full meaning we have to wait God's time.

xiii. 8. "Never, while the world lasteth, shalt thou wash my feet." Compare Peter's conduct, *Luke v. 8*, and *Matt. xvi. 22*. Higher teaching is incidentally given on this declaration of Peter: "If I wash thee not," &c. "It is," say Webster and Wilkinson, "as if our

apply ourselves to an actual preparation, as our Master did, 2 *Pet. iii. 14*. Now it was in the immediate foresight of his departure that he washed his disciples' feet; that as his own head was anointed just now against the day of his burial, so their feet might be washed against the day of their consecration by the descent of the Holy Ghost fifty days after, as the priests were washed, *Lev. viii. 6*. When we see our day approaching, we should do what good we can to those we leave behind.

2nd. Because the devil had "now put it into the heart of Judas to betray him," ver. 2. These words in a parenthesis may be considered,

First. As tracing Judas's treason to its original; it was a sin of such a nature that it evidently bore the devil's image and superscription. What ways of access the devil has to men's hearts, and by what methods he darts in his suggestions, and mingles them undiscerned with those thoughts which are the natives of the heart, we cannot tell. But there are some sins in their own nature so exceedingly sinful, and to which there is so little temptation from the world and the flesh, that it is plain Satan lays the eggs of them in a heart disposed to be the nest to hatch them in. For Judas to betray such a Master, so cheaply, and upon no provocation, was such downright enmity to God as could not be forged but by Satan himself, who thereby thought to ruin the Redeemer's kingdom, but it proved the ruin of his own.

Secondly. As intimating a reason why Christ now washed his disciples' feet. 1st. Judas being now resolved to betray him, the time of his departure could not be far off; if this matter be determined, it is easy to infer with St. Paul, "I am now ready to be offered." Note, The more malicious we perceive our enemies to be against us, the more industrious we should be to prepare for the worst that may come. 2nd. Judas being now got into the snare, and the devil aiming at Peter, and the rest of them, (*Lu. xxii. 31*.) Christ would fortify his own against him. If the wolf have seized one of the flock, it is time for the shepherd to look well to the rest. Antidotes must be stirring when the infection is begun. Dr. Lightfoot observes, that the disciples had learned of Judas to murmur at the anointing of Christ: compare *ch. xii. 4*, with *Mat. xxvi. 8*. Now lest they that had learned that of him should learn worse, he fortifies them by a lesson of humility against his most dangerous assaults. 3rd. Judas, who was now plotting to betray him, was "one of the twelve." Now Christ would hereby shew that he did not design to cast them all off for the faults of one. Though one of their college had a devil, and was a traitor, yet they should fare never the worse for that. Christ loves his church, though there are hypocrites in it, and had still a kindness for his disciples, though there was a Judas among them, and he knew it.

Secondly. Christ washed his disciples' feet that he might give an instance of his own wonderful humility, and shew how lowly and condescending he was, and let all the world know how low he could stoop in love to his own. This is intimated, ver. 5, "Jesus knowing" and now actually considering, and perhaps discoursing of his honours as Mediator, and telling his friends "that the Father had given all things into his hand," &c. "he riseth from supper, and" to the great surprise of the company, who wondered what he was going to do, "washed his disciples' feet."

1. Here is the rightful advancement of the Lord Jesus. Glorious things are here said of Christ as Mediator.

1st. "The Father had given all things into his hands;" had given him a propriety in all, and a power over all, as possessor of heaven and earth, in pursuance of the great designs of his undertaking: see *Mat. xi. 27*. The accommodation and arbitration of all matters in variance between God and man was committed into his hands, as the great umpire and referee; and the administration of the kingdom of God among men, in all the branches of it, was committed to him; so that all acts, both of government and judgment, were to pass through his hands; he is "heir of all things."

2nd. "He came from God." This implies that he was in the beginning with God, and had a being and glory, not only before he was born into this world, but before the world itself was born; and that when he came into the world he came as God's ambassador, with a commission from him. He came from God as the Son of God, and the sent of God. The Old Testament prophets were raised up, and employed for God, but Christ came directly from him.

3rd. "He went to God," to be glorified with him, with the same glory which he had with God from eternity. That which comes from God shall go to God; they that are born from heaven are bound for heaven. As Christ came from God to be an agent for him on earth, so he went to God to be an agent for us in heaven; and it is a comfort to us to think how welcome he was there: he was brought near to the Ancient of days, *Dan. vii. 13*; and it was said to him, "Sit thou at my right hand," *Ps. cx. 1*.

4th. He knew all this; was not like a prince in the cradle, that knows nothing of the honour he is born to, or like Moses, who wist not that his face shone; no, he had a full view of all the honours of his exalted state, and yet stooped thus low. But how doth this come in here?

First. As an inducement to him now quickly to leave what lessons and legacies he had to leave to his disciples, because his hour was now come, when he must take his leave of them, and be exalted above that familiar converse which he now had with them, ver. 1.

Secondly. It may come in as that which supported him under his sufferings, and carried him cheerfully through this sharp encounter. Judas was now betraying him, and he knew it, and knew what would be the consequence of it; yet knowing also "that he came from God, and went to God;" he did not draw back, but went on cheerfully.

Thirdly. It seems to come in as a foil to his condescension, to make it the more admirable. The reasons of Divine grace are sometimes represented in Scripture as strange and surprising, as *Isa. lviii. 17, 18*; *Hos. ii. 13, 14*; so here, that is given as an inducement to Christ to stoop, which should rather have been a reason for his taking state, for God's thoughts are not as ours. Compare with this, those passages which preface the most signal instances of condescending grace with the displays of Divine glory, as *Ps. lxxviii. 4, 5*; *Isa. lviii. 15*; *Isa. lvi. 1, 2*.

2. Here is the voluntary abasement of our Lord Jesus, notwithstanding this. Jesus knowing his own glory as God, and his own authority and power as Mediator, one would think it should follow, "he riseth from supper," lays aside his ordinary garments, calls for robes, bids them keep their distance, and do him homage; no, quite contrary, when he considered this, he gave the greatest instance of humility. Note, 1st. A well-grounded assurance of heaven and happiness, instead of puffing a man up with pride, will make and keep him very humble. 2nd. Those that would be found conformable to Christ, and partakers of his Spirit, must study to keep their minds low in the midst of the greatest advancements. Now that which Christ humbled himself to, was to wash his disciples' feet.

First. The action itself was not mean and servile; and that which servants of the lowest rank were employed in. "Let thine handmaid," saith Abigail, "be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord;" let me be in the meanest employments, 1 *Sam. xxv. 41*. If he had washed their hands or faces, it had been great condescension. Elisha poured water on the hands of Elijah, 2 *Kin. iii. 11*; but for Christ to stoop to such a piece of drudgery as this, we may well be amazed at it. Thus he would teach us to think nothing below

Lord had said, 'Do you object to your Master's washing your feet, as a lesson of humility? Why, he must wash you, that you may become qualified for true fellowship with him. There is a washing to which you must submit, involving very far deeper humiliation, or you can have no part with me.' "Part with me:" that fellowship with him of which St. John speaks (1 John i. 3, 7), and which he there connects with the washing or cleansing from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ.

us, wherein we may be serviceable to God's glory and the good of our brethren.

Secondly. The condescension was so much the greater, that he did this for his own disciples, who in themselves were of a low and despicable condition, not curious about their bodies; their feet, it is likely, seldom washed, and therefore very dirty. In relation to him they were his scholars, his servants, and such as should have washed his feet; whose dependence was upon him, and their expectations from him. Many of great spirits otherwise will do a mean thing to curry favour with their superiors, they rise by stooping, and climb by cringing; but for Christ to do this to his disciples, could be no act of policy or complaisance, but pure humility.

Thirdly. He rose from supper to do it. Though we translate it, ver. 2, "supper being ended;" it might be better read, 'there being a supper made,' or, 'he being at supper,' for he sat down again, ver. 12; and we find him dipping a sop, ver. 26; so that he did it in the midst of his meal, and thereby taught us, 1st. Not to reckon it a disturbance, or any just cause of uneasiness, to be called from our meal to do God or our brother any real service; esteeming the discharge of our duty more than our necessary food, *ch. iv. 34*. Christ would not leave his preaching to oblige his nearest relations, *Mar. iii. 33*; but would leave his supper to shew his love to his disciples. 2nd. Not to be over nice about our meat. It would have turned many a squeamish stomach to wash dirty feet at supper time; but Christ did it, not that we might learn to be rude and slovenly, (cleanliness and godliness will do well together); but to teach us not to be curious, not to indulge, but mortify the delicacy of the appetite, giving good manners their due place, and no more.

Fourthly. He put himself into the garb of a servant to do it: "he laid aside his" loose and upper "garments," that he might apply himself to this service the more expeditely. We must address ourselves to duty as those that are resolved not to take state, but to take pains; we must divest ourselves of every thing that would either feed our pride, or hang in our way, and hinder us in what we have to do; must gird up the loins of our mind, as those that in earnest buckle to business.

Fifthly. He did it with all the humble ceremony that could be; went through all the parts of the service distinctly, and balked none of them; he did it as if he had been used thus to serve; did it himself alone, and had none to minister to him in it. He "girded himself with the towel," as servants throw a napkin on their arm, or put an apron before them; he poured water into the basin out of the water pots that stood by, *ch. ii. 6*, and then washed their feet; and to complete the service, wiped them. Some think he did not wash the feet of them all, but only four or five of them, that being thought sufficient to answer the end; but I see nothing to countenance this conjecture, for in other places where he did make a difference it is taken notice of; and his washing the feet of them all, without exception, teacheth us a catholic and extensive charity to all Christ's disciples, even the least.

Sixthly. Nothing appears to the contrary but that he washed the feet of Judas among the rest, for he was present, ver. 26. It is the character of a widow indeed, that she had washed the saints' feet, *1 Tim. v. 10*; and there is some comfort in that, but the blessed Jesus here washed the feet of a sinner, the worst of sinners; the worst to him, that was at this time contriving to betray him.

Many interpreters make Christ's washing his disciples' feet a representation of his whole undertaking. He knew that he was equal with God, and all things were his, and yet he rose from his table in glory, laid aside his robes of light, girded himself with our nature, took upon him the form of a servant, "came not to be ministered to, but to minister;" poured out his blood, poured out his soul unto death, and thereby prepared a laver to wash us from our sins, *Rev. i. 5*.

Thirdly. Christ washed his disciples' feet that he might signify to them spiritual washing, and the cleansing of the soul from the pollutions of sin. This is plainly intimated in his discourse with Peter upon it, ver. 6-11. In which we may observe,

1. The surprise Peter was in when he saw his Master go about this mean service; ver. 6, "Then comes he to Simon Peter," with his towel and basin, and laid him put out his feet to be washed. Chrysostom conjectures that he washed the feet of Judas first, who readily admitted it, and was pleased to see his Master so disparage himself. It is most probable when he went about this service, (which is all that is meant by his beginning to wash, ver. 5) he took Peter first; and the rest would not have suffered it, if they had not first heard it explained in what passed between Christ and Peter.

Whether Christ came first to Peter or no, when he did come to him, Peter started at the proposal; "Lord," saith he, "dost thou wash my feet?" Here is an emphasis to be laid upon the persons, *thou and me*; and the placing of the words is observable, *σε μου*, what, thou mine? *Τῷ μὴ λυῶς πόδες*. *Quid est tui? Quid est mihi?* *Cogitanda sunt potius quam dicenda*.—Dost thou wash my feet? What is it thou? What to me?—Those things are rather to be contemplated than uttered.—*Aug. in loc.* What thou? Our Lord and Master, whom we know, and believe to be the Son of God, and Saviour and Ruler of the world, do this for me, a worthless worm of the earth, a sinful man, O Lord? Shall these hands wash my feet, which with a touch have cleansed lepers, given sight to the blind, and raised the dead? So Theophylact, and from him Dr. Taylor. Very willingly would Peter have taken the basin and towel, and washed his Master's feet, and been proud of the honour, *Luk. xvii. 7, 8*. This had been natural and regular; for my Master to wash my feet, is such a solecism as never was—such a paradox as I cannot understand;—"Is this the manner of men?" Note, Christ's condescensions, especially his condescensions to us, wherein we find ourselves taken notice of by his grace, are justly the matter of our admiration, *ch. xiv. 22*. "Who am I, Lord God? And what is my father's house?"

2. The immediate satisfaction Christ gave to this question of surprise, which was at the least sufficient to silence his objections; ver. 7, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Here are two reasons why Peter must submit to what Christ was doing:

1st. Because he was at present in the dark concerning it, and ought not to oppose what he did not understand, but acquiesce in the will and wisdom of one who could give a good reason for all he said and did. Christ would teach Peter an implicit obedience; "what I do, thou knowest not now," and therefore art no competent judge of it,—but must believe it is well done, because I do it. Note, Consciousness to ourselves of the darkness we labour under, and our inability to judge of what God doth, should make us sparing and modest in our censures of his proceeding: see *Heb. xi. 8*.

2nd. Because there was something considerable in it, which he should hereafter know the meaning of. "Thou shalt know hereafter," what need thou hast of being washed, when thou shalt be guilty of the heinous sin of denying me; so some. Thou shalt know, when in the discharge of the office of an apostle, thou wilt be employed in washing off from those under thy charge, all sins and defilements of their earthly affections; so Dr. Hammond. Note, *First*. Our Lord Jesus doth many things, which even his own disciples do not for the present know the meaning of, but they shall know afterwards; what he did when he became man for us, and what he did when he became a worm, and

no man, for us; what he did when he lived our life, and what he did when he laid it down, could not be understood till afterwards, and then it appeared that it behoved him, *Heb. ii. 17*. Subsequent providences explain preceding ones; and we see afterwards what was the kind tendency of events that seemed most cross; and the way which we thought was about, proved the right way. *Secondly*. Christ's washing his disciples' feet had a significance in it, which they themselves did not understand till afterwards; when Christ explained it to be a specimen of the laver of regeneration, and till the Spirit was poured out from on high. We must let Christ take his own way, both in ordinances and providences, and we shall find in the issue it was the best way.

3. Peter's peremptory refusal, notwithstanding this, to let Christ wash his feet; ver. 8, "Thou shalt by no means wash my feet; I do, never." So it is in the original. It is the language of a fixed resolution.

Now, 1st. Here was a show of humility and modesty. Peter herein seemed to have, and no doubt he really had, a great respect for his Master, as he had, *Luk. v. 8*. Thus many are beguiled of their reward in a voluntary humility, *Col. ii. 18, 23*, such a self-denial as Christ neither appoints nor accepts; for, 2nd. Under this show of humility there was a real contradiction to the will of the Lord Jesus. "I will wash thy feet," saith Christ. "But thou never shalt," saith Peter. "It is not a fitting thing," so making himself wiser than Christ. It is not humility, but infidelity, to put away the offers of the Gospel, as if too rich to be made us, or too good news to be true.

4. Christ's insisting upon his offer, and a good reason given to Peter why he should accept it; "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me;" which may be taken,

1st. As a severe caution against disobedience: "If I wash thee not," that is, if thou continue refractory, and wilt not comply with thy Master's will in so small a matter, thou shalt not be counted as one of my disciples, but be justly discarded and cashiered for not observing orders. Thus several of the ancients understand it; if Peter will make himself wiser than his Master, and dispute the commands he ought to obey, he doth in effect renounce his allegiance, and say as they did, "What portion have we in David?" in the Son of David, and so shall his doom be, he shall have no part in him. Let him use no more manners than doth him good, for "to obey is better than sacrifice," *1 Sam. xv. 22*. Or,

2nd. As a declaration of the necessity of spiritual washing; and so I think it is to be understood. "If I wash not thy soul from the pollution of sin, thou hast no part with me, no interest in me, no communion with me, no benefit by me." Note, All those, and those only, that are spiritually washed by Christ have a part in Christ. *First*. To have a part in Christ, or with Christ, has all the happiness of a Christian bound up in it; to be partakers of Christ, *Heb. iii. 14*; to share in those inestimable privileges which result from a union with him and relation to him. It is that good part, the having of which is the one thing needful. *Secondly*. It is necessary to our having a part in Christ, that he wash us. All those whom Christ owns and saves, he justifies and sanctifies, and both are included in his washing them. We cannot partake of his glory, if we partake not of his merit and righteousness, and of his Spirit and grace.

5. Peter's more than submission, his earnest request to be washed by Christ, ver. 9. If this be the meaning of it, "Lord, wash not my feet only, but also my hands, and my head." How soon is Peter's mind changed! When the mistake of his understanding was rectified, the corrupt resolution of his will was soon altered. Let us therefore not be peremptory in any resolve, (but only in our resolve to follow Christ,) because we may soon see cause to retract it; but cautious in taking up a purpose we will be tenacious of. Observe,

1st. How ready Peter is to recede from what he had said, "Lord, what a fool was I to speak such a hasty word!" Now the washing of him appeared to be an act of Christ's authority and grace, he admits it, but disliked it when it seemed only an act of humiliation. Note, *First*. Good men, when they see their error, will not be loath to recant it. *Secondly*. Sooner or later, Christ will bring all to be of his mind.

2nd. How importunate he is for the purifying grace of the Lord Jesus, and the universal influence of it, even upon his hands and head. Note, A divorce from Christ, and an exclusion from having a part in him, is the most formidable evil in the eyes of all that are enlightened, for the fear of which they will be persuaded to any thing. And for fear of this, we should be earnest with God in prayer that he will wash us—will justify and sanctify us. Lord, that I may not be cut off from thee, make me fit for thee, by the washing of regeneration. Lord, wash, not my feet only, from the gross pollutions that cleave to them, but also my hands and my head, from the lesser spots which they have contracted, and the undiscerned filth which proceeds by perspiration from the body itself. Note, Those who truly desire to be sanctified, desire to be sanctified throughout, and to have the whole man with all its parts and powers purified, *1 Thes. v. 23*.

6. Christ's farther explication of this sign, as it represented spiritual washing.

1st. With reference to his disciples that were faithful to him; ver. 10, "He that is washed" all over in the bath, (as was frequently practised in those countries,) when he returns to his house, "needeth not save to wash his feet;" his hands and head having been washed, and he having only dirtied his feet in walking home. Peter had gone from one extreme to the other; at first, he would not let Christ wash his feet, and now he overlooks what Christ had done for him in his baptism, and what was signified thereby, and cries out to have his hands and head washed. Now Christ directs him into the meaning; he must have his feet washed, but not his hands and head.

First. See here what is the comfort and privilege of such as are in a justified state; they are washed by Christ, and are "clean every whit," that is, they are graciously accepted of God, as if they were so; and though they offend, yet they need not upon their repentance to be again put into a justified state, for then should they often be baptized. The evidence of a justified state may be clouded, and the comfort of it suspended, when yet the charter of it is not vacated or taken away. Though we have occasion to repent daily, God's gifts and callings are without repentance. The heart may be swayed and garnished, and yet still remain the devil's palace; but if it be washed, it belongs to Christ, and he will not lose it.

Secondly. See what ought to be the daily care of those who through grace are in a justified state, and that is to wash their feet; to cleanse themselves from the guilt they contract daily through infirmity and inadvertency, by the renewed exercise of repentance, with a believing application of the virtue of Christ's blood. We must also wash our feet by constant watchfulness against every thing that is defiling, for we must cleanse our way, and cleanse our feet, by taking heed thereto, *Ps. cxix. 9*. The priests, when they were consecrated, were washed with water, and though they did not need afterwards to be so washed all over, yet, whenever they went in to minister, they must wash their feet and hands at the laver, on pain of death, *Ex. xxx. 19, 20*. The provision made for our cleansing should not make us presumptuous, but the more cautious; "I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" From yesterday's pardon we should fetch an argument against this day's temptations.

2nd. With reflection upon Judas; "and ye are clean, but not all," ver. 10, 11. He pronounceth his disciples clean, clean through the word he had spoken to

xiii. 10. "He that is washed:" the rendering is unfortunate, as the word in the original is different from that translated "wash" in verse 8. "He that is bathed hath no need save to wash his feet." The distinction between the various words used for washing is defined in *Lev. xv. 11*. "Every whit;" as a whole. "But not all;" referring to Judas; yet it must be remembered that Judas had been washed with the rest. The spiritual efficacy was not tied to the symbolical act, for Judas was not clean in the sense of this verse.

xiii. 11. "Who should betray:" better, "who was betraying him," for Judas was already engaged in traitorous communication with the chief priests.

xiii. 12. "Said unto them:" it is thought that the words recorded in *Luke xxii. 25-27* were uttered at this time. The reference in *Luke xxii. 27* to the act of washing the disciples' feet is very distinct. As this incident is not recorded by St. Luke, the reference to it forms an undesigned coincidence of much value.

them, *ch. xv. 3*; he washed them himself, and then said, "ye are clean, but," he excepts Judas, "not all;" they were all baptized, even Judas, yet not all clean. Many have the sign that have not the thing signified. Note, *First*. Even among those who are called disciples of Christ, and profess relation to him, there are some who are not clean, *Pr. xxx. 12*. *Secondly*. The Lord knows them that are his, and them that are not, *2 Tim. ii. 19*; the eye of Christ can separate between the precious and the vile, the clean and the unclean. *Thirdly*. When those that have called themselves disciples afterwards prove traitors, their apostasy at last is a certain evidence of their hypocrisy all along. *Fourthly*. Christ sees it necessary to let his disciples know that they are not all clean, that we may all be jealous over ourselves; "Is it I? Lord, is it I?" that am among the clean, yet not clean? and that when hypocrites are discovered it may be no surprise or stumbling to us.

Fourthly. Christ washed his disciples' feet to set before us an example; this explication he gave of what he had done, when he had done it, *ver. 12-17*.

1. Observe with what solemnity he gave an account of the meaning of what he had done; *ver. 12*, "after he had washed their feet, he said, Know ye what I have done?"

1st. He adjourned the explication till he had finished the transaction, *First*. To try their submission and implicit obedience. What he did, they should not know till after, that they might learn to acquiesce in his will when they could not give a reason for it. *Secondly*. Because it was proper to finish the riddle before he unriddled it. Thus as to his whole undertaking, when his sufferings were finished, when he had resumed the garments of his exalted state, and was ready to sit down again, then he opened the understandings of his disciples, and poured out his Spirit, *Lu. xxiv. 46*.

2nd. Before he explained it he asked them if they could construe it; "Know ye what I have done to you?" He put this question to them not only to make them sensible of their ignorance, and the need they had to be instructed, as *Zec. iv. 5-13*, "Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord;" but to raise their desires and expectations of instruction; "I would have you know, and if you will give attention I will tell you." Note, It is the will of Christ that sacramental signs should be explained, and that his people should be acquainted with the meaning of them; otherwise, though never so significant, to them who know not the thing signified, they are insignificant; hence they are directed to ask, "What mean ye by this service?" *Ex. xii. 26*.

2. Observe what he grounds that which he had to say upon; *ver. 13*, "You call me Master and Lord," you give me those titles in speaking of me, in speaking to me, and you say well, for so I am; you are in the relation of scholars to me, and I do the part of a master to you. Note, 1st. Jesus Christ is our Master and Lord; he that is our Redeemer and Saviour is, in order to that, our Lord and Master. He is our 'Master,' *διδασκαλος*, our teacher and instructor in all necessary truths and rules, as a prophet revealing to us the will of God. He is our Lord, *κύριος*, our ruler and owner, that has authority over us and propriety in us. 2nd. It becomes the disciples of Christ to call him Master and Lord, not in compliment, but in reality; not by constraint, but with delight. Devout Mr. Herbert, when he mentioned the name of Christ, used to add, 'my Master,' and thus expresseth himself concerning it in one of his poems;

'How sweetly doth my Master sound, my Master!

As ambergris leaves a rich scent unto the taster,

So do these words a sweet content, an oriental fragrant; my Master.'

3rd. Our calling Christ Master and Lord is an obligation upon us to receive and observe the instructions he gives us. Christ would thus pre-engage their obedience to a command that was displeasing to flesh and blood. If Christ be our Master and Lord, be so by our own consent, and we have often called him so, we are bound in honour and honesty to be observant of him.

3. Observe the lesson which Christ hereby taught: "you also ought to wash one another's feet," *ver. 14*.

1st. Some have understood this literally, and have thought these words amount to the institution of a standing ordinance in the church, that Christians should, in a solemn, religious manner wash one another's feet, in token of their condescending love to one another. St. Ambrose took it so, and practised it in the church of Milan. St. Austin saith, that those Christians who did not do it with their hands, yet, he hoped did it with their hearts, in humility; but he saith it is much better to do it with the hands also when there is occasion, as *1 Tim. v. 10*; what Christ has done, Christians should not disdain to do. Calvin saith that the Pope, in the annual observing of this ceremony on Thursday in the passion week, is rather Christ's ape than his follower, for the duty enjoined in conformity to Christ was mutual,—"wash one another's feet;" and Jansenius saith, it is done *frigide, et dissimiliter*,—frigidly, and unlike the primitive model.

2nd. But doubtless it is to be understood figuratively; it is an instructive sign, but not sacramental, as the eucharist. This was a parable to the eye; and three things our Master hereby designed to teach us:

First. A humble condescension. We must learn of our Master to be lowly in heart, *Mat. xi. 29*, and walk with all lowliness; we must think meanly of ourselves and respectfully of our brethren, and nothing below us but sin; we must say of that which seems mean, but has a tendency to the glory of God and our brethren's good, as David, *2 Sam. vi. 22*, "If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile." Christ had often taught his disciples humility, and they had forgot the lesson, but now he teaches them in such a way as sure they could never forget.

Secondly. A condescension to be serviceable. To wash one another's feet is to stoop to the meanest offices of love, for the real good and benefit of one another, as blessed Paul, who, though free from all, made himself servant of all; and blessed Jesus, who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." We must not grudge to take care and pains, and to spend time, and to diminish ourselves, for the good of others that we are not under any particular obligation to, even to our inferiors, and such as are not in a capacity of making us any requital. Washing the feet after travel contributed both to the decency of the person and to his ease, so that to wash one another's feet is to consult both the credit and the comfort of one another; to do what we can both to advance our brethren's reputation and to make their minds easy, see *1 Cor. x. 24*; *Heb. vi. 10*; the duty is mutual; we must both accept help from our brethren and afford help to our brethren.

Thirdly. A serviceableness to the sanctification of one another; "ye ought to wash one another's feet" from the pollutions of sin. Austin takes it in this sense, and many others. We cannot satisfy for one another's sins,—that is peculiar to Christ,—but we may help to purify one another from sin. We must in the first place wash ourselves; this charity must begin at home, *Mat. vi. 5*, but it must not end there; we must scrow for the failings and follies of our brethren, much more their gross pollutions, *1 Cor. v. 2*; must wash our brethren's polluted feet in tears; we must faithfully reprove them, and do what we can to bring them to repentance, *Gal. vi. 1*; and we must admonish them, to prevent their falling into the mire; this is washing their feet.

4. Here is the ratifying and enforcing of this command, from the example of what Christ had now done. 'If I, your Lord and Master, have done it to you, you ought to do it to one another.' He shews the cogency of this argument in two things:

xiii. 16. An apostle is one sent by another. One that is sent is not greater than he who sent him. It was not till afterwards that a more technical and special sense was attached to the word. Tyndale translated it by "a messenger" in this passage. The phrase, "The servant is not greater," &c., appears to have been a proverbial one. Christ applies it in different ways on different occasions. (Compare John xv. 20; Matt. x. 24; Luke vi. 40.)

xiii. 18. "He that eateth bread with me;" the quotation is

1st. I am your Master, and you are my disciples, and therefore you ought to learn of me, *ver. 15*; for in this, as in other things, "I have given you an example, that you should do to others as I have done to you." Observe,

First. What a good teacher Christ is. He teacheth by example as well as doctrine, and for that end came into this world and dwelt among us, that he might set us a copy of all those graces and duties which his holy religion teacheth; and it is a copy without one false stroke. Hereby he made his own laws more intelligible and practicable, and our obedience to them more easy, pleasant, and honourable. Christ is a commander, like Gideon, who said to his soldiers, "Look on me, and do likewise," *Jud. vii. 17*; like Abimelech, who said, "What ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done," *Jud. ix. 48*; and like Caesar, who called his soldiers not *milites*,—soldiers, but *committiones*,—'fellow-soldiers'; and whose usual word was not *Ite illuc*, but *Venite huc*; not 'go,' but 'come.'

Secondly. What good scholars we must be. We must do as he hath done, for therefore he gave us a copy that we should write after it, that we might be as he was in this world, *1 Jno. iv. 17*; and walk as he walked, *1 Jno. ii. 6*. Christ's example herein is to be followed by ministers in particular, in whom the graces of humility and holy love should especially appear, and by the exercise thereof they effectually serve the interests of their Master and the ends of their ministry. When Christ sent his apostles abroad as his agents, it was with this charge, that they should not take state upon them, nor carry things with a high hand, but "become all things to all men," *1 Cor. ix. 22*: what I have done to your dirty feet, that do ye to the polluted souls of sinners; wash them. Some, who suppose this to be done at the passover supper, think it intimates a rule in admitting communicants to the Lord's supper, to see that they be first washed and cleansed by reformation and a blameless conversation, and then take them in to compass God's altar. But all Christians likewise are here taught to condescend to each other in love, and to do it as Christ did it—unasked, unpaid. We must not be mercenary in the services of love, nor do them with reluctance.

2nd. I am your Master, and you are my disciples, and therefore you cannot think it below you to do that, how mean soever it may seem, which you have seen me do, for, *ver. 16*, "the servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent," though sent with all the pomp and power of an ambassador, yet is he not "greater than he that sent him." Christ had urged this, *Mat. x. 24, 25*, as a reason why they should not think it strange if they suffered as he did; here he urgeth it as a reason why they should not think much to humble themselves as he did: what he did not think a disparagement to him, they must not think a disparagement to them. Perhaps the disciples inwardly disgusted this precept of washing one another's feet, as inconsistent with that dignity they expected shortly to be preferred to; to obviate such thoughts Christ minds them of their place, as his servants; they were not better men than their Master, and what was consistent with his dignity was much more consistent with theirs; if he were humble and condescending, it ill became them to be proud and assuming. Note, *First*. We must take good heed to ourselves, lest Christ's gracious condescensions to us, and advancements of us, through the corruption of nature, occasion us to think any high thoughts of ourselves, or low thoughts of him: we need to be put in mind of this, that we are not greater than our Lord. *Secondly*. Whatever our Master was pleased to condescend to in favour to us, we should much more condescend to in conformity to him. Christ, by humbling himself, has dignified humility, and put an honour upon it, and obliged his followers to think nothing below them but sin. We commonly say to those who disdain to do such or such a thing, As good as you have done it, and been never the worse thought of; and true indeed it is, if our Master has done it. When we see our Master serving, we cannot but see how ill it becomes us to be domineering.

Lastly. Our Saviour closes this part of his discourse with an intimation of the necessity of their obedience to these instructions; "If ye know these things," or, 'seeing ye know them,' "happy are ye if ye do them." Most people think, happy are they that rise and rule; washing one another's feet will never get estates and preferments; but Christ saith, for all that, happy are they that stoop and obey. "If ye know these things." That may be understood either as speaking doubtfully, whether they knew them or no; so strong was their conceit of a temporal kingdom, that it was a question whether they could entertain the notion of a duty so contrary to that conceit; or, as taking it for granted that they did know these things, since they had such excellent precepts given them, recommended by such an excellent pattern, it will be necessary to the completing of their happiness that they practise accordingly.

1. This is applicable to the commands of Christ in general. Note, Though it is a great advantage to know our duty, yet we shall come short of happiness if we do not do our duty: knowing is in order to doing; that knowledge therefore is vain and fruitless which is not reduced to practice; nay, it will aggravate the sin and ruin, *Lu. xii. 47, 48*; *Jas. iv. 17*. It is knowing and doing that will demonstrate us of Christ's kindred, and wise builders. See *Ps. ciii. 17, 18*.

2. It is to be applied especially to this command of humility and serviceableness. Nothing is better known or more readily acknowledged than this, that we should be humble; and therefore, though many will own themselves to be passionate and intemperate, few will own themselves to be proud; for it is as inexcusable a sin, and as hateful as any other; and yet how little is to be seen of true humility, and that mutual subjection and condescension which the law of Christ insists so much upon! Most know these things so well as to expect that others should do accordingly to them, yield to them, and serve them, but not so well as to do so themselves.

18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. 19 Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. 20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. 22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. 23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples,

taken from *Psa. xli. 9*. The psalm itself primarily alludes, says Olshausen, to David and his betrayer Ahithophel; but in these circumstances there is an allusion to the more important fact of the Lord's betrayal, and, according to this typical view, the reference is perfectly suitable. The question whether Judas partook of the Lord's Supper has been warmly debated. No doubt he was present at the meal, but whether he had quitted the room (see verses 29, 30) before the institution of the Lord's Supper is a vexed topic, on which

whom Jesus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? 26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. 28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. 29 For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. 30 He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

We have here the discovery of Judas' plot to betray his Master; Christ knew it from the beginning, but now first he discovered it to his disciples, who did not expect Christ should be betrayed, though he had often told them so, much less did they suspect that one of them should do it. Now here,

First, Christ gives them a general intimation of it; ver. 8, "I speak not of you all;" I cannot expect you will all do these things, for "I know whom I have chosen," and whom I have passed by; but the scripture will be fulfilled, Ps. xli. 9, "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." He doth not yet speak out, of the crime or the criminal, but raiseth their expectations of a farther discovery.

1. He intimates to them that they were not all right. He had said, ver. 10, "ye are clean, but not all;" so here, "I speak not of you all." Note, What is said of the excellences of Christ's disciples cannot be said of all that are called so; the word of Christ is a distinguishing word, which separates between cattle and cattle, and will distinguish thousands into hell who flattered themselves with hopes that they were going to heaven; "I speak not of you all;" you, my disciples and followers. Note, There is a mixture of bad with good in the best societies, a Judas among the apostles; it will be so till we come to the blessed society into which shall enter nothing unclean or disguised.

2. That he himself knew who were right, and who were not; "I know whom I have chosen,"—who the few are that are chosen among the many that are called with the common call. Note, 1st. They that are chosen, Christ himself had the choosing of them: he nominated the persons he undertook for. 2nd. They that are chosen are known to Christ, for he never forgets any whom he has once had in his thoughts of love, 2 Tim. ii. 19.

3. That in the treachery of him that proved false to him the scripture was fulfilled, which takes off very much both the surprise and offence of the thing. Christ took one into his family whom he foresaw to be a traitor, and did not, by effectual grace prevent his being so, "that the scripture might be fulfilled." Let it not therefore be a stumbling-block to any; for though it do not at all lessen Judas' offence, it may lessen our offence at it. The scripture referred to is David's complaint of the treachery of some of his enemies: the Jewish expositors generally understand it of Ahithophel, and ours from them; and Grotius thinks it intimates that the death of Judas would be like that of Ahithophel: but because that Psalm speaks of David's sickness, which we read nothing of at the time of Ahithophel's deserting him, it may better be understood of some other friend of his that proved false to him. This our Saviour applies to Judas.

1st. Judas, as an apostle, was admitted to the highest privilege; he did eat bread with Christ; he was familiar with him, and favoured by him; was one of his family, one of those with whom he was intimately conversant. David saith of his treacherous friend, He did eat of my bread; but Christ, being poor, had no bread he could properly call his own; he saith, He did eat bread with me; such as he had by the kindness of his friends that ministered to him his disciples had their share of, Judas among the rest. Wherever he went, Judas was welcome with him; did not dine among servants, but sat at table with his Master, ate of the same dish, drank of the same cup, and in all respects fared as he fared; he ate miraculous bread with him, when the loaves were multiplied; ate the passover with him. Note, all that eat bread with Christ are not his disciples indeed: see 1 Cor. x. 5.

2nd. Judas, as an apostate, was guilty of the basest treachery; he lifted up the heel against Christ. First, He forsook him, turned his back upon him, went out from the society of his disciples, ver. 30. Secondly, He despised him, shook off the dust of his feet against him, in contempt of him and his Gospel; nay, Thirdly, He became an enemy to him; spurned at him, as wrestlers do at their adversaries, whom they would overthrow. Note, It is no new thing for those that were Christ's seeming friends, to prove his real enemies: they who pretended to magnify him magnify themselves against him: they ate not only the bread of his charity, but the bread of his covenant, yet rebel against him; and thereby prove themselves guilty not only of the basest ingratitude, but the basest treachery and perfidiousness.

Secondly, He gives them a reason why he told them beforehand of the treachery of Judas; ver. 19, "Now I tell you before it come," before Judas has begun to put his wicked plot in execution, "that when it is come to pass you may" instead of stumbling at it, be confirmed in your belief that "I am he," he that should come.

1. By his clear and certain foresight of things to come, which in this as in other instances he gave incontestable proof of, he proved himself to be the true God, before whom all things are naked and open. Christ foretold that Judas would betray him when there was no ground to suspect such a thing, and so proved himself the eternal Word, which is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The prophecies of the New Testament concerning the apostacy of the later times, which we have, 2 Thes. ii., 1 Tim. iv., and in the Apocalypse, being evidently accomplished, it is a proof that those writings were divinely inspired, and confirms our faith in the whole canon of Scripture.

2. By his application of the types and prophecies of the Old Testament

to himself, he proved himself to be the true Messiah, to whom all the prophets bare witness: "Thus it is written, and thus it behaved Christ to suffer," and he suffered just as it was written, Lu. xxiv. 45, 46; ch. viii. 28.

Thirdly, He gives a word of encouragement to his apostles, and all his ministers, whom he employed in his service, ver. 20; "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me." The purport of these words is the same with what we have in other scriptures, but it is not easy to make out their coherence here. 1st. Christ had told his disciples they must humble and abase themselves. Now, saith he, though there may be those that will despise you for your condescension, yet there will be those that will do you honour, and shall be honoured for so doing. They who know themselves dignified by Christ's commission may be content to be vilified in the world's opinion. 2nd. It is intended to silence the scruples of those who, because there was a traitor among the apostles, would be shy of receiving any of them; for if one of them was false to his Master, whom would any of them be true to? *ex uno disce omnes*,—they are all alike. No, as Christ will think never the worse of them for Judas' crime, so he will stand by them and own them, and will raise up such as shall receive them. They that had received Judas when he was a preacher, and perhaps were converted and edified by his preaching, were never the worse, nor should reflect upon it with any regret, though he afterwards proved a traitor; for he was one whom Christ sent. We cannot know what men are, much less what they will be; but those who appear to be sent of Christ we must receive, till the contrary appear. Though some by entertaining strangers have entertained robbers unawares, yet we must still be hospitable, for thereby some have entertained angels. The abuses put upon our charity, though ordered with never so much discretion, will neither justify our uncharitableness, nor lose us the reward of our charity.

1. We are here encouraged to receive ministers as sent of Christ; "He that receiveth whomsoever I send," though weak and poor, and subject to like passions as others, for as the law, so the Gospel, makes men priests that have infirmity; yet if he deliver my message, and be regularly called and appointed to do so, and as an officer give himself to the word and prayer, he that entertains him shall be owned as a friend of mine. Christ was now leaving the world, but he would leave an order of men to be his agents, to deliver his word, and those who receive that in the light and love of it, receive him; to believe the doctrine of Christ, and obey his law, and accept the salvation offered upon the terms proposed,—this is receiving those whom Christ sends, and it is receiving Christ Jesus the Lord himself.

2. We are here encouraged to receive Christ as sent of God: He that thus receiveth me, that receiveth Christ in his ministers, receiveth the Father also; for they come upon his errand likewise, baptizing in the name of the Father, as well as of the Son. Or in general, He that receiveth me as his prince and Saviour, receiveth him that sent me as his portion and felicity. Christ was sent of God, and in embracing his religion, we embrace the only true religion.

Fourthly, Christ more particularly notifies to them the plot which one of their number was now hatching against him, ver. 21: "When Jesus had thus said," in general, to prepare them for a more particular discovery, "he was troubled in spirit," and shewed it by some gesture or sign, "and he testified," he solemnly declared it—"cum animo testandi"; "one of you shall betray me"; "one of you, mine apostles and constant followers. None indeed could be said to betray him, but those whom he reposed a confidence in, and were the witnesses of his retirements. This did not determine Judas to the sin by any fatal necessity; for though the event did follow according to the prediction, yet not from the prediction. Christ is not the author of sin; yet, as to this heinous sin of Judas,

1. Christ foresaw it; for even that which is secret and future, and hid from the eyes of all living, is naked and open before the eyes of Christ. He knows what is in men better than they do themselves, 2 Kin. viii. 12; and therefore sees what will be done by them; "I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously," Isa. xlviii. 8.

2. He foretold it, not only for the sake of the rest of his disciples, but for the sake of Judas himself, that he might take warning, and recover himself out of the snare of the devil. Traitors proceed not in their plots, when they find they are discovered; surely Judas when he finds that his Master knows his design, will retreat in time; if not, it will aggravate his condemnation.

3. He spoke of it with a manifest concern; "he was troubled in spirit" when he mentioned it. He had often spoken of his own sufferings and death, without any such trouble of spirit as he here discovered when he spoke of the ingratitude and treachery of Judas. This touched him in a tender part. Note, The falls and miscarriages of the disciples of Christ are a great trouble of spirit to their Master; the sins of Christians are the grief of Christ. "What! one of you betray me!—you, that have received from me such distinguishing favours!—you, that I had reason to think would be firm to me, that have professed such a respect for me; what iniquity have you found in me, that one of you should betray me?" This went to his heart, as the unfaithfulness of children grieves those who have nourished and brought them up, Isa. i. 2: see Ps. xcv. 10; Isa. lxiii. 10.

Fifthly, The disciples quickly take the alarm; they knew their Master would neither deceive them nor jest with them, and therefore "looked one upon another," with manifest concern, "doubting of whom he spake."

1. By looking one upon another they discovered the trouble they were in upon this notice given them; it struck such a horror upon them, that they knew not well which way to look, or what to say. They saw their Master troubled, and therefore they were troubled. This was at a feast, where they were cheerfully entertained; but hence we must be taught to rejoice with trembling, and as though we rejoiced not. When David wept for his son's rebellion, all his followers wept with him, 2 Sam. xv. 30; so Christ's disciples here. Note, That which grieves Christ is and should be a grief to all that are his, particularly the scandalous miscarriages of those that are called by his name: "Who is offended, and I burn not?"

2. Hereby they endeavoured to discover the traitor; they looked wistfully in one another's faces, to see who blushed, or by some disorder in the countenance manifested guilt in the heart upon this notice. But while those who were faithful had their consciences so clear that they could lift up their faces without spot, he that was false had his conscience so seared that he was not ashamed, neither could he blush, and so no discovery could be made this way. Christ thus perplexed his disciples for a time, and put them into confusion, that he might humble them, and prove them; might excite in them a jealousy of themselves, and an indignation at the baseness of Judas. It is good for us sometimes to be put to a gaze, to be put to a pause.

Sixthly, The disciples were solicitous to get their Master to explain himself, and to tell them particularly whom he meant, for nothing but that can put them out of their present pain; for each of them thought they had as much reason to suspect themselves as any of their brethren. Now,

1. Of all the disciples, John was most fit to ask, because he was the favourite, and sat next his Master; ver. 23, "there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved." It appears that this was John, by comparing ch. ii. 21, 20. Observe,

harmonists do not agree. Stier, who adopts the view that Judas was present and received the sacrament, comments on the awful significance it gives to the words, "eateth bread with me." "The eating bread derives a fearful meaning from the participation in the sacramental supper, a meaning which must be applied for ever to all unworthy communicants, as well as to all betrayers of Christ, who eat the bread of his Church." "Hath lifted up his heel against me:" the metaphor is taken from the act of an

animal suddenly and treacherously kicking its owner. (Compare Deut. xxxii. 15.)

xiii. 22. "Looked one on another:" St. John omits the mention of their reiterated question, "Is it I?" but he gives us the account of this gesture of surprise. In the other Gospels, Christ answers Judas, "Thou hast said;" but the fact that the other apostles seemed still ignorant (verse 29) that Judas was the traitor, leads to the conjecture that these words were said in a low tone of voice.

1st. The particular kindness which Jesus had for him; he was known by this periphrasis, that he was the disciple whom Jesus loved. He loved them all, ver. 1, but John was particularly dear to him. His name signifies gracious. Daniel, who was honoured with the revelations of the Old Testament, as John of the New, was a man greatly beloved, *Dan. ix. 23*. Note, Among the disciples of Christ some are dearer to him than others.

2nd. His place and posture at this time: he was leaning on Jesus' bosom. Some say it was the fashion in those countries to sit at meat in a leaning posture, so that the second lay in the bosom of the first, and so on, which doth not seem probable to me; for in such a posture as that they could neither eat nor drink conveniently; but whether that were so or no, John now leaned in his bosom, and it seems to be an extraordinary expression of endearment used at this time. Note, There are some of Christ's disciples whom he lays in his bosom, who have more free and intimate communion with him than others. The Father loved the Son, and laid him in his bosom, *ch. i. 18*; and believers are in like manner one with Christ, *ch. xvii. 21*. This honour all the saints shall have shortly, in the bosom of Abraham. They who lay themselves at Christ's feet, he will lay them in his bosom.

3rd. Yet he conceals his name, because he himself was the penman of the story; he puts this instead of his name, to shew that he was pleased with it; it is his title of honour, that he was "the disciple whom Jesus loved;" as in David's and Solomon's court, there was one that was the king's friend; yet he doth not put his name down, to shew that he was not proud of it, nor would seem to boast of it. Paul, in a like case, saith "I knew a man in Christ."

2. Of all the disciples, Peter was most forward to know, ver. 24. Peter, sitting at some distance, beckoned to John, by some sign or other, to ask. Peter was generally the leading man, most apt to put himself forth; and where men's natural tempers lead them to be thus bold in answering and asking, if it be kept under the laws of humility and wisdom, it makes men very serviceable. God gives his gifts variously; but that the forward men in the church may not think too well of themselves, nor the modest be discouraged, it must be noted that it was not Peter, but John, that was the beloved disciple. Peter was desirous to know, not only that he might be sure it was not he, but that, knowing who it was, they might withdraw from him, and guard against him, and if possible prevent his design. It were a desirable thing, we would think, to know who in the church will deceive us; yet let this suffice, Christ knows, though we do not. The reason why Peter did not ask himself, was, because John had a much fairer opportunity, by the advantage of his seat at table, to whisper the question into the ear of Christ, and to receive a like private answer. It is good to improve our interest in those that are near to Christ, and to engage their prayers for us. Do we know any that we have reason to think lie in Christ's bosom? let us beg of them to speak a good word for us.

3. The question was asked accordingly; ver. 25, he then lying at the breast of Jesus, and so having the convenience of whispering with him; "saith unto him, Lord, who is it?" Now here John shews,

1st. A regard to his fellow-disciple, and to the motion he made. Though Peter had not the honour he had at this time, yet he did not therefore disdain to take the hint and intimation he gave him. Note, They who lie in Christ's bosom may often learn from those who lie at his feet something that will be profitable for them, and be minded of that which they did not of themselves think of. John was willing to gratify Peter herein, having so fair an opportunity for it. As every one hath received the gift, so let him minister the same for a common good, *Rom. xii. 6*.

2nd. A reverence of his Master. Though he whispered that in Christ's ear, yet he called him Lord; the familiarity he was admitted to did not at all lessen his respect for his Master. It becomes us to use a reverence of expression, and to observe a decorum, even in our secret devotions, which no eye is a witness to, as well as in public assemblies. The more intimate communion gracious souls have with Christ, the more sensible they are of his worthiness, and their own unworthiness; as *Gen. xviii. 27*.

4. Christ gave a speedy answer to this question, but whispered it in John's ear; for it appears, ver. 29, that the rest were still ignorant of the matter; "he it is to whom I shall give a sop," *φωμίον*,—a morsel, a crust; "when I have dipped it" in the sauce. And when he had dipped the sop, John strictly observing his motion, "he gave it to Judas;" and Judas took it readily enough, not suspecting the design of it; but glad of a savoury bit to make up his mouth with.

1st. Christ notified the traitor by a sign. He could have told John by name who he was: the adversary and enemy is that wicked Judas; he is the traitor, and none but he. But thus he would exercise the observation of John, and intimate what need his ministers have of a spirit of discerning; for the false brethren we are to stand upon our guard against, are not made known to us by words, but by signs; they are to be known to us by their fruits, by their spirits, which requires great diligence and care to form a right judgment upon them.

2nd. That sign was a sop, which Christ gave him; a very proper sign, because it was the fulfilling of the Scripture, ver. 18, that the traitor should be one that ate bread with him, that was at this time a fellow-commoner with him. It had likewise a significance in it; and teacheth us, *First*. That Christ sometimes gives sops to traitors: worldly riches, honours, and pleasures are sops (if I may so speak) which Providence sometimes gives into the hands of wicked men. Judas perhaps thought himself a favourite because he had the sop; like Benjamin at Joseph's table, a mess by himself; thus the prosperity of fools, like a stupefying sop, helps to destroy them. *Secondly*. That we must not be outrageous against those whom we know to be very malicious against us. Christ carved to Judas as kindly as to any at the table, though he knew he was then plotting his death. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him," that is to do as Christ doth.

Seventhly. Judas himself, instead of being convinced hereby of his wickedness, was the more confirmed in it; and the warning given him was to him a savour of death unto death; for it follows,

1. The devil hereupon took possession of him; ver. 27, "after the sop, Satan entered into him," not to make him melancholy, or drive him distracted, which was the effect of his possessing some; not to hurry him into the fire, or into the water; happy had it been for him, if that had been the worst of it, or if with the swine he had been choked in the sea; but Satan entered into him, to possess him with a prevailing prejudice against Christ and his doctrine, and a contempt of him, as one whose life was of small value, to excite in him a covetous desire of the wages of unrighteousness, and a resolution to stick at nothing for the obtaining of them. But,

1st. Was not Satan in him before? How then is it said, that now "Satan entered into him?" Judas was all along a devil, *ch. vi. 70*, a son of perdition; but now Satan gained a more full possession of him, had a more abundant entrance into him. His purpose to betray his Master was now ripened into a fixed resolution; now he returned with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, *Luk. xi. 25*. Note. *First*. Though the devil is in every wicked man that doth his works, *Eph. ii. 2*, yet sometimes he enters more manifestly and more powerfully than at other times, when he puts them upon some enormous wickedness, which humanity and natural conscience startle at. *Secondly*.

Betrayers of Christ have much of the devil in them. Christ speaks of the sin of Judas as greater than that of any of his persecutors.

2nd. How came Satan to enter into him after the sop? Perhaps he was presently aware that it was the discovery of him, and it made him desperate in his resolutions. Many are made worse by the gifts of Christ's bounty, and are confirmed in their impenitency by that which should have led them to repentance. The coals of fire heaped upon their heads, instead of melting them, harden them.

2. Christ hereupon dismissed him, and delivered him up to his own heart's lusts. "Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly." This is not to be understood as either advising him to his wickedness, or warranting him in it; but either, 1st. As abandoning him to the conduct and power of Satan. Christ knew that Satan was entered into him, and had peaceable possession, and now he gives him up as hopeless. The various methods Christ had used for his conviction were ineffectual, and therefore 'what thou doest thou wilt do quickly; if thou art resolved to ruin thyself, go on, and take what comes.' Note, When the evil spirit is willingly admitted, the good Spirit justly withdraws. Or, 2nd. As challenging him to do his worst; "Thou art plotting against me, put thy plot in execution, and welcome; the sooner the better. I do not fear thee; I am ready for thee." Note, Our Lord Jesus was very forward to suffer and die for us, and was impatient of delay in the perfecting of his undertaking. Christ speaks of Judas's betraying him as a thing he was now doing, though he was only purposing it. Those who are contriving and designing mischief are, in God's account, doing mischief.

3. They that were at table understood not what he meant, because they did not hear what he whispered to John; ver. 28, 29, "no man at table," either the disciples or any other of the guests, except John, "knew for what intent he spake this to him."

1st. They did not suspect that Christ said it to Judas as a traitor, because it did not enter into their heads that Judas was such a one, or would prove so. Note, It is an excusable dulness in the disciples of Christ not to be quicksighted in their censures. Most are ready enough to say, when they hear harsh things spoken in general, now such a one is meant, and now such a one; but Christ's disciples were so well taught to love one another, that they could not easily learn to suspect one another; "Charity thinks no evil."

2nd. They therefore took it for granted that he said it to him as a trustee, or treasurer of the household, giving him orders for the laying out of some money. And their surmises in this case discover to us for what uses and purposes our Lord Jesus commonly directed payments to be made out of that little stock he had; and so teach us how to honour the Lord with our substance. They concluded something was to be laid out, either,

First. In works of piety: "Buy those things that we have need of against the feast." Though he borrowed a room to eat the passover in, yet he bought in provision for it. That is to be reckoned well bestowed which is laid out upon "those things we have need of" for the maintenance of God's ordinances among us; and we have the less reason to grudge that expense now, because our Gospel worship is nothing so chargeable as the legal worship was.

Secondly. Or in works of charity; "that he should give something to the poor." By this it appears, 1st. That our Lord Jesus, though he lived upon alms himself, (*Luk. viii. 3*.) yet gave alms to the poor—a little out of a little. Though he might very well be excused, not only because he was poor himself, but because he did so much good other ways,—curing so many gratis; yet, to set us an example, he gave for the relief of the poor out of that which he had for the subsistence of his family; see *Eph. iv. 28*. 2nd. That the time of a religious feast was thought a proper time for works of charity. When he celebrated the passover, he ordered something for the poor. When we experience God's bounty to us, that should make us bountiful to the poor.

4. Judas hereupon sets himself vigorously to pursue his design against him. He went away. Notice is taken,

1st. Of his speedy departure; "he went out presently," and quitted the house; *First*. For fear of being more plainly discovered to the company; which, if he were, he expected they would all fall upon him, and be the death of him, or at least of his project. *Secondly*. He went out as one weary of Christ's company, and sick of the society of his apostles. Christ needed not to expel him, he expelled himself. Note, withdrawing from the communion of the faithful is commonly the first overt act of a backslider, and the beginning of an apostasy. *Thirdly*. He went out to prosecute his design, to look for those with whom he was to make his bargain, and to settle the agreement with them. Now Satan had got into him he hurried him on with precipitation, lest he should see his error and repent of it.

2nd. Of the time of his departure; "it was night." *First*. Though it was night, an unreasonable time for business, yet Satan having entered into him, he made no difficulty of the coldness and darkness of the night. This should shame us out of our slothfulness and cowardice in the service of Christ, that the devil's servants are so earnest and venturesome in his service. *Secondly*. Because it was night, and that gave him advantage of privacy and concealment. He was not willing to be seen treating with the chief priests, and therefore chose the dark night as the fittest time for such works of darkness. They whose deeds are evil love darkness rather than light; see *Job xxiv. 13*, &c.

31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. 33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. 34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

This, and what follows to the end of *ch. xiv.*, was Christ's table-talk with his disciples. When supper was done, Judas went out; but what did the Master and his disciples do, whom he left sitting at table? They applied themselves to profitable discourse, to teach us as much as we can to make

xiii. 26. "Sop:" the portion of bread soaked in wine or sauce—a token of friendship.

xiii. 32. The first clause of this verse, "If God be glorified in him," is not found in the oldest MSS.

xiv. 1. On the general drift of these chapters, Olshausen remarks as follows: "At first (from chap. xiii. 31) the intercourse took the form of conversation; sitting at table, they talked familiarly together. But when the repast was finished (chap. xiv. 31), the language of Christ

assumed a loftier strain; the disciples assembled round their Master, listened to the words of life, and seldom spoke a word (only chap. xvi. 17, 29). At length, in the Redeemer's sublime intercessory prayer, his full soul was poured forth in express petition to his heavenly Father on behalf of those who were his own. It is a peculiarity of these last chapters that they treat almost exclusively of the most profound relations, as that of the Son to the Father, and of both to the Spirit; that of Christ to the Church, and the Church to the world,

conversation with our friends at table serviceable to religion. Christ begins this discourse; and the more forward we are humbly to promote that communication which is good, and to the use of edifying, the more like we are to Jesus Christ. Those especially that by their place, reputation, and gifts, command the company, to whom men give ear, ought to use the interest they have in other respects as an opportunity of doing them good. Now our Lord Jesus discourseth with them, and probably discourseth much more largely than is here recorded.

First. Concerning the great mystery of his own death and sufferings, which they were as yet so much in the dark about, that they could not persuade themselves to expect the thing itself, much less did they understand the meaning of it; and therefore Christ gives them such instructions concerning it as made the offence of the cross to cease. Christ did not begin this discourse till Judas was gone out, for he was a false brother. The presence of wicked people is often a hindrance to good discourse. "When Judas was gone out, Christ said, Now is the Son of man glorified; now Judas is discovered and discarded—that was a spot in their love-feast, and a scandal to their family,—now is the Son of man glorified." Note, Christ is glorified by the purifying of Christian societies. Corruptions in his church are a reproach to him; the purging out of those corruptions rolls away the reproach. Or rather, now Judas was gone to set the wheels a going, in order to his being put to death, and the thing was likely to be effected shortly; "now is the Son of man glorified," meaning, now he is crucified.

1. Here is something which Christ instructs them in, concerning his sufferings, that was very comforting; three things:

1st. That he should himself be glorified in them. Now the Son of man is to be exposed to the greatest ignominy and disgrace, to be desperately used to the last degree, and dishonoured both by the cowardice of his friends, and the insolence of his enemies; yet now is he glorified. For, *First*, Now he is to obtain a glorious victory over Satan and all the powers of darkness, to spoil them, and triumph over them. He is now girding on the harness, to take the field against those adversaries of God and man, with as great an assurance as if he had put it off. *Secondly*, Now he is to work out a glorious deliverance for his people; by his death to reconcile them to God, and bring in an everlasting righteousness and happiness for them; to shed that blood which is to be an inexhaustible fountain of joys and blessings to all believers. *Thirdly*, Now he is to give such a glorious example of self-denial and patience under the cross, courage and contempt of the world, zeal for the glory of God, and love to the souls of men, as will make him to be for ever admired and had in honour. Christ had been glorified in many miracles he had wrought, and yet he speaks of his being glorified now in his sufferings, as if that were more than all his other glories in his humbled state.

2nd. That God the Father should be glorified in them. The sufferings of Christ were, *First*, The satisfaction of God's justice, and so God was glorified in them. Reparation was thereby made with great advantage for the wrong done him in his honour by the sin of man. The ends of the law were abundantly answered, and the glory of his government effectually asserted and maintained. *Secondly*, They were the manifestation of his holiness and mercy. The attributes of God shine bright in creation and providence, but much more in the work of redemption; see 1 *Cor. i. 24*; 2 *Cor. iv. 6*. God is love, and herein he hath commended his love.

3rd. That he should himself be greatly glorified after them, in consideration of God's being greatly glorified by them, ver. 32. Observe how he enlarges upon it. *First*, He is sure that God will glorify him; and those whom God glorifies are glorious indeed. Hell and earth set themselves to vilify Christ; but God resolved to glorify him, and he did it. He glorified him in his sufferings by the amazing signs and wonders, both in heaven and earth, which attended them, and extorted even from his crucifiers an acknowledgment that he was the Son of God. But especially after his sufferings he glorified him, when he set him at his own right hand, gave him a name above every name. *Secondly*, That he will glorify him in himself, *ἐν ἑαυτῷ*, either, 1st. In Christ himself. He will glorify him in his own person, and not only in his kingdom among men. This supposeth his speedy resurrection. A common person may be honoured after his death in his memory or posterity; but Christ was honoured in himself. Or, 2nd. In God himself. God will glorify him with himself, as it is explained, *ch. xvii. 5*; he shall "sit down with the Father in his throne," *Rev. iii. 21*. This is true glory. *Thirdly*, That he will glorify him straightway. He looked upon the joy and glory set before him, not only as great, but as near; and his sorrows and sufferings short, and soon over. Good services done to earthly princes often remain long unrewarded; but Christ had his preferments presently. It was but forty hours, or not so much, from his death to his resurrection, and forty days from thence to his ascension; so that it might well be said he was straightway glorified, *Ps. xvi. 10*. *Fourthly*, All this in consideration of God's being glorified in and by his sufferings. Seeing God is glorified in him, and receives honour from his sufferings, God shall in like manner glorify him in himself, and give honour to him. Note, 1st. In the exaltation of Christ there was a regard had to his humiliation, and a reward given for it. Because he humbled himself, therefore God highly exalted him. If the Father be so great a gainer in his glory by the death of Christ, we may be sure the Son shall be no loser in his. See the covenant between them, *Isa. liii. 12*. 2nd. Those who mind the business of glorifying God, no doubt shall have the happiness of being glorified with him.

2. Here is something that Christ instructs them in concerning his sufferings, which was awakening, for as yet they were slow of heart to understand it; ver. 33, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you," &c. Two things Christ here suggests to quicken his disciples to improve their present opportunities; two serious words:

1st. That his stay in this world, to be with them here, they would find to be very short. "Little children." This compellation doth not speak so much their weakness as his tenderness and compassion; he speaks to them with the affection of a father, now he is about to leave them, and to leave blessings with them. Know this then, that "yet a little while I am with you." Whether we understand it of the time betwixt his death, or betwixt his ascension, it comes much to one; he had but a little time to spend with them, and therefore, *First*, Let them improve the advantage they now had. If they had any good question to ask, if they would have any advice, instruction, or comfort, let them speak quickly; for "yet a little while I am with you." We must make the best of the helps we have for our souls while we have them, because we shall not have them long; they will be taken from us, or we from them. *Secondly*, Let them not dote upon his bodily presence, as if their happiness and comfort were bound up in that; no, they must think of living without it; not be always little children, but go alone, without their nurses. Ways and means are appointed but for a little while, and are not to be rested in, but pressed through to our rest, which they have a reference to.

2nd. That their following him to the other world to be with him there, they would find to be very difficult. What he had said to the Jews, *ch. vii. 34*, he saith to his disciples; for they have need to be quickened by the same considerations that are propounded for the convincing and awakening of sinners. Christ tells them here, *First*, That when he was gone they would find a miss

of him. "Ye shall seek me;" that is, ye shall wish ye had me again with you. We are often taught the worth of mercies by the want of them. Though the presence of the Comforter yielded them real and effectual relief in straits and difficulties, yet it was not such a sensible satisfaction as his bodily presence would have been to those who had been used to that. But observe, Christ said to the Jews, "ye shall seek me and not find me;" but to the disciples he only saith, "Ye shall seek me;" intimating, that though they should not find his bodily presence, no more than the Jews, yet they should find that which was tantamount, and should not seek in vain. When they sought his body in the sepulchre, though they did not find it, yet they sought to good purpose. *Secondly*, That whither he went they could not come; which suggests to them high thoughts of him, who was going to an invisible, inaccessible world, to dwell in that light which none can approach unto; and also low thoughts of themselves, and serious thoughts of their future state. Christ tells them they could not follow him, as Joshua told the people they could not serve the Lord, only to quicken them to so much the more diligence and care. They could not follow him to his cross, for they had not courage and resolution; it appeared they could not, when they all forsook him and fled. Nor could they follow him to his crown, for they had not sufficiency of their own, nor was their work and warfare yet finished.

Secondly, He discourseth with them concerning the great duty of brotherly love; ver. 34, 35, Ye shall love one another. Judas was now gone out, and had proved himself a false brother; but they must not therefore harbour such jealousies and suspicions one of another, as would be the bane of love; though there was one Judas among them, yet they were not all Judases. Now the enmity of the Jews against Christ and his followers was swelling to the height, and they must expect such treatment as their Master had, it concerned them, by brotherly love, to strengthen one another's hands. Three arguments for mutual love are here urged:

1. The command of their Master; ver. 34, "A new commandment I give unto you." He not only commends it as amiable and pleasant; not only counsels it as excellent and profitable; but commands it, and makes it one of the fundamental laws of his kingdom; it goes abreast with the command of believing in Christ, 1 *Jno. iii. 23*; 1 *Pet. i. 23*. It is the command of our Ruler, who has right to give law to us; it is the command of our Redeemer, who gives us this law in order to the curing of our spiritual diseases, and the preparing of us for our eternal bliss. It is a new commandment; that is, 1st. It is a renewed commandment; it was a commandment from the beginning, 1 *Jno. ii. 7*, as old as the law of nature; it was the second great commandment of the law of Moses, yet, because it is also one of the great commandments of the New Testament of Christ, the new Lawgiver, it is called a new commandment; it is like an old book in a new edition, corrected and enlarged. This commandment had been so corrupted by the traditions of the Jewish church, that when Christ revives it, and sets it in a true light, it might well be called a new commandment. Laws of revenge and retaliation were so much in vogue, and self-love had so much the ascendant, that the law of brotherly love was forgotten as obsolete and out of date; so that as it came from Christ new, it was new to the people. 2nd. It is an excellent command, as a new song is an excellent song, that has an uncommon gratefulness in it. 3rd. It is an everlasting command; so strangely new as to be always so; as the new covenant, which shall never decay, *Heb. viii. 13*, it shall be new to eternity when faith and hope are antiquated. 4th. As Christ gives it, it is new. Before it was, "thou shalt love thy neighbour;" now it is, ye shall love one another; it is pressed in a more winning way, when it is thus pressed as a mutual duty owing to one another.

2. The example of their Saviour is another argument for brotherly love; "as I have loved you." This is it that makes it a new commandment; that this rule and reason of love, "as I have loved you," is perfectly new, and such as had been hid from ages and generations. Understand this, 1st. Of all the instances of Christ's love to his disciples, which they had already experienced during the time he went in and out among them. He spoke kindly to them, concerned himself heartily for them and for their welfare; instructed, counselled, and comforted them; prayed with them and for them; vindicated them when they were accused, took their part when they were run down, and publicly owned them to be dearer to him than his mother, or sister, or brother; he reproved them for what was amiss, and yet compassionately bore with their failings, excused them, made the best of them, and passed by many an oversight. Thus he had loved them, and just now washes their feet; and thus they must love one another, and love to the end. Or, 2nd. It may be understood of the special instance of love to all his disciples he was now about to give, in laying down his life for them: "Greater love hath no man than this," *ch. xv. 13*. Has he thus loved us all? justly may he expect that we should be loving to one another. Not that we are capable of doing any thing of the same nature for each other, *Ps. xlix. 7*, but we must love one another in some respects after the same manner; we must set this before us as our copy, and take directions from it. Our love to one another must be free and ready, laborious and expensive, constant and persevering; it must be love to the souls one of another. We must also love one another from this motive, and upon this consideration, because Christ has loved us; see *Rom. xv. 1, 3*; *Eph. v. 2, 25*; *Phil. ii. 1-5*.

3. The reputation of their profession; ver. 35. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Observe, we must have love; not only shew love, but have it in the root and habit of it; and have it when there is not any present occasion to shew it—have it ready. Hereby it will appear that you are indeed my followers, by following me in this. Note, Brotherly love is the badge of Christ's disciples. By this he knows them, by this they may know themselves, 1 *Jno. iii. 14*, and by this others may know them. This is the lively of his family, the distinguishing character of his disciples; this he would have them noted for, as that wherein they excelled all others, their loving one another. This was it that their Master was famous for; all that ever heard of him have heard of his love, his great love; and therefore if you see any people more than ordinary loving one to another, say, Certainly these are the followers of Christ, they have been with Jesus.

Now by this it appears, 1st. That the heart of Christ was very much upon it, that his disciples should love one another. In this they must be singular; whereas the way of the world is to be every one for himself, they should be hearty for one another. He doth not say, By this shall men know that you are my disciples, if ye work miracles; for a worker of miracles is but a cipher without charity, 1 *Cor. xiii. 1, 2*; but if ye love one another from a principle of self-denial, and gratitude to Christ; this Christ would have to be the primum of his religion, the principal note of the true church. 2nd. That it is the true honour of Christ's disciples to excel in brotherly love. Nothing will be more effectual than this to recommend them to the esteem and respect of others. See what a powerful attractive it was, *Acts ii. 46, 47*. Tertullian speaks of it as the glory of the primitive church, that the Christians were known by their lovingness to one another. Their adversaries took notice of it, and said, See how these Christians love one another, *Apol. c. 39*. 3rd. That if the followers of Christ do not love one another, they not only cast an unjust reproach upon their profession, but give just cause to suspect their own sincerity. 'O Jesus! are these thy Christians?'—these passionate, malicious, spiteful, ill-natured people; "Is this thy son's coat?" When our brethren

and so forth." "Let not your heart be troubled:" there is a fitness in the opening words to comfort the disciples after the prediction of their failure, and to remove the fear that he regarded them with any distrust or suspicion. "Ye believe in God:" the verb may be either indicative or imperative. Alford inclines to the latter, translating, "Believe in God; believe," &c.

xiv. 4. "Ye know:" it seems best to take this not as a positive assertion (for the apostles scarcely consciously knew), but as an

assumption or statement of what they ought to have known, made to stimulate the inquiry and lead on to further teaching.

xiv. 5. "Thomas;" on the character of Thomas, see Notes on chap. xi. 16. He has been sometimes identified with the person to whom Christ said, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead" (*Matt. viii. 22*).

xiv. 8, 9. Philip did not understand Christ's words. There was a childlike simplicity, and also (not an unnatural accompani-

stand in need of help from us, and we have an opportunity of being serviceable to them; when they differ in opinion and practice from us, or are any way rivals with, or provoking to us, and so we have an occasion to condescend and forgive; in such cases as this it will be known whether we have this badge of Christ's disciples.

36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. 37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. 38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

In these verses we have,

First, Peter's curiosity, and the check given to that.

1. Peter's question was bold and blunt; ver. 36, "Lord, whither goest thou?" referring to what Christ had said, ver. 33, "Whither I go ye cannot come." The practical instructions Christ had given them concerning brotherly love he overlooks, and asks no questions upon them, but fastens upon that concerning which Christ purposely kept them in the dark. Note, It is a common fault among us to be more inquisitive concerning things secret, which belong to God only, than concerning things revealed, which belong to us and our children; more desirous to have our curiosity gratified, than our consciences directed; to know what is done in heaven, than what we may do to get thither. It is easy to observe it, in the converse of Christians, how soon a discourse of that which is plain and edifying is dropped, and no more said to it,—the subject is exhausted; while a matter of doubtful disputation runs into an endless strife of words.

2. Christ's answer was instructive. He did not gratify him with any particular account of the world he was going to, nor ever foretold his glories and joys so distinctly as he did his sufferings; but said what he had said before, ver. 33, let that suffice, "Thou canst not follow me now, but shalt follow me hereafter."

1st. We may understand it of his following him to the cross. Thou hast not yet strength enough of faith and resolution to drink of my cup; and it appeared so by his cowardice when Christ was suffering. For this reason, when Christ was seized, he provided for the safety of his disciples, "let these go their way," because they could not follow him now. Christ considers the frame of his disciples, and will not cut out for them that work and hardship which they are not as yet fit for; the day shall be as the strength is. Peter, though designed for martyrdom, cannot follow Christ now, not being come to his full growth, but he shall follow him hereafter; he shall be crucified at last like his Master. Let him not think, that because he escapes suffering now, he shall never suffer; from our missing the cross once, we must not infer that we shall never meet it; we may be reserved for greater trials than we have yet known.

2nd. We may understand it of his following him to the crown. Christ was now going to his glory, and Peter was very desirous to go with him; no, saith Christ, "Thou canst not follow me now," thou art not yet ripe for heaven, nor hast thou finished thy work on earth. The Forerunner must first enter, to prepare a place for thee; but thou shalt follow me afterwards, after thou hast fought the good fight, and at the time appointed. Note, Believers must not expect to be glorified as soon as they are effectually called, for there is a wilderness between the Red sea and Canaan.

Secondly, Peter's confidence, and the check given to that.

1. Peter makes a daring protestation of his constancy. He is not content to be left behind, but asks, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?" Dost thou question my sincerity and resolution? I promise thee, if there be occasion, "I will lay down my life for thy sake." Some think Peter had a conceit, as the Jews had in the like case, *ch. vii. 35*, that Christ was designing a journey or voyage into some remote country, and he declared his resolution to go along with him wherever he went; but having heard his Master so often speak of his own sufferings, surely he could not understand him any otherwise but of his going away by death, and he resolves, as Thomas did, he will go and die with him; and better die with him, than live without him. See here, 1st. What an affectionate love Peter had to our Lord Jesus; "I will lay down my life for thy sake," and I can do no more. I believe Peter spoke as he thought, and though he was inconsiderate, he was not insincere in this resolution. Note, Christ should be dearer to us than our own lives, which therefore, when we are called to it, we should be willing to lay down for his sake, *Acts xx. 24*. 2nd. How ill he took it to have it questioned, intimated in that expostulation, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?" dost thou suspect my fidelity to thee? *1 Sam. xxix. 8*. Note, It is with regret that true love hears its own sincerity arraigned, as *ch. xxi. 17*. Christ had indeed said, that one of them was a devil, but he was discovered and gone out, and therefore Peter thinks he may speak with the more assurance of his own sincerity, "Lord, I am resolved I will never leave thee, and therefore why cannot I follow thee?" We are apt to think we can do any thing, and take it amiss to be told that this and the other we cannot do, whereas without Christ we can do nothing.

2. Christ gives him a surprising prediction of his inconstancy, ver. 38. Jesus Christ knows us better than we know ourselves, and has many ways of discovering those to themselves whom he loves and will hide pride from.

1st. He upbraids Peter with his confidence: "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?" Methinks he seems to have said this with a smile. Peter, thy promises are too large, too lavish, to be relied on; thou dost not consider with what reluctance and struggle a life is laid down, and what a hard task it is to die; not so soon done as said. Christ hereby puts Peter upon second thoughts, not that he might retract his resolution, or recede from it, but that he might insert into it that necessary proviso, "Lord, thy grace enabling me, I will lay down my life for thy sake." Wilt thou undertake to die for me?—what, thou, that tremblest to walk upon the water to me?—what, thou, that when sufferings were spoken of, criest out, "Be it far from thee, Lord!" It was an easy thing to leave thy boats and nets to follow me, but not so easy to lay down thy life. His Master himself struggled when it came to that, and the disciple is not greater than his Lord. Note, It is good for us to shame ourselves out of our presumptuous confidence in ourselves. Shall a bruised reed set up for a pillar? or a sickly child undertake to be a champion? What a fool am I to talk so big!

2nd. He plainly foretels his cowardice in the critical hour. To stop the

mouth of his boasting, lest Peter should say it again, 'Yea, Master, that I will, Christ solemnly asserts it with, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice." He doth not say, as afterwards, this night, for it seems to have been two nights before the passover; but shortly thou wilt have denied me thrice, within the space of one night; yea, within so short space as between the first and last crowing of the cock; "The cock shall not crow," that is, shall not have crowed his crowing out till thou hast again and again denied me, and that for fear of suffering. The crowing of the cock is mentioned, *First*. To intimate that the trial, in which he would miscarry thus, should be in the night, which was an improbable circumstance; but Christ's foretelling it was an instance of his infallible foresight. *Secondly*. Because the crowing of the cock was to be the occasion of his repentance, which of itself would not have been, if Christ had not put this into the prediction. Christ not only foresaw that Judas would betray him, though he only in heart designed it; but he foresaw that Peter would deny him, though he did not design it, but the contrary. He knows not only the wickedness of sinners, but the weakness of saints.

Christ told Peter, 1st. That he would deny him, would renounce and abjure him: Thou wilt not only not follow me still, but be ashamed to own that ever thou didst follow me. 2nd. That he would do this not once only, by a hasty slip of his tongue, but after he had paused—would repeat it a second and third time; and it proved too true. We commonly give it as a reason why the prophecies of Scripture are expressed darkly and figuratively, because if they did plainly describe the event, the accomplishment would thereby either be defeated, or necessitated by a fatality inconsistent with human liberty; and yet this plain and express prophecy of Peter's denying Christ did neither; nor did in the least make Christ accessory to Peter's sin. But we may well imagine what a mortification it was to Peter's confidence of his own courage, to be told this, and to be told it in such a manner, as that he durst not contradict it, else he would have said as Hazael, "What! is thy servant a dog?" This could not but fill him with confusion. Note, The most secure are commonly the least safe; and those most shamefully betray their own weakness that most confidently presume upon their own strength, *1 Cor. x. 12*.

CHAPTER XIV.

This chapter is a continuation of Christ's discourse with his disciples after supper; when he had convicted and discarded Judas, he set himself to comfort the rest, who were full of sorrow upon what he had said of leaving them; and a great many good words, and comfortable words, he here speaks to them. The discourse is interlocutory, as Peter in the foregoing chapter, so Thomas, and Philip, and Jude in this, interposed their thoughts upon what he said, according to the liberty he was pleased to allow them. Free conferences are as instructive as solemn speeches, and more so. The general scope of this chapter is in the first verse; it is designed to keep trouble from their hearts. Now in order to that, they must believe: and let them consider, I. Heaven as their everlasting rest, ver. 2, 3. II. Christ himself as their way, ver. 4—11. III. The great powers they shall be clothed with by the prevalency of their prayers, ver. 12—14. IV. The coming of another Comforter, ver. 15—17. V. The fellowship and communion that should be between him and them after his departure, ver. 18—24. VI. The instructions which the Holy Ghost should give them, ver. 25, 26. VII. The peace Christ bequeathed to them, ver. 27. VIII. Christ's own cheerfulness in his departure, ver. 28—31. And this which he said to them is designed for the comfort of all his faithful followers.



ET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

In these verses we have,

First. A general caution, which Christ gives to his disciples, against trouble of heart: ver. 1, "Let not your heart be troubled." They now began to be troubled, were entering into this temptation. Now here see,

1. How Christ took notice of it. Perhaps it was legible in their looks; it was said, *ch. xiii. 22*, they looked one upon another with anxiety and concern, and Christ looked upon them all, and observed it: however it was intelligible to the Lord Jesus, who is acquainted with all our secret, undiscovered sorrows, with the wound that bleeds inwardly; he knows not only how we are afflicted, but how we stand affected under our afflictions, and how near they lie to our hearts: he takes cognizance of all the trouble which his people are at any time in danger of being overwhelmed with; he knows our souls in adversity. Many things concurred to trouble the disciples now.

1st. Christ had newly told them of the unkindnesses he should receive from some of them, and this troubled them all. Peter no doubt looked very sorrowful upon what Christ said to him, and all the rest were sorry for him, and for themselves too, not knowing whose turn it should be to be told next of some ill thing or other they should do. As to this, Christ comforts them; though a godly jealousy over ourselves is of great use to keep us humble and watchful, yet it must not prevail to the disquieting of our spirits, and the damping of our holy joy.

2nd. He had newly told them of his own departure from them; that he should not only go away, but go away in a cloud of sufferings. They must shortly hear him loaded with reproaches, and those will be as a sword in their bones; must see him barbarously abused, and put to death, and this also will be a sword piercing through their own souls; for they had loved him, and chosen him, and left all to follow him. When we now look upon Christ pierced we cannot but mourn and be in bitterness, though we see the glorious issue and fruit of it, much more grievous must the sight be to them, who could then look no farther.

If Christ depart from them, *First*. They will think themselves shamefully disappointed; for they looked that this had been he that should have delivered Israel, and should have set up his kingdom in secular power and glory, and in

ment of it) a spiritual loftiness in the character of Philip. He yearned to see the Father, his soul was athirst for God; not the kingdom, but the King in his beauty did he desire to see; that would suffice him. But he failed to see the meaning of Christ's words. In tones of wonder Christ asks the question, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet," &c.

xiv. 10. "The Father that dwelleth," &c.: there is some variety in the readings of different MSS. Alford, who follows the Sinaitic,

Vatican, and Cambridge MSS., translates, "The Father that dwelleth in me doeth his works."

xiv. 17. "Ye know him:" though the apostles had not yet received the Spirit (compare chap. iv. 14 and vii. 38), yet our Lord appeals to the experience of the disciples, because they had already felt his preliminary operation in their hearts, in some happy hours of intercourse with the Lord (Olsbhausen).

xiv. 22. "Judas:" probably identical with Thaddæus or Lebbaeus.

expectation of that, had left all to follow him. Now, if he leave the world in the same circumstances of meanness and poverty in which he had lived, and worse, they are quite defeated. *Secondly*. They will think themselves sadly deserted and exposed. They knew by experience what little presence of mind they had in difficult emergencies—that they could count upon nothing but being ruined and run down if they part with their Master. Now, in reference to all these, "Let not your heart be troubled."

Here are three words, upon any of which the emphasis may significantly be laid. 1st. Upon the word "troubled," *μη ταρασσέσθε*; be not so troubled as to be put into a hurry and confusion, "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest." He doth not say, Let not your hearts be sensible of the griefs, or sad because of them; but, Be not ruffled and discomposed, be not cast down and disquieted. *Ps. xlii. 5.* 2nd. Upon the word "heart;" though the nation and city be troubled, though your little family and flock be troubled, yet "let not your heart be troubled." Keep possession of your own souls, when you can keep possession of nothing else. The heart is the main fort, whatever you do, keep trouble from that; keep that with all diligence. The spirit must sustain the infirmity, therefore; see that be not wounded. 3rd. Upon the word "your;" you that are my disciples and followers, my redeemed, chosen, sanctified ones; however others are overwhelmed with the sorrows of this present time, be not you so, for you know better things; let the sinners in Zion tremble, but "let the sons of Zion be joyful in their King." Herein Christ's disciples should do more than others, should keep their minds quiet, when every thing else is unquiet.

2. The remedy he prescribes against this trouble of mind, which he saw ready to prevail over them; in general, "Believe," *πιστεύετε*. 1st. Some read it in both parts imperatively, "believe in God," and his perfections and providence; "believe also in me," and my mediation. Build with confidence upon the great acknowledged principles of natural religion; that there is a God, that he is most holy, wise, powerful, and good; that he is the governor of the world, and has the sovereign disposal of all events; and comfort yourselves likewise with the peculiar doctrines of that holy religion which I have taught you. But, 2nd. We read the former as an acknowledgment, that they did "believe in God," for which he commends them; but if you would effectually provide against a stormy day, "believe also in me." Through Christ we are brought into covenant with God, and become interested in his favour and promise, which otherwise as sinners we must despair of, and the remembrance of God would have been our trouble; but by believing in Christ as the Mediator between God and man, our belief in God becomes comfortable; and this is the will of God, "that all men should believe in the Father; and those that rightly believe in the Son, as they should believe in the Father; and those that rightly believe in God, will believe in Jesus Christ, whom he has made known to them. And believing in God through Jesus Christ, is an excellent means of keeping trouble from the heart. The joys of faith are the best remedies against the griefs of sense; it is a remedy with a promise annexed to it; "the just shall live by faith;" a remedy with a *probatum est* annexed to it, "I had fainted, unless I had believed."

Secondly. Here is a particular direction to act faith upon the promise of eternal life, ver. 2, 3. He had directed them to trust God, and to trust him; but what must they trust God and Christ for? Trust them for a happiness to come, when this body and this world shall be no more; and for a happiness to last as long as the immortal soul and the eternal world shall last. Now this is proposed as a sovereign cordial under all the troubles of this present time, to which there is that in the happiness of heaven which is admirably adapted and accommodated. All the saints have encouraged themselves with this in their greatest extremities, "that heaven would make amends for all." Let us see how this is suggested here:

1. Believe and consider that really there is such a happiness: "In my Father's house there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you," ver. 2. 1st. See under what notion the happiness of heaven is here represented; as mansions, many mansions in Christ's Father's house. *First*. Heaven is a house, not a tent or tabernacle; it is "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." *Secondly*. It is a Father's house; my Father's house; and his Father is our Father, to whom he was now ascending, so that in the right of their elder Brother all true believers shall be welcome to that happiness as to their home. It is his house who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, dwells in light, and inhabits eternity. *Thirdly*. There are mansions there. That is, 1st. Distinct dwellings, an apartment for each; perhaps there is an allusion to the priests' chambers that were about the temple. In heaven there are accommodations for particular saints; though all shall be swallowed up in God, yet our individuation shall not be lost there; every Israelite had his lot in Canaan, and every elder a seat, *Rev. iv. 4.* 2nd. Durable dwellings: *μοναί*, from *μένω*, *maneo*, "abiding-places." The house itself is lasting; our estate in it is not for a term of years, but a perpetuity. Here we are as in an inn, in heaven we shall gain a settlement. The disciples had quitted their houses to attend Christ, who had not time to lay his head; but the mansions in heaven will make them amends. *Fourthly*. There are many mansions, for there are many sons to be brought to glory, and he exactly knows their number; nor will be straitened for room by the coming of more company than he expects. He had told Peter that he should follow him, *ch. xiii. 36*; but let not the rest be discouraged, in heaven there are mansions for them all. *Rehoboth, Gen. xxvi. 22.*

2nd. See what assurance we have of the reality of the happiness itself, and the sincerity of the proposal of it to us; "if it were not so, I would have told you;" if you had deceived yourselves when you quitted your livelihoods, and ventured your lives for me, in prospect of a happiness future and unseen, I would soon have undeceived you. The assurance is built, *First*. Upon the veracity of his word. It is implied, if there were not such a happiness, valuable and attainable, I would not have told you that there was. *Secondly*. Upon the sincerity of his affection to them. As he is true, and would not impose upon them himself; so he is kind, and would not suffer them to be imposed upon. If either there were no such mansions, or none designed for them, who had left all to follow him, he would have given them timely notice of the mistake, that they might have made an honourable retreat to the world again, and have made the best hand they could of it. Note, Christ's good-will to us is a great encouragement to our hope in him. He loves us too well, and means us too well, to disappoint the expectations of his own raising, or to leave those to be of all men most miserable, who have been of him most observant.

2. Believe and consider, that the design of Christ's going away was to prepare a place in heaven for his disciples. You are grieved to think of my going away, whereas I go on your errand; as the forerunner, I am to enter for you. He went to prepare a place for us; that is, 1st. To take possession for us, as our advocate or attorney, and so to secure our title as indefeasible. Livery of seisin was given to Christ for the use and behoof of all that should believe on him. 2nd. To make provision for us as our Friend and Father. The happiness of heaven, though prepared before the foundation of the world, yet must be further fitted up for man in his fallen state. It consisting much in the presence of Christ there, it was therefore necessary he should go before, to enter into that glory which his disciples were to share in. Heaven would be an uneasy place for a Christian if Christ were not there. He went to prepare a table for

them, to prepare thrones for them, *Lu. xlii. 30*. Thus he designed to speak the fitness of heaven's happiness for the saints, for whom it is prepared.

3. Believe and consider, that therefore he would certainly come again in due time, to fetch them to that blessed place which he was now going to possess for himself, and prepare for them; ver. 3, "If I go and prepare a place for you," if that be the errand of my journey, you may be sure, when every thing is ready "I will come again and receive you to myself," so that you shall follow me hereafter, "that where I am there ye may be also." Now these are comfortable words indeed.

1st. That Jesus Christ will come again, *ἐρχομαι*, "I do come;" intimating the certainty of it, that he will come, and that he is daily coming. We say we are coming, when we are busy in preparing for our coming, and so he is. All he doth has a reference and tendency to his second coming. Note, The belief of Christ's second coming, which he has given us the assurance of, is an excellent preservative against trouble of heart, *Phil. iv. 5*; *Jas. v. 8*.

2nd. That he will come again to receive all his faithful followers to himself. He sends for them privately at death, and gathers them one by one; but they are to make their public entry in solemn state all together at the last day; and then Christ himself will come to receive them, to conduct them out of the abundance of his care, and to welcome them out of the abundance of his love. He will hereby testify the utmost respects and endearments imaginable. The coming of Christ is in order to "our gathering together unto him," *2 Thes. ii. 1*.

3rd. That where he is, there shall they be also. This speaks the same that many other scriptures speak, that the quintessence of heaven's happiness is being with Christ there, *ch. xvii. 24*; *Phil. i. 23*; *1 Thes. iv. 17*. Christ speaks of his being there as now present, "that where I am;" where I am to be shortly, where I am to be eternally, there ye shall be shortly, there ye shall be eternally. Not only there in the same place, but there in the same state; not only spectators of his glory, as the three disciples on the mount, but sharers in it.

4th. That this may be inferred from his going to prepare a place for us, for his preparations shall not be in vain; he will not build and furnish lodgings, and let them stand empty. He will be the finisher of that which he is the author of. If he have prepared the place for us, he will prepare us for it, and in due time put us in possession of it. As the resurrection of Christ is the assurance of our resurrection, so his ascension, victory, and glory is an assurance of ours.

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. 5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. 7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? 10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

Christ having set the happiness of heaven before them as the end, here shews them himself as the way to it; and tells them they were better acquainted both with the end they were to aim at, and with the way they were to walk in, than they thought they were. "Ye know," that is, 1. Ye may know. It is none of the secret things which belong not to you, but one of the things revealed. You need not ascend into heaven, or go down into the deep, for the word is nigh you, *Rom. x. 6, 8*; level to you. 2. Ye do know. Ye know that which is the home, and which is the way; though perhaps not as the home, and as the way. You have been told it, and cannot but know, if you would recollect and consider it. Note, Jesus Christ is willing to make the best of his people's knowledge, though they are weak and defective in it. He knows the good that is in them better than they do themselves, and is certain they have that knowledge, and faith, and love, which they themselves are not sensible of, or not certain of. This word of Christ gave occasion to two of his disciples to address themselves to him, and he answers them both.

First. Thomas inquired concerning the way, ver. 5; without any apology for contradicting his Master, he said, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest," to what place, or what state, "and how can we know the way" in which we must follow thee? We can neither guess at it, nor inquire it out, but must still be at a loss. Christ's testimony concerning their knowledge made them more sensible of their ignorance, and more inquisitive after farther light. Thomas here shews more modesty than Peter, who thought he could follow Christ now: Peter was there more solicitous to know whither Christ went: Thomas here, though he complains that he did not know that, yet seems most solicitous to know the way. Now, 1. His confession of his ignorance was commendable enough. If good men be in the dark, and know but in part, yet they are willing to own their defects. But, 2. The cause of his ignorance was culpable. They knew not whither Christ went, because they dreamed of a temporal kingdom in external pomp and power, and doted upon that, notwithstanding what he had said again and again to the contrary. Hence it was that when Christ spoke of going away, and their following him, their fancy ran upon his going to some remarkable city or other, Bethlehem, or Nazareth, or Capernaum, or some of the cities of the Gentiles, as David to Hebron, there to be anointed king, and to restore the kingdom to Israel; and which way this place lay, where these castles in the air were to be built,—east, west, north, or south,—

(Compare Matt. x. 3.) In our Lord's reply we may trace the same principle which he observed on other occasions. He turns from the speculative to the practical. (Compare Luke xiii. 23, 24.) He does this, however, because love and obedience are paths by which the spirit reaches the heights of divine knowledge. (Compare John vii. 17; *Psa. l. 23*.)

xiv. 25, 26. The Spirit is described as the teacher of all truth. (Compare chap. xvi. 13.) The idea of "all things" must not be extended

to all minute points, but neither must its meaning be arbitrarily limited. It is of the principle of all essential truth, with which we receive the true knowledge of God, that Christ is speaking. "Holy Ghost;" better, "Holy Spirit."

xiv. 28. "Ye would rejoice:" rather, "ye would have rejoiced;" i.e., "when I told you." (Compare chap. xvi. 6.)

xiv. 31. "Arise, let us go hence;" from chap. xviii. 1 we learn the moment when our Lord crossed over the brook Kedron in his way

they could not tell; and therefore knew not the way. Thus still we think ourselves more in the dark than we need to be concerning the future state of the church, because we expect its worldly prosperity, whereas it is its spiritual advancement that the promise points at. Had Thomas understood, as he might have done, that Christ was going to the invisible world, the world of spirits, to which spiritual things only have a reference, he would not have said, 'Lord, we do not know the way.'

Now to this complaint of their ignorance, which included a desire to be taught, Christ gives a full answer, ver. 6, 7. Thomas had inquired, both whither he went, and what was the way; and Christ answers both those inquiries, and makes good what he had said, that they would have needed no answer if they had understood themselves aright; for they knew him, and he was the way; they knew the Father, and he was the end; and therefore "whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." Believe in God as the end, and in me as the way, ver. 1, and you do all you should do.

1. He speaks of himself as the way, ver. 6. Dost thou not know the way? "I am the way," and I only, "for no man comes to the Father but by me." Great things Christ here saith of himself, shewing us,

1st. The nature of his mediation; he is "the way, the truth, and the life." Let us consider these first distinctly.

First. Christ is "the way," the highway spoken of, *Isa. xxxv. 8*. Christ was his own way; for by his own blood he entered into the holy place, *Heb. ix. 12*; and he is our way, for we enter by him; by his doctrine and example, he teaches us our duty; by his merit and intercession, he procures us our happiness, and so he is the way. In him God and man meet and are brought together; we could not get to the tree of life in the way of innocence, but Christ is another way to it. By Christ, as the way, an intercourse is settled and kept up between heaven and earth. The angels of God ascend and descend: our prayers go to God, and his blessings come to us by him: this is the way that leads to rest—the good old way. The disciples followed him, and Christ tells them they followed the road; and while they continued following him they would never be out of their way.

Secondly. He is "the truth." 1st. As truth is opposed to figure and shadow. Christ is the substance of all the Old Testament types, which are therefore said to be figures of the true, *Heb. ix. 24*. Christ is the true manna, *ch. vi. 32*; the true tabernacle, *Heb. viii. 2*. 2nd. As truth is opposed to falsehood and error. The doctrine of Christ is true doctrine; when we inquire for truth, we need learn no more but the truth as it is in Jesus. 3rd. As truth is opposed to fallacy and deceit. He is true to all that trust in him; as true as truth itself, *2 Cor. i. 20*.

Thirdly. He is "the life;" for we are alive unto God only in and through Jesus Christ, *Rom. vi. 11*. Christ formed in us is that to our souls which our souls are to our bodies: Christ is the resurrection and the life.

Let us also consider these jointly, and with reference to each other. Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life;" that is, 1. He is the beginning, the middle, and the end; in him we must set out, go on, and finish. As the truth, he is the guide of our way; as the life, he is the end of it. 2. He is the true and living way, *Heb. x. 20*; there is truth and life in it, as well as at the end of it. 3. He is the true way to life—the only true way; other ways may seem right, but the end of them is the way of death.

2nd. The necessity of his mediation; "no man cometh to the Father but by me." Fallen man must come to God as a judge, but cannot come to him as a Father otherwise than by Christ as mediator. We cannot perform the duty of coming to God by repentance, and the acts of worship, without the Spirit and grace of Christ; nor obtain the happiness of coming to God as our Father without his merit and righteousness. He is the high priest of our profession—our advocate.

2. He speaks of his Father as the end; ver. 7, "If ye had known me" aright, "ye should" or would "have known my Father also; and from henceforth," by the glory you have seen in me, and the doctrine you have heard from me, "ye know him, and have seen him." Here is,

1st. A tacit rebuke to them for their dullness and carelessness in acquainting themselves with Jesus Christ, though they had been his constant followers and associates. "If ye had known me," they know him, and yet did not know him so well as they might and should have known him; they know him to be the Christ, but did not follow on to know God in him. Christ had said to the Jews, *ch. viii. 19*, "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also;" and here the same to his disciples; for it is hard to say which is more strange, the wilful ignorance of those that are enemies to the light, or the defects and mistakes of the children of light, that have had such opportunities of knowledge. If they had known Christ aright, they would have known that his kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world; that he came down from heaven, and therefore must return to heaven; and then they would have known his Father also—would have known whether he designed to go, when he said, "I go to the Father;" to a glory in the other world, not in this: if we knew Christianity better, we should better know natural religion.

2nd. A favourable intimation that he was well satisfied concerning their sincerity, notwithstanding the weakness of their understanding; "and from henceforth," from my giving you this hint, which will serve as a key to all the instructions I have given you hitherto, let me tell you, "ye know him, and have seen him," inasmuch as ye know me, and have seen me; for in the face of Christ we see the glory of God, as we see a father in his son that resembles him. Christ tells his disciples they were not so ignorant as they seemed to be; for though little children, yet they had known the Father, *1 Jno. ii. 13*. Note, Many of the disciples of Christ have more knowledge and more grace than they think they have; and Christ takes notice of, and is well pleased with that good in them which they themselves are not aware of; for they that know God, do not presently know that they know him, *1 Jno. ii. 3*.

Secondly, Philip inquired concerning the Father, ver. 8, and Christ answered him, ver. 9—11; where observe,

1. Philip's request for some extraordinary discovery of the Father. He was not so forward to speak as some others of them were; and yet, from an earnest desire of farther light, he cries out, "Shew us the Father." Philip listened to what Christ said to Thomas, and fastened upon the last words, "ye have seen him." Nay, saith Philip, "that is it we want, that is it we would have,"—"shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

1st. This supposeth an earnest desire of acquaintance with God as a Father. The petition is, "shew us the Father;" give us to know him in that relation to us; and this he begs not for himself only, but for the rest of the disciples. The plea is, "it sufficeth us;" he not only professeth it himself, but will pass his word for his fellow-disciples; Grant us but one sight of the Father, and we have enough. Jansenius saith, though Philip did not mean it, yet the Holy Ghost, by his mouth, designed here to teach us, that the satisfaction and happiness of a soul consists in the vision and fruition of God, *Ps. xvi. 1*; *xvii. 5*. In the knowledge of God the understanding rests, and is at the top of its ambition; in the knowledge of God as our Father the soul is satisfied. A sight of the Father is a heaven upon earth,—fills us with joy unspeakable.

2nd. As Philip speaks it here, it intimates that he was not satisfied with such a discovery of the Father as Christ thought fit to give them; but he would pre-

scribe to him, and press upon him something farther, and no less than some visible appearance of the glory of God, like that to Moses, *Ex. xxxiii. 22*, and to the elders of Israel, *Ex. xxiv. 9—11*. 'Let us see the Father with our bodily eyes, as we see thee, and it sufficeth us; we will trouble thee with no more questions, whither thou goest.' And so it discovers not only the weakness of his faith, but his ignorance of the gospel way of manifesting the Father, which is spiritual, and not sensible. Such a sight of God, he thinks, would suffice them; and yet those who did thus see him, were not sufficed, but soon corrupted themselves, and made a graven image. Christ's institutions have provided better for the confirmation of our faith than our own inventions would.

2. Christ's reply, referring him to the discoveries already made of the Father, ver. 9—11.

1st. He refers him to what he had seen, ver. 9. He upbraids him with his ignorance and inadvertency; "have I been so long time with you," now above three years intimately conversant with you, "and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Now, "he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" Wilt thou ask for that which thou hast already? Now here,

First. He reproves him for two things: 1st. For not improving his acquaintance with Christ as he might have done, to a clear and distinct knowledge of him. "Hast thou not known me, Philip," whom thou hast followed so long, and conversed with so much? Philip, the first day he came to him, declared that he knew him to be the Messiah, *ch. i. 45*; and yet, to this day, did not know the Father in him. Many that have good knowledge in the Scripture and divine things fall short of the attainments justly expected from them, for want of compounding the ideas they have, and going on to perfection. Many know Christ, who yet do not know what they might know of him, nor see what they should see in him. That which aggravated Philip's dullness was, that he had had so long an opportunity of improvement; "I have been so long time with thee." Note, The longer we enjoy the means of knowledge and grace, the more inexcusable we are if we be found defective in grace and knowledge. Christ expects our proficiency should be in some measure according to our standing, and that we should not be always babes. Let us thus reason with ourselves: Have I been so long a hearer of sermons, a student in the Scripture, a scholar in the school of Christ, and yet so weak in the knowledge of Christ, and so unskilful in the word of righteousness? 2nd. He reproves him for his infirmity in the prayer made, "shew us the Father." Note, Herein appears much of the weakness of Christ's disciples, that they "know not what to pray for as they ought," *Rom. viii. 26*; but often ask amiss, *Jas. iv. 3*; for that which either is not promised, or is already bestowed in the sense of the promise, as here.

Secondly. He instructs him, and gives him a maxim, which not only in general magnifies Christ, and leads us to the knowledge of God in him, but justifies what Christ had said, ver. 7, Ye know the Father, and have seen him; and answers what Philip had asked, "shew us the Father;" why, saith Christ, the difficulty is soon over, for "he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." 1st. All that saw Christ in the flesh might have seen the Father in him, if Satan had not blinded their minds, and kept them from a sight of Christ as the image of God, *2 Cor. iv. 4*. 2nd. All that saw Christ by faith did see the Father in him, though they were not suddenly aware that they did so. In the light of Christ's doctrine they saw God as the Father of lights; in the miracles they saw God as the God of power, the finger of God. The holiness of God shone in the spotless purity of Christ's life, and his grace in all the acts of grace he did.

2nd. He refers him to what he had reason to believe: ver. 10, 11, "Believeth thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" and therefore, in seeing me, thou hast seen the Father. Hast thou not believed this? If not, take my word for it, and believe it now.

First. See here what it is which we are to believe, "that I am in the Father, and the Father in me;" that is, as he had said, *ch. x. 30*, "I and my Father are one." He speaks of the Father and himself as two persons, and yet so one as never any two were, or can be. In knowing Christ as 'God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, and as being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made;' we know the Father, and in seeing him thus we see the Father. In Christ we behold more of the glory of God than Moses did at mount Horeb.

Secondly. See here what inducements we have to believe this; and they are two: We must believe it, 1st. For his words' sake; "the words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself;" see *ch. vi. 16*, "my doctrine is not mine." What he said seemed to them careless, as the word of man, speaking his own thoughts at his own pleasure; but really it was the wisdom of God that indited it, and the will of God that enforced it: he spake not of himself only, but the mind of God according to the eternal counsels. 2nd. For his works' sake; "the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth them," and therefore believe me for their sakes. Observe, 1. The Father is said to dwell in him; *ὁ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων*,—"he abideth in me" by the inseparable union of the Divine and human nature. Never had God such a temple to dwell on in earth, as the body of the Lord Jesus, *ch. ii. 21*. Here was the true Shechinah, of which that in the tabernacle was but a type. The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, *Col. ii. 9*. The Father so dwells in Christ, as that in him we may be found, as a man where he dwells. Seek ye the Lord, seek him in Christ, and he will be found, for in him he dwells. 2. He doth the works. Many works of power, and works of mercy; Christ did, and the Father did them in him; and the work of redemption in general was God's own work. 3. We are bound to believe this, for the very works' sake. As we are to believe the being and perfections of God for the sake of the works of the creation, which declare his glory; so we are to believe the revelation of God to man in Jesus Christ for the sake of the works of the Redeemer; those mighty works, which, by shewing forth themselves, (*Mat. xiv. 2*) shew forth him, and God in him. Note, Christ's miracles are proofs of his Divine mission, not only for the conviction of infidels, but for the confirmation of the faith of his own disciples, *ch. ii. 11*; *v. 36*; *x. 37*.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

The disciples, as they were full of grief to think of parting with their Master, so they were full of care what would become of themselves when he was gone: while he was with them he was a support to them, kept them in countenance

to Gethsemane. These words have usually been understood to indicate the time when he rose from the supper-table and prepared to leave the city; but as they stood ready to leave, Christ began to speak again.

xv. 1. It has been conjectured that some special occasion led to the sudden comparison which our Lord here made. A vine-branch across the window, or its foliage decorating the walls of the supper-room, caught his attention and suggested the image. A curious thought

of Rosenmüller is mentioned by Olshausen. According to Josephus, on the door, seventy cubits high, which led into the holy place of the Temple, an artificial vine was spread out, the branches and leaves of which were made of precious metal, and its clusters of diamonds and pearls. Doubtless this vine was, according to prophetic passages, intended as a type of Israel, often called a vine of the Lord. Now Rosenmüller thinks it was by the sight of this that Jesus was led to institute the comparison before us. (Compare *Jer. ii. 21*; *Ezek. xix.*

kept them in heart; but if he leave them, they will be as sheep having no shepherd—an easy prey to those who sought to run them down. Now to silence these fears, Christ here assures them that they should be clothed with powers sufficient to bear them out. As Christ had all power, they in his name should have great power, both in heaven and in earth.

First. Great power on earth; ver. 12, "He that believeth on me," as I know you do, "the works that I do shall he do also." This doth not weaken the argument Christ had taken from his works to prove himself one with the Father, that others should do as great works, but rather strengthens it; for the miracles which the apostles wrought were wrought in his name, and by faith in him; and this magnifies his power more than any thing, that he not only wrought miracles himself, but gave power to others to do so too. Two things he assures them of:

1. That they should be enabled to do such works as he had done, and that they should have a more ample power for the doing of them than they had had when he first sent them forth, *Mat. x. 8*. Did Christ heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead? so should they. Did he convince and convert sinners, and draw multitudes to him? so should they. Though he should depart, the work should not cease, nor fall to the ground; but should be carried on as vigorously and successfully as ever, and it is still in the doing.

2. That they should do greater works than these:

1st. In the kingdom of nature: they should work greater miracles. No miracle is little; but some, to our apprehension, seem greater than others. Christ had healed with the hem of his garment, but Peter with his shadow, *Acts v. 15*; Paul, by the handkerchief that had touched him, *Acts xix. 12*. Christ wrought miracles for two or three years in one country, but his followers wrought miracles in his name for many ages in divers countries. Ye shall do greater, if there were occasion, for the glory of God. The prayer of faith, if at any time it had been necessary, should have removed mountains.

2nd. In the kingdom of grace: they should obtain greater victories by the Gospel than had been obtained while Christ was upon earth; and the truth is, the captivating of so great a part of the world to Christ under such outward disadvantages, was the miracle of all. I think this refers especially to the gift of tongues, which was the immediate effect of the pouring out of the Spirit; which was a constant miracle upon the mind, in which words are framed, and which was made to serve so glorious an intention as that of spreading the Gospel to all nations in their own language. This was a greater sign to them which believed not, (*1 Cor. xiv. 22*), and more powerful for their conviction, than any other miracle whatsoever.

The reason Christ gives for this, "because I go unto my Father." 1. Because I go, it will be requisite you should have such a power, lest the work suffer damage by my absence. 2. Because I go to the Father, I shall be in a capacity to furnish you with such a power; for I go to the Father to send the Comforter, from whom you shall receive power, *Acts i. 8*. The wonderful works which they did in Christ's name, were part of the glories of his exalted state, when he ascended on high, *Eph. iv. 8*.

Secondly. Great power in heaven: "Whatsoever ye shall ask, that will I do," ver. 13, 14; as Israel, that was a prince with God. Therefore you shall do such mighty works, because you have such an interest in me, and I in my Father. Observe,

1. In what way they were to keep up communion with him, and fetch in power from him when he was gone to the Father—by prayer. When dear friends are to be removed to a distance from each other, they provide for the settling of a correspondence; thus when Christ was going to his Father, he tells his disciples how they might write to him upon every occasion, and send it by a safe and ready way of conveyance, without danger of miscarriage, or lying by the way: Let me hear from you by prayer, the prayer of faith, and you shall hear from me by the Spirit. This was the old way of intercourse with Heaven, ever since "men began to call upon the name of the Lord;" but Christ by his death has laid it more open, and it is still open to us. Here is,

1st. Humility prescribed: "Ye shall ask." Though they had quitted all for Christ, they could demand nothing of him as a debt, but must ask it as an alms; must be humble supplicants; beg or starve, beg or perish.

2nd. Liberty allowed: Ask any thing; any thing that is good and proper for you, any thing, provided you know what you ask: you may ask for assistance in your work; for a mouth and wisdom; for preservation out of the hands of your enemies; for power to work miracles when there is occasion; for the success of the ministry in the conversion of souls; ask to be informed, directed, vindicated: occasions vary, but they shall be welcome to the throne of grace upon every occasion.

2. In what name they were to present their petitions; "Ask in my name." To ask in Christ's name is, 1st. To plead his merit and intercession, and to depend upon that plea. The Old Testament saints had an eye to this when they prayed for the Lord's sake, *Deut. ix. 17*; and for the sake of the anointed, *Psa. lxxxiv. 9*; but Christ's mediation is brought to a clearer light by the Gospel, and so we are enabled more expressly to ask in his name. When Christ dictated the Lord's prayer this was not inserted, because they did not so fully understand this matter as they should afterwards, when the Spirit was poured out. If we ask in our own name, we cannot expect to speed; for being strangers, we have no name in heaven; being sinners, we have an ill name there: but Christ's is a good name, well known in heaven, and very precious. 2nd. It is to aim at his glory and honour in our prayers, and to seek that as our highest end in all our prayers.

3. What success they should have in their prayers; what you ask, "that will I do," ver. 13; and again, ver. 14, "I will do it." You may be sure I will: not only it shall be done, I will see it done, or give orders for the doing of it, but, "I will do it;" for he has not only the interest of an intercessor, but the power of a sovereign prince, who sits at the right hand of God, the hand of action, and has the doing of all in the kingdom of God. By faith in his name we may have what we will for the asking.

4. For what reason their prayers should speed so well; "that the Father may be glorified in the Son;" that is, 1st. This they ought to aim at, and have their eye upon, in asking. In this all our desires and prayers should meet, as in their centre; to this they must all be directed, that God in Christ may be honoured by our services, and in our salvation. "Hallowed be thy name," is an answered prayer, and is put first, because if the heart be sincere in that, it doth in a manner consecrate all the other petitions. 2nd. This Christ will aim at in granting; and for the sake of this will do what they ask, that hereby the glory of the Father in the Son might be manifested. The wisdom, power, and goodness of God were manifested in the Redeemer, when by a power derived from him, and exerted in his name, and for his service, his apostles and ministers were enabled to do such great things, both in the proofs of their doctrine, and in the successes of it.

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for

ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Christ not only proposeth such things to them as were the matter of their comfort; but here promiseth to send the Spirit, whose office it should be to be their Comforter, to impress those things upon them.

First. He premiseth to this a memorandum of duty: ver. 15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Keeping the commandments of Christ is here put for the practice of godliness in general, and for the faithful and diligent discharge of their office as apostles in particular. Now observe, 1. When Christ is comforting them, he bids them keep his commandments; for we must not expect comfort but in the way of duty. The same word (*παρακαλέω*) signifies both to exhort and to comfort. 2. When they were in care what they should do, now their Master was leaving them, and what would become of them now, he bids them keep his commandments, and then nothing could come amiss to them. In difficult times, our care concerning the events of the day should be swallowed up in a care concerning the duty of the day. 3. When they were shewing their love to Christ by their grieving to think of his departure, and the sorrow which filled their heart upon the foresight of that, he bids them, if they would shew their love to him, do it not by those weak and feminine passions, but by their conscientious care to perform their trust, and by a universal obedience to his commands; that is better than sacrifice, better than tears. "Lovest thou me? feed my lambs." 4. When Christ had given them precious promises of the answer of their prayers, and the coming of the Comforter, he laid down this as a limitation of the promises, provided you keep my commandments, from a principle of love to me. Christ will not be an advocate for any but those that will be ruled and advised by him as their counsel. Follow the conduct of the Spirit, and you shall have the comfort of the Spirit.

Secondly. He promiseth this great and unspeakable blessing to them, ver. 16, 17.

1. It is promised that they shall have "another Comforter." This is the great New Testament promise, *Acts i. 4*; as that of the Messiah was of the Old Testament; a promise adapted to the present distress of the disciples, who were in sorrow, and needed a comforter. Observe here,

1. The blessing promised, ἄλλον παρακλήτοιν. The word is used only here in these discourses of Christ's, and *1 Jno. ii. 1*, where we translate it an advocate. The Rhemists and Dr. Hammond are for retaining the Greek word, *paraclete*; we read, *Acts ix. 13*, of the *παρακλήσις τοῦ ἀγίου πνεύματος*,—"the comfort of the Holy Ghost," including his whole office as an advocate.

1st. You shall have another advocate. The office of the Spirit was to be Christ's advocate with them and others, to plead his cause, and take care of: is concerns on earth; to be *Vicarius Christi*, as one of the ancients calls him; and to be their advocate with their opposers. When Christ was with them, he spoke for them as there was occasion; but now he is leaving them, they shall not be run down; the Spirit of the Father shall speak in them, *Mat. x. 19, 20*; and the cause cannot miscarry that is pleaded by such an advocate.

2nd. You shall have another master or teacher, another exhorter. While they had Christ with them, he excited and exhorted them to their duty; but now he is going he leaves one with them that shall do this as effectually, though silently. Jansenius thinks the most proper word to render it by is a patron, one that shall both instruct and protect you.

3rd. Another comforter. Christ was expected as the consolation of Israel. One of the names of the Messiah among the Jews was *Menehem*,—"the Comforter." The Targum calls the days of the Messiah, the years of consolation. Christ comforted his disciples when he was with them, and now he was leaving them in their greatest need, he promiseth them another.

2. The giver of this blessing; "the Father" shall give him; my Father and your Father; it includes both. The same that gave the Son to be our Saviour, will give his Spirit to be our Comforter, pursuant to the same design. The Son is said to send the Comforter, *ch. xv. 26*; but the Father is the prime agent.

3. How this blessing is procured, by the intercession of the Lord Jesus; "I will pray the Father." He said, ver. 11, "I will do it;" here he saith, "I will pray for it;" to shew not only that he is both God and man, but that he is both king and priest. As priest, he is ordained for men to make intercession; as king, he is authorized by the Father to execute judgment. When Christ saith, "I will pray the Father," it doth not suppose that the Father is unwilling, or must be importuned to it, but only that the gift of the Spirit is a fruit of Christ's mediation, purchased by his merit, and taken out by his intercession.

4. The continuance of this blessing; "that he may abide with you for ever;" that is, 1st. With you, as long as you live: you shall never know the want of a comforter, nor lament his departure, as you are now lamenting mine. Note, It should support us under the loss of those comforts which were designed us for a time, that there are everlasting consolations provided for us. It was not expedient Christ should be with them for ever; for they were designed for public service must not always live a college life; they must disperse, and therefore a comforter that would be with them all, in all places alike, where-soever dispersed, and howsoever distressed, was alone fit to be with them for ever. 2nd. With your successors, when you are gone, to the end of time; your successors in Christianity, in the ministry. 3rd. If we take "for ever" in its utmost extent, the promise will be accomplished in those consolations of God which will be the eternal joy of all the saints—pleasures for evermore.

11. This Comforter is "the Spirit of truth, whom ye know," ver. 16, 17. They might think it impossible to have a Comforter equivalent to him who is the Son of God; Yea, saith Christ, you shall have the Spirit of God, who is equal in power and glory with the Son.

1. The Comforter promised is "the Spirit;" one who should do his work in a spiritual way and manner, inwardly and invisibly, by working on men's spirits.

2. He is "the Spirit of truth." He will be true to you, and to his undertaking for you, which he will perform to the utmost. He will teach you the truth, will enlighten your minds with the knowledge of it, will strengthen and confirm your belief of it, and will increase your love to it. The Gentiles by their idolatries, and the Jews by their traditions, were led into gross errors and mistakes; but the Spirit of truth shall not only "lead you into all truth," but others, by your ministry. Christ is the truth, and he is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit that he was anointed with.

3. He is one "whom the world cannot receive," "but ye know him;" therefore he abideth with you.

1st. The disciples of Christ are here distinguished from the world; for they are chosen and called out of the world that lies in wickedness; they are the children and heirs of another world, not of this.

2nd. It is the misery of those that are invincibly devoted to the world, that they cannot receive the Spirit of truth. The spirit of the world, and of God, are spoken of as directly contrary the one to the other, *1 Cor. ii. 12*; for where

10; *Joel i. 7*; *Psa. lxxx. 8*; *Mark xii. 1*). The objection to this is that it is hardly likely that our Lord was in the Temple precincts when he spoke these words. "I am the true vine;" the earthly vine is but the figure of the true. All things were made after the pattern of things in the heavens; to convey, that is, the deeper truths which the inner nature of man needed to know. "Every physical vital unity, of which the vine forms an example, is, as it were, a copy of the spiritual vital unity of believers." "And

my Father is the husbandman;" the word here is the same as that used in *Matt. xxi. 33*, which has a more general meaning than that used in *Luke xiii. 7*. Olshausen, however, would take the word here as equivalent to the more special word employed by St. Luke. The figure reminds us that the origin and support of spiritual life depends on the will and power of God. (*Compae chap. v. 19, 26, vi. 32–45, 65*; *1 Cor. iii. 9*.) It is to be remembered that though, no doubt, the language used by our Lord here is applicable to all who

the spirit of the world has the ascendant, the Spirit of God is excluded. Even the princes of this world, though as princes they had advantages of knowledge, yet, as princes of this world, they labour under invincible prejudices, so that they knew not the things of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. ii. 8.

3rd. Therefore men cannot receive the Spirit of truth, because they see him not, neither know him. The comforts of the Spirit are foolishness to them, as much as ever the cross of Christ was; and the great things of the Gospel, like those of the law, counted as a strange thing: these are judgments far above out of their sight. Speak to the children of this world of the operations of the Spirit, and you are as a barbarian to them.

4th. The best knowledge of the Spirit of truth, is that which is got by experience: "Ye know him, for he dwelleth with you." Christ had dwelt with them, and by their acquaintance with him, they could not but know "the Spirit of truth;" they had themselves been indwelt with the Spirit in some measure. What enabled them to leave all to follow Christ, and to continue with him in his temptations? What enabled them to preach the Gospel, and work miracles, but the Spirit dwelling in them? The experiences of the saints are the explanations of the promises; paradoxes to others are axioms to them.

5th. They that have an experimental acquaintance with the Spirit have a comfortable assurance of his continuance: "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," for the blessed Spirit doth not use to shift his lodging. They that know how to value him, invite him, and bid him welcome; and therefore he shall be in them, as the light in the air, as the sap in the tree, as the soul in the body; their communion with him shall be intimate, and their union with him inseparable.

6th. The gift of the Holy Ghost is a peculiar gift, bestowed upon the disciples of Christ in a distinguishing way;—them, and not the world; it is to them hidden manna, and the white stone. No comforts comparable to those which make no show, make no noise. 'This is the favour God bears to his chosen; it is the heritage of those that fear his name.

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. 20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. 21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. 22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? 23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

When friends are parting, it is a common request they make to each other, 'Pray let us hear from you as often as you can:' this Christ engaged to his disciples, that out of sight, they should not be out of mind.

First. He promiseth that he would continue his care of them, ver. 18: "I will not leave you orphans," or fatherless; for though I leave you, yet I leave you this comfort, "I will come to you." His departure from them was it that grieved them; but it was not so bad as they apprehended, for it was neither total nor final.

1. Not total: "Though I leave you without my bodily presence, yet I do not leave you without comfort." Though children, and left little, yet they had received the adoption of sons, and his Father would be their Father, with whom those who otherwise would be fatherless find mercy. Note, The case of true believers, though sometimes it may be sorrowful, yet it is never comfortless, because they are never orphans; for God is their Father, who is an everlasting Father.

2. Not final: "I will come to you." *ἐρχομαι*, 'I do come;' that is, 1st. 'I will come speedily to you at my resurrection, I will not be long away; but will be with you again in a little time.' He had often said, "the third day I will rise again." 2nd. 'I will be coming daily to you in my Spirit.' In the tokens of his love, and visits of his grace, he is still coming. 3rd. 'I will come certainly at the end of time; surely I will come quickly to introduce you into the joy of your Lord.' Note, The consideration of Christ's coming to us saves us from being comfortless in his removals from us; for if he depart for a season, it is that we may receive him for ever. Let this moderate our grief, "the Lord is at hand."

Secondly. He promiseth that they should continue their acquaintance with him, and interest in him, ver. 19, 20: "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more;" that is, now I am no more in the world. After his death, the world saw him no more; for though he rose to life, he never shewed himself "to all the people," Acts x. 43. The malignant world thought they had seen enough of him, and cried, Away with him, crucify him; and so shall their doom be; they shall see him no more. Those only that see Christ with an eye of faith shall see him for ever; the world sees him no more, till his second coming; but his disciples have communion with him in his absence.

1. "Ye see me," and shall continue to see me, when the world sees me no more; they saw him with their bodily eyes after his resurrection, for he shewed himself to them "by many infallible proofs," Acts i. 3; and "then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord;" they saw him with an eye of faith, after his ascension, sitting at God's right hand, as Lord of all; saw that in him which the world saw not.

2. "Because I live, ye shall live also." That which grieved them was, that their Master was dying, and they counted upon nothing else but to die with him. No, saith Christ, 1st. "I live;" this the great God glories in, "I live," saith the Lord; and Christ saith the same; not only I shall live, as he saith of them, but I do live; for he has life in himself, and lives for evermore. We are not comfortless while we know that our Redeemer lives. 2nd. Therefore

"ye shall live also." Note, The life of Christians is bound up in the life of Christ; as sure and as long as he lives, they that by faith are united to him shall live also: they shall live spiritually, a Divine life in communion with God; this life is hid with Christ; if the head and root live, the members and branches live also; they shall live eternally; their bodies shall rise in the virtue of Christ's resurrection: it will be well with him in the world to come; it cannot but be well with all that are his, Isa. xvi. 19.

3. Ye shall have the assurance of this, ver. 20: "At that day" when I am glorified, when the Spirit is poured out, "ye shall know" more clearly, certainly than ye do now, "that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."

1st. These glorious mysteries will be fully known in heaven: "At that day," when I shall receive you to myself, you shall know perfectly that which now you see through a glass darkly. Now it appears not what we shall be, but then it will appear what we were.

2nd. They were more fully known after the pouring out of the Spirit upon the apostles; at that day Divine light should shine, and their eyes should see more clearly; their knowledge should greatly advance and increase then—would become more extensive and more distinct, and like the blind man's at the second touch of Christ's hand, who at first only saw men as trees walking.

3rd. They are known by all that receive the Spirit of truth, to their abundant satisfaction; for in the knowledge of this is founded their fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. They know, *First*, That Christ is in the Father, is one with the Father, by their experience of what he has wrought for them, and in them; they find what an admirable consent and harmony there is between Christianity and natural religion, that that is grafted into this, and so they know that Christ is in the Father. *Secondly*, That Christ is in them; experienced Christians know by the Spirit that Christ abides in them, 1 Jno. iii. 24. *Thirdly*, That they are in Christ, for the relation is mutual, and equally near on both sides; Christ in them, and they in Christ; which speaks an intimate and inseparable union; in the virtue of which it is, that because he lives, they shall live also. Note, 1st. Union with Christ is the life of believers; and their relation to him, and to God through him, is their felicity. 2nd. The knowledge of this union is their unspeakable joy and satisfaction; they were now in Christ, and he in them; but he speaks of it as a farther act of grace, that they should know it, and have the comfort of it. An interest in Christ, and the knowledge of it, are sometimes separated.

Thirdly. He promiseth that he would love them, and manifest himself to them, ver. 21–24; where observe,

1. Who they are whom Christ will look upon, and accept as lovers of him; those that have his commandments, and keep them. By this Christ shews that the kind things he here said to his disciples were intended not for those only that were now his followers, but for all that should believe in him through their word. Here is,

1st. The duty of those that claim the dignity of being disciples. Having Christ's commandments, we must keep them; as Christians, in name and profession we have Christ's commandments, we have them sounded in our ears, written before our eyes, we have knowledge of them; but this is not enough; would we approve ourselves Christians indeed, we must keep them. Having them in our heads, we must keep them in our hearts and lives.

2nd. The dignity of those that do the duty of disciples. They are looked upon by Christ to be such as love him, not those that have the greatest wit, and know how to talk for him, or the greatest estate to lay out for him, but those that keep his commandments. Note, The surest evidence of our love to Christ, is obedience to the laws of Christ. Such is the love of a subject to his sovereign, a dutiful, respectful, obedient love, a conformity to his will, and satisfaction in his wisdom.

3. What returns he will make to them for their love; rich returns: there is no love lost upon Christ.

1st. They shall have the Father's love; "he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father." We could not love God, if he did not first, out of his good-will to us, give us his grace to love him; but there is a love of complacency, promised to those that do love God, *Pr.* viii. 17. He loves them, and lets them know that he loves them, smiles upon them, and embraceth them. God so loves the Son as to love all those that love him.

2nd. They shall have Christ's love; "and I will love him," as Godman, as Mediator. God will love him as a father, and I will love him as a brother, an elder brother. The Creator will love him, and be the felicity of his being; the Redeemer will love him, and be the protector of his well-being. In the nature of God, nothing shines more bright than this, that "God is love;" and in the undertaking of Christ, nothing appears more glorious than this, that "he loved us." Now both these loves are the crown and comfort, the grace and glory, which shall be to "all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Christ was now leaving his disciples, but promiseth to continue his love to them; for he not only retains a kindness for believers, though absent, but is doing them kindness whilst absent, for he hears them on his heart, and ever lives interceding for them.

3rd. They shall have the comfort of that love: "I will manifest myself to him." Some understand it of Christ's shewing himself alive to his disciples after his resurrection; but it being promised to all that love him, and keep his commandments, it must be construed so as to extend to them. There is a spiritual manifestation of Christ and his love made to all believers: when he enlightens their minds to know his love, and the dimensions of it, *Eph.* iii. 18, 19; enlivens their graces, and draws them into exercise, and thus enlargeth their comforts in himself; when he clears up the evidences of their interest in him, and gives them tokens of his love, experience of his tenderness, and earnestness of his kingdom and glory, then he manifests himself to them; and Christ is manifested to none but those to whom he is pleased to manifest himself.

Now upon occasion of Christ's making this promise,

1. One of the disciples expresseth his wonder and surprise at it, ver. 22. Observe,

1. Who it was that said this; "Judas, not Iscariot." Judah, or Judas, was a famous name; the most famous tribe in Israel was that of Judah; two of Christ's disciples were of that name; one of them was the traitor, the other was the brother of James, *Lu.* vii. 16; one of those that were akin to Christ, *Mat.* xiii. 55. He is called Lebbeus and Thaddeus; was the penman of the last of the Epistles, which in our translation, for distinction sake, we call the Epistle of Jude. This was he that spoke here. Observe, 1st. There was a very good man, and a very ill man, called by the same name; for names commend us not to God, nor do they make men worse; Judas the apostle was never the worse, nor Judas the apostate ever the better, for being namesakes. But, 2nd. The evangelist carefully distinguisheth between them; when he speaks of this pious Judas, he adds "not Iscariot;" take heed of mistaking; let us not confound the precious and the vile.

2. What he said, "Lord, how is it?"—which speaks either, 1st. The weakness of his understanding; so some take it. He expected the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, that it should appear in external pomp and power, such as all the world would wonder after. How then, thinks he, should it be confined to us only? *τί γίνεσθαι*; what is the matter now, that thou wilt not shew thyself openly as is expected, that the Gentiles may come to thy light, and kings to

abide in Christ, yet the peculiar difficulties and duties of the apostles themselves are kept in view.

xv. 3. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you:" rather, "Ye are already clean, by reason of the word which I have spoken unto you." The word rendered "purgeth" in verse 2 is better translated "cleanseth"—maketh clean—so that the force of this, "ye are clean," may be seen. The disciples were already clean—by the Word; not any separate

discourse of our Lord's, nor merely the truths taught, but by the power which accompanied them. (Compare 1 Pet. i. 23.)

xv. 5. "Without me:" the sense of the word "without" in this passage is "outside of" (e.g., Peter stood at the door, "without") or "apart from." So Alford renders it.

xv. 6. "Men gather them, and they are burned:" much better is Alford's rendering, "they burn." It is not "they are burned," as though inevitably destroyed by the power of the flame; but "they

the brightness of thy rising? Note, We create difficulties to ourselves by mistaking the nature of Christ's kingdom, as if it were of this world. Or, 2nd. As speaking the strength of his affections, and the humble and thankful sense he had of Christ's distinguishing favours to them. "Lord, how is it?" He is amazed at the condescensions of Divine grace, as David, 2 *Sam.* vii. 18. What is there in us to deserve so great a favour? Note, First. Christ's manifesting of himself to his disciples is done in a distinguishing way; to them, and not unto the world, that sits in darkness; to the base, and not to the mighty and noble; to babes, and not to the wise and prudent. Distinguishing favours are very obliging, considering who are passed by, and who are pitched upon. Secondly. It is justly marvellous in our eyes; for it is unaccountable, and must be resolved into free and sovereign grace: "Even so, Father, because it seemed good unto thee."

11. Christ, in answer hereunto, explains and confirms what he had said, ver. 23, 24. He overlooks what infirmity there was in what Judas spoke, and goes on with his comforts.

1. He farther explains the condition of the promise, which was loving him, and keeping his commandments. And as to this, he shews what an inseparable connection there is between love and obedience; love is the root, obedience is the fruit.

1st. Where a sincere love to Christ is in the heart, there will be obedience; "If a man love me" indeed, that love will be such a commanding, constraining principle in him, that no question "he will keep my words." Where there is true love to Christ, there is a value for his favour, a veneration for his authority, and an entire surrender of the whole man to his conduct and government. Where love is, duty follows of course, and is easy and natural, and flows from a principle of gratitude.

2nd. On the other hand, where there is no true love to Christ, there will be no care to obey him; "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings," ver. 24. This comes in here as a discovery of those that do not love Christ: whatever they pretend, certainly those do not love him that believe not his truths, and obey not his laws; to whom Christ's sayings are but as idle tales, which he heeds not, or hard sayings, which he likes not. It is also a reason why Christ will not manifest himself to the world that doth not love him, because they put this affront upon him, not to keep his sayings; why should Christ be familiar with them that will be strange to him?

2. He farther explains the promise, ver. 23: "If a man do thus love me, I will manifest myself to him."

1st. "My Father will love him." This he said before, ver. 21, and here repeats it for the confirming of our faith; because it is hard to imagine that the great God should make those the objects of his love that had made themselves vessels of his wrath. Jude wondered that Christ should manifest himself to them; but this answers it, "If my Father love you, why should not I be free with you?"

2nd. "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." This explains the meaning of Christ's manifesting himself to him, and magnifies the favour. First. Not only I will, but "we will," I and the Father, who in this are one; see ver. 9. The light and love of God is communicated to man in the light and love of the Redeemer; so that wherever Christ is formed, the image of God is stamped. Secondly. Not only I will shew myself to him at a distance, but "we will come to him" to be near him, to be with him: such are the powerful influences of Divine graces and comforts upon the souls of those that love Christ in sincerity. Thirdly. Not only, I will give him a transient view of me, or make him a short and running visit, but we will take up "our abode with him;" which notes complacency in him, and constancy to him. God will not only love obedient believers, but he will take a pleasure in loving them; will rest in love to them, *Zep.* iii. 17; he will be with them, as at his house.

3. He gives a good reason both to bind us to observe the condition, and encourage us to depend upon the promise, ver. 24: "The word which you hear is not mine, but his that sent me." To this purpose he had often spoken, *ch.* vii. 16; viii. 28; xii. 44; and here it comes in very pertinently. 1st. The stress of duty is laid upon the precept of Christ as our rule, and justly; for that word of Christ, which we are to keep, is the Father's word; and his will, the Father's will. 2nd. The stress of our comfort is laid upon the promise of Christ. But forasmuch as in dependence upon that promise we must deny ourselves, and take up our cross, and quit all, it concerns us to inquire whether the security be sufficient for us to venture our all upon; and this satisfies us it is, that the promise is not Christ's bare word, but the Father's which sent him; which therefore we may rely upon.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. 27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Two things Christ here comforts his disciples with:

First. That they should be under the tuition of his Spirit, ver. 25, 26; where we may observe,

1. The reflection Christ would have them make upon the instructions he had given them: "These things have I spoken unto you;" referring to all the good lessons he had taught them since they entered themselves into his school; "being yet present with you." This intimates, 1st. That what he had said he did not retract, or unsay, but ratify it, and stand to it. What he had spoken he had spoken, and would abide by it. 2nd. That he had improved the opportunity of his bodily presence with them to the utmost; "as long as I have been yet present with them, you know I have lost no time." Note, When our teachers are about to be removed from us, we should call to mind what they have spoken, being yet present with us.

2. The encouragement given them to expect another teacher, and that Christ would find out a way of speaking to them, after his departure from them, ver. 26. He had told them before that the Father would give them this other Comforter, ver. 16; and here he returns to speak of it again; for as the promise of the Messiah had been, so the promise of the Spirit now was, the consolation of Israel. Two things he here tells them farther concerning the sending of the Holy Ghost:

burn," because they have no inner vigour to withstand the fire. (Compare 1 *Cor.* iii. 12-14.) Severed from the foundation, there is not the least power of resistance; on those in Christ the second death hath no power. (Compare *Dan.* iii. 27.)

xv. 8. A slightly different turn is given to this verse by the reading adopted by some critics who follow the Alexandrian MS.: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, and become my disciples."

1st. On whose account he should be sent; the Father will send him "in my name;" that is, for my sake, at my special instance and request; or, as my agent and representative. He came in his Father's name, as his ambassador; the Spirit comes in his name, as resident in his absence, to carry on his undertaking, and to ripen things for his second coming. Hence he is called the Spirit of Christ, for he pleads his cause, and doth his work.

2nd. On what errand he should be sent; two things he shall do:

First. "He shall teach you all things," as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Christ was a teacher to his disciples. If he leave them now, they have made so little proficiency, what will become of them? Why, the Spirit shall teach them, shall be their standing tutor. He shall teach them all things necessary for them, either to learn themselves, or to teach others; for they that would teach the things of God must first themselves be taught of God; this is the Spirit's work: see *Isa.* lix. 21.

Secondly. He shall "bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Many a good lesson Christ had taught them, which they had forgot, and which would be to seek when they had occasion for it; many things they did not retain the remembrance of, because they did not rightly understand the meaning of; the Spirit shall not teach them a new Gospel, but bring to their minds that which they had been taught, by leading them into the understanding of it. The apostles were all of them to preach, and some of them to write, the things that Jesus did and taught, to transmit them to distant nations and future ages: now if they had been left to themselves herein, some needful things might have been forgotten; others misrepresented, through the treachery of their memories; therefore the Spirit is promised, to enable them truly to relate and record what Christ said unto them. And to all the saints the Spirit of grace is given, to be a remembrancer; and to him, by faith and prayer, we should commit the keeping of what we hear and know.

Secondly. That they should be under the influence of his peace, ver. 27; "Peace I leave with you." When Christ was about to leave the world, he made his will; his soul he committed to his Father; his body he bequeathed to Joseph, to be decently interred; his clothes fell to the soldiers; his mother he left to the care of John. But what should he leave to his poor disciples, that had left all for him? Silver and gold he had none; but he left them that which was infinitely better, his peace: "I leave you, but I leave my peace with you. I not only give you a title to it, but put you in possession of it." He did not part in anger, but in love; for this was his farewell, "Peace I leave with you," as a dying father leaves portions to his children; and this is a worthy portion. Observe,

1. The legacy that is here bequeathed; peace, "my peace." Peace is put for all good, and Christ has left us all the needful good, all that is really and truly good, all the unchained, promised good. Peace is put for reconciliation and love; the peace bequeathed is peace with God—peace with one another; peace in our own bosoms, that seems to be especially meant; a tranquillity of mind, arising from a sense of our justification before God. It is the counterpart of our pardons, and the composure of our minds. This Christ calls his peace; for he is himself our peace, *Eph.* ii. 14. It is the peace he purchased for us, and preached to us, and which the angels congratulated at his birth, *Lu.* ii. 14.

2. To whom this legacy is bequeathed; "to you, my disciples and followers that will be exposed to trouble, and have need of peace; to you, that are the sons of peace, and are qualified to receive it." This legacy was left to them as the representatives of the church; to them and their successors; to them and all true Christians, in all ages.

3. In what manner it is left; "not as the world giveth, give I unto you;" that is, 1st. I do not compliment with you with, "Peace be unto you;" no, it is not a mere formality, but a real blessing. 2nd. The peace I give is of such a nature as that the smiles of the world cannot give it, nor the favours of the world take it away. Or, 3rd. The gifts I give to you are not such as this world gives to its children and votaries, that it is kind to. The world's gifts concern only the body and time; Christ's gifts enrich the soul for eternity. The world gives lying vanities, and that which will cheat us; Christ gives substantial blessings, which will never fail us. The world gives and takes; Christ gives a good part, that shall never be taken away. 4th. The peace which Christ gives is infinitely more valuable than that which the world gives. The world's peace begins in ignorance, consists with sin, and ends in endless troubles; Christ's peace begins in grace, consists with no allowed sin, and ends at length in everlasting peace. As is the difference between a killing lethargy and a reviving, refreshing sleep, such is the difference between Christ's peace and the world's.

4. What use they should make of it; "Let not your heart be troubled" for any evils past or present; "neither let it be afraid" of any evil to come. Note, They that are interested in the covenant of grace, and entitled to the peace which Christ gives, ought not to yield to overwhelming griefs and fears. This comes in here as the conclusion of the whole matter; he had said, ver. 1, "Let not your heart be troubled;" and here he repeats it, as that which he had now given sufficient reason for.

28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. 30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. 31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

Christ here gives his disciples another reason why their hearts should not be troubled for his going away, and that is, because his heart was not. And here he tells them what it was that enabled him to endure the cross, and despise the shame, that they might look unto him, and run with patience. He comforted himself,

First. That though he went, he should come again; "Ye have heard how I have said," and now I say it again, "I go away, and come again." Note, What we have heard of the doctrine of Christ, especially concerning his second

xv. 16. "Ye have not:" or rather, "ye did not choose me." On this compare Coleridge's words: "Shall the believer who thus hopes on the appointed grounds of hope, attribute this distinction exclusively to his own resolves and strivings? or, if not exclusively, yet primarily and principally? Shall he refer the first movements and preparations to his own will and understanding, and bottom his claim to the promises on his own comparative excellence? If not, if no man dare take this honour to himself, to whom shall he assign

coming, we have need to be told again and again. When we are under the power of any transport of passion, grief, or fear, or care, we forget that Christ will come again; see *Phil. iv. 5*. Christ encouraged himself with this in his sufferings and death, that he should come again; and the same should comfort us in our departure at death; we go away to come again; the leave we take of our friends at that parting is only 'a good night,' not a final 'farewell;' see *1 Thes. iv. 13, 14*.

Secondly. That he went to his Father; "If ye loved me," as by your sorrow you say you do, "ye would rejoice" instead of mourning; because though I leave you, yet I have said, "I go unto the Father," not only mine, but yours, which will be my advancement and your advantage; "for my Father is greater than I." Observe here,

1. It is matter of joy to Christ's disciples that he is gone to the Father, to take possession for orphans, and make intercession for transgressors. His departure had a bright side, as well as a dark side; therefore he sent this message, after his resurrection, *ch. xx. 17*, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father," as most comfortable.

2. The reason of this is, because the Father is greater than he; which, if it be a proper proof of that for which it is alleged, as no doubt it is, must be understood thus, that his state with his Father would be much more excellent and glorious than his present state; his returning to his Father (so Dr. Hammond) would be the advancing of him to a much higher condition than that which he was now in. Or thus: his going to the Father himself, and bringing all his followers to him there, was the ultimate end of his undertaking, and therefore greater than the means. Thus Christ raiseth the thoughts and expectations of his disciples to something greater than that which now they thought all their happiness bound up in. The kingdom of the Father, wherein he shall be all in all, will be greater than the mediatorial kingdom.

3. The disciples of Christ should shew that they love him, by their rejoicing in the glories of his exaltation, rather than by lamenting the sorrows of his humiliation, and rejoicing that he is gone to his Father, where he would be, and where we shall be shortly with him. Many that love Christ let their love run out in a wrong channel: they think, if they love him, they must be continually in pain because of him; whereas they that love him should dwell at ease in him, should rejoice in Christ Jesus.

Thirdly. That his going away, compared with the prophecies, which went before it, would be a means of confirming the faith of his disciples; *ver. 29*, "I have told you, before it came to pass," that I must die, and rise again, and ascend to the Father, and send the Comforter, "that when it is come to pass ye might believe." See this reason, *ch. xiii. 19; xvi. 4*. Christ told his disciples of his death, though he knew it would both puzzle them and grieve them, because it would afterwards redound to the confirmation of their faith in two things:

1. That he who foretold those things had a Divine prescience, and knew beforehand what a day would bring forth. When St. Paul was going to Jerusalem, he knew not the things that did abide him there, but Christ did.

2. That the things foretold were according to the Divine purpose and designation: not sudden resolves, but the counterparts of an eternal counsel. Let them therefore not be troubled at that which would be for the confirmation of their faith, and so would redound to their real benefit: for the trial of our faith is very precious, though it cost us present heaviness, through manifold temptations, *1 Pet. i. 6*.

Fourthly. That he was sure of a victory over Satan, with whom he knew he was to have a struggle in his departure; *ver. 40*, "Henceforth I will not talk much with you," having not much to say, but what may be adjourned to the pouring out of the Spirit. He had a great deal of good talk with them after this, *ch. xv. xvi.*; but, in comparison with what he had said, it was not much. His time was now short, and he therefore spoke largely to them now, because the opportunity would soon be over. Note, We should always endeavour to talk to the purpose, because perhaps we may not have time to talk much; we know not how soon our breath will be stopped, and therefore should be always breathing something that is good. When we come to be sick, and die, perhaps we may not be capable of talking much to those about us; and therefore what good counsel we have to give them, let us give it when we are in health.

One reason why he would not talk much with them was, because he had now other work to apply himself to; "the prince of this world comes;" he called the devil "the prince of this world," *ch. xii. 31*. The disciples dreamed of their Master being the prince of this world, and they worldly princes under him; but Christ tells them that the prince of this world was his enemy, and so were the princes of this world that were acted and ruled by him, *1 Cor. ii. 8*. But he "has nothing in me." Observe here,

1. The prospect Christ had of an approaching conflict, not only with men, but with the powers of darkness. The devil had set upon him with his temptations, *Mat. iv.*; had offered him the kingdoms of this world, if he would hold them as tributary to him; with an eye to which Christ calls him, in disdain, "the prince of this world." Then "the devil departed from him for a season." "But now," saith Christ, "I see him rallying again, preparing to make a furious onset, and so to gain that by terrors which he could not gain by allurements; to frighten from his undertaking, when he could not entice him from it. Note, The foresight of a temptation gives us great advantage in our resistance of it; being forewarned, we should be forearmed. While we are here, we may see Satan continually coming against us, and ought therefore to be always upon our guard.

2. The assurance he had of good success in the conflict; he "hath nothing in me," *οὐκ ἔχει οὐδέν*,—"he has nothing at all." 1st. There was no guilt in Christ to give authority to the prince of this world in his terrors. The devil is said to have the power of death, *Heb. ii. 14*; the Jews called him the angel of death, as an executioner. Now Christ having done no evil, he had no legal power against him; and therefore, though he prevailed to crucify him, he could not prevail to terrify him; though he hurried him to death, yet not to despair. When Satan comes to disquiet us, he has something in us to perplex us with, for we have all sinned; but when he would disturb Christ, he found no occasion against him. 2nd. There was no corruption in Christ, to give advantage to the prince of this world in his temptations. He could not crush his undertaking, by drawing him to sin, because there was nothing sinful in him; nothing irregular for his temptations to fasten upon; no tinder for him to strike fire into; such was the spotless purity of his nature, that he was above the possibility of sinning. The more Satan's interest in us is crushed, and decays, the more comfortably may we expect sufferings and death.

Fifthly. That his departure was in compliance with, and obedience to, his Father. Satan could not force his life from him; and yet he would die, that the world may know that I love the Father," *ver. 31*. We may take this,

1. As confirming what he had often said, that his undertaking as Mediator was a demonstration to the world, 1st. Of his compliance with the Father; whereby it appeared that he loved the Father. As it was an evidence of his love to man that he died for his salvation, so it was of his love to God that he died for his glory, and the accomplishing of his purposes. Let the world know,

that between the Father and the Son there is no love lost; as the Father loved the Son, and gave all things into his hands, so the Son loved the Father, and gave his spirit into his hand. 2nd. Of his obedience to his Father; "as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do;" the thing commanded, is the manner commanded. Note, The best evidence of our love to the Father is, our doing as he hath given us commandment. As Christ loved the Father and obeyed him, even to the death, so we must love Christ and obey him. Christ's eye to the Father's commandment, obliging him to suffer and die, bore him up with cheerfulness, and overcame the reluctancies of nature; this took off the offence of the cross, that what he did was by order from the Father. The command of God is sufficient to bear us out in that which is most disputed by others, and therefore should be sufficient to bear us up in that which is most difficult to ourselves. This is the will of him that made me, that sent me.

2. As concluding what he now had said; having brought it to this, here he leaves it; "that the world may know that I love the Father," you shall see how cheerfully I can meet the appointed cross; "Arise, let us go hence," to the garden; so some; or to Jerusalem. When we talk of trouble at a distance, it is easy to say, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest;" but when it comes to the pinch,—when an unavoidable cross lies in the way of duty,—then to say, "Arise, let us go" meet it, instead of going out of our way to miss it, this lets the world know that we love the Father. If this discourse was at the close of the passover supper, it should seem that at these words he rose from the table, and retired into the withdrawing-room, where he might the more freely carry on the discourse with his disciples in the following chapters, and pray with them. Dr. Goodwin's remark upon this is, that Christ, mentioning the great motive of his sufferings, his Father's commandment, was in all haste to go forth to suffer and die, was afraid of slipping the time of Judas' meeting him: "Arise," saith he, "let us go hence;" but he looks upon the glass, as it were, sees it not quite out, and therefore sits down again and preaches another sermon.

Now, 1st. In these words he gives his disciples an encouragement to follow him. He doth not say, I must go; but, "let us go;" he calls them out to no hardships but what he himself goes before them in as their leader. They had promised they would not desert him. Come, saith he, let us go then; let us see how you will make the words good. 2nd. He gives them an example, teaching them at all times, especially in suffering times, to sit loose to all things here below, and often to think and speak of leaving them. Though we sit easy, and in the midst of the delights of an agreeable conversation, yet we must not think of being here always; "Arise, let us go hence." If it were at the close of the paschal and eucharistical supper, it teacheth us that the solemnities of our communion with God are not to be constant in this world. When we sit down under Christ's shadow with delight, and say, It is good to be here, yet we must think of rising and going hence; going down from the mount.

CHAPTER XV.

It is generally agreed that Christ's discourse in this and the next chapter was in the close of his last supper, the night in which he was betrayed; and it is a continued discourse, not interrupted, as that in the foregoing chapter was; and what he chooseth to discourse of is very pertinent to the present sad occasion of a farewell sermon. Now he was about to leave them. I. They would be tempted to leave him, and return to Moses again; and therefore he tells them how necessary it was that they should by faith adhere to him, and abide in him. II. They would be tempted to grow strange one to another; and therefore he presseth it upon them to love one another, and to keep up that communion, when he was gone, which had hitherto been their comfort. III. They would be tempted to shrink from their apostleship when they met with hardships, and therefore he prepares them to bear the shock of the world's ill-will. There are four words to which his discourse in this chapter may be reduced: 1. Fruit, *ver. 1—8*; 2. Love, *ver. 9—17*; 3. Hatred, *ver. 18—25*; 4. The Comforter, *ver. 26, 27*.



AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Here Christ discourseth concerning the fruit, the fruits of the Spirit, which his disciples were to bring forth, under the similitude of a vine. Observe here, First. The doctrine of this similitude; what notion we ought to have of it.

it, if not to that Being in whom the promise originated, and on whom its fulfilment depends?" ("Aids to Reflection," pp. 160, 161; Edition 1836).

xv. 18. "If the world hate you, ye know"—or know (imperative mood)—"that it hated me before it hated you:" the words "it hated" are not in the original, hence "it hated me before you" is the right rendering.

xv. 22. "No cloke;" Alford renders, "no excuse for their sin."

xv. 26, 27. "He shall bear witness, and ye also are witnesses"—not "shall bear witness." They (the apostles) had to deliver a personal testimony peculiarly their own, and as such distinguished from his—i.e., the Comforter's.

xvi. 1, 2. "That ye should not be offended:" "The Redeemer considered the admonition respecting the coming conflict of great importance to the life of faith in the disciples, and therefore he returned to it once again, and expressly remarks that he has directed

1. That Jesus Christ is the vine, "the true vine." It is an instance of the humility of Christ that he is pleased to speak of himself under low and humble comparisons: he that is the Sun of righteousness, and the bright and morning Star, compares himself to a vine. The church, which is Christ mystical, is a vine, *Ps. lxxx. 8*: so is Christ, who is the church seminal. Christ and his church are thus set forth.

1st. He is the vine; planted in the vineyard, and not a spontaneous product; planted in the earth, for he is the Word made flesh. The vine has an unsightly, unpromising outside; and Christ had no form nor comeliness, *Isa. liii. 2*; the vine is a spreading plant, and Christ will be known as salvation to the ends of the earth: the fruit of the vine honours God, and cheers man, *Jud. ix. 13*; so doth the fruit of Christ's mediation; it is better than gold, *Pr. viii. 19*.

2nd. He is the true vine; as truth is opposed to pretence and counterfeit; he is really a fruitful plant, a plant of renown; he is not like that wild vine, which deceived those who gathered of it, *2 Kin. iv. 39*, but a true vine. Unfruitful trees are said to lie, *Hab. iii. 13*; but Christ is a vine that will not deceive. Whatever excellency there is in any creature serviceable to man, it is but a shadow of that grace which is in Christ for his people's good. He is that true vine typified by Judah's vine, which enriched him with the blood of the grape, *Gen. xlix. 11*; by Joseph's vine, the branches of which run over the wall, *Gen. xlix. 22*; by Israel's vine, under which he dwelt safely, *1 Kin. iv. 25*.

3. That believers are branches of this vine, which supposeth that Christ is the root of the vine. The root is unseen, and our life is hid with Christ; the root bears the tree, *Rom. xi. 18*, diffuseth sap to it, and is all in all to its flourishing and fruitfulness; and in Christ is all supports and supplies. The branches of the vine are many, some on one side of the house or wall, others on the other side, yet, meeting in the root, are all but one vine. Thus all good Christians, though in place and opinion distant from each other, yet meet in Christ, the centre of their unity. Believers, like the branches of the vine, are weak and insufficient to stand of themselves, but as they are borne up, see *Eze. xv. 2*.

3. That the "Father is the husbandman," *γεωργός*, "the land worker;" though the earth is the Lord's, it yields him no fruit, unless he work it. God has not only a propriety in, but a care of, the vine and all the branches. He hath planted and watered, and gives the increase; for we "are God's husbandry," *1 Cor. iii. 9*; see *Isa. v. 1, 2*; *xvii. 2, 3*. He had an eye upon Christ the root, and upheld him; and made him to flourish out of a dry ground. He has an eye upon all the branches, and prunes them, and watches over them, that nothing hurt them. Never was any husbandman so wise, so watchful about his vineyard, as God is about his church; which therefore must needs prosper.

Secondly. The duty taught us by this similitude, which is to bring forth fruit, and, in order to that, to abide in Christ.

1. We must be fruitful. From a vine we look for grapes, *Isa. v. 2*; and from a Christian we look for Christianity; that is, the fruit, a Christian temper and disposition, a Christian life and conversation, Christian devotions, and Christian designs. We must honour God, and do good; and exemplify the purity and power of the religion we profess,—and this is bearing fruit. The disciples here must be fruitful as Christians, in all the fruits of righteousness, and as apostles, in diffusing the savour of that knowledge. To persuade them to this, he urgeth,

1st. The doom of the unfruitful, ver. 2. They are taken away. First. It is here intimated that there are many who pass for branches in Christ, who yet do not bear fruit. Were they really united to Christ by faith, they would bear fruit, but being only tied to him by the thread of an outward profession, though they seem to be branches, yet will soon be seen to be dry ones: unfruitful professors are unfaithful professors; professors, and no more. It might be read, "Every branch that beareth not fruit in me;" and it comes much to one; for they that do not bear fruit in Christ, and in his Spirit and grace, are as if they bore no fruit at all, *Hos. x. 1*. Secondly. It is here threatened that they shall be taken away, in justice to them, and in kindness to the rest of the branches. From him that has not real union with Christ, and fruit produced thereby, shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have, *Lu. viii. 18*. Some think this refers primarily to Judas.

2nd. The promise made to the fruitful; "he purgeth them, that they may bring forth much fruit." Note, First. Further fruitfulness is the blessed reward of former fruitfulness. The first blessing was, Be fruitful,—and it is still a great blessing. Secondly. Even fruitful branches, in order to their further fruitfulness, have need of purging, or pruning, *καθαίρει*; he taketh away that which is superfluous and luxuriant, which hinders its growth and fruitfulness. The best have that in them which is peccant; *aliquid amputandum*,—"something which should be taken away;" some notions, passions, or humours, that want to be purged way, which Christ has promised to do by his word and Spirit, and providence; and these shall be taken off by degrees in the proper season. Thirdly. The purging of fruitful branches, in order to their greater fruitfulness, is the care and work of the great Husbandman, for his own glory.

3rd. The benefit which believers have by the doctrine of Christ, the power of which they should labour to exemplify in a fruitful conversation, ver. 6. "Now ye are clean." First. Their society was clean, now Judas was expelled by that word of Christ, "What thou doest, do quickly;" and till they were got clear of him, they were not all clean. The word of Christ is a distinguishing church, and separates between the precious and the vile; it will purify the church of the firstborn in the great dividing day. Secondly. They were each of them clean; that is, sanctified by the truth of Christ, *ch. xvii. 17*. That faith by which they received the word of Christ purified their hearts, *Acts xv. 9*; the Spirit of grace by the word refined them from the dross of the world and the flesh, and purged out of them the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees, from which, when they saw their inveterate rage and enmity against their Master, they were now pretty well cleansed. Apply it to all believers. The word of Christ is spoken to them; there is a cleansing virtue in that word, as it works grace, and works out corruption; it cleanseth as fire cleanseth the gold from its dross, and as physic cleanseth the body from its disease. And we then evidence that we are cleansed by the word, when we bring forth fruit unto holiness. Perhaps here is an allusion to the law concerning vineyards in Canaan: the fruit of them was as unclean, and uncircumcised, the three first years after it was planted; and the fourth year it was to be holiness of praise unto the Lord, and then it was clean, *Lev. xix. 23, 24*. The disciples had now been three years under Christ's instruction, and "now ye are clean."

4th. The glory that will redound to God by our fruitfulness, with the comfort and honour that will come to ourselves by it, ver. 8, if we bear much fruit. First. Herein our Father will be glorified. The fruitfulness of the apostles, as such, in the diligent discharge of their office, would be to the glory of God, in the conversion of souls, and the offering of them up to him, *Rom. xv. 9*. The fruitfulness of all Christians in a lower and narrower sphere is to the glory of God. By the eminent good works of Christians, many are brought to glorify our Father which is in heaven. Secondly. So shall we be Christ's disciples indeed; approving ourselves so, and making it to appear that we are really what we call ourselves. So shall we both evidence our discipleship, and adorn it, and be to our Master for a name, and a praise, and a glory; that is, disciples indeed, *Jer. xiii. 11*. So shall we be owned by our Master in the great day, and

have the reward of disciples, a share in the joy of our Lord; and the more fruit we bring forth, the more we abound in that which is good, the more he is glorified.

2. In order to our fruitfulness, we must abide in Christ—must keep up our union with him by faith, and do all we do in religion in the virtue of that union.

Here is, 1st. The duty enjoined; ver. 4, "Abide in me, and I in you." Note, It is the great concern of all Christ's disciples constantly to keep up a dependence upon Christ, and communion with him; habitually to adhere to him, and actually to derive from him. Those that are come to Christ must abide in him, "Abide in me" by faith, and I in you by my Spirit. "Abide in me," and then fear not but I will abide in you; for the communion between Christ and believers never fails on his side. We must abide in Christ's word by a regard to it, and it in us as a light to our feet. We must abide in Christ's merit as our righteousness and plea, and it in us as our support and comfort. The knot of the branch abides in the vine, and the sap of the vine abides in the branch, and so there is a constant communication between them.

2nd. The necessity of our abiding in Christ in order to our fruitfulness; ver. 4, 5, Ye cannot bring forth fruit "except ye abide in me;" but if ye do, ye bring forth much fruit; for in short, "without me," or separate from me, "ye can do nothing." So necessary is it to our comfort and happiness that we be fruitful, that the best argument to engage us to abide in Christ is, that otherwise we cannot be fruitful. First. Abiding in Christ is in order to our doing much good. He that is constant in the exercise of faith in Christ, and love to him, that lives upon his promises, and is led by his Spirit, he "bringeth forth much fruit;" is very serviceable to God's glory, and his own account, in the great day. Note, Union with Christ is a noble principle, productive of all good. A life of faith in the Son of God is incomparably the most excellent life a man can live in this world; it is regular and even, pure and heavenly, it is useful and comfortable, and all that answers the end of life. Secondly. It is necessary to our doing any good. It is not only a means of cultivating and increasing what good there is already in us, but it is the root and spring of all good. "Without me, ye can do nothing;" not only no great thing, heal the sick, or raise the dead, but nothing. Note, We have a necessary and constant dependence upon the grace of the Mediator for all the actions of the spiritual and Divine life, as we have upon the providence of the Creator for all the actions of the natural life; for as to both, it is in the Divine power that "we live, and move, and have our being." Abstract from the merit of Christ we can do nothing towards our justification, and from the Spirit of Christ, nothing towards our sanctification. Without Christ we can do nothing aright, nothing that will be fruit pleasing to God, or profitable to ourselves, *2 Cor. iii. 5*; we depend upon Christ, not only as the vine upon the wall for support, but as the branch on the root for sap.

3. The fatal consequences of forsaking Christ: ver. 6, "If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch." This is a description of the fearful state of hypocrites, that are not in Christ, and of apostates that abide not in Christ.

1st. They are "cast forth" as dry and withered branches, which are plucked off because they cumber the tree. It is just they should have no benefit by Christ who think they have no need of him, and that they who reject him should be rejected by him: those that abide not in Christ shall be abandoned by him; they are left to themselves, to fall into scandalous sin, and then are justly cast out of the communion of the faithful.

2nd. They are "withered," as a branch broken off from the tree: they that abide not in Christ, though they may flourish a while in a plausible, at least a passable profession, yet in a little time they wither, and come to nothing: their parts and gifts wither, their zeal and devotion wither, their credit and reputation wither, their hopes and comforts wither, *Job viii. 11–13*. Note, They that bear no fruit, after a while will bear no leaves. How soon is that fig tree withered away which Christ has cursed!

3rd. "Men gather them." Satan's agents and emissaries pick them up, and make an easy prey of them. They that fall off from Christ, presently fall in with sinners; and the sheep that wander from Christ's fold, the devil stands ready to seize them for himself. When the Spirit of the Lord was departed from Saul, an evil spirit possessed him.

4th. They "cast them into the fire;" that is, they are cast into the fire; and they who seduce them, and draw them to sin, do in effect cast them there, for they make them the children of hell. Fire is the fittest place for withered branches, for they are good for nothing else, *Eze. xv. 2*.

5th. They "are burned," that follows of course; but it is here added very emphatically, and makes the threatening very terrible; they will not be consumed in a moment like thorns under a pot, *Ecl. vii. 6*; but *καίεται*, they are burning for ever in a fire, which not only cannot be quenched, but will never spend itself. This comes of quitting Christ, this is the end of barren trees. Apostates are twice dead, *Jude 12*; and when it is said they are cast into the fire and are burned, it speaks as if they were twice damned. Some apply men's gathering them to the ministry of the angels in the great day, when they shall gather out of Christ's kingdom all things that offend, and shall bundle the tares for the fire.

4. The blessed privilege which they have that abide in Christ; ver. 7, "If my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will," of my Father, in my name, "and it shall be done."

See here, 1st. How our union with Christ is maintained by the word; "If ye abide in me." He had said before, "and I in you;" here he explains himself, "and my words abide in you," for it is in the word that Christ is set before us, and offered to us, *Rom. x. 6–8*; it is in the word that we receive and embrace him; and so where the word of Christ dwells richly, there Christ dwells. If the word be our constant guide and monitor, if it be in us, as at home, then we abide in Christ, and he in us. 2nd. How our communion with Christ is maintained by prayer; "ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you." And what can we desire more, than to have what we will for the asking? Note, They that abide in Christ as their heart's delight, shall have through Christ their heart's desire. If we have Christ, we shall want nothing that is good for us. Two things are implied in this promise: First. That if we abide in Christ, and his word in us, we will not ask any thing but what is proper to be done for us. The promises abiding in us lie ready to be turned into prayers, and the prayers so regulated cannot but be speed. Secondly. That if we abide in Christ, and his word, we shall have such an interest in God's favour, and Christ's mediation, that we shall have an answer of peace to all our prayers.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto

their attention to it in order that, when it arrives, they may not err in their faith. (Compare chap. xiv. 29.) Hence, also, he enters the more minutely into particular points, warning them of exclusion from the theocratic system of the Old Testament (compare ix. 22), and even speaking of death, which awaited many of them." (Compare Matt. xxiv. 9.) Men, in their blindness, will even think to serve God by slaying believers, as if they were God's enemies. The word rendered "service" may also signify "sacrifice," as a main part of

the service of God under the old covenant. The rabbins designated the murder of the ungodly a sacrifice pleasing to God. "Doeth God service:" not simply that such a one will consider it a duty, but a religious duty. Alford renders, "will think that he offereth a service unto God."

xvi. 4. "When the time shall come:" or, "when their hour is come, ye may remember," &c. Such an hour came when Christ was apprehended. (Compare Luke xxii. 53.)

you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. 12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. 16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. 17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Christ, who is love itself, is here discoursing concerning love, a fourfold love. First. Concerning the Father's love to him. And concerning this he here tells us,

1. That the Father did love him; ver. 9, "As the Father hath loved me." He loved him as Mediator; "This is my beloved Son." He was 'the Son of his love.' He loved him, and gave all things into his hand, and yet so loved the world as to deliver him up for us all. When Christ was entering upon his sufferings, he comforted himself with this, that his Father loved him. Those whom God loves as a Father, may despise the hatred of all the world.

2. That he abode in his Father's love, ver. 11. He continually loved his Father, and was beloved of him. Even then, when he was made sin and a curse for us, and "it pleased the Lord to bruise him," yet he abode in his Father's love: see *Ps. lxxxix. 33*. Because he continued to love his Father, he went cheerfully through his sufferings, and therefore his Father continued to love him.

3. That therefore he abode in his Father's love, because he kept his Father's law: "I have kept my Father's commandments," as Mediator, "and so abide in his love." Hereby he shewed that he continued to love his Father, that he went on, and went through with his undertaking, and therefore the Father continued to love him. His soul delighted in him, because he did not fail, nor was discouraged, *Isa. xlii. 1, 4*. We having broken the law of creation, and thereby thrown ourselves out of the love of God, Christ satisfied for us, by obeying the law of redemption, and so he abode in his love, and restored us to it.

Secondly. Concerning his own love to his disciples. Though he leave them, he loves them; and observe here,

1. The pattern of this love: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you." A strange expression of the condescending grace of Christ; as the Father loved him, who was most worthy, he loved them, who were most unworthy. The Father loved him as his Son, and he loves them as his children. The Father gave all things into his hand; so with himself he freely giveth us all things. The Father loved him as Mediator, as Head of the church, and the great Trustee of Divine grace and favour, which he had not for himself only, but for the benefit of those for whom he was intrusted; and, saith he, I have been a faithful trustee; as the Father has committed his love to me, so I transmit it to you. Therefore the Father was well pleased with him, that he might be well pleased with us in him; and loved him, that in him, as beloved, he might make us accepted, *Eph. i. 6*.

2. The proofs and products of this love; which are four:

1st. Christ loved his disciples, for he laid down his life for them, ver. 13. Greater proof of love hath no man to shew than this, to lay down his life for his friend. And this is the love wherewith Christ hath loved us; he is our *ἀντίδοτος*, bail for us, body for body, life for life, though he knew our insolvency, and foresaw how dear the engagement would cost him. Observe here,

First. The extent of the love of the children of men to one another; the highest proof of it is, laying down one's life for a friend to save his life; and perhaps there have been some such heroic achievements of love, more than plucking out one's own eyes, *Gal. iv. 15*. If "all that a man has he will give for his life," he that gives that for his friend gives all, and can give no more; this may sometimes be our duty, *1 Jno. iii. 16*. Paul was ambitious of the honour, *Phil. ii. 17*; and "for a good man some will even dare to die," *Rom. v. 7*. It is love in the highest degree, which is strong as death.

Secondly. The excellency of the love of Christ beyond all other love; he has not only equalled, but exceeded the most illustrious lovers. Others have laid down their lives, content they should be taken from them, but Christ gave up his; was not merely passive, but made it his own act and deed. The life which others have laid down, has been but of equal value with the life for which it was laid down, and perhaps less valuable; but Christ is infinitely more worth than ten thousand of us. Others have thus laid down their lives for their friends, but Christ laid down his for us when we were enemies, *Rom. v. 8*. *Plusquam ferrea aut lapidea corda esse oportet, quæ non emolliet tam incomparabilis Divini amoris suavitas.* "Those hearts must be harder than iron or stone, which are not softened by such incomparable sweetness of Divine love." — *Calvin*.

2nd. Christ loved his disciples, for he took them into a covenant of friendship with himself, ver. 14, 15. If ye approve yourselves by your obedience my disciples indeed, ye are my friends, and shall be treated as friends. Note, The followers of Christ are the friends of Christ; and he is graciously pleased to call and count them so. They that do the duty of his servants, are admitted and advanced to the dignity of his friends. David had one servant in his court, and Solomon one in his, that was in a particular manner the king's friend, *2 Sam. xv. 37*; *1 Kin. iv. 5*; but this honour have all Christ's servants. We may in some particular instances befriend a stranger; but we espouse all the interests of a friend, and concern ourselves in all his cares: thus Christ takes believers to be his friends; he visits them, and converseth with them as his friends; bears with them, and makes the best of them; is afflicted in their afflictions, and takes pleasure in their prosperity. He pleads for them in heaven, and takes care of all their interests there. Have friends but one soul? He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, *1 Cor. vi. 17*. Though they often shew themselves unfriendly, he is a friend that loves at all times.

xvi. 7. "It is expedient for you," &c.: "The faith they had hitherto been called upon to exercise was not a faith in one who was absent, but in one who was always by their side; whom they saw with their eyes, and heard with their ears, and who was daily working visible wonders before them. Hence their faith, having never been trained to see him when he was absent, and to trust in him when he was far off, as soon as they were out of his sight, it failed. When he was upon the mount, they were unable, through their unbelief, to heal the boy that

Observe how endearingly this is expressed here, *First*. He will not call them servants, though they called him Master, and Lord. They that would be like Christ in humility, must not take a pride in insisting upon all occasions on their authority and superiority, but remember that their servants are their fellow-servants. But, *Secondly*. He will call them his friends; he will not only love them, but will let them know it; for in his tongue is the law of kindness. After his resurrection he seems to speak with more affectionate tenderness of and to his disciples than before; "Go to my brethren," *Ch. xx. 17*; "Children, have ye any meat?" *Ch. xxi. 5*. But observe, though Christ called them his friends, they called themselves his servants; Peter a servant of Christ, *2 Pet. i. 1*; and so James, *Jas. i. 1*. The more honour Christ puts upon us, the more honour we should study to do him; though higher in his eyes, the lower in our own.

3rd. Christ loved his disciples, for he was very free in communicating his mind to them, ver. 15. Henceforth you shall not be kept so much in the dark as you have been, like servants, that are only told their present work; but when the Spirit is poured out, you shall know your Master's designs, as friends. "All things that I have heard of my Father, I have declared unto you." As to the secret will of God, there are many things which we must be content not to know; but as to the revealed will of God, Jesus Christ has faithfully handed to us what he received of the Father, *Ch. i. 18*; *Mat. xi. 27*. The great things relating to man's redemption Christ declared to his disciples, that they might declare them to others; they were the men of his counsel, *Mat. xiii. 11*.

4th. Christ loved his disciples, for he chose and ordained them to be the prime instruments of his glory and honour in the world, ver. 16, "I have chosen you, and ordained you." His love to them appeared,

First. In their election—their election to the apostleship: *Ch. vi. 70*, "Have not I chosen you twelve?" It did not begin on their side; "ye have not chosen me, but I first chose you." Why were they admitted to such an intimacy with him, employed in such an embassy for him, and endued with such power from on high? It was not owing to their wisdom and goodness in choosing him for their Master, but to his favour and grace in choosing them for his disciples. It is fit Christ should have the choosing of his own ministers; still he doth it, by his providence and Spirit. Though ministers make that holy calling their own choice, Christ's choice is prior to theirs, and directs and determines it. Of all that are chosen to grace and glory, it may be said, they have not chosen Christ, but he has chosen them, *Deu. vii. 7, 8*.

Secondly. In their ordination: "I have ordained you," *ἐθροῖκα ὑμᾶς*; I have put you into the ministry, *1 Tim. i. 12*, put you into commission. By this it appeared he took them for his friends, that he crowned their heads with such an honour, and filled their hands with such a trust. It was a mighty confidence he reposed in them, when he made them his ambassadors, to negotiate the affairs of his kingdom in this lower world, and the prime ministers of state, in the administration of it.

The treasure of the Gospel was committed to them,

1st. That it might be propagated; that you should go, *ἵνα ὑμεῖς ἐνέγγετε*, that you should go as under a yoke or burthen; for the ministry is a work, and you that go about it must resolve to undergo a great deal. That you may go from place to place, all the world over, and bring forth fruit. They were ordained not to sit still, but to go about; to be diligent in their work, and to lay out themselves unweariedly in doing good. They were ordained, not to beat the air, but to be instrumental in God's hand for the bringing of nations into obedience to Christ, *Rom. i. 13*. Note, Those whom Christ ordains should and shall be fruitful; should labour, and shall not labour in vain.

2nd. That it might be perpetuated; that the fruit should remain, that is, that the good effect of the labours may continue in the world from generation to generation, to the end of time. The church of Christ was not to be a short-lived thing, as many of the sects of the philosophers, that were a nine days' wonder; it did not come up in a night, nor should it perish in a night, but be as the days of heaven. The sermons and writings of the apostles are transmitted down to us, and we at this day are built upon that foundation. Ever since the Christian church was first founded by the ministry of the apostles and seventy disciples, as one generation of ministers and Christians has passed away, still another has come. By virtue of that great charter, *Mat. xxviii. 19*, Christ has a church in the world, which, as our lawyers say of bodies corporate, doth not die, but lives in a succession; and thus their fruit remains to this day, and shall do, while the earth remains.

Lastly. His love to them appeared in the interest they had at the throne of grace; "whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he will give it you." Probably this refers, in the first place, to the power of working miracles, which the apostles were clothed with, which was to be drawn out by prayer. Whatever gifts are necessary to the furtherance of your labours, whatever help from Heaven you have occasion for at any time, it is but ask and have. Three things are here hinted to us for our encouragement in prayer, and very encouraging they are: 1. That we have a God to go to, who is a Father; Christ here calls him the Father, both mine and yours; and the Spirit in the word and in the heart teacheth us to cry, Abba, Father. 2. That we come in a good name. Whatever errand we come upon to the throne of grace, according to God's will, we may with a humble boldness mention Christ's name in it, and plead that we are related to him, and he is concerned for us. 3. That an answer of peace is promised us. What you come for shall be given you. This great promise, made to that great duty, keeps up a comfortable and gainful intercourse between heaven and earth.

Thirdly. Concerning the disciples' love to Christ, enjoined in consideration of the great love wherewith he had loved them. Three things he exhorts them to:

1. To continue in his love, ver. 9; Continue in your love to me, and in mine to you. Both may be taken in. We must place our happiness in the continuance of Christ's love to us, and make it our business to give continued proofs of our love to Christ, that nothing may tempt us to withdraw from him, or provoke him to withdraw from us. Note, All that love Christ should continue in their love to him; that is, be always loving him, and taking all occasions to shew it; and love him to the end. The disciples were to go out upon service for Christ, in which they would meet with many troubles; But, saith Christ, "continue in my love;" keep up your love to me, and then all the troubles you meet with will be easy. Love made seven years' hard service easy to Jacob. Let not the troubles you meet with for Christ's sake quench your love to Christ, but quicken it rather.

2. To let his joy remain in them, and fill them, ver. 11. This he designed in those precepts and promises given them:

1st. That his joy might remain in them. The words are so placed in the original as that they may be read, either, *First*, "That my joy in you may remain." If they bring forth much fruit, and continue in his love, he will continue to rejoice in them, as he had done. Note, Fruitful and faithful disciples are the joy of the Lord Jesus; he rests in his love to them, *Zep. iii. 17*. As there is a transport of joy in heaven in the conversion of sinners, so there is a remaining joy in the perseverance of saints. *Secondly*, Or, "that my joy," that is, 'your joy in me,' may remain." It is the will of Christ that his disciples should constantly and continually rejoice in him, *Phil. iv. 4*. The joy of the hypocrite is

was possessed by the evil spirit. When he was asleep, they were afraid lest the sea should swallow them up. . . . Hence, as it is expedient that a child should rise from a visible to an invisible object of faith, and that his obedience to an earthly should be transfigured into obedience to a heavenly Father, so was it expedient that the love and reverence which the disciples felt for their earthly Lord should be transfigured into love and reverence for a heavenly Lord; for the same Lord, not a different one. . . . He was no longer to

but for a moment, but the joy of those who abide in Christ's love is a continual feast. The word of the Lord enduring for ever, the joys that flow from it, and are founded on it, do so too.

2nd. That their joy might be full. Not only that you might be full of joy, but that your joy in me and in my love may rise higher and higher, till it come to perfection, when you "enter into the joy of your Lord." Note, *First*. They, and they only, that have Christ's joy remaining in them, have their joy full; worldly joys are empty, soon surfeit, but never satisfy; it is only wisdom's joy that will fill the soul, *Ps. xxxvi. 8. Secondly*. The design of Christ in his word is to fill the joy of his people; see *1 Jno. i. 4*. This and the other he hath said that our joy might be fuller and fuller, and perfect at last.

3. To evidence their love to him, by keeping his commandments: ver. 10, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." That will be an evidence of the fidelity and constancy of your love to me, and then you may be sure of the continuance of my love to you. Observe here, 1st. The promise, "ye shall abide in my love;" as in a dwelling-place, at home in Christ's love; as in a resting-place, at ease in Christ's love; as in a stronghold, safe in it: "ye shall abide in my love," that is, you shall have grace and strength to persevere in loving me. If the same hand that first shed abroad the love of Christ in our hearts did not keep us in that love, we should not long abide in it, but through the love of the world should go out of love with Christ himself. 2nd. The condition of the promise, "if ye keep my commandments;" the disciples were to keep Christ's commandments, not only by a constant conformity to them themselves, but by a faithful delivery of them to others; they were to keep them as trustees, in whose hands that great depositum was lodged, for they were to teach all things that Christ had commanded, *Mat. xxviii. 20*. This commandment they must keep without spot, *1 Tim. vi. 14*; and thus they must show that they abide in his love.

To induce them to keep his commandments, he urgeth, *First*. His own example; "as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." Christ submitted to the law of mediation, and so preserved the honour and comfort of it, to teach us to submit to the laws of the Mediator, for we cannot otherwise preserve the honour and comfort of our relation to him. *Secondly*. The necessity of it to their interest in him; ver. 14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" and not otherwise. Note, 1. Those only will be accounted Christ's faithful friends that approve themselves his obedient servants; for they that will not have him to reign over them, shall be treated as his enemies: *Idem velle et idem nolle ea demum vera est amicitia*.—Friendship involves a fellowship of aversions and attachments.—*Sallust*. 2. It is universal obedience to Christ that is the only acceptable obedience; to obey him in every thing that he commands us, not excepting, much less excepting against, any command.

Fourthly. Concerning the disciples' love to one another, enjoined as an evidence of their love to Christ, and a grateful return for his love to them. We must keep his commandments, and this is his commandment, that we love one another, ver. 12; and again, ver. 17. No one duty of religion is more frequently inculcated, or more pathetically urged upon us, by our Lord Jesus, than that of mutual love; and for good reason.

1. It is here recommended by Christ's pattern; ver. 12, "as I have loved you." Christ's love to us should direct and engage our love to each other; in that manner, and from that motive, we should love one another, as and because Christ has loved us. He here instances in some of the expressions of his love to them; he called them friends, communicated his mind to them, was ready to give them what they asked, "Go ye and do likewise."

2. It is required by his precept. He interposeth his authority, has made it one of the statute laws of his kingdom. Observe how differently it is expressed in these two verses, and both very emphatical. 1st. "This is my commandment," ver. 12, as if this were the most necessary of all the commandments. As under the law the prohibition of idolatry was the commandment more insisted on than any other, foreseeing the people's addictedness to that sin, so Christ, foreseeing the addictedness of the Christian church to uncharitableness, has laid most stress upon this precept. 2nd. "These things I command you," ver. 17. He speaks as if he were about to give them many things in charge, and yet names this only, "that ye love one another;" not only because this includes many duties, but because it will have a good influence upon all.

18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also. 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. 23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

Here Christ discourseth concerning hatred, which is the character and genius of the devil's kingdom, as love is of the kingdom of Christ. Observe here,

1. Who they are in whom this hatred is found; in the world, the children of this world, as distinguished from the children of God; that are in the interests

of the god of this world, whose image they bear, and whose power they are subject to; all those, whether Jews or Gentiles, that would not come into the church of Christ, which he audibly called, and visibly separates from this evil world. The calling of these "the world" speaks, 1. Their number: there were a world of people that opposed Christ and Christianity; Lord, how were they increased that troubled the Son of David! I fear, if we should put it to the vote between Christ and Satan, Satan would outpoll us quite. 2. It speaks their confederacy and combination: these numerous hosts are embodied, and are as one, *Ps. lxxxiii. 7*. Jews and Gentiles, that could agree in nothing else, agreed to persecute Christ's ministers. 3. It speaks their spirit and disposition: they are men of the world, *Ps. xvii. 13, 14*; wholly devoted to this world, and the things of it, and never thinking of another world. The people of God, though they are taught to hate the sins of sinners, yet not their persons, but to love and do good to all men. A malicious, spiteful, envious spirit is not the spirit of Christ, but of the world.

II. Who they are against whom this hatred is levelled; against the disciples of Christ, against Christ himself, and against the Father.

First. The world hates the disciples of Christ; "the world hateth you," ver. 19; and he speaks of it as that which they must expect and count upon, ver. 20; as *1 Jno. iii. 13*. Observe how this comes in here, 1. Christ had expressed the great kindness he had for them as friends; but lest they should be puffed up with this, there was given them, as there was to Paul, "a thorn in the flesh," that is, as it is explained there, reproaches and persecutions for Christ's sake, *2 Cor. xii. 7, 10*. 2. He had appointed them their work, but tells them what hardships they should meet with in it, that it might not be a surprise to them, and that they might prepare accordingly. 3. He had charged them to love one another; and need enough they had to love one another, for the world would hate them; to be kind to one another, for they would have a great deal of unkindness and ill-will from those that were without. Keep peace among yourselves, and that will fortify you against the world's quarrels with you. They that are in the midst of enemies are concerned to hold together. See,

1st. The world's enmity against the followers of Christ; it hateth them. Note, Whom Christ blesseth, the world curseth. The favourites and heirs of Heaven have never been the darlings of this world, since the old enmity was put between the seed of the woman and of the serpent. Why did Cain hate Abel, but because his works were righteous? Esau hated Jacob, because of the blessing; Joseph's brethren hated him, because his father loved him; Saul hated David, because the Lord was with him; Ahab hated Micaiah, because of his prophecies: such are the causeless causes of the world's hatred.

2nd. The fruits of that enmity. Two of which we have here, ver. 20. *First*. They will persecute you, because they hate you; for hatred is a restless passion. It is the common lot of those who will live godly in Christ Jesus to suffer persecution, *2 Tim. iii. 12*. Christ foresaw what ill usage his ambassadors would meet with in the world; and yet, for the sake of those few that by their ministry were to be called out of the world, he sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. *Secondly*. Another fruit of their enmity is implied, that they would reject their doctrine; when Christ saith, "if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours," he means they will keep yours, and regard yours, no more than they have regarded and kept mine. Note, The preachers of the Gospel cannot but take the despising of their message to be the greatest injury that can be done to themselves; as it was a great affront to Jeremiah to say, "Let us not give heed to any of his words," *Jer. xviii. 18*.

3rd. The causes of that enmity. The world will hate them, *First*. Because they do not belong to it; ver. 19, "If you were of the world," of its spirit, and in its interests, if you were carnal and worldly, "the world would love you" as its own; but because you are called out of the world, it hates you, and ever will. Note, 1st. We are not to wonder if those that are devoted to the world are caressed by it, as its friends: most men bless the covetous, *Ps. x. 3; xlix. 18*. 2nd. Nor are we to wonder if those that are delivered from the world are malign'd by it as its enemies; when Israel is rescued out of Egypt, the Egyptians will pursue them. Observe, the reason why Christ's disciples are not of the world, is not because they have by their own wisdom and virtue distinguished themselves from the world, but because Christ hath chosen them out of it to set them apart for himself; and this is the reason why the world hates them; for, 1. The glory which by virtue of this choice they are designed for, sets them above the world, and so makes them the objects of its envy. The saints shall judge the world, and the upright have dominion, and therefore they are hated. 2. The grace which by virtue of this choice they are endued with, sets them against the world; they swim against the stream of the world, and are not conformed to it; they witness against it, and are not conformed to it. This would support them under all the calamities which the world's hatred would bring upon them, that therefore they were hated, because they were the choice and chosen ones of the Lord Jesus, and were not of the world. Now, *First*. This was no just cause for the world's hatred of them; if we do any thing to make ourselves hateful, we have reason to lament it; but if men hate us for that for which they should love and value us, we have reason to pity them, but no reason to perplex ourselves. Nay, *Secondly*. This was just cause for their own joy. He that is hated because he is rich, and prospers, cares not who has the vexation of it, while he has the satisfaction of it;

—*Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo
Ipse domi.*

Let them hiss on, he cries,

While in my own opinion fully bless'd.—*Timon in Hor.*

Much more may they hug themselves whom the world hates, but Christ loves.

Secondly. Another cause of the world's hating you will be, because you do belong to Christ; ver. 21, "for my name's sake." Here is the core of the controversy; whatever is pretended, this is the ground of the quarrel—they hate Christ's disciples, because they bear his name, and bear up his name in the world. Note, 1st. It is the character of Christ's disciples, that they stand for his name; the name into which they were baptized is that which they will live and die by. 2nd. It has commonly been the lot of those that appear for Christ's name, to suffer for so doing; to suffer many things, and hard things, "all these things." It is matter of comfort to the greatest sufferers, if they suffer for Christ's name's sake: "if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye," *1 Pet. iv. 14*; happy indeed, considering not only the honour that is imprinted upon those sufferings, *Acts v. 41*, but the comfort that is infused into them, and especially the crown of glory which those sufferings lead to. "If we suffer with Christ," and for Christ, "we shall reign with him."

Thirdly. After all, it is the world's ignorance that is the true cause of its enmity to the disciples of Christ; ver. 21, "because they know not him that sent me." 1st. They know not God. If men had but a due acquaintance with the very first principles of natural religion, and did but know God, though they would not embrace Christianity, yet they could not hate and persecute it: those have no knowledge who eat up God's people, *Ps. xiv. 4*. 2nd. They know not God as he sent our Lord Jesus Christ, and authorized him to be the great Mediator of the peace. We do not rightly know God, if we do not know him in Christ; and they who persecute those whom he sends, make it to appear they know not that he was sent of God: see *1 Cor. ii. 8*.

be Jesus of Nazareth, but Christ, the eternal Son of God." (Hare's "Mission of the Comforter," pp. 9, 10.)

xvi. 8. "He will reprove:" "The meaning of the verb 'reprove' falls far short of the original verb, which, in a very remarkable passage of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (xiv. 24), where it is used in the same sense and almost in the same relation as in the text, we translate 'convince'" (Hare). "The word in this place means more than to convince; it implies a breaking down and

casting out of the whole power of ungodliness, both in the outward life of the world and in the inner life of the conscience." (Ackermann, quoted in Hare's "Mission of the Comforter," p. 543.) The word implies a previous resistance on the part of those in whom the conviction is wrought. Alford renders, "convict." "Of righteousness:" while Christ's going to the Father was a proof of the unrighteousness and desperate wickedness of the world, it was also a proof of righteousness—namely, of his own pure, and perfect, and spotless

Secondly. The world hates Christ himself; and this is here spoken of for two ends:

1. To mitigate the trouble of his followers arising from the world's hatred, and to make it the less strange, and the less grievous; ver. 18, "Ye know that it hated me before you," *πρὸν ὑμᾶς*. We read it as signifying priority of time; he began in the bitter cup of suffering, and then left us to pledge him; but it may be read as speaking his superiority over them; Ye know that it hated me, "your first," that is, your chief and captain, your leader and commander. 1st. If Christ, who excelled in goodness, and was perfectly innocent, and universally beneficent, was hated, can we expect that any virtue or merit of ours should screen us from malice? 2nd. If our Master, the founder of our religion, met with so much opposition in the planting of it, his servants and followers can look for no other in propagating and professing it.

For this he refers them (ver. 20) to his own words, at their admission into discipleship, "Remember the word that I said unto you." It would help us to understand Christ's later sayings, to compare them with his former sayings; nor would any thing contribute more to the making of us easy, than remembering the words of Christ, which will expound his providences. Now in this word there is,

First. A plain truth; "the servant is not greater than his lord." This he had said to them, *Mat. x. 24*; Christ is our Lord, and therefore we must diligently attend all his motions, and patiently acquiesce in all his disposals, for the servant is inferior to his lord. The plainest truths are sometimes the strongest arguments for the hardest duties; Elihu answers a multitude of Job's murmurings with this one self-evident truth, "that God is greater than man," *Job xxxiii. 12*. So here.

Secondly. A proper inference drawn from it; "If they have persecuted me" as you have seen, and are likely to see much more, "they will also persecute you;" you may expect it, and count upon it; for, 1st. You will do the same that I have done to provoke them; you will reprove them for their sins, and call them to repentance, and give them strict rules of holy living, which they will not bear. 2nd. You cannot do more than I have done to oblige them; after so great an instance, let none wonder if they suffer ill for doing well. He adds, "if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also;" as there have been a few, and but a few, that have been wrought upon by my preaching, so there will be by yours, a few, and but a few. Some give another sense of this, making *ἐπίστησαν* to be put for *παρηγορήσαν*; if they have lain in wait for my sayings, with a design to ensnare me, they will in like manner lie in wait to entangle you in your talk.

2. It serves to aggravate the wickedness of this unbelieving world, and to discover its exceeding sinfulness: to hate and persecute the apostles was bad enough, but in them to hate and persecute Christ himself was much worse. The world is generally in an ill name in Scripture, and nothing can put it into a worse name than this, that it hated Jesus Christ. There is a world of people that are haters of Christ.

Two things he insists upon to aggravate the wickedness of those that hated him:

1st. That there was the greatest reason imaginable why they should love him. Men's good words and good works use to recommend them; now as to Christ,

First. His words were such as merited their love; ver. 22, "if I had not spoken unto them," to court their love, "they had not had sin," their opposition had not amounted to a hatred of me; their sin had been comparatively no sin. But now I have said so much to them to recommend myself to their best affection, they have no pretence, no excuse for their sin. Observe here,

1st. The advantage which they have that enjoy the Gospel. Christ in it comes and speaks to them; he spoke in person to the men of that generation, and is still speaking to us by our Bibles and ministers, and as one that has the most unquestionable authority over us, and affection for us. Every word of his is pure, carries with it a commanding majesty, and yet a condescending tenderness; able, one would think, to charm the deafest addler.

2nd. The excuse which they have that enjoy not the Gospel; "if I had not spoken to them," if they had never heard of Christ, and salvation by him, "they had not had sin." First. Not this kind of sin: they had not been chargeable with a contempt of Christ, if he had not come and made a tender of his grace to them. As sin is not imputed where there is no law, so unbelief is not imputed where there is no Gospel; and where it is imputed, it is thus far the only damning sin, that being a sin against the remedy; other sins would not damn, if the guilt of them were not bound on with this. Secondly. Not such a degree of sin. If they had not had the Gospel among them, their other sins had not been so bad; for "the times of ignorance God winked at;" *Lu. xii. 47, 48*.

3rd. The aggravated guilt which they lie under, to whom Christ has come and spoke in vain, whom he has called and invited in vain, with whom he has reasoned and pleaded in vain; "they have no cloak for their sin," they are altogether inexcusable, and in the judgment day will be speechless, and will not have a word to say for themselves. Note. The clearer and fuller the discoveries are, which are made of the grace and truth of Jesus Christ—the more is said to us that is convincing and endearing, the greater is our sin if we do not love him, and believe in him. The word of Christ strips sin of its cloak, that it may appear sin.

Secondly. His works were such as merited their love, as well as his words; ver. 24, "If I had not done among them," in their country, and before their eyes, such "works as none other man did, they had not had sin," their unbelief and enmity had been excusable; and they might have had some colour to say that his word was not to be credited, if not otherwise confirmed: but he produced satisfactory proofs of his Divine mission, "works which no other man did." Note, 1st. As the Creator demonstrates his power and godhead by his works, *Rom. i. 20*, so doth the Redeemer. His miracles, his mercies, works of wonder, and works of grace, prove him sent of God, and sent on a kind errand. 2nd. Christ's works were such as no man ever did; no common person, that had not a commission from Heaven, and God with him, could work miracles, *ch. iii. 2*; and no prophet ever wrought such miracles, so many, so illustrious. Moses and Elias wrought miracles, as servants, by a derived power; but Christ, as a Son, by his own power. This was it that amazed the people, that with authority he remanded diseases and devils, *Mar. i. 27*; they owned they never saw the like, *Mar. ii. 17*. They were all good works, works of mercy; and this seems especially intended here, for he is upbraiding them with this, that they hated him. One that was so universally useful, more than ever any man was, one would think should have been universally beloved, and yet even he is hated. 3rd. The works of Christ enhance the guilt of sinners' infidelity and enmity to him to the last degree of wickedness and absurdity. If they had only heard his words, and not seen his works—if we had only his sermons upon record, and not his miracles, unbelief might have pleaded want of proof; but now it has no excuse. Nay, the rejecting of Christ, both by them and us, has in it the sin not only of obstinate unbelief, but of base ingratitude. They saw Christ to be most amiable, and studious to do them a kindness, yet they hated him, and studied to do him mischief; and we see in his word that great love wherewith he loved us, and yet are not wrought upon by it.

righteousness. It was a proof that he was the Holy One, who could not see corruption." (Hare's "Mission of the Comforter.")

xvi. 11. "Of judgment, because the prince of this world" is, or rather, "hath been judged:" compare chap. xii. 27—33. In these words we are taught how the prince of this world was to be judged—how he was to be cast out. The Father declared from heaven that he had and would still glorify his name; and in that he did so, in the very act of his showing forth his glory, the world was judged; and the prince

2nd. That there was no reason at all why they should hate him. Some that at one time will say and do that which is recommending, yet at another time will say and do that which is provoking and disoblighing; but our Lord Jesus not only did much to merit men's esteem and good-will, but never did any thing justly to incur their displeasure; this he pleads by quoting a scripture for it; ver. 25, "this comes to pass," this unreasonable hatred of me, and of my disciples for my sake, "that the world might be fulfilled which is written in their law," (that is, in the Old Testament, which is a law, and was received by them as a law.) "They hated me without a cause:" this David speaks of himself as a type of Christ, *Ps. xxxv. 19*; *lxix. 4*. Note, First. They that hate Christ, hate him without any just cause; enmity to Christ is unreasonable enmity. We think those deserve to be hated that are haughty and froward; but Christ is meek and lowly, compassionate and tender: those also that, under colour of compliance, are malicious, envious, and revengeful; but Christ devoted himself to the service of those that used him, nay, and of those that abused him; toiled for others' ease, and impoverished himself to enrich us. Those we think hateful that are hurtful to kings and provinces, and disturbers of the public peace; but Christ, on the contrary, was the greatest blessing imaginable to his country, and yet was hated. He testified indeed that their works were evil, with a design to make them good; but to hate him for that cause, was to hate him without a cause. Secondly. Herein the Scripture was fulfilled, and the antitype answered the type. Saul and his courtiers hated David without cause, for he had been serviceable to him with his harp, and with his sword; Absalom and his party hated him, though to him he had been an indulgent father, and to them a great benefactor: thus was the Son of David hated and hunted most unjustly. They that hated Christ did not design therein to fulfil the Scripture; but God, in permitting it, had that in his eye; and it confirms our faith in Christ as the Messiah, that even this was foretold concerning him; and being foretold, was accomplished in him; and we must not think it strange or hard, if it have a farther accomplishment in us. We are apt to justify our complaints of injuries done us with this, that they are causeless; whereas the more they are so, the more like they are to the sufferings of Christ, and may be the more easily borne.

Thirdly. In Christ, the world hates God himself: this is twice said here, ver. 23, "he that hateth me," though he thinks his hatred goes no farther, yet really he "hates my Father also;" and again, ver. 24, "they have seen and hated both me and my Father." Note, 1. There are those that hate God, notwithstanding the beauty of his nature, and the bounty of his providence; they are enraged at his justice; as the devils, that believe it and tremble, are vexed at his dominion, and would gladly break his bands asunder: they who cannot bring themselves to deny that there is a God, and yet wish there were none, they see and hate him. 2. Hatred of Christ will be construed and adjudged hatred of God; for he is in his person his Father's express image, and in his office his great agent and ambassador. God will have all men to honour the Son as they honour the Father; and therefore what entertainment the Son has, that the Father has. Hence it is easier to infer that those who are enemies to the Christian religion, however they may cry up natural religion, are really enemies to all religion. Deists are in effect atheists, and they that ridicule the light of the Gospel world, if they could, extinguish even natural light, and shake off all obligations of conscience and the fear of God. Let an unbelieving, malignant world know that their enmity to the Gospel of Christ will be looked upon in the great day as enmity to the blessed God himself; and let all that suffer for righteousness' sake, according to the will of God, take comfort from this, if God himself be hated in them, and struck at through them, they need not be either ashamed of their cause, or afraid of the issue.

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: 27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Christ having spoken of the great opposition which his Gospel was likely to meet with in the world, and the hardships that would be put upon the preachers of it, lest any should fear that they, and it, would be run down by that violent torrent, he here intimates to all those that were well-wishers to his cause and interest, what effectual provision was made for the supporting it, both by the principal testimony of the Spirit, ver. 26, and the subordinate testimony of the apostles, ver. 27; and testimonies are the proper supports of truth.

First. It is here promised that the blessed Spirit shall maintain the cause of Christ in the world, notwithstanding the opposition it should meet with. Christ, when he was reviled, committed his injured cause to his Father, and did not lose by his silence, for the Comforter came, pleaded it powerfully, and carried it triumphantly. "When the Comforter," or Advocate, "is come, which proceedeth from the Father," and whom I will send to supply the want of my bodily presence, "he shall testify of me" against those that hate me without cause.

We have more in this verse concerning the Holy Ghost than in any one verse beside in the Bible; and being baptized into his name, we are concerned to acquaint ourselves with him, as far as he is revealed. Here is an account of him:

1. In his essence, or subsistence rather. He is "the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father." Here, 1st. He is spoken of as a distinct person; not a quality or property, but a person under the proper name of a Spirit, and proper title of the Spirit of truth; a title fitly given him, where he is brought in testifying. 2nd. As a Divine person, that proceedeth from the Father, by out-goings that were of old from everlasting. The spirit or breath of man, called the breath of life, proceedeth from the man; and by it modified he delivers his mind, by it invigorated he sometimes exerts his strength to blow out what he would extinguish, and blow up what he would excite: thus the blessed Spirit is the emanation of Divine light, and the energy of Divine power. The rays of the sun, by which it dispenseth and diffuseth its light, heat, and influence, proceed from the sun, and yet are one with it. The Nicene creed saith, the Spirit "proceedeth from the Father and the Son," for he is called the Spirit of the Son, *Gal. iv. 6*; and the Son is here said to send him. The Greek church chose rather to say, "from the Father by the Son."

2. In his mission. 1st. He will come in a more plentiful effusion of his gifts, graces, and powers, than had ever yet been. Christ had been long the *ἐκχυστωρ*, "he that should come;" now the blessed Spirit is so. 2nd. "I will send him to you from the Father." He had said, *ch. xiv. 16*, "I will pray the Father, and he shall send you the Comforter;" that speaks the Spirit to be the fruit of the intercession Christ makes within the veil. Here he saith, "I will send him;" that speaks him to be the fruit of his dominion within the veil. The Spirit was sent, First. By Christ, as Mediator, now ascended on high to give gifts unto men, and all power being given to him. Secondly. From the

of this world, whose dominion over the world lay in his having drawn it away from the recognition of God's glory and name, was cast out" (Hare).

xvi. 13. "He will show:" this word Alford renders here and in verse 14 by "tell"—"he shall tell you the things to come."

xvi. 16. "The words 'because I go to the Father' are omitted by the great majority of early MSS" (Alford). Two words in the Greek are rendered by one ("see") in the English. The distinction

Father; not only from heaven, my Father's house; the Spirit was given in a sound from heaven, *Acts* ii. 2; but according to my Father's will and appointment, and with his concurring power and authority. *Thirdly*. To the apostles, to instruct them in their preaching, enable them for working, and carry them through their sufferings. He was given to them and their successors, both in Christianity and in the ministry; to them and their seed, and their seed's seed, according to that promise, *Isa.* lix. 21.

3. In his office and operations; which are two:

1st. One implied, in the title given to him; he is the Comforter, or Advocate; an advocate for Christ, to maintain his cause against the world's infidelity; a comforter to the saints, against the world's hatred.

2nd. Another expressed; "he shall testify of me." He is not only an advocate, but a witness for Jesus Christ; he is one of the "three that bear record in heaven," and the first of the three that bear witness on earth, *1 Jno.* v. 7. He instructed the apostles, and enabled them to work miracles; he indited the Scriptures, which are the standing witnesses that testify of Christ, *ch.* v. 39. The power of the ministry is derived from the Spirit, for he qualifies ministers; and the power of Christianity too, for he sanctifies Christians, and in both testifies of Christ.

Secondly. It is here promised that the apostles also, by the Spirit's assistance, should have the honour of being Christ's witnesses; *ver.* 27, "and ye also shall bear witness" of me, being competent witnesses, "for ye have been with me from the beginning" of my ministry. Observe here,

1. That the apostles were appointed to be witnesses for Christ in the world. When he had said, the Spirit shall testify, he adds, and you also shall bear witness. Note, The Spirit's working is not to supersede, but to engage and encourage ours. Though the Spirit testify, ministers also must bear their testimony, and people attend to it; for the Spirit of grace witnesseth and worketh by the means of grace. The apostles were the first witnesses that were called in the famous trial between Christ and the prince of this world, which issued in the ejection of the intruder. This speaks, 1st. The work cut out for them; they were to attest the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, concerning Christ, for the recovering of his just right, and the maintaining of his crown and dignity. Though Christ's disciples fled when they should have been witnesses for him upon his trials before the high priest and Pilate; yet after the Spirit was poured out upon them, they appeared courageous in vindication of the cause of Christ, against the accusations it was loaded with. The truth of the Christian religion was to be proved very much by the evidence of matter of fact, especially Christ's resurrection, of which the apostles were in a particular manner chosen witnesses, *Acts* x. 41; and they bore their testimony accordingly, *Acts* iii. 15; *v.* 32: Christ's ministers are his witnesses. 2nd. The honour put upon them hereby, that they should be workers together with God: The Spirit shall testify of me; and you also, under the conduct of the Spirit, and in concurrence with the Spirit, (who will preserve you from mistaking in that which you relate on your own knowledge, and will inform you of that which you cannot know but by revelation,) shall bear witness. This might encourage them against the hatred and contempt of the world, that Christ had honoured them, and would own them.

2. That they were qualified to be so: "ye have been with me from the beginning;" they not only heard his public sermons, but had constant private converse with him. He went about doing good; and while others saw his wonderful and merciful works that he did in their own town and country only, they that went about with him were witnesses of them all. They had likewise opportunity of observing the unspotted purity of his conversation, and could witness for him that they never saw in him, or heard from him, any thing that had the least tincture of human frailty. Note, 1st. We have great reason to receive the record which the apostles gave of Christ; for they did not speak by hearsay, but what they had the greatest assurance of imaginable, *2 Pet.* i. 16; *1 Jno.* i. 1, 3. 2nd. Those are best able to bear witness for Christ that have themselves been with him, by faith, hope, and love, and by living a life of communion with God in him. Ministers must first learn Christ, and then preach him. Those speak best of the things of God that speak experimentally. It is particularly a great advantage to have been acquainted with Christ from the beginning; to understand all things from the very first. *Lu.* i. 3; to have been with him from the beginning of our days. An early acquaintance and constant converse with the Gospel of Christ will make a man like a good householder.

CHAPTER XVI.

Among other glorious things God hath spoken of himself, this is one, "I wound, and I heal," *Deu.* xxxii. 39. Christ's discourse in this chapter, which continues and concludes his farewell sermon to his disciples, doth so. I. Here are wounding words in the notice he gives them of the troubles that were before them, *ver.* 1-6. II. Here are healing words in the comforts he administers to them for their support under those troubles, which are five: 1. That he would send them the Comforter, *ver.* 7-15; 2. That he would visit them again at his resurrection, *ver.* 16-22; 3. That he would secure to them an answer of peace to all their prayers, *ver.* 23-27; 4. That he was now but returning to his Father, *ver.* 28-32; 5. That whatever troubles they might meet with in this world, by virtue of his victory over it, they should be sure of peace in him, *ver.* 33.



THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. 2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. 3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known

the Father, nor me. 4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I

said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. 5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? 6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

Christ dealt faithfully with his disciples when he sent them forth on his errands; for he told them the worst of it, that they might sit down and count the cost. He had told them, in the chapter before, to expect the world's hatred; now here, in these verses,

First. He gives them a reason why he alarmed them thus with the expectation of trouble; "these things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended," or scandalized, *ver.* 1.

1. The disciples of Christ are apt to be offended at the cross; and the offence of the cross is a dangerous temptation, even to good men, either to turn back from the ways of God, or turn aside out of them, or drive on heavily in them; to quit either their integrity or their comfort. It is not for nothing that a suffering time is called an hour of temptation.

2. Our Lord Jesus, by giving us notice of trouble, designed to take off the terror of it, that it might not be a surprise to us. Of all the adversaries of our peace in this world of troubles, none insult us more violently, nor put our troops more into disorder, than disappointment doth; but we can easily welcome a guest we expect, and being "forewarned are forearmed"—*præmoniti præmuniti*.

Secondly. He foretels particularly what they should suffer, *ver.* 2: "they," that have power to do it, "shall put you out of their synagogues;" and that is not the worst; they shall kill you: *ecce duo gladii*,—behold two swords, drawn against the followers of the Lord Jesus!

1. The sword of ecclesiastical censure. This is drawn against them by the Jews; for they were the only pretenders to church power; "they shall cast you out of their synagogues,"—*ἐκδιώξουσιν ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῶν συναγωγῶν*; "they shall make you excommunicates." 1st. They shall cast you out of the particular synagogues ye were members of. At first they scourged them in their synagogues, as contemners of the law, *Mat.* x. 17; and at length cast them out, as incorrigible. 2nd. They shall cast you out of the congregation of Israel in general, the national church of the Jews; shall debar you from the privileges of that, put you into the condition of an outlaw, *qui caput gerit lupinum*,—to be knocked on the head like another wolf. They will look upon you as Samaritans, as heathen men and publicans; *interdico tibi aqua et igne*,—I forbid you the use of water and fire. And were it not for the penalties, forfeitures, and incapacities incurred hereby, it would be no injury to be thus driven out of a house infected and falling. Note, It has often been the lot of Christ's disciples to be unjustly excommunicated. Many a good truth has been branded with an anathema; and many a child of God delivered to Satan.

2. The sword of civil power. The time cometh, the hour is come; now things are likely to be worse with you than hitherto they have been; when you are expelled as heretics, they will kill you, and think they do God service, and others will think so too. 1st. You will find them really cruel; they will kill you. Christ's sheep have been accounted as sheep for the slaughter; the twelve apostles, we are told, were all put to death, except John. Christ had said, *ch.* xv. 27, "ye shall bear witness,"—*μαρτυρεῖτε*; ye shall be martyrs; shall seal the truth with their blood, their hearts' blood. 2nd. You will find them seemingly conscientious. They will think they do God service; they will seem *λατρεῖν πνευματικῶς*,—to offer a good sacrifice to God; as those that cast out God's servants of old, and said, "Let the Lord be glorified." *Isa.* lvi. 5. Note, First. It is possible for those that are real enemies to God's service to pretend a mighty zeal for it. The devil's work has many times been done in God's livery; and one of the most mischievous enemies Christianity ever had sits in the temple of God. Nay, Secondly. It is common to patronize an enmity to religion with a colour of duty to God, and service to his church. God's people have suffered the greatest hardships from conscientious persecutors; Paul verily thought he ought to do what he did against the name of Jesus. This doth not at all lessen the sin of the persecutors; for villainies will never be consecrated by entitling God to them; but it doth greatly lessen the sufferings of the persecuted to die under the character of being enemies to God. But there will be a resurrection of names, as well as of bodies, at the great day.

Thirdly. He gives them the true reason of the world's enmity and rage against them; *ver.* 3, "these things will they do unto you;" not because you have done them any harm, but "because they have not known the Father, nor me." Let this comfort you, that none will be your enemies but the worst of men. Note, 1. Many that pretend to know God are wretchedly ignorant of him. They that pretended to do him service, thought they knew him, but it was a wrong notion they had of him. Israel transgressed the covenant, and yet cried, "My God, we know thee!" *Hos.* viii. 1, 2. 2. They that are ignorant of Christ cannot have any right knowledge of God. In vain do men pretend to know God and religion, while they slight Christ and Christianity. 3. Those are very ignorant indeed of God and Christ, that think it an acceptable piece of service to persecute good people. They that know Christ, know that he "came not into the world to destroy men's lives, but to save them;" that he rules by the power of truth and love, not of fire and sword. Never was such a persecuting church as that which makes ignorance the mother of devotion.

Fourthly. He tells them why he gave them notice of this now, and why not sooner. 1. Why he told them of it now, *ver.* 4; not to discourage them, or add to their present sorrow; nor did he tell them of their danger, that they might contrive how to avoid it; "but that, when the time shall come," (and you may be sure it will come), "you may remember that I told you." Note, When suffering times come, it will be of use to us to remember what Christ has told us of sufferings. 1st. That our belief of Christ's foresight and faithfulness may be confirmed; and, 2nd. That the trouble may be the less grievous; for we were told of it before, and we took up our profession in expectation of it; so that it ought not to be a surprise to us, nor looked upon as a wrong to us. As Christ in his sufferings, so his followers in theirs, should have an eye to the fulfilling of the Scripture. 2. Why he did not tell them of it sooner: "I spake not this to you from the beginning," when you and I came to be first acquainted, "because I was with you." 1st. While he was with them he bore the shock of the world's malice, and stood in the front of the battle; against him the powers of darkness levelled all their force; not against small or great, but only against the King of Israel; and therefore he did not need then to say so much to them of suffering, because it did not fall much to their share. But we do find that from the beginning he bade them prepare for sufferings; and therefore, 2nd. It

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is at least marked if we translate, "A little while, and ye behold me no longer: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me." The first clause refers, no doubt, to his approaching death; the second clause is by some taken as referring to the internal, spiritual operation of Christ, as in *chap.* xiv. 19 (Olshausen).

xvi. 18. "We cannot tell what he saith;" or, "we know not of what he speaketh."

xvi. 20. "Weep and lament;" these words are such as would

be used to describe funeral wailing. Compare *Zech.* xii. 10; for the literal fulfilment, see *Mark* xvi. 10 (Webster and Wilkinson).

xvi. 23. "Ye shall ask me nothing;" "whatsoever ye shall ask:" the word in the second clause is different from that used in the first. The first here refers mainly to inquiry (as in verses 19 and 30), though the word has both senses. There would be no need for them to ask any question. "Ye shall ask me no question" is the rendering in Tyndale's version. The second word means "petition."

seems rather to be meant of the promise of another Comforter. This he had said little of to them at the beginning, because he was himself with them, to instruct, guide, and comfort them; and then they needed not the promise of the Spirit's extraordinary presence. The children of the bridechamber would not have so much need of a Comforter, till the bridegroom should be taken away.

Fifthly. He expresses a very affectionate concern for the present sadness of his disciples, upon occasion of what he had said to them; ver. 5, 6, "Now I am to be no longer with you, but 'go my way to him that sent me,' to repose there after this fatigue; 'and none of you asketh me,' with any courage, 'Whither goest thou?' But instead of inquiring after that which would comfort you, you pore upon that which looks melancholy, and 'sorrow has filled your heart.'" 1. He had told them that he was about to leave them; "Now I go my way." He was not driven away by force, but voluntarily departed; his life was not extorted from him, but deposited by him. He went to him that sent him, to give account of his negotiation. Thus when we depart out of this world, we go to him that sent us into it, which should make us all solicitous to live to good purposes; remembering we have a commission to execute, which must be returned at a certain day. 2. He had told them what hard things they must suffer when he was gone, and that they must not expect such an easy, quiet life as they had had. Now if these were the legacies he had to leave to them who had left all for him, they would be tempted to think they had made a sorry bargain of it, and were for the present in a consternation about it, in which their Master sympathizes with them, and blames them.

1st. That they were careless of the means of comfort, and did not stir up themselves to seek it: "none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?" Peter had started that question, ch. xiii. 36, and Thomas had seconded it, ch. xiv. 5; but they did not pursue it; they did not take the answer; were in the dark concerning it, and did not inquire farther, nor seek for fuller satisfaction; did not continue seeking, continue knocking. See what a compassionate teacher Christ is, and how condescending to the weak and ignorant; many a teacher will not endure that the learner should ask the same question twice; if he cannot take a thing quickly, let him go without it; but our Lord Jesus knows how to deal with babes, that must be taught with precept upon precept. If the disciples here would have pushed on that inquiry, they would have found that his going away was for his advancement, and therefore his departure from them should not inordinately trouble them; for why should they be against his preferment? and for their advantage, and therefore their sufferings for him should not inordinately trouble them; for a sight of Jesus at the right hand of God would be an effectual support to them, as it was to Stephen. Note. An humble, believing inquiry into the design and tendency of the darkest dispensations of Providence would help to reconcile us to them, and to grieve the less, and fear the less because of them. It will silence us to ask whence they come, but will abundantly satisfy us to ask whither they go; for we know they work for good, Rom. viii. 28.

2nd. That they were too intent, and pored too much upon the occasions of their grief: sorrow has filled their heart. Christ had said enough to fill them with joy, ch. xv. 11; but by looking at that only which made against them, and overlooking that which made for them, they were so full of sorrow that there was no room for joy. Note. It is the common fault and folly of melancholy Christians to dwell only upon the dark side of the cloud, to meditate nothing but terror, and turn a deaf ear to the voice of joy and gladness. That which filled the disciples' hearts with sorrow, and hindered the operation of the cordials Christ administered, was too great an affection to this present life. They were big with hopes of their Master's external kingdom and glory, and that they should shine and reign with him; and now, instead of that, to hear of nothing but bonds and afflictions, this filled them with sorrow. Nothing is a greater prejudice to our joy in God than the love of the world, and the sorrow of the world, the consequence of it.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

As it was usual with the Old Testament prophets to comfort the church in its calamities with the promise of the Messiah, Isa. ix. 6, Mic. v. 5, Zec. iii. 8, so, the Messiah being come, the promise of the Spirit was the great cordial, and is still. Three things we have here concerning the Comforter's coming:

First. That Christ's departure was absolutely necessary to the Comforter's coming, ver. 7. The disciples were so loath to believe this, that Christ saw cause to assert it with a more than ordinary solemnity; "I tell you the truth." We may be confident of the truth of every thing that Christ has told us; he hath no design to impose upon us. Now, to make them easy, he here tells them,

1. In general, it was expedient for them he should go away. This was strange doctrine; but if it was true, it was comfortable enough, and shewed them how absurd their sorrow was. 'It is expedient, not only for me, but

for you also, that I go away;' though they did not see it, and are loath to believe it, so it is. Note, 1st. Those things often seem grievous to us that are really expedient for us; and particularly our going away when we have finished our course. 2nd. Our Lord Jesus is always for that which is most expedient for us, whether we think so or no; he deals not with us according to the folly of our own choices, but graciously overrules them, and gives us the physic we are loath to take, because he knows it is good for us.

2. It was therefore expedient, because it was in order to the sending of the Spirit. Now observe,

1st. That Christ's going was in order to the Comforter's coming.

First. This is expressed negatively; "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come." And why not? 1st. So it was settled in the Divine counsels concerning this affair; and the measures must not be altered; shall the earth be forsaken for them? He that gives freely may recall one gift before he bestows another; while we would fondly hold all. 2nd. It is congruous enough that the ambassador extraordinary should be recalled before the envoy come that is constantly to reside. 3rd. The sending of the Spirit was to be the fruit of Christ's purchase, and that purchase was to be made by his death, which was his going away. 4th. It was to be in answer to his intercession within the veil: see ch. xiv. 16. Thus must this gift be both paid for and prayed for by our Lord Jesus, that we might learn to put the greater value upon it. 5th. The great argument the Spirit was to use in convincing the world, must be Christ's ascension into heaven, and his welcome there: see ver. 10; ch. vii. 39. 6th. The disciples must be weaned from his bodily presence, which they were too apt to dote upon before they were fully prepared to receive the spiritual aids and comforts of a new dispensation.

Secondly. It is expressed positively; "If I depart, I will send him to you;" that is to say, 'Trust me to provide effectually, that you shall be no losers by my departure.' The glorified Redeemer is not unmindful of his church on earth, nor will ever leave it without its necessary supports; though he departs, he sends the Comforter; nay, he departs on purpose to send him. Thus still, though one generation of ministers and Christians departs, another is raised up in their room; for Christ will maintain his own cause.

2nd. That the presence of Christ's Spirit in his church is so much better and more desirable than his bodily presence, that it was really expedient for us he should go away to send the Comforter. His corporal presence could be but in one place at one time, but his Spirit is every where, in all places, at all times, wherever two or three are gathered in his name. Christ's bodily presence draws men's eyes, his Spirit draws their hearts; that was the letter which kills,—his Spirit gives life.

Secondly. That the coming of the Spirit was absolutely necessary to the carrying on of Christ's interest on earth; ver. 8, "And when he is come," *ὅταν ἐλθὼν*. He that is sent, is willing of himself to come, and at his first coming he will do this,—"he will reprove," or, as the margin reads it, 'he will convince the world' by your ministry, concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.

1. See here what the office of the Spirit is, and on what errand he is sent. 1st. To reprove. The Spirit, by the word and conscience, is a reprover; ministers are reprovers by office, and by them the Spirit reproves. 2nd. To convince. It is a law term, and speaks the office of the judge in summing up the evidence, and setting a matter that has been long canvassed in a clear and true light. He shall convince, that is, he shall put to silence the adversaries of Christ and his cause, by discovering and demonstrating the falsehood and fallacy of that which they have maintained, and the truth and certainty of that which they have opposed. Note. Convincing work is the Spirit's work; he can do it effectually, and none but he; man may open the cause, but it is the Spirit only that can open the heart. The Spirit is called the Comforter, ver. 7, and here it is said he shall convince; one would think that were cold comfort; but it is the method the Spirit takes, first to convince, and then to comfort,—first to lay open the wound, and then apply healing medicines. Or, taking conviction more generally for a demonstration of what is right, it intimates that the Spirit's comforts are solid, and grounded upon truth.

2. See who they are whom he is to reprove and convince—"the world," both Jew and Gentile. 1st. He shall give the world the most powerful means of conviction; for the apostles shall go into all the world, backed by the Spirit, to preach the Gospel, fully proved. 2nd. He shall sufficiently provide for the taking off and silencing of the objections and prejudices of the world against the Gospel. Many an infidel was convinced of all, and judged of all, 1 Cor. xiv. 24. 3rd. He shall effectually and savingly convince many in the world, some in every age, in every place, in order to their conversion to the faith of Christ. Now this was an encouragement to the disciples, in reference to the difficulties they were likely to meet with, First. That they should see good done; Satan's kingdom fall like lightning, which would be their joy, as it was his. Even this malignant world the Spirit shall work upon, and the conviction of sinners is the comfort of faithful ministers. Secondly. That this would be the fruit of their services and sufferings; these should contribute very much to this good work.

3. See what the Spirit shall convince the world of.

1st. "Of sin, because they believe not on me," ver. 9.

First. The Spirit is sent to convince sinners of sin; not barely to tell them of it, (in conviction there is more than that,) it is to prove it upon them, and force them to own it, as they that were convicted of their own consciences, ch. viii. 9; make them to know their abominations. The Spirit convinceth of the fact of sin, that we have done so and so; of the fault of sin, that we have done ill in doing so; of the folly of sin, that we have acted against right reason and our true interest; of the filth of sin, that by it we are become odious to God; of the fountain of sin, the corrupt nature; and, lastly, of the fruit of sin, that the end thereof is death. The Spirit demonstrates the pravity and degeneracy of the whole world; that all the world is guilty before God.

Secondly. The Spirit in conviction fastens especially upon the sin of unbelief, their not believing in Christ, 1st. As the great reigning sin. There was, and is, a world of people that believe not in Jesus Christ, and they are not sensible that it is their sin. Natural conscience tells them that murder and theft are sins; but it is a supernatural work of the Spirit to convince them that it is a sin to suspend their belief of the Gospel, and to reject the salvation offered by it. Natural religion, after it has given us its best discoveries and directions, lays and leaves us under this farther obligation, that whatever Divine revelation shall be made to us at any time, with sufficient evidence to prove it Divine, we accept it, and submit to it; which law they transgress who, when God speaketh to us by his Son, refuse him that speaketh; and therefore it is sin. 2nd. As the great ruining sin. Every sin is so in its own nature; no sin is so to them that believe in Christ; so that it is unbelief that damns sinners; it is because of that, that they cannot enter into rest, that they cannot escape the wrath of God; it is a sin against the remedy. 3rd. As that which is at the bottom of all sin; so Calvin takes it: the Spirit shall convince the world, that the true reason why sin reigns among them, is because they are not by faith united to Christ; *ne putimus vel guttam unam rectitudinis sine Christo nobis inesse*.—Let us not suppose that, apart from Christ, we have a drop of rectitude.—Calvin.

2nd. "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more," ver. 10. We may understand this, First. Of Christ's personal righteousness.

they said—"Ye do indeed believe now, but," &c.; in the latter, that he designed to represent the weakness and imperfection of their faith.

xvi. 33. "I have overcome the world:" they were to regard the world as a conquered foe. The world in its persecuting, rather than its seducing aspect, seems to be the main thought. The victory is moral resistance to violence, rather than temptation. Compare verses 1—3 and chap. xv. 18—21 (Webster and Wilkinson).

xvi. 26. "Ye shall ask:" the word is that used in the first clause of verse 23. It was noted that the word has two senses—inquiring, and also petitioning.

xvi. 29. "Now speakest thou plainly:" now, at this present time, as opposed to the expression, "the time cometh," &c., verse 25.

xvi. 31. "Do ye now believe?" the sentence may be taken as a simple assertion, or, as in the English version, as a question. In the former case we must understand Christ to admit the truth of what

He shall convince the world that Jesus of Nazareth was "Christ the righteous," 1 *Jno.* ii. 1; as the centurion owned, *Lu.* xxiii. 47, "Certainly this was a righteous man." His enemies put him under the worst of characters, and multitudes were not or would not be convinced but that he was an ill man, which strengthened their prejudices against his doctrine, but he is "justified by the Spirit," 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. He is proved to be a righteous man, and not a deceiver; and then the point is in effect gained, for he is either the great Redeemer, or a great cheat; but a cheat we are sure he is not. Now, by what medium or argument will the Spirit convince men of the sincerity of our Lord Jesus? Why, 1st. Their seeing him no more will contribute something towards the removal of their prejudices; they shall see him no more in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the form of a servant, which made them slight him. Moses was more respected after his removal than before. But, 2nd. His going to the Father would be a full conviction of it. The coming of the Spirit according to the promise was a proof of Christ's exaltation to God's right hand, *Acts* ii. 36, 37; and that was a demonstration of his righteousness, for the holy God would never set a deceiver at his right hand. Secondly. Of Christ's righteousness communicate, to us for our justification and salvation, that everlasting righteousness which Messiah was to bring in, *Dan.* ix. 24. Now, 1st. The Spirit shall convince men of this righteousness; having by convictions of sin shewed them their need of a righteousness, lest that drive them to despair, he will shew them where it is to be had, and how they may, upon their believing, be acquitted from guilt, and accepted as righteous in God's sight. It was hard to convince those of this righteousness, that went about to establish their own, *Rom.* x. 3; but the Spirit will do it. 2nd. Christ's ascension is the great argument proper to convince men of this righteousness: "I will go to the Father," and as an evidence of my welcome with him, "you shall see me no more," if Christ had left any part of his undertaking unfinished, he had been sent back again; but now we are sure he is at the right hand of God, we are sure of being justified through him.

3rd. "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged," ver. 10. Observe here, First. The devil, the prince of this world, was judged, was discovered to be a great deceiver and destroyer; and as such, judgment was entered against him, and execution in part done. He was cast out of the Gentile world, when his oracles were silenced, and his altars deserted; cast out of the bodies of many in Christ's name, which miraculous power continued long in the church; he was cast out of the souls of people by the grace of God working with the Gospel of Christ; he fell as lightning from heaven. Secondly. This is a good argument wherewith the Spirit convinceth the world of judgment; that is, 1st. Of inherent holiness and sanctification, *Mat.* xii. 18. By the judgment of the prince of this world, it appears that Christ is stronger than Satan, and can disarm and dispossess him, and set up his throne upon the ruins of his. 2nd. Of a new and better dispensation of things. He shall shew that Christ's errand into the world was to set things to rights in it, and to introduce times of reformation and regeneration; and he proves it by this, that the prince of this world, the great master of misrule, is judged and expelled. All will be well when his power is broken who made all the mischief. 3rd. Of the power and dominion of the Lord Jesus. He shall convince the world that all judgment is committed to him, and that he is Lord of all; which is evident by this, that he has judged the prince of this world, has broken the serpent's head, destroyed him that had the power of death, and spoiled principalities. If Satan be thus subdued by Christ, we may be sure no other power can stand before him. 4th. Of the final day of judgment; all the obstinate enemies of Christ's Gospel and kingdom shall certainly be reckoned with at last; for the devil, their ringleader, is judged.

Thirdly. That the coming of the Spirit would be of unspeakable advantage to the disciples themselves. The Spirit has work to do, not only on the enemies of Christ, to convince and humble them; but upon his servants and agents, to instruct and comfort them; and therefore it was expedient for them that he should go away.

1. He intimates to them the tender sense he had of their present weakness; ver. 12, "I have yet many things to say unto you,"—not which should have been said, but which he could and would have said—"but ye cannot bear them now." See what a teacher Christ is. 1st. None like him for copiousness; when he hath said much, he hath still many things more to say. Treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him, and we are not straitened in him, if we be not straitened in ourselves. 2nd. None like him for compassion. He would have told them more of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, particularly of the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, but they could not bear it; it would have confounded and stumbled them, rather than have given them any satisfaction. When, after his resurrection, they spoke to him of restoring the kingdom to Israel, he referred them to the coming of the Holy Ghost, by which they should receive power to bear those discoveries, which are so contrary to the notions they had received, that they could not bear them now.

2. He assures them of sufficient assistances by the pouring out of the Spirit. They were now conscious to themselves of great dulness and many mistakes, and what shall they do now their Master is leaving them? but when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, you will be easy, and all will be well; well indeed, for he shall undertake to guide the apostles, and glorify Christ.

1st. To guide the apostles. He will take care. First. That they do not miss their way; he will guide you, as the camp of Israel was guided through the wilderness by the pillar of cloud and fire. The Spirit guided their tongues in speaking, and their pens in writing, to secure them from mistakes. The Spirit is given us to be our guide, *Rom.* viii. 14; not only to shew us the way, but to go along with us by his continued aids and influences.

Secondly. That they do not come short of their end. He will guide them into all truth, as the skilful pilot guides the ship into the port it is bound for. To be led into a truth, is more than barely to know it; it is to be intimately and experimentally acquainted with it; to be piously and strongly affected with it; not only to have the notion of it in our heads, but the relish and savour and power of it in our hearts; it notes a gradual discovery of truth, shining more and more. He shall lead you by those truths that are plain and easy to those that are more difficult. But how into all truth? The meaning is,

1st. Into the whole truth relating to their embassy; whatever was needful or useful for them to know, in order to the due discharge of their office, they should be fully instructed in. What truths they were to teach others the Spirit would teach them; would give them the understanding of, and enable them both to explain and to defend.

2nd. Into nothing but the truth; all that he shall guide you into shall be truth, 1 *Jno.* ii. 27; the anointing is truth. In the following words he proves both these:

(1.) The Spirit shall teach nothing but the truth; "for he shall not speak of himself" any doctrine distinct from mine; "but whatsoever he shall hear," and knows to be the mind of the Father, "that," and that only, "shall he speak." This intimates, (1st.) That the testimony of the Spirit in the Word, and by the apostles, is what we may rely upon. The Spirit knows and "searches all things, even the deep things of God," and the apostles received that Spirit,

1 *Cor.* ii. 10, 11; so that we may venture our souls upon the Spirit's word. (2nd.) That the testimony of the Spirit always concurs with the word of Christ, for he doth not speak of himself, has no separate interest or intention of his own; but as in essence, so in record, he is one with the Father and the Son, 1 *Jno.* v. 7. Men's word and spirit often disagree, but the eternal Word and the eternal Spirit never do.

(2.) He shall teach you all truth, and keep back nothing that is profitable for you, for he will "shew you things to come." The Spirit was in the apostles a spirit of prophecy; it was foretold he should be so, *Joel* ii. 28; and he was so. The Spirit shewed them things to come, as *Acts* xii. 28; xx. 23; xxi. 11; the Spirit spake of the apostasy of the latter times, 1 *Tim.* iv. 1. John, when he was in the Spirit, had things to come shewed him in vision. Now this was a great satisfaction to their own minds, and of use to them in their conduct, and was also a great confirmation of their mission. Jansenius has a pious note upon this; we should not grudge that the Spirit doth not now shew us things to come in this world, as he did to the apostles; let it suffice that the Spirit in the Word hath shewed us things to come in the other world, which are our chief concern.

2nd. The Spirit undertook to glorify Christ, ver. 14, 15.

First. Even the sending of the Spirit was the glorifying of Christ. God the Father glorified him in heaven, and the Spirit glorified him on earth. It was the honour of the Redeemer that the Spirit was both sent in his name, and sent on his errand, to carry on and perfect his undertaking. All the gifts and graces of the Spirit, all the preaching and all the writing of the apostles under the influence of the Spirit,—the tongues, and miracles, were to glorify Christ.

Secondly. The Spirit glorified Christ, by leading his followers into the truth as it is in Jesus, *Eph.* iv. 21. He assures them,

1st. That the Spirit should communicate the things of Christ to them; "he shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you." As in essence he proceedeth from the Son, so in influence and operation he derives from him. He shall take, *ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ*, of "that which is mine." All that the Spirit shews us, that is, applies to us for our instruction and comfort, all he gives us for our strength and quickening, and all he secures and seals to us, did all belong to Christ, and was had and received from him. All was his, for he bought it, and paid dear for it; and therefore he had reason to call it his own; his, for he first received it; it was given him as the head of the church, to be derived from him to all his members. The Spirit came not to erect a new kingdom, but to advance and establish the same kingdom that Christ had erected, to maintain the same interest, and pursue the same design; those, therefore, who pretend to the Spirit, and yet vilify Christ, give themselves the lie, for he came to glorify Christ.

2nd. That herein the things of God should be communicated to us. Lest any should think that the receiving of his would not make them much the richer, he adds, "all things that the Father has are mine;" as God, all that self-existent light, and self-sufficient happiness, which the Father has, he has; as Mediator, all things are delivered to him of the Father, *Mat.* xi. 27; all that grace and truth, which God designed to shew to us, he lodged it in the hands of the Lord Jesus, *Col.* i. 19. Spiritual blessings in heavenly things are given by the Father to the Son for us; and the Son intrusts the Spirit to convey them to us. Some apply it to that which goes just before, "he shall shew you things to come;" and so it is explained by *Rev.* i. 1: God gave it to Christ, and he signified it to John, who wrote what the Spirit said, *Rev.* i. 1.

16 A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. 17 Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? 18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. 19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? 20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. 21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. 22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Our Lord Jesus, for the comfort of his sorrowful disciples, here promiseth that he would visit them again.

First. Observe the intimation he gave them of this comfort he designed them, ver. 16. Here he tells them,

1. That they should now shortly lose the sight of him; "a little while, and ye," that have seen me so long, and still desire to see me, "shall not see me;" and therefore, if they had any good question to ask him, they must ask quickly, for he was now taking his leave of them. Note, It is good to consider how near to a period our seasons of grace are, that we may be quickened to improve them while they are continued. Now our eyes see our teachers, see the days of the Son of man; but perhaps yet a little while, and we shall not see them. They lost the sight of Christ, 1st. At his death; when he withdrew from this world, and never after shewed himself openly in it. The most that death doth to our Christian friends, is to take them out of our sight, not out of being, not out of bliss, not out of all relation to us; only out of sight, and then

xvii. 1. "And now," writes Olshausen, "the Redeemer breathes out all the wishes of his heart for his own in a sublime prayer, usually called the intercessory prayer, because in this the Lord prays for the disciples, and the whole of his future Church that should result from their ministry. The peculiarity of John's Gospel is expressed in this prayer in a kind of concentrated form. The thoughts in it are so natural and simple, that they seem to be free from all difficulty; and yet, with all their perspicuity, they are so unfathomably pro-

found, that every attempt to exhaust them is in vain." Archbishop Thomson speaks of this prayer as "that sublime prayer in which the High-Priest, as it were, consecrates himself the victim; and so doing, prays for those who shall hold fast and keep the benefits of that sacrifice offered for the whole world, whether his disciples already, or to be brought to him hereafter by the ministry of the apostles." Concerning the general structure of the prayer, it has been noted that it has two parts—the first extending to the end of verse 8, in

not out of mind. 2nd. At his ascension; when he withdrew from them who, after his resurrection, had for some time conversed with him; "a cloud received him out of their sight;" and though they looked stedfastly after him, "they saw him no more," *Acts* i. 9, 10; 2 *Kin.* ii. 12; see 2 *Cor.* v. 16.

2 That yet they should speedily recover the sight of him; "again a little while, and ye shall see me;" and therefore ye ought not to sorrow as those that had no hope. His farewell was not a final farewell; they should see him again, 1st. At his resurrection, soon after his death, when he shewed himself alive by many infallible proofs, and this in a very little while, not forty hours; see *Hos.* vi. 2. 2nd. By the pouring out of the Spirit soon after his ascension, which scattered the mists of ignorance and mistakes they were almost lost in, and gave them a much clearer insight into the mysteries of Christ's Gospel, than they had yet had. The Spirit's coming was Christ's visit to his disciples; not a transient but a permanent one, and such a visit as abundantly retrieved the sight of him. 3rd. At his second coming: they saw him again as they removed one by one to him at death; and they shall all see him together at the end of time, when he shall come in the clouds, and every eye shall see him. It might truly be said of this, it was but a little while, and they should see him; for what are the days of time to the days of eternity? 2 *Pet.* iii. 8, 9.

The reason given is, "because I go to the Father;" and therefore, 1st. I must leave you for a time, because my business calls me to the upper world; and you must be content to wait me, for really my business is yours. 2nd. Therefore you shall see me again shortly, for the Father will not detain me to your prejudice. If I go upon your errand, you shall see me again as soon as my business is done, as soon as is convenient. It should seem all this refers rather to his going away at death and return at his resurrection, than his going away at his ascension, and his return at the end of time; for it was his death that was their grief, not his ascension, *Lu.* xxiv. 52; and betwixt his death and resurrection it was indeed a little while. And it may be read, not, "yet a little while,"—it is not *ἐτι μικρόν*, as it is *ch.* xii. 35,—but *μικρόν*, "for a little while ye shall not see me;" namely, the three days of his lying in the grave; and again, "for a little while ye shall see me;" namely, the forty days between his resurrection and ascension. Thus we may say of our ministers and Christian friends—yet a little while, and we shall not see them; either they must leave us, or we leave them; but it is certain we must part shortly, and yet not part for ever: it is but a 'good night' to them, whom we hope to see with joy in the morning.

Secondly. The perplexity of the disciples upon the intimation given them; they were at a loss what to make of it, ver. 17, 18; some of them said softly among themselves,—either some of the weakest, that were least able, or some of the most inquisitive, that were most desirous to understand him, "What is this that he saith to us?" Though Christ had often spoken to this purpose before, yet still they were in the dark; though precept be upon precept, it is in vain, unless God give the understanding. Now see here,

1. The disciples' weakness, in that they could not understand so plain a saying, which Christ had already given him a key to, having told them so often in plain terms that he should be killed, and the third day rise again; yet say they, "We cannot tell what he saith." For, 1st. Sorrow had filled their heart, and made them unapt to receive the impressions of comfort. The darkness of ignorance, and the darkness of melancholy, commonly increase and thicken one another; mistakes cause griefs, and then griefs confirm mistakes. 2nd. The notion of Christ's secular kingdom was so deeply rooted in them that they could make no sense at all of those sayings of his, which they knew not how to reconcile with that notion. When we think the Scripture must be made to agree with the false ideas we have imbibed, no wonder we complain of its difficulty; but when our reasonings are captivated to revelation, the matter becomes easy. 3rd. It should seem that which puzzled them was, the little while. If he must go at last, yet they could not conceive how he should leave them quickly, when his stay hitherto had been so short, and so little while comparatively. Thus it is hard for us to represent to ourselves that change as near, which yet we know will come certainly, and may come suddenly. When we are told, yet a little while, and we must go hence,—yet a little while, and we must give up our account, we know not how to digest it, for we always took the vision to be for a great while to come, *Eze.* xii. 27.

2. Their willingness to be instructed. When they were at a loss about the meaning of Christ's words, they conferred together upon it, and asked help of one another. By mutual converse about Divine things we both borrow others' light and improve our own. Observe how exactly they repeat Christ's words; though we cannot fully solve every difficulty we meet with in Scripture, yet we must not therefore throw it by, but revolve what we cannot explain, and wait till God shall reveal even this unto us.

Thirdly. The farther explication of what Christ had said.

1. See here why Christ explained it, ver. 19; because he "knew they were desirous to ask him," and designed it. Note, The knots we cannot untie, we must bring to Him who alone can give an understanding. Christ knew they were desirous to ask him, but were bashful and ashamed to ask. Note, Christ takes cognizance of pious desires, though they be not as yet offered up—the groanings that cannot be uttered, and even prevents them with the blessings of his goodness. Christ instructed those who he knew were desirous to ask him, though they did not ask; before we call he answers.

Another reason why Christ explained it was because he observed them canvassing this matter among themselves: "Do ye enquire this among yourselves?" well, I will make it easy to you. This intimates to us who they are that Christ will teach, 1st. The humble, that confess their ignorance, for so much their inquiry implied. 2nd. The diligent, that use the means they have. Do ye inquire? you shall be taught: "to him that hath shall be given."

2. See here how he explained it, not by a nice and critical descent upon the words, but by bringing the thing more closely to them. He had told them of not seeing him, and seeing him, and they did not apprehend that; and therefore he explains it by their sorrowing and rejoicing, because we commonly measure things according as they affect us; ver. 20. "Ye shall weep and lament for my departure, but the world shall rejoice in it; and ye shall be sorrowful while I am absent, but upon my return to you your sorrow will be turned into joy." But he saith nothing of the little while, because he saw that perplexed them more than any thing; and it is no matter for our knowing the times and the seasons. Note, Believers have joy or sorrow according as they have or have not a sight of Christ, and the tokens of his presence with them.

What Christ saith here, and ver. 21, 22, of their sorrow and joy,

1st. Is primarily to be understood of the present state and circumstances of the disciples; and so we have,

First. Their grief foretold; "ye shall weep and lament, and ye shall be sorrowful." The sufferings of Christ could not but be the sorrow of his disciples: they wept for him, because they loved him; the pain of our friend is a pain to ourselves; when they slept, it was for sorrow, *Lu.* xxii. 45; they wept for themselves, and their own loss, and the sad apprehensions they had what would become of them when he was gone. It could not but be a grief to lose him for whom they had left their all, and from whom they expected so much. Christ has given notice to his disciples beforehand to expect sorrow, that they may treasure up comforts accordingly.

Secondly. The world's rejoicing at the same time; "but the world shall rejoice." That which is the grief of saints, is the joy of sinners. 1st. They that are strangers to Christ will continue in their carnal mirth, and not at all interest themselves in their sorrows. It is nothing to them that pass by, *Lam.* i. 12. Nay, 2nd. They that are enemies to Christ will therefore rejoice, because they hope they have conquered him, and ruined his interest. When the chief priests had Christ upon the cross, we may suppose they made merry over him, as they that dwell on earth over the slain witnesses, *Rev.* xi. 10. Let it be no surprise to us if we see others triumphing when we are trembling for the ark.

Thirdly. The return of joy to them in due time; "but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." As the joy of the hypocrite, so the sorrow of the true Christian, is but for a moment. "The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord." His resurrection was life from the dead to them; and their sorrow for Christ's sufferings was turned into joy of such a nature as could not be damped and embittered by any sufferings of their own. They were sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing, 2 *Cor.* vi. 10; had sorrowful lives, and yet joyful hearts.

2nd. It is applicable to all the faithful followers of the Lamb, and describes the common case of Christians.

First. Their condition and disposition are both mournful; sorrows are their lot, and seriousness is their temper: they that are acquainted with Christ must, as he was, be acquainted with grief; they weep and lament for that which others make light of, their own sins, and the sins of those about them; they mourn with sufferers that mourn, and mourn for sinners that mourn not for themselves.

Secondly. The world at the same time goes away with all the mirth; they laugh now, and spend their days so jovially, that one would think they neither knew sorrow nor feared it. Carnal mirth and pleasures are surely none of the best things; for then the worst men would not have so large a share of them, and the favourites of Heaven be such strangers to them.

Thirdly. Spiritual mourning will shortly be turned into eternal rejoicing. Gladness is sown for the upright in heart, that sow in tears, and without doubt they shall shortly reap in joy. Their sorrow will not only be followed with joy, but turned into it; for the most precious comforts take rise from pious griefs. This he illustrates by a similitude taken from a woman in travail, to whose sorrows he compares those of his disciples, for their encouragement; for it is the will of Christ that his people should be a comforted people.

1st. Here is the similitude or parable itself, ver. 21: "A woman" we know "when she is in travail hath sorrow;" she is in exquisite pain, "because her hour is come," the hour which nature and Providence have fixed, which she hath expected, and cannot escape; "but as soon as she is delivered of the child" provided she be safely delivered, and the child be, though a Jabez, 1 *Chr.* iv. 9, yet not a Benoni, *Gen.* xxxv. 18, then "she remembers no more the anguish;" her groans and complaints are all over, and the after-pains are easier borne, "for joy that a man is born into the world," *αὐθιγίας*, one of the human race, a child, be it son or daughter, for the word speaks either. Observe,

(1.) The fruit of the curse, in the sorrow and pain of a woman in travail, according to the sentence, *Gen.* iii. 16; "in sorrow shalt thou bring forth." These pains are extreme, the greatest griefs and pains are compared to them, *Ps.* lxxviii. 6; *Isa.* xlii. 8; *xxi.* 3; *Jer.* iv. 31; *vi.* 24; and they are inevitable, 1 *Thes.* v. 3. See what this world is; all its roses are surrounded with thorns; all the children of men are upon this account foolish children, that they are the heaviness of her that bore them from the very first. This comes of sin.

(2.) The fruit of the blessing, in the joy there is for a child born into the world. If God had not preserved the blessing in force after the fall, "be fruitful and multiply" parents could never have looked upon their children with any comfort. But what is the fruit of a blessing is matter of joy. The birth of a living child is, 1st. The parents' joy; it makes them very glad, *Jer.* xx. 15. Though children are certain cares, uncertain comforts, and often prove the greatest crosses, yet it is natural to us to rejoice in their birth. Could we be sure that our children, like John, should be filled with the Holy Ghost, we might indeed, like his parents, have joy and gladness in their birth, *Lu.* i. 14, 15; but when we consider, not only that they are born in sin, but as it is here expressed, they are born into the world, a world of snares, and a vale of tears, we shall see reason to rejoice with trembling, lest it should prove better for them they had never been born. 2nd. It is such joy as makes the anguish not to be remembered, or remembered "as waters that pass away," *Job* xi. 16. *Hoc olim meminisse juvabit.* *Gen.* xli. 51. Now this is very proper to set forth, 1. The sorrows of Christ's disciples in this world; they are like traveling pains, sure and sharp, but not to last long, and in order to a joyful product; they are in pain to be delivered, as the church is described, *Rev.* xii. 2, and the whole creation, *Rom.* viii. 24. And, 2. Their joys after these sorrows, which will wipe away all tears, for the former things are passed away, *Rev.* xxi. 4; when they are born into that blessed world, and reap the fruit of all their services and sorrows, the toil and anguish of this world will be no more remembered, as Christ's were not, when he saw of the travail of his soul abundantly to his satisfaction, *Isa.* liii. 11.

2nd. The reddition of the similitude, ver. 22: "Ye now have sorrow," and are likely to have more; "but I will see you again," and you me, and then all will be well.

(1.) Here again he tells them of their sorrow: "Ye now therefore have sorrow;" therefore, because I am leaving you, as is intimated in the antithesis, "I will see you again." Note, Christ's withdrawals are just cause of grief to his disciples; if he hide his face, they cannot but be troubled. When the sun sets, the sunflower will hang the head. And Christ takes notice of those griefs, has a bottle for the tears, and a book for the sighs, of all gracious mourners.

(2.) He more largely than before assures them of a return of joy, *Ps.* xxx. 5, 11. He himself went through his own griefs, and bore ours, "for the joy that was set before him;" and he would have us encourage ourselves with the same prospect. Three things recommend the joy:

(1st.) The cause of it, "I will see you again;" I will make you a kind and friendly visit, to inquire after you, and minister comfort to you. Note, 1. Christ will graciously return to those that wait for him, though for a small moment he has seemed to forsake them, *Isa.* liv. 7. Men, when they are preferred, will scarce look upon their inferiors; but the exalted Jesus will visit his disciples; they shall not only see him in his glory, but he will see them in their meanness. 2. Christ's returns are returns of joy to all his disciples. When clouded evidences are cleared up, interrupted communion revived, then is the mouth filled with laughter.

(2nd.) The cordialness of it; "your heart shall rejoice." Divine consolations put gladness into the heart. Joy in the heart is solid, and not flashy—secret, and that which a stranger doth not intermeddle with; it is sweet, and gives a good man satisfaction in himself; it is sure, and not easily broken in upon. Christ's disciples should heartily rejoice in his returns, sincerely, and greatly.

(3rd.) The continuance of it; "your joy no man taketh from you." Men will attempt to take their joy from them; they would, if they could, but they shall not prevail. Some understand it of the eternal joy of them that are glorified; they that are entered into the joy of their Lord shall go no more out. Our joys

which Christ speaks of himself, his relation to the Father, and to mankind; the second (verses 9–26) consisting more distinctly of prayer. In this intercession he prays on behalf of his disciples, that they may be kept (verses 11–16); that they may be sanctified (verses 17–19); that a true union may subsist among them (verses 20–23); that they may be brought to final happiness and glory with him (verses 24–26).

xvii. 2. "All flesh:" a term including all mankind: all of whom

are objects of the redeeming work of Christ. The glorification of the Lord was by no means confined to his individuality; on the contrary, humanity was placed before him as the object of his ministry, and his exalted vocation was to bring to it eternal life, the communication of which to mankind is the very thing in which the glorification of the Father through the Son consists. Alford gives this rendering: "That whatsoever thou hast given him, to them he should give eternal life."

on earth we are liable to be robbed of by a thousand accidents, but heavenly joys are everlasting. But I rather understand it of the spiritual joys of those that are sanctified, particularly the apostles' joy in their apostleship. "Thanks be to God," saith St. Paul, in the name of the rest, "who always causeth us to triumph," 2 Cor. ii. 14. A malicious world would have taken it from them. If bonds and punishments, tortures and deaths, would have taken it from them, they had lost it; but when they took every thing else from them, they could not take this: "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;" they could not rob them of their joy, because they could not separate them from the love of Christ—could not rob them of their God, nor of their treasure in heaven.

23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. 24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. 25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. 26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

An answer to their askings is here promised for their farther comfort. Now there are two ways of asking; asking by way of inquiry, that is the asking of the ignorant; and asking by way of request, and that is the asking of the indigent: Christ here speaks of both.

First. By way of inquiry, they should not need to ask; ver. 23, "in that day ye shall ask me nothing;" οὐκ ἐρωτᾶτε οὐδέν, "ye shall ask no questions." You shall have such a clear knowledge of gospel mysteries, by the opening of your understandings, that you shall not need to inquire; as Heb. viii. 11, "they shall not teach;" you shall have more knowledge on a sudden than hitherto you have had by diligent attendance. They had asked some ignorant questions, as ch. ix. 2; some ambitious questions, as Mat. xviii. 1; some distrustful ones, as Mat. xix. 27; some impertinent ones, as ch. xxi. 21; some curious ones, as Acts i. 6; but after the Spirit was poured out, nothing of all this. In the story of the apostles' acts we seldom find them asking questions, as David, Shall I do this? or, shall I go thither? for they were constantly under a Divine conduct. In that weighty case of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, Peter went, nothing doubting, Acts x. 20. Asking questions supposeth us at a loss, or at least at a stand, and the best of us have need to ask questions; but we should aim at such a full assurance of understanding, as that we may not hesitate, but be constantly led in a plain path both of truth and duty.

Now for this he gives a reason, ver. 25, which plainly refers to this promise, that they should not need to ask questions: "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs;" in such a way as you have thought not so plain and intelligible as you could have wished; "but the time cometh when I shall shew you plainly," as plainly as you can desire, "of the Father," so that you shall not need to ask questions.

1. The great thing Christ would lead them into was the knowledge of God; "I will shew you the Father," and bring you acquainted with him. This is that which Christ designs to give, and which all true Christians desire to have. When Christ would speak the greatest favour intended for his disciples, he tells them he would shew them plainly the Father; for what is the happiness of heaven, but immediately and everlastingly to see God? To know God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the greatest mystery for the understanding to please itself with the contemplation of; and to know him as our Father, is the greatest happiness for the will and affections to please themselves with the choice and enjoyment of.

2. Of this he had hitherto spoken to them in proverbs, which are wise sayings, and instructive, but figurative, and resting in generals. Christ had spoken many things very plainly to them, and expounded his parables privately to the disciples; but, 1st. Considering their dullness and unaptness to receive what he said to them, he might be said to speak in proverbs; what he said to them was a book sealed, Isa. xxix. 11. 2nd. Comparing the discoveries he had made to them, in what he had spoken to their ears, with what he would make to them when he would put his Spirit into their hearts, all hitherto had been but proverbs. It would be a pleasing surprise to themselves, and they would think themselves in a new world, when they would reflect upon all their former notions as confused and enigmatical, compared with their present clear and distinct knowledge of Divine things. The ministration of the letter was nothing to that of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 8, 11. 3rd. Confining it to what he had said of the Father, and the counsels of the Father, what he had said was very dark, compared with what was shortly to be revealed, Col. ii. 2.

3. He would speak to them plainly, παρρησίᾳ, "with freedom," of the Father. When the Spirit was poured out, the apostles attained to a much greater knowledge of Divine things than they had before, as appears by the utterance the Spirit gave them, Acts ii. 4. These things, which they had a very confused idea of before they were led into the mystery of and what the Spirit shewed them, Christ is here said to shew them; for as the Father speaks by the Son, so the Son by the Spirit. But this promise will have its full accomplishment in heaven, where we shall see the Father as he is, face to face, not as we do now, through a glass darkly, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; which is matter of comfort to us under the cloud of present darkness, by reason of which we cannot order our speech, but often disorder it. While we are here we have many questions to ask concerning the invisible God, and the invisible world; but in that day we shall see all things clearly, and ask no more questions.

Secondly. He promiseth that, by way of request, they should ask nothing in vain. It is taken for granted by all Christ's disciples give themselves to prayer; he had taught them by his precept and pattern to be much in prayer; that must be their support and comfort when he had left them; their instruction, direction, strength, and success must be fetched in by prayer. Now

1. Here is an express promise of a grant, ver. 23. The preface to this promise is such as makes it inviolably sure, and leaves no room to question it: "Verily, verily, I say unto you;" I pawn my veracity upon it. The promise itself is incomparably rich and sweet; the golden sceptre is here held out to us with

this word, "What is thy petition? and it shall be granted;" for he saith, "whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." We had it before, ch. xiv. 13. What would we more? The promise is as express as we can desire.

1st. We are here taught how to seek; we must ask the Father in Christ's name; we must have an eye to God as a Father, and come as children to him; and to Christ as Mediator, and come as clients. Asking of the Father includes a sense of spiritual wants, and a desire of spiritual blessings, with a conviction that they are to be had from God only; as also a humility of address to him, with a believing confidence in him, as a Father able and ready to help us. Asking in Christ's name includes an acknowledgment of our own unworthiness to receive any favour from God, and a complacency in the method God has taken of keeping up a correspondence with us by his Son, and an entire dependence upon Christ as the Lord our righteousness.

2nd. We are here told how we shall speed; "he will give it you." What more can we wish for, than to have what we want, nay, to have what we will, in conformity to God's will, for the asking? He will give it you from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift. What Christ purchased by the merit of his death, he needed not for himself, but intended it for, and consigned it to, his faithful followers; and having given a valuable consideration for it, which was accepted in full, by this promise he draws a bill as it were upon the treasury in heaven, which we are to present by prayer, and in his name to ask for that which is purchased and promised, according to the true intent of the new covenant. Christ had promised them great illumination by the Spirit, but they must pray for it, and did so, Acts i. 14. God will for this be inquired of. He had promised them perfection hereafter; but what shall they do in the mean time?—they must continue praying. Perfect fruition is reserved for the land of our rest; asking and receiving is the comfort of the land of our pilgrimage.

2. Here is an invitation to them to petition. It is thought sufficient if great men permit addresses; but Christ calls upon us to petition, ver. 24.

1st. He looks back upon their practice hitherto; "hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name." That refers either, *First*. To the matter of their prayers. Ye have asked nothing comparatively, nothing to what ye might have asked, and will ask when the Spirit is poured out. See what a generous benefactor our Lord Jesus is, above all benefactors; he gives liberally, and is so far from upbraiding us with the frequency and largeness of his gifts, that he rather upbraids us with the seldomness and straitness of our requests. You have asked nothing in comparison of what you want, and what I have to give, and have promised to give. We are told to open our mouth wide. Or, *Secondly*. To the name in which they prayed. They prayed many a prayer, but never so expressly in the name of Christ as now he was directing them to do; for he had not as yet offered up that great sacrifice, in the virtue of which our prayers were to be accepted; nor entered upon his intercession for us, the incense whereof was to perfume all our devotions, and so enable us to pray in his name. Hitherto they had cast out devils, and healed diseases in the name of Christ, as a king and prophet; but they could not yet distinctly pray in his name as a priest.

2nd. He looks forward to their practice for the future; "ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Here, *First*. He directs them to ask for all that which they needed, and he had promised. *Secondly*. He assures them that they shall receive. What we ask from a principle of grace, God will graciously give; ye shall receive it. There is something more in that than in the promise, that he will give it. He will not only give it, but give you to receive it, give you the comfort and benefit of it, a heart to eat of it, Eccl. vi. 2. *Thirdly*. That hereby their joy shall be full. Which speaks, 1st. The blessed effect of the prayer of faith, it helps to fill up the joy of faith. Would we have our joy full, as full as it is capable of being in this world, we must be much in prayer. When we are told to rejoice evermore, it follows immediately, "pray without ceasing." See how high we are to aim in prayer; not only at peace, but joy, a fulness of joy. Or, 2nd. The blessed effects of the answer of peace. Ask, and ye shall receive that which will fill your joy. Christ's gifts, through Christ, fill the treasures of the soul; they fill its joys, Pr. viii. 21. Ask for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and ye shall receive it; and whereas other knowledge increaseth sorrow, Eccl. i. 1, the knowledge he gives will increase, will fill your joy.

3. Here are the grounds upon which they might hope to speed, ver. 26, 27; which are summed up in short by the apostle, 1 Jno. ii. 1; "we have an advocate with the Father."

1st. We have an advocate; and as to that, Christ saw cause at present not to insist upon it, only to make the following encouragement shine the brighter. "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you." Suppose I should not tell you that I will intercede for you—should not undertake to solicit every particular cause you have depending there, yet it may be a general ground of comfort that I have settled a correspondence between you and God—have erected a throne of grace, and consecrated for you a new and living way into the holiest. He speaks as if they needed not any farther favours, when he had prevailed for the gift of the Holy Ghost to make intercession within them, as a Spirit of adoption, crying Abba, Father; as if they had no farther need of him to pray for them now; but we shall find he doth more for us than he saith he will. Men's performances often come short of their promises; but Christ's go beyond them.

2nd. We have to do with a Father, which is so great an encouragement that it doth in a manner supersede the other; "for the Father himself loveth you," φιλεῖ ὑμᾶς, he is a friend to you, and you cannot be better befriended. Note, The disciples of Christ are the beloved of God himself. Christ not only turned away God's wrath from us, and brought us into a covenant of peace and reconciliation, but purchased his favour for us, and brought us into a covenant of friendship. Observe what an emphasis is laid upon this, "the Father himself loveth you;" who is perfectly happy in the enjoyment of himself, whose self-love is both his infinite rectitude, and his infinite blessedness, yet he is pleased to love you; the Father himself, whose favour you have forfeited, and whose wrath you have incurred, and with whom you need an advocate, he himself now loves you. Observe,

First. Why the Father loved the disciples of Christ; "because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God;" that is, because ye are my disciples indeed; not as if the love began on their side, but when by his grace he has wrought in us a love to him, he is well pleased with the work of his own hands. See here, 1st. What is the character of Christ's disciples; they love him because they "believe he came out from God," is the only begotten of the Father, and his high commissioner to the world. Note, Faith in Christ works by love to him, Gal. v. 6. If we believe him to be the Son of God, we cannot but love him; as infinitely lovely in himself; and if we believe him to be our Saviour, we cannot but love him as the most kind to us. Observe with what respect Christ is pleased to speak of his disciples' love to him, and how kindly he took it; he speaks of it as that which recommended them to his Father's favour: Ye have loved me, and believed in me, when the world has hated and rejected me; and you shall be distinguished, who have thus distinguished yourselves. 2nd. See what advantage Christ's faithful disciples have, the Father

xviii. 3. "And Jesus Christ," &c. or, "and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." In this verse the means of the communication of eternal life (which is the glorification of the Father in Christ) is set forth.

xviii. 4. These words affirm that all that is needed for the communication of eternal life is accomplished—the last hour of all needed preparation had come. "I glorified thee on earth by finishing the work," &c. So Alford.

xviii. 6. "I have manifested:" or, rather, "I manifested thy name;" the "name" standing for the character.

xviii. 7, 8. "All things whatsoever," &c.: "The revelation which he had to make, in terms distinct from the manifestation of God in his incarnation. This is evident from what follows ('the words which thou gavest me,' &c.). 'Now they know . . . for I have given,' &c. It would seem that the possession of the revelation made by Christ was in itself sufficient to prove its divine origin" (Webster and I

loves them, and that because they love Christ; so well pleased is he in him that he is well pleased with all his friends.

Secondly. What encouragement this gave them in prayer. They need not fear speeding, when they came to one that loved them and wished them well. *1st.* This cautions us against hard thoughts of God. When we are taught in prayer to plead Christ's merit and intercession, it is not as if all the kindness were in Christ only, and in God nothing but wrath and fury; no, the matter is not so, the Father's love and good-will appointed Christ to be the mediator; so that we owe Christ's merit to God's mercy in giving him for us. *2nd.* Let it cherish and confirm in us good thoughts of God. Believers, that love Christ, ought to know that God loves them, and therefore to come boldly to him as children to a loving Father.

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. 29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. 30 Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. 31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? 32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. 33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Two things Christ here comforts his disciples with:

First. With an assurance that though he was leaving the world, he was returning to his Father, from whom he came forth, ver. 28—32; where we have,

1. A plain declaration of Christ's mission from the Father, and his return to him, ver. 28; "I am come forth from the Father, and am come," as you see, "into the world: again, I leave the world," as you will see shortly, "and go to the Father." This is the conclusion of the whole matter. There was nothing he had more inculcated upon them than these two things, whence he came, and whither he went; the Alpha and Omega of the mystery of godliness, 1 Tim. iii. 16, that the Redeemer in his entrance was God manifest in the flesh, and in his exit was received up into glory. These two great truths are here, *1st.* Contracted, and put into a few words. Brief summaries of Christian doctrine are of great use to young beginners. The principles of the oracles of God brought into a little compass in creeds and catechisms have, like the beams of the sun contracted in a burning-glass, conveyed Divine light and heat with a wonderful power. Such we have, *Job* xviii. 28; *Ecc.* xii. 13; 1 Tim. i. 15; *Tit.* ii. 11, 12; 1 *Jno.* v. 11; much in a little. *2nd.* Compared, and set the one over against the other. There is an admirable harmony in Divine truths; they do both corroborate and illustrate one another; Christ's coming and his going do so. Christ had commended his disciples for believing that he came forth from God, ver. 27; and from thence infers the necessity and equity of his returning to God again; which therefore should not seem to them either strange or sad. Note, The due improvement of what we know and own, would help us into the understanding of that which seems difficult and doubtful.

If we ask concerning the Redeemer, whence he came, and whither he went, we are here told, *1st.* That he came forth from the Father, who sanctified and sealed him; and he came into this world, this lower world, this world of mankind, among whom by his incarnation he was pleased to incorporate himself. Here his business lay, and hither he came to attend it. He left his home for this strange country; his palace for this cottage—wonderful condescension! *2nd.* That when he had done his work on earth, he left the world, and went back to his Father at his ascension. He was not forced away, but made it his own act and deed to leave the world, to return to it no more till he comes to put an end to it; yet still he is spiritually present with his church, and will be to the end.

2. The disciples' satisfaction in this declaration; ver. 29, 30, "Lo, now speakest thou plainly." It should seem this one word of Christ did them more good than all the rest, though he had said many things likely enough to fasten upon them. The Spirit, as the wind, blows when and where, and by what word he pleaseth; perhaps a word that has been spoken once, yea twice, and not perceived, yet by being often repeated, takes hold at last. Two things they improved in this saying:

1st. In knowledge: "Lo, now speakest thou plainly." When they were in the dark concerning what he said, they did not say, Lo, now speakest thou obscurely, as blaming him; but now they apprehended his meaning, they give him glory for condescending to their capacity; "Lo, now speakest thou plainly." Divine truths are then most likely to do good when they are spoken plainly, 1 Cor. ii. 4. Observe how they triumphed, as the mathematician did with his *εὐρηκα, εὐρηκα*, when he had lit upon a demonstration he had long been in quest of, "I have found it! I have found it!" Note, When Christ is pleased to speak plainly to our souls, and to bring us with open face to behold the glory, we have reason to rejoice in it.

2nd. In faith: "Now are we sure." Observe, *First.* What was the matter of their faith; "We believe that thou camest forth from God." He had said, ver. 27, that they did believe this; Lord, say they, we do believe it, and we have cause to believe it, and we know that we believe it, and have the comfort of it. *Secondly.* What was the motive of their faith; his omniscience. This proved him a teacher come from God, and more than a prophet, that he knew all things; which they were convinced of by this, that he resolved those doubts which were hid in their hearts, and answered the scruples they had not confessed. Note, Those know Christ best that know him by experience; that can say of his power, It works in me; of his love, that he loved me. And this proves Christ not only to have a Divine mission, but to be a Divine person, that he is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart; therefore the essential, eternal Word, *Heb.* iv. 12, 13. He has made all the churches to know that he searcheth the reins and the heart, *Rev.* ii. 23. This confirmed the faith of the disciples here, as it made the first impression upon the woman of Samaria, that

Christ told her all things that ever she did, *ch.* iv. 29; and upon Nathanael, that Christ saw him under the fig tree, *ch.* i. 49.

These words, "and needest not that any man should ask thee," may speak either, *1st.* Christ's aptness to teach; he prevents us with his instructions, and is communicative of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hid in him, and needs not be importuned; or, *2nd.* His ability to teach. Thou needest not, as other teachers, to have the learners' doubts told thee, for thou knowest without being told what they stumble at. The best of teachers can only answer what is spoken; but Christ can answer what is thought, what we are afraid to ask, as the disciples were, *Mar.* ix. 12; thus he can have compassion, *Heb.* v. 2.

3. The gentle rebuke Christ gave the disciples for their confidence that they now understood him, ver. 31, 32; observing how they triumphed in their attainments, he said, "Do ye now believe?" Do ye now look upon yourselves as advanced and confirmed disciples? Do ye now think you shall make no more blunders? Alas, ye know not your own weakness, you will very shortly be scattered every man to his own, &c. Here we have,

1st. A question designed to put them upon consideration, "Do ye now believe?" *First.* If now, why not sooner? Have ye not heard the same things many a time before? They who after many instructions and invitations are at last persuaded to believe, have reason to be ashamed that they stood it out so long. *Secondly.* If now, why not ever? When an hour of temptation comes, where will your faith be then? As far as there is inconstancy in our faith, there is cause to question the sincerity of it, and to ask, Do we indeed believe?

2nd. A prediction of their fall; that how confident soever they were now of their own stability, in a little time they would all desert him, which was fulfilled that very night, when upon his being seized by a party of the guards, "all his disciples forsook him, and fled," *Mat.* xxvi. 56. They were scattered, *First.* From one another; they shifted every one for his own safety, without any care or concern for each other. Troublous times are times of scattering to Christian societies; in the cloudy and dark day, the flock of Christ is dispersed, *Eze.* xxxix. 12; so Christ as a society is not visible. *Secondly.* Scattered from him; "ye shall leave me alone." They should have been witnesses for him upon his trial, should have ministered to him in his sufferings; if they could have given him no comfort, they might have done him some credit; but they were ashamed of his chain, and afraid of sharing with him in his sufferings, and left him alone. Note, Many a good cause, when it is distressed by its enemies, is deserted by its friends. The disciples had continued with Christ in his other temptations, and yet turned their back upon him now. Those that are tried do not always prove trusty. If we at any time find our friends unkind to us, let us remember that Christ's were so to him.

When they left him alone, they were "scattered, every man to his own;" not to their own possessions or habitations, those were in Galilee; but to their own friends and acquaintance in Jerusalem. Every one went his own way, where he fancied he should be most safe; every man to secure his own; that is, himself and his own life. Note, Those will not dare to suffer for their religion that seek their own things more than the things of Christ, and that look upon the things of this world as their *αἰῶνα*, "their own" property, and in which their happiness is bound up. Now observe here, *1st.* Christ knew before that his disciples would thus desert him in the critical moment, and yet he was still tender of them, and in nothing unkind. We are ready to say of some, If we could have foreseen their ingratitude, we would not have been so prodigal of our favours to them; Christ did foresee theirs, and yet was kind to them. *2nd.* He told them of it, to be a rebuke to their exultation in their present attainments. "Do ye now believe?" be not high-minded, but fear; for you will find your faith so sorely shaken, as to make it questionable whether it be sincere or no in a little time. Note, Even then when we are taking the comfort of our graces, it is good to be minded of our danger from our corruptions. When our faith is strong, our love flaming, and evidences clear, yet we cannot infer from thence that to-morrow shall be as this day. Even then when we have most reason to think we stand, yet we have reason enough to take heed lest we fall. *3rd.* He spoke of it as a thing very near. The hour was already come in a manner, when they would be as shy of him as ever they had been fond of him. Note, A little time may produce great changes both concerning us and in us.

3rd. An assurance of his own comfort notwithstanding; "yet I am not alone." He would not be thought to complain of their deserting him, as if it were any real damage to him; for in their absence he should be sure of his Father's presence, which was *instar omnium*,—"every thing": "the Father is with me." We may consider this, *First.* As a privilege peculiar to the Lord Jesus; the Father was so with him in his sufferings, as he never was with any, for still he was in the bosom of the Father. The Divine nature did not desert the human nature, but supported it, and put an invincible comfort and an inestimable value into his sufferings. The Father had engaged to be with him in his whole undertaking, *Ps.* lxxxix. 21, &c.; and to preserve him, *Isa.* xlix. 8; and this emboldened him, *Isa.* l. 7; then when he complained of his Father's forsaking him, yet he called him "my God," and presently after was so well assured of his favourable presence with him, as to commit his spirit into his hand. This he had comforted himself with all along, *ch.* viii. 29; "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone," and especially now at last. This assists our faith in the acceptableness of Christ's satisfaction; no doubt the Father was well pleased in him, for he went along with him in his undertaking from first to last. *Secondly.* As a privilege common to all believers by virtue of their union with Christ; when they are alone they are not alone, but the Father is with them. *1st.* When solitude is their choice, when they are alone, as Isaac in the field; Nathanael under the fig tree; Peter upon the housetop, meditating and praying; the Father is with them. They that converse with God in solitude, are never less alone than when alone. A good God, and a good heart, are good company at any time. *2nd.* When solitude is their affliction, their enemies lay them alone, and their friends leave them so; their company, like Job's, is made desolate; yet they are not so much alone as they are thought to be; the Father is with them, as he was with Joseph in his bonds, and with John in his banishment. In their greatest troubles they are as one whom his Father pities, as one whom his mother comforts; and while we have God's favourable presence with us, we are happy, and ought to be easy, though all the world forsake us; *non Deo tribuimus justum honorem; nisi solus ipse nobis sufficiat*.—"We do not render due honour to God, unless we deem him alone all-sufficient."—*Calvin*.

Secondly. He comforts them with a promise of peace in him, by virtue of his victory over the world, whatever troubles they might meet with in it; ver. 33, "These things I have spoken, that in me ye might have peace;" and if ye have it not in me, ye will not have it at all, for "in the world ye shall have tribulation;" you must expect no other, and yet may cheer up yourselves, for "I have overcome the world." Observe,

1. The end Christ aimed at in preaching this farewell sermon to his disciples, that in him they might have peace. He did not hereby intend to give them a full view of that doctrine which they were shortly to be made masters of by the pouring out of the Spirit; but only to satisfy them for the present that his departure from them was really for the best; or, we may take it more generally: Christ had said all this to them, that by enjoying him they might have

Wilkinson). (Compare chap. vii. 17.) "They have received them, and have known surely:" to a certainty.

xvii. 9. "I pray;" or, rather, "I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world."

xvii. 11. "Holy Father:" Christ always in prayer used the term Father. The epithet "holy" is appropriate in this place, where he prays that his followers may be "kept." "Through thine own name:" much better is the rendering, "in thy name." This was the

element, as it were, in which he desired them to be kept, all their heart-feeling and all their life-power moving in this sphere.

xvii. 12. "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name:" his object is to make them understand that God had kept them always; that his keeping had been God's keeping, and that now they were to look for and expect God's keeping, even though deprived of their Master's personal, visible presence with them (Webster and Wilkinson). Two different words are rendered

the best enjoyment of themselves. Note, 1st. It is the will of Christ that his disciples should have peace within, whatever their troubles may be without. 2nd. Peace in Christ is the only true peace; and in him alone believers have it, "for this man shall be the peace," *Mic. v. 5*; through him we have peace with God, and so in him we have peace in our own minds. 3rd. The word of Christ aims at this, that in him we may have peace; peace is the fruit of the lips, of his lips, *Isa. lvii. 19*.

2. The entertainment they were likely to meet with in the world. You shall not have outward peace, never expect it; though they were sent to proclaim peace on earth, good-will towards men, they must expect troubles on earth, and ill-will from men. Note, It has been the lot of Christ's disciples to have more or less tribulation in this world. Men persecute them because they are so good, and God corrects them because they are no better; men design to cut them off from the earth, and God designs by affliction to make them meet for heaven, and so between both they shall have tribulation.

3. The encouragement Christ gives them with reference hereunto; "but be of good cheer," *supra*, not only be of good comfort, but be of good courage; have a good heart on it, and all shall be well. Note, In the midst of the tribulations of this world, it is the duty and interest of Christ's disciples to be of good cheer, to keep up their delight in God whatever is pressing, and their hope in God whatever is threatening; as sorrowful indeed in compliance with the temper of the climate; and yet always rejoicing, always cheerful, *2 Cor. vi. 10*; even in tribulation, *Rom. v. 3*.

4. The ground of that encouragement; "I have overcome the world." Christ's victory is a Christian's triumph. Christ overcame the prince of this world, disarmed him, and cast him out, and still treads Satan under our feet. He overcame the children of this world by the conversion of many to the faith and obedience of his Gospel, making them the children of his kingdom. When he sends his disciples to preach the Gospel to all the world, "be of good cheer," saith he, "I have overcome the world," as far as I have gone, and so shall you; though you have tribulation in the world, yet you shall gain your point, and captivate the world, *Rev. vi. 2*. He overcame the wicked world; for many a time he put his enemies to silence, to shame, and, be you of good cheer, for the Spirit will enable you to do so too. He overcame the evil things of the world, by submitting to them; he endured the cross, despised it, and the shame of it; and the good things of it, by being wholly dead to them; its honours had no beauty in his eye, its pleasures no charms. Never was there such a conqueror of the world as Christ was; and we ought to be encouraged by it, 1st. Because Christ has overcome the world before us; so that we may look upon it as a conquered enemy, that has many a time been baffled; nay, 2nd. He has conquered it for us, as the Captain of our salvation. We are interested in his victory; by his cross the world is crucified to us, which speaks it completely conquered and put into our possession; All is yours, even the world. Christ having overcome the world, believers have nothing to do but to pursue their victory, and divide the spoil; and this we do by faith, *1 Jno. v. 4*; "we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us."

CHAPTER XVII.

This chapter is a prayer; it is the Lord's prayer, the Lord Christ's prayer. There was one Lord's prayer, which he taught us to pray, and did not pray himself, for he needed not to pray for the forgiveness of sin; but this was properly and peculiarly his, and suited him only as Mediator, and is a sampler of his intercession, and yet is of use to us both for instruction and encouragement in prayer. Observe, 1. The circumstances of the prayer, ver. 1. 2. The prayer itself: 1. He prays for himself, ver. 1-5. 2. He prays for those that are his. And there see, 1st. The general pleas with which he introduceth his petitions for them, ver. 6-10. 2nd. The particular petitions he puts up for them: First, That they might be kept, ver. 11-16. Secondly, That they might be sanctified, ver. 17-19. Thirdly, That they might be united, ver. 11, and ver. 20-23. Fourthly, That they might be glorified, ver. 24-26.



THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. 4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Here is, First. The circumstances of this prayer, ver. 1. Many a solemn prayer Christ made in the days of his flesh; sometimes he continued all night in prayer; but none of his prayers are recorded so fully as this. Observe,

1. The time when he prayed this prayer; when he had spoken these words, had given the foregoing farewell to his disciples, he prayed this prayer, in their hearing; so that, 1st. It was a prayer after sermon; when he had spoken from God to them, he turned to speak to God for them. Note, Those we preach to we must pray for. He that was to prophesy upon the dry bones was also to pray, "Come, O breath, and breathe upon them." And the word preached should be prayed over, for God gives the increase. 2nd. It was a prayer after sacrament; after Christ and his disciples had eaten the passover and the Lord's supper together, and he had given them a suitable exhortation, he closed the solemnity with this prayer, that God would preserve the good impressions or the ordinance upon them. 3rd. It was a family prayer. Christ's disciples were his family; and to set a good example before masters of families, he not

only as a son of Abraham taught his household, *Gen. xviii. 19*, but as a son of David blessed his household, *2 Sam. vi. 20*, prayed for them, and with them. 4th. It was a parting prayer; when we and our friends are parting it is good to part with prayer, *Acts xx. 36*. Christ was parting by death, and that parting should be sanctified and sweetened by prayer. Dying Jacob blessed the twelve patriarchs; dying Moses the twelve tribes; and so here, dying Jesus the twelve apostles. 5th. It was a prayer that was a preface to his sacrifice he was now about to offer on earth; specifying the favours and blessings designed to be purchased by the merit of his death, for those that were his; like a deed leading the uses of a fine, and directing to what intents and purposes it shall be levied. Christ prayed then, as a priest now offering sacrifice, in the virtue of which all prayers were to be made. 6th. It was a prayer that was a specimen of his intercession, which he ever lives to make for us within the veil. Not that in his exalted state he addresseth himself to his Father by way of humble petition, as when he was on earth; no, his intercession in heaven is a presenting of his merit to his Father, with a suing out of the benefit of it for all his chosen ones.

2. The outward expression of fervent desire which he used in this prayer; he "lifted up his eyes to heaven," as before, *ch. xi. 41*. Not that Christ needed thus to engage his own attention, but he was pleased thus to sanctify this gesture to those that use it, and justify it against those that ridicule it. It is significant of the lifting up of the soul to God in prayer, *Ps. xxv. 1*. *Sursum corda*, was anciently used as a call to prayer; "Up with your hearts," up to heaven. Thither we must direct our desires in prayer, and thence we must expect to receive the good things we pray for.

Secondly, The first part of the prayer itself, in which Christ prays for himself. Observe here,

1. He prays to God as a Father: he "lifted up his eyes, and said, Father." Note, As prayer is to be made to God only, so it is our duty in prayer to eye him as a Father, and to call him our Father. All that have the spirit of adoption are taught to cry, "Abba, Father," *Rom. viii. 15*; *Gal. iv. 6*. If God be our Father, we have liberty of access to him, ground of confidence in him, and great expectations from him. Christ calls him here, "holly Father," ver. 11, and "righteous Father," ver. 25. For it will be of great use to us in prayer, both for direction and for encouragement, to call God as we hope to find him.

2. He prayed for himself first: though Christ as God was prayed to, Christ as man prayed. Thus "it became him to fulfil all righteousness." It was said to him, as it is said to us, "Ask, and I will give thee," *Ps. ii. 8*. What he had purchased he must ask for; and shall we expect to have what we have never merited, but have a thousand times forfeited, unless we pray for it? This puts an honour upon prayer, that it was the messenger Christ sent on his errands, the way in which even he corresponded with Heaven. It likewise gives great encouragement to praying people, and cause to hope that even the prayer of the destitute shall not be despised. Time was when he that is Advocate for us had a cause of his own to solicit, a great cause, on the success of which depended all his honour as Mediator; and this he was to solicit in the same method that is prescribed to us, by prayers and supplications, *Heb. v. 7*; so that he knows the heart of a petitioner, *Ex. xxiii. 9*; he knows the way. Now observe, 1st. Christ began with prayer for himself, and afterwards prayed for his disciples: this charity must begin at home, though it must not end there. We must love and pray for our neighbour as ourselves, and therefore must in a right manner love and pray for ourselves first. 2nd. He was much shorter in his prayer for himself than in his prayer for his disciples. Our prayers for the church must not be crowded into a corner of our prayers; in making supplication for all saints we have room enough to enlarge, and should not straiten ourselves.

Now here are two petitions which Christ puts up for himself, and they two are one—that he might be glorified. But this one petition "Glorify thou me," is twice put up because it has a double reference. First, To the prosecution of his undertaking farther; "Glorify me, that I may glorify thee," in doing what is agreed upon to be yet done, ver. 1-3; and, Secondly, To the performance of his undertaking hitherto; "Glorify me, for I have glorified thee."

1. Christ here prays to be glorified in order to his glorifying God; ver. 1, "Glorify thy Son," according to thy promise, "that thy Son may glorify thee," according to his undertaking. Here observe,

1. What he prays for; that he might be glorified in this world. "The hour is come" when all the powers of darkness will continue to vilify thy Son; now, Father, glorify him. The Father glorified the Son upon earth; 1st. Even in his sufferings, by the signs and wonders which attended them; when they that came to take him were thunderstruck with a word; when Judas confessed him innocent, and sealed that confession with his own guilty blood; when the judge's wife asleep, and the judge himself awake, pronounced him righteous; when the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple rent; then the Father not only justified, but glorified the Son. Nay, 2nd. Even by his sufferings; when he was crucified, he was magnified, he was glorified, *ch. xiii. 31*. It was in his cross that he conquered Satan and death: his thorns were a crown; and Pilate in the inscription over his head, wrote more than he thought. But, 3rd. Much more after his sufferings; the Father glorified the Son when he raised him from the dead, shewed him openly to chosen witnesses, and poured out the Spirit to support and plead his cause, and set up his kingdom among men, then he glorified him. This he here prays for, and insists upon.

2. What he pleads to enforce this request. 1st. He pleads relation; "Glorify thy Son," thy Son as God, as Mediator. It is in consideration of this that the heathen are given him for his inheritance; for "thou art my Son," *Ps. ii. 7, 8*. The devil had tempted him to renounce his sonship with an offer of the kingdoms of this world, but he rejected it with disdain, and depended upon his Father for his preferment, and here applies himself to him for it. Note, They that have received the adoption of sons may in faith pray for the inheritance of sons; if sanctified, then glorified "Father, glorify thy Son."

2nd. He pleads the time; "the hour is come;" the season prefixed to an hour. The hour of Christ's passion was determined in the counsel of God; he had often said his hour was not yet come; but now it was come, and he knew it. "Man knows not his time," *Ecc. ix. 12*; but the Son of man did. He calls it this hour, *ch. xii. 27*, and here the hour, (compare *Mar. xiv. 35*; *ch. xvi. 21*) for the hour of the Redeemer's death, which was also the hour of the Redeemer's birth, was the most signal and remarkable hour, and without doubt the most critical that ever was since the clock of time was first set agoing. Never was there such an hour as that, nor did ever any hour challenge such expectations of it before, nor such reflections upon it after.

First, "The hour is come," in the midst of which I need to be owned; now is the hour, when this grand affair is come to a crisis; after many a skirmish, the decisive battle between heaven and hell is now to be fought; and that great cause, in which God's honour and man's happiness are together embarked, must now be either won or lost for ever. The two champions, David and Goliath, Michael and the dragon, are now entering the lists; the trumpet sounds for an engagement that will be irretrievably fatal either to the one or the other. Now "glorify thy Son," now give him victory over principalities

"kept" in this verse; the second is better rendered "guarded." Alford divides the clauses differently from the Authorised Version. He connects "guarded" with the first clause; "I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me, and guarded them; and not one of them perished," &c.

xvii. 14. "I have given them thy word;" i.e., committed to them "the ministry of the Gospel," or made them pillars of that new spiritual community which he had come to establish.

xvii. 15. "From the evil;" some have thought that as the definite article is used, the prince of this world is alluded to; but it seems more natural to give a wider meaning, and understand that Christ prays that his people may be kept from any real contamination of evil—from the evil which might be derived from all things, because of sin in man.

xvii. 17. "Sanctify them through thy truth;" here, as in verse 11, "through" is better rendered "in." "Sanctify them in thy

and powers; now let the bruising of his heel be the breaking of the serpent's head; now let thy Son be so upheld as not to fail or be discouraged. When Joshua went forth conquering and to conquer, it is said the Lord magnified Joshua; so he glorified his Son, when he made the cross his triumphant chariot.

Secondly. "The hour is come," in the close of which I expect to be crowned; the hour is come when I am to be glorified, and set at thy right hand. Betwixt him and that glory there intervened a bloody scene of suffering; but being short, he speaks as if he made little of it; "the hour is come that I must be glorified,"—and he did not expect it till then. Good Christians in a trying hour, particularly a dying hour, may thus plead, "Now the hour is come, stand by me, appear for me, now or never." Now the earthly tabernacle is to be dissolved; the hour is come that I should be glorified, 2 Cor. v. 1.

3rd. He pleads the Father's own interest and concern herein; "that thy Son also may glorify thee." For he had consecrated his whole undertaking to his Father's honour. He desired to be carried triumphantly through his sufferings to his glory, that he might glorify the Father two ways: *First.* By the death of the cross, which he was now to suffer; "Father, glorify thy name," expressed the great intention of his sufferings, which was to retrieve his Father's injured honour among men; and by his satisfaction to come up to the glory of God, which man by his sin came short of. Father, own me in my sufferings, that I may honour thee by them. *Secondly.* By the doctrine of the cross, which was now shortly to be published to the world, by which God's kingdom was to be re-established among men. He prays that his Father would so grace his sufferings, and crown them, as not only to take off the offence of the cross, but to make it to them that are saved "the wisdom of God, and the power of God." If God had not glorified Christ crucified, by raising him from the dead, his whole undertaking had been crushed; therefore "glorify me, that I may glorify thee."

Now hereby he hath taught us, *1st.* What to eye and aim at in our prayers, in all our designs and desires, and that is the honour of God. It being our chief end to glorify God, other things must be sought and attended to in subordination and subserviency to the Lord; do this and the other for thy servant, that thy servant may glorify thee. 'Give me health, that I may glorify thee with my body; success, that I may glorify thee with my estate,' &c. "Hallowed be thy name," must be our first petition, which must fix our end in all our other petitions, 1 Pet. iv. 11. *2nd.* He hath taught us what to expect and hope for. If we sincerely set ourselves to glorify our Father, he will not be wanting to do that for us which is requisite to put us into a capacity of glorifying him, to give us the grace he knows sufficient, and the opportunity he sees convenient. But if we secretly honour ourselves more than him, it is just with him to leave us in the hand of our own counsels; and then, instead of honouring ourselves, we shall shame ourselves.

4th. He pleads his commission, ver. 2, 3; he desires to glorify his Father in conformity to, and in pursuance of, the commission given him: "Glorify thy Son, as thou hast given him power," glorify him in the execution of the powers thou hast given him; so it is connected with the petition; or, "that thy Son may glorify thee," according to the power given him; so it is connected with the plea. Now see here the power of the Mediator.

First. The original of his power. "Thou hast given him power," he has it from God, to whom all power belongs. Man in his fallen state must, in order to his recovery, be taken under a new model of government, which could not be erected but by a special commission, under the broad seal of Heaven, directed to the undertaker of that glorious work, and constituting him sole arbitrator of the grand difference that was, and sole guarantee of the grand alliance that was to be, between God and man; so as to this office, he received his power, which was to be executed in a way distinct from his power and government as Creator. Note, The church's king is no usurper, as the prince of this world is. Christ's right to rule is incontestable.

Secondly. The extent of his power. He has "power over all flesh." *1st.* Over all mankind. He has power in and over the world of spirits; the powers of the upper and unseen world are subject to him, 1 Pet. iii. 22; but being now mediating between God and man, he here pleads his power over all flesh. They were men whom he was to subdue and save; out of that race he had a remnant given him, and therefore all that rank of beings was put under his feet. *2nd.* Over mankind considered as corrupt and fallen, for so he is called flesh, Gen. vi. 3. If he had not in this sense been flesh, he had not needed a Redeemer. Over this sinful race the Lord Jesus has all power; and all judgment concerning them is committed to him. Power to bind or loose, acquit or condemn; "power on earth to forgive sins," or not. Christ, as Mediator, has the government of the whole world put into his hand; he is king of nations, has power even over those that know him not, nor obey his Gospel. Whom he doth not rule he overrules, Ps. xxii. 25, and lxxii. 8; Mat. xxviii. 18; Jno. v. 35.

Thirdly. The grand intention and design of this power; "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Here is the mystery of our salvation laid open. *1st.* Here is the Father making over the elect to the Redeemer; and giving them to him as his charge and trust, and the crown and recompence of his undertaking. He has a sovereign power over all the fallen race, but a peculiar interest in the chosen remnant; all things were put under his feet, but they were delivered into his hand. *2nd.* Here is the Son undertaking to secure the happiness of those that were given him; that he should give eternal life to them. See how great the authority of the Redeemer is; he hath lives and crowns to give,—eternal lives that never die, immortal crowns that never fade. Now consider how great the Lord Jesus is, who hath such pre-ferents in his gift; and how gracious he is in giving eternal life to those whom he undertakes to save. 1. He sanctifies them in this world, gives them the spiritual life, which is eternal life in the bud and embryo, ch. iv. 14. Grace in the soul is heaven in that soul. 2. He will glorify them in the other world, their happiness shall be completed in the vision and fruition of God: and this only is mentioned, because it supposeth all the other parts of his undertaking, teaching them, satisfying for them, sanctifying them, and preparing them for that eternal life; and indeed all the other were in order to this. We are called to his kingdom and glory, and begotten to the inheritance; what is last in execution was first in intention, and that is eternal life. *3rd.* Here is the subserviency of the Redeemer's universal dominion to this. He hath power over all flesh, on purpose that he might give eternal life to the select number. Note, Christ's dominion over the children of men is in order to the salvation of the children of God: all things are for their sakes, 2 Cor. iv. 15. All Christ's laws, ordinances, and promises, which are given to all, are designed effectually to convey spiritual life, and secure eternal life, to all that were given to Christ; he is "head over all things to the church." The administration of the kingdoms of providence and grace are put into the same hand, that all things may be made to concur for good to the called.

Fourthly. Here is a farther explication of this grand design; ver. 3. "This is life eternal," which I am empowered and have undertaken to give—this is the nature of it, and this the way leading to it—"to know thee the only true God," and all the discoveries and principles of natural religion, "and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," as Mediator, and the doctrines and laws of that holy religion which he instituted for the recovery of man out of his lapsed state.

truth," or "in the truth." The truth God has revealed is the element or medium of sanctification. This petition is a step in advance of that offered in verse 15. There the prayer was negative, "Keep them from the evil;" here it is positive, "Give them holiness in thy truth."

xvii. 19. "For their sakes I sanctify myself:" "The whole self-sacrificing work of the disciples here appears as a mere result of the offering of Christ; since the language, 'For their sakes I sanctify

Here is, *1st.* The great end which the Christian religion sets before us, and that is eternal life; the happiness of an immortal soul in the vision and fruition of an eternal God. This he was to reveal to all, and secure to all that were given him. By the Gospel, life and immortality are brought to light, are brought to hand, a life which transcends this as much in excellency as it doth in duration. *2nd.* The sure way of attaining this blessed end, which is by the right knowledge of God and Jesus Christ; "this is life eternal, to know thee," which may be taken two ways: 1. Life eternal lies in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ; the present principle of this life is the believing knowledge of God and Christ. The future perfection of that life will be the intuitive knowledge of God and Christ. They that are brought into union with Christ, and live a life of communion with God in Christ, know in some measure by experience what eternal life is; and will say, If this be heaven, heaven is sweet: see Ps. xvii. 15. 2. The knowledge of God and Christ leads to life eternal; this is the way in which Christ gives eternal life, by the knowledge of him that hath called us, 2 Pet. i. 3; and this is the way in which we come to receive it.

The Christian religion shews us the way to heaven.

1. By directing us to God as the author and felicity of our being; for Christ died to bring us to God, to know him as our Creator, and to love him, obey him, submit to him, and trust in him as our owner, ruler, and benefactor; to devote ourselves to him as our Sovereign Lord, depend upon him as our chief good, and to direct all to his praise as our highest end: this is life eternal. God is here called "the only true God," to distinguish him from the false gods of the heathen, which were counterfeits and pretenders; not from the person of the Son, of whom it is expressly said, that he is the true God, and eternal life, 1 Jno. v. 20, and who in this text is proposed as the object of the same religious regard with the Father. It is certain there is but one only living and true God; and the God we adore is he. He is the true God, and not a mere name or notion, the only true God; and all that ever set up as rivals with him are vanity and a lie: the service of him is the only true religion.

2. By directing us to Jesus Christ as the Mediator between God and man; "Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." If man had continued innocent, the knowledge of the only true God would have been life eternal to him; but now he is fallen, there must be something more; now we are under guilt, to know God is to know him as a righteous judge, whose curse we are under; and nothing more killing than to know this; we are therefore concerned to know Christ as our Redeemer, by whom alone we can now have access to God. It is life eternal to believe in Christ; and this he has undertaken to give to as many as were given him; see ch. vi. 39, 40. They that are acquainted with God and Christ are already in the suburbs of life eternal.

II. Christ here prays to be glorified, in consideration of his having glorified the Father hitherto, ver. 4, 5. The meaning of the former petition was, Glorify me in this world; the meaning of the latter is, Glorify me in the other world. "I have glorified thee on the earth;" and now "glorify thou me." Observe here,

1. With what comfort Christ reflects on the life he had lived on earth. "I have glorified thee, and finished my work; it is as good as finished." He doth not complain of the poverty and disgrace he had lived in, what a weary life he had had upon earth, as ever any man of sorrows had; he overlooks this, and pleaseth himself in reviewing the service he had done his Father, and the progress he had made in his undertaking. And this is here recorded,

1st. For the honour of Christ; that his life upon earth did in all respects fully answer the end of his coming into the world. Note, *First.* Our Lord Jesus had work given him to do by him that sent him; he came not into the world to live at ease, but to go about doing good, and to fulfil all righteousness. His Father gave him his work, his work in the vineyard; both appointed him to it, and assisted him in it. *Secondly.* The work that was given him to do he finished; though he had not as yet gone through the last part of his undertaking, yet he was so near "being made perfect through sufferings," that he might say he had finished it; it was as good as done, he was giving it its finishing strokes, *ἐτελειῶσα*,—"I have finished." The word signifies his performing every part of his undertaking in the most complete and perfect manner. *Thirdly.* Herein he glorified his Father; he pleased him, he praised him. It is the glory of God that his work is perfect, and the same is the glory of the Redeemer. What he is the author of, he will be the finisher of. It was a strange way for the Son to glorify the Father, by abasing himself; that looked more likely to disparage him; yet it was contrived that so he should glorify him; "I have glorified thee on the earth," that is, in such a way as men on earth could bear the manifestation of thy glory.

2nd. It is recorded for example to all, that we may follow his example. *First.* We must make it our business to do the work God has appointed us to do; according as our capacity, and the sphere of our activity is, we must each of us do all the good we can in this world. *Secondly.* We must aim at the glory of God in all. We must glorify him on the earth, which he has given unto the children of men, demanding only this quit-rent; on the earth, where we are in a state of probation and preparation for eternity. *Thirdly.* We must persevere herein to the end of our days; we must not sit down till we have finished our work, and accomplished as a hireling our day.

3rd. It is recorded for encouragement to all those that rest upon him. If he have finished the work that was given him to do, then he is a complete Saviour, and did not do his work by the halves; and he that finished his work for us, will finish it in us to the day of Christ.

2. See with what confidence he expects the joy set before him; ver. 5. "Now, O Father, glorify thou me." It is what he depends upon, and cannot be denied him.

1st. See here what he prayed for, "glorify thou me," as before, ver. 1. All repetitions in prayer are not to be counted vain repetitions. Christ prayed, saying the same words, Mat. xxvi. 44, and yet prayed more earnestly. What his Father had promised him, and he was assured of, yet he must pray for. Promises are not designed to supersede prayers, but to be the guide of our desires, and the ground of our hopes. Christ's being glorified, includes all the honours, powers, and joys of his exalted state. See how it is described.

First. It is a glory with God; not only glorify my name on earth, but "glorify me with thine own self." It was paradise, it was heaven, to be with his Father, as Pr. viii. 30; Dan. vii. 13; Heb. viii. 1. Note, The brightest glories of the exalted Redeemer were to be displayed within the veil, where the Father manifests his glory. The praises of the upper world are offered up to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb in conjunction, Rev. v. 13; and the prayers of the lower world draw out grace and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ in conjunction, and thus the Father has glorified him with himself.

Secondly. It is the glory he had with God before the world was. By this it appears, *1st.* That Jesus Christ, as God, had a being before the world was, co-eternal with the Father; our religion acquaints us with One that was before all things, and by whom all things consist. *2nd.* That his glory with the Father is from everlasting, as well as his existence with the Father; for he was from eternity, the brightness of his Father's glory, Heb. i. 3. As God's making the world only declared his glory, but made no real additions to it, so Christ undertook the work of redemption, not because he needed glory, for he had

myself,' &c., must be interpreted as meaning, 'I consecrate myself (for you and for all) that ye also may then be enabled (by my power) to consecrate yourselves'" (Olshausen).

xvii. 20. "Which shall believe;" all the ancient MSS. have the present tense, "which believe." The future is as the present to Him with whom is neither past nor future.

xvii. 21. "That they also may be one in us;" several of the ancient MSS. omit the "one" in this passage—"that they may be

a glory with the Father before the world, but because we needed glory. 3rd. That Jesus Christ in his state of humiliation, divested himself of this glory, and drew a veil over it; though he was still God, yet he was God manifested in the flesh, not in his glory. He laid down this glory for a time, as a pawn or pledge that he would go through with his undertaking, according to the appointment of his Father. 4th. That in his exalted state he resumed this glory, and clad himself again with his former robes of light. Having performed his undertaking, he did as it were *repossere pignus*,—"take up his pawn," by this demand, "glorify thou me." He prays that even his human nature might be advanced to the highest honour it was capable of; his body a glorious body; and that the glory of the Godhead might now be manifested in the person of the Mediator, Immanuel, God-man. He doth not pray to be glorified with the princes and great men of the earth; no, he that knew both worlds, and might choose which he would have his preferment in, chose it in the glory of the other world, as far exceeding all the glory of this. He had despised the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, when Satan offered them to him, and therefore might the more boldly claim the glories of the other world. Let the same mind be in us;" Lord, give the glories of this world to whom thou wilt give them, but let me have my portion of glory in the world to come. It is no matter, though I be vilified with men; but, "Father, glorify thou me with thine own self."

2nd. See here what he pleaded; "I have glorified thee;" and now, in consideration thereof, "glorify thou me." For, *First*. There was an equity in it, and an admirable becomingness, that if God were glorified in him, he should glorify him in himself, as he had observed, *ch. xiii. 32*. Such an infinite value there was in what Christ did to glorify his Father, that he properly merited all the glories of his exalted state. If the Father were a gainer in his glory by the Son's humiliation, it was fit the Son should be no loser by it, at long run, in his glory. *Secondly*. It was according to the covenant between them, that if the Son would make his soul an offering for sin, he should divide the spoil with the strong, *Isa. liii. 10, 11*, and the kingdom should be his; and this he had an eye to, and depended upon, in his sufferings; it was for the joy set before him that he endured the cross; and now, in his exalted state, he still expects the completing of his exaltation, because he perfected his undertaking, *Heb. x. 13*. *Thirdly*. It was the most proper evidence of his Father's accepting and approving the work he had finished. By the glorifying of Christ we are satisfied that God was satisfied, and therein a real demonstration was given, that his Father was well pleased in him as his beloved Son. *Fourthly*. Thus we must be taught, that those, and those only, who glorify God on earth, and persevere in the work God hath given them to do, shall be glorified with the Father, when they must be no more in this world. Not that we can merit that glory as Christ did; but our glorifying God is required as an evidence of our interest in Christ, through whom eternal life is God's free gift.

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. 7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. 8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. 9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. 10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

Christ having prayed for himself, comes next to pray for those that are his; and he knew them by name, though he did not here name them. Now observe here,

First. Whom he did not pray for; ver. 9, "I pray not for the world." Note, There is a world of people that Jesus did not pray for. It is not meant of the world of mankind in general; he prays for that here, ver. 21, "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Nor is it meant of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews; but the world is here opposed to the elect, who are given to Christ out of the world. Take the world for a heap of unwinnowed corn in the floor, and God loves it, Christ prays for it, and dies for it, for a blessing is in it; but the Lord, perfectly knowing them that are his, he eyes particularly them that were given him out of the world, extracts them; and then, take the world for the remaining heap of rejected, worthless chaff, and Christ neither prays for it, nor dies for it, but abandons it, and the wind drives it away. These are called the world, because they are governed by the spirit of this world, and have their portion in it. For these Christ doth not pray; not but that there are some things which he intercedes with God for on their behalf, as the dresser for the reprieve of the barren tree; but he doth not pray for them in this prayer; they have no part or lot in the blessings here prayed for. He doth not say, "I pray against the world," as Elias made intercession against Israel, but, "I pray not for them; I pass them by, and leave them to themselves;" they are not written in the Lamb's book of life, and therefore not in the breastplate of the great High Priest. And miserable is the condition of such, as of those whom the prophet was forbidden to pray for, and more so, *Jer. vii. 16*. We that know not who are chosen, and who are past by, must pray for all men, *1 Tim. ii. 1, 4*; while there is life there is hope, and room for prayer: see *1 Sam. xii. 23*.

Secondly. Whom he did pray for; not for angels, but for the children of men. 1. He prays for those that were given him, meaning primarily the disciples, that had attended him in the regeneration; but it is doubtless to be extended farther, to all that come under the same character, who receive and believe the words of Christ, ver. 6, 8. 2. He prays for all that should believe on him, ver. 20. And it is not only the petitions that follow, but those also which went before, that must be construed to extend to all believers, in every place and every age; for he has a concern for them all, and calls things that are not as though they were.

Thirdly. What encouragement he had to pray for them, and what are the general pleas with which he introduceth his petitions for them, and recommends them to his Father's favour: they are five:

in us." The unity here prayed for is a spiritual unity, not a formal one. Formal differences serve to make the inner unity more manifest. "The Spirit of Christ is that uniting element which destroys isolation, and blends hearts and souls in one; by this alone harmony of will becomes possible. All attempts to bring it about in any other way—by force, instruction, or persuasion—have to this day proved abortive, and they always will be so in time to come" (Olshausen).

xvii. 24. "I will that they also;" according to the majority of

1. *The charge he had received concerning them*: "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me," ver. 6; and again, ver. 7, thou hast given them me, and they are of thee; and again, ver. 9, "them which thou hast given me." Father, those I am now praying for are such as thou hast intrusted me with; and what I have to say for them is in pursuance of the charge I have received concerning them. Now,

1. This is meant primarily of the disciples that then were, who were given to Christ as his pupils, to be educated by him while he was on earth, and his agents to be employed for him when he went to heaven. They were given him to be the learners of his doctrine, the witnesses of his life and miracles, and the monuments of his grace and favour, in order to their being the publishers of his Gospel, and the planters of his church. When they left all to follow him, this was the secret spring of that strange resolution; they were given to him, else they had not given themselves to him. Note, The apostleship and ministry, which is Christ's gift to the church, was first the Father's gift to Jesus Christ. As under the law the Levites were given to Aaron, *Num. iii. 9*, to him, the great High Priest of our profession, the Father gave the apostles first, and ministers in every age, to keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, and to do the service of the tabernacle; see *Eph. iv. 8, 11*; *Ps. lxxviii. 18*. Christ received this gift for men, that he might give it to men. As this puts a great honour upon the ministry of the Gospel, and magnifies that office, which is so much vilified, so it lays a mighty obligation upon the ministers of the Gospel to devote themselves entirely to Christ's service, as being given to him.

2. But it is designed to extend to all the elect, for they are elsewhere said to be given to Christ, *ch. vi. 37, 39*; and he often laid a stress upon this, that those he was to save were given to him as his charge; to his care they were committed, from his hand they were expected, and concerning them he received commandments. He here shews,

1st. That the Father had authority to give them; "thine they were." He did not give that which was none of his own, but covenanted that he had a good title. The elect that the Father gave to Christ were his own three ways: *First*. They were creatures, and their lives and beings were derived from him. When they were given to Christ to be vessels of honour, they were in his hand as clay in the hand of the potter, to be disposed of as God's wisdom saw most for God's glory. *Secondly*. They were criminals, and their lives and beings were forfeited to him. It was a remnant of fallen mankind that was given to Christ to be redeemed, that might have been made sacrifices to justice, then when they were pitched upon to be the monuments of mercy; might justly have been delivered to the tormentors when they were delivered to the Saviour. *Thirdly*. They were chosen, and their lives and beings were designed for him; they were set apart for God, and were consigned to Christ as his agent. This he insists upon again, ver. 7; "All things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee;" which, though it may take in all that appertained to his office as Mediator, yet seems especially to be meant of those that were given him. They are of thee; their being is of thee as the God of nature; their well-being is of thee as the God of grace; they are all of thee; and therefore, Father, I bring them all to thee, that they may be all for thee.

2nd. That he did accordingly give them to the Son: "Thou gavest them me," as sheep to the shepherd to be kept; a patient to the physician to be cured; children to a tutor to be educated; thus he will deliver up his charge, *Heb. ii. 13*, "the children thou hast given me." They were delivered to Christ, *First*. That the election of grace might not be frustrated; that not one, no, not of the little ones, might perish. That great concern must be lodged in some one good hand, able to give sufficient security, "that the purpose of God according to election might stand." *Secondly*. That the undertaking of Christ might not be fruitless. They were given to him as his seed, in whom he should "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied," *Isa. liii. 10, 11*; and might not spend his strength and shed his blood for nought and in vain, *Isa. xlix. 4*. We may plead, as Christ doth, Lord, keep my graces, keep my comforts, for "thine they were, and thou gavest them me."

11. *The care he had taken of them to teach them*; ver. 6, "I have manifested thy name to them;" and ver. 8, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." Observe here,

1. The great design of Christ's doctrine, which was to manifest God's name, to declare him, *ch. i. 18*. To instruct the ignorant, and rectify the mistakes of a dark and foolish world concerning God, that he might be better loved and worshipped.

2. His faithful discharge of this undertaking; I have done it. And his fidelity appears, 1st. In the truth of his doctrine. It agreed exactly with the instructions he received from his Father; he gave not only the things, but the very words, that were given him. Ministers, in wording their message, must have an eye to the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. 2nd. In the tendency of his doctrine, which was to manifest God's name. He did not seek himself, but in all he did and said aimed to magnify his Father. Note, *First*. It is Christ's prerogative to manifest God's name to the souls of the children of men. No man knows the Father but he to whom the Son will reveal him, *Mat. xi. 27*. He only hath acquaintance with the Father, and so is able to open the truth; and he only hath access to the spirits of men, and so is able to open the understanding. Ministers may publish the name of the Lord, as Moses, *Deu. xxxii. 3*, but Christ only can manifest that name. By the word of Christ God is revealed to us; by the Spirit of Christ God is revealed in us. Ministers may speak the words of God to us, but Christ can give us his words, can put them in us, as food, as treasure. *Secondly*. Sooner or later Christ will manifest God's name to all that were given him; and will give them his word, to be the seed of their new birth, the support of their spiritual life, and the earnest of their everlasting bliss.

111. *The good effect of the care he had taken of them, and the pains he had taken with them*; ver. 6, "they have kept thy word;" ver. 7, "they have known that all things are of thee;" ver. 8, "they have received thy words;" and embraced them; have given their assent and consent to them, "and have known surely that I came out from thee, and have believed that thou didst send me." Observe here,

1. What success the doctrine of Christ had among those that were given him, in several particulars.

1st. They have received the words which I gave them, as the ground receives the seed, and the earth drinks in the rain. They attended to the words of Christ, apprehended in some measure the meaning of them, and were affected with them; they received the impression of them; it was to them an ingrafted word.

2nd. "They have kept thy word," have continued in it, they have conformed to it. Christ's commandment is then only kept when it is obeyed. They that are to teach others the commands of Christ, ought to be themselves observant of them: it was requisite they should keep what was committed to them, for it was to be transmitted by them to every place, for every age.

3rd. They have understood the word, and have been sensible on what ground they went in receiving and keeping of it. They have been aware that thou art the original Author of that holy religion which I am come to institute; that "all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee." All Christ's offices and powers, all the gifts of the Spirit, all his graces and comforts, which God

early MSS. we must read, "Father, I will that what thou hast given me, even they may be with me where I am."

xvii. 25. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee;" or, "knew not thee." The epithet here, as in verse 11, is appropriate, the righteous Father is appealed to against the evil world, and in favour of those who knew God. (Compare 2 Thess. i. 6.)

xviii. 1. "Brook Cedron;" the word here rendered "brook" is properly a "storm brook," or a "winter brook." It is the channel of

gave without measure to him, were all from God; contrived by his wisdom, appointed by his will, and designed by his grace for his own glory in man's salvation. Note, It is a great satisfaction to us in our reliance upon Christ, that he, and all he is and has, all he said and did, all he is doing and will do, is of God, 1 Cor. i. 30. We may therefore venture our souls upon Christ's mediation, for it has a good bottom. If the righteousness be of God's appointing, we shall be justified; if the grace be of his dispensing, we shall be sanctified.

4th. They have set their seal to it. "They have known surely that I came out from God," ver. 8. See here, *First*. What it is to believe; it is to know surely, know that it is so of a truth. The disciples were very weak and defective in knowledge, yet Christ, who knew them better than they knew themselves, passeth his word for them that they did believe. Note, We may know surely that which we neither do nor can know fully; may know the certainty of the things which are not seen, though we cannot particularly describe the nature of them. We walk by faith, which knows surely; not yet by sight, which knows clearly. *Secondly*. What it is we are to believe; that Jesus Christ came out from God, as he is the Son of God; in his person the image of the invisible God; and that God did send him; that in his undertaking he is the ambassador of the eternal King: so that the Christian religion stands upon the same foot, and is of equal authority with, natural religion; and therefore all the doctrines of Christ are to be received as Divine truths, all his commands obeyed as Divine laws, and all his promises depended upon as Divine securities.

2. How Jesus Christ speaks of this here. He enlarges upon it, 1st. As pleased it himself. Though the many instances of his disciples' dulness and weakness had grieved him, yet their constant adherence to him, their gradual improvements, and their great attainments at last, were his joy. Christ is a master that delights in the proficiency of his scholars. He accepts the sincerity of their faith, and graciously passeth by the infirmity of it. See how willing he is to make the best of us, and to say the best of us; thereby encouraging our faith in him, and teaching us charity to one another. 2nd. As pleading it with his Father. He is praying for those that were given him, and he pleads that they had given themselves to him. Note, The due improvement of grace received is a good plea, according to the tenor of the new covenant, for farther grace; for so runs the promise, "to him that hath shall be given." They that keep Christ's word, and believe on him, let Christ alone to commend them; and, which is more, to recommend them to his Father.

IV. He pleads the Father's own interest in them; ver. 9. "I pray for them, for they are thine;" and this by virtue of a joint and mutual interest which he and the Father have in what pertained to each, "all mine are thine, and thine are mine." Betwixt the Father and Son there can be no dispute (as there is among the children of men) about *meum* and *tuum*,—mine and thine, for the matter was settled from eternity; "all mine are thine, and thine are mine." Here is,

1. The plea particularly urged for his disciples; "they are thine." The consigning of the elect to Christ was so far from making them less the Father's, that it was in order to the making them the more so. Note, 1. All that receive Christ's word, and believe in him, are taken into covenant relation to the Father, and are looked upon as his; Christ presents them to him, and they through Christ present themselves to him. Christ has redeemed us not to himself only, but to God, by his blood, Rev. v. 9, 10. They are first-fruits unto God, Rev. xiv. 4. 2. This is a good plea in prayer; Christ here pleads it, "they are thine;" we may plead it for ourselves, "I am thine, save me;" and for others, as Moses, Ex. xxiii. 11, "they are thy people." "They are thine; wilt thou not provide for thine own? Wilt thou not secure them, that they may not be run down by the devil and the world? Wilt thou not secure thine interest in them, that they may not depart from thee? They are thine, own them as thine."

2. The foundation on which this plea is grounded; "all mine are thine, and thine are mine." This speaks the Father and Son to be, 1st. One in essence. Every creature must say to God, "All mine are thine;" but none can say to him, "All thine are mine," but he that is the same in substance with him, and equal in power and glory. 2nd. One in interest; no separate or divided interests between them. *First*. What the Father has as Creator is delivered over to the Son, to be used and disposed of in subserviency to his great undertaking. All things are delivered to him, Mat. xi. 27; the grant so general that nothing was excepted but He that did put all things under him. *Secondly*. What the Son hath as Redeemer is designed for the Father, and his kingdom shall shortly be delivered up to him. All the benefits of redemption purchased by the Son are intended for the Father's praise; and in his glory all the lines of his undertaking centre; "all mine are thine." The Son owns none for his that are not devoted to the service of the Father; nor will any thing be accepted as a piece of service to the Christian religion which clashes with the dictates and laws of natural religion. In a limited sense every true believer may say, "all thine are mine." If God be ours in covenant, all he is and has is so far ours as that it shall be engaged for our good; and in an unlimited sense every true believer doth say, Lord, "all mine are thine;" all laid at his feet to be serviceable to him. And then what we have may be comfortably committed to God's care and blessing, when it is cheerfully submitted to his government and dispose; Lord, take care of what I have, for it is all thine.

V. He pleads his own concern in them; "I am glorified in them," δέδοσμαι. 1. I have been glorified in them. What little honour Christ had in this world was among his disciples. He had been glorified by their attendance on him, and obedience to him, their preaching and working miracles in his name; and therefore "I pray for them." Note, Those shall have an interest in Christ's intercession in and by whom he is glorified.

2. I am to be glorified in them when I am gone to heaven; they are to bear up my name. The apostles preached and wrought miracles in Christ's name, the Spirit in them glorified Christ, ch. xvi. 14. "I am glorified in them;" and therefore, 1st. I concern myself for them. What little interest Christ has in this degenerate world lies in his church; and therefore it and all its affairs lie near his heart within the veil. 2nd. Therefore I commit them to the Father, who has engaged to glorify the Son, and upon that account will have a gracious eye to those in whom he is glorified. That in which God and Christ are glorified may with humble confidence be committed to God's special care.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition;

the valley of Jehoshaphat—the bed of a wintry torrent—dry, except after rains. "Where was a garden:" the name is given by Matthew (chap. xxvi. 36)—Gethsemane, literally an "oil-press," or, more generally, "a small farm." It was situated probably at the foot of Mount Olivet (Luke xii. 39), and at a distance of half or three-quarters of a mile (English) from the walls of Jerusalem. There was a garden, or rather orchard, attached to it, to which the olive, fig, and pomegranate invited resort by their hospitable shade.

that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

After the general pleas with which Christ recommended his disciples to his Father's care, follow the particular petitions he put up for them; and, 1. They all relate to spiritual blessings in heavenly things. He doth not pray that they might be rich and great in the world, that they might raise estates, and get preferments; but that they might be kept from sin, and furnished for their duty, and brought safe to heaven. Note, The prosperity of the soul is the best prosperity; for what relates to that, Christ came to purchase and bestow, and so teacheth us to seek in the first place both for others and for ourselves. 2. They are such blessings as were suited to their present state and case, and the exigencies and occasions of that. Note, Christ's intercession is always pertinent. Our Advocate with the Father is acquainted with all the particulars of our wants and burthens, our dangers and difficulties, and knows how to accommodate his intercession to each, as to Peter's peril, which he himself was not aware of, Lu. xxii. 32; "I have prayed for thee." 3. He is large and full in the petitions, orders them before his Father, and fills his mouth with arguments, to teach us fervency and importunity in prayer, to be large in prayer, and dwell upon our errands at the throne of grace, wrestling as Jacob, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

Now the first thing Christ prays for his disciples is, their preservation, in these verses; in order to which he commits them all to his Father's custody. Keeping supposes danger, and their danger arose from the world, the world wherein they were; the evil of this he begs they might be kept from. Now observe,

First. The request itself: Keep them from the world. There were two ways of their being delivered from the world.

1. By taking them out of it; and he doth not pray that they might be so delivered: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world;" that is,

1st. I pray not that they may speedily be removed by death. If the world will be vexatious to them, the readiest way to secure them would be to hasten them out of it to a better world, that will give them better treatment; send chariots and horses of fire for them to fetch them to heaven. Job, Elijah, Jonah, Moses, when that occurred which fretted them, prayed that they might be taken out of the world; but Christ would not pray so for his disciples, for two reasons: *First*. Because he came to conquer, not to countenance, those intemperate heats and passions which make men impatient of life, and importunate for death. It is his will that we should take up our cross, and not outrun it. *Secondly*. Because he had work for them to do in the world; the world, though sick of them, Acts xxii. 22, and therefore not worthy of them, Heb. xi. 38, yet could ill spare them. In pity, therefore, to this dark world, Christ would not have these lights removed out of it, but continued in it, especially for the sake of those in the world that were to believe in him through their word. Let not them be taken out of the world when their Master is; they must each, in their own order, die martyrs, but not till they have finished their testimony. Note, 1st. The taking of good people out of the world is a thing by no means to be desired, but dreaded rather, and laid to heart, Isa. lvii. 1. 2nd. Though Christ loves his disciples, he doth not presently send for them to heaven, as soon as they are effectually called, but leaves them for some time in this world, that they may do good, and glorify God upon earth, and be ripened for heaven. Many good people are spared to live, because they can ill be spared to die.

2nd. I pray not that they may be totally freed and exempted from the troubles of this world, and taken out of the toil and terror of it into some place of ease and safety, there to live undisturbed; that is not the preservation I desire for them; *non ut omni molestia liberati otium et delicias colant, sed ut inter media pericula salvi tamen maneant Dei auxilio*;—not that, being freed from all troubles, they may bask in luxurious ease, but that by the help of God they may be preserved in a scene of danger; so Calvin. Not that they may be kept from all conflict with the world, but that they may not be overcome by it. Not that, as Jeremiah wished, they might leave their people, and go from them, Jer. ix. 2; but that, like Ezekiel, their faces may be strong against the faces of wicked men, Eze. iii. 8. It is more the honour of a Christian soldier by faith to overcome the world, than by a monastical vow to retreat from it; and more for the honour of Christ to serve him in a city, than to serve him in a cell.

2. Another way is by keeping them from the corruption that is in the world; and thus he prays they may be kept, ver. 11, 15. Here are three branches of this petition.

1st. "Holy Father, keep those whom thou hast given me." Christ was now leaving them, but let them not think that their defence was departed from them; no, he doth here in their hearing commit them to the custody of his Father and their Father. Note, It is the unspeakable comfort of all believers that Christ himself has committed them to the care of God himself. Those cannot but be safe whom the Almighty God keeps, and he cannot but keep those whom the Son of his love commits to him; in the virtue of which we may by faith commit the keeping of our souls to God, 1 Pet. iv. 19; 2 Tim. i. 12. *First*. He here puts them under the Divine protection, that they might not be run down by the malice of their enemies; that they and all their concerns might be the particular care of the Divine providence. Keep their lives till they have done their work; keep their comforts, and let not them be broken in upon by the hardships they meet with; keep up their interest in the world, and let not that sink. To this prayer is owing the wonderful preservation of the gospel ministry and gospel church in the world unto this day; if God had not graciously kept both, and kept up both, they had been extinguished and lost long ago. *Secondly*. He puts them under the Divine tuition, that they might not themselves run away from their duty, or be led aside by the treachery of their own hearts. Keep them in their integrity, keep them disciples, keep them close to their duty. We need God's power, not only to put us into a state of grace, but to keep us in it. See ch. x. 28, 29; 1 Pet. i. 5.

The titles he gives to him he prays to, and them he prays for, enforce the petition. 1st. He speaks to God as a holy Father. In committing ourselves

Concerning the position of Gethsemane another writer says, "We could not, when in its neighbourhood, persuade ourselves that the traditional is the real Gethsemane. It is too close to the city, and too near a road which, at least in Passover times, must have been a very public thoroughfare. Higher up the valley of Jehoshaphat there is a recess in the western slopes of Mount Olivet, which seemed to us much more likely to have been the scene of our Lord's agony" (Dr. Hanra). "The period of the year was the vernal

and others to the Divine care, we may take encouragement. 1. From the attribute of his holiness, for that is engaged for the preservation of his holy ones; he hath sworn by his holiness, *Ps. lxxix. 35*. If he be a holy God, and hate sin, he will make those that are his holy, and keep them from sin, who hate it too, and dread it as the greatest evil. 2. From this relation of a Father, wherein he stands to us through Christ. If he be a Father, he will take care of his own children, will teach them, and keep them; who else should? 2nd. He speaks of them as those whom the Father had given him. What we receive as our Father's gifts, we may comfortably remit to our Father's care. Father, keep the graces and comforts thou hast given me; the children thou hast given me; the ministry I have received.

2nd. Keep them "through thine own name;" that is, *First*. Keep them for thy name's sake; so some. Thy name and honour is concerned in their preservation as well as mine; for both will suffer by it if they either revolt or sink. The Old Testament saints often pleaded for thy name's sake; and those may with comfort plead it that are indeed more concerned for the honour of God's name than for any interest of their own. *Secondly*. Keep them in thy name; so others; the original is so, *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι*, keep them in the knowledge and fear of thy name; keep them in the profession and service of thy name, whatever it cost them. Keep them in the interest of thy name, and let them ever be faithful to that; keep them in thy truths, in thine ordinances, in the way of thy commandments. *Thirdly*. Keep them by or through thy name; so others. Keep them by thine own power, in thine own hand; keep them thyself, undertake for them. Let them be thine own immediate care. Keep them by those means of preservation which thou hast thyself appointed, and by which thou hast made thyself known. Keep them by thy word and ordinances; let thy name be their strong tower, thy tabernacle their pavilion.

3rd. "Keep them from the evil;" or, out of the evil. He had taught them to pray daily, "Deliver us from evil;" and this would encourage them to pray that. *First*. Keep them from the evil one, the devil and all his instruments; that wicked one, and all his children. Keep them from Satan, as a tempter; that either he may not have leave to sift them, or that their faith may not fail. Keep them from him, as a destroyer; that he may not drive them to despair. *Secondly*. Keep them from the evil thing, that is, sin; from every thing that looks like it, or leads to it. Keep them, that they do no evil, *2 Cor. xiii. 7*. Sin is that evil which above any other we should dread and deprecate. *Thirdly*. Keep them from the evil of the world, and of their tribulation in it, so that it may have no sting in it, no malignity. Not that they might be kept from affliction, but kept through it; that the property of their afflictions might be so altered as that there might be no evil in them, nothing to do them any harm.

Secondly. The reasons with which he enforceth these requests for their preservation, which are five:

1. He pleads that hitherto he had kept them, ver. 12; "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name," in the true faith of the Gospel, and the service of God. Those that thou gavest me for my constant attendants I have kept; they are all safe, and none of them missing, none of them revolted or ruined, but the son of perdition; he is lost, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. Observe,

1st. Christ's faithful discharge of his undertaking concerning his disciples; while he was with them he kept them, and his care concerning them was not in vain. He kept them in God's name, preserved them from falling into any dangerous errors or sins; from striking in with the Pharisees, who would have compassed sea and land to make proselytes of them; he kept them from deserting him, and returning to that little all they had left for him; he had them still under his eye and care; when he sent them to preach, went not his heart with them? Many that followed him awhile, took offence at something or other, and went off; but he kept the twelve, that they also should not go away. He kept them from falling into the hands of persecuting enemies that sought their lives; kept them when he surrendered himself, *ch. xviii. 9*. While he was with them, he kept them in a visible manner, by instructions still sounding in their ears, miracles still done before their eyes; when he was gone from them, they must be kept in a more spiritual manner. Sensible comforts and supports are sometimes given, and sometimes withheld; but when they are withdrawn, yet they are not left comfortless.

What Christ here saith of his immediate followers is true of all the saints, while they are here in this world, Christ keeps them in God's name. It is implied, *First*. That they are weak, and cannot keep themselves; their own hands are not sufficient for them. *Secondly*. That they are in God's account valuable, and worth the keeping; precious in his sight, and honourable; his treasure, his jewels. *Thirdly*. That their salvation is designed, for to that it is that they are kept, *1 Pet. i. 4*. As the wicked are reserved for the day of evil, so the righteous are preserved for the day of bliss. *Fourthly*. That they are the charge of the Lord Jesus; for as his charge he keeps them, and exposed himself, like the good shepherd, for the preservation of the sheep.

2nd. The comfortable account he gives of his undertaking; "none of them is lost." Note, Jesus Christ will certainly keep all that were given him, so as that none of them shall be totally and finally lost; they may think themselves lost, and may be near lost, in imminent peril; but it is the Father's will he should lose none, and none he will lose, *ch. vi. 39*; so it will appear when they come all together, and none of them shall be wanting.

3rd. A brand put upon Judas, as not one of those whom he had undertaken to keep. He was among those that were given to Christ, but not of them. He speaks of Judas as already lost; for he had abandoned the society of his Master, and his fellow-disciples, and abandoned himself to the devil's conduct, and in a little time would go to his own place; he is as good as lost.

But the apostasy and ruin of Judas was no reproach at all to his Master, or his family; for, *First*. He was the son of perdition, and therefore none of those that were given to Christ to be kept. He deserved perdition, and God left him to throw himself headlong into it. He was the son of the destroyer, as Cain, who was of that wicked one. That great enemy whom the Lord will consume, is called a son of perdition, because he is a man of sin, *2 Thes. ii. 3*. It is an awful consideration, that one of the apostles proved a son of perdition. No man's place or name in the church, no man's privileges or opportunities of getting grace, no man's profession or external performances, will secure him from ruin, if his heart be not right with God; nor any more likely to prove sons of perdition at last, after a plausible course of profession, than those that, like Judas, love the bag. But Christ's distinguishing Judas from those that were given him (for *εἰς* is adversative, not exceptive,) intimates that the truth and true religion ought not to suffer for the treachery of those that are false to it, *1 Jno. ii. 19*. *Secondly*. The Scripture was fulfilled. The sin of Judas was foreseen in God's counsel, and foretold in his word; and the event would certainly follow after the prediction as a consequent, though it cannot be said necessarily to follow from it as an effect; see *Ps. xlix. 9*; *lxxx. 25*; *cix. 8*. One would be amazed at the treachery of apostates, were we not told it before.

2. He pleads that he was now under a necessity of leaving them, and could no longer watch over them in the way that he had hitherto done it, ver. 11. Keep them now, that I may not lose the labour I bestowed upon them while I was with them. Keep them, that they may be one with us, as we are with each other. We shall have occasion to speak of that, ver. 21. But see here,

1st. With what pleasure he speaks of his own departure. He expresseth himself concerning it with an air of triumph and exultation, with references both to the world he left, and the world he removed to. *First*. "Now I am no more in the world." Now farewell to this provoking, troublesome world; I have had enough of it, and now the welcome hour is at hand, when I shall be no more in it. Now I have finished the work I had to do in it, I have done with it; nothing remains now but to hasten out of it as fast as I can. Note, It should be a pleasure to those that have their home in the other world, to think of being no more in this world; for when we have done what we have to do in this world, and are made meet for that, what is there here that should court our stay? When we receive a sentence of death within ourselves, with what a holy triumph should we say, "Now I am no more in this world," this dark, deceitful world, this poor empty world, this tempting, defiling world; no more vexed with its thorns and briars, no more endangered by its nets and snares; now I shall wander no more in this howling wilderness, be tossed no more on this stormy sea; "now I am no more in this world," but can cheerfully quit it, and give it a final farewell. *Secondly*. "Now I come to thee." To get clear of the world, is but the one half of the comfort of a dying Christ, of a dying Christian; the far better half is to think of going to the Father, to sit down in the immediate, uninterrupted, and everlasting enjoyment of him. Note, They who love God cannot but be pleased to think of coming to him, though it be through the valley of the shadow of death. When we go to be absent from the body, it is to be present with the Lord, like children fetched home from school to their father's house. "Now come I to thee" whom I have chosen and served, and whom my soul thirsteth after; to thee, the fountain of light and life, the crown and centre of bliss and joy; now my longings shall be satisfied, my hopes accomplished, my happiness completed, for "now come I to thee."

2nd. With what a tender concern he speaks of those whom he left behind; "but these are in the world." I have found what an evil world it is; what will become of these dear little ones, that must stay in it? "Holy Father, keep them;" they will want my presence, let them have thine. They have now more need than ever to be kept, for I am sending them out farther into the world than they have yet ventured; they must launch forth into the deep, and have business to do in these great waters, and will be lost if thou do not keep them. Observe here, *First*. That when our Lord Jesus was going to the Father, he carried with him a tender concern for his own which are in the world, and continued to compassionate them. He bears their names upon his breastplate, nay, upon his heart, and has graven them with the nails of his cross upon the palms of his hands; and when he is out of their sight, they are not out of his, much less out of his mind. We should have such a pity for those that are launching out into the world, when we are got almost through it, and for those that are left behind in it, when we are leaving it. *Secondly*. That when Christ would express the utmost need his disciples had of Divine preservation, he only saith, they are in the world; that speaks danger enough to those who are bound for heaven, whom a flattering world would divert and seduce, and a malignant world would hate and persecute.

3. He pleads what a satisfaction it would be to him to see them easy; "I speak this that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves," ver. 13. Observe,

1st. Christ earnestly desired the fullness of the joy of his disciples; for it is his will that they should rejoice evermore. He was leaving them in tears and troubles, and yet took effectual care to fulfil their joy. When they thought, their joy in him was brought to an end, then was it advanced nearer to perfection than ever it had been, and they were fuller of it. We are here taught, *First*. To found our joy in Christ; it is my joy, joy of my giving, or rather, joy that I am the matter of. Christ is a Christian's joy, his chief joy. Joy in the world is withering with it; joy in Christ is everlasting, like him. *Secondly*. To build up our joy with diligence; for it is the duty as well as privilege of all true believers; no part of the Christian life is pressed upon us more earnestly, *Phil. iii. 1*; *iv. 4*. *Thirdly*. To aim at the perfection of this joy, that we may have it fulfilled in us, for this Christ would have.

2nd. In order hereunto he did thus solemnly commit them to his Father's care and keeping, and took them for witnesses that he did so. "These things I speak in the world," while I am yet with them in the world. His intercession in heaven for their preservation would have been as effectual in itself; but saying this in the world would be a greater satisfaction and encouragement to them, and would enable them to rejoice in tribulation. Note, *First*. Christ has not only treasured up comforts for his people, in providing for their future welfare, but has given out comforts to them, and said that which will be for their present satisfaction. He here condescended in the presence of his disciples to publish his last will and testament, and (which many a testator is shy of) lets them know what legacies he had left them, and how well they were secured, that they might have strong consolation. *Secondly*. Christ's intercession for us is enough to fulfil our joy in him; nothing more effectual to silence all our fears and mistrusts, and to furnish us with strong consolation, than this, that he always appears in the presence of God for us; therefore the apostle puts a "yea rather" upon this, *Rom. viii. 34*; and see *Heb. vii. 25*.

3. He pleads the ill usage they were likely to meet with in the world for his sake; ver. 14, "I have given them thy word," to be published to the world; and they have received it, have believed it themselves, and accepted the trust of transmitting it to the world; "and therefore the world hath hated them;" as also because they are not of the world, no more than I. Here we have,

1st. The world's enmity to Christ's followers. While Christ was with them, though as yet they had given but little opposition to the world, yet it hates them; much more would it do so when, by their more extensive preaching of the Gospel, they would turn the world upside down. Father, stand their friend, saith Christ; for they are likely to have many enemies; let them have thy love, for the world's hatred is entailed upon them. In the midst of those fiery darts let them be compassed with thy favour as with a shield; it is God's honour to take part with the weaker side, and to help the helpless. Lord, be merciful to them, for men would swallow them up.

2nd. The reasons of that enmity, which strengthen the plea. *First*. It is implied that one reason is, because they had received the Word of God, as it was sent them by the hand of Christ, when the greatest part of the world rejected it, and set themselves against them who were the preachers and professors of it. Note, They that receive Christ's good-will and good word must expect the world's ill-will and ill word. Gospel ministers have been, in a particular manner, hated by the world; because they call men out of the world, and separate them from it, and teach them to conform not to conform to it, and condemn the world. "Father, keep them," for it is for thy sake that they are exposed; they are sufferers for thee. Thus the psalmist pleads, "For thy sake I have borne reproach" *Ps. lxxix. 7*. Note, Those that keep the word of Christ's patience are entitled to special protection in the hour of temptation, *Rev. iii. 10*. That cause which makes a martyr may well make a joyful sufferer. *Secondly*. Another reason is more express; the world hates them, because "they are not of the world." They to whom the word of Christ comes in power are not of the world; for it has this effect upon all that receive it in the love of

equinox; the day of the month about two days before the full moon, in which case the moon would not be now very far past her meridian, and the night would be enlightened until a late hour towards the morning."

xviii. 3. "Having received a band;" or, "the band"—i.e., the detachment of the Roman cohort on duty at the festival for the purpose of maintaining order. The officer of this band probably acted on his own responsibility, at the request of the high-priest, and in concert

with the captain of the Temple and the band of armed Levites (*Luke xxii. 4, 52*; *2 Kings xi. 4, 11*), and afterwards reported the case to Pilate (*verses 28, 29*). "Lanterns, and torches, and weapons;" these would enable them to search the dark glades and shady nooks of the hill and garden, in which they thought Jesus might hide himself."

xviii. 4, 5. The account of the salutation given by Judas is not related by St. John. He describes Judas as standing with the band when Jesus went forth to meet them. By some it is thought

it, that it weans them from the wealth of the world, and turns them against the wickedness of the world; and therefore the world bears them a grudge.

5. He pleads their conformity to himself, in a holy nonconformity to the world; ver. 16, Father, keep them, for they are of my spirit and mind; "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." They may in faith commit themselves to God's custody, 1st. Who are as Christ was in this world, and tread in his footsteps. God will love those that are like Christ. 2nd. Who do not engage themselves in the world's interest, nor devote themselves to its service. Observe, *First*. That Jesus Christ was not of this world; he never had been of it, and least of all now he was upon the point of leaving it. This speaks, 1st. His state. He was none of the world's favourites or darlings; none of its princes or grandees; worldly possessions he had none,—not where to lay his head; nor worldly power,—he was no judge or divider. 2nd. His spirit. He was perfectly dead to the world; the prince of this world had nothing in him; the things of this world were nothing to him; not honour,—for he made himself of no reputation; not riches,—for for our sakes he became poor;—not pleasures,—for he acquainted himself with grief. See ch. viii. 23. *Secondly*. That therefore true Christians are not of this world. The spirit of Christ in them is opposite to the spirit of the world. 1st. It is their lot to be despised by the world; they are not in favour with the world, no more than their Master before them was. 2nd. It is their privilege to be delivered from the world; as Abraham out of the land of his nativity. 3rd. It is their duty and character to be dead to the world. Their most pleasing converse is, and should be, with another world, and their prevailing concern about the business of that world, not of this. Christ's disciples were weak, and had many infirmities; yet this he could say for them, they were not of the world,—not of the earth; and therefore he recommends them to the care of Heaven.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

The next thing he prayed for them was, that they might be sanctified; only not kept from evil, but made good.

First. Here is the petition; ver. 17, "Sanctify them through thy truth," that is, through thy Word; for "thy word is truth;" it is true,—it is truth itself. He desires they may be sanctified, both as Christians and as ministers.

1. As Christians: Father, make them holy, and that will be their preservation, 1 *Thes. v. 23*. Observe here,

1st. The grace desired: sanctification. The disciples were sanctified; for they were not of the world; yet he prays, Father, sanctify them; that is, *First*. Confirm the work of sanctification in them, strengthen their faith, inflame their good affections, rivet their good resolutions. *Secondly*. Carry on that good work in them, and continue it. Let the light shine more and more. *Thirdly*. Complete it; crown it with the perfection of holiness; sanctify them throughout, and to the end. Note, 1st. It is the prayer of Christ for all that are his, that they may be sanctified; because he cannot for shame own them as his, either here or hereafter, either employ them in his work or present them to his Father, if they be not sanctified. 2nd. Those that through grace are sanctified have need to be sanctified more and more. Even disciples must pray for sanctifying grace; for if he that was the Author of the good work be not the finisher of it, we are undone. Not to go forward is to go backward; he that is holy, must be holy still,—more holy still,—pressing forwards, soaring upwards, as those that have not attained. 3rd. It is God that sanctifies as well as God that justifies, 2 *Cor. v. 5*. 4th. It is an encouragement to us in our prayers for sanctifying grace, that it is what Christ intercedes for us.

2nd. The means of conferring this grace: "Through thy truth, thy Word is truth." Not that the Holy One of Israel is hereby limited to means, but in the counsels of peace, among other things, it was settled and agreed. *First*. That all needful truth should be comprised and summed up in the Word of God. Divine revelation, as it now stands in the written Word, is not only pure truth without mixture, but entire truth without deficiency. *Secondly*. That this word of truth should be the outward and ordinary means of our sanctification; not of itself, for then it would always sanctify, but as the instrument which the Spirit commonly useth in beginning and carrying on that good work; it is the seed of the new birth, 1 *Pet. i. 23*, and the food of the new life, 1 *Pet. ii. 1, 2*.

2. As ministers: "sanctify them;" that is, set them apart for thyself and service; let their call to the apostleship be ratified in heaven. Prophets were said to be sanctified, *Jer. i. 5*; priests and Levites were so. "Sanctify them;" that is, 1st. Qualify them for the office, with Christian graces and ministerial gifts, to make them able ministers of the New Testament. 2nd. Separate them to the office; *Rom. i. 1*. I have called them, they have consented; Father, say Amen to it. 3rd. Own them in the office; let thy hand go along with them; sanctify them by or in thy truth, as truth is opposed to figure and shadow; sanctify them really, not ritually and ceremonially, as the Levitical priests were, by anointing and sacrifice. Sanctify them to thy truth, the word of thy truth, to be the preachers of thy truth to the world; as the priests were sanctified to serve at the altar, so let them be to preach the Gospel, 1 *Cor. ix. 13, 14*. Note, *First*. Jesus Christ intercedes for his ministers with a particular concern; and recommends to his Father's grace those stars he carries in his right hand. *Secondly*. The great thing to be asked of God for gospel ministers is, that they may be sanctified,—effectually separated from the world, and entirely devoted to God, and experimentally acquainted with the influence of that word upon their own hearts which they preach to others. Let them have the Urim and Thummim, light and integrity.

Secondly. We have here two pleas or arguments to enforce this petition for the disciples' sanctification.

1. The mission they had from him; ver. 18, "As thou hast sent me into the world" to be thine ambassador to the children of men, "so," now I am recalled, "have I sent them into the world" as my delegates. Now here,

1st. Christ speaks with great assurance of his own mission: "Thou hast sent me into the world." The great Author of the Christian religion had his commission and instructions from him who is the original and object of all religion. He was sent of God to say what he said, and do what he did, and be what he is to those that believe on him; which was his comfort in his undertaking, and may be ours abundantly, in our dependence upon him. His record was on high; from thence his mission was.

2nd. He speaks with great satisfaction of the commission he had given his disciples; "So have I sent them," on the same errand, and to carry on the same design; to preach the same doctrine that he had preached, and to confirm it with the same proofs; with a charge likewise to commit to other faithful

men that which was committed to them. He gave them their commission, ch. xx. 21, with a reference to his own; and it magnifies their office, that it comes from Christ, and that there is some affinity between the commission given to the ministers of reconciliation, and that given to the Mediator. He is called an apostle, *Heb. iii. 1*; a minister, *Rom. xv. 8*; a messenger, *Mal. iii. 1*; only they are sent as servants, he as a Son.

Now this comes in here as a reason, *First*. Why Christ was concerned so much for them, and laid their case so near his heart; because he had himself put them into a difficult office, which required great abilities for the due discharge of it. Note, Whom Christ sends he will stand by, and interest himself in those that are employed for him: what he calls us out to, he will fit us out for, and bear us out in. *Secondly*. Why he committed them to his Father; because he was concerned in the cause; their mission being in prosecution of his, and as it were an assignment out of it. Christ received gifts for men, *Ps. lxxiii. 18*, and then gave them to men, *Eph. iv. 8*; and therefore prays aid of his Father to warrant and uphold those gifts, and confirm his grant of them. The Father sanctified him when he sent him into the world, ch. x. 36; now they being sent as he was, let them also be sanctified.

2. The merit he had for them is another thing here pleaded; ver. 19, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." Here is,

1st. Christ's designation of himself to the work and office of Mediator; "I sanctify myself;" that is, he entirely devoted himself to the undertaking, and all the parts of it; especially that which he was now going about, the offering up of himself without spot unto God, by the Eternal Spirit. He, as the priest and altar, sanctified himself as the sacrifice. When he said, "Father, glorify thy name," and, "Father, thy will be done," and, "Father, I commit my spirit into thy hands," he paid down the satisfaction he had engaged to make, and so sanctified himself. This he pleads with his Father; for his intercession is made in the virtue of his satisfaction; "By his own blood he entered into the holy place," *Heb. ix. 12*; as the high priest on the day of atonement sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice, at the same time that he burnt incense within the veil, *Lev. xvi. 12, 14*.

2nd. Christ's design of kindness to his disciples herein. It is for their sakes, that they may be sanctified; that is, that they may be martyrs: so some. I sacrifice myself, that they may be sacrificed, to the glory of God and the church's good. Paul speaks of his being offered, 2 *Tim. iv. 6*; *Phil. ii. 17*. Whatever there is in the death of the saints that is precious in the sight of the Lord, it is owing to the death of the Lord Jesus. But I rather take it more generally, that they may be saints and ministers duly qualified and accepted of God.

First. The office of the ministry is the purchase of Christ's blood, and one of the blessed fruits of his satisfaction, and owes its virtue and value to Christ's merit. The priests under the law were consecrated with the blood of bulls and goats, but gospel ministers with the blood of Jesus.

Secondly. The real holiness of all good Christians is the fruit of Christ's death, by which the gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased. He gave himself for his church, to sanctify it, *Eph. v. 26*. And he that designed the end, designed also the means, that they might be sanctified by the truth,—the truth which Christ came into the world to bear witness to, and died to confirm. The Word of truth receives its sanctifying virtue and power from the death of Christ. Some read it, That they may be sanctified in truth; that is, truly; for as God must be served, so in order to that we must be sanctified, in the spirit and in truth. And this Christ has prayed for for all that are his; for this is his will, even their sanctification, which encourages them to pray for it.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Next to their purity, he prays for their unity; for the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable; and amity is then amiable indeed when it is like the ointment on Aaron's holy head, and the dew on Zion's holy hill. Observe,

First. Who are included in this prayer; ver. 20, not these only,—not these only that are now my disciples, the eleven, the seventy, with others, men and women that followed him when he was here on earth,—but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, "either preached by them in their own day, or written by them for the generation to come: I pray for them all, "that they all may be one" in their interest in this prayer, and may all receive benefit by it. Note here,

1. Those, and those only, are interested in the mediation of Christ, that do or shall believe in him. This is that by which they are described; and it comprehends all the character and duty of a Christian. They that lived then saw and believed; but they in after ages have not seen, and yet have believed.

2. It is through the Word that souls are brought to believe on Christ, and it is for this end that Christ appointed the Scriptures to be written, and a standing ministry to continue in the church while the church stands, that is, while the world stands, for the raising up of a seed.

3. It is certainly and infallibly known to Christ who shall believe on him. He doth not here pray at a venture, upon a contingency depending on the treacherous will of man, which pretends to be free, but by reason of sin is in bondage with its children; no, Christ knew very well whom he prayed for; the matter was reduced to a certainty by the Divine prescience and purpose. He knew who were given him; who, being ordained to eternal life, were entered in the Lamb's book, and should undoubtedly believe, *Acts xiii. 48*.

4. Jesus Christ intercedes not only for great and eminent believers, but for the meanest and weakest; not for those only that are to be employed in the highest posts of trust and honour in his kingdom, but for all, even those that in the eye of the world are inconsiderable. As the Divine providence extends itself to the meanest creature, so doth the Divine grace to the meanest Christian. The good Shepherd has an eye even to the poor of the flock.

5. Jesus Christ in his mediation had an actual regard to those of the chosen

likely that he was among those who "went backward, and fell to the ground." Others think that our Lord's coming forth to the band was after the interview with Judas.

xviii. 6. "They went backward," &c.: this occurring before his surrender, would show his power over his enemies, and so the freedom with which he gave himself up (Meyer, quoted in "Portable Commentary"). (Compare chap. x. 18.)

xviii. 10. "Simon Peter:." St. John alone gives the name of the

apostle and of the servant. The mention of the servant's name was quite natural, if we suppose John to have been that disciple who was known to the high-priest (see Note on verse 15). Malchus is described as a servant of the high-priest; he was probably one of the officers mentioned in verse 3, and attached to the high-priest's household as a servant. He was, as it seems, foremost among those who went forward to seize Jesus. It is his right ear which was cut off, and this side would be most exposed to attack if he went forward as a combatant.

remnant that were yet unborn; the people that should be created, *Ps.* xxii. 31; the other sheep which he must yet bring. Before they are formed in the womb he knows them, *Jer.* i. 5; and prayers are filed in heaven for them beforehand, by him who declareth the end from the beginning, and calleth things that are not, as though they were.

Secondly. What is intended in this prayer; ver. 21, "That they all may be one;" the same before, ver. 11, "that they may be one as we are;" and again, ver. 22. The heart of Christ was much upon this. Some think that oneness prayed for, ver. 1, hath special reference to the disciples as ministers and apostles, that they might be one in their testimony to Christ; and the harmony of the evangelists, and concurrence of the first preachers of the Gospel, is owing to this prayer. Let them be not only of one heart, but one mouth, speaking the same thing. The unity of gospel ministers is both the beauty and strength of the gospel interest. But it is certain the oneness prayed for, ver. 21, respects all believers. It is the prayer of Christ for all that are his, and we may be sure it is an answered prayer: "that they all may be one; one in us," ver. 21; "one as we are one," ver. 22; "made perfect in one," ver. 23. It includes three things:

1. That they might all be incorporated in one body. Father, look upon them all as one; and ratify that great charter by which they are embodied as one church. Though they live in distant places, from one end of heaven to the other, and in several ages, from the beginning to the close of time, and so cannot have any personal acquaintance or correspondence with each other, yet let them be united in me, their common head. As Christ died, so he prayed, to gather them all in one, *ch.* xi. 53; *Eph.* i. 10.

2. That they might all be animated by one spirit. This is plainly implied in that, "that they may be one in us." Union with the Father and Son is obtained and kept up only by the Holy Ghost; "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," *1 Cor.* vi. 17. Let them all be stamped with the same image and super-scription, and influenced by the same power.

3. That they might all be knit together in the bond of love and charity,—all of one heart. "That they all may be one;" 1st. In judgment and sentiment; not in every little thing,—it is neither possible nor needful,—but in the great things of God; and in them, by the virtue of this prayer, they are all agreed, that God's favour is better than life; that sin is the worst of evils, Christ the best of friends; that there is another life after this; and the like. 2nd. In disposition and inclination. All that are sanctified have the same Divine nature and image; they have all a new heart, and it is one heart. 3rd. They are all one in their designs and aims. Every true Christian, as far as he is so, eyes the glory of God as his highest end, and the glory of heaven as his chief good. 4th. They are all one in their desires and prayers. Though they differ in words, and the manner of expressions, yet, having all received the same Spirit of adoption, and observing the same rule, they pray for the same things in effect. 5th. All one in love and affection. Every true Christian has that in him which inclines him to love all true Christians as such. That which Christ here prays for is that communion of saints which we profess to believe; the fellowship which all believers have with God, and their intimate union with all the saints in heaven and earth, *1 Jno.* i. 3. But this prayer of Christ will not have its complete answer till all the saints come to heaven; for then, and not till then, they shall be perfect in one, ver. 23; *Eph.* iv. 13.

Thirdly. What is intimated, by way of plea or argument, to enforce this petition; three things:

1. The oneness that is between the Father and the Son, which is mentioned again and again, ver. 11, 21—23.

1st. It is given for granted, that the Father and Son are one,—one in nature and essence, equal in power and glory,—one in mutual endearments. "The Father loveth the Son," and the Son always pleased the Father. They are one in design, and one in operation. The intimacy of this oneness is expressed in these words, "Thou in me, and I in thee;" this he often mentions for his support under his present sufferings, when his enemies were ready to fall upon him, and his friends to fall off from him; yet he was in the Father, and the Father in him.

2nd. This is insisted on in Christ's prayer for his disciples' oneness. First. As the pattern of that oneness; shewing how he desired they might be one. Believers are one in some measure, as God and Christ are one; for, 1st. The union of believers is a strict and close union; they are united by a Divine nature, by the power of Divine grace, in pursuance of the Divine counsels. 2nd. It is a holy union, in the Holy Spirit, for holy ends; not a body politic for any secular purpose. 3rd. It is, and will be at last, a complete union. Father and Son have the same attributes, properties, and perfections; so have believers now, as far as they are sanctified; and when grace shall be perfected in glory, they will be exactly consonant to each other, all changed into the same image.

Secondly. As the centre of that oneness; "that they may be one in us," all meeting here. There is one God and one Mediator; and herein believers are one, that they all agree to depend upon the favour of this one God as their felicity, and the merit of this one Mediator as their righteousness. That is a conspiracy, not a union, which doth not centre in God as the end, and Christ as the way. All that are truly united to God and Christ, who are one, will soon be united one to another.

Thirdly. As a plea for that oneness. The Creator and Redeemer are one in interest and design; but to what purpose are they so, if all believers were not one body with Christ, and did not jointly receive grace for grace from him, as he had received it for them? Christ's design was to reduce revolted mankind to God; Father, saith he, "let all that believe be one, that in one body they may be reconciled," *Eph.* ii. 15, 16, which speaks of the uniting of Jews and Gentiles in the church; that great mystery, "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body," *Eph.* iii. 6, to which I think this prayer of Christ principally refers, it being one great thing he aimed at in his dying; and I wonder none of the expositors I have met with do so apply it. Father, let the Gentiles that believe be incorporated with the believing Jews; and make of twain one new man.

Those words, "I in them, and thou in me," shew what that union is which is so necessary not only to the beauty, but to the very being of his church. 1st. Union with Christ; "I in them." Christ dwelling in the hearts of believers is the life and soul of the new man. 2nd. Union with God through him; "thou in me;" so as by me to be in them. 3rd. Union with each other, resulting from those, that they hereby "may be made perfect in one;" "we are complete in him."

2. The design of Christ in all his communications of light and grace to them; ver. 22, "The glory which thou gavest me," as the trustee or channel of conveyance, "I have" accordingly "given them," to this intent, "that they may be one, as we are one;" so that those gifts will be in vain if they be not one. Now these gifts are either,

1st. Those that were conferred upon the apostles and first planters of the church. The glory of being God's ambassadors to the world; the glory of working miracles; the glory of gathering a church out of the world, and erecting the throne of God's kingdom among men: this glory was given to Christ, and some of the honour he put upon them when he sent them to disciple all nations. Or,

2nd. Those that are given in common to all believers. The glory of being in covenant with the Father, and accepted of him; of being laid in his bosom, and being redeemed for a place at his right hand, was the glory which the Father gave to the Redeemer, and he hath confirmed it to the redeemed. First. This honour he saith he hath given them, because he hath intended it for them, settled it upon them, and secured it to them upon their believing; Christ's promises are real gifts. Secondly. This was given him to give them; it was conveyed to him in trust for them, and he was faithful to him that appointed him. Thirdly. He gave it to them that they might be one. 1st. To entitle them to the privilege of unity, that by virtue of their common relation to one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, they might be truly denominated one. The gift of the Spirit, that great glory which the Father gave to the Son, by him to be given to all believers, makes them one; for he worketh all in all, *1 Cor.* xii. 4, &c. 2nd. To engage them to the duty of unity. That in consideration of their agreement and communion in one creed, and one covenant, one Spirit, and one Bible; in consideration of what they have in one God, and one Christ, and of what they hope for in one heaven, they may be of one mind and one mouth. Worldly glory sets men at variance; for if some be advanced, others are eclipsed; and therefore, while the disciples dreamed of a temporal kingdom, they were ever and anon quarrelling; but spiritual honours being conferred alike upon all Christ's subjects,—they being all made to our God kings and priests,—there is no occasion for contest or emulation. The more Christians are taken up with the glory Christ has given them, the less desirous they will be of vainglory, and consequently the less disposed to quarrel.

3. He pleads the happy influence their oneness would have upon others, and the furtherance it would give to the public good. This is twice urged, ver. 21, "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me;" and again, ver. 23, "that the world may know" it; for without knowledge there can be no true faith. Believers must know what they believe, and why and wherefore they believe it. They who believe at a venture, venture too far. Now Christ here shews,

1st. His good-will to the world of mankind in general. Herein he is of his Father's mind, as we are sure he is in every thing, that he would "have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth," *1 Tim.* ii. 4; *2 Pet.* iii. 9; therefore it is his will that all means possible should be used, and no stone left unturned, for the conviction and conversion of the world. We know not who are chosen; but we must in our places do our utmost to further men's salvation, and take heed of doing any thing to hinder it.

2nd. The good fruit of the church's oneness. It will be an evidence of the truth of Christianity, and a means of bringing many to embrace it.

First. In general, it will recommend Christianity to the world, and to the good opinion of those that are without. 1st. The embodying of Christians in one society by the gospel charter will greatly promote Christianity: when the world shall see so many of those that were its children called out of its family, distinguished from others, and changed from what they themselves sometimes were,—when they shall see this society raised by the foolishness of preaching, and kept up by miracles of Divine providence and grace, and how admirably well it is modelled and constituted,—they will be ready to say, "We will go with you, for we see that God is with you." 2nd. The uniting of Christians in love and charity is the beauty of their profession, and invites others to join with them, as the love that was among those primo-primitive Christians, *Acts* ii. 42, 43; iv. 32, 33. When Christianity, instead of causing quarrels about itself, makes all other strifes to cease,—when it cools the fiery, smooths the rugged, and disposeth men to be kind and loving, courteous and beneficent to all men, studious to preserve and promote peace in all relations and societies,—this will recommend it to all that have any thing either of natural religion or natural affection in them.

Secondly. In particular, it will beget in men good thoughts, 1st. Of Christ. They will know and believe that thou hast sent me. By this it will appear that Christ was sent of God, and that his doctrine was Divine, in that his religion prevails to join so many of different capacities, tempers, and interests in other things, in one body by faith, with one heart by love. Certainly he was sent by the God of power, who fashioneth men's hearts alike, and the God of love and peace; when the worshippers of God are one, he is one, and his name one. 2nd. Of Christians. They will "know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." Here is, 1. The privilege of believers; the Father himself loveth them with a love resembling his love to his Son; for they are loved in him with an everlasting love. 2. The evidence of their interest in this privilege, and that is their being one. By this it will appear that God loves us, if we love one another with a pure heart; for wherever the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, it will change it into the same image. See how much good it would do the world to know better how dear to God all good Christians are. The Jews had a saying, 'If the world did but know the worth of good men, they would hedge them about with pearls.' Those that have so much of God's love should have more of ours.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. 26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Here is, First. A petition for the glorifying of all those that were given to Christ; ver. 24, not only these apostles, but all believers; "Father, I will that they may be with me." Observe,

1. The connection of this request with those foregoing. He had prayed that God would preserve, sanctify, and unite them, and now he prays that he would crown all his gifts with their glorification. In this method we must pray, first for grace, and then for glory, *Ps.* lxxiv. 11; for in this method God gives. Far be it from the only wise God to come under the imputation either of that foolish builder, that without a foundation built upon the sand; as he would if he should glorify any whom he has not first sanctified; or of that foolish builder, who began to build and was not able to finish; as he would if he should sanctify any and not glorify them.

2. The manner of the request; "Father, I will." Here, as before, he addresseth himself to God as a Father, and therein we must do likewise; but

The incident of verse 6 may have emboldened Peter to act as he did (Webster and Wilkinson).

xviii. 11. "The cup which my Father," &c.: in this expression Paley finds an undesigned coincidence. The word is here used by the evangelist, who does not record the prayer in the garden, "Let this cup pass," &c.

xviii. 14. It might appear from the course of St. John's narrative that the examination of our Lord, and the first denial of Peter, took

place in the house of Annas. But verse 24 is retrospective, and probably all that occurred after verse 14 took place not at the house of Annas, but at that of Caiaphas.

xviii. 15. "So did another disciple:" rather, "the other disciple"—that other disciple was known unto the high-priest. It has been argued, with no little plausibility, that this disciple was Judas. Peter and Judas are the only disciples mentioned in the chapter; and when it is said Peter followed and so did the other disciple, it is con-

when he saith, *Θέλω*,—"I will," he speaks a language peculiar to himself, and such as doth not become ordinary petitioners, but very well became him who paid for what he prayed for.

1st. It speaks the authority of his intercession in general; his word was with power in heaven as well as on earth. He entering with his own blood into the holy place, his intercession there has an uncontrollable efficacy. He intercedes as a king, for he is a priest upon his throne; like Melchizedek, a king-priest.

2nd. It speaks his particular authority in this matter; he had a power to give eternal life, ver. 2; and, pursuant to that power, he saith, "Father, I will." Though now he took upon him the form of a servant, yet that power being to be most illustriously exerted when he shall come the second time in the glory of a judge, to say, "Come, ye blessed," having that in his eye, he might well say, "Father, I will."

3. The request itself; that all the elect might come to be with him in heaven at last, to see his glory, and to share in it. Now observe here,

1st. Under what notion we are to hope for heaven; wherein doth that happiness consist? Three things make heaven:

First. It is to be where Christ is; "where I am." In the paradise whither Christ's soul went at death; in the third heavens, where his soul and body went at his ascension. "Where I am," am to be shortly, am to be eternally. In this world we are but *in transitu*,—on our passage; there we truly are where we are to be for ever: so Christ reckoned, and so must we.

Secondly. It is to be with him where he is. This is no tautology; but intimates that we shall not only be in the same happy place where Christ is, but that the happiness of the place will consist in his presence, that is the fulness of his joy. The very heaven of heaven is to be with Christ; there in company with him, and communion with him, *Phil. i. 21.*

Thirdly. It is to behold his glory which the Father has given him. Observe, 1st. The glory of the Redeemer is the brightness of heaven. That glory, before which angels cover their faces, was his glory, *ch. xii. 41.* The Lamb is the light of the New Jerusalem, *Rev. xxi. 23.* Christ will come in the glory of his Father, for he is the brightness of his glory. God shews his glory there, as he doth his grace here, through Christ. The Father has given me this glory, though he was as yet in his low estate; but it was very sure and very near.

2nd. The felicity of the redeemed consists very much in the beholding of that glory; they will have the immediate view of his glorious person; "I shall see God in my flesh," *Job xix. 26, 27.* They will have a clear insight into his glorious undertaking, as it will be then accomplished; they will see into those springs of love from whence flow all the streams of grace; they shall have an appropriating sight of Christ's glory,—*uxor fulget radiis mariti*,—"the wife shines with the radiance of her husband;" and an assimilating sight,—they shall be "changed into the same image, from glory to glory."

2nd. Upon what ground we are to hope for heaven. No other but purely the mediation and intercession of Christ; because he hath said, "Father, I will." Our sanctification is our evidence, for he that hath this hope in him purifies himself; but it is the will of Christ that is our title, by the which will we are sanctified, *Heb. x. 10.* Christ speaks here as if he did not count his own happiness complete unless he had his elect to share with him in it; for it is the bringing of many sons to glory that makes the Captain of our salvation perfect, *Heb. ii. 10.*

4. The argument to back this request; "for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." This is a reason, 1st. Why he expected this glory himself; Thou wilt give it me, for thou lovedst me. The honour and power given to the Son as mediator was founded in the Father's love to him; *ch. v. 20.* "The Father loveth the Son;" is infinitely well pleased in his undertaking, and therefore "has given all things into his hand;" and the matter being concerted in the Divine counsels from eternity, he is said to love him as mediator before the foundation of the world. Or, 2nd. Why he expected that those who were given him should be with him to share in his glory. Thou lovedst me, and them in me, and canst deny me nothing I ask for them.

Secondly. The conclusion of the prayer, which is designed to enforce all the petitions for the disciples, especially the last, that they may be glorified. Two things he insists upon, and pleads:

1. The respect he had to his Father, ver. 25. Observe, 1st. The title he gives to God; "O righteous Father." When he prayed they might be sanctified, he calls him "holy Father;" when he prays they might be glorified, he calls him "righteous Father," for it is a crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge shall give. God's righteousness was engaged for the giving out of all that good which the Father had promised, and the Son had purchased.

2nd. The character he gives of the world that lay in wickedness; "the world has not known thee." Note, Ignorance of God overspreads the world of mankind; this is the darkness they sit in. Now this is urged here, *First.* To shew that these disciples needed the aids of special grace, both because of the necessity of their work,—they were to bring a world that knew not God to the knowledge of him; and also because of the difficulty of their work,—they must bring light to those that rebelled against the light; therefore keep them. *Secondly.* To shew that they were qualified for farther peculiar favours, for they had that knowledge of God which the world had not.

3rd. The plea he insists upon for himself; "but I have known thee." Christ knew the Father so as no one else ever did; knew upon what grounds he went in his undertaking; knew his Father's mind in every thing; and therefore in this prayer came to him with confidence, as we do to one we know. Christ is here suing out blessings for those that were his; pursuing this petition. When he had said, "the world has not known thee," one would expect it should follow, "but they have known thee;" no, their knowledge was not to be bragged of: "but I have known thee," which intimates that there is nothing in us to recommend us to God's favour; but all our interest in him, and intercourse with him, results from, and depends upon, Christ's interest and intercourse. We are unworthy, but he is worthy.

4th. The plea he insists upon for his disciples; "and these have known that thou hast sent me." And, *First.* Hereby they are distinguished from the unbelieving world. When multitudes to whom Christ was sent, and his grace offered, would not believe that God had sent him, these knew it and believed it, and were not ashamed to own it. Note, To know and believe in Jesus Christ in the midst of a world that persists in ignorance and infidelity, is highly pleasing to God, and shall certainly be crowned with distinguishing glory. Singular faith qualifies for singular favours. *Secondly.* Hereby they are interested in the mediation of Christ, and partake of the benefit of his acquaintance with the Father; "I have known thee" immediately and perfectly, "and these," though they have not so known thee, nor were capable of knowing thee so, yet they "have known that thou hast sent me;" have known that which was required of them to know; have known the Creator in the Redeemer. Knowing Christ as sent of God, they have in him known the Father, and are introduced to an acquaintance with him; therefore, Father, look after them for my sake.

2. The respect he had to his disciples; ver. 26, I have led them into the knowledge of thee, and will do it yet more and more, with this great and kind

intention, "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Observe here,

1st. What Christ had done for them; "I have declared unto them thy name." *First.* This he had done for those that were his immediate followers. All the time that he went in and out among them, he made it his business to declare his Father's name to them, and to beget in them a veneration for it. The tendency of all his sermons and miracles was to advance his Father's honour, and to spread the knowledge of him, *ch. i. 18.* *Secondly.* This he hath done for all that believe on him; for they had not been brought to believe if Christ had not made known to them his Father's name. Note, 1st. We are indebted to Christ for all the knowledge we have of the Father's name; he declares it, and he opens the understanding to receive that revelation. 2nd. Those whom Christ recommends to the favour of God, he first leads into an acquaintance with God.

2nd. What he intended to do yet farther for them; "I will declare it." To the disciples he designed to give farther instructions after his resurrection, *Acts i. 3.* and to bring them into a much more intimate acquaintance with Divine things by the pouring out of the Spirit after his ascension; and to all believers, into whose hearts he hath shone, he shines more and more. Where Christ has declared his Father's name, he will declare it; for to him that hath shall be given, and they that know God both need and desire to know more of him. This is fitly pleaded for them: Father, own and favour them, for they will own and honour thee.

3rd. What he aimed at in all this; not to fill their heads with curious speculations, and furnish them with something to talk of among the learned, but to secure and advance their real happiness, in two things:

First. Communion with God. "Therefore I have given them the knowledge of thy name, of all that whereby thou hast made thyself known, that thy love, even that wherewith thou hast loved me, may be not only towards them, but in them." That is, 1st. Let them have the fruits of that love for their sanctification; let the spirit of love, with which thou hast filled me, be in them. Christ declares his Father's name to believers, that with that Divine light darted into their minds a Divine love may be shed abroad in their hearts, to be in them a commanding, constraining principle of holiness; that they may partake of a Divine nature. When God's love to us comes to be in us, it is like the virtue which the loadstone gives the needle, inclining it to move towards the pole; it draws out the soul towards God in pious and devout affections, which are as the spirits of the Divine life in the soul. 2nd. Let them have the taste and relish of that love for their consolation; let them not only be interested in the love of God, by having God's name declared to them, but, by a farther declaration of it, let them have the comfort of that interest; may not only know God, but know that they know him, *1 Jno. i. 3.* It is the love of God thus shed abroad in the heart that fills it with joy, *Rom. v. 3, 5.* This God has provided for, that we may not only be satisfied with his lovingkindness, but satisfied of it; and so may live a life of complacency in God, and communion with him. This we must pray for; this we must press after; if we have it, we must thank Christ for it; if we want it, we may thank ourselves.

Secondly. Union with Christ, in order hereunto; "and I in them." There is no getting into the love of God but through Christ, nor can we keep ourselves in that love but by abiding in Christ, that is, having him to abide in us; nor can we have the sense and apprehension of that love but by our experience of the indwelling of Christ, that is, the Spirit of Christ, in our hearts. It is Christ in us that is the only hope of glory that will not make us ashamed, *Col. i. 27.* All our communion with God, the reception of his love to us, and our return of love to him again, passeth through the hands of the Lord Jesus, and the comfort of both is owing purely to him. Christ had said but a little before, "I in them," ver. 23, and here it is repeated again, though the sense was complete without it, and the prayer closed with it, to shew how much the heart of Christ was set upon it; all his petitions centre in this, and with this the prayers of Jesus the Son of David are ended. "I in them;" let me have this and I desire no more; it is the glory of the Redeemer to dwell in the redeemed; it is his rest for ever, and he has desired it. Let us therefore make sure our union with Christ, and then take the comfort of his intercession. This prayer had an end, but that he ever lives to make.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Hitherto this evangelist has recorded little of the history of Christ, only so far as was requisite to introduce his discourses; but now the time drew nigh that Jesus must die, he is very particular in relating the circumstances of his sufferings, and some which the others had omitted, especially his sayings. So far were his followers from being ashamed of his cross, or endeavouring to conceal it, that this was it which both by word and writing they were most industrious to proclaim, and gloried in it. This chapter relates, I. How Christ was arrested in the garden, and surrendered himself a prisoner, ver. 1—12. II. How he was abused in the high priest's court, and how Peter in the meantime denied him, ver. 13—27. III. How he was prosecuted before Pilate, and examined by him; and put in election with Barabbas for the favour of the people, and lost it, ver. 28—40.



AND Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. 2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. 3 Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto

tended that this naturally refers to Judas. Further, his communication with the chief priests respecting the betrayal of our Lord would make him the "known to the high-priest." On the other hand, the phrase "the other disciple" is frequently employed by St. John in describing himself. (Compare chap. xx. 3, 4, 8.) The description of all that happened is given in this chapter as though by an eye-witness. We find John alone of all the disciples present at the crucifixion.

xviii. 17. "Art not thou also, &c.;" Alford has, "Art thou also one of this man's disciples?" The word "also" is appropriate, and intimates the fact that John was known to be a disciple of Jesus. Concerning the denials given by Peter, it has been remarked that it is not necessary to suppose that the evangelists all relate the same three denials. As Christ had foretold that Peter would deny him thrice, each evangelist has recorded three denials, thus showing that the prediction was verified. But the denials given by Peter were more than three.

them, Whom seek ye? 5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground. 7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. 10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. 11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? 12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,



BRIDGE OVER A BROOK.—VER. 1.

The hour was now come that the Captain of our salvation, who was to be made perfect by sufferings, should engage the enemy. We have here his entrance upon the encounter. The day of recompense is in his heart, and the year of his redeemed is come, and his own arm works the salvation, for he has no second. Let us turn aside now, and see this great sight.

First. Our Lord Jesus, like a bold champion, takes the field first, ver. 1, 2. "When he had spoken these words," preached the sermon, prayed his prayer, and so finished his testimony, he would lose no time, but "went forth" immediately out of the house, out of the city, by moonlight, (for the passover was observed at the full moon,) "with his disciples," the eleven, (for Judas was otherwise employed,) and he went "over the brook Cedron," which runs between Jerusalem and the mount of Olives, "where was a garden," not of his own, but some friend's, who allowed him the liberty of it. Observe,

1. That our Lord Jesus entered upon his sufferings "when he had spoken these words," as *Mat. xxvi. 1*, "when he had finished these sayings." Here it is intimated, 1st. That our Lord Jesus took his work before him. The office of the priest was to teach, and pray, and offer sacrifice. Christ, after teaching and praying, applies himself to make atonement. Christ had said all he had to say as a prophet, and now he addresseth himself to the discharge of his office as a priest, to make his soul an offering for sin; and when he had gone through that, he entered upon his kingly office. 2nd. That having, by his sermon, prepared his disciples for this hour of trial, and, by his prayer, prepared himself for it, he then courageously went out to meet it. When he had put on his armour he entered the lists, and not till then. Let those that suffer according to the will of God, in a good cause, with a good conscience, and having a clear call to it, comfort themselves with this, that Christ will not engage those that are his in any conflict, but he will first do that for them which is necessary to prepare them for it; and if we receive Christ's instructions and comforts, and be interested in his intercession, we may, with an unshaken resolution, venture through the greatest hardships in the way of duty.

2. That "he went forth with his disciples." Judas knew what house he was in the city, and he could have stayed and met his sufferings there. But 1st. He would do as he was wont to do, and not alter his method, either to meet the cross, or to miss it, when his hour was come. It was his custom when he was at Jerusalem, after he had spent the day in public work, to retire at night to the mount of Olives; there his quarters were, in the skirts of the city, for they would not make room for him in the palaces, in the heart of the town. This being his custom, he would not be put out of his method by the foresight of his sufferings; but, as Daniel, did then just as he did aforetime, *Dan. vi. 10*. 2nd. He was as unwilling there should be an uproar among the people, as his enemies were; for it was not his way to strive or cry. If he had been seized in the city, and a tumult raised thereby, mischief might have been done, and a deal of blood shed, and therefore he withdrew. Note, When we find ourselves involved in trouble, we should be afraid of involving others with us. It is no disgrace to the followers of Christ to fall tamely. They who aim at honour from men, value themselves upon a resolution to sell their lives as dear

as they can; but they who know their blood is precious to Christ, and not a drop of it shall be shed but upon a valuable consideration, need not stand upon such terms. 3rd. He would set us an example in the beginning of his passion, as he did at the end of it, of retirement from the world. "Let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach," *Heb. xiii. 13*. We must lay aside and leave behind the crowds, and cares, and comforts of cities, even holy cities, if we would cheerfully take up our cross, and keep up our communion with God therein.

3. That he went "over the brook Cedron;" he must go over that to go to the mount of Olives; but the notice taken of it intimates that there was something in it significant; and it points, 1st. At David's prophecy concerning the Messiah, *Ps. cx. 7*, that "he shall drink of the brook in the way;" the brook of suffering, in the way to his glory and our salvation, signified by the brook Cedron; the black brook, so called, either from the darkness of the valley it run through, or the colour of the water, tainted with the dirt of the city. Such a brook Christ drank of when it lay in the way of our redemption, and "therefore shall he lift up the head," his own and ours. 2nd. At David's pattern as a type of the Messiah. In his flight from Absalom, particular notice is taken of his passing over the brook Cedron, and going up by the ascent of mount Olivet, weeping, and all that were with him in tears too, *2 Sam. xv. 23, 30*. The Son of David being driven out by the rebellious Jews, who would not have him to reign over them, and Judas, like Athithophel, being in the plot against him, passed over this brook in meanness and humiliation, attended by a company of true mourners. The godly kings of Judah had burnt and destroyed the idols they found at the brook Cedron, *2 Chr. xv. 16*; Hezekiah, *2 Chr. xxx. 14*; Josiah, *2 Kin. xxiii. 4, 6*. Into that brook the abominable things were cast, Christ being now made sin for us, that he might abolish it, and take it away, began his passion by the same brook. Mount Olivet, where Christ began his sufferings, lay on the east side of Jerusalem; mount Calvary, where he finished them, on the west; for in them he had an eye to such as should come from the east and the west.

4. That he entered into a garden. This circumstance is taken notice of only by this evangelist, that Christ's sufferings began in a garden. In the garden of Eden sin began, there the curse was pronounced, there the Redeemer was promised; and therefore in a garden that promised Seed entered the lists with the old serpent. Christ was buried also in a garden. 1st. Let us, when we walk in our gardens, take occasion from thence to meditate on Christ's sufferings in a garden, to which we owe all the pleasure we have in our gardens; for by them the curse upon the ground for man's sake was removed. 2nd. When we are in the midst of our possessions and enjoyments, we must keep up an expectation of troubles, for our gardens of delight are in a vale of tears.

5. That he had his disciples with him. 1st. Because he used to take them with him when he retired for prayer. 2nd. They must be witnesses of his sufferings, and his patience under them, that they might with the more assurance and affection preach them to the world, *Lu. xxiv. 48*, and be prepared to suffer themselves. 3rd. He would take them into the danger to shew them their weakness, notwithstanding the promises they had made of fidelity. Christ sometimes brings his people into difficulties, that he may magnify himself in their deliverance.

6. That Judas the traitor "knew the place," knew it to be the place of his usual retirement; and, by some word Christ had dropped, probably knew that he intended to be there that night, for want of a better closet. A solitary garden is a proper place for meditation and prayer; and, after a passover, a proper time to retire for private devotion, that we may pray over the impressions made, and the vows renewed, and clench the nail. Mention is made of Judas' knowing the place, 1st. To aggravate the sin of Judas, that he would betray his Master, notwithstanding the intimate acquaintance he had with him; nay, and that he would make use of his familiarity with Christ, as giving him an opportunity of betraying him; a generous mind would have scorned to do so base a thing. Thus hath Christ's holy religion been wounded in the house of its friends, so as it could not have been wounded any where else. Many an apostate could not have been so profane as he is, if he had not been a professor; could not have ridiculed Scriptures and ordinances if he had not known them. 2nd. To magnify the love of Christ, that, though he knew where the traitor would seek him, thither he went to be found of him, now he "knew that his hour was come." Thus he shewed himself willing to suffer and die for us. What he did was not by constraint, but by consent; though as a man he said, "Let this cup pass away," as Mediator he said, "Lo, I come;" I come with a good will. It was late in the night, we may suppose it eight or nine o'clock when Christ went out to the garden; for it was not only his meat and drink, but his rest and sleep, to do the will of Him that sent him. When others were going to bed, he was going to pray, going to suffer.

Secondly. The Captain of our salvation having taken the field, the enemy presently comes upon the spot, and attacks him, ver. 3. Judas, with his men, comes thither, commissioned by the chief priests, especially those among them that were Pharisees, who were the most bitter enemies to Christ. This evangelist passeth over Christ's agony, because the other three had fully related it; and presently introduceth Judas and his company, that came to seize him. Observe,

1. The persons employed in this action: a band of men and officers from the chief priests, with Judas. 1st. Here is a multitude engaged against Christ, "a band of men;" *στρατις, cohors*, a regiment, a Roman band; which some think was five hundred men, others a thousand. Christ's friends were few, his enemies many. Let us, therefore, not follow a multitude to do evil, nor fear a multitude designing evil to us, if God be for us. 2nd. Here is a mixed multitude. The band of men were Gentiles, Roman soldiers; a detachment out of the guards that were posted in the tower of Antonia to be a curb upon the city. The officers of the chief priests, *ιπποκρίτες*, either their domestic servants or the officers of their courts, were Jews; these had an enmity to each other, but were united against Christ, who came to reconcile both to God in one body. 3rd. It is a commissioned multitude, not a popular tumult; no, they have received orders from the chief priests, upon whose suggestion to the governor that this Jesus was a dangerous man, it is likely they had a warrant from him too to take him up, for they feared the people. See what enemies Christ and his Gospel have had, and are likely to have; numerous and potent, and therefore formidable. Ecclesiastical and civil powers combined against them, *Ps. ii. 1, 2*. Christ said it would be so, *Mat. x. 18*, and found it so. 4th. All under the conduct of Judas. He received this band of men; it is likely he desired it, telling them how necessary it was to send a good force; and being as ambitious of the honour of commanding in chief in this expedition, as he was covetous of the wages of this unrighteousness. He thought himself bravely preferred, from coming in the rear of the contemptible twelve, to be placed in the head of these formidable hundreds; he never made such a figure before, and promised himself, perhaps, that this should not be the last time, but he should be rewarded with a captain's commission, or better, if he succeeded well in this enterprise.

2. The preparation they had made for an attack; they came "with lanterns, and torches, and weapons." 1st. If he should abscond, though they had moonlight, they would have occasion for their lights. But they might have spared

xviii. 18. "Fire of coals; for it was cold:" St. John alone mentions the materials (charcoal) of which the fire was made; and the reason for the fire, the coldness of the night (Webster and Wilkinson).

xviii. 22. "Struck Jesus with the palm of his hand;" or, "with a rod." The word, it is said, originally meant a blow from a rod or stick, but came to signify (as it probably does here) a blow from the open hand, distinguished from a blow given with the fist.

xviii. 24. "Had sent him bound:" Alford has, "Annas therefore sent him bound." (See Note on verse 14.)

xviii. 28. "The hall of judgment:" in the margin, "Pilate's house;" Alford, "the palace." It was probably a part of the Tower of Antonia, near the Temple, where the Roman garrison was. "It was early:" the consultation had been held early in the morning (*Matt. xvii. 1*). It was perhaps about 7 A.M. when they arrived at the Prætorium.

these; the second Adam was not driven, as the first was, to hide himself either for fear or shame among the trees of the garden. It was folly to light a candle to seek the sun by. 2nd. If he should resist, they would have occasion for their arms. The weapons of his warfare were spiritual, and at those weapons he had often beaten them, and put them to silence, and therefore they have now recourse to other weapons, swords and staves.

Thirdly. Our Lord Jesus gloriously repulsed the first onset of the enemy, ver. 4-6. Where observe,

1. How he received them with all the mildness imaginable towards them, and all the calmness imaginable in himself.

1st. He met them with a very soft and mild question; ver. 4, "knowing all things that should come upon him," and therefore not at all surprised with this alarm, with a wonderful intrepidity and presence of mind, undisturbed and undaunted, he went forth to meet them, and as if he had been unconcerned, softly asked, "Whom seek ye?" What is the matter? What means this bustle at this time of night? See here, *First*, Christ's foresight of his sufferings. He knew all those things that should come upon him, for he had obliged himself to suffer them. Unless we had strength, as Christ had, to bear the discovery, we should not covet to know what shall come upon us; it would but anticipate our pain. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Yet it will do us good to expect sufferings in general, so as that when they come, we may say, It is but what we looked for; the cost we said down and counted upon. *Secondly*, Christ's forwardness to his sufferings. He did not outrun them, but went out to meet them and reached forth his hand to take the bitter cup. When the people would have forced him to a crown, and offered to make him a king in Galilee, he withdrew, and hid himself, *ch. vi. 15*; but when they came to force him to a cross, he offered himself; for he came to this world to suffer, and went to the other world to reign. This will not warrant us needlessly to expose ourselves to trouble, for we know not when our hour is come; but then we are called to suffering when we have no way to avoid it, but by sin; and when it comes to that, let none of these things move us, for they cannot hurt us.

2nd. He met them with a very calm and mild answer, when they told him whom they were in quest of; ver. 5, they said, "Jesus of Nazareth," and he said, "I am he." *First*, It should seem that many of the Roman band, however, the officers of the temple, had often seen him, at least to satisfy their curiosity; however, Judas to be sure knew him well enough; and yet none of them could pretend to say, Thou art the man we seek. Thus he shewed them the folly of bringing lights to see for him, for he could make them not to know him when they saw him; and had shewed us how easily he can infatuate the counsels of his enemies, and make them lose themselves when they are seeking mischief. *Secondly*, In their inquiries for him they called him Jesus of Nazareth, which was the only title they knew him by, and probably he was so called in their warrant. It was a name of reproach given him, to darken the evidence of his being the Messiah. By this it appears they knew him not, whence he was; nor if they had known, surely they would not have persecuted him. *Thirdly*, He fairly answers them, "I am he." He did not improve the advantage he had against them by their blindness, as Elisha did against the Syrians, telling them, "This is not the way, neither is this the city," but improves it as an opportunity of shewing his willingness to suffer. Though they called him Jesus of Nazareth, he answered to the name, for he despised the reproach. He might have said, I am not he, for he was Jesus of Bethlehem; but he would by no means allow equivocations. He has hereby taught us to own him, whatever it cost us; not to be ashamed of him or his words, but even in difficult times to confess Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner. "I am he," *Ἐγώ εἰμι*.

"I am he" is the glorious name of the blessed God, *Ex. iii. 14*, and the honour of that name is justly challenged by the blessed Jesus. *Fourthly*, Particular notice is taken, in a parenthesis, that Judas stood with them. He that used to stand with them that followed Christ now stood with those that fought against him. This describes an apostate; he is one that changes sides, he herds himself with those with whom his heart always was, and with whom he shall have his lot in the judgment day. This is mentioned, 1st. To shew the impudence of Judas. One would wonder where he got the confidence with which he now faced his Master, and was not ashamed, neither could he blush; Satan in his heart gave him a whore's forehead. 2nd. To shew that Judas was particularly aimed at in the power which went along with that word, "I am he," to foil the aggressors. It was an arrow levelled at the traitor's conscience, and pierced him to the quick; for Christ's coming, and his voice, will be, of all sinners, most terrible to apostates and betrayers of him.

2. See how he terrified them, and obliged them to retire; ver. 6, "they went backward, and," like men thunder-struck, "fell to the ground." It should seem they did not fall forwards, as humbling themselves before him, and yielding to him, but backwards, as standing it out to the utmost. Thus Christ was declared to be more than a man, even then when he was trampled upon as a worm and no man. This word, "I am he," had revived his disciples, and raised them up, *Mat. xiv. 27*; but the same word strikes his enemies down. Hereby he shewed plainly,

1st. What he could have done with them. When he struck them down, he could have struck them dead; when he spoke them to the ground, he could have spoke them to hell, and have sent them, like Korah's company, the next way thither; but he would not do so. *First*, Because the hour of his suffering was come, and he would not put it by; only shew that his life was not forced from him, but he laid it down of himself, as he had said. *Secondly*, Because he would give an instance of his patience and forbearance with the worst of men, and his compassionate love to his very enemies. In striking them down, and no more, he gave them both a call to repent, and space to repent; but their hearts were hardened, and all was in vain.

2nd. What he will do at last with all his implacable enemies that will not repent to give him glory; they shall flee, they shall fall before him. Now the scripture was accomplished, *Ps. xxi. 12*, "Thou shalt make them turn their back," and *Ps. xx. 8*, and it will be accomplished more and more; with the breath of his mouth he will slay the wicked, *2 Thes. ii. 8*; *Rev. xix. 21*. *Quid judicatorius faciet qui judicandus hoc facit?* What will he do when he shall come to judge, seeing he did this when he came to be judged?—*Aug.*

Fourthly. Having given his enemies a repulse, he gives his friends a protection, and that by his word too, ver. 7-9; where we may observe,

1. How he continued to expose himself to their rage, ver. 7. They did not lie long where they fell; but, by Divine permission, got up again. It is only in the other world that God's judgments are everlasting. When they were down, one would have thought Christ should have made his escape; when they were up again, one would have thought they should have let fall their pursuit; but still we find, 1st. They are as eager as ever to seize him. It is in some confusion and disorder that they recover themselves; cannot imagine what ailed them that they could not keep their ground, but will impute it to any thing rather than Christ's power. Note, There are hearts so very hard in sin, that nothing will work upon them to reduce and reclaim them. 2nd. He is as willing as ever to be seized. When they were fallen before him he did not insult over them; but, seeing them at a loss, asked them the same question, "Whom seek ye?" And they gave him the same answer, "Jesus of Nazareth."

In his repenting the question, he seems to come yet closer to their consciences. Do ye not know whom ye seek? Are you not aware that you are in an error, and do not meddle with your match? Have you not had enough of it, but will you try it the other struggle? Did ever any harden his heart against God, and prosper? In their repeating the same answer, they shewed an obstinacy in their wicked way; they still call him Jesus of Nazareth with as much disdain as ever, and Judas as unrelenting as any of them. Let us therefore fear, lest by a few bold steps at first in a sinful way, our hearts be hardened.

2. How he contrived to secure his disciples from their rage. He improved this advantage against them for the protection of his followers; when he shews his courage with reference to himself, "I have told you that I am he," he shews his care for his disciples, "let these go their way." He speaks this as a command to them, rather than a contract with them; for they lay at his mercy, not he at theirs. He chargeth them therefore as one having authority, "Let these go their way;" it is at your peril if you meddle with them. This aggravated the sin of the disciples in forsaking him, and particularly Peter's, in denying him, that Christ had given them this pass or warrant of protection, and yet they had not faith and courage enough to rely upon that, but betook themselves to such base and sorry shifts for their security. When Christ said, "Let these go their way," he intended,

1st. To manifest his affectionate concern for his disciples. When he exposed himself, he exposed them, because they were not as yet fit to suffer; their faith was weak, and their spirits low, and it would have been as much as their souls, and the lives of their souls, were worth, to bring them into sufferings now. New wine must not be put into old bottles. And besides, they had other work to do; they must go their way, for they are to go into all the world to preach the Gospel; destroy not them, for a blessing is in them. Now herein, *First*, Christ gives us a great encouragement to follow him; for though he has allotted us sufferings, yet he considers our frame, will wisely time the cross, and proportion it to our strength, and will deliver the godly out of temptation, either from it or through it. *Secondly*, He gives us a good example of love to our brethren, and concern for their welfare. We must not consult our own ease and safety only, but others' as well as our own, and, in some cases, more than our own. There is a generous and heroic love which will enable us "to lay down our lives for the brethren," *1 Jno. iii. 16*.

2nd. He intended to give a specimen of his undertaking as Mediator. When he offered himself to suffer and die, it was that we might escape. He was our *ἀντίβοϋς*, a sufferer in our stead; when he said, "Lo, I come," he said also, "Let these go their way;" like the ram offered instead of Isaac.

3. Now herein he confirmed the word which he had spoken a little before, *ch. xvii. 12*, "Of them which thou gavest me, I have lost none." Christ, by fulfilling that word in this particular, gave an assurance that it should be accomplished in the full extent of it, not only for them that were now with him, but for all that should believe on him through their word. Though Christ's keeping of them was meant especially of the preservation of their souls from sin and apostasy, yet it is here applied to the preservation of their natural lives, and very fitly, for even the body was a part of Christ's charge and care; he is to raise it up at the last day, and therefore to preserve that as well as the spirit and soul. *Thes. v. 23*; *2 Tim. iv. 17*. Christ will preserve the natural life for the service to which it is designed; it is given him to be used for him, and he will not lose the service of it, but will be magnified in it whether by life or death. It shall be held in life as long as any use is to be made of it; Christ's witnesses shall not die till they have given in their evidence. But that is not all; this preservation of the disciples was in the tendency of it a spiritual preservation. They were now so weak in faith and resolution, that, in all probability, if they had been called out to suffer at this time, they would have shamed themselves and their Master, and some of them, at least the weaker of them, would have been lost; that therefore he might lose none, he would not expose them. The safety and preservation of the saints is owing not only to the Divine grace in proportioning the strength to the trial, but to the Divine providence in proportioning the trial to the strength.

Fifthly. Having provided for the safety of his disciples, he rebukes the rashness of one of them, and represseth the violence of his followers, as he had repulsed the violence of his persecutors, ver. 10, 11, where we have,

1. Peter's rashness. He had a sword; it is not likely he wore one constantly, as a gentleman; but they had two swords among them all, *Lu. xxii. 28*, and Peter was intrusted with one, and he drew it,—for now, if ever, he thought it was time to use it,—and "he smote one of the high priest's servants," who, it is likely, was one of the forwardest, and aiming, it is likely, to clear him down the head, missed his blow, "and," only "cut off his right ear." The servant's name, for the greater certainty of the narrative, is recorded, it was Malchus, or Malluch, *Neh. x. 4*.

1st. We must here acknowledge Peter's good will; he had an honest zeal for his Master, though now misguided. He had lately promised to venture his life for him, and would now make his words good. Probably it exasperated Peter to see Judas at the head of this gang, and his baseness excited Peter's boldness; and I wonder, when he did draw his sword, he did not aim at his head.

2nd. Yet we must acknowledge Peter's ill conduct; and though his good intention did excuse, yet it would not justify him. *First*, He had no warrant from his Master for what he did; Christ's soldiers must wait the word of command, and not outrun it; and before they expose themselves to sufferings, must see to it not only that their cause be good, but their call clear. *Secondly*, He transgressed the duty of his place, and resisted the power, "that were, which Christ had never countenanced, but forbidden;" *Mat. v. 39*, "that ye resist not evil." *Thirdly*, He opposed his Master's suffering; and, notwithstanding the rebuke he had for it once, is ready to repeat, "Master, spare thyself;" suffering be far from thee; though Christ had told him he must and would suffer, and that his hour was now come; thus, while he seemed to fight for Christ, he fought against him. *Fourthly*, He broke the capitulation his Master had lately made with the enemy. When he said, "Let these go their way," he not only indented for their safety, but in effect passed his word for their good behaviour; that they would go away peaceably; this Peter heard, and yet would not be bound by. As we may be guilty of a sinful cowardice when we are called to retire, so we may be of a sinful forwardness when we are called to appear, so we foolishly exposed himself and his fellow disciples to the fury of this enraged multitude. If he had cut off Malchus' head when he cut off his ear, we may suppose the soldiers would have fallen upon all the disciples, and heard them to pieces, and would have represented Christ as no better than Barabbas. Thus many have been guilty of self-destruction in their zeal for self-preservation. *Sixthly*, Peter played the coward so soon after this, denying his Master, that we have reason to think he would not have done this, but that he saw his Master beat them down to the ground, and then he could deal with them, but when he saw him surrender himself notwithstanding, his courage failed him then; whereas the true Christian hero will appear in the cause of Christ, not only when it is prevailing, but when it seems to be declining; will be on the right side, though it be not the rising side.

3rd. We must acknowledge God's overruling providence in directing the stroke, so that it should do no more execution, but only cut off his ear, which was rather marking him than maiming him. As also in giving Christ an

xviii. 29-32. Pilate, hearing that Jesus was an offender under their law, was about to give them leave to treat him accordingly, and this would have made it quite safe to execute him. But the council, wishing to shift the responsibility from themselves, from a fear of some reaction among the people in favour of the Lord, such as they had seen on the first day of that week, said that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death; and having condemned Jesus for blasphemy, they now strove to have him condemned by Pilate for a

political crime, for calling himself the King of the Jews. But the Jewish punishment was stoning, whilst crucifixion was a Roman punishment, inflicted occasionally on those who were not Roman citizens. Hence the force of verse 32.

xviii. 37. "Every one that is of the truth, &c.:" "Not every one that hears my voice is of the truth, but every one that is of the truth hears, recognises my voice."

xviii. 38. "He went out;" after this, hearing of Galilee, he sent

opportunity to manifest his power and goodness in healing the hurt, *Lu. xxii. 51*. Thus what was in danger of turning to Christ's reproach, proved an occasion of that which redounded much to his honour, even among his adversaries.

2. The rebuke his Master gave him; ver. 11, "Put up thy sword into the sheath," or scabbard: it is a gentle reproof, because it was his zeal that carried him beyond the bounds of discretion; he did not aggravate the matter, only bade him do so no more. Many think, when they are in grief and distress, it will excuse them if they be hot and hasty with those about them; but Christ has here set us an example of meekness in sufferings. Peter must put up his sword, for it was the sword of the Spirit that was to be committed to him; weapons of warfare not carnal, yet mighty. When Christ with a word felled the aggressors, he shewed Peter how he should be armed with a word, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and with that, not long after this, he laid Ananias and Sapphira dead at his feet.

3. The reason for this rebuke: "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" Matthew relates another reason Christ gave for this rebuke, but John preserves this which he had omitted; in which Christ gives us,

1st. A full proof of his own submission to his Father's will. Of all that was amiss in what Peter did, he seems to resent nothing so much as that he would have hindered his sufferings now his hour was come. "What, Peter! wilt thou step in between the cup and the lip? Get thee hence, Satan." If Christ be determined to suffer and die, it is presumption for Peter, in word or deed, to oppose it. "Shall I not drink it?" The manner of expression speaks a settled resolution, and that he would not entertain a thought to the contrary. He was willing to drink of this cup, though it was a bitter cup, an infusion of the worm-wood and the gall; the cup of trembling, a bloody cup, the dregs of the cup of the Lord's wrath, *Isa. li. 22*, yet he drank it, that he might put into our hands the cup of salvation, the cup of consolation, the cup of blessing; and therefore he is willing to drink it, because his Father put it into his hand. If his Father will have it so, it is for the best, and be it so.

2nd. A fair pattern to us of submission to God's will, in every thing that concerns us. We must pledge Christ in the cup that he drank of, *Mat. xx. 23*, and must argue ourselves into a compliance. First. It is but a cup; a small matter comparatively, be it what it will. It is not a sea, a Red sea, a Dead sea, for it is not hell; it is light, and but for a moment. Secondly. It is a cup that is given us; sufferings are gifts. Thirdly. It is given us by a Father, who has a Father's authority, and doth us no wrong; a Father's affection, and means us no hurt.

Sixthly. Having entirely reconciled himself to the dispensation, he calmly surrendered and yielded himself a prisoner, not because he could not have made his escape, but because he would not. One would have thought the cure of Malchus' ear should have made them relent, but nothing would win upon them. *Maledictus furor, quem nec majestas miraculi nec pietas beneficii confringere potuit*,—"Accursed rage, which the grandeur of the miracle could not appease, nor the tenderness of the favour conciliate."—*Anselm*. Observe here,

1. How they seized him. They took Jesus. Only some few of them could lay hands on him, but it is charged upon them all, for they were all aiding and abetting: in treason there are no accessories; all are principals. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, "bulls have compassed me," *Ps. xxii. 12*; "compassed me like bees," *Ps. cxviii. 12*; "the breath of our nostrils is taken in their pit," *Lam. iv. 20*. They had so often been frustrated in their attempts to seize him, that, now they had got him into their hands, we may suppose they flew upon him with so much the more violence.

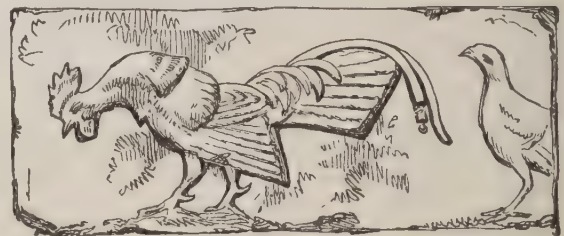
3. How they secured him: they bound him. This particular of his sufferings is taken notice of only by this evangelist, that as soon as ever he was taken he was bound, pinioned, handcuffed. Tradition saith, they bound him with such cruelty, that the blood started out at his fingers' ends; and that having bound his hands behind him, they clapped an iron chain about his neck, and with that dragged him along. See *Gerhard. Harm. cap. 5*.

1st. This speaks the spite of his persecutors. They bound him, First. That they might torment him, and put him to pain, as they bound Samson to afflict him. Secondly. That they might disgrace him, and put him to shame. Slaves were bound, so was Christ, though free-born. Thirdly. That they might prevent his escape, Judas having bidden them hold him fast. See their folly! that they should think to fetter that power which had but just now proved itself omnipotent! Fourthly. They bound him as one already condemned, for they were resolved to prosecute him to the death, and that he should die as a fool dieth; that is, as a malefactor, with his hands bound, *2 Sam. iii. 33, 34*. Christ had bound the consciences of his persecutors with the power of his word, which galled them; and to be revenged on him, they laid these bonds on him.

2nd. Christ's being bound was very significant; in this, as in other things, there was a mystery. First. Before they bound him, he had bound himself by his own undertaking to the work and office of a Mediator; he was already bound to the horns of the altar with the cords of his own love to man, and duty to his Father, else their cords would not have held him. Secondly. We were bound with the cords of our iniquities, *Pr. v. 22*; with the yoke of our transgressions, *Lam. i. 14*. Guilt is a bond on the soul, by which we are bound over to the judgment of God; corruption is a bond on the soul, by which we are bound under the power of Satan. Christ being made sin for us, to free us from those bonds, himself submitted to be bound for us, else we had been bound hand and foot, and reserved in chains of darkness. To his bonds we owe our liberty; his confinement was our enlargement; thus the Son maketh us free. Thirdly. The types and prophecies of the Old Testament were herein accomplished. Isaac was bound that he might be sacrificed; Joseph was bound, and the iron entered into his soul, in order to his being brought from prison to reign, *Ps. cv. 18*; Samson was bound in order to his slaying more of the Philistines at his death than he had done in his life; and the Messiah was prophesied of as a prisoner, *Isa. liii. 8*. Fourthly. Christ was bound, that he might bind us to duty and obedience. His bonds for us are bonds upon us, by which we are ever obliged to love him, and serve him. Paul's salutation to his friends, is Christ's to us all, "Remember my bonds," (*Col. iv. 18*), remember them, as bound with him from all sin, and to all duty. Fifthly. Christ's bonds for us were designed to make our bonds for him easy to us, if at any time we be so called out to suffer for him, to sanctify and sweeten them, and put honour upon them; these enabled Paul and Silas to sing in the stocks, and Ignatius to call his bonds for Christ 'spiritual pearls.'—*Epist. ad Eph.*

13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. 14 Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. 15 And Simon

Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. 16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. 18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. 19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. 20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. 21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. 22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? 23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? 24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest. 25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. 26 One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? 27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.



SYRIAN COCK.—FROM THE XANTHIAN MARBLES.

We have here an account of Christ's arraignment before the high priest, and some passages that occurred therein, which were omitted by the other evangelists; and Peter's denying of him, which the other evangelists had given the story of entire by itself, is interwoven with the other passages. The crime laid to his charge, having relation to religion, the judges of the spiritual court took it to fall directly under their cognizance; both Jews and Gentiles seized him, and so both Jews and Gentiles tried and condemned him, for he died for the sins of both. Let us go over the story in order.

First. Having seized him, they "led him away to Annas first," before they brought him to the court that was set expecting him in the house of Caiaphas, ver. 1.

1. They led him away, led him in triumph, as a trophy of their victory; led him as a lamb to the slaughter, and they led him through the sheep-gate spoken of *Neh. iii. 1*, for through that they went from the mount of Olives into Jerusalem. They hurried him away with violence, as if he had been the worst and vilest of malefactors. We had been led away of our own impetuous lusts, and led captive by Satan at his will; and that we might be rescued, Christ was led away, led captive by Satan's agents and instruments.

2. They led him away to their masters that sent them. It was now about midnight, and one would think they should have put him in ward, *Lev. xxiv. 12*, should have led him to some prison till it was a proper time to call some court; but he is hurried away immediately, not to the justices of peace to be committed, but to the judges to be condemned; so extremely violent was the prosecution, partly because they feared a rescue, which they would thus not only leave no time for, but give a terror to; partly, because they greedily thirsted after Christ's blood, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.

3. They led him to Annas first: probably his house lay in the way, and was

Jesus to Herod, and on his return Pilate tried the expedient of verse 39. Throughout the whole narrative Pilate is seen trying to throw the decision off himself. He was hated by the Jews, who were on the look-out for any accusation against him. His cruelty and treachery (compare Luke xiii. 1) roused bitterness in the hearts of those who groaned under his oppressive rule. The Jews knew where they could best wound him, and policy to get rid of Pilate directed their conduct during the trial of Jesus. The favour of the Emperor was necessary

to his prosperity, and the Jews were ready for any opportunity of denouncing him at Rome. His life at Jerusalem must at times have been a very torment to him, but at no period more so than when he must either violate his sense of right by condemning Christ or run the almost certain risk of disgrace and banishment. His after-life illustrates how vain are the devices of timidity to avoid danger at the expense of duty. Not many years after the crucifixion he was accused and banished, and died by his own hand.

convenient for them to call at to refresh themselves, and, as some think, to be paid for their service. I suppose Annas was old and infirm, and could not be present in council with the rest at that time of night, and yet earnestly desired to see the prey. To gratify him, therefore, with the assurance of their success, that the old man might sleep the better, and to receive his blessing for it, they produce their prisoner before him. It is sad to see them that are old and sickly, when they cannot commit sin as formerly, taking pleasure in them that do. Dr. Lightfoot thinks Annas was not present, because he was to attend early that morning in the temple, to examine the sacrifices which were that day to be offered, whether they were without blemish; if so, there was a significance in it, that Christ the great Sacrifice was presented to him, and sent away bound, as approved and ready for the altar.

4. This Annas was father in law to Caiaphas the high priest; this kindred by marriage between them comes in as a reason, either why Caiaphas ordered that this piece of respect should be done to Annas, to favour him with the first sight of the prisoner; or why Annas was willing to countenance Caiaphas in a matter his heart was so much upon. Note, Acquaintance and alliance with wicked people is a great confirmation to many in their wicked ways.

Secondly, Annas did not long detain them, being as willing as any of them to have the prosecution pushed on, and therefore sent him bound to Caiaphas to his house, which was appointed for the rendezvous of the Sanhedrim upon this occasion, or to the usual place in the temple where the high priest kept his court; this is mentioned, ver. 24, but our translators intimate in the margin, that it should come in here, and accordingly read it there, "Annas had sent him." Observe here.

1. The power of Caiaphas intimidated; ver. 13, he "was the high priest that same year." The high priest's commission was during life; but there were now such frequent changes, by the simoniacal artifices of aspiring men with the government, that it was become almost an annual office, a presage of its final period approaching; while they were undermining one another, God was overturning them all, that he might come whose right it was. Caiaphas was high priest that same year when Messiah was to be cut off, which intimates, 1st. That when an ill thing was to be done by a high priest, according to the foreknowledge of God, Providence so ordered it that an ill man should be in the chair to do it. 2nd. That when God would make it to appear what corruption there was in the heart of a bad man, he put him into a place of power, where he had temptation and opportunity to exert it. It was the ruin of Caiaphas that he was high priest that year, and so became a ringleader in the putting of Christ to death. Many a man's advancement has lost him his reputation, and he had not been dishonoured if he had not been preferred.

2. The malice of Caiaphas, which is intimated, ver. 14, by the repeating of what he had said some time before, "that," right or wrong, guilty or innocent, "it was expedient that one man should die for the people," which refers to the story, ch. xi. 50. This comes in here to shew, 1st. What an ill man he was; this was that Caiaphas that governed himself and the church by rules of policy, in defiance of the rules of equity. 2nd. What ill usage Christ was likely to meet with in his court, when his case was adjudged before it was heard, and they were already resolved what to do with him; he must die, so that his trial was a jest. Thus the enemies of Christ's Gospel are resolved, true or false, to run it down. 3rd. It is a testimony to the innocency of our Lord Jesus, from the mouth of one of his worst enemies, who owned that he fell a sacrifice to the public good, and that it was not just he should die, but expedient only.

3. The concurrence of Annas in the prosecution of Christ. He made himself a partaker in guilt, 1st. With the captain and officers, that without law or mercy had bound him, for he approved it by continuing him bound when he should have loosed him, he not being convicted of any crimes, nor having attempted an escape. If we do not what we can to undo what others have ill done, we are accessaries, *ex post facto*,—after the fact. It was more excusable in the rude soldiers to bind him, than in Annas, that should know better things, to continue him bound. 2nd. With the chief priest and council that condemned him and prosecuted him to death. This Annas was not present with them; yet thus he wished them good speed, and became a partaker of their evil deeds.

Thirdly, In the house of Caiaphas, Simon Peter began to deny his master, ver. 15—18.

1. It was with much ado that Peter got into the hall where the court was set; an account of which we have, ver. 15, 16; where we may observe,

1st. Peter's kindness to Christ, which (though it proved no kindness) appeared in two things. *First*, That he followed Jesus when he was led away. Though at first he fled with the rest, yet afterwards he took heart a little, and followed at some distance; calling to mind the promises he had made to adhere to him whatever it cost him. They that had followed Christ in the midst of his honours, and shared with him in those honours, when the people cried Hosanna to him, ought to have followed him now in the midst of his reproaches, and to have shared with him in those; they that truly love and value Christ, will follow him all weathers and all ways. *Secondly*, When he could not get in where Jesus was in the midst of his enemies, he stood at the door without, willing to be as near him as he could, and waiting for an opportunity to get nearer. Thus, when we meet with opposition in following Christ, we must shew our good will; but yet this kindness of Peter's was no kindness, because he had not strength and courage enough to persevere in it, and so, as it proved, he did but run himself into a snare; and even his following Christ, considering all things, was to be blamed; because Christ, who knew him better than he knew himself, had expressly told him, ch. xiii. 36, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now," and told him again and again he would deny him; and he had lately had experience of his own weakness in forsaking him. Note, We must take heed of tempting God by running upon difficulties beyond our strength, and venturing too far in a way of suffering. If our call be clear to expose ourselves, we may hope that God will enable us to honour him; but if it be not, we may fear that God will lead us to shame ourselves.

2nd. The other disciple's kindness to Peter, which yet, as it proved, was no kindness neither. St. John several times in this Gospel speaking of himself as another disciple, many interpreters have been led by that to fancy that this other disciple here was John; and many conjectures they have, how he should come to be known to the high priest; *propter generis nobilitatem*,—being of superior birth, saith Jerome, *Epitaph. Marcel.*, as if he were a better gentleman born than his brother James, when they sold his estate to the high priest; others, that he supplied his family with fish; which are very improbable. But I see no reason to think that this other disciple was John, or one of the twelve; other sheep Christ had which were not of the fold, and this might be as the Syrian reads it, *unus ex discipulis aliis*,—one of those other disciples that believed in Christ, but resided at Jerusalem, and kept their places there; perhaps Joseph of Arimathea, or Nicodemus, known to the high priest, but not known to him to be disciples of Christ. Note, As there are many who seem disciples and are not so, so there are many that are disciples and seem not so. There are good people hid in courts, even Nero's, as well as hid in crowds. We must not conclude a man to be no friend to Christ, merely because he has acquaintance and conversation with those that are his known enemies. Now,

First, This other disciple, whoever he was, shewed a respect to Peter, in

introducing him, not only to gratify his curiosity and affection, but to give him an opportunity of being serviceable to his Master upon his trial, if there were occasion. Those that have a real kindness for Christ and his ways, though their temper may be reserved, and their circumstances lead them to be cautious and retired, yet, if their faith be sincere, when they are called to it, they will discover which way their inclination lies, by being ready to do a professed disciple a good turn. Peter, perhaps, had formerly introduced this disciple into conversation with Christ; and now he requites his kindness, and is not ashamed to own him, though it should seem he looked but sneakingly.

Secondly, But this kindness proved no kindness; nay, a great diskindness. By letting him into the high priest's hall, he let him into temptation, and the consequence was ill. Note, The courtesies of our friends often prove a snare to us through a misguided affection.

2. Peter being got in, was immediately assaulted with the temptation, and foiled by it, ver. 17. Observe here, 1st. How slight the attack was. It was but a silly maid, of so small account that she was only set to keep the door, that challenged him, and she only asked him carelessly, "Art not thou one of this man's disciples?" probably suspecting it by his sheepish look and coming in timorously. We should many a time better maintain a good cause if we had a good heart on it, and could put a good face on it. Peter had had some reason to take the alarm if Malchus had set upon him, and had said, This is he that cut off my ear, and I will have his head for it; but when a maid only asked him, "Art not thou one of them?" he might without danger have answered, And what if I am? Suppose the servants had ridiculed him, and insulted over him upon it; those can bear but little for Christ that cannot bear that; that is, but running with the footmen. 2nd. How speedy the surrender was; Without taking time to recollect himself, he suddenly answered, "I am not." If he had had the boldness of the lion, he would have said, It is my honour that I am so; or, if he had had the wisdom of the serpent, he would have kept silence at this time; for it was an evil time. But all his care being for his own safety, he thought he could not secure that but by a peremptory denial, "I am not;" he not only denies it, but even disdains it, and scorns her words.

3. Yet he goes farther into the temptation; ver. 18, "and the servants and officers stood there, and Peter with them." 1st. See how the servants made much of themselves. The night being cold, they made a fire in the hall, not for their masters—they were so eager in prosecuting Christ, that they forgot cold—but for themselves, to refresh themselves. They cared not what came of Christ, all their care was to sit and warm themselves, *Amos vi. 6*. 2nd. See how Peter herded himself with them, and made one among them. "He sat and warmed himself."

First, It was a fault bad enough that he did not attend his Master, and appear for him at the upper end of the hall, where he was now under examination. He might have been a witness for him, and have confronted the false witnesses that swore against him, if his Master had called him; however, he might have been a witness to him, might have taken exact notice of what passed, that he might relate it to the other disciples, who could none of them get in to hear the trial; he might have learned by his Master's example how to carry himself, when it should come to his turn to suffer thus; yet neither his conscience nor his curiosity could bring him into the court, but he sits by, as if, like Gallio, he cared for none of these things. And yet, at the same time, we have reason to think his heart was as full of grief and concern as it could hold; but he had not the courage to own it. "Lord, lead us not into temptation."

Secondly, It was much worse that he joined himself with those that were his Master's enemies; "he stood with them and warmed himself," that was a poor excuse for joining with them. A little thing will draw those into bad company that will be drawn to it by the love of a good fire. If Peter's zeal for his Master had not frozen, but had continued in the heat it seemed to be of but a few hours before, he had not had occasion to warm himself now. Peter was much to be blamed.

1st. Because he associated himself with these wicked men, and kept company with them. Doubtless they were diverting themselves with this night's expedition, scoffing at Christ, at what he had said, at what he had done, and triumphing in their victory over him; and what sort of entertainment would this give to Peter? If he said as they said, or by silence gave consent, he involved himself in sin; if not, he exposed himself to danger. If Peter had not so much courage as to appear publicly for his Master, yet he might have had so much devotion as to retire into a corner, and weep in secret for his Master's sufferings and his own sin in forsaking him; if he could not have done good, he might have kept out of the way of doing hurt. It is better abscond than appear to no purpose, or ill purpose.

2nd. Because he desired to be thought one of them, that he might not be suspected to be a disciple of Christ. Is this Peter? What a contradiction is this to the prayer of every good man, "Gather not my soul with sinners." Saul among the prophets is not so absurd as David among the Philistines. They that deprecate the lot of the scornful hereafter, should dread the seat of the scornful now. It is ill warming ourselves with those with whom we are in danger of burning ourselves, *Ps. cxli. 4*.

Fourthly, Peter, Christ's friend, having begun to deny him, the high priest, his enemy, begins to accuse him, or rather urges him to accuse himself, ver. 19—21. It should seem the first attempt was to prove him a seducer, and a teacher of false doctrine, which this evangelist relates; and when they failed in the proof of that, then they charged him with blasphemy, which is related by the other evangelists, and therefore omitted here. Observe,

The articles or heads upon which Christ was examined, ver. 19, concerning his disciples and his doctrine. Observe, 1st. The irregularity of the process. It was against all law and equity; they seize him as a criminal, and now he is their prisoner, they have nothing to lay to his charge; no libel, no prosecutor; but the judge must himself be the prosecutor, and the prisoner himself the witness, and against all reason and justice is put on to be his own accuser. 2nd. The intention. "The high priest then," *sc.*, therefore,—which seems to refer to ver. 14, because he had resolved that Christ must be sacrificed to their private malice, under colour of the public good,—therefore he examined him upon those interrogatories which would touch his life. He examined him,

First, Concerning his disciples; that he might charge him with sedition, and represent him as dangerous to the Roman government, as well as to the Jewish church. He asked him who were his disciples? what number they were? of what country? what were their names and characters? Insinuating that his scholars were designed for soldiers, and would in time become a formidable body. Some think his question concerning his disciples was, What was now become of them all? where were they? and why did they not appear? upbraiding him with their cowardice in deserting him; thus adding to the affliction of it. There was something significant in this; that Christ's calling and owning his disciples was the first thing laid to his charge; for it was for their sakes that he sanctified himself and suffered.

Secondly, Concerning his doctrine; that they might charge him with heresy, and bring him under the penalty of the law against false prophets, *Deu. xiii. 9, 10*. This was a matter properly cognizable in that court, *Deu. xvii. 12*; therefore a prophet could not perish but at Jerusalem, where that court sat. They could not prove any false doctrine upon him; but they hoped to extort some from him which they might distort to his prejudice, and to make him a

xix. 1. "Scourged him:" Pilate had before offered to do this, and then release Jesus (Luke xxiii. 16, 22). It is not improbable that he scourged Jesus now in the hope that this punishment would satisfy the Jews.

xix. 2—5. This mockery on the part of the soldiers seems to have been their own act, and not suggested or countenanced by Pilate. "The purple robe;" Olshausen says it was an old robe. It may have been the "gorgeous" robe in which Herod arrayed him (Luke

xxiii. 11). "And said:" the majority of early MSS. read, "And they kept coming unto him, and saying," &c. "Then came Jesus forth;" or, "Jesus therefore came forth, wearing the crown of thorns," &c.

xix. 6. "Take ye him, and crucify him:" Alford renders, "Take him yourselves." To understand the meaning and force of these words, we must remember—(1) that the Jews were not permitted to inflict death (xviii. 31); (2) that the verbal permission would involve them in the actual responsibility; (3) that the infliction of this death

offender for some word or other, *Isa. xxix. 21*. They said nothing to him concerning his miracles, by which he had done so much good, and proved his doctrine beyond contradiction, because of these they were sure they could take no hold. Thus the adversaries of Christ, while they are industriously quarrelling with his truth, wilfully shut their eyes against the evidences of it, and take no notice of them.

2. The appeal Christ made in answer to these interrogatories.

1st. As to his disciples, he said nothing, because it was an impertinent question. If his doctrine was sound and good, his having disciples to whom to communicate it was no more than what was practised and allowed by their own doctors. If Caiaphas, in asking him concerning his disciples, designed to ensnare them, and bring them into trouble, it was in kindness to them that he said nothing of them; for he had said, "Let these go their way." If he meant to upbraid him with their cowardice, no wonder he said nothing; for,

Pudet hæc approbriari nobis,

Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli,

—'Shame attaches when charges are exhibited that cannot be refuted.' He would say nothing to condemn them, and could say nothing to justify them.

2nd. As to his doctrine, he said nothing in particular; but in general referred himself to those that heard him, being not only made manifest to God, but made manifest also in their consciences, ver. 20, 21.

First. He tacitly charges his judges with illegal proceedings. He doth not indeed speak evil of the rulers of the people, nor say now to these princes, Ye are wicked; but he appeals to the settled rules of their own court, whether they had dealt fairly by him. "Do ye indeed judge righteously?" *Ps. lxxviii. 1*. So here, "Why ask ye me?" Which implies two absurdities in judgment, 1st. Why ask ye me now concerning my doctrine, when you have already condemned it? They had made an order of court for the excommunicating of all that owned him, *ch. ix. 22*, had issued out a proclamation for the apprehending of him; and now they come to ask what his doctrine is! This was he condemned, as his doctrine and cause commonly are, unheard. 2nd. "Why ask ye me?" must I accuse myself, when you have no evidence against me?

Secondly. He insists upon his fair and open dealing with them in the publication of his doctrine, and justifies himself with that. The crime which the Sanhedrim by the law was to inquire after, was the clandestine spreading of dangerous doctrines, enticing secretly, *Deu. xiii. 6*. As to this, therefore, Christ clears himself very fully. 1st. As to the manner of his preaching. He spake "openly," *παρρησια*,—with freedom and plainness of speech; he did not deliver things ambiguously, as Apollo did his oracles. Those that would undermine the truth, and spread corrupt notions, do it by sly insinuations, putting queries, starting difficulties, and asserting nothing; but Christ explained himself fully with, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," his reproofs were free and bold, and his testimonies express against the corruptions of the age. 2nd. As to the persons he preached to. He spake to the world, that is, to all that had ears to hear, and were willing to hear him, high or low, learned or unlearned, Jew or Gentile, friend or foe; his doctrine feared not the censure of a mixed multitude; nor did he grudge the knowledge of it to any, as the masters of some rare invention commonly do, but freely communicated it, as the sun doth his beams. 3rd. As to the places he preached in. When he was in the country, he preached ordinarily in the synagogues, the places of meeting for worship, and on the sabbath day, the time of meeting; when he came up to Jerusalem, he preached the same doctrine in the temple, at the time of the solemn feasts, when the Jews from all parts assembled there. Though he often preached in private houses, and on mountains, and by the seaside, to shew that his word and worship were not to be confined to temples and synagogues, yet what he preached in private was the very same with what he delivered publicly. Note, The doctrine of Christ, purely and plainly preached, need not be ashamed to appear in the most numerous assembly, for it carries its own strength and beauty along with it. What Christ's faithful ministers say, they would be willing all the world should hear. Wisdom cries in the places of concourse, *Pr. i. 21* *viii. 3*; *ix. 3*. 4th. As to the doctrine itself. He said nothing in secret contrary to what he said in public, but only by way of repetition and explication. "In secret have I said nothing," as if he had been either suspicious of the truth of it, or conscious of any ill design in it. He sought no corners, for he feared no colours, nor said any thing that he need be ashamed of; what he did speak in private to his disciples he ordered them to proclaim on the housetops, *Mat. x. 27*. God saith of himself, *Isa. xlv. 19*, "I have not spoken in secret;" his commandment is not hidden, *Deu. xxx. 11*. And the righteousness of faith speaks in like manner, *Rom. x. 5*, *Veritas nihil metuit nisi abscondi*,—'truth fears nothing but concealment.'—*Tertul.*

Thirdly. He appeals to those that had heard him, and desires they might be examined what doctrine he had preached, and whether it had that dangerous tendency that was surmised. "Ask them that heard me, what I said unto them;" some of them may be in court, or may be sent for out of their beds. He means not his friends and followers, who might be presumed to speak in his favour; but, Ask any impartial hearer; ask your own officers. Some think he pointed to them, when he said, "Behold, they know what I said," referring to the report which they had made of his preaching, *ch. vii. 46*, "Never man spake like this man." Nay, you may ask some upon the bench; for it is probable some of them had heard him, and been put to silence by him. Note, The doctrine of Christ may safely appeal to all that know it, and has so much right and reason on its side, that they who will judge impartially cannot but witness to it.

Fifthly. While the judges were examining him, the servants that stood by were abusing him, ver. 22, 23. 1. It was a base affront which one of the officers gave him; though he spoke with so much calmness and convincing evidence, this insolent fellow "struck him with the palm of his hand," probably on the side of his head or face, saying, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" as if he had behaved himself rudely to the court. 1st. He struck him, *ἔδωκε ῥάπισμα*,—he 'gave him a blow.' Some think it signifies a blow with a rod, or wand, from *πάβδος*; or with the staff which was the badge of his office. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, *Isa. i. 6*, "I gave my cheeks," *εἰς ῥάπισματα*, so the Seventy, "to blows," the word here used. And *Mic. vi. 1*, "They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek;" and the type answered, *Job xvi. 10*, "They have smitten me on the cheek reproachfully." It was unjust to strike one that neither said nor did amiss; it was insolent for a mean servant to strike one that was confessedly a person of account; it was cowardly to strike one that had his hands tied; and barbarous to strike a prisoner at the bar. Here was a breach of the peace in the face of the court, and yet the judges countenanced it. Confusion of face was our due; but Christ here took it to himself; Upon me be the curse, the shame.

2nd. He checked him in a haughty, imperious manner, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" As if the blessed Jesus was not good enough to speak to his master, or not wise enough to know how to speak to him, but, like a rude and ignorant prisoner, must be controlled by the jailer, and taught how to behave himself. Some of the ancients suggest that this officer was Malchus, who pined to Christ the healing of his ear, and the saving of his head, and yet made him this ill return. But, whoever it was, it was done to please the high priest,

and to curry favour with him; for what he said speaks a jealousy for the dignity of the high priest. Wicked rulers will not want wicked servants, who will help forward the affliction of those whom their masters persecute. There was a successor of this high priest that commanded the bystanders to smite Paul thus on the mouth, *Acts xxiii. 2*. Some think this officer took himself affronted by Christ's appeal to those about him concerning his doctrine, as if he would have vouched him to be a witness; and perhaps he was one of those officers that had spoken honourably of him, *ch. vii. 47*; and, lest he should now be thought a secret friend to him, he thus appears a bitter enemy.

2. Christ bore this affront with wonderful meekness and patience; ver. 23, "If I have spoken evil," in what I have now said, "bear witness of the evil," observe it to the court, and let them judge of it who are the proper judges; "but if well," and as it did become me, "why smitest thou me?" Christ could have answered him with a miracle of wrath, could have struck him dumb or dead, or have withered the hand that was lifted up against him. But this was the day of his patience and suffering, and he answered him with the meekness of wisdom, to teach us not to avenge ourselves; not to render railing for railing, but, with the innocency of the dove, to bear injuries, even then when with the wisdom of the serpent, as our Saviour, we shew the injustice of them, and appeal to the magistrate concerning them. Christ did not here turn the other cheek, by which it appears that that rule, *Mat. v. 39*, is not to be understood literally; a man may possibly turn the other cheek, and yet have his heart full of malice; but, comparing Christ's precept with his pattern, we learn, 1st. That in such cases we must not be our own avengers, nor judges in our own case; we must rather receive than give the second blow, which makes the quarrel. We are allowed to defend ourselves, but not to avenge ourselves; the magistrate (if it be necessary for the preserving of the public peace, and the restraining and terrifying of evil doers) is to be the avenger, *Rom. xiii. 4*. 2nd. Our resentment of injuries done us must always be rational, and never passionate; such Christ's here was; when he suffered he reasoned, but threatened not. He fairly expostulated with him that did him the injury, and so may we. 3rd. When we are called out to suffering, we must accommodate ourselves to the inconveniences of a suffering state with patience, and by one indignity done us be prepared to receive another, and to make the best of it.

Sixthly. While the servants were thus abusing him, Peter was proceeding to deny him, ver. 25–27. It is a sad story, and none of the least of Christ's sufferings.

1. He repeated the sin the second time, ver. 25. While he was warming himself with the servants, as one of them, they asked him, "Art not thou one of his disciples?" what dost thou here among us? He, perhaps, hearing that Christ was examined about his disciples, and fearing he should be seized, or at least smitten as his Master was, if he should own it, flatly denied it, and said, "I am not."

1st. It was his great folly to thrust himself into the temptation, by continuing in the company of those that were unsuitable for him, and that he had nothing to do with. He stayed to warm himself; but they that warm themselves with evil doers grow cold towards good people and good things; and they that are fond of the devil's fireside, are in danger of the devil's fire. Peter might have stood by his Master at the bar, and have warmed himself better than here, at the fire of his Master's love, which many waters could not quench, *Cant. viii. 5, 7*. He might there have warmed himself with zeal for his Master, and indignation at his persecutors; but he chose rather to warm with them that were warm against them. But how could one, one disciple, be warm alone? *Ecc. iv. 11*.

2nd. It was his great unhappiness that he was again assaulted by the temptation; and no other could be expected, for this was a place, this an hour of temptation. When the judge asked Christ about his disciples, probably the servants took the hint, and challenged Peter for one of them. Answer to thy name. See here, First. The subtlety of the tempter in running down one whom he saw falling, and mustering a greater force against him; not a maid now, but all the servants. Note, Yielding to one temptation invites another, and perhaps a stronger; Satan redoubles his attacks when we give ground. Secondly. The danger of bad company. We commonly study to approve ourselves to those with whom we choose to associate ourselves; their good word we value ourselves by, and covet to stand right in their opinion. As we choose our people, we choose our praise, and govern ourselves accordingly; and are therefore concerned to make the first choice well, and not to mingle ourselves with those whom we cannot please without displeasing God.

3rd. It was his great weakness, nay, it was his great wickedness, to yield to the temptation, and to say, I am not one of his disciples, as one ashamed of that which was his honour, and afraid of suffering for it, which would have been yet more his honour. See how the fear of man brings a snare. When Christ was admired and caressed, and treated with respect, Peter pleased himself, and perhaps prided himself, in this that he was a disciple of Christ; and so put in for a share in the honours done his Master. But thus many, who seem fond of the reputation of religion when it is in fashion, are ashamed of the reproach of it; but we must take it for better and worse.

2. He repeated the sin the third time, ver. 26, 27. Here he was attacked by one of the servants, that by the same token was kinsman to Malchus; and, when he hears Peter deny himself to be a disciple of Christ, gives him the lie with great assurance, "Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" witness my kinsman's ear: Peter then denied again, as if he knew nothing of Christ, nothing of the garden, nothing of all this matter.

1st. This third assault of the temptation was more close than the former. Before, his relation to Christ was only suspected, here it is proved upon him by one that saw him with Jesus, and saw him draw his sword in his defence. Note, They who by sin think to help themselves out of trouble do but entangle and embarrass themselves the more. Dare to be brave; for truth will out. A bird of the air may perhaps tell the matter which we seek to conceal with a lie. Notice is taken of this servant's being akin to Malchus, because that circumstance would make it the more a terror to Peter; Now, thinks he, I am gone, my business is done, there needs no other witness or prosecutor. We should not, if we can help it, make any man in particular our enemy; because the time may come when either he or some of his relations may have us at their mercy. He that may need a friend, should not make a foe. But observe, though here was sufficient evidence against Peter, and sufficient provocation given by his denial to have prosecuted him, yet he escapes, has no harm done him, nor attempted to be done. Note, We are often drawn into sin by groundless, causeless fears, which there is no occasion for; and which a small degree of wisdom and resolution would make nothing of.

2nd. His yielding to it was no less base than the former; "He denied again." See here, First. The nature of sin in general; the heart is hardened by the deceitfulness of it, *Heb. iii. 13*. It was a strange degree of effrontery that Peter was arrived to on a sudden, that he could with such assurance stand in a lie against so clear a disproof; but "the beginning of sin is as the letting forth of water;" when once the fence is broken, men easily go from bad to worse. Secondly. Of the sin of lying in particular; it is a fruitful sin, and upon that account exceedingly sinful. One lie needs another to support it, and that another. It is a rule in the devil's politics, *Male facta male factis tegere, ne perfluant*,—'to cover sin with sin, in order to escape detection.'

by the Jews on a fellow-countryman, on a charge of sedition, would be a slavish acknowledgment of their subjection to Rome. Pilate spoke in irritation, and satirically (see xviii. 31).

xix. 7. "We have a law;" the "we" here is emphatic, and answers to "yourselves" in Pilate's words. The rejoinder is a reply to the taunt of Pilate, which thus extorted from them the acknowledgment that they had a reason for desiring the death of Jesus different from that alleged in their actual charge against him.

xix. 8. "When Pilate heard that saying;" or, rather, "this saying;" "The more afraid;" the feeling which now took possession of his mind was fear. The words indeed seem to intimate that he was afraid before. The former fear may have been simply some apprehension of the political trouble into which the chief priests evidently designed to bring him. Now, however, the fear is concerning the prisoner, who has claimed to be the Son of God. The half-sad, half-sceptical temperament of Pilate was just that which

3. The hint given him for the awakening of his conscience was reasonable and happy; "immediately the cock crew," and this is all that is here said of his repentance, it being recorded by the other evangelists. This brought him to himself, by bringing to his mind the words of Christ. See here, 1st. The care Christ has of those that are his, notwithstanding their follies; though they fall, they are not utterly cast down, not utterly cast off. 2nd. The advantage of having faithful remembrancers near us, that, though they cannot tell us more than we know already, yet may mind us of that which we know, but have forgotten. The crowing of the cock to others was an accidental thing, and had no significance; but to Peter it was the voice of God, and had a blessed tendency to awaken his conscience, by putting him in mind of the word of Christ.

28 Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. 29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? 30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. 31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. 33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. 38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. 39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

We have here an account of Christ's arraignment before Pilate, the Roman governor, in the *prætorium*, (a Latin word made Greek,) the prætor's house, or hall of judgment; thither they hurried him to get him condemned in the Roman court, and executed by the Roman power. Being resolved on his death they took this course. 1. That he might be put to death the more legally, and regularly, according to the present constitution of their government, since they became a province of the empire; not stoned in a popular tumult, as Stephen, but put to death with the present formalities of justice. Thus he was treated as a malefactor, being made sin for us. 2. That he might be put to death the more safely. If they could engage the Roman government in the matter, which the people stood in awe of, there would be little danger of an uproar. 3. That he might be put to death with more reproach to himself. The death of the cross, which the Romans commonly used, being of all other the most ignominious, they were desirous by it to put an indelible mark of infamy upon him, and so to sink his reputation for ever. This, therefore, they harped upon, "Crucify him." 4. That he might be put to death with less reproach to them. It was an invidious thing to put one to death that had done so much good in the world; and therefore they were willing to throw the odium upon the Roman government, to make that the less acceptable to the people, and save themselves from the reproach. Thus many are more afraid of the scandal of an ill thing than of the sin of it: see *Acts v. 28*.

Two things are here observed concerning the prosecution: 1. Their policy and industry in the prosecution; it was early. Some think about two or three

in the morning; others about five or six, when most people were in their beds, and so there would be the less danger of opposition from the people that were for Christ; while at the same time they had their agents about to call those together whom they could influence to cry out against him. See how much their heart was upon it, and how violent they were in the prosecution; now they had him in their hands, they would lose no time till they had him upon the cross, but denied themselves their natural rest to push on this matter: see *Mic. vi. 1, 2*. Their superstition and vile hypocrisy. The chief priests and elders, though they came along with the prisoner, that the thing might be done effectually, "yet they went not into the judgment hall," because it was the house of an uncircumcised Gentile, "lest they should be defiled," but kept out of doors, "that they might eat the passover;" not the paschal lamb, that was eaten the night before, but the passover feast, upon the sacrifices which were offered on the fifteenth day; the *Chagigah*, as they called it, the passover bullocks, spoken of *Deut. xvi. 2*; *2 Chr. xxx. 24*; *xxxv. 8, 9*. These they were to eat of, and therefore would not go into the court for fear of touching a Gentile; and thereby contracting, not a legal, but only a traditional pollution. This they scrupled, but made no scruple of breaking through all the laws of equity to persecute Christ to the death: "They scrutinized at a gnat, and swallowed a camel." Let us now see what passed at the judgment hall. Here is,

First. Pilate's conference with the prosecutors; they are called first, and heard what they had to say against the prisoner, as was very fit, ver. 29-32.

1. The judge calls for the indictment. Because they would not come into the hall, he went out to them into the court before the house, to talk with them. Looking upon Pilate as a magistrate, that we may give every one his due, here are three things commendable in him: 1st. His diligent and close application to business. If it had been upon a good occasion, it had been very well that he was willing to be called up early to the judgment seat. Men in public trust must not love their ease. 2nd. His condescension to the humour of the people; and receding from the honour of his place to gratify their scruples. He might have said, If they be so nice as not to come in to me, let them go home as they came; by the same rule as we might say, If the complainant scruple to put off his hat to the magistrates, let not his complaint be heard; but Pilate insists not upon it, bears with them, and goes out to them; for when it is for good, we should become all things to all men. 3rd. His adherence to the rule of justice in demanding the accusation, suspecting the prosecution to be malicious; "What accusation bring ye against this man?" What is the crime you charge him with, and what proof have ye of it? It was a law of nature, before Valerius Publicola made it a Roman law, *Ne quis indicta causa condemnatur*. "No man should be condemned unheard;" see *Acts xxv. 16, 17*. It is unreasonable to commit a man without alleging some cause in the warrant, and much more to arraign a man when there is no bill of indictment found against him.

2. The prosecutors demand judgment against him, upon a general surmise that he was a criminal; not alleging, much less proving, any thing in particular worthy of death, or of bonds; ver. 30. "If he were not a malefactor," or evil doer, "we would not have delivered him to thee" to be condemned. This speaks them, 1st. Very rude and uncivil to Pilate; a parcel of ill-natured men, that affected to despise dominion. When Pilate was so complaisant to them as to come out to treat with them, yet they were to the highest degree out of humour with him. He put the most reasonable question to them that could be, but if it had been the most absurd they could not have answered him with more disdain. 2nd. Very spiteful and malicious towards our Lord Jesus; right or wrong, they will have him to be a malefactor, and treated as one. We are to presume a man innocent till he is proved guilty; but they will presume him guilty who could prove himself innocent. They cannot say he is a traitor, a murderer, a felon, a breaker of the peace, but an evil doer. He an evil doer who "went about doing good!" Let those be called whom he had cured, and fed, and taught; whom he had rescued from devils, and raised from death; and let them be asked whether he were an evil doer or no. Note, It is no new thing for the best of benefactors to be branded and run down as the worst of malefactors. 3rd. Very proud, and conceited of themselves, and their own judgment and justice; as if their delivering a man up under the general character of a malefactor were sufficient for the civil magistrate to ground a judicial sentence upon; than which what could be more haughty?

3. The judge remands him to their own court; ver. 31, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your own law," and do not trouble me with him. Now, 1st. Some think Pilate herein complimented them, acknowledging the remains of their power, and allowing them to exert it. Corporal punishment they might inflict, as scourging in their synagogues, but whether capital or no, is uncertain. But, saith Pilate, go as far as your law will allow you, and if you go farther it shall be connived at. This he said, "willing to do the Jews a pleasure," but unwilling to do them the service they required. 2nd. Others think he bantered them, and upbraided them with their present state of weakness and subjection. They would be the sole judges of the guilt; Pray, saith Pilate, if you will be so, go on as you have begun; you have found him guilty by your own law, condemn him, if you dare, by your own law, to carry on the humour. Nothing is more absurd, nor more deserves to be exposed, than for those to pretend to dictate, and boast of their wisdom, who are weak and underlings, and whose lot it is to be dictated to. Some think Pilate here reflects upon the law of Moses, as if that allowed them to do that which the Roman law would by no means allow, the judging of a man unheard; it may be your law will suffer such a thing, but ours will not. Thus through their corruptions the law of God was blasphemed, and so is his Gospel too.

4. They disown any authority as judges, and since it must be so, are content to be prosecutors. They now grow less insolent, and more submissive, and own, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death," whatever less punishment we may inflict, and this is a malefactor whom we would have the blood of. 1st. Some think they had lost their power to give judgment in matters of life and death only by their own carelessness, and cowardly yielding to the darling iniquities of the age, so Dr. Lightfoot; οὐκ ἔστιν, It is not in our power to pass sentence of death upon any; if we do, we shall have the mob about our ears presently. 2nd. Others think their power was taken from them by the Romans, because they had not used it well, or because it was thought too great a trust to be lodged in the hands of a conquered, and yet an unsubdued, people. Their acknowledgment of this they designed for a compliment to Pilate, and to atone for their rudeness, ver. 30; but it amounts to a full evidence that the sceptre was departed from Judah, and therefore now the Messiah was to come, *Gen. xlix. 10*. If the Jews have no power to put any man to death, where is the sceptre? Yet they ask not, Where is the Shiloh? 3rd. However, there was a providence in it, that either they should have no power to put any man to death, or should decline the exercise of it upon this occasion, "that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which he spake, signifying what death he should die," ver. 32. Observe.

First. In general, that even they who designed the defeating of Christ's sayings, beyond their intention were made serviceable to the fulfilling of them by an overruling hand of God. No word of Christ shall fall to the ground; he can never either deceive or be deceived. Even the chief priests, while they persecuted him as a deceiver, had their spirits so directed as to help to prove

could be susceptible of an almost superstitious dread. Added to this, his conscience had declared against the condemnation of Christ. He dreaded to deliver Jesus to death, and he dreaded to release him, for he knew the wily priesthood were seeking to undermine his position.

xix. 10. "Speakest thou not unto me?" The word "me" is emphatic. Pilate is surprised at the demeanour of the prisoner, and falls back on his own position of authority. Yet even here the tone

is that of a man under the influence of fear, for he hints that he can use his power in favour of Jesus. This is the more apparent if we accept the transposition adopted by Alford, who renders the last clause of this verse, "Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?" The hint of a release thus holds the first place in the speech.

xix. 12. "And from thenceforth;" i.e., especially after hearing this. "Upon this" is Alford's rendering. "But the Jews cried

him true, when we would think, by taking other measures, they might have defeated his predictions: "Howbeit they meant not so," *Isa. x. 7.*

Secondly. Those sayings of Christ in particular were fulfilled which he had spoken concerning his own death. Two sayings of Christ concerning his death were fulfilled by the Jews declining to judge him according to their law: 1st. He had said that he should be delivered to the Gentiles, and that they should put him to death, *Mat. xx. 19; Mar. x. 33; Lu. xviii. 32;* and hereby that saying was fulfilled. 2nd. He had said that he should be crucified, *Mat. xx. 19; xvi. 2; lifted up, ch. iii. 14; xii. 32.* Now if they had judged him by their law he had been stoned. Burning, strangling, and beheading were in some cases used among the Jews, but never crucifying. It was therefore necessary Christ should be put to death by the Romans; that, being hanged upon a tree, he might be made a curse for us, *Gal. iii. 13;* and his hands and feet might be pierced. As the Roman power had brought him to be born at Bethlehem, so now to die upon a cross, and both according to the Scriptures. It is likewise determined concerning us, though not discovered to us, what death we shall die; which should free us from all disquieting cares about that matter. Lord, what, and when, and how thou hast appointed.

Secondly. Here is Pilate's conference with the prisoner, ver. 35, &c.; where we have,

1. The prisoner set to the bar. Pilate, after he had conferred with the chief priests at his door, entered into the hall, and called for Jesus to be brought in. He would not examine him in the crowd, where he might be disturbed by the noise, but ordered him to be brought into the hall, for he made no difficulty of going in among the Gentiles. We by sin were become liable to the judgment of God, and were to be brought before his bar; therefore Christ being made sin, and a curse for us, was arraigned as a criminal. Pilate entered into judgment with him, that God might not enter into judgment with us.

2. His examination. The other evangelists tell us that his accusers had laid it to his charge, that he perverted the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and upon this he is examined.

1st. Here is a question put to him with a design to ensnare him, and to find out something upon which to ground an accusation. "Art thou the king of the Jews?" *ὁ βασιλεὺς*, that king of the Jews that has been so much talked of, and so long expected—Messiah the prince; art thou he? That is, dost thou pretend to be he? dost thou call thyself, and wouldst thou be thought so? For he was far from imagining that really he was so, or making a question of that. Some think Pilate asked this with an air of scorn and contempt; What, art thou a king, that makest so mean a figure? Art thou the king of the Jews, by whom thou art hated and persecuted? Art thou king, *de jure*,—of right; while the emperor is only king *de facto*—in fact? Since it could not be proved he ever said it, he would constrain him to say it now, that he might proceed upon his own confession.

2nd. Christ answers this question with another, not for evasion, but as an intimation to Pilate, to consider what he did, and upon what grounds he went; ver. 34, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself," from a suspicion arising in thy own breast, "or did others tell it thee of me," and dost thou ask it only to oblige them?

First. It is plain thou hast no reason to say that of thyself. Pilate was obliged by his office to take care of the interests of the Roman government, but he could not say that that was in any danger, or suffered any damage by any thing our Lord Jesus had ever said or done. He never appeared in worldly pomp, never assumed any secular power, never acted as a judge or divider, never were any traitorous principles or practices objected to him, nor any thing that might give the least umbrage of suspicion.

Secondly. If others tell it thee of me, to incense thee against me, thou oughtest to consider who they are, and upon what principles they go; and whether they who represented him as an enemy to Caesar were not really such themselves, and therefore used this only as a pretence to cover their malice; which, if so, ought to be well weighed by a judge that would do justice. Nay, if Pilate had been as inquisitive as he ought to have been in this matter, he would have found that the true reason why the chief priests were outrageous against Jesus was, because he did not set up a temporal kingdom, in opposition to the Roman power; if he would have done that, and would have wrought miracles to bring them out of the Roman bondage, as Moses did to bring them out of the Egyptian, they would have been so far from siding with the Romans against him, that they would have made him their king, and have fought under him against the Romans; but he not answering this expectation of theirs, they charged that upon him which they were themselves most notoriously guilty of, disaffection to, and design against, the present government; and was such an information as this fit to be countenanced?

3rd. Pilate resents Christ's answer, and takes it very heinously, ver. 35. This is a direct answer to Christ's question, ver. 34.

First. Christ had asked him, Whether he spoke of himself? No; saith he, "am I a Jew," that thou suspectest me to be in the plot against thee? I know nothing of the Messiah, nor desire to know, and therefore interest not myself in the dispute who is the Messiah, and who not; it is all alike to me. Observe with what disdain Pilate asks, "Am I a Jew?" The Jews were upon many accounts an honourable people, but having corrupted the covenant of their God, he made them contemptible and base before all the people, *Mal. ii. 8, 9,* so that a man of sense and honour reckoned it a scandal to be counted a Jew. Thus good names often suffer for the sake of the ill men that wear them. It is sad that when a Turk is suspected of dishonesty he should ask, What, do you take me for a Christian?

Secondly. Christ had asked him, Whether others told him? Yes, saith he, and those thine own people, that one would think should be biassed in favour of thee; and the priests, whose testimony, *in verbum sacerdotis*,—on the word of a priest, ought to be regarded; and therefore I have nothing to do but to proceed upon their information. Thus Christ in his religion still suffers by those that are of his own nation, even the priests that profess relation to him, but do not live up to their profession.

Thirdly. Christ had declined answering that question, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" and therefore Pilate puts another question to him, more general, "What hast thou done?" What provocation hast thou given to thy own nation, and particularly the priests, to be so violent against thee? Surely there cannot be all this smoke but there is some fire; what is it?

4th. Christ in his next reply gives a more full and direct answer to Pilate's former question, "Art thou a king?" explaining in what sense he was a king, but not such a king as was any ways dangerous to the Roman government; not a secular king, for his interest was not supported by secular methods, ver. 36. Observe,

First. An account of the nature and constitution of Christ's kingdom. It "is not of this world." It is expressed negatively, what it is not, to rectify the present mistakes concerning it, but the positive is implied: it is the kingdom of heaven, and belongs to another world. He is a king, and has a kingdom; but not of this world. 1st. Its rise is not from this world. The kingdoms of men arise out of the sea and the earth, *Dan. vii. 3; Rev. xiii. 1, 11;* but the holy city comes down from God out of heaven, *Rev. xxi. 2.* His kingdom is not by succession, election, or conquest, but by the immediate and special designation

of the Divine will and counsel. 2nd. Its nature is not worldly; it is a kingdom within men, *Lu. xvii. 21;* set up in their hearts and consciences, *Rom. xiv. 17;* its riches spiritual, powers spiritual, and all its glory within. The ministers of state in Christ's kingdom have not the spirit of the world, *1 Cor. ii. 12.* 3rd. Its guards and supports are not worldly; its weapons spiritual. It needed not, nor used, secular force to maintain and advance it; nor was it carried on in a way hurtful to kings or provinces; it did not in the least interfere with the prerogatives of princes, or the property of their subjects; it tended not to alter any national establishment in secular things, nor opposed any kingdom but that of sin and Satan. 4th. Its tendency and design is not worldly. Christ aimed not, nor would allow his disciples to aim, at the pomp and power of the great men of the earth. 5th. Its subjects, though they are in the world, yet are not of the world; they are called and chosen out of the world, are born from and bound for another world; they are neither the world's pupils nor its darlings; neither governed by its wisdom, nor enriched with its wealth.

Secondly. An evidence of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom produced. If he had designed an opposition to the government, he would have fought them at their own weapons, and would have repelled force with force of the same nature; but he did not take this course. "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews," and my kingdom be ruined by them. But, 1st. His followers did not offer to fight. There was no uproar, no attempt to rescue him, though the town was now full of Galileans, his friends and countrymen, and they generally armed; but the peaceable behaviour of his disciples on this occasion was enough to "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." 2nd. He did not order them to fight, nay, he forbade them; which was an evidence both that he did not depend upon worldly aids, for he could have summoned legions of angels into his service, which shewed that his kingdom was from above; as also that he did not dread worldly opposition, for he was very willing to be delivered to the Jews, as knowing that that which would have been the destruction of any worldly kingdom would be the advancement and establishment of his. Justly, therefore, doth he conclude, "Now you may see my kingdom is not from hence; in the world, but not of it."

5th. In answer to Pilate's farther query, he replies yet more directly, ver. 37, where we have,

First. Pilate's plain question, "Art thou a king then?" Thou speakest of a kingdom thou hast, art thou then in any sense a king? And what colour hast thou for such a claim? Explain thyself.

Secondly. The good confession which our Lord Jesus witnessed before Pontius Pilate, in answer to this, *1 Tim. vi. 13,* "Thou sayest that I am a king;" that is, "It is as thou sayest, I am a king; for I came to bear witness of the truth."

1st. He grants himself to be a king, though not in the sense that Pilate meant it. The Messiah was expected under the character of a king, Messiah the prince; and therefore, having owned to Caiaphas that he was the Christ, he would not disown to Pilate that he was a king, lest he should seem inconsistent with himself. Note, Though Christ took upon him the form of a servant, yet even then he justly claimed the honour and authority of a king.

2nd. He explains himself, and shews how he is a king, as he came to bear witness of the truth; he rules in the minds of men by the power of truth. If he had meant himself a temporal prince, he would have said, "For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world," to rule the nations, to conquer kings, and take possession of kingdoms; no, he came to be a witness, a witness for the God that made the world, and against sin that ruins the world and by this word of his testimony he sets up and keeps up his kingdom. It was foretold that he should be a witness to the people, and, as such, a leader and commander to the people, *Isa. lv. 4;* Christ's kingdom was not of this world, in which truth faileth, *Isa. lix. 15,* (*Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare*,—He that cannot dissimulate, knows not how to reign,) but of that world in which truth reigns eternally. Christ's errand into the world, and his business in the world, was to bear witness to the truth. First. To reveal it; to discover to the world that which otherwise could not have been known concerning God, and his will, and good will to men, *ch. i. 18; xvii. 26.* Secondly. To confirm it, *Rom. xv. 8.* By his miracles he bare witness to the truth of religion, the truth of Divine revelation, and of God's perfections and providence, and the truth of his promise and covenant, that all men through him might believe. Now by doing this he is a king, and sets up a kingdom.

(1.) The foundation and power, the spirit and genius, of Christ's kingdom is truth, Divine truth. When he said, "I am the truth," he said in effect, "I am a king;" he conquers by the convincing evidence of truth, he rules by the commanding power of truth, and "in his majesty rides prosperously, because of truth," *Ps. xlv. 4;* it is with his truth that he shall judge the people, *Ps. xvi. 13;* it is the sceptre of his kingdom; he draws with the cords of a man, that is, with truth revealed to us, and received by us in the love of it; and thus he brings thoughts into obedience. He came a light into the world, and rules as the sun by day.

(2.) The subjects of this kingdom are those that are of the truth. All that by the grace of God are rescued from under the power of the father of lies, and are disposed to receive the truth, and submit to the power and influence of it, will hear Christ's voice, that is, will become his subjects, and will bear faith and true allegiance to him. Every one that has any real sense of true religion, will entertain the Christian religion, and they belong to his kingdom; by the power of truth he makes them willing, *Ps. cx. 3.* All that are in love with truth will hear the voice of Christ; for greater, better, surer, sweeter truths can nowhere be found than are found in Christ, by whom grace and truth came; so that by hearing Christ's voice "we know that we are of the truth," *1 John. iii. 19.*

6th. Pilate hereupon puts a good question to him, but doth not stay for an answer; ver. 38, he said, "What is truth?" and immediately went out again.

First. It is certain this was a good question, and could not be put to one that was better able to answer it. Truth is that pearl of great price which the human understanding has a desire to, and is in quest of, for it cannot rest but in that which is, or at least is apprehended to be, truth. When we search the Scriptures, and attend the ministry of the word, it must be with this inquiry, "What is truth?" and with this prayer, "Lead me in thy truth;" into all truth. But many put this question that have not patience and constancy enough to persevere in their search after truth; or not humility and sincerity enough to receive it when they have found it, *2 Tim. iii. 7.* Thus many deal with their own consciences; they ask them those needful questions, What am I? what have I done? but will not take time for an answer.

Secondly. It is uncertain with what design Pilate asked this question. 1st. Perhaps he spoke it as a learner, as one that began to think well of Christ, and to look upon him with some respect, and desired to be informed what new notions he advanced, and what improvements he pretended to in religion and learning. But while he desired to hear some new truth from him, as Herod to see some miracle, the clamour and outrage of the priests' mob at his gate obliged him abruptly to let fall the discourse. 2nd. Some think he speaks "as a judge, inquiring farther into the cause now brought before him; Let me into this mystery, and pray thee tell me what the truth of it is, the true state of this matter." 3rd. Others think he speaks it as a scoffer, in a jeering way: "Thou

out," &c.: the last argument, which had been long in the minds of the priests, and probably suspected by Pilate, is now openly urged. It was not uttered till the vehemence of rage overcame their decent respect for Pilate's position. The cry was equivalent to a threat of impeachment, which we know was much dreaded by such officers as the procurators, especially if of the character of Pilate or Felix. To a Tiberius a mere suspicion was as bad as an offence. The term "Caesar's friend" is not to be taken (so Olshausen thinks) as equivalent

to the honorary title, "Amicus Caesaris," but rather as referring to his loyal adherence and faithfulness to the Emperor; the meaning being, "If you liberate this man, you are not faithful to the Emperor."

xix. 13. "Pavement:" a tessellated pavement. Such pavements are found in the "atrium" or court of nearly every house in Pompeii. Several, very elaborately executed, have been found at well-known Roman stations in England, as Cirencester and Woodchester

talkest of truth, canst thou tell me what truth is, or give me a definition of it?" Thus he makes a jest of the everlasting Gospel, that great truth which the chief priests hated and persecuted, and which Christ was now witnessing to, and suffering for; and like men of no religion, who take a pleasure in bantering all religions, he ridicules both sides; and therefore Christ made him no reply. "Answer not a fool according to his folly; cast not pearls before swine." But though Christ would not tell Pilate what is truth, he has told his disciples, and by them has told us, *ch. xiv. 6.*

Thirdly. The result of both these conferences with the prosecutors and the prisoner, *ver. 38-40.* In two things:

1. The judge appeared his friend, and favourable to him; for, 1st. He publicly declared him innocent; *ver. 38.* Upon the whole matter "I find in him no fault at all." He supposed there might be some controversy in religion between him and them, wherein he was as likely to be in the right as they, but nothing criminal appears against him. This solemn declaration of Christ's innocence was, *First.* For the justification and honour of the Lord Jesus. By this it appears, that, though he was treated as the worst of malefactors, he had never merited such treatment. *Secondly.* For the explaining of the design and intention of his death. That he did not die for any sin of his own, even in the judgment of the judge himself, and therefore he died as a sacrifice for our sins, and that even in the judgment of the prosecutors themselves, "that one man should die for the people," *ch. xi. 50;* this is he that "did no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth," *Isa. liii. 9;* who was to "be cut off, but not for himself," *Dim. ix. 26.* *Thirdly.* For the aggravating of the sin of the Jews that prosecuted him with so much violence. If a prisoner have had a fair trial, and has been acquitted by those that are proper judges of the crime, especially if there be no cause to suspect them partial in his favour, he must be believed innocent, and his accusers are bound to acquiesce. But our Lord Jesus, though brought in, Not guilty, is still run down as a malefactor, and his blood thirsted for.

2nd. He proposed an expedient for his discharge; *ver. 39.* "You have a custom that I should release you a prisoner at the passover; shall it be this king of the Jews?" He proposed this, not to the chief priests—he knew they would never agree to it, but to the multitude; it was an appeal to the people, as appears *Mat. xxvii. 15.* Probably he had heard how this Jesus had been attended but the other day with the hosannas of the common people; he therefore looked upon him to be the darling of the multitude, and the envy only of the rulers, and therefore he made no doubt but they would demand the release of Jesus, and that would stop the mouth of the prosecutors, and all would be well. *First.* He allows their custom, for which perhaps they had had a long prescription, in honour of the passover, which was a memorial of their release. But it was adding to God's words, as if he had not instituted enough for the due commemoration of that deliverance; and, though an act of mercy, might be injurious to the public, *Pr. xvii. 15.* *Secondly.* He offers to release Jesus to them, according to the custom. If Pilate had had the honesty and courage that became a judge, he should not have named an innocent person to be competitor with a notorious criminal for this favour; if he found no fault in him, he was bound in conscience to discharge him. But he was willing to trim the matter, and please all sides, and was governed more by worldly wisdom than by the rules of equity.

2. The people appeared his enemies, and implacable against him; *ver. 40.* "They cried all again and again, Not this man;" let not him be released, "but Barabbas." Observe.

1st. How fierce and outrageous they were. Pilate proposed the thing to them calmly, as worthy their mature consideration; but they resolved it in a heat, and gave in their resolution with clamour and noise, and in the utmost confusion. Note. The enemies of Christ's holy religion cry it down, and so hope to run it down; witness the outcry at Ephesus, *Acts xix. 34.* But those who think the worse of things or persons, merely for their being thus exclaimed against, have a very small share of constancy and consideration. Nay, there is cause to suspect a deficiency of reason and justice on that side which calls in the assistance of popular tumult.

2nd. How foolish and absurd they were; intimated in the short account here given of the other candidate. "Now Barabbas was a robber;" and therefore, *First.* A breaker of the law of God; and yet he shall be spared, rather than one who reproved the pride, avarice, and tyranny of the priests and elders. Though Barabbas be a robber, he will not rob them of Moses' seat, nor of their traditions; and then no matter. *Secondly.* He is an enemy to the public safety, and personal property. The clamour of the town uses to be against robbers, *Job xxx. 5.* "Men cried after them as after a thief;" yet here it is for one. Thus they do who prefer their sins before Christ. Sin is a robber, every base lust is a robber, and yet foolishly chosen rather than Christ, who would truly enrich us.

CHAPTER XIX.

Though in the history hitherto this evangelist seems industriously to have declined the recording of such passages as had been related by the other evangelists, yet, when he comes to the sufferings and death of Christ, instead of passing them over as one ashamed of his Master's chain and cross, and looking upon them as the blemishes of his story, there he repeats what had been before related, with considerable enlargements, as one that desired to know nothing but Christ and him crucified, to glory in nothing save in the cross of Christ. In the story of this chapter we have, I. The remainder of Christ's trial before Pilate, which was tumultuous and confused, *ver. 1-15.* II. Sentence given, and execution done upon it, *ver. 16-18.* III. The title over his head, *ver. 19-22.* IV. The parting of his garments, *ver. 23, 24.* V. The care he took of his mother, *ver. 25-27.* VI. The giving him vinegar to drink, *ver. 28, 29.* VII. His dying word, *ver. 30.* VIII. The piercing of his side, *ver. 31-37.* IX. The burial of his body, *ver. 38-42.* Oh, that in meditating on these things we may experimentally know the power of Christ's death, and the fellowship of his sufferings.

HEN Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. 4 Pilate therefore went forth

again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate



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saith unto them, Behold the man! 6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. 7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. 8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; 9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? 11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. 12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar. 13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! 15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.

Here is a farther account of the unfair trial which they gave to our Lord Jesus; the prosecutors carrying it on with great confusion among the people, and the judge with great confusion in his own breast. Between both the narrative is such as is not easily reduced to a method; we must therefore take the parts of it as they lie.

First. The judge abuseth the prisoner, though he declares him innocent, and hopes therewith to pacify the prosecutors; wherein his intention, if indeed they were good, will by no means justify his proceedings, which were palpably unjust.

1. He ordered him to be whipped as a criminal; *ver. 1.* "Pilate," seeing the people so outrageous, and being disappointed in his project of releasing him upon the people's choice, "took Jesus, and scourged him;" that is, appointed the lictors that attended him to do it. Bede is of opinion that Pilate scourged Jesus himself with his own hands, because it is said he took him and scourged him, that it might be done favourably. Matthew and Mark mention his

xix. 14. "The sixth hour:" John mentions that this occurred about the sixth hour, whereas the crucifixion, according to St. Mark, was accomplished at the third hour. But there is every reason to think, with Greswell and Wieseler, that John reckons from midnight, and that this took place at six in the morning, whilst in Mark the Jewish reckoning from six in the morning is followed; so that the crucifixion took place at nine o'clock, the intervening time having been spent in preparations."



("castra"), and seem to indicate the villas or private residences of Roman commanders or municipal officers of high rank. Pliny ("Nat. Hist.," xxxvi. 64) attributes the introduction of them to Sylla. Cæsar, according to Suetonius, always took a tessellated pavement with him on his military expeditions. "Gabbatha:" probably derived from a Hebrew word, signifying "to be high." It denotes the terrace on which the pavement was—the "suggestus," or raised platform of the tribunal (Webster and Wilkinson).

scourging after his condemnation, but here it appears to have been before. St. Luke speaks of Pilate's offering to "chastise him and let him go," which must be before sentence. This scourging of him was designed only to pacify the Jews, and in it Pilate put a compliment upon them, that he would take their word against his own sentiments so far. The Roman scourgings were ordinarily very severe, not limited, as among the Jews, to forty stripes; yet this pain and shame Christ submitted to for our sakes.

1st. That the Scriptures might be fulfilled which spake of his being stricken, smitten, and afflicted, and the chastisement of our peace being upon him, *Isa. liii. 4*; of his giving his back to the smiters, *Isa. l. 6*; of the ploughers ploughing upon his back, *Ps. cxxix. 3*. He himself likewise had foretold it, *Mat. xx. 19*; *Mar. x. 34*; *Lu. xviii. 32*.

2nd. That by his stripes we might be healed, *1 Pet. ii. 24*. We deserved to have been chastised with whips and scorpions, and to be beaten with many stripes, having known our Lord's will and not done it; but Christ underwent the stripes for us, bearing the rod of his Father's wrath, *Lam. iii. 1*. Pilate's design in scourging him was that he might not be condemned, which did not take effect; but intimated what was God's design, that his being scourged might prevent our being condemned, we having fellowship in his sufferings, and that did take effect. The physician scourged, and so the patient healed.

3rd. That stripes for his sake might be sanctified, and made easy to his followers; and they might, as they did, rejoice in that shame, *Acts v. 40*; *xvi. 22*; as Paul did, who was in stripes above measure, *2 Cor. xi. 23*. Christ's stripes take out the sting of theirs, and alter the property of them; "We are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." *1 Cor. xi. 32*.

2. He turned him over to his soldiers to be ridiculed and made sport with as a fool; ver. 2, 3, "The soldiers," that were the governor's life-guard, "put a crown of thorns upon his head;" such a crown fittest for such a king. "They put on him a purple robe;" some old thread-bare coat of that colour, which they thought good enough to be the badge of his royalty; and they complimented him with, "Hail, king of the Jews;" like people like king; "and then smote him with their hands."

1st. See here the baseness and injustice of Pilate, that he would suffer one whom he believed an innocent person, and if so, an excellent person, to be thus abused and trampled on by his own servants. They who are under the arrest of the law ought to be under the protection of it; and their being secured is to be their security. But Pilate did this, *First*. To oblige his soldiers' merry humour, and perhaps his own too, notwithstanding the gravity one might have expected in a judge. Herod, as well as his men of war, had just before done the same, *Lu. xxiii. 11*. It was as good as a stage play to them, now it was a festival time; as the Philistines made sport with Samson. *Secondly*. To oblige the Jews' malicious humour, and to gratify them, who desired that all possible disgrace might be done to Christ, and the utmost indignities put upon him.

2nd. See here the rudeness and insolence of the soldiers; how perfectly lost they were to all justice and humanity who could thus triumph over a man in misery, and one that had been in reputation for wisdom and honour, and never did any thing to forfeit it. But thus hath Christ's holy religion been basely misrepresented; dressed up by ill men at their pleasure, and so exposed to contempt and ridicule, as Christ was here. *First*. They clothe him with a mock robe, as if it were a sham and a jest, and nothing but the product of a heated fancy, and a crazed imagination. And as Christ is here represented a king in conceit only, so is his religion as a concern in conceit only; and God and the soul, sin and duty, heaven and hell, are with them all chimeras. *Secondly*. They crown him with thorns, as if it were a perfect penance, and the greatest pain and hardship in the world; as if to submit to the conduct of God and conscience were to thrust one's head into a thicket of thorns; but this is an unjust imputation; "Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward," but roses and laurels in religion's ways.

3rd. See here the wonderful condescension of our Lord Jesus in his sufferings for us. Great and generous minds can bear any thing better than ignominy; any toil, any pain, any loss rather than reproach; yet this the great and holy Jesus submitted to for us. See and admire, *First*. The invincible patience of a sufferer, leaving us an example of contentment and courage, evenness, and easiness of spirit under the greatest hardships we may meet with in the way of duty. *Secondly*. The invincible love and kindness of a Saviour, who not only cheerfully and resolutely went through all this, but voluntarily undertook it for us, and for our salvation. Herein he commended his love, that he would not only die for us, but die as a fool dies. *1st*. He endured the pain; not the pangs of death only,—though in the death of the cross those were most exquisite,—but, as if those were too little, he submitted to those previous pains. Shall we complain of a thorn in the flesh, and of being buffeted by affliction, because we need it to hide pride from us, when Christ humbled himself to bear those thorns in the head, and those buffetings to save and teach us? *2 Cor. xii. 7*. *2nd*. He despised the shame,—the shame of a fool's coat,—and the mock respects paid him with, Hail, king of the Jews. If we be at any time ridiculed for well-doing, let us not be ashamed, but glorify God; for thus we are partakers of Christ's sufferings. He that bore these sham honours was recompensed with real honours; and so shall we, if we patiently suffer shame for him.

Secondly. Pilate, having thus abused the prisoner, presents him to the prosecutors, in hopes they would now be satisfied, and drop the prosecution, ver. 4, 5. Here he proposeth two things to their consideration:

1. That he had not found any thing in him which made him obnoxious to the Roman government; ver. 5, "I find no fault in him;" *οὐδὲν εἰς κρίσιν εὑρίσκω*.—I do not find in him the least fault, or cause of accusation.' Upon farther inquiry he repeats the declaration he had made, *ch. xviii. 38*. Hereby he condemned himself; if he found no fault in him, why did he scourge him? why did he suffer him to be abused? None ought to suffer ill but those that do ill; yet thus many banter and abuse religion, who yet, if they be serious, cannot but own they find no fault in it. If he found no fault in him, why did he bring him out to his prosecutors, and not immediately release him, as he ought to do? If Pilate would have consulted his own conscience only, he had neither scourged Christ nor crucified him; but thinking to trim the matter, to please the people, by scourging Christ, and save his conscience by not crucifying him, behold he doth both; whereas, if he had at first resolved to crucify him, he needed not have scourged him. It is common for those who think to keep themselves from greater sins by venturing upon lesser sins to run into both.

2. That he had done that to him which would make him the less dangerous to them and to their government, ver. 5. He brought him out to them wearing the crown of thorns, his head and face all bloody, and said, "Behold the man" whom you are so jealous of; intimating that, though his having been so popular might have given them some cause to fear that his interest in the country would lessen theirs, yet that he had taken an effectual course to prevent it, by treating him as a slave, and exposing him to contempt; after which he supposed the people would never look upon him with any respect, nor could he ever retrieve his reputation again. Little did Pilate think with what veneration even these sufferings of Christ would in after ages be commemorated by the

best and greatest of men, who world glory in 'na' cross and those stripes which he thought would have been to him and his followers a perpetual and indelible reproach.

1st. Observe here how our Lord Jesus shews himself dressed up in all the marks of ignominy. He came forth willing to be made a spectacle, and to be hooted at, as no doubt he was when he came forth in this garb; knowing that he was set for a sign that should be spoken against, *Lu. ii. 34*. Did he go forth thus bearing our reproach? Let us go forth to him, bearing his reproach. *Heb. xiii. 13*.

2nd. How Pilate shews him; "Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man." He saith unto them, 'so the original is; and the immediate antecedent being Jesus, I see no inconvenience in supposing these to be Christ's own words; he said, "Behold the man" you are so exasperated against. But some of the Greek copies, and the generality of the translators, supply it as we do: "Pilate saith unto them," with a design to qualify them, "Behold the man;" not so much to move their pity, Behold a man worthy your compassion, as to silence their jealousies, Behold a man not worthy your suspicion; a man from whom you can henceforth fear no danger; his crown is profaned and cast to the ground, and now all mankind will make a jest of him. The word, however, is very affecting; "Behold the man." It is good for every one of us with an eye of faith to behold the man Christ Jesus in his sufferings. Behold this king with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him, the crown of thorns, *Cant. iii. 11*. Behold him, and be suitably affected with the sight. Behold him, and mourn because of him. Behold him and love him; be still looking unto Jesus!

Thirdly. The prosecutors, instead of being pacified, were but the more exasperated, ver. 6, 7.

1. Observe here their clamour and outrage. The chief priests, who headed the mob, cried out with fury and indignation, and their officers or servants, who must say as they said, joined with them in crying, "Crucify him, crucify him!" The common people, perhaps, would have acquiesced in Pilate's declaration of his innocency; but their leaders, the priests, caused them to err. Now by this it appears, that their malice against Christ was, 1st. Unreasonable and most absurd, in that they offer not to make good their charge against him, or to object against the judgment of Pilate concerning him; but, though he be innocent, he must be crucified. 2nd. It was insatiable and very cruel. Neither the extremity of his scourging, nor his patience under it, nor the tender expostulations of the judge, could mollify them in the least; no, nor could the jest into which Pilate had turned the cause put them into a pleasant humour. 3rd. It was violent and exceeding resolute. They will have it their own way, and hazard the governor's favour, the peace of the city, and their own safety, rather than abate of the utmost of their demands. Were they so violent in running down our Lord Jesus, and in crying, "Crucify him, crucify him?" and shall not we be vigorous and zealous in advancing his name, and in crying, "Crown him, crown him?" Did their hatred of him sharpen their endeavours against him? and shall not our love to him quicken our endeavours for him and his kingdom?

2. The check Pilate gave to their fury; still insisting upon the prisoner's innocency; "Take ye him, and crucify him," if he must be crucified. This is spoken ironically; he knew they could not, they durst not crucify him; but it is as if he should say, You shall not make me a drudge to your malice; I cannot with a safe conscience crucify him. A good resolve, if he could but have stuck to it. He found no fault in him, and therefore should not have continued to parley with the prosecutors. They that would be safe from sin should be deaf to temptation. Nay, he should have secured the prisoner from their insults. What was he armed with power for, but to protect the injured? The guards of governors ought to be the guards of justice. But Pilate had not courage enough to stick to his conscience; and his cowardice betrayed him into a snare.

3. The farther colour which the prosecutors gave to their demand; ver. 7, "We have a law, and by our law," if it were but in our power to execute it, "he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." Now here observe.

1st. They make their boast of the law, even then when through breaking the law they dishonoured God; as is charged upon the Jews, *Rom. ii. 23*. They had indeed an excellent law, far exceeding the statutes and judgments of other nations; but in vain did they boast of their law, when they abused it to such ill purposes.

2nd. They discover a restless and inveterate malice against our Lord Jesus. When they could not incense Pilate against him, by alleging that he pretended himself a king, they urge this, that he pretended himself a God. Thus they turn every stone to take him off.

3rd. They pervert the law, and make that the instrument of their malice. Some think they refer to a late law made particularly against Christ; as if being a law it must be executed, right or wrong; whereas there is a vowe to them that decree the unrighteous decrees, and that write the grievousness which they have prescribed, *Isa. x. 1*; *Mic. vi. 16*. But it should rather seem they refer to the law of Moses; and if so, *First*. It was true that blasphemers, idolaters, and false prophets were to be put to death by that law. Whoever falsely pretended to be the Son of God was guilty of blasphemy, *Lev. xxiv. 16*. But then, *Secondly*. It was false that he pretended to be the Son of God, for he really was so; and they ought to have inquired into the proofs he produced of his being so. If he said he was the Son of God, and the scope and tendency of his doctrine was not to draw people from God, but to bring them to him, and if he confirmed his mission and doctrine by miracles, as undoubtedly he did, beyond contradiction, by their law they ought to hearken to him, *Deu. xviii. 18, 19*; and if they did not, they were to be cut off. That which was his honour, and might have been their happiness, if they had not stood in their own light, they impute to him as a crime, for which he ought to die; yet, if he ought to die by their law, he ought not to be crucified, for that was no death inflicted by their law.

Fourthly. The judge brings the prisoner again to his trial, upon this new suggestion. Observe,

1. The concern Pilate was in when he heard this alleged, ver. 8. When he heard that his prisoner pretended not to royalty only, but to deity, "he was the more afraid." This embarrassed him more than ever, and made the case more difficult both ways; for, 1st. There was the more danger of offending the people, if he should acquit him; for he knew how jealous that people was for the unity of the Godhead, and what an aversion they now had to other gods; and, therefore, though he might hope to pacify their rage against a pretended king, he could never reconcile them to a pretended god. If this be at the bottom of the tumult, thinks Pilate, it will not be turned off with a jest. 2nd. There was the more danger of offending his own conscience, if he should condemn him. Is he one, thinks Pilate, that makes himself the Son of God; and what if it should prove that he is so? What will become of me then? Even natural conscience makes men afraid of being found fighting against God. The heathen had some fabulous traditions of incarnate deities appearing sometimes in mean circumstances, and treated ill by some that paid dear for their so doing. Pilate fears lest he should thus run himself into a preannure.

2. His farther examination of our Lord Jesus thereupon, ver. 9. That he

ix. 16. "And led him away:" "These words are wanting, or are otherwise read in many of the ancient MSS." (Alford).

ix. 17. "Golgotha:" this Hebrew or, rather, Chaldean word was applied to the skull, on account of its round, globular form, that being the idea at the root of the word. Two explanations are given: (1) That it was a spot where executions ordinarily took place, and therefore abounded in skulls. Against this is the fact that, according to Jewish law, these skulls must have been buried; and, further, the

Greek expression would have been the "place of skulls," not "of a skull." (2) It is explained as referring to the form of the spot—a bald, round, skull-shaped hillock or mound. It was outside the gate (*Heb. xiii. 12*), but near the city (*verse 20*); apparently near a thoroughfare where there were passers-by.

ix. 18. "Two other:" "thieves," according to the other evangelists. The term, however, should be rendered "robber," as it is the same word which is applied to Barabbas (*chap. xviii. 40*). It is

might give the prosecutors all the fair play they could desire, he resumed the debate, went into the judgment-hall, and asked Christ, "Whence art thou?" Observe.

1st. The place he chose for this examination. He "went into the judgment-hall," for privacy, that he might be out of the noise and clamour of the crowd, and might examine the thing the more closely. They that would find out the truth as it is in Jesus, must get out of the noise of prejudice, and retire as it were into the judgment-hall, to converse with Christ alone.

2nd. The question he put to him; "Whence art thou?" "Art thou from men or from heaven? from beneath or from above?" He had before asked directly, "Art thou a king?" but doth not here directly ask, "Art thou the Son of God?" lest he should seem to meddle with Divine things too boldly; but in general, "Whence art thou?" "Where wast thou? and in what world hadst thou been before thy coming into this world?"

3rd. The silence of our Lord Jesus when he was examined upon this head; "but Jesus gave him no answer." This was not a sullen silence, in contempt of the court; nor was it because he knew not what to say; but,

First. It was a patient silence, that the Scripture might be fulfilled; "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth," *Isa. liii. 7*. This silence loudly spake his submission to his Father's will in his present sufferings, which he thus accommodated himself to, and composed himself to bear. He was silent because he would say nothing to hinder his sufferings. If Christ had avowed himself a God as plainly as he avowed himself a king, it is likely he would not have condemned him, for he was afraid at the mention of it by the prosecutors; and the Romans, though they triumphed over the kings of the nations they conquered, yet stood in awe of their gods: see *1 Cor. ii. 8*. If they had known him to be the Lord of glory, they would not have crucified him, and how then must we have been saved?

Secondly. It was a prudent silence. When the chief priests asked him, "Art thou the Son of the Blessed?" he answered, "I am," for he knew they went upon the Scriptures of the Old Testament which spake of the Messiah; but when Pilate asked him, he knew he did not understand his own question, having no notion of the Messiah, and of his being the Son of God; and therefore to what purpose should he reply to him, whose head was filled with the pagan theology, to which he would have turned his answer?

4th. The haughty check which Pilate gave him for his silence; ver. 16, "Speakest thou unto me?" "Dost thou put such an affront upon me as to stand mute? What knowest thou not that, as president of the province, I have power, if I think fit, to crucify thee; and have power, if I think fit, to release thee?" Observe here,

First. How Pilate magnifies himself, and boasts of his own authority, as not inferior to that of Nebuchadnezzar, of whom it is said, that "whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive," *Dan. v. 19*. Men in power are apt to be puffed up with their power; and the more absolute and arbitrary it is, the more it gratifies their pride, and humours that. But he magnifies his power to an exorbitant degree, when he boasts that he had power to crucify one whom he declared innocent; for no prince or potentate has authority to do wrong; *id possumus quod jure possumus*,—we can do that only which we can do justly.

Secondly. How he tramples upon our blessed Saviour; "Speakest thou unto me?" He reflects upon him, 1st. As if he were undutiful and disrespectful to those in authority, not speaking when he was spoken to. 2nd. As if he were ungrateful to one that had been tender of him; "Speakest thou not to me, who have laboured thy release?" 3rd. As if he were unwise for himself; "Wilt thou not speak to clear thyself to one that is willing to clear thee?" If Christ had indeed sought to save his life, now had been his time to have spoken; but that which he had to do was to lay down his life.

5th. Christ's pertinent answer to this check, ver. 11; where, First. He boldly rebukes his arrogance, and rectifies his mistake; "As big as thou lookest and talkest, thou couldst have no power at all against me,"—no power to scourge, no power to crucify,—except it were given thee from above." Though Christ did not think fit to answer him when he was impatient, then—answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him,—yet he did think fit to answer him when he was imperious; then—answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit," *Pr. xxvi. 4, 5*. When Pilate used his power, Christ silently submitted to it; but when he grew proud of it, he made him know himself. "All the power thou hast is given thee from above;" which may be taken two ways:

1st. As minding him that his power in general as a magistrate was a limited power, and he could do no more than God would suffer him to do. God is the fountain of power; and the powers that be, as they are ordained by him, and derived from him, so they are subject to him. They ought to go no farther than his law directs them; they can go no farther than his providence permits them. They are God's hand, and his sword, *Ps. xvii. 13*. Though the axe may boast itself against him that beweth therewith, yet still it is but a tool, *Isa. x. 5, 15*. Let the proud oppressors know that there is a higher than they, to whom they are accountable, *Ecc. x. 8*; and let this silence the murmurings of the oppressed, "It is the Lord." God has bid Shimei curse David; and let it comfort them, that their persecutors can do no more than God will let them; see *Isa. li. 12, 13*.

2nd. As informing him that his power against him in particular, and all the efforts of that power, were "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," *Acts ii. 23*. Pilate never fancied himself to look so great as now, when he sat in judgment upon such a prisoner as this, who was looked upon by many as the Son of God, and king of Israel, and had the fate of so great a man at his disposal; but Christ lets him know that he was herein but an instrument in God's hand, and could do nothing against him, but by the appointment of Heaven, *Acts iv. 27, 28*.

Secondly. He mildly excuseth and extenuateth his sin, in comparison with the sin of the ringleaders. "Therefore he that delivered me unto thee" lies under greater guilt; for thou, as a magistrate, hast power from above, and art in thy place; thy sin is less than theirs who from envy and malice urge thee to abuse thy power.

1st. It is plainly intimated that what Pilate did was sin, a great sin; and the force which the Jews put upon him, and which he put upon himself in it, would not justify him. Christ hereby intended a hint for the awakening of his conscience, and the increase of that fear he was now under. Others' guilt will not acquit us, nor will it avail in the great day to say others were worse than we; for we are not to be judged by comparison, but must bear our own burthen.

2nd. Yet theirs that delivered him up to Pilate was the greater sin. By this it appears that all sins are not equal, but some more heinous than others; some comparatively as gnats, others as camels; some as moles in the eye, others as beams; some as venes, others as pounds. He that delivered Christ to Pilate was either,

(1.) The people of the Jews, who cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him." They had seen Christ's miracles, which Pilate had not; to them the Messiah was first sent, they were his own; and to them, who were now enslaved, a Redeemer should have been most welcome; and therefore it was much worse in them to appear against him than in Pilate.

(2.) Or, rather, he means Caiaphas in particular, who was at the head of the conspiracy against Christ, and first advised his death, *ch. xi. 49*. The sin of Caiaphas was abundantly greater than the sin of Pilate. Caiaphas prosecuted Christ from pure enmity to him and his doctrine, deliberately, and of malice prepense; Pilate condemned him purely for fear of the people, and it was a hasty resolution which he had not time to cool upon.

(3.) Some think Christ means Judas; for, though he did not immediately deliver him into the hands of Pilate, yet he betrayed him to those that did. The sin of Judas was upon many accounts greater than the sin of Pilate. Pilate was a stranger to Christ, Judas was his friend and follower. Pilate found no fault in him, but Judas knew a deal of good by him. Pilate, though biased, was not bribed; but Judas took a reward against the innocent. The sin of Judas was a leading sin, and let in all that followed. He was a "guide to them that took Jesus." So great was the sin of Judas, that vengeance suffered him not to live; but when Christ said this, or soon after, he was gone to his own place.

Fifthly. Pilate struggles with the Jews to deliver Jesus out of their hands, but in vain. We hear no more after this of any thing that passed between Pilate and the prisoner; what remains, lay between him and the prosecutors.

1. Pilate seems more zealous than before to get Jesus discharged; ver. 12, "from thenceforth," from this time, and for this reason, because Christ had given him that answer, ver. 11, which, though it had a rebuke in it, yet he took it kindly; and though Christ found fault with him, he still continued to find no fault in Christ, but "sought to release him," desired it, endeavoured it. "He sought to release him," he contrived how to do it handsomely and safely, and so as not to disoblige the priests. It never doth well, when our resolutions to do our duty are swallowed up in projects how to do it plausibly and conveniently. If Pilate's policy had not prevailed above his justice, he would not have been long seeking to release him, but would have done it. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*.—Let justice be done, though heaven itself should fall.

2. The Jews were more furious than ever, and more violent to get Jesus crucified. Still they carry on their design with noise and clamour, as before; so now they cried out. They would have it thought that the commonalty was against him, and therefore laboured to get him cried down by a multitude; and it is no hard matter to pack a mob; whereas, if a fair poll had been granted, I doubt not but it would have been carried by a great majority for the releasing of him. A few madmen may outshout many wise men, and then fancy themselves to speak the sense, when it is but the nonsense of a nation, or of all mankind; but it is not so easy a thing to change the sense of the people as it is to misrepresent it, and to change their cry. Now Christ was in the hands of his enemies, his friends were shy, and silent, and disappeared, and those that were against him were forward to shew themselves so; and this gave the chief priests an opportunity to represent it as the concurring vote of all the Jews, that he should be crucified. In this outcry they endeavour two things:

1st. To blacken the prisoner as an enemy to Cæsar. He had refused the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; had declared his kingdom not to be of this world; and yet they will have it that he "speaks against Cæsar;" *ἀντιλέγει*, 'he opposeth Cæsar,' invades his dignity and sovereignty. It has always been the artifice of the enemies of religion to represent it as hurtful to kings and provinces, when it would be highly beneficial to both.

2nd. To frighten the judge, as no friend to Cæsar, if he let this man go unpunished, and let him go on. "Thou art not Cæsar's friend," and therefore false to thy trust, and the duty of thy place, and obnoxious to the emperor's displeasure, and liable to be turned out. They intimate a threatening, that they would inform against him, and get him displaced; and here they touched him in a sensible and very tender part. But, of all people, those Jews should not have pretended a concern for Cæsar, who were themselves so ill affected to him and his government. They should not talk of being friends to Cæsar who were themselves such back friends to him. Yet thus a pretended zeal for that which is good often serves to cover a real malice against that which is better.

3. When other expedients had been tried in vain, Pilate slightly endeavoured to banter them out of their fury; and yet, in doing that, betrayed himself to them, and yielded to the rapid stream, ver. 13–15. After he had stood it out a great while, and seemed now as if he would have made a vigorous resistance upon that attack, ver. 12, he basely surrendered. Observe here,

1st. What it was that shocked Pilate; ver. 13, "when he heard that saying," that he could not be true to Cæsar's honour, nor sure of Cæsar's favour, if he did not put Jesus to death, then he thought it was time to look about him. All they had said to prove Christ a malefactor, and that, therefore, it was Pilate's duty to condemn him, did not move him, but he still kept to his conviction of Christ's innocency; but when they urged that it was his interest to condemn him, then he began to yield. Note, They that bind up their happiness in the favour of men make themselves an easy prey to the temptations of Satan.

2nd. What preparation was made for a definitive sentence upon this matter. "Pilate brought Jesus forth," and he himself in great state took the chair. We may suppose that he called for his robes, that he might look big, and then he "sat down in the judgment-seat." He was condemned with all the ceremony that could be. First. To bring us off at God's bar; and that all believers, through Christ being judged here, might be acquitted in the court of heaven. Secondly. To take off the terror of pompous trials, which his followers would be brought to for his sake. Paul might the better stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, when his Master had stood there before him.

Notice is here taken of the place and time.

1st. The place where Christ was condemned. In a "place called the pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha," probably the place where he used to sit to try causes or criminals. Some make Gabbatha to signify an enclosed place, fenced against the insults of the people, whom, therefore, he did the less need to fear; others, an elevated place, raised that all might see him.

2nd. The time, ver. 14. "It was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour." Observe,

(1.) The day. "It was the preparation of the passover" that is, for the passover sabbath, and the solemnities of that, and the rest of the days of the feast of unleavened bread. This is plain from *Lu. xxiii. 54*, "It was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on." So that this preparation was for the sabbath. Note, Before the passover there ought to be preparation. This is mentioned as an aggravation of their sin in persecuting Christ with so much malice and fury; that it was when they should have been purging out the old leaven, to get ready for the passover; but the better the day the worse the deed.

(2.) The hour. It was "about the sixth hour." Some ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts read it, "about the third hour," which agrees with *Mar. xv. 25*. And it appears by *Mat. xxvii. 45*, that he was upon the cross before the sixth hour. But it should seem to come in here, not as a precise determination of the time, but as an additional aggravation of the sin of his prosecutors, that they were pushing on the prosecution, not only on a solemn day, the day of the preparation, but from the third to the sixth hour, which was, as we call it, church time, on that day they were employed in this wickedness; so that for this day, though they were priests, they dropped the temple service; for they did not leave Christ till the sixth hour, when the darkness began, which frightened them away. Some think that the sixth hour with this evangelist

not improbable that these men were concerned in the insurrection raised by Barabbas.

xix. 29. The vessel contained the usual drink of the Roman soldiers—"posca"—exceedingly sour wine, and had been brought for the use of the guard. The hyssop produces long wiry stalks, very suitable for the purpose described.

xix. 35. "He that saw it bare record;" or, rather, "hath borne witness."

xix. 38. "Joseph of Arimathea:" Arimathea, a city supposed by Robinson to be situated between Lydda and Nobe, now Beit Nuba, a mile north-east of Yalo. Joseph is described by St. Mark as an honourable counsellor—i.e., probably a member of the great council, or Sanhedrim. His request for the body was made boldly, and granted after some delay.

xix. 42. This verse is given by Alford thus: "There, therefore, by reason of the Jews' preparation day, because the sepulchre was

is, according to the Roman reckoning and ours, six o'clock in the morning, answering to the Jews' first hour of the day. This is very probable, that Christ's trial before Pilate was at the height about six in the morning, which was then a little after sun-rising.

3rd. The encounter Pilate had with the Jews, both priests and people, before he proceeded to give judgment, endeavouring in vain to stem the tide of their rage.

First. He saith unto the Jews, "Behold your king." This is a reproof to them for the absurdity and malice of their innuendo, that this Jesus made himself a king. "Behold your king;" that is, him whom you accuse as a pretender to the crown. Is this a man likely to be dangerous to the government? I am satisfied he is not, and you may be so too, and let him alone. Some think he hereby upbraids them with their secret disaffection to Cæsar. You would have this man to be your king, if he would but have headed a rebellion against Cæsar. But Pilate, though he was far from meaning so, seems as if he were the voice of God to them. Christ, now crowned with thorns, here is, as a king at his coronation, offered to the people. "Behold your king," the king which God hath set upon his holy hill of Zion; but they, instead of entering into it with acclamations of joyful consent, protest against him; they will not have a king of God's choosing.

Secondly. They cried out with the greatest indignation, "Away with him, away with him," which speaks disdain as well as malice; ἀπό, ἀπό, 'take him,' he is none of ours; we disown him for our kinsman, much more for our king; we have not only no veneration for him, but no compassion; away with him out of our sight; for so it was written of him, he is one whom the nation abhors, *Isa. xlix. 7*; and they hid as it were their faces from him, *Isa. liii. 2, 3*; away with him from the earth, *Acts xxii. 22*. This shews, 1st. How we deserved to have been treated at God's tribunal; we were by sin become odious to God's holiness, which cried, Away with them, away with them; for God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. We were also become obnoxious to God's justice, which cried against us. Crucify them, crucify them; let the sentence of the law be executed. Had not Christ interposed, and been thus rejected of men, we had been for ever rejected of God. 2nd. It shews how we ought to treat our sins. We are often in Scripture said to crucify sin, in conformity to Christ's death; now, they that crucified Christ did it with detestation. With a pious indignation we should run down sin in us, as they, with an impious indignation, run him down who was made sin for us. The true penitent casts away from him his transgressions; Away with them, away with them, *Isa. ii. 20*; xxx. 22. Crucify them, crucify them; it is not fit they should live in my soul, *Hos. xiv. 8*.

Thirdly. Pilate, willing to have Jesus released, and yet that it should be their doing, asks them, "Shall I crucify your king?" In saying this, he designed either, 1st. To stop their mouths, by shewing them how absurd it was for them to reject one who offered himself to them to be their king, at a time when they needed one more than ever. Have they no sense of slavery? No desire of liberty? No value for a deliverer? Though he saw no cause to fear him, they might see cause to hope for something from him; since crushed and sinking interests are ready to catch at any thing. Or, 2nd. To stop the mouth of his own conscience. If this Jesus be a king, thinks Pilate, he is only king of the Jews, and therefore I have nothing to do but to make a fair tender of him to them; if they refuse him, and will have their king crucified, what is that to me? He banters them for their folly, in expecting a Messiah, and yet running down one that bade so fair to be he.

Fourthly. The chief priests, that they might effectually renounce Christ, and engage Pilate to crucify him, but otherwise sore against their will, cried out, "We have no king but Cæsar." This they knew would please Pilate, and so they hoped to carry their point, though at the same time they hated Cæsar and his government. But observe here, 1st. What a plain indication this is that the time for the Messiah to appear, even the set time, was now come; for, if the Jews have no king but Cæsar, then is "the sceptre departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet," which should never be till Shiloh come to set up a spiritual kingdom. And, 2nd. What a righteous thing it was with God to bring upon them that ruin by the Romans, which followed not long after. (1.) They adhere to Cæsar, and to Cæsar they shall go. God soon gave them enough of their Cæsars, and, according to Jotham's parable, since the trees choose the bramble for their king, rather than the vine and the olive, an evil spirit is sent between them, for they could not do it truly and sincerely, *Jud. ix. 12-19*; from henceforward they were rebels to the Cæsars, and the Cæsars tyrants to them, and it ended in the overthrow of their place and nation. It is just with God to make that a scourge and plague to us which we prefer before Christ. (2.) They would have no other king but Cæsar, and never have they had any other to this day, but have now "abode many days without a king, and without a prince," *Hos. iii. 4*, without any of their own, but the kings of the nations have ruled over them. Since they will have no king but Cæsar, so shall their doom be, themselves have decided it.

16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. 17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha: 18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

We have here sentence of death passed upon our Lord Jesus, and execution done presently. A mighty struggle Pilate had had within him between his convictions and his corruptions; but at length his convictions yielded, and his corruptions prevailed; the fear of man having a greater power over him than the fear of God.

First. Pilate gave judgment against Christ, and signed the warrant for his execution, ver. 16. We may see here,

1. How Pilate sinned against his conscience. He had again and again pronounced him innocent, and yet at last condemned him as guilty. Pilate, since he came to be governor, had in many instances dissembled and exasperated the Jewish nation; for he was a man of a haughty, implacable spirit, and extremely wedded to his humour. He had seized upon the Corban, and spent it upon a water work; he had brought in shields stamped with Cæsar's image, which was very provoking to the Jews; he had sacrificed the lives of many to his resolutions herein. Fearing, therefore, he should be complained of for those and other insolencies, he was willing to gratify the Jews. Now this makes the matter much worse. If he had been of an easy, soft, and pliable disposition, his yielding to so strong a stream, had been the more excusable; but for a man that was so wilful in other things, and of so fierce a resolution, to be overcome

in a thing of this nature, shews him an ill man indeed, that could better bear the wronging of his conscience, than the crossing of his humour.

2. How he endeavoured to transfer the guilt upon the Jews. He delivered him not to his own officers, as usual, but to the prosecutors, the chief priests and elders; so excusing the wrong to his own conscience with this, that it was but a permissive condemnation, and that he did not put Christ to death, but only connived at those that did it.

3. How Christ was made sin for us. We deserved to have been condemned; but Christ was condemned for us, that to us there might be no condemnation. God was now entering into judgment with his Son, that he might not enter into judgment with his servants.

Secondly. Judgment was no sooner given, but with all possible expedition the prosecutors, having gained their point, resolved to lose no time. 1. *1st.* Pilate should change his mind, and order a reprieve. Those are enemies to our souls, the worst of enemies, that hurry us to sin, and then leave us no room to undo what we have done amiss. 2. *2nd.* Lest there should be an uproar among the people; and there should have been a greater number against, than they had with so much artifice got to be for them. It were well if we would be thus expeditious in that which is good, and not stay for more difficulties.

1. They immediately hurried away the prisoner. The chief priests greedily flew upon the prey which they had been long waiting for; now it is drawn into their net. Or they, that is, the soldiers who were to attend the execution, they took him and led him away, not to the place from whence he came, and thence to the place of execution, as is usual with us; but directly to the place of execution. Both the priests and the soldiers joined in leading him away. Now was the Son of man delivered into the hands of men, wicked and unreasonable men. By the law of Moses, (and in appeals by our law,) the prosecutors were to be the executioners, *Deu. xvii. 7*. And the priests here were proud of the office. His being led away doth not suppose him to have made any opposition; but the Scripture must be fulfilled, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter," *Acts viii. 32*. We deserved to have been led forth with the workers of iniquity, as criminals to execution, *Ps. cxxv. 5*; but he was led forth for us, that we might escape.

2. To add to his misery, they obliged him, as long as he was able, to carry his cross, ver. 17, according to the custom among the Romans; hence *Furcifer* was among them a name of reproach. Their crosses did not stand up constantly, as our gibbets do in the places of execution; because the malefactor was nailed to the cross as it lay along upon the ground, and then it was lifted up and fastened in the earth, and removed when the execution was over, and commonly buried with the body; so that every one that was crucified had a cross of his own. Now, Christ's carrying his cross may be considered, 1st. As a part of his sufferings; he endured the cross literally. It was a long and thick piece of timber, that was necessary for such a use; and some think it was neither seasoned nor hewn. The blessed body of the Lord Jesus was tender, and unaccustomed to such burthens; it had now lately been harassed and tired out. His shoulders sore with the stripes they had given him, every jog of the cross would renew his smart, and be apt to strike the thorns he was crowned with into his head; yet all this he patiently underwent, and it was but the beginning of sorrows. 2nd. As answering the type which went before him. Isaac, when he was about to be offered, carried the wood on which he was to be bound, and with which he was to be burned. 3rd. As very significant of his undertaking, the Father having "laid upon him the iniquity of us all," *Isa. liii. 6*, and he being to take away sin by bearing it in his own body upon the tree, *1 Pet. ii. 24*. He had said in effect, On me be the curse; for he was made a curse for us, and therefore on him was the cross. 4th. As very instructive to us. Our Master hereby taught all his disciples to take up their cross and follow him. Whatever cross he calls us out to bear at any time, we must remember he bore the cross first, and, by bearing it for us, bears it off from us in a great measure, for thus he hath made his yoke easy, and his burthen light. He bore that end of the cross that had the curse upon it, that was the heavy end; and thence all that are his are enabled to call their afflictions for him light, and but for a moment.

3. They brought him to the place of execution. He went forth, not dragged against his will, but voluntary in his sufferings. He went forth out of the city, for he was crucified without the gate, *Heb. xiii. 12*. And, to put the greater infamy upon his sufferings, he was brought to the common place of execution, as one in all points numbered among the transgressors; a place called Golgotha, the place of a skull, where they threw dead men's skulls and bones, or where the heads of beheaded malefactors were left; a place ceremonially unclean. There Christ suffered, because he was made sin for us, that he might purge our consciences from dead works, and the pollution of them. If one would take notice of the traditions of the elders, there are two which are mentioned by many of the ancient writers concerning this place. 1st. That Adam was buried here, and that this was the place of his skull; and they observe that there, where death triumphed over the first Adam, there the second Adam triumphed over him. Gerhard quotes for this tradition, Origen, Cyprinus, Epiphanius, Austin, Jerome, and others. 2nd. That this was that mountain in the land of Moriah on which Abraham offered up Isaac, and the ram was a ransom for Isaac.

4. There they crucified him, and the other malefactors with him; ver. 18. "Where they crucified him." Observe, 1st. What death Christ died; the death of the cross, a bloody, painful, shameful death, a cursed death. He was nailed to the cross, as a sacrifice bound to the altar, as a Saviour fixed for his undertaking; his ear nailed to God's door-post, to serve him for ever. He was lifted up as the brazen serpent, hung between heaven and earth; because we were unworthy of either, and abandoned by both. His hands stretched out to invite and embrace us; he hung upon the tree some hours, dying gradually, in the full use of reason and speech, that he might actually resign himself a sacrifice. 2nd. In what company he died; "two other with him." Probably those had not been executed at that time, but at the request of the chief priests, to add to the disgrace of our Lord Jesus; which might be the reason why one of them reviled him, because their death was hastened for his sake. Had they taken two of his disciples, and crucified them with him, it had been an honour to him; but if such as they had been partakers with him in suffering, it would have looked as if they had been undertakers with him in satisfaction; therefore it was ordered that his fellow-sufferers should be the worst of sinners, that he might bear our reproach, and that the merit might appear to be his only. This exposed him much to be the people's contempt and hatred, who are apt to judge of persons by the lump, and are not curious in distinguishing; and would conclude him not only a malefactor, because he was yoked with malefactors, but the worst of the three, because put in the midst. But thus the Scripture was fulfilled, "He was numbered among the transgressors." He did not die at the altar among the sacrifices, nor mingle his blood with that of bulls and goats; but he died among the criminals, and mingled his blood with theirs who were sacrificed to public justice.

And now let us pause awhile, and with an eye of faith look upon Jesus. Was ever sorrow like unto his sorrow? See him who was clothed with glory stripped of it all, and clothed with shame; him who was the praise of angels, made a reproach of men; who had been with eternal delight and joy in the

nigh at hand, they laid Jesus." The tomb was intended as the final resting-place of the body; but their placing it there, wrapped in the linen and spices, was not intended as its final obsequies.

xx. 1. The Sabbath ended at six o'clock in the evening of the 16th Nisan (April 9th). Early the next morning the resurrection took place. He had lain in the grave about thirty-six or forty hours, but these reached through the whole of one day and a portion of the previous and following days; and this, according to Jewish reckoning, would

be spoken of as three days. Josephus often speaks of years in the same way, reckoning a period made up of the extreme portions of two years as two years. The order of the earlier events connected with our Lord's resurrection are difficult to harmonise. The exact hour of the resurrection is not mentioned, but the language of St. John ("when it was yet dark") shows us that it must have taken place at a very early hour. At the same time, it could not have been very long before the coming of the women (see Mark

poison of his Father, now in the extremities of pain and agony. See him bleeding, see him struggling, see him dying, see him and love him, love him and live so him, and study what we shall render.

19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. 21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. 22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. 23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. 24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. 25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. 28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. 29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Here are some remarkable circumstances of Christ's dying more fully related than before, which they will take special notice of who covet to know Christ, and him crucified.

First. The title set up over his head. Observe, 1. The inscription itself which Pilate wrote, and ordered to be fixed to the top of the cross, declaring the cause for which he was crucified, ver. 19; Matthew called it *αἰτία*, the accusation; Mark and Luke called it *ἐπιγραφὴ*, the inscription; John calls it by the proper Latin name, *titulus*, the title; and it was this, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews." Pilate intended this for his reproach, that he, being Jesus of Nazareth, should pretend to be king of the Jews, and set up in competition with Caesar, to whom Pilate would thus recommend himself, as very jealous for his honour and interest, when he would treat but a titular king, a king in metaphor, as the worst of malefactors; but God overruled this matter, 1st. That it might be a farther testimony to the innocency of our Lord Jesus; for here was an accusation, which as it was worded contained no crime. If this be that, if this be all they have to lay to his charge, surely he has done nothing worthy of death or of bonds. 2nd. That it might shew forth his dignity and honour. This is Jesus, a Saviour, *Ναζωραῖος*, that blessed Nazarene, sanctified to God; this is the king of the Jews, Messiah the prince, the sceptre that should rise out of Israel, as Balaam had foretold; dying for the good of his people, as Caiaphas had foretold. Thus all these three ill men witnessed to Christ, though they meant not so.

2. The notice taken of this inscription; ver. 20, many of the Jews read it; not only those of Jerusalem, but those out of the country, and from other countries, strangers and proselytes that came up to worship at the feast. Multitudes read it, and it occasioned a great variety of reflections and speculations, as men stood affected. Christ himself was set for a sign, a title. Here are two reasons why the title was so much read: 1st. Because the place where Jesus was crucified, though without the gate, yet was nigh the city; which intimates, that if it had been at any great distance off they would not have been led, no, not by their curiosity, to go see it, and read it. It is an advantage to have the means of knowing Christ brought to our doors. 2nd. Because it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, which made it legible by all; they all understood one or other of these languages, and none more careful to bring up their children to read than the Jews generally were. It likewise made it the more considerable; every one would be curious to inquire what it was which so industriously published in the three most known languages. In the Hebrew, the oracles of God were recorded; in Greek, the learning of the philosophers; and, in Latin, the laws of the empire:

in each of these Christ is proclaimed king, in whom are hid all the treasures of revelation, wisdom, and power. God so ordering it that this should be written in the three then most known tongues, it was intimated thereby that Jesus Christ should be a Saviour to all nations, and not to the Jews only; and also that every nation should hear in their own tongue the wonderful works of the Redeemer. Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, were the vulgar languages at that time in this part of the world; so that this is so far from intimating (as the papists would have it) that the Scripture is still to be retained in these three languages, that, on the contrary, it teaches us that the knowledge of Christ ought to be diffused throughout every nation in their own tongue, as the proper vehicle of it, that people may converse as freely with the Scriptures as they do with their neighbours.

3. The offence which the prosecutors took at it; ver. 21, they would not have it written "The King of the Jews; but that he said of himself, I am King of the Jews." Here they shewed themselves, 1st. Very spiteful and malicious against Christ. It was not enough to have him crucified, but they must have his name crucified too; to justify themselves in giving him such ill treatment, they thought themselves concerned to give him an ill character, and to represent him as a usurper of honours and powers that he was not entitled to. 2nd. Foolishly jealous of the honour of their nation, though they were a conquered and enslaved people; yet they stood so much upon the punctilio of their reputation, that they scorned to have it said that this was their king. 3rd. They shew themselves very impertinent and troublesome to Pilate. They could not but be sensible that they had forced him against his mind to condemn Christ; and yet in such a trivial thing as this they continue to tease him; and it was so much the worse, in that, though they had charged him with pretending to be the king of the Jews, yet they did not prove it, nor had he ever said so.

4. The judge's resolution to adhere to it. "What I have written I have written," and will not alter it to humour them.

1st. Hereby an affront was put upon the chief priests, who would still be dictating. It seems, by Pilate's manner of speaking, that he was uneasy in himself for yielding to them, and vexed at them for forcing him to it; and therefore he was resolved to be cross with them; and by this inscription insinuates, *First*, That, notwithstanding their pretences, they were not sincere in their affections to Caesar and his government; they were willing enough to have a king of the Jews, if they could have one to their mind. *Secondly*, That such a king as this, so mean and despicable, was good enough to be the king of the Jews; and this would be the fate of all that should dare to oppose the Roman power. *Thirdly*, That they had been very unjust and unreasonable in persecuting this Jesus, when there was no fault to be found in him.

2nd. Hereby honour was done to the Lord Jesus. Pilate stuck to it with resolution that he was the king of the Jews; what he had written was what God had first written, and therefore he could not alter; for thus it was written, that Messiah the prince shall be cut off, *Dan. ix. 26*. This, therefore, is the true cause of his death. He dies, because the king of Israel must die, must thus die. When the Jews reject Christ, and will not have him for their king, Pilate, a Gentile, sticks to it that he is a king; which was an earnest of what came to pass soon after, when the Gentiles submitted to the kingdom of the Messiah, which the unbelieving Jews had rebelled against.

Secondly. The dividing of his garments among the executioners, ver. 23, 24. Four soldiers were employed, who when they had crucified Jesus, had nailed him to the cross, and lifted it up, and him upon it, and nothing more was to be done but to wait his expiring through the extremity of pain, as with us when the prisoner is turned off, then they went to make a dividend of his clothes, each claiming an equal share; and so they made four parts, as near of the same value as they could, to every soldier a part; but his coat, or upper garment, whether cloak or gown, being a pretty piece of curiosity, "without seam, woven from the top throughout," they agreed to cast lots for that. Here observe,

1. The shame they put upon our Lord Jesus in stripping him of his garments before they crucified him. The shame of nakedness came in with sin. He, therefore, who was made sin for us, bare that shame to roll away our reproach. He was stripped that we might be clothed with white raiment, *Rev. iii. 18*; and that when we are unclothed we may not be found naked.

2. The wages with which these soldiers paid themselves for crucifying Christ. They were willing to do it for his old clothes. Nothing is to be done so ill but there will be found men ill enough to do it for a trifle. Probably they hoped to make more than ordinary advantage of his clothes, having heard of cures wrought by the touch of the hem of his garment; or expecting that his admirers would give any money for them.

3. The sport they made about his seamless coat; we read not of anything about him valuable or remarkable but that, and that not for the richness, but only the variety of it, for it was woven from the top throughout; no curiosity, therefore, in the shape, but an affected plainness. Tradition saith his mother wove it him; and adds this farther, that it was made for him when he was a child, and like the Israelites' clothes in the wilderness, waxed not old; but that is a groundless fancy. The soldiers thought it pity to rend it, for then it would unravel, and a piece of it would be good for nothing; they would therefore cast lots for it. While Christ was in his dying agonies, they were merrily dividing his spoils.

The preserving of Christ's seamless coat is commonly alluded to, to shew the care all Christians ought to take that they rend not the church of Christ with strifes and divisions; yet some have observed, that the reason why the soldiers would not rend Christ's coat was not out of any respect to Christ, but because each of them hoped to have it entire for himself; and so many cry out against schism only that they may engross all the wealth and power to themselves. Those who opposed Luther's separation from the church of Rome urged much the *tunica inconsutilis*,—the seamless coat; and some of them laid so much stress upon it, that they were called the *Inconsutibilistæ*.

4. The fulfilling of the Scripture in this. David in spirit foretold this very circumstance of Christ's sufferings in that passion, *Ps. xxii*. The event so exactly answering the prediction, proves, 1st. That the Scripture is the word of God, which foretold contingent events concerning Christ so long before, and they came to pass according to the prediction. 2nd. That Jesus is the true Messiah; for in him all the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah had and have their full accomplishments. "These things, therefore, the soldiers did."

Thirdly. The care that he took of his poor mother.

1. His mother attends him to his death; ver. 25, "There stood by the cross," as near as they could get, "his mother," and some of his relations and friends with her. At first they stood near, as it is said here; but it is probable afterwards the soldiers forced them to stand afar off, as it is said in Matthew and Mark, or they themselves removed out of the ground.

1st. See here the tender affection of this pious woman to our Lord Jesus in his sufferings; when all the disciples except John had forsaken him, they continued their attendance on him. Thus the feeble were as David, *Zec. xii. 8*; they were not deterred by the fury of the enemy, or the horror of the sight; they could not rescue him, or relieve him; yet they attended him, to shew their good-will. It is an impious and blasphemous construction which some of the popish writers put upon the Virgin Mary standing by the cross, that

xvi. 2, 9), for the alarm was given while the women were going to tell the disciples (see Matt. xxviii. 11) that they had seen Jesus.

xx. 6, 7. It is worth comparing the correspondence between this account and that given in Luke xxiv. 12. Luke narrates what Peter saw—the linen clothes lying by themselves. St. John tells that the napkin which was about the head was not lying with the linen clothes, but in a place by itself. The description of these circumstances shows that there was deliberateness and calmness throughout

the whole scene. The contrast in the case of Lazarus serves to confirm the sense of quietness here. Neither friends nor foes would have removed the body except under the pressure of fear, which would have left signs of haste behind them.

xx. 8. "Then went in," &c.: it has been thought that these words imply that the belief of Peter was less ready than that of John, who, when he saw the state of the sepulchre, believed. This would be perhaps natural. John showed the quickest discernment on a later

thereby she contributed to the satisfaction he made for sin no less than he did, and so became a joint mediatrix and coadjutrix in our salvation.

2nd. We must easily suppose what an affliction it was to those poor women to see him thus abused, especially to the blessed Virgin. Now was fulfilled Simeon's word, "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul," *Lu. ii. 35*. His torments were her tortures; she was upon the rack while he was upon the cross, and her heart bled with his wounds, and the reproaches wherewith they reproached him fell on them that attended him.

3rd. We may justly admire the power of Divine grace in supporting these women, especially the Virgin Mary, under this heavy trial. We do not find his mother wringing her hands, or tearing her hair, or rending her clothes, or making an outcry; but, with a wonderful composure, standing by the cross, and her friends with her. Surely she and they were strengthened by a Divine power to this degree of patience; and surely the Virgin Mary had a fuller expectation of his resurrection than the rest had, which supported her thus. We know not what we can bear till we are tried, and then we know who has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

2. He tenderly provides for his mother at his death. It is probable Joseph, her husband, was long since dead, and that her son Jesus had supported her, and her relation to him had been her maintenance; and now he was dying, what would become of her? He saw her standing by, and knew her cares and griefs; and he saw John standing not far off, and so he settled a new relation between his beloved mother and his beloved disciple; for he said to her, "Woman, behold thy son," for whom henceforward thou must have a motherly affection; and to him, "Behold thy mother," to whom thou must pay a filial duty; and so "from that hour" that hour never to be forgotten, that disciple took her to his own home." See here,

1st. The care Christ took of his dear mother. He was not so much taken up with a sense of his sufferings as to forget his friends; all whose concerns he bore upon his heart. His mother, perhaps, was so taken up with his sufferings, that she thought not what would become of her; but he admitted that thought. Silver and gold he had none to leave, no estate, real or personal; his clothes the soldiers had seized, and we hear no more of the bag since Judas, that had carried it, hanged himself. He had, therefore, no other way to provide for his mother but by his interest in a friend, which he doth here.

First. He calls her "Woman," not mother; not out of any disrespect to her, but because mother would have been a cutting word to her that was already wounded to the heart with grief; like Isaac saying to Abraham, "My father." He speaks as one that was now no more in this world, but was already dead to those in it that were dearest to him. His speaking in this seemingly slight manner to his mother, as he had done formerly, was designed to obviate and give check to the undue honours which he foresaw would be given her in the Romish church, as if she were a joint purchaser with him in the honours of the Redeemer.

Secondly. He directs her to look upon John as her son; Behold him as thy son who stands there by thee, and be as a mother to him. See here, 1st. An instance of Divine goodness to be observed for our encouragement. Sometimes, when God removes one comfort from us, he raiseth up another for us; perhaps there where we looked not for it. We read of children which the church shall have after she has lost the other, *Isa. xlix. 21*. Let none, therefore, reckon all gone with one cistern dried up; for from the same fountain another may be filled. 2nd. An instance of filial duty to be observed for our imitation. Christ has here taught children to the utmost of their power to provide for the comfort of their aged parents. When David was in distress, he took care of his parents, and found out a shelter for them, *1 Sam. xxii. 3*; so the Son of David here. Children at their death, according to their ability, should provide for their parents, if they survive them, and need their kindness.

2nd. The confidence he reposed in the beloved disciple. It is to him he saith, "Behold thy mother;" that is, I recommend her to thy care, be thou as a son to her, to guide her, *Isa. li. 18*, and not to forsake her when she is old, *Pr. xxiii. 22*. Now, First. This was an honour put upon John, and a testimony both to his prudence and to his fidelity: if he who knows all things had not known that John loved him, he would not have made him his mother's guardian. It is a great honour to be employed for Christ, and to be trusted with any of his interest in the world. But, Secondly. It would be a care and some charge to John; but he cheerfully accepted it, and took her to his own home; not objecting the trouble or expense, or his obligations to his own family, or the ill-will he might contract by it. Note, Those that truly love Christ, and are loved of him, will be glad of an opportunity to do any service to him or his. Nicophoras, *Ecccl. Hist. i. ii. c. 3*, saith that the Virgin Mary lived with John at Jerusalem eleven years, and then died. Others, that she lived to remove with him to Ephesus.

Fourthly. The fulfilling of the Scripture in the giving of him vinegar to drink, ver. 28, 29. Observe,

1. How much respect Christ shewed to the Scripture; ver. 28, "Knowing that all things" hitherto "were accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled" which spake of his drinking in his sufferings, he "saith, I thirst;" that is, he called for drink.

1st. It was not at all strange that he was thirsty. We find him thirsty in a journey, *ch. iv. 6, 7*, and now thirsty when he was just at his journey's end. Well might he thirst, after all the toil and hurry which he had undergone; and being now in the agonies of death, ready to expire purely by the loss of blood, and extremity of pain. The torments of hell are represented by a violent thirst in the complaint of the rich man that begged for a drop of water to cool his tongue. To that everlasting thirst we had been condemned, had not Christ suffered for us.

2nd. But the reason of his complaining of it is somewhat surprising; it is the only word he spoke that looked like complaint of his outward sufferings. When they scourged him, and crowned him with thorns, he did not cry, O my head, or my back; but now he cried, "I thirst." For, First. He would thus express the travail of his soul, *Isa. liii. 11*. He thirsted after the glorifying of God, and the accomplishment of the work of our redemption, and the happy issue of his undertaking. Secondly. He would thus take care to see the Scripture fulfilled. Hitherto all had been accomplished, and he knew it; for this was the thing he had carefully observed all along. And now he called to mind one thing more which this was the proper season for the performance of. By this it appears he was the Messiah, in that not only the Scripture was punctually fulfilled in him, but it was strictly eyed by him. By this it appears that God was with him of a truth; that in all he did he went exactly according to the word of God, taking care not to destroy, but to fulfil the law and the prophets.

Now, 1st. The Scripture had foretold his thirst, and therefore he himself related it, because it could not otherwise be known, saying, "I thirst;" it was foretold that his tongue should cleave to his jaws, *Ps. xxii. 15*. Samson, an eminent type of Christ, when he was laying the Philistines heaps upon heaps, was himself sore athirst, *Jud. xv. 18*; so was Christ when he was upon the cross, "spoiling principalities and powers."

2nd. The Scripture had foretold, that in his thirst he should have vinegar given him to drink, *Ps. lxxix. 21*. They had given him vinegar to drink before

they crucified him, *Mat. xxvii. 34*; but the prophecy was not exactly fulfilled in that, because that was not in his thirst; therefore, now he said, "I thirst," and called for it again; then he would not drink, but now he received it. Christ would rather court an affront, than see any prophecy unfulfilled. This should satisfy us under all our trials, that the will of God is done, and the word of God accomplished.

2. See how little respect his persecutors shewed to him; ver. 20, "There was set a vessel full of vinegar," probably according to the custom at all executions of this nature; or, as others think, it was now set designedly for an abuse to Christ, instead of the cup of wine, which they used to give to them that were ready to perish; with that they filled a sponge, for they would not allow him a cup, and they put it upon hyssop, an hyssop-stalk, and with that heaved it to his mouth; *ισσαντω περιβλετες*, they 'stuck it round with hyssop,' so it may be taken; or, as others, they mingled it with hyssop-water, and this they gave him to drink when he was thirsty. A drop of water would have cooled his tongue better than a draught of vinegar; yet this he submitted to for us; he had taken the sour grapes, and thus his teeth were set on edge. We had forfeited all comforts and refreshments, and therefore they were withheld from him. When Heaven denied him a beam of light, earth denied him a drop of water, and put vinegar in the room of it.

Fifthly. The dying word wherewith he breathed out his soul; ver. 30, "When he had received the vinegar," as much of it as he thought fit, "he said, It is finished," and with that, "bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." Observe,

1. What he said; and we may suppose him to say it with triumph and exultation: *Τετέλεσται*, "It is finished;" a comprehensive word, and a comfortable one. 1st. "It is finished;" that is, the malice and enmity of his persecutors had now done its worst. When he had received that last indignity in the vinegar they gave him, he said, 'This is the last, I am now going out of their reach, where the wicked cease from troubling.' 2nd. "It is finished;" that is, the counsel and commandment of his Father concerning his sufferings was now fulfilled. It was a determinate counsel, and he took care to see every iota and tittle of it exactly answered, *Acts ii. 23*. He had said when he entered upon his sufferings, "Father, thy will be done;" and now he saith with pleasure, "It is done." It was his meat and drink to finish his work, *ch. iv. 34*; and the meat and drink refreshed him when they gave him gall and vinegar. 3rd. "It is finished;" that is, all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament which pointed at the sufferings of the Messiah were accomplished and answered. He speaks as if, now they had given him the vinegar, he could not bethink himself of any word in the Old Testament that was to be fulfilled betwixt him and his death, but it had its accomplishment; for example's sake, his being sold for thirty pieces of silver, his hands and feet pierced, his garments divided, &c.; and now this is done, "It is finished." 4th. "It is finished;" that is, the ceremonial law is abolished, and a period put to the obligation of it. The substance is now come, and all the shadows are done away. Just now the veil is rent, the wall of partition is taken down, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, *Eph. ii. 14, 15*. The Mosaic economy is dissolved to make way for a better hope. 5th. "It is finished;" that is, sin is finished, and an end made of transgression, by the bringing in of an everlasting righteousness; it seems to refer to *Dan. ix. 24*. The Lamb of God was sacrificed to take away the sin of the world, and it is done, *Heb. ix. 26*. 6th. "It is finished;" that is, his sufferings were now finished, both those of his soul and those of his body; the storm is over, the worst is past; all his pains and agonies are at an end, and he is just going to Paradise, entering upon the joy set before him. Let all that suffer for Christ, and with Christ, comfort themselves with this, that yet a little while and they also shall say, "It is finished." 7th. "It is finished;" that is, his life was now finished, he was just ready to breathe his last, and now he is no more in this world, *ch. xvii. 11*. This is like that of blessed Paul, *2 Tim. iv. 7*, "I have finished my course," my race is run, my glass is out; *Mene, mene*, numbered and finished. This we must all come to shortly. 8th. "It is finished;" that is, the work of man's redemption and salvation is now completed, at least the hardest part of the undertaking is over. A full satisfaction is made to the justice of God, a fatal blow given to the power of Satan, a fountain of grace opened that shall ever flow, a foundation of peace and happiness laid that shall never fail. Christ had now gone through with his work, and finished it, *ch. xvii. 4*; for as for God, his work is perfect; When I begin, saith he, I will also make an end; and as in the purchase, so in the application of the redemption, he that has begun a good work will perform it; the mystery of God shall be finished.

2. What he did. He "bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." He was voluntary in dying; for he was not only the sacrifice, but the priest and the offerer; and the *animus offerenti*,—"the mind of the offerer," was all in all in the sacrifice. Christ shewed his will in his sufferings; "by the which will we are sanctified."

1st. He gave up the ghost. His life was not forcibly extorted from him, but freely resigned. He had said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit;" thereby expressing the intention of this act. I give up myself as a ransom for many; and accordingly he did give up his spirit, paid down the price of pardon and life at his Father's hands. "Father, glorify thy name."

2nd. He bowed his head. They that were crucified, in dying stretched up their heads to gasp for breath, and did not drop their heads till they had breathed their last; but Christ, to shew himself active in dying, bowed his head first, composing himself as it were to fall asleep. God had "laid upon him the iniquity of us all," putting them upon the head of this great sacrifice; and some think by this bowing of his head he would intimate his sense of the weight upon him; see *Ps. xxxviii. 4*; *xl. 12*. The bowing of his head shews his submission to his Father's will, and his obedience to death. He accommodated himself to his dying work, as Jacob, who gathered up his feet into the bed, and then yielded up the ghost.

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. 35 And

xx. 12. "Seeth:" Alford renders the word, and in verse 14, by "beholdeth." It is not the same word which in verse 8 is rendered "saw."

xx. 14. "Turned herself back"—perhaps on hearing a sound. She "knew not that it was Jesus:" compare the case of the disciples, Luke xxiv. 16; John xxi. 4.

xx. 15. "The gardener;" or, rather, the keeper of the garden. It has been thought (say Webster and Wilkinson) that it may mean the

occasion (chap. xxi. 7); and Peter's fall would, in his impetuous temperament, produce a disposition to doubt what he most wished to believe.

xx. 9. "As yet they knew not the Scripture:" they did not understand or comprehend the Scripture on the subject. The remark is valuable, showing that there was no predisposition on the part of the disciples to believe the resurrection. Not till clear and unquestionable evidence of the fact was given did they believe.

he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. 36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. 37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

This passage concerning the piercing of Christ's side after his death is recorded only by this evangelist.

First. Observe the superstition of the Jews which occasioned it: ver. 31. "because it was the preparation for the sabbath, and that sabbath day," because it fell in the passover week, "was a high day," that they might shew a veneration for the sabbath, would not have the dead bodies to remain on the crosses on the sabbath day, but "besought Pilate that their legs might be broken," which would be a certain but cruel despatch, and that then they might be buried out of sight. Note here,

1. The esteem they would be thought to have for the approaching sabbath, because it was one of the days of unleavened bread; and some reckon the day of the offering of the first fruits. Every sabbath day is a holy day, and a good day; but this was a high day, *μεγάλη ημέρα*,—"a great day." Passover sabbaths are high days; sacrament days, supper days, communion days, are high days, and there ought to be more than ordinary preparation for them, that these may be high days indeed to us, as the days of heaven.

2. The reproach which they reckoned it would be to that day if the dead bodies should be left hanging upon the cross. Dead bodies were not to be left at any time, *Deu. xxi. 23*, yet in this case the Jews would have left the Roman custom to take place, had it not been an extraordinary day, and many strangers from all parts being then at Jerusalem, it would have been an offence to them. Nor could they well bear the sight of Christ's crucified body; for, unless their consciences were quite seared, when the heat of their rage was a little over, they would upbraid them.

3. Their petition to Pilate, that their bodies, now as good as dead, might be despatched; not by strangling or beheading them, which would have been a compassionate hastening them out of their misery, like the *coup de grace*, as the French call it, to them that are broken upon the wheel, "the stroke of mercy;" but by the breaking of their legs, which would carry them off in the more exquisite pain. Note, 1st. "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." 2nd. The pretended sanctity of hypocrites is abominable. These Jews would be thought to bear a great regard to the sabbath, and yet had no regard to justice and righteousness; they made no conscience of bringing an innocent and excellent person to the cross, and yet scrupled letting a dead body hang upon the cross.

Secondly. The despatch of the two thieves that were crucified with him, ver. 32. Pilate was still gratifying the Jews, and gave orders as they desired; and the soldiers came, hardened against all impressions of pity, and broke the legs of the two thieves; which no doubt extorted from them hideous outcries, and made them die, according to the bloody disposition of Nero, so as to feel themselves die. One of these thieves was a penitent, and had received from Christ an assurance that he should shortly be with him in Paradise, and yet died in the same pain and misery that the other thief did; for "all things come alike to all." Many go to heaven that have bands in their death, and die in the bitterness of their soul. The extremity of dying agonies is no obstruction to the living comforts that wait for holy souls on the other side death. Christ died, and went to Paradise; but appointed a guard to convey him thither. This is the order of going to heaven: "Christ the firstfruits," and forerunner; "afterwards they that are Christ's."

Thirdly. The trial that was made whether Christ was dead or not, and the putting of it out of doubt.

1. They supposed him to be dead, and therefore did not break his legs, ver. 33. Observe here, 1st. That Jesus died in less time than persons crucified ordinarily did. The structure of his body, perhaps, being extraordinary fine and tender, was the sooner broke by pain; or, rather, it was to shew that he laid down his life of himself, and could die when he pleased, though his hands were nailed: though he yielded to death, yet he was not conquered. 2nd. That his enemies were satisfied he was really dead. The Jews, who stood by to see the execution effectually done, would not have balked this piece of cruelty if they had not been sure he was got out of the reach of it. 3rd. Whatever devices are in men's hearts, the counsel of the Lord shall stand. It was fully designed to break his legs, but, God's counsel being otherwise, see how it was prevented!

2. Because they would be sure he was dead, they made such an experiment as would put it past dispute: "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side," aiming at his heart, "and forthwith came thereout blood and water," ver. 34. 1st. The soldier hereby designed to decide the question whether he was dead or not, and, by this honourable wound in his side, to supersede the ignominious method of despatch they took with the other two. Tradition saith this soldier's name was Longinus, and that, having some distemper in his eyes, he was immediately cured of it by some drops of blood that flowed out of Christ's side lighting on them. Significant enough, if we had any good authority for the story. 2nd. But God had a farther design herein, which was, First. To give an evidence of the truth of his death, in order to the proof of his resurrection. If he was only in a trance or swoon, his resurrection was a sham; but by this experiment he was certainly dead, for his spear broke up the very fountains of life; and, according to all the law and course of nature, it was impossible a human body should survive such a wound as this in the vitals, and such an evacuation thence. Secondly. To give an illustration of the design of his death. There was much of mystery in it, and its being so solemnly attested, ver. 35, intimates there was something miraculous in it, that the blood and water should come out distinct and separate from the same wound; however, that was very significant. This same apostle refers to it as a very considerable thing, *1 Jno. v. 6, 8*.

1st. The opening of his side was significant. When we would protest our sincerity, we wish there were a window in our hearts, that the thoughts and intents of them might be visible to all. Through this window opened in Christ's side you may look into his heart, and see *love flaming there, love strong as death*; see our own names written there. Some make it an allusion to the opening of Adam's side in innocency. When Christ, the second Adam, was fallen into a deep sleep upon the cross, then was his side opened, and out of it was his church taken, which he espoused to himself: see *Eph. v. 30, 32*. Our devout poet, Mr. George Herbert, in his poem cal. d *The Bay*, very affectingly brings in our Saviour, when his side was pierced, thus speaking to his disciples:

If ye have anything to send or write,
(I have no bag, but here is room,) *Believe me, I shall safely come.*

occupier, or tenant, to whom the garden for the time being belonged, and who, Mary seems to have thought, objected to the interment within its precincts. The thrice-repeated "him" is both touching and characteristic.

xx. 16. "Turned." this time she turned to look at him directly and steadily. "Rabboni;" "my great Master." The termination has an intensive signification; a word signifying strength, power, wealth, being probably the root. The seven most famous Jewish

That I shall mind what you impart,—
Look, you may put it very near my heart;
Or if hereafter any of my friends
Will use me in this kind, the door
Shall still be open: what he sends
I will present, and somewhat more,
Not to his hurt. Sighs will convey
Anything to me. Hark! Despair away!"

2nd. The blood and water that flowed out of it were significant.

(1.) They signified the two great benefits which all believers partake of through Christ, justification and sanctification. Blood for remission, water for regeneration; blood for atonement, water for purification: blood and water were used very much under the law. Guilt contracted must be expiated by blood; stains contracted must be done away by the water of purification. These two must always go together, "Ye are sanctified, ye are justified," *1 Cor. vi. 11*. Christ has joined them together, and we must not think to put them asunder; they both flow from the pierced side of our Redeemer. To Christ crucified we owe both merit for our justification, and spirit and grace for our sanctification; and we have as much need of the latter as of the former, *1 Cor. i. 30*.

(2.) They signified the two great ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, by which those benefits are represented, sealed, and applied to believers; they both owe their institution and efficacy to Christ. It is not the water in the font that will be to us the washing of regeneration, but the water out of the side of Christ; not the blood of the grape that will pacify the conscience, and refresh the soul, but the blood out of the side of Christ. Now was the rock smitten, *1 Cor. x. 4*. Now was the fountain opened, *Zec. xiii. 1*. Now were the wells of salvation digged, *Isa. xii. 3*. Here is the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God.

Fourthly. The attestation of the truth of this by an eyewitness, ver. 35, the evangelist himself. Observe,

1. What a competent witness he was of the matters of fact. 1st. What he bare record of he saw; he had it not by hearsay, nor was it only his own conjecture, but he was an eyewitness of it; it is "what we have seen and looked upon," *1 Jno. i. 1*; *2 Pet. i. 16*, and had perfect understanding of, *Lu. i. 3*. 2nd. What he saw he faithfully bare record of. As a faithful witness he told not only the truth, but the whole truth; and did not only attest it by word of mouth, but left it upon record in writing, in *perpetuum rei memoriam*,—"for a perpetual memorial." 3rd. His record is undoubtedly true; for he wrote not only from his own personal knowledge and observation, but from the dictates of the Spirit of truth, that leads into all truth. 4th. He had himself a full assurance of the truth of what he wrote, and did not persuade others to believe that which he did not believe himself; "He knows that he saith true." 5th. He therefore witnesseth these things that we might believe. He did not record them merely for his own satisfaction, or the private use of his friends; but made them public to the world: not to please the curious, or entertain the ingenious; but to draw men to believe the Gospel in order to their eternal welfare.

2. What care he shewed in this particular instance. That we may be well assured, both of the truth of Christ's death, he saw his heart's blood, his life's blood, let out; and also of the benefits that flow to us from his death, signified by the blood and water which came out of his side. Let this silence the fears of weak Christians, and encourage their hopes; iniquity shall not be their ruin, for there came both water and blood out of Christ's pierced side, both to justify and sanctify them; and if you ask, How can we be sure of this? you may be sure, for "he that saw it bare record."

Fifthly. The accomplishment of the Scripture in all this; ver. 36. "that the Scripture should be fulfilled," and so both the honour of the Old Testament may be preserved, and the truth of the New Testament confirmed. Here are two instances of it together:

1. The Scripture was fulfilled in the preserving of his legs from being broken; therein that word was fulfilled, "a bone of him shall not be broken." 1st. There was a promise of this made indeed to all the righteous; but principally pointing at Jesus Christ the righteous, *Ps. xxxv. 20*, "He kepteth all his bones, not one of them is broken;" and David in spirit saith, "All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?" *Ps. xxxv. 10*. 2nd. There was a type of this in the paschal lamb, which seems to be especially referred to here, *Ex. xii. 46*, "Neither shall ye break a bone thereof;" and it is repeated, *Num. ix. 12*, "Ye shall not break any bone of it;" for which law the will of the lawmaker is the reason. But the antitype must answer the type; "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," *1 Cor. v. 7*; he is the Lamb of God, *ch. i. 29*; and as the true passover his bones were kept unbroken. This commandment was given concerning his bones when dead, as of Joseph's, *Heb. xi. 22*. 3rd. There was a significance in it; the strength of the body is in the bones. The Hebrew word for the bones signifies the strength; and therefore not a bone of Christ must be broken, to shew that, though he be crucified in weakness, his strength to save is not at all broken. Sin breaks our bones; it broke David's, *Ps. li. 8*; but it did not break his bones: he stood firm under the burthen, "mighty to save."

2. The Scripture was fulfilled in the piercing of his side; ver. 37, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced," so it is written, *Zec. xii. 10*; and there the same that pours out the Spirit of grace, and can be no less than the God of the holy prophets, saith, "They shall look upon me;" which is here applied to Christ, "They shall look upon him." 1st. It is here implied that the Messiah shall be pierced; and here it had a more full accomplishment than in the piercing of his hands and feet. He was pierced by the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; wounded in the house of his friends, as it follows, *Zec. xiii. 6*. 2nd. It is promised, that when the Spirit is poured out they shall look on him and mourn. This was in part fulfilled, when many of those that were his betrayers and murderers were pricked to the heart, and brought to believe in him. It will be further fulfilled in mercy, when all Israel shall be saved; and in wrath, when they who persisted in their infidelity shall see him whom they have pierced, and wail because of him, *Rev. i. 7*. But it is applicable to us all; we have all been guilty of piercing the Lord Jesus, and are all concerned with suitable affections to look on him.

38 And after this Joseph of Arimathæa, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. 39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and

rabbis have the title "Rabban." The word represents the sense in which a man was called Rab or Rabbi at that time. The term denoted one who was a literary or spiritual master. Jesus, however, was called "Master" in the sense of chief or ruler (Webster and Wilkinson).

xx. 17. "Touch me not;" the touch does not seem to have been absolutely forbidden, for we learn that they held him by the feet (*Matt. xxviii. 9*).

aloes, about an hundred pound weight. 40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.



ALOE, VARIOUS.

We have here an account of the burial of the blessed body of our Lord Jesus. The solemn funerals of great men used to be looked at with curiosity; the mournful funerals of dear friends used to be attended with concern. Come and see an extraordinary funeral, never was the like; come and see a burial that conquered the grave and buried it: a burial that beautified the grave, and softened it for all believers. Let us turn aside now, and see this great sight. Here is,

First. The body begged, ver. 38. This was done by the interest of Joseph of Ramah, or Arimathea, of whom no mention is made in all the New Testament story, but only in the narrative which each of the evangelists gives us of Christ's burial, wherein he was chiefly concerned. Observe,

1. The character of this Joseph. He was a disciple of Christ incognito; a better friend to Christ than he would willingly be known to be. It was his honour that he was a disciple of Christ; and some such there are, that are themselves great men, and unavoidably linked with ill men: but it was his weakness that he was so secretly, when he should have confessed Christ before men; yea, though he had lost his preferment by it. Disciples should openly own themselves; yet Christ may have many that are his disciples sincerely, though secretly: better secretly than not at all, especially, if, like Joseph here, they grow stronger and stronger. Some who in lesser trials have been timorous, yet in greater have been very courageous; so Joseph here. He concealed his affection to Christ for fear of the Jews, lest they should put him out of the synagogue, at least out of the Sanhedrim, which was all they could do. To Pilate the governor he went boldly, and yet feared the Jews. The impotent malice of those that can but censure, and revile, and clamour, is sometimes more formidable even to wise and good men than one would think.

2. The part he bore in this affair. He, having by his place access to Pilate, desired leave of him to dispose of the body. His mother and dear relations have neither spirit nor interest to attempt such a thing; his disciples were gone; if nobody appear, the Jews, or soldiers, would bury him with the thieves; therefore God raised up this gentleman to interpose in it, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, and the decorum owing to his approaching resurrection maintained. Note, When God has work to do, he can find out such as are proper to do it, and spirit them for it. Observe it as an instance of the humiliation of Christ, that his dead body lay at the mercy of a heathen judge, and not take the body of Christ till he had asked and obtained leave of the governor; for in those things wherein the power of the magistrate is concerned we must ever pay a deference to that power, and peaceably submit to it.

Secondly. The embalming prepared, ver. 39. This was done by Nicodemus, another person of quality, and in a public post. He brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes; which some think were bitter ingredients to preserve the body; others, fragrant ones to perfume it. Here is,

1. The character of Nicodemus, which is much the same with that of Joseph; he was a secret friend to Christ, though not his constant follower. He at first came to Jesus by night, but now owned him publicly, as before, *ch. vii. 51*. That grace which at first is like a bruised reed may afterwards become like a strong cedar; and the trembling lamba bold as a lion: see *Rom. xiv. 4*. It is a wonder that Joseph and Nicodemus, men of such interest, did not appear sooner, and solicit Pilate not to condemn Christ, especially seeing him so loath to it. Begging his life would have been a nobler piece of service than begging his body; but Christ would have none of his friends to endeavour to prevent his death when his hour was come. While his persecutors were forwarding the accomplishment of the Scriptures, his followers must not obstruct it.

2. The kindness of Nicodemus, which was considerable, though of a different nature. Joseph served Christ with his interest; Nicodemus with his purse. Probably they agreed it between them, that, while one was procuring the grant, the other should be preparing the spices; and that for expedition, because they were straitened in time.

But why did they make this ado about Christ's dead body?

1st. Some think we may see in it the weakness of their faith. A firm belief

of the resurrection of Christ the third day would have saved them this care and cost, and have been more acceptable than all spices. Those bodies, indeed, to whom the grave is a long home need to be clad accordingly; but what need of such furniture of the grave for one that, like a wayfaring man, did but turn aside into it to tarry for a night or two?

2nd. However, we may plainly see in it the strength of their love. Hereby they shewed the value they had for his person and doctrine, and that it was not lessened by the reproach of the cross. They that had been so industrious to profane his crown, and lay his honour in the dust, may already see that they imagine a vain thing; for as God had done him honour in his sufferings, so did men too, even great men. They shewed not only the charitable respects of committing his body to the earth, but the honourable respects shewed to great men. This they might do, and yet believe and look for his resurrection; nay, this they might do in the belief and expectation of it. Since God designed honour for this body, they would put honour upon it. However, we must do our duty according as the present day and opportunity is, and leave it to God to fulfil his promises in his own way and time.

Thirdly. The body got ready, ver. 40. They took it into some house adjoining, and, having washed it from blood and dust, wound it in linen clothes very decently, with the spices melted down, it is likely, into an ointment, as the manner of the Jews is to bury, or to embalm, so Dr. Hammond; as we sear dead bodies.

1. Here was care taken of Christ's body; it was wound in linen clothes. Among other clothing that belongs to us, Christ put on even the grave clothes; to make them easy to us, and to enable us to call them our wedding clothes. They wound the body with the spices, for "all his garments," his grave clothes not excepted, "smell of myrrh and aloes" (the spices here mentioned) "out of the ivory palaces," *Ps. xlv. 8*; and an ivory palace the sepulchre hewn out of a rock was to Christ. Dead bodies and graves use to be noisome and offensive; hence sin is compared to a body of death, and an open sepulchre; but Christ's sacrifice being to God as a sweet smelling savour hath taken away our pollution. No ointment or perfume can rejoice the heart so as the grave of our Redeemer doth, where there is faith to perceive the fragrant odours of it.

2. In conformity to this example, we ought to have regard to the dead bodies of Christians; not to enshrine and adore their relics, no, not those of the most eminent saints and martyrs,—nothing like that was done to the dead body of Christ himself,—but carefully deposit the dust in the dust, as those who believe the dead bodies of the saints are still united to Christ, and designed for glory and immortality at the last day. The resurrection of the saints will be in the virtue of Christ's resurrection; and therefore, in burying them, we should have an eye to Christ's burial, for he being dead thus speaketh; "Thy dead men shall live," *Isa. xxvi. 19*. In burying our dead it is not necessary that in all circumstances we imitate the burial of Christ, as if we must be buried in linen, and in a garden, and be embalmed as he was; but he being buried after the manner of the Jews, it teacheth us, that in things of this nature we should conform to the usages of the country where we live, except in those that are superstitious.

Fourthly. The grave pitched upon. In a garden which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, very near the place where he was crucified, there was a sepulchre or vault prepared for the first occasion, but not yet used. Observe,

1. That Christ was buried without the city; for thus the manner of the Jews was to bury, not in their cities, much less in their synagogues, which some have thought better than our way of burying. Yet there was then a peculiar reason for it, which doth not hold now, because the touch of a grave contracted a ceremonial pollution. But now the resurrection of Christ has altered the property of the grave, and done away its pollution for all believers, we need not keep at such a distance from it; nor is it incapable of a good improvement to have the congregation of the dead in the churchyard, encompassing the congregation of the living in the church, since they also are dying, and "in the midst of life we are in death." Those that would, not superstitiously, but by faith, visit the holy sepulchre, must go forth out of the noise of this world.

2. That Christ was buried in a garden. Observe,

1st. That Joseph had his sepulchre in his garden. So he contrived it, that it might be a memorandum, *First*. To himself while living. When he was taking the pleasure of his garden, and reaping the products of it, let him think of dying, and be quickened to prepare for it. The garden is a proper place for meditation, and a sepulchre there may furnish us with a proper subject for meditation; and such a one as we are loath to admit in the midst of our pleasures. *Secondly*. To his heirs and successors when he was gone. It is good to acquaint ourselves with the place of our fathers' sepulchres; and perhaps we might make our own less formidable if we made theirs more familiar.

2nd. That in a sepulchre in a garden Christ's body was laid. In the garden of Eden death and the grave first received their power; and now in a garden they are conquered, disarmed, and triumphed over. In a garden Christ began his passion; and from a garden he would rise and begin his exaltation. Christ fell to the ground as a corn of wheat, *ch. xii. 24*; and therefore was sown in a garden among the seeds, for his dew is as the dew of herbs, *Isa. xxvi. 19*. He is the fountain of gardens, *Cant. iv. 15*.

3rd. That he was buried in a new sepulchre. This was so ordered, *First*. For the honour of Christ; he was not a common person, and therefore must not mix with common dust. He that was born from a virgin womb, must rise from a virgin tomb. *Secondly*. For the confirming of the truth of his resurrection; that it might not be suggested that it was not he but some other that rose, now when many bodies of saints arose; or, that he rose by the power of some other, as the man that was raised by the touch of Elisha's bones, and not by his own power. He that has made all things new has new-made the grave for us.

Fifthly. The funeral solemnized; ver. 42. "There laid they Jesus," that is, the dead body of Jesus. Some think the calling of that Jesus intimates the inseparable union between the Divine and human nature. Even this dead body was Jesus, a Saviour, for his death is our life; Jesus is still the same, *Heb. xiii. 8*. There they laid him because it was the preparation day.

1. Observe here the deference which the Jews paid to the sabbath, and to the day of preparation. Before the passover sabbath they had a solemn day of preparation. This day had been kept by the chief priests, who called themselves the church, but was well kept by the disciples of Christ, who were branded as dangerous to the church; and it is often so. 1st. They would not put off the funeral till the sabbath day; because the sabbath is to be a day of holy rest and joy, with which the business and sorrow of a funeral do not well agree. 2nd. They would not drive it too late on the day of preparation for the sabbath. What is to be done the evening before the sabbath should be contrived as that it may neither intrench upon sabbath time, nor indispose us for sabbath work.

2. Observe the convenience they took of an adjoining sepulchre; the sepulchre they made use of was nigh at hand. Perhaps if they had had time they would have carried him to Bethany, and buried him among his friends there. And I am sure he had more right to have been buried in the chief of the sepulchres of the sons of David, than any of the kings of Judah had; but it was so ordered, that he should be laid in a sepulchre nigh at hand, 1st. Because

xx. 20. "Then were the disciples glad:" or, "the disciples therefore were glad."

xx. 22. "Breathed on them:" the act was symbolical, and expressed the imparting of the Spirit, as the breath of life (the "spirit of lives") had been breathed into man's nostrils at the first (*Gen. ii. 7*).

xx. 24. "Thomas was not with them:" some have conjectured that Thomas absented himself from this gathering of the disciples

because of despondency. His naturally sad temperament might well have led him to prefer solitude at such a time. The fact of his absence may have been stated by the evangelist partly as a kind of apologetic explanation of the hesitating belief of Thomas.

xx. 25. "Thrust:" rather, "put my hand."

xx. 26. "Eight days:" or, the first day of the week following. "Were within:" i.e., in a house, but not necessarily the same in which they had met in the preceding week. Some have supposed

he was to lie there but a while, as in an inn, and therefore he took the first that offered itself. 2nd. Because this was a new sepulchre; they that prepared it little thought who should hansom it; but the wisdom of God has reached infinitely beyond ours, and makes what use he pleaseth of us and all we have. 3rd. We are hereby taught not to be over curious in the place of our burial. Where the tree fall why should it not lie? for Christ was buried in the sepulchre that was next at hand. It was faith in the promise of Canaan that directed the patriarchs' desire to be carried thither for a burying place; but now that promise is superseded by a better, that care is over.

Thus without pomp or solemnity is the body of Jesus laid in the cold and silent grave. Here lies our Surety under arrest for our debts, so that if he be released his discharge will be ours. Here is the Sun of Righteousness set for a while, to rise again in greater glory, and set no more. Here lies a seeming captive to death, but a real conqueror over death; for here lies death itself slain, and the grave conquered. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory."

CHAPTER XX.

This evangelist, though he began not his gospel as the rest did, yet concludes it as they did, with the history of Christ's resurrection; not of the thing itself, for none of them describe how he rose, but of the proofs and evidences of it, which demonstrated that he was risen. The proofs of Christ's resurrection which we have in this chapter are, I. Such as occurred immediately at the sepulchre: 1. The sepulchre found empty, and the grave clothes in good order, ver. 1-10; 2. Two angels appearing to Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, ver. 11-13; 3. Christ himself appearing to her, ver. 14-18. II. Such as occurred afterwards at the meetings of the apostles: 1. At one, the same day at evening that Christ rose, when Thomas was absent, ver. 19-25; 2. At another, that day se'nlight, when Thomas was with them, ver. 26-31. And what is related here is mostly what was omitted by the other evangelists.



HE first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. 2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. 3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. 4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. 5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. 6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, 7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. 8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

There was no one thing which the apostles were more concerned to produce substantial proof of, than the resurrection of their Master. 1. Because this was it which he himself had appealed to as the last and most cogent proof of his being the Messiah. They that would not believe other signs were referred to this sign of the prophet Jonas; and, therefore, the enemies were most solicitous to stifle the notices of this, because it was put to this issue, and if he be risen, they are not only murderers, but murderers of the Messiah. 2. Because this was that upon which the performance of his undertaking for our redemption and salvation did depend. If he give his life a ransom, and do not resume it, it doth not appear that his giving of it was accepted as a satisfaction. If he be imprisoned for our debt, and lie by it, we are undone, 1 Cor. xv. 17. 3. Because he never shewed himself alive after his resurrection to all the people, Acts x. 40, 41. We would have said, Let his ignominious death be private, and his glorious resurrection public. But God's thoughts are not as ours; and he ordered it that his death should be public, before the sun, by the same token that he blushed, and hid his face upon it. But the demonstrations of his resurrection should be reserved as a favour for his particular friends, and by them be published to the world, that they might be blessed who have not seen and yet have believed. The method of proof is such as gives abundant satisfaction to those who are piously disposed to receive the doctrine and law of Christ; and yet leaves room for those to object who are willingly ignorant and obstinate in their unbelief. And this is a fair trial, suited to the case of those who are probationers.

that this gathering took place in Galilee, as the apostles had been bidden to go there. "Came Jesus;" or, "Jesus cometh, the doors being shut."

xx. 28. "My Lord and my God:" these words can hardly be understood in any other sense than as a confession of belief on the part of Thomas. The resurrection, the mode of Christ's appearance, the proof he gave of his knowledge of Thomas's doubt, combined to produce this confession.

In these verses we have the first step towards the proof of Christ's resurrection, which is, that the sepulchre was found empty. He is not here, and if so they must tell us where he is, or we conclude him risen.

First. Mary Magdalene coming to the sepulchre finds the stone taken away. This evangelist doth not mention the other women that went with Mary Magdalene, but her only, because she was the most active and forward in this visit to the sepulchre, and in her appeared the most affection; and, 1. It was an affection kindled by a good cause; in consideration of the great things Christ had done for her. Much was forgiven her, therefore she loved much. 2. She had shewed her affection to him while he lived, attended his doctrine, ministered to him of her substance, Lu. vii. 2, 3. It doth not appear she had any business now at Jerusalem but to wait upon him, for the women were not bound to go up to the feast; and probably she and others now followed him the closer, as Elisha did Elijah, now they know their Master should shortly be taken from their head, 2 Kin. ii. 1, 2, 3. The continued instances of her respect to him, at and after his death, prove the sincerity of her love. Note, Love to Christ, if it be cordial, will be constant. Her love to Christ was strong as death, the death of the cross, for it stood by that; cruel as the grave, for it made a visit to that, and was not deterred by its terrors.

1. She came to the sepulchre to wash the dead body with her tears; for she went to the grave to weep there, and to anoint it with the ointment she had prepared. The grave is a house that people do not care for making visits to. They that are free among the dead are separated from the living; and it must be an extraordinary affection to the person which will endure his grave to us. It is especially frightful to the weak and timorous sex. Could she, that had not strength enough to roll away the stone, pretend to such a presence of mind as to enter the grave? The Jews' religion forbade them to meddle any more than needs must with graves and dead bodies. In visiting Christ's sepulchre she exposed herself, and perhaps the disciples, to the suspicion of a design to steal him away; and what real service could she do him by it? But her love answers these, and a thousand such objections. Note, 1st. We must study to do honour to Christ in those things wherein yet we cannot be profitable to him. 2nd. Love to Christ will take off the terror of death and the grave. If we cannot come to Christ but through that darksome valley, even in that, if we love him, we will fear no evil.

2. She came as soon as she could; for she came, 1st. Upon the first day of the week; as soon as ever the sabbath was gone, longing, not to sell corn, and to set forth wheat, as Am. viii. 5, but to be at the sepulchre. They that love Christ will take the first opportunity of testifying their respects to him; this was the first Christian sabbath, and she begins it accordingly, with inquiries after Christ. She had spent the day before in commemorating the work of creation, and therefore rested; but now she is upon search into the work of redemption, and therefore makes a visit to Christ and him crucified. 2nd. She came early, while it was yet dark; so early did she set out. Note, Those who would seek Christ so as to find him must seek him early, that is, First. Seek him solicitously, with such a care as even breaks the sleep; be up early for fear of missing him. Secondly. Seek him industriously; we must deny ourselves and our own repose in pursuit of Christ. Thirdly. Seek him betimes; early in our days, early every day, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning;" that day is in a fair way to be well ended that is thus begun. They that diligently inquire after Christ while it is yet dark shall have such light given them concerning him as shall shine more and more.

3. She found the stone taken away which she had seen rolled to the door of the sepulchre. Now this was, 1st. A surprise to her, for she little expected it. Christ crucified is the fountain of life, his grave one of the wells of salvation; if we come to it in faith, though to a carnal heart it be a spring shut up, we shall find the stone rolled away, as Gen. xxix. 10, and free access to the comforts of it. Surprising comforts are the frequent encouragements of early seekers. 2nd. It was the beginning of a glorious discovery; the Lord was risen, though she did not at first apprehend it so. Note, 1. They that are most constant in their adherence to Christ, and most diligent in their inquiries after him, have commonly the first and sweetest notices of the Divine grace. Mary Magdalene, that followed Christ to the last in his humiliation, met him with the first in his exaltation. 2. God ordinarily reveals himself and his comforts to us by degrees, to raise our expectations, and quicken our inquiries.

Secondly. Finding the stone taken away, she hastens back to Peter and John, who probably lodged together at that end of the town, not far off, and acquaints them with it: "They have taken the Lord out of the sepulchre," envying him the honour of such a decent burying-place, "and we know not where they have laid him," nor where to find him, that we may pay him the remainder of our last respects. Observe here,

1. What a notion Mary had of the thing as it now appeared; she found the stone gone, looked into the grave and saw it empty. Now one would expect that the first thought that offered itself should have been, 'Surely the Lord is risen;' for whenever he had told them that he should be crucified, which she had now lately seen accomplished, he still subjoined in the same breath, that "the third day he should rise again." Could she feel the great earthquake that happened as she was coming to the sepulchre, or getting ready to come, and now see the grave empty, and yet have no thought of the resurrection enter into her mind? what, no conjecture, no suspicion of it? So it seems by the odd construction she puts upon the removing of the stone, which was very far-fetched. Note, When we come to reflect upon our own conduct in a cloudy and dark day, we shall stand amazed at our dullness and forgetfulness, that we could miss of such thoughts as afterwards appear obvious, and how they could be so far out of the way when we had occasion for them. She suggested, "They have taken away the Lord;" either the chief priests have taken him away, to put him in a worse place, or Joseph and Nicodemus have, upon second thoughts, taken him away, to avoid the ill-will of the Jews. Whatever was her suspicion, it seems it was a great vexation and disturbance to her that the body was gone, whereas, if she had understood it rightly, nothing could be more happy. Note, Weak believers often make that the matter of their complaint, which is really just ground of hope, and matter of joy. We cry out that this and the other creature comfort is taken away, and we know not how to retrieve it, when indeed the removal of our temporal comforts, which we lament, is in order to the resurrection of our spiritual comforts, which we should rejoice in too.

2. What a narrative she made of it to Peter and John. She did not stand poring upon the grief herself, but acquaints her friends with it. Note, The communication of sorrows is one good improvement of the communion of saints. Observe, Peter, though he had denied his Master, had not deserted his Master's friends; by this appears the sincerity of his repentance, that he associated with the disciple whom Jesus loved. And the disciples' keeping up their intimacy with him as formerly, notwithstanding his fall, teacheth us to restore those with a spirit of meekness that have been faulty. If God has received them upon their repentance, why should not we?

Thirdly. Peter and John go with all speed to the sepulchre, to satisfy themselves of the truth of what was told them, and to see if they could make any farther discoveries, ver. 3, 4. Some think the other disciples were with Peter and John when the news came; for they "told these things to the eleven," Lu. xxiv. 9. Others think Mary Magdalene told her story only to Peter and

xx. 29. "Blessed are they," &c.: "Blessed above Thomas are they in the possession of such enlightened minds as to be able to believe on such sufficient evidence like that which had been offered to him, but which he had rejected, requiring to be convinced by his own personal experience, the testimony of his bodily senses." A passage which throws light on this verse is 1 Cor. ii. 9.

xx. 30. "Many other signs:" these are not the same as the "infallible proofs" of Acts i. 3. The signs here seem mainly to refer to

John, and the other women told theirs to the other disciples; yet none of them went to the sepulchre but Peter and John, who were two of the first three of Christ's disciples, often distinguished from the rest by special favours. Note, It is well when those that are more honoured than others with the privileges of disciples are more active than others in the duty of disciples, more willing to take pains and run hazards in a good work.

1. See here what use we should make of others' experiences and observations. When Mary told them what she had seen, they would not in this sense take her word, but would go see with their own eyes. Do others tell us of the comfort and benefit of ordinances? let us be engaged thereby to make trial of them. Come and see how good it is to draw near to God.

2. See how ready we should be to share with our friends in their cares and fears. Peter and John hasten to the sepulchre that they might be able to give Mary a satisfactory answer to her jealousies. We should not grudge any pains we take for the succouring and comforting of the weak and timorous followers of Christ.

3. See what haste we should make in a good work, and when we are going on a good errand. Peter and John consulted neither their ease nor their gravity, but ran to the sepulchre, that they might shew the strength of their zeal and affection, and might lose no time. If we are in the way of God's commandments, we should run that way.

4. See what a good thing it is to have good company in a good work. Perhaps neither of these disciples would have ventured to the sepulchre alone, but being both together they made no difficulty of it: see *Ecc. iv. 9*.

5. See what a laudable emulation it is among disciples to strive which shall excel, which shall exceed, in that which is good. It was no breach of ill manners for John, though the younger, to outrun Peter, and get before him. We must do our best, and neither envy those that can do better, nor despise those that do as they can, though they come behind. 1st. He that got foremost in this race was the disciple whom Jesus loved in a special manner, and who therefore in a special manner loved Jesus. Note, Sense of Christ's love to us, kindling love in us to him again, will make us to excel in virtue. The love of Christ will constrain us more than any thing to abound in duty. 2nd. He that was cast behind was Peter, who denied his Master, and was in shame and sorrow for it, and this clogged him as a weight. Sense of guilt cramps us, and hinders our enlargements in the service of God. When conscience is offended, we lose ground.

Fourthly. Peter and John being come to the sepulchre, prosecute the inquiry, yet improve little in the discovery.

1. John went no farther than Mary Magdalene had done. 1st. He had the curiosity to look into the sepulchre, and saw it was empty; he stooped down and looked in. Those that would find the knowledge of Christ must stoop down and look in; must, with an humble heart, veil to the authority of Divine revelation, and must look wistfully. 2nd. Yet he had not courage to go into the sepulchre. The warmest affections are not always accompanied with the boldest resolutions. Many are swift to run religion's race that are not stout to fight her battles.

2. Peter, though he came last, went in first, and made a more exact discovery than John had, ver. 6, 7. Though John outran him, he did not therefore turn back, or stand still, but made after as fast as he could, and while John was, with a deal of caution, looking in, he came, and with a deal of courage went into the sepulchre.

1st. Observe here the boldness of Peter, and how God dispenseth his gifts variously; John could outrun Peter, but Peter could outdare John. It is seldom true of the same persons what David saith poetically of Saul and Jonathan, that they were swifter than eagles, and yet stronger than lions, 2 *Sam. i. 23*. Some disciples are quick, and they are useful to quicken them that are slow; others are bold, and they are useful to hearten them that are timorous: diversity of gifts, but one spirit.

Peter's venturing into the sepulchre may teach us, *First*. That those who in good earnest seek after Christ, must not frighten themselves with hughbears and foolish fancies: there is a lion in the way, a ghost in the grave. *Secondly*. That good Christians need not be afraid of the grave, since Christ has lain in it, for to them there is nothing in it frightful; it is not the pit of destruction, nor the worms in it never dying worms. Let us therefore not indulge, but conquer the fear we are apt to conceive upon the sight of a dead body, or being alone among the graves; and, since we must be dead and in the grave shortly, let us make death and the grave familiar to us as our near kindred, *Job xvii. 14*. *Thirdly*. We must be willing to go through the grave to Christ; that way he went to his glory, and so must we. If we cannot see God's face and live, better die than never see it: see *Job xix. 25, &c.*

2nd. Observe the posture he found things in in the sepulchre. *First*. Christ had left his grave clothes behind him there; what clothes he appeared in to his disciples we are not told, but he never appeared in his grave clothes, as ghosts are supposed to do; no, he laid them aside, 1st. Because he rose to die no more; death was to have no more dominion over him, *Rom. vi. 9*. Lazarus came out with his grave clothes on, for he was to use them again; but Christ, rising to an immortal life, came out free from those encumbrances. 2nd. Because he was going to be clothed with the robes of glory, therefore he lays aside these rags. In the heavenly Paradise there will be no more occasion for clothes than there was in the earthly. The ascending prophet dropped his mantle. 3rd. When we rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, we must leave our grave clothes behind us, must put off all our corruptions. 4th. Christ left those in the grave as it were for our use. If the grave be a bed to the saints, thus he hath sheeted that bed, and made it ready for them; and the napkin by itself is of use for the mourning survivors, to wipe away their tears. *Secondly*. The grave clothes were found in very good order, which serves for an evidence that his body was not stolen away while men slept. Robbers of tombs have been known to take away the clothes and leave the body, but none ever took away the body and left the clothes, especially when it was fine linen, and new, *Mar. xv. 46*. Any one would rather choose to carry a dead body in its clothes than naked; or, if they that were supposed to have stolen it would have left the grave clothes behind, yet it cannot be supposed they should find leisure to fold up the linen.

3rd. See how Peter's boldness encouraged John. Now he took heart and ventured in, ver. 8, and "he saw and believed," not barely believed what Mary said, that the body was gone,—no thanks to him to believe what he saw,—but he began to believe that Jesus was risen to life again, though his faith as yet was weak and wavering. *First*. John followed Peter in venturing. It should seem he durst not have gone into the sepulchre if Peter had not gone in first. Note, It is good to be emboldened in a good work by the boldness of others. The dread of difficulty and danger will be taken off by observing the resolution and courage of others. Perhaps John's quickness had made Peter run faster, and now Peter's boldness makes John venture farther than otherwise either the one or the other would have done. Though Peter had lately fallen under the disgrace of being a deserter, and John had been advanced to the honour of a confidant, Christ having committed his mother to him, yet John not only associated with Peter, but thought it no disparagement to follow him. *Secondly*. Yet it should seem that John got the start of Peter in believing. Peter saw

and wondered, *Lu. xxiv. 12*, but John saw and believed. A mind disposed to contemplation may perhaps sooner receive the evidence of Divine truth, than a mind disposed to action.

But what was the reason they were so slow of heart to believe? The evangelist tells us, ver. 9, "as yet they knew not the Scripture;" that is, they did not consider, and apply, and duly improve what they knew of the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. The Old Testament spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah; they believe him to be the Messiah; he himself had often told them that, according to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, he should rise again; but they had not presence of mind sufficient by these to explain the present appearances. Observe here,

1st. How unapt the disciples themselves were at first to believe the resurrection of Christ, which confirms the testimony they afterwards gave with so much assurance concerning it; for, by their backwardness to believe it, it appears they were not credulous concerning it, nor of those simple ones that believe every word. If they had had any design to advance their own interest by it, they would greedily have caught at the first spark of its evidence, would have raised and supported one another's expectations of it, and have prepared the minds of those that followed them to receive the notices of it; but we find, on the contrary, their hopes were prostrated; it was to them as a strange thing, and one of the farthest things in their thoughts. Peter and John were so shy of believing it at first, that nothing less than the most convincing proof the thing was capable of could bring them to testify it afterwards with so much assurance. Hereby it appears they were not only honest men, who would not deceive others, but cautious men, who would not themselves be imposed upon.

2nd. What was the reason of their slowness to believe? Because as yet they knew not the Scripture. This seems to be the evangelist's acknowledgment of his own fault among the rest; he doth not say, "For as yet Jesus had not appeared to them, had not shewed them his hands and his side," but "As yet he had not opened their understandings to understand the Scriptures," *Lu. xxiv. 44, 45*; for that is the most sure word of prophecy.

4th. Peter and John pursued their inquiry no farther, but desisted, hovering between faith and unbelief; ver. 10, "the disciples went away," not much the wiser, "to their own home," *ἑκαστος εἰς οἶκον*, to their own friends and companions; the rest of the disciples to their own lodgings, for homes they had none at Jerusalem. They went away, *First*. For fear of being taken up upon suspicion of a design to steal away the body, or of being charged with it now it was gone. Instead of improving their faith, their care is to secure themselves, shift for their own safety. In difficult, dangerous times, it is hard even for good men to go on in their work with the resolution that becomes them. *Secondly*. Because they were at a loss, and knew not what to do next, nor what to make of what they had seen; and therefore, not having courage to stay at the grave, they resolve to go home, and wait till God shall reveal even this unto them, which is an instance of their weakness as yet. *Thirdly*. It is probable the rest of the disciples were together, and to them they returned to make report of what they had discovered, and to consult with them what was to be done; and probably now they appointed their meeting in the evening, when Christ came to them.

It is observable that, before Peter and John came to the sepulchre, an angel had appeared there, rolled away the stone, frightened the guard, and comforted the women. As soon as they were gone from the sepulchre, Mary Magdalene here sees two angels in the sepulchre, ver. 12, and yet Peter and John come to the sepulchre, and go into it, and see none; what shall we make of this? Where were the angels when Peter and John were at the sepulchre who appeared there before and after? 1st. Angels appear and disappear at pleasure, according to the orders and instructions given them. They may be, and are really, where they are not visibly; nay, it should seem may be visible to one and not to another at the same time, 2 *Kn. vi. 17*; *Num. xxiii. 23*. How they make themselves visible, then invisible, and then visible again, it is presumption for us to inquire, but that they do so, is plain from this story. 2nd. This favour was shewed to those who were early and constant in their inquiries after Christ, and was the reward of them that came first and staid last, but denied to them that made a transient visit. 3rd. The apostles were not to receive their instructions from the angels, but from the Spirit of grace: see *Heb. ii. 5*.

11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, 12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. 14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. 16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. 17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. 18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

miraculous signs. The words here used are parallel to those which close chap. xxi. 25. The observation or reflection which follows them would hardly apply were these signs only to be regarded as applying to evidences of the resurrection. The connection between these closing verses and verse 29 suggests much encouraging thought. It has been said, "As the Lord pronounced them blessed who, not having seen him, have yet believed, so for that one end have the whole contents of the Gospel been recorded, that all who read it

may believe on him, and believing, may have life in that blessed name."

xx. 31. "These are written:" the object of the record of Christ's wonderful works is the same as that for which they were wrought. His miracles were wrought in attestation of his Messiahship and Divine mission, and as signs in confirmation of the truth of his teaching. But more than the tokens of visible power is the force of living love and holiness. The record of that blameless life is mightier

Saint Mark tells us that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene, *Mar. xvi. 9*; that appearance is here largely related, and we may observe,
First. The constancy and fervency of Mary Magdalene's affection to the Lord Jesus, ver. 11.

1. She staid at the sepulchre, when Peter and John were gone, because there her Master had lain, and there she was likeliest to hear some tidings of him. Note, 1st. Where there is a true love to Christ, there will be a constant adherence to him, and a resolution with purpose of heart to cleave to him. This good woman, though she has lost him, yet, rather than seem to desert him, will abide by his grave for his sake, and continue in his love, even then when she wants the comfort of it. 2nd. Where there is a true desire of acquaintance with Christ, there will be a constant attendance on the means of knowledge: see *Hos. vi. 2, 3*, "The third day he will raise us up;" and then we shall know the meaning of that resurrection, if we follow on to know, as Mary here.

2. She staid there weeping, and these tears loudly spake her affection to her Master. They that have lost Christ have cause to weep. She wept at the remembrance of his bitter sufferings; wept for his death, and the loss which she and her friends and the country sustained by it; wept to think of returning home without him; wept because she did not now find his body. They that seek Christ must seek him sorrowing, *Lu. ii. 48*; must weep, not for him, but for themselves.

3. "As she wept, she looked into the sepulchre," that her eye might affect her heart. When we are in search of something we have lost, we look again and again in the place where we last left it, and expected to have found it: she will look yet seven times, not knowing but that at length she might see some encouragement. Note, 1st. Weeping must not hinder seeking. Though she wept, she stooped down and looked in. 2nd. Those are likely to seek and find, that seek with affection, that seek in tears.

Secondly. The vision she had of two angels in the sepulchre, ver. 12. Observe here,

1. The description of the persons she saw. They were two angels in white, sitting probably on some benches or ledges hewn out in the rock, one at the head, and the other at the foot of the grave; where we have,

1st. Their nature. They were angels; messengers from heaven, sent on purpose on this great occasion. First. To honour the Son, and to grace the solemnity of his resurrection. Now the Son of God was again to be brought into the world, the angels have a charge to attend him, as they did at his birth, *Heb. i. 6*. Secondly. To comfort the saints; to speak good words to them that were in sorrow, and, by giving them notice that the Lord was risen, to prepare them for the sight of him.

2nd. Their number; two. Not a multitude of the heavenly host to sing praise, only two to bear witness; for out of the mouth of two witnesses this word would be established.

3rd. Their array. They were in white, noting, First. Their purity and holiness. The best of men standing before the angels, and compared with them, are clothed in filthy garments, *Zec. iii. 3*; but angels are spotless; and glorified saints, when they come to be as the angels, shall walk with Christ in white. Secondly. Their glory, and glorying upon this occasion. The white in which they appeared represented the brightness of that state into which Christ was now risen.

4th. Their posture and place. They sat, as it were reposing themselves in Christ's grave; for angels, though they needed not a restoration, were obliged to Christ for their establishment. These angels went into the grave, to teach us not to be afraid of it; nor to think that our resting in it awhile will be any prejudice to our immortality. No; matters are so ordered, that the grave is not much out of our way to heaven. It intimates, likewise, that angels are to be employed about the saints, not only at their death, to carry their souls into Abraham's bosom, but at the great day, to raise their bodies, *Mat. xxiv. 31*. These angelic guards (and angels are called watchers, *Dan. iv. 23*) keeping possession of the sepulchre, when they had frightened away the guards which the enemies had set, represent Christ's victory over the powers of darkness, routing and defeating them. Thus Michael and his angels are more than conquerors. Their sitting to face one another, one at his bed's head, the other at the bed's foot, notes their care of the entire body of Christ, his mystical as well as his natural body, from head to foot. It may also mind us of the two cherubims, placed one at either end of the mercy-seat, looking one at another, *Ex. xxv. 18*. Christ crucified was the great Propitiatory, at the head and feet of which were these two cherubims, not with flaming swords to keep us from, but welcome messengers to direct us to, the way of life.

2. Their compassionate inquiry into the cause of Mary Magdalene's grief; ver. 13. "Woman, why weepest thou?" This question was, 1st. A rebuke to her; "Why weepest thou, when thou hast cause to rejoice? Many of the floods of our tears would dry away before such a search as this into the fountain of them." "Why art thou cast down?" 2nd. It was designed to shew how much angels are concerned at the griefs of the saints, having a charge to minister to them for their comfort. Christians should thus sympathise with one another. 3rd. It was only to make an occasion of informing her of that which would turn her mourning into rejoicing, would put off her sackcloth, and gird her with gladness.

3. The melancholy account she gives them of her present distress; "Because they have taken away the blessed body I came to embalm, and I know not where they have laid it." The same story she had told, ver. 2. In it we may see,

1st. The weakness of her faith. If she had had faith as a grain of mustard seed this mountain would have been removed; but we often perplex ourselves needlessly with imaginary difficulties, which faith would discover to us as real advantages. Many good people complain of the clouds and darkness they are under, which are the necessary methods of grace for the humbling of their souls, the mortifying of their sins, and the endearing of Christ to them.

2nd. The strength of her love. They that have a true affection for Christ cannot but be in great affliction, when they have lost either the comfortable tokens of his love in their souls, or the comfortable opportunities of conversing with him, and doing him honour in his ordinances. Mary Magdalene is not diverted from her inquiries by the surprise of the vision, nor satisfied with the honour of it; but still she harps upon the same string; "They have taken away my Lord." A sight of angels, and their smiles, will not suffice without a sight of Christ, and God's smiles in him. Nay, the sight of angels is but an opportunity of pursuing her inquiries after Christ. All creatures, the most excellent, the most dear, should be used as means, and but as means, to bring us into acquaintance with God in Christ. The angels asked her, "Why weepest thou?" "Why, saith she, I have cause enough to weep, for they have taken away my Lord; and, like Micah, what have I more?" Do you ask why I weep? My beloved has withdrawn himself, and is gone." Note, None know but they that have experienced the sorrows of a deserted soul, that has had comfortable evidences of the love of God in Christ, and hopes of heaven, but has now lost them, and walks in darkness; such a wounded spirit who can bear?

Thirdly. Christ's appearing to her. While she was talking with the angels, and telling them her case, before they had given her any answer, Christ steps

in himself to satisfy her inquiries; for God now speaketh to us by his Son: none but he himself can direct us to himself. Mary would fain know where her Lord is, and behold he is at her right hand. Note, 1. Those that will be content with nothing short of a sight of Christ shall be put off with nothing less. He never said to the soul that sought him, Seek in vain. Is it Christ thou wouldst have? Christ thou shalt have. 2. Christ in manifesting himself to those that seek him often outdoes their expectations. Mary longs to see the dead body of Christ, and complains of the loss of that, and behold she sees him alive. Thus he doth for his praying people more than they are able to ask or think. In this appearance of Christ to Mary, observe,

1. How he did at first conceal himself from her.

1st. He stood as a common person, and she looked upon him accordingly, ver. 14. She stood expecting an answer to her complaint from the angels; and either seeing the shadow, or hearing the tread of some person behind her, she turned herself back from talking with the angels, and sees Jesus himself standing, the very person she was looking for, and yet she knew not that it was Jesus. Note, First. "The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart," *Ps. xxxiv. 18*, nearer than they are aware. They that seek Christ, though they do not see him, yet may be sure he is not far from them. Secondly. Those that diligently seek the Lord will turn every way in their inquiry after him. Mary turned herself back, in hopes of some discoveries. Several of the ancients suggest, that Mary was directed to look behind her by the angels' rising up, and doing obeisance to the Lord Jesus, whom they saw before Mary did; and that she looked back to see who it was they paid such a profound reverence to. But if so, it is not likely she would have taken him for the gardener; rather, therefore, it was her earnest desire in seeking that made her turn away. Thirdly. Christ is often near his people, and they are not aware of him. She "knew not that it was Jesus." Not that he appeared in any other likeness; but either it was a careless, transient look she cast upon him, and her eyes being full of care, she could not so well distinguish, or they were hidden that she should not know him, as those of the two disciples, *Lu. xxiv. 16*.

2nd. He asked her a common question, and she answered him accordingly, ver. 15.

First. The question he asked her was natural enough, and what any one would have asked her; "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? What business hast thou here in the garden so early? And what is all this noise and ado for?" Perhaps it was spoken with some roughness, as Joseph spake to his brethren when he made himself strange, before he made himself known to them. It should seem this was the first word Christ spake after his resurrection, "Why weepest thou?" I am risen. The resurrection of Christ has enough in it to allay all our sorrows, to check the streams and dry up the fountains of our tears. Observe here, Christ takes cognizance, 1st. Of his people's griefs; and inquires why they weep. He bottles their tears, and records them in his book. 2nd. Of his people's cares; and inquires whom they seek, and what they would have. When he knows they are seeking him, yet he will know it from them; they must tell him whom they seek.

Secondly. The reply she made him is natural enough. She doth not give him a direct answer, but, as if she should say, Why do you banter me, and upbraid me with my tears? you know why I weep, and whom I seek; and, therefore, supposing him to be the gardener, the person employed by Joseph to dress and keep his garden, who she thought was come thither thus early to his work, she said, "Sir, if thou hast carried him hence, pray tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." See here,

1st. The error of her understanding. She supposed our Lord Jesus to be the gardener; perhaps because he asked what authority she had to be there. Note, Troubled spirits, in a cloudy and dark day, are apt to misrepresent Christ to themselves, and to put wrong constructions upon the methods of his providence and grace.

2nd. The truth of her affection. See how her heart was upon it to find Christ; she puts the question to every one she meets, like the careful spouse, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" She speaks a gardener fair, and calls him, Sir, in hopes to gain some intelligence from him concerning her Beloved. When she speaks of Christ, she doth not name him; but, "If thou hast borne him hence," taking it for granted that this gardener was full of thoughts concerning this Jesus as well as she, and therefore could not but know whom she meant. Another evidence of the strength of her affection was, that, wherever he was laid, she would undertake to remove him. Such a body, with such a weight of spices about it, was much more than she could pretend to carry; but true love thinks it can do more than it can, and makes nothing of difficulties. She supposed this gardener grudged that the body of one that was ignominiously crucified should have the honour to be laid in his master's new tomb; and that, therefore, he had removed it to some sorry place, which he thought fitter for it. Yet Mary doth not threaten him to go tell his master, and get him turned out of his place for it; but undertakes to find out some other sepulchre to which he might be welcome. Christ needs not stay where he is thought a burthen.

2. How Christ at length made himself known to her, and, by a pleasing surprise, gave her infallible assurances of his resurrection. Joseph at length said to his brethren, "I am Joseph." So Christ here to Mary Magdalene, now he is entered upon his exalted state. Observe,

1st. How Christ discovered himself to this good woman that was seeking him in tears; ver. 16. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary." It was said with an emphasis, and that air of kindness and freedom with which he was wont to speak to her. Now he changed his voice, and spake like himself, not like the gardener. Christ's way of making himself known to his people is by his word, applied to their souls; speaking to them in particular. When those whom God knew by name in the counsels of his love, *Ex. xxxiii. 12*, are called by name in the efficacy of his grace, then he reveals his Son in them, as in Paul, *Gal. i. 16*, when Christ called to him by name, Saul, Saul. Christ's sheep know his voice, *ch. x. 4*. This one word, Mary, was like that to the disciples in the storm, "It is I." Then the word of Christ doth us good, when we put our own names into the precepts and promises; in this Christ calls to me, and speaks to me.

2nd. How readily she received this discovery, when Christ said, "Mary, dost thou not know me? Are you and I grown such strangers?" She was presently aware who it was, as the spouse, *Cant. ii. 8*, "It is the voice of my beloved;" she turned herself, and said, "Rabboni; my master." It might properly be read with an interrogation, "Rabboni? Is it my master? Nay, but is it indeed?" Observe,

First. The title of respect she gives him. "My master;" *ῥαββουνι*, 'a teaching master.' The Jews called their doctors Rabbis, great men. Their critics tell us that Rabbon was with them a more honourable title than Rabbi; and therefore Mary chooseth that, and adds a note of appropriation, My great Master. Note, Notwithstanding the freedom of communion Christ is pleased to admit us to with himself, we must remember that he is our Master, and to be approached with a godly fear.

Secondly. With what liveliness of affection she gives this title to Christ. She turned herself from the angels whom she had in her eye, to look unto Jesus. We must take off our regards from all creatures, even the brightest and best, to fix them upon Christ, from whom nothing must divert us, and with whom

than the record of the mighty works. "Through his name;" rather, "in his name; in virtue of what he is, has done for us, and has revealed to us."

xxi. 1. "The authenticity of this chapter has been doubted, but upon very insufficient grounds. External and internal evidence are both in its favour. The doubt appears to be suggested by the apparent conclusion of the gospel in chap. xx. 30, 31; but the author himself might naturally add an appendix before publishing, without

withdrawing his concluding paragraph. And it is in character for St. John thus to make two conclusions, who, in his introduction, made several beginnings" (Webster and Wilkinson). "Sea of Tiberias;" called in the Old Testament the "sea of Chinnereth;" called in the New Testament the "sea of Galilee" and the "sea of Gennesaret." It took its name, Tiberias, from the celebrated city of that name. (See John vi. 1.) "Showed himself;" or, "manifested himself." The word corresponds with the altered

nothing must interfere. When she thought it had been the gardener, she looked another way when she spoke to him; but now she knew the voice of Christ she turned herself. The soul that hears Christ's voice, and is turned to him, calls him with joy and triumph, My Master. See with what pleasure those who love Christ speak of his authority over them, My Master; my great Master.

3. The farther instructions that Christ gave her; ver. 17, "Touch me not;" but go carry the news to the disciples.

1st. He diverts her from the expectation of familiar society and conversation with him at this time; "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended." Mary was so transported with the sight of her dear Master, that she forgot herself, and that state of glory into which he was now entering, and was ready to express her joy by affectionate embraces of him; which Christ here forbids at this time.

First. "Touch me not" thus at all, "for I am to ascend to heaven." He bade the disciples touch him for the confirmation of their faith; he allowed the women to take hold of his feet, and worship him, *Mat. xxviii. 9*; but Mary, supposing that he was risen, as Lazarus was, to live among them constantly, and converse with them freely as he had done, upon that presumption was about to take hold of his hand with her usual freedom. This mistake Christ rectified; she must believe him and adore him, as exalted; but must not expect to be familiar with him as formerly; see *2 Cor. v. 16*. He forbids her to dote upon his bodily presence, to set her heart on that, or expect the continuance of that, and leads her to that spiritual converse and communion which she should have with him after he was ascended to his Father; for the greatest joy of his resurrection was, that it was a step towards his ascension. Mary thought, now her Master was risen, he would presently set up a temporal kingdom, such as they had long promised themselves. No, saith Christ, touch me not with any such thought, think not to lay hold on me so as to detain me here; for, though I am not yet ascended, go to my brethren, and tell them, I am to ascend. As before his death, so now after his resurrection, he still harps upon this, that he was going away, was no more in the world; and therefore they must look higher than his bodily presence, and look farther than the present state of things.

Secondly. "Touch me not," that is, do not stay to touch me now, stay not now to make any farther inquiries, or give any farther expressions of joy, "for I am not yet ascended." I shall not presently depart, it may as well be done another time; the best service thou canst do now is to carry the tidings to the disciples; lose no time, therefore, but go away with all speed. Note, Public service ought to be preferred before private satisfaction. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Jacob must let an angel go when the day breaks, and it is time for him to look after his family. Mary must not stay to talk with her Master, but must carry his message; for it was a day of good tidings, which she must not engross the comfort of, but hand it to others: see that story, *2 Kin. vii. 9*.

2nd. He directs her what message to carry to his disciples. But "go to my brethren," and tell them not only that I am risen, (she could have told them that of herself, for she had seen him,) but that I ascend. Observe,

First. To whom this message is sent. "Go to my brethren" with it; for he is not ashamed to call them so. 1st. Though he was now entering upon his glory, and was declared to be the Son of God with greater power than ever, yet he owns his disciples as his brethren, and expresseth himself with more tender affection to them than before. He had called them friends; but never brethren till now. Though Christ be high, yet he is not haughty; notwithstanding his elevation, he disdains not to own his poor relations. 2nd. Though his disciples had lately carried themselves very disingenuously towards him, he had never seen them together since; "they all forsook him and fled," when he was apprehended. Justly might he now have sent them an angry message; Go to yonder treacherous deserters, and tell them, I will never trust them more, or have any thing more to do with them. No, he forgiveth, he forgets, and doth not upbraid.

Secondly. By whom it is sent. By Mary Magdalene, out of whom had been cast seven devils, yet now thus favoured. This was her reward for her constancy in adhering to Christ, and inquiring after him, and a tacit rebuke to the apostles who had not been so close as she was in attending on the dying Jesus, nor so early as she was in meeting the rising Jesus; she becomes an apostle to the apostles.

Thirdly. What the message itself is; "I ascend to my Father." Two full breasts of consolation here are in these words.

1st. Our joint relation to God, resulting from our union with Christ, is an unspeakable comfort. Speaking of that inexhaustible Spring of light, life, and bliss, he saith, He is "my Father and your Father, my God and your God." This is very expressive of that near relation that is between Christ and believers; "he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are both one," for they agree in one, *Heb. ii. 11*. Here is such an advancement of Christians, and such a condescension of Christ, as brings them very near together, so admirably well is the matter contrived in order to their union.

(1.) It is the great dignity of believers, that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is in him their Father. A vast difference, indeed, there is between the respective foundations of the relation. He is Christ's Father by eternal generation, ours by a gracious adoption; yet even that warrants us to call him, as Christ did, Abba, Father. This gives a reason why Christ called them brethren, because his Father was their Father. Christ was now ascending to appear as an advocate with the Father, with his Father; and therefore we may hope he will prevail for any thing with our Father, and therefore we may hope he will prevail for us.

(2.) It is the great condescension of Christ that he is pleased to own the believer's God for his God; "my God and your God;" mine, that he may be yours. The God of the Redeemer to support him, *Ps. lxxxix. 26*, that he might be the God of the redeemed to save them. The summary of the new covenant is, that God will be to us a God; and, therefore, Christ being the surety and head of the covenant, who is primarily dealt with, and believers only through him, as his spiritual seed, this covenant relation fastens first upon him, God becomes his God, and so ours. We partaking of a Divine nature, Christ's Father is our Father; and he partaking of the human nature, our God is his God.

2nd. Christ's ascension into heaven, in farther prosecution of his undertaking for us, is likewise an unspeakable comfort; Tell them I must shortly ascend; that is the next step I am to take. Now this was intended to be,

(1.) A word of caution to these disciples, not to expect the continuance of his bodily presence on earth, nor the setting up of his temporal kingdom among men, which they dreamt of. No, tell them I am not risen to stay with them, but to go on their errand to heaven. Thus they who are raised to a spiritual life, in conformity to Christ's resurrection, must reckon that they rise to ascend. They are quickened with Christ, that they may sit with him in heavenly places, *Eph. ii. 5, 6*. Let them not think that this earth is to be their home and rest; no, being born from heaven, they are bound for heaven. Their eye and aim must be upon another world, and this ever upon their hearts, I ascend, therefore must I seek things above.

(2.) A word of comfort to them, and to all that shall believe in him through their word. He was then ascending, he is now ascended, to his Father and

our Father. This was his advancement, he ascended to receive those honours and powers which were to be the recompence of his humiliation; he saith it with triumph, that they who love him may rejoice. This is our advantage; for he ascended as a conqueror, leading captivity captive for us, *Ps. lxxviii. 18*. He ascended as our forerunner, to prepare a place for us, and to be ready to receive us. This message was like that which Joseph's brethren brought to Jacob concerning him, *Gen. xlv. 26*, "Joseph is yet alive;" and not only so, *vivi- ino, et in senatum venit*,—"he lives, and comes into the senate too;" "he is governor over all the land of Egypt;" "all power is his."

Some make these words, "I ascend to my God and your God," to include a promise of our resurrection in the virtue of Christ's resurrection; for Christ had proved the resurrection of the dead from these words, "I am the God of Abraham," *Mat. xxii. 32*. So that Christ here insinuates, As he is my God, and hath therefore raised me; so he is your God, and will therefore raise you, and be your God, *Rev. xxi. 3*, "Because I live, you shall live also." I now ascend to honour my God, and you shall ascend to him as your God.

Lastly. Here is Mary Magdalene's faithful report of what she had seen and heard, to the disciples; ver. 18, "She came and told the disciples," whom she found together, "that she had seen the Lord." Peter and John had left her seeking him carefully with tears, and would not stay to seek him with her; and now she comes to tell them that she had found him, and to rectify the mistake she had led them into, by inquiring after the dead body; for now she found it was a living body, and a glorified one; so that she found what she sought, and what was infinitely better, she had joy in her sight of the Master himself, and was willing to communicate of her joy, for she knew it would be good news to them. When God comforts us, it is with this design, that we may comfort others. And as she told them what she had seen, so also what she had heard; she had seen the Lord alive, by the same token, and a good token it was, that "he had spoken these things unto her," as a message to be delivered to them; and she delivered it faithfully. They that are acquainted with the word of Christ themselves, should communicate their knowledge for the good of others, and not grudge that others should know as much as they do.

19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. 24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

The infallible proofs of Christ's resurrection were his shewing himself alive, *Acts i. 3*. In these verses we have an account of his first appearance to the college of the disciples on the same day he rose. He had sent them the tidings of his resurrection by trusty and credible messengers; but to shew his love to them, and confirm their faith in him, he came himself, and gave them all the assurances they could desire of the truth of it, that they might not have it by hearsay only, and at secondhand, but might themselves be eyewitnesses of his being alive, because they must attest it to the world, and build the church upon that testimony. Now observe here,

First. When and where this appearance was, ver. 19. It was the same day that he arose, being the first day of the week, the day after the Jewish sabbath, at a private meeting of the disciples; ten of them, and some more of their friends with them, *Lu. xxiv. 33*. There are three secondary ordinances, as I may call them, instituted by our Lord Jesus, to continue in his church for the support of it, and for the due administration of the principal ordinances,—the word, sacraments, and prayer; these are, the Lord's day, solemn assemblies, and a standing ministry. The mind of Christ concerning each of these is plainly intimated to us in these verses; of the first two, here, in the circumstances of this appearance, the other, ver. 21. Christ's kingdom was to be set up among men immediately upon his resurrection, and accordingly we find the very day he arose, though but a day of small things, yet graced with those solemnities which should help to keep up a face of religion throughout all the ages of the church.

1. Here is a Christian sabbath observed by the disciples and owned by our Lord Jesus. The visit Christ made to his disciples was on "the first day of the week;" and the first day of the week is, I think, the only day of the week, or month, or year, that is ever mentioned by number in all the New Testament; and that is several times spoken of as a day religiously observed. Though it was said here expressly, ver. 1, that Christ rose the first day of the week, and it might have been sufficient to say here, ver. 19, he appeared "the same day at evening;" yet, to put an honour upon the day, it is repeated, "being the first day of the week." Not that the apostles designed to put honour upon the day, they were yet in doubt concerning the occasion of it; but God designed to put honour upon it, by ordering it that they should be all together to receive Christ's first visit on that day. Thus, in effect, he blessed and sanctified that day, because in it the Redeemer rested.

character of our Lord's appearance to his disciples after his resurrection. It seems to indicate that during those forty days our Lord appeared to them occasionally, unexpectedly, and in a way unusual.

xxi. 2. See *Matt. xxviii. 16*. Supposing Nathanael to be the same as Bartholomew (see *John i. 45*), there would seem to have been only seven out of the eleven present on this occasion. For identifying Nathanael with Bartholomew, the three following reasons have been given:—First, because Bartholomew is not so properly a name as a

family surname; next, because not only in the list in *Matt. x.*, but in *Mark's* and *Luke's*, he follows the name of 'Philip,' who was the instrument of bringing Nathanael first to Jesus; and again, in this chapter he is mentioned along with six others, all of them apostles, as being present."

xxi. 3. "They caught nothing:" the word here rendered "caught" is one which is frequently employed by St. John. Its use in this verse tends to confirm the authenticity of this chapter. Their

2. Here is a Christian assembly solemnized by the disciples, and that also owned by the Lord Jesus. Probably the disciples met here for some religious exercise, to pray together; or perhaps they met to compare notes, and consider whether they had sufficient evidence of their Master's resurrection, and to consult what was now to be done, whether they should keep together or scatter. They met to know one another's minds, strengthen one another's hands, and concert proper measures to be taken in the present critical juncture.

This meeting was private, because they durst not appear publicly, especially not in a body. They met in a house; but they kept the doors shut, that they might not be seen together, and that none might come among them, but such as they knew; for they feared the Jews, who would prosecute the disciples as criminals, that they might seem to believe the lie they would deceive the world with; that they came by night and stole him away. Note, 1st. The disciples of Christ, even in difficult times, must not forsake the assembling themselves together, *Heb. x. 25*. Those sheep of the flock were scattered in the storm, but sheep are sociable, and will come together again. It is no new thing for the assemblies of Christ's disciples to be driven into corners, and forced into the wilderness, *Rev. xii. 14; Pr. xxviii. 12*. 2nd. God's people have been often obliged to enter into their chambers, and shut their doors, as here, for fear of the Jews. Persecution is allotted them, and retirement from persecution is allowed them; and then where shall we look for them but in dens and caves of the earth? It is a real grief, but no real reproach, to Christ's disciples thus to abscond.

Secondly. What was said and done in this visit Christ made to his disciples, and this interview between them.

1. When they were assembled, Jesus came among them in his own likeness; yet drawing a veil over the brightness of his body, now begun to be glorified, else it would have dazzled their eyes, as in his transfiguration. Christ came among them, to give them a specimen of the performance of his promise, that "where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them."

2. He came, though the doors were shut. This doth not at all weaken the evidence of his having a real human body after his resurrection; though the doors were shut, he knew how to open them without any noise, and come in so as they might not hear him, as formerly he had walked on the water, and yet had a true body. It is a comfort to Christ's disciples, when their solemn assemblies are reduced to privacy, that no doors can shut out Christ's presence from them. We have five things in this appearance of Christ:

1st. His kind and familiar salutation of his disciples. He said, "Peace be unto you." This was not a word of course, though commonly used so at the meeting of friends, but a solemn, uncommon benediction, conferring upon them all the blessed fruits and effects of his death and resurrection. The phrase was vulgar, but the sense was now peculiar; "Peace be unto you," is as much as, All good be to you; all peace always by all means. Christ had left them his peace for their legacy, *ch. xiv. 27*. By the death of the testator the testament was become of force; and he was now risen from the dead to prove the will, and to be himself the executor of it. Accordingly he here makes prompt payment of the legacy, "Peace be unto you." His speaking peace makes peace, creates the fruit of the lips, peace; peace with God, peace in your own consciences, peace with one another. All this peace be with you; not peace with the world, but peace in Christ. His sudden appearing in the midst of them, when they were full of doubts concerning him, full of fears concerning themselves, could not but put them into some disorder and consternation, the noise of which waves he stills with this word, "Peace be unto you."

2nd. His clear and undeniable manifestation of himself to them, *ver. 20*. And here observe,

First. The method he took to convince them of the truth of his resurrection. They now saw him alive, whom multitudes had seen dead two or three days before. Now the only doubt was, whether this that they saw alive was the same individual body which had been seen dead; and none could desire a farther proof that it was so, than the scars or marks of the wounds in the body. Now, 1st. The marks of the wounds, and very deep marks (though without any pain or soreness) remained in the body of the Lord Jesus even after his resurrection, that they might be demonstrations of the truth of it. Conquerors glory in the marks of their wounds. Christ's wounds were to speak on earth, that it was he himself, and therefore he rose with them. They were to speak in heaven, on the intercession he must ever live to make, and therefore he ascended with them, and appeared in the midst of the throne, a lamb as it had been slain, and bleeding afresh, *Rev. v. 6*. Nay, it should seem he will come again with his scars, that they may look on him whom they pierced. 2nd. These marks he shewed to his disciples for their conviction. They had not only the satisfaction of seeing him look with the same countenance, and hearing him speak with the same voice, they had been so long accustomed to, *sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat*,—such were his gestures, such his eyes and hands; but the farther evidence of these peculiar marks. He opened his hands to them, that they might see the marks of the wounds on them; he opened his breast, as the nurse hers to the child, to shew them the wound there. Note. The exalted Redeemer will ever shew himself open-handed and open-hearted to all his faithful friends and followers. When Christ manifests his love to believers by the comforts of his Spirit, assures them that because he lives they shall live also, then he shews them his hands and his side.

Secondly. The impression it made upon them, and the good it did them. 1st. They were convinced that they saw the Lord; so was their faith confirmed. At first they thought they saw an apparition only,—a phantasm; but now they knew it was the Lord himself. Thus many true believers, who, while they were weak, feared their comforts were but imaginary, afterwards find them through grace real and substantial. They ask not, "Is it the Lord?" but are assured, "It is he." 2nd. Then they were glad. That which strengthened their faith raised their joy; believing, they rejoice. The evangelist seems to write it with something of transport and triumph; "Then," then, "were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." If it revived the spirit of Jacob to hear that Joseph was yet alive; how would it revive the hearts of those disciples to hear that Jesus is again alive! It is life from the dead to them. Now that word of Christ was fulfilled, *ch. xvi. 22*, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." This wiped away all tears from their eyes. Note. A sight of Christ will glad the heart of a disciple at any time. The more we see of Christ the more we shall rejoice in him; and our joy will never be perfect till we come there where we shall see him as he is.

3rd. The honourable and ample commission he gave them to be his agents in the planting of his church, *ver. 21*. Here is,

First. The preface to their commission, which was the solemn repetition of the salutation before; "Peace be unto you." This was intended, either, 1st. To raise their attention to the commission he was about to give them. The former salutation was to still the tumult of their fear, that they might calmly attend to the proofs of his resurrection; this was to reduce the transport of their joy, that they might sedately hear what he had farther to say to them. Or, 2nd. To encourage them to accept of the commission he was giving them. Though it would involve them in a great deal of trouble, yet he designed their honour and comfort in it, and in the issue it would be peace to them. Gideon

received his commission with this word, "Peace be unto thee," *Jud. vi. 22, 23*. Christ is our peace; if he be with us, peace is in us. Christ was now sending the disciples to publish peace to the world, *Isa. lii. 7*; and Christ here, not only confers it upon them for their own satisfaction, but commits it to them as a trust, to be by them transmitted to all the sons of peace, *Lu. x. 5, 6*.

Secondly. The commission itself, which sounds very great, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." 1st. It is easy to understand how Christ sent them; he appointed them to go on with his work upon earth, and to lay out themselves for the spreading of his Gospel, and the setting up of his kingdom among men. He sent them authorized with a Divine warrant, armed with a Divine power; sent them as ambassadors to treat of peace, and as heralds to proclaim it; sent them as servants to bid to the marriage. Hence they were called "apostles,"—men sent. 2nd. But how Christ sent them as the Father sent him is not so easily understood; certainly their commissions and powers were infinitely inferior to his. But,

(1) Their work was of the same kind with his, and they were to go on where he left off. They were not sent to be priests and kings like him, but only prophets. As he was sent to bear witness to the truth, so were they; not to be mediators of the reconciliation, but only preachers and publishers of it. Was he sent, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him; not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fill them up? so were they. As the Father sent him to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, so he sent them into all the world.

(2) He had a power to send them equal to that which the Father had to send him. Here the force of the comparison seems to lie: By the same authority that the Father sent me do I send you. This proves the godhead of Christ: the commissions he gave were of equal authority with those which the Father gave, and as valid and effectual to all intents and purposes; equal with those he gave to the Old Testament prophets in visions. The commissions of Peter and John, by the plain word of Christ, are as good as those of Isaiah and Ezekiel by the Lord sitting on his throne; nay, equal with that which was given to the Mediator himself for his work. Had he an incontestable authority, and an irresistible ability, for his work? so had they for theirs. Or thus, As the Father hath sent me, as it were the recital of his power; by virtue of the authority given him as Mediator, he gave authority to them as his ministers, to act for him and in his name, with the children of men; so that they who received them, or rejected them, received or rejected him, and him that sent him, *ch. xiii. 20*.

4th. The qualification of them for the discharge of the trust reposed in them by their commission; *ver. 22*, "He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Observe,

First. The sign he used to assure them of, and affect them with, this gift he was now about to bestow upon them. "He breathed on them;" not only to shew them, by this breath of life, that he himself was really alive, but to signify to them that spiritual life and power which they should receive from him for all the services that lay before them. Probably he breathed upon them all together, not upon each severally; and, though Thomas was not with them, yet the Spirit of the Lord knew where to find him, as he did Eldad and Medad, *Num. xi. 26*. Christ here seems to refer to the creation of man at first by the breathing of the breath of life into him, *Gen. ii. 7*; and to intimate that he himself was the author of that work; and that the spiritual life and strength of ministers and Christians is derived from him, and depends upon him, as much as the natural life of Adam and his seed. As the breath of the Almighty gave life to man, and began the old world, so the breath of the mighty Saviour gave life to his ministers, and began a new world, *Job xxxiii. 4*. Now this intimates to us, 1st. That the Spirit is the breath of Christ proceeding from the Son. The Spirit in the Old Testament is called to breath, *Eze. xxxvii. 9*, "Come, O breath;" but the New Testament tell us it is Christ's breath. The breath of God is put for the power of his wrath, *Isa. xl. 4; xxx. 33*. But the breath of Christ signifies the power of his grace; the breathing of threatenings is changed into the breathing of love by the mediation of Christ. Our words are uttered by our breath, so the word of Christ is spirit and life. The word comes from the Spirit, and the Spirit comes along with the word. 2nd. That the Spirit is the gift of Christ. The apostles communicated the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, those hands being first lifted up in prayer, for they could only beg this blessing, and carry it as messengers; but Christ conferred the Holy Ghost by breathing; for he is the author of the gift, and from him it comes originally. Moses could not give his Spirit, God did it, *Num. xi. 17*; but Christ did it himself.

Secondly. The solemn grant he made, signified by this sign, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," in part now, as an earnest of what you shall farther receive not many days hence. They now received more of the Holy Ghost than they had yet received. Thus spiritual blessings are given gradually; to him that has shall be given. Now Jesus began to be glorified, more of the Spirit began to be given; see *ch. vii. 39*. Let us see what is contained in this grant. 1st. Christ hereby gives them assurance of the Spirit's aid in their future work; in the execution of the commission now given them. I send you, and you shall have the Spirit to go along with you. Now the Spirit of the Lord rested upon them, to qualify them for all the services that lay before them. Whom Christ employs he will clothe with his Spirit, and furnish with all needful powers. 2nd. He hereby gives them experience of the Spirit's influences in their present case. He had shewed them his hands and his side, to convince them of the truth of his resurrection; but the plainest evidences will not of themselves work faith, witness the infidelity of the soldiers, who were the only eyewitnesses of the resurrection; therefore, "Receive the Holy Ghost," to work faith in you, and to open your understandings. They were now in danger of the Jews; therefore, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," to work courage in you. What Christ said to them he saith to all true believers, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," *Eph. i. 13*. What Christ gives we must receive; must submit ourselves and our whole souls to the quickening, sanctifying influences of the blessed Spirit; receive his motions, and comply with them; receive his powers, and make use of them; and they who thus obey this word as a precept, shall have the benefit of it as a promise; they shall receive the Holy Ghost as the guide of their way, and the earnest of their inheritance.

5th. One particular branch of the power given them by their commission instanced in, *ver. 23*, "Whosoever sins ye remit" in the due execution of the powers you are intrusted with, "they are remitted unto them;" and they may take the comfort of it; and "whosoever sins ye retain," that is, pronounce unpardoned, and the guilt of them bound on, "they are retained," and the sinner may be sure of it to his sorrow. Now this follows upon their receiving the Holy Ghost, for if they had not an extraordinary spirit of discerning they had not been fit to be intrusted with such an authority; for in the strictest sense this is a special commission to the apostles themselves, and the first preachers of the Gospel, who could distinguish who were "in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity," and who were not. By virtue of this power, Peter struck Ananias and Sapphira dead; and Paul struck Elymas blind. Yet it must be understood as a general charter to the church and her ministers, not securing an infallibility of judgment to any man or company of men in the world; but encouraging the faithful stewards of the mysteries of God to stand as he

want of success on this night, and their after good fortune, must have brought vividly back to their recollection the similar incident in Luke v. 1—11.

xxi. 7. "It is the Lord;" the quick insight of St. John suits his character. (See Note on chap. xx. 8.) "Fisher's coat:" this was the upper garment, corresponding to the tunic, and opposed to the inner garment, which was worn next the body. The word does not mean necessarily a fisherman's coat. "Girt:" tightened or

strapped the tunic about him with a belt or girdle. "Cast himself into the sea:" it has been supposed that Peter walked miraculously on the water. His girding his coat upon him has been thought to show that he could not have intended to swim to shore, as then he would have removed every encumbrance. But the putting on of the garment was the impulse of respect for Christ; and the distance from shore was not great, and probably the water was shallow, and could be waded without difficulty.

Gospel they were sent to preach, for God himself would stand to it. The apostles, in preaching remission, must begin at Jerusalem, though she had lately brought upon herself the guilt of Christ's blood, yet you may declare their sins remitted upon gospel terms; and Peter did so, *Acts* ii. 38; iii. 19. Christ being risen for our justification, sends his gospel heralds to proclaim the jubilee begun, the act of indemnity now passed; and by this rule men shall be judged, *ch.* xii. 48; *Rom.* ii. 13; *Jas.* ii. 12. God will never alter this rule of judgment, nor vary from it; whom the Gospel acquits shall be acquitted, and whom that condemns shall be condemned, which puts a mighty honour upon the ministry, and should put a mighty courage into ministers.

Two ways the apostles and ministers of Christ remit and retain sin, and both as having authority. 1. By a sound doctrine. They are commissioned to tell the world, that salvation is to be had upon gospel terms, and no other,—and they shall find God will say Amen to it; so shall their doom be. 2. By a strict discipline, applying the general rule of the Gospel to particular persons. Whom you admit into communion with you, according to the rules of the Gospel, God will admit into communion with himself; and whom you cast out of communion, as impenitent and obstinate in scandalous and infectious sins, shall be bound over to the righteous judgment of God.

Thirdly. The incredulity of Thomas, when the report of this was made to him, which introduced Christ's second appearance.

1. Here is Thomas' absence from this meeting, *ver.* 24. He is said to be one of the twelve, one of the college of the apostles, who, though now eleven, had been twelve, and were to be so again. They were but eleven, and one of them was missing. Christ's disciples will never be all together till the general assembly at the great day. Perhaps it was Thomas' unhappiness that he was absent. Either he was not well, or had not notice; or perhaps it was his sin and folly; either he was diverted by business or company, which he preferred before this opportunity, or he durst not come for fear of the Jews; and he called that his prudence and caution which was his cowardice. However, by his absence, he missed the satisfaction of seeing his Master risen, and of sharing with the disciples in their joy upon that occasion. Note, Those know not what they lose who carelessly absent themselves from the stated solemn assemblies of Christians.

2. The account which the other disciples gave him of the visit their Master had made them, *ver.* 25. Next time they saw him, they said unto him with joy enough, "We have seen the Lord;" and no doubt they related to him all that had passed, particularly the satisfaction he had given them, by shewing them his hands and his side. It seems, though Thomas was then from them, he was not long from them; absenters for a time must not be condemned as apostates for ever: Thomas is not Judas.

Observe with what an exultation and triumph they speak it; "We have seen the Lord," the most comfortable sight we ever saw. This they said to Thomas, 1st. To upbraid him with his absence; "We have seen the Lord," but thou hast not. Or rather, 2nd. To inform him; "We have seen the Lord," and we wish thou hadst been here to see him too, for thou wouldst have seen enough to satisfy thee. Note, The disciples of Christ should endeavour to build up one another in their most holy faith, both by repeating what they have heard to those that were absent, that they may hear it at secondhand; as also by communicating what they have experienced. They that by faith have seen the Lord, and tasted that he is gracious, should tell others what God has done for their souls; only let boasting be excluded.

3. The objections Thomas raised against the evidence, to justify himself in his loathness to admit it. "Tell me not that you have seen the Lord alive, you are too credulous, somebody has made fools of you; for my part, except I shall not only see in his hand the print of the nails, but put my finger into it, and thrust my hand into the wound in his side, I am resolved I will not believe." Some, by comparing this with what he said, *ch.* xi. 16; *xiv.* 5, conjecture him to be a man of a rough, morose temper, apt to speak peevishly; for all good people are not alike happy in their temper. However, there was certainly much amiss in this here.

1st. He had either not heeded, or not duly regarded, what Christ had so often said, and that too according to the Old Testament, that he would rise again the third day; so that he ought to have said, He is risen, though he had not seen him, nor spoken with any that had.

2nd. He did not pay a just deference to the testimony of his fellow disciples, who were men of wisdom and integrity, and ought to be credited. He knew them to be honest men; they all ten of them concurred in the testimony with great assurance, and yet he cannot persuade himself to say that their record is true. Christ had chosen them to be his witnesses of this very thing to all nations, and yet Thomas, one of their own fraternity, will not allow them to be competent witnesses, nor trust them farther than he can see them. But it was not their veracity that he questioned, but their prudence; he feared they were too credulous.

3rd. He tempted Christ, and limited the Holy One of Israel, when he would be convinced by his own method, or not at all. He could not be sure that the print of the nails, which the apostles told him they had seen, would admit the putting of his finger into them, or the wound in his side the thrusting in of his hand; nor was it fit to deal so roughly with a living body, yet Thomas ties up his faith to this evidence; either he will be humoured, and have his fancy gratified, or he will not believe; see *Matt.* xvi. 1; *xxvii.* 42.

4th. The open avowing of this in the presence of the disciples was an offence and discouragement to them. It was not only a sin but a scandal. As one coward makes many, so doth one unbeliever, one sceptic making his brethren's heart to faint like his heart, *Deu.* xx. 9. Had he only thought this evil, and then laid his hand upon his mouth to suppress it, his error had remained with himself, but his proclaiming his infidelity, and that so peremptorily, might be of ill consequence to the rest, who were as yet but weak and wavering.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed:

blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. 30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

We have here an account of another appearance of Christ to his disciples after his resurrection, when Thomas was now with them. And concerning this we may observe,

First. When it was that Christ repeated his visit to his disciples; "after eight days." That day seven-night after he rose, which must therefore be, as that was, "the first day of the week."

1. He deferred his next appearance for some time, to shew his disciples that he was not risen to such a life as he had formerly lived, to converse constantly with them, but was as one that belonged to another world, and visited this, only as angels do, now and then, when there was occasion. Where Christ was during these eight days, and the rest of the time of his abode on earth, is folly to inquire, and presumption to determine. Wherever he was, no doubt angels ministered unto him. In the beginning of his ministry he had been forty days unseen, tempted by the evil spirit, *Mat.* iv. 1, 2. And now in the beginning of his glory he was forty days, for the most part unseen, attended by good spirits.

2. He deferred it so long as seven days. And why so? 1st. That he might put a rebuke upon Thomas for his incredulity. He had neglected the former meeting of the disciples; and to teach him to prize those seasons of grace better for the future, he cannot have such another opportunity for several days. That slips one tide must stay a good while for another. A very melancholy week we have reason to think Thomas had of it, drooping, and in suspense, while the other disciples were full of joy; and it was long of himself, and his own folly. 2nd. That he might try the faith and patience of the rest of the disciples. They had gained a great point when they were satisfied that they had seen the Lord, "then were the disciples glad;" but he would try whether they could keep the ground they had got, when they saw no more of him for some days. And thus he would gradually wean them from his bodily presence, which they had doted and depended too much upon. 3rd. That he might put an honour upon the first day of the week, and give a plain intimation of his will, that it should be observed in his church as the Christian sabbath, that is, the weekly day of holy rest, and holy convocations. That one day in seven should be religiously observed was an appointment from the beginning, as old as innocency; and that in the kingdom of the Messiah the first day of the week should be that solemn day, this was indication enough, that Christ on that day once and again met his disciples in a religious assembly; and it is highly probable, in his former appearance to them, he appointed them that day seven-night to be together again, and promised to meet them; and also that he appeared to them every first day of the week, besides other times, during the forty days. And the religious observance of that day has been from thence transmitted down to us through every age of the church. "This," therefore, "is the day which the Lord has made."

Secondly. Where and how Christ made them this visit. It was at Jerusalem, for the doors were shut now, as before, "for fear of the Jews." There they staid, to keep the feast of unleavened bread, seven days, which expired the day before this, yet they would not set out on their journey to Galilee on the first day of the week, because it was the Christian sabbath, but staid till the day after. Now observe,

1. That Thomas was with them. Though he had withdrawn himself once, yet not a second time. When we have lost one opportunity, we should give the more earnest heed to lay hold on the next, that we may recover our losses: it is a good sign if such a loss whet our desires, and a bad sign if it cool them. And the disciples admitted him among them, and did not insist upon his believing the resurrection of Christ as they did, because as yet it was but darkly revealed; they did not receive him to doubtful disputation, but bade him welcome to come and see. But observe, Christ did not appear to Thomas, for his satisfaction, till he found him in society with the rest of the disciples, because he would countenance the meetings of Christians and ministers, for there will he be in the midst of them. And besides, he would have all the disciples witnesses of the rebuke he gave to Thomas, and yet withal, of the tender care he had of him.

2. That Christ came in among them, and stood in the midst, and they all knew him, for he shewed himself now just as he had shewed himself before, *ver.* 19, still the same, and no changeling. See the condescension of our Lord Jesus. The gates of heaven were ready to be opened to him, and there he might have been in the midst of the adorations of a world of angels; yet for the benefit of his church he lingered on earth, and visited the little private meetings of his poor disciples, and is in the midst of them.

3. He saluted them all in a friendly manner, as he had done before; he said, "Peace be unto you." This was no vain repetition, but significant of the abundant and assured peace which Christ gives, and of the continuance of his blessings upon his people; for they fail not, but are new every morning, new every meeting.

Thirdly. What passed between Christ and Thomas at this meeting; and that only is recorded, though we may suppose he said a deal to the rest of them. Here is,

1. Christ's gracious condescension to Thomas, *ver.* 27. He singled him out from the rest, and applied himself particularly to him, "Reach hither thy finger," and since thou wilt have it so, "behold my hands," and satisfy thy curiosity to the utmost about the "print of the nails; reach hither thy hand," and if nothing less will convince thee, "thrust it into my side." Here we have,

1st. An implicit rebuke of Thomas' incredulity, in the plain reference which is here had to what Thomas had said, answering it word for word, for he had heard it, though unseen; and one would think his telling him of it should put him to the blush. Note, There is not an unbelieving word in our tongues, no, nor thought in our minds, at any time, but it is known to the Lord Jesus, *Ps.* lxxviii. 21.

2nd. An express condescension to his weakness; which appears in two things: First. That he suffers his wisdom to be prescribed to. Great spirits will not be dictated to by their inferiors, especially in their acts of grace, yet Christ is pleased here to accommodate himself even to Thomas' fancy, in a needless thing, rather than break with him, and leave him in his unbelief. He will not break the cruised reed; but, as a good shepherd, gathers that which was driven away, *Eze.* xxxiv. 16. We ought thus to bear the infirmities of the weak, *Rom.* xv. 1, 2. Secondly. He suffers his wounds to be raked into allows

xxi. 11. "Peter went up;" or, as Alford has it, "went aboard." He went up into the ship and drew the net ashore. The net was not rent. The contrast in this point between the miracle of Luke v. and this is suggestive—then the net broke. Now, as fishers of men by the power of the risen Christ, the net would never give way; for the Gospel would be equal to every strain, and strong enough to draw all men unto Christ.

xxi. 14. "This is now the third time" &c.: according to the calculation of Archbishop Thomson, this is the seventh appearance of Jesus after the resurrection; but St. John is only reckoning those in which he appeared to his assembled disciples. "Showed himself:" or, "was manifested" (see verse 1).

xxi. 15. "More than these:" the reference clearly is to Simon Peter's declaration, "Though all men forsake thee, yet will I never." Throughout this conversation two words are used which are both rendered "love." The word which Christ uses when he says, "Lovest

Thomas even to thrust his hand into his side, if then at last he would believe. Thus, for the confirmation of our faith, he hath instituted an ordinance on purpose to keep his death in remembrance, though it was an ignominious, shameful death, and one would think should rather have been forgotten, and no more said of it; yet, because it was such an evidence of his love as would be an encouragement to our faith, he appoints the memorial of it to be celebrated. And in that ordinance wherein we shew the Lord's death, we are called as it were to put our finger into the print of the nails; Reach hither thy hand to him who reacheth forth his helping, inviting, giving hand to thee.

It is an affecting word with which Christ closeth up what he had to say to Thomas, "Be not faithless, but believing;" *μὴ ῥηῖν ἄπιστος*. "Do not thou become an unbeliever;" as if he should have been sealed up under unbelief had he not yielded now. This warning is given to us all, "Be not faithless;" for if we are faithless we are Christless and graceless, hopeless and joyless; let us therefore say, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

2. Thomas' believing consent to Jesus Christ. He is now ashamed of his incredulity, and cries out, "My Lord and my God," ver. 28. We are not told whether he did put his finger into the print of the nails; it should seem he did not, for Christ saith, ver. 29, "Thou hast seen and believed;" seeing sufficed. And now faith comes off a conqueror, after a struggle with unbelief.

1st. Thomas is now fully satisfied of the truth of Christ's resurrection; that the same Jesus that was crucified is now alive, and this is he. His slowness and backwardness to believe may help to strengthen our faith; for hereby it appears that the witnesses of Christ's resurrection, who attested it to the world, and pawned their lives upon it, were not easy, credulous men, but cautious enough, and that suspended their belief of it till they saw the utmost evidence of it they could desire. Thus out of the eater came forth meat.

2nd. He therefore believed him to be Lord and God, and we are to believe him so. First. We must believe his Deity, that he is God; not a man made God, but God made man, as this evangelist had laid down his thesis at first, *ch. i. 1*. The Author and Head of our holy religion has the wisdom, power, sovereignty, and unchangeableness of God, which was necessary, because he was to be not only the founder of it, but the foundation of it for its constant support, and the fountain of life for its supply. Secondly. His mediation, that he is Lord, the one Lord, *1 Cor. viii. 5*; *1 Tim. ii. 5*. He is sufficiently authorized as plenipotentiary to settle the great concerns that lie between God and man; to take up the controversy which would inevitably have been our ruin, and to establish the correspondence that was necessary to our happiness: see *Acts ii. 36*; *Rom. xiv. 9*.

3rd. He consented to him as his Lord and his God. In faith there must be the consent of the will to gospel terms, as well as the assent of the understanding to gospel truths. We must accept of Christ to be that to us which the Father hath appointed him. "My Lord," refers to *Adonai*, 'my foundation and stay'; "my God," to *Elohim*, 'my prince and judge.' God having constituted him the umpire and referee, we must approve the choice, and entirely refer ourselves to him. This is the vital act of faith, He is mine, *Cant. ii. 16*.

4th. He made an open profession of this before those that had been the witnesses of his unbelieving doubts. He saith it to Christ, and to complete the sense we must read it, "Thou art my Lord and my God; or, speaking to his brethren, This is my Lord and my God. Do we accept of Christ as our Lord God? we must go to him, and tell him so, as David, *Ps. xvi. 2*. Deliver the surrender to him as our act and deed. Tell others so, as those that triumph in our relation to Christ, "This is my beloved." Thomas speaks with an ardency of affection, as one that took hold of Christ with all his might, "My Lord, and my God."

3. The judgment of Christ upon the whole; ver. 29, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed," and it is well thou art brought to it at last upon any terms; "but blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Here,

1st. Christ owns Thomas a believer. Sound and sincere believers, though they be slow and weak, shall be graciously accepted of the Lord Jesus. They who have long stood it out, if at last they yield, shall find him ready to forgive. No sooner did Thomas consent to Christ, but Christ gives him the comfort of it, and lets him know that he believes.

2nd. He upbraids him with his former incredulity. He might well be ashamed to think, First. That he had been so backward to believe, and came so slowly to his own comforts. They that in sincerity have closed with Christ see a great deal of reason to lament that they did not do it sooner. Secondly. That it was not without much ado that he was brought to believe at last; if thou hadst not seen me alive thou wouldst not have believed. But if no evidence must be admitted but that of our own senses, and we must believe nothing but what we ourselves are eyewitnesses of, farewell all commerce and conversation. If this must be the only method of proof, how must the world be converted to the faith of Christ? He is therefore justly blamed for laying so much stress upon this.

3rd. He commends the faith of those who believe upon easier terms. Thomas as a believer was truly blessed; but rather "blessed are they that have not seen." It is not meant of not seeing the objects of faith, for those are invisible, *Heb. xi. 1*; *2 Cor. iv. 18*, but the motives of faith, Christ's miracles, and especially his resurrection; blessed are they that see not these, and yet believe in Christ. This may look either backward upon the Old Testament saints, who had not seen the things which they saw, and yet believed the promise made unto the fathers, and lived by that faith; or forward, upon them which should afterwards believe, the Gentiles who had never seen Christ in the flesh, as the Jews had. This faith is more laudable and praiseworthy than theirs who saw and believed; for, First. It evidenceth a better temper of mind in those that do believe. Not to see and yet to believe, argues greater industry in searching after truth, and greater ingenuity of mind in embracing it. He that believes upon that sight hath his resistance conquered by a sort of violence, but he that believes without that, like the Bereans, is more noble. Secondly. It is a greater instance of the power of Divine grace. The less sensible the evidence is, the more doth the work of faith appear to be the Lord's doing. Peter is blessed in his faith because flesh and blood have not revealed it to him, *Mat. xvi. 17*. Flesh and blood contribute more to their faith that see and believe than to theirs who see not, and yet believe. Dr. Lightfoot quotes a saying of one of the rabbins, "That one proselyte is more acceptable to God than all the thousands of Israel that stood before mount Sinai, for they saw and received the law, but a proselyte sees not, and yet receives it."

Fourthly. The remark which the evangelist makes upon his narrative, like an historian drawing towards a conclusion, ver. 30, 31. And here,

1. He assures us that many other things occurred which were all worthy to be recorded, but are not written in the book; many signs. Some refer this to all the signs that Jesus did during his whole life; all the wondrous works he spoke, and all the wondrous works he did; but it seems rather to be confined to the signs he did after his resurrection, for these were in the presence of the disciples only, which are here spoken of, *Acts x. 41*. Divers of his appearances are not recorded, as appears *1 Cor. xv. 5, 7*; see *Acts i. 3*. Now,

1st. We may here improve this general attestation, that there were other many other, for the confirmation of our faith and being added to the

particular narratives, very much strengthens the evidence. They that recorded the resurrection of Christ were not put to fish for evidence, to take up such short and scanty proofs as they could find, and make up the rest with conjecture; no, they had evidence enough and to spare, and more witnesses to produce than they had occasion for. The disciples, in whose presence these other signs were done, were to be preachers of Christ's resurrection to others; and therefore it was requisite they should have proofs of it *ex abundantia*,—"in abundance," that they might have a strong consolation who ventured life and all upon it.

2nd. We need not ask why they were not all written, or why not more than these, or other than these, for it is enough for us that so it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration this was given. Had this history been a mere human composure, it had been swelled with a multitude of depositions and affidavits, to prove the contested truth of Christ's resurrection, and long arguments drawn up for the demonstration of it; but, being a Divine history, the penmen write with a noble security, relating what amounted to a competent proof, sufficient to convince those that were willing to be taught, and to condemn those that were obstinate in their unbelief; and if this satisfy not, more would not. Men produce all they have to say, that they may gain credit; but God doth not, for he can give faith. Had this history been written for the entertainment of the curious, it would have been more copious, for every circumstance would have brightened and embellished the story; but it was written to bring men to believe, and enough is said to answer that intention, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear.

2. He instructs us in the design of recording what we do find here, ver. 31. These accounts are given in this and the following chapter, that ye might believe upon these evidences, "that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," declared with power to be so by his resurrection.

1st. Here is the design of those that wrote the Gospel. Some write books for their diversion, and publish them for their profit or applause; others to oblige the Athenian humour; others to instruct the world in arts and sciences, for their secular advantage. But the evangelists wrote without any view of temporal benefit to themselves or others, but to bring men to Christ and heaven, and in order to that to persuade men to believe; and for this they took the most fitting methods, they brought to the world a Divine revelation, supported with its due evidences.

2nd. The duty of those that read and hear the Gospel. It is their duty to believe, to embrace the doctrine of Christ, and that record given concerning him, *1 Jo. v. 11*.

First. We are here told what the great gospel truth is which we are to believe, that Jesus is that Christ, that Son of God. 1st. That he is the Christ; the person that, under the title of the Messiah, was promised to, and expected by, the Old Testament saints; and that, according to the signification of the name, is anointed of God to be a Prince and a Saviour. 2nd. That he is the Son of God; not only as Mediator, for then he had not been greater than Moses, who was both a prophet, intercessor, and lawgiver, but antecedent to his being the Mediator; for if he had not been a Divine person, endued with the power of a God, and entitled to the glory of a God, he had not been qualified for the undertaking, not fit either to do the Redeemer's work, or to wear the Redeemer's crown.

Secondly. What the great gospel blessedness is which we are to hope for; "that believing, we shall have life through his name." This is, 1st. To direct our faith. It must have an eye to the life, the crown of life, the tree of life set before us. Life through Christ's name, the life proposed in the covenant which is made with us in Christ, is what we must propose to ourselves as the fulness of our joy, and the abundant recompence of all our services and sufferings. 2nd. To encourage our faith, and invite us to believe. Upon the prospects of some great advantage, men will venture far, and greater advantage there cannot be than that which is offered by "the words of this life," as the Gospel is called, *Acts v. 20*; it includes both spiritual life in conformity to God and communion with him, and eternal life in the vision and fruition of him. Both are through Christ's name, by his merit and power, and both indefeasibly sure to all true believers.

CHAPTER XXI.

The evangelist seemed to have concluded his history with the foregoing chapter; but, as St. Paul sometimes in his epistles, new matter occurring, he begins again. He had said, that there were many other signs which Jesus did for the proof of his resurrection. And in this chapter he instanceth in one of those many, which was Christ's appearance to some of his disciples at the sea of Tiberias, in which we have an account, I. How he discovered himself to them as they were fishing, filled their net, and then very familiarly came and dined with them upon what they had caught, ver. 1-14. II. What discourse he had with Peter after dinner: 1. Concerning himself, ver. 15-20. 2. Concerning John, ver. 21-23. III. The solemn conclusion of this Gospel, ver. 24, 25. It is strange any should suppose that this chapter was added by some other hand, when it is expressly said, ver. 24, that the disciple whom Jesus loved is he which testifieth these things.



AFTER these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. 2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. 3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. 5 Then Jesus saith unto

thou me?" is not so strong or so personal as that with which Peter answers, "I love thee." The distinction between the words has been pointed out in the Note on chap. xi. 5. It is the more general word Christ uses in addressing Peter the first and second time. Throughout Peter replies using the warmer word. In the third question our Lord adopts the word Peter has persistently made use of. Similarly, there is a difference in the injunction given to Peter after each answer. "Feed my lambs;" "Shepherd (or Alford has,

"keep") my sheep;" "Feed my sheep." There seems to be an ascending commission of duty in these successive sentences.

xvi. 18. "Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands:" there seems no reason to doubt the tradition which represents Simon Peter as having suffered martyrdom by crucifixion; but it is not likely that these words apply to more than the act of stretching out the hands to be bound before execution. (See *Acts xxii. 25*; and also the words of Agabus, *Acts xxi. 11*.)

them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. 6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. 7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. 8 And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. 9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. 10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. 11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. 12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. 14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

We have here an account of Christ's appearance to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias. Now,

1. Let us compare this appearance with those that went before. In this Christ shewed himself to his disciples when they were met in a solemn assembly (it should seem for religious worship) upon a Lord's day, and when they were all together, perhaps, expecting his appearing; but in this he shewed himself to some of them occasionally, upon a week day, when they were fishing, and little thought of it. Christ has many ways of making himself known to his people, usually in his ordinances; but sometimes by his Spirit he visits them when they are employed in common business, as the shepherds who were keeping their flock by night, *Lu. ii. 8*; even so here also, *Gen. xvi. 13*.

2. Let us compare it with that which followed at the mountain in Galilee, where Christ had appointed them to meet him, *Mat. xxviii. 16*. Thitherward they moved as soon as the days of unleavened bread were over, and disposed of themselves as they thought fit, till the time fixed for this interview, or general rendezvous. Now this appearance was while they were waiting for that, that they might not be weary of waiting. Christ is often better than his word, but never worse; often prevents and outdoes the believing expectations of his people, but never disappoints them. As to the particulars of the story we may observe,

First. Who they were to whom Christ now shewed himself, *ver. 2*: not to all the twelve, but to seven of them only. Nathanael is mentioned as one of them whom we have not met with since *ch. i.*; but some think he was the same with Bartholomew, one of the twelve. The two not named are supposed to be Philip of Bethsaida and Andrew of Capernaum. Observe here, 1. It is good for the disciples of Christ to be much together; not only in solemn, religious assemblies, but in common conversation, and about common business. Good Christians should by this means both testify and increase their affection to, and delight in, each other, and edify one another both by discourse and example. 2. Christ chose to manifest himself to them when they were together; not only to countenance Christian society, but that they might be joint witnesses of the same matter of fact, and so might corroborate one another's testimony. Here were seven together to attest this; on which occasion some observe, that the Roman law required seven witnesses to a testament. 3. Thomas was one of them, and is named next to Peter, as if he now kept closer to the meetings of the apostles than ever. It is well if losses by our neglects make us more careful afterwards not to slip opportunities.

Secondly. How they were employed, *ver. 3*. Observe,

1. Their agreement to go a fishing. They knew not well what to do with themselves; For my part, saith Peter, I will go a fishing. We will go with thee then, say they, for we will keep together. Though commonly two of a trade cannot agree, yet they could. Some think they did amiss in returning to their boats and nets which they had left, but then Christ would not have countenanced them in it with a visit. It was rather commendable in them; for they did it, 1st. To redeem time, and not be idle; they were not yet appointed to preach the resurrection of Christ. Their commission was in the drawing, but not perfected: the hour for entering upon action was not come. It is likely their Master had directed them to say nothing of his resurrection till after his ascension; nay, not till after the pouring out of the Spirit, and then they were to begin at Jerusalem. Now in the meantime, rather than do nothing, they would go a fishing; not for recreation, but for business. It is an instance of their humility; though they were advanced to be sent of Christ, as he was of the Father, yet they did not take state upon them, but remembered the rock out of which they were hewn. It is an instance likewise of their industry, and speaks them good husbands of their time. While they were waiting they would not be idling. Those who would give an account of their time with joy should contrive to fill up the vacancies of it, to gather up the fragments of *t.* 2nd. That they might help to maintain themselves, and not be burthensome

to any. While their Master was with them, those that ministered to him were kind to them; but now the bridegroom was taken from them they must fast in those days, and therefore their own hands, as Paul's, must minister to their necessities; and for that reason Christ asked them, Have ye any meat? This teacheth us with quietness to work, and eat our own bread.

2. Their disappointment in their fishing. That night they caught nothing, though it is likely they toiled all night, as *Lu. v. 5*. See the vanity of this world: the hand of the diligent often returns empty. Even good men may come short of desired success in their honest undertakings; we may be in the way of our duty, and yet not prosper. Providence so ordered it that all that night they should catch nothing; that the miraculous draught of fishes in the morning might be the more wonderful, and the more acceptable. In those disappointments which to us are very grievous God has often designs that are very gracious. Man has indeed a dominion over the fish of the sea, but they are not always at his beck; God only knows the paths of the sea, and commands that which passeth through them.

Thirdly. After what manner Christ made himself known to them. It is said, *ver. 1*, he shewed himself; his body, though a true and real body, yet was raised, as ours will be, a spiritual body, and so was visible only when he himself was pleased to make it so; or rather, came and removed so quickly, that it was here or there in an instant, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Four things are observable in the appearance of Christ to them:

1. He shewed himself to them seasonably; *ver. 4*. "When the morning was now come," after a fruitless night's toil, "Jesus stood on the shore." Christ's time of making himself known to his people is when they are most at a loss. When they think they have lost themselves, he will let them know they have not lost him. Weeping may endure for a night; but joy comes, if Christ comes, in the morning. Christ appeared to them not walking upon the water, because, being risen from the dead, he was not to be with them as he had been; but standing upon the shore, because now they were to make towards him. Some of the ancients put this significancy upon it, that Christ, having finished his work, was got through a stormy sea, a sea of blood, to a safe and quiet shore, where he stood in triumph; but the disciples having their work before them were yet at sea in toil and peril. It is a comfort to us, when our passage is rough and stormy, that our Master is at shore, and we are hastening to him.

2. He shewed himself to them gradually. "The disciples," though they had been intimately acquainted with him, "knew not" presently "that it was Jesus." Little expecting to see him there, and not looking intently upon him, they took him for some common person waiting the arrival of their boat to buy their fish. Note, Christ is often nearer us than we think he is, and so we shall find afterwards to our comfort.

3. He shewed himself to them by an instance of his pity, *ver. 5*. He called to them, "Children," *ταῖς*, 'lads,' 'have ye any meat?' Have ye caught any fish? Here, 1st. The compellation is very familiar; he speaketh unto them as unto his sons, with the care and tenderness of a father, "Children." Though he was now entered upon his exalted state, he spoke to his disciples with as much kindness and affection as ever. They were not children in age, but they were his children; the children which God had given him. 2nd. The question is very kind; "Have ye any meat?" He asks, as a tender father concerning his children, whether they be provided with that which is fit for them; that, if they be not, he may take care for their supply. Note, The Lord is for the body, 1 *Cor. vi. 13*. Christ takes cognizance of the temporal wants of his people, and has promised them not only grace sufficient, but food convenient;

Verily they shall be fed," *Ps. xxxvii. 3*. Christ looks into the cottages of the poor, and asks, "Children, have ye any meat?" thereby inviting them to open their case before him, and by the prayer of faith to make their requests known to him, and then let them be careful for nothing; for Christ takes care of them, takes care for them. Christ has herein set us an example of compassionate concern for our brethren; there are many poor householders disabled for labour, or disappointed in it, that are reduced to straits, whom the rich should inquire after thus, "Have ye any meat?" for the most necessitous are commonly the least clamorous. To this question the disciples give a short answer, and some think with an air of discontent and peevishness; they said, "No," not giving him any such friendly and respectful title as he had given them; so short do the best come in their returns of love to the Lord Jesus. Christ put the question to them, not because he did not know their wants; but he would know them from them. They that would have supplies from Christ must own themselves empty and needy.

4. He shewed himself to them by an instance of his power; and this perfected the discovery, *ver. 6*. He ordered them to "cast the net on the right side of the ship," the contrary side to what they had been casting it on; and then they, who were going home empty-handed, were enriched with a great draught of fishes. Here we have, 1st. The orders Christ gave them, and the promise annexed to those orders. Cast the net there in such a place, and you shall find. He from whom nothing is hid, not the inhabitants under the waters, *Job xvi. 5*, knew on what side of the ship the shoal of fishes was, and to that side he directs them. Note, Divine Providence extends itself to things most minute and contingent; and they are happy that know how to take hints from thence in the conduct of their affairs, and acknowledge it in all their ways. 2nd. Their obedience to these orders, and the good success of that. As yet they knew not that it was Jesus; however they were willing to be advised by anybody, and did not bid this supposed stranger mind his own business, and not meddle with theirs, but took his counsel; and, in being thus observant of strangers, they were obedient to their Master unawares. And it sped wonderfully well; now they had a draught that paid them for all their pains. Note, Those that are humble, diligent, and patient, though their labours may be crossed, they shall be crowned; they sometimes live to see their affairs take a happy turn after many struggles and fruitless attempts. There is nothing lost by observing Christ's orders. Those are likely to speed well that follow the rule of the Word, the conduct of the Spirit, and the intimations of Providence; for that is casting the net on the right side of the ship.

Now the draught of fishes may be considered, *First*. As a miracle in itself; and so it was designed to prove that Jesus Christ was raised in power, though sown in weakness; and that all things were put under his feet, the fishes of the sea not excepted. Christ manifests himself to his people by doing that for them which none else can do, and things which they looked not for. *Secondly*. As a mercy to them; for the seasonable and abundant supply of their necessities. When their ingenuity and industry failed them, the power of Christ came in opportunely for their relief; for he would take care that they who had left all for him, should not want any good thing. When we are most at a loss, Jehovah Jireh. *Thirdly*. As the memorial of a former mercy, with which Christ had formerly recompensed Peter for the loan of his boat, *Lu. v. 4. &c.* This miracle nearly resembled that, and could not but put Peter in mind of that, which helped him to improve this; for both that and this affected him much, as meeting him in his own element, in his own employment. Latter favours are designed to bring to mind former favours, that eaten bread may not be forgotten. *Fourthly*. As a mystery, and very significant of that work to which Christ was now with an enlarged commission sending them forth. The prophets had been fishing for souls, and caught nothing, or very little; but

xxi. 22. "Follow thou me;" the pronouns are emphatic: "Do thou follow me." The words illustrate the practice of Christ to turn away men's thoughts from speculative and curious questions to practical ones. Compare his doing so in answer to the question, "Are there few that be saved?" (*Luke xiii. 23, 24*).

xxi. 23. "Then went this saying abroad among," &c.: or, "This saying therefore went . . . that that disciple was not to die" (*Alford*). Webster and Wilkinson refer to a similar mistake made

by the Thessalonian Christians on reading St. Paul's First Epistle. (Compare 1 *Thess. iv. 13, v. 1-4*, and 2 *Thess. ii. 1-10*.)

xxi. 25. "Contain the books;" though the expression is hyperbolic, and probably a proverbial one, yet the force of it must not be ignored. The fulness which is in Christ, and which was betokened in his works on earth, is inexhaustible.

Additional Notes.—Concerning the general intention or design of this gospel, much discussion has taken place. The general fault of

the apostles that let down the net at Christ's word had wonderful success; "many were the children of the desolate," *Gal. iv. 27*. They themselves, in pursuance of their former mission, when they were first made fishers of men, had had small success in comparison with what they should now have. When, soon after this, three thousand were converted in one day, then the net was cast on the right side of the ship. It is an encouragement to Christ's ministers to continue their diligence in their work; one happy draught at length may be sufficient to repay many years' toil at the gospel net.

Fourthly. How the disciples received this discovery which Christ made of himself, ver. 7, 8. Where we find,

1. That John was the most intelligent and quicksighted disciple. He whom Jesus loved was the first that said, "It was the Lord; for those whom Christ loves he will in a special manner manifest himself to; his secret is with his favourites." John had adhered more closely to his Master in his sufferings than any of them; and therefore he has a clearer eye, and a more discerning judgment, than any of them, in recompence for his constancy. When John was himself aware that it was the Lord he communicated his knowledge to those with him; for this dispensation of the Spirit is given to every one to profit withal. They that know Christ themselves should endeavour to bring others acquainted with him. We need not engross him; there is enough in him for us all. John tells Peter, particularly, his thoughts that it was the Lord; knowing he would be glad to see him above any of them. Though Peter had denied his Master, yet, having repented, and being taken into the communion of the disciples again, they were as free and familiar with him as ever.

2. That Peter was the most zealous and warm-hearted disciple; for as soon as he heard it was the Lord, for which he took John's word, the ship could not hold him, nor could he stay the bringing of it to shore, but into the sea he throws himself presently, that he might come first to Christ. 1st. He shewed his respect to Christ by girding his fisher's coat about him, that he might appear before his Master in the best clothes he had; and not rudely rush into his presence stripped as he was to his waistcoat and drawers, because the work he was about was toilsome, and he was resolved to take pains in it. Perhaps this fisher's coat was made of leather, or oilcloth, and would keep out wet; and he girt it to him that he might make the best of his way through the water to Christ, as he used to do after his nets, when he was intent upon his fishing.

2nd. He shewed the strength of his affection to Christ, and his earnest desire to be with him, by casting himself into the sea; and either wading or swimming to shore to come to him. When he walked upon the water to Christ, *Mat. xiv. 28, 29*, it was said, "he came down out of the ship" deliberately; but here it is said, "he cast himself into the sea" with precipitation; sink or swim, he would shew his goodwill, and aim to be with Jesus. If Christ suffer me, thinks he, to drown and come short of him, it is but what I deserve for denying him. Peter had had much forgiven, and made it appear he loved much by his willingness to run hazards and undergo hardships to come to him. They that have been with Jesus will be willing to swim through a stormy sea, a sea of blood, to come to him; and it is a laudable contention among Christ's disciples, to strive who shall be first with him.

3. That the rest of the disciples were careful and honest-hearted. Though they were not in such a transport of zeal as to throw themselves into the sea like Peter, yet they hastened in the boat to the shore, and made the best of their way, ver. 8. The other disciples, and John with them, who had first discovered that it was Christ, came slowly, yet they came to Christ. Now here we may observe,

1st. How variously God dispenseth his gifts. Some excel, as Peter and John; are very eminent in gifts and graces, and are thereby distinguished from their brethren; others are but ordinary disciples, that mind their duty, and are faithful to him, but do nothing to make themselves remarkable. And yet both the one and the other, the eminent and the obscure, shall sit down together with Christ in glory; nay, and perhaps, the last shall be first. Of those that do excel, some like John are eminently contemplative, have great gifts of knowledge, and serve the church with that; others, like Peter, eminently active and courageous, are strong, and do exploits, and are thus very serviceable to their generation. Some are useful as the church's eyes; others, as the church's hands; and all for the good of the body.

2nd. What a great deal of difference there may be between some good people and others in the way of their honouring Christ; and yet both accepted of him. Some serve Christ more in acts of devotion, and extraordinary expressions of a religious zeal; and they do well, to the Lord they do it. Peter ought not to be censured for casting himself into the sea, but commended for his zeal, and the strength of his affection; and so must they be that, in love to Christ, quit the world, with Mary, to sit at his feet. But others serve Christ more in the affairs of the world. They continue in that ship, drag the net, and bring the fish to shore, as the other disciples here; and such ought not to be censured as worldly, for they in their place are as truly serving Christ as the other, even in serving tables. If all the disciples had done as Peter did, what had become of their fish and their nets? And yet, if Peter had done as they did, we had wanted this instance of holy zeal. Christ was well pleased with both, and so must we.

3rd. That there are several ways of bringing Christ's disciples to shore to him from off the sea of this world. Some are brought to him by a violent death, as the martyrs that threw themselves into the sea in their zeal for Christ; others are brought to him by a natural death, dragging the net, which is less terrible. But both meet at length on the safe and quiet shore with Christ.

Fifthly. What entertainment the Lord Jesus gave them when they came ashore.

1. He had provision ready for them. When they came to land, wet and cold, weary and hungry, they found a good fire there to warm them, and dry them, and fish and bread; competent provision for a good meal.

1st. We need not be curious in inquiring whence this fire, and fish, and bread came, no more than whence the meat came which the ravens brought Elijah. He that could multiply the loaves and fishes that were, could make new ones if he pleased, or turn stones into bread, or send his angels to fetch it where he knew it was to be had. It is uncertain whether this provision was made in the open air, or in some fisher's cabin, or hut, upon the shore. Here was nothing stately or delicate. We should be content with mean things, for Christ was.

2nd. We may be comforted in this instance of Christ's care of his disciples. He has wherewith to supply all their needs, and knows what things we have need of. He kindly provided for those fishermen when they came weary from their work; for verily they shall be fed who trust in the Lord, and do good. It is encouraging to Christ's ministers, whom he hath made fishers of men, that they may depend upon him who employs them to provide for them; and, if they should miss of encouragement in this world, should be reduced, as Paul was, to hunger and thirst, and fastings often, let them content themselves with what they have here; they have better things in reserve, and shall eat and drink with Christ at his table, in his kingdom, *Lu. xxii. 30*. A while ago the disciples had entertained Christ with a broiled fish, *Lu. xxiv. 42*, and now, as a friend, he returned their kindness, and entertained them with one; nay, in the draught of fishes he repaid them more than a hundred fold.

2. He called for some of that which they had caught, and they produced it ver. 10, 11. Observe here,

1st. The command Christ gave them to bring their draught of fish to shore; 'Bring of the fish hither, which you have now caught, and let us have some of them'; not as if he needed it, and could not make up a dinner for them without it; but, *First*. He would have them eat the labour of their hands, *Ps. cxxviii. 2*. What is got by God's blessing on our own industry and honest labour, if withal God give us power to eat of it, and enjoy good in our labour, hath a peculiar sweetness in it. It is said of the slothful man, that he roasteth not that which he took in hunting; cannot find in his heart to dress what he has been at the pains to take, *Pr. xii. 27*. But Christ would hereby teach us to use what we have. *Secondly*. He would have them taste the gifts of his miraculous bounty, that they might be witnesses both of his power and of his goodness. The benefits Christ bestows upon us are not to be buried and laid up, but to be used and laid out. *Thirdly*. He would give a specimen of the spiritual entertainment he has for all believers, which in this respect is most free and familiar, that he sups with them, and they with him. Their graces are pleasing to him, and his comforts are so to them. What he works in them he accepts from them. *Fourthly*. Ministers that are fishers of men must bring all they catch to their Master; for on him their success depends.

2nd. Their obedience to this command, ver. 11. It was said, ver. 6, "they were not able to draw the net to shore for the multitude of fishes;" that is, they found it difficult, it was more than they could well do; but he that bade them bring it to shore made it easy. Thus the fishers of men, when they have enclosed souls in the gospel net, cannot bring them to shore, cannot carry on and complete the good work begun, without the continued influence of the Divine grace. If he that helped us to catch them, when without his help we should have caught nothing, do not help us to keep them, and draw them to land, by building them up in their most holy faith, we shall lose them at last, *1 Cor. iii. 7*. Observe, *First*. Who it was that was most active in landing the fish. It was Peter, who, as in the former instance, ver. 7, he had shewed a more zealous affection to his Master's person than any of them, so in this shewed a more ready obedience to his Master's commands. But all that are faithful are not alike forward. *Secondly*. The number of the fishes that were caught. They had the curiosity to count them; and perhaps it was in order to the making of a dividend; they were in all a hundred and fifty-three, and all great fishes. These were many more than they needed for their present supply, but they might sell them, and the money would serve to bear their charges back to Jerusalem, whither they were shortly to return. *Thirdly*. A farther instance of Christ's care of them, to increase both the miracle and the mercy. "For all there were so many," and great fishes too, "yet was not the net broken;" so that they lost none of their fish, nor damaged the net. It was said, *Lu. v. 6*, their net brake. Perhaps this was a borrowed net, for they had long since left their own; and if so, Christ would teach us to take care of what we have borrowed, as much as if it were our own. It was well their net did not break, for they had not now the leisure they had had to mend their nets. The net of the Gospel has enclosed multitudes, three thousand in one day, and yet is not broken, it is still as mighty as ever to bring souls to God.

3. He invited them to dinner. Observing them to keep their distance, and that they were afraid to ask him, "Who art thou?" because they knew it was their Lord, he called to them very familiarly, "Come, and dine."

1st. See here how free Christ was with his disciples. He treated them as friends; he did not say, Come, and wait, come, and attend me, but, "Come, and dine." Not, Go dine by yourselves, as servants are appointed to do, but, Come and dine with me. This kind invitation may be alluded to to illustrate, *First*. The call Christ gave his disciples into communion with him in grace here; All things are now ready; come, and dine. Christ is a feast, come, dine upon him; his flesh is meat indeed, his blood drink indeed. Christ is a friend, come, dine with him, he will bid you welcome, *Cant. v. 1*. *Secondly*. The call he will give them into the fruition of him in glory hereafter; "Come, ye blessed of my Father," come, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. Christ has wherewithal to dine all his friends and followers; there is room and provision enough for them all.

2nd. See how reverent the disciples were before Christ. They were somewhat shy of using the freedom he invited them to; and, by his courting them to their meat, it should seem they stood pausing. Being to eat with a ruler—such a ruler—they consider diligently what is before them. None of them durst ask him, "Who art thou?" either, *First*. Because they would not be so bold with him. Though perhaps he appeared now in something of a disguise at first, as to the two disciples, when their eyes were holden that they should not know him, yet they had very good reason to think it was he, and could be no other. *Secondly*. Because they would not so far betray their own folly. When he had given them this instance of his power and goodness, they must be stupid indeed if they questioned whether it was he or no. When God in his providence hath given us sensible proofs of his care for our bodies, and hath given us in his grace manifest proofs of his goodwill to our souls, and good work upon them, we should be ashamed of our distrusts, and not dare to question that which he has left us no room to question. Groundless doubts must be stifled, and not started.

4. He served to them, as the master of the feast, ver. 13. Observing them to be still shy and timorous, he comes and takes bread himself, and giveth them, some to each of them, and fish likewise. No doubt he craved a blessing, and gave thanks, as *Lu. xxiv. 30*; but, it being his known and constant practice, it did not need to be mentioned.

1st. The entertainment here was but ordinary. It was but a fish dinner, but coarsely dressed. Here was nothing pompous, nothing curious; plentiful indeed, but plain and homely. Hunger is the best sauce. Christ, though entered upon his exalted state, shewed himself alive by eating, not shewed himself a prince by feasting. Those that could not content themselves with bread and fish unless they have sauce and wine, would scarce have found in their hearts to dine with Christ himself here.

2nd. Christ himself began. Though perhaps, having a glorified body, he needed not to eat, yet he would shew that he had a true body which was capable of eating. The apostles produced this as one proof of his resurrection, that they had eaten and drunk with him, *Acts x. 41*.

3rd. He gave the meat out to all his guests. He not only provided it for them, and invited them to it, but he himself divided it among them, and put it into their hands. Thus to him we owe the application as well as the purchase of the benefits of redemption. He giveth us power to eat of them.

The evangelist leaves them at dinner, and makes this remark, ver. 14, that "this is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself alive" to his disciples, "or the greater part of them; this is the third day, so some. On the day he rose he appeared five times; the second day was that day seven-night; and this was the third. Or this was his third appearance to any considerable number of his disciples together. Though he had appeared to Mary, to the women, to the two disciples, to Cephas, yet he had but twice before this appeared to any company of them together. This is taken notice of, *First*. For the confirming the truth of his resurrection. The vision was doubled, was trebled; for the thing was certain. They who believed not the first sign would be brought to

being bound by an exclusive theory is noticeable among many critics. Some, for example, have maintained that the gospel was intended to be merely a supplement to the three earlier ones. In making so hard and fast a line, a more general design or scope in the gospel is excluded; and the book would be regarded as a compilation of fragments, or lines left out. But there is a truth in the notion that there is something supplementary in the character of the gospel. Luthardt concludes most judiciously that though St. John may not have

written with direct reference to the earlier three evangelists, he did not write without any reference to them. Allusions and references to various forms of error have been sought and found in the gospel, as though to confute these had been the main design of the apostle. All who have noticed the constructive character which marks the sacred writings will see that such a notion is out of harmony with their general spirit. On the other hand, to deny all allusion to prevailing or growing forms of error would be equally

believe the voice of the latter signs. *Secondly.* As an instance of Christ's continued kindness to his disciples. Once, and again, and a third time, he visited them. It is good to keep account of Christ's gracious visits, for he keeps account of them; and they will be remembered against us, if we walk unworthily of them, as they were against Solomon, when he was minded that the Lord God of Israel had appeared unto him twice. This is now the third; have we made a due improvement of the first and second? see 2 Cor. xii. 14. This is the third; perhaps it may be the last.

15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. 19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

We have here Christ's discourse with Peter, after dinner, so much of it as relates to himself. In which,

First. He examines his love to him, and gives him a charge concerning his flock, ver. 15-17. Observe,

1. When Christ entered into this discourse with Peter. It was after they had dined; they had all eaten, and were filled, and it is likely, were entertained with such edifying discourse as our Lord Jesus used to make his table-talk. Christ foresaw that what he had to say to Peter would give him some uneasiness, and therefore would not say it till they had dined; because he would not spoil his dinner. Peter was conscious to himself that he had incurred his Master's displeasure, and could expect no other but to be upbraided with his treachery and ingratitude; "Was this thy kindness to thy friend?" Did not I tell thee what a coward thou wouldest prove? Nay, he might justly expect to be struck out of the roll of the disciples, and to be expelled the sacred college. Twice, if not thrice, he had seen his Master since his resurrection, and he said not a word to him of it. We may suppose Peter full of doubts upon what terms he stood with his Master; sometimes hoping the best, because he had received favours from him in common with the rest; yet not without some fears, lest the chiding would come at last that would pay for all. But now, at length, his Master put him out of his pain, said what he had to say to him, and confirmed him in his place as an apostle. He did not tell him of his fault hastily, but deferred it for some time; did not tell him of it unseasonably to disturb the company at dinner, but when they had dined together, in token of reconciliation, then discoursed he with him about it, not as with a criminal, but as with a friend. Peter had reproached himself for it, and therefore Christ did not reproach him for it, nor tell him of it directly, but only by a tacit intimation; and, being satisfied in his sincerity, the offence was not only forgiven but forgotten; and Christ let him know that he was as dear to him as ever. Herein he has given us an encouraging instance of his tenderness towards penitents; and has taught us in like manner to restore such as are fallen with a spirit of meekness.

2. What was the discourse itself. Here was the same question three times asked, the same answer three times made, and the same reply three times given with very little variation, and yet no vain repetition. It was repeated by our Saviour, in the speaking of it, the more to affect Peter, and the other disciples that were present. It is repeated by the evangelist, in the writing of it, the more to affect us, and all that read it.

1st. Three times Christ asks Peter whether he loves him or no. The first time the question is, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" Observe,

First. How he calls him; "Simon, son of Jonas." He speaks to him by name, the more to affect him, as Lu. xxii. 31, "Simon, Simon." He doth not call him Cephas, or Peter, the name he had given him, for he had lost the credit of his strength and stability, which those names signified, but his original name, Simon. Yet he gives him no hard language, doth not call him out of his name, though he deserved it, but as he had called him when he pronounced him blessed, Simon Bar-jona, Mat. xvi. 17. He calls him son of Jonas, or John, or Johanan, to mind him of his extraction, how mean it was, and unworthy the honour to which he was advanced.

Secondly. How he catechiseth him; "Lovest thou me more than these?" 1st. "Lovest thou me?" If we would try whether we are Christ's disciples indeed, this must be the inquiry. Do we love him? But there was a special reason why Christ put it now to Peter.

(1.) His fall had given occasion to doubt of his love. Peter, I have cause to suspect thy love; for if thou hadst loved me thou wouldest not have been ashamed and afraid to own me in my sufferings; "how canst thou say thou lovest me, when thy heart was not with me?" Note, We must not reckon it an affront to have our sincerity questioned when we ourselves have done that which makes it questionable. After a shaking fall we must take heed of

settling too soon, lest we settle upon a wrong bottom. The question is affecting, he doth not ask, Dost thou fear me? Dost thou honour me? Dost thou admire me? but, Dost thou love me? Give but proofs of that, and the affront shall be passed by, and no more said of it. Peter had professed himself a penitent, witness his tears, and his return to the society of the disciples; he was now upon his probation as a penitent; but the question is not, Simon, how much hast thou wept? How often hast thou fasted and afflicted thy soul? but, Dost thou love me? that is it which will make the other expressions of repentance acceptable. The great thing Christ eyes in penitents is their eyeing him in their repentance. Much is forgiven her, not because she wept much, but because she loved much.

(2.) His function would give occasion for the exercise of his love. Before Christ would commit his sheep to his care, he asked him, "Lovest thou me?" Christ hath such a tender regard to his flock, that he will not trust it with any but those that love him, and therefore will love all that are his for his sake. Those that do not truly love Christ will never truly love the souls of men, nor will naturally care for their state as they should; nor will that minister love his work that doth not love his Master. Nothing but the love of Christ will constrain ministers to go cheerfully through the difficulties and discouragements they meet with in their work, 2 Cor. v. 13, 14; but this love will make their work easy, and them in good earnest in it.

2nd. "Lovest thou me more than these?" *πλεον τοις τω.* (1.) "Lovest thou me more than these? more than thou lovest these persons? Dost thou love me better than James or John, thy intimate friends, or Andrew thy own brother and companion?" Those do not love Christ aright that do not love him better than the best friend they have in the world, and make it to appear whenever they stand in comparison or in competition. Or, "more than thou lovest these things,—these boats and nets,—more than all the pleasure of fishing, which some make a recreation of; more than the gain of fishing, which others make a calling of." Those only love Christ indeed that love him better than all the delights of sense, and all the profits of this world. "Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these occupations thou art now employed in? if so, leave them to employ thyself wholly in feeding my flock." So Dr. Whitby.

(2.) "Lovest thou me more than these love me? more than any of the rest of the disciples love me?" And then it is either to upbraid him with his vain-glorious boast, "Though all men should deny thee, yet will not I;" Art thou still of the same mind? or to intimate to him that he had now more reason to love him than any of them had, for more had been forgiven to him than to any of them, as much as his sin in denying Christ was greater than theirs in forsaking him. "Tell me therefore which of them will love him most?" Lu. vii. 41. Note, We should all study to excel in our love to Christ. It is no breach of the peace to strive which shall love Christ best, nor any breach of good manners to go before others in this love.

The second and third time that Christ puts this question, (1.) He left out "more than these;" because Peter in his answer modestly left it out, not willing to compare himself with his brethren, much less to prefer himself before them. Though we cannot say we love Christ more than others do, yet we shall be accepted if we can say we love him indeed. (2.) In the last he altered the word, as it is in the original. In the two first inquiries the original word is, *αγαπας με*,—dost thou retain a kindness for me? In answer to which Peter useth another word, more emphatical, *φιλω σε*,—I love thee dearly. And the last time, Christ useth that word, And dost thou indeed love me dearly?

2nd. Three times Peter returns the same answer to Christ; "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Observe,

First. Peter doth not pretend to love Christ more than the rest of the disciples did. He is now ashamed of that rash word of his, "Though all men deny thee, yet will not I," and he had reason to be ashamed of it. Note, Though we must aim to be better than others, yet we must in lowliness of mind esteem others better than ourselves; for we know more evil by ourselves than we do by any of our brethren.

Secondly. Yet he professeth again and again that he loved Christ; Yea, Lord, surely I love thee; I were unworthy to live if I did not. He had a high esteem and value for him, a grateful sense of his kindness, and was entirely devoted to his honour and interest. His desire was towards him, as one he was undone without; and his delight in him, as one he should be unspeakably happy in. This amounts to a profession of repentance for his sin, for it grieves us to have affronted one we love; and to a promise of adherence to him for the future; Lord, I love thee, and will never leave thee. Christ prayed that his faith might not fail, Lu. xxii. 32; and because his faith did not fail his love did not, for faith will work by love. Peter had forfeited his claim of relation to Christ. He was now to be re-admitted upon his repentance. Christ puts his trial upon this issue, Dost thou love me? and Peter joins issues upon it, Lord, I love thee. Note, Those who can truly say, through grace, that they love Jesus Christ may take the comfort of their interest in him, notwithstanding their daily infirmities.

Thirdly. He appeals to Christ himself for the proof of it; "thou knowest that I love thee." And the third time yet more emphatically, "thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." He doth not vouch his fellow-disciples to witness for him,—they might be deceived in him; nor doth he think his own word might be taken,—the credit of that was cracked already, but he calls Christ himself to witness. 1st. Peter was sure that Christ knew all things, and particularly that he knew the heart, and was a discerner of the thoughts and intents of that, ch. xvi. 30. 2nd. Peter was satisfied of this, that Christ, who knew all things, knew the sincerity of his love to him, and would be ready to attest it in his favour. It is a terror to a hypocrite to think that Christ knows all things, for the Divine omniscience will be a witness against him; but it is a comfort to a sincere Christian that he has that to appeal to; "My witness is in heaven, my record is on high." Christ knows us better than we know ourselves. Though we know not our own uprightness, he doth.

Fourthly. He was grieved when Christ asked him the third time, "Lovest thou me?" ver. 17. 1st. Because it put him in mind of his threefold denial of Christ, and was plainly designed to do so; "and when he thought thereon, he wept." Every remembrance of past sins, even pardoned sins, renews the sorrow of a true penitent. "Thou shalt be ashamed when I am pacified towards thee." 2nd. Because it put him in fear, lest his Master foresaw some farther miscarriage of his, which would be as great a contradiction to his profession of love to him as the former was. Surely, thinks Peter, my Master would not thus put me upon the rack if he did not see some cause for it. What would become of me if I should be again tempted? Godly sorrow works carefulness and fear, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

3rd. Three times Christ committed the care of his flock to Peter. "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep; feed my sheep."

First. Those whom Christ committed to Peter's care were his lambs and his sheep. The church of Christ is his flock, which he hath purchased with his own blood, Acts xx. 28; and he is the chief Shepherd of it. In his flock some are lambs, young, and tender, and weak; others are sheep, grown to some strength and maturity. The Shepherd here takes care of both, and of the lambs first, for upon all occasions he shewed a particular tenderness for them: the lambs he gathers in his arms, and carries in his bosom, Isa. xl. 11.

out of keeping with the disposition of all the sacred writers. Dr. Davidson's opinion is well worthy of attention: "Designed polemical opposition to one of those errors, or to all of them, does not lie in the contents of the sacred book itself, and yet it is true that they were not unnoticed by St. John. He intended to set forth the faith alone, and in so doing he has written passages that do confute those erroneous tendencies." An early tradition, related by Theodore of Mopsuestia, refers the origin of John's gospel to the circulation of

the writings of the other evangelists among the Christians of Asia Minor and elsewhere. When these were shown to St. John, he praised the truthfulness of the writers, and mentioned a few things which they had omitted. He also expressed an opinion that those who write of Christ's life in the flesh should not fail to mention his divinity. The Christians then urged him to write; this he did, beginning his narrative with the discourse about the divinity of our Lord.

Secondly. The charge he gives him concerning them is to feed them. The word used, ver. 15, 17, is *βλάσσω*, which strictly signifies, 'to give them food'; but the word used, ver. 16, is *ποιμαίνω*, which signifies, more largely, to do all the offices of a shepherd to them: feed the lambs with that which is proper for them, and the sheep likewise with food convenient. The lost sheep of the house of Israel, seek and feed them, and the other sheep also which are not of this fold. Note, It is the duty of all Christ's ministers to feed his lambs and sheep. Feed them, that is, teach them; for the doctrine of the Gospel is spiritual food. Feed them, that is, lead them to the green pastures, presiding in their religious assemblies, and ministering all the ordinances to them. Feed them by personal application to their respective state and case; not only lay meat before them, but feed them with it that are wilful and will not, or weak and cannot, feed themselves. When Christ ascended on high he gave pastors; left his flock with them that loved him, and would take care of them for his sake.

Thirdly. But why did he give this charge particularly to Peter? Ask the advocates for the pope's supremacy, and they will tell you that Christ hereby designed to give to Peter, and therefore to his successors, and therefore to the bishops of Rome, an absolute dominion and headship over the whole Christian church, as if a charge to serve the sheep gave a power to lord it over all the shepherds; whereas, it is plain, Peter himself never claimed such a power, nor did the other disciples ever own it in him. This charge given to Peter to preach the Gospel is, by a strange fetch, made to support the usurpation of his pretended successors, that fleece the sheep, and, instead of feeding them, feed upon them. But the particular application to Peter here was designed, 1st. To restore him to his apostleship, now he repented of his abjuration of it, and to renew his commission, both for his own satisfaction, and for the satisfaction of his brethren. A commission given to one convicted of a crime is supposed to amount to a pardon. No doubt this commission given to Peter was an evidence that Christ was reconciled to him, else he would never have reposed such a confidence in him. Of some that have deceived us, we say, though we forgive them, we will never trust them; yet Christ, when he forgave Peter, trusted him with the most valuable treasure he had on earth. 2nd. It was designed to quicken him to a diligent discharge of his office as an apostle. Peter was a man of a bold and zealous spirit, always forward to speak and act; and, lest he should be tempted to take upon him the directing of the shepherds, he is charged to feed the sheep, as he himself charges all the presbyters to do, and not to lord it over God's heritage, 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. If he will be doing, let him do this, and pretend no farther. 3rd. What Christ said to him he said to all his disciples. He charged them all not only to be fishers of men, though that was said to Peter, Lu. v. 10, by the conversion of sinners, but feeders of the flock, by the edification of saints.

Secondly. Christ, having thus appointed Peter his doing work, next cuts out to him his suffering work. Having confirmed to him the honour of an apostle, he now tells him of farther preferment designed him, the honour of a martyr. Observe,

1. How his martyrdom is foretold; ver. 18, "Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands," being compelled to it, "and another shall gird thee," as a prisoner that is pinioned, "and carry thee whither," naturally, "thou wouldest not."

1st. He preface this notice he gives to Peter of his sufferings with a solemn asseveration, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee." It was not spoken of as a thing probable, which perhaps might happen, but as a thing certain, I say it to thee. Others, perhaps, will say to thee, as thou didst to me, "This shall not be unto thee," but I say it shall. As Christ foresaw all his own sufferings, so he foresaw the sufferings of all his followers, and foretold them, though not in particular as to Peter, yet in general, that they must take up their cross. Having charged him to feed his sheep, he bids him not to expect ease and honour in it, but trouble and persecution, and to suffer ill for doing well.

2nd. He foretells particularly that he should die a violent death by the hands of an executioner. The stretching out his hands, some think, points at the manner of his death by crucifying; and the tradition of the ancients, if we may rely upon that, informs us that Peter was crucified at Rome, under Nero, A.D. 68, or, as others say, 79. Others think it points at the bonds and imprisonments which those are hampered with that are sentenced to death. The pomp and solemnity of an execution adds much to the terror of death, and, to an eye of sense, makes it look doubly formidable. Death in these horrid shapes has often been the lot of Christ's faithful ones, who yet have overcome it by the blood of the Lamb. This prediction, though pointing chiefly at his death, yet was to have its accomplishment in his previous sufferings. It began to be fulfilled presently, when he was imprisoned, Acts iv. 3; v. 18; xii. 4. No more is implied here, in his being carried whither he would not, but that it was a violent death he should be carried to; such a death as even innocent nature could not think of without dread, nor approach without some reluctance. He that puts on the Christian doth not put off the man: Christ himself prayed against the bitter cup. A natural aversion to pain and death is well reconcilable with a holy submission to the will of God in both. Blessed Paul, though longing to be unloaded, yet owns he cannot desire to be unclothed, 2 Cor. v. 4.

3rd. He compares this with his former liberty; Time was when thou knewest not any of these hardships, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest. Where trouble comes, we are apt to aggravate it with this, that it has been otherwise; and to fret the more at the grievances of restraint, sickness, and poverty, because we have known the sweets of liberty, health, and plenty, Job xxix. 2; Ps. xlii. 4. But we may turn it the other way, and reason thus with ourselves: How many years of prosperity have I enjoyed more than I deserved and improved; and, having received good, shall not I receive evil also? See here, *First.* What a change may possibly be made with us as to our condition in this world. They that have girded themselves with strength and honour, and indulged themselves in the greatest liberties, perhaps levities, may be reduced to such circumstances as are the reverse of all this: see 1 Sam. ii. 5. *Secondly.* What a change is presently made with those that leave all to follow Christ. They must *cease* to gird themselves, but he must gird them; and must no longer walk whither they will, but whither he will. *Thirdly.* What a change will certainly be made with us if we should live to be old. They that, when they were young, had strength of body and vigour of mind, and could easily go through business and hardship, and take the pleasures they had a mind to, when they shall be old will find their strength gone, like Samson, when his hair was cut, and he could not shake himself as at other times.

Christ tells Peter he should suffer thus in his old age. 1st. Though he should be old, and in a course of nature not likely to live long, yet his enemies would hasten him out of the world violently, then when he was about to retire out of it peaceably; and would put out his candle, when it was almost burned down to the socket: see 2 Chr. xxxvi. 17. 2nd. God would shelter him from the rage of his enemies, till he should come to be old, that he might be made the fitter for sufferings, and the church might the longer enjoy his service.

2. The explication of this prediction; ver. 19, "This spake he" to Peter, "signifying by what death he should glorify God," when he had finished his course. Observe.

1st. That it is not only appointed to all once to die, but it is appointed to each what death they shall die, whether natural or violent, slow or sudden, easy or painful. When Paul speaks of so great a death, he intimates that there are

degrees of death. There is one way into the world, but many ways out; and God has determined which way we should go.

2nd. That it is the great concern of every good man, whatever death he dies, to glorify God in it; for what is our chief end but this, to die to the Lord, at the word of the Lord? When we die patiently, submitting to the will of God—die cheerfully, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God—and die usefully, witnessing to the truth and goodness of religion, and encouraging others—we glorify God in dying. And this is the earnest expectation and hope of all good Christians, as it was Paul's, that Christ may be magnified in them, living and dying, Phil. i. 20.

3rd. That the death of the martyrs was in a special manner for the glorifying of God. The truths of God, which they died in the defence of, are hereby confirmed. The grace of God, which carried them with so much constancy through their sufferings, is hereby magnified; and the consolations of God, which have abounded towards them in their sufferings, and his promises, the springs of their consolations, have hereby been recommended to the faith and joy of all the saints. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church, and the conversion and establishment of thousands. Precious, therefore, in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints, and that which honours him; and those that thereby at such an expense honour him he will honour.

3. The word of command he gives him hereupon. "When he had spoken thus," observing Peter perhaps to look blank upon it, he saith unto him, "Follow me." Probably he rose from the place where he had sat at dinner, walked off a little, and bade Peter attend him. This word, "Follow me," was, 1st. A farther confirmation of his restoration to his Master's favour, and to his apostleship; for, "Follow me," was the first call. 2nd. It was an explication of the prediction of his sufferings, which perhaps Peter at first did not fully understand till Christ gave him that key to it, "Follow me;" expect to be treated as I have been, and to tread the same bloody path that I have trod before thee; for the disciple is not greater than his Lord. 3rd. It was to excite him to, and encourage him in, faithfulness and diligence in his work as an apostle. He had bidden him feed his sheep; and let him set his Master before him as an example of pastoral care: Do as I have done. Let the under shepherds study to imitate the chief Shepherd. They had followed Christ while he was here upon earth; and now he was leaving them he still preaches the same duty to them, though to be performed in another way, "Follow me;" still they must follow the rules he had given them, and the example he had set them; and what greater encouragement could they have than this, both in service and in sufferings? *First.* That herein they did follow him, and it was their present honour. Who would be ashamed to follow such a leader? *Secondly.* That hereafter they should follow him, and that would be their future happiness; and so it is a repetition of the promise Christ had given Peter, ch. xiii. 36, "Thou shalt follow me afterwards." They that faithfully follow Christ in grace, shall certainly follow him to glory.

20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. 23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? 24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. 25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

In these verses we have,

First. The conference Christ had with Peter concerning John the beloved disciple. In which we have,

1. The eye Peter cast upon him, ver. 20. Peter, in obedience to his Master's orders followed him, and, turning about, pleased with the honours his Master now did him, he sees "the disciple whom Jesus loved following" likewise. Observe here,

1st. How John is described. He doth not name himself, as thinking his own name not worthy to be preserved in these records, but gives such a description of himself as sufficiently informs us who he meant, and withal gives us a reason why he followed Christ so close. He was "the disciple whom Jesus loved," whom he had a particular kindness for above the rest; and therefore you cannot blame him for coveting to be as much as possible within hearing of Christ's gracious words, during these few precious minutes he favoured his disciples with his conversation; and, it is probable, mention is here made of John's having leaned on Jesus' breast, and his inquiring concerning the traitor, which he did at the instigation of Peter, ch. xiii. 24, as a reason why Peter made the following inquiry concerning him, to repay him for the former kindness. Then John was in the favourite's place, lying in Christ's bosom, and he improved the opportunity to oblige Peter. And now Peter was in the favourite's place, called to take a walk with Christ, he thought himself bound in gratitude to put such a question for John as he thought would oblige him, we all being desirous to know things to come. Note, As we have interest at the throne of grace, we should improve it for the benefit one of another. They that help us by their prayers at one time should be helped by us with ours at another time. This is the communion of saints.

2nd. What he did. He also followed Jesus, which shews how well he loved his company. Where he was, there also would this servant of his be. When Christ called Peter to follow him, it looked as if he designed to have some private talk with him; but, such an affection John had to his Master, that he would rather do a thing that seemed rude than lose the benefit of any of

Chap. i. 1—5. "These verses are designed to direct attention to the majesty of the person of Jesus as the Word of God: relating how he, before all created things, was with God and was God; how the world was made by him; how from the beginning he was the only source of life and light; how this life and light was revealed, but was rejected" (Hengstenberg). "Comprehended it not;" i.e., did not take hold of, did not hold fast, or was not susceptible of the light.

i. 7. "For a witness:" for the purpose of bearing testimony. The Greek word here used for witness is that from which our English word martyr is derived. Hence the literal meaning of martyr is a witness. On John bearing witness, see verses 20—24.

i. 8. "That Light:" literally, "the Light." Compare John v. 35, where the word employed respecting John signifies lamp or torch, rather than light. (See Note there.)

i. 9. "That was the true Light which," &c.: or rather, "The true

Christ's discourse. What Christ said to Peter he took as said to himself; for that word of command, "Follow me," was given to all the disciples. However, he desired to have fellowship with those that had fellowship with Christ, and to accompany those that attended him. The bringing of one to follow Christ should engage others. "Draw me, and we will run after thee," *Cant. i. 4.*

3rd. The notice Peter took of it. He, turning about, sees him. This may be looked upon, either, *First*, As a culpable diversion from following his Master. He should have been wholly intent upon that, and have waited to hear what Christ had farther to say to him, and then was he looking about him to see who followed. Note, The best men find it hard to attend upon the Lord without distraction, hard to keep their minds so closely fixed as they should be in following Christ; and a needless and unseasonable regard to our brethren often diverts us from communion with God. Or, *Secondly*, As a laudable concern for his fellow disciples. He was not so elevated with the honour his Master did him, in singling him out from the rest, as to deny a kind look to one that followed. Acts of love to our brethren must go along with actings of faith in Christ.

2. The inquiry Peter made concerning him; ver. 21, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Thou hast told me my work, to feed the sheep; and my lot, to be carried whither I would not. What shall be his work, and his lot? Now this may be taken as the language,

1st. Of concern for John, and kindness to him; Lord, thou shewest me a great deal of favour. Here comes thy beloved disciple, who never forfeited thy favour as I have done. He expects to be taken notice of. Hast thou nothing to say to him? Wilt thou not tell him how he must be employed, and how he must be honoured?

2nd. Or of uneasiness at what Christ had said to him concerning his sufferings; Lord, must I alone be carried whither I would not? Must I be marked out to be run down? And must this man have no share of the cross? It is hard to reconcile ourselves to distinguishing sufferings, and the troubles in which we think we stand alone.

3rd. Or of curiosity, and a fond desire of knowing things to come concerning others as well as himself. It seems, by Christ's answer, there was something amiss in the question. When Christ had given him the charge of such a treasure, and the notice of such a trial, it had well become him to have said, "Lord, and what shall I do then to approve myself faithful to such a trust, in such a trial? Lord, increase my faith. As my day is, let my strength be." But instead of this, *First*, He seems more concerned for another than for himself. So apt are we to be busy in other men's matters, but negligent in the concerns of our own souls; quick-sighted abroad, but dim-sighted at home; judging others, and prognosticating what they will do, when we have enough to do to prove our own work, and understand our own way. *Secondly*, He seems more concerned about events than about duty. John was younger than Peter, and in a course of nature likely to survive him; Lord, saith he, what times shall he be reserved for? Whereas, if God by his grace enable us to persevere to the end, and finish well, and get safe to heaven, we need not ask what shall be the lot of those that shall come after us. "Is it not well if peace and truth be in my days?" Scripture predictions must be eyed for the directing of our consciences, not the satisfying of our curiosity.

3. Christ's reply to this inquiry; ver. 22, "If I will that he tarry till I come," and do not suffer as thou must, "what is that to thee?" Mind thou thy own duty, thy present duty. "Follow thou me."

1st. There seems to be here an intimation of Christ's purpose concerning John in two things: *First*, That he should not die a violent death like Peter, but should tarry till Christ himself came by a natural death to fetch him to himself. The most credible of the ancient historians tell us that John was the only one of all the twelve that did not actually die a martyr. He was often in jeopardy, in bonds, and banishments, but at length died in his bed in a good old age. Note, 1st. At death Christ comes to us to call us to account, and it concerns us to be ready for his coming. 2nd. Though Christ calls out some of his disciples to resist unto blood, yet not all. Though the crown of martyrdom is bright and glorious, yet the beloved disciple comes short of it. *Secondly*, That he should not die till after Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem; so some understand his tarrying till Christ comes. All the other apostles died before that destruction, but John survived it many years. God wisely so ordered it that one of the apostles should live so long to close up the canon of the New Testament, which John did solemnly, *Rev. xxi. 18*; and to obviate the design of the enemy that sowed tares even before the servants fell asleep. John lived to confront Ebion and Cerinthus, and other heretics, who rose betimes, "speaking perverse things."

2nd. Others think it is only a rebuke to Peter's curiosity, and that his tarrying till Christ's second coming is only the supposition of an absurdity. Wherefore askest thou after that which is foreign and secret? Suppose I should desire that John should never die, what doth that concern thee? It is nothing to thee when, or where, or how John must die. I have told thee how thou must die for thy part; it is enough for thee to know that: Follow thou me. Note, It is the will of Christ that his disciples should mind their own present duty, and not be curious in their inquiries about future events, either concerning themselves or others. *First*, There are many things we are apt to be solicitous about that are nothing to us. Other people's characters are nothing to us; it is out of our line to judge them, *Rom. xiv. 4*, "Whatsoever they are," saith Paul, "it makes no matter to me." Other people's affairs are nothing to us to intermeddle in: we must quietly work, and mind our own business. Many nice and curious questions are put by the scribes and disputers of this world concerning the counsels of God, and the state of the invisible world, concerning which we may say, What is this to us? What do you think will become of such and such? is a common question, which may easily be answered with another; What is that to me? To his own Master he stands or falls. What is it to us to know the times and the seasons? Secret things belong not to us. *Secondly*, The great thing that is all in all to us is duty, and not events; for duty is ours, events are God's: our own duty and not another's, for every one shall bear his own burthen: our present duty, and not the duty of the time to come, for sufficient to the day shall be the directions thereof. "A good man's steps are ordered by the Lord," *Ps. xxxvii. 23*; he is guided step by step. Now all our duty is summed up in this one of following Christ; we must attend his motions, and accommodate ourselves to them; follow him to do him honour, as the servant his master. We must walk in the way in which he walked, and aim to be where he is. And if we will closely attend to the duty of following Christ we shall find neither heart nor time to meddle with that which doth not belong to us.

4. The mistake which arose from this saying of Christ, "that that disciple should not die," but abide with the church to the end of time; together with the suppressing of this notion by a repetition of Christ's words, ver. 23. Observe here,

1st. The easy rise of a mistake in the church, by misconstruing the sayings of Christ, and turning a supposition into a position. Because John must not die a martyr, they conclude he must not die at all.

First, They were inclined to expect it, because they could not choose but desire it; *quia volumus facile credimus*,—"we easily believe what we wish to

be true." For John to abide in the flesh when the rest were gone, and to continue in the world till Christ's second coming, they think will be a great blessing to the church, which in every age might have recourse to him as an oracle. When they must lose Christ's bodily presence, they hope they shall have that of his beloved disciple, as if that must supply the want of his, forgetting that the blessed Spirit, the Comforter, was to do that. Note, We are apt to dote too much on men and means, instruments and external helps, and to think we are happy if we may but have them always with us; whereas God will change his workmen, and yet carry on his work, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men. There is no need of immortal ministers to be guides of the church, while it is under the conduct of an eternal Spirit.

Secondly, Perhaps they were confirmed in their expectations when they now found that John survived all the rest of the apostles. Because he lived long, they were ready to think he should live always; whereas, that which waxeth old is ready to vanish away, *Heb. viii. 13*. However, it took rise from a saying of Christ's misunderstood, and then made a saying of the church. Hence learn, 1st. The uncertainty of human tradition, and the folly of building our faith upon it. Here was a tradition, an apostolical tradition, a saying that went abroad among the brethren; it was early, it was common, it was public, and yet it was false. How little, then, are those unwritten traditions to be relied upon which the council of Trent hath decreed to be received with a veneration and pious affection equal to that which is owing to the holy Scripture. Here was a traditional exposition of Scripture; no new saying of Christ's advanced, but only a construction put by the brethren upon what he did really say; and yet it was a misconception. Let the Scripture be its own interpreter, and explain itself, as it is in a great measure its own evidence, and proves itself, for it is light. 2nd. The aptness of men to misinterpret the sayings of Christ. The grossest errors have sometimes shrouded themselves under the umbrage of incontestable truths; and the Scriptures themselves have been wrested by the unlearned and unstable. We must not think it strange if we hear the sayings of Christ misinterpreted, vouched to patronize the errors of Antichrist; and the impudent doctrine of transubstantiation, for instance, pretending to build upon that blessed word of Christ, "This is my body."

2nd. The easy rectifying of such mistakes by adhering to the word of Christ, and abiding by that. So the evangelist here corrects and controls that saying among the brethren, by repeating the very words of Christ. He did not say, "that that disciple should not die,"—let us not say so then; but he said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" He said so, and no more. "Add thou not unto his words." Let the words of Christ speak for themselves, and let no sense be put upon them but what is genuine and natural; and in that let us agree. Note, The best end of men's controversies would be to keep to the express words of Scripture, and speak, as well as think, according to that word, *Isa. viii. 20*. Scripture language is the safest and most proper vehicle of Scripture truth; "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," *1 Cor. ii. 13*. As the Scripture itself, duly attended to, is the best weapon wherewith to wound all dangerous errors,—and, therefore, deists, socialists, papists, and enthusiasts, do all they can to derogate from the authority of the Scripture,—so the Scripture itself, humbly subscribed to, is the best weapon—salve to heal the wounds that are made by different modes of expression concerning the same truths. Those that cannot agree in the same logics and metaphysics, and the propriety of the same terms of art, and the application of them, yet may agree in the same Scripture terms, and then may agree to love one another.

Secondly, We have here the conclusion of this Gospel, and with it of the evangelical story, ver. 24, 25. This evangelist ends not so abruptly as the other three did, but with a sort of cadency.

1. A decent transition with an account of the author or penman of it, connected by a decent transition to that which went before; ver. 24, "This is the disciple which testified of these things" to the present age, and wrote these things for the benefit of posterity; even this same that Peter and his Master had that conference about in the foregoing verses, John the apostle.

1st. Observe here, that those who wrote the history of Christ were not ashamed to put their names to it. John here doth in effect subscribe his name. As we are sure who was the author of the first five books of the Old Testament, which were the foundation of that revelation, so we are sure who were the men of the four Gospels and the Acts, the Pentateuch of the New Testament. The record of Christ's life and death is not the report of we know not who, but was drawn up by men of known integrity, who were ready not only to depose it upon oath, but, which was more, to seal it with their blood.

2nd. Those that wrote the history of Christ wrote upon their own knowledge, not by hearsay, but what they themselves were eye and ear witnesses of. The penman of this history was a disciple, a beloved disciple, one that had leaned on Christ's breast, that had himself heard his sermons and conferences, had seen his miracles, and the proofs of his resurrection. "This is he which testifies" what he was well assured of.

3rd. Those that wrote the history of Christ, as they testified what they had seen, so they wrote what they had first testified. It was published by word of mouth, with the greatest assurance, before it was committed to writing. They testified it in the pulpit, testified it at the bar, solemnly averred it, steadfastly avowed it, not as travellers give account of their travels, to entertain the company, but as witnesses upon oath give account of what they know in a matter of consequence, with the utmost caution and exactness to found a verdict upon. What they wrote, they wrote as an affidavit which they would abide by. Their writings are standing testimonies to the world of the truth of Christ's doctrine, and will be testimonies either for us or against us, according as we do or do not receive it.

4th. It was graciously appointed, for the support and benefit of the church, that the history of Christ should be put into writing, that it might with the greater fullness and certainty spread to every place, and last through every age.

2. It concludes with an attestation of the truth of what had been here related; "We know that his testimony is true." This may be taken either,

1st. As speaking the common sense of mankind in matters of this nature, which is, that the testimony of one who is an eyewitness, is of unspotted reputation, solemnly depose what he had seen, and puts it into writing for the greater certainty, is an unexceptionable evidence. We know, that is, all the world knows, that the testimony of such a one is valid, and the common faith of mankind requires us to give credit to it, unless we can disprove it; and, in other cases, verdict and judgment is given upon such testimonies. The truth of the Gospel comes confirmed by all the evidence we can rationally desire or expect in a thing of that nature. The matter of fact, that Jesus did preach such doctrines, and work such miracles, and rise from the dead, is proved beyond contradiction, by such evidence as is always admitted in other cases, and therefore to the satisfaction of all that are impartial; and then let the doctrine recommend itself, and let the miracles prove it to be of God. Or,

2nd. As speaking the satisfaction of the churches at that time concerning the truth of what is here related. Some take it for the subscription of the church of Ephesus, others of the angels or ministers of the churches of Asia, to this narrative. Not as if an inspired writing needed any attestation from men, or could from thence receive any addition to its credibility; but hereby they

Light was that which coming into the world enlighteneth every man."

i. 27. "Shoe's latchet," &c.: i.e., the thong which bound the sandal to the foot. To unloose this was a menial office, implying great inferiority on the part of him who performed it.

i. 28. "Bethabara beyond Jordan:" the best MSS. read Bethany, the two words signifying the same; as Bethabara, "ferry-place;" Bethany, "ship-place."

i. 29—34. Some are of opinion that this visit of Jesus took place after his baptism, and was therefore not his first visit; but Webster and Wilkinson seem to express the more probable view when they say, "It seems natural to understand this of John's first interview with Jesus, and therefore this would be the day of our Lord's baptism. In the words, 'Behold the Lamb,' he expresses his recognition of him, which, as we know, from Matt. iii. 14, took place before his baptism. What follows (verses 30, 31, and especially 32—34) is the testimony

recommended it to the notice of the churches as an inspired writing, and declared the satisfaction they received by it. Or,

3rd. As speaking the evangelist's own assurance of the truth of what he wrote, like that, *ch. xix. 35*, "he knows that he saith true." He speaks of himself in the plural number, "we know," not for majesty's sake, but for modesty's sake, as *1 Jno. i. 1*, "That which we have seen," and *2 Pet. i. 16*. Note, The evangelists themselves were entirely satisfied of the truth of what they have testified, and transmitted to us. They do not require us to believe what they did not believe themselves; no, they knew their testimony was true, for they ventured both this life and the other upon it; threw away this life, and depended upon another, on the credit of what they spoke and wrote.

3. It concludes with an *et cetera*; with a reference to "many other things," very memorable, said and done by our Lord Jesus, which were well known by many then living, but not thought fit to be recorded for posterity, *ver. 25*. There were many things very remarkable and improvable, which, if they should be written at large, with the several circumstances of them, even the world itself, that is, all the libraries in it, could not contain the books that might be written. Thus he concludes like an orator, as Paul, *Heb. xi. 32*, "What shall I more say? for the time would fail me."

If it be asked why the Gospels are not larger, why they did not make the New Testament history as copious and as long as the Old, it may be answered,

1st. It was not because they had exhausted their subject, and had nothing more to write that was worth writing; no, there were many of Christ's sayings and doings not recorded by any of the evangelists, which yet were worthy to be written in letters of gold. For, *First*. Every thing that Christ said and did was worth our notice, and capable of being improved. He never spoke an idle word, nor did an idle thing; nay, he never spoke or did any thing mean or little or trifling, which is more than can be said of the wisest or best of men. *Secondly*. His miracles were many, very many, of many kinds, and the same often repeated as occasion offered. Though one true miracle might perhaps suffice to prove a Divine commission, yet the repetition of the miracles upon a great variety of persons, in a great variety of cases, and before a great variety of witnesses, helped very much to prove them true miracles. Every new miracle rendered the report of the former the more credible; and the multitude of them renders the whole report incontestable. *Thirdly*. The evangelists upon several occasions give general accounts of Christ's preaching and miracles, inclusive of many particulars, as *Mat. iv. 23, 24*; *ix. 35*; *xi. 1*; *xiv. 14, 36*; *xviii. 30*; *xix. 2*; and many the like. When we speak of Christ, we have a copious subject before us; the reality exceeds the report, and, after all, the one half is not told us. St. Paul quotes one of Christ's sayings, which is not recorded by any of the evangelists, *Acts xx. 35*; and doubtless there were many more. All his sayings were apophthegms.

2nd. But it was for these three reasons: *First*. Because it was not needful to write more. This is implied here; there were many other things which

were not written because there was no occasion for writing them. What is written is a sufficient revelation of the doctrine of Christ, and the proof of it; and the rest was but to the same purpose. They that from thence argue against the sufficiency of the Scripture as the rule of our faith and practice, and for the necessity of unwritten traditions, ought to shew what there is in the traditions they pretend to perfective of the written word. We are sure there is that which is contrary to it, and therefore reject them. "By these, therefore, let us be admonished, for of writing many books there is no end," *Ecc. xii. 12*. If we do not believe and improve what is written, neither would we if there had been much more. *Secondly*. It was not possible to write all. It was possible for the Spirit to indite all, but morally impossible for the penmen to pen all. "The world could not contain the books." It is a hyperbole common enough and justifiable, when no more is intended but this, that it would fill a vast and incredible number of volumes. It would be such a large and overgrown history as never was; such as would jostle out all other writings, and leave us no room for them. What volumes would be filled with Christ's prayers, had we the record of all those he made, when he continued all night in prayer to God, without any vain repetitions. Much more if all his sermons and conferences were particularly related; his miracles, his cures, all his labours, all his sufferings. It would have been an endless thing. *Thirdly*. It was not advisable to write much; for the world, in a moral sense, could not contain the books that should be written. Christ said not what he might have said to his disciples, "because they were not able to bear it;" and for the same reason the evangelists wrote not what they might have written. "The world could not contain," *χαρησται* it is the word that is used *ch. viii. 37*, "My word has no place in you." They would have been so many, that they would have found no room. All people's time would have been spent in reading, and other duties would thereby have been crowded out. Much is overlooked of what is written, much forgotten, and much made the matter of doubtful disputation; much more, if there had been such a world of books of equal authority and necessity as the whole history would have swelled to; especially since it was requisite that what was written should be meditated upon and expounded, which God wisely thought fit to leave room for. Parents and ministers, in giving instruction, must consider the capacities of them they teach, and, like Jacob, must take heed of over driving. Let us be thankful for the books that are written, and not prize them the less for their plainness and brevity; but diligently improve what God has thought fit to reveal, and long to be there where our capacities shall be so elevated and enlarged that there will be no danger of their being overloaded.

The evangelist, concluding with Amen, thereby sets to his seal, and lets us set to ours, an Amen of faith, subscribing to the Gospel that it is true, all true; and an Amen of satisfaction in what is written, as able to make us wise to salvation. Amen; so be it.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES TO THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

It has been remarked that there are evidences in this Gospel that it was not written for the Jews. He explains words and customs which to a Jew would have needed no explanation. See *ch. i. 38, 41*; *iv. 9*; *v. 1, 2*; *vii. 2*. The style in the Greek indicates that he was an unlearned man. It is simple, plain, unpolished; such as we should suppose would be used by one in his circumstances. At the same time it is dignified, containing pure and profound sentiments, and is on many accounts the most difficult of all the books of the New Testament to interpret. It contains more about Christ, his person, design, and work, than any of the other gospels. The other evangelists were employed more in recording the miracles, and giving external evidence of the Divine mission of Jesus. John is employed chiefly in telling us what he was, and what was his peculiar doctrine. His aim was to shew, 1st. That Jesus was the Messiah. 2nd. To shew, from the words of Jesus himself, what the Messiah was. The other evangelists record his parables, his miracles, his debates with the scribes and Pharisees; John records chiefly his discourses about himself. If any one wishes to learn the true doctrine respecting the Messiah, the Son of God, expressed in simple language, but with most sublime conceptions; to learn the true nature and character of God, and the way of approach to his mercy-seat; to see the true nature of Christian piety, or the source and character of religious consolation; to have perpetually before him the purest model of character the world has seen, and to contemplate the purest precepts that have ever been delivered to man; he cannot better do it than by a prayerful study of the Gospel by John. It may be added that this Gospel is, of itself, proof that cannot be overthrown of the truth of revelation. John was a fisherman, unlearned and unpolished, *Acts iv. 13*. What man in that rank of life now could compose a book like this? And can it be conceived that any man of that rank, unless under the influence of inspiration, could conceive so sublime notions of God, so pure views of morals, and draw a character so imitatively lovely and pure as that of Jesus Christ? To ask these questions is to answer them. And this Gospel will stand to the end of time as an unanswerable demonstration that the fisherman who wrote it was under a more than human guidance, and was, according to the promise that he has recorded, (*ch. xvi. 13*, compare *xiv. 26*), guided into all truth. It will also remain as an unanswerable proof that the character which he has described—the character of the Lord Jesus—was real. It is a perfect character. It has not a flaw. How has this happened? The attempt has often been made to draw a perfect character—and as often, in every other instance, failed. How is it, when Homer and Virgil and the ancient historians have all failed to describe a perfect character, with the purest models before them, and with all the aid of imagination, that in every instance they have failed? How is it that this has at last been accomplished only by a Jewish fisherman? The difficulty is vastly increased if another idea is borne in mind. John describes one who he believed had a Divine nature, *ch. i. 1*. It is an attempt to describe God in human nature, or to shew how the Divine Being acts when united with man, or when appearing in human form. And the description is complete. There is not a word

expressed by the Lord Jesus, or an emotion ascribed to him, inconsistent with such a supposition.—But this same attempt was often made—and as often failed. Homer and Virgil and all the ancient poets have undertaken to shew what the gods would be if they came down and conversed with man. And what were they? What were Jupiter, and Juno, and Venus, and Mars, and Vulcan? Beings of lust, and envy, and contention, and blood. How has it happened that the only successful account which has been given of the Divine nature united with the human, and living and acting as became such a union, has been given by a Jewish fisherman?—How, unless the character was real, and the writer under a guidance far superior to the genius of Homer, and the imagination of Virgil,—the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

CHAP. I.—37. *They followed Jesus*. They had been the disciples of John. His office was to point out the Messiah. When that was done, they left at once their master and teacher, John, and followed the long expected Messiah. This shews that John was sincere; that he was not desirous of forming a party or of building up a sect; that he was willing that all his followers should follow Christ. The object of ministers should not be to build up themselves. It is to point men to the Saviour. And ministers, however popular or successful, should be willing that their disciples should look to Christ rather than to them; nay, should forget them, and look away from them, to tread in the footsteps of the Son of God. And the conduct of these disciples shews us that we should forsake all and follow Jesus, when he is pointed out to us as the Messiah. We should not delay nor debate the matter, but leave at once all our old teachers and guides, and follow the Lamb of God. And we should do that, too, though to the world the Lord Jesus may appear, as he did to the multitude of the Jews, as poor, unknown, and despised. Reader, have you left all and followed him? Have you forsaken all the guides of false philosophy and deceit, of sin and infidelity, and committed yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ?

CHAP. II.—19. *In three days I will raise it up*. The Jews had asked a miracle of him in proof of his authority; that is, a proof that he was the Messiah. He tells them that a full and decided proof of that would be his resurrection from the dead. Though they would not be satisfied by any other miracle, yet by this they ought to be convinced that he came from heaven, and was the long-expected Messiah. To the same evidence that he was the Christ he refers them on other occasions: see *Mat. xii. 38, 39*. Thus early did Christ foretell his death and resurrection, and at the beginning of the work had a clear foresight of all that was to take place. This knowledge shews clearly that he came from heaven; and it evinces also the extent of his love;—that he was willing to come to save us, knowing clearly what it would cost him. Had he come without such an expectation of suffering, his love might have been far less; but when he fully knew all that was before him, when he saw that it would involve him in contempt and death, it shews a compassion "worthy of a

subsequently delivered; but the insertion of it, and particularly of the circumstance mentioned (verse 32) in the account of this day's events, agrees with the supposition that this was the day of the baptism." A supposed discrepancy, says Archbishop Thomson, between *Matt. iii. 14* and *John i. 31–33*, disappears when we remember that from the relationship between the families of John and our Lord (*Luke i.*), John must have known already something of the power, goodness, and wisdom of Jesus. What he did not know was

that this same Jesus was the very Messiah for whom he had come to prepare the world.

i. 35. "Stood:" i.e., was standing, at his accustomed place.

i. 40. "Andrew:" a resident at Bethsaida. He is said by Alford to have taken rank fourth among the twelve, i.e., next after the three—Peter, James, and John. Compare *Mark xiii. 3*, where he, in company with the three, inquires concerning Christ's second coming.

God, that he was willing to endure the load of all our sorrows and die to save us from death everlasting. When Jesus says, "I will raise it up," it is proof also of Divine power. A mere man could not say this. No deceased man can have such power over his body; and there must have been, therefore, in the person of Jesus a nature superior to human, to which the term "I" could be applied; and which had power to raise the dead—that is, which was Divine.

CHAP. III.—25. *About purifying.* What the precise subject of this dispute was, we do not know. From what follows, it would seem it was about the comparative value and efficacy of the baptism performed by John and by the disciples of Jesus. The word purifying may be applied to baptism, as it was an emblem of repentance and purity, and thus used by the Jews, by John, and by Jesus. About this subject it seems that a dispute arose, and was carried to such a length that complaint was made to John. From this we may learn, 1st. That even in the time of Jesus, when the Gospel began to be preached, there were witnessed, what have ever been since, unhappy disputings on the subject of religion. Even young converts may, by over-heated zeal and ignorance, fall into angry discussion. 2nd. That such discussions are commonly about some unimportant matter of religion, something which they may not yet be qualified to understand, and which does not materially affect them if they could. 3rd. That such disputes often are connected with a spirit of proselytism; with boasting of the superior excellence of the sect with which we are connected, or with whom we have been converted, and often with a desire to persuade others to join with us. 4th. That such a spirit is eminently improper on such occasions. Love should characterize the feelings of young converts; a disposition to inquire, and not to dispute; a willingness that all should follow the dictates of their own consciences, and not a desire to proselyte them to our way of thinking, or to our church. It may be added, that there is scarcely any thing which so certainly and effectually arrests a revival of religion as such a disposition to dispute, and to make proselytes to particular modes of faith and of administering the ordinance of the Gospel.

CHAP. IV.—11. *The well is deep.* 'Mr. Bonar engaged a very affable Jew to shew him the road to Jacob's well, who, after leading him through the town, gave him in charge to another that knew the place. They went out at the eastern gate, and proceeded along the Vale of Sychar, keeping near the base of Gerizim for nearly two miles, till they arrived at a covered well, which is marked out by tradition as the memorable spot. It is immediately below the rocky path by which we had travelled the day before, at that point of the road where we turned from the spacious plain into the narrow vale, between Ebal and Gerizim. The guide removed a large stone that covers the mouth of the low vault built over the well; and then, thrusting himself through the narrow aperture, invited Mr. Bonar to follow. This he accordingly did; and, in the act of descending, his Bible, escaping from his breast-pocket, fell into the well, and was soon heard plunging in the water far below. The guide made very significant signs that it could not be recovered, "for the well is deep." The small chamber over the well's mouth appears to have been carefully built, and may have been originally the ledge which is often found round the mouth of Eastern wells, affording a resting-place for the weary traveller. But the well itself is cut out of the rock. Mr. Calhoun who was here lately, found it seventy-five feet deep, with ten or twelve feet of water in it. In all the other wells and fountains which we saw in this valley the water is within reach of the hand, but in this one the water seems never to rise high. This is one of the clear evidences that this is really the well of Jacob, for at this day it would require what it required in the days of our Lord, an "ἀντήρα," "something to draw with," for it was deep, *ch. iv. 11*. On account of the great depth, the water would be peculiarly cool, and the associations that connected this well with their father Jacob no doubt made it to be highly esteemed. For these reasons, although there is a fine stream of water close by the west side of the town, at least two gushing fountains within the walls, and the fountain El Defna nearly a mile nearer the town, still the people of the town may very probably have revered and frequented Jacob's well. This may in part account for the Samaritan woman coming so far to draw water; and there seems every probability that the town in former times extended much farther to the east than it does now. The narrative itself, however, seems to imply that the well was situated a considerable way from the town. He who "leads the blind by a way which they know not," drew the woman that day by the invisible cords of grace past all other fountains to the well where she was to meet with one who told her all that ever she did; the Saviour of the world and the Saviour of her soul." 35. *They are white.* Grain, when ripe, turns from a green to a yellow, or light colour, indicating that it is time to reap it. So here were indications that the Gospel was effectual, and that the harvest was to be gathered in. Hence we may learn, 1st. That there is as much encouragement to attempt to save souls as the farmer has to raise a crop. 2nd. That the Gospel is fitted to make an immediate impression on the minds of men. We are to expect that it will. We are not to wait to some future period, as if we could not expect immediate results. This wicked and ignorant people—little likely, apparently, to be affected—turned to God, heard the voice of the Saviour, and came in multitudes to him. 3rd. We are to expect revivals of religion. Here was one instance of it under the Saviour's own preaching; multitudes were excited, moved, and came to learn the way of life. 4th. We know not how much good may be done by conversation with even a single individual. This conversation with a woman resulted in a deep interest felt throughout the city, and in the conversion of many of them to God. So a single individual may often be the means, in the hand of God, of leading many to the cross of Jesus. 5th. What evils may follow from neglecting to do our duty! How easily might Jesus have alleged, if he had been like many of his professed disciples, that he was weary that he was hungry, that it was esteemed improper to converse with a woman alone, that she was an abandoned character, and there could be little hope of doing her good! How many consciences of ministers and Christians would have been satisfied with reasoning like this! Yet Jesus, in spite of his fatigue and thirst, and all the difficulties of the case, seriously set about seeking the conversion of this woman. And behold what a glorious result! The city was moved, and a gr at harvest was found ready to be gathered in! "Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

CHAP. V.—17. *And I work.* 'As God does good on that day; as he is not bound by the law which requires his creatures to rest on that day; so I do the same. The law on that subject may be dispensed with also in my case, for the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath.'—In this reply it is implied that he was equal with God, from two circumstances: 1st. Because he called God his Father, ver. 8. 2nd. Because he claimed the same exemption from law which God did; asserting that the law of the sabbath did not bind him or his Father—thus showing that he had a right to impose and repeal laws in the same manner as God. He that has a right to do this must be God.

* The extracts marked thus * are from Bonar and M^cCheyne's Narrative of a Mission to the Jews.

CHAP. VI.—37. *Shall come to me.* This is an expression denoting, that they shall believe on him. To come to one implies our need of help, our confidence that he can aid us, and our readiness to trust to him. The sinner comes to Jesus, feeling that he is poor, and needy, and wretched, and casts himself on his mercy, believing that he alone can save him. This expression also proves that men are not compelled to come to Christ. Though they who believe are given to him, and though his Spirit works in them faith and repentance, yet they are made willing in the day of his power, *Ps. cx. 3*. No man is compelled to go to heaven against his will; and no man is compelled to go to hell against his will. The Spirit of God inclines the will of one, and he comes freely as a moral agent. The other chooses the way to death; and, though God is constantly using means to save him, yet he prefers the path that leads down to woe. 53-55. In these verses Jesus repeats what he had, in substance, said before. *Except ye eat the flesh, &c.* He did not mean that this should be understood literally, for it was never done, and it is absurd to suppose that it was intended to be understood literally. Nothing can possibly be more absurd than to suppose that when he instituted the Supper, and gave the bread and wine to his disciples, they literally ate his flesh, and drank his blood. Who can believe this? There he stood, a living man—his body yet alive, his blood flowing in his veins; and how can it be believed that this body was eaten and this blood drunk? Yet this absurdity must be held by those who hold that the bread and wine at the communion are 'changed into the body, blood, and the divinity of our Lord.' So it is taught in the decrees of the Council of Trent; and to such absurdities are men driven when they depart from the simple meaning of the Scriptures, and from common sense. It may be added, that if the bread and wine used in the Lord's supper were not changed into his literal body and blood when it was first instituted, they have never been since. The Lord Jesus would institute it just as he meant it should be observed; and there is nothing now in that ordinance which there was not when the Saviour first appointed it. His body was offered on the cross, and was raised up from the dead, and received into heaven. There is no evidence that he had any reference to the Lord's supper. That was not yet instituted, and in that there was no literal eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood. The plain meaning of the passage is, that by his bloody death—his body, and his blood offered in sacrifice for sin—he would procure pardon and life for man; and that they who partook of that, or had an interest in that, should obtain eternal life. He uses the figure of eating and drinking, because that was the subject of discourse; because the Jews prided themselves much on the fact that their fathers had eaten manna; and because, as he had said that he was the bread of life, it was natural and easy, especially in the language which he used, to carry out the figure, and say, that bread must be eaten in order to be of any avail in supporting and saving men. To eat and to drink, among the Jews, was also expressive of sharing in, or partaking of, the privileges of friendship. The happiness of heaven, and all spiritual blessings, are often represented under this image, *Mat. viii. 11; xxvi. 29; Lu. xiv. 15, &c.*

CHAP. VII.—38. *As the Scripture hath said.* Jesus probably intended to say, not that there was any particular place in the Old Testament that affirmed, this in so many words, but that this was the substance of what the Scriptures taught, or this was the spirit of their declarations. Hence the Syriac translates it in the plural, "the Scriptures." Probably there is a reference more particularly to *Isa. lviii. 11*, than to any other single passage: "Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." See also *Isa. xlv. 3, 4; Joel iii. 18*. *Out of his belly.* Out of his midst, or out of his heart. The word belly is often put for the midst of a thing, the centre, and the heart, *Mat. xii. 40*. It means here, that from the man shall flow that is, his piety shall be of such a nature that it shall extend its blessings to others: it shall be like a running fountain—perhaps in allusion to statues, or ornamented reservoirs in gardens, in which pipes were placed, from which water was continually flowing. The Jews used the same figure, "His two reins are like fountains of water, from which the law flows." And again, "When a man turns himself to the Lord, he shall be as a fountain filled with living water, and his streams shall flow to all the nations and tribes of men."

CHAP. VIII.—11. *Neither do I condemn thee.* This is evidently to be taken in the sense of judicial condemnation, or of passing sentence as a magistrate; for this was what they had arraigned her for. It was not to obtain his opinion about adultery, but to obtain the condemnation of this woman. As he claimed no civil authority, he said that he did not exercise it, and should not condemn her to die. In this sense the word is used in the previous verse, and this is the only sense which the passage demands. Besides, what follows shews that this was his meaning. *Go, and sin no more.* You have sinned. You have been detected and accused. The sin is great. But I do not claim power to condemn you to die; and, as your accusers have left you, my direction to you is that you sin no more. This passage, therefore, teaches us, 1st. That Jesus claimed no civil authority. 2nd. That he regarded the action of which they accused her as sin. 3rd. That he knew the hearts and lives of men. 4th. That men are often very zealous in accusing others of that of which they themselves are guilty. And, 5th. That Jesus was endowed with wonderful wisdom in meeting the devices of his enemies, and eluding their deep-laid plans to involve him in ruin.

CHAP. IX.—7. *Pool of Siloam.* 'Passing under the rocky face of Ophel, we came to the Pool of Siloam. We were surprised to find it so entire, exactly resembling the common prints of it. It is in the form of a parallelogram, and the walls all round are of hewn stones. The steps that lead down into it, at the eastern end, are no doubt the same which have been there for ages. The water covered the bottom to the depth of one or two feet. At the western end, climbing a little way into a cave hewn out of a rock, we ascended a few steps into the place from which the water flows into the pool. It is connected by a long subterranean passage, running quite through the hill to the fountain of the Virgin, or more properly the fountain of Siloam, the entrance to which is a considerable way farther up the valley of Jehoshaphat. Through this passage the water flows softly from the fountain till it finds its way into the pool, not, as generally represented in pictures, by pouring over the mouth of the cave, but secretly from beneath. Wild flowers, and among other plants the caper tree, grow luxuriantly around its border. We are told that "the wall of the pool of Siloam by the king's garden," *Neh. iii. 15*, was built in the days of Nehemiah. There can be no doubt that this is the very spot; and possibly the present walls and steps may be as ancient as the days of our Lord. While sitting on the margin, we could imagine the history of the blind man (*ch. ix.*) realized before us. We had seen that very day a blind man in the streets of Jerusalem as we passed by. Now it was to such a man that our Lord said, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam." The man obeys—comes out at the gate—descends the sloping side of Zion, gropes his way down these steps, and feels for the cool water with his hand; then laves his clay-anointed eyes, and they open! Now he sees the glory of Jerusalem, but above all comes back to see the face of the Son of God, the light of the world, whose word commanded the light to shine on his dark eye-balls and his darker heart. The water of this pool flows out through a small channel cut or worn in the rock, and descends to refresh the gardens which are planted below on terraces, illustrating the expression "a

the Greeks applied who desired to see Jesus. He was an inhabitant if not a native of Bethsaida, a city on the western shore of the sea of Galilee. As the name implies, it was a fishing station. The notices of him in the gospels are few, but significant; they are chiefly found in St. John. (Compare John vi. 5-9; xii. 20-22; xiv. 8.)

i. 48. "Under the fig-tree;" probably for prayer and meditation. The Lord implies his Divine presence and knowledge of what was passing, when Nathanael thought he was alone. Olshausen well

i. 41, 42. "First findeth:" i.e., was the first to find. It seems that both John and Andrew went in search of Simon; John to bring his friend, Andrew to bring his brother. "Brought him to Jesus:" probably the same night; an example of the energy of Peter's character. "Cephas:" a rock or stone; the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek, Peter.

i. 43, 44. "Philip:" the only one of the apostles who has an ordinary Greek name. It is worth observing that it was to him that

fountain of gardens," *Cant. iv. 15*; for a fountain in such a situation waters many gardens. These are the remains of "the king's garden," *Neh. iii. 15*, mentioned by Nehemiah and Josephus, *Ant. vii. c. 14, s. 4*. *

CHAP. X.—16. *Other sheep.* There are others who shall be members of my redeemed church. *I have.* This does not imply that they were then his friends, but that they would be. There were others whom it was his purpose and intention to call to the blessings of the Gospel and salvation. The purpose was so sure, and the fact that they would believe on him so certain, that he could use the present tense as if they were already his own. "He calleth things that be not, as though they were," *Rom. i. 17*. This purpose was in accordance with the promise, (*Isa. liii. 11*.) "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." An instance of a parallel expression occurs in *Acts xviii. 10*, "I have much people in this city" (Corinth.) That is, it was the purpose of God to bless the preaching of Paul, and give him many souls as the seals of his ministry. It was so certain that they would believe in the Saviour, that it could be spoken of as if it were already done. This certainty could have existed only in consequence of the intention of God that it should be so. It did not consist in any disposition to embrace the Gospel which was foreseen, for they were the most corrupt and licentious people of antiquity; and it must have been because God meant that it should be so. Declarations like these are full proof that God has a plan in regard to the salvation of men, and that the number is known and determined by him. Learn 1. That it is not a question of hap-hazard whether men shall be saved. 2. That there is encouragement for preaching the Gospel. There are those whom God means to save.

CHAP. XI.—1. *Bethany.* 'Descending, and leaving the Jericho road, we came quite suddenly upon Bethany, called by the Arabs, Azariah, from the name of Lazarus. We found this ever memorable village to be very like what we could have imagined it. It lies almost hidden in a small ravine of mount Olivet, so much so, that from the height you cannot see it. It is embosomed in fruit trees, especially figs and almonds, olives and pomegranates. The ravine in which it lies is terraced, and the terraces are covered either with fruit trees or waving grain. There are not many houses, perhaps about twenty inhabited, but there are many marks of ancient ruins. How pleasing are all the associations that cluster round this village. Perhaps there was no scene in the Holy Land which afforded us more unmingled enjoyment, and we even fancied that the curse that everywhere rests so visibly upon the land had fallen more lightly here. In point of situation, nothing could have come up more completely to our previous imagination of the place to which Jesus delighted to retire at evening from the bustle of the city, and the vexations of the unbelieving multitudes—sometimes traversing the road by which we had come, and perhaps oftener still coming up the face of the hill by the foot-path that passes on the north of Gethsemane. What a peaceful scene! Amidst these trees, or in that grassy field, he may often have been seen in deep communion with the Father. And in sight of this verdant spot it was that he took his farewell of the disciples, and went upward to resume the deep, unbroken fellowship of "his God, and our God," uttering blessings even in the moment when he began to be parted from them, *Lu. xiv. 51*. And it was here that the two angels stood by them in white apparel, and left us this glorious message, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," *Acts i. 11*. *

CHAP. XII.—3. *Then took Mary.* See Supplementary Notes on *Mat. xxvi. 20*, and *Lu. vii. 36—38*. At dinner we were still more interested in observing a custom of the country. In the room where we were received, besides the divan on which we sat, there were seats all round the walls. Many came in and took their place on those side seats, uninvited and yet unchallenged. They spoke to those at table on business or the news of the day, and our host spoke freely to them. This made us understand the scene in Simon's house at Bethany, where Jesus sat at supper, and Mary came in and anointed his feet with ointment, *ch. xii. 1—3*; and also the scene in the Pharisee's house, where the woman who was a sinner came in, uninvited and yet not forbidden, and washed his feet with her tears, *Lu. vii. 36—38*. * 6. *Had the bag.* The word translated "bag" is compounded of two words, meaning "tongue," and "to keep, or preserve." It was used to denote the bag in which musicians used to keep the tongues, or reeds of their pipes when travelling. Hence it came to mean any bag or purse in which travellers put their money, or their most precious articles. The disciples appear to have had such a bag or purse in common, in which they put whatever money they had, and which was designed especially for the poor, *Lu. viii. 3*; *Mat. xxvii. 55*; *Acts ii. 44*. The keeping of this, it seems, was intrusted to Judas. And it is remarkable that the only one among them that seems to have been naturally avaricious should have received this appointment. It shews us that every man is tried according to his native propensity. This is the object of trial, to bring out man's native character. And every man will find opportunity to do evil according to his native disposition, if he is inclined to it. *And bare, &c.* The word translated "bare," means literally to carry, as a burden. Then it means to carry away, as in *ch. xx. 15*, "If thou shalt borne him hence." Hence it means to carry away as a thief does; and this is evidently its meaning here. It has this sense often in classic writers. Judas was a thief, and stole what was put into the bag. This money he desired to be intrusted to him, that he might secretly enrich himself. It is clear, however, that the disciples did not at this time know that this was his character, or they would have remonstrated against him. They learned it afterwards. We may learn here, 1st. That it is not a new thing for members of the church to be covetous. Judas was so before them. 2nd. That such members will be those who complain of the great waste in spreading the Gospel. 3rd. That this deadly, mean, and grovelling passion will work all evil in a church. It brought down the curse of God on the children of Israel, in the case of Achan, *Jos. vii.*; and it betrayed our Lord to death. It has often since brought blighting on the church; and many a time betrayed the cause of Christ, and drowned men in destruction and perdition, *1 Tim. vi. 9*. 41. *When he saw his glory.* *Isa. vi. 1—10*. Isaiah saw the Lord (in Hebrew, Jehovah) sitting on a throne, and surrounded with the seraphim. This is, perhaps, the only instance in the Bible in which Jehovah is said to have been seen by man; and for this the Jews affirm that Isaiah was put to death. God had said, (*Ex. xxiii. 20*.) "No man shall see me and live," and, as Isaiah affirmed that he had seen Jehovah, the Jews, for that and other reasons, put him to death by sawing him asunder. In the prophecy, Isaiah is said expressly to have seen Jehovah, *ver. 1*; and in *ver. 5*, "Mine eyes have seen the King Jehovah of hosts." By his glory is meant the manifestation of him, the shechinah, or visible cloud that was a representation of God, and that rested over the mercy-seat. This was regarded as equivalent to seeing God; and John here expressly applies this to the Lord Jesus Christ. For he is not affirming that the people did not believe in God, but is assigning the reason why they believed not on Jesus Christ as the Messiah. The whole discourse and illustration has respect to the Lord Jesus, and the natural construction of the passage requires us to refer it to him. John affirms that it was the glory of the Messiah that Isaiah saw and yet Isaiah affirms that it was

Jehovah. And from this the inference is irresistible, that John regarded Jesus as the Jehovah whom Isaiah saw. The name Jehovah is never in the Scriptures applied to a man, or an angel, or to any creature. It is the peculiar, incommunicable name of God. So great was the reverence of the Jews for that name that they would not even pronounce it. This passage is, therefore, conclusive proof that Christ is equal with the Father. 48. *He that rejecteth me.* *Lu. x. 16*. The word "reject" means to despise, or to refuse to receive him. *Hath one.* That is, he needs not my voice to condemn him. He will carry his own condemnation with him, even should I be silent. His own conscience will condemn him. The words which I have spoken will be remembered, and will condemn him, if there were nothing farther. From this we learn, 1st. That a guilty conscience needs no accuser. 2nd. That the words of Christ, and the messages of mercy which the sinner has rejected, will be remembered by him. 3rd. That this will be the source of his condemnation. This will make him miserable; and there will be no possibility of his being happy. 4th. That the conscience of the sinner will concur with the sentence of Christ in the great day, and that he will go to eternity self-condemned. It is this which will make the pains of hell so intolerable to the sinner. 5th. The word that Christ has spoken, the doctrines of his Gospel, and the messages of mercy, will be that by which the sinner will be judged in the last day. Every man will be judged by that message, and the sinner will be punished according to the frequency and clearness with which the rejected message has been presented to his mind, *Mat. xii. 41*.

CHAP. XIV.—16. *Another Comforter.* Jesus had been to them a counsellor, a guide, a friend, while he was with them. He had instructed them; had borne with their prejudices and ignorance; and had administered to their consolation in the times of despondency. But he was about to leave them now to go alone into an unfriendly world. The other Comforter was to be given as a compensation for his absence, or to perform the offices towards them which he would have done if he was personally with them. And from this we may learn, in part, what is the office of the Spirit; it is to furnish to all Christians the instruction and consolation which would be given by the personal presence of Jesus, *ch. xvi. 14*. To the apostles it was particularly to inspire them with the knowledge of all truth, *ch. xiv. 26*; *xv. 26*. Besides this, he came to convince men of sin; see *ch. xiv. 8—11*. It was proper that such an agent should be sent into the world: 1st. Because it was a part of the plan that Jesus should ascend to heaven after his death. 2nd. Unless some heavenly agent should be sent to carry forward the work of salvation man would reject it, and perish. 3rd. Jesus could not be personally and bodily present in all places, with the vast multitudes who should believe on him. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent, and can teach them all. 4th. It was manifestly a part of the plan of redemption that each of the persons of the Trinity should perform his appropriate work: the Father in sending his Son; the Son in making atonement and interceding; and the Spirit in applying the work to the hearts of men. The word translated "Comforter" is used in the New Testament five times. In four instances it is applied to the Holy Spirit, *ch. xiv. 16, 26*; *xv. 26*; *xvi. 7*. In the other instance it is applied to the Lord Jesus; *1 Jno. ii. 1*, "We have an advocate (Paraclete—Comforter) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." It is used, therefore, only by John. The verb from which it is taken has many significations. Its proper meaning is to call one to us, *Acts xxviii. 20*; then to call one to aid us, as an advocate in a court; then to exhort or entreat, to pray or implore, as an advocate does, and to comfort or console, by suggesting reasons or arguments for consolation. The word "comforter" is frequently used in the Greek and Jewish writers to denote an advocate in a court; one who intercedes for us; a monitor, a teacher, an assistant, a helper. It is somewhat difficult therefore to fix the precise meaning of the word. It may be translated either advocate, monitor, teacher, or helper. What the office is, is to be learned from what we are elsewhere told he does. We learn particularly from the accounts that our Saviour gives of his work, that that office was, 1st. To comfort them; to be with them in his absence, and to supply his place; and this is properly expressed by the word Comforter. 2nd. To teach them, or remind them of truth; and this might be expressed by the word monitor, or teacher, *ver. 26*; *xv. 26, 27*. 3rd. To aid them in their work; to advocate their cause, or to assist them in advocating the cause of religion in the world, and in bringing sinners to repentance; and this may be expressed by the word advocate, *ch. xvi. 7—13*. It was also by the Spirit that they were enabled to stand before kings and magistrates, and boldly to speak in the name of Jesus, *Mat. x. 20*. These seem to comprise all the meanings of the word in the New Testament, but no single word in our language expresses fully the sense of the original. *That he may abide with you for ever.* Not that he should remain with you for a few years, as I have done, and then leave you, but be with you in all places to the close of life. He shall be your constant guide and attendant.

CHAP. XVII.—1. *That thy Son also may glorify thee.* This refers clearly to the manifestation of the honour of God which would be made by the spread of the Gospel among men, *ver. 2*. Jesus prayed that God would so honour him in his death, that striking proof might be furnished that he was the Messiah, and men thus be brought to honour God. By his death, the law, and truth, and mercy of God were honoured. By the spread of his Gospel, and the conversion of sinners,—by all that Christ will do, now that he is glorified, to spread his Gospel,—God will be honoured. The conversion of a single sinner honours God. A revival of religion is an eminent means of promoting his glory. And the spread of the Gospel among all nations shall yet do more than all other things to promote the honour of God among men. Whatever honours the Saviour honours God. Just as he is exalted in the view of the mind, so will God be honoured and obeyed. 2. *As thou hast given him power.* It is to be observed here, that the Saviour, in this prayer, makes an important distinction between "all flesh," and those who were "given him." He has power over all. He can control, direct, restrain them. Wicked men are so far under his universal dominion, and so far restrained by his power, that they shall not be able to prevent his bestowing redemption on those who were given him; that is, all who will believe on him. Long ago, if they had been able, they would have banished religion from the world. But they are under the power of Christ, and it is his purpose that there shall be "a seed to serve him," and that "the gates of hell shall not prevail" against his church. Men who oppose the Gospel should therefore feel that they cannot prevent the salvation of Christians, and should be alarmed lest they be found "fighting against God." 23. *May be made perfect in one.* That their union may be complete. That there may be no want of union, no jars, discords, or contentions. A machine is perfect or complete when it has all its parts, and in good order; when there is no portion of it wanting. So the union of Christians, for which the Saviour prayed, would be complete, or perfect, if there were no controversies, no envyings, no contentions, and no heart-burnings and jealousies. It is worthy of remark here, how entirely the union of his people occupied the mind of Jesus as he drew near to death. He saw the danger of strifes and contentions in the church. He knew the imperfections of even the best of men. He saw how prone they would be to passion, and even ambition; how ready to mistake love

observes, "Nathanael's soul lay spread open before his spiritual sight, and he read its depths. Doubtless the disciple had, under the fig-tree, uttered in prayer his inmost desires and hopes, and to have been observed in this by the eyes of the All-Seeing so subdued his heart that he also believed in the Nazarene." (Compare *Psa. cxxxix. 1—3*.)

ii. 1. "Cana of Galilee;" not far from Capernaum, and situated on higher ground, since it is said of our Lord that "he went down"

from one to the other (see verse 12, also *iv. 46—54*). "Marriage:" the customs of the Hebrews and Oriental nations generally differ in many respects from those with which we are familiar. In the first place, the choice of the bride devolved, not on the bridegroom himself, but on his relations, or on a friend deputed by the bridegroom for this purpose. (See *Gen. xxiv., xxi. 21, xxviii. 1, xxxviii. 6*. See also *Gen. xxxiv. 4, 8*; *Judges xiv. 1—10*, where the wishes of the bridegroom are consulted). Generally the proposal came from the

of sect or party for zeal for pure religion; how ambitious and worldly men in the church might divide his followers, and produce unholiness and contention. And he saw, also, how much this would do to dishonour religion. Hence he took occasion, when he was about to die, to impress the importance of union on his disciples. By solemn admonition, and in most tender and affecting appeals to God in supplication, he shewed his sense of the value of this union. He used the most sublime and impressive illustration; adverted to the eternal union between the Father and himself; reminded them of his love, and of the effect that their union would have on the world, to fix it more deeply in their hearts. The effect has shewn the infinite wisdom of the Saviour. The contentions and strifes of Christians have shewn his knowledge in foreseeing it. The effect of this on religion has shewn that he understood the value of union. Christians have contended long enough. It is time that they should hear the parting admonitions of their Redeemer, and go unitedly against their common foe. The world still lies in wickedness; and the friends of Jesus, bound by the cords of eternal love, should advance together against the common enemy, and spread the triumphs of the Gospel around the globe. All that is needful now, under the blessing of God, to convince the world that God sent the Lord Jesus, is that very union among all Christians for which he prayed; and when that union of feeling, and purpose, and action, shall take place, the task of sending the Gospel to all nations will be soon accomplished, and the morning of the millennial glory will dawn upon the world. 24. *Thou lovest me, &c.* This is another of the numerous passages which prove that the Lord Jesus existed before the creation of the world. Nor is it possible to explain it on any other supposition.

CHAP. XVIII.—1. *Over the brook Cedron, where was a garden.* 'Early one morning two of us set out to visit Gethsemane. The sun had newly risen; few people were upon the road, and the valley of Jehoshaphat was lonely and still. Descending the steep of mount Moriah, and crossing the dry bed of the brook Kedron, we soon came to the low rude wall enclosing the plot of ground which for ages has borne the name of Gethsemane. Clambering over, we examined the sacred spot and its eight olive trees. These are very large and very old, but their branches are still strong and vigorous. One of them we measured, and found to be nearly eight yards in girth round the lower part of the trunk. Some of them are hollow with age, but filled up with earth, and most have heaps of stones gathered round their roots. The enclosure seems to have been tilled at some recent period. At one corner a pilgrim has erected a stone, and carved upon it the Latin words, "*et hic tenuerunt eum*," marking it as the spot where Judas betrayed his master with a kiss. The road to Bethany passes by the foot of the garden, and the more private footpath up the brow of the hill passes along its northern wall. Looking across the Kedron, the steep brow of Moriah and sombre wall of the Haram with its battlements, and the top of the mosque of Omar, shut in the view. At evening, when the gates of Jerusalem are closed, it must be a perfect solitude. Our blessed Master must distinctly have seen the band of men and officers sent to apprehend him, with their lanterns and torches, and glittering weapons, descending the side of Moriah and approaching the garden. By the clear moonlight he saw his three chosen disciples fast asleep in his hour of agony; and by the gleam of the torches he observed his cruel enemies coming down to seize him and carry him away to his last sufferings; yet "he was not rebellious, neither turned away back," *Isa. l. 5.* He viewed the bitter cup that was given him to drink, and said, "Shall I not drink it?" *ch. xvi. 33.* We read over all the passages of Scripture relating to Gethsemane while seated together there. It seemed nothing wonderful to read of the weakness of those three disciples, when we remembered that they were sinful men like disciples now; but the compassion, the unwavering love, of Jesus appeared, by the contrast, to be infinitely amazing. For such souls as ours he rent this vale with his strong crying and tears, wetted this ground with his bloody sweat, and set his face like a flint to go forward and die. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us," *Rom. v. 8.* Each of us occupied part of the time alone, in private meditation, and then we joined together in prayer, putting our sins into that cup which our Master drank here, and pleading for our own souls, for our far distant friends, and for the flocks committed to our care. It is probable that Jesus often resorted to this place, not only because of its retirement, but also because it formed a fit place of meeting, when his disciples, dispersed through the city by day, were to join his company in the evening, and go with him over the hill to Bethany. And this seems the real force of the original words, "For Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples," *ch. xvii. 2.* 38. *What is truth?* This question was probably asked in contempt, and hence Jesus did not answer it. Had the question been sincere, and had Pilate really sought it as Nicodemus did, *ch. iii.*, Jesus would not have hesitated to have explained to him the nature of his kingdom. They were now alone in the judgment hall, *ver. 33;* and as soon as Pilate had asked the question, without waiting for an answer, he went out. It is evident that he was satisfied, from the answer of Jesus, *ver. 36, 37;* that he was not a king in the sense in which the Jews accused him; that he would not endanger the Roman government, and consequently that he was innocent of the charge alleged against him. He regarded him clearly as a fanatic; poor, ignorant, and deluded, but innocent and not dangerous. Hence he sought to release him; and hence, in contempt, he asked him this question, and immediately went out, not expecting an answer. This question had long agitated the world. It was the great subject of inquiry in all the schools of the Greeks. Different sects of philosophers had held different opinions; and Pilate now, in derision, asked him, whom he esteemed an ignorant fanatic, whether he could solve this long agitated question. He might have had an answer. Had he patiently waited in sincerity, Jesus would have told him what it was. Thousands ask the question in the same way. They have a fixed contempt for the Bible; they deride the instructions of religion; they are unwilling to investigate, and to wait at the gates of wisdom; and hence, like Pilate, they remain ignorant of the great Source of truth, and die in darkness and in error. All might find truth if they would seek it; none ever will find it if they do not apply for it to the great Source of light—the God of truth—and seek it patiently in the way which he has chosen to communicate it to mankind. How highly should we prize the Bible! and how patiently and prayerfully should we search the Scriptures, that we may not err, and die for ever!

CHAP. XIX.—5. *Behold the man!* It is probable that Pilate pointed to the Saviour, and his object evidently was to move them to compassion, and to convince them, by a sight of the Saviour himself, that he was innocent. Hence he brought him forth with the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, and with

the marks of scourging. Amidst all this, Jesus was meek, patient, and calm, giving evident proofs of innocence. The conduct of Pilate was as if he had said, "See! the man whom you accuse is arrayed in a gorgeous robe, as if a king. He has been scourged and mocked. All this he has borne with patience. See! how calm and peaceful! Behold his countenance! how mild! His body scourged, his head pierced with thorns! Yet in all this he is meek and patient! This is the man that you accuse; and he is now brought forth, that you may see that he is not guilty." 34. *And forthwith came, &c.* This was evidently a natural effect of thus piercing the side. Such a flowing of blood and water makes it probable that the spear reached the heart, and, if Jesus had not before been dead, this would have closed his life. The heart is surrounded by a membrane called the *pericardium*. This membrane contains a serous matter, or liquor, resembling water, which prevents the surface of the heart from becoming dry by its continual motion. (*Webster*.) It was this which was pierced, and from which the water flowed. The point of the spear also reached one of the ventricles of the heart, and the blood yet warm rushed forth, either mingled with or followed by the water of the pericardium, so as to appear to John to be blood and water flowing together. This was a natural effect, and would follow in any other case. Commentators have almost uniformly supposed that this was significant; as, for example, that the blood was an emblem of the eucharist, and the water of baptism, or that the blood denoted justification, and the water sanctification. But that this was the design there is not the slightest evidence. It was strictly a natural result, adduced by John to establish one fact on which the whole of Christianity turns—that he was truly dead. On this depends the doctrine of the atonement, of his resurrection, and all the prominent doctrines of religion. This fact it was of importance to prove, that it might not be pretended that he had only suffered a syncope, or had fainted. This John establishes. He shews that those who were sent to hasten his death believed that he had expired; that then a soldier inflicted a wound which would have terminated life, if he had not been already dead; and that the infliction of this wound was followed by the fullest proof that he had truly expired. On this fact he dwells with the interest which became a subject of so much importance to the world, and thus laid the foundation for undoubted assurance that the Lord Jesus died for the sins of men.

CHAP. XX.—23. *Whosoever sins, &c.* It is worthy of remark here, that Jesus confers the same power on all the apostles. He gives to no one of them any peculiar authority. If Peter, as the papists pretend, had been appointed to any peculiar authority, it is wonderful that the Saviour did not here hint at any such pre-eminence. This passage conclusively proves that they were invested with equal power in organizing and governing the church. The authority which he had given Peter to preach the Gospel first to the Jews and the Gentiles does not militate against this. This authority given them was full proof that they were inspired. The meaning of the passage is, not that man can forgive sins—that belongs only to God, *Isa. xlii. 23;* but the meaning is, that they should be inspired; that in founding the church, and in declaring the will of God, they should be taught by the Holy Ghost to declare on what terms, to what characters, and to what temper of mind, God would extend forgiveness of sins. It was not authority to forgive individuals, but to establish in all the churches the terms and conditions on which men might be pardoned; with a promise that God would confirm all that they taught; that men might have assurance of forgiveness who would comply with those terms; and that those who did not comply should not be forgiven, and their sins should be retained. This commission is as far as possible from the authority which the Roman Catholic claims of remitting sin and of pronouncing pardon.

XXI.—25. *Many other things.* Many miracles, *ch. xx. 30.* Many discourses delivered, &c. *I suppose, &c.* This is evidently the figure of speech called a hyperbole. It is a mode of speech where the words express more, or less, than is literally true. It is common among all writers; and, as the sacred writers in recording a revelation to men, used human language, it was proper that they should express themselves as men ordinarily do, if they wished to be understood. This figure of speech is commonly the effect of surprise; or having the mind full of some object, and not having words to express the ideas. At the same time the words convey no falsehood. The statement is to be taken as it would be understood among the persons to whom it is addressed; and, as no one supposes that the author means to be understood literally, so there is no deception in the case, and consequently no impeachment of his veracity, or inspiration. Thus, when Longinus said of a man, that "he was owner of a piece of ground not larger than a Lacedæmonian letter," no one understood him literally. He means evidently a very small piece of land, and no one would be deceived. So Virgil says of a man, "he was so tall as to reach the stars," and means only that he was very tall. So, when John says that the world would not contain the books that should be written, if all the deeds and sayings of Jesus were recorded, he clearly intends nothing more than that a great many books would be required; or that it would be extremely difficult to record them all; intimating that his life was active, that his discourses were numerous, and that he had not pretended to give them all, but only such as should go to establish the main point for which he wrote—that he was the Messiah, *ch. xx. 30, 31.* The figure which John uses here is not uncommon in the Scriptures: *Gen. xi. 4;* *xv. 5;* *Num. xii. 33;* *Dan. iv. 20.* This Gospel contains in itself the clearest proof of inspiration. It is the work of a fisherman of Galilee, without any proof that he had any unusual advantages. It is a connected, clear, and satisfactory argument, to establish the great truth that Jesus was the Messiah. It was written many years after the ascension of Jesus. It contains the record of the Saviour's profoundest discourses; of his most convincing arguments with the Jews; and of his declarations respecting himself and God. It contains the purest and most elevated views of God to be found anywhere, as far exceeding all the speculations of philosophers as the sun does the blaze of a taper. It is in the highest degree absurd to suppose that an unlettered fisherman could have originated this book. Any one may be convinced of this by comparing it with what would be the production of a man in that rank of life now. But if John has preserved the record of what has occurred so many years before, then it shews that he was under the Divine guidance, and is himself a proof, a full and standing proof, of the fulfilment of the promise which he has recorded, that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth, *ch. xiv. 26.* To this book we may, in conclusion, apply the words spoken by John, respecting his vision of the future events of the church, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this book," and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand," *Rev. i. 3.*

family of the bridegroom; but sometimes, when there was a difference of rank, the bride was offered by her father. (See *Exod. ii. 21;* *Josh. xv. 17;* *1 Sam. xviii. 27.* See also *Gen. xxiv. 51, 58, xxiv. 11,* where the consent of the maiden is asked, but that subject to the wishes of the father and brothers.) "The selection of the bride was followed by the espousal, which was a formal proceeding, undertaken by a friend or legal representative on the part of the bridegroom, and by the parents on the part of the bride. It was confirmed by oaths, and accompanied with presents to the bride." "Between the betrothal and the marriage an interval elapsed. During this period all communication between the bride and her future husband was carried on through the medium of a friend deputed for the purpose, termed 'the friend of the bridegroom.' She was now virtually regarded as the

wife of her future husband; for it was a maxim of the Jewish law that betrothal was of equal force with marriage. Hence faithlessness on her part was punishable with death (*Deut. xxii. 23, 24*), the husband having, however, the option of putting her away (*Matt. i. 19*) by giving her a bill of divorcement, in case he did not wish to proceed to such an extreme punishment (*Deut. xxiv. 1*)." See also *chap. iii. 29.* "There were no definite religious ceremonies connected with it. The essence of the marriage ceremony consisted in the removal of the bride from her father's house." When the time came, the bridegroom, attended by his groomsmen, went to the house of the bride, and escorted her and her friends back to his own house, where a feast was prepared, to which friends and neighbours were invited. The festivities sometimes lasted as long as fourteen days.



ROMAN JUDGMENT.

AN
EXPOSITION

OF



PRISONER AND GUARDS.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,
WITH
PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We have, with an abundant satisfaction, seen the foundations of our holy religion laid in the history of our blessed Saviour, its great Author; which was related and left upon record by four several inspired writers, who all agree in this sacred truth, and the incontestable proofs of it, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Upon this rock the Christian church is built; and how it began to be built upon this rock comes next to be related in this book which we have now before us; and of this we have the testimony only of one witness, for the matters of fact concerning Christ were much more necessary to be fully related and attested than those concerning the apostles. Had Infinite Wisdom seen fit, we might have had as many books of the *Acts of the Apostles* as we have Gospels, nay, as we might have had Gospels, but for fear of overburthening the world, *Jno.* xxi. 25. We have sufficient to answer the end, if we will but make use of it. The history of this book, which was always received as a part of the sacred canon, may be considered,

I. As looking back to the preceding Gospels, giving light to them, and greatly assisting our faith in them. The promises there made we here find made good, particularly the great promise of the descent of the Holy Ghost, and his wonderful operations, both on the apostles, (whom here in a few days we find quite other men than what the Gospels left them,—no longer weak-headed and weak-hearted, but able to say that which then they were not able to bear, *Jno.* xvi. 12, and bold as lions to face those hardships which then as lambs they trembled at the thought of,) and also with the apostles, making the Word mighty to the pulling down of Satan's strongholds, which had been before comparatively preached in vain. The commission there granted to the apostles we here find executed, and the powers there lodged in them exerted in miracles wrought on the bodies of people,—miracles of mercy, restoring sick bodies to health and dead bodies to life,—miracles of judgment, striking rebels blind or dead; and much greater miracles wrought on the minds of people, in conferring spiritual gifts upon them, both of understanding and utterance; and this in pursuance of Christ's purposes, and in performance of his promises which we had in the Gospels. The proofs of Christ's resurrection which the Gospels closed with are here abundantly corroborated, not only by the constant and undaunted testimony of those that conversed with him after he rose,—who had all deserted him, and one of them denied him, and would not otherwise have been rallied again but by his resurrection, but must have been irretrievably dispersed, and yet by that were enabled to own him more resolutely than ever, in defiance of bonds and death,—but by the working of the Spirit with that testimony for the conversion of multitudes to the faith of Christ, according to the word of Christ, that his resurrection, the sign of the prophet Jonas, which was reserved to the last, should be the most convincing proof of his Divine mission. Christ had told his disciples they should be his witnesses, and this book brings them in witnessing for him; that they should be fishers of men, and here we have them enclosing multitudes in the gospel net; that they should be the lights of the world, and here we have the world enlightened by them; but that dayspring from on high, which we there discerned the first appearing of, we here find shining more and more. The corn of wheat which there fell to the ground here springs up and bears much fruit; the grain of mustard seed there is here a great tree; and the kingdom of heaven, which was then at hand, is here set up. Christ's predictions of the virulent persecutions which the preachers of his Gospel should be afflicted with (though one could not have imagined that a doctrine so well worthy of all acceptance should meet with so much opposition) we here find abundantly fulfilled, and also the assurances he gave them of extraordinary supports and comforts under their sufferings. Thus, as the latter part of the history of the Old Testament verifies the promises made to the fathers in the former part, as appears by that famous and solemn acknowledgment of Solomon's, which runs like a receipt in full, *1 Kin.* viii. 56, "There has not failed one word of all his good promise which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant," so this latter part of the history of the New Testament exactly answers to the word of Christ in the former part of it; and thus they mutually confirm and illustrate each other.

II. As looking forwards to the following Epistles, which are an explication of the Gospels, which open the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, the history whereof we had in the Gospels. This book introduceth them, and is a key to them, as the history of David is to David's Psalms. We are members of the Christian church, that tabernacle of God among men, and it is our honour and our privilege that we are so. Now this book gives us an account of the framing and rearing of that tabernacle. The four Gospels shewed us how the foundation of that house was laid; this shews us how the superstructure began to be raised. 1. Among the Jews and Samaritans, which we have an account of in the former part of this book; 2. Among the Gentiles, which we have an account of in the latter part. From thence, and downward to our own day, we find the Christian church subsisting in a visible profession of faith in Christ, as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, made by his baptized disciples, incorporated into religious societies, stately meeting in religious assemblies, attending on the apostles' doctrine, and joining in prayers and breaking of bread, under the conduct and presidency of men that gave themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word, and in a spiritual communion with all in every place that do likewise. Such a body as this there is now in the world, which we belong to, and, to our great satisfaction and honour, in this book we find the rise and original of it, vastly different from the Jewish church, and erected upon its ruins; but undeniably appearing to be of God, and not of man. With what confidence and comfort may we proceed in and adhere to our Christian profession, as far as we find it agrees with this pattern in the mount, to which we ought religiously to conform and confine ourselves!

Two things more are to be observed concerning this book: 1. The penman of it. It was written by Luke, who wrote the third of the four Gospels, which bears his name; and who, as the learned Dr. Whitby shews, was very probably one of the seventy disciples, whose commission (*Lu.* x. 1, &c.) was little inferior to that of the twelve apostles. This Luke was very much a companion of Paul's in his services and sufferings: "Only Luke is with me," *2 Tim.* iv. 11. We may know by his style in the latter part of this book when and where he was with him, for then he writes, We did so and so, as *ch.* xvi. 10; xx. 6; and from thenceforward to the end of the book. He was with Paul in his dangerous voyage to Rome, when he was carried thither a prisoner; was with him when, from his prison there, he wrote his Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon, in both which he is named. And it should seem that St. Luke wrote this history when he was with St. Paul at Rome, during his imprisonment there, and was assistant to him; for the history concludes with St. Paul's preaching there in his own hired house. 2. The title of it: "The Acts of the Apostles;" "of the holy apostles," so the Greek copies generally read it, and so they are called, *Rev.* xviii. 20, "Rejoice over her, ye holy apostles." One copy inscribes it, "The Acts of the Apostles, by Luke the Evangelist." 1st. It is the history of the apostles, yet here is in it the history of Stephen, Barnabas, and some other apostolical men, who, though not of the twelve, yet were endued with the same spirit, and employed in the same work; and, of those that were apostles, it is the history of Peter and Paul only that is here recorded, (and Paul was now of the twelve,) Peter the apostle of the circumcision, and Paul the apostle of the Gentiles, *Gal.* ii. 7. But this sufficeth as a specimen of what the rest did in other places pursuant to their commission, for they were none of them idle; and, as we are to think what is related in the Gospels concerning Christ sufficient, because Infinite Wisdom thought so, the same we are to think here concerning what is related of the apostles and their labours; for what more is told us from tradition of the labours and sufferings of the apostles, and the churches they planted, is altogether doubtful and uncertain, and what I think we cannot build upon with any satisfaction at all. This is gold, silver, and precious stones built upon the foundation: that is wood, hay, and stubble. 2nd. It is called their 'acts,' or 'doings,'—*Gesta apostolorum*: so some *ἡρώδης*, their 'practices' of the lessons their Master had taught them. The apostles were active men; and, though the wonders they did were by the Word, yet they are fitly called their Acts; they spake, or rather the Spirit by them spake, and it was done. The history is filled with their sermons and their sufferings, yet so much did they labour in their preaching, and so voluntarily did they expose themselves to sufferings, and such were their achievements by both, that they may very well be called their Acts.

Introductory Note.—It is generally believed that St. Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles. The author speaks of a "former treatise," in which he had given an account of the doings and teachings of Jesus while on earth. And the number of words and phrases peculiar to the Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts of the Apostles afford strong evidence that they proceed from one and the same writer. Luke seems to have been a Gentile, a native of Antioch in Syria, and a physician. It must, however, be remembered that the practice of

medicine was in former times frequently left to freed men and even slaves. The Acts of the Apostles was most probably written at Rome, at the expiration of the two years mentioned in chap. xxviii. 30. For St. Luke's intimacy with St. Paul, see *2 Tim.* iv. 11; *Phil.* 24. Compare also the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper as given by Luke in his gospel (*xxii.* 19, 20), and that given by St. Paul (*1 Cor.* xi. 23–26).

i. 1. "Treatise:" narrative or discourse; alluding to the gospel

CHAPTER I.

The inspired historian begins his narrative of the Acts of the Apostles, I. With a reference to, and a brief recapitulation of, his Gospel, or History of the Life of Christ, inscribing this, as he had done that, to his friend Theophilus, ver. 1, 2. II. With a summary of the proofs of Christ's resurrection, and his conference with his disciples, ver. 2-5. III. With a particular narrative of Christ's ascension into heaven, his disciples' discourse with him before he ascended, and the angels' discourse with them after he was ascended, ver. 6-11. IV. With a general idea of the embryo of the Christian church, and its state from Christ's ascension to the pouring out of the Spirit, ver. 12-14. V. With a particular account of the filling up of the vacancy that was made in the sacred college by the death of Judas, by the electing of Matthias in his room, ver. 15-26.



HE former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

In these verses,

First, Theophilus is put in mind, and we in him, of St. Luke's Gospel, which it will be of use for us to cast an eye upon before we enter upon the study of this book, that we may see, not only how this begins there where that breaks off, but that, as in water face answers to face, so do the acts of the apostles to the acts of their Master, the acts of his grace.

1. His patron, to whom he dedicates this book, (I should rather say his pupil, for he designs, in dedicating it to him, to instruct and direct him, and not to crave his countenance or protection,) is Theophilus, ver. 1. In the epistle dedicatory before his Gospel, he had called him "most excellent Theophilus," here he calls him no more but, "O Theophilus;" not that he had lost his excellency, or that it was diminished, and become less illustrious; but, either he had now quitted his place, whatever it was, for the sake of which that title was given him; or he was now grown into years, and despised such titles of respect more than he had done; or Luke was now grown more intimate with him, and therefore could address to him with the more freedom. It was usual with the ancients, both Christian and heathen writers, thus to inscribe their writings to some particular person; but the directing some of the books of the Scripture so is an intimation to each of us to receive them as if directed to us in particular, to us by name, for "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning."

2. His Gospel is here called the former treatise which he had made, which he had an eye to in writing this, intending this for a continuation and confirmation of that, *τὸν πρότερον λόγον*,—"the former word." What is written of the Gospel is the Word as truly as what was spoken; nay, we now know no unwritten word that we are to give credit to, but as it agrees with that which is written. He made the former treatise, and now is Divinely inspired to make this; for Christ's scholars must go on towards perfection, *Heb. vi. 1*; and therefore their guides must help them on, must still teach the people knowledge, *Ecc. xii. 9*, and not think that their former labours, though never so good, will excuse them from farther labours; but they should rather be quickened and encouraged by them, as St. Luke here, who, because he had laid the foundation in a former treatise, will build upon it in this. Let not this, therefore, drive out that. Let not new sermons, and new books, make us forget old ones, but put us in mind of them, and help us to improve them.

3. The contents of his Gospel were "that, all that, which Jesus began both to do and teach;" and the same is the subject of the writings of the other three evangelists. Observe, 1st. Christ both did and taught. The doctrine he taught was confirmed by the miraculous works he did, which proved him a teacher come from God, *Jno. iii. 2*; and the duties he taught were copied out in the holy gracious works he did, for he hath left us an example, and that such as proves him a teacher come from God too; for by their fruits ye shall know them. Those are the best ministers that both do and teach, whose lives are a constant sermon. 2nd. He began both to do and teach; he laid the foundation of all that was to be taught and done in the Christian church. His apostles were to carry on and continue what he began, and to do and teach the same things. Christ set them in, and then left them to go on; but sent his Spirit to empower them both to do and teach. It is a comfort to those who are endeavouring to carry on the work of the Gospel that Christ himself began it. The great salvation at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, *Heb. ii. 3*. 3rd. The four evangelists, and Luke particularly, have handed down to us "all that Jesus began both to do and teach;" not all the particulars,—the world could not have contained them; but all the heads, samples of all; so many and in such variety, as that by them you may judge of the rest. We have the beginnings of his doctrine, *Mat. iv. 17*; and the beginnings of his miracles, *Jno. ii. 11*. Luke had spoken, had treated, of all Christ's sayings and doings, had given us a general idea of them, though he had not recorded each in particular.

which St. Luke had composed, probably during the imprisonment of St. Paul at Cæsarea. "Theophilus:" all that can be conjectured with any degree of certainty concerning him comes to this, that he was a Gentile of rank and consideration, who came under the influence of St. Luke, or (not improbably) under that of St. Paul, at Rome, and was converted to the Christian faith. "Began:" this word is not superfluous, but points to the Gospel as containing the account of the commencement of that work which Christ continues to carry on

4. The period of the evangelical story is fixed to "the day in which he was taken up," ver. 2. Then it was that he left this world, and his bodily presence was no more in it. St. Mark's Gospel concludes with the Lord's being received up into heaven, *Mar. xvi. 19*; and so doth St. Luke's, *Lu. xxiv. 51*. Christ continued doing and teaching to the last, till he was taken up to the other world he had to do within the veil.

Secondly, The truth of Christ's resurrection is maintained and evidenced, ver. 3. That part of what was related in the former treatise was so material, that it was necessary to be upon all occasions repeated. The great evidence of his resurrection was, that he shewed himself alive to his apostles; being alive, he shewed himself so, and he was seen of them. They were honest men, and one may depend upon their testimony; but the question is, Whether they were not imposed upon, as many a well-meaning man is? No; they were not. For,

1. The proofs were infallible; *τεκμήρια*,—"plain indications," both that he was alive,—he walked and talked with them, he ate and drank with them,—and that it was he himself and not another, for he shewed them again and again the marks of the wounds in his hands, and feet, and side; which was the utmost proof the thing was capable of, or required.

2. They were many, and often repeated. He was seen by them forty days; not constantly residing with them, but frequently appearing to them, and bringing them by degrees to be fully satisfied concerning it; so that all their sorrow for his departure was done away by it. Christ's staying upon earth so long after he was entered upon his state of exaltation and glory, to confirm the faith of his disciples, and comfort their hearts, was such an instance of condescension and compassion to believers as may fully assure us that we have a High Priest that is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

Thirdly, A general hint given of the instructions he furnished his disciples with now he was about to leave them; and they, since he breathed on them and opened their understandings, were better able to receive them.

1. He instructed them concerning the work they were to do. "He gave commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen." Note, Christ's choice is always attended with his charge. Those whom he elected into the apostleship expected he should give them preferences, but instead of that he gave them commandments. When he took his journey, and gave authority to his servants, and to every one his work, *Mar. xiii. 34*, he gave them commandments through the Holy Ghost, which he was himself filled with as Mediator, and which he had breathed into them. In giving them the Holy Ghost, he gave them his commandments, for the Comforter will be a commander; and his office was to bring to their remembrance what Christ had said. He charged those "that were apostles by the Holy Ghost," so the words are placed. It was their receiving the Holy Ghost that sealed their commission, *Jno. xx. 22*. He was not taken up till after he had given them their charge, and so finished his work.

2. He instructed them concerning the doctrine they were to preach. He "spoke to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." He had given them a general idea of that kingdom, and the certain time it should be set up in the world, in his parable, *Mar. xiii.*; but here he let them more into the nature of it; as a kingdom of grace in this world, and of glory in the other, and opened to them that covenant which is the great charter by which it is incorporated. Now this was intended, 1st. To prepare them to receive the Holy Ghost, and to go through that which they were designed for. He tells them in secret what they must tell the world; and they shall find that the Spirit of truth, when he comes, will say the same. 2nd. To be one of the proofs of Christ's resurrection. So it comes in here; the disciples to whom he shewed himself alive knew that it was he, not only by what he shewed them, but by what he said to them. None but he could speak thus clearly, thus fully, of "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." He did not entertain them with discourses of politics, or the kingdoms of men,—of philosophy, or the kingdom of nature,—but pure divinity, and the kingdom of grace; the things which most nearly concerned them, and those to whom they were sent.

Fourthly, A particular assurance given them that they should now shortly receive the Holy Ghost, with orders given them to expect it, ver. 4, 5, he "being assembled together with them," probably in the interview at the mountain in Galilee, which he had appointed before his death; for there is mention of their coming together again, ver. 6, to attend his ascension. Though he had now ordered them to Galilee, yet they must not think to continue there; no, they must return to Jerusalem, and not depart thence. Observe,

1. The command he gives them to wait. This was to raise their expectations of something great; and something very great they had reason to expect from their exalted Redeemer. 1st. They must wait till the time appointed, which is now not many days hence. They that by faith hope promised mercies will come must with patience wait till they do come, according to the time, the set time; and when the time draws near, as now it did, we must, as Daniel, look earnestly for it, *Dan. ix. 3*. 2nd. They must wait in the place appointed, in Jerusalem; for there the Spirit must be first poured out, because Christ was to be as King upon the holy hill of Zion; and because the word of the Lord must go forth from Jerusalem; that must be the mother church. There Christ was put to shame, and therefore there he will have this honour done him, and this favour done to Jerusalem, to teach us to forgive our enemies and persecutors. The apostles were more exposed to danger at Jerusalem than they would have been in Galilee; but we may cheerfully trust God with our safety when we keep in the way of our duty. The apostles were now to put on a public character, and therefore must venture in a public station; Jerusalem was the fittest candlestick for those lights to be set up in.

2. The assurance he gives them that they shall not wait in vain. The blessing designed them shall come, and they shall find it was worth waiting for; "You shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." That is, 1st. The Holy Ghost shall be poured out upon you more plentifully than ever. They had already been breathed upon with the Holy Ghost, *Jno. xx. 22*, and they had found the benefit of it, but now they shall have larger measures of his gifts, graces, and comforts, and be baptized with them; where there seems to be an allusion to those Old Testament promises of the pouring out of the Spirit, *Joel ii. 29*; *Isa. xlii. 3*; *xxxii. 15*. 2nd. Ye shall be cleansed and purified by the Holy Ghost, as the priests were baptized and washed with water when they were consecrated to their sacred function: they had the sign, you shall have the thing signified. You shall be sanctified by the truth, as the Spirit shall lead you more and more into it, and your consciences purged by the witness of the Spirit, that you may serve the living God in the apostleship. 3rd. Ye shall hereby be more effectually than ever engaged to your Master and to his conduct, as Israel was baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. You shall be tied so fast to Christ, that you shall never, for fear of any sufferings, forsake him again, as once you did.

Now this gift of the Holy Ghost he speaks of, First, As "the promise of the Father" which they had heard of him, and might therefore depend upon. 1st. The Spirit was given by promise; and it was at this time the great promise, as that of the Messiah was before, *Lu. i. 72*, and that of eternal life is now, *1 Jno. ii. 25*. Temporal good things are given by Providence; but the Spirit, and spiritual blessings, are given by promise.

by his Spirit, working through human instrumentality. Of this continuation does the Acts of the Apostles contain an account.

i. 2. Our Lord is here said to have given his commands to the Apostles "through" or in the power of "the Holy Ghost." Compare *Heb. ix. 14*, where it is said of him, "who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." The words "through the Holy Ghost" may be joined with "whom he had chosen," and with this compare chap. xx. 28.

Gal. iii. 13. The Spirit of God is not given as the spirit of men is given us, and formed within us by a course of nature, *Zec. xii. 1*, but by the Word of God. 1. That the gift may be the more valuable. Christ thought the promise of the Spirit a legacy worth leaving to his church. 2. That it may be the more sure, and that the heirs of promise may be confident of the immutability of God's counsel herein. 3. That it may be of grace, peculiar grace, and may be received by faith, laying hold on the promise and depending upon it. As Christ, so the Spirit is received by faith. 2nd. It was the promise of the Father, of Christ's Father. Christ, as Mediator, had an eye to God, as his Father, fathering his design, and owning it all along. Of our Father, who if he give us the adoption of sons, will certainly give us the Spirit of adoption, *Gal. iv. 5*. He will give the Spirit as the Father of lights, as the Father of spirits, and as the Father of mercies; it is the promise of the Father. 3rd. This promise of the Father they had heard from Christ many a time, especially in the farewell sermon he preached to them a little before he died, wherein he assured them again and again that the Comforter should come. This confirms the promise of God, and encourageth us to depend upon it, that we have heard it from Jesus Christ; for in him all the promises of God are Yea and Amen. You have heard it from me, and I will make it good.

Secondly. As the prediction of John Baptist; for so far back Christ here directs them to look; ver. 5. You have not only heard it from me, but you had it from John; when he turned you over to me he said, *Mat. iii. 11*, "I indeed baptize you with water; but he that comes after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." It is a great honour Christ now doth to John, not only to quote his words, but to make this great gift of the Spirit now at hand to be the accomplishment of them. Thus he confirmeth the word of his servants, his messengers, *Isa. xlv. 26*. But Christ can do more than any of his ministers. It is an honour to them to be employed in dispensing the means of grace; but it is his prerogative to give the Spirit of grace. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost;" shall teach you by his Spirit, and give his Spirit to make intercession in you, which is more than the best ministers preaching with us.

Now this gift of the Holy Ghost thus promised, thus prophesied of, thus waited for, is that which we find the apostles received in the next chapter; for in that this promise had its full accomplishment. That was it that should come, and we look for no other; for it is here promised to be given not many days hence. He doth not tell them how many, because they must keep every day in a frame fit to receive it. Other Scriptures speak of the gift of the Holy Ghost to ordinary believers; this speaks of that particular power which, by the Holy Ghost, the first preachers of the Gospel and planters of the church were endued with, enabling them infallibly to relate to that age, and record to posterity the doctrine of Christ, and the proofs of it; so that, by virtue of this promise and the performance of it, we receive the New Testament as of Divine inspiration, and venture our souls upon it.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

In Jerusalem, Christ, by his angel, had appointed his disciples to meet him in Galilee; there he appointed them to meet him in Jerusalem again such a day. Thus he would try their obedience, and it was found ready and cheerful; they came together, as he appointed them, to be the witnesses of his ascension, which here we have an account of. Observe,

First. The question they asked him at this interview. They came together to him, as those that had consulted one another about it, and concurred in the question *nemine contradicente*,—'unanimously;' they came in a body, and put it to him as the sense of the house, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Two ways this may be taken:

1. Sure thou wilt not at all restore it to the present rulers of Israel, the chief priests and the elders that put thee to death; and to compass that design, tamely gave up the kingdom to Cæsar, and owned themselves his subjects. What! shall those that hate and persecute thee and us be trusted with power? That be far from thee. Or rather,

2. Sure thou wilt now restore it to the Jewish nation, as far as it will submit to thee as their King. Now two things were amiss in this question:

1st. Their expectation of the thing itself. They thought Christ would restore the kingdom to Israel, that is, that he would make the nation of the Jews as great and considerable among the nations as it was in the days of David and Solomon, of Aza and Jehoshaphat; that, as Shiloh, he would restore the sceptre to Judah, and the lawgiver; whereas Christ came to set up his own kingdom, and that a kingdom of heaven, not to restore the kingdom to Israel, an earthly kingdom. See how apt even good men are to place the happiness of the church too much in external pomp and power, as if Israel were not glorious unless the kingdom were restored to it, nor Christ's disciples honoured unless they were peers of the realm; whereas we are told to expect the cross in this world, and to wait for the kingdom in the other world. See how apt we are to retain what we have imbibed, and how hard it is to get over the prejudices of education. The disciples having sucked in this notion with

their milk, that the Messiah was to be a temporal prince, they were long before they could be brought to have any idea of his kingdom as spiritual. See also how naturally we are biased in favour of our own people. They thought God would have no kingdom in the world unless it were restored to Israel, whereas the kingdoms of this world were to become his, in whom he would be glorified, whether Israel sink or swim. See also how apt we are to misunderstand Scripture, and to understand that literally which is spoken figuratively, and to expound Scripture by our schemes, whereas we ought to form our schemes by the Scriptures; but when the Spirit shall be poured out from on high, our mistakes will be rectified, as the apostles' soon after were.

2nd. Their inquiry concerning the time of it; Lord, wilt thou do it at this time? Now thou hast called us together is it for this purpose, that proper measures may be concerted for the restoring of the kingdom to Israel? sure there cannot be a more favourable juncture than this. Now herein they missed it. **First.** That they were inquisitive into that which their Master had never directed or encouraged them to inquire into. **Secondly.** That they were impatient for the setting up of that kingdom in which they promised themselves so great a share, and would anticipate the Divine counsels. Christ had told them they should sit on thrones, *Lu. xxii. 30*, and now nothing will serve them but they must be in the throne presently, and cannot stay the time; whereas he that believeth doth not make haste, but is satisfied that God's time is the best time.

Secondly. The check which Christ gave to this question, like that which he had a little before given to Peter's inquiry concerning John, "What is that to thee?" ver. 7. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons." He doth not contradict their expectation that the kingdom would be restored to Israel, because that mistake would soon be rectified by the pouring out of the Spirit, after which they never had any more thought of the temporal kingdom; and also because there is a sense of the expectation which is true, the setting up of the gospel kingdom in the world, and their mistake of the promise shall not make it of none effect; but he checks their inquiry after the time.

1. The knowledge of this is not allowed to them; "It is not for you to know," and therefore it is not for you to ask. 1st. Christ is now parting from them, and parts in love, and yet he gives them this rebuke; which is intended for a caution to his church in all ages, to take heed of splitting upon the rock which was fatal to our first parents,—an inordinate desire of forbidden knowledge, and intruding into things which we have not seen, because God has not shewn. *Nescire nelle quæ magister maximus docere non vult, erudita inculta est.*—It is folly to covet to be wise above what is written, and wisdom to be content to be no wiser. 2nd. Christ had given his disciples a great deal of knowledge above others, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God;" and had promised them his Spirit to teach them more. Now, lest they should be puffed up with the abundance of the revelations, he here let them understand that there were some things which it was not for them to know. We shall see how little reason we have to be proud of our knowledge, when we consider how many things we are ignorant of. 3rd. Christ had given his disciples instructions sufficient for the discharge of their duty, both before his death and since his resurrection, and this knowledge he will have them to be satisfied in; for it is enough for a Christian, in whom vain curiosity is a corrupt humour, to be mortified and not gratified. 4th. Christ had himself told his disciples the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and had promised that the Spirit should shew them things to come concerning it, *Jno. xvi. 13*. He had likewise given them signs of the times, which it was their duty to observe, and a sin to overlook, *Mat. xxiv. 33*; xvi. 3; but they must not expect or desire to know either all the particulars of future events or the exact times of them. It is good for us to be kept in the dark, and left at uncertainty concerning the times and moments, as Dr. Hammond reads it, of future events concerning the church as well as concerning ourselves; concerning all the periods of time, and the final period of it, as well as concerning the period of our own time.

Prudens futuri temporis exitum,

Caliginosa nocte premittit Deus.—

But Jove, in goodness ever wise,

Hath hid, in clouds of thickest night,

All that in future prospect lies

Beyond the ken of mortal sight.—*Hor.*

As to the times and seasons of the year, we know in general, there will be summer and winter counterchanged; but we know not particularly which day will be fair or which foul, either in summer or in winter: so as to our affairs in this world, when it is a summer time of prosperity, that we may not be secure, we are told there will come a winter time of trouble; and in that winter, that we may not despond and despair, we are assured summer will return; but what this or that particular day will bring forth we cannot tell, but must accommodate ourselves to it whatever it is, and make the best of it.

2. The knowledge of it is reserved to God as his prerogative; it is what "the Father hath put in his own power;" it is hid with him. None but he can reveal the times and seasons to come; "known unto God are all his works," but not unto us, *Acts xv. 18*. It is in his power, and in his only, to declare the end from the beginning, and by this he proves himself to be God, *Isa. xli. 10*. And though he did think fit sometimes to let the Old Testament prophets know the times and the seasons, as of the Israelites' bondage in Egypt four hundred years, and in Babylon seventy years, yet he has not thought fit to let you know the times and seasons, no, not just how long it shall be before Jerusalem be destroyed, though you be so well assured of the thing itself. He hath not said he will not yet give you to know something more than you do of the times and seasons,—he did do so afterwards to his servant John; but he has put it in his own power to do it or not, as he thinks fit. And what is in that New Testament prophecy discovered, concerning the times and seasons, is so dark and hard to be understood, that, when we come to apply to it, it concerns us to remember this word, that it is not for us to be positive in determining the times and the seasons. Buxtorf mentions a saying of the Rabbins concerning the coming of the Messiah, *Rumpatur spiritus eorum qui supputant tempora*.—Perish the men who calculate the time.

Thirdly. He cuts them out their work, and with authority assures them of an ability to go on with it, and of success in it. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons," that will do you no good; but know this, ver. 8, that you shall receive a spiritual power by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon you, and shall not receive it in vain, for ye shall be witnesses unto me and my glory; and your testimony shall not be in vain, for it shall be received here in Jerusalem, in the country about, and all the world over, ver. 8. If Christ make us serviceable to his honour in our own day and generation, let that be enough for us, and let not us perplex ourselves about times and seasons to come. Christ here tells them,

1. That their work should be honourable and glorious; "You shall be witnesses unto me." 1st. They shall proclaim him king, and publish those truths to the world by which his kingdom should be set up, and he would rule. They must openly and solemnly preach his Gospel to the world. 2nd. They shall prove this, shall confirm their testimony, not as witnesses do, with an oath, but with the Divine seal of miracles and supernatural gifts; Ye shall be martyrs

i. 3. "Passion:" literally, "suffering." "Infallible proofs:" "The word in the original denotes a certain proof or ground of argument by which a fact may be ascertained. The apostles saw our Lord after the resurrection on no less than thirteen recorded occasions, and under circumstances that made all illusion impossible" (Cook on The Acts). "Being seen:" not continually, but occasionally. One qualification for the office of an apostle was to have been an eye-witness of our Lord after his resurrection.

i. 6. Most probably this was the last meeting of our Lord with his disciples; that which took place on the Mount of Olives, from which our Lord ascended. The disciples feel that there is a connection between the outpouring of the Spirit and the restoration of the kingdom. If the outpouring of the Spirit is the greatest of all gifts for purifying the national life, if this outpouring is to take place within a few days, might not the national restoration, as its true result, be close at hand?

to me, or my martyrs, as some copies read it; for they attested the truth of the Gospel with their sufferings, even unto death.

2. That their power for this work should be sufficient. They had not strength of their own for it, not wisdom or courage enough; they were naturally of the weak and foolish things of this world. They durst not appear as witnesses for Christ upon his trial, neither as yet were they able; "But ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you," (so it may be read,) shall be animated and acted by a better spirit than your own; you shall have power to preach the Gospel, and to prove it out of the scriptures of the Old Testament, which, when they were filled with the Holy Ghost, they did to admiration, *ch. xviii. 28*, and to confirm it, both by miracles and by their sufferings. Note, Christ's witnesses shall receive power for that work to which he calls them. Whom he employs in his service he will qualify them for it, and bear them out in it.

3. That their influence should be great and very extensive. You shall be witnesses for Christ, and shall carry his cause, 1st. In Jerusalem. There you must begin, and many there will receive your testimony; and they that do not will be left inexcusable. 2nd. Your light shall from thence shine throughout all Judæa, where before we have laboured in vain. 3rd. Thence you shall proceed to Samaria, though at your first mission you were forbidden to preach in any of the cities of the Samaritans. 4th. Your usefulness shall reach to the uttermost part of the earth, and you shall be blessings to the whole world.

Fourthly. Having left these instructions with them, he leaves them; *ver. 9*, "when he had spoken these things," and had said all that he had to say, "he blessed them;" so we were told, *Lu. xxiv. 50*; and "while they beheld" him, and had their eye fixed upon him, receiving his blessing, "he was" gradually "taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." We have here Christ's ascending on high. Not fetched away as Elijah was, with a chariot of fire, and horses of fire; but rising to heaven, as he rose from the grave, purely by his own power, his body being now, as the bodies of the saints will be at the resurrection, a spiritual body, and raised in power and incorruption. Observe,

1. He began his ascension in the sight of his disciples, even while they beheld. They did not see him come up out of the grave, because they might see him after he was risen, which would be satisfaction enough; but they saw him go up towards heaven, and had actually their eye upon him, with so much care and intention of mind that they could not be deceived. It is probable that he did not fly swiftly up, but moved upwards fair and softly, for the farther satisfaction of his disciples.

2. He finished it out of their sight, in a cloud; either a thick cloud, for God said, He would dwell in the thick darkness, or a bright cloud, to signify the splendour of his glorious body. It was a bright cloud that overshadowed him in his transfiguration, and most probably this was so, *Mat. xvii. 5*. This cloud received him, it is probable, when he was gone about as far from the earth as the clouds generally are; yet it was not such a spreading cloud as we commonly see, but such as just served to enclose him. Now he made the clouds his chariot, *Ps. civ. 3*. God had often come down in a cloud, now he went up in one. Dr. Hammond thinks that the clouds receiving him here was the angels receiving him; for the appearance of angels is ordinarily described by a cloud; comparing *Ex. xxv. 22*, with *Lev. xvi. 2*. By the clouds there is a sort of a communication kept up between the upper and lower world; in them the vapours are sent up from the earth, and the dews sent down from heaven; fitly, therefore, doth he ascend in a cloud who is the Mediator between God and man, by whom God's mercies come down upon us, and our prayers come up to him. This was the last that was seen of him, the eyes of a great many witnesses followed him into the cloud; and if we would know what came of him then, we may find, *Dan. vii. 13*, that "one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him" in the clouds as he came "near before him."

Fifthly. The disciples, when he was gone out of their sight, yet still continued looking up stedfastly to heaven, *ver. 10*, and this longer than it was fit they should; and why so?

1. Perhaps they hoped that Christ would presently come back to them again, to restore the kingdom to Israel, and were loath to believe they should now part with him for good and all, so much did they still dote upon his bodily presence, though he had told them it was expedient for them that he should go away. Or, they look after him as doubting whether he might not be dropped, as the sons of the prophets thought concerning Elijah, *2 Kin. ii. 16*, and so they might have him again.

2. Perhaps they expected to see some change in the visible heavens now upon Christ's ascension, that either the sun should be ashamed or the moon confounded, *Isa. xxiv. 6*, as being outshone by his lustre. Or, rather, that they should shew some sign of joy and triumph. Or, perhaps, they promised themselves a sight of the glory of the invisible heavens, upon their opening to receive him. Christ had told them that "hereafter they should see heaven opened," *Jno. i. 51*, and why should not they expect it now?

Sixthly. Two angels appeared to them, and delivered them a seasonable message from God. There was a world of angels ready to receive our Redeemer now he made his public entry into the Jerusalem above. We may suppose these two loath to be absent then; yet, to shew how much Christ had at heart the concerns of his church on earth, he sent two of those that came to meet him back to his disciples, who appear as two men in white apparel, bright and glistering; for they know, according to the duty of their place, that they are really serving Christ when they are ministering to his servants on earth. Now we are told that they said to them,

1. To check their curiosity; "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" He calls them men of Galilee, to put them in mind of the rock out of which they were hewn. Christ had put a great honour upon them in making them his ambassadors; but they must remember that they are men, earthen vessels, and men of Galilee, illiterate men, looked upon with disdain. Now, say they, Why stand ye here, like Galileans, rude and unpolished men, gazing up into heaven? What would you see? you have seen all that you were called together to see, and why do ye look any farther? Why stand ye gazing, as men frightened and perplexed, as men astonished and at their wits' end? Christ's disciples should never stand at a gaze, because they have a sure rule to go by, and a sure foundation to build upon.

2. To confirm their faith concerning Christ's second coming. Their Master had often told them of that, and the angels sent at this time seasonably to put them in mind of it. "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, and whom you are looking thus long after, wishing you had him with you again, is not gone for ever; for there is a day appointed in which he will come in like manner thence as ye have seen him go thither, and you must not expect him back till that appointed day. 1st. This same Jesus shall come again in his own person, clothed with this glorious body; this same Jesus, that came once to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, will appear the second time without sin, *Heb. ix. 26*; 2d. that came once in disgrace to be judged, will come again in glory to judge. The same Jesus that has given you your charge will come again to call you to an account how you have performed your trust; he, and not another, *Job xix. 27*. 2nd. He shall come in like manner. He is gone away in a cloud, and attended with angels; and, behold, he comes in the clouds,

i. 7. "Times" and "seasons:" "times" means any period; "seasons" a limited, definite space of time, including the notions of fitness and transitoriness. Our Lord checks their curiosity to peep into the unrevealed future. Their faith is drawn out, and their attention turned to their immediate work; and so our Lord returns (verse 8) to the subject of the outpouring of the Spirit, adding this time the effect on themselves, and the object for which it would be given: "Leave the future in the hands of God. Look to yourselves. You

and with him an innumerable company of angels. He is gone up with a shout, and with the sound of a trumpet, *Ps. xlvii. 5*, and he will descend from heaven with a shout, and with the trump of God, *1 Thes. iv. 16*. You have now lost the sight of him in the clouds, and in the air, and whither he is gone you cannot follow him now; but shall then, when you shall be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. When we stand gazing and trifling, the consideration of our Master's second coming should quicken and awaken us; and when we stand gazing and trembling, the consideration of it should comfort and encourage us.

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. 13 And when they were come



ASCENT TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

We are here told,

First. From whence Christ ascended. From the mount of Olives, *ver. 12*; from that part of it where the town of Bethany stood, *Lu. xxiv. 50*. There he began his sufferings, *Lu. xxii. 39*, and, therefore, there he rolled away the reproach of them by his glorious ascension, and thus shewed that his passion and his ascension had the same reference and tendency. Thus would he enter upon his kingdom in the sight of Jerusalem, and of those unthankful, ungrateful citizens of that city that would not have him to reign over them. It was prophesied of him, *Zec. xiv. 4*, that his feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem, shall stand last there; and presently it follows, The mount of Olives shall cleave in two. From the mount of Olives he ascended who is the good olive tree, whence we receive the unction, *Zec. iv. 12*; *Rom. xi. 24*. This mount is here said to be near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey from it; that is, a little way, no farther than devout people used to walk out on a sabbath evening, after the public worship was over, for meditation. Some reckon it a thousand paces, others two thousand cubits; some seven furlongs, others eight. Bethany, indeed, was fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, *Jno. xi. 18*; but that part of the mount of Olives which was next to Jerusalem, from whence Christ began to ride in triumph, was but seven or eight furlongs off. The Chaldee paraphrast on *Ruth i. 1*, saith, 'We are commanded to keep the sabbaths and the holy days, so as not to go above two thousand cubits,' which they build upon *Jos. iii. 4*, where, in their march through Jordan, the space between them and the ark was to be two thousand cubits. God had not then thus limited them, but they limited themselves, and thus far it is a rule to us, not to journey on the sabbath any more than in order to the sabbath work; and as far as it is necessary to that, we are not only allowed, but enjoined, *2 Kin. iv. 23*.

Secondly. Whither the disciples returned. They came to Jerusalem, according to their Master's appointment, though there they were in the midst of enemies; but, it should seem, that, though immediately after Christ's resurrection they were watched, and were in fear of the Jews, yet, after it was known that they were gone into Galilee, no notice was taken of their return to Jerusalem, nor any farther search made for them. God can find out hiding places for his people in the midst of their enemies, and so influence Saul that he shall not seek for David any more. At Jerusalem they went up into an upper room, and there abode; not that they all lodged and dined together in one room, but there they assembled every day, and spent time together in religious exercises, in expectation of the descent of the Spirit. Divers conjectures the learned have about this upper room. Some think it was one of the upper rooms in the temple; but it cannot be thought that the chief priests, who had the setting and letting of those rooms, would suffer Christ's disciples constantly to reside in any of them. It was said, indeed, by the same historian, that they were continually in the temple, *Lu. xxiv. 53*, but that was in the courts of the temple, at the hours of prayer, where they could not be hindered from attending; but, it should seem this upper room was in a private house. Mr. Gregory, of Oxford, is of that mind, and quotes a Syriac scholiast upon this place, who saith that it was the same upper room in which they had eaten the passover; and, though that was called *ἀνδρῶν*, this *ὑπερῶν*, both may signify

have work before you; but you are weak. You shall be made powerful. You must be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem," &c.

i. 9. "A cloud:" Alford says, "There was a manifest propriety in the last withdrawal of our Lord, while ascending, not consisting in a disappearance of his body, as on former occasions since his resurrection; for thus might his abiding humanity have been called in question. As it was, he went up, past the visible boundary of heaven—the cloud—in human form, and so we think of and pray to him."

the same. "Whether, saith he, "it was in the house of St. John the evangelist, as Eusebius delivered, or that of Mary the mother of John Mark, as others have collected, cannot be certain." Notes, *ch.* xiii.

Thirdly. Who the disciples were that kept together. The eleven apostles are here named, *ver.* 13. So is Mary the mother of our Lord, *ver.* 14; and it is the last time that ever any mention is made of her in the Scriptures. There were others, that are here said to be the brethren of our Lord, his kinsmen according to the flesh; and, to make up the hundred and twenty spoken of, *ver.* 15, we may suppose that all or most of the seventy disciples were with them, that were associates with the apostles, and were employed as evangelists.

Fourthly. How they spent their time. They "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Observe,

1. They prayed and made supplication. All God's people are praying people, and give themselves to prayer. It was now a time of trouble and danger with the disciples of Christ, they were as sheep in the midst of wolves; and, in any afflicted, let him pray, that will silence cares and fears. They had now work before them, great work, and before they entered upon it they were instant in prayer to God for his presence with them in it. Before they were first sent forth, Christ spent time in prayer for them, and now they in prayer for themselves. They were waiting for the descent of the Spirit upon them, and therefore abounded thus in prayer. The Spirit descended upon our Saviour when he was praying, *Lu.* iii. 21. Those are in the best frame to receive spiritual blessings that are in a praying frame. Christ had promised now shortly to send the Holy Ghost; now that promise was not to supersede prayer, but to quicken and encourage it. God will be inquired of for promised mercies; and the nearer the performance seems to be the more earnest we should be in prayer for it.

2. They continued in prayer, spent much time in it, more than ordinary, prayed frequently, and were long in prayer: they never missed an hour of prayer. They resolved to persevere herein till the Holy Ghost came according to the promise, to pray and not faint. It was said, *Lu.* xxiv. 53, they were praising and blessing God, here that they continued in prayer and supplication; for, as praise for the promise is a decent way of begging for the performance, and praise for former mercy of begging farther mercy, so, in seeking to God, we give him the glory of that mercy and grace which we have found in him.

3. They did this with one accord. That intimates that they were together in holy love, and there was no quarrel or discord among them; and those who so keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace are best prepared to receive the comforts of the Holy Ghost. It also speaks their worthy concurrence in the supplications that were made; though but one spoke, they all prayed. And if, when two agree to ask, it shall be done for them, much more when many agree in the same petition: see *Mat.* xviii. 19.

15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty,) 16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. 17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. 18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. 20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. 21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. 23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

The sin of Judas was not only his shame and ruin, but it made a gap in the college of the apostles. They were ordained twelve, with an eye to the twelve

tribes of Israel, descended from the twelve patriarchs; they were the twelve stars that make up the church's crown, *Rev.* xii. 1, and for them twelve thrones were designed, *Mat.* xix. 28. Now, being twelve when they were learners, if they were but eleven when they were to be teachers, it would occasion every one to inquire what was become of the twelfth; and so revive the remembrance of the scandal of their society; and, therefore, care was taken before the descent of the Spirit to fill up the vacancy, which now we have an account of the doing of. Our Lord Jesus, probably, having given directions about it, among other things which he spoke pertaining to the kingdom of God. Observe,

First. The persons concerned in this affair.

1. The house consisted of about a hundred and twenty. These were the number of the names, that is, the persons; some think the men only, distinguished from the women. Dr. Lightfoot reckons that the eleven apostles, the seventy disciples, and about thirty-nine more, all of Christ's own kindred, country, and concourse, made up this one hundred and twenty, and that these were a sort of synod, or congregation of ministers, a standing presbytery, *ch.* iv. 21, to whom none of the rest durst join themselves, *ch.* v. 13; and they continued together till the persecution at Stephen's death dispersed them all but the apostles, *ch.* viii. 1. But he thinks that, besides these, there were many hundreds in Jerusalem, if not thousands, at this time that believed; and we have indeed read of many that believed on him there, but durst not confess him, and therefore I cannot think as he doth, that they were now formed into distinct congregations for the preaching of the Word, and other acts of worship, nor that there was any thing of that till after the pouring out of the Spirit, and the conversions in the following chapter. Here was the beginning of the Christian church. This hundred and twenty was the grain of mustard seed that grew into a tree, the leaven that leavened the whole lump.

2. The speaker was Peter, who had been and still was the most forward man; and, therefore, notice is taken of his forwardness and zeal to shew that he had perfectly recovered the ground he lost by his denying his Master. And Peter being designed to be the apostle of the circumcision, while the sacred story stays among the Jews, he is still brought in, as afterwards, when it comes to speak of the Gentiles, it keeps to the story of Paul.

Secondly. The proposal which Peter made for the choice of another apostle. He "stood up in the midst of the disciples," *ver.* 15. He did not sit down, as one that gave laws, or had any supremacy over the rest; but stood up, as one that had only a motion to make, in which he paid a deference to his brethren, standing up when he spoke to them. Now, in this speech we may observe,

1. The account he gives of the vacancy made by the death of Judas, in which he is very particular, and, as became one that Christ had breathed upon, takes notice of the fulfilling of the Scriptures in it. Here is,

1st. The power to which Judas had been advanced; *ver.* 17, "He was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry" which we are invested in. Note, Many are numbered with the saints in this world that will not be found among them in the day of separation between the precious and the vile. What will it avail us to be added to the number of Christians if we partake not of the spirit and nature of Christians? Judas' having obtained part of this ministry was but an aggravation of his sin and ruin, as it will be of theirs who professed in Christ's name, and yet were workers of iniquity.

2nd. The sin of Judas, notwithstanding his advancement to this honour. He "was guide to them that took Jesus;" not only informed Christ's persecutors where they might find him, which they might have done effectually though he had kept out of sight; but he had the impudence to appear openly at the head of the party that seized him. He went before them to the place, and, as if he had been proud of the honour, gave the word of command; "That same is he, hold him fast." Note, Ringleaders in sin are the worst of sinners, especially if those that by their office should have been guides to the friends of Christ are guides to his enemies.

3rd. The ruin of Judas by this sin. Perceiving the chief priests to seek the life of Christ and his disciples, he thought to save his by going over to them; and, not only so, but to get an estate under them, of which his wages for his service he hoped would be but an earnest. But see what came of it:

First. He lost his money shamefully enough; *ver.* 18, he purchased a field with the thirty pieces of silver which were the reward of his iniquity. He did not purchase the field, but the wages of his unrighteousness did; and it is very elegantly expressed thus, in derision of his projects to enrich himself by this bargain. He thought to have purchased a field for himself, as Gehazi did with what he got from Naaman by a lie: see *2 Kin.* v. 26; but it proved the purchase of a field to bury strangers in; and what the better was he for that, or any of his? It was to him an unrighteous mammon, it deceived him; and the reward of his iniquity was the stumblingblock of his iniquity.

Secondly. He lost his life more shamefully. We were told, *Mat.* xxvii. 5, that he went away in despair, and was suffocated; so the word signifies there, and no more; here it is added (as latter historians add to those who went before) that, being strangled, or choked, with grief and horror, he fell headlong, fell on his face, so Dr. Hammond; and, partly with the swelling of his own breast, and partly with the violence of the fall, he burst asunder in the midst, so that all his bowels tumbled out. If, when the devil was cast out of a child, he tore him, threw him down, and rent him, and almost killed him, as we find *Mar.* ix. 36; *Lu.* ix. 42, no wonder if, when he had full possession of Judas, he threw him headlong, and burst him. The suffocating of him, which Matthew relates, would make him swell till he burst, which Peter relates. He burst asunder with a great noise, so Dr. Edwards, which was heard by the neighbours, and so, as it follows, it came to be known, *ver.* 19. His bowels gushed out; Luke writes like a physician, understanding all the entrails of the middle and lower ventricle. Bowelling is part of the punishment of traitors. Justly do those bowels gush out that were shut up against the Lord Jesus. And perhaps Christ had an eye to the fate of Judas, when he said of the wicked servant that he would cut him in sunder, *Mat.* xxiv. 51.

4th. The public notice that was taken of this. "It was known to all the dwellers in Jerusalem;" it was, as it were, put into the newspapers, and was all the talk of the town, as a remarkable judgment of God upon him that betrayed his Master, *ver.* 19. It was not only discoursed of among the disciples, but it was in everybody's mouth, and nobody disputed the truth of the fact. "It was known," that is, it was known to be true, incontestably so. Now one would think this should have awakened those to repentance that had had any hand in the death of Christ, when they saw him that had the first hand thus made an example. But their hearts were hardened; and those of them that were to be softened, it must be done by the Word, and the Spirit working with it. Here is one proof of the notoriety of the thing mentioned, that the field which was purchased with Judas' money was called Aceldama, the field of blood, because it was bought with the price of blood, which perpetuated the infamy, not only of him that sold that innocent precious blood, but of them that bought it too. Look how they will answer it, when God shall make inquisition for blood.

5th. The fulfilling of the Scriptures in this, which had spoken so plainly of it, that it must needs be fulfilled, *ver.* 16. Let none be surprised or stumbled at it, that this should be the exit of one of the twelve, for David had foretold,

i. 10. "Looked steadfastly:" were gazing. The words indicate the intense feelings with which the apostles looked on their departing Lord.

i. 12. "Olivet:" "On the east the city is immediately enclosed by a long ridge, itself with four distinct summits, one outlier starting off to the north and another to the south. This ridge is that known, both in the Old and the New Testament, as the Mount of Olives, or of the olive-garden. . . . From every roof of the city

the long ridge of Olivet forms a familiar feature—so near, so immediately overhanging the town, that it almost seems to be within it. . . . The olives and vineyards, from which it derived its name, must in earlier times have clothed it far more completely than at present. Now it is only in the deeper and more secluded slope leading up to the northernmost summit that these venerable trees spread into anything like a forest. And in those times myrtle-groves, pines, and palm-trees, all of which have now disappeared,

not only his sin, (which Christ had taken notice of, *Jno.* xiii. 18, from *Ps.* xli. 9, "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me,") but had also foretold.

First. His punishment; *Ps.* lxxix. 25, "Let his habitation be desolate." That psalm refers to the Messiah,—mention was made but two or three verses before of their giving him gall and vinegar,—and therefore the following predictions of the destruction of David's enemies must be applied to the enemies of Christ, and particularly to Judas. Perhaps he had some habitation of his own at Jerusalem, which, upon this, everybody was afraid to live in, and so it became desolate. This prediction signifies the same with that of Bildad concerning the wicked man, that his "confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors. It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because it is none of his: brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation," *Job* xviii. 14, 15.

Secondly. The substitution of another in his room. "His bishoprick," or his office, for so the word signifies in general, "shall another take," which is quoted from *Ps.* cix. 8. With this quotation Peter very aptly introduceth the following proposal. Note, We are not to think the worse of any office that God has instituted, whether magistracy or ministry, either for the wickedness of any that are in that office, or for the ignominious punishment of that wickedness; nor will God suffer any purpose of his to be frustrated, any commission of his to be vacated, or any work of his to be undone, for the miscarriages of them that are intrusted therewith. The unbelief of man shall not make the promise of God of none effect. Judas is hanged, but his bishoprick is not lost. It is said of his habitation, that no man shall dwell therein, there he shall have no heir; but it is not said so of his bishoprick, there he shall not want a successor. It is with the officers of the church as with the members of it, if the natural branches be broken off, others shall be grafted in, *Rom.* xi. 17. Christ's cause shall never be lost for want of witnesses.

2. The motion he makes for the choice of another apostle, *ver.* 21, 22, where observe,

1st. How the person must be qualified that must fill up the vacancy. It must be one "of these men," these seventy disciples, "that have companied with us," that have constantly attended us "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us," preaching and working miracles for three years and a half, "beginning from the baptism of John," which the Gospel of Christ commenced from, "unto the same day that he was taken up from us." Those that have been diligent, and faithful, and constant in the discharge of the duty of a lower station are fittest to be preferred to a higher; that have been faithful in a little shall be intrusted with more. And none should be employed as ministers of Christ, preachers of his Gospel, and rulers in his church, but those that are well acquainted with his doctrine and doings from first to last. None shall be an apostle but one that has companied with the apostles, and that continually; nor that has visited them now and then, but been intimately conversant with them.

2nd. To what work he is called that must fill up the vacancy. He must "be a witness with us of his resurrection." By this it appears that others of the disciples were with the eleven when Christ appeared to them, else they could not have been witnesses with them, as competent witnesses as they of his resurrection. The great thing which the apostles were to attest to the world was Christ's resurrection; for that was the great proof of his being the Messiah, and the foundation of our hope in him. See what the apostles were ordained to; not to a secular dignity and dominion, but to preach Christ, and the power of his resurrection.

Thirdly. The nomination of the person that was to succeed Judas in his office as an apostle.

1. Two, who were known to have been Christ's constant attendants, as I men of great integrity, were set up as candidates for the place; *ver.* 23, "They appointed two,"—not the eleven, they did not take upon them to determine who should be put up,—but the hundred and twenty; for to them Peter spoke, and not to the eleven. The two they nominated were Joseph and Matthias, of neither of whom do we read elsewhere, except this Joseph be the same with that Jesus which is called Justus, whom Paul speaks of, *Col.* iv. 11, and who is said to be of the circumcision, a native Jew as this was, and who was a fellow-worker with Paul unto the kingdom of God, and a comfort to him; and then it is observable, that, though he came short of being an apostle, he did not therefore quit the ministry, but was very useful in a lower station; for, "are all apostles? are all prophets?" Some think this Joseph is he that is called Josep, *Mar.* vi. 3, the brother of James the less, *Mar.* xv. 40, and was called Josep the just, as he was called James the just. Some confound this with that Josep mentioned *ch.* iv. 36, but that was of Cyprus, this of Galilee; and it should seem, to distinguish them, that was called Barnabas, "a son of consolation," this Barnabas, "a son of the oath." These two were both of them such worthy men, and so well qualified for the office, that they could not tell which of them was fittest, but all agreed it must be one of them two. They did not propose themselves, nor strive for the place, but humbly sat still and were appointed to it.

2. They applied themselves to God by prayer for direction, not which of the seventy,—for none of the rest could stand in competition with these in the opinion of all present,—but which of these two? *ver.* 24, 25.

1st. They appeal to God as the searcher of hearts; "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men," which we do not, and better than they know their own. Observe, when an apostle was to be chosen, he must be chosen by his heart, and the temper and disposition of that. Yet Jesus, who knew all men's hearts, for wise and holy ends chose Judas to be one of the twelve. It is comfortable to us, in our prayers for the welfare of the church and its ministers, that the God we pray to knows the hearts of all men, and hath them, not only under his eye, but in his hand, and turns them which way soever he will; can make them fit for his purpose, if he do not find them so, by giving them another spirit.

2nd. They desire to know which of these God hath chosen; Lord, shew us that, and we are satisfied. It is fit God should choose his own servants; and so far as he any way, by the disposals of his providence, or the gifts of his Spirit, shews whom he hath chosen, or what he hath chosen for us, we ought to comply with him.

3rd. They are ready to receive him as a brother whom God hath chosen; for they are not contriving to have so much the more dignity themselves by keeping out another, but desire to have one to "take part of this ministry and apostleship," to join with us in the work, and share with us in the honour, "from which Judas by transgression fell;" threw himself, by deserting and betraying his Master, from the place of an apostle, which he was unworthy of, that he might go to his own place, the place of a traitor, the fittest place for him; not only to the gibbet, but to hell,—that was his own place. Note, Those that betray Christ, as they fall from the dignity of relation to him, so they fall into all misery. It is said of Balaam, *Num.* xxiv. 24, 25, that he went to his own place, that is, says one of the rabbins, he went to hell. Dr. Whitby quotes Ignatius saying, "There is appointed to every man, *id est* toros, a proper place, which is the same with that of God's rendering to every man according to his works." And our Saviour said, that Judas's own place should be such as he had been better for him he had never been born, *Mat.* xxvi. 24: his mis-

such as to be worse than not being. Judas had been a hypocrite, and hell is the proper place of such; other sinners, as inmates, have their portion with them, *Mat.* xxiv. 51.

4th. The doubt was determined by lot, *ver.* 26, which is an appeal to God, and lawful to be used for the determining matters not otherwise determinable, provided it be done in a solemn religious manner, and with prayer, the prayer of faith; for "the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposal thereof is of the Lord," *Pr.* xvi. 33. Matthias was not ordained by the imposition of hands, as presbyters were, for he was chosen by lot, which was the act of God; and, therefore, as he must be baptized, so he must be ordained, by the Holy Ghost, as they all were not many days after. Thus the number of the apostles was made up, as afterwards, when James, another of the twelve, was martyred, Paul was made an apostle.

CHAPTER II.

Between the promise of the Messiah's coming, even the latest of those promises, and his coming, many ages intervened; but between the promise of the Spirit and his coming there were but a few days; and during those days the apostles, though they had received orders to preach the Gospel to every creature, and to begin at Jerusalem, yet lay perfectly wind-bound, incognito, and not offering to preach. But in this chapter the north wind and the south wind awake, and then they awake, and we have them in the pulpit presently. Here is, I. The descent of the Spirit upon the apostles, and those that were with them, on the day of Pentecost, *ver.* 1—4. II. The various speculations which this occasioned among the people that were now met in Jerusalem from all parts, *ver.* 5—13. III. The sermon which Peter preached to them hereupon, wherein he shews that this pouring out of the Spirit was the accomplishment of an Old Testament promise, *ver.* 14—21; that it was a confirmation of Christ's being the Messiah, which was already proved by his resurrection, *ver.* 21—32; and that it was a fruit and evidence of his ascension in heaven, *ver.* 33—36. IV. The good effect of this sermon in the conversion of many to the faith of Christ, and their addition to the church, *ver.* 37—41. V. The eminent piety and charity of those primitive Christians, and the manifest tokens of God's presence with them, and power in them, *ver.* 42—47.



AND when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there

appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

We have here an account of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples of Christ. Observe,

First. When and where this was done, which is particularly noticed for the greater certainty of the thing.

1. It was "when the day of Pentecost was fully come;" where there seems to be a reference to the manner of the expression in the institution of this feast, where it is said, *Lev.* xxiii. 15, Ye shall count unto you seven sabbaths complete from the day of the offering of the firstfruits, which was the next day but one after the passover, the sixteenth day of the month Abib, which was the day that Christ rose. This day was fully come; that is, the night preceding, with a part of the day, was fully past.

1st. The Holy Ghost came down at the time of a solemn feast, because there was then a great concourse of people to Jerusalem from all parts of the country, and of proselytes from other countries, which would make it the more public, and the fame of it to be spread the sooner and farther, which would contribute much to the propagating of the Gospel into all nations. Thus now, as before at the passover, the Jewish feasts served to toll the bell for gospel services and entertainments.

2nd. This feast of Pentecost was kept in remembrance of the giving of the law upon mount Sinai, from whence the incorporating of the Jewish church was to be dated, which Dr. Lightfoot reckons to be just one thousand four hundred and forty-seven years before this. Fitly, therefore, is the Holy Ghost given at that feast, in fire, and in tongues, for the promulgation of the evangelical law; not, as that, to one nation, but to every creature.

3rd. The feast of Pentecost happened on the first day of the week, which was an additional honour put on that day, and a confirmation of it to be the Christian sabbath, "the day which the Lord hath made," to be a standing memorial in his church of those two great blessings, the resurrection of Christ, and the pouring out of the Spirit, both on that day of the week. This serves not only to justify us in observing that day, under the style and title of the Lord's day, but to direct us in the sanctifying of it to give God praise particularly for those two great blessings. Every Lord's day in the year, I think, there should be a full and particular notice taken in our prayers and praises of these two, as there is by some churches of the one, once a year, upon Easter-day, and of the other, once a year, upon Whit-sunday. O that we may do it with suitable affections!

2. It was when "they were all with one accord in one place." What place it was we are not told particularly; whether in the temple, where they attended at public times, *Lu.* xxiv. 53; or whether in their own upper room, where they met at other times; but it was at Jerusalem, because it had been the place which God chose to put his name there, and the prophecy was, that from thence the Word of the Lord should go forth to all nations, *Isa.* ii. 3. And it was now the place of the general rendezvous of all devout people; here God had promised to meet them and bless them; here, therefore, he meets them with this blessing of blessings. Though Jerusalem had done the utmost dishonour imaginable to Christ, yet he did this honour to Jerusalem, to teach us not to fall out with places, nor conceive prejudices against them; for God has his remnant in all places: he had so in Jerusalem.

Here they were in one place, and they were not as yet so many but that one

must have made it a constant resort for pleasure or seclusion." (Stanley, "Sinai and Palestine," p. 186, "A Sabbath-day's journey:" i.e., about six furlongs. (See *Luke* xxiv. 50; *John* xi. 18.) The explanation of the apparent contradiction is simple. The term Bethany was often used of the district of Bethany, which stretched to within one Sabbath-day's journey of Jerusalem, and there touched Bethphage, which was a district stretching up to Jerusalem. Hence *Luke* means that our Lord led his disciples through the district of

Bethphage up to that point on the Mount of Olives where it touched the district of Bethany; and this point was one Sabbath-day's journey from Jerusalem.

i. 13. "Abode:" not lodged, but had as a place of rendezvous.

i. 14. "With the women:" in the Jewish Temple women were not permitted to worship with men, but had a separate court, the "Court of the Women;" they were also separated in the synagogue. (See *Luke* viii. 2, 3, *xxiii.* 49, 55, *xxiv.* 10.)

place, and no large one, would hold them all; and here they were with one accord. We cannot forget how often, while their Master was with them, there were strifes among them which should be greatest; but now all these strifes were at an end, we hear no more of them. What they had received already of the Holy Ghost, when Christ breathed on them, had in a good measure rectified the mistakes upon which those contests were grounded, and had disposed them to holy love. They had prayed more together of late than usual, *ch. i. 14*, and that made them love one another better. By his grace he thus prepared them for the gift of the Holy Ghost; for that blessed dove comes not where there is noise and clamour, but moves upon the face of the still waters, not the rugged ones. Would we have the Spirit poured out upon us from on high, let us be all of one accord, and, notwithstanding variety of sentiments and interests, as no doubt there was among those disciples, let us agree to love one another; for where brethren dwell together in unity there it is that the Lord commands his blessing.

Secondly. How, and in what manner, the Holy Ghost came upon them. We often read in the Old Testament of God's coming down in a cloud, as when he took possession of the tabernacle first, and afterwards of the temple, which intimates the darkness of that dispensation. And Christ went up to heaven in a cloud, to intimate how much we are kept in the dark concerning the upper world. But the Holy Ghost did not descend in a cloud; for he was to dispel and scatter the clouds that overspread men's minds, and to bring light into the world.

1. Here is an audible summons given them, to awaken their expectations of something great, *ver. 2*. It is here said, 1st. That it came suddenly, did not rise gradually, as common winds do, but was at the height immediately. It came sooner than they expected, and startled even them that were now together waiting, and probably employed in some religious exercises. 2nd. It was a sound from heaven, like a thunderclap, *Rev. vi. 1*. God is said to bring the winds out of his treasures, *Ps. cxlvi. 7*, and to gather them in his hands, *Pr. xxx. 4*. From him this sound came, like the voice of one crying, Prepare ye the way of the Lord. 3rd. It was the sound of a wind, for the way of the Spirit is like that of the wind, *Jno. iii. 8*. "Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it comes, or whither it goes." When the spirit of life is to enter into the dry bones, the prophet is bid to "prophesy unto the winds; Come from the four winds, O breath," *Eze. xxxvii. 9*. And though it was not in the wind that the Lord came to Elijah, yet that prepared him to receive his discovery of himself in the still small voice, *1 Kin. xix. 11, 12*. "God's way is in the whirlwind and the storm," *Nah. i. 3*; and out of the whirlwind he spoke to Job. 4th. It was a rushing mighty wind. It was strong and violent, and came not only with a great noise, but with a great force, as if it would bear down all before it. This was to signify the powerful influences and operations of the Spirit of God upon the minds of men, and thereby upon the world, that they should be mighty through God, to the casting down of imaginations, *5th*. It filled not only the room, but "all the house where they were sitting." Probably it alarmed the whole city, but, to shew that it was supernatural, presently fixed upon that particular house; as some think the wind that was sent to arrest Jonah affected only the ship that he was in, *Jonah i. 4*, and as the wise men's star stood over the house where the Child was; and this would direct the people who observed it whither to go to inquire the meaning of it. This wind filling the house would strike an awe upon the disciples, and help to put them into a very serious, reverent, and composed frame for the receiving of the Holy Ghost. Thus the convictions of the Spirit make way for his comforts; and the rough blasts of that blessed wind prepare the soul for its soft and gentle gales.

2. Here is a visible sign of the gift they were to receive. They saw "cloven tongues, like as of fire," *ver. 3*; and "it sat," *ἐκάθητο*, not they sat, those cloven tongues; but he, that is, the Spirit signified thereby, rested "upon each of them," as he is said to rest upon the prophets of old; or, as Dr. Hammond describes it, "There was an appearance of something like flaming fire, lighting on every one of them, which divided asunder, and so formed the resemblance of tongues, with that part of them that was next their heads divided or cloven." The flame of a candle is somewhat like a tongue; and there is a meteor which naturalists call *ignis lambens*,—"a gentle flame," not a devouring fire; such was this. Observe,

1st. There was an outward sensible sign for the confirming of the faith of the disciples themselves, and for the convincing of others. Thus the prophets of old had frequently their first mission confirmed by signs, that all Israel might know them to be established prophets.

2nd. The sign given was fire, that John Baptist's saying concerning Christ might be fulfilled, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire;" with the Holy Ghost, as with fire. They were now in the feast of Pentecost, celebrating the memorial of the giving of the law upon mount Sinai, and as that was given in fire, and therefore is called a fiery law, so is the Gospel. Ezekiel's mission was confirmed by a vision of burning coals of fire, *Eze. i. 13*; and Isaiah's by a coal of fire touching his lips, *Isa. vi. 7*. The Spirit like fire melts the heart, separates and burns up the dross, and kindles pious and devout affections in the soul, in which, as in the fire upon the altar, the spiritual sacrifices are offered up. This is that fire which Christ came to send upon the earth, *Lu. xii. 49*.

3rd. This fire appeared in cloven tongues. The operations of the Spirit were many; that of speaking with divers tongues was one, and was singled out to be the first indication of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and to that this sign had a reference. First. They were tongues, for from the Spirit we have the Word of God, and by him Christ would speak to the world; and he gave the Spirit to the disciples, not only to endue them with knowledge, but to endue them with a power to publish and proclaim to the world what they knew; for the "dispensation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." Secondly. These tongues were cloven, to signify that God would hereby divide unto all nations the knowledge of his grace, as he is said to have divided to them by his providence the light of the heavenly bodies, *Dez. iv. 19*. The tongues were divided, and yet they still continued all of one accord; for there may be a sincere unity of affections where yet there is a diversity of expression. Dr. Lightfoot observes, that the dividing of tongues at Babel was the casting off of the heathen; for, when they had lost the language in which alone God was spoken of and preached, they utterly lost the knowledge of God and religion, and fell into idolatry. But now, after above two thousand years, God by another dividing of tongues restores the knowledge of himself to the nations.

4th. This fire sat upon them for some time, to shew the constant residence of the Holy Ghost with them. The prophetic gifts of old were conferred sparingly, and but at some times; but the disciples of Christ had the gifts of the Spirit always with them, though the sign, we may suppose, presently disappeared. Whether these flames of fire passed from one to another, or whether there were as many flames as there were persons, is not certain. But they must be strong and bright flames, that would be visible in the daylight, as it now was, for the day was fully come.

Thirdly. What was the immediate effect of this.

1. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost" more plentifully and power-

fully than they were before. They were filled with the graces of the Spirit, and were more than ever under his sanctifying influences; were now holy, and heavenly, and spiritual; more weaned from this world, and better acquainted with the other. They were more filled with the comforts of the Spirit, rejoiced more than ever in the love of Christ, and the hope of heaven; and in it their griefs and fears were swallowed up. They were also, for the proof of this, filled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which is especially meant here. They were endued with miraculous powers for the furtherance of the Gospel. It seems evident to me, that not the twelve apostles only, but all the hundred and twenty disciples, were filled with the Holy Ghost alike at this time,—all the seventy disciples, who were apostolical men, and employed in the same work, and all the rest too that were to preach the Gospel; for it is said expressly, *Eph. iv. 8, 11*, that "when Christ ascended on high," (which refers to this here, *ver. 33*), "he gave gifts unto men," not only "some apostles," (such were the twelve;) but "some prophets; and some evangelists," (such were many of the seventy disciples, itinerant preachers;) "and some pastors and teachers," settled in particular churches, as we may suppose some of these afterwards were. The "all" here must refer to the all that were together, *ver. 1*; *ch. i. 14, 15*.

2. "They began to speak with other tongues," besides their native language, though they had never learned any other. They spake not matters of common conversation, but the Word of God, and the praises of his name, "as the Spirit gave them utterance," or gave them to speak ἀποφθέγγεσθαι,—to speak apophthegms, substantial and weighty sayings worthy to be had in remembrance. It is probable it was not only one that was enabled to speak one language, and another another, as it was with the several families that were dispersed from Babel; but every one was enabled to speak divers languages, as he should have occasion to use them. And we may suppose that they not only understood themselves, but understood one another too, which the builders of Babel did not, *Gen. xi. 7*. They did not speak here and there a word of another tongue, or stammer out some broken sentences; but spoke it as readily, properly, and elegantly, as if it had been their mother tongue; for whatever was produced by miracle was the best of the kind. They spake not from any previous thought or meditation, but "as the Spirit gave them utterance;" he furnished them with the matter as well as the language. Now this was, 1st. A very great miracle. It was a miracle upon the mind, (and so had most of the nature of a gospel miracle,) for in the mind words are framed. They had not only never learned these languages, but had never learned any foreign tongue, which might have facilitated these; nay, for aught appears, they had never so much as heard these languages spoken, or had any idea of them. They were neither scholars nor travellers, nor had had any opportunity of learning languages, either by books or conversation. Peter, indeed, was forward enough to speak in his own tongue, but the rest of them were no spokesmen, nor were they quick of apprehension; yet now, not only the heart of the rash understands knowledge, but the tongue of the stammerers is ready to speak elegantly, *Isa. xxxii. 4*. When Moses complained, "I am slow of speech," God said, "I will be with thy mouth, and Aaron shall be thy spokesman." But he did more for these messengers of his; he that made man's mouth new-made theirs. 2nd. A very proper, needful, and serviceable miracle. The language the disciples spoke was Syriac, a dialect of the Hebrew; so that it was necessary they should be endued with the gift, both for the understanding of the original Hebrew of the Old Testament, in which it was written, and of the original Greek of the New Testament, in which it was to be written. But that was not all; they were commissioned to preach the Gospel to every creature, to disciple all nations. But here is an insuperable difficulty at the threshold. How shall they master the several languages, so as to speak intelligibly to all the nations; it will be the work of a man's life to learn their languages. And therefore to prove that Christ could give authority to preach to the nations, he gives ability to preach to them in their own language. And it should seem that this was the accomplishment of that promise which Christ made to his disciples, *Jno. xiv. 12*; "Greater works than these shall ye do." For this may well be reckoned, all things considered, a greater work than the miraculous cures Christ wrought. Christ himself did not speak with other tongues, nor did he enable his disciples to do it while he was with them; but it was the first effect of the pouring out of the Spirit upon them. And Archbishop Tillotson thinks it probable that, if the conversion of infidels to Christianity were now sincerely and vigorously attempted by men of honest minds, God would extraordinarily countenance such an attempt with all fitting assistance, as he did the first publication of the Gospel.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.



COSTUMES

Of Lydia, Media, Persia, Phrygia, Judæa, Rome, Greece, and Asia Minor.

i. 15. "In those days;" during the ten days between the Ascension and Pentecost. "An hundred and twenty;" compare 1 Cor. xv. 6, where St. Paul mentions five hundred. Here Luke is not mentioning all the disciples throughout the country, but simply the number of those present at this meeting. Our Lord's appearance to the five hundred probably took place in Galilee, where the great majority of his disciples resided.

i. 17. "For he was numbered;" rather, "because," giving the

reason why Peter applied this prophecy to Judas. "I quote this prophecy, and may apply it to Judas because," &c.

i. 18. "Falling headlong;" supplementary to the account in Matthew. "As he fell strangled with his face downwards, his body burst and his entrails gushed out" (Cook). "Purchased:" see Matt. xxvii. 6—8. Alford says that we cannot reconcile these accounts until we know more of the facts. As regards the purchase, he considers the account in Matthew as more particular, the one here more

" And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? 13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

We have here an account of the public notice that was taken of this extraordinary gift, with which the disciples were all on a sudden endued. Observe,

First. The great concourse of people that there was now at Jerusalem; it should seem more than usually was at the feast of Pentecost. "There were dwelling" or abiding, "at Jerusalem Jews," that were "devout men," disposed to religion, and that had the fear of God before their eyes, (so the word properly signifies), some of them proselytes of righteousness, that were circumcised and admitted members of the Jewish church, others only proselytes of the gate, that forsook idolatry, and gave up themselves to the worship of the true God, but not to the ceremonial law; some of those there were at Jerusalem now "out of every nation under heaven" whither the Jews were dispersed, or from whence proselytes were come. The expression is hyperbolic, noting that there were some from most of the then known parts of the world. As much as ever Tyre was, or London is, the rendezvous of trading people from all parts, Jerusalem at that time was of religious people from all parts. Now,

1. We may here see what were some of those countries whence those strangers came, ver. 9-11. Some from the eastern countries, as the "Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia," the posterity of Shem; from thence we come in order to Judæa, which ought to be mentioned, because, though the language of them in Judæa was the same with that which the disciples spoke, yet before they spoke it with the north country tone and dialect, ("Thou art a Galilean, and thy speech bewrays thee," but now they spoke it as fine as the inhabitants of Judæa themselves did. Next come the inhabitants of Cappadocia, Pontus, and that country about Propontis which was particularly called Asia, and these were the countries in which those strangers were scattered to whom St. Peter writes, *1 Pet. i. 1*. Next come the dwellers in Phrygia and Pamphylia, which lay westward, the posterity of Japhet, as were also the strangers of Rome. There were some also that dwelt in the southern parts of Egypt, in the parts of Libya, about Cyrene. There were also some from the island of Crete, and some from the deserts of Arabia. But they were all either Jews originally, dispersed into those countries, or proselytes to the Jewish religion, but natives of those countries. Dr. Whitby observes, that the Jewish writers about this time, as Philo and Josephus, speak of the Jews as dwelling every where through the whole earth; and that there is not a people upon earth among whom some Jews do not inhabit.

2. We may inquire what brought all those Jews and proselytes together to Jerusalem at this time; not to make a transient visit thither to the feast of Pentecost, for they are said to dwell there. They took lodgings there, because there was at this time a general expectation of the appearing of the Messiah; for Daniel's weeks were just now expired; the sceptre was departed from Judah; it was then generally thought that "the kingdom of God should immediately appear." *Lu. xix. 11*. This brought those who were most zealous and devout to Jerusalem to sojourn there, that they might have an early share in the kingdom of the Messiah, and the blessings of that kingdom.

Secondly. The amazement which these strangers were seized with when they heard the disciples speak to them in their own tongues. It should seem the disciples spoke in various languages before the people of those languages came to them; for it is intimated, ver. 6, that the spreading of the report of this abroad was it that brought the multitude together, especially those of different countries, who seem to have been more affected with this work of wonder than the inhabitants of Jerusalem themselves.

1. They observe that the speakers are all Galileans; that know no other but their mother tongue, ver. 7; they are despicable men, from whom nothing learned or polite is to be expected. God chose the weak and foolish things of the world to confound the wise and mighty. Christ was thought to be a Galilean, and his disciples really were so; unlearned and ignorant men.

2. They acknowledged that they spoke intelligibly and readily their own language, which they were the most competent judges of; so right and exact, that none of their own countrymen could speak it better. "We hear every man in our own tongue wherein we were born," ver. 8; that is, we hear one or other of them speak our native language. The Parthians hear one of them speak their language, the Medes hear another of them speak theirs, and so of the rest; ver. 11. "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." Their respective languages were not only unknown at Jerusalem, but probably despised and undervalued; and, therefore, it was not only a surprise, but a pleasing surprise, to them to hear the language of their own country spoken, as it naturally is to those that are strangers in a strange land.

1st. The things they heard the apostles discourse of were the wonderful works of God, *μεγαλὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, Magnalia Dei*.—"The great things of God." It is likely the apostles spoke of Christ and redemption by him, and the grace of the Gospel; and these are indeed the great things of God, and which will be for ever marvellous in our eyes.

2nd. They heard them both praise God for these great things and instruct the people concerning these things, in their own tongue, according as they perceived the language of their hearers, or those that inquired of them, to be. Now though, perhaps, by dwelling some time at Jerusalem, they were got to be so much masters of the Jewish language as that they could have understood the meaning of the disciples if they had spoken that language, yet, first. This was more strange, and helped to convince their judgment that this doctrine was of God; for tongues were for a sign to them that believed not. *1 Cor. xiv. 22*.

Secondly. It was more kind, and helped to engage their affections, as it was a plain indication of the favour intended to the Gentiles, and that the knowledge

and worship of God should no longer be confined to the Jews, but the partition wall should be broken down. And this is to us a plain imitation of the mind and will of God, that the sacred records of God's wonderful works should be preserved by all nations in their own tongues; that the Scriptures should be read, and public worship performed in the vulgar languages of the nations.

3. They wonder at it, and look upon it as an astonishing thing; ver. 12, "they were all amazed;" they were in an ecstasy, so the word is; and they were in doubt what the meaning of it was, and whether it was to introduce the kingdom of the Messiah, which they were big with the expectation of. They asked themselves, and one another, *τί αὐτοῖς τοῦτο εἶναι; Quid hoc vobis vult?*—"What is the tendency of this?" Surely it is to dignify, and so to distinguish, these men as messengers from heaven; and therefore, like Moses at the bush, they will "turn aside and see this great sight."

Thirdly. The scorn which some made of it, who were natives of Judæa and Jerusalem, probably the scribes and Pharisees, and chief priests, who always resisted the Holy Ghost. They said, "These men are full of new wine," or sweet wine; they have drunk too much this festival time, ver. 13. Not that they were so absurd as to think that wine in the head would enable men to speak languages which they never learned; but these, being native Jews, knew not, as the others did, that these were really the languages of other nations, and therefore took what they said to be gibberish and nonsense, such as drunkards, those fools in Israel, sometimes talk. As, when they resolved not to believe the finger of the Spirit in Christ's miracles, they turned it off with this, He casteth out devils by compact with the prince of the devils, so, when they resolved not to believe the voice of the Spirit in the apostles preaching, they turned it off with this, "These men are full of new wine." And, if they called the master of the house a wine-bibber, no marvel if they so call them of his household.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: 19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: 21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. 22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: 24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. 25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: 26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. 29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore being a prophet,

general. He repudiates the view that Judas may be said to have bought the field, when he only gave occasion to its being bought by the chief priests.

ii. 1. "Pentecost:" the word means fiftieth. It was the fiftieth day after the sixteenth of Nisan, the second day of the Passover. It is called the "feast of harvest" (*Exod. xxiii. 16*), and the "feast of weeks" (*Deut. xvi. 10*). It was one of the three great feasts when all the males were required to appear in Jerusalem. "Was fully come:"

literally, "was being fulfilled," "during the progress of that particular day." "They were all:" generally supposed to be the hundred and twenty, but there may have been more, for as this was a high festival of the old covenant, the disciples who did not reside at Jerusalem were doubtless also present in the city, and would most likely be assembled with the other disciples. "In one place;" most probably in a private dwelling, and not in the Temple; possibly the room mentioned in chap. i. 13.

and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. 32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool. 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

We have here the firstfruits of the Spirit in the sermon which Peter preached immediately, directed not to those of other nations in a strange language, (we are not told what answer he gave to those that were amazed, and said, "What meaneth this?" but to the Jews in the vulgar language, even to them that mocked, for he begins with the notice of that, ver. 15; and addresseth his discourse, ver. 14, to the men of Judæa, and inhabitants of Jerusalem. But we have reason enough to think that the other disciples continued to speak to those who understood them, and therefore flocked about them, in the languages of their respective countries, the wonderful works of God; and it was not by Peter's preaching only, but that of all or most of the rest of the hundred and twenty, that the three thousand souls were that day converted, and added to the church. But Peter's sermon only is recorded, to be an evidence for him that he was thoroughly recovered from his fall, and thoroughly restored to the Divine favour. He that had sneakily denied Christ now as courageously confesseth him. Observe,

1. His introduction or preface, wherein he craves the attention of the auditory, or demands it rather. "Peter stood up," ver. 14, (to shew that he was not drunk,) "with the eleven," who concurred with him in what he said; and probably in their turns spoke likewise to the same purpose. They that were of greatest authority stood up to speak to the scoffing Jews, and to confront those who contradicted and blasphemed; but left the seventy disciples to speak to the willing proselytes from other nations, who were not so prejudiced, in their own language. Thus, among Christ's ministers, some of greater gifts are called out to instruct those that oppose themselves, to take hold of sword and spear; others of meener abilities are employed in instructing those that resign themselves, and to be vine-dressers and husbandmen. Peter "lifted up his voice," as one that was both well assured of, and much affected with, what he said, and was neither afraid nor ashamed to own it. He applied himself to the men of Judæa; *ἄνδρες ἰουδαῖοι*, "the men that were Jews," so it should be read; and you especially that dwell at Jerusalem, who were accessory to the death of Jesus, "be this known unto you," which you did not know before, and which you are concerned to know now, and to "hearken to my words," who would draw you to Christ, and not to the words of the scribes and Pharisees that would draw you from him. My Master is gone, whose words you have often heard in vain, but shall hear no more as you have done, but he speaks to us; hearken now to our words.

2. His answer to their blasphemous calumny; ver. 15, "These men are not drunken, as ye suppose." These disciples of Christ, that now speak with other tongues, they speak good sense, and know what they say, and so do these they speak to, who are led by their discourses into the knowledge of the wonderful works of God. You cannot think they are drunk; for "it is but the third hour of the day," nine of the clock in the morning. And before that time, on the sabbaths and solemn feasts, the Jews did not use to eat or drink; nay, ordinarily, "they that are drunk are drunk in the night," and not in the morning. Those are besotted drunkards indeed that, when they are awake, presently seek it yet again, *Pr. xxiii. 35*.

3. His account of the miraculous effusion of the Spirit, which is designed to awaken them all to embrace the faith of Christ, and to join themselves to his church. Two things he resolves it into:—that it was the fulfilling of the Scripture, and the fruit of Christ's resurrection and ascension, and consequently the proof of both.

First, That it was the accomplishment of the prophecies of the Old Testament, which related to the kingdom of the Messiah; and, therefore, an evidence that that kingdom is come, and the other predictions of it are fulfilled. He instanceth in one, that of the prophet Joel, *Joel ii. 28*. It is observable that, though Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake with tongues as the Spirit gave him utterance; yet he did not set aside the Scriptures, nor think himself above them, nay, much of his discourse is quotation out of the Old Testament, to which he appeals, and with which he proves what he saith. Christ's scholars never learn above their Bible; and the Spirit is given, not to supersede the Scriptures, but to enable us to understand and improve the Scriptures. Observe,

1. The text itself that Peter quotes, ver. 17–21. It refers to the last days; that is, the times of the Gospel, which are therefore called the last days, because the dispensation of God's kingdom among men when the Gospel sets up is the last dispensation of Divine grace; and we are to look for no other, but the continuation of that to the end of time. Or, in the last days; that is, a great while after the ceasing of prophecy in the Old Testament church; or, in the days immediately preceding the destruction of the Jewish nation, in the last days of that people, just "before that great and notable day of the Lord," spoken of ver. 20. It was prophesied of and promised, and therefore you ought to expect it, and not to be surprised at it; to desire it and bid it welcome, and not to dispute it, as not worth taking notice of. The apostle quotes the whole paragraph, for it is good to take Scripture entire. Now it was foretold,

ii. 2. "A sound," &c.: "The external manifestations and signs which attended the outpouring of the Spirit were both a sound and a light, the one appealing to the ear and the other to the eye. The sound which came down to the earth from heaven was very loud, like that produced by a blast, a gust, or a very strong wind which rushes onward; and it was this loud, penetrating sound which filled all the house in which the disciples were assembled. The text does not speak of an actual gust of wind, and still less of an earthquake,

1st. That there should be a more plentiful and extensive effusion of the Spirit of grace from on high than had ever yet been. The prophets of the Old Testament had been filled with the Holy Ghost; and it was said of the people of Israel, that "God gave them his good Spirit to instruct them," *Neh. ix. 20*. But now the Spirit shall be poured out not only upon the Jews, but upon all flesh, Gentiles as well as Jews, though yet Peter himself did not understand it so, as appears, *ch. xi. 17*; or, upon all flesh, that is, upon some of all ranks and conditions of men. The Jewish doctors taught that the Spirit came only upon wise and rich men, and such as were of the seed of Israel, but God will not tie himself to their rules.

2nd. That the Spirit should be in them a spirit of prophecy; by the Spirit they should be enabled to foretell things to come, and to preach the Gospel to every creature. This power shall be given without distinction of sex,—not only your sons, but your daughters, shall prophesy; without distinction of age,—both your young men and your old men shall see visions, and dream dreams, and in them receive Divine revelations to be communicated to the church; and without distinction of outward condition,—even the servants and handmaids shall receive of the Spirit, and shall prophesy, ver. 18; or in general, men and women whom God calls his servants and his handmaids. In the beginning of the age of prophecy in the Old Testament there were schools of the prophets; and, before that, the spirit of prophecy came upon the elders of Israel that were appointed to the government. But now the Spirit shall be poured out upon persons of inferior rank, and such as were not brought up in the schools of the prophets; for the kingdom of the Messiah is to be purely spiritual. The mention of the daughters, ver. 17, and the handmaids, ver. 18, would make one think that the women which were taken notice of, *ch. i. 14*, received the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost as well as the men, (Philip the evangelist had four daughters who did prophesy, *ch. xxi. 9*;) and therefore St. Paul, finding abundance of the gifts both of tongues and prophecy in the church of Corinth, saw it needful to prohibit women's use of those gifts in public, *1 Cor. xiv. 28, 34*.

3rd. That one great thing which they should prophesy of should be the judgments that were coming upon the Jewish nation; for this was the chief thing that Christ himself had foretold, *Mat. xxiv.*, at his entrance into Jerusalem, *Lu. xix. 41*; and when he was going to die, *Lu. xxiii. 29*. And these judgments were to be brought upon them to punish them for their contempt of the Gospel, and their opposition to it, though it came to them thus proved. They that would not submit to the power of God's grace, in this wonderful effusion of his Spirit, should fall and lie under the pourings out of the vials of his wrath. They shall break that will not bend.

First. The destruction of Jerusalem, which was about forty years after Christ's death, is here called, "that great and notable day of the Lord;" because it put a final period to the Mosaic economy: the Levitical priesthood and the ceremonial law were thereby for ever abolished and done away. The desolation itself was such as was never brought upon any place or nation either before or since. It was the day of the Lord, for it was the day of his vengeance upon that people for crucifying Christ, and persecuting his ministers; it was the year of recompence for that controversy, yea, and for all the blood of the saints and martyrs, from the blood of righteous Abel, *Mat. xxiv. 35*. It was a little day of judgment; it was a notable day. In *Joel* it is called a terrible day, for so it was to men on earth; but here *ἐπιφάνια*, (after the Seventy,) a 'glorious, illustrious' day, for so it was to Christ in heaven. It was the epiphany; his appearing, so he himself spoke of it, *Mat. xxiii. 30*. The destruction of the Jews was the deliverance of the Christians, that were hated and persecuted by them; and therefore that day was often spoken of by the prophets of that time for the encouragement of suffering Christians, that the Lord was at hand, the coming of the Lord drew nigh, the Judge stood before the door, *Jas. v. 8, 9*.

Secondly. The terrible presages of that destruction are here foretold. These shall be wonders in heaven above, the sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood; and signs too in the earth beneath, blood and fire. Josephus, in his preface to his history of the Wars of the Jews, speaks of the signs and prodigies that preceded them, terrible thunders, lightnings and earthquakes; there was a fiery comet that hung over the city for a year; and a flaming sword was seen pointing down upon it; a light shone upon the temple and the altar at midnight, as if it had been noonday. Dr. Lightfoot gives another sense of these presages: the blood of the Son of God, the fire of the Holy Ghost now appearing, the vapour of the smoke in which Christ ascended, the sun darkened, and the moon made blood, at the time of Christ's passion, were all loud warnings given to that unbelieving people to prepare for the judgments coming upon them. Or, it may be applied, and very fitly, to the previous judgments themselves by which that desolation was brought on. The blood points at the wars of the Jews with the neighbour nations, with the Samaritans, Syrians, and Greeks, in which abundance of blood was shed, as there was also in their civil wars, and the struggles of the seditious as they called them, which were very bloody; there was no peace to him that went out, or to him that came in. The fire and vapour of smoke here foretold literally came to pass in the burning of their cities, and towns, and synagogues, and temple at last. And this turning of the sun into darkness, and the moon into blood, speaks the dissolution of their government, civil and sacred, and the extinguishing of all their lights.

Thirdly. The signal preservation of the Lord's people is here promised; ver. 21, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord Jesus" (which is the description of a true Christian, *1 Cor. i. 2*) "shall be saved," shall escape that judgment; which shall be a type and earnest of everlasting salvation. In the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans there was a remnant sealed to be hid in the day of the Lord's anger; and in the destruction by the Romans not one Christian perished. They that distinguish themselves by singular piety shall be distinguished by special preservation; and observe, the saved remnant are described by this, that they are a praying people, they called on the name of the Lord; which intimates, that they are not saved by any merit or righteousness of their own, but purely by the favour of God, which must be sued out by prayer. It is the name of the Lord which they call upon; that is their strong tower.

2. The application of this prophecy to the present event; ver. 16, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;" it is the accomplishment of that, it is the full accomplishment of it. This is that effusion of the Spirit upon all flesh which should come; and we are to look for no other, no more than we are to look for another Messiah. For, as our Messiah ever lives in heaven reigning and interceding for his church on earth, so this Spirit of grace, the Advocate or Comforter, that was given now according to the promise, will, according to the same promise, continue with the church on earth to the end; and will work all its works in it, and for it, and every member of it, ordinary and extraordinary, by the means of the Scriptures and ministry.

Secondly. That it was the gift of Christ, and the product and proof of his resurrection and ascension. From this gift of the Holy Ghost he takes occasion to preach unto them Jesus; and this part of his sermon he introduceth with another solemn preface, ver. 22, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words." It is a mercy that ye are within hearing of them, and it is your duty to give heed to

accompanied by a storm of wind by which the house was shaken. The sound which was heard is simply compared to that of a vehement wind, for the purpose of giving a general description of it."

ii. 3. "Cloven tongues:" the word cloven means divided, and may be understood of the form, or of the dispersion, distribution of the tongues of fire. "It was as little natural fire as the sound already mentioned was natural wind; the appearances which were seen only resembled flames of fire that assumed the form of tongues."

their. Words concerning Christ should be acceptable words to the men of Israel. Here is,

1. An abstract of the history of the life of Christ, ver. 22. He calls him Jesus of Nazareth, because by that name he was generally known; but (which was sufficient to roll away that reproach) he was "a man approved of God among you;" censured and condemned by men, but approved of God. God testified his approbation of his doctrine by the power he gave him to work miracles. A man marked out by God, so Dr. Hammond reads it; signalized and made remarkable among you that now hear me. He was sent to you, set up a glorious light in your land. You yourselves are witnesses how he became famous by miracles, wonders, and signs; works above the power of nature, out of its ordinary course, and contrary to it, "which God did by him;" that is, which he did by that Divine power with which he was clothed, and in which God plainly went along with him; for no man could do such works unless God were with him. See what a stress Peter lays upon Christ's miracles. 1st. The matter of fact was not to be denied; for they were done in the midst of you, in the midst of your country, your city, your solemn assemblies, "as ye yourselves also know." You have been eyewitnesses of his miracles; I appeal to yourselves whether you have any thing to object against them, or can offer any thing to disprove them. 2nd. The inference from them cannot be disputed. The reasoning is as strong as the evidence: if he did those miracles, certainly God approved him, declared him to be, what he declared himself to be, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; for the God of truth would never set his seal to a lie.

2. An account of his death and sufferings; which they were witnesses of also but a few weeks ago. And this was the greatest miracle of all, that a man approved of God should thus seem to be abandoned of him; and a man thus approved among the people, and in the midst of them, should be thus abandoned by them. But both these mysteries are here explained, ver. 23; and his death considered,

1st. As God's act; and in him it was an act of wonderful grace and wisdom. He delivered him to death; not only permitted him to be put to death, but gave him up, devoted him. This is explained, *Rom. viii. 32*; He "delivered him up for us all;" and yet he was approved of God, and there was nothing in this that signified the disapproving of him; for it was done "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" in infinite wisdom and for holy ends, which Christ himself concurred in, and in the means leading to them. Thus Divine Justice must be satisfied, sinners saved, God and man brought together again, and Christ himself glorified. It was not only according to the will of God, but according to the counsel of his will, that he suffered and died; according to an eternal counsel, which could not be altered. This reconciled him to the cross: "Father, thy will be done;" and "Father, glorify thy name." Let thy purpose take effect, and let the great end of it be attained.

2nd. As the people's act, and in them it was an act of prodigious sin and folly. It was fighting against God to persecute one whom he approved as the darling of Heaven; and fighting against their own mercies to persecute one that was the greatest blessing of this earth. And neither God's designing it from eternity, nor his bringing good out of it to eternity, would in the least excuse their sin; for it was their voluntary act and deed, from a principle morally evil; and, therefore, they were wicked hands with which you have crucified and slain him. It is probable some of those were here present who had cried, "Crucify him, crucify him;" or had been otherwise aiding and abetting in the murder, and Peter knew it. However, it was justly looked upon as a national act, because done by the vote of the great council, and by the voice of the great crowd. It is a rule, *Refertur ad universos quod publice fit per majorem partem*. That which is done publicly by the greater part we attribute to all. He charges it particularly on them as parts of the nation on which it would be visited, the more effectually to bring them to faith and repentance; because that was the only way to distinguish themselves from the guilty, and discharge themselves from the guilt.

3. An attestation of his resurrection, which effectually wiped away the reproach of his death; ver. 24. "Whom God raised up." The same that delivered him to death delivered him from death; and thereby gave a higher approbation of him than he had done by any other of the signs and wonders wrought by him, or by all put together. This, therefore, he insists most largely upon.

1st. He describes his resurrection. "God loosed the bands of death, because it was impossible that he should be holden of it;" *ἀνέσταιναι*, 'the sorrows' of death. The word is used for travelling pains; and some think it signifies the trouble and agony of his soul, in which it was exceeding sorrowful, even to the death. From these pains and sorrows of soul, this travail of soul, the Father loosed him, when at his death he said, "It is finished;" thus Dr. Godwin understands it. Those torments which made Heman's soul lie like the slain, *Ps. lxxviii. 15*, those had hold of Christ; but he was too strong for them, and broke through them. This was the resurrection of his soul, (and it is a great thing to bring a soul out of the depths of spiritual agonies; this was not leaving his soul in hell; as that which follows, that he should not see corruption, speaks of the resurrection of his body; and both together make up the great resurrection. Dr. Lightfoot gives another sense of this: Having dissolved the pains of death in reference to all that believe in him, God raised up Christ, and by his resurrection broke all the power of death, and destroyed its pangs upon his own people. He hath abolished death, has altered the property of it; and, because it was not possible that he should be long holden of it, it is not possible that they should be for ever holden. But most refer this to the resurrection of Christ's body. And death, saith Mr. Baxter, as a separation between soul and body, is by privation a penal state, though not dolorous by positive evil. But Dr. Hammond shows that the Septuagint, and from them the apostle here, useth the word for cords and bands, as *Ps. xlviii. 4*; to which the metaphor of loosing and being held best agrees. Christ was imprisoned for our debt, was thrown into the bands of death; but, Divine Justice being satisfied, it was not possible he should be detained there, either by right or by force; for he had life in himself, and in his own power, and had conquered the prince of death.

2nd. He attests the truth of his resurrection; ver. 32, "God hath raised him up, whereof we all are witnesses;" we apostles, and other our companions, that were intimately acquainted with him before his death, were intimately conversant with him after his resurrection, did eat and drink with him. They received power, by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, on purpose that they might be skilful, faithful, and courageous witnesses of this thing, notwithstanding their being charged by his enemies as having stolen him away.

3rd. He shewed it to be the fulfilling of the Scripture; and, because the Scripture had said that he must rise again before he saw corruption, therefore it was impossible that he should be holden by death and the grave; for David speaks of his being raised; so it comes in ver. 25. The scripture he refers to is that of David, *Ps. xvi. 8-11*, which, though in part applicable to David, as a saint, yet refers chiefly to Jesus Christ, of whom David was a type. Here is, *First*, The text quoted at large, ver. 25-28; for it was all fulfilled in him, and shews us,

1st. The constant regard that our Lord Jesus had to his Father in his whole undertaking; "I foresaw the Lord before me continually." He set before him

his Father's glory as his end in all; foresaw that his sufferings would redound abundantly to the honour of God, and would issue in his own joy. These were set before him, and these he had an eye to in all he did and suffered; and with the prospect of these he was borne up, and carried on, *Jno. xiii. 31, 32*; *xvii. 4, 5*.

2nd. The assurance he had of his Father's presence and power going along with him; "He is on my right hand," the hand of action, strengthening, guiding, and upholding that, "that I should not be moved," or driven off from my undertaking, notwithstanding the hardships I must undergo. This was an article of the covenant of redemption, *Ps. lxxix. 21*; With him "my hand shall be established, my arm also shall strengthen him;" and therefore he is confident the work shall not miscarry in his hand. If God be at our right hand, we shall not be moved.

3rd. The cheerfulness with which our Lord Jesus went on in his work, notwithstanding the sorrows he was to pass through. Being satisfied that "I shall not be moved," but the good pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in my hand, "therefore doth my heart rejoice, and my tongue is glad," and the thought of my sorrow is as nothing to me. Note, It was a constant pleasure to our Lord Jesus to look to the end of his work, and to be sure that the issue would be glorious; so well pleased was he with his undertaking, that it does his heart good to think how the issue would answer the design; he rejoiced in spirit; *Lu. x. 21*, "My tongue was glad." In the psalm it is, "my glory rejoiceth," which intimates that our tongue is our glory. The faculty of speaking is an honour to us, and never more so than when it is employed in praising God. Christ's tongue was glad; for when he was just entering upon his sufferings, in the close of his last supper, he sang a hymn.

4th. The pleasing prospect he had of the happy issue of his death and sufferings. This was it that carried him not only with courage, but with cheerfulness, through them. He was putting off the body, but "My flesh shall rest," the grave shall be to the body, while it lies there, a bed of repose, and hope shall give it a sweet repose; "it shall rest in hope," or, "that thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." What follows is the matter of his hope, or assurance rather, (1.) That the soul shall not continue in a state of separation from the body; for, besides that that is some uneasiness to a human soul made for its body, it would be the continuance of death's triumph over him who was in truth a conqueror over death. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," in Hades, in 'the invisible state,' so Hades properly signifies; but, though thou suffer it for a time to remove thither, and to remain there, yet thou wilt remain it; thou wilt not leave it there as thou dost the souls of other men. (2.) That the body shall lie but a little while in the grave; "Thou wilt not suffer that thy Holy One to see corruption;" the body shall not continue dead so long as that it should begin to putrefy or become noisome; and, therefore, it must return to life on or before the third day after its death. Christ was God's Holy One, sanctified and set apart to his service in the work of redemption. He must die, for he must be consecrated by his own blood; but he must not see corruption, for his death was to be unto God of a sweet smelling savour. And this was typified by the law concerning the sacrifices, that no part of the flesh of the sacrifices which was to be eaten should be kept till the third day, for fear it should see corruption and begin to putrefy, *Lev. vii. 15-18*. (3.) That his death and sufferings should be not to him only, but to all his, an inlet to a blessed immortality; "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life," and by me made them known to the world, and laid them open. When the Father gave to the Son to have life in himself, a power to lay down his life and to take it again, then he shewed him the way of life, both to and fro; the gates of death were opened to him, and the doors of the shadow of death, (*Job xxxviii. 17*) to pass and repass through them as his occasions led him, for man's redemption. (4.) That all his sorrows and sufferings should end in perfect and perpetual felicity; "Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance." The reward set before him was joy, a fulness of joy, and that in God's countenance, in the countenance he gave to his undertaking, and to all those, for his sake, that should believe in him. The smiles with which the Father received him, when at his ascension he was brought to the Ancient of days, filled him with joy unspeakable; and that is the joy of our Lord, into which all his shall enter, and in which they shall be for ever happy.

Secondly, The comment upon this text, especially so much of it as relates to the resurrection of Christ. He addresses himself to them with a title of respect, "Men and brethren," ver. 29. You are men, and therefore should be ruled with reason; you are brethren, and therefore should take kindly what is said to you by one that, being nearly related to you, is heartily concerned for you, and wisheth you well. Now, "give me leave freely to speak to you concerning the patriarch David;" and let it be no offence to you if I tell you that David cannot be understood here as speaking of himself, but of the Christ to come. David is here called a patriarch, because he was the father of the royal family, and a man of great note and eminency in his generation, and whose name and memory was justly very precious. Now, when we read that psalm of his, we must consider,

1st. That he could not say that of himself; for he died, and was buried, and his sepulchre remained in Jerusalem till now when Peter spoke this, and his bones and ashes in it. Nobody ever pretended that he had risen, and therefore he could never say of himself that he should not see corruption; for it was plain he did see corruption. St. Paul urgeth this, *Acts xiii. 35-37*. Though he was a man after God's own heart, yet he went the way of all the earth, as he saith himself, *1 Kin. ii. 2*, both in death and burial.

2nd. Therefore, certainly, he spoke it as a prophet, with an eye to the Messiah, whose sufferings the prophets testified beforehand, and with them the glory that should follow; so did David in that psalm, as Peter here plainly shews. (1.) David knew that the Messiah should descend from his loins; ver. 30, "that God had sworn to him that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." He promised him a son, the throne of whose kingdom should be established for ever, *2 Sam. vii. 12*; and it is said, *Ps. cxxxii. 11*, God swore it in truth unto David. When our Lord Jesus was born, it was promised that the Lord God would give him the throne of his father David, *Lu. i. 32*. And all Israel knew that the Messiah was to be the son of David, that is, that according to the flesh he should be so, by his human nature; for otherwise, according to the spirit, and by his Divine nature, he was to be David's Lord, not his son. God having sworn to David that the Messiah promised to his fathers should be his son and successor, the fruit of his loins, and heir to his throne, he kept this in view in penning his psalm. (2.) Christ being the fruit of his loins, and consequently in his loins when he penned that psalm, (as Levi is said to be in Abraham's loins when he paid tithes to Melchizedek,) if what he saith as in his own person be not applicable to himself, as it is plain that it is not, we must conclude it points to that Son of his, that was then in his loins, in whom his family and kingdom were to have their perfection and perpetuity. And, therefore, when he saith that his soul should not be left in its separate state, nor his flesh see corruption, without doubt he must be understood to speak of the resurrection of Christ, ver. 31; and, as Christ died, so he rose again according to the Scriptures; and that he did so we are witnesses.

4. Here is a touch upon his ascension too. As David did not rise from the

ii. 4. "Other tongues;" i.e., the languages of the nations whose names follow.

ii. 5. "Dwelling at Jerusalem;" including those who lived at Jerusalem, and those who were then residing there on account of the feast. "There were three classes of dispersed Hebrews: 1, those who were led into captivity by Shalmaneser, most of whom were in Parthia, Media, and Elamitis; 2, by Nebuchadnezzar, who were chiefly in Mesopotamia; 3, and by Ptolemy Lagus, who carried

away the inhabitants of Jerusalem into Egypt. In addition to these, vast numbers of Jews had settled in various countries, especially at the great marts of commerce. Most of these Jews forgot their own language, and spoke that of their adopted country. The Septuagint Greek version of the Bible was exclusively used by the Jews in Alexandria and most of the adjacent countries" (Cook).

ii. 6. "When this was noised abroad;" literally, "when this sound was made," referring to the sound as of a rushing wind.

dead, so neither did he ascend into the heavens bodily as Christ did, ver. 34. And farther, to prove that when he spoke of the resurrection he meant it of Christ, he observes that, when in another psalm he speaks of the next step of his exaltation, he plainly shews that he spoke of another person, and such another as was his Lord; *Ps. cx. 1*, "The Lord said unto my Lord," when he had raised him from the dead, "Sit thou at my right hand," in the highest dignity and dominion there; be thou intrusted with the administration of the kingdom both of providence and grace; sit there as king, until I make thy foes either thy friends or thy footstool, ver. 35. Christ rose from the grave to rise higher, and therefore it must be of his resurrection that David spoke, and not his own, in the 16th psalm; for there was no occasion for him to rise out of his grave who was not to ascend to heaven.

We now come to the application of this discourse concerning the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.

1st. This explains the meaning of the present wonderful effusion of the Spirit in these extraordinary gifts. Some of the people had asked, ver. 12, "What meaneth this?" I will tell you the meaning of it, saith Peter; this Jesus being 'exalted to the right hand of God,' (so some read it,) to sit there, 'exalted by the right hand of God,' (so we read it,) by his power and authority, it comes all to one, "and having received of the Father," to whom he is ascended, "the promise of the Holy Ghost," he hath given what he received, (*Ps. lxxviii. 18*) and "hath shed forth this which you now see and hear;" for the Holy Ghost was to be given when Jesus was glorified, and not before, *Jno. vii. 39*. You see and hear us speak with tongues that we never learned, (probably there was an observable change in the air of their countenances, which they saw, as well as heard the change of their voice and language;) now this is from the Holy Ghost, whose coming is an evidence that Jesus is exalted, and he has received this gift from the Father, to confer it upon the church, which plainly speaks him to be the Mediator, or middle person, between God and the church. The gift of the Holy Ghost was, *First*. A performance of Divine promises already made. Here it is called "the promise of the Holy Ghost." Many exceeding great and precious promises the Divine power has given us; but this is "the promise," by way of eminency, as that of the Messiah had been, and this is the promise that includes all the rest. Hence God's giving the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, *Lu. xi. 13*, is his giving them all good things, *Mat. vii. 11*. Christ received the promise of the Holy Ghost, that is, the promised gift of the Holy Ghost, and has given it to us; for all the promises are yea and amen in him. *Secondly*. It was a pledge of all Divine favours farther intended; what you now see and hear is but an earnest of greater things.

2nd. This proves what you are all bound to believe, that Christ Jesus is the true Messiah and Saviour of the world. This he closeth his sermon with, as the conclusion of the whole matter, the *quod erat demonstrandum*,—"the truth to be demonstrated;" ver. 36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly," that this truth has now received its full confirmation, and we our full commission to publish it, "that God has made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." They were charged to tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ till after his resurrection, *Mat. xvi. 20*; *xvii. 9*; but now it must be proclaimed on the housetops, to "all the house of Israel." He that has ears to hear let him hear it. It is not proposed as probable, but deposited as certain; let them know it assuredly, and know that it is their duty to receive it as a faithful saying, *First*. That God has glorified him whom they have crucified. This aggravates their wickedness, that they crucified one whom God designed to glorify, and put him to death as a deceiver who had given such pregnant proofs of his Divine mission; and it magnifies the wisdom and power of God, that, though they crucified him, and thought thereby to have put him under an indelible mark of infamy, yet God had glorified him, and the indignities they had done him served as a foil to his lustre. *Secondly*. That he has glorified him to that degree as to make him both Lord and Christ. These signify the same; he is Lord of all, and he is not a usurper, but is Christ, anointed to be so. He is one Lord to the Gentiles, who had had lords many, and to the Jews he is Messiah, which includes all his offices. He is the king Messiah, as the Chaldee paraphrast calls him; or, as the angel to Daniel, Messiah the prince, *Dan. ix. 25*. This is the great truth of the Gospel which we are to believe, that that same Jesus, the very same that was crucified at Jerusalem, is he to whom we owe allegiance, and from whom we are to expect protection as Lord and Christ.

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them; Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. 40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

We have seen the wonderful effect of the pouring out of the Spirit, in its influence upon the preachers of the Gospel. Peter in all his life never spoke at that rate that he had done now, with such fulness, perspicuity, and power: we are now to see another blessed fruit of the pouring out of the Spirit, in its influence upon the hearers of the Gospel. From the first delivery of that Divine message, it appeared that there was a Divine power going along with it, and it was mighty through God to do wonders; thousands were immediately brought by it to the obedience of faith. It was the rod of God's strength sent out of Zion, *Ps. cx. 2, 3*. We have here the firstfruits of that vast harvest of souls which by it were gathered in to Jesus Christ. Come and see in these verses the exalted Redeemer, riding forth in these chariots of salvation, conquering and to conquer, *Rev. vi. 2*. In these verses we find the Word of God the means

of beginning and carrying on a good work of grace in the hearts of many the Spirit of the Lord working by it. Let us see the method of it.

First. They were startled and convinced, and put upon a serious inquiry; ver. 37, "when they heard," or, having heard, having patiently heard Peter out, and not given him the interruption they had been used to give to Christ in his discourses, (this was one good point gained, that they were become attentive to the Word,) "they were pricked to the heart," or, in the heart; and, under a deep concern and perplexity, applied themselves to the preachers with this question, "What shall we do?" It was very strange that such impressions should be made upon such hard hearts all of a sudden. They were Jews, bred up in the opinion of the sufficiency of their religion to save them; had lately seen this Jesus crucified in weakness and disgrace, and were told by their rulers that he was a deceiver. Peter had charged them with having a hard, wicked hand, in his death, which was likely to have exasperated them against him; yet, when they heard this plain scriptural sermon, they were much affected with it.

1. It put them in pain; "they were pricked in their hearts." We read of those that were cut to the heart with indignation at the preacher, *ch. vii. 54*; but these were pricked to the heart with indignation at themselves, for having been accessory to the death of Christ. Peter charging it upon them awakened their consciences, touched them to the quick, and the reflection they now made upon it was as a sword in their bones; it pierced them as they had pierced Christ. Note, Sinners, when their eyes are opened, cannot but be pricked to the heart for sin, cannot but experience an inward uneasiness; this is having the heart rent, *Joel ii. 13*, a broken and contrite heart, *Ps. li. 17*. Those that are truly sorry for their sins, and ashamed of them, and afraid of the consequences of them, are pricked to the heart. A prick in the heart is mortal, and under those commotions, saith Paul, I died, *Rom. vii. 9*; all my good opinion of myself, and confidence in myself, failed me.

2. It put them upon inquiry. Out of the abundance of the heart thus pricked the mouth spoke. Observe,

1st. To whom they addressed themselves; "to Peter and to the rest of the apostles," some to one, and some to another. To them they opened their case; by them they had been convinced, and therefore by them they expect to be counselled and comforted. They do not appeal from them to the scribes and Pharisees to justify them against the apostles' charge, but apply to them, as owning the charge, and referring the case to them. They call them men and brethren, as Peter had called them, ver. 29; it is a style of friendship and love, rather than a title of honour: You are men, look upon us with humanity; you are brethren, look upon us with brotherly love. Note, Ministers are spiritual physicians, they should be advised with by those whose consciences are wounded; and it is good for people to be free and familiar with those ministers, as men and their brethren, who deal for their souls as for their own.

2nd. What the address is: "What shall we do?" *First*. They speak as men at a plunge, that did not know what to do; in a perfect surprise. Is that Jesus, whom we have crucified, both Lord and Christ? Then what will become of us, who crucified him? we are all undone! Note, No way of being happy but by seeing ourselves miserable. When we find ourselves in danger of being lost for ever, there is hope of our being made for ever; and not till then. *Secondly*. They speak as men at a point, that were resolved to do any thing they shall be directed to, presently. They are not for taking time to consider, or adjourning the prosecution of their convictions to a more convenient season; but desire now to be told what they must do to escape the misery they were liable to. Note, Those that are convinced of sin would gladly know the way to peace and pardon, *ch. ix. 6*; *xvi. 30*.

Secondly. Peter and the apostles direct them in short what they must do, and what in so doing they might expect, ver. 38, 39. Sinners convinced must be encouraged, and that which is broken must be bound up, *Eze. xxxiv. 16*; they must be told that though their case is sad it is not desperate, there is hope for them.

1. He here shews them the course they must take.

1st. "Repent;" that is a plank after shipwreck. Let the sense of this horrid guilt which you have brought upon yourselves by putting Christ to death awaken you to a penitent reflection upon all your other sins, as the demand of some one great debt brings to light all the debts of a poor bankrupt, and to bitter remorse and sorrow for them. This was the same duty that John the Baptist and Christ had preached; and now the Spirit is poured out it is still insisted on: Repent, repent; change your mind, change your way; admit an afterthought.

2nd. "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ;" that is, firmly believe the doctrine of Christ, and submit to his grace and government; and make an open, solemn profession of this, and come under an engagement to abide by it, by submitting to the ordinance of baptism; be proselyted to Christ and to his holy religion, and renounce your infidelity. They must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. They did believe in the Father and the Holy Ghost speaking by the prophets; but they must also believe in the name of Jesus, that he is the Christ, the Messiah promised to the fathers. Take Jesus for your king, and by baptism swear allegiance to him; take him for your prophet, and hear him; take him for your priest, to make atonement for you,—which seems peculiarly intended here, for they must be baptized in his name for the remission of sins, upon the score of his righteousness.

3rd. This is pressed upon each particular person; "Every one of you," even those of you that have been the greatest sinners, if they repent and believe, are welcome to be baptized; and those that think they have been the greatest saints yet have need to repent, and believe, and be baptized. There is grace enough in Christ for every one of you, be ye never so many; and grace suited to the case of every one. Israel of old was baptized unto Moses in the camp, the whole body of the Israelites together, when they passed through the cloud, and the sea, *1 Cor. x. 1, 2*, for the covenant of peculiarity was national, but now every one of you distinctly must be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and transact for himself in this great affair: see *Col. i. 28*.

2. He gives them encouragement to take that course.

1st. It shall be "for the remission of sins." Repent of your sin, and it shall not be your ruin; be baptized into the faith of Christ, and in truth you shall be justified, which you could never be by the law of Moses. Aim at this, and depend upon Christ for it, and this you shall have. As the cup in the Lord's supper is the new testament in the blood of Christ for the remission of sins, so baptism is in the name of Christ for the remission of sins. Be washed, and you shall be washed.

2nd. "You shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," as well as we; for it is designed for a general blessing. Some of you shall receive these external gifts, and each of you, if ye be sincere in your faith and repentance, shall receive his internal graces and comforts, shall be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Note, All that receive the remission of sins receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; all that are justified are sanctified.

3rd. Your children shall still have, as they have had, an interest in the covenant, and a title to the external seal of it. Come over to Christ to receive those inestimable benefits; for the promise of the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, is to you and to your children, ver. 39. It was very express, *Isa. xlii. 3*, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed;" and, *Isa. lix. 21*, "My

ii. 7. "Galileans:" not perhaps spoken so much in contempt of the Galileans, who were considered rude and uneducated, as in astonishment that those who were of one province should speak in so many different languages.

ii. 9. "Parthians, and Medes:" "These people spoke various dialects of the old Persian. . . . Parthia proper lay to the east of Media and Persia, Media to the south-east of the Caspian Sea. At that time, however, the Parthians occupied Babylon. Elymais (now

called Khusistan), named from Elam, the first-born of Shem, was separated from Persia by the Eulaeus, or Ulai. The Elauites here mentioned were, however, probably settled on the Orontes, near the Caspian Sea. Their original language would be Semitic. 'Mesopotamia,' the Padan-Aram of Genesis; bounded on the north by Armenia, and on the east and west by the Tigris and Euphrates" (Cook). "Judea:" Alford says he sees no difficulty in the mention of Judea here, for the catalogue does not proceed by languages, but

Spirit and my Word shall not depart from thy seed, and thy seed's seed." When God took Abraham into covenant, he said, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed." *Gen. xvii. 7*; and accordingly every Israelite had his son circumcised at eight days old. Now it is proper for an Israelite, when he is by baptism to come into a new dispensation of this covenant, to ask, What must be done with my children? must they be thrown out, or taken in with me? Taken in, saith Peter, by all means; for the promise, that great promise of God's being to you a God, is as much to you and to your children now as ever it was.

4th. Though the promise is still extended to your children as it has been, yet it is not, as it has been, confined to you and them, but the benefit of it is designed for "all that are afar off;" we may add, and their children, for the blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ, *Gal. iii. 14*. The promise had long pertained to the Israelites, *Rom. ix. 4*, but now it is sent to those that are afar off; the remotest nations of the Gentiles, and every one of them too, "all that are afar off." To this general the following limitation must refer: "even as many" of them, as many particular persons in each nation, "as the Lord our God shall call" effectually into the fellowship of Jesus Christ. Note, God can make his call to reach those that are never so far off, and none come but whom he calls.

Thirdly. These directions are followed with a needful caution; ver. 40, "with many other words" to the same purpose, "did he testify" Gospel truths, "and exhort" to Gospel duties. Now the Word began to work he followed it; he had said much in a little, ver. 38, 39, and that which one would think included all, and yet he had more to say. When we have heard those words which have done our souls good, we cannot but wish to hear more, to hear many more such words. Among other things he said, and it should seem inculcated in, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation;" be ye free from them. The unbelieving Jews were an untoward generation, perverse and obstinate; they walked contrary to God and man, *1 Thes. ii. 15*, wedded to sin and marked for ruin. Now as to them,

1. Give diligence to save yourselves from their ruin, that you may not be involved in that, and may escape all those things, as the Christians did; "repent, and be baptized," and then you shall not be sharers with them in destruction whom you have been sharers with in sin. O "gather not my soul with sinners."

2. In order to this, continue not with them in their sin, persist not with them in infidelity. "Save yourselves," that is, separate yourselves; distinguish yourselves "from this untoward generation;" "be not rebellious like this rebellious house;" partake not with them in their sins, that you share not with them in their plagues. Note, To separate ourselves from wicked people is the only way to save ourselves from them. Though we thereby expose ourselves to their rage and enmity, we really save ourselves from them; for, if we consider whither they are hastening, we shall see it is better have the trouble of swimming against their stream, than the danger of being carried down their stream. Those that repent of their sins, and give up themselves to Jesus Christ, must evidence their sincerity by breaking off all intimate society with wicked people. "Depart from me, ye evil-doers;" the resolution of one that determines to keep the commandments of his God, *Ps. cxix. 115*. We must save ourselves from them, which notes avoiding them with dread and holy fear, as we would save ourselves from an enemy that seeks to destroy us, or from a house infected with the plague.

Fourthly. Here is the happy success and issue of this, ver. 41. The Spirit wrought with the Word, and wrought wonders by it. These same persons, that had many of them been eyewitnesses of the death of Christ, and the prodigies that attended it, and were not wrought upon by them, yet were wrought upon by the preaching of the Word; for that is it that is the power of God unto salvation.

1. They received the Word; and then only the Word doth us good when we do receive it, embrace it, and bid it welcome. They admitted the conviction of it, and accepted the offers of it.

2. They gladly received it. Herod heard the Word gladly, but these gladly received it; were not only glad that they had it to receive, but glad that by the grace of God they were enabled to receive it, though it would be a humbling, changing Word to them, and would expose them to the enmity of their countrymen.

3. They were baptized. Believing with the heart, they made confession with the mouth, and enrolled themselves among the disciples of Christ, by that sacred rite and ceremony which he had instituted; and, though Peter said, Be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,—because the doctrine of Christ was the present truth,—yet we have reason to think that, in baptizing them, the whole form Christ prescribed was used, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Note, Those that receive the Christian covenant ought to receive the Christian baptism.

4. Hereby there were added to the disciples to the number of about three thousand souls that same day. All those that had received the Holy Ghost had their tongues at work to preach, and their hands at work to baptize; for it was time to be busy, when such a harvest was to be gathered in. The conversion of these three thousand with these words was a greater work than the feeding of four or five thousand with a few loaves. Now Israel began to multiply after the death of our Joseph. They are said to be three thousand souls, which word is generally used for persons when women and children are included with men, as *Gen. xiv. 21*, "Give me the souls;" *Gen. xvi. 27*, "seventy souls;" which intimates that those that were here baptized were not so many men, but so many heads of families, as with their children and servants baptized, might make up three thousand souls. These were added to them. Note, They who are joined to Christ are added to the disciples of Christ, and join with them. When we take God for our God, we must take his people to be our people.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47

Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

We often speak of the primitive church, and appeal to it, and to the history of it; in these verses we have the history of the truly primitive church, of the first days of it; its state of infancy indeed, but, like that, the state of its greatest innocence.

First. They kept close to holy ordinances, and abounded in all instances of piety and devotion; for Christianity admitted in the power of it will dispose the soul to communion with God in all those ways wherein he has appointed us to meet him, and promised to meet us.

1. They were diligent and constant in their attendance upon the preaching of the Word; "they continued in the apostles' doctrine," and never disowned or deserted it; or, as it may be read, They continued constant to the apostles' teaching, or instruction. By baptism they were disciplined to be taught, and they were willing to be taught. Note, Those who have given up their names to Christ must make conscience of hearing his Word; for thereby we give honour to him, and build up ourselves in our most holy faith.

2. They kept up the communion of saints. They continued in fellowship, ver. 42, and "continued daily with one accord in the temple," ver. 46. They not only had a mutual affection to each other, but a great deal of mutual conversation with each other; they were much together. When they withdrew from the untoward generation, they did not turn hermits, but were very intimate with one another, and took all occasions to meet; wherever you saw one disciple, you should see more, like birds of a feather: See how these Christians love one another. They were concerned for one another, sympathized with one another, and heartily espoused one another's interests. They had fellowship with one another in religious worship; they met in the temple: there was their rendezvous; for joint fellowship with God is the best fellowship we can have with one another, *1 Jno. i. 3*. Observe, 1st. They were daily in the temple, not only on the days of the sabbaths and solemn feasts, but on other days, every day. Worshipping God is to be our daily work, and, where there is opportunity, the oftener it is done publicly the better. God loves the gates of Zion, and so must we. 2nd. They were with one accord; not only no discord or strife, but a great deal of holy love among them; and they heartily joined in their public services. Though they met with the Jews in the courts of the temple, yet the Christians kept together by themselves, and were unanimous in their separate devotions.

3. They frequently joined in the ordinance of the Lord's supper. They continued in breaking of bread, in celebrating that memorial of their Master's death, as those that were not ashamed to own their relation to, and their dependence upon, Christ, and him crucified. They could not forget the death of Christ, yet they kept up this memorial of it, and made it their constant practice, because it was an institution of Christ's, to be transmitted to the succeeding ages of the church. They broke bread from house to house, κατ' οἶκον,—"house by house." They did not think fit to celebrate the eucharist in the temple, for that was peculiar to the Christian institutes, and therefore they administered that ordinance in private houses, choosing such houses of the converted Christians as were convenient, to which the neighbours resorted; and they went from one to another of these little synagogues or domestic chapels, houses that had churches in them, and there celebrated the eucharist, with those that usually met there to worship God.

4. They continued in prayers. After the Spirit was poured out, as well as before, while they were waiting for him, they continued instant in prayer; for prayer will never be superseded till it comes to be swallowed up in everlasting praise. Breaking of bread comes in between the word and prayer, for it has reference to both, and is a help to both. The Lord's supper is a sermon to the eye, and a confirmation of God's word to us; and it is an encouragement to our prayers, and a solemn expression of the ascent of our souls to God.

5. They abounded in thanksgiving; were continually praising God, ver. 47. That should have a part in every prayer, and not be crowded into a corner. They that have received the gift of the Holy Ghost will be much in praise.

Secondly. They were loving one to another, and very kind. Their charity was as eminent as their piety, and their joining together in holy ordinances knit their hearts to each other, and very much endeared them to one another.

1. They had frequent meetings for Christian converse; ver. 44, "all that believed were together." Not all those thousands in one place, that was impracticable; but, as Dr. Lightfoot explains it, they kept together in several companies, or congregations, according as their languages, nations, or other references, brought them and kept them together. And thus joining together, because it was apart from those that believed not, and because it was in the same profession and practice of religion, they are said to be together, ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ. They associated together, and so both expressed and increased their mutual love.

2. They "had all things common." Perhaps they had common tables, as the Spartans of old, for familiarity, temperance, and freedom of conversation; they ate together, that they who had much might have the less, and so be kept from the temptations of abundance; and they who had little might have the more, and so be kept from the temptations of want and poverty. Or, there was such a concern for one another, and such a readiness to help one another as there was occasion, that it might be said, they had all things common, according to the law of friendship. One wanted not what another had, for he might have it for the asking.

3. They were very cheerful, and very generous in the use of what they had. Besides the religion that was in their sacred feasts, their breaking bread from house to house, a great deal of it appeared in their common meals: they "did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." They brought the comforts of God's table along with them to their own, which had two good effects upon them; 1st. It made them very pleasant, and enlarged their hearts in holy joy; they did eat their bread with joy, and drank their wine with a merry heart, as knowing that God now accepted their works. None have such cause to be cheerful as good Christians have; it is pity but that they should always have hearts to be so. 2nd. It made them very liberal to their poor brethren, and enlarged their hearts in charity. They "did eat their meat with singleness of heart," ἐν ἀφελότητι καρδίας,—with liberality of heart; so some. They did not eat their morsels alone, but bade the poor welcome to their tables, not grudgingly, but with all the hearty freedom imaginable. Note, It becomes Christians to be open hearted, and open handed, and in every good work to sow plentifully, as those on whom God hath sowed plentifully, and that hope to reap so.

4. They raised a fund for charity; ver. 45, they "sold their possessions and goods." Some sold their lands and houses, others their stocks and the furniture of their houses, and parted the money to their brethren, "as every man had need." This was not to destroy property, as Mr. Baxter saith, but selfishness. Herein, probably, they had an eye to the command which Christ gave to the

by territorial divisions, and Judea lay immediately south of its path from Mesopotamia to Cappadocia. "Asia;" not the continent of Asia, nor Asia Minor; but the Roman province which embraced the western part of the peninsula of Asia Minor, and of which Ephesus was the capital.

ii. 10. "In Egypt:" the Jews had settled in great numbers in Egypt, especially Alexandria. Alexander and Ptolemy Lagus had encouraged them to do so.

ii. 14. "With the eleven;" i.e., distinguished from the rest of the disciples.

ii. 15. "Third hour;" i.e., 9 A.M., and the first hour of prayer, before which no pious Jew might eat or drink.

ii. 16, 17. See Joel ii. 28—31. St. Peter gives the sense rather than the words of Joel. "Last days;" observe, "in the first place the term denotes not a single point of time, but an entire period, including a succession of times, and consequently also a process of

rich man, as a test of his sincerity, "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor." Not that this was intended for an example, to be a constant binding rule, as if all Christians, in all places and ages, were bound to sell their estates, and give away the money in charity; for St. Paul's epistles, after this, often speak of the distinction of rich and poor; and Christ hath said, that the poor we have always with us, and shall have; and the rich must be always doing them good out of the rents, issues, and profits of their estates, which they disable themselves to do if they sell them and give all away at once. But here the case was extraordinary: 1st. They were under no obligation of a Divine command to do this, as appears by what Peter said to Ananias, *ch. v. 4*, "Was it not in thine own power?" But it was a very commendable instance of their raisedness above the world, their contempt of it, their assurance of another world, their love to their brethren, their compassion to the poor, and their great zeal for the encouraging of Christianity, and the nursing of it in its infancy. The apostles left all to follow Christ, and were to give themselves wholly to the Word and prayer, and something must be done for their maintenance; so that this extraordinary liberality was like that of Israel in the wilderness, towards the building of the tabernacle, which needed to be restrained, *Ex. xxxvi. 5, 6*. Our rule is to give according as God hath blessed us; yet, in such an extraordinary case as this, those are to be praised who give beyond their power, *2 Cor. viii. 3, 2nd*. They were Jews that did this, and they who believed Christ must believe that the Jewish nation should shortly be destroyed, and an end put to the possession of estates and goods in it; and in the belief of that they sold them for the present service of Christ and his church.

Thirdly, God owned them, and gave them signal tokens of his presence with them; *ver. 43*, "many wonders and signs were done by the apostles," of divers sorts, which confirmed their doctrine, and incontestably proved that it was from God. They that could work miracles could have maintained themselves and the poor that were among them, miraculously, as Christ fed thousands with a little food; but it was as much for the glory of God that it should be done by a miracle of grace, inclining people to sell their estates to do it, as if it had been done by a miracle in nature. But the Lord's giving them power to work miracles was not all he did for them; he "added to the church daily." The Word in their mouths did wonders, and God blessed their endeavours for the increase of the number of believers. Note, It is God's work to add souls to the church; and it is a great comfort both to ministers and Christians to see it.

Fourthly, The people were influenced by it; they that were without, the standers by, that were spectators.


1. They feared them, and had a veneration for them; *ver. 43*, "fear came upon every soul," that is, upon very many, who saw the wonders and signs done by the apostles, and were afraid lest their not being respected as they should be would bring desolation upon their nation. The common people stood in awe of them, as Herod feared John. Though they had nothing of external pomp to command external respect, as the scribes' long robes gained them the greetings in the market places, yet they had abundance of spiritual gifts in them that were truly honourable, which possessed men with an inward reverence for them. "Fear came upon every soul;" the souls of people were strangely influenced by their awful preaching and living.

2. They favoured them. Though we have reason to think there were those that despised them and hated them,—we are sure the Pharisees and chief priests did,—yet far the greater part of the common people had a kindness for them; they had favour with all the people. Christ was so violently run upon and run down by a packed mob, which cried, Crucify him, crucify him, that one would think his doctrine and followers were never likely to have an interest in the common people any more. And yet here we find them in favour with them all; by which it appears that their prosecuting Christ was a sort of force put upon them by the artifices of the priests; now they returned to their wits, to their right mind. Note, Undissembled piety and charity will command respect; and cheerfulness in serving God will recommend religion to those that are without. Some read it, 'They had charity to all the people,' *χάριν ἔχοντες πρὸς ὅλον τὸν λαόν*; but it did not confine their charity to those of their own community, but it was catholic and extensive; and this recommended them very much.

3. They fell over to them. Some or other were daily coming in, though not so many as the first day; and they were such as should be saved. Note, Those that God has designed for eternal salvation shall, one time or other, be effectually brought to Christ; and those that are brought to Christ are added to the church in a holy covenant by baptism, and in a holy communion by other ordinances.

CHAPTER III.

In this chapter we have a miracle and a sermon: the miracle wrought to make way for the sermon, and to confirm the doctrine that was to be preached, and to make way for it into the minds of people; and then the sermon to explain the miracle, and to sow the ground which by it was broken up. I. The miracle was the healing of a man that was lame from his birth, with a word speaking, *ver. 1-8*; and the impression which this made upon the people, *ver. 9-11*. II. The scope of the sermon which was preached hereupon was to bring people to Christ, to repent of their sin in crucifying him, *ver. 12-19*; and to believe in him now he was glorified, and to comply with the Father's design in glorifying him, *ver. 20-26*. The former part of the discourse opens the wound, the latter applies the remedy.

OW Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. 2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. 4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look

on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. 6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ancle bones received strength. 8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God: 10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. 11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

We were told in general, *ch. ii. 43*, that "many signs and wonders were done by the apostles," which are not written in this book; but here we have one given us for an instance. As they wrought miracles, not upon every body, as every body had occasion for them, but as the Holy Spirit gave direction, so as to answer the end of their commission; so all the miracles they did work are not written in this book, but such only are recorded as the Holy Ghost thought fit, to answer the end of this sacred history.

First. The persons by whose ministry this miracle was wrought were Peter and John, two principal men among the apostles. They were so in Christ's time; one speaker of the house for the most part, the other favourite of the Master; and they continue so. When, upon the conversion of thousands, the church was divided into several societies, perhaps Peter and John presided in that which Luke associated with, and therefore he is more particular in recording what they said and did, as afterwards what Paul said and did, when he attended him; both the one and the other being designed for a specimen of what the other apostles did.

Peter and John had each of them a brother among the twelve, with which they were coupled when they were sent out, yet now they seem to be knit together more closely than either of them to his brother; for the bond of friendship is sometimes stronger than that of relation; there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. Peter and John seem to have had a peculiar intimacy after Christ's resurrection, more than before, *Jno. xx. 2*. The reason of which, if I may have liberty to conjecture, might be this, that John, a disciple made up of love, was more compassionate to Peter upon his fall and repentance, and more tender of him in his bitter weeping for his sin, than any other of the apostles were, and more solicitous to restore him with the spirit of meekness, which made him very dear to Peter ever after. And it was a good evidence of Peter's acceptance with God upon his repentance, that Christ's favourite was made his bosom friend. David prayed after his fall, "Let them that fear thee turn unto me," *Psa. cxix. 79*.

Secondly. The time and place are here set down. 1. It was in the temple, whither Peter and John went up together; because it was the place of concourse. There were the shoals of fish, among whom the net of the Gospel was to be cast, especially during the days of the Pentecost, within the compass of which we may suppose this to have happened. Note, It is good to go up to the temple to attend on public ordinances, and it is comfortable to go up together to the temple; "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go." The best society is society in worshipping of God.

2. It was "at the hour of prayer," one of the hours of public worship commonly appointed and observed among the Jews. Time and place are two necessary circumstances of every action, which must be determined by consent, as is most convenient for edification, with reference to public worship. There must be a house of prayer and an hour of prayer. The ninth hour, that is, three o'clock in the afternoon, was one of the hours of prayer among the Jews; nine in the morning and twelve at noon were the other two; see *Psa. lv. 17; Dan. vi. 10*. It is of use for private Christians so far to have their hours of prayer, as may serve, though not to bind, yet to mind conscience. Every thing is beautiful in its season.

Thirdly. The patient is here described on whom this miraculous cure was wrought, *ver. 2*. He was a poor lame beggar at the temple gate.

1. He was a cripple. Not by accident so, but born so; he was "lame from his mother's womb," as it should seem by a paralytic distemper, which weakened his limbs; for it is said in the description of his cure, *ver. 7*, that "his feet and ancle bones received strength." Some such piteous cases now and then there are, which we ought to be affected with, and look upon with compassion; and which are designed to shew us what we all are by nature spiritually; without strength, lame from our birth, unable to work or walk in God's service.

2. He was a beggar. Being unable to work for his living, he must live upon alms: such are God's poor. He was laid daily by his friends at one of the gates of the temple, a miserable spectacle, unable to do any thing else for himself but "to ask alms of them that entered into the temple," or came out. There was a concourse,—and a concourse of devout, good people,—from whom charity might be expected; and a concourse of such people when it might be hoped they were in the best frame; and there he was laid. Those that need, and cannot work, must not be ashamed to beg; and he would not have been laid there, and laid daily there, if he had not been used to meet with supplies,—daily supplies there. Note, Our prayers and our alms should go together; Cornelius's did, *ch. x. 4*. Objects of charity should be in a particular manner welcome to us when we go up to the temple to pray. It is a pity that common beggars at church doors should any of them be of such a character as to discourage charity; but they ought not always to be overlooked. Some there are, surely, that merit regard; and better feed ten drones, yea, and some wasps, than let one bee starve. The gate of the temple at which he was laid is here

development. In the second place, all the prophecies of the Old Testament reach their ultimate limit or are fulfilled in the Messianic age" (Lechler).

ii. 22. "Approved of God:" rather, authenticated, proved, demonstrated, shown to be that which he claimed to be.

ii. 23. This verse should be rather rendered thus: "Him, delivered according to the fixed counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men have affixed, nailed up, and slain;"

the lawless men being the Romans—Gentiles, who knew not the law.

ii. 24. "The pains of death:" some translate "the bands of death." Alford, however, denies this translation of the Greek, and says, "The fact may be that Peter used the Hebrew word, meaning 'nets' or 'bands,' i.e., the nets in which death held the Lord captive; and that in rendering the words into Greek, the Septuagint rendering of the word in that place and *Psa. cxvi. 3* has been adopted."

named; it was called, "Beautiful," for the extraordinary splendour and magnificence of it. Dr. Lightfoot observes, that this was the gate that led out of the court of the Gentiles into that of the Jews, and supposes that the cripple would beg only of the Jews, as disdaining to ask any thing of the Gentiles. But Dr. Whitby takes it to be at the first entrance into the temple; and beautified so sumptuously as became the frontispiece of that place where the Divine Majesty vouchsafed to dwell; and it was no diminution to the beauty of this gate that a poor man lay there begging.

3. He begged of Peter and John; ver. 3, begged an alms. That was the utmost he expected from them, who had the reputation of being charitable men; and who, though they had not much, yet did good with what they had. It was not many weeks ago that the blind and the lame came to Christ in the temple, and were healed there, *Mat. xxi. 14*; and why might not he have asked more than an alms if he knew that Peter and John were Christ's messengers, and preached and wrought miracles in his name? But he had that done for him which he looked not for; asked an alms and had a cure.

Fourthly. We have here the method of the cure.

1. His expectations were raised. Peter, instead of turning his eyes from him, as many do from objects of charity, turned his eyes to him; nay, he "fastened his eyes upon him," that his eye might affect his heart with compassion towards him, ver. 4. John did so too; for they were both guided by one and the same Spirit, and concurred in this miracle; they said, "Look on us." Our eye must be ever towards the Lord, the eye of our mind; and, in token of that, the eye of the body may properly be fixed on those whom he employs as the ministers of his grace. This man needed not be bidden twice to look on the apostles; for he justly thought this gave him cause to expect that he should receive something from them, and therefore he gave heed to them, ver. 5. Note, We must come to God, both to attend on his Word, and to apply ourselves to him in prayer, with hearts fixed, and expectations raised. Look up to heaven, and expect to receive benefit by that which God speaks from thence, and an answer of peace to the prayers sent up thither; "I will direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."

2. His expectations of an alms were balked; "Peter said, Silver and gold have I none," and, therefore, none to give thee; yet he intimates that, if he had any, he would give him an alms, not brass, but silver or gold. Note, 1st. It is not often that Christ's friends and favourites have abundance of the wealth of this world. The apostles were very poor, had but just enough for themselves, and no overplus; Peter and John had abundance of money laid at their feet, but that was appropriated to the maintenance of the poor of the church, and they would not convert any of it to their own use, nor dispose of it otherwise than according to the intention of the donors. Public trusts ought to be strictly and faithfully observed. 2nd. Many that are well inclined to works of charity yet are not in a capacity of doing any thing considerable, while others that have wherewithal to do much have not a heart to do any thing.

3. His expectations, notwithstanding, were quite outdone. Peter had no money to give him; but, 1st. He had that which was better, such an interest in heaven, such a power from heaven, as to be able to cure his disease. Note, Those who are poor in the world may yet be rich, very rich, in spiritual gifts, graces, and comforts. Certainly there is that we are capable of which is infinitely better than silver and gold; the merchandise and gain of it better, *Job xxviii. 12*, &c.; *Pr. iii. 14*, &c. 2nd. He gave him that which was better, the cure of his disease, which he would gladly have given a great deal of silver and gold for, if he had had it, and it could have been so obtained. This would enable him to work for his living, so that he should not need to beg any more; nay, he should have to give to them that needed; and it is more blessed to give than to receive. A miraculous cure would be a greater instance of God's favour, and would put a greater honour upon him, than thousands of gold and silver could. Observe, When Peter had no silver and gold to give, yet, saith he, "Such as I have give I thee." Note, Those may, and ought to be, otherwise charitable and helpful to the poor that have not wherewithal to give in charity. They that have not silver and gold have their limbs and senses, and with these may be serviceable to the blind, and lame, and sick, which, if they be not as there is occasion, neither would they give to them if they had silver and gold; "as every one has received the gift, so let him minister it."

Let us now see how the cure was wrought.

First. Christ sent his word and healed him, *Ps. cvii. 20*; for healing grace is given by the word of Christ, that is the vehicle of the healing virtue derived from Christ. Christ spoke cures by himself, the apostles spoke them in his name. Peter bids a lame man "rise up and walk," which would have been a banter upon him if he had not premised "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth;" I say it by warrant from him, and it shall be done by power from him, and all the glory and praise of it shall be ascribed to him. He calls Christ Jesus of Nazareth, which was a name of reproach, to intimate that the indignities done him on earth served but as a foil to his glories now he was in heaven. Give him what name you will, call him, if ye will, in scorn Jesus of Nazareth, in that name you shall see wonders done; for, because he humbled himself, thus highly was he exalted. He bids the cripple rise up and walk, which doth not prove that he had power in himself to do it, but proves, if he attempt to rise and walk, and, in a sense of his own impotency, depend upon a Divine power to enable him to do it, he shall be enabled. And by rising and walking he must evidence that that power has wrought upon him; and then let him take the comfort, and let God have the praise. Thus it is in the healing of our souls, that are spiritually impotent.

Secondly. Peter lent his hand and helped him; ver. 7, "he took him by the right hand," in the same name in which he had spoken to him to arise and walk, "and lifted him up." Not that this could contribute any thing to his cure, out it was a sign, plainly intimating the help he should receive from God if he exerted himself as he was bidden. When God by his word commands us to rise, and walk in the way of his commandments, if we mix faith with that word, and lay our souls under the power of it, he will give his Spirit to take us by the hand, and lift us up. If we set ourselves to do what we can, God has promised his grace to enable us to do what we cannot; and by that promise we partake of a new nature, and that grace shall not be in vain; it was not here: "his feet and ankle-bones received strength," which they had not done if he had not attempted to rise, and been helped up. He doth his part, and Peter doth his, and yet it is Christ that doth all; it is he that puts strength into him. As the bread multiplied in the breaking, and the water was turned into wine in the pouring out, so strength was given to the cripple's feet in his stirring them, and using them.

Fifthly. Here is the impression which this cure made upon the patient himself, which we may best conceive of if we put our soul into his soul's stead.

1. He leaped up, in obedience to the command, Arise. He found in himself such a degree of strength, in his feet and ankle-bones, that he did not steal up fair and softly, with fear and trembling, as weak people do when they begin to recover strength, but he started up as one refreshed with sleep, boldly, and with great agility, and as one that questioned not his own strength. The incomes of strength were sudden, and he no less sudden in shewing them. He leaped, as one glad to quit the bed or pad of straw on which he had lain so long.

2. He stood and walked. He stood without either leaning or trembling, stood straight up, and walked without a staff; he trod strongly, and moved steadily; and this was to manifest the cure, and that it was a thorough cure. Note, Those who have had experience of the working of Divine grace upon them, should evidence what they have experienced. Has God put strength into us, let us stand before him in the exercises of devotion, let us walk before him in all the instances of a religious conversation. Let us stand up resolutely for him, and walk cheerfully with him, and both in strength derived and received from him.

3. He held Peter and John, ver. 11. We need not ask, why he held them; I believe he scarce knew himself; but it was in a transport of joy that he embraced them as the best benefactors he ever met with, and hung upon them to a degree of rudeness. He would not let them go forward, but would have them stay with him while he published to all about him what God had done for him by them. Thus he testified his affection to them; he held them, and would not let them go. Some suggest that he clung to them for fear lest, if they should leave him, his lameness should return. Those whom God hath healed love them whom he made instruments of their healing, and see the need of their farther help.

4. He "entered with them into the temple." His strong affection to them held them; but it should not hold them so fast as to keep them out of the temple, whither they were going to preach Christ. We should never suffer ourselves to be diverted by the most affectionate kindnesses of our friends from going in the way of our duty. But if they will not stay with him he is resolved to go with them, and the rather because they are going into the temple, whence he had been so long kept by his weakness and his begging. The impotent man whom Christ cured was presently found in the temple, *Jno. v. 14*. He went into the temple, not only to offer up his praises and thanksgivings to God, but to hear more from the apostles of that Jesus in whose name he had been healed. Those that have experienced the power of Christ should earnestly desire to grow in their acquaintance with Christ.

5. He was there "walking, and leaping, and praising God." Note, The strength God has given us, both in mind and body, should be made use of to his praise, and we should study how to honour him with it. Those that are healed in his name must walk up and down in his name, and in his strength, *Zec. x. 12*. This man, as soon as he could leap, leaped for joy in God, and praised him. Here was that scripture fulfilled, *Isa. xxxv. 6*, "Then shall the lame man leap as a hart." Now this man was newly cured, he was in this excess of joy and thankfulness. All true converts walk and praise God; but perhaps young converts leap more in his praises.

Sixthly. How the people that were eyewitnesses of this miracle were influenced by it, we are next told.

1. They were entirely satisfied in the truth of the miracle, and had nothing to object against it. They knew it was he that sat begging "at the beautiful gate of the temple," ver. 10. He had sat there so long that they all knew him, and for that reason he was chosen to be this vessel of mercy. Now they were not so perverse as to make any doubt whether he was the same man, as the Pharisees had questioned concerning the blind man that Christ cured, *Jno. ix. 18*. They now saw him walking and praising God, ver. 9; and, perhaps, took notice of a change in his mind; for he was now as loud in praising God as he had used to be in begging relief. The best evidence that it was a complete cure was, that he praised God for it. Mercies are then perfected when they are sanctified.

2. They admired at it. They were "filled with wonder and amazement," ver. 10; "greatly wondered," ver. 11; they were in an ecstasy. There seems to be this effect of the pouring out of the Spirit, that the people, at least those in Jerusalem, were much more affected with the miracles the apostles wrought than they had been with those of the same kind that had been wrought by Christ himself; and this was in order to the miracles answering their end.

3. They gathered about Peter and John; "all the people ran together unto them, in Solomon's porch;" some only to gratify their curiosity with the sight of men that had such power; others with a desire to hear them preach, concluding that their doctrine must needs be of Divine origin which thus had a Divine ratification. They flocked to them in Solomon's porch, a part of the court of the Gentiles, where Solomon had built the outer porch of the temple; or it was some cloisters or piazzas which Herod had erected upon the same foundation which Solomon had built that stately porch upon that bore his name, Herod being ambitious herein to be a second Solomon. Here the people met to see this great sight.

12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? 13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. 14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; 15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. 16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. 17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so ful-

ii. 36. Observe how in this concluding verse, as well as throughout St. Peter's address, he lays stress upon the fact that the God of Israel was the doer of all these things.

ii. 38. "Repent:" the word imports change of mind; here, change from thinking Jesus an impostor, and scorning him as one crucified, to being baptised in his name, and looking to him for remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit.

ii. 39. "All that are afar off:" i.e., the Gentiles (*Eph. ii. 13*).

ii. 40. "Save yourselves:" rather, "be saved."

ii. 42. "Breaking of bread:" Alford says, "The Holy Communion was at first and for some time, till abuses put an end to the practice, inseparably connected with the love-feasts of the Christians, and unknown as a separate ordinance. To these love-feasts, accompanied as they were at this time by the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the breaking of bread refers—from the custom of the master of the feast breaking bread in asking a blessing."

filled. 19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; 20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: 21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. 22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. 23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. 24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. 25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. 26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

We have here the sermon which Peter preached after he had cured the lame man. "When Peter saw it." 1. When he saw the people got together in a crowd, he took that opportunity to preach Christ to them; especially, the temple being the place of their concourse, and Solomon's porch there, let them come and hear a more excellent wisdom than Solomon's, for behold a greater than Solomon is here preached. 2. When he saw the people affected with the miracle, and filled with admiration, then he sowed the gospel seed in the ground which was thus broken up and prepared to receive it. 3. When he saw the people ready to adore him and John, he stepped in immediately and diverted their respects from them, that they might be directed to Christ only; and to this he answered presently, as Paul and Barnabas at Lystra: see *ch. xiv. 14, 15.* In the sermon.

First. He humbly disclaims the honour of the miracle, as not due to them, who were only the ministers of Christ, or instruments in his hand for the doing of it. The doctrines they preached were not of their own invention, nor were the seals of it their own, but his whose doctrines were. He addresseth himself to them as men of Israel, men to whom pertained not only the law and the promises, but the Gospel and the performances, and who were nearly interested in the present dispensation. Two things he asks them:

1. Why they were so surprised at the miracle itself: "Why marvel ye at this?" It was indeed marvellous, and they justly wondered at it; but it was no more than what Christ had done many a time, and they had not duly regarded it, or been affected with it. It was but a little before that Christ had raised Lazarus from the dead, and why should this then seem so strange? Note, Stupid people think that strange now which might have been familiar to them, if it had not been their own fault. Christ had lately risen from the dead himself, why did they not marvel at that? Why were they not convinced by that?

2. Why they gave so much of the praise of it to them, that were only the instruments of it: "Why look ye so earnestly on us?" 1st. It was certain they had made this man to walk, by which it appeared that the apostles not only were sent of God, but were sent to be blessings to the world, benefactors to mankind; and were sent to heal sick and distempered souls, that were spiritually lame and impotent, to set broken bones, and make them rejoice. 2nd. Yet they did not do it by any power or holiness of their own. It was not done by any might of their own, any skill they had in physic or surgery, or any virtue in their word; the power they did it by was wholly derived from Christ. Nor was it done by any merit of their own; the power which Christ gave them to do it they had not deserved; it was not by their own holiness, for, as they were weak things, so they were foolish things that Christ chose to employ; Peter was a sinful man. What holiness had Judas? yet he wrought miracles in Christ's name. What holiness any of them had it was wrought in them, and they could not pretend to merit by it. 3rd. It was the people's fault that they attributed it to their power and holiness, and accordingly looked at them. Note, The instruments of God's favour to us, though they must be respected, yet must not be idolized; we must take heed of reckoning that to be done by the instrument which God is the author of. 4th. It was the praise of Peter and John that they would not take the honour of this miracle to themselves, but carefully transmitted it to Christ. Useful men must see to it that they be very humble; "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory." Every crown must be cast at the feet of Christ; "Not I, but the grace of God with me."

Secondly. He preacheth Christ to them. That was his business, that he might lead them into obedience to Christ.

1. He preacheth Christ as the true Messiah, promised to the fathers, ver. 13; for, 1st. He is Jesus the Son of God. Though they had lately condemned Christ as a blasphemer, for saying he was the Son of God, yet Peter avows it; He is his Son Jesus, to him dear as a Son, to us, Jesus a Saviour. 2nd. God hath glorified him: in raising him up to be king, priest, and prophet of his church; he glorified him in his life and in his death, as well as in his resurrection and ascension. 3rd. He has glorified him as the God of our fathers,—whom he names with respect, for they were great names with the men of Israel, and justly,—the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. God sent him into the world pursuant to the promises made to those patriarchs, that "in their seed

the families of the earth should be blessed, and the covenant made with them that God would be a God to them and their seed. The apostles call the patriarchs their fathers, and God, the God of those patriarchs from whom the Jews were descended, to intimate to them that they had no evil design upon the Jewish nation, that they should look upon them with a jealous eye; but had a value and concern for it, and were hereby well-wishers to it, and the Gospel they preached was the revelation of the mind and will of the God of Abraham: see *ch. xvi. 7, 22; Lu. i. 72, 73.*

2. He chargeth them flat and plain with the murder of this Jesus, as he had done before. 1st. You delivered him up to your chief priests and elders, the representative body of the nation, and you of the common people were influenced by them to clamour against him, as if he had been a public grievance. 2nd. You denied him, and you disowned him; would not have him then to be your king, could not look on him as the Messiah, because he came not in external pomp and power. You "denied him in the presence of Pilate," renounced all the expectations of your church in the presence of the Roman governor, who justly laughed at you for it; "you denied him against the face of Pilate," so Dr. Hammond, in defiance of his reasonings with you. Pilate had determined to let him go; but the people opposed it, and overruled him. You were worse than Pilate, for he would have released him, if you had let him follow his own judgment. "You denied the Holy One and the Just," who had approved himself so, and all the malice of his persecutors could not disprove it. The holiness and justice of the Lord Jesus, which is something more than his innocency, was a great aggravation of the sin of those that put him to death. 3rd. You desired a murderer to be released, and Christ crucified; as if Barabbas had deserved better at your hands than the Lord Jesus; than which a greater affront could not be put upon him. 4th. You killed the Prince of life. Observe the antithesis: You preserved a murderer, a destroyer of life; and destroyed the Saviour, the author of life. You killed him who was sent to be to you the Prince of life; and so, not only forsook, but rebelled against, your own mercies. You did an ungrateful thing in taking away his life who would have been your life; you did a foolish thing, to think you could conquer the Prince of life, who has life in himself, and would soon resume the life he resigned.

3. He attests his resurrection as before, *ch. ii. 32*; You thought the Prince of life might be deprived of his life, as any other prince might be deprived of his dignity and dominion; but you found yourselves mistaken, for God raised him from the dead; so that, in putting him to death, you fought against God, and were baffled. God raised him from the dead, and thereby ratified his demands, and confirmed his doctrine, and rolled away all the reproach of his sufferings; and for the truth of his resurrection we all are witnesses.

4. He ascribes the cure of this impotent man to the power of Christ; ver. 16, "His name through faith in his name," in that discovery which he hath made of himself "has made this man strong." He repeats it again, "The faith which is by him hath given him this soundness." Here, 1st. He appeals to themselves concerning the truth of the miracle: the man on whom it was wrought is one whom ye see, and know, and have known. He was not acquainted with Peter and John before, so that there was no room to suspect a compact between them; but, You know him to be a cripple from a child. The miracle was wrought publicly, the presence of you all; not in a corner, but in the gate of the temple; you saw in what manner it was done, so as that there could be no juggle in it; you had liberty to examine it immediately, and may yet. The cure is complete; it is a perfect soundness; you see the man walks and leaps as one that has no remainder either of weakness or pain. 2nd. He acquaints them with the power by which it was wrought. First, It is done by the name of Christ; not merely by naming it as a spell or charm, but it is done by us as professors, and preachers of his name, by virtue of a commission and instructions we have received from him, and a power which he has invested us with. That name which Christ has above every name, his authority, his command, has done it; as writs run in the king's name, though it is an inferior officer that executes them. Secondly. The power of Christ is fetched in through faith in his name: a confidence in him, a dependence on him, a believing application to him, and expectations from him, even that faith which is *ἀντιπαρα*—by him, which is of his working. It is not of ourselves, it is the gift of Christ; and it is for his sake, that he may have the glory of it: for he is both the author and finisher of our faith. Dr. Lightfoot suggests that faith is twice named in this verse, because of the apostles' faith in doing this miracle, and the cripple's faith in receiving it; but I suppose it relates chiefly, if not only, to the former. They that wrought this miracle by faith derived power from Christ to work it, and therefore returned all the glory to him. By this true and just account of the miracle, Peter both confirmed the great gospel truth they were to preach to the world, that Jesus Christ is the fountain of all power and grace, and the great Healer and Saviour, and recommended the great gospel duty of faith in him, as the only way of receiving benefit by him; it explains, likewise, the great gospel mystery of our salvation by Christ. It is his name that justifies us; that glorious name of his, the Lord our righteousness; but we in particular are justified by that name through faith in it, applying it to ourselves. Thus doth Peter preach unto them Jesus and him crucified, as a faithful friend of the bridge, to whose service and honour he devoted all his interest.

Thirdly. He encourageth them to hope that, though they had been guilty of putting Christ to death, yet they might find mercy. He doth all he can to convince them, yet is careful not to drive them to despair. The guilt was very great, but,

1. He mollifies their crime by a candid imputation of it to their ignorance. Perhaps he perceived, by the countenances of his hearers, that they were struck with an exceeding horror when he told them that they had killed the Prince of life, and were ready either to sink down or to fly off, and therefore he saw it needful to mitigate the rigour of the charge by calling them brethren; and well might he call them so, for he had been himself a brother with them in this iniquity: he had denied the Holy One and the Just, and swore he did not know him. He did it by surprise; and, for your parts, I know, that "through ignorance, ye did it, as did also your rulers," ver. 17. This was the language of Peter's charity, and teacheth us to make the best of those whom we desire to make better. Peter had searched the wound to the bottom, and now he begins to think of healing it up; in order to which it is necessary to leget in them a good opinion of their Physician, and could any thing be more winning than this? And that which bears him out in it is that he has the example of his Master, praying for his crucifiers, and pleading in their behalf that they knew not what they did. And it is said of the rulers that, if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; see *1 Cor. ii. 8.* Perhaps some of the rulers, and of the people did therein rebel against the light, and the convictions of their own consciences, and did it through malice; but the generality went down the stream, and did it through ignorance; as Paul persecuted the church, ignorantly and in unbelief, *1 Tim. i. 13.*

2. He mollifies the effect of their crime, the death of the Prince of life. This sounds very dreadful, but it was according to the Scriptures, ver. 18; the predictions of which, though they did not necessitate their sin, yet did necessitate his sufferings; so he himself saith, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoveth Christ to suffer." "You did it through ignorance," may be taken in this sense, You fulfilled the Scripture, and did not know it: "God" by your

ii. 47. "Such as should be saved:" rather, "those who were in the way of salvation;" "those who were being saved."

iii. 1. "Peter and John:" we frequently find these disciples mentioned together. They went together to prepare the Passover; Peter at the last supper beckoned to John to ask who should be the betrayer; John, in all probability, was the other disciple who brought in Peter to the high-priest's palace; they ran together to the sepulchre; Peter inquired about the future lot of

John; they were deputed to go together to Samaria; they were partners as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. "The hour of prayer, the ninth hour;" i.e., 3 P.M. The Jews prayed at the third, sixth, and ninth hours, corresponding to our 9 A.M., mid-day, and 3 P.M.

iii. 2. "The gate of the Temple which is called Beautiful:" perhaps that of Nicaen, or more probably that called Shushan, or the gate of lilies, which was nearer Solomon's Porch. "It was thirty cubits

hands "hath fulfilled what he shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer." That was his design in delivering him up to you; but you had views of your own, and were altogether ignorant of that design; you meant not so, neither did your heart think so. God was fulfilling the Scripture when you were gratifying your own passions. Observe, It was not only determined in the secret counsel of God, but declared to the world many ages before, by the mouth and pen of the prophets, that Christ should suffer, in order to the accomplishment of his undertaking; and it was God himself that shewed it by them, who will see that his words be made good. What he shewed he fulfilled; he so fulfilled as he had shewed, punctually and exactly, without any variation. Now, though this is no extenuation at all of their sin in hating and persecuting Christ to the death,—that still appears exceeding sinful, yet it was an encouragement to them to repent, and hope for mercy upon their repentance; not only because, in general, God's gracious designs were carried on by it, (and thus it agrees with the encouragement Joseph gave to his brethren, when they thought their offence against him almost unpardonable, "Fear not," saith he, "you thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good," *Gen. i. 15, 20.*) but because, in particular, the death and sufferings of Christ were for the remission of sins, and the ground of that display of mercy he now encouraged them to hope for.

Fourthly. He exhorts them all to turn Christians, and assures them it would be unspeakably for their advantage to do so; it would be the making of them for ever. This is the application of his sermon.

1. He tells them what they must believe.

1st. They must believe that Jesus Christ is the promised seed; that seed in which God had told Abraham that all the kindreds of the earth should be blessed, *ver. 25.* This refers to that promise made to Abraham, *Gen. xii. 3;* which promise was long ere it was fulfilled; but now at length had its accomplishment in this Jesus, who was of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and in him all the families of the earth are blessed, and not the families of Israel only. All have some benefits by him, and some have all benefits.

2nd. They must believe that Jesus Christ is a prophet; that prophet like unto Moses which God had promised to raise up to them from among their brethren, *ver. 22.* This refers to that promise, *Deu. xviii. 18.* Christ is a prophet, for by him God speaks unto us; in him all Divine revelation centres, and by him it is handed to us. He is a prophet like unto Moses; a favourite of Heaven, more intimately acquainted with the Divine counsel, and more familiarly conversed with, than any other prophets. He was a deliverer of his people out of bondage, and their guide through the wilderness, like Moses; a prince, and a lawgiver, like Moses; the builder of the true tabernacle, as Moses was of the typical one. Moses was faithful as a servant, Christ as a son; Moses was murmured against by Israel, defied by Pharaoh, yet God owned him, and ratified his commission; Moses was a pattern of meekness and patience, so is Christ; Moses died by the word of the Lord, so did Christ. There was no prophet like unto Moses, *Num. xii. 6, 7; Deu. xxxiv. 10;* but a greater than Moses is here where Christ is. He is a prophet of God's raising up; for he took not this honour of himself, but was called of God to it. He was raised up unto Israel in the first place; he executed this office in his own person, among them only. They had the first offer of Divine grace made to them; and therefore he was raised up from among them. Of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came; which, as it was a great honour done to them, so it was both an obligation upon them, and an encouragement to them, to embrace him. If he come to his own, one would think they should receive him. The Old Testament church was blessed with many prophets, with schools of prophets, for many ages with a constant succession of prophets, (which is here taken notice of, from Samuel and those that follow after, *ver. 24,* from him the prophetic era did commence;) but, those servants being abused, last of all God sent them his Son, who had been in his bosom.

3rd. They must believe that times of refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord, *ver. 19;* and that they will be the times of the restitution of all things, *ver. 21.* There is a future state, another life after this. Those times will come from the presence of the Lord; from his glorious appearance at that day, his coming at the end of time. The absence of the Lord occasions many of the securities of sinners, and the distrust of saints; but his presence is hastening on, which will for ever silence both; "Behold the judge standeth before the door." The presence of the Lord will introduce, *First.* The restitution of all things, *ver. 21.* The new heavens, and the new earth, which will be the product of the dissolution of all things, *Rev. xxi. 1;* the renovation of the whole creation, which is that which grieves after, as its present burthen under the sin of man is that which it groans under. Some understand this of a state on this side the end of time, but it is rather to be understood of that end of all things which God hath spoken of by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began; for this is that which Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of, *Jude 14;* and the temporal judgments which the other prophets foretold were typical of that which the apostle calls the eternal judgment. This is more clearly and plainly revealed in the New Testament than is had been before, and all that receive the Gospel have an expectation of it. *Secondly.* With this will come the times of refreshing, *ver. 19;* of consolation to the Lord's people, like a cool shade to those that have borne the burthen and heat of the day. All Christians look for a rest that remains for the people of God, after the travails and toils of their present state; and with the prospect of that they are borne up under their present sufferings, and carried on in their present services. The refreshing that then comes from the presence of the Lord will continue eternally in the presence of the Lord.

2. He tells them what they must do.

1st. They must repent, must bethink themselves of what they have done amiss, must return to their right mind, admit a second thought, and submit to the convictions of it; they must begin anew. Peter, who had himself denied Christ, repented, and he would have them to do so too.

2nd. They must be converted, must face about and direct both their faces and steps the contrary way to what they had been; they must return to the Lord their God, from whom they had revolted. It is not enough to repent of sin, but we must be converted from it, and not return to it again. They must not only exchange the profession of Judaism for that of Christianity, but the power and dominion of a carnal, worldly, sensual mind, for that of holy, heavenly, and Divine principles and affections.

3rd. They must hear Christ the great prophet; "Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." Attend his dictates, receive his doctrine, submit to his government; hear him with a Divine faith, as prophets should be heard that come with a Divine commission. Him shall ye hear; and to him you shall subscribe with an implicit faith and obedience. Hear him in all things; let his laws govern all your actions, and his counsels determine all your submissions; whenever he has a mouth to speak, you must have an ear to hear. Whatever he saith to us, though never so displeasing to flesh and blood, bid it welcome; Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears. And a good reason is here given why we should be observant of, and obedient to, the Word of Christ: for it is at our peril if we turn a deaf ear to his call, and a stiff neck to his yoke; *ver. 23,* "every soul which will not hear that prophet," and be directed by what he saith, "shall be destroyed from among the people." The

destruction of the city and nation by war and famine were threatened for slighting the prophets of the Old Testament; but the destruction of the soul, a spiritual and eternal destruction, is threatened for slighting Christ, this great prophet. They that will not be advised by the Saviour can expect no other but to fall into the hands of the destroyer.

3. He tells them what they might expect.

1st. That they should have the pardon of their sins. This is always spoken of as the great privilege of all those that embrace the Gospel; *ver. 19,* "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." This implies, *First.* That the remission of sin is the blotting of it out, as a cloud is blotted out by the beams of the sun, *Isa. xlv. 22;* as a debt is crossed and blotted out when it is remitted. It intimates that, when God forgives sin, he remembers it no more against the sinner; it is forgotten as that which is blotted out. All the bitter things written against the sinner (*Job xiii. 26*) are wiped out, as it were with a sponge. It is the cancelling of a bond, the vacating of a judgment. *Secondly.* We cannot expect that our sins should be pardoned unless we repent of them, and turn from them to God. Though Christ has died to purchase the remission of sin, yet, that we may have the benefit of that purchase in the forgiveness of our sins, we must repent, and be converted. If no repentance, no remission.

Thirdly. Hopes of the pardon of sin upon repentance should be a powerful inducement to us to repent; "Repent, that your sins may be blotted out." And that repentance is evangelical which flows from an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, and the hopes of pardon. This was the first and great argument, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." *Fourthly.* The most comfortable fruit of the forgiveness of our sins will be when the times of refreshing shall come. If our sins be forgiven us, we have now reason to be of good cheer; but the comfort will be complete when the pardon shall be allowed in open court, and our justification published before angels and men; when, "whom he justified, them he glorifies," *Rom. viii. 30;* as "now we are the sons of God," *1 Jno. iii. 2,* so now we have our sins blotted out; but it doth not yet appear what are the blessed fruits of it, till the times of refreshing shall come. During these times of toil and conflicts, doubts and fears within, troubles and dangers without, we cannot have that full satisfaction of our pardon and in it, that we shall have when the refreshing times come, which shall wipe away all tears.

2nd. That they should have the comfort of Christ's coming; *ver. 20, 21,* "He shall send Jesus Christ," the same Jesus, the very same, "which before was preached unto you;" for you must not expect another dispensation, another Gospel, but the continuance and completion of this; must not expect another prophet like unto Jesus, as Moses bade you expect another like unto him; for, though "the heavens must receive him till the times of the restitution of all things," yet, if you repent and be converted, you shall find no want of him; some way or other he shall be seen of you.

First. We must not expect Christ's personal presence with us in this world; for the heavens, which received him out of the sight of the disciples, must retain him till the end of time. To that seat of the blessed his bodily presence is confined, and will be to the end of time, "the accomplishment of all things," so it may be read. And, therefore, those dishonour him, and deceive themselves, who dream of his corporal presence in the eucharist. It is agreeable to a state of trial and probation that the glorified Redeemer should be out of sight, because we must live by that faith in him which is the evidence of things not seen; because he must be believed on in the world, he must be received up into glory. Dr. Hammond reads it, "who must receive the heavens," that is, who must receive the glory and power of the upper world; "he must reign till all be made subject to him," *1 Cor. xv. 25; Ps. lxxv. 2.*

Secondly. Yet it is promised that he shall be sent to all that repent and are converted; *ver. 20,* "He shall send Jesus Christ," who was preached to you by his disciples both before and since his resurrection, and is, and will be, all in all to them. 1st. You shall have his spiritual presence; he that is sent into the world shall be sent to you; you shall have the comfort of his being sent; he shall be sent among you in his Gospel, which shall be his tabernacle, his chariot of war. 2nd. He shall send Jesus Christ to destroy Jerusalem, and the nation of unbelieving Jews, that are enemies to Christ and Christianity, and to deliver his ministers and people from them, and give them a quiet profession of the Gospel, and that shall be a time of refreshing which you shall share in; "then had the churches rest," so Dr. Hammond. 3rd. The sending of Christ to judge the world at the end of time will be a blessing to you. You shall then "lift up your heads with joy, knowing that your redemption draws nigh;" it seems to refer to this, for till then the heavens must receive him, *ver. 21.* As God's counsels from eternity, so his predictions from the beginning of time, had a reference to the transactions of the last day, when "the mystery of God shall be finished, as he had declared to his servants the prophets," *Rev. x. 7.* The institution of all things in the church had an eye to the restitution of all things as the end of them.

4. He tells them what ground they had to expect these things, if they were converted to Christ. Though they had denied him, and put him to death, yet they might hope to find favour through him upon the account of their being Israelites; for,

1st. As Israelites, they had the monopoly of the grace of the Old Testament. They were, above any other, God's favourite nation; and the favour God bestowed upon them were such as had a reference to the Messiah, and his kingdom. "Ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant;" a double privilege.

First. They were "the children," that is, the disciples, "of the prophets," as children at school. Not sons of the prophets, in the sense that we read of such in the Old Testament, from Samuel and downwards, who were or are trained up to be endued with the spirit of prophecy; but you are of that people from among whom prophets were raised up, and to whom prophets were sent. It is spoken of as a great favour to Israel, that God raised up of their sons for prophets, *Am. ii. 11.* All the inspired writers, both of the Old and New Testament, were of the seed of Abraham; and it was their honour and advantage that unto them were committed the oracles of God, *Rom. iii. 2.* Their government was constituted by prophecy, that is, by Divine revelation; and by it their affairs were for many ages very much managed: see *Jos. xii. 13,* "By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved." Those of the latter ages of the church, when prophecy was ceased, yet might be fitly called the children of the prophets, because they heard, though they did not know, the voices of the prophets, which were read in their synagogues every sabbath day, *ch. xiii. 27.* Now this should quicken them to embrace Christ, and they might hope to be accepted of him; for their own prophets had foretold that this grace should be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ, *1 Pet. i. 13;* and therefore ought not to be neglected by them, nor should be denied to them. Those that are blessed with prophets and prophecy, as all are that have the Scriptures, are concerned not to receive the grace of God therein in vain. We may apply it particularly to ministers' children, who, if they plead that effectually with themselves, as an inducement to be faithful and forward in religion, may comfortably plead it with God, and hope that the children of God's servants shall continue.

Secondly. They were "the children;" that is, the heirs "of the covenant

high, and was made of Corinthian brass, and wrought with exceeding delicacy and skill, so that it greatly exceeded in value the gates leading into the second court, which were covered with plates of silver, and richly gilt." The word means that this lame man "was in the habit of being carried," and whom they "used to place."

iii. 4. "Fastening his eyes upon him;" it is the same word as used in chap. i. 10.

iii. 7. "The soles of his feet and his ankles;" the word employed for ankles is derived from the same origin as that for a hammer or mallet, and is applied to the ankle bones because of their resemblance to a hammer. See in this specification, as in the minute accounts St. Luke gives of other miracles, evidences of his medical knowledge.

iii. 8. "Leaping up" expresses the eagerness and joy, as well as the perfection, with which he began to exercise his newly-acquired

which God made with our fathers," as children in the family. God's covenant was made with Abraham and his seed; and they were that seed, with whom the covenant was made, and on whom the blessings of the covenant were entailed. The promise of the Messiah was made to you; and therefore, if you forsake not your own mercies, and do not by an obstinate infidelity put a bar in your own door, you may hope it shall be made good to you. That promise here mentioned as the principal article of the covenant, "In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed," though referring principally to Christ, *Gal. iii. 16*, yet may include the church also, which is his body, all believers, that are the spiritual seed of Abraham. All the kindreds of the earth were blessed in having a church for Christ among them; and those that were the seed of Abraham according to the flesh stood fairest for this privilege. If all the kindreds of the earth were to be blessed in Christ, much more that kindred, his "kinsmen according to the flesh."

2nd As Israelites, they had the first offer of the grace of the New Testament. Because they were the children of the prophets and the covenant, and therefore to them the Redeemer was first sent, which was an encouragement to them to hope that, if they did repent, and were converted, he should be yet farther sent for their comfort; ver. 20. "He shall send Jesus Christ," for to you first he hath sent him; ver. 26. "unto you first," you Jews, though not to you only. "God, having raised up his Son Jesus," appointed and authorized him to be a Prince and a Saviour, and, in confirmation of that, raised him from the dead, "sent him to bless you;" to make a tender of his blessing to you, especially that great blessing, of "turning every one of you from his iniquities;" and therefore it concerns you to receive this blessing, and turn from your iniquities, and you may be encouraged to hope that you shall.

First. We are here told whence Christ had his mission; "God raised up his Son Jesus, and sent him." God raised him up when he constituted him a prophet, owned him by a voice from heaven, and filled him with his Spirit without measure, and then sent him; for to that end he raised him up, that he might be his commissioner to treat of peace. He sent him to bear witness of the truth; sent him to seek and save lost souls; sent him against his enemies to conquer them. Some refer the raising of him up to the resurrection, which was the first step towards his exaltation; that was, as it were, the renewing of his commission, and though, having raised him up he seemed presently to take him from us, yet he did really send him afresh to us, in his Gospel and Spirit.

Secondly. To whom he was sent; "unto you first." You of the seed of Abraham, you that are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant, to you is the tender made of gospel grace. The personal ministry of Christ, as that of the prophets, was confined to the Jews; he was not then sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and forbade the disciples he then sent forth to go any farther. After his resurrection he was to be preached indeed to all nations, but they must begin at Jerusalem, *Lu. xxiv. 47*; and, when they went to other nations, they first preached to the Jews they found therein; they were the firstborn, and as such had the first privilege of the offer. So far were they from being excluded for their putting of Christ to death, that, when he is risen, he is first sent to them; and they are primarily intended to have benefit by his death.

Thirdly. On what errand he was sent. He is sent "to you first, to bless you." That is his primary errand; not to condemn you as you deserve, but to justify you, if you will accept of the justification offered you in the way wherein it is offered; but he that sends him first to bless you, if you refuse and reject that blessing, will send him to curse you with a curse, *Mal. iv. 6*. Note, 1st. Christ's errand into the world was to bless us, to bring a blessing with him; for "the Sun of righteousness rose with healing under his wings;" and when he left the world he left a blessing behind him, for he was "parted from the disciples as he blessed them," *Lu. xxiv. 51*. He sent his Spirit to be the great blessing, the blessing of blessings, *Isa. xlv. 3*. It is by Christ that God sends blessings to us, and through him only we can expect to receive them. 2nd. The great blessing wherewith Christ came to bless us was the "turning of us away from our iniquities;" the saving of us from our sins, *Mat. i. 21*; to turn us from sin, that we may be qualified to receive all other blessings. Sin is that which naturally we cleave to; the design of Divine grace is to turn us from it, nay, to turn us against it, that we may not only forsake it, but hate it. The Gospel has a direct tendency to it, not only as it requires us, or every one of us, to turn from our iniquities, but as it promiset us grace to enable us to do so. Therefore do your part, "repent, and be converted;" because Christ is ready to do his, in turning you from your iniquities, and so blessing you.

CHAPTER IV.

In going over the last two chapters, where we met with so many good things that the apostles did, I wondered what was become of the scribes and Pharisees, and chief priests, that they did not appear to contradict and oppose them, as they had used to treat Christ himself; sure they were so confounded at first with the pouring out of the Spirit, that they were for a time struck dumb. But I find we have not lost them; their forces rally again, and here we have an encounter between them and the apostles; for from the beginning the Gospel met with opposition. Here, I. Peter and John are taken up upon a warrant from the priests, and committed to jail, ver. 1-4. II. They are examined by a committee of the great Sanhedrim, ver. 5-7. III. They bravely avow what they have done, and preach Christ to their persecutors, ver. 8-12. IV. Their persecutors, being unable to answer them, enjoin them silence; threaten them if they go on to preach the Gospel, and so dismiss them, ver. 13-22. V. They apply themselves to God by prayer for the farther operations of that grace which they had already experienced, ver. 23-30. VI. God owns them, both outwardly and inwardly, by manifest tokens of his presence with them, ver. 31-33. VII. The believers had their hearts knit together in holy love, and enlarged their charity to the poor; and the church flourished more than ever, to the glory of Christ, ver. 33-37.



AND as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, 2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now

eventide. 4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

We have here the interests of the kingdom of heaven successfully carried on and the powers of darkness appearing against them to put a stop to them. Let Christ's servants be never so resolute, Satan's agents will be spiteful; and therefore, let Satan's agents be never so spiteful, Christ's servants ought to be resolute.

First. The apostles Peter and John went on in their work, and did not labour in vain. The Spirit enabled the ministers to do their part, and the people theirs.

1. The preachers faithfully delivered the doctrine of Christ; "they spake unto the people," to all that were within hearing, ver. 1. What they said concerned them all, and they spoke it openly and publicly. They taught the people, still taught the people knowledge; taught those that as yet did not believe, for their conviction and conversion; and taught those that did believe, for their comfort and establishment. They "preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead;" this doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, 1st. Was verified in Jesus. This they proved, that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead, was the first, the chief that should rise from the dead, *ch. xxvi. 23*; they preached the resurrection of Christ as their warrant for what they did; or, 2nd. It is secured by him to all believers. The resurrection of the dead includes all the happiness of the future state; this they preached through Jesus Christ, attainable through him, (*Phil. iii. 10, 11*), and through him only. They meddled not with matters of state, but kept to their business, and preached to the people heaven as their end, and Christ as their way; see *ch. xvii. 18*.

2. The hearers cheerfully receive it; ver. 4. "many of them which heard the word believed." Not all, perhaps not the most, yet many, to the number of about five thousand, over and above the three thousand we read of before. See how the Gospel got ground, and it was the effect of the pouring out of the Spirit. Though the preachers were persecuted, the Word prevailed; for sometimes the church's suffering days have been her growing days: the days of her infancy were so.

Secondly. The chief priests and their party now made head against them, and did what they could to crush them; their hands were tied a while, but their hearts were not in the least changed. Now here observe,

1. Who they were that appeared against the apostles. They were the priests, you may be sure, in the first place; they were always sworn enemies to Christ and his Gospel. They were as jealous for their priesthood, as Caesar for his monarchy; and would not bear one they thought their rival now when he was preached as a priest, as much as when he did preach as a prophet. With them joined the captain of the temple, who, it is supposed was a Roman officer, governor of the garrison that was placed in the tower of Antonia, for the guard of the temple; so that still here were both Jews and Gentiles confederate against Christ. The Sadducees also were zealous against them, who denied the being of spirits, and the future state. "One would wonder," saith Mr. Baxter, "what should make such brutists as the Sadducees were to be such furious silence and persecutors; if there is no life to come, what harm can other men's hopes of it do them? but in depraved souls all faculties are vitiated. A blind mind has a malignant heart and a cruel hand to this day."

2. How they stood affected to the apostles' preaching. They were "grieved" that they taught the people," ver. 2. It grieved them both that the Gospel doctrine was preached, was so preached, so publicly, so boldly, and that the people were so ready to hear it. They thought, when they had put Christ to such an ignominious death, his disciples would ever after be ashamed and afraid to own him, and the people would have invincible prejudices against his doctrine; and now it vexed them to see themselves disappointed, and that his Gospel gets ground instead of losing it; "The wicked shall see it, and be grieved," *Ps. cxli. 10*. They were grieved at that which they should have rejoiced in, at that which angels rejoice in. Miserable is their case to whom the glory of Christ's kingdom is a grief; for, since the glory of that kingdom is everlasting, it follows of course that their grief will be everlasting too. It grieved them that the apostles "preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." The Sadducees were grieved that the resurrection from the dead was preached; for they opposed that doctrine, and could not bear to hear of a future state, to hear it so well attested. The chief priests were grieved that they preached the resurrection of the dead through Jesus, that he should have the honour of it; and, though they professed to believe the resurrection of the dead, against the Sadducees, yet they would rather give up that important article than have it preached and proved to be through Jesus.

3. How far they proceeded against the apostles; ver. 3. "they laid hands on them," (that is, their servants and officers did at their command,) "and put them in hold," committed them to the custody of the proper officer, "unto the next day." They could not examine them now, for it was eventide, and yet would defer it no longer than till next day. See how God trains up his servants to sufferings by degrees, and by lesser trials prepares them for greater; now they resist unto bonds only, but afterwards to blood.

5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, 6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth

power. He first leaped up, then stood upon his legs, and then walked about, and frequently leaped to convince himself of his cure.

iii. 11. "Porch called Solomon's;" "This appears to have been the place where the apostles were in the habit of addressing the people (see chap. v. 12). It was the cloister on the east side of the Temple. The porch then consisted of a double row of pillars, twenty-five cubits high, with a richly-carved roof of cedar-wood. The breadth of the porch was thirty cubits" (Cook).

iii. 12. "Holiness:" the original word implies meritorious efficacy. Peter denies for himself and John that they had either the power to perform or the piety to merit such a cure.

iii. 13. "Son:" the word also means servant, and most likely bears that meaning here and in other passages of the Acts. It is the word used in the Septuagint version of *Isa. xlii. 1* and elsewhere for the servant of the Lord (Cook).

iii. 15. "Prince of life:" rather, "Author of life."

this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. 13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.



SET IN THE MIDST.—VER. 7.

We have here the trial of Peter and John before the judges of the ecclesiastical court, for preaching a sermon concerning Jesus Christ, and working a miracle in his name. This is charged upon them as a crime, which was the best service they could do to God or men.

First. Here is the court set. An extraordinary court it should seem was called on purpose upon this occasion. Observe,

1. The time when the court sat; ver. 5, "on the morrow," not in the night, as when Christ was to be tried before them; for they seem not to have been so hot upon this prosecution as they were upon that; it was well if they began to relent. But they adjourned it to the morrow, and no longer; for they were impatient to get them silenced, and would lose no time.

2. The place where; in Jerusalem, ver. 6. There it was that he told his disciples they must expect to suffer hard things, as he had done before them in that place. This seems to come in here as an aggravation of their sin, that in Jerusalem, where there were so many that looked for redemption before it came, yet there were more that would not look upon it when it did come. How is that faithful city become a harlot! see *Mat. xxiii. 37*. It was in the foresight of Jerusalem's standing in her own light that Christ beheld the city and wept over it.

3. The judges of the court. 1st. Their general character. They were rulers, elders, and scribes, ver. 5. The scribes were men of learning, who came to dispute with the apostles, and hoped to confute them. The rulers and elders were men in power, who, if they could not answer them, thought they could find some cause or other to silence them. If the Gospel of Christ had not been of God it could not have made its way; for it had both the learning and power of the world against it, both the colleges of the scribes and courts of the elders. 2nd. The names of some of them who were most considerable. Here were Annas and Caiaphas, ringleaders in this persecution; Annas, the president of the Sanhedrim, and Caiaphas, the high priest, (though Annas is here called so,) and father of the house of judgment. It should seem that Annas and Caiaphas executed the high priest's office alternately, year for year. They two were most active against Christ; then Caiaphas was high priest, now Annas was.

However, they were both equally malignant against Christ and his Gospel. John is supposed to be the son of Annas; and Alexander is mentioned by Josephus as a man that made a figure at that time. There were others likewise that were of the kindred of the high priest, that, having dependence on him, and expectations from him, would be sure to say as he said, and vote with him against the apostles. Great relations, and not good, have been a snare to many.

Secondly. The prisoners are arraigned, ver. 7.

1. They are brought to the bar; "they set them in the midst," for the Sanhedrim sat in a circle, and they who had any thing to do in the court stood or sat in the midst of them, *Lu. ii. 46*; so Dr. Lightfoot. Thus the Scripture was fulfilled: "The assembly of the wicked has enclosed me," *Ps. xlii. 16*; "They compassed me about like bees," *Ps. cxviii. 12*. They were seated on every side.

2. The question they asked them was, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" By what authority do ye these things? the same question that they had asked their Master, *Mat. xxi. 23*. Who commissioned you to preach such a doctrine as this, and empowered you to work such a miracle as this? You have no warrant or licence from us, and therefore are accountable to us whence you have your warrant. Some think this question was grounded upon a fond conceit, that the very naming of some names might do wonders, as, *ch. xix. 13*, the Jewish exorcists made use of the name of Jesus. Now they would know what name they made use of in their cure, and, consequently, what name they set themselves to advance in their preaching. They knew very well that they preached Jesus, and the resurrection of the dead, and the healing of the sick, through Jesus, ver. 2; yet they asked them to tease them, and try if they could get any thing out of them that looked criminal.

Thirdly. The plea they put in; the design of which was not so much to clear and secure themselves, as to advance the name and honour of their Master, who had told them that their being brought before governors and kings would give them an opportunity of preaching the Gospel to those who other-

wise they could not have had access to, and it should be a testimony against them, *Mar. xiii. 9*. Observe,

1. By whom this plea was drawn up. It was dictated by the Holy Ghost, who fitted Peter more than before for this occasion. The apostles, with a holy negligence of their own preservation, set themselves to preach Christ, as he had directed them to do in such a case; and then Christ made good to them his promise, that the Holy Ghost should give them in that same hour what they should speak. Christ's faithful advocates shall never want instructions, *Mar. xiii. 11*.

2. To whom it was given in. Peter, who is still the chief speaker, addresseth himself to the judges of the court as the "rulers of the people and elders of Israel," for the wickedness of those in power doth not divest them of their power, but the consideration of the power they are intrusted with should prevail to divest them of their wickedness. You are rulers and elders, and should know more than others of the signs of the times, and not oppose that which you are bound by the duty of your place to embrace and advance, that is, the kingdom of the Messiah. You are rulers and elders of Israel, God's people, and if you mislead them, and cause them to err, you will have a great deal to answer for.

3. What the plea is. It is a solemn declaration,

1st. That what they did was in the name of Jesus Christ, which was a direct answer to the question the court asked them; ver. 9, 10. "If we be this day examined," be called to an account as criminals, so the word signifies, "for a good deed," as any one will own it to be, "done to the impotent man,"—if this be the ground of the commitment, this the matter of the indictment,—if we are put to the question, "by what means," or by whom, "he is made whole,"—we have an answer ready, and it is the same we gave to the people, *ch. iii. 16*; we will repeat it to you, as that which we will stand by, "Be it known to you all," who pretend to be ignorant of this matter, and not to you only, but "to all the people of Israel," for they are all concerned to know it, "that by the name of Jesus Christ," that precious, powerful, prevailing name,—that name above every name,—even by him "whom you in contempt called Jesus of Nazareth," "whom you crucified," both rulers and people, and "whom God hath raised from the dead," and advanced to the highest dignity and dominion, "even by him doth this man stand here before you whole," a monument of the power of the Lord Jesus. Here, *First*. He justifies what he and his colleague had done in curing the lame man. It was a good deed; it was a kindness to the man that had begged, but could not work for his living a kindness to the temple, and to them that went in to worship, who were now freed from the noise and clamour of that common beggar. Now, if we be reckoned with for this good deed, we have no reason to be ashamed, *1 Pet. ii. 20*; *ch. iv. 14, 16*; let them be ashamed who bring us into trouble for it. Note, It is no new thing for good men to suffer ill for doing well. *Bene agere et male pati vere Christianum est*, "to do well and to suffer punishment is the Christian's lot." *Secondly*. He transfers all the praise and glory of that good deed to Jesus Christ. It is by him, and not by any power of ours, that this man is cured. He seeks not to raise an interest for themselves, or to recommend themselves by it to the good opinion of the court; but, Let the Lord alone be exalted, no matter what comes of us. *Thirdly*. He charges it upon the judges themselves that they had been the murderers of this Jesus; it is he whom ye crucified; look how you will answer it. In order to the bringing of them to believe in Christ, (for he aims at no less than that,) he endeavours to convince them of sin, of that sin which one would think of all other was most likely to startle conscience, their putting Christ to death. Let them take it how they will, Peter will balk no occasion to tell them of it. *Fourthly*. He attests the resurrection of Christ as the strongest testimony to him, and against his persecutors. They crucified him, but God raised him from the dead; they took away his life, but God gave it him again; and your farther opposition to his interest will speed no better. He tells them God raised him from the dead, and they could not for shame answer him with that foolish suggestion that they palmed upon the people, that "his disciples came by night and stole him away." *Fifthly*. He preaches this to all the bystanders, to be by them repeated to all their neighbours, and commands all manner of persons, from the highest to the lowest, to take notice of it at their peril; "Be it known to you all" that are here present, and it shall be made known to all the people of Israel, wherever they are dispersed, in spite of all your endeavours to stifle and suppress the notice of it. As the Lord God of gods knows, so Israel shall know, all Israel shall know, that wonders are wrought in the name of Jesus, not by repeating it as a charm, but believing in it as a Divine revelation of grace and good-will to men.

2nd. That the name of this Jesus, by the authority of which they acted, is that name alone by which men can be saved. He passeth from this particular instance to shew that it is not a particular sect, a party, that is designed to be set up by the doctrine they preached, and the miracle they wrought, which people might either join with, or keep off from, at their pleasure, as it was with the sects of the philosophers, and those among the Jews; but it is a sacred and Divine institution that is hereby ratified and confirmed, and which all people are highly concerned to submit to, and come into the measures of. It is not an indifferent thing, but of an absolute necessity, that people believe in this name, and call upon it.

First. We are obliged to it in duty to God, and in compliance with his designs; ver. 11, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders," you that are the rulers of the people and the elders of Israel, that should be the builders of the church, that pretend to be so; for the church is God's building. Here was a stone offered you to be put in the chief place of the building, to be the main pillar on which the fabric might entirely rest; but you set it at nought, rejected it, would not make use of it, but threw it by as good for nothing but to make a stepping-stone; but this stone is now become the head of the corner. God has raised up this Jesus whom you rejected, and, by setting him at his right hand, has made him both the corner-stone and the head-stone, the centre of unity, and the fountain of power. Probably St. Peter here chose to make use of this quotation, because Christ had himself made use of it in answer to the demand of the chief priests and the elders concerning his authority, not long before this, *Mat. xxi. 43*. Scripture is a tried weapon in our spiritual conflicts; let us therefore stick to it.

Secondly. We are obliged to it for our own interest. We are undone if we do not take shelter in this name, and make it our refuge and strong tower; for we cannot be saved but by Jesus Christ, and if we be not eternally saved we are eternally undone; ver. 12, "neither is there salvation in any other." As there is no other name by which diseased bodies can be cured, so there is no other by which sinful souls can be saved. "By him, and him only, by receiving and embracing his doctrine, salvation must now be hoped for by all. For there is no other religion in the world, no, not that delivered by Moses, by which salvation can be had for those that do not now come in to this, at the preaching of it," so Dr. Hammond. Observe here, 1st. Our salvation is our chief concern, and that which ought to lie nearest our hearts; our rescue from wrath and the curse, and our restoration to God's favour and blessing. 2nd. Our salvation is not in ourselves, nor can be obtained by any merit or strength of our own. We can destroy ourselves, but we cannot save ourselves.

iii. 19. "Blotted out:" the writing in former ages was on tablets covered with wax, by means of an iron pen. One end of this pen was sharp for writing with, the other broad, by which the entry could be "blotted out." "When the times of refreshing:" rather, "in order that times of refreshment may come," &c.; the period of repose which the coming of the Messiah in his glory was to inaugurate.

iii. 20. Rather, "Him who was pre-destined, before-appointed, your Messiah—namely, Jesus."

iii. 21. "The times of the restoration of all things, of which times God hath spoken," &c.

iii. 24. "From Samuel:" Samuel first instituted the schools of the prophets, and was the first of the long series of prophets who played so important a part in the history of Israel and Judah.

iii. 26. "Raised up:" not in allusion to our Lord's resurrection, but used as in verse 22. "Son:" rather, "servant."

iv. 1. "The captain of the Temple:" an officer of high rank, and

3rd. There are among men many names that pretend to be saving names, but really are not so; many institutions in religion that pretend to settle a reconciliation and correspondence between God and man, but cannot do it. 4th. It is only by Christ and his name that those favours can be expected from God which are necessary to our salvation, and that our services can be accepted with God. This is the honour of Christ's name, that it is the only name whereby we must be saved.—the only name we have to plead in all our addresses to God. This name is given: God has appointed it; and it is an inestimable benefit freely conferred upon us. It is given under heaven: Christ has not only a great name in heaven, but a great name under heaven; for he has all power both in the upper and in the lower world. It is given among men who need salvation, men who are ready to perish: we may be saved by his name, that name of his, the Lord our righteousness; and we cannot be saved by any other. How far those who have not the knowledge of Christ, nor any actual faith in him, yet live up to the light they have, may find favour with God, it is not our business to determine; but this we know, that, whatever saving favour such may receive, it is upon the account of Christ, and for his sake only; so that still there is not salvation in any other; "I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me," *Isa. xlv. 4*.

Fourthly. The stand that the court was put to in the prosecution by this plea, ver. 13, 14. Now was fulfilled that promise Christ made, that he would give them a mouth and wisdom, such as all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay or resist.

1. They could not deny the cure of the lame man to be both a good deed and a miracle. He was there standing with Peter and John, ready to attest the cure, if there was occasion, and they had nothing to say against it, ver. 14, either to disprove it or to disparage it. It was well it was not on the sabbath day, else they would have had that to say against it.

2. They could not, with all their pomp and power, face down Peter and John. This was a miracle not inferior to the cure of the lame man, considering both what cruel, bloody enemies these priests had been to the name of Christ, enough to make any one tremble that appeared for him; and considering what cowardly, faint-hearted advocates those disciples had lately been for him, Peter particularly, who denied him for fear of a silly maid; yet now they see the boldness of Peter and John, ver. 13. Probably there was something extraordinary and very surprising in their looks. They appeared not only undaunted by the rulers, but daring and daunting to them; they had something majestic in their foreheads, sparkling in their eyes, and commanding, if not terrifying, in their voice. They set their faces like a flint; as the prophet, *Isa. i. 7; Eze. iii. 8*. The courage of Christ's faithful confessors has often been the confusion of their cruel persecutors. Now,

1. We are here told what increased their wonder. They "perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men." They inquired, either of themselves or others, and found that they were of mean extraction, born in Galilee; that they were bred fishermen, and had no learned education,—had never been at any university, were not brought up at the feet of any of the rabbins,—had never been conversant in courts, camps, or colleges; nay, perhaps, talk to them at this time upon any point in natural philosophy, mathematics, or politics, and you will find they know nothing of the matter; and yet, speak to them of the Messiah and his kingdom, and they speak with so much clearness, evidence, and assurance,—so pertinently, and so fluently, and are so ready in the Scriptures of the Old Testament relating to it,—that the most learned judge upon the bench is not able to answer them, or to enter the lists with them. They were "ignorant men," *ἄσῳτοι*, "private men," men that had not any public character or employment, and therefore they wondered they should have such high pretensions. They were idiots, so the word signifies; they looked upon them with as much contempt as if they had been mere naturals, and expected no more from them, which made them wonder to see what freedom they took.

2. We are told what made their wonder in a great measure to cease; "they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." They themselves, it is probable, had seen them with him in the temple, and now recollected that they had seen them; or some of their servants, or those about them, informed them of it, for they would not be thought themselves to have taken notice of such inferior people. But when they understood "that they had been with Jesus," had been conversant with him, attendant on him, and trained up under him, they knew what to impute their boldness to; nay, their boldness in Divine things was enough to shew with whom they had had their education. Note, Those that have been with Jesus, in converse and communion with him, have been attending on his Word, praying in his name, and celebrating the memorials of his death and resurrection, should carry themselves in every thing as that those who converse with them may take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. And that makes them so holy and heavenly, and spiritual, and cheerful; that has raised them so much above this world, and filled them with another. One may know that they have been in the mount by the shining of their faces.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing

how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. 22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

We have here the issue of the trial of Peter and John before the council. They came off now with flying colours, because they must be trained up to sufferings by degrees, and by lesser trials be prepared for greater; they now but run with the footmen, hereafter we shall have them contending with horses, *Jer. xii. 5*.

First. Here is the consultation and resolution of the court about this matter, and their proceeding thereupon.

1. The prisoners were ordered to withdraw; ver. 15, "they commanded them to go aside out of the council;" willing enough to get clear of them, they spoke so home to their consciences, and not willing they should hear the acknowledgments that were extorted from them. But, though they might not hear them, we have them here upon record. The designs of Christ's enemies are carried on in close cabals; and they dig deep, as if they would hide their counsels from the Lord.

2. A debate arose upon this matter; "they conferred among themselves." Every one is desired to speak his mind freely, and to give advice upon this important affair. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, that the rulers would "take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed," *Ps. ii. 2*. The question proposed was, "What shall we do to these men?" ver. 16. If they would have yielded to the convincing, commanding power of truth, it had been easy to say what they should do to these men. They should have placed them at the head of their council, and received their doctrine, and been baptized by them in the name of the Lord Jesus, and joined in fellowship with them. But, when men will not be persuaded to do what they should do, it is no marvel they are ever and anon at a loss what to do. The truths of Christ, if men would but entertain them as they should, would give them no manner of trouble or uneasiness; but if they hold them, or imprison them, in unrighteousness, *Rom. i. 18*, they will find them a burthensome stone, that they will not know what to do with, *Zec. xii. 4*.

3. They came at last to a resolution in two things:

1st. That it was not safe to punish the apostles for what they had done. Very willingly they would have done it, but they had not courage to do it, because the people espoused their cause, and cried up the miracle; and they stood now in as much awe of them as they had done formerly, when they durst not lay hands on Christ for fear of the people. By which it appears that the outcry of the mob against our Saviour was a forced or managed thing; the stream soon returned to its former channel. Now they could not find how they might punish Peter and John, what colour they might have for it, because of the people. They knew it would be an unrighteous thing to punish them, and therefore should have been restrained from it by the fear of God; but they considered it only as a dangerous thing, and therefore were held in from it only by the fear of the people. For,

First. The people were convinced of the truth of the miracle. It was a notable miracle, *ἑνός τινος σημείου*,—"a known miracle;" it was known that they did it in Christ's name, and that Christ himself had often done the like before. This was a known instance of the power of Christ, and proof of his doctrine. That it was a great miracle, and wrought for the confirmation of the doctrine they preached, (for it was a sign,) was manifest to all that dwelt in Jerusalem; it was an opinion universally received, and the miracle being wrought at the gate of the temple, universal notice was taken of it; and they themselves, with all the craft and all the front they had, could not deny it to be a true miracle; every body would have hooted at them if they had. They could easily deny it to their own consciences, but not to the world. The proofs of the Gospel were undeniable.

Secondly. They went farther, and were not only convinced of the truth of the miracle, but all men glorified God for that which was done. Even those that were not persuaded by it to believe in Christ yet were so affected with it as a mercy to a poor man, and an honour to their country, that they could not but give praise to God for it: even natural religion taught them to do that. And, if the priests had punished Peter and John for that for which all men glorified God, they would have lost all their interest in the people, and been abandoned as enemies both to God and man. Thus, therefore, their wrath shall be made to praise God, and the remainder thereof shall be restrained.

2nd. They yet resolve that it is necessary to silence them for the future, ver. 17, 18. They could not prove that they had said or done any thing amiss, and yet they must no more say or do what they have done. All their care is that the doctrine of Christ spread no farther among the people; as if that healing institution were a plague begun, the contagion of which must be stopped. See how the malice of hell fights against the counsels of Heaven; God will have the knowledge of Christ to spread all the world over, but the chief priests would have it spread no farther; which He that sits in heaven laughs at. Now, to prevent the farther spreading of this doctrine,

First. They charge the apostles never to preach it any more. 'Be it enacted by their authority,' (which they think every Israelite is bound in conscience to submit to,) 'that no man speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus,' ver. 18. We do not find that they give them any reason why the doctrine of Christ must be suppressed; they cannot say it is either false or dangerous, or of any ill tendency, and are ashamed to own the true reason, that it testifies against their hypocrisy and wickedness, and shocks their tyranny; but *stat pro ratione voluntas*,—"they can assign no reason but their will." We straitly charge and command you, not only that you do not preach this doctrine publicly, but that ye speak henceforth to no man, not to any particular person privately, in this name," ver. 17. There is not a greater service done to the devil's kingdom than the silencing of faithful ministers, and the putting them under a bushel than are the lights of the world.

Secondly. They threaten them if they do,—straitly threaten them; it is at their peril. This court will reckon itself highly affronted if they do, and they shall fall under its displeasure. Christ had not only charged them to preach the Gospel to every creature, but had promised to bear them out in it, and reward them for it. Now these priests not only forbade them to preach the Gospel, but threaten to punish it as a heinous crime; but those who know how to put a just value upon Christ's promises know how to put a just contempt upon the world's threatenings, though they be threatenings of slaughter that it breathes out, *ch. ix. 1*.

Secondly. Here is the courageous resolution of the prisoners to go on in their work, notwithstanding the resolutions of this court; and their declaration of this resolution, ver. 19, 20. Peter and John needed not confer together to know one another's minds, for they were both acted by one and the same spirit, but agree presently in the same sentiments, and jointly put in the answer, "Whether it be right in the sight of God," to whom both you and we are accountable, "to hearken unto you more than unto God," we appeal to your-

one of the chief priests. He had command of the Levitical band which guarded the Temple. "The Sadducees:" "The party opposed to the Pharisees. They rejected not only traditionalism, but also the inspired writings, except the books of Moses; and denied, along with the authority of the prophets, also the deeper truths of revelation, such as the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection" (Lange). (See Matt. xxiii. 23.) They were at this time the most powerful party in the Sanhedrim, and took the lead in persecuting the early Church,

their opposition being called forth specially by the doctrine of the resurrection. See verse 2, also chap. xxiii. 6, where the question of the resurrection broke up for a time the union between the Sadducees and Pharisees against Christianity.

iv. 2. Not "through Jesus," but "in the person (case, example) of Jesus," alleging him as an example of that which the Sadducees denied.

iv. 3. "Eventide;" 6 P.M.

selves, "judge ye. For we cannot" forbear speaking to every body "the things which we have seen and heard," and are ourselves full of, and are charged to publish. The prudence of the serpent would have directed them to be silent, and, though they could not with a good conscience promise that they would not preach the Gospel any more, yet they needed not tell them that they would; but the boldness of the lion directed them thus to set both the authority and the malignity of their persecutors at defiance. They do in effect tell them they are resolved to go on in preaching, and justify themselves in it with two things:

1. The command of God. You charge us not to preach the Gospel; he hath charged us to preach it, has committed it to us as a trust, requiring us, upon our allegiance, faithfully to dispense it: now whom must we obey, God or you? There they appeal to one of the *communis notitia*—to a settled and acknowledged maxim in the law of nature, that, if men's commands and God's interfere, God's commands must take place. It is a rule in the common law of England, that if any statute be made contrary to the law of God it is null and void. Nothing can be more absurd than to hearken unto weak and fallible men, that are fellow-creatures and fellow-subjects, more than unto a God that is infinitely wise and holy, our Creator and sovereign Lord, and the judge to whom we are all accountable. The case is so plain, so uncontroverted and self-evident, that we will venture to leave it to yourselves to judge of it, though you are biased and prejudiced. Can you think it right in the sight of God to break a Divine command in obedience to a human injunction? That is right indeed which is right in the sight of God; for his judgment we are sure is according to truth, and therefore by that we ought to govern ourselves.

2. The convictions of their own consciences. Though they had not had such an express command from Heaven to preach the doctrine of Christ, yet they could not but speak, and speak publicly, those things which they had seen and heard. Like Elihu, they were full of this matter, and the spirit within them constrained them; they must speak that they might be refreshed, *Job xxxii. 18, 20*. 1st. They felt the influence of it upon themselves, what a blessed change it had wrought upon them, had brought them into a new world, and therefore they cannot but speak of it; and those speak the doctrine of Christ best that have felt the power of it, and tasted the sweetness of it, and have themselves been deeply affected with it; it is as a fire in their bones, *Jer. xx. 9*. 2nd. They know the importance of it to others. They look with concern upon perishing souls, and know they cannot escape eternal ruin but by Jesus Christ, and therefore will be faithful to them in giving them warning, and shewing them the right way. They are things which we have seen and heard, and therefore are fully assured of ourselves; and things which we only have seen and heard, and therefore, if we do not publish them, who will? who can? Knowing the favour, as well as the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; for the love of Christ, and the love of souls, constraineth us, *2 Cor. v. 11, 14*.

Thirdly. Here is the discharge of the prisoners; ver. 21, "they farther threatened them," and thought they frightened them, and then "let them go." There were many whom they terrified into an obedience to their unrighteous decrees; they knew how to keep men in awe with their excommunications, *Jno. ix. 22*, and thought they could have the same influence upon the apostles that they had upon other men; but they were deceived, for they had been with Jesus. They threatened them, and that was all they did now; when they had done that they let them go.

1. Because they durst not contradict the people, who glorified God for that which was done, and would have been ready (at least they thought so) to pull them out of their seats if they had punished the apostles for doing it. As rulers, by the ordinance of God, are made a terror and restraint to wicked people, so people are sometimes, by the providence of God, made a terror and restraint to wicked rulers.

2. Because they could not contradict the miracle; "for the man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing was shewed," and therefore, 1st. The miracle was so much the greater, he having been lame from his mother's womb, *ch. iii. 2*. The older he grew the more inveterate the disease was, and the more hardly cured. If those that are grown into years, and have been long accustomed to evil, yet are cured of their spiritual impotency to good, and thereby of their evil customs, the power of Divine grace is therein so much the more magnified. 2nd. The truth of it was so much the better attested; for the man, being above forty years old, he was able, like the blind man whom Christ healed, when he was asked, to speak for himself, *Jno. ix. 21*.

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. 24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: 25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. 27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. 29 And now, Lord, behold thy threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. 31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where

they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

We hear no more at present of the chief priests, what they did when they had dismissed Peter and John, but are to attend those two witnesses. And here we have,

First. Their return to their brethren, the apostles and ministers, and perhaps some private Christians; ver. 23, "being let go, they went to their own company," who perhaps were at this time met together in pain for them, and praying for them, as *ch. xii. 12*. As soon as ever they were at liberty they went to their old friends, and returned to their church fellowship.

1. Though God had highly honoured them, in calling them out to be his witnesses, and enabling them to acquit themselves so well, yet they were not puffed up with the honour done them, nor thought themselves thereby exalted above their brethren, but "went to their own company." No advancement in gifts or usefulness should make us think ourselves above either the duties or the privileges of the communion of saints.

2. Though their enemies had severely threatened them, and endeavoured to break their knot, and frighten them from the work they were jointly engaged in, yet "they went to their own company," and feared not the wrath of their rulers. They might have had comfort if, being let go, they had retired to their closets, and spent some time in devotion there. But they were men in a public station, and must seek not so much their own personal satisfaction as the public good; and Christ's followers do best in company, provided it be in their own company.

Secondly. The account they gave them of what had passed. They "reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them," adding, no doubt, what they were enabled by the grace of God to reply to them, and how their trial issued. They related it to them,

1. That they might know what to expect both from men and from God in the progress of their work. From men they might expect every thing that was terrifying, but from God every thing that was encouraging; men would do their utmost to run them down, but God would take effectual care to bear them up. Thus the brethren in the Lord would wax confident through their bonds, and their experiences, as *Phil. i. 14*.

2. That they might have it recorded in the history of the church for the benefit of posterity, particularly for the confirmation of our faith touching the resurrection of Christ. The silence of an adversary, in some cases, is next door to the consent and testimony of an adversary. These apostles told the chief priests to their faces that God had raised up Jesus from the dead; and, though they were a body of them together, they had not the confidence to deny it, but, in the silliest and most sneaking manner imaginable, bade the apostles not tell any body of it.

3. That they might now join with them in prayers and praises; and by such a concert as this, God would be the more glorified, and the church the more edified. We should therefore communicate to our brethren the providences of God that are concerning us, and our experience of his presence with us, that they may assist us in our acknowledgment of God therein.

Thirdly. Their address to God upon this occasion. When they heard of the impotent malice of the priests, and the potent courage of the sufferers, they called their company together, and went to prayer; "they lifted up their voice to God with one accord," ver. 24. Not that it can be supposed that they all said the same words at the same time, though it was possible they might, being all inspired by one and the same Spirit, but one in the name of the rest lifted up his voice to God, and the rest joined with him, *δυνάμειον*,—"with one mind," so the word signifies; their hearts went along with him, and so, though but one spoke, they all prayed. One lifted up his voice, and in concurrence with him they all lifted up their hearts, which was in effect lifting up their voice to God; for thoughts are words to God. Moses cried unto God, when we find not a word said. Now, in this solemn address to God, we have,

1. Their adoration of God as the Creator of the world, ver. 24. With one mind, and so in effect with one mouth, they glorified God, *Rom. xv. 6*. They said, "O Lord, thou art God," God alone, *ἀέκτιστος*; thou art our Master and sovereign Ruler, (so the word signifies:) art God; God, and not man; God, and not the work of men's hands; the Creator of all, and not the creature of men's fancies. "Thou art the God which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea," the upper and lower world, and all the creatures that are in both. Thus we Christians distinguish ourselves from the heathen, that while they worship gods which they have made, we are worshipping the God that made us and all the world. And it is very proper to begin our prayers, as well as our creed, with the acknowledgment of this, that God is "the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." Though the apostles were at this time full of the mystery of the world's redemption, yet they do not forget or overlook the history of the world's creation; for the Christian religion was intended to confirm and improve, not to eclipse or justify out, the truths and dictates of natural religion. It is a great encouragement to God's servants, both in doing work and suffering work, that they serve the God that made all things, and therefore has the disposal of their times, and all events concerning them, and is able to strengthen them under all their difficulties; and if we give him the glory of this, we may take the comfort of it.

2. Their reconciling themselves to the present dispensations of Providence by reflecting upon those scriptures in the Old Testament which foretold that the kingdom of the Messiah would meet with such opposition as this at the first setting of it up in the world, ver. 25, 26. "God that made heaven and earth" cannot meet with any opposition to his designs, since none dare dispute or contest with him; yea, thus it was written, thus he spake by the mouth, thus he wrote by the pen, of his servant David, who, as appears by this, was the penman of the second Psalm, and therefore most probably of the first, and other psalms that are not ascribed to any other, though they have not his name in the title. Let it not therefore be a surprise to them, or any discouragement to any in embracing their doctrine; for the Scripture must be fulfilled. It was foretold, *Ps. ii. 1, 2*. 1st. That the heathen would rage at Christ and his kingdom, and be angry at the attempts to set it up; because that would be the pulling down of the gods of the heathen, and giving check to the wickedness of the heathen. 2nd. That the people would imagine all the things that could be against it, to silence the teachers of it, to discountenance the subjects of it, and to crush all the interests of it; and if they prove vain things in the issue, that is no thanks to them who imagined them. 3rd. That the kings of the earth particularly would stand up in opposition to the kingdom of Christ, as if they were jealous (though there is no occasion for their being so) that it would interfere with their powers, and entrench upon their prerogatives. The kings of the earth that are most favoured and honoured by Divine providence, and should do most for God, are strangers and enemies to Divine grace, and do most against God. 4th. That the rulers would gather together against God and Christ; not only monarchs that have the power in their single persons, but there where the power is in many rulers, councils, and senates, they gather

iv. 4. Not five thousand fresh disciples, but the number by this time had risen to five thousand.

iv. 5. "A formal and very full session of the Sanhedrim was, therefore, held next morning. The three classes or orders of the members composing that body are distinctly specified (the term "rulers" applying to the Sanhedrists generally)—1, high-priests; 2, elders of the people; 3, scribes" (Lechler). Annas had been formerly high-priest: he had been deposed A.D. 15, when he was succeeded by his

son-in-law, Caiaphas. Annas still retained the title of high-priest, together with considerable influence. Both seem to have been cunning, worldly men, and Sadducees.

iv. 6. It is unknown who John and Alexander were; they were most likely relatives or connections of Annas and Caiaphas.

iv. 7. "By what manner of power, by what manner of name have ye done this?" (Compare Matt. xii. 24, where our Lord is charged with casting out devils by Beelzebub. See also Deut. xiii.

together to consult and decree against the Lord, and against his Christ; against both natural and revealed religion. What is done against Christ God takes as done against himself. Christianity was not only destitute of the advantage of the countenance and support of kings and rulers, it had neither their power nor their purses, but it was opposed and fought against by them, and they combined to run it down; and yet it made its way.

3. Their representation of the present accomplishment of those predictions, in the enmity and malice of the rulers against Christ. What was foretold we see fulfilled, ver. 27, 28. It is of a truth, it is certainly so, it is too plain to be denied, and in it appears the truth of the prediction, that Herod and Pilate, the two Roman governors, with the Gentiles, the Roman soldiers under their command, and with the people of Israel, the rulers of the Jews, and the mob that is under their influence, were gathered together in a confederacy against the holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, (some copies add another circumstance; ἐν τῇ πόλει σου ταύτῃ,—"in this thy holy city," where, above any place, he should have been welcomed;) but herein they "do that which thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." See here, 1st. The wise and holy designs God had concerning Christ. He is here called the child Jesus, as he was called, *Lu. ii. 27, 43*, in his infancy, to intimate that, even in his exalted state, he is not ashamed of his condescensions for us, and that he continues meek and lowly in heart: in the height of his glory he is the Lamb of God, and the child Jesus. But he is the holy child Jesus, so he was called, *Lu. i. 35*, "that holy thing," and thy holy child,—the word signifies both a son and a servant,—παῖδα σου; he was the Son of God, and yet in the work of redemption he acted as his Father's servant; *Isa. xlii. 1*, "My servant whom I uphold." It was he whom God anointed, both qualified for the undertaking, and called to it; and thence he was called the Lord's Christ, ver. 26. And this comes in as a reason why they set themselves with so much rage and violence against him, because God had anointed him, and they were resolved not to resign, much less to submit to him. David was envied by Saul because he was the Lord's anointed; and the Philistines came up to seek David when they heard he was anointed, *2 Sam. v. 17*. Now the God that anointed Christ determined what should be done to him pursuant to that anointing; he was anointed to be a Saviour, and therefore it was determined he should be a sacrifice to make atonement for sin. He must die, therefore he must be slain, yet not by his own hands; therefore God wisely determined before by what hands it should be done. It must be by the hands of those who will treat him as a criminal and malefactor, and therefore it cannot be done by the hands either of angels or good men; he must therefore be delivered into the hands of sinners, as Job was, *Job xvi. 11*; and as David was delivered to Shimei to be made a curse, *2 Sam. xvi. 11*, "the Lord has bidden him." God's hand and his counsel determined it; his will, and his wisdom. God's hand, which properly notes his executive power, yet is here put for his purpose and decree, because with him saying and doing are not two things as they are with us: his hand and his counsel always agree; for whatsoever the Lord pleased that did he. Dr. Hammond makes this phrase, of God's hand determining it, to be an allusion to the high priest's casting lots upon the two goats on the day of atonement, *Lev. xvi. 8*, in which he lifted up the hand that he happened to have the lot for the Lord in, and that goat on which it fell was immediately sacrificed; and the disposal of this lot was from the Lord, *Pr. xvi. 33*. Thus God's hand determined what should be done, that Christ should be the sacrifice slain. Or, (if I may offer a conjecture,) when God's hand is here said to determine, it may be meant not of God's acting hand, but his writing hand, as *Job xiii. 26*, "Thou writest bitter things against us;" and God's decree is said to be that which is written in the Scripture of truth, *Dan. x. 21*; and in the volume of the book it was written of Christ, *Ps. xl. 7*; and it was God's hand that wrote it, his hand according to his counsel. The commission was given under his hand. 2nd. The wicked and unholy instruments that were employed in the executing of this design, though they meant not so, neither did their hearts think so. Herod and Pilate, Gentiles and Jews, who had been at variance with each other, united against Christ; and God's serving his own purposes by what they did was no excuse at all for their malice and wickedness in the doing of it, any more than God's making the blood of the martyrs the seed of the church extenuated the guilt of their bloody persecutors. Sin is not the less evil for God's bringing good out of it; but he is by that the more glorified, and will be so, when the mystery of God shall be finished.

4. Their petition with reference to their case at this time. The enemies were gathered together against Christ, and then no wonder they were so against his ministers; "the disciple is not better than his Master," nor must expect better treatment: but, being thus insulted, they pray,

1st. That God would take cognizance of the malice of their enemies; "Now, Lord, behold their threatenings," ver. 29. Behold them as thou art said to behold them in the psalm before quoted, *Ps. ii. 4*; when they thought to break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from them, he that sits in heaven laughs at them, and has them in derision; and then the virgin, the daughter of Zion, may despise the impotent menaces even of the great king, the king of Assyria, *Isa. xxxvii. 22*. And "now, Lord,"—τὰ νῦν; there is an emphasis upon the "now," to intimate that then is God's time to appear for his people, when the power of their enemies is most daring and threatening. They do not dictate to God what he should do, but refer themselves to him, like Hezekiah, *Isa. xxxvii. 17*: "Open thine eyes, O Lord, and see;" thou knowest what they say; "thou beholdest mischief and spite," *Ps. x. 14*; to thee we appeal. "Behold their threatenings," and either tie their hands, or turn their hearts; make their wrath as far as it is let loose to praise thee, and the remainder thereof do thou restrain, *Ps. lxxvi. 10*. It is a comfort to us, that if we are unjustly threatened, and bear it patiently, we may make ourselves easy by spreading the case before the Lord, and leaving it with him.

2nd. That God by his grace would keep up their spirits, and animate them to go on cheerfully in their work; "Grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy Word," though the priests and rulers have enjoined them silence. Note, In threatening times our care should be, not so much that troubles may be prevented, as that we may be enabled to go on with cheerfulness and resolution in our work and duty, whatever troubles we may meet with. Their prayer is not, Lord, behold their threatenings, and frighten them, and stop their mouths, and fill their faces with shame; but, Behold their threatenings, and animate us, open our mouths, and fill our hearts with courage. They do not pray, Lord, give us a fair opportunity to retire from our work, now it is become dangerous; but, Lord, give us grace to go on in our work, and not to be afraid of the face of man. Observe, *First*. Those that are sent on God's errands ought to deliver their message with boldness, with all boldness, with all liberty of speech; not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God, whoever is offended; not doubting of what they say, or of being borne out in saying it. *Secondly*. God is to be sought unto for an ability to speak his Word with boldness, and those that desire Divine aids and encouragements may depend upon them, and ought to go forth and go on in the strength of the Lord God. *Thirdly*. The threatenings of our enemies, that are designed to weaken our hands, and drive us off from our work, should rather stir us up to so much the more courage and resolution in our work. Are they daring that fight against Christ? for shame, let not us be sneaking that are for him.

3rd. That God would still give them power to work miracles for the confirmation of the doctrine they preached, which, by the cure of the lame man, they found to contribute very much to their success, and would contribute abundantly to their farther progress. "Lord, grant us boldness, by stretching forth thine hand to heal." Note, Nothing emboldens faithful ministers more in their work than the tokens of God's presence with them, and a Divine power going along with them. They pray, *First*. That God would stretch forth his hand to heal both the bodies and souls of men; else in vain do they stretch forth their hands, either in preaching, *Isa. lxxv. 2*, or in curing, *ch. vii. 7*. *Secondly*. That "signs and wonders might be done by the name of the holy child Jesus," which would be convincing to the people, and confounding to the enemies. Christ had promised them a power to work miracles for the proof of their commission, *Mar. xvi. 17, 18*. Yet they must pray for it; and, though they had it, must pray for the continuance of it. Christ himself must ask, and it shall be given him. Observe, It is the honour of Christ that they aim at in this request, that the wonder might be done by the name of Jesus, the holy child Jesus, and his name shall have all the glory.

Fourthly. The gracious answer God gave to this address, not in word, but in power.

1. God gave them a sign of the acceptance of their prayers, ver. 31; "when they had prayed,"—perhaps many of them prayed successively, one by one, according to the rule, *1 Cor. xiv. 31*,—and when they had concluded the work of the day, "the place was shaken where they were assembled together;" there was a strong mighty wind, such as that when the Spirit was poured out upon them, *ch. ii. 1*, which shook the house, which was now their house of prayer. This shaking of the place was designed to strike an awe upon them, and to awaken and raise their expectations, and to give them a sensible token that God was with them of a truth; and perhaps it was to put them in mind of that prophecy, *Hag. ii. 7*, "I will shake all nations, and will fill this house with glory." This was to shew them what reason they had to fear God more, and then they would fear man less. He that shook this place could make the hearts of those who threatened his servants thus to tremble; for he cuts off the spirit of princes, and is terrible to the kings of the earth. The place was shaken that their faith might be established and unshaken.

2. God gave them greater degrees of his Spirit, which was the thing they prayed for. Their prayer without doubt was accepted, for it was answered; "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" more than ever, by which they were not only encouraged, but enabled to speak "the Word of God with boldness," and not to be afraid of the proud and haughty looks of men. The Holy Ghost taught them, not only what to speak, but how to speak. Those that were endued habitually with the powers of the Holy Ghost, yet had occasion for fresh supplies of the Spirit, according as the various occurrences of their service were. They were filled with the Holy Ghost at the bar, ver. 2; and now filled with the Holy Ghost in the pulpit; which teaches us to live in an actual dependence upon the grace of God according as the duty of every day requires. We need to be anointed with fresh oil upon every fresh occasion. As in the providence of God, so in the grace of God, we not only in general live, and have our being, but move in every particular action, *ch. xvii. 28*. We have here an instance of the performance of that promise, that "God will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him," *Lu. xi. 13*; for it was in answer to prayer that they were filled with the Holy Ghost; and an example of the improvement of that gift, which is required of all on whom it is bestowed; have it and use it, use it and have more of it. When they were filled with the Holy Ghost, "they spoke the Word with all boldness," for "the ministration of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." Talents must be traded with, not buried. When they find the Lord God help them by his Spirit, they know they shall not be confounded, *Isa. i. 7*.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, 37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

We have a general idea given us in these verses, and it is a very beautiful one, of the spirit and state of this truly primitive church; it is *conspectus sæculi*,—"a view of that age" of infancy and innocence.

First. The disciples loved one another dearly. Behold how good and how pleasant it was to see how "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul," ver. 32; and there was no such thing as discord or division among them. Observe here,

1. There were multitudes that believed, even in Jerusalem where the malignant influence of the chief priests was most strong. There were three thousand converted on one day, and five thousand on another, and besides those there were added to the church daily. And no doubt they were all baptized, and made profession of the faith, for the same Spirit that endued the apostles with courage to preach the faith of Christ endued them with courage to confess it. Note, The increase of the church is the glory of it, and the multitude of them that believe more than their quality. Now the church shines, and her light is come, when souls thus fly like a cloud into her bosom, and like doves to their windows, *Isa. lx. 1, 8*.

2. They were all of one heart and one soul. Though there were many, very

1—3, where the teaching of the prophet is laid down as the criterion of the source of the sign or wonder given.) The Sanhedrim do not question the miracle, but they ask what power or name had been invoked, hoping therein to find the grounds for the charge of perverting the people to idolatry.

iv. 13. "Having had previous knowledge that they were illiterate men (not trained in the schools of the scribes), they marvelled, and recognised them that they (once) were with Jesus."

iv. 19. This is the last occasion on which St. John is mentioned in the Acts, but see Gal. ii. 9.

iv. 25. "Rage:" this word is properly applied to the wild snorting of spirited or intractable horses. The word "heathen" is one used exclusively of the Gentiles; the word "people" is more general, and includes the people of Israel.

iv. 28. "Thy hand and thy counsel:" the former signifying the power, as the latter word the wisdom of God.

many, of different ages, tempers, and conditions in the world, who, perhaps, before they believed were perfect strangers to one another, and yet, when they met in Christ, they were as intimately acquainted as if they had known one another many years. Perhaps they had been of different sects among the Jews before their conversion, or had had discords upon civil accounts. But now those were all forgotten and laid aside, and they were unanimous in the faith of Christ; and, being all joined to the Lord, they were, joined to one another in holy love. This was the blessed fruit of Christ's dying precept to his disciples, to love one another, and his dying prayer for them, that they all might be one. We have reason to think they divided themselves into several congregations, or worshipping assemblies, according as their dwellings were, under their respective ministers; and yet that occasioned no jealousy or uneasiness, for they were all of one heart and one soul notwithstanding, and loved those of other congregations as truly as those of their own. Thus it was then, and we may not despair of seeing it so again, when the Spirit shall be poured out upon us from on high.

Secondly. The ministers went on in their work with great vigour and success; ver. 33, "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." The doctrine they preached was the resurrection of Christ; a matter of fact, which served not only for the confirmation of the truth of Christ's holy religion, but, being duly explained and illustrated, with the proper inferences from it, served for a summary of all the duties, privileges, and comforts of Christians. The resurrection of Christ, rightly understood and improved, will let us into the great mysteries of religion. By the great power wherewith the apostles attested the resurrection may be meant, 1. The great vigour, and spirit, and courage, with which they published and avowed this doctrine. They do it not softly and diffidently, but with liveliness and resolution, as those that were themselves abundantly satisfied of the truth of it, and earnestly desired that others should be so too. Or, 2. The miracles which they wrought to confirm their doctrine. With works of great power they gave witness to the resurrection of Christ, God himself in them bearing witness too.

Thirdly. The beauty of the Lord our God shone upon them and all their performances. "Great grace was upon them all," not only all the apostles, but all the believers; *χρῆς μεγάλη*, grace that had something great in it, magnificent, and very extraordinary, was upon them all. 1. Christ poured out abundance of grace upon them, such as qualified them for great services, by enduing them with great power: it came upon them from on high; from above. 2. There were evident fruits of this grace in all they said and did, such as put an honour upon them, and recommended them to the favour of God, as being in his sight of great price. 3. Some think it includes the favour they were in with the people. Every one saw a beauty and excellency in them, and respected them.

Fourthly. They were very liberal to the poor, and dead to this world. This was as great an evidence of the grace of God in them as any other, and recommended them as much to the esteem of the people.

1. They insisted not upon property, which even children seem to have a sense of, and a jealousy for, and which worldly people triumph in; as Laban, *Gen. xxxi. 43*, "All that thou seest is mine," and Nabal, *1 Sam. xxv. 11*, "My bread and my water." These believers were so taken up with the hopes of an inheritance in the other world that this was as nothing to them. "No man said that ought of the things which he possessed was his own," ver. 32. They did not take away property, but they were indifferent to it. They did not call what they had their own, in a way of pride and vainglory, boasting of it, or trusting in it. They did not call it their own, because they had in affection forsaken all for Christ, and were continually expecting to be stripped of all for their adherence to him. They did not say that ought was their own, for we can call nothing our own but sin; what we have in the world is more God's than our own, we have it from him, must use it for him, and are accountable for it to him. No man said what he had was "his own," *ἰδίον*, 'his peculiar,' for he was ready to distribute, willing to communicate, and desired not to eat his morsel alone; but what he had to spare from himself and family his poor neighbours were welcome to. They that had estates were not solicitous to lay up, but very willing to lay out, and would straiten themselves to help their brethren. No marvel they were of one heart and soul, when they sat so loose to the wealth of this world, for *meum* and *tuum*, 'mine and thine,' are the great makebates. Men's holding their own, and grasping at more than their own, are the rise of wars and fightings.

2. They abounded in charity, so that, in effect, "they had all things common;" for, ver. 34, there was not "any among them that lacked," but care was taken for their supply. Those that had been maintained upon the public charity, when they turned Christians probably were excluded, and therefore it was fit the church should take care of them. As there were many poor that received the Gospel, so there were some rich, that were able to maintain them, and the grace of God made them willing. Therefore those that gather much have nothing over, because what they have over they have for them who gather little, that they may have no lack, *2 Cor. viii. 14, 15*. The Gospel hath laid all things common, not so that the poor are allowed to rob the rich, but so as that the rich are appointed to relieve the poor.

3. They did many of them sell their estates to raise a fund for charity; "as many as had possessions of lands or houses sold them," ver. 34. Dr. Lightfoot computes that this was the year of jubilee in the Jewish nation, the fiftieth year, (the twenty-eighth since they settled in Canaan, one thousand four hundred years ago,) so that, what was sold that year being not to return till the next jubilee, lands then took a good price, and so the sale of those lands would raise the more money. Now,

1st. We are here told what they did with the money that was so raised. They "laid it at the apostles' feet," that is, they left it to them to be disposed of as they thought fit. Probably they had their support from it; for whence else could they have it? Observe, The apostles would have it laid at their feet in token of their holy contempt of the wealth of the world. They thought it fitter it should be laid at their feet than lodged in their hands, or in their bosoms. Being laid there, it was not hoarded up, but "distribution was made" by proper persons, "unto every man according as he had need." Great care ought to be taken in the distribution of public charity. *First*, That it be given to such as have need, that are not able to procure a competent maintenance for themselves, through age, infancy, sickness, or bodily disability, or incapacity of mind, want either of ingenuity or activity, cross providence, losses, oppressions, or a numerous charge. Those that upon any of those accounts, or any other, have real need, and have not relations of their own to help them,—but above all those that are reduced to want for well-doing, and for the testimony of a good conscience,—ought to be taken care of, and provided for, and with a prudent application of what is given, so as may be most for their benefit. *Secondly*, That it be given to every man for whom it is intended according as he has need, without partiality or respect of persons. It is a rule in dispensing charity, as well as in administering justice, *ut parium par sit ratio*, 'that those who are equally needing and equally deserving should be equally helped,' and that the charity should be suited and adapted to the necessity; as the word is.

iv. 29, 30. Compare Luke ix. 54, where James and John asked if they might command fire to come down on the Samaritans. Now the prayer is not for the destruction of their enemies, nor that they might be preserved from danger, but that they might have boldness to persevere, and that the glory of God and welfare of men might be promoted. Here, as in verse 27 and chap. iii. 26, not "child" but "servant."

iv. 31. "The place was shaken:" "the special presence of the

2nd. Here is one particular person instanced in that was remarkable for this generous charity; it was Barnabas, afterwards Paul's colleague. Observe,

First, The account here given concerning him, ver. 36. His name was *Joses*; he was of the tribe of Levi, for there were Levites among the Jews of the dispersion, who, it is probable, presided in their synagogue worship, and, according to the duty of that tribe, taught them "the good knowledge of the Lord." He was born in Cyprus, a great way off from Jerusalem; his parents, though Jews, having a settlement there. Notice is taken of the apostle's changing his name, having he associated with them. It is probable he was one of the seventy disciples, and, as he increased in gifts and graces, grew eminent, and was respected by the apostles, who, in token of their value for him, gave him a name, Barnabas, 'the son of prophecy,' so it properly signifies, he being endued with extraordinary gifts of prophecy. "But the Hellenist Jews," saith Grotius, 'called praying *προφήτεια*; and therefore by that word it is rendered here.' A son of exhortation, so some; one that had an excellent faculty of healing and persuading; we have an instance of it, *ch. xi. 22, 24*. 'A son of consolation,' so we read it; one that did himself walk very much in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, a cheerful Christian, and this enlarged his heart in charity to the poor; or, one that was eminent for comforting the Lord's people, and speaking peace to wounded troubled consciences: he had an admirable felicity that way. There were two among the apostles that were called Boanerges, 'sons of thunder,' *Mar. iii. 17*; but here was a son of consolation with them. Each had their secret gift; neither must censure the other, but both ease one another. Let the one search the wound, and then let the other heal it and bind it up.

Secondly, Here is an account of his charity, and great generosity to the public fund. His is particularly taken notice of, because of the eminency of his services afterwards in the church of God, especially in carrying the Gospel to the Gentiles; which, that it might not appear to come from any ill-will to his own nation, we have here his benevolence to the Jewish converts; or, perhaps this is mentioned because it was a leading card, and an example to others. He having land, whether in Cyprus, where he was born, or in Judea, where he now lived, or elsewhere, is not certain, but he sold it, not to buy elsewhere to advantage; but, as a Levite indeed, who knew he had the Lord God of Israel for his inheritance, he despised earthly inheritances, would be cumbered no more with them, but brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet, to be given in charity. Thus, as one that was designed to be a preacher of the Gospel, he disentangled himself from the affairs of this life. And he lost nothing, upon the balance of the account, by laying the purchase money at the apostles' feet, when he himself was in effect numbered among the apostles, by that word of the Holy Ghost, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work wherunto I have called them," *ch. xiii. 2*. Thus, for the respect he shewed to the apostles as apostles, he had an apostle's reward.

CHAPTER V.

In this chapter we have, I. The sin and punishment of Ananias and Sapphira, who, for lying to the Holy Ghost, were struck dead at the word of Peter, ver. 1—11. II. The flourishing state of the church, in the power that went along with the preaching of the Gospel, ver. 12—16. III. The imprisonment of the apostles, and their miraculous discharge out of prison, with fresh orders to go on to preach the Gospel, which they did to the great vexation of their persecutors, ver. 17—26. IV. Their arraignment before the great Sanhedrim, and their justification of themselves in what they did, ver. 27—33. V. Gamaliel's counsel concerning them, that they should not persecute them, but let them alone and see what would come of it; and their concurrence for the present with this advice, in the dismissal of the apostles with no more but a scourging, ver. 34—40. VI. The apostles' cheerful progress in their work, notwithstanding the prohibition laid upon them, and the indignity done them, ver. 41, 42.



BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold,

Holy Ghost is accompanied with a sign to the senses—an earthquake, as before, with probably the appearance of flame. Both phenomena are mentioned by Virgil (*Æn.* iii. 89) as marks of Divine favour. Coincidences between the facts of revelation and the opinions and superstitions of the heathen world occur too frequently to be accounted for by the supposition that they are accidental. Such resemblances seem to admit one of two solutions: either that God condescended to use methods which men had already, without authority, supposed him

the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

The chapter begins with a melancholy "but," which puts a stop to the pleasant and agreeable prospect of things which we had in the foregoing chapters. As every man, so every church, in its best state, has its 'but.' 1. The disciples were very holy and heavenly, and seemed to be all exceeding good; but it proved there were hypocrites among them, whose hearts were not right in the sight of God, who, when they were baptized, and took upon them the form of godliness, denied the power of godliness, and stopped short of that. There is a mixture of bad with good in the best societies on this side heaven. Tares will grow among the wheat until the harvest. 2. It was the praise of the disciples that they came up to that perfection which Christ recommended to the rich young man; they sold what they had and gave to the poor: but even that proved a cloak and cover of hypocrisy, which was thought the greatest proof and evidence of sincerity. 3. The signs and wonders which the apostles wrought were hitherto miracles of mercy, but now comes in a miracle of judgment; and here is an instance of severity, following the instances of goodness, that God may be both loved and feared. Observe here.

First. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira his wife. It is good to see husband and wife joining together in that which is good; but to be confederate in evil is to be like Adam and Eve when they agreed to eat the forbidden fruit, and were one in their disobedience. Now their sin was,

1. That they were ambitious of being thought eminent disciples, and of the first rank, when really they were not true disciples; would pass for some of the most fruitful trees in Christ's vineyard, when really the root of the matter was not found in them. They sold a possession, and brought the money, as Barnabas did, to the apostles' feet, that they might not seem to be behind the very chief of the believers, but might be applauded and cried up, and stand so much the fairer for preferment in the church; which, perhaps, they thought would shortly shine in secular pomp and grandeur. Note, It is possible hypocrites may deny themselves in one thing, but then it is to serve themselves in another; may forego their secular advantage in one instance, with a prospect of finding their account in something else. Ananias and Sapphira would take upon them a profession of Christianity, and make a fair show in the flesh with it, and so would mock God and deceive others, when they knew they could not go through with the Christian profession. It was commendable, and so far it was right, in that rich young man, that he would not pretend to follow Christ when, if it should come to a pinch, he knew he could not come up to his terms; but he went away sorrowful. Ananias and Sapphira pretended they could come up to the terms, that they might have the credit of being disciples, when really they could not, and so were a discredit to discipleship. Note, It is often of fatal consequence for people to go a greater length in profession than their inward principle will admit of.

2. That they were covetous of the wealth of the world, and distrustful of God and his providence. They sold the land, and perhaps then, in a pang of zeal, designed no other but to dedicate the whole of the purchase money to pious uses, and made a vow, or at least conceived a full purpose, to do so; but when the money was received their heart failed them, and they kept back part of the price, ver. 2, because they loved the money, and thought it was too much to part with at once, and to trust in the apostles' hands; and because they knew not but they might want it themselves, and, though now all things were common, yet it would not be so long, and what should they do in a time of need, if they should leave themselves nothing to look to? They could not take God's word that they should be provided for, but thought they would play a wiser part than the rest had done, and lay up for a rainy day. Thus they thought to serve both God and Mammon, God by bringing part of the money to the apostles' feet, and Mammon by keeping the other part in their own pocket; as if there were not an all-sufficiency in God to make up the whole to them, except they retained some in their own hands by way of caution money. Their hearts were divided, so were they found faulty, *Hos. x. 2*. They halted between two: if they had been thorough-paced worldlings, they would not have sold their possession; and if they had been thorough-paced Christians, they would not have detained part of the price.

3. That they thought to deceive the apostles, and make them believe they brought the whole purchase money, when really it was but a part. They came with as good an assurance, and as great a show of piety and devotion, as any of them, and laid the money at the apostles' feet, as if it were their all. They dissembled with God and his Spirit, with Christ and his church and ministers; and this was their sin.

Secondly. The indictment of Ananias, which proved both his condemnation and execution, for this sin. When he brought the money, and expected to be commended and encouraged as others were, Peter took him to task about it. He, without any inquiry or examination of witnesses concerning it, charges him peremptorily with the crime, and aggravates it, and lays load upon him for it, shewing it him in its own colour, ver. 3, 4. The Spirit of God in Peter not only discovered the fact without any information, when perhaps no one in the world knew it but the man and his wife themselves, but likewise discerned the principle of reigning infidelity in the heart of Ananias, which was at the bottom of it, and therefore proceeded against him so suddenly. Had it been a sin of infirmity, through the surprise of a temptation, Peter would have taken Ananias aside, and have bid him go home and fetch the rest of the money, and repent of his folly in attempting to put this cheat upon them; but he knew that his heart was fully set in him to do this evil, and therefore allowed him not space to repent him. He here shewed him,

1. The original of his sin. Satan filled his heart; he not only suggested it to him, and put it into his head, but he hurried him on with resolution to do it. Whatever is contrary to the good Spirit proceeds from the evil spirit; and those hearts are filled by Satan in which worldiness reigns, and has the ascendant. Some think Ananias was one of those that had received the Holy Ghost, and was filled with his gifts, but, having provoked the Spirit to withdraw from him, now Satan filled his heart: as, when the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, an evil spirit from God troubled him. Satan is a lying spirit, he was so in the mouth of Ahab's prophets, and so he was in the mouth of Ananias, and by that made it appear that he filled his heart.

2. The sin itself. He lied to the Holy Ghost; a sin of such a heinous nature that he could not have been guilty of it if Satan had not filled his heart. The phrase which we render lying to the Holy Ghost, is *ψεύσασθαι αὐτὸ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον*, which some read, to belie the Holy Ghost; which may be taken two ways: 1st. That he belied the Holy Ghost in himself; so Dr. Lightfoot takes it, and supposeth, that Ananias was not an ordinary believer, but a minister, and one that had received the gift of the Holy Ghost with the hundred and twenty,—for mention is made of him immediately after Barnabas,—yet he durst thus, by dissembling, belie and shame that gift. Or thus, They who had sold their estates and laid the money at the apostles' feet, did it by the special impulse of the Holy Ghost, enabling them to do an act so very great and generous; and Ananias pretended that he was moved by the Holy Ghost to do what he did, as others were, whereas it appeared, by his baseness, that he was not under the influence of the good Spirit at all; for, had it been his work, it would have been perfect. 2nd. That he belied the Holy Ghost in the apostles, to whom he brought the money. He misrepresented the Spirit they were acted by, either by a suspicion that they would not faithfully distribute what they were intrusted with,—which was a base suggestion, as if they were false to the trust reposed in them,—or by an assurance that they could not discover the fraud. He belied the Holy Ghost when, by what he did, he would have it thought that those who are endued with the gifts of the Holy Ghost might as easily be imposed upon as other men; like Gehazi, whom his master convicted of his error by that word, "Went not mine heart with thee?" 2 *Kin. v. 26*. It is charged upon the house of Israel and Judah, when, like Ananias here, they dealt very treacherously, that they belied the Lord, saying, It is not he, *Jer. v. 11, 12*. Thus Ananias thought the apostles were altogether such as himself; and this was belying the Holy Ghost in them, as if he were not in them a discernor of spirits; whereas they had all the gifts of the Spirit in them, which to others were divided severally: see 1 *Cor. xii. 8, 10*. They that pretend to an inspiration of the Spirit in imposing upon the church their own fancies, either in opinion or practice, that say they are moved from above, when they are carried on by their pride, covetousness, or affectation of dominion, belie the Holy Ghost.

But we read it, "to lie unto the Holy Ghost," which reading is countenanced by ver. 4, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." 1. Ananias told a lie, a deliberate lie, and with a purpose to deceive. He told Peter he had sold a possession, house or lands, and this was the purchase money. Perhaps he expressed himself in words that were capable of a double meaning, used some equivocations about it, which he thought might palliate the matter a little, and save him from the guilt of a downright lie; or perhaps he said nothing. But it was all one, he did as the rest did who brought the whole price, and would be thought to do so, and expected the praise they had that did so, and the same privilege and access to the common stock as they had; and therefore it was an implicit protestation that he brought the whole price, as they did. And this was a lie; for he kept back part. Note, Many are brought to gross lying by reigning pride, and affectation of the applause of men; particularly in works of charity to the poor. That, therefore, we may not be found boasting of a false gift given to us, or given by us, *Pr. xxv. 14*, we must not boast even of a true gift; which is the meaning of our Saviour's caution in works of charity, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." Those that brag of good works they never did, or promise good works they never do, or make the good works they do more or better than really they are, come under the guilt of Ananias's lie, which it concerns us all to dread the thought of. 2. He told this lie to the Holy Ghost. It was not so much to the apostles as to the Holy Ghost in them that this money was brought, and that was said which was said, ver. 4, "Thou hast not lied unto men," not to men only, not to men chiefly, though the apostles be but men, "but thou hast lied unto God." From hence it is justly inferred, that the Holy Ghost is God; for he that lieth to the Holy Ghost lieth to God. "They that lied to the apostles, acted and acted by the Spirit of God, are said to lie to God, because the apostles acted by the power and authority of God; from whence it follows," as Dr. Whitby well observes, "that the power and authority of the Spirit must be the power and authority of God." And, as he farther argues, "Ananias is said to lie to God, because he lied to that Spirit in the apostles which enabled them to discern the secrets of men's hearts and actions, which, being the property of God alone, he that lies to him must, therefore, lie to God, because he lies to one who has the incommunicable property of God, and consequently the Divine essence."

3. The aggravations of the sin; ver. 4, "Whilst it remained was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" which may be understood two ways: 1st. Thou wast under no temptation to keep back part of the price; before it was sold it was thine own, and not mortgaged, nor encumbered, or any way engaged for debt, and when it was sold, it was in thy own power to dispose of the money at thy pleasure, so that thou mightest as well have brought the whole as a part. Thou hadst no debts to pay, perhaps no children to provide for, so that thou wast not under the influence of any particular inducement to keep back part of the price. Thou wast a transgressor without a cause. Or, 2nd. Thou wast under no necessity of selling thy land at all, or bringing any of the money to the apostles' feet; thou mightest have kept the money, if thou hadst pleased, and the land too, and never have pretended to this piece of perfection. This rule of charity the apostle gives that people be not pressed, and that it be not urged as of necessity, because God loves a cheerful giver, 2 *Cor. ix. 7*; and Philemon must do a good work, not as it were of necessity, but willingly, *Phile. 14*. As better it is not to vow than to vow and not to pay, so better had it been for him not to have sold his land at all, than thus to keep back part of the price; not to have pretended to do the good work, than thus to do it by the halves. When it was sold it was in thine own power; but it was not so when it was vowed: thou hadst then opened thy mouth to the Lord, and couldst not go back. Thus, in giving our hearts to God, we are not admitted to divide them. Satan, like the mother whose own the child was not, would take up with a half, but God will have all or none.

4. All this guilt, thus aggravated, is charged upon him. "Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?" Observe, Though Satan filled his heart to do it, yet he is said to have conceived it in his own heart, which shews that we cannot extenuate our sins by laying the fault of them upon the devil. He tempts, but he cannot force; it is of our own lusts that we are drawn away and enticed. The ill thing, whatever it is, that is said or done, the sinner has conceived it in his own heart, and therefore, "if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it." The close of the charge is very high, but very just; "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." What emphasis doth the prophet lay upon that of Ahaz, Not wearying men only, but wearying my God also *Isa. vii. 13*; and Moses upon that of Israel, Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord, *Ex. xvi. 8*; so here, Thou mightest have imposed *αὐτοῦς* us, who are men like thyself, but "be not deceived, God is not mocked." If we think to put a cheat upon God, we shall prove in the end to have put a fatal cheat upon our own souls.

Thirdly. The death and burial of Ananias, ver. 5, 6. 1. He died upon the spot. "Ananias, hearing these words," was speechless; in the same sense that he was who was charged with intruding into the wedding feast without a wedding garment; he had nothing to say for himself. But that was not all; he was struck speechless with a witness, for he was struck

to use; or that men had an authority for so believing, viz., a tradition which was derived to them from a distant age, through some unknown channel. The former hypothesis seems better to account for the appearance of the star to the Magi; the latter will apply to the present passage, to chap. ii. 3, 19, and to the Gentile anticipations of the incarnation" (quoted by Webster and Wilkinson).

iv. 32. "No man called (reckoned) anything of his good to be his own." (Compare chap. v. 4.)

iv. 35. "The apostles, like the prator, probably sat upon a raised seat, on the step of which, at their feet, the money was laid" (Alford).

iv. 36. The well-known Barnabas, afterwards an associate with St. Paul. He was related to Mary, the mother of Mark, at whose house the disciples were assembled praying for Peter's deliverance from prison. The family seem to have been of some affluence, and dwelt in the rich and beautiful island of Cyprus, in the Mediterranean, where

dead; "he fell down and gave up the ghost." It doth not appear whether Peter designed and expected that this would follow upon what he said to him; it is likely he did, for to Sapphira, his wife, Peter particularly spoke death, ver. 9. Some think an angel struck him; that he died as Herod, *ch. xii. 23*; or his own conscience smote him with such horror and amazement at the sense of his guilt, that he sunk and died away under the load of it. And perhaps, when he was convicted of lying to the Holy Ghost, he remembered the unpardonableness of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which struck him like a dagger to the heart. See the power of the Word of God in the mouth of the apostles. As it was to some a saviour of life unto life, so it was to others a saviour of death unto death. As there are those whom the Gospel justifies, so there are those whom it condemns.

This punishment of Ananias may seem severe, but we are sure it was just. 1st. It was designed to maintain the honour of the Holy Ghost, as now lately poured out upon the apostles, in order to the setting up of the gospel kingdom. It was a great affront which Ananias put upon the Holy Ghost, as if he could be imposed upon, and it had a direct tendency to invalidate the apostles' testimony, for, if they could not by the Spirit discover this fraud, how could they by this Spirit discover the deep things of God, which they were to reveal to the children of men? It was, therefore, necessary the credit of the apostles' gifts and powers should be supported, though it was at this expense. 2nd. It was designed to deter others from the like presumptions now at the beginning of this dispensation. Simon Magus afterwards was not thus punished, nor Elymas; but Ananias was made an example now at first that, with the sensible proofs given what a comfortable thing it is to receive the Spirit, there might be also sensible proofs given what a dangerous thing it is to resist the Spirit, and do despite to him. How severely was the worshipping of the golden calf punished, and the gathering of sticks on the sabbath day, when the laws of the second and fourth commandments were now newly given! So was the offering of strange fire by Nadab and Abihu, and the mutiny of Korah and his company, when the fire from heaven was now newly given, and the authority of Moses and Aaron now newly established.

The doing of this by the ministry of Peter, who himself with a lie denied his Master but a while ago, intimates that it was not the resentment of a wrong done to himself; for then he, who had himself been faulty, would have had charity for them that offended; and he, who himself had repented and been forgiven, would have forgiven this affront, and endeavoured to bring this offender to repentance. But it was the act of the Spirit of God in Peter; to him the indignity was done, and by him the punishment was inflicted.

2. He was buried presently; for that was the manner of the Jews, ver. 6. The young men that, it is probable, were appointed to that office in the church of burying the dead, as among the Romans the *libitinarii* and *pollinctores*,—or the young men that attended the apostles, and waited on them,—they wound up the dead body in grave clothes, and carried it out of the city, and buried it decently, though he died in sin, and by an immediate stroke of Divine vengeance.

Fourthly. The reckoning with Sapphira the wife of Ananias, who perhaps was first in the transgression, and tempted her husband to eat this forbidden fruit. She came into the place where the apostles were, which, as it should seem, was Solomon's porch, for there we find them, ver. 12; a part of the temple where Christ used to walk, *Jno. x. 23*. She came in about three hours after, expecting to share in the thanks of the house for her coming in and consenting to the sale of the land, of which perhaps she was entitled to her dower, or thirds, for she knew not what was done. It was strange nobody ran to tell her of the sudden death of her husband, that she might keep away. Perhaps they did, and she was not at home; and so, when she came to present herself before the apostles as a benefactor to the fund, she met with a breach instead of a blessing.

1. She was found guilty of sharing with her husband in his sin by a question that Peter asked her, ver. 8, "Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?"—naming the sum which Ananias had brought and laid at the apostles' feet; was that all you received for the sale of the land, and had you no more for it? No, saith she, we had no more; but that was every farthing we received. Ananias and his wife agreed to tell the same story, and the bargain being private, and by consent kept to themselves, nobody could disprove them, and therefore they thought they might safely stand in the lie, and should gain credit to it. It is sad to see those relations which should quicken one another to that which is good harden one another in that which is evil.

2. Sentence is passed upon her, that she should partake in her husband's doom, ver. 9.

1st. Her sin is opened; "How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?" Before he passeth sentence, he makes her to know her abominations, and shews her the evil of her sin. First. That they tempted the Spirit of the Lord, as Israel tempted God in the desert, when they said, "Is the Lord among us, or is he not?" after they had seen so many miraculous proofs of his power, and not only his presence, but his presidency, when they said, "Can God furnish a table?" so here, Can the Spirit in the apostles discover this fraud? Can they discern that this is but a part of the price, when we tell them it is the whole? "Can he judge through this dark cloud?" *Job xxii. 13*. They saw they had the gift of tongues, but had they the gift of discerning spirits? Those that presume upon security and impunity in sin tempt the Spirit of God; they tempt God, as if he were altogether such an one as themselves. Secondly. That they agreed together to do it; making the bond of their relation to each other, which by the Divine institution is a sacred tie, to become a bond of iniquity. It is hard to say which is worse between yoke-fellows and other relations, a discord in good, or concord in evil. It seems to intimate that their agreeing together to do it was a farther tempting of the Spirit; as if, when they had engaged to keep one another's counsel in this matter, even the Spirit of the Lord himself could not discover them. Thus they digged deep to hide their counsel from the Lord; but were made to know it is in vain. How is it that ye are thus infatuated? What strange stupidity has seized you, that you would venture to make trial of that which is past dispute? How is it that ye, who are baptized Christians, do not understand yourselves better? How durst you run so great a risk?

2nd. Her doom is read; "Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door," (perhaps he heard them coming, or knew that they could not be long); "and they shall carry thee out." As Adam and Eve, who agreed to eat the forbidden fruit, were turned together out of Paradise, so Ananias and Sapphira, who agreed to tempt the Spirit of the Lord, were together chased out of the world.

3. The sentence executed itself. There needed no executioner; a killing power went along with Peter's word, as sometimes a healing power did, for the God in whose name he spoke, kills and makes alive; and out of his mouth (and Peter was now his mouth) both evil and good proceed; ver. 10, "then fell she down straightway at his feet." Some sinners God makes quick work with, while others he bears long with; for which difference doubtless there are good reasons; but he is not accountable to us for them. She heard not till now that her husband was dead; the notice of which, with the discovery of her sin, and the sentence of death passed upon her struck her as a thunderbolt, and took

her away as with a whirlwind. And many instances there are of sudden deaths which are not to be looked upon as the punishment of some gross sin, like this here; we must not think that all who die suddenly are sinners above others. Perhaps it is in favour to them that they have a quick passage; however, it is forewarning to all to be always ready. But here, it was in judgment. Some put the question concerning the eternal state of Ananias and Sapphira, and incline to think that the destruction of the flesh was that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus; and I should go in with that charitable opinion, if there had been any space given them to repent, as there was to that incestuous Corinthian. But secret things belong not to us. It is said she fell down at Peter's feet; there, where she should have laid the whole price, and did not, she was herself laid, as it were to make up the deficiency. The young men that had the care of funerals coming in, found her dead; and it is not said they wound her up, as they did Ananias, but they carried her out as she was, and buried her by her husband. And probably an inscription was set over their graves, intimating that they were joint monuments of Divine wrath against those that lie to the Holy Ghost. Some ask whether the apostles kept the money which they did bring, and concerning which they lied. I am apt to think they did; they had not the superstition of those who said, "It is not lawful for us to put it into the treasury;" for, "unto the pure all things are pure." What they brought was not polluted to them that they brought it to; but what they kept back was polluted to them that kept it back. Use was made of the censures of Korah's mutineers.

Fifthly. The impression that this made upon the people. Notice is taken of this in the midst of the story, ver. 5, "great fear came upon all that heard these things," that heard what Peter said, and saw what followed; or, upon all that heard the story of it, for, no doubt, it was all the talk of the city. And again, ver. 11, "great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."

1. They that had joined themselves to the church were hereby struck with an awe of God, and of his judgments, and with a greater veneration of this dispensation of the Spirit they were now under. It was not a damp or check to their holy joy; but it taught them to be serious in it, and to rejoice with trembling. All that laid their money at the apostles' feet after this were afraid of keeping back any part of the price.

2. All that heard it were put into a consternation by it, and were ready to say, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God," and his Spirit in the apostles? as 1 *Sam. vi. 20*.

12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

We have here an account of the progress of the Gospel, notwithstanding this terrible judgment inflicted upon two hypocrites.

First. Here is a general account of the miracles which the apostles wrought; ver. 12, "by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people;" many miracles of mercy for one of judgment. Now the gospel power returned to its proper channel, which is that of mercy and grace; God had come out of his place to punish, but now returns to his place, to his mercy-seat again. The miracles they wrought proved their Divine mission; they were not a few, but many, of divers kinds, and often repeated; they were signs and wonders, such wonders as were confessedly signs of a Divine presence and power. They were not done in a corner, but among the people, who were at liberty to inquire into them; and, if there had been any fraud or collusion in them, would have discovered it.

Secondly. We are here told what were the effects of these miracles which the apostles wrought

1. The church was hereby kept together, and confirmed in their adherence, both to the apostles and to one another. They of the church were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 1st. They met in the temple, in the open place that was called Solomon's porch. It was strange the rulers of the temple suffered them to keep their meeting there. But God inclined their hearts to tolerate them there a while, for the more convenient spreading of the Gospel; and they who permitted buyers and sellers could not for shame prohibit such preachers and healers there. They all met in public worship; so early is the institution of religious assemblies observed in the church, which must by no means be forsaken or let fall, for in them a profession of religion is kept up. 2nd. They were there with one accord; unanimous in their doctrine, worship, and discipline. And there was no discontent or murmuring about the death of Ananias and Sapphira, as there was against Moses and Aaron, about the death of Korah and his company, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord," *Num. xvi. 41*. The separation of hypocrites by distinguishing judgments should make the sincere cleave so much the closer to each other, and to the gospel ministry.

2. It gained the apostles very great respect, who were the prime ministers of state in Christ's kingdom. 1st. The other ministers kept their distance; "of the rest," of their company, "durst no man join himself to them," as their equal, or an associate with them. Though others of them were endued with the Holy Ghost, and spoke with tongues, yet none of them at this time did such signs and wonders as the apostles did; and, therefore, they acknowledged their superiority, and in every thing yielded to them. 2nd. All the people magnified them, and had them in great veneration; spoke of them with respect, and represented them as the favourites of Heaven, and unspeakable blessings to this earth. Though the chief priests vilified them, and did all they could to make them contemptible, that did not hinder the people from magnifying them, who saw the thing in a true light. Observe, The apostles were far from magnifying

the Jews had settled in great numbers. "The right of individual ownership might exist within the forty-eight cities and the territory adjacent to them which were assigned to the Levites (*Num. xxxv. 1—8*; *Lev. xxv. 32*), and it is probable that after the return from Babylon the restrictions imposed on the priests and Levites by the Mosaic law (*Num. xviii. 10—24*; *Josh. xviii. 7*) were no longer enforced" (*Schaeffer*).

v. 1. "But," connecting the following account with that which

went before, and thereby introducing a contrast between Barnabas and Ananias. "Ananias;" the word means "the grace of the Lord." "Sapphira;" probably derived from the Greek word for "sapphire," or from the Syriac for "beautiful." Alford says, "The crime of these two is well described by Meyer: 'By the sale of their field and the bringing in of the money, they in fact professed to give the whole price as a gift of brotherly love to the common stock; but their aim was to get for themselves the credit of holy love and zeal by one portion of

themselves: they transmitted the glory of all they did very carefully and faithfully to Christ, and yet the people magnified them; for they that humble themselves shall be exalted, and those honoured that honour God only.

3. The church increased in number; ver. 14, "believers were the more added to the Lord," and no doubt joined themselves to the church, when they saw that God was in it of a truth; even "multitudes both of men and women." They were so far from being deterred by the example that was made of Ananias and Sapphira, that they were rather invited by it into a society that kept such a strict discipline. Observe, 1st. Believers are added to the Lord Jesus, joined to him, and so joined to his mystical body, from which nothing can separate us and cut us off but that which separates us and cuts us off from Christ. Many have been brought to the Lord, and yet there is room for others to be added to him, added to the number of those that are united to him; and additions will still be in the making till the mystery of God shall be finished, and the number of the elect accomplished. 2nd. Notice is taken of the conversion of women as well as men; more notice than generally was in the Jewish church, in which they neither received the sign of circumcision, nor were obliged to attend the solemn feasts; and the court of the women was one of the outer courts of the temple. But, as among those that followed Christ while he was upon earth, so among those that believed on him after he went to heaven, great notice was taken of the good women.

4. The apostles had abundance of patients; and gained abundance of reputation, both to them and their doctrine, by the cure of them all, ver. 15, 16. So many signs and wonders were wrought by the apostles, that all manner of people put in for the benefit of them, both in city and country, and had it. 1st. In the city. They "brought forth their sick into the streets;" for it is probable the priests would not suffer them to bring them into the temple to Solomon's porch, and the apostles had not leisure to come to the houses of them all. And they "laid them on beds and couches," because they were so weak that they could neither go nor stand, "that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them," though it could not reach them all. And it should seem it had the desired effect, as the woman's touch of the hem of Christ's garment had; and in this, among other things, that word of Christ was fulfilled, "Greater works than these shall ye do." God expresses his care of his people by his being their shade on their right hand; and the benign influences of Christ as a king are compared to the shadow of a great rock. Peter comes between them and the sun, and so heals them; cuts them off from a dependence upon creature-sufficiency as insufficient, that they may expect help only from that Spirit of grace with whom he was filled. And, if such miracles were wrought by Peter's shadow, we have reason to think they were so by the other disciples, as by the handkerchiefs from Paul's body, *ch. xix. 12*; no doubt both being with an actual intention in the minds of the apostles thus to heal; so that it is absurd hence to infer a healing virtue in the relics of saints that are dead and gone. We read not of any cured by the relics of Christ himself, after he was gone, as certainly we should if there had been any such thing. 2nd. In the country towns. Multitudes came to Jerusalem from "the cities round about, bringing sick folks," that were afflicted in body, "and them that were vexed with unclean spirits," that were troubled in mind, "and they were healed every one;" distempered bodies and distempered minds were set to rights. Thus opportunity was given to the apostles, both to convince people's judgments, by these miracles, of the heavenly original of the doctrine they preached; and also to engage people's affections both to them and it, by giving them a specimen of its beneficial tendency to the welfare of this lower world.

17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, 18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. 19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. 21 And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, 23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. 24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. 25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

Never did any good work go on with any hope of success, but it met with opposition; they that are bent to do mischief, cannot be reconciled to them who make it their business to do good. Satan, the destroyer of mankind, ever was, and will be, an adversary to those who are the benefactors of mankind; and it would have been strange if the apostles had gone on thus teaching and healing, and had had no check. In these verses we have the malice of hell and the grace of heaven struggling about them; the one to drive them off from this good work, the other to animate them in it.

the price, whereas they had selfishly kept back the other portion for themselves. They wished to serve two masters, but to appear to serve only one."

v. 4. "Why hast thou conceived this?" &c.: literally, "put this thing in thine heart." This, with the "why," verse 3, shows the deliberate assent which Ananias gave to the suggestions of the evil one, instead of resisting them. These words of St. Peter show that there was no compulsory selling and dividing of possessions,

First. The priests were enraged at them, and clapped them up in prison, ver. 17, 18. Observe,

1. Who their enemies and persecutors were. The high priest was the ring-leader, Annas or Caiaphas, who saw their wealth and dignity, their power and tyranny, that is, their all, at stake, and inevitably lost, if the spiritual and heavenly doctrine of Christ get ground, and prevail among the people. Those that were most forward to join with the high priest herein were the sect of the Sadducees, who had a particular enmity to the Gospel of Christ, because it confirmed and established the doctrine of the invisible world, the resurrection of the dead, and the future state, which they denied. It is not strange if men of no religion be bigoted in their opposition to true and pure religion.

2. How they were affected towards them; ill affected, and exasperated to the last degree. When they heard and saw what flocking there was to the apostles, and how considerable they were become, they rose up in a passion, as men that could no longer bear it, and were resolved to make head against it, being filled with indignation at the apostles for preaching the doctrine of Christ, and curing the sick; and at the people for hearing them, and bringing the sick to them to be cured; and at themselves and their own party for suffering this matter to go so far, and not knocking it on the head at first. Thus are the enemies of Christ and his Gospel a torment to themselves; envy slays the silly one.

3. How they proceeded against them; ver. 18, "they laid their hands," perhaps their own hands, "and low did their malice make them stoop," or rather the hands of their officers, "and put them in the common prison," among the worst of malefactors. Hereby they designed, 1st. To put a restraint upon them. Though they could not lay any thing criminal to their charge worthy of death or of bonds, yet, whilst they had them in prison they kept them from going on in their work, and that they reckoned a good point gained. Thus early were the ambassadors of Christ in bonds. 2nd. To put a terror upon them, and so to drive them off from their work. The last time they had them before them they had only threatened them, *ch. iv. 21*, but now, finding that did not do, they imprisoned them, to make them afraid of them. 3rd. To put a disgrace upon them; and therefore they chose to clap them up in the common prison, that, being thus vilified, the people might not as they had done magnify them. Satan hath carried on his design against the Gospel very much by making the preachers and professors of it despicable.

Secondly. God sent his angel to release them out of prison, and to renew their commission to preach the Gospel. The powers of darkness fight against them, but the Father of lights fights for them, and sends an angel of light to plead their cause. The Lord will never desert his witnesses, his advocates, but will certainly stand by them, and bear them out.

1. The apostles are discharged, legally discharged from their imprisonment; ver. 19, "the angel of the Lord by night," in spite of all the locks and bars that were upon them, opened the prison doors; and, in spite of all the vigilance and resolution of the keepers that stood without before the doors, brought forth the prisoners, (see ver. 12,) gave them authority to go out, without crime; and led them through all opposition. This deliverance is not so particularly related as that of Peter, *ch. xii. 7*, &c.; but the miracle here was the very same with that there. Note, There is no prison so dark, so strong, but God can both visit his people in it, and, if he pleaseth, fetch them out of it. This discharge of the apostles out of prison by an angel was a resemblance of Christ's resurrection, and his discharge out of the prison of the grave, and would help to confirm the apostles' preaching of it.

2. They are charged, and legally charged, to go on with their work; so as thereby to be discharged from the prohibition which the high priest laid upon them. The angel bade them, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life," ver. 20. When they were miraculously set at liberty they must not think it was that they might save their lives by making their escape out of the hands of their enemies. No; it was that they might go on with their work with so much the more boldness. Recoveries from sickness, releases out of trouble, are granted us, and are to be looked upon by us as granted, not that we may enjoy the comforts of our life, but that God may be honoured with the services of our life; "Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee," *Psa. cxix. 175*; "Bring my soul out of prison," as the apostles here, "that I may praise thy name," *Psa. cxlii. 7*; see *Isa. xxxviii. 22*.

Now, in this charge, given them, observe, 1st. Where they must preach; "Speak in the temple." One would think, though they might not quit their work, yet it had been prudence to go on with it in a more private place, where it would give less offence to the priests than in the temple, and so would the less expose them. No; "speak in the temple," for that is the place of concourse; that is your Father's house, and is not to be as yet quite left desolate. It is not for your preachers of Christ's Gospel to retire into corners as long as they can have any opportunity of preaching in the great congregation. 2nd. To whom they must preach; "Speak to the people." Not to the princes and rulers, for they will not hearken; but to the people, who are willing and desirous to be taught; and whose souls are as precious to Christ, and ought to be so to you, as the souls of the greatest. "Speak to the people;" to all in general, for all are concerned. 3rd. How they must preach; "Go, stand and speak." Which intimates, not only that they must speak publicly,—stand up and speak, that all may hear,—but they must speak boldly and resolutely; "stand and speak" that is, speak it as those that resolve to stand to it, to live and die by it. 4th. What they must speak; "all the words of this life;" This life which you have been speaking of among yourselves; referring, perhaps, to the conferences concerning heaven which they had among themselves, for their own and one another's encouragement, in prison. Go, and preach the same to the world, that others may be comforted with the same comforts with which you yourselves are comforted of God; or, of this life which the Sadducees deny, and therefore persecute you,—preach that, though you know that is it they have indignation at; or, of this life emphatically, this heavenly, Divine life, in comparison with which the present earthly life doth not deserve the name; or, these words of life, the very same you have preached, these words which the Holy Ghost puts into your mouth. Note, The words of the Gospel are the words of life, quickening words; they are spirit, and they are life; "words whereby we may be saved;" that is the same with this here, *ch. xi. 24*. The Gospel is the word of this life, for it secures to us the privileges of our way, as well as those of our home; and the promises of the life that now is, as well as of that to come. And yet even the spiritual and eternal life are brought so much to light in the Gospel that they may be called this life; for the Word is light itself. Note, The Gospel is concerning matters of life and death; and ministers must preach it, and people hear it accordingly. They must speak "all the words of this life," and not conceal any for fear of offending, or in hope of ingratiating themselves with their rulers; Christ's witnesses are sworn to speak the whole truth.

Thirdly. They went on with their work; ver. 21, "when they heard that," when they heard that it was the will of God they should continue to preach in the temple, they returned to Solomon's porch there, ver. 21.

1. It was a great satisfaction to them to have these fresh orders. Perhaps they began to question whether, if they had their liberty, they should preach as publicly in the temple as they had done; because they had been hidden,

Compare verse 3, where the sin of Ananias is said to be "lie to the Holy Ghost," here "unto God." These passages are adduced as proving the deity of the Holy Spirit.

v. 5. "Gave up the ghost;" literally, "expired." We are not told how the death of Ananias was brought about, whether by direct stroke of God, or God's judgment working through the more natural means of the shock and disappointment occasioned by the sudden and public exposure of the fraud.

when they were persecuted in one city, to flee to another. But, now the angel ordered them to go, preach in the temple, their way was plain, and they ventured without any difficulty, entered into the temple, and feared not the face of man. Note, If we may but be satisfied concerning our duty, our business is to keep close to that, and then we may cheerfully trust God with our safety.

2. They set themselves presently to execute them without dispute or delay. They "entered into the temple early in the morning," as soon as the gates were opened, and people began to come together there, and taught them the Gospel of the Kingdom, and did not at all fear what man could do unto them. The case here was extraordinary: the whole treasure of the Gospel is lodged in their hands; if they be silent now, the springs are shut up, and the whole work falls to the ground and is made to cease, which is not the case with ordinary ministers, who therefore are not by this example bound to throw themselves into the mouth of danger; and yet, when God gives opportunity of doing good, though we be under the restraint and terror of human powers, we should venture far, rather than let go such an opportunity.

Fourthly. The high priest and his party went on with their prosecution, ver. 21. They, supposing they had the apostles sure enough, "called the council together," a great and extraordinary council, for they summoned "all the senate of the children of Israel." See here,

1. How they were prepared, and how big with expectation, to crush the Gospel of Christ and the preachers of it; for they raised the whole posse. The last time they had the apostles in custody, they convened them only before a committee of those that were "of the kindred of the high priest," who were obliged to act cautiously; but now, that they might proceed farther, and with more assurance, they called together *τὸν ἄρχιερέα καὶ τοὺς ἑπομένους*, 'all the eldership'; that is, saith Dr. Lightfoot, all the three courts or benches of judges in Jerusalem, not only the great Sanhedrim, consisting of seventy elders, but the other two judicatories, that were erected, one in the outer court gate of the temple, the other in the inner or beautiful gate, consisting of twenty-three judges each; so that, if there were a full appearance, here were one hundred and sixteen judges. Thus God ordered it, that the confusion of the enemies, might be more public, and the apostles' testimony against them, and that those might hear the Gospel who would not hear it otherwise than from the bar. Howbeit, the high priest meant not so, neither did his heart think so; but it was in his heart to rally all his forces against the apostles, and by a universal consent to cut them all off at once.

2. How they were balked, and had their faces filled with shame. "He that sits in heaven laughs at them," and so may we too, to see how gravely the court is set; and we may suppose the high priest makes a solemn speech to them, setting forth the occasion of their coming together: That a very dangerous faction was now lately raised in Jerusalem by the preaching of the doctrine of Jesus, which it was needful, for the preservation of their church (which never was in such danger as now), speedily and effectually to suppress; that it was now in the power of their hands to do it, for he had the ringleaders of the faction now in the common prison, to be proceeded against, if they would but agree to it, with the utmost severity. An officer is in order hereunto despatched immediately to fetch the prisoners to the bar: but see how they are baffled.

1st. The officers come and tell them that they are not to be found in the prison, ver. 22, 23. The last time they were forthcoming when they were called for, ch. iv. 7, but now they were gone; and the report which the officers make is, "The prison doors truly found we shut with all safety," nothing had been done to weaken them; "the keepers" had not been wanting to their duty, we found them "standing without before the doors," and knowing nothing to the contrary but that the prisoners were all safe; but when we went in we found no man therein, that is, none of the men we were sent to fetch; but it is likely the common prisoners they found there. Which way the angel fetched them out, whether by some back way, or opening the door and fastening it close again, the keepers all the while asleep, we are not told; however it was, they were gone. The Lord knows, though we do not, how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and how to loose those that are in bonds for his name's sake; and he will do it, as here, when he has occasion for them.

Now think how blank the court looked when the officers made this return upon their order; ver. 25. "When the high priest, and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests, heard those things," they were all at a plunge, and looked one upon another, "doubting what this thing should be." They were extremely perplexed, were at their wits' end, having never been so disappointed in all their lives of a thing they were so sure of. It occasioned various speculations; some suggesting that they were conjured out of the prison, and made their escape by magic arts; others, that the keepers had played tricks with them, not knowing how many friends these prisoners had that were so much the darlings of the people. Some feared that having made such a wonderful escape, they would be the more followed; others, that though perhaps they had frightened them from Jerusalem, they should hear of them again in some part or other of the country, where they would do yet more mischief, and it would be yet more out of their power to stop the spreading of the infection; and now they begin to fear that, instead of curing the ill, they have made it worse. Note, Those often distress and embarrass themselves that think to distress and embarrass the cause of Christ.

2nd. Their doubt is in part determined, and yet their vexation is increased, by another messenger, who brings them word that their prisoners are preaching in the temple; ver. 25. "Behold, the men whom ye put in prison," and have sent for to your bar, "are now," hard by you here, "standing in the temple," under your nose, and in defiance of you, "teaching the people." Prisoners that have broke prison use to abscond for fear of being retaken; but these prisoners that here made their escape dare to shew their faces even there where their persecutors have the greatest influence. Now this confounded them more than any thing. Common malefactors may have art enough to break prison, but they are uncommon ones that have courage enough to avow it when they have done.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council; and the high priest asked them, 28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. 29 Then Peter and

the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. 33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them. 34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; 35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. 36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. 37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. 38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: 39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. 40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

We are not told what it was that the apostles preached to the people; no doubt it was according to the direction of the angel, "the words of this life;" but what passed between them and the council we have here an account of; for in their sufferings there appeared more of a Divine power and energy than even in their preaching. Now here we have,

First. The seizing of the apostles a second time. We may think, if God designed this, why were they rescued from their first imprisonment? But that was designed to humble the pride, and check the fury of their persecutors; and now he would shew that they were discharged, not because they feared a trial, for they were ready to surrender themselves, and make their appearance before the greatest of their enemies.

1. They brought them without violence, with all the respect and tenderness that could be; did not pull them out of the pulpit, nor bind them, or drag them along, but spoke them fair. And one would think they had reason to do so in reverence to the temple, that holy place, and for fear of the apostles, lest they should strike them as they did Ananias, or call for fire from heaven upon them as Elias did; but all that restrained their violence was, their fear of the people, who had such a veneration for the apostles that they would stone them if they offered them any abuse.

2. Yet they brought them to those who they knew were violent against them, and were resolved to take violent courses with them; ver. 27, they brought them to set them before the council as delinquents. Thus the powers that should have been a terror to evil works and workers became so to the good.

Secondly. Their examination. Being brought before this august assembly, the high priest, as the mouth of the court, told them what it was they had to lay to their charge, ver. 28.

1. That they had disobeyed the commands of authority, and would not submit to the injunctions and prohibitions given them; ver. 28, 'Did not we, by virtue of our authority, straitly charge and command you, upon pain of our highest displeasure, that you should not teach in this name; but you have disobeyed our commands, and go on to preach, not only without our license, but against our express order.' Thus they who make void the commandments of God commonly are very strict in binding on their own commandments, and insisting upon their own power. "Did not we command you?" Yes; they did. But did not Peter at the same time tell them that God's authority was superior

v. 6. "Young men:" probably only the younger members of the congregation.

v. 9. "To try the omniscience of the Spirit then visibly dwelling in the apostles and the Church was in the highest sense to tempt the Spirit of God. It was saying in their hearts, 'There is no Holy Spirit,' and certainly approached very closely to a sin against the Holy Ghost. Peter characterises the sin more solemnly this second time, because by the wife's answer it was now proved to be no individual lie

of a bad and covetous man, but a pre-concerted scheme to deceive God" (Alford). "The feet," &c.: Alford says, "Not that Peter heard the tread of the young men outside (they were probably barefooted), but it is an expression common in the poetical or lively description of the Hebrews, and indeed of all nations (see Isa. lii. 7; Nah. i. 15; Rom. x. 15), meaning the member whereby the person acts, the actor. I take the words to mean that the time was just at hand for their return (see Jas. v. 9). The space of three hours was not too long; they would

to theirs, and his commands must take place of theirs? And they had forgotten that.

2. That they spread false doctrine among the people, or at least a singular doctrine, and which was not allowed by the Jewish church, nor agreed with what was delivered from Moses' chair. "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine," and thereby have disturbed the public peace, and drawn people from the public establishment. Some take this for a haughty, scornful word: This silly, senseless doctrine of yours, that is not worth taking notice of, you have made such a noise with, that even Jerusalem, the great and holy city, is become full of it, and it is all the talk of the town. They are angry that men whom they looked upon as despicable should make themselves thus considerable.

3. That they had a malicious design against the government, and aimed to stir up the people against it, by representing it as wicked and tyrannical, and that had made itself justly odious both to God and man. "Ye intend to bring this man's blood,"—the guilt of it before God, the shame of it before men,—"upon us." Thus they charge them not only with contumacy and contempt of the court, but with sedition and faction, and a plot to set, not only the people against them, for having persecuted even to death not only so innocent but so good and great a man as this Jesus, but the Romans too, for having drawn them into it. See here how those that, with a great deal of presumption, will do an ill thing, yet cannot bear to hear of it afterwards, or to have it charged upon them. When they were in the heat of the persecution, they could cry daringly enough, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children;" let us bear the blame for ever. But, now they have time for a cooler thought, they take it as a heinous affront to have his blood laid at their door. Thus are they convicted and condemned by their own consciences, and dread lying under that guilt which they were not afraid to involve themselves in.

Thirdly. Their answer to the charge exhibited against them. Peter and the other apostles all spake to the same purpose; whether severally examined, or answering jointly, they spake as one and the same Spirit gave them utterance, depending upon the promise their Master had made them, that, when they were brought before councils, it should be given them in that same hour what they should speak, and courage to speak it.

1. They justify themselves in their disobedience to the commands of the great Sanhedrim, as great as it was; ver. 29, "We ought to obey God rather than men." They do not plead the power they had to work miracles, that spoke sufficiently for them, and therefore they humbly decline mentioning it themselves; but they appeal to a maxim universally owned, and which even natural conscience subscribes to, and which comes home to their case: God had commanded them to teach in the name of Christ, and therefore they ought to do it, though the chief priests forbade them. Those rulers set up in opposition to God, and have a great deal to answer for, who punish men for disobedience to them, in that which was their duty to God.

2. They justify themselves in doing what they could to fill Jerusalem with the doctrine of Christ, though, in preaching him up, they did indeed reflect upon those that maliciously ran him down; and, if they thereby bring his blood upon them, they may thank themselves. It is charged upon them as a crime that they preached Christ and his Gospel; Now, say they, we will tell you who this Christ is, and what his Gospel is, and then do you judge whether we ought not to preach it; nay, and we shall take this opportunity to preach it to you, "whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear."

1st. The chief priests are told to their faces the indignities they did to this Jesus; "Ye slew him, and hanged him on a tree;" you cannot deny it. The apostles, instead of making an excuse, or begging their pardon for bringing the guilt of this man's blood upon them, repeat the charge, and stand to it: It was you that slew him; it was your act and deed. Note, People's being unwilling to hear of their faults is no good reason why they should not be faithfully told of them. It is a common excuse made for not reproving sin, that the times will not bear it. But they whose office it is to reprove must not be awed by that; the times must bear it, and shall bear it: "Cry aloud, and spare not;" cry aloud, and fear not.

2nd. They are told also what honours God put upon this Jesus, and then let them judge who was in the right, the persecutors of his doctrine, or the preachers of it. He calls God the God of our fathers—not only ours, but yours; to shew that in preaching Christ they did not preach a new god, nor entice people to come and worship other gods; nor did they set up an institution contrary to that of Moses and the prophets, but they adhered to the God of the Jewish fathers; and that name of Christ which they preached answered the promises made to the fathers, and the covenant God entered into with them, and the types and figures of the law he gave them. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. See what honour he did him.

First. He raised him up; that is, he qualified him for, and called him to, his great undertaking. It seems to refer to the promise God made by Moses, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you." God raised him up out of obscurity, and made him great. Or, it may be meant of his raising him up from the grave; You put him to death, but God has restored him to life, so that God and you are manifestly contesting about this Jesus, and which must we side with?

Secondly. He exalted him with his right hand: *ἡ δυνάμις*, hath 'lifted him up.' You loaded him with disgrace, but God has crowned him with honour; and ought we not to honour him whom God honours? God has exalted him, *τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ*, 'with his right hand;' that is, by his power put forth: Christ is said to live by the power of God. Or, to his right hand, to sit there, to rest there, to rule there. He has invested him with the highest dignity, and intrusted him with the highest authority, and therefore we must teach in his name, for God has 'given him a name above every name.'

Thirdly. He hath appointed him "to be a Prince and a Saviour," and therefore we ought to preach in his name, and to publish the laws of his government, as he is a Prince, and the offers of his grace, as he is a Saviour. Observe, There is no having Christ to be our Saviour, unless we be willing to take him for our Prince. We cannot expect to be redeemed and healed by him, unless we give up ourselves to be ruled by him. The judges of old were saviours; Christ's ruling is in order to his saving, and faith takes an entire Christ, that came not to save us in our sins, but to save us from our sins.

Fourthly. He is appointed as "a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins." Therefore they must preach in his name to the people of Israel, for his favours were designed primarily and principally for them, and none that truly loved their country could be against that. Why should the rulers and elders of Israel oppose one who came with no less a blessing to Israel than repentance and pardon? Had he been exalted to give deliverance to Israel from the Roman yoke and dominion over the neighbouring nations, the chief priests would have welcomed him with all their hearts; but repentance and remission of sins are blessings they neither value nor see their need of, and therefore they can by no means admit his doctrine. Observe here, 1st. Repentance and remission go together; wherever repentance is wrought, remission is without fail granted, and the favour is given to all those to whom is given the qualification for it. And, on the other hand, no remission

without repentance; none are freed from the guilt and punishment of sin but those that are freed from the power and dominion of sin; that are turned from it, and turned against it. 2nd. It is Jesus Christ that gives, and is authorized to give, both repentance and remission. Whatsoever is required in the gospel covenant is promised: are we appointed to repent? Christ is appointed to give repentance; by his Spirit working with the Word, to awaken the conscience, to work contrition for sin, and an effectual change in the heart and life. The new heart is his work, and the broken spirit a sacrifice of his providing; and when he has given repentance, if he should not give remission, he would forsake the work of his own hands. See how necessary it is that we repent, and that we apply ourselves to Christ by faith for his grace to work repentance in us.

Fifthly. All this is well attested, 1st. By the apostles themselves. They are ready to testify upon oath, if required, that they saw him alive after his resurrection, and saw him ascend into heaven; and also that they experienced the power of his grace upon their hearts, raising them up to that which was far above their natural capacities. "We are his witnesses," appointed by him to publish this to the world; and if we should be silent, as you would have us, we should betray a trust, and be false to it. When a cause is in trying, witnesses, of all men, ought not to be silenced, for the issue of the cause depends on their testimony. 2nd. By the Spirit of God. We are witnesses, competent ones, and whose testimony is sufficient before any human judicature; but that is not all, "The Holy Ghost is witness," a witness from heaven,—for God hath given his gifts and graces to them that obey Christ. Therefore we must preach in this name, because for this end the Holy Ghost is given us, whose operations we cannot stifle.

Note, The giving of the Holy Ghost to obedient believers, not only to bring them to "the obedience of faith," but to make them eminently useful therein, is a very strong proof of the truth of Christianity. God gave the Holy Ghost by his Son, and in his name, *Jno. xiv. 26*, and in answer to his prayer, *Jno. xiv. 16*; nay, it was Christ that sent him from the Father, *Jno. xv. 26*; *xvi. 7*; and this proves the glory to which the Father has exalted him. The great work of the Spirit being not only to justify Christ, *1 Tim. iii. 16*, but to glorify him; and all his gifts having a direct tendency to exalt his name, proves that his doctrine is Divine, else it would not be carried on thus by a Divine power. And, lastly, The giving of the Holy Ghost to them that obey Christ, both for their assistance in their obedience, and as a present recompence for their obedience, is a plain evidence that it is the will of God that Christ should be obeyed; and then judge whether we ought to obey you in opposition to him.

Fourthly. The impression which the apostles' defence of themselves made upon the court. It was contrary to what one would have expected from men that pretended to reason, learning, and sanctity. Sure such fair reasoning could not but clear the prisoners, and convert the judges; no, instead of yielding to it, they raged against it, and were filled,

1. With indignation at what the apostles said; "they were cut to the heart," angry to see their own sin set in order before them; stark mad to find that the Gospel of Christ had so much to say for itself, and consequently was likely to get ground. When a sermon was preached to the people to this purpose, they were pricked to the heart in remorse and godly sorrow, *ch. ii. 37*; these here were cut to the heart with rage and indignation. Thus the same Gospel is "to some a savour of life unto life, to others of death unto death." The enemies of the Gospel not only deprive themselves of its comforts, but fill themselves with terrors, and are their own tormentors.

2. With malice against the apostles themselves. Since they see they cannot stop their mouths any other way than by stopping their breath, they take counsel to slay them, hoping that so they should cause the work to cease. While the apostles went on in the service of Christ with a holy security and serenity of mind, perfectly composed, and in a sweet enjoyment of themselves, their persecutors went on in their opposition to Christ, with a constant perplexity and perturbation of mind, and vexation to themselves.

Fifthly. The grave advice which Gamaliel, a topping man in the council, gave upon this occasion, the scope of which was to moderate the fury of these bigots, and check the violence of the prosecution. This Gamaliel is here said to be a Pharisee by his profession and sect, and by office a doctor of the law, one that studied the scriptures of the Old Testament, read lectures upon the sacred authors, and trained up pupils in the knowledge of them; Paul was brought up at his feet, *ch. xxii. 3*; and tradition saith that so were Stephen and Barnabas. Some say he was the son of that Simeon that took up Christ in his arms when he was presented in the temple, and grandson of the famous Hillel. He is here said to be "in reputation among all the people" for his wisdom and conduct; it appearing by this passage that he was a moderate man, and not apt to go in with furious measures. Men of temper and charity are justly had in reputation for checking the incendiaries that otherwise would set the world on fire. Now observe here,

1. The necessary caution he gives to the council with reference to the case before them. "He commanded to put the apostles forth a little while," that he might speak the more freely, and be the more freely answered; (it was fit the prisoners should withdraw when their cause was to be debated;) and then put the house in mind of the importance of this matter, which, in their heat, they were not capable of considering as they ought. "Ye men of Israel," saith he, "take heed to yourselves," consider what you do, or "intend to do as touching these men," ver. 35. It is not a common case, and therefore should not be hastily determined. He calls them men of Israel, to enforce this caution. You are men that should be governed by reason; be not then as the horse and the mule that have no understanding. You are men of Israel, that should be governed by revelation; be not then as strangers and heathens that have no regard to God and his word. "Take heed to yourselves," now you are angry at these men, lest you meddle to your own hurt. Note, The persecutors of God's people had best look to themselves, lest they fall into the pit which they dig. We have need to be cautious whom we give trouble to, lest we be found making the hearts of the righteous sad.

2. The cases he cites to pave the way to his opinion. Two instances he gives of factious, seditious men, such as they would have the apostles thought to be, whose attempts came to nothing of themselves; from whence he infers that, if these men were indeed such as they represented them, their cause would sink with its own weight, and Providence would infatuate and defeat them, and then they needed not persecute them.

1st. There was one Theudas, that made a mighty noise for a while, as one sent of God, "boasting himself to be somebody," "some great one," so the word is, either a teacher or a prince, with a Divine commission, to effect some great revolution either in the church or in the state; and he observes here, ver. 36, concerning him, *First*. How far he prevailed. "A number of men," about four hundred in all, joined themselves to him, that knew not what to do with themselves, or hoped to mend themselves, and they seemed then a formidable body. *Secondly*. How soon his pretensions were all dashed; for when he was slain, probably in war, there needed no more ado; "all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered," and melted away like snow before the sun. Now compare that case with this: you have slain Jesus the ringleader of this faction, you have taken him off: now, if he was, as you say he was, an impostor

have to carry the corpse to the burying-ground, at a considerable distance from the city, and when there to dig a grave and bury it." Peter, from what had happened to Ananias, foretells the fate of Sapphira.

v. 12. "Solomon's porch:" see chap. iii. 11.

v. 17. "Rose up;" indicating haste and excitement. (Compare chap. iv. 1.) "The high-priest:" there is a difference of opinion as to who is meant. Caiaphas was actual high-priest; but see chap. iv. 6.

"Which is the sect of the Sadducees:" the words refer to the friends and kindred of the high-priest, not to the members of the Sanhedrim generally. The word "sect" is literally "heresy," which means properly "choice," and is not used here as a term of reproach.

v. 28. The high-priest means that the teaching of the apostles tended to stir up the people to take revenge on the Sanhedrim for the murder of Jesus.

v. 34. "Gamaliel:" "His learning was so eminent, and his

and pretender, his death, like that of Theudas, will be the death of his cause, and the final dispersion of his followers. From what has been we may infer what will be in a like case. The smiting of the shepherd will be the scattering of the sheep, and, if the God of peace had not brought again from the dead that great Shepherd, the dispersion of the sheep at his death had been total and final.

2nd. The case was the same with Judas of Galilee, ver. 37. Observe, *First*, The attempt he made. It is said to be "after this," which some read 'besides this,' or 'let me mention after this,' supposing that Judas' insurrection was long in time before that of Theudas, for it was in the time of the taxation, namely, that at our Saviour's birth, *Lu. ii. 1*; and that of Theudas they would make the same with that of one Theudas whom Josephus speaks of, that mutinied in the time of Cuspius Fadus; but that was in the days of Claudius Cæsar, some years after Gamaliel spoke this, and therefore could not be the same. It is not easy to determine particularly when these events happened, nor whether this taxing were the same with that at our Saviour's birth, or one of a later date. Some think this Judas of Galilee was the same with Judas Gaulonitis, whom Josephus speaks of; others not. It is probable they were cases that lately happened, and were fresh in memory. This "Judas drew away much people after him," who gave credit to his pretensions. But, *Secondly*, Here is the defeat of his attempt, and that without any interposal of the great Sanhedrim, or any decree of theirs against him. It did not need; "he also perished, and all, even as many as obeyed him," or were persuaded by him, "were dispersed." Many have foolishly thrown away their lives, and brought others into the same snares, by a jealousy for their liberties "in the days of the taxing," who had better have been content, when Providence had so determined, to serve the king of Babylon.

3. His opinion upon the whole matter.

1st. That they should not persecute the apostles; ver. 38. "Now I say unto you," (*τα νυν*, "for the present," as the matter now stands, my advice is,) "restrain from these men;" neither punish them for what they have done, nor restrain them for the future. Conive at them, let them take their course; let not our hand be upon them. It is uncertain whether he spoke this out of policy, for fear of offending either the people or the Romans, and making farther mischief; (the apostles did not attempt any thing by outward force, the weapons of their warfare were not carnal; and therefore why should any outward force be used against them?) or, whether he was under some present convictions, at least of the probability of the truth of the Christian doctrine, and thought it deserved better treatment, at least a fair trial. Or, whether it was only the language of a mild, quiet spirit, that was against persecution for conscience' sake. Or, whether God put this word into his mouth, beyond his own intention, for the deliverance of the apostles at this time: we are sure there was an overruling providence in it, that the servants of Christ might not only come off, but come off honourably.

2nd. That they should refer this matter to Providence; Wait the issue, and see what it will come to. "If it be of men, it will come to nought" of itself; "if of God, it will stand," in spite of all your powers and policies. That which is apparently wicked and immoral must be suppressed, else the magistrate bears the sword in vain; but that which has a show of good, and it is doubtful whether it be of God or men, it is best to let it alone, and let it take its fate, not to use any external force for the suppressing of it. Christ rules by the power of truth, not of the sword. What Christ asked concerning John's baptism, Was it of Heaven or of men? was a question proper to be asked concerning the apostles' doctrine and baptism, which followed Christ, as John Baptist's went before him; now, they, having owned concerning the former, that they could not tell whether it was from Heaven or of men, ought not to be too confident concerning the latter; but, take it which way you will, it is a reason why they should not be persecuted.

First. If this counsel, and this work, this forming of a society and incorporating it in the name of Jesus, be of men, it will come to nothing. If it be the counsel and work of foolish, crack-brained men, that know not what they do, let them alone a while, and they will run themselves out of breath, and their folly will be manifest before all men, and they will make themselves ridiculous. If it be the counsel of politic, designing men, who, under colour of religion, are setting up a secular interest, let them alone a while, and they will throw off the mask, and their knavery will be manifest to all men, and they will make themselves odious, and Providence will never countenance it,—it will come to nothing in a little time; and if so, your persecuting and opposing it is very needless. There is no occasion for giving yourselves so much trouble, and bringing such an odium upon yourselves, to kill that which, if you give it a little time, will die of itself. The unnecessary use of power is an abuse of it. But,

Secondly. If it should prove (and as wise men as you have been mistaken) that this counsel and this work is of God, that these preachers have their commissions and instructions from him, that they are as truly his messengers to the world as the Old Testament prophets were, then what do you think of persecuting them? of this attempt of yours, ver. 33, to slay them? You must conclude it to be, 1st. A fruitless attempt against them. "If it be of God, you cannot overthrow it;" for there is no wisdom nor counsel against the Lord; he that sits in heaven laughs at you. It may be the comfort of all that are sincerely on God's side, that have a single eye to his will as their rule, and his glory as their end, that whatsoever is of God cannot be overthrown totally and finally, though it may be very vigorously opposed; it may be run upon, but cannot be run down. 2nd. A dangerous attempt to themselves. Pray, let it alone, "lest laply ye be found even to fight against God;" and I need not tell you who will come off by the worse in that contest. "Woe unto him that strives with his Maker;" for he will not only be overcome as an impotent enemy, but severely reckoned with as a rebel and traitor against his rightful prince. They that hate and abuse God's faithful people, that restrain and silence his faithful ministers, fight against God, for he takes what is done against them as done against himself; whose toucheth them toucheth the apple of his eye.

Well, this was the advice of Gamaliel: we wish it were duly considered by those that persecute for conscience' sake; for it was a good thought, and natural enough, though we are uncertain what the man was. The tradition of the Jewish writers is, that for all this he lived and died an inveterate enemy to Christ and his Gospel; and though, now at least, he was not for persecuting the followers of Christ, yet he was the man who composed that prayer which the Jews use to this day for the extirpating of Christians and Christianity. On the contrary, the tradition of the papists is, that he turned Christian, and became an eminent patron of Christianity, and a follower of Paul, who, when time was, had sat at his feet. If that had been so, it is very probable we should have heard of him somewhere in the *Acts* or *Epistles*.

Sixthly. The determination of the council upon the whole matter, ver. 40.

1. Thus far they agreed with Gamaliel, that they let fall the design of putting the apostles to death. They saw a great deal of reason in what Gamaliel said, and for the present it gave some check to their fury, and a remainder of their wrath was restrained by it.

2. Yet they could not forbear giving some vent to their rage, so outrageous was it, contrary to the convictions of their judgments and consciences; for, though they were advised to let them alone, yet, 1st. They beat them, scourged them as malefactors, stripped them, and whipped them, as they used to do in

the synagogues; and notice is taken, ver. 41, of the ignominy of it. Thus they thought to make them ashamed of preaching, and the people ashamed of hearing them; as Pilate scourged our Saviour to expose him, when yet he declared he found no fault in him. 2nd. "They commanded them that they should not speak any more in the name of Jesus;" that if they could find no other fault with their preaching, they might have this ground to reproach it,—that it was against law, and not only without the permission, but against the express order, of their superiors.

Seventhly. The wonderful courage and constancy of the apostles in the midst of all these injuries and indignities done them. When they were dismissed "they departed from the council," and we do not find one word they said by way of reflection upon the court, and the unjust treatment given them; "when they were reviled they reviled not again, and when they suffered they threatened not, but committed their cause to Him," to whom Gamaliel had referred it, even to God, "who judgeth righteously." All their business was to preserve the possession of their own souls, and to make full proof of their ministry, notwithstanding the opposition given them; and both these they did to admiration.

1. They bore their sufferings with an invincible cheerfulness, ver. 41. When they went out, perhaps with the marks of the lashes given them on their arms and hands appearing, hissed at by the servants and rabble it may be, or public notice given of the infamous punishment they had undergone, instead of being ashamed of Christ, and their relation to him, they "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." They were men, and men in reputation, that had never done any thing to make themselves vile, and therefore could not but have a sense of the shame they suffered, which it should seem was more grievous to them than the smart, as it useth to be to ingenious minds; but they considered that it was for the name of Christ that they were thus abused, because they belonged to him, and served his interest, and their sufferings should be made to contribute to the farther advancement of his name. And therefore, 1st. They reckoned it an honour; looked upon it that "they were counted worthy to suffer shame," *κατετιμωσαν ατιμασθαι*, "that they were honoured to be dishonoured for Christ." Reproach for Christ is true preferment; as it makes us conformable to his pattern and serviceable to his interest. 2nd. They rejoiced in it, remembering what their Master had said to them at their first setting out, *Mat. v. 11, 12*, "When men shall revile you, and persecute you, rejoice and be exceeding glad." They rejoiced not only though they suffered shame,—their troubles did not diminish their joy,—but that they suffered shame; their troubles increased their joy, and added to it. If we suffer ill for doing well, provided we suffer it well and as we should, we ought to rejoice in that grace which enables us so to do.

2. They went on in their work with indefatigable diligence, ver. 42. They were punished for preaching, and were commanded not to preach, and yet they "ceased not to teach and preach;" they omitted no opportunity, nor abated any thing of their zeal or forwardness. Observe, 1st. When they preached. Daily; not only on sabbath days, or on Lord's days, but every day; as duly as the day came, without intermitting any day, as their Master did, *Lu. xix. 47*; *Mat. xxvi. 55*; not fearing that they should either kill themselves or cloy their hearers. 2nd. Where they preached. Both publicly in the temple, and privately in every house; in promiscuous assemblies, to which all resorted, and in the select assemblies of Christians for special ordinances. They did not think that either one would excuse them from the other, for the Word must be preached in season and out of season. Though in the temple they were more exposed, and under the eye of their enemies, yet they did not confine themselves to their little oratories in their own houses, but ventured into the post of danger; and though they had the liberty of the temple, a consecrated place, yet they made no difficulty of preaching in houses, in every house, even the poorest cottage. They visited the families of those that were under their charge, and gave particular instructions to them, according as their case required; even to the children and servants. 3rd. What was the subject matter of their preaching. They preached Jesus Christ, they preached concerning him. That was not all; they preached him up, they proposed him, to those that heard them, to be their Prince and Saviour. They did not preach themselves, but Christ; as faithful friends to the bridegroom, making it their business to advance his interest. This was the preaching that gave most offence to the priests; they were willing they should preach any thing but Christ; but they would not alter their subject to please them. It ought to be the constant business of gospel ministers to preach Christ; Christ, and him crucified; Christ, and him glorified: nothing beside this but what is reducible to it.

CHAPTER VI.

In this chapter we have, I. The discontent that was among the disciples about the distribution of the public charity, ver. 1. II. The election and ordination of seven men who should take care of that matter, and ease the apostles of the burthen, ver. 2—6. III. The increase of the church by the addition of many to it, ver. 7. IV. A particular account of Stephen, one of the seven: 1. His great activity for Christ, ver. 8; 2. The opposition he met with from the enemies of Christianity, and his disputes with them, ver. 9, 10; 3. The convening of him before the great Sanhedrim, and the crimes laid to his charge, ver. 11—14; 4. God's owning him upon his trial, ver. 15.



ND in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the

disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

character so revered, that he is one of the seven who alone among Jewish doctors have been honoured with the title of 'Rabban.' He was called the 'Beauty of the Law,' and it is a saying of the Talmud that since Rabban Gamaliel died, the glory of the law has ceased. He was a Pharisee, but he was not trammelled by the narrow bigotry of the sect; he rose above the prejudices of his party. Our impulse is to class him with the best of the Pharisees, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Candour and wisdom seem to have been

features of his character. He lived and died a Jew. He died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem, about the time of St. Paul's shipwreck at Malta, and was buried with great honour" (Conybeare).

v. 36. "Theudas:" the Theudas mentioned by Josephus appeared fourteen years after Gamaliel's speech. The name was a common one, and probably there were two who bore it. The insurrection here mentioned was probably comparatively insignificant, and so left unnoticed by the Jewish historian.

4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them. 7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Having seen the church's struggles with its enemies, and triumphed with her in her victories, we now come to take a view of the administration of its affairs at home. And here we have,

First. An unhappy disagreement among some of the church members, which might have been of ill consequence; but was prudently accommodated and taken up in time; ver. 1, "When the number of the disciples," for so Christians were at first called, learners of Christ, "was multiplied" to many thousands in Jerusalem, "there arose a murmuring."

1. It doth our hearts good to find that "the number of the disciples is multiplied," as, no doubt, it vexed the priests and Sadducees to the heart to see it. The opposition that the preaching of the Gospel met with, instead of checking its progress, contributed to the success of it; and this infant Christian church, like the infant Jewish church in Egypt, the more it was afflicted, the more it multiplied. The preachers were beaten, threatened, abused, and yet the people received their doctrine, invited no doubt thereto by their wonderful patience and cheerfulness under their trials, which convinced men that they were borne up and carried on by a better spirit than their own.

2. Yet it casts a damp upon us to find that the multiplying of the disciples proves an occasion of discord. Hitherto they were all with one accord,—this had been often taken notice of to their honour; but now they were multiplied, they began to murmur; as in the old world, when men began to multiply they corrupted themselves; "Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased their joy," *Isa. ix. 7*. When Abraham and Lot increased their families, there was a strife between their herdsmen; so it was here, "there arose a murmuring," not an open falling out, but a secret heartburning.

1st. The complainants were "the Grecians," or Hellenists, "against the Hebrews." The Jews that were scattered in Greece and other parts, who ordinarily spoke the Greek tongue, and read the Old Testament in the Greek version, and not the original Hebrew,—many of which, being at Jerusalem at the feast, embraced the faith of Christ, and were added to the church, and so continued there,—these complained against the Hebrews, the native Jews, that used the original Hebrew of the Old Testament. Some of each of these became Christians; and it seems their joint embracing of the faith of Christ did not prevail, as it ought to have done, to extinguish the little jealousies they had had one of another before their conversion; but they retained somewhat of that old leaven, not understanding, or not remembering, "that in Christ Jesus there is neither Greek nor Jew," no distinction of Hebrew and Hellenist, but all are alike welcome to Christ, and should be, for his sake, dear to one another.

2nd. The complaint of these Grecians was, that "their widows were neglected in the daily ministration;" that is, in the distribution of the public charity, and the Hebrew widows had more care taken of them. Observe, The first contention in the Christian church was about a money matter; but it is pity that the little things of this world should be makebates among those that profess to be taken up with the great things of another world. A great deal of money was gathered for the relief of the poor; but, as useful to be in such cases, it was impossible to please every body in the laying of it out. The apostles, at whose feet it was laid, did their best to dispose of it so as to answer the intentions of the donors; and, no doubt, designed to do it with the utmost impartiality, and were far from respecting the Hebrews more than the Grecians; and yet here they are complained to, and implicitly complained of, that the Grecian widows were neglected: though they were as real objects of charity, yet they had not so much allowed them, or not so many, or not so duly paid them, as the Hebrews. Now, *First*. Perhaps this complaint was groundless and unjust, and there was no cause for it. But those who upon any account lie under disadvantages,—as the Grecian Jews did in comparison with them that were Hebrews of the Hebrews,—are apt to be jealous that they are slighted, when really they are not so; and it is the common fault of poor people, that instead of being thankful for what is given them, they are querulous and clamorous, and finding fault that more is not given them, or that more is given to others than to them. And there is envy and covetousness, those roots of bitterness, to be found among the poor as well as among the rich, notwithstanding the humbling providences they are under and should accommodate themselves to. But, *Secondly*. We will suppose there might be some occasion for their complaint. 1st. Some suggest that, though their other poor were well provided for, yet their widows were neglected, because the managers governed themselves by an ancient rule which the Hebrews observed, that a widow was to be maintained by her husband's children: see *1 Tim. v. 4*. But, 2nd. I take it, that the widows are here put for all the poor, because many of them that were in the church book, and received alms, were widows, who were well provided for by the industry of their husbands while they lived, but were reduced to straits when they were gone. As those that have the administration of public justice ought in a particular manner to protect widows from injury, *Isa. i. 17*; *Luk. xviii. 3*; so those that have the administration of public charity ought in a particular manner to provide for widows what is necessary: see *1 Tim. v. 3*. And, observe, the widows here, and the other poor, had a daily ministration. Perhaps they wanted forecast, and could not save for hereafter; and therefore the managers of the fund, in kindness to them, gave them day by day their daily bread: they lived from hand to mouth. Now, it seems, the Grecian widows were comparatively neglected. Perhaps those that disposed of the money considered that there was more brought into the fund by the rich Hebrews than was by the rich Grecians, who had not estates to sell as the Hebrews had, and therefore the poor Grecians should have less out of the fund. This, though there was some tolerable reason for it, they thought hard and unfair. Note, In the best ordered church

in the world there will be something amiss, some maladministration or other, some grievances, or, at least, some complaints; they are the best that have least and fewest.

Secondly. The happy accommodating of this matter, and the expedient pitched upon for the taking away of the cause of this murmuring. The apostles had hitherto the directing of the matter; applications were made to them, and appeals in case of grievances. They were obliged to employ persons under them, who did not take all the care they might have taken, nor were so well fortified as they should have been against temptations to partiality; and, therefore, some persons must be chosen to manage this matter who have more leisure to attend to it than the apostles had, and were better qualified for the trust than those whom the apostles employed were. Now observe,

1. How the method was proposed by the apostles. They "called the multitude of the disciples unto them;" the heads of the congregations of Christians in Jerusalem, the principal leading men. The Twelve themselves would not determine any thing without them; for in multitude of counsellors there is safety; and, in an affair of this nature, they might be best able to advise who were more conversant in the affairs of this life than the apostles were.

1st. The apostles urge that they could by no means admit so great a diversion as this would be from their great work; ver. 2 "It is not reasonable that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables." Receiving and paying money was serving tables, too like the tables of the money changers in the temple. This was foreign to the business which the apostles were called to. They were to preach the Word of God; and though they had not such occasion to study for what they preached as we have, it being given in that same hour what they should speak; yet they thought that was work enough for a whole man, and to employ all their thoughts, and cares, and time, though one man of them was more than ten of us, than ten thousand. If they serve tables, they must, in some measure, leave the Word of God; they could not attend their preaching work so closely as they ought. *Pectora nostra duas non admittunt curas*.—These minds of ours admit not of two distinct anxious employments. Though this serving tables was for pious uses, and serving the charity of rich Christians, and the necessity of poor Christians, and in both serving Christ, yet the apostles would not take so much time from their preaching as this would require. They will no more be drawn from their preaching by the money laid at their feet than they will be driven from it by the stripes laid on their backs.

While the number of the disciples was few, the apostles might manage this matter without making it any considerable avocation from their main business; but, now their number was increased, they could not do it. "It is not reason," *οὐκ ἀρεσκόν ἐστιν*, "it is not fit, or commendable, that we should neglect the business of feeding souls with the bread of life, to attend the business of relieving the bodies of the poor." Note, Preaching the Gospel is the best work, and the most proper and needful that a minister can be employed in; and that which he must give himself wholly to, *1 Tim. iv. 15*; which, that he may do, he must not entangle himself in the affairs of this life, *2 Tim. ii. 4*; no, not in the outward business of the house of God, *Neh. xi. 16*.

2nd. They therefore desire that seven men might be chosen, well qualified for the purpose, whose business it should be to serve tables, *διακονεῖν τραπεζαῖς*, to be deacons to the tables, ver. 3. The business must be minded, must be better minded than it had been, and than the apostles could mind it, and, therefore, proper persons must be chosen, who, though they might be occasionally employed in the Word and prayer, yet were not so devoted entirely to it as the apostles were. And these must take care of the church's stock, must review, and pay, and keep accounts; must "buy those things which they had need of against the feast," *Jno. xiii. 29*, and attend to all those things which are necessary in *ordine ad spiritualia*,—in order to spiritual exercises, that every thing might be done decently and in order, and no person or thing neglected. Now,

First. The persons must be duly qualified. The people are to choose, and the apostles to ordain; but the people have no authority to choose, nor the apostles to ordain, men utterly unfit for the office. "Look out seven men;" so many they thought might suffice for the present, more might be added afterwards if there were occasion. These must be, 1st. "Of honest report." Men free from scandal, that were looked upon by their neighbours as men of integrity, and faithful men; well attested to, as men that might be trusted; not under a blemish for any vice, but, on the contrary, well spoken of for every thing that is virtuous and praiseworthy; *μαρτυροῦμενοι*, men that can produce good testimonials concerning their conversation. Note, Those that are employed in any office in the church ought to be men of honest report, of a blameless, nay, of a beautiful character, which is requisite not only to the credit of their office, but to the due discharge of it. 2nd. They must be "full of the Holy Ghost;" must be filled with those gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost which were necessary to the right management of this trust. They must not only be honest men, but they must be men of parts, and men of courage; such as were to be made judges in Israel, *Ex. xviii. 21*; "able men, fearing God, men of truth, and hating covetousness," and hereby appearing to be "full of the Holy Ghost." 3rd. They must be "full of wisdom." It was not enough that they were honest, good men, but they must be discreet, judicious men, that could not be imposed upon, and would order things for the best, and with consideration. "Full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom;" that is, of the Holy Ghost as a spirit of wisdom. We find the word of wisdom given by the Spirit, as distinct from the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit, *1 Cor. xii. 8*. They must be full of wisdom who are intrusted with public money, that it may be disposed of not only with fidelity, but with frugality.

Secondly. The people must nominate the persons. "Look ye out among you seven men," consider among yourselves who are the fittest for such a trust, and whom you can with the most satisfaction confide in. They might be presumed to know better, or at least, were fitter to inquire, what character men had, than the apostles; and therefore they are intrusted with the choice.

Thirdly. The apostles will ordain them to the service, will give them their charge, that they may know what they have to do, and make conscience of doing it; and give them their authority, that the persons concerned may know whom they are to apply to, and submit to, in affairs of that nature; men "whom we may appoint." In many editions of our English Bibles, there has been an error of the press here, for they have read it, "whom ye may appoint;" as if the power were in the people, whereas it was certainly in the apostles; "whom we may appoint over this business," to take care of it, and to see that there be neither waste nor want.

3rd. The apostles engage to addict themselves wholly to their work as ministers, and the more closely if they can but get fairly quit of this troublesome office; ver. 4. "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word." See here, *First*. What are the two great gospel ordinances—the Word and prayer. By these two, communion between God and his people is kept up and maintained; by the Word he speaks to them, and by prayer they speak to him; and these have a mutual reference to each other. By these two the kingdom of Christ must be advanced, and additions made to it; these two must prophesy upon the dry bones, and then pray for a spirit of life from God to enter into them. By the Word and prayer, other ordinances are sanctified to us, and sacraments have their efficacy. *Secondly*. What is the

v. 37. "Judas:" "Josephus says he was a native of Gamala, in Lower Gaulonitis. In two other passages he calls him a Galilean. This is a point of some importance. Had the former notice been the only one by the historian, St. Luke's accuracy would have been questioned. Judas represented the decree of Augustus Cæsar (Luke ii. 2) to be an introduction to slavery" (Cook).

vi. 1. "In those days:" that is, in the period between the events mentioned in the last chapter and the death of Stephen. "The

widows are not here mentioned as representatives of all the poor; we may, on the contrary, easily imagine that widows would be more readily overlooked than entire families, since the Hellenistic father of a family would support his claims with comparatively greater vigour; and it was possibly this very circumstance which caused such treatment of lonely females to be felt the more acutely. The causes which led to this neglect of the Hellenistic widow can only be conjectured. We have no reason to ascribe it to any arrogant spirit on the

great business of gospel ministers—to give themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word; they must still be either fitting and furnishing themselves for those services or employing themselves in them, either publicly or privately; in the stated times, or out of them. They must be God's mouth to the people in the ministry of the Word, and the people's mouth to God in prayer. In order to the conviction and conversion of sinners, and the edification and consolation of saints, we must not only offer up our prayers for them, but we must minister the Word to them, seconding our prayers with our endeavours, in the use of appointed means. Nor must we only minister the Word to them, but we must pray for them, that it may be effectual; for God's grace can do all without our preaching, but our preaching can do nothing without God's grace. The apostles were endued with extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost,—tongues and miracles; and yet that which they gave themselves continually to was preaching and praying, by which they might edify the church. And those ministers, without doubt, are the successors of the apostles (not in the plenitude of the apostolical power, those are daring usurpers who pretend to that, but in the best and most excellent of the apostolical work) who give themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word; and such Christ will always be with, even to the end of the world.

2. How this proposal was agreed to, and presently put in execution by the disciples. It was not imposed upon them by an absolute power though they might have been bold in Christ to do that, *Phil. 8*, but proposed, as that which was highly convenient, and then "the saying pleased the whole multitude," ver. 5. It pleased them to see the apostles so willing to discharge themselves from intermeddling in secular affairs, and to transmit them to others; it pleased them to hear that they would give themselves to the Word and prayer; and therefore they neither disputed the matter nor deferred the execution of it.

1st. They pitched upon the persons. It is not likely they all cast their eye upon the same men; every one had his friend, whom he thought well of. But the major vote fell upon the persons here named; and the rest, both of the candidates and electors, acquiesced, and made no disturbance, as the members of societies in such cases ought to do. An apostle, who was an extraordinary officer, was chosen by lot, which is more immediately the act of God. But the overseers of the poor were chosen by the suffrage of the people; in which yet a regard is to be had to the providence of God, who has all men's hearts and tongues in his hand.

We have a list of the persons chosen. Some think they were such as were before of the seventy disciples; but that is not likely, for they were ordained by Christ himself long since, to preach the Gospel, and there was no more reason that they should leave the word of God to serve tables, than that the apostles should. It is therefore more probable that they were of those that were converted since the pouring out of the Spirit; for it was promised to all that would be baptized, that they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; and the gift according to that promise is that fullness of the Holy Ghost which was required in those that were to be chosen to this service. We may further conjecture concerning these seven, 1. That they were such as had sold their estates, and brought the money into the common stock; for *ceteris paribus*,—'other things being equal, those were fittest to be intrusted with the distribution of it who had been most generous in the contribution to it. 2. That these seven were all of the Grecians, or Hellenist Jews, for they have all Greek names. And this would be most likely to silence the murmuring of the Grecians, (which occasioned this institution,) to have the trust lodged in those that were foreigners like themselves, who would be sure not to neglect them. Nicolas, it is plain, was one of them, for he was a proselyte of Antioch; and some think the manner of expression intimates that they were all proselytes of Jerusalem, as he was of Antioch.

The first named is Stephen, the glory of these septemviri; "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." He had a strong faith in the doctrine of Christ, and was full of it above most; full of fidelity, full of courage, so some, for he was full of the Holy Ghost, of his gifts and graces. He was an extraordinary man, and excelled in every thing that was good. His name signifies 'a crown,' Philip is put next; because he, having used this office of a deacon well, thereby obtained a good degree, and was afterwards ordained to the office of an evangelist, a companion and assistant to the apostles; for so he is expressly called, *ch. xxi. 8*; compare *Eph. iv. 11*. And his preaching and baptizing, which we read of, *ch. viii. 12*, was certainly not as a deacon,—for it is plain that office was serving tables, in opposition to the ministry of the Word,—but as an evangelist; and, when he was preferred to that office, we have reason to think he quitted this office, as incompatible with that. And as for Stephen, nothing we find done by him proves him to be a preacher of the Gospel, for he only disputes in the schools, and pleads for his life at the bar, ver. 9; *ch. vii. 2*.

The last named is Nicolas, who, some say, afterwards degenerated, (as the Judas among these seven,) and was the founder of the sect of the Nicolaitans, which we read of *Rev. ii. 6, 15*; and which Christ there saith, once and again, was a thing he hated. But some of the ancients clear him from that charge, and tell us that, though that vile impure sect denominated themselves from him, yet it was unjustly, and because he only insisted much upon it that they that had wives should be as though they had none; thence they wickedly inferred that they that had wives should have them in common, which, therefore, Tertullian, when he speaks of the community of goods, particularly excepts: *Omnia indiscreta apud nos, præter uxores*.—'All things are common among us, except our wives.'—*Apol. c. 39*.

2nd. The apostles appointed them to this work of serving tables for the present, ver. 6. The people presented them to the apostles, who approved their choice, and ordained them. First, They prayed with them, and for them, that God would give them more and more of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom; that he would qualify them for the service to which they were called, and own them in it, and make them thereby a blessing to the church, and particularly to the poor of the flock. All that are employed in the service of the church ought to be committed to the conduct of the Divine grace, by the prayers of the church. Secondly, "They laid their hands on them," that is, they blessed them in the name of the Lord; for laying on hands was used in blessing; so Jacob blessed both the sons of Joseph; "and without controversy the less is blessed of the greater," *Heb. vii. 7*; the deacons are blessed by the apostles, and the overseers of the poor by the pastors of the congregation. Having by prayer implored a blessing upon them, they did, by the laying on of hands, assure them that the blessing was conferred in answer to the prayer. And this was giving them authority to execute that office, and laying an obligation upon the people to be observant of them herein.

Thirdly. The advancement of the church hereupon. When things were thus put into good order in the church, grievances were redressed, and discontents silenced; then religion got ground, ver. 7.

1. "The word of God increased." Now the apostles resolved to stick more closely than ever to their preaching. It spread the Gospel farther, and brought it home with the more power. Ministers disentangling themselves from secular employments, and addicting themselves entirely and vigorously to their work, will contribute very much, as a means, to the success of the Gospel. The Word

of God is said to increase as the seed sown increaseth, when it comes up again thirty, sixty, a hundred fold.

2. Christians grow numerous; "the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." When Christ was upon earth his ministry had least success in Jerusalem; yet now that city affords most converts. God has his remnant even in the worst of places.

3. "A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." Then is the word and grace of God greatly magnified, when those are wrought upon by it, that were least likely, as the priests here, who either had opposed it or at least were linked in with those that had. The priests, whose preferments arose from the law of Moses, yet were willing to let them go for the Gospel of Christ. And it should seem they came in a body; many of them agreed together for the keeping up of one another's credit, and the strengthening of one another's hands, to join at once in giving up their names to Christ, *πολλοι τε ὄχλοι*,—a great crowd of priests, were by the grace of God helped over their prejudices, and were obedient to the faith, so their conversion is described. 1st. They embraced the doctrine of the Gospel; their understandings were captivated to the power of the truths of Christ, and every opposing objection thought brought into obedience to him, *2 Cor. x. 4, 5*. The Gospel is said to be "made known for the obedience of faith," *Rom. xvi. 26*. Faith is an act of obedience, for this is God's commandment, that we believe, *1 Jno. iii. 23*. 2nd. They evidenced the sincerity of their believing the Gospel of Christ, by a cheerful compliance with all the rules and precepts of the Gospel. The design of the Gospel is to refine and reform our hearts and lives; it is faith gives law to us, and we must be obedient to it.

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. 9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. 10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. 11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. 12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, 13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: 14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. 15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

Stephen, no doubt, was diligent and faithful in the discharge of his office as distributor of the church's charity, and laid out himself to put that affair in a good method; and did it to universal satisfaction. And though it appears here that he was a man of uncommon gifts, and fitted for a higher station, yet, being called to that office, he did not think it below him to do the duty of it. And being faithful in a little he was soon intrusted with more. And though we do not find him propagating the Gospel by preaching and baptizing, yet we find him here called out to very honourable services, and owned in them.

First. He proved the truth of the Gospel, by working miracles in Christ's name, ver. 8.

1. He was "full of faith and power," that is, of a strong faith, by which he was enabled to do great things. They that are full of faith are full of power, because by faith the power of God is engaged for us. His faith did so fill him that it left no room for unbelief, and made room for the influences of Divine grace; so that, as the prophet speaks, he was "full of power by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts," *Mic. iii. 8*. By faith we are emptied of self, and so are filled with Christ, who is the wisdom of God, and the power of God.

2. Being so, he "did great wonders and miracles among the people," openly, and in the sight of all; for Christ's miracles feared not the strictest scrutiny. It is not strange that Stephen, though he was not a preacher by office, yet did these great wonders, for we find that these were distinct gifts of the Spirit, and divided severally; for "to one was given the working of miracles, and to another prophecy," *1 Cor. xii. 10, 11*. And those signs followed not only them that preached, but them that believed, *Mar. xvi. 17*.

Secondly. He pleaded the cause of Christianity against those that opposed it, and argued against it, ver. 9, 10. He served the interests of religion as a disputant, in the high places of the field, while others were serving them as vinedressers and husbandmen.

1. We are here told who were his opponents, ver. 9. They were Jews, but Hellenist Jews,—Jews of the dispersion, who seem to have been more zealous for their religion than the native Jews. It was with difficulty that they retained the practice and profession of it in the country where they lived,—where they were as speckled birds; and not without great expence and toil that they kept up their attendance at Jerusalem, and this made them more active sticklers for Judaism than they were whose profession of their religion was cheap and easy. They were "of the synagogue which is called the synagogue of the libertines." The Romans called those *liberti* or *libertini*, that either, being foreigners, were naturalized, or, being slaves by birth, were manumitted or made freedmen. Some think these libertines were such of the Jews as had obtained the Roman freedom, as Paul had, *ch. xxii. 28*. And it is probable he was the most forward man of this synagogue of the libertines in disputing with Stephen, and engaged others in the dispute; for we find him busy in the stoning of Stephen, and consenting to his death. There were others that belonged to the synagogue of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, of which

part of the Palestinian Jews, nor to any actual ill-feeling; it is more probable that the want of a sufficient personal acquaintance with the foreign widows, and with their private circumstances, may have occasioned the neglect of which complaint was made" (Lechler). "The daily ministration" was the daily distribution of money or food.

vi. 2. "It is not reason:" rather, "it is not our pleasure."

vi. 3. "Of honest report:" good reputation.

vi. 5. The names of the seven are Greek, and they were most likely

Hellenists. Of the seven, Stephen and Philip are the only two of whom we have any mention made elsewhere, Philip being the deacon mentioned in chap. viii.

vi. 9. "Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians:" "Stephen being himself a Grecian, speaking the language and conversant with the opinions of the Asiatic and African Jews and proselytes, brought the Gospel to bear upon a class of men equally distinguished for learning and bigotry. The foreign Jews attended their own synagogues when

synagogue the Jewish writers speak; and others that belonged to their synagogue, who were of Cilicia and Asia. And if Paul, as a freeman of Rome, did not belong to the synagogue of the libertines, he belonged to this as a native of Tarsus, a city of Cilicia; it is probable he might be a member of both. The Jews that were born in other countries, and had concerns in them, had frequent occasion not only to resort to, but to reside in, Jerusalem. And each nation had its synagogue, as in London there are French, and Dutch, and Danish churches. And if those synagogues were the schools to which the Jews of those nations sent their youth to be educated in the Jewish learning. Now those that were tutors and professors in these synagogues, seeing the Gospel grew, and the rulers coniving at the growth of it, and fearing what would be the consequence of it to the Jewish religion, which they were jealous for, being confident of the goodness of their cause, and their own sufficiency to manage it, would undertake to run down Christianity by force of argument. And it was a fair and rational way of dealing with it, and what religion is always ready to admit: "Produce your cause, saith the Lord, bring forth your strong reasons," *Isa. xli. 21*. But why did they dispute with Stephen? and why not with the apostles themselves? 1st. Some think because they despised the apostles as unlearned and ignorant men, whom they thought it below them to engage with; but Stephen was bred a scholar, and they thought it their honour to meddle with their match. 2nd. Others think it was because they stood in awe of the apostles, and could not be so free and familiar with them as they could be with Stephen, who was in an inferior office. 3rd. Perhaps, they having given a public challenge, Stephen was chosen and appointed by the disciples to be their champion; for it was not meet that the apostles should leave the preaching of the Word of God to engage in controversy. Stephen, that was only a deacon in the church, and a very sharp young man, and of bright parts, and better qualified to deal with wrangling disputants than the apostles themselves, is appointed to this service. 4th. Some historians say, that Stephen had been bred up at the feet of Gamaliel; and Saul, and the rest of them, set upon him as a deserter, and with a particular fury made him their mark. 5th. It is probable they disputed with Stephen because he was zealous to argue with them, and convince them; and this was the service which God had called him to.

2. We are here told how he carried the point in this dispute *ver. 10*. "They were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake." They could not either support their own arguments or answer his. He proved, by such irresistible arguments, that Jesus is the Christ, and delivered himself with so much clearness and fulness, that they had nothing to object against what he said; though they were not convinced, yet they were confounded. It is not said they were not able to resist him, but "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake," that is, that Spirit of wisdom which spake by him. Now was fulfilled that promise, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist," *Luk. xxi. 15*. They thought they had only disputed with Stephen, and could make their part good with him; but they were disputing with the Spirit of God in him, for whom they were an unequal match.

Thirdly. At length he sealed it with his blood. So we shall find he did in the next chapter; here we have some steps taken by his enemies towards it. When they could not answer his arguments as a disputant, they prosecuted him as a criminal, and suborned witnesses against him to swear blasphemy upon him. "On such terms," saith Mr. Baxter here, "do we dispute with malignant men. And it is next to a miracle of providence, that no greater number of religious persons have been murdered in the world, by the way of perjury and pretence of law, when so many thousands hate them who make no conscience of false oaths." "They suborned men," that is, instructed them what to say, and then hired them to swear it. They were the more enraged against him because he had proved them to be in the wrong, and shewed them the right way; for which they ought to have given him their best thanks. Was he therefore become their enemy because he told them the truth, and proved it to be so? Now let us observe here.

1. How, with all possible art and industry, they incensed both the government and the mob against him, that if they could not prevail by the one they might by the other; *ver. 12*. "They stirred up the people" against him, that if the Sanhedrim should still think fit, according to Gamaliel's advice, to let him alone, yet they might run him down by a popular rage and tumult. They also find means to stir up the elders and the scribes against him, that, if the people should countenance and protect him, they might prevail by authority. Thus they doubted not but to gain their point, when they had two strings to their bow.

2. How they got him to the bar. They "came upon him," when he little thought of it, "and caught him, and brought him to the council." They came upon him in a body, and flew upon him as a lion on his prey; so the word signifies. By their rude and violent treatment of him they would represent him both to the people and to the government as a dangerous man, that would either flee from justice, if he were not watched or fight with it, if he were not put under a force. Having caught him, they brought him triumphantly into the council, and, as it should seem, so hastily that he had none of his friends with him. They had found when they brought many together, they emboldened one another, and strengthened one another's hands; and, therefore, they will try how to deal with them singly.

3. How they were prepared with evidence ready to produce against him. They were resolved they would not be run aground as they were when they brought our Saviour upon his trial, and then were to seek for witnesses. These were got ready beforehand, and were instructed to make oath, that they had "heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God," *ver. 11*; against this holy place and the law, *ver. 13*; for they heard him say what Jesus would do to their place and their customs, *ver. 14*. It is probable he had said something to that purpose; and yet they who swore it against him are called false witnesses, because, though there was something of truth in their testimony, yet they put a wrong and malicious construction upon what he had said, and perverted it. Observe,

1st. What was the general charge exhibited against him, that he spoke blasphemous words; and, to aggravate the matter, he "ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words." It is his common talk, his discourse in all companies, wheresoever he comes; he makes it his business to instil his notions into all he converseth with. It intimates, likewise, something of contumacy and contempt of admonition; He hath been warned against it, and yet ceaseth not to talk at this rate. Blasphemy is justly reckoned a heinous crime, to speak contemptibly and reproachfully of God our maker; and therefore Stephen's persecutors would be thought to have a mighty concern upon them for the honour of God's name, and to do this in a jealousy for that. As it was with the confessors and martyrs of the Old Testament, so it was with those of the New, their brethren that hated them, and cast them out, said, "Let the Lord be glorified;" and pretended they did him service in it. He is said to have spoken "blasphemous words against Moses and against God." Thus far they were right, that they who blaspheme Moses, if they mean the writings of Moses, which were given by inspiration of God, blaspheme God himself. They that speak reproachfully of the Scriptures, and ridicule them, reflect upon God himself, and do despite

to him. His great intention is to magnify the law, and make it honourable; those, therefore, that vilify the law, and make it contemptible, blaspheme his name; for he has magnified his Word above all his name. But did Stephen blaspheme Moses? By no means; he was far from it. Christ, and the preachers of his Gospel, never said any thing that looked like blaspheming Moses; they always quoted his writings with respect, appealed to them, and said no other things but what Moses said should come. Very unjustly therefore is Stephen indicted for blaspheming Moses. But,

2nd. Let us see how this charge is supported and made out. Why, truly, when the thing was to be proved, all they can charge him with is, that "he hath spoken blasphemous words against this holy place and the law;" and this must be deemed and taken as blasphemy against Moses, and against God himself. Thus doth the charge dwindle when it comes to the evidence. First. He is charged with blaspheming this holy place. Some understand that of the city of Jerusalem, which was the holy city, and which they had a mighty jealousy for; but it is rather meant of the temple, that holy house. Christ was condemned as a blasphemer, for words which were thought to reflect upon the temple, which they seemed concerned for the honour of, then when they by their wickedness had profaned it. Secondly. He is charged with blaspheming the law, of which they made their boast, and in which they put their trust, then when through breaking of the law they dishonoured God, *Rom. ii. 23*.

Well, but how can they make this out? Why, here the charge dwindles again; for all they can accuse him of is, that they had themselves heard him say, (but how it came in, or what explication he gave of it, they think not themselves bound to give account,) "That this Jesus of Nazareth," who was so much talked of, "shall destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses delivered us." He could not be charged with having said any thing to the disparagement either of the temple or of the law. The priests had themselves profaned the temple by making it not only a house of merchandise, but a den of thieves; yet they would be thought zealous for the honour of it, against one that had never said any thing amiss of it, but had attended it more as a house of prayer, according to the true intention of it, than they had. Nor had he ever reproached the law as they had.

1st. He had said, "That Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place;" destroy the temple, destroy Jerusalem. It is likely he might say so; and what blasphemy is it against the holy place to say that it should not be perpetual, any more than Shiloh was? and that the just and holy God would not continue the privileges of his sanctuary to those that abused them? Had not the prophets given the same warning to their fathers of the destruction of that holy place by the Chaldeans? Nay, when the temple was first built, had not God himself given the same warning? "This house which is high shall be an astonishment," *2 Chr. vii. 21*. And is he a blasphemer, then, who tells them that Jesus of Nazareth, if they continue their opposition to him, will bring a just destruction upon their place and nation, and they may thank themselves? Those wickedly abuse their profession of religion who, under colour of that, call the reproofs given them for their disagreeable conversations blasphemous reflections upon their religion.

2nd. He had said, "That this Jesus shall change the customs which Moses delivered us." And it was expected that in the days of the Messiah they should be changed, and that the shadows should be done away when the substance was come; yet this was no essential change of the law, but the perfecting of it. Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law; and if he changed some customs that Moses delivered, it was to introduce and establish those that were much better. And if the Jewish church had not obstinately refused to come into this new establishment, and adhered to the ceremonial law, for aught I know, their place had not been destroyed; so that, for putting them into a certain way to prevent their destruction, and for giving them certain notice of their destruction if they did not take that way, he is accused as a blasphemer.

Lastly. We are here told how God owned him when he was brought before the council, and made it to appear that he stood by him; *ver. 15*. "All that sat in the council," the priests, scribes, and elders, "looking steadfastly on him," being a stranger, and one they had not yet had before them, they "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." It is usual for judges to observe the countenance of the prisoner, which sometimes is an indication either of guilt or innocence. Now Stephen appeared at the bar with the countenance as of an angel.

1. Perhaps it intimates no more than that he had an extraordinary pleasant cheerful countenance, and there was not in it the least sign either of fear for himself, or anger at his persecutors; he looked as if he were never better pleased in his life than he was now when he was called out to bear his testimony to the Gospel of Christ thus publicly, and stood fair for the crown of martyrdom. Such an undisturbed serenity, such an undaunted courage, and such an unaccountable mixture of mildness and majesty there was in his countenance, that every one said he looked like an angel; enough, sure, to convince the Sadducees that there are angels, when they saw before their eyes an incarnate angel.

2. It should rather seem that there was a miraculous splendour and brightness upon his countenance, like that of our Saviour, when he was transfigured, or at least that of Moses, when he came down from the mount; God designing thereby to put honour upon his faithful witness, and confusion upon his persecutors and judges, whose sin would be highly aggravated, and would be, indeed, a rebellion against the light, if, notwithstanding this, they proceeded against him. Whether he himself wist that the skin of his face shone or no, we are not told; but all that sat on the council saw it, and probably took notice of it to one another, and an errant shame it was, that when they saw it, and could not but see by it that he was owned of God, they did not call him from standing at the bar, to sit in the chief seat upon the bench. Wisdom and holiness make a man's face to shine, and yet these will not secure men from the greatest indignities; and no wonder, when the shining of Stephen's face would not be his protection; though it had been easy to prove that, if he had been guilty of putting any dishonour upon Moses, God would not thus have put Moses' honour upon him.

CHAPTER VII.

When our Lord Jesus called his apostles out to be employed in services and sufferings for him, he told them that yet the last should be first, and the first last; which was remarkably fulfilled in St. Stephen and St. Paul, who were both of them late converts, in comparison of the apostles, and yet got the start of them, both in services and sufferings; for God, in conferring honours and favours, often crosseth hands. In this chapter we have the martyrdom of Stephen, the first martyr of the Christian church, who led the van in that noble army; and therefore his sufferings and death are more largely related than of any other, for direction and encouragement to all those who are called out to resist unto blood, as he did. Here is, 1. His defence of himself before the council, in answer to the matters and things he stood charged with, the scope of which is to shew that it was no blasphemy against God, nor any injury at all to the glory of his name, to say that the temple should be destroyed, and the customs of the ceremonial law changed. And, 2. He shews this by going over the history of the Old

they visited Jerusalem, where the Holy Scriptures were read and expounded in their own language. The synagogue of the Libertines was probably built and maintained by the Libertini, i.e., freed men, most of whom were Jews who had been taken prisoners in great numbers by the Romans in war, and afterwards manumitted. It has been conjectured that the father of St. Paul may thus have acquired the rights of citizenship, and that Paul was thus brought into contact with Stephen. "Cyrenians:" Cyrene, a Greek city on the coast of Africa.

Large numbers of Jews settled there, introduced by Ptolemy, son of Lagus. In B.C. 75 the territory of Cyrene was reduced to the form of a Roman province. "Alexandrians:" "Two of the five regions of Alexandria were inhabited by Jews. It was also the seat of the learning and philosophy of the Grecian Jews, which was now at its height. This metropolis of the Hellenists would certainly have a synagogue in Jerusalem. I understand three distinct synagogues to be meant" (Alford). Cilicia was at this time a Roman province.

Testament, and observing that God never intended to confine his favours to that place, or that ceremonial law; and that they had no reason to expect he should, for the people of the Jews had always been a provoking people, and had forfeited the privileges of their peculiarity; nay, that that holy place, and that law, were but figures of good things to come, and it was no disparagement at all to them to say that they must give place to better things, ver. 1-50; and then, 2. He applies this to them that prosecuted him, and sat in judgment upon him, sharply reproving them for their wickedness, by which they had brought upon themselves the ruin of their place and nation, and then could not bear to hear of it, ver. 51-53. 11. The putting of him to death by stoning of him, and his patient, cheerful, pious submission to it, ver. 54-60.



ATHEN said the high priest, Are these things so? 2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, 3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. 4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. 5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. 6 And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. 7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. 8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs. 9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, 10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. 11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. 13 And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. 14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. 15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, 16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Enmor the father of Sychem.

Stephen is now at the bar before the great council of the nation, indicted for blasphemy; what the witnesses swore against him, we had an account of in the foregoing chapter, that he spoke blasphemous words against Moses and God; for he spoke against this holy place, and the law. Now here,

1. The high priest calls upon him to answer for himself, ver. 1. He was president, and, as such, the mouth of the court, and therefore he saith, You, the prisoner at the bar, you hear what is sworn against you, what do you say to

it? "Are these things so?" Have you ever spoken any words to this purpose? If you have, will you recant them, or will you stand to them? Guilty, or not guilty? This carried a show of fairness, and yet seems to have been spoken with an air of haughtiness; and thus far he seems to have prejudged the cause, that if it were so, that he had spoken such and such words, he shall certainly be adjudged a blasphemer, whatever he may offer in justification or explanation of them.

11. He begins his defence, and it is long; but it should seem by his breaking off abruptly, just when he came to the main point, ver. 50, that it would have been much longer, if his enemies would have given him leave to say all he had to say. In general we may observe,

1. That in this discourse he appears to be a man ready and mighty in the Scriptures, and thereby thoroughly furnished for every good word and work. He can relate Scripture stories, and such as were very pertinent to his purpose, offhand, without looking in his Bible. He was filled with the Holy Ghost, not so much to reveal to him new things, or open to him the secret counsels and decrees of God concerning the Jewish nation, with them to convict these gain-sayers; no, but to bring to his remembrance the scriptures of the Old Testament, and to teach him how to make use of them for their conviction. They that are full of the Holy Ghost will be full of the Scripture, as Stephen was.

2. That he quotes the Scriptures according to the Septuagint translation, by which it appears he was one of the Hellenist Jews, who used that version in their synagogues; and his following that occasions divers variations from the Hebrew original in this discourse, which the judges of the court did not correct, because they knew how he was led into them; nor is it any derogation to the authority of that Spirit by which he spoke, for the variations are not material. We have a maxim, *Apices juris non sunt iura*.—Mere points of law are not the law itself. These verses carry on this his compendium of church history to the end of the book of Genesis. Observe,

1st. His preface; "Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken." He gives them, though not flattering titles, yet civil and respectful ones, signifying his expectation of fair treatment with them. From men he hopes to be treated with humanity, and that brethren and fathers will use him in a fatherly, brotherly way. They are ready to look upon him as an apostate from the Jewish church, and an enemy to them. But, to make way for their conviction to the contrary, he addresseth himself to them as "men, brethren, and fathers," resolving to look on himself as one of them, though they would not so look on him. He craves their attention: "Hearken." Though he was about to tell them what they already knew, yet he begs of them to hearken to it, because, though they knew it all, yet they would not, without a very close application of mind, know how to apply it to the case before them.

2nd. His entrance upon the discourse, which, however it may seem to those that read it carelessly, is far from being a long ramble only to amuse the hearers, and give them a diversion by telling them an old story. No, it is all pertinent, and *ad rem*,—"to the purpose," to shew them that God had not his heart so much upon that holy place and the law as they had; but, as he had a church in the world many ages before that holy place was founded, and the ceremonial law given, so he would have, when they should both have had their period.

First. He begins with the call of Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, by which he was set apart for God to be the trustee of the promise, and the father of the Old Testament church. This we had an account of Gen. xii. 1, &c.; and it is referred to, Neh. ix. 7, 8. His native country was an idolatrous country, it was Mesopotamia; ver. 2, "the land of the Chaldeans," ver. 4. Thence God brought him at two removes, not too far at once, dealing tenderly with him, he first brought him out of the land of the Chaldeans to Charran, or Haran, a place in the midway between that and Canaan, Gen. xi. 31; and from thence, five years after, when his father was dead, "he removed him into the land of Canaan, wherein ye now dwell." It should seem, the first time that God spoke to Abraham, he appeared in some visible display of the Divine presence, as the God of glory, ver. 3, to settle a correspondence with him; and then afterwards he kept up that correspondence, and spoke to him from time to time, as there was occasion, without repeating his visible appearance as the God of glory.

From this call of Abraham we may suppose, 1. That in all our ways we must acknowledge God, and attend the conduct of his providence, as of the pillar of cloud and fire. It is not said, "Abraham removed," but, "God removed him into this land wherein ye now dwell," and he did but follow his leader. 2. Those whom God takes into covenant with himself he distinguisheth from the children of this world; they are effectually called out of the state, out of the land of their nativity; they must sit loose to the world, and live above it, and everything in it, even that in it which is most dear to them, and must trust God to make it up to them in another and better country, that is, the heavenly, which he will shew them. God's chosen must follow him with an implicit faith and obedience. But let us see what this is to Stephen's case.

1st. They had charged him as a blasphemer of God, and an apostate from the church; therefore he shews that he is a son of Abraham, and values himself upon his being able to say, "Our father Abraham," and that he is a faithful worshipper of the God of Abraham, whom, therefore, he here calls the God of glory. He also shews that he owns Divine revelation, and that particularly by which the Jewish church was founded and incorporated.

2nd. They were proud of their being circumcised, and therefore he shews that Abraham was taken under God's conduct, and into communion with him, before he was circumcised, for that was not till after; ver. 8. With this argument Paul proves that Abraham was justified by faith, because he was justified when he was in uncircumcision; and so here.

3rd. They had a mighty jealousy for this holy place, which may be meant of the whole land of Canaan; for it was called the holy land, Immanuel's land; and the destruction of the holy house, inferred that of the holy land. Now, saith Stephen, you need not to be so proud of it; for, First. You came originally out of Ur of the Chaldees, where "your fathers served other gods," Jos. xxiv. 2, and you were not the first planters of this country. "Look, therefore, unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and the hole of the pit out of which ye were digged;" that is, as it follows there, "look unto Abraham your father, for I called him alone," Isa. li. 1, 2; think of the meanness of your beginnings, and how you are entirely indebted to Divine grace, and then you will see boasting to be for ever excluded. It was God that "raised up the righteous man from the east, and called him to his foot," Isa. xli. 2. But, if his seed degenerate, let them know God can destroy this holy place, and raise up to himself another people; for he is not a debtor to them. Secondly. God appeared in his glory to Abraham a great way off, in Mesopotamia, before he came near Canaan, nay, before he dwelt in Charran; so that you must not think God's visits are tied to this land. No; he that brought the seed of the church from a country so far east can, if he pleaseth, carry the fruit of it to another country as far west. Thirdly. God made no haste to bring him into this land, but let him linger some years by the way; which shews that God has not his heart so much upon this land as you have, neither is his honour, nor the happiness of his people, bound up in it. It is, therefore, neither blasphemy nor treason to say it shall be destroyed.

Secondly. The unsettled state of Abraham and his seed for many ages after

vii. 2. "Charran:" called Haran, Gen. xi.—a city in Mesopotamia, lying on the road from Central Asia; the same as Carræ, where Crassus was defeated by the Parthians. (Compare Gen. xi. 31—xii. 2.) The account in Genesis represents the move from Ur as originating with Terah, and says nothing about the Divine command till chap. xii. 1, where the word "had" should be left out before "said." The Jews, however, held the opinion or tradition that Abraham had received a Divine command or intimation before he came

to Charran, and this opinion Stephen adopts. It is quite possible that some such intimation given to Abraham while in Ur was the first cause of Terah's move, although this is not mentioned in Genesis. Alford says, "The fact of his having left Ur by some Divine intimation is plainly stated in Gen. xv. 7, and referred to in Neh. ix. 7. It was surely both natural and allowable to express this first command in the well-known words of the second."

vii. 4. Here again Stephen adopts the current opinion of his age,

he was called out of Ur of the Chaldees. God did indeed promise that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, ver. 5. But, 1. As yet he had no child, nor any by Sarah for many years after. 2. He himself was but a stranger and a sojourner in that land, and "God gave him no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on;" but there he was as in a strange country, where he was always upon the remove, and could call nothing his own. 3. His posterity did not come to the possession of it of a long time; "After four hundred years they shall come and serve me in this place," and not till then, ver. 7. Nay, 4. They must undergo a great deal of hardship and difficulty before they shall be put into the possession of that land; they shall be brought into bondage, and ill treated in a strange land; and this not as a punishment of any particular sin, as their wandering in the wilderness was, for we never find any such account given of their bondage in Egypt; but so God had appointed, and it must be. And at the end of four hundred years, reckoning from the birth of Isaac, "that nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge," said God. Now, this teacheth us, 1st. That known unto God are all his works beforehand. When Abraham had neither inheritance nor heir, yet he was told he should have both, the one a land of promise, and the other a child of promise; and therefore both had and received by faith. 2nd. That God's promises, though they are slow, yet they are sure in the operation of them, they will be fulfilled in the season of them, though perhaps not so soon as we expect. 3rd. That, though the people of God may be in distress and trouble for a time, yet God will at length both rescue them and reckon with those that do oppress them; for, "Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth." But let us see how this serves Stephen's purpose.

1st. The Jewish nation, which they were so jealous for the honour of, was very inconsiderable in its beginnings. As their common father Abraham was fetched out of obscurity in Ur of the Chaldees, so their tribes, and the heads of them, were fetched out of servitude in Egypt, when they were the fewest of all people, *Deu. vii. 7.* And what needs so much ado, as if their ruin, when they bring it upon themselves by sin, must be the ruin of the world, and of all God's interest in it? No; he that brought them out of Egypt, can bring them into it again, as he threatened, *Deu. xxviii. 68.* and yet be no loser, while he can out of stones raise up children unto Abraham.

2nd. The slow steps by which the promise made to Abraham advanced towards the performance, and the many seeming contradictions here taken notice of, plainly shew that it had a spiritual meaning, and that the land principally intended to be conveyed and secured by it was the "better country, that is, the heavenly;" as the apostle shews from this very argument, that the patriarchs "sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country;" thence inferring, that "they looked for a city that had foundations," *Heb. xi. 9, 10.* It was, therefore, no blasphemy to say that Jesus shall destroy this place, when at the same time we say that he shall lead us to the heavenly Canaan, and put us in possession of that of which the earthly Canaan was but a type and figure.

Thirdly. The building up of the family of Abraham, with the entail of Divine grace upon it, and the disposals of Divine providence concerning it, which take up the rest of the book of *Genesis*.

1. God engaged to be a God to Abraham and to his seed; and, in token of that, appointed that he and his male seed should be circumcised, *Gen. xvii. 9.* He "gave him the covenant of circumcision," that is, that covenant which circumcision was the seal of; and accordingly, when Abraham had a son born, he "circumcised him the eighth day," ver. 8, by which he was both obliged by the Divine law and interested in the Divine promise, for circumcision had reference to both, being a seal of the covenant both on God's part. I will be to thee a God all-sufficient; and on man's part, "Walk before me and be thou perfect." And then, when effectual care was thus taken for the securing of Abraham's seed to be a seed to serve the Lord, they began to multiply; "Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs," or roots of the respective tribes.

2. Joseph, the darling and blessing of his father's house, was abused by his brethren; they envied him because of his dreams, and sold him into Egypt. Thus early did the children of Israel begin to grudge those among them that were eminent, and outshone others, of which their enmity to Christ, who, like Joseph, was a Nazarite among his brethren, was a great instance.

3. God owned Joseph in his troubles, and was with him, *Gen. xxxix. 2, 21.* by the influence of his Spirit, both on his mind, giving him comfort, and on the minds of those he was concerned with, giving him favour in their eyes. And thus at length he delivered him out of his afflictions, and Pharaoh made him the second man in the kingdom, *Ps. cv. 20-22.* And thus he not only arrived to great perfection among the Egyptians, but became the shepherd and stone of Israel, *Gen. xlix. 24.*

4. Jacob was compelled to go down into Egypt, by a famine, which forced him out of Canaan; a dearth which was a great affliction, to that degree, that "our fathers found no sustenance" in Canaan, ver. 9. That fruitful land was turned into barrenness. But hearing that there was corn in Egypt, treasured up by the wisdom of his own son, "he sent out our fathers first" to fetch corn, ver. 12; and the second time that they went, Joseph, who at first made himself strange to them made himself known to them; and it was notified to Pharaoh that they were Joseph's kindred, and had a dependence upon him, ver. 13; whereupon, with Pharaoh's leave, Joseph sent for his father Jacob to him into Egypt, with all his kindred and family, to the number of seventy-five souls, to be subsisted there, ver. 14. In *Genesis* they are said to be seventy souls, *Gen. xlii. 27.* But the Septuagint there makes them seventy-five; and Stephen or Luke follows that version, as *Lu. iii. 36.* where Cainan is inserted, that is not in the Hebrew text, but in the Septuagint. Some, by excluding Joseph and his sons, who were in Egypt before, which reduced the number to sixty-four, and adding the sons of the eleven patriarchs, make the number seventy-five.

5. Jacob and his sons died in Egypt, ver. 16; but were carried over to be buried in Canaan, ver. 17. A very considerable difficulty occurs here. It is said they were carried over into Sychem, whereas Jacob was buried not in Sychem, but near Hebron, in the cave of Macpelah, where Abraham and Isaac were buried, *Gen. i. 13.* Joseph's bones, indeed, were buried in Sychem, *Jos. xxiv. 32;* and, it seems by this, though it is not mentioned in the story, that the bones of all the other patriarchs were carried with his, each of them giving the same commandment concerning them that he had done; and of them this must be understood, not of Jacob himself. But then that sepulchre in Sychem was bought by Jacob, *Gen. xxxiii. 19;* and by that it is described, *Jos. xxiv. 32.* How then is it here said to be bought by Abraham? Dr. Whitby's solution of this is very sufficient; he supplies it thus: 'Jacob went down into Egypt and died, he and our fathers; and (our fathers) were carried over into Sychem; and he, that is, Jacob, was laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money, *Gen. xxiii. 16;* (or, they were laid there, that is, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob); and they, namely, the other patriarchs, were buried in the sepulchre bought of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem.'

Let us now see what this is to Stephen's purpose. 1st. He still minds them of the mean beginning of the Jewish nation, as a check to their priding of themselves in the glories of that nation; and that it was by a miracle of mercy that they were raised up out of nothing to what they were, from so small a number to be so great a nation; but, if they answer not the intention of their being so raised, they can expect no other but to be destroyed. The prophets frequently

put them in mind of the bringing of them out of Egypt, as an aggravation of their contempt of the law of God, and here it is urged upon them as an aggravation of their contempt of the Gospel of Christ. 2nd. He minds them likewise of the wickedness of those that were the patriarchs of their tribes, in envying their brother Joseph, and selling him into Egypt; and the same spirit was still working in them towards Christ and his ministers. 3rd. Their holy land they doated so much upon, their fathers were long kept out of the possession of, and met with dearth and great affliction in it; and, therefore, let them not think it strange if, after it has been so long polluted with sin, it be at length destroyed. 4th. The faith of the patriarchs, in desiring to be buried in the land of Canaan, plainly shewed that they had an eye to the heavenly country, which it was the design of this Jesus to lead them to.

17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt. 18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. 19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. 20 In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: 21 And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. 22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. 23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: 25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not. 26 And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? 27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday? 29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.

Stephen here goes on to relate,

First. The wonderful increase of the people of Israel in Egypt. It was by a wonder of providence that in a little time they advanced from a family into a nation. 1. It was "when the time of the promise drew nigh;" the time when they were to be formed into a people. During the first two hundred and fifteen years after the promise made to Abraham, the children of the covenant were increased but to seventy; but in the latter two hundred and fifteen years they increased to six hundred thousand fighting men. The motion of providence is sometimes quickest when it comes nearest the centre. Let not us be discouraged at the slowness of the proceedings towards the accomplishment of God's promises. God knows how to redeem the time that seems to have been lost; and, when the year of the redeemed is at hand, can do a double work in a single day. 2. It was in Egypt, where they were oppressed and ruled with rigour. When their lives were made so bitter to them, that one would think they should have wished to be written childless, yet they marry, in faith that God in the due time would visit them. And God blessed them who thus honoured him, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply." Suffering times have often been growing times with the church.

Secondly. The extreme hardships which they underwent there, ver. 18, 19. When the Egyptians observed them to increase in number, they increased their burthens; in which Stephen observes three things: 1. Their base ingratitude. They were oppressed by "another king that knew not Joseph," that is, did not consider the good service that Joseph had done to that nation; for, if he had, he would not have made so ill a requital to his relations and family. Those that injure good people are very ungrateful, for they are the blessings of the age and place they live in. 2. Their hellish craft and policy. "They dealt subtilly with our kindred." "Come on," said they, "let us deal wisely," thinking thereby to secure themselves; but it proved dealing foolishly, for they did but treasure up wrath by it. Those are in a great mistake who think they deal subtly for themselves, when they deal deceitfully or unmercifully with their brethren. 3. Their barbarous and inhuman cruelty. That they might effectually extirpate them, they "cast out their young children to the end they might not live." The killing of their infant seed seemed a very likely way to crush an infant nation.

Now Stephen seems to observe this to them, not only that they might farther see how mean their beginnings were, fitly represented (perhaps with an eye to the exposing of the young children in Egypt) by the forlorn state of a helpless outcast infant, *Eze. xvi. 4.* and how much they were indebted to God for his care of them, which they had forfeited, and made themselves unworthy of, but

Gen. xi. 31-xii. 2 does at first sight seem to state that Abraham did not quit Charran till after Terah's death; on closer inspection, however, the narrative will not bear this construction, for in *Gen. xi. 26* we read that Terah was 70 years old when he begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; again, in *Gen. xi. 32*, that Terah died at the age of 205. But *Gen. xii. 4* states that Abraham was only 75 when he left Charran; therefore Terah must have lived 160 years in Charran after Abraham's departure. Stephen seems to have followed, along

with his contemporaries, the view which the narrative in *Genesis* at first sight presents; the words "and Terah died in Haran" apparently supporting this view, but in reality being used in anticipation of Terah's death, which happened afterwards. The view that Abraham was the youngest son of Terah does not remove the difficulty.

vii. 6. Stephen is making a free quotation from the Septuagint version of *Gen. xv. 13.* The number 400 is evidently a round number for the more exact 430.

also that they might consider that what they were now doing against the Christian church in its infancy was as impious and unjust, and would be in the issue as fruitless and ineffectual, as that was which the Egyptians did against the Jewish church in its infancy. You think you deal subtly in your evil intreating us; and in persecuting young converts you do as they did in casting out the young children, but will find it is to no purpose. In spite of your malice, Christ's disciples will increase and multiply.

Thirdly. The raising up of Moses to be their deliverer. Stephen was charged with having spoken blasphemous words against Moses; in answer to which charge he here speaks very honourably of him.

1. Moses was born when the persecution of Israel was at the hottest, especially in that most cruel instance of it, the murdering of the new-born children. "At that time Moses was born," ver. 20; and was himself in danger, as soon as he came into the world, (as our Saviour also was at Bethlehem,) of falling a sacrifice to that bloody edict. God is preparing for his people's deliverance, then when their day is darkest, and their distress deepest.

2. He "was exceeding fair." His face began to shine as soon as he was born, as a happy presage of the honour God designed to put upon him. He was *admirabilis et Deus*,—"fair towards God." He was sanctified from the womb, and that made him beautiful in God's eyes; for it is the beauty of holiness that is in God's sight of great price.

3. He was wonderfully preserved in his infancy. First, by the care of his tender parents, who nourished him three months in their own house, as long as they durst; and then by a favourable providence that threw him into the arms of Pharaoh's daughter, who "took him up and nourished him for her own son," ver. 21; for those whom God designs to make special use of he will take special care of. And did he thus protect the child Moses? much more will he secure the interests of his holy child Jesus, as he is called, *ch. iv. 27*, from the enemies that are gathered together against him.

4. He became a great scholar; ver. 22, "he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," who were then famed for all manner of polite literature, particularly philosophy, astronomy, and (which perhaps helped to lead them to idolatry) hieroglyphics. Moses, having his education at court, had opportunity of improving himself, by the best books, tutors, and conversation, in all the arts and sciences, and had a genius for them. Only we have reason to think that he had not so far forgotten the God of his fathers as to acquaint himself with the unlawful studies and practices of the magicians of Egypt, any farther than was necessary to the confuting of them.

5. He became a prime minister of state in Egypt; that seems to be meant by his being "mighty in words and deeds." Though he had not a ready way of expressing himself, but stammered, yet he spoke admirable good sense; and every thing he said commanded assent, and carried its own evidence and force of reasoning along with it; and in business none went on with such courage, and conduct, and success. Thus was he prepared by human helps for these services, which, after all, he could not be thoroughly furnished for without Divine illumination. Now by all this Stephen will make it appear that, notwithstanding the malicious insinuations of his persecutors, he had as high and honourable thoughts of Moses as they had.

Fourthly. The attempts which Moses made to deliver Israel, which they kicked at, and would not close in with. This Stephen insists much upon, and it serves for a key to this story, *Ex. ii. 11-15*; as doth also that other construction which is put upon it by the apostle, *Heb. xi. 24-26*. There it is represented as an act of holy self-denial; here as a designed prelude to, or entrance upon, the public service he was to be called out to. Ver. 23, "when he was full forty years old," in the prime of his time for preferment in the court of Egypt, "it came into his heart," for God put it there, "to visit his brethren the children of Israel," and to see which way he might do them any service; and he shewed himself as a public person with a public character,

1. As Israel's saviour. This he gave a specimen of, in avenging an oppressed Israelite, and killing the Egyptian that abused him, ver. 24. Seeing one of his brethren suffer wrong, he was moved with compassion towards the sufferer, and a just indignation at the wrong doer, as men in public stations should be, and he avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian, which, if he had been only a private person, he could not lawfully have done; but he knew that his commission from heaven would bear him out. And he "supposed that his brethren" (who could not but have some knowledge of the promise made to Abraham, that the nation that should oppress them God would judge) "would have understood that God by his hand would deliver them;" for he could not have had either presence of mind or strength of body to do what he did, if he had not been clothed with such a Divine power as evidenced a Divine authority. If they had but understood the signs of the times, they might have taken this for the dawning of the day of their deliverance; but they understood not. They did not take this as it was designed, for the setting up of a standard, and sounding of a trumpet to proclaim Moses their deliverer.

2. As Israel's judge. This he gave a specimen of the very next day, in offering to accommodate matters between two contending Hebrews, wherein he plainly assumed a public character; ver. 26. "He shewed himself to them as they strove," and, putting on an air of majesty and authority, "he would have set them at one again," and as their prince have determined the controversy between them, saying, "Sirs, ye are brethren," by birth and profession of religion, "why do ye wrong one to another?" for he observed that, as in most strifes, there was a fault on both sides; and therefore, in order to peace and friendship, there must be a mutual remission and condescension. When Moses was to be Israel's deliverer out of Egypt, he slew the Egyptians, and so delivered Israel out of their hands; but, when he was to be Israel's judge and lawgiver, he ruled them with the golden sceptre, not the iron rod. He did not kill and slay them when they strove; but gave them excellent laws and statutes, and determined upon their complaints and appeals made to him, *Ex. xviii. 16*. But the contending Israelite that was most in the wrong thrust him away, ver. 27; would not bear the reproof, though a just and gentle one, but was ready to fly in his face, with "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" Proud and litigious spirits are impatient of check and control. Rather would these Israelites have their bodies ruled with rigour by their taskmasters than be delivered, and have their minds ruled with reason, by their deliverer. The wrong-doer was so enraged at the reproof given him, that he upbraided Moses with the service he had done to their nation in killing the Egyptian, which, if they had pleased, would have been the earnest of farther and greater service; "Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?" ver. 28; charging that upon him as his crime, and threatening to accuse him for it, which was the hanging out of the flag of defiance to the Egyptians, and the banner of love and deliverance to Israel. Hereupon Moses fled into the land of Midian, and made no more attempt to deliver Israel till forty years after. He settled as a stranger in Midian, married, and had two sons by Jethro's daughter, ver. 29.

Now let us see how this serves Stephen's purpose. 1st. They charged him with blaspheming Moses, in answer to which he retorts upon them the indignities which their fathers did to Moses, which they ought to be ashamed of, and humbled for, instead of picking quarrels thus, under pretence of zeal for the honour of Moses, with one that had as great a veneration for him as any of them had. 2nd. They persecuted him for disputing in defence of Christ and

his Gospel, in opposition to which they set up Moses and his law: But, saith he, you had best take heed. First. Lest you hereby do as your fathers did, refuse and reject one whom God has raised up to be to you a prince and a Saviour. You may understand, if you will not wilfully shut your eyes against the light, that God will by this Jesus deliver you out of a worse slavery than that in Egypt; take heed then of thrusting him away, but receive him as a ruler and a judge over you. Secondly. Lest you hereby fare as your fathers fared, who for this were justly left to die in their slavery; for the deliverance came not till forty years after. This will come of it: you put away the Gospel from you, and it will be sent to the Gentiles; you will not have Christ, and you shall not have him, so shall your doom be, *Mat. xxiii. 38, 39*.

30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. 31 When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, 32 Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. 33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. 34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. 35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. 36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. 37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. 38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: 39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, 40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

Stephen here proceeds in his story of Moses; and let any one judge whether these be the words of one that was a blasphemer of Moses. No; nothing could be spoken more honourable of him. Here is,

First. The vision which he saw of the glory of God at the bush, ver. 30. "When forty years were expired,"—during all which time Moses was buried alive in Midian, and was now grown old, and one would think past service,—that it might appear that all his performances were products of a Divine power and promise, as it appeared that Isaac was a child of promise, by his being born of parents stricken in years, now at eighty years old he enters upon that post of honour to which he was born, in recompence for his self-denial at forty years old. Observe,

1. Where God appeared to him. "In the wilderness of mount Sinai," ver. 30. And when he appeared to him there, that was holy ground, ver. 33; which Stephen takes notice of as a check to those who prided themselves in the temple, that holy place, as if there were no communion to be had with God but there; whereas God met Moses, and manifested himself to him, in a remote, obscure place in the wilderness of Sinai. They deceive themselves, if they think God is tied to places; he can bring his people into a wilderness, and there speak comfortably to them.

2. How he appeared to him. "In a flame of fire," for our God is a consuming fire; and yet the bush in which this fire was, though combustible matter, was not consumed; which, as it represented the state of Israel in Egypt, where, though they were in the fire of affliction, yet they were not consumed, so perhaps may be looked upon as a type of Christ's incarnation, and the union between the Divine and human nature. God manifested in the flesh was as the flame of fire manifested in the bush.

4. How Moses was affected with this. 1st. He "wondered at the sight,"

vii. 14. Compare Gen. xlv. 27 and Exod. i. 5. Stephen follows the Septuagint version.

vii. 16. Compare Gen. l. 13; Josh. xxiv. 32; Gen. xxxiii. 18, 19. "It is the most judicious course to admit frankly that with reference to the purchase of the ground and the burial of Jacob, it might easily occur that Stephen, whose discourse treated an entirely different and a loftier theme, should in his rapid course confound two analogous transactions. As to the burial of Joseph's brethren in Canaan, the

Old Testament presents no conflicting statements, but merely observes silence. It is very probable that such a tradition, the existence of which at a later period can be proved, was already current in Stephen's age, and adopted by him" (Lechler).

vii. 22. "Mighty in words:" see Exod. iv. 10. Powerful in argument or in writing, or in the thoughts expressed.

vii. 30. "Sina," Exod. iii. 1. says "Horeb," but they were points of the same mountain.

ver. 31. It was a phenomenon which all his Egyptian learning could not furnish him with the solution of. He had the curiosity at first to pry into it, "I will turn aside now, and see this great sight;" but the nearer he drew the more he was struck with amazement. And, 2nd. He "trembled, and durst not behold;" durst not look wistly upon it, for he was soon aware that it was not a fiery meteor, but "the angel of the Lord," and no other but the angel of the covenant, the Son of God himself. This set him on trembling. Stephen was accused for blaspheming Moses and God, *ch. vi. 11*, as if Moses had been a little god: but by this it appears he was a man subject to like passions as we are; and 1 particularly that of fear, upon any appearance of the Divine majesty and glory.

Secondly. The declaration which he heard of the covenant of God; ver. 32, "The voice of the Lord came to him"—for faith comes by hearing—and this was it, "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And, therefore, 1. I am the same that I was. The covenant God made with Abraham some ages ago was, "I will be to thee a God," a God all-sufficient. Now, saith God, that covenant is still in full force; it is not cancelled or forgotten, but I am as I was, the God of Abraham, and now I will make it to appear so; for all the favours, all the honours, God put upon Israel were founded upon this covenant with Abraham, and flowed from it. 2. I will be the same that I am. For, if the death of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, cannot break the covenant relation between God and them, (as by this it appears it could not,) then nothing else can. And then he will be a God,

1st. To their souls; which are now separated from their bodies. Our Saviour by this proves the future state, *Mat. xxii. 31*. Abraham is dead, and yet God is still his God; therefore Abraham is still alive. God never did that for him in this world which would answer the true intent and full extent of that promise, that he would be the God of Abraham; and therefore it must be done for him in the other world. Now this is that life and immortality which are brought to light by the Gospel, for the full conviction of the Sadducees who denied it. Those, therefore, who stood up in defence of the Gospel, and endeavoured to propagate that, were so far from blaspheming Moses, that they did the greatest honour imaginable to Moses, and that glorious discovery which God made of himself to him at the bush.

2nd. To their seed. God, in declaring himself thus the God of their fathers, intimated his kindness to their seed, that they should be loved for the fathers' sakes, *Rom. xi. 28*; *Deu. vii. 8*. Now the preachers of the Gospel preached up this covenant, "the promise made of God unto the fathers; unto which promise" those of the twelve tribes that did continue "serving God hoped to come," *ch. xxvi. 6, 7*. And shall they, under colour of supporting the holy place and the law, oppose the covenant which was made with Abraham and his seed, his spiritual seed, before the law was given, and long before the holy place was built? Since God's glory must be for ever advanced, and our glorying for ever silenced, God will have our salvation to be by promise and not by the law; the Jews, therefore, who persecuted the Christians under pretence that they blasphemed the law, did themselves blaspheme the promise, and forsook all their own mercies that were contained in it.

Thirdly. The commission which God gave him to deliver Israel out of Egypt. The Jews set up Moses in competition with Christ; and accused Stephen as a blasphemer, because he did not do so too. But Stephen here shews, that Moses was an eminent type of Christ, as he was Israel's deliverer. When God had declared himself the God of Abraham, he proceeded,

1. To order Moses into a reverent posture; "Put off thy shoes from thy feet." Enter not upon sacred things with low, and cold, and common thoughts. "Keep thy foot," *Ecc. v. 1*; be not hasty and rash in thy approaches to God. Treat softly.

2. To order Moses into a very eminent service; when he is ready to receive commands, he shall have commission. He is commissioned to demand leave from Pharaoh for Israel to go out of his land, and to enforce that demand, ver. 34. Observe, 1st. The notice God took, both of their sufferings and of their sense of their suffering; "I have seen, I have seen their affliction, and have heard their groanings." God has a compassionate regard to the troubles of his church, and the groans of his persecuted people, and their deliverance takes rise from his pity. 2nd. The determination he fixed to redeem them by the hand of Moses; "I am come down to deliver them." It should seem, though God is present in all places, yet he useth that expression here of coming down to deliver them, because that deliverance was typical of what Christ did, when "for us men, and for our salvation, he came down from heaven." He that ascended, first descended. Moses is the man that must be employed; "Come, and I will send thee into Egypt." And if God send him he will own him, and give him success.

Fourthly. His acting in pursuance of this commission, wherein he was a figure of the Messiah. And Stephen takes notice here again of the slights they had put upon him, the affronts they had given him, and their refusal to have him to reign over them, as tending very much to magnify his agency in their deliverance.

1. God put honour upon him, whom they put contempt upon; ver. 35, "This Moses whom they refused," whose kind offers and good offices they rejected with scorn, saying, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge?" thou takest too much upon thee, thou son of Levi, *Nam. xvi. 3*; that "same Moses did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush." It may be understood either that God sent to him by the hand of the angel, or that by the hand of the angel going along with him he became a complete deliverer. Now by this example, Stephen would intimate to the council, that this Jesus whom they now refused, as their fathers did Moses, saying, Who made thee a prophet and a king? Who gave thee this authority? Even this same has God advanced to be a Prince and a Saviour, a Ruler and a Deliverer; as the apostles had told them a while ago, *ch. v. 30*, that "the stone which the builders refused was become the headstone in the corner," *ch. iv. 11*.

2. God shewed favour to them by him; and he was very forward to serve them, though they had thrust him away. God might justly have refused them his service, and he might justly have declined it; but it is all forgotten, they are not so much as upbraided with it; ver. 36, "He brought them out," notwithstanding, "after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt," which were afterwards continued for the completing their deliverance, according as the case called for it, "in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years." So far is he from blaspheming Moses that he admires him as a glorious instrument in the hand of God for the forming of the Old Testament church. But it doth not at all derogate from his just honour, to say that he was but an instrument, and that he is outshone by this Jesus; whom he encourageth these Jews yet to close with, and to come into his interest, not fearing but that then they should be received into his favour, and receive benefit by him, as the people of Israel were delivered by Moses, though they had once refused him.

Fifthly. His prophecy of Christ and his grace, ver. 37. He not only was a type of Christ, (many were so that perhaps had not an actual foresight of his day,) but Moses spoke of him; ver. 37, "This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren." This is spoken of as one of the greatest honours God put

upon him, nay, as that which exceeded all the rest, that, by him he gave notice to the children of Israel of the great Prophet that should come into the world, raised their expectation of him, and obliged them to receive him. When his bringing of them out of Egypt is spoken of, it is with an emphasis of honour, "This is that Moses," *Ex. vi. 26*; and so it is here, "This is that Moses." Now this is very full to Stephen's purpose: in asserting that Jesus should change the customs of the ceremonial law, he was so far from blaspheming Moses, that really he did him the greatest honour imaginable, by shewing how the prophecy of Moses was accomplished, which was so clear that, as Christ told them himself, if they had believed Moses, they would have believed him, *Jno. v. 46*.

1. Moses in God's name told them, that in the fulness of time they should have a prophet raised up among them. One of their own nation that should be like unto him, *Deu. xviii. 15, 18*; a ruler and a deliverer, a judge and a law-giver like him, who should therefore have authority to change the customs that he had delivered, and to bring in a better hope as the Mediator of a better testament.

2. He charged them to hear that prophet, to receive his dictates, to admit the change he would make in the customs, and to submit to him in every thing. And this will be the greatest honour you can do to Moses and to his law, who said, "Hear ye him," and came to be a witness to the repetition of this charge by a voice from heaven at the transfiguration of Christ; and by his silence he gave consent to it, *Mat. xvii. 5*.

Sixthly. The eminent services which Moses continued to do to the people of Israel, after he had been instrumental to bring them out of Egypt, ver. 38. And herein also he was a type of Christ, who yet so far exceeds him, that it is no blasphemy to say, he has authority to change the customs that Moses delivered. It was the honour of Moses,

1. That "he was in the church in the wilderness;" he presided in all the affairs of it for forty years, was king in Jeshurun, *Deu. xxxiii. 5*. The camp of Israel is here called the church in the wilderness; for it was a sacred society, incorporated by a Divine charter under a Divine government, and blessed with Divine revelation. The church in the wilderness was a church, though it was yet not perfectly formed, as it was to be when they came to Canaan, but "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," *Deu. xii. 8, 9*. It was the honour of Moses that he was in that church, and many a time it had been destroyed, if Moses had not been in it to intercede for it. But Christ is the president and guide of a more excellent and glorious church than that in the wilderness was, and is more in it as the life and soul of it than Moses could be in that.

2. That he was "with the angel that spoke to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers;" was with him in the holy mount twice forty days, with the angel of the covenant, Michael our prince. Moses was immediately conversant with God; but never lay in his bosom, as Christ did from eternity. Or, these words may be taken thus; Moses was in the church in the wilderness, but it was with the angel that spake to him in mount Sinai, that is, at the burning bush, for that was said to be at mount Sinai, ver. 30; that angel went before him, and was guide to him, else he could not have been a guide to Israel. Of this God speaks, *Ex. xxxiii. 20*, "I send an angel before thee," and *Ex. xxxiii. 2*; and see *Nam. xx. 16*. He was in the church with the angel, without whom he could have done no service to the church; but Christ is himself that angel which was with the church in the wilderness, and therefore has an authority above Moses.

3. That he received the lively oracles to give unto them; not only the ten commandments, but the other instructions which "the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak them to the children of Israel." 1st. The words of God are oracles, certain and infallible, and of unquestionable authority and obligation; they are to be consulted as oracles, and by them all controversies must be determined. 2nd. They are lively oracles, for they are the oracles of the living God; not of the dumb and dead idols of the heathens. The word that God speaks is spirit and life; not that the law of Moses could give life, but it shewed the way to life; "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." 3rd. Moses received them from God, and delivered nothing as an oracle to the people but what he had first received from God. 4th. The lively oracles which he received from God he faithfully gave to the people to be observed and preserved. It was the principal privilege of the Jews, that "to them were committed the oracles of God;" and it was by the hand of Moses that they were committed. As Moses gave them not that bread, so neither did he give them that law, from heaven, *Jno. vi. 32*, but God gave it them; and he that gave them those customs by his servant Moses might, no doubt, when he pleased, change the customs by his Son Jesus, who has received more lively oracles to give unto us than Moses did.

Seventhly. The contempt that was, after this, and notwithstanding this, put upon him by the people. They that charged Stephen with speaking against Moses would do well to answer what their own ancestors had done, and they tread in their steps.

1. They "would not obey him, but thrust him from them," ver. 35; they murmured at him, mutinied against him, refused to obey his orders, and sometimes were ready to stone him. Moses did indeed give them an excellent law, but by this it appeared that it could not make the comers thereunto perfect, *Heb. x. 1*; for in their hearts they turned back again into Egypt, and preferred their garlic and onions there, before the manna they had under the conduct of Moses, or the milk and honey they hoped for in Canaan. Observe, Their secret disaffection to Moses, and inclination to Egyptianism, (if I may so call it,) it was in effect turning back to Egypt; it was doing it in heart. Many that pretend to be going forwards towards Canaan by keeping up a show and profession of religion, yet at the same time are in their hearts turning back to Egypt, like Lot's wife to Sodom, and will be dealt with as deserters, for it is the heart that God looks at. Now if the customs that Moses delivered to them could not prevail to change them, wonder not that Christ comes to change the customs, and to introduce a more spiritual way of worship.

2. They made a golden calf instead of him, which, besides the affront that was thereby done to God, was a great indignity to Moses; for it was upon this consideration that they made the calf, "Because as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him, therefore make us gods of gold;" as if a calf were sufficient to supply the want of Moses, and as capable of going before them into the promised land. So "they made a calf" in those days when the law was given them, and "offered sacrifices unto the idol, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands;" so proud were they of their new god, that when they had sat down "to eat and drink, they rose up to play." By all this it appears there was a great deal which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh; it was therefore necessary that this law should be perfected by a better hand, and he was no blasphemer against Moses who said Christ had done it.

42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye

vii. 43. "Ye took up," or "carried about," referring to their bearing the tent of the idol upon their shoulders in religious processions. "Moloch:" This name (which is derived from the Semitic word, 'he reigned') was given by the Ammonites (2 Kings xvi. 3) and the Moabites (2 Kings iii. 2) to their national idol, which they also named Baal, or 'lord.' It is supposed that they worshipped the sun by these names; but at a later period Baal was worshipped as the sun, Moloch as the planet Saturn. The rites performed in honour of this idol

were remarkably atrocious. According to the Jewish writers, children were burned alive between the outstretched arms of the brassen statue. The Tyrians and their colonists, especially the Carthaginians, offered their children to Moloch until a comparatively late period in ancient history. The Israelites frequently fell into this most horrible of all idolatries (see *Lev. xviii. 21, xx. 2*; 2 Kings xxiii. 10; *Jer. vii. 31*). 'Remphan,' or 'Rephan': a Coptic, i.e., Egyptian word, which is used in the Septuagint as equivalent to Chiun. Both words are

offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? 43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. 44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. 45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; 46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. 47 But Solomon built him an house. 48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, 49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? 50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

Two things we have in these verses:

First. Stephen upbraids them with the idolatry of their fathers, which God gave them up to as a punishment for their early forsaking him in worshipping the golden calf. And this was the saddest punishment of all for that sin, as it was of the idolatry of the Gentile world, that God gave them up to a prostrate sense. When Israel was joined to idols, joined to the golden calf, and not long after to Baal-peor, God said, Let them alone, let them go on; ver. 42, "Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven." He particularly cautioned them not to do it, at their peril, and gave them reasons why they should not; but when they were bent upon it, he "gave them up to their own hearts' lust;" withdrew his restraining grace, and then they "walked in their own counsels," and were so scandalously mad upon their idols, as never any people were: compare *Deu. iv. 19* with *Jer. viii. 2*. For this he quotes a passage out of *Am. v. 25*; for it would be less invidious to tell them their own from an Old Testament prophet; who upbraids them,

1. For not sacrificing to their own God in the wilderness; ver. 42, "Have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?" No; during all that time it was intermitted, they did not so much as keep the passover after the second year. It was God's condescension to them, that he did not insist upon it during their unsettled state; but then let them consider how ill they requited him in offering sacrifices to idols, when God dispensed with their offering to him. This is also a check to their zeal for the customs that Moses delivered to them; and their fear of having them changed by this Jesus, that, immediately after they were delivered, they were for forty years together disused as needless things.

2. For sacrificing to other gods after they came to Canaan; ver. 43, "Ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch;" Moloch was the idol of the children of Ammon, to which they barbarously offered their own children in sacrifice, which they could not do without great terror and grief to themselves and their families; yet this unnatural idolatry they arrived to, when "God gave them up to worship the host of heaven:" see *2 Chr. xxviii. 3*. It was surely the strongest delusion that ever people were given up to, and the greatest instance of the power of Satan in the children of disobedience, and therefore it is here spoken of emphatically. "Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch," you submitted even to that; and to the worship of "the star of your god Remphan." Some think it signifies the moon, as Moloch doth the sun; others take it for Saturn, for that planet is called Remphan, in the Syriac and Persian languages. The Septuagint puts it for Chiuu, as being a name more commonly known. They had images representing the star like the silver shrines for Diana, here called the figures which they made to worship. Dr. Lightfoot thinks they had figures representing the whole starry firmament, with all the constellations and the planets, and these are called Remphan,—"the high representation," like the celestial globe; a poor thing to make an idol of, and yet better than a golden calf. Now for this it is threatened; "I will carry you away beyond Babylon." In *Amos*, it is beyond Damascus; meaning to Babylon, the land of the north; but Stephen changes it, with an eye to the captivity of the ten tribes, who were carried away beyond Babylon by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, *2 Kin. xvii. 6*. Let it not therefore seem strange to them, to hear of the destruction of this place, for they had heard of it many a time from the prophets of the Old Testament, who were not therefore accused as blasphemers by any but the wicked rulers. It was observed in the debate on Jeremiah's case, that Micah was not called to an account, though he prophesied saying, Zion shall be ploughed as a field, *Jer. xxvi. 18, 19*.

Secondly. He gives an answer particularly to the charge exhibited against him relating to the temple, that he spake blasphemous words against that holy place, ver. 44-50. He was accused for saying that Jesus would destroy this holy place. And what if I did say so, saith Stephen; the glory of the holy God is not bound up in the glory of this holy place; but that may be preserved untouched, though this be laid in the dust. For,

1. It was not till our fathers came into the wilderness in their way to Canaan, that they had any fixed place of worship; and yet the patriarchs, many ages before, worshipped God acceptably, at the altars they had adjoining to their own tents, "in the open air,"—*sub dio*; and he that was worshipped without any holy place, in the first, and best, and purest ages of the Old Testament church, may, and will be so, when this holy place is destroyed, without any diminution of his glory.

2. The holy place was at first but a tabernacle, mean and moveable, and speaking itself to be short-lived, and not designed to continue always. Why might not this holy place, though built of stone, be decently brought to its end, and give place to its betters, as well as that, though framed of curtains? As it was

no dishonour but an honour to God, that the tabernacle gave way to the temple, so it is now that the material temple gives way to the spiritual one; and so it will be when at last the spiritual temple shall give way to the eternal one.

3. That tabernacle was a tabernacle of witness, or of testimony, "a figure for the time then present," *Heb. ix. 9*; a figure of good things to come, of "the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not men," *Heb. viii. 2*. "This was the glory both of the tabernacle and temple, that they were erected for a testimony of that temple of God which in the latter days should be opened in heaven," *Rev. xi. 19*; and of Christ's tabernacled on earth, (as the word is, *Jno. i. 14*), and of the temple of his body.

4. That tabernacle was framed just as God appointed, and according to the fashion which Moses saw in the mount; which plainly intimates that it had reference to good things to come. Its rise being heavenly, its meaning and tendency was so, and therefore it was no diminution at all to its glory, to say, that this temple made with hands should be destroyed, in order to the building of another made without hands; which was Christ's crime, *Mar. xiv. 58*, and Stephen's.

5. That tabernacle was pitched first in the wilderness. It was not a native of this land of yours, to which you think it must for ever be confined, but was brought in in the next age, by our fathers that came after those who first erected it, into the possession of the Gentiles, into the land of Canaan, which had long been in the possession of the devoted nations, "whom God drove out before the face of our fathers." And why may not God set up his spiritual temple, as he had done the material tabernacle, in those countries that were now the possession of the Gentiles? That tabernacle was brought in by those who came with Jesus, that is, Joshua. And I think for distinction sake, and to prevent mistakes, it ought to be so read, both here and *Heb. iv. 8*; yet in naming Joshua here, which in Greek is Jesus, there may be a tacit intimation that, as the Old Testament Joshua brought in that typical tabernacle, so the New Testament Joshua should bring in the true tabernacle into the possession of the Gentiles.

6. That tabernacle continued for many ages, even to the days of David, above four hundred years, before there was any thought of building a temple, ver. 45. David, having found favour before God, did indeed desire this farther favour to have leave to build God a house, to be a constant tabernacle or dwelling-place for the Shechinah, or the tokens of the presence of the God of Jacob, ver. 46. Those who have found favour with God, should shew themselves forward to advance the interests of his kingdom among men.

7. God had his heart so little upon a temple, or such a holy place as they were so jealous for, that, when David desired to build one, he was forbidden to do it. God was in no haste for one, as he told David, *2 Sam. vii. 7*; and therefore it was not he, but his son Solomon, some years after, that built him a house. David had all that sweet communion with God in public worship which we read of in his psalms, before there was any temple built.

8. God often declared that temples made with hands were not his delight, nor could any thing to the perfection of his rest and joy. Solomon, when he dedicated the temple, acknowledged that "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands;" he has not need of them, is not benefited by them, cannot be confined to them. The whole world is his temple, in which he is everywhere present, and fills it with his glory; and what occasion has he for a temple then to manifest himself in? Indeed the pretended deities of the heathen needed temples made with hands, for they were gods made with hands, ver. 41, and had no other place to manifest themselves in but in their own temples. But the one only true and living God needs no temple; for the heaven is his throne, in which he rests, and the earth is his footstool, over which he rules, ver. 49, 50. And therefore "what house will ye build me?" comparable to this which I have already? "Or what is the place of my rest?" What need I a house, either to repose myself in or to shew myself? "Hath not my hand made all these things?" And these shew his eternal power and Godhead, *Rom. i. 20*; they shew themselves so to all mankind, that they are without excuse who worship other gods. And as the world is thus God's temple wherein he is manifested, so it is God's temple in which he will be worshipped. As the earth is full of his glory, and is therefore his temple, *Isa. vi. 3*, so the earth is or shall be full of his praise, *Hab. iii. 3*, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him, *Psa. lxxvii. 7*, and upon that account it is his temple. It was therefore no reflection at all upon this holy place, however they might take it, to say that Jesus shall destroy this temple, and set up another into which all nations shall be admitted, *ch. xv. 16, 17*. And it would not seem strange to them who considered that scripture which Stephen here quotes, *Isa. lvi. 1-3*, which, as it spoke God's comparative contempt of the external part of his service, so it plainly foretold the rejection of the unbelieving Jews, and the welcome of the Gentiles into the church that were of a contrite spirit.

51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

Stephen was going on in his discourse (as it should seem by the thread of it) to shew that as the temple, so the temple service, must come to an end, and it would be the glory of both to give way to that worship of the Father in spirit and in truth which was to be established in the kingdom of the Messiah, stripped of the pompous ceremonies of the old law; and so was going to apply all this which he had said, more closely to his present purpose; but he perceived they could not bear it. They could patiently hear the history of the Old Testament told,—it was a piece of learning which they themselves dealt much in; but if Stephen go about to tell them that their power and tyranny must come down, and that the church must be governed by a spirit of holiness and love, and heavenly mindedness, they will not so much as give him the hearing. It is probable he perceived this, and that they were going to silence him; and therefore he breaks off abruptly in the midst of his discourse, and by that Spirit of wisdom, courage, and power wherewith he was filled, he sharply rebuked his persecutors, and gave them their own; for if they will not admit the testimony of the Gospel to them, it shall become a testimony against them.

First, They, like their fathers, were stubborn and wilful, and would not be wrought upon by the various methods God took to reclaim and reform them; they were, like their fathers, inflexible both to the Word of God and to his providences.

of uncertain origin and meaning, but probably designate the planet Saturn, or rather the malevolent and destructive principle which the idolaters believed that planet to represent ("Cook's Commentary on the Acts"). For a fine description of Moloch, see "Milton's Paradise Lost," book i., line 392.

vii. 56. This is the only passage wherein any of our Lord's disciples speak of him as "Son of Man." (Compare Luke xxii. 69).

vii. 58. Stoning was the punishment in the Jewish law for idolaters,

and the witnesses were to be the first to put them to death. As from John xviii. 31 it appears that the Sanhedrim had not the power to put any to death, and as no sentence had yet been passed by the Sanhedrim (this sentence in its turn to be submitted to the Romans), we must regard the death of Stephen as an unjustifiable and illegal act. Saul was probably about thirty years of age at this time. He appears to have been a member of the Sanhedrim (see chap. xxvi. 10).

1. They were stiff-necked, *ver. 51*, and would not submit their necks to the sweet and easy yoke of God's government, nor draw in it, but were like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Or, they would not bow their heads, no, not to God himself, would not do obedience to him, would not humble themselves before him. The stiff neck is the same with the hard heart, obstinate and contumacious, and that will not yield; the general character of the Jewish nation, *Ex. xxxii. 9; xxxiii. 3, 5; xxxiv. 9; Deut. ix. 6, 13; xxxi. 27; Eze. ii. 4.*

2. They were uncircumcised in heart and ears. Their hearts and ears were not devoted and given up to God, as the body of the people were in profession by the sign of circumcision. In name and show you are circumcised Jews, but in heart and ears you are still uncircumcised heathens, and pay no more deference to the authority of your God than they do, *Jer. ix. 26*; you are under the power of unmortified lusts and corruptions, which stop your ears to the voice of God, and harden your hearts to that which is both most commanding and most affecting. They had not that "circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," *Col. ii. 11.*

Secondly, They, like their fathers, were not only not influenced by the methods God took to reform them, but they were enraged and incensed against them: "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost."

1. They resisted the Holy Ghost speaking to them by the prophets, whom they opposed and contradicted, hated and ridiculed. This seems especially meant here by the following explication, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" In persecuting and silencing them that spake by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they resisted the Holy Ghost. Their fathers resisted the Holy Ghost in the prophets that God raised up to them, and so did they in Christ's apostles and ministers, who spake by the same Spirit, and had greater measures of his gifts than the prophets of the Old Testament had, and yet were more resisted.

2. They resisted the Holy Ghost striving with them by their own consciences, and would not comply with the convictions and dictates of them. God's Spirit strove with them as with the old world, but in vain; they resisted him, took part with their corruptions against their convictions, and rebelled against the light. There is that in our sinful hearts that always resists the Holy Ghost, a flesh that lusts against the Spirit, and wars against his motions; but in the hearts of God's elect, when the fullness of time comes, this resistance is overcome and overpowered, and after a struggle the throne of Christ is set up in the soul, and every thought that had exalted itself against it is brought into captivity to it, *2 Cor. x. 4, 5*. That grace, therefore, which effects this change might more fitly be called victorious grace than irresistible.

Thirdly, They, like their fathers, persecuted and slew those whom God sent unto them to call them to duty, and make them offers of mercy.

1. Their fathers had been the cruel and constant persecutors of the Old Testament prophets; *ver. 52*, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" More or less, one time or other, they had a blow at them all. Even those that lived in the best reigns, when the princes did not persecute them, yet there was a malignant party in the nation that mocked at them, and abused them, and most of them were at last, either by colour of law, or popular fury, put to death. And that which aggravated the sin of persecuting the prophets was, that the business of the prophets they were so spiteful at, was to "shew before of the coming of the Just One;" to give notice of God's kind intentions towards that people, to send the Messiah among them in the fullness of time. They that were the messengers of such glad tidings should have been courted and caressed, and have had the preferments of the best of benefactors, but instead of that had the treatment of the worst of malefactors.

2. They had been the betrayers and murderers of the Just One himself, as Peter had told them, *ch. iii. 14; v. 30*. They had hired Judas to betray him, and had in a manner forced Pilate to condemn him; and therefore it is charged upon them, that they were his betrayers and murderers. Thus they were the genuine seed of those who slew them that foretold his coming, which, by slaying him, they shewed they would have done if they had lived then; and thus, as our Saviour had told them, they brought upon themselves the guilt of the blood of all the prophets. Which of the prophets would they have shewed any respect to that had no regard to the Son of God himself?

Fourthly, They, like their fathers, put contempt upon Divine revelation, and would not be guided and governed by it. And this was the aggravation of their sin, that God had given, as to their fathers his law, so to them his Gospel, in vain.

1. Their fathers "received the law, and have not kept it," *ver. 53*. God wrote to them the great things of his law, after he had first spoken them to them, and yet they were counted by them as a strange or foreign thing, which they were no way concerned in. The law is said to be "received by the disposition of angels," because angels were employed in the solemnity of giving the law; in the thunderings and lightnings, and the sound of the trumpet. It is said to be ordained by angels, *Gal. iii. 19*; and God is said to come with ten thousand of his saints to give the law, *Deut. xxxiii. 2*; and it was a word spoken by angels, *Heb. ii. 2*. This put an honour both upon the law and the Lawgiver, and should increase our veneration for both. But they that thus received the law yet kept it not, but by making the golden calf broke it immediately in a capital instance.

2. They received the Gospel now, not by the disposition of angels, but of the Holy Ghost,—not with the sound of a trumpet, but, which was more strange, in the gifts of tongues,—and yet they did not embrace it. They would not yield to the plainest demonstrations, no more than their fathers before them did, for they were resolved not to comply with God, either in his law or in his Gospel.

We have reason to think Stephen had a great deal more to say, and would have said it, if they would have suffered him, but they were wicked and unreasonable men with whom he had to do, that could no more bear reason than they could speak it.

54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. 57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58 And cast him out of the city, and

stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

We have here the death of the first martyr of the Christian church; and there is in this story a lively instance of the outrage and fury of the persecutors, such as we may expect to meet with if we are called out to suffer for Christ; and of the courage and comfort of the persecuted that are thus called out. Here is hell in its fire and darkness, and heaven in its light and brightness; and these here serve as foils to set off each other. It is not here said, that the votes of the council were taken upon this case, and that by the majority he was found guilty, and then condemned, and ordered to be stoned to death, according to the law, as a blasphemer; but it is likely so it was, and that it was not by the violence of the people without order of the council that he was put to death; for here is the usual ceremony of regular executions, he was cast out of the city, and the hands of the witnesses were first upon him. Let us observe here the wonderful discomposure of the spirits of his enemies and persecutors, and the wonderful composure of his spirit.

First. See the strength of corruption in the persecutors of Stephen; malice in perfection, hell itself broken loose, and men become incarnate devils! The serpent's seed spitting their venom.

1. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart," *ver. 54*; *διεσπάρτο*, the same word that is used, *Heb. xi. 37*, and translated, "they were sawn asunder." They were put to as much torture in their minds as ever the martyrs were put to in their bodies. They were filled with indignation at the unanswerable arguments that Stephen urged for their conviction, and that they could find nothing to say against them. They were not pricked to the heart with sorrow, as those were, *ch. ii. 37*; but cut to the heart with rage and fury, as they themselves were, *ch. v. 33*. Stephen rebuked them sharply, as Paul expresses it, *Tit. i. 13*; *ἀποτόμος*, 'cuttingly,' for "they were cut to the heart," by the reproof. Note, Rejecters of the Gospel, and opposers of it, are really tormentors to themselves. Enmity to God is a heart-cutting thing; faith and love are heart-healing. When they heard how he that looked like an angel before he began his discourse, talked like an angel, like a messenger from heaven, before he had done it, they were "like a wild bull in a net, full of the fury of the Lord," *Isa. li. 20*; despairing to run down a cause so bravely pleaded, and yet resolved not to yield to it.

2. They "gnashed upon him with their teeth." This speaks, 1st. Great malice and rage against him; Job complained of his enemy, that he gnashed upon him with his teeth, *Job xvi. 9*; the language of this was, "O that we had of his flesh to eat!" *Job xxxi. 31*. They grinned at him, as dogs at those they are enraged at; and therefore Paul, cautioning against those of the circumcision, saith, "Beware of dogs," *Phil. iii. 2*. Enmity at the saints turns men into brute beasts. 2nd. Great vexation within themselves. They fretted to see in him such manifest tokens of a Divine power and presence, and it vexed them to the heart. "The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth and melt away," *Ps. cxii. 10*. Gnashing of the teeth is often used to express the horror and torments of the damned. Those that have the malice of hell, cannot but have with it some of the pains of hell.

3. They "cried out with a loud voice," *ver. 50*. To irritate and excite one another, and to drown the noise of the clamours of their own and one another's consciences, when he said he saw heaven opened, they "cried with a loud voice," that he might not be heard to speak. Note, It is very common for a righteous cause, particularly the righteous cause of Christ's religion, to be endeavoured to be run down by noise and clamour; what is wanting in reason is made up in tumult, and "the cry of him that ruleth among fools," while "the words of the wise are heard in quiet." They "cried with a loud voice," as soldiers, when they are going to engage in battle, mustering up all their spirit and vigour for this desperate encounter.

4. They "stopped their ears," that they might not hear their own noisiness. Or, perhaps, under pretence that they could not bear to hear his blasphemies. As Caiaphas rent his clothes when Christ said, "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man coming in glory," *Mat. xxvi. 64, 65*, so these here stopped their ears when Stephen said, "I now see the Son of man standing in glory;" both pretending that what was spoken was not to be heard with patience. Their stopping their ears was, 1st. A manifest specimen of their wilful obstinacy; they were resolved they would not hear what had a tendency to convince them, which was it that the prophets often complained of; they were "like the deaf adder, that will not hear the voice of the charmer," *Ps. lviii. 4, 5*. 2nd. It was a fatal omen of that judicial hardness to which God would give them up. They stopped their ears, and then God in a way of righteous judgment stopped them. That was the work that was now in doing with the unbelieving Jews, "Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy;" thus was Stephen's character of them answered, "Ye uncircumcised in heart and ears."

5. They "ran upon him with one accord." The people and the elders of the people, judges, prosecutors, witnesses, and spectators, they all flew upon him, as beasts upon their prey. See how violent they were, and in what haste they "ran upon him," though there was no danger of his outrunning them; and see how unanimous they were in this evil thing, they "ran upon him with one accord," one and all, hoping thereby to terrify him, and put him into confusion; envying him his composure and comfort in soul, with which he wonderfully enjoyed himself in the midst of this hurry, they did all they could to ruffle him.

6. They "cast him out of the city, and stoned him," as if he were not worthy to live in Jerusalem, nay, not worthy to live in this world; pretending herein to execute the law of Moses, *Lev. xxiv. 16*. "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death, all the congregation shall certainly stone him." And thus they had put Christ to death, when this same court had found him guilty of blasphemy, but that, for his greater ignominy, they were desirous he should be crucified, and God overruled it, for the fulfilling of the Scripture. The fury with which they managed the execution is intimated in that, they "cast him out of the city," as if they could not bear the sight of him; they treated him as an anathema, as the offscouring of all things. The witnesses against him were the leaders in the execution, according to the law, *Deut. xvii. 7*, "The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death;" and particularly in the case of blasphemy, *Lev. xxiv. 14; Deut. xiii. 9*. Thus they were to confirm their testimony. Now, the stoning of a man being a laborious piece of work, the witnesses put off their upper garments that they might not hang in their way, and they "laid them down at a young man's feet, whose

vii. 59, 60. This prayer of Stephen's was addressed directly to the Lord Jesus. The spirit of confidence, peace, and forgiveness which it breathed may be compared with our Lord's own words on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" and again, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." "Luke describes the end of Stephen by designedly employing a word (occurring, e.g., John xi. 11; Acts xiii. 36; 2 Pet. iii. 4) which does not at first view seem to correspond in the least to a violent and

bloody death. He evidently intends to imply by it that the end of the noble disciple had, nevertheless, been peaceful, through the divine power and grace of the Redeemer, who overcame for him the terrors of a bloody death, and received his spirit. For although Stephen was overpowered and murdered by lawless violence and a brutal fury that was set on fire of hell, nevertheless, even when he succumbed, he gained a glorious victory by his steadfast faith, his forgiving love, and his patience. The people of Israel seemed indeed to have pre-

name was Saul," now a pleased spectator of this tragedy. It is the first time we find mention of his name; we shall know it and love it better when we find it changed to Paul, and him changed from a persecutor into a preacher. This little instance of his agency in Stephen's death he afterwards reflected upon with regret, *ch. xxii. 20*, "I kept the raiment of them that slew him."

Secondly, See the strength of grace in Stephen, and the wonderful instances of God's favour to him, and working in him. As his persecutors were full of Satan, so was he "full of the Holy Ghost," fuller than ordinary, anointed with fresh oil for the combat; that as the day so might the strength be. Upon this account they are blessed who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, that the Spirit of God and of glory rests upon them, *2 Pet. iv. 14*. When he was chosen to public service, he was described to be "a man full of the Holy Ghost," *ch. vi. 5*; and, now that he is called out to martyrdom, he has still the same character. Note, They that are full of the Holy Ghost are fit for any thing, either to do for Christ, or to suffer for him; and those whom God calls out to hard services for his name, he will qualify them for those services, and carry them comfortably through them, by filling them with the Holy Ghost; that, as their afflictions for Christ do abound, their consolation in him may yet more abound, and then none of these things move them. Now here we have a remarkable communion between this blessed martyr and the blessed Jesus in this critical moment. When the followers of Christ are for his sake "killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter," doth that separate them from the love of Christ? doth he love them the less? do they love him the less? No, by no means; and so it appears by this story, in which we may observe,

1. Christ's gracious manifestation of himself to Stephen, both for his comfort and for his honour in the midst of his sufferings; when they were cut to the heart, and gnashed upon him with their teeth, ready to eat him up, then he had a view of the glory of Christ sufficient to fill him with joy unspeakable; which was intended not only for his encouragement, but for the support and comfort of all God's suffering servants in all ages.

1st. He, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven," *ver. 55*. *First*, Thus he looked above the power and fury of his persecutors, and did as they were despise them, and laugh them to scorn, as the daughter of Zion, *Isa. xxxvii. 22*. They had their eyes fixed upon him full of malice and cruelty, but he looked up to heaven, and never minded them; was so taken up with the eternal life now in prospect, that he seemed to have no manner of concern for the natural life now at stake. Instead of looking about him, to see either which way he was in danger or which way he might make his escape, he looks up to heaven, for thence only comes his help, and thitherward his way is still open; though they compass him about on every side, they cannot interrupt his intercourse with heaven. Note, A believing regard to God and the upper world will be of great use to us to set us above the fear of man; for, as far as we are under the influence of that, we forget the Lord our maker, *Isa. li. 13*. *Secondly*, Thus he directed his sufferings to the glory of God, to the honour of Christ, and did as it were appeal to heaven concerning them: Lord, for thy sake I suffer this; and express his earnest expectation that Christ should be magnified in his body. Now he was ready to be offered, he looks up stedfastly to heaven, as one willing to offer himself. *Thirdly*, Thus he lifted up his soul with his eyes to God in the heavens in pious ejaculations, calling upon God for wisdom and grace to carry him through this trial in a right manner. God has promised that he will be with his servants whom he calls out to suffer for him; but he will for this be sought unto. He is high unto them, but it is in that which they call upon him for. "Is any afflicted? let him pray." *Fourthly*, Thus he breathed after the heavenly country to which he saw the fury of his persecutors would presently send him. It is good for dying saints to look up stedfastly to heaven; Yonder is the place whither death will carry my better part, and then, "O death, where is thy sting?" *Fifthly*, Thus he made it to appear that he was "full of the Holy Ghost;" for, wherever the Spirit of grace dwells, and works, and reigns, he directs the eye of the soul upward. Those that are "full of the Holy Ghost" will look up stedfastly to heaven, for there the heart is. *Sixthly*, Thus he put himself into a posture to receive the following manifestation of the Divine glory and grace. If we expect to hear from heaven, we must look up stedfastly to heaven.

2nd. He "saw the glory of God," *ver. 55*; for he saw, in order to that, the heavens opened, *ver. 56*. Some think his eyes were strengthened, and the sight of them so raised above its natural pitch by a supernatural power, that he saw into the third heavens, though at so vast a distance, as Moses' sight was enlarged to see the whole land of Canaan. Others think it was a representation of the glory of God set before his eyes, as before Isaiah and Ezekiel; heaven did as it were come down to him, *Rev. xxi. 2*. The heavens were opened to give him a view of the happiness he was going to, that he might in prospect of that go cheerfully through death, so great a death. Would we by faith look up stedfastly, we might see the heavens opened by the mediation of Christ, the veil being rent, and a new and living way laid open for us into the holiest; the heaven is opened for the settling of a correspondence between God and men, that his favours and blessings may come down to us, and our prayers and praises may go up to him. We may also see the glory of God, as far as he has revealed it in his Word, and the sight of this will carry us through all the terrors of sufferings and death.

3rd. He "saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God," *ver. 55*; "the Son of man," so it is, *ver. 56*. Jesus being the Son of man, having taken our nature with him to heaven, and being there clothed with a body, might be seen with bodily eyes, and so Stephen saw him. When the Old Testament prophets saw the glory of God, it was attended with angels. The Shechinah, or Divine presence, in Isaiah's vision, was attended with seraphim; in Ezekiel's vision, with cherubim; both signifying the angels, the ministers of God's providence. But here no mention is made of the angels, though they surround the throne and the Lamb; and instead of them Stephen sees Jesus at the right hand of God, the great Mediator of God's grace, from whom more glory redounds to God than from all the ministrations of the holy angels. The glory of God shines brightest in the face of Jesus Christ, for there shines the glory of his grace, which is the most illustrious instance of his glory. God appears more glorious with Jesus standing at his right hand, than with millions of angels about him. Now, *First*, Here is a proof of the exaltation of Christ to the Father's right hand. The apostles saw him ascend, but they did not see him sit down; "a cloud received him out of their sight." We are told that he sat down on the right hand of God, but was ever he seen there? Yes; Stephen saw him there, and was abundantly satisfied with the sight. He saw Jesus "at the right hand of God," noting both his transcendent dignity and his sovereign dominion; his uncontrollable ability and his universal agency. Whatever God's right hand either gives to us, or receives from us, or doth concerning us, it is by him; for he is his right hand. *Secondly*, He is usually said to sit there; but Stephen sees him standing there, as one more than ordinarily concerned at present for his suffering servant. He stood up as a judge to plead his cause against his persecutors, he is raised up out of his holy habitation, *Zec. ii. 13*; comes out of his place to punish, *Isa. xxvi. 21*; he stands ready to receive him and crown him, and, in the meantime, to give him a prospect of the joy set before him. *Thirdly*, This was intended for the encouragement of

Stephen; he sees Christ is for him, and then no matter who is against him. When our Lord Jesus was in his agony, an angel appeared to him, strengthening him; but Stephen had Christ himself appearing to him. Note, Nothing so comfortable to dying saints, nor so animating to suffering saints, as to see Jesus at the right hand of God; and, blessed be God, by faith we may see him there.

4th. He told those about him what he saw; *ver. 56*, "Behold, I see the heavens opened." That which was a cordial to him ought to have been a conviction to them, and a caution to them to take heed of proceeding against one whom Heaven thus smiled upon; and therefore what he saw he declared, let them make what use they pleased of it. If some were exasperated by it, others perhaps might be wrought upon to consider this Jesus whom they persecuted, and to believe in him.

2. His pious addresses to Jesus Christ. The manifestation of God's glory to him did not set him above praying, but rather set him upon it. "They stoned Stephen, calling upon God," *ver. 59*. Though he called upon God, and by that shewed himself to be a trueborn Israelite, yet they proceeded to stone him, not considering how dangerous it is to fight against those that have an interest in Heaven. Though they stoned him, yet he called upon God; nay, therefore he called upon him. Note, It is the comfort of those who are unjustly hated and persecuted by men, that they have a God to go to, a God all-sufficient to call upon. Men stop their ears, as they did here, *ver. 57*, but God doth not. Stephen was now cast out of the city, but he was not cast out from his God. He was now taking his leave of the world, and therefore calls upon God, for we must do that as long as we live. Note, It is good to die praying; then we need help; strength we never had to do a work we never did; and how must we fetch in that help and strength but by prayer?

Two short prayers Stephen offered up to God in his dying moments, and in them, as it were, breathed out his soul.

1. Here is a prayer for himself: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Thus Christ had himself resigned his spirit immediately into the hand of the Father; we are here taught to resign ours into the hands of Christ as Mediator, by him to be recommended to the Father. Stephen saw Jesus standing at the Father's right hand, and he thus calls to him, Blessed Jesus, do that for me now which thou standest there to do for all thine, receive my departing spirit into thy hand. Observe,

1st. The soul is the man; and our great concern, living and dying, must be about our souls. Stephen's body was to be miserably broken and shattered, and overwhelmed with a shower of stones, the earthly house of his tabernacle violently beaten down and abused; but, however it goes with that, Lord, saith he, let my spirit be safe; let it go well with my poor soul. Thus, while we live, our care should be that, though the body be starved or stripped, the soul may be fed and clothed; though the body lies in pain, the soul may dwell at ease. And, when we die, that though the body be thrown by as a despised broken vessel, and a vessel in which there is no pleasure, yet the soul may be presented a vessel of honour; that God may be the strength of the heart, and its portion, though the flesh fail.

2nd. Our Lord Jesus is God, to whom we are to seek, and in whom we are to confide and comfort ourselves living and dying. Stephen here prays to Christ, and so must we; for it is the will of God that all men should thus honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. It is Christ we are to commit ourselves to, who alone is able to keep what we commit to him against that day. It is necessary we have an eye to Christ when we come to die; for there is no venturing into another world but under his conduct, no living comforts in dying moments but what are fetched from him.

3rd. Christ's receiving our spirits at death is the great thing we are to be careful about, and to comfort ourselves with. We ought to be in care about this while we live, that Christ may receive our spirits when we die; for, if he reject and disown them, whither will they betake themselves? How can they escape being a prey to the roaring lion? To him, therefore, we must commit them daily to be ruled and sanctified, and made meet for heaven; and then, and not otherwise, he will receive them. And if this has been our care while we live, it may be our comfort when we come to die, that we shall be received into everlasting habitations.

2. Here is a prayer for his persecutors, *ver. 60*.

1st. The circumstances of this prayer are observable, for it seems to have been offered up with something more of solemnity than the former. *First*, He "kneeled down," which was an expression of his humility in prayer. *Secondly*, He "cried with a loud voice," which was an expression of his importunity. But why should he thus shew more humility and importunity in this request than in the former? Why, there was none could doubt of his being in good earnest in his prayers for himself, and therefore there he needed not to use such outward expressions of it; but in his prayer for his enemies, because that is so much against the grain of corrupt nature, it was requisite he should give proofs of his being in earnest.

2nd. The prayer itself; "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" therein he followed the example of his dying Master, who prayed thus for his persecutors, "Father, forgive them;" and set an example to all following sufferers in the cause of Christ, thus to pray for those that persecute them. Prayer may preach; this did so to those who stoned Stephen, and therefore he kneeled down, that they might take notice he was going to pray, and "cried with a loud voice," that they might take notice of what he said; and might learn. *First*, That what they did was a sin, a great sin, which if Divine mercy and grace did not prevent, would be laid to their charge, to their everlasting confusion. *Secondly*, That, notwithstanding their malice and fury against him, he was in charity with them, and was so far from desiring that God would avenge his death upon them, that it was his hearty prayer to God that it might not in any degree be laid to their charge. A sad reckoning there would be for it: if they did not repent, it would certainly be laid to their charge; but he, for his part, did not desire the worst day. Let them take notice of this; and, when their thoughts were cool, surely they would not easily forgive themselves putting him to death who could so easily forgive them. "The bloodthirsty hate the upright, but the just seek his soul," *Pr. xxix. 10*. *Thirdly*, That though the sin was very heinous, yet they must not despair of the pardon of it upon their repentance. If they would lay it to their hearts, God would not lay it to their charge. "Do you think," saith St. Austin, "that Paul heard Stephen pray this prayer? It is likely he did," saith he, "and ridiculed it then; (*audivit subsannans, sed irritis*,—'he heard with scorn,') but afterwards he had the benefit of it, and fared the better for it."

3. His expiring with this; "When he had said this, he fell asleep;" or, "as he was saying this, the blow came that was mortal." Note, Death is but a sleep to good people; not the sleep of the soul, (Stephen had given that up into Christ's hand,) but the sleep of the body; it is its rest from all its grief and toils, it is perfect ease and indolence. Stephen died as much in a hurry as ever any man did, and yet, when he died, he fell asleep; he applied himself to his dying work with as much composure of mind as if he had been going to sleep; it was but closing his eyes and dying. Observe, He fell asleep when he was praying for his persecutors; it is expressed as if he thought he could not die in peace till he had done that. It contributes very much to our dying comfortably, to

vailed when they silenced this enlightened and bold confessor of Jesus by robbing him of life. But they sustained a vast moral and religious loss, through their implacable hostility towards Stephen, their increased obduracy and opposition to the truth, and the growing power which their mad passions acquired over them. They degraded themselves, became a prey to their delusions and passions, and were in truth not the conquering but the conquered party" (Lechler)

viii. 1. Probable date, A.D. 37. "Saul;" St. Paul's Jewish name (see Note to chap. xiii. 9). "Consenting unto his death;" the expression signifies hearty approval. "At that time;" the majority of commentators translate these words literally, "on that day." Alford objects to this rendering, on the ground that what follows cannot have happened on the same day. But is this necessary? Lechler's note is well worthy of perusal. He says, "There is no reason for departing from the literal sense, 'on that day.' We might rather infer,

die in charity with all men; we are then found of Christ in peace. Let not the sin of life go down upon our wrath. "He fell asleep;" the vulgar Latin adds, "in the Lord;" in the embraces of his love. If he thus sleep, he shall do well; he shall awake again in the morning of the resurrection.

CHAPTER VIII.

In this chapter we have an account of the persecutions of the Christians, and the propagating of Christianity thereby. It was strange, but very true, that the disciples of Christ, the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied. 1. Here is the church suffering: upon the occasion of the putting Stephen to death a very sharp storm arose, which forced many from Jerusalem, ver. 1—3. 2. Here is the church spreading by the ministry of Philip and others that were dispersed upon that occasion. We have here, 1. The Gospel brought to Samaria; preached there, ver. 4, 5; embraced there, ver. 6—8; even by Simon Magus, ver. 9—13; the gift of the Holy Ghost conferred upon some of the believing Samaritans, by the imposition of the hands of Peter and John, ver. 14—17; and the severe rebuke given by Peter to Simon Magus for bidding money for a power to bestow that gift, ver. 18—25. 2. The Gospel sent to Ethiopia, by the eunuch, a person of quality of that country: he is returning home in his chariot from Jerusalem, ver. 26—28; Philip is sent to him, and in his chariot preaches Christ to him, ver. 29—35; baptizeth him upon his profession of the Christian faith, ver. 36—38; and then leaves him, ver. 39, 40. Thus in different ways and methods the Gospel was dispersed among the nations; and one way or other, "Have they not all heard?"



ND Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles.

2 And devout men carried

Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

In these verses we have,

First. Something more concerning Stephen, and his death; how people stood affected to it: variously, as generally in such cases, according to men's different sentiments of things. Christ had told his disciples when he was parting with them, *Jno. xvi. 20*, "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice." Accordingly here is,

1. Stephen's death rejoiced in by one: by many, no doubt, but by one in particular, and that was Saul, who was afterwards called Paul. He "was consenting to his death," *συνοδοῦν*, he "consented to it with delight," so the word signifies; he was pleased with it; he fed his eyes with this bloody spectacle, in hopes it would put a stop to the growth of Christianity. We have reason to think that Paul ordered Luke to insert this for shame to himself, and glory to free grace. Thus he owns himself guilty of the blood of Stephen, and aggravates it with this, that he did not do it with regret and reluctance, but with delight and a full satisfaction, like those who not only do such things, but have pleasure in them that do them.

2. Stephen's death bewailed by others, ver. 2. Devout men, which some understand of those that were properly so called, proselytes, one of whom Stephen himself probably was; or, it may be taken more largely, some of the church that were more devout and zealous than the rest, went and gathered up the poor crushed and broken remains, to which they gave a decent interment, probably in the field of blood, which was bought some time ago to bury strangers in. They buried him solemnly, and "made great lamentation over him." Though his death was of great advantage to himself, and great service to the church, yet they bewailed it as a general loss, so well qualified was he for the service, and so likely to be useful both as a deacon and as a disputant. It is an ill symptom if, when such men are taken away, it is not laid to heart. Those devout men paid these their last respects to Stephen, 1st. To shew that they were not ashamed of the cause for which he suffered, nor ashamed of the wrath of those that were enemies to it; for, though they now triumph, the cause is a righteous cause, and will be at last a victorious one. 2nd. To shew the great value and esteem they had for this faithful servant of Jesus Christ, this first martyr for the Gospel, whose memory shall always be precious to them, notwithstanding the ignominy of his death. They study to do honour to him whom God put honour upon. 3rd. To testify their belief and hope of the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Secondly. An account of this persecution of the church, which begins upon the martyrdom of Stephen. When the fury of the Jews ran with such violence, and to such a height against Stephen, it could not quickly either stop itself or spend itself. The bloody are often in Scripture called bloodthirsty; for when they have tasted blood they thirst for more. One would have thought Stephen's dying prayers, and dying comforts, should have overcome them, and melted them into a better opinion of Christians and Christianity, but it seems it did not. The persecution goes on; for, 1st. They were more exasperated when they saw they could prevail nothing, and as if they hoped to be too hard for God himself, they resolve to follow their blow; and, perhaps, because they were none of them struck dead upon the place for stoning Stephen, their hearts were the more fully set in them to do evil. 2nd. Perhaps the disciples were the more emboldened to dispute against them, as Stephen did, seeing how triumphantly he finished his course; which would provoke them so much the more. Observe,

1. Against whom this persecution was raised. It was against the church in Jerusalem, which is no sooner planted, but it is persecuted; as Christ often intimated, that tribulation and persecution would arise because of the Word. And Christ had particularly foretold that Jerusalem would soon be made too hot for his followers, for that city had been famous for killing the prophets, and stoning them that were sent to it, *Mat. xxiii. 37*. It should seem that in this persecution many were put to death; for Paul owns that at this time he

"persecuted this way unto the death," *ch. xxii. 4*; and, *ch. xxvi. 10*, that "when they were put to death he gave his voice against them."

2. Who was an active man in it. None so zealous, so busy, as Saul, a young Pharisee; ver. 3, "As for Saul," (who had been twice mentioned before, and now again, for a notorious persecutor,) "he made havoc of the church;" he did all he could to lay it waste and ruin it; he cared not what mischief he did to the disciples of Christ, nor knew when to take up. He aimed at no less than the cutting off of the gospel Israel, that the name of it should be no more in remembrance, *Ps. lxxxiii. 4*. He was the fittest tool the chief priests could find out to serve their purposes; he was informer-general against the disciples, a messenger of the great council to be employed in searching for meetings, and seizing all that were suspected to favour that way. Saul was bred a scholar, a gentleman, and yet did not think it below him to be employed in the dirtiest work of that kind. 1st. He "entered into every house," making no difficulty of breaking open doors night or day, and having a force attending him for that purpose. He entered into every house where they used to keep their meetings, or every house that had any Christians in it, or was thought to have. No man could be secure in his own house, though it is his castle. 2nd. He haled, with the utmost contempt and cruelty, both men and women, dragged them along the streets, without any regard to the tenderness of the weaker sex; he stooped so low as to take cognizance of the meanness that were leavened with the Gospel, so extremely bigoted was he. 3rd. He committed them to prison, in order to their being tried and put to death, unless they would renounce Christ; and some, we find, were compelled by him to blaspheme, *ch. xxvi. 11*.

3. What was the effect of this persecution. "They were all scattered abroad," ver. 1; not all the believers, but all the preachers, who were principally struck at, and against whom warrants were issued out to take them up. They, remembering our Master's rule, "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another," dispersed themselves, by agreement, "throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria," not so much for fear of sufferings, for Judæa and Samaria were not so far off from Jerusalem but that, if they made a public appearance there as they determined to do, their persecutors' power would soon reach them there; but because they looked upon this as an intimation of Providence to them to scatter. Their work was pretty well done in Jerusalem, and now it was time to think of the necessities of other places, for their Master had told them that they must be his witnesses in Jerusalem first, and then in all Judæa and in Samaria, and then to the uttermost part of the earth, *ch. i. 8*, and that method they observe. Though persecution may not drive us off from our work, yet it may send us, as a hint of Providence, to work elsewhere.

The preachers were all scattered, except the apostles, who probably were directed by the Spirit to continue at Jerusalem yet for some time, they being, by the special providence of God, screened from the storm, and, by the special grace of God, enabled to face the storm. They tarried at Jerusalem, that they might be ready to go where their assistance was most needed by the other preachers that were sent to break the ice; as Christ ordered his disciples to go to those places where he himself designed to come, *Lu. x. 1*. The apostles continued longer together at Jerusalem than one would have thought, considering the command and commission given to them, to go into all the world, and to disciple all nations: see *ch. xv. 6*; *Gal. i. 17*. But what was done by the evangelists whom they sent forth was reckoned as done by them.

4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city. 9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: 10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. 11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

Samson's riddle is here again unriddled, "Out of the eater comes forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness." The persecution that was designed to extirpate the church was, by the overruling providence of God, made an occasion of the enlargement of it. Christ had said, "I am come to send fire on the earth;" and they thought by scattering those who were kindled with that fire, to have put it out, but, instead of that, they did but help to spread it.

1. Here is a general account of what was done by them all; ver. 4, "They

d priori, from psychological considerations, as well as from others furnished by the natural sequence of events, that the stoning of Stephen would be immediately followed by an outbreak of fanaticism, of which the Christians generally would be the victims. As a wild beast that has once tasted blood is ever afterwards governed by a thirst for it, so the brutal passions of men, when they are once roused, and especially when they are combined with religious fanaticism, acquire additional ferocity after every successful outbreak. It is

not probable that many days passed by before the great persecution began; it is possible that the mass of the Jews, on returning to the city, at once began a general attack on the Christians. And this persecution was, without doubt, not exclusively a measure adopted by the theocratical authorities, but rather the act of the people, who had previously been 'stirred up,' according to chap. vi. 12, and had now participated in the act of stoning Stephen." For the account of this dispersion, see chap. xi. 19, 20.

went every where preaching the Word." They did not go to hide themselves for fear of suffering, nor shew themselves as proud of their sufferings, but they went up and down to scatter the knowledge of Christ in every place where they were scattered. They went every where, into the way of the Gentiles, and the cities of the Samaritans, which before they were forbidden to go into, *Mat. x. 5*. They did not keep together in a body, though that might have been a strength to them; but they scattered into all parts, not to take their ease, but to find out work. They went evangelising the Word, preaching the word of the Gospel; that was it which filled them, and which they endeavoured to fill the country with, those of them that were preaching in their preaching, and others in their common converse. They were now in a country where they were no strangers, for Christ and his disciples had conversed much in the regions of Judæa, so that they had a foundation laid there for them to build upon; and it would be requisite to let the people there know what that doctrine which Jesus had preached there some time ago was come to, and that it was not left and forgotten, as perhaps they were made to believe.

11. A particular account of what was done by Philip. We shall hear of the progress and success of others of them afterwards, *ch. xi. 19*; but here must attend the motions of Philip, not Philip the apostle, but Philip the deacon, who was chosen and ordained to serve tables, but, having used the office of a deacon well, he purchased to himself a good degree, and great boldness in the faith, *1 Tim. iii. 13*. Stephen was advanced to the degree of a martyr, Philip to the degree of an evangelist, which when he entered upon, being obliged by it to give himself to the word and prayer, he was no doubt discharged from the office of a deacon; for how could he serve tables at Jerusalem, which by that office he was obliged to do, when he was preaching in Samaria? And it is probable two others were chosen in the room of Stephen and Philip. Now observe,

First. What wonderful success Philip had in his preaching, and what reception he met with.

The place he chose was the city of Samaria, the head city of Samaria, the metropolis of that country, which stood there where the city of Samaria had formerly stood, which we read of the building of, *1 Kin. xvi. 24*, now called Sebaste. Some think it was the same with Sychem, or Sychar, that city of Samaria where Christ was, *Jno. iv. 5*. Many of that city then believed in Christ, though he did no miracle among them, *ver. 39, 41*; and now Philip, three years after, carries on the work then begun. The Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans; but Christ sent his Gospel to slay all enmities, and particularly that between the Jews and the Samaritans, by making them one in his church.

2. The doctrine he preached was Christ; for he determined to know nothing else. He "preached Christ to them," he proclaimed Christ to them, so the word signifies; as a king when he comes to the crown is proclaimed throughout his dominions. The Samaritans had an expectation of the Messiah's coming, as appears by *Jno. iv. 25*; now Philip tells them he is come, and that the Samaritans are welcome to him. Ministers' business is to preach Christ; Christ, and him crucified; Christ, and him glorified.

3. The proofs he produced for the confirmation of his doctrine were miracles, *ver. 6*. To convince them that he had his commission from Heaven, and therefore not only they might venture upon what he said, but they were bound to yield to it, he shews them this broad seal of heaven annexed to it, which the God of truth would never put to a lie. The miracles were undeniable; they "heard and saw the miracles which he did;" they heard the commanding words he spoke, and saw the amazing effect of them immediately; that he spoke, and it was done. And the nature of the miracles was such as suited the intention of his commission, and gave light and lustre to it.

1st. He was sent to break the power of Satan; and, in token of that, "unclean spirits," being charged in the name of the Lord Jesus to remove, "came out of many that were possessed with them," *ver. 7*. As far as the Gospel prevails, Satan is forced to quit his hold of men, and his interest in them, and then those are restored to themselves, and to their right mind again, who, while he kept possession, were distracted. Wherever the Gospel gains the admission and submission it ought to have, evil spirits are dislodged, and particularly unclean spirits, all inclinations to the lusts of the flesh, which war against the soul; for God has called us from uncleanness to holiness, *1 Thes. iv. 7*. This was signified by the casting of these unclean spirits out of the bodies of people, who, it is here said, came out crying with a loud voice, which signifies that they came out with great reluctance, and sore against their wills, but were forced to acknowledge themselves overcome by a superior power, *Mar. i. 26*; *iii. 11*; *ix. 26*.

2nd. He was sent to heal the minds of men, to cure a distempered world, and to put it into a good state of health; and, in token of that, "many that were taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed." Those distempers are instanced in that were most difficult to be cured by a course of nature, that the miraculous cure might be the more illustrious; and those that were most expressive of the disease of sin, and that moral impotency which the souls of men labour under as to the service of God. The grace of God in the Gospel is designed for the healing of those that are spiritually lame and paralytic, and cannot help themselves, *Rom. v. 6*.

4. The acceptance which Philip's doctrine thus proved met with in Samaria; *ver. 6*. "The people with one accord gave heed to those things which Philip spake;" induced thereto by the miracles which served at first to gain attention, and so by degrees to gain assent. There then begins to be some hopes of people, when they begin to take notice of what is said to them concerning the things of their souls and eternity; when they begin to give heed to the Word of God, as those that are well pleased to hear it, desirous to understand and remember it, and that look upon themselves as concerned in it. The common people gave heed to Philip; *οἱ ὄχλοι*, "a multitude" of them; not here and there one, but with one accord; they were all of a mind that the doctrine of the Gospel was fit to be inquired into, and an impartial hearing given to it.

5. The satisfaction they had in attending on, and attending to, Philip's preaching, and the success it had with many of them; *ver. 8*. "There was great joy in that city;" for, *ver. 12*, "They believed Philip, and were baptized" into the faith of Christ; the generality of them, "both men and women." Observe, 1st. Philip preached the "things concerning the kingdom of God," the constitution of that kingdom, the laws and ordinances of it, the liberties and privileges of it, and the obligations we are all under to be the loyal subjects of that kingdom; and he preached the name of Jesus Christ as king of that kingdom, his name which is above every name; he preached it up in its commanding power and influence, all that by which he has made himself known. 2nd. The people not only gave heed to what he said, but at length believed it; were fully convinced that it was of God, and not of men, and gave up themselves to the conduct and government of it. As to this mountain on which they had hitherto worshipped God, and placed a great deal of religion in it, they were now as much weaned from it as ever they had been wedded to it, and become the true worshippers, who worship the Father in spirit and in truth, and in the name of Christ, the true temple, *Jno. iv. 20, 23*. 3rd. "When they believed," without scruple (though they were Samaritans) and without delay, "they were baptized," openly professed the Christian faith, promised to adhere to it, and then, by washing them with water, were solemnly admitted into the commu-

nion of the Christian church, and owned as brethren by the disciples. Men only were capable of being admitted into the Jewish church by circumcision; but to shew, that in Jesus Christ there is neither male nor female, *Gal. iii. 28*, but both are alike welcome to him, the initiating ordinance is such as women are capable of; for they are numbered with God's spiritual Israel, though not with Israel according to the flesh, *Num. i. 2*. And from hence it is easily gathered, that women are to be admitted to the Lord's supper, though it doth not appear that there were any among those to whom it was first administered. 4th. This occasioned great joy. Each one rejoiced for himself, as he in the parable who found the treasure hid in the field; and they all rejoiced for the benefit hereby brought to their city, and that it came without opposition, which it would scarce have done if Samaria had been within the jurisdiction of the chief priests. Note, The bringing of the Gospel to any place is just matter of joy, of great joy to that place. Hence the spreading of the Gospel in the world is often prophesied of in the Old Testament as the diffusing of joy among the nations, *Ps. lxxvii. 4*. "Let the nations be glad, and sing for joy;" *1 Thes. i. 6*. The Gospel of Christ doth not make men melancholy, but fills them with joy, if it be received as it should be; for it is "glad tidings of great joy to all people," *Luk. ii. 10*.

Secondly. What there was in particular at this city of Samaria, that made the success of the Gospel there more than ordinary wonderful.

1. That Simon Magus had been busy there, and had gained a great interest among the people, and yet they believed the things that Philip spoke. To unlearn that which is bad, proves many times a harder task than to learn that which is good. These Samaritans, though they were not idolaters as the Gentiles, nor prejudiced against the Gospel by traditions received from their fathers, yet they had of late been drawn to follow Simon a conjuror, (for so Magus signifies,) that made a mighty noise among them, and had strangely bewitched them. We are here told,

1st. How strong the delusion of Satan was, by which they were brought into the interests of this great deceiver. He had been for some time, nay, for a long time, in this city using sorcery; perhaps, he came thither by the instigation of the devil, soon after our Saviour had been there, to undo what he had been doing there; for it was always Satan's way to crush a good work in its bud and infancy, *1 Cor. xi. 3*; *1 Thes. iii. 5*. Now,

First. Simon assumed to himself that which was considerable; he "gave out that himself was some great one;" and would have all people to believe so, and to pay him respect accordingly, and then, as to every thing else, they might do as they pleased. He had no design to reform their lives, or improve their worship and devotion, only to make them believe that he was *ὁ μέγας*, some Divine person or other. Justin Martyr saith, he would be worshipped as *τῷ θεῷ ὅμοιος*, the chief God. He gave out himself to be the Son of God, the Messiah, so some think; or, to be an angel or a prophet. Perhaps he was uncertain within himself what title of honour to pretend to; but he would be thought some great one. Pride and ambition, and an affectation of grandeur, has always been the principle of abundance of mischief both to the world and to the church.

Secondly. The people ascribed to him what he pleased. 1st. They "all gave heed to him, from the least to the greatest;" both young and old, both poor and rich, both governors and governed. "To him they had regard," *ver. 10, 11*, and perhaps the more, because the time fixed for the coming of the Messiah was now expired, which had raised a general expectation of the appearing of some great one about this time. Probably he was a native of their country, and therefore they embraced him the more cheerfully, that by giving honour to him they might reflect it upon themselves. 2nd. They said of him, "This man is the great power of God;" the power of God, that great power, so it might be read. That power which made the world. See how ignorant, inconsiderate people mistake that which is done by the power of Satan, as if it were done by the power of God. Thus, in the Gentile world, devils pass for deities; and in the antichristian kingdom all the world wonders after a beast, to whom the dragon gives his power, and who "opens his mouth in blasphemy against God," *Rev. xiii. 2, 5*. 3rd. They were brought to it by his sorceries; he "bewitched the people of Samaria," *ver. 9*. "Bewitched them with sorceries," *ver. 11*; that is, either, (1.) By his magic arts he bewitched the minds of the people, at least some of them, who drew in others. Satan by his permission filled their hearts to follow Simon. "O foolish Galatians," saith Paul, "who hath bewitched you?" *Gal. iii. 1*. These people are said to be bewitched by Simon, because they were so strangely infatuated to believe a lie. Or, (2.) By his magic arts he did "many signs and lying wonders," which seemed to be miracles, but really were not so; like those of the magicians of Egypt, and those of the man of sin, *2 Thes. ii. 9*. When they knew no better, they were influenced by his sorceries; but when they were acquainted with Philip's real miracles, they saw plainly that the one was real, and the other a sham, and there was as much difference as between Aaron's rod and those of the magicians. "What is the chaff to the wheat?" *Jer. xxiii. 28*.

Thus, notwithstanding the influence Simon Magus had upon them, and the loathsomeness there generally is in people to own themselves in an error, and to retract it, yet, when they saw the difference between Simon and Philip, they quitted Simon, gave heed no longer to him, but to Philip. And thus you see,

2nd. How strong the power of Divine grace is, by which they were brought to Christ, who is truth itself; and was, as I may say, the great undeceiver. By that grace working with the Word, they that had been led captive by Satan were brought into obedience to Christ. Where Satan, as a strong man armed, kept possession of the palace, and thought himself safe, Christ, as a stronger than he, dispossessed him, and divided the spoil; led captivity captive, and made those the trophies of his victory whom the devil had triumphed over. Let us not despair of the worst, when even those whom Simon Magus had bewitched were brought to believe.

2. Here is another thing yet more wonderful, that Simon Magus himself became a convert to the faith of Christ, in show and profession, for a time. "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Yes; *ver. 13*. "Simon himself believed also;" he was convinced that Philip preached a true doctrine, because he saw it confirmed by real miracles, which he was the better able to judge of, because he was conscious to himself of the trick of his own pretended ones. 1st. The present conviction went so far, that he was baptized, was admitted as other believers were, into the church by baptism; and we have no reason to think that Philip did amiss in baptizing him, nor in baptizing him quickly. Though he had been a very wicked man, a sorcerer, a pretender to Divine honours; yet, upon his solemn profession of repentance for his sin, and faith in Jesus Christ, he was baptized. For, as great wickedness before conversion keeps not true penitents from the benefit of God's grace, so neither should it keep professing ones from church fellowship. Prodigals, when they return, must be joyfully welcomed home, though we cannot be sure but that they will play the prodigal again. Nay, though he was now but a hypocrite, and really in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity all this while, and would soon have been found to be so if he had been tried awhile, yet Philip baptized him; for it is God's prerogative to know the heart: the church and its ministers must go by a judgment of charity, as far as there is room for it. It is a maxim

viii. 2. "Devout men:" most likely Jews not yet converted to Christianity.

viii. 3. "Made havoc:" ravaged; a word used of wild beasts or armies. "Haling:" *i.e.*, seizing.

viii. 5. "Philip:" one of the seven deacons (*chap. vi. 5*). Compare the same expression, "city of Samaria," in *John iv. 5*, where Sychar is distinctly named as the city.

viii. 9. "Simon:" called Magus, from a word signifying "exer-

cising magic arts" ("used sorcery," English Version). He was born at Gitton, a city of Samaria; studied at Alexandria, where he became acquainted with the tenets of the Gnostic school. He "amazed" or "astonished" (not "bewitched") the people by his magic, inasmuch that they said he was "the power of God which is called great." Philip's success threatening to draw off his followers and weaken his influence, and being doubtless astonished at the miracles wrought by Philip, and the gift of the Holy Spirit in answer to the laying on of

in the law, *Donc contrarium patet, semper præsuntur meliori parti*.—"We must hope the best as long as we can." And it is a maxim in the discipline of the church, *De secretis non judicat ecclesia*.—"The secrets of the heart God only judgeth." 2nd. The present conviction lasted so long, that "he continued with Philip;" though afterwards he apostatized from Christianity, yet not quickly. He courted Philip's acquaintance, and now he that had given out himself to be some great one, is content to sit at the feet of a preacher of the Gospel. Even bad men, very bad, may sometimes be in a good frame, very good; and they whose hearts still go after their covetousness, may possibly not only come before God as his people come, but continue with them. 3rd. The present conviction was wrought and kept up by the miracles; he wondered to see himself so far outdone in signs and miracles. Many wonder at the proofs of Divine truths that never experience the power of them.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me. 25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

God had wonderfully owned Philip in his work as an evangelist at Samaria; but he could do no more than an evangelist. There were some peculiar powers reserved to the apostles for the keeping up of the dignity of their office; and here we have an account of what was done by two of them there, Peter and John. The twelve kept together at Jerusalem, ver. 1, and thither these good tidings were brought them, "That Samaria had received the Word of God," ver. 14, that a great harvest of souls was gathered, and was likely to be gathered in to Christ there. The Word of God was not only preached to them, but received by them; they bade it welcome, admitted the light of it, and submitted to the power of it. When they heard it, "they sent unto them Peter and John." If Peter had been, as some say he was, the prince of the apostles, he would have sent some of them, or, if he had seen cause, would have gone himself of his own accord; but he was so far from that, that he submitted to an order of the house, and, as a servant to the body, went whither they sent him. Two apostles were sent, the two most eminent, to Samaria, 1st. To encourage Philip, to assist him, and strengthen his hands. Ministers in a higher station, and that excel in gifts and graces, should contrive how they may be helpful to those in a lower sphere, and contribute to their comfort and usefulness. 2nd. To carry on the good work that was begun among the people, and with those heavenly graces that had enriched them to confer upon them spiritual gifts. Now observe.

First. How they advanced and improved those of them that were sincere. It is said, ver. 16, that the Holy Ghost "was as yet fallen upon none of them," in those extraordinary powers which were conveyed by the descent of the Spirit upon the day of pentecost; they were none of them endued with the gift of tongues, which seems then to have been the most usual, immediate effect of the pouring out of the Spirit, see *ch. x. 45, 46*; which was both an eminent sign to them which believed not, and of excellent service to them that did. This, and other such gifts, they had not, "only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," and so engaged to him, and interested in him, which was necessary to salvation; and in that they had joy and satisfaction, ver. 8, though they could not speak with tongues. They that are indeed given up to Christ, and have experienced the sanctifying influences and operations of the Spirit of grace, have great reason to be thankful, and no reason to complain, though they have not those gifts that are for ornament, and would make them bright. But it is intended that they shall go on to the perfection of the present dispensation, for the greater honour of the Gospel. We have reason to think that Philip had received these gifts of the Holy Ghost himself, but not a power to confer them; the apostles must come to do that. And they did it, not upon all that were baptized, but upon some of them, and it should seem, such as were designed for some office in the church, or, at least, to be eminent, active

members of it; and upon some of them, one gift of the Holy Ghost, and upon others another: see *1 Cor. xii. 4, 8*; *xiv. 26*. Now in order to this,

1. The apostles "prayed for them," ver. 15. The Spirit is given, not to ourselves only, *Lu. xi. 13*, but to others also, in answer to prayer. "I will put my Spirit within you," *Eze. xxxvi. 7*; "But I will for this be inquired of," ver. 37. We may take encouragement from this example, in praying to God to give the renewing graces of the Holy Ghost to them whose spiritual welfare we are concerned for. For our children, for our friends, for our ministers, we should pray, and pray earnestly, that they may receive the Holy Ghost; for that includes all blessings.

2. They "laid their hands upon them;" to signify that their prayers were answered, and that the gift of the Holy Ghost was conferred upon them: for upon the use of this sign, "they received the Holy Ghost, and spake with tongues." The laying on of hands was anciently used in blessing by those who blessed with authority. Thus the apostles blessed these new converts, ordained some to be ministers, and confirmed others in their Christianity. We cannot now, nor can any, thus give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands; but this may intimate to us, that those whom we pray for we should use our endeavours with.

Secondly. How they discovered and discarded him that was a hypocrite among them, and that was Simon Magus; for they knew how to "separate between the precious and the vile." Now, observe here.

1. The wicked proposal that Simon made, by which his hypocrisy was discovered; ver. 18, 19. "When he saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given" which should have confirmed his faith in the doctrine of Christ, and increased his veneration for the apostles, it gave him a notion of Christianity as no other but an exalted piece of sorcery, in which he thought himself capable of being equal to the apostles, and therefore "offered them money, saying, Give me also this power." He doth not desire them to lay their hands on him, that he might receive the Holy Ghost himself, for he did not foresee that any thing was to be got by that, but that they would convey to him a power to bestow the gift upon others. He was ambitious to have the honour of an apostle, but not at all solicitous to have the spirit and disposition of a Christian. He was more desirous to gain honour to himself than to do good to others. Now, in making this motion, 1st. He put a great affront upon the apostles, as if they were mercenary men, would do any thing for money, and loved it as well as he did; whereas they had left what they had for Christ, so far were they from aiming to make it more. 2nd. He put a great affront upon Christianity, as if the miracles that were wrought for the proof of it were done by magic arts, only of a different nature from what he himself had practised formerly. 3rd. He shewed that, like Balaam, he aimed at the rewards of divination; for he would not have bidden money for this power if he had not hoped to get money by it. 4th. He shewed that he had a very high conceit of himself, and that he had never had his heart truly humbled. Such a wretch as he had been before his baptism, should have asked, like the prodigal, to be made as one of the hired servants; but, as soon as he is admitted into the family, no less a place will serve him than to be one of the stewards of the household, and to be intrusted with a power which Philip himself had not, but the apostles only.

2. The just rejection of his proposal, and the cutting reproof Peter gave him for it, ver. 20—23.

1st. Peter shews him his crime; ver. 20, "Thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." And thus, *First*. He had overvalued the wealth of this world, as if it were an equivalent for any thing; and as if because, as Solomon saith, It answers all things relating to the life that now is, it would answer all things relating to the other life, and would purchase the pardon of sin, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and eternal life. *Secondly*. He had undervalued the gift of the Holy Ghost, and put it upon a level with the common gifts of nature and providence. He thought the power of an apostle might as well be had for a good fee as the advice of a physician or a lawyer, which was the greatest despite that could be done to the Spirit of grace. All the buying and selling of pardons and indulgences in the church of Rome is the product of this same wicked "thought, that the gift of God may be purchased with money" when the offer of Divine grace, so expressly runs, "without money and without price."

2nd. He shews him his character, which is inferred from his crime. From every thing that a man saith or doth amiss we cannot infer that he is a hypocrite in the profession he makes of religion; but this of Simon's was such a fundamental error as could by no means consist with a state of grace. His bidding money (and that got by sorcery too) was an incontestable evidence that he was yet under the power of a worldly and carnal mind, and was yet that natural man which "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them." And therefore Peter tells him plainly, *First*. That his "heart is not right in the sight of God," ver. 21. Though thou professes to believe, and art baptized, yet thou art not sincere. We are as our hearts are; if they be not right we are wrong; and they are open in the sight of God, who knows them, judgeth them, and judgeth of us by them. That our hearts are what they are in the sight of God, who cannot be deceived; and, if they be not right in his sight, whatever our pretensions be, our religion is vain, and will stand us in no stead. Our great concern is to approve ourselves to Him in our integrity, for otherwise we cheat ourselves into our own ruin. Some refer this particularly to the proposal he made. What he asked is denied him, because his "heart is not right in the sight of God" in asking it; he doth not aim at the glory of God, or the honour of Christ in it, but to make a hand of it for himself; he "asks and has not, because he asks amiss, that he may consume it upon his lusts," and be still thought some great one. *Secondly*. That he is "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity;" "I perceive" that thou art so, ver. 23. This is plain dealing; and plain dealing is best, when we are dealing about souls and eternity. Simon had got a great name among the people, and of late a good name too among God's people; and yet Peter here gives him a black character. Note. It is possible for a man to continue under the power of sin, and yet to put on a form of godliness. "I perceive it," saith Peter. It was not so much by the spirit of discerning with which Peter was endued that he perceived this as by Simon's discovery of it in the proposal he made. Note. The disguises of hypocrites many times are soon seen through. The nature of the wolf shews itself, notwithstanding the cover of the sheep's clothing. Now the character here given of Simon is really the character of all wicked people. 1st. They are "in the gall of bitterness;" odious to God as that which is bitter as gall is to us. Sin is an abominable thing which the Lord hates, and sinners are by it made abominable to him; they are vicious in their own nature. Indwelling sin is a root of bitterness, that bears gall and wormwood, *Deu. xxix. 18*. The faculties corrupted, and the mind embittered against all good, *Heb. xii. 15*. It speaks, likewise, the pernicious consequences of sin; the end is bitter as wormwood. 2nd. They are "in the bond of iniquity;" bound over to the judgment of God by the guilt of sin, and bound under the dominion of Satan by the power of sin; led captive by him at his will; and it is a sore bondage, like that in Egypt, making the life bitter.

3rd. He reads him his doom in two things: *First*. He shall sink with his worldly wealth, which he overvalued; "Thy money perish with thee." 1st.

the apostles' hands, he not only became a disciple, but desired to purchase from the apostles the power of imparting the Holy Spirit. There seems little doubt that his professed discipleship and his request were dictated by the desire to carry on the practice of magic. From this offer on the part of Simon has originated the term "simony," applied to the purchase of any spiritual office.

viii. 23. "Gall of bitterness;" the gall was regarded as the seat of the poison of serpents.

viii. 25. Compare Luke ix. 52—56.

viii. 26. "Gaza;" one of the five principal cities of the Philistines. It was given to Judah, but was taken by the Philistines, and was always regarded as a Philistian city. (See *1 Sam. vi. 17*; *2 Kings xviii. 8*.) It was given to Herod by Augustus, and afterwards was attached to the province of Syria. "Which is desert:" referring not to Gaza, which was a flourishing city at the time, but to the road Philip was to take—that which was desert.

Hereby Peter rejects his offer with the utmost disdain and indignation. Dost thou think thou canst bribe us to betray our trust, and to put the power we are intrusted with into such unworthy hands? Away with thee and thy money too, we will have nothing to do with either; "Get thee behind me, Satan." When we are tempted with money to do an evil thing, we should see what a perishing thing money is, and scorn to be biassed with it. It is the character of the upright man, that he shakes his hands from holding, from touching, of bribes, *Isa. xxxiii. 15*. 2nd. He warns him of his danger of utter destruction if he continued in this mind; Thy money will perish, and thou wilt lose it, and all that thou canst purchase with it. As "meats for the belly, and the belly for meats," *1 Cor. vi. 13*, so goods for money, and money for goods; "but God shall destroy both it and them," they perish in the using. But that is not the worst of it; thou wilt perish with it, and it with thee, and it will be an aggravation of thy ruin, and a heavy load upon thy perishing soul, that thou hadst money which might have been made to turn to a good account, *Lu. xvi. 9*; which might have been laid at the apostles' feet as a charity, and would have been accepted, but was thrust into their hands as a bribe, and was rejected. Son, remember this. Secondly, He shall come short of the spiritual blessings which he undervalued; ver. 21, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter." Thou hast nothing to do with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, thou dost not understand them, thou art excluded from them, hast put a bar in thine own door; thou canst not receive the Holy Ghost thyself, nor power to confer the Holy Ghost upon others, for "thy heart is not right in the sight of God" if thou thinkest that Christianity is a trade to live by in this world; and therefore thou hast no part or lot in the eternal life in the other world which the Gospel offers. Note, 1st. There are many who profess the Christian religion, and yet have no part or lot in the matter, no part in Christ, *Jno. xiii. 8*, no lot in the heavenly Canaan. 2nd. They are those whose hearts are "not right in the sight of God," are not animated by a right spirit, nor guided by a right rule, nor directed to the right end.

4th. He gives him good counsel notwithstanding, ver. 22. Though he was angry with him, yet he did not abandon him; and, though he would have him see his case to be very bad, yet he would not have him think it desperate: yet now there is hope in Israel. Observe,

First. What it is that he adviseth him to. He must do his first works. 1st. He must repent; must see his error, and retract it, must change his mind and way; must be humbled and ashamed for what he has done; his repentance must be particular; Repent of this, own thyself guilty in this, and be sorry for it. He must lay load upon himself for it, must not extenuate it by calling it a mistake, or misguided zeal; but must aggravate it by calling it wickedness, his wickedness, the fruit of his own corruption. Those that have said and done amiss must, as far as they can, unsay it, and undo it again by repentance. 2nd. He must pray to God, must pray that God would give him repentance, and pardon upon repentance. Penitents must pray, which implies a desire towards God, and a confidence in Christ. Simon Magus, as great a man as he thinks himself, shall not be courted into the apostles' communion, how much soever some would think it a reputation to them, upon any other terms than those upon which other sinners are admitted,—repentance and prayer.

Secondly. What encouragement he gives him to do this. "If perhaps the thought of thy heart," this wicked thought of thine, "may be forgiven thee." Note, 1st. There may be a great deal of wickedness in the thought of the heart, its false notions, and corrupt affections, and wicked projects, which must be repented of, or we are undone. 2nd. The thought of the heart, though never so wicked, yet shall be forgiven upon our repentance, and not laid to our charge. When Peter here puts a "perhaps" upon it, the doubt is of the sincerity of his repentance, not of his pardon, if his repentance be sincere. "If, indeed, the thought of thy heart may be forgiven;" so it may be read. Or, it intimates that the greatness of his sin might justly make the pardon doubtful, though the promise of the Gospel had put the matter out of doubt, in case he did truly repent. Like that, *Lam. iii. 29*, "If so be there may be hope."

3. Simon's request to them to pray for him, ver. 24. He was startled and put into confusion by that which Peter said, finding that re-ented thus, which he thought would have been embraced with both arms; and he cries out, "Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me." Here was, 1st. Something well. That he was affected with the reproof given him, and terrified by the character given of him; enough to make the stoutest heart to tremble. And that, being so, he begged the prayers of the apostles for him, wishing to have an interest in them who, he believed, had a good interest in Heaven. 2nd. Something wanting. He begged of them to pray for him, but did not pray for himself, as he ought to have done; and in desiring them to pray for him his concern is more that the judgments he had made himself liable to might be prevented, than that his corruptions might be mortified, and his heart, by Divine grace, be made right in the sight of God. Like Pharaoh, who would have Moses entreat the Lord for him, that he would take away this death only, not that he would take away this sin, this hardness of heart, *Ex. viii. 8*; x. 17. Some think Peter had denounced some particular judgments against him, as against Ananias and Sapphira, which, upon this submission of his, at the apostles' intercession, were prevented. Or, from what is related, he might infer that some token of God's wrath would fall upon him, which he thus dreaded and deprecated.

Lastly. Here is the return of the apostles to Jerusalem, when they had finished the business they came about; for as yet they were not to disperse. But, though they came hither to do that work which was peculiar to them as apostles, yet, opportunity offering itself, they applied themselves to that which was common to all gospel ministers. 1. There in the city of Samaria they were preachers; they "testified the word of the Lord," solemnly attested the truth of the Gospel, and confirmed what the other ministers preached. They did not pretend to bring them any thing new, though they were apostles, but bore their testimony to the Word of the Lord as they had received it. 2. In their road home they were itinerant preachers: as they passed through many villages of the Samaritans they preached the Gospel. Though the congregations there were nothing so considerable as in the cities, either for number or figure, yet their souls were as precious; and the apostles did not think it below them to preach the Gospel to them. God has a regard to the inhabitants of his villages in Israel, *Jud. v. 11*, and so should we.

26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. 27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come

to Jerusalem for to worship, 28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readeest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. 32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: 33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. 34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.



GAZA.—VER. 26.

We have here the story of the conversion of an Ethiopian eunuch to the faith of Christ; by whom we have reason to think the knowledge of Christ was sent into that country where he lived, and that scripture fulfilled, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands," one of the first of the nations, "unto God," *Ps. lxxiii. 31*.

First. Philip the evangelist is directed into the road where he would meet with this Ethiopian, ver. 26. When the churches in Samaria were settled, and had ministers appointed them, the apostles went back to Jerusalem, but Philip stays, expecting to be employed in breaking up fresh ground in the country. And here we have,

1 Direction given him by an angel (probably in a dream or vision of the night) what course to steer; "Arise, and go towards the south." Though angels were not employed to preach the Gospel, they were often employed in

viii. 27. "Ethiopia:" a country to the south of Egypt, which embraced in its most extended sense the modern Nubia, Sennaar, Kordofan, and Northern Abyssinia. "The Hebrews do not appear to have had much practical acquaintance with Ethiopia itself, though the Ethiopians were well known to them through their intercourse with Egypt. They were, however, perfectly aware of its position (*Ezek. xxix. 10*), and they describe it as a well-watered country, lying 'by the side of' (Authorized Version, 'beyond') the waters of

Cush (*Isa. xlviii. 1*; *Zeph. iii. 10*), being traversed by the two branches of the Nile and by the Astaboras, or Tacazze. The Nile descends with a rapid stream in this part of its course, forming a series of cataracts; its violence seems to be referred to in *Isa. xviii. 2*: 'whose land the rivers have spoiled.' The Hebrews seem also to have been aware of its tropical characteristics, the words translated in the Authorized Version 'the land shadowing with wings' (*Isa. xlviii. 1*) admitting of the sense 'the land of the shadows

carrying messages to ministers for advice and encouragement, as *ch. v. 19*. We cannot now expect such guides in our way, but doubtless there is a special providence of God conversant about the removes and settlements of ministers; and, one way or other, he will direct those who sincerely desire to follow him into that way in which he will own them; he will guide them with his eye. He must go southward, to the way that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza, through the desert, or wilderness of Judah. Philip would never have thought of going thither, into a desert, into a common road through the desert,—small probability of finding work there,—yet thither he is sent, according to our Saviour's parable, foretelling the call of the Gentiles, "Go ye into the highways, and the hedges," *Mat. xxii. 9*. Sometimes God opens a door of opportunity to his ministers in places very unlikely.

2. His obedience to this direction; *ver. 27*, "he arose and went," without objecting, or so much as asking, What business have I there? or what likelihood of doing good there? He went out, not knowing whither he went, or whom he was to meet.

Secondly. An account is given of this eunuch, *ver. 27*, who, and what he was on whom this distinguishing favour was bestowed.

1. He was a foreigner; "a man of Ethiopia." There were two Ethiopians; one in Arabia, but that lay east from Canaan. It should seem this was Ethiopia in Africa, which lay south, beyond Egypt, a great way off from Jerusalem; for in Christ they that were afar off were made nigh, according to the promise, that the ends of the earth should see the great salvation. The Ethiopians were looked upon as the meanest and most despicable of the nations, blackamoors, as if nature had stigmatized them; yet the Gospel is sent to them, and Divine grace looketh upon them, though they are black, though the sun has looked upon them.

2. He was a person of quality, a great man in his own country; "a eunuch," not in body, but in office, lord chamberlain, or steward of the household. And either by the dignity of his place, or by his personal character, which commanded respect, he was "of great authority," and bore a mighty sway "under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians," who, probably, was successor to the queen of Sheba, who is called the queen of the south; that country being governed by queens, to whom Candace was a common name, as Pharaoh to the kings of Egypt. He had the "charge of all her treasure," so great a trust did she repose in him. "Not many mighty, not many noble are called," but some are.

3. He was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, for he came "to Jerusalem for to worship." Some think he was a proselyte of righteousness, that was circumcised and kept the feasts; others that he was only a proselyte of the gate, a Gentile, but that had renounced idolatry, and worshipped the God of Israel occasionally in the court of the Gentiles. But if so, then Peter was not the first that preached the Gospel to the Gentiles, as he saith he was. Some think there were remains of the knowledge of the true God in this country ever since the queen of Sheba's time; and probably the ancestor of this eunuch was one of her attendants, who transmitted to his posterity what he learned at Jerusalem.

Thirdly. Philip and the eunuch are brought together into a close conversation; and now Philip shall know the meaning of his being sent into a desert, for there he meets with a chariot that shall serve for a synagogue, and one man, the conversion of whom shall be in effect, for aught he knows, the conversion of a whole nation.

1. Philip is ordered to fall in company with this traveller that is going home from Jerusalem towards Gaza, thinking he has done all the business of his journey, when the great business which the overruling providence of God designed in it, was yet undone. He had been at Jerusalem, where the apostles were preaching the Christian faith, and multitudes professing it, and yet there he had taken no notice of it, and made no inquiries after it, nay, it should seem had slighted it, and turned his back upon it; yet the grace of God pursues him, overtakes him in the desert, and there overcomes him. Thus God is often found of those that sought him not, *Isa. lvi. 1*. Philip has this order, not by an angel as before, but by the Spirit whispering it in his ear; *ver. 29*, "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot;" go so near as that the gentleman may take notice of thee. We should study to do good to those we light in company with upon the road: thus the lips of the righteous may feed many. We should not be so shy of all strangers as some affect to be. Those we know nothing else, we know this of, that they have souls.

2. He finds him reading in his Bible, as he sat in his chariot, *ver. 28*. He ran to him and heard him read; he read up for the benefit of those that were with him, *ver. 30*. He not only relieved the tediousness of the journey, but redeemed time by reading, not philosophy, history, or politics, much less a romance or a play, but the Scriptures; the Book of *Isaiah*. That book Christ read in, *Lu. iv. 17*, and the eunuch here; which should recommend it particularly to our reading. Perhaps the eunuch was now reading over again those portions of Scripture which he had heard and expounded at Jerusalem, that he might recollect what he had heard. Note, 1st. It is the duty of every one of us to converse much with the holy Scriptures. 2nd. Persons of quality should abound more than others in the exercises of piety, because their example will influence many, and they have their time more at command. 3rd. It is wisdom for men of business to redeem time for holy duties. Time is precious, and it is the best husbandry in the world to gather up the fragments of time, that none be lost; to fill up every minute with something that will turn to a good account. 4th. When we are returning from public worship we should use means in private for the keeping up of the good affections there kindled, and the preserving of the good impressions there made, *1 Chr. xxix. 18*. 5th. Those that are diligent in searching the Scriptures are, in a fair way to improve in knowledge; for "to him that hath shall be given."

3. He puts a fair question to him, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" Not by way of reproach, but with design to offer him his service. Note, What we read and hear of the Word of God it highly concerns us to understand; especially what we read and hear concerning Christ; and therefore we should often ask ourselves whether we understand it or no. "Have ye understood all these things?" *Mat. xiii. 51*. And have ye understood them aright? We cannot profit by the Scriptures unless we do in some measure understand them, *1 Cor. xiv. 16, 17*. And, blessed be God, what is necessary to salvation is easy to be understood.

4. He, in a sense of his need of assistance, desires Philip's company; *ver. 31*, "How can I?" understand, saith he, "except some one guide me?" therefore pray come up and sit with me. 1st. He speaks as one that had very low thoughts of himself and his own capacity and attainments. He was so far from taking it as an affront to be asked whether he understood what he read, though Philip was a stranger, on foot, and probably looked mean, (which many a less man would have done, and have called him an impertinent fellow, and bid him go about his business, What was it to him?) that he takes the question kindly; makes a very modest reply, "How can I?" We have reason to think he was an intelligent man, and as well acquainted with the meaning of Scripture as most were, and yet modestly confesseth his weakness. Note, Those that would learn must see their need to be taught. The prophet must first own that he knows not what these be, and then the angel will tell him, *Zec. iv. 13*. 2nd. He speaks as one very desirous to be taught, to have some one to guide

him. Observe, He read the Scripture, though there were many things in it which he did not understand. Though there be many things in the Scriptures which are dark and hard to be understood, nay, which are often misunderstood, yet we must not therefore throw them by; but study them for the sake of those things that are easy, which is the likeliest way to come by degrees to the understanding of those things that are difficult; for knowledge and grace grow gradually. 3rd. He invited Philip to come up and sit with him; not as Jehu took Jonadab into his chariot, to come and see his zeal for the Lord of hosts, *2 Kiz. x. 16*; but rather, Come, see my ignorance, and instruct me. He will gladly do Philip the honour to take him into the coach with him, if Philip will do him the favour to expound a portion of Scripture to him. Note, In order to our right understanding of the Scripture, it is requisite we should have some one to guide us: some good books, and some good men, but above all, the Spirit of grace to lead us into all truth.

Fourthly. The portion of Scripture which the eunuch recited, with some hints of Philip's discourse upon it. The preachers of the Gospel had a very good handle to take hold of those by that were conversant with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and received them, especially when they found them actually engaged in the study of them, as the eunuch was here.

1. The chapter he was reading was the 53rd of *Isaiah*, two verses of which are here quoted, (*ver. 32, 33*;) part of the 7th and 8th verses; they are set down according to the Septuagint version, which in some things differs from the original Hebrew. Grotius thinks the eunuch read it in the Hebrew, but Luko takes the Septuagint translation, as reader to the language in which he wrote; and he supposeth that the eunuch had learned from the many Jews that were in Ethiopia both their religion and language. But, considering that the Septuagint version was made in Egypt, which was the next country adjoining to Ethiopia, and lay betwixt them and Jerusalem, I rather think that translation was most familiar to him. It appears by *Isa. xx. 4*, that there was much communication between those two nations, Egypt and Ethiopia. The greatest variation from the Hebrew is, that what in the original is, "He was taken from prison and from judgment," hurried with the utmost violence and precipitation from one judgment-seat to another; or, "From force and from judgment he was taken away," that is, It was from the fury of the people, and their continual clamours, and the judgment of Pilate thereupon, that he was taken away; is here read, "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away;" he appeared so mean and despicable in their eyes, that they denied him common justice, and, against all the rules of equity, which every man is entitled to the benefit of, they declared him innocent, and yet condemned him to die; nothing criminal can be proved upon him, but he is down, and down with him. Thus, "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away;" so the sense is much the same with that of the Hebrew.

So that these verses foretold concerning the Messiah, 1st. That he should die; should be led to the slaughter, as sheep that were offered in sacrifice. That his life should be taken from among men, taken from the earth. With what little reason then was the death of Christ a stumblingblock to the unbelieving Jews, when it was so plainly foretold by their own prophets? and was so necessary to the accomplishment of his undertaking? Then is the offence of the cross ceased. 2nd. That he should die wrongfully; should die by violence, should be hurried out of his life, and "his judgment shall be taken away;" no justice done him; for he must be cut off, but not for himself. 3rd. That he should die patiently, like "a lamb dumb before the shearer;" nay, and before the butcher too; so "he opened not his mouth." Never was such an example of patience as our Lord Jesus was in his sufferings; when he was accused, when he was abused, he was silent, reviled not again, threatened not. 4th. That yet he should live for ever, to ages which cannot be numbered; for so I understand those words, "Who shall declare his generation?" The Hebrew word properly signifies, "The duration of one life," *Ecc. i. 4*. Now who can conceive or express how long he shall continue notwithstanding this; "for his life is" only "taken from the earth;" in heaven he shall live to endless and innumerable ages, as it follows in *Isa. liii. 10*, "He shall prolong his days."

2. The eunuch's question upon this is, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this?" *ver. 34*. He doth not desire Philip to give him some critical remarks upon the words and phrases, and the idioms of the language, but to acquaint him with the general scope and design of the prophecy, to furnish him with a key, in the use of which he might, by comparing one thing with another, be let into the meaning of the particular passages. Prophecies had usually in them something of obscurity, till they were explained by the accomplishment of them, as this now was. It is a material question he asks, and a very sensible one: "Doth the prophet speak this of himself, in expectation of being used, being misused, as the other prophets were? Or doth he speak it of some other man, in his own age, or in some age to come?" Though the modern Jews will not allow it to be spoken of the Messiah, yet their ancient doctors did so interpret it; and perhaps the eunuch knew it, and did partly understand it so himself, only he proposed this question to draw on discourse with Philip; for the way to improve in learning, is to consult the learned. As they must inquire the law at the mouth of the priests, *Mat. ii. 7*, so they must inquire the Gospel, especially that part of the treasure which is hid in the field of the Old Testament, at the mouth of the ministers of Christ. The way to receive good instructions is to ask good questions.

3. Philip takes this fair occasion given him to open to him the great mystery of the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, and him crucified. He "began at this Scripture," took that for his text (as Christ did another passage of the same prophecy, *Lu. iv. 21*) "and preached unto him Jesus," *ver. 35*. That is all the account given us of Philip's sermon, because it was the same in effect with Peter's sermons, which we have had before. The business of Gospel ministers is to preach Jesus, and that is the preaching that is likely to do good. It is probable Philip had now occasion for his gift of tongues, that he might preach Christ to this Ethiopian in the language of his own country. And here we have an instance of speaking of the things of God, and speaking of them to good purpose, not only as we sit in the house, but as we walk by the way, according to that rule, *Deu. vi. 7*.

Fifthly. The eunuch is baptized in the name of Christ, *ver. 36—38*. It is probable the eunuch had heard at Jerusalem of the doctrine of Christ, so that it was not altogether new to him. But if he had, what could that do towards this speedy conquest that was made of his heart for Christ? It was a powerful working of the Spirit with and by Philip's preaching that gained the point. Now here we have,

1. The modest proposal which the eunuch made of himself to baptism; *ver. 36*, "As they went on their way," discoursing of Christ, the eunuch asking more questions, and Philip answering them to his satisfaction, they came unto a certain water, "a well, river, or pond, the sight of which made the eunuch think of being baptized. Thus God, by hints of providence which seem casual, sometimes puts his people in mind of their duty, which otherwise perhaps they would not have thought of. The eunuch knew not how little a while Philip might be with him, nor where he might afterwards inquire for him; he could not expect his travelling with him to his next stage, and therefore, if Philip think fit, he will take the present convenience which offers itself of being baptized: "See, here is water," which perhaps we may not meet with a great

of both sides, the shadows falling towards the north and south at different periods of the year. The papyrus boats (vessels of bulrushes, *Isa. xviii. 2*), which were peculiarly adapted to the navigation of the Upper Nile, admitting of being carried on men's backs when necessary, were regarded as a characteristic feature of the country. The Hebrews carried on commercial intercourse with Ethiopia, its merchandise consisting of ebony, ivory, frankincense, and gold and precious stones. There seems little evidence that the man referred

to in this verse was of Israelitish descent. He was most likely a Gentile, and was reading the Greek version of the Scriptures, which was generally used in Egypt. "Candace" was the regal title of the queens of Ethiopia.

viii. 33. Cook says, "The exact meaning of the original appears to be, 'He was taken away by a cruel and oppressive judgment; being humbled, afflicted, and crucified.'" And again: "We may perhaps understand the expression, 'his generation,' to mean, 'Who can

while again, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Canst thou shew any cause why I should not be admitted a disciple and follower of Christ by baptism? Observe, 1st. He doth not demand baptism, doth not say, Here is water, and here I am resolved I will be baptized; for, if Philip have any thing to offer to the contrary, he is willing to waive it for the present. If he think him not fit to be baptized, or if there be any thing in the institution of the ordinance which will not admit such a speedy administration of it, he will not insist upon it. The most forward zeal must submit to order and rule. But, 2nd. He doth desire it; and, unless Philip can shew cause why not, he desires it now, and is not willing to defer it. Note, In the solemn dedicating and devoting of ourselves to God it is good to make haste and not to delay; for the present time is the best time. *Ps. cxix. 60.* They who have received the thing signified by baptism, should not put off receiving the sign. The eunuch feared lest the good affections now working in him should cool and abate, and therefore was willing presently to bind his soul with the baptismal bonds unto the Lord, that he might bring the matter to an issue.

2. The fair declaration which Philip made him of the terms upon which he might have the privilege of baptism; ver. 17, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest;" that is, If thou believest this doctrine, which I have preached to thee concerning Jesus; if thou receive the record God has given concerning him, and set to thy seal that it is true. He must believe with all his heart, for with the heart man believeth; not with the head only, by an assent to gospel truths, in the understanding, but with the heart, by a consent of the will to gospel terms. If thou do indeed believe with all thy heart, thou art by that united to Christ; and, if thou give proofs and evidences that thou dost so, thou mayest by baptism be joined to the church.

3. The confession of faith which the eunuch made in order to his being baptized. It is very short, but it is comprehensive, and much to the purpose, and what was sufficient, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." He was before a worshipper of the true God, so that all he had to do now was to receive Christ Jesus the Lord. 1st. He believes that Jesus is the Christ, the true Messiah promised, the anointed one. 2nd. That Christ is Jesus, a Saviour, the alone Saviour of his people from their sins. And, 3rd. That this Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he has a Divine nature, as the Son is of the same nature with the Father; and that, being the Son of God, he is the heir of all things. This is the principal peculiar doctrine of Christianity, and whosoever believe this with all their heart, and confess it, they and their seed are to be baptized.

4. The baptizing of him hereupon. The eunuch ordered his coachman to stop, "commanded the chariot to stand still;" it was the best baiting-place he ever met with in any of his journeys. "They went down both into the water," for they had no convenient vessels with them, being upon a journey, wherewith to take up water, and must therefore go down into it; not that they stripped off their clothes, and went naked into the water, but, going barefoot according to the custom, they went perhaps up to the ancles or midleg into the water, and Philip sprinkled water upon him according to the prophecy which this eunuch had probably but just now read, (for it was but a few verses before those which Philip found him upon,) and was very apposite to his case, *Isa. li. 15:* "So shall he sprinkle many nations; kings and great men shall shut their mouths at him," shall submit to him, and acquiesce in him, "for that which had not before been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider." Observe, Though Philip had very lately been deceived in Simon Magus, and had admitted him to baptism, though he afterwards appeared to be no true convert, yet he did not therefore scruple to baptize the eunuch upon his profession of faith immediately, without putting him upon a longer trial than usual. If some hypocrites crowd into the church, that afterwards prove a grief and scandal to us, yet we must not therefore make the door of admission any straiter than Christ has made it; they shall answer for their apostacy, and not we.

Sixthly. Philip and the eunuch are parted presently; and this is as surprising as the other parts of the story. One would have expected that the eunuch should either have stayed with Philip, or have taken him along with him into his own country; and, there being so many ministers in these parts he might be spared, and it would be worth while. But God ordered otherwise; as soon as "they were come up out of the water," before the eunuch went into his chariot again, "the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip," ver. 39; and did not give him time to make an exhortation to the eunuch, as usual after baptism, which it is probable the one intended, and the other expected. But his sudden departure was sufficient to make up the want of that exhortation, for it seems to have been miraculous, and that he was caught up in the air in the eunuch's sight, and so carried out of his sight; and the working of this miracle upon Philip was a confirmation of his doctrine, as much as the working of a miracle by him would have been. He was caught away, and the "eunuch saw him no more;" but, having lost his minister, returned to the use of his Bible again. Now here we are told,

1. How the eunuch was disposed; he "went on his way rejoicing." He pursued his journey, business called him home, and he must hasten to it; for it was no way inconsistent with his Christianity, which places no sanctity or perfection in men being hermits or recluses, but is a religion which men may and ought to carry about with them into the affairs of this life. But he went on rejoicing; so far was he from reflecting upon this sudden resolution, and change, or advancement rather, in his religion, with any regret, that his second thoughts confirmed him abundantly in it, and he went on "rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory;" he was never better pleased in all his life. 1st. He rejoiced that he himself was joined to Christ, and had an interest in him. And, 2nd. That he had these good tidings to bring to his countrymen, and a prospect of bringing them also, by virtue of his interest among them, into fellowship with Christ; for he returned not only a Christian but a minister. And some copies read this verse thus; "and when they were come up out of the water, the Holy Spirit fell upon the eunuch;" (without the ceremony of the apostle's imposition of hands,) "but the angel of the Lord caught away Philip."

2. How Philip was disposed of; ver. 40, he "was found at Azotus," or Ashdod, formerly a city of the Philistines, there the angel or Spirit of the Lord dropped him, which was above thirty miles from Gaza, whither the eunuch was going, and where Dr. Lightfoot thinks he took ship, and went, by sea into his own country. But Philip, wherever he was, would not be idle. "Passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea;" and there he settled, and, for aught appears, had his principal residence ever after; for at Cæsarea we find him in a house of his own, *ch. xxi. 8.* He that had been faithful in working for Christ as an itinerant, at length gains a settlement.

CHAPTER IX.

In this chapter we have, I. The famous story of St. Paul's conversion, from being an outrageous persecutor of the Gospel of Christ, to be an illustrious professor and preacher of it. 1. How he was first awakened and wrought upon by an appearance of Christ himself to him, as he was going upon an errand of persecution to Damascus; and what a condition he was in while he lay under the power of those convictions and

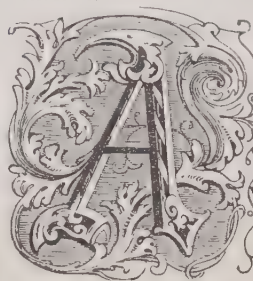
declare or sufficiently describe the wickedness of that generation by whom the Messiah was judicially murdered?"

viii. 37. Some copies omit the whole of this verse.

viii. 40. "Azotus," or Ashdod: one of the five principal cities of the Philistines. Like Gaza, it was given to Judah, but it was never thoroughly conquered.

ix. 1. "Saul:" St. Paul's Jewish name. He was born in the Gentile city of Tarsus, in Cilicia. His parents were Jews, and his father

terrors, ver. 1-9. 2. How he was baptized by Ananias, by immediate directions from heaven, ver. 10-19. 3. How he immediately commenced doctor, and preached the faith of Christ, and proved what he preached, ver. 20-22. 4. How he was persecuted, and narrowly escaped with his life, ver. 23-25. 5. How he was admitted among the brethren at Jerusalem, how he preached and was persecuted there, ver. 26-30. 6. The rest and quietness which the churches enjoyed for some time after this, ver. 31. II. The cure wrought by Peter on Æneas, who had long been laid up of a palsy, ver. 32-35. III. The raising of Tabitha from death to life, at the prayer of Peter, ver. 36-43.



ND Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly



DAMASCUS.

there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

We found mention made of Saul twice or thrice in the story of Stephen, for the sacred penman even longed to come to his story; and now we are come to it; not quite taking leave of Peter, but from henceforward being mostly taken up with Paul the apostle of the Gentiles, as Peter was of the circumcision. His name in Hebrew was Saul, desired, though as remarkably little in stature, as his namesake king Saul was tall and stately; one of the ancients calls him *homo tricubitalis*,—"the man of three cubits," but four feet and a half in height; his Roman name, which he went by among the citizens of Rome, was Paul, "little." He was born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, a free city of the Romans, and himself a freeman of that city. His father and mother were both native Jews, therefore he calls himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews; he was of the tribe of Benjamin, which adhered to Judah. His education was in the schools of Tarsus first, which was a little Athens for learning; there he acquainted himself with the philosophy and poetry of the Greeks. Thence he was sent to

had acquired the Roman franchise. The city of Tarsus was famed for its literature and philosophy; and here, doubtless, St. Paul was early instructed in the Greek language as well as the Hebrew. That he was brought up in childhood as a Hebrew child, we may gather both from the accounts which he gives of himself and from the fact that his father was a Pharisee. At an early age he was sent to Jerusalem, for further instruction in the Jewish law, and there he became a disciple of Gamaliel, the celebrated doctor of

the university at Jerusalem, to study divinity and the Jewish law; his tutor was Gamaliel, an eminent Pharisee. He had extraordinary natural parts, and improved mightily in learning; he had likewise a handicraft trade, was bred to tent-making, which was common with those among the Jews that were bred scholars, as Dr. Lightfoot saith, for the earning of their maintenance, and the avoiding of idleness. This is the young man on whom the grace of God wrought this mighty change here recorded, about a year after the ascension of Christ, or little more. We are here told,

First. How bad he was, how very bad, before his conversion; just before he was an inveterate enemy to Christianity, did his utmost to root it out, by persecuting all that embraced it. In other respects he was well enough, as "touching the righteousness which is the law, blameless," a man of no ill morals, but a blasphemer of Christ, a persecutor of Christians, and injurious to both, 1 Tim. i. 13. And so ill informed was his conscience, that he thought he ought to do what he did against the name of Christ, ch. xxvi. 9; and that he did God service in it, as was foretold, Jno. xvi. 2. Here we have,

1. His general enmity and rage against the Christian religion; ver. 1, he "yet breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." The persons persecuted were "the disciples of the Lord;" because they were so, under that character he hated and persecuted them; the matter of the persecution was "threatenings and slaughter." There is persecution in threatening, as ch. iv. 17, 21; it terrifies the spirit, and breaks that. And, though we say, threatened folks live long; yet those whom Saul threatened, if he prevailed not thereby to frighten them from Christ, he slew them; he persecuted them to death, ch. xxii. 4. His "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" intimates that it was natural to him, and his constant business. He even breathed in this, as in his element. He breathed it out with heat and vehemence; his very breath, like that of some venomous creatures, was pestilential. He breathed death to the Christians wherever he came; he puffed at them in his pride, Ps. xii. 5; spit his venom at them in his rage. Saul yet breathing thus intimates, 1st. That he still persisted in it; not satisfied with the blood of those he had slain, still he cries, Give, give. 2nd. That he shall shortly be of another mind; as yet he breathes "out threatenings and slaughter," but he has not long to live such a life as this, that breath will be stopped shortly.

2. His particular design upon the Christians at Damascus. Thither was the Gospel now lately carried by those that fled from the persecution at Stephen's death, and thought to be safe and quiet there, and were connived at by those in power there. But Saul cannot be easy if he knows a Christian is quiet; and, therefore, hearing that the Christians in Damascus were so, he resolves to give them disturbance. In order to this, he applies himself to the high priest for a commission, ver. 1, to go to Damascus, ver. 2. The high priest needed not to be stirred up to persecute the Christians, he was forward enough of himself to do it; but it seems the young persecutor drove more furiously than the old one. Leaders in sin are the worst of sinners. And, the proselytes which the scribes and Pharisees make often prove seven times more the children of hell than themselves. He saith (ch. xxii. 5) that this commission was had from the "whole estate of the elders." And proud enough this furious bigot was to have a commission to him directed, with the seal of the great Sanhedrim affixed to it.

Now the commission was to empower him to inquire among the synagogues or congregations of the Jews that were at Damascus, whether there were any that belonged to them that inclined to favour this new sect or heresy, that believed in Christ; and if he found any such, whether men or women, to bring them up prisoners to Jerusalem to be proceeded against according to law by the great council there. Observe, 1st. The Christians are here said to be "those of this way;" "those of the way," so it is in the original. Perhaps the Christians sometimes called themselves so, from Christ the way; or, because they looked on themselves as but in the way, and not yet at home. Or, the enemies thus represented it as a way by itself, a byway, a party, a faction. 2nd. The high priest and Sanhedrim claimed a power over the Jews in all countries, and had a deference paid to their authority in matters of religion by all their synagogues, even those that were not of the jurisdiction of the civil government of the Jewish nation. And such a sovereignty the Roman pontiff now claims, as the Jewish pontiff then did, though he has not so much to shew for it. 3rd. By this commission all that worshipped God in the way that they called heresy, though agreeing exactly with the original institutes, even of the Jewish church, whether they were men or women, were to be prosecuted. Even the weaker sex, who in a case of this nature might deserve excuse, or at least compassion, shall find neither with Saul, nor more than they do with the Popish persecutors. 4th. He was ordered to "bring them all bound to Jerusalem," as criminals of the first magnitude; which, as it would be the more likely to terrify them, so it would be to magnify Saul, as having the command of the forces that were to carry them up, and opportunity of "breathing out threatenings and slaughter." This was Saul employed when the grace of God wrought that great change in him. Let not us then despair of renewing grace for the conversion of the greatest sinners, nor let such despair of the pardoning mercy of God for the greatest sin; for Paul himself obtained mercy, that he might be a monument, 1 Tim. i. 13.

Secondly. How suddenly and strangely a blessed change was wrought in him, not in the use of any ordinary means, but by miracles. The conversion of Paul is one of the wonders of the church. Here is,

1. The place and time of it. "As he journeyed he came near to Damascus;" and there Christ met with him.

1st. He was in the way, travelling upon his journey; not in the temple or the synagogue, or in the meeting of Christians, but by the way. The work of conversion is not tied to the church, though ordinarily public administrations are made use of. Some are reclaimed in slumbering on the bed, Job xxxiii. 15-17; and sometimes in travelling upon the road alone; thoughts are as free, and there is as good an opportunity of communing with our own hearts, as upon the bed; and there the Spirit may set in with us; for that "wind blows where it listeth." Some observe that Saul was spoken to abroad in the open air, that there might be no suspicion of imposture, or of a trick put upon him in it.

2nd. He was near Damascus, almost at his journey's end, ready to enter the city, the chief city of Syria. Some observe, that he who was to be the apostle of the Gentiles was converted to the faith of Christ in a Gentile country. Damascus had been infamous for persecuting God's people formerly—they "threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron," Am. i. 3, and now it was likely to be so again.

3rd. He was in a wicked way; pursuing his design against the Christians at Damascus, and pleasing himself with the thought that he should devour this newborn child of Christianity there. Note, Sometimes the grace of God works upon sinners when they are at the worst, and hotly engaged in the most desperate sinful pursuits; which is much for the glory both of God's pity and of his power.

4th. The cruel edict and decree he had with him, drew near to be put in execution; and now it was happily prevented. Which may be considered, First. As a great kindness to the poor saints at Damascus, who had notice of his coming, as appears by what Ananias said, ver. 13, 14; and were apprehensive of their danger from him, and trembled as poor lambs at the approach of a

ravaging wolf. Saul's conversion was their security for the present. Christ has many ways of delivering the godly out of temptation; and sometimes doth it by a change wrought in their persecutors, either restraining their wrathful spirits, Ps. lxxvi. 10, and mollifying them for a time, as the Old Testament Saul, who relented towards David more than once, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16; xxvi. 21; or renewing their spirits, and fixing upon them durable impressions, as upon the New Testament Saul here. Secondly. It was also a very great mercy to Saul himself, to be hindered from executing his wicked design, in which if he had now proceeded, perhaps it had been the filling up of the measure of his iniquity. Note, It is to be valued as a signal token of the Divine favour, if God, either by the inward operations of his grace, or the outward occurrences of his providence, prevent us from prosecuting and executing a sinful purpose, 1 Sam. xxv. 32.

2. The appearance of Christ to him in his glory. Here it is only said that "there shined round about him a light from heaven;" but it appears by what follows, ver. 17, that the Lord Jesus was in this light, and appeared to him by the way. He "saw that Just One," ch. xxii. 14; and see ch. xxvi. 13; whether he saw him at a distance, as Stephen saw him in the heavens, or nearer in the air, is not certain. It is not inconsistent with what is said of the heavens receiving Christ till the end of time, ch. iii. 21, to suppose that he did upon such an extraordinary occasion as this make a personal visit, but a very short one, to this lower world. It was necessary to Paul's being an apostle, that he should have seen the Lord, and so he did, 1 Cor. ix. 1; xv. 8.

1st. This light shined upon him "suddenly," *Hæuere*, when Paul never "thought of any such thing, and without any previous warning." Christ's manifestations of himself to poor souls are many times sudden and very surprising, and he prevents them with the blessings of his goodness. This the disciples that Christ called to himself found. "Or ever I was aware," *Cant. vi. 12*.

2nd. It was a light from heaven, the fountain of light, from the God of heaven, the Father of lights. It was a light "above the brightness of the sun," ch. xxvi. 31; for it was visible at mid-day, and outshone the sun in his meridian strength and lustre, Isa. xiv. 23.

3rd. It shone "round about him," not in his face only, but on every side of him; let him turn which way he will, he finds himself surrounded with the discoveries of it. And this was designed, not only to startle him and awaken his attention, (for well may he expect to hear, when he is thus made to see, something very extraordinary,) but to signify the enlightening of his understanding with the knowledge of Christ. The devil comes to the soul in darkness; by it he gets and keeps possession of it; but Christ comes to the soul in light, for it is himself the light of the world, bright and glorious in himself, beneficial and gracious to us as light. The first thing in this new creation, as in that of the world, is light, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Hence all Christians are said to be children of the light and of the day, Eph. v. 8.

3. The arresting of Saul and his detachment. He "fell to the earth," ver. 4; some think he was on foot, and this light, which perhaps was accompanied with a thunder-clap, so terrified him that he could not keep his feet, but fell upon his face, usually a posture of adoration, but here of astonishment. It is probable that he was mounted as Balaam, when he went to curse Israel, and perhaps better mounted than he; for Saul was now in a public post, was in haste, and the journey was long, so that it is not likely he should travel on foot. The sudden light would frighten the beast he rode on and make it throw him, and it was God's good providence that his body got no hurt by the fall; but angels had a particular charge concerning him to keep all his bones, so that not one of them was broken. It appears, ch. xxvi. 14, that all that were with him fell to the earth as well as he. But the design was upon him. This may be considered,

1st. As the effect of Christ's appearing to him, and of the light which shone round about him. Note, Christ's manifestations of himself to poor souls are humbling; they lay them very low, in mean thoughts of themselves, and an humble submission to the will of God. "Now mine eye seeth thee," saith Job, "I abhor myself." "I saw the Lord," saith Isaiah, "sitting upon a throne, and I said, Woe is me, for I am undone."

2nd. As a step towards his intended advancement. He is designed not only to be a Christian, but to be a minister, an apostle, a great apostle, and therefore he must thus be cast down. Note, Those whom Christ designs for the greatest honours are commonly first laid low. Those that are designed to excel in knowledge and grace are commonly laid low first, in a sense of their own ignorance and sinfulness. Those whom God will employ are first struck with a sense of their unworthiness to be employed.

4. The arraignment of Saul. Being by the fall taken into custody, and as it were, set to the bar, he "heard a voice saying to him," (and it was distinguishing, to him only, for though they that were with him heard a sound, ver. 7, yet they knew not the words, ch. xxii. 9.) "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Observe here,

1st. Saul not only saw a light from heaven, but heard a voice from heaven. Wherever the glory of God was seen the word of God was heard, as Ex. xx. 18, and to Moses, Num. vii. 89, and to the prophets. God's manifestations of himself were never dumb shows, for he magnifies his word above all his name; and what was seen was always designed to make way for what was said. Saul heard a voice. Note, Faith comes by hearing; hence the Spirit is said to be received by the hearing of faith, Gal. iii. 2. The voice he heard was the voice of Christ; when he saw that Just One he heard the voice of his mouth, ch. xxii. 14. Note, To on the word we hear is likely to profit us when we hear it as the voice of Christ, 1 Thes. ii. 13. "It is the voice of my beloved;" no voice but his can reach the heart. Seeing and hearing are the two learning senses; Christ here by both those doors entered into Saul's heart.

2nd. What he heard was very awakening. First. He was called by his name, and that doubled; "Saul, Saul." Some think in calling him Saul he hints at that great persecutor of David whose name he bore. He was indeed a second Saul, and such an enemy to the Son of David as he was to David. Calling him by his name intimates the particular regard that Christ had to him; "I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me," Isa. xlv. 4; see Ex. xxxiii. 12. His calling him by name brought the conviction home to his conscience, and put it past dispute to whom the voice spoke this. Note, What God speaks in general is then likely to do us good when we apply it to ourselves, and insert our own names into the precepts and promises, which are expressed generally, as if God spoke to us by name, and when he saith, "Ho, every one," he had said, "Ho, such a one;" "Samuel, Samuel," "Saul, Saul."

The doubling of it, "Saul, Saul," intimates, 1st. The deep sleep that Saul was in, he needed to be called again and again, as Jer. xxii. 29, "O earth, earth, earth." 2nd. The tender concern that the blessed Jesus had for him, and for his recovery. He speaks as one in earnest; it is like "Martha, Martha," Lu. x. 41; or, "Simon, Simon," Lu. xxi. 31; or, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," Mat. xxiii. 37. He speaks to him as to one in imminent danger, at the pit's brink, and just ready to drop in; "Saul, Saul," dost thou know whither thou art going, and what thou art doing?

Secondly. The charge exhibited against him is, "Why persecutest thou me?" Observe here, 1st. Before Saul is made a saint he is made to see himself a sinner, a great sinner, a sinner against Christ. Now he was made to see that evil by himself which he never saw before; sin revived, and he died. Note,

the law. "The high-priest:" probably Theophilus, son of Annas, whom Vitellius, the prefect of Syria, appointed A.D. 37.

ix. 2. "Damascus:" the capital of Syria, about 150 miles north-east of Jerusalem. From the time of Pompey (B.C. 64) it had passed under the dominion of the Romans, and had been attached to the province of Syria. In 2 Cor. xi. 32 St. Paul says, "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes." It seems most likely that Caligula gave the city to Aretas. From this

we may infer that the time of this journey of St. Paul was not very distant from the accession of Caligula. Damascus was famed from the very earliest periods. It is mentioned in connection with Abraham's steward (Gen. xv. 2), the rescue of Lot (Gen. xiv. 15), during the period of the Jewish monarchy (2 Sam. viii. 6; 1 Chron. xviii. 6; 1 Kings xi. 24), and Naaman the Syrian. For its close relations with the Jews and its mercantile greatness, see 2 Kings xiv. 28, xvi. 9, 10; 2 Chron. xxiv. 23; Isa. vii. 8; Amos i. 3, 5; Ezek.

An humble conviction of sin is the first step towards a saving conversion from sin. 2nd. He is convinced of one particular sin, which he was most notoriously guilty of, and had justified himself in, and thereby way is made for his conviction of all the rest. 3rd. The sin he is convicted of is persecution; "Why persecutest thou me?" It is a very affectionate expostulation, enough to melt a heart of stone. Observe, (1.) The person sinning. It is "thou;" thou that art not one of the ignorant, rude, unthinking crowd, that will run down any thing that they hear put into an ill name; but thou that hast had a liberal, learned education, hast good parts and accomplishments, hast the knowledge of the Scriptures, which, if duly considered, would shew thee the folly of it. It is worse in thee than in another. (2.) The person sinned against. It is "me," who never did thee any harm; who came from heaven to earth to do thee good; who was not long since crucified for thee; and was not that enough, but must I afresh be crucified by thee? (3.) The kind and continuance of the sin. It was persecution; and he was at this time engaged in it; Not only thou hast persecuted, but thou persecutest, thou persistest in it. He was not at this time halting any to prison, or killing them, but that was the errand he came upon to Damascus; he was now projecting it, and pleasing himself with the thought of it. Note, They that are designing mischief are in God's account doing mischief. (4.) The question put to him upon it, Why dost thou do it? (1st.) It is complaining language. Why dealest thou thus unjustly, thus unkindly, with my disciples? Christ never complained so much of those who persecuted him in his own person as he did here of those who persecuted him in his followers. He complains of it as it was Saul's sin. Why art thou such an enemy to thyself, to thy God? Note, The sins of sinners are a very grievous burthen to the Lord Jesus. He is grieved for them, *Mar. iii. 5*; he is pressed under them, *Am. ii. 13*. (2nd.) It is convincing language. Why dost thou thus? canst thou give any good reason for it? Note, It is good for us often to ask ourselves, why we do so and so, that we may discern what an unreasonable thing sin is; and of all sins none so unreasonable, so unaccountable, as the sin of persecuting the disciples of Christ; especially when it is discovered to be, as certainly it is, persecuting Christ. Those have no knowledge who eat up God's people, *Ps. xiv. 4*. "Why persecutest thou me?" He thought he was only persecuting a company of poor, weak, silly people, that were an offence and eyesore to the Pharisees; little imagining that it was one in heaven that he was all this while insulting; for surely if he had known, he would not have persecuted the Lord of glory. Note, Those who persecute the saints persecute Christ himself; and he takes what is done against them as done against himself, and accordingly will be the judgment in the great day, *Mat. xxv. 45*.

5. Saul's question upon his indictment, and the reply to it, ver. 5. 1st. He makes inquiry concerning Christ; "Who art thou, Lord?" He gives no direct answer to the charge preferred against him, being convicted by his own conscience, and self-condemned. If God contend with us for our sins, we are not able to answer for one of a thousand, especially such a one as the sin of persecution. Convictions of sin, when they are set home with power upon the conscience, will silence all excuses, and self-justifications; "Though I were righteous, yet would I not answer." But he desires to know who is his Judge. The compellation is respectful, "Lord;" he who had been a blasphemer of Christ's name, now speaks to him as his Lord. The question is proper; "Who art thou?" This implies his present unacquaintedness with Christ; he knew not his voice as his own sheep do; but he desires to be acquainted with him. He is convinced by this light, which encloseth him, that it is one from heaven that speaks to him; and he has a veneration for every thing that appears to him to come from heaven; and, therefore, "Lord, who art thou?" What is thy name? *Jud. xiii. 17*; *Gen. xxxii. 29*. Note, There is then some hopes of people when they begin to inquire after Jesus Christ.

2nd. He has an answer immediately, in which we have, First, Christ's gracious revelation of himself to him. He is always ready to answer the serious inquiries of those who covet an acquaintance with him; "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." The name of Jesus was not unknown to him; his heart had risen at it many a time, and gladly would he bury it in oblivion. He knew it was the name that he persecuted, but little did he think to hear it from heaven, or from the midst of such a glory as now shone round about him. Note, Christ brings souls into fellowship with himself by manifesting himself to them. He said, 1st. "I am Jesus," a Saviour; "I am Jesus of Nazareth," so it is, *ch. xxii. 8*. Saul used to call him so when he blasphemed him; I am that very Jesus whom thou usest to call in scorn, Jesus of Nazareth. And he would shew that now he is in glory he is not ashamed of his humiliation. 2nd. I am that Jesus whom thou persecutest; and, therefore, it is at thy peril if thou persist in this wicked course. There is nothing more effectual to awaken and humble the soul than to see sin to be against Christ, an affront to him, and a contradiction to his designs.

Secondly, His gentle reproof of him; "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," or goads; to spurn at the spur. "It is hard," that is, it is in itself an absurd and evil thing, and will be of fatal consequence to him that doth it. Those kick at the goad that stifle and smother the convictions of conscience, that rebel against God's truths and laws, that quarrel with his providences, and that persecute and oppose his ministers, because they reprove them, and their words are as goads and as nails. They that revolt more and more when they are stricken by the word or rod of God, that are enraged at reproofs, and fly in the face of their reprovers, they kick against the pricks, and will have a deal to answer for.

6. His surrender of himself to the Lord Jesus at length, ver. 6. See here, 1st. The frame and temper he was in when Christ had been dealing with him. First, He trembled as one in a great fright. Note, Strong convictions set home by the blessed Spirit will make an awakened soul to tremble. How can those choose but tremble that are made to see the eternal God provoked against them, the whole creation at war with them, and their own souls upon the brink of ruin? Secondly, He was astonished, was filled with amazement, as one brought into a new world, that knew not where he was. Note, The convincing converting work of Christ is astonishing to the awakened soul, and fills it with admiration. What is this that God has done with me? and what will he do?

2nd. His address to Jesus Christ, when he was in this frame; "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" which may be taken, First, As a serious request for Christ's teachings. Lord, I see I have hitherto been out of the way, thou that hast shewed me my error, set me to rights; thou that hast discovered sin to me, discover to me the way to pardon and peace. It is like that, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" Note, A serious desire to be instructed by Christ in the way of salvation is an evidence of a good work begun in the soul. Or, Secondly, As a sincere resignation of himself to the conduct and government of the Lord Jesus. This was the first word that grace spoke in Paul, and with this began a spiritual life: "Lord Jesus, what wilt thou have me to do?" Did not he know what he had to do? Had he not his commission in his pocket? and what had he to do but to execute it? No; he had done enough of this work already, and resolves now to change his master, and employ himself better. Now it is not, What will the high priest and the elders have me to do; what will my own wicked appetites and passions have me to do?

but, "What wilt thou have me to do?" The great change in conversion is wrought upon the will, and consists in the resignation of that to the will of Christ.

3rd. The general direction Christ gave him in answer to this; "Arise, go into the city of Damascus," which thou art now near to, "and it shall be told thee what thou must do." It is encouragement enough to have farther instruction promised him, but, First, He must not have it yet; it shall be told him shortly what he must do, but for the present he must pause upon what has been said to him, and improve that. Let him consider awhile what he has done in persecuting Christ, and be deeply humbled for that, and then he shall be told what he has farther to do. Secondly, He must not have it in this way, by a voice from heaven; for it is plain he cannot bear it,—he trembles and is astonished,—he shall be told, therefore, what he must do, by a man like himself, whose terror shall not make him afraid, nor his hand be heavy upon him, which Israel desired at mount Sinai. Or, it is an intimation that Christ would take some other time to manifest himself farther to him, when he was more composed, and this fright pretty well over. Christ manifests himself to his people by degrees; and both what he doth and would have them to do, though they know not now, they shall know hereafter.

7. How far his fellow travellers were affected with this, and what impression it made upon them; "they fell to the earth," as he did, but rose without being bidden, which he did not, but lay still till it was said to him, "Arise," for he lay under a heavier load than any of them did. But when they were up,

1st. They "stood speechless," as men in confusion, and that was all, ver. 7. They were going on the same wicked errand that Paul was, and perhaps to the best of their power were as spiteful as he, yet we do not find that any of them were converted, though they saw the light, and were struck down, and struck dumb by it. No external means will of themselves work a change in the soul, without the Spirit and grace of God, which distinguisheth between some and others. Among these that journeyed together, "one is taken, and the other left." They "stood speechless;" none of them said, "Who art thou, Lord?" or, "What wilt thou have me to do?" as Paul did; but none of God's children are born dumb.

2nd. They "heard a voice, but saw no man;" they heard Paul speak, but saw not him to whom he spoke, nor heard distinctly what was said to him, which reconciles it with what is said of this matter, *ch. xxii. 9*, where it is said they saw the light and were afraid, which they might do, and yet see no man in the light, as Paul did; and that they heard not the voice of him that spake to Paul so as to understand what he said, though they did hear a confused noise. Thus they who came hither to be the instruments of Paul's rage against the church serve for witnesses of the power of God over him.

8. What condition Saul was in after this, ver. 8, 9.

1st. He "arose from the earth," when Christ bade him, but probably not without help, the vision had made him so faintly and weak; I will not say like Belshazzar, when the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another; but like Daniel, when upon the sight of a vision no strength remained in him, *Dan. x. 16, 17*.

2nd. When "his eyes were opened," he found that his sight was gone, and he "saw no man," none of the men that were with him, and began now to be busy about him. It was not so much this glaring light "that by dazzling his eyes had dimmed them"—*Nimium sensibile ludit sensum*, for then those with him would have lost their sight too; but it was a sight of Christ, whom the rest saw not, that had this effect upon him. Thus a believing sight of the glory of God in the face of Christ dazzles the eyes to all things here below. Christ, in order to the farther discovery of himself and his Gospel to Paul, took him off from the sight of other things, which he must look off, that he may look unto Jesus, and to him only.

3rd. They "led him by the hand into Damascus;" whether to a public house or to some friend's house, is not certain; but thus he who thought to have led the disciples of Christ prisoners and captives to Jerusalem was himself led a prisoner and a captive to Christ into Damascus. He was thus taught what need he had of the grace of Christ to lead his soul, being naturally blind, and apt to mistake, into all truth.

4th. He lay without sight, and without food, neither did eat nor drink for three days, ver. 9. I do not think, as some do, that now he had his rapture into the third heavens, which he speaks of, *2 Cor. xii.*; so far from that, that we have reason to think he was all this time rather in the belly of hell, suffering God's terrors for his sins, which were now set in order before him. He was in the dark concerning his own spiritual state, and was so wounded in spirit for sin that he could relish neither meat nor drink.

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother

xxvii. 16, 18. After speaking of a perennial stream which rises at the base of Anti-Lebanus, and distributes itself into different channels, Conybeare and Howson say, "The desert is a fortification round Damascus. The river is its life; it is drawn out into water-courses, and spreads in all directions. For miles around it is a wilderness of gardens. Everywhere among the trees the murmur of unseen rivulets is heard; even in the city, which is in the midst of the gardens, the clear rushing of the current is a perpetual refreshment. Every

dwelling has its fountain, and at night, when the sun has set behind Mount Lebanon, the lights of the city are seen flashing on the waters. . . . The white buildings of the city gleamed then, as they do now, in the centre of a verdant, inexhaustible Paradise. The Syrian gardens, with their low walls and water-wheels, and careless mixture of fruits and flowers, were the same then as they are now. The same figures would be seen in the green approaches to the town, camels and mules, horses and asses, with Syrian peasants and Arabs from beyond

Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. 21 But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

"As for God, his work is perfect;" if he begin he will make an end. A good work was begun in Saul, when he was brought to Christ's feet, in that word, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and never did Christ leave any that were brought to that. Though Saul was sadly mortified when he lay three days blind, yet he was not abandoned; Christ here takes care of the work of his own hands. He that hath torn will heal, that hath smitten will bind up, that has convinced will comfort.

First, Ananias is here ordered to go and look after him, to heal and help him; for he that causeth grief will have compassion.

1. The person employed is Ananias, "a certain disciple at Damascus;" not lately driven thither from Jerusalem, but a native of Damascus; for it is said, *ch. xxii. 12*, that he had "a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, as a devout man according to the law;" he had lately embraced the Gospel, and given up his name to Christ, and, as it should seem, officiated as a minister, at least *pro hac vice*,—on this occasion; though it doth not appear he was apostolically ordained. But why were not some of the apostles from Jerusalem sent for upon this great occasion, or Philip the evangelist, who had lately baptized the eunuch, and might have been fetched hither by the Spirit in a little time? Surely because Christ would employ variety of hands in eminent services, that the honours might not be monopolized or engrossed by a few; and would put work into the hands, and thereby put honour upon the heads, of those that were mean and obscure, to encourage them; and would direct us to make much of the ministers that are where our lot is cast, if they have obtained mercy to be faithful, though they are not of the most eminent.

2. The direction given him is to go and inquire at such a house, probably an inn, for one Saul of Tarsus. Christ in a vision called to Ananias by name, *ver. 10*. It is likely it was not the first time that he had heard the words of God, and seen the visions of the Almighty, for without terror or confusion he readily answers, "Behold, I am here, Lord," ready to go wherever thou sendest me, and do whatever thou biddest me. "Go then," saith Christ, "into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas," where strangers used to lodge, "for one called Saul of Tarsus." Note, Christ very well knows where to find out those that are in their distresses. When their relations, it may be, know not what is become of them, they have a Friend in heaven that knows in what street, in what house, nay, and which is more, in what frame they are; he knows their souls in adversity.

3. Two reasons are given him why he must go and inquire for this stranger, and offer him his service:

1st. Because he prays, and his coming to him must answer his prayer. This is a reason. *First*. Why Ananias needed not to be afraid of him, as we find he was, *ver. 13, 14*. There is no question, saith Christ, but he is a true convert, for "behold he prayeth." "Behold," notes the certainty of it; assure thyself it is so; go, and see else. Christ was so pleased to find Paul praying, that he must have others to take notice of it, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the sheep which I had lost." It notes also the strangeness of it; behold, and wonder, that he who but the other day breathed nothing but threatening and slaughter, now breathes nothing but prayer. But was it such a strange thing for Saul to pray? Was he not a Pharisee, and have we not reason to think he did as the rest of them did, make long prayers in the synagogues and the corners of the streets? Yes; but now he began to pray after another manner than he had done; then he said his prayers, now he prayed them. Note, Regenerating grace evermore sets people on praying. You may as soon find a living man without breath, as a living Christian without prayer. If breathless, lifeless; and so if prayerless, graceless. *Secondly*. As a reason why Ananias must go to him with all speed. It is no time to linger, for, "behold, he prayeth." If the child cry, the tender nurse hastens to it with the breast. Saul here, like Ephraim, is bemoaning himself, reproaching himself, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, and kicking against the goad. Oh! go to him quickly, and tell him, he is a dear son, a pleasant child; and since I spake against him for persecuting me, I do earnestly remember him still, *Jer. xxxi. 18–20*. Observe, 1st. What condition Saul was now in; he was under conviction of sin, trembling and astonished. The setting of sin in order before us should drive us to prayer. He was under a bodily affliction, blind and sick; and, "Is any afflicted? let him pray." Christ had promised him that it should be farther told him what he should do, *ver. 6*, and he prays that one may be sent to him to instruct him. Note, What God has promised we must pray for; he will for this be inquired of, and particularly for Divine instruction.

2nd. Because he hath seen in a vision such a man coming to him, to restore him to his sight, and Ananias coming to him must answer his dream, for it was of God; *ver. 12*. "He hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias," and just such a man as thou art, "coming in" seasonably for his relief, "and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight." Now, this vision Paul had may be considered, *First*. As an immediate answer to his prayer, and the keeping up of that communion with God which he had entered into by prayer. He had in prayer spread the misery of his own case before God, and God pre-

sently manifests himself, and the kind intentions of his grace to him; and it is very encouraging to know God's thoughts to usward. *Secondly*. As designed to raise his expectations, and to make Ananias coming more welcome to him. He would readily receive him as a messenger from God, when he was told beforehand in vision that one of that name would come to him. See what a great thing it is to bring a spiritual physician and his patient together; here are two visions in order to it. When God in his providence doth it without visions, brings a messenger to the afflicted soul, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness, it must be acknowledged with thankfulness to his praise.

Secondly. Ananias objects against going to him, and the Lord answers the objection. See how condescendingly the Lord admits his servant to reason with him.

1. Ananias pleads that this Saul was a notorious persecutor of the disciples of Christ, *ver. 13, 14*. 1st. He had been so at Jerusalem. "Lord, I have heard by many of this man," what a malicious enemy he is to the Gospel of Christ. All those that were scattered upon the late persecution, many of whom are come to Damascus, tell "how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem," that he was the most virulent, violent persecutor of all the rest, and a ringleader in the mischief; what "havoc he has made of the church." There was no man they were more afraid of, no, not the high priest himself, than of Saul. Nay, 2nd. His errand to Damascus at this time is to persecute us Christians, "here he has authority from the chief priests, to bind all that call on thy name," to treat the worshippers of Christ as the worst of criminals. Now, why doth Ananias object this? Not, Therefore I do not owe him so much service; why should I do him a kindness who has done and designed us so much unkindness? No, Christ has taught us another lesson, to render good for evil, and pray for our persecutors. But, if he be such a persecutor of Christians, *First*. Will it be safe for Ananias to go to him? Will he throw himself like a lamb into the mouth of the lion? And if he thus bring himself into trouble he will be blamed for his indiscretion. *Secondly*. Will it be to any purpose to go to him? can such a hard heart ever be softened, or such an Ethiopian ever change his skin?

2. Christ overrules the objection, *ver. 16, 17*. Do not tell me how bad he has been, I know it very well; but "go thy way" with all speed, and give him all the help thou canst, "for he is a chosen vessel," or instrument, "unto me." I design to put a confidence in him, and then thou needest not fear him. He was a vessel in which the Gospel treasure should be lodged, in order to the conveyance of it to many; an earthen vessel, *2 Cor. iv. 7*, but a chosen vessel. The vessel God useth he himself chooseth; and it is fit he should himself have the choosing of the instruments he employs; *Jno. xv. 16*, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." He is a vessel of honour, and must not be neglected in his present forlorn condition, or thrown away as a despised, broken vessel, or a vessel in which there is no pleasure. He is designed, 1st. For eminent services. He is "to bear my name before the Gentiles," is to be the apostle of the Gentiles, and to carry the Gospel to heathen nations. Christ's name is the standard to which souls must be gathered, and under which they must be listed, and Saul must be a standard-bearer, he must bear Christ's name, that is, must bear witness to it, "before kings," king Agrippa, and Cæsar himself. Nay, he must bear it "before the children of Israel," though there were so many hands already at work about them. 2nd. For eminent sufferings; *ver. 16*, "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." He that has been a persecutor, shall be himself persecuted. Christ's shewing him this intimates either his bringing him to these trials, as *Ps. lx. 3*, "Thou hast shewed thy people hard things," or his giving him notice of them beforehand, that they might be no surprise to him. Note, Those that bear Christ's name must expect to bear the cross for his name; and those that do most for Christ are often called out to suffer most for him. Saul must suffer great things. This, one would think, was cold comfort for a young convert; but it is but like telling a soldier of a bold and brave spirit, when he is enlisted, that he shall take the field and enter upon action shortly. Saul's sufferings for Christ shall redound so much to the honour of Christ and the service of the church, shall be so balanced with spiritual comforts and recompensed with eternal glories, that it is no discouragement to him to be told "how great things he must suffer for Christ's name's sake."

Thirdly. Ananias presently goes on Christ's errand to Saul, and with good effect. He had started an objection against going to him, but when an answer was given to it he dropped it, and did not insist upon it. When difficulties are removed, what have we to do but to go on with our work, and not hang upon an objection?

1. Ananias delivered his message to Saul, *ver. 17*. Probably he found him in bed, and applied to him as a patient. 1st. He "put his hands on him." It was promised as one of the signs that should follow them that believe, that they should "lay hands on the sick, and they should recover," *Mar. xvi. 18*; and it was for that intent that he put his hands on him. Saul came to lay violent hands upon the disciples at Damascus, but here a disciple lays a helping, healing hand upon him. "The bloodthirsty hate the upright, but the just seek his soul." 2nd. He called him "brother," because he was made a partaker of the grace of God, though not yet baptized. And his readiness to own him as a brother, intimated to him God's readiness to own him as a son, though he had been a blasphemer of God, and a persecutor of his children. 3rd. He proddeth his commission from the same hand that had laid hold on him by the way, and now had him in custody. That same "Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest," and convinced thee of thy sin in persecuting him, has now sent me to thee to comfort thee. *Una eademque manus vulnus openique tulit*.—The hand that wounded heals. His light struck thee blind, but he hath sent me to thee "that thou mightest receive thy sight;" for the design was not to blind thine eyes, but to dazzle them, that thou mightest see things by another light. He that then put clay upon thine eyes hath sent me to wash them, that they may be cured. Ananias might deliver his message to Saul very appositely in the prophet's words; *Hos. vi. 1, 2*, "Come, and turn to the Lord; for he hath torn and he will heal thee; he hath smitten, and he will bind thee up; now after two days he will revive thee, and the third day he will raise thee up, and thou shalt live in his sight." Corrosives shall be no more applied, but lenitives. 4th. He assures him that he shall not only have his sight restored, but "be filled with the Holy Ghost." He must himself be an apostle, and must in nothing come behind the chief of the apostles, and therefore must receive the Holy Ghost immediately, and not as others did, by the interposition of the apostles. And Ananias putting his hands upon him before he was baptized was not for the conferring of the Holy Ghost.

2. Ananias saw the good issue of his mission, 1st. In Christ's favour to Saul. At the word of Ananias, Saul was discharged from his confinement, by the restoring of his sight; for Christ's commission "to open the prison to them that were bound," *Isa. lxi. 1*, is explained by the "giving of sight to the blind," *Lu. ix. 18*; and, *Isa. xlii. 7*, Christ's commission is "to open the blind eyes, and to bring out the prisoners from the prison." Saul is delivered from the spirit of bondage by his receiving sight, *ver. 18*, which was signified by the falling of scales from his eyes, and this immediately and forthwith. The cure was sudden, to shew that it was

Palmyra. We know the very time of the day when Saul was entering these shady avenues. It was at mid-day. The birds were silent in the trees; the hush of noon was in the city; the sun was burning fiercely in the sky. The persecutor's companions were enjoying the cool refreshment of the shade after their journey; and his eyes rested with satisfaction on those walls which were the end of his mission, and contained the victims of his righteous zeal." The Jews in other towns acknowledged the authority of the high-priest and Sanhe-

drim, and the letters which Saul carried were to the presidents of the synagogues at Damascus, who would be able, under the authority of the ethnarch, to carry out the orders contained in them.

ix. 20. See Gal. i. 16, 17, where St. Paul says, "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus." From this we gather that soon after his conversion (probably before he commenced the active work men-

miraculous. This signified the recovering of him, *First*. From the darkness of his unconverted state. When he persecuted the church of God, and walked in the spirit and way of the Pharisees, he was blind, he saw not the meaning either of the law or of the Gospel, *Rom. vii. 9*. Christ often told the Pharisees they were blind, and could not make them sensible of it; they said, "We see," *Jno. ix. 41*. Saul is saved from his Pharisaical blindness by being made sensible of it. Note, Converting grace opens the eyes of the soul, and makes the scales of it fall from them; *ch. xxvi. 18*, "To open men's eyes, and turn them from darkness to light." This was it that Saul was sent among the Gentiles to do by the preaching of the Gospel, and therefore must first experience it in himself. *Secondly*. From the darkness of his present terrors under the apprehension of guilt upon his conscience, and the wrath of God against him. This filled him with confusion; during those three days he sat in darkness, like Jonah for three days in the belly of hell; but now the scales fell from his eyes, the cloud was scattered, and the Sun of righteousness rose upon his soul with healing under his wings.

2nd. In Saul's subjection to Christ. He was baptized, and thereby submitted himself to the government of Christ, and cast himself upon the grace of Christ. Thus he was entered into Christ's school, hired into his family, enlisted under his banner, and joined himself to him for better for worse. The point was gained, it is settled, Saul is now a disciple of Christ; not only ceaseth to oppose him, but devotes himself entirely to his service and honour.

Fourthly. The good work that was begun in Saul, is carried on wonderfully; this new-born Christian, though he seemed "as one born out of due time," yet presently comes to maturity.

1. He received his bodily strength, *ver. 19*. He had continued three days fasting, which, with the mighty weight that was all that time upon his spirits, had made him very weak; but "when he had received meat, he was strengthened," *ver. 19*. The Lord is for the body, and therefore care must be taken of that to keep it in good plight, that it may be fit to serve the soul in God's service, and that Christ may be magnified in it, *Phil. i. 20*.

2. He associated with the disciples that were at Damascus, fell in with them, conversed with them, went to their meetings, and joined in communion with them. He had lately breathed out threatenings and slaughter against them, but now breathes love and affection to them; now "the wolf dwells with the lamb, and the leopard lies down with the kid," *Isa. xi. 6*. Note, Those that take God for their God take his people for their people. Saul associated with the disciples, because now he saw an amiableness and excellency in them, because he loved them, and found that he improved in knowledge and grace by conversing with them, and thus he made profession of his Christian faith, and openly declared himself a disciple of Christ, by herding with those that were his disciples.

3. He "preached Christ in the synagogues," *ver. 20*. To this he had an extraordinary call, and for it an extraordinary qualification, God having immediately revealed his Son to him and in him, that he might preach him, *Gal. i. 15, 16*. He was so full of Christ himself, that the Spirit within him constrained him to preach him to others, and, like Elihu, to speak that he might be refreshed, *Job xxxii. 20*. Observe, 1st. Where he preached. "In the synagogues of the Jews;" for they were to have the first offer made them. The synagogues were their places of concourse, there he met with them together, and there they used to preach against Christ, and to punish his disciples, by the same token that Paul himself had "punished them off in every synagogue," *ch. xxvi. 11*, and therefore there he would face the enemies of Christ, where they were most daring; and openly profess Christianity there where he had most opposed it. 2nd. What he preached. He preached Christ. When he began to be a preacher, he fixed that for his principle, which he stuck to ever after, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord;" nothing but Christ, and him crucified. He preached concerning Christ, "that he is the Son of God," his beloved Son, in whom he is well-pleased, and with us in him, and not otherwise. 3rd. How people were affected with it; *ver. 21*, "All that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem?" and now doth he call on this name himself, and persuade others to call upon it, and strengthen the hands of those that do? *Quantum mutatus ab illo!*—"O how changed!" "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Nay, did he not "come hither for that intent?" to seize all the Christians he could find, "and bring them bound to the chief priests?" Yes, he did; who would have thought then that he should preach Christ as he doth? Doubtless this was looked upon by many as a great confirmation of the truth of Christianity, that one who had been such a notorious persecutor of it, came on a sudden to be such an intelligent, strenuous, and capacious preacher of it. This miracle upon the mind of such a man outshone the miracles upon men's bodies; and giving such a man another heart was more than giving men to speak with other tongues.

4. He confuted and confounded those that opposed the doctrine of Christ, *ver. 22*. He not only signified himself in the pulpit, but in the schools, and shewed himself supernaturally enabled not only to preach the truth, but to maintain and defend it when he had preached it. 1st. He increased in strength; he became more intimately acquainted with the Gospel of Christ, and his pious affections grew more strong; he grew more bold and daring and resolute in the defence of the Gospel; he "increased the more" for the reflections that were cast upon him, *ver. 21*, in which his new friends upbraided him as having been a persecutor, and his old friends upbraided him as being now a turn-coat; but Saul, instead of being discouraged by the various remarks made upon his conversion, was thereby so much the more emboldened, finding he had enough at hand wherewith to answer the worst they could say of him. 2nd. He ran down his antagonists, and "confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus;" he silenced them, and shamed them; answered their objections to the satisfaction of all indifferent persons, and pressed them with arguments which they could make no reply to. In all his discourses with the Jews, he was still proving that "this Jesus is very Christ," is the Christ, the Anointed of God, the true Messiah promised to the fathers. He was proving it, *συμψιχίζων*; affirming it, and confirming it; "teaching with persuasion." And we have reason to think he was instrumental to convert many to the faith of Christ, and to build up the church at Damascus, which he came thither to make havoc of. Thus "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness."

23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: 24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. 26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the dis-

ciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. 29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. 30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. 31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

Luke here makes no mention of Paul's journey into Arabia, which he tells us himself was immediately after his conversion, *Gal. i. 16, 17*. As soon as God had revealed his Son in him, that he might preach him, he went not up to Jerusalem, to receive instructions from the apostles, as any other convert would have done that was designed for the ministry, but he went to Arabia, where there was new ground to break up, and where he would have opportunity of teaching, but not of learning. Thence he returned to Damascus, and there, three years after his conversion, this happened which is here recorded.

First. He met with difficulties at Damascus, and had a narrow escape of being killed there. Observe,

1. What his danger was; *ver. 23*, "The Jews took counsel to kill him," being more enraged at him than at any other of the preachers of the Gospel; not only because he was more lively and zealous in his preaching than any of them, and more successful, but because he had been such a remarkable deserter, and his being a Christian was a testimony against them. It is said, *ver. 24*, "the Jews watched the gates day and night to kill him;" they incensed the governor against him, as a dangerous man, who, therefore, "kept the city with a guard to apprehend him," at his going out or coming in, *2 Cor. xi. 32*. Now Christ shewed Paul what "great things he must suffer for his name," *ver. 16*, when here is presently the government in arms against him, which was a great thing, and, as all other sufferings, afterwards helped to make him considerable. Saul was no sooner a Christian, but a preacher; no sooner a preacher, but a sufferer; so quick did he rise to the top of his preferment. Note, Where God gives great grace, he commonly exercises it with great trials.

2. How he was delivered. 1st. The design against him was discovered. "Their lying in wait was known of Saul" by some intelligence, whether from heaven or from men we are not told. 2nd. The disciples contrived to help him away, hid him, it is likely, by day, and in the night, the gates being watched that he could not get away through them, they "let him down by the wall in a basket," as he himself relates it, *2 Cor. xi. 33*, so he "escaped out of their hands." This story, as it shews us that, when we enter into the way of God, we must look for temptation, and prepare accordingly, so it shews us that "the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape," that we may not be by it deterred or driven from the way of God.

Secondly. He met with difficulties at Jerusalem the first time he went thither; *ver. 26*, he came to Jerusalem. This is thought to be that journey to Jerusalem which he himself speaks of, *Gal. i. 18*, "After three years, I went up to Jerusalem," saith he, "to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days." But I rather incline to think that this was a journey before that, because his coming in and going out, his preaching and disputing, *ver. 28, 29*, seem to be more than would consist with his fifteen days' stay, for that was no more, and to require a longer time. And, besides, now he came a stranger; but then he came *ιστοφάνη Περπον*, to confer with Peter, as one he was intimate with. However, it might possibly be the same. Now observe,

1. How shy his friends were of him; *ver. 26*, "When he came to Jerusalem," he did not go to the chief priests and the Pharisees, he had taken his leave of them long since, but "he assayed to join himself to the disciples." Wherever he came he owned himself one of that despised, persecuted people, and associated with them; they were now in his eyes "the excellent ones of the earth, in whom was all his delight." He desired to be acquainted with them, and to be admitted into communion with them. But they looked strange upon him, shut the door against him, and would not go about any of their religious exercises if he were by; for "they were afraid of him." Now might Paul be tempted to think himself in an ill case, when the Jews had abandoned and persecuted him, and the Christians would not receive and entertain him. Thus doth he fall into divers temptations, and needs "the armour of righteousness," as we all do, both "on the right hand and on the left," that we may not be discouraged either by the unjust treatment of our enemies or the unkind treatment of our friends.

1st. See what was the cause of their jealousy of him. "They believed not that he was a disciple;" but that he only pretended to be so, and came among them as a spy, or an informer. They knew what a bitter persecutor he had been, with what fury he went to Damascus some time ago, had heard nothing of him since, and therefore thought he was but a wolf in sheep's clothing. The disciples of Christ had need to be cautious whom they admit into communion with them; "Believe not every spirit." There is need of the wisdom of the serpent to keep the mean between the extremes of suspicion on the one hand, and credulity on the other; yet, methinks, it is safer to err on the charitable side, because it is an adjudged case, that it is better the tares should be found among the wheat, than that the wheat should, any of it, be rooted up, and thrown out of the field.

2nd. See how it was removed; *ver. 27*, "Barnabas took him to the apostles" themselves, who were not so scrupulous as the inferior disciples, to whom he first assayed to join himself, and he declared to them, *First*. What Christ had done for him; had shewed himself to him in the way, and spoken to him, and what he said. *Secondly*. What he had since done for Christ. Had "preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus." How Barnabas came

tioned in this verse) he went to visit Arabia, that his visit there was short, and he returned to Damascus.

ix. 26. The visit to Jerusalem here mentioned is the same as that mentioned by St. Paul in *Gal. i. 18*.

ix. 27. "Barnabas:" see chap. iv. 36. A native of Cyprus, not far from Tarsus, Saul's native place. "The apostles:" see *Gal. i. 18, 19*.

ix. 29. "The Grecians:" i.e., the Hellenistic Jews. He very likely attended the synagogue where Stephen had previously disputed. See

chap. xxii. 17, for a vision which St. Paul had at this time at Jerusalem.

ix. 31. "Then had the churches rest:" at this time Caligula attempted to set up his image in the Temple at Jerusalem. The indignation and distress which this caused the Jews seems to have for a time drawn off their attention from the Christians.

ix. 32. "Lydda:" a large village near Joppa, on the Mediterranean, and distant about one day's journey from Jerusalem.

to know this more than the rest of them, we are not told; whether he had himself been at Damascus, or had had letters from thence, or discoursed with some of that city, by which he came to the knowledge of this; or whether he had formerly been acquainted with Paul in the Grecian synagogues, or at the feet of Gamaliel, and had such an account of his conversion from himself, as he saw cause enough to give credit to: so it was that, being satisfied himself, he gave satisfaction to the apostles concerning him, he having brought no testimonials from the disciples at Damascus, thinking he needed not, as some others, epistles of commendation, 2 Cor. iii. 1. Note, The introducing of a young convert into the communion of the faithful is a very good work, and which, as we have opportunity, we should be ready to.

2. How sharp his enemies were upon him.

1st. He was admitted into the communion of the disciples; which was no little provocation to his enemies. It vexed the unbelieving Jews to see Saul a trophy of Christ's victory, and a captive to his grace, who had been such a champion for their cause; to see him "coming in and going out with the apostles," ver. 28; and to hear them glorying in him, or rather glorifying God in him.

2nd. He appeared vigorous in the cause of Christ, and this was yet more provoking to them; ver. 29. "He spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus." Note, Those that speak for Christ have reason to speak boldly; for they have a good cause, and speak for One who will at last speak for himself and them too. The Grecians, or Hellenist Jews, were most offended at him, because he had been one of them; and they drew him into a dispute, in which, no doubt, he was too hard for them, as he had been for the Jews at Damascus. One of the martyrs said, Though she could not dispute for Christ, she could die for Christ; but Paul could do both. Now the Lord Jesus divided the spoils of the strong man armed in Saul. For that same natural quickness and fervour of spirit which, while he was in ignorance and unbelief, made him a furious, bigoted persecutor of the faith, made him a most zealous, courageous defender of the faith.

3rd. This brought him into peril of his life, with which he narrowly escaped. "The Grecians," when they found they could not deal with him in disputation, contrived to silence him another way; they "went about to slay him," as they did Stephen, when "they could not resist the Spirit by which he spake," ch. vi. 10. That is a bad cause that has recourse to persecution for its last argument. But notice was given of this conspiracy too, and effectual care taken to secure this young champion; ver. 30. "When the brethren knew" what was designed against him, "they brought him down to Cæsarea." They remembered how the putting of Stephen to death, upon his disputing with the Grecians, had been the beginning of a sore persecution; and, therefore, were afraid of having such a vein opened again, and hastened Paul out of the way. He that flies may fight again; he that fled from Jerusalem might do service at Tarsus, the place of his nativity; and thither they desired him by all means to go, in hopes he might go on in his work with more safety than at Jerusalem. Yet it was also by direction from Heaven that he left Jerusalem at this time; as he tells us himself, ch. xxii. 17, 18, that Christ now appeared to him, and ordered him to "go quickly out of Jerusalem," for he must be sent to the Gentiles, ver. 21. Those by whom God has work to do shall be protected from all the designs of their enemies against them till it is done. Christ's witnesses cannot be slain till they have finished their testimony.

Thirdly. The churches had now a comfortable gleam of liberty and peace; ver. 31, "then had the churches rest." Then when Saul was converted, so some, when that persecutor was taken off, those were quiet whom he used to irritate; and then those were quiet whom he used to molest. Or, "then," when he was gone from Jerusalem, the fury of the Grecian Jews was a little abated, and they were the more willing to bear with the other preachers, now Saul was gone out of the way. Observe,

1. "The churches had rest." After a storm comes a calm. Though we are always to expect troublesome times, yet we may expect that they shall not last always. This was a breathing time allowed them to prepare them for the next encounter. The churches that were already planted were mostly in Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria, within the limits of the Holy Land. There were the first Christian churches, where Christ had himself laid the foundation.

2. They made a good use of this lucid interval. Instead of growing secure and wanton in the day of their prosperity, they abounded more in their duty, and made a good use of their tranquillity. 1st. They were edified, were built up in their most holy faith. The more free and constant enjoyment they had of the means of knowledge and grace, the more they increased in knowledge and grace. 2nd. They "walked in the fear of the Lord;" were more exemplary themselves for a holy, heavenly conversation. They lived so as that all who conversed with them might say, Surely the fear of God reigns in those people. 3rd. They walked "in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." They were not only faithful, but cheerful in religion; they stuck to the ways of the Lord, and sang in those ways. The comfort of the Holy Ghost was their consolation, and that which they made their chief joy. They had recourse to the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and lived upon that not only in days of trouble and affliction, but in days of rest and prosperity. The comforts of the earth, when they had the most free and full enjoyment of them, could not content them without the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Observe the connexion of these two; when they walked in the fear of the Lord, then they walked in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Those are most likely to walk cheerfully that walk circumspectly.

3. God blessed it to them for their increase in number; "they were multiplied." Sometimes the church multiplies the more for its being afflicted, as Israel in Egypt; yet if it were always so the saints of the Most High would be worn out. At other times, its rest contributes to its growth, as it enlargeth the opportunity of ministers, and invites those in that at first are afraid of suffering. Or, then when they walked in the fear of God, and his comforts, then they were multiplied. Thus, they that will not be won by the Word may be won by the conversation of professors.

32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed through-out all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. 33 And there he found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. 34 And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. 35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

Here we have, First. The visit Peter made to the churches that were newly planted by the dispersed preachers, ver. 32.

ix. 35. "Saron:" a fertile and beautiful plain, extending along the coast from Cæsarea to Joppa.

ix. 36. "Joppa:" now called Jaffa, or Japha. It was on the sea-coast, and formerly belonged to the Philistines, but at the time of Peter's visit it belonged to the province of Syria. It was the only port of Palestine before Herod built the harbour of Cæsarea. "Tabitha," "Dorcas:" "Both words mean a fawn or gazelle, from the brightness of the large black eye" (Cook).

1. He passed through all quarters. As an apostle, he was not to be the resident pastor of any one church, but the itinerant visitor of many churches; to confirm the doctrine of inferior preachers, to confer the Holy Ghost on them that believed, and to ordain ministers. He passed *διὰ πάντων*, "among them all," who pertained to the churches of Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria, mentioned in the foregoing chapter. He was, like his Master, always upon the remove, and "went about doing good;" but still his head quarters were at Jerusalem, for there we shall find him imprisoned, ch. xii.

2. He came to the saints at Lydda. This seems to be the same with Lod, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, mentioned 1 Chr. viii. 12; Ezr. ii. 33. The Christians are called saints, not only some particular eminent ones, as St. Peter and St. Paul, but every sincere professor of the faith of Christ. These are the saints on the earth, Ps. xvi. 3.

Secondly. The cure Peter wrought on Æneas, a man that had been bed-ridden eight years, ver. 33.

1. His case was very deplorable. He was sick of the palsy, a dumb palsy, perhaps a dead palsy; the disease was extreme, for he kept his bed; it was inveterate, for he kept his bed eight years. And we may suppose both he himself and all about him despaired of relief for him, and concluded upon no other but that he must still keep his bed till he removed to his grave. Christ chose such patients as those, whose diseases were incurable in a course of nature, to shew how desperate the case of fallen mankind was when he undertook their cure. When we were without strength, as this poor man, he sent his Word to heal us.

2. His cure was very admirable, ver. 34. 1st. Peter interested Christ in his case, and engaged him for his relief; "Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." Peter doth not pretend to do it himself by any power of his own, but declares it to be Christ's act and deed, and directs him to look up to Christ for help, and assures him of an immediate cure,—not, He will make thee, but he doth make thee, whole; and a perfect cure,—not, makes thee easy, but he makes thee whole. He doth not express himself by way of prayer to Christ that he would make him whole; but, as one having authority from Christ, and that knew his mind, he declares him made whole. 2nd. He ordered him to bestir himself, to exert himself; "Arise, and make thy bed," that all may see thou art thoroughly cured. Let none say that, because it is Christ that by the power of his grace works all our works in us, therefore we have no work, no duty to do; for, though "Jesus Christ makes thee whole," yet thou must arise, and make use of the power he gives thee. "Arise, and make thy bed," for another use than it has been; to be a bed of rest to thee, no longer a bed of sickness. 3rd. Power went along with this word; "he arose immediately," and, no doubt, very willingly made his own bed.

Thirdly. The good influence this had upon many; ver. 35. "All that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord." We can scarce think that every individual person in those countries took cognizance of the miracle, and was wrought upon by it, but many, the generality of the people in the town of Lydda, and in the country of Saron, or Sharon, a fruitful plain or valley, of which it was foretold, "Sharon shall be a fold of flocks," Isa. lxi. 10.

1. They all made inquiry into the truth of the miracle; did not overlook it, but saw him that was healed, and saw that it was a miraculous cure that was wrought upon him, by the power of Christ, and in his name, and with a design to confirm and ratify that doctrine of Christ which was now preached to the world.

2. They all submitted to the convincing proof and evidence there was in this of the Divine original of the Christian doctrine, and "turned to the Lord," to the Lord Jesus; they turned from Judaism to Christianity; they embraced the doctrine of Christ, and submitted to his ordinances, and turned themselves over to him to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. 37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. 38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had



LYDDA.

heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. 39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him

ix. 38, 39. Lydda was about six miles from Joppa. The "widows" here mentioned were those for whom Dorcas had made garments during her lifetime. Widows were a special care of the Church (see 1 Tim. v. 3–10). "The coats:" these were tunics, or inner garments. "Garments:" these were the outer robes, or cloaks.

ix. 40. Luke gives a very graphic account of the scene of raising Dorcas. In this, as in other accounts which he gives of miracles, we can detect the observation and knowledge of the physician.

weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him* to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 And he gave her *his* hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive. 42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. 43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

Here we have a greater miracle wrought by Peter, for the confirming of the Gospel, and which exceeded the former: the raising of Tabitha to life, when she had been for some time dead. Here is,

First. The life, and death, and character of Tabitha, on whom this miracle was wrought, ver. 36, 37.

1. She lived at Joppa, a seaport town in the tribe of Dan, where Jonah took shipping to go to Tarshish, now called Japho.

2. Her name was Tabitha, a Hebrew name, the Greek for which is Dorcas, both signifying a doe, or hind, or deer, a pleasant creature; Naphtali is compared to "a hind let loose, giving goodly words." And the wife, to the kind and tender husband, is as the loving hind, and as the pleasant roe, *Pr. v. 19*.

3. She was a disciple, one that had embraced the faith of Christ, and was baptized. And not only so, but was eminent above many for works of charity; she shewed her faith by her works, her good works, which she was full of; that is, which she abounded in; her head was full of cares and contrivances which way she should do good. She devised liberal things, *Isa. xxxii. 8*; her hands were full of good employment; she made a business of doing good, was never idle, having learned to maintain good works, *Tit. ii. 14*; to keep up a constant course, and method of them. She "was full of good works," as a tree that is full of fruit. Many are full of good words that are empty and barren in good works; but Tabitha was a great doer, no great talker; *non magna loquimur, sed vivimus*.—"We do not talk great things, but we live them." Among other good works, she was remarkable for her "alms-deeds which she did;" not only her works of piety, which are good works and the fruits of faith, but works of charity and beneficence, flowing from love to her neighbour, and a holy contempt of this world. Observe. She is praised, not only for the alms which she gave, but for the "alms-deeds which she did." Those that have not estates wherewith to give in charity may yet be able to do in charity, working with their hands, or walking with their feet, for the benefit of the poor. And they who will not do a charitable deed, whatever they may pretend, if they were rich, would not bestow a charitable gift. She was full of alms-deeds, *de bonis*, "which she made." There is an emphasis upon her doing them, because what her hand found to do of this kind she did with all her might, and persevered in. They were "alms-deeds," not which she purposed and designed, and said she would do, "but which she did;" not which she began to do, but which she did, which she went through with, which she performed the doing of, *2 Cor. viii. 11; ix. 7*. This is the life and character of a certain disciple, and should agree to all the disciples of Christ; for, if thus we bear much fruit, then are we his disciples indeed, *Jno. xv. 3*.

4. She was removed in the midst of her usefulness; ver. 37. "In those days she was sick, and died." It is promised to those who consider the poor, not that they shall never be sick, but that "the Lord will strengthen them upon the bed of languishing," at least with strength in their soul, and so will "make all their bed in their sickness;" will make it easy, *Psa. xli. 1, 3*. They cannot hope that they shall never die,—merciful men are taken away, and merciful women too,—witness Tabitha, but they may hope that they shall find mercy of the Lord in that day, *2 Tim. i. 18*.

5. Her friends, and those about her, did not presently bury her as usual, because they were in hopes Peter would come and raise her to life again; but they washed the dead body, according to the custom, which, they say, was with warm water, which, if there were any life remaining in the body, would recover it; so that this was done to shew that she was really and truly dead. They tried all the usual methods to bring her to life and could not. *Conclamatio est*.—"The last cry was uttered." "They laid her" out in her grave-clothes "in an upper chamber;" which Dr. Lightfoot thinks was probably the public meeting-room for the believers of that town; and they laid the body there, that Peter, if he would come, might raise her to life the more solemnly in that place.

Secondly. The request which her Christian friends sent to Peter to come to them with all speed; not to attend the funeral, but, if it might be, to prevent it, ver. 38. Lydda, where Peter now was, was nigh to Joppa; and the disciples at Joppa had heard that Peter was there, and that he had raised *Eneas* from a bed of languishing, and therefore "sent to him two men," to make the message the more solemn and respectful, "desiring him that he would not delay to come to them;" not telling him the occasion, lest he should modestly decline coming upon so great an errand as to raise the dead. If they can but get him to them, they will leave it to him. Their friend was dead, and it was too late to send for a physician; but not too late to send for Peter. *Post mortem medicus*.—"a physician after death," is an absurdity; but not *post mortem apostolus*.—"an apostle after death."

Thirdly. The posture in which he found the survivors, when he came to them, ver. 39. "Peter arose and went with them." Though they did not tell him what they wanted him for, yet he was willing to go along with them, believing it was upon some good account or other that he was sent for. Let not faithful ministers grudge to be at every body's beck, as far as they have ability, when the great apostle made himself the servant of all, *1 Cor. ix. 19*. He found the corpse laid in the upper chamber, and attended by widows; probably such as were in the communion of the church, poor widows. There they were,

1. Commending the deceased. A good work, when there was that in them which was truly commendable, and recommendable to imitation, and it is done modestly and soberly, and without flattery of the survivors, or any sinister intention, but purely for the glory of God, and the exciting of others to that which is virtuous and praiseworthy. The commendation of Tabitha was like her own virtues, not in word, but in deed. Here were no encomiums of her in orations, or poems inscribed to her memory, but "the widows shewed the coats and garments which she made" for them, and bestowed upon them, "while she was with them." It was the comfort of Job while he lived, that the loins of

the poor blessed him, because they were warmed with the fleece of his sheep, *Job xxxi. 20*; and here it was the credit of Tabitha when she was dead, that the backs of the widows praised her, for the garments which she made them. And those are certainly best praised whose own works praise them in the gates, whether others' words do or no. And it is much more honourable to clothe a company of crazy widows with needful clothing for night and day, who will pray for their benefactors when they do not see them, than to clothe a company of lazy footmen with rich liveries, who perhaps behind their backs will curse them that clothe them, *Ecc. vii. 21*; and it is what all that are wise and good will take a greater pleasure in, for goodness is true greatness, and will pass better in the account shortly. Observe, 1st. Into what channel Tabitha turned much of her charity. Doubtless there were other instances of her alms-deeds which she did, but this was now produced: she did, as it should seem, with her own hands "make coats and garments" for poor widows, who perhaps with their own labour could make a shift to get their bread, but could not earn enough to buy clothes. And this is an excellent piece of charity. "If thou seest the naked, that thou cover him," *Isa. lviii. 7*; and not think it enough to say, "Be ye warmed," *Jas. ii. 15, 16*. 2nd. What a grateful sense the poor had of her kindness. "They shewed the coats," not ashamed to own that they were indebted to her for the clothes on their backs. Those are horribly ungrateful indeed that have kindness shewn them, and will not make at least an acknowledgment of it by shewing the kindness that is done them, as these widows here did. They that receive alms are not obliged so industriously to conceal it as those are who give alms. When the poor reflect upon the rich as uncharitable and unmerciful, they ought to reflect upon themselves, and consider whether they are not unthankful and ungrateful. Their shewing their coats and garments which Dorcas made tended to the praise not only of her charity, but of her industry, according to the character of the virtuous woman, that she "layeth her hands to the spindle," or at least to the needle, and then "stretcheth out her hand to the poor, and reacheth forth her hands to the needy," of what she has worked; and when God and the poor have thus had their due, "she makes herself coverings of tapestry, and her own clothing is silk and purple," *Pr. xxxi. 19—22*.

2. They were here lamenting the loss of her; the widows stood by Peter weeping. When the merciful are taken away, it should be laid to heart; especially by those to whom they have been in a particular manner merciful. They needed not to weep for her, she was taken from the evil to come; she rests from her labours, and her works follow her, besides those she leaves behind her. But they weep for themselves and for their children, who will soon find the want of such a good woman, that had not left her fellow. Observe. They take notice of what good Dorcas did while she was with them; but now she is gone from them, and that is the grief. Those that are charitable will find that the poor they have always with them; but it is well if those that are poor find that they have the charitable always with them. We must make a good use of the lights that yet a little while are with us, because they will not be always with us, will not be long with us; and when they are gone we shall think what they did when they were with us. It should seem the widows wept before Peter, as an inducement to him, if he could do any thing, to have compassion on them, and help them, and restore one to them that used to have compassion on them. When charitable people are dead, there is no praying them to life again; but when they are sick that piece of gratitude is owing them to pray for their recovery, that if it be the will of God those may be spared to live who can ill be spared to die.

Fourthly. The manner how she was raised to life.

1. Privately. She was laid in the upper room where they used to have their public meetings, and it should seem there was great crowding about the dead body, in expectation what would be done; but "Peter put them all forth," all the weeping widows, all but some few relations of the family, or perhaps the heads of the church, to join with him in prayer, as Christ did, *Mat. ix. 25*. Thus Peter declined every thing that looked like vainglory and ostentation; they came to see, but he did not come to be seen. He "put them all forth," that he might with the more freedom pour out his soul before God in prayer upon this occasion, and not be disturbed with their noisy and clamorous lamentations.

2. By prayer. In his healing *Eneas* there was an implicit prayer; but in this greater work he addressed himself to God by solemn prayer, as Christ when he raised Lazarus; but Christ's prayer was with the authority of a Son, who quickens whom he will, Peter's with the submission of a servant, who is under direction, and therefore he "kneeled down and prayed."

3. By the word, a quickening word, a word which is spirit and life. He turned to the body, which intimates that when he prayed he turned from it. Lest the sight of it should discourage his faith, he looked another way, to teach us, like Abraham, against hope to believe in hope, and overlook the difficulties that lie in the way; not considering the body as now dead, lest we should stagger at the promise, *Rom. iv. 19, 20*. But when he had prayed he turned to the body, and spake in his Master's name, and according to his example, "Tabitha, arise;" return to life again. Power went along with this word, and she came to life; opened her eyes which death had closed. Thus, in the raising of dead souls to spiritual life, the first sign of life is the opening of the eyes of the mind, *ch. xxvi. 18*. When she saw Peter, she sat up, to shew that she was really and truly alive; and, ver. 41, "He gave her his hand, and lifted her up;" not as if she laboured under any remaining weakness, but thus he would, as it were, welcome her to life again, and gave her the right hand of fellowship among the living from whom she had been cut off. And, lastly, He "called the saints and widows," who were all in sorrow for her death, and "presented her alive" to them, to their great comfort; particularly of the widows, who laid her death much to heart, ver. 41. To them he presented her, as Elijah, *1 Kin. xvii. 23*, and Elisha, *2 Kin. iv. 36*, and Christ, *Lu. vii. 15*, presented the dead sons alive to their mothers. And the greatest joy and satisfaction are expressed by life from the dead.

Fifthly. The good effect of this miracle.

1. Many were by it convinced of the truth of the Gospel, that it was from Heaven, and not of men, and "believed in the Lord," ver. 42. The thing was "known throughout all Joppa;" it would be in every body's mouth quickly, and, it being a town of seafaring men, the notice of it would be the sooner carried from thence to other countries; and, though some never minded it, many were wrought upon by it. This was the end of miracles, to confirm a Divine revelation.

2. Peter was hereby induced to continue some time in this city, ver. 43. Finding that a door of opportunity was opened for him there, he tarried there many days, till he was sent thence, and sent for from thence upon business to another place. He tarried not in the house of Tabitha, though she was rich, lest he should seem to seek his own glory; but he took up his lodging with one Simon a tanner, an ordinary tradesman, which is an instance of his condescension and humility. And hereby he has taught us not to mind high things, but to condescend to them of low estate, *Rom. xii. 16*. And, though Peter might seem to be buried in obscurity here in the house of a poor tanner by the sea side, yet hence God fetched him to a noble piece of service in the next chapter; for "those that humble themselves shall be exalted."

ix. 43. "A tanner." "One who prepared skins for domestic uses. From the necessary contact with dead animals, the occupation was held by the Jews in great disrepute. Chrysostom instances this as a mark of Peter's humility, that he chose to lodge with a despised countryman. The trade was considered mean by other nations, and was practised at a distance from towns, near water (chap. x. 6), for the convenience of softening the hides" (Webster and Wilkinson).

x. 1. "Cæsarea;" built by Herod the Great, in honour of Augustus

Cæsar, on the sea-coast, about sixty miles north-west of Jerusalem. It belonged to Phœnicia, not to Judæa, and was regarded as a Gentile city. "The city was provided with everything that could contribute to magnificence, amusement, and health. But its great boast was its harbour, which provided for the ships which visited that dangerous coast a safe basin. Vast stones were sunk in the sea to the depth of twenty fathoms, and thus a stupendous breakwater was formed, curving round so as to afford complete protection from south-easterly

CHAPTER X.

It is a turn very new and remarkable which the story of this chapter gives to the Acts of the Apostles. Hitherto, both at Jerusalem and everywhere else where the ministers of Christ came, they preached the Gospel only to the Jews, or those Greeks that were circumcised and proselyted to the Jews' religion; but now, lo, we turn to the Gentiles, and to them the door of faith is here opened. Good news indeed to us sinners of the Gentiles. The apostle Peter is the man that is first employed to admit uncircumcised Gentiles into the Christian church; and Cornelius, a Roman centurion, or colonel, is the first that with his family and friends is so admitted. Now here we are told, 1. How Cornelius was directed by a vision to send for Peter, and did send for him accordingly, ver. 1-8. II. How Peter was directed by a vision to go to Cornelius, though he was a Gentile, without making any scruple of it; and did go accordingly, ver. 9-23. III. The happy interview between Peter and Cornelius at Cæsarea, ver. 24-33. IV. The sermon Peter preached in the house of Cornelius to him and to his friends, ver. 34-43. V. The baptizing of Cornelius and his friends with the Holy Ghost first, and then with water, ver. 44-48.



HERE was a certain man in Cæsarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, 2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. 3

He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: 6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. 7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; 8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

The bringing of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and the bringing of them who had been strangers and foreigners to be fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, was such a mystery to the apostles themselves, and such a surprise, Eph. iii. 3, 6, that it concerns us carefully to observe all the circumstances of the beginning of this great work, this part of the mystery of godliness, Christ preached to the Gentiles, and believed on in the world, 1 Tim. iii. 16. It is not unlikely that some Gentiles might before now step into a synagogue of the Jews, and hear the Gospel preached; but the Gospel was never yet designedly preached to the Gentiles, nor any of them baptized; Cornelius was the first. And here we have,

First. An account given us of this Cornelius, who and what he was, that was the firstborn of the Gentiles to Christ. We are here told that he was a great man, and a good man; two characters that seldom meet, but here they did; and where they do meet, they put a lustre upon each other. Goodness makes greatness truly valuable, and greatness makes goodness much more serviceable.

1. Cornelius was an officer of the army, ver. 1. He was at present quartered in Cæsarea, a strong city, lately re-edified and fortified by Herod the Great, and called Cæsarea, in honour of Augustus Cæsar. It lay on the sea shore, very convenient for the keeping up of a correspondence between Rome and its conquests in those parts. The Roman governor, or proconsul, ordinarily resided there, ch. xxiii. 23, 24; xxv. 6. Here there was a band, or cohort, or regiment of the Roman army, which probably was the governor's life-guard, and is here called the Italian band, because, that they might be the more sure of their fidelity, they were all native Romans or Italians. Cornelius had a command in this part of the army. His name, Cornelius, was much used among the Romans, among some of the most ancient and noble families. He was an officer of considerable rank and figure, a centurion. We read of one in our Saviour's time of that rank, whom he gave a great commendation of, Mat. viii. 10. When a Gentile must be pitched upon to receive the Gospel first, it is not a Gentile philosopher, much less a Gentile priest, who are bigoted to their notions and worship, and prejudiced against the Gospel of Christ, but a Gentile soldier, who is a man of more free thought; and he that truly is so, when the Christian doctrine is fairly set before him, cannot but receive it, and bid it welcome. Fishermen, unlearned and ignorant men, were the first of the Jewish converts, but not so of the Gentiles; for the world shall know that the Gospel has that in it which may recommend it to men of polite learning and a liberal education, as we have reason to think this centurion was. Let not soldiers and officers of the army plead that their employment frees them from the restraints which some others are under, and giving them an opportunity of living more at large, may excuse them if they be not religious; for here was an officer of the army that embraced Christianity, and yet was neither turned out of his place, nor turned himself out. And, lastly, it was a mortification to the Jews, that not

only the Gentiles were taken into the church, but the first that was taken in was an officer of the Roman army, which was to them the abomination of desolation.

2. He was, according to the measure of the light he had, a religious man. It is a very good character that is given of him, ver. 2. He was no idolater, no worshipper of false gods, or images, nor allowed himself in any of those immoralities which the greater part of the Gentile world were given up to, to punish them for their idolatry. 1st. He was possessed with a principle of regard to the true and living God; he was "a devout man, and one that feared God." He believed in one God, the creator of heaven and earth, and had a reverence of his glory and authority, and a dread of offending him by sin; and, though he was a soldier, it was no diminution to the credit of his valour to tremble before God. 2nd. He kept up religion in his family; he "feared God, with all his house." He would not admit any idolaters under his roof, but took care that not himself only, but all his, should serve the Lord. Every good man will do what he can that those about him may be good too. 3rd. He was a very charitable man; he "gave much alms to the people," the people of the Jews, notwithstanding the singularities of their religion. Though he was a Gentile, he was willing to contribute to the relief of one that was a real object of charity, without asking what religion he was of. 4th. He was much in prayer; he "prayed to God alway." He kept up stated times for prayer, and was constant to them. Note, Wherever the fear of God rules in the heart, it will appear both in works of charity and of piety, and neither will excuse us from the other.

Secondly. The orders given him from Heaven, by the ministry of an angel, to send for Peter to come to him; which he would never have done, if he had not been thus directed to do it. Observe,

1. How and in what way these orders were given him. He had a vision, in which an angel delivered them to him. It was "about the ninth hour of the day," at three of the clock in the afternoon, which is with us an hour of business and conversation; but then, because it was in the temple the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, it was made by devout people an hour of prayer, to intimate that all our prayers are to be offered up in the virtue of the great Sacrifice. Cornelius was now at prayer, so he tells us himself, ver. 30. Now here we are told, 1st. That an angel of God came in to him. By the brightness of his countenance, and the manner of his coming in, he knew him to be something more than a man, and therefore nothing less than an angel, an express from heaven. 2nd. That he saw him evidently, with his bodily eyes; not in a dream presented to his imagination, but in a vision presented to his sight, for his greater satisfaction; it carried its own evidence along with it. 3rd. That he called him by his name, Cornelius, to intimate the particular notice God took of him. 4th. That this put Cornelius for the present into some confusion; ver. 4, "when he looked on him, he was afraid." The wisest and best men have been struck with fear upon the appearance of any extraordinary messenger from heaven; and justly, for sinful man knows he has no reason to expect any good tidings from thence. And therefore Cornelius cries, "What is it, Lord?" What is the matter? This he speaks as one afraid of something amiss, and longing to be eased of that fear by knowing the truth; or as one desirous to know the mind of God, and ready to comply with it, as Joshua, "What saith my Lord unto his servant?" and Samuel, "Speak, for thy servant heareth."

2. What the message was that was delivered to him.

1st. He is assured that God accepts of him in walking according to the light he had; ver. 4, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." Observe, Prayers and alms must go together. We must follow our prayers with alms; for the fact that God hath chosen is, to draw out the soul to the hungry, Isa. lviii. 6, 7. It is not enough to pray that what we have may be sanctified to us, but we must give alms of such things as we have; and then, behold, all things are clean to us, Lu. xi. 41. And we must follow our alms with our prayers, that God would graciously accept them, and that they may be blessed to those to whom they are given. Cornelius prayed and gave alms, not as the Pharisees, to be seen of men, but in sincerity, as unto God; and he is here told, that they were "come up for a memorial before God." They were upon record in heaven, in the book of remembrance that is written there for all that fear God, and shall be remembered to his advantage; Thy prayers shall be answered, and thine alms recompensed. The sacrifices under the law are said to be for a memorial; see Lev. ii. 9, 16; v. 12; vi. 15; and prayers and alms are our spiritual offerings, which God is pleased to take cognizance of, and have regard to. The Divine revelation communicated to the Jews, as far as the Gentiles were concerned in it, not only as it directed and improved the light and law of nature, but as it promised a Messiah to come, Cornelius believed and submitted to. What he did, he did in that faith, and was accepted of God in it; for the Gentiles to whom the law of Moses came were not obliged to become circumcised Jews, as those to whom the Gospel of Christ comes are to become baptized Christians.

2nd. He is appointed to inquire after a farther discovery of Divine grace, now lately made to the world; ver. 5, 6, he must send forthwith to Joppa, and inquire for one Simon Peter; he lodgeth at the house of one Simon a tanner: his house is by the sea side, and if he be sent for he will come; and when he comes, "he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do," in answer to thy question, "What is it, Lord?" Now here are two things very surprising, and well worthy our consideration:

First. Cornelius prays and gives alms, in the fear of God; is religious himself, and keeps up religion in his family; and all this so as to be accepted of God in it; and yet there is something farther that he ought to do; he ought to embrace the Christian religion, now God has established it among men. Not, he may do it if he pleases,—it will be an improvement and entertainment to him,—but he must do it, it is indispensably necessary to his acceptance with God for the future, though he has been accepted in his services hitherto. He that believed the promise of the Messiah must now believe the performance of that promise. Now God had given a farther record concerning his Son than what had been given in the Old Testament prophecies, he requires that we receive that when it is brought to us; and now neither our prayers nor our alms come up for a memorial before God unless we believe in Jesus Christ; for it is that farther which we ought to do. "This is his commandment, that we believe." Prayers and alms are accepted from those that believe that the Lord is God, and have not opportunity of knowing more; but from those to whom it is preached that Jesus is Christ, it is necessary to the acceptance of their persons, prayers, and alms, that they believe that, and rest upon him alone for acceptance.

Secondly. Cornelius has now an angel from heaven talking to him, and yet he must not receive the Gospel of Christ from this angel, nor be told by him what he ought to do; but all that the angel has to say is, Send for Peter, and he shall tell thee. As the former observation puts a mighty honour upon the Gospel, so doth this upon the Gospel ministry; it was not to the highest of angels, but to them who were less than the least of all saints, that this grace was given, to "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ," Eph. iii. 8, that the excellency of the power might be of God, and the dignity of an institution of Christ supported; for "unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the

winds, and open only to the north. . . . Its two great features were its close connection with Rome and the emperors, and the large admixture of heathen strangers in its population. Not only do we see here the residence of Roman procurators, the quarters of imperial troops, and the port by which Judæa was entered from the west, but a Roman impress was ostentatiously given to everything that belonged to Cæsarea. The conspicuous object to those who approached from the sea was a temple dedicated to Cæsar and to Rome; the harbour

was called the 'Augustan harbour;' the city itself was 'Augustan Cæsarea.' And, finally, the foreign influence here was so great that the Septuagint translation of the Scriptures was read in the synagogues. There was a standing quarrel between the Greeks and the Jews, as to whether it was a Greek city or a Jewish city. The Jews appealed to the fact that it was built by a Jewish prince; the Greeks pointed to the temples and statues. This quarrel was never appeased till the great war broke out, the first act of which was

world to come," *Heb. ii. 5*, but to the Son of man as the sovereign, and the sons of men as his agents and ministers of state, whose terror shall not make us afraid, nor their hand be heavy upon us, as this angel's now was to Cornelius. And, as it was an honour to the apostle that he must preach that which an angel might not, so it was a farther honour that an angel was despatched on purpose from heaven to order him to be sent for. To bring a faithful minister and a willing people together is a work worthy of an angel, and what therefore the greatest of men should be glad to be employed in.

Thirdly, His immediate obedience to these orders, *ver. 7, 8*. He sent with all speed to Joppa to fetch Peter to him. Had he himself only been concerned, he would have gone to Joppa to him. But he had a family, and kinsmen, and friends, *ver. 24*, a little congregation of them that could not go to Joppa, and therefore he sends for Peter. Observe,

1. When he sent. As soon as the angel which spoke unto him had departed. Without dispute or delay, he was obedient to the heavenly vision. He perceived by what the angel said that he was to have some farther work prescribed him, and he longed to have it told him. He made haste, and delayed not, to do this commandment. In any affair wherein our souls are concerned it is good for us not to lose time.

2. Whom he sent. "Two of his household servants," who all feared God, and "a devout soldier," one of them that "waited on him continually." Observe, A devout centurion had devout soldiers. A little devotion commonly goes a great way with soldiers; but there would be more of it in the soldiers if there were but more of it in the commanders. Officers in an army that have such a great power over the soldiers as we find the centurion had, *Mat. viii. 9*, have a great opportunity of promoting religion, at least of restraining vice and profaneness in those under their command, if they would but improve it. Observe, When this centurion was to choose some of his soldiers to attend his person, and to be always about him, he pitched upon such of them as were devout; they shall be preferred and countenanced, to encourage others to be so. He went by David's rule, *Ps. ci. 6*, "Mine eye shall be upon the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me."

3. What instructions he gave them; *ver. 8*, "he declared all these things unto them;" told them of the vision he had, and the orders given him to send for Peter, because Peter's coming was a thing in which they were concerned, for they had souls to save as well as he. Therefore he doth not only tell them where to find Peter, which he might have thought it enough to do,—"the servant knows not what his lord doth,"—but he tells them on what errand he was to come, that they might importune him.

9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. 17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, 18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

Cornelius had received positive orders from heaven to send for Peter, whom otherwise he had not heard of, or at least, not heeded. But here is another difficulty that lies in the way of bringing them together. The question is whether Peter will come to Cornelius when he is sent for; not as if he thinks it below him to come at a beck, or as if he is afraid to preach his doctrine to a polite man as Cornelius was; but it sticks at a point of conscience: Cornelius is a very worthy man, and has many good qualities, but he is a Gentile, he is not circumcised; and, because God in his law had forbidden his people to associate with idolatrous nations, they would not keep company with any but those of their own religion, though they were never so deserving, and carried the matter so far, that they made even the involuntary touch of a Gentile to contract a ceremonial pollution, *Jno. xvii. 28*. Peter had not got over this stinky, bigoted notion of his countrymen, and therefore will be shy of coming to Cornelius. Now, to remove this difficulty, he has a vision here, to prepare him to receive the message sent him by Cornelius, as Ananias had, to prepare him to go to Paul. The Scriptures of the Old Testament had spoken plainly of the bringing in of the Gentiles into the church, Christ had given plain intimation of it, when he ordered them to teach all nations, and yet even Peter himself, that knew so much of his Master's mind, cannot understand it, till it was here revealed by vision, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, *Eph. iii. 6*. Now here observe,

First. The circumstances of this vision.

1. It was when the messengers sent from Cornelius were now nigh the city, *ver. 9*. Peter knew nothing of their approach, and they knew nothing of his

praying; but he that knew both him and them was preparing things for the interview, and facilitating the end of their negotiation. To all God's purposes there is a time, a proper time; and he is pleased often to bring things to the minds of his ministers which they had not thought of, just then when they have occasion to use them.

2. It was when "Peter went up upon the housetop to pray," about noon. 1st. Peter was much in prayer, much in secret prayer, though he had a great deal of public work upon his hands. 2nd. He prayed about the sixth hour, according to David's example, who not only morning and evening, but at noon, addressed himself to God by prayer, *Ps. lv. 17*. From morning to night we would think to be too long to be without meat, yet who thinks it is too long to be without prayer? 3rd. He prayed upon the housetop; thither he retired for privacy, where he could neither hear nor be heard, and so might avoid both distraction and ostentation. There, upon the roof of the house, he had a full view of the heavens, which might assist his pious adoration of the God he prayed to; and there he had also a full view of the city and country, which might assist his pious compassion of the people he prayed for. 4th. He had this vision immediately after he had prayed, as an answer to his prayer for the spreading of the Gospel; and because the ascent of the heart to God in prayer is an excellent preparative to receive the discoveries of the Divine grace and favour.

3. It was when "he became very hungry," and was waiting for his dinner, *ver. 10*. Probably he had not eaten before that day, though doubtless he had prayed before; and now he "would have eaten," *ἤθελε φαγεῖν αὐτάς*, 'he would have tasted,'—which intimates his great moderation and temperance in eating,—when he was very hungry, yet he would be content with a little, with a taste, and would not fly upon the spoil. Now this hunger was a proper inlet to the vision about meats, as Christ's hunger in the wilderness was to Satan's temptations to turn stones into bread.

Secondly. The vision itself, which was not so plain as that to Cornelius, but more figurative and enigmatical, to make the deeper impression.

1. "He fell into a trance," or extacy, not of terror, but of contemplation, with which he was so entirely swallowed up, as not only not to be regardless, but not to be sensible of external things; he quite lost himself to this world, and so had his mind entirely free for converse with Divine things, as Adam in innocency, when the deep sleep fell upon him. The more clear we get of the world the more near we get to heaven; whether Peter was now in the body or out of the body, he could not himself tell, much less can we, *2 Cor. xii. 2, 3*; see *Gen. xv. 12*; *Acts xxii. 17*.

2. He saw heaven opened, that he might be sure his authority to go to Cornelius was indeed from heaven; that it was a Divine light which altered his sentiments, and a Divine power that gave him his commission. The opening of the heavens signified the opening of a mystery that had been hid, *Rom. xvi. 25*.

3. He saw a great sheet full of all manner of living creatures, which descended from heaven, and was let down to him to the earth; that is, to the roof of the house where he now was. Here were not only beasts of the earth, but fowls of the air, which might have flown away, laid at his feet; and not only tame beasts, but wild. Here were no fishes of the sea, because there were none of them in particular unclean, but whatever had fins and scales were allowed to be eaten. Some make this sheet thus filled to represent the church of Christ. It comes down from heaven, from heaven opened, not only to send it down, *Rev. xxi. 2*, but to receive souls sent up from it; it is knit at the four corners, to receive those from all parts of the world that are willing to be added to it, and to retain and keep those safe that are taken into it, that they may not fall out; and in this we find some of all countries, nations, and languages, without any distinction of Greek or Jew, or any disadvantage put upon barbarian or Scythian, *Col. iii. 11*. The net of the Gospel encloseth all, both bad and good, those that before were clean and unclean. Or it may be applied to the bounty of Divine providence, which, antecedently to the prohibitions of the ceremonial law, had given to man a liberty to use all the creatures, to which by the cancelling of that law we are now restored. By this vision we are taught to see all the benefit and service we have from the inferior creatures coming down to us from heaven. It is the gift of God who made them, made them fit for us, and then gave to man a right to them, and dominion over them. Lord, what is man, that he should be thus magnified! *Ps. viii. 4-8*. How would it double our comfort in the creatures, and our obligations to serve God in the use of them, to see them thus let down to us out of heaven!

4. Peter was ordered by a voice from heaven to make use of this plenty and variety which God had sent him; *ver. 13*, "Rise, Peter, kill, and eat," without putting any difference between clean and unclean; take which thou hast most mind to. The distinction of meats which the law made was intended to put a difference between Jew and Gentile, that it might be difficult to them to dine and sup with a Gentile, because they would have that set before them which they were not allowed to eat; and now the taking off of that prohibition was a plain allowance to converse with the Gentiles, and to be free and familiar with them. Now they might fare as they fared, and therefore might eat with them, and be fellow-commoners with them.

5. Peter stuck to his principles, and would by no means hearken to the motion, though he was hungry; *ver. 14*, "Not so, Lord." Though hunger will break through stone walls, God's laws should be to us a stronger fence than stone walls, and not so easily broken through. And he will adhere to God's laws, though he has a countermmand by a voice from heaven, not knowing at first but that "Kill, and eat," was a command of trial whether he would adhere to the more sure word, the written law; and if so his answer had been very good, "Not so, Lord." Temptations to eat forbidden fruit must not be parleyed with, but peremptorily rejected; we must startle at the thought of it; "Not so, Lord." The reason he gives is, "For I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean;" hitherto I have kept my integrity in this matter, and will still keep it. If God by his grace has preserved us from gross sin unto this day, we should use that as an argument with ourselves to abstain from all appearance of evil. So strict were the pious Jews in this matter, that the seven brethren, those glorious martyrs under Antiochus, chose rather to be tortured to death in the most cruel manner that ever was than to eat swine's flesh, because it was forbidden by the law. No wonder then that Peter saith it with so much pleasure, that his conscience could witness for him that he had never gratified his appetite with any forbidden food.

6. God, by a second voice from heaven, proclaimed the repeal of the law in this case; *ver. 15*, "What God has cleansed, that call not thou common." He that made the law might alter it when he pleased, and reduce the matter to its first state. God had, for reasons suited to the Old Testament dispensation, restrained the Jews from eating such and such meats, which, while that dispensation lasted, they were obliged in conscience to submit to; but he has now, for reasons suited to the New Testament dispensation, taken off that restraint, and set the matter at large, has cleansed that which was before polluted to us; and we ought to make use of, and "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free," and not call that common or unclean which God has now declared clean. Note, We ought to welcome it as a great mercy, that by the Gospel of Christ we are freed from the distinction of meats, which was made

the slaughter of 20,000 Jews in the streets of Cæsarea" (Conybeare and Howson's "Life and Letters of St. Paul," People's Edition, vol. ii., pp. 300, 301). "Centurion:" an officer in the Roman army. The Roman army was divided into legions, each under six tribunes (*chap. xxi. 31*). The legion was sub-divided into ten cohorts, the cohort into three maniples, and the maniples into two centuries, containing originally 100 men, but subsequently from 50 to 100, according to the strength of the legion. The centurion, then, was

the officer over a century, or 100 men. The "band" mentioned here was a cohort, or tenth part of a legion. It is called "the Italian band" because it was composed of Italians, as distinguished from the natives of the provinces who composed the Roman legions in the east.

x. 2. "A devout man:" said of those Gentiles who, though perhaps not proselytes to Judaism, had renounced idolatry for the worship of the true God. "To the people:" i.e., to the Jews. *Thas*

by the law of Moses, and that now "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused;" not so much because hereby we gain the use of swine's flesh, hares, rabbits, and other pleasant and wholesome food for our bodies, but chiefly because conscience is hereby freed from a yoke in things of this nature, that we might serve God without fear. Though the Gospel has made duties which were not so by the law of nature, yet it has not, like the law of Moses, made sins that were not so. Those who command to abstain from some kinds of meat at some times of the year, and place religion in it, call that common which God hath cleansed, and in that error, more than in any truth, are the successors of Peter.

7. "This was done thrice," ver. 16. The sheet was drawn up a little way, and let down again the second time, and so the third time, with the same call to him to kill and eat, and the same reason, that what God had cleansed, we must not call common; but whether Peter's refusal was repeated the second and third time, is not certain; sure it was not, when his objection had the first time received such a satisfactory answer. The doubling of Pharaoh's dream, and so the trebling of Peter's vision, was to shew that the thing was certain, and engage him to take so much the more notice of it. The instructions given us in the things of God, whether by the ear in the preaching of the Word, or by the eye in sacraments, need to be often repeated; precept must be upon precept, and line upon line. But at last the vessel was received up into heaven. Those who make this vessel to represent the church, including both Jews and Gentiles, as this did both clean and unclean creatures, make this very aptly to signify the admission of the believing Gentiles into the church, and into heaven too, into the Jerusalem above. Christ has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and there we shall find, besides those that are sealed out of all the tribes of Israel, an innumerable company out of every nation, *Rev. vii. 9*, but they are such as God has cleansed.

Thirdly. The providence which very opportunely explained this vision, and gave Peter to understand the intention of it, ver. 17, 18.

1. What Christ did, Peter knew not just then, *Jno. xiii. 7*. He "doubted within himself what this vision which he had seen should mean." He had no reason to doubt the truth of it, that it was a heavenly vision, all his doubt was concerning the meaning of it. Note, Christ reveals himself to his people by degrees, and not all at once, and leaves them to doubt a while, to ruminate upon a thing, and debate it to and fro in their own minds before he clears it up to them.

2. Yet he was made to know presently: for the men which were sent from Cornelius were just now come to the house, and were at the gate, inquiring whether Peter lodged there, and by their errand it will appear what was the meaning of this vision. Note, God knows what services are before us, and therefore how to prepare us; and we then better know the meaning of what he has taught us, when we find what occasion we have to make use of it.

19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. 20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. 21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. 23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. 24 And the morrow after they entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. 25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. 26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. 27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. 28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. 29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? 30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright

clothing, 31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa, and



JOPPA.

call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. 33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee: and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

We have here the meeting between Peter the apostle and Cornelius the centurion. Though Paul was designed to be the apostle of the Gentiles, and to gather in the harvest among them, and Peter to be the apostle of the circumcision, yet it is ordered that Peter shall break the ice, and reap the firstfruits of the Gentiles, that the believing Jews who retained too much of the old leaven of ill-will to the Gentiles might be the better reconciled to their admission into the church, when they were first brought in by their own apostle, which Peter urgeth against those that would have imposed circumcision upon the Gentile converts, *ch. xv. 7*, "Ye know that God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel." Now here,

First. Peter is directed by the Spirit to go along with Cornelius' messengers, ver. 19, 20; and this is the exposition of the vision. Now the riddle is unriddled, while Peter thought on the vision. He was musing upon it, and then it was opened to him. Note, Those that would be taught the things of God must think on those things; that would understand the Scripture must meditate in them day and night. He was at a loss about it, and then had it explained; which encourages us, when we know not what to do, to have our eyes up unto God for direction. Observe,

1. Whence he had the direction; "the Spirit said unto him" what he should do. It was not spoken to him by an angel, but spoken in him by the Spirit secretly whispering it in his ear, as it were, as God spake to Samuel, *1 Sam. ix. 15*; or impressing it powerfully upon his mind, so that he knew it to be a Divine afflatus, or inspiration, according to the promise, *Jno. xvi. 13*.

2. What the direction was. 1st. He told, before any of the servants could come up to tell him, that there are three men below want to speak with him, ver. 19; and he must arise from his musings, leave off thinking of the vision, and go down to them, ver. 20. Those that are searching into the meaning of the words of God, and the visions of the Almighty, should not be always poring, no, nor always praying; but should sometimes look abroad, look about them, and they may meet with that which will be of use to them in their inquiries; for the Scripture is in the fulfilling every day. 2nd. He is ordered to go along with the messengers to Cornelius, though he was a Gentile, doubting nothing. He must not only go, but go cheerfully, without reluctance or hesitation, or any scruple concerning the lawfulness of it; not doubting whether he might go, no, nor whether he ought to go, for it was his duty. "Go with them, for I have sent them; and I will bear thee out in going along with them, however thou mayest be censured for it. Note, When we see our call clear to any service, we should not suffer ourselves to be perplexed with doubts and scruples concerning it, arising from former prejudices or prepossessions, or a fear of men's censure. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, and prove his own work.

Secondly. He receives both them and their message; he went down to them, ver. 21. So far was he from going out of the way, or refusing to be spoken with, as one that was shy of them, or making them tarry, as one that took state upon him, that he went to them himself, told them he was the person they were inquiring for; and,

1. He favourably receives their message. With abundance of openness and condescension, he asks what their business is, what they have to say to him; "What is the cause wherefore ye are come?" And they tell him their errand, ver. 22. Cornelius, an officer of the Roman army, a very honest gentleman, and one that has more religion than most of his neighbours, that fears God above many, (*Neh. vii. 2*), who, though he is not a Jew himself, has carried it so well, that he is "of good report among all the nation of the Jews;" they will all give him a good word, for a conscientious, sober, charitable man; so that it will be no discredit to thee to be seen in his company; he "was warned from God," *εχρηματισθη*, he "had an oracle from God," sent him "by an holy angel," (and the lively oracles of the law of Moses were given by the disposition of angels,) by which he was ordered "to send for thee into his house," (where he is expecting thee, and ready to bid thee welcome,) "and to hear words of thee." They know not what words, but they are such as he may hear from thee, and not from any one else so well. "Faith comes by hearing." When Peter repeats this, he tells

conduct was all the more praiseworthy in one belonging to a foreign people, and engaged in the rougher life of a soldier. But the specimens of Roman centurions which we have in Scripture would lead us to form a favourable opinion of them as a class.

x. 3. "Evidently:" this word is to be connected with the words preceding, not succeeding it. It means that Cornelius saw clearly. "The ninth hour:" 3 P.M. Cornelius, who may have been a proselyte of the gate, seems to have observed the Jewish hours of prayer.

x. 4. "Lord:" not meaning that Cornelius regarded the angel as God, but simply meaning "master" here; a term of respect rather than of adoration.

x. 10. "Trance:" Alford draws the following distinction between the "trance" here spoken of and the "vision" in verse 3:—"In this case, that which was seen was a revelation shown to the eye of the beholder when rapt into a supernatural state, having, as is the case in a dream, no objective reality; whereas, in the other case, the

as more fully, they are "words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved," *ch. xi. 14*. Come to him, for an angel bade him send for thee. Come to him, for he is ready to hear and receive those saving words thou hast to bring him.

2. He kindly entertained the messengers, *ver. 23*; he "called them in, and lodged them." He did not bid them go and refresh and repose themselves in an inn at their own charge, but was himself at the charge of entertaining them in his own quarters. What was getting ready for him, *ver. 10*, they should be welcome to share in. He little thought what company he should have when he bespoke his dinner, but God foresaw it. Note, It becomes Christians and ministers to be hospitable, and ready, according as their ability is, and there is occasion for it, to entertain strangers. Peter lodged them, though they were Gentiles, to shew how readily he complied with the design of the vision in eating with Gentiles; for he immediately took them to eat with him. Though they were two of them servants, and the other a common soldier, yet Peter thought it not below him to take them into his house. Probably he did it that he might have some talk with them about Cornelius and his family; for the apostles, though they had instructions from the Spirit, yet made use of other informations, as they had occasion for them.

Thirdly, He went with them to Cornelius, whom he found ready to receive and entertain him.

1. Peter, when he went with them, was accompanied by "certain brethren from Joppa," where he now was, *ver. 23*. Six of them went along with him, as we find, *ch. xi. 12*. Either Peter desired their company, that they might be witnesses of his proceeding cautiously with reference to the Gentiles, and of the good ground on which he went, and therefore he voucheth them, *ch. xi. 12*, or they offered their service to attend him, and desired they might have the honour and happiness of being his fellow travellers. This was one way in which the primitive Christians very much shewed their respect to their ministers; they accompanied them in their journeys, to keep them in countenance, to be their guard, and, as there was occasion, to minister to them, with a farther prospect not only of doing them service, but of being edified by their converse. It is pity those who have skill and will to do good to others by their discourse should want an opportunity for it by traveling alone.

2. Cornelius, when he was ready to receive him, had got some friends together of Cæsarea. It seems it was the day after they set out that they entered into Cæsarea; for it was the afternoon of that day, *ver. 30*. It is likely they travelled on foot; the apostles generally did so. Now when they came into the house of Cornelius, Peter found, 1st, That he was expected, and that was an encouragement to him. "Cornelius waited for them" and such a guest was worth waiting for; nor can I blame him if he waited with some impatience, longing to know what that mighty thing was which an angel bade him expect to hear from Peter. 2nd, That he was expected by many, and that was a farther encouragement to him. As Peter brought some with him to partake of the spiritual gift he had now to dispense, so Cornelius "had called together" not only his own family, but "his kinsmen and near friends," to partake with him of the heavenly instructions he expected from Peter, which would give Peter a larger opportunity of doing good. Note, We should not covet to eat our spiritual morsels alone, *Job xxxi. 17*. It ought to be both given and taken as a piece of kindness and respect to our kindred and friends to invite them to join with us in religious exercises; to go with us to hear a good sermon. What Cornelius ought to do he thought his kinsmen and friends ought to do too; and therefore let them come hear it at the first hand, that it may be no surprise to them to see him change upon it.

Fourthly, Here is the first interview between Peter and Cornelius; in which we have,

1. The profound, and indeed undue, respect and honour which Cornelius paid to Peter, *ver. 25*. He met him as he was coming in, and, instead of taking him in his arms and embracing him as a friend, which would have been very acceptable to Peter, he "fell down at his feet and worshipped him;" some think as a prince and a great man, according to the usage of the eastern countries; others think, as an incarnate deity, or as if he took him to be the Messiah himself. His worshipping a man was indeed culpable, but, considering his present ignorance, it was excusable; nay, and it was an evidence of something in him that was very commendable, and that was, a great veneration for Divine and heavenly things. No wonder if, till he was better informed, he took him to be the Messiah, and therefore worshipped him whom he was ordered to send for by an angel from heaven. But the worshipping of his pretended successor, who is not only a man, but a sinful man, the man of sin himself, is altogether inexcusable, and such an absurdity as would be incredible, if we were not told before that all the world would worship the beast, *Rev. xiii. 4*.

2. Peter's modest, and indeed just and pious, refusal of this honour that was done him, *ver. 26*. He "took him up" into his arms, with his own hands, (though time was when he little thought he should ever either receive so much respect from, or shew so much affection to, an uncircumcised Gentile), saying, "Stand up, I myself also am a man," and therefore not to be worshipped thus. "The good angels of the churches are like the good angels of heaven, cannot bear to have the least of that honour shewn to them which is due to God only." "See thou do it not," saith the angel to John, *Rev. xix. 10*; *xxii. 9*; and in like manner the apostle to Cornelius. How careful was Paul that no man should think of him above what he saw in him, *2 Cor. xii. 6*. Christ's faithful servants could better bear to be vilified than to be deified. Peter did not entertain a surmise that his great respect for him, though excessive, might contribute to the success of his preaching, and therefore, if he will be deceived, let him be deceived; no, let him know that Peter is a man, that the treasure is in earthen vessels, that he may value the treasure for its own sake.

Fifthly, The account which Peter and Cornelius give to each other, and to the company, of the hand of Heaven in bringing them together. "As he talked with him," *συνομιλῶν αὐτῷ*, "he went in," *ver. 27*. Peter went in talking familiarly with Cornelius, endeavouring, by the freedom of his converse with him, to take off something of that dread which he seemed to have of him; and when he came in, he "found many that were come together," more than he expected, which added solemnity as well as opportunity of doing good to this service. Now,

1. Peter declares the direction God gave to him to come to those Gentiles, *ver. 21, 29*. They knew it had never been allowed by the Jew, but always looked upon as an unlawful thing, *ἀθέμιτον*, an abomination, for a man that is a Jew, a native Jew, as I am, to keep company, or come unto one of another nation, a stranger, an uncircumcised Gentile. It was not made so by the law of God, but by the decree of their wise men, which they looked upon to be no less obliging. They did not forbid them to converse or traffic with Gentiles in the street, or shop, or upon the exchange, but to eat with them. Even in Joseph's time the Egyptians and Hebrews could not eat together, *Gen. xliii. 32*. The three children would not defile themselves with the king's meat, *Dan. i. 8*. They might not come into the house of a Gentile, for they looked upon it to be ceremonially polluted. Thus scornfully did the Jews look upon the Gentiles, who were not behindhand with them in contempt, as appears by many passages in the Latin poets. But now, saith Peter, "God hath shewed me," by a vision,

thing seen actually happened, and was beheld by the person as an ordinary spectator, in possession of his natural senses."

x. 11. "Vessel:" the word was used in the widest sense for "goods" of any description. "At the four corners:" rather, fastened by four rope-ends.

x. 25. "Fell down . . . and worshipped:" "The salutations of Eastern people to their superiors are far more humble than agrees with European notions of decorum; and this act of Cornelius may

"that I should not call any man common or unclean," nor refuse to converse with any man for the sake of his country. Peter, that had taught his new converts to save themselves from the untoward generation of wicked men, (*ch. ii. 40*), is now himself taught to join himself with the towardly generation of devout Gentiles. Ceremonial characters were abolished, that more regard might be had to moral ones. Peter thought it necessary to let them know how he came to change his mind in this matter, and that it was by a Divine revelation, lest he should be upbraided with it as having used lightness. God having thus taken down the partition wall,

1st. He assures them of his readiness to do them all the good offices he could; that, when he kept at a distance, it was not out of any personal disgust to them, but only because he wanted leave from Heaven; which now having received he was at their service. "Therefore came I unto you, without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for" ready to preach the same Gospel to you that I have preached to the Jews. The disciples of Christ could not but have some notion of the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, but they imagined it must be only to those Gentiles that were first proselyted to the Jewish religion; which mistake Peter acknowledges was now rectified.

2nd. He inquires wherein he might be serviceable to them; "I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?" What do you expect from me, or what business have you with me? Note, Those that desire the help of God's ministers ought to look well to it that they propose right ends to themselves in it, and do it with a good intent.

2. Cornelius declares the direction God gave to him to send for Peter; and that it was purely in obedience to those directions that he had sent for him. Then we are right in our aims in sending for, and attending on, a Gospel ministry, when we do it with a regard to the Divine appointment instituting that ordinance, and requiring us to make use of it. Now,

1st. Cornelius gives an account of the angel's appearing to him, and ordering him to send for Peter; not as glorying in it, but as that which warranted his expectation of a message from heaven by Peter.

First. He tells how this vision found him employed; *ver. 30*, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour," this hour of the day that it is now, when Peter came, about the middle of the afternoon. By this it appears that religious fasting, in order to the greater seriousness and solemnity of praying, was used by devout people that were not Jews; the king of Nineveh proclaimed a fast, *Jonah iii. 5*. Some give these words another sense, "From four days ago I have been fasting until this hour;" as if he had eaten no meat, or at least no meal, from that time to this. But it comes in as an introduction to the story of the vision; and therefore the former must be the meaning. He was "at the ninth hour praying in his house;" not in the synagogue, but at home. I will that men pray wherever they dwell. His praying in his house intimates that it was not a secret prayer in his closet, but in a more public room of his house, with his family about him. And perhaps after prayer he retired, and had this vision. Observe, "At the ninth hour of the day," three of the clock in the afternoon, most people were travelling or trading, working in the fields, visiting their friends, taking their pleasure, or taking a nap after dinner; yet then Cornelius was at his devotions, which shews how much he made religion his business, and then it was that he had this message from heaven. Those that would hear comfortably from God must be much in speaking to him.

Secondly, He describes the messenger that brought him this message from heaven. There "stood a man before me in bright clothing," such as Christ's was when he was transfigured, and that of the two angels who appeared at Christ's resurrection, *Lu. xxiv. 4*, and at his ascension, *ch. i. 10*, shewing their relation to the world of light.

Thirdly, He repeats the message that was sent him, *ver. 31, 32*, just as we had it, *ver. 4-6*, only here it is said, "Thy prayer is heard." We are not told what his prayer was; but if this message was an answer to it, and it should seem it was, we may suppose, that, finding the deficiency of natural light, and that it left him at a loss how to obtain the pardon of his sin, and the favour of God, he prayed that God would make some farther discoveries of himself to him, and of the way of salvation. Well, saith the angel, send for Peter, and he shall give thee such a discovery.

2nd. He declares his own and his friends' readiness to receive the message he had to deliver; *ver. 33*, "Immediately, therefore, I sent to thee," as I was directed, "and thou hast well done that thou hast come" to us, though we are Gentiles. Note, Faithful ministers do well to come to people that are willing and desirous to receive instruction from them; to come when they are sent for; it is as good a deed as they can do.

Well, Peter is come to do his part; but will they do theirs? Yes; Thou art here prepared to speak, and we are here prepared to hear, *1 Sam. iii. 9, 10*. Observe,

First. Their religious attendance upon the Word: "We are all here present before God;" we are here in a religious manner, are here as worshippers. They thus compose themselves into a serious, awful frame of spirit. Therefore, because thou art come to us by such a warrant, on such an errand, because we have such a price in our hands as we never had before, and perhaps may never have again, we are ready now at this time of worship, here in this place of worship, though it was in a private house; "we are present," *παρόντες*, "we are at the business," and are ready to come at a call. If we would have God's special presence at an ordinance, we must be there with a special presence, an ordinance presence; Here I am. We are all present, all that were invited; we and all that belong to us, we and all that is within us. The whole of the man must be present; not the body here, and the heart with the fool's eyes in the ends of the earth. But that which makes it indeed a religious attendance is, we are present before God. In holy ordinances we present ourselves unto the Lord; and we must be as before him, as those that see his eye upon us.

Secondly, The intention of this attendance. "We are present to hear all things that are commanded thee of God," and given thee in charge to be delivered to us. Observe, 1st. Peter was there to preach all things that were commanded him of God; for, as he had an ample commission to preach the Gospel, so he had full instructions what to preach. 2nd. They were ready to hear, not whatever he pleased to say, but what he was commanded of God to say. The truths of Christ were not communicated to the apostles to be published or stifled as they thought fit, but intrusted with them to be published to the world. We are ready to hear all, to come at the beginning of the service and stay to the end, and be attentive all the while, else how can we hear all? We are desirous to hear all that thou art commissioned to preach, though it be never so displeasing to flesh and blood, and never so contrary to our former notions, or present secular interests. We are ready to hear all, and therefore let nothing be kept back that is profitable for us.

34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. 36

have been merely a mark of the respect and deference which he felt for the person of St. Peter, as one who was divinely commissioned to teach him the way of salvation" (Cook). At the same time, Alford observes, "This respect he showed in a way which proves him not to have altogether lost the heathen training of his childhood. He must have witnessed the rise of the custom of paying divine honours first to those who were clothed with the delegated power of the senate, and then to him in whom the imperial majesty centered."

The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) 37 That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

We have here Peter's sermon, preached to Cornelius and his friends; that is, an abstract or summary of it; for we have reason to think that he did with many other words testify and exhort to this purpose. It is intimated that he delivered himself with a great deal of solemnity and gravity, but with freedom and copiousness, in that phrase, that he opened his mouth and spoke, ver. 34: "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open to you," saith Paul, 2 *Cor.* vi. 11. You shall find us communicative, if we but find you inquisitive. Hitherto the mouths of the apostles had been shut to the uncircumcised Gentiles, they had nothing to say to them; but now God gave unto them, as he did to Ezekiel, the opening of the mouth. This excellent sermon of Peter's is admirably suited to the circumstances of those to whom he preached it; for it was a new sermon.

First. Because they were Gentiles to whom he preached, he shews that, notwithstanding that, they were interested in the Gospel of Christ which he had to preach, and entitled to the benefit of it upon an equal foot with the Jews. It was necessary this should be cleared, or else with what comfort could either he preach, or they hear? He therefore lays down this as an undoubted principle, that God is no respecter of persons; doth not know favour in judgment, as the Hebrew phrase is, which magistrates are forbidden to do, *Deu.* i. 17; *xvi.* 19; *Pr.* xxiv. 23; and are blamed for doing, *Ps.* lxxxii. 2. And it is often said of God, that he doth not respect persons, *Deu.* x. 17; 2 *Chr.* xix. 7; *Job* xxxiv. 19; *Rom.* ii. 11; *Col.* iii. 25; 1 *Pet.* i. 17. He doth not give judgment in favour of a man, for the sake of any external advantage foreign to the merits of the cause. God never perverts judgment upon personal regards and considerations, nor countenanceth an ill man in an ill thing for the sake of his beauty or stature, his country, parentage, relations, wealth or honour in the world. God, as a benefactor, gives favours arbitrarily and by sovereignty, *Deu.* vii. 7, 8; *ix.* 5, 6; *Mat.* xx. 10. But he doth not, as a judge, so give sentence. "But in every nation," and under every denomination, "he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him," ver. 3. The case is plainly thus.

1. God never did, nor ever will, justify and save a wicked Jew, that lived and died impenitent, though he was of the seed of Abraham, and a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and had all the honour and advantages that attended circumcision. He doth and will render "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil," and of the Jew first; whose privileges and professions, instead of screening him from the judgment of God, will but aggravate his guilt and condemnation: see *Rom.* ii. 3, 8, 9, 17. Though God has favoured the Jews above other nations with the dignities of visible church-membership, yet he will not therefore accept of any particular persons of that dignity, if they allow themselves in immoralities contradictory to their profession, and particularly in persecution, which was now more than any other the national sin of the Jews.

2. He never did, nor ever will, reject or refuse an honest Gentile, who, though he has not the privileges and advantages that the Jews have, yet, like Cornelius, fears God, and worships him, and works righteousness, that is, is just and charitable towards all men; who lives up to the light he has both in a sincere devotion and in a regular conversation, whatever nation he is of, though never so far remote from kindred to the seed of Abraham, though never so despicable; nay, though in never so ill a name, that shall be no prejudice to him. God judgeth of men by their hearts, not by their country or parentage; and where-ever he finds an upright man he will be found an upright God, *Ps.* xviii. 25. Observe, Fearing God and working righteousness must go together; for, as righteousness towards men is a branch of true religion, so religion towards God is a branch of universal righteousness. Godliness and honesty must go together, and neither will excuse for the want of the other. But where these are predominant, no doubt is to be made of acceptance with God. Not that any man since the full can obtain the favour of God, otherwise than through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and by the grace of God in him; but those that have not the knowledge of him, and therefore cannot have an explicit regard to him, may yet receive grace from God, for his sake, to fear God, and to work righteousness. And wherever God gives grace to do so, as he did to Cornelius, he will through Christ accept the work of his own hands. Now,

1st. This was always a truth, before Peter perceived it, that God respecteth no man's person. It was the fixed rule of judgment from the beginning, "If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if not well, sin," and the punishment of it, "lies at the door," *Gen.* iv. 7. God will not ask in the great

day what country men were of; but, what they were, what they did, and how they stood affected towards him, and towards their neighbours. And if men's personal characters received neither advantage nor disadvantage from the great difference that was between Jew and Gentile, much less from any lesser difference of sentiments and practices that may happen to be among Christians themselves, as those about meats and days, *Rom.* xiv. It is certain "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" and he that in these things serveth Christ is accepted of God, and ought to be approved of men; for dare we reject those whom God doth not?

2nd. Yet now it was made more clear than it had been. This great truth had been darkened by the covenant of peculiarity made with Israel, and the badges of distinction put upon them. The ceremonial law was a wall of partition between them and other nations. In it, it was true, that God favoured that nation, *Rom.* iii. 1, 2; *ix.* 4; and from thence particular persons among them were ready to infer that they were sure of God's acceptance, though they lived as they listed, and that no Gentile could possibly be accepted of God. God had said a great deal by the prophets to prevent and rectify this mistake; but now at length he doth it effectually, by abolishing the covenant of peculiarity, and repealing the ceremonial law; and so setting the matter at large, and both Jew and Gentile upon the same level before God; and Peter is here made to perceive it by comparing the vision which he had with that which Cornelius had. Now "in Christ Jesus," it is plain, "neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision," *Gal.* v. 6; *Col.* iii. 11.

Secondly. Because they were Gentiles inhabiting a place within the confines of the land of Israel, he refers them to what they themselves could not but know concerning the life and doctrine, the preaching and miracles, the death and sufferings, of our Lord Jesus; for these were things the report of which spread into every corner of the nation, ver. 35, &c. It facilitates the work of ministers when they deal with such as have some knowledge of the things of God, to which they may appeal, and on which they may build.

1. They knew in general "the word," that is, the Gospel "which God sent to the children of Israel: that word, I say, ye know," ver. 37. Though the Gentiles were not admitted to hear it,—Christ and his disciples were "not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,"—yet they could not but hear of it: it was all the talk both of city and country. We are often told in the Gospels how the fame of Christ went into all parts of Canaan when he was on earth, as afterwards the fame of his Gospel went into all parts of the world, *Rom.* x. 18. "That word," that Divine word, that word of power and grace, "you know." 1st. What the purport of this word was. God by it "published the good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ;" so it should be read, *εὐαγγελισθενοι ειρηνης*. It is God himself that proclaims peace, who justly might have proclaimed war. He lets the world of mankind know that he is willing to be at peace with them through Jesus Christ; in him he was reconciling the world to himself. 2nd. To whom it was sent. To "the children of Israel" in the first place; the prime offer is made to them. This all their neighbours heard of, and were ready to envy them those advantages of the Gospel more than they ever envied them those of their law. "Then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them," *Ps.* cxxvi. 2.

2. They knew the several matters of fact relating to this word of the Gospel sent to Israel.

1st. They knew the baptism of repentance which John preached by way of introduction to it, and in which the Gospel first began, *Mar.* i. 1. They knew what an extraordinary man John was, and what a direct tendency his preaching had to prepare the way of the Lord; they knew what great flocking there was to his baptism, what an interest he had, and what he did.

2nd. They knew that, immediately after John's baptism, the Gospel of Christ, that word of peace, "was published throughout all Judæa," and that it took rise from Galilee. The twelve apostles, and seventy disciples, and our Master himself, published these glad tidings in all parts of the land; so that we may suppose there was not a town or village in all the land of Canaan but had had the Gospel preached in it.

3rd. They knew that Jesus of Nazareth, when he was here upon earth, "went about doing good;" they knew what a benefactor he was to that nation, both to the souls and bodies of men; how he made it his business to do good to all, and never did hurt to any. He was not idle, but still doing; not selfish, but doing good; did not confine himself to one place, nor wait till people came to him to seek his help, but he went to them, went about from place to place, and wherever he came he was doing good. Hereby he shewed that he was sent of God, who is good, and doth good, and therefore doth good because he is good; and who hereby "left not himself without witness" to the world, "in that he did good," *ch.* xiv. 17. And in this he hath set us an example of indefatigable industry in serving God and our generation; for therefore we came into the world, that we may do all the good we can in it; and therein, like Christ, we must always abide and abound.

4th. They knew more particularly that he "healed all that were oppressed of the devil," and helped them from under his oppressing power. By this it appeared not only that he was sent of God, as it was a kindness to men, but that he was sent to destroy the works of the devil; for thus he obtained many a victory over him.

5th. They knew that the Jews put him to death; they slew him by hanging him on a tree. When Peter preached to the Jews, he said, Whom ye slew; but now he preached to the Gentiles, it is, Whom they slew; they to whom he had done and designed so much good.

All this they knew; but, lest they should think it was only a report, and was magnified, as reports use to be, more than the truth; Peter, for himself and the rest of the apostles, attests it; ver. 39, "We are witnesses," eyewitnesses, "of all things which he did;" and earwitnesses of the doctrines which he preached, "both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem," in city and country.

3. They did know, or might know by all this, that he had a commission from heaven to preach and act as he did. This he still harps upon in his discourse, and takes all occasions to hint it to them. Let them know,

1st. That this Jesus is "Lord of all." It comes in a parenthesis, but is the principal proposition intended to be proved, that Jesus Christ, by whom peace is made between God and man, "he is Lord of all;" not only as "God over all, blessed for evermore," but as Mediator, "all power both in heaven and in earth" is put into his hand, and all judgment committed to him. He is Lord of angels, they are all his humble servants; he is Lord of the powers of darkness, for he hath triumphed over them; he is King of nations, has a power over all flesh; he is King of saints, all the children of God are his scholars, his subjects, his soldiers.

2nd. That "God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power," He was both authorized and enabled to do what he did by a Divine anointing; from whence he was called Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One. The Holy Ghost descended upon him at his baptism, and he was full of power both in preaching and working miracles, which was the seal of a Divine mission.

3rd. That "God was with him," ver. 38. His works were wrought in God; God not only sent him, but was present with him all along, owned him, stood by him, and carried him on in all his services and sufferings. Note. Those

x. 37. "Word:" a different word from that used in ver. 36. Here it signifies "the matter," the thing said, the matter of fact, subject of speech. St. Peter's assumption that Cornelius had heard of Christ is in accordance with the fact recorded at the end of chap. viii.—viz., of Philip the deacon's visit to Cæsarea.

x. 38. "Doing good:" Canon Cook well observes, "The use which he made of that power proved even more convincingly that God was with him. Goodness is more essentially divine than power."

x. 42. "Quick and dead:" see 2 *Tim.* iv. 1; 1 *Pet.* iv. 5.

x. 45. "They of the circumcision" here mentioned were the Jewish brethren who had come with Peter.

x. 47. "Water . . . the Holy Ghost:" rather, "the water," &c. On this verse Alford observes, "The two great parts of full and complete baptism; the latter infinitely greater than but not superseding the necessity of the former. The article should here certainly be expressed: 'Can any forbid the water to these who have received the

whom God anoints he will accompany; will himself be with those to whom he has given his Spirit.

Thirdly. Because they had heard no more for certain concerning this Jesus, Peter declares to them his resurrection from the dead, and the proofs of it, that they might not think when he was slain there was an end of him. Probably they had heard at Cæsarea some talk of his being risen from the dead; but the talk of it was soon silenced by that vile suggestion of the Jews, that "his disciples came by night and stole him away." And therefore Peter insists upon this as the main support of that word which preacheth peace by Jesus Christ.

1. The power by which he rose is incontestably Divine; ver. 40, "Him God raised up the third day;" which not only disproved all the calumnies and accusations he was laid under by men, but effectually proved God's acceptance of the satisfaction he made for the sin of man by the blood of his cross. He did not break prison, but had a legal discharge: "God raised him up."

2. The proofs of his resurrection were incontestably clear; for God "shewed him openly." He gave him to be made manifest, *ἐδύκεν αὐτὸν ἐμφανῶς γενέσθαι*, to be visible, evidently so; so he appears as that it appears beyond contradiction to be he and not another. It was such a shewing of him as amounted to a demonstration of the truth of his resurrection. He shewed him, not publicly indeed, it was not open in that sense, but evidently, "Not to all the people," who had been the witnesses of his death; by resisting all the evidences he had given them of his Divine mission in his miracles, they had forfeited the favour of being eyewitnesses of this great proof of it. They who immediately forged and promoted that lie of his being stolen away, were justly given up to strong delusions to believe it, and not suffered to be undeceived by his being shewn to all the people; and so much the greater shall be the blessedness of "those who have not seen and yet have believed." *Nec ille se in vulgus edixit, ne impii errore liberarentur; ut et fides non præmio medicæ destinato difficultate constaret.*—He shewed not himself to the people at large, lest the impious among them should have been forthwith loosed from their error; and that faith, the reward of which is so ample, might be exercised with a degree of difficulty.—*Tert. Apol. cap. xi.* But, though all the people did not see him, there were enough saw him to attest the truth of his resurrection. The testator's declaring his last will and testament needs not to be before all the people; it is enough that it be done before a competent number of credible witnesses: so the resurrection of Christ was proved before sufficient witnesses. 1st. They were not so by chance, but they were chosen before of God to be witnesses of it; and, in order to that, had their education under the Lord Jesus, and intimate converse with him, that, having known him so intimately before, they might the better be assured it was he. 2nd. They had not a sudden and transient view of him, but a great deal of free conversation with him; they "did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead." This implies that they saw him eat and drink; witness their dining with him at the sea of Tiberias, and the two disciples supping with him at Emmaus; and this proved that he had a true and real body. But this was not all; they saw him without any terror or consternation, which might have rendered them incompetent witnesses, for they saw him so frequently, and he conversed with them so familiarly, that they "did eat and drink with him." It is brought as a proof of the clear view which the nobles of Israel had of the glory of God, *Ex. xxiv. 11*, that "they saw God, and did eat and drink."

Fourthly. He concludes with an inference from all this, that therefore that which they all ought to do, was to believe in this Jesus. He was sent to tell Cornelius what he must do, and this is it; his praying and his giving alms was very well, but one thing he lacked, he must believe in Christ. Observe,

1. Why he must believe in him. Faith has reference to a testimony, and the Christian faith is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," it is built upon the testimony given by them.

1st. By the apostles. Peter, as foreman, speaks for the rest, that God commanded them, and gave them in charge to preach to the people, and to testify concerning Christ; so that their testimony was not only credible, but authentic, and what we may venture upon. Their testimony is God's testimony; and they are his witnesses to the world. They do not only say it as matter of news, but testify it as matter of record, by which men must be judged.

2nd. By the prophets of the Old Testament; whose testimony beforehand, not only concerning his sufferings, but concerning the design and intention of them, doth very much corroborate the apostles' testimony concerning them; ver. 43, "To him gave all the prophets witness," &c. We have reason to think Cornelius and his friends were no strangers to the writings of the prophets. Out of the mouth of these two clouds of witnesses, so exactly agreeing, this word is established.

2. What they must believe concerning him.

1st. That we are all accountable to Christ as our judge. This the apostles were commanded to testify to the world, that this Jesus is "ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and dead," ver. 42. He is empowered to prescribe the terms of salvation, that rule by which we must be judged; to give laws both to quick and dead, both to Jew and Gentile; and he is appointed to determine the everlasting condition of all the children of men at the great day; of those that shall be found alive, and of those that shall be raised from the dead. He hath assured us of this, in that he hath raised him from the dead, *ch. xvii. 31*; so that it is the great concern of every one of us, in the belief of this, to seek his favour, and to make him our friend.

2nd. That if we believe in him we shall all be justified by him as our righteousness, ver. 43. The prophets, when they spoke of the death of Christ, did witness this, "That through his name," for his sake, and upon the account of his merit, "whosoever believeth in him," Jew or Gentile, "shall receive remission of sins." That is the great thing we need, without which we are undone, and which the convinced conscience is most inquisitive after; which the carnal Jews promised themselves from their ceremonial sacrifices, and purifications, yea, and the heathen too from their atonements; but all in vain, it is to be had only through the name of Christ, and only by those that believe in his name; and they that do so may be assured of it, their sins shall be pardoned, and there shall be no condemnation to them. And the remission of sins lays a foundation for all other favours and blessings, by taking that out of the way that hinders them. If sin be pardoned all is well, and shall end everlastingly well.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered

Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

We have here the issue and effect of Peter's sermon to Cornelius and his friends. He did not labour in vain among them, but they were all brought home to Christ. Here we have,

First. God's owning Peter's word, by conferring the Holy Ghost upon the hearers of it, and immediately upon the hearing of it; ver. 44, "While Peter was yet speaking these words," and perhaps designed to say more, he was happily superseded by visible indications that "the Holy Ghost," even in his miraculous gifts and powers, "fell on all them which heard the word," even as he did on the apostles at first; so Peter saith, *ch. xi. 15*. Therefore some think it was with a rushing mighty wind, and in cloven tongues, as that was. Observe,

1. When the Holy Ghost fell upon them; while Peter was preaching, ver. 44. Thus God bare witness to what he said, and accompanied it with a Divine power. Thus were the signs of an apostle wrought among them, *2 Cor. xii. 12*. Though Peter could not give the Holy Ghost, yet, the Holy Ghost being given along with the word of Peter, by that it appeared he was sent of God. The Holy Ghost fell upon others after they were baptized, for their confirmation; but upon these Gentiles before they were baptized, as Abraham was justified by faith being yet in uncircumcision, to shew that God is not tied to a method, nor confines himself to external signs. The Holy Ghost fell upon those that were neither circumcised nor baptized; for "it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."

2. How it appeared that the Holy Ghost was fallen upon them; ver. 46, "They spake with tongues" which they never learned, perhaps the Hebrew, the holy tongue; as the preachers were enabled to speak the vulgar tongues, that they might communicate the doctrine of Christ to the hearers, so probably the hearers were immediately taught the sacred tongue, that they might examine the proofs which the preachers produced out of the Old Testament in the original. Or their being enabled to speak with tongues intimated that they were all designed for ministers, and by this first descent of the Spirit upon them were qualified to preach the Gospel to others, which they did but now receive themselves. But observe, When they spake with tongues they magnified God, they spoke of Christ and the benefits of redemption, which Peter had been preaching of, to the glory of God. Thus did they on whom the Holy Ghost first descended, *ch. ii. 11*. Note, Whatever gift we are endued with we ought to honour God with it, and particularly the gift of speaking, and all the improvements of it.

3. What impression it made upon the believing Jews that were present; ver. 45, "They of the circumcision which believed, were astonished;" those six that came along with Peter. It surprised them exceedingly, and perhaps gave them some uneasiness, because that "upon the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost," which they thought had been appropriated to their own nation. Had they understood the Scriptures of the Old Testament which pointed at this, it would not have been such an astonishment to them; but by our mistaken notions of things we create difficulties to ourselves in the methods of Divine providence and grace.

Secondly. Peter's owning God's work in baptizing those on whom the Holy Ghost fell. Observe,

1. Though they had received the Holy Ghost, yet it was requisite they should be baptized. Though God is not tied to instituted ordinances, we are; and no extraordinary gifts set us above them, but rather oblige us so much the more to conform to them. Some in our days would have argued, These are baptized with the Holy Ghost, and therefore what need have they to be baptized with water? it is below them. No; it is not below them, while water baptism is an ordinance of Christ, and the door of admission into the visible church, and a seal of the new covenant.

2. Though they were Gentiles, yet, having received the Holy Ghost, they might be admitted to baptism; ver. 47, "Can any man," though never so rigid a Jew, "forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" The argument is conclusive; can we deny the sign to those who have received the thing signified? Are not those on whom God has bestowed the grace of the covenant plainly entitled to the seals of the covenant? Surely they that have received the Spirit as well as we ought to receive baptism as well as we; for it becomes us to follow God's indications, and to take those into communion with us whom he hath taken into communion with himself. God hath promised to pour his Spirit upon the seed of the faithful, upon their offspring; and who then can forbid water that they should not be baptized, who have received the promise of the Holy Ghost as well as we? Now it appears why the Spirit was given them before they were baptized, because otherwise Peter could not have persuaded himself to baptize them, no more than to have preached to them, if he had not been ordered to do it by a vision; at least, could not have avoided the censure of those of the circumcision that believed. Thus is there one unusual step of Divine grace taken after another, to bring the Gentiles into the church. How well it is for us that the grace of a good God is so much more extensive than the charity even of some good men.

3. Peter did not baptize them himself, but "commanded them to be baptized," ver. 48. It is likely some of the brethren who came with him did it by his order, and that he declined it for the same reason that Paul did, lest those that were baptized by him should think the better of themselves for it, or he should seem to have baptized in his own name, *1 Cor. i. 15*. The apostles received the commission to "go and disciple all nations by baptism," but it was prayer and the ministry of the word that they were to give themselves to. And Paul saith, that he was sent not to baptize, but to preach; which was the more noble and excellent work. The business of baptizing was therefore ordinarily devolved upon the inferior ministers, who acting by the apostles' orders, they might be said to do it. *Qui per alterum facit per seipsum facere dicitur.*—What a man does by another he may be said to do by himself.

Lastly. Their owning both Peter's word and God's work in their desire of farther advantage by Peter's ministry. "They prayed him to tarry certain days." They could not press him to reside constantly among them, they knew he had work to do in other places, and that for the present he was expected at Jerusalem; yet they were not willing he should go away immediately, but earnestly begged he would stay for some time among them, that they might be farther instructed by him in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Note, 1. Those who have some acquaintance with Christ cannot but covet more. 2. Even those that have received the Holy Ghost yet must see their need of the ministry of the word.

Spirit? The expression 'forbid,' used with 'the water,' is interesting, as showing that the practice was to bring the water to the candidates, not the candidates to the water. This, which would be implied by the word under any circumstances, is rendered certain, when we remember that they were assembled in the house."

x. 48, "In the name of the Lord:" referring either to the form of administering baptism or to the profession of faith made by the convert.

xi. 1. "In Judæa:" rather, "throughout Judæa," including the whole country as well as Jerusalem. They were probably informed by some general and perhaps not very accurate (if not positively hostile) rumour of what had taken place at Cæsarea.

xi. 2. "They that were of the circumcision:" as all the members of the Church were at this time Jews, and therefore circumcised, some difficulty has been felt as to who are meant by this expression, Alford says, "The term 'they of the circumcision' must have

CHAPTER XI.

In this chapter we have, I Peter's necessary vindication of what he did in receiving Cornelius and his friends into the church, from the censure he lay under for it among the brethren, and their acquiescence in it, ver. 1—18. II. The good success of the Gospel at Antioch and the parts adjacent, ver. 19—21. III. The carrying on of the good work that was begun at Antioch, by the ministry of Barnabas first, and afterwards of Paul in conjunction with him, and the lasting name of Christian first given to the disciples there, ver. 22—26. IV. A prediction of an approaching famine, and the contribution that was made among the Gentile converts for the relief of the poor saints in Judæa upon that occasion, ver. 27—30.



AND the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 3 Saying, Thou wentest in

to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. 4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, 5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners: and it came even to me: 6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. 8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. 9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me. 12 And the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: 13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter: 14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. 17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? 18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

The preaching of the Gospel to Cornelius was a thing which we poor sinners of the Gentiles have reason to reflect upon with a great deal of joy and thankfulness; for it was the bringing of light to us who sat in darkness. Now it being so great a surprise to the believing, as well as the unbelieving Jews, it is worth while to inquire how it took; and what comments were made upon it. And here we find,

come into use later, as designating the circumcised generally. In this case all those spoken of would belong to the circumcision. Luke uses it in the sense of the time when he wrote the account." Lechler says, "If, therefore, in the midst of the Judæo-Christian congregation, they of the circumcision are specially brought forward, this term cannot be intended to state the objective, religious, and national fact that they were circumcised Jews, but can refer only to subjective (personal) views and sentiments. Those only of the

First. That intelligence was presently brought of it to the church in Jerusalem, and thereabouts; for Cæsarea was not so far from Jerusalem but that they might presently hear of it. Some for good-will, and some for ill-will, would spread the report of it; so that before Peter himself returned to Jerusalem, "the apostles and the brethren there, and in Judæa, heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God," that is, the Gospel of Christ, which is not only a word of God, but the word of God; for it is the summum centre of all Divine revelation. They received Christ; for his name is called the Word of God, *Rev. xix. 13*. Not only that the Jews who were circumcised into the Gentile countries, and the Gentiles that were proselyted to the Jewish religion, but that the Gentiles also themselves, with whom it had hitherto been thought unlawful to hold common conversation, were taken into church communion, that they had "received the word of God." That is,

1. That the word of God was preached to them, which was a greater honour put upon them than they expected. Yet I wonder this should seem strange to those who were themselves commissioned to "preach the Gospel to every creature." But thus often are the prejudices of pride and bigotry held fast against the clearest discoveries of Divine truth.

2. That it was entertained and submitted to by them, which was a better work wrought upon them than they expected. It is likely they had got a notion, that, if the Gospel were preached to the Gentiles, it would be to no purpose, because the proofs of the Gospel were fetched so much out of the Old Testament, which the Gentiles did not receive. They looked upon them as not inclined to religion, nor likely to receive the impressions of it, and therefore were surprised to hear that they had received the word of the Lord. Note, We are too apt to despair of doing good to those who yet, when they are tried, prove very tractable.

Secondly. That offence was taken at it by the believing Jews, ver. 2, 3. "When Peter was" himself "come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision," those Jewish converts that still retained a veneration for circumcision, "contended with him;" they charged it upon him as a crime, that he "went in to men uncircumcised, and did eat with them," and hereby they think he hath stained, if not forfeited, the honour of his apostleship, and ought to come under the censure of the church; so far were they from looking upon him as infallible, or as the supreme head of the church that all were accountable to, and he to none. See here,

1. How much it is the bane and damage of the church to monopolize it, and to exclude those from it, and from the benefit of the means of grace, that are not in every thing as we are. There are narrow souls that are for engrossing the riches of the church, as there are that would engross the riches of the world, and would be placed alone in the midst of the earth. These men were of Jonah's mind, who, in a jealousy for his people, was angry that the Ninevites received the word of God, and justified himself in it.

2. That Christ's ministers must not think it strange if they be censured and quarrelled with, not only by their professed enemies, but by their professing friends, and not only for their follies and infirmities, but for their good actions, seasonably and well done; but if we have proved our own work, we may have rejoicing in ourselves, as Peter had, whatever reflections we may have from our brethren. Those that are zealous and courageous in the service of Christ, must expect to be censured by those that, under pretence of being cautious, are cold and indifferent. Those that are of catholic, generous, charitable principles, must expect to be censured by such as are conceited and strait-laced, that say, "Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou."

Thirdly. Peter gave such a full and fair account of the matter of fact as was sufficient, without any farther argument or apology, both to justify him and to satisfy them; ver. 4, he "rehearsed the matter from the beginning," and laid it before them in order, and then could appeal to themselves, whether he had done amiss; for it appeared all along God's own work, and not his.

1. He takes it for granted that, if they had rightly understood how the matter was, they would not have contended with him, but rather have concurred with him, and commended him. And it is a good reason why we should be moderate in our censures, and sparing of them, because, if we rightly understood that which we are so forward to run down, perhaps we should see cause to run in with it. When we see others do that which looks suspicious, instead of contending with them, we should inquire of them, what ground they went upon; and, if we have not an opportunity to do that, should ourselves put the best construction upon it that it will bear, and judge nothing before the time.

2. He is very willing to stand right in their opinion, and takes pains to give them satisfaction; doth not insist upon his being the chief of the apostles, for he was far from the thought of that supremacy which his pretended successors claim. Nor did he think it enough to tell them he was satisfied himself in the grounds he went upon, and then what need they trouble themselves about it; but is ready to give a reason of the hope that is in him concerning the Gentiles, and why he had receded from his former sentiments, which were the same with theirs. It is a debt we owe both to ourselves and to our brethren to set those actions of ours in a true light which at first looked ill and gave offence, that we may remove stumbling-blocks out of our brethren's way. Let us now see what Peter pleads in his own defence.

1st. That he was instructed by a vision no longer to keep up the distinctions which were made by the ceremonial law. He relates the vision, ver. 5, 6, as we had it before, *ch. x. 9*, &c. The sheet, which was there said to be let down to the earth, he here saith came even to him, which circumstance intimates that it was particularly designed for instruction to him. We should thus see all God's discoveries of himself which he has made to the children of men, coming even to us; applying them by faith to ourselves. Another circumstance here added is, that when the sheet came to him he fastened his eyes upon it, and considered it, ver. 6. If we would be led into the knowledge of Divine things, we must fix our minds upon them, and consider them. He tells them what orders he had to eat of all sorts of meat without distinction, "asking no questions for conscience sake," ver. 7. It was not till after the flood, as it should seem, that man was allowed to eat flesh at all, *Gen. ix. 3*. That allowance was afterwards limited by the ceremonial law; but now the restrictions were taken off, and the matter set at large again. It was not the design of Christ to abridge us in the use of our creature comforts by any other law but that of sobriety, and temperance, and preferring the meat that endures to eternal life before that which perisheth. He pleads that he was as averse to the thoughts of conversing with Gentiles, or eating of their dainties, as they could be, and therefore refused the liberty given him. "Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth," ver. 8. But he was told from heaven, that the case was now altered, that God had cleansed those persons and things which were before polluted, and therefore he must no longer call them common, nor look upon them as unfit to be meddled with by the peculiar people, ver. 9. So that he was not to be blamed for changing his thoughts, when God had changed the thing. In things of this nature we must act according to our present light; yet must not be so wedded to our opinion concerning them as to be prejudiced against farther discoveries, when the matter may either be otherwise or appear otherwise; and God may reveal even this unto us, *Phil. iii. 15*. And, that they might be sure he was not deceived in it, he tells them it was done three times, ver. 10, the same command given to kill and eat, and the

Judæo-Christians are accordingly described by it who assigned a peculiar value to circumcision, and, without doubt, to the observance of the Mosaic law in general. These persons disputed, contended with Peter; they declared it to be a ground of reproach to him that he had entered the house of uncircumcised men, and eaten at the same table with them."

xi. 19. Resumption of the narrative from chap. viii. 4. "Phenice:" a beautiful strip of country, extending about 120 miles along the

same reason, because that which God hath cleansed is not to be called common, repeated a second and third time. And, farther to confirm him that it was a Divine vision, the things he saw did not vanish away into the air, but were drawn up again into heaven, whence they were let down.

2nd. That he was particularly directed by the Spirit to go along with the messengers that Cornelius sent. And that it might appear that that vision was designed to satisfy him in that matter, he observes to them the time when the messengers came—immediately after he had that vision; yet, lest that should not be sufficient to clear his way, the Spirit bade him “go with the men” that were then sent from Caesarea to him, “nothing doubting,” ver. 11, 12; though they were Gentiles he went to, and went with, yet he must make no scruple of going along with them.

3rd. That he took some of his brethren along with him, who were of the circumcision, that they might be satisfied as well as he; and these he had brought up from Joppa, to witness for him with what caution he proceeded, foreseeing the offence that would be taken at it. He did not act separately, but with advice; not rashly, but upon due deliberation.

4th. That Cornelius had a vision too, by which he was directed to send for Peter; ver. 13, “He shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house,” that bade him send to Joppa for one Simon whose surname is Peter. See how good it is for those that have communion with God, and keep up a correspondence with heaven, to compare notes, and communicate their experiences to each other; for hereby they may strengthen one another’s faith. Peter is the more confirmed in the truth of his vision by Cornelius’s, and Cornelius by Peter’s. Here is something added in what the angel said to Cornelius. Before it was, Send for Peter, and “he shall speak to thee, he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do,” *ch. x. 6. 32*. But here it is, “He shall tell thee words whereby thou and thy house shall be saved,” ver. 13; and therefore it is of vast concern to thee, and will be of unspeakable advantage, to send for him. Note, *First*. The words of the Gospel are words whereby we may be saved, eternally saved; not merely by hearing them and reading them, but by believing and obeying them. They set the salvation before us, and shew us what it is; they open the way of salvation to us, and, if we follow the method prescribed us by them, we shall certainly be saved from the wrath and the curse, and be for ever happy. *Secondly*. They that embrace the Gospel of Christ will have salvation brought by it to their families: “Thou and all thy house shall be saved,” thou and thy children shall be taken into covenant, and have the means of salvation; thy house shall be as welcome to the benefit of the salvation, upon their believing, as thou thyself, even the meanest servant thou hast. “This day is salvation come to this house,” *Lu. xix. 9*. Hitherto salvation was of the Jews, *Jno. iv. 22*, but now salvation is brought to the Gentiles as much as ever it was with the Jews; the promises, privileges, and means of it conveyed to all nations, as amply and fully to all intents and purposes as ever it had been appropriated to the Jewish nation.

5th. That which put the matter past all dispute was, the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Gentile hearers; this completed the evidence that it was the will of God that he should take the Gentiles into communion.

First. The fact was plain and undeniable; ver. 15, “As I began to speak,” (and perhaps he felt some secret reluctance in his own breast, doubting whether he was in the right to preach to the uncircumcised,) presently “the Holy Ghost fell on them,” in as visible signs “as on us at the beginning,” in which there could be no fallacy. Thus God attested what was done, and declared his approbation of it. That preaching is certainly right with which the Holy Ghost is given; the apostle supposeth that, when he thus argues with the Galatians, “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” *Gal. iii. 2*.

Secondly. Peter was hereby put in mind of a saying of his Master’s when he was leaving them, *ch. i. 5*, “John baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost,” ver. 16, which plainly intimated, 1st. That the Holy Ghost was the gift of Christ, and the product and performance of his promise, that great promise which he left with them when he went to heaven. It was therefore without doubt from him that this gift came; and the filling of them with the Holy Ghost was his act and deed. As it was promised by his mouth, so it was performed by his hand, and was a token of his favour, 2nd. That the gift of the Holy Ghost was a kind of baptism. They that received it were baptized with it in a more excellent manner than any of those that even the Baptist himself baptized with water.

Comparing that promise, so worded, with this gift just now conferred, when the question was started, Whether these persons should be baptized or no? he concluded, that the question was determined by Christ himself; ver. 17, “Forasmuch, then, as God gave them the like gift as he did to us,” gave it to us as believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to them upon their believing in him, “what was I that I could withstand God?” Could I refuse to baptize them with water whom God had baptized with the Holy Ghost? Could I deny the sign to those on whom he had conferred the thing signified? But as for me, who was I? What! able to forbid God? Did it become me to control the Divine will, or to oppose the counsels of Heaven? Note, Those that hinder the conversion of souls withstand God; and those take too much upon them who contrive how to exclude those from their communion whom God has taken into communion with himself.

Fourthly. This account which Peter gave of the matter satisfied them, and all was well. Thus, when the two tribes and a half gave an account to Phinehas and the princes of Israel of the true intent and meaning of their building them an altar on the banks of Jordan, the controversy was dropped, and it pleased them that it was so, *Jos. xxii. 30*. Some people, when they have fastened a censure upon a person, will stick to it, though afterwards it appear never so plainly to be unjust and groundless. It was not so here; for these brethren, though they were of the circumcision, and their bias went the other way, yet, when they heard this,

1. They let fall their censures; “they held their peace,” and said no more against what Peter had done. They laid their hand upon their mouth, because now they perceived that God did it. Now they who prided themselves in their dignities as Jews began to see that God was staining that pride, by letting in the Gentiles to share and share alike with them. And now that prophecy is fulfilled, “Thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain,” *Zeph. iii. 11*.

2. They turned them into praises. They not only held their peace from quarrelling with Peter, but opened their mouths to glorify God, for what he had done by and with Peter’s ministry; were thankful that their mistake was rectified, and that God had shewed more mercy to their mistake than they were inclined to shew them, saying, “Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life;” hath granted them, not only the means of repentance, in opening a door of entrance for his ministers among them, but the grace of repentance in having given them his Holy Spirit, who, wherever he comes to be a Comforter, first convinceth; and gives a sight of sin first, and sorrow for it, and then a sight of Christ, and joy in him. Note, 1st. Repentance, if it be true, is unto life; it is to spiritual life; all that truly repent of their sins evidence it by living a new life, a holy, heavenly, and divine life. Those that by repentance die unto sin from thenceforward live unto God;

and then, and not till then, we begin to live indeed; and it shall be to eternal life. All true penitents shall live; that is, they shall be restored to the favour of God, which is life, which is better than life; they shall be comforted with the assurance of the pardon of their sins, and shall have the earnestness of eternal life, and at length the fruition of it. 2nd. Repentance is God’s gift; it is not only his free grace that accepts it, but his mighty grace that works it in us; that takes away the heart of stone, and gives a heart of flesh. “The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;” it is he that provides himself that lamb. 3rd. Wherever God designs to give life he gives repentance; for that is a necessary preparative for the comforts of a sealed pardon, and a settled peace in this world, and for the seeing and enjoying of God in the other world. 4th. It is a great comfort to us that “God hath exalted his son Jesus,” not only “to give repentance to Israel, and the remission of sins,” *ch. v. 31*, but to the Gentiles also.

19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. 22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. 23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. 25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek



TARSUS.

Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

We have here an account of the planting and watering of a church at Antioch, the chief city of Syria, reckoned afterwards the third most considerable city of the empire, only Rome and Alexandria being preferred before it, next to whose patriarchate that of Antioch took place. It stood where Hamath, or Riblah, did, which we read of in the Old Testament. It is suggested, that Luke, the penman of this history, was of Antioch, and Theophilus, to whom he dedicates it; which might be the reason why he takes more particular notice of the success of the Gospel at Antioch, as also because there it was that Paul began to be famous, the story of whom he is hastening towards. Now, concerning the church at Antioch, observe,

First. That the first preachers of the Gospel there were such as were dispersed from Jerusalem by persecution, that persecution which arose five or six years ago, as some compute, at the time of Stephen’s death; ver. 19, “They

coast of the Mediterranean, to the north of Judæa. It was well watered by the streams from Libanus, and had several flourishing towns, of which Tyre and Sidon were the most famous. It became subject to Rome, and was annexed to the province of Syria. “Antioch:” the capital of Syria; an important town, the residence of the pro-consul, to whom the procurator of Judæa was subordinate. It was founded by Seleucus Nicator, who called it after his father Antiochus. It was on the river Orontes, in a large

and beautiful plain, and was adorned with many fine buildings. It became one of the five great centres of the Christian Church; Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople being the other four.

xi. 20. “Cyrene,” a city in Lybia. “Grecians:” the rendering “Greeks” is most likely the right one; persons of Gentile origin and uncircumcised, and whose “conversion took place before any tidings had reached Jerusalem of the Divine sanction given in the case of Cornelius” (Alford).

travelled as far as Phenice," and other places, preaching the word." Therefore God suffered them to be persecuted, that thereby they might be dispersed in the world, sown as seed to God, in order to their bringing forth much fruit. Thus, what was intended for the hurt of the church was made to work for its good; as Jacob's curse of the tribe of Levi, "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel," was turned into a blessing. The enemies designed to scatter and lose them; Christ designed to scatter and use them. Thus the wrath of man is made to praise God. Observe,

1. Those that fled from persecution, yet did not flee from their work. Though for the time they declined suffering, yet they did not decline service; nay, they threw themselves into a larger field of opportunity than before. Those that persecuted the preachers of the Gospel hoped thereby to prevent their carrying it to the Gentile world; but it proved that they did but hasten it the sooner; "Howbeit, they meant not so, neither did their heart think so." They that were persecuted in one city fled to another; but they carried their religion along with them, not only that they might take the comfort of it themselves, but that they might communicate it to others; thus shewing, that when they got out of the way it was not because they were afraid of suffering, but because they were willing to reserve themselves for farther service.

2. They pressed forward in their work, finding that the good pleasure of the Lord prospered in their hands. When they had preached successfully in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, they got out of the borders of the land of Canaan, and travelled into Phenicia, into the island of Cyprus, and into Syria. Though the farther they travelled, the more they exposed themselves; yet they travelled on; *plus ultra* was their motto,—"farther still;" grudging no pains, and dreading no perils, in carrying on so good a work, and serving so good a Master.

3. They preached "the word to none but to the Jews only," who were dispersed in all those parts, and had synagogues of their own, in which they met with them by themselves, and preached to them. They did not yet understand that the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs, and of the same body; but left the Gentiles either to turn Jews, and so come into the church, or else remain as they were.

4. They particularly applied themselves to the Hellenist Jews, here called the Grecians, that were at Antioch. Many of the preachers were natives of Judea and Jerusalem; but some of them were by birth of Cyprus and Cyrene, as Barnabas himself, *ch. iv. 36*, and Simon, *Mar. xv. 21*, but had their education in Jerusalem; and these, being themselves Grecian Jews, had a particular concern for those of their own denomination and distinction, and applied themselves closely to them at Antioch. Dr. Lightfoot saith, they were there called Hellenists or Grecians, because they were Jews of the corporation, or enfranchisement of the city; for Antioch was a Syro-Grecian city. To them they preached the Lord Jesus. That was the constant subject of their preaching. What else should the ministers of Christ preach but Christ? Christ, and him crucified; Christ, and him glorified?

5. They had wonderful success in their preaching, *ver. 21*. 1st. Their preaching was accompanied with a Divine power; "the hand of the Lord was with them;" which some understand of the power they were endued with to work miracles, for the confirming of their doctrine, in these the Lord was working with them; that he confirmed the word with signs following, *Mar. xvi. 20*; in these God bare them witness, *Heb. ii. 4*. But I rather understand it of the power of Divine grace working on the hearts of the hearers, and opening them, as Lydia's heart was opened, because many saw the miracles that were not converted; but when, by the Spirit, the understanding was enlightened, and the will bowed to the Gospel of Christ, that was a day of power, in which volunteers were listed under the banner of the Lord Jesus, *Ps. cx. 3*. "The hand of the Lord was with them," to bring that home to the hearts and consciences of men which they could but speak to the outward ear. Then the word of the Lord gains its end, when the hand of the Lord goes along with it to write it in their heart. Then people are brought to believe the report of the Gospel when with it "the arm of the Lord is revealed," *Isa. liii. 1*; when God teacheth with a strong hand, *Isa. viii. 11*. These were not apostles, but ordinary ministers, yet they had the hand of the Lord with them, and did wonders. 2nd. Abundance of good was done. "A great number believed, and turned unto the Lord," many more than could have been expected, considering the outward disadvantages they laboured under; some of all sorts of people were wrought upon, and brought into obedience to Christ. Observe, What the change was. First. They believed. They were convinced of the truth of the Gospel, and subscribed to the record God had given in it concerning his Son. Secondly. The effect and evidence of this was, that they turned unto the Lord. They could not be said to turn from the service of idols, for they were Jews, worshippers of the true God only; but they turned from a confidence in the righteousness of the law, to rely only upon the righteousness of Christ, the righteousness which is by faith. They turned from a loose, careless, carnal way of living, to live a holy, heavenly, spiritual, and divine life; they turned from worshipping God in show and ceremony, to worship him in the spirit and in truth; they turned to the Lord Jesus, and he became all in all with them. This was the work of conversion wrought upon them, and it must be wrought upon every one of us. It was the fruit of their faith. All that sincerely believe will turn to the Lord; for, whatever we profess or pretend, we do not really believe the Gospel, if we do not cordially embrace Christ offered to us in the Gospel.

Secondly. The good work thus begun at Antioch was carried on to great perfection; and this church, thus founded, grew to be a flourishing one, by the ministry of Barnabas and Saul, who built upon the foundation which the other preachers had laid, and entered into their labours, *Jno. iv. 37, 38*.

1. The church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas thither, to nurse this newborn church, and to strengthen the hands both of preachers and people, and put a reputation upon the cause of Christ there.

1st. They heard the good news that the Gospel was received at Antioch, *ver. 22*. The apostles there were inquisitive how the work went on in the countries about; and, it is likely, kept up a correspondence with all parts where preachers were, so that "tidings of these things," of the great numbers that were converted at Antioch, soon "came to the ears of the church that was in Jerusalem." Those that are in the most eminent stations in the church ought to concern themselves for those in a lower sphere.

2nd. They despatched Barnabas to them with all speed; they desired him to go and assist and encourage these hopeful beginnings. They sent him forth as an envoy from them, and a representative of their whole body, to congratulate them upon the success of the Gospel among them, as matter of rejoicing both to preachers and hearers, and with both they rejoiced. He must go as far as Antioch. It was a great way, but, as far as it was, he was willing to undertake the journey for a public service. It is probable Barnabas had a particular genius for work of this kind, was active and conversable, and loved to be in motion, delighted in doing good abroad as much as others in doing good at home, was as much of Zebulun's spirit, who rejoiced in his going out, as others are of Issachar's, who rejoiced in his tent. And his talent lying this way, he was fittest to be employed in this work. God gives various gifts for various services.

3rd. Barnabas was wonderfully pleased to find that the Gospel got ground,

and that some of his countrymen, men of Cyprus, *ver. 20*, (of which country he was, *ch. iv. 36*.) were instrumental in it; *ver. 23*, "when he came, and had seen the grace of God," the tokens of God's good will to the people of Antioch, and the evidences of his good work among them, "he was glad." He took time to make his observations, and both in their public worship, in their common conversation, and in their families, he saw the grace of God among them. Where the grace of God is it will be seen, as the tree is known by its fruits; and where it is seen it ought to be owned. What we see which is good in any we must call it God's grace in them, and give that grace the glory of it; and we ought ourselves to take the comfort of it, and make it the matter of our rejoicing. We must be glad to see the grace of God in others, and the more when we see it there where we did not expect it.

4th. He did what he could to fix them, and to confirm them in the faith, who were converted to the faith. He exhorted them, *παρεκάλει*. It is the same word with that by which the name of Barnabas is interpreted, *ch. iv. 36*, *παρακληση*,—"a son of exhortation;" his talent lay that way, and he traded with it,—let him that exhorteth attend to exhortation, *Rom. xii. 8*; or, being a son of consolation, for so we render the word, he comforted or encouraged them "with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord." The more he rejoiced in the beginning of the good work among them, the more earnest he was with them to proceed according to these good beginnings. Those we have comfort in we should exhort. Barnabas was glad for what he saw of the grace of God among them, and therefore was the more earnest with them to persevere. First. "To cleave unto the Lord." Note, Those that have turned to the Lord are concerned "to cleave unto the Lord," not to fall off from following him, not to flag and tire in following him. To cleave to the Lord Jesus is to live a life of dependence upon him, and devotedness to him; not only to hold him fast, but to hold fast by him, to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Secondly. To cleave to him "with purpose of heart," with an intelligent, firm, and deliberate resolution, founded upon good grounds, and fixed upon that foundation, *Ps. cxiii. 1*. It is to bind our souls with a bond to be the Lord's, and to say, as Ruth, Entreat me not to leave him, or to return from following after him.

5th. Herein he gave a proof of his good character; *ver. 24*, "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," and approved himself so upon this occasion. First. He shewed himself to be a man of a very sweet, affable, courteous disposition, that had himself, and could teach others, the art of obliging. He was not only a righteous man, but a good man, a good-tempered man. Ministers that are so recommend themselves and their doctrine very much to the good opinion of those that are without. "He was a good man," that is a charitable man; so he had approved himself, when he sold an estate, and gave the money to the poor, *ch. iv. 37*. Secondly. By this it appeared that he was richly endued with the gifts and graces of the Spirit. The goodness of his natural disposition would not have qualified him for this service if he had not been "full of the Holy Ghost," and so "full of power, by the Spirit of the Lord." Thirdly. He was full of faith, full of the Christian faith himself, and therefore desirous to propagate it among others, full of the grace of faith, and full of the fruits of that faith that works by love. He was sound in the faith, and therefore pressed them to be so.

6th. He was instrumental to do good by bringing in those that were without as well as by building up those that were within. "Much people was added to the Lord," and thereby added to the church. Many were turned to the Lord before, yet more are to be turned. "It is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room."

2. Barnabas went to fetch Saul, to join with him in the work of the Gospel at Antioch. The last news we heard of him was, that, when his life was sought at Jerusalem, he was sent away to Tarsus, the city where he was born; and it should seem he continued there ever since, doing good, no doubt. But now Barnabas takes a journey on purpose to Tarsus, to see what was become of him, to tell him what a door of opportunity was opened at Antioch, and to desire him to come and spend some time with him there, *ver. 25, 26*. And here, also, it appears that Barnabas was a good sort of a man in two things:

1st. That he would take so much pains to bring an active, useful man out of obscurity. It was he that introduced Saul to the disciples at Jerusalem, when they were shy of him; and it was he that brought him out of the corner into which he was driven into a more public station. It is a very good work to fetch a candle from under a bushel, and to set it on a candlestick.

2nd. That he would bring in Saul at Antioch, who, being a chief speaker, *ch. xiv. 12*, and, probably, a more popular preacher, would be likely to eclipse him there, by outshining him; but Barnabas is very willing to be so when it is for the public service. If God, by his grace, enables us to do what good we can, according to the ability we have, we ought to rejoice if others, that have also larger capacities, have larger opportunities, and do more good than we can do. Barnabas brought Saul to Antioch, though it might be the lessening of himself, to teach us to seek the things of Christ more than our own things.

3. Now here we are farther told,

1st. What service was now done to the church at Antioch. Paul and Barnabas continued there a whole year, presiding in their religious assemblies, and preaching the Gospel, *ver. 26*. Observe, First. The church frequently assembled. The religious assemblies of Christians are appointed by Christ for his honour, and the comfort and benefit of his disciples. God's people of old frequently came together, "at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation;" places of meeting are now multiplied; but they must come together, though it be with difficulty and peril. Secondly. Ministers were the masters of those assemblies, and held those courts in Christ's name, to which all that hold by, from, and under him, owe suit and service. Thirdly. Teaching the people is one part of the work of ministers, when they preside in religious assemblies. They are not only to be the people's mouth to God in prayer and praise, but God's mouth to the people in opening the Scriptures, and teaching out of them the good knowledge of the Lord. Fourthly. It is a great encouragement to ministers when they have opportunity of teaching much people, of casting the net of the Gospel where there is a large shoal of fish, in hopes that the more may be enclosed. Preaching is not only for the conviction and conversion of those that are without, but for the instruction and edification of those that are within. A constituted church must have its teachers.

2nd. What honour was now put upon the church at Antioch. There "the disciples were first called Christians." It is likely they called themselves so, incorporated themselves by that title; whether by some solemn act of the church or ministers, or whether this name insensibly obtained there by its being frequently used in their praying and preaching, we are not told; but it should seem, that two such great men as Paul and Barnabas continuing there so long, being exceedingly followed, and meeting with no opposition, Christian assemblies made a greater figure there than any where, and became more considerable, which was the reason of their being called Christians first there; which, if there were to be a mother church to rule over all other churches, would give Antioch a better title to the honour than Rome can pretend to. Hitherto, they who gave up their names to Christ were called disciples, learners, scholars, trained up under him, in order to their being employed by him. But from henceforward they were called Christians. First. Thus the

xi. 26. "Christians:" only used in two other places in the New Testament (*chap. xxvi. 28*; *1 Pet. iv. 16*) but not there as adopted by the Christians, and would not be given them by the Jews, who refused to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. Most likely it was given by the Gentiles at Antioch, to distinguish them from the Jews. The followers of Jesus afterwards adopted and gloried in it.

xi. 27. "Prophets:" not necessarily foretellers of events, but inspired teachers.

xi. 28. In the fourth year of Claudius, A.D. 44, there was a severe famine which visited Judaea and the neighbouring countries. In addition, Greece and Italy suffered several times.

xi. 30. "Elders:" i.e., the overseers and presidents of the congregation.

xii. 1. "Herod:" Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great. He was educated at Rome, in the palace of the Cæsars. Under Tiberius he was imprisoned, because of the attention he showed to

reproachful names which their enemies had hitherto branded them with would perhaps be wiped away and disused. They called them Nazarenes, *ch. xxiv. 5*; "the men of that way," that by-way, which had no name, and thus they prejudiced people against them; to remove which prejudices they gave themselves a name which their enemies could not but say was proper enough. Secondly, Thus they who, before their conversion, had been distinguished by the names of Jew and Gentile might, after their conversion, be called by one and the same name, which would help them to forget their former dividing names, and prevent their bringing their former marks of distinction, and with them the seeds of contention, into the church. Let not one say 'I was a Jew,' nor the other, 'I was a Gentile,' when both the one and the other must now say, 'I am a Christian.' Thirdly, Thus they studied to do honour to their Master, and shewed that they were not ashamed to own their relation to him, but gloried in it: as the scholars of Plato called themselves Platonists, and so the scholars of other great men. They took their denomination not from the name of his person, Jesus, but of his office, Christ,—"Anointed;" so putting their creed into their name, that Jesus is the Christ, and they are willing all the world should know that this is the truth they will live and die by. Their enemies will turn this name to their reproach, and impute it to them as their crime, but they will glory in it: "If this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile." Fourthly, Thus they owned their dependence upon Christ, and their receivings from him; not only that they believed in him who is the Anointed, but that through him they themselves had the anointing, *1 Jno. ii. 20, 27*; and God is said to have anointed us in Christ, *2 Cor. i. 21*. Fifthly, Thus they laid upon themselves, and all that should ever profess that name, a strong and lasting obligation to submit to the laws of Christ, to follow the example of Christ, and to devote themselves entirely to the honour of Christ, to be to him for a name and a praise. Are we Christians? then we ought to think, and speak, and act in every thing as becomes Christians, and to do nothing to the reproach of that worthy name by which we are called; that that may not be said to us which Alexander said to a soldier of his own name that was noted for a coward, *Aut nomen, aut mores muta*,—"Either change thy name, or mend thy manners." And as we must look upon ourselves as Christians, and carry ourselves accordingly, so we must look upon others as Christians, and carry ourselves towards them accordingly. A Christian, though not in every thing of our mind, should be loved and respected for his sake whose name he bears, "because he belongs to Christ." Sixthly, Thus the Scripture was fulfilled, for so it was written, *Isa. lxiii. 2*, concerning the Gospel church, "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name;" and, *Isa. lxxv. 15*, it is said to the corrupt and degenerate church of the Jews, "The Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name."

27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar. 29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa: 30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

When our Lord Jesus ascended on high he gave gifts unto men, not only apostles and evangelists, but prophets, who were enabled by the Spirit to foresee and foretell things to come; which not only served for a confirmation of the truth of Christianity, for all that these prophets foretold came to pass, which proved that they were sent of God, *Deu. xviii. 22*; *Jer. xxviii. 9*; but it was also of great use to the church, and served very much for its conduct. Now here we have,

First, A visit which some of these prophets made to Antioch; *ver. 27*. "In these days," during that year that Barnabas and Saul lived at Antioch, there "came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch;" we are not told how many, nor is it certain whether these were any of those prophets that he afterwards find in the church at Antioch, *ch. xiii. 1*. 1. They came from Jerusalem, probably because they were not now so much regarded there as they had been. They saw their work in a manner done there, and therefore thought it time to be gone. Jerusalem had been infamous for killing the prophets, and abusing them, and therefore is now justly deprived of these prophets. 2. They came to Antioch, because they heard of the flourishing state of that church, and there they hoped they might be of some service. Thus should every one, as he hath received the gift, minister the same. Barnabas came to exhort them; and they having received the exhortation well, now have prophets sent them, to shew them things to come, as Christ had promised, *Jno. xvi. 13*. They that are faithful in their little shall be intrusted with more. The best understanding of Scripture predictions is to be got in the way of obedience to Scripture instructions.

Secondly, A particular prediction of a famine approaching, delivered by one of these prophets, his name Agabus; we read of him again, prophesying Paul's imprisonment, *ch. xxi. 10*. Here he stood up, probably in one of their public assemblies, and prophesied, *ver. 28*. Observe, 1. Whence he had his prophecy; what he said was not of himself, nor a fancy of his own, nor an astronomical prediction, nor a conjecture upon the present workings of second causes, but he signified it by the Spirit, the spirit of prophecy, that there should be a famine; as Joseph, by the Spirit enabling him, understood Pharaoh's dreams, foretold the famine in Egypt, and Elijah the famine in Israel, in Ahab's time. Thus God revealed his secrets to his servants the prophets. 2. What the prophecy was; "that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world," by unreasonable weather, that corn should be scarce and dear, so that many of the poor should perish for want of bread. This should be not in one particular country, but through all the world, that is, all the Roman empire, which they in their pride, like Alexander before them, called the world. Christ had foretold in general that there should be famines, *Mat. xxiv. 7*; *Mar. xiii. 8*; *Luk. xxi. 11*: but Agabus foretold one very remarkable famine now at hand. 3. The accomplishment of it. It "came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar;" it began in the second year of his reign and continued to the fourth, if not longer: several of the Roman historians make mention of it, as doth also Josephus. God sent them the bread of life, and they rejected it; loathed the plenty of that manna, and therefore God justly broke the staff of bread and punished them with famine, and herein he was righteous. They were barren, and did not bring forth to God, and therefore God made the earth barren to them.

Thirdly, The good use they made of this prediction. When they were told of a famine at hand they did not do as the Egyptians, hoard up corn for them-

selves; but, as became Christians, laid by for charity to relieve others, which is the best preparative for sufferings and want ourselves. It is promised to those that consider the poor, that God will preserve them and keep them alive, and they shall be blessed upon the earth, *Ps. xli. 1, 2*; and those who "shew mercy and give to the poor shall not be ashamed in the evil time," but "in the days of famine they shall be satisfied," *Ps. xxxvii. 19, 21*. The best provision we can lay up against a dear time is to lay up an interest in those promises, by doing good and communicating, *Luk. xii. 33*. Many give it for a reason why they should be sparing, but the Scripture gives it as a reason why we should be liberal, to seven, and also to eight, because we know not what evil shall be upon the earth, *Eccl. xi. 2*. Observe,

1. What they determined: that "every man according to his ability," should "send relief to the brethren that dwelt in Judæa," *ver. 29*. 1st. The persons that were recommended to them as objects of charity, were the brethren that dwelt in Judæa. Though we must, as we have opportunity, do good to all men, yet we must have a special regard to the household of faith, *Gal. vi. 10*. No poor must be neglected, but God's poor most particularly regarded. The care which every particular church ought to take of their own poor we were taught by the early instance of that in the church at Jerusalem, where the ministration was so constant, that none lacked, *ch. iv. 34*. But the communion of saints in that instance is here extended farther, and provision is made by the church at Antioch for the relief of the poor in Judæa, whom they call their brethren. It seems it was the custom of the Jews of the dispersion to send money to those Jews which dwelt in Judæa, for the relief of the poor that were among them, and to make collections for that purpose. Tully speaks of such a thing in his time, *Orat. pro Flacco*: which supposeth there were many poor in Judæa, more than in other countries, so that the rich among them were not able to bear the charge of keeping them from starving; either because their land was grown barren, though it had been a fruitful land, for the iniquity of them that dwelt therein, or because they had no traffic with other nations. Now we may suppose that the greatest part of those who turned Christians in that country were the poor, (*Mat. xi. 5*, the poor are evangelized;) and also that when the poor turned Christians they were put out of the poor's book, and cut off from their shares in the public charity, and it were easy to foresee that, if there came a famine, it would go very hard with them; and if any of them should perish for want it would be a great reproach to the Christian profession, and therefore this early care was taken, upon notice of this famine coming, to send them a stock beforehand, lest, if it should be deferred till the famine came, it should be too late. 2nd. The agreement that was among the disciples about it; that every man should contribute according to his ability to this good work. The Jews abroad in other countries grew rich by trade, and many of the rich Jews became Christians, whose abundance ought to be a supply to the want of their poor brethren, that were at a great distance; for the case of such ought to be considered, and not only theirs that live among us. Charitable people are traders with what God has given them; and the merchants find their account in sending effects to countries that lie very remote, and so should we in giving alms to those afar off that need them, which therefore we should be forward to do when we are called to it. Every man determined to send something, more or less, according to his ability; what he could spare from the support of himself and his family, and according as God had prospered him. What may be said to be according to our ability, we must judge for ourselves; but must be careful that we judge righteous judgment.

2. What they did they did as they determined; *ver. 30*. "Which also they did." They not only talked of it, but they did it. Many a good motion of that kind is made and commended, but is not prosecuted, and so comes to nothing; but this was pursued. The collection was made, and was so considerable that they thought it worth while to send Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem, to carry it to the elders there, though they would want their labours in the meantime at Antioch. They sent it, 1st. To the elders, the presbyters, the ministers, or pastors of the churches in Judæa, to be by them distributed, according to the necessity of the receivers, as it had been contributed according to the ability of the givers. 2nd. It was sent by Barnabas and Saul, who, perhaps, wanted an occasion to go to Jerusalem, and therefore were willing to take this. Josephus tells us, that at this time king Irates sent his charity to the chief men of Jerusalem, for the poor of that country. And Helena, queen of the Adiabeni, being now at Jerusalem, and hearing of many that died of famine there, and in the country about, sent for provisions from Cyprus and Alexandria, and distributed them among the people. So saith Dr. Lightfoot, who also computes, by the date of Paul's rapture, fourteen years before he wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, *2 Cor. xii. 1, 2*, that it was in this journey of his to Jerusalem, with these alms and offerings, that he had his trance in the temple, which he speaks of *ch. xiii. 17*, and in that trance was rapt up into the third heaven; and then it was that Christ told him he would send him from thence unto the Gentiles, which accordingly he did, as soon as ever he came back to Antioch. It is no disparagement, in an extraordinary case, for ministers of the Gospel to be messengers of the church's charity; though to undertake the constant care of that matter would ordinarily be too great a diversion from more needful work to those who have given themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

CHAPTER XII.

In this chapter we have the story, I. Of the martyrdom of James the apostle, and the imprisonment of Peter, by Herod Agrippa, who now reigned as king in Judæa, *ver. 1-4*. II. The miraculous deliverance of Peter out of prison by the ministry of an angel, in answer to the prayers of the church for him, *ver. 5-19*. III. The cutting off of Herod in the height of his pride, by the stroke of an angel, the minister of God's justice, *ver. 20-23*. And this was done while Barnabas and Saul were at Jerusalem, upon the errand that the church of Antioch sent them on to carry their charity; and therefore in the close we have an account of their return to Antioch, *ver. 24, 25*.



NOW about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. 3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened

Caligula. On the accession of Caligula he was given the government of Batanæa, Trachonitis, and Auranitis, and the tetrarchy of Lysanias, with the title of king; afterwards Persæa. In A.D. 41 Claudius added Samaria and Judæa, with Cæsarea as the capital. He was thus at this time king over all Palestine. He was a selfish and ostentatious man, who sought the favour of the Jews by pretending zeal for their law, while at the same time he engaged in Roman and heathen customs.

xii. 2. "James the brother of John:" one of the sons of Zebedee, called by Christ at the same time as his brother John. He was one of the three present at the raising of Jairus' daughter, the transfiguration, and agony in the garden. He and his brother John were called Boanerges, or "sons of thunder." He joined in the request for fire upon the Samaritans, and prayed to sit at Christ's side in his kingdom. In answer to this latter request, our Lord foretold the sufferings that awaited him.

bread.) 4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

Ever since the conversion of Paul we have heard no more of the agency of the priests in persecuting the saints at Jerusalem; perhaps that wonderful change wrought upon him, and the disappointment it gave to their design upon the Christians at Damascus, had somewhat mollified them, and brought them under the check of Gamaliel's advice, to let those men alone, and see what would be the issue. But here the storm ariseth from another point; the civil power, not now, as usual (for aught appears) stirred up by the ecclesiastics, acts by itself in the persecution. But Herod, though originally of an Edomite family, yet seems to have been a proselyte to the Jewish religion; for Josephus saith he was zealous for the Mosaic rites, a bigot for the ceremonies. He was not only (as Herod Antipas was) tetrarch of Galilee, but had also the government of Judæa committed to him by Claudius the emperor, and resided most at Jerusalem, where he was at this time. Three things we are here told he did:

First. He "stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church," ver. 1. His stretching forth his hands to it intimates that his hands had been tied up by the restraints which, perhaps, his own conscience held him under in this matter; but now he broke through them, and stretched forth his hands deliberately, and of malice prepense. "Herod laid hands upon some of the church to afflict them;" so some read it. He employed his officers to seize them, and take them into custody, in order to their being prosecuted. See how he advances gradually.

1. He began with some of the members of the church, certain of them that were of less note and figure; played first at small game, but afterwards flew at the apostles themselves. His spite was at the church; and those he gave trouble to, it was not upon any other account, but because they belonged to the church, and so belonged to Christ.

2. He began with vexing them only, or afflicting them, imprisoning them, fining them, spoiling their houses and goods, and other ways molesting them; but afterwards he proceeded to greater instances of cruelty. Christ's suffering servants are thus trained up by lesser troubles for greater, that tribulation may work patience, and patience experience.

Secondly. He "killed James the brother of John with the sword," ver. 2. We are here to consider,

1. Who the martyr was. It was "James the brother of John," so called to distinguish him from the other James, the brother of Joseph. This was called *Jacobus major*,—James the greater; that, *minor*,—the less. This that was here crowned with martyrdom was one of the first three of Christ's disciples, one of those that were the witnesses of his transfiguration and agony, whereby he was prepared for martyrdom. He was one of those whom Christ called *Boanerges*,—sons of thunder; and perhaps by his powerful, awakening preaching he had provoked Herod, or those about him, as John Baptist did the other Herod, and that was the occasion of his coming into this trouble. He was one of those sons of Zebedee whom Christ told, that they should drink of the cup that he was to drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that he was to be baptized with, *Mat. xx. 23*. And now those words of Christ were made good in him; but it was in order to his sitting at Christ's right hand; for, "if we suffer with him, we shall reign with him." He was one of the twelve who were commissioned to disciple all nations; and to take him off now, before he was removed from Jerusalem, was like Cain's killing Abel then when the world was to be peopled; and one man was then more than many at another time. To kill an apostle now was killing he knew not how many. But why would God permit it? If the blood of his saints, much more the blood of apostles, is precious in his eyes, and therefore we may be sure is not shed but upon a valuable consideration. Perhaps God intended hereby to awaken the rest of the apostles to disperse themselves among the nations, and not to nestle any longer at Jerusalem. Or, it was to shew that, though the apostles were appointed to plant the Gospel in the world, yet if they were taken off, God could do his work without them, and would do it. This apostle died a martyr, to shew the rest of them what they must expect, that they might prepare accordingly. The tradition that they have in the Romish church, that this James had been before this in Spain, and had planted the Gospel there, is altogether groundless, nor is there any certainty of it, or good authority for it.

2. What the kind of his death was. He was slain with the sword, that is, his head was cut off with a sword, which was looked upon by the Romans to be a more disgraceful way of being beheaded than with an axe; so *Lorinus*. Beheading was not ordinarily used among the Jews; but when kings gave verbal orders for private and sudden executions, this manner of death was used as most expeditious; and it is probable this Herod killed James, as the other Herod killed John Baptist, privately in the prison. It is strange that we have not a more full and particular account of the martyrdom of this great apostle, as we had of Stephen; but even this short mention of the thing is sufficient to let us know that the first preachers of the Gospel were so well assured of the truth of it, that they sealed it with their blood, and thereby have encouraged us, if at any time we are called to it, to resist unto blood too. The Old Testament martyrs were slain with the sword, *Heb. xi. 37*. And Christ came not to send peace but a sword, *Mat. x. 34*; in preparation for which we must arm ourselves with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and then we need not fear what the sword of men can do unto us.

Thirdly. He imprisoned Peter, whom he had heard most of, as making the greatest figure among the apostles, and whom therefore he would be proud of the honour of taking off. Observe here,

1. When he had beheaded James "he proceeded farther," he added, "to take Peter also." Note, Blood to the bloodthirsty doth but make them more so; and the way of persecution, as of other sins, is downhill; when men are in it they cannot easily stop themselves; when they are in, they find they must on. *Male facta male factis tegere ne perluant*,—"One evil deed is covered with another, so that there is no passage through them." They that take one bold step in a sinful way give Satan advantage against them, to tempt them to take another, and provoke God to leave them to themselves, to go from bad to worse. It is therefore our wisdom to take heed of the beginnings of sin.

2. He did this, "because he saw it pleased the Jews." Observe, The Jews made themselves guilty of the blood of James, by shewing themselves well pleased with it afterwards, though they had not excited Herod to it. There are accessories *ex post facto*,—after the fact, and they will be reckoned with as persecutors that take pleasure in others' persecuting, that delight to see good men ill used, and cry, "Aha, so would we have it;" or at least secretly approve of it. For bloody persecutors, when they perceive themselves applauded for that which every one ought to cry shame upon them for, are encouraged to go on, and have their hands strengthened, and their hearts hardened, and the checks of their own consciences smothered; nay, it is a strong temptation to them to do the like, as it was here to Herod, "because he saw it pleased

the Jews." Though he had no reason to fear displeasing them if he did not, as Pilate condemned Christ, yet he hoped to please them by doing it, and so to make an interest among them, and make amends for displeasing them in something else. Note, Those make themselves an easy prey to Satan that make it their business to please men.

3. Notice is taken of the time when Herod laid hold on Peter; "Then were the days of unleavened bread." It was at the feast of the passover, when their celebrating the memorial of their typical deliverance should have led them to the acceptance of their spiritual deliverance. Instead of that, they, under pretence of zeal for the law, were most violently fighting against it; and, "in the days of unleavened bread," were most soured and embittered with the old leaven of malice and wickedness. At the passover, when the Jews came from all parts of Jerusalem to keep the feast, they irritated one another against the Christians and Christianity, and were then more violent than at other times.

4. Here is an account of Peter's imprisonment; ver. 4, when he had laid hands on him, and, it is likely, examined him, he put him in prison, into the inner prison; some say into the same prison into which he and the other apostles were cast some years before, and were then rescued out of it by an angel, *ch. v. 18*. He was delivered to four quaternions of soldiers; that is, to sixteen, who were to be a guard upon him, four at a time, that he should not make his escape, or be rescued by his friends. Thus they thought they had him fast.

5. Herod's design was, "after Easter to bring him forth unto the people." 1st. He would make a spectacle of him. Probably he had put James to death privately, which the people had complained of, not because it was an unjust thing to put a man to death without giving him a public hearing, but because it deprived them of the satisfaction of seeing him executed; and therefore Herod, now he knows their minds, will gratify them with the sight of Peter in bonds, of Peter upon the block, that they may feed their eyes with such a pleasing spectacle. And very ambitious sure he was to please the people, who was willing thus to please them. 2nd. He would do this after Easter, *μετα τὴν πάσχα*, 'after the passover;' certainly so it ought to be read, for it is the same word that is always so rendered; and to insinuate the introducing of a gospel feast, instead of the passover, when we have nothing in the New Testament of such a thing, is to mingle Judaism with our Christianity. Herod would not condemn him till the passover was over; some think, for fear lest he should have such an interest among the people, as that they should demand the release of him, according to the custom of the feast; or, after the hurry of the feast was over, and the town was empty, he would entertain them with Peter's public trial and execution. Thus was the plot laid, and both Herod and the people long to have the feast over, that they may gratify themselves with this barbarous entertainment.

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. 6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. 7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. 10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. 12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying. 13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. 14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. 15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it

xii. 3. "Days of unleavened bread:" the Passover lasted seven days, during which unleavened bread was used. (See *Exod. xii. 15, 16*.) Herod, who took every opportunity of winning the favour of the Jews, would not let the great festival pass without his attendance.

xii. 4. A quaternion was a guard of four soldiers. The four quaternions would be required for the four watches into which, according to the Roman custom, the night was divided. To two of these soldiers the prisoner was bound, while the other two kept guard

before the prison doors; and these were the first and second guards mentioned in verse 10. "After Easter:" rather, "after the Passover." It was unlawful for the Jews to put any one to death during the feast.

xii. 6. On each hand a chain, the other end of which was fastened to a soldier.

xii. 10. "The first and the second ward:" i.e., the two other soldiers; one placed at the door of the room, and the other at the outer

was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. 16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished. 17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place. 18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. 19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judæa to Cæsarea, and there abode.

We have here an account of Peter's deliverance out of prison, by which the design of Herod against him was defeated, and his life reserved for farther service, and a stop given to this bloody torrent. Now,

First. One thing that magnified his deliverance was, that it was a signal answer to prayer; ver. 5, "Peter was kept in prison" with a great deal of care, so that it was altogether impossible either by force or by stealth to get him out; "but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him;" for prayers and tears are the church's arms, therewith she fights not only against her enemies, but for her friends; and to those means they have recourse.

1. The delay of Peter's trial gave them time for prayer. It is probable James was hurried off so suddenly and so privately that they had not time to pray for him, God so ordering it that they should not have space to pray, when he designed they should not have the thing they prayed for. James must be offered upon the sacrifice and service of their faith; and therefore prayer for him is restrained and prevented; but Peter must be continued to them, and therefore prayer for him is stirred up, and time is given them for it, by Herod's putting off the prosecution, "howbeit, he meant not so, neither did his heart think so."

2. They were very particular in their prayers for him, that it would please God, some way or other, to defeat Herod's purpose, and to snatch the lamb out of the jaws of the lion. The death of James alarmed them to a greater fervency in their prayers for Peter; for, if they be broken thus with breach upon breach, they fear that the enemy will make a full end. Stephen is not, and James is not, and will they take Peter also? All these things are against them: this will be sorrow upon sorrow, Phil. ii. 27. Note, Though the death and sufferings of Christ's ministers may be made greatly to serve the interests of Christ's kingdom, yet it is the duty and concern of the church earnestly to pray for their life, liberty, and tranquillity; and sometimes Providence orders it that they are brought into imminent danger to stir up prayer for them.

3. Prayer was made without ceasing; it was, προσευχή ἐκτενής, "fervent prayer;" it is the word that is used concerning Christ's praying in his agony "more earnestly." It is "the fervent prayer of the righteous man" that is effectual, and "availeth much." Some think it notes the constancy and continuance of their prayers; so we take it. They prayed "without ceasing;" it was an extended prayer. They prayed for his release in their public assemblies, private ones, perhaps, for fear of the Jews; then they went home, and prayed for it in their families; then retired into their closets, and prayed for it there; so they prayed without ceasing. Or, first one knot of them, and then another, and then a third, kept a day of prayer, or rather a night of prayer, for him, ver. 12. Note, Times of public distress and danger should be praying times with the church. We must pray always, but then especially.

Secondly. Another thing that magnified his deliverance was, that when "the king's commandment and decree drew near to be put in execution," then his deliverance was wrought, as Est. ix. 2. Let us observe when his deliverance came.

1. It was the very night before Herod designed to bring him forth; which made it to be so much the greater consolation to his friends, and confusion to his enemies. It is likely some that had an interest in Herod, or those about him, had been improving it to get a discharge for Peter, but in vain. Herod resolves he shall die; and now they despair of prevailing that way, for tomorrow is the day set for the bringing him forth, and it is likely they will make as quick work with him as with his Master; and now God opened a door of escape for him. Note, God's time to help is when things are brought to the last extremity, when there is none shut up or left, Deu. xxxii. 36; and for that reason it has been said, The worse the better. When Isaac is bound upon the altar, and the knife in the hand, and the hand stretched out to slay him, then "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide."

2. It was when he was fast bound with two chains between two soldiers, so that if he offer to stir he wakes them; and besides this, though the prison doors no doubt were locked and bolted, yet, to make sure work, "the keepers before the door kept the prison," that no one might so much as attempt to rescue him. Never could the art of man do more to secure a prisoner. Herod no doubt said as Pilate, Mat. xxvii. 65, "Make it as sure as you can." When men will think to be too hard for God, God will make it appear that he is too hard for them.

3. It was when he was sleeping between the soldiers; fast asleep. 1st. Not terrified with his danger, though it was very imminent, and there was no visible way for his escape. There was but a step between him and death, and yet he could lay him down in peace and sleep, sleep in the midst of his enemies, sleep when it may be they were awake; having a good cause that he suffered for, and a good conscience that he suffered with, and being assured that God would issue his trial that way that should be most for his glory; having committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously, his soul dwells at ease; and even in prison, between two soldiers, God gives him sleep, as he doth to his beloved. 2nd. Not expecting his deliverance. He did not keep awake, looking to the right hand or to the left for relief, but lay asleep, and was perfectly surprised with his deliverance. Thus the church; Ps. cxxvi. 1, "We were like them that dream."

Thirdly. It also magnified his deliverance very much, that an angel was sent from heaven on purpose to rescue him, which made his escape both practicable and warrantable. This angel brought him a legal discharge, and enabled him to make use of it.

1. "The angel of the Lord came upon him," ἐλθὼν, 'stood over him;' he seemed as one abandoned by men, yet not forgotten of his God; the Lord thinketh upon him. Gates and guards keep all his friends from him, but cannot keep the angels of God from him; and they invisibly encamp round about them that fear God, to deliver them, Ps. xxxiv. 7, and therefore they need not fear though a host of enemies encamp against them, Ps. xxvii. 3. Wherever the people of God are, and however surrounded, they have a way open heavenward, nor can any thing intercept their intercourse with God.

2. "A light shined in the prison." Though it was a dark place, and in the night, Peter shall see his way clear. Some observe, that we do not find in the Old Testament that where angels appeared the light shone round about them, — for that was a dark dispensation, and the glory of angels was then veiled, — but in the New Testament, when mention is made of the appearing of angels, notice is taken of the light that they appeared in; for it is by the Gospel that the upper world is brought to light. The soldiers to whom Peter was chained were either struck into a deep sleep for the present, as Saul and his soldiers were when David carried off his spear and cruse of water; or, if they were awake, the appearance of the angel made them to shake, and to become as dead men, as it was with the guard set on Christ's sepulchre.

3. The angel awakened Peter by giving him "a blow on his side," a gentle touch, enough to rouse him out of his sleep, though so fast asleep that the light that shone upon him did not wake him. When good people slumber in a time of danger, and are not awakened by the light of the Word, and the discoveries it gives them, let them expect to be smitten on the side by some sharp affliction: better be raised up so then left asleep. The language of this stroke was, "Arise up quickly;" not as if the angel feared coming short by his delay; but Peter must not be indulged in it. When David hears the sound of the going on the top of the mulberry trees, then he must rise up quickly, and bestir himself.

4. "His chains fell off from his hands." It seems they had handcuffed him to make him sure, but God loosed his bands; and if they fall off from his hands it is as well as if he had the strength of Samson to break them like threads of tow. Tradition makes a mighty rout about these chains, and tells a formal story, that one of the soldiers kept them for a sacred relic, and they were long after presented to Eudoxia the empress, and I know not what miracles are said to be wrought by them; and the Romish church keeps a feast on the first of August yearly, in remembrance of Peter's chains, *Festum vinculorum Petri*, — 'the feast of Peter's chains;' whereas this was at the passover. Surely they are thus fond of Peter's chains in hopes with them to enslave the world.

5. He was ordered to dress himself presently, and follow the angel, and he did so, ver. 8, 9. When Peter was awake, he knew not what to do, but as the angel directed him. 1st. He must gird himself; for those that slept in their clothes ungird themselves, so that they had nothing to do when they got up but to fasten their girdles. 2nd. He must bind on his sandals, that he might be fit to walk. Those whose bonds are loosed by the power of Divine grace must have "their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." 3rd. He must cast his garments about him, and come away as he was, and follow the angel; and he might go with a great deal of courage and cheerfulness who had a messenger from heaven for his guide and guard; he went out, and followed him. Those who are delivered out of a spiritual imprisonment must follow their deliverer, as Israel when they went out of the house of bondage did; they went out, not knowing whither they went, but whom they followed. Now, it is said, when Peter went out after the angel, "he wist not that it was true which was done by the angel," that it was really matter of fact, "but thought he saw a vision;" and if he did, it was not the first that he had seen. But by this it appears that a heavenly vision was so plain, and carried so much of its own evidence along with it, that it was hard to distinguish between what was done in fact and what was done in vision. "When the Lord brought back the captivity of his people, we were like them that dream," Ps. cxxvi. 1; Peter was so, he thought the news was too good to be true.

6. He was led safe by the angel out of danger, ver. 10. Guards were kept at one pass and at another, which they were to make their way through when they were out of the prison, and they did so without any opposition; nay, for aught appears, without any discovery. Either their eyes were closed, or their hands were tied, or their hearts failed them; so it was that the angel and Peter safely pass the first and second ward. Those watchmen represented the watchmen of the Jewish church, on whom God had "poured out a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear," Rom. xi. 8. "These watchmen are blind, sleeping, lying down, and loving to slumber." But still there is an iron gate after all that will stop them, and, if the guards can but recover themselves there, they may recover their prisoners, as Pharaoh hoped to retake Israel at the Red sea. However, up to that gate they march, and, like the Red sea before Israel, it opens to them; they did not so much as put a hand to it, but it opened of its own accord, by an invisible power; and thus was fulfilled in the letter what was figuratively promised to Cyrus, Isa. xlv. 1, "I will open before him the two-leaved gates, will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron." And probably the iron gate shut again of itself, that none of the guards might pursue Peter. Note, When God will work salvation for his people, no difficulties in their way are insuperable; but even gates of iron are made to open of their own accord. This iron gate led into the city out of the castle or tower, whether within the gates of the city or without, is not certain, so that when they were through this they were got into the street.

This deliverance of Peter represents to us our redemption by Christ, which is often spoken of as the setting of prisoners free, not only the proclaiming of liberty to the captives, but the bringing of them out of the prison house. The application of the redemption in the conversion of souls is the "sending forth of the prisoners, by the blood of the covenant, out of the pit wherein is no water," Zec. ix. 11. The grace of God, like this angel of the Lord, brings light first into the prison by the opening of the understanding, smites the sleeping sinner on the side by the awakening of the conscience; causeth the chains to fall off from the hands by the renewing of the will; and then gives the word of command, "Gird thyself, and follow me." Difficulties are to be passed through, and the opposition of Satan and his instruments, a first and second ward, an untoward generation, from which we are concerned to save ourselves; and shall be saved by the grace of God if we put ourselves under the Divine conduct. And at length the iron gate shall be opened to us to enter into the new Jerusalem, where we shall be perfectly freed from all the marks of our captivity, and brought "into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

7. When this was done, "the angel departed from him," and left him to himself. He was out of danger from his enemies, and needed no guard; he knew where he was, and how to find out his friends, and needed no guide, and therefore his heavenly guard and guide bids him farewell. Note, Miracles are not to be expected when ordinary means are to be used. When Peter has now no more wards to pass, or iron gates to get through, he needs only the ordinary invisible ministration of the angels who encamp round about them that fear God, and deliver them.

Fourthly. Having seen how his deliverance was magnified, we are next to

door of the building; the iron gate which led from the precincts of the building into the city.

xii. 12. "John:" generally identified with Mark the evangelist. This Mary was either sister or aunt of Barnabas.

xii. 15. "It is his angel:" some interpret these words as meaning his disembodied spirit, his ghost. Lechler says that the most probable supposition is that they believed that Peter's guardian angel had assumed his voice, and was standing before the door.

xii. 17. "James:" not the son of Alphæus, but the Lord's brother (the other James, son of Zebedee, was slain), who presided over the church at Jerusalem (Gal. i. 19, ii. 9; Acts xv. 13, xxi. 18).

xii. 19. Herod went to Cæsarea to celebrate games in honour of Claudius Cæsar.

xii. 20. Tyre and Sidon depended upon Palestine for provisions. Herod probably intended stopping all commercial intercourse. (For "Tyre," see Note on chap. xxi. 3.)

see. how it was manifested both to himself and others, and how being made great it was made known. We are here told,

1. How Peter came to himself, and so came himself to the knowledge of it, ver. 11. So many strange and surprising things coming together upon a man just waked out of sleep put him for the present into some confusion, so that he knew not where he was, nor what he did, nor whether it was fancy or fact; but at length Peter came to himself, was thoroughly awake, and found that it was not a dream, but a real thing; "Now I know of a surety," now I know, ἀληθώς, "truly," now I know that it is truth, and not an illusion of the fancy. Now I am well satisfied concerning it, "that the Lord Jesus hath sent his angel," for angels are subject to him, and go his errands, and by him "hath delivered me out of the hands of Herod," who thought he had me fast, and so hath disappointed "all the expectation of the people of the Jews," who doubted not to see Peter cut off the next day, and hoped it was the one neck of Christianity in which it would all be struck off at one blow. For which reason it was a cause of great expectation, among not only the common people, but the great people of the Jews. Peter, when he recollected himself, perceived of a truth what great things God had done for him, which at first he could not believe for joy. Thus souls who are delivered out of a spiritual bondage are not at first aware what God has wrought in them; many have the truth of grace that want the evidence of it. They are questioning whether there be indeed this change wrought in them, or whether they have not been all this while in a dream. But when the Comforter comes, whom the Father will send sooner or later, he will let them know of a surety what a blessed change is wrought in them, and what a happy state they are brought into.

2. How Peter came to his friends, and brought the knowledge of it to them. Here is a particular account of this, and it is very entertaining.

1st. He considered the thing, ver. 12. Considered how imminent his danger was, how great his deliverance. And now, what has he to do; what improvement must he make of his deliverance? What must he do next? God's providence leaves room for the use of our prudence; and what he has begun, though he has undertaken to perform and perfect it, yet he expects we should consider the thing.

2nd. He went directly to a friend's house, which, it is likely, lay near to the place where he was. It was the house of Mary, a sister of Barnabas, and mother of John Mark, whose house it should seem was frequently made use of for the private meeting of the disciples, either because it was large, and would hold many, or because it lay obscure, or because she was more forward than others were to open her doors to them; and no doubt it was like the house of Obed-edom, blessed for the ark's sake. A church in the house makes it a little sanctuary.

3rd. There he found "many" that were "gathered together praying," at the dead time of the night, praying for Peter, who was the next day to come upon his trial, that God would find out some way or other for his deliverance. Observe, *First*. They continued in prayer, in token of their importunity; they did not think it enough once to have presented his case to God, but they did it again and again. Thus "men ought always to pray, and not to faint." As long as we are kept waiting for a mercy, we must continue praying for it. *Secondly*. It should seem that now, when the affair came near a crisis, and the very next day was fixed for the determining of it, they were more fervent in prayer than before; and it was a good sign that God intended to deliver Peter, when he thus stirred up a spirit of prayer for his deliverance, for he never "said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain." *Thirdly*. They gathered together for prayer on this occasion. Though that would make them obnoxious to the government, if they were discovered, yet they knew what an encouragement Christ gave to joint prayer, *Mat. xviii. 19, 20*. And it was always the practice of God's praying people to unite their forces in prayer, as *Est. iv. 16; 2 Chr. xx. 4*. *Fourthly*. They were many that were got together for this work, as many perhaps as the room would hold; and first one prayed, and then another, of those who gave themselves to the word and prayer, the rest joining with them. Or, if they had not ministers among them, no doubt but there were many private Christians that knew how to pray, and to pray pertinently, and to continue long in prayer, when the affections of those who joined were so stirred as to keep pace with them upon such an occasion. This was in the night when others were asleep, which was an instance both of their prudence and of their zeal. Note, It is good for Christians to have private meetings for prayer, especially in times of distress, and not to let fall or forsake such assemblies. *Fifthly*. Peter came to them when they were thus employed, which was an immediate present answer to their prayer. It was as if God should say, You are praying that Peter may be restored to you, now here he is. "While they are yet speaking, I will hear," *Isa. lxx. 24*. Thus the angel was sent with an answer of peace to Daniel's prayer, "while he was praying," *Dan. ix. 20*. "Ask, and it shall be given."

4th. He "knocked at the gate," and had much ado to get them to let him in; ver. 13-16. "Peter knocked at the door of the gate," designing by it to awaken them out of their sleep, and, for aught appears, not knowing that he disturbed them in their devotions. Yet, if his friends were permitted to speak with him in private in the prison, it is possible he might know of this appointment, and this was it which he recollected and considered when he determined to go to that house, where he knew he should find many of his friends together. Now, when he knocked there, *First*. "A damsel came to hearken," not to open the door till she knew who was there, a friend or a foe, and what their business was, fearing informers. Whether this damsel was one of the family or one of the church, whether a servant or a daughter, doth not appear; it should seem, by her being named, that she was of note among the Christians, and more zealously affected to the better part than most of her age. *Secondly*. She "knew Peter's voice," having often heard him pray, and preach, and discourse with a great deal of pleasure; but, instead of letting him in immediately out of the cold, "she opened not the gate for gladness." Thus sometimes in a transport of affection to our friends we do that which is unkind. In an ecstasy of joy, she forgets herself, and "opened not the gate." *Thirdly*. She ran in, and probably went up to an upper room where they were together, and told them that Peter was certainly at the gate, though she had not courage enough to open the gate, for fear she should be deceived, and it should be the enemy. But when she spoke of Peter's being there, they said, "Thou art mad," it is impossible it should be he, for he is in prison. Sometimes that which we most earnestly wish for we are most backward to believe, because we are afraid of imposing upon ourselves, as the disciples who, when Christ was risen, believed not for joy. However, she stood to it that it was he. Then said they, "It is his angel," ver. 15. 1st. It is a messenger from him, that makes use of his name; so some take it: ἀγγελος often signifies no more but a messenger. It is used of John's messengers, *Luk. vii. 24, 27*; of Christ's, *Luk. ix. 32*. When the damsel was confident it was Peter, because she knew his voice, they thought it was because he that stood at the door had called himself Peter, and therefore offer this solution of the difficulty: It is one that comes with an errand from him, and thou mistookest as if it had been he himself. Dr. Hammond thinks this the easiest way of understanding it. 2nd. It is his guardian angel, or some other angel that had assumed his shape and voice, and stands at the gate in his resemblance. Some think that they supposed his angel to appear as a presage

of his death approaching; and this agrees with a notion which the vulgar have that sometimes before persons have died their ward has been seen; that is, some spirit exactly in their likeness for countenance and dress, when they themselves have been at the same time in some other place; they call it their ward, that is, their angel, that is, their guard. If so, they concluded this an ill omen, that their prayers were denied, and that the language of the apparition was, Let it suffice you, Peter must die, say no more of that matter. And, if we understand it so, it only proves that they had then such an opinion of a man's ward being seen a little before his death, but doth not prove that there is such a thing. Others think they took this to be an angel from heaven, sent to bring them a grant to their prayers. But why should they imagine that angel to assume the voice and shape of Peter, when we find not any thing like it in the appearance of angels? Perhaps they did herein speak the language of the Jews, who had a fond conceit that every good man hath a particular tutelar angel that has the charge of him, and sometimes personates him. The heathen called it a good genius that attended a man; but since no other scripture speaks of such a thing, this alone is too weak to bear the weight of such a doctrine. We are sure that the angels are ministering spirits for the good of the heirs of salvation; that they have a charge concerning them, and pitch their tents round about them; and we need not be solicitous that every particular saint should have his guardian angel, when we are assured he has a guard of angels.

5th. At length they let him in, ver. 16. He continued knocking, though they delayed to open to him, and at last they admitted him. The iron gate which opposed his enlargement, opened of itself, without so much as once knocking at it; but the door of his friend's house that was to welcome him doth not open of its own accord, but must be knocked at, long knocked at. Lest Peter should be puffed up by the honours which the angel did him, he meets with this mortification, by a seeming slight which his friends put upon him. But "when they saw him, they were astonished," were filled with wonder and joy in him, as much as they were but just now with sorrow and fear concerning him. It was both surprising and pleasing to them in the highest degree.

6th. Peter gave them an account of his deliverance. When he came to the company that were gathered together with so much zeal to pray for him, they gathered about him with no less zeal to congratulate his deliverance, and herein they were so noisy, that when Peter himself begged them to consider what peril he was yet in, if they should be overheard, he could not make them hear him, but was forced to beckon to them with the hand to hold their peace, and had much ado thereby to command silence, while he declared unto them how the Lord Jesus had by an angel brought him out of prison. And it is very likely, having found them praying for his deliverance, he did not part with them till he and they had together solemnly given thanks to God for his enlargement; or, if he could not stay to do it, it is likely they stayed together to do it: for what is won by prayer, must be worn with praise, and God must always have the glory of that which we have the comfort of. When David declares what God had done for his soul, he bleaseth God, who had not turned away his prayer, *Psa. lxxvi. 16, 20*.

7th. Peter sent the account to others of his friends: "Go, shew these things to James, and to the brethren" with him; who perhaps were met together in another place at the same time, upon the same errand to the throne of grace, which is one way of keeping up the communion of saints, and wrestling with God in prayer, acting in concert though at a distance, like Esther and Mordecai. He would have James and his company to know of his deliverance, not only that they might be eased of their pain, and delivered from their fears concerning Peter, but that they might return thanks to God with him and for him. Observe, Though Herod had slain one James with the sword, yet here was another James, and that in Jerusalem too, that stood up in his room to preside among the brethren there; for when God has work to do he will never want instruments to do it with.

8th. Peter had nothing more to do for the present but to shift for his own safety, which he did accordingly. He departed, and went into another place more obscure, and therefore more secure. He knew the town very well, and knew where to find a place that would be a shelter to him. Note, Even the Christian law of self-denial and suffering for Christ has not abrogated and repealed the natural law of self-preservation, and care for our own safety, as far as God gives an opportunity of providing for it by lawful means.

Fifthly. Having seen the triumph of Peter's friends in his deliverance, let us next observe the confusion of his enemies thereupon, which was so much the greater because people's expectation was so much raised of the putting of him to death.

1. The guards were in the utmost consternation upon it, for they knew how highly penal it was to them to let a prisoner escape that they had charge of; ver. 18. "As soon as it was day," and they found their prisoner gone, "there was no small stir," or strife, as some read it, "among the soldiers, what was become of Peter." He is gone, and nobody knows how or which way. They thought themselves as sure as could be of him but last night, yet now the bird is flown, and they can hear no tale or tidings of him. This set them together by the ears. One saith, It was long of you; the other, Nay, but it was long of you; having no other way to clear themselves, but by accusing one another. With us, if but a prisoner for debt escape, the sheriff must answer for the debt. Thus have the persecutors of the Gospel of Christ been often filled with vexation to see its cause conquering, notwithstanding the opposition they have given to it.

2. Houses were searched in vain for the rescued prisoner; ver. 19. "Herod sought for him, and found him not." Who can find whom God hath hid? Baruch and Jeremiah are safe, though searched for, because the Lord has hid them, *Jer. xxxvi. 26*. In times of public danger all believers have God for their hiding-place; which is such a secret, that there the ignorant world cannot find them; such a strength, that the impotent world cannot reach them.

3. The keepers were reckoned with for a permissive escape. "Herod examined the keepers," and finding that they could give no satisfactory account how Peter got away, "he commanded that they should be put to death," according to the Roman law, and that, *1 Kin. xx. 39*. "If by any means he be missing, then shall thy life go for his life." It is probable these keepers had been more severe with Peter than they needed to be, (as the jailer, *ch. xvi. 24*) and had been abusive to him and to others that had been their prisoners upon the like account, and now justly are they put to death, for that which was not their fault, and by him too that had set them to work to vex the church. When the wicked are thus snared in the work of their own hands, the Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth. Or, if they had not thus made themselves obnoxious to the justice of God, and it be thought hard that innocent men should suffer thus for that which was purely the act of God, we may easily admit the conjectures of some, that, though they were commanded to be put to death, to please the Jews, who were sadly disappointed by Peter's escape, yet they were not executed; but Herod's death immediately after prevented it.

4. Herod himself retired upon it. "He went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and there abode." He was vexed to the heart, as a lion disappointed of his prey; and the more because he had so much raised the expectation of the people of the Jews concerning Peter, had told them how he would very shortly gratify them with the sight of Peter's head in a charger, which would oblige

xii. 21. "Arrayed in royal apparel:" see Josephus, "Antiquities," xv. 9, 6. Conybeare and Howson thus describe the scene:—"The city was crowded, and Herod was there. On the second day of the festival he came into the theatre. That theatre had been erected by his grandfather, who had murdered the innocents; and now the grandson was there, who had murdered an apostle. The stone seats, rising in a great semi-circle, tier above tier, were covered with an excited multitude. The king came in, clothed in magnificent robes,

of which silver was the costly and brilliant material. It was early in the day, and the sun's rays fell upon the king, so that the eyes of the beholders were dazzled with the brightness which surrounded him. Voices from the crowd here and there exclaimed that it was an apparition of something divine. And when he spoke and made an oration to the people, they gave a shout, saying, 'It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.' But in the midst of this idolatrous ostentation, the angel of God suddenly smote him. He was carried out of

them as much as John Baptist's did Herodias; it made him ashamed to be robbed of this boasting, and to see himself, notwithstanding his confidence, disabled to make his words good. This is such a mortification to his proud spirit, that he cannot bear to stay in Judæa, but away he goes to Cæsarea. Josephus mentions this coming of Herod to Cæsarea, at the end of the third year of his reign over all Judæa, *Antiq.* xix. 7, and saith, he came thither to solemnize the plays that were kept there, by a vast concourse of the nobility and gentry of the kingdom, for the health of Cæsar, and in honour of him.

20 And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country. 21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. 22 And the people gave a shout, saying, *It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.* 23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. 24 But the word of God grew and multiplied. 25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them Jolin, whose surname was Mark.

In these verses we have,

First. The death of Herod. God reckoned with him, not only for his putting James to death, but for his design and endeavour to put Peter to death; for sinners will be called to an account, not only for the wickedness of their deeds, but for the wickedness of their endeavours, *Ps.* xxviii. 4; for the mischief they have done, and the mischief they would have done. It was but a little while that Herod lived after this. Some sinners God makes quick work with. Observe,

1. How the measure of his iniquity was filled up. It was pride that did it; that is it that commonly goes more immediately before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Nebuchadnezzar had been a very bloody man, and a great persecutor; but the word that was in the king's mouth when the judgments of God fell upon him, was a proud word, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" *Dan.* iv. 30, 31. It is the glory of God to look on every one that is proud, and bring him low, *Job* xl. 12. The instance of it here is very remarkable, and shews how God resists the proud.

2d. The men of Tyre and Sidon had, it seems, offended Herod. Those cities were now under the Roman yoke, and some misdemeanours they had been guilty of, which Herod highly resented, and was resolved they should feel his resentments. Some very small matter would serve such a proud, imperious man as Herod was for a provocation, where he was minded to pick a quarrel. He was highly displeased with this people, and they must be made to know that his wrath was as the roaring of a lion, as messengers of death.

3d. The offenders truckled, being convinced, if not that they had done amiss, yet that it was in vain to contend with such a potent adversary, that, right or wrong, would be too hard for them; they submitted, and were willing, upon any terms, to make peace with him. Observe, *First*. The reason why they were desirous to have the matter accommodated; "because their country was nourished by the king's country." Tyre and Sidon were trading cities, and had little land belonging to them, but were always supplied with corn from the land of Canaan; Judah and Israel traded in their market, with wheat, and honey, and oil, *Eze.* xxvii. 17. Now, if Herod should make a law to prohibit the exportation of corn to Tyre and Sidon, (which they knew not but a man so revengeful as he might soon do, not caring how many were famished by it,) their country would be undone; so that it was their interest to keep in with him. And is it not then our wisdom to make our peace with God, and humble ourselves before him, who have a much more constant and necessary dependence upon him than one country can have upon another; "for in him we live, and move, and have our being?" *Secondly*. The method they took to prevent a rupture: "they made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend." It is very likely with bribes, and good presents; that is usually the way for men to make courtiers their friends; and it is the hard fate of princes that they must have not only their affairs, but their affections too, governed by such mercenary tools. Yet such men as Herod, that will not be governed by reason, had better be so governed, than by pride and passion. Blastus had Herod's ear, and has the art of mollifying his resentments; and a time is fixed for the ambassadors of Tyre and Sidon to come and make a public submission to beg his majesty's pardon, throw themselves upon his clemency, and promise never again to offend in the like kind. And that which will thus feed his pride shall serve to cool his passion.

4th. Herod appeared in all the pomp and grandeur he had. He was "arrayed in his royal apparel," *ver.* 21, and "sat upon his throne." Josephus gives an account of this splendid appearance which Herod made upon this occasion, *Antiq.* xix. 7. He saith, that Herod at this time wore a robe of cloth of silver, so richly woven, and framed with such art, that when the sun shone it reflected the light with such a lustre as dazzled the eyes of the spectators, and struck an awe upon them. Foolish people value men by their outward appearance; and no better are they who value themselves by the esteem of such; who court it and recommend themselves to it, as Herod did, who thought to make up the want of a royal heart with his royal apparel, and sat upon his throne, as if that gave him a privilege to trample upon all about him as his footstool.

5th. He made a speech to the men of Tyre and Sidon; a fine oration, in which, probably, after he had aggravated their fault, and commanded their submission, he concluded with an assurance that he would pass by their offence, and receive them into his favour again, proud enough that he had it in his power, whom he would to keep alive, as well as whom he would to slay; and probably kept them in suspense what their doom should be till he made this oration to them, that the act of grace might come to them with the more pleasing surprise.

6th. The people applauded him. "The people" that had a dependence upon him, and had benefit by his favour, they "gave a shout," and this was it they

shouted, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man," *ver.* 22. God is great and good, and they thought such was Herod's greatness in his apparel and throne, and such his goodness in forgiving them, that he was worthy to be called no less than a god; and, perhaps, his speech was delivered with such an air of majesty, and a mixture of clemency with it, as affected the auditors thus. Or, it may be, it was not from any real impression made upon their minds, or any high or good thoughts they had indeed conceived of him, but, how meanly soever they thought of him, they were resolved thus to curry favour with him, and strengthen the new-made peace between him and them. Thus great men are made an easy prey to flatterers, if they lend an ear to them, and encourage them. Grotius here observes that, "though magistrates are called gods, *Ps.* lxxxii. 1, yet kings or monarchs, that is, single persons, are not, lest countenance should thereby be given to the Gentiles, who gave Divine honours to their kings alive and dead, as here; but they are a college of senators, or a bench of judges that are called gods;" — *In collegio tota senatorum non idem erat periculi, itaque eos non autem regis inenimus dictos elohim.* Those that live by sense vilify God, as if he were altogether such a one as themselves; and deify men as if they were gods; having their persons in admiration, because of advantage. This is not only a great affront to God, giving that glory to others which is due to him alone, but a great injury to those who are thus flattered, as it makes them forget themselves, and so puffs them up with pride as that they are in the utmost danger possible of falling into the condemnation of the devil.

7th. These undue praises he took to himself, pleased himself with them, and prided himself in them; and that was his sin. We do not find that he had given any private orders to his confidants to begin such a shout, or to put those words into the mouths of the people, or that he returned them thanks for the compliment, and undertook to answer their opinion of him; but his fault was, that he said nothing, did not rebuke their flattery, nor disown the title they had given him, nor give God the glory, *ver.* 23; but he took it to himself, was very willing it should terminate in himself, and that he should be thought a god, and have Divine honours paid him. "St populus vult decipi decipitur." — "If the people will be deceived, let them." And it was worse in him who was a Jew, and professed to believe one God only, than it was in the heathen emperors, who had gods many and lords many. Observe,

2. How his iniquity was punished; *ver.* 23, "Immediately the angel of the Lord smote him," (by the order of Christ, for to him all judgment is committed,) "because he gave not God the glory;" (for God is jealous for his own honour, and will be glorified upon those whom he is not glorified by;) "and he was eaten of worms," above ground, "and gave up the ghost." Now he was reckoned with for vexing the church of Christ, killing James, and imprisoning of Peter, and all the other mischiefs he had done. Observe, in the destruction of Herod,

1st. It was no less than an angel that was the agent; "the angel of the Lord," that angel that was ordered and commissioned to do it, or that angel that used to be employed in works of this nature; the destroying angel. Or, the angel; that is, that angel that delivered Peter in the former part of the chapter: that angel smote Herod. For those ministering spirits are the ministers either of Divine justice or of Divine mercy, as God is pleased to employ them. The angel smote him with a sore disease just at that instant when he was strutting at the applauds of the people, and adoring his own shadow. Thus the king of Tyre said in his pride, "I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, and set his heart as the heart of God;" but he shall be a man, and no god; a weak, mortal man, "in the hand of him that slayeth him," *Eze.* xxviii. 2, 9; so Herod here. Potent princes must know, not only that God is omnipotent; but that angels too are greater in power and might than they. "The angel smote him, because he gave not the glory to God." Angels are jealous for God's honour, and, as soon as ever they have commission, are ready to smite those that usurp his prerogatives, and rob God of his honour.

2nd. It was no more than a worm that was the instrument of Herod's destruction. "He was eaten of worms," *γενόμενος ακακηλάρητος*, — "he became worm-eaten," so it must be read; rotten he was, and became like a piece of rotten wood. The body in the grave is destroyed by worms; but Herod's body putrefied while he was yet alive, and bred the worms which began to feed upon it betimes: so Antiochus, that great persecutor, died. See here, *First*. What vile bodies those are which we carry about with us; they carry about with them the seeds of their own dissolution, by which they will soon be destroyed whenever God doth but speak the word. Surprising discoveries have of late been made by microscopes of the multitude of worms that there are in human bodies, and how much they contribute to the diseases of them; which is a good reason why we should not be proud of our bodies, or of any of their accomplishments; and why we should not pamper our bodies, for that is but feeding the worms; and feeding them for the worms. *Secondly*. See what weak and contemptible creatures God can make the instruments of his justice when he pleaseth. Pharaoh is plagued with lice and flies; Ephraim consumed as with a moth; and Herod eaten of worms. *Thirdly*. See how God delights, not only to bring down proud men, but to bring them down in such a way as is most mortifying, and pours most contempt upon them. Herod is not only destroyed, but destroyed by worms, that the pride of his glory may be effectually stained.

This story of the death of Herod, is particularly related by Josephus, a Jew, *Antiquities*, lib. xix. cap. vii. thus, "That Herod came down to Cæsarea to celebrate a festival in honour of Cæsar; that the second day of the festival he went in the morning to the theatre, clothed with that splendid robe mentioned before; that his flatterers saluted him as a god, begged that he would be propitious to them; that hitherto they had revered him as a man, but now they would confess to be in him something more excellent than a mortal nature. That he did not refuse or correct this impious flattery, (so the historian expresseth it), but presently after, looking up, he saw an owl perched over his head, and was at the same instant seized with a most violent pain in his bowels, and gripes in his belly, which were exquisite from the very first; that he turned his eyes upon his friends, and said to this purpose, Now I, whom you called a god, and therefore immortal, must be proved a man, and mortal. That his torture continued without intermission, or the least abatement; and then he died in the fifty-fourth year of his age, when he had been king seven years."

Secondly. The progress of the Gospel after this.

1. "The word of God grew and multiplied." As seed sown, which comes up with a great increase, thirty, sixty, a hundred-fold; wherever the Gospel was preached, multitudes embraced it, and were added to the church by it, *ver.* 24. After the death of James, the word of God grew; for the church, the more it was afflicted, the more it multiplied; like Israel in Egypt. The courage and comfort of the martyrs, and God's owning them, did more to invite them to Christianity than their sufferings did to deter them from it. After the death of Herod, the word of God got ground. When such a persecutor was taken off by a dreadful judgment, many were thereby convinced that the cause of Christianity was doubtless the cause of Christ, and therefore embraced it.

2. Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch as soon as they had despatched the business they were sent upon. "When they had fulfilled their ministry," had paid in their money to the proper persons, and taken care about the due distribution of it to those for whom it was collected, "they returned from Jerusalem." Though they had a great many friends there, yet, at present, their

the theatre a dying man, and on the 6th of August he was dead." The year was A.D. 44. "His throne:" a raised seat from which he delivered his oration. He was also giving a public audience to the embassy from Tyre and Sidon.

xii. 25. "Their ministry:" the distribution of the alms sent from Antioch. (See chap. xi. 30.)

xiii. 1. "Prophets:" not so much in the sense of foretellers of events as in that of teachers; those called teachers were probably men

of an inferior order to the prophets. Alford says that the "teachers" were probably less immediately the organs of the Holy Spirit than the prophets, but under his continual guidance in the gradual and progressive work of teaching the word. "Simeon:" nothing is known of him; he was probably an African proselyte. "Lucius of Cyrene:" see *Rom.* xvi. 21. "Manaen:" possibly the son of Manaen, an Essene, who foretold to Herod the Great that he would be king of the Jews, and in consequence received favours from Herod

work lay at Antioch; and where our business is, there we should be, and no longer from it than is requisite. When a minister is called abroad upon any service, when he has fulfilled that ministry, he ought to remember that he has work to do at home, which wants him there, and calls him thither. Barnabas and Saul, when they went to Antioch, "took with them John, whose surname was Mark," at whose mother's house they had that meeting for prayer which we read of, ver. 12; she was sister to Barnabas. It is probable Barnabas lodged there, and perhaps Paul with him, while they were at Jerusalem, and that was it that occasioned the meeting there at that time: for, wherever Paul was, he would have some good work to do; and their intimacy in that family while they were at Jerusalem, occasioned their taking a son of that family with them, when they returned, to be trained up under them, and employed by them, in the service of the Gospel. Educating young men for the ministry, and entering them into it, is a very good work for elder ministers to take care of, and of good service to the rising generation.

CHAPTER XIII.

We have not yet met with any thing concerning the spreading of the Gospel to the Gentiles which bears any proportion to the largeness of that commission. "Go, and disciple all nations." The door was opened in the baptizing of Cornelius and his friends; but since then we had the Gospel preached to the Jews only, ch. xi. 19. It should seem as if the light which began to shine upon the Gentile world had withdrawn itself; but here, in this chapter, that work, that great good work, is revived in the midst of the years; and though the Jews shall still have the first offer of the Gospel made to them, yet upon their refusal the Gentiles shall have their share of the offer of it. Here is, I. The solemn ordination of Barnabas and Saul, by Divine direction, to the ministry, to the great work of spreading the Gospel among the nations about; and it is probable other apostles or apostolical men dispersed themselves by order from Christ, upon the same errand, ver. 1—3. II. Their preaching the Gospel in Cyprus, and the opposition they met with there from Elymas the sorcerer, ver. 4—13. III. The heads of a sermon which Paul preached to the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, in their synagogue, which is given us as a specimen of what they usually preached to the Jews, and the method they took with them, ver. 14—41. IV. The preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles at their request, and upon the Jews' refusal of it, wherein the apostles justified themselves against the displeasure which the Jews conceived at it, and God owned them, ver. 42—49. V. The trouble which the infidel Jews gave to the apostles, which obliged them to remove to another place, ver. 50—52; so that the design of this chapter is to shew how cautiously, how gradually, and with what good reason the apostles carried the Gospel into the Gentile world; and admitted the Gentiles into the church, which was so great an offence to the Jews, and which Paul is so industrious to justify in his epistles.



OW there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on *them*, they sent them away.

We have here a Divine warrant and commission to Barnabas and Saul to go and preach the Gospel among the Gentiles, and their ordination to that service by the imposition of hands with fasting and prayer.

First. Here is an account of the present state of the church at Antioch, which was planted, ch. xi. 20.

1. How well furnished it was with good ministers. There were there "certain prophets and teachers," ver. 1; men that were eminent for gifts, graces, and usefulness. Christ, when he ascended on high, gave some prophets and some teachers, Eph. iv. 11: these were both. Agabus seems to have been a prophet, and not a teacher, and there were many who were teachers that were not prophets; but those were at times divinely inspired, and had instructions immediately from Heaven upon special occasions, which gave them the title of prophets; and withal they were stated teachers of the church in their religious assemblies, expounded the Scriptures, and opened the doctrine of Christ with suitable applications. These were the prophets and scribes, or teachers, which Christ promised to send, Mat. xxiii. 34; such as were every way qualified for the service of the Christian church. Antioch was a great city, and the Christians there were many, so that they could not all meet in one place; it was, therefore, requisite that they should have many teachers, to preside in their respective assemblies, and to deliver God's mind to them. Barnabas is first named, probably because he was the eldest; and Saul last, probably because he was the youngest: but afterwards the last became first, and Saul more eminent in the church.

Three others are mentioned: 1st. Simeon, or Simon, that for distinction sake was called Niger, Simon the Black, from the colour of his hair; like him that with us was surnamed the Black Prince. 2nd. Lucius, of Cyrene, who some think (and Dr. Lightfoot inclines to it) was the same with this Luke that wrote the Acts, originally a Cyrenian, and educated in the Cyrenian college, or synagogue, at Jerusalem, and there first receiving the Gospel. 3rd. Manaen, a person of some quality, as it should seem, for he was "brought up with Herod the tetrarch;" either nursed of the same milk, or bred at the same school, or pupil to the same tutor; or rather, one that was his constant colleague and companion, that in every part of his education was his comrade and intimate, which gave him a fair prospect of preferment at court, and yet, for Christ's sake, he quitted all the hopes of it; like Moses, who, "when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Had he joined in with Herod, with whom he was brought up, he might have had Blastus' place, and have been his chamberlain; but it is better to be fellow-sufferer with a saint than fellow-persecutor with a tetrarch.

when he became king. The words "brought up with" should be rendered foster-brother. The Herod here mentioned was Herod Antipas.

xiii. 2. "The work:" see chap. ix. 15, xxi. 21, xxvi. 17). The work was evangelising the heathen world. "Saul had been called at first to be an apostle, but he did not enter upon the special duties, nor obtain the peculiar authority attached to that office, until this his solemn and public designation and appointment by the Holy Ghost" (Cook).

2. How well employed they were; ver. 2, "they ministered to the Lord and fasted." Observe, 1st. Diligent, faithful teachers, do truly minister unto the Lord. They that instruct Christians serve Christ, they really do him honour, and carry on the interest of his kingdom. They that minister to the church in praying and preaching (both which are included here) minister unto the Lord, for they are the church's servants for Christ's sake; to him they must have an eye in their ministrations, and from him they shall have their recompence. 2nd. Ministering to the Lord, in one way or other, ought to be the stated business of churches and their teachers. To this work time ought to be set apart, nay, it is set apart; and in this work we ought to spend some part of every day. What have we to do as Christians and ministers but to serve the Lord Christ? Col. iii. 24; Rom. xiv. 18. 3rd. Religious fasting is of use in our ministering to the Lord, both as a sign of our humiliation and a means of our mortification. Though it was not much practised by the disciples of Christ, while the bridegroom was with them, as it was by the disciples of John and of the Pharisees; yet, after the bridegroom was taken away, they abounded in it, as those that had well learned to deny themselves, and to endure hardness.

Secondly. The orders given by the Holy Ghost for the setting apart of Barnabas and Saul. While they were engaged in public exercises, the ministers of the several congregations in the city joining in one solemn fast, or day of prayer, the Holy Ghost said, either by a voice from heaven, or by a strong impulse on the minds of those of them that were prophets, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." He doth not specify the work, but refers to a former call, which they themselves knew the meaning of, whether others did or no. As for Saul, he was particularly told that he must bear Christ's name to the Gentiles, ch. ix. 15; that he must be sent to the Gentiles, ch. xxii. 21. The matter was settled between them at Jerusalem before this, that, as Peter, James, and John laid out themselves among them of the circumcision, so Paul and Barnabas should go to the heathen, Gal. ii. 7—9. Barnabas, it is likely, knew himself designed for that service as well as Paul. Yet they would not thrust themselves into this harvest, though it appeared plenteous, till they received their orders from the Lord of the harvest, "Thrust in thy sickle, for the harvest is ripe," Rev. xiv. 15. The orders were, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul." Observe here,

1. Christ, by his Spirit, has the nomination of his ministers; for it is by the Spirit of Christ that they are both qualified in some measure for his service, inclined to it, and taken off from other cares inconsistent with it. There are some whom the Holy Ghost hath separated for the service of Christ, hath distinguished from others as men that are offered and that willingly offer themselves to the temple service, and concerning them directions are given to those who are competent judges of the sufficiency of the abilities, and the sincerity of the inclination: Separate them.

2. Christ's ministers are separated to him, and to the Holy Ghost: Separate them to me: they are to be employed in Christ's work, and, under the Spirit's conduct, to the glory of God the Father.

3. All that are separated to Christ as his ministers, are separated to work; Christ keeps no servants to be idle: "If any man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work," that is it which he is separated to, to labour in the word and doctrine. They are separated to take pains, not to take state.

4. The work of Christ's ministers, to which they are to be separated, is work that is already settled; and that which all Christ's ministers, hitherto, have been called to, and which they themselves have first been, by an external call, directed to, and have chosen.

Thirdly. Their ordination, pursuant to these orders, not to the ministry in general, (Barnabas and Saul had both of them been ministers long before this,) but to a particular service in the ministry, which had something peculiar in it, and which required a fresh commission; which commission God saw fit at this time to transmit by the hands of these prophets and teachers, for the giving of this direction to the church, that teachers should ordain teachers, (for prophets we are not now any longer to expect,) and that those who have the dispensing of the oracles of Christ committed to them should, for the benefit of posterity, "commit the same to faithful men, which shall be able also to teach others," 2 Tim. ii. 2; so here, Simeon, and Lucius, and Manaen, faithful teachers at this time in the church of Antioch, when they had fasted and prayed, laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul, and sent them away, ver. 3, according to the directions received. Observe,

1. They prayed for them. When good men are going forth about good work, they ought to be solemnly and particularly prayed for, especially by their brethren that are their fellow-labourers and fellow-soldiers.

2. They joined fasting with their prayers, as they did in other their ministrations, ver. 3. Christ has taught us this by his abstaining from sleep (a night fast, if I may so call it) the night before he sent forth his apostles, that he might spend it in prayer.

3. They laid their hands on them. Hereby, 1st. They gave them their manumission, dismissal, or discharge from the present service they were engaged in in the church at Antioch, acknowledging not only that they went off fairly and with consent, but honourably and with a good report. 2nd. They implored a blessing upon them in their present undertaking; begged that God would be with them, and give them success; and, in order to this, that they might be filled with the Holy Ghost in their work. This very thing is explained, ch. xiv. 26, where it is said, concerning Paul and Barnabas, that from Antioch they had been "recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled." As it was an instance of the humility of Barnabas and Saul, that they submitted to the imposition of the hands of those that were their equals, or rather their inferiors; so it was of the good disposition of the other teachers, that they did not envy Barnabas and Saul the honour to which they were preferred, but cheerfully committed it to them, with hearty prayers for them. And they sent them away with all expedition, out of a concern for those countries where they were to break up fallow ground.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister. 6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country,

xiii. 4. "Seleucia:" about fifteen miles from Antioch, and on the sea-coast. It was strongly fortified, and was a sea-port. It was built by Seleucus Nicator, the first Greek king of Syria, who called it after himself. "Cyprus:" St. Barnabas' native place. This may account for their making it their first point after leaving Palestine.

xiii. 5. "Salamis:" a sea-port on the east of Cyprus. (For a good account of Salamis, see Conybeare and Howson's "Life and Letters of St. Paul," People's Edition, vol. i., p. 133.)

Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And

now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. 13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.



CYPRUS.—ver. 4.

In these verses we have,

First. A general account of the coming of Barnabas and Saul to the famous island of Cyprus; and perhaps thitherward they steered their course because Barnabas was a native of that country, *ch. iv. 36*, and he was willing they should have the firstfruits of his labours, pursuant to his new commission. Observe,

1. Their "being sent forth by the Holy Ghost" was the great thing that encouraged them in this undertaking, *ver. 4*. If the Holy Ghost send them forth, he will go along with them, strengthen them, carry them on in their work, and give them success; and then they fear no colours, but can cheerfully venture upon a stormy sea from Antioch, which was now to them a quiet harbour.

2. They came to Seleucia, the seaport town opposite to Cyprus, from thence crossed the sea to Cyprus, and in that island the first city they came to was Salamis, a city on the east side of the island, *ver. 5*; and when they had sown good seed there, thence they went onward through the isle, *ver. 6*, till they came to Paphos, which lay on the western coast.

3. "They preached the word of God" wherever they came, "in the synagogues of the Jews." So far were they from excluding them, that they gave them the preference, and so left those among them who believed not inexcusable; they would have gathered them, but they would not. They did not act clandestinely, nor preach the Messiah to others unknown to them, but laid their doctrine open to the censure of the rulers of their synagogues, who might, if they had any thing to say, object against it. Nor would they have acted separately, but in concert with them, if they had not driven them out from them, and from their synagogues.

4. They had John to their minister; not their servant in common things, but their assistant in the things of God; either to prepare their way in places where they designed to come, or to carry on their work in places where they had begun it, or to converse familiarly with those to whom they preached publicly, and explain things to them, and such a one might be many ways of use to them, especially in a strange country.

Secondly. A particular account of their encounter with Elymas the sorcerer, whom they met with at Paphos, where the governor resided. A place famous for a temple built to Venus there, thence called Paphian Venus; and therefore, there was more than ordinary need that the Son of God should be manifested "to destroy the works of the devil."

1. There the deputy, a Gentile, Sergius Paulus by name, encouraged the apostles, and was willing to hear their message. He was governor of the country, under the Roman emperor, proconsul, or proprætor, such a one as we would call lord lieutenant of the island; he had the character of a prudent man, an intelligent considerate man, that was ruled by reason, not passion or prejudice; which appeared by this, that having a character of Barnabas and Saul he sent for them, and desired to hear the word of God. Note, That which we hear has a tendency to lead us to God, it is prudence to desire to hear more of it. Those are wise people, however they may be ranked among the foolish of this world, who are inquisitive after the mind and will of God. Though he was a great man, and a man in authority, and the preachers of the Gospel were men that made no figure, yet, if they have a message from God, let him know what it is, and if it appear to be so he is ready to receive it.

2. There Elymas, a Jew, a sorcerer, opposed them, and did all he could to obstruct their progress. This justified the apostles in turning to the Gentiles, that this Jew was so malignant against them.

1st. This Elymas was a pretender to the gift of prophecy, a sorcerer, a false prophet; one that would be taken for a divine, because he was skilled in the arts of divination, was a conjuror, and took on him to tell people their fortune, and to discover things lost, and probably was in league with the devil for that purpose. His name was Bar-Jesus, 'the son of Joshua'; it signifies 'the son of salvation'; but the Syriac calls him Bar-shoma, 'the son of pride'; *filius inflationis*, 'the son of inflation'.

2nd. He was hanging on at court; was with the deputy of the country. It doth not appear that the deputy called for him, as he did for Barnabas and Saul, but he thrust himself upon him, aiming, no doubt, to make a hand of him, and get money by him.

3rd. He made it his business to withstand Barnabas and Saul, as the magicians of Egypt in Pharaoh's court withstood Moses and Aaron, *2 Tim. iii. 8*. He set up himself to be a messenger from heaven, and denied that they were. And thus he sought "to turn away the deputy from the faith," *ver. 8*; to keep him from receiving the Gospel, which he saw him inclined to do. Note, Satan is in a special manner busy with great men, and men in power, to keep them from being religious, because he knows their example, whether good or bad, will have

an influence upon many; and those who are any way instrumental to prejudice people against the truths and ways of Christ are doing the devil's work.

4th. Saul (who is here for the first time called Paul, and never after Saul,) fell upon him for this with a holy indignation; "Saul, who also is called Paul," *ver. 9*. Saul was his name as he was a Hebrew, and of the tribe of Benjamin; Paul was his name as he was a citizen of Rome; hitherto we have had him mostly conversant among the Jews, and therefore called by his Jewish name; but now, when he is sent forth among the Gentiles, he is called by his Roman name, to put somewhat of a reputation upon him in the Roman cities; Paulus being a very common name among them. But some think he was never called Paul till now that he was instrumental in the conversion of Sergius Paulus to the faith of Christ, and that he took that name (Paulus) as a memorial of that victory obtained by the Gospel of Christ, as among the Romans he that had conquered a country took his denomination from it, as Germanicus, Britannicus, Africanus; or, rather Sergius Paulus himself gave him the name Paulus in token of his favour and respect to him, as Vespasian gave his name Flavius to Josephus the Jew. Now of Paul it is said,

First. That he was "filled with the Holy Ghost" upon this occasion; filled with a holy zeal against a professed enemy of Christ, which was one of the graces of the Holy Ghost, a spirit of burning; filled with a power to denounce the wrath of God against him, which was one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, a spirit of judgment. He felt a more than ordinary fervour in his mind, as the prophet did when he was "full of power by the Spirit of the Lord," *Mic. iii. 8*; and another prophet when his face was made harder than flint, *Eze. iii. 9*; and another when his mouth was made like a sharp sword, *Isa. xlix. 2*. What Paul said did not come from any personal resentment, but from the strong impressions which the Holy Ghost made upon his spirit.

Secondly. He "set his eyes upon him," to face him down, and to shew a holy boldness in opposition to his wicked impudence. He set his eyes upon him as an indication that the eye of the heart-searching God was upon him, and saw through and through him; nay, that the face of the Lord was against him, *Ps. xxxiv. 16*. He fixed his eyes upon him, to see if he could discern in his countenance any marks of remorse for what he had done, which, if he could have discerned the least sign of it, had prevented the ensuing doom.

Thirdly. He gave him his true character, not in passion, but by the Holy Ghost, who knows men better than they know themselves, *ver. 1*. He describes him to be, 1st. An agent for hell; and such there have been upon this earth, (the seat of the war between the seed of the woman and of the serpent,) ever since Cain, "who was of that wicked one," an incarnate devil, slew his brother, for no other reason than "because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous." This Elymas, though called Bar-Jesus, a son of Jesus, was really a child of the devil, bore his image, did his lusts, and served his interest, *Jno. viii. 44*. In two things he resembled the devil, as a child doth his father: (1.) In craft; "the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field," *Gen. iii. 1*; and Elymas, though void of all wisdom, yet was "full of all subtilty," expert in all the arts of deceiving men, and imposing upon them. (2.) In malice; he was full of all mischief, a spiteful ill-conditioned man, and a sworn implacable enemy to God and goodness. Note, A fulness of subtilty and mischief together make a man indeed a "child of the devil." 2nd. An adversary to heaven; if he be a "child of the devil," it follows of course that he is an "enemy to all righteousness," for the devil is so. Note, Those that are enemies to the doctrine of Christ are enemies to all righteousness, for in it all righteousness is summed up and fulfilled.

Fourthly. He charged upon him his present crime, and expostulated with him upon it; "Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" that is, to misrepresent them, to put false colours upon them, and so to discourage people from entering into them, and walking in them. Note, 1st. The ways of the Lord are right, they are all so, they are perfectly so. The ways of the Lord Jesus are right, the only right ways to heaven and happiness. 2nd. There are those who pervert these right ways, who not only wander out of these ways themselves, as Elihu's penitent, who owns, "I have perverted that which was right, and it profited me not," but mislead others, and suggest to them unjust prejudices against these ways, as if the doctrine of Christ were uncertain and precarious, the laws of Christ unreasonable and impracticable, and the service of Christ unpleasant and unprofitable, which is an unjust perverting of the right ways of the Lord, and making them to seem crooked ways. 3rd. Those that pervert the right ways of the Lord are commonly so hardened in it, that, though the equity of those ways be set before them by the most powerful and commanding evidence, yet they will not cease to do it. *Etsi suaseris non persuaseris*, "You may advise, but you will never persuade." They will have it their own way; have loved strangers, and after them they will go.

xiii. 6. "Paphos:" at the other extremity of the island from Salamis, the distance between the two being about 100 miles. "Bar-Jesus:" or, "son of Jesus" (Joshua; see *Heb. iv. 8*). Compare the names Barabbas, Bartholomew, Barjona, Bartimæus. He had assumed the name or title of Elymas, an Arabic word, signifying "wise man." The Roman Empire was full of such professors of divination and magic at this time. They found encouragement amongst the upper classes, and would naturally be opposed to Christianity.

xiii. 7. "Deputy:" rather, "pro-consul." The provinces of the empire were divided between the Emperor and the senate. Those provinces under the jurisdiction of the senate were governed by pro-consuls. At first the Emperor had reserved Cyprus to himself, but afterwards gave it over to the senate. Hence St. Luke's use of this title "pro-consul," shows his accurate knowledge. The name of the governor of the imperial provinces was "proprætor," and he was a military officer. The minor districts were governed by procurators.

Fifthly. He denounced the judgment of God upon him, in a present blindness; ver. 11. "And now behold this hand of the Lord is upon thee," a righteous hand; God is now about to lay hands on thee and make thee his prisoner, for thou art taken in arms against him; "thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season." This was designed both for the proof of his crime, (as it was a miracle wrought to confirm the right ways of the Lord, and consequently to shew the wickedness of him who would not cease to pervert them,) as also for the punishment of his crime. It was a suitable punishment; he shut his eyes, the eyes of his mind, against the light of the Gospel, and therefore justly were the eyes of his body shut against the light of the sun. He sought to blind the deputy, as an agent for "the god of this world, who blindeth the mind of them that believe not, lest the light of the Gospel should shine unto them," 2 Cor. iv. 4; and therefore is himself struck blind. Yet it was a moderate punishment; he was only struck blind when he might most justly have been struck dead, and it was only for a season; if he will repent and give glory to God by making confession, his sight shall be restored. Nay, it should seem, though he do not, yet his sight shall be restored, to try if he will be led to repentance, either by the judgments of God or by his mercies.

Sixthly. This judgment was immediately executed; "there fell on him a mist and a darkness," as on the Sodomites, when they persecuted Lot, and on the Syrians, when they persecuted Elisha. This silenced him presently, filled him with confusion, and was an effectual confutation of all he said against the doctrine of Christ. Let not him any more pretend to be a guide to the deputy's conscience who is himself struck blind. It was also an earnest to him of a much sorer punishment if he repent not; for he is one of those "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever," Jude 13. Elymas did himself proclaim the truth of the miracle, when "he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand;" and where now is all his skill in sorcery, upon which he had so much valued himself, when he can neither find his way himself nor find a friend that will be so kind as to lead him!

3. Notwithstanding all the endeavours of Elymas, "to turn away the deputy from the faith," he was brought to believe; and this miracle wrought upon the magician himself, like the boils of Egypt, which were upon the magicians so that they could not stand before Moses, Ex. ix. 11, contributed to it. The deputy was a very sensible man, and observed something uncommon, and which spoke its Divine original.

1st. In Paul's preaching. He was "astonished at the doctrine of the Lord," the Lord Christ; the doctrine that is from him, the discoveries he has made of the Father; the doctrine that is concerning him, his person, natures, offices, undertaking. Note, The doctrine of Christ has a great deal in it that is astonishing, and the more we know of it the more reason we shall see to wonder and stand amazed at it.

2nd. In this miracle. When he saw what was done, and how much Paul's power transcended that of the magician, and how plainly Elymas was baffled and confounded, he believed. It is not said that he was baptized, and so made a complete convert; but it is probable he was. Paul would not do his business by the halves; "as for God his work is perfect." When he became a Christian he neither laid down his government nor was turned out of it; but we may suppose, as a Christian magistrate, by his influence helped very much to propagate Christianity in that island. The tradition of the Romish church, which has taken care to find bishoprics for all the eminent converts we read of in the Acts, has made this Sergius Paulus bishop of Narbon in France, left there by Paul in his journey to Spain.

Thirdly. Their departure from the island of Cyprus. It is probable they did a great deal more there than is here recorded, where an account is given only of that which was extraordinary, the conversion of the deputy. When they had done what they had to do,

1. They quitted the country and went to Perga. Those that went were Paul and his company, which it is probable was increased in Cyprus, many being desirous to accompany him: *Ἀναχθέντες οἱ περὶ τοῦ Παύλου*,—they that were about Paul loosed from Paphos, which supposeth that he went too; but such an affection had his new friends for him that they were always about him, and by their good-will would be never from him.

2. Then John Mark quitted them, and returned to Jerusalem without the consent of Paul and Barnabas. Either he did not like the work, or wanted to go see his mother. It was his fault, and we shall hear of it again.

14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. 16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. 17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. 18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. 19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. 22 And when he had removed

him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. 23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: 24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose. 26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. 27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. 28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. 29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. 30 But God raised him from the dead: 31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. 32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, 33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. 34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. 35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: 37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. 38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

Perga, in Pamphylia, was a noted place, especially for a temple there erected to the goddess Diana; yet nothing at all is related of what Paul and Barnabas did there, only thither they came, ver. 13; and thence they departed, ver. 14. But the history of the apostles' travels, as that of Christ's, passeth by many things worthy to have been recorded, because, if all should have been written, the world could not have contained the books. But the next place we find them in is another Antioch, said to be in Pisidia, to distinguish it from that Antioch in Syria from whence they were sent out. Pisidia was a province of the lesser Asia, bordering upon Pamphylia; this Antioch, it is likely, was the metropolis of it. Abundance of Jews lived there, and to them the Gospel was to be first preached; and Paul's sermon to them is what we have in these verses, which it is likely is the substance of what was preached by the apostles

xiii. 9. "Who also is called Paul:" there seems no foundation for the notion that Paul changed his name in honour of Sergius Paulus. Most likely, in accordance with Jewish custom, he had two names before his conversion; and Paul was his Roman, while Saul was his Hebrew name. (See Conybeare and Howson, vol. i., pp. 145—147.)

xiii. 11. Observe Luke's description of the symptoms: "a mist" or dimness, resulting in complete darkness. It was, however, only temporary.

xiii. 13. "Perga in Pamphylia:" Pamphylia was a province of Asia Minor, to the north-west of Cyprus. Perga was about seven miles inland. On a hill near the town was the celebrated Temple of Diana.

xiii. 14. "Antioch in Pisidia:" for a good description of the road leading up to the central table-land of Asia, whereon was Antioch, see Conybeare and Howson. See also "Eastern Geography of the Bible," and Plumptre's "Coincidences of Scripture," both in Volume III. of

generally to the Jews in all places; for in dealing with them the proper way was to shew them how the New Testament, which they would have them to receive, exactly agreed with the Old Testament, which they not only received, but were zealous for. We have here,

First. The appearance which Paul and Barnabas made in a religious assembly of the Jews at Antioch, ver. 14. Though they had lately had so good success with a Roman deputy, yet when they came to Antioch, they did not inquire for the chief magistrate, or make their court to him, but they applied themselves to the Jews, which is a further proof of their good affection to them, and their desire of their welfare.

1. They observed their time of worship on the sabbath day, the Jewish sabbath. The first day of the week they observed among themselves, as a Christian sabbath; but, if they will meet the Jews, it must be on the seventh-day sabbath; which therefore, upon such occasions, they did as yet sometimes observe. For, though it was by the death of Christ that the ceremonial law died, yet it was in the ruins of Jerusalem that it was to be buried; and therefore, though the morality of the fourth commandment was entirely transferred to the Christian sabbath, yet it was not incongruous to join with the Jews in their sabbath sanctification.

2. They met them in their place of worship; in the synagogue. Note, Sabbath days should be kept holy in solemn assemblies; they are instituted chiefly for public worship. The sabbath day is a holy convocation, and for that reason no servile work must be done therein. Paul and Barnabas were strangers; but, wherever we come, we must inquire out God's faithful worshippers, and join with them, (as these apostles here did,) as those that desire to keep up a communion with all saints. Though they were strangers, yet they were admitted into the synagogue, and to sit down there. Care should be taken in places of public worship, that strangers be accommodated, even the poorest; for those we know nothing else of, we know this, that they have precious souls, which our charity binds us to be concerned for.

Secondly. The invitation given them to preach.

1. The usual service of the synagogue was performed; ver. 15, "the law and the prophets" were read; a portion of each, the lessons for the day. Note, When we come together to worship God, we must do it not only by prayer and praise, but by the reading and hearing of the Word of God; hereby we give him the glory due to his name, as our Lord and Lawgiver.

2. When that was done, they were asked by the rulers of the synagogue to give them a sermon; ver. 15, they sent a messenger to them with this respectful message, "Men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on." It is probable the rulers of the synagogue had met with them, and been in private conversation with them before, and if they had not an affection to the Gospel, yet had at least the curiosity to hear Paul preach; and therefore not only gave him permission, but begged the favour of him, that he would speak a word of exhortation to the people. Note, 1st. The bare reading of the Scriptures in the public assemblies is not sufficient, but they should be expounded, and the people exhorted out of them. This is spreading the net, and assisting people in doing that which is necessary to the making of the word profitable to them, and that is the applying of it to themselves. 2nd. Those that preside and have power in public assemblies should provide for a word of exhortation to the people whenever they come together. 3rd. Sometimes a word of exhortation from a stranger minister may be of great use to the people, provided he be well approved. It is likely Paul did often preach in the synagogue when he was not thus invited to it by the rulers of the synagogues; for he often preached with much contention, 1 *Thes. ii. 2*. But these were more noble, more generous, than the rulers of the synagogues commonly were.

Thirdly. The sermon Paul preached in the synagogue of the Jews at the invitation of the rulers of the synagogue. He gladly embraced the opportunity given him to preach Christ to his countrymen the Jews; did not object to them that he was a stranger, and that it was none of his business, nor object to himself that he may get ill-will by preaching Christ among the Jews; but stood up, as one prepared and determined to speak, and beckoned with his hand, to excite and prepare them to hear. He waved his hand as an orator, not only desiring silence and attention, but endeavouring to move affection, and to shew himself in earnest. Perhaps, upon the moving of them to give an exhortation to the people, there were those in the synagogue that were ready to mutiny against the rulers, and opposed the toleration of Paul's preaching; and that occasioned some tumult and commotion, which Paul endeavoured to quiet by that decent motion of his hand; as also, by his modest desire of a patient impartial hearing: "Men of Israel," that are Jews by birth, "and ye that fear God," that are proselyted to the Jewish religion, "give audience;" let me beg your attention a little, for I have something to say to you which concerns your everlasting peace, and would not say it in vain. Now this excellent sermon is recorded, to shew that those who preached the Gospel to the Gentiles did it not till they had first used their utmost endeavours with the Jews, to persuade them to come in and take the benefit of it; and that they had no prejudice at all against the Jewish nation, nor any desire that they should perish, but rather that they should turn and live. Every thing is touched in this sermon that might be proper either to convince the judgment, or insinuate into the affections of the Jews, to prevail with them to receive and embrace Christ as the promised Messiah.

1. He owns them to be God's favourite people, whom he had taken into special relation to himself, and for whom he had done great things. Probably, the Jews of the dispersion that lived in other countries, being more in danger of mingling with the nations, were more zealous of their peculiarity than those that lived in their own land were; and therefore, Paul is here very careful to take notice of it to their honour.

1st. That the God of the whole earth was in a particular manner the God of this people Israel, a God in covenant with them, and that had given them a revelation of his mind and will, such as he had not given to any other nation or people; so that hereby they were distinguished from, and dignified above, all their neighbours, having peculiar precepts to be governed by, and peculiar promises to depend upon.

2nd. That he had chosen their fathers to be his friends, Abraham was called the friend of God; to be his prophets, by whom he would reveal his mind to his church; and to be the trustees of his covenant with the church. He puts them in mind of this, to let them know that the reason why God favoured them, though undeserving and ill-deserving, was, because he would adhere to the choice he had made of their fathers, *Deu. vii. 7, 8*. They were beloved purely for the fathers' sakes, *Rom. xi. 28*.

3rd. That he had exalted that people, and put a great deal of honour upon them, had advanced them into a people, and raised them from nothing, then when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and had nothing in them to recommend them to the Divine favour. They ought to remember this, and to infer from hence that God was no debtor to them; for it was *ex mero motu*,—out of his mere good pleasure, and not upon a valuable consideration, that they had the grant of the Divine favour; and therefore it was revocable at pleasure, and God did them no wrong if he at length plucked up the hedge of their peculiarity. But they were debtors to him, and obliged to receive such

further discoveries as he should make of his will, and to admit such farther additions as he should make to his church.

4th. That he had "with a high hand brought them out of Egypt," where they were not only strangers, but captives; and delivered them at the expense of a great many miracles, both of mercy to them, and judgment on their oppressors, signs and wonders, *Deu. iv. 34*; and at the expense of a great many lives, "all the firstborn of Egypt, Pharaoh and all his host in the Red sea;" "I gave Egypt for thy ransom," gave men for thee, *Isa. xlii. 3, 4*.

5th. That "he had suffered their manners forty years in the wilderness," ver. 18. *ἑτεροποποιήσας*; some think it should be read, *τροποποιήσας*, he "educated them," because that is the word the Septuagint use concerning the fatherly care God took of that people, *Deu. i. 31*. Both may be included; for, *First*, God made a great deal of provision for them for forty years in the wilderness; miracles were their daily bread, and kept them from starving; they lacked not anything. *Secondly*, He exercised a deal of patience with them. They were a provoking, murmuring, unbelieving people, and yet he bore with them, did not deal with them as they deserved, but suffered his anger many a time to be turned away by the prayer and intercession of Moses. "So many years as we have each of us lived in this world, we must own that God has thus been as a tender father to us, has supplied our wants, has fed us all our life long unto this day, has been indulgent to us, a God of pardons, as he was to Israel, *Neh. ix. 17*, and not extreme to mark what we have done amiss; we have tried his patience, and yet not tired it. Let not the Jews insist too much upon the privileges of their peculiarity, for they had forfeited them a thousand times.

6th. That he had put them in possession of the land of Canaan; ver. 19, "When he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan," that were doomed to be rooted out to make room for them, he "divided their land to them by lot," and put them in possession of it. This was a signal favour of God to them, and he owns that hereby a great honour was put upon them, which he would not in the least derogate from.

7th. That he had raised up men spirited from heaven to deliver them out of the hands of those that invaded their rights, and oppressed them after their settlement in Canaan, ver. 20, 21. *First*, He "gave them judges;" men qualified for public service, and by an immediate impulse upon their spirits called to it, *pro re nata*,—as the occasion required. Though they were a provoking people, and were never in servitude but their sin brought them to it, yet upon their petition a deliverer was raised up. The critics find some difficulty in computing these four hundred and fifty years. From the deliverance out of Egypt to David's expulsion of the Jebusites from the stronghold of Zion, which completed the casting out of the heathen nations, was four hundred and fifty years, and most of that time they were under judges. Others thus: the government of the judges, from the death of Joshua to the death of Eli, was just three hundred and thirty-nine years; but it is said to be [400] as it were four hundred and fifty years, because the years of their servitude to the several nations that oppressed them, though really they were included in the years of the judges, yet are mentioned in the history as if they had been distinct from them. Now these all put together make one hundred and eleven years, and those added to the three hundred and thirty-nine, make them four hundred and fifty; as so many, though not really so many. *Secondly*, He governed them by a prophet, Samuel, a man divinely inspired to preside in their affairs. *Thirdly*, He afterwards at their request, set a king over them, ver. 21, Saul the son of Kish; Samuel's government and his lasted forty years, which was a kind of transition from the theocracy to the kingly government. *Fourthly*, At last he made David their king, ver. 22. When God had removed Saul for his maladministration, he raised up unto them David to be their king, and made a covenant of royalty with him and with his seed. Then, when he had removed one king, he did not leave them as sheep without a shepherd, but soon raised up another; raised him up from a mean and low estate, raised him up on high, *2 Sam. xlii. 1*. He quotes the testimony God gave concerning him: 1st. That his choice was Divine, "I have found David," *Psa. lxxxix. 20*; God himself pitched upon him. Finding, implies seeking, as if God had ransacked all the families of Israel to find a man fit for his purpose, and this was he. 2nd. That his character was Divine, "A man after my own heart;" such a one as I would have, one on whom the image of God is stamped; and therefore one in whom God is well pleased, and whom he doth approve. This character was given of him before he was first anointed, *1 Sam. xiii. 14*, "The Lord hath sought him out a man after his own heart," such a one as he would have. 3rd. That his conduct was Divine, and under a Divine direction: "He shall fulfil all my will." He shall desire and endeavour to do the will of God, and shall be enabled to do it, and employed in the doing of it, and go through with it.

Now all this seems to shew not only that special favour of God to the people of Israel, which the apostle is very willing to oblige them with the acknowledgment of, but the farther favours of another nature which he designed them, and which were now by the preaching of the Gospel offered to them. Their deliverance out of Egypt, and settlement in Canaan, were types and figures of good things to come. The changes of their government shewed that it made nothing perfect, and therefore must give way to the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, which was now in the setting up, and which if they would admit it, and submit to it, would be the glory of their people Israel; and therefore they needed not conceive any jealousy at all of the preaching of the Gospel, as if it tended in the least to damage the true excellences of the Jewish church.

2. He gives them a full account of our Lord Jesus, passing from David to the son of David, and shews that this Jesus is his promised seed; ver. 23, "Of this man's seed," from that root of Jesse, from that man after God's own heart, "hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus," who carries salvation in his name. How welcome should the preaching of the Gospel of Christ be to the Jews, and how should they embrace it as well worthy of all acceptance when it brought them the tidings, 1st. Of a Saviour; to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, as the judges of old, who were therefore called saviours; but this a Saviour to do that for them which it appears by the history, those could not do—to save them from their sins, their worst enemies. 2nd. A Saviour of God's raising up, that has his commission from heaven. 3rd. Raised up to be a Saviour unto Israel; to them in the first place he was sent to bless them: so far was the Gospel from designing the rejection of Israel, that it designed the gathering of them. 4th. Raised up of the seed of David, that ancient royal family, which the people of Israel gloried so much in, and which at this time to the great disgrace of the whole nation was buried in obscurity. It ought to be a great satisfaction to them that God had raised up this horn of salvation for them in the house of his servant David, *Luk. i. 69*. 5th. Raised up according to his promise, the promise to David, *Psa. cxxxii. 11*: the promise to the Old Testament church in the later times of it, "I will raise unto David a righteous branch," *Jer. xxiii. 5*. This promise was it to which the twelve tribes hoped to come, *ch. xxvi. 7*; why then should they entertain it so coldly, now it was brought to them? Now, concerning this Jesus, he tells them,

1st. That John the Baptist was his harbinger, and forerunner; that great man, whom all acknowledged to be a prophet. Let them not say that the Messiah's coming was a surprise upon them, and that might excuse them if they took time to consider whether they should entertain him or no; for they had

the *Bible Educator*. Antioch was about 115 miles to the north of Perga; it was built by Seleucus, king of Syria, and at this time was a Roman colony.

xiii. 15. The Pentateuch and Prophets were divided into sections, so that by reading them on the Sabbath the whole could be gone through during the year. (See *Luke iv. 16*.)

xiii. 16. "Ye that fear God:" those who were proselytes, or even any pious Gentiles who might be present.

xiii. 18. "Suffered he their manners," &c.: rather, "he bore and cherished them," &c.; "bore or fed them, as a nurse beareth or cheriseth her child."

xiii. 20. On the chronological difficulty of this verse, Alford says, "We have exactly the same chronological arrangement in Josephus, who reckons 592 years from the Exodus to the building of Solomon's Temple, arranging the period thus: (1) 40 years in the wilderness; (2) 25 under Joshua; (3) Judges (below); (4) 40 under Saul;

sufficient warning by John, who preached before his coming, ver. 24. Two things he did:

First. He made way for his entrance, by preaching the baptism of repentance, not to a few select disciples, but "to all the people of Israel." He shewed them their sins, warned them of the wrath to come, called them to repentance, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and bound those to this who were willing to be bound, by the solemn rite or sign of baptism, and by this he made ready a people prepared for the Lord Jesus, to whom his grace would be acceptable when they were thus brought to know themselves.

Secondly. He gave notice of his approach; ver. 25, "as he fulfilled his course," when he was going on vigorously in his work, and had had wonderful success in it, and an established interest; Now, saith he, to those that attended his ministry, "whom think ye that I am?" what notions have you of me? what expectations from me? You may be thinking that I am the Messiah whom you expect; but you are mistaken, "I am not he;" see *Jno. i. 20*; but he is at the door. "Behold there cometh one" immediately "after me," who will so far exceed me upon all accounts, that "I am not worthy" to be employed in the meanest office about him, no, not to help him on and off with his shoes; "whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to unloose;" and you may guess who that must be.

2nd. That the rulers and people of the Jews who should have welcomed him, and been his willing, forward, faithful subjects, were his persecutors and murderers. When the apostles preach Christ as the Saviour, they are so far from concealing his ignominious death, and drawing a veil over it, that they always preach Christ crucified; yea, and (though that added much to the reproach of his sufferings) crucified by his own people, by them that dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, the royal city, and their rulers, ver. 27.

First. Their sin was, that "though they found no cause of death in him," could not prove him, no, nor had any colour to suspect him guilty of any crime; the judge himself that tried him, when he had heard all they could say against him, declared he found no fault in him; yet they "desired Pilate that he might be slain," ver. 28; and presented their address against Christ with such fury and outrage, that they compelled Pilate to crucify him, not only contrary to his inclination, but contrary to his conscience. They condemned him to so great a death, though they could not convict him of the least sin. Paul cannot charge this upon his hearers, as Peter did; *ch. ii. 23*, "You have with wicked hands crucified and slain him;" for these, though Jews, were far enough off; but he chargeth it upon the Jews at Jerusalem, and the rulers, to shew what little reason those Jews of the dispersion had to be so jealous for the honour of their nation as they were, when it had brought upon itself such a load and stain of guilt as this, and how justly they might have been cut off from all benefit by the Messiah, who had thus abused him, and yet they were not; but, notwithstanding all this, the preaching of this Gospel shall begin at Jerusalem.

Secondly. The reason of this was, because they knew him not, ver. 27. They knew not who he was, nor what errand he came into the world upon; for "if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;" Christ owned this in extenuation of their crime, "They knew not what they did;" and so did Peter, "I wot that through ignorance ye did this," *ch. iii. 17*. It was also, "because they knew not the voice of the prophets," though they heard them "read every sabbath day;" they did not understand nor consider that it was foretold, that the Messiah should suffer, or else they would never have been the instruments of his suffering. Note, Many that read the prophets, yet do not know the voice of the prophets, do not understand the meaning of the Scriptures; have the sound of the Gospel in their ears, but not the sense of them in their heads, or savour of them in their hearts; and therefore men do not know Christ, nor know how to carry it towards him, because they do not know the voice of the prophets, who testified beforehand concerning Christ.

Thirdly. God overruled them for the accomplishment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. "Because they knew not the voice of the prophets," which warned them not to touch God's anointed, "they fulfilled them in condemning him;" for so it was written, that "Messiah the prince shall be cut off; but not for himself." Note, It is possible that men may be fulfilling Scripture prophecies, even when they are breaking Scripture precepts, particularly in the persecution of the church, as in the persecution of Christ; and this justifies the reason which is sometimes given for the obscurity of Scripture prophecies, that if they were too plain and obvious, the accomplishment of them would thereby be prevented; so Paul saith here, "Because they knew not the voice of the prophets," therefore "they have fulfilled them;" which implies, that if they had understood them they would not have fulfilled them.

Fourthly. All that was foretold concerning the sufferings of the Messiah was fulfilled in Christ; ver. 29, "When they had fulfilled all" the rest "that was written of him," even to the giving of him vinegar to drink in his thirst, then they fulfilled what was foretold concerning his being buried; "they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre." This is taken notice of here, as that which made his resurrection the more illustrious. Christ was separated from this world, as those that are buried have nothing more to do with this world, nor this world with them; and, therefore, our complete separation from sin is represented by our being buried with Christ; and a good Christian will be willing to be buried alive with Christ. They laid him in a sepulchre, and thought they had him fast.

3rd. That he rose again from the dead, and saw no corruption. This was the great truth that was to be preached, for it is the main pillar by which the whole fabric of the Gospel is supported, and therefore he insists largely upon this, and shews,

First. That he rose by consent. When he was imprisoned in the grave for our debt, he did not break prison, but had a fair and legal discharge from the arrest he was under; ver. 30, "God raised him from the dead," sent an angel on purpose to roll away the stone from the prison door, returned him the spirit which at his death he had committed into the hands of his Father, and quickened him by the Holy Ghost. His enemies laid him in a sepulchre, with design he should always lie there; but God said, No; and it was soon seen whose word should stand, his or theirs.

Secondly. That there was sufficient proof of his having risen; ver. 31, "he was seen many days," in divers places, upon divers occasions, by them that were most intimately acquainted with him, for they came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, were his constant attendants, and "they are his witnesses unto the people;" were appointed to be so, have attested the thing many a time, and are ready to attest it, though they were to die for the same. Paul saith nothing of his own seeing him, which he mentions, *1 Cor. xv. 8*, because it was in a vision, which was more convincing to himself than it could be when produced to others.

Thirdly. That the resurrection of Christ was the performance of the promise made to the patriarchs. It was not only true news but good news: In declaring this, we "declare unto you glad tidings," ver. 32, 33, which should be in a particular manner acceptable to you Jews. So far are we from designing to put any slur upon you, or do you any wrong, that the doctrine we preach, if you receive it aright, and understand it, brings you the greatest honour and satisfaction imaginable: for it is in the resurrection of Christ that the promise which was made to your fathers is fulfilled to you. He acknowledges it to be

the dignity of the Jewish nation, that to them pertained the promises, *Rom. ix. 4*, that they were the heirs of the promise, as they were the children of the patriarchs, to whom the promises were first made. The great promise of the Old Testament was that of the Messiah, "in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed," and not the family of Abraham only. Though it was to be the peculiar honour of that family that he should be raised up of it, yet it was to be the common benefit of all families that he should be raised up to them. Note, *1st.* God hath raised up Jesus, advanced him, and exalted him; raised him again, so we read it; meaning from the dead. We may take in both senses. God raised up Jesus to be a prophet at his baptism; to be a priest to make atonement at his death; and to be a king to rule over all at his ascension; and his raising him up from the dead was the confirmation and ratification of all these commissions, and proved him raised of God to these offices. *2nd.* This is the fulfilling of the promises made to the fathers, the promise of sending the Messiah, and of all those benefits and blessings which were to be had with him and by him. This is he that should come; and in him you have all that God promised in the Messiah, though not all that you promised yourselves. Paul puts himself into the number of the Jews, to whom the promise was fulfilled,—"to us their children." Now, if they who preached the Gospel brought them these glad tidings, instead of looking upon them as enemies to their nation, they ought to caress them as their best friends, and embrace their doctrine with both arms; for if they valued the promise so much, and themselves by it, much more the performance. And the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, which was the great thing that the Jews found themselves aggrieved at, was so far from infringing the promise made to them, that the promise itself, that all the families of the earth should be blessed in the Messiah, could not otherwise be accomplished.

Fourthly. That the resurrection of Christ was the great proof of his being the Son of God, and confirms what was written in the 2nd Psalm, (thus ancient was the order in which the Psalms are now placed), ver. 7, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." That the resurrection of Christ from the dead was designed to evidence and evince this, is plain from that of the apostle, *Rom. i. 4*, "He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." When he was first raised up out of obscurity, God declared concerning him by a voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son," *Mat. iii. 17*, which has a plain reference to that in the 2nd Psalm, "Thou art my Son." A abundance of truth there is couched in those words, that this Jesus was begotten of the Father before all worlds; was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, as the Son is of the Father's; that he was the *Λόγος*,—"the Eternal thought of the Eternal mind;" that he was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin; for upon that account also "that holy thing was called the Son of God," *Lu. i. 35*. That he was God's agent in creating and governing the world, and in redeeming it and reconciling it to himself, and "faithful as a Son in his own house," and as such was heir of all things. Now all this, which was declared at Christ's baptism, and again at his transfiguration, was undeniably proved by his resurrection. The decree, which was so long before declared, was then confirmed: and the reason why it was impossible he should be held by the bands of death was, because he was the Son of God, and consequently had life in himself, which he could not lay down but with a design to resume it. When his eternal generation is spoken of, it is not improper to say, "This day have I begotten thee," for from everlasting to everlasting is with God as it were one and the same eternal day. Yet it may also be accommodated to his resurrection, in a subordinate sense, "This day have I" made it to appear that I have "begotten thee;" and this day have I begotten all that are given to thee; for it is said, *1 Pet. i. 3*, that "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," as our God and Father, "hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Fifthly. That his being raised the third day, so as not to see corruption, and to a heavenly life, so as "no more to return to corruption," that is, to the state of the dead, as others did who were raised to life, doth farther confirm his being the Messiah promised.

1st. He rose to die no more, so it is expressed, *Rom. vi. 9*. "As concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption," that is, to the grave, which is called corruption, *Job xvii. 14*. Lazarus came out of the grave with his grave-clothes on, because he was to use them again, but Christ, having no more occasion for them, left them behind. Now this was the fulfilling of that scripture, *Isa. lv. 3*, "I will give you the sure mercies of David," *τὰ βέβαια Δαβὶδ τὰ πιστά*,—"the holy things of David, the faithful things;" for in the promise made to David, and in him to Christ, great stress is laid upon the faithfulness of God, *Ps. lxxix. 1, 2, 5, 24, 33*; and upon the oath God had sworn by his holiness, ver. 35. Now this makes them sure mercies indeed, that he who is intrusted with the dispensing of them is risen to die no more; so that he ever lives to see his own will executed, and the blessings he hath purchased for us given out to us. As, if Christ had died and had not risen again, so, if he had risen to die again, we had come short of the sure mercies, or at least could not have been sure of them.

2nd. He rose so soon after he was dead, that his body did not see corruption, for it is not till the third day that the body begins to change. Now this was promised to David; it was one of the sure mercies of David; for it was said to him in *Ps. xvi. 10*, "Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption;" ver. 35, God had promised to David, that he would raise up the Messiah of his seed, who should therefore be a man, but should not like other men see corruption. This promise could not have its accomplishment in David, but looked forward to Christ.

(1.) It could not be accomplished in David himself, ver. 36; for "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God," who raised him up to be what he was, "fell asleep, and was laid to his fathers, and saw corruption." Here we have a short account of the life, death, and burial of the patriarch David, and his continuance under the power of death. (1st.) His life. "He served his own generation by the will of God," before he slept the sleep of death. David was a useful, good man; he did good in the world by the will of God; he made God's precepts his rule; he served his own generation, so as therein to serve God. He so served and pleased men, ("as whate'er the king did pleased the people," *2 Sam. iii. 36*), as still to keep himself the faithful servant of God: see *Gal. i. 10*. He served the good of men, but did not serve the will of man; or, by the will of God's providence so ordering it, qualifying him for, and calling him to, a public station, he "served his own generation;" for every creature is that to us that God makes it to be. David was a great blessing to the age wherein he lived; he was the servant of his generation. Many are the curse, and plague, and burthen of their generation. Even those that are in a lower and narrower sphere, yet must look upon it that therefore they live, to serve their generation; and those that will do good in the world, must make themselves servants of all, *1 Cor. ix. 19*. We were not born for ourselves, but are members of communities, to which we must study to be serviceable. Yet here is the difference between David and Christ, that David was to serve only his own generation, that generation in which he lived, and therefore, when he had done what he had to do, and written what he had to write, he died, and continued in the grave; but Christ (not by his writings

(5) 40 under David; (6) 4 years of Solomon's reign. This gives 592 less 149, equal to 443 years (about 450) for the Judges, including Samuel. That this chronology differs from 1 Kings vi. 1 is evident, and all attempts to reconcile the two are arbitrary and forced. . . . It seems that Paul followed a chronology current among the Jews, and agreeing with the Book of Judges itself (the spaces of time in which added together equal 450) and that adopted by Josephus, but not with the present Hebrew text of 1 Kings vi. 1."

xiii. 22. "When he had removed him:" i.e., at Saul's death, for not till then did David succeed to the throne.

xiii. 31. Rather, "who are at this moment witnesses unto the people."

xiii. 38. "Through this man:" the English version seems to imply that the preaching was through this man. But the words should be connected with forgiveness. It was forgiveness through or by means of this man which was preached.

or words upon record only, as David, but by his personal agency,) was to serve all generations, must ever live to reign over the house of Jacob, not as David, for forty years, but for all ages, as long as the sun and moon endure, *Ps. lxxxix. 29*. His throne must be as the days of heaven, and all generations must be blessed in him, *Ps. lxxii. 17*. (2nd.) His death. He fell asleep. Death is a sleep, a quiet rest to those that while they lived laboured in the service of God and their generation. Observe. He did not fall asleep till he had served his generation, till he had done the work for which God raised him up. God's servants have their work assigned them, and not till then, they are called to rest. God's witnesses never die till they have finished their testimony; and then the sleep, the death, of the labouring man, will be sweet. David was not permitted to build the temple, and therefore when he had made preparation for it, which was the service he was designed to, he fell asleep, and left the work to Solomon. (3rd.) His burial. He was laid to his fathers. Though he was buried in the city of David, *1 Kii. ii. 10*, and not in the sepulchre of Jesse his father at Bethlehem, yet he might be said to be laid to his fathers, for the grave in general is the habitation of our fathers, of those that are gone before us, *Ps. xlix. 19*. (4th.) His continuance in the grave. He saw corruption. We are sure he did not rise again; this Peter insists upon, when he freely speaks of the patriarch David, *ch. ii. 29*, "He is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day," that is, he saw corruption, and therefore that promise could not have its accomplishment in him, which was meant to be shewn. But,

(2.) It was accomplished in the Lord Jesus; ver. 37, "He whom God raised again saw no corruption;" for it was in him that the sure mercies were to be reserved for us. He rose the third day, and therefore did not see corruption then; and he rose to die no more, and therefore never did. Of him therefore the promise must be understood, and no other.

3. Having given them this account of the Lord Jesus, he comes to make application of it.

1st. In the midst of his discourse, to engage their attention, he had told his hearers that they were concerned in all this; ver. 26, "To you is the word of this salvation sent," to you first. If you by your unbelief make it a word of rejection to you, you may thank yourselves; but it is sent to you for a word of salvation; if it be not so, it is your own fault. Let them not peevishly argue, that because it was sent to the Gentiles, who had no communion with them, therefore it was not sent to them; for to them it was sent in the first place. To you men this is sent, and not to the angels that sinned,—to you living men, and not to the congregation of the dead and damned, whose day of grace is over. He therefore speaks to them with tenderness and respect,—You are men and brethren; and so we are to look upon all those that stand fair with us for the great salvation, as having the word of salvation sent to them. Those to whom he doth by warrant from heaven here bring the word of salvation are, *First*. The native Jews; Hebrews of the Hebrews, as Paul himself was. Children of the stock of Abraham, though a degenerate race, yet to you is this word of salvation sent; nay, it is therefore sent to you to save you from your sins. It is an advantage to be of a good stock; for, though salvation does not always follow the children of godly parents, yet the word of salvation doth; "Abraham will command his children and his household after him." *Secondly*. The proselytes; the Gentiles that by birth were in some degree brought over to the Jews' religion: "Whosoever among you that feareth God"—you that have a sense of natural religion, and have subjected yourselves to the laws of that, and taken hold of the comforts of that,—to you is the word of this salvation sent; you need the farther discoveries and directions of revealed religion, are prepared for them, and will bid them welcome, and therefore shall certainly be welcome to take the benefit of them.

2nd. In the close of his discourse he applies what he had said concerning Christ to his hearers. He had told them a long story concerning this Jesus; now they would be ready to ask, What is all this to us? And he tells them plainly what it is to them.

First. It will be their unspeakable advantage if they embrace Jesus Christ, and believe this word of salvation; it will relieve them there where their greatest danger lies; and that is from the guilt of their sins. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren," we are warranted to proclaim it to you, and you are called to take notice of it. He did not stand up to preach before them, but to preach to them, and not without hopes of prevailing with them; for they are men, reasonable creatures, and capable of being argued with; they are brethren, spoken to, and dealt with by men like themselves; not only of the same nature, but of the same nation. It is proper for the preachers of the Gospel to call their hearers brethren; as speaking familiarly to them, and with an affectionate concern for their welfare, and as being equally interested with them in the Gospel they preach. Let all that hear the Gospel of Christ know these two things:

1st. That it is an act of indemnity granted by the King of kings to the children of men, who stand attainted at his bar of treason against his crown and dignity; and it is for, and in consideration of, the mediation of Christ between God and man that this act of grace is passed and proclaimed; ver. 35, "Through this man," who died and rose again, "is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." We are to tell you in God's name, that your sins, though many and great, may be forgiven, and how it is come about that they may be so, without any injury to God's honour; and how you may obtain the forgiveness of your sins. We are to preach repentance for the remission of sins, and Divine grace giving both repentance and remission of sins. The remission of sins is through this man; by his merit it was purchased, in his name it is offered, and by his authority it is bestowed; and therefore you are concerned to be acquainted with him, and interested in him. We preach to you the forgiveness of sins: that is the salvation we bring you, the word of God, and therefore you ought to bid us welcome, and look upon us as your friends, and messengers of good tidings.

2nd. That it does that for us which the law of Moses could not do. The Jews were jealous for the law; and, because it prescribed expiatory and pacificatory sacrifices, and a great variety of purifications, fancied they might be justified by it before God. No, saith Paul, be it known unto you, that it is by Christ only that "they who believe in him," and none but they only, "are justified from all things," from all the guilt and stain of sin, "from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses," ver. 39; therefore they ought to entertain and embrace the Gospel, and not to adhere to the law in opposition to it, because the Gospel is perfective, not destructive of the law. Note, (1.) The great concern of sinners is, to be justified, to be acquitted from guilt, and accepted as righteous in God's sight. (2.) Those that are truly justified are justified from all their guilt; for if any be left charged upon the sinner he is undone. (3.) It was impossible for a sinner to be justified by the law of Moses. Not by his moral law, for we have all broken it, and are transgressing it daily, so that instead of justifying us it condemns us. Not his remedial law, "for it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin,"—should satisfy God's offended justice, or pacify the sinner's wounded conscience. It was but a ritual and typical institution; see *Heb. ix. 9*; x. 1, 4. (4.) By Jesus Christ we obtain a complete justification; for by him a complete atonement was made for sin. We are justified not only by him as our judge, but by him as our righteousness, "the Lord our righteousness." (5.) All that

believe in Christ, that rely upon him, and give up themselves to be ruled by him, are justified by him, and none but they. (6.) What the law could not do for us, in that it was weak, that the Gospel of Christ doth; and therefore it was folly out of a jealousy for the law of Moses, and the honour of that, to conceive a jealousy of the Gospel of Christ, and the designs of that.

Secondly. It is at their utmost peril if they reject the Gospel of Christ, and turn their backs upon the offer now made them; ver. 40, 41, "Beware, therefore," you have a fair invitation given you, look to yourselves, lest you either neglect or oppose it. Note, Those to whom the Gospel is preached must see themselves upon their trial and good behaviour; and are concerned to beware, lest they be found refusers of the grace offered. Beware, lest you not only come short of the blessings and benefits spoken of in the prophets, as coming upon those that believe, but fall under the doom spoken of in the prophets, as coming upon those that persist in unbelief; "Lest that come upon you which is spoken of." Note, The threatenings are warnings; what we are told will come upon impenitent sinners is designed to awaken us to beware lest it do come upon us. Now the prophecy referred to we have, *Hab. i. 5*, where the destruction of the Jewish nation by the Chaldeans is foretold as an incredible, unparalleled destruction; and that is here applied to the destruction that was coming upon that nation, by the Romans, for their rejecting the Gospel of Christ. The apostle follows the Septuagint translation, which reads, "Behold, ye despisers," for, "Behold, ye among the heathen," because it made the text more apposite to his purpose.

1st. Take heed, lest the guilt come upon you, which was spoken of in the prophets, the guilt of despising the Gospel, and the tenders of it, and despising the Gentiles that were advanced to partake of it. Beware, lest it be said of you, "Behold, you despisers." Note, It is the ruin of many that they despise religion; they look upon it as a thing below them, and are not willing to stoop to it.

2nd. Take heed, lest the judgment come upon you which was spoken of in the prophets, that you shall wonder and perish, that is, wonderfully perish; your perdition shall be amazing to yourselves, and all about you. They that will not wonder and be saved shall wonder and perish. They that enjoyed the privileges of the church, and flattered themselves with a conceit that those would save them, will wonder when they find their vain presumption over-ruled, and that their privileges do but make their condemnation the more intolerable. Let the unbelieving Jews expect that God will "work a work in their days which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." This may be understood as a prediction, either, (1.) Of their sin, that they should be incredulous; that that great work of God, the redemption of the world by Christ, though it should be in the most solemn manner declared unto them, yet they would in no wise believe it; *Isa. liii. 1*, "Who hath believed our report?" Though it was of God's working, to whom nothing is impossible, and of his declaring, who cannot lie, yet they would not give credit to it. They that had the honour and advantage to have this work wrought in their days yet had not the grace to believe it. Or, (2.) Of their destruction; the dissolving of the Jewish polity, the taking of the kingdom of God from them, and giving it to the Gentiles, the destruction of their holy house and city, and the dispersion of their people, was a work which one would not have believed should ever have been done, considering how much they had been the favourites of Heaven. The calamities that were brought upon them were such as were never before brought upon any people, *Mat. xxiv. 21*. It was said of their destruction by the Chaldeans, and it was true of their last destruction, "All the inhabitants of the world would not have believed that the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem" as they did, *Lam. iv. 12*. Thus is there a "strange punishment to the workers of iniquity," especially to the despisers of Christ, *Job xxxi. 3*.

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. 44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled

xiii. 42, 43. The words "Jews" and "Gentiles" should be left out, and the verse read thus: "As they (the congregation) were going out, they (the congregation) besought them," &c. Instead, then, of regarding it as a mixed congregation of Jews and Gentiles, from which the Jews went out annoyed at the teaching of the apostle, it would seem that it was a congregation principally, if not solely, composed of Jews and proselytes, and that being impressed with the apostles' teaching, they crowded round them, requesting them on the

next Sabbath to continue their instruction; and some of these, after the dispersion of the congregation, still remained with the apostles.

xiii. 44, 45. This coming together was into the synagogue; and this time not merely the usual congregation, but almost the whole city. The great majority of "the multitude" must have been Gentiles. But the presence of Gentiles in their synagogue, and as sharers with them of the same religious privileges, was more than the Jews could bear. This seems to have first stirred up their opposition, but

them out of their coasts. 51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

The design of this story being to vindicate the apostles, especially Paul, (as he doth himself at large, *Rom. xi.*) from the reflections of the Jews upon him for preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, it is here observed that he proceeded therein with all the caution imaginable, and upon due consideration, which here there is an instance of.

First, There were some of the Jews that were so incensed against the preaching of the Gospel, not to the Gentiles but to them, that they would not bear to hear it, but "went out of the synagogue" while Paul was preaching, ver. 42, in contempt of him and his doctrine, and to the disturbance of the congregation. It is likely they whispered among themselves, exciting one another to it, and did it by consent. Now this spoke,

1. An open infidelity; as plain a profession of unbelief as coming to hear the Gospel is of faith. They thus publicly avowed their contempt of Christ and of his doctrine and law, were not ashamed, neither could they blush; and they thus endeavoured to beget prejudices in the minds of others against the Gospel: they went out to draw others to follow their pernicious ways.

2. An obstinate infidelity. They went out of the synagogue, not only to shew that they did not believe the Gospel, but because they were resolved they would not, and therefore got out of the hearing of those things that had a tendency to convince them. They stopped their ears, like the deaf adder. Justly, therefore, was the Gospel taken from them, when they first took themselves from it, and turned themselves out of the church before they were turned out of it; for it is certainly true, God never leaves any till they first leave him.

Secondly, The Gentiles were as willing to hear the Gospel as those rude and ill-conditioned Jews were to get out of the hearing of it; "they besought that these words," or words to this effect, "might be preached to them the next sabbath;" "in the week between," so some take it; on the second and fifth day of the week, which in some synagogues were their lecture days. But it appears, ver. 44, that it was the next sabbath day that they came together. They begged,

1. That the same offer might be made to them that was made to the Jews. Paul, in this sermon, had brought the word of salvation to the Jews and proselytes, but had taken no notice of the Gentiles; and therefore they begged that forgiveness of sins through Christ might be preached to them, as it was to the Jews. The Jews' leavings, nay, longings, were their longings. This justifies Paul in his preaching to them, that he was invited to it, as Peter was sent for to Cornelius. Who could refuse to break the bread of life to those who begged so hard for it, and to give that to the poor at the door which the children at the table threw under their feet?

2. That the same instructions might be given to them. They had heard the doctrine of Christ, but did not understand it at the first hearing, nor could they remember all that they had heard, and therefore they begged it might be preached to them again. Note, It is good to have the word of Christ repeated to us. What we have heard we should desire to hear again, that it may take deep root in us, and the nail that is driven may be clenched, and be as a nail in a sure place. To hear the same things should not be grievous, because it is safe, *Phil. iii. 1.* It aggravates the ill disposition of the Jews, that the Gentiles desired to hear that often which they were not willing to hear once; and commends the good disposition of the Gentiles, that they did not follow the ill example which the Jews set them.

Thirdly, There were some, nay, there were many, both of Jews and proselytes, that were wrought upon by the preaching of the Gospel. They who aggravated the matter of the Jews' rejection by the preaching of the Gospel, cried out, as is usual in such cases, They have cast away, and cast off, all the people of God. Nay, saith Paul, that is not so; for abundance of the Jews have embraced Christ, and are taken in, himself for one, *Rom. xi. 1, 5.* So it was here, "many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas," and received farther instructions and encouragement from them.

1. They submitted to the grace of God, and were admitted to the benefit and comfort of it; that is implied in their being exhorted to continue in it. They "followed Paul and Barnabas;" that is, they became their disciples, or rather, the disciples of Christ, whose agents they were. Those that join themselves to Christ will join themselves to his ministers, and follow them. And Paul and Barnabas, though they were sent to the Gentiles, yet bade the Jews welcome to them, that were willing to come under their instructions; such hearty well-wishers were they to all the Jews, and their friends, if they pleased.

2. They were exhorted and encouraged to persevere herein. Paul and Barnabas, "speaking to them" with all the freedom and friendship imaginable, "persuaded them to continue in the grace of God;" to hold fast that which they had received; to continue in their belief of the Gospel of grace, to continue in their dependence upon the Spirit of grace, and attendance upon the means of grace. And the grace of God shall not be wanting to those who thus continue in it.

Fourthly, There was a cheerful attendance upon the preaching of the Gospel the next sabbath day; ver. 44, "Almost the whole city," the generality of which were Gentiles, "came together to hear the word of God."

1. It is probable Paul and Barnabas were not idle in the week days; but took all opportunities in the week between (as some think the Gentiles desired) to bring them acquainted with Christ, and to raise their expectations from him. They did a great deal of service to the Gospel in private discourse and conversation, as well as in their public sermons. Wisdom cried in the chief places of concourse, and the opening of the gates, as well as in the synagogues, *Pr. i. 20, 21.*

2. This brought a vast concourse of people to the synagogue on the sabbath day. Some came out of curiosity, the thing being new; others longing to see what the Jews would do upon the second tender of the Gospel to them; and many who had heard something of the word of God came to hear more, and to hear it, "not as the word of men, but as the word of God," by which we must be ruled and judged. Now this justified Paul in preaching to the Gentiles, that he met with the most encouraging auditories among them; there the fields were white to the harvest, and therefore why should he not there put in his sickle?

Fifthly, The Jews were enraged at this, and not only would not receive the Gospel themselves, but were filled with indignation at them that crowded after it; ver. 45, "When the Jews saw the multitudes," and considered what an encouragement it was to Paul to go on in his work, when he saw people thus flying like doves to their windows, and what probability there was that among these multitudes some would be without doubt wrought upon, and it is likely the greater part, to embrace Christ; this filled them with envy.

1. They grudged the interest the apostles had in the people: were vexed to see the synagogue so full when they were to preach. This was the same spirit

so effectually that they who showed earnest interest on the previous Sabbath became violent opponents.

xiii. 47. See *Isa. xlix. 6.* St. Paul quotes this passage to show that the extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles was no new theory, but what had long since been determined by God. The "thee" refers to Christ, but it implies the Divine appointment that Christian teachers shall instruct Gentiles as well as Jews.

xiii. 48. "As many as were ordained," &c.: rather, "as many as

that worked in the Pharisees toward Christ; they were cut to the heart when they saw "the whole world go after him." When the kingdom of heaven was opened, they not only would not go in themselves, but were angry with them that did.

2. They opposed the doctrine the apostles preached. "They spoke against those things that were spoken by Paul," cavilled at them, started objections against them, finding some fault or other with every thing he said, "contradicting, and blaspheming," *ἀντιλεγον ἀντιλεγοντες*, "contradicting they contradicted." They did it with the utmost spite and rage imaginable; they persisted in their contradiction, and nothing would silence them. They contradicted for contradiction sake, and denied that which was most evident. And when they could find no colour of objection they broke out into ill language against Christ and his Gospel, blaspheming him and it. From the language of the carnal man that receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, and therefore contradicts them, they proceed to the language of incarnate devils, and blaspheme them. Commonly those who begin with contradicting end with blaspheming.

Sixthly, The apostles hereupon solemnly and openly declare themselves discharged from their obligation to the Jews, and at liberty to bring the word of salvation to the Gentiles, even by the implicit consent of the Jews themselves. Never let the Jews lay the fault of the carrying of the kingdom of God to the Gentiles upon the apostles; for that complaint of theirs is for ever silenced by their own act and deed, for what they did here is for ever an estoppel to it. Tender and refusal, we say, is good payment in law. The Jews had the refusal of the Gospel, and did refuse it, and therefore ought not to say any thing against the Gentiles having it. In declaring this it is said, ver. 46, "Paul and Barnabas waxed bold," more bold than they had been, while they were shy of looking favourably upon the Gentiles, for fear of giving offence to the Jews, and laying a stumbling-block in their way. Note, There is a time for the preachers of the Gospel to shew as much of the boldness of the lion as of the wisdom of the serpent, and the harmlessness of the dove. When the adversaries of Christ's cause begin to be daring, it is not for its advocates to be sneaking. While there are any hopes of working upon those that oppose themselves, they must be instructed with meekness, *2 Tim. ii. 25.* But when that method has long been tried in vain, we must wax bold, and tell them what will come of their opposition. The impudence of the enemies of the Gospel, instead of frightening, should rather embolden the friends of its cause, for they are sure they have a good cause, and they know whom they have trusted to bear them out. Now Paul and Barnabas having made them a fair offer of gospel grace, here give them fair notice of their bringing it to the Gentiles, "if by any means," (as Paul saith, *Rom. xi. 14*), "they might provoke them to emulation."

1. They own that the Jews were entitled to the first offer. "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you," to whom the promise was made; to you of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, whom Christ reckoned himself first sent to. And his charge to the preachers of his Gospel to begin at Jerusalem, *Lu. xxiv. 47*, was an implicit direction to all that went into other countries to begin with the Jews, to whom "pertained the giving of the law," and therefore the preaching of the Gospel. "Let the children first be served," *Mar. vii. 27.*

2. They charge them with the refusal of it. "Ye put it from you," you will not accept of it, nay, you will not so much as hear the offer of it, but take it as an affront to you. If men put the Gospel from them, God justly takes it from them. Why should manna be given to them that loathe it, and call it light bread? or the privileges of the Gospel forced on them that put them away, and say, We have no part in David? Herein "you judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life." In one sense we must all judge ourselves unworthy of everlasting life, for there is nothing in us, or done by us, by which we can pretend to merit it, and we must be made sensible of this; but here the meaning is, you discover or make it to appear that you are not meet for eternal life; you throw away all your claims, and hopes, and give up your pretensions to it. Since you will not take it from his hands, into whose hand the Father has given it, *κρίνετε*, you do in effect pass this judgment upon yourselves, and out of your own mouth you shall be judged; you will not have it by Christ, by whom alone it is to be had, and so shall your doom be, you shall not have it at all.

3. Upon this they ground their preaching the Gospel to the uncircumcised. Since you will not accept eternal life as it is offered, our way is plain, "lo, we turn to the Gentiles." If one will not, another will. If those that were first invited to the wedding-feast will not come, we must invite out of the highways and hedges those that will, for the wedding must be furnished with guests. If he that is next of kin will not do the kinsman's part, he must not complain that another will, *Ru. iv. 4.*

4. They justify themselves in this by a Divine warrant; ver. 47, "For so hath the Lord commanded us." The Lord Jesus gave us directions to witness to him in Jerusalem and Judaea first, and after that to the uttermost part of the earth, to preach the Gospel to every creature, to disciple all nations; and this is according to what was foretold in the Old Testament. When the Messiah, in the prospect of the Jews' infidelity, was ready to say, I have laboured in vain, he was told by his satisfaction, that though Israel was not gathered, yet he should be glorious; that his blood should not be shed in vain, nor his purchase made in vain, nor his doctrine preached in vain, nor his Spirit sent in vain; for "I have set thee," not only raised thee up, but established thee, "to be a light of the Gentiles," not only a shining light for a time, but a standing light, set for a light; "that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Note, 1st. Christ is not only the Saviour, but the salvation; is himself our righteousness, and life, and strength. 2nd. Wherever Christ is designed to be salvation, he is set up to be a light; he enlightens the understanding, and so saves the soul. 3rd. He is, and is to be, light and salvation to the Gentiles, to the ends of the earth. Those of any nation should be welcomed to him; some of every nation have heard of him, *Rom. x. 18*, and all nations shall at length become his kingdoms. This prophecy has had its accomplishment in part in the setting up of the kingdom of Christ in this island of ours, which lies as it were in the ends of the earth, a corner of the world, and shall be accomplished more and more, when the time comes for the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles.

Seventhly, The Gentiles cheerfully embraced that which the Jews scornfully rejected, ver. 48, 49. Never was land lost for want of heirs; "through the fall of the Jews salvation is come to the Gentiles. The casting off of them was the reconciling of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles;" so the apostle shews at large, *Rom. xi. 11, 12, 15.* The Jews, the natural branches, were broken off, and the Gentiles, that were branches of the wild olive, were thereupon grafted in, ver. 17, 19. Now here we are told how the Gentiles welcomed this happy turn in their favour.

1. They took the comfort of it; "when they heard this they were glad." It was good news to them that they might have admission into covenant and communion with God, by a clearer, and nearer, and better way than submitting to the ceremonial law, and being proselyted to the Jewish religion; that the partition wall was taken down, and they were as welcome to the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom as the Jews themselves, and might share in their promise, without coming under their yoke. This was indeed glad tidings of great joy to all people. Note, Our being put into a possibility of salvation, and a capacity for it, ought to be the matter of our rejoicing. When the Gentiles

were disposed to eternal life, believed." Alford says, "The meaning of this word must be determined by the context. The Jews had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life; the Gentiles, 'as many as were disposed to eternal life, believed.' By whom so disposed is not here declared; nor need the word be in this place further particularised. . . . To find in this text pre-ordination to life asserted, is to force both the word and the context to a meaning which they do not contain."

did not hear that the offers of grace should be made them, the word of grace preached to them, and the means of grace afforded them, they were glad. 'Now there are some hopes for us.' Many grieve under doubts whether they have an interest in Christ or no, when they should be rejoicing that they may have an interest in him. The golden sceptre is held out to them, and they are invited to come touch the top of it.

2. They gave God the praise of it. They "glorified the word of the Lord;" that is, Christ, so some; the essential Word. They conceived a mighty veneration for him, and expressed the high thoughts they had of him. Or, rather, the Gospel; the more they knew of it, the more they admired it. O! what a light, what a power, what a treasure, doth this Gospel bring along with it! How excellent are its truths, its precepts, its promises, how far transcending all other institutions, how plainly Divine and heavenly is its original! Thus they "glorified the word of the Lord," and that is it which he has himself magnified above all his name, *Ps. cxxxviii. 2*, and will magnify and make honourable, *Isa. xlii. 21*. They "glorified the word of the Lord," 1st. Because now the knowledge of it was diffused, and not confined to the Jews only. Note, It is the glory of the word of the Lord that the farther it spreads the brighter it shines; which shews it to be not like the light of a candle, but like that of the sun when he goes forth in his strength. 2nd. Because now the knowledge of it was brought to them. Note, Those speak best of the honour of the word of the Lord that speak experimentally, that have themselves been captivated by the power and comforted with the sweetness of it.

3. Many of them became not only professors of the Christian faith, but sincerely obedient to the faith: "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed;" that is, God by his Spirit wrought true faith in them for whom he had in his counsels from everlasting designed a happiness to everlasting. 1st. Those believed to whom God gave grace to believe, whom by a secret but mighty operation he brought into subjection to the Gospel of Christ, and made "willing in the day of his power." Those came to Christ whom the Father drew, and to whom the Spirit made the Gospel call effectual. It is called "the faith of the operation of God," *Col. ii. 12*, and is said to be wrought by the same power that raised up Christ, *Eph. i. 19, 20*. 2nd. God gave this grace to believe to all those among them who "were ordained to eternal life" for "whom he had predestinated, them he also called," *Rom. viii. 30*. Or, "as many as were disposed to eternal life;" as many as had a concern about their eternal state, and aimed to make sure eternal life, believed in Christ in whom God hath treasured up that life, *1 Jno. v. 11*, and who is the only way to it; and it was the grace of God that wrought it in them. Thus all those captives, and those only, took the benefit of Cyrus' proclamation, "whose spirit God had raised to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem," *Ezr. i. 5*. Those will be brought to believe in Christ that by his grace are well disposed to eternal life, and make that their aim.

4. When they believed, they did what they could to spread the knowledge of Christ and his Gospel among their neighbours; ver. 49, "And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region." When it was received with so much satisfaction in the chief city, it soon spread itself into all parts of the country. Those new converts were themselves ready to communicate to others that which they were so full of themselves. "The Lord gave the word, and" then "great was the company of them that published it," *Ps. lxxviii. 11*. Those that have got acquaintance with Christ themselves will do what they can to bring others acquainted with him. Those in great and rich cities that have received the Gospel should not think to engross it, as if, like learning and philosophy, it were only to be the entertainment of the more polite and elevated part of mankind; but should do what they can to get it published in the country among the ordinary sort of people, the poor and unlearned, who have souls to save as well as they.

Eighty. Paul and Barnabas having sowed the seeds of a Christian church there, quitted the place, and went to do the like elsewhere. We read not any thing of their working miracles here, to confirm their doctrine, and to convince people of the truth of it; for, though God did then ordinarily make use of that method of conviction, yet he could, when he pleased, do his work without it; and begetting faith by the immediate influence of his Spirit was itself the greatest miracle to those in whom it was wrought; yet it is probable they did work miracles, for we find they did in the next place they came to, *ch. xiv. 3*. Now here we are told.

1. How the unbelieving Jews expelled the apostles out of that country. They first turned their back upon them, and then lifted up the heel against them; ver. 50, they "raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas;" excited the mob to persecute them in their way, by insulting their persons as they went along the streets; excited the magistrates to persecute them in their way, by imprisoning and punishing them. When they could not resist the wisdom and spirit wherewith they spoke, they had recourse to these brutish methods, the last refuge of an obstinate infidelity. Satan and his agents are most exasperated against the preachers of the Gospel, when they see them go on successfully, and therefore then will be sure to raise persecution against them. Thus it has been the common lot of the best men in the world to suffer ill for doing well; to be persecuted, instead of being preferred, for the good services they have done to mankind. Observe.

1st. What method they took to give them trouble: They "stirred up the devout and honourable women" against them. The Jews could not make any considerable interest themselves, but they applied themselves to some ladies of quality in the city, that were well affected to the Jewish religion, and were proselytes of the gate, therefore called devout women. These, according to the genius of their sex, were zealous in their way, and bigoted; and it was easy, by false stories and misrepresentations, to incense them against the Gospel of Christ, as if it had been destructive of all religion, which really it is perfective of. It is good to see honourable women devout, and well-affected to religious worship; the less they have to do in the world, the more they should do for their souls, and the more time they should spend in communion with God. But it is sad when, under colour of devotion to God, they conceive an enmity to Christ, as those here did. What, women persecutors! Can they forget the tenderness and compassion of their sex? What, honourable women! Can they thus stain their honour, and disgrace themselves, and do so mean a thing? But, which is strangest of all, devout women! Will they kill Christ's servants, and think therein they do God service? Let those therefore that have zeal, see that it be according to knowledge. By these devout and honourable women they stirred up likewise the chief men of the city, the magistrates and the rulers, who had power in their hands, and set them against the apostles; who had so little consideration as to suffer themselves to be made the tools of this ill-natured party, who neither would go into the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffer those that were entering to go in.

2nd. How far they carried it: so far that they "expelled them out of their coasts," they banished them, ordered them to be carried (as we say) from constable to constable, till they were forced out of their jurisdiction. So that it was not by fear, but downright violence, that they were driven out. This was one method which the overruling providence of God took to keep the first planters of the church from staying too long at a place, as *Mat. x. 23*, "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another," that thus you may the sooner

go over the cities of Israel. This was likewise a method God took to make those that were well-disposed the more warmly affected towards the apostles; for it is natural to us to pity those that are persecuted, and to think the better of those that suffer, when we know they suffer unjustly, and to be the more ready to help them. The expelling of the apostles out of their coasts made people inquisitive what evil they had done; and perhaps raised them more friends than conniving at them in their coasts would have done.

2. How the apostles abandoned and rejected the unbelieving Jews; ver. 51, "they shook off the dust of their feet against them." When they went out of the city they used this ceremony, in the sight of them that sat in the gate; or, when they went out of the borders of their country, in the sight of them that were sent to see the country rid of them. Hereby, 1st. They declared that they would have no more to do with them; would take nothing that was theirs; for they sought not theirs but them: dust they are, and let them keep their dust to themselves, it shall not cleave to them. 2nd. They expressed their detestation of their infidelity, and that, though they were Jews by birth, yet, having rejected the Gospel of Christ, they were in their eyes no better than heathen and profane. As Jews and Gentiles, if they believe, are equally acceptable to God and good men; so, if they do not, they are equally abominable. 3rd. Thus they set them at defiance, and expressed their contempt of them and their malice, which they looked upon as impotent. It was as much as to say, Do your worst, we do not fear you; we know whom we serve, and whom we have trusted. 4th. Thus they left a testimony behind them that they had had a fair offer made them of the grace of the Gospel, which shall be proved against them in the day of judgment: this dust will prove that the preachers of the Gospel had been among them, but were expelled by them. Thus Christ had ordered them to do, and for this reason, *Mat. x. 14; Lu. ix. 5*. When they left them, they came to Iconium, not so much for safety, as for work.

3. What frame they left the new converts in at Antioch, ver. 52. The disciples, when they went with what courage and cheerfulness Paul and Barnabas not only bore the indignities that were done them, but went on with their work notwithstanding, they were in like manner spirited. 1st. They were very cheerful. One would have expected that when Paul and Barnabas were expelled out of their coasts, and perhaps forbidden to return upon pain of death, the disciples should have been full of grief, and full of fear, looking for no other but that, if the planters of Christianity go, the plantation would soon come to nothing. Or, that it would be their turn next to be banished the country, and to them it would be more grievous, for it was their own. No; they were filled with joy in Christ, had such a satisfactory assurance of Christ's carrying on and perfecting his own work in them, and among them, and that either he would screen them from trouble, or bear them up under it, that all their fears were swallowed up in their believing joys. 2nd. They were very courageous: wonderfully animated with a holy resolution to cleave to Christ, whatever difficulties they met with. That seems especially to be meant, by their being filled with the Holy Ghost; for that is used of Peter's boldness, *ch. iv. 8*; and Stephen's, *ch. vii. 55*; and Paul's, *ch. xiii. 9*. The more we relish the comforts and encouragements we meet with in the power of godliness, and the fuller our hearts are of them, the better prepared we are to face the difficulties we meet with in the profession of godliness.

CHAPTER XIV.

We have in this chapter a farther account of the progress of the Gospel, by the ministry of Paul and Barnabas, among the Gentiles; it goes on conquering and to conquer; yet meeting with opposition, as before, among the unbelieving Jews. Here is, I. Their successful preaching of the Gospel for some time at Iconium, and their being driven thence by the violence of their persecutors, both Jews and Gentiles, and forced into the neighbouring countries, ver. 1-7. II. Their healing of a lame man at Lystra, and the mighty veneration which the people conceived of them thereupon, which they had much ado to keep from running into an extreme, ver. 8-18. III. The outrage of the people against Paul at the instigation of the Jews; the effect of which was, that they stoned him, as they thought, to death; but he was wonderfully restored to life again, ver. 19, 20. IV. The visit which Paul and Barnabas made to the churches which they had planted, to confirm them, and put them into order, ver. 21-23. V. Their return to Antioch, from whence they were sent forth, the good they did by the way, and the report they made to the church of Antioch of their expedition, and, if I may so say, of the campaign they had made, ver. 24-28.



AND it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren. 3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. 4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. 5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them, 6 They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: 7 And there they preached the gospel.

xiii. 50. "The devout and honourable women" were women of good rank, who had become proselytes to Judaism. By their means the Jews influenced the chief men of the city to take part against the apostles. "Coasts:" i.e., the boundaries of the country, not sea-coasts. The expulsion was one of violence, and not according to law.

xiii. 51. "Iconium:" the capital of Lycaonia. It was to the east of Antioch, in Pisidia, and was situated at the foot of Mount Taurus. "The elements of its population would be as follows:—A large

number of trifling and frivolous Greeks, whose principal places of resort would be the theatre and the market-place; some remains of a still older population, coming in occasionally from the country, or residing in a separate quarter of the town; some few Roman officials, civil or military, holding themselves proudly aloof from the inhabitants of the subjugated province; and an old-established colony of Jews, who exercised their trade during the week, and met on the Sabbath to read the law in the synagogue" (Conybeare and Howson)

In these verses we have,

First. The preaching of the Gospel in Iconium, whither the apostles were forced to retire from Antioch. As the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church, so the banishment of the confessors has helped to scatter that seed. Observe,

1. How they made the first offer of the Gospel to the Jews, in their synagogues. Thither they went, not only as to a place of meeting, but as to a place of meeting with them to whom, wherever they came, they were to apply themselves in the first place. Though the Jews at Antioch had used them barbarously, yet they did not therefore decline preaching the Gospel to the Jews at Iconium, who perhaps might be better disposed. Let not those of any denomination be condemned in the gross, nor some suffer for others' faults; but let us do good to those who have done evil to us. Though "the bloodthirsty hate the upright," yet "the just seek their soul," *Pr. xxix. 10*; seek the salvation of it.

2. How the apostles concurred herein. Notice is taken of this, that they "went both together into the synagogue," to testify their unanimity, and mutual affection, that people might say, See how they love one another, and might think the better of Christianity; and that they might strengthen one another's hands, and confirm one another's testimony, and "out of the mouth of two witnesses every word might be established." They did not go one one day, and another another; or one at the beginning, and the other some time after; but they went in both together.

Secondly, The success of their preaching there. "They so spake, that a great multitude," some hundreds perhaps, if not thousands, "both of the Jews, and also of the Greeks," that is, the Gentiles, "believed." Observe here,

1. That the Gospel was now preached to Jews and Gentiles together, and those of each denomination that believed came together into the church. In the close of the foregoing chapter it was preached first to the Jews, and some of them believed, then to the Gentiles, and some of them believed; but here they are put together, being put upon the same level. The Jews have not so lost their preference as to be thrown behind, only the Gentiles are brought to stand upon even terms with them; "both are reconciled to God in one body," *Eph. ii. 16*, and both together admitted into the church without distinction.

2. There seems to have been something remarkable in the manner of the apostles' preaching here, which contributed to their success. They "so spake, that a great multitude believed;" so plainly, so convincingly, with such an evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and with such power; they "so spake," so warmly, so affectionately, and with such a manifest concern for the souls of men; they "so spake," as that one might perceive they were not only convinced, but filled with the things they spake of; and that what they spake came from the heart, and therefore was likely to reach to the heart; they "so spake," so earnestly and seriously, so boldly and courageously, that they who heard them could not but say God was with them of a truth. Yet the success was not to be attributed to the manner of their preaching, but to the Spirit of God, who made use of that means.

Thirdly, The opposition that their preaching met with there, and the trouble that was created them. Lest they should be puffed up with the multitude of their converts, there was given them this thorn in the flesh.

1. "Unbelieving Jews" were the first spring of their trouble, here as elsewhere; ver. 2, they "stirred up the Gentiles." The influence which the Gospel had upon many of the Gentiles, and their embracing of it, as it provoked some of the Jews to a holy jealousy, and stirred them up to receive the Gospel too, *Rom. xi. 14*, so it provoked others of them to a wicked jealousy, and exasperated them against the Gospel. Thus as good instructions, so good examples, which to some are a savour of life unto life, to others are a savour of death unto death: see *2 Cor. ii. 15, 16*.

2. Disaffected Gentiles, irritated by the unbelieving Jews, were likely to be the instruments of their trouble. The Jews, by false suggestions, which they were continually buzzing in the ears of the Gentiles, "made their minds evil affected against the brethren" whom of themselves they were inclined to think favourably of. They not only took occasion in all companies, as it came in their way, but made it their business to go purposely to such as they had any acquaintance with, and said all that their wit or malice could invent, to beget in them, not only a mean, but an ill opinion of Christianity, telling them how destructive it would certainly be to their pagan theology and worship; and for their parts they would rather be Gentiles than Christians. Thus they soured and embittered their spirits against both the converters and the converted. The old serpent did, by their poisonous tongues, infuse his venom against the seed of the woman into the minds of these Gentiles, and this was a "root of bitterness in them bearing gall and wormwood." Those that are ill-affected towards good people, it is no wonder if they wish ill to them, speak ill of them, and contrive ill against them; it is all owing to ill-will; *εχθροσύναι*—they molested and vexed the minds of the Gentiles, so some of the critics take it; they were continually teasing them, with their impudent solicitations. The tools of persecutors have a dog's life, set on continually.

Fourthly, Their continuance in their work there, notwithstanding this opposition, and God's owning them in it, ver. 3. We have here,

1. The apostles working for Christ, faithfully and diligently, according to the trust committed to them. Because the minds of the Gentiles were evil-affected against them, one would think that therefore they should have withdrawn, and hastened out of the way; or, if they had preached, should have preached cautiously, for fear of giving farther provocation to those who were already enough enraged. No; on the contrary, "therefore they abode there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord." The more they perceived the spite and rancour of the town against the new converts, the more they were animated to go on in their work; and the more needful they saw it to continue among them, to confirm them in the faith, and to comfort them. They spake boldly, and were not afraid of giving offence to the unbelieving Jews. What God said to the prophet with reference to the unbelieving Jews in his day, was now made good to the apostles, "I have made thy face strong against their faces," *Eze. iii. 7-9*. But observe what it was that animated them, they "spake boldly in the Lord," in his strength, and trusting in him to bear them out, not depending upon any thing in themselves. They were "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

2. Christ working with the apostles, according to his promise, "Lo, I am with you always." When they went on in his name and strength, he failed not to give testimony to the word of his grace. Note, 1st. The Gospel is a word of grace, the assurance of God's good-will to us, and the means of his good work in us. It is the word of Christ's grace; for it is in him alone that we find favour with God. 2nd. Christ himself has attested this word of grace, who is the Amen, the faithful Witness; he hath assured us that it is the word of God, and that we may venture our souls upon it. As it was said in general concerning "the first preachers of the Gospel, that they had "the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by signs following," *Mar. xvi. 20*, so it is said particularly concerning the apostles here, that the Lord confirmed their testimony in "granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands," in the miracles they wrought in the kingdom of nature, as well as the wonders done by their word,

in the greater miracles wrought in men's minds by the power of Divine grace. The Lord was with them while they were with him, and abundance of good was done.

Fifthly, The division which this occasioned in the city; ver. 4, "the multitude of the city was divided" into two parties, and both active and vigorous; among the rulers and persons of rank, and among the common people, there were some that held with the unbelieving Jews, and others that held with the apostles. Barnabas is here reckoned an apostle, though none of the twelve, nor called in that extraordinary manner that Paul was, because set apart by special designation of the Holy Ghost to the service of the Gentiles. It seems this business of the preaching of the Gospel was so universally taken notice of with concern, that every person, even of the multitude of the city, was either for it or against it; none stood neuter. Either for us or for our adversaries; for God or Baal; for Christ or Beelzebub.

1. We may here see the meaning of Christ's prediction, that he came not to send peace upon earth, but rather division, *Lk. xii. 51-53*. If all would have given in unanimously into his measures, there had been universal concord, and could men have agreed in that, there would have been no dangerous discord or disagreement in other things; but, disagreeing here, the breach was wide as the sea. Yet the apostles must not be blamed for coming to Iconium, because before they came the city was united, but now it was divided; for it is better that part of the city go to heaven, than all to hell.

2. We may here take the measures of our expectations. Let us not think it strange if the preaching of the Gospel occasion division, nor be offended at it. It is better to be reproached and persecuted as dividers for swimming against the stream, than yield ourselves to be carried down the stream that leads to destruction. Let us hold with the apostles, and not fear them that hold with the Jews.

Sixthly, The attempt made upon the apostles by their enemies. Their evil affection against them broke out at length in violent outrages, ver. 5. Observe,

1. Who the plotters were. "Both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers." The Gentiles and Jews were at enmity with one another, and yet united against Christians, like Herod and Pilate, Sadducees and Pharisees, against Christ; and like Gebal and Ammon, and Amalek of old, against Israel. If the church's enemies can thus unite for its destruction, shall not its friends, laying aside all personal feuds, unite for its preservation?

2. What the plot was. Having now got the rulers on their side, they doubted not but to carry their point; and their design was to use the apostles despitefully, to expose them to disgrace, and then to stone them, to put them to death; and thus they hoped to sink their cause. They aimed to take away both their reputation and their life, and that was all they had to lose, which they could take from them, for they had neither lands nor goods.

Seventhly, The deliverance of the apostles out of the hands of those wicked and unreasonable men, ver. 6, 7. They got away upon notice given them of the design against them, or the beginning of the attempt upon them which they were soon aware of, and they made an honourable retreat (for it was not an inglorious flight) to Lystra and Derbe. And there,

1. They found safety. Their persecutors in Iconium were for the present satisfied that they were thrust out of their borders, and pursued them no farther. God hath shelters for his people in a storm; nay, he is, and will be, himself their hiding-place.

2. They found work, and that was it they went for. When the door of opportunity was shut against them at Iconium, it was opened at Lystra and Derbe. To those cities they went, and there, and in the region that lieth round about, they preached the Gospel. In times of persecution ministers may see cause to quit the spot, when yet they do not quit the work.

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: 9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. 11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. 13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. 14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: 16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. 18 And with these sayings

xiv. 1. "Greeks:" proselytes, or heathen, or both; or proselytes as distinguished from "the Gentiles" mentioned in verse 2 (Conybeare and Howson). Alford says, "Those of the uncircumcised who were more or less attached to the Jewish religion."

xiv. 5. "An assault:" the word is used of physical and mental movement; here with the latter reference, meaning "a tumultuous, a strong impulse." Cook says, "Preparation for an assault." Paley, in his "Horæ Paulinæ," says, "Had the assault been completed, had

history related that a stone was thrown, or even had the account of this transaction stopped, without going on to inform us that Paul and his companions were aware of the danger and fled, a contradiction between the history and the epistles (2 Cor. xi. 25—"once was I stoned") would have ensued. Truth is necessarily consistent; but it is scarcely possible that independent accounts, not having truth to guide them, should thus advance to the very brink of contradiction without falling into it."

scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

In these verses we have,

First. A miraculous cure wrought by Paul at Lystra upon a cripple that had been lame from his birth; such a one as was miraculously cured by Peter and John, *ch. iii. 2*. That introduced the Gospel among the Jews, this among the Gentiles. Both that and this were designed to represent the impotency of all the children of men in spiritual things; they are lame from their birth, till the grace of God puts strength into them: for it was "when we were yet without strength" that "Christ died for the ungodly," *Rom. v. 6*. Observe here,

1. The deplorable case of the poor cripple; ver. 8, he was "impotent in his feet;" "disabled," so the word is, to that degree that it was impossible he should set his foot to the ground, to lay any stress upon it; it was well known that he had been so from his mother's womb, and that he never had walked, or could stand up. We should take occasion from hence to thank God for the use of our limbs; and those who are deprived of it may observe that their case is not singular.

2. The expectation that was raised in him of a cure; ver. 9, he heard Paul preach, and, it is likely, was much affected with what he heard, believed the message was from heaven, and that the messengers, having their commission thence, had a Divine power going along with them, and were therefore able to cure him of his lameness. This Paul was aware of by the spirit of discerning that he had, and perhaps the show of his countenance did in part witness for him. Paul perceived that he had faith to be healed; desired it, hoped for it, had such a thing in his thoughts, which it doth not appear that the lame man Peter healed had, for he expected no more than an alms. There was not found such great faith in Israel as was among the Gentiles, *Mat. viii. 10*.

3. The cure wrought. "Paul perceiving that he had faith to be healed," brought the word and healed him, *Ps. cvii. 20*. Note, God will not disappoint the desires that are of his own kindling, nor the hopes of his own raising. Paul spake to him with a loud voice, either because he was at some distance, or to shew that the true miracles wrought by the power of Christ were far unlike the lying wonders wrought by deceivers, that peeped, and muttered, and whispered, *Isa. viii. 19*. God saith, "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth," *Isa. xlv. 19*. Paul spoke to him with a loud voice, that the people about might take notice, and have their expectations raised of the effect. It doth not appear that this cripple was a beggar; it is said, ver. 8, that he sat, not that he sat begging. But we may imagine how melancholy it was to him to see other people walking about him, and himself disabled; and therefore how welcome Paul's word was to him, "Stand upright on thy feet;" help thyself, and God shall help thee. Try whether thou hast strength, and thou shalt find that thou hast. Some copies read it, "I say unto thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, stand upright on thy feet." It is certain that is implied, and very probably was expressed by Paul, and power went along with this word, for presently he leaped and walked; leaped up from the place where he sat, and not only stood upright, but to shew that he was perfectly cured, and that immediately, he walked to and fro before them all. Herein the Scripture was fulfilled, that when the wilderness of the Gentile world is made "to blossom as the rose, then shall the lame man leap as a hart," *Isa. xxxv. 1, 6*. Those that by the grace of God are cured of their spiritual lameness must shew it by leaping with a holy exultation, and walking in a holy conversation.

Secondly. The impression which this cure made upon the people. They were amazed at it, had never seen or heard the like, and fell into an extacy of wonder. Paul and Barnabas were strangers, exiles, refugees, in their country; every thing concurred to make them mean and despicable; yet the working of this one miracle was enough to make them, in the eyes of this people, truly great and honourable, though the multitude of Christ's miracles could not screen him from the utmost contempt among the Jews. We find here,

1. The people take them for gods; ver. 11, "they lifted up their voices" with an air of triumph, saying, in their own language, (for it was the common people that said it), "in the speech of Lycaonia," which was a dialect of the Greek, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." They imagined they were dropped down to them out of the clouds, and that they were some divine powers, no less than gods, though in the likeness of men. This notion of the thing agreed well enough with the pagan theology, and the fabulous account they had of the visits which their gods made to this lower world, and proud enough they were to think that they should have a visit made to them. They carried this notion so far here, that they pretended to tell which of their gods they were, according to the ideas their poets had given them of the gods; ver. 12, they called Barnabas, Jupiter; for if they will have him to be a god, it is as easy to make him the prince of their gods as not. It is likely he was the senior, and the more portly, comely man, that had something of majesty in his countenance; and Paul they called Mercury, who was the messenger of the gods, that was sent on their errands; for Paul, though he had not the presence that Barnabas had, was the chief speaker, and had a greater command of language, and perhaps appeared to have something mercurial in his temper and genius. Jupiter used to take Mercury along with him, they said; and if he make a visit to their city, they will suppose he doth so now.

2. The priest thereupon prepares to do sacrifice to them, ver. 13. The temple of Jupiter was, it seems, before the gate of their city, as its protector and guardian; and the priest of that idol and temple, hearing the people cry out thus, took the hint presently, and thought it was time for him to bestir himself to do his duty. Many a costly sacrifice he had offered to the image of Jupiter, but if Jupiter be among them "himself,"—*in propria persona*, it concerns him to do him the utmost honours imaginable, and the people are ready to join with him in it. See how easily vain minds are carried away with a popular outcry! If the crowd give a shout, Here is Jupiter, the priest of Jupiter takes the first hint, and offers his service presently. When Christ the Son of God came down and appeared in the likeness of men, and did many, very many miracles, yet they were so far from doing sacrifice to him, that they made him a sacrifice to their pride and malice; "he was in the world, and the world knew him not; he came to his own, and his own received him not." But Paul and Barnabas, upon the

working of one miracle, are deified presently. The same power of the god of this world, which prejudice the carnal mind against truth, makes errors and mistakes to find easy admission, and both ways his turn is served. They brought oxen to be sacrificed to them, and garlands with which to crown the sacrifices. These garlands were made up of flowers and ribbons, and they led the horns of the oxen they sacrificed.

So beasts for sacrifice do feed,
First to be crown'd, and then to bleed.
*Victimæ ad supplicium saginantur,
Hostiæ ad pænam coronantur.*

So Octavius in Minutius Felix.

Thirdly. Paul and Barnabas protest against this undue respect paid them, and, with much ado, prevent it. Many of the heathen emperors called themselves gods, and took a pride in having divine honours paid them; but Christ's ministers, though real benefactors to mankind, while they only pretended to be so, refused those honours when they were tendered. Whose successor therefore he is who sits in the temple of God, and shews that he is God, (*2 Thes. ii. 4*) and who is adored as our Lord God the pope, it is easy to say. Observe,

1. The holy indignation which Paul and Barnabas conceived at this. When they heard this, they rent their clothes. We do not find that they rent their clothes when the people vilified them, and spake of stoning them; they could bear that without disturbance; but when they deified them, and spake of worshipping them, they could not bear it, but rent their clothes, as being more concerned for God's honour than their own.

2. The pains they took to prevent it. They did not connive at it, nor say, If people will be deceived, let them be deceived; much less suggest to themselves and one another, that it might contribute both to the safety of their persons and the success of their ministry, if they suffered the people to continue in this mistake, and so they might make a good hand of an ill thing. No; God's truth needs not the service of man's lie; Christ had put honour enough upon them in making them apostles, they needed not assume either the honour of princes, or the honour of gods. They appeared with much more magnificent titles when they were called the ambassadors of Christ, and the stewards of the mysteries of God, than when they were called Jupiter and Mercury. Let us see how they prevented it.

1. They "ran in among the people" as soon as they heard of it, and would not so much as stay a while to see what the people would do. Their running in like servants among the people shewed that they were far from looking upon themselves as gods, or taking state upon them; they did not stand still expecting honours to be done them, but plainly declined them by thrusting themselves into the crowd. They ran in as men in earnest, with as much concern as Aaron ran in between the living and the dead when the plague was begun.

2. They reasoned with them, crying out, that all might hear. "Sirs, why do ye these things?" Why do ye go about to make gods of us? It is the most absurd thing you can do; for,

1st. Our nature will not admit it; "we also are men of like passions with you;" *ὁμοιωμένοι*, it is the same word that is used concerning Elias, *Jas. v. 17*, where we render it, "subject to like passions as we are." We are men, and therefore you wrong yourselves if you expect that from us which is to be had in God only; and you wrong God if you give that honour to us, or to any other man, which is to be given to God only. We not only have such bodies as you see, but are of like passions with you, have hearts fashioned like as other men, *Ps. xxxiii. 15*; for "as in water face answers to face, so doth the heart of man to man," *Pr. xxvii. 19*; we are naturally subject to the same infirmities of the human nature, and liable to the same calamities of the human life; not only men, but sinful men, and suffering men, and therefore will not be deified.

2nd. Our doctrine is directly against it. Must we be added to the number of your gods, whose business it is to abolish the gods you have? we "preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God." If we should suffer this, we should confirm you in that which is our business to convert you from. And so they take this occasion to shew them how just and necessary it was that "they should turn to God from idols," *1 Thes. i. 9*. When they preached to the Jews, who hated idolatry, they had nothing to do but to preach the grace of God in Christ, and needed not, as the prophets in dealing with their fathers, to preach against idolatry; but, when they had to do with the Gentiles, they must rectify their mistakes in natural religion, and bring them off from the gross corruptions of that. See here what they preached to the Gentiles:

First. That the gods which they and their fathers worshipped, and all the ceremonies of their worship of them, were vanities, idle things, unreasonable, unprofitable, which no rational account could be given of, nor any real advantage gained from. Idols are often called vanities in the Old Testament, *Deu. xxxii. 21*; *1 Kin. xvi. 13*; *Jer. xiv. 22*; "an idol is nothing in the world," *1 Cor. viii. 4*; it is not at all what it is pretended to be; it is a cheat, it is a counterfeit; it deceives those that trust to it, and expect relief from it. Therefore turn from these vanities, turn from them with abhorrence and detestation, as Ephraim did, *Hos. xiv. 8*, "What have I to do any more with idols?" I will never again be thus imposed upon.

Secondly. That the God whom they would have them turn to is the living God. They had hitherto worshipped dead images, that were utterly unable to help them, *Isa. xlv. 9*; or (as they now attempted) dying men, that would soon be disabled to help them; but now they are persuaded to worship a living God, who hath life in himself, and life for us, and lives for evermore.

Thirdly. That this God is the creator of the world, the fountain of all being and power; "he made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things therein," even those things which you worship as gods, so that he is the God of your gods. You worship gods which you made, the creatures of your own fancy, and the work of your own hands; we call you to worship the God that made you and all the world; worship the true God, and cheat not yourselves with pretenders; worship the sovereign Lord of all, and disparage not yourselves in bowing down to his creatures and subjects.

Fourthly. That the world owed it to his patience that he had not destroyed them long ere this for their idolatry; ver. 16, "in times past," for many ages, unto this day, "he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." These idolaters that were called from the service of other gods might think, had they



SACRIFICE, FROM THE XANTHIAN MARBLES.

xiv. 6. "Lystra." "In the eastern part of the great plain of Lycaonia. There are strong reasons for identifying its site with the ruins called Bin-bir-Kilisseh, at the base of a conical mountain of volcanic structure, named Karadagh. Here are the remains of a great number of churches; and it should be noticed that Lystra has its post-apostolic Christian history, the names of its bishops appearing in the records of early councils." "Derbe:" exact position unknown. It was in the eastern part of the great plain of Lycaonia, which

stretched from Iconium eastwards along the north side of the chain of Taurus. "Lycaonia:" a district lying among the highlands of Taurus.

xiv. 8. "Sat." probably in the forum or market-place.

xiv. 9. "Heard Paul speak:" rather, "was hearing," &c., the tense implying continued action, and so persevering and attentive listening.

xiv. 11. "The speech of Lycaonia:" the nature of this dialect is

not served these gods hitherto, and their fathers before them, time out of mind? and why may they not as well go on to serve them still? No; Your serving of them was a trial of God's patience, and it was a miracle of mercy that you were not cut off for it. But though he did not destroy you for it while you were in ignorance and knew no better, *ch. xvii. 30*, yet, now he hath sent his Gospel into the world, and by it has made a clear discovery of himself and his will to all nations, and not to the Jews only, if yet you continue in your idolatry, he will not bear with you as he has done. All the nations that had not the benefit of Divine revelation, that is, all but the Jews, he suffered to walk in their own ways, for they had nothing to check them or control them but their own consciences, their own thoughts, *Rom. ii. 15*; no Scriptures, no prophets, and then they were the more excusable if they mistook their way; but, now God hath sent a revelation into the world which is to be published to all nations, the case is altered. We may understand it as a judgment upon all nations, that God "suffered them to walk in their own ways, gave them up to their own hearts' lusts." But now the time is come when "the veil of the covering spread over all nations should be taken off." *Isa. xxv. 7*; and now you will no longer be excused in these vanities, but must turn from them. Note, 1st. God's patience with us hitherto should "lead us to repentance," and not encourage us to presume upon the continuance of it, while we continue to provoke him. 2nd. Our having done ill while we were in ignorance will not bear us out in doing ill when we are better taught.

Fifthly. That even then, when they were not under the direction and correction of the word of God, yet they might have known, and should have known, to do better by the works of God, *ver. 17*. Though the Gentiles had not the statutes and judgments that the Jews had to witness for God against all pretenders, no tables of testimony, or tabernacle of testimony, yet he "left not himself without witness." Besides the witness for God within them, the dictates of natural conscience, they had witnesses for God round about them, the bounty of common providence. Their having no Scriptures did in part excuse them, and therefore God did not destroy them for their idolatry, as he did the Jewish nation; but that did not wholly excuse them, but that notwithstanding that they were highly criminal, and deeply guilty before God; for there were other witnesses for God, sufficient to inform them that he, and he only, is to be worshipped; and that to him they owed all their services, from whom they received all their comforts, and therefore were guilty of the highest injustice and ingratitude imaginable in alienating them from him. God having not left himself without witness, has not left us without a guide, and so has left us without excuse; for whatever is a witness for God is a witness against us, if we give that glory to any other which is due to him only.

1st. The bounties of common providence witness to us that there is a God for they are all dispensed wisely, and with design. The rain and fruitful seasons could not come by chance, nor "are there any of the vanities of the heathen that can give rain," neither can the heavens themselves give showers, *Jer. xiv. 22*. All the powers of nature witness to us a sovereign power in the God of nature, from whom they are derived, and on whom they depend. It is not the heaven that gives us rain, but God that gives us rain from heaven; he is the father of the rain, *Job xxxviii. 28*.

2nd. The benefits we have by these bounties witness to us that we ought to make our acknowledgments, not to the creatures who are made serviceable to us, but to the Creator who makes them so. He "left not himself without witness, in that he did good." God seems to reckon the instances of his goodness to be more pregnant cogent proofs of his title to our homage and adoration than the evidences of his greatness, for his goodness is his glory. "The earth is full of his goodness; his tender mercies are over all his works," and therefore they praise him, *Ps. cxlv. 9, 10*. God doth us good in preserving to us his air to breathe in, his ground to go upon, the light of his sun to see by; but, because the most sensible instance of the goodness of Providence to each of us in particular is that of the daily provision made by it of meat and drink for us, the apostle insists upon that, and shews how God doth us good, (1.) In preparing it for us, and that by a long train of causes which depend upon him as the first cause; "the heavens hear the earth, the earth hears the corn, and wine, and oil, and they hear Jezreel," *Hos. ii. 21, 22*. He doth us good in giving us rain from heaven; rain for us to drink, for if there were no rain there would be no springs of water, and we should soon die of thirst; rain for our land to drink, — for our meat as well as drink we have from the rain, — in giving us that, he gives us fruitful seasons. If the heavens be as brass, the earth will soon be as iron, *Lev. xxvi. 19*. That is the river of God, which greatly enricheth the earth, and by it God prepares us corn, *Ps. lxx. 9—11*. Of all the common operations of Providence, the heathen chose to form their notion of the supreme God by that which speaks terror, and is proper to strike an awe of him upon us, and that was the thunder; and therefore they called Jupiter the thunderer, and represented him with a thunderbolt in his hand. And it appears by *Ps. xxix. 3*, that that ought not to be overlooked; but the apostle here, to engage us to worship God, sets before us his beneficence, that we may have good thoughts of him in every thing wherein we have to do with him: may love him and delight in him, as one that doth good, doth good to us, doth good to all, in giving "rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons;" and if at any time rain be withheld, or the seasons unfruitful, we may thank ourselves; it is our sin that turns away these good things from us which were coming to us, and stops the current of God's favours. (2.) In giving us the comforts of it. It is he that fills our hearts with food and gladness. God is rich in mercy to all, *Rom. x. 12*; he gives "us richly all things to enjoy," *1 Tim. vi. 17*; is not only a benefactor, but a bountiful one; not only gives us the things we need, but gives us to enjoy them, *Ecc. ii. 24*. He fills our hearts with food; that is, he gives us food to our heart's content, or according to our heart's desire; not merely for necessity, but for plenty, daintiness, and variety. Even those nations that had lost the knowledge of him, and worshipped other gods, yet he filled their houses, filled their mouths, filled their bellies, (*Job xxii. 18*; *Ps. xvii. 14*) with good things. The Gentiles that lived without God in the world, yet lived upon God, which Christ urgeth as a reason why we should do good to those that hate us, *Mat. v. 44, 45*. Those heathen had their hearts filled with food; that was their felicity and satisfaction, they desired no more. But these things will not fill the soul, *Eze. vii. 19*; nor will those that know how to value their own souls be satisfied with them. But the apostles put themselves in as sharers in the Divine beneficence; we must all own that God fills our hearts with food and gladness; not only food that we may live, but gladness that we may live cheerfully: to him we owe it that we do not all our days eat in sorrow. Note, We must thank God, not only for our food, but for our gladness; that he gives us leave to be cheerful, cause to be cheerful, and hearts to be cheerful. And if our hearts be filled with food and gladness, they ought to be filled with love and thankfulness, and enlarged in duty and obedience, *Deu. xiii. 10*; *xviii. 47*.

Lastly. The success of this prohibition which the apostles gave to the people, *ver. 18*. By these sayings, with much ado, they restrained the people from doing sacrifice to them, so strongly were these idolaters set upon their idolatry. It was not enough for the apostles to refuse to be deified, (that would be construed only a pang of modesty;) but they resent it, they shew them the evil of it, and all little enough, for they scarce restrained them from it; and some of them were ready to blame the priest that he did not go on with his business, notwithstanding.

We may see here what gave rise to the Pagan idolatry, it was terminating those regards in the instruments of our comfort which should have passed through them to the Author. Paul and Barnabas have cured a cripple, and therefore they deify them, instead of glorifying God for giving them such power; which should make us very cautious that we do neither give that honour to another, or take it to ourselves, which is due to God only.

19 And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. 20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, 22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. 24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. 25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: 26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. 27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. 28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

We have here a farther account of the services and sufferings of Paul and Barnabas.

First. How Paul was stoned, and left for dead, but miraculously came to himself again, *ver. 19, 20*. They fell upon Paul rather than Barnabas, because Paul, being the chief speaker, galled and vexed them more than Barnabas did. Now observe here,

1. How the people were incensed against Paul. Not by any injury they pretended he had done against them; if they took it for an affront that he would not let them misplace Divine honours upon him, when they considered themselves they would easily forgive him that wrong. But "there came certain Jews from Antioch," hearing, it is likely, and vexed to hear, what respect was shewed to Paul and Barnabas at Lystra, and they incensed the people against them, as factious, seditious, dangerous persons, not fit to be harboured. See how restless the rage of the Jews was against the Gospel of Christ. They could not bear that it should have footing any where.

2. To what degree they were incensed by these barbarous Jews. They irritated them to that degree, that the mob rose and stoned Paul, not by a judicial sentence, but in a popular tumult. They threw stones at him, with which they knocked him down, and then "drew him out of the city," as one not fit to live in it; or drew him out, upon a sledge or in a cart, to bury him, "supposing he had been dead." So strong is the bent of the corrupt and carnal heart to that which is evil, even in contrary extremes, that, as it is with great difficulty that men are re-trained from evil on one side, so it is with great ease that they are persuaded to evil on the other side. See how fickle and mutable the minds of carnal, worldly people are, that do not know and consider things. Those that but the other day would have treated the apostles as more than men, now treat them as worse than brutes, as the worst of men, as the worst of malefactors. To-day Hosanna, and to-morrow Crucify; to-day sacrificed to, to-morrow sacrificed; as we have an instance of a change the other way, *ch. xxviii. 1*. "This man is a murderer," *ver. 4*; no doubt he is a god, *ver. 6*. Popular breath turns like the wind. If Paul would have been Mercury, he might have been enthroned, nay, he might have been enshrined; but if he will be a faithful minister of Christ he shall be stoned, and thrown out of the city. Thus they who easily submit to strong delusions, hate to receive the truth in the love of it.

3. How he was delivered by the power of God. When he was drawn out of the city, "the disciples stood round about him," *ver. 20*. It seems there were some here at Lystra that became disciples, that found the mean between deifying the apostles and rejecting them. And even these new converts had courage to stand round about Paul, when he was thus run down, though they had reason enough to fear that the same that stoned him would stone them for owning him. They stood round about him, as a guard to him against the farther outrage of the people; stood about him to see whether he were alive or dead. And all of a sudden he rose up. Though he was not dead, yet he was ill crushed and bruised no doubt, and fainted away; he was in a deliquant, so that it was not without a miracle that he came so soon to himself, and was so well as to be able to go into the city. Note, God's faithful servants, though they may be brought within a step of death, and may be looked upon as dead both by friends and enemies, shall not die as long as he has work for them to do. They are "cast down, but not destroyed," *2 Cor. iv. 9*.

uncertain. Some say the speech is here mentioned to show that the apostles did not understand the intentions of the people till they saw their actual preparations for sacrifice. Schaeffer, in his translation of Lechler, objects to this, and says, in a very good note, that the apostles retired after the cure of the cripple, and so did not know the intentions of the people; and this he supports by referring to the expression "brought oxen"—i.e., to where the apostles had retired.

xiv. 12. "Jupiter!" the supreme deity, father of gods and men.

Barnabas was probably of larger stature than Paul. (See *2 Cor. x. 1, 10*.) "Mercurius;" Paul was so named because he was the chief speaker; Hermes (Mercurius) being regarded as the active messenger and the eloquent herald and interpreter of the gods. Luke does not state the reason for which Barnabas received the name of Zeus (Jupiter); he had doubtless remained in a state of calm repose, and may, on this account (perhaps the elder of the two), as well as on account of his dignified presence, have appeared the superior god. The cause

Secondly. How they went on with their work, notwithstanding the opposition they met with. All the stones they threw at Paul will not beat him off from his work. They drew him out of the city, ver. 19; but, as one that set them at defiance, he came into the city again, to shew that he did not fear them; none, even of these things, move him. However, their being persecuted here is a known indication to them to seek for opportunities of usefulness elsewhere, and therefore for the present they quit Lystra. And,

1. They went to break up and sow fresh ground at Derbe. Thither the next day Paul and Barnabas departed, a city not far off; there they preached the Gospel, there they taught many, ver. 21. And it should seem that Timothy was of that city, and was one of the disciples that now attended Paul; had met him at Antioch, and accompanied him in all this circuit; for, with reference to this story, Paul tells him how fully he had known the afflictions he endured at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11. Nothing is recorded that happened at Derbe.

2. They returned and went over their work again, watering what they had sown. Having stayed as long as they thought fit at Derbe, they came back to Lystra, to Iconium, and Antioch, the cities where they had preached, ver. 21. Now, as we have had a very instructive account of the methods they took in laying the foundation, and beginning the good work, so here we have the like of their building upon that foundation, and carrying on that good work. Let us see what they did.

1st. They "confirmed the souls of the disciples;" that is, they inculcated that upon them which was proper to confirm them, ver. 22. Young converts are apt to waver, and a little thing shocks them. Their old acquaintance beg they will not leave them; those that they look upon to be wiser than they set before them the absurdity, indecency, and danger of a change; they are allured by the prospect of preferment to stick to the traditions of their fathers; they are frightened with the danger of swimming against the stream: all this tempts them to think of making a retreat in time. But the apostles come and tell them that "this is the true grace of God wherein they stand," and therefore they must stand to it; that there is no danger like that of losing their part in Christ, no advantage like that of keeping their hold of him; that whatever their trials may be, they shall have strength from Christ to pass through them; and whatever their losses may be, they shall be abundantly recompensed. And this confirms the souls of the disciples, it fortifies their pious resolutions, in the strength of Christ, to stick to Christ, whatever it cost them. Note, *First*. Those that are converted need to be confirmed—that are planted need to be rooted. Ministers' work is to establish saints, as well as to awaken sinners. *Non minor est virtus quam querere parva tueri.*—To retain is sometimes as difficult as to acquire. Those that were instructed in the truth, must know the certainty of the things in which they have been instructed; and those that are resolved, must be fixed in their resolutions. *Secondly*. True confirmation is confirmation of the soul; it is not binding the body by severe penalties on apostates, but binding the soul. The best ministers can do that only by pressing those things which are proper to bind the soul. It is the grace of God, and nothing less, that can effectually "confirm the souls of the disciples," and prevent their apostasy.

2nd. They "exhorted them to continue in the faith." Or (as it may be read) they "encouraged them." They told them it was both their duty and interest to persevere; to abide in the belief of Christ's being the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. Note, Those that are in the faith, are concerned to continue in the faith, notwithstanding all the temptations they may be under to desert it, from the smiles or frowns of this world. And it is requisite they should often be exhorted to do so. They that are continually surrounded with temptations to apostasy have need to be continually attended with pressing exhortations to perseverance.

3rd. That which they insisted most upon was, that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Not only they must, but we must. It must be counted upon that all that will go to heaven must expect tribulation and persecution in their way thither. But is this the way to "confirm the souls of the disciples," and to engage them to "continue in the faith?" One would think it should rather shock them, and make them weary. No; as the matter is fairly stated and taken entire, it will help to confirm them, and fix them to Christ. It is true they will meet with tribulation, with much tribulation, that is the worst of it; but then, *First*. It is so appointed; they must undergo it, there is no remedy, the matter is already fixed, and cannot be altered. He that has the sovereign disposal of us, has determined it to be our lot, that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" and he that has the sovereign command over us has determined this to be our duty, that all that will be Christ's disciples must take up their cross; so that when we gave up our names to Jesus Christ it was what we agreed to; when we sat down and counted the cost, if we reckoned right, it was what we counted upon; so that, "if tribulation and persecution arose because of the word," it is but what we had notice of before, it must be so, "He performeth the thing that is appointed for us." The matter is fixed unalterably, and shall the rock be for us removed out of its place? *Secondly*. It is the lot of the leaders in Christ's army as well as of the soldiers. It is not only you, but we, that (if it be thought a hardship) are subject to it; therefore, as your own sufferings must not be a stumbling to you, so neither must ours: see 1 Thes. iii. 3, "Let none be moved by our afflictions, for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto." As Christ did not put the apostles upon any harder service than what he underwent before them, so neither did the apostles put the ordinary Christians. *Thirdly*. It is true we must count upon much tribulation, but this is encouraging, that we shall get through it; we shall not be lost and perish in it. It is a Red sea; but the Lord has opened a way through it, "for the redeemed of the Lord to pass over." We must go down to trouble, but we shall come up again. *Fourthly*. We shall not only get through it, but get through it into the kingdom of God; and the joy and glory of the end will make abundant amends for all the difficulties and hardships we may meet with in the way. It is true we must go by the cross, but it is as true that if we keep in the way, and do not turn aside or turn back, we shall go to the crown; and the believing prospect of that will make the tribulation easy and pleasant.

4th. They "ordained them elders," or presbyters, "in every church." Now, at this second visit they settled them in some order, formed them into religious societies under the conduct of a settled ministry, and settled that distinction between them that are taught in the word and them that teach. *First*. Every church had its governors, or presidents, whose office it was to pray with the members of the church, and to preach to them in their solemn assemblies; to administer all gospel ordinances to them, and to take the oversight of them; to instruct the ignorant, warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, and to convince gainsayers. It is requisite that every particular church should have one or more such to preside in it. *Secondly*. Those governors were then elders, that had in their qualification the wisdom and gravity of seniors, and had in their commission the authority and command of seniors; not to make new laws, that is the prerogative of the Prince, the great Lawgiver, (the government of the church is an absolute monarchy, and the legislative power entirely in Christ,) but to see to the observation and execution of the laws Christ has made; and so far they are to be obeyed and submitted to. *Thirdly*. These

elders were ordained. Those that knew the persons that were proposed, or proposed themselves, (whether the apostles or the people put them up,) their qualifications were judged of by the apostles, as most fit to judge, and they themselves, having devoted themselves, were solemnly set apart to the work of the ministry, and bound to it. *Fourthly*. These elders were ordained to them, to the disciples, to their service, for their good. Those that are in the faith have need to be built up in it, and have need of the elders' help therein, the pastors and teachers, who are to edify the body of Christ.

5th. By prayer, joined with fasting, they "commended them to the Lord," to the Lord Jesus, "on whom they believed." Note, *First*. When persons are brought to believe, and that sincerely, yet ministers' care concerning them is not then over. There is need of watching over them still, instructing and admonishing them still; there is still that lacking in their faith, which needs to be perfected. *Secondly*. The ministers that take most care of them that believe must after all commend them to the Lord, and put them under the protection and conduct of his grace: "Lord, keep them through thine own name." To his custody they must commit themselves, and their ministers must commit them. *Thirdly*. It is by prayer that they must be commended to the Lord. Christ in his prayer, *Jno. xvii.* commended his disciples to his Father; "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; Father, keep them." *Fourthly*. It is a great encouragement to us in commending the disciples to the Lord, that we can say, it is he in whom they believed. We commit them to him who have committed themselves to him, and who know they have believed in one who is able to keep what they and we have committed to him against that day, 2 Tim. i. 12. *Fifthly*. It is good to join fasting with prayer, in token of our humiliation for sin, and in order to the adding of vigour to our prayers. *Sixthly*. When we are parting with our friends, the best farewell is to commend them to the Lord, and to leave them with him.

3. They went on preaching the Gospel in other places, where they had been, but, as it should seem, had not made so many converts as that now at their return they could form them into churches; therefore thither they came to pursue and carry on conversion-work. From Antioch they passed throughout Pisidia, the province in which that Antioch stood, thence they came into the province of Pamphylia, the head city of which was Perga, where they had been before, *ch. xiii. 13*, and came thither again to preach the word, ver. 25, making a second offer, to see if they were now better disposed than they were before, to receive the Gospel. What success they had there we are not told, but that from thence they went down to Attalia, a city of Pamphylia, on the sea coast. They stayed not long at a place, but wherever they came endeavoured to lay a foundation which might afterwards be built upon, and to sow the seeds which would in time produce a great increase. Now Christ's parables were explained, in which he resembled the kingdom of heaven to a little leaven, which in time leavened the whole lump; to a grain of mustard seed, which, though very inconsiderable at first, grew to a great tree; and to the seed which a man sowed in his ground, and it sprang up, he knew not how.

Thirdly. How they at length came back to Antioch, in Syria, from whence they were sent forth upon this expedition. From Attalia they came by sea to Antioch, ver. 26. And we are here told,

Why they came thither. Because "from thence they had been recommended to the grace of God," and such a value did they put upon a solemn recommendation to the grace of God, though they had themselves a great interest in Heaven, that they never thought they could shew respect enough to those who had so recommended them. They having recommended them to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled, now they had fulfilled it, they thought they owed them an account of it, that they might help them by their prayers, as they had done by their prayers.

2. What account they gave them of their negotiation, ver. 27. They "gathered the church together." It is probable the Christians at Antioch were more than ordinarily met or could meet in one place; but on this occasion they called together the leading men of them. As the heads of the tribes are often called the congregation of Israel, so the ministers and principal members of the church at Antioch are called the church; or perhaps as many of the people as the place would hold came together on that occasion; or, some met one time, or in one place, and others at another. But when they had them together they gave them an account of two things:

1st. Of the tokens they had had of the Divine presence with them in their labours. They rehearsed all that God had done with them. They did not tell what they had done, that would have savoured of vainglory; but of what "God had done with them," and by them. Note, The praise of all that little good we do at any time must be ascribed to God; for it is he that not only worketh in us both to will and to do, but then worketh with us to make what we do successful. God's grace can do any thing without ministers' preaching; but ministers' preaching, even Paul's, can do nothing without God's grace; and the operations of that grace must be acknowledged in the efficacy of the word.

2nd. Of the fruit of their labours among the heathen. They told how "God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles;" had not only ordered them to be invited to the gospel feast, but had inclined the hearts of many of them to accept the invitation. Note, *First*. There is no entering into the kingdom of Christ but by the door of faith. We must firmly believe in Christ, or we have no part in him. *Secondly*. It is God that opens the door of faith, that opens to us the truths we are to believe, opens our hearts to receive them, and makes this a wide door, and an effectual, into the church of Christ. *Thirdly*. We have reason to be thankful that God has "opened the door of faith to the Gentiles," hath both sent them his Gospel, which is "made known to all nations for the obedience of faith," *Rom. xvi. 26*; and hath also given them hearts to entertain the Gospel. Thus the Gospel was spread, and it shined more and more, and none was able to shut this door which God had opened; not all the powers of hell and earth.

3. How they disposed of themselves for the present. "There they abode long time with the disciples," ver. 28; longer than, perhaps, at first they intended; not because they feared the enemies, but because they loved their friends, and were loath to part from them.

CHAPTER XV.

Hitherto we have, with a great deal of pleasure, attended the apostles in their glorious travels for the propagating of the Gospel in foreign parts; have seen the bounds of the church enlarged, by the accession both of Jews and Gentiles to it; and thanks be to that God who always caused them to triumph! We left them in the close of the foregoing chapter reposing themselves at Antioch, and edifying the church there with the rehearsal of their experiences, and it is pity they should ever be otherwise employed; but in this chapter we find other work, nothing so pleasant, cut out for them. The Christians and ministers are engaged in controversy, and they that should have been now busied in enlarging the dominions of the church have as much as they can do to compose the divisions of it; when they should have been making war upon the devil's kingdom, they have much ado to keep the peace in Christ's kingdom. Yet that occurrence, and the record of it, is of great use to the church, both for warning to us to expect such unhappy discords among Christians, and direction to us what method to

which led the people to assume that the two men were precisely Jupiter and Mercurius, and not two other of the gods, was furnished by the worship which was offered on that spot specially to those two. Thus, Zeus had a temple before the city; and the legend was widely spread, especially in those Phrygian regions, respecting the appearances of Zeus and Hermes in human form; they were, for instance, said to have been entertained on a certain occasion by Philemon and Baucis" (Lechler).

xiv. 13. "Which" refers to Jupiter, his temple or image. "Gates:" the vestibule or court-gate of the house in which the apostles abode.

xiv. 14. "Ran in:" rather, "rushed forth into the crowd," implying that they had been within the house.

xiv. 19. "The Lycaonians were proverbially fickle and faithless." These Jews probably suggested that the miracle had been done by some diabolic agency. (Compare Matt. xii. 24.)

take for the accommodating of them. Here is, I. A controversy raised at Antioch by the Judaizing teachers, who would have the believing Gentiles brought under the yoke of circumcision and the ceremonial law, ver. 1, 2. II. A consultation had with the church at Jerusalem about this matter, and the sending of delegates thither for that purpose, which occasioned the starting of the same question there, ver. 2-5. III. An account of what passed in the synod that was convened upon this occasion, ver. 6; what Peter said, ver. 7-11; what Paul and Barnabas discoursed of, ver. 12; and lastly, what James proposed for the settling of this matter, ver. 13-21. IV. The result of this debate, and the circular letter that was written to the Gentile converts, directing them how to govern themselves with respect to the Jews, ver. 22-29. V. The delivering of this determination to the church at Antioch, and the satisfaction it gave them, ver. 30-35. VI. A second expedition designed by Paul and Barnabas to preach to the Gentiles, in which they quarrelled about their assistant, and parted upon it, one steering one course, and the other another, ver. 36-41.



AND certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they

determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. 3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. 5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

When things go on very smoothly and pleasantly in a state, or in a church, yet it is folly to be secure, and to think the mountain stands strong, and cannot be moved; some uneasiness or other will arise which is not foreseen, cannot be prevented, but must be prepared for. If ever there was a heaven upon earth, sure it was in the church at Antioch at this time, when there were so many excellent ministers there, and blessed Paul among them, building up that church in their most holy faith. But here we have their peace disturbed, and differences arising. Here is,

First. A new doctrine started among them, which occasioned this division, obliging the Gentile converts to submit to circumcision and the ceremonial law, ver. 1. Many that had been proselytes to the Jewish religion became Christians, and they would have such as were proselyted to the Christian religion to become Jews.

1. The persons that urged this were "certain men which came down from Judæa;" some think, such as had been of the Pharisees, ver. 5; or, perhaps, of those priests which were obedient to the faith, ch. vi. 7. They came from Judæa; pretending perhaps to be sent by the apostles at Jerusalem, at least, to be countenanced by them. Having a design to spread their notions, they came to Antioch, because that was the head-quarters of those that preached to the Gentiles, and the rendezvous of the Gentile converts; and, if they could but make an interest there, this leaven would soon be diffused to all the churches of the Gentiles. They insinuated themselves into an acquaintance with the brethren, pretended to be very glad that they had embraced the Christian faith, and congratulated their conversion; but tell them, yet one thing they lack,—they must be circumcised. Note, Those that are never so well taught have need to stand upon their guard, that they be not untaught again, or ill-taught.

2. The position they laid down, the thesis they gave, was this, That except the Gentiles who turned Christians were circumcised after the manner of Moses, and thereby obliged themselves to all the observances of the ceremonial law, they could not be saved. As to this,

1st. Many of the Jews who embraced the faith of Christ yet continued very zealous for the law, ch. xxi. 20. They knew it was from God, and its authority was sacred; valued it for its antiquity, had been bred up in the observance of it, and, it is probable, had been often devoutly affected in their attendance on those observances; they, therefore, kept them up after they were by baptism admitted into the Christian church; kept up the distinction of meats, and used the ceremonial purifyings from ceremonial pollutions, attended the temple service, and celebrated the feasts of the Jews. Herein they were connived at, because the prejudices of education are not to be got over all at once, and in a few years the mistake would be effectually rectified by the destruction of the temple, and the total dissolution of the Jewish church; by which the observation of the Mosaic ritual would become utterly impracticable. But this did not suffice them, that they were herein indulged themselves: they must have the Gentile converts brought under the same obligations which they continued under. Note, There is a strange proneness in us to make our own opinion and practice a rule and a law to every body else; to judge of all about us by our standard, and to conclude that, because we do well, all do wrong that do not do just as we do.

2nd. Those Jews who believed that Christ was the Messiah, as they could not get clear of their affection to the law, so they could not get clear of the notions they had of the Messiah, that he should set up a temporal kingdom in

favour of the Jewish nation, should make that illustrious and victorious. It was a disappointment to them that there was, as yet, nothing done towards this in the way they expected. But now they hear that the doctrine of Christ is received among the Gentiles, and his kingdom begins to be set up in the midst of them, if they can but persuade those that embrace Christ to embrace the law of Moses too, they hope their point will be gained; the Jewish nation will be made as considerable as they can wish, though in another way; and therefore, by all means, let the brethren be pressed to be circumcised and keep the law; and then, with our religion, our dominion will be extended, and we shall, in a little time, be able to shake off the Roman yoke; and not only so, but to put it on the necks of our neighbours, and so shall have such a kingdom of the Messiah as we promised ourselves. Note, Those who have wrong notions of the kingdom of Christ, it is no wonder if they take wrong measures for the advancement of it, and such as really tend to the destruction of it, as this here.

3rd. The controversy about the circumcising of the Gentile proselytes had been on foot among the Jews long before this. This is observed by Dr. Whitby, out of Josephus, *Antiquities*, l. xx. cap. ii.; That when Izates the son of Helen, queen of Adiabene, embraced the Jews' religion, Ananias declared he might do it without circumcision. But Eleazar maintained, that it was a great impiety to remain uncircumcised; and when two eminent Gentiles fled to Josephus, (as he relates in the history of his own life,) the zealots among the Jews were urgent for their circumcision; but Josephus dissuaded them from insisting upon it. Such has been the difference in all ages between bigotry and moderation.

4th. It is observable what a mighty stress they laid upon it. They do not only say, You ought to be circumcised after the manner of Moses, and it will be good service to the kingdom of the Messiah if you be, and will best accommodate matters between you and the Jewish converts, and we shall take it very kindly if you will, and shall converse the more familiarly with you; but, "Except ye be circumcised ye cannot be saved." If you be not herein of our mind and way, you will never go to heaven; and therefore, of course, must go to hell. Note, It is common for proud imposers to enforce their own inventions under pain of damnation, and to tell people, unless they believe just as they would have them believe, and do just as they would have them do, they cannot be saved; it is impossible they should: not only their case is hazardous, but it is desperate. Thus the Jews tell the brethren, that except they be of their church, and come into their communion, and conform to the ceremonies of their worship, though otherwise good men and believers in Christ, yet they cannot be saved; salvation itself cannot save them. None are in Christ but they that are within their pale. We ought to see ourselves well warranted by the Word of God before we say, Except you do so and so, you cannot be saved.

Secondly, The opposition which Paul and Barnabas gave to this schismatical notion, which engrossed salvation to the Jews, now Christ had opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles; ver. 2, "they had no small dissension and disputation with them." They would by no means yield to this doctrine; but appeared and argued publicly against it.

1. As faithful servants of Christ, they would not see his truths betrayed. They knew that Christ came to free us from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and to take down that wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, and unite them both in himself; and therefore cannot bear to hear of circumcising the Gentile converts, when their instructions were only to baptize them. The Jews would unite with the Gentiles; that is, they would have them to conform in every thing to their rites, and then, and not till then, they will look upon them as their brethren; and no thanks to them, But this not being the way in which Christ designeth to unite them, it is not to be admitted.

2. As spiritual fathers to the Gentile converts, they would not see their liberties encroached upon. They had told them, that if they believed in Jesus Christ they should be saved; and now to be told, that that was not enough to save them, except they were circumcised and kept the law of Moses, this was such a discouragement to them at setting out, and would be such a stumblingblock in their way, as might almost tempt them to think of returning into Egypt again; and therefore they set themselves against it.

Thirdly, The expedient pitched upon for the preventing of the mischief of this dangerous notion, and the silencing of those that vented it, and the quieting of the minds of the people, with reference to it. "They determined that Paul and Barnabas, and some others of their number, should go to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders," concerning this doubt. Not that the church at Antioch had any doubt concerning it; they knew the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free: but they sent the case to Jerusalem,

1. Because those who taught this doctrine came from Jerusalem, and pretended to have directions from the apostles there to urge circumcision upon the Gentile converts; it was, therefore, very proper to send to Jerusalem about it, to know if they had any such direction from the church there. And it was soon found to be all wrong, which yet pretended to be of apostolical right. It was true that these went out from them, ver. 24; but they never went with any such orders from them.

2. Because those who were taught this doctrine would be the better confirmed in their opposition to it, and in the less danger of being shocked and disturbed by it, if they were sure that the apostles and elders at Jerusalem (which was that Christian church that of all other retained the most affection to the law of Moses) were against it; and, if they could but have that under their hands, it would be the likeliest means to silence and shame these incendiaries, who had pretended to have it from them.

3. Because the apostles at Jerusalem were fittest to be consulted in a point yet not fully settled, and being most eminent for an infallible spirit, peculiar to them as apostles, their decision would be likely to end the controversy. And it is the subtlety and malice of the great enemy of the church's peace, that it appears by Paul's frequent complaints of these Judaizing teachers, these false apostles, these deceitful workers, these enemies of the cross of Christ, that it had not that effect.

Fourthly, Their journey to Jerusalem upon this errand, ver. 3; where we find,

1. That they were honoured at parting. "They were brought on their way by the church;" which was then much used as a token of respect to useful men, and is directed to be done after a godly sort, 3 *Jno.* 6. Thus the church shewed their favour to them who witnessed against these encroachments on the liberties of the Gentile converts, and stood up for them.

2. That they did good as they went along. They were men that would not lose time, and therefore visited the churches by the way; they passed through Phenice and Samaria, and as they went "declared the conversion of the Gentiles," and what wonderful success the Gospel had had among them; which "caused great joy to all the brethren." Note, The progress of the Gospel is, and ought to be, a matter of great joy. "All the brethren," the faithful brethren in Christ's family, rejoice when more are born into the family; for the family will be never the poorer for the multitude of its children. In Christ and heaven there is portion enough, and inheritance enough for them all.

Fifthly, Their hearty welcome at Jerusalem, ver. 2.

xiv. 25. "Attalia;" or, rather, Attaleia. A sea-port of Pamphylia near the mouth of the Catarrhactes, built by Attalus.

xv. 1. See chap. xi. 1-18. The discontent there recorded seems to have been only silenced for a time. The success of Paul and Barnabas, and the free intercourse which they doubtless maintained with Gentiles, not only abroad, but at Antioch, stirred up the jealousy of the Judaizers. See Gal. ii. 4, where we have a reference to the conduct of these men who came to Antioch from Judæa. They did not act

openly. "They came as 'spies' into an enemy's camp, creeping in 'unawares,' that they might ascertain how far the Jewish law had been relaxed by the Christians at Antioch, their purpose being to bring the whole Church under the bondage of the Mosaic yoke." "Taught;" rather, "were teaching," implying that they remained some time at Antioch. There was no mistaking the drift of their teaching. They did not recommend circumcision, they asserted its necessity to salvation.

1. The good entertainment their friends gave them. They were "received of the church, and of the apostles and elders," were embraced as brethren, and had audience as messengers of the church at Antioch; they received them with all possible expressions of love and friendship.

2. The good entertainment they gave their friends. They "declared all things that God had done with them;" gave them an account of the success of their ministry among the Gentiles; not what they had done, but what God had done with them; what he had, by his grace in them, enabled them to do; and what he had, by his grace in their hearers, enabled them to receive. As they went they had planted, as they came back they had watered; but in both they were ready to own it was God that gave the increase. Note, it is a great honour to be employed for God, to be workers for him; for those that are so have him a worker with them, and he must have all the glory.

Sixthly, The opposition they met with from the same party at Jerusalem, ver. 5. When Barnabas and Paul gave an account of the multitude of the Gentiles, and of the great harvest of souls gathered in to Christ there, and all about them congratulated them upon it, "there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees, who received the tidings very coldly, and though they believed in the Christ, yet were not satisfied in the admission of those converts, but thought it was needful to circumcise them. Observe here,

1. That those who have been most prejudiced against the Gospel, yet have been captivated by it; so mighty has it been through God to the pulling down of strongholds. When Christ was here upon earth, few or none of the rulers and of the Pharisees believed on him; but now there are those of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, and many of them, we hope, in sincerity.

2. That it is very hard for men suddenly to get clear of their prejudices. These that had been Pharisees, even after they became Christians, retained some of the old leaven. All did not so; witness Paul; but some did, and had such a jealousy for the ceremonial law, and such a dislike of the Gentiles, that they could not admit the Gentiles into communion with them, unless they would be circumcised, and thereby engage themselves to keep the law of Moses. This was, in their opinion, needful; and, for their parts, they would not converse with them unless they submitted to it.

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. 7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us; 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. 12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. 13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: 14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. 18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. 19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. 21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

We have here a council called, not by writ, but by consent, on this occasion ver. 6. "The apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." They did not give their judgment separately, but came together to do it, that they might hear one another's sense in this matter; for in the multitude of counsellors there is safety and satisfaction. They did not give their judgment rashly, but considered of this matter. Though they were clear concerning it in their minds, yet they would take time to consider it, and to hear what was to be said by the adverse party; nor did the apostles give their judgment concerning it without the elders, the inferior ministers, to whom they thus condescended, and on whom they thus put an honour. Those that are most eminent in gifts and graces, and are of the most exalted stations in the church, ought to shew respect to their juniors and inferiors; for though days should speak, yet there is a spirit in man, *Job xxxii. 7, 8*. Here is a direction to the pastors of the churches when difficulties arise to come together in solemn meetings for mutual advice and encouragement, that they may know one another's minds, and strengthen one another's hands, and may act in concert. Now here we have,

First, Peter's speech in this synod. He did not in the least pretend to any primacy or headship in this synod; he was not master of this assembly, not so much as chairman, or moderator, *pro hac vice*,—"on this occasion." For we do not find that either he spoke first to open the synod, there having been much disputing before he rose up, nor that he spoke last to sum up the cause, and collect the suffrages; but he was a faithful, prudent, zealous member of this assembly, and offered that which was very much to the purpose, and which would come better from him than from another, because he had himself been the first that preached the Gospel to the Gentiles. "There had been much disputing," *pro* and *con*, upon this question, and liberty of speech allowed, as ought to be in such cases. Those of the sect of the Pharisees were some of them present, and allowed to say what they could in defence of those of their opinion at Antioch, which probably was answered by some of the elders; such questions ought to be fairly disputed before they are decided. When both sides had been heard, Peter rose up and addressed himself to the assembly, Men and brethren, as did James afterwards, ver. 13. And here,

1. He puts them in mind of the call and commission he had some time ago to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles; he wondered there should be any difficulty made of a matter already settled. Ye know that *ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἀρχαίας*, from the beginning of the days of the Gospel, many years ago, "God made choice among us" apostles, of one to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, and I was the person chosen, "that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word, and believe," ver. 7; you know I was questioned about it, and cleared myself to universal satisfaction; everybody rejoiced that "God had granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life," and nobody said a word of circumcising them, nor was there any thought of such a thing: see *ch. xi. 18*. Why should the Gentiles who hear the word of the Gospel by Paul's mouth be compelled to submit to circumcision any more than those that heard it by my mouth? or why should the terms of their admission now be made harder than they were then?

2. He puts them in mind how remarkably God owned him in preaching to the Gentiles, and gave testimony to their sincerity in embracing the Christian faith: ver. 8, "God, who knows the hearts," and therefore is able to judge infallibly of men, he "bore them witness," that they were his indeed, by "giving them the Holy Ghost," not only the graces and comforts, but the extraordinary, miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, "even as he did unto us" apostles: see *ch. xi. 16, 17*. Note, 1st. "The Lord knows them that are his," for he knows men's hearts; and we are as our hearts are. 2nd. Those to whom God gives the Holy Ghost, he thereby bears witness to that they are his. Here we are said to be sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise—marked for God. God had bidden the Gentiles welcome to the privilege of communion with him, without requiring them to be circumcised, and to keep the law; and, therefore, shall not we admit them into communion with us, but upon those terms? ver. 9, "God has put no difference between us and them;" they, though Gentiles, are welcome to the grace of Christ, and the throne of grace, as we Jews are; why then should we set them at a distance, as if we were holier than they? *Isa. lxxv. 5*. Note, We ought not to make any other conditions of our brethren's acceptance with us, but such as God has made the conditions of their acceptance with him, *Rom. xiv. 3*. Now the Gentiles were fitted for communion with God, in having their hearts purified by faith, and that faith God's own work in them; and therefore why should we think them unfit for communion with us, unless they will submit to the ceremonial purifying enjoined by the law to us? Note, 1st. By faith the heart is purified; we are not only justified, and conscience purified, but the work of sanctification is begun and carried on. 2nd. Those that have their hearts purified by faith therein are made so nearly to resemble one another, that, whatever other difference there may be between them, no account is to be made of it; for the faith of all the saints is alike precious, and has like precious effects, *2 Pet. i. 1*; and they that by it are united to Christ are so to look upon themselves as joined to one another, as that all distinctions, even that between Jew and Gentile, are merged and swallowed up in it.

3. He sharply reproves those teachers (some of whom it is likely were present) who went about to bring the Gentiles under the obligation of the law of Moses, ver. 10. The thing is so plain that he cannot forbear speaking of it with some warmth; "Now, therefore," since God has owned them for his, "why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples," of the believing Gentiles and their children—for circumcision was a yoke upon their infant seed, who are here reckoned among the disciples—a yoke "which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Here he shews that in this attempt, 1st. They offered a very great affront to God; You tempt him by calling that in question which he hath already settled and determined by no less an indication than that of the gift of the Holy Ghost; you do in effect ask, Did he know what he did? or was he in earnest in it? or will he abide by his own act? Will you try whether God, who designed the ceremonial law for the people of the Jews only, will now in its last ages, bring the Gentiles too under the obligation of it, to gratify you? Those tempt God who prescribe to him, and say, People cannot be saved but upon such and such terms, which God never appointed, as if the God of salvation must come into their measures. 2nd. They offered a very great wrong to the disciples. Christ came to proclaim liberty to the captives, and they go about to enslave those whom he has made free: see *Neh. v. 8*. The ceremonial law was a heavy yoke; they and their fathers found it difficult to be borne, so numerous, so various, so pompous were the institutions of it. The distinction of meats was a heavy yoke, not only as it rendered conversation less pleasant, but as it embarrassed conscience with endless scruples. The ado that was made about even the unavoidable touch of a grave, or a dead body, the pollution contracted by it, and the many rules about purifying from that pollution, was a heavy burthen. This yoke Christ came to ease us of, and called those that were weary and heavy laden under it to come and take his yoke upon them, his easy yoke. Now for these teachers to go about to lay that yoke upon the neck of the Gentiles, which he came to free even the Jews from, was the greatest injury imaginable to them.

4. Whereas the Jewish teachers had urged that circumcision was necessary to salvation, Peter shews it was so far from being so, that both Jews and Gentiles were to be saved purely "through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

xv. 2. See Gal. ii. 1, which alludes to this same visit to Jerusalem. Professor Lightfoot gives the following reasons, amongst others, for identifying the two visits. The geography is the same in both accounts (Antioch and Jerusalem). The time the same, or not inconsistent; St. Paul placing it fifteen or sixteen years after his conversion (the fourteenth year of Gal. ii. 1 being dated from the visit mentioned Gal. i.), and St. Luke's narrative implies that they took place about A.C. 51. The persons are the same; the agitators similarly described.

The two apostles of the Gentiles are represented in both accounts as attended. The subject of dispute the same; the results the same. (See Lightfoot on Galatians, pp. 122—124.) In Gal. ii. 2, St. Paul says he went up "by revelation," here he is sent by the Church. Both accounts are doubtless true. In Galatians he mentions the inward motion; here the external impulse alone is noticed. (Compare chap. ix. 29, 30, xxii. 17.) Titus (Gal. ii. 1) was one of these "certain others."

and no other way, ver. 11; 'we believe to be saved through that grace' only, *ἐκ τούτου τῆς χάριτος*, we hope to be saved, or 'we believe unto salvation in the same manner as they,' *καθ' ὃν τρόπον ἐλπίσωμεν*. We that are circumcised believe to salvation, and so do they that are uncircumcised; and as our circumcision will be no advantage to us, so their uncircumcision will be no disadvantage to them; for we must depend upon the grace of Christ for salvation, and must apply that grace by faith as well as they. There is not one way of salvation for the Jews and another for the Gentiles; "neither circumcision avails any thing nor uncircumcision," that is neither here nor there, "but faith which works by love," *Gal. v. 6*. Why should we burden them with the law of Moses as necessary to their salvation, when it is not that, but the Gospel of Christ, that is necessary both to our salvation and theirs?

Secondly, An account of what Barnabas and Paul said in this synod, which did not need to be related; for they only gave in a narrative of what was recorded in the foregoing chapters, "what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them," ver. 12. This they had given in to the church at Antioch, *ch. xiv. 27*; to their brethren by the way, *ch. xv. 3*; and now again to the synod. And it was very proper to be given in here. That which was contended for was, that the Gentiles ought to submit to the law of Moses; now, in opposition to this, Paul and Barnabas undertake to shew, by a plain relation of matters of fact, that God owned the preaching of the pure Gospel to them without the law, and therefore to press the law upon them now was to undo what God had done. Observe,

1. What account they gave. They declared or opened in order, and with all the magnifying and affecting circumstances, what glorious miracles, "what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them;" what confirmation he had given to their preaching by miracles wrought in the kingdom of nature; and what success he had given to it by miracles wrought in the kingdom of grace. Thus God had honoured these apostles whom the Jewish teachers condemned; and had thus honoured the Gentiles whom they contemned. What needed they any other advocate, when God himself pleaded their cause? The conversion of the Gentiles was itself a wonder; all things considered, no less than a miracle. Now, if they received the Holy Ghost by the hearing of faith, why should they be embarrassed with the works of the law? see *Gal. iii. 2*.

2. What attention was given to them. "All the multitude" (who, though they had not votes, yet came together to hear what was said,) "kept silence, and gave audience to Paul and Barnabas." It should seem they took more notice of their narrative than they did of all the arguments that were offered. As in natural philosophy and medicine nothing so satisfactory as experiments, and in law nothing so satisfactory as cases adjudged, so in the things of God the best explication of the word of grace is the accounts given of the operations of the Spirit of grace; these the multitude will with silence give audience to. They that fear God will most readily hear them that can tell them what God has done for their souls, or by their means, *Ps. lxxvi. 16*.

Thirdly, The speech which James made to the synod. He did not interrupt Paul and Barnabas, though it is likely he had before heard their narrative, but let them go on with it for the edification of the company, and that they might have it from the first and best hand; but, "after they had held their peace," then James stood up. "Ye may all prophesy, one by one," *1 Cor. xiv. 31*. God is the God of order. He let Paul and Barnabas say what they had to say, and then he made the application of it; the hearing of variety of ministers may be of use, when one truth doth not drive out, but clench, another.

1. He addresseth himself respectfully to those present. "Men and brethren, hearken unto me;" ye are men, and therefore it is to be hoped will hear reason, you are my brethren, and therefore will hear me with candour. We are all brethren, and equally concerned in this cause that nothing be done to the dishonour of Christ and the uneasiness of Christians.

2. He refers himself to what Peter had said concerning the conversion of the Gentiles: ver. 14, "Simeon," that is, Simon Peter, "hath declared" and opened the matter to you "how God at the first did visit the Gentiles" in Cornelius and his friends, who were the firstfruits of the Gentiles; how, when the Gospel began first to spread, presently the Gentiles were invited to come and take the benefit of it. And James observes here, 1st. That the grace of God was the rise of it. It was God that visited the Gentiles; and it was a kind visit. Had they been left to themselves they would never have visited him, but the acquaintance began on his part. He not only visited and redeemed his people, but visited and redeemed those that were "Lo-ammi," 'not a people.' 2nd. That the glory of God was the end of it. It was "to take out of them a people for his name," who should glorify him, and in whom he would be glorified. As of old he took the Jews, so now the Gentiles, to be to him "for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory," *Jer. xiii. 11*. Let all the people of God remember that therefore they are thus dignified in God, that God may be glorified in them.

3. He confirms this with a quotation out of the Old Testament. He could not prove the calling of the Gentiles by a vision as Peter could, or by miracles wrought by his hand as Paul and Barnabas could. But he would prove that it was foretold in the Old Testament, and therefore it must be fulfilled; ver. 15, "To this agree the words of the prophets," most of the Old Testament prophets spoke more or less of the calling in of the Gentiles, even Moses himself, *Rom. x. 19*. It was the general expectation of the pious Jews, that the Messiah should be a light to lighten the Gentiles, *Lu. ii. 32*. But James waves the more illustrious prophecies of this, and pitches upon one that seemed more obscure; "it is written," *Am. ix. 12*, where is foretold,

1st. The setting up of the kingdom of the Messiah; ver. 16, "I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen." The covenant was made with David and his seed, but the house and family of David is here called his tabernacle, because David in his beginning was a shepherd, and dwelt in tents; and his house that had been as a stately palace, was become a mean and despicable tabernacle, reduced in a manner to its small beginning; this tabernacle was ruined and fallen down. There had not been for many ages a king of the house of David; the sceptre was departed from Judah, the royal family was sunk, and buried in obscurity, and, as it should seem, not inquired after; but God will return and will build it again, raise it out of its ruins, a phoenix out of its ashes, and this was now lately fulfilled when our Lord Jesus was raised out of that family, had "the throne of his father David given him," with a promise that "he should reign over the house of Jacob for ever," *Lu. i. 32*. And when the tabernacle of David was thus rebuilt in Christ, all the rest of it was not many years after wholly extirpated and cut off, as was also the nation of the Jews itself, and all their genealogies lost. The church of Christ may be called the tabernacle of David; this may sometimes be brought very low, and may seem to be in ruins, but it shall be built again, its withering interests shall revive; it is cast down but not destroyed, even dry bones are made to live.

2nd. The bringing in of the Gentiles as the effect and consequence of this; ver. 17, "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord." Not the Jews only, who thought they had the monopoly of the tabernacle of David, but the residue of men, such as had hitherto been left out of the pale of the visible church. They must now, upon this re-edifying of the tabernacle of David, be brought to seek after the Lord, and to inquire how they may obtain his favour;

when David's tabernacle is set up, they shall seek the Lord their God, and David their king, *Hos. iii. 5*; *Jer. xxx. 9*. Then Israel shall possess the remnant of Edom, so it is in the Hebrew; but the Jews called all the Gentiles Edomites, and, therefore, the Septuagint there leaves out the particular mention of Edom, and read it just as it is here, "that the residue of men might seek." (St. James here adds, "after the Lord,") "and all the Gentiles, or heathen, upon whom my name is called." The Jews were for many ages so peculiarly favoured, that the residue of men seemed neglected; but now God will have an eye to them, and his name shall be called upon the Gentiles. His name shall be declared and published among them, and they shall be brought both to know his name and to call upon it. They shall call themselves the people of God, and he shall call them so; and thus, by consent of both parties, his name is called upon them. This promise we may depend upon the fulfilling of in its season, and now it begins to be fulfilled, for it is added, "saith the Lord, who doeth this," who doeth "all these things," so the Seventy there, and the apostle here. He saith it who doeth it, who therefore said it because he was determined to do it; and who therefore doth it because he had said it: for though with us saying and doing are two things, they are not so with God. The uniting of Jews and Gentiles in one body, and all these things that were done in order to it, which was here foretold, were, 1st. What God did; this was the Lord's doing, whatever instruments were employed in it. And, 2ndly. It was what God delighted in, and was well pleased with; for he is the God of the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and it is his honour to be "rich in mercy to all that call upon him."

4. He resolves it into the purpose and counsel of God; ver. 18, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." He not only foretold the calling of the Gentiles, many ages ago, by the prophets; and, therefore, it ought not to be a surprise or stumblingblock to us, but he foresaw and fore-ordained it in his eternal counsels, which are unquestionably wise and unalterably firm. It is an excellent maxim here laid down concerning all God's works, both of providence and grace, in the natural and spiritual kingdom, that they were all "known unto him from the beginning of the world," from the time he first began to work, which supposeth his knowing them, as other scriptures speak, "from before the foundation of the world," and therefore from all eternity. Note, Whatever God doth he did before design and determine to do; for it is said, *Eph. i. 11*, he works all, not only according to his will, but "according to the counsel of his will." He not only doth whatever he determined, *Ps. cxxxv. 6*, which is more than we can do; our purposes are frequently broken off, and our measures broken; but he determined what he doth. Whatever he may say to prove us, he himself knoweth what he will do. We know not our works beforehand, but must do as occasion shall serve, *1 Sam. x. 7*. What we shall do in such or such a case, we cannot tell till it comes to the setting to; but "known unto God are all his works." In the volume of his book, called the Scriptures of truth, *Dan. x. 21*, they are all written in order, without any rasure or interlining, *Ps. xl. 7*. And all God's works will in the day of review be found to agree exactly with his counsels, without the least error or variation. We are poor short-sighted creatures, the wisest men can see but a little way before them, and not at all with any certainty; but this is our comfort, that whatever uncertainty we are at, there is an infallible certainty in the Divine prescience; "known unto God are all his works."

5. He gives his advice what was to be done in the present case, as the matter now stood, with reference to the Gentiles; ver. 9, "My sentence is," *ἐν τῷ κρίματι*, I give it as my opinion, or judgment; not as having authority over the rest, but as being an adviser with them. Now his advice is,

1st. That circumcision and the observation of the ceremonial law be by no means imposed upon the Gentile converts; no, nor so much as recommended or mentioned to them. There are many from among the Gentiles that are turned to God, in Christ, and we hope there will be many more. Now I am clearly for using them with all possible tenderness, and putting no manner of hardship or discouragement upon them, *μὴ παρενοχλεῖν*, not to give them any molestation or disturbance, or suggest any thing to them that may be disquieting, or raise scruples in their minds, or perplex them. Note, Great care must be taken not to discourage or disquiet young converts with matters of doubtful dispute. Let the essentials of religion, which an awakened conscience will readily receive, be first impressed deeply upon them, and those will satisfy them and make them easy; and let not things foreign and circumstantial be urged upon them, which will but trouble them. The kingdom of God, which they are to be trained up in, is not meat and drink; either the opposition, or the imposition of indifferent things, which will but trouble them; but "it is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," which we are sure will trouble nobody.

2nd. That yet it would be well, that in some things which gave most offence to the Jews, the Gentiles should comply with them. Because they must not humour them so far as to be circumcised and keep the whole law, it doth not therefore follow that they must act in a continual contradiction to them, and study how to provoke them. It will please the Jews, (and if a little thing will oblige them, better do so than cross them,) if the Gentile converts abstain, 1st. "From pollutions of idols, and from fornication;" which are two bad things, and always to be abstained from; but writing to them particularly and expressly to abstain from them (because in these things the Jews were jealous of the Gentile converts lest they should transgress) would very much gratify the Jews. Not but that the apostles, both in preaching and writing to the Gentiles that embraced Christianity, were careful to warn against, 1st. Pollutions of idols; that they should have no manner of fellowship with idolaters in their idolatrous worship, and particularly not in the feasts they held upon their sacrifices: see *1 Cor. x. 14*, &c.; *2 Cor. vi. 14*, &c. 2nd. Fornication, and all manner of uncleanness. How low pressing is St. Paul in his cautions against this sin! *1 Cor. vi. 9, 15*; *Eph. v. 3*, &c. But the Jews, who were willing to think the worst of those they did not like, suggested, that these were things which the Gentiles, even after conversion, allowed themselves in, and the apostles of the Gentiles connived at it. Now to obviate this suggestion, and to leave no room for this calumny, St. James adviseth that, besides the private admonitions which were given them by their ministers, they should be publicly warned to "abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication;" that herein they should be very strict, and should avoid all appearance of those two evils, which would be in so particular a manner offensive to the Jews. 3rdly, "From things strangled, and from blood;" which, though not evil in themselves, as the other two, nor designed to be always abstained from, as those were, yet they had been forbidden by the precepts of Noah, *Gen. ix. 4*, before the giving of the law of Moses. And the Jews had a great dislike to them, and to all those that took a liberty to use them; and, therefore, to avoid giving offence, let the Gentile converts abridge themselves of their liberty herein, *1 Cor. viii. 9, 13*. Thus we must become all things to all men.

6. He gives a reason for his advice—that great respect ought to be shewed to the Jews; for they have been so long accustomed to the solemn injunctions of the ceremonial law, that they must be borne with, if they cannot presently come off from them, ver. 27; for "Moses hath of old them that preach him in every city," his writings (a considerable part of which is the ceremonial law) "being read in the synagogues every sabbath day." You cannot blame them if they have a great veneration for the law of Moses, for, besides that they

xv. 6. In *Gal. ii*. St. Paul speaks of a private interview with the apostles. This probably took place previous to the general council, that there might be no misunderstanding in public. It was a prudent course on the part of St. Paul, and was quite characteristic of him.

xv. 7. It was probably about fifteen years since the conversion of Cornelius. Peter lays stress on the length of time which had elapsed, to show that the question in dispute had been settled long ago.

xv. 11. Compare *Gal. ii. 14*, where Paul uses very much the same argument to Peter at Antioch.

xv. 12. "Kept silence;" the "much disputing" (verse 7) was arrested by Peter's speech, which tranquillised the minds of his hearers.

xv. 13. "James;" the brother of the Lord. He was called by Jews and Christians "the Just," from the sanctity of his character. "If we may presume to judge from the character of his

are very sure God spake by Moses, 1st. Moses is continually preached to them, and they are called upon to remember the law of Moses, *Mal. iv. 4*. Note, Even that word of God which is written to us should also be preached. Those that have the Scriptures, yet have need of ministers to help them to understand and apply the Scriptures. 2nd. His writings are read in a solemn, religious manner, in their synagogues, and on the sabbath day, in the place, and at the time of their meetings for the worship of God, so that from their childhood they have been trained up in a regard to the law of Moses; the observance of it is a part of their religion. 3rd. This has been done of old time; they have received from their fathers an honour for Moses; they have antiquity for it. 4th. This has been done in every city, wherever there are any Jews, so that none of them can be ignorant what stress that law laid upon these things. And therefore, though the Gospel hath set us free from these things, yet they cannot be blamed if they are loath to part with them, and cannot of a sudden be persuaded to look upon those things as needless and indifferent which they and their fathers before them had been so long taught, and taught of God too, to place religion in. And therefore we must give them time, must meet them half-way; they must be borne with a while, and brought on gradually, and we must comply with them as far as we can without betraying our gospel liberty. Thus doth this apostle shew the spirit of a moderator, that is, a spirit of moderation, being careful to give no offence either to Jew or Gentile, and contriving as much as may be to please both sides, and provoke neither. Note, We are not to think it strange if people be wedded to customs which they have had transmitted to them from their fathers, and which they have been educated in an opinion of as sacred; and therefore allowances must be made in such cases, and not rigour used.

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: 24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must be circumcised*, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such

commandment: 25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. 30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: 31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. 32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them*. 33 And after they had tarried *there* a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles. 34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still. 35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.



ANTIOCH.

We have here the result of the consultation that was had at Jerusalem, about the imposing of the ceremonial law upon the Gentiles. Much more, it is likely, was said about it than is here recorded; but at length it was brought to a head, and the advice which James gave was universally approved of, and agreed to, *namine contradicente*,—'unanimously'; and letters were accordingly sent by messengers of their own to the Gentile converts, acquainting them with their sentiments in this matter, which would be a great confirmation to them against the false teachers. Now, observe here,

First. The choice of the delegates that were to be sent with Paul and Barnabas on this errand: not as if they had any suspicion of the fidelity of these great men, and could not trust them with their letters, or as if they thought those to whom they sent them would suspect them to have altered any thing in their letter; no, their charity thought no such evil concerning men of such tried integrity, but,

1. They thought fit to send "men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas," ver. 22. This was agreed to by "the apostles and elders, with the whole church," who it is likely undertook to bear their charges, *1 Cor. ix. 7*. They sent these messengers, 1st. To shew their respect to the church at Antioch, as a sister church, though a younger sister, and that they looked upon it as upon the same level with them; as also, that they were desirous farther to know their state. 2nd. To encourage Paul and Barnabas, and to make their journey home the more pleasant (for it is likely they travelled on foot) by sending such excellent men to bear them company; *amicus pro vehiculo*,—"a friend instead of a carriage." 3rd. To put a reputation upon the letters they carried, that it might appear a solemn embassy, and so much the more regard might be had to the message, which was likely to meet with opposition from some. 4th. To keep up the communion of saints, and cultivate an acquaintance between churches and ministers that were at a distance from each other, and to shew that, though they were many, yet they were one.

2. Those they sent were not inferior persons, who might serve to carry the letters, and attest the receipt of them from the apostles; but they were chosen men, and chief men among the brethren, men of eminent gifts, graces, and usefulness; for those are the things which denominate men chief among the brethren, and qualify them to be the messengers of the churches. They are here named: Judas, who was called Barsabas, probably the brother of that Joseph who was called Barsabas, that was a candidate for the apostleship, *ch. i. 23*. The character which these men had in the church at Jerusalem would have some influence upon them that came from Judaea, as those false teachers

did, and engage them to pay the more deference to the message that was sent by them.

Secondly. The drawing up of the letters, circular letters, that were to be sent to the churches, to notify the sense of the synod in this matter.

1. Here is a very condescending, obliging preamble to this decree, ver. 23. Here is nothing in it haughty or assuming, but, 1st. That which speaks the humility of the apostles, that they join the elders and brethren in commission with them; the ministers, the ordinary Christians, whom they had advised with in this case as they used to do in other cases. Though never men were so qualified as they were for a monarchical power and conduct in the church, nor had such a commission as they had, yet their decrees run not, We the apostles, Christ's vicars upon earth, and pastors of all the pastors of the churches, (as the pope styles himself,) and sole judges in all matters of faith; but "the apostles, and elders, and brethren," agree in their orders. Herein they remembered the instructions their Master gave them, *Mat. xxiii. 8*, "Be not ye called rabbi; for all ye are brethren." 2nd. That which speaks their respects to the churches they wrote to. They send them greeting, wish them health and happiness, and joy, and call them brethren of the Gentiles; thereby owning their admission into the church, and giving them the right hand of fellowship; You are our brethren, though Gentiles, for we meet in Christ, the firstborn among many brethren, in God our common Father. Now the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and of the same body, they are to be countenanced, and encouraged, and called brethren.

2. Here is a just and severe rebuke to the Judaizing teachers; ver. 23, "We have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words," and we are very much concerned to hear it. Now this is to let them know, that those who preached this doctrine were false teachers, both as they produced a false commission, and as they taught a false doctrine. 1st. They did a great deal of wrong to the apostles and ministers at Jerusalem, in pretending that they had instructions from them, to impose the ceremonial law upon the Gentiles, when there was no colour for such a pretension. They went out from us indeed; they were such as belonged to our church, which, when they had a mind to travel, we gave them perhaps a testimonial of; but as for their urging the law of Moses upon you, we gave them "no such commandment," nor had we ever thought of such a thing, nor given them the least occasion to use our names in it. It is no new thing for apostolical authority to be pleaded in defence of those doctrines and practices which yet the apostles gave neither command nor encouragement for. 2nd. They did a great deal

epistle, to say nothing of the particulars which tradition has handed down concerning him, his decision would come with remarkable weight on this occasion; for he is, among all sacred writers of the New Testament, the representative of the strictest adherence to and loftiest appreciation of the pure standard of legal morality. All that the law was, from its intrinsic holiness, justice, and goodness, capable of being to Christians, he would be sure to attribute to it. And therefore, when his judgment, as well as that of Peter, is given

in favour of the freedom of the Gentiles, the disputers, even the Pharisaic party, are silenced" (Alford).

xv. 23. "Cilicia." From this we gather that the disturbing teaching of these Judaizers had spread farther than Antioch, into Cilicia. Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, was Paul's native town.

xv. 24. "Subverting;" the word means turning up the foundations. The teaching of these Judaizers threatened the foundations of their faith. (See Gal. v. 4.)

of wrong to the Gentile converts, in saying, "Ye must be circumcised, and must keep the law." *First.* It perplexed them. They have troubled you with words; have occasioned disturbance and disquietment to you; you depended upon those who told you, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall be saved; and now you are startled by those that tell you, you must keep the law of Moses, or you cannot be saved; by which you see yourselves drawn into a snare. They trouble you with words; words, and nothing else; very words; sound, but no substance. How has the church been troubled with words, by the pride of men that loved to hear themselves talk! *Secondly.* It endangered them; they subverted their souls, put them into disorder, and pulled down that which had been built up. They took them off from pursuing pure Christianity, and minding the business of that, by filling their heads with the necessity of circumcision, and the law of Moses, which were nothing to the purpose.

3. Here is an honourable testimony given of the messengers by whom these letters were sent. 1st. Of Paul and Barnabas, whom these Judaizing teachers had opposed and censured, as having done their work by the halves, because they had brought the Gentile converts to Christianity only, and not to Judaism. Let them say what they will of these men, *First.* They are men that are dear to us; they are our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men whom we have a value for, a kindness for, a concern for. Sometimes it is good for those that are of eminency to express their esteem, not only for the despised truth of Christ, but for the despised preachers and defenders of that truth, to encourage them, and weaken the hands of their opposers. *Secondly.* They are men that have signalized themselves in the service of Christ, and therefore have deserved well of all the churches; they are "men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," ver. 26; and therefore are worthy of double honour, and cannot be suspected of having sought any secular advantage to themselves; for they have ventured their all for Christ, have engaged in the most dangerous services, as good soldiers of Christ, and not only in laborious services. It is not likely that such faithful confessors should be unfaithful preachers. They that urged circumcision did it to avoid persecution, *Gal. vi. 12, 13.* They that opposed it knew they thereby exposed themselves to persecution; and which of these were most likely to be in the right? 2nd. Of Judas and Silas. They are chosen men, ver. 25; and they are men that have heard our debates, and are perfectly apprised of the matter, and will "tell you the same things by mouth," ver. 27. What is of use to us it is good to have both in writing and by word of mouth, that we may have the advantage both of reading and of hearing it. The apostles refer themselves to the bearers for a farther account of their judgment and their reasons; and the bearers will refer themselves to their letters for the certainty of their determination.

4. Here is the direction given, what to require from the Gentile converts. Where observe,

1st. The matter of the injunction, which is according to the advice given by St. James, that to avoid giving offence to the Jews, *First.* They should never eat any thing that they knew had been offered in sacrifice to an idol; but look upon it as, though clean in itself, yet thereby polluted to them. This prohibition was afterwards in part taken off, for they were allowed to eat whatever was sold in the shambles, or set before them at their friends' table, though it had been offered to idols, except when there was danger of giving offence by it, that is, of giving occasion either to a weak Christian to think the worse of our Christianity, or to a wicked heathen to think the better of his idolatry; and in those cases it is good to forbear, *1 Cor. x. 25, &c.* This to us is an antiquated case. *Secondly.* That they should not eat blood, or drink it; out avoid every thing that looked cruel and barbarous in that ceremony which had been of so long standing. *Thirdly.* That they should not eat any thing that was strangled, or died of itself, or had not the blood let out. *Fourthly.* That they should be very strict in censuring those that were guilty of fornication, or marrying within the degrees prohibited by the Levitical law, which some think is principally intended here: see *1 Cor. v. 1.* Dr. Hammond states this matter thus: The Judaizing teachers would have the Gentile converts to submit to all that those submitted to whom they called the proselytes of righteousness, to be circumcised, and keep the whole law. But the apostles required no more of them than what was required of the proselytes of the gate, which was to observe the seven precepts of the sons of Noah, which he thinks are here referred to. But the only ground of this decree being in compliance to the rigid Jews that had embraced the Christian faith, and, except in that one case of scandal, all meats being pronounced free and indifferent to all Christians, as soon as the reason of the decree ceased, which at farthest was after the destruction of Jerusalem, the obligation of it ceased likewise. "These things are in a particular manner offensive to the Jews, and therefore do not disoblige them herein for the present; in a little time the Jews will incorporate with the Gentiles, and then the danger is over."

2nd. The manner how it is worded. *First.* They express themselves with something of authority, that what they wrote might be received with respect, and deference paid to it; "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us," that is, to us under the conduct of the Holy Ghost, and by direction from him. Not only the apostles, but others were endued with spiritual gifts extraordinary, and knew more of the mind of God than any since those gifts ceased can pretend to; their infallibility gave an incontestable authority to their decrees; and they would not order any thing, because it seemed good to them, but that they knew it first seemed good to the Holy Ghost. Or, it refers to what the Holy Ghost had determined in this matter formerly. When the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles he endued them with the gift of tongues, in order to their preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, which was a plain indication of God's purpose to call them in. When the Holy Ghost descended upon Cornelius and his friends, upon Peter's preaching, it was plain Christ designed the taking down of the Jewish pale, within which they fancied the Spirit had been inclosed. *Secondly.* They express themselves with abundance of tenderness, and fatherly concern. 1st. They are afraid of burdening them; We will lay upon you no greater burthen. So far were they from delighting to impose upon them, that they dreaded nothing so much as imposing too far upon them, so as to discourage them at their setting out. 2nd. They impose upon them no other, but necessary things. The avoiding of fornication is necessary to all Christians, at all times; the avoiding of things strangled, and of blood, and of things offered to idols, is necessary at this time, for the keeping up of a good understanding between you and the Jews, and the preventing of offence; and as long as it continues necessary for that end, and no longer, it is enjoined. Note, Church rulers should impose only necessary things,—things that Christ has made duty, and have a real tendency to the edification of the church, and, as these here, to the uniting of good Christians. If they impose things only to shew their own authority, and to try people's obedience, they forget that they have not authority to make new laws, but only to see that the laws of Christ be duly executed, and to enforce the observation of them. 3rd. They enforce their order with a commendation of those that shall transgress it. They do not conclude, "From which, if you do not keep yourselves, ye shall be an anathema," ye shall be cast out of the church, and accursed, according to the style of after councils, and particularly that of Trent; but, "From which, if you keep yourselves," as we

do not question but ye will, "ye shall do well." It will be for the glory of God, the furtherance of the Gospel, the strengthening of the hands of your brethren, and your own credit and comfort. It is all sweetness, and love, and good humour, such as became the followers of Him, who, when he called us to take his yoke upon us, assured us we should find him meek and lowly in heart. The difference of the style of the true apostles from that of the false is very observable; they that were for imposing the ceremonial law were positive and imperious, Except ye keep it, ye cannot be saved, ver. 1; you are excommunicated *ipso facto*,—"at once," and delivered to Satan. The apostles of Christ, that only recommend necessary things, are mild and gentle; "From which if ye keep yourselves ye shall do well," and as becomes you; "fare ye well." We are hearty well-wishers to your honour and peace.

Thirdly. The delivering of the letters, and how the messengers disposed of themselves.

1. When they were dismissed, had had their audience of leave of the apostles, (it is probable they were dismissed with prayer, and a solemn blessing in the name of the Lord, and with instructions and encouragements in their work,) they then came to Antioch; they stayed no longer at Jerusalem than till their business was done, and then came back; and perhaps were met at their return by them that brought them on their way at their setting out; for those that have taken pains in public service ought to be contented and encouraged.

2. As soon as they came to Antioch, they "gathered the multitude together, delivered the epistle" to them, ver. 30, 31, that they might all know what it was that was forbidden them, and might observe these orders, which would be no difficulty for them to do; most of them having been, before their conversion to Christ, proselytes of the gate, who had laid themselves under these restrictions already. But this was not all; it was that they might know that no more than this was forbidden them, that it was no longer a sin to eat swine's flesh,—no longer a pollution to touch a grave, or a dead body.

3. The people were wonderfully pleased with the "orders that came from Jerusalem; ver. 31," they rejoiced for the consolation; and a great consolation it was to the multitude, 1st. That they were confirmed in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and were not burthened with that, as those upstart teachers would have had them to be. It was a comfort to them to hear that the carnal ordinances were no longer imposed on them, which perplexed the conscience, but could not purify or pacify it. 2nd. That those who troubled their minds with an attempt to force circumcision upon them were hereby for the present silenced, and put to confusion; the fraud of their pretensions to an apostolical warrant being now discovered. 3rd. That the Gentiles were hereby encouraged to receive the Gospel, and those that had received it to adhere to it. 4th. That the peace of the church was hereby restored, and that removed which threatened a division. All this was consolation, which they rejoiced in, and blessed God for.

4. They got the strange ministers that came from Jerusalem to give them each a sermon, and more; ver. 32, "Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves," endued with the Holy Ghost, and called to the work, and being likewise intrusted by the apostles to deliver some things relating to this matter by word of mouth, they "exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them." Even they that had the constant preaching of Paul and Barnabas yet were glad of the help of Judas and Silas. The diversity of the gifts of ministers is of use to the church. Observe, What is the work of ministers with those that are in Christ; 1st. To confirm them, by bringing them to see more reason both for their faith in Christ and their obedience to him; to confirm their choice of Christ, and their resolutions for Christ. 2nd. To exhort them to perseverance, and to the particular duties required of them; to quicken them to that which is good, and direct them in it. They comforted the brethren, so it may be rendered, and that would contribute to the confirming of them; for the joy of the Lord will be our strength. They exhorted them with many words, they used a very great copiousness and variety of expression; one word would affect one, and another another; and therefore, though what they had to say might have been summed up in a few words, yet it was for the edification of the church that they used many words, *διὰ λόγον πολλού*,—"with much speech, much reasoning;" "precept must be upon precept."

5. The dismissal of the Jerusalem ministers, ver. 33. When they had "spent some time among them," so it might be read, *ποιήσαντες χρόνον*, having made some stay, and having made it to good purpose, not having trifled away time, but having filled it up, they were let go in peace from the brethren at Antioch to the apostles at Jerusalem, with all possible expressions of kindness and respect; they thanked them for their coming and pains, and the good service they had done, wished them their health, and a good journey home; and committed them to the custody of the peace of God.

6. The continuance of Silas, notwithstanding, together with Paul and Barnabas, at Antioch. 1st. Silas, when it came to the setting to, would not go back with Judas to Jerusalem; but let him go home himself, and chose rather to abide still at Antioch, ver. 34; and we have no reason at all to blame him for it, though we know not the reason that moved him to it. I am apt to think the congregations at Antioch were both more large and more lively than those at Jerusalem, and that tempted him to stay there, and he did well. So did Judas, who, notwithstanding this, returned to his post of service at Jerusalem. 2nd. Paul and Barnabas, though their work lay chiefly among the Gentiles, yet continued for some time in Antioch, being pleased with the society of the ministers and people there, which, it should seem by divers passages, was more than ordinarily inviting. They continued there, not to take their pleasure, but "teaching and preaching the word of God." Antioch being the chief city of Syria, it is likely there was a great resort of Gentiles thither from all parts upon one account or other, as there was of Jews to Jerusalem: so that in preaching there, they did in effect preach to many nations; for they preached to those who would carry the report of what they preached to many nations, and thereby prepare them for the apostles coming in person to preach to them; and thus they were not only not idle at Antioch, but were serving their main intention. 3rd. There were many others also there, labouring at the same oar. The multitude of workmen in Christ's vineyard doth not give us a writ of ease. Even there where there are many others labouring in the word and doctrine, yet there may be opportunity for us; others' zeal and usefulness should excite us, not lay us asleep.

36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. 37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. 38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and

xv. 28. See Commentary above, also verse 8 and chap. xi. 47, where Peter adduces the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles as a reason for his baptising them. May there not then be an allusion to this same gift, as showing the mind of the Spirit on this disputed point? Would he have descended on the uncircumcised Gentiles, if circumcision had been necessary to salvation?

xv. 35. It seems probable that during this interval Peter's visit to Antioch took place (*Gal. ii. 11*), when his inconsistency drew upon

him Paul's protest and rebuke. Barnabas, we read (*Gal. ii. 13*), was also carried away. "It is not impossible that this incident, by producing a temporary feeling of distrust, may have prepared the way for the dissension between Paul and Barnabas, which shortly afterwards led to their separation" (Lightfoot on Galatians).

xv. 36. "He felt that he was not called to spend a peaceful, though laborious life at Antioch, but that his true work was 'far off among the Gentiles.' . . . We notice here, for the first time, a trace

went not with them to the work. 39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; 40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

We have seen one unhappy difference among the brethren, that was of a public nature, brought to a good issue; but here we have a private quarrel between two ministers, no less men than Paul and Barnabas, not compromised indeed, yet ending well.

First. Here is a good motion Paul made to Barnabas, to go and review their work among the Gentiles, and renew it; to take a circuit among the churches they had planted, and see what progress the Gospel made among them. Antioch was now a safe and quiet harbour for them, they had there no adversary or evil occurrence. But Paul remembered they only put in there to refit and refresh themselves, and therefore begins now to think of putting to sea again; and having been in winter quarters long enough, he is for taking the field again, and making another campaign in a vigorous prosecution of this holy war against Satan's kingdom. Paul remembers that the work appointed him was afar off among the Gentiles, and therefore he is here meditating a second expedition among them to do the same work, though to encounter the same difficulties. And this some days after, for his active spirit could not bear to be long out of work; no, nor his bold and daring spirit to be long out of danger. Observe,

1. To whom he makes this motion. To Barnabas, his old friend and fellow-labourer; he invites his company and help in this work. We have need one of another, and may be many ways serviceable one to another; and therefore should be forward both to borrow and lend assistance. Two are better than one. Every soldier has his comrade.

2. For whom the visit is designed. Let us not presently begin new work, or break up new ground; but let us take a view of the fields we have sown; "Come, and let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish," *Cant. vii. 12*; "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord." Observe, He calls all the Christians brethren, and not ministers only; for, "Have we not all one Father?" He has a concern for them "in every city," even there where the brethren were fewest and poorest, and most persecuted and despised; yet let us visit them. "Wherever we have preached the word of the Lord," let us go and water the seed sown. Note, Those that have preached the Gospel should visit those to whom they have preached it. As we must look after our praying, and hear what answer God gives to that, so we must look after our preaching, and see what success that has. Faithful ministers cannot but have a particular tender concern for those to whom they have preached the Gospel, that they may not bestow upon them labour in vain; see *1 Thes. iii. 5, 6*.

3. What was intended in this visit. Let us "see how they do;" *πῶς ἔχουσιν*,—"how it is with them." It was not merely a compliment that he designed, nor did he take such a journey with a bare How do ye? No, he would visit them, that he might acquaint himself with their case, and impart unto them such spiritual gifts as were suited to it; as the physician visits his recovering patient, that he may prescribe what is proper for the perfecting of his cure, and the preventing of a relapse. Let us see how they do, that is, 1st. What spirit they are of, how they stand affected, and how they behave themselves. It is probable they frequently heard from them; but, Let us go see them; let us go see whether they hold fast what we preached to them, and live up to it, that we may endeavour to reduce them if we find them wandering, to confirm them if we find them wavering, and to comfort them if we find them steady. 2nd. What state they are in; whether the churches have rest and liberty, or whether they are not in trouble or distress, that we may rejoice with them if they rejoice, and caution them against security; and may weep with them if they weep, and comfort them under the cross, and may know the better how to pray for them.

Secondly. The disagreement between Paul and Barnabas about an assistant. It was convenient to have a young man with them that should attend on them, and minister to them, and be a witness of their "doctrine, manner of life, and patience," and that should be fitted and trained up for farther service, by being occasionally employed in the present service. Now,

1. Barnabas would have his nephew John, whose surname was Mark, to go along with them, ver. 37; he determined to take him, because he was his relation, and it is likely was brought up under him, and he had a kindness for him, and was solicitous for his welfare. We should suspect ourselves of partiality, and guard against it, in preferring our relations.

2. Paul opposed it; ver. 36, "He thought not good to take him with them," *οὐκ ἤθεον*; he did not think him worthy of the honour, nor fit for the service, who had "departed from them,"—clandestinely, as it should seem, without their knowledge, or wilfully without their consent,—from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work," *ch. xiii. 13*, either because he was lazy, and would not take the pains that must be taken; or cowardly, and would not run the hazard. He run his colours just as they were going to engage. It is probable he promised very fair now, that he would not do so again. But Paul thought it was not fit he should be thus honoured who had forfeited his reputation; nor thus employed, who had betrayed his trust; at least not till he had been longer tried. If a man deceive me once, it is his fault; but if twice, it is my own, for trusting him. Solomon saith, that "confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble, is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint," which will hardly be used again, *Pr. xxv. 19*.

Thirdly. The issue of this disagreement. It came to such a height that they parted upon it. "The contention," the paroxysm, so the word is, the fit of passion which this threw them both into, "was so sharp, that they departed asunder one from the other;" Barnabas was peremptory, that he would not go with Paul unless they took John Mark with them; Paul was as peremptory, that he would not go if John did go with them. Neither would yield, and therefore there is no remedy but they must part. Now here is that which is very humbling, and just matter of lamentation, and yet very instructive. For we see,

1. That the best of men are but men, subject to like passions as we are; as these two good men had expressly owned concerning themselves, *ch. xiv. 15*, and now it appeared too true. I doubt there was (as usually there is in such contentions) a fault on both sides; perhaps Paul was too severe upon the young man, and did not allow his fault the extension it was capable of; did not consider what a useful woman his mother was in Jerusalem, *ch. xii. 12*, nor make the allowances he might have made to Barnabas' natural affection. But it was Barnabas' fault that he took that into consideration in a case wherein the interest of Christ's Kingdom was concerned, and indulged it too much. And

they were certainly both in fault to be so hot, as to let the contention be sharp, it is to be feared they gave one another some hard words; as also to be so stiff, as each to stick so resolutely to his opinion, and neither to yield. It was pity they did not refer the matter to a third person; or that some friend did not interpose, to prevent its coming to an open rupture. Is there never a wise man among them to interpose his good offices, and to accommodate the matter, and to put them in mind of the Canaanite and the Perizzite that were now in the land; and that not only Jews and heathen, but the false brethren among themselves, would warm their hands at the flames of the contention between Paul and Barnabas? We must own it was their infirmity, and is recorded for our admonition; not that we must make use of it to excuse our own intemperate heats and passions, or to rebate the edge of our sorrow and shame for them; we must not say, What if I was in a passion; were not Paul and Barnabas so? No; but it must check our censures of others, and moderate them. If good men are soon put into a passion, we must make the best of it. It was the infirmity once of two of the best men that ever the world had. Repentance teaches us to be severe in reflections upon ourselves; but charity teaches us to be candid in our reflections upon others. It is only Christ's example that is a copy without a blot.

2. That we are not to think it strange if there be differences among wise and good men; we are told before that such offences will come, and here is an instance of it. Even they that are united to one and the same Jesus, and sanctified by one and the same Spirit, yet have different apprehensions, different opinions, different views, and different sentiments in point of prudence. It will be so while we are in this state of darkness and imperfection; we shall never be all of a mind till we come to heaven, where light and love are perfect. That is charity which never fails.

3. That these differences often prevail so far as to occasion separations. Paul and Barnabas, that were not separated by the persecutions of the unbelieving Jews, nor the impositions of the believing Jews, yet were separated by an unhappy disagreement between themselves. O the mischief that even the poor and weak remainders of pride and passion, that are found even in good men, do in the world, do in the church! no wonder the consequences are so fatal where they reign.

Fourthly. The good that was brought out of this evil. Meat out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong. It was strange that even the sufferings of the apostles (as *Phil. i. 12*), but much more strange, that even the quarrels of the apostles, should tend to the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ; yet so it proved here. God would not permit such things to be if he knew not how to make them serve his own purposes.

1. More places are hereby visited. Barnabas went one way, he sailed to Cyprus, ver. 39, that famous island where they began their work, *ch. xiii. 4*, and which was his own country, *ch. iv. 36*. Paul he went another way; into Cilicia, which was his own country, *ch. xxi. 39*. Each seems to be influenced by his affection to his native soil, as usual—(*Nescio qua natale solum dulcedine cunctos ducit*).—There is something that attaches us all to our native soil;—and yet God served his own purposes by it, for the diffusing of Gospel light.

2. More hands are hereby employed in the ministry of the Gospel among the Gentiles; for, 1st. John Mark, that had been an unfaithful hand, is not rejected, but is again made use of against Paul's mind, and for aught we know proves a very useful and successful hand; though many think it was not the same with that Mark that wrote the Gospel, and founded the church at Alexandria, that was he whom Peter calls his son, *1 Pet. v. 13*. 2nd. Silas, that was a new hand, and never yet employed in that work, nor designed to be, but to return to the service of the church at Jerusalem, had not God changed his mind, ver. 33, 34, he is brought in and engaged in that noble work. We may farther observe,

Fifthly. That the church at Antioch seemed to countenance Paul in what he did. Barnabas sailed with his nephew to Cyprus, and no notice was taken of him, nor a *bene dicensit*,—a recommendation, given him. Note, Those that in their service of the church are swayed by private affections and regards forfeit public honours and respects. But when Paul departed he was "recommended by the brethren to the grace of God." They thought he was in the right in refusing to make use of John Mark, and could not but blame Barnabas for insisting upon it, though he was one who had deserved well of the church, *ch. xi. 22*, before they knew Paul. And therefore they prayed publicly for Paul, and for the success of his ministry; encouraged him to go on in his work, and, though they could do nothing themselves to further him, they transferred the matter to the grace of God, leaving it to that grace, both to work upon him, and to work with him. Note, Those are happy at all times, and especially in times of disagreement and contention, who are enabled so to carry themselves as not to forfeit their interest in the love and prayers of good people.

2. That yet Paul afterwards seemed to have had, though not upon second thoughts, yet upon farther trial, a better opinion of John Mark than now he had; for he writes to Timothy, *2 Tim. iv. 11*, "Take Mark and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry." And writes to the Colossians concerning Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, that if he came to them they should receive him, bid him welcome, and employ him, *Col. iv. 10*. Which teacheth us, 1st. That even those whom we justly condemn, yet we should do it moderately, and with a great deal of temper, because we know not but afterwards we may see cause to think better of them, and both to make use of them and make friendship with them, and we should so regulate our resentments as that, if it should prove so, we may not afterwards be ashamed of them. 2nd. That even those whom we have justly condemned, if afterwards they prove more faithful, we should cheerfully receive, forgive and forget, and put a confidence in, and, as there is occasion, give a word to.

3. That Paul, though he wanted his old friend and companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, yet went on cheerfully in his work; ver. 41, "He went through Syria and Cilicia," countries which lie next to Antioch, "confirming the churches." Though we change our colleagues, we do not change our principal president. And observe, Ministers are well employed, and ought to think themselves so, and be satisfied, when they are made use of in confirming those that believe, as well as in converting those that believe not.

CHAPTER XVI.

It is some rebuke to Barnabas that after he left Paul we hear no more of him, of what he did or suffered for Christ. But Paul, as he was "recommended by the brethren to the grace of God," so his services for Christ after this are largely recorded; we are to attend him in this chapter from place to place, wherever he came doing good, either watering or planting, beginning new work, or improving what was done. Here is, 1. The beginning of his acquaintance with Timothy, and taking him to be his assistant, ver. 1-3. 2. The visit he made to the churches for their establishment, ver. 4, 5. 3. His call to Macedonia, (after a restraint he had been under from going to some other places,) and his coming to Philippi, the chief city of Macedonia, with his entertainment there, ver. 6-13. 4. The conversion of Lydia there, ver. 14, 15. 5. The casting of an evil spirit out of a damsel, ver. 16-18. 6. The accusing and abusing of Paul and Silas for it, their imprisonment, and the indignities done them, ver. 19-24. 7. The miraculous conversion of the jailor to the faith of Christ, ver. 25-34. 8. The honourable discharge of Paul and Silas by the magistrates, ver. 35-40.

of that tender solicitude concerning his converts, that earnest longing to behold their faces, which appears in the letters which he wrote afterwards, as one of the most remarkable and one of the most attractive features of his character" (Conybeare and Howson).

xv. 38. Alford says on this verse, "It gives Paul's refusal in the strongest manner. The position of the accusatives also forcibly expresses his decided rejection of one who had not dared to face the dangers of the untried country before. 'But Paul thought proper (as

to) one who had fallen off from them from Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work, not to take with them that man.' We may well believe that Paul's own mouth gave originally the character to the sentence." (Compare *Col. iv. 10*; *2 Tim. iv. 11*).

xvi. 1. Conybeare and Howson suppose this journey to have been made about the spring, A.D. 51, and that Paul passed from Cilicia to Lycaonia through the pass called the "Cilician Gates." (For a description and account of the historic associations of this pass, see vol. i..



HEN came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: 2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 3

Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. 4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. 5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Paul was a spiritual father, and as such an one we have him here adopting Timothy, and taking care of the education of many others, who had been begotten to Christ by his ministry: and in all he appears to have been a wise and tender father.

First. Here is his taking of Timothy into his acquaintance, and under his tuition. One thing designed in the book of the *Acts* is to help us to understand Paul's epistles, two of which are directed to Timothy; it was therefore necessary that in the history of Paul we should have some account concerning him. And we are here accordingly told,

1. That he was a disciple, one that belonged to Christ, and was baptized, probably in his infancy when his mother became a believer, as Lydia's household was baptized upon her believing, ver. 15. He that was a disciple of Christ, Paul took to be his disciple, that he might farther train him up in the knowledge and faith of Christ; he took him to be brought up for Christ.

2. That his mother was a Jewess originally, but believed in Christ; her name was Eunice, his grandmother's name was Lois. Paul speaks of them both with great respect, as women of eminent virtue and piety, and commends them especially for their unfeigned faith, 2 *Tim.* i. 5. Their sincere embracing of and adhering to the doctrine of Christ.

3. That his father was a Greek, a Gentile. The marriage of a Jewish woman to a Gentile husband, (though some would make a difference,) was prohibited as much as the marriage of a Jewish man to a Gentile wife, *Deut.* vii. 3. Thou shalt not more give thy daughter to his son, than take his daughter to thy son; yet that seems to have been limited to the nations that lived among them in Canaan, whom they were most in danger of infection from. Now because his father was a Greek, he was not circumcised; for the entail of the covenant and the seal of it, as of other entails in that nation, went by the father, not by the mother; so that his father being no Jew, he was not obliged to circumcision, nor entitled to it, unless when he grew up he did himself desire it. But observe, though his mother could not prevail to have him circumcised in his infancy, because his father was of another mind and way, yet she educated him in the fear of God; that though he wanted the sign of the covenant he might not want the thing signified.

4. That he had gained a very good character among the Christians; he was "well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium;" he had not only an unblemished reputation, and was free from scandal, but he had a bright reputation, and great encomiums were given of him, as an extraordinary young man, and one from whom great things were expected. Not only those in the place where he was born, but those in the neighbouring cities admired him, and spoke honourably of him. He had a name for good things with good people.

5. That Paul would have him to go forth with him, to accompany him, to give attendance on him, and receive instructions from him, and to join with him in the work of the Gospel, to preach for him when there was occasion, and to be left behind in places where he had planted churches. Paul took a great love to him, not only because he was an ingenious young man, and one of great parts, but because he was a serious young man, and one of devout affections; for Paul was always mindful of his tears, 2 *Tim.* i. 4.

6. That Paul took him and circumcised him, or ordered it to be done. This was strange. Had not Paul opposed those with all his might that were for imposing circumcision upon the Gentile converts? Had he not at this time the decrees of the council at Jerusalem with him, which witnessed against it? He had, and yet circumcised Timothy, not, as those teachers designed in imposing circumcision, to oblige him to keep the ceremonial law, but only to render his conversation and ministry passable, and, if it might be, acceptable among the Jews that abounded in those quarters. He knew Timothy was a man likely to do a great deal of good with them, being admirably qualified for the ministry, if they were not invincibly prejudiced against him; and therefore, that they might not shun him as one unclean, because uncircumcised, he took him and circumcised him. Thus to the Jews he became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews, and all things to all men, that he might gain some. He was against those who made circumcision necessary to salvation, but himself used it when it was conducive to edification; nor was he rigid in opposing it as they were in imposing it. Thus, though he went not in this instance according to the letter of the decree, he went according to the spirit of it, which was a spirit of tenderness towards the Jews, and willingness to bring them off gradually from their prejudices. Paul made no difficulty of taking him to be his companion, though he was uncircumcised; but the Jews would not hear him if he were, and therefore Paul will humour them herein. It is probable that it was at this time that Paul laid his hands on Timothy, for the conferring of the gift of the Holy Ghost upon him, 2 *Tim.* i. 6.

Secondly. Here is his confirming of the churches which he had planted;

pp. 236, 237.) "Timotheus;" as Timothy is here mentioned as already a Christian, it is not improbable that Paul was the means of his conversion during his former visit to Lystra. It is doubtful whether Derbe or Lystra was the birthplace of Timothy, but most probably the latter. The mixed origin of Timothy would make him a suitable fellow-worker in a mission directed to Jews and Gentiles. With regard to his father being a Greek, mixed marriages were not uncommon among the Jews of the dispersion, and in all probability he was a proselyte.

ver. 4, 5, he went through the cities where he had preached the word of the Lord, as he intended, *ch.* xv. 36, to inquire into their state. And we are told,

1. That they delivered them copies of the decrees of the Jerusalem synod, to be a direction to them in the government of themselves, and that they might have wherewith to answer the Judaizing teachers, and to justify themselves in adhering to the liberty with which Christ had made them free. All the churches were concerned in that decree, and therefore it was requisite they should all have it well attested. Though Paul had for a particular reason circumcised Timothy, yet he would not have that drawn into a precedent, and therefore delivered the decrees to the churches, to be religiously observed; for they must abide by the rule, and not be drawn from it by a particular example.

2. That this was of very good service to them. 1st. "The churches were" hereby "established in the faith," ver. 5. They were confirmed particularly in their opinion against the imposing of the ceremonial law upon the Gentiles. The great assurance and heat wherewith the Judaizing teachers pressed the necessity of circumcision, and the plausible arguments they produced for it, had shocked them, so that they began to waver concerning it. But when they saw the testimony, not only of the apostles and elders, but of the Holy Ghost in them, against it, they were established, and did no longer waver about it. Note, Testimonies to truth, though they may not prevail to convince those that oppose it, yet may be of very good use to establish those that are in doubt concerning it, and to fix them. Nay, the design of this decree being to set aside the ceremonial law, and the carnal ordinances of that, they were by it established in the Christian faith in general, and were the more firmly assured that it was of God, because it set up a spiritual way of serving God, as more suited to the nature both of God and man; and besides, that spirit of tenderness and condescension which appeared in these letters, plainly shewed that the apostles and elders were herein under the conduct of him who is love itself. 2nd. They "increased in number daily." The imposing of the yoke of the ceremonial law upon their converts was enough to frighten people from them. If they had been disposed to turn Jews, they could have done that long since, before the apostles came among them; but if they cannot be interested in the Christian privileges without submitting to the Jews' yoke, they will be as they are. But if they find there is no danger of their being so enslaved, they are ready to embrace Christianity, and join themselves to the church. And thus the church "increased in number daily;" not a day passed but some or other gave up their names to Christ. And it is a joy to those who heartily wish well to the honour of Christ, and the welfare of the church, and the souls of men, to see such an increase.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. 8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. 9 And



RUINS AT TROAS.

a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. 11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; 12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. 13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the

xvi. 3. See Gal. ii. 3, where St. Paul mentions his refusal to circumcise Titus. But the two cases were different. In the case of Titus, circumcision was demanded as necessary to salvation, and to have yielded would have been to have granted this vital point; whereas in the circumcision of Timothy no vital question had been raised, and it was simply an act which would conciliate prejudice.

xvi. 6. "Galatia:" a district to the east of Phrygia and Bithynia. The Galatians were descended from the Gauls, who invaded Greece

things which were spoken of Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

In these verses we have,

First. Paul's motions up and down to do good.

1. He and Silas, his colleague, went "throughout Phrygia, and the region of Galatia," where, it should seem, the Gospel was already planted, but whether by Paul's hand or no, is not mentioned; it is likely it was, for in his Epistle to the Galatians, he speaks of his "preaching the Gospel to them at the first," and how very acceptable he was among them, *Gal. iv. 13-15*. And it appears by that epistle, that the Judaizing teachers had then done a great deal of mischief to these churches of Galatia, and had prejudiced them against Paul, and drawn them from the Gospel of Christ, for which he there severely reproves them; but probably that was a great while after this.

2. They were forbidden at this time to preach the Gospel in Asia, that country properly so called, either because it did not need, for other hands were at work there, or because they were not yet prepared to receive it, as they were afterwards, *ch. xix. 10*, when "all they that dwell in Asia heard the word of the Lord;" or, as Dr. Lightfoot suggests, because at this time Christ would employ Paul in a piece of new work, which was to preach the Gospel to a Roman colony at Philippi, for hitherto the Gentiles he had preached to were Greeks. The Romans were more particularly hated by the Jews than other Gentiles; their armies were the abomination of desolation, and therefore there is this among other things extraordinary in his call thither, that he is forbidden to preach the Gospel in Asia, and other places, in order to his preaching it there, which is an intimation that the light of the Gospel would in after times be directed more westward than eastward. It was the Holy Ghost that forbade them, either by secret whispers in the minds of both of them, which, when they came to compare notes, they found to be the same, and to come from the same Spirit, or by some prophets who spake to them from the Spirit. The removes of ministers, and the dispensing of the means of grace by them, is in a particular manner under a Divine conduct and direction. We find an Old Testament minister forbidden to preach at all, *Eze. iii. 26*, "Thou shalt be dumb." But these New Testament ministers are only forbidden to preach in one place, while they are directed to another where there is more need.

3. They would have gone into Bithynia, but were not permitted; "the Spirit suffered them not," *ver. 7*. They came to Mysia, and, as it should seem, preached the Gospel there; for though it was a very mean, contemptible country, even to a proverb, (*Mysorum ultimus*, in Cicero, is 'a most despicable man;') yet the apostles disdained not to visit it, owning themselves debtors "both to the wise and the unwise," *Rom. i. 14*. In Bithynia was the city of Nice, where the first general council was held against the Arians; into these countries Peter sent his epistle, *1 Pet. i. 1*; and there were flourishing churches here; for though they had not the Gospel sent them now, they had it in their turn not long after. Observe, Though their judgment and inclination was to go into Bithynia, yet they having then extraordinary ways of knowing the mind of God, were overruled by them, contrary to their own mind. We must now follow Providence, and submit to the conduct of that pillar of cloud and fire; and what we assay to do, if that suffer us not, we ought to acquiesce, and believe it for the best. "The spirit of Jesus suffered them not," so many ancient copies read it. The servants of the Lord Jesus ought to be always under the check and conduct of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, by whom he governs men's minds.

4. They passed by Mysia, or passed through it, so some; sowing good seed, we may suppose, as they went along; and they came down to Troas, the city of Troy, so much talked of, or the country thereabout that took its denomination from it. Here a church was planted, for here we find one in being, *ch. xx. 6, 7*, and probably planted at this time, and in a little time. It should seem that at Troas Luke fell in with Paul, and joined himself to his company, for from henceforward, for the most part, when he speaks of Paul's journeys, he puts himself into the number of his retinue,—we went, *ver. 10*.

Secondly. Paul's particular call to Macedonia, that is, to Philippi, the chief city, inhabited mostly by Romans, as appears, *ver. 21*. Here we have,

1. The vision Paul had, *ver. 9*. Paul had many visions, sometimes to encourage, sometimes, as here, to direct him in his work. An angel appeared to him, to intimate to him that it was the will of Christ he should go to Macedonia. Let him not be discouraged by the embargo laid upon him once and again, by which his designs were crossed; for though he shall not go where he has a mind to go, he shall go where God has work for him to do. Now observe,

1st. The person Paul saw. There stood by him a man of Macedonia, that by his habit or dialect seemed so to Paul, who knew it to be a man of that country, or told him he was so. The angel, some think, assumed the shape of such a man; or, as others think, impressed upon Paul's fancy, between sleep and wake, the image of such a man; he dreamed he saw such an one. Christ would have Paul directed to Macedonia, not as the apostles were at other times, by a messenger from heaven to send him thither, but by a messenger from thence to call him thither, because in that way he would afterwards ordinarily direct the motions of his ministers, by inclining the hearts of those who need them to invite them. Paul shall be called to Macedonia by a man of Macedonia, and by him speaking in the name of the rest. Some make this man to be the tutelary angel of Macedonia; supposing angels to have charge of particular places, as well as persons, and that so much is intimated, *Dan. x. 20*, where we read of the princes of Persia and Grecia, that seem to have been angels. But there is no certainty of that. There was presented either to Paul's eyes or to his mind, a man of Macedonia. The angel must not preach the Gospel himself to the Macedonians, but must bring Paul to them. Nor must he, by the authority of an angel, order him to go; but in the person of a Macedonian, court him to come. "A man of Macedonia," not a magistrate of the country, much less a priest,—Paul did not use to receive invitations from such,—but an ordinary inhabitant of the country, a plain man, that carried in his countenance marks of probity and seriousness, that did not come to banter Paul, or trifle with him, but in good earnest, and with all earnestness, to importune his assistance.

2nd. The invitation given him. This honest Macedonian "prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us;" that is, come and preach the Gospel to us; let us have the benefit of thy labours. First. Thou hast helped many; we have heard of those in this and the other country that thou hast been very useful to; and why may not we put in for a share? O come and help us. The benefits others have received from the Gospel should quicken our inquiries, our farther inquiries after it. Secondly. It is thy business, and it is thy delight, to help poor souls; thou art physician for the sick, thou art to be ready at the call of every patient; O come and help us. Thirdly. We have need of thy help as much as any people; we in Macedonia are as ignorant and as careless in religion as any people in the world are; are as idolatrous and as vicious as any, and as ingenious

and industrious to ruin ourselves as any; and therefore, O come, come with all speed among us. "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." Fourthly. Those few among us that have any sense of things, and any concern for their own souls, and the souls of others, have done what can be done by the help of natural light. I have done my part for one; we have carried the matter as far as it will go, to persuade our neighbours to fear and worship God, but we can do little good among them; O come, come thou over and help us. The Gospel thou preachest hath arguments and powers beyond those we have been yet furnished with. Fifthly. Do not only help us with thy prayers here, that will not do; thou must come over and help us. Note, People have great need of help for their souls, and it is their duty to look out for it, and invite those among them that can help them.

2. The interpretation made of the vision; *ver. 10*. They gathered assuredly from this, that the Lord had called them to preach the Gospel there, and they were ready to go wherever God directed. Note, We may sometimes infer a call of God from a call of man. If a man of Macedonia say, Come and help us; from thence Paul gathers assuredly that God saith, Go and help them. Ministers may go on with a great deal of cheerfulness and courage in their work when they perceive Christ calling them not only to preach the Gospel, but to preach it at this time, in this place, to this people.

Thirdly. Paul's voyage to Macedonia hereupon. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but followed this Divine conduct much more cheerfully, and with more satisfaction than he would have followed any contrivance or inclination of his own.

1. Thitherward he turned his thoughts. Now he knows the mind of God in the matter he is determined, for this was all he wanted; now he thinks no more of Asia or Bithynia, but "immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia." Paul only had the vision, but he communicated it to his companions, and they all, upon the credit of that, resolved for Macedonia. As Paul will follow Christ, so all his will follow him, or rather follow Christ with him. They are getting things in readiness for this expedition immediately, without delay. Note, God's calls must be complied with presently; as our obedience must not be disputed, so it must not be deferred. Do it to-day, lest thy heart be hardened. Observe, They could not immediately go into Macedonia, but they immediately endeavoured to go. If we cannot be so quick as we should be in our performances, yet we may be in our endeavours, and that shall be accepted.

2. Thitherward he steered his course. They set sail by the first shipping, and with the first fair wind from Troas; for they may be sure they have done what they have to do there when God calls them to another place. They "came with a straight course," that is, a prosperous voyage, "to Samothracia; the next day they came to Neapolis," a city in the confines of Thrace and Macedonia; and at last they landed at Philippi, a city so called from Philip king of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. It is said, *ver. 17*, to be, 1st. The "chief city of that part of Macedonia;" or, as some read it, the first city, the first they came to when they came from Troas; so that, like an army that lands in a country which they design to make themselves masters of, they begin with the reduction of the first place they come to: so did Paul and his assistants. They began with the chief city; because if the Gospel were received there, it would the easier spread from thence all the country over. 2nd. It was a colony. The Romans not only had a garrison, but the inhabitants of the city were Romans, the magistrates at least, and the governing part. There was the greatest numbers and variety of people, and therefore the most likelihood of doing good.

Fourthly. The cold entertainment which Paul and his companions met with at Philippi. One would have expected that having such a particular call from God thither, they should have had a joyful welcome there, as Peter had with Cornelius, when the angel sent him thither. Where was the man of Macedonia that begged Paul to come thither with all speed? why did he not stir up his countrymen, some of them at least, to go meet him? why was he not introduced with solemnity, and the keys of the city put into his hand? Here is nothing like that; for,

1. It is a good while before any notice at all is taken of him. "We were in that city abiding certain days," probably at a public house, and at their own charge, for they had no friend to invite them so much as to a meal's meat, till Lydia welcomed them. They had made all the haste they could thither, but now they are there, are almost tempted to think they might as good have stayed where they were. But so it was ordered for their trial, whether they could bear the pain of silence and lying by, when that was their lot. Those eminent, useful men are not fit to live in this world, that know not how to be slighted and overlooked. Let not ministers think it strange if they be first strongly invited to a place, and yet looked shily upon when they come.

2. When they have an opportunity of preaching it is in an obscure place, and to a mean and small auditory, *ver. 13*. There was no synagogue of the Jews there, for aught appears, to be a door of entrance to them, and they never went to the idol temples of the Gentiles, to preach to the auditories there. But here, upon inquiry, they found out a little meeting of good women, that were proselytes of the gate, and they will be thankful to them if they will give them a sermon. The place of this meeting is out of the city; there it was connived at, but would not be suffered any where within the walls. It was a place "where prayer was wont to be made,"—προσευχή, where an oratory or house of prayer was, so some,—a chapel, or lesser synagogue. But I rather take it as we read it, where prayer was appointed, or accustomed to be. They that worshipped the true God, and would not worship idols, met there to pray together, and according to the description of the most ancient and universal devotion, to call upon the name of the Lord. They each of them prayed apart every day; that was always the practice of them that worshipped God. But besides that, they came together on the sabbath day; though they were but a few, discountenanced by the town, though their meeting was at some distance, though, for aught appears, none but women, yet a solemn assembly the worshippers of God must have, if by any means it be possible, on the sabbath day. When we cannot do as we would, we must do as we can; if we have not synagogues, we must be thankful for more private places, and resort to them; "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," according as our opportunities are. This place is said to be by a river side, which perhaps was chosen as befriending contemplation. Idolaters are said to take their lot among the smooth stones of the stream, *Isa. lvii. 6*; but these proselytes had in their eye perhaps the example of those prophets who had their visions, one by the river of Chebar, *Eze. i. 1*, another "by the great river Hiddekel," *Dan. x. 4*. Thither Paul and Silas and Luke went, and sat down, to instruct the congregation, that they might the better pray with them. They "spoke unto the women which resorted thither;" encouraged them in practising according to the light they had, and led them on farther to the knowledge of Christ.

Fifthly. The conversion of Lydia, who probably was the first that was wrought upon there to believe in Christ, though not the last. In this story of the Acts we have not only the conversion of places recorded, but of many particular persons; for such is the worth of souls, that the reducing of one to God is a great matter. Nor have we only the conversions that were done by miracle, as Paul's, but some that were done by the ordinary methods of grace, as Lydia's here. Observe,

and Asia in the third century before Christ, and finally settled in the region of Phrygia. From the accounts of the Galatians in the New Testament, we may perceive that they retained many of the characteristics of the Gauls in the time of Julius Caesar. See *Gal. iv. 13*, where St. Paul alludes to this visit, and where we learn that it was not his original intention to preach to the Galatians, but he was detained amongst them, "through (or on account of) an infirmity of the flesh." "Asia:" the provinces on the sea-coast of Asia Minor,

including Mysia, Lydia, and Caria; Mysia being at the north-west extremity.

xvi. 9, 10. Recognised as a "man of Macedonia" probably by his dress or speech. Macedonia was the country to the north of the Aegean Sea, bounded by Thrace, Thessaly, and Epirus. Observe the "we" introduced. Luke seems to have joined Paul here.

xvi. 13. The place of prayer was outside the city, and beside a river, because of the washings of the Jews. The congregation seems

1. Who this convert was, that there is such particular notice taken of. Four things are recorded of her:

1st. Her name, "Lydia." It is an honour to her to have her name recorded here in the book of God, so that wherever the Scriptures are read, there shall this be told concerning her. Note, The names of the saints are precious with God, and should be so with us; we cannot have our names recorded in the Bible, but if God open our hearts we shall find them written in the book of life, and that is better, *Phil. iv. 3*, and more to be rejoiced in, *Lu. x. 20*.

2nd. Her calling. She was "a seller of purple," either of purple dye or of purple cloth or silk. Observe, *First*. She had a calling, an honest calling, which the historian takes notice of to her praise; she was none of those women that the apostle speaks of, *1 Tim. v. 13*, "who learn to be idle, and not only idle," &c. *Secondly*. It was a mean calling; she was a seller of purple, not a wearer of purple, few such are called. The notice taken of this here is an intimation to those who are employed in honest callings, if they be honest in the management of them, not to be ashamed of them. *Thirdly*. Though she had a calling to mind, yet she was a worshipper of God, and found time to improve advantages for her soul. The business of our particular callings may be made to consist very well with the business of religion, and therefore it will not excuse us from religious exercises alone, and in our families, or in solemn assemblies, to say, we have shops to look after, and a trade to mind, for have we not also a God to serve, and a soul to look after? Religion doth not call us from our business in the world, but directs us in it. Every thing in its time and place.

3rd. The place she was of; "of the city of Thyatira," which was a great way from Philippi; there she was born and bred, but either married to Philippi, or brought by her trade to settle there. The providence of God, as it always appoints, so it often removes the bounds of our habitation; and sometimes makes the change of our outward condition, or place of our abode, wonderfully subservient to the designs of his grace concerning our salvation: Providence brings Lydia to Philippi, to be under Paul's ministry, and there where she met with it she made a good use of it; so should we improve opportunities.

4th. Her religion before the Lord opened her heart. *First*. She worshipped God according to the knowledge she had; she was one of the devout women. Sometimes the grace of God wrought upon those who, before their conversion, were very wicked and vile,—publicans and harlots; "such were some of you," *1 Cor. vi. 11*, but sometimes it fastened upon those that were of a good character, that had some good in them, as the eunuch, Cornelius, and Lydia here. Note, It is not enough to be worshippers of God, but we must be believers in Jesus Christ, for there is no coming to God as a Father, but by him as Mediator. But those who worshipped God according to the light they had, stood fair for the discoveries of Christ and his grace to them, for to him that hath shall be given: and to them Christ would be welcome; for they that know what it is to worship God see their need of Christ, and know what use to make of his mediation. *Secondly*. She heard us. Here where prayer was made, when there was an opportunity, the word was preached; for hearing the word of God is a part of religious worship, and how can we expect God should hear our prayers if we will not hearken to his word? They that worshipped God according to the light they had, looked out for farther light. We must improve the day of small things, but must not rest in it.

2. What the work was that was wrought upon her; "whose heart the Lord opened." Observe here, 1st. The Author of this work; it was the Lord, the Lord Christ, to whom this judgment is committed,—the Spirit of the Lord, who is the sanctifier. Note, Conversion-work is God's work; it is he that "works in us both to will and to do;" not as if we had nothing to do, but of ourselves, without God's grace, we can do nothing; not as if God were in the least chargeable with the ruin of them that perish, but the salvation of them that are saved must be wholly ascribed to him. 2nd. The seat of this work. It is in the heart that the change is made; it is to the heart that this blessed turn is given. It was the heart of Lydia that was wrought upon; conversion-work is heart-work; it is a renewing of the heart, the inward man, the spirit of the mind. 3rd. The nature of the work; she had not only her heart touched, but her heart opened. An unconverted soul is shut up and fortified against Christ, straightly shut up, as Jericho against Joshua, *Jos. vi. 1*. Christ, in dealing with the soul, knocks at the door that is shut against him, *Rev. iii. 20*; and when a sinner is effectually persuaded to embrace Christ, then the heart is opened for the King of glory to come in. The understanding is opened to receive the Divine light, the will opened to receive the Divine law, and the affections opened to receive the Divine love. And when the heart is thus opened to Christ, the ear is opened to his word, the lips opened in prayer, the hand opened in charity, and the steps enlarged in all manner of gospel obedience.

3. What were the effects of this work on the heart. 1st. She took great notice of the word of God. Her heart was so opened that "she attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul;" she not only gave attendance on Paul's preaching, but gave attention to it. She "applied to herself," so some read it, "the things that were spoken of Paul;" and then only the word doth us good, and makes an abiding impression upon us, when we apply it to ourselves. Now this was an evidence of the opening of her heart, and was the fruit of it. Wherever the heart is opened by the grace of God, it will appear by a diligent attendance on, and attention to, the word of God, both for Christ's sake, whose word it is, and for our own sakes, who are so nearly interested in it. 2nd. She gave up her name to Jesus Christ, and took upon her the profession of his holy religion. She was baptized, and by that solemn rite was admitted a member of the church of Christ. And with her her household also was baptized; those of them that were infants, in her right; for if the root be holy, so are the branches; and those that were grown up by her influence and authority. She and her household were baptized by the same rule that Abraham and his household were circumcised, because the seal of the covenant belongs to the covenanters and their seed. 3rd. She was very kind to the ministers, and very desirous to be farther instructed by them in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; "she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord,"—if you take me to be a sincere Christian,—manifest your confidence in me by this, "come into my house, and abide there." Thus she desired an opportunity, *First*. To testify her gratitude to them who had been the instruments of Divine grace in this blessed change that was wrought upon her. When her heart was open to Christ, her house was open to his ministers, for his sake; and they were welcome to the best entertainment she had, which she did not think too good for those of whose spiritual things she had reaped so plentifully; nay, they are not only welcome to her, but she is extremely pressing and importunate with them,—she constrained us, which intimates that Paul was very backward and unwilling to go, because he was afraid of being burthensome to the families of the young converts, and would study to "make the Gospel of Christ without charge," *1 Cor. ix. 18*; *ch. xx. 34*; that those that were without might have no occasion given them to reproach the preachers of the Gospel as designing, self-seeking men; and that those that were within might have no occasion to complain of the expenses of their religion. But Lydia would have no nay; she will not believe that they take her to be a sincere Christian, unless they will oblige her herein; like Abraham inviting the angels, *Gen. xviii. 3*, "If now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away from thy servant." *Secondly*. She desired an opportunity of receiving farther

instruction. If she might but have them for a while in her family, she might hear them daily, *Pr. viii. 34*, and not only on sabbath days at the meeting; in her own house she might not only hear them, but ask them questions, and she might have them to pray with her daily, and to bless her household. Those that know something of Christ cannot but desire to know more, and seek opportunities of increasing their acquaintance with his Gospel.

16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: 17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. 18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. 19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, 20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. 22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. 23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: 24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

Paul and his companions, though they were for some time buried in obscurity at Philippi, yet now begin to be taken notice of.

First. A damsel that had a spirit of divination made them to be taken notice of, by proclaiming them to be the servants of God. Observe,

1. The account that is given of this damsel. She was *Pythionissa*,—"possessed with a spirit of divination," such as that damsel was by whom the oracles of Apollo at Delphos were delivered. She was acted by an evil spirit, that dictated ambiguous answers to those who consulted her, which served to gratify their vain desire of knowing things to come, but often deceived them. In those times of ignorance, infidelity, and idolatry, the devil, by the Divine permission, thus led men captive at his will; and he could not have gained such adoration from them as he had, if he had not pretended to give oracles to them; for by both his usurpation is maintained as the god of this world. This damsel "brought her masters much gain by soothsaying;" many came to consult this witch for the discovery of robberies, the finding of things lost, and especially to be told their fortune; and none came but with the rewards of divination in their hands, according to the quality of the person, and the importance of the case. Probably there were many that were thus kept for fortune-tellers; but it should seem this was more in repute than any of them; for while others brought some gain, this brought much gain to her masters, being consulted more than any other.

2. The testimony which this damsel gave to Paul and his companions. She met them in the street, as they were going to prayer, to the house of prayer, or rather to the work of prayer there, ver. 16. They went thither publicly; every body knew whither they were going, and what they were going to do. If what she did was likely to be any distraction to them, or a hindrance in their work, it is observable how subtle Satan is, that great tempter, to give us diversion then when we are going about any religious exercise, to ruffle us, and to put us out of temper then when we need to be most composed. When she met with them, she followed them, crying, "These men," how contemptible soever they look, and are looked upon, are great men, for they "are the servants of the most high God," and men that should be very welcome to us, for "they shew unto us the way of salvation," both the salvation that will be our holiness, and the way to it that will be our holiness.

Now, 1st. This witness is true; it is a comprehensive encomium of the faithful preachers of the Gospel, and makes their feet beautiful, *Rom. x. 15*. Though they are men, subject to like passions as we are, and earthen vessels, yet, *First*. They "are the servants of the most high God;" they attend on him, are employed by him, and are devoted to his honour, as servants; they come to us on his errands, the message they bring is from him, and they serve the purposes and interests of his kingdom. The gods who Gentiles worship are inferior beings, therefore not gods, but they belong to the supreme *Nomen*,—to the most high God, who is over all men, over all gods; who made us all, and to whom we are all accountable. They are his servants, and therefore it is our duty to respect them, and hearken to them for their Master's sake, and it is at our peril if we affront them. *Secondly*. They "shew unto us the way of salvation." Even the heathen had some notion of the miserable, deplorable state of mankind, and their need of salvation; and it was what they made some inquiries after. Now, saith she, these are the men that shew us what we have in vain sought for in our superstitious, profitless applications to our priests and oracles. Note, God has in the Gospel of his Son plainly shewed us the way of salvation,—has told us what we must do that we may be delivered from the misery to which, by sin, we have exposed ourselves.

But, 2nd. How came this testimony from the mouth of one that had a spirit of divination? Is Satan divided against himself? Will he cry up those whose

to have consisted of women, and not all of these were of Jewish birth.

xvi. 16. "Spirit of divination:" literally, "a spirit of Python," or "a Pythonic spirit." Python was the name of Apollo in his oracular character, and the heathen attributed such possessions as that in the text to his agency. The damsel here mentioned seems to have been a slave of several joint owners, who used her soothsaying as a source of profit.

xvi. 19. The public tribunals were held in or near the marketplace.

xvi. 20. "Magistrates:" rather, "prætors," but the word is used for the supreme magistrates of Greek towns.

xvi. 22. It does not mean either that the magistrates rent off their own clothes or that the magistrates with their own hands stripped Paul and Silas; but they ordered the lictors to do this, and also to beat them. It seems to have been done hastily and un-

business it is to pull him down? We may take it either, *First*. As extorted from this spirit of divination for the honour of the Gospel, by the power of God, as the devil was forced to say of Christ, *Mar. i. 24*, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." The truth is sometimes magnified by the confession of its adversaries, in which they are witnesses against themselves. Christ would have this testimony of the damsel to rise up in judgment against those at Philippi, who slighted and persecuted the apostles. Though the Gospel needed no such testimony, yet it shall serve to add to their condemnation, that the damsel whom they looked upon as an oracle in other things, proclaimed the apostles God's servants. Or, *Secondly*. As designed by the evil spirit, that subtle serpent, to the dishonour of the Gospel. Some think she designed hereby to gain credit to herself and her prophecies, and so to increase her masters' profit, by pretending to be in the interest of the apostles, who she thought had a growing reputation, or to speak Paul fair not to part between her and her familiar. Others think, Satan, who can transform himself into an angel of light, and can say any thing to serve a turn, designed hereby to disgrace the apostles, as if these divines were of the same fraternity with their diviners, because they were witnessed to by them; and then the people had as good stick to those they had been used to. Those that were most likely to receive the apostles' doctrine were such as were prejudiced against these spirits of divination, and therefore would by this testimony be prejudiced against the Gospel. And as for these who regarded these diviners, the devil thought himself sure of them.

Secondly. Christ made them to be taken notice of, by giving them power to cast the devil out of this damsel. She continued many days clamouring thus, *ver. 15*; and it should seem Paul took no notice of her, not knowing but it might be ordered of God, for the service of his cause, that she should thus witness concerning his ministers; but finding perhaps that it did them a prejudice rather than any service, he soon silenced her, by casting the devil out of her.

1. He was grieved; it troubled him to see the damsel made an instrument of Satan, to deceive people, and to see the people imposed upon by her divinations. It was a disturbance to him to hear a sacred truth so profaned, and good words come out of such an ill mouth, with such an ill design. Perhaps they were spoken in an ironical, bantering way, as ridiculing the apostles' pretensions, and mocking them, as when Christ's persecutors complimented him with, Hail, king of the Jews. And then justly might Paul be grieved, as any good man's heart would be, to hear any good truth of God bawled out in the streets in a canting, jeering way.

2. He commanded the evil spirit to come out of her. He turned with a holy indignation, angry both at the flatteries and at the reproaches of the unclean spirit, and said, "I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her." And by this he will show that "these men are the servants of the living God," and are able to prove themselves so without her testimony; her silence shall demonstrate it more than her speaking could do. This Paul shews the way of salvation indeed, that it is by breaking the power of Satan, and chaining him up, that he may not deceive the world, *Rev. xx. 3*; and that this salvation is to be obtained in the name of Jesus Christ only, as in his name the devil was now cast out, and by no other. It was a great blessing to the country when Christ by a word cast the devil out of those in whom he frightened people, and molested them, so that no man might pass by that way, *Mat. viii. 28*; but it was a much greater kindness to the country when Paul now, in Christ's name, cast the devil out of one who deceived people, and imposed upon their credulity. Power went along with the word of Christ, which Satan could not stand before, but was forced to quit his hold, and in this case it was a stronghold; he "came out the same hour."

Thirdly. The masters of the damsel that was dispossessed made them to be taken notice of, by bringing them before the magistrates for doing it, and laying it to their charge as their crime. And the preachers of the Gospel would never have had an opportunity of speaking to the magistrates, if they had not been brought before them as evil-doers. Observe here,

1. That which provoked them was, that now the damsel was restored to herself, "her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone," *ver. 19*. See here what evil the love of money is the root of; if the preaching of the Gospel ruin the craft of the silversmiths, *ch. xix. 24*, much more the craft of the sooth-sayers, and therefore here is a mighty outcry raised when Satan's power to deceive is broken. And, therefore the priests hated the Gospel, because it turned men from the blind service of dumb idols, and so "the hope of their gains was gone." The power of Christ which appeared in dispossessing the woman, and the great kindness done to her in delivering her out of Satan's hand, made no impression upon them when they apprehended that they should lose money by it.

2. The course they took with them was to incense the higher powers against them, as men fit to be punished. They caught them as they went along, and with the utmost fury and violence dragged them into the market-place, where public justice was administered. 1st. They brought them to the rulers, their justices of peace, to do by them as men taken into the hands of the law, the *duumviri*. 2nd. From them they hurried them to the magistrates, the praetors, or governors of the city, τοῖς στρατηγοῖς, 'the officers of the army,' so the word signifies; but it is taken in general for the judges, or chief rulers: to them they brought their complaint.

3. The charge they exhibited against them was that they were the troublers of the land, *ver. 24*. They take it for granted that they were Jews, a nation at this time as much an abomination to the Romans as they had long ago been to the Egyptians. Piteous was the case of the apostles when it was turned to their reproach that they were Jews; and yet the Jews were their most violent persecutors. 1st. The general charge against them is that they troubled the city, sowed discord, and disturbed the public peace, and occasioned riots and tumults; than which nothing could be more false and unjust, as was Ahab's character of Elijah, *1 Kin. xviii. 17*, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" If they troubled the city, it was but like the angel's troubling the water of Bethesda's pool, in order to healing; shaking in order to a happy settlement. Thus they that rouse the sluggards are exclaimed against for troubling them. 2nd. Their proof of the charge is, their teaching customs not proper to be admitted by a Roman colony, *ver. 21*. The Romans were always very jealous of innovations in religion; right or wrong, they would stick to that, how vain soever, which they had received by tradition from their fathers. No foreign or upstart deity must be allowed of without the approbation of the senate; the gods of their country must be their gods, true or false. It was one of the laws of the twelve tables, "Hath a nation changed their gods?" This incensed them against the apostles, that they taught a religion destructive of polytheism and idolatry, and preached to them to turn from those vanities. Thus the Romans could not bear; if this grow upon us, in a little while we shall lose our religion.

Fourthly. The magistrates, by their proceedings against them, made them to be taken notice of.

1. By countenancing the persecution, they raised the mob upon them; *ver. 22*, "The multitude rose up together against them," and were ready to pull them to pieces. It has been the artifice of Satan to make God's ministers and people odious to the commonalty, by representing them as dangerous men, and aiming

at the destruction of the constitution, and the changing of the customs, when really there has been no ground for such an imputation.

2. By going on to an execution, they farther represented them as the vilest of malefactors; "they rent off their clothes" with rage and fury, not having patience till they were taken off in order to their being scourged. This the apostles refers to when he speaks of their being "shamefully intreated at Philippi," *1 Thes. ii. 2*. They commanded that they should be whipped as vagabonds, by the lictors or beadles, who attended the praetors, and carried rods with them for that purpose. This was one of those three times that Paul was beaten with rods, according to the Roman usage, which was not under the compassionate limitation of the number of stripes not to exceed forty, which was provided by the Jewish law. It is here said, that "they laid many stripes upon them," *ver. 23*; without counting how many, because they seemed vile unto them, *Deu. xxv. 3*.

Now one would think this might have satiated their cruelty; if they must be whipped, sure they must be discharged; no, they are imprisoned, and it is probable their present purpose was to try them for their lives, and put them to death, else why should there be such care taken to prevent their escape?

1st. The judges made their commitment very strict; they "charged the jailor to keep them safely," and have a very watchful eye upon them, as if they were dangerous men, that either would venture to break prison themselves, or were in confederacy with those that would attempt to rescue them. Thus they endeavoured to render them odious, that they might justify themselves in the base usage they had given them.

2nd. The jailor made their confinement very severe; *ver. 24*, "having received such a charge," though he might have kept them safely enough in the outer prison, yet he "thrust them into the inner prison." He was sensible that the magistrates had a great indignation against these men, and were inclined to be severe with them; and, therefore, he thought to ingratiate himself with them, by exerting his power likewise against them to the uttermost. When magistrates are cruel, it is no wonder that the officers under them are so too. He put them into the inner prison, the dungeon, into which none were usually put but condemned malefactors; dark at noonday, damp and cold, dirty, it is likely, and stinking, like that into which Jeremiah was let down, *Jer. xxxviii. 6*; and as if that were not enough, he "made their feet fast in the stocks." Perhaps having heard a report of the escape of the preachers of the Gospel out of prison, when the doors were fast barred, *ch. v. 1*; *xii. 9*; he thought he would be wiser than other jailors had been, and therefore would effectually secure them by fastening them in the stocks. And they were not the first of God's messengers that had their feet in the stocks; Jeremiah was so treated, and publicly too, in the high gate of Benjamin, *Jer. xx. 2*; Joseph had his feet hurt with fetters, *Ps. cv. 18*. Oh what hard usage have God's servants met with, as in the former days, so in the latter times! Witness the Book of Martyrs, martyrs in queen Mary's time.

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. 27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. 32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

We have here the designs of the persecutors of Paul and Silas baffled and broken.

First. The persecutors designed to dishearten and discourage the preaching of the Gospel, and to make them sick of the cause, and weary of their work; but here we find them both hearty and heartened.

1. They were themselves hearty, wonderful hearty; never were poor prisoners so truly cheerful, nor so far from laying their hard usage to heart. Let us consider what their case was. The praetors among the Romans had rods carried before them, and axes bound upon them; the *fascies* and *securae*. Now they had felt the smart of the rods, the plowers had plowed upon their backs, and made long their furrows; the many stripes they had laid on them were very sore, and one might have expected to hear them complaining of them, of the rawness and soreness of their backs and shoulders; yet this was not all, they had reason to fear the axes next. Their Master was first scourged, and then crucified; and they might expect the same. In the meantime they were in the inner prison, their feet in the stocks, which (some think) not only held them, but hurt them; and yet "at midnight," when they should have been trying if

lawfully, without an opportunity being given for Paul and Silas to defend themselves.

xvi. 24. A writer on the subject (Walch) says that in a Roman prison there were usually three distinct parts—(1) the *communiora*, where the prisoners had light and fresh air; (2) the *interiora*, shut off by iron gates with strong bars and locks; (3) the *tullianum*, or dungeon. If this was the case at Philippi, Paul and Silas were perhaps in the second, and the other prisoners in the first part.

xvi. 29. Not "a light," but "lights."

xvi. 35. "The sergeants:" rather, the lictors, or rod-bearers. They attended the Roman magistrates on public occasions, and each carried an axe bound up in a bundle of rods. In the colonies, however, they carried staves or rods only. The message of the magistrates is couched in a contemptuous form: "Let those fellows go."

xvi. 37. "Unto them:" i.e., to the lictors who had brought the message. The magistrates had been guilty of a double violation of

possible to get a little rest, "they prayed, and sang praises to God." 1st. They prayed together; prayed to God to support them, and comfort them in their afflictions; to visit them as he did Joseph in the prison, and to be with them; prayed that their consolations in Christ might abound as their afflictions for him did; prayed that even their bonds and stripes might turn to the furtherance of the Gospel; prayed for their persecutors, that God would forgive them, and turn their hearts. This was not an hour of prayer, but at midnight; it was not a house of prayer, but in a dungeon; yet it was seasonable to pray, and the prayer was acceptable. As in the dark, so out of the depths, we may cry unto God; no place, no time, no place for prayer, if the heart be lifted up to God. They that are companions in suffering should join in prayer: "Is any afflicted? let him pray." No trouble, how grievous soever, should indispose us for prayer. 2nd. They "sang praises to God;" they praised God, for we must "in every thing give thanks." We never want matter for praise, if we do not want a heart; and what should put the heart of a child of God out of tune for that duty, if a dungeon and a pair of stocks will not do it? They praised God that "they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name;" and that they were so wonderfully supported and borne up under their sufferings, and felt Divine consolations so sweet, so strong in their souls. Nay, they not only praised God, but they sang praises to him, in some psalm or hymn, or spiritual song, either one of David's, or some modern composure, or one of their own, as the Spirit gave them utterance. As our rule is, that the afflicted should pray; and, therefore, being in affliction they prayed; so our rule is, that the merry should sing psalms, *Ps. v. 13*, and therefore being merry in their affliction, merry after a godly sort, they sang psalms. This proves that singing of psalms is a gospel ordinance, and ought to be used by all good Christians; and that it is instituted not only for the expressing of their joys in a day of triumph, but for the balancing and relieving of their sorrows in a day of trouble. It was at midnight that they sang psalms, according to the example of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, *Ps. cxix. 62*, "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee." Notice is here taken of one circumstance, that "the prisoners heard them." If they did not hear them pray, yet they heard them sing praises. First. It intimates how hearty they were in singing praises to God; they sang so loud, that, though they were in the dungeon, yet they were heard all the prison over. Nay, so loud, that they waked the prisoners; for we may suppose, being at midnight, they were all asleep. We should sing psalms with all our heart. The saints are called upon to sing aloud upon their beds, *Ps. cxlv. 5*; but gospel grace carries the matter farther, and gives us an example of those that sang aloud in the prison, in the stocks. Secondly. Though they knew the prisoners would hear them, yet they sang aloud, as those that were not ashamed of their Master, or of his service. Shall those that would sing psalms in their families, plead in excuse for their omission of the duty, that they are afraid their neighbours should hear them, when those that sing profane songs roar them out, and care not who hears them? Thirdly. The prisoners were made to hear the prison songs of Paul and Silas, that they might be prepared for the miraculous favour shewed to them all for the sake of Paul and Silas, when the prison doors were thrown open; by this extraordinary comfort which they were filled with, it was published that he whom they preached was the consolation of Israel. Let the prisoners that mean to oppose him, hear and tremble before him; let those that are faithful to him, hear and triumph; and take of the comfort that is spoken to the prisoners of hope, *Zec. ix. 12*.

2. God heartened them wonderfully by his signal appearances for them, *ver. 26*. 1st. There was immediately "a great earthquake;" how far it extended we are not told, but it was such a violent shock in this place, that the very "foundations of the prison were shaken." While the prisoners were hearkening to the midnight devotions of Paul and Silas, and perhaps laughing at them, and making a jest of them, this earthquake would strike a terror upon them, and convince them that those men were the favourites of Heaven, and such as God owned. We had the house of prayer shaken in answer to prayer, and as a token of God's acceptance of it, *ch. iv. 31*; and here the prison shaken. The Lord was in these earthquakes to shew his resentment of the indignities done to his servants, to testify to those whose confidence is in the earth, the weakness and instability of that which they confide in, and to teach his people, that, though the earth be removed, yet they need not fear. 2nd. The prison doors were thrown open, and the prisoners' fetters were knocked off, "every man's bands were loosed." Perhaps the prisoners when they heard Paul and Silas pray and sing psalms, admired them, and spake honourably of them, and said what the damsel had said of them; Surely "these men are the servants of the living God;" and to recompense them for, and confirm them in, their good opinion of them, they share in the miracle, and have their bands loosed. As afterwards God gave to Paul all those that were in the ship with him, *ch. xxvii. 24*, so now he gave him all those that were in the prison with him. God hereby signified to these prisoners, as Grotius observes, that the apostles in preaching the Gospel were public blessings to mankind, as they "proclaimed liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound," *Isa. lxi. 1*; *et per eos solvi animorum vincula*,—and as by them the bonds of souls were unloosed.

Secondly. The persecutors designed to stop the progress of the Gospel, that no more might embrace it; thus they hoped to ruin the meeting by the river side, that no more hearts should be opened there; but here we find converts made in the prison, that house turned into a meeting, the trophies of the Gospel's victories erected there, and the jailor, their own servant, become a servant of Christ. It is probable, some of the prisoners, if not all, were converted; surely the miracle wrought on their bodies in loosing their bands, was wrought on their souls too; see *Job xxxvi. 8, 9, 13*; *Ps. cvii. 14, 15*. But it is only the conversion of the jailor that is recorded.

1. He is afraid he shall lose his life, and Paul makes him easy as to that care, *ver. 27, 28*.

1st. He awoke out of his sleep; it is likely the shock of the earthquake waked him, and the opening of the prison doors, and the prisoners' expressions of joy and amazement, when in the dark they found their bands loosed, and called to tell one another what they felt. This was enough to wake the jailor, whose place required that he should not be hard to wake. This waking of him out of his sleep, signified the awakening of his conscience out of his spiritual slumber; the call of the Gospel is, "Awake, thou that sleepest," *Eph. v. 14*; like that *Jonah i. 6*.

2nd. He saw the prison doors open, and supposed, as well he might, that the prisoners were fled; and then what would become of him? He knew the Roman law in that case, and it was executed not long ago upon the keepers out of whose hands Peter escaped, *ch. xii. 19*; it was according to that of the prophet, *1 Kin. xx. 39, 42*, "Keep this man; if he be missing, thy life shall go for his life." The Roman lawyers after this, in their readings upon the law, *de custodia reorum*,—"the custody of criminals," which appoints that the keeper should undergo the same punishment that should be inflicted on the prisoner, if he let him escape, take care to except an escape by miracle.

3rd. In his fright he drew his sword, and was going to kill himself, to prevent a more terrible death; an expected one, a pompous, ignominious death, which he knew he was liable to for letting his prisoners escape, and not looking better to them; and the extraordinary strict charge which the magistrates gave

him concerning Paul and Silas, made him conclude they would be very severe upon him if they were gone. The philosophers generally allowed self-murder; Seneca prescribes it as the last remedy which those that are in distress may have recourse to. The Stoics, notwithstanding their pretended conquest of the passions, yielded thus far to them; and the Epicureans, who indulged the pleasures of sense, to avoid its pains chose rather to put an end to it. This jailor thought there was no harm in anticipating his own death; but Christianity by this proves itself to be of God, that it keeps us to the law of our creation, revives, enforces and establishes that; obliges us to be just to our own lives, and teacheth us cheerfully to resign them to our graces, but courageously to hold them out against our corruptions.

4th. Paul stopped him from his proceeding against himself; *ver. 28*, he "cried with a loud voice," not only to make him hear, but to make him heed, saying, "Do not practise any evil to thyself;" "Do thyself no harm." All the cautions of the Word of God against sin and all appearances of it, and approaches to it, have this tendency, "Do thyself no harm." Man, woman, do not wrong thyself, nor ruin thyself; hurt not thyself, and then none else can hurt thee. Do not sin; for nothing but that can hurt thee. Even as to the body, we are cautioned against those sins which do harm to that, and are taught not to hate our own flesh, but to nourish and cherish it. The jailor need not fear being called to an account for the escape of his prisoners, for they are all here. It was strange that some of them did not slip away when the prison doors were opened, and they were loosed from their bands; but their amazement held them fast, and being sensible it was by the prayers of Paul and Silas that they were loosed, they would not stir unless they stirred; and God shewed his power in binding their spirits, as much as in loosing their feet.

2. He is afraid he shall lose his soul, and Paul makes him easy as to that care too. One concern leads him to the other, and a much greater; and being hindered from hastening himself out of this world, he begins to think, if he had pursued his intention, whether death would have brought him, and what would have become of him on the other side death? A very proper thought for such as have been snatched as a brand out of the fire, when there was but a step between them and death. And perhaps the heinousness of the sin he was running into helped to alarm him.

1st. Whatever was the cause, he was put into a mighty consternation; the Spirit of God, that was sent to convince, in order to his being a Comforter, struck a terror upon him, and startled him. Whether he took care to shut the prison doors again, we are not told; perhaps he forgot that, as the woman of Samaria, when Christ had impressed convictions on her conscience, left her waterpot, and forgot her errand to the well; for he called for a light with all speed, and sprang in to the inner prison, and came trembling to Paul and Silas. Those that have sin set in order before them, and are made to know their abominations, cannot but tremble at the apprehension of their misery and danger. This jailor, when he was thus made to tremble, could not apply himself to a more proper person than to Paul, for it had once been his own case. He had been a persecutor of good men, as this jailor was; had cast them into prison, as he kept them; and, when like him, he was made sensible of it, he trembled, and was astonished; and therefore was able to speak the more feelingly to the jailor.

2nd. In this consternation he applied himself to Paul and Silas for relief. Observe,

First. How reverent and respectful his address to them is: he called for a light, because they were in the dark, and that they might see what a fright he was in. He fell down before them, as one amazed at the badness of his own condition, and ready to sink under the load of his terror because of it; he fell down before them, as one that had upon his spirit an awe of them, and of the image of God upon them, and of their commission from God. It is likely he had heard what the damsel said of them, that they were the servants of the living God, which shewed to them the way of salvation, and as such, he thus expressed his veneration for them. He fell down before them to beg their pardon, as a penitent, for the indignities he had done them; and to beg their advice, as a suppliant, what he should do. He gave them a title of respect, *Sirs, κυριοι*, lords, masters; it was, but now, rogues and villains, and he was their master; but now, *sirs, lords*, and they are his masters. Converting grace changes people's language of and to good people, and good ministers. And to those who are thoroughly convinced of sin, the very feet of those are beautiful that bring tidings of Christ, yea, though they are disgracefully fastened in the stocks.

Secondly. How serious his inquiry is; "What must I do to be saved?" 1st. His salvation is now his great concern, and lies nearest his heart, which before was the farthest thing in his thoughts. Not, What shall I do to be preferred, to be rich and great in the world? but, "what shall I do to be saved?" 2nd. He doth not inquire concerning others, what they must do; but concerning himself, "what must I do?" It is his own precious soul that he is in care about; let others do as they please, tell me what I must do, what course I must take. 3rd. He is convinced that something must be done, and done by him too, in order to his salvation; that it is not a thing of course, a thing that will do itself; but a thing about which we must strive, and wrestle, and take pains. He asks not, what may be done for me; but, "what shall I do?" that, being now in fear and trembling, I may work out my salvation, as Paul speaks in his epistle to the church at Philippi, of which this jailor was, perhaps with respect to his trembling inquiry here; intimating that he must not only ask after his salvation, as he had done, but work out his salvation with a holy trembling, *Phil. ii. 12*. 4th. He is willing to do anything; Tell me what I must do, and I am here ready to do it. *Sirs*, put me into any way, if it be but the right way, and a sure way, though narrow, and thorny, and uphill; yet I will walk in it. Note, Those who are thoroughly convinced of sin, and truly concerned about their salvation, will surrender upon discretion to Jesus Christ; will give him a blank to write what he pleaseth; will be glad to have Christ upon his own terms, Christ upon any terms. 5th. He is inquisitive what he should do; is desirous to know what he should do; and asks those that were likely to tell him. "If ye will inquire, inquire ye," *Isa. xxi. 12*. They that set their faces Zionward, must ask the way thither, *Jer. l. 5*. We cannot know it of ourselves; but God has made it known to us by his Word, has appointed his ministers to assist us in consulting the Scriptures; and has promised to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, to be their guide in the way of salvation. 6th. He brought them out to put this question to them, that their answer might not be by duress, or compulsion, but they might prescribe to him, though he was their keeper, with the same liberty as they did to others. He brings them out of the duce, in hopes they would bring him out of a much worse.

3rd. They very readily directed him what he must do, *ver. 31*; they were always ready to answer such inquiries: though they are cold, and sore, and sleepy, they do not adjourn this cause to a more convenient time and place; do not bid him come to them the next sabbath at the meeting place by the river side, and they will tell him; but they strike while the iron is hot, take him now when he is in a good mind, lest the conviction should wear off; now God begins to work, it is time for them to set in as workers together with God. They do not upbraid him with his rude and ill carriage towards them, and his going beyond his warrant; all this is forgiven, and forgotten, and they are as glad to

the law—they had inflicted punishment without a trial; they had scourged Roman citizens; and all this had been aggravated by publicity, and, by so doing, they had rendered themselves liable to heavy penalties.

xvii. 1. "They:" from this it is supposed that Luke remained at Philippi.

xvii. 2. "As his manner was;" i.e., preaching first to the Jews in their synagogue. See his Epistles to the Thessalonians for some

account of this visit—its success (1 Thess. i. 9); its difficulties and sufferings (1 Thess. i. 6, ii. 2); his care not to be chargeable to them (1 Thess. ii. 9). The Second Advent seems to have made a great impression, inasmuch that he had to remove a misunderstanding from their minds as to its near approach.

xvii. 5. "Of the baser sort;" literally, "of the frequenters of the market-place;" those worthless idlers about the markets and landing-places which abound in every such city, and are always ready for

show him the way to heaven, as the best friend they have. They did not triumph over him though he trembled; they gave him the same direction they did to others, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." One would think they should have said, Repent of thy abusing us in the first place. No, that is overlooked and easily passed by, if he will but believe in Christ. This is an example to ministers to encourage penitents, to meet those that are coming to Christ, and take them by the hand; not to be hard upon any for unkindnesses done to them: but to seek Christ's honour more than their own. Here is the sum of the whole Gospel, the covenant of grace in a few words, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Here is,

First. The happiness promised; "Thou shalt be saved." Not only rescued from eternal ruin, but brought to eternal life and blessedness. Thou, though a poor man, an under-jailor, or turnkey, mean and of low condition in the world, yet that shall be no bar to thy salvation. Thou, though a great sinner, though a persecutor, yet thy heinous transgressions shall be all forgiven, through the merits of Christ; and thy hard embittered heart shall be softened and sweetened by the grace of Christ, and thus thou shalt neither die for thy crime, nor die of thy disease.

Secondly. The condition required; "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." We must admit the record that God hath given in his Gospel concerning his Son, and assent to it as faithful, and well worthy of all acceptance. We must approve the method God has taken, of reconciling the world to himself by a Mediator; and accept of Christ as he is offered to us, and give up ourselves to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him. This is the only way, and a sure way to salvation; no other way of salvation but by Christ, and no other way of our being saved by Christ but by believing in him; and no danger of coming short, if we take this way: for it is the way that God has appointed, and he is faithful that has promised. It is the Gospel that is to be preached to every creature, "he that believes shall be saved."

Thirdly. The extent of this to his family; "Thou shalt be saved, and thy house;" that is, God will be in Christ a God to thee and to thy seed, as he was to Abraham. Believe, and salvation shall come to thy house, as *Lu. xix. 9.* Those of thy house that are infants, shall be admitted into the visible church with thee, and thereby put into a fair way for salvation. Those that are grown up shall have the means of salvation brought to them, and he they never so many, let them believe in Jesus Christ, and they shall be saved; they are all welcome to Christ upon the same terms.

4th. They proceeded to instruct him and his family in the doctrine of Christ; *ver. 32.* they "spoke unto him the word of the Lord." He was, for aught appears, an utter stranger to Christ, and therefore it is requisite he should be told who this Jesus is, that he may believe in him, *Jno. ix. 36.* and the substance of the matter lying in a little compass, they soon told him enough to make his being baptized a reasonable service. Christ's ministers should have the word of the Lord so ready to them, and so richly dwelling in them, as to be able to give instruction off-hand, to any that desire to hear and receive it, for their direction in the way of salvation. They spake the word not only to him, but "to all that were in his house." Masters of families should take care that all under their charge, partake of the means of knowledge and grace: and that the word of the Lord be spoken to them; for the souls of the poorest servants are as precious as those of their masters, and are bought with the same price.

5th. The jailor and his family were immediately baptized; and thereby took upon them the profession of Christianity, submitted to its laws, and were admitted to its privileges: upon their declaring solemnly as the eunuch did, that they believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, he was "baptized, he and all his, straightway." Neither he nor any of his family desired time to consider, whether they should come into baptismal bonds or no; nor did Paul and Silas desire time to try their sincerity, and to consider whether they should baptize them or no; but the Spirit of grace worked such a strong faith in them, all on a sudden, as superseded farther debate, and Paul and Silas knew by the Spirit, that it was a work of God that was wrought in them: so that there was no occasion for demur; this therefore will not justify such precipitation in ordinary cases.

6th. The jailor was hereupon very respectful to Paul and Silas, as one that knew not how to make amends for the injury he had done to them, much less for the kindness he had received from them; he "took them the same hour of the night," would not let them lie a minute longer in the inner prison; but, *First.* He "washed their stripes," to cool them, and abate the smart of them, to clean them from the blood which the stripes had fetched; it is probable he bathed them with some healing liquor, as the good Samaritan helped the wounded man by pouring in oil and wine. *Secondly.* He brought them into his house, bade them welcome to the best room he had, and prepared his best bed for them. Now nothing was thought good enough for them, as before nothing had enough. *Thirdly.* He "set meat before them," such as his house would afford, and they were welcome to it; by which he expressed the welcome which his soul gave to the Gospel. They had "spoken to him the word of the Lord," had broken the bread of life to him and his family, and he having reaped so plentifully of their spiritual things, he thought it was but reasonable that they should reap of his carnal things, *1 Cor. ix. 11.* What have we houses and tables for, but, as we have opportunity, to serve God and his people with them?

7th. The voice of rejoicing with that of salvation was heard in the jailor's house: never was such a truly merry night kept there before; "he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." There was none in his house that refused to be baptized, and so made a jar in the harmony; but they were unanimous in embracing the Gospel, which added much to the joy. Or, it may be read, "he, believing in God, rejoiced all the house over;" *πανοικι*, he went to every apartment expressing his joy. Observe, *First.* His believing in Christ is called believing in God, which intimates that Christ is God, and that the design of the Gospel is so far from being to draw us from God, saying, "Go serve other gods," *Deu. xiii. 2.* that it has a direct tendency to bring us to God. *Secondly.* His faith produced joy. They that by faith have given up themselves to God in Christ as theirs, have a great deal of reason to rejoice; the eunuch when he was converted went on his way rejoicing; and here the jailor rejoiced. The conversion of the nations is spoken of, in the Old Testament, as their rejoicing, *Psa. lxxvii. 45; xvi. 11.* For "believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory;" believing in Christ is rejoicing in Christ. *Thirdly.* He signified his joy to all about him. Out of the abundance of the joy in his heart his mouth spake, to the glory of God, and their encouragement who believed in God too. Those who have themselves tasted the comforts of religion, should do what they can to bring others to the taste of them; one cheerful Christian should make many.

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. 36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore

depart, and go in peace. 37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out. 38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. 39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. 40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

In these verses we have,

First. Orders sent for the discharge of Paul and Silas out of prison; *ver. 35, 36.* 1. The magistrates that had so basely abused them the day before gave the orders; and their doing it so early, "as soon as it was day," intimates that either they were sensible the terrible earthquake they felt at midnight was intended to plead the cause of their prisoners, or their consciences had smitten them for what they had done, and made them very uneasy. While the persecuted were singing in the stocks, the persecutors were full of tossings to and fro upon their beds, through anguish of mind; complaining more of the lashes of their consciences than the prisoners did of the lashes on their backs; and more in haste to give them a discharge, than they were to petition for one. Now God made his servants to be "pitied of them that had carried them captives," *Ps. cxvi. 46.* The magistrates sent serjeants, *ῥαβδούχους*, "those that had the rods," the vergers, the tipstaves, the beaules, those that had been employed in beating them, that they might go and ask them forgiveness. The order was, "Let those men go;" it is probable they designed farther mischief to them, but God turned their hearts, and as he had made their wrath hitherto to praise him, so the remainder thereof he did restrain, *Ps. lxxvi. 10.*

2. The jailor brought them the news, *ver. 36.* "The magistrates have sent to let you go." Some think the jailor had betimes transmitted an account to the magistrates of what had passed in his house that night, and so had obtained this order for the discharge of his prisoners; "now therefore depart." Not that he was desirous to part with them as his guests, but as his prisoners; they shall still be welcome to his house: but is glad they are at liberty from his stocks. God could by his grace, as easily have converted the magistrates as the jailor, and have brought them to faith and baptism, but God hath chosen the poor of this world, *Jas. ii. 5.*

Secondly. Paul's insisting upon the breach of privilege which the magistrates had been guilty of, *ver. 37.* Paul said to the serjeants, "They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison," against all law and justice; "and now do they thrust us out privily?" and think to make us amends with that for the injury done us? "nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out," and own that they have done us wrong. It is probable the magistrates had some intimation that they were Romans, and were made sensible that their fury had carried them farther than the law could bear them out; and that was the reason they gave orders for their discharge. Now observe,

1. Paul did not plead this before he was beaten, though it is probable it might have prevented it, lest he should seem to be afraid of suffering for the truth which he had preached. Tully, in one of his orations against Verres, tells of one Ganius, that was ordered by Verres to be beaten in Sicily, that all the while he was under the lash he cried out nothing but, *Civis Romanus sum*,—"I am a citizen of Rome;" Paul did not do so; he had nobler things than that to comfort himself with in his affliction.

2. He did plead it after, to put an honour upon his sufferings, and upon the cause he suffered for, to let the world know that the preachers of the Gospel were not such despicable men as they were commonly looked upon to be, and that they merited better treatment. He did it likewise to mollify the magistrates towards the Christians at Philippi, and to gain better treatment for them; and to beget in the people a better opinion of the Christian religion, when they saw that Paul had a fair advantage against their magistrates, might have brought his action against them, and had them called to an account for what they had done, and yet did not take the advantage, which was very much to the honour of that worthy name by which he was called. Now here,

1st. Paul lets them know how many ways they had run themselves into a preminure, and that he had law enough to know it. *First.* They had beaten them that were Romans; some think Silas was a Roman citizen as well as Paul; others, that that doth not necessarily follow, Paul was a citizen, and Silas was his companion. Now both the *Lex Porcia* and the *Lex Sempronia* did expressly forbid *liberum corpus Romani civis, virgis aut aliis verberibus caedi*,—"the free body of a Roman citizen to be beaten with rods or otherwise." Roman historians give instances of cities that had their charters taken from them for indignities done to Roman citizens; we shall afterwards find Paul making use of this plea, *ch. xxii. 25, 26.* To tell them that they had beaten them that were the messengers of Christ, and the favourites of Heaven, would have had no influence upon them; but to tell them they have abused Roman citizens will put them into a fright; so common is it for people to be more afraid of Cæsar's wrath than of Christ's. He that affronts a Roman, a gentleman, a nobleman, though ignorantly, and through mistake, thinks himself concerned to cry peccavi, and make his submission; but he that persecutes a Christian because he belongs to Christ, stands to it, and thinks he may do it securely, though God hath said, "he that toucheth them toucheth the apple of his eye," and Christ has warned us of the danger of offending his little ones. *Secondly.* They had beaten them "uncondemned;" *indicta causa*, had not allowed them "a fair hearing;" had not calmly examined what was said against them, much less inquired what they had to say for themselves. It is a universal rule of justice, *Causa cognata possunt multi absolvi, incognita nemo condemnari potest*,—"Many may be acquitted in consequence of having had a hearing, while without a hearing no one can be condemned." Christ's servants could not have been abused as they have been if they and their cause might but have had an impartial trial. *Thirdly.* It was an aggravation of this that they had done it openly, which as it was so much the greater disgrace to the sufferers, so it was the bolder defiance to justice and the law. *Fourthly.* They had cast them into

any evil work. "Jason;" perhaps the same as in *Rom. xvi. 21.* Thessalonica, as a free city, was self-governed, and its chief magistrates called "politarchs." This "freedom" was given to Thessalonica, because of the part it had taken in the struggle of Augustus and Antony against Brutus and Cassius. The chief characteristics of a free city were, entire self-government in all its internal affairs within its own territory, and the absence of Roman soldiers and magistrates. (For the difference between a free city and colony, see

Supplementary Notes.) The name given here to the magistrates is the same as that used in an inscription found on a marble arch at Thessalonica.

xvii. 7. "We have no king but Cæsar" (see *John xix. 15*).

xvii. 9. "Security;" it seems most probable that Jason pledged himself either not to receive Paul and Silas again into his house or that they should depart from the city (Conybeare and Howson).

xvii. 13. The last clause of this verse should be, "They came and

prison, without shewing any cause of their commitment, and in an arbitrary manner by a verbal order. *Fifthly*. They now thrust them out privily. They had not indeed the impudence to stand by what they had done, but yet had not the honesty to own themselves in a fault.

2nd. He insists upon it that they should make them an acknowledgment of their error, and give them a public discharge, to make that the more honourable, as they had done them a public disgrace, which made that the more disgraceful. "Let them come themselves and fetch us out," and give a testimony to our innocence, and that we have done nothing worthy of stripes or of bonds. It was not a point of honour that Paul stood thus stiffly upon, but a point of justice, and not to himself so much as to his cause; Let them come and stop the clamours of the people, by confessing that we are not the troublers of the city.

Thirdly. The magistrates' submission, and the reversing of the judgment given against Paul and Silas, ver. 38, 39.

1. The magistrates were frightened when they were told (though it may be they knew it before) that Paul was a Roman. They feared when they heard it, lest some of his friends should inform the government what they had done, and they should fare the worse for it. The proceedings of persecutors have often been illegal, even by the laws of nations; and often inhuman, against the law of nature; but always sinful, and against God's law.

2. They came and besought them not to take the advantage of the law against them, but he overlooks the illegality of what they had done, and says no more of it; they brought them out of the prison, owning that they were wrongfully put into it, and desired them that they would peaceably and quietly depart out of the city. Thus Pharaoh and his servants, that had set God and Moses at defiance, came to Moses and "bowed down themselves to him, saying, Get thee out," *Ex. xi. 8*. God can make the enemies of his people ashamed of their envy and enmity to them, *Isa. xxvi. 11*. Jerusalem is sometimes made a burdensome stone to them that heave at it, which they would gladly get clear of, *Zec. xii. 3*. Yet, if the repentance of these magistrates had been sincere, they would have desired them not to depart out of their city, as the Gadarenes desired to be rid of Christ, but would have courted their stay, and begged of them to continue in their city, to shew them the way of salvation. But many are convinced that Christianity is not to be persecuted, who yet are not convinced that it ought to be embraced, or at least are not persuaded to embrace it. They are compelled to do honour to Christ and his servants, "to worship before their feet, and to know that he has loved them," *Rev. iii. 9*, and yet do not go so far as to have benefit by Christ, or to come in for a share in his love.

Fourthly. The departure of Paul and Silas from Philippi, ver. 40. They "went out of the prison" when they were legally discharged, and not till then, though they were illegally committed. And then,

1. They took leave of their friends. They went "to the house of Lydia," where probably the disciples had met to pray for them, and there they saw the brethren, or visited them at their respective habitations: which was soon done, they were so few; and they comforted them, by telling them (saith an ancient Greek commentary) what God had done for them, and how he had owned them in the prison. They encouraged them to keep close to Christ, and hold fast the profession of their faith, whatever difficulties they might meet with; assuring them that all would then end well, everlastingly well. Young converts should have a great deal said to them to comfort them, for the joy of the Lord will be very much their strength.

2. They quitted the town; they "departed." I wonder they should do so; for, now they had had such an honourable discharge from their imprisonment, sure they might have gone on, at least for some time, in their work without danger; but I suppose they went away on that principle of their Master's, *Mar. i. 38*, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, for therefore came I forth." Paul and Silas had an extraordinary call to Philippi, and yet when they were come there they see little of the fruit of their labours, and are soon driven thence. But yet they did not come in vain; though the beginnings here were small, the latter end greatly increased. Now they laid the foundation of a church at Philippi which became very eminent; had its bishops and deacons, and people that were more generous to Paul than any other church, as appears by his epistle to the Philippians, *ch. i. 1*; *iv. 15*. Let not ministers be discouraged though they see not the fruit of their labours presently; the seed sown seems to be lost under the clouds, but it shall come up again in a plentiful harvest in due time.

CHAPTER XVII.

We have here a farther account of the travels of Paul, and his services and sufferings for Christ; he was not like a candle upon a table, that gives light only to one room, but like the sun that goes its circuit to give light to many; he was called into Macedonia, a large kingdom, *ch. xvi. 9*; he began with Philippi, because it was the first city he came to; but he must not confine himself to that. We have him here, I. Preaching and persecuted at Thessalonica, another city of Macedonia, ver. 1—9. II. Preaching at Berea, where he met with an encouraging auditory, but was driven thence also by persecution, ver. 10—15. III. Disputing at Athens, the famous university of Greece, ver. 16—21; and the account he gave of natural religion, for the conviction of those that were addicted to polytheism and idolatry, and to lead them to the Christian religion, ver. 22—31; together with the success of this sermon, ver. 32—34.



OW when they had passed through Amphipolis, and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and al-

leging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. 4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of

the chief women not a few. 5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; 7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. 8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

Paul's two epistles to the Thessalonians, the two first he wrote by inspiration, give such a shining character of that church, that we cannot but be glad here in the history to meet with an account of the first founding of the church there.

First. Here is Paul's coming to Thessalonica, which was the chief city of this country, called at this day, Salonech, in the Turkish dominions. Observe,

1. Paul went on with his work, notwithstanding the ill usage he had met with at Philippi; he did not fail, nor was discouraged. He takes notice of this in his first epistle to the church here, *1 Thes. ii. 2*, "After we were shamefully entreated at Philippi," yet "we were bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel of God." The opposition and persecution that he met with made him the more resolute. None of these things moved him. He could never have held out, and held on, as he did, if he had not been animated by a spirit of power from on high.

2. He did but pass through Amphipolis and Apollonia; the former a city near Philippi, the latter near Thessalonica. Doubtless he was under Divine direction, and was told by the Spirit, who, as the wind, blows where he listeth, what places he should pass through, and what he should rest in. Apollonia was a city of Illyrium, which some think illustrates that of Paul, that he had preached the Gospel from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyrium, *Rom. xv. 19*, that is, to the borders of Illyrium, where he now was. And we may suppose, though he be said only to pass through these cities, yet that he stayed so long in them as to publish the Gospel there, and to prepare the way for the entrance of other ministers among them, whom he would afterwards send.

Secondly. His preaching to the Jews first, in their synagogue at Thessalonica. He found a synagogue of the Jews there, ver. 1, which intimates that one reason why he passed through those other cities mentioned, and did not continue long in them, was because there were no synagogues in them. But finding one in Thessalonica, by it he made his entry.

1. It was always his manner to begin with the Jews, to make them the first offer of the Gospel, and not to turn to the Gentiles till they had refused it, that their mouths might be stopped from clamouring against him because he preached to the Gentiles; for if they received the Gospel, they would cheerfully embrace the new converts; if they refused it, they might thank themselves if the apostles carried it to those that would bid it welcome. That command of beginning at Jerusalem was justly construed as a direction, wherever they came, to begin with the Jews.

2. He met them in their synagogue on the sabbath day, in their place and at their time of meeting, and thus he would pay respect to both. Sabbaths and solemn assemblies are always very precious to those to whom Christ is precious, *Psa. lxxxiv. 10*. It is good being in the house of the Lord, on his day. This was Christ's manner, and Paul's manner, and has been the manner of all the saints, the good old way which they have walked in.

3. He "reasoned with them out of the Scriptures;" they agreed with him to receive the Scriptures of the Old Testament; so far they were of a mind. But they received the Scripture, and therefore thought they had reason to reject Christ; Paul received the Scripture, and therefore saw great reason to embrace Christ. It was therefore requisite in order to their conviction that he should by reasoning with them, the Spirit setting in with him, convince them that his inferences from Scripture were right, and theirs were wrong. Note, The preaching of the Gospel should be both scriptural preaching, and rational; such Paul's was, for he reasoned out of the Scriptures. We must take the Scriptures for our foundation, our oracle, and touchstone, and then reason out of them, and upon them, and against those who, though they pretend zeal for the Scriptures, as the Jews did, yet wrest them, to their own destruction. Reason must not be set up in competition with the Scripture, but it must be made use of in explaining and applying the Scripture.

4. He continued to do this three sabbath days successively. If he could not convince them the first sabbath, he would try the second, and the third; for "precept must be upon precept, and line upon line." God waits for sinners' conversion, and so must his ministers; all the labourers came not into the vineyard at the first hour, no, nor at the first call, nor are wrought upon so suddenly as the jailor.

5. The drift and scope of his preaching and arguing was to prove that Jesus is the Christ; this was that which he opened and alleged, ver. 3. He first explained his thesis and opened the terms, and then alleged it and laid it down, as that which he would abide by, and which he summoned them in God's name to subscribe to. Paul had an admirable method of discourse; and shewed that he was himself both well apprized of the doctrine he preached and thoroughly understood it, and that he was fully assured of the truth of it, and therefore he opened it like one that knew it, and alleged it like one that believed it. He shewed them,

1st. That it was necessary the Messiah should suffer and die, and rise again; that the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah made it necessary he should. The great objection which the Jews made against Jesus being the Messiah was his ignominious death and sufferings. The cross of Christ was to the Jews a stumblingblock, because it did by no means agree with the idea they had framed of the Messiah; but Paul here allegeth, and makes it out undeniably, not only that it was possible he might be the Messiah though he suffered, but that being the Messiah it was necessary he should suffer. He could not otherwise be made perfect but by sufferings; for if he had not died, he could

stirred up there also the people;" the "also" referring to the stirring up which they had carried out at Thessalonica. From *1 Thess. ii. 13* it would appear as if Paul had made an effort to return to Thessalonica, but had failed.

xvii. 16. "Athens was the very centre of Grecian culture, the teacher and model of the European mind. The Romans derived their knowledge of art and science principally from Athens; and their mental development was almost exclusively moulded by its

orators, poets, and philosophers. Although at that time it was a mere dependency of the Roman Empire, without any political influence, yet the sons of the noblest families—all, indeed, who were ambitious of distinction for learning and talent—still frequented its schools, and regarded its professors as the best exponents of moral and scientific truth. Athens was, in fact, the intellectual metropolis of heathen civilisation; but there was no distinction of which the inhabitants were so proud as of their singular devotion

not have risen again from the dead. This was it which Christ himself insisted upon, *Lu. xxiv. 26*, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And again, *ver. 46*, "Thus it is written, and" therefore "thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead." He must needs have suffered for us, because he could not otherwise purchase the redemption for us; and he must needs have risen again, because he could not otherwise apply the redemption to us.

2nd. That Jesus is the Messiah; "This Jesus whom I preach unto you," and call upon you to believe in, is Christ, is the Christ, is the Anointed of the Lord, is he that should come, and you are to look for no other; for God has, both by his word and by his works, (the two ways of his speaking to the children of men,) by the Scriptures and by miracles, and the gift of the Spirit to make both effectual, borne witness to him. Note, 1. Gospel ministers should preach Jesus. That must be their principal subject; their business is to bring people acquainted with him. 2. That which we are to preach concerning Jesus is that he is Christ, and therefore we may hope to be saved by him, and we are bound to be ruled by him.

Thirdly. The success of his preaching there, *ver. 4*.

1. Some of the Jews believed, notwithstanding their rooted prejudices against Christ and his Gospel, and they consorted with Paul and Silas. They not only associated with them as friends and companions, but they gave up themselves to their conduct, as their spiritual guides; they put themselves into their possession, as an inheritance into the possession of the right owner, so the word signifies. They first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to them by the will of God, *2 Cor. viii. 5*: they gave to Paul and Silas, and attended them wherever they went. Note, They that believe in Jesus Christ come into communion with his faithful ministers, and consort with them.

2. Many more of the devout Greeks, and of the chief women, embraced the Gospel. These were proselytes of the gate; the godly among the Gentiles, so the Jews called them; such as, though they did not submit to the law of Moses, yet renounced idolatry and immorality, worshipped the true God only, and did no man any wrong. These were *οἱ εὐσέβειοι*, *Εὐσεβεῖς*,—"the worshipping Gentiles;" as in America they call those of the natives that are converted to the faith of Christ, the praying Indians; these were admitted to join with the Jews in their synagogue worship. Of these a great multitude believed, more of them than of the thorough-paced Jews, that were wedded to the ceremonial law. And not a few of the chief women of the city, that were devout and had a sense of religion, embraced Christianity. Particular notice is taken of this for an example to the ladies, the chief women, and an encouragement to them to employ themselves in the exercises of devotion, and to submit themselves to the commanding power of Christ's holy religion, in all the instances of it; for this intimates how acceptable it will be to God, what an honour to Christ, and what great influence it may have upon many, besides the advantages of it to their own souls.

No mention is here made of their preaching the Gospel to the Gentile idolaters at Thessalonica, and yet it is certain they did, and that great numbers were converted; nay, it should seem that of the Gentile converts that church was chiefly composed, though notice is not taken of them here; for Paul writes to the Christians there, as having turned to God from idols, *1 Thes. i. 9*, and that at the first entering in of the apostles among them.

Fourthly. The trouble that was given to Paul and Silas at Thessalonica. Wherever they preached they were sure to be persecuted; bonds and afflictions did abide them in every city. Observe,

1. Who were the authors of their trouble: "the Jews which believed not," that were moved with envy, *ver. 5*. The Jews were in all places the most inveterate enemies to the Christians, especially to those Jews that turned Christians, whom they had a particular spleen against, as deserters. Now see what that division was which Christ came to send upon earth. Some of the Jews believed the Gospel, and pitied and prayed for those that did not; while those that did not envied and hated those that did. St. Paul, in his epistle to this church, takes notice of the rage and enmity of the Jews against the preachers of the Gospel, as their measure-filling sin, *1 Thes. ii. 15, 16*.

2. Who were the instruments of the trouble: the Jews made use of "certain lewd persons of the baser sort," whom they picked up and got together, and who must undertake to give the sense of the city against the apostles. All wise and sober people looked upon them with respect, and valued them, and none would appear against them but such as were the scum of the city, a parcel of vile scoundrels, that were given to all manner of wickedness. Tertullian pleads this the worst of men: *Tales semper nobis insecutores, injusti, impij, turpes, quos, et ipsi dammare consuevit*,—"Our persecutors are invariably unjust, impious, infamous, whom you yourselves have been accustomed to condemn," *Apol. cap. v*. It is the honour of religion, that those who hate it are generally the lewd fellows of the baser sort, that are lost to all sense of justice and virtue.

3. In what method they proceeded against them.

1st. They set the city in an uproar; made a noise to put people in a fright, and then every body ran to see what the matter was; they began a riot, and then the mob was up presently. See who are the troublers of Israel; not the faithful preachers of the Gospel, but the enemies of it. See how the devil carries on his designs; he sets cities in an uproar, sets souls in an uproar, and then fisheth in troubled waters.

2nd. They assaulted the house of Jason, where the apostles lodged, with a design to bring them out to the people, whom they had incensed and enraged against them, and by whom they hoped to see them pulled to pieces. The proceedings here were altogether illegal; if Jason's house must be searched, it ought to be done by the proper officers, and not without a warrant. A man's house (the law saith) is his castle; and for them, in a tumultuous manner, to assault a man's house, to put him and his family in fear, was but to shew what outrages men are carried to by a spirit of persecution. If men have offended, magistrates are appointed to inquire into the offence, and to judge of it; but to make the rabble judges and executioners too, as these here designed to do, was to make truth fall in the street, to set servants on horseback and princes to walk as servants on the earth; to depose equity, and enthroned fury.

3rd. When they could not get the apostles into their hands, whom they would have punished as vagabonds, and incensed the people against as strangers that came to spy out the land, and devour its strength, and eat the bread out of their mouths; then they fall upon an honest citizen of their own, who entertained the apostles in his house, his name Jason, a converted Jew, and drew him out with some other of the brethren to the rulers of the city. The apostles were advised to withdraw, for they were more obnoxious. *Currenti cede furori*,—"Retire before the torrent." But their friends were willing to expose themselves, being better able to weather this storm. "For a good man," for such good men as the apostles were, "some would even dare to die."

4th. They accused them to the rulers, and represented them as dangerous persons, not fit to be tolerated. The crime charged upon Jason is receiving and harbouring the apostles, *ver. 7*, countenancing them, and promoting their interest. And what was the apostles' crime, that it should be no less than misprision of treason to give them lodging? Two very black characters are

here given them, enough to make them odious to the people, and obnoxious to the magistrates, if they had been just.

First. That they were enemies to the public peace, and threw every thing into disorder wherever they came; "Those that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." In one sense it is true that wherever the Gospel comes in its power to any place, to any soul, it works such a change there, gives such a wide change to the stream, so directly contrary to what it was, that it may be said to turn the world upside down in that place, in that soul. The love of the world is rooted out of the heart; and the way of the world contradicted in the life; so that the world is turned upside down there. But in the sense in which they meant it it is utterly false. They would have it thought that the preachers of the Gospel were incendiaries, and mischief-makers wherever they came; that they sowed discord among relations, set neighbours together by the ears, obstructed commerce, and inverted all order and regularity. Because they persuaded people to turn from vice to virtue, from idols to the living and true God, from malice and envy to love and peace, they are charged with turning the world upside down, when it was only the kingdom of the devil in the world that they thus overturned. Their enemies set the city in an uproar, and then laid the blame upon them; as Nero set Rome on fire, and then charged it upon the Christians. If Christ's faithful ministers, even those that are most quiet in the land, be thus invidiously misrepresented and miscalled, let them not think it strange, or be exasperated by it; we are not better than Paul and Silas, who were thus abused. The accusers cry out, They are come hither also; they have been doing all the mischief they could in other places, and now they have brought the infection hither; it is therefore time for us to bestir ourselves, and make head against them.

Secondly. That they were enemies to the established government, and disaffected to that, and their principles and practices were destructive to monarchy, and inconsistent with the constitution of the state, *ver. 7*. They "all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar," not to any particular decree, for there was as yet no law of the empire against Christianity; but contrary to Caesar's power in general to make decrees; for they say, "There is another King, one Jesus;" not only a king of the Jews, as our Saviour was himself charged before Pilate, but Lord of all; so Peter called him in the first sermon he preached to the Gentiles, *ch. x. 36*. It is true the Roman government, both while it was a commonwealth, and after it came into the Caesars' hands, was very jealous of any governor under their dominion taking upon him the title of king, and there was an express law against it. But Christ's kingdom was not of this world. His followers said indeed that Jesus is a King, but not an earthly king, not a rival with Caesar, nor his ordinances interfering with the decrees of Caesar, but who had made it a law of his kingdom to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. There was nothing in the doctrine of Christ that tended to the dethroning of princes, or the depriving them of any of their prerogatives; and they knew it very well, and it was against their conscience that they laid this to their charge. And of all people it ill became the Jews to do it, who hated Caesar and his government, and sought the ruin of him and it, and who expected a Messiah that should be a temporal prince, and overturn the thrones of kingdoms, and were therefore opposing our Lord Jesus, because he did not appear under that character. Thus they have been most spiteful in representing God's faithful people as enemies to Caesar, and hurtful to kings and provinces, who have been themselves setting up *imperium in imperio*,—a kingdom within a kingdom; a power not only in competition with Caesar's, but superior to it, that of the papal supremacy, *ver. 8*, "They troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things." They had no ill opinion of the apostles or their doctrine, could not apprehend any danger to the state from them, and therefore were willing to connive at them; but if they be represented to them by the prosecutors as enemies to Caesar, they will be obliged to take cognizance of them, and to suppress them, for fear of the government, and this troubled them. Claudius, the present emperor, is represented by Suetonius as a man very jealous of the least commotion, and timorous to the last degree, which obliged the rulers under him to be watchful against every thing that looked dangerous, or gave the least cause of suspicion; and therefore it troubled them to be brought under a necessity of disturbing good men.

5. The issue of this troublesome affair. The magistrates had no mind to persecute the Christians; care was taken to secure the apostles. They absconded, and fled, and kept out of their hands, so that nothing was to be done but to discharge Jason and his friends upon bail, *ver. 9*. The magistrates here were not so easily incensed against the apostles as the magistrates at Philipp were, but were more considerate and of better temper; so they "took security of Jason and the other," bound them to their good behaviour, and perhaps they gave bond for Paul and Silas, that they should be forthcoming when they were called for, if any thing should afterwards appear against them.

Among the persecutors of Christianity, as there have been instances of the madness and rage of brutes, so there have been likewise of the prudence and temper of men. Moderation has been a virtue.

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. 12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. 13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people. 14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. 15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a com-

to the worship of the gods. The city was full of altars, victims, temples, and processions; their mysteries were esteemed the most solemn and awful in the world; and while they scrupulously retained every rite which had the sanction of antiquity, they readily adopted novelties brought by impostors from every land. They were, at the same time, rigidly intolerant of any practical innovation in the national religion, and punished those who spoke or wrote against the established forms with severity. The fact that a state of high

mental activity, a philosophy that recoiled from no results of pantheism or atheism, co-existed with degrading superstition and wild fanaticism, is one fraught with the most important suggestions. St. Paul is here placed in a position of direct antagonism to false philosophy and false religion. We shall observe how he assails both" (Cook on the Acts—an invaluable commentary for English readers).

xvii. 18. "Epicureans:" so named from Epicurus, who lived

mandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.



ATHENS.

In these verses we have,

First. Paul and Silas removing to Berea, and employed in preaching the Gospel there, ver. 10. They had gone so far at Thessalonica that the foundations of a church were laid, and others were raised up to carry on the work that was begun, whom the rulers and people were not so much prejudiced against as they were against Paul and Silas; and therefore when the storm rose they withdrew, taking that as an indication to them that they must quit that place for the present. That command of Christ to his disciples, "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another," intends their flight to be not so much for their own safety, (flee to another to hide there,) as for the carrying on of their work, (flee to another to preach there,) as appears by the reason given, for "you shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come," *Mat. x. 23*. Thus out of the eater came forth meat, and the devil was outshot in his own bow; he thought by persecuting the apostles to stop the progress of the Gospel, but it was so overruled as to be made to further it. See here,

1. The care that the brethren took of Paul and Silas, when they perceived how the plot was laid against them. They "immediately sent them away by night," incognito, "to Berea." This could be no surprise to the young converts, for "When we were with you," (saith Paul to them, *1 Thes. iii. 4*) when we came first among you, "we told you that we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass, and ye know." It should seem that Paul and Silas would willingly have stayed and faced the storm, if the brethren would have let them; but they would rather want their help than expose their lives, which it should seem were dearer to their friends than to themselves. They sent them away by night, under the covert of that, as if they had been evil-doers.

2. The constancy of Paul and Silas in their work. Though they fled from Thessalonica, they did not flee from the service of Christ. When they came to Berea, they went into the synagogue of the Jews, and made their public appearance there. Though the Jews at Thessalonica had been their spiteful enemies, and, for aught they knew, the Jews at Berea would be so too, yet they did not therefore decline paying their respects to the Jews, either in revenge for the injuries they had received, or for fear of what they might receive. If others will not do their duty to us, yet we ought to do ours to them.

Secondly. The good character of the Jews in Berea; ver. 11, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica." The Jews in the synagogue at Berea were better disposed to receive the Gospel than the Jews in the synagogue at Thessalonica; they were not so bigoted and prejudiced against it; not so peevish and ill-natured; they were more noble, *εὐγενέστεροι*, 'better bred;' that is, 1st. They had a freer thought, and lay more open to conviction, were willing to hear reason, and admit the force it, and to subscribe to that which appeared to them to be truth, though it was contrary to their former sentiments. This was more noble. 2nd. They had a better temper, were not so sour and morose and ill-conditioned towards all that were not of their mind. As they were ready to come into a unity with those that, by the power of truth, they were brought to concur with, so they continued in charity with those they saw cause to differ from. This was more noble. They neither prejudged the cause, nor were moved with envy at the managers of it, as the Jews at Thessalonica were, but very generously gave both it and them a fair hearing, without passion or partiality. For,

1. "They received the word with all readiness of mind." They were very willing to hear it, presently apprehended the meaning of it, and did not shut their eyes against the light. They "attended to the things that were spoken of Paul," as Lydia did, and were very well pleased to hear them. They did not pick quarrels with the word, nor find fault, nor seek occasion against the preachers of it, but bade it welcome, and put a candid construction upon every thing that was said; herein "they were more noble than the Jews in Thessalonica," but walked in the same spirit and in the same steps with the Gentiles there, of whom it is said, that they received the word with joy of the Holy Ghost, and turned to God from idols, *1 Thes. i. 5, 9*. This was true nobility. The Jews gloried much in their being Abraham's seed, thought themselves well-born, and that they could not be better born. But they are here told who among them were the most noble and the best bred men, those that were most disposed to receive the Gospel, and had the high and conceited thoughts in them captivated and brought into obedience to Christ. These were the most noble, and (if I may so say) the most gentleman-like men. *Nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus*,—"Virtue and piety are true nobility, true honour; and without that, stemmata quid prosunt?"—what are pedigrees and pompous titles worth?

about B.C. 300. "The Stoics;" so called from "Stoa," the porch where Zeno, about B.C. 350, held his school. (For more on both these subjects, see Supplementary Notes.) A similar charge was brought against Socrates.

xvii. 19. "Areopagus;" literally, "the hill of Mars." The supreme court of Athens had held their sittings here from time immemorial. But we are not to suppose that this was a formal investigation into Paul's teaching by the court. The philosophers seem to have

2. They "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Their readiness of mind to receive the word was not such as that they took things upon trust, swallowed them upon an implicit faith; no, but since Paul reasoned out of the Scriptures, and referred them to the Old Testament for the proof of what he said, they had recourse to their Bibles, turned to the places he referred them to, read the context, considered the scope and drift of them, compared them with other places of Scripture, examined whether Paul's inferences from them were natural and genuine, and his arguments upon them cogent, and determined accordingly. Observe, 1st. The doctrine of Christ doth not fear a scrutiny. We that are advocates for his cause desire no more but that people will not say these things are not so, till they have first, without prejudice and partiality, examined whether they be so or no. 2nd. The New Testament is to be examined by the Old. The Jews received the Old Testament; and those that did so, if they considered things aright, could not but see cause sufficient to receive the New, because in it they see all the prophecies and promises of the Old, fully and exactly accomplished. 3rd. Those that read and receive the Scriptures, must search them, *Jno. v. 39*, must study them, and take pains in considering them, both that they may find out the truth contained in them, and may not mistake the sense of them, and so run into error, or remain in it, and that they may find out the whole truth contained in them, and may not rest in a superficial knowledge, in the outward court of the Scriptures, but may have an intimate acquaintance with the mind of God revealed in them. 4th. Searching the Scriptures must be our daily work. They that heard the word in the synagogue, on the sabbath day, did not think that enough, but were searching it every day in the week, that they might improve what they had heard the sabbath before, and prepare for what they were to hear the sabbath after. 5th. Those are truly noble, and are in a fair way to be more and more so, that make the Scriptures their oracle and touchstone, and consult them accordingly. Those that rightly study the Scriptures and meditate therein day and night, have their minds filled with noble thoughts, fixed to noble principles, and formed for noble aims and designs. "These are more noble."

Thirdly. The good effect of the preaching of the Gospel at Berea. It had the desired success; the people's hearts being prepared, a great deal of work was done suddenly, ver. 12.

1. Of the Jews there were many that believed. - At Thessalonica there were only some of them that believed, ver. 4; but at Berea, where they heard with unprejudiced minds, many believed; many more Jews than at Thessalonica. Note, God gives grace to those whom he first inclines to make a diligent use of the means of grace, and particularly to search the Scriptures.

2. Of the Greeks likewise, the Gentiles, many believed, both of the honourable women, the ladies of quality, and of men not a few; men of the first rank, as should seem by their being mentioned with the honourable women. The wives first embraced the Gospel, and then they persuaded their husbands to embrace it; for "what knowest thou, O wife, but thou shalt save thy husband?" *1 Cor. vii. 16*.

Fourthly. The persecution that was raised against Paul and Silas at Berea, which forced Paul thence.

1. The Jews at Thessalonica were the mischief-makers at Berea. They had notice that "the word of God was preached at Berea,"—for envy and jealousy bring quick intelligence,—and likewise that the Jews there were not so inveterately set against it as they were. They came thither also, to turn the world upside down there, and they stirred up the people, and incensed them against the preachers of the Gospel; as if they had such a commission from the prince of darkness to go from place to place to oppose the Gospel as the apostles had to go from place to place to preach it. Thus we read before that the Jews at Antioch came to Iconium on purpose to incense the people against the apostles, *ch. xiv. 19*. See how restless Satan's agents are in their opposition to the glory of Christ, and the salvation of the souls of men. This is an instance of the enmity that is in the serpent's seed against the seed of the woman, and we must not think it strange if persecutors at home extend their rage to stir up persecution abroad.

2. This occasioned Paul's remove to Athens. By seeking to extinguish this Divine fire which Christ had already kindled, they did but spread it the farther and the faster. So long Paul stayed at Berea, and such success he had there, that there were brethren there, and sensible active men too, which appeared by the care they took of Paul, ver. 14. They were aware of the coming of the persecuting Jews from Thessalonica, and that they were busy irritating the people against Paul; and, fearing what it would come to they lost no time, but immediately sent Paul away, whom they were most prejudiced and enraged against, hoping that that would pacify them, while they retained Silas and Timothy there still, who, now Paul had broke the ice, might be sufficient to carry on the work without exposing him. They 'sent Paul to go even to the sea,' so some; "to go as it were to the sea," so we read it, *ἐς ἐν τῇ θάλασσᾳ*, he went out from Berea in that road which went out to the sea, that the Jews, if they inquired after him, might think he was gone far enough; but he went by land to Athens, in which there was no culpable dissimulation at all. "They that conducted Paul" (as his guide and guard, he being both a stranger in the country, and one that had many enemies,) "brought him to Athens." The Spirit of God influencing his spirit, directed him to that famous city; famous of old for its power and dominion, when the Athenian commonwealth coped with the Spartan: famous afterwards for learning. It was the rendezvous of scholars; those that wanted learning went thither to get it, because those that had learning went thither to shew it. It was a great university, much resorted to from all parts, and therefore for the better diffusing of gospel light, Paul is sent thither, and is not ashamed or afraid to show his face among the philosophers there, and there to preach Christ crucified, though he knew it would be as much foolishness to the Greeks as it was to the Jews a stumblingblock.

3. He ordered Silas and Timothy to come to him to Athens, when he found there was a prospect of doing good there; or because, there being none there that he knew, he was solitary and melancholy without them. Yet it should seem that, as much haste as he was in for them, he ordered Timothy to go about by Thessalonica, to bring him an account of the affairs of that church; for he saith, *1 Thes. iii. 1, 2*, "We thought good to be left at Athens alone, and sent Timotheus to establish you."

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. 17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. 18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him.

invited him to this spot simply that they might have a better opportunity of hearing him.

xvii. 21. "It is computed," says Canon Cook, "that there were no less than 340 places in Athens where people met merely to talk on politics and other subjects."

xvii. 22. This verse has been most unhappily rendered in our English version. St. Paul is made to appear as if he blamed the Athenians, calling them too superstitious; whereas the words are a

And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. 19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? 20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. 21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

A scholar that has acquaintance, and is in love, with the learning of the ancients, would think he should have been very happy if he were where Paul now was, at Athens, in the midst of the various sects of philosophers, and would have had a great many curious questions to ask them, for the explicating of the remains we have of the Athenian learning; but Paul, though bred a scholar, and an ingenious active man, doth not make that any of his business at Athens; he hath other work to mind. It is not the improving of himself in their philosophy that he aims at; he has learned to call it a vain thing, and is above it. Col. ii. 8. His business is, in God's name, to correct their disorders in religion, and to turn them from the service of idols, and of Satan in them, to the service of the true living God in Christ.

First. Here is the impression which the abominable ignorance and superstition of the Athenians made upon Paul's spirit, ver. 16. Observe,

1. The account here given of that city. It was "wholly given to idolatry." This agrees with the account which the heathen writers give of it, that there were more idols in Athens than there were in all Greece beside put together, and that they had twice as many sacred feasts as others had. Whatever strange gods were recommended to them they admitted them, and allowed them a temple and an altar,—"so that they had almost as many gods as men,"—*facilius possit deum quam hominem invenire*. And this city, after the empire became Christian, continued incurably addicted to idolatry, and all the pious edicts of the Christian emperors could not root it out, till, by the irruption of the Goths, that city was in a particular manner laid waste, and there are now scarce any remains of it. It is observable that there, where human learning most flourished, idolatry most abounded, and the most absurd and ridiculous idolatry, which confirms that of the apostle, that when they "professed themselves to be wise, they became fools," Rom. i. 22; and, in the business of religion, were of all other the most vain in their imaginations. "The world by wisdom knew not God," 1 Cor. i. 21. They might have reasoned against polytheism and idolatry, but it seems the greatest pretenders to reason were the greatest slaves to idols, so necessary was it to the re-establishing even of natural religion, that there should be a Divine revelation, and that centering in Christ.

2. The disturbance which the sight of this gave to Paul. Paul was not willing to appear publicly till Silas and Timothy came to him, that "out of the mouth of two or three witnesses the word might be established;" but, in the meantime, "his spirit was stirred within him." He was filled with concern for the glory of God, which he saw given to idols, and with compassion to the souls of men, which he saw thus enslaved to Satan, and led captive by him at his will. He beheld these transgressors and was grieved, and horror took hold of him. He had a holy indignation at the heathen priests that led the people such an endless trace of idolatry, and at their philosophers that knew better things, and yet never said a word against it, but themselves went down the stream.

Secondly. The testimony that he bore against their idolatry, and his endeavours to bring them to the knowledge of the truth. He did not, as Witsius observes, in the heat of his zeal break into the temples, pull down their images, demolish their altars, or fly in the face of their priests; nor did he run about the streets crying, You are all the bond-slaves of the devil, though it was too true; but he observed a decorum, and kept himself within due bounds, doing that only which became a prudent man.

1. He went to the synagogue of the Jews, who, though enemies to Christianity, were free from idolatry, and joined with them in that among them which was good, and took the opportunity given him there of disputing for Christ, ver. 17; he discoursed with the Jews, reasoned fairly with them, and put it to them, what reason they could give why, since they expected the Messiah, they would not receive Jesus. There he met with the devout persons that had forsaken the idol temples, but rested in the Jews' synagogue, and he talked with those to lead them on to the Christian church, to which the Jews' synagogue was but as a porch.

2. He entered into conversation with all that came in his way about matters of religion. In the market, *ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ*, in the exchange or place of commerce, he disputed daily as he had occasion, with them that met him, or that he happened into company with, that were heathen, and never came to the Jews' synagogue. The zealous advocates for the cause of Christ will be ready to plead it in all companies as occasion offers. The ministers of Christ must not think it enough to speak a good word for Christ once a week, but should be daily speaking honourably of him to such as meet with them.

Thirdly. The inquiries which some of the philosophers made concerning Paul's doctrine. Observe,

1. Who they were that encountered him, that entered into discourse with him, and opposed him; he disputed with all that met him in the places of concourse, or rather of discourse; most took no notice of him, slighted him, and never minded a word he said; but there were some of the philosophers that thought him worth making remarks upon, and they were those whose principles were most directly contrary to Christianity. 1st. The Epicureans, who thought God altogether such a one as themselves, an idle, inactive being, that minded nothing, nor put any difference between good and evil. They would not own either that God made the world or that he governs it, nor that man needs to make any conscience of what he saith or doth, having no punishment to fear, or rewards to hope for; all which loose atheistical notions Christianity is levelled against. The Epicureans indulged themselves in all the pleasures of sense, and placed their happiness in them, in what Christ has taught us in the first place to deny ourselves. 2nd. The Stoics, who thought themselves altogether as good as God, and indulged themselves as much in the pride of life as the Epicureans did in the lusts of the flesh and of the eye. They made their virtuous men to be no way inferior to God himself, nay, to be superior. *Esse aliquid quo sapiens antecedit Deum*.—"There is that in which a wise man excels God," so Seneca; to which Christianity is directly opposite, as it teacheth us to deny ourselves, and to abase

ourselves, and to come off from all confidence in ourselves, that Christ may be all in all.

2. What their different sentiments were of him; such there were as there were of Christ, ver. 18. 1st. Some called him a babbler, and thought he spoke without any design, whatever came uppermost, as men of crazed imaginations do; "What will this babbler say?"—*ἀσπερίλογος αὐτός*, this 'scatterer of words,' that goes about throwing here one idle word or story and there another, without any intentment or signification; or, 'this picker up of seeds;' some of the critics tell us it is used for a little sort of bird, that is worth noting at all, either for the spit or for the cage, 'that picks up the seeds that lie uncovered either in the field or by the way side, and hops here and there for that purpose,'—*avicula parva quæ semina in trivis dispersa colligere solet*. Such a pitiful, contemptible animal they took Paul to be; or supposed he went from place to place venting his notions to get money;—a penny here and another there, as that bird picks up here and there a grain. They looked upon him as an idle fellow, and regarded him, as we say, no more than a ballad singer. 2nd. Others called him, "a setter forth of strange gods," and thought he spoke with design to make himself considerable by that means. And if he had strange gods to set forth, he could not bring them to a better market than to Athens. He did not, as many did, directly set forth new gods, nor avowedly, but they thought he seemed to do so, "because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." From his first coming among them he ever and anon harped upon these two strings, which are indeed the principal doctrines of Christianity—Christ and a future state—Christ our way, and heaven our end; and though he did not call these gods, yet they thought he meant to make them so; *τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ τὴν Ἀντίστασιν*,—Jesus they took for a new god, and Anastasis, 'the resurrection,' for a new goddess. Thus they lost the benefit of the Christian doctrine, by dressing it up in a pagan dialect; as if believing in Jesus, and looking for the resurrection, were the worshipping of new demons.

3. The proposal they made to give him a free, full, fair, and public hearing, ver. 19, 20. They had heard some broken pieces of his doctrine, and are willing to have a more perfect knowledge of it.

1st. They look upon it as strange and surprising, and very different from the philosophy that had for many ages been taught and professed at Athens. It is a new doctrine, which we do not understand the drift and design of; "thou bringest certain strange things to our ears," which we never heard of before, and know not what to make of now. By this it should seem that, among all the learned books they had, they either had not or heeded not the book of Moses and the prophets, else the doctrine of Christ would not have been so perfectly new and strange to them. There was but one book in the world that was of Divine inspiration, and that was the only book they were strangers to, which, if they would have given a due regard to, would in its very first page have determined that great controversy among them, about the origin of the universe.

2nd. They desire to know more of it, only because it was new and strange; "May we know what this new doctrine is?" or is it (like the mysteries of the gods) to be kept as a profound secret? If it may be, we would gladly know, and desire thee to tell us, what these things mean, that we may be able to pass a judgment upon them. This was a fair proposal; it was fit they should know what this doctrine was before they embraced it; and they were so fair as not to condemn it till they had had some account of it. 3rd. The place they brought him to, in order to this public declaration of his doctrine. It was to Areopagus, the same word that is translated (ver. 22) Mars' hill; it was the town house, or guildhall of their city, where the magistrates met upon public business, and the courts of justice were kept; and it was as the theatre in the university, or the schools, where learned men met to communicate their notions. The court of justice which sat here was famous for its equity, which drew appeals to it from all parts. If any denied a god, he was liable to the censure of this court; Diagoras was by them put to death as a contemner of the gods. Nor might any new god be admitted without their approbation. Hither they brought Paul to be tried, not as a criminal but as a candidate.

4. The general character of the people of that city given upon this occasion; ver. 21, "All the Athenians," that is, natives of the place, and the strangers which sojourned there for their improvement, "spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing," which comes in as the reason why they were inquisitive concerning Paul's doctrine, not because it was good, but because it was new. It is a very sorry character which is here given of the people, yet many transcribe it. 1st. They were all for conversation; St. Paul exhorts his pupil to give attendance to reading and meditation, 1 Tim. iv. 13, 14, but these people despised those old-fashioned ways of getting knowledge, and preferred that of telling and hearing. It is true, that good company is of great use to a man, and will polish one that has laid a good foundation in study; but that knowledge will be very flashy and superficial which is got by conversation only. 2nd. They affected novelty; they were for telling and hearing some new thing; they were for new schemes, and new notions in philosophy, new forms and plans of government in politics; and in religion, for new gods that came newly up, *Deu. xxxii. 17*; new demons, new-fashioned images and altars, 2 Kin. xvi. 10. They were given to change. Demosthenes, an orator of their own, had charged this upon them long before in one of his Philippics, that their own common question in the markets, or wherever they met, was, *εἰ τί λόγεται νεώτερον*,—"if there was any news?" 3rd. They meddled in other people's business, and were inquisitive concerning that, and never minded their own. Tatlers are always busy-bodies, 1 Tim. v. 13. 4th. They "spent their time in nothing else," and a very uncomfortable account they must needs have to make of their time who thus spend it. Time is precious, and we are concerned to be good husbands of it, because eternity depends upon it, and it is hastening apace into eternity; but abundance of it is wasted in unprofitable converse. To tell and hear the new occurrences of Providence concerning the public, in our own and other nations, and concerning our neighbours and friends, is of good use now and then; but to set up for newsmongers, and to spend our time in nothing else, is to lose that which is very precious, for the gain of that which is worth little.

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. 23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. 24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

conciliatory and studiously courteous introduction to his speech. "In all respects extremely reverential," or "much given to religious worship," are much nearer the true meaning.

xvii. 23. "The unknown god;" Greek writers tell us that there were altars at Athens thus inscribed. It was certainly a confession of ignorance; and Paul skillfully seizes it as an opening for declaring to them the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

xvii. 24. "Not made with hands;" compare chap. vii. 48.

xvii. 25. St. Paul briefly but clearly draws a distinction between God and his works, opposing thereby all idolatry, or pantheism, or polytheism, or the idea of fate or chance. God and his works are distinct. God is the sovereign creator and ruler; God rules, and directs, and sustains all according to his unerring wisdom, and mankind are equal in his sight.

xvii. 26. Rather, "caused every nation of men, sprung from one blood, to dwell," &c. Alford says these words "controvert the

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. 29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. 30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

We have here St. Paul's sermon at Athens. Divers sermons we have had which the apostles preached to the Jews, or such Gentiles as had an acquaintance with, and veneration for, the Old Testament, and were worshippers of the true and living God, and all they had to do with them was to open and allege that Jesus is the Christ; but here we have a sermon to heathens that worshipped false gods, and were without the true God in the world; and to them the scope of their discourse was quite different from what it was to the other. In the former case their business was to lead their hearers by prophecies and miracles to the knowledge of the Redeemer, and faith in him; in the latter, it was to lead them by the common works of Providence to the knowledge of the Creator, and worship of him. One discourse of this kind we had before to the rude idolaters of Lystra that deified the apostles, *ch. xiv. 15*; this here is to the more polite and refined idolaters at Athens, and an admirable discourse it is, and every way suited to his auditory, and the design he had upon them.

First. He lays down this as the scope of his discourse, that he aimed to bring them to the knowledge of the one only living and true God, as the sole and proper object of their adoration. He is here obliged to lay the foundation, and to instruct them in the first principle of all religion, that there is a God, and that God is but one. When he preached against the gods they worshipped he had no design to draw them to atheism, but to the service of the true Deity. Socrates, who had exposed the pagan idolatry, was indicted in this very court, and condemned, not only because he did not esteem those to be gods whom the city esteemed to be so, but because he introduced new demons; and this was the charge against Paul. Now he tacitly owns the former part of the charge, but guards against the latter by declaring, that he doth not introduce any new gods, but reduce them to the knowledge of one God, the Ancient of days. Now.

1. He shews them, that they needed to be instructed herein; for they had lost the knowledge of the true God, that made them, in the worship of false gods that they made; *deos qui rogat ille facit*,—he who worships the gods makes them: "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." The crime he chargeth upon them is giving that glory to others which is due to God only; that they feared and worshipped demons, spirits that they supposed inhabited the images to which they directed their worship. It is time for you to be told, that there is but one God, who are multiplying deities above any of your neighbours, and mingle your idolatries with all your affairs; "you are in all things too superstitious"—*δεισιδαίμονες ὄντες*; you easily admit every thing that comes under show of religion, but it is that which corrupts it more and more; I bring you that which will reform it. Their neighbours praised them for this as a pious people, but Paul condemns them for it. Yet it is observable how he mollifies the charge; doth not aggravate it to provoke them. He useth a word which among them was taken in a good sense; "you are every way more than ordinary religious," so some read it; you are very devout in your way. Or, if it be taken in an ill sense it is mitigated; "you are, as it were, (*ὥς*) more superstitious than you need be," and he saith no more than what he himself perceived, *θεωρίω*,—"I see it, I observe it." They charged Paul with setting forth new demons; Nay, saith he, you have demons enough already, I will not add to the number of them.

2. He shews them that they themselves had given a fair occasion for the declaring of this one true God to them, by setting up an altar, "To the unknown God," which intimated an acknowledgment that there was a God which was yet to them an unknown God. And it is sad to think that at Athens, a place which was supposed to have the monopoly of wisdom, the true God was an unknown God, the only God that was unknown. Now you ought to bid Paul welcome; for this is the God whom he comes to make known to you, the God whom you implicitly complain that you are ignorant of. There where we are sensible we are defective and come short, just there the Gospel takes us up and carries us on. Various conjectures the learned have concerning this altar dedicated "To the unknown God."

1st. Some think the meaning is, To the God whose honour it is to be unknown; and that they intend the God of the Jews, whose name is ineffable, and whose nature is unsearchable. It is probable they had heard from the Jews, and from the writings of the Old Testament, of the God of Israel, who had proved himself to be above all gods; but was a God hiding himself, *Isa. xlv. 15*. The heathen called the Jews' God, *Deus incertus, incertum Mosi Numen*,—"an uncertain God, the uncertain Deity of Moses;" and the God without name.

whole genius of polytheism, which attributed to the various nations differing mythical origins and separate guardian gods."

xvii. 28. "Your own poets:" Aratus, a Greek poet, born in Tarsus in Cilicia (Saul's native place), about 270 B.C. The words are also found in a poem of Cleanthes, a disciple of Zeno, who was born at Assos, in Troas, about 300 B.C.

xvii. 30. "Winked at;" i.e., overlooked.

xvii. 32. "When they heard of a resurrection of dead men."

Now this God, saith Paul, this God who cannot by searching be found out to perfection, "I now declare unto you."

2nd. Others think the meaning is, To the God whom it is our unhappiness not to know, which intimates that they would think it their happiness to know him. Some tell us, that upon occasion of a plague that raged in Athens, when they had sacrificed to all their gods one after another for the staying of the plague, they were advised to let some sheep go where they pleased, and where they lay down to build an altar, *τις προσποιεῖται θεῷ*,—"To the proper God, or the God to whom that affair of staying the pestilence did belong;" and because they knew not how to call him, they inscribed it, "To the unknown God." Others, from some of the best historians of Athens, tell us, they had many altars inscribed to the gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa; To the unknown God. And some of the neighbouring countries used to swear by the God that was unknown at Athens: so Lucian.

Now observe how modestly Paul mentions this; that he might not be thought a spy, or one that had intruded himself more than became a stranger, into the knowledge of their mysteries, he tells them that he observed it as he passed by and saw their devotions, or their sacred things. It was public, and he could not forbear seeing it; and it was proper enough to make his remarks upon the religion of the place. And observe how prudently and ingeniously he takes rise from this to bring in his discourse of the true God. (1.) He tells them, that the God he preached to them was one that they did already worship, and, therefore, he was not a setter forth of new or strange gods; as you have a dependence upon him so he has had some kind of homage from you. (2.) He was one whom they ignorantly worshipped, which was a reproach to them who were famous all the world over for their knowledge. Now, saith he, I come to take away that reproach, that you may worship him understandingly whom now you worship ignorantly; and it cannot but be acceptable to have your blind devotion turned into a reasonable service, that you may not worship ye know not what.

Secondly. He confirms his doctrine of one living and true God by his works of creation and providence; The God whom I declare unto you to be the sole object of your devotion, and call you to the worship of, is the God that made the world and governs it; and by the visible proofs of these you may be led to this invisible Being, and be convinced of his eternal power and godhead. The Gentiles in general, and the Athenians particularly, in their devotions were governed not by their philosophers, who, many of them, spoke clearly and excellently well of one supreme *Numen*, and of his infinite perfections, and universal agency and dominion,—witness the writings of Plato, and, long after, of Cicero,—but by their poets and their idle fictions. Homer's works were the Bible of the pagan theology, or demonology rather, not Plato's. And the philosophers tamely submitted to this, rested in their speculations, disputed them among themselves, and taught them their scholars, but never made the use they ought to have made of them in opposition to idolatry, so little certainty were they at concerning them, and so little impression did they make upon them; nay, they ran in themselves into the superstition of their country, and thought they ought to do so; *eamus ad communem errorem*,—"let us embrace the common error." Now Paul here sets himself in the first place to reform the philosophy of the Athenians,—he corrects the mistakes of that,—and to give them right notions of the one only living and true God; and then to carry the matter farther than they ever attempted, for the reforming of their worship and the bringing them off from their polytheism and idolatry. Observe what glorious things Paul here saith of that God whom he served, and would have them to serve.

1. He is the "God that made the world, and all things therein," the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth. This was admitted by many of the philosophers, but those of Aristotle's school denied it, and maintained that the world was from eternity, and every thing always was what now it is. Those of the school of Epicurus fancied, that the world was made by a fortuitous concurrence of atoms, which, having been in a perpetual motion, at length accidentally jumped into this frame. Against both these Paul here maintains, that God by the operations of an infinite power, according to the contrivance of an infinite wisdom, in the beginning of time, "made the world and all things therein;" the rise of which was owing not, as they fancied, to an eternal matter, but to an eternal mind.

2. He is therefore "Lord of heaven and earth," that is, he is the rightful owner, proprietor, and possessor of all the beings, powers, and riches of the upper and lower world,—material and immaterial, visible and invisible. This follows from his making of heaven and earth. If he created all, without doubt he has the disposing of all; and where he gives being has an indisputable right to give law.

3. He is in a particular manner the Creator of men, of all men; ver. 26, "He made of one blood all nations of men." He made the first man; he makes every man; is the former of every man's body, and the father of every man's spirit. He has made the nations of men, not only all men in the nations, but as nations in their political capacity; he is their founder, and disposed them into communities for their mutual preservation and benefit. He made them all of one blood, of one and the same nature; he fashioneth their hearts alike: descended from one and the same common ancestor, in Adam they are all akin, so they are in Noah, that hereby they might be engaged in mutual affection and assistance, as fellow-creatures and brethren: "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" *Mal. ii. 10*. He hath made them "for to dwell on all the face of the earth," which, as a bountiful Benefactor, he has given with all its fulness to the children of men. He made them not to live in one place, but to be dispersed over all the earth; one nation, therefore, ought not to look with contempt upon another, as the Greeks did upon all other nations; for those on all the face of the earth are of the same blood. The Athenians boasted that they sprang out of their own earth, were aborigines, and nothing akin by blood to any other nation, which proud conceit of themselves the apostle here takes down.

4. That he is the Great Benefactor of the whole creation; ver. 25, He "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." He not only breathed into the first man the breath of life, but still breathes it into every man; he gave us these souls; he formed the spirit of man within him. He not only gave us our life and breath when he brought us into being, but he is continually giving it us; his providence is a continued creation; he holds our souls in life. Every moment our breath goes forth, but he graciously gives it us again the next moment. It is not only his air that we breathe in, but it is in his hand that our breath is, *Dan. v. 23*. He gives to all the children of men their life and breath; for as the meanest of the children of men live upon him, and receive from him, so the greatest, the wisest philosophers and mightiest potentates, cannot live without him. He gives to all, not only to all the children of men, but to the inferior creatures, to all animals, every thing wherein is the breath of life, *Gen. vii. 17*; they have their life and breath from him; and where he gives life and breath he gives all things,—all other things needful for the support of life. The earth is full of his goodness, *Ps. civ. 24, 27*.

5. That he is the Sovereign Disposer of all the affairs of the children of men, according to the counsel of his will; ver. 26, He hath "determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." See here, 1st. The

xvii. 34. Nothing is known of Dionysius.

xviii. 1. "Corinth;" a wealthy and commercial city, situated on the isthmus between the Ionian and Aegean seas. It was at this time the capital of Achaia, and the residence of the Roman pro-consul. The old Greek Corinth had been destroyed, and for a hundred years the place had remained desolate. Julius Cæsar re-founded the city in the form of a colony. It had peculiar commercial facilities from its position, and acquired an extensive commerce and reputation for the skill

sovereignty of God's disposal concerning us; he hath determined every event, *ἑκαστα*, the matter is fixed. The disposals of Providence are incontestable, and must not be disputed; unchangeable, and cannot be altered. 2nd. The wisdom of his disposals; he hath determined what was before appointed. The determinations of the Eternal Mind are not sudden resolves, but the counterparts of an Eternal counsel, the copies of Divine decrees. "He performeth the thing that is appointed for me," *Job* xxiii. 14. Whatever comes forth from God was before all worlds hid in God. 3rd. The things about which his providence is conversant. These are time and place; the times and places of our living in this world are determined and appointed by the God that made us. *First*. He has determined the times that are concerning us. Times to us seem changeable, but God has fixed them; our times are in his hand to lengthen or shorten, embitter or sweeten, as he pleaseth. He has appointed and determined the time of our coming into the world, and the time of our continuance in the world, our time to be born, and our time to die, (*Ecc.* iii. 1.) and all that little that lies between them, the time of all our concerns in this world, whether they be prosperous times or calamitous times, it is he that hath determined them; and on him we must depend, with reference to the times that are yet before us. *Secondly*. He has also determined and appointed the bounds of our habitation. He that appointed the earth to be a habitation for the children of men, has appointed to the children of men a distinction of habitations upon the earth, has instituted such a thing as property, to which he has set bounds to keep us from trespassing one upon another. The particular habitations in which our lot is cast, the place of our nativity, and of our settlement, are of God's determining and appointing, which is a reason why we should accommodate ourselves to the habitations we are in, and make the best of that which is.

6. That "he is not far from every one of us," ver. 27. He is everywhere present, not only at our right hand, but hath possessed our reins, *Ps.* cxxxix. 13; hath his eye upon us at all times, and knows us better than we know ourselves. Idolaters made images of God, that they might have him with them in those images, which the apostle here shews the absurdity of; for he is an Infinite Spirit that is not far from any of us, and never the nearer, but in one sense the farther off from us, for our pretending to realize or presentiate him to ourselves by an image. He is nigh unto us, both to receive the homage we render him, and to give the mercies we ask of him, wherever we are, though near no altar, image, or temple. The Lord of all, as he is rich, *Rom.* x. 12, so "he is nigh" (*Dan.* iv. 7) "to all that call upon him." He that wills us to pray everywhere, assures us, that he is nowhere far from us. Whatever country, nation, or profession we are of, whatever our rank and condition in the world is, be we in a palace or in a cottage, in a crowd or in a corner, in a city or in a desert, in the depths of the sea, or afar off upon the sea, this is certain, God is not far off from every one of us.

7. That "in him we live, and move, and have our being," ver. 28. We have a necessary and constant dependence upon his providence, as the streams have upon the spring, and the beams upon the sun. 1st. "In him we live," that is, the continuance of our lives is owing to him, and the constant influence of his providence; "He is our life, and the length of our days." It is not only owing to his patience and pity that our forfeited lives are not cut off, but it is owing to his power, and goodness, and fatherly care, that our frail lives are prolonged. There needs not a positive act of his wrath to destroy us, if he suspend the positive acts of his goodness, we die of ourselves. 2nd. In him we move. It is by the uninterrupted concurrence of his providence that our souls move themselves in their outgoings and operations, that our thoughts run to and fro about a thousand subjects, and our affections run out towards their proper objects. It is likewise by him that our souls move our bodies; we cannot stir a hand, or a foot, or a tongue, but by him who as he is the first cause, so is the first mover. 3rd. In him we have our being; not only from him we had it at first, but in him we have it still. To his continued care and goodness we owe it, not only that we have a being, and are not sunk into nonentity, but that we have our being, have this being were, and still are, of such a noble rank of beings, capable of knowing and enjoying God, and are not thrust into the meanness of brutes, or the misery of devils.

8. That upon the whole matter, we are God's offspring. He is our father that begat us, *Deu.* xxxii. 6, 18; and he hath nourished and brought us up as children, *Isa.* i. 2. The confession of an adversary in such a case, is always looked upon to be of use as *argumentum ad hominem*,—an argument to the man; and, therefore, the apostle here quotes a saying of one of the Greek poets, Aratus, a native of Cilicia, Paul's countryman, in his *Phænomena*. In the beginning of his book, speaking of the heathen Jupiter, that is, in the poetical dialect, the supreme God, he saith this of him, *τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἔσμεν*, "for we are also his offspring." And he might have quoted other poets to the purpose of what he was speaking, that in God we live and move.

Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus

Mens agit at molem.

"This active mind, infused through all the space,
Unites and mingles with the mighty mass."—*Virgil, Æneid* vi.

Est Deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo.

"Tis the Divinity that warms our hearts."—*Ovid, Fast.* vi.

Jupiter est quodcumque vides,

Quocumque moeroris.

"Where'er you look, where'er you rove,

The spacious scene is full of Jove."—*Lucan, lib.* ii.

But he chooses this of Aratus, as having much in a little. By this it appears not only that Paul was himself a scholar, but that human learning is both ornamental and serviceable to a Gospel minister, especially for the convincing of those that are without; for it enables them to beat them at their own weapons, and to cut off Goliath's head with his own sword. How can the adversaries of truth be beaten out of their strongholds by those that do not know them? It may likewise shame God's professing people, who forget their relation to God, and walk contrary to it, that a heathen poet could say of God, "We are his offspring;" formed by him, formed for him, more the care of his providence than ever any children were the care of their parents; and, therefore, are obliged to obey his commands, and acquiesce in his disposals, and to be unto him for a name and a praise. Since in him, and upon him we live, we ought to live to him; since in him we move, we ought to move towards him; and since in him we have our being, and from him we receive all the supports and comforts of our being, we ought to consecrate our being to him, and to apply ourselves to him for a new being, a better being, an eternal well-being.

Thirdly. From all these great truths concerning God he infers the absurdity of their idolatry, as the prophets of old had done. If this be so,

1. Then God cannot be represented by an image. If we are the offspring of God, as we are spirits in flesh, then certainly he who is the Father of our spirits, (and they are the principal part of us, and that part of us by which we are denominated God's offspring,) then he is himself a Spirit, and "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device," ver. 29. We wrong God, and put an affront upon him, if we think so. God honoured man in making his soul after his likeness, but man

dishonours God, if he makes him after the likeness of his body. The Godhead is spiritual, immaterial, incomprehensible; and, therefore, it is a very false and unjust conception which an image gives us of God, be the matter never so rich, gold or silver; be the shape never so curious, and be it never so well graven by art and man's device; its countenance, posture or dress never so significant,—it is a teacher of lies.

2. Then he "dwells not in temples made with hands," ver. 24. He is not invited to any temple men can build for him, nor confined to any. A temple brings him never the nearer to us, nor keeps him ever the longer among us. A temple is convenient for us to come together in to worship God; but God needs not any place of rest or residence, or the magnificence and splendour of any structure to add to the glory of his appearance. A pious, upright heart, a temple not made with hands, but by the Spirit of God, is that which he dwells in, and delights to dwell in; see *1 Kin.* viii. 27; *Isa.* lvi. 1, 2.

3. Then he is not "worshipped," *ὑπερμενέται*; he is not served or ministered unto "with men's hands, as though he needed any thing," ver. 25. He that made all, and maintains all, cannot be benefited by any of our services, nor needs them; if we receive and derive all from him, he is all-sufficient, and therefore cannot but be self-sufficient, and independent. What need can God have of our services, or what benefit can he have by them, when he has all perfection in himself, and we have nothing that is good, but what we have from him? The philosophers indeed were sensible of this truth, that God has no need of us or our services; but the vulgar heathen built temples, and offered sacrifices to their gods with an opinion that they needed houses and food: see *Job* xxxv. 5–8; *Ps.* l. 8, &c.

4. Then it concerns us all to inquire after God; ver. 27. "That they should seek the Lord," that is, fear and worship him in a right manner. Therefore God has kept the children of men in a constant dependence upon him for life, and all the comforts of life, that he might keep them under constant obligations to him. We have plain indications of God's presence among us, his presidency over us, the care of his providence concerning us, and its bounty to us, that we might be put upon inquiring, "Where is God our Maker, who giveth songs in the night; who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?" *Job* xxxv. 10, 11. Nothing, one would think, should be more powerful with us to convince us that there is a God, and to engage us to seek his honour and glory in our services; and to seek our happiness in his favour and love, than the consideration of our own nature, especially the noble powers and faculties of our own souls. If we reflect upon these, and contemplate these, we may perceive both our relation and obligation to a God above us; yet so dark is this discovery in comparison with that by Divine revelation, and so unapt are we to receive it, that they who have no other, could but haply feel after God and find him. 1st. It was very uncertain, whether they would by this searching find out God; it is but a peradventure, if haply they might. 2nd. If they did find out something of God, yet it was but some confused notions of him; they did but feel after him, as men in the dark, or blind men who lay hold on a thing that comes in their way, but know not whether it be that which they are in quest of or no. It is a very confused notion which this poet of theirs has of the relation between God and man, and very general, that "we are his offspring;"—as was also that of their philosophers. Pythagoras said, *Θεῶν γένος ἐστί θνητῶν*,—"men have a sort of a Divine nature." And Heraclitus (*apud Lucian*) being asked, "what men were?" answered, "They were, *θεοὶ θνητοί*, 'mortal gods'; and 'what the gods were?' answered, 'They were, *θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι*, 'immortal men'; and Pindar saith, (*Nem. Ode* vi.), "*Ἐν ἀνδράσιν γένος ἐν θεῶν γένος*, 'God and man are near akin.' It is true, that by the knowledge of ourselves we may be led to the knowledge of God; but it is a very confused knowledge. This is but feeling after him. We have, therefore, reason to be thankful that by the Gospel of Christ we have notices given us of God much clearer than we could have by the light of nature; we do not now feel after him, but "with open face behold as in a glass the glory of God."

Fourthly. He proceeds to call them all to repent of their idolatries, and to turn from them, ver. 30, 31. This is the practical part of Paul's sermon before the university; having declared God to them, ver. 23, from thence he properly presseth upon them "repentance towards God," and would have taught them also "faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," if they would have had patience to hear him. Having shewed them the absurdity of their worshipping other gods, he persuades them to go on no longer in that foolish way of worship, but to return from it to the living and true God. Observe,

1. The carriage of God towards the Gentile world before the Gospel came among them: "The times of this ignorance God winked at." 1st. They were times of great ignorance; human learning flourished more than ever in the Gentile world just before Christ's time, but in the things of God they were grossly ignorant. Those are ignorant indeed, who either know not God, or worship him ignorantly; idolatry was owing to ignorance. 2nd. These times of ignorance God winked at. Understand it, *First*. As an act of Divine justice. God despised or neglected these times of ignorance, and did not send them his Gospel, as now he doth. It was very provoking to him to see his glory thus given to another; and he detested and hated these times, so some take it. Or rather, *Secondly*. As an act of Divine patience and forbearance. He winked at these times, he did not restrain them from these idolatries, by sending prophets to them as he did to Israel; he did not punish them in their idolatries as he did Israel, but gave them the gifts of his providence, *ch.* xiv. 16; "These things thou hast done, and I kept silence," *Ps.* l. 21. He did not give them such calls and motives to repentance as he doth now; he let them alone. Because they did not improve the light they had, but were willingly ignorant, he did not send them greater lights. Or, he was not quick and severe with them, but was long-suffering towards them, because they did it ignorantly, *1 Tim.* i. 13.

2. The charge God gave to the Gentile world by the Gospel, which he now sent among them. He "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent;" to change their mind, and change their way, to be ashamed of their folly, and to act more wisely; to break off the worship of idols, and bind themselves to the worship of the true God. Nay, it is to turn with sorrow and shame from every sin, and with cheerfulness and resolution to every duty. 1st. This is God's command. It had been a great favour if he had only told us, that there was room left for repentance, and we might be admitted to it; but he goes farther, he interposeth his own authority for our good, and has made that our duty which is our privilege. 2nd. It is his command to all men everywhere. To men, and not to angels, that need it not: to men, and not to devils, that are excluded the benefit of it. To all men in all places; all men have made work for repentance, and have cause enough to repent, and all men are invited to repent, and shall have the benefit of it. The apostles are commissioned to preach this everywhere; the prophets were sent to command the Jews to repent; but the apostles were sent to preach repentance and remission of sins to all nations. 3rd. Now in gospel times it is more earnestly commanded, because more encouraged than it had been formerly. Now the way of remission is more opened than it had been, and the promise more fully confirmed; and, therefore, now he expects we should all repent. Now repent; now at length, now in time, repent; for you have too long gone on in sin. Now in time repent, for it will be too late shortly.

and general culture of its inhabitants; but it was also notorious for its licentiousness. It was from Corinth, and during this visit, that St. Paul wrote his Epistles to the Thessalonians.

xviii. 2. "Aquila" and "Priscilla:" natives of Pontus, a province of Asia Minor, on the shores of the Euxine. They were Jews, and most probably not Christians at this time, but converted during Paul's visit. Their common occupation seems to have drawn them and Paul together at first.

xviii. 3. "Tent-makers:" makers of tents from the hair-cloth of the Cilician goats; not the manufacturers of the cloth itself. It was a custom among the Jews that all boys should learn a trade. (See Supplementary Notes.)

xviii. 5. "Pressed in the spirit" should be "in the word." Alford translates, "anxiously occupied in dis-coursing to the Jews." Another translation is, "He was impelled in reference to the word, entirely absorbed, engrossed by the doctrine."

3. The great reason to enforce this command, taken from the judgment to come; God commands us to repent, "because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness," ver. 31; and has now under the Gospel made a clearer discovery of a state of retribution in the other world than ever before. Observe, 1st. The God that made the world will judge it; that gave the children of men their being and faculties, will call them to an account what use they have made of them, and recompense them accordingly; whether the body served the soul in serving God, or the soul was a drudge to the body in making provision for the flesh; and "every man shall receive according to the things done in the body," 2 Cor. v. 10. The God that now governs the world, will judge it, will reward the faithful friends of his government, and punish the rebels. 2nd. There is a day appointed for this general review of all that men have done in time, and a final determination of their state for eternity. The day is fixed in the counsel of God, and cannot be altered; but it is hid there, and cannot be known. A day of decision, a day of recompence; a day that will put a final period to all the days of time. 3rd. The world will be judged in righteousness; for God is not unrighteous who taketh vengeance, far be it from him that he should do iniquity. His knowledge of all men's characters and actions is infallibly true; and, therefore, his sentence upon them incontestably just. And as there will be no appeal from it, so there will be no exception against it. 4th. God will judge the world "by that man whom he hath ordained," who can be no other but the Lord Jesus, to whom all judgment is committed. By him God made the world, by him he redeemed it, by him he governs it, and by him he will judge it. 5th. God's raising Christ from the dead is the great proof of his being appointed and ordained the Judge of quick and dead, his doing him that honour evidenced his designing him this honour. His raising him from the dead was the beginning of his exaltation; his judging the world will be the perfection of it; and he that begins will make an end. God "hath given assurance unto all men," sufficient ground for their faith to build upon, both that there is a judgment to come, and that Christ will be their judge; the matter is not left doubtful, but is of unquestionable certainty. Let all his enemies be assured of it, and tremble before him; let all his friends be assured of it, and triumph in him. 6th. The consideration of the judgment to come, and of the great hand Christ will have in that judgment, should engage us all to repent of our sins, and turn from them to God. This is the only way to make the Judge our friend in that day; which will be a terrible day to all that live and die impenitent, but true penitents will then "lift up their heads with joy, knowing that their redemption draws nigh."

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. 33 So Paul departed from among them. 34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Pamaris, and others with them.

We have here a short account of the issue of Paul's preaching at Athens. First. Few were the better. The Gospel had as little success at Athens as any where; for the pride of the philosophers there, as of the Pharisees at Jerusalem, prejudiced them against the Gospel of Christ.

1. Some ridiculed Paul and his preaching. They heard him patiently till he came to speak of the resurrection of the dead, ver. 32; and then some of them began to hiss him, they mocked. What he had said before was somewhat like what they had sometimes heard in their own schools; and some notion they had of a resurrection, as it signifies a future state; but if he speak of a resurrection of the dead, though it be of the resurrection of Christ himself, it is altogether incredible to them, and they cannot bear so much as to hear of it, as being contrary to a principle of their philosophy: *A privatione ad habundantiam non datur regressus*—life when once lost is irrecoverable. They had deified their heroes after their death, but they never thought of their being raised from the dead; and therefore they could by no means reconcile themselves to this doctrine of Christ's being raised from the dead: how can this be? This great doctrine, which is the saints' joy, is their jest; when it was but mentioned to them, they mocked and made a laughing matter of it. We are not to think it strange, if sacred truths of the greatest certainty and importance are made the scorn of profane wits.

2. Others were willing to take time to consider of it. They said, "We will hear thee again of this matter;" they would not at present comply with what Paul said, or oppose it, but we will hear thee again of this matter of the resurrection from the dead. It should seem they overlooked that which was plain and uncontroverted, and shifted off the application and the improvement of that, by starting objections against that which was disputable, and would admit a debate. Thus many lose the benefit of the practical doctrine of Christianity, by wading beyond their depth into controversy, or, rather, by objecting against that which hath some difficulty in it; whereas, if any man were disposed and determined to do the will of God, as far as it is discovered to him, he should know of the doctrine of Christ, that it is of God, and not of man, *Jno. vii. 17*. Those that would not yield to the present convictions of the word, thought to get clear of them, as Felix did, by putting them off to another opportunity; they will hear of it again some time or other, but they know not when; and thus the devil cozens them of all their time, by cozening them of the present time.

3. Paul thereupon left them for the present to consider of it; ver. 33, "He departed from among them," as seeing little likelihood of doing any good with them at this time; but, it is likely, with a promise to those that were willing to hear him again that he would meet them whenever they pleased.

Secondly. Yet there were some that were wrought upon, ver. 34. If some would not, others would.

1. There were certain men that clave to him and believed. When he departed from among them, they would not part with him so; wherever he went, they would follow him with a resolution to adhere to the doctrine he preached, which they believed.

2. Two are particularly named. One was an eminent man, Dionysius, the Areopagite; one of that high court, or great council, that sat in Areopagus, or Mars' hill; a judge, a senator, one of those before whom Paul was summoned to appear: his judge becomes his convert. The account which the ancients give of this Dionysius is, that he was bred at Athens, had studied astronomy in Egypt, where he took notice of the miraculous eclipse at our Saviour's passion; that, returning to Athens, he became a senator, disputed with Paul, and was by him converted from his error and idolatry; and being by him thoroughly instructed, was made the first bishop of Athens: so Eusebius,

xviii. 7. Paul, leaving the synagogue, carried on his labours in the house of Justus, a Gentile proselyte.

xviii. 8. "The converts in this city, as we learn from the epistles, were for the most part persons belonging to the middle and lower classes. 'Not many wise men after the flesh' (i.e., students in the schools of heathen philosophy), 'not many mighty, not many noble, are called' (1 Cor. i. 16). The opulent merchants and persons of rank in that city were excessively licentious, and accustomed to a highly arti-

l. iii. c. 4, l. iv. c. 22. The woman named Damaris was, as some think, the wife of Dionysius; but rather, some other person of quality, and though there was not so great a harvest gathered in at Athens as there was at some other places, yet, these few being wrought upon there, Paul had no reason to say he had laboured in vain.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In this chapter we have, I. Paul's coming to Corinth, his private converse with Aquila and Priscilla, and his public reasonings with the Jews, from whom, when they rejected him, he turned to the Gentiles, ver. 1-5. II. The great success of his ministry there, and the encouragement Christ gave him in a vision, to continue his labours there, in hopes of farther success, ver. 7-11. III. The molestation which after some time he met with there from the Jews, which he got pretty well through by the coldness of Gallio the Roman governor in the cause, ver. 12-17. IV. The progress Paul made through many countries, after he had continued long at Corinth, for the edifying and watering of the churches which he had founded and planted, in which circuit he made a short visit to Jerusalem, ver. 18-23. V. An account of Apollos' improvement in knowledge, and his usefulness in the church, ver. 24-28.



AFTER these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome;) and came unto

them. 3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. 6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

We do not find that Paul was much persecuted at Athens, nor that he was driven from thence by any ill-usage, as he was from those places where the Jews had or could make any interest; but his reception at Athens being cold, and little prospect of doing good there, he departed from Athens, leaving the care of those there who believed with Dionysius; and from thence he came to Corinth, where he was now instrumental in planting a church that became, upon many accounts, considerable. Corinth was the chief city of Achaia, now a province of the empire, a rich and splendid city. *Non cuius homini contingit adire Corinthum*—it is not permitted every man to see Corinth. The country thereabouts at this day is called the Morea. Now here we have,

First. Paul working for his living, ver. 2, 3.

1. Though he was bred a scholar, yet he was master of a handicraft trade. He was a tentmaker, an upholsterer; he made tents for the use of soldiers and shepherds, of cloth or stuff, or (as some say, tents were then generally made) of leather, or skins, as the outer covering of the tabernacle. Hence to live in tents, was to live *sub pellibus*—"under skins." Dr. Lightfoot shews that it was the custom of the Jews to bring up their children to some trade, yea, though they gave them learning or estates. Rabbi Judah saith, 'He that teacheth not his son a trade is as if he taught him to be a thief.' And another saith, 'He that hath a trade in his hand is as a vineyard that is fenced.' An honest trade, by which a man may get his bread, is not to be looked upon by any with contempt. Paul, though a Pharisee, and bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, yet, having in his youth learned to make tents, he did not by disuse lose the art.

2. Though he was entitled to a maintenance from the churches he had planted, and from the people he preached to, yet he worked at his calling to get bread, which is more to his praise who did not ask for supplies, than to theirs who did not supply him unasked, knowing what straits he was reduced to. See how humble Paul was, and wonder that so great a man could stoop so low; but he had learned condescension of his Master, who came not to be ministered to, but to minister. See how industrious he was, and how willing to take pains. He that had so much excellent work to do with his mind, yet, when there was occasion, did not think it below him to work with his hands. Even those that are redeemed from the curse of the law, yet are not exempt from that sentence, "in the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread." See how careful Paul was to recommend his ministry, and to prevent prejudices against it, even the most unjust and unreasonable; he therefore maintained himself with his own labour, that he might not make the Gospel of Christ burdensome, 2 Cor. xi. 7, &c.; 2 The. iii. 8, 9.

3. Though we may suppose he was master of his trade, yet he did not disdain to work journey-work; he wrought with Aquila and Priscilla, who were of that calling; so that he got no more but day-wages; a bare subsistence. Poor tradesmen must be thankful if their callings bring them in a maintenance for themselves and their families, though they cannot do as the rich merchants that raise estates by their callings.

4. Though he was himself a great apostle, yet he chose to work with Aquila and Priscilla, because he found them to be very intelligent in the things of God,

ficial style of oratory, and to subtle philosophical discussions. Both causes stood in the way of a general conversion by the plain and practical preaching of the Gospel; but the expression 'not many' seems to imply that some persons distinguished for rank and talents joined the Church—some of its members were certainly opulent" (Cook).

xviii. 12. "Gallio:" Marcus Anneus Novatus was his original name, but he took the name of Junius Anneus Gallio when he was adopted by Lucius Junius Gallio, a celebrated rhetorician. He was

as appears afterwards, ver. 26; and he owns that they had been his helpers in Christ Jesus, *Rom. xvi. 3*. This is an example to those who are going to service to seek for those services in which they may have the best help for their souls. Choose to work with those that are likely to be helpers in Christ Jesus. It is good to be in company, and to have our conversation with those that will further us in the knowledge of Christ, and to put ourselves under the influence of such as are resolved that they will serve the Lord.

Concerning this Aquila we are here told, 1st. That he was a Jew, but born in Pontus, ver. 2. Many of the Jews of the dispersion were seated in that country, as appears *1 Pet. i. 1*. 2nd. That he was lately come from Italy to Corinth. It seems he often changed his habitation: this is not the world we can promise ourselves a settlement in. 3rd. That the reason of his leaving Italy was, because by a late edict of the Emperor Claudius Caesar all Jews were banished from Rome; for the Jews were generally disgusted, and every occasion was taken to put hardship and disgrace upon them. God's heritage was "as a speckled bird, the birds round about were against her," *Jer. xii. 9*. Aquila, though a Christian, was banished because he had been a Jew; and the Gentiles had such confused notions of the thing, that they could not distinguish between a Jew and a Christian. Suetonius, in the life of Claudius, speaks of this decree in the ninth year of his reign, and saith, The reason was, because the Jews were "a turbulent people," *assiduo tumultuantes*; and that it was *impulsore Christo*,—"upon the account of Christ;" some zealous for him, others bitter against him, which occasioned great heats, such as gave umbrage to the government, and provoked the emperor, who was a timorous, jealous man, to order them all to be gone. If Jews persecute Christians, it is not strange if heathens persecute them both.

Secondly. We have here Paul preaching to the Jews, and dealing with them to bring them to the faith of Christ, both the native Jews and the Greeks, that is, those that were more or less proselyted to the Jewish religion, and frequented their meetings.

1. He reasoned with them in the synagogue publicly every sabbath. See in what way the apostles propagated the Gospel, not by force and violence, by fire and sword, not by demanding an implicit consent, but by fair arguing; they drew with the cords of a man; gave a reason for what they said, and gave a liberty to object against it, having satisfactory answers ready. God invites us to come and reason with him, *Isa. i. 18*, and challenges sinners to produce their cause, and bring forth their strong reasons, *Isa. xli. 21*, Paul was a rational as well as scriptural preacher.

2. He persuaded them, *πειθε*. It notes, 1st. The urgency of his preaching. He did not only dispute argumentatively with them, but he followed his arguments with affectionate persuasions, begging of them for God's sake, for their own souls' sake, for their children's sake, not to refuse the offer of salvation made them. Or, 2nd. The good effect of his preaching. He persuaded them; that is, he prevailed with them, so some understand it. *In sententiam suam adducebat*, "He brought them over to his own opinion." Some of them were convinced by his reasonings, and yielded to Christ.

3. He was yet more earnest in this matter when his fellow labourers, his seconds, came up with him; ver. 5, "when Silas and Timothy were come from Macedonia," and had brought him good tidings from the churches there, and were ready to assist him here, and strengthened his hands, then Paul was more than before pressed in spirit, which made him more than ever pressing in his preaching. He was grieved for the obstinacy and infidelity of his countrymen the Jews, was more intent than ever upon their conversion, and the love of Christ constrained him to it, *2 Cor. v. 14*; it is the word that is used here, it pressed him in spirit to it; and being thus pressed, he testified to the Jews with all possible solemnity and seriousness, as that which he was perfectly well assured of himself, and attested to them as "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance," that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah promised to the fathers, and expected by them.

Thirdly. We have him here abandoning the unbelieving Jews, and turning from them to the Gentiles, as he had done in other places, ver. 6.

1. Many of the Jews, and indeed the most of them, persisted in their contradiction to the Gospel of Christ, and would not yield to the strongest reasonings, or the most winning persuasions, "they opposed themselves and blasphemed," they "set themselves in battle array," so the word signifies, against the Gospel, they joined hand in hand to stop the progress of it. They resolved they would not believe it themselves, and would do all they could to keep others from believing it. They could not argue against it, but what was wanting in reason they made up in ill language; they blasphemed, spoke reproachfully of Christ, and in him, of God himself, as *Rev. xiii. 5, 6*. To justify their infidelity, they broke out into downright blasphemy.

2. Paul hereupon declared himself discharged from them, and left them to perish in their unbelief. He that was pressed in spirit to testify to them, ver. 5, when they opposed that testimony, and persisted in their opposition, was pressed in spirit to testify against them, ver. 6; and his zeal herein also he shewed by a sign, he shook his raiment, shaking off the dust of it, as before they shook off the dust of their feet, *ch. xiii. 51*, for a testimony against them. Thus he cleared himself from them, but threatened the judgments of God against them. As Pilate by washing his hands signified the devolving of the guilt of Christ's blood from himself upon the Jews, so Paul, by shaking his raiment, signified what he said, if possible, to affect them with it. First. He had done his part, and was clean from the blood of their souls; he had, like a faithful watchman, given them warning, and thereby had delivered his soul, though he could not prevail to deliver theirs; he had tried all methods to work upon them, but all in vain, so that, if they perish in their unbelief, their blood is not to be required at his hands; here, and *ch. xx. 26*, he plainly refers to *Eze. xxxiii. 8, 9*. It is very comfortable to a minister to have the testimony of his conscience for him, that he has faithfully discharged his trust by warning sinners. Secondly. They would certainly perish if they persisted in their unbelief, and the blame would lie wholly upon themselves; "Your blood be upon your own heads," you will be your own destroyers, your nation will be ruined in this world, and particular persons will be ruined in the other world, and you alone shall bear it. If any thing would frighten them at last into a compliance with the Gospel, sure this would.

3. Having given them over, yet he doth not give over his work. Though Israel be not gathered, Christ and his Gospel shall be glorious; "From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles;" and the Jews cannot complain, for they had the first offer, and a fair one, made to them. The guests that were first invited will not come, and the provision must not be lost; guests must be had therefore from the highways and the hedges. We would have gathered the Jews, *Mat. xxiii. 37*, would have healed them, *Jer. li. 9*, and they would not; but Christ must be a head without a body, nor a foundation without a building, and therefore, if they will not, we must try whether others will. Thus the fall and diminishing of the Jews was the riches of the Gentiles; and Paul said this to their faces, not only because it was what he could justify, but to provoke them to jealousy, *Rom. xi. 12, 14*.

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that wor-

shipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Here we are told,

First. That Paul changed his quarters. Christ directed his disciples, when he sent them forth, not to go from house to house, *Lu. x. 7*; but there might be occasion to do it, as Paul did here. He departed out of the synagogue, being driven out by the perverseness of the unbelieving Jews, and he "entered into a certain man's house named Justus," ver. 7. It should seem he went to this man's house, not to lodge, for he continued with Aquila and Priscilla, but to preach. When the Jews would not let him go on peaceably with his work in their meeting, this honest man opened his doors to him, and told him he should be welcome to preach there, and Paul accepted the motion: and it was not the first time that God's ark had taken up its lodgings in a private house. When Paul could not have liberty to preach in the synagogue, he preached in a house, without any disparagement to his doctrine. But observe the account of this man and his house:

1. The man was next door to a Jew. He was "one that worshipped God;" he was not an idolater, though he was a Gentile, but was a worshipper of the God of Israel, and him only, as Cornelius. That Paul might give the less offence to the Jews, though he had abandoned them, he set up his meeting in that man's house. Even then, when he was under a necessity of breaking off from them to turn to the Gentiles, yet he would study to oblige them.

2. The house was next door to the synagogue, it joined close to it, which some perhaps might interpret as done with a design to draw people from the synagogue to the meeting, but I rather think it was done in charity, to shew that he would come as near them as he could, and was ready to return to them if they were but willing to receive his message, and would not contradict and blaspheme as they had done.

Secondly. That Paul saw the good fruit of his labours presently, both among Jews and Gentiles.

1. Crispus, a Jew, an eminent one, "the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord Jesus with all his house," ver. 8. It was for the honour of the Gospel that there were some rulers and persons of the first rank, both in church and state, that embraced it. This would leave the Jews inexcusable, that the ruler of their synagogue, who may be supposed to have excelled the rest in knowledge of the Scriptures and zeal for their religion, believed the Gospel, and yet they opposed and blasphemed it. Not only he, but his house believed, and probably were baptized with him by Paul, *1 Cor. i. 14*.

2. "Many of the Corinthians," who were Gentiles, and some of them persons of an ill character, (as appears *1 Cor. vi. 11*, "such were some of you," "hearing believed, and were baptized.") First they heard, for faith comes by hearing. Some, perhaps, came to hear Paul under some convictions of conscience that the way they were in was not right; but it is probable the most came only for curiosity, because it was a new doctrine that was preached; but hearing they believed, by the power of God working upon them, and believing they were baptized, and so fixed for Christ; took upon them the profession of Christianity, and became entitled to the privileges of Christians.

Thirdly. That Paul was encouraged by a vision to go on with his work at Corinth: ver. 9, "The Lord Jesus spake to Paul in the night by a vision." When he was musing on his work, communing with his own heart upon his bed, and considering whether he should continue here or no, what method he should take here, and what probability there was of doing good, then Christ appeared very seasonably to him, and in the multitude of his thoughts within him delighted his soul with Divine consolations.

1. He renewed his commission and charge to preach the Gospel. "Be not afraid" of the Jews, though they are very outrageous, and perhaps the most enraged by the conversion of the chief ruler of their synagogue; Be not afraid of the magistrates of the city, for they have no power against thee but what is given them from above. It is the cause of heaven thou art pleading; do it boldly. "Be not afraid of their words, nor dismayed at their looks," but "speak, and hold not thy peace;" let slip no opportunity of speaking to them, "cry aloud, spare not." Do not hold thy peace from speaking for fear of them, nor hold thy peace in speaking, if I may so say; do not speak shily and with caution, but plainly, and fully, and with courage; speak out, use all the liberty of spirit that becomes an ambassador for Christ.

2. He assured him of his presence with him, which was sufficient to animate him, and put life and spirit into him. "Be not afraid, for I am with thee," to protect thee, and bear thee out, and to deliver thee from all thy fears; "speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee," to own what thou sayest, to work with thee, and to confirm the word by signs following. The same promise that ratified the general commission, *Mat. xxviii. 19, 20*, "Lo, I am with you always," is here repeated. They that have Christ with them need not fear, and ought not to shrink.

3. He gave him a warrant of protection to save him harmless. "No man shall set on thee to hurt thee;" thou shalt be delivered out of the hands of wicked and unreasonable men, and shalt not be driven hence as thou wast from other places by persecution. He doth not promise that no man should set on him, for the next news we hear is, that he is set upon, and brought to the judgment-seat, ver. 12; but "no man shall set on thee to hurt thee;" the remainder of their wrath shall be restrained; thou shalt not be beaten and imprisoned here as thou wast at Philippi. Paul met with coarser treatment at first than he did afterwards, and was now comforted according to the time wherein he had been afflicted. Trials shall not last always, *Ps. lxxvi. 10-12*. Or we may take it more generally, "no man shall set on thee," τοῦ κακίστου σε,—"to do evil to thee;" whatever trouble they may give thee, there is no real evil in it. They may kill thee, but they cannot hurt thee, for I am with thee, *Ps. xxiii. 4*; *Isa. xli. 10*.

4. He gave him a prospect of success. "For I have much people in this city," therefore no man shall prevail to obstruct thy work; therefore I will be with thee to own thy work, and therefore do thou go on vigorously and cheerfully

a brother of Seneca, the Roman philosopher, who was tutor to Nero. "Deputy:" pro-consul (see chap. xiii. 7). "Achaia:" in the New Testament the Roman province which included the Peloponnesus and the greater part of Hellas proper, with the adjacent islands. "The judgment-seat:" "This chair or tribunal, 'the indispensable symbol of the Roman judgment-seat,' is mentioned three times in the course of this narrative. It was of two kinds—(1) fixed in some open and public place; (2) movable, and taken by the Roman magistrates to be

placed wherever they might sit in a judicial character. Probably here and in the case of Pilate the former kind of seat is intended" (Conybeare and Howson).

xviii. 14. "Wrong or wicked lewdness:" the first means an act of injustice, the other a malicious and reckless act or crime.

xviii. 17. The best MSS. omit the word "Greeks." The Gentile mob present, excited by what had taken place, and perhaps harbouring a dislike for the Jews, gave vent to their feelings by attack-

in; for there are many in this city that are to be effectually called by thy ministry, in whom thou shalt see of the travail of thy soul. *Λαός ἐστι μοι πολὺς*,—“there is to me a great people here.” The Lord knows them that are his, yea, and them that shall be his; for it is by his work upon them that they become his, and known unto him are all his works. I have them, though they yet know me not, though yet they are led captive by Satan at his will; for the Father has given them me to be a seed to serve me; I have them written in the book of life, I have their names down, and of all that were given me I will lose none; I have them, for I am sure to have them; “whom he did predestinate, them he called.” In this city, though it be a very profane wicked city, full of impurity, and the more so for a temple of Venus there, to which there was great resort, yet in this heap, that seems to be all chaff, there is wheat; in this ore, that seems to be all dross, there is gold. Let us not despair concerning any place, when even in Corinth Christ had much people.

Fourthly. That upon this encouragement he made a long stay there; ver. 11, he “continued at Corinth a year and six months,” not to take his ease, but to follow his work, “teaching the word of God among them.” And it being a city flocked to from all parts, he had opportunity there of preaching the Gospel to strangers, and sending notice of it thence to other countries. He stayed so long,

1. For the bringing in of those that were without. Christ had much people there, and by the power of his grace he could have had them all converted in one month or week, as at the first preaching of the Gospel, when thousands were inclosed at one cast of the net; but God works variously. The people Christ has at Corinth must be called in by degrees, some by one sermon, others by another; we see not yet all things put under Christ. Let Christ’s ministers go on in their duty, though their work be not done all at once; nay, though it be done but a little at a time.

2. For the building up of those that were within. Those that are converted have still need to be taught the word of God, and particular need at Corinth to be taught it by Paul himself, for no sooner was the good seed sown in that field, but the enemy came and sowed tares, the false apostles, those deceitful workers, whom Paul in his epistles to the Corinthians complains so much of. When the hands of Jewish persecutors were tied, who were professed enemies to the Gospel, Paul had a more vexatious trouble created him, and the church more mischievous damage done it by the tongue of Judaizing preachers, who, under colour of the Christian name, undermined the very foundations of Christianity. Soon after Paul came to Corinth, it is supposed, he wrote the first epistle to the Thessalonians, which, in order of time, was the first of all the epistles he wrote by Divine inspiration, and the second epistle to the same church was written not long after. Ministers may be serving Christ, and promoting the great ends of their ministry, by writing good letters, as well as by preaching good sermons.

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, 13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. 14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: 15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. 16 And he drave them from the judgment seat. 17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

We have here an account of some disturbance given to Paul and his friends at Corinth, but no great harm done, nor much hindrance given to the work of Christ there.

First, Paul is accused by the Jews before the Roman governor, ver. 12, 13. The governor was Gallio, deputy of Achaia, that is, proconsul, for Achaia was a consular province of the empire. This Gallio was elder brother to the famous Seneca; in his youth he was called Novatus, but took the name of Gallio upon his being adopted into the family of Julius Gallio. He is described by Seneca, his brother, to be a man of great ingenuity, and great probity, and a man of a wonderful good temper. He was called *dulcis Gallio*,—“sweet Gallio,” for his sweet disposition, and is said to have been universally beloved. Now observe,

1. How rudely Paul is apprehended and brought before Gallio; “the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul.” They were the ringleaders of all the mischief against Paul, and they entered into a confederacy to do him a mischief. They were unanimous in it; they came upon him with one accord, hand joined in hand to do this wickedness; they did it with violence and fury; they made an insurrection to the disturbance of the public peace, and hurried Paul away to the judgment-seat, and, for aught appears, allowed him no time to prepare for his trial.

2. How falsely Paul is accused before Gallio; ver. 13, “This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.” They could not charge him with persuading men not to worship God at all, or to worship other gods, *Deu. xiii. 2*, but only to worship God in a way contrary to the law. The Romans allowed the Jews in their provinces the observation of their own law; and what then? must they therefore be persecuted as criminals who worship God in any other way? Doth their toleration include a power of imposition? But the charge was unjust; for their own law had in it a promise of a prophet whom God would raise up to them, and him they should hear. Now Paul persuaded them to believe in this prophet, who was come, and to hear him, which was according to the law; for he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. The law relating to the temple service those Jews at Corinth could not observe, because of their distance from Jerusalem, and there was no part of their synagogue worship which Paul contradicted. Thus when people are taught to worship God in Christ, and to worship him in the Spirit, they are ready to quarrel, as if they were taught to worship him contrary to the law, whereas this is indeed perfective of the law.

ing Sosthenes. This Sosthenes is not to be confounded with the one in 1 Cor. i. 1.

xviii. 18. “Cenchrea:” the sea-port of Corinth, on the Gulf of Ægina. Many commentators refer the last clause of this verse to Aquila. It was probably a vow made in some time of trouble; and if it be referred to St. Paul, it will account for his hastening to Jerusalem, that he might be there to offer the requisite sacrifice within the prescribed thirty days.

Secondly, Gallio, upon the first hearing, or rather, without any hearing at all, dismisseth the cause, and will not take any cognizance of it, ver. 14, 15. Paul was going about to make his defence, and to shew that he did not teach “men to worship God contrary to the law;” but the judge, being resolved not to pass any sentence upon this cause, he would not give himself the trouble of examining it. Observe,

1. He shews himself very ready to do the part of a judge in any matter that it was proper for him to take cognizance of. He said to the Jews that were the prosecutors, “If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, if you could charge the prisoner with theft or fraud, with murder or rapine, or any act of immorality, I should think myself bound to bear with you in your complaints, though they were clamorous and noisy; for the rudeness of the petitioners was no good reason, if their cause was just, why they should not have justice done them. It is the duty of magistrates to right the injured, and to animadvert upon the injurious; and if the complaint be not made with all the decorum that might be, yet they should hear it out. But,

2. He will by no means allow them to make a complaint to him of a thing that was not within his jurisdiction; ver. 15, “If it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it;” end it among yourselves as ye can, but “I will be no judge of such matters;” you shall neither burthen my patience with the hearing of it, nor burthen my conscience with giving judgment upon it. And therefore, when they were urgent and pressing to be heard, he “drave them from the judgment-seat,” ver. 16, and ordered another cause to be called. Now,

1st. Here was something well in Gallio’s conduct, and praiseworthy; that he would not pretend to judge of things he did not understand; that he left the Jews to themselves in matters relating to their own religion, but yet would not let them, under pretence of that, run down Paul and abuse him, or at least would not himself be the tool of their malice to give judgment against him. He looked upon the matter to be not within his jurisdiction, and therefore would not meddle in it. But,

2nd. It was certainly ill to speak so slightly of a law and religion which he might have known to be of God, and which he ought to have acquainted himself with. In what way God is to be worshipped, whether Jesus be the Messiah, whether the Gospel be a Divine revelation, were not questions of words and names, as he scornfully and profanely called them: they are questions of vast importance, and which, if he had understood himself aright, he would have seen himself nearly concerned in. He speaks as if he boasted of his ignorance of the Scriptures, and took a pride in it; as if it were below him to take notice of the law of God, or make any inquiries concerning it.

Thirdly. The abuse done to Sosthenes, and Gallio’s unconcernedness in it, ver. 17.

1. The parties put a great contempt upon the court when they “took Sosthenes, and beat him before the judgment-seat.” Many conjectures there are concerning this matter, because it is uncertain who this Sosthenes was, and who the Greeks were that abused him. It seems most probable that Sosthenes was a Christian, and Paul’s particular friend, that appeared for him on this occasion, and probably had taken care of his safety, and conveyed him away when Gallio dismissed the cause; so that, when they could not light on Paul, they fell foul on him who protected him. It is certain there was one Sosthenes that was a friend of Paul, and well known at Corinth; it is likely he was a minister, for Paul calls him his brother, and joins him with himself in his first epistle to the church at Corinth, 1 Cor. i. 1, as he doth Timothy in his second; and it is probable this was he. He is said to be a ruler of the synagogue, either joint ruler with Crispus, ver. 8, or ruler of one synagogue as Crispus was of another. And as for the Greeks that abused him, it is very probable they were either Hellenist Jews, or Jewish Greeks, those that joined with the Jews in opposing the Gospel, ver. 4, 6; and the native Jews put them on to do it, thinking it would in them be less offensive. They were so enraged against Paul that they beat Sosthenes, and so enraged against Gallio, because he would not countenance the prosecution, that they beat him before the judgment-seat, whereby they did in effect tell him that they cared not for him; if he would not be their executioner, they would be their own judges.

2. The court put no less a contempt upon the cause and the persons too; “but Gallio cared for none of these things.” If by this he meant that he cared not for the affronts of ill men, it was commendable,—while he steadily adhered to the laws and rules of equity, he might despise their contempt; but if it be meant, as I think it is, that he concerned not himself for the abuses done to good men, it carries his indifferency too far, and gives us but an ill character of him. Here is wickedness done in the place of judgment, which Solomon complains of, *Ecc. iii. 16*, and nothing done to discountenance and suppress it. Gallio, as a judge, ought to have protected Sosthenes, and restrained and punished the Greeks that assaulted him. For a man to be mobbed in the street or in the market, perhaps may not be easily helped; but to be so in his court, the judgment-seat, the court sitting, and not concerned at it, is an evidence that “truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter; for he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey,” *Isa. lix. 14*. Those that see and hear of the sufferings of God’s people, and have no sympathy with them, or concern for them, do not pity and pray for them, it is all one to them whether the interests of religion sink or swim, are of the spirit of Gallio here, who, when a good man was abused before his face, “cared for none of these things;” like them that were at ease in Zion, and “were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph,” *Am. vi. 1*; like the king and Haman, that sat down to drink when the city Shushan was perplexed, *Est. iii. 15*.

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; 21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. 22 And when he had landed at Cæsarea, and gone up, and saluted

xviii. 19. “Ephesus:” the wealthy and beautiful capital of Ionia, celebrated for the worship of Diana. (See Note to chap. xix. 1.)

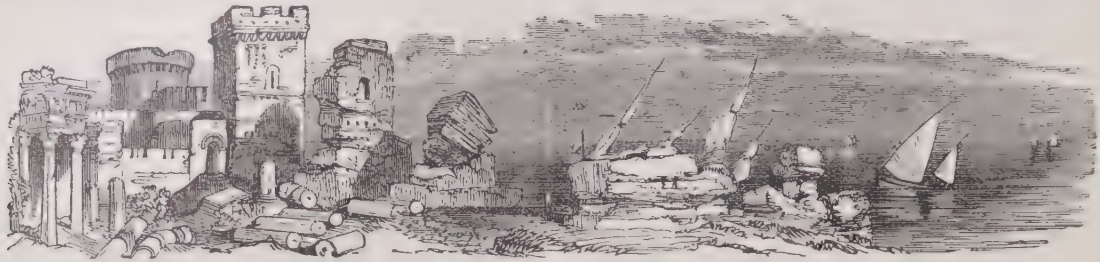
xviii. 22. “Gone up:” i.e., to Jerusalem.

xviii. 23. Commencement of Paul’s third missionary journey. Conybeare and Howson date it A.D. 54, giving A.D. 48 and A.D. 51 for his first and second journeys.

xviii. 24. “Alexandria:” founded by Alexander the Great, in Egypt, on the Mediterranean; the seat of Hellenistic learning. “One

the church, he went down to Antioch. 23 And after he had spent some time *there*, he departed, and

went over *all* the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.



CÆSAREA.

We have here Paul in motion, as we have had him at Corinth for some time at rest, but in both busy, very busy in the service of Christ; if he sat still, if he went about, still it was to do good. Here is,

First. Paul's departure from Corinth, ver. 18.

1. He did not go away till some time after the trouble he met with there. From other places he had departed when the storm rose, but not from Corinth, for there it was no sooner risen but it fell again. Some tell us that Gallio did privately countenance Paul, and took him into his favour, and that this occasioned a correspondence between Paul and Seneca, Gallio's brother, which some of the ancients speak of. "After this he tarried there yet a good while," some think beyond the year and half mentioned ver. 11; while he found he laboured not in vain, he continued labouring.

2. When he went he took leave of the brethren solemnly, and with much affection, with suitable comforts and counsels, and prayers at parting, commending what was good, reproving what was otherwise, and giving them necessary cautions against the wiles of the false apostles; and his farewell sermon would leave impressions upon them.

3. He took with him Priscilla and Aquila, because they had a mind to accompany him, for they seem disposed to remove, and not inclined to stay long at a place; a disposition which may come from a good principle, and have good effects, and therefore ought not to be condemned in others, though it ought to be suspected in ourselves. There was a mighty friendship contracted between them and Paul, and therefore, when he went, they begged to go along with him.

4. At Cenchrea, which was hard by Corinth, the port where those that went to sea from Corinth took ship, either Paul or Aquila (for the original doth not determine which) had his head shaved, to discharge himself from the vow of a Nazarite; "having shorn his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow." Those that lived in Judæa were in such a case bound to do it at the temple, but those who lived in other countries might do it in other places. The Nazarite's head was to be shaved, when either his consecration was accidentally polluted, in which case he must begin again, or "when the days of his separation were fulfilled," Num. vi. 9, 13, 18, which we suppose was the case here. Some throw it upon Aquila, who was a Jew, ver. 2, and retained perhaps more of his Judaism than was convenient; but I see no harm in admitting it concerning Paul, for concerning him we must admit the same thing, ch. xxi. 24, 26, not only in compliance for a time with the Jews, to whom he became as a Jew, 1 Cor. ix. 20, that he might win upon them, but because the vow of the Nazarites, though ceremonial, and as such ready to vanish away, yet had a great deal of moral and very pious significancy, and therefore was fit to die the last of all the Jewish ceremonies. The Nazarites are joined with the prophets, Am. ii. 11, and were very much the glory of Israel, Lam. iv. 7; and therefore it is not strange if Paul bound himself for some time with the vow of a Nazarite, from wine and strong drink, and from being trimmed, to recommend himself to the Jews, and from this he now discharged himself.

Secondly. Paul's calling at Ephesus, which was the metropolis of the Lesser Asia, and a seaport.

1. There he left Aquila and Priscilla, not only because they would be but burthensome to him in his journey, but because they might be serviceable to the interests of the Gospel at Ephesus. Paul intended shortly to settle there for some time, and he left Aquila and Priscilla there in the meantime, for the same end as Christ sent his disciples before to every place where he himself would come, to prepare his way. Aquila and Priscilla might, by private conversation, being very intelligent, judicious Christians, dispose the minds of many to give Paul, when he should come among them, a favourable reception, and to understand his preaching; therefore he calls them his helpers in Christ Jesus, Rom. xvi. 3.

2. There he preached to the Jews in their synagogue. Though he did but call there in his journey, yet he would not go without giving them a sermon. He entered into the synagogue, not as a hearer, but as a preacher, for there he reasoned with the Jews. Though he had abandoned the Jews at Corinth, who opposed themselves and blasphemed, yet he did not for their sakes decline the synagogues of the Jews in other places, but still made the first offer of the Gospel to them. We must not condemn a whole body or denomination of men for the sake of some that carry themselves ill.

3. The Jews at Ephesus were so far from driving Paul away, that they courted his stay with them; ver. 20, "they desired him to tarry longer with them," to instruct them in the Gospel of Christ. These were more noble, and better bred than those Jews at Corinth and other places, and it was a sign that God had not quite cast away his people, but had a remnant among them.

4. Paul would not stay with them now: "he consented not, but bade them farewell;" he had farther to go; he "must by all means keep this feast at Jerusalem;" not that he thought himself bound in duty to it, he knew the laws of the feasts were no longer binding; but he had business at Jerusalem (whatever it was) which would be best done at the time of the feast, when there was a general rendezvous of all the Jews from all parts. Which of the feasts it was we are not told; probably it was the passover, which was the most eminent.

5. He intimated his purpose, after this journey, to come and spend some time at Ephesus, by their kind invitation, being encouraged to hope that he should do good among them. It is good to have opportunities in reserve, when one good work is over, to have another to apply ourselves to. "I will return again to you;" but he inserts that necessary proviso, "if God will." Our times are in God's hand; we purpose, but he disposeth; and therefore we must make all our promises with submissions to the will of God. "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that." I will return again to you, if the Spirit suffer me, ch. xvi. 7. That was included in Paul's case; not only if Providence permit, but if God do not otherwise direct my motions.

Thirdly. Paul's visit to Jerusalem. A short visit it was, but it served as a token of respect to that truly mother church.

1. He came by sea to the port that lay next to Jerusalem. He sailed from Ephesus, ver. 21, and landed at Cæsarea, ver. 22. He chose to go by sea for expedition and for safety, and that he might "see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." Joppa had been the port for Jerusalem; but Herod having improved Cæsarea, and the port at Joppa being dangerous, that was generally made use of.

2. He "went up and saluted the church;" by which I think is plainly meant the church at Jerusalem, which is emphatically called the church, because there the Christian church began, ch. xv. 4. Paul thought it requisite to shew himself among them, that they might not think his success among the Gentiles had made him think himself either above them or estranged from them; or, that the honour God had put upon him made him unmindful of the honour he owed to them. His going to salute the church at Jerusalem intimates, 1st. That it was a very friendly visit that he made them, in pure kindness, to inquire into their state, and to testify his hearty good-will to them. Note, The increase of our new friends should not make us to forget our old ones; but it should be a pleasure to good men and good ministers to revive former acquaintance. The ministers at Jerusalem were constant residents, Paul was a constant itinerant; but he took care to keep up a good correspondence with them, that they might rejoice with him in his going out, and he might rejoice with them in their tents, and they might both congratulate and wish well to one another's comfort and success. 2nd. That it was but a short visit. He went up and saluted them, perhaps with the holy kiss, and made no stay among them. It was designed but for a transient interview, and yet Paul undertook this long journey for that. This is not the world we are to be together in. God's people are the salt of the earth, dispersed and scattered, yet it is good to see one another sometimes, if it be but to see one another, that we may confirm mutual love, may the better keep up our spiritual communion with one another at a distance, and may long the more for that heavenly Jerusalem in which we hope to be together for ever.

Fourthly. His return through those countries where he had formerly preached the Gospel.

1. He went and spent some time in Antioch, among his old friends there, from whence he was first sent out to preach among the Gentiles, ch. xiii. 1. He went down to Antioch to refresh himself with the sight and conversation of the ministers there. And a very good refreshment it is to a faithful minister to have for a while the society of his brethren; for "as iron sharpeneth iron, so doth a man the countenance of his friend." Paul's coming to Antioch would bring to remembrance the former days, which would furnish him with matter for fresh thanksgiving.

2. Thence he "went over the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order," where he had preached the Gospel, and planted churches; which, though very briefly mentioned, ch. xvi. 6, yet was a glorious work, as appears by Gal. iv. 14, 15, where Paul speaks of his preaching of the Gospel to the Galatians at the first, and their receiving him as an angel of God. These country churches (for so they were, Gal. i. 2, and we read not of any city in Galatia where a church was) Paul visited in order as they lay, watering what he had been instrumental to plant, and strengthening all the disciples. His very coming among them, and owning them, was a great strengthening to them and their ministers. Paul's countenancing of them was encouraging to them; but that was not all, he preached that to them which strengthened them, which confirmed their faith in Christ, and their resolutions for Christ, and their pious affections to him. Disciples need to be strengthened, for they are compassed about with infirmity; ministers must do what they can to strengthen them, to strengthen them all, by directing them to Christ, and bring them to live upon him, whose strength is perfected in their weakness, and who is himself their strength and song.

24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. 26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much

of the largest and most opulent cities in the world, where every branch of literature had long flourished under the patronage of the Ptolemies. Vast numbers of Jews were settled there, and the famous version of the Old Testament into Greek was made in that city, and, as was said, at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus, by seventy interpreters, whence it is called the Septuagint."

xviii. 25. Apollos had probably been taught by some of John's disciples as far as the teaching of John went.

xix. 1. "The upper coasts:" the Phrygian table-lands of the interior. "Ephesus:" the capital of the Roman province of Asia, which embraced the western part of the peninsula now called Asia Minor. The city was about mid-way on the western coast, and stood on "an alluvial flat," with hills about it. It was well placed for commerce, being connected by two great roads with the east, and by "coast-roads" with the north and south, while by sea it had command of the *Ægean Sea*. It was celebrated for the worship of Diana, or Artemis,

which had believed through grace: 28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

The sacred history leaves Paul upon his travels, and goes here to meet Apollos at Ephesus, and to give us some account of him, which was necessary to our understanding some passages in Paul's epistles.

First. Here is an account of his character, when he came to Ephesus.

1. He was a Jew, born at Alexandria in Egypt, but of Jewish parents; for there were abundance of Jews in that city, since the dispersion of the people, as it was foretold, *Deu. xxviii. 68*, "The Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again." His name was not Apollo, the name of one of the heathen gods, but Apollos; some think, the same with Apollos, *Rom. xvi. 10*.

2. He was a man of excellent good parts, and well fitted for public service. He "was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures" of the Old Testament, which he was, as a Jew, brought up in the knowledge of. 1st. He had a great command of language; he "was an eloquent man"; he was, *ἀνὴρ λόγιος*, "a prudent man; so some"; learned man; so others; *historiarum peritus*, "a good historian, which is an excellent qualification for the ministry. He was one that could speak well, so it properly signifies; he was an oracle of a man; he was famous for speaking pertinently and closely, fully and fluently, upon any subject. 2nd. He had a great command of Scripture language, and that was the eloquence he was remarkable for. He came to Ephesus, being mighty in the Scriptures, so the words are placed. Having an excellent faculty of expounding Scripture, he came to Ephesus, which was a public place, to trade with that talent for the honour of God, and the good of many. He was not only ready in the Scriptures, able to quote texts off-hand, and repeat them, and tell you where to find them, many of the carnal Jews were so, who are therefore said to have the form of knowledge, and the letter of the law,—but he was "mighty in the Scriptures"; he understood the sense and meaning of them; he knew how to make use of them, and to apply them,—how to reason out of the Scriptures, and to reason strongly. A convincing, commanding, confirming power went along with all his expositions and applications of the Scripture. It is likely he had given proof of his knowledge of the Scriptures, and his abilities in them, in many synagogues of the Jews.

3. He was "instructed in the way of the Lord;" that is, he had some acquaintance with the doctrine of Christ, had got some general notions of the Gospel, and the principles of Christianity, that Jesus is the Christ, and that prophet that should come into the world. The first notice of this would be readily embraced by one that was so mighty in the Scripture as Apollos was, and therefore understood the signs of the times. He was instructed, *κατηχημένος*, he was "catechized," so the word is, either by his parents or ministers; he was taught something of Christ, and the way of salvation by him. Those that are to teach others must first be themselves taught the word of the Lord; not only to talk of it, but to walk in it. It is not enough to have our tongues tuned to the word of the Lord, but we must have our feet directed into the way of the Lord.

4. Yet he knew only the baptism of John; he was instructed in the Gospel of Christ as far as John's ministry would carry him, and no farther. He knew the preparing of the way of the Lord, by that voice crying in the wilderness, rather than the way of the Lord itself. We cannot but think he had heard of Christ's death and resurrection, but was not let into the mystery of them; had not had opportunity of conversing with any of the apostles since the pouring out of the Spirit; or, he had himself been baptized only with the baptism of John, but was not baptized with the Holy Ghost, as the disciples were at the day of Pentecost.

Secondly. Here is the employment and improvement of his gifts at Ephesus. He came thither seeking opportunities of doing and getting good, and found both.

1. He there made a very good use of his gifts in public. He came, probably recommended to the synagogue of the Jews, as a fit man to be a teacher there, and, according to the light he had, and the measure of the gift given to him, he was willing to be employed; ver. 25 "being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord." Though he had not the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, as the apostles had, he made use of the gifts he had; for the dispensation of the Spirit, whatever the measure of it is, "is given to every man to profit withal." And our Saviour by a parable designed to teach his ministers, that though they had but one talent they must not bury that. We have seen how Apollos was qualified with a good head and a good tongue; he was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures;" had laid in a good stock of useful knowledge, and had an excellent faculty of communicating it. Let us now see what he had farther to recommend him as a preacher, and his example recommended to the imitation of all preachers.

1st. He was a lively, affectionate preacher. As he had a good head, so he had a good heart; he was fervent in spirit; he had in him a great deal of Divine fire as well as Divine light,—was burning as well as shining. He was full of zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of precious souls; and this appeared both in his forwardness to preach when he was called to it by the rulers of the synagogue, and his fervency in his preaching; he preached as one in earnest, and that had his heart in his work. What a happy composition was here! Many are fervent in spirit but are weak in knowledge, in Scripture knowledge, and far to seek for proper words, and full of improper ones. And, on the other hand, many are eloquent enough, "and mighty in the Scriptures," and learned and judicious, but they have no life or fervency. Here was a complete man of God, thoroughly furnished for his work, that was both eloquent and fervent; full both of Divine knowledge and of Divine affections.

2nd. He was an industrious, laborious preacher. "He spake and taught diligently," he took pains in his preaching; what he delivered was elaborate, and he did not offer that to God or to the synagogue that either cost nothing or cost him nothing. He first worked it upon his own heart, and then laboured to impress it on those he preached it to; "He taught diligently," *ἀκρίβως*,—"accurately, exactly." Every thing he said was well weighed.

3rd. He was an evangelical preacher. Though he knew only the baptism of John, yet that was the beginning of the Gospel of Christ, and to that he kept close; for he taught the things of the Lord, of the Lord Christ; that tended to make way for him, and to set him up. The things pertaining to the kingdom of the Messiah was the subject he chose to insist upon, not the things of the ceremonial law, though those would be pleasing to his Jewish auditors; not the things of the Gentile philosophy, though he could have discoursed very well on those things, but the things of the Lord.

4th. He was a courageous preacher. "He began to speak boldly in the synagogue," as one that, having put a confidence in God, did not fear the face of man. He spoke as one that knew the truth of what he said, and had no doubt of it; and knew the worth of what he said, and was not afraid to suffer for it. In the synagogue, where the Jews not only were present but had power, there he preached the things of God, which he knew they were prejudiced against.

5. He there made a good increase of his gifts in private; not so much in study

as in conversation with Aquila and Priscilla. If Paul, or some other apostle, or evangelist, had been at Ephesus, they would have instructed him; but for want of better help Aquila and Priscilla, that were tent-makers, "expounded to him the way of God more perfectly." Observe,

1st. Aquila and Priscilla heard him preach in the synagogue. Though in knowledge he was much inferior to them, yet, having excellent gifts for public service, they encouraged his ministry by a diligent and constant attendance upon it. Thus young ministers that are hopeful should be countenanced by grown Christians, for it becomes them to fulfil all righteousness.

2nd. Finding him defective in his knowledge of Christianity, "they took him to them" to lodge in the same house with them, "and expounded to him the way of God," the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, "more perfectly." They did not take occasion, from what they observed of his deficiency, either to despise him themselves or to disparage him to others; did not call him a young raw preacher not fit to come into a pulpit, but considered the disadvantages he had laboured under, as knowing no more but the baptism of John; and, having themselves got great knowledge in the truths of the Gospel by their long and intimate conversation with Paul, they communicated what they knew to him, and gave him a clear, distinct, and methodical account of those things which before he had but confused notions of. First. See here an instance of that which Christ has promised, that to him that hath shall be given; that has and uses what he has, he shall have more. He that diligently traded with the talent he had doubled it quickly. Secondly. See an instance of truly Christian charity in Aquila and Priscilla. They did good according to their ability. Aquila, though a man of great knowledge, yet did not undertake to speak in the synagogue, because he had not such gifts for public work as Apollos had; but he furnished Apollos with matter, and then left him to clothe it with acceptable words. Instructing young Christians and young ministers privately in conversation, who mean well, and perform well as far as they go, is a piece of very good service both to them and to the church. Thirdly. See an instance of great humility in Apollos. He was a very bright young man, of great parts and learning, newly come from the university, a popular preacher, and mightily cried up and followed; and yet, finding that Aquila and Priscilla were judicious serious Christians, that could speak intelligently and experimentally of the things of God, though they were but mechanics, poor tent-makers, he was glad to receive instruction from them, to be shewed by them his defects and mistakes, and to have his mistakes rectified by them, and his deficiencies made up. Young scholars may gain a great deal by converse with old Christians, as young students in the law may by old practisers. Apollos, though he "was instructed in the way of the Lord," did not rest in the knowledge he had attained, nor thought he understood Christianity as well as any man, which proud conceited young men are apt to do, but was willing to have it expounded to him more perfectly. They that know much should covet to know more, and what they know to know it better,—pressing forward towards perfection. Fourthly. Here is an instance of a good woman, though not permitted to speak in the church, or in the synagogue, yet doing good with the knowledge God had given her in private converse. Paul will have the aged women to be teachers of good things, *Tit. ii. 3, 4*.

Thirdly. Here is his preferment to the service of the church of Corinth; which was a larger sphere of usefulness than Ephesus at present was. Paul had set the wheels agoing in Achaia, and particularly at Corinth, the county-town. Many were stirred up by his preaching to receive the Gospel, and they needed to be confirmed; and many were likewise irritated to oppose the Gospel, and they needed to be confuted. Paul was gone, was called away to other work, and now there was a fair occasion in this vacancy for Apollos to set in, who was fitted rather to water than to plant; to build up those that were within, than to bring in those that were without. Now here we have,

1. His call to this service. Not by a vision, as Paul was called to Macedonia, no, nor so much as by the invitation of those he was to go to, but, 1st. He himself inclined to go. He was "disposed to pass into Achaia;" having heard of the state of the churches there he had a mind to try what good he could do among them. Though there were those there who were eminent for spiritual gifts, yet Apollos thought there might be some work for him, and God disposed his mind that way. 2nd. His friends encouraged him to go, and approved of his purpose, and, he being a perfect stranger there, they gave him a testimonial, or letters of recommendation, exhorting the disciples in Achaia to entertain him and employ him. In this way, among others, the communion of churches is kept up, by the recommending of members and ministers to each other, that, as Apollos here, are disposed to remove. Though they at Ephesus had a great loss of his labours, they did not grudge them in Achaia the benefit of them, but, on the contrary, used their interest in them to introduce him; for the churches of Christ, though they are many, yet they are one.

2. His success in this service, which both ways answered his intention and expectation. For,

1st. Believers were greatly edified, and they that had received the Gospel were very much confirmed. He "helped them much which had believed through grace." Note, First. They that believe in Christ it is through grace that they believe; it is not of themselves, it is God's gift to them, it is his work in them. Secondly. Those who through grace do believe, yet still have need of help; as long as they are here in this world there are remainders of unbelief, and something lacking in their faith to be perfected, and the work of faith to be fulfilled. Thirdly. Faithful ministers are capable of being many ways helpful to those who through grace do believe, and it is their business to help them,—to help them much; and when a Divine power goes along with them they will be helpful to them.

2nd. Unbelievers were greatly mortified. Their objections were fully answered, the folly and sophistry of their arguments was discovered, so that they had nothing to say in defence of the opposition they made to the Gospel; their mouths were stopped, and their faces filled with shame; ver. 28, "He mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly" before the people. He did it, *ἐνδραστήως*, "earnestly," and with a great deal of vehemence; he took pains to do it; his heart was upon it, as one that was truly desirous both to serve the cause of Christ and to save the souls of men. He did it effectually, and to universal satisfaction; he did it, *levi negotio*,—"with facility." The case was so plain, and the arguments so strong on Christ's side, that it was an easy matter to baffle all that the Jews could say against it; though they were so fierce, yet their cause was so weak that he made nothing of their opposition. Now that which he aimed to convince them of was, that Jesus is the Christ; that he is the Messiah promised to the fathers, who should come, and they were to look for no other. If the Jews were but convinced of this, that Jesus is Christ, even their own law would teach them to hear him. Note. The business of ministers is to preach Christ; "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." The way he took to convince them was by the Scriptures; thence he fetched his arguments; for the Jews owned the Scriptures to be of Divine authority, and it was easy for him who was "mighty in the Scriptures," from them to show that Jesus is the Christ. Note, Ministers must be able not only to preach the truth, but to prove it and defend it, and to convince gainsayers with meekness and yet with power, instructing those that oppose themselves; and this is real service to the church.

the tutelary divinity of the city. The Temple of Diana stood at the head of the harbour, having been raised at great expense and trouble, and being renowned throughout the world for its splendour. Its length was 425 feet, and breadth 220 feet. It had 127 columns, each of them being 60 feet high. This temple probably suggested some of the imagery employed by Paul in the epistles which he wrote either to or from Ephesus. (See 1 Cor. iii. 9—17; Eph. ii. 19—22, &c.) In consequence of the worship of Diana, Ephesus was called the "warden"

or adorer of Diana (verse 35); and an active and lucrative business was carried on by the manufacture of small silver shrines or models of the temple, which visitors purchased and worshippers carried on their journeys or set up in their houses. Ephesus was a free city, and had its own assemblies and magistrates. It was an assize town (verse 38), and had public games connected with the worship of Diana.

xix. 2. Rather, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye became believers? And they said unto him, On the contrary, we did not so

CHAPTER XIX.

We left Paul in his circuit visiting the churches, *ch. xviii. 23*; but we have not forgot, nor has he, the promise he made to his friends at Ephesus, to return to them, and make some stay there. Now this chapter shews us his performance of that promise; his coming to Ephesus, and his continuance there two years. We are here told, 1. How he laboured there in the word and doctrine, how he taught some weak believers that had gone no farther than John's baptism, *ver. 1-7*; how he taught three months in the synagogue of the Jews, *ver. 8*; and, when he was driven thence, how he taught the Gentiles a long time in a public school, *ver. 9, 10*; and how he confirmed his doctrine by miracles, *ver. 11, 12*. 11. What was the fruit of his labour, particularly among the conjurers, the worst of sinners. Some were confounded that did but make use of his name, *ver. 13-17*; but others were converted that received and embraced his doctrine, *ver. 18-20*. 11. What projects he had of farther usefulness, *ver. 21, 22*; and what trouble at length he met with at Ephesus, from the silversmiths, which forced him thence to pursue the measures he had laid; how a mob was raised by Demetrius to cry up Diana, *ver. 23-34*; and how it was suppressed and dispersed by the town-clerk, *ver. 35-41*.



AND it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much

as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

Ephesus was a city of great note in Greece, famous for a temple built there to Diana, which was one of the wonders of the world; thither Paul came to preach the Gospel, while Apollos was at Corinth, *ver. 1*. While he was watering there, Paul was planting here; and grudging not that Apollos entered into his labours, and was building upon his foundation, but rejoiced in it, and went on in the new work that was cut out for him at Ephesus with the more cheerfulness and satisfaction, because he knew that such an able minister of the New Testament as Apollos was was now at Corinth, carrying on the good work there. Though there were those that made him the head of a party against Paul, 1 *Cor. i. 12*, yet Paul had no jealousy of him, nor any way disliked the affection the people had for him. Paul, having gone through the country of Galatia and Phrygia, passed through the upper coasts, Pontus and Bithynia, that lay north: at length came to Ephesus, where he had left Aquila and Priscilla, and there found them. At his first coming, he met with some disciples there, who professed faith in Christ as the true Messiah, but were as yet in the first and lowest form in the school of Christ, under his usher, John the Baptist. They were in number about twelve, *ver. 7*; they were much of the standing that Apollos was of when he came to Ephesus; for he knew only the baptism of John, *ch. xviii. 25*; but either they had not opportunity of being acquainted with Aquila and Priscilla, or had not been so long in Ephesus, or were not so willing to receive instruction as Apollos was, otherwise they might have had the way of God expounded to them more perfectly, as Apollos had. Observe here,

First. How Paul catechised them. He was told, probably by Aquila and Priscilla, that they were believers, that they did own Christ, and had given up their names to him. Now Paul hereupon takes them under examination.

1. They did believe in the Son of God; but Paul inquires, whether they had received the Holy Ghost; whether they believed in the Spirit, whose operations on the minds of men for conviction, conversion, and comfort were revealed some time after the doctrine of Jesus being the Christ; whether they had been acquainted with, and had admitted this revelation. That was not all; extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were conferred upon the apostles and other disciples presently after Christ's ascension, which was frequently repeated upon occasion: had they participated of these gifts? "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" have you had that seal of the truth of Christ's doctrine in yourselves? We are not now to expect any such extraordinary gifts as they had then. The canon of the New Testament being long since completed and ratified, we depend upon that as the most sure word of prophecy; but there are graces of the Spirit given to all believers, which are as earnest to them, 2 *Cor. i. 22*; *v. 5*; *Eph. i. 13*. Now it concerns us all who profess the Christian faith seriously to inquire whether we have received the Holy Ghost or not. The Holy Ghost is promised to all believers, to all petitioners, *Luk. xi. 13*; but many are deceived in this matter, that think they have received the Holy Ghost, when really they have not. As there are pretenders to the gifts of the Holy Ghost, so there are to his graces and comforts; we should therefore strictly examine ourselves, "Have we received the Holy Ghost since we believed?" The tree will be known by its fruits; Do we bring forth the fruits of the Spirit? Are we led by the Spirit? Do we walk in the Spirit? Are we under the government of the Spirit?

much as hear him mentioned:" i.e., "our reception into the faith was unaccompanied by any preaching of the office or the gifts of the Spirit" (Alford).

xix. 9. Probably a large room or hall, either belonging to Tyrannus or called after him, where lectures were delivered.

xix. 10. "Asia:" the province of Asia, embracing the western part of what is now named Asia Minor.

xix. 13. Wandering Jews, who went about practising magic.

2. They owned their ignorance in this matter; "whether there be a Holy Ghost," is more than we know. That there is a promise of the Holy Ghost we know from the scriptures of the Old Testament, and that that promise will be fulfilled in its season we doubt not; but so much have we been out of the way of intelligence in this matter, that we have not so much as heard whether the Holy Ghost be indeed yet given as a spirit of prophecy. They knew, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, that according to the tradition of their nation, after the death of Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the Holy Ghost departed from Israel, and went up; and they professed they had never heard of his return. They spake as if they expected it, and wondered they did not hear of it, and were ready to welcome the notice of it. The gospel light, like that of the morning, shone more and more gradually: not only clearer and clearer in the discovery of truths not before heard of, but farther and farther in the discovery of them to persons that had not before heard of them.

3. Paul inquired how they came to be baptized, if they knew nothing of the Holy Ghost; for, if they were baptized by any of Christ's ministers, they were instructed concerning the Holy Ghost, and were baptized in his name. Know ye not that, Jesus being glorified, consequently the Holy Ghost is given? "Unto what then were ye baptized?" This is strange and unaccountable. What! baptized, and yet know nothing of the Holy Ghost? Surely, your baptism was a nullity, if you know nothing of the Holy Ghost; for it is the receiving of the Holy Ghost that is signified and sealed by that washing of regeneration. Ignorance of the Holy Ghost is as inconsistent with a sincere profession of Christianity as ignorance of Christ is: and applying it to ourselves it intimates, that those are baptized to no purpose, and have received the grace of God therein in vain, that do not receive and submit to the Holy Ghost. It is also an inquiry we should often make, not only to whose honour we were born, but into whose service we were baptized, that we may study to answer the ends both of our birth and of our baptism. Let us often consider unto what we were baptized, that we may live up to our baptism.

4. They own that they were baptized unto John's baptism, *Efr to Ioudaion baptisma*, that is, as I take it, they were baptized in the name of John; not by John himself, he was far enough from any such thought, but by some weak, well-meaning disciple of his, that ignorantly kept up his name, as the head of a party; retaining the spirit and notion of those disciples of his, that were jealous of the growth of Christ's interest, and complained to him of it, *Jno. iii. 26*. Some one or more of these, that found themselves much edified by John's baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, not thinking that the kingdom of heaven, which he spoke of as at hand, was so very near as it proved, ran away with that notion, rested in what they had, and thought they could not do better than to persuade others to do so too; and so, ignorantly, in a blind zeal for John's doctrine, they baptized here and there one in John's name, or, as it is here expressed, "unto John's baptism," looking no farther themselves, nor directing those they baptized any farther.

5. Paul explains to them the true intent and meaning of John's baptism, as principally referring to Jesus Christ; and so rectifies the mistake of those who had baptized them into the baptism of John, and had not directed them to look any farther, but to rest in that. They that have been left in ignorance, or led into error by any infelicities of their education, should not therefore be despised or rejected by those who are more knowing and orthodox; but should be compassionately instructed, and better taught, as those here were by Paul. 1st. He owns that John's baptism was a very good thing as far as it went; "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance." By his baptism he obliged people to be sorry for their sins, and to confess them and turn from them; and to bring any to this is a great point gained. But, 2nd. He shews them that John's baptism had a farther reference; and he never designed that those he baptized should rest there, but told them, "that they should believe on him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus;" that his baptism of repentance was designed only "to prepare the way of the Lord," and to dispose them to receive and entertain Christ, whom he left them big with expectations of; nay, whom he directed them to, "Behold the Lamb of God." John was a great and good man; but he was only the harbinger, Christ is the Prince. His baptism was the porch which you were to pass through, not the house you were to rest in; and, therefore, it was all wrong for you to be baptized into the baptism of John.

6. When they were thus shewed the error they were led into, they thankfully accepted the discovery, and "were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," *ver. 5*. As for Apollos, of whom it was said, *ch. xviii. 25*, that he knew the baptism of John; that he rightly understood the meaning of it, when he was baptized with it, though he knew that only; yet, when he understood the way of God more perfectly, he was not again baptized, no more than Christ's first disciples that had been baptized with John's baptism, and knew it referred to the Messiah at the door (and with an eye to that, submitted to it), were baptized again. But these here, who received it only with an eye to John, and looked no farther, as if he were their saviour, it was such a fundamental error as was fatal to it; as it would have been for any to be baptized in the name of Paul, 1 *Cor. i. 13*. And, therefore, when they came to understand themselves better, they desired to be "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," and were so; not by Paul himself, as we have reason to think, but by some of those who attended him. It doth not, therefore follow hence, that there was not an agreement between John's baptism and Christ's, or that they were not for substance the same; much less doth it follow that those who have been once baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (which is the appointed form of Christ's baptism,) may be again baptized in the same name; for those that were here baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus had never been so baptized before.

Secondly. How Paul conferred the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost upon them, *ver. 6*.

1. Paul solemnly prayed to God to give them those gifts, signified by his laying his hands on them, which was a gesture used in blessing by the patriarchs, especially in conveying the great trust of the promise, as *Gen. xlviii. 14*. The Spirit being the great promise of the New Testament, the apostles conveyed it by the imposition of hands. The Lord bless thee with that blessing, that blessing of blessings, *Isa. xlv. 3*.

2. God granted the thing he prayed for. The Holy Ghost came upon them in a surprising, overpowering manner. "and they spake with tongues, and prophesied," as the apostles did and the first Gentile converts, *ch. x. 44*. This was intended to introduce the Gospel at Ephesus, and to awaken in the minds of men an expectation of some great things from it. And some think it was farther designed to qualify these twelve men for the work of the ministry; and that these twelve were the elders of Ephesus to whom Paul committed the care and conduct of that church. They had the spirit of prophecy that they might understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God themselves; and the gift of tongues that they might preach them to every nation and language. Oh! what a wonderful change was here made on a sudden with those men; they that but just now had not so much as heard that there was a Holy Ghost, now are themselves filled with the Holy Ghost; for the Spirit, like the wind, blows where and when he listeth.

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake

xix. 14. Sceva had probably been one of the heads of the twenty-four courses. David divided the priests into twenty-four courses; four only returned from the captivity; these were subdivided into twenty-four, each of which preserved its original name; every class had a president.

xix. 18. It would seem that some who had professed Christianity still practised magical arts in secret. But impressed by what had taken place to the sons of Sceva, they came forward and made confes-

boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. 11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Paul is here very busy at Ephesus to do good.

First. He begins as usual in the Jews' synagogue, and makes the first offer of the Gospel to them: that he might gather in the lost sheep of the house of Israel, who were now scattered upon the mountains. Observe,

1. Where he preached to them. In their synagogue, ver. 8, as Christ used to do. He went and joined with them in their synagogue worship, to take off their prejudices against him, and to ingratiate himself with them, while there was any hope of winning upon them. Thus he would bear his testimony to public worship on sabbath days. Where there were no Christian assemblies yet formed, he frequented the Jewish assemblies, while the Jews were not as yet wholly cast off. Paul went into the synagogue because there he had them together, and had them, it might be hoped, in a good frame.

2. What he preached to them. "The things concerning the kingdom of God" among men; the great things which concerned God's dominion over men, and favour to them; and men's subjection to God, and happiness in God. He shewed them our obligations to God, and interest in him as our Creator, by which the kingdom of God was set up; the violation of those obligations, and the forfeiture of that interest by sin, by which the kingdom of God was pulled down; and the renewing of those obligations upon us, and the restoring of us to that interest again by the Redeemer, whereby the kingdom of God was again set up. Or, more particularly, the things concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, which the Jews were in expectation of; and promised themselves great matters from. He opened the Scriptures which spake concerning this, gave them a right notion of this kingdom, and shewed them their mistakes about it.

3. How he preached to them. 1st. He preached argumentatively. He disputed; gave reasons, scripture reasons, for what he preached, and answered objections for the convincing of men's judgments and consciences, that they might not only believe, but might see cause to believe. He preached *διαλογικῶς*, dialogically; he put questions to them and received their answers; gave them leave to put questions to him, and answered them. 2nd. He preached affectionately. He persuaded; he used not only logical arguments to enforce what he said upon their understandings, but rhetorical motives to impress what he said upon their affections, shewing them that the things he preached concerning the kingdom of God were things concerning themselves, which they were nearly concerned in, and therefore ought to concern themselves about; 2 Cor. vi. 1, "We persuade men." Paul was a moving preacher, and was master of the art of persuasion. 3rd. He preached undauntedly, and with a holy resolution. He spake boldly, as one that had not the least doubt of the things he spake of, nor the least distrust of him he spoke from, nor the least dread of them he spoke to.

4. How long he preached to them. "For the space of three months," which was a competent time allowed them to consider of it. In that time those among them that belonged to the election of grace were called in, and the rest were left inexcusable. Thus long Paul preached the Gospel with much contention, 1 Thes. ii. 2; yet he did not fail, nor was discouraged.

5. What success his preaching had among them. 1st. There were some that were persuaded to believe in Christ; some think that is intimated in that word, persuading, he prevailed with them. But, 2nd. Divers continued in their infidelity, and were confirmed in their prejudices against Christianity. When Paul called on them before, and preached only some general things to them, they courted his stay among them, ch. xviii. 20; but now he settled among them, and his word came more closely to their consciences, they were soon weary of him. First. They had an invincible aversion to the Gospel of Christ themselves; they were hardened, and believed not. They were resolved they would not believe, though the truth shone in their faces with never such a convincing light and evidence; therefore, they believed not because they were hardened. Secondly. They did their utmost to raise and keep up in others an aversion to the Gospel. They not only entered not into the kingdom of God themselves, but neither did they suffer those that were entering to go in; for "they spake evil of that way before the multitude," to prejudice them against it. Though they could not shew any manner of evil in it, yet they said all manner of evil concerning it. These sinners, like the angels that sinned, became Satans, adversaries and devils, false accusers.

Secondly. When he had carried the matter as far as it would go in the synagogue of the Jews, and found that their opposition grew more obstinate, he left the synagogue; because he could not safely, or rather because he could not comfortably and successfully, continue in communion with them. Though their worship was such as he could join in, and they had not silenced him, nor forbidden him to preach among them, yet they drove him from them with their railing at those things which he spoke concerning the kingdom of God. They hated to be reformed, hated to be informed, and therefore he departed from them. Here we are sure there was a separation, and no schism; for there was a just cause for it, and a clear call to it. Now observe.

1. When Paul departed from the Jews, he took the disciples with him, and separated them, to save them from that untoward generation, according to the charge Peter gave to his new converts, ch. ii. 40. Lest they should be infected with the poisonous tongues of those blasphemers, he separated them which believed, to be the foundation of a Christian church, now they were a competent number to be incorporated; that others might attend with them upon the preaching of the Gospel, and might, upon their believing, be added to them.

sion. Some, however, think that the passage refers simply to those who at this time believed; that they became believers and confessed their secret deeds at the same time.

xix. 19. "Fifty thousand pieces of silver:" fifty thousand drachmæ; the drachma being about 8½d. Hence the whole value was about £1,770.

xix. 22. It is supposed that about the beginning of the second year of Paul's residence at Ephesus, he paid a short visit to Corinth, and

When Paul departed, there needed no more to separate the disciples; let him go where he will, they will follow him.

2. When Paul separated from the synagogue, he set up a meeting of his own; he "disputed daily in the school of one Tyrannus." He left the synagogue of the Jews, that he might go on with the more freedom in his work; still he disputed for Christ and Christianity, and was ready to answer all opponents whatsoever, in defence of them. And he had by this separation a double advantage. 1st. That now his opportunities were more frequent. In the synagogue he could only preach every sabbath day, ch. xiii. 42; but now he disputed daily, he set up a lecture every day, and thus redeemed time. Those whose business would not permit them to come one day might come another day; and those were welcome who watched daily at these gates of wisdom, and waited daily at the posts of her doors. 2nd. That now they were more open. To the synagogue of the Jews none might come, or could come, but Jews or proselytes; Gentiles were excluded. But, when he set up a meeting in the school of Tyrannus, both Jews and Greeks attended his ministry, ver. 10. Thus, as he describes this gate of opportunity at Ephesus, 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9, a wide door and an effectual was opened to him, though there were many adversaries. Some think this school of Tyrannus was a divinity school of the Jews; and such a one they commonly had in their great cities, beside their synagogue. They called it Beth-midrash, "the house of inquiry," or of repetition, and they went to that on the sabbath day, after they had been in the synagogue; they go from strength to strength, from the house of the sanctuary to the house of doctrine. If this were such a school, it shews that, though Paul left the synagogue, he left it gradually, and still kept as near it as he could, as he had done ch. xviii. 7. But others think it was a philosophy school of the Gentiles belonging to one Tyrannus; or, a retiring place (for so the word *σχολή* sometimes signifies) belonging to a principal man, or governor of the city; some convenient place it was which Paul and the disciples had the use of, either for love or money.

3. Here he continued his labours for two years; read his lectures, and disputed daily. These two years commence from the end of the three months which he spent in the synagogue, ver. 8; and after they were ended he continued for some time in the country about, preaching; therefore he might justly reckon it in all three years, as he doth ch. xx. 31.

4. The Gospel hereby spread far and near; ver. 10. "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus." Not only all that dwelt in Ephesus, but all that dwelt in that large province called Asia, which Ephesus was the head city of; Asia the Less it was called. There was great resort to Ephesus from all parts of the country for law, traffic, religion, or education, which gave Paul an opportunity of sending the report of the Gospel to all the towns and villages of that country; they all "heard the word of the Lord Jesus." The Gospel is Christ's word, it is a word concerning Christ. This they heard, or at least heard of it. Some of all sects, some out of all parts, both in city and country, embraced this Gospel, and entertained it, and by them it was communicated to others; and so they all "heard the word of the Lord Jesus," or might have heard it. Probably Paul sometimes made excursions himself into the country to preach the Gospel, or sent his missionaries or assistants that attended him; and thus the word of the Lord was heard throughout that region. Now they that sat in darkness saw a great light.

Thirdly. God confirmed Paul's doctrine by miracles; which awakened people's inquiries after it, fixed their affection to it, and engaged their belief of it, ver. 11, 12. I wonder we have not read of any miracle wrought by Paul since the casting of the evil spirit out of the damsel at Philippi; why did he not work miracles at Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens? Or, if he did, why are they not recorded? Was the success of the Gospel, without miracles in the kingdom of nature, itself such a miracle in the kingdom of grace, and the Divine power which went along with it such a proof of its Divine original, that there needed no other? It is certain that at Corinth he wrought many miracles, though Luke has recorded none; for he tells them, 2 Cor. xii. 12, that the signs of his apostleship were among them, in wonders and mighty deeds. But here at Ephesus we have a general account of the proofs of this kind which he gave of his Divine mission.

1. They were special miracles, *ἀνέσεις οὐ τυχόντες*. God exerted powers that were not according to the common course of nature: *virtutes non vulgares*. Things were done which could by no means be ascribed either to chance or second causes; or, they were not only, as all miracles are, 'out of the common road,' but they were even uncommon miracles, such miracles as had not been wrought by the hands of any other of the apostles. The opposers of the Gospel were so prejudiced, that any miracles would not serve their turn; therefore God wrought *virtutes non quolibet*, (so they render it,)—"something above the common road of miracles."

2. It was not Paul that wrought them,—what is Paul, and what is Apollos? —but it was God that wrought them by the hand of Paul. He was but the instrument, God was the principal agent.

3. He not only cured the sick that were brought to him, or that he was brought to, but "from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons." They got Paul's handkerchiefs, or his aprons, that is, (say some,) the aprons he wore when he worked at his trade, and the applying of them to the sick cured them immediately. Or, they brought the sick people's handkerchiefs, or their girdles, or caps, or head-dresses, and laid them for a while to Paul's body, and then took them to the sick. The former is more probable. Now was fulfilled that word of Christ to his disciples, "Greater works than these shall ye do." We read of one that was cured by the touch of Christ's garment, when it was upon him, and he perceived that virtue went out of him; but here were people cured by Paul's garments when they were taken from him. Christ gave his apostles "power against unclean spirits, and against all manner of sickness," Mat. x. 1. And accordingly we find here, that those to whom Paul sent relief had it in both these cases; "for the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them," which were both significant of the great design and blessed effect of the Gospel, which was to heal spiritual diseases, and to free the souls of men from the power and dominion of Satan.

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them,

shortly before this departure of Timotheus and Erastus wrote a short letter to Corinth, which has been lost. The subject of the letter and the object of the visit were probably connected with the appearance of lax morality amongst the Corinthian Christians. (See 2 Cor. xii. 14, xiii. 1; also 1 Cor. v. 9.) After the departure of Timothy it would seem that he received further information concerning the Corinthians, and a reply from that church to his letter. Paul then wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians, which we now have. The departure of

and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

The preachers of the Gospel were sent forth to carry on a war against Satan, and therein Christ went forth conquering and to conquer. The casting of evil spirits out of those that were possessed was one instance of Christ's victory over Satan; but, to shew how many ways Christ triumphed over that great enemy, we have here in these verses two remarkable instances of the conquest of Satan, not only in those that were violently possessed by him, but in those that were voluntarily devoted to him.

First. Here is the confusion of some of Satan's servants, some vagabond Jews that were exorcists, who made use of Christ's name profanely and wickedly, in their diabolical enchantments, but were made to pay dear for their presumption. Observe,

1. The general character of those who were guilty of this presumption. They were Jews, but vagabond Jews, were of the Jewish nation and religion, but went about from town to town to get money by conjuring; they strolled about to tell people their fortunes, and pretended, by spells and charms, to cure diseases, and bring people to themselves that were melancholy or distracted. They called themselves exorcists, because in doing their tricks they used forms of adjuration, by such and such commanding names. The superstitious Jews, to put a reputation upon these magic arts, wickedly attributed the invention of them to Solomon: so Josephus, *Antiq.* lib. viii. cap. 2, saith, 'that Solomon composed charms by which diseases are cured, and devils driven out, so as never to return; and that these operations continued common among the Jews to his time.' And Christ seems to refer to this, *Mat.* xii. 27, "By whom do your children cast them out?"

2. A particular account of some at Ephesus that led this course of life, and came thither in their travels. They "were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests," ver. 14. It is sad to see the house of Jacob thus degenerated, much more the house of Aaron, the family that was in a peculiar manner consecrated to God, that any of that race should be in league with Satan. Their father was a chief of the priests, head of one of the twenty-four courses of priests. One would think the temple would find both employment and encouragement enough for the sons of a chief priest, if they had been twice as many; but it is likely it was a vain, rambling, rakish humour that took them all to turn mountebanks, and wander all the world over to cure mad folks.

3. The profaneness they were guilty of. "They took upon them to call over evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus;" not as those who had a veneration for Christ, and a confidence in his name, as we read of some who cast out devils in Christ's name, and yet did not follow with his disciples, *Lu.* ix. 49, whom he would not have to be discouraged, but as those who were willing to try all methods to carry on their wicked trade; and it should seem had this design: if the evil spirits should yield to an adjuration in the name of Jesus, by those that did not believe in him, they would say, it was no confirmation of his doctrine to those that did; for it was all one whether they believed it or no. If they should not yield to it, they would say, the name of Christ was not so powerful as the other names they used, which the devils had often by collusion yielded to. They said, "We adjure you, by Jesus whom Paul preacheth," not whom we believe in, or depend upon, or have any authority from, but whom Paul preacheth; as if they had said, We will try what that name will do. The exorcists in the Romish church, that pretend to cast the devil out of melancholy people by spells and charms, which they understand not, and which, not having any Divine warrant, cannot be used in faith, are the followers of these vagabond Jews.

4. The confusion they were put to in this impious operation. Let them not be deceived, God is not mocked, nor shall the glorious name of Jesus be prostituted to such a vile purpose as this; "What communion hath Christ with Belial?" 1st. The evil spirit gave them a sharp reply, ver. 15, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" I know that Jesus has conquered principalities and powers, and that Paul has authority in his name to cast out devils, but what power have you to command us in his name, or who gave you any such power? What have you to do to declare the power of Jesus, or to take his covenant and commands into your mouths, seeing you hate his instructions? *Ps.* l. 16, 17. This was extorted out of the mouth of the evil spirit by the power of God, to gain honour to the Gospel, and to put those to shame that made an ill use of Christ's name. Antichristian powers and factions pretend a mighty zeal for Jesus and Paul, and to have authority from them; but, when the matter comes to be looked into, it is a mere worldly, secular interest that is to be thus supported; nay, it is an enmity to true religion; "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are ye?" 2nd. "The man in whom the evil spirit was" gave them a warm reception, fell foul upon them, "leaped on them," in the height of his frenzy and rage, "overcame them" and all their enchantments, "prevailed against them" and was quite too hard for them; so that "they fled out of the house," not only naked, but wounded,—their clothes pulled off their backs, and their heads broke. This is written for a warning to all those who name the name of Christ, but do not depart from iniquity. That same enemy that overcomes them with his temptations will overcome them with his terrors, and their adjuring him in Christ's name to let them alone will be no security to them. If we resist the devil by a true and lively faith in Christ, he will flee from us; but if we think to resist him by the bare using of Christ's name, or any part of his word, as a spell or charm, he will prevail against us.

5. The general notice that was taken of this, and the good impression it made on many; ver. 17, "this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus." It was the common talk of the town, and the effect of it was, 1st. That men were terrified; "fear fell on them all." In this instance they saw the malice of the devil, whom they served, and the power of Christ, whom they opposed; and both were awful considerations. They saw that the name

of Christ was not to be dallied with, nor his religion compounded with the pagan superstitions. 2nd. That God was glorified. "The name of the Lord Jesus," by which his faithful servants cast out devils, and cured diseases, without any resistance, "was the more magnified;" for now it appeared to be a name above every name.

Secondly. Here is the conversion of others of Satan's servants, and the evidences of their conversion.

1. Those that had been guilty of wicked practices confessed them, ver. 18. Many that had believed and were baptized, but had not then been so particular as they might have been in the confession of their sins, were so terrified with these instances of the magnifying of the name of Jesus Christ, that they came to Paul, or some of the other ministers that were with him, and confessed what ill lives they had led, and what a great deal of secret wickedness their own consciences charged them with, which the world knew not of; secret frauds, and secret filthiness; "they shewed their deeds;" took shame to themselves, and gave glory to God, and warning to others. These confessions were not extorted from them, but were voluntary for the ease of their consciences, which the late miracles had struck a terror upon. Note, Where there is true contrition for sin, there will be an ingenuous confession of sin to God in every prayer, and to man whom we have offended, when the case requires it.

2. Those that had conversed with wicked books, burnt them; ver. 19, "Many also of them which used curious arts,"—*τὰ περίεργα*, 'impertinent things;' *multa nihil ad se pertinentia satagentes*,—'busy-bodies,' (so the word is used, *2 Thes.* iii. 11; *1 Tim.* v. 13), that traded in the study of magic and divination, in books of judicial astrology, casting of nativities, telling of fortunes, raising and laying of spirits, interpreting of dreams, predicting future events, and the like; to which some think are to be added 'plays, romances, love-books, and unchaste and immodest poems,'—*histrionica, amatoria, saltatoria*.—*Stres* These, having their consciences more awakened than ever to see the evil of those practices which these books instructed them in, "brought their books together, and burned them before all men." Ephesus was notorious for the use of these curious arts, hence spells and charms were called *Literæ Ephesie*. Here people furnished themselves with all those sorts of books, and probably had tutors to instruct them in those black arts. It was, therefore, much for the honour of Christ and his Gospel to have such a noble testimony borne against those curious arts in a place where they were so much in vogue. It is taken for granted, that they were convinced of the evil of those curious arts, and resolved to deal in them no longer; but they did not think that enough unless they burnt their books. 1st. Thus they shewed a holy indignation at the sins they had been guilty of, as the idolaters when they were brought to repentance, "said to their idols, Get ye hence," *Isa.* xxx. 22, and cast even those of "silver and gold to the moles and to the bats," *Isa.* ii. 20. They thus took a pious revenge on those things that had been the instruments of sin to them, and proclaimed the force of their conviction of the evil of it, and that those very things were now detestable to them, as much as ever they had been delectable. 2nd. Thus they shewed their resolution never to return to the use of those arts, and the books which related to them, again. They were so fully convinced of the evil and danger of them, that they would not throw the books by, within reach of a recall, upon supposition that it was possible they might change their mind; but, being stedfastly resolved never to make use of them, they burnt them. 3rd. Thus they put away a temptation to return to them again. Had they kept the books by them, there was danger lest, when the heat of the present conviction was over, they should have the curiosity to look into them, and so be in danger of liking them and loving them again, and therefore they burnt them. Note, Those that truly repent of sin; will keep themselves as far as possible from the occasions of it. 4th. Thus they prevented their doing mischief to others. If Judas had been by he would have said, Sell them, and give the money to the poor, or buy Bibles and good books with it. But then who could tell into whose hands these dangerous books might fall, and what mischief might be done by them? It is therefore the safest course to commit them all to the flames. Those that are recovered from sin themselves will do all they can to keep others from falling into it, and much more are afraid of laying an occasion of sin in others' way. 5th. Thus they shewed a contempt of the wealth of this world, for the price of the books was cast up, probably by those that persuaded them not to burn them, and it was found to be fifty thousand pieces of silver, which some compute to be fifteen hundred pounds of our money. It is likely the books were scarce, perhaps prohibited, and therefore dear. Probably they had cost them so much; yet, being the devil's books, though they had been so foolish as to buy them, they did not think that would justify them in being so wicked as to sell them again. 6th. Thus they publicly testified their joy for their conversion from these wicked practices, as Matthew did by the great feast he made when Christ had called him from the receipt of custom. These converts join together in making this bonfire, and made it before all men. They might have burnt the books privately, every one in his own house, but they chose to do it together, by consent, and to do it at the high cross, (as we say,) that Christ and his grace in them might be the more magnified, and all about them the more edified.

Thirdly. Here is a general account of the progress and success of the Gospel in and about Ephesus; ver. 20, "So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed." It is a blessed sight to see the word of God growing and prevailing mightily, as it did here.

1. To see it grow extensively, by the addition of many to the church. When still more and more are wrought upon by the Gospel, and wrought up into a conformity to it, then it grows; when those that were least likely to yield to it, and that had been most stiff in their opposition to it, yet are captivated and brought into obedience to it, then it may be said to grow mightily.

2. To see it prevail intensively, by the advancement of those in knowledge and grace that are added to the church. When strong corruptions are mortified, vicious habits changed, ill customs of long standing broken off, and pleasant gainful fashionable sins are abandoned, then it prevails mightily; and Christ in it goes on conquering and to conquer.

21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. 22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season. 23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which

Timothy and Erastus was probably connected with the collection about to be made for the poor Christians of Jerusalem. (See *1 Cor.* xvi. 1–6.)

xix. 24. "A silversmith," or worker in silver. Demetrius was probably the proprietor of a manufactory where these silver shrines were made. He employed "craftsmen" (artists), and also "workmen" or mechanics (verse 25).

xix. 31. "The chief of Asia:" *asiarchæ*, or chief magistrates

elected by the cities in Asia to preside over their games and religious festivities. They were men of rank and opulence, receiving no pay, but being at considerable expense. "They held for the time a kind of sacerdotal position; and when, robed in mantles of purple and crowned with garlands, they assumed the duty of regulating the great gymnastic contests, and controlling the tumultuary crowd in the theatre, they might literally be called 'the chief of Asia.'"

xix. 33. "Alexander:" some suppose him to have been a Jew put



DIANA OF EPHESUS.

made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; 25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. 26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought;

but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. 28 And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. 30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. 31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring *him* that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. 32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. 34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter? 36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. 37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. 38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. 39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. 40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar,

there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. 41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

Paul is here brought into some trouble at Ephesus, just when he is forecasting to go thence, and to cut him out work elsewhere. See here.

1. How he laid his purpose of going to other places, ver. 21, 22. He was a man of vast designs for God, and was for making his influences as far diffusive as might be. Having spent above two years at Ephesus,

1st. He designed a visit to the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, especially of Philippi and Corinth, the chief cities of those provinces, ver. 21. There he had planted churches, and now is concerned to visit them. He "purposed in the spirit," either in his own spirit,—not communicating his purpose as yet, but keeping it to himself,—or by the conduct of the Holy Spirit, who was his guide in all his motions, and by whom he was led. He purposed to go see how the work of God went on in those places, that he might rectify what was amiss, and encourage what was good.

2nd. Thence he designed to go to Jerusalem, to visit the brethren there, and give an account to them of the prospering of the good pleasure of the Lord in his hand. And from thence he intended to go to Rome, to go see Rome, not as if he designed only the gratifying of his curiosity with the sight of that ancient famous city, but because it was an expression people commonly used, that they would go see Rome, would look about them there; when that which he designed was to see the Christians there, and to do them some service, *Rom. i. 11*. The good people at Rome were the glory of the city, which he longed for a sight of. Dr. Lightfoot supposeth that it was upon the death of the Emperor Claudius, who died the second year of Paul's being at Ephesus, that Paul thought of going to Rome, because while he lived the Jews were forbidden Rome, *ch. xviii. 2*.

3rd. He sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, to give them notice of the visit he intended them, and to get their collection ready for the poor saints at Jerusalem. Soon after, he wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians, designing to follow it himself, as appears *1 Cor. iv. 17, 19*, "I have sent to you Timotheus; but I will myself come to you shortly, if the Lord will." For the present he stayed in Asia, in the country about Ephesus, founding churches.

2. How he was seconded in his purpose, and obliged to pursue it, by the troubles which at length he met with at Ephesus. It was strange he had been quiet there so long; yet it should seem he had met with trouble there, not recorded in this story; for in his epistle, written at this time, he speaks of his having fought with beasts at Ephesus, *1 Cor. xv. 32*; which seems to be meant of his being put to fight with wild beasts in the theatre, according to the barbarous treatment they sometimes gave the Christians. And he speaks of the trouble which came to them in Asia, near Ephesus, when he despaired of life, and received a sentence of death within himself, *2 Cor. i. 8, 9*. But in the trouble here related he was worse frightened than hurt. In general, "there arose no small stir about that way," ver. 23. Some historians say that that famous impostor, Apollonius Tyanæus, who set up for a rival with Christ, and gave out himself, as Simon Magus, to be some great one, was at Ephesus about this time that Paul was there; but it seems the opposition he gave to the Gospel was so insignificant that St. Luke did not think it worth taking notice of. The disturbance he gives an account of was of another nature: let us view the particulars of it. Here is,

First. A great complaint against Paul and the other preachers of the Gospel, for drawing people off from the worship of Diana, and so spoiling the trade of the silversmiths that worked for Diana's temple.

1. The complainant is Demetrius, a silversmith; a principal man, it is likely, of the trade, and one that would be thought to understand and consult the interests of it more than others of the company. Whether he worked in other sorts of plate or no we are not told; but the most advantageous branch of his trade was "making silver shrines for Diana," ver. 24. Some think these were medals stamped with the effigies of Diana, or her temple, or both. Others think they were representations of the temple, with the image of Diana in it in miniature; all of silver, but so small that people might carry them about with them, as the papists do their crucifixes. Those that came from far to pay their devotions at the temple of Ephesus, when they went home, bought these little temples, or shrines, to carry home with them, for the gratifying of the curiosity of their friends, and to preserve in their own minds the idea of that stately edifice. See how craftsmen, and crafty men too, above the rank of silversmiths, make an advantage to themselves of people's superstition, and serve their worldly ends by it.

2. The persons he appeals to are not the magistrates, but the mob. He called the craftsmen together, "with the workmen of like occupation," a parcel of mechanics who had no sense of any thing but their worldly interest; and these he endeavoured to incense against Paul, who would be acted as little by reason, and as much by fury, as he could desire.

3. His complaint and representation is very full.

1st. He lays it down for a principle that the art and mystery of making silver shrines for the worshippers of Diana was very necessary to be supported and kept up; ver. 25, "Ye know that by this craft," we have not only our subsistence, and our necessary food, but "our wealth;" we grow rich, and raise estates; we live great, and have wherewithal to maintain our pleasures; and therefore, whatever comes of it, we must not suffer this craft to grow into contempt. Note, It is natural for men to be jealous for that, whether right or wrong, by which they get their wealth. And many have, for this reason alone, set themselves against the Gospel of Christ, because it calls men off from those crafts which are unlawful, how much wealth soever is to be gotten by them.

2nd. He charges it upon Paul, that he had dissuaded men from worshipping idols. The words, as they are laid in the indictment, are, that he had asserted "they are no gods which are made with hands;" ver. 26. Could any truth be more plain and self-evident than this? Or any reasoning more cogent and convincing than those of the prophets, "The workman made it, therefore it is not God." The first and most genuine notion we have of God is, that he has his being of himself, and depends upon none, but that all things have their being from him, and their dependence on him; and then it must follow, that those are no gods which are the creatures of men's fancy, and the work of men's hands: yet this must be looked upon as an heretical and atheistical notion, and Paul as a criminal, for maintaining it. Not that they could advance any thing against this doctrine itself, but that the consequence of it was that, not only at Ephesus, the chief city, but almost throughout all Asia, among the country people, who were their best customers, and whom they thought they were surest of, he had persuaded and turned away much people from the worship of Diana; so that there was not now such a demand for the silver shrines as had been, nor such good rates given for them. There are those who will stickle for that which is most grossly absurd and unreasonable, and which carries along with it its own conviction of falsehood, as this doth, that those are gods which are made with hands, if it have but human laws, and worldly interest and prescription, on its side.

forward by the Jews to clear them of blame, others that he was a Christian whom the Jews pushed forward in order to expose him to the violence of the people.

xix. 35. "Town-clerk:" the keeper of the public records. "A worshipper:" rather, adorer or keeper of the temple. It was a title of honour, and was granted by the emperors to certain cities noted for their piety. "The image," &c.: it was a rude wooden figure, the upper part representing the breasts of a woman (the many

breasts of Nature); the lower part a shapeless block. A bar of metal was in each hand, and the figure was robed in a dress covered with mystic signs. It was supposed to have fallen from heaven.

xix. 38. "The law is open:" rather, the assizes or court-days: being holden. "Deputies:" rather, pro-consuls.

xx. 1, 2. "After his mention of the affectionate parting between Paul and the Christians at Ephesus, St. Luke tells us very little of the apostle's proceedings during a period of nine or ten months—

3rd. He minds them of the danger which their trade was in of going to decay. Whatever toucheth that, toucheth them in a sensible, tender part; if this doctrine gains credit, we are all undone, and may even shut up shop; "this our craft will be set at naught," will be convicted, and put into an ill name, as superstition, and a cheat upon the world, and every body will run it down. This our part, so the world is, our interest, our share of trade and commerce, *κινουμένην ἡμῖν τὸ μέτρον*, it will not only come into danger of being lost, but it will bring us into danger, and we shall become not only beggars, but malefactors.

4th. He pretends a mighty zeal for Diana, and a jealousy for her honour. "Not only this our craft is in danger;" if that were all, he would not have you think that he would have spoken with so much warmth, but all his care is, "lest the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed;" and we would not, for all the world, see the diminution of the honour of that goddess, "whom all Asia, and the world, worship." See what the worship of Diana had to plead for itself, and what was the utmost which the most zealous bigots for it had to say in its behalf. First. That it had pomp on its side. The magnificence of the temple was the thing that charmed them, the thing that chained them; they could not bear the thoughts of any thing that tended to the diminution, much less to the destruction, of that. Secondly. That it had numbers on its side. All Asia, and the world, worship it; and therefore it must needs be the right way of worship, let Paul say what he will to the contrary. Thus, because "all the world wonders after the beast," the dragon, the devil, the god of this world, gives him "his power, and his seat, and great authority," *Rev. xiii. 2, 3*.

Secondly. The popular resentment of this complaint. The charge was managed by a craftsman, and was framed to incense the common people, and it had the desired effect; for on this occasion they shewed,

1. A great displeasure against the Gospel, and the preachers of it. "They were full of wrath," *ver. 28*, full of fury and indignation; so the word signifies. The craftsmen went stark mad when they were told that their trade and their idol were both in danger.

2. A great jealousy for the honour of their goddess. "They cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians," and we are resolved to stand by her, and live and die in the defence of her. Are there any that expose her to contempt, or threaten her destruction? let us alone to deal with them. Let Paul say never so much to prove that "those are no gods which are made with hands," we will abide by it, that whatever comes of other gods and goddesses, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." We must and will stand up for the religion of our country, which we have "received by tradition from our fathers." Thus "all people walked every one in the name of their god," and thought well of their own; much more should the servants of the true God do so, who can say, "This God is our God for ever and ever."

3. A great disorder among themselves; *ver. 29*, "the whole city was full of confusion;" the common and natural effect of an intemperate zeal for a false religion. It throws all into confusion, dethrones reason, and enthrones passion, and men run together, not only not knowing one another's minds, but not knowing their own.

Thirdly. The proceedings of the mob under the power of these resentments, and how far they were carried.

1. They laid hands on some of Paul's companions, and hurried them into the theatre, *ver. 29*. Some think with design there to make them fight with beasts, as Paul had sometimes done, *ver. 29*; or perhaps they intended only to abuse them, and to make them a spectacle to the crowd. Those they seized were Gaius and Aristarchus, of both whom we read elsewhere; Gaius was of Derbe, *ch. xx. 4*; Aristarchus is also there spoken of, and *Col. iv. 10*. They came with Paul from Macedonia, and that was their only crime, that they were Paul's companions in travel, both in services and sufferings.

2. Paul, who had escaped being seized by them, when he perceived his friends in distress for his sake, would have entered in unto the people, to sacrifice himself, if there were no other remedy, rather than his friends should suffer upon his account; and it was an evidence of a generous spirit, and that he loved his neighbour as himself.

3. He was dissuaded from it by the kindness of his friends, that overruled him. 1st. The "disciples suffered him not," for it better became him to offer it, than it would have become them to suffer it. They had reason to say to Paul, as David's servants did to him, when he was for exposing himself in a piece of public service, "Thou art worth ten thousand of us," *2 Sam. xviii. 3*. 2nd. Others of his friends interposed, to prevent his throwing of himself thus into the mouth of danger. They would treat him much worse than Gaius and Aristarchus, looking upon him as the ringleader of the party; and therefore better let them bear the brunt of the storm than that he should venture into it, *ver. 31*. They were "certain of the chief of Asia," the princes of Asia, *Ἀσιαρχαί*. The critics tell us they were the chief of their priests, or (as others) the chief of their players. Whether they were converts to the Christian faith, and some such there were, even of the priests and governors, or whether they were only well-wishers to Paul as an ingenious good man, we are not told, only that they were Paul's friends. Dr. Lightfoot suggests that they kept up a respect and kindness for him, ever since he fought with beasts in their theatre, and were afraid he should be abused so again. Note. It is a friendly part to take more care of the lives and comforts of good men than they do themselves. It would be a very hazardous adventure for Paul to go into the theatre; it was a thousand to one it cost him his life, and therefore Paul was overruled by his friends, to obey the law of self-preservation, and hath taught us to keep out of the way of danger as long as we can without going out of the way of duty. We may be called to lay down our lives, but not to throw away our lives. It would better become Paul to venture into a synagogue than into a theatre.

4. The mob was in a perfect confusion; *ver. 32*, "some cried one thing, and some another," according as their fancies and passions, and perhaps the reports they received, led them. Some cried, Down with the Jews; others, Down with Paul; but "the assembly was confused;" as, not understanding one another's minds, they contradicted one another, and were ready to fly in one another's faces for it, but they did not understand their own; for the truth was, "the greater part knew not wherefore they were come together." They knew not what began the riot, nor who, much less what business they had there; but upon such occasions the greatest part come only to inquire what the matter is: they follow the cry, follow the crowd, increase like a snowball, and where there are many there will be more.

5. The Jews would have interested themselves in this tumult. In other places they had been the first movers of such riots; but now at Ephesus they had not interest enough to raise the mob, and yet, when it was raised, they had ill-will enough to set in with it; *ver. 33*, "they drew Alexander out of the multitude," called him out to speak on the behalf of the Jews, against Paul and his companions: You have heard what Demetrius and the silversmiths have to say against them, as enemies to their religion; give us leave now to tell you what we have to say against him, as an enemy to our religion. The Jews put him forward to do this, encouraged him, and told him they would stand by him and second him. And this they looked upon as necessary in their own defence; and therefore what he designed to say, is called his apologising to the people, not for himself in particular, but for the Jews in general, whom the worshippers of

Diana looked upon to be as much their enemies as Paul was. Now they would have them know that they were as much Paul's enemies as they were; and they who are thus careful to distinguish themselves from the servants of Christ now, and are afraid of being taken for them, shall have their doom accordingly in the great day. "Alexander beckoned with the hand," desiring to be heard against Paul; for it had been strange if a persecution were carried on against the Christians, and there were not Jews at one end or the other of it: if they could not begin the mischief they would help it forward, and so make themselves partakers of other men's sin. Some think this Alexander had been a Christian, but had apostatized to Judaism, and therefore was drawn out as a proper person to accuse Paul; and that he was that Alexander the copper-smith that did Paul so much evil, *2 Tim. iv. 14*; and whom he had delivered unto Satan, *1 Tim. i. 20*.

6. This occasioned the prosecutors to drop the prosecution of Paul's friends, and to turn it into acclamations in honour of their goddess; *ver. 34*, "when they knew that he was a Jew," and as such an enemy to the worship of Diana,—for the Jews had now an implacable hatred to idols and idolatry,—whatever he had to say for Paul or against him, they were resolved not to hear him, and therefore set the mob a shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Whoever runs her down, be he Jew or Christian, we are resolved to cry her up; she is Diana of the Ephesians, our Diana, and it is our honour and happiness to have her temple with us; and she is great, a famous goddess, and universally adored. There are other Dianas, but Diana of the Ephesians is beyond them all, because her temple is more rich and magnificent than any of theirs. This was all the cry for two hours together. And it was thought a sufficient confutation of Paul's doctrine, that they are not gods which are made with hands. And thus the most sacred truths are often run down with nothing else but noise and clamour and popular fury. It was said of old concerning idolaters, that they were mad upon their idols; and here is an instance of it. Diana made the Ephesians great, for the town was enriched by the vast concourse of people from all parts to Diana's temple there; and therefore they are concerned by all means possible to keep up her sinking reputation with, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

Fourthly. The suppressing and dispersing of these rioters, by the prudence and vigilance of the town-clerk. He is called *ῥαῖστρος*, the scribe, or secretary, or recorder; the governor of the city, so some; the register of their games, the Olympic games, so some; whose business it was to preserve the names of the victors, and the prizes they won. With much ado he at length stilled the noise, so as to be heard, and then made a pacific speech to them; and gave us an instance of that of Solomon, *Ecc. ix. 17*, "The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that rules among fools," as Demetrius did.

1. He humours them with an acknowledgment that Diana was the celebrated goddess of the Ephesians, *ver. 35*. They needed not to be so loud and strenuous in asserting a truth which nobody denied, or could be ignorant of. Every one knows that "the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana," is *νεικήσους*; not only that the inhabitants were worshippers of this goddess, but the city, as a corporation, was by its charter intrusted with the worship of Diana, to take care of her temple, and to accommodate those who came thither to do her homage. Ephesus is the *ἁδία*, (they say that is the most proper word,) or the sacrist, of the great goddess Diana. The city was more the patroness and protectress of Diana than Diana was of the city; such a mighty care did idolaters take for the keeping up the worship of gods made with hands, while the worship of the true and living God is neglected; and few nations or cities glory in patronizing and protecting that. The temple of Diana at Ephesus was a very rich and sumptuous structure; but, it should seem, the image of Diana in the temple, because they thought it sanctified the temple, was had in greater veneration than the temple; for they persuaded the people that it fell down from Jupiter, and therefore was none of the gods that were made with men's hands. See how easily the credulity of superstitious people is imposed upon by the fraud of designing men. Because this image of Diana had been set up time out of mind, and nobody could tell who made it, they made the people believe it fell down from Jupiter. Now "these things," saith the town-clerk very gravely, (but whether seriously or no, and as one that did himself believe them, may be questioned, "cannot be spoken against;" they have obtained such universal credit that you need not fear contradiction, it can do you no prejudice. Some take it thus: seeing the image of Diana fell down from Jupiter, as we all believe, then what is said against gods made with hands does not at all affect us.

2. He cautions them against all violent and tumultuous proceedings, which their religion did not need, nor could receive any real advantage from; *ver. 36*, "Ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly." A very good rule this is to be observed at all times, both in private and public affairs; not to be hasty and precipitate in our motions, but to deliberate, and take time to consider; not to put ourselves or others into a heat, but to be calm and composed, and always keep reason in the throne and passion under check. This word should be ready to us to command the peace with, when ourselves or those about us are growing disorderly. "We ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly;" to do nothing in haste which we may repent of at leisure.

3. He wiped off the odium that had been cast upon Paul and his associates, and tells them they were not the men that they were represented to them to be; *ver. 37*, "Ye have brought hither these men," and you are ready to pull them to pieces; but have you considered what is their transgression, and what is their offence? What can you prove upon them? They are not robbers of churches; you cannot charge them with sacrilege, or the taking away of any dedicated thing; they have offered no violence to Diana's temple, or the treasures of it. Nor are they blasphemers of your goddess; they have not given any opprobrious language to the worshippers of Diana, nor spoken scurrilously of her or her temple. Why should you prosecute them with all this violence, who, though they are not of your mind, yet do not inveigh with any bitterness against you; since they are calm, why should you be hot? It was the idol in the heart that they levelled all their force against, by reason and argument; if they can but get that down, the idol in the temple will fall of course. Those that preach against idolatrous churches have truth on their side, and ought vigorously to maintain it, and press it on men's consciences; but let them not be robbers of those churches, "on the prey laid they not their hand," *Est. ix. 15, 16*, nor blasphemers of those worshipers; with meekness instructing, not with passion and foul language reproaching, those that oppose themselves; for God's truth, as it needs not man's lie, so it needs not man's intemperate beat: "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

4. He turns them over to the regular methods of the law, which ought always to supersede popular tumults, and, in civilized, well-governed nations, will do so. And a great mercy it is to live in a country where provision is made for the keeping of the peace and the administration of public justice, and the appointing a remedy for every wrong; and herein we of this nation are as happy as any people.

1st. If the complaint was of a private injury, let them have recourse to the judges and courts of justice, which were kept publicly at stated times. If Demetrius and the company of the silversmiths, that have made all this rout, find themselves aggrieved, or any privilege they are legally entitled to infringed

that is, from the early summer of the year A.D. 57 to the spring of A.D. 58. All the information which we find in the Acts concerning this period is comprised in the following words: "He departed to go into Macedonia; and when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, and there abode three months." The season at which he left Ephesus is ascertained by St. Paul's own words (*1 Cor. xvi. 8*, compared with *Acts xx. 1*). The time of his leaving Corinth on his return appears

from *Acts xx. 6*" (Conybeare and Howson). The period thus briefly glanced at by Luke was one of great activity on the part of Paul—a period of labour, anxiety, weakness, strength, sorrow, and joy; and for some account of which we must turn to his epistles. (See *2 Cor. ii. 12, 13*, where he mentions his visit to Troas.) Titus had been sent to Corinth, and Paul expected to meet him and hear his report at Troas. He describes his anxiety on finding that Titus did not arrive. He laboured here successfully, but, at length, impelled by his anxiety to

or intrenched upon; let them bring their action, take out a process, and the matter shall be fairly tried, and justice done; "the law is open, and there are deputies." There is a proconsul and his delegate, whose business it is to hear both sides, and to determine according to equity; and in their determination all parties must acquiesce, and not be their own judges, nor appeal to the people. Note, "The law is good, if a man use it lawfully," as the last remedy, both for the discovery of a right disputed, and the recovery of a right denied.

2nd. If the complaint was of a public grievance relating to the constitution, it must be redressed, not by a confused rabble, but by a convention of the states; ver. 39, "If ye inquire any thing concerning other matters," that are of a common concern, "it shall be determined in a lawful assembly" of the aldermen and common council, called together in a regular way by those in authority. Note, Private persons should not intermeddle in public matters, so as to anticipate the counsels of those whose business it is to take cognizance of them. We have enough to do to mind our own business.

5. He makes them sensible of the danger they were in, and of the premunire they had run themselves into by this riot; ver. 40. It is well if we be not "called in question for this day's uproar," if we be not complained of at the emperor's court, as a factious and seditious city, and if a *quo warranto* be not brought against us, and our charter taken away; for "there is no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse," we have nothing to say in excuse of it. We cannot justify ourselves in breaking the peace, by saying that others broke it first, and we only acted defensively; we have no colour for any such plea; and therefore let the matter go no farther, for it has gone too far already. Note, Most people stand in awe of men's judgment, more than of the judgment of God. How well were it if we would thus still the tumult of our disorderly appetites and passions, and check the violence of them with the consideration of the account we must shortly give to the Judge of heaven and earth for all these disorders. "We are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar" in our hearts, in our houses, and how shall we answer it? "there being no cause," no just cause, or no proportionable one, "whereby we may give an account of this concourse," and of this heat and violence. As we must repress the inordinancy of our appetites, so also of our passions, with this, that "for all those things God will bring us into judgment," *Ecc. xi. 9*; and we are concerned to manage ourselves "as those that must give account."

6. When he had thus shewed them the absurdity of their riotous meeting, and the ill consequences that might follow from it, he advised them to scatter with all speed; ver. 41, he "dismissed the assembly," ordered the crier, perhaps, to give notice that all manner of persons should peaceably depart, and go about their own business, and they did so. See here, 1st. How the overruling providence of God preserves the public peace, by an unaccountable power over the spirits of men; and thus the world is kept in some order, and men are restrained from being "as the fishes of the sea, where the greater devour the lesser." Considering what an impetuous furious thing, what an ungovernable, untameable wild beast, the mob is when it is up, we shall see reason to acknowledge God's goodness that we are not always under the tyranny of it. He stills the noise of the sea, the noise of her waves, and (which is no less an instance of his almighty power) the tumult of the people, *Ps. lxxv. 2nd*. See how many ways God has of protecting his people. Perhaps this town-clerk was no friend at all to Paul, or the Gospel he preached, yet his human prudence is made to serve the Divine purpose; "Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all."

CHAPTER XX.

In this chapter we have, I. Paul's travels up and down about Macedonia, Greece, and Asia, and his coming at length to Troas, ver. 1—6. II. A particular account of his spending one Lord's day at Troas, and his raising Eutychus to life there, ver. 7—12. III. His progress or circuit for the visiting of the churches he had planted, in his way towards Jerusalem, where he designed to be by the next feast of Pentecost, ver. 13—16. IV. The farewell sermon he preached to the presbyters of Ephesus, now he was leaving that country, ver. 17—35. V. The very sorrowful parting between him and them, ver. 36—38; and in all these we find Paul very busy to serve Christ, and to do good to the souls of men; not only in the conversion of heathens, but the edification of Christians.



AND after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia. 2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

3 And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia. 4 And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. 5 These going before tarried for us at Troas. 6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

These travels of Paul which are thus briefly related, if all in them had been recorded that was memorable, and worthy to be written in letters of gold, the world would not have contained the books that should be written; and, there-

fore, we have only some general hints of occurrences, which therefore ought to be the more precious. Here is,

First, Paul's departure from Ephesus. He had tarried there longer than he had done at any one place since he was ordained to the apostleship of the Gentiles; and, now it was time to think of removing, for he must preach in other cities also. But after this, to the end of the Scripture history of his life, (which is all we can depend upon,) we never find him breaking up fresh ground again, nor preaching the Gospel there where Christ had not been named, as hitherto he had done, *Rom. xv. 20*; for in the close of the next chapter, we find him made a prisoner, and so continued and so left at the end of this book. 1. Paul left Ephesus soon "after the uproar was ceased;" looking upon that disturbance he met with there to be an indication of Providence to him not to stay there any longer, ver. 1. His remove might somewhat appease the rage of his adversaries, and gain better quarter for the Christians there. *Currenti cede furor*.—"It is good to lie by in a storm." Yet some think that before he now left Ephesus he wrote the first Epistle to the Corinthians; and that his fighting with beasts at Ephesus, which he mentions in that epistle, was a figurative description of this uproar; but I rather take that literally. 2. He did not leave them abruptly and in a fright, but took leave of them solemnly. He "called unto him the disciples," the principal persons of the congregation, and embraced them, took leave of them, saith the Syriac, with the kiss of love, according to the usage of the primitive church. Loving friends know not how well they love one another till they come to part, and then it appears how near they lay to one another's hearts.

Secondly, His visitation of the Greek churches, which he had planted, and more than once watered, and which appear to have lain very near his heart. 1. He went first to Macedonia, ver. 1, according to his purpose before the uproar, *ch. xix. 21*; there he visited the churches of Philippi and Thessalonica, and gave them much exhortation, ver. 2. Paul's visits to his friends were preaching visits, and his preaching was large and copious; he gave them much exhortation. He had a great deal to say to them, and did not stint himself in time. He exhorted them to many duties in many cases, and, as some read it, with many reasonings. He enforced his exhortation with a great variety of motives and arguments. 2. He stayed three months in Greece, ver. 2, 3; that is, in Achaia, as some think; for thither also he purposed to go, to Corinth, and thereabout, *ch. xix. 21*; and, no doubt, there also he gave the disciples much exhortation, to direct and confirm them, and engage them to cleave to the Lord.

Thirdly, The altering of his measures; for we cannot always stand to our purposes. Accidents unforeseen put us upon new counsels; which oblige us to purpose with a proviso. 1. Paul was about to sail into Syria, to Antioch, from whence he was first sent out into the service of the Gentiles, and which therefore in his journeys he generally contrived to take in his way; but he changed his mind, and resolved to return through Macedonia, the same way he came. 2. The reason was because the Jews, expecting he would steer that course as usual, had waylaid him, designing to be the death of him. Since they could not get him out of the way by stirring up both mobs and magistrates against him, which they had often attempted, they contrived to assassinate him. Some think they laid wait for him to rob him of the money that he was carrying to Jerusalem, for the relief of the poor saints there; but, considering how very spiteful the Jews were against him, I suppose they thirsted for his blood more than for his money.

Fourthly, His companions in his travels when he went into Asia. They are here named, ver. 4; some of them were ministers, whether they were all so or no is not certain. Sopater of Berea, it is likely, is the same with Sosipater, who is mentioned *Rom. xvi. 21*. Timothy is reckoned among them; for though Paul, when he departed from Ephesus, ver. 1, left Timothy there, and afterwards wrote his first epistle to him thither, to direct him as an evangelist how to settle the church there, and in what hands to leave it, (see *1 Tim. i. 3*; *iii. 14, 15*),—which epistle was intended for direction to Timothy what to do, not only at Ephesus, where he now was, but also at other places where he should be in like manner left, or whither he should be sent to reside as an evangelist, and not to him only, but to other of the evangelists that attended Paul, and were in like manner employed,—yet he soon followed him, and accompanied him with others here named. Now one would think this was no good husbandry to have all these worthy men accompanying Paul, for there was more need of them where Paul was not, than where he was. But so it was ordered, 1. That they might assist him in instructing such as by his preaching were awakened and startled. Wherever Paul came the waters were stirred, and then there was need of many hands to help the cripples in; it was time to strike when the iron was hot. 2. That they might be trained up by him, and fitted for future service; might fully know his doctrine, and manner of life, *2 Tim. iii. 10*. Paul's bodily presence was weak and despicable; and therefore these friends of his accompanied him to put a reputation upon him, and to keep him in countenance, and to intimate to strangers, who would be apt to judge by the sight of the eye, that he had a great deal in him truly valuable, which was not discovered upon the outward appearance.

Fifthly, His coming to Troas, where he had appointed a general rendezvous of his friends. 1. They went before and stayed for him at Troas, ver. 5; designing to go along with him to Jerusalem, as Trophimus particularly did, *ch. xxi. 29*. We should not think it hard to stay a while for good company in a journey. 2. Paul made the best of his way thither; and it should seem Luke was now in company with him; for he saith, "We sailed from Philippi," ver. 6; and the first time we find him in his company was here at Troas, *ch. xvi. 11*. The days of unleavened bread are mentioned only to describe the time, not to intimate that Paul kept the passover after the manner of the Jews; for just about this time he had written in his first epistle to the church of Corinth, and taught, that Christ is our passover, and a Christian life our feast of unleavened bread, *1 Cor. v. 7, 8*; and when the substance was come, the shadow was done away. He came to them to Troas by sea in five days, and when he was there, stayed but seven days. There is no remedy, but a great deal of time will unavoidably be lost in travelling to and fro by those who go about doing good; yet it shall not be put upon the score of lost time. Paul thought it worth while to spend five days in going to Troas, though it was but for an opportunity of seven days' stay there. But he knew, and so should we, how to redeem even journeying time, and make it turn to some good account.

7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. 8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. 9 And there sat in

meet Titus, sailed to Macedonia. For Troas, see chap. xvi. 8. For this visit to Macedonia, and Paul's feelings, see *2 Cor. vii. 5—7*. It seems most likely that Philippi is the place in Macedonia spoken of, and that from it, after the arrival of Titus, Paul wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians. St. Paul seems to have passed the summer and autumn in Macedonia, extending his labours wider than on his former visit, and to have started for Corinth in the early winter.

11. 3. According to Conybeare and Howson, the Epistles to the

Galatians and Romans were written during this visit; but see Lightfoot's introduction to the Galatians, and Notes on that epistle. "The Jews generally settled in great numbers at sea-ports, for the sake of commerce, and their occupation would give them peculiar influence over the captains and owners of merchant vessels, in which St. Paul had sailed. They might, therefore, form the project of seizing him or murdering him at Cenchrea, with great probability of success" (Cook).

a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. 10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. 11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. 12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

We have here an account of what passed at Troas, the last of the seven days that Paul stayed there.

First. There was a solemn religious assembly of the Christians that were there, according to their constant custom, and the custom of all the churches.

1. "The disciples came together," ver. 7. Though they read and meditated, and prayed, and sung psalms apart, and thereby kept up their communion with God, yet that is not enough; they must come together to worship God in concert, and so keep up their communion with one another by mutual countenance and assistance, and testify their spiritual communion with all good Christians. There ought to be stated times for the disciples of Christ to come together; though they cannot all come together in one place, yet as many as can.

2. They came together "upon the first day of the week," which they called the Lord's day, *Rev. i. 10*; the Christian sabbath, celebrated to the honour of Christ and the Holy Spirit, in remembrance of the resurrection of Christ and the pouring out of the Spirit, both on the first day of the week. This is here said to be "the day when the disciples came together," that is, when it was their practice to come together in all the churches. Note, "The first day of the week is to be religiously observed by all the disciples of Christ, and it is a sign between Christ and them; for by this it is known that they are his disciples; and it is to be observed in solemn assemblies, which are as it were the courts held in the name of our Lord Jesus, and to his honour, by his ministers, the stewards of his courts, and to which all that hold from and under him owe suit and service, and at which they are to make their appearance, as tenants at their lord's courts; and the first day of the week is appointed to be the court day."

3. They were gathered together in an upper chamber, ver. 8. They had no temple or synagogue to meet in, no capacious stately chapel, but met in a private house in a garret. As they were few and did not need, so they were poor and could not build, a large meeting place; yet they came together in that despicable inconvenient place. It will be no excuse for our absenting ourselves from religious assemblies, that the place of them is not so decent or so commodious as we would have it be.

4. They came together to break bread; that is, to celebrate the ordinance of the Lord's supper. That one instituted sign of breaking the bread being put for all the rest; "the bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ," *1 Cor. x. 16*. In the breaking of the bread, not only the breaking of Christ's body for us, to be a sacrifice for our sins, is commemorated; but the breaking of Christ's body to us, to be food and a feast for our souls, is signified. In the primitive times it was the custom of many churches to receive the Lord's supper every Lord's day; celebrating the memorial of Christ's death in the former with that of his resurrection in the latter; and both in consort, in a solemn assembly, to testify their joint concurrence in the same faith and worship.

Secondly. In this assembly Paul gave them a sermon, a long sermon, a farewell sermon, ver. 7.

1. He gave them a sermon, he preached to them. Though they were disciples already, yet it was very necessary they should have the word of God preached to them, in order to their increase in knowledge and grace. Observe, The preaching of the Gospel ought to accompany the sacraments. Moses read the book of the covenant in the audience of the people, and then sprinkled the blood of the covenant which the Lord had "made with them concerning all these words," *Ex. xxiv. 7, 8*. What doth the seal signify without a writing?

2. It was a farewell sermon; he being "ready to depart on the morrow." When he was gone they might have the same Gospel preached, but not as he preached it; and therefore, they must make the best use of him that they could while they had him. Farewell sermons use to be in a particular manner affecting both to the preacher and to the hearers.

3. It was a very long sermon. He "continued his speech until midnight;" for he had a great deal to say, and knew not that ever he should have another opportunity of preaching to them. After they had received the Lord's supper he preached to them the duties they had thereby engaged themselves to, and the comforts they were interested in; and in this he was very large, and full, and particular. There may be occasion for ministers to preach not only in season, but out of season. We know some that would have reproached Paul for this, as a long-winded preacher, that tired his hearers; but they were willing to hear; he saw them so, and therefore continued his speech. He continued it till midnight; perhaps they met in the evening for privacy, or in conformity to the example of the disciples, who came together on the first Christian sabbath in the evening. It is likely he had preached to them in the morning, and yet thus lengthened out his evening sermon even till midnight. We wish we had the heads of this long sermon; but we may suppose it was for substance the same with his epistles. The meeting being continued till midnight, there were candles set up; many lights, ver. 8, that the hearers might turn to the Scriptures Paul quoted, and see whether these things were so; and that this might prevent the reproach of their enemies, who said they met in the night for works of darkness.

Thirdly. A young man in the congregation, that slept at sermon, was killed by a fall out of the window, but raised to life again. His name signifies 'one that had good fortune,' *Eutychus, bene fortunatus*; and he answered his name. Observe,

1. The infirmity with which he was overtaken. It is likely his parents brought him, though but a boy, to the assembly, out of a desire to have him well instructed in the things of God by such a preacher as Paul. Parents should bring their children to hear sermons as soon as they can hear with understanding, *Neh. viii. 2*; even the little ones, *Deu. xix. 11*. Now this youth was to be blamed, 1st. That he presumptuously sat in the window, ungazed perhaps, and so exposed himself; whereas, if he could have been con-

tent to sit on the floor, he had been safe. Boys that love to climb, or otherwise endanger themselves to the grief of their parents, consider not how much it is also an offence to God. 2nd. That he slept, nay, he fell into a deep sleep, when Paul was preaching; which was a sign he did not duly attend to the things that Paul spoke of, though they were weighty things. The particular notice taken of his sleeping makes us willing to hope none of the rest slept; though it was sleeping time, and after supper. But this youth fell fast asleep; he was carried away with it, so the word is, which intimates that he strove against it, but was overpowered with it, and at last sunk down with sleep.

2. The calamity with which he was seized herein. "He fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead." Some think the hand of Satan was in it by the Divine permission, and that he designed it for a disturbance to this assembly, and a reproach to Paul and it. Others think God designed it for a warning to all people to take heed of sleeping when they are hearing the word preached; and certainly we are to make that use of it. We must look upon it as an evil thing, as a bad sign of our low esteem of the word of God, and a great hindrance to our profiting by it. We must be afraid of it, do what we can to prevent our being sleepy; not compose ourselves to sleep, but get our hearts affected with the word we hear to such a degree, as may drive sleep far enough. Let us watch and pray that we enter not into this temptation, and by it into worse. Let the punishment of Eutychus strike an awe upon us, and shew us how jealous God is in the matters of his worship; "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." See how severely God visited an iniquity that seemed little, and but in a youth, and say, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" Apply to this story that lamentation, *Jer. ix. 20, 21*, "Hear the word of the Lord, for death is come up into our windows, to cut off the children from without and the young men from the streets."

3. The miraculous mercy shewed him in his recovery to life again, ver. 10. It gave a present distraction to the assembly, and an interruption to Paul's preaching; but it proved an occasion of that which was a great confirmation to his preaching, and helped to set it home, and make it effectual.

1st. Paul fell on the dead body and embraced it; thereby expressing a great compassion to, and an affectionate concern for, this young man; so far was he from saying, He was well enough served for minding so little what I said. Such tender spirits as Paul had, are much affected with sad accidents of this kind, and are far from judging and censuring those that fall under them, as if those on whom the tower of Siloam fell were sinners above all that dwelt at Jerusalem; I tell you nay. But this was not all; his falling on him and embracing him was in imitation of Elijah, *1 Kin. xvii. 21*, and Elisha, *2 Kin. iv. 34*, in order to the raising of him to life again. Not that this could, as a means, contribute any thing to it; but, as a sign, it represented the descent of that Divine power upon the dead body, for the putting of life into it again, which at the same time he inwardly, earnestly, and in faith prayed for.

2nd. He assured them that he was returned to life, and it would appear presently. Various speculations, we may suppose, this ill accident had occasioned in the congregation; but Paul puts an end to them all, "Trouble not yourselves;" be not in any disorder about it, let it not put you into any hurry; for "his life is in him;" "he is not dead, but sleepeth;" lay him awhile upon a bed, and he will come to himself, for he is now alive. Thus, when Christ raised Lazarus he said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me."

3rd. He returned to his work immediately after this interruption, ver. 11. He came up again to the meeting; they broke bread together in a love-feast, which usually attended the eucharist, in token of their communion with each other, and for the confirmation of friendship among them; and they talked a long while, even till break of day. Paul did not now go on in a continued discourse as before, but he and his friends fell into a free conversation, the subject of which, no doubt, was good and to the use of edifying. Christian conference is an excellent means of promoting holiness, comfort, and Christian love. They knew not when they should have Paul's company again, and therefore made the best use they could of it when they had it, and reckoned a night's sleep well lost for that purpose.

4th. Before they parted "they brought the young man alive" into the congregation, every one congratulating him upon his return to life from the dead; and they were not a little comforted," ver. 12. It was the matter of great rejoicing among them, not only to the relations of the young man, but to the whole society, as it not only prevented the reproach that would otherwise have been cast upon them, but contributed very much to the credit of the Gospel.

13 And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot. 14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. 15 And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus. 16 For Paul



MILETUS.

xx. 7. "The first day of the week:" the evening after the Jewish Sabbath. Paul was to sail on the morrow.

xx. 8. The mention of the "many lights" may be accounted for simply by the fact that an eye-witness is recording a scene which in every particular was vividly impressed upon his mind.

xx. 9. "A window:" not like our windows, protected by glass, but openings which sometimes had lattices which could be opened or removed.

xx. 11. The breaking of bread had probably been interrupted by the accident to Eutychus.

xx. 16. "To sail by:" i.e., to pass without visiting.

xx. 17. "Elders:" see verse 28, where "overseers" is used.

xx. 22. "Bound in the spirit:" impelled or constrained in the spirit. Not in or by the Holy Spirit; Paul's own spirit is meant. It was an internal constraint under which he acted.

xx. 23. Compare chap. xxi. 4, 10, 11.

had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

Paul is hastening towards Jerusalem, but strives to do all the good he can by the way, *ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ*, as it were on the by. He had called at Troas, and done good there; and now he makes a sort of a coasting voyage, the merchants would call it a trading voyage,—going from place to place, and no doubt endeavouring to make every place he came to the better for him, as every good man should do.

First. He sent his companions by sea to Assos, but he himself was minded to go afoot, *ver. 13.* He had decreed or determined within himself that, whatever opportunity should be used with him to the contrary, urging either his ease or his credit, or the convenience of a ship that offered itself, or the company of his friends, he would foot it to Assos. And if the land way which Paul took was the shorter way, yet it is taken notice of by the ancients as a rough way, (Homer, *Iliad*. vi. and Eustathius upon him, says, 'It was enough to kill one to go on foot to Assos; Lorin, *in loc.*') yet that way Paul would take; 1. That he might call on his friends by the way, and do good among them, either converting sinners or edifying saints; and in both he was serving his great Master, and carrying on his great work. Or, 2. That he might be alone, and might have the greater freedom of converse with God and his own heart in solitude. He loved his companions, and delighted in their company; yet he would shew hereby that he did not need it, but could enjoy himself alone. Or, 3. That he might inure himself to hardship, and not seem to indulge his ease. Thus he would, by voluntary instances of mortification and self-denial, keep under the body, and bring it into subjection, that he might make his sufferings for Christ, when he was called out to them, the more easy, 2 *Tim.* ii. 3. We should use ourselves to deny ourselves.

Secondly. At Assos he went on board with his friends. There they took him in; for by this time he had enough of his walk, and was willing to betake himself to the other way of travelling; or perhaps he could not go any farther by land, but was obliged to go by water. When Christ sent his disciples away by ship, and tarried behind himself, yet he came to them, and they took him in, *Mar.* vi. 45, 51.

Thirdly. He made the best of his way to Jerusalem. His ship passed by Chios, *ver. 15*, touched at Samos; these are places of note among the Greek writers, both poets and historians. They tarried a while at Trogyllium, the seaport next to Samos; and the next day they came to Miletus, the seaport that lay next to Ephesus; for, *ver. 16*, he had determined not to go to Ephesus at this time, because he could not go thither but he would be urged by his friends, whose importunity he could not resist, to make some stay with them there; and because he was resolved not to stay, he would not put himself into a temptation to stay; "for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost." He had been at Jerusalem, about four or five years ago, *ch. xviii.* 21, 22; and now he was for going thither again to pay his continued respects to that church, which he was careful to keep a good correspondence with, that he might not be thought alienated from it by his commission to preach among the Gentiles. He aimed to be there by the feast of Pentecost, because it was a time of concourse, which would give him an opportunity of propagating the Gospel among the Jews and proselytes, who came from all parts to worship at the feast; and the feast of Pentecost had been particularly made famous among the Christians, by the pouring out of the Spirit. Note, Men of business must set themselves, and it will contribute to the expediting of it, to set time, with submission to Providence, and strive to keep it; contriving to do that first which we judge to be most needful, and not suffering ourselves to be diverted from it. It is a pleasure to us to be with our friends; it diverts us, nothing more; but we must not by it be diverted from our work. When Paul has a call to Jerusalem, he will not loiter away the time in Asia, though he had more and kinder friends there. This is not the world we are to be together in; we hope to be so in the other world.

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know

that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

It should seem the ship Paul and his companions were embarked in for Jerusalem, attended him on purpose, and stayed or moved as he pleased; for when he came to Miletus, he went ashore, and tarried there so long as to send for the elders of Ephesus to come to him thither; for if he should have gone up to Ephesus he could never have got away from them. These elders or presbyters, some think, were those twelve who received the Holy Ghost by Paul's hands, *ch. xix.* 6. But, besides those, it is likely Timothy had ordained other elders there for the service of that church and the country about. These Paul sent for, that he might instruct and encourage them to go on in the work to which they had laid their hands. And what instructions he gave to them, they would give to the people under their charge. It is a very pathetic and practical discourse with which Paul here takes leave of these elders, and has in it much of the excellent spirit of this good man.

First. He appeals to them concerning both his life and doctrine, all the time he had been in and about Ephesus; *ver. 18*, "Ye know after what manner I have been with you," and how I have done the work of an apostle among you. He mentions this, 1. As a confirmation of his commission, and consequently of the doctrine he had preached among them. They all knew him to be a man of a serious, gracious, heavenly spirit; that he was no designing, self-seeking man, no seducers used to be. He could not have been carried on with so much earnestness and constancy in his services and sufferings, but by the power of Divine grace. The temper of his mind, and the tenor both of his preaching and conversation, was such as plainly spoke that God was with him of a truth, and that he was acted and animated by a better spirit than his own. 2. As an instruction to them in whose hands the work was now left, to follow his example. "You know after what manner I have been with you," how I have carried myself as a minister; in like manner be you with those that are committed to your charge when I am gone; *Phil.* iv. 9, "What you have seen in me" that is good, "do."

1. His spirit and conversation were excellent and exemplary. They knew after what manner he had been among them, and how he had had his conversation towards them, in simplicity and godly sincerity, 2 *Cor.* i. 12. How holily, justly, and unblameably he behaved himself, and how gentle he was towards them, 1 *Thes.* ii. 7, 10.

2. He had carried himself well all along, from the very first day that he came into Asia; at all seasons. The manner of his entering in among them was such as nobody could find fault with. He appeared, from the first day they knew him, to be a man that aimed not only to do well, but to do good, wherever he came. He was a man that was consistent with himself, and all of a piece. Take him where you would he was the same at all seasons, did not turn with the wind, nor change with the weather; but was uniform, like a die, that, throw it which way you will, lights on a square side.

3. He had made it his business to serve the Lord; to promote the honour of God, and the interest of Christ and his kingdom among them. He never served himself, nor made himself a servant of men, of their lusts and humours, nor was he a time-server; but he made it his business to serve the Lord. In his ministry, in his whole conversation, he proved himself what he wrote himself, "Paul a servant of Jesus Christ," *Rom.* i. 1.

4. He had done his work with all humility of mind, *κατὰ πάσας ταπεινοφροσύνας*, that is, in all instances of condescension, modesty, and self-abasement. Though he was one that God had put a great deal of honour upon, and done a great deal of good by, yet he never took state upon him, nor kept people at a distance; but conversed as freely and familiarly with the meanest for their good as if he had stood upon a level with them. He was willing to stoop to any service, and to make himself and his labours as cheap as they could desire. Note, Those that would in any office serve the Lord, acceptably to him, and profitably to others, must do it with all humility of mind, *Mat.* xx. 26, 27.

5. He had always been very tender affectionate, and compassionate among

xx. 24. Alford renders this verse, "But I hold my life of no account, nor is it so precious to me as the finishing of my course." "I do not value my life in comparison with the finishing my course." This representation of his life and ministry as a "course" would have special force with those who had been accustomed to witness Grecian games.

xx. 25. "Among whom I have gone:" the word seems to imply frequent visitations in different places. He had been constantly

going in and out amongst the different congregations. St. Paul's assertion that they should see his face no more need not be regarded as anything but the conclusion which he drew from the dangers that were threatening him. As it is very probable that he was released after his first imprisonment at Rome, it is likely that he did visit his Asiatic converts again.

xx. 27. "Counsel of God:" he may refer more specially to that part of the counsel or will of God which had reference to the admis-

them. He had served the Lord with many tears. Paul was herein like his Master, often in tears. In his praying he wept and made supplication, *Hos. xii. 4.* In his preaching, what he had told them before, he told them again, even weeping, *Phil. iii. 18.* In his concern for them, though his acquaintance with them was but of a late standing, yet so near did they lie to his heart, that he wept with them that wept, and mingled his tears with theirs upon every occasion, which was very endearing.

5. He had struggled with many difficulties among them. He went on in his work in the face of much opposition, many temptations, trials of his patience and courage, such discouragements as perhaps were sometimes temptations to him, as to Jeremiah in a like case, to say, "I will not speak any more in the name of the Lord," *Jer. xx. 8, 9.* These befell him by the lying in wait of the Jews, who still were plotting some mischief or other against him. Note, Those are the faithful servants of the Lord that continue to serve him in the midst of troubles and perils, that care not what enemies they make, so they can but approve themselves to their Master, and make him their friend. Paul's tears were owing to his temptations; his afflictions helped to excite his good affections.

11. His preaching was likewise such as it should be, *ver. 20, 21.* He came to Ephesus to preach the Gospel of Christ among them; and he had been faithful both to them and to him that appointed him.

1. He was a plain preacher, and one that delivered his message so as to be understood. This is intimated in two words: "I have shewed you, and have taught you." He did not amuse them with nice speculations, nor lead them into and then lose them in the clouds of lofty notions and expressions; but he shewed them the plain truths of the Gospel, which were of greatest consequence and importance, and taught them as children are taught. I have shewed you the right way to happiness, and taught you to go in it.

2. He was a powerful preacher; intimated in his testifying to them. He preached as one upon oath, that was himself fully assured of the truth of what he preached, and was desirous to convince them of it, and to influence and govern them by it. He preached the Gospel, not as a hawk proclaims news in the street, (it is all one to him whether it be true or false,) but as a conscientious witness gives in his evidence at the bar, with the utmost seriousness and concern. Paul preached the Gospel as a testimony to them, if they received it; but as a testimony against them, if they rejected it.

3. He was a profitable preacher; one that in all his preaching aimed at doing good to those he preached to. He studied that which was profitable unto them, which had a tendency to make them wise and good, wiser and better; to inform their judgments, and reform their hearts and lives. He preached *τὰ συμφέροντα*, such things as brought with them Divine light and heat and power to their souls. It is not enough not to preach that which is hurtful, which leads into error, or hardens in sin; but we must preach that which is profitable. "We do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying." Paul aimed to preach, not that which was pleasing, but that which was profitable, and to please only in order to profit.

4. He was a painful preacher, very industrious and indefatigable in his work. He preached publicly, and from house to house. He did not confine himself to a corner when he had opportunity of preaching in the great congregation; nor did he confine himself to the congregation when there was occasion for private and personal instruction. He was neither afraid nor ashamed to preach the Gospel publicly, nor did he grudge to bestow his pains privately, among a few, when there was occasion for it. He preached publicly to the flock that came together into the green pastures, and went from house to house to seek those that were weak and wandered; and did not think that the one would excuse him from the other. Ministers should, in their private visits, and as they go from house to house, discourse of those things which they have taught publicly, repeat them, inculcate them, and explain them, if it be needful; asking, "I have ye understood all these things?" and especially, help them to apply it to themselves, and their own case. God is said to teach his people to profit, *Isa. xlviii. 17.* Those teach for God that teach people to profit.

5. He was a faithful preacher. He not only preached that which was profitable, but he preached every thing that he thought might be profitable, and kept back nothing; though the preaching of it might either cost him more pains, or be disobliging to some, and expose him to their ill-will. He declined not preaching whatever he thought might be profitable, though it was not fashionable, nor to some acceptable. He did not keep back reproofs when they were necessary, and would be profitable, for fear of offending; nor keep back the preaching of the cross, though he knew it was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, as the Romish missionaries in China lately did.

6. He was a catholic preacher. He testified both to the Jews and also to the Greeks. Though he was born and bred a Jew, and had an entire affection for that nation, and was trained up in their prejudices against the Gentiles, yet he did not therefore confine himself to the Jews and avoid the Gentiles; but preached as readily to them as to the Jews, and conversed as freely with them. And, on the other hand, though he was called to be the apostle of the Gentiles, and the Jews had an implacable enmity against him upon that score, had done him many an ill turn, and here, at Ephesus, were continually plotting against him, yet he did not therefore abandon them as reprobates, but continued to deal with them for their good. Ministers must preach the Gospel with impartiality; for they are ministers of Christ for the universal church.

7. He was a truly Christian, evangelical preacher. He did not preach philosophical notions, or matters of doubtful disputation, nor did he preach politics, or intermeddle at all with affairs of state or the civil government; but he preached faith and repentance, the two great Gospel graces; the nature and necessity of them: these he urged upon all occasions.

1st. "Repentance towards God." That those who by sin had gone away from God, and were going farther and farther from him into a state of endless separation from him, should by true repentance look towards God, turn towards him, move towards him, and hasten to him. He preached repentance as God's great command, *ch. xvii. 30*, which we must obey; "That men should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance;" so he explains it, *ch. xxvi. 20*. And he preached it as Christ's gift, in order to the remission of sins, *ch. v. 31*, and directed people to look up to him for it.

2nd. "Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." We must by repentance look towards God as our end; and by faith towards Christ as our way to God. Sin must by repentance be abandoned and forsaken, and then Christ must by faith be relied on for the pardon of sin. Our repentance towards God is not sufficient; we must have a true faith in Christ as our Redeemer and Saviour, consenting to him as our Lord and our God. For there is no coming to God, as penitent prodigals to a father, but in the strength and righteousness of Jesus Christ as Mediator.

Such a preacher as this they all knew Paul had been; and if they will carry on the same work they must walk in the same spirit, in the same steps.

Secondly. He declares his expectation of sufferings and afflictions in his present journey to Jerusalem, *ver. 22-24*. Let them not think that he quitted Asia now for fear of persecution; no, he was so far from running away like a coward from the post of danger, that he was now like a hero hastening to

the high places of the field, where the battle was likely to be hottest. "Now, behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem;" which may be understood either, 1st. Of the certain foresight he had of trouble before him. Though he was not yet bound in body, he was bound in spirit; he was in full expectation of trouble, and made it his daily business to prepare for it: he was bound in spirit, as all good Christians are poor in spirit, endeavouring to accommodate themselves to the will of God if they should be reduced to poverty. Or, 2nd. Of the strong impulse he was under from the Spirit of God working upon his spirit to go this journey. "I go bound in the spirit;" that is, firmly resolved to proceed, and well assured that it is by a Divine direction and influence that I am so, and not from any humour or design of my own. I go led by the Spirit, and bound to follow him, wherever he leads me.

1. He doth not know particularly the things that shall befall him at Jerusalem; whence the trouble shall spring, what shall be the occasion of it, what the circumstances, and to what degree it shall arise; God had not thought fit to reveal that to him. It is good for us to be kept in the dark concerning future events, that we may be always waiting on God, and waiting for him. When we go abroad, it should be with this thought, we "know not the things that shall befall us," not what a day, or a night, or an hour may bring forth, and therefore must refer ourselves to God; let him do with us as seemeth good in his eyes, and study to stand complete in his whole will.

2. Yet he doth know, in general, that there is a storm before him; for the prophets, in every city he passed through, told him by the Holy Ghost, that bonds and afflictions did abide him. Besides the common notice given to all Christians and ministers to expect and prepare for sufferings, Paul had particular intimations of an extraordinary trouble, greater and longer than any he had yet met with, that was now before him.

3. He fixeth a brave and heroic resolution to go on with his work, notwithstanding. It was a melancholy peal that was rung in his ears in every city, that bonds and afflictions did abide him. It was a hard case, for a poor man to labour continually to do good, and to be so ill treated for his pains. Now it is worth while to inquire how he bore it. He was flesh and blood as well as other men; he was so, and yet, by the grace of God, he was enabled to go on with his work, and to look with a gracious and generous contempt upon all the difficulties and discouragements he met with in it. Let us take it from his own mouth here, *ver. 24*, where he speaks, not with obstinacy or ostentation, but with a holy, humble resolution: "None of these things move me;" all my care is to proceed and to persevere in the way of my duty, and to finish well. Paul is here an example.

1st. Of holy courage and resolution in our work, notwithstanding the difficulty and oppositions we meet with in it. He saw them before him, but he made nothing of them; "None of these things move me," *οὐδὲν ἀντιλαμβάνομαι*. "I make no account of them." He did not lay these things to heart; Christ and heaven lay there. None of those things moved him; that is, *First*. They did not drive him off from his work. He did not tuck about, and go back again, when he saw the storm arise; but went on resolutely, preaching there where he knew how dear it would cost him. *Secondly*. They did not deprive him of his comfort, nor make him drive on heavily in his work. In the midst of troubles he was as one unconcerned; in his patience he possessed his soul, and when he was as sorrowful, yet he was always rejoicing, and in all things more than a conqueror. Those that have their conversation in heaven can look down not only upon the common troubles of this earth, but upon the threatening rage and malice of hell itself, and say that none of these things move them, as knowing that none of these things can hurt them.

2nd. Of a holy contempt of life, and the continuance and comforts of it. "Neither count I my life dear to myself." Life is sweet, and is naturally dear to us; "All that a man has will he give for his life;" but all that a man has, and life too, will he give, who understands himself aright, and his own interest, rather than lose the favour of God, and hazard eternal life. Paul was of this mind. Though to an eye of nature life is superlatively valuable, yet to an eye of faith it is comparatively despicable; it is not so dear, but it can be cheerfully parted with for Christ. This explains *Lu. xiv. 26*, where we are required to hate our own lives, not in a hasty passion, as Job and Jeremiah, but in a holy submission to the will of God, and a resolution to die for Christ rather than to deny him.

3rd. Of a holy concern to go through with the work of life; which should be much more our care than to secure either the outward comforts of it, or the continuance of it. Blessed Paul counts not his life dear in comparison with this, and resolves in the strength of Christ, *Non propter vitam vivendi perdere causas*. "That he never will, to save his life, lose the ends of living." He is willing to spend his life in labour, to hazard his life in dangerous service, to waste it in toilsome services; nay, to lay down his life in martyrdom, so he may but answer the great intentions of his birth, of his baptism, and of his ordination to the apostleship.

Two things this great and good man is in care about, and if he gain them, it is no matter to him what comes of life:

First. That he may be found faithful to the trust reposed in him; that he may finish the ministry which he has received of the Lord Jesus, may do the work which he was sent into the world about, or rather, which he was sent into the church about; that he might complete the service of his generation, might make full proof of his ministry; that he might go through the business of it, and others might reap the advantage of it to the utmost of what was designed; that he might, as is said of the two witnesses, "finish his testimony," *Rev. xi. 7*, and might not do his work by halves. Observe, 1st. The apostleship was a ministry both to Christ and to the souls of men; and they that were called to it considered more the ministry of it than the dignity or dominion of it. And if the apostles did so, much more ought the pastors and teachers to do so, and to be in the church as those that serve. 2nd. This ministry was received from the Lord Jesus. He intrusted them with it, and from him they received their charge; for him they do their work, in his name, in his strength, and to him they must give up their account. It was Christ that put them into the ministry, *1 Tim. i. 12*; it is he that carries them on in their ministry, and from him they have strength to do their services, and bear up under the hardships of it. 3rd. The work of this ministry was to "testify the Gospel of the grace of God," to publish it to the world, to prove it, and to recommend it; and being the Gospel of the grace of God it has enough in it to recommend itself. It is a proof of God's good-will to us, and a means of his good work in us; it shews him gracious towards us, and tends to make us gracious, and so is the Gospel of the grace of God. Paul made it the business of his life to testify this; and desired not to live a day longer than he might be instrumental to spread the knowledge, and savour, and power of this Gospel.

Secondly. That he may finish well. He cares not when the period of his life comes, nor how, be it never so soon, never so sudden, never so sad as to outward circumstances, so that he may but finish his course with joy. 1st. He looks upon his life as a course, a race, so the word is. Our life is a race set before us, *Heb. xii. 1*. This intimates that we have our labours appointed us, for we were not sent into the world to be idle; and our limits appointed us, for we were not sent into the world to be here always; but to pass through the world, nay, to run through it, and it is soon run through; I may add, to

sion of the Gentiles to the same privileges as the Jews. This "mystery" Paul frequently represents as a part of God's eternal counsels, and the preaching of which involved Paul in trial and suffering. (See *Eph. i. 9*; *iii. 2-11*.)

xx. 28. "Overseers;" rather, as the word is elsewhere rendered, "bishops." "The English version has hardly dealt fairly in this case with the sacred text, in rendering the word 'overseers,' whereas it ought here, as in all other places, to have been 'bishops,' in order

that the fact of elders and bishops having been originally and apostolically synonymous might be apparent to the ordinary English reader, which now it is not" (Alford).

xx. 29-31. Compare the letter to the church of Ephesus (*Rev. ii. 1-7*).

xx. 32. Compare *Eph. ii. 20-22*. These and similar figures of speech may have been suggested by and certainly would be very applicable to those who lived in sight of the temple at Ephesus, espe-

run the gauntlet through it. 2nd. He counts upon the finishing of his course, and speaks of it as sure and near, and that which he had his thoughts continually upon. Dying is the end of our race, when we come off either with honour or shame. 3rd. He is full of care to finish it well; which implies a holy desire of obtaining, and a holy fear of coming short. Oh that I may but finish my course with joy; and then all will be well, perfectly and eternally well. 4th. He thinks nothing too much to do, or too hard to suffer, so that he might but finish well, finish with joy. We must look upon it as the business of our life to provide for a joyful death; that we may not only die safely, but die comfortably.

Thirdly. Counting upon it that this was the last time they should see him, he appeals to their consciences concerning his integrity, and demands of them a testimony to it.

1. He tells them that he was now taking his last leave of them; ver. 25, "I know that ye all, among whom I have" been conversant "preaching the kingdom of God," though you may have letters from me, shall never see my face again. When any of us part with our friends we may say, and should say, We know not that ever we shall see one another again; our friends may be removed, or we ourselves may. But Paul here speaks it with assurance by the Spirit of prophecy, that these Ephesians should see his face no more; and we cannot think that he who spoke so doubtfully of that which he was not sure of, ver. 22, "not knowing the things that shall befall me there," should speak this with so much confidence, especially when he foresaw what a trouble it would be to his friends here, unless he had had a special warrant from the Spirit to say it; to whom I think they do wrong who suppose that, notwithstanding this, Paul did afterwards come to Ephesus and see them again. He would never have said thus solemnly, "Now, behold I know it," if he had not known it for certain. Not but that he foresaw that he had a great deal of time and work yet before him, but that his work would be cut out for him in other places, and in these parts he had no more to do. Here he had, for a great while, "gone about preaching the kingdom of God," preaching down the kingdom of sin and Satan, and preaching up the authority and dominion of God in Christ; preaching the kingdom of glory as the end, and the kingdom of grace as the way. Many a time they had been glad to see his face in the pulpit, and saw it "as it had been the face of an angel." If the feet of these messengers of peace were beautiful upon the mountains, what were their faces? But now they shall see his face no more. Note, We ought often to think of it, that those who now are preaching to us the kingdom of God, will shortly be removed, and we shall see their faces no more. "The prophets, do they live for ever?" Yet a little while is their light with us. It concerns us, therefore, to improve it while we have it, that when we shall see their faces no more on earth, yet we may hope to look them in the face with comfort in the great day.

2. He appeals to them concerning the faithful discharge of his ministry among them; ver. 26. Wherefore, seeing my ministry is at an end with you, it concerns both you and me to reflect and look back; and, 1st. He challengeth them to prove him faithful, or to have said or done any thing by which he had made himself accessory to the ruin of any precious soul. "I am pure from the blood of all men," the blood of souls. This plainly refers to that of the prophet, *Eze* xxxiii. 6, where the blood of him that perisheth by the sword of the enemy is said to be required at the hand of the unfaithful watchman that did not give warning; You cannot say but I have given warning, and therefore no man's blood can be laid at my door. If a minister has approved himself faithful, he may have this rejoicing in himself, "I am pure from the blood of all men," and ought to have this testimony from others. 2nd. He therefore leaves the blood of them that perish upon their own heads, because they had fair warning given them, but they would not take it. 3rd. He charges these ministers to look to it, that they took care and pains as he had done; "I am pure from the blood of all men," see that you keep yourselves so too; "I take you to record this day," *ἐν τῇ σήμερον ἡμέρᾳ*.—I call this day to witness to you," so Streso. As sometimes the heavens and earth are appealed to, so here, this day shall be a witness; this parting day.

3. He proves his own fidelity with this; ver. 27, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." 1st. He had preached to them nothing but the counsel of God, and had not added any inventions of his own; it was pure Gospel and nothing else, the will of God concerning your salvation. The Gospel is the counsel of God; it is admirably contrived by his wisdom, it is unalterably determined by his will, and it is kindly designed by his grace for our glory, *1 Cor.* ii. 7. This counsel of God it is the business of ministers to declare as it is revealed, and not otherwise, nor any farther. 2nd. He had preached to them the whole counsel of God. As he had preached them the Gospel pure, so he had preached it them entire. He had gone over a body of divinity among them, that, having the truths of the Gospel opened to them methodically from first to last in order, they might the better understand them, by seeing them in their several connections with, and dependences upon, one another. 3rd. He had not shunned to do it; had not wilfully or designedly avoided the declaring of any part of the counsel of God. He had not, to save his own pains, declined preaching upon the most difficult parts of the Gospel; nor, to save his own credit, declined preaching upon the most plain and easy parts of it. He had not shunned preaching those doctrines which he knew would be provoking to the watchful enemies of Christianity, or displeasing to the careless professors of it, but faithfully took his work before him, whether they would bear or forbear. And thus it was that he kept himself pure from the blood of all men.

Fourthly. He chargeth them, as ministers, to be diligent and faithful in their work.

1. He commits the care of the church at Ephesus, that is, the saints, the Christians that were there, and thereabouts, *Eph.* i. 1, to them; who, though doubtless they were so numerous that they could not all meet in one place, but worshipped God in several congregations, under the conduct of several ministers, yet are called here one flock, because they not only agreed in one faith, as they did with all Christian churches, but in many instances they kept up communion one with another. To these elders, or presbyters, the apostle here, upon the actual foresight of his own final leaving them, commits the government of this church, and tells them that, not he, but "the Holy Ghost had made them overseers," *ἐπισκόπους*, bishops of this flock; you that are presbyters are bishops, bishops of the Holy Ghost's making; that are to take the oversight of this part of the church of God, *1 Pet.* v. 1, 2; *Tit.* i. 5, 7. While Paul was present at Ephesus, he presided in all the affairs of that church, which made the elders loath to part with him; but now this "eagle," tirs up the nest, flutters over her young, now they begin to be fledged, they must learn to fly themselves, and to act without him; for the Holy Ghost had made them overseers. They took not this honour to themselves, nor was it conferred upon them by any prince or potentate, but the Holy Ghost in them qualified them for, and enriched them to, this great undertaking; "the Holy Ghost fell upon them," *ch.* xix. 6. The Holy Ghost also directed them that chose and called and ordained them to this work in answer to prayer.

2. He commanded them to mind the work to which they were called. Dignity calls for duty. If the Holy Ghost has made them overseers of the flock, that is, shepherds, they must be true to their trust.

1st. They must take heed to themselves in the first place, must have a very jealous eye upon all the motions of their own souls, and upon all they said and did; must walk circumspectly, and know how to behave themselves aright in the house of God, in which they were now advanced to the office of stewards. You have many eyes upon you, some to take example by you, others to pick quarrels with you; and therefore you ought to "take heed to yourselves." Those are not likely to be skilful or faithful keepers of others' vineyards that do not keep their own.

2nd. "Take heed to the flock, to all the flock;" some to one part of it, others to another, according as your call and opportunity is; but see that no part of it be neglected among you. Ministers must not only take heed to their own souls, but must have a constant regard to the souls of those who are under their charge, as shepherds have to their sheep, that they may receive no damage. "Take heed to all the flock," that none of them either of themselves wander from the fold or be seized by the beasts of prey; that none of them be missing, or miscarry through your neglect.

3rd. They must "feed the church of God," must do all the parts of the shepherd's office; must lead the sheep of Christ into the green pastures; must lay meat before them; must do what they can to heal those that are distempered, and have no appetite to their meat; must feed them with wholesome doctrine, with a tender evangelical discipline, and must see that nothing be wanting that is necessary in order to their being nourished up to eternal life. There is need of pastors, not only to gather the church of God by the bringing in of those that are without, but to feed it by building up those that are within.

4th. They must watch, ver. 31, as shepherds keep watch over their flocks by night; must be awake, and wakeful; must not give way to spiritual sloth and slumber; but must stir up themselves to their business, and closely attend it. "Watch thou in all things," *2 Tim.* iv. 5; watch against every thing that will be hurtful to the flock, and watch to every thing that will be advantageous to it; improve every opportunity of doing it a kindness.

3. He gives them several good reasons why they should mind the business of their ministry.

1st. Let them consider the interest of their Master, and his concern for the flock that was committed to their charge; ver. 28, it is "the church which he has purchased with his own blood." First. It is his own; you are but his servants to take care of it for him. It is your honour that you are employed for God, who will own you in his service. But then your carelessness and treachery is so much the worse if you neglect your work, for you wrong God and are false to him. From him you received the trust, and to him you must give up your account, and therefore "Take heed to yourselves." And if it be the church of God, he expects you should shew your love to him by feeding his sheep and lambs. Secondly. He hath purchased it. The world is God's by right of creation, but the church is his by right of redemption; and therefore it ought to be dear to us, for it was dear to him, because it cost him dear, and we cannot better shew it than by feeding his sheep and his lambs. Thirdly. This church of God is what he has purchased, not as Israel of old, when he gave men for them, and people for their life, *Isa.* xliii. 3, 4, but "with his own blood." This proves that Christ is God, for he is called so here, where yet he is said to purchase the church with his own blood. The blood was his as man, yet so close is this union between the Divine and human nature, that it is here called the blood of God—for it was the blood of him who is God—and his being so put such a dignity and worth into it as made it both a valuable ransom of us from all evil, and a valuable purchase for us of all good, nay, a purchase of us to Christ, to be to him a peculiar people. "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." In consideration of this, therefore "feed the church of God," because it is purchased at so dear a rate. Did Christ lay down his life to purchase it, and shall his ministers be wanting in any care and pains to feed it? Their neglect of its true interest is a contempt of the blood that purchased it.

2nd. Let them consider the danger that the flock was in of being made a prey to its adversaries, ver. 29, 30. If the flock be thus precious, upon the account of its relation to God, and its redemption by Christ, then you are concerned to take heed both to yourselves and to it. Here are reasons for both.

First. "Take heed to the flock" for wolves are abroad that seek to devour; ver. 29. "I know this, that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you." 1st. Some understand it of persecutors, that will inform against the Christians, and incense the magistrates against them, and will have no compassion on the flock. They thought, because while Paul was with them the rage of the Jews was most against him, that when he was gone out of the country they should be quiet. No, saith he, after my departing you will find the persecuting spirit still working; therefore take heed to the flock, confirm them in the faith, comfort and encourage them, that they may not either leave Christ for fear of suffering or lose their peace and comfort in their sufferings. Ministers must take a more than ordinary care of the flock in times of persecution. 2nd. It is rather to be understood of seducers and false teachers. Probably he has an eye to those of the circumcision, that preached up the ceremonial law; these he calls grievous wolves, for though they came in sheep's clothing, nay, in shepherds' clothing, they made mischief in the congregations of Christians, sowed discord among them, drew away many from the pure Gospel of Christ, and did all they could to blemish and defame those that adhered to it; not sparing the most valuable members of the flock; did stir up these whom they could influence to bite and devour them, *Gal.* v. 15; therefore they are called dogs, *Phil.* iii. 2, as here wolves. While Paul was at Ephesus they kept away, for they durst not face him; but when he was gone, then they entered in among them, and sowed their tares where he had sown the good seed. Therefore take heed to the flock, and do all you can to establish them in the truth, and to arm them against the insinuations of the false teachers.

Secondly. "Take heed to yourselves," for some shepherds will apostatize; ver. 30, "also of your own selves." Among the members, nay, perhaps among the ministers of your own church, among you that I am now speaking to, (though I am willing to hope it loth not go so far as that,) "shall men arise, speaking perverse things;" that is things contrary to the right rule of the Gospel, and destructive of the great intentions of it. Nay, they will pervert some sayings of the Gospel, and wrest them to make them patronize their errors, *2 Pet.* iii. 16. Even those that were well thought of among you, and that you had confidence in, will grow proud, and conceited, and opinionative, and will refine upon the Gospel; and will pretend with more nice and curious speculations to advance you to a higher form; but it is "to draw away disciples after them," to make a party for themselves, that shall admire them, and be led by them, and pin their faith upon their sleeve. Some read it, "to draw away the disciples after them;" those that are already disciples of Christ, draw them from him to follow them. Therefore "take heed to yourselves." When you are told that some of you shall betray the Gospel, you are each of you concerned to ask, "Is it I?" and to look well to yourselves. This was there fulfilled in Phygellus and Hermogenes, who turned away from Paul and the doctrine he had preached, *2 Tim.* i. 15; and "in Hymeneus, and Philetus, who, concerning the truth, erred, and overthrew the faith of some," *2 Tim.* ii. 18, which explains this here. But, though there were some such seducers in the church of Ephesus, yet it should seem, by St. Paul's epistle to that church, wherein

cially as the foundation of that temple had been laid with great care and trouble, owing to the soft nature of the ground where it was built. Large blocks of stone were laid down to form a firm foundation.

xx. 35. "All things;" rather, "in all things," in all ways, by example. The saying of our Lord here quoted by Paul is not found in the Gospels. But there must have been several sayings of his treasured up in the minds of his first disciples, which, though not

formally reduced to writing, would be preserved for some time in the Church. His whole teaching and life taught the lesson, independently of any formal saying.

xxi. 1. "Were gotten from them;" rather, "had torn ourselves away." The word expresses the painfulness and difficulty of the parting. "Came with a straight course," or "ran straight," or, as we should say, "ran before the wind;" the phrase implying fair weather and a favourable wind.

we do not find such complaints and reprehensions as we meet with in some other of his epistles, that that church was not so much infested with false teachers, at least not so much infected with their false doctrine, as some other churches were; but its peace and purity were preserved by the blessing of God on the pains and vigilance of these presbyters, to whom the apostle, in the actual foresight and consideration of the rise of heresies and schisms, as well as of his own death, committed the government of this church.

3rd. Let them consider the great pains that Paul had taken in planting this church; ver. 31, "Remember that by the space of three years" (for so long he had been preaching in Ephesus and the parts adjacent) "I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears;" and be not you negligent in building upon that foundation which I was so diligent to lay. *First*, Paul, like a faithful watchman, had warned them; and by the warnings he gave men of the danger of their continuing in their Judaism and heathenism he prevailed with them to embrace Christianity. *Secondly*, He warned every one. Besides the public warnings he gave in his preaching, he applied himself to particular persons, according as he saw their case called for it, which he had something to say peculiar to. *Thirdly*, He was constant in giving warning. He warned them night and day; his time was filled up with this work. In the night, when he should have been reposing himself, he was dealing with those he could not get to speak with in the day, about their souls. *Fourthly*, He was indefatigable in it. He ceased not to warn. Though they were never so obstinate against his warnings, yet he did not cease to warn, not knowing but that at length they might by the grace of God be overcome. Though they were never so pliable to his warnings, yet he did not think that would be a sufficient excuse for him to desist; but still he warned them that were righteous, not to turn from their righteousness, as he had warned them when they were wicked to turn from their wickedness, *Eze. iii. 18-21*. *Fifthly*, He spoke to them about their souls with a great deal of affection and concern. He warned them with tears. As he had served the Lord, so he had served them, with many tears, ver. 19. He warned them with tears of compassion, thereby shewing how much he was himself affected with their misery and danger in a sinful state and way, that he might affect them with it. Thus Paul had begun the good work at Ephesus, thus free had been of his pains, and why then should they be sparing of their pains in carrying it on?

Fifthly, He recommends them to a Divine conduct and influence; ver. 32, "And now, brethren," having given you this solemn charge and caution, "I commend you to God." Now I have said what I have to say, "the Lord be with you." I must leave you, but I leave you in good hands. They were in care what would become of them, how they should go on in their work, break through their difficulties, and what provision would be made for them and their families. In answer to all these perplexities, Paul directs them to look up to God with an eye of faith, and beseeches God to look down on them with an eye of favour.

1. See here to whom he commends them. He calls them brethren, not only as Christians, but as ministers, and hereby encourageth them to hope in God, as he had done; for they and he were brethren.

1st. He commends them to God; begs of God to provide for them, to take care of them, and to supply all their needs, and encourages them to cast all their care upon him, with an assurance that he cared for them. Whatever you want, go to God, let your eye be ever towards him, and your dependence upon him, in all your straits and difficulties; and let this be your comfort, that you have a God to go to, a God all-sufficient. "I commend you to God;" that is, to his providence, and to the protection and care of that. It is enough that, whoever we are separated from, still we have God nigh unto us, *1 Pet. iv. 19*.

2nd. He commends them "to the word of his grace;" by which some understand Christ. He is the Word, *Jno. i. 1*, the Word of life, because life is treasured up for us in him, *1 Jno. i. 1*; and in the same sense he is here called the Word of God's grace, because "from his fulness we receive grace for grace." He commends them to Christ, puts them in his hand, as being his servants whom he would in a particular manner take care of. Paul commends them not only to God and to his providence, but to Christ and his grace, as Christ himself did his disciples when he was leaving them. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." It comes much to one, if by the word of his grace we understand the Gospel of Christ; for it is Christ in the word that is nigh unto us for our support and encouragement, and his word is spirit and life. You will find much relief by acting faith on the providence of God, but much more by acting faith on the promises of the Gospel. He commends them to the word of Christ's grace which he spoke to his disciples when he sent them forth, the commission he gave them, with assurance that he would be with them always to the end of the world; take hold of that word, and God give you the benefit and comfort of it, and you need no more. He commends them to the word of God's grace, not only as the foundation of their hope, and the fountain of their joy, but as the rule of their walking. "I commend you to God," as your Master whom you are to serve, and I have found him a good Master; "and to the word of his grace," as cutting you out your work, and by which you are to govern yourselves. Observe the precepts of this word, and then live upon the promises of it.

2. See here what he commends them to the word of God's grace for. Not so much for a protection from their enemies, or a provision for their families, as for the spiritual blessings which they needed, and ought most to value. They had received and were intrusted to preach the Gospel of the grace of God. Now he recommends them to that.

1st. For their edification. It is "able," the Spirit of grace working with it and by it, "to build you up," and you may depend upon that, while you keep close to it, and are deriving daily from it. Though you are already furnished with good gifts, yet that is able to build you up; there is that in it which you need to be better acquainted with, and more affected with. Note, Ministers in preaching the word of grace must aim at their own edification as well as at the edification of others. The most grown Christians, while they are in this world, are capable of growing, and they will find the word of grace to have still more and more in it to contribute to their growth. It is still able to build them up.

2nd. For their glorification. It is "able to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." The word of God's grace gives it, not only as it gives the knowledge of it; for "life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel;" but as it gives the promise of it, the promise of a God that cannot lie, and which is yea and amen in Christ. And by the word, as the ordinary vehicle, the Spirit of grace is given, (*ch. x. 44*), to be the seal of the promise, and the earnest of the eternal life promised. And thus it is the word of God's grace that gives us the inheritance. Note, *First*, Heaven is an inheritance, which gives an indefeasible right to all the heirs. It is an inheritance like that of the Israelites in Canaan, which was by promise, and yet by lot, but was sure to all the seed. *Secondly*, This inheritance is entailed upon and secured to all those, and those only, that are sanctified; for, as those cannot be welcome guests to the holy God, or the holy society above, that are un sanctified, so really heaven would be no heaven to them. But to all that are sanctified, that are born again, and on whom the image of God is renewed, it is

as sure as almighty power and eternal truth can make it. Those, therefore, that would make out a title to that inheritance, must make it sure that they are among the sanctified, are joined to them, and incorporated with them, and partake of the same image and nature; for we cannot expect to be among the glorified hereafter, unless we be among the sanctified here.

Sixthly, He recommends himself to them as an example of indifference to this world, and to every thing in it, which, if they would walk in the same spirit, and in the same steps, they would find to contribute greatly to their easy and comfortable passage through it. He had recommended them to God, and to the word of his grace for spiritual blessings, which without doubt are the best blessings. But what shall they do for food for their families, and agreeable subsistence for themselves, and portions for their children? As to these, Paul saith, Do as I did. And how was that? He here tells them,

1. That he never aimed at worldly wealth; ver. 33, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel," nor do you, and then you will be easy. There were many in Ephesus, and many of those that had embraced the Christian faith, who were rich, had a deal of money, and plate, and rich furniture, and wore very good clothes, and made a very good appearance. Now, 1st. Paul was not ambitious to live like them; we may take it in that sense. I never coveted to have so much silver and gold at command as I see others have; nor to wear such rich clothes as I see others wear; I neither condemn them, nor envy them; I can live comfortably and usefully without living great. The false apostles desired to make a fair show in the flesh, *Gal. vi. 12*, to make a figure in the world; but Paul did not do so; he knew how to want, and how to be abased. 2nd. He was not greedy to receive from them either silver, or gold, or apparel; so far from being always craving, that he was not so much as coveting, nor desired them to allow him so and so for his pains among them, but was content with such things as he had. He never made a gain of them, *2 Cor. xii. 14*. He could not only say with Moses, *Num. xvi. 15*, and with Samuel, *1 Sam. xii. 3, 5*, "Whose ox have I taken, or whom have I defrauded?" but whose kindness have I coveted or asked? or to whom have I been burdensome? He protests against desiring a gift, *Phil. iv. 17*.

2. That he had worked for his living, and taken a deal of pains to get bread; ver. 34, "Yea, you yourselves know," and have been eyewitnesses of it, "that these hands" of mine "have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me." You have seen me busy early and late, cutting out tents and making them up; and, they being commonly made of leather, it was very hard work. Observe, 1st. Paul was sometimes reduced to necessities, and the want of the common supports of life, though he was so great a favourite of Heaven, and so great a blessing to this earth. What an unthinking, unkind, and ungrateful world is this, that could let such a man as Paul be poor in it? 2nd. He desired no more than to have his necessities supplied. He did not work at his calling to enrich himself, but to maintain himself with food and raiment. 3rd. When he was to earn his bread, he did it by a manual occupation. Paul had a head and a tongue that he might have got money by; but they were these hands, saith he, that ministered to my necessities. What pity was it that those hands, by the laying on of which the Holy Ghost had been so often conferred, those hands by which God had wrought special miracles, and both these at Ephesus too, *ch. xix. 6, 11*, should there be obliged to lay themselves to the needle and shears, the awl and tacking-end, in tent-making, purely to get bread! Paul puts these presbyters, and others in them, in mind of this, that they may not think it strange if they be thus neglected, and yet to go on in their work, and make the best shift they can to live; the less encouragement they have from men, the more they shall have from God. 4th. He worked not only for himself, but for the support of them also that were with him. That was hard, indeed; it had better become them to have worked for him, to maintain him as their tutor, than he for them. But so it is; those that are willing to take the labouring oar will find those about them willing they should have it. If Paul will work for the maintenance of his companions, he is welcome to do it.

3. That even then when he worked for the supply of his own necessities, yet he spared something out of what he got for the relief of others; for this he here obliges them to do; ver. 35, "I have shewed you all things;" that is, in all the parts of your duty I have set you your copy, and given you a good example, and particularly in this, "that so labouring, you ought to support the weak." Some understand it of their supporting the faith of weak believers by removing the prejudices which some conceived against Christianity, as if the preachers of it made a gainful trade of their preaching, and that the Gospel was only a trick to get money by, and pick people's pockets. Now, that you may cut off occasion from those that seek occasion to reproach us, and so may support the weak among us, you would do well for the present to get your livelihood by the labour of your hands, and not to depend upon your ministry. But I rather understand it of their helping to support the sick and the poor, and those that could not labour; because it agrees with Paul's exhortation, *Eph. iv. 28*, "Let him labour, working with his hands, that he may have to give to him that needeth." We must labour in an honest employment, not only that we may be able to live, but that we may be able to give.

This might seem a hard saying, and therefore Paul backs it with a saying of our Master's, which he would have them always to remember. These words our Lord Jesus said. It should seem they were words he often used to his disciples. When he himself did so much good gratis, and bade them do so too, *Mat. x. 8, 9*, he added this saying, which though nowhere recorded by the evangelists, yet Paul had by word of mouth from Peter, or some other of the disciples, and an excellent saying it is, and has something of a paradox in it: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is (saith Dr. Tillotson) a particular endearment of this admirable saying of our Saviour's to us, that being omitted by the evangelists, and in danger of being lost and forgotten, it was thus happily retrieved by St. Paul, and recorded by St. Luke. It is more blessed to give to others than to receive from others; not only more blessed to be rich, and so on the giving hand, than to be poor, and so on the receiving hand—every one will own that; but more blessed to do good with what we have, be it much or little, than to increase it, and make it more. The sentiment of the children of this world is contrary to this. They are afraid of giving; This giving, they say, undoes us all; but they are in hope of getting, "every one for his gain from his quarter," *Isa. lvi. 11*; clear gain with them is the most blessed thing that can be. But Christ tells us "It is more blessed," more excellent in itself, an evidence of a more excellent disposition of mind, and the way to a better blessedness at last, "to give than to receive." It makes us more like to God, who gives to all, and receives from none; and to the Lord Jesus, who went about doing good. It is more blessed to give our pains, than to receive pay for it, and what we should delight to do, if the necessities of ourselves and families would admit it. It is more pleasant to do good to the grateful, but it is more honourable to do good to the ungrateful; for then we have God to be our paymaster, who will reward in the resurrection of the just what has not otherwise been recompensed.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37 And they all

xxi. 3. "Discovered;" "sighted;" a nautical expression, implying that the land appeared to rise quickly. "The word, in reference to sea-voyages, means 'to see land, to bring land into view,' by a similar figure of speech to that in which our sailors speak of 'making land.' So 'open' is used by our sailors. The grammatical construction in the Greek is peculiar: but confusions of grammar are common in the language of sailors. Thus an English seaman speaks of 'rising the land,' which is exactly what is meant here" (Conybeare

and Howson). "Tyre;" a maritime city of Phœnicia, and also an island at a short distance. At the time of the siege by Alexander, Tyre was built upon the island. Alexander, however, united it to the main land, and from that time it stood upon a peninsula. It was celebrated for its purple dye, extracted from the shell-fish found on the coast. It depended greatly upon the adjacent country of Palestine for supplies of food (see chap. xii. 20).

xxi. 4. "Having sought out the disciples." Paul may have visited

wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, 38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

After the parting sermon that Paul preached to the elders of Ephesus, which was very affecting, we have here the parting prayer and tears, which were yet more affecting. We can scarcely read the account here given of them, and meditate upon them, with dry eyes.

First. They parted with prayer; ver. 36, "And when he had thus spoken, he knelt down, and prayed with them all." And no doubt it was a prayer every way suited to the present mournful occasion. He committed them to God in this prayer; prayed that he would not leave them, but continue his presence with them.

It was a joint prayer. He not only prayed for them, but prayed with them, prayed with them all, that they might put up the same petitions for themselves, and one another, that he put up to God for them all; and that they might learn what to ask of God for themselves, when he was gone. Public prayers are so far from being intended to supersede our own secret prayers, and make them needless, that they are designed to quicken and encourage them, and to direct us in them. When we are alone, we should pray over the prayers that our ministers have put up with us.

2. It was an humble, reverent prayer. This was expressed by the posture they used. He knelt down and prayed with them, which is the most proper posture in prayer, and significant both of adoration and of petition, especially petition for the forgiveness of sin. St. Paul used it much, "I bow my knees," Eph. iii. 14.

3. It was a prayer after sermon. And we may suppose he prayed over what he had preached. He had committed the care of the church at Ephesus to those elders, and now he prays that God would enable them faithfully to discharge this great trust reposed in them, and would give them those measures of wisdom and grace which it required. He prayed for the flock, and all that belonged to it, that the great Shepherd of the sheep would take care of them all, and keep them from being a prey to the grievous wolves. Thus he taught those ministers to pray for those they preached to, that they might not labour in vain.

4. It was a parting prayer; which might be likely to leave lasting impressions, as the farewell sermon did. It is good for friends when they part to part with prayer; that, by praying together just at parting, they may be enabled to pray the more feelingly one for another when they are parted, which is one part of our Christian duty, and an improvement of the communion of saints. "The Lord watch between us," and watch over us both, "when we are absent the one from the other," is a good parting prayer, Gen. xxi. 49. As also that our next meeting may be either nearer heaven or in heaven. Paul here followed the example of Christ, who, when he took leave of his disciples, after he had preached to them, prayed with them all, Jno. xvii. 1.

Secondly. They parted with tears, abundance of tears, and most affectionate embraces, ver. 37, 38.

1. "They all wept sore." We have reason to think that Paul himself began. Though he was determined to go, and saw his call clear to other work, yet he was sorry in his heart to leave them, and many a tear it cost him. He that was so often in tears while he was with them, ver. 19, 31, no doubt shed many at parting, so watering what he had sown among them. But the notice is taken of their tears: "they all wept sore," there was not a dry eye among them. And it is probable the affectionate expressions Paul used in prayer set them a weeping. These were tears of love and mutual endearment, like those of Jonathan and David, when they were forced to part, and "wept one with another until" (as if they wept for strife) "David exceeded," 1 Sam. xx. 41.

2. They "fell upon Paul's neck, and kissed him," all, one after another, each bewailing his own loss. How can I part with this dear creature, this blessed Paul, saith one, in whom my life is in a manner bound up? Farewell, my dear friend, saith another, a thousand thanks to thee, and ten thousand to God for thee, and for all the pains thou hast taken with me for my good. And must we part? saith another; must I lose my spiritual father, nurse, and guide? What will become of us now, saith another, when we shall no more have him to apply to and receive direction from? What shall I do, if the Lord take away my master from my head? "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." Note, Those that are most loving are commonly best beloved. Paul, that was a most affectionate friend himself, had friends that were very affectionate to him. These tears at parting with Paul were a grateful return for all the tears he had shed in preaching to them, and praying with them. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself."

3. That which cut them to the heart thus, and made this place such a Bochim, such a place of weepers, was that word which Paul spake, that he was certain "they should see his face no more." If he had given them directions to follow him, as he did to those that were his usual companions, or any intimation that he would come hereafter and make them a visit, they could have borne this parting pretty well; but when they are told that they shall see his face no more in this world, that it is a final farewell they are now giving and taking, this makes it a great mourning; it makes the farewell just like a funeral, and puts them into this passion of weeping. There were other things for which they sorrowed, that they should want the benefit of his public performances, and see him no longer presiding in their assemblies; should have none of his personal counsels and comforts. And we hope they sorrowed for their own sin in not profiting more by his labours while they had him among them, and which had provoked God to order his remove. But that which gave the most sensible accent to their grief was, "that they should see his face no more." And when our friends are separated from us by death, this is that consideration with which we raise up our mourning, that we shall see their faces no more. But we complain not of this as those that have no hope; for if our friends died in Christ, and we live to him, they are gone to see God's face, to behold his glory, with the reflection of which their faces shine, and we hope to be with them shortly. Though we shall see their faces no more in this world, we hope to see them again in a better world, and to be there together for ever, and with the Lord.

Lastly. "They accompanied him unto the ship;" partly to shew their respect to him, they would bring him on his way as far as they could; and partly that they might have a little more of his company and conversation. If it must be the last interview, they will have as much from him as they can, and see the last of him. And we have reason to think, when they came to the water side, and he was to go on board, their tears and embraces were repeated; for loath to part bids off farewell. But this was a comfort to both sides, and soon turned this tide of passion, that the presence of Christ both went with him, and stayed with them.

Tyre before, when he went to Syria and Cilicia (Gal. i. 21; and again chap. xv. 41). "The notice here is very important, that these Tyrian disciples said to Paul by the Spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem, and yet he went thither, and as he himself declares, bound in the spirit by the leading of God. We thus have an instance of that which Paul asserts (1 Cor. xiv. 32), that the spirits of the prophets are subject to prophets, i.e., that the revelation made by the Holy Spirit to each man's spirit was under the influence of that man's will and tem-

CHAPTER XXI.

We have with a great deal of pleasure attended the apostle in his travels throughout the Gentile nations to preach the Gospel, and have seen a great harvest of souls gathered in to Christ; there we have seen likewise what persecutions he endured, yet still out of them all the Lord presently delivered him, 2 Tim. iii. 1. But now we are to attend him to Jerusalem, and there into lasting bonds. the days of his service now seem to be over, and nothing to remain but days of suffering, days of darkness, for they are many. It is a thousand pities that such a workman should be laid aside; yet so it is, and we must not only acquiesce, as his friends then did, saying, "The will of the Lord be done;" but we must believe, and shall find reason to do so, that Paul in the prison, and at the bar, is as truly glorifying God, and serving Christ's interest, as Paul in the pulpit was. In this chapter we have, I. A journal of Paul's voyage from Ephesus to Cæsarea, the next seaport to Jerusalem, some places he touched at, and his landing there, ver. 1—7. II. The struggles he had with his friends at Cæsarea, who mightily opposed his going up to Jerusalem, but could not prevail, ver. 8—14. III. Paul's journey from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, and the kind entertainment which the Christians there gave him, ver. 15—17. IV. The compliance with the persuasions of the brethren there, who advised him so far to compliment the Jews, as to go purify himself with an offering in the temple, as if he had had a vow, that it might appear he was no such enemy to the Mosaic rites and ceremonies as he was reported to be, ver. 18—26. V. The turning of this very thing against him by the Jews, and the apprehending of him in the temple as a criminal thereupon, ver. 27—30. VI. The fair escape he had of being pulled to pieces by the rabble, and the taking of him into fair and legal custody by the chief captain, who permitted him to speak for himself to the people, ver. 31—40; and so we have him made a prisoner, and shall never have him otherwise to the end of the history of this book.



AND it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: 2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. 3 Now



RHODES.—VER. 1.

when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden. 4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. 5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way;



PTOLEMAIS.—VER. 7.

perament, moulded by and taking the form of his own capacities and resolves. So here, these Tyrian prophets knew by the Spirit which testified in every city that bonds and imprisonment awaited Paul. This appears to have been announced by them, shaped and intensified by their own intense love and anxiety for him who was probably their father in the faith. But he paid no regard to the prohibition, being himself under a leading of the same Spirit too plain for him to mistake it" (Alford).

and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed. 6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again. 7 And when we had finished *our* course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

We may observe here,

First. How much ado Paul had to get clear from Ephesus, intimated in the first words of the chapter, "after we were gotten from them," were drawn from them as by violence. It was a force put upon both sides; Paul was loath to leave them, and they were as loath to part with him, and yet there was no remedy but so it must be. When good people are taken away by death, they are as it were gotten from their friends here below, who struggled hard to have detained them if possible.

Secondly. What a prosperous voyage they had from thence. Without any difficulty they came with a straight course, by direct sailing, to Coos, a famous island in Greece; the next day to Rhodes, talked of for the Colossus there; thence to Patara, a famous port, the metropolis of Lycia, ver. 1; there they very happily found "a ship sailing over unto Phenicia," the very course they were steering, ver. 2. Providence must be acknowledged when things happen thus opportunely, and we are favoured in some little circumstances that contribute to the expediting of our affairs; and we must say, "It is God that maketh our way perfect." This ship that was bound for Phenicia, that is, Tyre, they took the convenience of, went on board, and set sail for Tyre. In that voyage they discovered Cyprus, the island that Barnabas was of, and which he took care of, and therefore Paul did not visit it, but "we left it on the left hand," ver. 3, sailed upon the coasts of Syria, and at length landed at Tyre, that celebrated mart of the nations, so it had been, but was now reduced; yet something of a trade it had still, for "there the ship was to unlade her burthen," and did so.

Thirdly. The halt that Paul made at Tyre. When he was got there, he was upon the coast of the land of Israel, and found now that he could compass the remainder of his journey within the time he had fixed.

1. At Tyre he found disciples, some that had embraced the Gospel, and professed the Christian faith. Observe, Wherever Paul came, he inquired what disciples were there, found them out, and associated with them; for we know what is the usage of birds of a feather. When Christ was upon earth, though he went sometimes into the coasts of Tyre, yet he never went thither to preach the Gospel there; nor did he think fit to afford to Tyre and Sidon the advantages which Chorazin and Bethsaida had, though he knew that if they had had them, they would have made a better improvement of them, *Lu. x. 13, 14*. But after the enlarging of the gospel commission, Christ was preached at Tyre, and had disciples there; and to this some think that prophecy concerning Tyre had reference, *Isa. xxiii. 18*, That her merchandise and hire should be holiness to the Lord.

2. Paul, finding those disciples at Tyre, tarried there seven days, they urging him to stay with them as long as he could; he stayed seven days at Tyre, *ch. xx. 6*, and here so many days at Tyre, that he might be sure to spend one Lord's day with them, and so might have an opportunity of preaching publicly among them. For it is the desire of good men to do good wherever they come; and where we find disciples, we may either benefit them, or be benefited by them.

3. The disciples at Tyre were endowed with such gifts, that they could by the Spirit foretell the troubles Paul would meet with at Jerusalem; for the Holy Ghost witnessed it in every city, *ch. xx. 23*. It being a thing that would be so much talked of when it came to pass, God saw fit to have it much prophesied of before, that people's faith instead of being offended, might be confirmed. And withal, they were endowed with such graces, that foreseeing his troubles, out of love to him, and concern for the church, especially the churches of the Gentiles, that could ill spare him, they begged of him that he would not go up to Jerusalem, for they hoped the decree was conditional: If he go up, he will come into trouble there, as the prediction to David, that the men of Keilah will deliver him up, (that is, if he venture himself with them,) and therefore they said to him by the Spirit, that he should not go up, because they concluded it would be most for the glory of God that he should continue at liberty. And it was not at all their fault to think so, and consequently to dissuade him; but it was their mistake, for his trial would be for the glory of God, and the furtherance of the Gospel, and he knew it; and the importunity that was used with him to dissuade him from it, renders his pious and truly heroic resolution the more illustrious.

4. The disciples at Tyre, though they were none of Paul's converts, yet shewed a very great respect to Paul, whose usefulness in the church they had heard so much of. When he departed from Tyre, though they had had but seven days' acquaintance with him, yet, as if he had been some great man, they all came together, with their wives and children, solemnly to take leave of him, to beg his blessing, and to bring him as far on his way as the sea would permit them. Note, 1st. We should pay respect not only to our own ministers that are over us in the Lord, and admonish us, and for their work's sake among us esteem them highly in love; but we must, as there is occasion, testify our love and respect to all the faithful ministers of Christ, both for his sake whose ministers they are, and for their work's sake among others. 2nd. We must in a particular manner honour those whom God hath singularly honoured, by making them eminently useful in their generation. 3rd. It is good to train up children in a respect to good people and good ministers. This was particularly remarkable at Tyre, which we have not met with anywhere else, that they brought their wives and children to attend Paul, to do him the more honour, and to receive benefit by his instructions and prayers. And as angry notice was taken of the children of the idolaters of Bethel that mocked a prophet, so no doubt gracious notice was taken of the children of the disciples at Tyre that honoured an apostle, as Christ accepted the hosannas of the little children. 4th. We should be good husbands of our opportunities, and make the utmost we can of them for the good of our souls. They brought Paul on his way, that they might have so much the more of his company and his prayers. Some refer us to *Ps. xlv. 12*, as a prediction of this, "The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift;" for it is probable they made some presents to Paul at parting, as usual to our friends that are going to sea, *ch. xxviii. 10*.

5. They parted with prayer, as Paul and the Ephesian elders had done, *ch. xx. 36*. Thus Paul has taught us, by example as well as rule, to pray *always*, to pray without ceasing. "We kneeled down on the shore, and prayed."

xxi. 7. "Ptolemais," or Accho: a sea-port about twelve miles north of Mount Carmel, and between Tyre and Cæsarea. It was given to the tribe of Asher, but, never being subdued, belonged to the Phœnicians. After the captivity a colony of Jews settled there. When St. Paul visited it, it was a prosperous city, and had lately received the rights of a Roman colony. Its associations with the names of Sir Sidney Smith and Sir Charles Napier are well known.

xxi. 15. "Carriages;" in the sense of "baggage," "things carried."

Paul prayed for himself, prayed for them, prayed for all the churches; as he was much in prayer, so he was mighty in prayer. They prayed upon the shore, that their last farewell might be sanctified and sweetened with prayer. Those that are going to sea should, when they quit the shore, commit themselves to God by prayer, and put themselves under his protection, as those that hope, even when they leave the *terra firma*, to find firm footing for their faith in the providence and promise of God. "They kneeled down on the shore," though we may suppose it either stony or dirty, and there prayed. Paul would that men should pray everywhere, and so he did himself; and where he lifted up his prayer he bowed his knees. Mr. George Herbert saith, kneeling never spoiled silk stockings.

6. They parted at last; ver. 6, "When we had taken our leave one of another," with the most affectionate embraces and expressions of love and grief, "we took ship" to be gone, "and they returned home again," each complaining that this is a parting world. Observe, How they disposed of themselves: we that had a journey before us took ship, thankful that we had a ship to carry us; and they that had no occasions to call them abroad returned home again, thankful that they had a home to go to. "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out, and Issachar in thy tents." Paul left his blessing behind him with those that returned home; and they that stayed sent their prayers after them that went to sea.

Fourthly. Their arrival at Ptolemais, which was not far from Tyre, ver. 7. "We came to Ptolemais," which some think is the same place with Accho, which we find in the tribe of Asher, *Jud. i. 31*. Paul begged leave to go ashore there, to salute the brethren, to inquire of their state, and to testify his good-will to them. Though he could not stay long with them, yet he would not pass by them without paying his respects to them; and he abode with them the more day, perhaps it was a Lord's day. Better a short stay than no visit.

8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. 9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. 10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet, named Agabus. 11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. 12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. 14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

We have here Paul and his company arrived at length at Cæsarea, where he designed to make some stay, it being the place where the Gospel was first preached to the Gentiles, and the Holy Ghost fell upon them, *ch. x. 1*. Now here we are told,

First. Who it was that entertained Paul and his company at Cæsarea. He seldom had occasion to go to a public house, but wherever he came some friend or other took him in and bade him welcome. Observe, They that had sailed together parted when the voyage was accomplished, according as their business was. They that were concerned in the cargo stayed where the ship was to unlade her burthen, ver. 3. Others, when they came to Ptolemais, went as their occasions led them. "But we that were of Paul's company" went where he went, "and came to Cæsarea." Those that travel together through this world will separate at death, and then it will appear who are of Paul's company, and who are not. Now at Cæsarea,

1. They were entertained by Philip the evangelist, whom we left at Cæsarea many years ago, after he had baptized the eunuch, *ch. viii. 40*; and there we now find him again. 1st. He was originally a deacon, one of the seven that were chosen to serve tables, *ch. vi. 5*. 2nd. He was now and had been long an evangelist, one that went about to plant and water churches as the apostles did, and gave himself, as they did, to the word and prayer. Thus, having used the office of a deacon well, he purchased to himself a good degree; and having been faithful in a few things was made ruler over many things. 3rd. He had a house at Cæsarea, fit to entertain Paul and all his company, and he bade him and them very welcome to it. We "entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, and abode with him." Thus doth it become Christians and ministers, according as their ability is, to "use hospitality one to another without grudging," *1 Pet. iv. 9*.

2. This Philip had four maiden daughters which did prophesy, ver. 9. It intimates that they prophesied of Paul's troubles at Jerusalem, as others had done, and dissuaded him from going. Or perhaps they prophesied for his comfort and encouragement in reference to the difficulties that were before him. Here was a further accomplishment of that prophecy, *Joel ii. 28*, of such a plentiful pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh, as that their sons and their daughters should prophesy, that is, foretell things to come.

Secondly. A plain and full prediction of the sufferings of Paul by a noted prophet, ver. 10, 11.

1. Paul and his company "tarried many days at Cæsarea." Perhaps Cornelius was yet living there, and (though Philip lodged them) yet might he many ways kind to them, and induce them to stay there. What cause Paul saw to tarry so long there, and to make so little haste at the latter end of his journey to Jerusalem, when he seemed so much in haste at the beginning of it, we cannot

The right reading is probably that which gives the meaning, "having packed up our baggage, made ourselves ready for the journey." So Alford.

xxi. 23—27. Jewish Christians under a Nazarite vow. Jews were wont to take upon themselves this vow when they wished either to return thanks or dedicate themselves publicly to God. (See Num. vi. 2—5 for the regulations.) During the continuance of the vow the Nazarite abstained from wine, and allowed his hair to grow uncut.

tall; but we are sure he did not stay either there or any where else to be idle. He measured his time by days, and numbered them.

2. Agabus the prophet came to Cæsarea from Judæa. This was he that we read of before, who came from Jerusalem to Antioch to foretell a general famine, *ch. xi. 27, 28*. See how God dispenseth his gifts variously: to Paul was given the word of wisdom and knowledge as an apostle, by the Spirit, and the gifts of healing; to Agabus and to Philip's daughters were given prophecy by the same Spirit, the foretelling of things to come, which came to pass according to the prediction, (*see 1 Cor. xii. 8, 10*), so that that which was the most eminent gift of the Spirit under the Old Testament, the foretelling of things to come, was under the New Testament quite outshone by other gifts, and was bestowed upon those that were of less note in the church. It should seem as if Agabus came on purpose to Cæsarea to meet Paul with this prophetic intelligence.

3. He foretold Paul's bonds at Jerusalem: 1st. By a sign, as the prophets of old did, *Isa. xx. 3; Jer. xiii. 1; xxvii. 2; Eze. iv. 1; xii. 3*; and many others. Agabus took Paul's girdle, when he laid it by, or perhaps took it from about him, and with it bound first his own hands, and then his own feet, or perhaps bound his hands and feet together. This was designed both to confirm the prophecy,—it was as sure to be done as if it were done already,—and to affect those about him with it; because that which we see usually makes a greater impression upon us than that which we only hear of. 2nd. By an explication of the sign: "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, the spirit of prophecy, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle;' and as they dealt with his Master, *Mat. xx. 18, 19*, 'shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles,' as the Jews in other places had all along endeavoured to do by accusing him to the Roman governors. Paul had this express warning given him of his troubles, that he might prepare for them, and when they came they might be no surprise or terror to him; and the general notice given us, that "through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God," should be of the same use to us.

Thirdly. The great importunity which his friends used with him, to dissuade him from going forward to Jerusalem, *ver. 12*. Not only they of that place, but we that were of Paul's company, and among the rest Luke himself, who had heard this often before, and seen Paul's resolution, notwithstanding, besought him with tears, that he would not go up to Jerusalem, but steer his course some other way. Now—

1. Here appeared a commendable affection to Paul, and a value for him upon the account of his great usefulness in the church. Good men that are very active sometimes need to be dissuaded from overworking themselves; and good men that are very bold need to be dissuaded from exposing themselves too far. "The Lord is for the body," and so must we be.

2. Yet there was a mixture of infirmity, especially in those of Paul's company, who knew he undertook this journey by Divine direction, and had seen with what resolution he had before broken through the like opposition; but we see in them the infirmity incident to us all. When we see troubles at a distance, and have only a general notice of it, we can make light of it, but when it comes near we begin to shrink and draw back; "Now it toucheth thee, thou art troubled," *Joh. iv. 5*.

Fourthly. The holy bravery and intrepidity with which Paul persisted in his resolution, *ver. 13*.

1. He reproves them for dissuading him. Here is a quarrel of love on both sides, and very sincere and strong affections clashing with each other. They love him dearly, and therefore oppose his resolution; he loves them dearly, and therefore chides them for opposing it; "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?" They were an offence to him, as Peter was to Christ, when in a like case he said, "Master, spare thyself." Their weeping about him brake his heart, that is, 1st. It was a temptation to him, it shocked him, it began to weaken and slacken his resolution, and made him entertain thoughts of tacking about. I know I am appointed to suffering, and you ought to animate and encourage me, and to say that which will strengthen my heart; but you with your tears break my heart and discourage me. What do you mean to do thus? Has not our Master bidden us take up our cross, and would you have me to balk mine? 2nd. It was a trouble to him that they should so earnestly press him to that in which he could not gratify them without wronging his conscience. Paul was of a very tender spirit; as he was much in tears himself, so he had a compassionate regard to the tears of his friends, they made a great impression upon him, and would bring him almost to yield to any thing. But now it breaks his heart when he is under a necessity of denying the request of his weeping friends. It was an unkind kindness, a cruel pity, thus to torment him with their dissuasions, and to add affliction to his grief. When our friends are called out to sufferings, we should shew our love rather by comforting them than by sorrowing for them. But observe, these Christians at Cæsarea, if they could have foreseen the particulars of that event, the general notice of which they received with so much heaviness, they would have been better reconciled to it for their own sakes; for when Paul was made a prisoner at Jerusalem he was presently sent to Cæsarea, the very place where he now was, *ch. xxiii. 33*; and there he continued at least two years, *ch. xxiv. 27*. And more than this, he was a prisoner at large, as appears *ch. xxiv. 23*, where orders were given, that he should have liberty to go among his friends, and his friends to come to him; so that the church at Cæsarea had much more of Paul's company and help when he was imprisoned than they could have had if he had been at liberty. That which we oppose, as thinking it to make much against us, may be overruled by the providence of God to work for us, which is a reason why we should follow providence, and not fear it.

2. He repeats his resolution to go forward notwithstanding. "What mean ye to weep thus?" I am ready to suffer whatever is appointed me. I am fully determined to go whatever comes of it; and therefore it is to no purpose for you to oppose it. I am willing to suffer; and therefore why are you unwilling that I should suffer? Am not I nearest myself, and fittest to judge for myself? If the trouble found me unready, it would be a trouble indeed, and you might well weep at the thoughts of it; but, blessed be God! it doth not. It is very welcome to me, and therefore should not be such a terror to you. For my part, "I am ready," *ετοιμος εχω*, "I have myself in a readiness," as soldiers for an engagement. 1st. I expect trouble, I count upon it, it will be no surprise to me. I was told at first what great things I must suffer, *ch. ix. 16*. 2nd. I am prepared for it by a clear conscience, firm confidence in God, a holy contempt of the world and the body, a lively faith in Christ, and a joyful hope of eternal life. 3rd. I can bid it welcome, as we do a friend that we look for, and have made preparation for; I can through grace not only bear it, but rejoice in it. Now, First. See how far his resolution extends. We are told that I must be bound at Jerusalem, and you would have me keep away for fear of that; tell you, "I am ready not only to be bound, but," if the will of God be so, "to die at Jerusalem;" not only to lose my liberty, but to lose my life. It is our wisdom to think of the worst that may befall us, and to prepare accordingly, that we "may stand complete in all the will of God." Secondly. See what it is that carries him out thus, that makes him willing to suffer and die: it is "for the name of the Lord Jesus." All that a man has will he give for his life; but life itself will Paul give for the service and honour of the name of Christ.

Fifthly. The patient acquiescence of his friends in his resolution, *ver. 14*.

At the expiration of the period for which he had bound himself, he went to the Temple, made offerings, and had his hair cut off and burned. The offerings required were more than the very poor could afford, and it was considered an act of piety for some one else to pay the expenses for them.

xxi. 28. "The Temple:" there was the outer court, beyond which Gentiles were forbidden to go, and beyond which Paul was accused of having taken the Greeks. Then came the court of the women,

1. They submitted to the wisdom of a good man. They had carried the matter as far as they could with decency; but "when he would not be persuaded, we ceased" our importunity. Paul knows best his own mind, and what he has to do, and it becomes us to leave it to himself, and not to censure him for what he doth, or to say he is rash, and wilful, and humorsome, and has a spirit of contradiction, as some people are apt to judge of those that will not do just as they would have them do. No doubt Paul has a good reason for his resolution, though he see cause to keep it to himself, and God has gracious ends to serve in confirming him in it. It is good manners not to overpress those in their own affairs that will not be persuaded.

2. They submitted to the will of a good God; "We ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done." They did not resolve his resolve into his wilfulness, but into his willingness to suffer, and God's will that he should. "Father in heaven, thy will be done;" as it is a rule to our prayers and to our practice, so it is to our patience. This may refer, 1st. To Paul's present stiffness. He is inflexible and unpersuadable, and in this they see "the will of the Lord" done. It is he that has wrought this fixed resolution in him, and therefore we acquiesce in it. Note, In the turning of the hearts of our friends or ministers this way or that way, and it may be quite another way than we could wish, we should eye the hand of God, and submit to that. 2nd. To his approaching sufferings. If there be no remedy; but Paul will run himself into bonds, "The will of the Lord Jesus be done." We have done all that we could on our parts to prevent it, and now we leave it to God, we leave it to Christ, to whom the Father has committed all judgment; and therefore we do; not as we will, but as he will. Note, When we see trouble coming, and particularly that of our ministers being silenced or removed from us, it becomes us to say, "The will of the Lord be done." God is wise, and knows how to make all work for good, and therefore welcome his holy will. Not only the will of the Lord must be done, and there is no remedy; but let the will of the Lord be done, for his will is his wisdom, and he doth all according to the counsel of it. Let him therefore do with us and ours as seemeth good in his eyes. When a trouble is come, this must allay our griefs, that the will of the Lord is done. When we see it coming, this must silence our fears, that the will of the Lord shall be done, to which we must say, Amen, let it be done.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem. 16 There went with us also certain of the disciples of Cæsarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge. 17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18 And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. 19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. 20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: 21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. 22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. 23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; 24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. 25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. 26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

In these verses we have, First. Paul's journey to Jerusalem from Cæsarea, and the company that went along with him.

approached by fourteen steps. This court contained several chambers, in one of which the Nazarites performed their vows. It was surrounded by a wall, with gates on each side, the easternmost of which was of Corinthian brass, with folding doors. These are probably the doors mentioned in verse 30 as being closed; St. Paul having been seized within them, and dragged down the steps into the outer court.

xxi. 31. The Roman garrison was stationed in the fortress of

1. "They took up their carriages," their bag and baggage, and, as it should seem, like poor travellers or soldiers, were their own porters; so little had they of change of raiment; *omnia mea mecum porto*,—"my property is all about me." Some think they had with them the money that was collected in the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, for the poor saints at Jerusalem. If they could have persuaded Paul to go some other way, they would gladly have gone along with him; but if, notwithstanding their dissuaves, he will go to Jerusalem, they do not say, Let him go himself then; but as Thomas, in a like case, when Christ would go into danger at Jerusalem, "Let us go and die with him," *Jno. xi. 16*. Their resolution to cleave to Paul, was like that of Ittai to cleave to David, *2 Sam. xv. 21*, "In what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, there also will thy servant be." Thus Paul's boldness emboldened them.

2. Certain of the disciples of Caesarea went along with them. Whether they designed to go however, and took this opportunity of going with so much good company, or whether they went on purpose to see if they could do Paul any service, and if possible prevent his trouble, or at least minister to him in it, doth not appear. The less while Paul is likely to enjoy his liberty, the more industrious they are to improve every opportunity of conversation with him. Elisha kept close to Elijah when he knew the time was at hand that he should be taken up.

3. They brought with them an honest old gentleman, that had a house of his own at Jerusalem, in which he would gladly entertain Paul and his company, "one Mnason of Cyprus," *ver. 16*, "with whom we should lodge." Such a great concourse of people there was to the feast, that it was a hard matter to get lodgings. The public houses would be taken up by those of the better sort; and it was looked upon as a scandalous thing for those that had private houses to hire their rooms out at those times, but they must freely accommodate strangers with them. Every one then would choose his friends to be his guests, and Mnason took Paul and his company to be his lodgers; though he had heard what trouble Paul was likely to come into, which might bring those that entertained him into trouble too, yet he shall be welcome to him whatever comes of it. This Mnason is called an old disciple, a disciple from the beginning; some think, one of the seventy disciples of Christ, or one of the first converts after the pouring out of the Spirit, or one of the first that were converted by the preaching of the Gospel in Cyprus, *ch. xiii. 4*. However it was, it seems he had been long a Christian, and was now in years. Note, It is an honourable thing to be an old disciple of Jesus Christ, to have been enabled by the grace of God to continue long in a course of duty, steadfast in the faith, and growing more and more prudent and experienced to a good old age. And with these old disciples one would choose to lodge; for the multitude of their years shall teach wisdom.

Secondly, Paul's welcome at Jerusalem.

1. Many of the brethren there received him gladly, *ver. 17*. As soon as they had notice that he was come to town, they went to his lodgings at Mnason's house, and congratulated his safe arrival; and told him they were glad to see him, and invited him to their houses; and counted it an honour to be known to one that was such an eminent servant of Christ. Streso observes, that the word here used concerning the welcome they gave to the apostle, ἀποδέχων, is used concerning the welcome of the apostle's doctrine, *ch. ii. 41*. They gladly received his word. We think if we had Paul among us we would gladly receive him; but it is a question whether we would or no if, having his doctrine, we do not gladly receive that.

2. They made a visit to James, and the elders of the church, at a church-meeting; *ver. 18*. "The day following Paul went into James," and took up with him that were his companions, to introduce us into acquaintance with the church at Jerusalem. It should seem that James was now the only apostle that was resident at Jerusalem; the rest had dispersed themselves to preach the Gospel in other places. But still they forecasted to have an apostle at Jerusalem, perhaps sometimes one, and sometimes another, because there was such a great resort thither from all parts. James was now upon the spot, and all the elders or presbyters, that were the ordinary pastors of the church, both to preach and govern, were present. Paul saluted them all; paid his respects to them, inquired of their welfare, and "gave them the right hand of fellowship." He saluted them, that is, he wished them all health and happiness, and prayed to God to bless them. The proper signification of salutation is, wishing salvation to you; *salve, or salus tibi sit*; like "peace be unto you." And such mutual salutations or good wishes very well become Christians, in token of their love to each other, and joint regard to God.

Thirdly, The account they had from him of his ministry among the Gentiles, and their satisfaction in it.

1. He gave them a narrative of the success of the Gospel in those countries where he had been employed, knowing it would be very acceptable to them to hear of the enlarging of Christ's kingdom. "He declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry," *ver. 19*. Observe how modestly he speaks, not what things he had wrought, he was but the instrument, but "what God had wrought by his ministry." It was "not I, but the grace of God which was with me." He planted and watered, but God gave the increase. He declared it particularly, that the grace of God might appear the more illustrious in the circumstances of his success. Thus David will tell others what God has done for his soul, *Ps. lxxvi. 16*, as Paul here, what God had done by his hand, and both, that their friends might help them to be thankful.

2. Hence they took occasion to give praise to God; *ver. 20*, "when they heard it, they glorified the Lord." Paul ascribed it all to God, and to God they gave the praise of it. They did not break out into high encomiums of Paul, but leave it to his Master to say to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant;" but they gave glory to the grace of God, which was extended to the Gentiles. Note, The conversion of sinners ought to be the matter of our joy and praise, as it is of the angels'. God had honoured Paul more than any of them in making his usefulness more extensive, yet they do not envy him, nor are they jealous of his growing reputation, but, on the contrary, glorified the Lord. And they could not do more to encourage Paul to go on cheerfully in his work, than to glorify God for his success in it; for if God be pleased Paul is pleased.

Fourthly, The request of James and the elders of the church at Jerusalem to Paul, or their advice rather, that he would gratify the believing Jews, by shewing some compliance with the ceremonial law, and appearing publicly in the temple to offer sacrifice, which was not a thing in itself sinful; for the ceremonial law, though it was by no means to be imposed upon the Gentile converts, as the false teachers would have it, and thereby endeavoured to subvert the Gospel, yet it was not become unlawful as yet to those that had been bred up in the observation of it, but were far from expecting justification by it. It was dead, but not buried; dead, but not yet deadly. And being not sinful, they thought it was a piece of prudence in Paul to conform thus far. Observe the counsel they give to Paul herein, not as having authority over him, but an affection for him.

1. They desire him to take notice of the great numbers there were of Jewish converts. "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe." They call him brother, for they looked upon him as a joint commis-

sioner with them in gospel work; though they were of the circumcision, and he the apostle of the Gentiles, though they were conformists and he a nonconformist, yet they were brethren, and owned the relation. Thou hast been in some of our assemblies, and seest how numerous they are, "how many myriads of Jews believe." The word signifies not thousands, but ten thousands. Even among the Jews that were most prejudiced against the Gospel, yet there were great multitudes that received it; for the grace of God can break down the strongest holds of Satan. The number of the names at first was but one hundred and twenty, yet now many thousands. Let none therefore despise the day of small things; for, though the beginning be small, God can make the latter end greatly to increase. Hereby it appeared that God had not quite cast away his people the Jews, for among them there was a remnant, an election that obtained, (*see Rom. xi. 5, 7*), many thousands that believed. And this account they could give to Paul of the success of the Gospel among the Jews, no doubt was as grateful to Paul as the account he gave them of the conversion of the Gentiles was to them; for his "heart's desire and prayer to God for the Jews was, that they might be saved."

2. They inform him of a prevailing infirmity these believing Jews laboured under, which they could not yet be cured of. "They are all zealous of the law;" they believe in Christ as the true Messiah; they rest upon his righteousness, and submit to his government; but they know the law of Moses was of God, they have found spiritual benefit in their attendance on the institutions of it, and therefore they can by no means think of parting with it, no, nor of growing cold to it; and perhaps urged Christ's being made under the law, and observing it, which was designed to be our deliverance from the law, as a reason for their continuance under it. This was a great weakness and mistake to be so fond of the shadows when the substance was come; to keep their necks under a yoke of bondage, when Christ was come to make them free. But see, 1st. The power of education and long usage, and especially of a ceremonial law. 2nd. The charitable allowance that must be made in consideration of these. These Jews that believed were not therefore disowned and rejected as no Christians because they were for the law, nay, were zealous for it, while it was only in their own practice, and they did not impose it upon others. Their being zealous of the law was capable of a good construction, which charity would put upon it; and it was capable of a good excuse, considering what they were brought up in, and who they lived among.

3. They give him to understand how these Jews, who were so zealous of the law, were ill-affected to him, *ver. 21*. Paul himself, though as faithful a servant as any Christ ever had, yet could not get the good word of all that belonged to Christ's family. "They are informed of thee," and form their opinion of thee accordingly, that thou not only dost not teach the Gentiles to observe the law, as some would have had thee, we have prevailed with them to drop that, but dost teach all the Jews which are dispersed among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, not to circumcise their children, nor to walk after the customs of our nation, which were of Divine appointment, so far as they might be observed even among the Gentiles, at a distance from the temple; not to observe the fasts and feasts of the church, not to wear their phylacteries, or abstain from unclean meats. Now, 1st. It was true that Paul preached the abrogation of the law of Moses, and that it was impossible to be justified by it, and therefore we are not bound up any longer to the observation of it. But, 2nd. It was false that he taught them to forsake Moses: for the religion he preached tended not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. He preached Christ, "the end of the law for righteousness," and repentance and faith, in the exercise of which we are to make great use of the law. The Jews among the Gentiles, whom Paul taught, were so far from forsaking Moses, that they never understood him better, nor ever embraced him so heartily, as now, when they were taught to make use of him as a school-master to bring them to Christ. But even the believing Jews having got this notion of Paul, that he was an enemy to Moses, and perhaps giving too much regard to the unbelieving Jews too, were much exasperated against him. Their ministers, the elders here present, loved and honoured him, and approved of what he did, and called him brother, but the people could hardly be got to entertain a favourable thought of him; for it is certain, the least judicious are the most censorious; the weak-headed are the hot-headed. They could not distinguish upon Paul's doctrine as they ought to have done, and therefore condemned it in the gross, through ignorance.

4. They therefore desire Paul that he would, by some public act, now he was come to Jerusalem, make it to appear that the charge against him was false, and that he did not teach people to forsake Moses, and to break the customs of the Jewish church, for he himself retained the use of them.

1st. They conclude that something of this kind must be done. "What is it therefore?" What must be done? "The multitude will hear that thou art come" to town. This is an inconvenience that attends men of fame, that their coming and going is taken notice of more than other people's, and will be talked of by some for good-will, and by others for ill-will. When they hear thou art come, "they must needs come together;" that is, they will expect that we call them together to advise with them, whether we should admit thee to preach among us as a brother, or no; or, they will come together of themselves expecting to hear thee. Now something must be done to satisfy them that Paul doth not teach people to forsake Moses, and they think it necessary, *First*. For Paul's sake, that his reputation may be cleared, and that so good a man may not lie under any blemish, nor so useful a man labour under any disadvantage which may obstruct his usefulness. *Secondly*. For the people's sake, that they may not continue prejudiced against so good a man, nor lose the benefit of his ministry by those prejudices. *Thirdly*. For their own sake. That since they knew it was their duty to own Paul, their doing it might not be turned to their reproach among those that were under their charge.

2nd. They produce a fair opportunity, which Paul might take to clear himself. "Do this that we say unto thee;" take our advice in this case. "We have four men," Jews, which believe, of our own churches, and they have a vow on them, a vow of Nazariteship for a certain time; their time is now expired, *ver. 23*, and they are to offer their offering according to the law, when they shave the head of their separation, a he lamb for a burnt offering, an ewe lamb for a sin offering, and a ram for a peace offering, with other offerings appurtenant to them, *Num. vi. 13-20*. Many used to do this together, when their vow expired about the same time, either for the greater expedition, or the greater solemnity. Now Paul having so far of late complied with the law as to take upon him the vow of a Nazarite, and to signify the expiration of it by shaving his head at Cenchrea, *ch. xviii. 18*, according to the custom of those who lived at a distance from the temple, they desire him but to go a little farther, and to join with these four in offering the sacrifices of a Nazarite; "Purify thyself with them" according to the law; and be willing not only to take that trouble, but to "be at charges with them; in buying sacrifices for this solemn occasion, and to join with them in the sacrifice. And this they think will effectually stop the mouth of calumny, and every one will be convinced that the report was false; that Paul was not the man he was represented to be, did not teach the Jews to forsake Moses, but that he himself being originally a Jew, walked orderly, and kept the law; and then all would be well.

5. The enter a protestation, that this shall be no infringement at all of the decree lately made in favour of the Gentile converts, nor do they intend by this

Antonia, one of the towers of which overlooked the Temple. The chief captain was Claudius Lysias, the tribune of the cohort, or one thousand men.

xxi. 33. "Two chains:" i.e., to two soldiers.

xxi. 34. "Castle:" castle of Antonia.

xxi. 38. This Egyptian is mentioned by Josephus, whose followers, according to him, numbered 30,000. The 4,000 named by Claudius Lysias probably refer to the commencement of the revolt, for he

says who "led out." "Murderers:" the word is derived from *sica*, "a dagger."

xxi. 39. "Tarsus:" see Note to chap. ix. 1.

xxi. 40. "Hebrew tongue:" the Syro-Chaldaic.

xxii. 1. "To account for this peculiar mode of address, we must suppose that mixed with the crowd were men of venerable age and dignity, perhaps members of the Sanhedrim, ancient scribes and doctors of the law, who were stirring up the people against the

in the least to derogate from the liberty allowed them, ver. 25, "as touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded," and resolve to abide by it, "that they observe no such thing;" we would not have them to be bound up by the ceremonial law, by no means, but only that "they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication;" but let not them be tied to the Jewish sacrifices or purifications, or any of their rites and ceremonies. They knew how jealous Paul was for the preserving of the liberty of the converted Gentiles, and therefore expressly covenant to abide by that. Thus far is their proposal.

Sixthly. Here is Paul's compliance with it. He was willing to gratify them in this matter. Though he would not be persuaded not to go to Jerusalem, yet, when he was there, he was persuaded to do as they there did; ver. 26, "Then Paul took the men," as they advised, and the very "next day purified himself with them," and not with multitude or tumult, as he himself pleads, *ch. xxiv. 18*. "He entered into the temple," as other devout Jews that came upon such errands did, "to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification" to the priests; desiring the priest would appoint a time when "the offering should be offered for every one of them," one for each. Ainsworth on *Num. vi. 18*, quotes out of Maimonides a passage which gives some light to this: "If a man say, upon me be half the oblations of a Nazarite, or upon me be half the shaving of a Nazarite, then he brings half the offerings by what Nazarite he will, and that Nazarite pays his offering out of that which is his." So Paul did here; he contributed what he vowed to the offerings of these Nazarites, and, some think, bound himself to the law of the Nazaritish, and to an attendance at the temple, with fastings and prayers for seven days, not designing that the offering should be offered *th*en; which was that he signified to the priest. Now it has been questioned whether James and the elders did well to give Paul this advice, and whether he did well to take it.

1. Some have blamed this occasional conformity of Paul's as indulging the Jews too much in their adherence to the ceremonial law, and a discouragement to those who stood fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. Was it not enough for James and the elders of Jerusalem to connive at this mistake in the Jewish converts themselves, but must they wheedle Paul to countenance them in it? Had it not been better, when they had told Paul how zealous the believing Jews were for the law, if they had desired him whom God had endued with such excellent gifts to take pains with their people, to convince them of their error, and to shew them that they were made free from the law by their marriage to Christ? *Rom. vii. 4*; and to urge him to encourage them in it by his example seems to have more in it of fleshly wisdom than of the grace of God. Surely Paul knew what he had to do better than they could teach him. But,

2. Others think the advice was prudent and good, and Paul's following it was justifiable enough as the case stood. It was Paul's avowed principle, "To the Jews became I as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews," *1 Cor. ix. 20*; he had circumcised Timothy to please the Jews. Though he would not constantly observe the ceremonial law, yet to gain an opportunity of doing good, and to shew how far he could comply, he would occasionally go to the temple and join in the sacrifices there. Those that are weak in the faith are to be borne with, when those that undermine the faith must be opposed. It is true, this compliance of Paul's sped ill to him, for this very thing by which he hoped to pacify the Jews did but provoke them, and bring him into trouble, yet that is not a sufficient ground to go upon in condemning it. Paul might do well, and yet suffer for it; but perhaps the wise God overruled both their advice and Paul's compliance with it, to serve a better purpose than was intended: for we have reason to think that when the believing Jews, who had endeavoured by their zeal for the law to recommend themselves to the good opinion of those who believed not, saw how barbarously they used Paul, who endeavoured to oblige them, they were by this more alienated from the ceremonial law than they could have been by the most argumentative or affecting discourses. They saw it was in vain to think of pleasing men that would be pleased with nothing else but the rooting out of Christianity. Integrity and uprightness will be more likely to preserve us than sneaking compliances. And when we consider what a great trouble it must needs be to James and the presbyters in the reflection upon it, that they had by their advice brought Paul into trouble, it should be a warning to us not to press men to oblige us by doing any thing contrary to their own mind.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, 28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all *men* every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. 29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) 30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. 31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul. 33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done. 34 And some

cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle. 35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people. 36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him. 37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? 38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? 39 But Paul said, I am a man *which am* a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people. 40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto *them* in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

We have here Paul brought into a captivity which we are not likely to see the end of; for after this he is either hurried from one bar to another, or lies neglected, first in one prison and then in another, and can neither be tried nor bailed. When we see the beginning of a trouble, we do not know either how long it will last, or how it will issue.

First. We have here Paul seized and laid hold on.

1. He was seized in the temple, when he was there attending the days of his purifying, and the solemn services of those days, ver. 27. Formerly he had been well known in the temple; but now he had been so long in his travels abroad, that he was become a stranger there; so that it was not till the seven days were almost ended that he was taken notice of by those that had an evil eye towards him. In the temple, where he should have been protected as in a sanctuary, he was most violently set upon by those who did what they could to have mingled his blood with his sacrifices. In the temple, where he should have been welcomed as one of the greatest ornaments of it that ever had been there since the Lord of the temple left it. The temple, which they themselves pretended such a mighty zeal for, yet did they themselves thus profane. Thus is the church polluted by none more than by popish persecutors, under the colour of the church's name and interest.

2. The informers against him were the Jews of Asia, not those of Jerusalem; the Jews of the dispersion, who knew him best, and who were most exasperated against him. Those who seldom came up to worship at the temple in Jerusalem themselves, but contentedly lived at a distance from it in pursuit of their private advantages, yet appeared most zealous for the temple, as if thereby they would atone for their habitual neglect of it.

3. The method they took was to raise the mob, and to incense them against him. They did not go to the high priest or the magistrates of the city with their charge, probably because they expected not to receive countenance from them, but they "stirred up all the people," who were at this time more than ever disposed to any thing that was tumultuous and seditious, riotous and routous. Those are fittest to be employed against Christ and Christianity that are governed least by reason, and most by passion; therefore Paul described the Jewish persecutors to be not only wicked, but absurd, unreasonable men.

4. The arguments wherewith they exasperated the people against him were popular, but very false and unjust. They cried out, "Men of Israel, help;" if ye are indeed men of Israel, trueborn Jews, that have a concern for your church and your country, now is your time to shew it by helping to seize an enemy to both. Thus they cried after him as after a thief, *Job xxx. 5*, or after a mad dog. Note. The enemies of Christianity, since they could never prove it to be an ill thing, have been always very industrious, right or wrong, to put it into an ill name, and so run it down by outrage and outcry. It had become men of Israel to help Paul, who preached up Him who was so much the glory of his people Israel, yet here the popular fury will not allow them to be men of Israel, unless they will help against him. This was like Stop thief, or Athaliah's cry, Treason, treason. What is wanting in right is made up in noise. They charge upon him both ill doctrine and ill practice, and both against the Mosaic ritual.

1st. They charge upon him ill doctrine; not only that he holds corrupt opinions himself, but that he vents and publishes them, though not here at Jerusalem, yet in other places, nay, in all places; he teacheth all men, everywhere. So artfully is the crime aggravated, as if, because he was an itinerant, he was an *ubiquitaire*. He spreads, to the utmost of his power, certain damnable and heretical positions, *First*. Against the people of the Jews. He had taught that Jews and Gentiles stand on the same level before God, and "neither circumcision avails any thing nor uncircumcision;" nay, he taught against the unbelieving Jews, that they were rejected, and therefore had separated from them and their synagogues, and this is interpreted to be speaking against the whole nation, as if no doubt but they were the people, and wisdom must die with them, *Job xii. 1*; whereas God, though he had cast them off, yet, had not cast away his people, *Rom. xi. 1*; they were "Lo-ammi, not a people," *Hos. i. 9*; and yet pretend to be the only people. Those commonly seem most jealous for the church's name that belong to it in name only. *Secondly*. Against the law. His teaching men to believe the Gospel as the end of the law, and the perfection of it, was interpreted his preaching against the law; whereas it was so far from making void the law, that it established it, *Rom. iii. 31*. *Thirdly*. Against this place, the temple. Because he taught men to pray everywhere, he was reproached as an enemy to the temple, and perhaps because he sometimes mentioned the destruction of Jerusalem, and the temple, and of the Jewish nation, which his Master had foretold. Paul had himself been active in persecuting Stephen and putting him to death, for words spoken against this holy place.

xxii. 3. "I:" there is an emphasis on the pronoun. "Gamaliel:" see Note to chap. v. 34. The expression "at the feet" refers to the custom of the scholars sitting either on the floor or on low benches beneath their teachers, who were on higher seats. The fact that St. Paul had been a scholar of Gamaliel would tell in his favour with his audience, and would add weight to his teaching, as that of one who did not teach ignorantly a new faith. "The perfect manner," &c.; rather, "the strictest doctrine or form," and that not of the written

heretic. The phrase generally translated in the Authorized Version 'men and brethren'—literally, 'men who are my brethren'—may be equally translated 'brethren' (Conybeare and Howson).

xxii. 2. "Hebrew:" i.e., Syro-Chaldaic. "The use of this tongue," says Canon Cook, "reminded them that St. Paul was not a Hellenistic Jew, though born at Tarsus, but a Hebrew in language, habits, and doubtless in affections." "The sound of the holy tongue in that place fell like a calm on the troubled waters" (Conybeare and Howson).

and now the same thing is laid to his charge. He that was then made use of as the tool, is now set aside as the butt, of Jewish rage and malice.

2nd. They charge upon him ill practices. To confirm their charge against him as teaching people against his holy place, they charge it upon him that he had himself polluted it, and by an overt act shewed his contempt of it, and a design to make it common. He "has brought Gentiles also into the temple," into the inner court of the temple, which none that were uncircumcised were admitted under any pretence to come into. There was written upon the wall that inclosed this inner court, in Greek and Latin, "It is a capital crime for strangers to enter."—*Joseph. Antiq.* l. xv. c. 14. Paul was himself a Jew, and had right to enter into the court of the Jews; and they seeing some with him there that joined with him in his devotions, concluded that Trophimus, an Ephesian, who was a Gentile, was one of them. Why? Did they see him there? Truly, no; but they had seen him with Paul in the streets of the city, which was no crime at all, and therefore they affirm that he was with Paul in the inner court of the temple, which was a heinous crime. They had seen him with him in the city, and therefore they supposed that Paul had brought him with him into the temple, which was utterly false. See here, *First*. That innocency is no fence against calumny and false accusation. It is no new thing for those that mean honestly, and act regularly, to have things laid to their charge which they know not, nor ever thought of. *Secondly*. That evil men dig up mischief, and go far to seek proofs of their false accusations, as they did here, who, because they saw a Gentile with Paul in the city, will from thence infer that he was with him in the temple? This was a strained innuendo indeed, yet by such unjust and groundless suggestions have wicked men thought to justify themselves in the most barbarous outrages committed upon the excellent ones of the earth. *Thirdly*. It is common for malicious people to improve that against those that are wise and good with which they thought to have obliged them, and ingratiate themselves with them. Paul thought to recommend himself to their good opinion by going into the temple, and from thence they take an occasion to accuse him. If he had kept farther off them, he had not been so maligned by them. This is the genius of ill-nature; "for my love, they are my adversaries." *Ps.* cix. 4; lxxix. 10.

Secondly. We have here Paul in danger of being pulled in pieces by the rabble. They will not be at the pains to have him before the high priest or the Sanhedrim; that is a roundabout way; the execution shall be of a piece with the prosecution, all unjust and irregular. They cannot prove the crime upon him, and therefore dare not bring him upon a fair trial; nay, so greedily do they thirst after his blood, that they have not patience to proceed against him by a due course of law, though they were never so sure to gain their point; and, therefore, as those who neither feared God nor regarded man, they resolved to knock him on the head presently.

1. All the city was in an uproar, ver. 30. The people, who, though they had little holiness themselves, yet had a mighty veneration for the holy place, when they heard a hue-and-cry from the temple, were up in arms presently, being resolved to stand by that with their lives and fortunes. "All the city was moved" when they were called to from the temple, "Men of Israel, help," with as much violence as if the old complaint were to be revived; *Ps.* lxxix. 1, "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance, thy holy temple they have defiled." Just such a zeal the Jews here shew for God's temple, as the Ephesians did for Diana's temple, when Paul was informed against as an enemy to that, *ch.* xix. 29. "The whole city was full of confusion." But God doth not reckon himself at all honoured by those whose zeal for him transports them to such irregularities, and who, while they pretend to act for him, act in such a brutish, barbarous manner.

2. They drew Paul out of the temple, and shut the doors between the outer and inner court of the temple, or perhaps the doors of the outer court. In dragging him furiously out of the temple, 1st. They shewed a real detestation of him, as one not fit to be suffered in the temple, nor to worship there, nor to be looked upon as a member of the Jewish nation, as if his sacrifice had been an abomination. 2nd. They pretended a veneration for the temple, like that of good Jehoiada, who would not have Athaliah to be slain in the house of the Lord, *1 Kin.* xi. 15. See how absurd these wicked men were; they condemned Paul for drawing people from the temple, and yet, when he himself was very devoutly worshipping in the temple, they drew him out of it. The officers of the temple shut the doors, either, *First*. Lest Paul should find means to get back, and take hold of the horns of the altar, and so protect himself by that sanctuary from their rage; or rather, *Secondly*. Lest the crowd should, by the running in of more to them, be thrust back into the temple, and some outrage should be committed, to the profanation of that holy place. They that made no conscience of doing so ill a thing as the murdering of a good man for well-doing, yet would be thought to make conscience of doing it in a holy place, or at a holy time; "not in the temple," as, "not on the feast day."

3. They "went about to kill him," ver. 31; for they fell a beating him, ver. 32, resolving to beat him to death by blows without number; a punishment which the Jewish doctors allowed of in some cases, (not at all to the credit of their nation,) and called, 'the beating of the rebels.' Now was Paul like a lamb thrown into a den of lions, and made an easy prey to them; and no doubt he was still of the same mind as when he said, "I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die, at Jerusalem," to die so great a death.

Thirdly. We have here Paul rescued out of the hands of his Jewish enemies by a Roman enemy.

1. Tidings were brought of the tumult, and that the mob was up, "to the chief captain of the band," the governor of the castle, or whoever he was, the new commander-in-chief of the Roman forces that were quartered in Jerusalem. Somebody, that was concerned, not for Paul, but for the public peace and safety, gave this information to the colonel, who had always a jealous and watchful eye upon those tumultuous Jews; and he is the man that must be instrumental to save Paul's life, when never a friend he had was capable of doing him any service.

2. The tribune, or chief captain, got his forces together with all possible expedition, and went to suppress the mob: "He took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them." Now, at the feast, as at other such solemn times, the guards were up, and the militia more within call than at other times, and so he had them near at hand, and he ran down upon the multitude; for at such times delays are dangerous. Sedition must be crushed at first, lest it grow headstrong.

3. The very sight of the Roman general frightened them from beating Paul; for they knew they were doing what they could not justify, and were in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, as the town-clerk told the Ephesians. They were determined from that by the power of the Romans from which they ought to have been restrained by the justice of God and the dread of his wrath. Note, God often makes the earth to help the woman, *Rev.* xii. 16, and those to be a protection to his people who yet have no affection for his people; only have a compassion for sufferers, and are jealous for the public peace. The shepherd makes use even of his dogs for the defence of his sheep; it is Stres's comparison here. See here how these wicked people were frightened away at the very sight of the chief captain; for the "king that sitteth on the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes."

4. The governor takes him into custody. He rescued him, not out of a concern for him, because he thought him innocent, but out of a concern for justice, because he ought not to be put to death without trial; and because he knew not how dangerous the consequence might be to the Roman government if such tumultuous proceedings were not timely suppressed, nor what such an outrageous people might do if once they knew their own strength. He therefore takes Paul out of the hands of the mob into the hands of the law; ver. 33, he "took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains," that the people might be satisfied he did not intend to discharge him, but to examine him; for he demanded of those that were so eager against him, "who he was, and what he had done." This violent taking of him out of the hands of the multitude, though there was all the reason in the world for it, yet they laid to the charge of the chief captain as his crime; *ch.* xxiv. 7. "The chief captain Lysias came with great violence and took him out of our hands," which refers to this rescue, as appears by comparing *ch.* xxiii. 27, 28, where the chief captain gives an account of it to Felix.

Fourthly. The provision which the chief captain made with much ado to bring Paul to speak for himself. One had almost as good enter into a struggle with the winds and the waves, as with such a mob as was here got together; and yet Paul made a shift to get liberty of speech among them.

1. There was no knowing the sense of the people; for, when the chief captain inquired concerning Paul, having perhaps never heard of his name before, (such strangers were the great ones to the excellent ones of the earth, and affected to be so,) "some cried one thing, and some another, among the multitude;" so that it was impossible for the chief captain to know their mind, when really they knew not either one another's mind or their own, when every one pretended to give the sense of the whole body. Those that will hearken to the clamours of the multitude will know nothing for a certainty, no more than from the builders of Babel, when their tongues were confounded.

2. There was no quelling the rage and fury of the people; for, when the chief captain commanded that Paul should be carried into the castle, the tower of Antonia, where the Roman soldiers kept garrison near the temple, the soldiers themselves had much ado to get him safe thither out of the noise, the people were so violent; ver. 35, "when he came upon the stairs" leading up to the castle, the soldiers were forced to take him up in their arms and carry him, (which they might easily do, for he was a little man, and his bodily presence weak,) to keep him from the people, who would have pulled him limb from limb, if they could. When they could not reach him with their cruel hands, they followed him with their sharp arrows, even bitter words; they "followed, crying, Away with him," ver. 36. See how the most excellent persons and things are often run down by a popular clamour; Christ himself was so, with "Crucify him, crucify him," though they could not say what evil he had done. Take him out of the land of the living; so the ancients expound it. Chase him out of the world.

3. Paul at length begged leave of the chief captain to speak to him; ver. 37, "as he was to be led into the castle," with a great deal of calmness and composure in himself, and a great deal of mildness and deference to those about him, he "said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee?" Will it be no offence, or construed as a breach of rule, if I give thee some account of myself, since my persecutors can give no account of me? What an humble, modest question was this! Paul knew how to speak to the greatest of men, and had many a time spoken to his betters; yet he humbly begs leave to speak to this commander, and will not speak till he has obtained leave. "May I speak unto thee?"

4. The chief captain tells him what notion he had of him; "Canst thou speak Greek?" I am surprised to hear thee speak a learned language; for, "art not thou that Egyptian which madest an uproar?" The Jews made the uproar, and then would have it thought that Paul had given them occasion for it, by beginning first; for probably some of them whispered this in the ear of the chief captain. See what false, mistaken notions of good people and good ministers many run away with, and will not be at the pains to have the mistake rectified. It seems there had lately been an insurrection somewhere in that country, headed by an Egyptian, who took on him to be a prophet. Josephus mentions this story; that an Egyptian raised a seditious party, promised to shew them the fall of the walls of Jerusalem from the mount of Olives, and that they should enter the city upon the ruins. The captain here saith, that he "led out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers," desperadoes, banditti, rapparees, cut-throats. What a degeneracy was there in the Jewish nation, when there were found there so many that had such a character, and could be drawn into such an attempt upon the public peace. But Josephus saith, that Felix the Roman president, went out against them, killed four hundred, and took two hundred prisoners, and the rest were dispersed, *Antiq.* xx. 6; *De Bello Jud.* ii. 12; and Eusebius speaks of it, *Hist.* ii. 20. It happened in the thirtieth year of Claudius, a little before those days, about three years ago. The ringleader of this rebellion it seems had made his escape; and the chief captain concluded, that one that lay under so great an odium as Paul seemed to lie under, and against whom there was so great an outcry, could not be a criminal of less figure than this Egyptian. See how good men are exposed to ill-will by mistake.

5. Paul rectifies his mistake concerning him, by informing him particularly what he was; not such a vagabond, a scoundrel, a rake, as that Egyptian, who could give no good account of himself. No; "I am a man which am a Jew," originally, and no Egyptian; a Jew, both by nation and religion, "I am of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia;" of honest parents, and a liberal education, (Tarsus was a university;) and, besides that, "a citizen of no mean city." Whether he means Tarsus or Rome is not certain; they were neither of them mean cities, and he was a freeman of both. Though the chief captain had put him under such an invidious suspicion that he was that Egyptian, he kept his temper, did not break out into any passionate exclamations against the times he lived in, or the men he had to do with; did not render railing for railing, but mildly denied the charge, and owned what he was.

6. He humbly desired a permission from the chief captain, whose prisoner he now was, to speak to the people. He doth not demand it as a debt, though he might have done it, but sues for it as a favour which he will be thankful for; "I beseech thee, suffer me to speak to the people." The chief captain rescued him with no other design but to give him a fair hearing. Now to shew that his cause needs no art to give it a plausible colour, he desires he may have leave immediately to defend himself; for it needed no more than to be set in a true light. Nor did he depend only upon the goodness of his cause, but upon the goodness and fidelity of his Patron, and that promise of his to all his advocates, that it should be given them in that same hour what they should speak.

Lastly. He obtained leave to plead his own cause; for he needed not to have counsel assigned him, when the Spirit of the Father was ready to dictate to him, *Mat.* x. 20. The chief captain gave him licence, ver. 40; so that now he could speak with a good grace, and with the more courage; he had, I will not say, that favour, but that justice done him by the chief captain, which he could not obtain from his countrymen the Jews, for they would not hear him, but the captain would, though it were but to satisfy his curiosity. This licence being obtained,

1. The people were attentive to hear; "Paul stood on the stairs," which gave

law only, but according to the teaching and interpretations of the fathers. He refers to his education as a Pharisee.

xxii. 4. "This way;" used in reference to a particular mode of life and conduct. Here it means the way or manner of life of those who believed in Jesus.

xxii. 5. "The high-priest;" St. Paul probably refers to Theophilus, who was most likely high-priest at the time of Paul's conversion, and was still living.

xxii. 8. "Jesus of Nazareth;" see how our Lord retains after his ascension the very title which was held in contempt by men.

xxii. 9. Compare chap. ix. 7. There is no real contradiction. In chap. ix. 7 it means that his companions did not hear the words; even as now it is usual to say we do not hear when we fail to catch the words, though the sound may reach us. Here it means that the sound of the voice reached his companions.

xxii. 12. St. Paul here specifies Ananias as a "devout man accord-

a little man, like Zaccheus, some advantage, and consequently some boldness in delivering himself. A sorry pulpit it was, and yet better than none; it served the purpose, though it was not like Ezra's pulpit of wood, made for the purpose. There he "beckoned with the hand unto the people," made signs to them to be quiet, and have a little patience, for he had something to say to them. And so far he gained his point, that every one cried hush to his neighbour, and there was made a profound silence. Probably, the chief captain also intimated his charge to all manner of people to keep silence. If the people were not required to give audience, it was to no purpose at all that Paul was allowed to speak. When the cause of Christ and his Gospel is to be pleaded, there ought to be a great silence, that we may give the more earnest heed; and all little enough.

2. Paul addressed himself to speak, well assured that he was serving the interest of Christ's kingdom, as truly and effectually as if he had been preaching in the synagogue. "He spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue;" that is, in their own vulgar tongue, which was the language of their country, to which he hereby owned not only an abiding relation, but an abiding respect.

CHAPTER XXII.

In the close of the foregoing chapter we had Paul bound, according to Agabus's prophecy of the hard usage he should receive from the Jews at Jerusalem, yet we had his tongue set at liberty, by the permission the chief captain gave him to speak for himself; and so intent he is upon using that liberty of speech which was allowed him, to the honour of Christ, and the service of his interest, that he forgets the bonds he is in, makes no mention of them, but speaks of the great things Christ had done for him with as much ease and cheerfulness as if nothing had been done to ruffle him, or put him into disorder. We have here, 1. His address to the people, and their attention to it, ver. 1, 2. II. The account he gives of himself; 1. What a bigoted Jew he had been in the beginning of his time, ver. 3-5; 2. How he was miraculously converted, and brought over to the faith of Christ, ver. 6-11. 3. How he was confirmed and baptized by the ministry of Ananias, ver. 12-16. 4. How he was afterwards called by an immediate warrant from Heaven to be the apostle of the Gentiles, ver. 17-21. III. The interruption given him upon this by the rabble, who could not bear to hear any thing said in favour of the Gentiles, and the violent passion they flew into upon it, ver. 22, 23. IV. Paul's second rescue out of the hands of the rabble, and the farther course which the chief captain took to find out the true reason of this mighty clamour against Paul, ver. 24, 25. V. Paul's pleading his privilege as a Roman citizen, by which he was exempted from this barbarous method of inquisition, ver. 26-29. VI. The chief captain's removing the cause into the high priest's court, and Paul's appearing there, ver. 30.



EN, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make now unto you.* 2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

Paul had in the last verse of the foregoing chapter gained a great point by commanding so profound a silence after so loud a clamour. Now here observe,

First. With what an admirable composure and presence of mind he addresseth himself to speak. Never was poor man set upon in a more tumultuous manner, nor with more rage and fury; and yet in what he said, 1. There appears no fright, but his mind is sedate and composed. Thus he makes his own words good, "None of these things move me;" and David's, *Ps. iii. 6*, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about." 2. There appears no passion. Though the suggestions against him were all frivolous and unjust, though it would have vexed any man alive to be charged with profaning the temple, just then when he was contriving and designing to shew his respects to it, yet he breaks out into no angry expressions, but is led as a lamb to the slaughter.

Secondly. What respectful titles he gives even to those who thus abused him, and how humbly he craves their attention; "Men, brethren, and fathers," ver. 1. To you, O men, I call; men, that should hear reason, and be ruled by it; men, from whom one may expect humanity. You brethren of the common people; you fathers of the priests. Thus he lets them know that he was one of them, and had not renounced his relation to the Jewish nation, but still had a kindness and concern for it. Note, Though we must not give flattering titles to any, yet we ought to give titles of due respect to all; and those we would do good to we should endeavour not to provoke. Though he was got out of their hands, and was taken under the protection of the chief captain, yet he doth not fall foul upon them, with, "Hear now, ye rebels;" but compliments them with "Men, brethren, and fathers." And observe, he doth not exhibit a charge against them, doth not recriminate, Hear now what I have to say against you, but hear now what I have to say for myself, "Hear ye my defence." A just and reasonable request; for every man that is accused has a right to answer for himself, and has not justice done him if his answer be not patiently and impartially heard.

Thirdly. The language he spoke in, which recommended what he said to the auditory. He spoke in the Hebrew tongue, that is, the vulgar language of the Jews, which at this time was not the pure Old Testament Hebrew, but the Syriac, a dialect of the Hebrew, or rather a corruption of it, as the Italian of the Latin. However, 1. It shewed his continued respect to his countrymen the Jews. Though he had conversed so much with the Gentiles, yet he still retained the Jews' language, and could talk it with ease. By this it appears he is a Jew, for his speech betrayeth him. 2. What he said was the more generally understood, for that was the language everybody spoke; and, therefore, to speak in that language was indeed to appeal to the people, by which he might have somewhat to insinuate into their affections, and therefore "when they heard that he spoke in the Hebrew tongue, they kept the more silence." How can it be thought people should give any attention to that which is spoken to them in a language they do not understand? The chief captain was surprised to hear him speak Greek, *ch. xxi. 37*; the Jews were surprised to hear him speak Hebrew, and both, therefore, think the better of him. But how would they have been surprised, if they had inquired, as they ought to have done, and had found in what variety of tongues "the Spirit gave him utterance," *1 Cor. xiv. 18*, "I speak with tongues more than you all." But the truth is, many wise and good men are therefore slighted, only because they are not known.

3 I am verily a man *which am a Jew*, born in

ing to the law," because of the Jewish audience whom he was addressing; and so met the charge that he was teaching things contrary to the law.

xxii. 13. "Looked up upon him;" Alford says, "De Wette remarks that the two meanings of the verb here unite in the word: 'I looked, with recovered sight, upon him.'"

xxii. 14. "That Just One;" see chap. vii. 52, where Stephen makes use of the same term. We may well imagine that the whole scene

Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. 4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. 5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. 6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. 10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. 11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. 12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, 13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. 14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. 16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. 17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again unto Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. 19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. 21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

Paul here gives such an account of himself as might serve not only to satisfy the chief captain that he was not that Egyptian he took him to be, but the Jews also that he was not that enemy to their church and nation, to their law and temple, as they took him to be. And that what he did in preaching Christ, and, particularly in preaching him to the Gentiles, he did by a Divine commission. He here gives them to understand,

First. What his extraction and education was.

1. That he was one of their own nation, of the stock of Israel, of the seed of Abraham, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, not of any obscure family, or a renegade of some other nation; no, "I am verily a man which am a Jew," *εἰμι ἰσχυρῶς Ἰουδαῖος*, a Jewish man. I am a man, and therefore ought not to be treated as a beast; a man that am a Jew, not a barbarian; I am a sincere friend to your nation, for

of the first martyr's defence and death was vividly present to Paul in his altered circumstances. There are few, if any, better proofs of St. Paul's manly courage than that afforded by this chapter.

xxii. 23. "Cast off their clothes;" rather, "shaking their garments, as shaking off the dust." There was no idea of stoning, as that was out of the question, since Paul was in the custody of the Roman soldiers.

xxii. 24. Lysias, who was unable to understand Paul's speech, from

I am one of it, and should defile my own nest if I should unjustly derogate from the honour of your law and your temple.

2. That he was born in a creditable, reputable place, in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, and was by his birth a freeman of that city. He was not born in servitude, as some of the Jews of the dispersion it is likely were, but he was a gentleman born, and perhaps could produce his certificate of his freedom in that ancient and honourable city. This was indeed but a small matter to make any boast of, and yet it was needful to be mentioned at this time to those who insolently trampled upon him, as if he were to be ranked with the children of fools, yea, the children of base men, *Job xxx. 8*.

3. That he had a learned and liberal education. He was not only a Jew and a gentleman, but a scholar. He was brought up in Jerusalem, the principal seat of the Jewish learning; and at the feet of Gamaliel, whom they all knew to be an eminent doctor of the Jewish law, which Paul was designed to be himself a teacher of; and, therefore, he could not be ignorant of their law, nor be thought to slight it because he did not know it. His parents had brought him very young to this city, designing him for a Pharisee. And some think his being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel intimates, not only that he was one of his pupils, but that he was above any other diligent and constant in attending his lectures, observant of him, and obsequious to him in all he said, as Mary that sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

4. That he was in his early days a very forward and eminent professor of the Jews' religion; his studies and learning were all directed that way. So far was he from being principled in his youth with any disaffection to the religious usages of the Jews, that there was not a young man among them that had a greater or more entire veneration for them than he had, was more strict in observing them himself, nor more hot in enforcing them upon others.

1st. He was an intelligent professor of their religion, and had a clear head. He minded his business at Gamaliel's feet, and was there "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers." What departures he had made from the law were not owing to any confused or mistaken notions of it; for he understood it to a nicety, *κατὰ ἀκριβείαν*, according to the most accurate and exact method. He was not trained up in the principles of the latitudinarians, had nothing in him of a Sadducee, but was of that sect that was most studious in the law, kept most close to it, and, to make it more strict than it was, added to it the traditions of the elders, "the law of the fathers;" the law which was given to them, and which they gave to their children, and so was handed down to us. Paul had as great a value for antiquity and tradition, and the authority of the church, as any of them had; and there was never a Jew of them all understood his religion better than Paul did, nor could better give an account of it, or a reason for it.

2nd. He was an active professor of their religion, and had a warm heart: "I was zealous towards God, as ye all are this day." Many that are very well skilled in the theory of religion, are willing to leave the practice of it to others, but Paul was as much a zealot as a rabbin. He was zealous against every thing that the law prohibited, and for every thing the law enjoined; and this was zeal towards God; because he thought it was for the honour of God, and the service of his interests. And here he compliments his hearers with a candid and charitable opinion of them, that they were all this day zealous towards God. He bears them record, *Rom. x. 2*, "that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." In hating him, and casting him out they said, "Let the Lord be glorified," *Isa. lvi. 5*. And though this did by no means justify their rage, yet it enabled those that prayed, "Father, forgive them," to plead as Christ did, "for they know not what they do." And when Paul owns that he had been zealous for God in the law of Moses, as they were this day, he intimates his hope that they might be zealous for God in Christ, as he was this day.

Secondly. What a fiery, furious persecutor he had been of the Christian religion in the beginning of his time, ver. 4, 5. He mentions this to make it the more plainly and evidently to appear, that the change which was wrought upon him, when he was converted to the Christian faith, was purely the effect of a Divine power; for he was so far from having any previous inclinations to it, or favourable opinions of it, that immediately before that sudden change was wrought in him he had the utmost antipathy imaginable to Christianity, and was filled with rage against it to the last degree. And perhaps he mentions it to justify God in his present trouble; how unrighteous soever they were that persecuted him, God was righteous who permitted them to do it, for time was when he was a persecutor. And he may have a farther view in it, to invite and encourage those people to repent; for he himself had been a blasphemer and a persecutor, and yet obtained mercy. Let us view Paul's picture of himself, when he was a persecutor.

1. He hated Christianity with a mortal enmity; "I persecuted this way unto the death," that is, those that walked in this way I aimed, if possible, to be the death of. He breathed out slaughter against them, *ch. ix. 1*; when they were "put to death he gave his voice against them," *ch. xxvi. 10*; nay, he persecuted not only them that walked in this way, but the way itself,—Christianity, which was branded as a by-way, a sect,—he aimed to persecute this to the death, to be the ruin of this religion. He persecuted it to the death, that is, he could have been willing himself to die in his opposition to Christianity, so some understand it. He would contentedly have lost his life, and would have thought it well laid out, in defence of the laws and traditions of the fathers.

2. He did all he could to frighten people from this way, and out of it, by "binding and delivering into prison both men and women." He filled the jails with Christians; now he himself was bound, he lays a particular stress upon this part of his charge against himself, that he had bound the Christians, and carried them to prison. He likewise reflects upon it with a special regret, that he had imprisoned not only the men, but the women, the weaker sex, who ought to be treated with particular tenderness and compassion.

3. He was employed by the great Sanhedrim, "the high priest, and all the estates of the elders," as an agent for them in suppressing this new sect, so much had he already signalized himself for his zeal against it, ver. 5. The high priest can witness for him, that he was ready to be employed in any service against the Christians. When they heard that many of the Jews at Damascus had embraced the Christian faith, to deter others from doing the like they resolved to proceed against them with the utmost severity, and could not think of a fitter person to be employed in that business than Paul, nor more likely to go through with it. They therefore sent him, and letters by him, to the Jews at Damascus, here called the brethren, because they all descended from one common stock and were of one family in religion too, ordering them to be assisting to Paul in seizing those among them that had turned Christians, and bringing them up prisoners to Jerusalem, in order to their being punished as deserters from the faith and worship of the God of Israel; and so might either be compelled to retreat or be put to death for terror to others. Thus did Saul make havoc of the church, and was in a fair way, if he had gone on awhile, to ruin it, and root it out. Such a one, saith Paul, I was at first, just such as you now are; I know the heart of a persecutor, and therefore pity you, and pray that you may know the heart of a convert, as God soon made me to do; "and who was I, that I could withstand God?"

Thirdly. In what manner he was converted, and made what he now was.

It was not from any natural or external causes; he did not change his religion from affectation of novelty, for he was then as well affected to antiquity as he used to be; nor did it arise from discontent, because he was balked in his preferment, for he was now more than ever in the way of preferment in the Jewish church, much less could it arise from covetousness or ambition, or any hope of mending his fortune in the world by turning Christian, for it was to expose himself to all manner of disgrace and trouble. Nor had he any conversation with the apostles or any other Christians, by whose subtlety and sophistry he might be thought to have been wheedled into this change. No; "it was the Lord's doing," and the circumstances of the doing of it were enough to justify him in the change to all those who believe there is a supernatural power; and none can condemn him for it without reflecting upon that Divine energy by which he was herein overruled. He relates the story of his conversion here very particularly, as we had it before, *ch. ix.*; aiming to shew that it was purely the act of God.

1. He was as fully bent upon persecuting the Christians just before Christ arrested him as ever. He made his journey and was come nigh to Damascus, ver. 6, and had no other thought but to execute the cruel design he was sent upon. He was not conscious of the least compassionate relentings towards the poor Christians, but still represented them to himself as heretics, schismatics, and dangerous enemies both to church and state.

2. It was a light from heaven that first startled him,—a great light, which shone suddenly round about him; and the Jews knew that God is light, and his angels angels of light, and that such a light as this shining at noon, and therefore exceeding that of the sun, must be from God. Had it shone in upon him into some private room, there might have been a cheat in it, but it shone upon him in the open road, at high noon, and so strongly that it struck him to the ground, ver. 7, and all that were with him, *ch. xxvi. 14*. They could not deny but that surely the Lord was in this light.

3. It was a voice from heaven that first began in him awful thoughts of Jesus Christ, whom before he had had nothing but hateful, spiteful thoughts of. The voice called to him by name, to distinguish him from those that journeyed with him; "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And when he asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" it was answered, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest," ver. 8; by which it appeared that this Jesus of Nazareth, whom they also were now persecuting, was one that spake from heaven, and they knew it was dangerous resisting one that did so, *Heb. xii. 25*.

4. Lest it should be objected, how came this light and voice to work such a change upon him, and not upon those that journeyed with him, (though it is very probable it had a good effect upon them, and that they thereupon became Christians,) he observes that his fellow-travellers saw indeed the light, and were afraid they should be consumed with fire from heaven; their own consciences perhaps now telling them that the way they were in was not good, but like Balaam's, when he was going to curse Israel, and therefore they might expect to meet an angel with a flaming glittering sword. But though the light made them afraid, they heard not the voice of him that spake to Paul, that is, they did not distinctly hear the words. Now faith comes by hearing, and therefore that change was now presently wrought upon him that heard the words, and heard them directed to himself, which was not wrought upon them who only saw the light; and yet it might afterwards be wrought upon them too.

5. He assures them that when he was thus startled, he referred himself entirely to a Divine conduct. He did not hereupon presently cry out, Well, I will be a Christian; but "What shall I do, Lord?" Let the same voice from heaven that hath stopped me in the wrong way guide me into the right way, ver. 10; Lord, tell me what I shall do, and I will do it. And immediately he had directions to go to Damascus, and there he should hear farther from him that spoke to him. No more needs to be said from heaven; "There it shall be told thee," by a man like thyself, in the name of him that now speaks to thee, "all things which are appointed for thee to do." The extraordinary ways of Divine revelation, by visions and voices, and the appearance of angels, were designed both in the Old Testament and in the New, only to introduce and establish the ordinary method by the Scriptures and a standing ministry, and therefore were generally superseded when those were settled. The angel did not preach to Cornelius himself, but bade him send for Peter, so the voice here tells not Paul what he shall do, but bids him go into Damascus, and there it shall be told him.

6. As a demonstration of the greatness of that light, which fastened upon him, he tells them of the immediate effect it had upon his eyesight; ver. 11, "I could not see for the glory of that light." It struck him blind for the present; *nimum sensibile ledit sensum*,—"its radiance dazzled him." Condemned sinners are struck blind, as the Sodomites and Egyptians were, by the power of darkness; and it is a lasting blindness, like that of the unbelieving Jews; but convinced sinners are struck blind as Paul here was, not by darkness, but by light. They are for the present brought to be at a loss within themselves, but it is in order to their being enlightened, as the putting of clay upon the eyes of the blind man was the designed method of his cure. Those that were with Paul had not the light so directly darted into their faces as Paul had into his, and therefore they were not blinded as he was; yet, considering the issue, who would not rather have chosen his lot than theirs? They having their sight led Paul by the hand into the city. Paul, being a Pharisee, was proud of his spiritual eyesight. The Pharisees said, "Are we blind also?" *Jo. ix. 40*; nay, they were "confident that they themselves were guides to the blind, and lights to them that were in darkness," *Rom. ii. 19*. Now Paul was thus struck with bodily blindness to make him sensible of his spiritual blindness, and his mistake concerning himself, when he was alive without the law, *Rom. vii. 9*.

Fourthly. How he was confirmed in the change he had made, and farther directed what he should do by Ananias, who lived at Damascus. Observe, 1. The character here given of Ananias. He was not a man that was any way prejudiced against the Jewish nation or religion, but was himself "a devout man according to the law." If not a Jew by birth, yet one that had been proselyted to the Jewish religion, and therefore called a devout man, and thence advanced farther to the faith of Christ, and carried himself so well that he had "a good report of all the Jews that dwelt at Damascus." This was the first Christian that Paul had any friendly communication with, and it was not likely that he should instil into him any such notions as they suspected him to have espoused, injurious to the law or to this holy place.

2. The cure immediately wrought by him upon Paul's eyes, which miracle was to confirm Ananias' mission to Paul, and to ratify all that he should afterwards say to him. He came to him, ver. 13; and, to assure him, that he came to him from Christ, the very same who had torn and would heal him,—had smitten, but would bind him up,—had taken away his sight, but would restore it again with advantage,—he stood by him and said, "Brother Saul, receive thy sight." With which word power went along, and the same hour, immediately, he recovered his sight, and looked up upon him, ready to receive from him the instructions sent by him.

3. The declaration which Ananias makes to him of the favour, the peculiar favour, which the Lord Jesus designed him above any other.

1st. In the present manifestation of himself to him; ver. 14, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee." This powerful call is the result of a particular

the indignation of the people thought he had given great provocation, and so determined to examine him.

xxii. 25. Some render the words, "for the thongs"—i.e., for the scourge; others, "with the thongs"—i.e., the straps which fastened the prisoner to the post.

xxii. 30. "Brought Paul down:" from the tower of Antonia to the council-hall, which was in the upper city, near the western cloister of the Temple.

xxiii. 1. "Earnestly beholding:" see chap. xiii. 9. Alford says that Paul probably never fully recovered his sight after seeing the vision on his way to Damascus, and that perhaps this expression may describe a peculiar look of his, connected with infirmity of sight, and that probably from this cause he failed to recognise the high-priest. The word, however, is used for others besides Paul, and seems simply to refer to steady, attentive, and earnest looking. "I have lived:" the words mean to lead a life of citizenship (see Phil. i. 27,

et-vice. His calling God the God of our fathers intimates that Ananias was himself a Jew by birth, that observed the law of the fathers, and lived upon the promise made unto the fathers. And he gives a reason why he said, Brother Saul, when he spoke of God as the God of our fathers: "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest," *First*, "Know his will," the will of his precept that is to be done by thee, the will of his providence that is to be done concerning thee. He hath chosen thee that thou shouldest know it in a more peculiar manner, not of man, nor by man, but immediately by the revelation of Christ, *Gal. i. 1, 12*. Those whom God hath chosen he hath chosen to know his will, and to do it. *Secondly*, "That thou shouldest see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth," and so shouldest know his will immediately from himself. This was what Paul was in a particular manner chosen to, above others; it was a distinguishing favour, that he should see Christ here upon earth after his ascension into heaven. Stephen saw him standing at the right hand of God, but Paul saw him standing at his right hand. This honour none had but Paul. Stephen saw him; but we do not find that he heard the voice of his mouth, as Paul did, who saith that he was last of all seen of him, as of one born out of due time, *1 Cor. xv. 8*. Christ is here called that Just One, for he is Jesus Christ the righteous, and suffered wrongfully. Observe, Those whom God hath chosen to know his will must have an eye to Christ, and must see him, and hear the voice of his mouth; for it is by him that God has made known his will, his good will to us, and he hath said, Hear ye him.

2nd. In the after-manifestation of himself by him to others; ver. 15, "Thou shalt be his witness," not only a monument of his grace, as a pillar may be, but a witness *viva voce*,—"by word of mouth;" thou shalt publish his Gospel, as that which thou hast experienced the power of, and been delivered into the mould of; "thou shalt be his witness unto all men," Gentiles as well as Jews, "of which thou hast seen and heard," now at the very first. And finding Paul so particularly relating the manner of his conversion in his apologies for himself, here and *ch. xxvii.*, we have reason to think that he frequently made the same narrative in his preaching for the conversion of others. He told them what God had done for his soul, to encourage them to hope that he would do something for their souls.

4. The counsel and encouragement he gave him to join himself to the Lord Jesus by baptism; ver. 16, "Arise, and be baptized." He had in his circumcision been given up to God, but he must now by baptism be given up to God in Christ, must embrace the Christian religion, and the privileges of it in submission to the precepts of it. This must now be done immediately upon his conversion, and so was added to his circumcision: but to the seed of the faithful it comes in the room of it; for it is as that was to Abraham, and his believing seed, "a seal of the righteousness which is by faith," *1st*. The great gospel privilege, which by baptism we have sealed to us, is the remission of sins; "Be baptized, and wash away thy sins;" that is, receive the comfort of the pardon of thy sins in and through Jesus Christ, and lay hold on his righteousness for that purpose. And receive power against sin for the mortifying of thy corruption; for our being washed includes our being both justified and sanctified, *1 Cor. vi. 11*. Be baptized, and rest not in the sign, but make sure of the thing signified, the putting away of the filth of sin. 2nd. The great gospel duty, which by our baptism we are bound to, is to "call on the name of the Lord;" the Lord Jesus; to acknowledge him to be our Lord and our God, and to apply ourselves to him accordingly; to give honour to him, to put all our petitions in his hand. To "call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (Son of David, have mercy on us,) is the periphrasis of a Christian, *1 Cor. i. 2*. We must "wash away our sins, calling on the name of the Lord;" that is, we must seek for the pardon of our sins in Christ's name, and in dependence on him and his righteousness. And in prayer we must not any longer call God the God of Abraham, but the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him our Father; in every prayer our eye must be to Christ. 3rd. We must do this quickly; "Why tarriest thou?" Our covenanting with God in Christ is needful work, that must not be deferred. The case is so plain, that it is needless to deliberate; and the hazard so great, that it is folly to delay. Why should not that be done at the present time that must be done some time or we are undone?

Fifthly. How he was commissioned to go and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. This was the great thing which they were so angry at him for; and, therefore, it was requisite he should for this, in a special manner, produce a Divine warrant, and here he doth it. This commission he did not receive presently upon his conversion; for this was at Jerusalem, whither he did not go till three years after, or more, *Gal. i. 18*; and whether it was then or afterwards that he had this vision here spoken of, we are not certain. But to reconcile them, if possible, to his preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles, he tells them,

1. That he received his orders to do it when he was at prayer, begging of God to appoint him his work, and to shew him the course he should steer. And, which was a circumstance that would have some weight with those he was now speaking to, he was at prayer in the temple, which was to be called "a house of prayer for all people,"—not only in which all people should pray, but in which all people should be prayed for. Now as Paul's praying in the temple was an evidence contrary to their malicious suggestion, that he had a veneration for the temple, though he did not make an idol of it as they did, so God's giving him this commission there in the temple was an evidence that the sending him to the Gentiles would be no prejudice to the temple, unless the Jews by their infidelity made it so. Now it would be a great satisfaction to Paul afterwards in the execution of this commission, to reflect upon it that he received it when he was at prayer.

2. He received it in a vision. He fell into a trance, ver. 17; his external senses for the present locked up; he was in an ecstasy, as when he was wrapped up into the third heaven, and was not at that time sensible whether he was in the body, or out of the body. In this trance he saw Jesus Christ, not with the eyes of his body, as at his conversion, but represented to the eyes of his mind; ver. 18, "I saw him, saying unto me." Our eye must be upon Christ, when we are receiving the law from his mouth; and we must not only hear him speaking, but see him speaking to us.

3. Before Christ gave him a commission to go to the Gentiles, he told him it was no purpose for him to think of doing any good at Jerusalem, so that they must not blame him, but themselves, if he were sent to the Gentiles. Paul came to Jerusalem full of hopes that by the grace of God he might be instrumental to bring those to the faith of Christ who had stood it out against the ministry of the other apostles; and perhaps this was it he was now praying for, that he, having had his education at Jerusalem, and being well known there, might be employed in gathering the children of Jerusalem to Christ, that were not yet gathered; which he thought he had particular advantages for the doing of. But Christ crosseth the measures he had laid, "Make haste," saith he, and "get thee quickly out of Jerusalem;" for, though thou thinkest thyself more likely to work upon them than others, thou wilt find they are more prejudiced against thee than against any other; and, therefore, will not receive thy testimony concerning me. As God knows before who will receive the Gospel, so he knows who will reject it.

4. Paul, notwithstanding this, renews his petition that he might be employed at Jerusalem, because they knew better than any did what he had been before his conversion; and, therefore, must ascribe so great a change in him to the

power of Almighty grace, and consequently, give the greater regard to his testimony. Thus he reasoned, both with himself and with the Lord, and thought he reasoned right, ver. 19, 20; Lord, saith he, they know that I was once of their mind, that I was as bitter an enemy as any of them to such as believed on thee, that I irritated the civil power against them, and imprisoned them, and turned the edge of the spiritual power against them too, and beat them in every synagogue. And, therefore, they will not impute my preaching Christ to education, or any prepossession in his favour, as they do that of other ministers; but will the more readily regard what I say, because they know I have myself been one of them; particularly in Stephen's case. They know that when he was stoned, I was standing by; I was aiding and abetting, and consenting to his death, and, in token of that, kept the clothes of them that stoned him. Now, Lord, saith he, if I appear among them, preaching the doctrine that Stephen preached and suffered for, they will no doubt receive my testimony. No, saith Christ to him, they will not; but will be more exasperated against thee as a deserter from, than against others whom they look upon only as strangers to, their constitution.

5. Paul's petition for a warrant to preach the Gospel at Jerusalem is overruled, and he has peremptory orders to go among the Gentiles; ver. 21, "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Note, God often gives gracious answers to the prayers of his people, not in the thing itself they pray for, but in something better. Abraham prays, "O that Ishmael may live before thee," and God hears him for Isaac. So Paul here prays that he may be an instrument of converting souls at Jerusalem; No, saith Christ, but thou shalt be employed among the Gentiles, and "more shall be the children of the desolate than those of the married wife." It is God that appoints his labourers, both their day and their place, and it is fit they should acquiesce in his appointment, though it may cross their own inclinations. Paul hankers after Jerusalem; to be a preacher there was the top of his ambition, but Christ designs him greater preferment. He shall not enter into other men's labours, as the other apostles did, *John. iv. 38*; but shall break up new ground, and preach the Gospel there where Christ was not named, *Rom. xv. 20*. So often doth Providence contrive better for us than we for ourselves; to the conduct of that we must therefore refer ourselves. "He shall choose our inheritance for us." Observe, Paul shall not go to preach among the Gentiles without a commission; "I will send thee." And if Christ send him, his Spirit shall go along with him, he will stand by him, will carry him on, and bear him out, and give him to see the fruit of his labours. Let not Paul set his heart upon Judaea and Jerusalem, for he must be sent far hence; his call must be quite another way, and his work of another kind. And it might be a mitigation of the offence of this to the Jews, that he did not set up a Gentile church in the neighbour nations; others did that, just under their nose; he was sent to places at a distance, a vast way off, where what he did could not be thought an annoyance to them. Now if they would lay all this together, surely they would see that they had no reason to be angry with Paul for preaching among the Gentiles, or construe it an act of ill-will to his own nation, for he was compelled to it, contrary to his own mind, by an overruling command from Heaven.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. 23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, 24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. 25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? 26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. 27 When the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. 28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. 29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him. 30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

Paul was going on with his account of himself; had shewed them his commission to preach among the Gentiles, without any peevish reflections upon the Jews; and, we may suppose, designed next to shew how he was afterwards by a special direction of the Holy Ghost, at Antioch separated to this service; how tender he was of the Jews, and now respectful to them, and how careful to give them the precedence in all places whither he came, and to unite Jews and Gentiles in one body; and then to shew how wonderfully God had owned him, and what good service had been done to the interest of God's kingdom among men in general, without damage to any of the true interests of the Jewish church in particular. But whatever he designs to say, they resolve he

iii. 20); and St. Paul asserts, in reply to the charge that he had been teaching things contrary to the law of Moses, that he had lived as a conscientious and loyal Jew.

xxiii. 2. "Ananias:" he was appointed to the office of high-priest by Herod, king of Chalcis, A.D. 43. Quadratus, when governor of Syria, sent him to Rome to Claudius Cæsar, on the charge of being a party to the disturbances between the Jews and Samaritans. He was pardoned and returned.

xxiii. 3. "Whited wall:" see Matt. xxiii. 27 for a similar expression used by our Lord. It is descriptive of those who appear better than they really are. "Walls were often made of clay or dried mud, and whitewashed—an apt emblem of an unsound and vile character, glossed over by a plausible demeanour." "God shall smite thee," &c.: "If we consider these words as an outburst of natural indignation, we cannot severely blame them, when we consider how they were provoked.

shall say no more to them; "they gave him audience to this word." Hitherto, they had heard him with patience, and some attention; but, when he speaks of being sent to the Gentiles, though it was what Christ himself said to him, they cannot bear it, not so much as to hear the Gentiles named, such an enmity had they to them, and such a jealousy of them. Upon the mention of this, they have no manner of patience, but forget all rules of decency and equity; thus were they provoked to jealousy by them that were no people, *Rom. x. 19*. Now here we are told,

First, How furious and outrageous the people were against Paul, for mentioning the Gentiles as taken into the cognizance of Divine grace, and so justifying his preaching among them.

1. They interrupted him by lifting up their voice, to put him into confusion, and that nobody might hear a word he said. Galled consciences kick at the least touch; and those who are resolved not to be ruled by reason commonly resolve not to hear it, if they can help it. And the spirit of enmity against the Gospel of Christ commonly shews itself in silencing the ministers of Christ and his Gospel, and stopping their mouths as the Jews did Paul's here. Their fathers had said to the best of seers, See not, *Isa. xxx. 10*; and so they to the best of speakers, "Speak not; forbear, wherefore shouldst thou be smitten?" *2 Chr. xvi. 16*.

2. They clamoured against him as one that was unworthy of life, much more of liberty. Without weighing the arguments he had urged in his own defence, or offering to make any answer to them, they cried out with a confused noise, "A way with such a fellow as this from the earth," who pretends to have a commission to go preach to the Gentiles; why "it is not fit that he should live." Thus the men that have been the greatest blessings of their age have been represented not only as the burthens of the earth, but the plague of their generation. He that was worthy of the greatest honours of life is condemned as not worthy of life itself. See what different sentiments God and men have of good men; and yet they both agree in this, that they are not likely to live long in this world. Paul saith of the godly Jews, that they were men "of whom the world was not worthy," *Heb. xi. 38*; and, therefore, they must be removed, that the world may be justly punished with the loss of them. The ungodly Jews here say of Paul, that it was not fit he should live; and therefore he must be removed, that the world may be eased of the burthen of him, as of the two witnesses, *Rev. xi. 10*.

3. They went stark mad against Paul, and against the chief captain for not killing him immediately, at their request, or throwing him as a prey into their teeth, that they might devour him, *ver. 23*. As men whose reason was quite lost in passion, they cried out like roaring lions, or raging bears, and howled like the evening wolves. They cast off their clothes with fury and violence, as much as to say, that thus they would tear him, if they could but come at him. Or rather, they thus shewed how ready they were to stone him; they that stoned Stephen threw off their clothes, *ver. 20*; or, they rent their clothes, as if he had spoken blasphemy, and threw dust into the air in detestation of it; or, signifying how ready they were to throw stones at Paul, if the chief captain would have permitted them. But why should they go about to give a reason for these expressions of fury, which they themselves could not account for? All they intended was to make the chief captain sensible how much they were enraged and exasperated at Paul, so that he could not do any thing to gratify them more than to let them have their will against him.

4. The chief captain took care for his safety by ordering him to be brought into the castle, *ver. 24*. A prison sometimes has been a protection to good men from popular rage. Paul's hour was not yet come, he had not finished his testimony; and, therefore, God raised up one that took care of him, when none of his friends durst appear on his behalf. Grant not, O Lord, the desire of the wicked.

5. He ordered him the torture, to force from him a confession of some flagrant crime, which had provoked the people to such an uncommon violence against him. He "bade that he should be examined by scourging;" as now in some countries by the rack, "that he might know wherefore they cried so against him." Herein he did not proceed fairly; he should have singled out some of the clamorous, tumultuous complainers, and taken them into the castle, as breakers of the peace, and should have examined them, and by scourging too, what they had to lay to the charge of a man that could give so good an account of himself, and did not appear to have done any thing worthy of death or of bonds. It was proper to ask them, but not at all proper to ask Paul, "wherefore they cried so against him?" He could tell that he had given them no just cause to do it; if there were any cause, let them produce it. No man is bound to accuse himself, though he be guilty, much less ought he to be compelled to accuse himself, when he is innocent. Surely, the chief captain did not know the Jewish nation, when he concluded that he must needs have done something very ill whom they cried out against. Had they not just thus cried out against our Lord Jesus, "Crucify him, crucify him," when they had not one word to say in answer to the judge's question, "Why, what evil has he done?" Is this a fair or just occasion to scourge Paul, that a rude, tumultuous mob cry out against him, but cannot tell why or wherefore, and therefore he must be forced to tell?

6. Paul pleaded his privilege as a Roman citizen, by which he was exempted from all trials and punishments of this nature; *ver. 25*, "as they bound him with thongs," or leathern bands, to the whipping-post, as they used the vilest of malefactors in Bridewell, from whom they would extort a confession, he made no outcry against the injustice of their proceedings against an innocent man, but very mildly let them understand the illegality of their proceedings against him as a citizen of Rome; which he had done once before at Philippi, after he had been scourged, *ch. xvi. 37*; but here he makes use of it for prevention. He "said to the centurion that stood by," You know the law, pray, "Is it lawful for you, who are yourselves Romans, to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" The manner of his speaking plainly speaks what a holy security and serenity of mind this good man enjoyed, not disturbed either with anger or fear in the midst of all those indignities that were done him, and the danger he was in. The Romans had a law (it was called, *Lex Sempromia*) that if any magistrate did chastise or condemn a freeman of Rome, *indicta causa*,—"without hearing him speak for himself, and deliberating upon the whole of his case," he should be liable to the sentence of the people, who were very jealous of their liberties. It is indeed the privilege of every man not to have wrong done him, except it be proved he has done wrong; as it is of every Englishman by Magna Charta, not to be disseized of his life or freehold, but by a verdict of twelve men of his peers.

7. The chief captain was surprised at this, and put into a fright. He had taken Paul to be a vagabond Egyptian, and wondered he could speak Greek, *ch. xxi. 37*; but is much more surprised now he finds that he is as good a gentleman as himself. How many men of great worth and merit are despised, because they are not known; are looked upon and treated as the offscouring of all things, when those that count them so, if they knew their true character, would own them to be of the excellent ones of the earth. The chief captain had centurions, under-officers, attending him, *ch. xxi. 32*; one of these reports this matter to the chief captain, *ver. 26*, "Take heed what thou dost, for this man is a Roman;" and what indignity is done to him will be construed an offence against the majesty of the Roman people, as they loved to speak. They all knew what a value was put upon this privilege of the Roman citizens. Truly

extols it in one of his orations against Verres, *O nomen dulce libertatis. O jus civium nostrae civitatis! O lex Porcia! O leges Sempromiae, facinus est vincire Romanum civem, sedus verberare.*—O liberty! I love thy charming name: and these our Porcian and Sempromian laws, how admirable! It is a crime to bind a Roman citizen, but an unpardonable one to beat him. Therefore, saith the centurion, let us look to ourselves; if this man be a Roman, and we do him any indignity, we shall be in danger to lose our commissions at least. Now,

1st. The chief captain would be satisfied of the truth of this from his own mouth; *ver. 37*, "Tell me, art thou a Roman?" Art thou entitled to the privileges of a Roman citizen? Yes, saith Paul, I am; and perhaps produces some ticket or instrument which proved it, for otherwise they would scarce have taken his word.

2nd. The chief captain very freely compares notes with him upon this matter, and it appears, that privilege Paul had as a Roman citizen was, of the two, more honourable than the colonel's; for the colonel owns that his was purchased. I am a freeman of Rome, but "with a great sum obtained I this freedom;" it cost me dear, how came you by it? Why truly, saith Paul, "I was freeborn." Some think he became entitled to his freedom by the place of his birth, as a native of Tarsus, a city privileged by the emperor with the same privileges that Rome itself enjoyed. Others rather think it was by his father or grandfather having served in the wars between Caesar and Antony, or some other of the civil wars of Rome, and being for some signal piece of service rewarded with the freedom of the city; and so Paul came to be freeborn. And here he pleads it for his own preservation; for which end not only we may but we ought to use all lawful means.

3rd. This put an immediate stop to Paul's trouble. They that were appointed to examine him by scourging quitted the spot; they departed from him, *ver. 29*, lest they should run themselves into a snare. Nay, and the colonel himself, though we may suppose him to have a considerable interest, was afraid when he heard he was a Roman, because, though he had not beaten him, yet he had bound him, in order to his being beaten. Thus many are restrained from evil practices by the fear of man, that would not be restrained from them by the fear of God. See here the benefit of human laws and magistry, and what reason we have to be thankful to God for them; for even when they have given no countenance or special protection to God's people and ministers, yet, by their general support of equity and fair-dealing between man and man, they have served to check the rage of wicked and unreasonable illegal men, that otherwise would know no bounds, and to say, "Hitherto it shall come, but no farther—here shall its proud waves be stayed." And therefore this service we owe to all in authority, to pray for them, because this benefit we have reason to expect from them, whether we have it or no, as long as we are quiet and peaceable, "to live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty," *1 Tim. ii. 1, 2*.

4th. The governor the next day brought Paul before the Sanhedrim, *ver. 30*. He first "loosed him from his bonds," that those might not prejudice his cause, and that he might not be charged with having pinioned a Roman citizen, and then summoned "the chief priests and all their council" to come together to take cognizance of Paul's case; for he found it to be a matter of religion, and therefore looked upon them to be the most proper judges of it. Gallio in this case discharged Paul; finding it to be a matter of their law, he drove the prosecutors from the judgment-seat, *ch. xviii. 16*, and would not concern himself at all in it. But this Roman, that was a military man, kept Paul in custody, and appealed from the rabble to the general assembly. Now, First, We may hope that hereby he intended Paul's safety, as thinking if he were an innocent and inoffensive man, though the multitude might be incensed against him, yet the chief priests and the elders would do him justice and clear him; for they were or should be men of learning and consideration, and their court governed by rules of equity. When the prophet could find no good among the poorer sort of people, he concluded it was because they "knew not the way of the Lord, nor the judgments of their God," and promised himself that he should speed better among the great men, as the chief captain here did, but soon found himself disappointed there: these have "altogether broken the yoke and burst the bonds," *Jer. v. 4, 5*. But, Secondly, That which he is here said to aim at is the gratifying of his own curiosity. He "would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews." Had he sent for Paul to his own chamber, and talked freely with him, he might soon have learned from him that which would have done more than satisfy his inquiry, and which might have persuaded him to be a Christian. But it is too common for great men to affect to see that at a distance from them which might awaken their consciences, and to desire to have no more of the knowledge of God's ways than may serve them to talk of.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The close of the foregoing chapter left Paul in the high priest's court, into which the chief captain (whether to his advantage or no I know not) had removed his cause from the mob; and if his enemies act there against him with less noise, yet it is with more subtlety. Now here we have, 1. Paul's protestation of his own integrity, and of a civil respect to the high priest, however he had upon a sudden spoken warmly to him, and justly, *ver. 1—5*. 11. Paul's prudent contrivance to get himself clear of them, by setting the Pharisees and Sadducees at variance one with another, *ver. 6—9*. 111. The governor's seasonable interposal to rescue him out of their hands likewise, *ver. 10*. IV. Christ's more comfortable appearing to him, to animate him against those difficulties that lay before him, and to tell him what he must expect, *ver. 11*. V. A bloody conspiracy of some desperate Jews to kill Paul, and their drawing in the chief priests and the elders to be aiders and abettors with them in it, *ver. 12—15*. VI. The discovery of this conspiracy to Paul, and by him to the chief captain, who perceived so much of their inveterate malice against Paul, that he had reason enough to believe the truth of it, *ver. 16—22*. VII. The chief captain's care of Paul's safety, by which he prevented the execution of the design; he sent him away immediately under a strong guard, from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, which was now the residence of Felix, the Roman governor, and there he safely arrived, *ver. 23—35*.



AND Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. 3 Then said Paul

xxiii. 5. "I wist not:" there have been several explanations offered of these words of St. Paul. One explanation is that St. Paul really did not know that this was the high-priest, as there were such frequent changes at this time in the office, and St. Paul had been absent from Jerusalem. Another is that given by Matthew Henry, the expression being regarded as the same as "I did not remember or consider," and that St. Paul here retracts what he confesses to have been a hasty word. Again, it has been thought that St. Paul

was speaking ironically, refusing to recognise a man like Ananias as high-priest; while some have supposed that the imperfection of St. Paul's sight had prevented him recognising the high-priest.

xxiii. 6. "The son of a Pharisee:" the reading best supported is "a son of Pharisees."

xxiii. 7. "Dissension:" rather, "violent dispute or discussion." "The multitude:" probably by this term we are to understand the bystanders as well as the Sanhedrim.

unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou* whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? 4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? 5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, 'Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.'

Perhaps when Paul was brought, as he often was, (*corpus cum causa*,—'the person and the cause together,') before heathen magistrates and councils, where he and his cause were slighted, because not at all understood; he thought, if he were brought before the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, he should be able to deal with them to some good purpose, and yet we do not find that he works at all upon them. Here we have,

First. Paul's protestation of his own integrity. Whether the chief priest put any question to him, or the chief captain made any representation of his case to the court, we are not told. But Paul appeared here,

1. With a good courage. He was not at all put out of countenance upon his being brought before such an august assembly, which in his youth he had conceived such a veneration for; nor did he fear their calling him to an account about the letters they gave him to Damascus, to persecute the Christians there, though (for aught we know) this was the first time he had ever seen them since; but he "earnestly beheld the council." When Stephen was brought before them they thought to have faced him down, but could not, such was his holy confidence; they "looked stedfastly on him, and his face was as that of an angel," *ch. vi. 15*. Now Paul was brought before them he thought to have faced them down, but could not, such was their wicked impudence. However, now was fulfilled in him what God promised to Ezekiel, *Eze. iii. 8, 9*, "I have made thy face strong against their faces; fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks."

2. With a good conscience, and that gave him a good courage.

Hic murus atheniens esto,

Nil conscire sibi.

"Be still thy brazen bulwark of defence,

Be this to preserve thy conscious innocence."

He said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." However I may be reproached, my heart doth not reproach me, but witnesseth for me. 1st. He had always been a man inclined to religion. He never was a man that lived at large, but always put a difference between moral good and evil; even in his unregenerate state he was, as "touching the righteousness that was in the law, blameless." He was no unthinking man, who never considered what he did, no designing man, who cared not what he did, so he could but compass his own ends. 2nd. Even when he persecuted the church of God, yet he thought he ought to do it, and that he did God service in it. Though his conscience was misinformed, yet he acted according to the dictates of it: see *ch. xxvi. 9*. 3rd. He seems rather to speak of the time since his conversion, since he left the service of the high priest, and fell under their displeasure for so doing. He doth not say, From my beginning until this day; but all the time in which you have looked upon me as a deserter, an apostate, and an enemy to your church, even to this day. "I have lived in all good conscience before God;" whatever you may think of me, I have in every thing approved myself to God, and lived honestly, *Heb. xiii. 18*. He had aimed at nothing but to please God, and do his duty in those things for which they were so incensed against him; in all he had done towards the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, and the setting of it up among the Gentiles, he had acted conscientiously.

See here the character of an honest man. First. He sets God before him, and lives as in his sight, and under his eye, and with an eye to him. "Walk before me, and be thou upright." Secondly. He makes conscience of what he saith and doth; and, though he may be under some mistakes, yet according to the best of his knowledge he abstains from that which is evil, and cleaves to that which is good. Thirdly. He is universally conscientious; and they that are not so are not at all truly conscientious; is so in all manner of conversation. "I have lived in all good conscience;" have had my whole conversation under the direction and dominion of conscience. Fourthly. He continues so, and perseveres in it; I have lived so until this day. Whatever changes pass over him, he is still the same, strictly conscientious. And those who thus live in all good conscience before God may, like Paul here, lift up their face without spot; and, if their hearts condemn them not, may have confidence both towards God and man, as Job had when he still held fast his integrity, and Paul himself, whose rejoicing was this, the testimony of his conscience.

Secondly. The abuse which Ananias the high priest did to Paul. He "commanded them that stood by," the beaules that attended the court, "to smite him on the mouth," *ver. 2*, to give him a dash on the teeth, either with a hand, or with a rod. Our Lord Jesus was thus despitely used in this court, by one of the servants, *Jno. xviii. 22*; as was foretold, *Mic. v. 1*, "They shall smite the judge of Israel upon the cheek." But here was an order of court for the doing of it, and it is likely it was done.

1. The high priest was highly offended at Paul; some think because he looked so boldly and earnestly at the council, as if he would face them down; others, because he did not address himself particularly to him, as president, with some title of honour and respect, but spoke freely and familiarly to them all, as men and brethren. His protestation of his integrity was provocation enough to one who was resolved to run him down, and make him odious. When he could charge him with no crime, he thought it was crime enough that he asserted his own innocence.

2. In his rage he ordered him to be smitten, so to put disgrace upon him; and to be smitten on the mouth, as having offended with his lips, and in token of his enjoining him silence. This brutish barbarous method he had recourse to when he "could not answer the wisdom and spirit wherewith he spake." Thus Zedekiah smote Micaiah, *1 Kin. xxii. 24*; and Pashur smote Jeremiah, *Jer. xx. 2*; when they spoke in the name of the Lord. If therefore we see such indignities done to good men,—nay, if they be done to us for well doing, and well saying,—we must not think it strange; Christ will give those the kisses of his mouth, *Cant. i. 2*, who for his sake receive blows on the mouth. And though it may be expected that, as Solomon saith, "every man should kiss his lips that giveth a right answer," *Pr. xxiv. 26*, yet we often see the contrary.

Thirdly. The denunciation of the wrath of God against the high priest for this wickedness in the place of judgment, *Eccl. iii. 16*; and it agrees with what follows there, *ver. 17*, with which Solomon comforted himself, "I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked;" "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall," *ver. 3*. Paul did not speak this in any sinful heat or passion, but in a holy zeal against the high priest's abuse of his power, and with something of a prophetic spirit, not at all with a spirit of revenge.

xxiii. 9. "Let us not fight against God:" these words are not found in the best MSS. The sense should be, "But what if an angel or spirit have spoken to him?" unless we regard the sentence as unfinished because of the disturbance which ensued. (See chap. xxii. 6—22.)

xxiii. 11. "By these few words the Lord assured him (1) of a safe issue from his present trouble; (2) of an accomplishment of his intention of visiting Rome; (3) of the certainty that, however he

1. He gives him his due character; "thou whited wall," that is, thou hypocrite, a mud wall, trash and dirt, and rubbish underneath, but plastered over, or whitewashed. It is the same comparison in effect with that of Christ, when he compares the Pharisees to whited sepulchres, *Mat. xxiii. 27*. They that daubed with untempered mortar failed not to daub themselves over with something that made them look not only clean, but gay.

2. He reads him his just doom. "God shall smite thee," shall bring upon thee his sore judgments, especially spiritual judgments. Grotius thinks this was fulfilled soon after in his removal from the office of the high priest, either by death or deprivation, for he finds another in that office a little while after this; probably he was smitten by some sudden stroke of Divine vengeance. Jeroboam's hand was withered when it was stretched out against a prophet.

3. He assigns a good reason for that doom; "for sittest thou there, as president in the supreme judicature of the church, pretending 'to judge me after the law,' to convict and condemn me by the law, 'and yet commandest me to be smitten,' before any crime is proved upon me, which is 'contrary to the law?' No man must be beaten unless he was worthy to be beaten, *Deu. xxv. 2*. It is against all law, human and Divine, natural and positive, to hinder a man from making his defence, and to condemn him unheard. When Paul was beaten by the rabble, he could say, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do;" but it is inexcusable in a high priest that is appointed to judge according to law.

Fourthly. The offence which was taken at this bold word of Paul's: *ver. 4*, "They that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?" It is probably conjectured that those who blamed Paul for what he said were believing Jews, who were zealous for the law, and consequently for the honour of the high priest; and therefore took it heinously that Paul should thus reflect upon him, and checked him for it. See here then,

1. What a hard game Paul had to play, when his enemies were abusive to him, and his friends were so far from standing by him, and appearing for him, that they were ready to find fault with his management.

2. How apt even the disciples of Christ themselves are to overvalue outward pomp and power. As because the temple had been God's temple, and a magnificent structure, there were those who followed Christ that could not bear to have any thing said that threatened the destruction of it; so, because the high priest had been God's high priest, and was a man that made a figure, though he was an inveterate enemy to Christianity, yet these were disgusted at Paul for giving him his due.

Fifthly. The excuse that Paul made for what he had said, because he found it was a stumblingblock to his weak brethren, and might prejudice them against him in other things. These Jewish Christians, though weak, yet were brethren, so he calls them here, and in consideration of that is almost ready to recall his words; for "who is offended," saith he, "and I burn not?" *2 Cor. xi. 29*. His fixed resolution was rather to abridge himself in the use of his Christian liberty than give offence to a weak brother; rather than do it he will eat no flesh while the world stands, *1 Cor. viii. 13*. And so here, though he had taken a liberty to tell the high priest his own, yet when he found it gave offence, he cried peccavi, wished he had not done it; and, though he did not beg the high priest's pardon, nor excuse it to him, yet he begs their pardon who took offence at it, because this was not a time to inform them better, nor to say what he could say to justify himself.

1. He excuseth it with this, that he did not consider, when he said it, who he spoke to: *ver. 5*, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest;" *οὐκ ᾔδειν*, I did not just then think of the dignity of his place, or else I would have spoken more respectfully to him. I see not how we can with any probability think that Paul did not know him to be the high priest, for Paul had been seven days in the temple at the time of the feast, where he could not miss of seeing the high priest; and his telling him that he sat to judge him after the law, shews that he knew who he was; but, saith he, I did not consider it. Dr. Whitby puts this sense upon it, that the prophetic impulse that was upon him, and inwardly moved him to say what he did did not permit him to advert that it was the high priest, lest this law might have restrained him from complying with that impulse, but the Jews acknowledged that prophets might use a liberty in speaking of rulers which others might not, as *Isa. i. 10, 23*. Or, (as he quotes the sense of Grotius and Lightfoot,) Paul doth not go about to excuse what he had said in the least, but rather to justify it: I own that God's high priest is not to be reviled; but I do not own this Ananias to be high priest, he is an usurper, he came to the office by bribery and corruption; and the Jewish rabbins say, that he who doth so is neither a judge, nor to be honoured as such. Yet,

2. He takes care that what he had said should not be drawn into a precedent, to the weakening of the obligation of that law in the least; "for it is written," and it remains a law in full force, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." It is for the public good that the honour of the magistracy should be supported, and not suffer for the miscarriages of those that are intrusted with it; and therefore that a decorum be observed in speaking both of and to princes and judges. Even in Job's time it was not thought "fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked; or to princes, You are ungodly," *Job xxiv. 18*. Even when we do well and suffer for it we must take it patiently, *1 Pet. ii. 20*. Not as if great men may not hear of their faults, and public grievances be complained of by proper persons, and in a decent manner, but there must be a particular tenderness for the honour and reputation of those in authority more than of other people, because the law of God requires a particular reverence to be paid to them, as God's viceregents; and it is of dangerous consequence to have those any way countenanced who "despise dominions, and speak evil of dignities," *Jude 8*; "Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought," *Eccl. x. 20*.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. 7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. 8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. 9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part

might be sent thither, he should preach the Gospel and bear testimony there. So that they upheld and comforted him (1) in the uncertainty of his life from the Jews; (2) in the uncertainty of his liberation from prison at Cæsarea; (3) in the uncertainty of his surviving the storm in the Mediterranean; (4) in the uncertainty of his fate on arriving at Rome. So may one crumb of Divine grace and help be multiplied to feed five thousand wants and anxieties" (Alford).

xxiii. 14. Some suppose that the conspirators addressed themselves

arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God. 10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle. 11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

"Many are the troubles of the righteous, but" some way or other "the Lord delivereth them out of them all." Paul owned he had experienced the truth of this in the persecutions he had undergone among the Gentiles: see 2 Tim. iii. 11, "out of them all the Lord delivered me." And now he finds that he that has delivered, doth and will. He that delivered him in the foregoing chapter from the tumult of the people here delivers him from that of the elders. First. His own prudence and ingenuity stand him in some stead, and contribute much to his escape. Paul's greatest honour, and that upon which he most valued himself, was that he was a Christian, and an apostle of Christ, and all his other honours he despised and made nothing of, in comparison with those, "counting them but dung that he might win Christ," and yet he had sometimes occasion to make use of his other honours, and they did him service. His being a citizen of Rome saved him in the foregoing chapter from being whipped by the chief captain as a vagabond. And here his being a Pharisee saved him from being condemned by the Sanhedrim as an apostate from the faith and worship of the God of Israel. It will consist very well with our willingness to suffer for Christ to use all lawful methods, nay, and arts too, both to prevent suffering, and to extricate ourselves out of it. The honest policy Paul used here for his own preservation was to divide his judges, and to set them at variance one with another about him; and, by incensing one part of them more against him, to engage the contrary part for him.

1. The great council was made up of Sadducees and Pharisees, and Paul perceived it. He knew the characters of many of them, ever since he lived among them, and saw those among them whom he knew to be Sadducees, and others whom he knew to be Pharisees; ver. 6, "One part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees," and perhaps near an equal part. Now these differed very much from one another, and yet they ordinarily agreed well enough to do the business of the council together.

1st. The Pharisees were bigots, zealous for the ceremonies, not only those which God had appointed, but those which were enjoined by the tradition of the elders. They were great sticklers for the authority of the church, and for enforcing obedience to its injunctions, which occasioned many quarrels between them and our Lord Jesus. But at the same time they were very orthodox in the faith of the Jewish church concerning the world of spirits, "the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."

2nd. The Sadducees were deists; no friends to the Scripture, or Divine revelation. The books of Moses they admitted as containing a good history, and a good law, but had little regard to the other books of the Old Testament: see Mat. xxii. 23. The account here given of these Sadducees is, *First*, That they deny the resurrection, not only the return of the body to life, but a future state of rewards and punishments; they had neither hope of eternal happiness nor dread of eternal misery, nor expectation of any thing on the other side death; and it was upon these principles that they said, "It is vain to serve God, and called the proud happy," Mat. iii. 14, 15. *Secondly*, That they denied the existence of angels and spirits, and allowed of no being but matter. They thought that God himself was corporeal, and had parts and members as we have. When they read of angels in the Old Testament they supposed them to be messengers that God made and sent on his errands as there was occasion; or that they were impressions on the fancies of those they were sent to, and no real existences; that they were this, or that, or any thing rather than what they were. And as for the souls of men, they looked upon them to be nothing else but the temperament of the humours of the body, or the animal spirits; but denied their existence in a state of separation from the body, and any difference between the soul of a man and of a beast. These no doubt pretended to be freethinkers, but really thought as meanly, absurdly, and slavishly as possible. It is strange how men of such corrupt and wicked principles could come into office, and have a place in the great Sanhedrim. But many of them were of quality and estate, and they complied with the public establishment, and so got in, and kept in. But they were generally stigmatized as heretics, were ranked with the Epicureans, and were prayed against, and excluded from eternal life. The prayer which the modern Jews use against Christians, Witsius thinks, was designed by Gamaliel, who made it, against the Sadducees; and that they meant them in their usual imprecation, "Let the name of the wicked rot." But how degenerate was the character and how miserable the state of the Jewish church, when such profane men as these were among their rulers!

2. In this matter of difference between the Pharisees and Sadducees Paul openly declared himself to be on the Pharisees' side, against the Sadducees; ver. 6, he cried out, so as to be heard by all, "I am a Pharisee," was bred a Pharisee, nay, I was born one in effect, for I was "the son of a Pharisee," my father was one before me, and thus far I am still a Pharisee, that I "hope for the resurrection of the dead;" and I may truly say, that if the matter were rightly understood it would be found this was it for which I was now "called in question." When Christ was upon the earth the Pharisees set themselves most against him, because he witnessed against their traditions and corrupt glosses upon the law. But after his ascension the Sadducees set themselves most against his apostles, because they "preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead," ch. iv. 1, 2. And it is said, ch. v. 17, that they were the sect of the Sadducees that were filled with indignation at them, because they preached that life and immortality which is brought to light by the Gospel. Now here,

1st. Paul owns himself a Pharisee so far as the Pharisees were in the right. Though, as Pharisaism was opposed to Christianity, he set himself against it, and against all its traditions that were set up in competition with the law of God, or in contradiction to the Gospel of Christ, but as it was opposed to Sadducism, he adhered to it. We must never think the worse of any truth of God, nor be more shy of owning it, for its being held by men otherwise corrupt. If the Pharisees will hope for the resurrection of the dead, Paul will go along with them in that hope, and be one of them whether they will or no.

only to those members of the Sanhedrim who were Sadducees; others think that the temporary breach was healed by the common hatred which both Pharisees and Sadducees really bore to Paul.

xxiii. 16. "Paul's sister's son:" from his hearing of this conspiracy, it would seem probable that he was a resident at Jerusalem, and perhaps connected with one of the religious schools.

xxiii. 23. A large escort, because of the unsettled state of Judæa, and the uncertainty as to what formidable extent the conspiracy might

2nd. He might truly say that, being persecuted as a Christian, this was the thing he was called in question for. Perhaps he knew that the Sadducees, though they had not such an interest in the common people as the Pharisees had, yet had underhand incensed the mob against him, under pretence of his having preached to the Gentiles, but really because he had preached the hope of the resurrection. However, being called in question for his being a Christian, he might truly say he was called in question "for the hope of the resurrection of the dead," as he afterwards pleaded, ch. xxiv. 15; xxvi. 6, 7. Though Paul preached against the traditions of the elders, as his Master had done, and therein opposed the Pharisees, yet he valued himself more upon his preaching for the resurrection of the dead, and a future state, in which he concurred with the Pharisees.

3. This occasioned a division in the council. It is probable the high priest sided with the Sadducees, as he had done, ch. v. 17, and made it to appear by his rage at Paul, ver. 2, which alarmed the Pharisees so much the more, but so it was, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, ver. 7; for this word of Paul's made the Sadducees more warm, and the Pharisees more cool in the prosecution of him; so that "the multitude was divided," *ἐξίσταθη*—there was a schism, that is, a quarrel among them, and the edge of their zeal began to turn from Paul against one another; nor could they go on to act against him when they could not agree among themselves, or prosecute him for breaking the unity of the church, when there was so little among them of the unity of the spirit. All the cry had been against Paul, but now there arose a great cry against one another, ver. 9. So much did a fierce, furious spirit, prevail among all orders of the Jews at this time, that every thing was done with clamour and noise, and in such a tumultuous manner were the great principles of their religion stickled for, by which they received little service: for "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Gainsayers may be convinced by fair reasoning, but never by a great cry.

4. The Pharisees hereupon (would one think it?) took Paul's part, ver. 9; they strove *ἀντιπαύσαντο*—they fought, saying, "we find no evil in this man." He had carried himself decently and reverently in the temple, and had attended the service of the church; and, though it was but occasionally, yet he shewed that he was not such an enemy to it as he was said to be. He had spoken very handsomely in his own defence, and given a good account of himself; and he now declared himself orthodox in the great principles of religion, as well as regular and conscientious in his conversation, and therefore they cannot see he has "done any thing worthy of death or of bonds." Nay, they go farther, "If a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him" concerning Jesus, and put him upon preaching as he doth, though we may not be so far satisfied as to give credit to him, yet we ought to be cautioned not to oppose him, lest we be found fighting against God, as Gamaliel, who was himself a Pharisee, had agreed, ch. v. 39. Now here,

1st. We may observe it to the honour of the Gospel, that it was witnessed to even by its adversaries, and confessions not only of its innocency, but of its excellency, were extorted sometimes by the power of truth, even from those that persecuted it. Pilate found no fault in Christ though he put him to death, nor Festus in Paul, though he continued him in bonds; and the Pharisees here supposed it possible that Paul might have a commission sent him from heaven by an angel to do what he did; and yet it should seem, as elders, they after this joined with the high priest in prosecuting him, ch. xxiv. 1. They sinned against the knowledge which they not only had, but sometimes owned, as Christ had said of them, "They have both seen and hated both me and my Father," Jno. xv. 24. Yet,

2nd. We will hope that some of them at least did from henceforward conceive a better opinion of Paul than they had had, and were favourable to him, having had such a satisfactory account both of his conversation in all good conscience and of his faith touching another world; and then it must be observed to their honour, that their zeal for the traditions of the elders, which Paul had departed from, was so far swallowed up in a zeal for the great and fundamental doctrines of religion, to which Paul still adhered, that if he will heartily join with them against the Sadducees, and stick to the hope of the resurrection of the dead, they will not think his shaking off the ceremonial law to be any evil in him, but charitably hope that he walks according to the light God has given him by some angel or spirit, and are so far from persecuting him that they are ready to patronize and protect him. The persecuting Pharisees of the church of Rome are not of this spirit, for let a man be never so sincere and zealous for all the articles of the Christian faith, yet, if he lay not his neck under the yoke of their church's authority, they find evil enough in him to persecute him unto the death.

Secondly. The chief captain's care and conduct stands him in more stead; for when he had thrown this bone of contention between the Pharisees and Sadducees, which had set them together by the ears, and had gained a fair testimony from the Pharisees, yet he is never the nearer, but is in danger of being pulled in pieces by them; the Pharisees pulling to have him set at liberty, and the Sadducees pulling to have him put to death, or thrown to the people, like Daniel into the den of lions; so that the chief captain was forced to come with his soldiers and rescue him, as he had done, ch. xxi. 32; xxii. 24.

1. See here Paul's danger. Between his friends and his enemies he had like to have been pulled to pieces, the one hugging him to death, the other crushing him to death; such violences are they liable to that are eminent, and that are become remarkable, as Paul was, who was by some so much beloved, and by others so much maligned.

2. His deliverance. The chief captain ordered his "soldiers to go down" from the upper wards, "and to take him by force from among them," out of that apartment in the temple where he had ordered the council to meet, "and to bring him into the castle," or tower of Antonia; for he saw he could make nothing of them towards the understanding of the merits of his cause.

Thirdly. Divine consolations stood him in most stead of all. The chief captain had rescued him out of the hands of cruel men; but still he had him in custody, and what might be the issue he could not tell. The castle was indeed a protection to him, but withal it was a confinement; and as it was now his preservation from so great a death, it might be his reservation for a greater. We do not find that any of the apostles or elders at Jerusalem came to him; either they had not courage, or they had not admission. Perhaps, "in the night following," Paul was full of thoughts and cares what should become of him, and how his present troubles might be turned to answer some good purpose. Then did the Lord Jesus make him a kind visit, and though at midnight, yet a very seasonable one; ver. 11, "The Lord stood by him," came to his bedside, though perhaps it was but a bed of straw, to shew him that he was all the day long with him really, as sure as he was in the night with him visibly. Note, Whoever is against us, we need not fear if the Lord stand by us; if he undertake our protection we may set those that seek our ruin at defiance. "The Lord is with those that uphold my soul," and then nothing can come amiss.

1. Christ bids him have a good heart on it; "Be of good cheer, Paul; be not discouraged, let not what has happened sadden thee, nor let what may yet be before thee frighten thee. Note, It is the will of Christ that his servants that are faithful should be always cheerful. Perhaps Paul, in the reflection, began to be jealous of himself, whether he had done well in what he said to the council

have spread. The "soldiers" were the heavy-armed legionaries, the "peasmen" the light-armed troops. The different kinds of troops were for the different circumstances in which they might be placed, and the different kinds of ground over which they would have to pass.

xxiii. 24. "Felix:" after the death of Herod Agrippa (chap. xii. 23) Judæa became again a part of the Roman province of Syria, and was governed by procurators. Felix was a freed man of Claudius,

the day before; but Christ by this word satisfies him that God approved of his conduct. Or perhaps it troubled him that his friends did not come to him; but Christ's visit did itself speak, though he had not said it, "Be of good cheer, Paul."

2. It is a strange argument which he makes use of to encourage him; "As thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." One would think this was but cold comfort: As thou hast undergone a great deal of trouble for me, so thou must undergo a great deal more; and yet this was designed to hearten him; for hereby he is given to understand, 1st. That he had been serving Christ, as a witness for him, in what he had hitherto endured. It was for no fault that he was buffeted, and that it was not his former persecuting of the church that was now remembered against him, however he might remember it against himself, but he was still going on with his work. 2nd. That he had not yet finished his testimony, nor was by his imprisonment laid aside as useless, but was only reserved for farther service. Nothing disheartened Paul so much as the thought of being taken off from doing service to Christ, and good to souls: Fear not, saith Christ, I have not done with thee. 3rd. Paul seems to have had a particular fancy, and an innocent one, to go to Rome, to preach the Gospel there, though it was already preached, and a church planted there; yet, being a citizen of Rome, he longed for a journey thither, and had designed it, *ch. xix. 21*, "After I have been at Jerusalem, I must also see Rome." And he had written to the Romans some time ago, that he longed to see them, *Rom. i. 11*. Now he was ready to conclude that this had broke his measures, and he should never see Rome. But even in that Christ tells him he should be gratified, since he desired it for the honour of Christ and to do good.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy. 14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul. 15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him. 16 And when Paul sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him. 18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto thee, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee. 19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me? 20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly. 21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee. 22 So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me. 23 And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; 24 And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor. 25 And he wrote a letter after this

manner: 26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. 27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. 28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: 29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. 30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell. 31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. 32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: 33 Who, when they came to Cæsarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him. 34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia; 35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

We have here the story of a plot against the life of Paul; how it was laid, how it was discovered, and how it was defeated.

First. How this plot was laid. They found they could gain nothing by popular tumult, or legal process, and therefore have recourse to the barbarous method of assassination: they will come upon him suddenly and stab him, if they can but get him within their reach: so restless is their malice against this good man, that when one design fails they will turn another stone. Now observe here,

1. Who they were that formed this conspiracy. They were certain Jews that had the utmost degree of indignation against him because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, *ver. 12*. And they were more than forty that were in the design, *ver. 13*. "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me!"

2. When the conspiracy was formed. "When it was day." Satan had filled their hearts in the night to purpose it, and as soon as it was day they got together to prosecute it; answering the account which the prophet gives of some who work evil upon their beds, and when the morning is light they practise it, and are laid under a woe for it, *Mic. ii. 1*. In the night Christ appeared to Paul to protect him, and when it was day here were forty men appearing against him to destroy him; they were not up so soon but Christ was up before them. "God shall help her, and that right early." *Ps. xli. 5*.

3. What the conspiracy was. These men banded together in a league, perhaps they called it a holy league: they engaged to stand by one another, and every one to his power to be aiding and assisting to murder Paul. It was strange that so many could so soon be got together, and that in Jerusalem too, that were so perfectly lost to all sense of humanity and honour, as to engage in so bloody a design. Well might the prophet's complaint be renewed concerning Jerusalem, *Isa. i. 21*, "Righteousness has lodged in it, but now murderers." What a monstrous idea must these men have formed of Paul, before they could be capable of forming such a monstrous design against him. They must be made to believe that he was the worst of men, an enemy to God and religion, and the curse and plague of his generation; when really his character was the reverse of all this. What laws of truth and justice, so sacred, so strong, which malice and bigotry will not break through!

4. How firm they made it, as they thought, that none of them might fly off upon conscience of the horror of the fact at second thoughts. They "bound themselves under an anathema," imprecating the heaviest curses upon themselves, their souls, bodies, and families, if they did not kill Paul, and so quickly, that they would not eat or drink till they had done it. What a complication of wickedness is here! To design to kill an innocent man, a good man, a useful man, a man that had done them no harm, but was willing to do them all the good he could, was going in the way of Cain, and spoke them to be of their father the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning; yet, as if this had been a small matter, 1st. They bound themselves to it. To incline to do evil and intend to do it is bad, but to engage to do it is much worse. This is entering into covenant with the devil: it is swearing allegiance to the prince of darkness; it is leaving no room for repentance, nay, it is bidding defiance to it. 2nd. They bound one another to it, and did all they could not only to secure the damnation of their own souls, but of theirs whom they drew into the association. 3rd. They shewed a great contempt of the providence of God, and a presumption upon it; in that they bound themselves to do such a thing within so short a time as they could continue fasting, without any proviso or reserve for the disposal of an overruling Providence. When we say, To-morrow we will do this or that, be it never so lawful and good, forasmuch as we know not what shall be on the morrow, we must add, if the Lord will. But with what face could they insert a proviso for the permission of God's providence, when they knew what they were about was directly against the prohibitions of God's word? 4th. They shewed a great contempt of their own souls and bodies. Of their own souls, in imprecating a curse upon them if they

and was appointed procurator of Judæa and Samaria, together with Cumanus, A.D. 48. Upon the banishment of Cumanus, in A.D. 51, he was made sole procurator.

xxiii. 35. "Herod's judgment hall:" rather, "prætorium," or "palace." "This was a splendid building, erected by Herod the Great as a royal residence, and occupied most probably at that time by the Roman procurator. The prison was within its precincts, as was customary in most ancient countries" (Cook).

xxiv. 1. "After five days:" i.e., from the time of Paul's departure from Jerusalem. "Tertullus:" "A common name among the Romans. The Jews, being imperfectly acquainted with the forms of Roman judicature, and not speaking the Latin language, which was generally, if not exclusively, used in proceedings before Roman magistrates, were in the habit of employing orators or professional advocates. Some of these were young men of rank from the capital, who practised gratuitously in the provinces, in order to

did not proceed in this desperate enterprise, (what a woeful dilemma did they throw themselves upon! God certainly meets them with his curse if they do go on in it; and they desire he would if they do not,) and of their own bodies too, (for wilful sinners are the destroyers of both,) in tying themselves out from the necessary supports of life till they had accomplished a thing which they could never lawfully do, and perhaps not possibly do. Such language of hell they speak, that wish, God to damn them, and the devil to take them, if they do not do so and so. "As they love cursing, so shall it come unto them." Some think the meaning of this curse was, they would either kill Paul, as an Achan, an accursed thing, a troubler of the camp, or, if they did not do it, they would make themselves accursed before God in his stead. They shewed a most eager desire to compass this matter, and an impatience till it was done; not only like David's enemies, that were mad against him, and sworn against him, *Ps. cii. 8*, but like the servants of Job against his enemy; "O that we had of his flesh, we cannot be satisfied," *Job xxxi. 31*. Persecutors are said to eat up God's people as they eat bread; it is as much a gratification to them as meat to one that is hungry, *Ps. xiv. 4*.

5. What method they took to bring it about. There is no getting near Paul in the castle; he is there under the particular protection of the government, and is imprisoned, not as others are lest he should do harm, but lest he should have harm done him. And, therefore, the contrivance is, that the chief priests and elders must desire the governor of the castle to let Paul come to them to the council-chamber to be farther examined. They have some questions to ask him, or something to say to him, and then in his passage from the castle to the council they would put an end to all disputes about Paul by killing him. Thus the plot was laid, *ver. 14, 15*. Having been all day employed in engaging one another to this wickedness, towards evening they come to the principal members of the great Sanhedrim, and, though they might have concealed their main design, and yet might have moved them upon some other pretence to send for Paul, they are so confident of their approbation of this villany, that they are not ashamed or afraid to own to them that they have "bound themselves under a great curse," without consulting the priests first whether they might lawfully do it, that they will eat nothing the next day till they have killed Paul. They design to breakfast the next morning upon his blood; they doubt not but the chief priests will not only countenance them in the design, but will lend them a helping hand, and be their tools to get them an opportunity of killing Paul; nay, and tell a lie for them too, pretending to the chief captain that "they would inquire something more perfectly concerning him," when they meant no such thing. What a mean, what an ill opinion had they of their priests, when they could apply to them on such an errand as this! And yet, as vile as the proposal was which was made to them, for aught appears, the priest and elders consented to it; and at the first word, without boggling at it in the least, promised to gratify them. Instead of reproving them, as they ought, for their wicked conspiracy, they bolstered them up in it, because it was against Paul, whom they hated; and thus they made themselves partakers of the crime, as much as if they had been the first in the conspiracy.

Secondly, How the plot was discovered. We do not find that the plotters, though they took an oath of fidelity, took an oath of secrecy, either because they thought it did not need, they would every one keep his own counsel; or because they thought they could accomplish it, though it should take wind and be known; but Providence so ordered it that it was brought to light, and so as effectually to be brought to nought. See here.

1. How it was discovered to Paul; *ver. 16*, there was a youth that was related to Paul, his sister's son, whose mother probably lived in Jerusalem, and some how or other, we are not told how, he heard of their lying in wait, either overheard them talking of it among themselves, or got intelligence from some that were in the plot; and he went into the castle, probably as he used to do to attend on his uncle, and bring him what he wanted, which gave him a free access to him, and he told Paul what he heard. Note, God has many ways of bringing to light the hidden works of darkness; though the contrivers of them dig deep to hide them from the Lord, he can make a bird of the air to carry the voice, *Ecc. x. 20*, or the conspirators' own tongues to betray themselves.

2. How it was discovered to the chief captain by the young man that told it Paul. This part of the story is related very particularly, perhaps because the penman was an eyewitness of the prudent and successful management of this affair, and remembered it with a deal of pleasure. 1st. Paul had got a good interest in the officers that attended by his prudent, peaceable deportment. He could call one of the centurions to him, though a centurion was one in authority, that had soldiers under him, and used to call, not to be called to; and he was ready to come at his call, *ver. 17*, and he desired that he would introduce this young man to the chief captain, to give him information of something that concerned the honour of the government. 2nd. The centurion very readily gratified him; *ver. 18*, he did not send a common soldier with him, but went himself, to keep the young man in countenance, to recommend his errand to the chief captain, and to shew his respects to Paul. "Paul the prisoner," that was his title now, "called me to him, and prayed me to bring this young man to thee," what his business is I know not; but "he hath something to say to thee." Note, It is true charity to poor prisoners to act for them, as well as to give to them. "I was sick, and in prison," and you went on an errand for me, will pass as well in the account as "I was sick and in prison, and you came unto me," to visit me, or sent me a token. Those that have acquaintance and interest should be ready to use it for the assistance of those that are in distress.

The centurion helped to save Paul's life by this piece of civility, which should engage us to be ready to do the like when there is occasion. "Open thy mouth for the dumb," *Pr. xxxi. 8*. Those that cannot give a good gift to God's prisoners may yet speak a good word for them. 3rd. The chief captain received the information with a great deal of condescension and tenderness; *ver. 19*, He "took the young man by the hand," as a friend or father, to encourage him, that he might not be dashed out of countenance, but might be assured of a favourable audience. The notice that is taken of this circumstance should encourage great men to make themselves easy of access to the meanest, upon any errand which may give them an opportunity of doing good, to "condescend to them of low estate." This familiarity to which this Roman tribune or colonel admitted Paul's nephew is here upon record to his honour. Let no man think he disparageth himself by his humility or charity. He "went with him aside privately," that none might hear his business, "and asked him, What is it that thou hast to tell me?" Tell me wherein I can be serviceable to Paul. It is probable the chief captain was the more obliging in this case, because he was sensible he had run himself into a *præmure* in binding Paul, against his privilege as a Roman citizen, which he was willing now to atone for. 4th. The young man delivered his errand to the chief captain very readily and handsomely; *ver. 20, 21*, "The Jews," (he doth not say who, lest he should invidiously reflect upon the chief priests and the elders, and his business was to save his uncle's life, not to accuse his enemies,) "have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to-morrow into the council," presuming that, being so little a way, thou wilt send him without a guard; but "do not thou yield unto them," we have reason to believe thou wilt not when thou knowest the truth, "for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men," who have sworn to be the death of

him, "and now are they ready looking for a promise from thee," but I have happily got the start of them. Lastly, The captain dismissed the young man with a charge of secrecy; "See that thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things unto me," *ver. 22*. The favours of great men are not always to be bragged of; and those that cannot keep counsel are not fit to be employed in business. If it should be known that the chief captain had this information brought him, perhaps they would compass and imagine the death of Paul some other way; therefore keep it private.

Thirdly, How the plot was defeated. The chief captain, finding how implacable and inveterate the malice of the Jews was against Paul, and how restless they were in their designs to do him a mischief, and how near he now was to become himself accessory to it as a minister, resolves to send him away with all speed out of their reach. He received the intelligence with horror and indignation, at the baseness and bloody mindedness of these Jews, and seems afraid lest, if he should continue Paul in his castle here, under never so strong a guard, they would find some way or other to compass their end notwithstanding, either by the guards, or burn the castle; and, whatever came of it, he would, if possible, protect Paul, because he looked upon it that he did not deserve such treatment. What a melancholy observation is it, that the Jewish chief priests, when they knew of this assassination plot, should countenance it, and assist in it, while a Roman chief captain, purely from a natural sense of justice and humanity, when he knows it, sets himself to baffle it, and puts himself to a deal of trouble to do it effectually!

He orders a considerable detachment of the Roman forces under his command to get ready to go to Casarea with all expedition, and to bring Paul thither to Felix the governor, where he might sooner expect to have justice done him than by the great Sanhedrim at Jerusalem. I see not but the chief captain might, without any unfaithfulness to the duty of his place, have set Paul at liberty, and given him leave to shift for his own safety, for he was never legally committed to his custody as a criminal, and he himself owns that nothing was laid to his charge worthy of bonds, *ver. 29*, and he ought to have had the same tenderness for his liberty that he had for his life; but he feared that would have incensed the Jews too much against him. Or, perhaps, finding Paul to be a very extraordinary man, he was proud to have him his prisoner, and under his protection; and the mighty parade with which he sent him off, intimates as much. Two centurions, or captains of hundreds, are employed in this business; *ver. 23, 24*. They must get ready two hundred soldiers,—probably those under their own command,—to go to Casarea; and, with these, seventy horse, and two hundred spearmen, beside which, some think, were the chief captain's guards: whether they were horse or foot, is not certain; most probably foot, as pikemen, for the protection of the horse. See how justly God brought the Jewish nation under the Roman yoke, when such a party of the Roman army was necessary to restrain them from the most execrable villanies. There needed not all this force, there needed not any of it, to keep Paul from being rescued by his friends. Ten times this force would not have kept him from being rescued by an angel, if it had pleased God to work his deliverance that way, as he had sometimes done. But, 1st. The chief captain designed hereby to expose the Jews as a headstrong, tumultuous people, that would not be kept within the bounds of duty and decency by the ordinary ministers of justice, but needed to be awed by such a train as this; and hearing how many were in the conspiracy against Paul, he thought less would not serve to defeat their attempt. 2nd. God designed hereby to encourage Paul,—for being thus attended, he was not only kept safe in the hands of his friends, but out of the hands of his enemies,—yet Paul did not desire such a guard, no more than Ezra did, *Ezr. vii. 22*, and for the same reason, because he trusted in God's all-sufficiency; but it was owing to the governor's own care. But he was also made considerable. Thus his bonds, which Christ were made manifest all the country over, *Phil. i. 13*. And, so great an honour having been put upon them before by the prediction of them, it was agreeable enough that they should be thus honourably attended, that the brethren in the Lord might wax the more confident by his bonds, when they saw him rather guarded as the patriot of his country, than guarded against as the pest of his country, and so great a preacher made so great a prisoner.

When his enemies hate him, and I doubt, his friends neglect him, then doth a Roman tribune patronize him, and carefully provide. First, For his ease. Let them "provide beasts, that they may set Paul on." Had his Jewish persecutors been to order his remove by *habeas corpus* to Casarea, they would have made him riding on foot, or dragged him thither in a cart, or on a sledge, or have horsed him behind one of the troopers; but the chief captain treats him like a gentleman, though he was his prisoner, and orders him a good pad to ride upon, not at all afraid that he should ride away. Nay, the order being that they should produce, not a beast, but beasts, to set Paul on, we must either suppose that he was allowed as great a piece of state as to have a led horse, or more, that if he did not like one he might take another; or, as some expositors conjecture, that he had beasts assigned him for his friends and companions, as many as pleased to go along with him, to divert him in his journey, and to minister to him. Secondly, For his security. They have a strict charge given them by their commander in chief to "bring him safe to Felix the governor," to whom he is consigned, and who was supreme in all civil affairs among the Jews, as this chief captain was in military affairs. The Roman historians speak much of this Felix, as a man of mean extraction, but that raised himself by his shifts to be governor of Judea, in the execution of which office, Tacitus, Hist. 5, says this of him, *Per omnem sævitiæ ac libidinis jussu regiam serviti ingenio exercuit*.—He used royal power with a servile genius, in connection with all the varieties of cruelty and lust. To the judgment of such a man as this is poor Paul turned over; and yet better so than in the hands of Ananias the high priest. Now a prisoner, thus upon his deliverance by course of law, ought to be protected as well as a prince.

The chief captain orders, for the greater security of Paul, that he be taken away "at the third hour of the night," which some understand of three hours after sunset, that it being now soon after the feast of Pentecost, that is, in the midst of summer, they might have the cool of the night to march in. Others, of three hours after midnight, in the third watch, about three in the morning, that they might have the day before them, and might get out of Jerusalem before Paul's enemies were stirring, and so might prevent any popular tumult, and leave them to roar when they rose, like a lion disappointed of his prey.

2. He writes a letter to Felix the governor of this province, by which he discharges himself from any farther care about Paul, and leaves the whole matter with Felix. The letter is here inserted *totidem verbis*,—verbatim, *ver. 25*. It is probable Luke the historian had a copy of it by him, having attended Paul in this remove. Now in this epistle we may observe,

1st. The compliments he passeth upon the governor; *ver. 26*, he is "the most excellent governor, Felix." This title being given him of course, His Excellency, &c., he sends him greeting, wishing him all health and prosperity; may he rejoice, may he ever rejoice.

2nd. The just and fair account which he gives him of Paul's case. First. That he was one that the Jews had a mighty pique against. They had taken him, and would have killed him, and perhaps Felix knew the temper of the Jews so well, that he did not think much the worse of him for that, *ver. 27*. Secondly. That he had protected him because he was a Roman. When they were about

prepare themselves for the courts at Rome; others were rhetoricians, who earned a livelihood by their profession. Tertullus belonged, probably, to the latter class" (Cook). Trials were not always held in Latin, but Greek was permitted, even in Rome. It seems most probable that on this occasion Tertullus spoke in Latin.

xxiv. 2. Felix had suppressed some seditious disturbances, but was a profligate and tyrannical man, wholly unworthy of the flatteries of

Tertullus. But such flatteries were commonly employed to win the favour of the magistrates. "Very worthy deeds;" there are two readings here—that from which our version is taken means "the excellent arrangements," "the happy results;" the other reading has, "reformatory measures." "Providence;" foresight and prudence.

xxiv. 3. The Jews really hated Felix, and sent an embassy to Rome to accuse him of extortion and cruelty, when he was recalled.

to kill him, "I came with an army;" that is, a considerable body of men, and rescued him, which action for a citizen of Rome would recommend him to the Roman governor. *Thirdly*. That he could not understand the merits of his cause, nor what it was that made him so odious to the Jews, and obnoxious to their ill-will. He took the proper method to know; he "brought him forth into their council," ver. 23, to be examined there, hoping that, either from their complaints or his own confessions, he should learn something of the ground of all this clamour, but found that he was "accused of questions of their law," ver. 29, about "the hope of the resurrection of the dead," ver. 6. This chief captain was a man of sense and honour, and had good principles in him of justice and humanity, and yet see how slightly he speaks of another world, and the great things of that world, as if that were a question, which is of undoubted certainty, and which both sides agreed in, except the Sadducees, and as if that were a question only of their law, which is of the utmost concern to all mankind! Or, perhaps, he refers rather to the question about their rituals, than about their doctrinals, and the quarrel he perceived they had with him, was for lessening the credit and obligation of their ceremonial law, which he looked upon as a thing not worth speaking of. The Romans allowed the nations they conquered the exercise of their own religion, and never offered to impose theirs upon them; yet, as conservators of the public peace, they would not suffer them, under colour of their religion, to abuse their neighbours. *Fourthly*. That thus far he understood, that there was "nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds," much less proved or made out against him. The Jews had by their wickedness made themselves odious to the world, had polluted their own honour, and profaned their own gown, had brought disgrace upon their church, their law, and their holy place, and then they cry out against Paul as having diminished the reputation of them; and was this a crime worthy of death or of bonds?

3. His referring of Paul's case to Felix; ver. 30, "When it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man," to kill him, without any legal process against him, "I sent straightway to thee," who art the most proper person to hear the cause and give judgment upon it; and let his accusers go after him if they please, and "say before thee what they have against him;" for, being bred a soldier, I will never pretend to be a judge. And so, farewell.

4. Paul is accordingly conducted to Caesarea. The soldiers got him safe out of Jerusalem by night, and left the conspirators to consider whether they should eat and drink or no, before they had killed Paul; and if they would not repent of the wickedness of their oath, as it was against Paul, they were now at leisure to repent of the rashness of it, as it was against themselves. And if any of them did starve themselves to death in conscience of their oath, and vexation at their disappointment, they fell unpitied. Paul was conducted to Antipatris, which was seventeen miles from Jerusalem, and about the midway to Caesarea, ver. 31. From thence the two hundred foot soldiers and the two hundred spearmen returned back to Jerusalem to their quarters in the castle; for, having brought Paul out of danger, there needed not so strong a guard, but the horsemen might serve to bring him to Caesarea, and would do it with more expedition. This they did not only to save their own labour, but their master's charge. And it is an example to servants, not only to act obediently according to their master's orders, but to act prudently, so as may be most for their master's interest.

5. He was delivered into the hands of Felix, as his prisoner ver. 33. The officers presented the letter, and Paul with it, to Felix, and so discharged themselves of their trust. Paul had never affected acquaintance or society with great men, but with the disciples wherever he came. Yet Providence overrules his sufferings so as by them to give him an opportunity of witnessing to Christ before great men; and so Christ had foretold concerning his disciples, that they should be "brought before rulers and kings for his sake, for a testimony against them," *Mar. xiii. 9*. The governor inquired of what province of the empire the prisoner originally was; and he was told that he was a native of Cilicia, ver. 34. And, 1st. He promises him a speedy trial; ver. 35, "I will hear thee when thine accusers are come;" and will have an ear open to both sides, as becomes a judge. 2nd. He ordered him into custody, that he should be kept a prisoner "in Herod's judgment-hall;" in some apartment belonging to that palace which was denominated from Herod the Great, who built it. There he had an opportunity of acquainting himself with the great men that attended the governor's court; and no doubt he improved what acquaintance he got there to the best purposes.

CHAPTER XXIV.

We left Paul a prisoner at Caesarea in Herod's judgment-hall, expecting his trial to come on quickly; for in the beginning of his imprisonment his affairs moved very quick, but afterwards, very slow. In this chapter we have his arraignment and trial before Felix the governor, at Caesarea. Here is, I. The appearing of the prosecutors against him, and the setting of the prisoner to the bar, ver. 1, 2. II. The opening of the indictment against him by Tertullus, who was of counsel for the prosecutors, and the aggravating of the charge with abundance of compliments to the judge, and malice to the prisoner, ver. 2—8. III. The corroborating of the charge by the testimony of the witnesses, or rather, the prosecutors themselves, ver. 9. IV. The prisoner's defence, in which with all due deference to the governor, ver. 10, he denies the charge, and challengeth them to prove it, ver. 11—13; owns the truth, and makes an unexceptionable profession of his faith, which he declares was it that they hated him for, ver. 14—16; and gives a more particular account of what had passed from their first seizing of him, challengeth them to instance in any ill that they had found in him, ver. 17—21. V. The adjourning of the cause, and the continuing of the prisoner in custody, ver. 22, 23. VI. The private conversation that was between the prisoner and the judge, by which the prisoner hoped to do good to the judge, and the judge thought to get money by the prisoner, but both in vain, ver. 24—26. VII. The lengthening out of Paul's imprisonment for two years, till another governor came, ver. 27; where he seems as much neglected, as there had been aid about him.

quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, 3 We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. 4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words. 5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: 6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. 7 But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, 8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him. 9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.



ROMAN ORATORS.—ver. 1.

We must suppose that Lysias, the chief captain, when he had sent away Paul to Caesarea, gave notice to the chief priests and others that had appeared against Paul, that if they had any thing to accuse him of, they must follow him to Caesarea, and there they would find him, and a judge ready to hear them; thinking, perhaps, they would not have given themselves so much trouble. But what will not malice do?

First. We have here the cause followed against Paul, and it is vigorously carried on.

1. Here is no time lost; for they are ready for a hearing after five days. All other business is laid aside immediately to prosecute Paul; so intent are evil men to do evil. Some reckon these five days from Paul's being first seized; and with most probability, for he saith here, ver. 11, that it was but twelve days since he came up to Jerusalem, and he had spent seven in his purifying in the temple, so that these five must be reckoned from the last of those.

2. Those that had been his judges do themselves appear here as his prosecutors. Ananias himself, the high priest, who had sat to judge him, now stands to inform against him. One would wonder, 1st. That he should thus disparage himself, and forget the dignity of his place. Shall the high priest turn informer, and leave all his business in the temple at Jerusalem, to go to be called as a prosecutor in Herod's judgment-hall? Justly did God make the priests contemptible and base, when they made themselves so, *Mal. ii. 9*. 2nd. That he should thus discover himself, and his enmity against Paul. If men of the first rank have a malice against any, they think it policy to employ others against them, and to play least in sight themselves, because of the odium that commonly attends it; but Ananias is not ashamed to own himself a sworn enemy to Paul. The elders attended him, to signify their concurrence with him, and to invigorate the prosecution; for they could not find any attorneys or solicitors that would follow it with so much violence as they would have it. The pains that evil men take in an evil matter, their contrivances, their condescensions, and their unwearied industry, should shame us out of our coldness, and backwardness, and indifferency in that which is good.

Secondly. We have here the cause pleaded against Paul. The prosecutors brought with them "a certain orator named Tertullus," a Roman, skilled in the Roman law and language; and therefore fittest to be employed in a cause before the Roman governor, and most likely to gain favour. The high priest and elders, though they had their own hearts spiteful enough, did not think their own tongues sharp enough, and therefore retained Tertullus, who probably was noted for a satirical wit, to be of counsel for them; and no doubt they gave him a good fee, probably out of the treasury of the temple, which they had the command of; it being a cause wherein the church was concerned, and therefore must not be starved. Paul is set to the bar before Felix the governor; he was called forth, ver. 2. And Tertullus' business is, on the behalf of the prosecutors, to open the information against him; and he is a man that will say any thing for his fee; mercenary tongues will do so. No cause so unjust but



ND after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul. 2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great

xxiv. 5. "Pestilent fellow:" rather, "a plague" or "pest." "Ringleader:" one in the front rank. "Sect:" same word as that translated heresy in verse 14, and from which heresy is derived. It means literally a choice. Being used of the choice of a sect or doctrine, it became applied to a school or party, and its reproach depended on whether it was applied to the orthodox or opposite opinions. Ultimately it came to be applied to error. Here it means a party or sect.

xxiv. 6. Tertullus brings three distinct charges against Paul:—1. That he created disturbances throughout the empire. 2. With being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, as opposed to the law of Moses. 3. With attempting to profane the Temple.

xxiv. 9. "Assented:" "joined in the attack"—i.e., united in making the same complaints.

xxiv. 10. Felix had been over six years procurator, having been appointed A.D. 52. The difference between Paul's allusion to Felix

can find advocates to plead it; and yet we hope many advocates so just as not knowingly to patronize an unrighteous cause. But Tertullus was none of those; his speech (or, at least, an abstract of it, for it appears by Tully's orations, that the Roman lawyers on such occasions used to make long harangues,) is here reported. And it is made up of flattery and falsehood; it calls evil good, and good evil.

1. One of the worst of men is here applauded as one of the best of benefactors, only because he was the judge. Felix is represented by the historians of his own nation, as well as by Josephus the Jew, as a very ill man; that, depending upon his interest in the court, allowed himself in all manner of wickedness, was a great oppressor, very cruel, and very covetous, patronizing and protecting assassins, *Joseph. Antiq. l. xx. c. 6.* And yet Tertullus here, in the name of the high priest and elders, and probably by particular directions from them, and according to the instructions of his briefcase, compliments him, and extols him to the sky, as if he were so good a magistrate as never was the like. And this comes the worse from the high priest and the elders, because he had given a late instance of his enmity to their order; for Jonathan, the high priest, or one of the chief priests, having offended him by too free an invective against the tyranny of his government, he got him murdered by some villains, whom he hired for that purpose; and who afterwards did the like for others, as they were hired. *Cujus factoris quia nemo ultor extitit, inquit, hic licentia sicarii multos confudit, alios propter privatas inimicitias, alios conducti pecunia, etiam in ipso templo.*—No one being found to punish such enormous wickedness, the assassins, encouraged by this impunity, stabbed several persons, some from personal malice, some for hire, and that even in the temple itself. And yet to engage him to gratify their malice against Paul, and to return them that kindness for their kindness in overlooking all this, they magnify him as the greatest blessing to their church and nation that ever came among them.

1st. They are very ready to own it; ver. 2, "By thee we" of the church, "enjoy great quietness," and we look upon thee as our patron and protector, "and very worthy deeds are done," from time to time, to the whole nation of the Jews, "by thy providence," thy wisdom, and care, and vigilance. To give him his due, he had been instrumental to suppress the insurrection of that Egyptian whom the chief captain spoke of, *ch. xxi. 38.* But will the praise of that screen him from the just reproach of his tyranny and oppression afterwards? See here, *First.* The unhappiness of great men, and a great unhappiness it is, to have their services magnified beyond measure, and never to be faithfully told of their faults; and hereby they are hardened and encouraged in evil. *Secondly.* The policy of ill men, by flattering princes in what they do amiss, to draw them in to do worse. The bishops of Rome got to be confirmed in their exorbitant church power, and have been assisted in persecuting the servants of Christ, by flattering and caressing usurpers and tyrants, and so making them the tools of their malice, as the high priest by his compliments designed to make Felix here.

2nd. They promise to retain a grateful sense of it; ver. 3, "We accept it always, and in all places," everywhere, and at all times we embrace it, we admire it, "most noble Felix, with all thankfulness." We will be ready upon any occasion to witness for thee, that thou art a wise and good governor, and very serviceable to the country. And if it had been true that he was such a governor, it had been just that they should thus accept his good offices with all thankfulness. The benefits which we enjoy by government, especially by the administration of wise and good governors, is what we ought to be thankful for both to God and man. This is part of the honour due to magistrates, to acknowledge the quietness we enjoy under their protection, and the worthy deeds done by their prudence.

3rd. They therefore expect his favour in this cause, ver. 4. They pretend a great care not to intrench upon his time; We will "not be further tedious to thee," and yet to be very confident of his patience, "I pray thee, that thou wouldst hear us of thy clemency a few words." All this address is only *ad captandam benevolentiam*,—to gain his goodwill, to induce him to give countenance to their cause; and they were so conscious to themselves that it would soon appear to have more malice than matter in it, that they found it necessary thus to insinuate themselves into his favour. Everybody knew that the high priest and the elders were enemies to the Roman government, and were uneasy under all the marks of that yoke, and therefore in their hearts hated Felix; and yet, to gain their ends against Paul, they by their counsel shew him all this respect, as they did to Pilate and Caesar, when they were persecuting our Saviour. Princes cannot always judge of the affections of their people by their applauses. Flattery is one thing, and true loyalty is another.

2. One of the best of men is here accused as one of the worst of malefactors, only because he was the prisoner. After a flourish of flattery, in which you cannot see matter for words, he comes to his business; and it is to inform his excellency concerning the prisoner at the bar. And this part of his discourse is as nauseous for its rallery as the former part is for its flattery. I pity the man, and believe he has no malice against Paul; nor doth he think as he speaks in calumniating him, any more than he did in courting Felix; but as I cannot but be sorry that a man of wit and sense should have such a saleable tongue, (as one calls it,) so I cannot but be angry at those dignified men that had such malicious hearts as to put such words into his mouth. Two things Tertullus here complains of to Felix, in the name of the high priest and the elders:

1st. That the peace of the nation was disturbed by Paul. They could not have baited Christ's disciples, if they had not first dressed them up in the skins of wild beasts, nor have given them as they did the vilest of treatment, if they had not first represented them as the vilest of men; though the characters they gave of them were absolutely false, and there was not the least colour or foundation for them. Innocency, nay, excellency and usefulness, are no fence against calumny; no, nor against the impressions of calumny upon the minds both of magistrates and multitudes to excite their fury and jealousy, for be the representation never so unjust, when it is enforced, as here it was, with gravity and pretence of sanctity, and with assurance and noise, something will stick. The old charge against God's prophets was, that they were the troublers of the land, and against God's Jerusalem, that it was a "rebellious city, hurtful to kings and princes." *Ezr. iv. 15, 19;* and against our Lord Jesus, that he perverted the nation, and forbade to give tribute to Caesar; and it is the very same against Paul here; and, though utterly false, is avowed with all the confidence imaginable. They do not say, We suspect him to be a dangerous man, and have taken him up upon that suspicion; but, as if the thing were past dispute, We have found him to be so; we have often and long found him so, as if he were traitor and rebel already convicted. And yet after all there is not a word of truth in this representation, but if Paul's just character be inquired into, it will be found directly the reverse of this here.

First. Paul was a useful man, and a great blessing to his country; a man of exemplary candour and goodness, obliging to all, and provoking to none, and yet he is here called a pestilent fellow, ver. 5. We have found him, *ἀνομιος, pesteμ,*—the plague of the nation, a walking pestilence, which supposeth him to be a man of a turbulent spirit, malicious and ill-natured, and one that threw all things into disorder wherever he came. They would have it thought that he had done more mischief in his time than a plague could do. That the mischief

he did was spreading and infectious, and that he made others as mischievous as himself; that it was of as fatal consequence as the plague is, killing and destroying, and laying all waste; that it was as much to be dreaded and guarded against as a plague is. Many a good sermon he had preached, and many a good work he had done, and for those he is called a pestilent fellow.

Secondly. Paul was a peacemaker; was a preacher of that Gospel which has a direct tendency to slay all enmities, and to establish true and lasting peace; he lived peaceably and quietly himself, and taught others to do so too, and yet is here represented as "a mover of sedition, among all the Jews throughout the world." The Jews were disaffected to the Roman government, those of them that were most bigoted were most so; this Felix knew, and had therefore a watchful eye upon them. Now they would fain make him believe that this Paul was the man that made them so, whereas they themselves were the men that sowed the seeds of faction and sedition among them, and they knew it, and the reason why they hated Christ and his religion was, because he did not go about to head them in an opposition to the Romans. The Jews were everywhere much set against Paul, and stirred up the people to clamour against him, they moved sedition in all places where he came, and then cast the blame unjustly upon him, as if he had been the mover of the sedition; as Nero, not long after, set Rome on fire, and then said they were the Christians that did it.

Thirdly. Paul was a man of catholic charity, that did not affect to be singular, but made himself the servant of all for their good; and yet he is here charged to be "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes," a standard-bearer of that sect, so the word signifies. When Cyprian was condemned to die for being a Christian, this was inserted in his sentence, that he was *actor iniqui nominis et signifer*—the author and standard-bearer of a wicked cause. Now it was true that Paul was an active, leading man in propagating Christianity. But, 1st. It was utterly false that that was a sect; he did not draw people to a party, or private opinion, nor did he make his own opinions their rule. True Christianity establishes that which is of common concern to all mankind; publisheth goodwill to men, and shews us God in Christ reconciling the world to himself; and, therefore, cannot be thought to take its rise from such narrow opinions, and private interests as sects owe their original to. True Christianity has a direct tendency to the uniting of the children of men, and the gathering of them together in one; and as far as it obtains its just power and influence upon the minds of men, will make them meek and quiet, and peaceable and loving, and every way easy and acceptable, and profitable one to another, and therefore is far from being a sect, which is supposed to lead to division and sow discord. True Christianity aims at no worldly benefit or advantage, and therefore must by no means be called a sect. Those that espouse a sect are governed in it by their secular interest, they aim at wealth or honour; but the professors of Christianity are so far from this, that they expose themselves thereby to the loss and ruin of all that is dear to them in this world. 2nd. It is invidiously called the sect of the Nazarenes, by which Christ was represented as of Nazareth, whence no good thing was expected to arise, whereas he was of Bethlehem, where the Messiah was to be born. Yet he was pleased to call himself Jesus of Nazareth, *ch. xxi. 8;* and the Scripture has put an honour on the name, *Mat. ii. 23.* And, therefore, though intended for a reproach, the Christians had no reason to be ashamed of sharing with their Master in it. 3rd. It was false that Paul was the author or standard-bearer of this sect; for he did not draw people to himself, but to Christ; did not preach himself, but Christ Jesus.

Fourthly. Paul had a veneration for the temple, as it had been the place God chose to put his name there; and had lately himself with reverence attended the temple-service, and yet it is here charged upon him, that he went about to profane the temple, and that he designedly put contempt upon it, and violated the laws of it, ver. 6. Their proof of this failed; for the matter of fact they alleged was utterly false, and they knew it, *ch. xxi. 29.*

2nd. That the course of justice against Paul was obstructed by the chief captain.

First. They pleaded, that they "took him, and would have judged him according to their law." This was false; they did not go about to judge him according to their law, but, contrary to all law and equity, went about to beat him to death, or pull him to pieces, without hearing what he had to say for himself; went about, under pretence of having him into their court, to throw him into the hands of ruffians that lay in wait to destroy him. Was this judging him according to their law? It is easy for men, when they know what they should have done, to say, that they would have done, when they meant nothing less.

Secondly. They reflected upon the chief captain as having done them an injury in rescuing Paul out of their hands; whereas he therein not only did him justice, but them the greatest kindness that could be in preventing the guilt they were bringing upon themselves. "The chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence" (but really no more than was necessary) "took him out of our hands," ver. 7. See how persecutors are enraged at their disappointments, which they ought to be thankful for. When David, in a heat of passion, was going upon a bloody enterprise, he thanked Abigail for stopping him, and God for sending her to do it, so soon did he correct and recover himself. But these cruel men justify themselves, and reckon him their enemy who kept them, as David there speaks, from shedding blood with their own hands.

Thirdly. They referred themselves to Felix and his judgment, yet seeming uneasy that they were under a necessity of doing so, the chief captain having obliged them to it, ver. 8. It was he that forced us to give your excellency this trouble, and ourselves too; for, 1st. He "commanded his accusers to come to thee," that thou mightest hear the charge, when it might as well have been ended in the inferior court. 2nd. He has left it to thee to examine him, and try what thou canst get out of him, and whether thou canst by his confession come to the knowledge of those things which we lay to his charge.

Thirdly. The assent of the Jews to this charge which Tertullus exhibited; ver. 9. "They confirmed it, saying, That those things were so."

1. Some think this speaks the proof of the charge by witnesses upon oath, that were examined as to the particulars of it, and attested them. And no wonder if, when they had found an orator that would say it, they found witnesses that would swear it, for money.

2. It rather seems to intimate the approbation which the high priest and the elders gave to what Tertullus said. Felix asked them, Is this your sense, and is it all that you have to say? And they answered, Yes, it was; and so they made themselves guilty of all the falsehood that was in his speech. Those that have not the wit and parts to do mischief with, that some others have, that cannot make speeches, and hold disputes against religion, yet make themselves guilty of the mischief that others do, by assenting to that which others do, and saying, Those things are so; repeating and standing by what is said, "to pervert the right ways of the Lord." Many that have not learning enough to plead for Baal yet have wickedness enough to vote for Baal.

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I

and that by Tertullus is great. Paul alludes to Felix's experience of Jewish affairs as that which should make his case more easily and fairly tried, especially as it was but twelve days since he went up to Jerusalem.

xxiv. 11. Alford reckons the twelve days thus:—"1. His arrival in Jerusalem (chap. xxi. 15—17). 2. His interview with James (chap. xxi. 18). 3. His taking on him the vow (chap. xxi. 26). 4—6. The time of the vow; interrupted by, 7, His apprehension (chap. xxi. 27). 8.

His appearance before the Sanhedrim (chap. xxii. 30). 9. His departure from Jerusalem (at night); and so to 13th, the day now current, which was the fifth inclusive from his leaving Jerusalem."

xxiv. 16. "Herein:" rather, "accordingly"—i.e., "having and cherishing this hope."

xxiv. 18. "Whereupon:" rather, "in the performance of which things," or "engaged in which offerings."

xxiv. 22. See chap. viii. 40, where we read of Philip coming to

know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself: 11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. 12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: 13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me. 14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: 15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. 16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. 17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. 18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. 19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me. 20 Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council, 21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

We have here Paul's defence of himself in answer to Tertullus' charge; and there appears in it a great deal of the Spirit of wisdom and holiness, and an accomplishment of Christ's promise to his followers, that when they were brought before governors and kings for his sake it should be given them in that same hour what they should speak. Though Tertullus had said a great many provoking things, yet Paul did not interrupt him, but let him go on to the end of his speech, according to the rules of decency, and the method in courts of justice, that the plaintiff be allowed to finish his evidence before the defendant begins his plea; and when he had done, he did not presently fly out into passionate exclamations against the iniquity of the times and the men, *O tempora, O mores*,—"Oh, the degeneracy of the times!" but he waited for a permission from the judge to speak in his turn, and had it. The governor beckoned to him to speak, ver. 10; and now he also may have leave to speak out, under the protection of the governor, which was more than he could obtain yet; and when he did speak, he made no reflections at all upon Tertullus: he knew he spoke for his fee, and therefore, despised what he said, and levelled his defence against those that employed him. And here,

First. He addresseth himself very respectfully to the governor, and with a confidence that he would do him justice. Here are no such flattering compliments as Tertullus soothed him up with, but, which was more truly respectful, a profession that he answered for himself cheerfully, and with good assurance before him, looking upon him, though not as one that was his friend, yet as one that would be fair and impartial. He thus expresseth his expectation that he would be so, to engage him to be so. It was likewise the language of one that was conscious to himself of his own integrity, and whose heart did not reproach him, whoever did. He did not stand trembling at the bar, but very cheerful, when he had one to be his judge that was not a party, but an indifferent person; nay, when he considers who his judge is, he answers the more cheerfully—and why so? He doth not say, Because I know thee to be a judge of inflexible justice and integrity, that hatest bribes, and in giving judgment, fearest God, and regardest not man; for he could not justly say this of him, and therefore would not say it, though it were to gain his favour never so much; but, "I the more cheerfully answer for myself, because I know thou hast been many years a judge to this nation;" and that was very true. And being so,

1. He could say of his own knowledge, that there had not formerly been any complaints against Paul; such clamours as they raised are generally against old offenders; but though he had long sitten judge there, he never had Paul brought before him yet, till now; and therefore he was not so dangerous a criminal as he was represented to be.

2. He was well acquainted with the Jewish nation, and with their temper and spirit. He knew how they were bigoted to their own way, what furious zealots they were against all that did not comply with them, how peevish and perverse they generally were; and therefore would make allowances for that in their accusation of him, and not regard that which he had reason to think came so much from party malice. Though he did not know him, he knew his prosecutors, and by that might guess what manner of man he was.

Secondly. He denies the facts that he was charged with, upon which their character of him was grounded. Moving sedition, and profaning the temple, were the crimes for which he stood indicted; crimes which they knew the Roman governors did not use to inquire into, and therefore hoped that the governor would return him back to them to be judged by their law, and that was all they wished for. But Paul desires that, though he would not inquire into the crimes he

would protect one that was unjustly charged with them, from those whom he knew to be spiteful and ill-natured enough. Now he would have him to understand, and what he said he was ready, if required, to make out by witnesses,

1. That he came up to Jerusalem on purpose to worship God in peace and holiness, so far as he from any design to move sedition among the people, or to profane the temple. He came to keep up his communion with the Jews, not to put any affront upon them.

2. That it was but twelve days since he came up to Jerusalem, and he had been six days a prisoner. He was alone, and it could not be supposed that in so short a time he could do the mischief they charged upon him. And as for what he had done in other countries, they knew nothing of it but by uncertain report, by which the matter was very unfairly represented.

3. That he had demeaned himself at Jerusalem very quietly and peaceably, and had made no manner of stir. If it had been true what they alleged, that he was a mover of sedition among all the Jews, surely he would have been industrious to make a party at Jerusalem; but he did not do so. He was in the temple, attending the public service there; he was in the synagogues, where the law was read and opened; he went about in the city, among his relations and friends, and conversed freely in their places of concourse, and he was a man of a great genius, and an active spirit; and yet they could not charge him with offering any thing either against the faith or against the peace of the Jewish church. 1st. He had nothing in him of a contradicting spirit, as the movers of sedition have. He had no disposition to quarrel or oppose; they never found him disputing with any man, either affronting the learned with captious cavils or perplexing the weak and simple with curious subtleties. He was ready, if asked, to give a reason of his own hope, and to give instructions to others, but he never picked a quarrel with any man about his religion, nor made that the subject of debate and controversy and perverse dispute, which ought always to be treated of with humility and reverence, with meekness and love. 2nd. He had nothing in himself of a turbulent spirit. They never found him raising up the people, by incensing them against their governors in church or state, or suggesting to them fears and jealousies concerning public affairs; or by setting them at variance one with another, or sowing discord among them. He carried it as became a Christian and a minister, with love and quietness, and due subjection to lawful authority. The weapons of his warfare were not carnal, nor did he ever mention or think of such a thing as taking up arms for the propagating of the Gospel, or the defence of the preachers of it; though he could have made perhaps as strong a party among the common people as his adversaries, yet he never attempted it.

4. That as to what they had charged him with of moving sedition in other countries, he was wholly innocent, and they could not make good the charge; ver. 13, "Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me." Hereby, 1st. He maintains his own innocence; for when he saith they cannot prove it, he means the matter is not so. He was no enemy to the public peace, he had done no real prejudice, but a great deal of real service, and would gladly have done more to the nation of the Jews; and was so far from having any antipathy to them, that he had the strongest affection imaginable for them, and a most passionate desire of their welfare, *Rom. ix. 1, 2*. 2nd. He bemoans his own calamity, that he was accused of those things which could not be proved against him. And it has often been the lot of very worthy, good men, to be thus injured, to have things laid to their charge which they are at the greatest distance from, and abhor the thought of. But while they are lamenting this calamity, this may be their rejoicing, even the testimony of their consciences concerning their integrity. 3rd. He shews the iniquity of his prosecutors, who said that which they knew they could not prove, and thereby did him wrong in his name, liberty, and life; and did the judge wrong too in imposing upon him, and doing what in them lay to pervert his judgment. 4th. He appeals to the equity of his judge, and awakens him to look about him that he might not be drawn into a snare by the violence of the prosecution. The judge must give sentence *secundum allegata et probata*,—"according to that which is not only alleged, but proved;" and therefore must inquire and make search, and "ask diligently, whether the thing be true and certain," *Deu. xiii. 14*; he cannot otherwise give a right judgment.

Thirdly. He gives a fair and just account of himself, which doth at once both clear him from crime and likewise intimate what was the true reason of their violence in prosecuting him.

1. He acknowledges himself to be one whom they looked upon as a heretic, and that was the reason of their spleen against him. The chief captain had observed, and the governor now cannot but observe, an uncommon violence and fury in his prosecutors, which they know not what to make of, but guessing at the crime by the cry, conclude he must needs have been a very ill man, only for that reason. Now Paul here unriddles the matter; I confess that "in the way which they call heresy," or a sect, "so worship I the God of my fathers." The controversy is in a matter of religion, and such controversies are commonly managed with most fury and violence. Note, It is no new thing for the right way of worshipping God to be called heresy; and for the best of God's servants to be stigmatized and run down as sectaries. The reformed churches are called heretical ones by those who themselves hate to be reformed, and are themselves heretics. Let us therefore never be driven off from any good way, by its being put into an ill name; for true and pure Christianity is never the worse, nor to be the worse thought of for its being called heresy; no, not though it be called so by the high priest and the elders.

2. He vindicates himself from this imputation. They call Paul a heretic, but he is not so; for,

1st. He worships the God of his fathers, and therefore is right in the object of his worship. He doth not say, "Let us go after other gods, which we have not known, and let us serve them," as the false prophet is supposed to do, *Deu. xiii. 2*. If so, they might justly call his way heresy, a drawing of them aside into a bypath, and a dangerous one; but he worships the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; not only the God whom they worshipped, but the God that took them into covenant with himself, and was and would be called their God. Paul adheres to that covenant, and sets up no other in opposition to it. The promise made unto the fathers, Paul preached as fulfilled to the children, *Acts xiii. 32, 33*, and so directed both his own and others' devotions to God, as the God of their fathers. He also refers to the practice of all his pious ancestors; I worship the same God that all my fathers worshipped. His religion was so far from being chargeable with novelty, that it gloried in its antiquity, and in an uninterrupted succession of its professors. Note, It is very comfortable in our worshipping God to have an eye to him as the God of our fathers. Our fathers trusted in him, and were owned by him, and he engaged to be their God, and the God of their seed. He approved himself theirs, and therefore, if we serve him as they did, he will be ours. What an emphasis is laid upon that, "He is my father's God, and I will exalt him!" *Ex. xv. 2*.

2nd. He believes all things which are written in the law and the prophets, and therefore is right in the rule of his worship. His religion is grounded upon, and governed by, the holy Scriptures; they are his oracle, and touchstone, and he speaks and acts according to them. He receives the Scriptures entire, and believes all things that are there written; and he receives them pure, for he saith no other things but what are contained in them, as he explains himself,

Cæsarea; and again chap. x., where Cornelius, a centurion of Cæsarea, is baptised, together with others. Christianity was therefore known at Cæsarea. "Deferred them:" the regular technical term for "to adjourn;" "them" referring to both parties, or the whole assembly. "I will know the uttermost;" rather, "I will adjudge your matters."

xiv. 23. "Liberty;" rather, "relaxation." "St. Paul doubtless remained within the precincts of the prison during the two years of

his captivity at Cæsarea. Felix may have had several distinct motives for this decision. He believed Paul to be innocent, and gave him some relaxation—i.e., probably lighter chains and greater freedom of movement. He feared the Jews, and therefore did not release him; and he allowed his friends to wait on him, probably hoping that he might receive supplies of money from them" (Cook). St. Paul was kept in military custody; delivered to a soldier, whose left hand was chained to Paul's right.

ch. xxvi. 12. He sets not up any other rule of faith or practice but the Scriptures: not tradition, not the authority of the church, or the infallibility of any man or company of men on earth. Not the light within, or human reason, but Divine revelation as it is in the Scripture, is that which he resolves to live and die by; and therefore he is not a heretic.

3rd. He has his eye upon a future state, and is a believing expectant of that, and therefore is right in the end of his worship. They that turn aside to heresy have a regard to this world, and some secular interests; but Paul aims to make heaven of his religion, and neither more nor less, ver. 15. "I have hope towards God," all my expectation is from him, and my hope is towards God, and not towards him, and all my dependence upon him; my hope is towards God, and not towards the world; towards another world, and not towards this. I depend upon God and upon his power, that "there shall be a resurrection of the dead" at the end of time, of all, "both the just and unjust;" and the great thing I aim at in my religion is to obtain a joyful and happy resurrection, a share in the resurrection of the just. Observe here, *First*. That there shall be a resurrection of the dead, the dead bodies of men, of all men from the beginning to the end of time. It is certain, not only that the soul doth not die with the body, but that the body itself shall live again. We have not only another life to live when our present life is at an end; but there is to be another world, which shall commence when this world is at an end, into which all the children of men must enter at once by a resurrection from the dead, as they entered into this, one after another, by their birth. *Secondly*. It "shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust;" the sanctified and the unsanctified; of those that did well, and to them our Saviour has told us, that it will be a resurrection of life; and of those that did evil, and to them it will be a resurrection of condemnation, *Jno. v. 29*; see *Dan. xii. 2*. This implies that it will be a resurrection to a final judgment, by which all the children of men will be determined to everlasting happiness or misery in a world of retribution, according to what they were, and what they did in this state of probation and preparation. The just shall rise by virtue of their union with Christ as their Head; the unjust shall rise by virtue of Christ's dominion over them as their Judge. *Thirdly*. God is to be depended upon for the resurrection of the dead. I have hope towards God, and in God, that there shall be a resurrection; it shall be effected by the almighty power of God, in performance of the word which God hath spoken; so that they who doubt of it betray their ignorance both of the Scriptures and of the power of God, *Mat. xxiii. 29*. *Fourthly*. The resurrection of the dead is a fundamental article of our creed, as it was also of that of the Jewish church. It is what they themselves also allow; nay, it was the expectation of the ancient patriarchs; witness Job's confession of his faith; but it is more clearly revealed, and more fully confirmed, by the Gospel, and therefore they who believed it should have been thankful to the preachers of the Gospel for their explications and proofs of it, instead of opposing them. *Fifthly*. In all our religion we ought to have an eye to the other world, and to serve God in all instances with a confidence in him that there will be a resurrection of the dead, doing all in preparation for that, and expecting our recompence in that.

4th. His conversation is of a piece with his devotion; ver. 16, "And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men." Prophets, and their doctrine, were to be tried by their fruits. Paul was far from having made shipwreck of a good conscience, and therefore it is not likely he has made shipwreck of the faith, the mystery of which is best held in a pure conscience. This protestation of Paul's is to the same purpose with that which he made before the high priest, *ch. xxiii. 1*, "I have lived in all good conscience;" and this was his rejoicing. Observe, *First*. What was Paul's aim and desire; to "have a conscience void of offence." Either, *1st*. A conscience not offending; not informing me wrong, or flattering me, or dealing deceitfully with me, or in any thing misleading me. Or, *2nd*. A conscience not offended. It is like Job's resolution, "My heart shall not reproach me," that is, I will never give it any occasion to do so. This is what I am ambitious of, to keep upon good terms with my own conscience, that it may have no cause either to question the goodness of my spiritual state or to quarrel with me for any particular action. I am as careful not to offend my conscience as I am not to offend a friend whom I daily converse with; nay, as I am not to offend a magistrate whose authority I am under and to whom I am accountable; for conscience is God's deputy in my soul. *Secondly*. What was his care and endeavour in pursuance of this. "I exercise myself," *ἀσκέω*, I make it my constant business, and govern myself by this intention; I discipline myself, and live by rule, (those that did so were called ascetics, from the word here used,) abstain from many a thing which my inclination leads me to, and abound in all the exercises of religion that are most spiritual, with this in my eye, that I may keep peace with my own conscience. *Thirdly*. The extent of this care. *1st*. To all times; "to have always a conscience void of offence," always void of gross offence; for though Paul was conscious to himself that he had not yet attained perfection, and the evil that he would not do yet he did, yet he was "innocent from the great transgression." Sins of infirmity are uneasy to conscience; but they do not wound it and waste it, as presumptuous sins do, and though offence may be given to conscience, yet care must be taken that it be not an abiding offence, but that by the renewed acts of faith and repentance, the matter may be taken up again quickly. And this however we must always exercise ourselves in, and though we come short we must follow after. *2nd*. To all things; "both towards God and towards man." His conscientious care extended itself to the whole of his duty, and he was afraid of breaking the law of love either to God or his neighbour. Conscience, like the magistrate, is *custos utriusque tabule*—"the guardian of each table." We must be very cautious that we do not think, or speak, or do any thing amiss either against God or man, *2 Cor. viii. 21*. *Fourthly*. The inducement to it; "herein," *ἐν τούτοις*,—"for this cause;" so it may be read. Because I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, therefore I thus "exercise myself." The consideration of the future state should engage us to be universally conscientious in our present state.

Fourthly. Having made confession of his faith, he gives a plain and faithful account of his case, and of the wrong done him by his persecutors. Twice he had been rescued by the chief captain out of the hand of the Jews, when they were ready to pull him to pieces, and he challengeth them to prove him guilty of any crime either time.

1. In the temple. There they fell furiously upon him as an enemy to their nation, and the temple, *ch. xxi. 28*. But was there any colour for the charge? No; but evidence sufficient against it. *1st*. It was very hard to accuse him as an enemy to his nation, when, after long absence from Jerusalem, he came to bring alms to his nation, (money which, though he had need enough himself of, yet he had collected among his friends for the relief of the poor at Jerusalem.) He not only had no malice to that people, but he had a very charitable concern for them, and was ready to do them all good offices. And were they his adversaries for his love? *Ps. cix. 4*. *2nd*. It was very hard to accuse him of having profaned the temple, when he brought offerings to the temple, and was himself at charges therein, *ch. xxi. 24*; and was found purifying himself in the temple, according to the law, ver. 18, and that in a very quiet, decent manner, "neither with multitude, nor with tumult." Though he was a man so much talked of, he was far from coveting to shew himself when he came to Jerusalem, or of being crowded after; but went to the temple, as much as was possible, incognito.

xxiv. 24. "Drusilla:" the daughter of Herod Agrippa I. She was married to Azizus, king of Emesa, but forsook him for Felix. She and her son by Felix perished in an eruption of Vesuvius, in the reign of Titus.

xxiv. 25. "Temperance:" chastity; self-command in regard to the passions.

xxiv. 26. The Roman law prohibited magistrates from receiving money from prisoners.

They were Jews from Asia, his enemies, that made him to be taken notice of; they had no pretence to make a tumult and raise a multitude against him, for he had neither multitude nor tumult for him. And as for what was perhaps suggested to Felix, that he had "brought Greeks into the temple" contrary to their law, and the governor ought to reckon with him for that, the Romans having stipulated with the nations that submitted to them to preserve them in their religion, he challengeth them to prove it, ver. 19. Those Jews of Asia "ought to have been here before thee," that they might have been examined whether "they had ought against me," that they would stand by, and swear to; for some that will not scruple to tell a lie have such leaveings of conscience that they boggle at confirming it with an oath.

2. In the council. Since the Jews of Asia are not here to prove any thing upon me done amiss in the temple, let these same that are here, the high priest and the elders, say whether they have found any evil doing in me, or if I were guilty of any misdemeanour, "when I stood before the council," which was another time they were ready to pull me in pieces, ver. 20. When I was there they could not take offence at any thing I said; for all I said was "touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question by you this day," ver. 21, which gave no offence to any but the Sadducees. This I hope was no crime, that I stuck to that which is the faith of the whole Jewish church, excepting those whom they themselves call heretics.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him. 24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. 25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. 26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. 27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

We have here the result of Paul's trial before Felix, and what was the consequence of it.

First. Felix adjourned the cause, and took farther time to consider of it, ver. 22. He had "a more perfect knowledge of that way" which the Jews called heresy, than the high priest and the elders thought he had. He understood something of the Christian religion; for, living at Casarea, where Cornelius, a Roman centurion, was, that was a Christian, from him and others he had got a notion of Christianity, that it was not such an ill thing as it was represented; he himself knew some of that way to be honest, good men, and very conscientious; and therefore he put off the prosecutors with an excuse, "When the chief captain shall come down hither, I will know the uttermost of your matter," or, I shall know the truth, whether this Paul did go about to raise sedition or no; you are parties, he is an indifferent person. Either Paul deserves to be punished for raising the tumult, or you do for doing it yourselves, and then charging it upon him; and I will hear what he saith, and determine accordingly between you. Now,

1. It was a disappointment to the high priest and the elders that Paul was not condemned, or remitted to their judgment, which they wished for and expected. But thus sometimes God restrains the wrath of his people's enemies by the agency, not of their friends, but of such as are strangers to them. And though they be so, if they have but some knowledge of their way, they cannot but appear for their protection.

2. It was an injury to Paul that he was not released. Felix ought to have avenged him of his adversaries, when he so plainly saw there was nothing but malice in the prosecution, and to have rid him out of the hand of the wicked, according to the duty of a judge, *Ps. lxxiii. 4*. But he was a judge that neither feared God nor regarded man, and what good could be expected from him? It is a wrong, not only to deny justice, but to delay it.

Secondly. He continued the prisoner in custody, and would not take bail for him; else here at Casarea Paul had friends enough, that would gladly have been his security. Felix thought a man of such a public character as Paul was had many friends, as well as many enemies, and he might have an opportunity of obliging them, or making a hand of them, if he did not presently release him, and yet did shew him some countenance; and therefore,

1. He continued him a prisoner; commanded a centurion, or captain, to keep him, ver. 23. He did not commit him to the common jail, but being first made an army prisoner, he shall still be so.

2. Yet he took care he should be "a prisoner at large,"—*in libera custodia*. His keeper must let him have liberty, not bind him or lock him up, but make his confinement as easy to him as possible. Let him have the liberty of the castle; and perhaps he means liberty to take the air, or go abroad upon his parole; and Paul was such an honest man, that they might take his word for his return. The high priest and the elders grudged him his life, but Felix generously allows him a sort of liberty; for he had not those prejudices against him and his way that they had. He also gave orders that none of his friends should be hindered from coming to him: the centurion must not forbid any of his acquaintance from ministering to him. And a man's prison is as it were his own house, if he has but his friends about him.

xxiv. 27. "Festus:" little is known of him. He probably succeeded Felix about A.D. 60. Felix was accused at Rome by the Jews, and was only saved by the interest of his brother Pallas. It is probable that these years were spent by Luke in writing his Gospel, under the superintendence of St. Paul.

xxv. 1. Festus arrived in the autumn, A.D. 60, and died in A.D. 62. He seems to have been able, energetic, and temperate. "Province:" not strictly speaking. Judaea was only a procurator-

Thirdly. He had frequent conversation with him afterwards in private; once particularly, not long after his public trial, ver. 24, 25. Observe,

1. With what design Felix sent for Paul. He had a mind to have some talk with him concerning faith in Christ, the Christian religion; he had some knowledge of that way, but he desired to have an account of it from Paul, who was so celebrated a preacher of that faith, above the rest. Those that would enlarge their knowledge, must discourse with men in their own profession; and those that would be acquainted with any profession, should consult those that excel in the knowledge of it: and therefore Felix has a mind to talk with Paul more freely than he could in open court, where he only observed Paul upon his guard concerning the faith of Christ. And this only to satisfy his curiosity, or rather, the curiosity of his wife, Drusilla, who was a Jewess, daughter of Herod Agrippa, that was eaten of worms; and being educated in the Jewish religion, she was the more inquisitive concerning the Christian religion, which pretended to be the perfection of that; and desired to hear Paul discourse of it. But it was no great matter what religion she was of, for whatever it was, she was a reproach and scandal to it; a Jewess, but an adulteress. She was another man's wife when Felix took her to be his wife, and she lived with him in whoredom, and was noted for an impudent woman; yet she desires to hear concerning the faith of Christ. Many are fond of new notions and speculations in religion, and can hear and speak of them with pleasure, who yet hate to come under the power and influence of religion; can be content to have their judgments informed, but not their lives reformed.

2. What the account was which Paul gave him of the Christian religion. By the idea he had of it he expected to be amused with a mystical divinity, but as Paul represents it to him he is alarmed with a practical divinity. Paul being asked concerning the faith in Christ, "reasoned" (for Paul was always a rational preacher) "concerning righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." It is probable he mentioned to him the peculiar doctrine of Christianity concerning the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and his being the Mediator between God and man; but he hastened to his application, in which he designed to come home to the consciences of his hearers; and he discoursed with clearness and warmth of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." And there he shewed,

1st. That the faith in Christ is designed to enforce upon the children of men the great laws of justice and temperance: "The grace of God teacheth us to live soberly and righteously," *Tit. ii. 12*. Justice and temperance were celebrated virtues among the heathen moralists; if the doctrine Paul preacheth, which Felix has heard of as proclaiming liberty, will but free him from an obligation to these, he will readily embrace it. No, saith Paul, so far from doing that, it strengthens the obligations of those sacred laws; it binds all under the highest penalties to be honest in all their dealings, and tender to all their due; to deny themselves, and to keep under the body and bring it into subjection. The world and the flesh being in our baptism renounced, all our pursuits of the world, and all our gratifications of the desires of the body, are to be under the regulations of religion. Paul reasoned of righteousness and temperance, to convince Felix of his unrighteousness and intemperance, which he had been notoriously guilty of, that seeing the odiousness of them, and his obnoxiousness to the wrath of God for them, *Eph. v. 6*, he might inquire concerning the faith of Christ, with a resolution to embrace it.

2nd. That by the doctrine of Christ is discovered to us the judgment to come, by the sentence of which the everlasting state of all the children of men will be finally and irreversibly determined. Men have their day now, Felix hath his; but God's day is coming, where every one shall give account of himself to God the judge of all. Paul reasoned concerning this, that is, he shewed what reason we have to believe that there is a judgment to come, and what reason we have in consideration thereof to be religious.

Now from this account of the heads of Paul's discourse we may gather, *First*. That Paul in his preaching had no respect of persons, for the Word of God, which he preached, has not. He urged the same convictions and instructions upon the Roman governor that he did upon other people. *Secondly*. That Paul in his preaching aimed at the consciences of men, and came close to them; sought not to please their fancy or gratify their curiosity, but led them to a sight of their sins, and a sense of the duty and interest. *Thirdly*. That Paul preferred the serving of Christ, and the saving of souls, before his own safety. He lay at the mercy of Felix, who had power (as Pilate said) to crucify him, (or, which was as bad, to deliver him back to the Jews,) and he had power to release him. Now when Paul had his ear, and had him in a good humour, he had a fair opportunity of ingratiating himself with him, and obtaining a release; nay, and of incensing him against his prosecutors. Alas, on the contrary, if he disoblige him, and put him out of humour, he may do himself a great kindness by it; but he seems wholly negligent of these considerations, and is intent upon doing good, at least discharging his duty. *Fourthly*. That Paul was willing to take pains and run hazards in his work, even where there was little probability of doing good. Felix and Drusilla were such hardened sinners, that it was not at all likely they should be brought to repentance by Paul's preaching, especially under such disadvantages; and yet Paul deals with them as one that did not despair of them. Let the watchmen give fair warning, and then they have delivered their own souls, though they should not prevail to deliver the souls they watch for.

3. What impression Paul's discourse made upon this great, but ill man; "Felix trembled," *ἐκφοβήσθη*, being put into a fright, or made a terror to himself, a Magor-misabib, as Pashur, *Jer. xxi. 3, 4*. Paul never trembled before him, but he was made to tremble before Paul. If this be so as Paul saith, what will become of me in another world? If the unrighteous and intemperate will be condemned in the judgment to come, if I am undone, for ever undone, unless I lead a new course of life. We do not find that Drusilla trembled, though she was equally guilty; for she was a Jewess, and depended upon the ceremonial law, which she adhered to the observance of, to justify her; but Felix, for the present, could fasten upon nothing to pacify his conscience, and therefore trembled. See here,

1st. The power of the Word of God; when it comes with commission, it is searching, it is startling, it can strike a terror into the heart of the most proud and daring sinner, by setting his sins in order before him, and shewing him the terrors of the Lord.

2nd. The workings of natural conscience; when it is startled and awakened, it will fill the soul with horror and amazement at its own deformity and danger. Those that are themselves "the terror of the mighty in the land of the living," have hereby been made a terror to themselves. A prospect of the judgment to come is enough to make the stoutest heart to tremble, as when it comes indeed, it will make the mighty men and the chief captains to call in vain to rocks and mountains to shelter them.

First. How Felix struggled to get clear of these impressions, and to shake off the terror of his convictions; he did by them as he did by Paul's prosecutors, ver. 27, he deferred them. He said, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." 1st. He trembled, and that was all. Paul's trembling, *ch. ix. 6*, and the jailor's, *ch. xvi. 30*, ended in their conversion, but this of Felix did not. There are many startled by the Word of God that are not effectually changed by it. Many are in fear of the consequences of sin, and

yet continue in love and league with sin. 2nd. He did not fight against his convictions, nor fly in the face of the Word, or of the preacher of it, to be revenged on them for making his conscience fly in his face; he did not say to Paul, as Amaziah to the prophet, "Forbear, why shouldst thou be smitten?" Did not threaten him with a closer confinement, or with death, for touching him, as John Baptist did Herod, in the same place. But, 3rd. He artfully shifted off his convictions, by putting off the prosecution of them to another time. He has nothing to object against what Paul hath said; it is weighty, and worth considering; but, like a sorry debtor, he begs a day. Paul hath spent himself, and has tired him and his lady, and therefore, "Go thy way for this time;" break off here; business calls me away, but "when I have a convenient season," and have nothing else to do, "I will call for thee," and hear what thou hast farther to say. Note, (1.) Many lose all the benefit of their convictions for want of striking while the iron is hot. If Felix, now he trembled, had but asked, as Paul and the jailor did, when they trembled, "What shall I do?" he might have been brought to the faith of Christ, and have been a Felix indeed,—"happy for ever; but by dropping his convictions now, he lost them for ever, and himself with them." (2.) In the affairs of our souls delays are dangerous; nothing is of more fatal consequence than men's putting off their conversion from time to time. They will repent and turn to God, but not yet; the matter is adjourned to some more convenient season; when such a business or affair is compassed, when they are so much elder, and their convictions cool and wear off; good purposes prove to no purpose, and they are more hardened than ever in their evil way. Felix put off this matter to a more convenient season, but we do not find that that more convenient season ever came; for the devil cozens us of all our time, by cozening us of the present time. The present season is, without doubt, the most convenient season: "Behold, now is the accepted time. To-day, if ye will hear his voice."

Fourthly. After all, he continued him a prisoner, and left him so, when two years after he was removed from the government, ver. 26, 27. He was convinced in his conscience that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or of bonds, and yet had not the honesty to release him. To little purpose had Paul reasoned with him about righteousness, though he then trembled at the thought of his own iniquity, who could thus persist in such a palpable piece of injustice. But here we are told what principles he was governed by herein; and they were such as make the matter yet much worse.

1. The love of money. He would not release Paul, because he hoped to make his markets of him; and that at length his friends would make a purse to purchase his liberty, and then he would satisfy his conscience by releasing him when he could without satisfy his covetousness by it. But he cannot find in his heart to do his duty as a judge unless he can get money by it. "He hoped that money should have been given him of Paul," or somebody for him, and then he would have loosed him, and set him at liberty; and in hopes of that he continues him a prisoner, and sends for him the oftener, and communes with him. Not any more about the faith of Christ,—he had had enough of that, and of the judgment to come, Paul must not return to those subjects, or go on with them,—but about his discharge, or ransom rather, out of his present captivity. He cannot for shame ask Paul what he will give him to release him, but he sends for him to feel his pulse, and gives him an opportunity to ask what he would take to release him. And now we see what became of his promise both to Paul and to himself, that he would hear more of Christ at some other convenient season. Here were many seasons convenient enough to have talked that matter through, but nothing is done in it; all his business now is to get money by Paul, not to get the knowledge of Christ by him. Note, Those that trifle with their convictions, and think they can have the grace of God at command when they please, it is just with God to say concerning them, that his Spirit shall no more strive with them. When men will not hear God's voice "to-day, while it is called to-day, the heart is" commonly "hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

Paul was but a poor man himself; silver and gold he had none to give to purchase his liberty; but Felix knew there were those who wished well to him that were able to assist him. He having lately collected a deal of money for the poor saints, to relieve them, it might be expected that the rich saints should contribute some to release him, and I wonder it was not done. Though Paul is to be commended that he would not bid money to Felix, nor beg money of the churches,—his great and generous soul disdained both,—yet I know not whether his friends are to be commended, nay, whether they can be justified, in not doing it for him. They ought to have solicited the governor as pressingly for him as his enemies did against him; and if a gift was necessary to make room for them (as Solomon speaks) and to bring them before great men, they might lawfully have brought it. I ought not to bribe a man to do an unjust thing, but, if he will not do me justice without a fee, it is but doing myself justice to give it him; and if they might do it it was a shame they did not do it. I blush for them, that they would let such an eminent and useful man as Paul lie in the jail, when a little money would have fetched him out and restored him to his usefulness again. The Christians here at Cæsarea, where he now was, had parted with their tears to prevent his going to the prison, *ch. xxi. 13*, but could not find in their hearts to part with their money to help him out. Yet there might be a providence of God in it; Paul's bonds must be for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ, and therefore he must continue in bonds. However, this will not excuse Felix, who ought to have released an innocent man without demanding or accepting any thing for it. The judge that will not do right without a bribe no doubt will do wrong for a bribe.

2. Men-pleasing Felix was recalled from his government about two years after this, and Porcius Festus was put in his place; and one would have expected he should have at least concluded his government with this act of justice, the release of Paul; but he did not, he left Paul bound; and the reason here given is, because he was "willing to do the Jews a pleasure." Though he would not deliver him to death to please them, yet he would continue him a prisoner rather than offend them. And he did it in hope hereby to atone for the many offences he had done against them. He did not think Paul had either interest or inclination to complain of him at court, for detaining him so long in custody, against all law and equity; but he was jealous of the high priest and elders, that they would be his accusers to the emperor, for the wrongs he had done them; and therefore hopes by gratifying them in this matter to stop their mouths. Thus they who do some ill things are tempted to do more, to screen themselves and bear them out. If Felix had not injured the Jews he needed not have done this to please them. But when he had done it it seems he did not gain his point. The Jews notwithstanding this accused him to the emperor, and some historians say he was sent bound to Rome by Festus; and if so, surely his remembering how light he had made of Paul's bonds would help to make his own chain heavy. Those that aim to please God by doing good will have what they aim at; but so will not they that seek to please men by doing evil.

CHAPTER XXV.

Some think that Felix was turned out and Festus succeeded him quickly after Paul's imprisonment, and that the two years mentioned in the close of the foregoing chapter are to be reckoned from the beginning of Nero's reign; but it seems more natural to compute it from Paul's being delivered into the hands of Felix; however, we have here

ship dependent upon Syria, which was a province. The term, however, was applied to Judæa. "When a Roman governor came to his province, his first step would be to make himself acquainted with the habits and prevalent feelings of the people he was come to rule, and to visit such places as might seem to be more peculiarly associated with national interests. The Jews were the most remarkable people in the whole Roman provinces, and no city was to any other people what Jerusalem was to the Jews" (Conybeare and Howson).

xxv. 2. "High-priest:" Ishmael, the son of Phabi, was high-priest. "Chief of the Jews:" not merely members of the Sanhedrim, but including others of the leading Jews. From ver. 15 and 24 it would appear that the Jews sought to induce Festus to pass judgment of death at once upon Paul, and this as a sort of favour to them on his entering upon his office. Their request, too, seems to have been put forward accompanied by clamour and crowds.

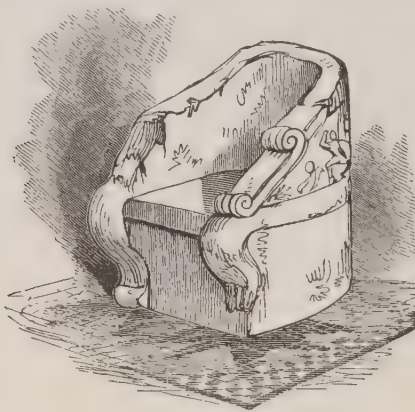
xxv. 4, 5. For Festus' reasons for thus answering, see verse 16.

much the same management of Paul's case as we had in the foregoing chapter. Cognizance is here taken of it, I. By Festus the governor; it is brought before him by the Jews, ver. 1—3; the hearing of it is appointed to be not at Jerusalem, as the Jews desired, but at Cæsarea, ver. 4—6; the Jews appear against Paul, and accuse him, ver. 7; but he stands upon his own innocence, ver. 8; and to avoid the removing of the cause to Jerusalem, which he was pressed to consent to, he at length appealed to Cæsar, ver. 9—12. II. By king Agrippa, to whom Festus relates his case, ver. 13—21; and Agrippa desires he might have the hearing of it himself, ver. 22; the court is accordingly set, and Paul brought to the bar, ver. 23; and Festus opens the cause, ver. 24—27; to introduce Paul's defence in the next chapter.



NOW when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. 2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, 3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for

him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him. 4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither. 5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him. 6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded



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Paul to be brought. 7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. 8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended anything at all. 9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? 10 Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. 11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar. 12 Then Festus, when he had conferred

with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.

We use to say, 'New lords, new laws, new customs;' but here was a new governor, and yet Paul had the same treatment with him that he had with the former, and no better. Festus, like Felix, is not so just to him as he should have been, for he doth not release him; and yet not so unjust to him as the Jews would have had him to be, for he will not condemn him to die, nor expose him to their rage. Here is,

First. The pressing instance which the high priest and other Jews used with the governor to persuade him to abandon Paul; for to send him to Jerusalem was in effect to abandon him.

1. See how speedy they were in their applications to Festus concerning Paul. As soon as ever he was come into the province, and had taken possession of the government,—into which probably he was installed at Cæsarea,—within three days he went up to Jerusalem, to shew himself there, and presently the priests were upon him to proceed against Paul. He stayed three days at Cæsarea, where Paul was a prisoner, and we do not find that in that time Paul made any application to him to release him, though no doubt he could have made good friends to him, that he might hope to have prevailed by; but, as soon as ever he comes up to Jerusalem, the priests are in all haste to make an interest with him against Paul. See how restless a thing malice is. Paul more patiently bears the lengthening out of his imprisonment than his enemies do the delay of his prosecution even to the death.

2. See how spiteful they were in their application. They informed the governor against Paul, ver. 2, before he was brought upon a fair trial, that so they might if possible prejudice the cause with the governor, and make him a party who was to be the judge. But this artifice, though base enough, they could not confide in; for the governor would be sure to hear him himself, and then all their informations against him would fall to the ground; and therefore they form another project much more base, and that is, to assassinate Paul before he came upon his trial. These inhuman, hellish methods, which all the world professeth at least to abhor, have these persecutors recourse to, to gratify their malice against the Gospel of Christ; and this, too, under colour of zeal for Moses' *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*,—'Such was their dire religious zeal.'

3. See how specious the pretence was. Now the governor was himself at Jerusalem, they desired he would send for Paul thither, and try him there, which would save the prosecutors a great deal of labour, and looked most reasonable, because he was charged with having profaned the temple at Jerusalem, and it is usual for criminals to be tried in the court where the fact was committed. But that which they designed was, to waylay him as he was brought up, and to murder him upon the road, supposing that he would not be brought up under so strong a guard as he was sent down with; or, that the officers that were to bring him up might be bribed to give them an opportunity for their wickedness. It is said, they desired favour against Paul. The business of prosecutors is to demand justice against one that they suppose to be a criminal, and if he be not proved so it is as much justice to acquit him as it is to condemn him if he be; but to desire favour against a prisoner, and from the judge, too, who ought to be of counsel for him, is a very impudent thing. The favour ought to be for the prisoner, *in favorem vite*,—'to favour his life;' but here they desire it against him. They will take it as a favour if the governor will but condemn Paul, though they can prove no crime upon him.

Secondly. The governor's resolution that Paul shall take his trial at Cæsarea, where he now is, ver. 4, 5. See how he manageth the prosecutors.

1. He will not do them the kindness to send for him to Jerusalem; no, he gave orders that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea. It doth not appear that he had any suspicion, much less any certain information, of their bloody design to murder him by the way, as the chief captain had when he sent him to Cæsarea, *ch. xliii. 30*; but perhaps he was not willing so far to oblige the high priest and his party; or he would maintain the honour of his court at Cæsarea, and require their attendance there; or he was not willing to be at the trouble or charge of bringing Paul up. Whatever was his reason for refusing it, God made use of it as a means of preserving Paul out of the hands of his enemies. Perhaps now they were more careful to keep their conspiracy secret than they had been before, that the discovery of it might not be now, as it was then, the defeat of it. But though God doth not as then bring it to light, yet he finds another way as effectual to bring it to nought, by inclining the heart of the governor, for some other reasons, not to remove Paul to Jerusalem. God is not tied to one method in working out salvation for his people. He can suffer the designs against them to be concealed, and yet not suffer them to be accomplished, and can make even the carnal policies of great men to serve his gracious purposes.

2. Yet he will do them the justice to hear what they have to say against Paul, if they will go down to Cæsarea, and appear against him there. 'Let them among you which are able,'—able in body and purse for such a journey, or able in mind and tongue to manage the prosecution,—let those among you that are fit to be managers, 'go down with me, and accuse this man.' Or, those that are competent witnesses, that are able to prove anything criminal upon him, let them go and give in their evidence, if there be any such wickedness in him as you charge upon him. Festus will not take it for granted, as they desire he should, that there is wickedness in him, till it is proved upon him, and he has been heard in his own defence: but, if he be guilty, it lies upon them to prove him so.

Thirdly. Paul's trial before Festus. He stayed at Jerusalem about ten days, and then went down to Cæsarea, and the prosecutors, it is likely, in his retinue; for he said, they should go down with him. And, since they are so eager in the prosecution, he is willing this cause should be first called; and that they may hasten home, he will despatch it the next day. Expedition in administering justice is very commendable, provided more haste be not made than good speed. Now here we have,

1. The court set, and the prisoner called to the bar. Festus sat in the judgment-seat, as he used to do when any cause was brought before him that was of consequence, and he 'commanded Paul to be brought,' and make his appearance, ver. 6. Christ, to encourage his disciples, and keep up their spirits under such awful trials of their courage as this was to Paul, promised them that the day should come when they 'should sit on thrones, judging the tribes of Israel.'

2. The prosecutors exhibiting their charge against the prisoner; ver. 7, 'the Jews stood round about,' which intimates that they were many,—'Lord, how are they increased that trouble me!' that they were unanimous,—they stood by one another, and resolved to hold together; and that they were intent upon the prosecution, and eager in clamouring against Paul. They stood round about, if possible to frighten the judge into a compliance with their malicious design; however, to frighten the prisoner, and at least to put him out of countenance; but in vain: he had too just and strong an assurance to be dashed by them. 'They compassed me about like bees, but they are quenched as the fire of thorns,' *Ps. cxviii. 12*. 'When they stood round him, they brought many and grievous accusations against Paul,' so it should be read; they charged him with high crimes and misdemeanours. The articles of impeachment were many, and contained things of a very heinous nature; they represented him to the court as black and odious as their wit and malice could contrive; but when they

It speaks well for his love of law and fair play. The words 'should be kept' should rather be 'is in custody.' 'Are able, go down:' rather, let the powerful among you, the leading men, those competent to undertake the task of accusers, go down and accuse him.

xxv. 9. It seems probable that this proposition of Festus involved more than merely a change of the place of the trial. The words 'before me' might have meant, not that Festus would be the judge, but that he would be present. Nothing would surely be gained in

moving the trial to Jerusalem if the same judge was to decide the case. The proposition of Festus, accordingly, would seem to involve the proposal that Paul should go and be tried by the Sanhedrim. Festus may have anticipated Paul's refusal to relinquish his right to be tried by Roman law, and so made the proposal simply to win the favour of the Jews and gain the reputation of favouring them.

xxv. 11. Under the Commonwealth, every Roman citizen had the right of appeal from the magistrate to the people, except in certain

had opened the cause as they thought fit, and came to the evidence, there they failed: they could not prove what they alleged against him, for it was all false, and the complaints groundless and unjust: either the fact was not as they opened it, or there was no fault in it. They laid to his charge things that he knew not, nor they neither. It is no new thing for the most excellent ones of the earth to have all manner of evil said against them falsely, not only in the song of the drunkards, and upon the seat of the scornful, but even before the judgment-seat.

3. The prisoner's insisting upon his own vindication, ver. 8. Whoever reproacheth him, his own heart doth not, and therefore his own tongue shall not; though he die, he will not remove his integrity from him. When it came to his turn to speak for himself, he insisted upon his general plea, Not guilty: "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended any thing at all." 1st. He had not violated the law of the Jews, nor taught any doctrine destructive of it. Did he make void the law by faith? No, he established the law. Preaching Christ, the end of the law, was no offence against the law. 2nd. He had not profaned the temple, nor put any contempt at all upon the temple service; his helping to set up the gospel temple did not at all offend against that temple which was a type of it. 3rd. He had not offended against Cæsar or his government. By this it appears, that now his cause was brought before the government, to curry favour with the governor, and that they might seem friends to Cæsar, they had charged him with some instances of disaffection to the present higher powers, which obliged him to purge himself as to that matter, and to protest that he was no enemy to Cæsar, not so much as they were that charged him with being so.

Fourthly, Paul's appeal to the emperor, and the occasion of it. This gave the cause a new turn; whether he had before designed it, or whether it was a sudden resolve upon the present provocation, doth not appear; but God puts it into his heart to do it, for the bringing about of that which he had said to him, that must bear witness to Christ at Rome, for there the emperor's court was, ch. xxiii. 11. We have here,

1. The proposal which Festus made to Paul, to go and take his trial at Jerusalem, ver. 8. Festus was "willing to do the Jews a pleasure," inclined to gratify the prosecutors rather than the prisoner, as far as he could go with safety against one that was a citizen of Rome, and therefore asked him, whether he would be willing to go up to Jerusalem and clear himself there where he had been accused, and where he might have his witnesses ready to vouch for him, and confirm what he said. He would not offer to turn him over to the high priest and the Sanhedrim, as the Jews would have had him; but, "Wilt thou go thither and be judged of these things before me?" The president, if he had pleased, might have ordered him thither, but he would not do it without his own consent, which if he could have wheedled him to give, it would have taken off the odium of it. In suffering times the prudence of the Lord's people is tried as well as their patience: being sent forth therefore as sheep in the midst of wolves, they have need to be wise as serpents.

2. Paul's refusal to consent to it, and his reasons for it. He knew, if he were removed to Jerusalem, notwithstanding the utmost vigilance of the president, the Jews would find some means or other to be the death of him, and therefore desired to be excused, and pleads,

1st. That, as a citizen of Rome, it was most proper for him to be tried, not only by that president, but in that which was properly his court, which sat at Cæsarea; "I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged," in the city which is the metropolis of the province. The court being held in Cæsar's name, and by his authority and commission, before one that was delegated by him, it might well be said to be his judgment-seat; as, with us, all writs run in the name of the sovereign, in whose name all courts are held. Paul's owning that he ought to be judged at Cæsar's judgment-seat, plainly proves that Christ's ministers are not exempted from the jurisdiction of the civil powers, but ought to be subject to them, as far as they can with a good conscience; and, if they be guilty of a real crime, to submit to their censure; if innocent, yet to submit to their inquiry, and to clear themselves before them.

2nd. That, as a member of the Jewish nation, he had done nothing to make himself obnoxious to them; "To the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest." It very well becomes those that are innocent to plead their innocency, and to insist upon it; it is a debt we owe to our own good name, not only not to bear false witness against ourselves, but maintain our own integrity against those who bear false witness against us.

3rd. That he was willing to abide by the rules of the law, and to let that take its course, ver. 11. If he be guilty of any capital crime that deserves death, he will not offer either to make resistance or to make his escape, will neither flee from justice nor fight with it; "I refuse not to die," but will accept of the punishment of mine iniquity. Not that all who have "committed any thing worthy of death" are obliged to accuse themselves, and offer themselves to justice; but when they are accused and brought to justice they ought to submit, and to say both God and the government is righteous: it is necessary that some should be made examples. But if he be innocent, as he protests he is, if there be "none of these things whereof these accuse me," if the prosecution be malicious, and they are resolved to have my blood, right or wrong, "no man may deliver me unto them," no, not the governor himself, without palpable injustice; for it is his business as much to protect the innocent as to punish the guilty; and he claims his protection.

3. His appealing to court. Since he is continually in danger of the Jews, and one attempt is made after another to get him into their hands, whose tender mercies were cruel, he flies to the *dernier resort*,—"the last refuge," of oppressed innocency, and takes sanctuary there, since he cannot have justice done him in any other way; "I appeal unto Cæsar." Rather than be delivered to the Jews, which Festus seems inclined to consent to, let me be delivered to Nero. When David had divers times narrowly escaped the rage of Saul, and concluded he was such a restless enemy that he should one day perish by his hands, he came to this resolution, being in a manner compelled to it, "There is nothing better for me than to take shelter 'in the land of the Philistines,' 1 Sam. xxvii. 1; so Paul here. But it is a hard case that a son of Abraham must be forced to appeal to a Philistine, to a Nero, from those who call themselves the seed of Abraham, and shall be safer in Gath or Rome than in Jerusalem! 'How is the faithful city become a harlot!'"

Fifthly, The judgment given upon the whole matter. Paul's neither released nor condemned. His enemies hoped the cause would end in his death; his friends hoped it would be ended in his deliverance; but it proves neither so nor so; they are both disappointed; the thing is left as it was. And it is an instance of the slow steps which Providence sometimes takes, not bringing things to an issue so soon as we expect, by which we are often made ashamed both of our hopes and of our fears, and are kept still waiting on God. The cause had before been adjourned to another time, now to another place, to another court, that Paul's tribulation might work patience.

1. The president advises upon the matter. He "conferred with the council," *ἀκούσας τοῦ συμβουλίου*, not with the council of the Jews, that is called *συνέδριον*, but with his own counsellors, that were always ready to assist the governor with their advice. "In multitude of counsellors there is safety;" and judges should consult both with themselves and others, before they pass sentence.

2. He determines to send him to Rome. Some think Paul meant not an appeal to Cæsar's person, but only to his court, the sentence of which he would abide by, rather than be remitted to the Jews' council, and that Festus might have chosen whether he would have sent him to Rome, or at least whether he would have joined issue with him upon the appeal. But it should seem, by what Agrippa said, ch. xxvi. 32, he "might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Cæsar," that by the course of the Roman law, a Roman citizen might appeal at any time to a superior court, even to the supreme, as causes with us are removed by *certiorari*, and criminals by *habeas corpus*, and as appeals are often made to the House of Peers. Festus therefore, either of choice, or of course, comes to this resolution, "Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? Unto Cæsar thou shalt go." He found there was something very extraordinary in the case, which he was therefore afraid of giving judgment upon, either one way or other, and the knowledge of which he thought would be an entertainment to the emperor, and therefore he transmitted it to his cognizance. In our judgment before God, those that by justifying themselves appeal to the law, to the law they shall go, and it will condemn them; but those that by repentance and faith appeal to the Gospel, to the Gospel they shall go, and it will save them.

13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cæsarea to salute Festus. 14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: 15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him. 16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. 17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. 18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: 19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. 20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. 21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cæsar. 22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him. 23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth. 24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. 25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him. 26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. 27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.

cases. Under the Empire this appeal was transferred to the Emperor, and when made the magistrate lost all power over the prisoner, and was obliged to send him at the earliest opportunity to Rome.

xxv. 12. "The council;" i.e., the governor's council, whose business it was to assist the president in his decisions. They were called counsellors, assessors, or friends of the governor.

xxv. 13. "Agrippa and Bernice;" Herod Agrippa II., son of Herod Agrippa mentioned in chap. xii. He was seventeen years old and at

Rome when his father died. Soon after Claudius gave him the principality of Chalcis, and four years later the tetrarchy of Philip, and Batanea, Trachonitis, and Abilene, with the title of king. He had also the superintendence of the Temple and the appointment of the high-priest. At this time he was twenty-three years of age. Bernice was his sister; Drusilla was another sister.

xxv. 15. "Judgment;" in the sense of sentence, condemnation.

xxv. 19. "Superstition;" rather, "religion." (See chap. xvii. 22.)

We have here the preparation that was made for another hearing of Paul before king Agrippa, not in order to his giving judgment upon him, but in order to his giving advice concerning him, or rather only to gratify his curiosity. Christ had said concerning his followers, that they should be brought before governors and kings; in the former part of this chapter Paul was brought before Festus the governor, here before Agrippa the king, for a testimony to both. Here is,

First. The kind and friendly visit which king Agrippa made to Festus, now upon his coming into the government in that province; ver. 13. "After certain days, king Agrippa came to Cæsarea." Here is a royal visit. Kings use to think it enough to send their ambassadors to congratulate their friends, but here was a king that came himself, that made the majesty of a prince yield to the satisfaction of a friend. For personal converse is the most pleasant among friends. Observe,

1. Who the visitants were. 1st. King Agrippa, the son of that Herod, surnamed Agrippa, who killed James the apostle, and was himself eaten up of worms, and great-grandson of Herod the great, under whom Christ was born. Josephus calls this Agrippa the younger. Claudius the emperor made him king of Chalcis, and tetrarch of Trachonitis and Abylene, mentioned *Lu. iii. 1*. The Jewish writers speak of him, and (as Dr. Lightfoot tells us) among other things relate this story of him: "That reading the law publicly, in the latter end of the year of release, as was enjoined, the king, when he came to those words, (*Deut. xvii. 15*), 'Thou shalt not set a stranger king over thee, which is not of thy brethren,' the tears ran down his cheeks, for he was not of the seed of Israel; which the congregation observing, cried out, 'Be of good comfort, king Agrippa, thou art our brother;' for he was of their religion, though not of their blood." 2nd. Bernice came with him; she was his own sister, now a widow, the widow of his uncle Herod, king of Chalcis; after whose death she lived with this brother of hers, who was suspected to be too familiar with her. And after she was a second time married to Polemon, king of Cilicia, she got to be divorced from him, and returned to her brother, king Agrippa. *Juv. Sat. 6*, speaks of a diamond ring which Agrippa gave to Bernice his incestuous sister;

— Bernices
*In digito factus pretiosior; hunc dedit olim
Barbarus incesta, dedit hunc Agrippa sorori.
That far-famed gem which on the finger glow'd
Of Bernice (dearer thence), bestow'd
By an incestuous brother.—Gifford.*

And both Tacitus and Suetonius speak of a criminal intimacy afterwards between her and Titus Vespasian. Drusilla, the wife of Felix, was another sister. Such lewd people were the great people generally in those times. "Say not that the former days were better."

2. What the design of the visit was. They came to salute Festus; to give him joy of his new promotion, and to wish him joy in it. They came to compliment him upon his accession to the government, and to keep up a good correspondence with him, that Agrippa, who had the government of Galilee, might act in concert with Festus, who had the government of Judæa. But it is probable, they came as much to divert themselves as to shew respect to him, and to share in the entertainments of his court; and to shew their fine clothes, which would do vain people no good if they did not go abroad.

Secondly. The account which Festus gave to king Agrippa of Paul and his case; which he gave,

1. To entertain him, and give him some diversion. It was a very remarkable story, and worthy any man's hearing; not only as it was surprising and entertaining, but, if it were truly and fully told, very instructive and edifying. And it would be particularly acceptable to Agrippa, not only because he was a judge, and there were some points of law and practice in it well worth his notice; but much more as he was a Jew, and there were some points of religion in it much more deserving his cognizance.

2. To have his advice. Festus was but newly come to be a judge, at least to be a judge in these parts, and therefore is diffident of himself, and of his own ability, and willing to have the counsel of those that were older and more experienced, especially in a matter that had so much difficulty in it as Paul's case seemed to have, and therefore he declared it to the king. Let us now see the particular account he gives to king Agrippa concerning Paul, ver. 14, 21.

1st. That he found him a prisoner when he came into the government of this province, and therefore could not of his own knowledge give an account of his cause from the beginning. "There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix;" and therefore, if there were any thing amiss in the first taking of him into custody, Festus is not to answer for that, for he found him in bonds. When Felix, to do the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound, though he knew him to be innocent, he knew not what he did; knew not but he might have fallen into worse hands than he did fall into, though they were none of the best.

2nd. That the Jewish Sanhedrim were extremely set against him; "The chief priests and the elders informed me" against him as a dangerous man, and not fit to live, and desired he might therefore be condemned to die. These being great pretenders to religion, and therefore to be supposed men of honour and honesty, Festus thinks he ought to give credit to; but Agrippa knows them better than he doth, and therefore he desires his advice in the matter.

3rd. That he had insisted upon the Roman law in favour of the prisoner, and would not condemn him unheard; ver. 16. "It is not the manner of the Romans," who herein govern themselves by the law of nature, and the fundamental rules of justice, "to deliver any man to die," to grant him to destruction, so the word is, to gratify his enemies with his destruction, "before the accused has the accusers face to face" to confront their testimony, and have both license and time given him to answer for himself. He seems to upbraid them as if they reflected upon the Romans and their government, in asking such a thing, or expecting that they would condemn a man without trying him. No, saith he, I would have you to know, whatever you may allow of among yourselves, the Romans allow not of such a piece of injustice among them. *Audi et alteram partem*,—"hear the other side," was become a proverb among them. This rule we ought to be governed by in our private censures in common conversation. We must not give men ill characters, nor condemn their words and actions till we have heard what is to be said in their vindication: see *Jno. vii. 51*.

4th. That he had brought him upon his trial according to the duty of his place, ver. 17. That he had been expeditious in it, and the prosecutors had no reason to complain of his being dilatory, for "as soon as ever they were come," and we are sure they lost no time, "without any delay, on the morrow," he had brought on the cause. He had likewise tried him in the most solemn manner: he sat on the judgment-seat, as they used to do in weightier causes, while those that were of small moment they judged *de plano*,—"upon even ground." He called a great court on purpose for the trial of Paul, that the sentence might be definitive, and the cause ended.

5th. That he was extremely disappointed in the charge they brought against him; ver. 18, 19. "When the accusers stood up against him," and opened their indictment, "they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed." He supposed by the eagerness of their prosecution, and their urging of it thus

upon the Roman governors, one after another. First. That they had something to accuse him of that was dangerous either to private property or the public peace; that they would undertake to prove him a robber, or a murderer, or a rebel against the Roman power; that he had been in arms to head a sedition; that, if he were not that Egyptian who lately made an uproar, and commanded a party of cut-throats, as the chief captain supposed him to be, yet that he was one of the same kidney. Such were the outcries against the primitive Christians, so loud, so fierce, that the standers-by, who judged of them by those outcries, could not but conclude them the worst of men; and to represent them so was the design of that clamour, as it was against our Saviour. Secondly. That they had something to accuse him of that was censurable in the Roman courts, and which the governor was properly the judge of, as Gallio expected, *ch. xviii. 14*; otherwise it was absurd and ridiculous to trouble him with it, and really an affront to him.

But to his great surprise he finds the matter is neither so nor so. They had "certain questions against him," instead of proofs and evidences against him. The worst they had to say against him was disputable, whether it was a crime or no; moot-points, that would bear an endless debate, but had no tendency to fasten any guilt upon him; questions fitter for the schools than for the judgment-seat. And they were "questions of their own superstition," so he calls their religion, or rather, so he calls that part of their religion which Paul was charged with doing damage to. The Romans protected their religion according to their law, but not their superstition, not the tradition of their elders. But the great question it seems was "concerning one Jesus that was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." Some think the superstition he speaks of was the Christian religion, which Paul preached, and that he had the same notion of it that the Athenians had, that it was the introducing of a new demon, even Jesus. See how slightly this Roman speaks of Christ, and of his death and resurrection, and of the great controversy between the Jews and the Christians whether he were the Messiah promised or no; and the great proof of his being the Messiah, his resurrection from the dead, as if it were no more but this,—there was one Jesus that was dead, and Paul affirmed he was alive. In many causes issue is joined upon this question, whether such a person that has been long absent be living or dead, and proofs are brought on both sides; and Festus will have it thought that this is a matter of no more moment. Whereas this Jesus, whom he prides himself in being thus ignorant of, as if he were below his notice, is "He that was dead, and is alive, and lives for evermore, and has the keys of hell and of death," *Rev. i. 18*. What Paul affirmed concerning Jesus, that he is alive, is a truth of such vast importance, that if it be not true we are all undone.

6th. That therefore he had moved it to Paul, that the cause might be adjourned to the Jewish courts, as best able to take cognizance of an affair of this nature; ver. 20. "Because I doubted of such manner of questions," and thought myself unfit to judge of things I did not understand. "I asked him, whether he would go to Jerusalem," appear before the great Sanhedrim, "and there be judged of these matters?" He would not force him to it, but should be glad he would consent to it, that he might not have his conscience burdened with a cause of this nature.

7th. That Paul had chosen rather to remove his cause to Rome than to Jerusalem, as expecting fairer play from the emperor than from the priests. He "appealed to be reserved to the hearing of Augustus," ver. 21, having no other way to stop proceedings here in this inferior court, and therefore I have "commanded him to be kept" a close prisoner, "till I might send him to Cæsar;" for I did not see cause to refuse his appeal, but rather was pleased with it.

Thirdly. The bringing of him before Agrippa, that he might have the hearing of his cause.

1. The king desired it, ver. 22. I thank you for your account of him; but "I would also hear the man myself." Agrippa knows more of this matter than Festus doth, of the cause and of the person; he has heard of Paul, and knows of what vast concern this question is, which Festus makes such a jest of, whether Jesus be alive or no; and nothing would oblige him more than to hear Paul. Many great men think it below them to take cognizance of the matters of religion, except they can hear them like themselves, in the judgment-seat. Agrippa would not for all the world have gone to a meeting to hear Paul preach, no more than Herod to hear Jesus; and yet are both glad to have them brought before them, only to satisfy their curiosity. Perhaps Agrippa desired to hear him himself, that he might be in a capacity to do him a kindness, and yet did him none, only put some credit upon him.

2. Festus granted it; "To-morrow thou shalt hear him." There was a good providence in this for the encouragement of Paul, who seemed buried alive in his imprisonment, and deprived of all opportunities of doing good. We know not of any of his epistles that bore date from his prison at Cæsarea. What opportunity he had of doing good to his friends that visited him, and perhaps to a little congregation of them that might visit him every Lord's day, was but a low and narrow sphere of usefulness, so that he seemed to be thrown by as a "despised broken vessel, and a vessel in which there was no pleasure;" but this gives him an opportunity of preaching Christ to a great congregation, and, which is more, to a congregation of great ones. Felix heard him in private concerning the faith of Christ; but Agrippa and Festus agree he shall be heard in public. And we have reason to think that his sermon in the next chapter, though it might not be so instrumental as some other of his sermons for the conversion of souls, yet redounded as much to the honour of Christ and Christianity as any sermon he ever preached in his life.

3. Great preparation was made for it, ver. 23. The next day, there was a great appearance in the place of hearing, Paul and his cause being much talked of, and the more for their being much talked against.

1st. Agrippa and Bernice took this opportunity to shew themselves in state, and to make a figure, and perhaps for that end desired the occasion that they might see and be seen; for they came with great pomp, richly dressed with gold, and pearl, and costly array; with a great retinue of footmen, in rich liveries, which made a splendid show, and dazzled the eyes of the gazing crowd. They came *μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας*,—"with great fancy," so the word is. Note. Great pomp is but great fancy; it neither adds any real excellency nor gains any real respects, but feeds a vain humour, which wise men would rather mortify than gratify. It is but a show, a dream, a fantastical thing, so the word signifies, superficial, and it passeth away. And the pomp of this appearance would put one for ever out of conceit with pomp, when the pomp which Agrippa and Bernice appeared in was, First. Stained by their lewd characters, and all the beauty of it sullied, and all virtuous people that knew them could not but condemn them, in the midst of all this pomp, as vile persons, *Ps. xv. 4*. Secondly. Outshone by the real glory of the poor prisoner at the bar. What was the honour of their fine clothes compared with that of his wisdom, and grace, and holiness, his courage and constancy in suffering for Christ! His bonds in so good a cause were more glorious than their chains of gold, and his guards than their equipage. Who would be fond of worldly pomp that here sees so ill a woman loaded with it, and so good a man loaded with the reverse of it?

2nd. The chief captain and principal men of the city took this opportunity to pay their respects to Festus and to his guests. It answered the end of

Festus would not have used it in an offensive sense when speaking to Agrippa.

xxv. 20. "Doubted," &c.: "was at a loss as to this investigation"—i.e., the inquiry which would have to be made on this question. (See verse 9 for the reason which induced Festus to make this proposal.)

xxv. 21. "Augustus:" this title was first conferred by the senate upon Octavianus, and was borne by all succeeding emperors.

xxv. 26. "My lord:" i.e., Nero. Augustus and Tiberius had

refused this title, as implying despotic rule, but their successors received it. "No certain thing:" i.e., no clear, tangible case.

xxvi. 1. As guest, Agrippa seems to have been permitted to preside at the examination, and so gives the word for Paul to defend himself. This gesture of Paul in stretching forth his hand is not the same as that mentioned in chaps. xii. 17, xiii. 16, where the object was to obtain silence. The presence of Festus and Agrippa, and the whole character of the proceedings here related, would be sufficient to

a ball at court; it brought the fine folks together in their fine clothes, and served for an entertainment. It is probable, Festus sent Paul notice of it over right, to be ready for a hearing the next morning before Agrippa. And such confidence had Paul in the promise of Christ, that it should be given him in that same hour what he should speak, that he complained not of the short warning, nor was put into confusion by it. And I am apt to think, they that were to appear in pomp perplexed themselves more with care about their clothes than Paul that was to appear as a prisoner did with care about his cause: for he knew whom he had believed, and who stood by him.

Fourthly. The speech with which Festus introduced the cause, when the court, or rather the audience, was set, which is much to the same purpose with the account he had just now given to Agrippa.

1. He addresseth himself respectfully to the company; "King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us." He speaks to all men, *πᾶσι ἀνδρες*, as if he intended a tacit reflection upon Bernice, a woman, for appearing in a meeting of this nature; he doth not refer anything to her judgment, or desire her counsel, but 'all you that are present, that are men,' so the words are placed, I desire you to take cognizance of this matter. The word used is that which signifies men in distinction from women. What had Bernice to do here?

2. He represents the prisoner as one that the Jews had a very great spite against; not to oppose the rulers, but "the multitude of them, both at Jerusalem and here at Caesarea, crying out, 'That he ought not to live any longer,' for they think he has lived too long already, and if he lived any longer it would be to do more mischief. They could not charge him with any capital crime, but they want to have him out of the way."

3. He confesseth the prisoner's innocence; and it was much for the honour of Paul and his bonds that he had such a public acknowledgment as this from the mouth of his judge; ver. 25, "I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death." Upon a full hearing of the cause it appeared that there was no evidence at all to support the indictment, and, therefore, though he was inclinable enough to favour the prosecutors, yet his own conscience brought in Paul not guilty. And why did he not discharge him then, for he stood upon his deliverance? Why, truly, because he was so much clamoured against, and he feared the clamour would turn upon himself, if he should release him. It is pity but every man that has a conscience should have courage to act according to it. Or, perhaps, because there was so much smoke he concluded there could not but be some fire, which would appear at last, and he would continue him a prisoner in expectation of it.

4. He acquaints them with the present state of the case, that the prisoner had appealed to the emperor himself, whereby he put an honour upon his own cause, as knowing it not unworthy the cognizance of the greatest of men; and that he had admitted his appeal; "I have determined to send him." And thus the cause now stood.

5. He desires their assistance in examining the matter, calmly and impartially, now there was no danger of their being interrupted, as he had been, with the noisiness and outrage of the prosecutors; that he might have at least such an insight into the cause as was necessary to his stating of it to the emperor, ver. 26, 27. 1st. He thought it "unreasonable to send a prisoner," especially so far as Rome, "and not without to signify the crimes laid against him," that the matter might be prepared as much as possible, and put in a readiness for the emperor's determination; for he is supposed to be a man of great business, and therefore every affair must be laid before him in as little compass as possible. 2nd. He could not as yet write anything certain concerning Paul; so confused were the informations that were given in against him, and so inconsistent, that he could make nothing at all of them. 3rd. He therefore desired he might be thus publicly examined, that he might be advised by them what to write. See what a great deal of trouble and vexation they were put to, and to what delay, nay, and to what hazard in the administration of public justice, who lived at such a distance from Rome, and yet were subject to the emperor of Rome. And the same was this nation of ours put to, (which is about as far distant from Rome the other way,) when it was in ecclesiastical affairs subject to the pope of Rome, and appeals were upon all occasions made to his court. And the same mischiefs, and a thousand worse, would they bring upon us who would again entangle us in that yoke of bondage.

CHAPTER XXVI.

We left Paul at the bar, and Festus, and Agrippa, and Bernice, and all the great men of the city of Caesarea upon the bench, or about it, waiting to hear what he had to say for himself. Now in this chapter we have, I. The account he gives of himself in answer to the calumnies of the Jews. And in that, 1. His humble address to king Agrippa, and the compliment he passed upon him, ver. 1-3; 2. His account of his original, and education, and his profession as a Pharisee, and his adherence still to that which was then the main article of his creed, in distinction from the Sadducees, the resurrection of the dead, however in rituals he had since departed from it, ver. 4-8; 3. Of his zeal against the Christian religion, and the professors of it, in the beginning of his time, ver. 9-11; 4. Of his miraculous conversion to the faith of Christ, ver. 12-16; 5. Of the commission he received from Heaven, to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, ver. 17, 18; 6. Of his proceedings pursuant to that commission, which had given this mighty offence to the Jews, ver. 19-21; 7. Of the doctrine which he had made it his business to preach to the Gentiles, which was so far from destroying the law and the prophets, that it shewed the fulfilling of both, ver. 22, 23. II. The remarks that were made upon his apology. 1. Festus thought he never heard a man talk so madly, and slighted him as crazed, ver. 24; and in answer to him he denies the charge, and appeals to king Agrippa, ver. 25, 26; 2. King Agrippa being more closely and particularly dealt with, thinks he never heard a man talk more rationally and convincingly, and owns himself almost his convert, ver. 28; and Paul heartily wishes him so, ver. 29; 3. They all agree that he was an innocent man, and that he ought to be set at liberty; and it was pity he was provoked to put a bar in his own door, by appealing to Caesar, ver. 30, 31.

WHEN Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself: 2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things

whereof I am accused of the Jews: 3 Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. 4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; 5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: 7 Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. 8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? 9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

Agrippa was the most honourable person in the assembly, having the title of king bestowed upon him, though otherwise having only the power of the other governors under the emperor; and though not here superior, yet senior to Festus, and therefore Festus having opened the cause, he, as the mouth of the court, intimates to Paul a license given him to speak for himself. And Paul was silent till he had that liberty allowed him; for those are not the most forward to speak that are best prepared to speak, and speak best. This was a favour which the Jews would not allow him, or not without difficulty; but Agrippa freely gives it him. And Paul's cause was so good, that he desired no more but to have liberty to speak for himself; he needed no advocate, no Tertullus to speak for him. Notice is taken of his gesture; he "stretched forth the hand," as one that was under no consternation at all, but a perfect freedom and command of himself; it also intimates that he was in earnest, and expected their attention, while he "answered for himself." Observe, He did not insist upon his having appealed to Caesar as an excuse for being silent; did not say, I will be examined no more till I come to the emperor himself; but cheerfully embraceth the opportunity of doing honour to the cause he suffered for. If we must be ready to give to every man that asketh us, much more to every man in authority, a reason of the hope that is in us, 1 Pet. iii. 15. Now in this former part of the speech,

First. Paul addresseth himself with a very particular respect to Agrippa, ver. 2, 3. He answered cheerfully before Felix, because he knew he had been many years a judge to that nation, *ch. xxiv. 10*; but his opinion of Agrippa goes farther. Observe,

1. Being accused of the Jews, and having many ill things laid to his charge, he is glad he has an opportunity of clearing himself; so far is he from imagining that his being an apostle exempted him from the jurisdiction of the civil powers. Magistracy is an ordinance of God, which we have all benefit by, and therefore must all be subject to.

2. Since he is forced to answer for himself, he is glad it is before king Agrippa, who being himself a proselyte to the Jewish religion, understood all matters relating to that better than the other Roman governors did; "I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews." It seems Agrippa was a scholar, and had been particularly conversant in the Jewish learning; was expert in the customs of the Jewish religion, and knew the nature of them, and that they were not designed to be either universal or perpetual. He was expert also in the questions that arose upon those customs, in determining of which the Jews themselves were not all of a mind. Agrippa was well versed in the scriptures of the Old Testament; and, therefore, could make a better judgment upon the controversy between him and the Jews concerning Jesus being the Messiah than another could. It is an encouragement to a preacher to have those to speak to that are intelligent, and can discern things that differ. When Paul saith, "Judge ye what I say," yet he speaks as to wise men, 1 Cor. x. 15.

3. He therefore begs that he would hear him patiently; *μακροθυμεω*, with long-suffering. Paul designed a long discourse, and begs he would hear him out, and not be weary; he designs a plain discourse, and begs he would hear him with mildness, and not be angry. Paul had some reason to fear that as Agrippa, being a Jew, was well versed in the Jewish customs, and therefore the more competent judge of his cause, so he was soured in some measure with the Jewish heaven, and therefore prejudiced against Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles; he therefore saith this to sweeten him, "I beseech thee, hear me patiently." Sure the least we can expect, when we preach the faith of Christ, is to be heard patiently.

Secondly. He professeth that, though he was hated and branded as an apostate, yet he still adhered to all that good which he was first educated and trained up in. His religion was always built upon the promise of God made unto the fathers; and this he still built upon.

1. See here what his religion was in his youth. His manner of life was well known, ver. 4, 5. He was not indeed born among his own nation, but he was

ensure silence. St. Paul's action was rather that of a speaker commencing his address. The hand he stretched forth was that on which he bore the chain.

xxvi. 2. Agrippa was better acquainted with Jewish customs and questions than Festus. See next verse, where the word "expert" means thoroughly well-informed. Agrippa, though educated at Rome, had spent six years in Palestine, and had the superintendence of the Temple and appointment of the high-priest. Canon Cook

says, "He was carefully instructed in the Jewish religion, by the directions of his father, and had a high reputation for knowledge of the law and zeal for the customs of Judaism."

xxvi. 4. "At the first," "at Jerusalem:" this would imply that St. Paul was very young when he went to Jerusalem. He was sent there probably at about twelve years of age, for instruction in the law, and became a pupil of Gamaliel.

xxvi. 5. "If they would testify:" &c., if they were willing to

bred among them at Jerusalem; though he had of late years been conversant with the Gentiles, which had given great offence to the Jews, yet at his setting out in the world he was intimately acquainted with the Jewish nation, and entirely in their interests. His education was neither foreign nor obscure; it was among his own nation at Jerusalem, where religion and learning flourished. All the Jews knew it, all that could remember so long, for Paul made himself remarkable betimes. They that knew him from the beginning could testify for him that he was a Pharisee; that he was not only of the Jewish religion, and an observer of all the ordinances of it, but that he was of the most strict sect of that religion, most nice and exact in observing the institutions of it himself, and most rigid and critical in imposing them upon others. He was not only called a Pharisee, but he lived a Pharisee. All that knew him knew very well that never any Pharisee conformed more punctually to the rules of his order than he did. Nay, and he was of the better sort of Pharisees; for he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, who was an eminent rabbin of the school or house of Hillel, which was in much greater reputation for religion than the school or house of Samai. Now if Paul was a Pharisee, and lived a Pharisee,

1st. Then he was a scholar, a man of learning, and not an ignorant, illiterate mechanic. The Pharisees knew the law, and were well versed in it, and in the traditional expositions of it. It was a reproach to the other apostles, that they had not had academical education, but were bred fishermen, *ch. iv. 13*. Therefore, that the unbelieving Jews might be left without excuse, here is an apostle raised up that had sat at the feet of their most eminent doctors.

2nd. Then he was a moralist, a man of virtue, and not a rake, or a loose, debauched young man. If he lived like a Pharisee, he was no drunkard, or fornicator; and, being a young Pharisee, we may hope he was no extortioner, nor had yet learned the arts which the crafty, covetous old Pharisees had of devouring the houses of poor widows; but he was, as "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless;" he was not chargeable with any instances of open vice and profaneness, and therefore as he could not be thought to have deserted his religion because he did not know it, for he was a learned man, so he could not be thought to have deserted it because he did not love it, or was disaffected to the obligations of it, for he was a virtuous man, and not inclined to any immorality.

3rd. Then he was orthodox; sound in the faith and not a deist or sceptic, or a man of corrupt principles that led to infidelity. He was a Pharisee, in opposition to a Sadducee; he received those books of the Old Testament which the Sadducees rejected; believed a world of spirits, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the rewards and punishments of the future state, all which the Sadducees denied. They could not say he quitted his religion for want of a principle, or for want of a due regard to Divine revelation. No; he always had a veneration for the ancient promise made of God unto the fathers, and built his hope upon it. Now, though Paul knew very well that all this would not justify him before God, nor make a righteousness for him, yet he knew it was for his reputation among the Jews, and an argument *ad hominem*,—"to the man;" that he was not such a man as they represented him to be. Though he counted it but loss that he might win Christ, yet he mentioned it when it might serve to honour Christ. He knew very well that all this while he was a stranger to the spiritual nature of the Divine law, and to heart religion, and that except his righteousness exceeded this he should never go to heaven; yet he reflects upon it with some satisfaction that he had not been before his conversion an atheistical, profane, vicious man, but, according to the light he had, had "lived in all good conscience before God."

2. See here what his religion is. He has not indeed such a zeal for the ceremonial law as he had in his youth; the sacrifices and offerings appointed by that he thinks are superseded by the great sacrifice which they typified. Ceremonial pollutions and purifications from them he makes no conscience of, and thinks the Levitical priesthood is honourably swallowed up in the priesthood of Christ; but for the main principles of his religion, he is as zealous for them as ever, and more so, and resolves to live and die by them.

1st. His religion is built upon "the promise made of God unto the fathers." It is built upon Divine revelation, which he receives and believes and ventures his soul upon; it is built upon Divine grace, and that grace manifested and conveyed by promise. The promise of God is the guide and ground of his religion; the promise made to the fathers, which was more ancient than the ceremonial law, "that covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, and which the law, that was not till four hundred and thirty years after, could not disannul," *Gal. iii. 17*. Christ and heaven are the two great doctrines of the Gospel, that "God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Now these two are the matter of the promise made unto the fathers; it may look back as far as the promise made to father Adam, concerning the seed of the woman, and those discoveries of a future state, which the first patriarchs acted faith upon, and were saved by that faith; but it respects chiefly the promise made to father Abraham, that "in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed;" and that "God would be a God to him, and to his seed after him." The former meaning Christ, the latter heaven; for if God had not prepared for them a city, he would have been ashamed to have called himself their God, *Heb. xi. 16*.

2nd. His religion consists in the hopes of this promise. He placeth it not, as they did, in meats and drinks, and the observation of carnal ordinances.—God had often shewed what little account he made of them,—but in a believing dependence upon God's grace in the covenant, and upon the promise, which was the great charter by which the church was first incorporated. *First*. He had hope in Christ as the promised seed; he hoped to be blessed in him, to receive the blessing of God, and to be truly blessed. *Secondly*. He had hopes of heaven; this is expressly meant, as appears by comparing *ch. xxiv. 15*, "That there shall be a resurrection of the dead." Paul had no confidence in the flesh, but in Christ; no expectation at all of great things in this world, but of greater things in the other world than any this world can pretend to: he had his eye upon a future state.

3rd. Herein he concurred with all the pious Jews. His faith was not only according to the Scripture, but according to the testimony of the church, which was a support of it. Though they set him up as a mark, he was not singular; "Our twelve tribes," the body of the Jewish church, "instantly serving God day and night," hope to come to this promise, that is, to the good promised. The people of Israel are called the twelve tribes, because so they were at first; and, though we read not of the return of the ten tribes in a body, yet we have reason to think many particular persons, more or less, of every tribe, returned to their own land, perhaps by degrees the greater part of them that were carried away. Christ speaks of the twelve tribes, *Mat. xix. 28*; Anna, was of the tribe of Asher, *Luk. ii. 36*; James directs his epistle to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, *Jas. i. 1*. "Our twelve tribes," which make up the body of our nation, to which I and others belong. Now all the Israelites profess to believe this promise, both of Christ and heaven; and hope to come to the benefits of them. They all hope for a Messiah to come, and we that are Christians hope in a Messiah already come; so that we all agree to build upon the same promise. They look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come, and that is it that I look for. Why should I be looked upon as advancing something dangerous and heterodox, or as an apostate from the faith and

worship of the Jewish church, when I agree with them in this fundamental article? I hope to come to the same heaven at last that they hope to come to; and, if we expect to meet so happily in our end, why should we fall out so unhappily by the way?

Nay, the Jewish church not only hoped to come to this promise, but in the hope of it they instantly served God day and night. The temple-service, which consisted in a continual course of religious duties, morning and evening, day and night, from the beginning of the year to the end of it, and was kept up by the priests and Levites, and the stationary men, as they called them, who continually attended there to lay their hands upon the public sacrifices, as the representatives of all the twelve tribes,—this service was kept up in the profession of faith in the promise of eternal life; and in expectation of it, Paul instantly serves God day and night in the Gospel of his Son. The twelve tribes by their representatives do so in the law of Moses, but he and they do it in hope of the same promise; and therefore they ought not to look upon me as a deserter from their church, so long as I hold by the same promise that they hold by. Much more should Christians, that hope in the same Jesus, for the same heaven, though differing in the modes and ceremonies of worship, hope the best one of another, and live together in holy love. Or it may be meant of particular persons who continued in the communion of the Jewish church, and were very devout in their way; serving God with great intention, and a close application of mind, and constant in it, night and day, as Anna, who "departed not from the temple, but served" (it is the same word here used) "in fastings and prayers night and day," *Luk. ii. 37*. In this way they hope to come to the promise, and I hope they will. Note, Those only can upon good grounds hope for eternal life that are diligent and constant in the service of God; and the prospect of that eternal life should engage us to diligence and constancy in all religious exercises. We should go on with our work with heaven in our eye; and those that instantly serve God day and night, though not in our way, we ought to judge charitably of.

4th. This was it that he was now suffering for. For preaching that doctrine which they themselves, if they did but understand themselves aright, must own; "I am judged for the hope of the promise made unto the fathers." He stuck to the promise against the ceremonial law, while his persecutors stuck to the ceremonial law against the promise; so that it is "for this hope's sake, king Agrippa, that I am accused of the Jews," because I do that which I think myself obliged to do by the hope of that promise. It is common for men to hate and persecute the power of that religion in others, which yet they pride themselves in the form of. Paul's hope was what they themselves also allowed, *ch. xxiv. 15*; and yet they were thus enraged against him for practising according to that hope. But it was his honour that, when he suffered as a Christian, he suffered for the hope of Israel, *ch. xxviii. 20*.

5th. This was it which he would persuade all that heard him cordially to embrace; ver. 8. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" This seems to come in somewhat abruptly; but it is likely Paul said much more than is here recorded, and that he explained the promise made to the fathers, to be the promise of the resurrection and eternal life; and proved that he was in the right way of pursuing his hope of that happiness, because he believed in Christ who was risen from the dead, which was a pledge and earnest of that resurrection which the fathers hoped for. Paul is therefore earnest to know the power of Christ's resurrection, that by it he might attain to the resurrection of the dead: see *Phil. iii. 10, 11*. Now many of his hearers were Gentiles,—most of them perhaps, Festus particularly; and we may suppose when they heard him speak so much of Christ's resurrection, and of the resurrection from the dead which the twelve tribes hoped for, they mocked, as the Athenians did, began to smile at it, and whispered to one another what an absurd thing it was, which occasioned Paul thus to reason with them. What! Is it thought incredible with you that God should raise the dead? so it may be read. "If it be marvellous in your eyes, should it be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts," *Zec. viii. 6*; if it be above the power of nature, yet it is not above the power of the God of nature. Note, There is no reason why we should think it at all incredible that God should raise the dead. We are not required to believe any thing that is incredible, any thing that implies a contradiction. There are motives of credibility sufficient to carry us through all the doctrines of the Christian religion, and this particularly of the resurrection of the dead. Hath not God an infinite, almighty power, to which nothing is impossible? Did not he make the world at first out of nothing, with a word's speaking? Did he not form our bodies, form them out of the clay, and breathe into us the breath of life at first; and cannot the same power form them again out of their own clay, and put life into them again? Do we not see a kind of resurrection in nature at the return of every spring? Hath the sun such a force to raise dead plants, and should it seem incredible to us that God should raise dead bodies?

Thirdly. He acknowledged that, while he continued a Pharisee, he was a bitter enemy to Christians and Christianity; and thought he ought to be so, and continued to the moment that Christ wrought that wonderful change in him. This he mentions,

1. To shew that his becoming a Christian and a preacher was not the product and result of any previous disposition or inclination that way, or any gradual advance of thought in favour of the Christian doctrine. He did not reason himself into Christianity by a chain of arguments, but was brought into the highest degree of an assurance of it, immediately from the highest degree of prejudice against it. By which it appeared, that he was made a Christian and a preacher by a supernatural power; so that his conversion in such a miraculous way was not only to himself, but to others also, a convincing proof of the truth of Christianity.

2. Perhaps he designs it for such an excuse of his persecutors as Christ made for his, when he said, They know not what they do. Paul himself, when time was, thought he did what he ought to do when he persecuted the disciples of Christ, and he charitably thinks they laboured under the like mistake. Observe,

1st. What a fool he was in his opinion; ver. 9, he "thought with himself that he ought to do many things," every thing that lay in his power, "contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth," contrary to his doctrine, his honour, his interest. That name did no harm, yet because it agreed not with the notion he had of the kingdom of the Messiah he was for doing all he could against it. He thought he did God good service in persecuting those who called on the name of Jesus Christ. Note, It is possible for those to be confident they are in the right who yet are evidently in the wrong; and for those to think they are doing their duty who are wilfully persisting in the greatest sin. They that hated their brethren, and cast them out, said, "Let the Lord be glorified," *Jas. lvi. 5*. Under colour and pretext of religion the most barbarous and inhuman villanies have been not only justified, but sanctified and magnified, *Jno. xvi. 2*.

2nd. What a fury he was in his practice, ver. 10, 11. There is not a more violent principle in the world than conscience misinformed; when Paul thought it his duty to do all he could against the name of Christ, he spared no pains or cost in it. He gives an account of what he did of that kind, and aggravates it as one that was truly penitent for it; "I was a blasphemer, a persecutor," *1 Tim. i. 13*. *First*. He filled the jails with Christians, as if they had been the

do so. "Most straitest sect:" rather, "most exact religious observance or usage."

xxvi. 6. The hope here meant was doubtless the coming of the Messiah, but intimately and inseparably connected with the Messianic claims of Jesus on his resurrection from the dead.

xxvi. 7. "Twelve tribes:" "a theocratic, honourable designation of the totality of the people." The Jewish nation, so called, even after the deportation of the ten tribes; for though these never re-

turned in a body, yet, as the people are called 'all Israel' in *Ezra ii. 70*, *Neh. vii. 73*, and sacrifices were offered for all the tribes (*Ezra vi. 17*, *viii. 35*), there were probably many individuals out of every tribe intermingled with those of Benjamin and Judah during the captivity in Babylon, who returned with them. See *Luke ii. 36*; *James i. 1* (Webster and Wilkinson). Compare *Rev. vii. 4*. "Instantly:" earnestly, with intense devotion.

xxvi. 8. On this verse Alford says, "Not, as commonly rendered,

worst of criminals; designing hereby not only to terrify them, but to make them odious to the people. He was "the devil that cast some of them into prison," *Rev. ii. 10*; took them into custody in order to their being prosecuted; "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, both men and women," *ch. viii. 2*. Secondly. He made himself the tool of the chief priests. Herein from them he received authority, as an inferior officer, to put their laws in execution; and proud enough he was to be a man in authority for such a purpose. Thirdly. He was very officious to vote unasked for the putting of Christians to death; particularly Stephen, to whose death Saul was consenting, *ch. viii. 1*, and so made himself *particeps criminis*,—'partaker of the crime.' Perhaps he was, for his great zeal, though young, made a member of the Sanhedrim, and there voted for the condemning of Christians to die; or after they were condemned he justified what was done, and commended it, and so made himself guilty *ex post facto*,—'after the deed was committed,' as if he had been a judge or jurymen. Fourthly. He brought them under punishments of an inferior nature, in the synagogues, where they were scourged as transgressors of the rules of the synagogue. He had a hand in the punishing of divers; nay, it should seem, the same persons were by his means often punished, as he himself was, five times, *2 Cor. xi. 24*. Fifthly. He not only punished them for their religion, but, taking pride in triumphing over men's consciences, he forced them to abjure their religion, by putting them to the torture; "I compelled them to blaspheme" Christ, and to say, he was a deceiver, and they were deceived in him; compelled them to deny their Master, and renounce their obligations to him. Nothing will lie heavier upon persecutors than forcing men's consciences, how much sower they may now triumph in the proselytes they have made by their violences. Sixthly. His rage swelled so against Christians and Christianity, that Jerusalem itself was too narrow a stage for it to act upon, but being "exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them even to strange cities." He was mad at them to see how much they had to say for themselves, notwithstanding all he did against them; mad to see them multiply the more for their being afflicted; he was exceedingly mad. The stream of his fury would admit no banks, no bounds; but he was as much a terror to himself as he was to them, so great was his vexation within himself that he could not prevail, as well as his indignation against them. Persecutors are mad men, and some of them exceedingly mad. Paul was mad to see that those in other cities were not as outrageous against the Christians, and therefore made himself busy there where he had no business, and persecuted the Christians even in strange cities. There is not a more restless principle than malice, especially which pretends conscience. This was Paul's character, and this his manner of life, in the beginning of his time; and therefore he could not be presumed to be a Christian by education, or custom, or that he was drawn in by hope of preferment; "or all imaginable external objections lay against his being a Christian."

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. 14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* 15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. 16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. 19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. 21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. 22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: 23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that

should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

All that believe a God, and have a reverence for his sovereignty, must acknowledge that they who speak and act by his direction, and by warrant from him, are not to be opposed; for that is fighting against God. Now Paul here, by a plain and faithful narrative of matters of fact, makes it out to this august assembly that he had an immediate call from heaven to preach the Gospel of Christ to the Gentile world, which was the thing that exasperated the Jews against him. He here shews,

First. That he was made a Christian by a Divine power. Notwithstanding all his prejudices against that way, he was brought into it on a sudden by the hand of Heaven; not compelled to confess Christ by outward force, as he had compelled others to blaspheme him, but by a Divine and spiritual energy,—by a revelation of Christ from above, both to him and in him. And this when he was in the full career of his sin, going to Damascus to suppress Christianity by persecuting the Christians there. As hot as ever in the cause, his persecuting fury not in the least spent or tired, nor was he tempted to give it up by the failing of his friends, for he had at this time as ample an "authority and commission from the chief priests" as ever he had to persecute Christianity, when he was obliged by a superior power to give up that, and accept another commission to preach up Christianity. Two things bring about this surprising change: a vision from heaven, and a voice from heaven, which conveyed the knowledge of Christ to him by the two learning senses of seeing and hearing.

1. He saw a heavenly vision; the circumstances of which were such as that it could not be 'a delusion,' or a *deceptio visus*, but was without doubt a Divine appearance. 1st. He saw a great light, a light from heaven, such as could not be produced by any art; for it was not in the night, but at midday; it was not in a house where tricks might have been played with him, but it was "in the way," in the open air. It was such a light as was "above the brightness of the sun;" outshone and eclipsed that, *Isa. xiv. 23*; and this could not be the product of Paul's own fancy, for it "shone round about them that journeyed with him;" they were all sensible of their being surrounded with this inundation of light, which made the sun itself to be in their eyes a lesser light. And the force and power of this light appeared in the effects of it; they all fell to the earth upon the sight of it, such a mighty consternation did it put them into. This light was lightning for its force, yet did not pass away as lightning, but continued to shine round about them. In Old Testament times God commonly manifested himself in the thick darkness, and made that his pavilion, *2 Chr. vi. 1*. He spoke to Abraham in a great darkness, *Gen. xv. 12*, for that was a dispensation of darkness; but, now life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel, Christ appeared in a great light. In the creation of grace, as of the world, the first thing created is light, *2 Cor. iv. 6*. 2nd. Christ himself appeared to him; ver. 16, "I have appeared to thee for this purpose." Christ was in this light; though they who travelled with Paul saw the light only, and not Christ in the light. It is not every knowledge that will serve to make us Christians, but it must be the knowledge of Christ.

2. He heard a heavenly voice, an articulate one, speaking to him. It is here said to be in the Hebrew tongue, (which was not taken notice of before,) in his native language, the language of his religion, to intimate to him that, though he must be sent among the Gentiles, yet he must not forget that he was a Hebrew, nor make himself a stranger to the Hebrew language. In what Christ said to him we may observe, 1st. That he called him by his name, and repeated it, "Saul, Saul," which would surprise and startle him, and the more because he was now in a strange place where he thought nobody knew him. 2nd. That he convinced him of sin, of that great sin which he was now in the commission of, the sin of persecuting the Christians, and shews him the absurdity of it. 3rd. That he interested himself in the sufferings of his followers; Thou persecutest me, ver. 14; and again, It is Jesus whom thou persecutest. Little did Paul think, when he was trampling upon those that he looked upon as the burthens and blemishes of this earth, that he was insulting one that was so much the glory of heaven. 4th. That he checked him for his wilful resisting those convictions; "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," or goads, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Paul's spirit at first perhaps began to rise, but he is told it is at his peril, and then he yields. Or, it was spoken by way of caution; Take heed, lest thou do resist these convictions, for they are designed to affect thee, not to affront thee. 5th. That upon his inquiry he made himself known to him. Paul asked, ver. 15, "Who art thou, Lord?" let me know who it is that speaks to me from heaven, that I may answer him accordingly. And he said, "I am Jesus;" he whom thou hast despised, and hated, and vilified; I bear that name which thou hast made so odious, and the naming of it criminal. Paul thought Jesus was buried in the earth, and though stolen out of his own sepulchre yet laid in some other; all the Jews were taught to say so; and therefore he is amazed to hear him speak from heaven, to see him surrounded with all this glory whom he had loaded with all possible ignominy. This convinced him that the doctrine of Jesus was Divine and heavenly; and not only not to be opposed, but to be cordially embraced; that Jesus is the Messiah, for he is not only risen from the dead, but he has received from God the Father honour and glory. And this is enough to make him a Christian immediately, to quit the society of the persecutors, whom the Lord from heaven thus appears against, and to join himself with the society of the persecuted, whom the Lord from heaven thus appears for.

Secondly. That he was made a minister by a Divine authority. That the same Jesus that appeared to him in that glorious light ordered him to go preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. He did not run without sending, nor was he sent by men like himself, but by him whom the Father sent, *Jno. xx. 21*. What is said of his being an apostle is here joined immediately to that which was said to him by the way, but it appears by *ch. ix. 15*, *xxi. 15, 17*, that it was spoken to him afterwards; but he puts the two together for brevity's sake; "Rise, and stand upon thy feet." Those whom Christ by the light of his Gospel casts down in humiliation for sin, it is in order to their rising and standing upon their feet in spiritual grace, strength, and comfort. If Christ has torn it, it is that he may heal; if he has cast down, it is that he may raise up. Rise then, and shake thyself from thy dust, *Isa. lii. 2*. Help thyself, and Christ shall help thee. He must stand up, for Christ has work for him to do; has an errand, and a very great errand, to send him upon; "I have appeared to thee to make thee a minister." Christ has the making of his own ministers; they have both their qualifications and their commissions from him; Paul thanks Christ Jesus who put him into the ministry, *1 Tim. i. 12*. Christ appeared to him to make him a minister. One way or other, Christ will manifest himself to all those whom he makes his ministers; for how can they preach him who do not know him? and how can they know him to whom he doth not by his Spirit make himself known? Observe,

1. The office to which Paul is appointed. He is made a minister to attend on Christ, and act for him, as a witness; to give evidence in his cause, and attest the truth of his doctrine; he must testify the Gospel of the grace of God. Christ appeared to him that he might appear for Christ before men.

'that God should raise the dead' (English Version), but the question is far stronger than this, if the conjunction be taken in its literal meaning: 'Why is it judged by you a thing past belief if God raises the dead?'—i.e., 'If God, in his exercise of power, sees fit to raise the dead (the word implying that such a fact has veritably taken place), is it for you to refuse to believe it?' Compare the declaration of our Lord, *Luke xvi. 31*. Others render the verse, "What! is it judged among you a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?"

xxvi. 9. Paul resumes the subject of his own personal history. "Name of Jesus of Nazareth:" i.e., the person and teaching of Jesus, (See *John xx. 31*, and places in the Old Testament, especially *Psalms*, where, by the name of God, is meant God himself as he has revealed him self.) Observe how St. Paul uses the word "Nazareth," and compare our Lord's own words to Paul when he appeared to him near Damascus: "I am Jesus of Nazareth," &c.

xxvi. 10. "When they were put to death, I gave my voice!"

2. The matter of Paul's testimony. He must give an account to the world, 1st. Of the things which he had seen, now at this time; must tell people of Christ's manifesting himself to him by the way, and what he said to him. He saw these things that he might publish them; and he did take all occasions to publish them, as here, and before, *ch. xxii.* 2nd. Of those things in which he would appear to him. Christ now settled a correspondence with Paul, which he designed afterwards to keep up, and only told him now that he should hear farther from him. Paul at first had but confused notions of the Gospel, till Christ appeared to him, and gave him fuller instructions. The Gospel he preached he received from Christ immediately, *Gal. i. 12*, but he received it gradually, some at one time and some at another, as there was occasion. Christ often appeared to Paul, oftener it is likely than is recorded, and still taught him, that he might still teach the people knowledge.

3. The spiritual protection he was taken under, while he was thus employed as Christ's witness. All the powers of darkness could not prevail against him, till he had finished his testimony; *ver. 17*, "Delivering thee from the people of the Jews, and from the Gentiles." Note, Christ's witnesses are under his special care; and though they may fall into the hands of their enemies, yet he will take care to deliver them out of their hands; and he knows how to do it. Christ had shewn Paul at this time what great things he must suffer, *ch. ix. 16*, and yet tells him here he will deliver him from the people. Note, Great sufferings are reconcilable to the promise of the deliverance of God's people; for it is not promised they shall be kept from trouble, but kept through it. And sometimes God delivers them into the hands of their persecutors, that he may have the honour of delivering them out of their hands.

4. The special commission given him to go among the Gentiles, and the errand upon which he is sent to them. It was some years after Paul's conversion before he was sent to the Gentiles, or (for aught appears) knew any thing of his being designed for that purpose: see *ch. xxii. 21*; but at length he is ordered to steer his course that way.

1st. There is a great work to be done among the Gentiles, and Paul must be instrumental in doing it. Two things must be done, which their case calls for the doing of.

First. A world that sits in darkness must be enlightened. Those must be brought to know the things that belong to their everlasting peace who are yet ignorant of them; to know God as their end, and Christ as their way, who as yet know nothing of either. He is sent "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light." His preaching shall not only make known to them those things which they had not before heard of, but shall be the vehicle of that Divine grace and power by which their understandings shall be enlightened to receive those things, and bid them welcome. Thus he shall open their eyes, which before were shut against the light; and they shall be willing to understand themselves, their own case and interest. Christ opens the heart by opening the eyes; doth not lead men blindfold, but gives them to see their own way. He is sent not only to open their eyes for the present, but to keep them open,—"to turn them from darkness to light," that is, from following false and blind guides, their oracles, divinations, and superstitious usages received by tradition from their fathers, and the corrupt notions and ideas they had of their gods, to follow a Divine revelation of unquestionable certainty and truth. This was turning them from darkness to light, from the ways of darkness to those on which the light shines. The great design of the Gospel is to instruct the ignorant, and to rectify the mistakes of those that are in error, that things may be set and seen in a true light.

Secondly. A world that lies in wickedness, in the wicked one, must be sanctified and reformed. It is not enough for them to have their eyes opened, they must have their hearts renewed; not enough to be turned from darkness to light, but they must be turned from the power of Satan unto God, which will follow of course; for Satan rules by the power of darkness, and God by the convincing evidence of light. Sinners are under the power of Satan, idolaters were so in a special manner; they paid their homage to devils. All sinners are under the influence of his temptations, yield themselves captives to him, are at his beck; converting grace turns them from under the dominion of Satan, and brings them into subjection to God; to conform to the rules of his Word, and comply with the dictates and directions of his Spirit, translates them "out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son." When gracious dispositions are strong in the soul, as corrupt and sinful dispositions had been, it is then turned from the power of Satan unto God.

2nd. There is a great happiness designed for the Gentiles by this work; "that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified." They are turned from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness, from the slavery of Satan to the service of God, not that God may be a gainer by them, but that they may be gainers by him.

First. That they may be restored to his favour, which by sin they have forfeited, and thrown themselves out of; "that they may receive forgiveness of sins." They are delivered from the dominion of sin that they may be saved from that death which is the wages of sin. Not that they may merit forgiveness as a debt or reward, but that they may receive it as a free gift; that they may be qualified to receive the comfort of it. They are persuaded to lay down their arms, and return to their allegiance, that they may have the benefit of the act of indemnity, and may plead it in arrest of the judgment to be given against them.

Secondly. That they may be happy in the fruition of him. Not only that they may have their sins pardoned, but that "they may have an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Note, 1st. Heaven is an inheritance; it descends to all the children of God, for "if children, then heirs." That they may have *κληρον*, a lot; so it might be read, alluding to the inheritances of Canaan, which were appointed by lot, and that also is the act of God, the disposal thereof is of the Lord. That they may have a right, so some read it; not by merit, but purely by grace. 2nd. All that are effectually turned from sin to God are not only pardoned, but preferred; have not only their attainder reversed, but a patent of honour given them, and a grant of a rich inheritance. And the forgiveness of sins makes way for this inheritance, by taking that out of the way which alone hindered. 3rd. All that shall be saved hereafter are sanctified now. Those that have the heavenly inheritance must have it in this way, they must be prepared and made meet for it; none can be happy that are not holy, nor shall any be saints in heaven that are not first saints on earth. 4th. We need no more to make us happy than to have our lot among them that are sanctified, to fare as they fare, that is, having our lot among them that are chosen to salvation through sanctification. They which are sanctified shall be glorified. Let us therefore now cast in our lot among them, by coming into the communion of saints, and be willing to take our lot with them, and share with them in their afflictions, which (how grievous soever) our lot with them in the inheritance will abundantly make amends for. 5th. We are sanctified and saved by faith in Christ. Some refer it to the word next before, sanctified by faith, for faith purifies the heart, and applies to the soul those precious promises, and subjects the soul to the influence of that grace, by which we partake of a Divine nature. Others refer it to the receiving both pardon and the inheritance. It is by faith accepting the grant: it comes all to one, for it is by faith that we are justified, sanctified, and glorified. By faith, *την ες εμε*, 'that faith

which is in me; it is emphatically expressed. That faith which not only receives Divine revelation in general, but which in a particular manner fastens upon Jesus Christ, and his mediation; by which we rely upon Christ as the Lord our righteousness, and resign ourselves to him as the Lord our ruler. This is that by which we receive the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and eternal life.

Thirdly. That he had discharged his ministry, pursuant to his commission, by Divine aid, and under Divine direction and protection. God, that called him to be an apostle, owned him in his apostolical work, and carried him on in it with enlargement and success.

1. God gave him a heart to comply with the call; *ver. 19*, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," for any one would say he ought to be obedient to it. Heavenly visions have a commanding power over earthly counsels, and it is at our peril if we be disobedient to them. Yet if Paul had conferred with flesh and blood, and been swayed by his secular interest, he would have done as Jonah did, gone any whither rather than upon this errand. But God opened his ear, and he was not rebellious; he accepted the commission, and having with it received his instructions, he applied himself to act accordingly.

2. He enabled him to go through a great deal of work, though in it he grappled with a great deal of difficulty, *ver. 20*. He applied himself to the preaching of the Gospel with all vigour. 1st. He began at Damascus, where he was converted, for he resolved to lose no time, *ch. ix. 20*. 2nd. When he came to Jerusalem, where he had his education, he there witnessed for Christ, where he had most furiously set himself against him, *ch. ix. 28*. 3rd. He preached throughout all the coasts of Judæa, in the country towns and villages, as Christ had done. He made the first offer of the Gospel to the Jews, as Christ had appointed, and did not leave them till they had wilfully thrust the Gospel from them; and then, 4th. He turned to the Gentiles, and laid out himself for the good of their souls, labouring more abundantly than any of the apostles, nay, perhaps than all put together.

3. His preaching was all practical. He did not go about to fill people's heads with airy notions, did not amuse them with nice speculations, nor set them together by the ears with matters of doubtful disputation, but he shewed them—declared it, demonstrated it—that they ought, 1st. To repent of their sins, to be sorry for them, and to confess them, and enter into covenant against them. They ought to bethink themselves, so the word *μετανοειν* properly signifies. They ought to change their mind, and change their way, and undo what they had done amiss. 2nd. To turn to God; they must not only conceive an antipathy to sin, but they must come into a conformity to God; must not only turn from that which is evil, but turn to that which is good. They must turn to God in love and affection, and return to God in duty and obedience, and turn, and return from the world and the flesh. This is that which is required from the whole revolted, degenerate race of mankind, both Jews and Gentiles; *ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ τὸν Θεόν*,—"to turn back to God, even to him;" to turn to him as our chief good and highest end, as our ruler and portion; turn our eye to him, turn our heart to him, and turn our feet unto his testimonies. 3rd. To do works meet for repentance. This was what John preached, who was the first Gospel preacher, *Mat. iii. 8*. Those that profess repentance must practise it, must live a life of repentance, must in every thing carry it as becomes penitents. It is not enough to speak penitent words, but we must do works agreeable to those words. As true faith, so true repentance, will work. Now what fault could be found with such preaching as this? Had it not a direct tendency to reform the world, and to redress its grievances, and to revive natural religion?

4. The Jews had no other quarrel with him but upon this account, that he did all he could to persuade people to be religious, and to bring them to God by bringing them to Christ, *ver. 21*. It was "for those causes," and no other, that "the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me," and let any one judge whether those were crimes worthy of death or of bonds. He suffered ill, not only for doing well himself, but for doing good to others. They attempted to kill him; it was his precious life that they hunted for, and hated, because it was a useful life. They caught him in the temple worshipping God, and there they set upon him, as if the better place the better deed.

5. He had no other help, but help from heaven, and, supported and carried on by that, he went on in this great work; *ver. 22*, "Having therefore obtained help from God, I continue unto this day;" *βοήθεια*,—"I have stood; my life has been preserved, and my work continued. I have stood my ground, and I have not been beaten off; I have stood to what I said, and have not been afraid or ashamed to persist in it. It was now above twenty years since Paul was converted, and all that time he had been very busy preaching the Gospel, in the midst of hazards, and what was it that bore him up? not any strength of his own resolutions, but "having obtained help of God;" for therefore, because the work was so great and he had so much opposition, he could not otherwise have gone on in it, but by help obtained of God. Note, Those who are employed in work for God shall obtain help from God, for he will not be wanting in necessary assistances to his servants; and our continuance to this day must be attributed to help obtained of God. We had sunk if he had not borne us up, had fallen off if he had not carried us on, and it must be acknowledged with thankfulness to his praise. Paul mentions it as an evidence that he had his commission from God, that from him he had ability to execute it. The preachers of the Gospel could never have done, and suffered, and prospered, as they did, if they had not had immediate help from heaven, which they would not have had if it had not been the cause of God that they now were pleading.

6. He preached no other doctrine but what agreed with the scriptures of the Old Testament. He witnessed both to small and great, to young and old, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, obscure and illustrious, all being concerned in it. It was an evidence of the condescending grace of the Gospel, that it was witnessed to the meanest, and the poor were welcome to the knowledge of it; and of the incontestable truth and power of it, that it was neither afraid nor ashamed to shew itself to the greatest. The enemies of Paul objected against him that he preached something more than that men should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. Those indeed were but what the prophets of the Old Testament had preached; but besides these he had preached Christ, and his death, and his resurrection, and that was it that they quarrelled with him for, as appears by *ch. xxv. 19*, that he affirmed Jesus to be alive. And so I did, saith Paul, and so I do, but therein also I say "no other than that which Moses and the prophets said should come;" and what greater honour can be done to them than to shew that what the foretold is accomplished, and in the appointed season too; that what they said should come is come, and at the time they prefixed? Three things they prophesied, and Paul preached: 1st. That Christ should suffer; that the Messiah should be a sufferer, *παθόντις*. Not only a man, and capable of suffering, but that as Messiah he should be appointed to sufferings. That his ignominious death should be not only consistent with, but pursuant of his undertaking. The cross of Christ was a stumblingblock to the Jews, and Paul's preaching that was the great thing that exasperated them. But Paul stands to it, that in preaching they ought not only not to be offended at what he preached, but to embrace it, and subscribe to it.

2nd. That "he should be the first that should rise from the dead;" not the

the words translated "gave my voice" mean, strictly speaking, to deposit the pebble used as a ballot. As to the exact force of the words here commentators differ. Some assert that they mean no more than to agree or concur with the sentence passed; others, especially Alford, take them literally to signify that Paul was a member of the Sanhedrim, and as such voted.

xxvi. 11. "Compelled;" rather, "endeavoured to compel them to blaspheme." It does not follow that the Christians did so.

xxvi. 12. "Whereupon:" in the performance of which things.

xxvi. 14. "In the Hebrew tongue:" "These words are expressed here only. In chap. ix. we have the fact remarkably preserved by the Hebrew form, Saul. In chap. xxii. he is speaking in Hebrew (Syro-Chaldaic), and the notice was not required" (Alford). "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks:" these words should be left out in the account given in chap. ix. They have been inserted from this place, where they are genuine. They constitute a familiar

many,—enough for each, be they never so craving. 5th. He intimates the hearty good-will he bore to them all; he wishes them, *First*. As well as he wished his own soul, that they might be as happy in Christ as he was. *Secondly*. Better than he now was as to his outward condition, for he excepts these bonds. He wishes they might all be comforted Christians as he was, but not persecuted Christians as he was; that they might taste as much as he did of the advantages that attended religion, but not so much of its crosses. They had made light of his imprisonment, and were in no concern for him; Festus continued him in bonds to gratify the Jews. Now this would have tempted many a one to wish them all in his bonds, that they might know what it was to be confined as he was, and then they would know the better how to pity him. But he was so far from this, that when he wished them in bonds to Christ, he desired they might never be in bonds for Christ. Nothing could be said more tenderly, nor with a better decorum.

Thirdly. They all agree that Paul was an innocent man, and was wronged in this prosecution.

1. The court broke up with some precipitation; ver. 30, "when he had spoken" that obliging word, ver. 29, which moved them all, the king was afraid if he were permitted to go on he would say something yet more moving, which might work upon some of them to appear more in his favour than was convenient, and perhaps might prevail with them to turn Christians. The king himself found his own heart begin to yield, and durst not trust himself to hear more; but, like Felix, dismissed Paul for this time. They ought in justice to have asked the prisoner, Whether he had any more to say for himself? But they think he has said enough; and therefore "the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them," concluding the case was plain, and with that they contented themselves; when Paul had more to say, which would have made it plainer.

2. They all concurred in an opinion of Paul's innocency, ver. 31. The court withdrew to consult of the matter, to know one another's minds upon it; and they "talked among themselves," all to the same purpose, that "this man doth nothing worthy of death." He is not a criminal that deserves to die; nay, he doth nothing worthy of bonds: he is not a dangerous man, whom it is prudence to confine. After this, Nero made a law for the putting of those to death who professed the Christian religion; but as yet there was no law of that kind among the Romans, and therefore no transgression. And this judgment of theirs is a testimony against that wicked law which Nero made not long after this, that Paul, the most active, zealous Christian that ever was, even by those that were no friends to his way, was adjudged to have "done nothing worthy of death or of bonds." Thus was he made manifest in the consciences of those who yet would not receive his doctrine; and the clamours of the hot-headed Jews, who cried out, "Away with him, it is not fit that he should live," were shamed by the moderate counsels of this court.

3. Agrippa gave his judgment that he "might have been set at liberty, if he had not" himself "appealed to Cæsar," ver. 32; but by that appeal he had put a bar in his own door. Some think that by the Roman law this was true; that when a prisoner had appealed to the superior court, the inferior courts could no more discharge him than they could condemn him; and we suppose the law was so, if the prosecutors joined issue upon the appeal, and consented to it. But it doth not appear that in Paul's case the prosecutors did so; but he was forced to do it to screen himself from their fury, when he saw the governor did not take the care he ought to have done for his protection. And, therefore, others think that Agrippa and Festus, being unwilling to disoblige the Jews by setting him at liberty, made this serve for an excuse of their continuing him in custody, when they themselves knew they might have justified the discharging of him. Agrippa, that was but almost persuaded to be a Christian, proves no better than if he had not been at all persuaded.

And now I cannot tell, 1st. Whether Paul repented of his having appealed to Cæsar, and wished he had not done it, blaming himself for it as a rash thing, now he saw that was the only thing that hindered his discharge. He had reason, perhaps, to reflect upon it with regret; and to charge himself with imprudence and impatience in it, and some distrust of the Divine protection. He had better have appealed to God than to Cæsar. It confirms what Solomon saith, *Ecc. vi. 12*, "Who knows what is good for man in this life?" What we think is for our welfare often proves to be a trap; such shortsighted creatures are we, and so ill-advised in leaning as we do to our own understanding. Or, 2nd. Whether notwithstanding this, he was satisfied in what he had done, and was easy in his reflections upon it. His appealing to Cæsar was lawful, and what became a Roman citizen, and would help to make his cause considerable; and forasmuch as when he did it, it appeared to him as the case then stood to be for the best, though afterwards it appeared otherwise, he did not vex himself with any self-reproach in the matter, but believed there was a providence in it, and it would issue well at last. And besides, he was told in a vision, that he must bear witness to Christ at Rome, *ch. xxiii. 11*; and it is all one to him whether he goes thither a prisoner or at his liberty, he knows the counsel of the Lord shall stand, and saith, *Let it stand*; "The will of the Lord be done."

CHAPTER XXVII.

This whole chapter is taken up with an account of Paul's voyage towards Rome, when he was sent thither a prisoner by Festus the governor, upon his appeal to Cæsar. I. The beginning of the voyage was well enough, it was calm and prosperous, ver. 1—8. II. Paul gave them notice of a storm coming, but could not prevail with them to lie by, ver. 9—11. III. As they pursued their voyage they met with a great deal of tempestuous weather, which reduced them to such extremity, that they counted upon nothing but being cast away, ver. 12—20. IV. Paul assured them that, though they would not be advised by him to prevent their coming into this danger, yet by the good providence of God they should be brought safely through it, and none of them should

be lost, ver. 21—26. V. At length they were, at midnight, thrown upon an island, which proved to be Malta, and then they were in the utmost danger imaginable, but were assisted by Paul's counsel to keep the mariners in the ship, and encouraged by his comforts to eat their meat, and have a good heart on it, ver. 27—36. VI. Their narrow escape with their lives when they came to shore, when the ship was wrecked, but all the persons wonderfully preserved, ver. 37—44.

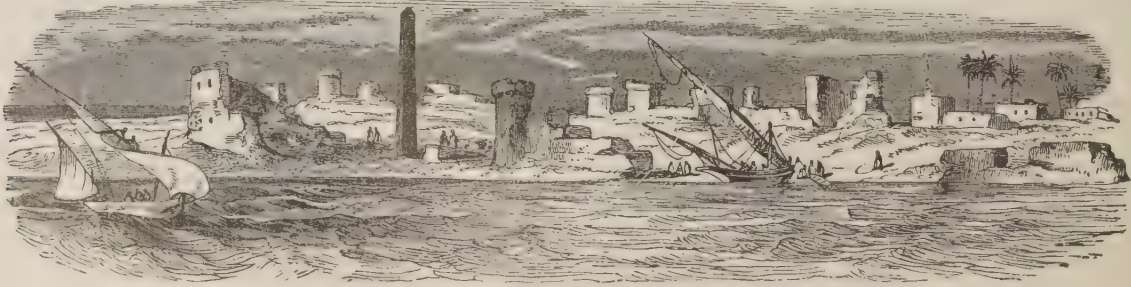


ND when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. 2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; *one* Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. 3 And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself. 4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. 5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia. 6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein. 7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against



CRETE.

Salmon; 8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea. 9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, 10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much



ALEXANDRIA.—ver. 6.

the words may have been said ironically. Alford, however, renders the words somewhat differently: "Lightly (with small trouble) art thou persuading thyself that thou canst make me a Christian."

xxvi. 29. "I could wish to God, that whether with ease or with difficulty (on my part) not only thou, but all who hear me to-day, might become such as I am, except only these bonds." So Alford. "These bonds:" pointing to the chain by which he had been attached to the soldier who guarded him.

xxvii. 1. When the mode and time of the journey to Italy had been resolved. "Augustus' band:" by this is probably meant the body-guard of the Emperor, chosen from the prætorian guard; its members had certain privileges, and were called Augustans. It is not necessary to believe that this band was present in Casarea, but that Julius had come from Rome on some special service.

xxvii. 3. "Sidon:" an ancient and wealthy city of Phœnicia, on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, about twenty miles

damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. 11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

It doth not appear how long it was after Paul's conference with Agrippa that he was sent away from Rome, pursuant to his appeal to Caesar; but it is likely they took the first convenience they could hear of to do it. In the meantime Paul is in the midst of his friends at Casarea; they arc comforts to him, and he a blessing to them. But here we are told,

First. How Paul was shipped off for Italy. A long voyage, but there is no remedy; he hath appealed to Caesar, and to Caesar he must go. "It was determined that we should sail into Italy;" for to Rome they must go by sea, it would have been a vast way about to go by land. Hence, when the Roman conquest of the Jewish nation is foretold, it is said, *Num. xxiv. 24*, "Ships shall come from Chittim," that is, Italy, "and shall afflict Eber," that is, the Hebrews. It was determined by the counsel of God, before it was determined by the counsel of Festus, that Paul should go to Rome; for, whatever man intended, God had work for him to do there. Now here we are told,

1. Whose custody he was committed to. To "one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band," as Cornelius was of the Italian band, or legion, *ch. x. 1*. He had soldiers under him, that were a guard upon Paul, that he might not make his escape, and likewise to protect him that he might have no mischief done him.

2. What bottom he embarked in. They went on board a ship of Adramyttium, *ver. 2*, a seaport of Africa, whence this ship brought African goods, and as it should seem, made a coasting voyage for Syria, where those goods came to a good market.

3. What company he had in this voyage. There were some prisoners that were committed to the custody of the same centurion, who probably had appealed to Caesar too, or were upon some other account removed to Rome to be tried there, or to be examined as witnesses against some prisoners there; perhaps some notorious offenders, like Barabbas, that were therefore ordered to be brought before the emperor himself. Paul was linked with these, as Christ with the thieves that were crucified with him; and was obliged to take his lot with them in this voyage, and we find in this chapter, *ver. 42*, that for their sakes he had like to have been killed, but for his sake they were preserved. Note, It is no new thing for the innocent to be numbered among the transgressors. But he had also some of his friends with him, Luke particularly, the penman of this book, for he puts himself in all along; *we* sailed into Italy, and *we* launched, *ver. 2*. Aristarchus a Thessalonian is particularly named, as being now in his company. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that Trophimus the Ephesian went off with him, but he left him sick at Miletum, *2 Tim. iv. 20*, when he passed by those coasts of Asia mentioned here, *ver. 2*; and that there likewise he left Timothy. It was a comfort to Paul to have the society of some of his friends in this tedious voyage, with whom he might converse freely, though he had so much loose, profane company about him. Those that go long voyages at sea are commonly necessitated to sojourn as it were in Mesec and Kedar, and have need of wisdom that they may do good to the bad company they are in, may make them better, or at least be made never the worse by them.

Secondly. What course they steered, and what places they touched at; which are particularly recorded for the confirming of the truth of the history to those who lived at that time, and could by their own knowledge tell of their being at such and such a place.

1. They touched at Sidon, not far off from where they went on board; thither they came the next day. And that which is observable there is, that Julius the centurion was extraordinary civil to Paul. It is probable he knew his case, and was one of the chief captains or principal men that heard him plead his own cause before Agrippa, *ch. xxv. 23*, and was convinced of his innocence, and the injury done him; and, therefore, though he was committed to him as a prisoner, he treated him as a friend, as a scholar, and a gentleman, and a man that had an interest in heaven. He gave him liberty, while the business of the ship stayed it at Sidon, to go among his friends there, to refresh himself; and it would be a great refreshment to him. Julius herein gives an example to those in power to be respectful to those whom they find worthy of their respects, and in using their power to make a difference. A Joseph, a Paul, are not to be used as common prisoners. God herein encourageth those that suffer for him to trust in him; for he can put it into the hearts of those to befriend them from whom they least expect it; can make them to be pitied, nay, can make them to be prized and valued even in the eyes of those that carry them captives, *Ps. cvi. 46*. And it is likewise an instance of Paul's fidelity, that when the centurion was so civil as to give him his liberty he did not go about to make his escape, which he might have easily done; but, being out upon his parole of honour, he faithfully returns to his imprisonment. If the centurion be so civil as to take his word, he is so just and honest as to keep his word.

2. They thence sailed under Cyprus, *ver. 4*. If the wind had been fair they had gone forward by direct sailing, and had left Cyprus on the right hand; but the wind not favouring them they were driven to oblique sailing with a side wind, and so compassed the island in a manner, and left it on the left hand. Sailors must do as they can, when they cannot do as they would, and make the best of their wind whatever point it is in; and so must we all in our passage over the ocean of this world. When the winds are contrary, yet we must be getting forward as well as we can.

3. At a port called Myra they changed their ship; that which they were in, it is probable, having business no farther, they went aboard a vessel of Alexandria bound for Italy, *ver. 5, 6*. Alexandria was now the chief city of Egypt, and great trading there was between that city and Italy; from Alexandria they carried corn to Rome, and the East India goods and Persian, which they imported at the Red sea, they exported again to all parts of the Mediterranean, and especially to Italy. And it was a particular favour shewed to the Alexandrian ships in the ports of Italy that they were not obliged to strike sail, as other ships were, when they came into port.

4. With much ado they made the Fair Havens, a port of the island of Crete, *ver. 7, 8*. They sailed slowly many days, being becalmed, or having the wind against them. It was a great while before they made the point of Cnidus, a port of Caria, and were forced to sail under Crete, as before under Cyprus; much difficulty they met with in passing by Salomone, a promontory on the eastern shore of the island of Crete. Though the voyage hitherto was not tempestuous, yet it was very tedious. Thus many, that are not driven backward in their affairs by cross providences, yet sail slowly, and do not get forward by favourable providences. And many good Christians make this complaint in the concerns of their souls, that they do not rid ground in their way to heaven, but have much ado to keep their ground; they move with many stops and pauses, and lie a great while wind-bound. Observe, The place they came to

was called the Fair Havens. Travellers say it is known to this day by the same name; and that it answers the name from the pleasantness of its situation and prospect. And yet, 1st. It was not the harbour they were bound for, it was a fair haven, but it was not their haven. Whatever agreeable circumstances we may be in in this world, we must remember we are not at home, and therefore we must arise and depart; for though it be a fair haven it is not the desired haven, *Ps. cvii. 30*. 2nd. It was not a commodious haven to winter in, so it is said, *ver. 12*; it had a fine prospect, but it lay exposed to the weather. Note, Every fair haven is not a safe haven; nay, there may be most danger where there is most pleasure.

Thirdly. What advice Paul gave them with reference to that part of their voyage they had before them; and it was to be content to winter where they were, and not to think of stirring till a better season of the year.

1. It was now a bad time for sailing. They had lost a deal of time while they were struggling with contrary winds. "Sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was already past," that is, the famous yearly fast of the Jews, the day of atonement, which was on the tenth day of the seventh month, a day to afflict the soul with fasting; it was about the 20th of our September. That yearly fast was very religiously observed; but (which is strange) we never have any mention made in all the Scripture history of the observation of it, unless it be meant here, where it serves only to describe the season of the year. Michaelmas is reckoned by mariners as bad a time of the year to be at sea in as any other; they complain of their Michaelmas blasts. It was that time now with these distressed voyagers; the harvest was past, the summer was ended; they had not only lost time but lost the opportunity.

2. Paul put them in mind of it, and gave them notice of their danger; *ver. 10*, "I perceive," either by notice from God, or by observing their wilful resolution to prosecute the voyage, notwithstanding the peril of the season, that "this voyage will be with hurt and much damage;" you that have effects on board are likely to lose them, and it will be a miracle of mercy if our lives be given us for a prey. There were some good men in the ship, and many more ill men; but in things of this nature "all things come alike to all, and there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked." If both be in the same ship, they both are in the same danger.

3. They would not be advised by Paul in this matter, *ver. 11*. They thought him impertinent in interposing in an affair of this nature, who did not understand navigation; and the centurion to whom it was referred to determine it, though himself a passenger, yet, being a man in authority, he takes upon him to overrule, though he had not been oftener at sea perhaps than Paul, nor was better acquainted with these seas; for Paul had planted the Gospel in Crete, *Tit. i. 5*; and knew the several parts of the island well enough. But the centurion gave more regard to the opinion of the master and owner of the ship than to Paul's. For every man is to be credited in his own profession ordinarily; but such a man as Paul, who was so intimate with heaven, was rather to be regarded in seafaring matters than the most celebrated sailors. Those know not what dangers they run themselves into who will be governed more by human prudence than by Divine revelation. The centurion was very civil to Paul, *ver. 3*, and yet would not be governed by his advice. Note, Many will shew respect to good ministers that will not take their advice, *Eze. xxxiii. 31*.

12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west. 13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete. 14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. 15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive. 16 And running under a certain island which is called Claudia, we had much work to come by the boat: 17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. 18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; 19 And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. 20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

In these verses we have,

First. The ship putting to sea again, and pursuing her voyage at first with a promising gale. Observe,

1. What induced them to leave the Fair Havens. It was because they thought the harbour not commodious to winter in; it was pleasant enough in the summer, but in the winter they lay bleak. Or perhaps it was upon some other account incommodious; provisions perhaps were scarce and dear there, and they run upon a mischief to avoid an inconvenience, as we often do. Some of the ship's crew, or of the council that was called to advise in this matter, were for staying there, rather than venturing to sea now the weather was so uncertain. It is better to be safe in an incommodious harbour than to be lost in a tempestuous sea. But they were outvoted when it was put to the question, and the "more part advised to depart thence also;" yet they aimed not to go far, but only to another port of the same island, here call Phenice, and some think it was so called because the Phenicians frequented it much, the merchants of Tyre

north of Tyre. It was given to the tribe of Asher, but never conquered. "To refresh himself;" "to enjoy the benefit of their care."

xxvii. 4-6. "Under Cyprus;" near the island, between it and Asia Minor, and over the whole sea, off Cilicia and Pamphylia. "Myra," at that time a flourishing sea-port of Lycia, was two or three miles from the sea, but on a river navigable to the city; its harbour was Andriace. "Ship of Alexandria;" Alford suggests that this ship had been prevented taking the direct course to Italy by the prevailing

westerly winds. From verse 38 we learn that part, at least, of the cargo consisted of wheat; Egypt at that time being one of the granaries of Italy.

xxvii. 7. "Scarce;" rather, "with difficulty." "Cnidus;" a city in Caria, on a promontory of that name. With a fair wind the distance from Myra might have been accomplished in one day. "Crete;" the modern Candia, a large island in the Mediterranean. "Unless she had put into that harbour (Cnidus) and waited for a fair wind, her

and Sidon. It is here described to lie toward the south-west and north-west. Probably the haven was between two promontories, or jutting-outs of land into the sea, one of which pointed to the north-west, and the other to the south-west, by which it was guarded against the east winds. Thus hath the wisdom of the Creator provided for the relief and safety of them who "go down to the sea in ships, and do business in great waters." In vain had nature provided for us the waters to sail on, if it had not likewise provided for us natural harbours to take shelter in.

2. What encouragement they had at first to pursue their voyage. They set out with a fair wind; ver. 13, "the south wind blew softly," upon which they flattered themselves with hope that they should gain their point, and so they sailed close by the coast of Crete, and were not afraid of running upon the rocks or quicksands, because the wind blew so gently. Those who put to sea with never so fair a gale know not what storms they may yet meet with; and therefore must not be secure, nor take it for granted that they have obtained their purpose, when so many accidents may happen to cross their purpose. "Let not him that girdeth on the harness boast as though he had put it off."

Secondly. The ship in a storm presently, a dreadful storm. They looked at second causes, and took their measures from the favourable hints they gave, and imagined that, because the south wind now blew softly, it would always blow so, and in confidence of that they ventured to sea, but are soon made sensible of their folly in giving more credit to a smiling wind than to the word of God in Paul's mouth, by which they had fair warning given them of a storm. Observe,

1. What their danger and distress was. 1st. "There arose against them a tempestuous wind," which was not only contrary to them and directly in their teeth, so that they could not get forward, but a violent wind that raised the waves, like that which was sent forth in pursuit of Jonah, though Paul was following God, and going on in his duty, and not as Jonah, running away from God and his duty. This wind the sailors called Euroclydon, a north-east wind, which upon those seas perhaps was observed to be in a particular manner troublesome and dangerous. It was a sort of a whirlwind, for the ship is said to be caught by it, ver. 12. It was God that commanded this wind to rise, designing to bring glory to himself, and reputation to Paul out of it; stormy winds being brought out of his treasures, Ps. cxxxv. 7; they fulfil his word, Ps. cxlviii. 8. 2nd. The ship was exceedingly tossed, ver. 18; it was kicked like a football from wave to wave; and, as it is elegantly described, Ps. cvii. 26, 27, it and its passengers "mount up to the heavens, go down again to the depths, reel to and fro, stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end." The ship could not possibly bear up into the wind, could not make her way in opposition to the wind, and therefore they folded up their sails, which in such a storm would endanger them rather than do them any service, and so let the ship drive, let it go wherever the wind hurries it. *Non quo voluit, sed quo rapit impetus unde.*—Ovid. *Trist.* It is probable they were very near the haven of Phenice when this tempest rose, and thought they should presently be in a quiet haven, and were pleasing themselves with the thought of it, and of wintering there, and, lo, of a sudden they are in distress. Let us therefore always rejoice with trembling, and never expect a perfect security nor a perpetual serenity till we come to heaven. 3rd. They saw neither sun nor stars for many days. This made the tempest the more terrible, that they were all in the dark; and the use of the loadstone for the directing of sailors not being then found out, so that they had no guide at all when they could see neither sun nor stars, made the case the more hazardous. Thus melancholy sometimes is the condition of the people of God upon a spiritual account; they walk in darkness, and have no light; neither sun nor stars appear; they cannot dwell, nay, they cannot fasten, upon any thing comfortable or encouraging. Thus it may be with them, and yet light is sown for them. 4th. They had abundance of winter weather; "no small tempest." *χειμὼν οὐκ ὀλίγος*, cold, rain, and snow, and all the rigours of that season of the year, so that they were ready to perish for cold; and all this continued many days. See what hardships those many times undergo that are much at sea, besides the hazards of life they run; and yet, to get gain, there are still those who make nothing of all this; and it is an instance of the wisdom of Divine Providence, that it disposeth some to this employment, notwithstanding the difficulties that attend it, for the keeping up of commerce among the nations, and the isles of the Gentiles particularly. And Zebulun can as heartily rejoice in his going out as Issachar in his tents. And perhaps Christ therefore chose ministers from among seafaring men, because they had been used to endure hardness.

2. What means they used for their own relief. They betook themselves to all the poor shifts (for I can call them no better) that sailors in distress have recourse to. 1st. When they could not make head against the wind, they let the ship run adrift, finding it was to no purpose to ply either the oar or the sail. When it is fruitless to struggle, it is wisdom to yield. 2nd. They nevertheless did what they could to avoid the present danger. There was a little island called Claudia, and when they were near that, though they could not pursue their voyage, they took care to prevent their shipwreck, and therefore so ordered their matters that they did not run against the island, but quietly ran under it, ver. 16. 3rd. When they were afraid they could scarce save the ship, they were busy to save the boat, which they did with much ado. They had "much work to come by the boat," ver. 16, but at last they took it up, ver. 17. That might be of use in any exigence, and therefore they made hard shift to get it into the ship to them. 4th. They used means which were proper enough in those times, when the art of navigation was far short of the perfection it is now come to; they undergirded the ship, ver. 17. They bound the ship, under the bottom of it, with strong cables, to keep it from bulging in the extremity of the tempest. 5th. For fear of falling into the quicksands, they struck sail, and then let the ship go as it would. It is strange how a ship will live at sea, (so they express it,) even in very stormy weather, if it have but sea-room; and when the sailors cannot make the shore it is their interest to keep as far off it as they can. 6th. The next day they lightened the ship of its cargo, threw the goods and merchandises overboard, as Jonah's mariners did, *Jonah* 1. 5; being willing rather to be poor without them than to perish with them. "Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life." See what the wealth of this world is; how much soever it is courted as a blessing, the time may come when it will be a burthen, not only too heavy to be carried safe of itself, but heavy enough to sink him that has it. Riches are often "kept by the owners thereof to their hurt," *Ecc.* v. 13, and parted with to their good. But see the folly of the children of this world; they can be prodigal of their goods when it is for the saving of their lives, and yet how sparing of them in works of piety and charity, and in suffering for Christ, though they are told by Eternal Truth itself that those shall be recompensed more than a thousand-fold in the resurrection of the just. They went upon a principle of faith, who "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and a more enduring substance," *Heb.* x. 34. Any man will rather make shipwreck of his goods than of his life, but many will rather make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience than of their goods. 7th. The third day they "cast out the tackling of the ship;" the utensils of it, *armamenta*, so some render it, as if it were a ship of force. With us it is common to heave the guns overboard in the extremity of a storm;

but what heavy artillery they had then which it was necessary to lighten the ship of, I do not know; and question whether it were not then a vulgar error among seamen thus to throw every thing into the sea, even that which would be of great use in a storm, and no great weight.

3. The despair which at last they were brought to; ver. 20, "all hope that we should be saved was then taken away." The storm continued, and they saw no symptoms of its abatement. We have known very blustering weather to continue for some weeks. The means they had used were ineffectual, so that they were at their wit's end; and such was the consternation that this melancholy prospect put them into, that they had no heart either to eat or drink. They had provision enough on board, ver. 38, but such bondage were they under through fear of death, that they could not admit the supports of life. Why did not Paul, by the power of Christ, and in his name, lay this storm? Why did he not say to the winds and waves, "Peace, be still," as his Master had done? Surely it was because the apostles wrought miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine, not for the serving of a turn for themselves or their friends.

21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. 22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship. 23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. 26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island. 27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; 28 And sounded, and found *it* twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found *it* fifteen fathoms. 29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day. 30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, 31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. 32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. 33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. 34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. 35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat. 36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat. 37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. 38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea. 39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship. 40 And when they had taken up the

only course was to run under the lee of Crete, in the direction of Salomone, which is the eastern extremity of that island."

xxvii. 8. "Hardly:" with difficulty. "The voyage was thence continued along the southern shore of the island, and the ship was constantly struggling with the wind and waves until it reached a place called Fair Havens, not far from the city named Lasea" (Lechler).

xxvii. 9. "The fast:" the great day of atonement, which occurred

about the close of September or the beginning of October, soon after which navigation was suspended in those waters.

xxvii. 14. "Arose against it:" rather, "beat down it"—i.e., Crete; beat down from the high lands forming the coast. "Tempestuous:" "typhonic," from *typhon*, a whirlwind or hurricane. The word describes the violence of the wind. "Euroclydon:" the true reading appears to be "Euro-aquilo"—i.e., north-east; this word describing the direction of the wind.

anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore. 41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. 42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. 43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast *themselves* first into the sea, and get to land: 44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

We have here the issue of the distress of Paul and his fellow-travellers. They escaped with their lives, and that was all, and that was for Paul's sake. We are here told, ver. 37, what number there were on board, mariners, merchants, soldiers, prisoners, and other passengers, in all two hundred and seventy-six souls. This is taken notice of to make us the more concerned for them in reading the story, that they were such a considerable number, whose lives were now in the utmost jeopardy, and one Paul among them worth more than all the rest. We left them in despair, giving up themselves for gone; whether they called every man on his God, as Jonah's mariners did, we are not told. It is well if the laudable practice in a storm was not gone out of fashion, and made a jest of. However, Paul among these seamen was not like Jonah among his, the cause of the storm, but the comforter in the storm, and as much a credit to the profession of an apostle as Jonah was a blemish to his character as a prophet. Now here we have,

First. The encouragement Paul gave them, by assuring them, in the name of God, that their lives should all be saved, then when in human appearance "all hope that they should be saved was taken away." Paul rescued them from their despair first, that they might not die of that, and starve themselves in that, and then they were in a fair way to be rescued from their distress. "After long abstinence," as if they were resolved not to eat till they knew whether they should live or die. "Paul stood forth in the midst of them." During the distress hitherto Paul hid himself among them, was one of the crowd, helped with the rest to throw out the tackling, ver. 19, but now he distinguished himself, and, though a prisoner, undertook to be their counsellor and comforter.

1. He reproves them for not taking his advice, which was to stay where they were in the road of Lasea; ver. 8, "Ye should have hearkened to me, and not have loosed from Crete," where we might have made a shift to winter well enough, and then we should "not have gained this harm and loss;" that is, we should have escaped it. Harm and loss in the world, if sanctified to us, may be truly said to be gain; for if they wean us from present things, and awaken us to think of a future state, we are truly gainers by them. Observe, They did not hearken to Paul when he warned them of their danger, and yet, if they will but acknowledge their folly, and repent of it, he will speak comfort and relief to them now they are in danger. So compassionate is God to those that are in misery, though they bring themselves into it by their own incogitancy, nay, by their own wilfulness and contempt of admonition. Paul, before his comfort, will first make them sensible of their sin in not hearkening to him, by upbraiding them with their rashness; and probably, when he tells them of their gaining harm and loss, he reflects upon what they promised themselves by proceeding in their voyage, that they should gain so much time, gain this and the other point: but, saith he, you have gained nothing but harm and loss; how will you answer it? That which they are blamed for is their loosing from Crete, where they were safe. Note, Most people bring themselves into inconvenience because they do not know when they are well, but gain harm and loss by aiming against advice to mend themselves.

2. He assures them that, though they should lose the ship, yet they should none of them lose their lives. You see your folly in not being ruled by me; he doth not say, now therefore expect to fare accordingly, you may thank yourselves if you be all lost. They that will not be counselled cannot be helped. No, yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing; your case is sad, but it is not desperate; "now I exhort you to be of good cheer." Thus we say to sinners that are convinced of their sin and folly, and begin to see and bewail their error, "You should have hearkened unto us," and should have had nothing to do with sin; yet now we "exhort you to be of good cheer;" though you would not take our advice when we said, Do not presume, yet take it now when we say, Do not despair. They had given up the cause, and would use no farther means, because "all hope that they should be saved was taken away." Now Paul quickens them to bestir themselves yet in working for their own safety, by telling them that, if they would resume their vigour, they should secure their lives. He gives them this assurance when they were brought to the last extremity, for now it would be doubly welcome to them to be told that not a life should be lost, when they were ready to conclude they must inevitably be all lost. He tells them, 1st. That they must count upon the loss of the ship. Those who were interested in that and the goods were probably those greater part that were pushing forward the voyage, and running the venture, notwithstanding Paul's admonition, and they are made to pay for their rashness; their ship shall be wrecked. And many a stately, strong, rich, gallant ship is lost in the mighty waters in a little time; for "vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." But, 2nd. Not a life shall be lost. This would be good news to those that were ready to die for fear of dying, and whose guilty consciences made death look very terrible to them.

3. He tells them what ground he had for this assurance; that it is not a banter upon them to put them into humour, nor a human conjecture, but he has a Divine revelation for it, and is as confident of it as that God is true, being fully satisfied that he has his word for it. An angel of God appeared to him in the night, and told him that for his sake they should all be preserved, ver. 23-25, which would double the mercy of their preservation, that they should have it not only by providence, but by promise, and as a particular favour to Paul. Now ob-
e-ve here,

1st. The solemn profession Paul makes of relation to God, the God from whom he had this favourable intelligence; It is he "whose I am, and whom I serve." He looks upon God, *First*. As his rightful owner, that has a sovereign, incontestable title to him, and dominion over him, "Whose I am." Because "God made us, and not we ourselves," therefore we are not our own, but his. His we are by creation, for he made us; by preservation, for he maintains us; by redemption, for he bought us. We are more his than our own. *Secondly*. As his sovereign ruler and master; that, having given him being, has right to give him law, "Whom I serve." Because his we are, therefore we are bound to serve him, to devote ourselves to his honour, and employ ourselves in his work. It is Christ that Paul here has an eye to; he is God, and the angels are his, and go on his errands. Paul often calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ; he is his, and him he serves, both as a Christian and as an apostle. He doth not say, Whose we are, and whom we serve, for the most that were present were strangers to him, but, Whose I am, and whom I serve, whatever others do. Nay, whom I am now in the actual service of going to Rome, not as you are upon worldly business, but to appear as a witness for Christ. Now this he tells the company, that seeing their relief coming from his God, whose he was, and whom he served, they might thereby be drawn in to take him for their God, and to serve him likewise; for the same reason Jonah said to his mariners, "I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which has made the sea and the dry land," *Jonah i. 9.*

2nd. The account he gives of the vision he had. "There stood by me this night an angel of God," a Divine messenger, who had used formerly to bring him messages from heaven; he stood by him, visibly appeared to him, probably when he was awake upon his bed. Though he was "afar off upon the sea," *Ps. lxxv. 5*, "in the uttermost parts of the sea," *Ps. cxxxix. 9*, yet that cannot intercept his communion with God, nor deprive him of the benefit of Divine visits. Thence he can direct a prayer to God, and thither God can direct an angel to him. He knows not where he is himself, yet God's angel knows where to find him out. The ship is tossed with winds and waves, hurried to and fro with the utmost violence, and yet the angel finds a way into it. No storms or tempests can hinder the communications of God's favour to his people, for he is a very present help, a help at hand, even when "the sea roars and is troubled," *Ps. xli. 1, 3*. We suppose that Paul, being a prisoner, had not a cabin of his own in the ship, much less a bed in the captain's cabin, but was put down into the hold, any dark or dirty place was thought good enough for him, in common with the rest of the prisoners,—and yet there the angel of God stood by him. Meanness and poverty set none at a distance from God and his favour. Jacob, when he has no pillow but a stone, no curtains but the clouds, yet has a vision of angels. Paul had this vision but this last night. He had himself been assured by a former vision that he should go to Rome, *ch. xxiii. 11*, from which he might infer that he himself should be safe; but he has this fresh vision to assure him of the safety of those with him.

3rd. The encouragements that were given him in the vision, ver. 24. *First*. He is forbidden to fear. Though all about him are at their wit's end, and lost in despair, yet, "Fear not, Paul." "Fear not their fear, nor be afraid," *Isa. viii. 12*. "Let the sinners in Zion be afraid," but let not the saints be afraid, no, not at sea in a storm, for "the Lord of hosts is with them, and their place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks," *Isa. xxxiii. 14, 16*. *Secondly*. He is assured that for his part he shall come safe to Rome. "Thou must be brought before Caesar." As the rage of the most potent enemies, so the rage of the most stormy sea, cannot prevail against God's witnesses till they have finished their testimony. Paul must be preserved in this danger, for he is reserved for farther service. This is comfortable to the faithful servants of God in straits and difficulties, that as long as God has any work for them to do their lives shall be prolonged. *Thirdly*. That for his sake all that were in the ship with him should be delivered too from perishing in this storm. "God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." This angel that was ordered to bring him this message could have singled him out from this wretched crew, and those that were his friends too, and have carried them safe to shore, and have left the rest to perish, because they would not take Paul's counsel. But God chooseth rather, by preserving them all for his sake, to shew what great blessings good men are to the world, than by delivering him only to shew how good men are distinguished from the world. "God hath given thee all them that sail with thee;" that is, spares them, in answer to thy prayers, or for thy sake. Sometimes good men deliver "neither sons nor daughters, but their own souls only," *Eze. xiv. 18*; but Paul here delivers a whole ship's crew, almost three hundred souls. Note, God often spares wicked people for the sake of the godly, as Zoar for Lot's sake, and as Sodom might have been, if there had been ten righteous persons in it. The good people are hated and persecuted in the world as if they were not worthy to live in it, yet really it is for their sakes that the world stands. If Paul had thrust himself needlessly into ill company, he might justly have been cast away with them, but God calling him into it they are preserved with him. And it is intimated that it was a great favour to Paul, and he looked upon it to be so, that others were saved for his sake: They are given thee. There is no greater satisfaction to a good man than to know that he is a public blessing.

4. He comforts them with the same comforts wherewith he himself was comforted; ver. 25. "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer," you shall see even this will end well; "for I believe God," and depend upon his word, "that it shall be even as it was told me." He would not require them to give credit to that which he did not himself give credit to; and therefore, solemnly professeth that he believes it himself, and the belief of it makes him easy. I doubt not but it shall be "as it was told me." Thus he "stagers not at the promise of God through unbelief." Hath God spoken, and shall he not make it good? No doubt he can, no doubt he will, for "he is not a man that he should lie." And shall it be as God hath said? Then "be of good cheer," be of good courage. God is ever faithful, and therefore let all that have an interest in his promise be ever cheerful. If with God saying and doing are not two things, then with us believing and enjoying should not.

5. He gives them a sign, telling them particularly what this tempestuous voyage would issue in; ver. 26, "We must be cast upon a certain island;" and that will both break the ship and save the passengers, and so the prediction in both respects will be fulfilled. The pilot had quitted his post; the ship was left to run at random; they knew not what latitude they were in, much less how to steer their course; and yet Providence undertakes to bring them to an island that shall be a refuge for them. When the church of God like this ship is tossed with tempests and not comforted, when "there is none to guide her of all her sons," yet God can bring her safe to shore, and will do it.

Secondly. Their coming at length to an anchor upon an unknown shore, ver. 27-29.

1. They had been a full fortnight in the storm continually expecting death. The fourteenth night, and not sooner, they came near land. They were that night "driven up and down in Adria," not in the Adriatic gulf, on which Venice stands, but in the Adriatic sea, a part of the Mediterranean containing both the Sicilian and Ionian seas, and extending to the African shore. In this sea they were tossed, and knew not whereabouts they were.

2. About midnight the mariners apprehended that they drew near to some shore, which confirmed what Paul had told them, that they must be driven

xxvii. 15. "The ship being hurried away (borne along), and being unable to bear up against or face the wind, giving up (either ourselves or the ship), we were driven along."

xxvii. 16. "Clauda" a small island to the south-west of Crete. "We were scarcely able to make ourselves masters of the boat;" the small boat which was usually towed behind the ship. "The difficulty they had in securing the boat was owing not only to the storm, but because it must have been filled with water."

xxvii. 17. "Helps:" props or stays to strengthen the ship. "To 'trap' (undergird) a ship is to pass four or five turns of a large cable-laid rope round the hull or frame of a ship" (Alford). "The quicksands:" the greater and less Syrtis, two sandbanks off the coast of Africa. "Strake sail:" hardly, for this would deprive them of the only means of escaping from the quicksands, some sail being necessary; but "lowering the gear"—i.e., sending down upon the deck the gear connected with the fair-weather sails, such as

some island. To try whether it was so or no they sounded, in order to their finding the depth of the water, for the water would be shallower as they drew nearer to shore. By the first experiment they found they drew twenty fathoms deep of water, and by the next, fifteen fathoms, which was a demonstration that they were near some shore. God hath wisely ordered such a natural notice to sailors in the dark, that they may be cautious.

3. They took the hint, and, fearing rocks near the shore, they "cast anchor, and wished for the day." They durst not go forward for fear of rocks, and yet would not go back in hope of shelter; but they would wait for the morning, and heartily wished for it: who can blame them when the affair came to a crisis? When they had light there was no land to be seen. Now there was land near them they had no light to see it by, no marvel then they wished for day. When those that fear God walk in darkness, and have no light, yet let them not say, the Lord has forsaken them, or their God has forgotten them, but let them do as these mariners did, cast anchor and wish for the day, and be assured that the day will dawn. Hope is "an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil." Hold fast by that, think not of putting to sea again, but abide by Christ, and wait "till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

Thirdly. The defeating of the sailors' attempt to quit the ship. Here was a new danger added to their distress, which they narrowly escaped. Observe,

1. The treacherous design of the shipmen; and that was to leave the sinking ship; which, though a piece of wisdom in others, yet in those that were intrusted with the conduct of it it was the basest fraud that could be, ver. 30. They were about to flee out of the ship, concluding no other but that when it ran ashore it must be broken all to pieces. Having the command of the boat, the project was to get all of them into that, and so save themselves, and leave all the rest to perish. To cover this vile design they pretended they would cast anchors out of the foreship, or carry them farther off, and in order to that they let down the boat, which they had taken in, ver. 16, 17; and were going into it, having agreed among themselves when they were in to make straight for the shore. The treacherous seaman, like the treacherous shepherd, flees when he sees the danger coming, and there is most need of his help, *Jno. x. 12*. Then true is that of Solomon, "confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth or a foot out of joint." Let us therefore cease from man. Paul had in God's name assured them that they should come safe to land, but they will rather trust their own refuge of lies than God's word of truth.

2. Paul's discovery of it, and protestation against it, ver. 31. They all saw them preparing to go into the boat, but were deceived by the pretence they made; only Paul saw through it, and gave notice to the centurion and the soldiers concerning it, and told them plainly, "Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved." The skill of a mariner is seen in a storm, and in the distress of the ship, then is the proper time for him to exert himself. Now the greatest difficulty of all was before them; and therefore the shipmen are now more necessary than ever yet. It was indeed not by any skill of theirs that they were brought to land, for it was quite beyond their skill; but now they are near land, they must use their art to bring the ship to it. When God has done that for us which we could not, we must then in his strength help ourselves. Paul speaks humanly when he saith, "Ye cannot be saved, except these abide in the ship," and doth not at all weaken the assurances he had divinely given that they should infallibly be saved. God, that appointed the end, that they should be saved, appointed the means, that they should be saved by the help of these shipmen; though, if they had gone off, no doubt God would have made his word good some other way. Paul speaks as a prudent man, not as a prophet, when he saith, "These are necessary to your preservation. Duty is ours, events are God's; and we do not trust God, but tempt him, when we say we put ourselves under his protection, and do not use proper means, such as are within our power, for our own preservation."

3. The effectual defeating of it by the soldiers, ver. 32. It was no time to stand arguing the case with the shipmen; and therefore they made no more ado but cut the ropes of the boat; and, though it might otherwise have done them service in their present distress, they chose rather to let it fall off, and lose it, than suffer it to do them this disservice; and now the shipmen, being forced to stay in the ship, whether they would or no, are forced likewise to work for the safety of the ship as hard as they could, because, if the rest perish, they must perish with them.

Fourthly. The new life which Paul put into the company, by his cheerful inviting them to take some refreshment, and the repeated assurances given them that they should all of them have their lives given them for a prey. Happy they who had such a one as Paul in their company, who not only had correspondence with heaven, but was of a hearty lively spirit with those about him; that sharpened the countenance of his friend, as iron sharpens iron. Such a friend in distress, when without are fightings and within there are fears, is a friend indeed. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel," *Pr. xxvii. 9*; such was Paul's here to his companions in tribulation. The day was coming on. They that wish for the day, let them wait a while and they have what they wish for. The dawning of the day revived them a little, and then Paul got them together.

1. He chid them for their neglect of themselves, that they had so far given way to fear and despair as to forget or not to mind their food. "This is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing;" and that is not well, ver. 33. Not that they had all, or any of them, continued fourteen days without any food, but they had not any set meal as they used to have, of all that time; they ate very little, next nothing. Or, you have continuing fasting, that is, you have lost your stomach; you have had no appetite at all to your food, nor any relish of it, through prevailing fear and despair. A very disconsolate state is thus expressed, *Ps. cii. 4*, "I forget to eat my bread." It is a sin to starve the body and to deny it its necessary support,—he is an unnatural man indeed that hateth his own flesh, and doth not nourish and cherish it; and a sore evil under the sun to have a sufficiency of the good things of this life, and not to have power to use them, *Ecd. vi. 2*. And if this arise from the sorrow of the world, and from any inordinate fear or trouble, it is so far from excusing it, that it is another sin; it is discontent, it is distrust of God; it is all wrong. What folly is it to die for fear of dying! but thus the sorrow of the world works death, while joy in God is life and peace in the greatest distresses and dangers.

2. He counsels them to their food; ver. 34, "Wherefore I pray you to take some meat." We have a hard struggle before us, must get to shore as well as we can; if our bodies be weak through fasting, we shall not be able to help ourselves. The angel bade Elijah arise and eat, for otherwise he would find the journey too great for him, *1 Kin. xix. 7*; so Paul will have these people eat, or otherwise the waves will be too hard for them. "I pray you," *παρακαλῶ*, "I exhort you," if you will be ruled by me, take some nourishment. Though you have no appetite to it, though you have fasted away your stomach, yet let reason bring you to it, "for this is for your health;" or rather, your preservation, or safety at this time. It is for your salvation; you cannot without nourishment have strength to shift for your lives. As he that will not labour, let him not eat, so he that means to labour must eat. Weak and trembling Christians, that give way to doubts and fears about their spiritual state, continue fasting

from the Lord's supper, and fasting from Divine consolations, and then complain they cannot go on in their spiritual work and warfare; and it is a long of themselves. If they would feed and feast as they ought upon the provision Christ has made for them, they would be strengthened, and it would be for their souls' health and salvation.

3. He assures them of their preservation; "There shall not a hair fall from the head of any of you." It is a proverbial expression, noting a complete indemnity; it is used, *1 Kin. i. 52*; *Lu. xxi. 18*. You cannot eat for fear of dying; I tell you, you are sure of living, and therefore eat. You will come to shore wet and cold, but sound wind and limb; your hair wet, but not a hair lost.

4. He himself spread their table for them; for none of them had any heart to do it, they were all so dispirited; "when he had thus spoken he took bread," fetched it from the ship's stores, to which every one might safely have access when none of them had an appetite. They were not reduced to short allowance, as sailors sometimes are, when they are kept longer at sea than they expected by distress of weather. They had plenty, but what good did that do them when they had no stomach? We have reason to be thankful to God that we have not only food to our appetite, but appetite to our food; that our soul abhors not even dainty meat, *Job xxxiii. 20*, through sickness or sorrow.

5. He was chaplain to the ship; and they had reason to be proud of their chaplain. He "gave thanks to God in presence of them all." We have reason to think he had often prayed with Luke and Aristarchus, and what others there were among them that were Christians, that they prayed daily together; but whether he had before this prayed with the whole company promiscuously is not certain. Now he "gave thanks to God in presence of them all;" that they were alive, and had been preserved hitherto; and that they had a promise that their lives should be preserved in the imminent peril now before them. He gave thanks for the provision they had, and begged a blessing upon it. We must in every thing give thanks; and must particularly have an eye to God in receiving our food, for it is sanctified to us by the word of God and prayer; and is to be received with thanksgiving. Thus the curse is taken off from it, and we obtain a covenant right to it, and a covenant blessing upon it, *1 Tim. iv. 3-5*; and it is not by bread alone that man lives, but by the word of God, which must be met with prayer. He gave thanks in presence of them all, not only to shew that he served a Master he was not ashamed of, but to invite them into his service too. If we crave a blessing upon our meat, and give thanks for it in a right manner, we shall not only keep up a comfortable communion with God ourselves, but credit our profession, and recommend it to the good opinion of others.

6. He set them a good example. When he had given thanks he broke the bread, (it was sea biscuit,) and he began to eat. Whether they would be encouraged or no, he would. If they would be sullen, and like froward children refuse their victuals, because they had not every thing to their mind, he would eat his meat and be thankful. Those that teach others are inexcusable if they do not themselves as they teach; and the most effectual way of preaching is by example.

7. It had a happy influence upon them all; ver. 36, "Then were they all of good cheer." They then ventured to believe the message sent them by Paul, when they plainly perceived that Paul believed it himself, who was in the same common danger with them. Thus God sends good tidings to the perishing world of mankind by those that are of themselves, and in the same common danger with themselves: that are sinners too, and must be saved, if ever they be saved, in the same way in which they persuade others to venture; for it is a common salvation which they bring the tidings of; and it is an encouragement to people to commit themselves to Christ as their Saviour, when those who invite them to do so make it to appear that they do so themselves. It is here upon this occasion that the number of the persons is set down, which we took notice of before, they were in all two hundred threescore and sixteen souls; see how many may be influenced by the good example of one. They did all eat; nay, they did all eat enough, ver. 38. They were satiated with food, or filled with it. They made a hearty meal, which explains the meaning of their fasting before for fourteen days, not that they did not eat of all that time, but they never had their belly full of all that time, as they had now.

8. They once more lightened the ship, that it might escape the better in the shock it was now to have. They had before thrown the wares and the tackle overboard, and now the wheat, the victuals, and provisions they had; better they should sink it than it should sink them. See what good reason our Saviour had to call our bodily food meat that perisheth; we may ourselves be under a necessity of throwing that away, to save our lives, which we had gathered and laid up for the support of our lives. It is probable the ship was overloaded with the multitude of the passengers, (for this comes in just after the account of the number of them,) and that obliged them so often to lighten the ship.

Fifthly. Their putting to shore, and the staving of the ship, in the adventure. It was about break of day when they ate their meat; and when it was fair day they began to look about them. And here we are told,

1. That they knew not where they were. They could not tell what country it was they were now upon the coast of, whether it was Europe, Asia, or Africa, for each had shores washed by the Adriatic sea. It is probable these shipmen had often sailed this way, and thought they knew every country they came near perfectly well, and yet here they were at a loss. "Let not the wise man then glory in his wisdom," since it may perhaps fail him thus egregiously, even in his own profession.

2. They observed a creek with a level shore, into which they hoped to thrust the ship, ver. 39. Though they knew not what country it was, nor whether the inhabitants were friends or foes, civil or barbarous, they determined to cast themselves upon their mercy. It was dry land, which would be very welcome to those that had been so long at sea. It was pity but they had had some help from the shore; a pilot sent them that knew the coast, who might steer their ship in; or another second ship to take some of the men on board. Those who live on the sea-coast have often opportunity of succouring those that are in distress at sea, and of saving precious lives; and they ought to do their utmost in order to it, with all readiness and cheerfulness; for it is a great sin, and very provoking to God, to forgo to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and are ready to be slain; and it will not serve for an excuse to say, Behold we knew it not, when either we did or might, and should have known it, *Pr. xxiv. 11*. I have been told there are some, and in our own nation too, that, when from the sea-coast they see a ship in distress, and at a loss, will, by misguiding fires or otherwise, purposely lead them into danger, that the lives may be lost, and they may have the plunder of the ship. One can scarce believe that any of the human nature could possibly be so wicked, so barbarously inhuman, and should have so much of the devil in them; if there be, let them know of a truth that "they shall have judgment without mercy who have shewed no mercy."

3. They made straight to the shore, with wind and tide; ver. 40, "They took up the anchors," the four anchors which they cast out of the stern, ver. 29. Some think, they took pains to weigh them up, hoping they should have use for them again at the shore; others, that they did it with such precipitation that they were forced to cut the cables, and leave them; the original will admit either. They then "committed themselves to the sea," the wind standing fair to carry them into the port; and they "loosed the rudder-bands," which were fastened

top-sails. "So:" i.e., "not only with the ship undergirded and made snug, but with storm-sails set and on the starboard tack, which was the only course by which she could avoid falling into the Syrtis."

xxvii. 19. "Tackling:" furniture.

xxvii. 21. "To have gained:" i.e., "to have been saved from this," &c.

xxvii. 27. "Adria:" the part of the Mediterranean between Greece,

Italy, and Africa. "They were now driving before the wind between Crete and Malta."

xxvii. 29. The ordinary way of anchoring was from the bow, but in case of need it could be done from the stern. In this case they anchored from the stern, otherwise "the vessel would have swung round and gone on the rocks" (Conybeare and Howson). They might well anxiously or devoutly wish for the day, for the ship might go to pieces during the night. Hence the desire of the ship-

during the storm for the greater steadiness of the ship, but now they were butting into the port were loosed, that the pilot might steer with the greater freedom. They then "hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made towards shore." The original words here used for the rudder-bands and the mainsail, find the critics a great deal of work, to accommodate them to the modern terms; but they need not give us any difficulty who are content to know, that when they saw the shore they hastened to it as fast as they could, and perhaps made more haste than good speed. And should not a poor soul, that has long been struggling with winds and tempests in this world, long to put into the safe and quiet haven of everlasting rest; should it not get clear from all that which fastens it to this earth, and straitens the outgoings of its pious and devout affections heavenwards; and should it not hoist up the mainsail of faith to the wind of the Spirit, and so with longing desires make to shore?

4. They made a shift among them to run the ship aground, in a shelf or bed of sand, as it should seem, or an isthmus, or neck of land, washed with the sea on both sides, and therefore two seas are said to meet upon it, and there the forepart stuck fast; and then when it had no liberty to play, as a ship has when it rides at anchor, but remained immovable, the hinder part would soon be broken of course by the violence of the waves. Whether the shipmen did not do their part, being angry that they were disappointed in their design to escape, and therefore wilfully ran the ship aground, or whether we may suppose that they did their utmost to save it, but God in his providence overruled, for the fulfilling of Paul's word, that the ship must be lost. ver. 22, I cannot say; but this we are sure of, that God will confirm the word of his servants, and perform the counsel of his messengers, *Isa. xlv. 26*. The ship, that had strangely weathered the storm in the vast ocean where it had room to roll, is dashed to pieces when it sticks fast. Thus if the heart fixeth in the world in love and affection, and adherence to it, it is lost: Satan's temptations beat against it, and it is gone; but as long as it keeps above the world, though it be tossed with its cares and tumults, there is hope of it. They had the shore in view, and yet suffered shipwreck in the harbour, to teach us never to be secure.

Sixthly. A particular danger that Paul and the rest of the prisoners were in, besides their share in the common calamity, and their deliverance from it.

1. In this critical moment, when every man hung in doubt of his life, the soldiers advised the killing of the prisoners, that were committed to their custody, and whom they were to give account of, "lest any of them should swim out and escape," ver. 42. There was no great danger of that, for they could not escape far, weak and weary as they were; and under the eye of so many soldiers that had the charge of them, it was not likely they should attempt it. And if it should so happen, though they might be obnoxious to the law for a permissive escape, yet in such a case as this equity would certainly relieve them. But it was a brutish, barbarous motion; and so much the worse, that they were thus prodigal of other people's lives, when, without a miracle of mercy, they must lose their own.

2. The centurion, for Paul's sake, quashed this motion presently. Paul had found favour with him whose prisoner he was, as Joseph with the captain of the guard. Julius, though he despised Paul's advice, ver. 11, yet he afterwards saw a great deal of cause to respect him; and therefore being willing to save Paul, he stayed the execution of that bloody project, and in *favorem vite*,—"from a regard to his life," he "kept them from their purpose." It doth not appear they were any of them malefactors convict, but only suspected, and waiting their trial; and, in such a case as this, better ten guilty ones should escape than one that was innocent be slain. As God had saved all in the ship for Paul's sake, so here the centurion saves all the prisoners for his sake; such a diffusive good is a good man.

Seventhly. The saving of the lives of all the persons in the ship, by the wonderful providence of God. When the ship broke under them, surely there was but a step between them and death; and yet Infinite Mercy interposed, and that step was not stepped.

1. Some were saved by swimming. The centurion commanded his own soldiers in the first place, as many of them as could swim, to get to land first, and to be ready to receive the prisoners, and prevent their escape. The Romans trained up their youth, among other exercises, to that of swimming; and it was often of service to them in their wars. Julius Cæsar was a famous swimmer. It may be very useful to those who deal much at sea, but otherwise perhaps more lives have been lost by swimming in sport, and learning to swim, than have been saved by swimming for need.

2. The rest, with much ado, scrambled to the shore: "some on boards," that they had loose with them in the ship, and others "on the broken pieces of the ship," every one making the best shift he could for himself and his friends, and the more busy because they were assured their labour should not be in vain. But "so it came to pass," that through the good providence of God none of them miscarried; none of them were by any accident turned off, but "they escaped all safe to land." See here an instance of the special providence of God in the preservation of people's lives, and particularly in the deliverance of many from perils by waters: ready to sink and yet kept from sinking,—the deep from swallowing them up, and the water-floods from overflowing them; the storm turned into a calm; they rescued from the dreaded sea, and brought to the desired haven. "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness!" *Ps. cvii. 30, 31*. Here was an instance of the performance of a particular word of promise, which God gave, that all the persons in this ship should be saved for Paul's sake. Though there may be great difficulty in the way of the promised salvation, yet it shall without fail be accomplished. And even the wreck of the ship may furnish out means for the saving of the lives; and, when all seems to be gone, all proves to be safe, though it be "on boards, and broken pieces of the ship."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

We are the more concerned to take notice of and to improve what is here recorded concerning blessed Paul, because after the story of this chapter we hear no more of him in the sacred history, though we have a great deal of him yet before us in his epistles. We have attended him through several chapters from one judgment-seat to another, and could at last have taken leave of him with the more pleasure if we had left him at liberty; but in this chapter we are to console him, and yet congratulate him. I. We console him as a poor shipwrecked passenger, stripped of all, and yet congratulate him, 1. As singularly owned by his God in his distress, preserved himself from receiving hurt by a viper that fastened on his hand, ver. 1-6; and being made an instrument of much good in the island on which they were cast, in healing many that were sick, and particularly the father of Publius, the chief man of the island, ver. 7-9; 2. As much respected by the people there, ver. 10. II. We console him as a poor confined prisoner, carried to Rome under the notion of a criminal, removed by *habeas corpus*, ver. 11-16; and yet we congratulate him, 1. Upon the respect shewed him by the Christians at Rome, who came a great way to meet him, ver. 15; 2. Upon the favour he found with the captain of the guard, into whose custody he was delivered, who suffered him to dwell by himself, and did not put him in the common prison, ver. 16; 3. Upon the free conference he had with the Jews at Rome, both about his own affair, ver. 17-22, and upon the head of the Christian religion in general, ver. 23; the issue

of which was, that God was glorified, many were edified, the rest left inexcusable, and the apostles justified in preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, ver. 24-29; 4. Upon the undisturbed liberty he had to preach the Gospel to all comers in his own house for two years together, ver. 30, 31.



ND when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. 2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. 5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. 6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god. 7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. 8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. 9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed: 10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

What a great variety of places and circumstances do we find Paul in! He was a planet, and not a fixed star. Here we have him in an island to which, in all probability, he had never come if he had not been thrown upon it by a storm; and yet it seems God has work for him to do here. Even stormy winds fulfil God's counsel; and an ill wind indeed it is that blows nobody any good. This ill wind blew good to the island of Melita; for it gave them Paul's company for three months, who was a blessing to every place he came to. This island was called Melita, lying between Sicily and Africa, twenty miles long, and twelve broad; it lies farthest from the continent of any island in the Mediterranean; it is about sixty miles from Sicily. It has been famous since for the Knights of Malta, who, when the Turks overran that part of Christendom, made a noble stand, and gave some check to the progress of their arms. Now here we have,

First. The kind reception which the inhabitants of this island gave to the distressed strangers, that were shipwrecked on their coast; ver. 2. "The barbarous people shewed us no little kindness." God had promised that there should be no loss of any man's life; and "as for God, his work is perfect:" if they had escaped the sea, and when they came ashore had perished for cold or want, it had been all one; therefore Providence continues its care of them. And what benefits we receive by the hand of man must be acknowledged to come from the hand of God; for every creature is that to us, and no more, that he makes it to be. And when he pleaseth, as he can make enemies to be at peace, so he can make strangers to be friends, friends in need, and those are friends indeed,—friends in adversity, and that is the time that a brother is born for. Observe,

1. The general notice taken of the kindness which the natives of Malta shewed to Paul and his company. They are called barbarous people, because they did not in language and customs conform either to the Greeks or Romans, who looked superciliously enough upon all but themselves as barbarians, though otherwise civilized enough, and perhaps in some cases more civil than they. These barbarous people, however they were called so, were full of humanity; they "shewed us no little kindness." So far were they from making a prey of this shipwreck, as many I fear who are called Christian people would have done, that they laid hold on it as an opportunity of shewing mercy. The Samaritan is a better neighbour to the poor wounded man than the priest or Levite. And verily we have not found greater humanity among Greeks, or Romans, or Christians, than among those barbarous people; and it is written for our imitation, that we may hence learn to be compassionate to those that are in distress and misery, and to relieve and succour them to the utmost of our ability, as those that know we ourselves also are in the body. We should be ready to entertain strangers, as Abraham, who sat at his tent door to invite passengers in, *Heb. xiii. 2*; but especially strangers in distress, as these were.

xxvii. 41. Probably near the island of Salmonetta, where it is separated from Malta by a narrow channel.

xxviii. 1. "Melita:" it is generally believed that Malta is the island meant. The course of the ship, and the wide application which the name Adria then had, are strongly in favour of this.

xxviii. 2. "The barbarous people:" see Rom. i. 14. The term is used rather in reference to language than civilisation, and was given to those who spoke neither Greek nor Roman. The words might be

men to escape at once, which they endeavoured to do under cover of the night.

xxvii. 39. A creek having a sandy beach, not a rocky coast.

xxvii. 40. "Ancient ships were steered by two large paddles, one on each quarter. When anchored by the stern in a gale, it would be necessary to lift them out of the water and secure them by lashings or rudder-bands, and to loose these bands when the ship was again got under way." "Mainsail:" rather, "foresail."

"Honour all men." If Providence hath so "appointed the bounds of our habitation," as to give us an opportunity of being frequently serviceable to persons at loss, we should not place it among the inconveniences of our lot, but the advantages of it; because "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Who knows but these barbarous people had their lot cast in this island for such a time as this!

2. A particular instance of their kindness. They "kindled a fire," in some large hall or other, and they "received us every one;" made room for us about the fire, and bade us welcome, without asking either what country we were of or what religion. In swimming to the shore, and coming on the broken pieces of the ship, we may suppose they were sadly wet, that they had not a dry thread on them, and, as if that were not enough to complete the deluge, waters from above met those from below; and it rained so hard, that that would wet them to the skin presently; and it was a cold rain too, so that they wanted nothing so much as a good fire, (for they had eaten heartily but just before on ship-board,) and that they got for them presently, to warm them, and dry their clothes. It is sometimes as much a piece of charity to poor families to supply them with fuel as with food or raiment. Be ye warmed, is as necessary as, Be ye filled. When in the extremities of bad weather we find ourselves fenced against the rigours of the season, by the accommodations of a warm house, bed, and clothes, and a good fire, we should think how many lie exposed to "the present rain, and to the cold," and pity them, and pray for them, and help them if we can.

Secondly, The farther danger that Paul was in, by a viper's fastening on his hand, and the unjust construction that the people put upon it. Paul is among strangers, and appears one of the meanest and most contemptible of the company, therefore God distinguisheth him, and soon makes him to be taken notice of.

1. When the fire was to be made, and to be made bigger, that so great a company might all have the benefit of it, Paul was as busy as any of them in gathering sticks, ver. 3. Though he was free from all, and of greater account than any of them, yet he made himself servant of all. Paul was an industrious, active man, and loved to be doing when any thing was to be done, and never contrived to take his ease. Paul was an humble, self-denying man, and would stoop to any thing by which he might be serviceable, even to the gathering of sticks to make a fire of. We should reckon nothing below us but sin, and be willing to condescend to the meanest offices, if there be occasion, for the good of our brethren. The people were ready to help them, yet Paul, wet and cold as he is, will not throw it all upon them, but will help himself. They that receive benefit by the fire should help to carry fuel to it.

2. The sticks being old dry rubbish, it happened there was a viper among them, that lay as dead till it came to the heat, and then revived, or lay quiet till it felt the fire, and then was provoked, and flew at him that unawares threw it into the fire, and "fastened upon his hand," ver. 3. Serpents, and such venomous creatures, use to lie among sticks; hence we read of him that leans on the wall and a serpent bites him, *Am. v. 19*. It was so common, that people were by it frightened from tearing hedges; *Ecc. x. 8*. "Whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him;" as there is a snake under the green grass, so there is often under the dry leaves. See how many perils human life is exposed to, and what danger we are in from the inferior creatures, which are many of them become enemies to men, since men became rebels to God; and what a mercy it is that we are preserved from them as we are. We often meet with that which is mischievous where we expect that which is beneficial; and many come by hurt when they are honestly employed, and in the way of their duty.

3. The barbarous people concluded that Paul, being a prisoner, was certainly a murderer, that had appealed to Rome to escape justice in his own country, and that this viper was sent by Divine Justice to be the avenger of blood; or, if they were not aware that he was a prisoner, they supposed that he was in his flight; and when they saw the "venomous animal hang on his hand," which it seems he could not, or would not, immediately throw off, but let it hang, they concluded, "No doubt, this man is a murderer," hath shed innocent blood; and therefore, "though he hath escaped the sea," yet Divine vengeance pursues him, and fastens upon him now he is pleasing himself with the thoughts of that escape, and will not suffer him to live. Now in this we may see,

1st. Some of the discoveries of natural light. They were barbarous people; perhaps had no books or learning among them, and yet they knew naturally, *First*. That there is a God that governs the world, and a providence that presides in all occurrences; that things do not come to pass by chance; no, not such a thing as this, but by Divine direction. *Secondly*. That "evil pursues sinners." That there are good works which God will reward, and wicked works that he will punish. There is a Divine *Nemesis*,—"a vengeance," which, sooner or later, will reckon for enormous crimes. They believe not only that there is a God, but that this God hath said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," even to death. *Thirdly*. That murder is a heinous crime, and which shall not long go unpunished. That whoso sheds man's blood, if his blood be not shed by man, by the magistrate, as it ought to be, it shall be shed by the righteous Judge of heaven and earth, who is the avenger of wrong. Those that think they shall go unpunished in any evil way will be judged out of the mouth of these barbarians, who could say, without book, "Woe to the wicked, for it shall be ill with them; for the reward of their hands shall be given them." Those that, because they have escaped many judgments, are secure, and say, They shall have peace, though they go on, and have their hearts so much the more set to do evil, because sentence against their evil works is not executed speedily, may learn from these illiterate people, that though malefactors have escaped the vengeance of the sea, yet there is no outrunning Divine justice, "Vengeance suffers not to live." In Job's time you might ask "them that go by the way," ask the next body you meet, and they would tell you, "that the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction."

2nd. Some of the mistakes of natural light; which needed to be rectified by Divine revelation. In two things their knowledge was defective: *First*. That they thought all wicked people are punished in this life, that Divine vengeance never suffers great and notorious sinners, such as murderers are, to live long; but that, if they "come up out of the pit, they shall be taken in the snare," *Jer. xlviii. 43, 44*; if they "flee from a lion, a bear shall meet them," *Am. v. 19*; if they escape being drowned, a viper shall fasten upon them; whereas it is not so; "the wicked," even murderers, sometimes "live, become old, yea, are mighty in power;" for the day of vengeance is to come in the other world, the great day of wrath; and though some are made examples of in this world, to prove that there is a God and a providence, yet many are left unpunished; to prove that there is a judgment to come. *Secondly*. That they thought all that are remarkably afflicted in this life are wicked people; that a man on whose hand a viper fastens may from thence be judged to be a murderer; as if those on whom the tower in Siloam fell must needs be greater sinners than all in Jerusalem. This mistake Job's friends went upon in their judgment upon his case. But Divine revelation sets this matter in a true light: that all things come ordinarily alike to all; that good men are oftentimes greatly afflicted in this life, for the exercise and improvement of their faith and patience.

4. When he shook off the viper from his hand, yet they expected that

Divine vengeance would ratify the censure they had passed, and "that he should have swollen and burst" through the force of the poison, or that he "should have fallen down dead suddenly." See how apt men are, when once they have got an ill opinion of a man, though never so unjust, to abide by it, and to think that God must necessarily confirm and ratify their peevish sentence. It was well they did not knock him down themselves, when they saw he did not swell and fall down; but so considerate they are as to let providence work, and to attend the motions of it.

Thirdly, Paul's deliverance from the danger, and the undue construction the people put upon that. The viper's fastening on his hand was a trial of his faith, and it was found to praise, and honour, and glory. For,

1. It doth not appear that it put him into any fright or confusion at all. He did not shriek or start, nor, as it would be natural for us to do, throw it off with terror and precipitation; for he suffered it to hang on so long as that the people had time to take notice of it, and to make their remarks upon it. Such a wonderful presence of mind he had, and such a composure, as no man could have upon such a sudden accident, but by the special aids of Divine grace, and the actual belief and consideration of that word of Christ concerning his disciples, *Mar. xvi. 18*, "They shall take up serpents." This it is to have the heart fixed, trusting in God.

2. He carelessly shook off the viper into the fire, without any difficulty or calling for help, or any means used to loosen its hold; and it is probable it was consumed in the fire. Thus, in the strength of the grace of Christ, believers shake off the temptations of Satan with a holy resolution, saying as Christ did, "Get thee behind me, Satan; the Lord rebuke thee;" and thus they "keep themselves that the wicked one toucheth them not," so as to fasten upon them, *1 Jno. v. 18*. When we despise the censures and reproaches of men, and look upon them with a holy contempt, having the testimony of conscience for us, then we do, as Paul here, "shake off the viper into the fire." It doth us no harm except we either fret at it, or be deterred by it from our duty, or be provoked to render railing for railing.

3. He was never the worse. They that thought it would have been his death "looked a great while, but saw no harm at all come to him." God hereby intended to make him remarkable among these barbarous people, and so to make way for the entertainment of the Gospel among them. It is reported that after this no venomous creature would live in that island, no more than in Ireland; but I do not find that the matter of fact is confirmed, though the popish writers speak of it with assurance.

4. They then magnified him as much as before they had vilified him. "They changed their minds, and said that he was a god," an immortal god; for they thought it impossible that a mortal man should have a viper hang on his hand so long, and be never the worse. See the uncertainty of popular opinion, how it turns with the wind, and how apt it is to run into extremes both ways; from sacrificing to Paul and Barnabas, to stoning of them; and here from condemning him as a murderer, to idolizing him as a god.

Fourthly, The miraculous cure of an old gentleman that was ill of a fever, and of others that were otherwise diseased, by Paul. And with these confirmations of the doctrine of Christ no doubt there was a faithful publication of it. Observe,

1. The kind entertainment Publius, the chief man of the island, gave to these distressed strangers. He had a considerable estate in the island, and, some think, was governor, and "he received them, and lodged them three days very courteously," that they might have time to furnish themselves in other places at the best hand. It is happy when God gives a large heart to those to whom he has given a large estate. It became him who was the chief man of the island to be most hospitable and generous; who was the richest man, to be rich in good works.

2. The illness of the father of Publius. He "lay sick of a fever and a bloody flux," which often go together, and when they do are commonly fatal. Providence ordered it that he should be ill just at this time, that the cure of him might be a present recompence to Publius for his generosity, and the cure of him by a miracle a recompence particularly for his kindness to Paul, whom he received in the name of a prophet, and had this prophet's reward.

3. His cure. Paul took cognizance of his case, and, though we do not find he was urged to it, (for they had no thought of any such thing,) yet he entered in, not as a physician to heal him by medicines, but as an apostle to heal him by miracle, and he prayed to God in Christ's name for his cure, and then laid his hands on him, and he was perfectly well in an instant. Though he must needs be in years, yet he recovered his health; and the lengthening out of his life yet longer would be a mercy to him.

4. The cure of many others, who were invited by this cure to apply themselves to Paul. If he can heal diseases so easily, so effectually, he shall soon have patients enough; and he bade them all welcome, and sent them away with what they came for. He did not plead that he was a stranger there, thrown accidentally among them, under no obligations to them, and waiting to be gone by the first opportunity, and therefore might be excused from receiving their applications. No, a good man will endeavour to do good wherever the providence of God casts him. Paul reckoned himself a debtor, not only to the Greeks, but to the barbarians, and thanked God for an opportunity of being useful among them. Nay, he was particularly obliged to these inhabitants of Malta for the seasonable shelter and supply they had afforded him, and hereby he did in effect discharge his quarters; which should encourage us to entertain strangers, for some thereby have entertained angels, and some apostles, unawares. God will not be behind with any for kindness shewn to his people in distress. We have reason to think that Paul with these cures preached the Gospel to them, and that, coming thus confirmed and recommended, it was generally embraced among them. And if so, never were any people so enriched by a shipwreck on their coasts as these Maltese were.

Fifthly, The grateful acknowledgment which even these barbarous people made of the kindness Paul had done them, in preaching Christ unto them. They were civil to him and to the other ministers that were with him, who, it is likely, were assisting to him in preaching among them, ver. 7.

1. They "honoured us with many honours." They shewed them all possible respect; they saw God honoured them, and therefore justly thought themselves obliged to honour them; and thought nothing too much by which they might testify the esteem they had for them. Perhaps they made them free of their island by naturalizing them, and admitted them members of their guilds and fraternities. The faithful preachers of the Gospel are worthy of a double honour, then especially when they succeed in their labours.

2. "When we departed, they laden us with such things as were necessary;" or, they put on board such things as we had occasion for. Paul could not labour with his hands here, for he had nothing to work upon, and therefore accepted the kindness of the good people of Melita, not as a fee for his cures,—freely he had received, and freely he gave,—but as the relief of his wants, and theirs that were with him. And, having reaped of their spiritual things, it was but just they should make them those returns, *1 Cor. ix. 11*.

11 And after three months we departed in a ship

rendered foreigners, strangers, natives. These islanders were of Phœnician descent. "No little kindness:" rather, "no ordinary kindness." The word translated "kindness" is that from which our English word "philanthropy" is derived.

xxviii. 3. "No person who has studied the changes which the operations of man have produced on the animals of any country, will be surprised that a particular species of reptile should have disappeared from Malta. Mr. Landsborough, in his interesting excursion

in Arran, has repeatedly noticed the gradual disappearance of the viper from the island since it has become more frequented. Perhaps there is nowhere a surface of equal extent in so artificial a state as that of Malta is at the present day, and nowhere has the aboriginal forest been more completely cleared. We need not, therefore, be surprised that, with the disappearance of the woods, the noxious reptiles which infested them should also have disappeared" (Smith). "Fastened:" attached itself. Several of the best com-

of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux. 12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried *there* three days. 13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: 14 Where we found



PUTEOLI.

brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome. 15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage. 16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

We have here the progress of Paul's voyage towards Rome, and his arrival there at length. A rough and dangerous voyage he had had hitherto, and narrowly escaped with his life; but after a storm comes a calm; the latter part of his voyage was easy and quiet.

*Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum,
Tendimus ad Latium.*

* Through various hazards and events we move
To Latium

Tendimus ad calum,—
* We make for heaven.

Dabit Deus his quoque finem,
* To these a period will be fixed by Heaven.

We have here,
First, Their leaving of Malta. That island was a happy shelter to them, but it was not their home; when they are refreshed they must to sea again. The difficulties and discouragements we have met with in our Christian course must not hinder us from pressing forward. Notice is here taken,

1. Of the time of their departure. "After three months," the three winter months. Better lie by, though they lay upon charges, than go forward while the season was dangerous. Paul had warned them against venturing to sea in winter weather, and they would not take the warning; but, now they had learned it by the difficulties and dangers they had gone through, he needed not to warn them; their learning did them good when they had paid dear for it. Experience is, therefore, called the mistress of fools, because they are fools that will not learn till experience has taught them.

2. Of the ship in which they departed. It was in a ship of Alexandria; so was that which was cast away, *ch.* xxvii. 6. This ship had wintered in that isle, and was safe. See what different issues there are of men's undertakings in this world. Here were two ships, both of Alexandria, both bound for Italy, both thrown upon the same island; but one is wrecked there, and the other is saved. Such occurrences may often be observed. Providence sometimes favours those that deal in the world, and prospers them, that people may be encouraged to set their hands to worldly business; at other times Providence crosseth them, that people may be warned not to set their hearts upon it. Events are thus varied, that we may learn both how to want and how to abound. The historian takes notice of the sign of the ship, which probably gave it its name; it was Castor and Pollux. Those little foolish pagan deities, that the poets had made to preside over storms, and to protect seafaring men, as gods of the sea, were painted or graven upon the forepart of the ship, and from thence the ship took its name. I suppose this is observed for no other reason but for the better ascertaining of the story; that ship being well known by that name and sign by all that dealt between Egypt and Italy. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that Luke mentions this circumstance to intimate the men's superstition, that they hoped they should have better sailing under this badge than they had had before.

Secondly, Their landing in or about Italy, and the pursuing of their journey towards Rome.

1. They landed first at Syracuse, in Sicily, the chief city of that island. There they tarried three days, probably having some goods to put ashore, or some merchandize to make there; for it seems to have been a trading voyage that this ship made. Paul had now his curiosity gratified with the sight of places he had often heard of, and wished to see; particularly Syracuse, a place of great antiquity and note; and yet it should seem there were no Christians there.

2. From Syracuse they came to Rhegium, a city in Italy, directly opposite to Messina, in Sicily, belonging to the kingdom of Calabria, or Naples. There it seems they stayed one day; and a very formal story the Romish legends tell of Paul's preaching here at this time, and the fish coming to the shore to hear him; that with a candle he set a stone pillar on fire, and by that miracle convinced the people of the truth of his doctrine, and they were many of them baptized; and he ordained Stephen, one of his companions in this voyage, to be their bishop; and all this, they tell you, was done in this one day; whereas it doth not appear that they did so much as go ashore, but only came to an anchor in the road.

3. From Rhegium they came to Puteoli, a seaport town not far from Naples, now called Pozzuolana. The ship of Alexandria was bound for that port, and therefore there Paul, and the rest that were bound for Rome, were put ashore, and went the remainder of their way by land. At Puteoli they found brethren, Christians. Who brought the knowledge of Christ hither, we are not told, but here it was; so wonderfully did the leaven of the Gospel diffuse its savour. God has many that serve and worship him in places where we little think he has. And observe, 1st. Though it is probable there were but few brethren in Puteoli, yet Paul found them out. Either they heard of him, or he inquired them out; but, as it were by instinct, they got together. Brethren in Christ should find out one another, and keep up communion with each other, as those of the same country do in a foreign land. 2nd. They desired Paul and his companions to tarry with them seven days; that is, to forecast to stay at least one Lord's day with them, and to assist them in their public worship that day. They knew not whether ever they should see Paul at Puteoli again, and therefore he must not go, but he must give them a sermon or two, or more. And Paul was willing to allow them so much of his time, and the centurion under whose command Paul now was, perhaps having himself friends or business at Puteoli, agreed to stay one week there, to oblige Paul.

4. From Puteoli they went forward towards Rome. Whether they travelled on foot, or whether they had beasts provided for them to ride on, as *ch.* xxiii. 24, doth not appear; but to Rome they must go, and this is their last stage.

Thirdly, The meeting which the Christians at Rome gave to Paul. It is probable notice was sent them by the Christians at Puteoli, as soon as ever Paul was come thither, how long he intended to stay there, and when he would set forward for Rome, which gave an opportunity for this interview. Observe,

1. The great honour they did to Paul. They had heard much of his fame, what use God had made of him, and what eminent service he had done to the kingdom of Christ in the world, and to what multitudes of souls he had been a spiritual father; they had heard of his sufferings, and how God had owned him in them; and therefore they not only longed to see him, but thought themselves obliged to shew him all possible respect, as a glorious advocate for the cause of Christ. He had, some time ago, written a long epistle to them, and a most excellent one,—the epistle to the Romans,—in which he had not only expressed his great kindness for them, but had given them a great many useful instructions; and in return for that they shew him this respect. They went to meet him, that they might bring him in state, as ambassadors and judges make their public entry, though he was a prisoner. Some of them went as far as Appii Forum, which was fifty-one miles from Rome; others, to a place called the Three Taverns, which was twenty-eight miles (some reckon thirty-three miles) from Rome. They are to be commended for it, that they were so far from being ashamed of him, or afraid of owning him, because he was a prisoner, that for that very reason they counted him worthy of double honour, and were the more careful to shew him respect.

2. The great comfort Paul had in this. Now he was drawing near to Rome, and perhaps heard at Puteoli what character the emperor Nero now had, and what a tyrant he was of late become, he began to have some melancholy thoughts about his appeal to Caesar, and the consequences of it; he was drawing near to Rome, where he had never been, where there were few that knew him, or that he knew, and what things may befall him here he cannot tell; but he begins to grow dull about it, till he meets with these good people that came from Rome to shew him respect, and when he saw them, 1st. He thanked God. We may suppose he thanked them for their civility, told them again and again how kindly he took it; but that was not all, he thanked God. Note, If our friends be kind to us, it is God that makes them so, that puts it into their hearts, and into the power of their hands to be so, and we must give him the glory of it. He thanked God, no doubt, for the civility and generosity of the barbarous people at Melita; but much more for the pious care of the Christian people at Rome for him. When he saw so many Christians that were of Rome, he thanked God that the Gospel of Christ had had such wonderful success there in the metropolis of the empire. When we go abroad, or but look abroad into the world, and meet with those, even in strange places, that bear up Christ's name, and fear God, and serve him, we should lift up our hearts to heaven in thanksgiving: Blessed be God that there are so many excellent ones on this earth, as bad as it is. Paul had thanked God for the Christians at Rome before he had ever seen them, upon the report he had heard concerning them; *Rom.* i. 8. "I thank my God for you all." But now he sees them,—and perhaps they appear more fashionable and genteel people than most he had conversed with, or more grave, serious, and intelligent than most,—he thanked God. But that was not all: 2nd. He took courage. It put new life into him, cheered up his spirits, and banished his melancholy, and now he can enter Rome a prisoner as cheerfully as ever he had entered Jerusalem at liberty. He finds there are those there who love and value him, and whom he may both converse with and consult with as his friends, which will take off much of the tediousness of his imprisonment, and the terror of his appearing before Nero. Note, It is an encouragement to those who are travelling towards heaven to meet with their fellow-travellers, who are their companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. When we see the numerous and serious assemblies of good Christians, we should not only give thanks to God, but take courage to ourselves. And this is a good reason why respect should be shewn to good ministers, especially when they are in sufferings, and have contempt put upon them, that it encourageth them, and makes both their sufferings and their services more easy. Yet it is observable that, though the Christians at Rome were now so respectful to Paul, and he had promised himself so much from their respects, yet they failed him when he most needed them; for he saith, *2 Tim.* iv. 16, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me." They could easily take a ride of forty or fifty miles to go meet Paul, for the pleasantness of the journey; but to venture the displeasure of the emperor, and the disobliging of other great men by appearing in defence of Paul, and giving evidence for him, here they desire to be excused. When it comes to that, they will rather ride as far out of town to miss him, as now they

mentators consider that the adder or viper did actually bite the apostle; that it did not merely coil itself round his hand, but hung there by its fangs. In support of this, they adduce the fact that the natives expected the immediate death of the apostle.

xxviii. 4. "Murderer." The idea of his being a murderer is not to be accounted for by the member which was bitten (for this would fit any crime which the hand could commit), nor by supposing the bite of a serpent to have been the Maltese punishment for murder;

it is accounted for by belonging to the most notorious delinquents, and the aptness of the assumed punishment, death for death" (Alford).

xxviii. 7. "But in the neighbourhood of that place," &c. The name Publius is Roman, and by the "chief" or "first" man may be meant his official position. It seems most likely that he was the deputy or legate of the prætor of Sicily, to which province Malta belonged. He can hardly have been styled "chief man" of the island from his possessions, because his father was still living.

did to meet him; which is an intimation to us to cease from man, and to encourage ourselves in the Lord our God. The courage we take from his promises will never fail us, when we shall be ashamed of that which we took from men's compliments. "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

Fourthly. The delivering of Paul into custody at Rome, ver. 16. He is now come to his journey's end. And,

1. He is still a prisoner. He had longed to see Rome; but when he comes there he is delivered, with other prisoners, to the captain of the guard, and can see no more of Rome than he will permit him. How many great men had made their entry into Rome, crowned and in triumph, who really were the plagues of their generation; but here is a good man makes his entry into Rome chained and triumphed over, as a poor captive, who was really the greatest blessing to his generation. This thought is enough to put one for ever out of conceit with this world.

2. Yet he has some favour shewed him. He is a prisoner, but not a close prisoner, not in the common jail; "Paul was suffered to dwell by himself," in some convenient, private lodgings which his friends there provided for him, and a soldier was appointed to be his guard, who we hope was civil to him, and let him take all the liberty that could be allowed to a prisoner; for he must be very ill-humoured indeed that could be so to such a courteous, obliging man as Paul. Paul, being suffered to dwell by himself, could the better enjoy himself, and his friends, and his God, than if he had been lodged with the other prisoners. Note, This may encourage God's prisoners, that he can give them favour in the eyes of those that carry them captives, *Ps. cvi. 46*; as Joseph in the eyes of his keeper, *Gen. xxxix. 21*; and Jehoiachin in the eyes of the king of Babylon, *2 Kin. xxv. 27, 28*. When God doth not deliver his people presently out of bondage, yet if he either make it easy to them or them easy under it they have reason to be thankful.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men, and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. 18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. 19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. 20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. 21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. 22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

Paul, with a great deal of expense and hazard, is brought a prisoner to Rome, and when he is come nobody appears to prosecute him, or lay any thing to his charge; but he must call his own cause; and here he represents it to the chief of the Jews at Rome. It is not long since, by an edict of Claudius, all the Jews were banished from Rome, and kept out till his death; but in the five years since then many Jews were come thither, for the advantage of trade, though it doth not appear that they were allowed any synagogue there, or place of public worship; but those chief of the Jews were those of best figure among them, the topping men of that religion, that had the best estates and interests. "Paul called them together," being desirous to stand right in their opinion, and that there might be a good understanding between him and them. And here we are told,

First. What he said to them, and what account he gave them of his case. He speaks respectfully to them, calls them Men and brethren; and thereby intimates that he expects to be treated by them both as a man and as a brother, and engageth to treat them as such, and to tell them nothing but the truth, for, "we are members one of another;" all we are brethren. Now,

1. He professeth his own innocency, and that he had not given any just occasion to the Jews to bear him such an ill-will as generally they did. I have "committed nothing against the people of the Jews," have done nothing to the prejudice of their religion or civil liberties, have added no affliction to their present miseries,—they know I have not; nor have I committed any thing "against the customs of our fathers," either by abrogating or by innovating in religion. It is true Paul did not impose the customs of the fathers upon the Gentiles, they were never intended for them; but it is as true that he never opposed them in the Jews, but did himself, when he is as true that he never opposed them. He never quarrelled with them for practising according to the usages of their own religion, but only for their enmity to the Gentiles, *Gal. ii. 12*. Paul had the testimony of his conscience for him that he had done his duty to the Jews.

2. He modestly complains of the hard usage he had met with. That, though he had given them no offence, yet he "was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans." If he had spoken the whole truth in this matter, it would have looked worse than it did upon the Jews, for they would have murdered him without any colour of law or justice, if the Romans had not protected him; but, however, their accusing him as a criminal before Felix the governor, and demanding judgment against him, was in effect delivering him prisoner into the hands of the Romans, when he desired no more but a fair and impartial trial by their own law.

3. He declares the judgment of the Roman governors concerning him, ver. 18. They examined him, inquired into his case, heard what was to be said against him, and what he had to say for himself; the chief captain examined him, so did

Felix, and Festus, and Agrippa, and they could find no cause of death in him. Nothing appeared to the contrary but that he was an honest, quiet, conscientious, good man, and therefore they would never gratify the Jews with a sentence of death upon him; but, on the contrary, would have let him go, and have let him go on in his work too, and have given him no interruption, for they all heard him, and liked his doctrine well enough. It was for the honour of Paul, that those who most carefully examined his case acquitted him, and none condemned him but unheard, and such as were prejudiced against him.

4. He pleads the necessity he was under to remove himself and his cause to Rome; and that it was only in his own defence, and not with any design to recriminate, or exhibit a cross bill against the complainants; ver. 19, "When the Jews spake against it," and entered a caveat against his discharge,—designing, if they could not have him condemned to die, yet to have him a prisoner for life,—he "was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar," finding that the governors one after another stood so much in awe of the Jews, that they would not discharge him for fear of making them their enemies; which made it necessary for him to pray the assistance of the higher powers. This was all he aimed at in this appeal; not to accuse his nation, but only to vindicate himself. Every man has a right to plead in his own defence, who yet ought not to find fault with his neighbours. It is an invidious thing to accuse, especially to accuse a nation, such a nation. Paul made intercession for them, but never against them. The Roman government had at this time an ill opinion of the Jewish nation, as factions, turbulent, disaffected, and dangerous, and it had been an easy thing for a man with such a fluent tongue as Paul had, a citizen of Rome, and so injured as he was, to have exasperated the emperor against the Jewish nation; but Paul would not for ever so much do such a thing, he was for making the best of every body, and not making ill worse.

5. He puts his sufferings upon the true foot, and gives them such an account of the reason of them, as should engage them not only not to join with his persecutors against him, but to concern themselves for him, and to do what they could on his behalf, if they had any interest to procure him his liberty; ver. 20, "For this cause I have called for you," not to quarrel with you, for I have no design to incense the government against you, but to see you, and speak with you as my countrymen, and men that I would keep up a correspondence with, "because that for the hope of Israel, I am bound with this chain." He carried the mark of his imprisonment about with him, and probably was chained to the soldier that kept him; and it was, 1st. Because he preached that the Messiah was come, who was the hope of Israel, He whom Israel hoped for. Do not all the Jews agree to this, that the Messiah will be the glory of his people Israel, and therefore he is to be hoped for; and this Messiah I preach, and prove he is come. They would keep up such a hope of a Messiah yet to come as must end in a despair of him; I preach such a hope in a Messiah already come as must produce a joy in him. 2nd. Because he preached that the resurrection of the dead would come. That also was the hope of Israel; so he had called it, *ch. xxiii. 6*; *xxiv. 15*; *xxvi. 6, 7*. They would have you still expect a Messiah that would free you from the Roman yoke, and make you great and prosperous upon earth, and that is it that fills them; and they are angry at me for directing their expectations to the great things of another world, and persuading them to embrace a Messiah who will secure those to them, and not external power and grandeur. I am for bringing you to the spiritual and eternal blessedness which our fathers by faith had their eye upon, and that is it that they hate me for; because I would take you off from that which is the cheat of Israel, and will be its shame and ruin,—the notion of a temporal Messiah,—and lead you to that which is the true and real hope of Israel, and the genuine sense of all the promises made to the fathers,—a spiritual kingdom of holiness and love, set up in the hearts of men, to be the pledge of and preparative for the joyful resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Secondly. What was their reply. They own, 1. That they had nothing to say in particular against him; nor had any instructions to appear as his prosecutors before the emperor, either by letter or word of mouth; ver. 21, "We have neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee," have no orders to prosecute thee; "neither any of the brethren" of the Jewish nation that have lately come up to Rome (as many occasions drew the Jews thither, now their nation was a province of the empire), have "shewed or spoke any harm of thee." This was very strange, that that restless and inveterate rage of the Jews, which had followed Paul wherever he went, should not follow him to Rome, to get him condemned there. And some think they told a lie here, and had orders to prosecute him, but durst not own it, being themselves obnoxious to the emperor's displeasure; who, though he had not, like his predecessors, banished them all from Rome, yet he gave them no countenance there. But, I am apt to think, what they said was true; and Paul now found he had gained the point he aimed at in appealing to Cæsar, which was to remove his cause into a court to which they durst not follow it. This was David's policy, and it was his security; *1 Sam. xxvii. 1*, "There is nothing better for me than to escape into the land of the Philistines, and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coasts of Israel, so shall I escape out of his hand," and it proves so, ver. 4, "When Saul heard that David was fled to Gath, he sought no more again for him." Thus did Paul by his appeal; he fled to Rome, where he was out of their reach, and they said, Even let him go.

2. That they desired to know more particularly concerning the doctrine he preached, and the religion he took so much pains to propagate in the face of so much opposition; ver. 22, "We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest," ὅ φρονεῖς, what thy opinions or sentiments are, what are those things which thou art so wise about, and hast such a relish of, and such a zeal for; for, though we know little else concerning Christianity, we know it is a sect every where spoken against." Those who said this scornful, spiteful word of the Christian religion, were Jews, the chief of the Jews at Rome, who boasted of their knowledge, *Rom. ii. 17*; and yet this was all they knew concerning the Christian religion, that it was "a sect every where spoken against." They put it into an ill name, and then run it down. 1st. They looked upon it to be a sect; and that was false. True Christianity establishes that which is of common concern to all mankind, and is not built upon such narrow opinions and private interests as sects commonly owe their original to. It aims at no worldly benefit or advantage, as sects do; but all its gains are spiritual and eternal. And, besides, it has a direct tendency to the uniting the children of men, and not the dividing of them, and setting them at variance, as sects have. 2nd. They said, it was every where spoken against; and that was too true. All that they conversed with spoke against it, and therefore they concluded every body did; most indeed did. It is, and always has been, the lot of Christ's holy religion to be every where spoken against.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the

xxviii. 8. "Fever:" plural, "fevers," probably indicating the recurrence of the attacks. "Bloody flux:" literally, "dysentery." St. Luke uses the technical language of a physician.

xxviii. 11. "With the sign of the Dioscuri:" Dioscuri, or sons of Zeus—i.e., Castor and Pollux. The sign was the painted or carved representation of Castor and Pollux at the prow. They were considered the tutelary deities of sailors. The constellation of the Gemini, or Twins, was dedicated to them.

xxviii. 12. "Syracuse:" the capital of Sicily, situated on the eastern coast, and about eighty miles from Malta. It was celebrated in history, and in its day was one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

xxviii. 13. "Fetched a compass:" literally, "having gone about," probably tacking on account of the wind. Mr. Lewin's account is that the vessel was obliged to stand out to sea in order to fill the sails, and so come to Rhegium by a circuitous sweep. "Rhegium:"

law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. 25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. 29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

We have here a short account of a long conference which Paul had with the Jews at Rome about the Christian religion. Though they were so far prejudiced against it, because it was everywhere spoken against, as to call it a sect, yet they were willing to give it a hearing, which was more than the Jews at Jerusalem would do. It is probable these Jews at Rome, being men of larger acquaintance with the world, and more general conversation, were more free in their inquiries than the bigoted Jews at Jerusalem were, and would not answer this matter before they heard it.

First. We are here told how Paul managed this conference in defence of the Christian religion. The Jews appointed the time; a day was set for this dispute, that all parties concerned might have sufficient notice, ver. 23. Those Jews seemed well disposed to receive conviction, and yet it did not prove that they all were so. Now when the day came,

1. There were many got together to Paul. Though he was a prisoner, and could not come out to them, yet they were willing to come to him in his lodging. And the confinement he was now under, if duly considered, instead of prejudicing them against his doctrine, ought to confirm it to them; for it was a sign not only that he believed it, but that he thought it worth suffering for. One would visit such a man as Paul in his prison, rather than not have instruction from him. And he made room for them in his lodging, not fearing giving offence to the government, so he might do good to them.

2. He was very large and full in his discourse with them, seeking their conviction more than his own vindication. 1st. He expounded or explained the kingdom of God to them; shewed them the nature of that kingdom, and the glorious purposes and designs of it; that it is heavenly and spiritual, seated in the minds of men, and shines not in external pomp, but in purity of heart and life.

That which kept the Jews in their unbelief was a misunderstanding of the kingdom of God, as if it came with observation; let but that be expounded to them, and set in a true light, and they will be brought into obedience to it. 2nd. He not only expounded the kingdom of God, but he testified it, plainly declared to them, and confirmed it by incontestable proofs, that the kingdom of God by the Messiah's ministration was come, and was now set up in the world. He attested the extraordinary powers in the kingdom of grace by which it was set up; and the miracles in the kingdom of nature by which it was confirmed. He bore his testimony to it from his own experience of its power and influence upon him, and the manner of his being brought into subjection to it. 3rd. He not only expounded and testified the kingdom of God, but he persuaded them, urged it upon their consciences, and pressed them with all earnestness to embrace the kingdom of God, and submit to it, and not to persist in an opposition to it. He followed his doctrine, the explication and confirmation of it, with a warm and lively application to his hearers, which is the most proper, profitable method of preaching. 4th. He persuaded them concerning Jesus. The design and tendency of his whole discourse was to bring them to Christ, to convince them of his being the Messiah, and to engage them to believe in him as he is offered in the Gospel. He urged upon them *τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*, 'the things concerning Jesus,' the prophecies of him, which he read to them out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, as pointing at the Messiah, and shewed how they had all their accomplishment in this Jesus. They being Jews, he dealt with them out of the scriptures of the Old Testament, and demonstrated that these were so far from making against Christianity, that they were the great proofs of it; so that, if we compare the history of the New Testament with the prophecy of the Old, we must conclude that this Jesus is he that should come, and we are to look for no other.

3. He was very long; for he continued his discourse,—and it should seem to have been a continued discourse,—from morning till evening; perhaps it was a discourse eight or ten hours long. The subject was curious, he was full of it; it was of vast importance, he was in good earnest, and his heart was upon it; he knew not when he should have such another opportunity, and therefore, without begging pardon for tiring their patience, he kept them all day; but it is likely he spent some of the time in prayer with them and for them.

Secondly. What was the effect of this discourse. One would have thought so good a cause as that of Christianity, and managed by such a skilful hand as Paul's, could not but carry the day, and that all the hearers should have yielded to it presently; but it did not prove so. The child Jesus is set for the fall of some, and the rising again of others; a foundation stone to some, and a stone of stumbling to others.

1. They did not agree among themselves, ver. 25. Some of them thought Paul was in the right, others would not admit it. This is that division which Christ came to send; that fire which he came to kindle, *Luk. xii. 49, 51*. Paul preached with a great deal of plainness and clearness, and yet his hearers could not agree about the sense and evidence of what he preached.

2. "Some believed the things that were spoken, and some believed not," ver. 24. There was the disagreement. Such as this has always been the success of the Gospel; to some it has been "a savour of life unto life, to others

a savour of death unto death.' Some are wrought upon by the Word, and others hardened; some receive the light, and others shut their eyes against it. So it was among Christ's hearers, and the spectators of his miracles; some believed, and some blasphemed. If all had believed, there had been no disagreement; so that all the blame of the division lay upon those who would not believe.

Thirdly. The awakening word which Paul said to them at parting. He perceived by what they muttered that there were many among them, and perhaps the greater part, that were obstinate, and would not yield to the conviction of what he said; and they were getting up to be gone,—they had had enough of it. Hold, saith Paul, take one word with you before you go, and consider of it when you come home. What do you think will be the effect of your obstinate infidelity? What will ye do in the end hereof? What will it come to?

1. You will, by the righteous judgment of God, be sealed up under unbelief. You harden your own hearts, and God will harden them, as he did Pharaoh's; and this is what was prophesied of concerning you. Turn to that scripture, *Isa. vi. 9, 10*, and read it seriously, and tremble, lest the case there described should prove to be your case. As there are in the Old Testament gospel promises, which will be accomplished in all that believe, so there are gospel threatenings of spiritual judgments, which will be fulfilled in them that believe not; and this is one. It is part of the commission given to Isaiah the prophet; he is sent to make those worse that would not be made better. "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers." What was spoken by Jehovah is here said to be spoken by the Holy Ghost, which proves that the Holy Ghost is God; and what was spoken to Isaiah is here said to be spoken by him to their fathers; for he was ordered to tell the people what God said to him; and though what is there said had in it much of terror to the people, and of grief to the prophet, yet it is here said to be well spoken. Hezekiah said concerning a message of wrath, "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken," *Isa. xxxix. 8*. And, "He that believes not shall be damned," is gospel, as well as "He that believes shall be saved," *Mar. xvi. 16*. Or, this may be explained by that of our Saviour, *Mat. xv. 7*, "Well did Esaias prophesy of you." The Holy Ghost said to your fathers that which would be fulfilled in you, "Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand."

1st. That which was their great sin against God, is yours; and that is this: you will not see; you shut your eyes against the most convincing evidence possible, and will not admit the conclusion, though you cannot deny the premises; your eyes you have closed, ver. 27. That speaks an obstinate infidelity, and a willing slavery to prejudice. As your fathers would not see God's hand lifted up against them in his judgments, *Isa. xxvi. 11*, so you will not see God's hand stretched out to you in gospel grace. It was true of these unbelieving Jews, that they were prejudiced against the Gospel; they did not see, because they were resolved they would not; and none so blind as they that will not see. They would not prosecute their convictions, and for that reason would not admit them. They have purposely closed their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes the great things which belong to their everlasting peace; should see the glory of God, the amiableness of Christ, the deformity of sin, the beauty of holiness, the vanity of this world, and the reality of another. They will not be changed and governed by those truths, and therefore will not receive the evidence of them; lest they should hear with their ears that which they are loath to hear, the wrath of God revealed from heaven against them, and the will of God revealed from heaven to them, "they stop their ear, like the deaf adder, that will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." Thus their fathers did; they would not hear, *Zec. vii. 11, 12*. And that which they are afraid of in shutting up their eyes and ears, and barricading, as it were, both their learning senses against him that "made both the hearing ear and the seeing eye" is, "lest they should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." They kept their minds in the dark, or at least in a constant confusion and tumult, lest, if they should admit a considerate, sober thought, they should understand with their heart how much it is both their duty and their interest to be religious, and so by degrees the truth should be too hard for them, and they should be converted from the evil ways which they take pleasure in, to those exercises which they have now an aversion to. Observe, God's method is to bring people first to see and hear, and so to understand with their hearts; and then to convert them, and bow their wills, and so heal them, which is the regular way of dealing with a rational soul; and therefore Satan prevents the conversion of souls to God, by blinding the mind, and darkening the understanding, *2 Cor. iv. 4*. And the case is very sad when the sinner joins with him herein, and puts out his own eyes. *Ut liberius peccent, libenter ignorant*.—They plunge into ignorance, that they may sin the more freely. They are in love with their disease, and are afraid lest God should heal them. Like Babylon of old, we would have healed her, and she would not be healed, *Jer. li. 9*. This was the sin.

2nd. That which was the great judgment of God upon them for this sin is his judgment upon you, and that is, "You shall be blind." God will give you up to a judicial infatuation; "Hearing you shall hear," you shall have the word of God preached to you over and over, but "you shall not understand it, because you will not give your minds to understand it. God will not give you strength and grace to understand it. "Seeing ye shall see," you shall have abundance of miracles and signs done before your eyes, but "you shall not perceive" the convincing evidence of them. Take heed lest it be true of you what Moses said to your fathers, *Deut. xxix. 4*, "The Lord has not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day," and what Isaiah said to the men of his generation, *Isa. xxix. 10-12*, "The Lord has poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes." What with their resisting the grace of God, and rebelling against the light, and God's withdrawing and withholding his grace and light from them; what with their not receiving the love of the truth, and God's giving them up for that to strong delusions to believe a lie; what with their wilful, and what with their judicial, hardness, "the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing." They are stupid and senseless, and not wrought upon by all that can be said to them; no physic that can be given them operates upon them, or will reach them, and therefore their disease must be adjudged incurable, and their case desperate. How should they be happy that will not be healed of a disease that makes them miserable? And how should they be healed that will not be converted to the use of the methods of cure? And how should they be converted that will not be convinced either of their disease or of their remedy? And how should they be convinced that shut their eyes and stop their ears? Let all that hear the Gospel, and do not heed it, tremble at this doom; for, when once they are thus given up to hardness of heart, they are already in the suburbs of hell; for who shall heal them if God do not?

2. Your unbelief will justify God in sending the Gospel to the Gentile world, which is the thing you look upon with such a jealous eye, ver. 28. Therefore, seeing you put the grace of God away from you, and will not submit to the power of Divine truth and love; seeing you will not be converted and healed in the methods which Divine wisdom has appointed; therefore "be it known unto you, that the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles," that salvation which was of the Jews only, *Jno. iv. 22*. The offer of it is made to them, the means

the modern Reggio, on the coast of Italy, opposite Syracuse. "Puteoli;" it was in the most sheltered part of the Bay of Naples, and the principal port of Southern Italy. It was celebrated for its warm springs, and was the great mart for the Alexandrian wheat-ships.

xxviii. 15. "Appii Forum;" a town on the Appian Way, the great road which led from Rome to the neighbourhood of the Bay of Naples. It was about forty-three miles from Rome, and probably derived its name from Appius Claudius, who constructed this part of the road.

xxviii. 16. "It was probably in the early spring of the year 61 that St. Paul arrived in Rome. The glorious five years which ushered in the reign of Nero, amidst the acclamations of a grateful people, had now drawn to a close. The unnatural murder of Agrippina had at length revealed the true character of Nero. Burrus and Seneca, it is true, still lingered at the head of affairs; but their power was waning. Neither the blunt honesty of the soldier nor the calm moderation of the philosopher could hold their ground any longer against the influ-

of it afforded to them, and they stand fairer for it than you do. It is sent to them, and they will hear it, and receive it, and be happy in it. Now Paul designs hereby.

1st. To abate their displeasure at the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, by shewing them the absurdity of it. They were angry that the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles, and thought it was too great a favour done to them. But if they thought that salvation of so small a value as not to be worthy their acceptance, surely they could not grudge it the Gentiles, as too good for them, or envy them for it. The salvation of God is sent into the world; the Jews had the first offer of it; it was fairly proposed to them, it was earnestly pressed upon them, but they refused it; they would not accept the invitation which was given to them first to the wedding-feast, and therefore must thank themselves if other guests be invited. If they will not strike the bargain, nor come up to the terms, they ought not to be angry at those that will. They cannot complain that the Gentiles took it over their heads, or out of their hands, for they had quite laid their hands off it,—nay, they had lifted up the heel against it,—and therefore it is their fault; for it is “through their fall that salvation is come to the Gentiles,” *Rom. xi. 11*.

2nd. To improve their displeasure at the favour done to the Gentiles to their advantage, and to bring good out of that evil; for when he had spoken of this very thing in his epistle to the Romans, the benefit which the Gentiles had by the unbelief and rejection of the Jews, he saith he took notice of it on purpose that he might provoke his dear countrymen the Jews to a holy emulation, and might save some of them, *Rom. xi. 14*. The Jews have rejected the Gospel of Christ, and kicked it off to the Gentiles; but it is not yet too late to repent of their refusal, and to accept of the salvation which they did make light of. They may say, No, and take it; as the elder brother in the parable, that, when he was bidden to go work in the vineyard, first said, I will not, and yet afterwards repented and went, *Mat. xxi. 29*. Is the Gospel sent to the Gentiles? Let us go after it, rather than come short of it. And will they hear it who were thought to be out of hearing, and had been so long like the idols they worshipped, that have ears and hear not? and shall not we hear it, whose privilege it is to have God so nigh to us in all that we call upon him for? Thus he would have them to argue, and to be shamed into the belief of the Gospel by the welcome it met with among the Gentiles. And if it did that that effect upon them, it would aggravate their condemnation, as it did that of the scribes and Pharisees, that, when they saw the publicans and harlots submit to John's baptism, they did not afterwards thereupon repent of their folly, that they might believe him, *Mat. xxi. 32*.

Fourthly. The breaking up of the assembly, as it should seem, in some disorder.

1. They turned their backs upon Paul. Those of them that believed not were extremely nettled at that last word which he said, that they should be judicially blinded, and that the light of the Gospel should shine among them that sat in darkness. “When Paul had said these words,” he had said enough for them, and “they departed,” perhaps not so much enraged as some others of their nation had been upon the like occasion, but stupid and unconcerned, no more affected either with those terrible words in the close of his discourse, or all the comfortable words he had spoken before, than the seats they sat on. They departed, many of them with a resolution never to hear Paul preach again, nor trouble themselves with further inquiries about this matter.

2. They set their faces one against another; for they had great disputes among themselves. There was not only a quarrel between them which believed and them which believed not, but even among them which believed not there were debates. They that agreed to depart from Paul yet agreed not in the reasons why they departed, but “had great reasoning among themselves.” Many have great reasoning, that yet do not reason right; can find fault with one another's opinions, and yet not yield to truth. Nor will men's reasoning among themselves convince them, without the grace of God to open their understandings.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

We are here taking our leave of the history of blessed Paul; and therefore, since God saw it not fit we should know any more of him, we would carefully take notice of every particular of the circumstances in which we must here leave him.

First. It cannot but be a trouble to us that we must leave him in bonds for Christ; nay, and that we have no prospect given us of his being set at liberty. Two whole years of that good man's life are here spent in confinement, and, for aught appears, he was never inquired after of all that time by those whose prisoner he was. He appealed to Cæsar, in hope of a speedy discharge from his imprisonment, the governors having signified to his imperial majesty concerning the prisoner, that he had done nothing worthy of death or of bonds, and yet he is continued a prisoner. So little reason have we to trust in men, especially despised prisoners in great men. Witness Joseph's case, whom the chief butler remembered not, but forgot, *Gen. xl. 23*. Yet some think that, though it be not mentioned here, yet it was in the first of these two years, and early too in that year, that he was first brought before Nero, and then his bonds in Christ were manifest in Cæsar's court, as he saith, *Phil. i. 13*; and at that first answer it was that no man stood by him, *2 Tim. iv. 16*. But it seems, instead of being set at liberty upon his appeal, as he expected, he hardly escaped out of the emperor's hands with his life. He calls it a deliverance out of the mouth of the lion, *2 Tim. iv. 17*. And his speaking there of his first answer, intimates that since that he had a second, in which he had come off better, and yet was not discharged. During these two years' imprisonment he wrote his epistle to the Galatians; then his second epistle to Timothy; then those to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon, in which he mentions several things particularly concerning his imprisonment; and lastly, his epistle to the Hebrews, just after he was set at liberty, as Timothy also was, who, coming to visit him, was on some account or other made his fellow-prisoner. With him, writes Paul to the Hebrews, *xiii. 23*, “if he come shortly, I will see you.” But how or by what means he obtained his liberty, we are not told; only that two years he was a prisoner. Tradition saith, that after his discharge he went from Italy to Spain, thence to Crete, and so with Timothy into Judæa, and from thence went to visit the churches in Asia, and at length came a second time to Rome, and there was beheaded in the last year of Nero. But Baronius himself owns that there is no certainty of any thing concerning him, betwixt his release from this imprisonment and his martyrdom; but it is said by some, that Nero having, when he began to play the tyrant, set himself against the Christians, and persecuted them, (and he was the first of the emperors that made a law against them, as Tertullian saith,

Apol. c. 5) the church of Rome was much weakened by that persecution; and that brought Paul the second time to Rome to re-establish the church there, and to comfort the souls of the disciples that were left; and so he fell a second time into Nero's hand. And Chrysostom relates that a young woman that was one of Nero's misses (to speak modestly) being converted by Paul's preaching to the Christian faith, and so brought off from that lewd course of life she had lived, Nero was incensed against Paul for that, and ordered him first to be imprisoned, and then put to death. But, to keep to this short account here given of it,

1. It would grieve one to think that such a useful man as Paul was should be so long in restraint. Two years he was a prisoner under Felix, *ch. xxiv. 27*, and, besides all the time that passed between that and his coming to Rome, he is here two years more a prisoner under Nero. How many churches might Paul have planted, how many cities and nations might he have brought over to Christ in these five years' time, (for so much it was at least,) if he had been at liberty. But God is wise, and will shew that he is no debtor to the most useful instruments he employs, but can and will carry on his own interest both without their services, and by their sufferings. Even Paul's bonds fell out to the furtherance of the Gospel, *Phil. i. 12, 14*.

2. Yet even Paul's imprisonment was in some respect a kindness to him; for these “two years he dwelt in his own hired house,” and that was more, for aught I know, than ever he had done before. He had always used to be a sojourner in the houses of others, now he has got a house of his own; his own, while he pays the rent for it; and such a retirement as this would be a refreshment to one who had been all his days an itinerant. He had used to be always upon the remove, seldom stayed long at a place; but now he lived for two years in the same house; so that the bringing of him into this prison was like Christ's call to his disciples, to “come into a desert place, and rest a while,” *Mar. vi. 31*. When he was at liberty, he was in continual fear by reason of the lying in wait of the Jews, *ch. xx. 19*; but now his prison was his castle. Thus “out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness.”

Secondly. Yet it is a pleasure to us, for we are sure it was to him, that, though we leave him in bonds for Christ, yet we leave him at work for Christ. And this made his bonds easy, that he was not by them bound out from serving God, and doing good. His prison becomes a temple, a church, and then it is to him a palace. His hands are tied, but, thanks be to God, his mouth is not stopped. A faithful, zealous minister can better bear any hardship than being silenced. Here is Paul a prisoner, and yet a preacher; he is bound, but the word of the Lord is not bound. When he wrote his epistle to the Romans, he said he longed to see them, that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift, *Rom. i. 11*. He was glad to see some of them, *ver. 15*, but it would not be half his joy unless he could impart to them some spiritual gift, which here he has an opportunity to do, and then he will not complain of his confinement. Observe,

1. Whom he preached to. To all that had a mind to hear him, whether Jews or Gentiles. Whether he had liberty to go to other houses to preach, doth not appear,—it is likely not; but whoever would had liberty to come to his house to hear, and they were welcome; “he received all that came to him.” Note, Ministers' doors should be open to such as desire to receive instruction from them, and they should be glad of an opportunity to advise those that are in care about their souls. Paul could not preach in a synagogue, or any public place of meeting that was sumptuous and capacious, but he preached in a poor cottage of his own. Note, When we cannot do what we would in the service of God, we must do what we can. Those ministers that have but little hired houses should rather preach in them, if they may be allowed to do that, than be silent. He received all that came to him, and was not afraid of the greatest, nor ashamed of the meanest. He was ready to preach on the first day of the week to Christians, on the seventh day to Jews, and to who would on any day of the week. And he might hope the better to speed because they came in unto him, which supposed a desire to be instructed, and a willingness to learn; and where these are it is probable some good may be done.

2. What he preached. He doth not fill their heads with curious speculations, or with matters of state and politics; but he keeps to his text, minds his business as an apostle. 1st. He is God's ambassador, and therefore preacheth the kingdom of God; doth all he can to preach it up; negotiates the affairs of it in order to the advancing of all its true interests. He meddles not with the affairs of the kingdoms of men. Let those treat of them whose work it is; he preacheth the kingdom of God among men, and the Word of that kingdom. The same that he defended in his public disputes, testifying the kingdom of God, *ver. 23*, he enforced in his public preaching, as that which, if received aright, will make us all wise and good, wiser and better, which is the end of preaching. 2nd. He is an agent for Christ, a friend of the bridegroom, and therefore teacheth those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ; the whole history of Christ, his incarnation, doctrine, life, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension; all that relates to the mystery of godliness. Paul stuck still to his principle, to know and preach nothing but Christ, and him crucified. Ministers, when in their preaching they are tempted to divert from that which is their main business, should reduce themselves with this question, What doth this concern the Lord Jesus Christ? What tendency has it to bring us to him, and to keep us walking in him? for “we preach not ourselves, but Christ.”

3. With what liberty he preacheth. 1st. Divine grace gave him a liberty of spirit. He preached “with all confidence,” as one that was himself well assured of the truth of what he preached, and that it was what he durst stand by; and of the worth of it, that it was what he durst suffer for. He was “not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.” 2nd. Divine providence gave him a liberty of speech; “no man forbidding him,” giving him any check for what he did, or laying any restraint upon him. The Jews, that used to forbid him to speak to the Gentiles, had no authority here; and the Roman government as yet took no cognizance of the profession of Christianity as a crime. Herein we must acknowledge the hand of God, *First*. Setting bounds to the rage of persecutors. Where he doth not turn the heart, yet he can tie the hand, and bridle the tongue. Nero was a bloody man, and there were many, both Jews and Gentiles, that hated Christianity; and yet so it was, unaccountably, that Paul, though a prisoner, was connived at in preaching the Gospel, and it was not construed a breach of the peace. Thus God makes the wrath of men to praise him, and restrains the remainder of it, *Psa. lxxvi. 10*. Though there were so many that had it in their power to forbid Paul's preaching, even the common soldier that kept him might have done it; yet God so ordered it, that no man did forbid him. *Secondly*. See God here providing comfort for the relief of the persecuted. Though it was a very low and narrow sphere of opportunity that Paul was here placed in, compared with what he had been in, yet, such as it was, he was not molested or disturbed in it. Though it was not a wide door that was opened to him, yet it was kept open and no man was suffered to shut it; and it was to many an effectual door, so that there were saints even in Cæsar's household, *Phil. iv. 22*. When the city of our solemnities is thus made a quiet habitation at any time, and we are fed from day to day with the bread of life, no man forbidding us, we must give thanks to God for it, and prepare for changes, still longing for that holy mountain in which there shall never be any pricking brier or grieving thorn.

ence of more subtle and less scrupulous counsellors” (Lightfoot). “The captain of the guard,” the commander of the prætorian guard. There seems little reason to doubt that Burrus is meant. He held the office from 51 to 62.

xxviii. 19. “My appeal was a defensive and necessary step; not an offensive one, to complain of my nation” (Alford).

xxviii. 21. Previous to St. Paul's appeal to Cæsar, there was no call for the Jews in Palestine to communicate with those in Rome.

Since his appeal there had been no time, as Paul had sailed for Italy soon after.

xxviii. 22. This reply of the Jews has caused some difficulty, because there was a flourishing Christian church at Rome at this time, St. Paul having already written his Epistle to the Romans. It is quite possible that in a large and mixed population, like that at Rome, the Jews may not have come into any close contact with the Christians.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

CHAP. I.—7. In his own power. That is, he has fixed them by his own authority; he will bring them about in his own time and way; and therefore it is not proper for men anxiously to inquire into them. All prophecy is remarkably obscure in regard to the time of its fulfilment. The reasons are, 1. To excite men to watch for the events that are to come, as the time is uncertain, and they will come "like a thief in the night." 2. As they are to be brought about by human agency, they are so arranged as to call forth that agency. If men knew just when an event was to come to pass, they might be remiss, and feel that their effort was not needed. 3. The knowledge of future scenes—of the exact time, might alarm men, and absorb their thoughts entirely, and prevent attendance to the present duties of life. Duty is ours now; God will provide for future scenes. 4. Promises sufficiently clear and full are therefore given us to encourage us; but not full enough to excite a vain and idle curiosity. All this is eminently true of our own death, one of the most important future scenes through which we are to pass. It is certainly before us; it is near; it cannot be long avoided; it may come at any moment. God has fixed the time, but will not inform us when it shall be. He does not gratify a vain curiosity, or terrify us, by announcing to us the day or the hour when we are to die, as we do a man that is to be executed. This would be to make our lives like that of a criminal sentenced to die, and we should through all our life, through fear of death, be subject to bondage, *Heb. ii. 15*. He has made enough known to excite us to prepare, and to be always ready, having our loins girt about, and our lamps trimmed and burning, *Lu. xii. 35*. 9. *While they beheld.* While they saw him. Had Jesus vanished secretly, or in the night, the apostles would have been amazed and confounded; perhaps they would even have doubted whether they had not been deceived. But when they saw him leave them in this manner, they could not doubt that he had risen; and when they saw him ascend to heaven, they could not doubt that his work was approved, and that God would carry it onward. This event was exceedingly important. 1. It was a confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion. 2. It enabled the apostles to state distinctly where the Lord Jesus was, and at once directed their affections and their thoughts away from the earth, and opened their eyes on the glory of the scheme of religion they were to establish. If their Saviour was in heaven, it settled the question about the nature of his kingdom. It was clear that it was not designed to be a temporal kingdom. The reasons why it was proper that the Lord Jesus should ascend to heaven, rather than remain on earth, were, 1. That he had finished the work which God gave him to do on the earth, *Jno. xvii. 4*; *xix. 30*, and it was proper that he should be received back to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, *Jno. xvii. 4, 5*; *Phil. ii. 6, 9, 10*. 2. It was proper that he should ascend, that the Holy Spirit might come down and perform his part of the work of redemption. Jesus, by his personal ministry, as a man, could be but in one place; the Holy Spirit could be in all places, and be present at all times, and could apply the work to all men, *Jno. xvi. 7, &c.* 3. A part of the work of Christ was yet to be performed in heaven. That was the work of intercession. The high priest of the Jews not only made an atonement, but also presented the blood of sacrifice before the mercy-seat, as the priest of the people, *Lev. xvi. 11–14*. This was done to typify the entrance of the great high priest of our profession into the heavens, *Heb. ix. 7, 8, 11, 12*. The work which he performs there is the work of intercession, *Heb. vii. 25*. This is properly the work which an advocate performs in a court of justice for his client. It means that Christ, our great high priest, still pleads and manages our cause in heaven; secures our interests; obtains for us grace and mercy. It consists in his appearing in the presence of God for us, *Heb. ix. 24*; in his presenting the merits of his blood, *Heb. ix. 12, 14*; and in securing the continuance of the mercy which has been bestowed on us, and which is still needful for our welfare. The Lord Jesus also ascended that he might assume and exercise the office of king in the immediate seat of power. All worlds were subject to him for the welfare of the church; and it was needful that he should be solemnly invested with that power in the presence of God, as the reward of his earthly toil; *1 Cor. xv. 25*, "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet," *Eph. i. 20–22*; *Phil. ii. 6–11*. *A cloud received him.* He entered into the region of the clouds, and was hid from their view. But two others of our race have been taken bodily from earth to heaven. Enoch was translated, *Gen. v. 24*; compare *Heb. xi. 5*; and Elijah was taken by a whirlwind to heaven, *2 Kin. ii. 11*. It is remarkable that, when the return of the Saviour is mentioned, it is uniformly said that he will return in the clouds, *ver. 11*; *Mat. xxiv. 30*; *xv. 64*; *Mar. xii. 26*; *Rev. i. 7*; *Dan. vii. 13*. The clouds are an emblem of sublimity and grandeur, and perhaps this is all that is intended by these expressions, *Deu. iv. 11*; *2 Sam. xxii. 12*; *Ps. xcvi. 2*; *civ. 3*. 20. *And his bishopric let another take.* This is quoted from *Ps. cix. 8*, "Let his days be few, and let another take his office." The word rendered "office" in the psalm, means the care, charge, business, oversight of any thing. It is a word applicable to magistrates, whose care it is to see the laws executed; to military men who have charge of an army, or a part of an army. In *Job x. 12*, it is rendered "thy visitation"—thy care. In *Num. iv. 16*, "and to the office of Eleazar," &c.; *2 Kin. xi. 18*. In the case of David, it refers to those who were intrusted with military or other offices, and who had treacherously perverted them to persecute and oppose him; and thus shewn themselves unworthy of the office. The Greek word which is used here, *ἐπισκοπή*, is taken from the Septuagint, and means the same thing as the Hebrew. It is well rendered in the margin "office, or charge." It means charge of any kind, or office, without in itself specifying of what kind. 26. *He was numbered.* By the casting of the lot, *συγκληρονομήσθαι*. This word is from *κλῆρος*—a calculus, or pebble, by which votes were given, or lots were cast. It means that by the result of the lot he was reckoned as an apostle. Nothing farther is related of Matthias in the New Testament. Where he laboured, and when and where he died, is unknown, nor is there any tradition on which reliance is to be placed. The election of Matthias throws some light on the organization of the church. 1. He was chosen to fill the place vacated by Judas, and for a specific purpose, to be a witness of the resurrection of Christ. There is no mention of any other design. It was not to ordain men exclusively, or to rule over the churches, but to be a witness to an important fact. 2. There is no intimation here that it was designed that there should be successors to the apostles in the peculiar duties of the apostolic office. The election was for a definite object, and was therefore temporary. It was to fill up the number originally appointed by Christ. When the purpose for which he was appointed was accomplished, the peculiar part of the apostolic work ceased of course. 3. There could be no succession in our times to the peculiar apostolic office. They were to be witnesses of the work of Christ. For this they were sent forth; and when the desired effect resulting from such a witnessing was accomplished the office itself would cease. Hence there is no record that after this the church even pretended to appoint successors to the apostles to discharge their peculiar work; and hence no minis-

ters of the Gospel can now pretend to be their successors in the peculiar and original design of the appointment of the apostles. 4. The only other apostle mentioned in the New Testament is the apostle Paul, not appointed as the successor of the others, not with any peculiar design except to be an apostle to the Gentiles, as the others were to the Jews, and appointed for the same end, to testify that Jesus Christ was alive, and that he had seen him after he rose, *ch. xxii. 8, 9, 14, 15*; *ix. 15*; *xv. 17, 18*; *1 Cor. ix. 1*; *xv. 8*. The ministers of religion, therefore, are successors of the apostles, not in their peculiar office as witnesses, but as preachers of the Word, and as appointed to establish, to organize, and to edify and rule the churches. The peculiar work of the apostleship ceased with their death. The ordinary work of the ministry, which they held in common with all others who preach the Gospel, will continue to the end of time.

CHAP. II.—3. Tongues, γλῶσσαι. The word tongue occurs often in the Scriptures to denote the member which is the instrument of taste and speech, and also to denote language or speech itself. It is also used, as with us, to denote that which in shape resembles the tongue. Thus, *Jos. vii. 21, 24*, (in *Heb.*) "a tongue of gold," that is, a wedge of gold, *Jos. xv. 5*; *xviii. 19*; *Isa. xi. 15*. "The tongue of the sea," that is, a bay or gulf. Thus, also, we say a tongue of land. The phrase "tongue of fire" occurs once, and once only, in the Old Testament, *Isa. v. 24*, "Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble (Heb. tongue of fire), and the flame consumeth," &c. In this place the name tongue is given from the resemblance of a pointed fire to the human tongue. Any thing long, narrow, and tending to a point, is thus in the Hebrew called a tongue. The word here means, therefore, slender and pointed appearances of flame; perhaps at first moving irregularly around the room. *Cloven.* Divided, separated, *δαμερίζεσθαι*, from the verb, to divide, or distribute into parts; *Mat. xxvii. 35*, "They parted his garments;" *Lu. xxii. 17*, "Take this (the cup) and divide it among yourselves." Probably the common opinion is, that these tongues or flames were, each one of them, split, or forked, or cloven. But this is not the sense of the expression. It means, that they were separated or divided one from another; not one great flame, but broken up, or cloven into many parts; and probably moving without order in the room. In the Syriac it is, "and there appeared unto them tongues which divided themselves, like fire, and sat upon each of them." The old Ethiopic version reads it, "and fire, as it were, appeared to them, and sat on them." *And sat upon each of them.* Or rested, in the form of a lambent or gentle flame, upon the head of each one. This evinced that the prodigy was directed to them, and was a very significant emblem of the promised descent of the Holy Spirit. 4. *Began to speak with other tongues.* There was certainly a most stupendous miracle which led to the dispersion of mankind over all the countries of the world, and whereby, as they receded from the family which God signalled by his special revelations, they were all the more apt to fall away from the true religion. But there was another miracle equally stupendous, and a miracle of tongues too, by which the people of all various languages were recalled to the faith from which they had departed. By the one miracle, each tribe, understanding only their own speech, were secluded from the rest of mankind, because, saving the words understood by themselves, they understood no languages. By the other miracle the apostles and the first leaders of Christianity were made to understand all languages. By the first, God raised up barriers for the segregation of the species into distinct communities. By the second, He threw down these barriers, that the bearers of the heavenly message might range freely over the world, and gather out of all nations the family of the faithful.—*Horæ Biblicæ*, posthumous work of Dr. Chalmers. 13. *These men are full of new wine.* These men are drunk. In such times men will have some way of accounting for the effects of the Gospel; and the way is commonly about as wise and rational as this. "To escape the absurdity of acknowledging their own ignorance, they adopted the theory that strong drink can teach languages."—*Dr. McLelland*.

CHAP. III.—19. When the times, &c. The word *ὅταν*, rendered, "when," is commonly rendered, "that," and denotes the final cause, or the reason why a thing is done, *Mat. ii. 23*; *v. 16, 45, &c.* The idea, which I suppose Peter intended to convey was this: "Repent, and be converted. You have been great sinners, and are in danger. Turn from your ways, that your sins may be forgiven." But then, what encouragement would there be for this? or why should it be done? Answer, "You are living under the times of the Gospel, the reign of the Messiah, the times of refreshing. This happy, glorious period has been long anticipated, and is to continue to the close of the world. The period including the restitution of all things, and the return of Christ to judgment, has come; and is, therefore, the period when you may find mercy, and when you should seek it, to be prepared for his return." In this sense the passage refers to the fact that this time, this dispensation, this economy, including all this, had come, and they were living under it, and might and should seek for mercy. It expresses, therefore, the common belief of the Jews that such a time should come, and the comment of Peter about its nature and continuance. The belief of the Jews was that such times should come. Peter affirms that the belief of such a period was well founded—a time when mercy may be obtained. That time has come. The doctrine that it should come was well-founded, and has been fulfilled. This was a reason why they should repent, and hope in the mercy of God. *Shall come.* This does not mean that this period was still future, for it had come; but that the expectation of the Jews that such a Messiah should come was well-founded. A remarkably similar construction we have concerning Elijah; *Mat. xvii. 11*, "And Jesus answered and said, Elias truly shall first come, and restore," &c.; that is, the doctrine that Elijah should come was true; though he immediately adds that it had already taken place, *ver. 12*.

CHAP. IV.—13. Had been with Jesus. Had been his followers, and had attended personally on his ministry. They gave evidence that they had seen him, been with him, heard him, and were convinced that he was the Messiah. We may learn here, 1. That if men wish to be successful in preaching, it must be based on deep and thorough conviction of the truth of that which they deliver. 2. They who preach should give evidence that they are acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ; that they have imbibed his spirit, pondered his instructions, studied the evidences of his Divine mission, and are thoroughly convinced that he was from God. 3. Boldness and success in the ministry, as well as in everything else, will depend far more on honest, genuine, thorough conviction of the truth, than on all the endowments of talent and learning, and all the arts and skill of eloquence. No man should attempt to preach without such a thorough conviction of truth; and no man who has it will preach in vain. 4. God often employs the ignorant and unlearned to confound the wise. *1 Cor. i. 27, 28*; but it is not by their ignorance. It was not the ignorance

xxviii. 30, 31. We must not suppose from this that St. Paul was not a prisoner. He was still chained day and night to one of the pretorian guard. During this imprisonment he wrote the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. At the end of the two years he appears to have been acquitted and released.

Additional Notes.—Chap. xvii. 5. "The privilege of a free city consisted in this—that it was entirely self-governed in all its internal

affairs within the territory that might be assigned to it. The governor of the province had no right, under ordinary circumstances, to interfere with these affairs. The local magistrates had the power of life and death over the citizens of the place. No stationary garrison of Roman soldiers was quartered within its territory; no insignia of Roman office were displayed in its streets. . . . The form of government was very various. In some cases the old magistracies and customs were continued without any material modification; in others a

of Peter and John that convinced the Sanhedrim. It was done in spite of their ignorance. It was their boldness, and their honest conviction of truth. Besides, though not learned in the schools of the Jews, they had been under a far more important training, under the personal direction of Christ himself for three years; and now they were directly endowed by the Holy Ghost with the power of speaking with tongues. Though not unlearned and ignorant, there was an important sense in which they were not unlearned and ignorant men. Their example should not, therefore, be pleaded in favour of an unlearned ministry. Christ himself expressed his opposition to an unlearned ministry by teaching them himself, and then by bestowing on them miraculous endowments which no learning at present can furnish. It may be remarked, further, that in the single selection which he made of an apostle after his ascension to heaven, when he came to choose one who had not been under his personal teaching, he chose a learned man, the apostle Paul, and thus evinced his purpose that there should be training or education in those who are invested with the sacred office. 5. Yet in the case before us there is a striking proof of the truth and power of religion. These men had not acquired their boldness in the schools; they were not trained for argument among the Jews; they did not meet them by cunning sophistry; but they came with the honest conviction that what they were saying was true. Were they deceived? Were they not competent to bear witness? Had they any motive to attempt to palm a falsehood on men? Infidelity must answer many such questions as these before the apostles can be convicted of imposture. 19. *In the sight of God.* That is, whether God will judge this to be right. The grand question was, how God would regard it. If he disapproved it, it was wrong. It was not merely a question pertaining to their reputation, safety, or life; but it was a question of conscience before God; and we have here a striking instance of the principle on which Christians act. It is, to lay their safety, reputation, and life out of view, and to bring every thing to this test, whether it will please God. If it will, it is right; if it will not, it is wrong. *Judge ye.* This was an appeal to them directly as judges, and as men; and it may be presumed that it was an appeal which they could not resist. The Sanhedrim acknowledged itself to have been appointed by God; and to have no authority which was not derived from his appointment. Of course, God could modify, supersede, or repeal their authority; and the abstract principle, that it was better to obey God than man, they could not call in question. The only inquiry was, whether they had evidence that God had issued any command in the case. Of that the apostles were satisfied; and that the rulers could not deny. It may be remarked, that this is one of the first and most bold appeals on record in favour of the right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience. That liberty was supposed in all the Jewish religion. It was admitted that the authority of God in all matters was superior to that of man; and the same spirit manifested itself thus early in the Christian church against all dominion over the conscience, and in favour of the right to follow the dictates of the conscience and the will of God. As a mere historical fact, therefore, it is interesting to contemplate this, and still more interesting in its important bearings on human liberty and human happiness. The doctrine is still more explicitly stated in *ch. v. 29*, "We ought to obey God rather than man." 20. *For, &c.* This is given as a reason why they should obey God rather than man. They had so clear evidence that God had sent the Messiah, and they had received so direct and solemn a command (*Mar. xvi. 15*) to preach the Gospel, that they could not be restrained. There was a necessity laid on them to preach the Gospel: see *1 Cor. ix. 16*; compare *Jer. xx. 9*; *ch. xviii. 5*; *Job xxxii. 18, 19*; *Ps. xxxix. 1-3*. It has already been remarked, that these two verses contain an important principle in favour of religious liberty—the liberty of conscience, and of private judgment. If it be asked here what the principle is, we answer, 1. That men have a right to their private judgment in matters of religion, subject only to God. The only restraint which, it is now settled, can be imposed on this, is, that no man has a right, under pretence of conscience, to injure or molest his fellow-men, or to disturb the peace and harmony of society. 2. No magistrate, church, council, or parent, has a right to impose a creed on others, and to demand subscription to it by mere authority. 3. No magistrate, church, or parent, has a right to control the free exercise of private judgment in this case. The power of a parent is to teach, advise, and entreat. The duty of a child is to listen with respect, to examine with candour, to pray over the subject, and to be deliberate and calm, not rash, hasty, impetuous, and self-willed. But when the child is thus convinced that his duty to God requires a particular course, then here is a higher obligation than any earthly law, and he must obey God rather than man, even a father or a mother, *Mat. x. 37, 38*. 4. Every man is responsible to God for his opinions and his conduct. Man may not control him, but God may and will. The great question before every man is, What is right in the sight of God? It is not what is expedient, or safe, or pleasurable, or honourable among men; but what is right in the sight of God. Neither in their opinions nor their conduct are men free from responsibility.—From this whole subject we see the duty of spreading the Bible. If we love liberty, if we hate tyranny and superstition, if we wish to extend the knowledge of the rights of man, and break every arm of oppression, let us spread far and wide the Book of God, and place in every palace and every cottage on the globe a copy of the sacred Scriptures. 28. *For to do, &c.* The facts which are brought to view in these verses are among the most remarkable on record. They are briefly these: 1. That the Jewish rulers were opposed to the Messiah, and slew him. 2. That the very people to whom he came, and for whose benefit he laboured, joined in the opposition, so that it became the act of a united people. 3. That the Romans who were there, as a sort of representation of all pagan nations, were easily prevailed on to join in the persecution, and to become the executioners. 4. That thus opposite factions, and dissimilar and prejudiced people, became united in opposing the Messiah. 5. That the rulers of the Roman people, the emperors, and statesmen, and philosophers, and the rulers of other nations, united to oppose the Gospel, and brought all the power of persecution to stay its progress. 6. That the people of the empire, the mass of men, were easily prevailed upon to join in the persecution, and endeavour to arrest its progress. 7. That the Gospel has encountered similar difficulties and opposition wherever it has been faithfully presented to the attention of men. 8. That the fact that Christianity has been thus opposed, and has triumphed, is no small proof of its Divine origin. It has been fairly tried, and still survives and flourishes. It was well to put it to the test, and to bring to bear on it everything which had a tendency to crush it, and thus to furnish the highest proof that it is from God. 9. This religion cannot be destroyed; it will triumph; opposition to it is vain; it will make its way throughout the world; and the path of safety is not to oppose that which God is intending to establish in the earth. Sinners who stand opposed to the Gospel should tremble and be afraid; for sooner or later they must fall before its triumphant advances. It is not safe to oppose that which has already been opposed by kings and rulers in every form, and yet has triumphed. It is not wise to risk one's eternal welfare on the question of successful opposition to that which God has, in so many ages and ways, pledged himself to protect; and when God has solemnly declared that the Son, the Messiah, whom he would set on his holy hill of Zion, should "break" his enemies "with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel," *Ps. ii. 9*.

CHAP. V.—38. *It will come to nought.* The sentiment of Gamaliel is full of wisdom in regard to error. For, 1. The very way to exalt error into notice, and to confirm men in it, is to oppose it in a harsh, authoritative, and unkind manner. 2. Error, if left alone, will often die away itself. The interest of men in it will often cease as soon as it ceases to be opposed; and having nothing to fan the flame, it will expire. It is not so with truth. 3. In this respect the remark may be applied to the Christian religion. It has stood too long and in too many circumstances of prosperity and adversity, to be of men. It has been subjected to all trials from its pretended friends and real foes; and it still lives as vigorous and flourishing as ever. If the opinion of Gamaliel was just, it is from God; and the Jews particularly should regard as important an argument derived from the opinion of one of the wisest of their ancient rabbins.

CHAP. VI.—3. *Over this business.* That is, over the distribution of the alms of the church—not to preach, or to govern the church, but solely to take care of the sacred funds of charity, and distribute them to supply the wants of the poor. The office is distinguished from that of preaching the Gospel; to that the apostles were to attend. The deacons were expressly set apart to a different work, and to that work they should be confined. 5. *Of Antioch.* This city, often mentioned in the New Testament, (*ch. xi. 19, 20, 26*; *xv. 22, 35*; *Gal. ii. 11, &c.*) was situated in Syria on the river Orontes, and was formerly called Bithlath. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but is frequently mentioned in the Apocrypha. It was built by Seleucus Nicanor, a.c. 301, and was named Antioch, in honour of his father Antiochus. It became the seat of empire of the Syrian kings of the Macedonian race, and afterwards of the Roman governors of the eastern provinces. In this place the disciples of Christ were first called Christians, *ch. xi. 26*. In 1268, it was taken possession of by the Sultan of Egypt, who demolished it, and placed it under the dominion of the Turk. It is now called Antakia, and till the year 1822 it occupied a remote corner of the ancient enclosure of its walls, its splendid buildings being reduced to hovels, and its population living in Turkish debasement. It contains now about ten thousand inhabitants.—*Robinson's Calmet.* This city should be distinguished from Antioch in Pisidia, also mentioned in the New Testament, *ch. xiii. 14*.

CHAP. VII.—59. *Calling upon God.* The word God is not in the original, and should not have been in the translation. It is in none of the ancient MSS. or versions. It should have been rendered, They stoned Stephen, invoking, or calling upon, and saying, Lord Jesus, &c.; that is, he was engaged in prayer to the Lord Jesus. The word is used to express prayer in the following among other places: *2 Cor. i. 23*, "I call God to witness;" *1 Pet. i. 17*, "and if ye call on the Father," &c.; *ch. ii. 21*, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord," &c.; *ch. ix. 14*; *xiii. 16*; *Rom. x. 12-14*. This was, therefore, an act of worship; a solemn invocation of the Lord Jesus, in the most interesting circumstances in which a man can be placed—in his dying moments; and this shews that it is right to worship the Lord Jesus, and to pray to him, for if Stephen was inspired, it settles the question. The example of an inspired man, in such circumstances, is a safe and correct example. If it should be said that the inspiration of Stephen cannot be made out, yet the inspiration of Luke, who has recorded it, will not be called in question. Then the following circumstances shew that he, an inspired man, regarded it as right, and as a proper example to be followed. 1. He has recorded it without the slightest expression of an opinion that it was improper. On the contrary, there is every evidence that he regarded the conduct of Stephen in this case as right and praiseworthy. There is, therefore, this attestation to its propriety. 2. The Spirit that inspired Luke knew what use would be made of this case. He knew that it would be used as an example, and as an evidence that it was right to worship the Lord Jesus. It is one of the cases which has been used to perpetuate the worship of the Lord Jesus in every age. If it was wrong, it is inconceivable that it should be recorded without some expression of disapprobation. 3. The case is strikingly similar to that recorded in *Jno. xx. 28*, where Thomas offered worship to the Lord Jesus, as his God, without reproof. If Thomas did it in the presence of the Saviour without reproof, it was right. If Stephen did it without any expression of disapprobation from the inspired historian, it was right. 4. These examples were used to encourage Christians and Christian martyrs to offer homage to Jesus Christ. Thus Pliny, writing to the emperor Trajan, and giving an account of the Christians in Bithynia, says, that they were accustomed to meet and sing hymns to Christ as to God.—*Lardner.* 5. It is worthy of remark, that Stephen in his death offered the same act of homage to Christ that Christ himself did to the Father when he died, *Lu. xxiii. 46*. From all these considerations, it follows that the Lord Jesus is an object of worship; that in most solemn circumstances it is proper to call upon him, to worship him, and to commit our dearest interests to his hands. If this may be done, he is Divine.

CHAP. VIII.—22. *And pray God.* Having a desire to forsake the sin, and to be pardoned, then pray to God to forgive. It would be absurd to ask forgiveness until a man felt his need of it. This shews that a sinner ought to pray, and how he ought to do it. It should be with a desire and purpose to forsake sin, and in that state of mind God will hear the prayer: compare *Dan. iv. 27*. *If perhaps.* There was no certainty that God would forgive him; nor is there any evidence either that Simon prayed or that he was forgiven. This direction of Peter presents another important principle in regard to the conduct of sinners. They are to be directed to repent, not because they have the promise of forgiveness, and not because they hope to be forgiven, but because sin is a great evil, and because it is right and proper that they should repent, whether they are forgiven or not. That is to be left to the sovereign mercy of God. They are to repent of sin, and then they are to feel, not that they have any claim on God, but that they are dependent on him, and must be saved or lost at his will. 33. *Who shall declare his generation?* The word generation used here properly denotes posterity; then an age of mankind, comprehending about thirty years, as we speak of this and the next generation. Another sense which the word has, is to denote the men of any particular age or time, *Mat. xi. 16*; *xxiii. 36*; *Lu. xvi. 8, &c.*; and it has been supposed that the question here means, "Who can describe the character and wickedness of the generation when he shall live—the enormous crime of that age, in putting him to death?" This, perhaps, is the most probable interpretation of the question, for these reasons: 1. It is the most usual signification of the word (see Schleusner), and would be its obvious meaning in any other connexion. 2. It suits the connexion here. For the prophet immediately adds as a reason for the fact that no one can describe that generation, that he was put to death—a deed so enormous as to defy all attempt at description. 39. *The Spirit of the Lord.* See *ver. 29*. The Spirit had suggested to Philip to go to meet the eunuch; and the same Spirit, now that he had fulfilled the design of his going there, directed his departure. *Caught away.* This phrase has been usually understood of a forcible or miraculous removal of Philip to some other place. Some have even supposed that he was borne through the air by an angel. (See even Doddridge.)

senate or an assembly was allowed to exist where none had existed before. Roman colonies were very different from anything which we usually intend by the term. They were primarily intended as military safeguards of the frontiers, and as checks upon insurgent provincials. They also served as convenient possessions for rewarding veterans who had served in the wars. The colonists went out, with all the pride of Roman citizens, to represent and reproduce the city in the midst of an alien population. . . . Their names were still enrolled

in one of the Roman tribes. Every traveller who passed through a colony saw there the insignia of Rome; he heard the Latin language, and was amenable in the strictest sense to the Roman law. The colonists paid not only the poll-tax as citizens, but also a ground-tax, yet they were free from any intrusion by the governor of the province. Their affairs were regulated by their own magistrates."

xvii. 18. "Stoics and Epicureans;" "The ethical system of the Stoics has been commonly supposed to have a close connection with

The meaning is, clearly, that the Spirit, who had directed Philip to go near the eunuch, now removed him in a similar manner. That this is the meaning is clear. 1. Because it accounts for all that occurred. 2. The word "caught away" (*ἁρπάσσει*) does not imply that there was a miracle. The word properly means to seize and bear away anything violently, without the consent of the owner, as robbers and plunderers do. Then it signifies to remove any thing in a forcible manner; to make use of strength or power to remove it, *ch. xiii. 10; Mat. xiii. 19; Jno. x. 28; 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4, &c.* In no case does it ever denote that a miracle is performed; and all that can be signified here is, that the Spirit strongly admonished Philip to go to some other place; that he so forcibly or vividly suggested the duty to his mind, as to tear him away, as it were, from the society of the eunuch. He had been deeply interested in the case. He would have found pleasure in continuing the journey with him. But the strong convictions of duty urged by the Holy Spirit impelled him, as it were, to break off this new and interesting acquaintanceship, and to go to some other place. The purpose for which he was sent, to instruct and baptize the eunuch, was accomplished, and now he was called to some other field of labour.

CHAP. IX.—2. *To Damascus.* This was a celebrated city of Syria, and long the capital of a kingdom of that name. It is situated in a delightful region about one hundred and twenty miles north-east of Jerusalem, and about one hundred and ninety miles south-east of Antioch. It is in the midst of an extensive plain, abounding with cypress and palm trees, and extremely fertile. It is watered by the river Barrady, anciently called Abana, *2 Kin. v. 12*. This city is mentioned often in the Old Testament. It was a city in the time of Abraham, *Gen. xv. 2*. By whom it was founded is unknown. It was taken and garrisoned by David, *A.M. 2992; 2 Sam. viii. 6; 1 Chr. xviii. 6*. It is subsequently mentioned as sustaining very important parts in the conflicts of the Jews with Syria, *2 Kin. xv. 28; xvi. 9; Isa. x. 9*. It was taken by the Romans, *A.M. 3939*, or about sixty years before Christ; in whose possession it was when Saul went there. It was conquered by the Saracens, *A.D. 713*. About the year 1250, it was taken by the Christians in the crusades, and was captured, *A.D. 1517*, by Selim, and has been since under the Ottoman emperors. The Arabians call this city *Damash*, or *Demesch*, or *Schams*. It is one of the most commercial cities in the Ottoman empire, and is distinguished also for manufactures, particularly for steel, hence called *Damascus steel*. The population is variously estimated. About twenty thousand are Maronites of the Catholic church, five thousand Greeks, and one thousand are Jews. The road from Jerusalem to Damascus lies between two mountains not above a hundred paces distant from each other; both are round at the bottom, and terminate in a point. That nearest the great road is called *Cocab*, the star, in memory of the dazzling light which is here said to have appeared to Saul. 3. *There shined round about him.* In order to understand this, it may be necessary to make the following remarks: 1. God was accustomed to appear to the Jews in a cloud; in a pillar of smoke, or of fire; in that peculiar splendour which they denominated the *Shechinah*. In this way he went before them into the land of Canaan, *Ex. xiii. 21, 22*; compare *Isa. iv. 5, 6*. This appearance, or visible manifestation, they called the glory of Jehovah, *Isa. vi. 1-4; Ex. xvi. 7, 10*. "In the morning ye shall see the glory of the Lord;" *Lev. ix. 23; Num. xiv. 10; xvi. 19, 42; xx. 6; 1 Kin. viii. 11; Eze. x. 4; Lu. ii. 9*. "The glory of the Lord shone round about them." 2. The Lord Jesus, in his transfiguration on the mount, had been encompassed with that glory. 3. He had spoken of similar glory as pertaining to him; as that which he had been invested with before his incarnation; and to which he would return; *Jno. xvii. 5*. "And now, Father, glorify thou me, &c., with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;" *Mat. xxv. 31*. "The Son of man shall come in his glory;" compare *Mat. xvi. 27; xix. 28*. To this glory he had returned when he left the earth. 4. It is a sentiment which cannot be shewn to be incorrect, that the various appearances of "the angel of Jehovah," and of Jehovah, mentioned in the Old Testament, were appearances of the Messiah; the God who should be incarnate; the peculiar protector of his people: see *Isa. vi.*; compare with *Jno. xii. 41*. 5. If the Lord Jesus appeared to Saul, it would be in this manner. It would be in his appropriate glory and honour, as the ascended Messiah. That he did appear is expressly affirmed. 6. This was an occasion when, if ever, such an appearance was proper. The design was to convert an infuriated persecutor, and to make him an apostle. To do this it was necessary that he should see the Lord Jesus, *1 Cor. ix. 1, 2*. The design was farther to make him an eminent instrument in carrying the Gospel to the Gentiles. A signal miracle; a demonstration that he was invested with his appropriate glory, *Jno. xvii. 5*; a calling up a new witness to the fact of his resurrection, and his solemn investment with glory in the heavens, seemed to be required in thus calling a violent persecutor to be an apostle and friend. 7. We are to regard this appearance, therefore, as the reappearance of the *Shechinah*, the Son of God, invested with appropriate glory, appearing to convince an enemy of his ascension, and to change him from a foe to a friend. It has been objected that, as the Lord Jesus had ascended to heaven, that it cannot be presumed that his body would return to the earth again. To this we may reply, that the New Testament has thrown no light on this. Perhaps it is not necessary to suppose that his body returned, but that he made such a visible manifestation of himself as to convince Saul that he was the Messiah. 8. *He saw no man.* This darkness continued three days, *ver. 9*. In *ch. xxii. 11*, it is expressly said to have been caused by the intense light; "And when I could not see for the glory of that light," &c. The intense, sudden light had so affected the optic nerve of the eye as to cause a temporary blindness. This effect is not uncommon. The disease of the eye which is thus produced is called *amaurosis*, or more commonly *gutta serena*. It consists in a loss of sight without any apparent defect of the eye. 18. *As it had been scales, &c.* The word *σκαλῆς*, as it had been, is designed to qualify the following word. It is not said that scales literally fell from his eyes; but that an effect followed as if scales had been suddenly taken off. It is evident that there was a miracle in the healing of Saul. The blindness was the natural effect of the light. The cure was by miraculous power. This is evident. 1. Because there were no means used that would naturally restore the sight. It may be remarked here, that *gutta serena* has been regarded by physicians as one of the most incurable of diseases. Few cases are restored; and few remedies are efficacious; see *Ed. Encyc. Art. Surgery, on Amaurosis*. 2. Ananias was sent for this very purpose,—to heal him, *ver. 17*. 3. The immediate effect shews that this was miraculous. Had it been a slow recovery, it might have been doubtful; but here it was instantaneous, and thus put beyond a question that it was a miracle. This conversion has always been justly considered as a strong proof of the Christian religion. For, 1. This change could not have occurred by any event of fair prospects of honour. 2. It could not have been produced by any prospect of wealth or fame, by becoming a Christian. 3. He was as firmly opposed to Christianity before his conversion as possible. He had already distinguished himself for his hostility. Infidels often say that Christians are prejudiced in favour of their religion; but here was a man, at first, a bitter infidel and foe to Christianity. 4. His subsequent life shewed that his change was sincere and real. 5. If Paul was sincere, if this conversion was genuine, the Christian religion is true. Nothing else but a

religion from heaven could produce this change. 6. The example of Saul does not stand alone. Hundreds and thousands of enemies, persecutors, and slanderers have been changed, and each one becomes a living witness of the power and truth of the Christian religion. The scoffer becomes reverent; the profane man learns to speak the praise of God; the sullen, bitter foe of Christ becomes his friend, and lives and dies under the influence of his religion. Could better proof be asked that it is from God?

CHAP. X.—17. *Behold, the men, &c.* We see here an admirable arrangement of the events of Providence to fit each other. Every part of this transaction is made to harmonize with every other part; and it was so arranged, that just in the moment when the mind of Peter was filled with perplexity that the very event should occur which should relieve him of his embarrassment. Such a coincidence is not uncommon. An event of Divine Providence may be as clear an expression of his will, and may as certainly serve to indicate our duty, as the most manifest revelation would do, and a state of mind may, by an arrangement of circumstances, be produced, that shall be extremely perplexing until some event shall occur, or some field of usefulness shall open, that shall exactly correspond to it, and shall indicate to us the will of God. We should observe, then, the events of God's providence. We should mark and record the train of our own thoughts, and we should watch with interest any event that occurs when we are perplexed and embarrassed, to obtain, if possible, an expression of the will of God. 35. *And worketh righteousness.* We may observe here, 1. That it is not said that Cornelius was accepted on account of his good works. Those works were simply an evidence of true piety in the heart; a proof that he feared and loved God, and not a meritorious ground of acceptance. 2. He improved the light which he had. 3. He embraced the Saviour when he was offered to him. This circumstance makes an essential difference between the case of Cornelius and those who depend on their morality in Christian lands. They do not embrace the Lord Jesus, and they are, therefore, totally unlike the Roman centurion. His example should not be pleaded, therefore, by those who neglect the Saviour; for it furnishes no evidence that they will be accepted, when they are totally unlike him.

CHAP. XIV.—14. *Which, when the apostles.* Barnabas is called an apostle because he was sent forth by the church on a particular message, *ch. xiii. 3*; compare *ch. xiv. 26*; not because he had been chosen to the peculiar work of the apostleship—to bear witness to the life and resurrection of Christ. 16. *Suffered all nations.* Permitted all nations; that is, all Gentiles, *ch. xvii. 30*. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at." *To walk in their own ways.* Why he did this we cannot determine. It might have been, among other reasons, to shew to the world, conclusively, 1. The insufficiency of reason to guide men in the matters of religion. 2. It shewed the need of revelation to guide man. 3. It evinced, beyond the possibility of mistake, the depravity of man. 19. *And there came thither certain Jews.* Not satisfied with having expelled them from Antioch and Iconium, they still pursued them. Persecutors often exhibit a zeal and perseverance in a bad cause which it would be well if Christians evinced in a holy cause. Men will often travel farther to do evil than they will to do good; and many men shew more zeal in opposing the Gospel than professed Christians do in advancing it. 21. *And to Iconium, ver. 1.* We have here a remarkable instance of the courage of the apostles. In these very places they had been persecuted and stoned, and yet in the face of danger they ventured to return. The welfare of the infant churches they deemed of more consequence than their own safety; and they threw themselves again into the midst of danger, to comfort and strengthen those just converted to God. There are times when ministers should not count their own lives dear to them, (*ch. xx. 24*), but when they should fearlessly throw themselves into the midst of danger, confiding only in the protecting care of their God and Saviour.

CHAP. XV.—39. *And the contention was so sharp.* This account proves that there was no collusion or agreement among the apostles to impose upon mankind. Had there been such an agreement, and had the books of the New Testament been an imposture, the apostles would have been represented as perfectly harmonious, and as united in all their views and efforts. What impostor would have thought of the device of representing the early friends of the Christian religion as divided, and contending, and separating from each other? Such a statement has an air of candour and honesty, and at the same time is apparently so much against the truth of the system, that he would never have thought of resorting to it.

CHAP. XVI.—19. *The hope of their gains was gone.* It was this that troubled and enraged them. And this is as likely to enrage men as any thing. Instead of regarding the act as a proof of Divine power, they were intent only on their profits. And their indignation furnishes a remarkable illustration of the fixedness with which men will regard wealth; of the fact that the love of it will blind them to all the truths of religion, and all the proofs of the power and presence of God; and of the fact that any interposition of Divine power that destroys their hopes of gain, fills them with wrath, and hatred, and murmuring. Many a man has been opposed to God and his Gospel because, if religion should be extensively prevalent, the hopes of gain would be gone. *Do exceedingly trouble our city.* In what way they did it they specify in the next verse. The charge which they wished to substantiate was that of being disturbers of the public peace. All at once they became conscientious. They forgot the subject of their gains, and were greatly distressed about the violation of the laws of the land. There is nothing that will make men more hypocritically conscientious, than to denounce, and detect, and destroy their unlawful and dishonest practices. Men who are thus exposed, become suddenly filled with reverence for the law or for religion; and they who have heretofore cared nothing for either become greatly alarmed lest the public peace should be disturbed.

CHAP. XVII.—5. *Certain lewd fellows of the baser sort.* The word *lewd* is not in the original. The Greek is, "And having taken certain wicked men of those who were about the forum," or market-place. The forum, or market-place, was the place where the idle assembled, and where those were gathered together that wished to be employed, *Mat. xx. 3*. Many of these would be of abandoned character,—the idle, the dissipated, and the worthless; and, therefore, just the materials for a mob. 12. *Therefore.* As the result of their examination. They found that the doctrines of Paul and Silas accorded with the Old Testament. This result will commonly follow when people search the Scriptures. Much is gained when men can be induced to examine the Bible. We may commonly take it for granted that such an examination will result in their conviction of the truth. The most prominent and invariable cause of infidelity is found in the fact that men will not investigate the Scriptures. Many infidels have confessed that they had never carefully read the New Testament. Thomas Paine confessed that he wrote the first part of the *Age of Reason* without having a Bible at hand; and without its being possible to procure one where he then was (in Paris). "I had," says he, "neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, though I was writing against both; nor could I procure any."—*Age of Reason*, p. 65, ed. 1831; also p. 33. The infidel "Hume owned," said Dr. Johnson, "he had never read the New Testament with attention. Here, then, was a man who had been at no pains to inquire into the truth of

Christian morality, and the outward similarity of isolated precepts is very close and worthy of notice. But the morality of Stoicism is essentially based on pride, that of Christianity on humility; the one upholds individual independence, the other absolute faith in another; the one looks for consolation in the issue of fate, the other in Providence; the one is limited by periods of cosmical ruin, the other is consummated in a personal resurrection. But in spite of the fundamental error of Stoicism, which lies in supreme egotism, the teaching of this

school gave a wide currency to the noble doctrine of the fatherhood of God, the common bond of mankind, the sovereignty of the soul." Epicureans: "The object of Epicurus was to find in philosophy a practical guide to happiness. True pleasure, and not absolute truth, was the end at which he aimed; experience, and not reason, the test on which he relied. He necessarily cast aside dialectics as a profitless science, and substituted in its place an assertion of the right of the senses, in the widest acceptance of the term, to be considered as the

religion, and had continually turned his mind the other way.'—*Life by Boswell*, vol. iii., p. 157. None have ever read the Scriptures with candour, and with the true spirit of prayer, who have not been convinced of the truth of Christianity, and been brought to submit their souls to its influence and its consolations. The great thing which Christians desire their fellow-men to do is candidly to search the Bible; and, when this is done, they confidently expect that they will be truly converted to God. 16. *His spirit was stirred within him, when he saw.* In regard to this interesting account of the visit of Paul to Athens—probably the only one which he made to that splendid capital—we may remark, 1. That he was indefatigable and constant in his great work. 2. Christians, amidst the splendour and gaieties of such cities, should have their hearts deeply affected in view of the moral desolations of the people. 3. They should be willing to do their duty, and to bear witness to the pure and simple Gospel in the presence of the great and the noble. 4. They should not consider it their main business to admire splendid temples, and statues, and paintings—the works of art; but their main business should be, to do good as they may have opportunity. 5. A discourse, even in the midst of much wickedness, and idolatry, may be calm and dignified; not an appeal merely to the passions, but to the understanding. Paul reasoned with the philosophers of Athens; he did not denounce them; he endeavoured calmly to convince them, not harshly to censure them. 6. The example of Paul is a good one for all Christians. In all places—cities, towns, or countries; amidst all people—philosophers, and the rich, and the poor; among friends and countrymen, or among strangers and foreigners, the great object should be to do good, to instruct mankind, and to seek to elevate the human character, and promote human happiness, by diffusing the mild and pure precepts of the Gospel of Christ.

CHAP. XIX.—9. *Disputing daily.* The word used here, *διαλεγόμενος*, does not of necessity denote disputation or contention, but is often used in a good sense of reasoning, *ch. xvii. 2; xviii. 4, 19; xxiv. 25*, or of public preaching, *ch. xx. 7, 9*. It is used in this sense here, and denotes that Paul taught publicly, or reasoned on the subject of religion in this place. 20. *So mightily.* On this instructive narrative we may remark, 1. That religion has power to break the hold of sinners on unjust and dishonest means of living. 2. That those who have been engaged in an unchristian and dishonourable practice will abandon it when they become Christians. 3. That their abhorrence of their former courses will be, and ought to be, expressed as publicly as was the offence. 4. That the evil practice will be abandoned at any sacrifice, however great. The only question will be, What is right? not, What will it cost? Property, in the view of a converted man, is nothing when compared with a good conscience. 5. This conduct of those who had used curious arts shews us what ought to be done by those who have been engaged in any course of life dishonouring to God or injurious to the souls and bodies of men, and who are then converted. If their conduct was right—and who can doubt it?—it settles a great principle on which a young convert should act. His property should be withdrawn from the business publicly, either by being destroyed, or by being converted to a useful purpose. And yet how few men there are in Christian lands who practise on the principle of these honest, but comparatively unenlightened, men of Ephesus!

CHAP. XX.—28. *Overseers.* *ἐπισκοποῦντες*,—'bishops.' The word properly denotes those who are appointed to oversee, or inspect any thing. This passage proves that the name was applicable to elders; and that in the time of the apostles the name bishop and presbyter, or elder, was given to the same class of officers, and, of course, that there was no distinction between them. One term was originally used to denote office, the other age, and both were applied to the same persons in the church. The same thing occurs in *1 Th. i. 5–7*, where those who in ver. 5 are called elders are in ver. 7 called bishops: see also *1 Tim. iii. 1–10; Phil. i. 1*.

CHAP. XXI.—13. *What mean ye.* Greek, What do ye. A tender and affectionate, but firm reproach. *To weep and to break my heart?* To afflict me, and distract my mind by alarms, and by the expressions of tenderness. His mind was fixed on going to Jerusalem; and he felt that he was prepared for whatever awaited him. Expressions of tenderness among friends are proper. Tears may be inevitable at parting from those whom we love. But such expressions of tenderness and love ought not to be allowed to interfere with the convictions of duty in their minds. These remarks apply especially to those who are engaged in the missionary enterprise. It is trying to part with a son, a daughter, or a beloved friend, in order that they may go to proclaim the Gospel to the benighted and dying heathen. The act of parting for life, and the apprehension of the perils which they may encounter on the ocean, and in heathen lands, may be painful. But if they, like Paul, have looked at it calmly, candidly, and with much prayer; if they have come to the deliberate conclusion that it is the will of God that they should devote their lives to this service, we ought not to weep, and to break their hearts. We should cheerfully and confidently commit them to the protection of the God whom they serve, and remember that they are seeking his glory, and that the parting of Christians, though for life, will be short. Soon, in a better world, they will be united again, to part no more; and the blessedness of that future meeting will be greatly heightened by all the sorrows and self-denials of separation here, and by all the benefits which such a separation may be the means of conveying to a dying world. That mother will meet, with joy, in heaven, the son from whom, with many tears, she was sundered, when he entered on a missionary life; and, surrounded with many ransomed heathen, heaven will be made more blessed, and all eternity more happy. *But also to die.* This was the true spirit of a martyr. This spirit reigned in the hearts of all the early Christians.

CHAP. XXIV.—14. *Which they call heresy.* This translation does not express to us the force of the original. We have attached to the word heresy an idea which is not conveyed by the Greek word; and now commonly understand by it, error of doctrine. In Paul's answer here, there is an explicit reference to their charge, which does not appear in our version. The charge of Tertullus was, that he was the ringleader of the sect, *τῆς αἵρεως*, of the Nazarenes, ver. 5. To this Paul replies, "After the way which they call sect (*αἵρεσις*), not error of doctrine, but after a way which they maintain is producing division or schism) so worship I the God of my fathers." Paul was not ashamed to be called a follower of that sect or party among the Jewish people. Nor should we be ashamed to worship God in a mode that is called heresy or schism, if we do it in obedience to conscience and to God. 25. *Temperance.* The word temperance we now use commonly to denote moderation, or restraint in regard to eating and drinking, particularly to abstinence from the use of ardent spirits. But this is not its meaning here. There is no reason to suppose that Felix was intemperate in the use of intoxicating liquors. The original word here denotes a restraint of all the passions and evil inclinations; and may be applied to prudence, chastity, and moderation in general. The particular thing in the life of Felix which Paul had probably in view, was the indulgence of licentious desires, or incontinence. He was living in adultery with Drusilla; and for this Paul wished doubtless to bring him to repentance.

CHAP. XXVIII.—3. *There came a viper.* A poisonous serpent. The viper was, doubtless, in the bundle of sticks, or limbs of trees, which Paul had gathered, but was concealed, and was torpid. But when the bundle was laid on the fire, the viper became warmed by the heat, and ran out, and fastened on the hand of Paul. *And fastened on his hand.* *Κατέβη.* This word properly means to join one's-self to; to touch; to adhere to. It might have been by coiling around his hand and arm; or by fastening its fangs in his hand. It is not expressly affirmed that Paul was bitten by the viper, yet it is evidently implied; and it is wholly incredible that a viper, unless miraculously prevented, should fasten himself to the hand without biting. 13. *We fetched a compass.* We coasted about; or we coasted along the eastern side of Sicily. The course can be seen on a map. *And came to Rhegium.* This was a city of Italy, in the kingdom of Naples, on the coast near the south-west extremity of Italy. It was nearly opposite to Messina, in Sicily. It is now called Reggio. *The south wind.* A wind favourable for their voyage. *To Puteoli.* The wells. It was celebrated for its warm baths, and from these, and its springs, it is supposed to have derived its name of the wells. It is now called Pozzuoli, and is in the campania of Naples, on the northern side of the bay, and about eight miles northwest from Naples. The town contains at present about 10,000 inhabitants. 15. *And from thence.* From Puteoli. *When the brethren heard of us.* The Christians who were at Rome. *As far as Appii Forum.* This was a city about fifty-six miles from Rome. The remains of an ancient city are still seen there. It is on the borders of the Pontine marshes. The city was built on the celebrated Appian way, or road from Rome to Capua. The road was made by Appius Claudius, and probably the city also. It was called the forum or market-place of Appius, because it was a convenient place for travellers on the Appian way to stop for purposes of refreshment. It was also a famous resort for pedlars and merchants: see *Horace*, b. i. Sat. 5. 3. *And the Three Taverns.* This place was about eight or ten miles nearer Rome than the Appii Forum. *Cicero ad Att. ii. 10.* It undoubtedly received its name because it was distinguished as a place of refreshment on the Appian way. Probably the greater part of the company of Christians remained at this place, while the remainder went forward to meet Paul, and to attend him on his way. The Christians at Rome had doubtless heard much of Paul. His epistle to them had been written about the year of our Lord 57, or at least five years before this time. The interest which the Roman Christians felt in the apostle was thus manifested by their coming so far to meet him, though he was a prisoner. *He thanked God.* He had long ardently desired to see the Christians of Rome, *Rom. i. 9–11; xv. 23, 32.* He was now grateful to God that the object of his long desire was at last granted to him, and that he was permitted to see them, though in bonds. *And took courage.* From their society and counsel. The presence and counsel of Christian brethren is often of inestimable value in encouraging and strengthening us in the trials of life. 31. *Preaching the kingdom of God with all confidence.* Openly and boldly, without any one to hinder him. It is known also, that Paul was not unsuccessful even when a prisoner at Rome. Several persons were converted by his preaching even in the court of the emperor. "The things which had happened to him," he says, *Phil. i. 12–14*, "had fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel, so that his bonds in Christ were manifested in all the palace, and in all other places; and many brethren in the Lord," says he, "waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." In this situation he was remembered with deep interest by the church at Philippi, who sent Epaphroditus to him with a contribution to supply his wants. Of their kindness he speaks in terms of the tenderest gratitude in *Phil. ii. 25; iv. 18*. During his confinement also he was the means of the conversion of Onesimus, a runaway slave of Philemon of Colosse in Phrygia, *Phile. 10*; whom he sent back to his master with a letter to himself, and with an epistle to the church at that place: see epistle to the Colossians, *iv. 8, 9, 18*. During this imprisonment he wrote, according to Lardner, the following epistles, in the following order and time, namely,

Ephesians, April, A.D.	61
2 Timothy, May	61
Philippians, before the end of	62
Colossians	62
Philemon	62
Hebrews, spring of	63

Here closes the inspired account of the propagation of Christianity, of the organization of the Christian church, and of the toils and persecutions of the apostle Paul. Who can but feel deeply affected when he comes to the conclusion of this inspired book of revivals, and of the history of the spread of the Christian religion, and of the account of that wonderful man—the apostle Paul? Why Luke closed his history here is not known. It may have been that he was not afterwards the companion of Paul; or that he might have been himself removed by death. It is agreed on all hands that he did not attend Paul in his subsequent travels; and we should infer, from the conclusion of this book, that he did not survive the apostle, as it is almost incredible, if he did, that he did not mention his release and death. It is the uniform account of antiquity, that Luke, after the transactions with which the Acts of the Apostles closes, passed over into Achaia, where he lived a year or two, and there died at the age of eighty-four years. Every thing in regard to the apostle Paul, after the account with which Luke closes this book, is involved in doubt and uncertainty. By what means he was set at liberty is not known; and there is a great contradiction of statements in regard to his subsequent travels, and even the time of his death. It is generally agreed, indeed, that he was set at liberty in the year of our Lord 63. After this, some of the fathers assert, that he travelled over Italy, and passed into Spain. But this account is involved in great uncertainty. It is far more important and interesting for us to be assured, from the character which he evinced, and from the proofs of his zeal and toil in the cause of the Lord Jesus, that his spirit rested in the bosom of his Saviour and his God. Wherever he died, his spirit, we doubt not, is in heaven. And where that body rested at last, which he laboured "to keep under," and which he sought to bring "into subjection," *1 Cor. ix. 27*, and which was to him so much the source of conflict and of sin, *Rom. vii. 5, 23*, is a matter of little consequence. It will be watched and guarded by the eye of that Saviour whom he served, and will be raised up to eternal life. In his own inimitable language, "it was sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption; it was sown in dishonour, it shall be raised in glory; it was sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power; it was sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body," *1 Cor. xv. 42–44*. And in regard to him, and to all other saints, "when that corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and that mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory," *1 Cor. xv. 54*. To Paul now, what are all his sorrows, and persecutions, and toils in the cause of his Master? What but a source of thanksgiving that he was permitted thus to labour to spread the Gospel through the world? So may we live—imitating his life of zeal, and self-denial, and faithfulness, that when he rises from the dead we may participate with him in the glories of the resurrection of the just.

criterion of truth. . . . It is obvious that a system thus framed would degenerate by a natural descent into mere materialism; and in this form Epicureanism was the popular philosophy at the beginning of the Christian era."

xviii. 3. "It was a custom among the Jews for all boys to learn a trade. 'What is commanded of a father towards his son?' asks a Talmudic writer. 'To circumcise him, to teach him the law, to teach him a trade.' Rabbi Judah saith, 'He that teacheth not his

son a trade doth the same as if he taught him to be a thief.' And Rabbi Gamaliel saith, 'He that hath a trade in his hand, to what is he like? he is like a vineyard that is fenced.' And if the father of the young Cilician (Paul) sought to make choice of a trade, none would occur to him more naturally than the profitable occupation of the making of tents, the material of which was that hair-cloth supplied by the goats of his native province, and sold in the markets of the Levant by the well known name of *cil'cium*."

THE
EPISTLES
AND THE
APOCALYPSE.



ANCIENT ROME.

AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE ROMANS,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If we may compare Scripture with Scripture, and take the opinion of some devout and pious persons, in the Old Testament David's Psalms, and in the New Testament Paul's Epistles, are stars of the first magnitude, that differ from the other stars in glory. The whole Scripture is indeed an epistle from heaven to earth; but in it we have upon record several particular epistles, more of Paul's than of any other, for he was the chief of the apostles, and laboured more abundantly than they all. His natural parts, I doubt not, were very pregnant; his apprehension was quick and piercing; his expressions were fluent and copious; his affections, wherever he took, very warm and zealous, and his resolutions no less bold and daring: this made him, before his conversion, a very keen and bitter persecutor; but when the strong man armed was dispossessed, and the stronger than he came to divide the spoil, and to sanctify these qualifications, he became the most skilful zealous preacher; never any better fitted to win souls, nor more successful. Fourteen of his epistles we have in the canon of Scripture; many more, it is probable, he wrote in the course of his ministry, which might be profitable enough for doctrine, for reproof, &c., but, not being given by inspiration of God, they were not received as canonical Scripture, nor handed down to us. Six epistles, said to be Paul's, written to Seneca, and eight of Seneca's to him, are spoken of by some of the ancients, (*Sixt. Senens. Biblioth. Sanct.*, lib. ii.,) and are extant; but, upon the first view, they appear spurious and counterfeit.

This epistle to the Romans is placed first, not because of the priority of its date, but because of the superlative excellency of the epistle, it being one of the longest and fullest of all, and perhaps because of the dignity of the place to which it is written. Chrysostom would have this epistle read over to him twice a week. It is gathered from some passages in the epistle that it was written *Anno Christi* 56, from Corinth, while Paul made a short stay there in his way to Troas, *Acts* xx. 5, 6. He commendeth to the Romans Phebe, a servant of the church at Cenchrea, *ch.* xvi., which was a place belonging to Corinth. He calls Gaius his host, or the man with whom he lodged, *ch.* xvi. 23, and he was a Corinthian, not the same with Gaius of Derbe, mentioned *Acts* xx. Paul was now going up to Jerusalem with the money that was given to the poor saints there, and of that he speaks, *ch.* xv. 26.

[Of the state of the church at Rome at that time it is not easy to form a precise opinion. From this epistle it is evident that it was composed of Jews and Gentiles, and that one design of writing to it was to reconcile their jarring opinions, particularly about the obligation of the Jewish law, the advantage of the Jew, and the way of justification. No small part of it is an argument expressly with the Jews, *ch.* ii.—iv., ix.—xi.; and no small part of the epistle also is designed to state the true doctrine about the character of the Gentiles, and the way in which they could be justified before God.—At what time, or by whom, the Gospel was first preached at Rome has been a matter of controversy. The Roman Catholic church have maintained that it was founded by Peter, and have thence drawn an argument for their high claims and infallibility. On this subject they make a confident appeal to some of the fathers. There is strong evidence to be derived from this epistle itself, and from the *Acts*, that Paul did not regard Peter as having any such primacy and ascendancy in the Roman church as are claimed for him by the papists. 1. In this whole epistle there is no mention of Peter at all. It is not suggested that he had been or was then at Rome. 2. It is clear that Peter was not there when Paul wrote this epistle. If he had been, he could not have failed to have sent him a salutation, amid the numbers that he saluted in the 16th chapter. 3. In the *Acts of the Apostles* there is no mention of Peter's having been at Rome. 4. Paul went to Rome about A.D. 60. There is no mention made then of Peter's being with him, or being there. If he had been, it could hardly have failed of being recorded. 5. The Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, to Philemon, and the second Epistle to Timothy (*Lardner*, vi. 235) were written from Rome during the residence of Paul as a prisoner; and the Epistle to the Hebrews probably also while he was still in Italy. In none of these epistles is there any hint that Peter was then, or had been, at Rome; a fact that cannot be accounted for if he was regarded as the founder of that church, and especially if he was then in that city. 6. If Peter was ever at Rome, therefore, of which indeed there is no reason to doubt, he must have come there after Paul; at what time is unknown. That he was there cannot be doubted without calling in question the truth of all history.—When, or by whom, the Gospel was preached first at Rome, it is not easy, perhaps not possible, to determine. In the account of the day of Pentecost, (*Acts* ii. 10) we find, among others, that there were present strangers of Rome, and it is not improbable that they carried back the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and became the founders of the Roman church. One design and effect of that miracle was doubtless to spread the knowledge of the Saviour among all nations.—A. B.*]

* It is well known that Matthew Henry died on the completion of his Commentary on the *Acts of the Apostles*. The Exposition of the remaining portion of the New Testament was undertaken by others. The Rev. Dr. Evans completed the Commentary on the *Epistle to the Romans*, having derived, said Dr. Watts, great assistance from the materials left for it by M. Henry. To the Exposition of this Epistle, and of the remaining books of the New Testament, numerous additions (comprised within brackets) have been made from the works of various authors, whose names, except when otherwise given, are referred to in the letters appended to the extracts. The C. denotes the extract to be from Rev. Dr. Chalmers' Lectures on this Epistle, and R. H. and A. B. and H. refer respectively to the Commentaries of Robert Haldane, Albert Barnes, and Professor Hodge of America.

Introductory.—This epistle has been universally believed to be St. Paul's. The evidence in its favour is unbroken. Modern criticism has left its genuineness unassailed. It was written probably from Corinth (*Acts* xx. 2, 3; chap. xv. 23, xvi. 1, 23), at the close of St. Paul's three months' residence there, when he was about to depart to Jerusalem (chap. xv. 25). "It was an epistle to all Gentiles from the apostle of the Gentiles. It had for its end the settlement, on the broad principles of God's truth and love, of the mutual relations and union

in Christ of God's ancient people and the recently engrafted world" (Dean Alford). The epistle is written to a church he has not visited. This may be the reason for the more detailed exposition of Christian doctrine we find. He unfolds the Gospel pure and simple—the fall and the redemption, the weakness of the law, the power of grace, the position of Jews and Gentiles (both of whom were to be found in the church at Rome). While the general scope is simple, it must be remembered that it is a letter, not a formal treatise. "We must scarcely imagine it

The great mysteries treated of in this epistle must needs produce in this, as in other writings of Paul, many things dark and hard to be understood, 2 *Pet.* iii. 16. The method of this (as of several other of the epistles) is observable; the former part of it doctrinal, in the first eleven chapters; the latter part practical, in the last five, to inform the judgment and to reform the life. And the best way to understand the truths explained in the former part is to abide and abound in the practice of the duties prescribed in the latter part; "for if any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine," *Jno.* vii. 17.

[But it cannot be denied that one reason why the epistles of Paul have been regarded as so difficult has been an unwillingness to admit the truth of the plain doctrines which he teaches. The heart is by nature opposed to them, and comes to believe them with great reluctance. This feeling will account for no small part of the difficulties felt in regard to this epistle. There is one great maxim in interpreting the Scriptures that can never be departed from; it is, that men can never understand them aright until they are willing to suffer them to speak out their fair and proper meaning. When men are determined not to find certain doctrines in the Bible, nothing is more natural than that they should find difficulties in it, and complain much of its great obscurity and mystery. I add, that one principal reason why so much difficulty has been felt here has been an unwillingness to stop where the apostle does. Men have desired to advance farther, and penetrate the mysteries which the Spirit of inspiration has not disclosed. Where Paul states a simple fact, men often advance a theory. If men desire to understand the epistles of Paul, and avoid difficulties, they should be willing to leave it where he does; and this single rule would have made useless whole years and whole tomes of controversy. Perhaps, on the whole, there is no book of the New Testament that more demands an humble, docile, and prayerful disposition in its interpretation than this epistle. No man ever yet understood the reasonings and views of the apostle Paul but under the influence of elevated piety. None ever found opposition to his doctrines recede, and difficulties vanish, who did not bring the mind in an humble frame to receive all that has been revealed; and that, in a spirit of humble prayer, did not purpose to lay aside all bias, and open the heart to the full influence of the elevated truths which he inculcates. Where there is a willingness that God should reign and do all his pleasure, this epistle may be in its general character easily understood.—A. B.]

I. The doctrinal part of the epistle instructs us, 1. Concerning the way of salvation. 1st. The foundation of it laid in justification, and that not by the Gentiles works of nature, *ch.* i., nor by the Jews' works of the law, *ch.* ii., iii., for both Jews and Gentiles were liable to the curse; but only by faith in Jesus Christ, *ch.* iii. 21, &c., *ch.* iv. throughout. 2nd. The steps of this salvation are, *First.* Peace with God, *ch.* v. *Secondly.* Sanctification, *ch.* vi., vii. *Thirdly.* Glorification, *ch.* viii. 2. Concerning the persons saved, such as belong to the election of grace, *ch.* ix.; Gentiles and Jews, *ch.* x. xi. By this it appears that the subjects he discourses of were such as were then the present truths, as the apostle speaks, 2 *Pet.* i. 12. Two things the Jews then stumbled at—justification by faith without the works of the law, and the admission of the Gentiles into the church; and therefore both these he studied to clear and vindicate.

II. The practical part follows, wherein we find, 1. Several general exhortations proper for all Christians, *ch.* xii. 2. Directions for our behaviour, as members of civil society, *ch.* xiii. 3. Rules for the conduct of Christians to one another, as members of the Christian church, *ch.* xiv., and *ch.* xv. to *ver.* 14.

III. As he draws towards a conclusion, he makes an apology for writing to them, *ch.* xv. 14—16; gives them an account of himself and his own affairs, *ver.* 17—21; promises them a visit, *ver.* 22—29; begs their prayers, *ver.* 30—33; sends particular salutations to many friends there, *ch.* xvi. 1—16; warns them against those who caused divisions, *ver.* 17—20; adds the salutations of his friends with him, *ver.* 21—23; and ends with a benediction to them and a doxology to God, *ver.* 24—27.

CHAPTER I.

In this chapter we may observe, I. The preface and introduction to the whole epistle, to *ver.* 16. II. A description of the deplorable condition of the Gentile world, which begins the proof of the doctrine of justification by faith, here laid down at *ver.* 17. The first is according to the then usual formality of a letter, but intermixed with very excellent and savoury expressions.



PAUL, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: 5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: 6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: 7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this paragraph we have, First. The person who writes the epistle described; *ver.* 1, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ." This is his title of honour, which he glories in, not as the Jewish teachers, Rabbi, rabbi; but a servant, a more immediate attendant, a steward in the house. "Called to be an apostle." Some think he alludes to his old name Saul, which signifies one called for, or inquired after: Christ sought him to make an apostle of him, *Acts* ix. 15. He here builds his authority upon his call; he did not run without sending, as the false apostles did: κλητός απόστολος—"called an apostle," as if this were the name he would be called by, though he acknowledged himself not meet to be called so, 1 *Cor.* xv. 9. "Separated to the Gospel of God." The Pharisees had their name from separation, because they separated themselves to the study of the law, and might be called ἀφορισμένοι εις τον νόμον. Such a one Paul had formerly been; but now he had changed his studies, was ἀφορισμένος εις το Ευαγγέλιον, a Gospel Pharisee, separated by the counsel of God, *Gal.* i. 15, "separated from his mother's womb," by an immediate direction of the Spirit, and a regular ordination according to that direction, *Acts* xiii. 2, 3, by a dedication of himself to this work. He was an entire devotee to the Gospel of God, the Gospel which has God for its author, the origin and extraction of it Divine and heavenly.

Secondly. Having mentioned the Gospel of God, he digresses, to give us an encomium of it.

1. The antiquity of it. It was promised before, *ver.* 2; it was no novel upstart doctrine, but of ancient standing in the promises and prophecies of the Old

Testament, which did all unanimously point at the Gospel, the morning beams that ushered in the Sun of righteousness: this not by word of mouth only, but in the Scripture.

2. The subject matter of it: it is concerning Christ, *ver.* 3, 4. The prophets and apostles all bear witness to him; he is the true treasure hid in the field of the Scriptures. Observe, When Paul mentions Christ, how he heaps up his names and titles, "his son Jesus Christ our Lord," as one that took a pleasure in speaking of him; and, having mentioned him, he cannot go on in his discourse without some expression of love and honour, as here, where in one person he shews us his two distinct natures. 1st. His human nature. "Made of the seed of David," *ver.* 3, that is, born of the virgin Mary, who was of the house of David, *Lu.* i. 27, as was Joseph, his supposed father, *Lu.* ii. 4. David is here mentioned because of the special promises made to him concerning the Messiah, especially his kingly office, 2 *Sam.* vii. 12; *Ps.* cxxxii. 11, compared with *Lu.* i. 32, 33. 2nd. His Divine nature. "Declared to be the Son of God," *ver.* 4, the Son of God by eternal generation, or, as it is here explained, "according to the Spirit of holiness." "According to the flesh," that is, his human nature, "he was of the seed of David;" but, "according to the Spirit of holiness," that is, the Divine nature, (as he is said to be quickened by the Spirit, 1 *Pet.* iii. 18, compared with 2 *Cor.* xiii. 4,) he is the Son of God. The great proof or demonstration of this is his resurrection from the dead, which proved it effectually and undeniably. The sign of the prophet Jonas, Christ's resurrection, was intended for that last conviction, *Mat.* xii. 39, 40. Those that would not be convinced by that would be convinced by nothing. So that we have here a summary of the Gospel doctrine concerning Christ's two natures in one person.

3. The fruit of it; *ver.* 5, "By whom," that is, by Christ manifested and made known in the Gospel. "We," Paul, and the rest of the ministers, "have received grace and apostleship," that is, the favour to be made apostles, *Eph.* iii. 8. The apostles were made a spectacle to the world, led a life of toil, and trouble, and hazard, were killed all the day long, and yet Paul reckons the apostleship a favour. We may justly reckon it a great favour to be employed in any work or service for God, whatever difficulties or dangers we may meet with in it. This apostleship was received "for obedience to the faith," that is, to bring people to that obedience; as Christ, so his ministers received that they might give. Paul's was for this obedience "among all nations," for he was the apostle of the Gentiles, *ch.* xi. 13. Observe the description here given of the Christian profession: or is "obedience to the faith." It does not consist in a notional knowledge or a naked assent, much less does it consist in perverse disputings, but in obedience. This obedience to the faith answers the law of faith, mentioned *ch.* iii. 27. The act of faith is the obedience of the understanding to God revealing, and the product of that is the obedience of the will to God commanding. To anticipate the ill use which might be made of the doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law, which he was to explain in the following epistle, he here speaks of Christianity as an obedience. Christ has a yoke, "Among whom are you," *ver.* 6. You Romans, in this, stand upon the same level with other Gentile nations of less fame and wealth; you are all one in Christ. The Gospel salvation is a common salvation, *Jude* 3. No respect of persons with God. "The called of Jesus Christ;" all those, and those only, are brought to an obedience of the faith that are effectually called of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly. The persons to whom it is written; *ver.* 7, "To all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints;" that is, to all the professing Christians that were in Rome, whether Jews or Gentiles originally, whether high or low, bond or free, learned or unlearned. Rich and poor meet together in Christ Jesus. Here is, 1. The privilege of Christians. They are beloved of God, they are members of that body which is beloved, which is God's *Hephzibah*, in which his delight is. We speak of God's love by his bounty and beneficence, and so he hath a common love to all mankind and a peculiar love for true believers; and between these there is a love he hath for all the body of visible Christians.

2. The duty of Christians; and that is to be holy, for hereunto are they called, called to be saints, called to salvation through sanctification. Saints, and only saints, are beloved of God with a special and peculiar love. Saints, and only saints, are called saints in profession; it were well if all that are called saints were saints indeed. Those that are called saints should labour to answer to the name; otherwise, though it is an honour and a privilege, yet it will be of little avail at the great day to have been called saints, if we be not really so.

Fourthly. The apostolical benediction; *ver.* 7, "Grace to you and peace." This is one of the tokens in every epistle; and it hath not only the affection of

to have been written upon a pre-conceived plan. We expect in it sequence, not system; coherence, not composition. . . . We may trace its argument, but we mar its beauty and we miss its meaning if we reduce it to a framework of pre-meditated heads and formal subdivisions" (Dr. Vaughan).

i. 1. "Servant." St. Paul usually describes himself as an apostle. Here and in Phil. i. 1 and Titus he uses the word servant—i.e., bond-servant. In 1 *Cor.* vii. 21—23 he applies it to Christians generally.

i. 4. "Declared:" i.e., shown, proved, or manifested. He was made of the seed of David (verse 3). He is not made, but manifested as the Son of God, for that he was from all eternity. "With power:" to be united either with "declared" or "Son of God." Thus St. Paul either maintains that Christ was proved to be the Son of God possessed of power (as stated in Matt. xxviii. 18), or that he was with power (i.e., powerfully) manifested to be the Son of God. (Compare Mark ix. 1; chap. xv. 19.) "By the resurrection of (not from) the

a good wish, but the authority of a blessing. The priests under the law were to bless the people, and so are gospel ministers, in the name of the Lord. In this usual benediction observe, 1. The favours desired: "Grace and peace." The Old Testament salutation was, "Peace be to you;" but now grace is prefixed—grace, that is, the favour of God towards us or the work of God in us; both are previously requisite to true peace. All gospel blessings are included in these two: "Grace and peace." Peace, that is, all good; peace with God, peace in your own consciences, peace with all that are about you; all these founded in grace. 2. The fountain of those favours; "From God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." All good comes, 1st. From God as a Father; he hath put himself into that relation to engage and encourage our desires and expectations; we are taught, when we come for grace and peace, to call him our Father. 2nd. "From the Lord Jesus Christ," as Mediator, and the great feeoffee in trust for the conveying and securing of these benefits. We have them from his fulness, peace from the fulness of his merit, grace from the fulness of his Spirit.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; 10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; 12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. 13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

We may here observe,

First. His thanksgivings for them; ver. 8, "First, I thank my God." It is good to begin every thing with blessing God, to make, that the alpha and omega of every song, "in every thing to give thanks." "My God." He speaks this with delight and triumph. In all our thanksgivings it is good for us to eye God as our God; this makes every mercy sweet, when we can say of God, "He is mine in covenant." "Through Jesus Christ." All our duties and performances are pleasing to God only through Jesus Christ, praises as well as prayers—"For you all." We must express our love to our friends, not only by praying for them, but by praising God for them. God must have the glory of all the comfort we have in our friends; for every creature is that to us, and no more, which God makes it to be. Many of these Romans Paul had no personal acquaintance with, and yet he could heartily rejoice in their gifts and graces. When some of the Roman Christians met him, *Acts xxviii.* 15, he thanked God for them, and took courage; but here his true catholic love extends itself farther, and he thanks God for them all; not only for those among them that were his helpers in Christ, and that bestowed much labour upon him, (of whom he speaks, *ch. xvi.* 3, 6) but for them all—"That your faith is spoken of." Paul travelled up and down from place to place, and wherever he came he heard great commendations of the Christians at Rome, which he mentions, not to make them proud, but to quicken them to answer the general character people gave of them, and the general expectation people had from them. The greater reputation a man hath for religion, the more careful he should be to preserve it, because "a little folly spoils him that is in reputation," *Ecc. x.* 1.—"Throughout the whole world," that is, the Roman empire, into which the Roman Christians, upon Claudius' edict to banish all the Jews from Rome, were scattered abroad, but had now returned, and it seems, led a very good report behind them, wherever they had been, in all the churches. There was this good effect of their sufferings; if they had not been persecuted, they had not been famous. This was indeed a good name, a name for good things with God and good people. As the elders of old, so these Romans, "obtained a good report through faith," *Heb. xi.* 2. It is a desirable thing to be famous for faith. The faith of the Roman Christians came to be thus talked of, not only because it was excelling in itself, but because it was eminent and observable in its circumstances. Rome was a city upon a hill, every one took notice of what was done there. Thus those who have many eyes upon them have need to walk circumspectly, for what they do, good or bad, will be spoken of. The church of Rome was then a flourishing church; but since that time how is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed! Rome is not what it was. She was then espoused a chaste virgin to Christ, and excelled in beauty; but she has since degenerated, "dealt treacherously, and embraced the bosom of a stranger;" so that (as that good old book, *The Practice of Piety*, makes appear in no less than twenty-six instances) even the *Epistle to the Romans* is now an epistle against the Romans; little reason has she, therefore, to boast of her former credit.

Secondly. His prayer for them, ver. 9. Though a famous flourishing church, yet they had need to be prayed for; they had not yet attained. Paul mentions this as an instance of his love to them. One of the greatest kindnesses we can do our friends, and sometimes the only kindness that is in the power of our hands, is, by prayer to recommend them to the lovingkindness of God. From Paul's example here we may learn, 1. Constancy in prayer; "Always without ceasing." He did himself observe the same rules he gave to others, *Eph. vi.* 18; *1 Thes. v.* 17. Not that Paul did nothing else but pray, but he kept up stated

times for the solemn performance of that duty, and those very frequent, and observed without fail. 2. Charity in prayer; "I make mention of you." Though he had no particular acquaintance with them, nor interest in them, yet he prayed for them; not only for all saints in general, but he made express mention of them. It is not unfit sometimes to be express in our prayers for particular churches and places; not to inform God, but to affect ourselves. We are likely to have the most comfort in those friends that we pray most for. Concerning this, he makes a solemn appeal to the Searcher of hearts: "For God is my witness." It was in a weighty matter, and in a thing known only to God and his own heart, that he used this asseveration. It is very comfortable to be able to call God to witness to our sincerity and constancy in the discharge of a duty. God is particularly a witness to our secret prayers, the matter of them, the manner of the performance; then our Father sees in secret, *Mat. vi.* 6. "God, whom I serve with my spirit." Those that serve God with their spirits may, with an humble confidence, appeal to him; hypocrites who rest in bodily exercise cannot. His particular prayer, among many other petitions he put up for them, was, that he might have an opportunity of paying them a visit, ver. 10. "Making request, if by any means," &c. Whatever comfort we desire to find in any creature, we must have recourse to God for it by prayer; for our times are in his hand, and all our ways at his disposal. The expressions here used intimate that he was very desirous of such an opportunity: "if by any means;" that he had long and often been disappointed: "now at length;" and yet that he submitted it to the Divine providence: "a prosperous journey by the will of God." As in our purposes, so in our desires, we must still remember to insert this, "if the Lord will," *Jas. iv.* 15. Our journeys are prosperous or otherwise according to the will of God, comfortable or not as he pleases.

Thirdly. His great desire to see them, with the reasons of it, ver. 11—15. He had heard so much of them that he had a great desire to be better acquainted with them. Fruitful Christians are as much the joy as barren professors are the grief of faithful ministers. Accordingly, he "often purposed to come, but was let hitherto," ver. 13, for man purposeth, but God disposeth. He was hindered by other business that took him off, by his care of other churches, whose affairs were pressing; and Paul was for doing that first, not which was most pleasant, (then he would have gone to Rome,) but which was most needful—a good example to ministers, who must not consult their own inclinations so much as the necessity of their people's souls. Paul desired to visit these Romans.

1. That they might be edified; ver. 11, "That I may impart unto you." He received that he might communicate. Never were full breasts so desirous to be drawn out to the sucking infant as Paul's head and heart were to be imparting spiritual gifts, that is, preaching to them. A good sermon is a good gift, so much the better for being a spiritual gift. "To the end you may be established." Having commended their flourishing, he here expresses his desire of their establishment, that as they grew upward in the branches they might grow downward in the root. The best saints, while they are in such a shaking world as this, have need to be more and more established; and spiritual gifts are of special use for our establishment.

2. That he might be comforted, ver. 12. What he heard of their flourishing in grace was so much a joy to him that it must needs be much more so to behold it. Paul could take comfort in the fruit of the labours of other ministers. "By the mutual faith both of you and me;" that is, our mutual faithfulness and fidelity. It is very comfortable when there is a mutual confidence between minister and people, they confiding in him as a faithful minister, and he in them as a faithful people. Or, the mutual work of faith, which is love; they rejoiced in the expressions of one another's love, or communicating their faith one to another. It is very refreshing to Christians to compare notes about their spiritual concerns; thus are they sharpened, "as iron sharpens iron." "That I might have some fruit," ver. 13. Their edification would be his advantage, it would be fruit abounding to a good account. Paul minded his work, as one that believed the more good he did the greater would his reward be.

3. That he might discharge his trust as the apostle of the Gentiles; ver. 14, "I am a debtor." 1st. His receivings made him a debtor; for they were talents he was intrusted with to trade for his Master's honour. We should think of this when we covet great things, that all our receivings put us in debt; we are but stewards of our Lord's goods. 2nd. His office made him a debtor. He was a debtor as he was an apostle; he was called and sent to work, and had engaged to mind it. Paul had improved his talent, and laboured in his work, and done as much good as ever any man did, and yet, in reflection upon it, he still writes himself debtor; for, when we have done all, we are but unprofitable servants. "Debtor to the Greeks, and to the barbarians;" that is, as the following words explain it, "to the wise, and to the unwise." The Greeks fancied themselves to have the monopoly of wisdom, and looked upon all the rest of the world as barbarians, comparatively so; not cultivated with learning and arts as they were. Now Paul was a debtor to both, looked upon himself as obliged to do all the good he could both to the one and to the other. Accordingly, we find him paying his debt, both in his preaching and in his writing, doing good both to Greeks and barbarians, and suiting his discourse to the capacity of each. You may observe a difference between his sermon at Lystra among the plain Lycaonians, *Acts xiv.* 15, &c., and his sermon at Athens among the polite philosophers, *Acts xvii.* 22, &c. He delivered both as debtor to each, giving to each their portion. Though a plain preacher, yet, as debtor to the wise, he speaks wisdom among those that are perfect, *1 Cor. ii.* 6. For these reasons he was ready, if he had an opportunity, "to preach the Gospel at Rome," ver. 15. Though a public place, though a perilous place, where Christianity met with a great deal of opposition, yet Paul was ready to run the risk at Rome, if called to it—"I am ready," *ἑτοιμος*. It denotes a great readiness of mind, and that he was very forward to it. What he did was not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. It is an excellent thing to be ready to meet every opportunity of doing or getting good.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

dead:" the expression is general, and though doubtless it includes a primary reference to the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the proof of his Divine Sonship, yet it views that as involving the whole resurrection. The argument of chap. vi. 4 lies wrapped up in these words.

i. 8. "Is spoken of:" Alford renders, "is published." Wherever there was a Christian church the faith of the little band of Christians at Rome would be discussed. The unfavourable opinion of the Jews is to be seen in *Acts xxviii.* 22.

i. 10. "A prosperous journey" suggests the wrong notion that St. Paul saw his way to go to them, and only prayed for a prosperous journey, whereas what he prays for is that the way to go may be made plain. Hence render the words with Alford, "I shall have a way opened."

i. 11. "Some spiritual gift:" not any of the supernatural gifts; higher than these he valued the establishing of believers in the faith.

Paul here enters upon a large discourse of justification, in the latter part of this chapter laying down his thesis, and, in order to the proof of it, describing the deplorable condition of the Gentile world. His transition is very handsome, and like an orator: he was ready to preach the Gospel at Rome, though a place where the Gospel was run down by those that called themselves the wits; "for," saith he, "I am not ashamed of it," ver. 16. There is a great deal in the Gospel which such a man as Paul might be tempted to be ashamed of, especially that he whose Gospel it was a man hanged upon a tree, that the doctrine of it was plain, had little in it to set it off among scholars, the professors of it were mean and despised, and every where spoken against; yet Paul was not ashamed to own it. I reckon him a Christian indeed that is neither ashamed of the Gospel nor to shame to us.

[We offer the following paraphrase:—"Now you must know, brethren, that it has long been my purpose to come to you, but have hitherto been prevented, that I might have some effects of my ministry among you also, even as among the other nations where I have laboured. I have not yet visited the seat of philosophy, nor come into contact with its refined and literary people. But I count myself as much bound to declare the Gospel to Greeks, or to men of Attic cultivation and acquirement, as to rude and ignorant barbarians—as much to the learned in this world's wisdom as to the unlearned. So that, as far as it lies with me, I am quite in readiness to preach the Gospel even to you who are at Rome. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ—and, in the work of declaring it, am as ready to face the contempt and the self-sufficiency of science as to go round with it among those more docile and acquiescing tribes of our species who have less of fancied wisdom in themselves with which to confront it.—C.]

The reason of this bold profession, taken from the nature and excellency of the Gospel, introduces his dissertation.

First. The proposition, ver. 16, 17. The excellency of the Gospel lies in this, that it reveals to us,

1. The salvation of believers as the end. "It is the power of God unto salvation." Paul is not ashamed of the Gospel, how mean and contemptible soever it may appear to a carnal eye; for 'the power of God works by it the salvation of all that believe;' it shews us the way of salvation, *Acts* xvi. 17, and is the great charter by which salvation is conveyed and made over to us. But, 1st. It is through "the power of God." Without that power the Gospel is but a dead letter; the revelation of the Gospel is the revelation of the arm of the Lord, *Isa.* liii. 1, as power went along with the word of Christ to heal diseases. 2nd. It is "to those," to others it is hidden. The medicine prepared will not cure the patient if it be not taken. "To the Jew first." The lost sheep of the house of Israel had the first offer made them, both by Christ and his apostles. You first, *Acts* ii. 26; but upon their refusal the apostles turned to the Gentiles, *Acts* xiii. 46. Jews and Gentiles now stand upon the same level, both equally miserable without a Saviour, and both equally welcome to the Saviour. *Col.* iii. 11. Such doctrine as this was surprising to the Jews, who had hitherto been the peculiar people, and had looked with scorn upon the Gentile world; but the long-expected Messiah proves a light to enlighten the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel.

2. The justification of believers as the way; ver. 17, "For therein," that is, in this Gospel, which Paul so much triumphs in, "is the righteousness of God revealed." Our misery and ruin being the product and consequent of our iniquity, that which will shew us the way of salvation must needs shew us the way of justification, and this the Gospel does. The Gospel makes known a righteousness wherein to appear before him; and, blessed be God, there is such a righteousness brought in by Messiah the prince, *Dan.* ix. 24, and revealed in the Gospel; a righteousness, that is, a gracious method of reconciliation and acceptance, notwithstanding the guilt of our sins. This evangelical righteousness, 1st. Is called the righteousness of God; it is of God's appointing, of God's approving and accepting. It is so called to cut off all pretensions to a righteousness resulting from the merit of our own works. It is the righteousness of Christ, who is God, resulting from a satisfaction of infinite value. 2nd. It is said to be "from faith to faith," from the faithfulness of God revealing to the faith of man receiving, so some; from the faith of dependence upon God, and dealing with him immediately, as Adam before the fall, to the faith of dependence upon a Mediator, and so dealing with God, so others; from the first faith, by which we are put into a justified state, to after faith, by which we live, and are continued in that state; and the faith that justifies us is no less than our taking Christ for our Saviour, and becoming true Christians, according to the tenor of the baptismal covenant; from faith engrafting us into Christ, to faith deriving virtue from him as our root; both implied in the next words, "The just shall live by faith." Just by faith, there is faith justifying us; live by faith, there is faith maintaining us; and so there is a righteousness from faith to faith. Faith is all in all, both in the beginning and progress of a Christian life. It is not from faith to works, as if faith put us into a justified state, and then works preserved and maintained us in it, but it is all along from faith to faith, as 2 *Cor.* iii. 18, "from glory to glory;" it is increasing, continuing, persevering faith, faith pressing forward, and getting ground of unbelief. To shew that this is no novel, upstart doctrine, he quotes for it that famous scripture in the Old Testament, so often mentioned in the New, *Hab.* ii. 4, "The just shall live by faith." Being justified by faith he shall live by it both the life of grace and of glory. The prophet there had placed himself upon the watch-tower, expecting some extraordinary discoveries, ver. 1, and the discovery was of the certainty of the appearance of the promised Messiah in the fulness of time, notwithstanding seeming delays. This is there called "the vision," by way of eminence, as elsewhere "the promise;" and while that time is coming, as well as when it has come, "the just shall live by faith." Thus is the evangelical righteousness from faith to faith—from Old Testament faith in a Christ to come to New Testament faith in a Christ already come.

[In this and other passages in this epistle where the expression "righteousness of God" occurs, it is subjected to various interpretations. The three most important are the following. According to the first it means, the justice, rectitude, or mercy of God. According to the second it means, God's method of justification; and, according to the third and most common, that righteousness which God bestows, and which is acceptable in his sight. In favour of this last interpretation it may be argued, 1. That it assigns to the word righteousness its most common and appropriate meaning. 2. It suits almost all the passages in which the phrase "righteousness of God" occurs: see *ch.* iii. 21; *x.* 3; *Phil.* iii. 9, &c. 3. It is suitable to the opposition between the expressions "righteousness of faith" and "righteousness of the law." The former means that excellence, together with its consequences, which is obtained by faith, the latter that which is obtained by obedience to the law. 4. It is especially recommended by a comparison with *Phil.* iii. 9, "Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Here, it is evident, that "the righteousness which is of God" means that justifying righteousness which God gives, as distinguished from that which is obtained by our own works; and is the apostle's own explanation of the more concise phrase "righteousness of God." 5. This interpretation is entirely suitable to the context. The

i. 13. "Was let hitherto:" for the cause of the hindrance see *chap.* xv. 19—22. "Fruit among you;" not fruit of my labours, but "fruit borne by you who have been planted to bring forth fruit to God. This fruit I should then gather and present to God. Compare the figure in *chap.* xv. 16" (Alford). "Other Gentiles;" some think that these words point to the Gentile origin of the Roman church.

i. 17. "The righteousness of God:" righteousness, "the state or character of one who is just in God's sight; the addition 'of God'

efficacy of the Gospel is attributed to the fact that a meritorious and saving excellence is therein revealed, and which God offers as the ground of the sinner's dependence, in preference to any righteousness or merit of his own.—H.]

Secondly. The proof of this proposition, that both Jews and Gentiles stand in need of a righteousness wherein to appear before God, and that neither the one nor the other have any of their own to plead. Justification must be either by faith or works. It cannot be by works, which he proves at large by describing the works both of Jews and Gentiles; and therefore he concludes it must be by faith, *ch.* iii. 20, 28. The apostle, like a skilful surgeon, before he applies the plaister, searches the wound—endeavours first to convince of guilt and wrath, and then to shew the way of salvation. This makes the Gospel the more welcome. We must first see the righteousness of God condemning, and then the righteousness of God justifying will appear worthy of all acceptance. In general, ver. 18, "the wrath of God is revealed." The light of nature and the light of the law reveal the wrath of God from sin to sin. It is well for us that the Gospel reveals the justifying righteousness of God from faith to faith. The antithesis is observable. Here is,

1. The sinfulness of man described. He reduceth it to two heads, "ungodliness and unrighteousness;" ungodliness against the laws of the first table, unrighteousness against those of the second.

2. The cause of that sinfulness; and that is, "holding the truth in unrighteousness." Some *communes notitiae*, some ideas they had of the being of God, and of the difference of good and evil, but they held them in unrighteousness; that is, they knew and professed them in a consistency with their wicked courses. They held the truth as a captive or prisoner, that it should not influence them, as otherwise it would. An unrighteous wicked heart is the dungeon in which many a good truth is detained and buried. "Holding fast the form of sound words in faith and love" is the root of all religion, 2 *Tim.* i. 13; but holding it fast in unrighteousness is the root of all sin.

3. The displeasure of God against it. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven," not only in the written word, "which is given by inspiration of God," (the Gentiles had not that,) but in the providences of God, his judgments executed upon sinners, which do not spring out of the dust, or fall out by chance, nor are they to be ascribed to second causes, but they are a revelation from heaven. Or, 'wrath from heaven is revealed;' it is not the wrath of a man like ourselves, 'but wrath from heaven,' therefore the more terrible and the more unavoidable.

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts,



JUPITER, &c.

and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more

showing that this state is the gift of God, and not earned by man. That it is not God's personal righteousness is shown by the context and absence of the article. It is a righteousness of God—i.e., a Divine gift of righteousness, a plan devised by God for man to be righteous before him; thus answering the question of *Job.* xxv. 4" (Vaughan). "Revealed:" rather, "is in process of unveiling." "From faith to faith:" depending on faith from first to last.

i. 18. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven:" is in process

than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

In this last part of the chapter the apostle applies what he had said particularly to the Gentile world, in which we may observe,

First. The means and helps they had to come to the knowledge of God. Though they had not such a knowledge of his law as Jacob and Israel had, *Ps. cxlvii. 20*, yet among them "he left not himself without witness, *Acts xiv. 17*; "for that which may be known," &c. ver. 19, 20. Observe,

1. What discoveries they had: "That which may be known of God is manifest," *ἐν αὐτοῖς*,—"among them;" that is, there were some even among them that had the knowledge of God, were convinced of the existence of one supreme *Nūmen*. The philosophy of Pythagoras, Plato, and the Stoics, discovered a great deal of the knowledge of God, as appears by abundance of testimonies. "That which may be known," which implies that there is a great deal which may not be known. The being of God may be apprehended, but cannot be comprehended. We cannot by searching find him out, *Job xi. 7-9*. Finite understandings cannot perfectly know an infinite being; but, blessed be God, there is that which may be known, enough to lead us to our chief end, the glorifying and enjoying of him; and these things revealed belong to us and to our children, while secret things are not to be pried into, *Deu. xxix. 29*.

2. Whence they had these discoveries: "God hath shewn it to them." Those common natural notions which they had of God were imprinted upon their hearts by the God of nature himself, who is the Father of lights. This sense of a Deity, and a regard to that Deity, are so connate with the human nature that some think we are to distinguish men from brutes by these rather than by reason.

3. By what way and means these discoveries and notions which they had were confirmed and improved, namely, by the work of creation; ver. 20, "For the invisible things of God," &c. 1st. Observe what they knew: "The invisible things of him, even his eternal power and godhead." Though God be not the object of sense, yet he hath discovered and made known himself by those things that are sensible. The power and godhead of God are invisible things, and yet are clearly seen in their products. He works in secret, (*Job xxiii. 8, 9*, *Ps. cxxxix. 13*; *Ecc. xi. 5*) but manifests what he has wrought, and therein makes known his power and godhead, and others of his attributes which natural light apprehends in the idea of a God. They could not come by natural light to the knowledge of the three persons in the godhead, (though some fancy they have found footsteps of this in Plato's writings,) but they did come to the knowledge of the godhead, at least so much knowledge as was sufficient to have kept them from idolatry. This was that truth which they held in unrighteousness. 2nd. How they knew it. "By the things that are made," which could not make themselves, nor fall into such an exact order and harmony by any casual hits; and therefore must have been produced by some first cause or intelligent agent, which first cause could be no other than an eternal powerful God: see *Ps. xix. 1*; *Isa. xl. 26*; *Acts xvii. 24*. The workman is known by his work. The variety, multitude, order, beauty, harmony, different nature, and excellent contrivance of the things that are made, the direction of them to certain ends, and the concurrence of all the parts to the good and beauty of the whole, do abundantly prove a Creator, and his eternal power and godhead. Thus did the light shine in the darkness. And this "from the creation of the world." Understand it either, *First*, As the topic from which the knowledge of them is drawn. To evince this truth, we have recourse to the great work of creation. And some think this *κτίσις κόσμου*,—"this creature of the world," (as it may be read,) is to be understood of man, the *κτίσις κατ' ἐξοχήν*,—"the most remarkable creature" of the lower world, called *κτίσις*, *Mar. xvi. 15*. The frame and structure of human bodies, and especially the most excellent powers, faculties, and capacities of human souls, do abundantly prove that there is a Creator, and that he is God. Or, *Secondly*, As the date of the discovery. It is as old as the creation of the world. In this sense *ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου* is most frequently used in Scripture. These notions concerning God are not any modern discoveries, hit upon of late, but ancient truths, which were from the beginning. The way of the acknowledgment of God is a good old way; it was from the beginning. Truth got the start of error.

Secondly. Their gross idolatry, notwithstanding these discoveries that God made to them of himself, described here, ver. 21-23, 25. We shall the less wonder at the inefficacy of these natural discoveries to prevent the idolatry of the Gentiles if we remember how prone even the Jews, who had Scripture light to guide them, were to idolatry; so miserably are the degenerate sons of men plunged in the mire of sense. Observe,

1. The inward cause of their idolatry, ver. 21, 22. They are therefore without excuse, in that they did know God, and from what they knew might easily infer that it was their duty to worship him, and him only. Though some have greater light and means of knowledge than others, yet all have enough to leave them inexcusable. But the mischief of it was that, 1st. "They glorified him not as God." Their affections towards him, and their awe and adoration of him, did not keep pace with their knowledge. To glorify him as God is to glorify him only; for there can be but one infinite; but they did not so glorify him, for they set up a multitude of other deities. To glorify him as God is to worship him with spiritual worship; but they made images of him. Not to glorify God as God is in effect not to glorify him at all; to respect him as a creature is not to glorify him, but to dishonour him. 2nd. "Neither were they thankful;" not thankful for the favours in general they received from God, (insensibleness of God's mercies is at the bottom of our sinful departures from him;) not thankful in particular for the discoveries God was pleased to make of himself to them. Those that do not improve the means of knowledge and grace are justly reckoned unthankful for them. 3rd. "But they became vain in their imaginations," *ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς*,—"in their reasonings," in their practical inferences. They had a great deal of knowledge of general truths, ver. 19, but no prudence to apply them to particular cases. Or, in their notions of God, and the creation of the world, and the origination of mankind, and the chief good; in these things, when they quitted the plain truth, they soon disputed themselves into a thousand vain and foolish fancies. The several opinions and hypotheses of the various sects of philosophers concerning these things were so many vain imaginations. When truth is forsaken, errors multiply in infinitum,—"infinitely." 4th. "And their foolish heart was darkened." The foolishness and practical wickedness of the heart cloud and darken the intellectual powers and faculties. Nothing tends more to the blinding and perverting of the understanding than the corruption and depravedness of the will and affections. 5th. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," ver. 22. This looks black upon the philosophers, the pretenders to wisdom and professors of it. Those that had the most luxuriant fancy, in framing to themselves the idea of a God, fell into the most gross and absurd conceits; and it was the just punishment of their pride and self-conceit. It has been observed that the most refined of nations, that made the greatest show of wisdom, were the arrantest fools in religion. The barbarians adored the sun and moon, which of all others was the most specious idolatry; while the learned Egyptians worshipped an ox and an onion. The Grecians, who excelled them in wisdom, adored diseases and human passions. The Romans, the wisest of all, worshipped the furies. And at this day the poor Americans worship the thunder; while the ingenious Chinese adore the devil. Thus "the world by wisdom knew not God," *1 Cor. i. 21*. As a profession of wisdom is an aggravation of folly, so a proud conceit of wisdom is the cause of a great deal of folly. Hence we read of few philosophers who were converted to Christianity; and Paul's preaching was no where so laughed at and ridiculed as among the learned Athenians, *Acts xvii. 18-32*. *φρόνησεν εἶναι*,—"conceited themselves" to be wise. The plain truth of the being of God would not content them; they thought themselves above that, and so fell into the greatest errors.

2. The outward acts of their idolatry, ver. 23-25. 1st. Making images of God, ver. 23, by which, as much as in them lay, "they changed the glory of the incorruptible God;" compare *Ps. cvi. 20*; *Jer. ii. 11*. They ascribed a deity to the most contemptible creatures, and by them represented God. It was the greatest honour God did to man that he made man in the image of God; but it is the greatest dishonour man has done to God that he has made God in the image of man. This was what God so strictly warned the Jews against, *Deu. iv. 15, &c.* This the apostle shews the folly of in his sermon at Athens, *Acts xvii. 29*; see *Isa. xl. 18, &c.*; *xlv. 10, &c.* This is called, ver. 25, "changing the truth of God into a lie." As it did dishonour his glory, so it did misrepresent his being. Idols are called lies, for they belie God, as if he had a body, whereas he is a spirit, *Jer. xxiii. 14*; *Hos. vii. 1*. "Teachers of lies," *Hab. ii. 18*. 2nd. Giving Divine honour to the creature. "Worshipped and served the creature," *παρὰ τὸν κτίστην*,—"besides the Creator." They did own a supreme *Nūmen* in their profession, but they did in effect disown him by the worship they paid to the creature; for God will be all or none. Or, 'above the Creator,' paying more devout respect to their inferior deities, stars, heroes, demons, thinking the supreme God inaccessible, or above their worship. The sin itself was their worshipping the creature at all; but this is mentioned as an aggravation of the sin, that they worshipped the creature more than the Creator. This was the general wickedness of the Gentile world, and became twisted in with their laws and government; in compliance with which even the wise men among them, who knew and owned a supreme God and were convinced of the nonsense and absurdity of their polytheism and idolatry, yet did as the rest of their neighbours did. Seneca, in his book *De Superstitione*, as it is quoted by Augustine, *De Civit. Dei*, lib. vi., cap. 10, (for the book itself is lost,) after he had largely shewn the great folly and impiety of the vulgar religion, in divers instances of it, yet concludes, *Quæ omnia sapiens servabit tanquam legibus iussa, non tanquam dis grata*,—"All which a wise man will observe as established by law, not imagining them grateful to the gods." And afterwards, *Omne istam ignobilem deorum turbam, quam longo ævo longa superstitione congesti, sic adorabimus, ut meminimus cultum ejus magis ad morem quam ad rem pertinere*,—"All this ignoble rout of gods, which ancient superstition has amassed together by long prescription, we will so adore as to remember that the worship of them is rather a compliance with custom than material in itself." Upon which Augustine observes, *Colebat quod reprehendebat, agebat quod arguebat, quod cupabat adorabat*,—"He worshipped that which he censured, he did that which he had proved wrong, and he adored what he found fault with." I mention this thus largely because methinks it doth fully explain that of the apostle here; ver. 18, "Who hold the truth in unrighteousness." It is observable that upon the mention of the dishonour done to God by the idolatry of the Gentiles, the apostle, in the midst of his discourse, expresses himself in an awful adoration of God: "Who is blessed for ever. Amen." When we see or hear of any contempt cast upon God or his name, we should thence take occasion to think and speak highly and honourably of him. In this, as in other things, the worse others are, the better we should be. "Blessed for ever," notwithstanding these dishonours done to his name; though there are those that do not glorify him, yet he is glorified, and will be glorified to eternity.

Thirdly. The judgments of God upon them for this idolatry; not many temporal judgments, (the idolatrous nations were the conquering ruling nations of the world,) but spiritual judgments, giving them up to the most brutish and unnatural lusts. *Παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς*,—"He gave them up." It is thrice repeated here, ver. 24, 26, 28. Spiritual judgments are of all judgments the sorest, and to be most dreaded. Observe,

1. By whom they were given up. God gave them up, in a way of righteous judgment, as the just punishment of their idolatry,—taking off the bridle of restraining grace, leaving them to themselves, letting them alone; for his grace is his own, he is debtor to no man, he may give or withhold his grace at pleasure. Whether this giving up be a positive act of God, or only privative, we leave to the schools to dispute; but this we are sure of, that it is no new thing for God to give men up to their own hearts' lusts, to send them strong delusions, to let

of revealing. "Hold the truth:" rather, "hold down," and thus hinder the truth.

i. 19. "That which may be known:" that which is matter of knowledge, is manifest. (Compare *Job xxxviii. xli.*, and *Psa. xix. 1-4*.) "In them:" i.e., in their hearts. The knowledge of God is not from the works of God alone, but from them taken in relation to man. "Shewed:" rather, manifested; same word in both clauses.

i. 21. "Neither were thankful:" unbelief is akin to ingratitude.

"Became vain:" rather, were brought to vanity. "Foolish heart:" "Their heart being without understanding was darkened"—i.e., lost the little light it had, and wandered blindly in the ways of folly" (Alford).

i. 24. "Gave them up:" surrendered, or handed them over to. The word is used twice in this passage, and signifies that stage in the history of a sinner when the Divine influence is withdrawn and sin is sealed upon the sinner. (Compare *Hos. iv. 17*; *Psa. lxxxi. 11, 12*.)

Satan loose upon them, nay, to lay stumblingblocks before them. And yet God is not the author of sin, but herein infinitely just and holy; for, though the greatest wickednesses follow upon this giving up, the fault of that is to be laid upon the sinner's wicked heart. If the patient be obstinate, and will not submit to the methods prescribed, but wilfully takes and does that which is prejudicial to him, the physician is not to be blamed if he give him up as in a desperate condition; and all the fatal symptoms that follow are not to be imputed to the physician, but to the disease itself, and to the folly and wilfulness of the patient.

2. To what they were given up.

1st. "To uncleanness and vile affections," ver. 24, 26, 27. Those that would not entertain the more pure and refined notions of natural light, which tend to preserve the honour of God, justly forfeited those more gross and palpable sentiments which preserve the honour of human nature. Man being in honour, and refusing to understand the God that made him, thus becomes worse than the beasts that perish, *Ps. xlix. 20*. Thus one, by the Divine permission, becomes the punishment of another; but it is, as it is said here, "through the lusts of their own hearts," there all the fault is to be laid. Those who dishonoured God were given up to dishonour themselves. A man cannot be delivered up to a greater slavery than to be given up to his own lusts. Such are given over, like the Egyptians, *Isa. xix. 4*, into the hand of a cruel lord. The particular instances of their uncleanness and vile affections are their unnatural lusts, for which many of the heathen, even of those among them who passed for wise men, as Solon and Zeno, were infamous, against the plainest and most obvious dictates of natural light. The crying iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah, for which God rained hell from heaven upon them, became not only commonly practised, but avowed, in the pagan nations. Perhaps the apostle especially refers to the abominations that were committed in the worship of their idol gods, in which the worst of uncleannesses were prescribed for the honour of their gods. Dungehill service for dungehill gods: the unclean spirit's delight in such ministrations. In the church of Rome, where the pagan idolatries are revived, images worshipped, and saints only substituted in the room of demons, we hear of these abominations going barefaced, licensed by the pope, (*Fox's Acts and Monuments*, vol. i., p. 808.) and not only commonly perpetrated, but justified and pleaded for by some of their cardinals: the same spiritual plagues for the same spiritual wickednesses. See what wickedness there is in the nature of man. How abominable and filthy is man! "Lord, what is man!" says David; what a vile creature is he when left to himself! How much are we beholden to the restraining grace of God for the preserving any thing of the honour and decency of the human nature! For, were it not for this, man, who was made but little lower than the angels, would make himself a great deal lower than the devils. This is said to be that "recompence of their error which was meet." The Judge of all the earth does right, and observes a meetness between the sin and the punishment of it.

2nd. To a reprobate mind in these abominations, ver. 28.

First. "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge." The blindness of their understandings was caused by the wilful aversion of their wills and affections. They did not retain God in their knowledge, because they did not like it. They would neither know nor do any thing but just what pleased themselves. It is just the temper of carnal hearts; the pleasing of themselves is their highest end. There are many that have God in their knowledge, they cannot help it, the light shines so fully in their faces; but they do not retain him there. They say to the Almighty, Depart, *Job xxi. 14*, and they therefore do not retain God in their knowledge because it thwarts and contradicts their lusts; they do not like it. In their knowledge, — *ἐν ἐπιγνώσει*. There is a difference between *γινώσκω* and *ἐπιγνώσκω*, the 'knowledge' and the 'acknowledgment' of God; the pagans knew God, but did not, would not, acknowledge him.

Secondly. Answerable to this wilfulness of theirs, in gainsaying the truth, God gave them over to a wilfulness in the grossest sins, here called "a reprobate mind." — *εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν*, a mind void of all sense and judgment to discern things that differ, so that they could not distinguish their right hand from their left in spiritual things.

[That process in general history by which the decline of this world's light respecting God, and the decline of its practical allegiance to his authority, have kept pace, the one with the other, is often realized in the personal history of a single individual. There is a connection by the law of our nature between his wilful disobedience and his spiritual darkness. You have read perhaps in our old theologians of what they called a judicial blindness. It is a visitation consequent upon sin. It is a withdrawal of the Spirit of God, when grieved and discouraged and provoked by our resistance to his warnings. It is that Spirit ceasing to strive with the children of men; and coming to this as the final result of the contest he has so long maintained with their obstinacy—he shall let them alone since they will have it so. It is an extinction of the light which they once had, but refused to be led by; and now perhaps that they have it not, may they do many an evil thing to the evil of which they are profoundly asleep, and against which their conscience, now lulled and stifled into spiritual death, lifts no voice of remonstrance whatever. It is true indeed, that, with a conscience obliterated, and an inner man deaf to every awakening call, and a system of moral feelings like a piece of worn and rusty mechanism that cannot be set agoing, and an overhanging torpor upon all the spiritual faculties, so that every denunciation of an angry God and a coming vengeance is only heard like a sound that whistles by—it is indeed true that he whose soul is in a condition such as this, sits in the region and in the shadow of grossest darkness. But it is not like the transmitted darkness of paganism, which he can offer to plead in mitigation, or which will make his last sentence more tolerable for him even as it shall be more tolerable for Sodom or Gomorrah. It is a darkness which he loved, and into which he voluntarily entered. He made his escape to it from the light which he hated; and by his own act did he so outrun his pursuing conscience, as now to be at a distance from her warnings. If the call of 'repent or perish' do not bring him back, it is because he is sealed unto the day of condemnation; it is because God hath given him over to a reprobate mind; it is because he is judicially in a state of blindness; it is because his soul is compassed with a thick and heavy atmosphere of his own gathering. The heathen sinner will be tried by the light which he had. The Christian sinner will be tried by the light which he fled from. This is his condemnation, that light has come into his part of the world, and he would not come to meet and be enlightened by it. He is on a footing altogether different from that of the idolater, though the darkness in which he is enveloped be irrecoverable. Enough that a light was offered which he refused, or enough that a light was once possessed, and he did not like to retain it.—C.]

See whether a course of sin leads, and into what a gulf it plunges the sinner at last; hither fleshly lusts have a direct tendency. "Eyes full of adultery cannot cease from sin," *2 Pet. ii. 14*. This reprobate mind was a blind seared conscience, past feeling, *Eph. iv. 19*. When the judgment is once reconciled to sin, the man is in the suburbs of hell. At first Pharaoh hardened his heart, but afterwards God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Thus wilful hardness is justly punished with judicial hardness. "To do those things which are not convenient." This phrase may seem to bespeak a diminutive evil, but

here it is expressive of the grossest enormities; things that are not 'agreeable to men, but contradict the very light and law of nature. And here he subjoins a black list of those unbecoming things which the Gentiles were guilty of, being delivered up to a reprobate mind. No wickedness so heinous, so contrary to the light of nature, to the law of nations, and to all the interests of mankind, but a reprobate mind will comply with it. By the histories of those times, especially the accounts we have of the then prevailing dispositions and practices of the Romans when the ancient virtue of that commonwealth was so degenerated, it appears that these sins here mentioned were then and there reigning national sins. No fewer than twenty-three several sorts of sins and sinners are here specified, ver. 29–31. Here the devil's seat is; his name is legion, for they are many. It was time to have the Gospel preached among them, for the world had need of reformation. 1st. Sins against the first table. "Haters of God." Here is the devil in his own colours, sin appearing sin. Could it be imagined that rational creatures should hate the chiefest good, and depending creatures abhor the fountain of their being? And yet so it is. Every sin has in it a hatred of God; but some sinners are more open and avowed enemies to him than others, *Zec. xi. 8*. Proud men and boasters cope with God himself, and put those crowns upon their own heads which must be cast before his throne. 2nd. Sins against the second table. These are especially mentioned, because in these things they had a clearer light. In general here is a charge of unrighteousness. This is put first, for every sin is unrighteousness; it is withholding that which is due, perverting that which is right; it is especially put for second table sins, doing as we would not be done by. Against the fifth commandment: "Disobedient to parents, and without natural affection." — *ἀσέβητος*, that is, parents unkind and cruel to their children. Thus, when duty fails on one side, it commonly fails on the other. Disobedient children are justly punished with unnatural parents; and, on the contrary, unnatural parents with disobedient children. Against the sixth commandment: "Wickedness" (doing mischief for mischief's sake) "maliciousness, envy, murder, debate," (*ἐριδος*,—contention,) "malignity, spiteful, implacable, unmerciful;" all expressions of that hatred of our brother which is heart-murder. Against the seventh commandment: "Fornication." He mentions no more, having spoken before of other uncleannesses. Against the eighth commandment: "Unrighteousness, covetousness." Against the ninth commandment: "Deceit, whisperers, backbiters, covenant-breakers," lying and slandering. Here are two generals not before mentioned,—inventors of evil things, and without understanding; wise to do evil, and yet having no knowledge to do good. The more deliberate and politic sinners are in inventing evil things, the greater is their sin; so quick of invention in sin, and yet without understanding (stark fools) in the thoughts of God. Here is enough to humble us all in the sense of our original corruption; for every heart by nature has in it the seed and spawn of all these sins. In the close he mentions the aggravations of the sins, ver. 32. (1.) They "knew the judgment of God;" that is, (1st.) They knew the law. The judgment of God is that which his justice requires, which, because he is just, he judgeth meet to be done. (2nd.) They knew the penalty; so it is explained here. They knew "that those who commit such things were worthy of death," eternal death; their own consciences could not but suggest this to them, and yet they ventured upon it. It is a great aggravation of sin when it is committed against knowledge, (*Jas. iv. 17*) especially against the knowledge of the judgment of God. It is daring presumption to run upon the sword's point. It argues the heart much hardened, and very resolutely set upon sin. (2.) They "not only do the same, but have pleasure in those that do them." The violence of some present temptation may hurry a man into the commission of such sins himself in which the vitiated appetite may take a pleasure; but to be pleased with other people's sins is to love sin for sin's sake: it is joining in a confederacy for the devil's kingdom and interest. *Συνεδοκῶντες*: they do not only commit sin, but they defend and justify it, and encourage others to do the like. Our own sins are much aggravated by our concurrence with, and complacency in, the sins of others.

Now lay all this together, and then say whether the Gentile world, lying under so much guilt and corruption, could be justified before God by any works of their own.

CHAPTER II.

The scope of the first two chapters of this epistle may be gathered from *ch. iii. 9*, "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin." Thus we have proved upon the Gentiles, (*ch. i.*) now in this chapter he proves it upon the Jews, as appears by ver. 17, "thou art called a Jew." I. He proves in general that Jews and Gentiles stand upon the same level before the justice of God, to ver. 17. II. He shews more particularly what sins the Jews were guilty of, notwithstanding their profession and vain pretensions, ver. 17, to the end.



HEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. 2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them

which commit such things. 3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? 4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against

i. 25. "Truth of God into a lie:" the contrast sustained here as in verse 23—corruptible, incorruptible; truth, lie. Truth, the true notion of God as Creator, changed into a lie; word used in *Jer. xvi. 19* (LXX.) for idols. "More than the Creator:" beyond the Creator, and so excluding him. The doxology, "who is blessed for ever," serves by contrast to show the darkness of their sins.

i. 32. "The apostle advances to the highest grade of moral abandonment—the knowledge of God's sentence against such crimes, united

with the contented practice of them, and encouragement of them in others" (Alford). It is the climax of sin to take pleasure in the sins of others; Christian love can never rejoice in iniquity (1 Cor. xiii. 6).

ii. 2. "We are sure:" rather, "we know." "According to truth:" the judgment is (i.e., proceeds) according to justice. (Compare *John viii. 16*.)

ii. 4. "Not knowing:" De Wette remarks that it is not mere inconsiderateness which is here blamed, but a guilty and wilful igno-

the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: 8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, 9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; 10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: 11 For there is no respect of persons with God. 12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; 13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. 14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

In the former chapter the apostle had represented the state of the Gentile world to be as bad and black as the Jews were ready enough to pronounce it. And now, designing to shew that the state of the Jews was very bad too, and their sins in many respects more aggravated, to prepare his way he sets himself in this part of the chapter to shew that God would proceed upon equal terms of justice with Jews and Gentiles; and not with such a partial hand as the Jews were apt to think he would use in their favour.

First. He arraigns them for their censoriousness and self-conceit; ver. 1, "Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest." As he expresses himself in general terms, the admonition may teach those many masters, (*Jas. iii. 1*), of whatever nation or profession they are, that assume to themselves a power to censure, control, and condemn others. But he intends especially the Jews, and to them particularly he applies this general charge; ver. 21, "Thou who teachest another teachest thou not thyself?" The Jews were generally a proud sort of people, that looked with a great deal of scorn and contempt upon the poor Gentiles, as not worthy to be set with the dogs of their flock; while in the meantime they were themselves as bad and immoral—though not idolaters, as the Gentiles, yet sacrilegious; ver. 22, "Therefore thou art inexcusable." If the Gentiles, who had but the light of nature, were inexcusable, (*ch. i. 20*), much more the Jews, who had the light of the law, the revealed will of God, and so had greater helps than the Gentiles.

Secondly. He asserts the invariable justice of the Divine government, ver. 2, 3. To drive home the conviction, he here shews what a righteous God that is with whom we have to do, and how just in his proceedings. It is usual with the apostle Paul, in his writings, upon mention of some material point, to make large disquisitions upon it; as here concerning the justice of God; ver. 2, "That the judgment of God is according to truth,"—according to the eternal rules of justice and equity,—according to the heart, and not according to the outward appearance, 1 *Sam. xvi. 7*,—according to the works, and not with respect to persons,—is a doctrine which we are all sure of, for he would not be God if he were not just; but it behoves those especially to consider it who condemn others for those things which they themselves are guilty of, and so, while they practise sin and persist in that practice, think to bribe the Divine justice by protesting against sin, and exclaiming loudly upon others that are guilty, as if preaching against sin would atone for the guilt of it. But observe how he puts it to the sinner's conscience; ver. 3, "Thinkest thou this, O man?" O man, a rational creature, a dependent creature, made by God, subject under him, and accountable to him. The case is so plain that we may venture to appeal to the sinner's own thoughts: Canst thou think that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Can the heart-searching God be imposed upon by formal pretences, the righteous Judge of all so bribed and put off? The most plausible politic sinners, who acquit themselves before men with the greatest confidence, cannot escape the judgment of God, cannot avoid being judged and condemned.

Thirdly. He draws up a charge against them, ver. 4, 5, consisting of two branches.

1. Slighting the goodness of God, ver. 4, "the riches of his goodness." This is especially applicable to the Jews, who had singular tokens of the Divine favour. Means are mercies, and the more light we sin against the more law we sin against. Low and mean thoughts of the Divine goodness are at the bottom of a great deal of sin. There is in every wilful sin an interpretative contempt of the goodness of God; it is spurning at his bowels, particularly the goodness of his patience, his forbearance, and long-suffering, taking occasion thence to be so much the more bold in sin, *Ecc. viii. 11*. "Not knowing," that is, not considering, not knowing practically and with application, "that the goodness of God leadeth thee," the design of it is to lead thee, "to repentance." It is not enough for us to know that God's goodness leads to repentance, but we must know that it leads us—there, in particular. See here what method God takes to bring sinners to repentance. He leads them, not drives them like horses; but leads them like rational creatures, allures them, *Hos. ii. 14*; and it

is goodness that leads, bands of love, *Hos. xi. 4*; compare *Jer. xxxi. 3*. The consideration of the goodness of God, his common goodness to all (the goodness of his providence, of his patience, and of his offers,) should be effectual to bring us all to repentance; and the reason why so many continue in impenitency is because they do not know and consider this.

2. Provoking the wrath of God, ver. 5. The rise of this provocation is a "hard and impenitent heart;" and the ruin of sinners is their walking after such a heart, being led by it. To sin is to walk in the way of the heart; and when that is a hard and impenitent heart, (contracted hardness by long custom, besides that which is natural,) how desperate must the course needs be! The provocation is expressed by "treasuring up wrath." Those that go on in a course of sin are treasuring up unto themselves wrath. A treasure denotes abundance. It is a treasure that will be spending to eternity, and yet never exhausted; and yet sinners are still adding to it as to a treasure. Every wilful sin adds to the score, and will inflame the reckoning; it brings a 'branch to their wrath,' as some read that, *Eze. viii. 17*, they "put the branch to their nose." A treasure denotes secrecy. The treasury or magazine of wrath is the heart of God himself, in which it lies hid, as treasures in some secret place sealed up: see *Deu. xxxii. 34*; *Job xiv. 17*. But wrath it denotes reservation to some farther occasion; as the treasures of the hail are reserved against the day of battle and war, *Job xxxviii. 22, 23*. These treasures will be broken open like the fountains of the great deep, *Gen. vii. 11*. They are treasured up against the day of wrath, when they will be dispensed by the wholesale, poured out by full vials. Though the present day be a day of patience and forbearance towards sinners, yet there is a day of wrath coming—wrath, and nothing but wrath. Indeed, every day is to sinners a day of wrath, for "God is angry with the wicked every day," *Ps. vii. 11*, but there is the great day of wrath coming, *Rev. vi. 17*. And that day of wrath will be "the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God." The wrath of God is not like our wrath, a heat and passion; no, fury is not in him, *Isa. xxvii. 4*; but it is a righteous judgment, his will to punish sin, because he hates it as contrary to his nature. This righteous judgment of God is now many times concealed in the prosperity and success of sinners, but shortly it will be manifested before all the world, these seeming disorders set to rights, and the heavens shall declare his righteousness, *Ps. i. 6*. "Therefore judge nothing before the time."

Fourthly. He describes the measures by which God proceeds in his judgment. Having mentioned the righteous judgment of God in ver. 5, he here illustrates that judgment, and the righteousness of it, and shews what we may expect from God, and by what rule he will judge the world. The equity of distributive justice is the dispensing of frowns and favours with respect to deserts, and without respect to persons: such is the righteous judgment of God.

1. He will "render to every man according to his deeds," ver. 6, a truth often mentioned in Scripture, to prove that the Judge of all the earth does right.

1st. In dispensing his favours; and this is mentioned twice here, both in ver. 7, and ver. 10. For he delights to shew mercy. Observe,

First. The objects of his favour. "Those who by patient continuance," &c. By this we may try our interest in the Divine favour, and may hence be directed what course to take, that we may obtain it. Those whom the righteous God will reward are, 1st. Such as fix to themselves the right end, that "seek for glory, and honour, and immortality;" that is, the glory and honour which are immortal—acceptance with God here and for ever. There is a holy ambition which is at the bottom of all practical religion. This is seeking the kingdom of God, looking in our desires and aims as high as heaven, and resolved to take up with nothing short of it. This seeking implies a loss, sense of that loss, desire to retrieve it, and pursuits and endeavours consonant to those desires. 2nd. Such as, having fixed the right end, adhere to the right way. "A patient continuance in well-doing." (1.) There must be well-doing, working good, ver. 10. It is not enough to know well, and speak well, and profess well, and promise well, but we must do well; do that which is good, not only for the matter of it, but for the manner of it. We must do it well. (2.) A continuance in well-doing. Not for a fit and a start, like the morning cloud and the early dew; but we must endure to the end. It is perseverance that wins the crown. (3.) A patient continuance. This patience respects not only the length of the work, but the difficulties of it, and the oppositions and hardships we may meet with in it. Those that will do well and continue in it must put on a great deal of patience.

Secondly. The product of his favour. He will render to such eternal life. Heaven is life, eternal life, and it is the reward of those that patiently continue in well-doing; and it is called, ver. 10, "glory, honour, and peace." Those that seek for glory and honour, ver. 7, shall have them. Those that seek for the vain glory and honour of this world often miss of them, and are disappointed; but those that seek for immortal glory and honour shall have them, and not only "glory and honour," but "peace." Worldly glory and honour are commonly attended with trouble; but heavenly glory and honour have peace with them, undisturbed everlasting peace.

2nd. In dispensing his frowns, ver. 8, 9. Observe, First. The objects of his frowns. In general those that do evil, more particularly described to be "such as are contentious and do not obey the truth." Contentious against God. Every wilful sin is a quarrel with God, it is striving with our Maker, *Isa. xlv. 9*, the most desperate contention. The Spirit of God strives with sinners, *Gen. vi. 3*, and impenitent sinners strive against the Spirit, rebel against the light, *Job xxiv. 13*, hold fast deceit, strive to retain that sin which the Spirit strives to part them from. Contentious, and do not obey the truth. The truths of religion are not only to be known, but to be obeyed; they are directing, ruling, commanding; truths relating to practice. Disobedience to the truth is interpreted a striving against it. "But obey unrighteousness"—do what unrighteousness bids them do. Those that refuse to be the servants of truth will soon be the slaves of unrighteousness. Secondly. The products or instances of these frowns. "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." These are the wages of sin. "Indignation and wrath" the causes—"tribulation and anguish" the necessary and unavoidable effects. And this upon the soul; souls are the vessels of that wrath, the subjects of that tribulation and anguish. Sin qualifies the soul for this indignation, and the impressions or effects of anguish therefrom. Hell is eternal tribulation and anguish, the product of infinite wrath and indignation. This comes of contending with God, of setting briers and thorns before a consuming fire, *Isa. xxvii. 4*. Those that will not bow to his golden sceptre will certainly be broken by his iron rod. Thus will God render to every man according to his deeds.

2. There is no respect of persons with God, ver. 11. As to the spiritual state, there is a respect of persons; but not as to outward relation or condition. Jews and Gentiles stand upon the same level before God. This was Peter's remark upon the first taking down of the partition-wall, *Acts x. 34*, that God is no respecter of persons; and it is explained in the next words, that "in every nation he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of him." God does not save men with respect to their external privileges or their barren knowledge and profession of the truth, but according as their state and disposition really are. In dispensing both his frowns and favours it is both to Jew and Gentile. If to the Jews first, who had greater privileges, and made

rance. "Leadeth:" better, with Alford, "is leading." The goodness of God is adaped to lead to repentance.

ii. 6, 7. "The apostle is here speaking generally of the general system of God in governing the world—punishing the evil and rewarding the righteous. No question at present arises how this righteousness is to be obtained; but the truth is only stated broadly at present, to be further specified by-and-by, when it is clearly shown that by the works of the law no flesh can be justified before God" (Alford).

ii. 8. "Are contentious:" the word is formed from one signifying a hiring, and has the sense of party spirit, faction. Alford renders, "self-seeking."

ii. 9, 10. The word rendered Gentile in these verses is properly Greek. In verse 14 Gentile is a different word, and rightly rendered Gentile.

ii. 17. "Restest in:" the word is used of false trust (compare Micah iii. 11: "lean upon the Lord"). The confidence implied is

a greater profession, yet "also to the Gentiles," whose want of such privileges will neither excuse them from the punishment of their ill-doing nor bar them out from the reward of their well-doing, see *Col. iii. 11*; for shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Fifthly. He proves the equity of his proceedings with all, when he shall actually come to judge them, ver. 12—16, upon this principle, that that which is the rule of man's obedience is the rule of God's judgment. Three degrees of light are revealed to the children of men:

1. The light of nature. This the Gentiles have, and by this they shall be judged. "As many as have sinned without law shall perish without law;" that is, the unbelieving Gentiles, who had no other guide but natural conscience, no other motive but common mercies, and had not the law of Moses nor any supernatural revelation, shall not be reckoned with for the transgression of the law they never had, nor come under the aggravation of the Jews' sin against judgment by the written law; but they shall be judged by, as they sin against, the law of nature, not only as it is in their hearts, corrupted, defaced, and imprisoned in unrighteousness, but as in the uncorrupted original the Judge keeps by him. Farther to clear this, ver. 14, 15, in a parenthesis, he evinces that the light of nature was to the Gentiles instead of a written law. He had said, ver. 12, they had "sinned without law," which looks like a contradiction; "for where there is no law there is no transgression." But, says he, though they had not the written law, *Ps. cxlvii. 20*, they had that which was equivalent, not to the ceremonial, but to the moral law. They "had the work of the law." He does not mean that work which the law commands, as if they could produce a perfect obedience; but that work which the law does. The work of the law is to direct us what to do, and to examine us what we have done. Now, 1st. They had that which directed them what to do by the light of nature; by the force and tendency of their natural notions and dictates they apprehended a clear and vast difference between good and evil. They "did by nature the things contained in the law." They had a sense of justice and equity, honour and purity, love and charity; the light of nature taught obedience to parents, pity to the miserable, conservation of public peace and order, forbade murder, stealing, lying, perjury, &c. Thus they were "a law unto themselves." 2nd. They had that which examined them as to what they had done. "Their conscience also bearing witness." They had that within them which approved and commended what was well done, and which reproached them for what was done amiss. Conscience is a witness, and first or last will bear witness, though for a time it may be bribed or brow-beaten. It is instead of a thousand witnesses, testifying of that which is most secret; and their "thoughts accusing or excusing," passing a judgment upon the testimony of conscience by applying the law to the fact. Conscience is that candle of the Lord which was not quite put out, no, not in the Gentile world. The heathen have witnessed to the comfort of a good conscience.

*Hic murus aeneus esto,
Nil conscire sibi—*

'Be this thy brazen bulwark of defence,
Still to preserve thy conscious innocence.'—*Hor.*

and to the terror of a bad one:

Quos diri conscia facti

Mens habet attonitos, et surdo verberare cedit—

'No lash is heard, and yet the guilty heart
Is tortured with a self-inflicted smart.'—*Juv. Sat. 13.*

Their "thoughts the meanwhile," *μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων*—among themselves, or one with another. The same light and law of nature that witnesses against sin in them, and witnessed against it in others, accused or excused one another. *Vicissim*, so some read it, 'by turns,' according as they observed or broke these natural laws and dictates, their consciences did either acquit or condemn them. All this did evince that they had that which was to them instead of a law, which they might have been governed by, and which will condemn them, because they were not so guided and governed by it. So that the guilty Gentiles are left without excuse. God is justified in condemning them. They cannot plead ignorance—and, therefore, are likely to perish, if they have not something else to plead.

2. The light of the law. This the Jews had, and by this they shall be judged; ver. 12. "As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." They sinned, not only having the law, but *ἐν νόμῳ*—"in the law," in the midst of so much law, in the face and light of so pure and clear a law, the directions of which were so very full and particular, and the sanctions of it so very cogent and enforcing. These "shall be judged by the law;" their punishment shall be, as their sin is, so much the greater for their having the law. "The Jew first," ver. 9. It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon. Thus Moses did accuse them, *Jno. v. 45*; and they fell under the many stripes of him that knew his master's will, and did it not, *Lu. xii. 47*. The Jews prided themselves very much in the law; but, to confirm what he had said, the apostle shews (ver. 13) that their having, and hearing, and knowing the law, would not justify them, but their doing it. The Jewish doctors bolstered up their followers with an opinion that all that were Jews, how bad soever they lived, should have a place in the world to come. This the apostle here opposes: it was a great privilege that they had the law, but not a saving privilege, unless they lived up to the law they had, which it is certain the Jews did not; and therefore they had need of a righteousness wherein to appear before God. We may apply it to the Gospel; it is not hearing, but doing, that will save us, *Jno. xiii. 17*; *Jas. i. 22*.

3. The light of the Gospel. And according to this those that enjoyed the Gospel shall be judged, ver. 16. According to my Gospel; not meant of any fifth Gospel written by Paul, as some conceit; or of the Gospel written by Luke, as Paul's amanuensis, (*Evangel. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 8*), but the Gospel in general, called Paul's because he was a preacher of it. As many as are under that dispensation shall be judged according to that dispensation, *Mar. xvi. 16*. Some refer those words, "according to my Gospel," to what he says of the day of judgment; "There will come a day of judgment, according as I have in my preaching often told you; and that will be the day of the final judgment both of Jews and Gentiles." It is good for us to get acquainted with what is revealed concerning that day. 1st. There is a day set for a general judgment. The day, the great day, his day that is coming, *Ps. cxvii. 13*. 2nd. The judgment of that day will be put into the hands of Jesus Christ; God shall judge by Jesus Christ, *Acts xvii. 31*. It will be part of the reward of his humiliation. Nothing speaks more terror to sinners, or more comfort to saints, than this, that Christ shall be the judge. 3rd. The secrets of men shall then be judged; secret services shall be then rewarded, secret sins shall be then punished, hidden things shall be brought to light. That will be the great discovering day, when that which is now done in corners shall be proclaimed to all the world.

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, 18 And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are

more excellent, being instructed out of the law; 19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, 20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. 21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? 22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? 23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? 24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. 25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. 26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? 27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? 28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

In the latter part of the chapter the apostle directs his discourse more closely to the Jews, and shews what sins they were guilty of, notwithstanding their profession and vain pretensions. He had said, ver. 13, that not the hearers but the doers of the law are justified; and he here applies that great truth to the Jews. Observe,

First. He allows their profession, ver. 17—20; and specifies their particular pretensions and privileges in which they prided themselves, that they might see he did not condemn them out of ignorance of what they had to say for themselves; no, he knew the best of their cause.

1. They were a peculiar people, separated and distinguished from all others by their having the written law and the special presence of God among them, 1st. "Thou art called a Jew;" not so much in parentage as profession. It was a very honourable title. Salvation was of the Jews; and this they were very proud of, to be a people by themselves; and yet many that were so called were the vilest of men. It is no new thing, for the worst practices to be shrouded under the best names; for many of the synagogue of Satan to say they are Jews, *Rev. ii. 9*; for a generation of vipers to boast they have Abraham to say they are Jews, *Mat. iii. 7—9*. 2nd. "And retest in the law;" that is, they took a pride in this, that they had the law among them, had it in their books, read it in their synagogues. They were mightily puffed up with this privilege, and thought this enough to bring them to heaven, though they did not live up to the law. To rest in the law, with a rest of complacency and acquiescence, is good; but to rest in it with a rest of pride, and slothfulness, and carnal security, is the ruin of souls. "The temple of the Lord," *Jer. vii. 4*; "Bethel their confidence," *Jer. xlviii. 13*; "Haughty because of the holy mountain," *Zep. iii. 11*. It is a dangerous thing to rest in external privileges, and not to improve them. 3rd. "And makest thy boast of God." See how the best things may be perverted and abused. A believing, humble, thankful glorying in God is the root and summary of all religion, *Ps. xxxiv. 2*; *1sa. xlv. 25*; *1 Cor. i. 31*. But a proud, vainglorious boasting in God, and in the outward profession of his name, is the root and summary of all hypocrisy. Spiritual pride is of all kinds of pride the most dangerous.

2. They were a knowing people, ver. 18, "And knowest his will;" *τὸ θέλημα*—"the will." God's will is the will; the sovereign, absolute, irresistible will. The world will then, and not till then, be set to rights when God's will is the only will, and all other wills are melted into it. They did not only know the truth of God, but the will of God, that which he would have them do. It is possible for a hypocrite to have a great deal of knowledge in the will of God. And approvest the things that are more excellent," *δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα*. Paul prays for it for his friends as a very great attainment, *Phil. i. 10*. *Εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα*. Understand it, 1st. Of a good apprehension in the things of God, reading it thus, "Thou discernest things that differ;" knowest how to distinguish between good and evil, to separate between the precious and the vile, *Jer. xv. 19*; to make a difference between the unclean and the clean, *Lev. xi. 47*. Good and bad lie sometimes so near together that it is not easy to distinguish them; but the Jews, having the touchstone of the law ready at hand, were, or at least thought they were, able to distinguish, to cleave the hair in doubtful cases. A man may be a good casuist, and yet a bad Christian—accurate in the notion, but loose and careless in the application. Or, we may, with De Dieu, understand controversies by the *τὰ διαφέροντα*. A man may be well skilled in the controversies of religion, and yet a stranger to the power of godliness. 2nd. Of a warm affection to the things of God, as we read it, "Approvest the things that are excellent." There are excellences in religion which a hypocrite may approve of; there may be a consent of the practical

one in the fact of possessing the law. Similarly, "makest thy boast of God" is not the boast of David (*Psa. xlv. 8*), but the false boast of the Jews, "The people of the Lord are we."

ii. 20. "Hast the form," &c.: the word rendered "form" occurs only here and in 2 Tim. iii. 5. In this latter passage it clearly means the outline without the substance. Here, however, it seems to signify "embodiment"—the real, not the delusive manifestation. Olshausen takes it to mean that the law contained a foreshadowing of Christ.

ii. 25. "Circumcision:" on this the Jews especially prided themselves. The apostle takes it up to show that circumcision, without real heart conformity to the law, is no avail. "The law;" the article is wanting in the original before "law" in both cases. Attention is thus drawn to the character of the person supposed: "If thou art a law-breaker, thy," &c.

ii. 28. "Jew," "circumcision:" each of these words is understood a second time, as in verse 29 also: "Not he who is (a Jew) out-

judgment "to the law, that it is good," and yet that consent overpowered by the lusts of the flesh, and of the mind:—

—*Vide me! ora proboque*
—*Deteriora sequor,*
"I see the better, but pursue the worse."

And it is common for sinners to make that approbation an excuse which is really a very great aggravation of a sinful course. They got this acquaintance with, and affection to, that which is good, by being "instructed out of the law," *scilicet* "being catechised." The word signifies an early instruction, from childhood. It is a great privilege and advantage to be early catechised betimes. It was the custom of the Jews to take a great deal of pains in teaching their children when they were young, and all their lessons were out of the law; it was well if Christians were but as industrious to teach their children out of the Gospel. Now this is called, ver. 20, "The form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law;" that is, the show and appearance of it. Those whose knowledge rests in an empty notion, and does not make an impression on their hearts, have only the form of it, like a picture well drawn and in good colours, but which wants life. A form of knowledge produces but a form of godliness, *2 Tim.* iii. 5. A form of knowledge may deceive men, but cannot impose upon the piercing eye of the heart-searching God. A form may be the vehicle of the power; but he that takes up with that only is like "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."

3. They were a teaching people, or at least thought themselves so; ver. 19, 20, "And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind." Apply it, 1st. To the Jews in general. They thought themselves guides to the poor blind Gentiles that sat in darkness, were very proud of this, that whoever could have the knowledge of God must be beholden to them for it. All other nations must come to school to them, to learn what is good, and what the Lord requires; for they had the lively oracles. 2nd. To their rabbies, and doctors, and leading men among them, who were especially those that judged others, ver. 1. These prided themselves much in the possession they had got of Moses' law, and the deference which the vulgar paid to their dictates; and the apostle expresses this in several terms. "a guide of the blind, a light of those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes;" the better to set forth their proud conceit of themselves, and contempt of others. This was a string they loved to be harping upon, heaping up titles of honour upon themselves. The best work, when it is prided in, is unacceptable to God. It is good to instruct the foolish, and to teach the babes; but, considering our own ignorance, and folly, and inability to make these teachings successful without God, there is nothing in it to be proud of.

Secondly, He aggravates their provocations (ver. 21–24) from two things:

1. That they sinned against their knowledge and profession, did that themselves which they taught others to avoid. Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Teaching is a piece of that charity which begins at home, though it must not end there. It was the hypocrisy of the Pharisees that they did not do as they taught, *Mat.* xxiii. 3; but pulled down with their lives what they built up with their preaching; for who will believe those who do not believe themselves? Examples will govern more than rules. The greatest obstructors of the success of the word are those whose bad lives contradict their good doctrine, who in the pulpit preach so well that it is a pity they should ever come out, and out of the pulpit live so ill that it is a pity they should ever come in. He specifies three particular sins that did abound among the Jews. 1st. Stealing. This is charged upon some that declared God's statutes, *Ps.* l. 16, 18. "When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him." The Pharisees are charged with devouring widows' houses, *Mat.* xxiii. 14, and that is the worst of robberies. 2nd. Adultery, ver. 22. This is likewise charged upon that sinner, *Ps.* l. 18. "Thou hast been partaker with adulterers." Many of the Jewish rabbies are said to have been notorious for this sin. 3rd. Sacrilege. Robbing in holy things which were then by special laws dedicated and devoted to God; and this is charged upon those that professed to abhor idols. So the Jews did remarkably, after their captivity in Babylon; that furnace separated them for ever from the dross of their idolatry, but they dealt very treacherously in the worship of God. It was in the latter days of the Old Testament church that they were charged with robbing God in tithes and offerings, *Mal.* iii. 8, 9; converting that to their own use, and to the service of their lusts, which was, in a special manner, set apart for God. And this is almost equivalent to idolatry, though this sacrilege was cloaked with the abhorrence of idols. Those will be severely reckoned with another day who, while they condemn sin in others, do the same, or as bad, or worse, themselves.

2. That they dishonoured God by their sin, ver. 23, 24. While God and his law were an honour to them, which they boasted of and prided themselves in, they were a dishonour to God and his law, by giving occasion to those that were without to reflect upon their religion, and if that did countenance and allow of such things; which, as it is their sin, who draw such inferences, (for the faults of professors are not to be laid upon professions,) so it is their sin who give occasion for those inferences, and will greatly aggravate their miscarriages. This was the condemnation in David's case, that he had "given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme," *2 Sam.* xii. 14; and the apostle here refers to the same charge against their forefathers, "As it is written," ver. 24. He does not mention the place, because he wrote this to those that were instructed in the law (in labouring to convince, it is some advantage to deal with those that have knowledge and are acquainted with the Scripture), but he seems to point at *Isa.* lii. 5; *Eze.* xxxvi. 22, 23; and *2 Sam.* xii. 14. It is a lamentation that those who were made "to be to God for a name and for a praise" should be to him a shame and dishonour. The great evil of the sins of professors is the dishonour done to God and religion by their profession. "Blasphemed through you;" that is, you give the occasion for it, it is through your folly and carelessness. The reproaches you bring upon yourselves reflect upon your God, and religion is wounded through your sides. A good caution to professors to walk circumspectly: see *1 Tim.* vi. 1.

Thirdly, He asserts the utter insufficiency of their profession to clear them from the guilt of these provocations, ver. 25–29. "Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law;" that is, obedient Jews shall not lose the reward of their obedience, but will gain this by their being Jews, that they have a clearer rule of obedience than the Gentiles have. God did not give the law nor appoint circumcision in vain. This must be referred to the state of the Jews before the ceremonial polity was abolished, otherwise circumcision to one that professed faith in Christ was forbidden, *Gal.* v. 2. But he is here speaking to the Jews, whose Judaism would benefit them, if they would but live up to the rules and laws of it; but, if not, "thy circumcision is made uncircumcision;" that is, thy profession will do thee no good; thou wilt be no more justified than the uncircumcised Gentiles, but more condemned for sinning against greater light. The uncircumcised are in Scripture branded as unclean, *Isa.* lii. 1, as out of the covenant, *Eph.* ii. 11, 12, and wicked Jews will be dealt with as such: see *Jer.* ix. 25, 26. Farther to illustrate this,

1. He shews that the uncircumcised Gentiles, if they live up to the light they have, stand upon the same level with the Jews; if "they keep the righteous-

ness of the law," ver. 26, "fulfil the law," ver. 27; that is, by submitting sincerely to the conduct of natural light, perform the matter of the law. Some understand it as putting the case of a perfect obedience to the law. "If the Gentiles could perfectly keep the law, they would be justified by it as well as the Jews." But it seems rather to be meant of such an obedience as some of the Gentiles did attain to. The case of Cornelius will clear it; though he was a Gentile, and uncircumcised, yet, "being a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house," *Acts* x. 2, he was accepted, ver. 4. Doubtless, there were many such instances; and "they were the uncircumcision, that kept the righteousness of the law;" and of such he says, 1st. That they were accepted with God, as if they had been circumcised. "Their uncircumcision was counted for circumcision." Circumcision was indeed to the Jews a commanded duty, but it was not to all the world a necessary condition of justification and salvation. 2nd. That their obedience was a great aggravation of the disobedience of the Jews, who had the letter of the law, ver. 27. "Judge thee," that is, help to add to thy condemnation, who "by the letter and circumcision dost transgress." Observe, To carnal professors the law is but the letter; they read it as a bare writing, but are not ruled by it as a law. They did transgress, not only notwithstanding the letter and circumcision, but by it; that is, they thereby hardened themselves in sin. External privileges, if they do not do us good, do us hurt. The obedience of those that enjoy less means, and make a less profession, will help to condemn those that enjoy greater means, and make a greater profession, but do not live up to it.

2. He describes the true circumcision, ver. 28, 29. 1st. It is "not that which is outward in the flesh and in the letter." This is not to drive us off from the observance of external institutions, (they are good in their place,) but from trusting to them and resting in them as sufficient to bring us to heaven, taking up with a name to live, without being alive indeed. "He is not a Jew," that is, shall not be accepted of God as the seed of believing Abraham, nor owned as having answered the intention of the law. To be Abraham's children is to do the works of Abraham, *Jno.* viii. 39, 40. 2nd. It is "that which is inward, of the heart, and in the spirit." It is the heart that God looks at, the circumcising of the heart that renders us acceptable to him; see *Deu.* xxx. 6. This is "the circumcision that is not made with hands," *Col.* ii. 11, 12; "Casting away the body of sin." So it is in the spirit; in our spirit as the subject, and wrought by God's Spirit as the author of it. 3rd. The praise thereof, though it be not of men, who judge according to outward appearance, yet it is of God; that is, God himself will own and accept and crown this sincerity, for "he seeth not as man seeth." Fair pretences and a plausible profession may deceive men; but God cannot be so deceived; he sees through shows to realities. This is alike true of Christianity. He is not a Christian that is one outwardly, nor is that baptism which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Christian that is one inwardly, and baptism is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.

[Let us observe that the apostle speaks both of the letter and spirit of the New Testament. And certain it is that, were we asked to fix on a living counterpart in the present day to the Jew of the passage now under consideration—it would be on him, who, thoroughly versant in all the phrases, and dexterous in all the arguments, of orthodoxy, is, without one affection of the old man circumcised, and without one sanctified affection to mark him the new man in Christ Jesus our Lord, withal a zealous and staunch and sturdy controversialist. He too rests in the form of sound words, and is confident that he is a light of the blind; and founds a complacency on knowledge, though it be knowledge without love and without regeneration—nor can we think of any delusion more hazardous, and at the same time more humbling, than that by which a literal acquaintance with the Gospel, and a literal adherence on the part of the understanding to all its truths and all its articles, may be confounded with the faith which is unto salvation. Faith is an inlet to holy affections. Its primary office is to admit truth into the mind, but it is truth that impresses as well as informs. The kingdom of God is neither in word alone, nor in argument alone—it is also in power; and while we bid you look unto Jesus and be saved, it is such a look as will cause you to mourn and to be in heaviness—it is such a look as will liken you to his image, and import into your own character the graces and the affections which adorn his. It is here that man finds himself at the limits of his helplessness. He cannot summon into his breast that influence which will either circumcise its old tendencies or plant new ones in its room. But the doctrine of Jesus Christ and of him crucified is the grand instrument for such a renovation; and he is at his post, and on the likely way of obtaining the clean heart and the right spirit, when looking humbly and desirously to Jesus as all his salvation, he may at length experience the operation of faith working by love, and yielding all manner of obedience.—C.]

CHAPTER III.

The apostle in this chapter carries on his discourse concerning justification. He had already proved the guilt both of Gentiles and Jews. Now in this chapter, I. He answers some objections that might be made against what he had said about the Jews, ver. 1–8. II. He asserts the guilt and corruption of mankind in common, both Jews and Gentiles, ver. 9–18. III. He argues thence that justification must needs be by faith, and not by the law, which he gives several reasons for, ver. 19, to the end. The many digressions in his writings render his discourse sometimes a little difficult, but his scope is evident.



HATH advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. 3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? 4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art

wardly is a Jew, nor is that (circumcision) which is outward in the flesh, circumcision; but he who is (a Jew) in secret is a Jew," &c.

iii. 3. "Unbelief make the faith of God," &c.: this verse becomes more intelligible if we substitute unfaithfulness for unbelief. The unfaithfulness of Israel to the covenant will not make God break his promise; on the contrary, as the next verse shows, the very failure of men will serve to display the faithfulness of God.

iii. 9. "What then?" must be understood as taking up the ques-

tion of verse 3. "Are we (i.e., Jews) better," &c.: i.e., preferred, placed in a position of real superiority to the Gentiles. Not really, because both are under sin.

iii. 19. "Saith:" The thought is condensed. 1st. Whatever the law says it says to the Jews. 2nd. Whatever it does say is, as we have seen, condemnatory, and this in order that neither Jew nor Gentile may be able to justify himself before God" (Dr. Vaughan). "Become guilty:" brought under or liable to judgment.

judged. 5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) 6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? 7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? 8 And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. 9 What then? are we better *than* they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

First. Here the apostle answers several objections, which might be made, to clear his way. No truth so plain and evident but wicked wits and corrupt carnal hearts will have something to say against it; but Divine truths must be cleared from evil.

Object. 1. If Jew and Gentile stand so much upon the same level before God, "what advantage then hath the Jew?" Hath not God often spoken with a great deal of respect for the Jews, as a nonsuch people, *Deu.* xxxiii. 29, a holy nation, a peculiar treasure, the seed of Abraham his friend? Did not he institute circumcision as a badge of their church-membership, and a seal of their covenant-relation to God? Now does not this levelling doctrine deny them all such prerogatives, and reflect dishonour upon the ordinance of circumcision, as a fruitless insignificant thing? *Answer.* The Jews are, notwithstanding this, a people greatly privileged and honoured, have great means and helps, though these be not infallibly saving; *ver.* 2, "much every way." The door is open to the Gentiles as well as the Jews, but the Jews have a fairer way up to this door, by reason of their church privileges, which are not to be undervalued, though many that have them perish eternally for not improving them. He reckons up many of the Jews' privileges, *Rom.* ix. 4, 5; here he mentions but one, (which is indeed *instar omnium*,—equivalent to all,) "that unto them were committed the oracles of God;" that is, the Scriptures of the Old Testament, especially the law of Moses, which is called "the lively oracles," *Acts* vii. 38, and those types, promises, and prophecies, which relate to Christ and the Gospel. The Scriptures are the oracles of God; they are a Divine revelation, they come from heaven, are of infallible truth, and of eternal consequence as oracles. The Septuagint call the Urim and Thummim the λόγια—"the oracles." The Scripture is our breastplate of judgment. We must have recourse to the law and to the testimony, as to an oracle. The Gospel is called the oracles of God, *Heb.* v. 12; *1 Pet.* iv. 11. Now these oracles were committed to the Jews; the Old Testament was written in their language; Moses and the prophets were of their nation, lived among them, preached and wrote primarily to and for the Jews. They were committed to them as trustees for succeeding ages and churches. The Old Testament was deposited in their hands to be carefully preserved pure and uncorrupt, and so transmitted down to posterity. The Jews were the Christians' library keepers, were intrusted with that sacred treasure for their own use and benefit in the first place, and then for the advantage of the world; and, in preserving the letter of the Scripture, they were very faithful to their trust, did not lose one iota or tittle, in which we are to acknowledge God's gracious care and providence. The Jews had the means of salvation, but they had not the monopoly of salvation. Now this he mentions with a "chiefly," *πρωτον μὲν γὰρ*—this was their prime and principal privilege. The enjoyment of God's word and ordinances is the chief happiness of a people; is to be put in the *imprimis* of their advantages, *Deu.* iv. 8; xxxiii. 3; *Ps.* cxlvii. 20.

Object. 2. Against what he had said of the advantages the Jews had in the lively oracles some might object the unbelief of many of them. To what purpose were the oracles of God committed to them when so many of them, notwithstanding these oracles, continued strangers to Christ, and enemies to his Gospel? "Some did not believe," *ver.* 3. *Answer.* It is very true that some, nay most of the present Jews, do not believe in Christ; but "shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" The apostle startles at such a thought: "God forbid!" The infidelity and obstinacy of the Jews could not invalidate and overthrow those prophecies of the Messiah which were contained in the oracles committed to them. Christ will be glorious, though Israel be not gathered, *Isa.* xlix. 5. God's words shall be accomplished, his purposes performed, and all his ends answered, though there be a generation that by their unbelief go about to make God a liar. "Let God be true, but every man a liar;" let us abide by this principle that God is true to every word which he has spoken, and will let none of his oracles fall to the ground, though thereby we give the lie to man; better question and overthrow the credit of all the men in the world than doubt of the faithfulness of God. What David said in his haste, *Ps.* cxvi. 11, that all men are liars, Paul here asserts deliberately. Lying is a limb of that old man which we every one of us come

into the world clothed with. All men are fickle, and mutable, and given to change, vanity and a lie, *Ps.* lxi. 9, altogether vanity, *Ps.* xxxix. 5. All men are liars compared with God. It is very comfortable, when we find every man a liar, no faith in man, that God is faithful. When "they speak vanity every one with his neighbour," it is very comfortable to think that "the words of the Lord are, pure words," *Ps.* xii. 2, 6. For the farther proof of this he quotes, *Ps.* li. 4, "That thou mightest be justified," the design of which is to shew, 1. That God does and will preserve his own honour in the world, notwithstanding the sins of men. 2. That it is our duty, in all our conclusions concerning ourselves and others, to justify God, and to assert and maintain his justice, truth, and goodness, however it goes. David lays a load upon himself in his confession that he might justify God, and acquit him from any injustice. So here, let the credit or reputation of man shift for itself, the matter is not great whether it sink or swim; let us hold fast this conclusion, how specious soever the premises may be to the contrary, that "the Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." Thus is God justified in his sayings, and cleared when he judges, (as it is *Ps.* li. 4,) or when he is judged, as it is here rendered. When men presume to quarrel with God and his proceedings, we may be sure the sentence will go on God's side.

Object. 3. Carnal hearts might hence take occasion to encourage themselves in sin. He had said that the universal guilt and corruption of mankind gave occasion to the manifestation of God's righteousness in Jesus Christ. Now it may be suggested, if all our sin be so far from overthrowing God's honour that it commends it, and his ends are secured, so that there is no harm done, is it not unjust for God to punish our sin and unbelief so severely? If the unrighteousness of the Jews gave occasion to the calling in of the Gentiles, and so to God's greater glory, why are the Jews so much censured? "If our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say?" *ver.* 5. What inference may be drawn from this? "Is God unrighteous," *μή ἀδικος ὁ θεός*—"Is not God unrighteous," (so it may be read, more in the form of an objection), "who taketh vengeance?" Unbelieving hearts will gladly take any occasion to quarrel with the equity of God's proceedings, and to condemn him that is most just, *Job* xxxiv. 17. "I speak as a man;" that is, I object this as the language of carnal hearts; it is suggested like a man, a vain, foolish, proud creature. *Answer.* "God forbid;" far be it from us to imagine such a thing. Suggestions that reflect dishonour upon God and his justice and holiness are rather to be startled at than parleyed with. Get thee behind me, Satan; never entertain such a thought. "For then how shall God judge the world?" *ver.* 6. The argument is much the same with that of Abraham, *Gen.* xviii. 25; "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" No doubt he shall. If he were not infinitely just and righteous he would be unfit to be the judge of all the earth. "Shall even he that hateth right govern?" *Job* xxxiv. 17. Compare *ver.* 18, 19. The sin has never the less of malignity and demerit in it though God bring glory to himself out of it. It is only accidentally that sin commends God's righteousness. No thanks to the sinner for that, who intends no such thing. The consideration of God's judging the world should for ever silence all our doubtings of, and reflections upon, his justice and equity. It is not for us to arraign the proceedings of such an absolute sovereign. The sentence of the supreme court, whence lies no appeal, is not to be called in question.

Object. 4. The former objection is repeated and prosecuted, *ver.* 7, 8, for proud hearts will hardly be beaten out of their refuge of lies, but will hold fast the deceit. But his setting off the objection in its own colours is sufficient to answer it; "If the truth of God has more abounded through my lie." He supposes the sophisters to follow their objection thus, "If my lie, that is, my sin, for there is something of a lie in every sin, especially in the sins of professors, have occasioned the glorifying of God's truth and faithfulness, why should I be judged and condemned as a sinner, and not rather thence take encouragement to go on in my sin that grace may abound?" an inference which at first sight appears too black to be argued, and fit to be cast out with abhorrence. Daring sinners take occasion to boast in mischief, because "the goodness of God endures continually," *Ps.* lii. 1. "Let us do evil that good may come" is oftener in the heart than in the mouth of sinners, so justifying themselves in their wicked ways. Mentioning this wicked thought, he observes, in a parenthesis, that there were those who charged such doctrines as this upon Paul and his fellow-ministers: Some affirm that we say so. "It is no new thing for the best of God's people and ministers to be charged with holding and teaching such things as they do most detest and abhor; and it is not to be thought strange, when our Master himself was said to be in league with Beelzebub. Many have been reproached as if they had said that the contrary of which they maintain: it is an old artifice of Satan thus to cast dirt upon Christ's ministers, *fortiter calumnias, aliquid adhaerebit*—lay slander thickly on, for some will be sure to stick." The best men and the best truths are subject to slander. Bishop Sanderson makes a farther remark upon this: "as we be slanderously reported"—*βλασφημοῦμεθα*. Blasphemy in Scripture usually signifies the highest degree of slander, speaking ill of God. The slander of a minister and his regular doctrine is a more than ordinary slander, it is a kind of blasphemy, not for his person's sake, but for his calling's sake, and his work's sake, *1 Thes.* v. 13. *Answer.* He says no more by way of confutation but that, whatever they themselves may argue, the damnation of those is just. Some understand it of the slanderers; God will justly condemn those who unjustly condemn his truth. Or, rather, it is to be applied to those who embolden themselves in sin under a pretence of God's getting glory to himself out of it. Those who deliberately do evil that good may come of it will be so far from escaping, under the shelter of that excuse, that it will rather justify their damnation, and render them the more inexcusable; for sinning upon such a surmise, and in such a confidence, argues a great deal both of the wit and of the will in the sin—a wicked will deliberately to choose the evil, and a wicked wit to palliate it with the pretence of good arising from it. Therefore their damnation is just; and, whatever excuses of this kind they may now please themselves with, they will none of them stand good in the great day, but God will be justified in his proceedings, and all flesh, even the proud flesh that now lifts up itself against him, shall be silent before him. Some think Paul herein refers to the approaching ruin of the Jewish church and nation, which their obstinacy and self-justification in their unbelief hastened upon them apace.

Secondly, Paul, having removed these objections, next revives his assertion of the general guilt and corruption of mankind in common, both of Jews and Gentiles, *ver.* 9–18. "Are we better than they," we Jews, to whom were committed the oracles of God: doth this recommend us to God, or will this justify us? No, by no means. Or, are we Christians (Jews and Gentiles) so much better antecedently than the unbelieving part as to have merited God's grace? Alas! no; before free grace made the difference, those of us that had been Jews and those that had been Gentiles were all alike corrupted. "They are all under sin." 1. Under the guilt of sin; under it as under a sentence; under it as under a bond, by which they are bound over to eternal ruin and damnation; under it as under a burthen, *Ps.* xxxviii. 4, that will sink them to the lowest hell; we are guilty before God, *ver.* 19. 2. Under the government and dominion of sin; under it as under a tyrant and cruel taskmaster, enslaved to it; under it as under a yoke; under the power of it, sold to work wickedness. And this he had

iii. 20. "By the deeds of the law:" the works of the law can never afford the source of man's justification. Observe the future tense, which makes the conclusion universal.

iii. 21. "But now:" in these Gospel times. (Compare *Col.* i. 21–26; *2 Tim.* i. 10; *Heb.* i. 1.) "Without the law:" i.e., independently, apart from. "Is manifested," better, "has been manifested," i.e., in the facts of the Gospel. The word may be compared with that used in chap. i. 17. That spoke of a gradual manifestation

of God's righteousness in the hearts and lives of his children; this of a complete one, made once for all in Christ.

iii. 24, 25. "Redemption:" this word is found ten times in the New Testament. There are three stages implied—1. Bondage. 2. The intervention of a ransom. 3. Deliverance. "Propitiation:" the word used in the LXX. of the mercy-seat. "Through faith:" these words must be taken with "propitiation." They define "the instrumentality by which the expiatory work of Christ is applied to the

proved, *προηγουμένη*. It is a law term; 'we have charged them with it,' and have made good our charge; we have proved the indictment, we have convicted them by the notorious evidence of the fact. This charge and conviction he here farther illustrates by several scriptures out of the Old Testament, which describe the corrupt, depraved state of all men, till grace restrain or change them; so that herein as in a glass we may all of us behold our natural face. The 10th, 11th, and 12th verses are taken from *Ps. xiv. 1-3*, which are repeated as containing a very weighty truth, *Ps. liii. 1-3*. The rest that follows here is found in the Septuagint translation of the 14th psalm, which some think the apostle chooses to follow as better known; but I rather think that Paul took these passages from other places of Scripture here referred to, but in later copies of the Seventy they were all added in *Ps. xiv.* from this discourse of Paul. It is observable that, to prove the general corruption of nature, he quotes some scriptures which speak of the particular corruptions of particular persons, as of Doeg, *Ps. cxi. 3*, of the Jews, *Isa. lix. 7, 8*, which shews that the same sins that are committed by one are in the nature of all. The times of David and Isaiah were some of the better times, and yet to their days he refers. What is said *Ps. xiv.* is expressly spoken of all the children of men, and that upon a particular view and inspection made by God himself. "The Lord looked down," as upon the old world, *Gen. vi. 5*. And this judgment of God was according to truth. He who, when he himself had made all, looked upon every thing that he had made, and behold all was very good, now that man had marred all, looked, and behold all was very bad. Let us take a view of the particulars. Observe,

1. That which is habitual, which is twofold:
1st. An habitual defect of everything that is good. *First*. "There is none righteous," none that has an honest good principle of virtue, or is governed by such a principle, none that retains any thing of that image of God, consisting in righteousness, wherein man was created; "no, not one;" implying that, if there had been but one, God would have found him out. When all the world was corrupt, God had his eye upon one righteous Noah. Even those who through grace are justified and sanctified were none of them righteous by nature. No righteousness is born with us. The man after God's own heart owns himself conceived in sin. *Secondly*. "There is none that understandeth," *ver. 11*. The fault lies in the corruption of the understanding; that is blinded, depraved, perverted. Religion and righteousness have so much reason on their side that if people had but any understanding they would be better and do better. But they do not understand. Sinners are fools. *Thirdly*. "None that seeketh after God;" that is, none that has any regard to God, any desire after him. Those may justly be reckoned to have no understanding that do not seek after God. The carnal mind is so far from seeking after God that really it is enmity against him. *Fourthly*. "They are together become unprofitable," *ver. 12*. Those that have forsaken God soon grow good for nothing, useless burthens of the earth. Those that are in a state of sin are the most unprofitable creatures under the sun; for it follows, *Fifthly*. "There is none that doeth good;" no, not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not, *Ecc. vii. 23*. Even in those actions of sinners that have some goodness in them there is a fundamental error in the principle and end; so that it may be said, "there is none that doeth good." *Malum oritur ex quolibet defectu*—'Every defect is the source of evil.'

2nd. An habitual defection to every thing that is evil. "They are all gone out of the way." No wonder that those miss the right way who do not seek after God, the highest end. God made man in the way, set him in right, but he hath forsaken it. The corruption of mankind is an apostasy.

3. That which is actual. And what good can be expected from such a degenerate race? He instances,

1st. In their words, *ver. 13, 14*, in three things particularly: *First*. Cruelty. "Their throat is an open sepulchre," ready to swallow up the poor and innocent, waiting an opportunity to do mischief, like the old serpent seeking to devour, whose name is Abaddon and Apollyon, the destroyer. And when they do not openly avow this cruelty, and vent it publicly, yet they are underhand intending mischief; "the poison of asps is under their lips," *Jas. iii. 8*; the most venomous and incurable poison, with which they blast the good name of their neighbour by reproaches, and aim at his life by false witness. These passages are borrowed from *Ps. v. 9*, and *exl. 3*. *Secondly*. Cheating. "With their tongues they have used deceit." Herein they shew themselves the devil's children, for he is a liar, and the father of lies. They have used it; it intimates that they make a trade of lying; it is their constant practice, especially belying the ways and people of God. *Thirdly*. Cursing; reflecting upon God, and blaspheming his holy name; wishing evil to their brethren; "Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." This is mentioned as one of the great sins of the tongue, *Jas. iii. 9*. But those that thus love cursing shall have enough of it, *Ps. cix. 17-19*. How many who are called Christians do by these sins evince that they are still under the reign and dominion of sin, still in the condition that they were born in!

2nd. In their ways, *ver. 15-17*. "Their feet are swift to shed blood;" that is, they are very industrious to compass any cruel design, ready to lay hold of all such opportunities. Wherever they go, "destruction and misery" go along with them; these are their companions—destruction and misery to the people of God, to the country and neighbourhood where they live, to the land and nation, and to themselves at last. Besides the destruction and misery that are at the end of their ways, (death is the end of these things,) destruction and misery are in their ways; their sin is its own punishment; a man needs no more to make him miserable than to be a slave to his sins. "And the way of peace have they not known;" that is, they know not how to preserve peace with others, nor how to obtain peace for themselves. They may talk of peace, such a peace as is in the devil's palace, while he keeps it, but they are strangers to all true peace; they know not the things that belong to their peace. These are quoted from *Pr. i. 16*; *Isa. lix. 7, 8*.

3rd. The root of all this we have: "There is no fear of God before their eyes," *ver. 18*. The fear of God is here put for all practical religion, which consists in an awful and serious regard to the word and will of God as our rule, to the honour and glory of God as our end. Wicked people have not this before their eyes; that is, they do not steer by it: they are governed by other rules, aim at other ends. This is quoted from *Ps. xxxvi. 1*. Where no fear of God is, no good is to be expected. The fear of God would lay a restraint upon our spirits, and keep them right, *Neh. v. 15*. When once fear is cast off, prayer is restrained, *Job xv. 4*, and then all goes to wreck and ruin quickly. So that we have here a short account of the general depravity and corruption of mankind; and may say, O Adam! what hast thou done? God made man upright, but thus he hath sought out many inventions.

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the

deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

From all this Paul infers that it is in vain to look for justification by the works of the law, and that it is to be had only by faith, which is the point he has been all along proving, from *ch. i. 17*, and which he lays down (*ver. 28*) as the summary of his discourse, with a *quod erat demonstrandum*,—"that which was to be demonstrated." "We conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law;" not by the deeds of the first law of pure innocence, which left no room for repentance, nor the deeds of the law of nature, how highly soever improved, nor the deeds of the ceremonial law, (the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin,) nor the deeds of the moral law, which are certainly included, for he speaks of that law by which is the knowledge of sin, and those works which might be matter of boasting. Man, in his depraved state, under the power of such corruption, could never, by any works of his own, gain acceptance with God; but it must be resolved purely into the free grace of God, given through Jesus Christ to all true believers that receive it as a free gift. If we had never sinned, our obedience to the law would have been our righteousness; "Do this, and live." But having sinned, and being corrupted, nothing that we can do will atone for our former guilt. It was by their obedience to the moral law that the Pharisees looked for justification, *Lu. xviii. 11*. Now there are two things from which the apostle here argues: the guiltiness of man, to prove that we cannot be justified by the works of the law; and the glory of God, to prove that we must be justified by faith.

First. He argues from man's guiltiness, to shew the folly of expecting justification by the works of the law. The argument is very plain: we can never be justified and saved by the law that we have broken. A convicted traitor can never come off by pleading the statute of 25 Edw. III., for that law discovers his crime and condemns him: indeed, if he had never broken it, he might have been justified by it; but now it is past that he has broken it, and there is no way of coming off but by pleading the act of indemnity, upon which he has surrendered and submitted himself, and humbly and penitently claiming the benefit of it and casting himself upon it. Now concerning the guiltiness of man,

1. He fastens it particularly upon the Jews; for they were the men that made their boast of the law, and set up for justification by it. He had quoted several scriptures out of the Old Testament to shew this corruption. Now, says he, (*ver. 19*) this that "the law says to those who are under the law;" this conviction belongs to the Jews as well as others, for it is written in their law. The Jews boasted of their being under the law, and placed a great deal of confidence in it: "But," says he, "the law convicts and condemns you—you see it does." That "every mouth may be stopped"—that all boasting may be silenced. See the method that God takes both in justifying and condemning: he stops every mouth; those that are justified have their mouths stopped by an humble conviction; those that are condemned have their mouths stopped too, for they shall at last be convinced, (*Jude 15*), and sent speechless to hell, *Mat. xxii. 12*. "All iniquity shall stop her mouth," *Ps. cvii. 42*.

2. He extends it in general to all the world; "That all the world may become guilty before God." If the world lies in wickedness, (*1 Jno. v. 19*), to be sure it is guilty. "May become guilty;" that is, may be proved guilty, liable to punishment, all "by nature children of wrath," *Eph. ii. 3*. They must all plead guilty; those that stand most upon their own justification will certainly be cast. Guilty before God is a dreadful word, before an all-seeing God, that is not, nor can be, deceived in his judgment—before a just and righteous judge, who will by no means clear the guilty. All are guilty, and therefore all have need of a righteousness wherein to appear before God. "For all have sinned," *ver. 23*; all are sinners by nature, by practice, "and have come short of the glory of God"—have failed of that which is the chief end of man. "Come short," as the archer comes short of the mark, as the runner comes short of the prize; so come short, as not only not to win, but to be great losers. "Come short of the glory of God." 1st. Come short of glorifying God: see *ch. i. 21*, "They glorified him not as God." Man was placed at the head of the visible creation, actively to glorify that great Creator whom the inferior creatures could glorify only objectively; but man by sin comes short of this, and, instead

boastful confidence of the Jew, he has shown that neither the possession of the law (*chap. ii. 17-24*), nor of circumcision (*verses 25-29*) in themselves gave any title to confidence. The case of Abraham is brought forward for a double purpose: to the Jew the name of Abraham was the very embodiment of these external confidences; to demolish these looked like stripping their great ancestor of his glory. Did Abraham find nothing as pertaining to the flesh? Had he no external grounds of boasting? Having thus anticipated the inquiry,

individual man, and are closely connected with the following words—"in his blood." Propitiatory by means of a faith resting in the blood of Christ himself" (*Dr. Vaughan*).

iv. 1-8. The connection between this chapter and the preceding should be carefully noted. In dealing with the case of the Jews, the apostle pointed to their confidence and boasting (*chap. ii. 17*). In *chap. iii.* he shows that the principle of justification by faith utterly annihilates the ground of this boasting (*verse 27*). In demolishing the

of glorifying God, dishonours him. It is a very melancholy consideration, to look upon the children of men, who were made to glorify God, and to think how few there are that do it. 2nd. Come short of glorying before God. There is no boasting of innocence; if we go about to glory before God, to boast of any thing we are, or have, or do, this will be an everlasting estoppel—that we have all sinned, and this will silence us. We may glory before men, who are shortsighted, and cannot search our hearts—who are corrupt, as we are, and well enough pleased with sin; but there is no glorying before God, who cannot endure to look upon iniquity. 3rd. Come short of being glorified by God. Come short of justification, or acceptance with God, which is glory begun—come short of the holiness or sanctification which is the glorious image of God upon man, and have overthrown all hopes and expectations of being glorified with God in heaven by any righteousness of their own. It is impossible now to get to heaven in the way of spotless innocence. That passage is blocked up. There is a cherub and a flaming sword set to keep that way to the tree of life.

3. Farther to drive us off from expecting justification by the law, he ascribes this conviction to the law; ver. 20, "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." That law which convicts and condemns us can never justify us. The law is the straight rule, that *rectum* which is *index sui et obliqui*,—that which points out the right and the wrong; 'it is the proper use and intendment of the law to open our wound, and therefore not likely to be the remedy. That which is searching is not sanative. Those that would know sin must get the knowledge of the law in its strictness, extent, and spiritual nature. If we compare our own hearts and lives with this rule, we shall discover wherein we have turned aside. Paul makes this use of the law, *ch. vii. 9*. "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight. Observe, 1st. No flesh shall be justified," no man, no corrupted man, (*Gen. vi. 3*), "for that he also is flesh," sinful and depraved; therefore not justified, because we are flesh. The corruption that remains in our nature will for ever obstruct any justification by our own works, which, coming from flesh, must needs taste of the cask, *Job xiv. 4*. 2nd. Not justified in his sight. He does not deny that justification which was by the deeds of the law in the sight of the church; they were, in their church-estate, as embodied in a polity, a holy people, a nation of priests; but as the conscience stands in relation to God, in his sight, we cannot be justified by the deeds of the law. The apostle refers to *Ps. cxlii. 2*.

Secondly. He argues from God's glory to prove that justification must be expected only by faith in Christ's righteousness. There is no justification by the works of the law. Must guilty man then remain eternally under wrath? Is there no hope? Is the wound become incurable because of transgression? No, blessed be God, it is not, ver. 21, 22; there is another way laid open for us, "the righteousness of God without the law is manifested" now under the Gospel. Justification may be obtained without the keeping of Moses' law; and this is called "the righteousness of God," righteousness of his ordaining, and providing, and accepting,—righteousness which he confers upon us; as the Christian armour is called the armour of God, *Eph. vi. 11*.

1. Now concerning this righteousness of God observe, 1st. That it is manifested. The gospel way of justification is a highway, a plain way, it is laid open for us: the brazen serpent is lifted up upon the pole; we are not left to grope our way in the dark, but it is manifested to us. 2nd. It is without the law. Here he obviates the method of the Judaizing Christians, who would needs join Christ and Moses together—owning Christ for the Messiah, and yet too fondly retaining the law, keeping up the ceremonies of it, and imposing it upon the Gentile converts: No, says he, it is without the law. The righteousness that Christ hath brought in is a complete righteousness. 3rd. Yet it is "witnessed by the law and the prophets;" that is, there were types, and prophecies, and promises, in the Old Testament, that pointed at this. The law is so far from justifying us that it directs us to another way of justification, points at Christ as our righteousness, to whom bear all the prophets witness: see *Acts x. 43*. This might recommend it to the Jews, who were so fond of the law and the prophets. 4th. It is by "the faith of Jesus Christ," that faith which hath Jesus Christ for its object—an 'anointed Saviour,' so Jesus Christ signifies. Justifying faith respects Christ as a Saviour in all his three anointed offices, as prophet, priest, and king—trusting in him, accepting of him, and adhering to him, in all these. It is by this that we become interested in that righteousness which God has ordained, and which Christ has brought in. 5th. It is "to all, and upon all, those that believe." In this expression he inculcates that which he had been often harping upon, that Jews and Gentiles, if they believe, stand upon the same level, and are alike welcome to God through Christ; "for there is no difference." Or, it is *εις πάντας*—to all, offered to all in general; the Gospel excludes none that do not exclude themselves; but it is *ἐπι πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας*, "upon all that believe," not only tendered to them, but put upon them as a crown, as a robe; they are, upon their believing, interested in it, and entitled to all the benefits and privileges of it.

2. But now how is this for God's glory? 1st. It is for the glory of his grace; ver. 24, "Justified freely by his grace,"—*δωρεάν ἢ αὐτοῦ χάριτι*. It is "by his grace," not by the grace wrought in us as the papists say, confounding justification and sanctification, but by the gracious favour of God to us, without any merit in us so much as forseen. And, to make it the more emphatic, he says it is "freely by his grace," to shew that it must be understood of grace in the most proper and genuine sense. It is said that Joseph found grace in the sight of his master, *Gen. xxxix. 4*, but there was a reason; he saw that what he did prospered. There was something in Joseph to invite that grace; but the grace of God communicated to us comes freely, freely; it is free grace, mere mercy; nothing in us to deserve such favours; no, it is all "through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." It comes freely to us, but Christ bought it, and paid dear for it, which yet is so ordered as not to derogate from the honour of free grace. Christ's purchase is no bar to the freeness of God's grace; for grace provided and accepted this vicarious satisfaction.

2nd. It is for the glory of his justice and righteousness; ver. 25, 26, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation," &c. Note, *First*. Jesus Christ is the great propitiation, or propitiatory sacrifice, typified by the *ἱλαστήριον*, or mercy-seat, under the law. He is our throne of grace, in and through whom atonement is made for sin, and our persons and performances are accepted of God, *1 Jno. ii. 2*. He is all in all in our reconciliation, not only the maker, but the matter of it—our priest, our sacrifice, our altar, our all. God was in Christ as in his mercy-seat, reconciling the world unto himself. *Secondly*. God hath set him forth to be so. God, the party offended, makes the first overtures towards a reconciliation, appoints the daysman; *προέβητο*—"foreordained" him to this, in the counsels of his love from eternity, appointed, anointed him to it, qualified him for it, and has exhibited him to a guilty world as their propitiation; see *Mat. iii. 17*; *xvii. 5*. *Thirdly*. That by faith in his blood we become interested in this propitiation. Christ is the propitiation; there is the healing plaster provided. Faith is the applying of this plaster to the wounded soul. And this faith in the business of justification hath a special regard to the blood of Christ, as that which made the atonement; for such was the Divine appointment, that without blood there should be no remission, and no blood but his would do it effectually. Here may be an allusion to the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifices under the law as *Ex. xxiv. 8*. Faith is the bunch of hyssop, and the

blood of Christ is the blood of sprinkling. *Fourthly*. That all who by faith are interested in this propitiation have "the remission of their sins that are past." It was for this that Christ was set forth to be a propitiation, in order to remission, to which the reprieves of his patience and forbearance were a very encouraging preface. "Through the forbearance of God." Divine patience has kept us out of hell, that we might have space to repent, and get to heaven. Some refer the "sins that are past" to the sins of the Old Testament saints, which were pardoned for the sake of the atonement which Christ in the fullness of time was to make, which looked backward as well as forward. "Past through the forbearance of God." It is owing to the Divine forbearance that we were not taken away in the very act of sin. Several Greek copies make *ἐν τῇ ἀνομίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ*—"through the forbearance of God," to begin ver. 26, and they denote two precious fruits of Christ's merit and God's grace:—Remission: *ἀνά τῇ παρρησίᾳ*—"for the remission;" and reprieves: "the forbearance of God." It is owing to the master's goodness and the dresser's mediation that barren trees are let alone in the vineyard; and in both God's righteousness is declared, in that without a mediator and a propitiation he would not only not pardon, but not so much as forbear, not spare a moment; it is owing to Christ that there is ever a sinner on this side hell. *Fifthly*. That God does in all this declare his righteousness. This he insists upon with a great deal of emphasis; "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness." It is repeated, as that which has in it something surprising. He declares his righteousness, 1st. In the propitiation itself. Never was there such a demonstration of the justice and holiness of God as there was in the death of Christ. It appears that he hates sin, when nothing less than the blood of Christ would satisfy for it. Finding sin, though but imputed, upon his own Son, he did not spare him, because he had made himself sin for us, *2 Cor. v. 21*. The iniquities of us all being laid upon him, though he was the Son of his love, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, *Isa. liii. 10*. 2nd. In the pardon upon that propitiation; so it follows, by way of explication; "That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth." Mercy and truth are so met together, righteousness and peace have so kissed each other, that it is now become not only an act of grace and mercy, but an act of righteousness, in God, to pardon the sins of penitent believers, having accepted the satisfaction that Christ by dying made to his justice for them. It would not comport with his justice to demand the debt of the principal when the surety has paid it and he has accepted that payment in full satisfaction: see *1 Jno. i. 9*. He is just, that is, faithful to his word.

3rd. It is for God's glory; for boasting is thus excluded, ver. 27. God will have the great work of the justification and salvation of sinners carried on from first to last in such a way as to exclude boasting, that no flesh may glory in his presence, *1 Cor. i. 29–31*. Now, if justification were by the works of the law, boasting would not be excluded. How should it? If we were saved by our own works, we might put the crown upon our own heads. But the law of faith, that is, the way of justification by faith, doth for ever exclude boasting; for faith is a depending, self-emptying, self-denying grace, and casts every crown before the throne; therefore it is most for God's glory that thus we should be justified. Observe, He speaks of the law of faith. Believers are not left lawless: faith is a law, it is a working grace, wherever it is in truth; and yet, because it acts in a strict and close dependence upon Jesus Christ, it excludes boasting. From all this he draws this conclusion; ver. 28, "That a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Thirdly. In the close of the chapter he shews the extent of this privilege of justification by faith, and that it is not the peculiar privilege of the Jews, but pertains to the Gentiles also; for he had said (ver. 23) that there is no difference: and as to this, 1. He asserts and proves it; ver. 29, 30, "Is he the God of the Jews only?" He argues from the absurdity of such a supposition. Can it be imagined that a God of infinite love and mercy should limit and confine his favours to that little perverse people of the Jews, leaving all the rest of the children of men in a condition eternally desperate? This would by no means agree with the idea we have of the Divine goodness, for his "tender mercies are over all his works;" therefore it is one God of grace that "justifies the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith;" that is, both in one and the same way. However the Jews, in favour of themselves, will needs fancy a difference, really there is no more difference than between by and through, that is, no difference at all. 2. He obviates an objection, ver. 31, as if this doctrine did nullify the law, which they knew came from God: "No," says he, "though we do say that the law will not justify us, yet we do not therefore say that it was given in vain, or is of no use to us; no, we establish the right use of the law, and secure its standing, by fixing it on the right basis. The law is still of use to convince us of what is past, and to direct us for the future; though we cannot be saved by it as a covenant, yet we own it, and submit to it, as a rule in the hand of the Mediator, subordinate to the law of grace; and thus are so far from overthrowing that we establish the law." Let those consider this who deny the obligation of the moral law on believers. [*Yea, we establish the law.*] This is done in the following manner: 1. God shewed respect to it, in being unwilling to pardon sinners without an atonement. 2. Jesus Christ came to magnify it, and to make it honourable. 3. The plan of justification by faith leads to an observance of the law. We do not easily and readily repeat that which overwhelms our best friends in calamity; and we are brought to hate that which inflicted such woes on the Saviour's soul. The sentiment recorded by Watts is as true as it is beautiful,—

'Twas for my sins my dearest Lord
Hung on the cursed tree,
And groan'd away his dying life,
For thee, my soul, for thee.
O how I hate those lusts of mine
That crucified my Lord;
Those sins that pierced and nail'd his flesh
Fast to the fatal wood.
Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die,
My heart hath so decreed;
Nor will I spare the guilty things
That made my Saviour bleed.

This is an advantage in moral influence which no cold, abstract law ever has over the human mind. And one of the chief glories of the plan of salvation is, that, while the sinner is justified, it brings a new set of influences from heaven, more tender and mighty than can be drawn from any other source, to produce obedience to the law of God.—*A. E.]*

CHAPTER IV.

The great gospel doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law was so very contrary to the notions the Jews had learnt from those that sat in Moses' chair, that it would hardly go down with them; and therefore the apostle insists very largely upon it, and labours much in the confirmation and illustration of it. He had before proved it by reason and argument, now in this chapter he proves it by example, which

the apostle proceeds to show that the principle for which he was contending had been exemplified in the case of Abraham, and the very outward sign on which the Jew prided himself was in itself the witness that Abraham found his justification by faith. In verse 1 the phrase "as pertaining to the flesh" must be joined to "found," not to "our father Abraham." In verse 2 a full stop after "glory" will make the passage clearer. The last clause in the verse is best read in connection with verse 3: "But not before God. For," &c.: the sense

runs, "If Abraham was justified by works, he has ground for boasting. But he has none before God, for the Scripture assigns faith as the means of his justification." In this passage the word "impute" is translated "reckon" by Alford.

iv. 11, 12. "Yet being uncircumcised," better, "while in his uncircumcision." "That he might be the father," &c.: implying the purpose, not the mere consequence; but in order "that he might be the father of all them that believe." The true descendants of Abraham

In some places serves for confirmation as well as illustration. The example he pitches upon is that of Abraham, whom he chooses to mention because the Jews gloried much in their relation to Abraham, put it in the first rank of their external privileges that they were Abraham's seed, and truly they had Abraham for their father. Therefore this instance was likely to be more taking and convincing to the Jews than any other. His argument stands thus: 'All that are saved are justified in the same way as Abraham was; but Abraham was justified by faith, and not by works; therefore all that are saved are so justified; for it would easily be acknowledged that Abraham was the father of the faithful. Now this is an argument, not only a *pari*,—from an equal case, as they say, but a *fortiori*,—from a stronger case.' If Abraham, a man so famous for works, so eminent in holiness and obedience, was nevertheless justified by faith only, and not by those works, how much less can any other, especially any of those that spring from him, and come so far short of him in works, set up for a justification by their own works? And it proves likewise, *ex abundanti*,—the more abundantly, as some observe, that we are not justified, no, not by those good works which flow from faith, as the matter of our righteousness; for such were Abraham's works, and are we better than he? The whole chapter is taken up with his discourse upon this instance, and there is in it which hath a particular reference to the close of the foregoing chapter, where he had asserted that, in the business of justification, Jews and Gentiles stand upon the same level. Now in this chapter, with a great deal of cogency of argument, I. He proves that Abraham was justified, not by works, but by faith, ver. 1—8. II. He observes when and why he was so justified, ver. 9—17. III. He describes and commends that faith of his, ver. 17—22. IV. He applies all this to us, ver. 22—25. And, if he had now been in the school of Tyrannus, he could not have disputed more argumentatively.



WHAT shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for

righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 *Saying*, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Here the apostle proves that Abraham was justified not by works, but by faith. Those that of all men contended most vigorously for a share in righteousness by the privileges they enjoyed, and the works they performed, were the Jews, and therefore he appeals to the case of Abraham their father, and puts his own name to the relation, being a Hebrew of the Hebrews; "Abraham our father." Now surely his prerogative must needs be as great as theirs who claim it as his seed according to the flesh. Now what has he found? All the world is seeking; but, while the most are wearying themselves for very vanity, none can be truly reckoned to have found but those who are justified before God; and thus Abraham, like a wise merchant, seeking goodly pearls, found this one pearl of great price. What has he found, *κατα σάρκα*—as pertaining to the flesh, that is, by circumcision and his external privileges and performances? These the apostle calls flesh, *Phil. iii. 3*. Now what did he get by these? Was he justified by them? Was it the merit of his works that recommended him to God's acceptance? No, by no means, which he proves by several arguments.

First, if he had been justified by works, room would have been left for boasting, which must for ever be excluded. If so, "he hath whereof to glory," ver. 2, which is not to be allowed. But, might the Jews say, "was not his name made great, (*Gen. xii. 2*), and then might not he glory?" Yes, "but not before God;" he might deserve well of men, but he could never merit of God. Paul himself had whereof to glory before men, and we have him sometimes glorying in it, yet with humility; but nothing to glory in before God, *1 Cor. iv. 4*; *Phil. iii. 8, 9*: so Abraham. Observe. He takes it for granted that man must not pretend to glory in anything before God; no, not Abraham, as great as and as good a man as he was; and therefore he fetches an argument from it: it would be absurd for him that glorieth to glory in any but the Lord.

Secondly, it is expressly said that Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness; "What saith the Scripture?" ver. 3. In all controversies in religion this must be our question, "What saith the Scripture?" It is not what this great man and the other good man say, but what saith the Scripture? Ask counsel at this Abel, and so end the matter, *2 Sam. xx. 18*. "To the law and the testimony," *Isa. viii. 20*, thither is the last appeal. Now the Scripture saith that "Abraham believed, and this was counted to him for righteousness," *Gen. xv. 6*; therefore he had not whereof to glory before God, it being purely of free grace that it was so imputed, and having not in itself anything of the formal nature of a righteousness, farther than as God himself was graciously pleased so to count it to him. It is mentioned in *Genesis*, upon occasion of a very signal and remarkable act of faith concerning the promised seed, and is the more observable in that it followed upon a grievous conflict he had had with unbelief; his faith was now a victorious faith, newly returned from the battle. It is not the perfect faith that is required to justification,—there may be acceptable faith where there are remainders of unbelief,—but the prevailing faith, the faith that has the upper hand of unbelief.

["Righteousness" means here, as it does in many other passages, justification. The sense then is, "Faith was imputed to him for justification," that is, that he

might be justified, or in order to his becoming and being treated as righteous; see *ch. x. 4*, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness," that is, in order that every one that believes may be regarded as righteous." Nothing is more familiar than this use of the preposition here used by the apostle. It points out the design with which any thing is done as "unto repentance," that men may repent, *Mat. iii. 11*; "unto death," that we may die, *ch. vi. 3*. So "unto salvation," *ch. xi. 1*; "unto condemnation," *Lu. xxiv. 20*. Or it indicates the result, *ch. x. 10*, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," that is, so that he is justified, regarded, and treated as righteous. This view of the passage expresses accurately the apostle's meaning. It was not as 'one who works, but as a believer, that Abraham was regarded in his justification. It was not works, but faith, that was imputed to him, in order to his being introduced into the number and blessings of the righteous. Faith, therefore, was not the ground of his justification, but the means of his being justified.—H.]

Thirdly, if he had been justified by faith the reward would have been of debt, and not of grace, which is not to be imagined. This is his argument, ver. 4, 5: Abraham's reward was God himself; so he had told him but just before, *Gen. xv. 1*, "I am thy exceeding great reward." Now, if Abraham had merited this by the perfection of his obedience, it had not been an act of grace in God, but Abraham might have demanded it with as much confidence as ever any labourer in the vineyard demanded the penny he had earned. But this cannot be; it is impossible for man, much more guilty man, to make God a debtor to him, *ch. xi. 35*. No, God will have free grace to have all the glory, grace for grace's sake, *Jno. i. 16*. And therefore to him that worketh not, that can pretend to no such merit, nor shew any worth or value in his work, which may answer such a reward, but disclaiming any such pretension, casts himself wholly upon the free grace of God in Christ by a lively, active, obedient faith,—to such a one "faith is counted for righteousness," is accepted of God as the qualification required in all that shall be pardoned and saved. "Him that justifieth the ungodly," that is, him that was before ungodly. His former ungodliness was no bar to his justification upon his believing: *τὸν ἀσεβή*,—that ungodly one, that is, Abraham, who, before his conversion, it should seem, was carried down the stream of the Chaldean idolatry, *Jos. xxiv. 2*. No room, therefore, is left for despair, though God clears not the impenitent guilty, yet through Christ he justifies the ungodly.

Fourthly, He farther illustrates this by a passage out of the *Psalms*, where David speaks of the remission of sins, the prime branch of justification, as constituting the happiness and blessedness of a man, pronouncing blessed, not the man who has no sin, or none which deserved death,—for then, while man is so sinful, and God so righteous, where would be the blessed man?—but "the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin," who, though he cannot plead, yet guilty, pleads the act of indemnity, and his plea is allowed. It is quoted from *Ps. xxxii. 1, 2*, where observe, 1. The nature of forgiveness. It is the remission of a debt or a crime; it is the covering of sin, as a filthy thing, as the nakedness and shame of the soul. God is said to cast sin behind his back, to hide his face from it, which, and the like expressions, imply that the ground of our blessedness is not our innocency, or our not having sinned,—a thing is, and is filthy, though covered; justification does not make the sin not to have been, or not to have been sin,—but God's not laying it to our charge, as it follows here; it is God's not imputing sin, ver. 8, which makes it wholly a gracious act of God, not dealing with us in strict justice, as we have deserved, not entering into judgment, not marking iniquities; all which, being purely acts of grace, the acceptance and the reward cannot be expected as due debts; and therefore Paul infers, ver. 6, that it is the imputing of righteousness without works. 2. The blessedness of it; Blessed are they. When it is said, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked," &c., the design is to shew the characters of those that are blessed; but when it is said, "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven," the design is to shew what that blessedness is, and what is the ground and foundation of it. Pardoned people are the only blessed people. The sentiments of the world are, those are happy that have a clear estate, and are out of debt to man; but the sentence of the word is, Those are happy that have their debts to God discharged. O how much therefore is it our interest to make it sure to ourselves that our sins are pardoned! For this is the foundation of all other benefits. So and so I will do for them; for I will be merciful. *Heb. viii. 12*.

9 *Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had being yet* uncircumcised. 13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression. 16 Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might*

embrace all who show the same faith. It is not birth, nor circumcision, but faith which constitutes the heirship.

iv. 16. "Therefore it," &c.: for which reason "it (*i.e.*, the inheritance) was by faith, that it might be (the purpose again, not the consequence) by grace, in order that (purpose once more) the promise might be sure to all the seed."

iv. 17. "Before God:" connect with last clause of verse 16—"father of us all before God." In the estimation of the Almighty,

Abraham is the father of all the faithful, for with God there is no past or future. All generations—the dead and the unborn, and, by implication, those now alive—are embraced in one view. (Compare *2 Pet. iii. 8*.)

iv. 19. "He considered not:" in some MSS. the word "not" is omitted. Taking the Authorised Version, the sense is, "he took no account of." Without the "not" the faith of Abraham appears in a stronger light. "Being not weak, he took notice of, &c.; yet

be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, 17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,)

St. Paul observes in this paragraph when and why Abraham was thus justified, for he has several things to remark upon that. It was before he was circumcised, and before the giving of the law, and there was a reason for both.

First. It was before he was circumcised, ver. 10. His faith was counted to him for righteousness while he was in uncircumcision. It was imputed, *Gen. xv. 6*, and he was not circumcised till *ch. xvii.* Abraham is expressly said to be justified by faith fourteen years, some say twenty-five years, before he was circumcised. Now this the apostle takes notice of in answer to the question, ver. 9, "Cometh this blessedness then on the circumcision only, or on the uncircumcision also?" Abraham was pardoned and accepted in uncircumcision, a circumstance which, as it might silence the fears of the poor uncircumcised Gentiles, so it might lower the pride and conceitedness of the Jews, who gloried in their circumcision, as if they had the monopoly of all happiness. Here are two reasons why Abraham was justified by faith in uncircumcision:

1. That circumcision might be "a seal of the righteousness of faith," ver. 11. The tenor of the covenants must first be settled before the seal can be annexed. Sealing supposes a previous bargain, which is confirmed and ratified by that ceremony. After Abraham's justification by faith had continued several years only a grant by parole, for the confirmation of Abraham's faith God was pleased to appoint a sealing ordinance, and Abraham received it; though it was a bloody ordinance, yet he submitted to it, and even received it as a special favour, "the sign of circumcision," &c. Now we may hence observe, 1st. The nature of sacraments in general; they are signs and seals, signs to represent and instruct, seals to ratify and confirm. They are signs of absolute grace and favour; they are seals of the conditional promises; nay, they are mutual seals; God does in the sacraments seal to us to be to us a God, and we do therein seal to him to be to him a people. 2nd. The nature of circumcision in particular; it was the initiating sacrament of the Old Testament; and it is here said to be, *First*, "A sign" a sign of that original corruption which we are all born with, and which is cut off by spiritual circumcision, a commemorating sign of God's covenant with Abraham, a distinguishing sign between Jews and Gentiles, a sign of admission into the visible church, a sign prefiguring baptism, which comes in the room of circumcision, now under the Gospel, when, the blood of Christ being shed, all bloody ordinances are abolished; it was "an outward and sensible sign of an inward and spiritual grace signified thereby." *Secondly*, "A seal of the righteousness of the faith." In general it was a seal of the covenant of grace, particularly of justification by faith, the covenant of grace, called "the righteousness which is of faith," *ch. x. 6*, and it refers to an Old Testament promise, *Deu. xxx. 12*. Now if infants were then capable of receiving a seal of the covenant of grace, which proves that they then were within the verge of that covenant, how they come to be now cast out of the covenant and incapable of the seal, and by what severe sentence they were thus rejected and incapacitated, those are concerned to make out that not only reject, but nullify and reproach, the baptism of the seed of believers.

[This affords, we think, something more than a dubious glimpse into the question that is often put by a distracted mother, when her babe is taken away from her—when all the converse it ever had with the world amounted to the gaze upon it of a few months or a few opening smiles, which marked the dawn of felt enjoyment; and ere it had reached perhaps the lisp of infancy, it, all unconscious of death, had to wrestle through a period of sickness with its power, and at length to be overcome by it. Oh, it little knew what an interest it had created in that home where it was so passing a visitant; nor, when carried to its early grave, what a tide of emotion it would raise among the few acquaintances it left behind it! On it too baptism was impressed as a seal, and as a sign it was never falsified. There was no positive unbelief in its little bosom—no resistance yet put forth to the truth—no love at all for the darkness rather than the light—nor had it yet fallen into that great condemnation which will attach to all who perish because of unbelief, that their deeds are evil. It is interesting to know that God instituted circumcision for the infant children of Jews, and at least suffered baptism for the infant children of those who profess Christianity. Should the child die in infancy, the use of baptism as a sign has never been thwarted by it; and may we not be permitted to indulge a hope so pleasing, as that the use of baptism as a seal remains in all its entirety—that he who sanctioned the affixing of it to a babe will fulfil upon it the whole expression of this ordinance? And when we couple with this the known disposition of our great Forerunner—the love that he manifested to children on earth—how he suffered them to approach his person—and, lavishing endearment and kindness upon them in the streets of Jerusalem, told his disciples that the presence and company of such as these in heaven formed one ingredient of the joy that was set before him—tell us if Christianity do not throw a pleasing radiance around an infant's tomb? And should any parent who hears us feel softened by the touching remembrance of a light that twinkled a few short months under his roof, and at the end of its little period expired—we cannot think that we venture too far when we say that he has only to persevere in the faith and in the following of the Gospel, and that very light will again shine upon him in heaven. The blossom which withered here upon its stalk has been transplanted there to a place of endurance; and it will then gladden that eye which now weeps out the agony of an affection that has been sorely wounded; and in the name of him who, if on earth, would have wept along with them, do we bid all believers present, to sorrow not even as others which have no hope, but to take comfort in the thought of that country where there is no sorrow and no separation.]

"Oh, when a mother meets on high
The babe she lost in infancy,
Hath she not then, for pains and fears—
The day of woe, the watchful night—
For all her sorrow, all her tears—
An overpayment of delight?"—C.]

2. "That he might be the father of all those that believe." Not but that there were those that were justified by faith before Abraham; but of Abraham first it is particularly observed, and in him commenced a much clearer and fuller dispensation of the covenant of grace than any that had been before extant; and therefore he is called "the father of all that believe," because he was so eminent a believer, and so eminently justified by faith, as Jabel was the father of shepherds, and Jubal of musicians, *Gen. iv. 4, 21*. "The father of all those that believe;" that is, a standing pattern of faith, as parents are examples to their children; and a standing precedent of justi-

fication by faith, as the liberties, privileges, honours, and estates of the fathers descend to their children. Abraham was the father of believers, because to him particularly the Magna Charta was renewed. 1st. The father of believing Gentiles, "though they be not circumcised." Zaccheus, a publican, if he believe, is reckoned a son of Abraham, *Lu. xix. 9*. Abraham being himself uncircumcised when he was justified by faith, uncircumcision can never be a bar. Thus were the doubts and fears of the poor Gentiles anticipated, and no room left to question but that righteousness might be imputed to them also, *Col. iii. 11; Gal. v. 6*. 2nd. The father of believing Jews, not merely as circumcised, and of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, but because believers, because they "are not of the circumcision only," that is, are not only circumcised, "but walk in the steps of that faith;" have not only the sign, but the thing signified; not only are of Abraham's family, but follow the example of Abraham's faith. See here who are the genuine children and lawful successors of those that were the church's fathers; not those that sit in their chairs and bear their names, but those that tread in their steps; this is the line of succession which holds, notwithstanding interruptions. It seems, then, those were most loud and forward to call Abraham father that had least title to the honours and privileges of his children. Thus, those have most reason to call Christ father, not that bear his name in being Christians in profession, but that tread in his steps.

Secondly. It was before the giving of the law, ver. 13—16. The former observation is levelled against those that confined justification to the circumcision, this against those that expected it by the law; now the promise was made to Abraham long before the law. Compare *Gal. iii. 17, 18*. Now observe.

1. What that promise was; "that he should be the heir of the world" that is, of the land of Canaan, the choicest spot of ground in the world; or the father of many nations of the world who sprang from him besides the Israelites; or the heir of the comforts of the life which now is. The meek are said to inherit the earth, and the world is theirs. Though Abraham had so little of the world in possession, yet he was heir of it all. Or, rather, it points at Christ, the seed here mentioned: compare *Gal. iii. 16*. "To thy seed, which is Christ." Now Christ is the heir of the world, the ends of the earth are his possession, and it is in him that Abraham was so. And it refers to that promise, *Gen. xii. 3*, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

2. How it was made to him; "Not through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." "Not through the law," for that was not yet given; but it was upon that believing which was counted to him for righteousness; it was upon his trusting God in his leaving his own country when God commanded him, *Heb. xi. 8*. Now being by faith it could not be by the law, which he proves by the opposition there is between them, ver. 14, 15, "If those who are of the law be heirs;" that is, those, and those only, and they by virtue of the law,—the Jews did, and still do, boast that they are the rightful heirs of the world, because to them the law was given,—then "faith is made void;" for, if it were requisite to an interest in the promise that there should be a perfect performance of the whole law, then the promise can never take its effect, nor is it to any purpose for us to depend upon it, since the way to life by perfect obedience to the law, and spotless, sinless innocency, is wholly blocked up, and the law in itself opens no other way. This he proves, ver. 15, "The law worketh wrath," wrath in us to God; it irritates and provokes that carnal mind which is enmity to God, as the damming up of a stream makes it swell; wrath in God against us: it works this, that is, it discovers it, or our breach of the law works it. Now it is certain that we can never expect the inheritance by a law that worketh wrath. How the law works wrath he shews very concisely in the latter part of the verse, "Where no law is there is no transgression," an acknowledged maxim, which implies, where there is a law there is transgression, and that transgression is provoking, and so the law worketh wrath.

3. Why the promise was made to him by faith; for three reasons, ver. 16. 1st. "That it might be by grace," that grace might have the honour of it; "by grace, and not by the law; by grace, and not of debt, not of merit;" that Grace, grace, might be cried to every stone, especially to the top-stone in this building. Faith hath particular reference to grace granting, as grace hath reference to faith receiving. By grace, and therefore through faith, *Eph. ii. 8*. For God will have every crown thrown at the feet of grace, free grace, and every song in heaven sung to that tune, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, be the praise." 2nd. "That the promise might be sure." The first covenant, being a covenant of works, was not sure; but, through man's failure, the benefits designed by it were cut off; and therefore the more effectually to ascertain and ensure the conveyance of the new covenant, there is another way found out, "not by works;" were it so, the promise would not be sure, because of the continual frailty and infirmity of the flesh; "but by faith," which receives all from Christ, and acts in a continual dependence upon him, as the great trustee of our salvation, and in whose keeping it is safe. The covenant is therefore sure, because it is so well ordered in all things, *2 Sam. xxiii. 5*. 3rd. "That it might be sure to all the seed." If it had been by the law, it had been limited to the Jews, "to whom pertained the glory," and the covenants, and the giving of the law," *ch. ix. 4*; but therefore it was by faith, that Gentiles as well as Jews might become interested in it, the spiritual as well as the natural seed of faithful Abraham. God would contrive the promise in such a way as might make it most extensive, to comprehend all true believers, that circumcision and uncircumcision might break no squares; and for this, ver. 17, he refers us to *Gen. xvii. 5*, where the reason of the change of his name from Abram, "a high father," to Abraham, "the high father of a multitude," is thus rendered; "For a father of many nations have I made thee;" that is, all believers, both before and since the coming of Christ in the flesh, should take Abraham for their pattern, and call him father. The Jews say Abraham was the father of all proselytes to the Jewish religion. "Behold, he is the father of all the world, which are gathered under the wings of the Divine majesty."—*Maimonides*.

17 — Before him whom he believed, *even God*, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. 18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: 20 He staggered not

staggered not:" he estimated the natural difficulties, but his confidence in God's promise and power surmounted them all.

iv. 25. "For our offences," &c.: for the sake of our offences. "Justification:" this word is used only here and in chap. v. 18, and signifies the act of absolving, acquitting, or clearing from guilt. (See Dr. Vaughan's Note in loco.)

v. 1—5. The sense of unforgiven sin causes alienation of mind, and even the feeling of enmity; the sense of forgiveness brings

peace. (Compare Col. i. 20, 21.) "We have peace:" in the best MSS. the word is "let us have." Perhaps this reading presses the application of the truth more closely. "Being justified by faith there is no hindrance to our experiencing true peace; let us have and use it." "By whom we have access:" the perfect tense is used, and should be rendered as in Commentary: "we have had." The access is spoken of as having taken place; we have entered by virtue of that faith into this state of grace, or gratuitous acceptance. "The same representa-

at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

Having observed when Abraham was justified by faith, and why, for the honour of Abraham, and for example to us who call him father, the apostle here describes and commends the faith of Abraham, where observe,

First. Whom he believed; "God who quickeneth." It is God himself that faith fastens upon; "other foundation can no man lay." Now observe what in God Abraham's faith had an eye to; to that, certainly, which would be most likely to confirm his faith concerning the things promised: 1. "God who quickeneth the dead." It was promised that he should be "the father of many nations," when he and his wife were now as good as dead, *Heb. xi. 11, 12*; and therefore he looks upon God as a God that could breathe life into dry bones. He that quickeneth the dead can do any thing, can give a child to Abraham when he is old, can bring the Gentiles, who are dead in trespasses and sins, to a Divine and spiritual life, *Eph. ii. 1*; compare *Eph. i. 19, 20*. 2. "Who calleth things which are not as though they were;" that is, creates all things by the word of his power, as in the beginning, *Gen. i. 3*; 2 *Cor. iv. 6*. The justification and salvation of sinners, the espousing of the Gentiles that had not been a people, were a gracious calling of things which are not as though they were, giving being to things that were not. This expresses the sovereignty of God and his absolute power and dominion, a mighty stay to faith when all other props sink and totter. It is the holy wisdom and policy of faith to fasten particularly on that in God which is accommodated to the difficulties wherewith it is to wrestle, and will most effectually answer the objections. It is faith indeed to build upon the all-sufficiency of God for the accomplishment of that which is impossible to any thing but that all-sufficiency. Thus Abraham became "the father of many nations before him whom he believed," that is, in the eye and account of God; or 'like him whom he believed;' as God was a common Father, so was Abraham. It is by faith in God that we become accepted of him and conformable to him.

Secondly. How he believed. He here greatly magnifies the strength of Abraham's faith, in several expressions. 1. "Against hope, he believed in hope," ver. 18. There was a hope against him, a natural hope. All the arguments of sense, and reason, and experience, which in such cases usually beget and support hope, were against him; no second causes smiled upon him, nor in the least favoured his hope. But against all those inducements to the contrary he believed, for he had a hope for him; "He believed in hope," which arose, as his faith did, from the consideration of God's all-sufficiency. "That he might become the father of many nations." Therefore God, by his almighty grace, enabled him thus to believe against hope, that he might pass for a pattern of great and strong faith to all generations. It was fit that he who was to be the father of the faithful should have something more than ordinary in his faith; that in him faith should be set in its highest elevation, and so the endeavours of all succeeding believers be directed, raised, and quickened. Or this is mentioned as the matter of the promise that he believed; and he refers to *Gen. xv. 5*, "So shall thy seed be," as the stars of heaven, so innumerable, so illustrious. This was that which he believed, when it was counted to him for righteousness, ver. 6. And it is observable that this particular instance of his faith was against hope, against the surmises and suggestions of his unbelief. He had just before been concluding hardly that he should go childless, that one born in his house was his heir, ver. 2, 3; and this unbelief was a foil to his faith, and bespeaks it a believing against hope. 2. "Being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body," ver. 19. Observe, His own body was now dead, become utterly unlikely to beget a child, though the new life and vigour that God gave him continued after Sarah was dead, witness his children by Keturah. When God intends some special blessing, some child of promise, for his people, he commonly puts a sentence of death upon the blessing itself, and upon all the ways that lead to it. Joseph must be enslaved and imprisoned before he be advanced. But Abraham did not consider this, *οὐ κατενόησεν*, "he did not dwell in his thoughts upon it." He said indeed, "Shall a child be born to him that is a hundred years old," *Gen. xvii. 17*. But that was the language of his admiration, and his desire to be farther satisfied, not of his doubting and distrust; his faith passed by that consideration, and thought of nothing but the faithfulness of the promise, with the contemplation whereof he was swallowed up, and this kept up his faith. "Being not weak in faith, he considered not." It is mere weakness of faith that makes a man lie poring upon the difficulties and seeming impossibilities that lie in the way of a promise. Though it may seem to be the wisdom and policy of carnal reason, yet it is the weakness of faith, to look into the bottom of all the difficulties that arise against the promise. 3. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief," ver. 20; and he therefore staggered not because he considered not the frowns and discouragements of second causes; *οὐ διεκρίθη*, "he disputed not;" he did not hold any self-consultation about it, did not take time to consider whether he should close with it or no, did not hesitate or stumble at it, but, by a resolute and pre-emptory act of his soul, with a holy boldness ventured all upon the promise. He took it not for a point that would admit of argument or debate, but presently determined it as a ruled case, did not at all hang in suspense about it; "he staggered not through unbelief." Unbelief is at the bottom of all our staggerings at God's promises. It is not the promise that fails, but our faith that fails when we stagger. 4. He "was strong in faith, giving glory to God;" *ἐνδυναμώθη*, "he was strengthened" in faith, his faith "got ground by exercise," *creciti eundo*. Though weak faith shall not be rejected, the bruised reed not broken, the smoking flax not quenched, yet strong faith shall be commended and honoured. The strength of his faith appeared in the victory it won over his fears. And hereby he gave glory to God; for as unbelief dishonours God by making him a liar, 1 *Jno. v. 10*, so faith honours God by setting to its seal that he is true, *Jno. iii. 33*. Abraham's faith gave God the glory of his wisdom, power, holiness, goodness, and especially of his faithfulness, resting upon the word that he had spoken. Among men we say, "He that trusts another gives him credit, and honours him by taking his word;" thus Abraham gave glory to God by trusting him. We never heard our Lord Jesus commending any thing so much as great faith, *Mat. viii. 10*, and *xv. 28*; therefore God gives honour to faith, great faith, because faith, great faith, gives honour to God. 5. He was "fully persuaded that what God had promised he was able also to perform;" *πληροθυμώμενος*, "was carried on with the greatest confidence" and assurance; it is a metaphor taken from ships that come into the harbour with full sail. Abraham saw the storms of doubts, and fears, and temptations likely to rise against the promise, upon which many a one would have shrunk back, and lain by for fairer days, and waited a smiling gale of sense and reason. But Abraham, having taken God for his pilot, and the promise for his card and

compass, resolves to weather his point, and, like a bold adventurer, sets up all his sails, breaks through all the difficulties, regards neither winds, nor clouds, but trusts to the strength of his bottom and the wisdom and faithfulness of his pilot, and bravely makes to the harbour, and comes home an unspeakable gainer. Such was his full persuasion, and it was built on the omnipotence of God; "He was able." Our waverings rise mainly from our distrust of the Divine power; and therefore to fix us it is requisite we believe, not only that he is faithful, but that he is able that hath promised. "And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness," ver. 22. Because with such a confidence he ventured his all in the Divine promise, God graciously accepted him, and not only answered, but outdid his expectation. This way of glorifying God by a firm reliance on his bare promise was so very agreeable to God's design, and so very conducive to his honour, that he graciously accepted it as a righteousness, and justified him, though there was not that in the thing itself which could merit such an acceptance. This shews why faith is chosen to be the prime condition of our justification, because it is a grace that of all others gives glory to God.

[It is common in Scripture to put the act for the object, especially with regard to faith and hope. And that this is the sense in which we are to understand the apostle when he says here, and ver. 5, that Abraham's believing and his faith were counted for righteousness, appears from its being opposed to our works, and from the reward being reckoned of grace and not of debt. Whereas the act of faith itself is as much a work as any other duty commanded in the moral law, and were that to be reckoned to us for righteousness, the reward in justifying us would be a debt, due to us on account of our having performed that work, as a servant's wages are for having done his master's business. We find Abraham's faith had reference to Christ the promised Seed, and to what should be done by him, that all nations might be blessed in him. What is here called faith's being imputed or counted for righteousness, is in the next chapter, ver. 2—11, 18, 19, called being justified by Christ's blood, and reconciled to God by the death of his Son, by whom we have received the atonement, and the righteousness of Christ coming upon us unto justification, and our being made or constituted righteous by his obedience. The typical sacrifices were spoken of as accepted for, or imputed to, the offerers to make atonement for them, or not, according as they were or were not presented to God, in the way of his appointment, *Lev. i. 4*; *vii. 18*; *xxii. 25*.—*Guyse*.—When believers are justified by faith, "their faith being counted for righteousness," their faith does not justify them as a part, small or great, of their righteousness; but as the appointed means of uniting them to Him who has chosen, as the name whereby he shall be called, "the Lord our Righteousness." And this is a fit appointment, even according to what we can see of it; for if we are to be justified altogether by another's merits, and not in any degree by our own, cordial trust in that Being, and a hearty renunciation of all trust in ourselves, would seem to be the precise state of mind to which an efficacious interest in those merits ought to be annexed. Now, whether this be an act of the mind or not, would not seem of much importance; so long as it is so clearly distinguished from all other acts, and so clearly fitted for its place in the free justification of sinners.—*O'Brien, Bishop of Ossory*. Quoted in Religious Tract Society's Commentary.]

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

In the close of the chapter he applies all to us; and, having abundantly proved that Abraham was justified by faith, he here concludes that his justification was to be the pattern or sampler of ours; "It was not written for his sake alone." It was not intended only for an historical commendation of Abraham, or a relation of something peculiar to him,—as some antipedobaptists will needs understand that circumcision was "a seal of the righteousness of the faith" (ver. 11) only to Abraham himself, and no other;—no, the Scripture did not intend hereby to describe some singular way of justification that belonged to Abraham as his prerogative. The accounts we have of the Old Testament saints were not intended for histories only, barely to inform and divert us, but for precedents to direct us, for examples (1 *Cor. x. 11*) for our learning, *ch. xv. 4*. And this particularly concerning Abraham was written for us also, to assure us what that righteousness is which God requireth and accepteth to our salvation,—for us also, that are mean and vile, that come so far short of Abraham in privileges and performances,—us Gentiles as well as the Jews, for the blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles through Christ,—for us on whom the ends of the world are come, as well as for the patriarchs; for the grace of God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. His application of it is but short. Only we may observe,

First. Our common privilege; it shall be imputed to us, that is, righteousness shall. The gospel way of justification is by an imputed righteousness, *μέλλει λογίζεσθαι*,—"it shall be imputed;" he uses a future verb to signify the continuation of this mercy in the church, that as it is the same now so it will be while God has a church in the world, and there are any of the children of men to be justified; for there is a fountain opened that is inexhaustible.

Secondly. Our common duty, the condition of this privilege, and that is believing. The proper object of this believing is a Divine revelation. The revelation to Abraham was concerning a Christ to come, the revelation to us is concerning a Christ already come, which difference in the revelation does not alter the case. Abraham believed the power of God in raising up an Isaac from the dead womb of Sarah; we are to believe the same power exerted in a higher instance, the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The resurrection of Isaac was in a figure, *Heb. xi. 19*, the resurrection of Christ was real. Now we are to believe on him that raised up Christ; not only believe his power, that he could do it, but depend upon his grace in raising up Christ as our surety; so he explains it, ver. 25, where we have a brief account of the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection, which are the two main hinges on which the door of salvation turns. 1. He "was delivered for our offences." God the Father delivered him, he delivered up himself as a sacrifice for sin. He died indeed as a malefactor, because he died for sin; but it was not his own sin, but the sins of the people. He died to make atonement for our sins, to expiate our guilt, to satisfy Divine justice. 2. He was "raised again for our justification," for the perfecting and completing of our justification. By the merit of his death he paid our debt, in his resurrection he took out our acquaintance. When he was buried he lay a prisoner in execution for our debt, which as a surety he had undertaken to pay; on the third day an angel was sent to roll away the stone, and so to discharge the prisoner, which was the greatest assurance possible that Divine justice was satisfied, the debt paid, or else he would never have released

tion of grace under the figure of a place of safety into which a Christian man enters, in which he abides, and out of which he must take heed lest he fall, is found, for example, in *Gal. v. 4* and 1 *Pet. v. 12*" (Vaughan). "We rejoice;" rather, "we glory, or triumph." This gains significance by comparing *chaps. ii. 17*, *iii. 27*, and *iv. 2*. "In tribulations;" literally, "in the tribulations"—i.e., "those which we shall meet with: we glory also, or better, even in these, because we know," &c. In the words which follow Alford substitutes "endur-

ance" for "patience," and "approval" for "experience." The sorrow of the world worketh death, or despondency, which is death to the spirit. Suffering works to the Christian a higher hopefulness, because an educated trust. (Compare *Hos. ii. 15*.)

v. 6. "Without strength;" weak or powerless to obey or please God. (Compare *chap. viii. 3*; *Ezek. xvi. 6*.) "In due time;" at the fulness of time, as *Gal. iv. 4*; *Eph. i. 10*. "For the ungodly;" we should have expected the apostle to say "for us;" but he says "for

the prisoner; and therefore the apostle puts a special emphasis on Christ's resurrection; "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that has risen again," *ch. viii. 34*.

["And was raised again for our justification," that is, that we might be justified. The resurrection of Christ was necessary for our justification, inasmuch as it was the formal acceptance of his sufferings, as the expiation for our sins. Had he not risen we should yet be under condemnation, *1 Cor. xv. 17*. But as he rose from the dead he was accepted of the Father, and appeared as the firstfruits; that is, the forerunner and pledge of the resurrection, and complete salvation of all his people. In the Epistle to the *Hebrews* the apostle presents this idea under another form. As it was necessary, on the great day of atonement, that the high priest should not only slay the victim at the altar, but enter into the most holy place, and sprinkle the blood upon the mercy-seat, so our high priest, having suffered in the outer court, has passed into the heavens with his own blood, there to appear for our justification; that is, to secure for us the continued application of the merits of his death. Either, therefore, as the evidence of the acceptance of his sufferings as our substitute, or as a necessary step towards securing the application of their merit to our benefit, the resurrection of Christ was essential to our justification.—*H.*]

So that upon the whole matter it is very evident that we are not justified by the merit of our own works, but by a fiducial obdiential dependence upon Jesus Christ and his righteousness, as the condition on our part of our right to impunity and salvation, which was the truth that Paul in this and the foregoing chapter had been fixing as the great spring and foundation of all our comfort.

[Under the law, obedience would have been that personal thing in us which stood connected with our right to eternal life. Under the Gospel, faith is that personal thing in us which stands connected with this right; but just as the act of stretching forth his hand to the offered alms is that personal doing of the mendicant that stands connected with his possession of the money received by him. Any other view of faith than that which excludes boasting must be altogether unscriptural, and will mislead the inquirer, and may involve his mind in much darkness, and in very serious difficulties. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of faith. It is of faith that it might be by grace—not that it might be a thing of merit, but a thing of freeness—a present. We are saved by grace through faith. Conceive it a question, whether a dwelling house is enlightened by a candle from within or by an open window. The answer may justly enough be, that it is by the window—and yet the window does not enlighten the house. It is the sun which enlightens it. The window is a mere opening for the transmission of that which is from without. Christ hath wrought out a righteousness for us that is freely offered to us of God. By faith we discern the reality of this offer; and all that it does is to strike out, as it were, an avenue of conveyance, by which the righteousness of another passes to us; and through faith we are saved by this righteousness.—*C.*]

CHAPTER V.

The apostle, having made good his point, and fully proved justification by faith. "In this chapter proceeds in the explication, illustration, and application of that truth. 1. He shews the fruits of justification, ver. 1–5. 2. He shews the fountain and foundation of justification in the death of Jesus Christ, which he discourses of at large in the rest of the chapter.



HEREFORE being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: know-

ing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

The precious benefits and privileges which flow from justification are such as should quicken us all to give diligence to make it sure to ourselves that we are justified, and then to take the comfort it renders to us, and to do the duty it calls for from us. The fruits of this tree of life are exceedingly precious.

First, "We have peace with God," ver. 1. It is sin that breeds the quarrel between us and God, creates not only a strangeness, but an enmity; the holy righteous God cannot in honour be at peace with a sinner while he continues under the guilt of sin. Justification takes away the guilt, and so makes way for peace. And such are the benignity and good-will of God to man that, immediately upon the removing of that obstacle, the peace is made. By faith we lay hold of God's arm, and of his strength, and so are at peace, *Isa. xxvii. 4, 5*. There is more in this peace than barely a cessation of enmity; there is friendship and lovingkindness, for God is either the worst enemy or the best friend. Abraham, being justified by faith, was called "the friend of God," *Jas. ii. 23*, which was his honour, but not his peculiar honour; Christ has called his disciples friends, *Jno. xv. 13–15*. And surely a man needs no more to make him happy than to have God his friend! But this is "through our Lord Jesus Christ," through him as the great peacemaker, the "Mediator between God and man," that blessed Daysman that has laid his hand upon us both. Adam, in innocence, had peace with God immediately; there needed no such mediator. But to guilty sinful man it is a very dreadful thing to think of God out of Christ; for he is our peace, *Eph. ii. 14*, not only the maker, but the matter and maintainer of our peace, *Col. i. 20*.

Secondly, "We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand," ver. 2. This is a farther privilege, not only peace, but grace, "this grace," that is, this favour. Observe, 1. The saints' happy state. It is a state of grace, God's lovingkindness to us, and our conformity to God; he that hath God's love and God's likeness is in a state of grace. Now into this grace we have access, *προσπαύμεν*,—"an introduction," which implies that we were not born in this state; we are

"by nature children of wrath," and "the carnal mind is enmity against God;" but we are brought into it. We could not have got into it of ourselves, nor have conquered the difficulties in the way, but we have a manuduction, a leading by the hand,—are led into it as blind, or lame, or weak people are led,—are introduced as pardoned offenders,—are introduced by some favourite at court to kiss the king's hand, as strangers, that are to have audience, are conducted. *προσπαύμεν εὐχρησται*,—"We have had access." He speaks of those that have been already brought out of a state of nature into a state of grace. Paul, in his conversion, had this access; then he was made nigh. Barnabas introduced him to the apostles, *Acts ix. 27*, and there were others that led him by the hand to Damascus, ver. 8, but it was Christ that introduced and led him by the hand into this grace. "By whom we have access by faith." By Christ as the author and principal agent, by faith as the means of this access; not by Christ in consideration of any merit or desert of ours, but in consideration of our believing dependence upon him, and resignation of ourselves to him.

[It would seem obvious, from the use of the word "also," that this verse expresses a distinct idea from the preceding. The most common and natural construction of this passage is to connect the word grace with access, that is, "access into this grace." Grace then, or favour, expresses the same idea as peace with God in the preceding verse; and the difference between the two verses is to be found in the word access or introduction. The meaning then is, "We are not only indebted to Jesus Christ for peace with God, but also for our introduction into this state of favour," which includes, of course, liberty of access to God.—*H.*]

2. Their happy standing in this state; "Wherein we stand." Not only wherein we are, but wherein we stand, a posture that denotes our discharge from guilt; we stand in the judgment, *Ps. i. 5*, not cast, as convicted criminals, but our dignity and honour secured,—not thrown to the ground, as abjects. The phrase denotes also our progress; while we stand, we are going. We must not lie down, as if we had already attained, but stand as those that are pressing forward, stand as servants attending on Christ our Master. The phrase denotes, farther, our perseverance: we stand firmly and safely, upheld by the power of God; stand as soldiers stand that keep their ground, not borne down by the power of the enemy. It denotes not only our admission to, but our confirmation in, the favour of God. It is not in the court of heaven as in earthly courts, where high places are slippery places; but we stand in an humble confidence "of this very thing, that he who has begun the good work will perform it." *Phil. i. 6*.

[The word "wherein" must refer to grace, the immediate antecedent, and not to faith, the more remote one. The figurative language here used is peculiarly expressive and appropriate. As those only who were in the favour of ancient monarchs could freely approach them, and even such had generally to be led forward by an 'introducer;' so Christ, our introducer, secures access for us into the favour and presence of God. We come not of ourselves, but, abashed and humbled, are led along by our kind Mediator.—*H.*]

Thirdly, We "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Besides the happiness in hand, there is a happiness in hope, "the glory of God," the glory which God will put upon the saints in heaven, glory which will consist in the vision and fruition of God. 1. Those, and those only, that have access by faith into the grace of God now, may hope for the glory of God hereafter. There is no good hope of glory but what is founded in grace; grace is glory begun, the earnest and assurance of glory; "He will give grace and glory," *Ps. lxxxiv. 11*. 2. Those who hope for the glory of God hereafter have enough to rejoice in now. It is the duty of those that hope for heaven to rejoice in that hope.

Fourthly, "We glory in tribulations also;" not only notwithstanding our tribulations (these do not hinder our rejoicing in hope of the glory of God,) but even in our tribulations, as they are working for us the weight of glory, *2 Cor. iv. 17*. Observe, What a growing increasing happiness the happiness of the saints is; "Not only so." One would think such peace, such grace, such glory, and such a joy in hope of it, were more than such poor undeserving creatures as we are could pretend to; and yet it is "not only so." There are more instances of our happiness. "We glory in tribulations also," especially tribulations for righteousness' sake, which seemed the greatest objection against the saints' happiness, whereas really their happiness did not only consist with, but take rise from, those tribulations; "They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer," *Acts v. 41*. This being the hardest point, he sets himself to shew the grounds and reasons of it. How come we to glory in tribulations? Why, because tribulations, by a chain of causes, greatly befriending hope, which he shews in the method of its influence. 1. "Tribulation worketh patience," not in and of itself, but the powerful grace of God working in and with the tribulation. It proves, and by proving improves, patience, as parts and gifts increase by exercise. It is not the efficient cause, but yields the occasion, as steel is hardened by the fire. See how God brings meat out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong. That which worketh patience is matter of joy; for patience does us more good than tribulations can do us hurt. "Tribulation in itself worketh impatience; but, as it is sanctified to the saints, it worketh patience." 2. "Patience, experience," ver. 4. It works an experience of God, and the songs he gives in the night. The patient sufferers have the greatest experience of the Divine consolations, which abound as afflictions abound. It works an experience of ourselves. It is by tribulation that we make an experiment of our own sincerity, and therefore such tribulations are called trials. It works, *δοκιμῆς*,—"an approbation," as he is approved that has passed the test. Thus Job's tribulation wrought patience, and that patience produced an approbation, that still he holds fast his integrity, *Job ii. 3*. 3. "Experience, hope." He who, being thus tried, comes forth as gold, will thereby be encouraged to hope. This experiment, or approbation, is not so much the ground as the evidence of our hope, and a special friend to it. Experience of God is a prop to our hope; he that hath delivered doth and will. Experience of ourselves helps to evidence our sincerity. 4. This "hope maketh not ashamed;" that is, it is a hope that will not deceive us. Nothing confounds more than disappointment. Everlasting shame and confusion will be caused by the perishing of the expectation of the wicked, "but the hope of the righteous shall be gladness," *Psa. x. 28*; see *Psa. xxii. 5*; *lxxi. 1*. Or, it maketh not ashamed of our sufferings. Though we are counted as the offscouring of all things, and trodden under foot as the mire in the streets, yet, having hopes of glory, we are not ashamed of these sufferings. It is in a good cause, for a good Master, and in good hope, and therefore we are not ashamed. We will never think ourselves disparaged by sufferings that are likely to end so well. "Because the love of God is shed abroad." This hope will not disappoint us, because it is sealed with the Holy Spirit as a spirit of love. It is the gracious work of the blessed Spirit to shed abroad the love of God in the hearts of all the saints. "The love of God," that is, the sense of God's love to us, drawing out love in us to him again. Or, the great effects of his love: 1st. Special grace; and, 2nd. The pleasant gust or sense of it. It is shed abroad, "as sweet ointment, perfuming the soul, as rain watering it and making it fruitful. The ground of all our comfort and holiness, and perseverance in both, is laid in the shinning abroad of the love of God in our hearts; it is this which constrains us, *2 Cor. v. 14*. Thus are we drawn and held by the bonds of love. Sense of God's love to us will make us not ashamed either of our hope in him or our sufferings for him.

the ungodly," to heighten the contrast here and in verse 7, where he speaks of "a good man."

v. 8. "Commendeth:" or, rather, "gives proof of," "establishes," "Yet sinners" stands in contrast to the "now justified" of verse 9.

v. 9, 10. "Much more:" St. Paul argues from the greater to the less here, as in chap. viii. 32. "By his blood:" the preposition is "in" ("in his blood"), and expresses, says Dr. Vaughan, the idea of our justification or absolution having been, as it were, contained in

the blood, the outpoured life-blood of Christ. "We shall be saved:" the salvation here spoken of is from "wrath"—literally, "the wrath;" i.e., "the wrath to come," as in *1 Thess. i. 10*. "By his life:" here, too, the preposition is "in;" "we shall be saved in his life; for he is our life." (Compare *John xiv. 19*; *2 Cor. iv. 10, 11*.)

v. 11. "We have now received:" "now" in contrast with the future glory spoken of in verse 2, and the future salvation (verse 9). "Received:" a single act, probably referring to the individual appro-

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. 12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. 15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification. 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) 18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

The apostle here describes the fountain and foundation of justification, laid in the death of the Lord Jesus. The streams are very sweet, but if you run them up to the spring-head, you will find it to be Christ's dying for us; it is in the precious stream of Christ's blood that all these privileges come flowing to us; and therefore he enlarges upon this instance of the love of God which is shed abroad. Three things he takes notice of for the explication and illustration of this doctrine: 1. The persons he died for, ver. 6-8. 2. The precious fruits of his death, ver. 9-11. 3. The parallel he runs between the communication of sin and death by the first Adam and of righteousness and life by the second Adam, ver. 12, to the end.

First. The character we were under when Christ died for us.

1. "We were without strength," ver. 6; in a sad condition; and, which is worse, altogether unable to help ourselves out of that condition—lost, and no visible way open for our recovery; our condition deplorable, and in a manner desperate; and therefore our salvation is here said to come "in due time." God's time to help and save is when those that are to be saved are without strength, that his own power and grace may be the more magnified, *Deu. xxxii. 36*. It is the manner of God to help at a dead lift.

2. He "died for the ungodly;" not only helpless creatures, and therefore likely to perish, but guilty sinful creatures, and therefore deserving to perish; not only mean and worthless, but vile and obnoxious, unworthy of such favour with the holy God. Being ungodly, they had need of one to die for them, to satisfy for guilt, and to bring in a righteousness. This he illustrates (ver. 7, 8,) as an unparalleled instance of love; herein God's thoughts and ways were above ours: compare *Jno. xv. 13, 14*, "Greater love has no man." 1st. One would hardly die for a righteous man, that is, an innocent man, one that is unjustly condemned; every body will pity such a one, but few will put such a

value upon his life as either to hazard, or much less to deposit, their own in his stead. 2nd. It may be, one might perhaps be persuaded to die for a good man, that is, a useful man, who is more than barely a righteous man. Many that are good themselves yet do but little good to others; but those that are useful commonly get themselves well-beloved, and meet with some that in a case of necessity would venture to be their *ἀντιψυχοί*,—"would engage life for life," would be their bail, body for body. Paul was, in this sense, a very good man, one that was very useful, and he met with some that for his life laid down their own necks, *ch. xvi. 4*; and yet observe how he qualifies this: it is but some that would do so, and it is a daring act if they do it,—it must be some bold venturing soul; and, after all, it is but a peradventure, 3rd. But Christ died for sinners, ver. 8, neither righteous nor good; not only such as were useless but such as were guilty and obnoxious; not only such as there would be no loss of should they perish, but such whose destruction would greatly redound to the glory of God's justice, being malefactors and criminals that ought to die. Some think he alludes to a common distinction the Jews had of their people into *צדיקים*—"righteous," *חוטאים*—"merciful" (compare *Isa. lvii. 1*), and *רשעים*—"wicked." Now herein "God commended his love," not only proved or evidenced his love, (he might have done that at a cheaper rate,) but magnified it and made it illustrious. This circumstance did greatly magnify and advance his love, not only put it past dispute, but rendered it the object of the greatest wonder and admiration; "Now my creatures shall see that I love them, I will give them such an instance of it as shall be without parallel." "Commendeth his love," as merchants commend their goods when they would put them off. This commending of his love was in order to the shedding abroad of his love in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. He evinces his love in the most winning, affecting, endearing way imaginable. "While we were yet sinners," implying that we were not to be always sinners, there should be a change wrought; for he died to save us, not in our sins, but from our sins; but we were yet sinners when he died for us. 4th. Nay, which is more, "we were enemies," ver. 10; not only malefactors, but traitors and rebels, in arms against the government; the worst kind of malefactors, and of all malefactors the most obnoxious. The carnal mind is not only an enemy to God, but enmity itself, *ch. viii. 7*; *Col. i. 21*. This enmity is a mutual enmity; God loathing the sinner and the sinner loathing God, *Zec. xi. 8*; and that for such as these Christ should die is such a mystery, such a paradox, such an unprecedented instance of love, that it may well be our business to eternity to adore and wonder at it. This is a commendation of love indeed. Justly might he who had thus loved us make it one of the laws of his kingdom that we should love our enemies.

Secondly. The precious fruits of his death.

1. Justification and reconciliation are the first and primary fruit of the death of Christ; "We are justified by his blood, ver. 9; reconciled by his death," ver. 10. Sin is pardoned, the sinner accepted as righteous, the quarrel taken up, the enmity slain, an end made of iniquity, and an everlasting righteousness brought in. This is done, that is, Christ has done all that was requisite on his part to be done in order hereunto, and, immediately upon our believing we are actually put into a state of justification and reconciliation. "Justified by his blood." Our justification is ascribed to the blood of Christ, because "without blood there is no remission," *Heb. ix. 22*. "The blood is the life," and that must go to make atonement. In all the propitiatory sacrifices, the sprinkling of the blood was of the essence of the sacrifice. It was "the blood that made an atonement for the soul," *Lev. xvii. 11*.

2. Hence results salvation from wrath; "Saved from wrath," (ver. 9,) "saved by his life," ver. 10. When that which hinders our salvation is taken away, the salvation must needs follow. Nay, the argument holds very strongly; if God justified and reconciled us when we were enemies, and put himself to so much charge to do it, much more will he save us when we are justified and reconciled. He that has done the greater, which is of enemies to make us friends, will certainly do the less, which is when we are friends to use us friendly and to be kind to us; and therefore the apostle, once and again, speaks of it with a "much more." He that hath digged so deep to lay the foundation will no doubt build upon that foundation. "We shall be saved from wrath" from hell and damnation. It is the wrath of God that is the fire of hell; "the wrath to come," so it is called, *1 Thes. i. 10*. The final justification and absolution of believers at the great day, together with the fitting and preparing of them for it, are the salvation from wrath here spoken of; it is the perfecting of the work of grace. "Reconciled by his death, saved by his life." His life here spoken of is not to be understood of his life in the flesh, but his life in heaven, that life which ensued after his death: compare *ch. xiv. 9*; "He was dead, and is alive," *Rev. i. 18*. We are reconciled by Christ humbled, we are saved by Christ exalted. The dying Jesus laid the foundation, in satisfying for sin, and slaying the enmity, and so making us salvageable; thus is the partition wall broken down, atonement made, and the attainer reversed; but it is the living Jesus that perfects the work: "he lives to make intercession," *Heb. vii. 25*. It is Christ, in his exaltation, that by his word and Spirit effectually calls, and changes, and reconciles us to God, is our Advocate with the Father, and so completes and consummates our salvation: compare *ch. iv. 25*; *viii. 34*. Christ dying was the testator, who bequeathed us the legacy; but Christ living is the executor, who pays it. Now the arguing is very strong. He that puts himself to the charge of purchasing our salvation will not decline the trouble of applying it.

[The death of a crucified Saviour, when beheld under such a view, is the firm stepping-stone to confidence in a risen Saviour. You may learn from it, that his desire and your salvation are most thoroughly at one. Of his good-will to have you into heaven he has given the strongest pledge and demonstration, by consecrating, with his own blood, a way of access, through which sinners may draw nigh; and now that, as our forerunner, he is already there—now that he has gone up again to the place from which he arose—now that, to the very place which he left to die, and that, that the barrier to its entrance from our world may be moved away, he has ascended alive and in glory, without another death to endure, for death has no more the dominion over him—will ever he do any thing to close that entrance which it has cost him so much to open? Will he thus throw away the toil and the travail of his own soul, and reduce to impotency that apparatus of reconciliation which he himself has reared, and at an expense too, equal to the penance of many millions through eternity? What he died to begin will he not now live to carry forward, and will not the love which could force a way through the grave to its accomplishments—now that it has reached the summit of triumph and of elevation which he at present occupies, burst forth and around the field of that mighty enterprise, which was begun in deepest suffering, and will end in full and finished glory?—C.]

3. All this produces, as a farther privilege, our joy in God, ver. 11. God is now so far from being a terror to us that he is our joy, and our hope in the day of evil, *Jer. xvii. 17*; we are reconciled and saved from wrath. Iniquity, blessed be God, shall not be our ruin; and not only so, there is more in it yet, a constant stream of favours. We not only go to heaven, but go to heaven triumphantly; not only get into the harbour, but come in with full sail: "We joy in God," not only saved from his wrath, but solacing ourselves in his love, and this "through Jesus Christ," who is the Alpha and the Omega, the foundation stone and the top stone of all our comforts and hopes, not only our salvation, but our strength and our song; and all this (which he repeats as a string he

priation of the atonement, or reconciliation. "We have now received our reconciliation."

v. 12-19. These verses trace the parallel between Christ and Adam. In it both likenesses and contrasts appear. "Christ, like Adam, has become the head and ancestor of a whole race, who are involved in the consequences of his act. Most unlike, indeed, are the two cases: the one an act of transgression, involving judgment and death; the other of obedience, leading to acceptance and life."

v. 17. "Reigned by one . . . in life by one;" translate not "one," but "the one;" so in verse 19. The one and the many are contrasted.

v. 18. The words "judgment came" and "free gift came" are not in the original, but are supplied from verse 16. Alford supplies "the issue was" in both cases.

v. 21. "Unto death;" rather, "in death." Sin was the sovereign, death the kingdom over which sin reigned.

loved to be harping upon) by virtue of the atonement, for by him we Christians, we believers, have now, now in gospel times, or now in this life, "received the atonement," which was typified by the sacrifices under the law, and is an earnest of our happiness in heaven. True believers do by Jesus Christ receive the atonement. Receiving the atonement is our actual reconciliation to God in justification, grounded upon Christ's satisfaction. To receive the atonement is, 1st. To give our consent to the atonement, approving of, and agreeing to, those methods which Infinite Wisdom has taken of saving a guilty world by the blood of a crucified Jesus, being willing and glad to be saved in a gospel way and upon gospel terms. 2nd. To take the comfort of the atonement, which is the fountain and the foundation of our joy in God. Now we joy in God, now we do indeed receive the atonement, *καυχόμενοι*,—"glorying" in it. God hath received the atonement, *Mat. iii. 17; xvii. 5; xviii. 2*; if we but receive it the work is done.

Thirdly. The parallel that the apostle runs between the communication of sin and death by the first Adam and of righteousness and life by the second Adam (ver. 12, to the end), which not only illustrates the truth he is discoursing of, but tends very much to the commending of the love of God and the comforting of the hearts of true believers, in shewing a correspondence between our fall and our recovery, and not only a like, but a much greater power in the second Adam to make us happy, than there was in the first to make us miserable. Now, for the opening of this observe,

1. A general truth laid down as the foundation of his discourse, that Adam was a type of Christ; ver. 14, "Who is the figure of him that was to come." Christ is therefore called the last Adam, *1 Cor. xv. 45*; compare ver. 22. In this Adam was a type of Christ, that in the covenant transactions that were between God and him, and in the consequent events of those transactions, Adam was a public person. God dealt with Adam, and Adam acted, as such a one, as a common father and factor, root and representative, of and for all his posterity; so that what he did in that station, as agent for us, we may be said to have done in him, and what was done to him may be said to have been done to us in him. Thus Jesus Christ, the Mediator, acted as a public person, the head of all the elect, dealt with God for them, as their father, factor, root, and representative—died for them, rose for them, entered within the veil for them, did all for them. When Adam failed, we failed with him; when Christ performed, he performed for us. Thus was Adam *τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος*,—"the figure of him that was to come," to come to repair that breach which Adam had made.

[The word translated "figure" means properly a print, or impression of any thing, *Jno. xx. 25*, where it is used of the print of the nails; then more generally an image, model, likeness, type. The simple meaning is, that Adam was like Christ, him that was to come, that is, the Messiah, who is called the second Adam, *1 Cor. xv. 45*; and, from the fact that he had been long expected, "He that was to come," *Mat. xi. 3*. The point of resemblance between Adam and Christ is to be gathered from the context. It is this: each stood as the head and representative of all connected with them. By the offence of the one all connected with him are subject to death; and by the righteousness of the other all connected with him are justified and saved.—H.]

2. A more particular explication of the parallel, in which observe, 1st. How Adam as a public person, communicated sin and death to all his posterity; ver. 12, "By one man sin entered." We see the world under a deluge of sin and death, full of iniquities and full of calamities. Now, it is worth while to inquire what is the spring that feeds it, and you will find it to be the general corruption of nature; and at what gap it entered, and you will find it to have been Adam's first sin. It was by one man, and he the first man, (for if any had been before him they would have been free,) that one man from whom as from the root, we all spring. First. By him sin entered. When God pronounced all very good, *Gen. i. 31*, there was no sin in the world; it was when Adam ate forbidden fruit that sin made its entry. Sin had before entered into the world of angels, when many of them revolted from their allegiance, and left their first estate; but it never entered into the world of mankind till Adam sinned. Then it entered as an enemy, to kill and destroy, as a thief, to rob and despoil; and a dismal entry it was. Then entered the guilt of Adam's sin imputed to posterity, and a general corruption and depravedness of nature. *Ἐφ' ᾧ*,—"for that," (so we read it,) rather "in whom, all have sinned." Sin entered into the world by Adam, for in him we all sinned. As, *1 Cor. xv. 22*, "in Adam all die," so here, "in him all have sinned;" for it is agreeable to the law of all nations that the acts of a public person be accounted theirs whom they represent; and what a whole body does every member of the same body may be said to do. Now Adam acted thus as a public person, by the sovereign ordination and appointment of God, and yet that founded upon a natural necessity; for God, as the Author of nature, had made this the law of nature, that man should beget in his own likeness, and so the other creatures. In Adam, therefore, as in a common receptacle, the whole nature of man was reposit, from him to flow down in a channel to his posterity; for all mankind are made of one blood, *Acts xvii. 26*, so that according as this nature proves through his standing or falling, before he puts it out of his hands, accordingly it is propagated from him. Adam therefore sinning and falling, the nature became guilty and corrupt, and is so derived. Thus in him all have sinned. Secondly. "Death by sin," for death is the wages of sin. Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. When sin came, of course death came with it. Death is here put for all that misery which is the due desert of sin, temporal, spiritual, eternal death. If Adam had not sinned, he had not died; the threatening was, "In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die," *Gen. ii. 17*. Thirdly. "So death passed," that is, a sentence of death was passed, as upon a criminal, *ἀπαθὲν*,—"passed through" all men, as an infectious disease passes through a town, so that none escape it. It is the universal fate, without exception: death passes upon all. There are common calamities incident to human life which do abundantly prove this. "Death reigned," ver. 14. He speaks of death as a mighty prince, and his monarchy the most absolute, universal, and lasting monarchy. None are exempted from its sceptre; it is a monarchy that will survive all other earthly rule, authority, and power, for it is the last enemy, *1 Cor. xv. 26*. Those sons of Belial that will be subject to no other rule cannot avoid being subject to this. Now all this we may thank Adam for; from him sin and death descend. Well may we say, as that good man, observing the change that a fit of sickness had made in his countenance, "O Adam! what hast thou done?"

Further, to clear this, he shews that sin did not commence with the law of Moses, but was in the world until, or before, that law; therefore that law of Moses is not the only rule of life, for there was a rule, and that rule was transgressed, before the law was given. It likewise intimates that we cannot be justified by our obedience to the law of Moses, any more than we were condemned by and for our disobedience to it. Sin was in the world before the law; witness Cain's murder, the apostasy of the old world, the wickedness of Sodom. His inference hence is, Therefore there was a law; for "sin is not imputed where there is no law." Original sin is a want of conformity to, and actual sin is a transgression of, the law of God: therefore all were under some law. His proof of it is, "Death reigned from Adam to Moses," ver. 14. It is certain that death could not have reigned if sin had not set up the throne for him. This proves that sin was in the world before the law, and original sin, for death reigned over those that had not sinned any actual sin, "that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," never sinned in their own persons

as Adam did—which is to be understood of infants, that were never guilty of actual sin, and yet died, because Adam's sin was imputed to them. This reign of death seems especially to refer to those violent and extraordinary judgments which were long before Moses, as the deluge, and the destruction of Sodom, which involved infants. It is a great proof of original sin that little children, who were never guilty of any actual transgression, are yet liable to very terrible diseases, casualties, and deaths, which could by no means be reconciled with the justice and righteousness of God if they were not chargeable with guilt.

[The simple doctrine and argument of the apostle is, that there are penal evils which come upon men antecedently to any transgressions of their own; and, as the infliction of these evils implies a violation of law, it follows that they are regarded and treated as sinners on the ground of the disobedience of another. In other words, that it was by the offence of one man that judgment came on all men to condemnation. It is of course not implied in this statement or argument, that men are not now, or were not from Adam to Moses, punishable for their own sins, but simply that they are subject to penal evils which cannot be accounted for on the ground of their personal transgressions. This statement, which contains the whole doctrine of imputation, is so obviously contained in the argument of the apostle, and stands out so conspicuously in the Bible, and is so fully established by the history of the world, that it is frequently and freely admitted by the great majority of commentators.—H.]

2nd. How, in correspondence to this, Christ, as a public person, communicates righteousness and life to all true believers, who are his spiritual seed. And in this he shews not only wherein the resemblance holds, but *ex abundanti*, wherein the communication of grace and love by Christ "goes beyond" the communication of guilt and wrath by Adam. Observe,

First. Wherein the resemblance holds. This is laid down most fully, ver. 18, 19. 1st. "By the offence and disobedience of one man were made sinners, and judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Here observe, (1.) That Adam's sin was disobedience, disobedience to a plain and express command; and it was a command of trial. The thing he did was therefore evil because it was forbidden, and not otherwise; but this opened the door to other sins, though itself seemingly small. (2.) That the malignity and poison of sin are very strong and spreading, else the guilt of Adam's sin would not have reached so far, nor have been so deep and long a stream. Who would think there should be so much evil in sin? (3.) That by Adam's sin many are made sinners; many, that is, all his posterity; said to be many, in opposition to the one that offended. "Made sinners," *καταστήσαντες*. It denotes the making of us such by a judicial act: we were cast as sinners by due course of law. (4.) That judgment is come to condemnation upon all those that by Adam's disobedience were made sinners. Being convicted, we are condemned. All the race of mankind lie under a sentence, like an attainder upon a family. There is judgment given and recorded against us in the court of heaven; and, if the judgment be not reversed, we are likely to sink under it to eternity.

2nd. In like manner, "by the righteousness and obedience of one" (and that one is Jesus Christ, the second Adam) "are many made righteous," and so "the free gift comes upon all." It is observable how the apostle inculcates this truth, and repeats it again and again, as a truth of very great consequence. Here observe, (1.) The nature of Christ's righteousness, how it is brought in; it is by his obedience. The disobedience of the first Adam ruined us, the obedience of the second Adam saves us,—his obedience to the law of mediation, which was that he should fulfil all righteousness, and then make his soul an offering for sin. By his obedience to this law he wrought out a righteousness for us, satisfied God's justice, and so made a way for us into his favour. (2.) The fruit of it. (1st.) There is a "free gift come upon all men," that is, it is made and offered promiscuously to all. The salvation wrought is a common salvation; the proposals are general, the tender free; whoever will may come, and take of these waters of life. This free gift is to all believers, upon their believing, "unto justification of life." It is not only a justification that frees from death, but that entitles to life. (2nd.) "Many shall be made righteous," many compared with one, or as many as belong to the election of grace, which, though but a few as they are scattered up and down in the world, yet will be a great many were they come all together. *Καταστήσαντες*,—"they shall be constituted" righteous, as by letters patent. Now the antithesis between these two, our ruin by Adam and our recovery by Christ, is obvious enough.

Secondly. Wherein the communication of grace and love by Christ goes beyond the communication of guilt and wrath by Adam; and this he shews, ver. 15–17. It is designed for the magnifying of the riches of Christ's love, and for the comfort and encouragement of believers, who, considering what a wound Adam's sin has made, might begin to despair of a proportionable remedy. His expressions are a little intricate, but this he seems to intend. 1st. If guilt and wrath be communicated, much more shall grace and love; for it is agreeable to the idea we have of the Divine goodness to suppose that he should be more ready to save upon an imputed righteousness than to condemn upon an imputed guilt; "Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace." God's goodness is, of all his attributes, in a special manner his glory, and it is that grace that is the root, (his favour to us in Christ,) and the gift is by grace. We know that God is rather inclined to shew mercy; punishing is his strange work. 2nd. If there was so much power and efficacy, as it seems there was, in the sin of a man, who was of the earth, earthy, to condemn us, much more are there power and efficacy in the righteousness and grace of Christ, who is the Lord from heaven, to justify and save us. The one man that saves us is Jesus Christ. Surely Adam could not propagate so strong a poison, but Jesus Christ could propagate as strong an antidote, and much stronger. 3rd. It is but the guilt of one single offence of Adam's that is laid to our charge; "The judgment was" *ἐξ ἑνός ἐκ κατακρίμα* "by one," that is, by one offence, ver. 16, 17, margin. But from Jesus Christ we receive and derive an "abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness." The stream of grace and righteousness is deeper and broader than the stream of guilt; for this righteousness does not only take away the guilt of that one offence, but of many other offences, even of all. God in Christ forgives all trespasses, *Col. ii. 13*. 4th. By Adam's sin "death reigned;" but by Christ's righteousness there is not only a period put to the reign of death, but believers are preferred to "reign in life," ver. 17. In and by the righteousness of Christ we have not only a charter of pardon, but a patent of honour, are not only freed from our chains, but, like Joseph, advanced to the second chariot, and made unto our God kings and priests—not only pardoned, but preferred. See this observed, *Rev. i. 5, 6; v. 9, 10*. We are by Christ and his righteousness entitled to, and instated in, more and greater privileges than we lost by the offence of Adam. The plaster is wider than the wound, and more healing than the wound is killing.

[The words "righteousness unto eternal life" should not be separated by a comma, as is commonly done in our Bibles. And the word translated righteousness should be rendered justification, as appears by a comparison with the preceding verses. "Justification unto eternal life" is the same with the "justification of life," in ver. 18; both expressions mean "that justification which is connected with eternal life." It will be remarked, that these words answer to the death spoken of in the preceding clause. As death is the consequence and attendant of sin, so the justification of life is the consequence and attendant of the grace of the Gospel. "By Jesus Christ our Lord." To him, and him alone,

vi. 1. The design of the chapter is to show the moral effects of justification by faith. The gratuitous acceptance of man apart from works might appear to sanction a continuance in sin, since the increase of sin would be the magnifying of grace. (Compare chap. v. 20.) This difficulty St. Paul meets by showing that life in Christ is death to sin.

vi. 2. "That are dead to sin:" render "died." The reference is to a particular time—viz., when Christ died. The Christian is reckoned

to have passed through death to life (compare chap. v. 11); to be one with Christ, crucified with him. (Compare 2 Cor. v. 15; Gal. ii. 20; Col. iii. 3.) Alford refers the time when this took place to the time of baptism. This, it is true, was with the converted heathen the moment of personal acknowledgment and appropriation of it, as indicated in verses 3, 4; but this derives its force from the death of Christ.

vi. 4. "Buried:" if baptised into Christ's death, our baptism was

do we owe it that the reign of sin and death has not produced universal and perpetual desolation. He has brought deliverance from both, and introduction into eternal life. "Grace much more abounds than sin." 1. Because we have reason to believe, taking into view those who die in infancy, and the probable future state of the church, that the number of the saved will greatly exceed that of the lost. 2. Because Christ does far more than merely repair the evils of sin. He not only delivers us from its power and penalty, but exalts our natures and persons to a state to which we have no reason to suppose they would otherwise ever have attained. 3. Through the redeemed church is to be manifested, in ages to come, to principalities and powers, the manifold wisdom of God. The results of redemption no tongue can tell, no heart conceive.—In the meantime we should open our hearts to the large prospects of purity and blessedness presented in the Gospel; the victory of grace over sin and death, which is to be consummated in the triumph of true religion, and in the eternal salvation of those multitudes, out of every tribe and kindred, which no man can number, ver. 21.—H.]

Fourthly. In the last two verses the apostle seems to anticipate an objection which is expressed, *Gal. iii. 19*, "Wherefore then serveth the law?" Answer, 1. "The law entered that the offence might abound." Not to make sin to abound the more in itself, otherwise than as sin takes occasion by the commandment, but to discover the abounding sinfulness of it. The glass discovers the spots, but does not cause them. When the commandment came into the world sin revived, as the letting of a clearer light into a room discovers the dust and filth which were there before, but were not seen. It was like the searching of a wound, which is necessary to the cure. "The offence" το παραπτώμα.—"that offence," the sin of Adam, the extending of the guilt of it to us, and the effect of the corruption in us, are the abounding of that offence which appeared upon the entry of the law. 2. "That grace might much more abound;" that the terrors of the law might make gospel comforts so much the sweeter. Sin abounded among the Jews; and, to those of them that were converted to the faith of Christ, did not grace much more abound in the remitting of so much guilt and the subduing of so much corruption? The greater the strength of the enemy, the greater the honour of the conqueror. This abounding of grace he illustrates, ver. 21. As the reign of a tyrant and oppressor is a foil to set off the succeeding reign of a just and gentle prince and to make it the more illustrious, so doth the reign of sin set off the reign of grace. "Sin reigned unto death;" it was a cruel, bloody reign. But grace reigns to life, eternal life, and this through righteousness, righteousness imputed to us for justification, implanted in us for sanctification; and both "by Jesus Christ our Lord" through the power and efficacy of Christ, the great prophet, priest, and king, of his church.

[This chapter is a most precious portion of Divine revelation. It brings into view the amazing evils which have resulted from the apostasy. The apostle does not attempt to deny or palliate those evils; he admits them fully; admits them in their deepest, widest, most melancholy extent; just as the physician admits the extent and ravages of disease which he hopes to cure. At the same time, Christianity is not responsible for those evils. It did not introduce them. It finds them in existence, as a matter of sober and melancholy fact pertaining to all the race. Christianity is no more answerable for the introduction and extent of sin than the science of medicine is responsible for the introduction and extent of disease. Like that science, it finds a state of widespread evils in existence; and, like that science, it is strictly a remedial system.—Christianity proposes a remedy; and it is permitted to the Christian to rejoice that the remedy is ample to meet all the evils; that it is just fitted to recover our alienated world; and that it is destined yet to raise the race up to life, and peace, and heaven. In the provisions of that scheme we may and should triumph; and on the same principle as we may rejoice in the triumph of medicine over disease so may we triumph in the ascendancy of the Christian plan over all the evils of the fall. And while Christians thus rejoice, the infidel, the deist, the pagan, and the scoffer shall contend with these evils which their systems cannot alleviate or remove, and sink under the chilly reign of sin and death; just as men pant, and struggle, and expire under the visitations of disease, because they will not apply the proper remedies of medicine, but choose rather to leave themselves to its unchecked ravages, or to use all the nostrums of quackery in a vain attempt to arrest evils which are coming upon them.—A. B.]

CHAPTER VI.

The apostle having at large asserted, opened, and proved, the great doctrine of justification by faith, for fear lest any should suck poison out of that sweet flower, and turn that grace of God into wantonness and licentiousness, he, with a like zeal, copiousness of expression, and cogency of argument, presses the absolute necessity of sanctification and a holy life, as the inseparable fruit and companion of justification; for, wherever Jesus Christ is made of God unto any soul righteousness, he is made of God unto that soul sanctification, 1 *Cor. i. 30*. The water and the blood came streaming together out of the pierced side of the dying Jesus. And what God hath thus joined together let not us dare to put asunder.

WHAT shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin

might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The apostle's transition, which joins this discourse with the former, is observable: "What shall we say then?" ver. 1. What use shall we make of this sweet and comfortable doctrine? Shall we do evil that good may come, as some say we do? *ch. iii. 8*. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Shall we hence take encouragement to sin with so much the more boldness, because the more sin we commit the more will the grace of God be magnified in our pardon? Is this a use to be made of it? No; it is an abuse, and the apostle startles at the thought of it, ver. 2, "God forbid;" far be it from us to think such a thought. He entertains the objection as Christ did the devil's blackest temptation; *Mat. iv. 10*, "Get thee hence, Satan." Those opinions that give any countenance to sin, or open a door to practical immoralities, how specious and plausible soever they be rendered, by the pretension of advancing free grace, are to be rejected with the greatest abhorrence; for the truth as it is in Jesus is a truth according to godliness, *Tit. i. 1*. The apostle is very full in pressing the necessity of holiness in this chapter, which may be reduced to two heads. His exhortations to holiness, which shew the nature of it; and his motives or arguments to enforce those exhortations, which shew the necessity of it.

First. For the first, we may hence observe the nature of sanctification, what it is, and wherein it consists. In general it has two things in it, mortification and vivification; dying to sin and living to righteousness, elsewhere expressed by putting off the old man and putting on the new, ceasing to do evil and learning to do well.

1. Mortification; putting off the old man. Several ways this is expressed: 1st. We must live no longer in sin, ver. 2; we must not be as we have been, nor do as we have done. The time past of our life must suffice, 1 *Pet. iv. 3*. Though there are none that live without sin, yet, blessed be God, there are those that do not live in sin, do not live in it as their element, do not make a trade of it: this is to be sanctified. 2nd. The body of sin must be destroyed, ver. 6. The corruption that dwelleth in us is the body of sin, consisting of many parts and members, as a body. This is the root to which the axe must

a kind of burial, "a solemn act of consigning us to that death of Christ in which we are made one with him; and with this object, not that we might remain dead, but that we might rise with him from death, experience (even in this world) the power of his resurrection, and live the life which we now live in the flesh as men who have already died and risen again. Compare *Col. ii. 12, 13, iii. 1*" (Dr. Vaughan).

vi. 6. "That the body of sin might be destroyed:" this strange

expression must not be understood as equivalent to the whole of sin, but as describing the body as the sphere in which sin manifests itself. The apostle does not sanction the idea that the body, or material part, is the source of sin; this, the Scripture shows us, lies in the will: but the body is the agent through which sin in the will shows itself; hence we are constantly urged to bring this powerful agent into subjection to the new nature, that it may no longer be the slave of the old sinful disposition. (Compare *Col. ii. 11, 12*;

he laid. We must not only cease from the acts of sin, (this may be done through the influence of outward restraints, or other inducements,) but we must get away the vicious habits and inclinations weakened and destroyed; not only cast away the idols out of the sanctuary, but the idols of iniquity out of the heart. "That henceforth we should not serve sin." The actual transgression is certainly in a great measure prevented by the crucifying and killing of the original corruption. Destroy the body of sin, and then, though there should be Canaanites remaining in the land, yet the Israelites will not be slaves to them. It is the body of sin that sways the sceptre, wields the iron rod; destroy this, and the yoke is broken. The destruction of Eglon the tyrant is the deliverance of oppressed Israel from the Moabites. 3rd. We must "be dead indeed unto sin," ver. 11; as the death of the oppressor is a release, so much more is the death of the oppressed, Job iii. 17, 18. Death brings a writ of ease to the weary. Thus must we be dead to sin; obey it, observe it, regard it, fulfil it will no more than he that is dead doth his quondam taskmasters; be as indifferent to the pleasures and delights of sin as a man that is dying is to his former diversions. He that is dead is separated from his former company, converse, business, enjoyments, employments, is not what he was, does not what he did, has not what he had. Death makes a mighty change; such a change doth sanctification make in the soul, it cuts off all correspondence with sin. 4th. Sin must not reign in our mortal bodies that we should obey it, ver. 12; though sin may remain as an outlaw, though it may oppress as a tyrant, yet let it not reign as a king. Let it not make laws, nor preside in councils, nor command the militia; let it not be uppermost in the soul, so as that we should obey it. Though we may be sometimes overtaken and overcome by it, yet let us never be obedient to it in the lusts thereof; let not sinful lusts be a law to you, to which you would yield a consenting obedience. "In the lusts thereof," *ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ*. It refers to the body, not to sin. Sin lies very much in the gratifying of the body, and humouring that. And there is a reason implied in the phrase, "your mortal body;" because it is a mortal body, and hastening apace to the dust, therefore let not sin reign in it. It was sin that made our bodies mortal; and therefore do not yield obedience to such an enemy. 5th. We must not yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness, ver. 13. The members of the body are made use of by the corrupt nature as tools, by which the wills of the flesh are fulfilled; but we must not consent to that abuse. The members of the body are fearfully and wonderfully made; it is a pity they should be the devil's tools of unrighteousness unto sin, instruments of the sinful actions, according to the sinful dispositions. Unrighteousness is unto sin; the sinful acts confirm and strengthen the sinful habits,—one sin begets another, it is like the letting forth of water,—therefore leave it before it be meddled with. The members of the body may be tempted to be instruments of sin; but do not yield them to be so, do not consent to it. In the strength of Christ resist the devil, and he will flee from you. This is one branch of sanctification, the mortification of sin.

2. Vivification, or living to righteousness; and what is that? 1st. It is to "walk in newness of life," ver. 4. Newness of life supposes newness of heart; for out of the heart are the issues of life, and there is no way to make the stream sweet but by making the spring so. Walking, in Scripture, is put for the course and tenor of the conversation, which must be new. Walk by new rules towards new ends, from new principles. Make a new choice of the way. Choose new paths to walk in, new leaders to walk after, new companions to walk with. Old things should pass away, and all things become new. The man is what he was not, does what he did not. 2nd. It is to be "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," ver. 11. To converse with God, to have a regard to him, a delight in him, a concern for him; the soul upon all occasions carried out towards him as towards an agreeable object, in which it takes a complacency: this is to be alive to God. The love of God reigning in the heart is the life of the soul towards God. *Animæ est ubi amat, non ubi animat*.—The soul is where it loves, rather than where it lives. It is to have the affections and desires alive towards God; or, living (our life in the flesh) unto God, to his honour and glory as our end, by his word and will as our rule; in all our ways to acknowledge him, and to have our eyes ever towards him; this is to live unto God. "Through Jesus Christ our Lord;" Christ is our spiritual life, there is no living to God but through him. He is the Mediator; there can be no comfortable receivings from God, not acceptable regards to God, but in and through Jesus Christ; no intercourse between sinful souls and a holy God, but by the mediation of the Lord Jesus. Through Christ as the author and maintainer of this life; through Christ as the head from whom we receive vital influence; through Christ as the root by which we derive sap and nourishment, and so live. In living to God, Christ is all in all. 3rd. It is to "yield ourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead," ver. 13. The very life and being of holiness lie in the dedication of ourselves to the Lord, giving our ourselves to the Lord, 2 Cor. viii. 5. "Yield yourselves to him, not only as the conquered yields to the conqueror, because he can stand it out no longer; but as the wife yields herself to her husband, to whom her desire is, as the scholar yields himself to the teacher, the apprentice to his master, to be taught and ruled by him. Not only yield your estates to him, but yield yourselves; nothing less than your whole selves," *παρατίθεσθε τὰ πάντα, accommodate vos ipsos Deo*.—accommodate yourselves to God; so Tremellius, from the Syriac. 'Not only submit to him, but comply with him; not only present yourselves to him once for all, but be always ready to serve him. Yield yourselves to him as wax to the seal, to take any impression; to be, and have, and do, what he pleases.' When Paul said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 6, he was then yielded to God. "As those that are alive from the dead." To yield a dead carcass to a living God is not to please him, but to mock him; 'Yield yourselves as those that are alive and good for something, a living sacrifice,' *ch. xii. 1*. The surest evidence of our spiritual life is the dedication of ourselves to God. It becomes those that are alive from the dead, (it may be understood of a death in law,) that are justified and delivered from death, to give themselves to him that hath so redeemed them.

"As those that are alive from the dead." This clause, which is descriptive both of the state and character of believers, is evidently derived from the preceding representation of Christians as being dead with Christ unto sin, and living with him unto God. They are required to act as those who are partakers of the life of Christ; as those whom God has quickened and made to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 5, 6. "And your members," your faculties of mind and body, "as instruments of righteousness unto God." This clause is simply explanatory of the former in same verse.—H.]

4th. It is to yield "our members as instruments of righteousness to God." The members of our bodies, when withdrawn from the service of sin, are not to lie idle, but to be made use of in the service of God. When the strong man armed is dispossessed, let him whose right it is divide the spoils. Though the powers and faculties of the soul be the immediate subjects of holiness and righteousness, yet the members of the body are to be instruments; the body must be always ready to serve the soul in the service of God. Thus, ver. 19, "Yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." Let them be under the conduct and at the command of the righteous law of God, and that principle of inherent righteousness which the Spirit, as a sanctifier, plants in the soul. "Righteousness unto holiness," which intimates growth, and pro-

gress, and ground obtained. As every sinful act confirms the sinful habit, and makes the nature more and more prone to sin, (hence the members of a natural man are here said to be "servants to iniquity unto iniquity;" one sin makes the heart more disposed for another,) so every gracious act confirms the gracious habit. Serving righteousness is unto holiness; one duty fits us for another, and the more we do the more we may do for God. Our serving righteousness, *εἰς ἁγιασμόν*,—as an evidence of sanctification.

Secondly. The motives or arguments here used to shew the necessity of sanctification. There is such an antipathy in our hearts by nature to holiness that it is no easy matter to bring them to submit to it; it is the Spirit's work, who persuades by such inducements as these set home upon the soul.

1. He argues from our sacramental conformity to Jesus Christ. Our baptism, with the design and intention of it, carries in it a great reason why we should die to sin, and live to righteousness. Thus we must improve our baptism as a bride of restraint to keep us in from sin, as a spur of constraint to quicken us to duty. Observe his reasoning.

1st. In general, we are "dead to sin;" that is, in profession and in obligation. Our baptism signifies our cutting off from the kingdom of sin. We profess to have no more to do with sin. We are dead to sin by a participation of virtue and power for the killing of it, and by our union with Christ and interest in him, in and by whom it is killed. All this is in vain if we persist in sin; we contradict a profession, violate an obligation, return to that to which we were dead, like walking ghosts, than which nothing is more unbecoming and absurd. For, ver. 7, "he that is dead is freed from sin;" that is, he that is dead to it is freed from the rule and dominion of it, as the servant that is dead is freed from his master, Job iii. 19. Now shall we be such fools as to return to that slavery from which we are discharged? When we are delivered out of Egypt, shall we talk of going back to it again?

[The expression, "dead to sin," which signifies justified from sin, ver. 7, has no reference whatever to the character of believers, as seems to be so generally understood, but exclusively to their state before God, as the ground on which their sanctification is secured. As justified persons they are dead to sin, being delivered from its condemning power by the death of Christ, their head and surety. In proof that this is the correct view of the subject, let it be observed that the whole of the apostle's answer to the objection, from this 2nd verse to the end of the 10th, with which he concludes it, rests not on the circumstance that sin is mortified in himself and those whom he is addressing, or that they are dead to any propensity to sin, but on the fact of their being one with Jesus Christ. They were united to Christ in his death, and consequently in his life, which was communicated to them by him who is "a quickening Spirit"—and thus their walking in newness of life and their resurrection with him are secured. These ideas are exhibited in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th verses. In the 7th verse, the reason of the whole is summed up; "for he who is dead" (with Christ) "is justified from sin;" and in the 8th verse, that which follows our being justified from sin is stated. "If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." Finally, in the 9th and 10th verses, the apostle declares the consequence of Christ's dying to sin to be, that he liveth unto God. The same effect in respect to the members must follow, as to the head with whom believers are one; and, therefore, he immediately proceeds to assure them, in the 14th verse, that sin shall not have dominion over them. The effect, then, of the doctrine of justification by grace, is the very reverse of giving not merely license, but even place to continue in sin. On the contrary, according to that doctrine, the power of God is engaged to secure a life of holiness—"freed from sin." The original word, which is here translated freed, different from that rendered free in verses 18, 20, 22, is literally, justified. It occurs fifteen times in this epistle, and twenty-five times in other parts of the New Testament; and, except in this verse, and one other where it is translated righteous, is uniformly rendered by the word justified. Hence it appears, that, in this verse, as in all the other passages, its proper rendering ought to be retained, and not exchanged for the term "freed," which has evidently been selected to convey a different sense. Retaining its proper translation in this place is absolutely necessary, in order clearly to perceive the great and cheering truth here announced, as well as to apprehend the full force of the apostle's answer to the objection stated in the 1st verse. As to the phrase "justified from sin," we find the apostle expressing himself in the same manner, Acts xiii. 39, "By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses"—R. H.]

2nd. In particular, being "baptized into Jesus Christ," we were baptized into his death, ver. 3. We were baptized *εἰς Χριστόν*—unto Christ; as 1 Cor. x. 2, *εἰς Μωϋσέως*,—unto Moses. Baptism binds us to Christ, it binds us up apprentice to Christ as our teacher; it is our allegiance to Christ as our Sovereign. Baptism is *externa arcta Christi*,—the external handle of Christ; by which Christ lays hold on men, and men offer themselves to Christ. Particularly, we were baptized into his death, into a participation of the privileges purchased by his death, and into an obligation both to comply with the design of his death, which was to redeem us from all iniquity, and to conform to the pattern of his death; that, as Christ died for sin, so we should die to sin. This was the profession and promise of our baptism, and we do not do well if we do not answer this profession, and make good this promise.

"Baptized into Jesus Christ." By faith believers are made one with Christ; they become members of his body. This oneness is represented emblematically by baptism. "Baptized into his death." In baptism, they are also represented as dying with Christ. This rite, then, proceeds on the fact that they have died with him who bore their sins. Thus, the satisfaction rendered to the justice of God by him, is a satisfaction from them, as they are constituent parts of his body. The believer is one with Christ as truly as he was one with Adam—he dies with Christ as truly as he died with Adam. Christ's righteousness is his as truly as Adam's sin was his. By a Divine constitution, all Adam's posterity are one with him, and so his first sin is really and truly theirs. By a similar Divine constitution, all Christ's people are one with him, and his work is as truly theirs as if they had performed it, and his death as if they had suffered it. When it is said that Christians have died with Christ, there is no more figure than when it is said that they have died in Adam.—R. H.]

First. Our conformity, we repeat, to the death of Christ obliges us to die unto sin; thereby we know "the fellowship of his sufferings," Phil. iii. 10. Thus we are here said to "be planted together in the likeness of his death," ver. 5; *τῇ ἐνομομασίᾳ*, not only a conformity, but a conformation, as the engrafted stock is planted together into the likeness of the shoot, of the nature of which it doth participate. Planting is in order to life and fruitfulness; we are planted in the vineyard in a likeness to Christ, which likeness we should evidence in sanctification.

["Planted together." The word in the original, when it refers to trees, does not designate the operation of grafting, but to planting them in the same place or bed. It signifies the closest union of any kind, as being incorporated, growing together, united, joined with. The meaning then is, that as in baptism we have been exhibited as one with Christ in his death, so in due time we shall be conformed to him in the likeness of his resurrection.—R. H.]

Our creed concerning Jesus Christ is, among other things, that he was crucified, dead, and buried; now baptism is a sacramental conformity to him

1 Cor. ix. 27.) "Be destroyed:" this scarcely conveys the correct impression; the expression rather signifies "be rendered powerless," "reduced to impotence."

vi. 7. "He that is dead:" rather, "he that died" hath been set free—i.e., judicially released from sin. The meaning seems to be that, as death cancels all legal claims, so the Christian, who has died with Christ, is out of the power of sin.

vi. 10. "In that he died," &c.: Alford renders, "For the death

that he died, he died unto sin once." There is a contrast between the death and the life of Christ; the death was unto sin, the life is unto God. Christ died to sin, not in the sense in which we die to sin, but as signifying that his personal work with respect to sin ceased with his death. The efforts of the tempter, the contradiction of sinners, were at an end; or, better still, because more consistent with the passage, sin needed no more atonement. "Once;" emphatic, "once for all." (Compare Heb. vii. 27, ix. 12, 26, 28, x. 10; 1 Pet.

in each of these, as the apostle here takes notice. 1st. "Our old man is crucified with him," ver. 6. The death of the cross was a slow death: the body, after it was nailed to the cross, gave many a throe and many a struggle; but it was a sure death, long in expiring, but expired at last; such is the mortification of sin in believers. It was a cursed death, *Gal. iii. 13*. Sin dies as a malefactor, devoted to destruction; it is an accursed thing. Though it be a slow death, yet this must needs hasten it, that it is an old man that is crucified; not in the prime of its strength, but decaying; that which waxeth old is ready to vanish away, *Heb. viii. 13*. "Crucified with him"—*co-crucifixio*, not in respect of time, but in respect of causality. The crucifying of Christ for us has an influence upon the crucifying of sin in us.

"That our old man is crucified with him." Paul draws here the same conclusion from the believer's crucifixion with Christ that he had previously drawn from his baptism into Christ's death. All believers died with Christ on the cross, as they were all one in him, and represented by him. Their old man, (*Eph. iv. 22*, *Col. iii. 9*.) or sinful nature, is crucified together with Christ. If, then, their old man has been crucified with him, it cannot be that they will for the future live according to their old nature.—*R. H.*

2nd. We are dead with Christ, ver. 8. Christ was obedient to death; when he died, we might be said to die with him, as our dying to sin is an act of conformity both to the design and to the example of Christ's dying for sin. Baptism signifies and seals our union with Christ, our engraving into Christ; so that we are dead with him, and engaged to have no more to do with sin than he had.

[By the death of Christ a full penalty was rendered for sin, inasmuch that he could no more be reckoned with on account of it. He undertook to be surety for all who should believe; and having finished his undertaking, the matter was closed, and the creditor now ceased from putting in any farther claim, or preferring any farther challenge against him. For us to be dead with Christ is just to share in this very exoneration. It was for us that the account was settled; and, just as much as if by death, the appointed penalty, we had settled in ourselves, do we now stand acquitted of all farther count and reckoning because of sin.—*C.*]

3rd. "We are buried with him by baptism," ver. 4. Our conformity is complete. We are in profession quite cut off from all commerce and communion with sin, as those that are buried are quite cut off from all the world; not only not of the living, but no more among the living, have nothing more to do with them. Thus must we be, as Christ was, separate from sin and sinners. We are buried, namely, in profession and obligation; we profess to be so, and we are bound to be so: it was our covenant and engagement in baptism; we are sealed to be the Lord's, therefore to be cut off from sin. Why this burying in baptism should so much as allude to any custom of dipping under water in baptism, any more than our baptismal crucifixion and death should have any such references, I confess I cannot see. It is plain that it is not the sign, but the thing signified, in baptism, that the apostle here calls being buried with Christ, and the expression of burying alludes to Christ's burial. As Christ was buried, that he might rise again to a new and more heavenly life, so we are in baptism buried, that is, cut off from the life of sin, that we may rise again to a new life of faith and love.

[Ver. 4, "Therefore," &c. This particle refers to the reason why believers are buried with Christ, namely, that they may rise with him. The death of Christ was the means by which sin was destroyed, and his being laid in the grave the proof of the reality of his death. In the same way, Christians are represented as buried with him by baptism into his death, in token that they really died with him; and, if buried with him, it is not that they should remain in the grave, but that as Christ arose from the dead they should also rise. Their baptism, then, is the figure of their complete deliverance from sin, signifying that God places to their account the death of Christ as their own death: it is also a figure of their purification and resurrection for the service of God.—*R. H.*]

Secondly. Our conformity to the resurrection of Christ obliges us to rise again to newness of life. This is "the power of his resurrection" which Paul was so desirous to know, *Phil. iii. 10*. "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father," that is, by the power of the Father. The power of God is his glory; it is glorious power, *Col. i. 11*. Now in baptism we are obliged to conform to that pattern, to be planted "in the likeness of his resurrection," ver. 5; to "live with him," ver. 8: see *Col. ii. 12*. Conversion is the first resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; and this resurrection is conformable to Christ's resurrection. This conformity of the saints to the resurrection of Christ seems to be intimated in the rising of so many of the bodies of the saints, which, though mentioned before by anticipation, is supposed to have been concomitant with Christ's resurrection, *Mat. xxvii. 52*. We have all risen with Christ. In two things we must conform to the resurrection of Christ: 1st. He rose to die no more, ver. 9. We read of many others that were raised from the dead, but they rose to die again. But, when Christ rose, he rose to die no more; therefore, he left his graveclothes behind him, whereas Lazarus, who was to die again, brought them out with him, as one that should have occasion to use them again: but over Christ "death has no more dominion;" he was dead indeed, but he is alive, and so alive that he lives for evermore, *Rev. i. 18*. Thus we must rise from the grave of sin never again to return to it, nor to have any more fellowship with the works of darkness, having quitted that grave, that land of darkness as darkness itself.

[The perpetuity of Christ's life is presented, 1. As the ground of assurance of the perpetuity of the life of believers. We shall partake of the life of Christ, that is, of the spiritual and eternal blessings of redemption, because he ever lives to make intercession for us, and to grant us those supplies of grace which we need: see *ch. v. 10*; *Jno. xiv. 19*; *1 Cor. xv. 23*, &c., &c. As death has no more dominion over him, there is no ground of apprehension that our supplies of life shall be cut off. This verse, therefore, is introduced as the ground of the declaration, "we shall live with him," at the close of ver. 8. 2. The perpetuity of the life of Christ is one of the points in which our life is to be conformed to his.—*H.*]

2nd. He rose to live unto God, ver. 10; to live a heavenly life, to receive that glory which was set before him. Others that were raised from the dead returned to the same life in every respect which they had before lived; but so did not Christ: he rose again to leave the world. "Now I am no more in the world," *Jno. xiii. 1*; *xvii. 11*. He rose to live to God, that is, to intercede and rule, and all to the glory of the Father. Thus must we rise to live to God; this is what he calls "newness of life," ver. 4. To live from other principles, by other rules, with other aims, than we have done. A life devoted to God is a new life; before, self was the chief and highest end, but now God. To live indeed is to live to God, with our eyes ever towards him, making him the centre of all our actions.

2. He argues from the precious promises and privileges of the new covenant, ver. 14. It might be objected that we cannot conquer and subdue sin, it is unavoidably too hard for us: "No," says he, "you wrestle with an enemy that may be dealt with and subdued, if you will but keep your ground and stand to your arms; it is an enemy that is already foiled and baffled; there is strength laid up in the covenant of grace for your assistance, if you will but use it. "Sin shall not have dominion." God's promises to us are more powerful and

effectual for the mortifying of sin than our promises to God. Sin may struggle in a believer, and may create him a great deal of trouble, but it shall not have dominion; it may vex him, but shall not rule over him. "For we are not under the law, but under grace," not under the law of sin and death, but under the law of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus. We are actuated by other principles than we have been. New lords, new laws. Or, not under the covenant of works, which requires brick, and gives no straw, which condemns upon the least failure, which runs thus, "Do this, and live; do it not, and die;" but under the covenant of grace, which accepts sincerity as our gospel perfection, which requires nothing but what it promises strength to perform, which is herein well ordered, that every transgression in the covenant does not put us out of covenant, and especially that it does not leave our salvation in our own keeping, but lays it up in the hands of the Mediator, who undertakes for us that sin shall not have dominion over us, who hath himself condemned it, and will destroy it; so that, if we pursue the victory, we shall come off more than conquerors. Christ rules by the golden sceptre of grace, and he will not let sin have dominion over those that are willing subjects to that rule. This is a very comfortable word to all true believers. If we were under the law, we were undone, for the law curses every one that continues not in every thing; but we are under grace, grace which accepts the willing mind, which is not extreme to mark what we do amiss, which leaves room for repentance, which promises pardon upon repentance; and what can be to an ingenuous mind a stronger motive than this to have nothing to do with sin?

"But under grace." Believers are not under the covenant of works, but under the covenant of grace, by which they enjoy all the blessings of that gracious covenant. They are in a state of reconciliation with God. They know the Lord. His law is written in their hearts, and his fear is put within them, so that as he has promised not to depart from them, they shall not depart from him, *Jer. xxxii. 40*. Being made partakers of the favour of God through Jesus Christ, in whom grace was given them before the world began, *2 Tim. i. 9*, they have every spiritual supply through him who is full of grace. His grace is sufficient for them, *2 Cor. xii. 9*. The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, that hath appeared to all men, teacheth them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, *Tit. ii. 11*; and not only is it manifested to them, but it operates within them. God works in them what is well pleasing in his sight, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Those who are under the law have nothing but their own strength for their obedience. But they who are under grace are by God himself thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Sin, therefore, shall not have dominion over them. The great principle of evangelical obedience is taught in this passage. Holiness is not the result of the law, but of the liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free. He sends forth the Spirit of grace into the hearts of all who belong to the election of grace, whom God hath from the beginning chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; and the word of God worketh effectually in all who believe, *1 Thes. ii. 13*. Jesus Christ is the absolute master of the hearts of his people, of which he has taken possession, and in whom he reigns by the invincible power of the Spirit of grace. The new covenant made with him, for those whom he has redeemed, and which is ratified with his blood, is immutable and irreversible.—*R. H.*

Shall we sin against so much goodness, abuse such love? Some, perhaps, might suck poison out of this flower, and disingenuously use this as an encouragement to sin. See how the apostle starts at such a thought; ver. 15. "Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid." What can be more black and ill-natured than from a friend's extraordinary expressions of kindness and good-will to take occasion to affront and offend him? To spurn at such bowels, to spit in the face of such love, is that which, between man and man, all the world would cry out shame on.

"What then," &c. Paul evinces constantly his anxiety to avoid misapprehension, and to shew that freedom from the law is very different from being free from moral obligation. He, therefore, for the second time, denies that the liberty of the Gospel is a liberty to sin. As the illustration and confirmation of the principle of ver. 14, are formally resumed at the beginning of the next chapter, the apostle contents himself here with proving the unsoundness of the objection presented in this verse, by shewing (in following verses) that it is as impossible for the Christian to live in sin as for the slave of one man to be obedient to another, or for a man to serve two masters at the same time.—*H.*

3. He argues from the evidence that this will be of our state, making for us, or against us; ver. 16. "To whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are." All the children of men are either the servants of God or the servants of sin; these are the two families. Now, if we would know to which of these families we belong, we must inquire to which of these masters we yield obedience. Our obeying the laws of sin will be an evidence against us that we belong to that family on which death is entailed; as, on the contrary, our obeying the laws of Christ will evidence our relation to Christ's family.

4. He argues from their former sinfulness, ver. 17–21, where we may observe,

1st. What they had been and done formerly. We have need to be often reminded of our former state. Paul frequently remembers it concerning himself, and those to whom he writes. First. "You were the servants of sin." Those that are now the servants of God would do well to remember the time when they were the servants of sin, to keep them humble, penitent, and watchful, and to quicken them in the service of God. It is a reproach to the service of sin that so many thousands have quitted the service, and shaken off the yoke and never any that sincerely deserted it, and gave up themselves to the service of God, have returned to the former drudgery. "God be thanked that you were so," that is, that though you were so, yet you have obeyed. You were so; God be thanked that we can speak of it as a thing past: you were so, but you are not now so. Nay, your having been so formerly tends much to the magnifying of Divine mercy and grace in the happy change. God be thanked that the former sinfulness is such a foil and such a spur to your present holiness. Secondly. "You have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity," ver. 19. It is the misery of a sinful state that the body is made a drudge to sin, than which there could not be a baser or a harder slavery, like that of the prodigal that was sent into the fields to feed swine. "You have yielded." Sinners are voluntary in the service of sin. The devil could not force them into the service, if they did not yield themselves to it. This will justify God in the ruin of sinners, that they sold themselves to work wickedness; it was their own act and deed. "To iniquity unto iniquity." Every sinful act strengthens and confirms the sinful habit. "To iniquity as the work, unto iniquity as the wages." Sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind; growing worse and worse, more and more hardened. This he speaks "after the manner of men;" that is, he fetches a similitude from that which is common among men, even the change of services and subjections. Thirdly. "You were free from righteousness," ver. 20; not free by any liberty given, but by a liberty taken, which is licentiousness. "You were altogether void of that which is good,—void of any good principles, motions, or inclinations,—void of all subjection to the law and will of God, of all conformity to his image; and this you

iii. 18.) In contrast with the death once for all, the life that he liveth he liveth (perpetually, eternally) unto God. (Compare *Luke xx. 38*.)

vi. 17. "God be thanked:" the stress is on the past tense, "ye were." The apostle is thankful that the service of sin is a thing of the past. "Which was delivered;" rather, "unto which ye were delivered." They were handed over to the Christian teaching that their life might be moulded by it.

vii. 1. The majority of commentators seem to connect the beginning of this chapter, as in the Commentary, with chap. vi. 14. The connection with verse 23 must not be overlooked, for the expressions of this verse imply that freedom from the law which is the topic of the earlier part of this chapter. Our hope is not in the law (verse 23); we are free from it (verse 14). This need not shock those who know that the power of the law ceases with death. We as Christians (we have seen, chap. vi. 3–11) are dead.

were highly pleased with, as a freedom and a liberty; but a freedom from righteousness is the worst kind of slavery.

2nd. How the blessed change was made, and wherein it did consist. *First.* "You have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you," ver. 17. This describes conversion, what it is; it is our conformity to, and compliance with, the Gospel which was delivered to us by Christ and his ministers. Margin, "Whereto you were delivered;" *εἰς ὃν κατεδόθητε*, "into which you were delivered." And so observe, 1st. The rule of grace, "that form of doctrine," *τύπον διδασκῆς*. The Gospel is the great rule both of truth and holiness; it is the stamp, grace is the impression of that stamp; it is the form of healing words, 2 *Tim.* i. 13. 2nd. The nature of grace, as it is our conformity to that rule. (1.) It is to "obey it from the heart." The Gospel is a doctrine not only to be believed, but to be obeyed, and that from the heart, which denotes the sincerity and reality of that obedience; not in profession only, but in power, from the heart, the innermost part, the commanding part of us. (2.) It is to be delivered into it, as into a mould, as the wax is cast into the impression of the seal, answering it line for line, stroke for stroke, and wholly representing the shape and figure of it. To be a Christian indeed is to be transformed into the likeness and similitude of the Gospel, our souls answering to it, complying with it, conformed to it; understanding, will, affections, aims, principles, actions, all according to that form of doctrine. *Secondly.* "Being made free from sin, you became servants of righteousness," ver. 18; "servants to God," ver. 22. Conversion is, 1st. A freedom from the service of sin; it is the shaking off of that yoke, resolving to have no more to do with it. 2nd. A resignation of ourselves to the service of God and righteousness, to God as our master, to righteousness as our work. When we are made free from sin, it is not that we may live as we list, and be our own masters. No, when we are delivered out of Egypt, we are, as Israel, led to the holy mountain to receive the law, and are there brought into the bond of the covenant. Observe. We cannot be made the servants of God till we are freed from the power and dominion of sin; we cannot serve two masters so directly opposite one to another as God and sin are. We must, with the prodigal, quit the drudgery of the citizen of the country before we can come to our Father's house.

3rd. What apprehensions they now had of their former work and way. He appeals to themselves (ver. 21) whether they had not found the service of sin. *First.* An unfruitful service. "What fruit had you then?" Did you ever get any thing by it? Sit down and cast up the account, reckon your gains, what fruit had you then? Besides the future losses, which are infinitely great, the very present gains of sin are not worth mentioning. "What fruit." Nothing that deserves the name of fruit. The present pleasure and profit of sin do not deserve to be called fruit; they are but chaff, ploughing iniquity, sowing vanity, and reaping the same. *Secondly.* It is an unbecoming service. It is that of which we "are now ashamed,"—ashamed of the folly, ashamed of the filth of it. Shame came into the world with sin, and is still the certain product of it,—either the shame of repentance, or, if not that, eternal shame and contempt. Who would wilfully do that which sooner or later he is sure to be ashamed of?

5. He argues from the end of all these things. It is the prerogative of rational creatures that they are endued with a power of prospect, are capable of looking forward, considering the latter end of things. To persuade us from sin to holiness, here are blessing and cursing, good and evil, life and death, set before us; and we are put to our choice. 1st. The end of sin is death; ver. 21. "The end of those things is death." Though the way may seem pleasant and inviting, yet the end is dismal: at the last it bites; it will be bitterness in the latter end. "The wages of sin is death," ver. 23. Death is as due to a sinner when he hath sinned as wages are to a servant when he hath done his work. This is true of every sin. There is no sin in its own nature venial. Death is the wages of the least sin. Sin is here represented either as the work for which the wages are given or as the master by whom the wages are given; all that are sin's servants and do sin's work must expect to be thus paid. 2nd. If the fruit be unto holiness, if there be an active principle of true and growing grace, the end will be everlasting life,—a very happy end! Though the way be uphill, though it be narrow, and thorny, and beset, yet everlasting life at the end of it is sure. So, ver. 23, "The gift of God is eternal life." Heaven is life, consisting in the vision and fruition of God; and it is eternal life, no infirmities attending it, no death to put a period to it. This is the gift of God. The death is the wages of sin, it comes by desert; but the life is a gift, it comes by favour. Sinners merit hell, but saints do not merit heaven. There is no proportion between the glory of heaven and our obedience; we must thank God, and not ourselves, if ever we get to heaven. And this gift is "through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is Christ that purchased it, prepared it, prepares us for it, preserves us to it; he is the Alpha and Omega, all in all in our salvation.

CHAPTER VII.

We may observe in this chapter. I. Our freedom from the law farther urged as an argument to press upon us sanctification, ver. 1—6. II. The excellency and usefulness of the law asserted and proved from the apostle's own experience, notwithstanding, ver. 7—14. III. A description of the conflict between grace and corruption in the heart, ver. 14, to the end.



NOW ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. 3 So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

vii. 4. "Become dead to the law:" the original word has a more active sense than is expressed by "dead;" better, "were put to death," or "slain."

vii. 5. "Motions," or "stirrings," "incitements," which were by means of the law. The law occasioned not the sin, but the incitements which led to the sin. "Did work," or, "were active."

vii. 7—25 contain, according to Alford, "an explanation of the part which the law has in bringing out sin, by example of the

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Among other arguments used in the foregoing chapter to persuade us against sin and to holiness this was one, ver. 14, that "we are not under the law;" and this argument is here farther insisted upon and explained; ver. 6, "We are delivered from the law." What is meant by this? And how is it an argument why sin should not reign over us, and why we should walk in newness of life? 1. We are delivered from that power of the law which curses and condemns us for the sin committed by us. The sentence of the law against us is vacated and reversed, by the death of Christ, to all true believers. The law saith, "The soul that sins shall die;" but we are delivered from the law. "The Lord has taken away thy sin, thou shalt not die." "We are redeemed from the curse of the law," *Gal.* iii. 13. 2. We are delivered from that power of the law which irritates and provokes the sin that dwelleth in us. This the apostle seems especially to refer to, ver. 5. "The motions of sins which were by the law." The law, by commanding, forbidding, threatening, corrupt and fallen man, but offering no grace to cure and strengthen, did but stir up the corruption, and, like the sun shining upon a dunghill, excite and draw up the filthy steams. We being lamed by the fall, the law comes and directs us, but provides nothing to heal and help our lameness, and so makes us halt and stumble the more. Understand this of the law not as a rule, but as a covenant of works. Now each of these is an argument why we should be holy; for here is encouragement to endeavours, though in many things we come short. We are under grace, which promises strength to do what it commands, and pardon upon repentance when we do amiss. This is the scope of these verses in general, that in point of profession and privilege we are under a covenant of grace, and not under a covenant of works—under the Gospel of Christ, and not under the law of Moses. The difference between a law state and a Gospel state he had before illustrated by the similitude of rising to a new life, and serving a new master; now here he speaks of it under the similitude of being married to a new husband.

First. Our first marriage was to the law, which, according to the law of marriage, was to continue only during the life of the law. The law of marriage is binding till the death of one of the parties, no matter which, and no longer. The death of either discharges both. For this he appeals to themselves, as persons knowing the law, ver. 1, "I speak to those that know the law." It is a great advantage to discourse with those that have knowledge, for such can more readily understand and apprehend a truth. Many of the Christians at Rome were such as had been Jews, and so were well acquainted with the law. One has some hold of knowing people. "The law hath power over a man as long as he liveth;" in particular, the law of marriage hath power; or, in general, every law is so limited—the laws of nations, of relations, of families, &c. 1. The obligation of laws extends no farther; by death the servant who, while he lived, was under the yoke, is freed from his master, *Job* iii. 19. 2. The condemnation of laws extends no farther; death is the finishing of the law. *Acto mortuorum cum persona.*—The action expires with the person. The severest laws could but kill the body, and after that there is no more that they can do. Thus while we were alive to the law we were under the power of it—while we were in our Old-Testament state, before the Gospel came into the world, and before it came with power into our hearts. Such is the law of marriage, ver. 2, the woman is bound to her husband during life, so bound to him that she cannot marry another; if she do, she shall be reckoned an adulteress, ver. 3. It will make her an adulteress, not only to be defiled by, but to be married to, another man; for that is so much the worse, upon this account, that it abuses an ordinance of God, by making it to patronize the uncleanness. Thus were we married to the law, ver. 5, "When we were in the flesh," that is, in a carnal state, under the reigning power of sin and corruption—in the flesh as in our element—then "the motions of sins which were by the law did work in our members," we were carried down the stream of sin, and the law was but as an imperfect dam, which made the stream to swell the higher, and rage the more. Our desire was towards sin, as that of the wife towards her husband, and sin ruled over us. We embraced it, loved it, devoted all to it, conversed daily with it, made it our care to please it. We were under a law of sin and death, as the wife under the law of marriage; and the product of this marriage was fruit brought forth unto death, that is, actual transgressions were produced by the original corruptions, such as deserve death. Lust, having conceived by the law, (which is the strength of sin, 1 *Cor.* xv. 56,) "bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," *Jas.* i. 15. This is the posterity that springs from this marriage to sin and the law. This comes of the motions of sin working in our members. And this continues during life, while the law is alive to us, and we are alive to the law.

Secondly. Our second marriage is to Christ; and how comes this about? Why, 1. We are freed, by death, from our obligation to the law as a covenant, as the wife is from her obligation to her husband, ver. 3. This resemblance is not very close, nor needed it to be. "You are become dead to the law," ver. 4. He does not say, "The law is dead," (some think because he would avoid giving offence to those who were yet zealous for the law,) but, which comes all to one, "You are dead to the law." As the crucifying of the world to us, and of us to the world, amounts to one and the same thing, so doth the law dying, and our dying to it. "We are delivered from the law," ver. 6, *κατηργήθημεν*—"we are null'd" as to the law; our obligation to it as a husband is cassated and made void. And then he speaks of the law being dead as far as it was a law of bondage to us: "That being dead wherein we were held;" not the law itself, but its obligation to punishment and its provocation to sin. It is dead, it has lost its power; and this, ver. 4, "by the body of Christ," that is, by the sufferings of Christ in his body, by his crucified body, which abrogated the law, answered the demands of it, made satisfaction for our violation of it, purchased for us a covenant of grace, in which righteousness and strength are laid up for us, such as were not, nor could be, by the law. We are dead to the law by our union with the mystical body of Christ. By being incorporated into Christ in our baptism professedly, in our believing powerfully and effectually, we are

apostle's own case." His view is, that from verse 7—13 inclusive is historical, or, in other words, exhibits the carnal self in the transition state, under the first motions towards God generated by the law, which the law could never have perfected; and that at verse 14 St. Paul transfers himself into his present position, altering the past tense into the present, still, however, meaning by "I" (verse 14) "my flesh." At verse 20 this carnal "I" passes altogether out of sight, and its place is taken by the actual then existing complex self,

dead to the law, have no more to do with it than the dead servant, that is free from his master, hath to do with his master's yoke.

2. We are married to Christ. The day of our believing is the day of our espousals to the Lord Jesus. We enter upon a life of dependence on him and duty to him: "Married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead," a periphrasis of Christ very pertinent here; for as our dying to sin and the law is in conformity to the death of Christ, and the crucifying of his body, so our devotedness to Christ in newness of life is in conformity to the resurrection of Christ. We are married to the raised exalted Jesus, a very honourable marriage: compare 2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 29. Now we are thus married to Christ, 1st. "That we should bring forth fruit unto God," ver. 4. One end of marriage is fruitfulness: God instituted the ordinance that he might seek a godly seed, Mal. ii. 15. The wife is compared to the fruitful vine, and children are called the fruit of the womb. Now the great end of our marriage to Christ is our fruitfulness in love, and grace, and every good work. This is fruit unto God, pleasing to God, according to his will, aiming at his glory. As our old marriage to sin produced fruit unto death, so our second marriage to Christ produces fruit unto God, fruits of righteousness. Good works are the children of the new nature, the products of our union with Christ, as the fruitfulness of the vine is the product of its union with the root. Whatever our professions and pretensions may be, there is no fruit brought forth to God till we are married to Christ; it is in Christ Jesus that we are created unto good works, Eph. ii. 10. The only fruit which turns to a good account is that which is brought forth in Christ. This distinguishes the good works of believers from the good works of hypocrites and self-justifiers, that they are brought forth in marriage, done in union with Christ, in the name of the Lord Jesus, Col. iii. 17. This is, without controversy, one of the great mysteries of godliness. 2nd. "That we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter," ver. 6. Being married to a new husband, we must change our way. Still we must serve, but it is a service that is perfect freedom, whereas the service of sin was a perfect drudgery: we must now serve in newness of spirit, by new spiritual rules, from new spiritual principles, in spirit and in truth, Jno. iv. 24. There must be a renovation of our spirits wrought by the Spirit of God, and in that we must serve. "Not in the oldness of the letter:" that is, we must not rest in mere external services, as the carnal Jews did, who gloried in their adherence to the letter of the law, and minded not the spiritual part of worship. The letter is said to kill with its bondage and terror, but we are delivered from that yoke that we may serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness, Lu. i. 74, 75. We are under the dispensation of the Spirit, and therefore must be spiritual, and serve in the spirit. Compare with this 2 Cor. iii. 3, 6, &c. It becomes us to worship within the veil, and no longer in the outward court.

7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. 8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. 9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. 12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual:

To what he had said in the former paragraph the apostle here raises an objection, which he answers very fully. "What shall we say then? Is the law sin?" When he had been speaking of the dominion of sin he had said so much of the influence of the law as a covenant upon that dominion that it might easily be misinterpreted as a reflection upon the law, to prevent which he shews from his own experience the great excellency and usefulness of the law, not as a covenant, but as a guide; and farther discovers how sin took occasion by the commandment. Observe in particular,

First. The great excellency of the law in itself. Far be it from Paul to reflect upon the law; no, he speaks honourably of it. 1. It "is holy, just, and good," ver. 12. The law in general is so, and every particular commandment is so. Laws are as the law-makers are. God, the great lawgiver, is holy, just, and good, therefore his law must needs be so. The matter of it is holy; it commands holiness, encourages holiness; it is holy, for it is agreeable to the holy will of God, the original of holiness. It is just; for it is consonant to the rules of equity and right reason: the ways of the Lord are right. It is good in the design of it; it was given for the good of mankind, for the conservation of peace and order in the world. It makes the observers of it good; the intention of it was to better and reform mankind. Wherever there is true grace there is an assent to this—that the law is holy, just, and good. 2. "The law is spiritual," ver. 14, not only in regard to the effect of it, as it is a means of making us spiritual, but in regard to the extent of it; it reaches our spirits, it lays a restraint upon, and gives a direction to, the motions of the inward man; "it is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart," Heb. iv. 12. It forbids spiritual wickedness, heart-murder, and heart-adultery. It commands spiritual service, requires the heart, obliges us to worship God in the spirit. It is a spiritual law; for it is given by God, who is a Spirit and the Father of spirits; it is given to man, whose principal part is spiritual. The soul is the best part, and the leading part of the man, and therefore the law to the man must needs be a law to the soul. Herein the law of God is above all other laws, that it is a spiritual law. Other laws may forbid compassing and

imagining, &c., which are treason in the heart, but cannot take cognizance thereof, unless there be some overt act; but the law of God takes notice of the iniquity regarded in the heart, though it go no farther. "Wash thy heart from wickedness," Jer. iv. 14. "We know that. Wherever there is true grace there is an experimental knowledge of the spirituality of the law of God."

Secondly. The great advantage that he had found by the law. 1. It was discovering. "I had not known sin but by the law," ver. 7. As that which is straight discovers that which is crooked, as the looking-glass shews us our natural face with all its spots and deformities, so there is no way of coming to that knowledge of sin which is necessary to repentance, and consequently to peace and pardon, but by comparing our hearts and lives with the law. Particularly he came to the knowledge of the sinfulness of lust by the law of the tenth commandment. By lust he means sin dwelling in us, sin in its first motions and workings, the corrupt principle. This he came to know when the law said, "Thou shalt not covet." The law spoke in other language than the scribes and Pharisees made it to speak in; it spoke in the spiritual sense and meaning of it. By this he knew that lust was sin, and a very sinful sin, that those motions and desires of the heart towards sin which never came into act were sinful, exceedingly sinful. Paul had a very quick and piercing judgment, all the advantages and improvements of education, and yet never attained the right knowledge of indwelling sin till the Spirit by the law made it known to him. There is nothing about which the natural man is more blind than about original corruption, concerning which the understanding is altogether in the dark till the Spirit by the law reveal it, and make it known. Thus "the law is a schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ," opens and searches the wound, and so prepares it for healing. Thus sin by the commandment does appear sin, ver. 13; it appears in its own colours, appears to be what it is, and you cannot call it by a worse name than its own. Thus by the commandment it becomes exceeding sinful; that is, it appears to be so. We never see the desperate venom or malignity there is in sin till we come to compare it with the law, and the spiritual nature of the law, and then we see it to be an evil and a bitter thing. 2. It was humbling, ver. 9. "I was alive." He thought himself in a very good condition; he was alive in his own opinion and apprehension, very secure and confident of the goodness of his state. Thus he was "once," *scilicet* in times past, when he was a Pharisee; for it was the common temper of that generation of men that they had a very good conceit of themselves; and Paul was then like the rest of them, and the reason was he was then without the law. Though brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, though himself a great student in the law, a strict observer of it, and a zealous stickler for it, yet without the law. He had the letter of the law, but he had not the spiritual meaning of it—the shell, but not the kernel. He had the law in his hand and in his head, but he had it not in his heart; the notion of it, but not the power of it. There are a great many who are spiritually dead in sin that yet are alive in their own opinion of themselves, and it is their strangeness to the law that is the cause of the mistake. "But when the commandment came," came in the power of it, not to his eyes only, but to his heart, "sin revived," as the dust in a room rises, (that is, appears,) when the sunshine is let into it. Paul then saw in sin which he had never seen before; he then saw in sin its causes, the bitter root, the corrupt bias, the bent to backside,—sin in its colours, deforming, defiling, breaking a righteous law, affronting an awful Majesty, profaning a sovereign crown by casting it to the ground,—sin in its consequences, sin with death at the heels of it, sin and the curse entailed upon it. "Thus sin revived, and then I died; I lost that good opinion which I had had of myself, and came to be of another mind. "Sin revived, and I died;" that is, the Spirit, by the commandment, convinced me that I was in a state of sin, and in a state of death because of sin." Of this excellent use is the law; it is a lamp and a light; it converts the soul, opens the eyes, prepares the way of the Lord in the desert, renders the rocks, levels the mountains, makes ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Thirdly. The ill use that his corrupt nature made of the law notwithstanding. 1. "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence," ver. 8. Observe, Paul had in him "all manner of concupiscence," though one of the best unregenerate men that ever was; "as touching the righteousness of the law, blameless," and yet sensible of "all manner of concupiscence." And it was sin that wrought it, indwelling sin, his corrupt nature, (he speaks of a sin that did work sin,) and it took occasion by the commandment. The corrupt nature would not have swelled and raged so much if it had not been for the restraints of the law; as the peccant humours in the body are raised, and more inflamed, by a purge that is not strong enough to carry them off. It is incident to corrupt nature, *in velutini siti*,—"to lean towards what is forbidden." Ever since Adam ate forbidden fruit we have all been fond of forbidden paths; the diseased appetite is carried out most strongly towards that which is hurtful and prohibited. "Without the law sin was dead," as a snake in winter, which the sunbeams of the law quicken and irritate. 2. It "deceived me." Sin puts a cheat upon the sinner, and it is a fatal cheat, ver. 11. "By it," by the commandment, "slew me." There being in the law no such express threatening against sinful lustings, sin, that is, his own corrupt nature, took occasion thence to promise him impunity, and to say, as the serpent to our first parents, "You shall not surely die." Thus it deceived and slew him. 3. It "wrought death in me by that which is good," ver. 13. That which works concupiscence works death, for sin bringeth forth death. Nothing so good but a corrupt and vicious nature will pervert it, and make it an occasion of sin; no flower so sweet but sin will suck poison out of it. Now in this sin appears sin. The worst thing that sin does, and most like itself, is the perverting of the law, and taking occasion from it to be so much the more malignant. Thus the commandment, which was ordained to life, was intended as a guide in the way to comfort and happiness, proved unto death, through the corruption of nature, ver. 10. Many a precious soul splits upon the rock of salvation; and the same word which to some is an occasion of life unto life is to others an occasion of death unto death. The same sun that makes the garden of flowers more fragrant makes the dunghill more noisome; the same heat that softens wax hardens clay; and the same child was set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. The way to prevent this mischief is to bow our souls to the commanding authority of the word and law of God, not striving against, but submitting to it.

14 — But I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good

compounded of the regenerate spiritual man in conflict with the still remaining though decadent carnal man.

vii. 9. "I was alive:" Observe in this passage the alternations of the 'I' and the 'sin;' (1) sin dead, I alive; (2) sin alive, I dead; (3) sin condemned, I emancipated (chap. viii. 2, 3). The first is the condition of nature; the second is the condition of law; the third is the condition of grace" (Vaughan).

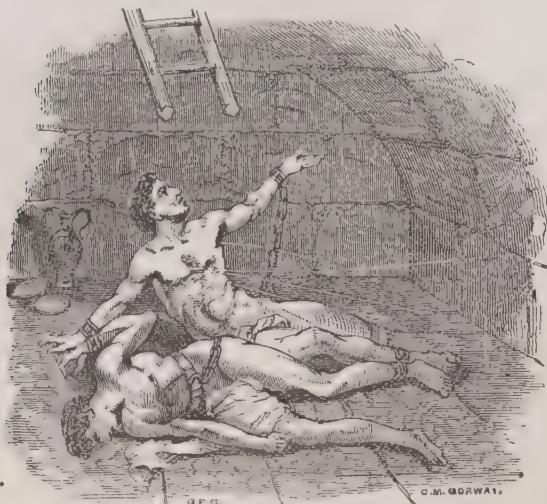
vii. 13. "Was then that which is good," &c.: to make the sense

clearer, supply, after "sin," the words "became death to me." "It was not that which is good, but sin which became death to me, that it might be shown to be (appear) sin."

vii. 14. "Sold under sin:" i.e., sold so as to become under the power of sin—enslaved to it.

vii. 23. "Another law:" properly, "a different law"—viz., as explained afterwards, the law of sin. "The law of my mind:" "the law accepted by my mind." "Bringing me into captivity:" rather,

thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body



BINDING THE LIVING TO THE DEAD.

of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Here is a description of the conflict between grace and corruption in the heart, between the law of God and the law of sin; and it is applicable two ways: 1. To the struggles that are in a convinced soul, but yet unregenerate, in the person of whom it is supposed, by some, that Paul speaks. 2. To the struggles that are in a renewed sanctified soul, but yet in a state of imperfection, as others apprehend; and a great controversy there is of which of these we are to understand the apostle. So far does the evil prevail here, when he speaks of one sold under sin, doing it, not performing that which is good, that it seems difficult to apply it to the regenerate, who are described to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; and yet so far does the good prevail in hating sin, consenting to the law, delighting in it, serving the law of God with the mind, that it is more difficult to apply it to the unregenerate that are dead in trespasses and sins.

First. Apply it to the struggles that are felt in a convinced soul, that is yet in a state of sin, knows his Lord's will, but does it not; approves the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and yet lives in the constant breach of it, *ch. ii. 17-23*. Though he has that within him that witnesses against the sin he commits and it is not without a great deal of reluctance that he does commit it, the superior faculties striving against it, natural conscience warning against it before it is committed, and sniting for it afterwards, yet the man continues a slave to his reigning lusts. It is not thus with every unregenerate man, but with those only that are convinced by the law, but not changed by the Gospel. The apostle had said, *ch. vi. 14*, "Sin shall not have dominion, because you are not under the law, but under grace," for the proof of which he here shews that a man under the law, and not under grace, may be, and is, under the dominion of sin. The law may discover sin, and convince of sin, but it cannot conquer and subdue sin; witness the predominancy of sin in many that are under very strong legal convictions. It discovers the defilement, but will not wash it off. It makes a man weary and heavy laden, *Mat. xi. 28*, burthens him with his sin, and yet, if rested in, it yields no help towards the shaken off of that burthen; this is to be had only in Christ. The law may make a man cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" and yet leave him thus fettered and captivated, as being too weak to deliver him, *ch. viii. 3*; give him a spirit of bondage to fear, *ch. viii. 15*. Now a soul advanced thus far by the law is in a fair way towards a state of liberty by Christ, though many rest here and go no farther. Felix trembled, but never came to Christ. It is possible for a man to go to hell with his eyes open, (*Nim. xxiv. 3, 4*) illuminated with common convictions, and to carry about with him a self-accusing conscience, even in the service of the devil. He may "consent to the law that it is good," delight to know God's ways, (as they, *Isa. lviii. 2*) may have that within him that witnesses against sin and for holiness; and yet all this overpowered by the reigning love of sin. Drunkards and

unclean persons have some faint desires to leave off their sins, and yet persist in them notwithstanding, such is the impotency and such the insufficiency of their convictions. Of such as these there are many that will needs have all this understood, and contend earnestly for it. Though it is very hard to imagine why, if the apostle intended this, he should speak all along in his own person; and not only so, but in the present tense. Of his own state under conviction he had spoken at large, as of a thing past, *ver. 7, &c.* "I died; the commandment I found to be unto death;" and if here he speaks of the same state as his present state, and the condition he was now in, surely he did not intend to be so understood; and therefore.

Secondly. It seems rather to be understood of the struggles that are maintained between grace and corruption in sanctified souls.

(That Paul throughout the latter part of this chapter is describing his own feelings when writing, appears evident from the following considerations. *a.* Because he uses the first person and the present tense throughout the passage, and says, "I consent to the law that it is good;" "I delight in the law of God;" "I see another law in my members;" "O wretched man that I am;" "So then I myself serve the law of God;" &c., &c. He does this with an earnestness and warmth which shew that he is expressing the feelings of his own heart. No example is to be found in all the apostle's writings analogous to this, if it be assumed that he is here personating another. *b.* Because there is nothing in this inconsistent with the experience of the holiest of men. The inward conflict here described every Christian understands and experiences. There are remainders of indwelling corruption, even where there is a living principle of grace, is past dispute; that this corruption is daily breaking forth in sins of infirmity (such as are consistent with a state of grace) is no less certain; "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves," *1 Jno. i. 8, 10.* *c.* The passage contains many declarations inconsistent with the Scriptural account of unregenerate men. The Bible does not speak of unregenerate men as consenting to the law, as hating sin, and struggling against it, groaning under it as a tyrant's yoke, as delighting in the law of God, and doing all this as to the inward or new man. *d.* That true grace strives against these sins and corruptions, does not allow of them, hates them, mourns over them, groans under them as a burden, is likewise certain; *Gal. v. 17*, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would."—*H. chiefly.*)

These are the truths which I think are contained in this discourse of the apostle; and his design is farther to open the nature of sanctification, that it does not attain to a sinless perfection in this life; and therefore to quicken us to, and encourage us in, our conflicts with remaining corruptions. Our case is not singular, that which we do sincerely strive against shall not be laid to our charge, and through grace the victory is sure at last. The struggle here is like that between Jacob and Esau in the womb, between the Canaanites and Israelites in the land, between the house of Saul and the house of David; but great is the truth and will prevail. Understanding it thus, we may observe here.

What he complains of. The remainder of indwelling corruptions, which he here speaks of, to shew that the law is insufficient to justify even a regenerate man, that the best man in the world hath enough in him to condemn him, if God should deal with him according to the law, which is not the fault of the law, but of our own corrupt nature, which cannot fulfil the law. The repetition of the same things over and over again in this discourse shews how much Paul's heart was affected with what he wrote, and how deep his sentiments were. Observe the particulars of this complaint. 1. "I am carnal, sold under sin," *ver. 14*; he speaks of the Corinthians as carnal, *1 Cor. iii. 1*. Even where there is spiritual life, there are remainders of carnal affection, and so far a man may be sold under sin; he does not sell himself to work wickedness, as Ahab did, *1 Kin. xxi. 25*, but he was sold by Adam when he sinned and fell; sold, as a poor slave that does his master's will against his own will; sold under sin, because conceived in iniquity and born in sin. 2nd. "What I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I," *ver. 15*; and to the same purport, *ver. 19, 21*. "When I would do good, evil is present with me." Such was the strength of corruptions, that he could not attain that perfection in holiness which he desired and breathed after. Thus, while he was pressing forward towards perfection, yet he acknowledges that he had not already attained, neither was already perfect, *Phil. iii. 12*. Fain he would be free from all sin, and perfectly do the will of God; such was his settled judgment, but his corrupt nature drew him another way; it was like a clog, that checked and kept him down when he would have soared upward like an eagle, the bias in a bowl, which when it is thrown straight, yet draws it aside. 3rd. "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good," *ver. 18*. Here he explains himself concerning the corrupt nature, which he calls flesh; and as far as that goes there is no good to be expected, any more than in the seaside. As the new nature, as far as that goes, cannot commit sin (*1 Jno. iii. 9*), so the flesh, the old nature, as far as that goes, cannot perform a good duty. How should it? For the flesh serveth the law of sin, *ver. 25*; it is not likely to do any good. The corrupt nature is elsewhere called flesh, *Gen. vi. 3*; *Jno. iii. 6*; and, though there may be good things dwelling in those that have this flesh, yet, as far as the flesh goes, there is no good; the flesh is not a subject capable of any good. 4th. "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind," *ver. 23*. The corrupt and sinful inclination is here compared to a law, because it controlled and checked him in his good motions. It is said to be seated in his members, because, Christ having set up his throne in his heart, it was only the rebellious members of the body that were the instruments of sin—in the sensitive appetite; or we may take it more generally for all that corrupt nature which is the seat not only sensual but of more refined lusts. This war against the law of the mind, the new nature; it draws the contrary way, drives on a contrary interest, which corrupt disposition and inclination are as great a burthen and grief to the soul as the worst drudgery and captivity could be. "It brings me into captivity." To the same purport, *ver. 25*. "With the flesh I serve the law of sin;" that is, the corrupt nature, the unregenerate part, is continually working towards sin. 5th. His general complaint we have, *ver. 24*, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The thing he complains of is a body of death, either the body of flesh, which is a mortal dying body, (while we carry this body about with us, we shall be troubled with corruption, when we are dead, we shall be freed from sin, and not before,) or the body of sin, the old man, the corrupt nature, which tends to death, that is, to the ruin of the soul. Or, comparing it to a dead body, the touch of which was by the ceremonial law defiling, if actual transgressions be dead works, *Heb. ix. 14*, original corruption is a dead body. It was as troublesome to Paul as if he had had a dead body tied to him, which he must have carried about with him. (Dr. Doddridge considers that the apostle alludes to the practice of some ancient tyrants, who bound the living bodies of their miserable captives to the dead bodies of others, as represented in the engraving.) This made him cry out, "O wretched man that I am!" A man, that had learned it, every state to be content yet complains thus of his

equipped peak of Paul, I

"leading me captive in (as if encircled by the chain of) the law of sin" (Vaughan).

viii. 1. "Therefore:" the immediate inference is drawn from *chap. vii. 25*; but the general force of it is due to the whole scope of the preceding chapters. "Now" is emphatic; now that in Christ Jesus there is deliverance from this body of sin and death (*chap. vii. 24, 25*).

viii. 2. "The law of the Spirit of life:" the Holy Spirit is the

giver of life. It is to be noted that he speaks not of the Spirit of life, but of the law of the Spirit of life. The force of this expression is to be found by bearing in mind the different laws which St. Paul has spoken of having experienced. There is the law of sin, the law of mind, the law of God, in *chap. vii. 22, 23*. The law of mind assented to the law of God (*verses 16, 22*); the law of sin opposed that assent, and carried captive the will (*verse 23*). The law of the Spirit of life now is shown entering the field of combat, and assuring

should have said, "O blessed man that thou art, an ambassador of Christ, a favourite of heaven, a spiritual father of thousands!" But in his own account he was a wretched man, because of the corruption of nature, because he was not so good as he fain would be, had not yet attained, neither was already perfect. Thus miserably does he complain. "Who shall deliver me?" He speaks like one that was sick of it, that would give any thing to be rid of it, looks to the right hand and to the left for some friend that would part between him and his corruptions. The remainders of indwelling sin are a very grievous burthen to a gracious soul.

2. What he comforts himself with. The case was sad, but there were some allays. Three things comforted him:

1st. That his conscience witnessed for him that he had a good principle ruling and prevailing in him notwithstanding. It is well when all does not go one way in the soul. The rule of this good principle which he had was the law of God, to which he here speaks of having a threefold regard, which is certainly to be found in all that are sanctified, and no others: *First*, "I consent unto the law that it is good," ver. 16; *συνιμι*.—"I give my vote to the law; here is the approbation of the judgment. Wherever there is grace, there is not only a dread of the severity of the law, but a consent to the goodness of the law." "It is good in itself, it is good for me." This is a sign that the law is written in the heart, that the soul is delivered into the mould of it. To consent to the law is so far to approve of it, as not to wish it otherwise constituted than it is. The sanctified judgment not only concurs to the equity of the law, but to the excellency of it, as convinced that a conformity to the law is the highest perfection of human nature, and the greatest honour and happiness we are capable of. *Secondly*, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," ver. 22. His conscience bore witness to a complacency in the law. He delighted not only in the promises of the word, but in the precepts and prohibitions of the word; *συνιμι* expresses a becoming delight. He did herein concur in affection with all the saints. All that are savingly regenerate, or born again, do truly delight in the law of God, delight to know it, to do it—cheerfully submit to the authority of it, and take a complacency in that submission, never better pleased than when heart and life are in the strictest conformity to the law and will of God. "After the inward man," that is, 1st. The mind or rational faculties, in opposition to the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh. The soul is the inward man, and that is the seat of gracious delights, which are therefore sincere and serious, but secret; it is the renewing of the inward man, 2 *Cor.* iv. 16. 2nd. The new nature. The new man is called "the inner man," *Eph.* iii. 16, "the hidden man of the heart," 1 *Pet.* iii. 4. Paul, as far as he was sanctified, had a delight in the law of God. *Thirdly*, "With the mind I myself serve the law of God," ver. 25. It is not enough to consent to the law, and to delight in the law, but we must serve the law; our souls must be entirely delivered up into the obedience of it. Thus it was with Paul's mind; thus it is with every sanctified renewed mind; this is the ordinary course and way; thitherward goes the bent of the soul. "I myself"—*αυτός* *ἐγώ*, plainly intimating that he speaks in his own person, and not in the person of another.

2nd. That the fault lay in that corruption of his nature which he did really bewail and strive against: "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." This he mentions twice, ver. 17, 20, not as an excuse for the guilt of his sin, (it is enough to condemn us if we were under the law, that the sin which does the evil dwelleth in us,) but as a salvo for his evidences, that he might not sink in despair, but take comfort from the covenant of grace, which accepts the willingness of the spirit, and has provided pardon for the weakness of the flesh. He likewise herein enters a protestation against all that which this indwelling sin produced. Having professed his consent to the law of God, he here professes his dissent from the law of sin. "It is not I; I disown the fact; it is against my mind that it is done." As when in the senate the major part are bad, and carry every thing the wrong way, it is indeed the act of the senate, but the honest party strive against it, bewail what is done, and enter their protestation against it, so that it is no more they that do it. "Dwelleth in me," as the Canaanites among the Israelites, though they were put under tribute; dwelleth in me, and is likely to dwell there, while I live.

3rd. His great comfort lay in Jesus Christ; ver. 25, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." In the midst of his complaints he breaks out into praises. It is a special remedy against fears and sorrows to be much in praise; many a poor drooping soul hath found it so. And, in all our praises, this should be the burthen of the song, "Blessed be God for Jesus Christ." "Who shall deliver me?" says he, ver. 24, as one at a loss for help. At length he finds an all-sufficient friend, even Jesus Christ. When we are under the sense of the remaining power of sin and corruption, we shall see reason to bless God through Christ,—for, as he is the Mediator of all our prayers, so he is of all our praises,—to bless God for Christ; it is he that stands between us and the wrath due to us for this sin. If it were not for Christ, that iniquity that dwells in us would certainly be our ruin. He is our Advocate with the Father, and through him God pities, and spares, and pardons, and lays not our iniquities to our charge. It is Christ that has purchased deliverance for us in due time. Through Christ death will put an end to all these complaints, and wait us to an eternity which we shall spend without sin or sigh. "Blessed be God that giveth us this victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

[Paul cries out in the agonies of his internal conflict, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And I would have you to mark how instantaneous the transition is, from the cry of distress to the gratitude of his felt and immediate deliverance; "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord." This we hold to be the exercise of every true Christian in the world. Evil is present with him; and he blames none but himself for its hateful and degrading instigations. But grace is in readiness, not to sweep away this evil as to its existence, but to subdue it as to its prevalency and power; and, while he blames none but himself for all that is corrupt, he thanks none but God in Christ for all that is gracious and good in him.—C.]

CHAPTER VIII.

The apostle, having fully explained the doctrine of justification, and pressed the necessity of sanctification, in this chapter applies himself to the consolation of the Lord's people. Ministers are helpers of the joy of the saints. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," so runs our commission, *Isa.* xl. 1. It is the will of God that his people should be a comforted people. And we have here such a draught of the gospel charter, such a display of the unspeakable privileges of true believers, as may furnish us with abundant matter for joy and peace in believing, that by all these immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation. Many of the people of God have, accordingly, found this chapter a well-spring of comfort to their souls, living and dying, and have sucked and been satisfied from these breasts of consolation and with joy drawn water out of these wells of salvation. There are three things in this chapter: I. The particular instances of Christians' privileges, ver. 1—28. "The ground thereof laid in predestination, ver. 29, 30. III. The apostle's triumph herein in the name of all the saints, ver. 31, to the end.

the emancipated one (Christ having rescued from condemnation) of final victory. "Hath made me free:" the historic tense here used should be rendered "freed me," or "set me free." The words "in Christ Jesus" must be connected with the idea of freedom—"in Christ Jesus set me free."

viii. 3. "Sinful flesh;" rather, "the likeness of the flesh of sin"—i.e., in a body like to that of sinful men. (Compare *Phil.* ii. 7.) "Condemned sin in the flesh;" rather, "condemned the sin in the



HERE is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

First. The apostle here begins with one signal privilege of true Christians, and describes the character of those to whom it belongs: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus," ver. 1. This is his triumph after that melancholy complaint and conflict in the foregoing chapter: sin remaining, disturbing, vexing, but, blessed be God, not ruining. The complaint he takes to himself, but humbly transfers the comfort with himself to all true believers, who are all interested in it. 1. It is the unspeakable privilege and comfort of all those that are in Christ Jesus, that there is therefore now no condemnation to them. He does not say, "There is no accusation against them," for this there is; but the accusation is thrown out, and the indictment quashed. He does not say, "There is nothing in them that deserves condemnation, for this there is, and they see it, and own it, and mourn over it, and condemn themselves for it; but it shall not be their ruin. He does not say, 'There is no cross, no affliction to them, or no displeasure in the affliction,' for this there may be; but 'no condemnation.' They may be chastened of the Lord, but not condemned with the world. Now this arises from their being in Christ Jesus; by virtue of their union with him through faith they are thus secured. They are in Christ Jesus, as in their city of refuge, and so are protected from the avenger of blood. He is their Advocate, and brings them off. There is therefore no condemnation, because they are interested in the satisfaction that Christ by dying made to the law. In Christ, God does not only not condemn them, but is well pleased with them, *Mat.* xvii. 5. 2. It is the undoubted character of all those who are so in Christ Jesus as to be freed from condemnation, that they "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Observe. The character is given from their walk, not from any one particular act, but from their course and way. And the great question is, what is the principle of the walk, the flesh or the Spirit, the old or the new nature, corruption or grace? Which of these do we mind, for which of these do we make provision, by which of these are we governed, which of these do we take part with?

Secondly. This great truth, thus laid down, he illustrates in the following verses; and shews how we come by this great privilege, and how we may answer this character.

1. How we come by these privileges—the privilege of justification, that there is no condemnation to us—the privilege of sanctification, that we walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh, which is no less our privilege than it is our duty. How comes it about?

1st. The law could not do it, ver. 3. It could neither justify nor sanctify; neither free us from the guilt nor from the power of sin, having not the promises either of pardon or grace. The law made nothing perfect; "It was weak." Some attempt the law made towards these blessed ends, but, alas! it was weak, it could not accomplish them; yet that weakness was not through any defect in the law, but "through the flesh," through the corruption of human nature, by which we became incapable either of being justified or sanctified by the law. We had become unable to keep the law, and, in case of failure, the law, as a covenant of works, made no provision, and so left us as it found us. Or, understand it of the ceremonial law; that was a plaister not wide enough for the wound; it could never take away sin, *Heb.* x. 4.

In the Westminster Confession of Faith, in which an explanation of the verse before us is given, it is said, "Albeit the apostle himself, [brought in here for example's sake,] and all other true believers in Christ, be by nature under the law of sin and death, or under the covenant of works, [called the law of sin and death, because it bindeth sin and death upon us, till Christ set us free,] yet the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, or the covenant of grace, so called because it doth enable and quicken a man to a spiritual life through Christ, doth set the apostle, and all true believers, free from the covenant of works, or the law of sin and death; so that every man may say with him, 'The law of the Spirit of life, or the covenant of grace, hath made me free from the law of sin and death, or covenant of works.' The import then of the verse

flesh"—i.e., sentenced all sin to death in the (his, or Christ's) flesh. "The obedience of Christ unto death (*Phil.* ii. 8) in human flesh was sin's death-warrant. Henceforth sin might linger a few days or centuries, but it is as a condemned thing, doomed to die. Compare *John* xii. 31; *Rev.* xii. 5—12; *Eph.* ii. 15; *Col.* i. 20, ii. 15" (Vaughan).

viii. 4. "That the righteousness of the law," &c.: better, "That the righteous demand or requirement of the law." "Flesh" and

before us is, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, because, by their union with him—being dead to the law by the body of Christ, and being married to him who is raised from the dead, *ch. vii. 4*—they have been freed from the curse of that law, which, though good in itself, is the occasion of sin and death to all who remain under it, and are consequently justified before God.—*R. H.]*

2nd. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" does it, *ver. 2*. The covenant of grace made with us in Christ is a treasury of merit and grace, and thence we receive pardon and a new nature, are freed "from the law of sin and death," that is, both from the guilt and power of sin,—from the curse of the law, and the dominion of the flesh. We are under another covenant, another master, another husband, under "the law of the Spirit," the law that gives the Spirit, spiritual life, to qualify us for eternal. The foundation of this freedom is laid in Christ's undertaking for us, of which he speaks *ver. 3*, "God sending his own Son." Observe, When the law failed, God provided another method. Christ comes to do that which the law could not do. Moses brought the children of Israel to the borders of Canaan, and then died, and left them there; but Joshua did that which Moses could not do, and put them in possession of Canaan. Thus what the law could not do Christ did. The best exposition of this verse we have *Heb. x. 1–10*. To make the sense of the words clear, which in our translation is a little intricate, we may read it thus, with a little transposition: "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, &c., *ver. 4*. Observe, *First*. The Divine nature of Christ.

"His own Son;" him who is a partaker of his nature. This is the meaning of the word Son as applied to Christ: see *ch. i. 4*; *Jno. i. 14*; *v. 17*, &c.; *x. 30–39*. The greatness of the gift, and the urgency of the necessity are therefore presented in the strongest light by these few words.—*H.]*

Secondly. How Christ appeared: "In the likeness of sinful flesh." Not sinful, for he was holy, harmless, undefiled, but in the likeness of that flesh which was sinful. He took upon him that nature which was corrupt, though perfectly abstracted from the corruptions of it. His being circumcised, redeemed, baptized with John's baptism, bespeaks the likeness of sinful flesh. The bitings of the fiery serpents were cured by a serpent of brass, which had the shape, though free from the venom, of the serpents that bit them. It was great condescension that he who was God should be made in the likeness of flesh; but much greater that he who was holy should be made in the likeness of sinful flesh. "And for sin;" here the best Greek copies place the comma. God sent him, *ἐν ὁμοιότητι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας, καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας*,—"in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as a sacrifice for sin." The Seventy call a sacrifice for sin no more than *περὶ ἁμαρτίας*,—"for sin;" so Christ was a sacrifice; he was sent to be so, *Heb. ix. 26*.

Thirdly. What was done by this appearance of his. Sin was condemned, that is, God did therein more than ever manifest his hatred of sin; and not only so, but, for all that are Christ's, both the damning and the domineering power of sin is broken and taken out of the way. He that is condemned can neither accuse nor rule; his testimony is null, and his authority null. Thus by Christ is sin condemned; though it live and remain, its life in the saints is still but like that of a condemned malefactor. It was by the condemning of sin that death was disarmed, and the devil, who had the power of death, destroyed. The condemning of sin saved the sinner from condemnation. Christ was made sin for us, *2 Cor. v. 21*, and, being so made, when he was condemned sin was condemned in the flesh of Christ, condemned in the human nature; so was satisfaction made to Divine justice, and way made for the salvation of the sinner. *Fourthly*. The happy effect of this upon us; *ver. 4*, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Both in our justification and in our sanctification the righteousness of the law is fulfilled. A righteousness of satisfaction for the breach of the law is fulfilled by the imputation of Christ's complete and perfect righteousness, which answers the utmost demands of the law, as the mercy-seat was as long and as broad as the ark. A righteousness of obedience to the commands of the law is fulfilled in us, when by the Spirit the law of love is written upon the heart, and that love is the fulfilling of the law, *ch. xiii. 10*. Though the righteousness of the law is not fulfilled by us, yet, blessed be God, it is fulfilled in us. There is that to be found upon and in all true believers which answers the intention of the law. "Us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." This is the description of all those that are interested in this privilege, they act from spiritual and not from carnal principles; as for others, the righteousness of the law will be fulfilled upon them in their ruin. Now,

2. Observe how we may answer to this character, *ver. 5*, &c.

1st. By looking to our minds. How may we know whether we are after the flesh or after the Spirit? By examining what we mind, the things of the flesh, or the things of the Spirit. Carnal pleasure, worldly profit and honour, the things of sense and time, are the things of the flesh, which unregenerate people mind. The favour of God, the welfare of the soul, the concerns of eternity, are the things of the Spirit, which those that are after the Spirit do mind. The man is as the mind is; the mind is the forge of thoughts. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he," *Pr. xxiii. 7*. Which way do the thoughts move with most pleasure? On what do they dwell with most satisfaction? The mind is the seat of wisdom. Which way go the projects and contrivances? whether are we more wise for the world or for our souls? *φρονέοντες τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς*,—"they savour the things of the flesh," so the word is rendered, *Mat. xvi. 23*. It is a great matter what our savour is, what truths, what tidings, what comforts, we do most relish, and are most agreeable to us. Now, to caution us against this carnal-mindedness, he shews the great misery and malignity of it, and compares it with the unspeakable excellency and comfort of spiritual-mindedness. *First*. It is death, *ver. 6*. It is spiritual death, the certain way to eternal death. It is the death of the soul; for it is its alienation from God, in union and communion with whom the life of the soul consists. A carnal soul is a dead soul, dead as a soul can die. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead," *1 Tim. v. 6*, not only dead in law as guilty, but dead in state as carnal. Death includes all misery; carnal souls are miserable souls. But "to be spiritually minded," (*φρονέοντα τοῦ πνεύματος*),—"a spiritual savour," the wisdom that is from above, a principle of grace,—"is life and peace;" it is the felicity and happiness of the soul. The life of the soul consists in its union with spiritual things by the mind; a sanctified soul is a living soul, and that life is peace; it is a very comfortable life. All the paths of spiritual wisdom are paths of peace. It is life and peace in the other world, as well as in this. Spiritual-mindedness is eternal life and peace begun, and an assuring earnest of the perfection of it. *Secondly*. It is enmity to God, *ver. 7*, and this is worse than the former. The former speaks the carnal sinner a dead man, which is bad; but this speaks him a devil of a man. It is not only an enemy, but enmity itself. It is not only the alienation of the soul from God, but the opposition of the soul against God; it rebels against his authority, thwarts his design, opposes his interest, spits in his face, spurns at his bowels. Can there be a greater enmity? An enemy may be reconciled, but enmity cannot. How should this humble us for, and warn us against, carnal-mindedness! Shall we harbour and indulge that which is enmity to God our creator, owner, ruler, and benefactor? To prove this, he urges that "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The

holiness of the law of God, and the unholiness of the carnal mind, are as irreconcilable as light and darkness. The carnal man may, by the power of Divine grace, be made subject to the law of God, but the carnal mind never can; this must be broken and expelled. See how wretchedly the corrupt will of man is enslaved to sin; as far as the carnal mind prevails, there is no inclination to the law of God; therefore, wherever there is a change wrought it is by the power of God's grace, not by the freedom of man's will. Hence he infers, *ver. 8*, "Those that are in the flesh cannot please God." Those that are in a carnal unregenerate state, under the reigning power of sin, cannot do the things that please God, wanting grace, the pleasing principle, and an interest in Christ, the pleasing Mediator. The very sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, *Pr. xv. 8*. Pleasing God is our highest end, of which those that are in the flesh cannot but fall short; they cannot please him, nay, they cannot but displease him. We may know our state and character.

2nd. By inquiring whether we have the Spirit of God and Christ, or not; *ver. 9*. "You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." This expresses states and conditions of the soul vastly different. All the saints have flesh and spirit in them, but to be in the flesh and to be in the Spirit are contrary. It denotes our being overcome and subdued by one of these principles. As we say, a man is in love, or in drink, that is, overcome by it. Now the great question is, whether we are in the flesh or in the Spirit; and how may we come to know it? Why, by inquiring whether the Spirit of God dwell in us. The Spirit dwelling in us is the best evidence of our being in the Spirit, for the indwelling is mutual; *1 Jno. iv. 16*, "Dwelleth in God, and God in him." The Spirit visits many that are unregenerate with his motions, which they resist and quench; but in all that are sanctified he dwells; there he resides and rules. He is there as a man at his own house, where he is constant and welcome, and has the dominion. Shall we put this question to our hearts, Who dwells, who rules, who keeps house here? Which interest has the ascendant? To this he subjoins a general rule of trial; "If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." To be Christ's (that is, to be a Christian indeed, one of his children, his servants, his friends, in union with him) is a privilege and honour which many pretend to that have no part nor lot in the matter. None are his but those that have his Spirit; that is, *First*. That are spirited as he was spirited,—are meek, and lowly, and humble, and peaceable, and patient, and charitable, as he was. We cannot tread in his steps unless we have his Spirit; the frame and disposition of our souls must be conformable to Christ's pattern.

[This, perhaps, is the right place for adverting to the way in which it has been endeavoured to make all that is revealed of the Holy Ghost, and of his regenerating influence upon man, more palatable than it naturally is to unregenerate taste,—more fitted to satisfy the demand which obtains for a religion that shall be altogether rational and devoid of mystery. One, it is thought, may be rightly enough said to have the Spirit of God if, from any cause whatever, it so happens that there be a resemblance of character and disposition and principle between him and the Divinity: just as any active and devoted philanthropist of our day may be said to have the spirit of Howard, without its ever being imagined that there has been any transmigration into his body of that soul by which the body of Howard was animated.—To have the Spirit of Christ is here to be understood, not in the light of our possessing a kindred character to that of Christ, but of our being the subjects of an actual and personal inhabitation by the Spirit. The Spirit of God may be denominated the Spirit of Christ, either because the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son, or, more particularly, because the Son, now that he is exalted at the Father's right hand, is intrusted with the dispensation of the Spirit.—Hence the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are equivalent the one to the other. And as the Saviour uniformly regenerates all whom he redeems—as the conjunction is invariable, between the penalty being lifted off from our persons and a purifying influence being laid upon our characters,—as it is true, even in the moral sense of the term, that if he wash us not we have no part in him,—the truth is inevitable, and cannot be too urgently impressed on all our consciences, that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.—C.]

Secondly. That are actuated and guided by the Holy Spirit of God, as a sanctifier, teacher, and comforter. Having the Spirit of Christ is the same with having the Spirit of God to dwell in us. But those two come much to one; for all that are actuated by the Spirit of God as their rule are conformable to the Spirit of Christ as their pattern. Now this description of the character of those to whom belongs this first privilege of freedom from condemnation is to be applied to all the other privileges that follow.

10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

In these verses the apostle represents two more excellent benefits, which belong to true believers:

First. Life. The happiness is not barely a negative happiness, not to be condemned; but it is positive, it is an advancement to a life that will be the unspeakable happiness of the man, *ver. 10, 11*. "If Christ be in you." Observe, If the Spirit be in us, Christ is in us. He dwells in the heart by faith, *Eph. iii. 17*. Now we are here told what becomes of the bodies and souls of those in whom Christ is.

1. We cannot say but that the body is dead; it is a frail, mortal, dying body

"spirit:" the contrast between these is drawn out in the following verses. The word "flesh" includes both what are called in *1 Thess. v. 23* "soul" and "body," and may be taken to embrace all the desires, appetites, and capacities of the natural man (*1 Cor. ii. 14*); the "spirit" signifies the renovated inner man, quickened and animated by the Holy Spirit.

viii. 10. "Because of sin . . . because of righteousness:" for "because" read "on account of," or "by reason of." The body,

with its lusts and passions, is treated by the Christian as a dead thing. The spirit is life, full of energy and vigour, animated by the Spirit of life. "By reason of righteousness:" in the Commentary this righteousness is taken in a wide sense, including the righteousness of justification and of sanctification. Alford limits the meaning to the latter, viz., the implanted righteousness of the sanctification of the Spirit.

viii. 15. "Bondage again to fear:" the spirit received by the

and it will be dead shortly; it is a house of clay, whose foundation is in the dust. The life purchased and promised does not immortalize the body in its present state. It is dead, that is, it is appointed to die, it is under a sentence of death; as we say one that is condemned is a dead man. In the midst of life we are in death; be our bodies ever so strong, and healthful, and handsome, they are as good as dead, *Heb. xi. 12*, and this "because of sin." It is sin that kills the body. This effect the first threatening has, *Gen. iii. 19*, "Dust thou art." Methinks, were there no other argument, love to our bodies should make us hate sin, because it is such an enemy to our bodies. The death even of the bodies of the saints is a remaining token of God's displeasure against sin.

2. But the spirit, the precious soul, that is life; it is now spiritually alive, nay, it is life. Grace in the soul is its new nature; the life of the saint lies in the soul, while the life of the sinner goes no farther than the body. When the body dies, and returns to the dust, "the spirit is life;" not only living and immortal, but swallowed up of life. Death to the saints is but the freeing of the heaven-born spirit from the clog and load of this body, that it may be fit to partake of eternal life. When Abraham was dead, yet God was the God of Abraham, for even then his spirit was life, *Mat. xxii. 31, 32*; see *Ps. xlix. 15*. And this "because of righteousness." The righteousness of Christ imputed to them secures the soul, the better part, from death; the righteousness of Christ inherent in them, the renewed image of God upon the soul, preserves it, and, by God's ordination, at death elevates it, and improves it, and makes it meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. The eternal life of the soul consists in the vision and fruition of God, and both assimilating, for which the soul is qualified by the righteousness of sanctification. I refer to *Ps. xvii. 15*, "I will behold thy face in righteousness."

3. There is a life reserved, too, for the poor body at last; "He shall also quicken your mortal bodies," ver. 11. The Lord is for the body; and though at death it is cast aside as a despoiled, broken vessel, vessel in which is no pleasure, yet God will have a desire to the work of his hands, *Job xiv. 15*, will remember his covenant with dust, and will not lose a grain of it; but the body shall be reunited to the soul, and clothed with a glory agreeable to it. Vile bodies shall be newly fashioned, *Phil. iii. 21*; *1 Cor. xv. 42*. Two great assurances of the resurrection of the body are mentioned: 1st. The resurrection of Christ, "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken." Christ rose as the head, and firstfruits, and forerunner of all the saints, *1 Cor. xv. 20*. The body of Christ lay in the grave, under the sin of all the elect imputed, and broke through it. "O grave, then, where is thy victory? It is in the virtue of Christ's resurrection that we shall rise." 2nd. The indwelling of the Spirit. The same Spirit that raised the soul now will raise the body shortly, "By his Spirit that dwelleth in you." The bodies of the saints are the temples of the Holy Ghost, *1 Cor. iii. 16*; *vi. 19*. Now, though these temples may be suffered for awhile to lie in ruins, yet they shall be rebuilt. The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, shall be repaired, whatever great mountains may be in the way. The Spirit, breathing upon dead and dry bones, will make them live, and the saints, even in their flesh, shall see God. Hence the apostle by the way, infers how much it is our duty to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, ver. 12, 13. Let not our life be after the wills and motions of the flesh. Two motives he mentions here: *First*. We are not debtors to the flesh, neither by relation, gratitude, nor any other bond or obligation. We owe no feed nor service to our carnal desires; we are indeed bound to clothe, and feed, and take care of the body, as a servant to the flesh never did use so much kindness as to oblige it to serve it. It is implied then we are debtors to Christ and to the Spirit; there we owe our all, as we have and all we can do, by a thousand bonds and obligations. Being delivered from so great a death by so great a ransom, we are deeply indebted to our deliverer: see *Cor. vi. 19, 20*. *Secondly*. Consider the consequences; what will be at the end of the way. Here are life and death, blessing and cursing, set before us. "If you live after the flesh you shall die;" that is, die eternally. It is the pleasing, and serving, and gratifying of the flesh that are the ruin of souls; that is, the second death. Dying indeed is the soul's dying; the death of the saints is but a sleep. But, on the other hand, "You shall live,"—live and be happy to eternity; that is the true life,—"if you through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body," subdue and keep under all fleshly lusts and affections, deny yourselves in the pleasing and humouring of the body, and this through the Spirit. We cannot do it without the Spirit working it in us, and the Spirit will not do it without our doing our endeavour. So that, in a word, we are put upon this dilemma, either to displease the body or destroy the soul.

Secondly. The Spirit of adoption is another privilege belonging to those that are in Christ Jesus, ver. 14—16.

1. All that are Christ's are taken into the relation of children to God, ver. 14. Observe. *1st*. Their property. They are "led by the Spirit of God," as a scholar in his learning is led by his tutor, as a traveller in his journey is led by his guide, as a soldier in his engagement is led by his captain; not driven as beasts, but led as rational creatures, drawn with the cords of a man and the bands of love. It is the undoubted character of all true believers that they are led by the Spirit of God. Having submitted themselves in believing to his guidance, they do in their obedience follow that guidance, and are sweetly led into all truth and all duty. *2nd*. Their privilege. "They are the sons of God," received into the number of God's children by adoption, owned and loved by him as his children.

2. And those that are the sons of God have the Spirit, *1st*. To work in them the disposition of children. *First*. "You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear," ver. 15. Understand it, *1st*. Of that spirit of bondage which the Old Testament church was under, by reason of the darkness and terror of that dispensation. The veil signified bondage, *2 Cor. iii. 15*; compare ver. 17. The spirit of adoption was not then so plentifully poured out as now; for the law opened the wound, but little of the remedy. Now you are not under that dispensation, you have not received that spirit. *2nd*. Of that spirit of bondage which many of the saints themselves were under at their conversion, under the convictions of sin and wrath set home by the Spirit; as those in *Acts ii. 37*; the gaoler, *Acts xvi. 30*; Paul, says the apostle, "with you this is over." "God as a judge," says Dr. Manton, "by the spirit of bondage, sends us to Christ as Mediator, and Christ as Mediator, by the spirit of adoption, sends us back again to God as a Father." Though a child of God may come under fear of bondage again, and may be questioning his sonship, yet the blessed Spirit is not again a spirit of bondage, for then he would witness an untruth. *Secondly*. But "you have received the spirit of adoption." Men may give a charter of adoption; but it is God's prerogative, when he adopts, to give a spirit of adoption, the nature of children. The spirit of adoption works in the children of God a filial love to God as a Father, a delight in him and a dependence upon him as a Father. A sanctified soul bears the image of God, as the child bears the image of the father. "Whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Praying is here called crying, which is not only an earnest, but a natural expression of desire; children that cannot speak vent their desires by crying. Now, the Spirit teaches us in prayer to come to God as a Father, with a holy, humble confidence, emboldening the soul in that duty. "Abba, Father."

Christian is not one of bondage, but of sonship and adoption. "Ye did not receive the spirit of bondage (leading) back unto fear" i.e., so as to bring about or result in fear (*chap. vi. 19*).

viii. 16. "With our spirit:" the idea is harmony of witness between the Spirit of God and our own spirit to the fact of our sonship. The word "with" our spirit suggests the notion of witness given at the same time. Alford renders "to" our spirit, with the view of expressing more strongly the idea of agreement in the fact.

Abba is a Syriac word, signifying 'father,' or 'my father'; *πάτερ*, a Greek word; and why both, "Abba, Father?" Because Christ said so in prayer, *Mar. xiv. 36*, "Abba, Father;" and we have received the Spirit of the Son. It denotes an affectionate, endearing importunity, and a believing stress laid upon the relation. Little children begging of their parents can say little but "Father, father," and that is rhetoric enough. It also denotes that the adoption is common both to Jews and Gentiles; the Jews call him *Abba* in their language, the Greeks may call him *πάτερ* in their language; for in Christ Jesus there is neither Greek nor Jew.

2nd. To witness to the relation of children, ver. 16. The former is the work of the Spirit as a sanctifier, this as a comforter. "Beareth witness with our spirit." Many a man has the witness of his own spirit to the goodness of his state who has not the concurring testimony of the Spirit. Many speak peace to themselves to whom the God of heaven does not speak peace. But those that are sanctified have God's Spirit witnessing with their spirits, which is to be understood not of any immediate extraordinary revelation, but an ordinary work of the Spirit, in and by the means of comfort, speaking peace to the soul. This testimony is always agreeable to the written word, and is therefore always grounded upon sanctification; for the Spirit in the heart cannot contradict the Spirit in the word. The Spirit witnesses to none the privileges of children who have not the nature and disposition of children.

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

In these words the apostle describes a fourth illustrious branch of the happiness of believers, namely, a title to the future glory. This is fitly annexed to our sonship; for as the adoption of sons entitles us to that of glory, so the disposition of sons fits and prepares us for it. "If children, then heirs," ver. 17. In earthly inheritances this rule does not hold, only the first-born are heirs; but the church is a church of first-born, for they are all heirs. Heaven is an inheritance that all the saints are heirs to. They do not come to it as purchasers, by any merit or procurement of their own; but as heirs, purely by the act of God, for God makes heirs. The saints are heirs, though in this world they are heirs under age: see *Gal. iv. 1, 2*. Their present state is a state of education and preparation for the inheritance. How comfortable should this be to all the children of God, how little soever they have in possession, that, being heirs, they have enough in reversion! But the honour and happiness of an heir lie in the value and worth of that which he is heir to; we read of those that inherit the wind, and therefore we have here an abstract of the premises. 1. "Heirs of God." The Lord himself is the portion of the saints' inheritance, *Ps. xvi. 5*, a goodly heritage, ver. 6. The saints are spiritual priests, that have the Lord for their inheritance, *Num. xviii. 20*. The vision of God and the fruition of God make up the inheritance the saints are heirs to. God himself will be with them, and will be their God, *Rev. xxi. 3*. 2. "Joint-heirs with Christ." Christ, as Mediator, is said to be the heir of all things, *Heb. i. 2*, and true believers, by virtue of their union with him, shall inherit all things, *Rev. xxi. 7*. Those that now partake of the Spirit of Christ, as his brethren, shall, as his brethren, partake of his glory, *Jno. xvii. 24*; shall sit down with him upon his throne, *Rev. iii. 21*. Lord, what is man, that thou shouldst thus magnify him! Now, this future glory is farther spoken of as the reward of present sufferings, and as the accomplishment of present hopes.

First. As the reward of the saints' present sufferings; and it is a rich reward; "If so be that we suffer with him," ver. 17, or "forasmuch as we suffer with him." The state of the church in this world always is, but was then especially, an afflicted state; to be a Christian was certainly to be a sufferer. Now, to comfort them in reference to those sufferings, he tells them that they suffered with Christ, for his sake, for his honour, and for the testimony of a good conscience, and should be glorified with him. Those that suffered with David in his persecuted state were advanced by him and with him when he came to the crown: see *2 Tim. ii. 12*. See the gains of suffering for Christ; though we may be losers for him we shall not, we cannot, be losers by him in the end. This the Gospel is filled with the assurances of. Now that suffering saints may have strong supports and consolations from their hopes of heaven, he holds the balance, ver. 18, in a comparison between the two, which is observable. 1. In one scale he puts "the sufferings of this present time." The sufferings of the saints are but sufferings of this present time, strike no deeper than the things of time, last no longer than the present time, *2 Cor. iv. 17*, light affliction, and but for a moment. So that on the sufferings he writes *tekel*, weighed in the balance, and found light. 2. In the other scale he puts the glory, and finds that

viii. 17. "If we suffer with him:" "if we are suffering with him"—i.e., provided that we are found in that course of participation in Christ's sufferings.

viii. 19. "The earnest expectation of the creature:" rather, "of the creation"—the whole earth in its present state, the world of Nature, "all animate and inanimate Nature, as distinguished from mankind." For this renovation of all things compare *Isa. xi. 6*, &c.; *Acts iii. 21*; *2 Peter iii. 13*.

a weight, an exceeding and eternal weight, "Glory that shall be revealed." In our present state we come short, not only in the enjoyment, but in the knowledge of that glory, 1 *Cor.* ii. 9; 1 *Jno.* iii. 2; it shall be revealed. It surpasses all that we have yet seen and known; present vouchsafements are sweet and precious, very precious, very sweet; but there is something to come, something behind the curtain, that will outshine all. "Shall be revealed in us;" not only revealed to us, to be seen, but revealed in us, to be enjoyed. The kingdom of God is within you, and will be so to eternity. 3. He concludes the sufferings "not worthy to be compared with the glory."—*οὐκ ἄξια πρὸς τὴν δόξαν*. They cannot merit that glory; and if suffering for Christ will not merit, much less will doing. They should not at all deter and frighten us from the diligent and earnest pursuit of that glory. The sufferings are small and short, and concern the body only; but the glory is rich and great, and concerns the soul, and is eternal. This he reckons: "I reckon,"—*λογίζομαι*. It is not a rash and sudden determination, but the product of a very serious and deliberate consideration. He had reasoned the case within himself, weighed the arguments on both sides, and thus at last resolves the point. O how vastly different is the sentence of the word from the sentiment of the world concerning the sufferings of this present time! "I reckon," as an arithmetician that is balancing an account. He first sums up what is disbursed for Christ in the sufferings of this present time, and finds they come to very little; he then sums up what is secured to us by Christ in the glory that shall be revealed, and this he finds to be an infinite sum, transcending all conception, the disbursement abundantly made up, and the losses infinitely counterbalanced. And who would be afraid then to suffer for Christ, who, as he is beforehand with us in suffering, so he will not be behindhand with us in recompence? Now Paul was as competent a judge of this point as ever any mere man was. He could reckon, not by art only, but by experience, for he knew both. He knew what the sufferings of this present time were: see 2 *Cor.* xi. 23–28. He knew what the glory of heaven is: see 2 *Cor.* xii. 3, 4. And, upon the view of both, he gives this judgment here. There is nothing like a believing view of the glory which shall be revealed to support and bear up the spirit under all the sufferings of this present time. The reproach of Christ appears riches to those who have respect to the recompence of reward, *Heb.* xi. 26.

Secondly. As the accomplishment of the saints' present hopes and expectations, ver. 19, &c. As the saints are suffering for it, so they are waiting for it. Heaven is therefore sure; for God by his Spirit would not raise and encourage those hopes only to defeat and disappoint them. He will establish that word unto his servants on which he has caused them to hope, *Ps.* cxix. 49, and heaven is therefore sweet; for if hope deferred makes the heart sick, surely when the desire comes, it will be a tree of life, *Pr.* xiii. 12. Now he observes an expectation of this glory,

1. In the creatures, ver. 19–22. That must needs be a great, a transcendent glory, which all the creatures are so earnestly expecting and longing for. This observation in these verses has some difficulty in it, which puzzles interpreters a little; and the more because it is a remark not made in any other Scripture, with which it might be compared. By the creature here we understand, not as some do, the Gentile world, and their expectation of Christ and the Gospel, which is an exposition very foreign and forced, but the whole frame of nature, especially that of this lower world, the whole creation, the companies of inanimate and insensible creatures, which, because of their harmony and mutual dependence, and because they all constitute and make up one world, are spoken of in the singular number as the creature. The sense of the apostle in these four verses we may take in the following observations: 1st. That there is a present vanity to which the creature, by reason of the sin of man, is made subject, ver. 20. When man sinned, the ground was cursed for man's sake, and with it all the creatures,—especially of this lower world, where our acquaintance lies,—became subject to that curse, became mutable and mortal. "Under the bondage of corruption," ver. 21. There is an impurity, deformity, and infirmity, which the creature has contracted by the fall of man; the creation is sullied and stained, much of the beauty of the world gone. There is an enmity of one creature to another; they are all subject to continual alteration and decay of the individuals, liable to the strokes of God's judgments upon man. When the world was drowned, and almost all the creatures in it, surely then it was subject to vanity indeed. The whole species of creatures is designed for, and is hastening to, a total dissolution by fire. And it is not the least part of their vanity and bondage that they are used, or abused, rather, by men as instruments of sin. The creatures are often abused to the dishonour of their Creator, the hurt of his children, or the service of his enemies. When the creatures are made the food and fuel of our lusts, they are subject to vanity, they are captivated by the law of sin. And this not willingly, but of their own choice. All the creatures desire their own perfection and consummation; when they are made instruments of sin, it is not willingly. Or, they are thus captivated, not for any sin of their own, which they had committed, but for man's sin. "By reason of him who hath subjected the same." Adam did it meritoriously; the creatures being delivered to him, when he by sin delivered himself he delivered them likewise into the bondage of corruption. God did it judicially; he passed a sentence upon the creatures for the sin of man, by which they become subject. And this yoke, poor creatures, they bear in hope that it will not be so always. *Ἐν ἁπλῇ ἐλπίδι*, &c.,—"in hope that the creature itself," so many Greek copies join the words. We have reason to pity the poor creatures that for our sin have become subject to vanity. 2nd. That the creatures groan and travail in pain together under this vanity and corruption, ver. 22. It is a figurative expression. Sin is a burthen to the whole creation; the sin of the Jews in crucifying Christ, set the earth a quaking under them. The idols were a burthen to the weary breast, *Isa.* xlvi. 1. There is a general outcry of the whole creation against the sin of man; the stone crieth out of the wall, *Hab.* ii. 11; the land cries, *Job* xxxi. 38. 3rd. That the creature that is now thus burthened shall, at the time of the restitution of all things, be "delivered from this bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God," ver. 21; they shall no more be subject to vanity and corruption, and the other fruits of the curse; but, on the contrary, this lower world shall be renewed. When there will be new heavens there will be a new earth, 2 *Pet.* iii. 13; *Rev.* xxi. 1; and there shall be a glory conferred upon all the creatures, which shall be, in the proportion of their natures, as suitable and as great an advancement as the glory of the children of God shall be to them. The fire at the last day shall be a refining, not a destroying, annihilating fire. What becomes of the souls of brutes, that go downwards, none can tell. But it should seem by the Scripture that there will be some kind of restoration of them. And if it be objected, what use will they be of to glorified saints? we may suppose them of as much use as they were to Adam in innocence; and if it be only to illustrate the wisdom, power, and goodness of their Creator, that is enough; compare with this *Ps.* xvi. 10–13; *Ps.* lxxvii. 7–9. "Let the heavens rejoice before the Lord, for he cometh." 4th. That the creature doth therefore earnestly expect and wait for "the manifestation of the children of God," ver. 19. Observe, At the second coming of Christ there will be a manifestation of the children of God. Now the saints are God's hidden ones, the wheat seems lost in a heap of chaff; but then they shall be manifested. "It does not yet appear what we shall be," 1 *Jno.* iii. 2, but then the glory shall be revealed. The children of God shall

appear in their own colours. And this redemption of the creature is reserved till then; for as it was with man and for man that they fell under the curse, so with man and for man they shall be delivered. All the curse and filth that now adhere to the creature shall be done away then when those that have suffered with Christ upon earth shall reign with him upon the earth. This the whole creation looks and longs for; and it may serve as a reason why now a good man should be merciful to his beast.

[The word rendered creature means the act of founding or creating, *ch.* i. 20; and then that which is created, *ch.* i. 25; *Col.* i. 15. The expression "the whole creation" may, according to the context, mean the rational or irrational creation. That in this case it refers to the latter may be argued, 1. Because it cannot be said of mankind generally, or of the rational creation, that they are waiting with earnest desire for the manifestation of the sons of God; that they were made subject to their present state of corruption not of their own accord, but by God; and that they are to be made partakers of the glorious liberty of the sons of God. 2. All this can be said, in strict accordance with the Scriptures, of the external world. The Scriptures frequently speak of the whole creation as a sentient being, rejoicing in God's favour, trembling at his anger, speaking abroad his praise, &c., as Paul here represents it as longing for the great consummation of all things. Again, it is agreeable to Scripture to speak of the earth as cursed for man's sake, as made subject to vanity not on its own account, but by the act of God in punishment of the sins of men. Finally, it is according to the word of God to represent the creation as participating in the blessings and glories of the Messiah's reign: see *Isa.* xxxv. 1; *xxix.* 17; *xxxii.* 15, 16; 2 *Pet.* iii. 7, 13; *Heb.* xii. 26, 27. 3. This interpretation is suitable to the design of the apostle. Paul's object is not to confirm the certainty of a future state, but to produce a strong impression of its glorious character. Nothing could be better adapted to this object than the grand and beautiful figure of the whole creation waiting and longing for the glorious revelation of the Son of God, and the consummation of his kingdom.—H.]

2. In the saints, who are new creatures, ver. 23–25. Observe, 1st. The grounds of this expectation in the saints. It is our having received "the firstfruits of the Spirit," which both quickens our desires and encourages our hopes, and both ways raises our expectations. The firstfruits did both sanctify and insure the lump. Grace is the firstfruits of glory, it is glory begun. We, having received such clusters in this wilderness, cannot but long for the full vintage in the heavenly Canaan. "Not only they"—not only the creatures which are not capable of such a happiness as the firstfruits of the Spirit, but even we, who have such present rich receivings, cannot but long for something more and greater. In having the firstfruits of the Spirit we have that which is very precious, but we have not all we would have. "We groan within ourselves," which denotes the strength and secrecy of these desires; not making a loud noise, as the hypocrites howling upon the bed for corn and wine, but with silent groans, which pierce heaven soonest of all. Or, "We groan among ourselves." It is the unanimous vote, the joint desire, of the whole church; all agree in this, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." The groaning denotes a very earnest and importunate desire, the soul pained with the delay. Present receivings and comforts are consistent with a great many groans; not as the pangs of one dying, but as the throes of a woman in travail—groans that are symptoms of life, not of death. 2nd. The object of this expectation. What is it we are thus desiring and waiting for? What would we have? "The adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Though the soul be the principal part of the man, yet the Lord has declared himself for the body also, and has provided a great deal of honour and happiness for the body. The resurrection is here called "the redemption of the body." It shall then be rescued from the power of death and the grave, and the bondage of corruption; and, though a vile body, yet it shall be refined and beautified, and made like that glorious body of Christ, *Phil.* iii. 21; 1 *Cor.* xv. 42. This is called the adoption. First. It is the adoption manifested before all the world, angels and men. Now are we the sons of God, but it does not yet appear, the honour is now clouded; but then God will publicly own all his children. The deed of adoption, which is now written, signed, and sealed, will then be recognised, proclaimed, and published. As Christ was, so the saints will be, declared to be the sons of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead, *ch.* i. 4. It will then be put past dispute. Secondly. It is the adoption perfected and completed. The children of God have bodies as well as souls; and, till those bodies are brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, the adoption is not perfect. But then it will be complete, when the Captain of our salvation shall bring the many sons to glory, *Heb.* ii. 10. This is that which we expect, in hope of which our flesh rests, *Ps.* xvi. 9, 10. All the days of our appointed time we are waiting, till this change shall come, when he shall call, and we shall answer, and he will have a desire to the work of his hands, *Job* xiv. 14, 15. 3rd. The agreeableness of this to our present state, ver. 24, 25. "Our happiness is not in present possession; "We are saved by hope." In this, as in other things, God hath made our present state a state of trial and probation—that our reward is out of sight. Those that will deal with God must deal upon trust. It is acknowledged that one of the principal graces of a Christian is hope, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 13, which necessarily implies a good thing to come, which is the object of that hope. Faith respects the promise, hope the thing promised. Faith is the evidence, hope the expectation, of things not seen. Faith is the mother of hope. "We do with patience wait." In hoping for this glory we have need of patience, to bear the sufferings we meet with in the way to it and the delays of it. Our way is rough and long; but he that shall come will come, and will not tarry; and therefore, though he seem to tarry, it becomes us to wait for him.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

The apostle here suggests two privileges more to which true Christians are entitled:

First. The help of the Spirit in prayer. While we are in this world, hoping and waiting for what we see not, we must be praying. Hope supposes desire, and that desire offered up to God is prayer; we groan. Now observe,

viii. 21. "Creature:" here, as in verse 19, "creation," "Bondage of corruption:" the bondage belonging to or arising from corruption. "Glorious liberty:" rather, "the liberty of the glory," &c. The glory of the children of God is their manifested perfection. For this creation waits, and in the liberty connected with it creation will share (verse 19).

viii. 23. "The firstfruits of the Spirit:" even we, though we possess the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, looking

anxiously forward for the adoption—rather, the end or fulness of the adoption, or the full manifestation of it—in the redemption of the body, "called, in Eph. i. 14, the redemption of the 'acquisition'—i.e., the final recovery (by resurrection of the body) of that which God has already made his own by the gift of his Son. The spiritual redemption is already ours. Eph. i. 7" (Vaughan).

ix. 1–5. It is worth noting that the apostle, though upholding God's sovereign rights, yet indicates that the blame of failure lies

1. Our weakness in prayer. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." 1st. As to the matter of our requests, we know not what to ask. We are not competent judges of our own condition. "Who knows what is good for a man in this life?" *Ecc. vi. 12*. We are shortsighted, and very much blinded in favour of the flesh, and apt to separate the end from the way. "You know not what you ask," *Mat. xx. 22*. We are like foolish children, that are ready to cry for fruit before it is ripe and fit for them: see *Lu. ix. 54, 55*. 2nd. As to the manner, we know not how to pray as we ought. It is not enough that we do that which is good, but we must do it well, seek in a due order; and here we are often at a loss—graces are weak, affections cold, thoughts wandering, and it is not always easy to find the heart to pray, 2 *Sam. vii. 27*. The apostle speaks of this in the first person; "We know not." He puts himself among the rest. Folly, and weakness, and distraction in prayer, are what all the saints are complaining of. If so great a saint as Paul knew not what to pray for, what little reason have we to go forth about that duty in our own strength!

2. The assistances which the Spirit gives us in that duty. He "helps our infirmities," meant especially of our praying infirmities, which most easily beset us in that duty, against which the Spirit helps. The Spirit in the Word helps; many rules and promises there are in the Word for our help. The Spirit in the heart helps, dwelling in us, working in us, as a Spirit of grace and supplication, especially with respect to the infirmities we are under when we are in a suffering state, when our faith is most apt to fail; for this end the Holy Ghost was poured out. "Helpe," *σοφισθησεται*,—helps with us, over against us, helps as we help one that would lift up a burthen, by lifting over against him at the other end—helps with us, that is, with us doing our endeavour, putting forth the strength we have. We must not sit still, and expect that the Spirit should do all; when the Spirit goes before us we must bestir ourselves. We cannot without God, and he will not without us. What help? Why, "the Spirit itself makes intercession for us," dictates our requests, indites our petitions, draws up our plea for us. Christ intercedes for us in heaven, the Spirit intercedes for us in our hearts; so graciously has God provided for the encouragement of the praying remnant. The Spirit, as an enlightening Spirit, teaches us what to pray for, as a sanctifying Spirit works and excites praying graces, as a comforting Spirit silences our fears, and helps us over all our discouragements. The Holy Spirit is the spring of all our desires and breathings towards God. Now this intercession which the Spirit makes is, 1st. "With groanings that cannot be uttered." The strength and fervency of those desires which the Holy Spirit works are hereby intimated. There may be praying in the Spirit where there is not a word spoken; as Moses prayed, *Ex. xiv. 15*, and Hannah, 1 *Sam. i. 13*. It is not the rhetoric and eloquence, but the faith and fervency of our prayers, that the Spirit works, as an intercessor in us. "Cannot be uttered;" they are so confused, the soul is in such a hurry with temptations and troubles, we know not what to say, nor how to express ourselves. Here is the Spirit interceding with groans that cannot be uttered. When we can but cry, "Abba, Father," and refer ourselves to him with a holy humble boldness, this is the work of the Spirit. 2nd. "According to the will of God," ver. 27. The Spirit in the heart never contradicts the Spirit in the word. Those desires that are contrary to the will of God do not come from the Spirit. The Spirit interceding in us evermore melts our wills into the will of God. "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

3. The sure success of these intercessions. "He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit," ver. 27. To a hypocrite, all whose religion lies in his tongue, nothing is more dreadful than that God searches the heart, and sees through all his disguises. To a sincere Christian, who makes heartwork of his duty, nothing is more comfortable than that God searches the heart, for then he will hear and answer those desires which we want words to express. He knows what we have need of before we ask, *Mat. vi. 8*. He knows what is the mind of his own Spirit in us. And, as he always hears the Spirit interceding for us, so he always hears the Spirit interceding in us, because his intercession is according to the will of God. What could have been done more for the comfort of the Lord's people, in all their addresses to God? Christ had said, "Whatever you ask the Father according to his will he will give it you." But how shall we learn to ask according to his will? Why, the Spirit will teach us that. Therefore it is that the seed of Jacob never seek in vain.

Secondly. The concurrence of all providences for the good of those that are Christ's, ver. 28. It might be objected that, notwithstanding all these privileges, we see believers compassed about with manifold afflictions; though the Spirit makes intercession for them, yet their troubles are continued. It is very true; but in this the Spirit's intercession is always effectual, that, however it goes with them, all this is working together for their good. Observe here.

1. The character of the saints, who are interested in this privilege. They are here described by such properties as are common to all that are truly sanctified. 1st. "They love God." This includes all the outgoings of the soul's affections towards God as the chief good and highest end. It is our love to God that makes every providence sweet, and therefore profitable. Those that love God make the best of all he does, and take all in good part. 2nd. They "are the called according to his purpose," effectually called according to the eternal purpose. The call is effectual, not according to any merit or desert of ours, but according to God's own gracious purpose.

"According to his purpose," or according to his previous design. We now tread on the borders of what is deemed by many to be a great mystery; and, though we have no great respect for that theology which loves to grapple with the incomprehensibilities of lofty speculation, yet we must not shrink from aught that Scripture lays across our path. The purpose signifies a previous design; and this in so far previous, as to be even anterior to the existence of those who are the objects of it. In the Second Epistle to Timothy there is an allusion to this very purpose of our text, and where it stands associated too with the very call that is now under consideration. "God hath saved us," says the apostle, "not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." The purpose then is the prior determination in the mind of the Divinity, that such a one should be converted from the error of his ways—should be called from darkness unto light—should make that transition by which he passes from a state of condemnation to a state of acceptance; and the call, which we have already supposed to be an effectual one, is just as distinguishable from this previous determination, as the execution of a purpose is from the purpose itself—or as a design entertained and resolved upon long ago is from its fulfilment, that may only take place this very day, or at some distant and indefinite futurity before us. "Moreover whom he did predestinate them he also called." By the one he makes the decree—by the other he carries it into effect. And we again repeat, that it is not in the daring spirit of an adventurer we would have you to enter this field, or on a game of strength or of skill with the difficulties of human argument; but in the simple and lowly spirit of genuine disciples would we have you to submit yourselves to the Divine testimony. But let not any feel himself thrown at a distance from salvation, by thus connecting it with the antecedent decree of God respecting it. We are sure that none ought,

who feel a true moral earnestness on the subject, and are honestly and desirously embarked on the pursuit of their immortal well-being. For, though the Spirit bioweth where he listeth, yet he listeth so to do on all who court and who aspire after him; and though by his work upon a human soul he is fulfilling a design that hath been conceived from eternity, yet it is not with this past design, but with the present fulfilment, that you have to do. And the matter in hand, the matter with which you should feel yourself urged and occupied is, that by the operation of that Spirit you may indeed be enlightened in the truth of God, and made wise unto your own salvation. For this purpose let me assure you of his readiness to help and to visit all who ask him—let me entreat your attention to that Bible, which with him is the mighty instrument whereby the understanding and the heart and all the faculties of man are gained over to that truth which is able at once to sanctify and to save us—let me press you to awake and be active in the work, putting forth all the strength that is in you, and confident that if you really do so more strength will be given. So that if the whole force which you have now be honestly and heartily directed to the object, by force the kingdom of heaven will be carried.—C. See note by Barnes on *ch. ix. 16*.]

2. The privilege of the saints, that "all things work together for good to them," that is, all the providences of God that concern them. All that God performs he performs for them, *Ps. lvi. 2*. Their sins are not of his performing, therefore not intended here, though his permitting sin is made to work for their good, 2 *Chr. xxxii. 31*. But all the providences of God are theirs—merciful providences, afflicting providences, personal, public. They are all for good; perhaps for temporal good, as Joseph's troubles; at least, for spiritual and eternal good. That is good for them which does their souls good. Either directly or indirectly, every providence has a tendency to the spiritual good of those that love God, breaking them off from sin, bringing them nearer to God, weaning them from the world, fitting them for heaven. "Work together." They work, as physic works upon the body, various ways, according to the intention of the physician; but all for the patient's good. "They work together," as several ingredients in a medicine concur to answer the intention. God hath set the one over against the other, *Ecc. vii. 14*; *σοφισται*, a verb singular, with a noun plural, denoting the harmony of Providence and its uniform designs, all the wheels as one wheel, *Eze. x. 13*. "He worketh all things together for good," so some read it. It is not for any specific quality in the providences themselves, but from the power and grace of God working in, with, and by, these providences. All this "we know"—know it for a certainty, from the word of God, from our own experience, and from the experience of all the saints.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

The apostle, having reckoned up so many ingredients of the happiness of true believers, comes here to represent the ground of them all, which he lays in predestination. These precious privileges are conveyed to us by the charter of the covenant, but they are founded in the c-ounsel of God, which infallibly secures the event. That Jesus Christ, the purchaser, might not labour in vain, nor spend his strength and life for nought, and in vain, there is a remnant given him, a seed that he shall see, so that the good pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. For the explication of this he here sets before us the order of the causes of our salvation, a golden chain, which cannot be broken. There are four links of it:

First. "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." All that God designed for glory and happiness as the end he decreed to grace and holiness as the way. Not whom he did foreknow to be holy those he predestinated to be so. The counsels and decrees of God do not trundle to the frail and fickle will of men; no, God's foreknowledge of the saints is the same with that everlasting love wherewith he is said to have loved them, *Jer. xxxi. 3*. God's knowing his people is the same with his owning them, *Ps. i. 6*; *Jno. x. 14*; 2 *Tim. ii. 19*; see *ch. xi. 2*. Words of knowledge often in Scripture denote affection; so here, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God," 1 *Pet. i. 2*. And the same word is rendered fore-ordained, 1 *Pet. i. 20*. "Whom he did foreknow," that is, whom he designed for his friends and favourites. "I know thee by name," said God to Moses, *Ex. xxxiii. 12*. Now those whom God thus foreknew he did predestinate to be conformed to Christ. 1. Holiness consists in our conformity to the image of Christ. This takes in the whole of sanctification, of which Christ is the great pattern and sampler. To be spirited as Christ was to walk and live as Christ did, to bear our sufferings patiently as Christ did. Christ is the express image of his Father, and the saints are conformed to the image of Christ. Thus it is by the mediation and interposal of Christ that we have God's love restored to us and God's likeness renewed upon us, in which two things consist the happiness of man. 2. All that God hath from eternity foreknown with favour he hath predestinated to this conformity. It is not we that can conform ourselves to Christ. Our giving ourselves to Christ takes rise in God's giving us to him; and, in giving us to him, he predestinated us to be conformable to his image. It is a mere cavil, therefore, to call the doctrine of election a licentious doctrine, and to argue that it gives encouragement to sin, as if the end were separated from the way and happiness from holiness. None can know their election but by their conformity to the image of Christ; for all that are chosen are chosen to sanctification, 2 *Thes. ii. 13*; and surely it cannot be a temptation to any to be conformed to the world to believe that they were predestinated to be conformed to Christ. 3. That which is herein chiefly designed is the honour of Jesus Christ, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren; that is, that Christ might have the honour of being the great pattern, as well as the great prince, and in this, as in other things, might have pre-eminence. It was in the firstborn that all the children were dedicated to God under the law. The firstborn was the head of the family, on whom all the rest did depend; now in the family of the saints Christ must have the honour of being the firstborn. And blessed be God that there are many brethren, though they seem but a few in one place at one time, yet, when they come all together, they will be a great many. There is, therefore, a certain number predestinated, that the end of Christ's undertaking might be infallibly secured. Had the event been left at uncertainties in the Divine counsels, to depend upon the contingent turn of man's will, Christ might have been the firstborn among but few or no brethren—a captain without soldiers, and a prince without subjects—to prevent which, and to secure to him many brethren, the decree is absolute, the thing ascertained; that he might be sure to

with Israel. He had "great sorrow and unceasing anguish" (so Alford renders verse 2) in his heart for Israel; and that sorrow owe I much of its keenness to the reflection that their fall and failure was in spite of rich privileges and opportunities. These he enumerates. "The adoption:" besides *Exod. iv. 22*, referred to in Commentary, compare *Deut. xxxii. 6*; *Jer. xxxi. 9*. "The glory:" generally referred to the Shekinah, or visible manifestation of God between the cherubim. In several passages the word "glory" is applied to it. (Compare

Exod. xvi. 10, *xiv. 16*, *xl. 34, 35*; 1 *Sam. iv. 22*; 1 *Kings viii. 11*.) "The covenants:" the word so translated signifies a disposition or disposal of anything, e.g., by deed or will. It is rendered "testament" in *Heb. ix. 15–22*, and where the notion of a last will and testament seems to be present to the apostle's mind. Elsewhere it is used as equivalent to the Hebrew word signifying a compact or agreement. Here it is to be understood, not of the tables of the law, nor of the Old and New Testaments, but of the several renewals to Abraham,

see his seed, there is a remnant predestinated to be conformed to his image, which decree will certainly have its accomplishment in the holiness and happiness of that chosen race; and so, in spite of all the opposition of the powers of darkness, Christ will be the firstborn among many, very many brethren.

Secondly, "Whom he did predestinate those he also called," not only with the external call, (so many are called that were not chosen, *Mat. xx. 16; xxii. 14.*) but with the internal and effectual call. The former comes to the ear only, but this to the heart. All that God did from eternity predestinate to grace and glory he does, in the fullness of time, effectually call. The call is then effectual when we come at the call; and we then come at the call when the Spirit draws us, convicts the conscience of guilt and wrath, enlightens the understanding, bows the will, persuades and enables us to embrace Christ in the promises, makes us willing in the day of his power. It is an effectual call from self and earth to God, and Christ, and heaven, as our end—from sin and vanity to grace, and holiness, and seriousness as our way. This is the gospel call. "Them he called," that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand; we are called to that to which we were chosen. So that the only way to make our election sure is to make sure our calling, *2 Pet. i. 10.*

Thirdly, "Whom he called those he also justified." All that are effectually called are justified, absolved from guilt, and accepted as righteous through Jesus Christ. They are *recti in curia*,—"right in court;" no sin that ever they have been guilty of shall come against them, to condemn them. The book is crossed, the bond cancelled, the judgment vacated, the attainder reversed; and they are no longer dealt with as criminals, but owned and loved as friends and favourites. Blessed is the man whose iniquity is thus forgiven. None are thus justified but those that are effectually called. Those that stand it out against the gospel call abide under guilt and wrath.

Fourthly, "Whom he justified those he also glorified." The power of corruption being broken in effectual calling, and the guilt of sin removed in justification, all that which hinders is taken out of the way, and nothing can come between that soul and glory. Observe, It is spoken of as a thing done. "He glorified," because of the certainty of it; he "hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling." In the eternal glorification of all the elect, God's design of love has its full accomplishment. This was what he aimed at all along—to bring them to heaven. Nothing less than that glory would make up the fullness of his covenant relation to them as God; and therefore, in all he does for them, and in them, he has this in his eye. Are they chosen? It is to salvation. Called? It is to his kingdom and glory. Begotten again? It is to an inheritance incorruptible. Afflicted? It is to work for them this exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Observe, The author of all these is the same. It is God himself that predestinated, calleth, justifieth, glorifieth; so "the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." Created wills are so very fickle, and created powers so very feeble, that, if any of these did depend upon the creature, the whole would shake. But God himself hath undertaken the doing of it from first to last, that we might abide in a constant dependence upon him and subjection to him, and ascribe all the praise to him—that every crown may be cast before the throne. This is a mighty encouragement to our faith and hope; for, as for God, his way, his work, is perfect. He that hath laid the foundation will build upon it, and the top-stone will at length be brought forth with shoutings, and it will be our eternal work to cry, Grace, grace to it.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The apostle closes this excellent discourse upon the privileges of believers with a holy triumph in the name of all the saints. Having largely set forth the mystery of God's love to us in Christ, and the exceeding great and precious privileges we enjoy by him, he concludes like an orator; "What shall we then say to these things?" What use shall we make of all that has been said? He speaks as one amazed and swallowed up with the contemplation and admiration of it, wondering at the height and depth, and length and breadth, of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. The more we know of other things the less we wonder at them; but the farther we are led into an acquaintance with gospel mysteries the more we are affected with the admiration of them. If Paul was at a loss what to say to these things, no marvel if we be. And what does he say? Why, if ever Paul rode in a triumphant chariot on this side heaven, here it was; with such a holy height and bravery of spirit, with such a fluency and copiousness of expression, does he here comfort himself and all the people of God upon the consideration of these privileges. In general, he here makes a challenge, throws down the gauntlet, as it were, dares all the enemies of the saints to do their worst; "If God be for us, who

can be against us?" The ground of the challenge is God's being for us; in this he sums up all our privileges. This includes all, that God is for us; not only reconciled to us, and so not against us, but in covenant with us, and so engaged for us—all his attributes for us, his promises for us. All that he is, and has, and does, is for his people. He performs all things for them. He is for them, even when he seems to act against them. And, if so, "who can be against us," so as to prevail against us, so as to hinder our happiness? Be they ever so great and strong, ever so many, ever so mighty, ever so malicious, what can they do? While God is for us, and we keep in his love, we may with a holy boldness defy all the powers of darkness. Let Satan do his worst, he is chained; let the world do its worst, it is conquered; principalities and powers are spoiled and disarmed, and triumphed over, in the cross of Christ. Who then dares fight against us, while God himself is fighting for us? And this we say to these things, this is the inference we draw from these premises. More particularly,

First. We have supplies ready in all our wants, *ver. 32.* "He that spared," &c. Who can be against us, to strip us, to deprive us of our comforts? Who can cut off our streams while we have a fountain to go to? 1. Observe what God has done for us, on which our hopes are built. "He spared not his own Son." When he was to undertake our salvation, the Father was willing to part with him, did not think him too precious a gift to bestow for the salvation of poor souls; now we may know that he loves us, in that he hath not withheld his Son, his only Son, from us, as he said of Abraham, *Gen. xxii. 12.* If nothing less will save man, rather than man shall perish let him go, though it were out of his bosom. Thus did he deliver him up for us all; that is, for all the elect; for us all, not only for our good, but in our stead, as a sacrifice or atonement to be a propitiation for sin. When he had undertaken it he did not spare him. Though he was his own Son, yet, being made sin for us, it pleased the Lord to bruise him. *Ὁὐκ ἐπέλατο*, "he did not abate" him a farthing of that great debt, but charged it home. "Awake, O sword." He did not spare his own Son that served him, that he might spare us, though we have done him so much disservice. 2. What we may therefore expect he will do. He will "with him freely give us all things." 1st. It is implied that he will give us Christ, for other things are bestowed with him; not only with him given for us, but with him given to us. He that puts himself to so much charge to make the purchase for us surely will not hesitate at making the application to us. 2nd. He will with him freely give us all things, all things that he sees to be needful and necessary for us, all good things, and more we should not desire, *Ps. xxiv. 10.* And Infinite Wisdom shall be the judge whether it be good for us and needful for us or no. "Freely give"—freely, without reluctance; he is ready to give, meets us with his favours;—and freely, without recompence, without money, and without price. "How shall he not?" Can it be imagined that he should do the greater, and not do the less; that he should give so great a gift for us when we were enemies, and should deny us any good thing, now that through him we are friends and children? Thus may we by faith argue against our fears of want. He that hath prepared a crown and kingdom for us will be sure to give us enough to bear our charges in the way to it. He that hath designed us for the inheritance of sons when we come to age will not let us want necessities in the meantime.

Secondly. We have an answer ready to all accusations, and a security against all condemnations, *ver. 33, 34.* "Who shall lay any thing?" Doth the law accuse them? Do their own consciences accuse them? Is the devil, the accuser of the brethren, accusing them before our God day and night? This is enough to answer all those accusations, "It is God that justifieth." Men may justify themselves, as the Pharisees did, and yet the accusations may be in full force against them; but if God justifies, this answers all. He is the judge, the king, the party offended, and his judgment is according to truth, and sooner or later all the world will be brought to be of his mind; so that we may challenge all our accusers to come and put in their charge. This overthrows them all; it is God, the righteous faithful God, that justifieth. "Who is he that condemneth?" Though they cannot make good the charge, yet they will be ready to condemn; but we have a plea ready to move in arrest of judgment, a plea which cannot be overruled. "It is Christ that died," &c. It is by virtue of our interest in Christ, our relation to him, and our union with him, that we are thus secured. 1. His death. "It is Christ that died." By the merit of his death he paid our debt; and the surety's payment is a good plea to an action of debt. It is Christ, an able all-sufficient Saviour. 2. His resurrection. "Yea, rather, that has risen again." This is a much greater encouragement, for it is a convincing evidence that Divine justice was satisfied by the merit of his death. His resurrection was his acquittance, it was a legal discharge. Therefore the apostle mentions it with a Yea, rather. If he had died, and not risen again, we had been where we were. 3. His sitting at the right hand of God. He "is even at the right hand of God"—a further evidence that he has done his work, and a mighty encouragement to us in reference to all accusations, that we have a friend, such a friend, in court. "At the right hand of God" which denotes that he is ready there—always at hand; and that he is ruling there—all power is given to him. Our friend is himself the judge. 4. The intercession which he makes there. He is there, not unconcerned about us, not forgetful of us, but making intercession. He is agent for us there, an advocate for us, to answer all accusations, to put in our plea, and to prosecute it with effect, to appear for us and to present our petitions. And is not this abundant matter for comfort? What shall we say to these things? Is this the manner of men, O Lord God? What room is left for doubting and disquietment? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Some understand the accusation and condemnation here spoken of of that which the suffering saints met with from men. The primitive Christians had many black crimes laid to their charge—heresy, sedition, rebellion, and what not? For these the ruling powers condemned them. "But no matter for that," says the apostle, "while we stand right at God's bar it is of no great moment how we stand at men's." To all the hard censures, the malicious calumnies, and the unjust and unrighteous sentences of men, we may with comfort oppose our justification before God through Christ Jesus as that which doth abundantly countervail, *1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.*

Thirdly. We have good assurance of our preservation and continuance in this blessed state, *v. 35, to the end.* The fears of the saints lest they should lose their hold of Christ are often very discouraging and disquieting, and create them a great deal of disturbance; but here is that which may silence their fears, and still such storms, that nothing can separate them. We have here from the apostle,

1. A daring challenge to all the enemies of the saints to separate them, if they could, from the love of Christ. "Who shall?" None shall, *ver. 35–37.* God having manifested his love in giving his own Son for us, and not hesitating at that, can we imagine that any thing else should divert or dissolve that love? Observe here,

1st. The present calamities of Christ's beloved ones supposed; that they meet with tribulation on all hands, are in distress, know not which way to look for any succour and relief in this world, are followed with persecution from an angry malicious world that always hated those whom Christ loved, pinched with famine, and starved with nakedness, when stripped of all crea-

Isaac, and Jacob of the first great promise made to Abraham when he forsook his own country. (Compare *Gen. xii. 1–3, xiii. 14–17, xv. 21, xvii. 1–22, xxii. 15–18, xxxv. 9–12, xli. 3, 4.*) "The giving of the law;" the word implies more than the act of giving the law; it includes the law so given. Vaughan renders "the legislation." There is, no doubt, allusion to the sublime circumstances which attended the giving of the law. (Compare *Deut. iv. 7–14, 32–36; Acts vii. 53.*) "The service of God;" better supply, as Alford

does, "of the sanctuary." The allusion is to the whole ceremonial system. (Compare *Heb. ix. 1–6.*) "The fathers;" Alford is disposed to limit the reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Compare *Acts iii. 13, 25; Deut. i. 8.*)

ix. 6–13. "Taken none effect;" better, "fallen to the ground." This preserves the metaphor. There has been no failure in God's promise; for from the very first it was shown that God's purpose was not to include all the descendants of Abraham, but to choose only a

ture comforts, exposed to the greatest perils, the sword of the magistrate drawn against them, ready to be sheathed in their bowels, bathed in their blood. Can a case be supposed more black and dismal? It is illustrated, ver. 36, by a passage quoted from *Ps. xlv. 22*, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long," which intimates that we are not to think strange, no, not concerning the fiery bloody trial. We see the Old Testament saints had the same lot; so persecuted they the prophets that were before us. "Killed all the day long;" that is, continually exposed to and expecting the fatal stroke. There is still every day, and all the day long, one or other of the people of God bleeding and dying under the rage of persecuting enemies. "Accounted as sheep for the slaughter;" they make no more of killing a Christian than of butchering a sheep. Sheep are killed, not because they are hurtful while they live, but because they are useful when they are dead. They kill the Christians to please themselves, to be food to their malice. "They eat up my people as they eat bread" *Ps. xiv. 4*.

2nd. The inability of all these things to separate us from the love of Christ. Shall they, can they, do it? No, by no means. All this will not cut the bond of the love and friendship that is between Christ and true believers. *First*. Christ doth not, will not, love us the less for all this. All these troubles are very consistent with the strong and constant love of the Lord Jesus. They are neither a cause nor an evidence of the abatement of his love. When Paul was whipped, and beaten, and imprisoned, and stoned, did Christ love him ever the less? Were his favours intermitted? his smiles any whit suspended? his visits more shy? By no means, but the contrary. These things separate us from the love of other friends. When Paul was brought before Nero all men forsook him, but then the Lord stood by him, *2 Tim. iv. 16, 17*. Whatever persecuting enemies may rob us of, they cannot rob us of the love of Christ, they cannot intercept his love-tokens, they cannot interrupt nor exclude his visits; and therefore let them do their worst, they cannot make a true believer miserable. *Secondly*. We do not, will not, love him the less for this; and that for this reason, because we do not think that he loves us the less. Charity thinks no evil, entertains no misgiving thoughts, makes no hard conclusions, no unkind constructions, takes all in good part that comes from love. A true Christian loves Christ never the less though he suffer for him, thinks never the worse of Christ though he lose all for him.

3rd. The triumph of believers in this; ver. 37, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors." *First*. We are conquerors; though killed all the day long, yet conquerors. A strange way of conquering, but it was Christ's way; thus he triumphed over principalities and powers in his cross. It is a surer and a nobler way of conquest by faith and patience than by fire and sword. The enemies have sometimes confessed themselves baffled and overcome by the invincible courage and constancy of the martyrs, who thus overcame the most victorious princes by not loving their lives to the death, *Rev. xii. 11*. *Secondly*. We are more than conquerors. In our patiently bearing these trials we are not only conquerors, but more than conquerors, that is, triumphers. Those are more than conquerors that conquer, *1st*. With little loss. Many conquests are dearly bought; but what do the suffering saints lose? Why, they lose that which the gold loses in the furnace, nothing but the dross. It is no great loss to lose things which are not—a body that is of the earth, earthy. *2nd*. With great gain. The spoils are exceedingly rich; glory, honour, and peace, a crown of righteousness that fades not away. In this the suffering saints have triumphed; not only have not been separated from the love of Christ, but have been taken into the most sensible endearments and embraces of it. As afflictions abound, consolations much more abound, *2 Cor. i. 5*. There is one more than a conqueror, when pressed above measure. He that embraced the stake, and said, "Welcome the cross of Christ, welcome everlasting life," he that dated his letter from the delectable orchard of the Leonine prison; he that said, "In these flames I feel no more pain than if I were upon a bed of down;" she who, a little before her martyrdom, being asked how she did, said, "Well and merry, and going to heaven;" those that have gone smiling to the stake, and stood singing in the flames;—these were more than conquerors. *Thirdly*. It is only "through Christ that loved us," the merit of his death taking the sting out of all these troubles, the Spirit of his grace strengthening us, and enabling us to bear them with holy courage and constancy, and coming in with special comforts and supports. Thus we are conquerors, not in our own strength, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. We are conquerors by virtue of our interest in Christ's victory. He hath overcome the world for us, *John. xvi. 33*, both the good things and the evil things of it; so that we have nothing to do but to pursue the victory, and to divide the spoil, and so are more than conquerors.

2. A direct and positive conclusion of the whole matter: "For I am persuaded," ver. 38, 39. It denotes a full, and strong, and affectionate persuasion, arising from the experience of the strength and sweetness of the Divine love. And here he enumerates all those things which might be supposed likely to separate between Christ and believers, and concludes that it could not be done.

1st. "Neither death nor life," neither the terrors of death on the one hand, nor the comforts, and pleasures of life on the other, neither the fear of death nor the hope of life. Or, We shall not be separated from that love either in death or in life.

2nd. "Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers." Both the good angels and the bad are called principalities and powers: the good, *Eph. i. 21*; *Col. i. 19*; the bad, *Eph. vi. 12*; *Col. ii. 15*. And neither shall do it. The good angels will not, the bad shall not; and neither can. The good angels are engaged friends, the bad are restrained enemies.

3rd. "Nor things present, nor things to come;" neither the sense of troubles present nor the fear of troubles to come. Time shall not separate us, eternity shall not. Things present separate us from things to come, and things to come separate and cut us off from things present; but neither from the love of Christ, whose favour is twisted in with both present things and things to come.

4th. "Nor height, nor depth;" neither the height of prosperity and preferment, nor the depth of adversity and disgrace; nothing from heaven above, no storms, no tempests; nothing on earth below, no rocks, no seas, no dungeons.

5th. "Nor any other creature;" any thing that can be named or thought of. It will not, it cannot, separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It cannot cut off or impair our love to God, or God's to us; nothing does it, can do it, but sin. Observe, The love that exists between God and true believers is through Christ. He is the Mediator of our love; it is in and through him that God can love us and that we dare love God. This is the ground of the steadfastness of the love; therefore God rests in his love, *Zeph. iii. 17*, because Jesus Christ, in whom he loves us, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Mr. Hugh Kennedy, an eminent Christian, of Ayr, in Scotland, when he was dying called for a Bible; but finding his sight gone, he said, "Turn me to the 8th of the *Romans*, and set my finger at these words, 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life,' &c. Now," said he, "is my finger upon them?" And, when they told him it was, without speaking any more, he said, "Now, God be with you, my children; I have breakfasted with you, and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night;" and so departed.

portion, e.g., Sarah's son, not Hagar's, and afterwards one out of the two sons of Rebecca. In the selection of these two cases as illustrative of God's purpose, it is worth noting that the parentage does not influence the selection. Of two sons of Abraham, one is chosen, the other not; and even when, as in the case of Jacob and Esau, the children were of the same mother as well as father, the selection was made. It is well noted by Dr. Vaughan that nothing is here said of the final destiny of either brother; that was shaped by the spirit and

CHAPTER IX.

The apostle, having plainly asserted and largely proved, that justification and salvation are to be had by faith only, and not by the works of the law, by Christ and not by Moses, comes in this and the following chapters to anticipate an objection which might be made against this. If this be so, then what becomes of the Jews, of them all as a complex body, especially those of them that do not embrace Christ, nor believe the gospel? By this rule they must needs come short of happiness; and then what becomes of the promise made to the fathers, which entailed salvation upon the Jews? Is not that promise nullified and made of none effect? Which is not a thing to be imagined concerning any word of God. That doctrine therefore, might they say, is not to be embraced, from which flows such a consequence as this. That the consequence of the rejection of the unbelieving Jews follows from Paul's doctrine he grants, but endeavours to soften and mollify, ver. 1—5. But that from this it follows that the word of God takes no effect he denies, ver. 6, and proves the denial in the rest of the chapter, which serves likewise to illustrate the great doctrine of predestination, which he had spoken of, *ch. viii. 28*, as the first wheel which in the business of salvation sets all the other wheels agoing.



SAY the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, 2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: 4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; 5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

We have here the apostle's solemn profession of a great concern for the nation and people of the Jews—that he was heartily troubled that so many of them were enemies to the Gospel, and out of the way of salvation. For this he had "great heaviness and continual sorrow." Such a profession as this was requisite to take off the odium which otherwise he might have contracted by asserting and proving their rejection. It is wisdom, as much as may be, to mollify those truths which sound harshly and seem unpleasant. Dip the nail in oil, it will drive the better. The Jews had a particular pique at Paul, above any of the apostles, as appears by the history of the *Acts*, and therefore were the more apt to take things amiss of him, to prevent which he introduces his discourse with this tender and affectionate profession, that they might not think he triumphed or insulted over the rejected Jews, or was pleased with the calamities that were coming upon them. Thus Jeremiah appeals to God concerning the Jews of his day, whose ruin was hastening on, *Jer. xvii. 16*, "Neither have I desired the woful day, thou knowest." Nay, Paul was so far from desiring it, that he most pathetically deprecates it. And, lest this should be thought only a copy of his countenance, to flatter and please them,

First. He asserts it with a solemn protestation; ver. 1, "I say the truth in Christ." "I speak it as a Christian, one of God's people, children that will not lie, as one that knows not how to give flattering titles." Or, "I appeal to Christ, who searches the heart, concerning it." He appeals likewise to his own conscience, which was instead of a thousand witnesses. That which he was going to assert was not only a great and weighty thing, (such solemn protestations are not to be thrown away upon trifles,) but it was likewise a secret; it was concerning a sorrow in his heart, to which none was a capable, competent witness, but God and his own conscience.—"That I have great heaviness," ver. 2. He does not say for what; the very mention of it was unpleasant and invidious; but it is plain that he means for the rejection of the Jews.

Secondly. He backs it with a very serious imprecation, which he was ready to make out of love to the Jews. "I could wish;" he does not say, I do wish, for it was no proper means appointed for such an end; but, if it were, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren;" a very high pang of zeal and affection for his countrymen. He would be willing to undergo the greatest misery to do them good. Love is apt to be thus bold, and venturesome, and self-denying. Because the glory of God's grace in the salvation of many is to be preferred before the welfare and happiness of a single person, Paul, if they were put in competition, would be content to forego all his own happiness to purchase theirs. 1. He would be content to be cut off from the land of the living, in the most shameful and ignominious manner, as an anathema, or a devoted person. They thirsted for his blood, persecuted him as the most obnoxious person in the world, the curse and plague of his generation, *1 Cor. iv. 13*; *Acts xxii. 22*. "Now," says Paul, "I am willing to bear all this, and a great deal more, for your good. Abuse me as much as you will, count and call me at your pleasure; your unbelief and rejection create in my heart a heaviness so much greater than all these troubles can that I could look upon them not only as tolerable, but as desirable, rather than this rejection." 2. He would be content to be excommunicated from the society of the faithful, to be separated from the church, and from the communion of saints, as a heathen man and a publican, if that would do them any good. He could wish himself no more remembered among the saints, his name blotted out of the church records; though he had been so great a planter of churches, and the spiritual father of so many thousands, yet he would be content to be disowned by the church, cut off from all communion with it, and have his name buried in oblivion or reproach, for the good of the Jews. It may be, some of the Jews had a prejudice against Christianity for Paul's sake; such a spleen they had at him that they hated the religion he was of: "If this stumble you," says Paul, "I could wish I might be cast out, not embraced as a Christian, so you might not be taken in." Thus Moses, (*Ex. xxxii. 32*) in a like holy passion of concern, "Blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written." 3. Nay, some think

conduct of each: what is spoken of here is the position of the one, and not of the other, as the depository of the promise to Abraham.

ix. 14—24. "What shall we say then?" "What inference shall we draw? Is there injustice with God in the bestowal of his gifts?" The difficulties of this passage turn upon the necessary conditions of human thought. They do not belong to this doctrine alone, nor are they found in Scripture only, but in every consistent belief in an almighty and all-knowing God. Verse 24 Alford renders,

that the expression goes farther, and that he could be content to be cut off from all his share of happiness in Christ, if that might be a means of their salvation. It is a common charity that begins at home; this is something higher, and more noble and generous.

Thirdly. He gives us the reason of this affection and concern.

1. Because of their relation to them; "My brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh." Though they were very bitter against him upon all occasions, and gave him the most unnatural and barbarous usage, yet thus respectfully does he speak of them. It shews him to be a man of a forgiving spirit. "Not that I had aught to accuse my nation of," *Acts xviii. 19.* "My kinsmen." Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. We ought to be in a special manner concerned for the spiritual good of our relations, our brethren, and kinsmen. To them we lie under special engagements, and we have more opportunity of doing good to them; and concerning them, and our usefulness to them, we must in a special manner give account.

2. Especially because of their relation to God; ver. 4, 5, "Who are Israelites," the seed of Abraham, God's friend, and of Jacob his chosen, taken into the covenant of peculiarity, dignified and distinguished by visible church privileges, many of which are here mentioned: 1st. "The adoption;" not that which is saving, and which entitles to eternal happiness, but that which was external and typical, and entitled them to the land of Canaan. "Israel is my son," *Ex. iv. 22.* 2nd. "And the glory;" the ark with the mercy-seat, over which God dwelt between the cherubim—this was the glory of Israel, *1 Sam. iv. 21.* The many symbols and tokens of the Divine presence and guidance, the cloud, the Shechinah, the distinguishing favours conferred upon them—these were the glory. 3rd. "And the covenants;" the covenant made with Abraham, and often renewed with his seed upon divers occasions. There was a covenant at Sinai, *Ex. xxiv.*; in the plains of Moab, *Deu. xxix.*; at Shechem, *Jos. xxiv.*, and often afterwards; and still these pertained to Israel. Or, the covenant of peculiarity, and in that, as in the type, the covenant of grace. 4th. "And the giving of the law." It was to them that the ceremonial and judicial law were given, and the moral law in writing pertained to them. It is a great privilege to have the law of God among us, and it is to be accounted so, *Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20.* This was the grandeur of Israel, *Deu. iv. 7, 8.* 5th. "And the service of God." They had the ordinances of God's worship among them—the temple, the altars, the priests, the sacrifices, the feasts, and the institutions relating to them. They were in this respect greatly honoured, that while other nations were worshipping and serving stocks, and stones, and devils, and they knew not what other idols of their own invention, the Israelites were serving the true God in the way of his own appointment. 6th. "And the promises"—particular promises added to the general covenant; promises relating to the Messiah and the gospel state. Observe, The promises accompany the giving of the law, and the service of God; for the comfort of the promises is to be had in obedience to that law, and attendance upon that service. 7th. "Whose are the fathers," ver. 5; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, those men of renown, that stood so high in the favour of God. The Jews stand in relation to them, are their children, and proud enough they are of it: "We have Abraham to our father." It was for the father's sake that they were taken into covenant, *ch. xi. 28.* 8th. But the greatest honour of all was that of them "as concerning the flesh" (that is, as to his human nature) "Christ came;" for he took on him the seed of Abraham, *Heb. ii. 16.* As to his Divine nature, he is the Lord from heaven; but, as to his human nature, he is of the seed of Abraham. This was the great privilege of the Jews, that Christ was of kin to them. Mentioning Christ, he interposes a very great word concerning him, that he "is over all, God blessed for ever." Lest the Jews should think meanly of him, because he was of their alliance, he here speaks thus honourably concerning him; and it is a very full proof of the Godhead of Christ; he is not only over all, as Mediator, but he is God blessed for ever. Therefore, how much sorer punishment were they worthy of that rejected him! It was likewise the honour of the Jews, and one reason why Paul had a kindness for them, that seeing God blessed for ever would be a man, he would be a Jew; and, considering the posture and character of that people at that time, it may well be looked upon as a part of his humiliation.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: 7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. 9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. 10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; 11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

The apostle having made his way to that which he had to say concerning the rejection of the body of his countrymen, with a protestation of his own affection for them, and a concession of their undoubted privileges, comes in these verses, and the following part of the chapter, to prove that the rejection of the Jews, by the establishment of the Gospel dispensation, did not at all invalidate the word of God's promise to the patriarchs: "Not as though the word of God hath taken no effect," ver. 6, which, considering the present state of the Jews, which created to Paul so much heaviness and continual sorrow, ver. 2, might be suspected. We are not to ascribe inefficacy to any word of God; nothing that he has spoken does or can fall to the ground: see *Isa. lv. 10, 11.* The promises and threatenings shall have their accomplishment; and, one way or other, he will magnify the law and make it honourable. This is to be under-

stood especially of the promise of God, which by subsequent providences may be to a wavering faith very doubtful; but it is not, it cannot be, made of no effect; at the end it will speak and not lie. Now the difficulty is to reconcile the rejection of the unbelieving Jews with the word of God's promise, and the external tokens of the Divine favour, which had been conferred upon them. This he does in four ways: 1. By explaining the true meaning and intention of the promise, ver. 6-13. 2. By asserting and proving the absolute sovereignty of God, in disposing of the children of men, ver. 14-24. 3. By shewing how this rejection of the Jews, and the taking in of the Gentiles, were foretold in the Old Testament, ver. 25-29. 4. By fixing the true reason of the Jews' rejection, ver. 30, to the end.

In this paragraph the apostle explains the true meaning and intention of the promise. When we mistake the word, and misunderstand the promise, we marvel if we are ready to quarrel with God about the accomplishment; and therefore the sense of this must first be duly stated. Now he here makes it out that when God said he would be "a God to Abraham, and to his seed," (which was the famous promise made unto the fathers,) he did not mean it of all his seed according to the flesh, as if it were a necessary concomitant of the blood of Abraham; but that he intended it with a limitation only to such and such. And as from the beginning it was appropriated to Isaac and not to Ishmael, to Jacob and not to Esau, and yet for all this the word of God was not made of no effect; so now the same promise is appropriated to believing Jews that embrace Christ and Christianity, and though it throws off multitudes that refuse Christ, yet the promise is not therefore defeated and invalidated, any more than it was by the typical rejection of Ishmael and Esau.

First. He lays down this proposition, that "They are not all Israel who are of Israel," ver. 6, "neither because they are," &c., ver. 7. Many that descended from the loins of Abraham and Jacob, and were of that people who were surnamed by the name of Israel, yet were very far from being Israelites indeed, interested in the saving benefits of the new covenant. They are not all really Israel that are so in name and profession. It does not follow that because they are the seed of Abraham, therefore they must needs be the children of God, though they themselves fancied so, boasted much of, and built much upon, their relation to Abraham, *Mat. iii. 9; Jno. viii. 38, 39.* But it does not follow. Grace does not run in the blood; nor are saving benefits inseparably annexed to external church privileges, though it is common for people thus to stretch the meaning of God's promise, to bolster themselves up in a vain hope.

Secondly. He proves this by instances; and therein shews not only that some of Abraham's seed were chosen, and others not, but that God therein wrought according to the counsel of his own will; and not with regard to that law of commandments to which the present unbelieving Jews were so strangely wedded.

1. He specifies the case of Isaac and Ishmael, both of them the seed of Abraham; and yet Isaac only taken into covenant with God, and Ishmael rejected and cast out. For this he quotes, *Gen. xxi. 12.* "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," which comes in there as a reason why Abraham must be willing to cast out the bondwoman and her son, because the covenant was to be established with Isaac, *Gen. xvii. 19.* And yet the word which God had spoken, that he would be a God to Abraham and to his seed, did not therefore fall to the ground; for the blessings wrapt up in that great word, being communicated by God as a benefactor, he was free to determine on what head they should rest, and accordingly entailed them upon Isaac, and rejected Ishmael. This he explains farther, ver. 8, 9, and shows what God intended to teach us by this dispensation. 1st. That the children of the flesh, as such, by virtue of their relation to Abraham according to the flesh, are not therefore the children of God, for then Ishmael had put in a good claim. This remark comes home to the unbelieving Jews, who boasted of their relation to Abraham according to the flesh, and looked for justification in a fleshly way, by those carnal ordinances which Christ had abolished. They had confidence in the flesh, *Phil. iii. 3.* Ishmael was a child of the flesh, conceived by Hagar, who was young and fresh, and likely enough to have children. There was nothing extraordinary or supernatural in his conception, as there was in Isaac's; he was born after the flesh, *Gal. iv. 29,* representing those that expect justification and salvation by their own strength and righteousness. 2nd. That "the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Those that have the honour and happiness of being counted for the seed have it not for the sake of any merit or desert of their own, but purely by virtue of the promise, in which God hath obliged himself of his own good pleasure to grant the promised favour. Isaac was a child of promise; this he proves, ver. 9, quoted from *Gen. xviii. 10.* He was a child promised, so were many others, and he was also conceived and born by force and virtue of the promise, and so a proper type and figure of those who are now counted for the seed, even true believers, who are born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God—of the incorruptible seed, even the word of promise, by virtue of the special promise of a new heart: see *Gal. iv. 28.* It was through faith that Isaac was conceived, *Heb. xi. 11.* Thus were the great mysteries of salvation taught under the Old Testament, not in express words, but by significant types and dispensations of providence, which to them then were not so clear as they are to us now, when the veil is taken away, and the types are expounded by the antitypes.

2. The case of Jacob and Esau, ver. 10-13, which is much stronger, to shew that the carnal seed of Abraham were not, as such, interested in the promise, but only such of them as God in sovereignty had appointed. There was a previous difference between Ishmael and Isaac before Ishmael was cast out. Ishmael was the son of the bondwoman, born long before Isaac, was of a fierce and rugged disposition, and had mocked or persecuted Isaac, to all which it might be supposed God had regard when he appointed Abraham to cast him out. But in the case of Jacob and Esau it was neither so nor so; they were both the sons of Isaac by one mother; they were conceived *ἐκ ἑνός*,—by one conception; *ἐκ ἑνός κοίτου*, so some copies read it. The difference was made between them by the Divine counsel before they were born, or had done any good or evil. Both lay struggling alike in their mother's womb, when it was said "the elder shall serve the younger," without respect to good or bad works done or foreseen, "that the purpose of God according to election might stand"—that this great truth may be established, that God chooses some and refuses others as a free agent, by his own absolute and sovereign will, dispensing his favours or withholding them as he pleases. This difference that was put between Jacob and Esau he farther illustrates by a quotation from *Mal. i. 2, 3,* where it is said, not of Jacob and Esau the persons, but the Edomites and Israelites their posterity, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated."

[This does not mean any positive hatred; but that he had preferred Jacob, and had withheld from Esau those privileges and blessings which he had conferred on the posterity of Jacob. This is explained in *Mal. i. 3.* "And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness;" compare *Jer. xlix. 17, 18; Eze. xxxv. 3.* It was common among the Hebrews to use the terms love and hatred in this comparative sense, where the former implied strong positive attachment, and the latter not positive hatred, but merely a less love, or the withholding of the expressions of affection: compare *Gen. xxix. 30, 31; Pr. xiii. 24; Mal. vi. 24; Lu. xiv. 26.—A. B.]*

The people of Israel were taken into the covenant of peculiarity, had the

"Who he also called, even us, not from among the Jews only, but also from among the Gentiles."

x. 3. "Ignorant of God's righteousness," &c.: Alford renders, "Not knowing God's righteousness, and seeking to set up their own righteousness," &c. "God's righteousness:" not the personal righteousness of God, but, as is clear from verse 4 ("righteousness to every one that believeth"), the Divine gift of righteousness. (See Note on chap. i. 17.)

x. 4. "Christ the end of the law:" the article is not expressed in the original before "end" or "law." Hence St. Paul says more than that Christ is the end of the Mosaic law. This, no doubt, is mainly in his mind; but he affirms of any law (e.g., law which Gentiles had, chap. ii. 14) that Christ is the end of it. The word "end" must be understood in a wide sense—aim or object, as well as fulfilment. Vaughan says "end" in all senses—that to which law points, and in which it finds its rest. (Compare our word "end," 1 Tim. i. 5.)

land of Canaan given them, were blessed with the more signal appearances of God for them in special protections, supplies, and deliverances, while the Edomites were rejected, had no temple, altar, priests, nor prophets—no such particular care taken of them, nor kindness shewn to them. Such a difference did God put between these two nations, that both descended from the loins of Abraham and Isaac, as at first there was a difference put between Jacob and Esau, the distinguishing heads of those two nations. So that all this choosing and refusing was typical, and intended to shadow forth some other election and rejection. 1st. Some understand it of the election and rejection of conditions or qualifications. As God chose Isaac and Jacob, and rejected Ishmael and Esau, so he might and did choose faith to be the condition of salvation, and reject the works of the law. Thus Arminius understands it, *De reiectis et assumptis talibus, certa qualitate notatis*,—concerning such as are rejected or such as are chosen, being distinguished by appropriate qualities; so John Goodwin. But this very much strains the Scripture; for the apostle speaks all along of persons, he has mercy on whom (he does not say, on what kind of people,) he will have mercy, besides that against this sense those two objections (ver. 14, 19) do not at all arise, and his answer to them concerning God's absolute sovereignty over the children of men is not at all pertinent if no more be meant than his appointing the conditions of salvation. 2nd. Others understand it of the election and rejection of particular persons—some loved, and others hated, from eternity. But the apostle speaks of Jacob and Esau, not in their own persons, but as ancestors—Jacob the people, and Esau the people: nor does God condemn any, or decree so to do, merely because he will do it, without any reason taken from their own deserts. 3rd. Others therefore understand it of the election and rejection of people considered complexly. In design is to justify God, and his mercy and truth in calling the Gentiles, and taking them into the church, and into covenant with himself, while he suffered the obstinate part of the Jews to persist in unbelief, and so to unchurch themselves—thus hiding from their eyes the things that belonged to their peace. The apostle's reasoning for the explication and proof of this is, however, very applicable to, and, no doubt, (as is usual in Scripture,) was intended for the clearing of the methods of God's grace towards particular persons, for the communication of saving benefits bears some analogy to the communication of church privileges. The choosing of Jacob the younger, and preferring him before Esau the elder, so crossing hands, were to intimate that the Jews, though the natural seed of Abraham, and the firstborn of the church, should be laid aside; and the Gentiles, who were as the younger brother, should be taken in in their stead, and have the birthright and blessing. The Jews, considered as a body politic, a nation and people, knit together by the bond and cement of the ceremonial law, the temple and priesthood, the centre of their unity, had for many ages been a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, dignified and distinguished by God's miraculous appearances among them and for them. Now that the Gospel was preached, and Christian churches were planted, this national body was thereby abandoned, their church polity dissolved; and Christian churches, and in process of time Christian nations, embodied in like manner become their successors in the Divine favour, and those special privileges and protections which were the products of that favour. To clear up the justice of God in this great dispensation is the scope of the apostle here.

[There is reference here to the whole train of temporal and spiritual blessings which were to be connected with the two races of people. If it be asked how this bears on the argument of the apostle, we may reply, 1. That it settles the principle that God might make a distinction among men, in the same nation, and in the same family, without reference to their works or character. 2. That he might confer his blessings on such as he pleased. 3. If this is done in regard to nations, it may be in regard to individuals. The principle is the same, and the justice the same. If it be supposed to be unjust in God to make such a distinction in regard to individuals, it is surely not less so to make a distinction in nations. The fact that numbers are thus favoured does not make it the more proper, or remove any difficulty. 4. If this distinction may be made in regard to temporal things, why not in regard to spiritual things? The principle must still be the same. If unjust in one case, it would be in the other. The fact that it is done in one case proves also that it will be in the other; for the same great principle will run through all the dealings of the Divine government. And as men do not and cannot complain that God makes a distinction among them in regard to talents, health, beauty, prosperity and rank, neither can they complain if he acts also as a sovereign in the distribution of his spiritual favours. They, therefore, who regard this as referring only to temporal and national privileges gain no relief in respect to the real difficulty in the case, for the unanswerable question would still be asked, Why has not God made all men equal in every thing? Why has he made any distinction among men? The only reply to all such inquiries is, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight," *Mat. xi. 26.—A. B.*]

14 What shall we say then? *Is there unrighteousness with God?* God forbid. 15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel

unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

The apostle, having asserted the true meaning of the promise, comes here to maintain and prove the absolute sovereignty of God in disposing of the children of men, with reference to their eternal state. And herein God is to be considered, not as a rector and governor, distributing rewards and punishments according to his revealed laws and covenants, but as an owner and benefactor, giving to the children of men such grace and favour as he has determined in and by his secret and eternal will and counsel; both the favour of visible church membership and privileges, which is given to some people and denied to others, and the favour of effectual grace, which is given to some particular persons and denied to others. Now this part of his discourse is in answer to two objections.

First. It might be objected, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" If God, in dealing with the children of men, do thus, in an arbitrary manner, choose some and refuse others, may it not be suspected that there is unrighteousness with him? This the apostle startles at the thought of; "God forbid!" Far be it from us to think such a thing; "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" *Gen. xviii. 25; ch. iii. 5, 6.* He denies the consequence, and proves the denial.

1. In respect of those to whom he shews mercy, ver. 15, 16. He quotes that Scripture to shew God's sovereignty in dispensing his favours, *Ex. xxxiii. 19*, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." All God's reasons of mercy are taken from within himself. All the children of men being plunged alike into a state of sin and misery, equally under guilt and wrath, God, in a way of sovereignty, picks out some from this fallen apostatized race to be vessels of grace and glory. He dispenses his gifts to whom he will, without giving us any reason; according to his own good pleasure he pitches upon some to be monuments of mercy and grace, preventing grace, effectual grace, while he passes by others. The expression is very emphatic, and the repetition makes it more so; "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." It imports a perfect absoluteness in God's will; he will do what he will, and giveth not account of any of his matters, nor is it fit he should. As these great words, "I am that I am," *Ex. iii. 14*, do abundantly express the absolute independency of his being, so these words, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," do as fully express the absolute prerogative and sovereignty of his will. To vindicate the righteousness of God, in shewing mercy to whom he will, the apostle appeals to that which God himself had spoken, wherein he claims this sovereign power and liberty. God is a competent judge, even in his own case. Whatsoever God does, or is resolved to do, is both by the one and the other proved to be just. *Ἐκείνου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνέναντον*,—"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." When I begin I will make an end. Therefore God's mercy endures for ever, because the reason of it is fetched from within himself: therefore his gifts and callings are without repentance. Hence he infers, ver. 16, "It is not of him that willeth." Whatever good comes from God to man the glory of it is not to be ascribed to the most generous desire, nor to the most industrious endeavour, of man, but only and purely to the free grace and mercy of God. In Jacob's case it was "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth;" it was not the earnest will and desire of Rebecca that Jacob might have the blessing; it was not Jacob's haste to get it, for he was compelled to run for it, that procured him the blessing, but only the mercy and grace of God. Wherein the holy, happy people of God differ from other people it is God and his grace that make them differ. Applying this general rule to the particular case that Paul has before him, the reason why the unworthy, the undeserving, ill-deserving Gentiles are called, and grafted into the church, while the greatest part of the Jews are left to perish in unbelief, is not because those Gentiles were better deserving or better disposed for such a favour, but because of God's free grace that made that difference. The Gentiles did neither will it nor run for it, for they sat in darkness, *Mat. iv. 16*. In darkness, therefore not willing what they knew not; sitting in darkness, a contented posture; therefore not running to meet it, but anticipated with these invaluable blessings of goodness. Such is the method of God's grace towards all that partake of it, for he is found of those that sought him not, *Isa. lxi. 1*; in this preventing, effectual, distinguishing grace, he acts as a benefactor, whose grace is his own. Our eye therefore must not be evil because his is good; but, of all the grace that we or others have, he must have the glory: "not unto us," *Ps. cxv. 1*.

["Nor of him that runneth." This denotes strenuous, intense effort, as when a man is anxious to obtain an object, or hastens from danger. The meaning is not that the sinner does not make an effort to be saved; nor that all who become Christians do not in fact strive to enter into the kingdom; or earnestly desire salvation, for the Scriptures teach the contrary, *Lu. xvi. 16; xiii. 24*. There is no effort more intense and persevering, no struggle more arduous or agonising, than when a sinner seeks eternal life. Nor does it mean that they who strive in a proper way, and with proper effort, shall not obtain eternal life, *Mat. vii. 7*. But the sense is, 1. That the sinner would not put forth any effort himself. If left to his own course he would never seek to be saved. 2. That he is pardoned, not on account of his effort, not because he makes an exertion, but because God chooses to pardon him. There is no merit in his anxiety, and prayers, and agony, on account of which God would forgive him; but he is still dependent on the mere mercy of God to save or destroy him at his will. The sinner, however anxious he may be, and however much or long he may strive, does not bring God under an obligation to pardon him any more than the condemned criminal trembling with the fear of execution, and the consciousness of crime, lays the judge or the jury under an obligation to acquit him. This fact it is of great importance for an awakened sinner to know. Deeply anxious he should be, but there is no merit in his distress. Pray he should, but there is no merit in his prayers. Weep and strive he may, but in this there is no ground of claim on God for pardon; and after all, he is dependent on his mere sovereign mercy, as a lost, ruined, and helpless sinner, to be saved or lost at his will.—A. B.]

2. In respect of those who perish, ver. 17. God's sovereignty, manifested in the ruin of sinners, is here discovered in the instance of Pharaoh; it is quoted from *Ex. ix. 16*. Observe, 1st. What God did with Pharaoh. He raised him up, brought him into the world, made him famous, gave him the kingdom and

x. 5. "For Moses describeth," &c.: the righteousness of the law was "do," that of the gospel is "trust." "Shall live by them:" rather, "the man which hath done them shall live in it," or "shall have life in it."

x. 6—11. The words quoted from Deuteronomy in these verses were used by Moses to describe the accessibility of the law. St. Paul "regarding Christ as the end of the law, quotes these words not merely as suiting his purpose, but bearing, as originally used,

an *à fortiori* application to faith in Him who is the end of the law" (Alford).

x. 12. This verse comes in support of the statement in verse 11, that "whosoever believeth," &c., "for there is no difference." Alford renders "distinction." "Rich unto all:" expressing "the direction in which the stream of grace gushes forth" (Olshausen).

x. 13. Introduces the Scripture proof (Joel ii. 32). "The name of the Lord:" Jehovah, but here used of Christ. Alford remarks on the

power,—set him up as a beacon upon a hill, as the mark of all his plagues [compare *Ex. ix. 14*]:—hardened his heart, as he had said he would, *Ex. iv. 21*, “I will harden his heart:” that is, withdrew softening grace, leave him to himself, let Satan loose against him, and lay a succession of providences before him. Or, by raising him up may be meant the permission of the plagues, which gave Pharaoh respite, and the reprieve of Pharaoh in those plagues. In the Hebrew, “I have made thee sinners, make them for himself, even for the living. Thus doth God raise up sinners, make them for himself, even for the day of evil, *Ps. xvi. 4*; raise them up in outward prosperity, external privileges, *Mat. xl. 23*, sparing mercies.” 2nd. What he designed in it. “That I might shew my power in thee.” God would, by all this, serve the honour of his name, and manifest his power in baffling the pride and insolence of that great and daring tyrant, who had defied to Heaven itself, and trampled upon all that was great and sacred. If Pharaoh had not been so high and mighty, so bold and hardy, the power of God had not been so illustrious in the ruining of him; but the taking off of the spirit of such a prince, who lifted up at that rate, did indeed proclaim God “glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders,” *Ex. xv. 11*. This is Pharaoh, and all his multitude. 3rd. His conclusion concerning both these we have, ver. 18, “He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.” The various dealings of God, by which he makes some to differ from others, must be resolved into his absolute sovereignty. He is debtor to no man, his grace is his own, and he may give it or withhold it as it pleaseth him; we have none of us deserved it, nay, we have all justly forfeited it a thousand times, so that herein the work of our salvation is admirably well ordered, that those who are saved must thank God only, and those who perish must thank themselves only, *Hos. xiii. 9*. We are bound, as God hath bound us, to do our utmost for the salvation of all we have to do with; but God is bound no farther than he has been pleased to bind himself by his own covenant and promise, which is his revealed will; and that is, that he will receive, and not cast out, those that come to Christ: but the drawing of souls in order to that coming is a preventing distinguishing favour to whom he will. Had he mercy on the Gentiles? It was because he would have mercy on them. Were the Jews hardened? It was because it was his own pleasure to deny them softening grace, and to give them up to their chosen affected unbelief. “Even so, Father, because it seemed good unto thee.” That scripture excellently explains this, *Lu. x. 21*; and, as this, doth shew the sovereign will of God in giving or withholding both the means of grace and the effectual blessing upon those means.

1. Some others think that this phrase is to be explained by a reference to that scriptural usage according to which God is said to do whatever indirectly and incidentally results from his agency; on the same principle that a father is said to ruin his children, or a master his servants; or that Christ is said to produce wars and divisions. Thus, *Isa. vi. 10*, the prophet is commanded to make the heart of the people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, &c., as though to him were to be ascribed the incidental results of his preaching. In the same way the Gospel is the cause of death, (not of misery only, but of insensibility also,) to those who hear and disregard it. 2. According to another mode of representation God is understood as merely permitting Pharaoh to harden his own heart, as the result is often expressly referred to Pharaoh himself, *Ex. vii. 15, 32, &c.* 3. But there seems to be more expressed by the language of the text than mere permission, because it is evidently a punitive act that is here intended, and because this view does not suit the other passages in which God is said to give sinners up to the evil of their own hearts, *ch. i. 24, 28*. It is probable, therefore, that the judicial abandonment of men "to a reprobate mind," a punitive withdrawing of the influences of the Holy Spirit, and the giving them up to the uncounteracted operation of the hardening or perverting influences by which they are surrounded, are all expressed by the language of the apostle. In this God does no more than what he constantly threatens to do, or which the Scriptures declare he actually does, in the case of those who forsake him; and nothing more than every righteous parent does in reference to a reprobate son. This, in connexion with the principle referred to above, in No. 1, seems as much as can fairly be considered as included in the expressions.—[H.]

Secondly. It might be objected, "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" ver. 10. Had the apostle been arguing only for God's sovereignty in appointing and ordering the terms and conditions of acceptance and salvation, there had not been the least colour for this objection; for he might well find fault if people refused to come up to the terms on which such a salvation is offered; the salvation being so great, the terms could not be hard. But there might be colour for the objection against his arguing for the sovereignty of God in giving and withholding differencing and preventing grace; and the objection is commonly and readily advanced against the doctrine of distinguishing grace. If God, while he gives effectual grace to some, denies it to others, why doth he find fault with those to whom he denies it? If he hath rejected the Jews, and hid from their eyes the things that belong to their peace, why doth he find fault with them for their blindness? If it be his pleasure to discard them as not a people, and not obtaining mercy, their knocking off themselves was no resistance of his will. This objection he answers at large,

By reproving the objector, ver. 20. "Nay but, O man." This is not an objection fit to be made by the creature against his Creator, by man against God. The truth, as it is in Jesus, is that which abases man as nothing, less than nothing, and advances God as sovereign Lord of all. Observe how contemptibly he speaks of man, when he comes to argue with God his maker; "Who art thou?" thou that art so foolish, so feeble, so short-sighted, so incompetent a judge of the Divine counsels? art thou able to fathom such a depth, dispute such a case, to trace that way of God which is in the sea, his path in the great waters? "That repliest against God." It becomes us to submit to him, not to reply against him; to lie down under his hand, not to fly in his face, nor to charge him with folly. 'Ο ὑπὸ τὸν κρημνόντων,—"that answerest again." God is our master, and we are his servants; and it does not become servants to answer again. *Tit. ii. 9.*

and he is the former; and it does not become us to challenge or arraign his wisdom in ordering and disposing of us into this or that shape or figure. The rude and unformed mass of matter hath no right to this or that form, but is shaped at the pleasure of him that formeth it. God's sovereignty over us is fully illustrated by the power that the potter hath over the clay: compare *Jer. 18. 1-6*, *Is. 64. 1-7*, *Is. 45. 1-7*, *Is. 46. 1-10*, *Is. 47. 1-15*, *Is. 48. 1-17*, *Is. 49. 1-13*, *Is. 50. 1-11*, *Is. 51. 1-17*, *Is. 52. 1-12*, *Is. 53. 1-12*, *Is. 54. 1-17*, *Is. 55. 1-12*, *Is. 56. 1-7*, *Is. 57. 1-13*, *Is. 58. 1-14*, *Is. 59. 1-15*, *Is. 60. 1-22*, *Is. 61. 1-11*, *Is. 62. 1-17*, *Is. 63. 1-6*, *Is. 64. 1-7*, *Is. 65. 1-16*, *Is. 66. 1-24*, *Is. 67. 1-13*, *Is. 68. 1-24*, *Is. 69. 1-24*, *Is. 70. 1-9*, *Is. 71. 1-10*, *Is. 72. 1-17*, *Is. 73. 1-40*, *Is. 74. 1-23*, *Is. 75. 1-10*, *Is. 76. 1-13*, *Is. 77. 1-9*, *Is. 78. 1-11*, *Is. 79. 1-13*, *Is. 80. 1-17*, *Is. 81. 1-16*, *Is. 82. 1-5*, *Is. 83. 1-4*, *Is. 84. 1-12*, *Is. 85. 1-12*, *Is. 86. 1-17*, *Is. 87. 1-7*, *Is. 88. 1-18*, *Is. 89. 1-22*, *Is. 90. 1-15*, *Is. 91. 1-16*, *Is. 92. 1-4*, *Is. 93. 1-12*, *Is. 94. 1-23*, *Is. 95. 1-7*, *Is. 96. 1-13*, *Is. 97. 1-13*, *Is. 98. 1-18*, *Is. 99. 1-13*, *Is. 100. 1-11*, *Is. 101. 1-11*, *Is. 102. 1-7*, *Is. 103. 1-24*, *Is. 104. 1-15*, *Is. 105. 1-12*, *Is. 106. 1-15*, *Is. 107. 1-14*, *Is. 108. 1-14*, *Is. 109. 1-17*, *Is. 110. 1-12*, *Is. 111. 1-16*, *Is. 112. 1-10*, *Is. 113. 1-14*, *Is. 114. 1-12*, *Is. 115. 1-21*, *Is. 116. 1-14*, *Is. 117. 1-14*, *Is. 118. 1-14*, *Is. 119. 1-64*, *Is. 120. 1-14*, *Is. 121. 1-14*, *Is. 122. 1-18*, *Is. 123. 1-14*, *Is. 124. 1-27*, *Is. 125. 1-12*, *Is. 126. 1-12*, *Is. 127. 1-14*, *Is. 128. 1-14*, *Is. 129. 1-16*, *Is. 130. 1-16*, *Is. 131. 1-14*, *Is. 132. 1-18*, *Is. 133. 1-14*, *Is. 134. 1-14*, *Is. 135. 1-12*, *Is. 136. 1-14*, *Is. 137. 1-14*, *Is. 138. 1-14*, *Is. 139. 1-14*, *Is. 140. 1-14*, *Is. 141. 1-14*, *Is. 142. 1-14*, *Is. 143. 1-14*, *Is. 144. 1-14*, *Is. 145. 1-14*, *Is. 146. 1-14*, *Is. 147. 1-14*, *Is. 148. 1-14*, *Is. 149. 1-14*, *Is. 150. 1-14*, *Is. 151. 1-14*, *Is. 152. 1-14*, *Is. 153. 1-14*, *Is. 154. 1-14*, *Is. 155. 1-14*, *Is. 156. 1-14*, *Is. 157. 1-14*, *Is. 158. 1-14*, *Is. 159. 1-14*, *Is. 160. 1-14*, *Is. 161. 1-14*, *Is. 162. 1-14*, *Is. 163. 1-14*, *Is. 164. 1-14*, *Is. 165. 1-14*, *Is. 166. 1-14*, *Is. 167. 1-14*, *Is. 168. 1-14*, *Is. 169. 1-14*, *Is. 170. 1-14*, *Is. 171. 1-14*, *Is. 172. 1-14*, *Is. 173. 1-14*, *Is. 174. 1-14*, *Is. 175. 1-14*, *Is. 176. 1-14*, *Is. 177. 1-14*, *Is. 178. 1-14*, *Is. 179. 1-14*, *Is. 180. 1-14*, *Is. 181. 1-14*, *Is. 182. 1-14*, *Is. 183. 1-14*, *Is. 184. 1-14*, *Is. 185. 1-14*, *Is. 186. 1-14*, *Is. 187. 1-14*, *Is. 188. 1-14*, *Is. 189. 1-14*, *Is. 190. 1-14*, *Is. 191. 1-14*, *Is. 192. 1-14*, *Is. 193. 1-14*, *Is. 194. 1-14*, *Is. 195. 1-14*, *Is. 196. 1-14*, *Is. 197. 1-14*, *Is. 198. 1-14*, *Is. 199. 1-14*, *Is. 200. 1-14*, *Is. 201. 1-14*, *Is. 202. 1-14*, *Is. 203. 1-14*, *Is. 204. 1-14*, *Is. 205. 1-14*, *Is. 206. 1-14*, *Is. 207. 1-14*, *Is. 208. 1-14*, *Is. 209. 1-14*, *Is. 210. 1-14*, *Is. 211. 1-14*, *Is. 212. 1-14*, *Is. 213. 1-14*, *Is. 214. 1-14*, *Is. 215. 1-14*, *Is. 216. 1-14*, *Is. 217. 1-14*, *Is. 218. 1-14*, *Is. 219. 1-14*, *Is. 220. 1-14*, *Is. 221. 1-14*, *Is. 222. 1-14*, *Is. 223. 1-14*, *Is. 224. 1-14*, *Is. 225. 1-14*, *Is. 226. 1-14*, *Is. 227. 1-14*, *Is. 228. 1-14*, *Is. 229. 1-14*, *Is. 230. 1-14*, *Is. 231. 1-14*, *Is. 232. 1-14*, *Is. 233. 1-14*, *Is. 234. 1-14*, *Is. 235. 1-14*, *Is. 236. 1-14*, *Is. 237. 1-14*, *Is. 238. 1-14*, *Is. 239. 1-14*, *Is. 240. 1-14*, *Is. 241. 1-14*, *Is. 242. 1-14*, *Is. 243. 1-14*, *Is. 244. 1-14*, *Is. 245. 1-14*, *Is. 246. 1-14*, *Is. 247. 1-14*, *Is. 248. 1-14*, *Is. 249. 1-14*, *Is. 250. 1-14*, *Is. 251. 1-14*, *Is. 252. 1-14*, *Is. 253. 1-14*, *Is. 254. 1-14*, *Is. 255. 1-14*, *Is. 256. 1-14*, *Is. 257. 1-14*, *Is. 258. 1-14*, *Is. 259. 1-14*, *Is. 260. 1-14*, *Is. 261. 1-14*, *Is. 262. 1-14*, *Is. 263. 1-14*, *Is. 264. 1-14*, *Is. 265. 1-14*, *Is. 266. 1-14*, *Is. 267. 1-14*, *Is. 268. 1-14*, *Is. 269. 1-*

1st. He gives us the comparison, ver. 21. The potter, out of the same lump, may make either a fashionable vessel, and a vessel fit for creditable and honourable uses, or a contemptible vessel, and a vessel in which is no pleasure; and herein he acts arbitrarily, as he might have chosen whether he would make any vessel of it at all, or whether he would leave it in the hole of the pit out of which it was dug.

2nd. The application of the comparison, ver. 22—24. Two sorts of vessels God forms out of the great lump of fallen mankind. *First*, "Vessels of wrath"

—vessels filled with wrath, as a vessel of wine is a vessel filled with wine; "full of the fury of the Lord," *Isa. li. 20.* In these God is willing to shew his wrath; that is, his punishing justice, and his enmity to sin. This must be shewn to all the world. God will make it appear that he hates sin. He will likewise make his power known, *το δεικναι αὐτοῦ.* It is a power of strength and energy, an inflicting power, which works and effects the destruction of those that perish; it is a destruction that proceeds "from the glory of his power," *2 Thes. i. 9.* The eternal damnation of sinners will be an abundant demonstration of the power of God; for he will act in it himself immediately, his wrath preying as it were upon guilty consciences, and his arm stretched out totally to destroy their well-being, and yet at the same instant wonderfully to preserve the being of the creature. In order to this, God "endured them with much longsuffering"—exercised a great deal of patience towards them, let them alone to fill up the measure of sin, to grow till they were ripe for ruin, and so they became "fitted for destruction," fitted by their own sin and self-hardening. The reigning corruptions and wickedness of the soul are its preparedness and disposedness for hell; a soul is hereby made combustible matter, fit for the flames of hell. When Christ said to the Jews, *Mat. xxiii. 32,* "Fill you up then the measure of your fathers, that upon you may come all the righteous blood," ver. 35; he did as it were endure them with much longsuffering, that they might by their own obstinacy and wilfulness in sin fit themselves for destruction. *Secondly.* "Vessels of mercy," filled with mercy. The happiness bestowed upon the saved remnant is the fruit not of their merit, but of God's mercy. The spring of all the joy and glory of heaven is that mercy of God which endures for ever. Vessels of honour must to eternity own themselves vessels of mercy. Observe, *1st.* What he designs in the v. "To make known the riches of his glory," that is, of his goodness; for God's goodness is his greatest glory, especially when it is communicated with the greatest sovereignty. "I beseech thee shew me thy glory," saith Moses, *Ex. xxxiii. 18.* "I will make all my goodness to pass before thee," saith *Ex. xxxiii. 19,* and that given out freely, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." God makes known this glory, this goodness of his in the preservation and supply of all the creatures; the earth is full of his goodness, and the year crowned with it; but when he would demonstrate the riches of his goodness, unsearchable riches, he doth it in the salvation of the saints, that will be to eternity glorious monuments of Divine grace. *2nd.* What he doth for them. He doth before prepare them to glory. Sanctification is the preparation of the soul for glory, making it meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. This is God's work; we can destroy ourselves fast enough, but we cannot save ourselves. Sinners fit themselves for hell, but it is God that prepares saints for heaven; and all those that God designs for heaven hereafter he prepares and fits for heaven now; he works them to the self-same thing, *2 Cor. v. 5.* And would you know who these vessels of mercy are? Those whom he hath called, ver. 24; for "whom he did predestinate them he also called" with an effectual call. And these "not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles;" for, the partition wall being taken down, the world was laid in common; and not as it had been, God's favour appropriated to the Jews, and they put a degree nearer his acceptance than the rest of the world. They now stood upon the same level with the Gentiles; and the question is not now, whether of the seed of Abraham or no, that is neither here nor there; but whether or no called according to his purpose.

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people ; and her beloved, which was not beloved. 26 And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are not my people* ; there shall they be called the children of the living God. 27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved : 28 For he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness : because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. 29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

Having explained the promise, and proved the Divine sovereignty, the apostle here shews how the rejection of the Jews and the taking in of the Gentiles was foretold in the Old Testament, and therefore must needs be very well consistent with the promise made to the fathers under the Old Testament. It tends very much to the clearing of a truth to observe how the Scripture is fulfilled in it. The Jews would no doubt willingly refer it to the Old Testament, the Scriptures of which were committed to them. Now he shews how this, which was so uneasy to them, was there spoken of.

First. By the prophet Hosea, who speaks of the taking in of a great many of the Gentiles, *Hos. ii. 23; 1. 10.* The Gentiles had not been the people of God, not owning him, nor owned by him in that relation; but, saith he, "I will call them my people," make them such, and own them as such, notwithstanding all their unworthiness. A blessed change! Former badness is no bar to God's present grace and mercy. "And her beloved which was not beloved." Those that God calls his people he calls beloved. He loves those that are his own. And lest it might be supposed that they should become God's people only by being proselyted to the Jewish religion, and made members of that nation, he adds from *Hos. i. 10.* "In the place where it was said, &c., there shall they be called." They need not be embodied with the Jews, nor go up to Jerusalem to worship; but wherever they are scattered over the face of the earth there will God own them. Observe the great dignity and honour of the saints, that they are called the children of the living God; and his calling them so makes them so. Behold what manner of love! This honour have all his saints.

Secondly. By the prophet Isaiah, who speaks of the casting off of many of the Jews, in two places :

1. One is *Isa. x. 22, 23*, which speaks of the saving of a remnant, that is, but a remnant; which, though in the prophecy it seems to refer to the preservation of a remnant from the destruction and desolation that was coming upon them by Sennacherib and his army, yet is to be understood as looking farther, and sufficiently proves that it is no strange thing for God to abandon to ruin a great many of the seed of Abraham, and yet maintain his word of promise to Abraham.

strong testimony such an application of the quotation affords to the Godhead of our Lord.

x. 16—18. The connection of these verses will be clearer if we note the contrast of "obeyed" in verse 16 and "heard" of verse 18. The words in the original bear the same relation to each other as "hearken" and "hear." The glad tidings is sent to all, but all did not hearken (obey). This Isaiah foretold. But the apostle adds, the question is not of hearkening but of hearing. Did not all hear?

Yes, for the word of the Gospel is sent throughout all the world. The citation from Psa. xix. is full of meaning. The light of the glad tidings is free to all as that of the sun, and carries with it a self-evidencing power as distinct as the witness of the universe to the Creator.

x. 19. Israel had warning that the Gospel would be universal. Moses foretold it when, in Deut. xxxii. 21, he predicted that Israel would forsake God, and provoke him to jealousy by going after their

in "all force and virtue: which is intimated in the supposition, that "the number of the children of Israel was as the sand of the sea," which was part of the promise made to Abraham, *Gen. xxii. 17*. And yet only a remnant shall be saved; for many are called, but few are chosen. In this salvation of the remnant we are told, ver. 28, from the prophet, 1st. That he will complete the work, "He will finish the work." When God begins, he will make an end, whether in ways of judgment or of mercy. The rejection of the unbelieving Jews God would finish in their utter ruin by the Romans, who, soon after this, quite took away their place and nation. The assuming of Christian churches into the Divine favour, and the spreading of the Gospel in other nations, was a work which God would likewise finish, and be known by his name Jehovah. "As for God, his work is perfect." Margin, "He will finish the account." God in his eternal counsels has taken an account of the children of men, allotted them to such or such a condition, to such a share of privileges, and as they come into being his dealings with them are pursuant to these counsels; and he will finish the account, complete the mystical body, call in as many as belong to the election of grace; and then the account will be finished. 2nd. That he will contract it; not only finish it, but finish it quickly. Under the Old Testament he seemed to tarry, and to make a longer and more tedious work of it; the wheels arrived but slowly towards the extent of the church; but now he will cut it short, and make a short work upon the earth. Gentile converts were now flying as a cloud. But he will cut it short in righteousness, both in wisdom and in justice. Men, when they cut short, do amiss,—they do indeed despatch causes; but when God cuts short it is always in righteousness. So the fathers generally apply it. Some understand it of the evangelical law and covenant, which Christ has introduced and established in the world; he has in that finished the work, put an end to the types and ceremonies of the Old Testament. Christ said, "It is finished," and then the veil was rent, echoing as it were to the word that Christ said upon the cross. And he will cut it short: the work, (it is *λογος*,—the word, the law,) was under the Old Testament very long; a long train of institutions, ceremonies, conditions; but now it is cut short. Our duty is now, under the Gospel, summed up in a much less room than it was under the law; the covenant was abridged and contracted; religion is brought into a less compass. And it is in righteousness, in favour to us, in justice to his own design and counsel. With us contractions use to darken things, *Brevi esse laboro, obscurus fio*.—I strive to be concise, but prove obscure; but it is not so in this case. Though it be cut short, it is clear and plain; and because short, the more easy.

2. Another is quoted from *Isa. i. 9*, where the prophet is shewing how, in a time of general calamity and destruction, God would preserve a seed. This is to the same purpose with the former; and the scope of it is to shew that it was no strange thing for God to leave the greatest part of the people of the Jews to ruin, and to reserve to himself only a small remnant. So he had done formerly, as appears by their own prophets; and they must not wonder if he did so now. Observe, 1st. What God is. He is "the Lord of Sabaoth;" that is, the Lord of hosts; a Hebrew word retained in the Greek, as *Jas. v. 4*. All the host of heaven and earth are at his beck and dispose. When God secures a seed to himself out of a degenerate apostate world, he acts as Lord of Sabaoth. It is an act of almighty power, and infinite sovereignty. 2nd. What his people are. They are a seed, a small number, (the corn reserved for next year's seedings is but little compared with that which is spent and eaten,) but a useful number; the seed, the substance of the next generation, *Isa. vi. 13*. It is so far from being an impeachment of the justice and righteousness of God that so many perish and are destroyed, that it is a wonder of Divine power and mercy that all are not destroyed, that there are any saved; for even those that are left to be a seed, if God had dealt with them according to their sins, had perished with the rest. This is the great truth which this scripture teacheth us.

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? Because *they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law*. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

The apostle comes here at last to fix the true reason of the reception of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews. There was a difference in the way of their seeking, and therefore there was that different success; though still it was the free grace of God that made them differ. He concludes like an orator, "What shall we say then?" What is the conclusion of the whole dispute?

First, Concerning the Gentiles, observe, 1. How they had been alienated from righteousness. They followed not after it; they knew not their guilt and misery, and therefore were not at all solicitous to procure a remedy. In their conversion preventing grace was greatly magnified; God was found of them that sought him not, *Isa. lxv. 1*. There was nothing in them to dispose them for such a favour more than what free grace wrought in them. Thus doth God delight to dispense grace in a way of sovereignty and absolute dominion. 2. How they attained to righteousness notwithstanding. By faith. Not by being proselyted to the Jewish religion, and submitting to the ceremonial law; but by embracing Christ, and believing in Christ, and submitting to the Gospel. They attained to that by the short cut of believing sincerely in Christ which the Jews had been long in vain beating about the bush for.

Secondly, Concerning the Jews, observe, 1. How they missed their end. They "followed after the law of righteousness," ver. 31; that is, they talked hard of justification and holiness, seemed very ambitious of being the people of God and the favourites of heaven, but they did not attain to it; that is, the greatest part of them did not. As many as stuck to their old Jewish principles and ceremonies, and pursued a happiness in those observances, embracing the shadows now the substance was come; these fell short of acceptance with God, were not owned as his people, nor went to their house justified. 2. How they mistook their way, which was the cause of their missing the end, ver. 32, 33. They sought, but not in the right way, not in the humbling way, not in the substituted appointed way. "Not by faith," not by embracing the Christian religion, and depending upon the merit of Christ, and submitting to the terms of the Gospel, which were the very life and end of the law. But they sought

"by the works of the law;" as if they were to expect justification by their observance of the precepts and ceremonies of the law of Moses. This was "the stumblingstone at which they stumbled." They could not get over this corrupt principle they had espoused, that the law was given them for no other end but that merely by their observance of it, and obedience to it, they might be justified before God; and so they could by no means be reconciled to the doctrine of Christ, which brought them off from that to expect justification through the merit and satisfaction of another. Christ himself is to some a stone of stumbling; for which he quotes *Isa. viii. 14; xxviii. 16*. It is said that Christ should be set for the fall of any, and yet it is so, *Lu. ii. 34*; that ever poison should be sucked out of the balm of Gilead, that the foundation-stone should be to any a stone of stumbling, and the Rock of salvation a rock of offence. So he is to multitudes; so he was to the unbelieving Jews, who rejected him, because he put an end to the ceremonial law. But still there is a remnant that do believe on him, and they shall not be ashamed; that is, their hopes and expectations of justification by him shall not be disappointed, as theirs are who expect it by the law.

So that upon the whole matter the unbelieving Jews have no reason to quarrel with God for rejecting them; they had a fair offer of righteousness, and life; and salvation made them upon gospel terms, which they did not like, and would not come up to; and therefore if they perish they may thank themselves; their blood is upon their own heads.

[In the eleventh verse we cannot refuse the statement that God had before the birth of Jacob and Esau an anterior purpose respecting their destinies; and that the actual and historical difference which afterwards took place between the two was the effect of that purpose. Of this election on the part of God I can give no account; I submit to be informed of the fact, but I am utterly in the dark as to the reason of it. I have to remark, however, that although this purpose according to election is not of works but of Him that calleth—although the purpose of the Divine mind was the primary, the originating cause of the favour shewn to Israel—yet it followeth not that works on the part of those whom he does favour are not indispensable. You would say of a stream of water that issued first from a fountain-head, and then was collected into a reservoir or second fountain, whence it flowed anew, you would say that, though it came through the lower fountain, it came from or of the higher. And so of this high predestination on the part of God. All that regards either our history in time, or our final condition in eternity, might originate there; and yet it may be true that we cannot pass onward to glory in heaven without passing through a course of personal righteousness upon earth. The primary will of God may be the aboriginal fountain of all the blessings which the children of life are to enjoy; and yet there may be a secondary fountain derived therefrom—even a fountain of grace struck out in the heart of man, and whence all the virtues of moral worth and of spiritual excellence overflow upon his history. So that, though God's primary decree is not of works, it is at least to works—inasmuch that, even among the children of the predestined Israel, the rewards and the preferments of eternity follow in the train of good works; and among the children of reprobate Esau the disgrace and the wretchedness of their irretrievable condemnation follow in the train of their evil works.—C.]

CHAPTER X.

The dissolving of the peculiar church state of the Jews, and the rejection of that policy by the repealing of their ceremonial law,—the vacating of all the institutions of it, the abolishing of their priesthood, the burning of their temple, and the taking away of their place and nation, and in their room the substituting and erecting of a Catholic church state among the Gentile nations,—though to us now, when these things are long since done and completed, they may seem no great matter, yet to them who lived when they were doing, who knew how high the Jews had stood in God's favour, and how deplorable the condition of the Gentile world had been for many ages, it appeared very great and marvellous, and a mystery hard to be understood. The apostle in this chapter, as in the foregoing and that which follows, is explaining and proving it; but with several very useful digressions, which a little interrupt the thread of his discourse. To two great truths I would reduce this chapter: 1. That there is a great difference between the righteousness of the law, which the unbelieving Jews were wedded to, and the righteousness of faith offered in the Gospel, ver. 1—11. 11. That there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, but in point of justification and acceptance with God the Gospel sets them both upon the same level, ver. 12—21.



RETHRENN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. 5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. 6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? The word is

idols, which were no gods; and that in consequence God would provoke their jealousy, and punish them by receiving into favour those whom they regarded as "no people."

xi. 1. "Hath God," &c.: rather, "Did God cast away," &c. The closing verse of the last chapter might suggest a total rejection of all Israelites; hence the apostle hastens to remove all ground for such an impression. "For I also," &c.: he himself is a sufficient proof that God did not cast off all, for he cannot entertain the supposition

that God has cast off Israel without excluding himself. The latter view is that of Alford and Vaughan; practically it agrees with the former, which is adopted by most commentators. "Abraham," "Benjamin;" compare 2 Cor. xi. 22; Phil. iii. 5. Benjamin was the tribe of the first judge and of the first king.

xi. 2. "His people which he foreknew;" i.e., his people nationally. "The covenant with Israel having been national, shall ultimately be fulfilled to them as a nation; not by the gathering in merely of indi-

nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

The scope of the apostle in this part of the chapter is to shew the vast difference between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith; and the great pre-eminence of the righteousness of faith above that of the law; that he might induce and persuade the Jews to believe in Christ, aggravate the folly and sin of those that refused, and justify God in the rejection of such refusers.

First. Paul doth here profess his good affection to the Jews, with the reason of it, ver. 1, 2: where he gives them a good wish and a good witness.

1. A good wish, ver. 1. A wish that they might be saved; saved from the temporal ruin and destruction that was coming upon them; saved from the wrath to come, eternal wrath, which was hanging over their heads. It is implied in this wish that they might be convinced and converted; he could not pray in faith that they might be saved in their unbelief. Though Paul preached against them, yet he prayed for them. Herein he was merciful as God is, who is "not willing that any should perish," 2 Pet. iii. 9; desires not the death of sinners. It is our duty truly and earnestly to desire the salvation of the souls of others next to the salvation of our own. This he saith was his heart's desire and prayer; which intimates, 1st. The strength and sincerity of his desire. It was his heart's desire; it was not a formal compliment, as good wishes are with many from the teeth outward, but a real desire. This it was, before it was his prayer. The soul of prayer is the heart's desire. Cold desires do but beg denials; we must even breathe out our souls in every prayer. 2ndly. The offering up of this desire to God. It was not only his heart's desire, but it was his prayer. There may be desires in the heart and yet no prayer, unless those desires be presented to God. Wishing and wouling, if that be all, is not praying. 2. A good witness, as a reason of his good wish; ver. 2, "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God." The unbelieving Jews were the most bitter enemies Paul had in the world, and yet Paul gives them as good a character as the truth would bear. We should say the best we can even of our worst enemies: this is blessing them that curse us. Charity teacheth us to have the best opinion of persons, and to put the best construction upon words and actions that they will bear. We should take notice of that which is commendable even in bad people. "They have a zeal of God." Their opposition to the Gospel is from a principle of respect to the law, which they knew to have come from God. There is such a thing as a blind, misguided zeal; such was that of the Jews, who, when they hated Christ's people and ministers, and cast them out, said, "Let the Lord be glorified," Isa. lvi. 5; nay, killed them, and thought they did God good service, Jno. xvi. 2.

Secondly. He here shews the fatal mistake that the unbelieving Jews were guilty of; which was their ruin. Their zeal was "not according to knowledge." It is true God gave them that law which they were so zealous for; but they might have known that by the appearance of the promised Messiah an end was put to it. He introduced a new religion and way of worship, to which the former must give place; he proved himself the Son of God, gave the most convincing evidence that could be of his being the Messiah; and yet they did not know, and would not own him, but shut their eyes against the clear light, so that their zeal for the law was blind. This he shews farther, ver. 3, where we may observe,

1. The nature of their unbelief. They "have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God;" that is, they have not yielded to gospel terms, nor accepted of the tender of justification by faith in Christ, which is made in the Gospel. Unbelief is a non-submission to the righteousness of God, standing it out against the gospel proclamation of indemnity. "Have not submitted." In true faith there is need of a great deal of submission; therefore the first lesson Christ teacheth is, to deny ourselves. It is a great piece of condescension for a proud heart to be content to be beholden to free grace; we are loath to sue *sub forma pauperis*;—"as paupers."

2. The causes of their unbelief: and those are two: 1st. Ignorance of God's righteousness. They did not understand and believe, and consider the strict justice of God in hating and punishing sin, and demanding satisfaction; did not consider what need we have of a righteousness wherein to appear before him; if they had, they would never have stood out against the gospel offer, nor expected justification by their own works, as if they could satisfy God's justice. Or, being ignorant of God's way of justification, which he has now appointed and revealed by Jesus Christ. They did not know it because they would not; they shut their eyes against the discoveries of it, and loved darkness rather. 2nd. A proud conceit of their own righteousness. "Going about to establish their own;" that is, a righteousness of their own devising, and of their own working out, by the merit of their works, and by their observance of the ceremonial law. They thought they needed not to be beholden to the merit of Christ, and therefore depended upon their own performances as sufficient to make up a righteousness wherein to appear before God. They could not, with Paul, disclaim a dependence upon this, Phil. iii. 9, "Not having my own righteousness." See an instance of this pride in the Pharisee, Lu. xviii. 10, 11: compare ver. 14.

Thirdly. He here shews the folly of that mistake; and what an unreasonable thing it was for them to be seeking justification by the works of the law, now Christ was come, and had brought in an everlasting righteousness; considering,

1. The subserviency of the law to the Gospel; ver. 4, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." The design of the law was to lead people to Christ: the moral law was but for the searching of the wound, the ceremonial law for the shadowing forth of the remedy; but Christ is the end of both: see 2 Cor. iii. 7, and compare Gal. iii. 23, 24. The use of the law was to direct people for righteousness to Christ. Christ is the end of the ceremonial law: he is the period of it, because he is the perfection of it. When the substance comes the shadow is gone. The sacrifices, and offerings, and purifications, appointed under the Old Testament, prefigured Christ, and pointed at him; and their inability to take away sin discovered the necessity of a sacrifice that should, by being once offered, take away sin. Christ is the end of the moral law in that he did that which the law could not do, ch. viii. 3 and secured

the great end of it. The end of the law was to bring men to perfect obedience, and so to obtain justification; this is now become impossible by reason of the power of sin, and the corruption of nature: but "Christ is the end of the law." The law is not destroyed, nor the intention of the lawgiver frustrated; but, full satisfaction being made by the death of Christ for our breach of the law, the end is attained, and we put in another way of justification. "Christ is" thus "the end of the law for righteousness," that is, for justification; but it is only "to every one that believeth." Upon our believing, that is, our humble consent to the terms of the Gospel, we become interested in Christ's satisfaction, and so are justified through the redemption that is in Jesus.

[It is the merit of Christ's obedience, imputed unto us and made ours by faith, which forms our right or title-deed of entry into the kingdom of heaven. He is the Lord our righteousness; and in receiving him we receive that righteousness which it was the end of the law to have secured for us had it been by us fulfilled, but which we in vain seek by the law, now that it has been broken.—C.]

2. The excellency of the Gospel above the law. This he proves by shewing the different constitution of these two.

1st. What is the righteousness which is of the law. This he shews, ver. 5; the tenor of it is, Do and live. Though it direct us to a better and more effectual righteousness in Christ, yet in itself, considered as a law, abstracted from its respect to Christ and the Gospel, (for so the unbelieving Jews embraced and retained it,) it owneth nothing as a righteousness sufficient to justify a man but that of perfect obedience. For this he quotes that scripture, Lev. xviii. 5, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them." To this he refers likewise, Gal. iii. 12, "The man that doth them shall live in them." "Live," that is, be happy, not only in the land of Canaan, but in heaven, of which Canaan was a type and figure. The doing supposed must be perfect and sinless, without the least breach or violation. The law which was given upon mount Sinai, though it was not a pure covenant of works, (for who then could be saved under that dispensation?) yet, that it might be the more effectual to drive people to Christ, and to make the covenant of grace welcome, it had a very great mixture of the strictness and terror of the covenant of works. Now, was it not extreme folly in the Jews to adhere so closely to this way of justification and salvation, which was in itself so hard, and by the corruption of nature now become impossible, when there was a new and a living way opened?

2nd. What is that righteousness which is of faith, ver. 6, &c. This he describes in the words of Moses, in *Deuteronomy*, in the second law, (so *Deuteronomy* signifies,) where there was a much clearer revelation of Christ and the Gospel than there was in the first giving of the law: he quotes it from *Deu. xxx. 11-14*, and shews,

First. That it is not at all hard or difficult. The way of justification and salvation has in it no such depths or knots as may discourage us, no insuperable difficulties attempting it; but, as was foretold, it is a highway, Isa. xlv. 8. We are not put to climb for it, it is not in heaven; we are not put to dive for it, it is not in the deep. 1st. We need not go to heaven to search the records there, or to inquire into the secrets of the Divine counsel. It is true, Christ is in heaven, but we may be justified and saved without going thither to fetch him thence, or sending a special messenger to him. 2nd. We need not go to the deep to fetch Christ out of the grave, or from the state of the dead. "Into the deep to bring up Christ from the dead." This plainly shews that Christ's descent into the deep, or into *adms*, was no more but his going into the state of the dead, in allusion to Jonah. It is true that Christ was in the grave, and it is as true that he is now in heaven; but we need not perplex and puzzle ourselves with fancied difficulties, nor must we create to ourselves such gross and carnal ideas of these things, as if the method of salvation was impracticable, and the design of the revelation was only to amuse us. No, salvation is not put at so vast a distance from us.

[Thus would we explain these parenthetic clauses. Strength to do the thing implies a strength to wield the alone instrument that was adequate for the doing of it. I can no more make atonement for my own guilt than I could have ascended into heaven, and there brought down Christ from above who has poured out his soul unto the death for me. I can no more earn or establish my own right to the high rewards of eternity, than I could have descended into the deep, and there brought up Christ again from the dead, who, in virtue of that everlasting righteousness which himself alone hath fulfilled, was raised to the mediatorial throne which he now occupies, and from which he welcomes the approaches of all, and casts out none who come unto him. Let me say not in my heart then, that there is a strength in me commensurate to the work which called for either the one or the other of these movements; but, dismissing the vain imagination, let me forthwith rejoice that it is a work no longer to do, because already done—that it is a work which has already passed through such able hands, even of him who travelled in the greatness of his strength for the full and finished performance of it—that a ready-made righteousness is now looking down upon me from heaven, made to my hand, and which I am simply invited to lay hold of—that personally and practically, my concern now is not with the doing, but with the report of the doing—not with a work which is far above my reach, but with a word which is nigh unto me, and in which, with the felt helplessness and docility of a little child, my only part is to acquiesce—a word now standing at the door, and soliciting admittance from every one of us; and which, when once it finds entrance into the house of a believer's heart, makes good his interest in the whole of this wondrous salvation. The question and the remonstrance now held with the men of our fallen race is not, Who of you hath made good the righteousness of the law? but, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?"—C.]

Secondly. But it is very plain and easy: "The word is nigh thee." When we speak of looking upon Christ, and receiving Christ, and feeding upon Christ, it is not Christ in heaven, nor Christ in the deep, that we mean; but Christ in the promise, Christ exhibited to us, and offered in the word. Christ is nigh thee, for the word is nigh thee; nigh thee indeed, it is "in thy mouth, and in thy heart;" there is no difficulty in understanding, believing, and owning of it. The work thou hast to do lies within thee: "The kingdom of God is within you," Lu. xvii. 21; thence thou must fetch thy evidences, not out of the records of heaven. It is, that is, it is promised that it shall be, "in thy mouth," Isa. lix. 21; "and in thy heart," Jer. xxxi. 33. All that which is to be done for us is already done to our hands: Christ is come down from heaven, we need not go to fetch him; he is come up from the deep, we need not perplex ourselves how to bring him up. There is nothing now to be done, but to work in us: that must be our cure, to look to our heart and mouth. Those that were under the law were to do all themselves. "Do this and live;" but the Gospel discovers the greatest of the work done already, and what remains out short in righteousness; salvation offered upon very plain and easy terms, brought to our door, as it were, in the word which is nigh us. It is in our mouth, we are reading it daily; it is in our heart, we are or should be thinking of it daily. Even the word of faith, the Gospel, and the promise of it: called the word of faith, 1st. Because it is the object of faith, about which it is conversant, the word which we believe. 2nd. Because it is the precept of faith commanding

vidual Jews, or of all the Jews individually, into the Christian Church, but by the national restoration of the Jews—not in unbelief, but as a Christian, believing nation—to all that can under the Gospel represent their ancient pre-eminence, and to the fulness of those promises which have never yet in their plain sense been accomplished to them" (Alford).

xi. 5, 6. "Election of grace:" the salvation of the remnant is of grace, the free favour of spontaneous love. Verse 6 is clearer if we

render "if it (the election) be by grace, it is no more," &c. The second half of the verse is not found in some of the best MSS., but in any case the position laid down by the apostle is plain. Salvation must be either of works or of grace; there can be no mixture of the two principles.

xi. 8. "Were blinded:" rather, "were hardened." "Spirit of slumber:" better, "of stupor," or "torpor." "Wine of astonishment:" compare Psa. lx. 3. The word in the LXX. for "astonish-

it, and making it the great condition of justification. 3rd. Because it is the ordinary means by which faith is wrought and conveyed.

Now what is the word of faith? We have the tenor of it, ver. 9, 10, the sum of the Gospel, which is plain and easy enough. Observe, 1st. What is promised to us: "Thou shalt be saved." It is salvation that the Gospel exhibits and tenders. Saved from guilt and wrath, with the salvation of the soul, an eternal salvation, which Christ is the author of, a Saviour to the uttermost. 2nd. Upon what terms. Two things required as conditions of salvation:

[The two requisites for salvation mentioned in this verse are confession and faith. They are mentioned in their natural order; as confession is the fruit and external evidence of faith. So, in 2 Pet. i. 10, calling is placed before election, because the former is the evidence of the latter.—H.]

(1.) Confessing the Lord Jesus. Openly professing relation to him, and dependence on him, as our Prince and Saviour; owning Christianity in the face of all the allurements and affrightments of this world; standing by him in all weathers. Our Lord Jesus lays a great stress upon this confessing of him before men: see *Mat. x. 32, 33*. It is the product of many graces, evidencing a great deal of self-denial, love to Christ, contempt of the world, a mighty courage and resolution. It was a very great thing, especially when the profession of Christ and Christianity hazarded estate, honour, preferment, liberty, life, and all that is dear in this world; which was the case in the primitive times. (2.) Believing in the heart that God raised him from the dead. The profession of faith with the mouth, if there be not the power of it in the heart, is but a mockery; the root of it must be laid in an unfeigned assent to the revelation of the Gospel concerning Christ, especially concerning his resurrection, which is the fundamental article of the Christian faith; for thereby he was declared to be the Son of God with power, and full evidence was given that God accepted his satisfaction.

This is farther illustrated, ver. 10, and the order inverted, because there must first be faith in the heart before there can be an acceptable confession with the mouth. (1.) Concerning faith. It is with the heart that man believeth; which implies more than an assent of the understanding, and takes in the consent of the will; an inward, hearty, sincere, and strong consent. It is not believing, not to be reckoned so, if it be not with the heart. This is unto righteousness. There is the righteousness of justification, and the righteousness of sanctification. Faith is to both; it is the condition of our justification, *Rom. v. 1*, and it is the root and spring of our sanctification; in it it is begun, by it it is carried on, *Acts xv. 4*. (2.) Concerning profession. It is with the mouth that confession is made; confession to God in prayer and praise, *Rom. xv. 6*; confession to men, owning the ways of God before others, especially when we are called to it in a day of persecution. It is fit God should be honoured with the mouth, for he made man's mouth, *Ex. iv. 11*; and at such a time has promised to give his faithful people a mouth and wisdom, *Lu. xxi. 15*. It is part of the honour of Christ that every tongue shall confess, *Phil. ii. 11*; and this is said to be unto salvation, because it is the performance of the condition of that promise, *Mat. x. 32*. Justification by faith lays the foundation of our title to salvation; but by confession we build upon that foundation, and come at last to the full possession of that to which we were entitled.

So that we have here a brief summary of the terms of salvation, and they are very reasonable; in short this, that we must devote, dedicate, and give up to God our souls and our bodies; our souls in believing with the heart, and our bodies in confessing with the mouth. "This do, and thou shalt live." For this, ver. 11, he quotes *Isa. xxviii. 16*, "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed;" *οὐ καταισχυνθήσεται*. That is, (1.) He will not be ashamed to own that Christ in whom he trusts; that he believes in the heart will not be ashamed to confess with the mouth. It is sinful shame that makes people deny Christ, *Mar. viii. 38*. "He that believeth will not make haste," so the prophet has it; will not make haste to overrun the sufferings he meets with in the way of his duty; will not be ashamed of a despised religion. (2.) He shall not be ashamed of his hope in Christ; he shall not be disappointed of his end. It is our duty that we must not, it is our privilege that we shall not, be ashamed of our faith in Christ. He shall never have cause to repent his confidence in reposing such a trust in the Lord Jesus.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. 18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. 19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. 20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. 21 But to Israel he

saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

The first words express the design of the apostle through these verses, that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, but they stand upon the same level in point of acceptance with God. In Jesus Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, *Col. iii. 11*. God doth not save any or reject any because they are Jews, or because they are Greeks, but doth equally accept both upon gospel terms. "There is no difference." For the proof of this he urgeth two arguments:

First. That God is the same to all. "The same Lord over all is rich unto all." There is not one God to the Jews, that is more kind, and another to the Gentiles, that is less kind; but he is the same to all, a common Father to all mankind. When he proclaimed his name, "The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful," he thereby signified not only what he was to the Jews, but what he is and will be to all his creatures that seek unto him. Not only good, but rich, plenteous in goodness; he hath wherewith to supply them all, and he is free and ready to give out to them; he is both able and willing. Not only rich, but rich unto us; liberal and bountiful in dispensing his favours. "To all that call upon him." Something must be done by us, that we may reap of this bounty, and it is as little as can be; we must call upon him. He will for this be inquired of, *Eze. xxxvi. 37*; and sure that which is not worth the asking is not worth the having. We have nothing to do but to draw out by prayer, as there is occasion.

Secondly. That the promise is the same to all; ver. 13, "Whosoever shall call," one as well as another, without exception. This extent, this undifferencing extent of the promise, both to Jews and Gentiles, he thinks should not be surprising, for it was foretold by the prophet, *Joel ii. 21*. Calling upon the name of the Lord is here put for all practical religion. What is the life of a Christian but a life of prayer? It implies a sense of our dependence on him, and an entire dedication of ourselves to him, a believing expectation of our all from him. Is that doth this shall be saved. It is but ask and have; what would we have more? For the farther illustration of this, he observes,

1. How necessary it was that the Gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, ver. 14, 15. This was it that the Jews were so angry with Paul for, that he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and preached the Gospel to them. Now, he shews how needful it was to bring them within the reach of the forementioned promise, an interest in which they should not envy to any of their fellow creatures. 1st. They cannot "call on him in whom they have not believed." Except they believe that he is God they will not call upon him by prayer; to what purpose should they? The grace of faith is absolutely necessary to the duty of prayer; we cannot pray aright, nor pray to acceptance, without it. He that comes to God by prayer must believe, *Heb. xi. 6*. Till they believed the true God they were calling upon idols; "O Baal, hear us." 2nd. They cannot "believe in him of whom they have not heard." Some way or other the Divine revelation must be made known to us before we can receive it, and assent to it; it is not born with us. In hearing is included reading, which is tantamount, and by which many are brought to believe; *Jno. xx. 31*. "These things are written that you may believe." But hearing only is mentioned, as the more ordinary and natural way of receiving information. 3rd. They cannot "hear without a preacher;" how should they? Somebody must tell them what they are to believe. Preachers and hearers are correlates. It is a blessed thing when they mutually rejoice in each other; the hearers in the skill and faithfulness of the preacher, and the preacher in the willingness and obedience of the hearers. 4th. They cannot "preach except they be sent;" that is, except they be both commissioned and in some measure qualified for their preaching work. How shall a man act as an ambassador unless he have both his credentials and his instructions from the prince that sends him? This proves that to the regular ministry there must be a regular mission and ordination. It is God's prerogative to send ministers; he is the Lord of the harvest, and therefore to him we must pray that he would send forth labourers, *Mat. ix. 38*. He only can qualify men for, and incline them to, the work of the ministry. But the competency of that qualification, and the sincerity of that inclination, must not be left to the judgment of every man for himself. The nature of the thing will by no means admit that; but for the preservation of due order in the church this must needs be referred and submitted to the judgment of a competent number of those that are themselves in that office, and of approved wisdom and experience in it; who, as in all other callings, are presumed the most able judges; and who are empowered to set apart such as they find so qualified and inclined to this work of the ministry; that by this preservation of the succession the name of Christ may endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. And they that are thus set apart, not only may, but must preach, as those that are sent.

2. How welcome the Gospel ought to be to those to whom it was preached; because it shewed the way to salvation, ver. 15; for this he quotes *Isa. lii. 7*, (the like passage we have, *Nah. i. 15*), which, if it point at the glad tidings of the deliverance of Israel out of Babylon in the type, yet it looks farther, to the Gospel, that is, the good news of our salvation by Jesus Christ. Observe, 1st. What the Gospel is. It is the Gospel of peace; it is the word of reconciliation between God and man. "On earth peace," *Lu. ii. 14*. Or, peace is put in general for all good; so it is explained here; it is "glad tidings of good things." The things of the Gospel are good things indeed, the best things; tidings concerning them are the most joyful tidings, the best news that ever came from heaven to earth. 2nd. What the work of ministers is. To preach this Gospel, to bring these glad tidings; to evangelize peace, (so the original is,) to evangelize good things. Every preacher is in this sense an evangelist. They are not only messengers to carry the news, but ambassadors to treat. And the first gospel preachers were angels, *Lu. ii. 16*. 3rd. How acceptable they should therefore be to the children of men, for their work's sake. "How beautiful are the feet!" that is, how welcome are they. Mary Magdalen expressed her love to Christ by kissing his feet, and after in holding him by the feet, *Mat. xxviii. 9*; and when Christ was sending forth his disciples he washed their feet. Those that preach the Gospel of peace should see to it that their feet, that is, their life and conversation, be beautiful. The holiness of ministers' lives is the beauty of their feet. How beautiful! namely, in the eyes of them that hear them. Those that welcome the message cannot but love the messengers: see *1 Thes. v. 12, 13*.

3. He answers an objection against all this, which might be taken from the small success which the Gospel had in many places; ver. 16, "But they have not all obeyed the Gospel." All the Jews have not, all the Gentiles have not; far the greater part of both remain in unbelief and disobedience. Observe, the Gospel is given us not only to be known and believed, but to be obeyed. It is not a system of notions, but a rule of practice. This little success of the word was likewise foretold by the prophet: *Isa. liii. 1*, "Who hath believed our report?" Very few have; few to what one would think should have believed it, considering how faithful a report it is, and how well worthy of all acceptance; very few to the many that persist in unbelief. It is no strange thing, but it is a very sad and uncomfortable thing, for the ministers of Christ to bring

ment" is the same which is here rendered "slumber," stupor. The reference of the psalmist is to the stupefying wine given to those who were about to be put to death. "God hath given them the spirit," &c.: "God is said to do that which is the result of the laws of man's moral and spiritual being as constituted by him" (Vaughan).

xi. 9, 10. These verses contain a description of the state of those who are snared in the work of their own hands, when the things which should have been for their peace are an occasion of falling; when

blessings perverted and opportunities neglected become curses. (Compare *Mal. ii. 2*.) "Snare—trap—stumbling-block—recompence;" the first three words express various forms of temptation, the last implies the reckoning, the retribution.

xi. 11. Alford renders this verse, "I say then, Did they stumble in order that they should fall? God forbid; but by their trespass salvation is come unto the Gentiles, in order to provoke them to jealousy." The design of God was not the fall or casting away of the

the report of the Gospel, and not to be believed in it. Under such a melancholy consideration it is good for us to go to God, and make our complaint to him. "Lord, who hath," &c. In answer to this,

1st. He shews that the word preached is the ordinary means of working faith. "So then," *ἀρα*, however; though many that hear do not believe, yet those that believe have first heard. "Faith cometh by hearing." It is the summary of what he had said before, ver. 14. The beginning, progress, and strength of faith is by hearing. The word of God is therefore called the word of faith; it begets and nourisheth it. God gives faith, but it is by the word as the instrument. Hearing, that is, that hearing which works faith, is "by the word of God." It is not hearing the enticing words of man's wisdom, but hearing the word of God, that will befriend faith, and hearing it as the word of God: see 1 *Thes.* ii. 13.

2nd. That those who would not believe the report of the gospel, yet having heard it, they were thereby left inexcusable, and may thank themselves for their own ruin, ver. 18, to the end.

First. The Gentiles have heard it; ver. 18, "Have they not heard?" Yes, more or less, they have, either heard the Gospel, or however heard of it. "Their sound went into all the earth;" not only a confused sound, but their words, more distinct and intelligible notices of these things, are "gone into the ends of the world." The commission which the apostles received runs thus: "Go ye into all the world, preach to every creature, disciple all nations;" and they did with indefatigable industry and wonderful success pursue that commission: see the extent of Paul's province, *Rom.* xv. 19. To this remote island of Britain, one of the utmost corners of the world, not only the sound, but the words of the Gospel, came within a few years after Christ's ascension. It was in order to this, that the gift of tongues was at the very first poured so plentifully upon the apostles, *Acts* ii. In the expression here he plainly alludes to *Ps.* xix. 4, which speaks of the notices which the visible works of God in the creation give to all the world of the power and godhead of the Creator. As under the Old Testament God provided for the publishing of the work of creation, by the sun, moon, and stars, so now for the publishing of the work of redemption to all the world, by the preaching of gospel ministers, who are therefore called stars.

[His object in using the words of the psalmist was, no doubt, to convey more clearly and affecting to the minds of his hearers the idea that the proclamation of the Gospel was now as free from all national or ecclesiastical restrictions, as the instructions shed down upon all the people by the heavens under which they dwell. Paul of course is not to be understood as quoting the psalmist as though the ancient prophet was speaking of the preaching of the Gospel. He simply uses Scriptural language to express his own ideas, as is done involuntarily almost by the preacher in every sermon. It will be perceived that the apostle says, "Their sound has gone," &c.; whereas in the 19th Psalm it is, "Their line is gone." Paul follows the Septuagint, which, instead of giving the literal sense of the Hebrew word, gives correctly its figurative meaning. The word signifies a line, then a musical chord, and then, metonymically, sound.—H.]

Secondly. The Jews have heard it too, ver. 19—21. For this he appeals to two passages of the Old Testament, to shew how inexcusable they are too. "Did not Israel know?" namely, that the Gentiles were to be called in. They might have known it from Moses and Isaiah.

1st. One is taken from *Deu.* xxxii. 21, "I will provoke you to jealousy." The Jews not only had the offer, but saw the Gentiles accepting of it, and advantaged by that acceptance, by the same token that they were vexed at it. They had the refusal: "To you first," *Acts* iii. 26. In all places where the apostles came, still the Jews had the first offer, and the Gentiles had but their leavings; if one would not, another would. Now this provoked them to jealousy; they, as the elder brother in the parable, *Lu.* xv., envied the reception and entertainment of the prodigal Gentiles, upon their repentance. The Gentiles are here called no people, and a foolish nation, that is, not the professing people of God. How much soever there be of the wit and wisdom of the world, those that are not the people of God are, and in the end will be, found to be a foolish people. Such was the state of the Gentile world, and yet made the people of God; and Christ to them the wisdom of God. What a provocation it was to the Jews to see the Gentiles taken into favour we may see, *Acts* xiii. 45; xvii. 5, 13; and especially, *Acts* xxii. 22. It was an instance of the great wickedness of the Jews that they were thus enraged; and this in *Deuteronomy* is the matter of a threatening. God often makes people's sin their punishment. A man needs no greater plague than to be left to the impetuous rage of his own lusts.

2nd. Another is taken from *Isa.* lxi. 1, 2, which is very full, and in it "Esaias is very bold;" bold indeed to speak so plainly of the rejection of his own countrymen. Those that will be found faithful have need to be very bold. Those that are resolved to please God must not be afraid to displease any man. Now Esaias speaks boldly and plainly,

(1.) Of the preventing grace and favour of God in the reception and entertainment of the Gentiles; ver. 20, "I was found of them that sought me not." The prescribed method is, Seek and find; that is a rule for us, not a rule for God, who is often found of those that do not seek. His grace is his own, differencing grace his own, and he dispenseth it in a way of sovereignty; gives or withholds it at pleasure, prevents us with the blessings, the richest choicest blessings of his goodness. Thus he manifested himself to the Gentiles, by sending the light of the Gospel among them when they were so far from seeking him, and asking after him, that they were following after lying vanities, and serving dumb idols. Was not this our own particular case? Did not God begin his love, and manifest himself to us when we did not ask after him? And was not that a time of love indeed, to be often remembered with a great deal of thankfulness?

(2.) Of the obstinacy and perverseness of Israel, notwithstanding the fair offers and affectionate invitations they had, ver. 21. Observe,

(1st.) God's great goodness to them; "All day long I have stretched forth my hands." (1.) His offers. "I have stretched forth my hands;" offering them life and salvation with the greatest sincerity and seriousness that can be, with all possible expressions of earnestness and importunity; shewing them the happiness tendered, setting it before them with the greatest evidence, reasoning the case with them. Stretching forth the hands is the gesture of those that require audience, *Acts* xxvi. 1; or desire acceptance, *Pr.* i. 24. Christ was crucified with his hands stretched out. "Stretched forth my hands," as offering reconciliation: Come, let us shake hands and be friends; and our duty is to give the hand to him, 2 *Chr.* xxx. 8. (2.) His patience in making these offers; "All day long." The patience of God toward provoking sinners is admirable: he waits to be gracious. The time of God's patience is here called a day, light—some as a day, and fit for work and business; but limited as a day, and a night at the end of it. He bears long, but he will not bear always.

(2nd.) Their great badness to him. They were "a disobedient, gainsaying people." One word in the Hebrew, in *Isaiah*, is here well explained by two; not only disobedient to the call, not yielding to it, but gainsaying, and quarrelling with it, which is much worse. Many that will not accept of a good proposal, yet will acknowledge that they have nothing to say against it; but the Jews who believed not rested not there, but contradicted and blasphemed.

Jews; rather, their trespass or lapse (not "fall," as in the English version, which contradicts the preceding question) has made room for the salvation of the Gentiles, and this with the view of rousing the Jews to emulation.

xi. 12—15. "Fall" here, as in verse 11, is better rendered "trespass." The contrast between "diminishing" and "fulness" in this verse refers to the present and future of Israel. "If the disgrace or degradation of Israel has had such a blessed accompaniment (viz., the

God's patience with them was a very great aggravation of their disobedience, and rendered that the more exceeding sinful, as their disobedience did advance the honour of God's patience, and rendered that the more exceeding gracious. It is a wonder of mercy in God that his goodness is not overcome by man's badness; and it is a wonder of wickedness in man that his badness is not overcome by God's goodness.

[From this discussion we may learn the following truths: 1. The heathen world is in danger without the Gospel. 2. The provisions of the Gospel are ample for them—for all. 3. The command of Jesus Christ remains still the same, to preach the Gospel to every creature. 4. If the Gospel is to be proclaimed everywhere, men must be sent forth into the vast field. 5. The church, in training young men for the ministry, in fitting her sons for these toils, is performing a noble and glorious work; a work which contemplates the triumphs of the Gospel among all nations. 6. That God will withdraw his favours from those nations that are disobedient and rebellious. Thus he rejected the ancient Jews; and thus also he will forsake all who abuse his mercies; who become proud, luxurious, effeminate, and wicked.—A. B.]

CHAPTER XI.

The apostle, having reconciled that great truth of the rejection of the Jews with the promise made unto the fathers, is in this chapter farther labouring to mollify the harshness of it, and to reconcile it to the Divine goodness in general. It might be said, "Hath God then cast away his people?" The apostle therefore sets himself in this chapter to make a return to this objection; and that two ways: I. He shews at large what the mercy is that is mixed with this wrath, ver. 1—32. II. He infers from thence the infinite wisdom and sovereignty of God, with the adoration of which he concludes this chapter and subject, ver. 33—36.



SAY then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. 4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. 5 Even so then at this present



BAAL.

time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. 7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. 8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. 9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: 10 Let their eyes be darkened, that

salvation of the Gentiles) how much more blessed a one shall Israel's honour bring with it, when his own people shall once more be set as a praise in the midst of the earth, and the glory of the nations" (Alford). The connection of verse 13 seems to be this: "I am speaking to you Gentiles: though a Jew, and interested in the restoration of my countrymen, I do not undervalue my office as apostle of the Gentiles; but I have a hope that my labours among the Gentiles may react upon my own people for their good and salvation."

they may not see, and bow down their back alway. 11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. 12 Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? 13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: 14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are my flesh*, and might save some of them. 15 For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving of them *be*, but life from the dead? 16 For if the firstfruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches. 17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert



THE WILD OLIVE.

grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; 18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee. 22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree? 25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved:

as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. 28 As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes. 29 For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance. 30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

The apostle proposes here a plausible objection, which might be urged against the Divine conduct in casting off the Jewish nation; ver. 1. "Hath God cast away his people?" Is the rejection total and final? are they all abandoned to wrath and ruin, and that eternal? is the extent of the sentence so large as to be without reserve, or the continuance of it so long as to be without repeal? will he have no more a peculiar people to himself? In opposition to this, he shews that there was a great deal of goodness and mercy expressed along with this seeming severity. Particularly he insists upon three things: 1. That though some of the Jews were cast off, yet they were not all so. 2. That though the body of the Jews were cast off, yet the Gentiles were taken in. And 3. That though the Jews were cast off at present, yet in God's due time they should be taken into his church again.

First. The Jews, it is true, were many of them cast off, but not all. The supposition of this he introduces with a "God forbid;" he will by no means endure such a suggestion. God had made a distinction between some and others of them.

1. There was a chosen remnant of believing Jews, that obtained righteousness and life by faith in Jesus Christ, ver. 1-7. These are said to be such as he foreknew, ver. 1, that is, had thoughts of love to before the world was; for whom he thus foreknew he did predestinate. There lies the ground of the difference. They are called the election, ver. 7; that is, the elect, God's chosen ones; whom he calls the election, because that which first distinguished them from, and dignified them above, others was God's electing love. Believers are the election, all those and those only whom God hath chosen. Now,

1st. He shews that he himself was one of them; "For I also am an Israelite;" that is to say, should I say that all the Jews are rejected, I should cut off my own claims, and see myself abandoned. Paul was a chosen vessel, *Acts ix. 15*; and yet he was of the seed of Abraham; and particularly of the tribe of Benjamin, the least and youngest of all the tribes of Israel.

2nd. He suggests that, as in Elias's time, so now, this chosen remnant was really more and greater than one would think it was, which intimates likewise, that it is no new or unusual thing for God's grace and favour unto Israel to be limited and confined to a remnant of that people; for so it was in Elias's time. The Scripture saith it of Elias, ἐν ἡλίῳ, in the story of Elias, the great reformer of the Old Testament. Observe,

First. His mistake concerning Israel; as if their apostacy in the days of Ahab was so general, that he himself was the only faithful servant God had in the world. He refers to *1 Kin. xix. 14*, where (it is here said) "he maketh intercession to God against Israel." A strange kind of intercession; ἐντυγχίνει τὸ θεῶν κατὰ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. He deals with God against Israel; so it may be read; so ἐντυγχάνω is translated, *Acts xxv. 24*, "The Jews, ἐντυχόν μοι, have dealt with me." In prayer we deal with God, commune with him, discourse with him; it is said of Elijah, *Jas. v. 17*, that he prayed in praying. We are then likely to pray in praying, to make a business of that duty, when we pray as those that are dealing with God in the duty. Now Elijah, in this prayer, spoke as if there were none left faithful in Israel but himself only. See to what a low ebb the profession of religion may sometimes be brought, and how much the face of it may be eclipsed, that the most wise and observing men may give it up for gone; so it was in Elias's time. That which makes the show of a nation is the powers and the multitude. The powers of Israel were then persecuting powers. "They have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars, and they seek my life." The multitude of Israel were then idolatrous: "I am left alone." Thus those few that were faithful to God were not only lost in the crowd of idolaters, but crushed and driven into corners by the rage of persecutors; "When the wicked rise, a man is hidden," *Pr. xxviii. 12*. "Digged down thine altars;" not only neglected them, and let them go out of repair, but digged them down. When altars were set up for Baal, it is no wonder if God's altars were pulled down; they could not endure that standing testimony against their idolatry. This was his intercession against Israel; as if he had said, Lord, is not this a people ripe for ruin, worthy to be cast off? What else canst thou do for thy great name? It is a very sad thing for any person or people to have the prayers of God's people against them, especially of God's prophets; for God doth espouse, and sooner or later will visibly own, the cause of his praying people.

Secondly. The rectifying this mistake by the answer of God; ver. 4, "I have reserved." Note, 1st. Things are oftentimes much better with the church of God than wise and good men think they are; they are ready to conclude hardly, and to give up all for gone, when it is not so. 2nd. In times of general apostacy there is usually a remnant that keep their integrity; some, though but a few,—all do not go one way. 3rd. That when there is a remnant who keep their integrity in times of general apostacy, it is God that reserves to himself that remnant; if he had left them to themselves, they had gone down the stream with the rest. It is his free and almighty grace that makes the difference between them and others. "Seven thousand;" a competent number to bear their testimony against the idolatry of Israel; and yet, compared with the many thousands of Israel, a very small number. One of a city, and two of a tribe, like the grape-gleanings of the vintage. Christ's flock is but a little flock; and yet, when they come all together at last, they will be a great and innumerable multitude, *Rev. vii. 9*. Now the description of this remnant is, that they "have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." That was then the reigning sin of Israel. In court, city and country, Baal had the ascendancy; and the generality of people, more or less, paid their respect to Baal. The

xi. 16. The allusion is to the offering of the first-fruits. The presentation was made of the sheaf (*Lev. xxiii. 10, 11*), and also of a portion of the lump of dough (*Num. xv. 19-21*). When these were offered all the produce was regarded as hallowed. Those Israelites who believed (the "remnant" of verse 5) were like the first-fruits of the whole mass or nation. The lump must correspond with the first-fruits, which are holy. Alford takes the "first-fruit" and the "root" both to apply to the patriarchs, especially Abraham.

xi. 17-24. The grafting process is usually the reverse of that which St. Paul here describes. Ordinarily, a good slip is grafted on an inferior stem, but there are instances of the reverse process. "The ancestors of Israel are the root; thou art but a branch, dependent for thy safety upon being supported by that root—in other words, upon being admitted into that Church of God which was founded in Abraham." The strength and life of that Church is through faith (see verse 20).

best evidence of integrity is a freedom from the present prevailing corruptions of the times and places that we live in; to swim against the stream when it is strong. Those God will own for his faithful witnesses that are bold in bearing their testimony to the present truth, 2 *Pei*. i. 12; this is thankworthy, not to bow to Baal when everybody bows. Sober singularity is commonly the badge of true sincerity.

Thirdly. The application of this instance to the case in hand; ver. 5-7, "Even so at this present time." God's methods of dispensation towards his church are as they used to be. As it has been so it is. In Elijah's time there was a remnant, and so there is now. If then there was a remnant left under the Old Testament, when the displays of grace were less clear, and the pouring out of the Spirit less plentiful, much more now under the Gospel, when the grace of God that bringeth salvation appears more illustrious. "A remnant," that is, a few of many; a remnant of believing Jews, when the rest were obstinate in their unbelief. This is called "a remnant according to the election of grace;" that is, they are such as were chosen from eternity in the counsels of Divine love to be vessels of grace and glory. "Whom he did predestinate, them he called." If the difference between them and others be made purely by the grace of God, as certainly it is, (I have reserved them, saith he, to myself,) then it must needs be according to the election; for we are sure that, whatever God doth, he doth it according to the counsel of his own will. Now concerning this remnant, we may observe,

1st. Whence it takes its rise. From the free grace of God, ver. 6; that grace which excludes works. The eternal election, in which the difference between some and others is first founded, is purely of grace, free grace; not for the sake of works done or foreseen; if so, it would not be grace. *Gratia non est ullo modo gratia, si non sit omni modo gratuita.* It is not grace, properly so called, if it be not perfectly free. Election is purely according to the good pleasure of his will, *Eph*. i. 5. Paul's heart was so full of the freeness of God's grace, that in the midst of his discourse he turns aside, as it were, to make this remark, "If of grace, then not of works;" and some observe, that faith itself, which in the matter of justification is opposed to works, is here included in them; for faith has a peculiar receptivity to receive the free grace of God for our justification, but not to receive that grace for our election.

2nd. What it doth obtain. That which Israel, that is, the body of the people, in vain sought for, ver. 7. Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, that is, justification and acceptance with God, (see *ch*. ix. 31;) but the election has obtained it. And in them the promise of God hath its accomplishment, and God's ancient kindness for that people is remembered. He calls the remnant of believers, not the elect, but the election, to shew that the sole foundation of all their hopes and happiness is laid in election. They were the persons whom God had in his eye in the counsels of his love; they are the election, they are God's choice.

Such was the favour of God to the chosen remnant. But, *2.* "The rest were blinded," ver. 7. Some are chosen and called, and the call is made effectual; but others are left to perish in their unbelief, nay, they were made worse by that which should have made them better. The Gospel, which to them that believed was the savour of life unto life, to the unbelieving was the savour of death unto death. The same sun softens wax and hardens clay. Good old Simeon foresaw that the child Jesus was set for the fall, as well as for the rising again of many in Israel, *Lu*. ii. 34. "Were blinded;" ἐκπρόσθηναι, they 'were hardened,' so some. They were seared, and made brawny and insensible. They could neither see the light nor feel the touch of gospel grace. Blindness and hardness are expressive of the same senselessness and stupidity of spirit. They shut their eyes, and would not see,—that was their sin; and then God in a way of righteous judgment blinded their eyes, that they could not see,—there was their punishment. This seemed harsh doctrine; to qualify it, therefore, he voucheth two witnesses out of the Old Testament which speak of such a thing.

1st. Isaiah, who spoke of such a judgment in his day, *Isa*. xxix. 10; vi. 9. "The spirit of slumber," that is, an indisposition to mind either their duty or interest. They are under the power of a prevailing unconcernedness, like people that are slumbering and sleeping, not affected with any thing that is said or done; they were resolved to continue as they were, and would not stir. The following words explain what is meant by the spirit of slumber: "Eyes that they should not see, ears that they should not hear." They had the faculties, but in the things that belonged to their peace they had not the use of those faculties; they were quite infatuated. They saw Christ, but they did not believe in him, they heard his word, but they did not receive it, and so both their hearing and seeing were in vain; it was all one as if they had neither seen nor heard. Of all judgments, spiritual judgments are the sorest and most to be dreaded, though they make the least noise. "Unto this day." Ever since Esaias prophesied, this hardening work hath been in the doing; some among them have been blind and senseless. Or rather, ever since the first preaching of the Gospel; though they have had the most convincing evidences that could be of the truth of it, the most powerful preaching, the fairest offers, the clearest calls, from Christ himself, from his apostles, yet to this day they are blinded. It is still true concerning multitudes of them even to this day in which we live; they are hardened and blinded. The obstinacy and unbelief goes by succession, from generation to generation, according to their own fearful imprecation which entailed the curse, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children."

2nd. David, ver. 9, 10, quoted from *Ps*. lxxix. 22, 23; where David, having in the Spirit foretold the sufferings of Christ from his own people the Jews, particularly that of their giving him vinegar to drink, *Ps*. lxxix. 21, which was literally fulfilled, *Mat*. xxvii. 48, an expression of the greatest contempt and malice, in the next words he doth, under the form of an imprecation, foretell the dreadful judgments of God upon them for it: "Let their table become a snare;" which the apostle here applies to the present blindness of the Jews, and the offence they took at the Gospel, which increased their hardness. This teacheth us how to understand other prayers of David against his enemies; they are to be looked upon as prophetic of the judgments of God upon the public and obstinate enemies of Christ and his kingdom. His prayer that it might be so, was a prophecy that it should be so, and not the private expressions of his own angry resentments; it was likewise intended to justify God, and to clear his righteousness in such judgments. He speaks here, *First*. Of the ruin of their comforts. "Let their table be made a snare;" that is, as the Psalmist explains it, let that which should be for their welfare be a trap to them. The curse of God will turn meat into poison. It is a threatening like that *Mal*. ii. 2, "I will curse your blessings." Their table a snare; that is, an occasion of sin, and an occasion of misery. Their very food, that should nourish them, shall choke them. *Secondly*. Of the ruin of their powers and faculties, ver. 10. "Their eyes darkened, their backs bowed down, that they can neither find the right way, nor, if they could, are they able to walk in it." The Jews, after their national rejection of Christ and his Gospel, became infatuated in their politics, so that their very counsels turned against them, and hastened their ruin by the Romans. They looked like a people designed for slavery and contempt, their backs bowed down to be ridden and trampled upon by all the nations about them. Or it may be understood spiritually,—their backs are bowed down in carnality and worldly-mindedness. *Curva in terris auiam*—

xi. 26-29. "Without repentance;" rather, "cannot be repented of;" are irrefragable, do not admit of a change of purpose. (Compare *Hos*. xiii. 14.) This explains verse 28 ("beloved for the fathers' sakes") to refer not to any merit, but to the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

xi. 30-32. "Unbelief" in these verses is translated by Alford "disobedience." "Your mercy" (verse 31) is "the mercy shown unto you," not that exercised by you

"they mind earthly things." This is an exact description of the state and temper of the present remainder of that people, than whom, if the accounts we have of them be true, there is not a more worldly, wilful, blind, selfish, ill-natured people in the world. They are manifestly to this day under the power of this curse. Divine curses will work long. It is a sign we have our eyes darkened, if we are bowed down in worldly-mindedness.

Secondly. Another thing which qualified this doctrine of the rejection of the Jews was, that, though they were cast off and unchurched, yet the Gentiles were taken in, ver. 11-14; which he applies by way of caution to the Gentiles, ver. 17-22.

1. The rejection of the Jews made room for the reception of the Gentiles. The Jews' leavings was a feast for the poor Gentiles; ver. 11, "Have they stumbled that they should fall?" Had God no other end in the forsaking and rejecting of them but their destruction? He startles at that, rejecting the thought with abhorrence, as usually he doth when anything is suggested which seems to reflect upon the wisdom, or righteousness, or goodness of God: "God forbid." No, "through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles." Not but that salvation might have come to the Gentiles if they had stood, but by the Divine appointment it was so ordered that the Gospel should be preached to the Gentiles upon the Jews' refusal of it. Thus in the parable, *Mat*. xii. 8, 9, "They that were first 'bidden were not worthy; so ye were thrust into the highways," *Lu*. xiv. 21; and so it was in the history, *Acts* xiii. 46. "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing you put it from you, lo, we turn to the Gentiles;" so *Acts* xviii. 6. God will have a church in the world, will have the wedding furnished with guests, and if one will not come another will, or why was the offer made? The Jews had the refusal, and so the tender came to the Gentiles. See how Infinite Wisdom brings light out of darkness, good out of evil, neat out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong. To the same purpose he saith, ver. 12, "The fall of them was the riches of the world;" that is, it hastened the Gospel so much the sooner into the Gentile world. The Gospel is the greatest riches of the place where it is; it is better than thousands of gold and silver. Or, the riches of the Gentiles was the multitude of converts among them. True believers are God's jewels. To the same purpose, ver. 15, "The casting away of them is the reconciling of the world." God's displeasure towards them made way for his favour towards the Gentiles. "God was in Christ reconciling the world," 2 *Cor*. v. 19. And therefore he took occasion from the unbelief of the Jews openly to disavow and disown them, though they had been his peculiar favourites; to shew that in dispensing his favours he would now no longer act in such a way of peculiarity and restriction; but that in every nation he that feared God and wrought righteousness should be accepted of him, *Acts* x. 34, 35.

2. The use that the apostle makes of this doctrine concerning the substitution of the Gentiles into the room of the Jews. *1st.* As a kinsman to the Jews, here is a word of excitement and exhortation to them, to stir them up to receive and embrace the Gospel offer. This God intended in his favour to the Gentiles, to provoke the Jews to jealousy, ver. 11, and Paul endeavours to enforce it accordingly, ver. 14. "If by any means I might provoke to emulation them which are my flesh." Shall the despised Gentiles run away with all the comforts and privileges of the Gospel, and shall not we forethink our refusal, and now at last put in for a share? Shall not we believe and obey, and be pardoned and saved as well as the Gentiles? See an instance of such an emulation in Esau, *Gen*. xxviii. 6-9. There is a commendable emulation in the affairs of our souls; why should not we be as holy and happy as any of our neighbours? In this emulation there needs no suspicion, undermining, or countermine, for the church hath room enough, and the new covenant grace and comfort enough, for us all. The blessings are not lessened by the multitudes of the sharers. "And might save some of them." See what was Paul's business,—to save souls; and yet the utmost he prometh himself is but to save some. Though he was such a powerful preacher, spoke and wrote with such evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, yet of the many he dealt with he could but save some. Ministers must think their pains well bestowed if they can but be instrumental to save some. *2nd.* As an apostle to the Gentiles, here is a word of caution to them. "I speak to you Gentiles." You believing Romans, you hear what riches of salvation are come to you by the fall of the Jews, but take heed lest you do anything to forfeit it. Paul takes this, as other occasions, to apply his discourse to the Gentiles, because he was the apostle of the Gentile, appointed for the service of their faith, to plant and water churches in the Gentile nations. This was the purport of his extraordinary mission, *Acts* xii. 21. "I will send thee far hence unto the Gentile:" compare *Acts* ix. 15. "It was likewise the intention of his ordination, *Gal*. ii. 9: compare *Acts* xii. 2. It ought to be our great and special care to do good to those that are under our charge; we must particularly mind that which is our own work. It was an instance of God's great love to the poor Gentiles, that he appointed Paul, who in gifts and graces excelled all the apostles, to be the apostle of the Gentiles. The Gentile world was a wider province, and the work to be done in it required a very able, skilful, zealous, courageous workman; such a one was Paul. God calls those to special work that he either sees or makes fit for it. "I magnify mine office." There were those that vilified it, and him because of it. It was because he was the apostle of the Gentiles that the Jews were so outrageous against him, *Acts* xxii. 21, 22, and yet he thought never the worse of it, though it set him up as the butt of all the Jewish rage and malice. It is a sign of true love to Jesus Christ, to reckon that service and work for him truly honourable which the world looks upon with scorn as mean and contemptible. The office of the ministry is an office to be magnified. Ministers are ambassadors for Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, and for their work's sake are to be esteemed highly in love. "Mine office;" τὴν διακονίαν μου, my ministry, my service, not my lordship and dominion. It was not the dignity and power, but the duty and work of an apostle, that Paul was so much in love with. Now, two things he exhorts the Gentiles to, with reference to the rejected Jews:

First. To have a respect for the Jews notwithstanding, and to desire their conversion. This is intimated in the prospect he gives them of the advantage that would accrue to the church by their conversion, ver. 12, 15. It would be as life from the dead; and therefore they must not insult and triumph over those poor Jews, but rather pity them, and desire their welfare, and long for the receiving of them again.

Secondly. To take heed to themselves lest they should stumble and fall as the Jews had done, ver. 17-22. Where observe,

1st. The privilege which the Gentiles had by being taken into the church. They "were grafted in," ver. 17, as a branch of a wild olive into a good olive; which is contrary to the way and custom of the husbandman, who grafts the good olive into the bad; but those that God grafts into the church, he finds wild, and barren, and good for nothing. Men graft to mend the tree, but God grafts to mend the imp. (1.) The church of God is an olive tree; flourishing and fruitful as an olive, *Ps*. lii. 8; *Hos*. xiv. 6; the fruit useful, for the honour both of God and man, *Jud*. ix. 9. (2.) Those that are out of the church are as "wild olive trees;" not only useless, but what they do produce is sour and unsavoury. "Wild by nature," ver. 24. This was the state of the poor Gentiles,

xii. 1. These are practical exhortations founded on what has gone before. "Therefore:" it seems best to make this word refer to the whole doctrinal part of the epistle. The apostle has set forth in various ways the mercy of God—mercy to mankind at large in the Gospel, mercy even in punishment of Israel (see chap. xi.). By these mercies we are exhorted to a consecrated Christian life. "Present:" the regular word for bringing to offer in sacrifice. "Your bodies:" either "your whole being," or, as Alford, strictly "your bodies;"

that wanted church privileges, and in respect of real sanctification; and it is the natural state of every one of us to be wild by nature. (3.) Conversion is the grafting in of wild branches into the good olive. We must be cut off from the old stock, and be brought into union with a new root. (4.) Those that are grafted into the good olive tree do partake of the root and fatness of the olive. It is applicable to a saving union with Christ; all that are by a lively faith grafted into Christ partake of him as the branches of the root, receive from his fulness. But it is here spoken of as a visible church membership, from which the Jews were as branches broken off, and so the Gentiles were grafted in, *in abscisio*,—"among them" that continued, or in the room of them that were broken off. The Gentiles, being grafted into the church, "partake of" the same privileges that the Jews did, "the root and fatness." The olive tree is the visible church, called so, *Jer. xi. 16*. The root of this tree was Abraham; not the root of communion, so Christ only is the root, but the root of administration, he being the first with whom the covenant was solemnly made. Now the believing Gentiles partake of this root; "he also is a son of Abraham," *Lu. xix. 9*; "the blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles," *Gal. iii. 14*; the same fatness of the olive tree, the same for substance, special protection, lively oracles, means of salvation, a standing ministry, instituted ordinances, and, among the rest, a visible church membership of their infant seed, which was part of the fatness of the olive tree that the Jews had, and cannot be imagined to be denied to the Gentiles.

2nd. A caution not to abuse these privileges.

(1.) Be not proud; ver. 18, "Boast not against the branches." Do not therefore trample upon the Jews as a reprobate people, nor insult over them that are broken off, much less over those that do continue. Grace is given, not to make us proud, but to make us thankful. The law of faith excludes all boasting, either of ourselves or against others. Do not say, ver. 19, "They were broken off, that I might be grafted in;" that is, do not think that thou didst merit more at the hand of God than they, or didst stand higher in his favour. But remember, "Thou hearest not the root, but the root thee;" though thou art grafted in, thou art still but a branch borne by the root; nay, and an engrafted branch, brought into the good olive "contrary to nature," ver. 24: not free born, but by an act of grace enfranchised and naturalized. Abraham, the root of the Jewish church, is not beholden to thee, but thou art greatly obliged to him, as the trustee of the covenant, and the father of many nations. Therefore, "if thou boast," know (that word must be supplied to clear the sense) "thou hearest not the root, but the root thee."

(2.) Be not secure; ver. 20, "Be not highminded, but fear." Be not too confident of your own strength and standing. A holy fear is an excellent preservative against highmindedness; happy is the man that thus feareth always. We need not fear but God will be true to his word, all the danger is lest we be false to ours: "Let us therefore fear," *Heb. iv. 1*. The church of Rome now boasts of a patent of perpetual preservation; but the apostle here in his epistle to that church, when she was in her infancy and integrity, enters an express caveat against that boast, and all claims of that kind. Fear what? Why fear lest thou commit a forfeiture, as they have done, lest thou lose the privileges thou now enjoy, as they have lost theirs. Others' harms should be our warnings. "Go," saith God to Jerusalem, (*Jer. vii. 12*), "and see what I did to Shiloh;" so now, let all the churches of God go see what he did to Jerusalem, and what is become of the day of their visitation, that we may hear, and fear, and take heed of Jerusalem's sin. The patent which churches have of their privileges is not for a certain term, or entailed upon them and their heirs, but it runs as long as they carry themselves well, and no longer. Consider,

(1st.) How they were broken off. It was not undeservedly, by an act of absolute sovereignty and prerogative, but "because of unbelief." It seems then it is possible for churches that have long stood by faith to fall into such a state of infidelity as may be their ruin. Their unbelief did not only provoke God to cut them off, but they did by that cut themselves off; it was not only the meritorious, but the formal cause of their separation. Now, thou art liable to the same infirmity and corruption that they fell by. Farther observe, they were natural branches, ver. 21, not only interested in Abraham's covenant, but descending from Abraham's loins, and so born upon the promises, and thence had a kind of tenant right; yet, when they sunk into unbelief, God did not spare them. Prescription, long usage, the faithfulness of their ancestors, would not secure them. It was in vain to plead, though they insisted much upon it, that they were Abraham's seed, *Mat. iii. 9*; *Jno. viii. 33*. It is true, they were the husbandmen to whom the vineyard was first let out, but when they forfeited it, it was justly taken from them, *Mat. xxi. 41, 43*. This is called here severity, ver. 22. God laid righteousness to the line, and judgment to the plummet, and dealt with them according to their sins. Severity is a word that sounds harsh, and I do not remember that it is any where else in Scripture ascribed to God, and it is here applied to the unchurching of the Jews. God is most severe towards those that have been in profession nearest to him, if they rebel against him, *Am. iii. 2*. Patience and privileges abused turn to the greatest wrath. Of all judgments spiritual judgments are the sorest, for of those he is here speaking, ver. 8.

(2nd.) How thou standest, thou that art engrafted in. He speaks to the Gentile churches in general, though perhaps tacitly reflecting on some particular person, who might have expressed some such pride and triumph in the Jews' rejection. Consider then, (1.) By what means thou standest. By faith, which is a depending grace, and fetcheth in strength from heaven. Thou dost not stand in any strength of thy own, of which thou mightest be confident; thou art no more than the free grace of God makes thee, and his grace is his own, which he gives or withholds at pleasure. That which ruined them was unbelief, and by faith thou standest: therefore thou hast no faster hold than they had, thou standest on no firmer a foundation than they did. (2.) On what terms; ver. 22, "Towards thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness" that is, continue in a dependence upon, and compliance with, the free grace of God, the want of which it was that ruined the Jews; if thou be careful to keep up thine interest in the Divine favour, by being continually careful to please God, and fearful of offending him. The sum of our duty, the condition of our happiness, is to keep ourselves in the love of God. "Fear the Lord and his goodness," *Hos. iii. 5*.

Thirdly. Another thing that qualified this doctrine of the Jews' rejection is, that though for the present they are cast off, yet the rejection is not final, but when the fulness of time is come, they will be taken in again. They are not cast off for ever, but mercy is remembered in the midst of wrath. Let us observe,

1. How this conversion of the Jews is here described. 1st. It is said to be their fulness, ver. 12, that is, the addition of them to the church, the filling up again of that place which became vacant by their rejection. This would be the enriching of the world, that is, the church in the world, with a great deal of light, and strength, and beauty. 2nd. It is called the receiving of them. The conversion of a soul is the receiving of that soul; so the conversion of a nation. They shall be received into favour, into the church, into the love of Christ, whose arms are stretched out for the receiving of all those that will come to him. And this will be "as life from the dead," so strange and surprising, and yet withal so welcome and acceptable. The conversion of the Jews will

bring great joy to the church. See *Lu. xv. 32*, "He was dead, and is alive," and therefore "it was meet we should make merry and be glad." 3rd. It is called "the grafting of them in again" (ver. 23) into the church, from which they had been broken off. That which is grafted in receives sap and virtue from the root, so doth a soul that is truly grafted into the church receive life, and strength, and grace, from Christ the quickening root. They shall be "grafted into their own olive tree," ver. 24, that is, into the church, which formerly they had been the most eminent and conspicuous members of; to retrieve these privileges of visible church membership which they had so long enjoyed, but have now sinned away and forfeited by their unbelief. 4th. It is called, the saving of all Israel, ver. 25. True conversion may well be called salvation: it is salvation begun. See *Acts ii. 47*. The adding of them to the church is the saving of them; *τοὺς σωζόμενους*, in the present tense, 'are saved.' When conversion work goes on, salvation work goes on.

2. What it is grounded upon, and what reason we have to look for it.

1st. Because of the holiness of the firstfruits and the root, ver. 16. Some by the firstfruits understand those of the Jews that were already converted to the faith of Christ, and received into the church; which were, as the firstfruits, dedicated to God, as earnest of a more plentiful and sanctified harvest. A good beginning promises a good ending. Why may we not suppose that others may be savingly wrought upon, as well as those who are already brought in? Others by the firstfruits understand the same with the root; namely, the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from whom the Jews descended, and with whom, as the prime trustees, the covenant was deposited; and so they were the root of the Jews, not only as a people, but as a church. Now, if they were holy, which is not meant so much of inherent as of federal holiness; if they were in the church, and in the covenant, then we have reason to conclude that God hath a kindness for the lump, that is, the body of that people; and for the branches, that is, the particular members of it. The Jews are in a sense a holy nation, *Ex. xix. 6*, being descended from holy parents. Now it cannot be imagined that such a holy nation should be totally and finally cast off. This proves that the seed of believers, as such, are within the pale of the visible church, and within the verge of the covenant, till they do by their unbelief throw themselves out; for, "if the root be holy, so are the branches." Though real qualifications be not propagated, yet relative privileges are; though a wise man do not beget a wise man, yet a free man begets a free man; though grace doth not run in the blood, yet external privileges do, (till they are forfeited,) even to a thousand generations. Look how they will answer it another day that cut off the entail, by turning the seed of the faithful out of the church, and so not allowing the blessing of Abraham to come upon the Gentiles. The Jewish branches are reckoned holy because the root was so. This is expressed more plainly, ver. 28, "They are beloved for the fathers' sakes." In this love to the fathers the first foundation of their church state was laid; *Deu. iv. 37*, "Because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them." And the same love would revive their privileges, for still the ancient loving-kindness is remembered; "They are beloved for the fathers' sakes." It is God's usual method of grace. Kindness to the children for the father's sake is therefore called the kindness of God, *2 Sam. ix. 3, 7*. Though, "as concerning the Gospel," namely, in the present dispensation of it, "they are enemies" to it "for your sakes,"—that is, for the sake of the Gentiles, against whom they have such an antipathy,—yet when God's time is come that will wear off, and God's love to their fathers will be remembered. See a promise that points at this, *Lev. xxvi. 42*. The iniquity of the fathers is visited but to the third and fourth generation; but there is mercy kept for thousands. Many fare the better for the sake of their godly ancestors. It is upon this account that the church is called their own olive-tree. Long it had been their own peculiar; which is some encouragement to us to hope that there may be room for them in it again, for old acquaintance sake; that which hath been may be again. Though particular persons and generations wear off in unbelief, yet there having been a national church membership, though for the present suspended, yet we may expect that it will be revived again.

2nd. Because of the power of God; ver. 23, "God is able to graft them in again." The conversion of souls is a work of Almighty power; and when they seem most hardened, and blinded, and obstinate, our comfort is that God is able to work a change, able to graft those in that have been long cast out and withered. When the house is kept by the strong man armed with all his force, yet God is stronger than he, and is able to dispossess him. The condition of their restoration is faith; "If they abide not still in unbelief." So that nothing is to be done but to remove that unbelief, that is the great obstacle; and God is able to take that away, though nothing less than an Almighty power will do it; the same power that raised up Christ from the dead, *Eph. i. 19, 20*. Otherwise, can these dry bones live?

3rd. Because of the grace of God manifested to the Gentiles. Those that have themselves experienced the grace of God, preventing, distinguishing grace, may from thence take encouragement to hope well concerning others. This is his argument, ver. 24. If thou wert grafted into a good olive, that was wild by nature, much more shall these that were the natural branches, and may therefore be presumed somewhat nearer to the Divine acceptance. This is a suggestion very proper to check the insolence of those Gentile Christians that looked with disdain and triumph upon the condition of the rejected Jews, and trampled upon them; as if he should say, Their condition, as bad as it is, is not so bad as yours was before your conversion, and therefore why may it not be made as good as yours is? This is his argument, ver. 30, 31, "As ye in time past have not" &c. It is good for those that have found mercy with God to be often thinking what they were in time past, and how they obtained that mercy. This would help to soften our censures of, and quicken our prayers for, those that still continue in unbelief. He argues farther from the occasion of the Gentiles' call,—namely, the unbelief of the Jews,—thence it took rise; "You have obtained mercy through their unbelief;" much more shall they obtain mercy through your mercy. If the putting out of their candle was the lighting of yours, by that power of God who brings good out of evil, much more shall the continued light of your candle, when God's time is come, be a means of lighting theirs again. "That through your mercy they might obtain mercy;" that is, that they may be beholden to you, as you have been to them. He takes it for granted that the believing Gentiles would do their utmost endeavour to work upon the Jews; that when God had persuaded Japheth he would be labouring to persuade Shem. True grace hates monopolies. Those that have found mercy themselves should endeavour that through their mercy others also may obtain mercy.

4th. Because of the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament which point at this. He quotes a very remarkable one, ver. 26, from *Isa. li. 20, 21*, where we may observe,

First. The coming of Christ promised; "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer." Jesus Christ is the great Deliverer, which supposes mankind in a state of misery and danger. In *Isaiah* it is, "the Redeemer shall come to Zion." There he is called the Redeemer, here the Deliverer; he delivers in a way of redemption, by a price. There he is said to come to Zion because, when the prophet prophesied, he was yet to come into the world, and Zion was his first head-quarters; thither he came, there he took up his residence. But when the

thus teaching "that the sanctification of Christian life is to extend to that part of man's nature which is most completely under the bondage of sin." "Living sacrifice;" in contrast with the Levitical, which were slain animals. But the sacrifice is not here one of expiation, but of dedication—a thank-offering. "Reasonable;" Alford renders "rational," and interprets it as opposed to carnal (*Heb. vii. 16*). The sacrifices of the Christian are spiritual (*1 Pet. ii. 5*).

xii. 2. "Conformed," "transformed;" "Fashion not yourselves

after the pattern of those who make the present their all (compare *1 Pet. i. 14*; *1 Cor. vii. 31*), but be ye also transformed." The same word is used of the transfiguration (*Matt. xvii. 2*). "Mind:" not the heart alone, but the understanding needs renewing. "Prove;" Alford renders "discern." Vaughan paraphrases, "That you may discriminate habitually, progressively, approvingly, what is," &c.

xii. 3. The general exhortations of verses 1 and 2 are applied to particular cases. Verse 3 has in it a play upon words, which Alford

apostle wrote this he was come, he had been in Zion; and he is speaking of the fruits of his appearing, which shall come out of Zion; from thence, as from the spring, issued forth those streams of living water which, in the everlasting Gospel, watered the nations; "Out of Zion went forth the law," *Isa. ii. 3*: compare *Lu. xxiv. 47*.

Secondly, The end and purpose of his coming; "He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Christ's errand into the world was to turn away ungodliness, to turn away the guilt by the purchase of pardoning mercy, and to turn away the power by the pouring out of renewing grace; to "save his people from their sins," *Mat. i. 21*; to part betwixt us and our sins, that iniquity might not be our ruin, and that it might not be our ruler. Especially to turn it away from Jacob; which is that for the sake of which he quotes the text as a proof of the great kindness God intended for the seed of Jacob. What greater kindness could he do them than to turn away ungodliness from them? to take away that which comes between them and all happiness? take away sin, and then make way for all good? This is the blessing that Christ was sent to bestow upon the world, and to tender it to the Jews in the first place, *Acts iii. 26*, to turn people from their iniquities. In *Isaiah* it is, "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob;" which shews who in Zion were to have a share in, and to reap benefit by, the deliverance promised: those, and those only, that leave their sins and turn to God. To them Christ comes as a redeemer, but as an avenger to them that persist in impenitence: see *Deu. xxx. 2, 3*. Those that turn from sin will be owned as the true citizens of Zion, *Eph. ii. 19*; the right Jacob, *Ps. xxiv. 4, 6*. Putting both these readings together we learn that none have an interest in Christ but those that turn from their sins, nor can any turn from their sins but by the strength of the grace of Christ. "For this is my covenant with them;" this, that the Deliverer shall come to them; this, that my Spirit shall not depart from them, as it follows, *Isa. lix. 21*. God's gracious intentions concerning Israel were made the matter of a covenant, which the God that cannot lie could not but be true and faithful to. They were "the children of the covenant," *Acts iii. 25*. The apostle adds, "When I shall take away their sins;" which some think refers to *Isa. xxvii. 9*; or only to the foregoing words, "to turn away ungodliness." Pardon of sin is laid as the foundation of all the blessings of the new covenant; *Heb. viii. 12*, "For I will be merciful." Now from all this he infers that certainly God had great mercy in store for that people, something answerable to the extent of these rich promises; and he proves his inference, ver. 29, by this truth, "For the gifts and callings of God are without repentance." Repentance is sometimes taken for a change of mind, and so God never repents; for he is in one mind, and who can turn him? Sometimes for a change of way, and that is here understood, intimating the constancy and unchangeableness of that love of God which is founded in election. Those gifts and callings are immutable; whom he so loves he loves to the end. We find God repenting that he had given man a being, *Gen. vi. 6*, "It repented the Lord that he had made man;" and repenting that he had given a man honour and power, *1 Sam. xv. 11*, "It repented me that I have set up Saul to be king;" but we never find God repenting that he had given a man grace, or effectually called him; those "gifts and callings are without repentance."

3. The time, and extent, [and effects] of this conversion, when and where it is to be expected. It is called a mystery, ver. 25, that which was not obvious, and which one would not expect upon the view of the present state of that people; who appeared generally so obstinate against Christ and Christianity, that it was a riddle to talk of their unanimous conversion. The conversion of the Gentiles is called a mystery, *Eph. iii. 3, 6, 9*. The case of the rejected Jews seemed as bad now as that of the Gentiles had been. The work of conversion is carried on in a mystery. Now he would have them know so much of this mystery as to keep them humble; "Lest you be wise in your own conceits;" that is, lest you be too much puffed up with your church membership, and trample upon the Jews. Ignorance is the cause of our self-conceit;ness; "I would not have you ignorant, lest you be wise in your own conceits." Observe,

1st. Their present state. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel." Here is something to qualify it, that it is but in part; there is a remnant that see the things which belong to their peace; though part, the far greater part, are in blindness, ver. 7, 8. To the same purpose, ver. 32, "God has concluded them all in unbelief," shut them up as in a prison; given them over to their own hearts' lusts. "Shutting up" is sometimes put for conviction, as *Gal. iii. 22*; they all stand before God convicted of unbelief. They would not believe; Why then, saith God, you shall not. They peremptorily refused to submit to Christ and his government; which refusal of theirs was, as it were, entered upon record in the court of heaven, and was conclusive against them.

2nd. When this blessed change should be. "When the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in;" that is, when the Gospel has had its intended success, and made its progress in the Gentile world; compare ver. 12. The Jews shall continue in blindness till God hath performed his whole work among the Gentiles, and then their turn will come next to be remembered. This was the purpose and ordination of God, for wise and holy ends; things should not be ripe for the Jews' conversion till the church was replenished with the Gentiles, that it might appear that God's taking them again was not because he had need of them, but of his own free grace.

3rd. The extent of it. "All Israel shall be saved," ver. 26. He "will have mercy upon all," ver. 32. Not every individual person, but the body of the people. Not that ever they should be restored to their covenant of peculiarity again, to have their priesthood, and temple, and ceremonies again; an end is put to all those things; but they should be brought to believe in Christ the true Messiah, whom they crucified, and be incorporated in the Christian church, and become one sheepfold with the Gentiles under Christ the great Shepherd. But the question is concerning the accomplishment of all this. *First*. Some think it is done already; when before, and in, and after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, multitudes of the Jews were convinced of their infidelity, and turned Christians; so many that, considering how many millions of them were cut off in the destruction, we may reasonably conclude that of those which survived the greater part were Christian, and embodied in the Christian church, and it was a very inconsiderable number that perished obstinate. For many ages Judea had, as other Christian provinces, their ministers and churches, and a face of religion. And most of this work, they suppose, was done towards the close of the ministry of the apostles, when the Gentiles were generally come in. *Secondly*. Others think that it is yet to have its accomplishment towards the end of the world; that those Jews which yet wonderfully remain distinct from the rest of the nations, by their names, customs, and religion, and are very numerous, especially in the Levant parts, shall, by the working of the Spirit with the word, be convinced of their sin, and brought generally to embrace the Christian faith, and to join in with the Christian churches; which will contribute much to their strength and beauty. Alas! who shall live when God doth this?

4th. The effects of it. It appears pretty obvious, that a great national movement towards Christianity on the part of the Jews, and their actual adoption of a faith which they have so long held in detestation, must tell with mighty

and decisive effect on the rest of the world. If the very existence of the Jews as a separate people be in itself the indication of a providence—a singular event in history, which demonstrates the part taken by him who overrules all history in the affairs of men—how much more impressive will the evidence become, when this same people shall describe the actual evolution, which it was predicted they should do, more than two thousand years ago; shall, after the dispersions and the desolations of many generations, reach at last the very landing place, to which the finger of prophecy has been pointing from an antiquity so high as that of the patriarchal ages? We know not if this splendid era is to be ushered in by palpable and direct miracle. We would not affirm this, but far less can we deny it. But should there be no such manifestation of the Divine power conjoined with this marvellous fulfilment, there will at least be such a manifestation of the Divine knowledge, as will incontestably prove that God has had to do with it; and so as that history shall of itself perform the office of revelation, or men will trace the finger of the Almighty in the events which are sensibly passing before their eyes. And besides, we have reason to believe of these converted Jews, that they will become the most zealous and successful of all missionaries; or, like Paul before them, the preachers of that faith which they persecuted in times past, and once laboured to destroy, *Gal. i. 23*. It is said of a single Christian that he may be the light of the world, *Mat. v. 14*. How much more will be a whole nation of Christians—glowing in the full ardour of their new-born convictions with apostolic fervour; and the very fruit of whose conversion will tell with a hundredfold greater effect than even that of St. Paul, as a testimony or evidence for the faith. Verily, like him, their great prototype, they will pre-eminently and emphatically be the apostles of the Gentiles; and there will be a light to lighten these Gentiles, in the very glory of the people of Israel, *Lu. ii. 32*. We must look to futurity for this great accomplishment—for, most obviously, it has not yet been realized. It will be "in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." This is all yet to come—else how could it be spoken, as an immediate sequence of its fulfilment—that "He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more?" *Isa. ii. 2-4*; *Mic. iv. 2-4*.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

The apostle having insisted so largely, through the greatest part of this chapter, upon reconciling the rejection of the Jews with the Divine goodness, he concludes with the acknowledgment and admiration of the Divine wisdom and sovereignty in all this. Here the apostle doth with great affection and awe adore.

First. The secrecy of the Divine counsels; "O the depth!" in these proceedings towards the Jews and Gentiles; or in general the whole mystery of the Gospel, which we cannot fully comprehend. "The riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God;" that is, the abundant instances of his wisdom and knowledge in the contriving and carrying on of the work of our redemption by Christ; a depth which the angels put into, *1 Pet. i. 12*. Much more may it puzzle any human understanding to give an account of the methods, and reasons, and designs, and reaches of it. Paul was as well acquainted with the mysteries of the kingdom of God as ever any mere man was; and yet he confesseth himself at a loss in the contemplation; and, despairing to find the bottom, he humbly sits down at the brink and adores the depth. Those that know most in this state of imperfection cannot but be most sensible of their own weakness and short-sightedness; and that after all their searches, and all their attainments in those searches, while they are here they cannot order their speech by reason of darkness. "Praise is silent to thee," *Ps. lxxv. 1*. "The depth of the riches." Men's riches of all kinds are shallow, you may soon see bottom; but God's riches are deep; *Ps. xxxvi. 6*, "Thy judgments are a great deep." There is not only a depth in the Divine counsels, but riches too, which notes an abundance of that which is precious and valuable; so complete are the dimensions of the Divine counsels, they have not only depth and height, but breadth and length, *Eph. iii. 18*, and that passing knowledge, ver. 19, "Riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God." His seeing of all things by one clear, and certain, and infallible view; all things that are, or ever were, or ever shall be; that all is naked and open before him,—there is his knowledge. His ruling and ordering of all things, directing and disposing of them to his own glory, and the bringing about of his own purposes and counsels in all,—that is his wisdom. And the vast reach of both these is such a depth as is past our fathoming, and we may soon lose ourselves in the contemplation of them; "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me," *Ps. cxxxix. 6*; compare ver. 17, 18, "How unsearchable are his judgments!" that is, his counsels and purposes; "and his ways," that is, the execution of these counsels and purposes. We know not what he designs; when the wheels are set in motion, and providence hath begun to work, yet we know not what he drives at, it is "past finding out." This doth not only overturn all our positive conclusions about the Divine counsels, but it also checks all our curious inquiries. Secret things belong not to us, *Deu. xxix. 29*. God's way is in the sea, *Ps. lxxvii. 19*; compare *Job xxiii. 8, 9*; *Ps. xcvi. 2*. What he doth we know not now, *Jno. xiii. 7*. We cannot give a reason of God's proceedings, or by searching find out God; see *Job v. 9*; ix. 10. The judgments of his month, and the way of our duty, blessed be God, are plain and easy, it is a highway; but the judgments of his heart, and the ways of his providence, are dark and mysterious, which therefore we must not pry into, but silently adore and acquiesce in. The apostle speaks this here especially with reference to that strange turn, the casting off of the Jews, and the entertainment of the Gentiles, with a purpose to take in the Jews again in due time. These were strange proceedings, the choosing of some, the refusing of others, and neither according to the probabilities of human conjecture. Even so, Father, because it seemed good in thine eyes. These are methods unaccountable, concerning which we must say, "O the depth!" "Past finding out," ἀνεξετάστον, 'cannot be traced.' God leaves no

expresses thus: "Not to be high-minded above that which he ought to be, but to be so minded as to be sober-minded." "Measure of faith:" our estimate of ourselves must be measured not by attainments or achievements, but by faith; yet this we must remember is God's gift.

xii. 6. "Prophecy according to the proportion of faith:" literally, "of the faith." Alford takes faith here to be the faith of him who prophesies, faith being the faculty needed for the exercise of all spiritual

gifts. Others understand by faith the Gospel, and explain the precept, as Vaughan, "Let us have no favourite doctrines."

xii. 7. "Wait on our ministering:" "wait on" is not found in the original. "Ministry:" the word is specially applied to the ministering to the poor. (Compare *Acts vi. 1*, xii. 25; *Rom. xv. 31*.) The precept enjoins a contented and interested discharge of duty; similarly "on teaching" within the bounds of that sphere which has been allotted to him by God, or for which God has given the faculty.

prints or footprints behind him, doth not make a path to shine after him, but his paths of providence are new every morning: he doth not go the same way so often as to make a track of it. "How little a portion is heard of him!" *Job xxvi. 14.* It follows, ver. 34, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord?" Is there any creature made of his cabinet council, or laid, as Christ was, in the bosom of the Father? Is there any to whom he has imparted his counsels, or that is able upon the view of his providences to know the way that he takes? There is that vast distance and disproportion between God and man, between the Creator and the creature, as doth for ever exclude the thought of such an intimacy and familiarity. The apostle makes the same challenge, *1 Cor. ii. 16.* "For who hath known the mind of the Lord?" And yet there he adds, "But we have the mind of Christ," which intimates that through Christ true believers, that have his Spirit, know so much of the mind of God as is necessary to their happiness. He that did know the mind of the Lord he has declared him, *1 John i. 18*; and so, though we know not the mind of the Lord, yet if we have the mind of Christ we have enough. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him," *Psal. xxv. 14.* "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?" see *1 John xv. 15.* "Or who has been his counsellor?" He needs no counsellor, for he is infinitely wise; nor is any creature capable of being his counsellor: that would be like lighting a candle to the sun. This seems to refer to that scripture, *Isa. xl. 13, 14.* "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord? or, being his counsellor, has taught him? with whom took he counsel?" &c. It is the substance of God's challenge to Job concerning the work of creation, *Job xxxviii.*, and is applicable to all the methods of his providence. It is nonsense for any man to prescribe to God, or to teach him how to govern the world.

Secondly, The sovereignty of the Divine counsels. In all these things God acts as a free agent, doth what he will, because he will, and giveth not account of any of his matters, *Job xxiii. 13*; *xxxiii. 13.* And yet there is no unrighteousness with him. To clear which,

1. He challengeth any to prove God a debtor to him; ver. 35, "Who hath first given to him?" Who is there of all the creatures that can prove that God is beholden to him? Whatever we do for him, or devote to him, it must be with that acknowledgment, which is for ever an estoppel to such demands, *1 Chr. xxix. 14.* "Of thine own we have given thee." All the duties we can perform are not requitals, but restitutions rather. If any can prove that God is their debtor, the apostle here stands bound for the payment, and proclaims in God's name that payment is ready: "It shall be recompensed to him again." It is certain God will let nobody lose by him; but never any one yet durst make a demand of this kind, or attempt to prove it. This is here suggested to silence the clamours of the Jews. When God took away their visible church privileges from them, he did but take his own; and may he not do what he will with his own? give or withhold his grace, where and when he pleases? To silence likewise the insultings of the Gentiles; when God sent the Gospel among them, and gave so many of them grace and wisdom to accept of it, it was not because he owed them so much favour, or that they could challenge it as a debt, but of his own good pleasure.

2. He resolves all into the sovereignty of God; ver. 36, "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things," that is, God is all in all. All things in heaven and earth, especially those things which relate to our salvation, the things that belong to our peace, they are all of him by way of creation, through him by way of providential influence, that they may be to him in their final tendency and result. Of God as the spring and fountain of all: through Christ, God-man, as the conveyance; to God as the ultimate end. These three include, in general, all God's causal relations to his creatures: of him, as the first efficient; through him, as the supreme dirigent; to him, as the ultimate, final cause: for the Lord hath made all for himself, *Rev. iv. 11.* If all be of him, and through him, there is all the reason in the world that all should be to him, and for him. It is a necessary circulation; if the rivers receive their waters from the sea, they return them to the sea again, *Eccles. i. 7.* To do all to the glory of God is to make a virtue of necessity; for all shall in the end be to him whether we will or no. And so he concludes with a short doxology, "To whom be glory for ever, Amen." God's universal agency as the first cause, the sovereign Ruler, and the last end, ought to be the matter of our adoration. Thus all his works do praise him objectively; but his saints do bless him actively; they hand that praise to him which all the creatures do minister matter for, *Psal. cxlv. 10.* He had been discoursing at large of the counsels of God concerning man, sifting the point with a great deal of accuracy; but after all he concludes with the acknowledgment of the Divine sovereignty, as that into which all these things must be ultimately resolved, and in which alone the mind can safely and sweetly rest. This is, if not the scholastical way, yet the Christian way of disputation. Whatever are the premises, let God's glory be the conclusion; especially when we come to talk of the Divine counsels and actings, it is best for us to turn our arguments into awful and serious adorations. The glorified saints, that see farthest into these mysteries, never dispute, but praise to eternity.

CHAPTER XII.

The apostle, having at large cleared and confirmed the prime fundamental doctrines of Christianity, comes in the next place to press the principal duties. We mistake our religion, if we look upon it only as a system of notions, and a guide to speculation; no, it is a practical religion, that tends to the right ordering of the conversation. It is designed, not only to inform our judgments, but to reform our hearts and lives. From the method of the apostle's writing in this as in some other of the epistles, as from the management of the principal ministers of state in Christ's kingdom, the stewards of the mysteries of God may take direction how to divide the word of truth: not to press duty abstract from privileges, nor privileges abstract from duty; but let both go together, with a complicated design, they will greatly promote and befriend each other. The duties are drawn from the privileges by way of inference. The foundation of Christian practice must be laid in Christian knowledge and faith. We must first understand how we receive Christ Jesus the Lord, and then we shall know the better how to walk in him. There is a great deal of duty prescribed in this chapter; the exhortations are short and pithy, briefly summing up what is good, and what the Lord our God in Christ requires of us. It is an abridgment of the Christian directory, an excellent heap of rules for the right ordering of the conversation, as becomes the Gospel. It is joined to the foregoing discourse by the word, "Therefore." It is the practical application of doctrinal truths that is the life of preaching. He had been discoursing at large of justification by faith, and of the riches of free grace, and the pledges and assurances we have of the glory that is to be revealed. From hence carnal liberties would be apt to infer, "Therefore we may live as we list, and walk in the way of our hearts, and the sight of our eyes;" no, that doth not follow; the faith that justifies is a faith that works by love. And there is no other way to heaven but the way of holiness and obedience. Therefore, what God hath joined together let no man put asunder. The particular exhortations of this chapter are reducible to the three principal heads of Christian duty; our duty to God, to ourselves, and to our brother. The grace of God teacheth us in general, to live godly, soberly, and righteously, and to deny all that which is contrary hereunto. Now this chapter will give us to understand what that godliness, sobriety, and righteousness is, though somewhat intermixed



BESEECH you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.* 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, *being many*, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, *let us wait on our ministering*: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. 9 *Let love be* without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. 10 *Be kindly affectioned* one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. 14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16 *Be of the same mind one toward another.* Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. 17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

We may observe here, according to the scheme mentioned in the contents, the apostle's exhortations.

First. Concerning our duty to God. We see what is godliness.

1. It is to surrender ourselves to God, and so to lay a good foundation. We must first give our ourselves unto the Lord, *2 Cor. vii. 5.* This is here pressed as the spring of all duty and obedience, ver. 1, 2. Man consists of body and soul, *Gen. ii. 7*; *Eccles. xii. 7.*

1st. The body must be presented to him, ver. 1. "The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body," *1 Cor. vi. 13, 14.* The exhortation is here introduced very pathetically, "I beseech you, brethren;" though he was a great apostle, yet he calls the meanest Christians brethren. A term of affection and

xii. 8, "With simplicity;" better, and more appropriately, "with liberality." "Cheerfulness:" "It is in exhibiting compassion, which is often the compulsory work of one obeying his conscience, rather than the spontaneous effusion of love, that cheerfulness is so peculiarly required and so frequently wanting" (Alford).

xii. 10—12. The point of the exhortations is rendered more distinct by placing the province in which they are to be exercised first, thus: "In love of the brethren, be affectionate to one another; in giving of

honour, preferring (*i.e.*, outdoing) one another; in diligence, not slothful; in spirit, fervent; in hope, rejoicing; in tribulation, patient; in prayer, persevering."

xii. 18, "As much as lieth in you;" *i.e.*, as far as you can, as much as dependeth on you.

xii. 19, "Give place unto wrath:" "that is, the wrath of your adversary or oppressor. Let his anger have free space—let it work freely and spend itself; do not thwart, do not punish it" (Vaughan).

earn. He useth entreaty; that is the Gospel way. "as though God did beseech you by us," 2 Cor. v. 20. Though he might with authority command, yet for love's sake he rather beseecheth, *Phil.* 4; "The poor useth entreaty," *Pr.* xviii. 23. This is to insinuate the exhortation, that it might come with the more pleasing power. Many are soonest wrought upon, if they be spoken fair; are easier led than driven. Now observe.

First. The duty pressed. To present our bodies "a living sacrifice;" alluding to the sacrifices under the law, which were presented or set before God at the altar, ready to be offered to him. "Your bodies," that is, your whole selves, so expressed, because under the law the bodies of beasts were offered in sacrifice, 1 Cor. vi. 20; our bodies and spirits are designed. The offering was sacrificed by the priest, but presented by the offerer, who transferred to God all his right, titles, and interest in it, by laying his hand on the head of it. Sacrifice is here taken for whatsoever is by God's own appointment dedicated to himself: see 1 Pet. ii. 5. We are both temple, priest, and sacrifice; as Christ was in his peculiar sacrificing. There were sacrifices of atonement, and sacrifices of acknowledgment. Christ is the only sacrifice of atonement, who was once offered to bear the sins of many; but our persons and performances, tendered to God through Christ our Priest, are as sacrifices of acknowledgment to the honour of God. Presenting of them notes a voluntary act, done by virtue of that absolute, despotic power, which the will hath over the body, and all the members of it. It must be a freewill offering. Your bodies, not your beasts. Those legal offerings, as they had their power from Christ, so they had their period in Christ. The presenting of the body to God implies not only the avoiding of the sins that are committed with or against the body, but the using of the body as a servant of the soul in the service of God. It is to glorify God with our bodies, 1 Cor. vi. 20; to engage our bodies in the duties of immediate worship, and in a diligent attendance to our particular callings, and to be willing to suffer for God with our bodies, when we are called to it. It is to yield the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness, *ch.* vi. 13. Though bodily exercise alone profits little, yet in its place it is a proof and product of the dedication of our souls to God.

1st. Present them a living sacrifice; not killed, as the sacrifices under the law. A Christian makes his body a sacrifice to God, though he do not give it to be burned. A body sincerely devoted to God is a living sacrifice. "A living sacrifice," by way of allusion; that which was dead of itself might not be eaten, much less sacrificed, *Deu.* xiv. 21. And by way of opposition; the sacrifice was to be slain, but you may be sacrifices, and yet live on. An unbloody sacrifice. The barbarous heathen sacrificed their children to their idol gods, not living, but slain sacrifices. But God will have mercy, and not such sacrifice, though life is forfeited to him. A living sacrifice, that is, inspired with the spiritual life of the soul. It is Christ living in the soul by faith, that makes the body a living sacrifice, *Gal.* ii. 20. Holy love kindles the sacrifices, puts life into the duties: see *ch.* vi. 13; alive, namely, to God, ver. 11.

2nd. They must be holy. There is a relative holiness in every sacrifice, as dedicated to God; but, besides that, there must be that real holiness which stands in an entire rectitude of heart and life, by which we are conformed in both to the nature and will of God. Even our bodies must not be made the instruments of sin and uncleanness, but set apart for God, and put to holy uses, as the vessels of the tabernacle were holy, being devoted to God's service. It is the soul that is the proper subject of holiness, but a sanctified soul communicates a holiness to the body it acts and animates. That is holy which is according to the will of God; when the bodily actions are so, the body is holy. They are the temples of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. vi. 19; possess the body in sanctification, 1 Thes. iv. 4, 5.

Secondly. The arguments to enforce this; which are three.

1st. Consider the mercies of God. "I beseech you by the mercies of God;" an affectionate obtestation, and which should melt us into a compliance; *ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκτιρομένης τοῦ Θεοῦ*. This is an argument most sweetly cogent. There is the mercy that is in God, and the mercy that is from God; mercy in the spring, and mercy in the streams. Both are included here; but especially gospel-mercies, mentioned *ch.* xi., the transferring what the Jews forfeited and lost by their unbelief unto us Gentiles, *Eph.* iii. 4-6; the sure mercies of David, *Isa.* lv. 3. God is a merciful God, therefore let us present our bodies to him; he will be sure to use them kindly, and knows how to consider the frames of them, for he is of infinite compassion. We receive from him every day the fruits of his mercy; particularly, mercy to our bodies: he made them, he maintains them, he bought them, he has put a great dignity upon them. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, that our souls are held in life. And the greatest mercy of all is, that Christ hath made not his body only, but his soul, an offering for sin; gave himself for us, gives himself to us. Now sure we cannot but be studying what we shall render to the Lord for all this. And what shall we render? Let us render ourselves as an acknowledgment of all these favours; all we are, all we have, all we can do, and after all, it is but very poor returns for very rich receivings. And yet, because it is what we have,

2nd. It is acceptable to God. The great end we should all labour after, is to be accepted of the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 9; to have him well pleased with our persons and performances. Now these living sacrifices are acceptable to God; while the sacrifices of the wicked, though fat and costly, are an abomination to the Lord. It is God's great condescension that he will vouchsafe to accept of any thing in us; and we can desire no more to make us happy. And if the presenting of ourselves will but please him, we may easily conclude that we cannot bestow ourselves better.

3rd. It is our reasonable service. There is an act of reason in it; for it is the soul that doth present the body. Blind devotion, that has ignorance for the mother and nurse of it, is fit to be paid only to those dunghill gods that have eyes and see not. Our God must be served in the spirit, and with the understanding; there is all the reason in the world for it, and no good reason can possibly be produced against it. "Come now, and let us reason together," *Isa.* i. 18. God doth not impose upon us any thing hard or unreasonable, but that which is altogether agreeable to the principles of right reason. *Τὴν λογικὴν λειτουργίαν ὑμῶν*, "your service according to the word;" so it may be read. The word of God doth not leave out the body in holy worship. That service only is acceptable to God which is according to the written word; it must be gospel worship, spiritual worship. That is a reasonable service which we are able and ready to give a reason for; in which we understand ourselves. God deals with us as with rational creatures, and will have us so to deal with him. Thus must the body be presented to God.

2nd. The mind must be renewed for him. This is pressed, ver. 2, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind;" that is, see to it that there be a saving change wrought in you, and that it be carried on. Conversion and sanctification are the renewing of the mind; a change not of the substance, but of the qualities of the soul. It is the same with making a new heart, and a new spirit; new dispositions and inclinations; new sympathies and antipathies; the understanding enlightened, the conscience softened, the thoughts rectified, the will bowed to the will of God, and the affections made spiritual and heavenly. So that the man is not what he was; old things are passed away, all things become new; he acts from new principles, by new rules, with new desires. The mind is the acting, ruling part of us: so that the renewing of that

is the renewing of the whole man, for out of it are the issues of life, *Pr.* iv. 23. The progress of sanctification, dying to sin more and more, and living to righteousness more and more, is the carrying on of this renewing work, till it be perfected in glory. This is called the transforming of us; it is like putting on a new shape and figure. *Μεταμορφώσθε*, "be ye metamorphosed." The transfiguration of Christ is expressed by this word, *Mat.* xvii. 2; when he put on a heavenly glory, which made his face to shine like the sun; and the same word is used, 2 Cor. iii. 18, where we are said to be "changed into the same image from glory to glory." This transformation is here pressed as a duty; not that we can work such a change ourselves,—we could as soon make a new world as make a new heart by any power of our own; it is God's work, *Eze.* xi. 19, and xxxvi. 26, 27;—but be ye transformed, that is, use the means which God hath appointed and ordained for it. It is God that turns us, and then we are turned; but we must frame our doings to turn, *Hos.* v. 4. Lay your souls under the changing, transforming influences of the blessed Spirit; seek unto God for grace in the use of all the means of grace. Though the new man be created of God, yet we must put it on, (*Eph.* iv. 24) and be pressing forward towards perfection. Now in this verse we may farther observe.

First. What is the great enemy to this renewing, which we must avoid; and that is conformity to this world; "Be not conformed to this world." All the disciples and followers of the Lord Jesus must be nonconformists to this world. *Μη συνχηματίζεσθε*,—"do not fashion yourselves" according to the world. We must not conform to the things of the world; they are mutable, and the fashion of them is passing away. Do not conform either to the lusts of the flesh or the lusts of the eye. We must not conform to the men of the world, of that world which lies in wickedness; not walk "according to the course of this world," *Eph.* ii. 2; that is, we must not follow a multitude to do evil, *Ex.* xxiii. 2. If sinners entice us, we must not consent to them, but in our places witness against them. Nay, even in things indifferent, and which are not in themselves sinful, we must so far not conform to the custom and way of the world, as not to act by the world's dictates as our chiefest rule, nor to aim at the world's favours as our highest end. True Christianity consists much in a sober singularity; yet we must take heed of the extreme of affected rudeness and moroseness, which some run into. In civil things, the light of nature, and the custom of nations takes place for our conduct; and the rule of the Gospel in those cases is a rule of direction, not a rule of contraries.

Secondly. What is the great effect of this renewing which we must labour after; "That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." By the will of God here we are to understand his revealed will concerning our duty, what the Lord our God requires of us. "This is the will of God" in general, "even our sanctification;" that will which we pray may be done by us as it is done by the angels; especially his will as it is revealed in the New Testament, where he hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son.

1st. The will of God is good, and acceptable, and perfect; three excellent properties of a law. It is good, *Mic.* vi. 8; it is exactly consonant to the eterna, reason of good and evil; it is good in itself, it is good for us. Some think the evangelical law is here called good, in distinction from the ceremonial law, which consisted of statutes that were not good, *Eze.* xx. 25. It is acceptable, it is pleasing to God; that and that only is so which is prescribed by him. The only way to attain his favour as the end is to conform to his will as the rule. It is perfect, that nothing can be added; the revealed will of God is a sufficient rule of faith and practice, containing all things which tend to the perfection of the man of God, to furnish us thoroughly to every good work, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

2nd. That it concerns Christians to prove what is that will of God which is good, and acceptable, and perfect; that is, to know it with judgment and approbation: to know it experimentally; to know the excellency of the will of God by the experience of a conformity to it. It is to "approve things that are excellent," *Phil.* i. 10; it is *δοκιμαζέω*, (the same word that is used here,) "to try" things that differ; in doubtful cases readily to apprehend what the will of God is, and to close in with it. It is to be "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord," *Isa.* xi. 3.

3rd. That those are best able to prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, who are transformed by the renewing of their mind. A living principle of grace is in the soul, as far as it prevails, an unbiased, unprejudiced judgment concerning the things of God. It dispotheth the soul to receive and entertain the revelations of the Divine will. The promise is, *Jno.* vii. 17, "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine." A good wit can dispute and distinguish about the will of God; whilst an honest, humble heart, that hath spiritual senses exercised, and is delivered into the mould of the word, loves it, and doth it, and hath the relish and savour of it. Thus to be godly is to surrender ourselves to God.

2. When this is done, to serve him in all manner of gospel obedience. Some hints of this we have here; ver. 11, 12, "Serving the Lord." Wherefore do we present ourselves to him, but that we may serve him? *Acts* xxvii. 23, "Whose I am," and then it follows, "whom I serve." To be religious is to serve God. How? *1st.* We must make a business of it, and not be slothful in that business. "Not slothful in business." There is the business of the world, that of our particular calling, in which we must not be slothful, 1 Thes. iv. 11. But this seems to be meant of the business of serving the Lord; our Father's business, *Lu.* ii. 49. Those that would approve themselves Christians indeed must make religion their business; that is, must choose it and learn it, and give themselves to it; they must love it, and employ themselves in it, and abide by it, as their great and main business. And having made it our business, we must not be slothful in it; not desire our own ease, and consult that, when it comes in competition with our duty. We must not drive on slowly in religion. Slothful servants will be reckoned with as wicked servants. *2nd.* We must be "servent in spirit, serving the Lord." God must be served with the spirit, *ch.* i. 9, *Jno.* iv. 24, under the influences of the Holy Spirit. Whatever we do in religion, it is pleasing to God no farther than it is done with our spirits, wrought upon by the Spirit of God. And there must be fervency in the spirit; a holy zeal and warmth, and ardency of affection in all we do; as those that love God not only with the heart and soul, but with all our hearts and with all our souls. This is the holy fire that kindles the sacrifice, and carries it up to heaven an offering of a sweet smelling savour. "Serving the Lord." *Τὴν κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες*; so some copies read it, "serving the time;" that is, improving your opportunities, and making the best of them; complying with the present seasons of grace. *3rd.* "Rejoicing in hope." God is worshipped and honoured by our hope and trust in him, especially when we rejoice in that hope, take a complacency in that confidence; which argues a great assurance of the reality, and a great esteem of the excellency, of the good hoped for. *4th.* "Patient in tribulation." Thus also God is served not only by working for him when he calls us to work; but by sitting still quietly when he calls us to suffer. Patience for God's sake, and with an eye to his will and glory, is true piety. Observe, those that rejoice in hope are likely to be patient in tribulation. It is a believing prospect of the joy set before us that bears up the spirit under all outward pressure. *5th.* "Continuing instant in prayer." Prayer is a friend to hope and patience, and we do in it serve the Lord. *Ἀποκρίτεσθαι*. It signifies both fervency and perseverance

xii. 20, "Therefore;" the three chief MSS. read, "But if thine enemy," &c. "Coals of fire;" the heaping up of coals of fire is a figurative expression for the Divine vengeance (*Psa.* cxl. 10). Hence the text implies, "Kindness is the best revenge; make your enemy ashamed by requiting unkindness with kindness: do not allow yourself to be defeated by the ill-doing of others"—i.e., "Do not suffer yourself to act in the same way as they do, for this is to be defeated; but rather let your constancy in kindness vanquish their ill-will."

xiii. 1. It has been thought that some special circumstances made the precepts in this chapter necessary or desirable. Mistakes respecting the nature of Christ's kingdom may have given rise to acts of disobedience among Christians to the civil power. "Higher powers;" rather, "authorities that are above him." The word here rendered "powers" is used (*Eph.* iii. 10, vi. 12; *Col.* i. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 22) of angelic powers; but in this passage (as in *Luke* xii. 11 and *Tit.* iii. 1) it is applied to human magistrates.

in prayer. We should not be cold in the duty, nor soon weary of it, *Lm. xviii. 1*;

1 Thes. v. 17; *Eph. vi. 18*; *Col. iv. 2*.

This is our duty which immediately respects God.

Secondly. Concerning our duty which respects ourselves; this is sobriety.

1. A sober opinion of ourselves, ver. 3. It is ushered in with a solemn preface; "I say, through the grace given unto me." The grace of wisdom, by which he understood the necessity and excellency of this duty; the grace of apostleship, by which he had authority to press and enjoin it. I say it, that am commissioned to say it, in God's name; I say it, and it is not for you to gainsay it. It is said to every one of us, one as well as another. Pride is a sin that is bred in the bone with all of us, and we have therefore each of us need to be cautioned and armed against it. "Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." We must take heed of having too great an opinion of ourselves, or putting too high a valuation upon our own judgments, abilities, persons, performances. We must not be self-conceited, nor esteem too much our own wisdom and other attainments; nor think ourselves to be something, *Gal. vi. 3*. There is a high thought of ourselves which we may and must have, to think ourselves too good to be the slaves of sin, and drudges to this world. But, on the other hand, we should think soberly; that is, we must have a low and modest opinion of ourselves and our own abilities, our gifts and graces, according to what we have received from God and not otherwise; not be confident and hot in matters of doubtful dispute; not stretch ourselves beyond our line; not judge and censure those that differ from us; not desire to make a fair show in the flesh. These, and the like, are the fruits of a sober opinion of ourselves. The words will bear yet another sense agreeable enough. "Of himself" is not in the original; therefore it may be read, "That no man be wise above what he ought to be wise, but be wise unto sobriety;" that is, we must not exercise ourselves in things too high for us, *Ps. cxxxi. 1, 2*, not intrude into those things which we have not seen, *Col. ii. 18*, those secret things which belong not to us, *Deu. xxix. 29*, not covet to be wise above what is written. There is a knowledge that puffeth up, which reacheth after forbidden fruit. We must take heed of that, and labour after that knowledge which tends to sobriety, to the rectifying of the heart, and the reforming of the life. Some understand it of the sobriety which keeps us in our own place and station, from intruding into the gifts and offices of others. See an instance of this sober, modest care in the exercise of the greatest spiritual gifts, *2 Cor. x. 13-15*. To this head refers also that exhortation; ver. 16, "Be not wise in your own conceits." It is good to be wise; but it is bad to think ourselves so; for there is more hope of a fool than of him that is wise in his own eyes. It was an excellent thing for Moses to have his face shine and not know it. Now the reasons why we must have such a sober opinion of ourselves, and our own abilities and attainments, are these:

1st. Because, whatever we have that is good, God hath dealt it to us. Every good and perfect gift comes from above, *Jas. i. 17*. What have we "that we have not received?" and if we have received it, why then do we "boast?" *1 Cor. iv. 7*. The best and most useful man in the world is no more, no better, than what the free grace of God makes him every day. When we are thinking of ourselves we must remember to think not how we have attained, as though our might and the power of our hand had gotten us these gifts; but think how kind God hath been to us, for it is he that gives us power to do any thing that is good, and in him is all our sufficiency.

2nd. Because God deals out his gifts in a certain measure. "According to the measure of faith." Observe, the measure of spiritual gifts he calls "the measure of faith;" for that is the radical grace. What we have and do that is good is so far right and acceptable, as it is founded in faith, and flows from faith, and no farther. Now, faith and other spiritual gifts with it are dealt by measure, according as Infinite Wisdom sees meet for us. Christ had the Spirit given him without measure, *Jno. iii. 34*; but the saints have it by measure: see *Eph. iv. 7*. Christ, who had gifts without measure, was meek and lowly; and shall we, that are stunted, be proud and self-conceited?

3rd. Because God hath dealt out gifts to others as well as to us. "Dealt to every man." Had we the monopoly of the Spirit, or a patent to be sole proprietors of spiritual gifts, there might be some pretence for this conceitedness of ourselves; but others have their share as well as we. God is a common Father, and Christ a common root to all the saints, that do all derive virtue from him; and therefore it ill becomes us to lift up ourselves and to despise others, as if we only were the people in favour with heaven, and wisdom should die with us. This reasoning he illustrates by a comparison taken from the members of the natural body; as *1 Cor. xii. 12*; *Eph. iv. 16*, "As we have many members in one body," &c., ver. 4, 5. Here observe, *First*. All the saints do make up one body in Christ, who is the head of the body, and the common centre of their unity. Believers lie not in the world as a confused, disorderly heap, but are organized and knit together as they are united to one common head, and acted and animated by one common spirit. *Secondly*. Particular believers are members of this body, constituent parts, which speak them less than the whole, and in relation to the whole, deriving life and spirits from the head. Some members in the body are bigger and more useful than others, and each receives spirits from the head according to its proportion. If the little finger should receive as much nourishment as the leg, how unseemly and prejudicial would it be? We must remember that we are not the whole; we think above what is meet if we think so; we are but parts and members. *Thirdly*. "All the members have not the same office," ver. 4, but each hath its respective place and work assigned it. The office of the eye is to see, the office of the hand is to work, &c. So in the mystical body, some are qualified for and called to one sort of work; others are, in like manner, fitted for and called to another sort of work. Magistrates, ministers, people in a Christian commonwealth, have their several offices, and must not intrude one upon another, or clash in the discharge of their several offices. *Fourthly*. Each member hath its place and office for the good and benefit of the whole, and of every other member. We are not only members of Christ, but we are "members one of another," ver. 5. We stand in relation one to another; we are engaged to do all the good we can one to another, and to act in conjunction for the common benefit. See this illustrated at large, *1 Cor. xii. 14*, &c. Therefore we must not be puffed up with a conceit of our own attainments, because, whatever we have, as we received it, so we received it not for ourselves, but for the good of others.

2. A sober use of the gifts that God hath given us. As we must not on the one hand be proud of our talents, so on the other hand we must not bury them. Take heed lest, under a pretence of humility and self-denial, we be slothful in laying out ourselves for the good of others. We must not say, I am nothing, therefore I will sit still and do nothing; but, I am nothing in myself, and therefore I will lay out myself to the utmost in the strength of the grace of Christ. He instanteth in the ecclesiastical offices appointed in particular churches; in the discharge of which each must study to do his own duty, for the preserving of order, and the promoting of edification in the church; each knowing his place, and fulfilling it. "Having then gifts." The following induction of particulars supplies the sense of this general. "Having gifts," let us use them. Authority and ability for the ministerial work is the gift of God. "Gifts differing." The immediate design is different, though the ultimate tendency of all the same. "According to the grace," *χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν*. The free grace of

God is the spring and original of all the gifts that are given to men. It is grace that appoints the office, qualifies and inclines the person, works both to will and to do. There were in the primitive church extraordinary gifts of tongues, of discerning, of healing; but he speaks here of those that are ordinary; compare *1 Cor. xii. 4*; *1 Tim. iv. 14*; *1 Pet. iv. 10*. Seven particular gifts he instanteth in, ver. 6, 8, which seem to be meant of so many distinct offices, used by the prudential constitution of many of the primitive churches, especially the larger. There are two general ones here expressed by prophesying and ministering; the former the work of the bishops, the latter the work of the deacons; which were the only two standing officers, *Phil. i. 1*. But the particular work belonging to each of these might be, and it should seem was, divided and allotted by common consent and agreement, that it might be done the more effectually; because that which is everybody's work is nobody's work, and he despatcheth his business best that is *vir unius negotii*,—"a man of one business." Thus David sorted the Levites, *1 Chr. xxiii. 4, 5*, and in this, "wisdom is profitable to direct." The five latter will therefore be reduced to the two first.

1st. Prophecy. "Whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith." It is not meant of the extraordinary gifts of foretelling things to come, but the ordinary office of preaching the word. So prophesying is taken, *1 Cor. xiv. 1, 3*, &c.; *1 Cor. xi. 4*; *1 Thes. v. 20*. The work of the Old Testament prophets was not only to foretell future things, but to warn the people concerning sin and duty, and to be their remembrancers concerning that which they knew before. And thus gospel preachers are prophets, and do indeed, as far as the revelation of the word goes, foretell things to come. Preaching refers to the eternal condition of the children of men, points directly to a future state. Now those that preach the word must do it "according to the proportion of faith," *κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως*; that is,

First. As to the manner of our prophesying. It must be according to the proportion of the grace of faith. He had spoken, ver. 3, of the measure of faith dealt to every man. Let him that preacheth set all the faith he hath on work to impress the truths he preacheth upon his own heart in the first place. As people cannot hear well, so ministers cannot preach well, without faith. First believe and then speak, *Ps. cxvi. 10*; *2 Cor. iv. 13*. And we must remember the proportion of faith; that though all men have not faith, yet a great many have besides ourselves; and therefore we must allow others to have a share of knowledge and ability to instruct as well as we, even those that in lesser things differ from us. "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself;" and do not make it a ruling rule to others, remembering that thou hast but thy proportion.

Secondly. As to the matter of our prophesying. It must be according to the proportion of the doctrine of faith, as it is revealed in the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. By this rule of faith the Bereans tried Paul's preaching, *Acts xvii. 11*; compare *Acts xvi. 22*; *Gal. i. 9*. There are some staple truths, as I may call them; some *prima axiomata*,—"first axioms," plainly and uniformly taught in the Scripture, which are the touchstone of preaching, by which, though we must not despise prophesying, yet we must "prove all things," and then "hold fast that which is good," *1 Thes. v. 20, 21*. Truths that are more dark must be examined by those that are more clear; and then entertained when they are found to agree and comport with the analogy of faith; for it is certain one truth can never contradict another. See here what ought to be the great care of preachers, to preach sound doctrine according to the form of wholesome words, *Tit. ii. 8*; *1 Tim. i. 13*. It is not so necessary that the prophesying be according to the proportion of art, the rules of logic and rhetoric; but it is necessary that it be according to the proportion of faith, for it is the word of faith that we preach. Now there are two particular works which he that prophesieth hath to mind,—teaching and exhorting; proper enough to be done by the same person, at the same time; and when he doth the one, let him mind that; when he doth the other, let him do that too as well as he can. If by agreement between the ministers of a congregation this work be divided, either constantly, or interchangeably, so that one teacheth and the other exhorts, that is, (in our modern dialect,) one expoundeth, and the other preacheth, let each do his work according to the proportion of faith. *1st*. "Let him that teacheth wait on teaching." Teaching is the bare explaining and proving of gospel truths without practical application, as in the expounding of the Scripture. Pastors and teachers are the same office, *Eph. iv. 11*; but the particular work somewhat different. Now he that has a faculty of teaching, and hath undertaken that province, let him stick to it. It is a good gift, let him use it, and give his mind to it. "He that teacheth, let him be in his teaching;" so some supply it. "Ὁ διδάσκων, ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ." Let him be frequent, and constant, and diligent in it; let him abide in that which is his proper work, and be in it as his element: see *1 Tim. iv. 15, 16*, where it is explained by two words, *ἐν τοῖς ῥησιν*, and *ἐπίμενε αὐτοῖς*,—"Be in these things" and "continue in them." *2nd*. "Let him that exhorteth wait on exhortation;" let him give himself to that. This is the work of the pastor, as the former of the teacher; to apply gospel truths and rules more closely to the case and condition of the people, and to press upon them that which is more practical. Many that are very accurate in teaching yet may be very cold and unskilful in exhorting; and on the contrary. The one requires a clearer head, the other a warmer heart. Now where these gifts are evidently separated, (that the one excels in the one, and the other in the other,) it conduceth to edification to divide the work accordingly; and whatsoever the work is we undertake, let us mind it. To wait on our work is to bestow the best of our time and thoughts upon it, to lay hold on all opportunities for it; and to study, not only to do it, but to do it well.

2nd. Ministry. If a man hath *διακονίαν*, the office of a deacon, or assistant to the pastor and teacher, let him use that office well; a churchwarden, suppose, an elder, or an overseer of the poor; and perhaps there were more put into these offices, and there was more solemnity in them, and a greater stress of care and business lay upon them in the primitive churches than we are now well aware of. It includes all those offices which concern the *οἶκος τοῦ κυρίου*, the church, "the outward business of the house of God;" see *Neh. xi. 16*. Serving tables, *Acts vi. 2*. Now he on whom this care of ministering is devolved, let him attend to it with faithfulness and diligence; particularly, *First*. "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity;" that is, those church officers that were the stewards of the church's alms, collected money, and distributed it according as the necessities of the poor were. Let them do it *ἐν ἀπλοτητι*, that is, liberally and faithfully; not converting what they receive to their own use, or distributing it with any sinister design, or with respect of persons; not froward and peevish with the poor, or seeking pretences to put them by; but with all sincerity and integrity, having no other intention in it but to glorify God and do good. Some understand it in general of all almsgiving; he that hath wherewithal, let him give, and give plentifully and liberally; so the word is translated, *2 Cor. viii. 2*; ix. 11. God loves a cheerful, bountiful giver. *Secondly*. "He that ruleth with diligence." It should seem he means those that were assistants to the pastors in exercising church discipline, as their eyes, and hands, and mouth, in the government of the church; or those ministers that in the congregation did chiefly undertake and apply themselves to this ruling work; for we find those ruling that laboured in the word and doctrine, *1 Tim. v. 17*. Now such must do it with diligence. It notes both care and industry to discover what is amiss, to reduce those that go astray, to reprove

xiii. 2. "Resisteth;" or, "setteth himself against the authority, resisteth the ordinance of God;" "and they that resist," &c., for there are two words in the original. "Damnation;" rather, "condemnation," or "judgment." This seems to refer to the punishment inflicted by human power; but in thus suffering the Christian would not have the support of God's countenance, as when he suffered for well-doing. God would condemn, not approve the resistance. (Compare *1 Pet. iv. 15, 16*.)

xiii. 3. This verse is pointed to as a proof that the epistle was written before the persecution under Nero.

xiii. 4. "Beareth not the sword;" Alford, who renders "weareth," sees in this an allusion to the dagger worn by the Cæsars, which was regarded as a symbol of the power of life and death. The verse is considered by some to be an argument against the abolition of capital punishment.

xiii. 5. "Ye must needs be subject;" the necessity for this sub-

and admonish those that are fallen, to keep the church pure. Those must take a great deal of pains that will approve themselves faithful in the discharge of this trust, and not let slip any opportunity that may facilitate and advance that work. Thirdly, "He that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." Some think it is meant in general of all that in any thing shew mercy; let them be willing to it, and take a pleasure in it. God loves a cheerful giver. But it seems to be meant of some particular church officers, whose work it was to take care of the sick, and strangers; and they were generally widows, that were in that matter servants to the church; deaconesses, 1 Tim. v. 9, 10; though others, it is likely, might be employed. Now this must be done with cheerfulness. A pleasing countenance in acts of mercy is a great relief and comfort to the miserable; when they see it is not done grudgingly and unwillingly, but with pleasant looks and gentle words, and all possible indications of readiness and alacrity. Those that have to do with them that are sick, and sore, and commonly cross and peevish, have need to put on, not only patience, but cheerfulness, to make the work the more easy and pleasant to them, and the more acceptable to God.

Thirdly, Concerning that part of our duty which respects our brethren, of which we have many instances, in brief exhortations. Now all our duty towards one another is summed up in one word, and that a sweet word, love. In that is laid the foundation of all our mutual duty; and therefore he mentions that first, which is the lively of Christ's disciples, and the great law of our religion: "Let love be without dissimulation," not in compliment and pretence, but in reality; "not in word and tongue only," 1 Jno. iii. 18. The right love is love unfeigned; not as the kisses of an enemy, which are deceitful. We should be glad of an opportunity to prove the sincerity of our love, 2 Cor. viii. 8. More particularly, there is a love owing to our friends and to our enemies. He instanceth in both.

1. To our friends. He that hath friends must shew himself friendly. There is a mutual love that Christians owe, and must pay.

1st. An affectionate love; ver. 10. "Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love," *φιλότητος*; it signifies not only love, but a readiness and inclination to love; the most genuine and free affection, kindness flowing out as from a spring. It properly denotes the love of parents to their children, which, as it is the most tender, so it is the most natural of any other, unforced, unconstrained. Such must our love be to one another; and such it will be, where there is a new nature, and the law of love is written in the heart. This kind affection puts us on to express ourselves both in word and action with the most courtesy and obligingness that may be. "One to another." This may recommend the grace of love to us, that it is made our duty to love others, so it is as much their duty to love us. And what can be sweeter on this side heaven than to love and be beloved? He that thus watereth shall be watered also himself.

2nd. A respectful love; "In honour preferring one another." Instead of contending for superiority, let us be forward to give to others the pre-eminence. This is explained, *Phil. ii. 3*, "Let each esteem others better than themselves." And there is this good reason for it, because, if we know our own hearts, we know more evil by ourselves than we do by any one else in the world. We should be forward to take notice of the gifts, and graces, and performances of our brethren, and value them accordingly; be more forward to praise another, and more pleased to hear another praised, than ourselves; *τη τιμή ἀλλήλων προσηργίζεσθαι*, "going before," or "leading one another in honour," so some read it; not in taking honour, but in giving honour. Strive which of you shall be most forward to pay respect to those to whom it is due, and to perform all Christian offices of love (which are all included in the word honour) to your brethren, as there is occasion. Let all your contention be, which shall be most humble, and useful, and condescending. So the sense is the same with *Tit. iii. 14*, "Let them learn," *ἐπιδιδάσκειν*, "to go before in good works." For though we must prefer others, as our translation reads it, and put on others, as more capable and deserving than ourselves, yet we must not make that an excuse for our lying by and doing nothing; nor, under a pretence of honouring others and their serviceableness and performances, indulge ourselves in ease and slothfulness. Therefore he immediately adds, ver. 11, "Not slothful in business."

3rd. A liberal love; ver. 13, "Distributing to the necessities of saints." It is but a mock love which rests in the verbal expressions of kindness and respect, while the wants of our brethren call for real supplies, and it is in the power of our hands to furnish them.

First. It is no strange thing for saints in this world to want necessities for the support of their natural life. In those primitive times, prevailing persecutions must needs reduce many of the suffering saints to great extremities; and still the poor, even the poor saints, we have always with us. Surely the things of this world are not the best things; if they were, the saints, who are the favourites of heaven, would not be put off with so little of them.

Secondly. It is the duty of those who have wherewithal to distribute, or, as it might better be read, to communicate, to those necessities. It is not enough to draw out the soul, but we must draw out the purse to the hungry: see *Jas. ii. 15, 16*; 1 Jno. iii. 17. "Communicating," *κοινωνήσας*. It intimates that our poor brethren have a kind of interest in that which God hath given us; and that our relieving of them should come from a sense and fellow feeling of their wants, as though we suffered with them. The charitable benevolence of the Philippians to Paul is called their communicating with his affliction, *Phil. iv. 14*. We must be ready, as we have ability and opportunity, to relieve any that are in want; but we are in a special manner bound to communicate to the saints. There is a common love owing to our fellow-creatures, but a special love owing to our fellow Christians; *Gal. vi. 10*, "especially to them who are of the household of faith." "Communicating," *ταῖς μνήταις*, to the memories of the saints; so some of the ancients read it, instead of *ταῖς χρείαις*. There is a debt owing to the memory of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises, to value it, to vindicate it, to embalm it. "Let the memory of the just be blessed;" so some read, *Pr. x. 7*. He mentions another branch of this bountiful love, "Given to hospitality." Those that have houses of their own should be ready to entertain those who go about doing good, or who, for fear of persecution, are forced to wander for shelter. They had not then so much of the convenience of common inns as we have, or the wandering Christians durst not frequent them, or had not wherewithal to bear the charges, and therefore it was a special kindness to bid them welcome on free cost. Nor is it yet an antiquated, superseded duty; as there is occasion we must welcome strangers, for we know the heart of a stranger. "I was a stranger, and ye took me in," is mentioned as one instance of the mercifulness of those that shall obtain mercy; *την φιλοφροσύνην διακονήσας*; following, or pursuing hospitality. It intimates not only that we must take opportunity, but we must seek opportunity, thus to shew mercy, as Abraham, who sat in the tent door, *Gen. xviii. 1*; and Lot, who sat in the gate of Sodom, *Gen. xix. 1*, expecting travellers, whom they might meet and prevent with a kind invitation, and so they entertained angels unawares, *Heb. xiii. 2*.

[The proper sense of hospitality is kindness to strangers, or to those who were at a distance from their own home—a wholly different thing from the conviviality which opens one's house to festive parties made up of acquaint-

ances from the immediate neighbourhood. Not that we would utterly proscribe these reciprocal convivialities of the middle or higher classes—burthen some though they often are, and wearisome to an extreme from the entire destitution, whether of the intellectual or the spiritual, in the conversation of our every-day parties. Our religionists might in a great degree be protected from this latter annoyance, were they but consistent with themselves; and did they aim at an entire, instead of a partial Christianity. Had they more of openness and intrepidity in their talk—when they sit at the same table, did they meet together on the footing of a society of immortals—would they speak of the country whither they were going, and of the character which prepared for it—a goodly number even of their present society might be amalgamated into a conformity with their own spirit, while the rest might be scared away from those resorts, in the atmosphere of which they could not breathe with congeniality or comfort. There would thus be brought about a thing mainly wanted in our day—a broader line of demarcation between the church and the world. It might seem a paradox, but is not the less true, that it is easier to be an altogether than an almost Christian.—C.]

4th. A sympathising love; ver. 15, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Where there is a mutual love between the members of the mystical body, there will be such a fellow-feeling: see 1 Cor. ii. 26. True love will interest us in the sorrows and joys of one another, and teach us to make them our own. Observe the common mixture in this world, some rejoicing, and others weeping, as the people, *Ezr. iii. 12, 13*, for the trial, as of other graces, so of brotherly love, and Christian sympathy. Not that we must participate in the sinful mirths or mournings of any, but only in just and reasonable joys and sorrows; not envying those that prosper, but rejoicing with them, truly glad that others have that success and comfort which we have not; not despising those that are in trouble, but concerned for them, and ready to help them, as being ourselves in the body. This is to do as God doth; who not only hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants, *Ps. xxxv. 27*, but is likewise afflicted in all their afflictions, *Isa. lxiii. 9*.

5th. An united love. "Be of the same mind one towards another," ver. 16; that is, labour as much as you can to agree in apprehension; and wherein you come short of that, yet agree in affection, endeavour to be all one, not affecting to clash, and contradict, and thwart one another, but keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, *Phil. ii. 2*; *iii. 15, 16*; 1 Cor. i. 10; *τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονεῖντες*, wishing the same good to others that you do to yourselves; so some understand it. This is to love our brethren as ourselves, desiring their welfare as our own.

6th. A condescending love. "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate," ver. 16. True love cannot be without lowliness, *Eph. iv. 1, 2*, *Phil. ii. 3*. "When our Lord Jesus washed his disciples' feet to teach us brotherly love, *Jno. xiii. 2, 14, 34*, it was designed especially to intimate to us, that to love one another aright is to be willing to stoop to the meanest offices of kindness for the good of one another. Love is a condescending grace. *Non bene conveniunt, majestas et amor*—Majesty and love do but ill assort with each other." Observe how it is pressed here:

First. "Mind not high things;" that is, we must not be ambitious of honour and preferment, nor look upon worldly pomp and dignity with any inordinate value or desire, but rather with a holy contempt. When David's advancements were high, his spirit was humble; *Ps. cxxxi. 1*, "I do not exercise myself in great matters." The Romans living in the imperial city, which reigned over the kings of the earth, *Rev. xvii. 18*, and was at that time in the meridian of its splendour, perhaps were ready to take occasion from thence to think the better of themselves: even the holy seed were tainted with this leaven. Roman Christians would be ready to look scornfully upon other Christians, as some citizens use to do upon the country; and therefore the apostle so often cautions them against high-mindedness; compare *ch. xi. 20*. They lived near the court, and conversed daily with the gaiety and grandeur of it; Well, saith he, do not mind it, be not in love with it.

Secondly. "Condescend to men of low estate." *Τοῖς ταπεινοῖς συναπαγόμενοι*. 1st. It may be meant of mean things, to which we must condescend. If our condition in the world be poor and low, our enjoyments coarse and scanty, our employments despicable and contemptible, yet we must bring our minds to it, and acquiesce in it; so the margin, "Be contented with mean things." Be reconciled to the place which God in his providence hath put us in, whatever it be. We must account nothing below us but sin; stoop to mean habitations, mean fare, mean clothing, mean accommodations, when they are our lot, and not grudge. Nay, we must be carried with a kind of impetus, by the force of the new nature, (so the word *συναπάγομαι* properly signifies, and it is very significant,) towards mean things, when God appoints us to them, as the old corrupt nature is carried out towards high things. We must accommodate ourselves to mean things. We should make a low condition and mean circumstances more the centre of our desires than a high condition.

2nd. It may be meant of mean persons; so we read it (I think both are to be included). "Condescend to men of low estate." We must associate ourselves with, and accommodate ourselves to, those that are poor and mean in the world, if they be such as fear God. David, though a king upon the throne, was a companion for all such, *Ps. cxix. 63*. We need not be ashamed to converse with the lowly, while the great God overlooks heaven and earth to look at such. True love values grace in rags as well as in scarlet. A jewel is a jewel, though it lie in the dirt. The contrary to this condescension is reproved, *Jas. ii. 1-4*. Condescend; that is, suit yourselves to them, stoop to them for their good, as Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 19, &c. Some think the original word is a metaphor taken from travellers, when those that are stronger and swifter of foot stay for those that are weak and slow, make a halt, and take them with them. Thus must Christians be tender towards their fellow-travellers. As a means to promote this he adds, "Be not wise in your own conceits," to the same purpose with ver. 2. We shall never find in our hearts to condescend to others, while we find there so great a conceit of ourselves; and therefore that must needs be mortified. *Μὴ γινώσκω φρόνημα παρ' ἑαυτοῦ*—Be not wise by yourselves; that is, be not confident of the sufficiency of your own wisdom, so as to despise others, or think you have no need of them, *Pr. iii. 7*, nor be shy of communicating what you have to others. We are members one of another, depend upon one another, are obliged to one another; and therefore, "Be not wise by yourselves," remembering it is the merchandise of wisdom that we profess; now, merchandise consists in commerce, receiving and returning.

7th. A love that engageth us, "as much as lies in us, to live peaceably with all men," ver. 18. Even those with whom we cannot live intimately and familiarly, by reason of distance in degree or profession, yet we must with such live peaceably; that is, we must be harmless and inoffensive, not giving others occasion to quarrel with us; and we must be galled and unrevenged, not taking occasion to quarrel with them. Thus must we labour to preserve the peace that it be not broken, and to piece it again when it is broken. The wisdom from above is pure and peaceable. Observe how the exhortation is limited. It is not expressed so as to oblige us to impossibilities: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you." Thus, *Heb. xii. 14*, "Follow peace;" *Eph. iv. 3*, "Endeavouring to keep." Study the things that make for peace. "If it be possible." It is not possible to preserve the peace when we cannot do it without

jection is not to be that of mere terror, not only for wrath, but for principle, that conscience might be kept pure and void of offence. (Acts xxiv. 16; 1 Tim. iii. 9.)

xiii. 6. "Pay ye tribute also;" "Tertullian remarks that what the Romans lost by the Christians refusing to bestow gifts on their temples, they gained by their conscientious payment of taxes" (Alford).

xiii. 8. "The law;" "Love fulfils any law" (Vaughan).

xiii. 11. The remembrance of the near approach of the day of the Lord is urged as an incentive to careful observance of the foregoing precepts. "Our salvation nearer;" Alford renders, "Now is salvation nearer to us than when we (first) believed." Complete salvation of each individual Christian is nearer at hand, but we must not ignore the clear reference of the whole passage to the great day of Christ's return. (Compare Matt. xxiv. 42; Luke xxi. 28-36.)

xiii. 13. "Let us walk;" Vaughan translates, "Let us have

offending God, and wounding conscience. *Id possumus quod pure possumus*,—"That is possible which is possible without incurring blame." "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, and then peaceable," *Jas. iii. 17*. Peace without purity is the peace of the devil's palace. "As much as lieth in you," There must be two words to the bargain of peace. We can but speak for ourselves. We may be unavoidably striven with, as Jeremiah, who was a man of contention. *Jer. xv. 10*, and that we cannot help; our care must be, that nothing be wanting on our parts to preserve the peace; *Ps. cxx. 7*, "I am for peace: though when I speak, they are for war."

2. To our enemies. Since men became enemies to God, they have been found very apt to be enemies one to another. Let but the centre of love be once forsaken, and the lines will either clash and interfere or be at an uncomfortable distance. And of all men, those that embrace religion have reason to expect to meet with enemies in a world whose smiles seldom concur with Christ's. Now Christianity teacheth us how to carry it towards our enemies; and in this instruction it quite differs from all other rules and methods, which generally aim at victory and dominion, but this at inward peace and satisfaction. And whoever are our enemies, that wish us ill and seek to do us ill, our rule is to do them no hurt, but all the good we can.

1st. To do them no hurt; ver. 17, "Recompense to no man evil for evil;" for that is a brutish recompence, and befitting only those animals which are not conscious either of any being above them or of any state before them. Or, if mankind were made (as some dream) in a state of war, such recompences as these were agreeable enough; but we have not so learned God, who doth so much for his enemies, *Mat. v. 45*; much less have we so learned Christ, who did for us when we were enemies, *ch. v. 8, 10*; so loved that world which hated him without a cause. "To no man," neither to Jew nor Greek; not to one that hath been thy friend, for by recompensing evil for evil thou wilt certainly lose him; not to one that hath been thine enemy, for by not recompensing evil for evil thou mayest perhaps gain him. To the same purpose, ver. 19, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves." And why must this be ushered in with such an affectionate compellation, rather than any other of the exhortations of this chapter? Surely, because this is intended for the composing of angry spirits, that are hot in the resentment of a provocation; he addresseth himself to such in this endearing language to mollify and qualify them. Any thing that breathes love sweetens the blood, lays the storm, and cools the intemperate heat. Would you pacify a brother offended, call him dearly beloved. Such a soft word fitly spoken may be effectual to turn away wrath. "Avenge not yourselves;" that is, when anybody hath done you any ill turn, do not desire or endeavour to bring the like mischief or inconvenience upon him. It is not forbidden to the magistrate to right those that are wronged by punishing the wrong-doer, or to make and execute just and wholesome laws against malefactors: but it forbids private revenge, which flows from anger and ill-will; and this is fitly forbidden, for it is presumed we are incompetent judges in our own case. Nay, if persons wronged, in seeking the defence of the law, and magistrates in granting it, act from any particular personal pique or quarrel, and not from a concern that public peace and order be maintained, and right done; even such proceedings, though seemingly regular, will fall under this prohibited self-revenge: see how strict the law of Christ is in this matter, *Mat. v. 38-40*. It is forbidden not only to take it into our own hands to avenge ourselves, but to desire and thirst after even that judgment in our case which the law affords, for the satisfying of a revengeful humour. It is a hard lesson to corrupt nature; and therefore he enjoins,

First. A remedy against it. "Rather give place unto wrath." Not to our own wrath; to give place to that is to give place to the devil, *Eph. iv. 26, 27*. We must resist, and stifle, and smother, and suppress that. But, 1st. To the wrath of our enemy. Give place to it; that is, be of a yielding temper; do not answer wrath with wrath, but with love rather. "Yielding pacifies great offences," *Ecc. x. 4*. Receive affronts and injuries, as a stone is received into a heap of wool, which gives way to it, and so it doth not rebound back or go any farther. So it explains that of our Saviour, *Mat. v. 39*, "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Instead of meditating how to revenge one wrong, prepare to receive another. When men's passions are up, and the stream is strong, let it have its course, lest by an unreasonable opposition it may be made to rage and swell the more. When others are angry, let us be calm. This is a remedy against revenge, and seems to be the genuine sense. But, 2nd. Many apply it to the wrath of God. Give place to that; make room for him to take the throne of judgment, and let him alone to deal with thine adversary.

Secondly. A reason against it. "For it is written, Vengeance is mine." We find it written, *Deu. xxxii. 35*. God is the sovereign King, the righteous Judge, and to him it belongs to administer justice; for, being a God of infinite knowledge, by his actions are weighed in unerring balances; and being a God of infinite purity, he hates sin, and cannot endure to look upon iniquity. Some of this power he hath trusted in the hands of the civil magistrates, *Gen. ix. 6; ch. xiii. 4*. Their legal punishments therefore are to be looked upon as a branch of God's revengings. This is a good reason why we should not avenge ourselves; for if vengeance be God's, then, 1st. We may not do it. We step into the throne of God if we do, and take his work out of his hand. 2nd. We need not do it; for God will, if we meekly leave the matter with him. He will avenge us as far as there is reason and justice for it, and farther we cannot desire it: see *Ps. xxxviii. 14, 15*, "I heard not, for thou wilt hear;" and what need I hear and God hear too?

2nd. We must not only not do hurt to our enemies, but our religion goes higher, and teacheth us to do them all the good we can. It is a command peculiar to Christianity, and which doth highly commend it; "Love your enemies," *Mat. v. 44*. And we are here taught to shew that love to them, both in word and deed.

First. In word: ver. 14, "Bless them which persecute you." It hath been the common lot of God's people to be persecuted, either with a powerful hand or with a spiteful tongue. Now we are here taught to bless those that persecute us. Bless them, that is, 1st. Speak well of them. If there be any thing in them that is commendable and praiseworthy, take notice of it and mention it to their honour. 2nd. Speak respectfully to them, according as their place is; not rendering railing for railing, and bitterness for bitterness. And, 3rd. We must wish well to them, and desire their good, so far from seeking any revenge. Nay, 4th. We must offer up that desire to God by prayer for them. If it be not in the power of our hand to do any thing else for them, yet we can testify our goodwill by praying for them, for which our Master hath given us not only a rule, but an example to back that rule, *Lu. xxiii. 34*. "Bless, and curse not." It notes a thorough-paced goodwill in all the instances and expressions of it; not, bless them when you are at prayer, and curse them at other times; but bless them always, and curse not at all. Cursing ill becomes the mouths of those whose work it is to bless God, and whose happiness it is to be blessed of him.

Secondly. In deed; ver. 20, "If thine enemy hunger," that is, As thou hast ability and opportunity, be ready and forward to shew him any kindness, and to do him any office of love for his good, and never the less forward for his having been thine enemy, but rather the more, that thou mayest thereby

testify the sincerity of thy forgiving of him. It was said of Archbishop Cranmer that the way for a man to make him his friend was to do him an ill turn. It is quoted from *Pr. xxv. 21, 22*; so that, as high a precept as it seems to be, the Old Testament was not a stranger to it. Observe here,

1st. What we must do; we must do good to our enemies. "If he hunger," do not insult over him, and say, Now God is avenging me of him and pleading my cause; do not make such a construction of his wants; but "feed him." Then, when he hath need of thine help, and thou hast an opportunity of starving him and trampling upon him, then feed him; *φιλέκε αὐτόν*, a significant word, feed him abundantly, nay, feed him carefully and indulgently; *frustulatum pascere*,—"feed him with small pieces," as we do children and sick people, with much tenderness; contrive to do it so as to express thy love. "If he thirst, give him drink;" *ποτίσε αὐτόν*; drink to him in token of reconciliation and friendship, so confirm your love to him.

2nd. Why we must do this; because "in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Two senses are given of this, which I think are both to be taken in disjunctively. "Thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head;" that is, Thou shalt either, (1.) Melt him into repentance and friendship, and mollify his spirit towards thee,—alluding to those who melt metals,—they not only put fire under them, but heap fire upon them; thus Saul was melted and conquered with the kindness of David, *1 Sam. xxiv. 16*; *xxvi. 21*. Thou wilt win a friend by it; and if thy kindness have not that effect, then, (2.) It will aggravate his condemnation, and make his malice against thee the more inexcusable; thou wilt hereby hasten upon him the tokens of God's wrath and vengeance. Not that this must be our intention in shewing him kindness, but for our encouragement such will be the effect. To this purpose is the exhortation in the last verse, which suggests a paradox not easily understood by the world; that in all matters of strife and contention those that revenge are the conquered, and those that forgive are the conquerors. (1st.) "Be not overcome of evil;" that is, Let not the evil of any provocation that is given you have such a power over you, or make such an impression upon you, as to dispossess you of yourselves, to disturb your peace, to destroy your love, to ruffle and discompose your spirits, to transport you to any indecencies, or to bring you to study or endeavour any revenge. He that cannot quietly bear an injury is perfectly conquered by it. (2nd.) "But overcome evil with good;" with the good of patience and forbearance, nay, and of kindness and beneficence to those that wrong you; learn to defeat their ill design against you, and either to change them, or howsoever to preserve your own peace. He that hath this rule over his spirit is better than the mighty.

[This is the noble and grand sentiment of the Christian religion. Nothing like this is to be found in the heathen classics, and nothing like it ever existed among pagan nations. Christianity alone has brought forth this lovely and mighty principle; and one design of it is to advance the welfare of man by promoting peace, harmony, and love. The idea of overcoming evil with good never occurred to men until the Gospel was preached. It never has been acted on except under the influences of the Gospel. On this principle God shews kindness; on this principle the Saviour came, and bled, and died; and on this principle all Christians should act in treating their enemies, and in bringing a world to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. If Christians will shew benevolence, if they will send forth proofs of love to the ends of the earth, the evils of the world will be overcome. Nor can the nations be converted until Christians act on this great and most important principle of their religion, on the largest scale possible, to "overcome evil with good."—A. B.]

To conclude, there remain two exhortations yet untouched, which are general, and which recommend all the rest as good in themselves, and of good report.

1. As good in themselves; ver. 9, "Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good." God hath shewed us what is good,—these Christian duties here enjoined; and that is evil which is opposite to them. Now observe, 1st. We must not only not do evil, but we must "abhor that which is evil." We must hate sin with an utter and irreconcilable hatred; have an antipathy to it as the worst of evils, and contrary to our new nature, and to our true interest; hating all the appearances of sin, even the garment spotted with the flesh. 2nd. We must not only do that which is good, but we must cleave to it. It notes a deliberate choice of a sincere affection for, and a constant perseverance in, that which is good. So cleave to it as not to be allured or affrighted from it; "cleave to him that is good," even to the Lord, *Acts xi. 23*, with a dependence and acquiescence. It is subjoined to the precept of brotherly love, as directive of it; we must love our brethren, but not love them so much as for their sakes to commit any sin, or omit any duty; not think the better of any sin for the sake of the person that commits it, but forsake all the friends in the world to cleave to God and duty.

2. As of good report; ver. 17, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men;" that is, Do not only do, but study and forecast, and take care to do, that which is amiable and creditable, and recommends religion to all with whom you converse: see *Phil. iv. 8*. These acts of charity and beneficence are in a special manner of good report among men, and therefore are to be industriously followed by all that consult the glory of God and the credit of their profession.

CHAPTER XIII.

There are three good lessons taught us in this chapter, where the apostle enlargeth more upon his precepts than he had done in the foregoing chapter, finding them more needful to be fully pressed. I. A lesson of subjection to lawful authority, ver. 1-6. II. A lesson of justice and love to our brethren, ver. 7-10. III. A lesson of sobriety and godliness in ourselves, ver. 11-14.



ET every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power?

meanour as a citizen should be. In this chapter he takes up the question of toleration among fellow-Christians. "Him that is weak," &c.: the weakness here referred to is "over-scrupulousness of conscience." Such a one is to be "received"—i.e., is to be accounted a brother, not to be rejected because of his peculiarities. The caution "not to doubtful disputations" is most needful. The strong often hold out the hand of patronising fellowship to the weak, with a proud expectation of removing their scruples. This is

walked; when it comes to the great retrospect in which the whole past life shall be seen as one single act." "Honestly;" more than mere honesty is implied; "decorously," "seemly," "becomingly," would better convey the meaning.

xiii. 14. "Make not provision;" "Take no forethought for the flesh, in the direction of lusts."

xiv. 1. The apostle brings Christian principles into every sphere of life. In the previous chapter he showed what the Christian's de-

do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. 6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

We are here taught how to carry ourselves towards magistrates and those that are in authority over us, called here the higher powers; intimating their authority, they are powers; and their dignity, they are higher powers; including not only the king, as supreme, but all inferior magistrates under him; and yet it is expressed not by the persons that are in that power, but the place of power itself in which they are. However the persons themselves may be wicked, and of those vile persons which the citizen of Zion contemneth, *Ps. xv. 4*, yet the just power which they have must be submitted to and obeyed. He had taught us in the foregoing chapter not to avenge ourselves or to recompense evil for evil. Lest it should seem as if that did cancel the ordinance of a civil magistracy among Christians, he takes occasion to assert the necessity of it, and of the due inflicting of punishment upon evil-doers, however it looks like recompensing evil for evil. Observe,

First. The duty enjoined: "Let every soul be subject." Every soul, that is, every person, one as well as another, not excluding the clergy, who call themselves spiritual persons, however the church of Rome doth not only exempt such from subjection to the civil powers, but place them in authority above them, making the greatest princes subject to the pope, who thus exalteth himself above all that is called God. "Every soul." Not that our consciences are subjected to the wills of any man, (it is God's prerogative to make laws immediately to bind conscience, and we must render to God the things that are God's;) but it intimates that our subjection must be free and voluntary, sincere and hearty: "Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought," *Ecc. x. 20*. To compass and imagine is treason begun. This subjection of soul here required includes inward honour, *1 Pet. ii. 17*, and outward reverence and respect, both in speaking to them and in speaking of them; obedience to their commands in things lawful and honest, and in other things a patient subjection to the penalty without resistance; a conformity in every thing to the place and duty of subjects, bringing our minds to the relation and condition, and the inferiority and subordination of it. They are higher powers; be content they should be so, and submit to them accordingly. Now there was good reason for the pressing of this duty of subjection to civil magistrates. 1. Because of the reproach which the Christian religion lay under in the world, as an enemy to the public peace, order, and government; as a sect that turned the world upside down, and the embracers of it as enemies to Caesar, and the more because the leaders were Galileans; an old slander.—Jerusalem was represented as a "rebellious city, hurtful to kings and provinces," *Ezr. iv. 15, 16*. Our Lord Jesus was so reproached, though he told them his kingdom was not of this world. No marvel, then, if his followers have been loaded, in all ages, with the like calumnies, called factious, and seditious, and turbulent, and looked upon as the troublers of the land, their enemies having found such representations needful for the justifying of their barbarous rage against them. The apostle, therefore, for the obviating of that reproach, and the clearing of Christianity from it, shews that obedience to civil magistrates is one of the laws of Christ, whose religion helps to make people good subjects; and it was very unjust to charge upon Christianity that faction and rebellion which its principles and rules are so directly contrary to. 2. Because of the temptation which the Christians lay under to be otherwise affected to civil magistrates, some of them being originally Jews, and so leavened with a principle that it was unmeet for any of the seed of Abraham to be subject to one of another nation; their king must be of their brethren, *Deu. xvii. 15*. Besides, Paul had taught them that they were not under the law, they were made free by Christ. Lest that liberty should be turned into licentiousness, and misconstrued to countenance faction and rebellion, the apostle enjoins obedience to civil government, which was the more necessary to be pressed now, because the magistrates were heathen and unbelievers, which yet doth not destroy their civil power and authority. Besides, the civil powers were persecuting powers; the body of the law was against them.

Secondly. The reasons to enforce this duty. Why must we be subject? 1. "For wrath's sake." Because of the danger we run ourselves into by resistance. Magistrates bear the sword, and to oppose them is to hazard all that is dear to us in this world, for it is to no purpose to contend with him that bears the sword. The Christians were then, in those persecuting times, obnoxious to the sword of the magistrate for their religion, and they needed not make themselves more obnoxious by their rebellion. The least show of resistance or sedition in a Christian would soon be aggravated and improved, and would be very prejudicial to the whole society; and therefore they had more need than others to be exact in their subjection, that those who had so much occasion against them in the matter of their God might have no other occasion. To this head must that argument be referred, ver. 2, "They that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." *Κριμα ληφονται*, they shall be called to an account for it. God will reckon with them for it, because the resistance reflects upon him; the magistrate will reckon with them for it. They will come under the lash of the law, and will find the higher powers too high to be trampled upon, all civil governments being justly strict and severe against treason and rebellion; so it follows, ver. 3, "Rulers are a terror." This is a good argument, but it is low for a Christian.

2. "We must be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake." Not so much *formidine penae*,—from the fear of punishment; as *virtutis amore*,—for the love of virtue. This makes common civil offices acceptable to God, when they are done for conscience sake, with an eye to God, to his providence putting us into such relations, and to his precept making subjection the duty of those relations. Thus the same thing may be done from a very different principle. Now to oblige conscience to this subjection, he argues, ver. 1—4, 6,

1st. From the institution of magistracy. "There is no power but of God; that is, God, as the ruler and governor of the world, hath appointed the ordinance of magistracy; so that all civil power is derived from him, as from its original, and he hath, by his providence, put the administration into those hands, whatever they are that have it. By him kings reign, *Pr. viii. 15*. The

usurpation of power, and the abuse of power, are not of God, for he is not the author of sin, but the power itself is. As our natural powers, though often abused and made instruments of sin, are from God's creating power, so civil powers are from God's governing power. The most unjust and oppressive princes in the world have no power but what is given them from above, *Jno. xix. 11*, the Divine providence, being in a special manner conversant about those changes and revolutions of governments which have such an influence upon states and kingdoms, and such a multitude of particular persons and lesser communities. Or it may be meant of government in general. It is an instance of God's wisdom, power, and goodness in the management of mankind, that he hath disposed them into such a state as distinguisheth between governors and governed, and hath not left them like the fishes of the sea, where the greater devour the lesser. He did herein consult the benefit of his creatures. "The powers that be." Whatever the particular form and method of government is, whether by monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, wherever the governing power is lodged, it is an ordinance of God, and it is to be received and submitted to accordingly; though immediately an ordinance of man, *1 Pet. ii. 13*, yet originally an ordinance of God. "Ordained of God;" *ταρταμένη*, a military word, signifying not only the ordination of magistrates, but the subordination of inferior magistrates to the supreme, as in an army; for among magistrates there is a diversity of gifts, and trusts, and services. Hence it follows, ver. 2, that "whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God." There are other things from God that are the greatest calamities, but magistracy is from God, as an ordinance, that is, it is a great law, and it is a great blessing. So that the children of Belial, that will not endure the yoke of government, will be found breaking a law, and despising a blessing. Magistrates are therefore called gods, *Ps. lxxxix. 6*, because they bear the image of God's authority; and those who spurn at their power reflect upon God himself. This is not at all applicable to the particular rights of kings and kingdoms, and the branches of their constitution; nor can any certain rule be fetched from hence for the modelling of the original contracts betwixt the governors and governed. But it is intended for direction to private persons in their private capacity, to behave themselves quietly and peaceably in the sphere which God hath set them in, with a due regard to the civil powers which God in his providence hath set over them, *1 Tim. ii. 1, 2*. Magistrates are here again and again called God's ministers; "He is the minister of God," ver. 4, 6. Magistrates are in a more peculiar manner God's servants; the dignity they have calls for duty. Though they are lords to us they are servants to God, have work to do for him, and an account to make up to him. In the administration of public justice the determining of quarrels, the protecting of the innocent, the righting of the wronged, the punishing of offenders, and the preserving of national peace and order, that every man may not do what is right in his own eyes; in these things it is that magistrates act as God's ministers. As the killing of an inferior magistrate, while he is actually doing his duty, is accounted treason against the prince, so the resisting of any magistrates in the discharge of these duties of their place is the resisting of an ordinance of God.

2nd. From the intention of magistracy. "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil." &c. Magistracy was designed to be,

First. A terror to evil works and evil workers. They bear the sword, not only the sword of war, but the sword of justice. They are heirs of restraint, to put offenders to shame; Laish wanted such, *Jud. xvii. 7*. Such is the power of sin and corruption that many will not be restrained from the greatest enormities, and such as are most pernicious to human society, by any regard to the law of God and nature or the wrath to come, but only by the fear of temporal punishments, which the wilfulness and perverseness of degenerate mankind hath made necessary. Hence it appears that laws with penalties for the lawless and disobedient, *1 Tim. i. 7*, must be constituted in Christian nations, and are agreeable with, and not contradictory to, the Gospel. When men are become such beasts, such ravenous beasts one to another, they must be dealt with accordingly, taken and destroyed, *in terrore*,—to deter others. The horse and the mule must thus be held in with bit and bridle. In this work the magistrate is "the minister of God," ver. 4. He acts as God's agent, to whom vengeance belongs, and therefore must take heed of infusing into his judgments any private personal resentments of his own. "To execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." In this the judicial processes of the most vigilant faithful magistrates, though some faint resemblance and prelude of the judgment of the great day, yet come far short of the judgment of God; they reach only to the evil act, can execute wrath only on him that doth evil; but God's judgment extends to the evil thought, and is a discerner of the intents of the heart. "He beareth not the sword in vain." It is not for nothing that God hath put such a power into the magistrate's hand, but it is intended for the restraining and suppressing of disorders. And therefore "if thou do that which is evil," which falls under the cognizance and censure of the civil magistrate, "be afraid," for civil powers have quick eyes and long arms. It is a good thing when the punishment of malefactors is managed as an ordinance of God, instituted and appointed by him. 1st. As a holy God that hates sin; against which, as it appears and puts up head, a public testimony is thus borne. 2nd. As king of nations and the God of peace and order, which are hereby preserved. 3rd. As the protector of the good, whose persons, families, estates, and names are by this means hedged about. 4th. As one that desires not the eternal ruin of sinners, but by the punishment of some would terrify others, and so prevent the like wickedness, that others may hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously. Nay, it is intended for a kindness to those that are punished, that by the destruction of the flesh the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Secondly. A praise to them that do well. Those that keep in the way of their duty shall have a commendation and protection of the civil powers, to their credit and comfort. Do that which is good, ver. 3, and thou needest not be afraid of the power, which, though terrible, reacheth none but those that by their own sin make themselves obnoxious to it; the fire burns only that which is combustible, nay, thou shalt have praise of it. This is the intention of magistracy, and therefore we must for conscience sake be subject to it, as a constitution designed for the public good, to which all private interests must give way. But pity it is that ever this gracious intention should be perverted, and that those that bear the sword, while they countenance and connive at sin, should be a terror to those that do well. But so it is, when the vilest men are exalted, *Ps. xii. 1*; and yet even then the blessing and benefit of a common protection and a face of government and order, is such, as that it is our duty in that case rather to submit to persecution for well doing, and to take it patiently, than by any irregular and disorderly practices to attempt a redress. Never did sovereign prince pervert the ends of government as Nero did; and yet to him Paul appealed, and under him had the protection of the law and the inferior magistrates more than once. Better a bad government than none at all.

3rd. From our interest in it. "He is the minister of God to thee for good." Thou hast the benefit and advantage of the government, and therefore must do what thou canst to preserve it, and nothing to disturb it. Protection draws allegiance. If we have protection from the government, we owe subjection to it; by upholding the government, we keep up our own hedge. This subjection

what they are not to do. The weak is to be received in sympathy and toleration, but not so as to sit in judgment on his scruples—not for the "deciding of doubts," for such is the meaning of "doubtful disputations."

xiv. 3. The words "despise," "judge," are exactly appropriate. The strong might be tempted to "despise" the weak, the weak to "judge" the strong, or set him down as profane.

xiv. 4. "Another's servant:" literally, "the servant of another,"

i.e., Christ. (Compare verses 8, 9.) The word here rendered "servant" is not "slave," which St. Paul applies to himself (*chap. i. 1*), but signifies "a domestic servant," and suggests the impertinence of the one who would judge and criticise. "He standeth or falleth:" not in the judgment hereafter, but in his place as a Christian, from which the uncharitable judgment of others would exclude him. It is to be observed that the argument of this passage is directed to the weak who "judged" the strong, not to the strong who might

is likewise consented to by the tribute we pay; ver. 6, "For for this cause pay you tribute;" as a testimony of your submission, and an acknowledgment that in conscience you think it to be due. You do, by paying taxes, contribute your share to the support of the power; if, therefore, you be not subject, you do but pull down with one hand what you support with the other. And is that conscience? By your paying tribute, you not only own the magistrate's authority, but the blessing of that authority to yourselves; a sense of which you thereby testify, giving him that as a recompence for the great pains he takes in the government; for honour is a burthen, and if he do as he ought, he is "attending continually upon this very thing;" for it is enough to take up all a man's thoughts and time, in consideration of which fatigue we pay tribute, and must be subject. "Pay you tribute," *φοροῦτε τελεῖτε*. He doth not say, you give it as an alms, but you pay it as a just debt, or lend it, to be repaid in all the blessings and advantage of public government, which you reap the benefit of. This is the lesson the apostle teacheth; and it becomes all Christians to learn and practise it, that the godly in the land may be found, whatever others are, the quiet and the peaceable in the land.

[The obedience which the Scriptures command us to render to our rulers is not unlimited; there are cases in which disobedience is a duty. This is evident, 1. From the very nature of the case. The command to obey magistrates is, from its nature, a command to obey them as magistrates in the exercise of their rightful authority. 2. From the fact that the same inspired men who enjoin, in such general terms, obedience to rulers, themselves uniformly and openly disobeyed them whenever their commands were inconsistent with other and higher obligations. "We ought to obey God rather than men," was the principle which the early Christians avowed, and on which they acted. They disobeyed the Jewish and heathen authorities whenever they required them to do any thing contrary to the will of God. There are cases, therefore, in which disobedience is a duty. How far the rightful authority of rulers extends, the precise point at which the obligation to obedience ceases, must often be a difficult question, and each case must be decided on its own merits. The same difficulty exists in fixing the limits of the authority of parents over their children, husbands over their wives, masters over their servants. This, however, is rather a theoretical than a practical difficulty. The general principles on which the question in regard to any given case is to be decided are sufficiently plain. No command to do any thing morally wrong can be binding; nor can any which transcends the rightful authority of the power whence it emanates, ver. 1-7.—H.]

7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. 8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. 9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

We are here taught a lesson of justice and charity.

First. Of justice; ver. 7, "Render therefore to all their dues," especially to magistrates, for this refers to what goes before; and likewise to all with whom we have to do. To be just is to give to all their due, to give everybody his own. What we have, we have it as stewards; others have an interest in it, and must have their dues. Render to God his due in the first place, to ourselves, to our families, our relations, to the commonwealth, to the church, to the poor, to those that we have dealings with, in buying, selling, exchanging, &c. "Render to all their dues;" and that readily and cheerfully, not tarrying till we are by law compelled to it. He instanteth,

1. In due taxes; "Tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom." Most of the countries where the Gospel was first preached were subject at this time to the Roman yoke, and were made provinces of the empire. He wrote this to the Romans, who, as they were rich, so they were drained by taxes and impositions, to the just and honest payment of which they are here pressed by the apostle. Some distinguish between tribute and custom, understanding by the former constant standing taxes, and by the other those which were occasionally required; both which are to be faithfully and conscientiously paid as they become legally due. Our Lord was born when his mother went to be taxed; and enjoined the payment of tribute to Cæsar. Many, who in other things seem to be just, yet make no conscience of this, but pass it off with a false, ill-favoured maxim, that it is no sin to cheat the king; directly contrary to Paul's rule, "Tribute to whom tribute is due."

2. In due respects; "Fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." This sums up the duty which we owe not only to magistrates, but to all superiors, parents, masters, all that are over us in the Lord, according to the fifth commandment, "Honour thy father and mother;" compare *Lev. xix. 3*, "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father;" not with a fear of amazement, but a loving, reverent, respectful, obediential fear. Where there is not this respect in the heart to our superiors, no other duty will be paid aright.

3. In due payment of debts; ver. 8, "Owe no man any thing;" that is, do not continue in any one's debt while you are able to pay it, farther than by at least the tacit consent of the person to whom you are indebted. Give every one his own. Do not spend that upon yourselves, much less heap it up for yourselves, which you owe to others. "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again," *Ps. xxxvii. 21*. Many that are very sensible of the trouble, think little of the sin, of being in debt.

Secondly. Of charity; "Owe no man any thing;" *ἀρεῖτε*, "You do owe" no man any thing, so some read it. Whatever you owe to any relation, or to any with whom you have to do, it is eminently summed up and included in this debt of love; "But to love one another," that is a debt that must be always in the paying, and yet always owing. Love is a debt; the law of God, and the interest of mankind, makes it so; it is not a thing which we are left at liberty about; but it is enjoined us, as the principle and summary of all duty owing one to another; "for love is the fulfilling of the law;" not perfectly, but it is a good step towards it. It is inclusive of all the duties of the second table, which he instanteth in, ver. 9, and those suppose the love of God; see *1 Jno. iv. 20*. If

the love be sincere, it is accepted as the fulfilling of the law. Surely we serve a good master, that hath summed up all our duty in one word, and that a short word, and a sweet word, love, the beauty and harmony of the universe. Loving and being loved, is all the pleasure, joy, and happiness of an intelligent being. "God is love," *1 Jno. iv. 16*, and love is his image upon the soul; where it is, the soul is well moulded, and the heart fitted for every good work. Now, to prove that love is the fulfilling of the law, he gives us,

1. An induction of particular precepts, ver. 9. He instanteth in the last five of the ten commandments, which he observes to be all summed up in this royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" with an "as" of quality, not of equality; with the same sincerity that thou lovest thyself, though not in the same measure and degree. He that loves his neighbour as himself will be desirous of the welfare of his neighbour's body, goods, and good name, as of his own. On this is built that golden rule of doing as we would be done by. Were there no restraints of human laws in these things, no punishments incurred, (which the malignity of human nature hath made necessary,) the law of love itself is effectual to prevent all such wrongs and injuries, and to keep peace and good order among us. In the enumeration of these commandments, he puts the seventh before the sixth, and mentions this first, "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" for though that commonly goes under the name of love, (pity it is so good a word should be so abused,) yet it is really as great a violation of it as killing and stealing is; which shews that true brotherly love is love to the souls of our brethren in the first place. He that tempts others to sin, and defiles their minds and consciences, though he may pretend the most passionate love, *Pr. vii. 15, 18*, doth really hate them, just as the devil doth, who wars against the soul.

2. A general rule concerning the nature of brotherly love. "Love worketh no ill," ver. 10; that is, he that walks in love, that is acted and governed by a principle of love, he worketh no ill; he neither practiseth nor contriveth any ill to his neighbour, to any one that he hath any thing to do with; *οὐκ ἐργάζεται*, the projecting of evil is in effect the performing of it. Hence devising of iniquity is called the working of evil upon the bed, *Mic. ii. 1*. Love intends and designs no ill to any body, is utterly against the doing of that which may turn to the prejudice, offence, or grief of any. It worketh no ill, that is, it prohibits the working of any ill. More is implied than is expressed; it not only worketh no ill, but it worketh all the good that may be, deviseth liberal things. For it is a sin not only to devise evil against thy neighbour, but to withhold good from them to whom it is due; both are forbidden together, *Pr. iii. 27*. This proves that "love is the fulfilling of the law," answers all the end of it; for what else is that but to restrain us from evil-doing, and to constrain us to well-doing? Love is a living, active principle of obedience to the whole law. The whole law is written in the heart, if the law of love be there.

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

We are here taught a lesson of sobriety and godliness in ourselves. Our main care must be to look to ourselves. Four things we are here taught, as a Christian's directory for his day's work; when to awake, how to dress ourselves, how to walk, and what provision to make.

First. When to awake; "Now it is high time to awake," ver. 11. To awake out of the sleep of sin, for a sinful condition is a sleeping condition; out of the sleep of carnal security, sloth, and negligence; out of the sleep of spiritual death, and out of the sleep of spiritual deadness. Both the wise and foolish virgins slumbered and slept, *Mat. xxv. 5*. We have need to be often excited and stirred up to awake. The word of command to all Christ's disciples is, Watch, awake; that is, be concerned about your souls, and your eternal interest; take heed of sin, be ready to, and serious in, that which is good, and live in a constant expectation of the coming of our Lord. Considering,

1. The time we are cast into. "Knowing the time," Consider what time of day it is with us, and you will see it is high time to awake. It is gospel time, it is the accepted time, it is working time; it is a time when more is expected than was in the times of that ignorance which God winked at, when people sat in darkness. It is high time to awake; for the sun hath been up a great while, and shines in our faces. Have we this light to sleep in? See *1 Thes. v. 5, 6*. It is high time to awake; for others are awake and up about us. Know the time to be a busy time; we have a great deal of work to do, and our Master is calling us to it again and again. Know the time to be a perilous time; we are in the midst of enemies and snares; it is high time to awake, for the Philistines are upon us; our neighbour's house is on fire, and our own in danger. It is time to awake, for we have slept enough, *1 Pet. iv. 3*; high time indeed, for "Behold the bridegroom cometh."

2. The salvation we are upon the brink of. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed;" that is, than when we first believed, and so took upon us the profession of Christianity. The eternal happiness we chose for our portion is now nearer us than it was when we became Christians. Let us mind our way, and mend our pace, for we are now nearer our journey's end than we were when we had our first love. The nearer we are to our centre the quicker should our motion be. Is there but a step betwixt us and heaven, and shall we be so very slow and dull in our Christian course, and move so heavily? The more the days are shortened, and the more grace is increased, the nearer is our salvation, and the more quick and vigorous we should be in our spiritual motions.

Secondly. How to dress ourselves. That is the next care when we are awake and up. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand;" therefore it is time to dress ourselves. Clearer discoveries will be quickly made of gospel grace than have been yet made, as light gets ground. The night of Jewish rage and cruelty is just at an end; their persecuting power is near a period; the day of our deliverance from them is at hand, that day of *redemption* which Christ promised, *Luk. xxi. 28*. And the day of our complete salvation, in the heavenly glory, is at hand.

"despise" the weak; for it is the over-scrupulous who is prone to set down the strong, who does not conform to his practice, as profane. The exhortation to the strong comes on later in the chapter.

xiv. 5. "Fully persuaded in his own mind;" let a man have some personal sentiment on these matters, though they are indifferent. They are "indifferent" questions in Christian society, they are not "indifferent" to individual Christians.

xiv. 6. The clause, "And he that regardeth not the day, to the

Lord he doth not regard it," is omitted in all the best MSS. "To the Lord he eateth not;" i.e., his abstinence, or abstemiousness rather, has a reference to his master, Christ. Yet over that scantier meal "he giveth thanks." He that eateth may think the abstinence of his brother almost an ingratitude to God, who giveth all things liberally to enjoy.

xiv. 9. "Christ died," &c.: read, "Christ died, and lived that he," &c. The parallel with verse 8 is thus preserved.

[The night here must be the time of the believer's being on earth; for his earthly state, with all its comparative light, is but night with respect to the light of heaven. The day which was at hand was not the day of judgment, but the day of death, with respect to those addressed.—R. H.]

Observe then, 1. What we must put off. Put off our night clothes, which it is a shame to appear abroad in. "Cast off the works of darkness." Sinful works are works of darkness; they come from the darkness of ignorance and mistake, they covet the darkness of privacy and concealment, and they end in the darkness of hell and destruction. Let us therefore who are of the day cast them off; not only cease from the practice of them, but detest and abhor them, and have no more to do with them. Because eternity is just at the door, take heed lest we be found doing that which will then make against us, 2 *Pet.* iii. 11, 14.

2. What we must put on. The Christian's care must be wherewithal we shall be clothed; how shall we dress our souls? 1st. "Put on the armour of light." Christians are soldiers in the midst of enemies, and their life a warfare, therefore their array must be armour, that they may stand upon their defence; the armour of God, which we are directed to, *Eph.* vi. 13, &c. A Christian may reckon himself undressed, if he be unarmed. The graces of the Spirit are this armour, to secure the soul from Satan's temptations, and the assaults of this present evil world. This is called the armour of light, some think, alluding to the bright glittering armour which the Roman soldiers used to wear, or such armour as becomes us to wear in the daylight. The graces of the Spirit are suitable, splendid ornaments; are in the sight of God of great price. 2nd. "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ," ver. 14. This stands in opposition to a great many base lusts, mentioned, ver. 13. "Rioting and drunkenness," which must be cast off. One would think it should follow, But put on sobriety, temperance, chastity, the opposite virtues. No, "put on Christ," that includes all. Put on the righteousness of Christ for justification; be found in him, *Phil.* iii. 9, as a man is found in his clothes; put on the priestly garments of the elder brother, that in them you may obtain the blessing; put on the Spirit and grace of Christ for sanctification; "put on the new man," *Eph.* iv. 24; get the habit of grace confirmed, the acts of it quickened. Jesus Christ is the best clothing for Christians to adorn themselves with, to arm themselves with; it is decent, distinguishing, dignifying, and defending. Without Christ we are naked, deformed; all other things are filthy rags, fig-leaves, a sorry shelter. God has provided us coats of skins, large, strong, warm, and durable. By baptism we have in profession put on Christ, *Gal.* iii. 27. Let us do it in truth and sincerity. The Lord Jesus Christ. Put him on as Lord to rule you, as Jesus to save you, and in both as Christ anointed and appointed by the Father to this ruling, saving work.

Thirdly. How to walk. When we are up and dressed, we are not to sit still in an affected closeness and privacy, as monks and hermits. What have we good clothes for, but to appear abroad in them. "Let us walk." Christianity teaches us how to walk so as to please God, whose eye is upon us; 1 *The.* iv. 1, "Walk honestly as in the day;" compare *Eph.* v. 8, "Walk as children of the light." Our conversation must be as becomes the Gospel. "Walk honestly;" *εὐσχημίως*, decently, and becomingly, so as to credit your profession, and to adore the doctrine of God our Saviour, and recommend religion in its beauty to others. Christians should be in a special manner careful to carry themselves well in those things wherein men have an eye upon them, and to study that which is lovely and of good report. Particularly, here are three pair of sins we are cautioned against. 1. We must not walk in rioting and drunkenness; abstain from all excess in eating and drinking. We must not give the least countenance to revelling, nor indulge our sensual appetite in any private excesses. Christians must not overcharge their hearts with surfeiting and drunkenness, *Lu.* xxi. 34. This is not walking as in the day; for "they that are drunk are drunk in the night," 1 *The.* v. 7. 2. "Not in chambering and wantonness;" not in any of those lusts of the flesh, those works of darkness, which are forbidden in the seventh commandment. Downright adultery and fornication is the chambering forbidden; lascivious thoughts and affections, lascivious looks, words, books, songs, gestures, dances, dalliances, which lead to, and are degrees of, that uncleanness, are the wantonness here forbidden; whatsoever transgresseth the pure and sacred law of chastity and modesty. 3. "Not in strife and envying." These are also works of darkness; for, though the acts and instances of strife and envy are very common, yet none are willing to own the principles, or to acknowledge themselves envious and contentious. It may be the lot of the best saints to be envied and striven with; but to strive and to envy ill become the disciples and followers of the peaceable and humble Jesus. Where there is riot and drunkenness, there use to be chambering and wantonness, and strife and envy. Solomon puts them all together, *Pr.* xxiii. 29, &c. Those that tarry long at the wine, ver. 30, have contentions and wounds without cause, ver. 29, and their eyes behold strange women, ver. 33.

Fourthly. What provision to make; ver. 14. "Make not provision for the flesh." Be not careful about the body. Our great care must be to provide for our souls. But must we take no care about our bodies? Must we not provide for them when they need it? Yes, but two things are here forbidden: 1. Perplexing ourselves with an inordinate care, intimated in those words, *πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιεῖτε*; be not solicitous in forecaring for the body, do not stretch your wits, nor set your thoughts upon the tenter-hooks, in making this provision; be not careful and encumbered about it, do not take thought, *Mat.* vi. 31. It forbids an anxious, encumbering care. 2. Indulging ourselves in an irregular desire. We are not forbidden barely to provide for the body, it is a lamp that must be supplied with oil, but we are forbidden "to fulfil the lusts thereof." The necessities of the body must be considered, but the lusts of it must not be gratified. Natural desires must be answered, but wanton appetites must be checked and denied. To ask meat for our necessities is duty, we are taught to pray for daily bread; but to ask meat for our lusts is provoking, *Ps.* lxxviii. 18. Those who profess to walk in the Spirit must not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, *Gal.* v. 16.

[The former verses, 11, 12, tell us, it is time to rise, and call us to put on our clothes, and, being soldiers, our arms. Ver. 13 directeth our behaviour and employment throughout the day. The last verse doth shortly, and clearly, fold up both together.—It contains the words the very reading of which wrought so with Augustine, that, of a licentious young man, he turned a holy faithful servant of Jesus Christ. While you were without Christ you had no higher nor other business to do but to attend and serve the flesh; but once having put him on, you are other men, and other manners do become you. There is a transcendent sweetness in Christ, that puts the flesh out of credit. "Put on Christ," thy royal robe, and "make no provision for the flesh." A soul clothed with Christ, stooping to any sinful delight, or an ardent pursuit of any thing earthly, though lawful, doth wonderfully indignify itself. Oh! raise up your spirits, you that pretend to anything in Christ: delight in him, and let his love satisfy you at all times. What need you go a-begging elsewhere? All you would add makes you the poorer, abates so much of your enjoyment of him; and what can compensate that? "Put on the Lord Jesus," and then view yourself as, and see if you be fit to be slaves to flesh and earth. These two, "put on the Lord Jesus," and "make no provision for the flesh," are directly the representation of the church,—a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, needed borrow no beauty from it, or any thing under it.—*Abp. Leighton.*]

xiv. 10. "Judgment-seat of Christ;" the best MSS. have "the judgment-seat of God." The word "Christ," it has been supposed, was substituted from 2 *Cor.* v. 10. The reading "of God" is confirmed by verses 11, 12.

xiv. 12. "Of himself;" the emphasis is on these words—about himself, not about his neighbour.

xiv. 13. "Let us not judge;" the word "judge" is in different tenses. The first denotes the habit of judging, the second a definite

CHAPTER XIV.

The apostle having in the former chapter directed our carriage one towards another in civil things, and prescribed the sacred laws of justice, peaceableness, and order, to be observed by us as members of the commonwealth, comes in this and part of the following chapter in like manner to direct our demeanour one towards another in sacred things, which pertain more immediately to conscience and religion, and which we observe as members of the church. Particularly he gives rules how to manage our different apprehensions about indifferent things: in the management of which, it seems, there was something amiss among the Roman Christians to whom he wrote, which he here labours to redress. But the rules are general, and of standing use in the church, for the preservation of that Christian love, which he had so earnestly pressed in the foregoing chapter as the fulfilling of the law. It is certain, nothing is more threatening, nor more often fatal to Christian societies, than the contentions and divisions of their members. By these wounds the life and soul of religion doth expire. Now in this chapter we are furnished with the sovereign balm of Gilead; the blessed apostle prescribes like a wise physician: "Why then is not the hurt of the daughter of my people recovered?" but because his directions are not followed? This chapter, rightly understood, made use of, and lived up to, would set things to rights, and heal us all.



IM that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. 5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. 7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. 10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. 14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and

judgment once for all. The second "judge" is like a playful echo of the first.

xiv. 14, 15. "There is nothing unclean of itself;" nothing has any essential pollution. (Compare Mark vii. 15.) But in relation to him who deems it so, it is unclean. The connection of verse 15 is a little difficult, but the simplest way to take it seems to be this: "There is nothing unclean in itself, but it may be so to another." Therefore your conduct must be determined not simply by your knowledge that

joy in the Holy Ghost. 18 For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men. 19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things where-with one may edify another. 20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21 *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. 22 Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. 23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.



UNCLEAN ANIMALS.—VER. 14.

We have in this chapter,

First. An account of the unhappy contention which had broken out in the Christian church. Our Master had foretold that offences would come; and it seems so they did, for want of that wisdom and love which would have prevented them, and kept up union among them.

1. There was a difference among them about the distinction of meats and days. Those are the two things instanced in. There might be other like occasions of difference, while these made the most noise, and were most taken notice of. The case was this; the members of the Christian church at Rome were some of them originally Gentiles, and others of them Jews. We find Jews at Rome believing, *Acts* xxviii. 24. Now those that had been Jews were trained up in the observance of the ceremonial appointments touching meats and days. This, which had been bred in the bone with them, would hardly be got out of the flesh, even after they turned Christians; especially with some of them, who were not easily weaned from what they had long been wedded to. They were not well instructed touching the cancelling of the ceremonial law by the death of Christ, and therefore retained the ceremonial institutions, and practised accordingly, while other Christians, that understood themselves better, and knew their Christian liberty, made no such difference.

1st. Concerning meats; ver. 2, "One believeth that he may eat all things," that is, he is well satisfied that the ceremonial distinction of meats into clean and unclean is no longer in force, but that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused,—"nothing unclean of itself," ver. 14. This he was assured of, not only from the general tenor and scope of the Gospel, but particularly from the revelation which Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, (and therefore more immediately concerned in it) had to this purpose, *Acts* x. 15, 23. This the strong Christian is clear in, and practiseth accordingly; eating what is set before him, and asking no question for conscience' sake, *1 Cor.* x. 27. On the other hand, another, who is weak, is dissatisfied in this point, is not clear in his Christian liberty, but rather inclines to think that the meats forbidden by the law remain still unclean; and therefore, to keep at a distance from them he will eat no flesh at all, but "eateth herbs," contenting himself only with the fruits of the earth. See to what degrees of mortification and self-denial a tender conscience will submit. None knows but they that experience it how great both the restraining and the constraining power of conscience is.

2nd. Concerning days, ver. 5. Those that thought themselves still under some kind of obligation by the ceremonial law, esteemed "one day above another," kept up a respect to the times of the passover, pentecost, new moons, and feasts of tabernacles; thought those days better than other days, and solemnized them accordingly with particular observances, binding themselves to some religious rest and exercise on those days. Those who knew that all these things were abolished and done away by Christ's coming esteemed every day alike. We must understand it with an exception of the Lord's day, which all

Christians unanimously observed; but they made no account, took no notice, of those antiquated festivals of the Jews. Here the apostle speaks of the distinction of meats and days as a thing indifferent, when it went no farther than the opinion and practice of some particular persons, who had been trained up all their days to such observances, and therefore were the more excusable if they hardly parted with them. But in the epistle to the Galatians, where he deals with those that were originally Gentiles, but were influenced by some Judaizing teachers, not only to believe such a distinction, and to practise accordingly, but to lay a stress upon it as necessary to salvation, and to make the observance of the Jewish festivals public and congregational: here the case was altered, and it is charged upon them as the frustrating of the design of the Gospel, falling from grace, *Gal.* iv. 9-11. These here did it out of weakness, the Galatians did it out of wilfulness and wickedness, and therefore the apostle handles them thus differently. This epistle is supposed to have been written some time before that to the Galatians. The apostle seems willing to let the ceremonial law wither by degrees, and to let it have an honourable burial. Now these weak Romans seem to be only following it weeping to its grave, but those Galatians were raking it out of its ashes.

2. It was not so much the difference itself that did the mischief as the mismanagement of the difference, making it a bone of contention.

1st. Those that were strong, and knew their Christian liberty, and made use of it, did despise the weak who did not; whereas they should have pitied them, and helped them, and afforded them meek and friendly instruction, they trampled upon them as silly, and humoursome, and superstitious, for scrupling those things which they knew to be lawful. So apt are those that have knowledge to be puffed up with it, and to look disdainfully and scornfully upon their brethren.

2nd. Those that were weak, and durst not use their Christian liberty, did judge and censure the strong who did, as if they were loose Christians, carnal professors, that cared not what they did, but walked at all adventures, and stuck at nothing. They judged them as breakers of the law, contemners of God's ordinance, and the like. Such censures as these discovered a great deal of rashness and uncharitableness, and would doubtless tend much to the alienating of affection. Well, this was the disease, and we see it remaining in the church to this day. The like differences, in like manner mismanaged, are still the disturbers of the church's peace. But,

Secondly. We have proper directions and suggestions laid down for allaying this contention, and preventing the ill consequences of it. The apostle, as a wise physician, prescribes proper remedies for the disease, which are made up of rules and reasons. Such gentle methods doth he take, with such order of a man doth he draw them together, not by excommunicating, suspending, and silencing either side, but by persuading them both to a mutual forbearance. And, as a faithful daysman, he lays his hand upon them both; reasoning the case with the strong, that they should not be so scornful, and with the weak, that they should not be so censorious. And if the contending parties will but submit to this fair arbitration, each abate of his rigour, and sacrifice their differences to their graces, all will be well quickly. Let us observe the rules he gives, some to the strong, and some to the weak, and some to both, for they are interwoven; and reduce the reasons to their proper rules.

1. Those that are weak must be received, "but not to doubtful disputations," ver. 1. Take this for a general rule; spend your zeal in those things wherein you and all the people of God are agreed, and do not dispute about matters that are doubtful. Receive him, *προσλαμβάνετε*, take him to you, bid him welcome, receive him with the greatest affection and tenderness; *porrigite manum*, (so the Syriac),—"lend him your hand," to help him, to fetch him to you, to encourage him. "Receive him" into your company, and converse, and communion, entertain him with readiness and condescension, and treat him with all possible endearments. "Receive him," not to quarrel with him, and to argue about uncertain points that are in controversy, which will but confound him, and fill his head with empty notions,—perplex him, and shake his faith. Let not your Christian friendship and fellowship be disturbed with such vain janglings, and strifes of words. "Not to judge his doubtful thoughts," so the margin; that is, not to pump out his weak sentiments concerning those things which he is in doubt about, that you may censure and condemn him. Receive him, not to expose him, but to instruct and strengthen him: see *1 Cor.* i. 10; *Phil.* iii. 15, 16.

2. Those that are strong must by no means despise the weak, nor those that are weak judge the strong, ver. 3. This is levelled directly against the fault of each party. It is seldom that any such contention is but there is a fault on both sides; and both must mend. He argues against both these jointly: we must not despise or judge our brethren. Why so?

1st. Because God hath received them; and we reflect upon him if we reject those whom he hath received. God never cast off any one that had true grace, though he were but weak in it; never broke the bruised reed. Strong believers and weak believers, those that eat, and those that eat not, if they be true believers, are accepted of God. It will be good for us to put this question to ourselves when we are tempted to carry it scornfully towards our brethren, to disdain and censure them, Hath not God owned them? and if he hath dare I disown them? Nay, God doth not only receive them, but hold them up, ver. 4. You think he that eateth will fall by his presumption, or that he that eateth not will sink under the weight of his own fears and scruples. But if they have true faith, and an eye to God, the one in the intelligent use of his Christian liberty, and the other in the conscientious forbearance of it, they shall be held up, the one in his integrity, and the other in his comfort. This hope is built upon the power of God; for "God is able to make him stand;" and, being able, no doubt he is willing to exert that power for the preservation of those that are his own. In reference to spiritual difficulties and dangers, our own and others, much of our hope and comfort is grounded upon the Divine power, *1 Pet.* i. 5; *Jude* 24.

2nd. Because they are servants to their own Master; ver. 4, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" We reckon it a piece of ill manners to meddle with other people's servants, and to find fault with them, and censure them. Weak and strong Christians are indeed our brethren, but they are not our servants. This rash judging is reproved, *Jas.* iii. 1, under the notion of being many masters. We make ourselves our brethren's masters, and do in effect usurp the throne of God, when we take upon us thus to judge them; especially to judge their thoughts and intentions, which are out of our view; to judge their persons and state, concerning which it is hard to conclude by those few indications which fall within our cognizance. God sees not as man sees; and he is their Master, and not we. In judging and censuring our brethren, we meddle with that which doth not belong to us. We have work enough to do at home; and, if we must needs be judging, let us exercise our faculty upon our own hearts and ways. "To his own Master he stands or falls," that is, his doom will be according to his Master's sentence, and not according to ours. How well for us is it that we are not to stand or fall by the judgment of another, but by the righteous and unerring judgment of God, which is according to truth! While thy brother's cause is before thy judgment, it is *coram non judice*,—"before one who is not the judge;" the court of heaven is the proper court for trial, where, and where only, the sentence

there is nothing unclean absolutely, but by the practical, commonplace fact that there are weak consciences in the world; for to grieve these is not walking according to love, which is more than liberty. For so trifling and contemptible a thing as a piece of meat, destroy not (*i.e.*, become not the Apollyon of; so Vaughan, who cites *Rev.* ix. 11 and *1 Cor.* viii. 10, 11) a brother for whom Christ died." "Make not more of your food than Christ did of his life" (Bengel).

xiv. 17. "Meat and drink:" better, "eating and drinking."

xiv. 19, 20. "Wherewith one may edify:" mutual edification—*i.e.*, the "building up" of the brethren in their faith individually, and the "building up" of all as one temple collectively. (Compare *1 Cor.* iii. 17, vi. 19; *Eph.* ii. 22.) The metaphor suggests the word in the next verse. It is rendered "destroy," but it is the exact opposite of the word rendered "build up." "Pull down" or "undo" would preserve the figure.

xiv. 22. "Have it to thyself:" *i.e.*, "Enjoy the blessing of this

is definitive and concluding; and to which, if his heart be upright, he may comfortably appeal from thy rash censure.

3rd. Because both the one and the other, if they be true believers, are right for the main, have an eye to God, and do approve themselves to God in what they do, ver. 6. "He that regardeth the day," that makes conscience of observing the Jewish fasts and festivals, not imposing it upon others, nor laying a stress upon it, but willing to be, as he thinks, on the surer side, as thinking there is no harm in resting from worldly labours, and worshipping God on those days, it is well. We have reason to think, because in other things he carries himself like a good Christian, that in this also his eye is single, and that he "regardeth it unto the Lord," and God will accept of his honest intention, though he be under a mistake about the observation of days; for the sincerity and uprightness of the heart was never rejected for the weakness and infirmity of the head; so good a Master do we serve. On the other hand, "he that regardeth not the day," that doth not make a difference between one day and another; doth not call one day holy and another profane; one day lucky and another unlucky, but esteemeth every day alike, he doth not do it out of a spirit of opposition, contradiction, or contempt of his brother. If he be a good Christian he doth not, he dares not, do it from such a principle; and therefore we charitably conclude, that "to the Lord he doth not regard it." He therefore makes no such difference of days, because he knows God hath made none; and therefore intends his honour in endeavouring to dedicate every day to him. So for the other instance; "He that eateth" whatever is set before him, though it be blood, though it be swine's flesh, if it be food convenient for him, he "eateth to the Lord." He understands the liberty that God hath granted him, and uses it to the glory of God, with an eye to his wisdom and goodness, in enlarging our allowance now under the Gospel, and taking off the yoke of legal restraints; "and he giveth God thanks" for the variety of food he hath, and the liberty he hath to eat it, and that in those things his conscience is not fettered. On the other hand, he "that eateth not" those meats which were forbidden by the ceremonial law, "to the Lord he eateth not." It is for God's sake, because he is afraid of offending God by eating that which he is sure was once prohibited; "and he giveth God thanks" too that there is enough beside. If he conscientiously deny himself that which he takes to be forbidden fruit, yet he blesseth God that of other trees in the garden he may freely eat. Thus while both have an eye to God in what they do, and approve themselves to him in their integrity, why should either of them be judged or despised? Observe, Whether we eat flesh or eat herbs, it is a thankful regard to God, the Author and Giver of all our mercies, that sanctifies and sweetens it. Bishop Sanderson, in his thirty-fourth sermon, upon 1 Tim. iv. 4, justly makes this observation: "It appears by this, that saying grace" (as we commonly call it, perhaps from 1 Cor. x. 30.) "before and after meat, was the common known practice of the church, among Christians of all sorts, weak and strong. An ancient, commendable, apostolical, Christian practice, derived down from Christ's example, through all the ages of the church, Mat. xiv. 19; xv. 36; Lu. ix. 16; 1 Jo. vi. 8; Mat. xxvi. 30; Acts xvii. 35; blessing the creatures in the name of God before we use them, and blessing the name of God for them after, both included; for εὐλογεῖν and εὐχαριστεῖν are used promiscuously."

To clear this argument against rash judging and despising, he shews how essential it is to true Christianity to have a regard to God, and not to ourselves, which, therefore, unless the contrary do manifestly appear, we must presume concerning those that in lesser things differ from us. Observe his description of true Christians, taken from their end and aim, ver. 7, 8, and the ground of it, ver. 9.

First. Our end and aim. Not self, but the Lord. As the particular end specifies the action, so the general scope and tendency specifies the state. If we would know what way we walk in we must inquire what end we walk towards. 1st. Not to self. We have learned to deny ourselves, that was our first lesson; "None of us liveth to himself." This is a thing in which all the people of God are one, however they differ in other things; though some are weak and others are strong, yet both agree in this, not to live to themselves. Not one that hath given up his name to Christ is allowed a self-seeker; it is contrary to the foundation of true Christianity. We neither live to ourselves nor die to ourselves, that is, we are not our own masters, nor our own proprietors; we are not at our own dispose. The business of our lives is not to please ourselves, but to please God. The business of our deaths, which we are every day exposed to, and delivered to, is not to make ourselves talked of; we run not such hazards out of vain-glory, while we are dying daily. When we come to die actually, neither is that to ourselves; it is not barely that we would be unclothed, and eased of the burthen of the flesh, but it is to the Lord, that we may depart and be with Christ,—may be present with the Lord. 2nd. But to the Lord, ver. 8, to the Lord Christ, to whom all power and judgment is committed, and in whose name we are taught as Christians to do every thing we do, Col. iii. 17; with an eye to the will of Christ as our rule, to the glory of Christ as our end, Phil. i. 21. Christ is the gain we aim at, living and dying. We live to glorify him in all the actions and affairs of life; we die, whether a natural or a violent death, to glorify him, and to go to be glorified with him. Christ is the centre in which all the lines of life and death do meet. This is true Christianity, which makes Christ all in all. So that whether "we live or die, we are the Lord's," devoted to him, depending on him, designed and designing for him. Though some Christians are weak, and others strong, and they of different sizes, capacities, apprehensions, and practices in lesser things, yet they are all the Lord's,—all eyeing, and serving, and approving themselves to Christ; and are accordingly owned and accepted of him. Is it for us then to judge or despise them, as if we were their masters, and they were to make it their business to please us, or to stand or fall by our dooms?

Secondly. The ground of this, ver. 9. It is grounded upon Christ's absolute sovereignty and dominion, which was the fruit and end of his death and resurrection. "To this end he both died, and rose, and revived" (he being risen, entered upon a heavenly life, the glory which he had before) "that he might be Lord both of dead and living," that is, that he might be universal monarch, Lord of all, Acts x. 36, all the animate and inanimate creatures; for he is head over all things to the church. He is Lord of those that are living, to rule them; of those that are dead, to revive them, and raise them up. This was that name above every name, which God gave him as the reward of his humiliation, Phil. ii. 8, 9. It was after he had died and risen that he said, "All power is given unto me," Mat. xxviii. 18; and presently he exerts that power in issuing out commissions, ver. 19, 20. Now if Christ paid so dear for his dominion over souls and consciences, and has such a just and undisputed right to exercise that dominion, we must not so much as seem to invade it, or intrench upon it by judging the consciences of our brethren, and arraigning them at our bar. When we are ready to reproach and reflect upon the name and memory of those that are dead and gone, and to pass a censure upon them, (which some the rather do, because such judgments of the dead are more likely to pass uncontrolled and uncontradicted,) we must consider that Christ is Lord of the dead, as well as of the living. If they are dead they have already given up their account, and let that suffice.

And this leads to another reason against judging and despising; namely,

strong faith without obtruding it to the injury of others." "Happy is he," &c.: "Happy is he whose practice does not outrun his convictions."

xv. 1. "We then that are strong:" St. Paul includes himself among the strong; he had said as much in chap. xiv. 14. "Bear the infirmities of the weak:" Vaughan aptly quotes, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. viii. 17). (Compare Gal. vi. 2.)

4th. Because both the one and the other must shortly give an account, ver. 10–12. A believing regard to the judgment of the great day would silence all these rash judgments. "Why dost thou" that art weak, "judge thy brother" that is strong? "and why dost thou" that art strong, "set at naught thy brother" that is weak? Why is all this clashing, and contradicting, and censuring among Christians? "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ," 2 Cor. v. 10. Christ will be the judge, and he has both authority and ability to determine men's eternal state according to their works, and before him we shall stand as persons to be tried, and to give up an account; expecting our final doom from him, which will be eternally conclusive. To illustrate this, ver. 11, he quotes a passage out of the Old Testament, which speaks of Christ's universal sovereignty and dominion, and that established with an oath; "As I live," saith the Lord, "every knee shall bow to me." It is quoted from Isa. xlv. 23: there it is; "I have sworn by myself;" here it is, "As I live." So that whenever God saith, "As I live," it is to be interpreted as swearing by himself; for it is God's prerogative to have life in himself. There is a farther ratification of it there, "The word is gone out of my mouth." It is a prophecy in general of Christ's dominion; and here very fitly applied to the judgment of the great day, which will be the highest and most illustrious exercise of that dominion. Here is a proof of Christ's godhead; he is the Lord, and he is God, equal with the Father. Divine honour is due to him, and must be paid. It is paid to God through him as Mediator. God will judge the world by him, Acts xvii. 31. The bowing of the knee to him, and the confession made with the tongue, are but outward expressions of inward adoration and praise. Every knee and every tongue, either freely or by force.

First. All his friends do it freely: are made willing in the day of his power. Grace is the soul's cheerful, entire, and avowed subjection to Jesus Christ. 1st. Bowing to him; the understanding bowed to his truths, the will to his laws, the whole man to his authority; and this expressed by the bowing of the knee, the posture of adoration and prayer. It is proclaimed before our Joseph, "Bow the knee," Gen. xli. 43. Though bodily exercise alone profits little, yet, as it is guided by inward fear and reverence, it is accepted. 2nd. Confessing to him; acknowledging his glory, grace, and greatness, acknowledging our own meanness and vileness; confessing our sins to him, so some understand it.

Secondly. All his foes shall be constrained to do it, whether they will or no. When he shall come in the clouds, and every eye shall see him, then, and not till then, will all those promises which speak of his victories over his enemies and their subjection to him, have their full and complete accomplishment. Then his foes shall be his footstool, and all his enemies shall lick the dust. Hence he concludes, ver. 12, "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." We must not give account for others, nor they for us; but every one for himself. We must give an account how we have spent our time; how we have improved our opportunities; what we have done, and how we have done it. And therefore, 1st. We have little to do to judge others, for they are not accountable to us, nor are we accountable for them; Gal. vi. 6, "Whosoever they were, it maketh no matter to me, God accepteth no man's person." Whatever they are, and whatever they do, they must give account to their own master, and not to us. If we can in any thing be helpers of their joy, it is well; but we have not dominion over their faith. And, 2nd. We have the more to do to judge ourselves; we have an account of our own to make up, and that is enough for us; "let every man prove his own work" Gal. vi. 4, state his own accounts, search his own heart and life. Let that take up his thoughts, and he that is strict in judging himself, and abasing himself, will not be apt to judge and despise his brother. Let all these differences be referred to the arbitration of Christ at the great day.

5th. Because the stress of Christianity is not to be laid upon these things, nor are they at all essential to religion, either on the one side or on the other. This is his reason, ver. 17, 18, which is reducible to this branch of exhortation: Why should you spend your zeal either for or against those things which are so minute and inconsiderable in religion? Some make it a reason why, in case of offence likely to be taken we should refrain the use of our Christian liberty; but it seems directed in general against that heat about those things which he observed on both sides. "The kingdom of God is not meat," &c. Observe here.

First. The nature of true Christianity, what it is. It is here called, "the kingdom of God;" it is a religion intended to rule us, a kingdom; it stands in a true and hearty subjection to God's power and dominion. The gospel dispensation is in a special manner called the kingdom of God, in distinction from the legal dispensation, Mat. iii. 2; iv. 17.

1st. It is "not meat and drink." It doth not consist either in using or abstaining from such and such meats and drinks. Christianity gives no rule in that case either one way or other. The Jewish religion consisted much in meats and drinks, Heb. ix. 10; abstaining from some meats religiously, Lev. xi. 2; eating other meats religiously; as in several of the sacrifices, part of which were to be eaten before the Lord. But all those appointments are now abolished, and are no more, Col. ii. 21, 22. The matter is left at large; "every creature of God is good," 1 Tim. iv. 4. So, as to other things, it is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, Gal. v. 6; vi. 15; 1 Cor. vii. 19. It is not being of this party and persuasion, of this or the other opinion in lesser things, that will recommend us to God. It will not be asked at the great day who ate flesh, and who ate herbs; who kept holidays, and who did not; nor will it be asked, who was conformist, and who was nonconformist; but asked who feared God and worked righteousness, and who did not. Nothing more destructive to true Christianity than placing it in modes, and forms, and circumstantialities, which eat out the essentials.

2nd. It is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." These are some of the essentials of Christianity; things in which all the people of God are agreed, in the pursuit of which we must spend our zeal, and which we must mind with an excellent care. Righteousness, peace, and joy, are very comprehensive words; and each of them includes much both of the foundation and the superstructure of religion. Might I limit the sense of them, it should be thus: As to God, our great concern is righteousness, to appear before him justified by the merit of Christ's death, sanctified by the Spirit of his grace; for the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; as to our brethren, it is peace; to live in peace, and love, and charity with them; following peace with all men; Christ came into the world to be the great peacemaker; as to ourselves, it is "joy in the Holy Ghost;" that spiritual joy which is wrought by the blessed Spirit in the hearts of believers, which respects God as their reconciled Father, and heaven as their expected home. Next to our complacency with God, the life of religion consists in our complacency in him; to delight ourselves always in the Lord. Surely we serve a good Master, who makes peace and joy so essential to our religion. Then and then only, we may expect peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, when the foundation is laid in righteousness, Isa. xxxiii. 17.

3rd. It is in these things to serve Christ, ver. 18; to do all this out of a respect to Christ himself as our Master, to his will as our rule, and to his glory as our end. That which puts an acceptableness upon all our good duties is a regard to Christ in the doing of them. We are to serve his interests and designs in the world, which are in the first place to reconcile us to God,

xv. 2. "Please his neighbour:" not simply studying his fancies, so as merely to please, as the next clause shows, but for his good to edification. The wish merely to please men is never to have influence among Christian motives. St. Paul disclaims it as incompatible with the service of Christ (Gal. i. 10). (Compare 1 Thess. ii. 4.) It is forbidden in that sphere where it would seem most allowable (Eph. vi. 6). Christ hints that it hinders the acceptance of himself (John v. 44). The Christian "pleasing" is to be with a view to a brother's

and then to reconcile us one to another. What is Christianity but the serving of Christ? And we may well afford to serve him who for us and for our salvation took upon him the form of a servant.

Secondly. The advantages of it. He that duly observeth these things, 1st. Is acceptable to God. God is well pleased with such a one, though he be not in every thing just of our length. He hath the love and favour of God; his person, his performances, are acceptable of God, and we need no more to make us happy. If God now accepteth thy works, thou mayest eat thy bread with joy. Those are most pleasing to God that are best pleased with him; and they are those that abound most in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. 2nd. He is approved of men, that is, of all wise and good men, and the opinion of others is not to be regarded. The persons and things which are acceptable to God should be approved of us. Should not we be pleased with that which God is pleased with? What is it to be sanctified, but to be of God's mind? Observe, The approbation of men is not to be slighted; for we must "provide things honest in the sight of all men," and study those things that "are lovely and of good report." But the acceptance of God is to be desired and aimed at in the first place, because sooner or later God will bring all the world to be of his mind.

3. Another rule here given is this, that in these doubtful things every one not only may, but must, walk according to the light that God hath given him. This is laid down ver. 5, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," that is, practise according to your own judgment in those things, and leave others to do so too. Do not censure the practice of others, let them enjoy their own opinion; if they be persuaded in their own mind that they ought to do so and so, do not condemn them; but if your sober sentiments be otherwise, do not make their practice a rule to you, any more than you must prescribe yours as a rule to them. Take heed of acting contrary to the dictates of a doubting conscience. First be persuaded that what you do is lawful, before you venture to do it. In doubtful things it is good keeping on the sure side of the hedge. If a weak Christian doubt whether it be lawful to eat flesh, while he remains under that doubt he had best forbear, till he be fully persuaded in his own mind. We must not pin our faith upon any one's sleeve, or make others' practice our rule; but follow the dictates of our own understanding. To this purpose he argues, ver. 14, 23; which two verses explain this, and give us a rule not to act against the dictates.

1st. Of a mistaken conscience, ver. 14. If a thing be indifferent, so that it is not in itself a sin not to do it, if we really think it a sin to do it, it is to us a sin, though not to others, because we act against our consciences, though mistaken and misinformed. He instanceth in the case in hand, concerning the difference of meats. Observe,

First. His own clearness in this matter. "I know and am persuaded,"—that is, I am fully persuaded, I am acquainted with my Christian liberty, and am satisfied in it, without any doubt or scruple,—"that there is nothing unclean of itself;" that is, no kind of meat that lies under any ceremonial uncleanness, nor is forbidden to be eaten, if it be food proper for human bodies. Several kinds of meat were forbidden to the Jews, that in that as in other things they might be a peculiar and separate people, *Lev. xi. 44; Deu. xiv. 2, 3*. Sin had brought a curse upon the whole creation, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake;" the use of the creatures, and dominion over them, was forfeited, so that to man they were all unclean, *Gen. i. 15*. In token of which, God in the ceremonial law prohibited the use of some, to shew what he might have done concerning all; but now Christ has removed the curse, the matter is set at large again, and that prohibition is taken away. Therefore he saith he was persuaded by the Lord Jesus, not only as the author of that persuasion, but as the ground of it; it was built upon the efficacy of Christ's death, which removed the curse, took off the forfeiture, and restored our right to the creatures in general, and consequently put a period to that particular distinguishing prohibition. So that now there is nothing unclean of itself, every creature of God is good; "nothing common," so the margin, *οὐδὲν κοινόν*; nothing which is common to others to eat, from the use of which the professors of religion are restrained. Nothing profane; in this sense the Jews used the word common. It is explained by the word *καθαίματος*, *Acts x. 14*: nothing common or unclean. It was not only from the revelation made to Peter in this matter, but from the tenor and tendency of the whole Gospel, and the manifest design of Christ's death in general, that Paul learned to count nothing common or unclean. This was Paul's own clearness, and he practised accordingly.

Secondly. But here is a caution he gives to those who had not that clearness in this matter which he had. "To him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean," though it be his error, yet "to him it is unclean." This particular case thus determined gives a general rule, that he that doth a thing which he verily believeth to be unlawful, however the thing be in itself, to him it is a sin. This ariseth from that unchangeable law of our creation, which is, that our wills, in all their choices, motions and directions, should follow the dictates of our understandings. This is the order of nature; which order is broken if the understanding (though misguided) tell us that such a thing is a sin, and yet we will do it. This is a will to do evil; for, if it appears to us to be sin, there is the same pravity and corruption of the will in the doing of it as if really it were a sin; and therefore we ought not to do it. Not that it is in the power of any man's conscience to alter the nature of the action in itself, but only as to himself. It must be understood likewise with this proviso; though men's judgments and opinions may make that which is good in itself to become evil to them, yet they cannot make that which is evil in itself to become good, either in itself or to them. If a man were verily persuaded, (it is Dr. Sanderson's instance, *Sermon on ch. xiv. 23*), that it were evil to ask his father's blessing, that mispersuasion would make it become evil to him; but if he should be as verily persuaded that it were good to curse his father, that would not make it become good. The Pharisees taught people to plead conscience, when they made *corban* an excuse for denying relief to their parents, *Mat. xv. 5, 6*. But that would not serve any more than Paul's erroneous conscience would justify his rage against Christianity, *Acts xxvi. 9*; or theirs, *1 Jno. xvi. 2*.

2nd. Nor must we act against the dictates of a doubting conscience. In those indifferent things which we are sure it is no sin not to do, and yet are not clear that it is lawful to do them, we must not do them while we continue under those doubts; for "he that doubteth is damned if he eat," ver. 23, that is, it turns into sin to him; he is damned, *κατακεκρίσται*,—he is condemned of his own conscience, because he "eateth not of faith," that is, because he doth that which he is not fully persuaded he may lawfully do. He is not clear that it is lawful for him to eat swine's flesh, (suppose,) and yet is drawn, notwithstanding his doubts, to eat it, because he sees others do it, because he would gratify his appetite with it, or because he would not be reproached for his singularity. Here his own heart cannot but condemn him as a transgressor. Our rule is to walk as far as we have obtained, not farther, *Phil. iii. 15, 16*: "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Taking it in general it is the same with that of the apostle, *Heb. xi. 6*, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Whatever we do in religion it will not turn to any good account except we do it from a principle of faith, with a believing regard to the will of Christ as our rule, to the glory of Christ as our end, and to the righteousness of Christ as our plea. Here it seems to be taken more strictly; whatever is not of faith, that is, whatever is done while we are not clearly persuaded of the lawfulness of it, is a sin

against conscience. He that will venture to do that which his own conscience suggests to him to be unlawful, when it is not so in itself, will by a like temptation be brought to do that which his conscience tells him is unlawful, when it is really so. The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord, and it is a dangerous thing to debase and put a force upon conscience, though it be under a mistake. This seems to be the meaning of that aphorism, which sounds somewhat darkly, ver. 22, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." Many a one alloweth himself in practice to do that which yet in his judgment and conscience he condemneth himself for; allows it for the sake of the pleasure, profit, or credit of it; allows it in conformity to the custom; and yet, whilst he doth it, and pleads for it, his own heart gives him the lie, and his conscience condemns him for it. Now, happy is the man who so orders his conversation as not in any action to expose himself to the challenges and reproaches of his own conscience; that doth not make his own heart his adversary, as he must needs do, who doth that which he is not clear he may lawfully do. He is happy that hath peace and quietness within; for the testimony of conscience will be a special cordial in troublesome times; though men condemn us, it is well enough if our own hearts condemn us not, *1 Jno. iii. 21*.

4. Another rule here prescribed is, to those who are clear in these matters, and do know their Christian liberty, yet to take heed of using it so as to give offence to a weak brother. This is laid down, ver. 13, "Let us not judge one another any more;" let it suffice that you have hitherto continued in this uncharitable practice, and do so no more. The better to insinuate the exhortation, he puts himself in; "Let us not," as if he had said, It is what I have resolved against, therefore do you leave it. "But judge this rather;" instead of censuring the practice of others, let us look to the conduct of our own, "that no man put a stumblingblock, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way," *πρόσκομμα ἢ σκάνδαλον*. We must take heed of saying or doing any thing which may occasion our brother to stumble or fall; the one signifies a lesser, the other a greater degree of mischief and offence. That which may be an occasion,

1st. Of grief to our brother. One that is weak, and thinks it unlawful to eat such and such meats, will be greatly troubled to see thee eat them, out of a concern for the honour of the law which he thinks forbids them, and for the good of thy soul which he thinks is wronged by them; especially when thou dost it wilfully, and with a seeming presumption, and not with that tenderness, and that care to give satisfaction to thy weak brother, which would become thee. Christians should take heed of grieving one another, and of saddening the hearts of Christ's little ones: see *Mat. xvii. 6, 10*.

2nd. Of guilt to our brother. The former is a stumblingblock, that gives our brother a great shake, and is a hindrance and discouragement to him, but this is an occasion to fall. If thy weak brother, purely by thine example and influence, without any satisfaction received concerning his Christian liberty, be drawn to act against his conscience, and to walk contrary to the light he has, and so to contract guilt upon his soul, though the thing were lawful to thee, yet not being so to him, having not yet thereto attained, thou wast to be blamed for giving him the occasion. See this case explained, *1 Cor. viii. 8—11*. To the same purpose, ver. 21, he recommends it to our care, not to give offence to any one by the use of lawful things. "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine;" these are things lawful indeed, and comfortable, but not necessary to the support of human life, and therefore we may and must deny ourselves in them, rather than give offence. "It is good," pleasing to God, profitable to our brother, and no harm to ourselves. Daniel and his fellows were in better liking with pulse and water than they were that ate the portion of the king's meat. It is a generous piece of self-denial, for which we have Paul's example, *1 Cor. viii. 13*. "If meat make my brother to offend," he doth not say, I will eat no meat, that is to destroy himself, but, "I will eat no flesh," that is to deny himself, "while the world stands." This is to be extended to all such indifferent things, "whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended," is involved either in sin or trouble; "or is made weak," his graces weakened, his comforts weakened, his resolutions weakened; "is made weak," that is, takes occasion to shew his weakness, by his censures and scruples. We must not weaken those that are weak; that is to quench the smoking flax, and to break the bruised reed. Observe the motives to enforce this caution.

First. Consider the royal law of Christian love and charity which is hereby broken; ver. 15, "If thy brother be grieved with thy meat," that is, be troubled to see thee eat those things which the law of Moses did forbid, which yet thou mayest lawfully do, possibly thou art ready to say, Now he talks foolishly and weakly, and it is no great matter what he saith; we are apt, in such a case, to lay all the blame on that side. But the reproof here is given to the stronger and more knowing Christian, "Now walkest thou not charitably." Thus the apostle takes part with the weakest, and condemns the defect in love on the one side more than the defect in knowledge on the other side, agreeable to his principles elsewhere, that the way of love is the "more excellent way," *1 Cor. xii. 31*; "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth," *1 Cor. viii. 1—3*. "Now walkest thou not charitably." Charity to the souls of our brethren is the best charity. True love would make us tender of their peace and purity, and begot a regard to their consciences as well as to our own. Christ deals gently with those that have true grace, though they are weak in it.

Secondly. Consider the design of Christ's death. "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died," ver. 5. 1st. Drawing of a soul to sin threatens the destruction of that soul. By shaking his faith, provoking his passion, and tempting him to act against the light of his own conscience, thou dost as much as in thee lies destroy him, giving him an occasion to return to Judaism again. *Μὴ ἀπολλύς*. It notes an utter destruction. The beginning of sin is as the letting forth of water, we are not sure that it will stop anywhere on this side eternal destruction. 2nd. The consideration of the love of Christ in dying for souls should make us very tender of the happiness and salvation of souls, and careful not to do anything which may obstruct and hinder it. Did Christ quit a life for souls, such a life, and shall not we quit a morsel of meat for them? Shall we despise those whom Christ valued at so high a rate? Did he think it worth while to deny himself so much for them, as to die for them, and shall not we think it worth while to deny ourselves so little for them as abstaining from flesh comes to? "With thy meat." Thou pleadest that it is thy own meat, and thou mayest do what thou wilt with it; but remember that, though the meat is thine, the brother offended by it is Christ's, and a part of his purchase. While thou destroyest thy brother, thou art helping forward the devil's design, for he is the great destroyer; and, as much as in thee lies, thou art crossing the design of Christ, for he is the great Saviour; and dost not only offend thy brother, but offend Christ, for the work of salvation is that which his heart is upon. But are any destroyed for whom Christ died? If we understand it of the sufficiency and general intentment of Christ's death, which was to save all upon gospel terms, no doubt but multitudes are. If of the particular determination of the efficacy of his death to the elect, then, though none that were given to Christ shall perish, *Jno. vi. 39*, yet thou mayest, as much as is in thy power, destroy such. No thanks to thee if they be not; by doing that which hath a tendency to it, thou dost manifest a great opposition to Christ. Nay, and thou mayest utterly destroy, some, whose profession may be so justifiable, that

good, and that good his edification, his growth and confirmation in the faith.

xv. 3. "Even Christ:" "How much less we; but on the contrary, so entirely forgot himself that he bore the very reproaches which were designed for another, even God" (Vaughan). The quotation is made to show that Christ did not seek to please himself, and that he ever had in mind the work which his Father gave him to do. Following this, the Christian will not think of self, nor yet of pleas-

ing men, but steadily keep in mind the purpose of his brother's good. Thus the quotation touches the two points—self-denial, and self-denial for another's good, not our gain.

xv. 4. This justifies the application of the quotation in verse 3 and those which follow, in verses 9—12. "Patience and comfort of the Scriptures:" both "patience" and "comfort" may be connected with "Scripture." "Through patience of (i.e., arising from the study of) the Scriptures, and comfort of (i.e., communicated by) the Scrip-

thou art bound to believe, in a judgment of charity, that Christ died for them. Compare this with 1 Cor. viii. 10, 11.

Thirdly. Consider the work of God; ver. 20, "For meat destroy not the work of God," that is, the work of grace, particularly the work of faith in thy brother's soul. The work of peace and comfort are destroyed by such an offence given; take heed of it therefore, do not undo that which God hath done; you should work together with God, do not countermining his work. **1st.** The work of grace and peace is the work of God; it is wrought by him, it is wrought for him, it is a good work of his beginning, *Phil. i. 6.* Observe, the same for whom Christ died, ver. 15, are here called the work of God; besides the work that is wrought for us, there is a work to be wrought in us, in order to our salvation. Every saint is God's workmanship, his husbandry, his building, *Eph. ii. 10; 1 Cor. iii. 9.* **2nd.** We must be very careful to do nothing which tends to the destruction of this work, either in ourselves or others. We must deny ourselves in our appetites, inclinations, and in the use of Christian liberty, rather than obstruct and prejudice our own or others' grace and peace. Many do for meat and drink destroy the work of God in themselves; nothing more destructive to the soul than pampering and pleasing the flesh, and fulfilling the lusts of it; so likewise in others, by wilful offence given. Think what thou destroyest,—the work of God, whose work is honourable and glorious; think for what thou destroyest it,—for meat, which was but for the belly, and the belly for it.

Fourthly. Consider the evil of giving offence, and what an abuse it is of our Christian liberty. He grants, that "all things indeed are pure;" we may lawfully eat flesh, even those meats which were prohibited by the ceremonial law, but if we abuse this liberty it turns into sin to us: "it is evil to him that eats with offence." Lawful things may be done unlawfully. "Eats with offence;" either carelessly or designedly giving offence to his brethren. It is observable, that the apostle directs his reproof most against those who gave the offence; not as if they were not to be blamed who causelessly or weakly took the offence from the ignorance of Christian liberty, and the want of that charity which is not easily provoked, and which thinketh no evil, (he doth several times tacitly reflect upon them,) but he directs his speech to the strong, because they were better able to bear the reproof, and to begin the reformation. For the farther pressing of this rule, we may here observe two directions which have relation to it.

1st. "Let not then your good be evil spoken of," ver. 16, that is, take heed of doing anything which may give occasion to others to speak evil, either of the Christian religion in general or of your Christian liberty in particular. The Gospel is your good; the liberties and franchises, the privileges and immunities granted by it are your good; your knowledge and strength of grace to discern and use your liberty in things disputed, is your good, a good which the weak brother hath not. Now, let not this be evil spoken of. It is true we cannot hinder loose and ungoverned tongues from speaking evil of us, and of the best things we have, but we must not, if we can help it, give them any occasion to do it. Let not the reproach arise from any default of ours; as, *1 Tim. iv. 12.* "Let no man despise thee," that is, do not make thyself despicable, so here, Do not use your knowledge and strength in such a manner as to give occasion to people to call it presumption, and loose walking, and disobedience to God's law. We must deny ourselves in many cases for the preservation of our credit and reputation; forbearing to do that which we rightly know we may lawfully do, when our doing of it may be a prejudice to our good name; as, when it is suspicious, and hath the appearance of evil, or when it is become scandalous among good people, or hath any way a brand upon it. In such a case we must rather cross ourselves than shame ourselves. Though it be but a little folly, it may be like a dead fly, very prejudicial to one that is in reputation for wisdom and honour, *Ecc. x. 1.* We may apply it more generally. We should manage all our good duties in such a manner as that they may not be evil spoken of. That which for the matter of it is good and unexceptionable may sometimes, by a mismanagement, be rendered liable to a great deal of censure and reproach. Good praying, preaching, and discourse, many times for want of prudence in ordering the time, the expression, and other circumstances to edification, may be evil spoken of. It is indeed their sin that do speak evil of that which is good, for the sake of any such circumstantial errors, but it is our folly, if we give any occasion to do so. As we tender the reputation of the good we profess and practise, let us so order it as that it may not be evil spoken of.

2nd. "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God," ver. 22. It is not meant of justifying faith, that must not be hid, but manifested by our works, but of a knowledge and persuasion of our Christian liberty in things disputed. Hast thou clearness in such a particular? Art thou satisfied that thou mayest eat all meats, and observe all days, except the Lord's day, alike? "Have it to thyself," that is, enjoy the comfort of it in thy own bosom, and do not trouble others by the imprudent use of it, when it might give offence and cause thy weak brother to stumble and fall. In these indifferent things, though we must never contradict our persuasion, yet we may sometimes conceal it, when the avowing of it will do more hurt than good. "Have it to thyself;" a rule to thyself, not to be imposed upon others, or made a rule to them; or, a rejoicing to thyself. Clearness in doubtful matters contributes very much to our comfortable walking, as it frees us from those scruples, jealousies, and suspicions, which those who have not such clearness are entangled in endlessly. Compare *Gal. vi. 4.* "Let every man prove his own work," that is, bring it to the touchstone of the word, and try it by that so exactly, as to be well satisfied in what he doth, and "then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." Paul had faith in these things, "I am persuaded that there is nothing unclean of itself;" but he had it to himself, so as not to use his liberty to the offence of others. How happy were it for the church, if those that have a clearness in disputable things would be satisfied to have it to themselves before God, and not impose those things upon others, and make them terms of communion, than which nothing is more opposite to Christian liberty, nor more destructive both to the peace of churches and the peace of consciences! That healing method is never the less excellent for being common. In things necessary let there be unity, in things unnecessary let there be liberty, and in both let there be charity, then all will be well quickly. "Have it to thyself before God." The end of such knowledge is, that being satisfied in our liberty we may have a conscience void of offence towards God, and let that content us. That is the true comfort which we have before God. Those are right indeed that are so in God's sight.

5. There is one rule more laid down here, and it is general, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another," ver. 19. Here is the sum of our duty towards our brethren. **1st.** We must study mutual peace. Many wish for peace, and talk loud for it, that do not follow the things that make for peace, but the contrary. Liberty in things indifferent, condescension to those that are weak and tender, zeal in the great things of God wherein we are all agreed, these are things that make for peace. Meekness, humility, self-denial, and love, are the springs of peace, the things that make for our peace. We are not always so happy as to obtain peace, there are so many that delight in war; but the God of peace will accept us if we follow after the things that make for peace, that is, if we do

our endeavour. **2nd.** We must study mutual edification. The former makes way for this. We cannot edify one another while we are quarrelling and contenting. There are many ways by which we may edify one another, if we did but seriously mind it; by good counsel, reproof, instruction, example, building up not only ourselves, but one another, in the most holy faith. We are God's building, God's temple, and have need to be edified, and therefore must study to promote the spiritual growth one of another. None so strong but they may be edified, none so weak but may edify, and while we edify others we benefit ourselves.

[We are not to imagine of this chapter, that the subject of it has now gone by. There are principles here of universal and abiding application—lessons of standing authority, the obligation and importance of which remain to this day; and though the casuistry of Jewish meats may seldom or never be in practical demand amongst us, yet is there a certain other casuistry, which gives rise, as before, to the distinction between weak and strong, and which still continues to exercise, and sometimes to perplex, the consciences of inquirers. In separating, as our great apostle did with inimitable skill, the clear from the doubtful, there is one obvious consideration which ought never to be forgotten. Each man is still his brother's keeper. We are all responsible to a certain extent for the Christianity of other men; and though there be many indulgences, which, viewed singly and in themselves, the light and liberty of the Gospel would allow, yet are we bound to abstain from them, if our example otherwise would inflict a moral injury upon any of our fellows. After several illustrations of this truth, Dr. Chalmers adds, 'There is another, and we think a most legitimate inference, to be drawn from this passage. It is, that Christians should either cease to differ, or, if this be impossible, that then they should agree to differ. We of course exclude such differences as, relating to what is vital and essential, imply that either one or other of the parties is not Christian, disowning, as they do, some weightier matters, whether of doctrine or of the law.—There are differences, on neither side of which has the Bible left any such express or authoritative deliverance as would lead us to pronounce of one or other of the parties, not only that they are in the wrong, but fatally in the wrong. We should rank among these differences many questions of meats, and days, and priestly vestments, and many points both of church order and church government; so that to recognise as Christians those of the Episcopalian, or Independent, or Methodist, or Baptist persuasions, we should hold not to be liberalism, but right and genuine liberality. Paul exemplified both these methods of dealing with controversies and disposing of them; bold, and resolute, and uncompromising in all that was essential; yielding and generous in all that was not so; and, however strong, and free from all scrupulosity himself, yet deferring with the utmost tenderness to the honest and conscientious scruples of other men. He thus acquitted himself of two most important services,—the one, as an intrepid soldier, the manly defender and guardian of the church's purity; the other, as a discreet and wary counsellor, who knew both how to judge charitably and to arbitrate wisely for the church's unity and peace. And, unless we follow this high example, we do not see how the blissful consummation of that unanimity in the Christian world, of which our Saviour speaks as the stepping-stone to a universal Christianity through the world at large, (*Jno. xvii. 21, 23.*) is ever to be arrived at. Surely, for the fulfilment of this sacred object, it were well that in the confessions of different churches, articles of faith, viewed as articles of distinction or separation, should not be unnecessarily multiplied; and we would farther submit, whether it is not a most unwarrantable hazarding of this high and precious interest, to speak of the exclusively Divine right of any form whatever of ecclesiastical government. It is thus that certain strenuous advocates, both of Presbytery on the one hand and of Episcopacy on the other, have been heard to affirm, that they will never consent to the loosening or letting down of a single pin in the tabernacle. This tenacity of theirs we should all the more readily understand, if the specific information of each and every pin were really to be had in Scripture; but, in the absence of this, we do think that there might be a great deal more of mutual toleration. It has been well said, that, while it is our duty to be wise up to that which is written, we should not attempt to be wise above or beyond it; and so too, while it is our duty to be inflexible up to that which is written, it is surely not our part to be inflexible beyond it. We feel confident that, with the use and right application of this principle, there is immense room for the abridgment of the church's controversies. Let us hope that the movement is upon the whole in this direction; and that, even amid the fits and fermentations of this busy period, the Christian world is now heaving towards this better state of things, when the war of opinions shall cease, and both truth and charity shall walk hand in hand. Heaven grant that this perspective of brighter and happier days may be speedily realized.—C.]

CHAPTER XV.

The apostle in this chapter continues the discourse of the former, concerning mutual forbearance in indifferent things, and so draws towards a conclusion of the epistle. Where such differences of apprehension, and consequently distances of affection, are among Christians, there is need of precept upon precept, line upon line, to allay the heat, and to beget a better temper. The apostle being desirous to drive the nail home, as it were in a sure place, follows his blow, unwilling to leave the subject till he had some hopes of prevailing; to which end he orders the cause before them, and fills his mouth with the most pressing arguments. We may observe in this chapter, I. His precepts to them. II. His prayers for them. III. His apology for writing to them. IV. His account of himself and his own affairs. V. His declaration of his purpose to come to see them. VI. His desire of a share in their prayers.



Then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. **2** Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. **3** For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were

tures, we might have hope." This view is adopted by Olshausen and Alford. On the other hand, we may separate "patience," and understand the verse thus: "That we, through the exercise of the Christian grace of patience, and through the comfort derived from Scripture, might have hope."

xv. 6. "God, even the Father," &c.: Alford renders, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." With this may be compared John **xv. 17**, and Eph. **i. 17**. Vaughan remarks that "it is more

consistent with common Scripture usage to take it, "Him who is (1) God, and (2) Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

xv. 8. This verse introduces the reason for receiving each other. The Jewish and Gentile believers might be slow to receive each other; Christ, says the apostle, was the minister or servant of both. "Minister of the circumcision;" used of Christ only here. (Compare chap. **ix. 5**.) Alford thinks that it is used to humble the pride of the "strong," the Gentile Christian.

written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

The apostle here lays down two precepts, with reasons to enforce them, shewing the duty of the strong Christian to consider and condescend to the weakest.

First. We must "bear the infirmities of the weak," ver. 1. We all have our infirmities, but the weak are more subject to them than others; the weak in knowledge or grace, the bruised reed, and the smoking flax. We must consider these; not trample upon them, but encourage them, and bear with their infirmities. If through weakness they judge and censure us, and speak evil of us, we must bear with them, pity them, and not have our affections alienated from them. Alas! it is their weakness, they cannot help it. Thus Christ bore with his weak disciples, and excused for them. But there is more in it; we must also bear their infirmities, by sympathizing with them, concerning ourselves for them, ministering strength to them, as there is occasion. That is bearing one another's burthens.

Secondly. We must not please ourselves, but our neighbour, ver. 1, 2. We must deny our own humour in consideration of our brethren's weakness and infirmity. 1. Christians must not please themselves. We must not make it our business to gratify all the little appetites and desires of our own heart; it is good for us to cross ourselves sometimes, and then we shall the better bear others crossing of us. We shall be spoiled, as Atoniah was, if we be always humoured. The first lesson we have to learn is, to deny ourselves, *Mat. xvi. 24*. 2. Christians must please their brethren. The design of Christianity is to soften and meek the spirit, to teach us the art of obliging, and true complaisance; not to be servants to the lusts of any, but to the necessities and infirmities of our brethren; to comply with all that we have to do with, as far as we can with a good conscience. Christians should study to be pleasing. Not please ourselves in the use of our Christian liberty, which was allowed us not for our own pleasure, but for the glory of God, and the profit and edification of others. So we must please our neighbour. How amiable and comfortable a society would the church of Christ be, if Christians would study to please one another, as now we see them commonly industrious to cross, and thwart, and contradict one another! "Please his neighbour," not in everything, it is not an unlimited rule, "but for his good," especially for the good of his soul. Not please him by serving his wicked wills, and humouring him in a sinful way, or consenting to his enticements, or suffering sin upon him, this is a base way of pleasing our neighbour to the ruin of his soul,—if we thus please men we are not the servants of Christ,—but please him for his good, not for our own secular good, or to make a prey of him, but for his spiritual good. "To edification," that is, not only for his profit, but for the profit of others, to edify the body of Christ by studying to oblige one another. The closer the stones lie, and the better they are squared to fit one another, the stronger is the building. Now observe the reason why Christians must please one another: "For even Christ pleased not himself." The self-denial of our Lord Jesus is the best argument against the selfishness of Christians. Observe,

1. That "Christ pleased not himself." He did not consult his own worldly credit, ease, safety, or pleasure; he had not where to lay his head, lived upon alms, would not be made a king, detested no proposal with greater abhorrence than that, "Master, spare thyself," did not seek his own will, *Jno. v. 30*, washed his disciples' feet, endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, troubled himself, *Jno. xi. 33*, did not consult his own honour, and, in a word, emptied himself, and made himself of no reputation; and all this for our sakes, to bring in a righteousness for us, and to set us an example. His whole life was a self-denying, self-displeasing life. He bore the infirmities of the weak, *Heb. iv. 15*.

2. That herein the Scripture was fulfilled. "As it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me." This is quoted out of *Ps. lxxix. 9*, the former part of which verse is applied to Christ, *Jno. ii. 17*, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," and the latter part here; for David was a type of Christ, and his sufferings of Christ's sufferings. It is quoted to shew, that Christ was so far from pleasing himself, that he did in the highest degree displease himself. Not as if his undertaking, considered in the whole, were a task and grievance to him, for he was very willing to it, and very cheerful in it; but in his humiliation the content and satisfaction of natural inclination was altogether crossed and denied. He preferred our benefit before his own ease and pleasure. This the apostle chooseth to express in Scripture language; for how can the things of the Spirit of God be better spoken of than in the Spirit's own words? and that scripture he allegeth, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me."

1st. The shame of those reproaches Christ underwent. Whatever dishonour was done to God was a trouble to the Lord Jesus. He was grieved for the hardness of people's hearts, beheld a sinful place with sorrow and tears. When the saints were persecuted, Christ so far displeased himself as to take what was done to them as done against himself. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Christ also did himself endure the greatest indignities; there was much of reproach in his sufferings.

2nd. The sin of those reproaches Christ undertook to satisfy for; so many understand it. Every sin is a kind of reproach to God, especially presumptuous sins; now the guilt of these fell upon Christ, when he was made sin, that is, a sacrifice, a sin offering for us. When the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all, and he bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, they fell upon him as upon our surety: Upon me be the curse. This was the greatest piece of self-displacement that could be, considering his infinite spotless purity and holiness, the infinite love of the Father to him, and his eternal concern for his Father's glory; nothing could be more contrary to him, nor more against him, than to be made sin and a curse for us, and to have the reproaches of God fall upon him; especially, considering for whom he thus displeased himself, for strangers, enemies, and traitors: "the just for the unjust," *1 Pet. iii. 18*. This seems to come in as a reason why we should "bear the infirmities of the weak." We must not please ourselves, for Christ pleased not himself; we must bear the infirmities of the weak, for Christ bore the reproaches of those that reproached God. He bore the guilt of sin, and the curse for it; we are only called to bear a little of the trouble of it. He bore the presumptuous sins of the wicked; we are called only to bear the infirmities of the weak. "Even Christ," καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστός. Even he who was infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself, who needed not us or our services; even he who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, who had reason enough to please himself, and no reason to be concerned, much less to be crossed for us; even he pleased not himself, even he bore our sins. And should not we be humble and self-denying, and ready to consider one another, who are members one of another?

3rd. That therefore we must go and do likewise; "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." First. That which is written of Christ, concerning his self-denial and sufferings, is written for our learning; he hath left us an example. If Christ denied himself, surely we should deny ourselves from a principle of ingenuousness, and of gratitude, and especially of conformity to his image. The example of Christ in what he did and said is recorded for our imitation. Secondly. That which is written in the Scriptures of the Old

Testament, in the general, is written for our learning. What David had said in his own person Paul had just now applied to Christ. Now, lest this should look like a straining of the Scripture, he gives us this excellent rule in general, that all the Scriptures of the Old Testament (much more those of the New) were written for our learning, and are not to be looked upon as of private interpretation. What happened to the Old Testament saints happened to them for ensamples; and the Scriptures of the Old Testament have many fulfillings. The Scriptures are left for a standing rule to us. They are written, that they might remain for our use and benefit. 1st. For our learning. There are many things to be learned out of the Scriptures; and that is the best learning that is drawn from those fountains. Those are the most learned, that are most mighty in the Scriptures. We must therefore labour not only to understand the literal meaning of the Scriptures, but to learn out of it that which will do us good; and have need of help, therefore, not only to roll away the stone, but to draw out the water; for in many places the well is deep. Practical observations are more necessary than critical expositions. 2nd. "That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." That hope, which hath eternal life for its object, is here proposed as the end of Scripture learning. The Scripture was written that we might know what to hope for from God, and upon what grounds, and in what way. This should recommend the Scripture to us, that it is a special friend to Christian hope. Now the way of attaining this hope is "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures." Patience and comfort suppose trouble and sorrow. Such is the lot of the saints in this world, and were it not so we should have no occasion for patience and comfort; but both these befriend that hope which is the life of our souls. Patience works experience, and experience hope, that maketh not ashamed, *ch. v. 3-5*. The more patience we exercise under troubles the more hopefully we may look through our troubles; nothing more destructive to hope than impatience. And the comfort of the Scriptures, that is, that comfort which springs from the word of God, (that is the surest and sweetest comfort,) is likewise a great stay to hope, as it is an earnest in hand of the good hoped for. The Spirit, as a comforter, is the earnest of our inheritance.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: 6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle having delivered two exhortations, before he proceeds to more, intermixes here a prayer for the success of what he had said. Faithful ministers water their preaching with their prayers, because, whoever sows the seed, it is God that gives the increase. We can but speak to the ear, it is God's prerogative to speak to the heart. Observe,

First. The title he gives to God; "the God of patience and consolation." Who is both the author and the foundation of all the patience and consolation of the saints; from whom it springs, and on whom it is built. He gives the grace of patience, he confirms and keeps it up as the God of consolation; for the comforts of the Holy Ghost help to support believers, and to bear them up with courage and cheerfulness under all their afflictions. When he comes to beg the pouring out of a spirit of love and unity, he addresseth himself to God as "the God of patience and consolation;" that is, 1. As a God that bears with us, and comforts us; is not extreme to mark what we do amiss, but is ready to comfort them that are cast down; to teach us so to testify our love to our brethren, and by these means to preserve and maintain unity, by being patient one with another and comfortable one to another. Or, 2. As a God that gives us patience and comfort. He had spoken, ver. 4, of patience and comfort of the Scriptures; but here he looks up to God, as "the God of patience and consolation." It comes through the Scripture as the conduit-pipe, but from God as the fountain-head. The more patience and comfort we receive from God, the better disposed we are to love one another. Nothing breaks the peace more than an impatient, and peevish, and fretful melancholy temper.

Secondly. The mercy he begs of God; "Grant you to be likeminded one towards another, according to Jesus Christ." 1. The foundation of Christian love and peace is laid in likemindedness; a consent in judgment, as far as you have attained; or, however, a concord and agreement in affection. *Τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν*,—"to mind the same thing," all occasions of difference removed, and all quarrels laid aside. 2. This likemindedness must be "according to Christ Jesus;" according to the precept of Christ, the royal law of love, according to the pattern and example of Christ, which he had propounded to them for their imitation, ver. 3. Or, let Christ Jesus be the centre of their unity; agree in the truth, not in any error. It was a cursed concord and harmony of those who were of one mind to give their power and strength to the beast, *Rev. xvii. 13*; that was not a likemindedness according to Christ, but against Christ; like the Babel builders, who were one in their rebellion, *Gen. xi. 6*. The method of our prayer must be, first for truth, and then for peace; for such is the method of the wisdom that is from above, it is first pure, then peaceable. That is to be likeminded according to Christ Jesus. 3. Likemindedness among Christians according to Christ Jesus is the gift of God; and a precious gift it is, for which we must earnestly seek unto him. He is the Father of spirits, and fashioneth the hearts of men alike, *Ps. xxxiii. 15*; opens the understanding, softens the heart, sweetens the affections, and gives the grace of love, and the Spirit as a spirit of love to those that ask him. We are taught to pray, that the will of God may be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Now there it is done unanimously, among the angels, who are one in their praises and services; and our desire must be, that the saints on earth may be so too.

Thirdly. The end of his desire. That God may be glorified, ver. 6. This is his plea with God in prayer, and is likewise an argument with them to endeavour it. We should have the glory of God in our eye in every prayer; therefore our first petition, as the foundation of all the rest, must be, "Hallowed be thy name." Likemindedness among Christians, is in order to their glorifying of God. 1. "With one mind and one mouth." It is desirable, that Christians should agree in everything, that so they may agree in this, to praise God together. It tends very much to the glory of God, who is one, and his name one, when it is so. It will not suffice that there be one mouth, but there must be one mind; for God looks at the heart. Nay, there will hardly be one mouth where there is not one mind; and God will scarce be glorified where there is not a sweet conjunction of both. One mouth in confessing the truths of God, in praising the name of God; one mouth in common converse, not jarring, biting, and devouring one another; one mouth in the solemn assembly; one speaking, but all joining. 2. As "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." That is his New Testament style. God must be glorified as he has now revealed himself in the face of Jesus Christ; according to the rules of the Gospel, and with an eye to Christ, in whom he is our Father. The unity of Christians glorifies God as "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;" because it is a kind of counterpart or representation of the oneness that is between the Father and

xv. 9. "That the Gentiles might," &c.: the expression, "I say," may be repeated from verse 8 at the beginning of this, and we must translate ("I say") that the Gentiles glorified—i.e., on hearing and receiving the glad tidings.

xv. 14. At this verse commences the concluding portion of the epistle.

xv. 15. "The grace that is given to me of God:" "In virtue of my special commission to the Gentiles" (Vaughan).

xv. 16. The language throughout is strongly figurative. He represents himself as a sacrificing priest offering to God his sacrifice. The sacrifice consists of those who by his means believe in Christ. The sacrifice of the Christian is himself (*chap. xii. 1*) and those brought through him to offer themselves in like manner.

xv. 17. "I have therefore whereof," &c.: rather, "I have my glorying, an exultation of my own; but not in myself, in Christ Jesus." (Compare *Phil. ii. 17*.)

the Son. We are warranted so to speak of it, and with that in our eye to desire it, and pray for it, and from *Jno.* xvii. 21, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." A high expression of the honour and sweetness of the saints' unity; and it follows, "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me;" and so God may be glorified as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. 8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: 9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. 10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. 11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. 12 And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

The apostle here returns to his exhortation to Christians. What he says here, ver. 7, is to the same purpose with the former; but the repetition shews how much the apostle's heart was upon it. Receive one another into your affection, into your communion, and into your common conversation, as there is occasion. He had exhorted the strong to receive the weak, *ch.* xiv. 1; here "Receive ye one another," for sometimes the prejudices of the weak Christian make him shy of the strong, as much as the pride of the strong Christian makes him shy of the weak, neither of which ought to be. Let there be a mutual embracing among Christians. Those that have received Christ by faith must receive all Christians by brotherly love; though poor in the world, though persecuted and despised, though it may be matter of reproach and danger to you to receive them, though in the less weighty matters of the law they are of different apprehensions, though they may have been occasion for private piques, yet, laying aside these and the like considerations, "receive ye one another." Now the reason why Christians must receive one another is taken, as before, from the condescending love of Christ to us; "as Christ also received us to the glory of God." Can there be a more cogent argument? Hath Christ been so kind to us, and shall we be unkind to those that are his? Was he so forward to entertain us, and shall we be backward to entertain our brethren? Christ has received us into the nearest and dearest relations to himself; hath received us into his fold, into his family, into the adoption of sons, into a covenant of friendship, yea, into a marriage covenant with himself; hath received us, though we were strangers and enemies, and had played the prodigal, into fellowship and communion with himself. Those words, "to the glory of God," may refer both to Christ's receiving us, which is our pattern, and to our receiving one another, which is our practice according to that pattern.

First, Christ hath received us to the glory of God. The end of our reception by Christ is, that we might glorify God in this world, and be glorified with him in that to come. It was the glory of God, and our glory in the enjoyment of God, that Christ had in his eye when he condescended to receive us. We are called to an eternal glory by Christ Jesus, *Jno.* xvii. 24. See to what he received us,—to a happiness transcending all comprehension; see for what he received us,—for his Father's glory: he had that in his eye in all the instances of his favour to us.

Secondly, We must receive one another to the glory of God. That must be our great end in all our actions, that God may be glorified; and nothing doth more conduce to that than the mutual love and kindness of those that profess religion: compare ver. 6, "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God." That which was a bone of contention among them was a different apprehension about meats and drinks, which took rise in distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Now, to prevent and make up this difference, he shews how Jesus Christ hath received both Jews and Gentiles; in him they are both one, "one new man," *Eph.* ii. 14–16. Now it is a rule, *Quæ conveniunt in aliquo tertio inter se conveniunt*,—"Things which agree with a third thing agree with one another." Those that agree in Christ, who is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, and the great centre of unity, may well afford to agree among themselves. This coalescence of the Jews and Gentiles in Christ and Christianity, was a thing that filled and affected Paul so much, that he could not mention it without some enlargement and illustration.

1. He received the Jews, ver. 8. Let not any think hardly or scornfully therefore of those that were originally Jews, and still through weakness retain some savour of their old Judaism; for,

1st. Jesus Christ was "a minister of the circumcision." That he was a minister, *διάκονος*, "a servant," speaks his great and exemplary condescension, and puts an honour upon the ministry; but that he was a minister of the circumcision, was himself circumcised, and made under the law, and did in his own person preach the Gospel to the Jews, who were of the circumcision,—this makes the nation of the Jews more considerable than otherwise they appear to be. Christ conversed with the Jews, blessed them, looked upon himself as primarily sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, laid hold of the seed of Abraham, (*Heb.* ii. 16, margin,) and by them, as it were, caught at the whole body of mankind. Christ's personal ministry was appropriated to them, though the apostles had their commission enlarged.

2nd. He was so for "the truth of God." That which he preached to them was the truth, for he came into the world to bear witness to the truth, *Jno.* xviii. 37; and he is himself the truth, *Jno.* xiv. 6. Or, for "the truth of God," that is, to make good the promises given to the patriarchs, concerning the special mercy God had in store for their seed. It was not for the merit of the Jews, but for "the truth of God," that they were thus distinguished, that God might approve himself true to this word which he had spoken; "To confirm the promises made unto the fathers." The best confirmation of promises is the performance of them. It was promised that in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth should be blessed; that Shiloh should come from between the feet of Judah; that out of Israel should proceed he that should have the dominion; that out of Zion should go forth the law; and many the like. There were many intermediate providences which seemed to weaken those promises, providences which threatened the fatal decay of that people. But when Messiah the prince appeared in the fulness of time, as "a minister of the cir-

cumcision," all these promises were confirmed, and the truth of them was made to appear; for in Christ all the promises of God, both those of the Old Testament and those of the New, are Yea, and in him Amen. Understanding by "the promises made unto the fathers," the whole covenant of grace, darkly administered under the Old Testament, and brought to a clearer light now under the Gospel, it was Christ's great errand to confirm that covenant, *Dan.* ix. 27. He confirmed it by shedding the blood of the covenant.

2. He received the Gentiles likewise. This he shews, ver. 9–12. 1st. Observe Christ's favour to the Gentiles, in taking them in to praise God, the work of the church on earth, and the wages of that in heaven. One design of Christ was, that the Gentiles likewise might be converted that they might be one with the Jews in Christ's mystical body,—a good reason why they should not think the worse of any Christian for his having been formerly a Gentile, for Christ hath received him. He invites the Gentiles, and welcomes them. Now observe how their conversion is here expressed, "That the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy," a periphrasis of conversion. *First*. They shall have matter for praise, even the mercy of God. Considering the miserable and deplorable condition that the Gentile world was in, the receiving of them appears more an act of mercy than the receiving of the Jews. They that were *Lo-ammi*, "not a people," were *Lo-ruhamah*, "not obtaining mercy," *Hos.* i. 6, 9; ii. 23. The greatest mercy of God to any people is the receiving of them into covenant with himself; and it is good to take notice of God's mercy in receiving us. *Secondly*. They shall have a heart for praise; they shall "glorify God for his mercy." Unconverted sinners do nothing to glorify God; but converting grace works in the soul a disposition to speak and do all to the glory of God. God intended to reap a harvest of glory from the Gentiles, who had been so long turning his glory into shame.

2nd. The fulfilling of the Scriptures in this. The favour of God to the Gentiles was not only mercy, but truth; though there were not promises directly given to them, as to the fathers of the Jews, yet there were many prophecies concerning them, which related to the calling of them, and the embodying of them in the church. Some of which he mentions, because it was a thing that the Jews were hardly persuaded to believe. Thus, by referring them to the Old Testament, he labours to qualify their dislike of the Gentiles, and so to reconcile the parties at variance. *First*. It was foretold that the Gentiles should have the Gospel preached to them. "I will confess to thee among the Gentiles," ver. 9; that is, thy name shall be known, and owned in the Gentile world; there shall Gospel grace and love be celebrated. This is quoted from *Ps.* xviii. 49, "I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen." A thankful explication, and commemoration of the name of God, is an excellent means of drawing others to know and praise God. Christ in and by his apostles and ministers, whom he sent to disciple all nations, did confess to God among the Gentiles. The exaltation of Christ, as well as the conversion of sinners, is set forth by the praise of God; Christ's declaring God's name to his brethren is called his praising of God in the midst of the congregation, *Ps.* xxii. 22. Taking these words as spoken by David, they were spoken when he was old and dying, and he was not likely to confess to God among the Gentiles. But when David's psalms are read and sung among the Gentiles, to the praise and glory of God, it may be said, that David is confessing to God among the Gentiles, and singing to his name. He that was the sweet psalmist of Israel is now the sweet psalmist of the Gentiles. Converting grace makes people greatly in love with David's psalms; taking them as spoken by Christ the Son of David, it may be understood of his spiritual indwelling by faith in the hearts of all the praising saints. If any confess to God among the Gentiles, and sing to his name, it is not they, but Christ and his grace in them. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;" so, I praise, yet not I, but Christ in me. *Secondly*. That the Gentiles should rejoice with his people, ver. 10. This is quoted from that song of Moses, *Deu.* xxxii. 43. Observe, That those who were incorporated among his people are said to rejoice with his people. No greater joy can come to any people than the coming of the Gospel among them in power. Those Jews that retain a prejudice against the Gentiles will by no means admit them to any of their joyful festivities; for, say they, a stranger intermeddled not with the joy, *Pr.* xiv. 10. But, the partition wall being taken down, the Gentiles are welcome to rejoice with his people. Being brought into the church they share in its sufferings, are companions in patience and tribulation; to recompense which they share in the joy. *Thirdly*. That they should praise God; ver. 11, "Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles." This is quoted out of that short psalm, *Ps.* exxii. 1. Converting grace sets people praising God, furnisheth with the richest matter for praise, and gives a heart to it. The Gentiles had been for many ages praising their idols of wood and stone, but now they are brought to praise the Lord; and this, David in spirit speaks of. In calling upon all the nations to praise the Lord, it is intimated, that they shall have the knowledge of him. *Fourthly*. That they should believe in Christ, ver. 12, quoted from *Isa.* xi. 10; where observe, 1st. The revelation of Christ as the Gentiles' king. He is here called the "Root of Jesse;" that is such a branch from the family of David as is the very life and strength of the family: compare *Isa.* xi. 1. Christ was David's Lord, and yet vithal he was the Son of David, *Mat.* xxii. 45, for he was the "root and offspring of David," *Rev.* xxii. 16. Christ, as God, was David's root; Christ, as man, was David's offspring. "And he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles." This explains the figurative expression of the prophet, "he shall stand for an ensign of the people." When Christ rose from the dead, when he ascended on high, it was to reign over the Gentiles. 2nd. The recourse of the Gentiles to him; "In him shall the Gentiles trust." Faith is the soul's confidence in Christ, and dependence on him. The prophet hath it, "To him shall the Gentiles seek." The method of faith is, first to seek unto Christ, as to one proposed to us for a Saviour; and, finding him able and willing to save, then to trust in him: they that know him will trust in him. Or, this seeking to him is the effect of a trust in him; seeking him by prayer, and pursuant endeavours. We shall never seek to Christ till we trust in him. Trust is the mother, diligence in the use of means the daughter. Jews and Gentiles being thus united in Christ's love, why should they not be united in one another's love?

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Here is another prayer directed to God, as the God of hope; and it is, as the former, ver. 5, 6, for spiritual blessings. Those are the best blessings, and to be first and chiefly prayed for.

First. Observe how he addresseth himself to God, as "the God of hope." It is good in prayer to fasten upon those names, titles, and attributes of God, which are most suitable to the errand we come upon, and will best serve to encourage our faith concerning it; every word in the prayer should be a plea. Thus should the cause be skilfully ordered, and the mouth filled with arguments. God is "the God of hope." He is the foundation on which our hope is built, and he is the builder that doth himself raise it; he is both the object of our hope and the author of it. That hope is but fancy, and will deceive us,

xv. 19. "Round about unto Illyricum:" "round about" is to be united with Jerusalem; Jerusalem and the neighbourhood, the eastern limit of St. Paul's preaching; Illyricum the western limit. There is no record of his having preached in Illyricum, though Acts xx. 1, 2 makes a visit there possible; but the language here does not necessarily imply that he actually preached in Illyricum, but that he went preaching as far as, i.e., up to the borders of Illyricum.

xv. 22. "For which cause:" i.e., through my exertions in preaching the Gospel. "Hindered;" the word may suggest the idea of an enemy impeding by trench or barricade the advance of an army.

xv. 23. "In these parts:" "having no more occupation here." The word rendered "parts" is that from which our word "clime" is derived. It occurs only in three of St. Paul's epistles—here, 2 Cor. xi. 10, Gal. i. 21.

xv. 24. "Spain:" this proposed visit was not accomplished before

which is not fastened upon God as the goodness hoped for, and the truth hoped in, and which is not of his working in us. We have both together. *Ps. cxix. 49. "Thy word,"* (there is God the object,) "on which thou hast caused me to hope;" there is God the author of our hope, *1 Pet. i. 4.*

Secondly. What he asketh of God; not for himself, but for them.

1. That they might be filled "with all joy and peace in believing." Joy and peace are two of those things in which the kingdom of God consists, *ch. xiv. 17.* Joy in God, peace of conscience, both arising from a sense of our justification: see *ch. v. 1, 2.* Joy and peace in our own bosoms would promote a cheerful unity and unanimity with our brethren. Observe, 1st. How desirable this joy and peace is; it is filling. Carnal joy puts up the soul, but cannot fill it; therefore in laughter the heart is sad. True, heavenly, spiritual joy is filling to the soul; it hath a satisfaction in it answerable to the soul's vast and just desires. Thus doth God satiate and replenish the weary soul. Nothing more than this joy, only more of it, even the perfection of it in glory, is the desire of the soul that hath it, *Ps. iv. 6, 7; xxxvi. 8; lxxiii. 5; lxxv. 4.* 2nd. How it is attainable. First. By prayer. We must go to God for it; he will for this be inquired of. Prayer fetcheth in spiritual joy and peace. Secondly. By believing. That is the means to be used. It is vain, and flashy, and transient joy, that is the product of fancy; true, substantial joy is the fruit of faith. "Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable," *1 Pet. i. 8.* It is owing to the weakness of our faith that we are so much wanting in joy and peace. Only believe; believe the goodness of Christ, the love of Christ, the promises of the covenant, and the joys and glories of heaven; let faith be the substance and evidence of these things, and the result must needs be joy and peace. Observe, it is "all joy and peace;" all sorts of true joy and peace. When we come to God by prayer, we must enlarge our desires; we are not straitened in him, why should we be straitened in ourselves? Ask for all joy; open thy mouth wide and he will fill it.

2. That they might "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost;" the joy and peace of believers ariseth chiefly from their hopes. What is laid out upon them is but little, compared with what is laid up for them; therefore, the more hope they have, the more joy and peace they have. We do then abound in hope when we hope for great things from God, and are greatly established and confirmed in these hopes. Christians should desire and labour after an abundance of hope, such a hope as will not make ashamed. This is "through the power of the Holy Ghost;" the same almighty power that works grace begets and strengthens this hope. Our own power will never reach it; and, therefore, where this hope is, and is abounding, the blessed Spirit must have all the glory.

14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. 15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, 16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Here, First. He commends these Christians with the highest characters that could be. He began his epistle with their praises, *ch. i. 5.* "Your faith is spoken of throughout the world," thereby to make way for his discourse; and now he concludes with the like commendation, because sometimes he had reproved them sharply, to qualify them, and to part friends. This he doth like an orator; it was not a piece of idle flattery and compliment, but a due acknowledgment of their worth, and of the grace of God in them. We must be forward to observe and commend that in others which is excellent and praiseworthy; it is part of the present recompence of virtue and usefulness, and will be of use to quicken others to a holy emulation. It was a great credit to the Romans to be commended by Paul, a man of so great judgment and integrity, too skilful to be deceived, and too honest to flatter. Paul had no personal acquaintance with these Christians, and yet he saith he was persuaded of their excellences, though he knew it only by hearsay. As we must not on the one hand be so simple as to believe every word, so on the other hand, we must not be so wilful as to believe nothing, but especially we must be forward to believe good concerning others; in that case charity hopeth all things, and believeth all things, and (if the probabilities be any thing strong, as here they were,) is persuaded. It is safer to err on that hand.

[From this verse we may learn, 1. That when it is our duty to give instruction, admonition, or advice, it should be in a kind, conciliating manner; not with harshness, or with the severity of authority. Even an apostle did not assume harshness or severity in his instructions. 2. There is no impropriety in speaking of the good qualities of Christians in their presence; or even of commending and praising them when they deserve it. The apostle Paul was as far as possible from always dwelling on the faults of Christians. When it was necessary to reprove them, he did it, but did it with tenderness and tears. When he could commend, he preferred it; and never hesitated to give them credit to the utmost extent to which it could be rendered. He did not flatter, but he told the truth; he did not commend to excite pride and vanity, but to encourage and to prompt to still more active efforts. The minister who always censures and condemns, whose ministry is made up of complaints and lamentations, who never speaks of Christians but in a strain of fault-finding, is unlike the example of the Saviour and of Paul, and may expect little success in his work. Compare *ch. i. 8; ver. 19; 1 Cor. i. 5; 2 Cor. viii. 7; ix. 2; Phil. i. 3-7; Heb. vi. 9; 2 Pet. i. 12-18.*]

Now observe what it was that he commended them for. 1. That they were "full of goodness;" therefore, the more likely to take in good part what he had written, and to account it a kindness, and not only so, but to comply with it, and to put it in practice; especially that which relates to their union, and to the healing of their differences. A good understanding of one another, and a good will to one another, would soon put an end to strife. 2. "Filled with all knowledge;" goodness and knowledge together! A very rare and an excellent conjunction; the head and the heart of the new man. All knowledge, all necessary knowledge, all the knowledge of those things which belong to their everlasting peace. 3. "Able to admonish one another;" to this there is a farther gift requisite, even the gift of utterance. Those that have goodness and knowledge should communicate what they have for the use and benefit of others; as if he had said, You that excel so much in good gifts may think you have no need of

any instructions of mine. It is a comfort to faithful ministers to see their work superseded by the gifts and graces of their people. How gladly would ministers leave off their admonishing work, if people were able and willing to admonish one another! Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets. But that which is everybody's work is nobody's work; and, therefore,

Secondly. He clears himself from the suspicion of intermeddling needlessly with that which did not belong to him, *ver. 15.* Observe how lovingly he speaks to them: "My brethren," *ver. 14;* and again, "Brethren," *ver. 15.* He had himself, and taught others, the art of obliging; he calls them all his brethren, to teach them brotherly love one to another. Probably he wrote the more courteously to them, because, being Roman citizens, living near the court, they were more genteel, and made a better figure; and therefore, Paul, who became all things to all men, was willing by the respectfulness of his style to please them in their good. He acknowledgeth he had written "boldly in some sort;" *τολμωροτέρως ἀπὸ μένους*, in a manner that looked like boldness and presumption, and for which some might perhaps charge him with taking too much upon him. But then consider.

1. He did it only as their remembrancer; "as putting you in mind." Such humble thoughts had Paul of himself, though he excelled in knowledge, that he would not pretend to tell them that which they did not know before; but only to mind them of that in which they had formerly been by others instructed: so Peter, *2 Pet. i. 12; iii. 1.* People commonly excuse themselves from the hearing of the word, that the minister can tell them nothing but what they knew before. If it be so, yet have they not need to know it better, and to be put in mind of it?

2. He did it as the apostle of the Gentiles; it was in pursuance of his office. "Because of the grace" (that is, the apostleship, *ch. i. 13.*) "given to me of God;" namely, to "be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles," *ver. 16.* Paul reckoned it a great favour and an honour that God had put upon him, in putting him into that office, *ch. i. 13.* Now, because of this grace given to him, he thus laid out himself among the Gentiles, that he might not receive that grace of God in vain. Christ received that he might give, so did Paul; so have we talents which must not be buried. Places and offices must be filled up with duty; it is good for ministers to be often remembering the grace that is given them of God. *Minister verbi es, hoc age.*—You are a minister of the word, give yourself wholly to it, was Mr. Perkins' motto. Paul was a minister. Observe here, 1st. Whose minister he was; "the minister of Jesus Christ," *1 Cor. iv. 1.* He is our Master; his we are, and him we serve. 2nd. To whom; to the Gentiles. So God had appointed him, *Acts xxii. 21;* so Peter, and he had agreed, *Gal. ii. 7-9.* These Romans were Gentiles; Now, saith he, I do not thrust myself upon you, or seek any lordship over you; I am appointed to it. If you think I am rude and bold, my commission is my warrant, and must bear me out. 3rd. What he ministered; "the Gospel of God," *εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ*, "ministering as about holy things," so the word signifies, executing the office of a Christian priest, more spiritual, and therefore more excellent than the Levitical priesthood. 4th. For what end; "That the offering up" (or sacrificing) "of the Gentiles might be acceptable;" that is, that God may have the glory which would redound to his name by the conversion of the Gentiles. Paul laid out himself thus to bring about something that might be acceptable to God. Observe how the conversion of the Gentiles is expressed; it is the "offering up of the Gentiles," it is *προσφορά τῶν ἐθνῶν*, "the oblation of the Gentiles." In which the Gentiles are looked upon either, First. As the priests offering the oblation of prayer and praise, and other acts of religion. Long had the Jews been the holy nation, the kingdom of priests; but now the Gentiles are become priests unto God, *Rev. v. 10;* by their conversion to the Christian faith consecrated to the service of God, that the Scripture might be fulfilled; *Mal. i. 11.* "In every place incense shall be offered, and a pure offering." The converted Gentiles are said to be "made nigh," *Eph. ii. 13;* the periphrasis of priests. Or, Secondly. The Gentiles are themselves the sacrifice offered up to God, by Paul, in the name of Christ; a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *ch. xii. 1.* A sanctified soul is offered up to God, in the flames of love, upon Christ the altar. Paul gathered in souls by his preaching, not to keep them to himself, but to offer them up to God. "Behold I, and the children that God hath given me." And it is an acceptable offering; "being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Paul preached to them, and dealt with them, but that which made them sacrifices to God was their sanctification; and that was not his work, but the work of the Holy Ghost. None are acceptably offered to God, but those that are sanctified; unholy things can never be pleasing to the holy God.

In this beautiful passage we see the nature of the only priesthood which belongs to the Christian ministry. It is not their office to make atonement for sin, or to offer a propitiatory sacrifice to God, but by the preaching of the Gospel to bring men, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, to offer themselves as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.—*H.]*

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. 18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, 19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. 20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: 21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

The apostle here gives some account of himself and of his own affairs. Having mentioned his ministry and apostleship, he goes on farther to magnify his office in the efficacy of it; and to mention to the glory of God the great success of his ministry, and the wonderful things that God hath done by him; for encouragement to the Christian church at Rome, that they were not alone in the profession of Christianity, but, though compared with the multitude of their idolatrous neighbours, they were but a little flock, yet up and down the

St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. It is possible that it may have been made in the interval between his first and second imprisonment. "I will come to you:" these words are not found in the best MSS. "To be brought on my way;" "to be started on my way." A graphic account of such a scene is given in Acts xxi. 5. "Filled with;" satisfied with. This being satisfied with their company could only be "somewhat," i.e., in some degree. He did not anticipate that he would be able to stay with them as long as he would wish.

Vaughan notes this as "one of St. Paul's delicate touches of tenderness, implying that his stay with them, so far from wearying him, would but partially satisfy his longing after them."

xv. 25. "I go unto Jerusalem:" this is the journey mentioned in Acts xx. 3, 16, xxi. 15. The purpose of the journey is alluded to in Acts xxiv. 17. The liberality of the Macedonian Christians is spoken of in 2 Cor. viii. 1-4. (Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4.)

xv. 26. "The poor saints:" "the poor among the saints."

country there were many that were their companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. It was likewise a great confirmation of the truth of the Christian doctrine, that it had such strange success, and was so far propagated by such weak and unlikely means; such multitudes captivated to the obedience of Christ by the foolishness of preaching. Therefore Paul gives them this account; which he makes the matter of his glorying, not vain glory, but holy, gracious glorying, which appears by the limitations; it is "through Christ Jesus." Thus doth he centre all his glorying in Christ; he teacheth us to do so, 1 Cor. i. 31. "Not unto us," Ps. cxv. 5; and it is "in those things which pertain to God." The conversion of souls is one of those things that pertain to God, and therefore is the matter of Paul's glorying, not the things of the flesh. "Whereof I may glory," *ἐξ οὗ δύναμαι καυχέσθαι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ πρὸς Θεόν*. I would rather read it thus, "Therefore I have a rejoicing in Christ Jesus;" (it is the same word that is used 2 Cor. i. 12; Phil. iii. 3, where it is the character of the circumcision that they rejoice, *καυχόμενοι*, in Christ Jesus,) "concerning things of God;" or those things that are offered to God, namely, the living sacrifices of the Gentiles, ver. 16. Paul would have them to rejoice with him in the extent and efficacy of his ministry; of which he speaks not only with the greatest deference possible to the power of Christ, and the effectual working of the Spirit as all in all, but with a protestation of the truth of what he said; ver. 18, "I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me." He would not boast of things without his line, nor take the praise of another man's work, as he might have done when he was writing to distant strangers, who perhaps could not contradict him; but, saith he, I dare not do it. A faithful man dares not lie, however he be tempted; dares be true, however he be terrified. Now in this account of himself, we may observe,

First. His unwearied diligence and industry in his work. He was one that "laboured more abundantly than they all."

1. He preached in many places; "From Jerusalem," whence the law went forth as a lamp that shineth, and "round about unto Illyricum," many hundred



ILLYRIA.

miles distant from Jerusalem. We have in the book of the *Acts* an account of Paul's travels. There we find him, after he was sent forth to preach to the Gentiles, *Acts* xiii., labouring in that blessed work in Seleucia, Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia, *ch.* xiii. 14. Afterwards travelling through Syria and Cilicia, Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, Troas; and thence called over to Macedonia, and so into Europe, *ch.* xv. 16. Then we find him very busy at Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and the parts adjacent. And those that know the extent and distance of these countries, will conclude Paul an active man, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. Illyricum is the country now called Slavonia, bordering upon Hungary; some take it for the same with Bulgaria, others for the Lower Pannonia; however, it was a great way from Jerusalem. Now, it might be suspected, that if Paul undertook so much work, surely he did it by the halves. No, saith he, "I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ;" gave them a full account of the truth and terms of the Gospel; shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God, *Acts* xx. 27; kept back nothing that was necessary for them to know. "Filled the Gospel," so the word is, *πεπληρωμένοι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον*; filled it as the net is filled with fishes in a large draught; or filled the Gospel, that is, filled them with the Gospel. Such a change doth the Gospel make, that when it comes in power to any place it fills the place. Other knowledge is airy, and leaves souls empty, but the knowledge of the Gospel is filling.

2. He preached in places that had not heard the Gospel before, ver. 20, 21. He broke up fallow ground, laid the first stone in many places, and introduced Christianity there, where nothing had reigned for many ages but idolatry and witchcraft, and all sorts of diabolism. Paul broke the ice, and therefore must needs meet with the more difficulties and discouragements in his work. Those that preached in Judea, had upon this account a much easier task than Paul, who was the apostle of the Gentiles; for they entered into the labours of others, *Jno.* iv. 38. Paul, being a hardy man, was called out to the hardest work; there were many instructors, but Paul was the great father: many that watered, but Paul was the great planter. Well, he was a bold man that made the first attack upon the palace of the strong man armed in the Gentile world; that first assaulted Satan's interest there, and Paul was that man who ventured the first onset in many places, and suffered greatly for it. He mentions this as a proof of his apostleship; for the office of the apostles was especially to bring in those that were without, and to lay the foundations of the new Jerusalem: see *Rev.* xxi. 14. Not but that Paul preached in many places where others had been at work before him; but he principally and mainly laid himself out for the good of those that sat in darkness. He was in care not to build upon another man's foundation, lest he should thereby disprove his apostleship, and give

occasion to those who sought occasion to reflect upon him. He quotes a scripture for this out of *Isa.* lii. 15, "To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see." "That which had not been told them, shall they see;" so the prophet hath it, much to the same purpose. This made the success of Paul's preaching the more remarkable. The transition from darkness to light is more sensible than the after-growth and increase of that light; and, commonly, the greatest success of the Gospel is at its first coming to a place; afterwards people become sermon-proof.

Secondly. The great and wonderful success that he had in this work. It was effectual "to make the Gentiles obedient." The design of the Gospel is to bring people to be obedient; it is not only a truth to be believed, but a law to be obeyed. This Paul aimed at in all his travels, not his own wealth and honour,—if he had, he had sadly missed his aim,—but the conversion and salvation of souls. That his heart was upon, and for that he travailed in birth again. Now how was this great work wrought?

1. Christ was the principal agent. He doth not say, Which I worked, but, Which Christ "wrought by me," ver. 18. Whatever good we do, it is not we, but Christ by us that doth it; the work is his, the strength is his; he is all in all, he worketh all our works, *Phil.* ii. 13; *Isa.* xxvi. 12. Paul takes all occasions to own this, that the whole praise might be transmitted to Christ.

2. Paul was a very active instrument. "By word and deed," that is, by his preaching, and by the miracles he wrought to confirm his doctrine, or his preaching and his living. Those ministers are likely to win souls that preach both by word and deed, by their conversation shewing forth the power of the truths they preach. This is according to Christ's example, who began both to do and teach, *Acts* i. 11. "Through mighty signs and wonders;" *ἐν δυνάμει σημείων*, by the power or in the strength of signs and wonders. These made the preaching of the word so effectual, being the appointed means of conviction, and the Divine seal affixed to the Gospel charter, *Mar.* xvi. 17, 18.

3. "The power of the Spirit of God" made this effectual, and crowned all with the desired success, ver. 19. 1st. The power of the Spirit in Paul, as in other the apostles, for the working of those miracles. Miracles were wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, *Acts* i. 8; therefore reproaching the miracles is called the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Or, 2nd. The power of the Spirit in the hearts of those to whom the word was preached, and who saw the miracles, making these means effectual to some and not to others. It is the Spirit's operation that makes the difference. Paul himself, as great a preacher as he was, with all his mighty signs and wonders, could not make one soul obedient farther than the power of the Spirit of God accompanied his labours. It was the Spirit of the Lord of hosts that made those great mountains plain before this Zerubbabel. This is an encouragement to faithful ministers, who labour under the sense of great weakness and infirmity, that it is all one to the blessed Spirit to work by many or by those that have no power. The same Almighty Spirit that wrought with Paul often perfecteth strength in weakness, and ordains praise out of the mouth of babes and sucklings. This success which he had in preaching is that which he here rejoiceth in; for the converted nations were his joy and crown of rejoicing; and he tells them of it, not only that they might rejoice with him, but that they might be the more ready to receive the truths which he had written to them, and to own him whom Christ had thus signally owned.

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. 23 But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; 24 Whosoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. 25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. 27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. 28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. 29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

St. Paul here declares his purpose to come and see the Christians at Rome and upon this head his matter is but common and ordinary, appointing a visit to his friends; but the manner of his expression is gracious and savoury, and very instructive, and for our imitation. We should learn by it to speak of our common affairs in the language of Canaan; even our common discourse should have an air of grace: by that it will appear what country we belong to. It should seem that Paul's company was very much desired at Rome. He was a man that had as many friends and as many enemies as most men ever had; he passed through evil report and good report. No doubt they had heard much of him at Rome, and longed to see him. Should the apostle of the Gentiles be a stranger at Rome, the metropolis of the Gentile world? Why, as to this he excuseth it that he had not come yet; he promiseth to come shortly, and gives a good reason why he should not come now.

First. He excuseth it that he never came yet. Observe how careful Paul was to keep in with his friends, and to prevent and anticipate any exceptions against him; not as one that lorded it over God's heritage.

1. He assures them that he had a great desire to see them,—not to see Rome, though it was now in its greatest pomp and splendour, nor to see the emperor's court, nor to converse with the philosophers and learned men that were then

xv. 28. "Sealed to them:" secured to them this fruit—i.e., the fruit of the love and faith of the Gentiles.

xv. 29. "Of the Gospel:" these words are omitted by the best MSS.

xvi. 1. "Phebe" (Phœbe): described as a sister and also a servant; literally, a deaconess. The term is not necessarily an official one, but it seems to be probable that St. Paul uses the word in an official sense in 1 Tim. iii. 11. Phebe is here called not a servant of Christ,

but of a particular church. This at least suggests a recognised position of usefulness at Cenchrea. The name is properly Kenchra; it was the port of Corinth, and, situated on the Saronic Gulf of the Ægean, received the Eastern traffic.

xvi. 2. "Succourer;" protectress, champion. The term "would seem to indicate one who had stood forth as the patroness of the unprotected and despised." "Of myself also:" the circumstances to which the apostle alludes are not known.

at Rome, though such conversation must needs be very desirable to so great a scholar as Paul was,—but “to come unto you,” ver. 23, a company of poor despised saints in Rome, hated of the world, but loving God and beloved of him. These were the men that Paul was ambitious of an acquaintance with at Rome; they were the excellent ones in whom he delighted, *Ps. xvi. 3*. And he had a special desire to see them, because of the great character they had in all the churches for faith and holiness; they were men that excelled in virtue, and therefore Paul was so desirous to come to them. This desire Paul had for “many years,” and yet could never compass it. The providence of God wisely overrules the purposes and desires of men. God’s dearest servants are not always gratified in every thing that they have a mind to; and yet all that delight in God have the desire of their heart fulfilled, *Ps. xxxvii. 4*, though all the desires in their heart be not humoured.

2. He tells them that therefore he could not come to them, because he had so much work cut out for him elsewhere. “For which cause,” that is, because of his labours in other countries, thence it was that he was so much hindered. God had opened a wide door for him in other places, and so diverted him. Observe in this, 1st. The gracious providence of God conversant in a special manner about his ministers, casting their lot, not according to their contrivance, but according to his own purpose. Paul was several times crossed in his intentions; sometimes hindered by Satan, as *2 Thes. ii. 16, 17*; sometimes forbidden by the Spirit, *Acts xvi. 17*; and here diverted by other work. Man purposeth, but God disposeth, *Pr. xvi. 9*; *xix. 21*; *Jer. x. 23*. Ministers purpose, and their friends purpose concerning them, but God overrules both, and orders the journeys, removes, and settlements of his faithful ministers as he pleaseth. The stars are in the right hand of Christ, to shine where he sets them. The Gospel doth not come by chance to any place, but by the will and counsel of God. 2nd. The gracious providence of Paul in bestowing his time and pains where there was most need. Had Paul consulted his own ease, wealth, and honour, the greatness of the work would never have hindered him from seeing Rome, but would rather have driven him thither, where he might have had more preferment, and taken less pains. But Paul sought the things of Christ more than his own things, and therefore would not leave his work of planting churches; no, not for a time, to go see Rome. The Romans were whole, and needed not the physician so as other poor places that were sick and dying. While men and women were every day dropping into eternity, and their precious souls perishing for lack of vision, it was no time for Paul to trifle. There was now a gale of opportunity, the fields were white unto the harvest; such a season slipped might never be retrieved; the necessities of poor souls were pressing, and called aloud, and therefore Paul must be busy. It concerns us all to do that first which is most needful. True grace teacheth us to prefer that which is necessary before that which is unnecessary, *Luk. x. 41, 42*; and Christian prudence teacheth us to prefer that which is more necessary before that which is less so. This Paul mentions as a sufficient satisfying reason. We must not take it ill of our friends if they prefer necessary work, which is pleasing to God, before unnecessary visits and compliments that may be pleasing to us. In this, as in other things, we must deny ourselves.

Secondly. He promiseth to come and see them shortly, ver. 23, 24, 29. “Having no more place in these parts,” namely, in Greece, where he then was. The whole of that country being more or less leavened with the savour of the Gospel, churches being planted in the most considerable towns, and pastors settled to carry on the work which Paul had begun, he had little more to do there. He had driven the chariot of the Gospel to the sea coast; and, having thus conquered Greece, he is ready to wish there was another Greece to conquer. Paul was one that went through with his work, and yet then did not think of taking his ease, but sets himself to contrive more work, to devise liberal things; here was a workman that needed not be ashamed. Observe,

1. How he forecasts his intended visit. His project was to see them in his way to Spain. It appears by this that Paul intended a journey into Spain, to plant Christianity there. The difficulty and peril of the work, the distance of the place, the danger of the voyage, the other good works,—though less needful, he thinks,—which Paul might find to do in other places, did not quench the flame of his holy zeal for the propagating of the Gospel, which did even eat him up, and make him forget himself. But it is not certain whether ever he fulfilled this purpose, and went to Spain. Many of the best expositors think he did not, but was hindered in this as he was in others of his purposes. He did indeed come to Rome, but he was brought thither a prisoner, and there was detained two years, and whither he went after is uncertain; but several of his epistles, which he wrote in prison, intimate his purpose to go eastward, and not towards Spain. However, Paul, “forasmuch as it was in thine heart” to bring the light of the Gospel into Spain, “thou didst well, in that it was in thine heart,” as God said to David, *2 Chr. vi. 8*. The grace of God oftentimes with favour accepts the sincere intention, when the providence of God in wisdom prohibits the execution; and do not we serve a good Master then? *2 Cor. viii. 12*. Now in his way to Spain he purposed to come to them. Observe his prudence; it is wisdom for every one of us to order our affairs so as that we may do the most work in the least time. Observe how doubtfully he speaks, “I trust to see you,” not, I am resolved I will, but, I hope I shall. We must purpose all our purposes, and make all our promises in like manner, with a submission to the Divine providence, not boasting ourselves of to-morrow, because we know not what a day may bring forth, *Pr. xxvii. 1*; *Jas. iv. 13–15*.

2. What he expected in this intended visit. 1st. What he expected from them. He expected they would bring him on his way towards Spain. It was not a stately attendance, such as princes have, but a loving attendance, such as friends give, that Paul expected. Spain was then a province of the empire, well known to the Romans, who had a great correspondence with it, and therefore they might be helpful to Paul in his voyage thither; and it was not barely the accompanying of him part of the way, but their furthering him in his expedition, that he counted upon; not only out of their respect to Paul, but out of respect to the souls of those poor Spaniards that Paul was going to preach to. It is justly expected from all Christians, that they should lay out themselves for the promoting and furthering of every good work, especially that blessed work of the conversion of souls, which they should contrive to make as easy as may be to their ministers, and as successful as may be to poor souls. 2nd. What he expected in them; to “be somewhat filled with their company.” That which Paul desired was their company and conversation. The good company of the saints is very desirable and delightful. Paul was himself a man of great attainments in knowledge and grace, taller by head and shoulders than other Christians in these things, and yet see how he pleased himself with the thoughts of good company; for, as iron sharpens iron, so doth a man the countenance of his friend. He intimates that he intended to make some stay with them, for he would be filled with their company, not just look at them and away; and yet he thinks their converse so pleasant that he should never have enough of it: it is but somewhat filled; he thought he should leave them with a desire of more of their company. Christian society, rightly managed and improved, is a heaven upon earth, a comfortable earnest of our gathering together unto Christ at the great day. Yet observe, it is but “somewhat filled,” *ἀπὸ μέρους*,—“in part.” The satisfaction we have in communion with the saints in this world is but partial; we are but somewhat filled. It is partial,

compared with our communion with Christ; that, and that only, will completely satisfy, that will fill the soul. It is partial, compared with the communion we hope to have with the saints in the other world. When we shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, with all the saints, and none but saints, and saints made perfect, we shall have enough of that society, and be quite filled with that company. 3rd. What he expected from God with them, ver. 29. He expected to come “in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.” Observe, concerning what he expected from them he speaks doubtfully; I trust to be brought on my way and to be filled with your company. Paul had learnt not to be too confident of the best; these very men slipped from him afterwards, when he had occasion to use them, *2 Tim. iv. 16*. “At my first answer no man stood with me;” none of the Christians at Rome. The Lord teach us to cease from man. But concerning what he expected from God he speaks confidently, it was uncertain whether he should come or no, but “I am sure when I do come, I shall come in the fulness,” &c. We cannot expect too little from man, nor too much from God. Now Paul expected that God would bring him to them, loaded with blessings, so that he should be the instrument of doing a deal of good among them, and fill them with the blessings of the Gospel; compare *ch. i. 11*, “That I may impart unto you some spiritual gift.” Note, First. The blessing of the Gospel of Christ is the best and most desirable blessing. When Paul would raise their expectation of something great and good in his coming, he directs them to hope for the blessings of the Gospel, spiritual blessings, knowledge, and grace, and comfort. Secondly. There is then a happy meeting between people and ministers, when they are both under the fulness of the blessing. The blessing of the Gospel is the treasure, which we have in earthly vessels. When ministers are fully prepared to give out, and people fully prepared to receive, this blessing, both are happy. Many have the Gospel that have not the blessing of the Gospel, and so they have it in vain. The Gospel will not profit unless God bless it to us, and it is our duty to wait upon him for that blessing, and for the fulness of it.

Thirdly. He gives them a good reason why he could not come and see them now; because he had other business upon his hands which required his attendance, upon which he must first make a journey to Jerusalem, ver. 25–28. He gives a particular account of it, to shew that the excuse was real. He was going to Jerusalem as the messenger of the church’s charity to the poor saints there. Observe what he saith,

1. Concerning this charity itself. And he speaks of that upon this occasion probably to excite the Roman Christians to do the like, according to their ability. Examples are moving, and Paul was very ingenious at begging, not for himself, but for others. Observe, 1st. For whom it was intended. For the poor saints which are at Jerusalem,” ver. 26. It is no strange thing for saints to be poor. Those whom God favours many times the world frowns upon; therefore riches are not the best things, nor poverty a curse. It seems the saints at Jerusalem were poorer than other saints, either because the wealth of that people in general was now declining, as their utter ruin was hastening on, (and to be sure if any must be kept poor, the saints must,) or because the famine that was over all the world in the days of Claudius Cæsar did in a special manner prevail in Judæa, a dry country; and God having called the poor of this world, the Christians smarted most by it. This was the occasion of that contribution mentioned *Acts xi. 28–30*. Or, because the saints at Jerusalem suffered most by persecution; for of all people the unbelieving Jews were most inveterate in their rage and malice against the Christians, wrath being come upon them to the uttermost, *1 Thes. ii. 16*. The Christian Hebrews are particularly noted to have their goods spoiled, *Heb. x. 34*, in consideration of which this contribution was made for them. Though the saints at Jerusalem were at a great distance from them, yet they thus extended their bounty and liberality to them; to teach us, as we have ability, and as there is occasion, to stretch out the hand of our charity to all that are of the household of faith, though in place distant from us. Though in personal instances of poverty every church should take care to maintain their own poor,—for such poor we have always with us,—yet sometimes, when more public instances of poverty are presented as objects of our charity, though a great way off from us, we must extend our bounty, as the sun his beams, and with the virtuous woman stretch out our hands to the poor, and reach forth our hands to the needy, *Pr. xxxi. 20*. 2nd. By whom it was collected. By “them of Macedonia,” the chief of whom were the Philippians, “and Achaia,” the chief of whom were the Corinthians, two flourishing churches, though yet in their infancy, newly converted to Christianity. And I wish the observation did not hold, that people are commonly more liberal at their first acquaintance with the Gospel than they are afterwards; that as well as other instances of the first love, and the love of the espousals, being apt to cool and decay after a while. It seems they of Macedonia and Achaia were rich and wealthy, while they at Jerusalem were poor and needy: Infinite Wisdom ordering it so that some should have what others want, and so this mutual dependence of Christians one upon another may be maintained. “It pleased them;” this intimates how ready they were to it; they were not pressed or constrained to it, but they did it of their own accord. And how cheerful they were in it; they took a pleasure in doing good, and God loves a cheerful giver. “To make a certain contribution;” *κοινωνία*, a communication, in token of the communion of saints and their fellow membership, as in the natural body one member communicates to the relief, and succour, and preservation of another, as there is occasion. Every thing that passeth between Christians should be a proof and instance of that communion which they have one with another in Jesus Christ. Time was when the saints at Jerusalem were on the giving hand, and very liberal they were. When they laid their estates at the apostles’ feet for charitable uses, and took special care that the Grecian widows should not be neglected in the daily ministrations, *Acts vi. 1*. And now the providence of God had turned the scale, and made them necessitous, they found the Grecians kind to them, for the merciful shall obtain mercy. We should therefore give a portion to seven, and also to eight, because we know not what evil may be on the earth which may make us glad to be beholden to others. 3rd. What reason there was for it; ver. 27. “And their debtors they are.” Alms are called “righteousness,” *Ps. cxli. 9*. Being but stewards of what we have, we owe it there where our great Master (by the calls of providence concurring with the precepts of the word) orders us to dispose of it; but here there was a special debt owing, the Gentiles were greatly beholden to the Jews, and were bound in gratitude to be very kind to them. From the stock of Israel came Christ himself, according to the flesh, who is the Light to lighten the Gentiles; out of the same stock came the prophets and apostles and first preachers of the Gospel. The Jews, having had the lively oracles committed to them, were the Christians’ library keepers; out of Zion went forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; their political church state was dissolved, and they were cut off, that the Gentiles might be admitted in. Thus did the Gentiles partake of their spiritual things, and did receive the Gospel of salvation as it were at second-hand from the Jews; and therefore “their duty is,” they are bound in gratitude “to minister unto them in carnal things.” It is the least they can do; *λειστουρησα*, to minister as unto God in holy things, so the word signifies. A conscientious regard to God in works of charity and almsgiving, makes them an acceptable service and sacrifice to God, and fruit abounding to a good account. Paul mentions this

xvi. 3. “Priscilla and Aquila:” the form of the first name is here Prisca, as in *2 Tim. iv. 19*, names familiar to us. They seem to have often changed their abode. *Acts xviii. 2* places them at Corinth; later in the same chapter (verses 18, 19–26) we find them at Ephesus. (Compare also *1 Cor. xvi. 19*.) Here they are at Rome. In *2 Tim. iv. 19* they are at Ephesus again.

xvi. 4. “Laid down their own necks:” it is uncertain where this took place—not improbably at Ephesus. (See *Acts xix. 21–xx.*)

xvi. 5. “Epenetus:” rather, “Epænetus.” Read, “firstfruits of Asia,” not Achaia. Stephanas is called (*1 Cor. xvi. 15*) the firstfruits of Achaia.

xvi. 6. “Mary:” Jowett notices that this is the only Jewish name in the list. “Labour on us:” some MSS. read “on you.” In either case the services are not known.

xvi. 7. “My kinsmen:” probably, “my countrymen.” “Fellow-prisoners:” the allusion is to some imprisonment of the apostle not

probably as the argument he had used with them to persuade them to it, and it is an argument of equal cogency to other Gentile churches.
 2. Concerning Paul's agency in this business. He could himself contribute nothing. Silver and gold he had none, but lived upon the kindness of his friends; yet he ministered unto the saints, ver. 25, by stirring up others, receiving what was gathered, and transmitting it to Jerusalem. Many good works of that kind stand at a stay for want of some one active person to lead in them, and to set the wheels going. Paul's labour in this work is not to be interpreted as any neglect of his preaching work, nor did Paul leave the word of God to serve tables; for, besides that Paul had other business in this journey—to visit and confirm the churches, and took this by the bye, this was indeed a part of the trust committed to him, in which he was concerned to approve himself faithful; Gal. ii. 10, "They would that we should remember the poor." Paul was one that laid out himself to do good every way, like his Master, to the bodies as well as the souls of people. Ministering to the saints is good work, and is not below the greatest apostles. This Paul had undertaken, and therefore he resolves to go through with it before he fell upon other work; ver. 28, "When I have sealed to them this fruit." He calls the alms fruit, for it is one of the fruits of righteousness; it sprang from a root of grace in the givers, and redounded to the benefit and comfort of the receivers. And his sealing of it intimates his great care about it, that what was given might be kept entire, and not embezzled, but disposed of according to the design of the givers. Paul was very solicitous to approve himself faithful in the management of this matter. An excellent pattern for ministers to write after, that the ministry may in nothing be blamed.

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me; 31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judæa; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; 32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. 33 Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

Here we have,
 First. St. Paul's desire of a share in the prayers of the Romans for him, expressed very earnestly, ver. 30—32. Though Paul was a great apostle, yet he begged the prayers of the meanest Christians, not here only, but in several other of the epistles. He had prayed much for them, and this he desires as the return of his kindness. Interchanging of prayers is an excellent token of the interchanging of loves. Paul speaks like one that knew himself, and would hereby teach us how to value the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous. How careful should we be lest we do any thing to forfeit our interest in the love and prayers of God's praying people!

1. Observe why they must pray for him. He begs it with the greatest importunity. He might suspect they would forget him in their prayers, because they had no personal acquaintance with him, and therefore he urgeth it so closely, and begs it with the most affectionate obtestations, by all that is sacred and valuable. "I beseech you," 1st. "for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake." He is my Master, I am going about his work, and his glory is interested in the success of it. If you have any regard to Jesus Christ, and to his cause and kingdom, pray for me. You love Christ, and own Christ; for his sake then do me this kindness. 2nd. "For the love of the Spirit." As a proof and instance of that love which the Spirit works in the hearts of believers one to another, pray for me; as a fruit of that communion which we have one with another by the Spirit, though we never saw one another. If ever you experienced the Spirit's love to you, and would be found returning your love to the Spirit, be not wanting in this office of kindness.

2. How they must pray for him. "That ye strive together." 1st. That you strive in prayers. Those that would prevail in prayer must strive in prayer. We must put forth all that is within us in that duty; pray with fixedness, faith, and fervency; wrestle with God, as Jacob did; pray in praying, as Elias did, Jas. v. 17, and stir up ourselves to take hold on God, Isa. lxi. 7. And this not only when we are praying for ourselves, but when we are praying for our friends. True love to our brethren should make us as earnest for them as sense of our own need makes us for ourselves. 2nd. "That you strive together with me." When he begged their prayers for him, he did not intend thereby to excuse his praying for himself; no, "Strive together with me," who am wrestling with God daily, upon my own and my friends' account. He would have them to ply the same oar. Paul and these Romans were distant in place, and like to be so, and yet they might join together in prayer. Those who are put far asunder by the disposal of God's providence may yet meet together at the throne of his grace. Those who beg the prayers of others must not neglect to pray for themselves.

3. What they must beg of God for him. He mentions particulars; for, in praying both for ourselves and for our friends, it is good to be particular. "What wilt thou that I shall do for thee?" so saith Christ, when he holds out the golden sceptre. Though he knows our state and wants perfectly, he will know them from us. He recommends himself to their prayers with reference to three things: 1st. His dangers which he was exposed to. "That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judæa." The unbelieving Jews were the most violent enemies Paul had, and most enraged against him, and some prospect he had of trouble from them in this journey; and therefore they must pray that God would deliver him. We may, and must, pray against persecution. This prayer was answered in several remarkable deliverances of Paul, recorded Acts xxi.—xxiv. 2nd. His services. Pray "that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints." Why was there any danger that it would not be accepted? Can money be other wise than acceptable to the poor? Yes, there was some ground of suspicion in this case; for Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, and as the unbelieving Jews looked spitefully at him, which was their wickedness, so those that believed were shy of him upon that account, which was their weakness. He doth not say, Let them choose whether they will accept it or no, if they will not, it shall be better bestowed; but pray that it may be accepted. As God must be sought unto for the restraining of the ill-will of our enemies, so also for the preserving and increasing of the good-will of our friends; for God hath the hearts both of the one and of the other in his hands. 3rd. His journey to them. To engage their prayers for him, he interests them in his concerns; ver. 32, "That I may come unto you with joy." If his present journey to Jerusalem proved unsuccessful, his intended journey to Rome would be uncomfortable. If he should not do good, and prosper

in one visit, he thought he should have small joy of the next. "May come with joy, by the will of God." All our joy depends upon the will of God. The comfort of the creature is in every thing according to the disposal of the Creator.

Secondly. Here is another prayer of the apostle for them; ver. 33, "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." The Lord of hosts, the God of battle, is the God of peace, the author and lover of peace. He describes God under this title here, because of the divisions among them, to recommend peace to them. If God be the God of peace, let us be men of peace. The Old Testament blessing was, "Peace be with you;" now, "The God of peace be with you." They who have the fountain cannot want any of the streams. "With you all;" both weak and strong. To dispose them to a nearer union, he puts them all together in this prayer. Those who are united in the blessing of God should be united in affection one to another.

CHAPTER XVI.

Paul is now concluding this long and excellent epistle, and he doth it with a great deal of affection. As in the main body of the epistle he appears to have been a very knowing man, so in these appurtenances of it he appears to have been a very loving man. So much knowledge, and so much love, is a very rare, but (where it is) a very excellent and amiable composition; for what is heaven but knowledge and love made perfect? It is observable how often Paul speaks as if he were concluding, and yet takes fresh hold again. One would have thought that solemn benediction which closed the foregoing chapter should have ended the epistle; and yet here he begins again, and in this chapter he repeats the blessing, ver. 20, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." And yet he hath something more to say; nay, again he repeats the blessing, ver. 24, and yet hath not done,—an expression of his tender love. These repeated benedictions, which stand for valedictions, speak Paul loath to part. Now in this closing chapter we may observe, I. His recommendation of one friend to the Roman Christians, and his particular salutation of several among them, ver. 1—16. II. A caution to take heed of those who caused divisions, ver. 17—20. III. Salutations added from some who were with Paul, ver. 21—24. IV. He concludes with a solemn celebration of the glory of God, ver. 25—27.



COMMEND unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ



ROMAN GREETING.—BRITISH MUSEUM.

Jesus: 4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. 6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. 7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before

mentioned in the Acts. "Of note among the apostles;" some understand this to mean, "highly thought of by the apostles." Others take it as applying the term "apostle" in an extended sense to Andronicus and Junia, and stating that they had distinguished themselves among those sent to preach. It seems a mistake to restrict the title "apostle" to the Twelve. It is applied to Barnabas (Acts xiv. 14; Gal. ii. 9).

xvi. 11. "Narcissus;" some have identified him with Narcissus

who was secretary to the Emperor Claudius. It is improbable, as this Narcissus died before this epistle was written. Still, the household (the body of his slaves) may have remained together and been known as those belonging to Narcissus.

xvi. 13. "His mother and mine;" i.e., who has also been a mother to me. "Rufus" has been identified, not without some plausibility, with the Rufus mentioned in Mark xv. 21. The name, however, was a common one.

me. 8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. 9 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. 10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. 11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. 12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. 13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. 14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. 15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. 16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

Such remembrances as these are usual in letters between friends; and yet Paul, by the savouriness of his expression, sanctifies these common compliments.

[It might at first sight appear strange, that in an inspired letter, which was to be preserved to the end of the world for the edification and instruction of the churches, there should be so much of it taken up with what many might consider as useless ceremony. But as the apostle was inspired by the Spirit of God in this, as well as in the highest matters, it is evident, that we ought to look for instruction from this peculiarity of his writings. This shews the value of inspiration; for were these writings merely human we should not look for instruction from such things. It shews us that every attention that expresses and promotes love ought to be exhibited among Christians. The forms and courtesies of social life, that manifest respect, are to be employed by them, to shew their esteem and affection for one another.—R. H.]

First. Here is the commendation of a friend, by whom, as some think, this epistle was sent, one Phebe, ver. 1, 2. It should seem that she was a person of quality and estate, who had business which called her to Rome, where she was a stranger; and therefore Paul recommends her to the acquaintance of the Christians there. An expression of his true friendship to her. Paul was as well skilled in the art of obliging as most men. True religion, rightly received, never made any man unkind. Courtesy and Christianity agree well together. It was not in compliment to her, but in sincerity, that,

1. He gives a very good character of her. 1st. As a sister to Paul. "Phebe our sister." Not in nature, but in grace; not in affinity or consanguinity, but in pure Christianity. His own sister in the faith of Christ; loving Paul, and beloved of him, with a pure, and chaste, and spiritual love, as a sister; for there is neither male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus, Gal. iii. 28. Both Christ and his apostles had some of their best friends among the devout, and upon that account honourable, women. 2nd. As a servant to the church at Cenchrea; *διακονῶν*, a servant by office, a stated servant, not to preach the word, that was forbidden to women; but in acts of charity and hospitality. Some think she was one of the widows that ministered to the sick, and were taken into the church's number, 1 Tim. v. 9. But those were old and poor, whereas Phebe seems to have been a person of some account; and yet it was no disparagement to her to be a servant to the church. Probably they used to meet at her house, and she undertook the care of entertaining the ministers, especially strangers. Every one in their place should strive to serve the church, for therein they serve Christ, and it will turn to a good account another day. Cenchrea was a small seaport town adjoining to Corinth, about twelve furlongs distant. Some think there was a church there distinct from that at Corinth; though, being so near, it is very probable that the church at Corinth is called the church at Cenchrea, because their place of meeting might be there, because of the great opposition to them in the city, Acts xviii. 12. As at Philippi, they met out of the city by the waterside, Acts xvi. 13. So the reformed church of Paris might be called the church at Charenton, where they formerly met out of the city. 3rd. As a succourer of many, and particularly of Paul, ver. 2. She relieved many that were in want and distress; a good copy for women to write after, that have ability. She was kind to those that needed kindness, intimated in her succouring of them; and her bounty was extensive, she was "a succourer of many." Observe the gratitude of Paul in mentioning her particular kindness to him; "and of myself also." Acknowledgment of favours is the least return we can make. It was much to her honour that Paul left this upon record; for wherever this epistle is read her kindness to Paul is told for a memorial of her.

2. He recommends her to their care and kindness, as one worthy to be taken notice of with peculiar respect. 1st. "Receive her in the Lord." Entertain her, bid her welcome. This pass under Paul's hand could not but recommend her to any Christian church. "Receive her in the Lord;" that is, for the Lord's sake, receive her as a servant and friend of Christ. As it becometh saints to receive, who love Christ, and therefore love all that are his for his sake; or, as becometh saints to be received, with love and honour, and the tenderest affection. There may be occasion sometimes to improve our interest in our friends, not only for ourselves, but for others also; interest being a price in the hand for doing good. 2nd. "Assist her in whatsoever business she has need of you." Whether she had business of trade, or law business at the court, is not material; however, being a woman, a stranger, a Christian, she had need of help, and Paul engageth them to be assistant to her. It becometh Christians to be helpful one to another in their affairs, especially to be helpful to strangers; for we are members one of another, and we know not what need of help we may have ourselves. Observe, Paul bespeaks help for one that had been so helpful to many. He that watereth shall be watered also himself.

Secondly. Here are commendations to some particular friends among those to whom he wrote more than in any other of the epistles. Though the care of all the churches came upon Paul daily, enough to distract an ordinary head, yet he could retain the remembrance of so many; and his heart was so full of love and affection as to send salutations to each of them, with particular characters of them, and expressions of love to them, and concern for them.

xvi. 18. "Good words and fair speeches:" "The distinction is that between good speaking and well speaking, between plausibility and flattery" (Vaughan). Who these were is not very clear, but they were probably similar to those pointed out in Phil. iii. 2, 18; 1 Tim. vi. 3; 2 Cor. xi. 2.

xvi. 20. "God of peace:" the description is appropriate. God is called the God of peace, since he can give the victory, bruising Satan under their feet. (Compare Gen. iii. 15)

"Greet them," salute them; it is the same word, *ἀντίσπετε*. Let them know that I remember them, and love them, and wish them well. There is something observable in divers of these salutations.

1. Concerning Aquila and Priscilla, a famous couple, that Paul had a special kindness for. They were originally of Rome, but were banished thence by the edict of Claudius, Acts xviii. 2. At Corinth Paul became acquainted with them, wrought with them at the trade of tent-making. After some time, when the edge of that edict was abated, they returned to Rome, and thither he now sends commendations to them. He calls them his "helpers in Christ Jesus;" by private instructions and converse furthering the success of Paul's public preaching; one instance whereof we have in their instructing of Apollos, Acts xviii. 26. Those are helpers to faithful ministers that lay out themselves in their families, and among their neighbours, to do good to souls. Nay, they did not only do much, but they ventured much for Paul; they have "for my life laid down their own necks." They exposed themselves to secure Paul, hazarded their own lives for the preservation of his, considering how much better they might be spared than he. Paul was in a great deal of danger at Corinth, while he sojourned with them; but they sheltered him, though they thereby made themselves obnoxious to the enraged multitude, Acts xviii. 12, 17. It was a good while ago that they had done Paul this kindness; and yet he speaks as sensibly of it as if it had been but yesterday. "To whom," saith he, "not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;" who were all beholden to these good people for helping to save the life of him that was the apostle of the Gentiles. Paul mentions this to engage the Christians at Rome to be the more kind to Aquila and Priscilla.

[We have here Aquila and Priscilla at Rome. St. Paul became acquainted with these persons in his first visit to Greece, Acts xviii. 2; they accompanied him to Ephesus, ver. 18, and were there when he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians. After writing that epistle, Paul staid some little time at Ephesus, he was a considerable time in Macedonia, and three months in Greece, and, as this epistle to the Romans was written at the close of that second visit, a sufficient interval elapsed for the return of Aquila and Priscilla to Rome, so as to be there when the apostle wrote this greeting to them. Paley remarks how fully this statement shews that names and circumstances are so implicated with dates and places in writings like the present, that nothing but truth could preserve consistency.—R. T. S. Com.]

He sends greeting likewise to the church in their house, ver. 5. It seems, then, a church in a house is no such absurd thing as some make it to be. Perhaps there was a congregation of Christians that used to meet at their house at stated times; and then no doubt but it was like the house of Obed-Edom, blessed for the ark's sake. Others think, the church was no more than a religious, pious, well-governed family, that kept up the worship of God. Religion, in the power of it reigning in a family, will turn a house into a church. And doubtless it had a good influence upon this, that Priscilla, the goodwife of the family was so very eminent and forward in religion; so eminent, that she is often named first. A virtuous woman, that looks well to the ways of her household, may do much towards the advancement of religion in a family. When Priscilla and Aquila were at Ephesus, though but sojourners there, yet there also they had a church in their house, 1 Cor. xvi. 19. A truly godly man will be careful to take religion along with him wherever he goes. When Abraham removed his tent, he renewed his altar, Gen. xiii. 18.

2. Concerning Epenetus, ver. 5. He calls him his "well-beloved." Where the law of love is in the heart, the law of kindness will be in the tongue. Endearing language should pass among Christians, to express love, and to engage love. So he calls Amplias "beloved in the Lord," with true Christian love for Christ's sake; and Stachys his "beloved." A sign Paul had been in the third heaven, he was so much made up of love. Of Epenetus it is farther said that he was the "firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ;" not only one of the most eminent believers in that country, but one of the first that was converted to the faith of Christ; one that was offered up to God by Paul, as the firstfruits of his ministry there; an earnest of a great harvest, for in Corinth, the chief city of Achaia, God had much people, Acts xviii. 10. Special respect is to be paid to those that set out early, and come to work in the vineyard at the first hour, at the first call. The household of Stephanas is likewise said to be the firstfruits of Achaia, 1 Cor. xvi. 15. Perhaps Epenetus was one of that household; or, however, he was one of the first three; not the first alone, but one of the first fleece of Christians that the region of Achaia afforded.

3. Concerning Mary, and some others who were laborious in that which is good,—industrious Christians; "Mary, who bestowed much labour on us." True love never sticks at labour, but rather takes a pleasure in it; where there is much love there will be much labour. Some think this Mary had been at some of those places where Paul was, though now removed to Rome, and had personally ministered to him; others think Paul speaks of her labour as bestowed on him, because it was bestowed upon his friends and fellow-labourers, and he took what was done to them as done to himself. He saith of Tryphena and Tryphosa, two useful women in their places, that they "laboured in the Lord," ver. 12; and of the "beloved Persis," another good woman, that she "laboured much in the Lord," more than others did. Among useful people some are more useful than others; abounding more in the work of the Lord.

4. Concerning Andronicus and Junia, ver. 7. Some take them for a man and his wife, and the original will well enough bear it; and, considering the name of the latter, that is more probable than that they should be two men, as others think, and brethren. Observe, 1st. They were Paul's cousins, akin to him; so was Herodion, ver. 11. Religion doth not take away, but rectifies, sanctifies, and improves our respect to our kindred; engaging us to lay out ourself as most for their good, and to rejoice in them the more when we find them related to Christ by faith. 2nd. They were his fellow-prisoners. Partnership in suffering sometimes doth much towards the union of souls, and the knitting of affections. We do not find in the story of the Acts any imprisonment of Paul before the writing of this Epistle, but that at Philippi, Acts xvi. 23. But Paul was "in prisons more frequent," 2 Cor. xi. 23, in some of which it seems he met with his friends Andronicus and Junia; yoke-fellows, as in other things, so in suffering for Christ, and bearing his yoke. 3rd. They were "of note among the apostles;" not so much because perhaps they were persons of estate and quality in the world, as because they were eminent for knowledge, and gifts, and graces, which made them famous among the apostles, who were competent judges of those things, and were endued with a spirit of discerning not only the sincerity, but the eminency of Christians. 4th. Whom "also were in Christ before me;" that is, were converted to the Christian faith. In time they had got the start of Paul, though he was converted the next year after Christ's ascension. How ready was Paul to acknowledge in others any kind of precedency!

5. Concerning Apelles, who is here said to be "approved in Christ," ver. 10; a high character. He was one of known integrity and sincerity in his religion, one that had been tried; his friends and enemies had tried him, and he was as gold. He was of approved knowledge and judgment, approved courage and constancy; a man that one might trust, and repose a confidence in.

6. Concerning Aristobulus and Narcissus. Notice is taken of their house—

xvi. 21. "Timotheus:" see Notes on First Epistle to Timothy. "Lucius:" probably the same with Lucius, a Cyrenian, mentioned in Acts xiii. 1. "Jason:" perhaps the Jason of Thessalonica. (See Acts xvii. 5.) "Sosipater:" there is a Sopater of Berea mentioned in Acts xx. 4; some identify him with the one named here.

xvi. 22. "Tertius, who wrote this epistle:" St. Paul usually employed an amanuensis. (See Gal. vi. 11.)

xvi. 23. "Gaius:" mentioned in 1 Cor. i. 14. He was baptised by

hold, ver. 11. Those of their household which "are in the Lord," as it is limited, ver. 11, that were Christians. How studious was Paul to leave none out of his salutations that he had any knowledge of, or acquaintance with! Aristobulus and Narcissus themselves, some think, were absent, or lately dead; others think they were unbelievers, and such as did not themselves embrace Christianity, so Pareus; and some think this Narcissus was the same with one of that name who is frequently mentioned in the life of Claudius, as a very rich man that had a great family, but very wicked and mischievous. It seems that there were some good servants or other retainers even in the family of a wicked man; a common case, 1 *Tim.* vi. 1; compare ver. 2. The poor servant called, and chosen, and faithful, while the rich master was passed by, and left to perish in unbelief. "Even so, Father, because it seemed good unto thee."

7. Concerning Rufus; ver. 13, "chosen in the Lord." He was a choice Christian, whose gifts and graces did evidence that he was eternally chosen in Christ Jesus. He was one of a thousand for integrity and holiness. "And his mother and mine;" his mother by nature, and mine by Christian love and spiritual affection; as he calls Phoebe his sister, and teacheth Timothy to treat the elder women as mothers, 1 *Tim.* v. 2. This good woman, upon some occasion or other, had been as a mother to Paul, in caring for him, and comforting of him, and Paul here gratefully owns it, and calls her mother.

8. Concerning the rest this is observable, that he salutes "the brethren which are with them," ver. 14; and "the saints which are with them," ver. 15; with them in family relations, with them in the bond of Christian communion. [Here a number of brethren are selected without distinction. This mark of brotherly attention would gratify those whom the apostle here names, besides the brethren who were with them. The Lord's people are not equally distinguished, but they are all brethren equally related to him who is the elder brother of his people. Some of them are eminent, and others are without peculiar distinction. They are all, however, worthy of love. A church is not to consist of the most eminent believers, but of believers, though some be of the lowest attainments. A church of Christ is a school in which their education is to be perfected.—*R. H.*]

It is the good property of saints to delight in being together; and Paul thus joins them together in his salutations to endear them one to another. Lest any should find themselves aggrieved, as if Paul had forgotten them, he concludes with the remembrance of the rest, as brethren and saints, though not named. In Christian congregations there should be lesser societies linked together in love and converse, and taking opportunities of being often together. Among all these to whom Paul sends greeting here is not a word of Peter, which gives occasion to suspect that he was not bishop of Rome, as the Papists say he was; for, if he was, we cannot but suppose him resident; or, however, how could Paul write so long an epistle to the Christians there, and take no notice of him?

Thirdly. He concludes with the recommendation of them to the love and embraces one of another; "Salute one another with a holy kiss." Mutual salutations, as they express love, so they increase and strengthen love, and endear Christians one to another; therefore Paul doth here encourage the use of them, and only directs that they be holy; a chaste kiss, in opposition to that which is wanton and lascivious; a sincere kiss, in opposition to that which is treacherous and dissembling, as Judas's when he betrayed Christ with a kiss. He adds in the close a general salutation to them all in the name of the churches of Christ, ver. 16, "The churches of Christ salute you;" that is the churches which I am with, and which I am used to visit personally, as knit together in the bonds of the common Christianity, desire me to testify their affection to you, and good wishes for you. This is one way of maintaining the communion of saints.

[It does not follow, because a custom prevailed in the early churches, and received the sanction of the apostles, that we are obliged to follow it. These customs often arose out of local circumstances and previous habits, or were merely conventional modes of expressing certain feelings, and were never intended to be made universally obligatory. As it was common in the East, (and so is, to a great extent, at present, not only there, but on the continent of Europe,) to express affection and confidence by "the kiss of peace," Paul exhorts the Roman Christians to salute one another with a holy kiss; that is, to manifest their Christian love to each other according to the mode to which they were accustomed. The exercise and manifestation of the feeling, but not the mode of its expression, are obligatory on us.—*H.*]

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. 19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. 20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

The apostle having endeavoured by his endearing salutations to unite them together, it was not improper to subjoin a caution to take heed of those whose principles and practices were destructive to Christian love. And we may observe,

First. The caution itself, which is given in the most obliging manner that could be, "I beseech you, brethren." He doth not will and command, as one that lorded it over God's heritage, but for love's sake beseeches. How earnest, how endearing are Paul's exhortations! He teaches them,

1. To see their danger; "Mark them which cause divisions and offences." Our Master had himself foretold that divisions and offences would come; but had entailed a woe on those by whom they come, *Mat.* xviii. 7, and against such we are here cautioned. Those who burthen the church with dividing and offending impositions, who uphold and enforce those impositions, who introduce and propagate dividing and offending notions, which are erroneous or justly suspected; who out of pride, ambition, affectation of novelty, or the like, causelessly separate from their brethren, and by perverse disputes, censures,

and evil surmisings, alienate the affections of Christians one from another; these "cause divisions and offences contrary to," or different from, (for that also is implied, it is *παρά την διδασχιν*), "the doctrine which we have learned." Whatever varies from the form of sound doctrine which we have in the Scriptures opens a door to division and offences. If truth be once deserted, unity and peace will not last long. Now, mark those that thus cause divisions, *οκορειν*. Observe them, the method they take, the end they drive at; there is need of a piercing, watchful eye to discern the danger we are in from such people; for commonly the pretences are plausible, when the projects are very pernicious. Do not look only at the "divisions and offences," but run up those streams to the fountain, and mark those that cause them; and especially that in them which doth cause these divisions and offences; those lusts on each side, from whence come these wars and fightings. A danger discovered is half prevented.

2. To shun it, "and avoid them." Shun all unnecessary communion and communication with them, lest you be leavened and infected by them. Do not strike in with any dividing interests, nor embrace any of those principles or practices which are destructive to Christian love and charity, or to the truth which is according to godliness. Their word will eat as doth a canker. Some think he doth especially warn them to take heed of the Judaizing teachers, who, under the covert of the Christian name, kept up the Mosaic ceremonies, and preached the necessity of them; who were industrious in all places to draw disciples after them, and whom Paul in most of his epistles cautions the churches to take heed of.

Secondly. The reasons to enforce this caution.

1. Because of the pernicious policy of these seducers, ver. 18. The worse they are the more need we have to watch against them. Now, observe his description of them in two things: 1st. The master they serve. "Not our Lord Jesus Christ;" though they call themselves Christians they do not serve Christ, do not aim at his glory, promote his interest, or do his will, whatever they pretend. How many are there who call Christ master and Lord that are far from serving him? But they serve "their own belly;" that is, their carnal, sensual, secular interests. It is some base lust or other that they are pleasing; pride, ambition, covetousness, luxury, lasciviousness, these are the designs which they are really carrying on: their "God is their belly," *Phil.* iii. 19. What a base master do they serve, and how unworthy to come in competition with Christ; that serve their own bellies; that make gain their godliness, and the gratifying of a sensitive appetite the very scope and business of their lives, to which all other purposes and designs must truckle and be made subservient. 2nd. The method they take to compass their design. "By good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple." Their words and speeches have a show of holiness and zeal for God, (it is an easy thing to be godly from the teeth outward,) and a show of kindness and love to those into whom they instil their corrupt doctrines, speaking them fair when they intend them the greatest mischief. Thus by good words and fair speeches the serpent beguiled Eve. Observe, they corrupt their heads by deceiving their hearts; pervert their judgments by a sly insinuating of themselves into their affections. We have great need therefore to keep our hearts with all diligence, especially when seducing spirits are abroad.

2. Because of the peril we are in through our proneness and aptness to be inveigled and ensnared by them; for "your obedience is come abroad unto all men." You are noted in all the churches for a willing, tractable, complying people; and, 1st. Therefore because it was so these seducing teachers would be the more apt to assault them. The devil and his agents have a particular spite at flourishing churches, and flourishing souls. The ship that is known to be richly laden is most exposed to privateers; the adversary and enemy covets such a prey, therefore look to yourselves, 2 *Jno.* 8. The false teachers hear that you are an obedient people, and therefore they will be likely to come among you, to see if you will be obedient to them. It hath been the common policy of seducers to set upon those who are softened by convictions, and begin to inquire what they shall do, because such do most easily receive the impressions of their opinions. Sad experience witnesseth how many who have begun to ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, have fatally split upon this rock; which speaks it much the duty of ministers, with a double care, to feed the lambs of the flock, to lay a good foundation, and gently to lead those that are with young. 2nd. Though it were so, yet they were in danger from these seducers. This Paul suggests with a great deal of modesty and tenderness; not as one suspicious of them, but as one solicitous for them. "Your obedience is come abroad unto all men;" we grant that, and rejoice in it: "I am glad therefore on your behalf." Thus doth he insinuate their commendation, the better to make way for the caution. A holy jealousy of our friends may very well consist with a holy joy in them. You think yourselves a very happy people, and so do I too; but for all that you must not be secure, "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." You are a willing, good-natured people, but you had best take heed of being imposed upon by those seducers. A pliable temper is good when it is under good conduct, but otherwise it may be very ensnaring; and therefore he gives two general rules: First. To be "wise unto that which is good;" that is, to be skilful and intelligent in the truths and ways of God. Be wise to try the spirits, to prove all things, and then to hold fast that only which is good. There is need of a great deal of wisdom in our adherence to good truths, and good duties, and good people, lest in any of these we be imposed upon and deluded. "Be ye therefore wise as serpents," *Mat.* x. 16; wise to discern that which is really good from that which is counterfeit; wise to distinguish things that differ, to improve opportunities. While we are in the midst of so many deceivers we have great need of that wisdom of the prudent, which is to understand his way, *Pr.* xiv. 8. Secondly. To be "simple concerning evil;" so wise as not to be deceived, and yet so simple as not to be deceivers. It is a holy simplicity not to be able to contrive, or palliate, or carry on any evil design; *ακεραιους*, harmless, unmix'd, inoffensive. "In malice be ye children," 1 *Cor.* xiv. 20. The wisdom of the serpent becomes Christians, but not the subtlety of the old serpent. We must withal be harmless as doves. That is a wisely simple man that knows not how to do anything against the truth. Now Paul was the more solicitous for the Roman church that that might keep its integrity, because it was so famous; it was a city upon a hill, and many eyes were upon the Christians there, so that an error prevailing there would be a bad precedent, and have an ill influence upon other churches; as indeed it hath since proved in fact, the great apostacy of the latter days taking its rise from that capital city. The errors of leading churches are leading errors. When the bishop of Rome fell as a great star from heaven, *Rev.* viii. 10 "his tail drew a third part of the stars" after him, *Rev.* xii. 4.

3. Because of the promises of God that we should have victory at last, which is given to quicken and encourage, not to supersede, our watchful cares and vigorous endeavours. It is a very sweet promise, ver. 20, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet." 1st. The titles he gives to God; "The God of peace;" that is, the author and giver of all good. When we come to God for spiritual victories, we must not only eye him as the Lord of hosts, whose all power is, but as the God of peace, a God at peace with us, speaking peace to us, working peace in us, creating peace for us. Victory comes from

St. Paul. "Of the whole church:" it is inferred that the Christians of Corinth met for worship in his house. "Erastus, the chamberlain;" better, treasurer of the city—i.e., Corinth. (Compare Acts xix. 22; 2 *Tim.* iv. 20.)

xvi. 25. "The mystery, which was kept secret;" or, "kept in silence."

Additional Notes.—Chap. i. 14. "Debtor;" because of the obligation laid on him to preach the Gospel (1 *Cor.* ix. 16). "Greeks," "bar-

barians;" i.e., to all Gentiles, whatever their race or capacity. He does not speak of his being debtor to Jews, though he yearned for their conversion (chap. ix. 1—3, x. 1); his obligation was toward Gentiles, not Jews (Gal. ii. 7).

i. 16. "Ashamed;" suggested by the idea of preaching at Rome. "Though your city be mistress of the world, though your emperors be worshipped as present deities, though you be elated by your pomps, and luxuries, and victories, yet I am not ashamed,"

God more as the God of peace than as the God of war; for in all our conflicts peace is the thing we must contend for. God, as the God of peace, will restrain and vanquish all those that cause divisions and offences, and so break and disturb the peace of the church. 2nd. The blessing he expects from God; a victory over Satan. If he mean primarily those false doctrines and seducing spirits spoken of before, of which Satan was the prime founder and author, yet doubtless it comprehends all the other designs and devices of Satan against souls, to defile, disturb, and destroy them; all his attempts to keep us from the purity of heaven, the peace of heaven here, and the possession of heaven hereafter. Satan, tempting and troubling, acting as a deceiver, and as a destroyer, the God of peace will bruise under our feet. He had cautioned them before against simplicity; now, they being conscious of their own great weakness and folly, might think, How shall we wade and escape these snares that are laid for us? Will not these adversaries of our souls be at length too hard for us? No, saith he, fear not; though you cannot overcome in your own strength and wisdom, yet the God of peace will do it for you; and through him that loved us we shall be more than conquerors. *First.* The victory shall be complete. He "shall bruise Satan under your feet," plainly alluding to the first promise of the Messiah, made in paradise, *Gen. iii. 15*, that the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head; which is in the fulfilling every day, while the saints are enabled to resist and overcome the temptations of Satan; and will be perfectly fulfilled when, in spite of all the powers of darkness, all that belong to the election of grace shall be brought triumphantly to glory. When Joshua had conquered the kings of Canaan, he called the captains of Israel to set their feet upon the necks of those kings, *Jos. x. 24*; so will Christ, our Joshua, enable all his faithful servants and soldiers to set their feet upon Satan's neck, to trample upon, and triumph over, their spiritual enemies. Christ hath overcome for us, disarmed the strong man armed, broken his power, and we have nothing to do but to pursue the victory, and divide the spoil. Let this quicken us to our spiritual conflict, to fight the good fight of faith. We have to do with a conquered enemy, and the victory will be perfect shortly. *Secondly.* The victory shall be speedy. He shall do it "shortly." Yet a little while and he that shall come will come. He hath said it, "Behold, I come quickly." When Satan seems to have prevailed, and we are ready to give up all for gone, then will the God of peace cut the work short in righteousness. It will encourage soldiers, when they know the war will be at an end quickly, in such a victory. Some refer it to the happy period of their contentions in true love and unity; others to the period of the church's persecutions, in the conversion of the powers of the empire to Christianity, when the bloody enemies of the church were subdued and trampled on by Constantine, and the church under his government. It is rather to be applied to the victory which all the saints shall have over Satan when they come to heaven, and shall be for ever out of his reach, together with the present victories which through grace they obtain in earnest of that. Hold out therefore, faith and patience, yet a little while; when we are once got through the Red sea we shall see our spiritual enemies dead on the shore, and triumphantly sing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb. To this therefore he subjoins the benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." The good will of Christ towards you, the good work of Christ in you. This will be the best preservative against the snares of heretics, and schismatics, and false teachers. If the grace of Christ be with us, who can be against us so as to prevail? Be strong therefore in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. Paul, not only as a friend, but as a minister and an apostle, who had received grace for grace, thus with authority blest them with his blessing, and repeats it, ver. 24.

[This form of expression has always been understood to import the deity of Jesus Christ, and justly it has been so understood. It is essentially and necessarily a prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ; and if he is not God, what grace has he to bestow on his people? It implies that there is a constant supply of grace to be communicated from Christ to his people, and if Christ so communicates his holy influences to his people in all ages, in all countries, to every individual of them, at every instant of time, what can he be but the Almighty God? This implies that they who have been bought by the blood of Christ are to be supplied with grace by him continually, in order to their standing in the truth. All their perseverance is in virtue of this. Of his church it is said, "I, the Lord, do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."—*R. H.*]

21 Timothy my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sospater, my kinsmen, salute you. 22 I Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord.



ROMAN SCRIBE

23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother. 24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

As the apostle had before sent his own salutations to many of this church, and that of the churches round him to them all, he here adds an affectionate remembrance of them from some particular persons, who were now with him, the better to promote acquaintance and fellowship among distant saints; and that the subscribing of these worthy names, known to them, might the more recommend this epistle. He mentions,

1. Some that were his particular friends, and probably known to the Roman Christians. "Timotheus my work-fellow." Paul sometimes calls Timothy his son, as an inferior; but here he styles him his work-fellow, as one equal with him, such a respect doth he put upon him. And Lucius; probably Lucius of Cyrene, a noted man in the church of Antioch, *Acts xiii. 1*, as Jason was at Thessalonica, where he suffered for entertaining Paul, *Acts xvii. 5, 6*, and Sospater, supposed to be the same with Sopater of Berea, mentioned *Acts xx. 4*. These last Paul calls his kinsmen; not only more largely, as they were Jews, but as they were in blood or affinity nearly allied to him. It seems Paul was of a good family, that he met with so many of his kindred in several places. It is a very great comfort to see the holiness and usefulness of our kindred.

2. One that was Paul's amanuensis; ver. 22, "I Tertius, who wrote this epistle." Paul made use of a scribe, not out of state, or idleness, but because he wrote a bad hand, which was not very legible, which he excuseth, when he wrote to the Galatians with his own hand, *Gal. vi. 11*, *πληκτικὸν γράμματιν*, "with what kind of letters." Perhaps this Tertius was the same with Silas; for Silas (as some think) signifies the third in Hebrew, as Tertius in Latin. Tertius either wrote as Paul dictated, or transcribed it fair over out of Paul's foul copy. The least piece of service done to the church, and the ministers of the church, shall not pass without a remembrance and a recompence. It was an honour to Tertius, that he had a hand, though but as a scribe, in writing this epistle.

3. Some others that were of note among the Christians; ver. 23, "Gaius mine host." It is uncertain whether this was Gaius of Derbe, *Acts xx. 4*, or Gaius of Macedonia, *Acts xix. 29*, or rather Gaius of Corinth, *1 Cor. i. 14*, and whether any of these was he to whom John wrote his third epistle. However, Paul commends him for his great hospitality; not only mine host, but of the whole church; one that entertained them all, as there was occasion, opened his doors to their church meetings, and eased the rest of the church by his readiness to treat all Christian strangers that came to them.

Erastus "the chamberlain of the city" is another. He means of the city of Corinth, whence this epistle was dated. It seems he was a person of honour and account, one in public place, steward or treasurer. Not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but some are. His estate, and honour, and employment, did not take him off from attending on Paul, and laying out himself for the good of the church, it should seem, in the work of the ministry; for he is joined with Timothy, *Acts xix. 22*, and is mentioned *2 Tim. iv. 20*. No disparagement to the chamberlain of the city to be a preacher of the Gospel of Christ. Quartus is likewise mentioned, and called a brother; for as one is our Father, even Christ, so all we are brethren.

[Ver. 24, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." This important prayer is repeated from ver. 20, which shows us that all repetition is not vain repetition; but that it may mark a thing of peculiar importance. Our Lord prayed the same words three times. And the apostle, from the abundance of his heart, and his great concern for the Christians at Rome, here twice within a short compass, prays that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ might be with them. Indeed there is great need of such earnest petitions, for without the constant supply of the grace of Christ we could not abide in him.—*R. H.*]

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: 27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

Here the apostle solemnly closes his epistle with a magnificent ascription of glory to the blessed God, as one that terminated all in the praise and glory of God, and studied to return all to him, seeing all is of him, and from him. He doth as it were breathe out his soul to these Romans in the praise of God, choosing to make that the end of his epistle which he made the end of his life. Observe here,

First, A description of the Gospel of God, which comes in a parenthesis; having occasion to speak of it as the means by which the power of God stablisheth souls, and the rule of that establishment; "To stablish you according to my Gospel." Paul calls it his gospel, because he was the preacher of it, and because he did so much glory in it. Some think he means especially that declaration, explication, and application of the doctrine of the Gospel, which he had now made in this epistle. But it rather takes in all the preaching and writing of the apostles, among whom Paul was a principal labourer. "Through their word," *Jno. xvii. 20*, the word committed to them. Ministers are the ambassadors, and the Gospel is their embassy. Paul had his head and heart so full of the Gospel that he could scarce mention it without a digression to set forth the nature and excellency of it.

1. It is "the preaching of Jesus Christ." Christ was the preacher of it himself; it "began to be spoken by the Lord," *Heb. ii. 3*. So pleased was Christ with his undertaking for our salvation, that he would himself be the publisher of it. Or, Christ is the subject matter of it; the sum and substance of the whole Gospel was Jesus Christ and him crucified. "We preach not ourselves," saith Paul, "but Christ Jesus the Lord." That which stablisheth souls is the plain preaching of Jesus Christ.

2. It is "the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began—and by the Scriptures—made known." The subject matter of the Gospel is a mystery; our redemption and salvation by Jesus Christ, in the foundation, method, and fruits of it, is without controversy a

&c. (Alford). "The power of God:" the Gospel is the special and greatest instrument of Divine power; Christ is the living power of it (*1 Cor. i. 24*). It is a power to salvation; there is a power to destruction (*Matt. x. 28*).

i. 17. The quotation from Habakkuk is made three times in the New Testament—*Gal. iii. 11*; *Heb. x. 38*; and here.

i. 28. "Did not like:" Alford renders "did not choose." There is a play upon the words in the original, which is thus given by Mr.

Conybeare: "As they thought fit to cast out the acknowledgment of God, God gave them over to an outcast mind." "Reprobate mind:" not that the mind had lost the faculty of discerning, but depravity had mastered it. Mind, as well as heart and life, are degraded. (Compare *1 Titus i. 15*.) "Convenient:" not in its modern sense of opportune, but in its old sense of fit, or seemly.

i. 30. "Haters of God:" Alford argues for the passive translation—"hated of God."

great mystery of godliness, 1 Tim. iii. 16. This speaks the honour of the Gospel; it is no vulgar, common thing, hammered out by any human wit, but it is the admirable product of the eternal wisdom and counsel of God, and hath in it such an inconceivable height, such an unfathomable depth, as passeth knowledge. It is a mystery which the angels desire to look into, and cannot find the bottom of. And yet, blessed be God, there is as much of this mystery made plain as will suffice to bring us to heaven, if we do not wilfully neglect so great salvation. Now, 1st. This mystery was "kept secret since the world began," *ἡ ἀποκρυφία τῆς αἰωνίου*. It was "wrapt up in silence from eternity;" so some, *a temporibus æternis*. It is no new and upstart notion, no late invention, but took rise from the days of eternity, and the purposes of God's everlasting love. Before the foundation of the world was laid, this mystery was hid in God, Eph. iii. 9; or, "since the world began," so we translate it. During all the times of the Old Testament this mystery was comparatively kept secret, in the types and shadows of the ceremonial law, and the dark predictions of the prophets, which pointed at it; but so that they could not stedfastly look to the end of those things, 2 Cor. iii. 13. Thus it was hid from ages and generations, even among the Jews, much more among the Gentiles that sat in darkness, and had no notices at all of it. Even the disciples of Christ themselves, before his resurrection and ascension, were very much in the dark about the mystery of redemption, and their notion of it was very much clouded and confused; such a secret was it for many ages. But, 2nd. It "now is made manifest." The veil is rent, the shadows of the evening are done away, and life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel, and the Sun of righteousness is risen upon the world. Paul doth not pretend to have the monopoly of this discovery, as if he alone knew it; no, it is made manifest to many others. But how is it made manifest "by the scriptures of the prophets?" Surely because now the event had given the best exposition to the prophecies of the Old Testament; being accomplished, they were explained. The preaching of the prophets, as far as it related to this mystery, was dark and unintelligible in a great measure, in the ages in which they lived; but "the scriptures of the prophets," that which they left in writing, is now not only made plain in itself, but by it this mystery is "made known to all nations." The Old Testament doth not only borrow light from, but return light to, the revelation of the New Testament. If the New Testament explain the Old, the Old Testament, by way of requital, very much illustrates the New. Thus the Old Testament prophets "prophecy again," now their prophecies are fulfilled, "before many people, and nations, and tongues." I refer to Rev. x. 11, which this explains. Now, Christ appears to have been the treasure hid in the field of the Old Testament; "to him give all the prophets witness;" see Lu. xxiv. 27. 3rd. It is manifested "according to the commandment of the everlasting God;" that is, the purpose, counsel, and decree of God from eternity; and the commission and appointment given first to Christ, and then to the apostles, in the fulness of time. They received commandment from the Father to do what they did in preaching the Gospel. Lest any should object, why was this mystery kept secret so long, and why made manifest now? he resolves it into the will of God, who is an absolute Sovereign, and gives not account of any of his matters. The commandment of the everlasting God was enough to bear out the apostles and ministers of the Gospel in their preaching, "The everlasting God." This attribute of eternity is here given to God very emphatically. *First*. He is from everlasting; which intimates, that though he had kept this mystery secret since the world began, and had but lately revealed it, yet he had framed and contrived it from everlasting, before the worlds were. The oaths and covenants in the written word are but the copy of that oath and covenant which was between the Father and the Son from eternity; those the extracts, these the original. And, *Secondly*. He is to everlasting; intimating the eternal continuance of this revelation, and its eternal consequence to us. We must never look for any new revelation, but abide by this, for this is "according to the commandment of the everlasting God." Christ in the Gospel is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. 4th. It is "made known to all nations for the

obedience of faith." The extent of this revelation he often takes notice of; that whereas hitherto in Judah only God was known, now Christ is salvation to the ends of the earth, to all nations. And the design and intention of it is very observable, it is "for the obedience of faith;" that is, that they might believe and obey it, receive it, and be ruled by it. The Gospel is revealed, not to be talked of and disputed about, but to be submitted to. "The obedience of faith" is that obedience which is paid to the word of faith, (see that phrase, *Acts vi. 7*.) and which is produced by the grace of faith. See here what is the right faith, even that which works in obedience; and what is the right obedience, even that which springs from faith; and what is the design of the Gospel, to bring us to both.

Secondly. A doxology to that God whose Gospel it is; ascribing glory to him for ever, ver. 27; acknowledging that he is a glorious God, and adoring him accordingly, with the most awful affections, desiring and longing to be at this work with the holy angels, where we shall be doing it to eternity. This is praising God, ascribing glory to him for ever. Observe,

1. The matter of this praise. In thanking God, we fasten upon his favours to us; in praising and adoring God, we fasten upon his perfections in himself. Two of his principal attributes are here taken notice of. 1st. His power; ver. 25, "To him that is of power to establish you." It is no less than a Divine power that stablisheth the saints. Considering the disposition that is in them to fall, the industry of their spiritual enemies that seek to overthrow them, and the shaking times into which their lot is cast, no less than an almighty power will stablish them. That power of God which is put forth for the establishment of the saints is, and ought to be, the matter of our praise, as Jude 24. "To him that is able to keep you from falling." In giving God the glory of this power, we may and must take to ourselves the comfort of it, that whatever our doubts, and difficulties, and fears may be, our God whom we serve is of power to stablish us: see 1 Pet. i. 5; Jno. x. 29. 2nd. His wisdom; ver. 27, "To God only wise." Power to effect without wisdom to contrive, and wisdom to contrive without power to effect, are alike vain and fruitless; but both together, and both infinite, make a perfect being. He is only wise; not the Father only wise, exclusive of the Son; but Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons, and one God. Only wise, compared with the creatures. Man, the wisest of all the creatures in the lower world, is born like a wild ass's colt; nay, the angels themselves are charged with folly, in comparison with God. He only is perfectly and infallibly wise; he only is originally wise, in and of himself; for he is the spring and fountain of all the wisdom of the creatures; the Father of all the lights of wisdom that any creature can pretend to, Jas. i. 17; with him is strength and wisdom, the deceived and deceiver are his.

2. The Mediator of this praise; "Through Jesus Christ." "To God only wise through Jesus Christ," so some. It is in and through Christ that God is manifested to the world as the only wise God; for he is the wisdom of God, and the power of God. Or rather, as we read it, "Glory through Jesus Christ." All the glory that passeth from fallen man to God, so as to be accepted of him, must go through the hands of the Lord Jesus, in whom alone it is that our persons and performances are or can be pleasing to God. Of his righteousness, therefore, we must make mention, even of his only; who, as he is the Mediator of all our prayers, so he is, and I believe will be to eternity, the Mediator of all our praises.

These three verses (25, 26, and 27) might be rendered thus,—"Now to Him who is able to establish you in the discipleship of my gospel, which is nothing else than the gospel of Jesus Christ himself—or in the discipleship of that revelation whereby there has been divulged the truth that was before hidden, and kept back from men in the earlier ages of the world; but is now made manifest, both by the prophetic writings which we in these days have been made more fully to understand—and also by the proclamation of the same agreeably to the commandment of the everlasting God, amongst all nations, for the purpose of obtaining their submission to the faith—to Him, the only wise God, be glory for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—C.]



THE FORUM.

iii. 2. "Much every way;" i.e., in every direction or sphere of life. "Oracles of God;" it has been hinted that the words of Stephen (Acts vii. 38) were in St. Paul's mind. These oracles must not be limited to the law of Moses; they include all the direct revelations which God made of himself.

iii. 4. "That thou mightest be justified;" shown to be just, vindicated. (Compare Luke vii. 29, 35.) "In thy sayings;" in thy arguments or pleadings. The metaphor employed is forensic: God is represented as entering into controversy with man (compare Isa. i. 2, 18; Mic. vi. 2), and pleading his cause against man before heaven and earth. "Mightest overcome when thou art judged;" "gain thy cause when thou contendest, or enterest into trial as a litigant" (Dr. Vaughan).

vi. 19. For "holiness" read "sanctification," or "consecration."

vi. 21. "What fruit," &c.: read the verse with Alford, thus—"What fruit then had ye at that time? Things whereof ye are now ashamed: for," &c.

viii. 6, 7. "To be carnally minded," &c.: Alford renders, "The mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it doth not submit itself to the law of God, neither indeed can it." The Spirit is the Spirit of life. Hence it follows that the spiritual man cannot mind the things of the flesh, because such mind is death. The addition of 'and peace' seems to be made to enhance the unlikelihood of such a minding, the peace of the Spirit being a blessed contrast to the tumult of the fleshly lusts, even in this life.

viii. 26. "Likewise;" better, "in like manner." "Our infirmities:" Alford renders, "our weakness."



ST. PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

CORINTH was a principal city of Greece, in that particular division of it which was called Achaia. It was situate on the isthmus, or neck of land, that joined Peloponnesus to the rest of Greece, on the southern side, and had two ports adjoining; one at the bottom of the Corinthian gulf, called Lechæum, not far from the city, from whence they traded to Italy and the West; the other at the bottom of the Sinus Saronicus, called Cenchrea, at a more remote distance, from whence they traded to Asia. From this situation, it is no wonder that Corinth should be a place of great trade and wealth. And, as affluence is apt to produce luxury of all kinds, neither is it to be wondered if a place so famous for wealth and arts should be infamous for vice. It was in a particular manner noted for lewdness, inasmuch that a Corinthian woman was a proverbial phrase for a woman of bad fame, and κορινθιάζειν, κορινθιάσθαι, 'to play the Corinthian,' is to indulge lewd inclinations. Yet in this debauched city did Paul, by the blessing of God on his labours, plant and raise a Christian church, chiefly among the Gentiles, as seems very probable from the history of this matter, *Acts* xviii. 1—18, compared with some passages in this epistle, particularly *ch.* xii. 2, where the apostle tells them, "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led." Though it is not improbable that many Jewish converts might be also among them, for we are told "that Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house," *Acts* xviii. 8. He continued in this city near two years, as is plain from *Acts* xviii. 11 and 18 compared, and laboured with great success, being encouraged by a Divine vision, assuring him God had much people in that city, *Acts* xviii. 9, 10. Nor did he use to stay long in a place where his ministry met not with acceptance and success.

Some time after he left them he wrote this epistle to them, to water what he had planted, and rectify some gross disorders that during his absence had been introduced, partly from the interest some false teacher or teachers had obtained amongst them, and partly from the leaven of their old maxims and manners that had not been thoroughly purged out by the Christian principles they had entertained. And it is but too visible how much their wealth had helped to corrupt their manners, from the several faults for which the apostle reprehends them. Pride, avarice, luxury, lust, the natural offspring of a carnal and corrupt mind, are all fed and prompted by outward affluence. And with all these, either the body of this people, or some particular persons among them, are here charged by the apostle. Their pride discovered itself in their sidings and factions, and the notorious disorders they committed in the exercise of their spiritual gifts. And this vice was not wholly fed by their wealth, but by the insight they had into the Greek learning and philosophy. Some of the ancients tell us, that the city abounded with rhetoricians and philosophers; and these were men naturally vain, full of self-conceit, and apt to despise the plain doctrine of the Gospel, because it did not feed the curiosity of an inquisitive and disputing temper, nor please the ear with artful speeches and a flow of fine words. Their avarice was manifest in their law-suits and litigations about *meum* and *tuum* before heathen judges. Their luxury appeared in more instances than one; in their dress, in their debauching themselves even at the Lord's table, where the rich, who were most faulty on this account, were guilty also of a very proud and criminal contempt of their poor brethren. Their lust broke out in a most flagrant and infamous instance, such as had not been named among the Gentiles, not spoken of without detestation, that a man should have his father's wife, either as his wife, or so as to commit fornication with her. This indeed seems to have been the fault of a particular person, but the whole church were to blame that they had his crime in no greater abhorrence, that they could endure one of such very corrupt morals and so flagitious a behaviour amongst them. But their participation in his sin was yet greater, if, as some of the ancients tell us, they were puffed up on behalf of the great learning and eloquence of this incestuous person. And it is plain from other passages of the epistle that they were not so entirely free from their former lewd inclinations as not to need very strict cautions and strong arguments against fornication: see *ch.* vi. 9—20. The pride of their learning had also carried many of them so far as to disbelieve or dispute against the doctrine of the resurrection. It is not improbable that they treated this question problematically, as they did many questions in philosophy, and tried their skill by arguing it *pro* and *con*.

It is manifest from this state of things that there was much that deserved reprehension and needed correction in this church. And the apostle, under the direction and influence of the Holy Spirit, sets himself to do both with all wisdom and faithfulness, and with a due mixture of tenderness and authority, as became one in so elevated and important a station in the church. After a short introduction at the beginning of the epistle, he first blames them for their discord and factions, enters into the original and source of them, shews them how much pride and vanity, and the affectation of science, and learning, and eloquence, flattered by false teachers, had contributed to the scandalous schism; and prescribes humility and submission to Divine instruction, the teaching of God by his Spirit, both by external revelation and internal illumination, as a remedy for the evils that abounded amongst them. He shews them the vanity of their pretended science and eloquence on many accounts. This is his business through the first four chapters. In the fifth he treats of the case of the incestuous person, and orders him to be put out from amongst them. Nor is what the ancients say improbable, that this incestuous person was a man in great esteem, and head of one party at least amongst them. The apostle seems to tax them with being puffed up on his account, *ch.* v. 2. In the sixth chapter he blames them for their law-suits, carried on before heathen judges, when their disputes about property should have been amicably determined amongst themselves; and in the close of the chapter warns them against the sin of fornication, and urges his caution with variety of arguments. In the seventh chapter he gives advice upon a case of conscience, which some of that church had proposed to him in an epistle, about marriage; and shews it to be appointed of God as a remedy against fornication, that the ties of it were not dissolved, though a husband or wife continued a heathen when the other became a Christian; and, in short, that Christianity made no change in men's civil states and relations. He gives also some directions here about virgins, in answer, as is probable, to the Corinthians' inquiries. In the eighth he directs them about meats offered to idols, and cautions them against abusing their Christian liberty; from whence he also takes occasion in the ninth chapter to expatiate a little on his own conduct upon this head of liberty; for, though he might have insisted on a maintenance from the churches where he ministered, he waived this demand, that he might make the Gospel of Christ without charge; and did in other things comply with, and suit himself to, the tempers and circumstances of those among whom he laboured, for their good. In the tenth chapter he dissuades them, from the example of the Jews, against having communion with idolaters by eating of their sacrifices, inasmuch as they could not be at once partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils [or, more properly, demons]; though they were not bound to inquire concerning meat sold in the shambles, or set before them at a feast made by unbelievers, whether it were a part of the idol sacrifices or no, but were at liberty to eat without asking questions. In the eleventh chapter he gives direction about their habit in public worship, blames them for their gross irregularities and scandalous disorders in receiving the Lord's supper, and solemnly warns them against the abuse of so sacred an institution. In the twelfth chapter he enters on the consideration of spiritual gifts, which were poured forth in great abundance on this church, upon which they were not a little elated. He tells them in this chapter that all came from the same original, and were all directed to the same end. They issued from one Spirit, and were intended for the good of the church, and must be abused when they were not made to minister to this purpose. Towards the close he informs them that they were indeed valuable gifts, but he could recommend to them somewhat far more excellent. Upon which he breaks out in the thirteenth chapter into the commendation and characters of charity. And then, in the fourteenth, directs them how to keep up decency and order in the churches, in the use of their spiritual gifts, in which they seem to have been exceeding irregular, through pride of their gifts, and a vanity of shewing them. The fifteenth chapter is taken up in confirming and explaining the great doctrine of the resurrection. The last chapter consists of some particular advices and salutations; and thus the epistle closes.

* The original commentary, written by the Rev. Simon Browne, has been revised (with additional notes in brackets) for this Edition by the Rev. R. J. Brown, D.D., Professor of Greek in Marischal College and University, Aberdeen, with a few additional notes, chiefly from Albert Barnes, and marked *A.B.*

Introductory Note.—"Corinth," not to be confounded with the ancient city of that name, which had been destroyed about two centuries before the time of St. Paul. The new city rose on the ruins of the old, from a colony planted there by Julius Cæsar. (See *Acts* xviii. 1—18 for an account of Paul's first visit.) This epistle was most probably written from Ephesus, A.D. 57, shortly before the visit to Corinth mentioned in *Acts* xx. 3. It seems likely that a previous letter was written from Ephesus, which has not been preserved, and

it has been conjectured that a short visit was paid to Corinth about the same time, of which no mention is made in the *Acts*. The temptations of the Corinthians were those of a wealthy commercial city, where a licentious worship was carried on. That vice and immorality had appeared in the Corinthian church is only too apparent from the epistle. The majority of the church were Gentiles, but the epistles give evidence of a strong Judaizing element, and a violent party spirit, threatening the peace and unity of the church.

CHAPTER I.

In this chapter we have, I. The preface or introduction to the whole epistle, ver. 1—10. 11. One principal occasion of writing it hinted; viz., their divisions, and the original of them, ver. 10—13. III. An account of Paul's ministry among them, which was principally preaching the Gospel, ver. 13—17. IV. The manner wherein he preached the Gospel, and the different success of it, with an account how admirably it was fitted to bring glory to God, and beat down the pride and vanity of man, ver. 17—31.



AUL, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's: 3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; 5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; 6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: 7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: 8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.



VIEW FROM CORINTH.—VER. 2.

We have here the apostle's preface to his whole epistle. In which we may take notice,

First. Of the inscription; in which, according to the custom of writing letters then, the name of the person by whom it was written, and the persons to whom it was written, are both inserted. 1. It is an epistle from Paul the apostle of the Gentiles to the church of Corinth, which himself had planted, though there were some amongst them that now questioned his apostleship, *ch. ix. 1, 2*, and vilified his person and ministry, *2 Cor. x. 10*. The most faithful and useful ministers are not secure from this contempt. He begins with challenging this character; "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God." He had not taken this honour to himself, but had a Divine commission for it. It was proper at any time, but necessary at this time, to assert his character and magnify his office; when false teachers made a merit of running him down, and their giddy and deluded followers were so apt to set them up in competition with him. It was not pride in Paul, but faithfulness to his trust, in this juncture, to maintain his apostolical character and authority. And, to make this more fully appear, he joins Sosthenes with him in writing, who was a minister of a lower rank. Paul, and Sosthenes his brother, not a fellow apostle, but a fellow minister; once a ruler of a Jewish synagogue, afterwards a convert to Christianity; a Corinthian by birth, as is most probable, and dear to this people, for which reason Paul, to ingratiate himself with them, joins him with himself in his first salutations, though there is no reason to suppose he was made a partaker of the apostle's inspiration, for which reason he speaks through the rest of the epistle in his own name, and in the singular number. Paul did not in any case lessen his apostolical authority, and yet he was ready upon all occasions to do a kind and condescending thing for their good to whom he ministered. 2. The persons to

whom this epistle was directed are the church of God that was at Corinth, sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints. All Christians are thus far sanctified in Christ Jesus, that they are by baptism dedicated and devoted to him; they are under strict obligations to be holy, and they make profession of real sanctity. If they be not truly holy, it is their own fault and reproach. Note, It is the design of Christianity to sanctify us in Christ; "He gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." In conjunction with the church at Corinth, he directs the epistle "to all that in every place call on the name of Christ Jesus our Lord, both their's and our's." Hereby Christians are distinguished from the profane and atheistical, that they dare not live without prayer; and hereby they are distinguished from Jews and pagans, that they call on the name of Christ, [which implies faith in all his attributes and worship]; he is their common head and Lord. Observe, That in every place in the Christian world there are some that call on the name of Christ. God hath a remnant in all places, and we should have a common concern for, and hold communion with, all that call on Christ's name.

Secondly. Of the apostolical benediction; "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." An apostle of the Prince of peace must be a messenger and minister of peace. This blessing the Gospel brings with it, and this blessing every preacher of the Gospel should heartily wish and pray may be the lot of all among whom he ministers. Grace and peace, the favour of God and reconciliation to him; it is indeed the summary of all blessings. "The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace," was the form of benediction under the Old Testament, *Num. ix. 26*; but this advantage we have by the Gospel, 1. That we are directed how to obtain that peace from God. It is in and by Christ. Sinners can have no peace with God, nor any good from him, but through Christ. 2. We are told what must qualify us for this peace, namely, grace; first grace, and then peace. God first reconciles sinners to himself, before he bestows his peace upon them.

Thirdly. Of the apostle's thanksgiving to God on their behalf. Paul begins most of his epistles with thanksgiving to God for his friends, and prayer for them. Note, The best way of manifesting our affection to our friends is by praying and giving thanks for them. It is one branch of the communion of saints to give thanks to God mutually for our gifts, graces, and comforts. He gives thanks, 1. For their conversion to the faith of Christ. That grace was given them by Jesus Christ, ver. 4; he is the great procurer and disposer of the favours of God. Those who are united to him by faith, and made to partake of his Spirit and merits, are the objects of Divine favour. God loves them, bears them hearty goodwill, and bestows on them his fatherly smiles and blessings. 2. For the abundance of their spiritual gifts. This the church of Corinth was famous for. They did not come behind any of the churches in any gift, ver. 7. He instances in utterance and knowledge, ver. 5, [that is, the gift of tongues and a deep insight into things spiritual.] Where God hath given these two gifts he hath given great capacity for usefulness. Many have the flower of utterance that have not the root of knowledge, and their converse is barren. Many have the treasure of knowledge, and want utterance to employ it for the good of others, and then it is in a manner wrapt up in a napkin. But where God gives both, a man is qualified for eminent usefulness. When the church of Corinth was enriched with all utterance and all knowledge, it was fit that a large tribute of praise should be rendered to God, especially when these gifts were a testimony to the truth of the Christian doctrine, a confirmation of the testimony of Christ among them, ver. 6. They were signs, and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, by which God did bear witness to the apostles, both to their mission and doctrine, *Heb. ii. 3*. So that, the more plentifully they were poured forth on any church, the more full attestation was given to that doctrine which was delivered by the apostles; the more confirming evidence they had of their Divine mission. And it is no wonder that, when they had such foundation for their faith, they should live in expectation of the coming of their Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 7. It is the character of Christians that they wait for Christ's second coming; all our religion hath regard to that. We believe it and hope for it, and it is the business of our lives to prepare for it, if we are Christians indeed. And the more confirmed we are in the Christian faith the more firm is our belief of our Lord's second coming, and the more earnest our expectation of it.

Fourthly. Of the encouraging hopes the apostle had of them for the time to come, founded on the power and love of Christ and the faithfulness of God, ver. 8, 9. He who had begun a good work in them, and carried it on thus far, would not leave it unfinished. Those that wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ will be kept by him and confirmed to the end; and those that are so will be blameless in the day of Christ,—not upon the foot of strict justice, but gracious absolution; not in rigour of law, but from rich and free grace. How desirable is it to be confirmed and kept of Christ for such a purpose as this! How glorious are the hopes of such a privilege, whether for ourselves or others; to be kept by the power of Christ from the power of our own corruptions and Satan's temptations, that we may appear without blame in the great day! Oh, glorious expectation! especially when the faithfulness of God comes in to support our hopes. He who hath called us into the fellowship of his Son is faithful, and will do it, *1 Thes. v. 24*. He who hath brought us into near and dear relation to Christ, into sweet and intimate communion with Christ, is faithful; he may be trusted with our dearest concerns. Those that come at his call shall never be disappointed in their hopes in him. If we approve ourselves faithful to God we shall never find him unfaithful to us; "He will not suffer his faithfulness to fail," *Ps. lxxix. 33*.

10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

i. 1. "Sosthenes:" not to be identified with the Sosthenes of Acts xviii. 17.

i. 2. "Church:" literally, "congregation or assembly." The word is *ecclesia* (from which our word "ecclesiastical" is taken), and is derived from a verb signifying to call out; pointing to the mode of gathering or assembling. The members were the "called." "Sanctified:" hallowed, or dedicated to God, and in union with or by means of Jesus Christ. "With all:" St. Paul addresses not merely

the Corinthians, but also "all that," &c. Alford observes that this important addition showed the Corinthians that membership of God's holy catholic church did not consist in being planted or presided over by Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, or their successors, but in calling on the name of the Lord. "Both theirs and ours:" perhaps the best rendering is to take these words with "in every place."

i. 3. "Grace and peace:" grace being the favour of God, and peace the result of that favour.

Here the apostle enters on his subject. He exhorts them to unity and brotherly love, and reproves them for their divisions. He had received an account from some that wished them well, of some unhappy differences amongst them. It was neither illwill to the church nor to their ministers that prompted them to give this account, but a kind and prudent concern to have these heats qualified by Paul's interposition. He writes to them in a very engaging way; "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." If you have any regard to that dear and worthy name by which you are called, be unanimous; speak all the same thing; avoid divisions or schisms, (as the original is,) that is, all alienation of affection from each other. "Be perfectly joined together in the same mind," namely, as far as you can, [thus pointing out that unity at which the church should aim.] In the great things of religion be of a mind; but when there is not a unity of sentiment let there be a union of affections. The consideration of being agreed in greater things should extinguish all feuds and divisions about lesser ones.

Secondly, He hints at the original of these contentions. Pride lay at the bottom, and this made them factious; "Only of pride cometh contention," *Pr. xiii. 10.* They quarrelled about their ministers. Paul and Apollos were both faithful ministers of Jesus Christ, and helpers of their faith and joy; but those who were disposed to be contentious broke into parties, and set their ministers at the head of their several factions; some cried up Paul, perhaps, as the most sublime and spiritual teacher; others cried up Apollos, perhaps, as the most eloquent speaker; some Cephas or Peter, perhaps, for the authority of his age, or because he was the apostle of the circumcision. And some were for neither, but Christ only. [The persons who attempted to form separate parties seem to have been, 1. Greeks; 2. Philosophising Greeks; 3. Judaizers; 4. Persons, perhaps, affecting superiority, as having seen the Lord Jesus Christ.] So liable are the best things in the world to be corrupted, and the Gospel and its institutions, which are at perfect harmony with themselves and one another, to be made the engines of variance, discord, and contention. This is no reproach to our religion, but a very melancholy evidence of the corruption and perversity of human nature. Note, How far will pride carry Christians in opposition to one another. Even so far as to set Christ and his own apostles at variance, and make them rivals and competitors.

Thirdly, He expostulates with them upon their discord and quarrels. "Is Christ divided?" No, there is but one Christ, and therefore Christians should be of one heart. "Was Paul crucified for you?" was he your sacrifice and atonement? Did I ever pretend to be your Saviour, or any more than his minister? "Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Were you devoted to my service, or engaged to be my disciples, by that sacred rite? Did I challenge that right in you, or dependence from you, which is the proper claim of your God and Redeemer? No, ministers, however instrumental they are of good to us, are not to be put in Christ's stead; they are not to usurp Christ's authority, nor encourage any thing in the people that looks like transferring his authority to them. He is our Saviour and sacrifice; he is our Lord and guide. And happy were it for the churches if there were no name of distinction among them, as Christ is not divided.

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; 15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. 16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

Here the apostle gives an account of his ministry amongst them. He thanks God he had baptized but a few among them; Crispus, who had been a ruler of a synagogue at Corinth, *Acts xviii. 8.* and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas; besides, he says, he did not remember he had baptized any. But how was this a proper matter for thankfulness? Was it not part of the apostolical commission to baptize all nations? And could Paul give thanks to God for his own neglect of duty? He is not to be understood in such a sense, as if he was thankful for not having baptized at all, but for not having done it in present circumstances, lest it should have had this very bad construction put upon it, that he had baptized in his own name, made disciples for himself, or set himself up as the head of a sect. He left it to other ministers to baptize, whilst he set himself to more useful work, and filled up his time with preaching the Gospel. This, he thought, was more his business, because the more important business of the two. He had assistants that could baptize, when none could discharge the other part of his office as well as himself. In this sense he saith Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel; not so much to baptize as to preach. Note, Ministers should esteem themselves sent and set apart more especially to that service in which Christ will be most honoured and the salvation of souls promoted, and for which themselves are best fitted, though no part of their duty is to be neglected. The principal business Paul did amongst them was to preach, to preach the Gospel, *ver. 17*; the cross, *ver. 11*; Christ crucified, *ver. 23*. Ministers are the soldiers of Christ, and are to erect and display the banner of the cross. He did not preach his own fancy, but the Gospel, the glad tidings of peace and reconciliation to God through the mediation of a crucified Redeemer. This is the sum and substance of the Gospel. Christ crucified is the foundation of all our hopes and the fountain of all our joys. By his death we live. This is what Paul preached, what all ministers should preach, and what all the saints live upon.

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. 20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For after

that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

We have here, First, The manner in which Paul preached the Gospel and cross of Christ; "Not with the wisdom of words," *ver. 17*, "the enticing words of man's wisdom," *ch. ii. 4*; the flourish of oratory or the accuracies of philosophical language, upon which the Greeks so much prided themselves, and which seem to have been the peculiar recommendations of some of the heads of the faction in this church, that most opposed this apostle. He did not preach the Gospel in this manner, "lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect;" lest the success should have been ascribed to the force of art, and not of truth; not to the plain doctrine of a crucified Jesus, but the powerful oratory of those who spread it; and hereby the honour of the cross be diminished or eclipsed. Paul had been bred up himself in Jewish learning at the feet of Gamaliel, but in preaching the cross of Christ he laid his learning aside. He preached a crucified Jesus in plain language, and told the people that that Jesus who was crucified at Jerusalem was the Son of God and Saviour of men; and that all who would be saved must repent of their sins and believe in him, and submit to his government and laws. This truth needed no artificial dress, it shone out with the greatest majesty in its own light, and prevailed in the world by its Divine authority and the demonstration of the Spirit, without any human helps. The plain preaching of a crucified Jesus was more powerful than all the oratory and philosophy of the heathen world.

Secondly, We have the different effects of this preaching. To them that perish it is foolishness, "but to them which are saved it is the power of God," *ver. 18*. "It is to the Jews a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks foolishness, but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God," *ver. 23, 24*. 1. Christ crucified is a stumblingblock to the Jews; they could not get over it. They had a conceit that their expected Messiah was to be a great temporal prince, and therefore would never own one who made so mean an appearance in life, and died so accursed a death, for their deliverer and king. They despised him and looked upon him as execrable because he was hanged on a tree, and because he did not gratify them with a sign to their mind, though his Divine power shone out in innumerable miracles. "The Jews require a sign," *ver. 22*; see *Mat. xii. 38*. 2. He was "to the Greeks foolishness." They laughed at the story of a crucified Saviour, and despised the apostles' way of telling it. "They sought for wisdom;" they were men of wit and reading, men that had cultivated arts and sciences, and had for some ages been in a manner the very nunt of knowledge and learning. There was nothing in the plain doctrine of the cross to suit their taste, or humour their vanity, or gratify a curious and wrangling temper; they entertained it therefore with scorn and contempt. What, hope to be saved by one that could not save himself, and trust in one who was condemned and crucified for a malefactor, a man of mean birth and poor condition in life, and cut off by so vile and opprobrious a death! This was what the pride of human reason and learning could not relish. The Greeks thought it little better than stupidity to receive such a doctrine, and pay this high regard to such a person; and thus were they justly left to perish in their pride and obstinacy. Note, It is just with God to leave them to themselves, who pour such proud contempt on Divine wisdom and grace. 3. "To them which are called and saved, he is the wisdom of God and the power of God." Those who are called and sanctified, who receive the Gospel and are enlightened [or who are enabled to receive the Gospel, and are enlightened and made holy by the Spirit] by the Spirit of God, discern more glorious discoveries of God's wisdom and power in the doctrine of Christ crucified than in all his other works. Note, Those who are saved are reconciled to the doctrine of the cross, and led into an experimental acquaintance with the mysteries of Christ crucified.

Thirdly, We have here the triumphs of the cross over human wisdom, according to the ancient prophecy, *Isa. xxix. 14*; "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" *ver. 19, 20*. All the valued learning of this world was confounded, baffled, and eclipsed, by the Christian

i. 4. "By Jesus Christ;" rather, "in Jesus Christ;"—i.e., as members of him.

i. 5. "Utterance;" rather, "doctrine;" "knowledge" being the inward apprehension of the truth.

i. 7. This waiting was the great proof or result of their spiritual life, for it displayed faith, hope, and love.

i. 11. "Chloe;" probably a resident at Corinth or Ephesus.

i. 12. There appear to have been Jewish converts or Judaizers

who professed to follow Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, in opposition to Paul; others who preferred the Alexandrian learning of Apollos, and who sought to form for themselves a philosophical Christianity; others, again, who repudiated any human teacher, and who, claiming to be "of Christ," slighted the apostleship of Paul. At the same time, want of brotherly love, spiritual pride, disorder in Christian worship, and immorality were showing themselves amongst them. At the same time, too, it would appear that the answer to St.

CHAPTER II.

revelation and the glorious triumphs of the cross. The heathen politicians and philosophers, the Jewish rabbies and doctors, the curious searchers into the secrets of nature, were all posed and put to a nonplus. This scheme lay out of the reach of the deepest statesmen and philosophers, and the greatest pretenders to learning both among the Jews and Greeks. When God would save the world, he took a way by himself, and good reason, for "the world by wisdom knew not God," ver. 21. All the boasted science of the heathen world did not, could not, effectually bring home the world to God. In spite of all their wisdom, ignorance still prevailed, iniquity still abounded. Men were puffed up by their imaginary knowledge, and rather farther alienated from God; and therefore "it pleased him, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe," "By the foolishness of preaching," not such in truth, but in vulgar reckoning. 1. The thing preached was foolishness in the eyes of worldly wise men. Our living through one that died, our being blessed by one who was made a curse, our being justified by one who was himself condemned, was all folly and inconsistency to men blinded with self-conceit and wedded to their own prejudices and the boasted discoveries of their reason and philosophy. 2. The manner of preaching the Gospel was foolishness to them too. None of the men famous for wisdom or eloquence were employed to plant the church or propagate the Gospel; a few fishermen were called out and sent upon this errand. These were commissioned to disciple the nations, the vessels chosen to convey the treasure of saving knowledge to the world. There was nothing in them that at first view looked grand or august enough to come from God; and the proud pretenders to learning and wisdom despised the doctrine for the sake of those who dispensed it. And yet "the foolishness of God is wiser than men," ver. 15. Those methods of Divine conduct that rain men are apt to censure as unwise and weak have more true, solid, and successful wisdom in them than all the learning and wisdom that is among men. "You see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called," ver. 26, &c. You see the state of Christianity; not many men of learning, or authority, or honourable extraction are called. There is a great deal of meanness and weakness in the outward appearance of our religion. For, 1st. Few of distinguished character in any of these respects were chosen for the work of the ministry. God did not choose philosophers, or orators, or statesmen, or men of wealth, and power, and interest in the world, to publish the Gospel of grace and peace. Not the wise men after the flesh, though men would be apt to think a reputation for wisdom and learning might have contributed much to the success of the Gospel; not the mighty and noble, however men might be apt to imagine that secular pomp and power would make way for its reception in the world; but God seeth not as man seeth. He hath chosen the foolish things of the world, the weak things of the world, the base and despicable things of the world, [that is,] men of mean birth, of low rank, of no liberal education, to be the preachers of the Gospel and planters of the church. "His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways." He is a better judge than we what instruments and measures will best serve the purposes of his glory. 2nd. Few of distinguished rank and character were called to be Christians, [yet a few such persons were called.] As the preachers were poor and mean, so generally were the converts; few of the wise, and mighty, and noble, embraced the doctrine of the cross. The first Christians, both among the Jews and Greeks, were weak, and foolish, and base, [in the eyes of the world,] men of mean furniture as to their mental improvements, and very mean rank and condition as to their outward estate; and yet what glorious discoveries are there of Divine wisdom in the whole scheme of the Gospel and in this particular circumstance of its success!

Fourthly. We have an account how admirably all is fitted, 1. To beat down the pride and vanity of men. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," men of no learning to confound the most learned; "The weak things of the world to confound the mighty," men of mean rank and circumstances to confound and prevail against all the power and authority of earthly kings. "And base things, and things that are despised," things which men have in the lowest esteem or in the utmost contempt, to pour contempt and disgrace on all they value and have in veneration. "And things which are not, to bring to nought," to abolish, "things that are." The conversion of the Gentiles, (of whom the Jews had the most contemptuous and vilifying thoughts,) to open a way to the abolishing that constitution of which they were so fond, and upon which they valued themselves so much, as for the sake of it to despise the rest of the world. It is common for the Jews to speak of the Gentiles under this character, as things that are not. Thus, in the apocryphal book of *Esther*, she is brought in praying that God would not give his sceptre to them which are not, *Est. iv. 11*; and *Esdra*, in one of the apocryphal books under his name, speaks to God "of the heathen, as those which are reputed as nothing," *2 Esd. vi. 56, 57*. And the apostle Paul seems to have this common language of the Jews in his view, when he calls Abraham "the father of us all, before him whom he believed, God, who calleth those things that be not as though they were," *Rom. iv. 17*. The Gospel is fitted to bring down both the pride of Jews and Greeks, to shame the boasted science and learning of the Greeks, and take down that constitution on which the Jews valued themselves, and despised all the world besides. "That no flesh should glory in his presence," ver. 29; that there might be no pretence for boasting. Divine wisdom alone had the contrivance of the method of redemption; Divine grace alone revealed it, and made it known. It lay in both respects out of human reach; and the doctrine and discovery prevailed, in spite of all the opposition it met with from human art or authority. So effectually did God veil the glory and disgrace the pride of man in all. The gospel dispensation is a *contrivance* to humble man. But, 2. It is admirably fitted to glorify God. There is a great deal of power and glory in the substance and life of Christianity. Though the ministers were poor and unlearned, and the converts generally of the meanest rank, yet the hand of the Lord went along with the preachers, and was mighty in the hearts of the hearers. And Jesus Christ was made both to ministers and Christians what was truly great and honourable. All we have, we have from God as the fountain, and in and through Christ as the channel of conveyance. He is made of God to us, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," ver. 30, all we need or can desire. We are foolishness, ignorant and blind in the things of God, with all our boasted knowledge; and he is made wisdom to us. We are guilty, obnoxious to justice; and he is made righteousness, our great atonement and sacrifice. We are depraved and corrupt; and he is made sanctification, the spring of our spiritual life; from him, the head, it is communicated to all the members of his mystical body by his Holy Spirit. We are in bonds, and he is made redemption to us, our Saviour and deliverer. Observe, That where Christ is made righteousness to any soul he is also made sanctification. He never discharges from the guilt of sin, without delivering from the power of it. And he is made righteousness and sanctification, that he may in the end be made complete redemption, and free the soul from the very being of sin, and loose the body from the bonds of the grave. And what is designed in all is, that all flesh may glory in the Lord, ver. 31. Observe, That is the will of God that all our glorying should be in the Lord; and, our salvation being only through Christ, it is thereby effectually provided it should be so. Man is humbled, and God glorified and exalted by the whole scheme.

Paul's former letter (the lost one) came, in which the Corinthians asked for instruction on three points—1, respecting meat offered to idols; 2, celibacy and matrimony; 3, the exercise of spiritual gifts in the assemblies of the church.

i. 17. "Wisdom of words:" rather, "in wisdom of speech"—i.e., speculations of philosophy.

i. 18. "For the doctrine of the cross is to the perishing, those who are on their way to ruin, folly; but to us who are being saved it

The apostle proceeds with his argument in this chapter, and I. Remembers the Corinthians of the plain manner wherein he delivered the Gospel to them, ver. 1—5. But yet, II. Shews them that he had communicated to them a treasure of the truest and highest wisdom; such as exceeded all the attainments of learned men; such as could never have entered into the heart of man if it had not been revealed; nor can be received and improved to salvation but by the light and influence of that Spirit who revealed it, ver. 6—16.



ND I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

In this passage the apostle pursues his design, and reminds the Corinthians how he acted when he first preached the Gospel amongst them.

First. As to the matter or subject, he tells us, ver. 2 "He determined to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ, and him crucified;" to make a show of no other knowledge but this, to preach nothing, to discover the knowledge of nothing, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Note, Christ, in his person and offices, is the sum and substance of the Gospel, and ought to be the great subject of a gospel minister's preaching. His business is to display the banner of the cross, and invite people under it. Any one that heard Paul preach found him to harp so continually on this string, that he would say he knew nothing but Christ, and him crucified. Whatsoever other knowledge he had, this was the only knowledge he discovered, and shewed himself concerned to propagate among his hearers.

Secondly. The manner wherein he preached Christ is here also observable. 1. Negatively. "He came not among them with excellency of speech or wisdom," ver. 1; His "speech and preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom," ver. 4. He did not affect to appear a fine orator, or a deep philosopher nor insinuate into their mind by a flourish of words, or a pompous show of deep reason, and extraordinary science and skill. He did not set himself to captivate the ear by fine turns and eloquent expressions, nor to please and entertain the fancy with lofty flights or sublime notions. Neither his speech nor the wisdom he taught savoured of human skill; he learnt both in another school. Divine wisdom needed not to be set off with such human ornaments. 2. Positively. He came among them, "declaring the testimony of God," ver. 1. He published a Divine revelation, and gave in sufficient vouchers for the authority of it, both by its consonancy to ancient predictions and by present miraculous operations, and there he left the matter. Ornaments of speech, and philosophical skill and argument, could add no weight to what came recommended by such authority. He was also "among them in weakness, and fear, and in much trembling," and yet his "speech and preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," ver. 4, 5. His enemies in the church of Corinth speak very contemptuously of him; "His bodily presence, say they, is weak, and his speech contemptible," *2 Cor. x. 10*. Possibly he had a little body, and a low voice, but though he had not so good an elocution as some, it is plain he was no mean speaker. The men of Lystra looked on him to be the heathen god Mercury, come down to them in the form of a man, because he was the chief speaker, *Acts xiv. 12*. Nor did he want courage or resolution to go through his work; he was in nothing terrified by his adversaries. Yet he was no boaster; he did not proudly vaunt himself, like his opposers; he acted in his office with much modesty, concern, and care. He carried it with great humility amongst them; not as one grown vain with the honour and authority conferred on him, but as one concerned to approve himself faithful, and fearful of himself, lest he should mismanage in his trust. Observe, None know the fear and trembling of faithful ministers, who are jealous over souls with a godly jealousy. And a deep sense of their own weakness is the occasion of this fear and trembling. They know how insufficient they are, and are therefore fearful for themselves. But though Paul managed with this modesty and concern, yet he spake with authority, "in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power." He preached the truths of Christ in their native dress, with plainness of speech. He laid down the doctrine as the Spirit delivered it, and left the Spirit, by his external operation in signs and miracles, and his internal influences on the hearts of men, to demonstrate the truth of it, and procure its reception.

Thirdly. Here is the end mentioned for which he preached Christ crucified in this manner, namely, "That their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," ver. 5. That they might not be drawn by human motives, or overcome by mere human arguments, lest it should be said that either rhetoric or logic had made them Christians. But when nothing but Christ crucified was plainly preached the success must be entirely attributed to a Divine power accompanying the word. Their faith must be founded, not on human wisdom, but Divine evidence and operation. The Gospel was so preached, that God might appear and be glorified in all.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before

is the power ('the perfection of God's power, the power itself in its noblest manifestation') of God."

i. 21. "Foolishness of preaching:" rather, "the folly of the thing preached"—i.e., the folly of the cross.

i. 22. "Sign:" rather, "signs." (See Matt. xii. 38, xvi. 1; Luke xi. 16; John ii. 18, vi. 30). Alford says, "The sign required was not a mere miracle, but some token from Heaven substantiating the word preached."

the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

In this part of the chapter the apostle shews them, that though he had not come to them with the excellency of human wisdom, with any of the boasted knowledge and literature of the Jews or Greeks, yet he had communicated to them a treasure of the truest and the highest wisdom; "We speak wisdom among them who are perfect," ver. 6; among them who are well instructed in Christianity, and come to some maturity in the things of God. They that receive the doctrine as Divine, and, having been illuminated by the Holy Spirit, have looked well into it, discover true wisdom in it. They take in not only the plain history of Christ, and him crucified, but discern the deep and admirable designs of the Divine wisdom therein. Though what we preach be foolishness to the world, it is wisdom to them; they are made wise by it, and can discern wisdom in it. Note, Those who are wise themselves are the only proper judges of what is wisdom; "not indeed the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, but the wisdom of God in a mystery," ver. 6, 7. Not worldly wisdom, but Divine; not such as the men of this world could have discovered, nor such as worldly men, under the conduct of pride, and passion, and appetite, and worldly interest, and destitute of the Spirit of God, can receive. Note, How different is the judgment of God from that of the world! "He seeth not as man seeth." The wisdom he teacheth is of a quite different kind from what passeth under that notion in the world. It is not the wisdom of politicians, nor philosophers, nor rabbies, (see ver. 9); not such as they teach, nor such as they relish, "but the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom of God; what he had a long time kept to himself, and concealed from the world; and the depth of which, now it is revealed, none but himself can fathom." "It is the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, though now made manifest to the saints," *Col. i. 26*; hid in a manner entirely from the heathen world, and made mysterious (in part) to the Jews, by being wrapt up in dark types, and distant prophecies, but revealed and made known to us by the Spirit of God. Note, The privilege of those who enjoy the gospel revelation; to them types are unveiled, mysteries made plain, prophecies interpreted, and the secret counsels of God published and laid open. The wisdom of God in a mystery is now made manifest to the saints. Now concerning this wisdom observe,

First. The rise and original of it. "It was ordained of God, before the world, to our glory," ver. 7; it was ordained of God. He had determined long ago to reveal and make it known, from many ages past, from the beginning, nay, from eternity; and that to our glory, the glory of us, either us apostles, or us Christians. It was great honour put upon the apostles to be intrusted with the revelation of this wisdom; it was a great and honourable privilege for Christians to have this glorious wisdom discovered to them; and the wisdom of God discovered in the Gospel, the Divine wisdom taught by the Gospel, prepares for our everlasting glory and happiness in the world to come. The counsels of God concerning our redemption are dated from eternity, and designed for the glory and happiness of the saints. And what deep wisdom was in these counsels! Note, The wisdom of God is both employed and displayed for the honour of his saints; employed from eternity, and displayed in time, to make them glorious both here and hereafter, in time and to eternity. What honour doth he put on his saints.

Secondly. The ignorance of the great men of the world about it; "Which none of the princes of this world knew," ver. 8, the principal men in authority and power, or in wisdom and learning. The Roman governor, and the guides and rulers of the Jewish church and nation, seem to be the persons here chiefly meant. These were the princes of this world, or this age, "who, had they known" this true and heavenly wisdom, "would not have crucified the Lord of glory." This Pilate and the Jewish rulers literally did when our Redeemer was crucified upon the sentence of the one and the clamorous demands of the other. Observe, Jesus Christ is the Lord of glory, a title much too great for any creature to bear; and therefore was he hated, because he was not known. Had his crucifiers known him, known who and what he was, they would have

withheld their impious hands, and not have taken and slain him. This he pleaded with his Father for their pardon; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," *Lu. xxiii. 34*. Note, There are many things which people would not do, if they knew the wisdom of God in the great work of redemption. They act as they do because they are blind or heedless; they know not the truth, or will not attend to it, [and for this ignorance are they justly condemned.]

Thirdly. It is such wisdom as could not have been discovered without a revelation, according to what the prophet Isaiah saith; *Isa. lxiv. 4*, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;" for him that waiteth for him, that waiteth for his mercy; as the Seventy. [The apostle does not here quote literally; he gives the general sense of the passage.] It was a testimony of love to God in Jewish believers to live in expectation of the accomplishment of evangelical promises. Waiting upon God is an evidence of love to him; "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him," *Isa. xxv. 9*. Observe, There are "things which God hath prepared for them that love him," and wait for him. There are such things prepared in a future life for them; things which sense cannot discover, no present information can convey to our ears, nor can yet enter our hearts. "Life and immortality are brought to light through the Gospel," *2 Tim. i. 10*; but the apostle speaks here of the subject matter of the Divine revelation under the Gospel; these are such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. Observe, The great truths of the Gospel are things lying out of the sphere of [mere] human discovery; "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard them, nor have they entered into the heart of man;" [they were utterly unknown to fallen man.] Were they objects of sense, could they be discovered by an eye of reason, and communicated by the ear to the mind, as matters of common human knowledge may, there had been no need of a revelation. But lying out of the sphere of nature, we cannot discover them but by the light of revelation; and therefore we must take them as they lie in the Scriptures, and as God has been pleased to reveal them.

Fourthly. We here see by whom this wisdom is discovered to us; "God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit," ver. 10. The Scripture is given by inspiration of God; "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" *2 Pet. i. 21*; and the apostles spake by inspiration of the same Spirit as he taught them, and gave them utterance. Here is a proof of the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures. Paul wrote what he taught, and what he taught was revealed of God by his Spirit; "That Spirit that searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God, and knows the things of God, as the spirit of a man that is in him knows the things of a man," ver. 11. A double argument is drawn from these words in proof of the divinity of the Holy Ghost. 1. Omniscience is attributed to him; "He searcheth all things, even the deep things of God." He has exact knowledge of all things, and enters into the very depths of God, penetrates into his most secret counsels. Now, who can have such a thorough knowledge of God but God? 2. This allusion seems to imply, that the Holy Spirit is as much in God as a man's mind is in himself. Now the mind of the man is plainly essential to him; he cannot be without his mind, nor can God be without his Spirit. He is as much and as intimately one with God, as the man's mind is with the man. The man knows his own mind, because his mind is one with himself. The Spirit of God knows the things of God, because he is one with God. And as no man can come at the knowledge of what is in another man's mind till he communicates and reveals it, so neither can we know the secret counsels and purposes of God till they are made known to us by his Holy Spirit. We cannot know them at all till he has proposed them objectively, as it is called, in the external revelation; we cannot know or believe them to salvation till he enlightens the faculty, opens the eye of the mind, and gives us such a knowledge and [saving] faith of them. And it was by his Spirit that the apostles had received the wisdom of God in a mystery, which they spake. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things freely given to us of God," ver. 12; not the spirit which is in the wise men of the world, ver. 6, nor in the rulers of the world, ver. 9, "but the Spirit which is of God," or proceedeth from God. We have what we deliver in the name of God by inspiration from him; and it is by his gracious illumination and influence that we know the things freely given to us of God unto salvation, that is, the great privileges of the Gospel, which are the free gift of God, distributions of mere and rich grace. Though these things are given us, and the revelation of this gift be made to us, we cannot know them to any saving purpose till we have the Spirit. The apostles had the revelation of these things from the Spirit of God, and the saving impression of them from the same Spirit. [And all God's people are taught these truths of the Spirit, and have from the Spirit the same saving impressions.]

Fifthly. We see here in what a manner this wisdom was taught or communicated; "Which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," ver. 13. They had received the wisdom they taught, not from the wise men of the world, not from their own inquiry or invention, but from the Spirit of God. Nor did they put a human dress on it, but plainly declared the doctrine of Christ in terms also taught them by the Holy Spirit. He not only gave them the knowledge of these things, but gave them utterance. Observe, The truths of God need no garnishing by human skill or eloquence, but look best in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. The Spirit of God knows much better how to speak of the things of God than the best critics, orators, or philosophers. "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual;" that is, one part of revelation with another; the revelation of the Gospel with that of the Jews; the discoveries of the New Testament with the types and prophecies of the Old. The comparing matters of revelation with matters of science, things supernatural with things natural and common, is going by a wrong measure. Spiritual things, when brought together, will help to illustrate one another: but if the principles of human art and science are to be made a test of revelation we shall certainly judge amiss concerning it, and the things contained in it. Or, "adapting spiritual things to spiritual." Speaking of spiritual matters, matters of revelation, and the spiritual life, in language that is proper and plain. [The sense of the passage seems to be interpreting things spiritual by things spiritual.] The language of the Spirit of God is the most proper to convey his meaning.

Sixthly. We have an account how this wisdom is received.

1. "The natural man receiveth not the things of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," ver. 14. The natural man, the animal man. Either the man under the power of corruption, and never yet illuminated by the Spirit of God, such as St. Jude calls sensual, "not having the Spirit," ver. 19. Men unsanctified receive not the things of God. The understanding, through the corruption of nature by the fall, and through the confirmation of this disorder by customary sin, is utterly unapt to receive the rays of Divine light; it is prejudiced against them. The truths of God are foolishness to such a mind. The man looks on them as trifling and impertinent things, not worth minding. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not," *Jno. i. 5*. Not that the natural faculty of discerning is lost, but evil inclinations and wicked principles render the man unwilling [nay, unable] to enter into the mind of God, in the

i. 23. "Stumbling-block;" an occasion of offence.

i. 24. "The power and wisdom of God;" and therefore affording a real sign and wisdom. (Compare next verse.)

ii. 3. Compare Acts xviii. 1-18 for the difficulties Paul had to encounter during his visit, and compare 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16, written during this visit.

ii. 4, 5. "Demonstration of the Spirit and of power;" i.e., demonstration springing from the Spirit and power of God. "That your

faith may be grounded on, owe its origin and stability to, the power of God" (Alford).

ii. 6. "The 'perfect' is St. Paul's expression for those who had attained the maturity of Christian wisdom. Such men could understand that his teaching was in truth the highest philosophy." Others take "the wisdom" to mean the higher truths of Christianity.

ii. 7. "We speak as dealing with a mystery;" i.e., not something to be kept hidden, but what heretofore was so, but is now revealed.

spiritual matters of his kingdom, and yield to their force and power. It is the quickening beams of the Spirit of truth and holiness that must help [or rather fit] the mind to discern their excellency, and to so thorough a conviction of their truth as heartily to receive and embrace them. Thus the natural man, the man destitute of the Spirit of God, cannot know them, "because they are spiritually discerned." Or, the natural man; that is, "the wise men of the world," *ch. i. 19, 20*; the "wise man after the flesh," or "according to the flesh," *ver. 26*; one who hath "the wisdom of the world, man's wisdom," *ch. ii. 4, 6*; a man, as some of the ancients, that would learn all truth by his own ratiocinations, receive nothing by faith, nor own any need of supernatural assistance. This was very much the character of the pretenders to philosophy, and the Grecian learning and wisdom at that day. Such a man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; revelation is not with him a principle of science; he looks upon it as delirium and dotage, the extravagant thought of some deluded dreamer. It is no way to wisdom among the famous masters of the world; and for that reason he can have no knowledge [savingly] of things revealed, "because they are only spiritually discerned," or made known by the revelation of the Spirit, which is a principle of science or knowledge which he will not admit.

2. "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged," or discerned, "of no man," *ver. 15*. Either he who is sanctified and made spiritually minded, *Rom. viii. 6*, judgeth all things, or discerneth all things; he is capable of judging [rightly] about matters of human wisdom, and has also a relish and savour of Divine truths. He sees Divine wisdom, and experiences Divine power in Gospel revelations and mysteries, which the carnal and unsanctified mind looks upon as weakness and folly; as things destitute of all power, and not worthy any regard. It is the sanctified mind that must discern the real beauties of holiness; but by the refinement of its faculties they do not lose their power of discerning and judging about common and natural things. The spiritual man may judge of all things, natural and supernatural, human and Divine, the deductions of reason, and the discoveries of revelation. But he himself is judged, or discerned, of no man. God's saints are his hidden ones, *Ps. lxxxiii. 3*; "Their life is hid with Christ in God," *Col. iii. 3*. The carnal man knows no more of a spiritual man than he doth of other spiritual things. He is a stranger to the principles, and pleasures, and actings of the Divine life. The spiritual man doth not lie open to his observation. Or, "he that is spiritual;" that is, has had Divine revelations made to him, or received them as such, and founds his faith and religion upon them. He can judge both of common things, and things Divine; he can discern what is and what is not the doctrine of the Gospel, and of salvation; and whether a man preaches the truths of God or not. He doth not lose the power of reasoning, nor renounce the principles of it, by founding his faith and religion on revelation. But "he himself is judged of no man;" can be judged, so as to be confuted, by no man; nor can any man who is not spiritual, not under a Divine afflatus himself, (see *ch. xiv. 37*), or not founding his faith on a Divine revelation, discern or judge whether what he speaks be true or Divine, or not. In short, he who founds all his knowledge upon principles of science, and the mere light of reason, can never be a judge of the truth or falsehood of what is received by revelation. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?" *ver. 16*; that is, the spiritual man. Who can enter so far into the mind of God as to instruct him who hath the Spirit of God, is under his inspiration? He only is the person to whom God immediately communicates the knowledge of his will. And who can inform or instruct him in the mind of God who is so immediately under the conduct of his own Spirit? Very few [or rather none] have known any thing of the mind of God by a natural power. "But," adds the apostle, "we have the mind of Christ;" and the mind of Christ is the mind of God; he is God, and the principal messenger and prophet of God. And the apostles were empowered by his Spirit to make known his mind to us. And in the Holy Scriptures, the mind of Christ, and the mind of God in Christ, is fully revealed to us. Observe, It is the great privilege of Christians that they have the mind of Christ revealed to them by his Spirit.

CHAPTER III.

In this chapter the apostle, I. Blames the Corinthians for their carnality and divisions, *ver. 1-4*. II. He instructs them how what was amiss among them might be rectified, by remembering, 1. That their ministers were no more than ministers, *ver. 5*. 2. That they were unanimous, and carried on the same design, *ver. 5-10*. 3. That they built on one and the same foundation, *ver. 11-16*. III. He exhorts them to give due honour to their bodies, by keeping them pure, *ver. 16, 17*; and to humility and self-diffidence, *ver. 18-21*. IV. And exhorts them from glorying in particular ministers, because of the equal interest they had in all, *ver. 22, 23*.



AND I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas

there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos: are ye not carnal?

Here, First, St. Paul blames the Corinthians for their weakness and non-proficiency. They who are sanctified are so only in part: there is still room for growth and increase, both in grace and knowledge, *2 Pet. iii. 18*. Those who through Divine grace are renewed to a spiritual life may yet in many things be defective. The apostle tells them he could not speak to them as unto spiritual men, but as unto carnal men, as to babes in Christ, *ver. 1*. They were so far from forming their maxims and measures [entirely] upon the foot of Divine revelation, and entering into the spirit of the Gospel, that it was but too evident they were much under the command of carnal and corrupt affections. They were still very babes in Christ. They had received some of the

first principles of Christianity, but were grown up to no maturity of understanding in them, or of faith and holiness. And yet it is plain from several passages in this epistle that the Corinthians were very proud of their wisdom and knowledge. Note, That it is but too common for persons of very moderate [spiritual] knowledge and understanding to have a great measure of self-conceit. The apostle assigns their little proficiency in the knowledge of Christianity as a reason why he had communicated no more of the deep things of it to them. They could not bear such food; they needed to be fed with milk, not with meat, *ver. 2*. Note, It is the duty of a faithful minister of Christ to consult the capacities of his hearers, and teach them as they can bear. And yet it is natural for babes to grow up to men; and babes in Christ should [prayerfully] endeavour to grow in stature, and become men in Christ. It is expected that their advances in knowledge should be in proportion to their means and opportunities, and their time of professing religion; that they may be able to bear discourses of the mysteries of our religion, and not always rest in plain things. It was a reproach to the Corinthians that they had so long sat under the ministry of St. Paul and had made no more improvement in Christian knowledge. Note, Christians are utterly to blame who do not endeavour to grow in grace and knowledge.

Secondly, He blames them for their carnality, and gives their contention and discord about their ministers as evidence of it. "For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there are among you envyings, and strifes, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" *ver. 2*. They had mutual emulations, and quarrels, and factions among them upon the account of their ministers; while one said, "I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos," *ver. 4*. These were proofs of their being carnal; and fleshly interests and affections too much swayed them. Note, Contentions and quarrels about religion are sad evidences of remaining carnality. True religion makes men peaceable, and not contentious. Factious spirits act upon human principles, not upon principles of true religion; they are guided by their own pride and passions, and not by rules of Christianity; "Do ye not walk as men?" Note, It is to be lamented that many who should walk as Christians, that is, above the common rate of men, do indeed walk as men, live and act too much like other men. [It is necessary however to distinguish between such carnal contentions and contentions for the faith once delivered to the saints. A spurious charity has often been a snare of the devil.]

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

Here the apostle instructs them how to cure this humour, and rectify what was amiss among them upon this head.

First, By remembering that the ministers about whom they contended were but ministers [or servants]; "Who then is Paul, or who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" *ver. 5*. But ministers; no more than instruments used by the God of all grace. Some of the factious people in Corinth seem to have made more of them, as if they were lords of their faith, authors of their religion. Note, We should take care not to deify ministers, or put them into the place of God. Apostles were not the authors of our faith and religion, though they were authorized and qualified to reveal and propagate it. They acted in this office "as God gave to every man."

Observe, All the gifts and powers that even apostles discovered and exerted in the work of the ministry were from God. They were intended to manifest their mission and doctrine to be Divine. It was perfectly wrong upon their account to transfer that regard to the apostles which was solely to be paid to the Divine authority by which they acted, and to God from whom they had their authority. "Paul had planted, and Apollos had watered," *ver. 6*. Both were useful, one for one purpose, the other for a different. Note, God makes use of a variety of instruments, and fits them to their several use and intention. Paul was fitted for planting work, and Apollos for watering work; but "God gave the increase." Note, The success of the ministry must be derived from the Divine blessing. "Neither he that planteth is any thing, nor he that watereth, but God who giveth the increase," *ver. 7*. Even apostolical ministers are nothing of themselves, can do nothing with efficacy and success unless God give the increase. Note, The best qualified and most faithful ministers have a just sense of their own insufficiency, and are very desirous that God should have all the glory of their success. Paul and Apollos are nothing at all in their own account, but God is all in all.

Secondly, By representing to them the unanimity of Christ's ministers; "He that planteth, and he that watereth, are one," *ver. 8*. Employed by one master, [guided by one Spirit,] intrusted with the same revelation, busied in one work, and engaged in one design; in harmony with one another, however they may be set in opposition to each other by factious party-makers. They have their different gifts from one and the same Spirit for the very same purposes; and they heartily carry on the same design. Planters and waterers are but fellow-labourers in the same work.

Note, All the faithful ministers of Christ are one in the great business and intentions of their ministry. They may have difference of sentiment in lesser things; they may have their debates and contests; but they heartily concur in the great design of honouring God and saving souls, by promoting true Christianity in the world. And all such may expect a glorious recompence of their fidelity, and in proportion to it. "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." Their business is one, but some may mind it more than others; their end and design is one, but some may pursue it more

ii. 9, 10. Some connect thus: "But (opposition to verse 8) the things that eye . . . to us God revealed." Others connect verse 7 thus: "We speak God's wisdom, which none of the princes knew . . . yea, which no eye hath . . . but God hath revealed," &c. The frequent application of these words to heaven is clearly untenable. The quotation seems based upon *Isa. lxi. 4*, and perhaps *lv. 17*.

ii. 13. "Interpreting spiritual things to the spiritual, leading to the introduction of the natural and spiritual immediately after."

ii. 14. "He now prepares the way for showing them that he could not give out the depths of this spiritual wisdom to them, because they were not fitted for it, being carnal (*chap. iii. 1-4*). "The natural man:" it is the adjective corresponding to the Greek noun for "soul," and means the man whose governing principle is the animal soul as distinguished from the spirit, the higher part, and the sphere of the operations of God's Holy Spirit.

ii. 16. "The judgment of the spiritual man on the part of him

closely than others. Their Master also is one, and yet this good and gracious Master may make a difference in the rewards he gives, according to the different service they do. "Every one's own work shall have its own reward." They that work hardest shall have best; they that are most faithful shall have the greatest reward; and glorious work it is, in which all faithful ministers are employed. "They are labourers with God," συνεργοί, co-workers, "fellow-labourers," ver. 9, not indeed in the same order and degree, but in subordination to him, as instruments in his hand. They are engaged in his business; they are working together with God, in promoting the purposes of his glory, and the salvation of precious souls; and he who knows their work will take care they do not labour in vain. Men may neglect and vilify one minister, whilst they cry up another, and have no reason for either; they may condemn when they should commend, and applaud what they should neglect and avoid; but the judgment of God is according to truth. He never rewards but upon just reason, and he ever rewards in proportion to the diligence and faithfulness of his servants. Note, Faithful ministers, when they are ill used by men, should encourage themselves in God. And it is to God, the chief agent and director of the great work of the Gospel, to whom they that labour with him should endeavour to approve themselves; they are always under his eye, employed in his husbandry and building; and therefore to be sure he will carefully look over them. "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building;" and therefore are neither of Paul nor of Apollos; neither belong to one nor other, but to God; they only plant and water you, but it is the Divine blessing on his own husbandry that alone can make it yield fruit. Ye are not our husbandry but God's; we work under him, and with him, and for him; it is all for God that we have been doing amongst you. You are God's husbandry and building. He had spoken to the former metaphor before, and now he goes on to the other of a building. "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon." Paul here calls himself a wise master-builder; a character doubly reflecting honour on him. It was honourable to be a master builder in the edifice of God, but it added to his character to be a wise one. Persons may be in an office for which they are not qualified, or not so thoroughly qualified as this expression implies Paul was. But, though he gives himself such a character, it is not to gratify his own pride, but to magnify Divine grace. He was a wise master-builder, but the grace of God made him such. Note, It is no crime in a Christian, but much to his commendation, to take notice of the good that is in him, to the praise of Divine grace. Spiritual pride is abominable; it is making use of the greatest favours of God to feed our own vanity, and make idols of ourselves; but to take notice of the favours of God, to promote our gratitude to him, and to speak of them to his honour, be they of what sort they will, is but a proper expression of the [love] duty and regard we owe him. Note, Ministers should not be proud of their gifts and graces; but the better qualified they are for their work, and the more success they have in it, the more thankful should they be to God for his distinguishing goodness. "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon." As before he had said, "I have planted, Apollos watered." It was Paul laid the foundation of a church amongst them. He had begotten them through the Gospel, *ch. iv. 19*. Whatever instructors they had besides, they had not many fathers. He would derogate from none that had done service amongst them, nor would he be robbed of his own honour and respect. Note, Faithful ministers may and ought to have a concern for their own reputation. Their usefulness depends much upon it. "But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon." This is a proper caution; there may be very indifferent building on a good foundation. It is easy to err here, and great care should be used, not only to lay a sure and right foundation, but to erect a regular building upon it. Nothing must be laid upon it but what the foundation will bear, and what is of a piece with it. Gold and dirt must not be mingled together. Note, Ministers of Christ should take great care that they do not build their own fancies or false reasonings on the foundation of Divine revelations. What they preach should be the plain doctrine of their Master, or what is perfectly agreeable with it.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Here the apostle informs us what foundation he had laid at the bottom of all his labours among them, even Jesus Christ, the chief corner-stone, *Eph. ii. 20*. Upon this foundation all the faithful ministers of Christ build; upon this rock all Christians found their hopes. They that build their hopes of heaven on any other foundation build upon the sand. "Other foundation can no man lay, besides what is laid, even Jesus Christ." Note, The doctrine of our Saviour, [his incarnation, divinity, vicarious atonement—perfect and meritorious righteousness—in short, his prophetic and priestly offices,] and his mediation, [and his mediatorial royalty,] is the principal doctrine of Christianity. It lies at the bottom, and is the foundation of all the rest. Leave out this, and you lay waste all our comforts, and leave no foundation for our hopes, as sinners. It is in Christ only that God is reconciling a sinful world to himself, *2 Cor. v. 19*. But of those that hold the foundation, and embrace the general doctrine of Christ's being the Mediator between God and man, there are two sorts:

First, Some build upon this foundation gold, silver, and precious stones, ver. 12; namely, those who receive and propagate the pure truths of the Gospel; that hold nothing but the truth as it is in Jesus, and preach nothing else. This is building well upon a good foundation, making all of a piece; when ministers not only depend upon Christ as the great prophet of the church, and take him for their guide and infallible teacher, but receive and spread the doctrines he taught in their purity, without any corrupt mixtures, without adding or diminishing.

Secondly, Others build wood, hay, and stubble on this foundation, that is, though they adhere to the foundation, they depart from the mind of Christ in many particulars; substitute their own fancies and inventions [such as forms,

ceremonies, and human commandments taught as doctrines] in the room of his doctrines and institutions, and build upon the good foundation what will not abide the test, when the day of trial comes, and the fire must make it manifest; as wood, hay, and stubble, will not bear the trial by fire, but must be consumed in it. There is a time coming when a discovery will be made of what men have built on this foundation. "Every man's work shall be made manifest;" shall be laid open to view, to his own and that of others. Some may in the simplicity of their hearts build wood and stubble on the good foundation, and know not all the while what they have been doing; but in the day of the Lord their own conduct shall appear to them in its proper light. Every man's work shall be made manifest to himself, and made manifest to others, both those that have been misled by him and those that have escaped his errors. Now we may be mistaken in ourselves and others, but there is a day coming that will cure all our mistakes, and shew us ourselves, and shew us our actions in the true light, without covering or disguise. "For the day shall declare it," namely, every man's work, "because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is," ver. 13. The day shall declare and make it manifest, the last day, the great day of trial: see *ch. iv. 5*. Though some understand it of the time when the Jewish nation was destroyed, and their constitution thereby abolished, when the superstructure Judaizing teachers would have raised on the Christian foundation was manifested to be no better than hay and stubble, that would not bear the trial. The expression carries in it a plain allusion to the refiner's art, in which the fire separates and distinguishes the dross from the gold and silver; as it also will silver, and gold, and precious stones, that will endure the fire, from wood, and hay, and stubble, that will be consumed in it. Note, There is a day coming that will as nicely distinguish one man from another, and one man's work from another's, as the fire distinguishes gold from dross, or metal that will bear the fire from other materials that will be consumed in it. In that day,

1. Some men's works will abide the trial, will be found standard. It will appear that they not only held the foundation, but that they built regularly and well upon it; that they laid on proper materials, and in due form and order. The foundation and the superstructure were all of a piece. The foundation truths, and those that had a manifest connexion with them, were taught together. It may not be so easy to discern this connexion now, nor know what works will abide the trial then; but that day will make a full discovery. And such a builder shall not, cannot fail of a reward. He will have praise and honour in that day, and eternal recompence after it. Note, Fidelity in the ministers of Christ will meet with full and ample rewards in a future life. They who spread true and pure religion in all the branches of it, and whose work will abide in the great day, shall receive a reward. And, Lord, how great, how much exceeding their [poor] deserts!

2. There are others whose works shall be burned, ver. 15; whose corrupt opinions and doctrines, or vain inventions and usages in the worship of God, shall be discovered, disowned, and rejected in that day; shall be first manifested to be corrupt, and then disapproved of God, and rejected. Note, The great day will pluck off all disguises, and make things appear as they are. "He whose work shall be burnt will suffer loss." If he has built upon the right foundation wood, and hay, and stubble, he will suffer loss. His weakness and corruption will be the lessening of his glory, though he may in the general have been an honest and an upright Christian. This part of his work will be lost, turning no way to his advantage, though "himself may be saved." Observe, Those who hold the foundation of Christianity, though they build hay, wood, and stubble upon it, may be saved. This may help to enlarge our charity. We should not reprobate men for their weakness, [provided they give evidence otherwise of being in Christ,] for nothing will damn men but wickedness, [that is, his not being in Christ.] "He shall be saved, yet so as by fire," saved out of the fire. Himself shall be snatched out of that flame which will consume his work. It intimates that it will be difficult for those that [in any degree] corrupt and deprave Christianity to be saved. God will have no mercy on their works, though he may pluck them as brands out of the burning. On this passage of Scripture the papists found their doctrine of purgatory, which is certainly hay and stubble; a doctrine never originally fetched from Scripture, but invented in barbarous ages to feed the avarice and ambition of the clergy, at their cost who would rather part with their money than their lusts for the salvation of their souls. It can have no countenance from this text, 1st. Because this is plainly meant of a figurative fire, not of a real one; for what real fire can consume religious rites or doctrines? 2nd. Because this fire is to try men's works of what sort they are; but purgatory fire is not for trial, not to bring men's actions to the test, but to punish for them. They are supposed to be venial sins not satisfied for in this life, for which satisfaction must be made by suffering the fire of purgatory. 3rd. Because this fire is to try every man's works, those of Paul and Apollos as well as those of others. Now, no papists will have the front to say, apostles must have passed through purgatory fires.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

Here the apostle resumes his argument and exhortation, founding it on his former allusion, "Ye are God's building," ver. 9; and here, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile, that is, corrupt and destroy, 'the temple of God, him shall God destroy,' (the same word is in the original in both clauses,) 'for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.'" It looks from other parts of the epistle, where the apostle argues to the very same purpose, (see *ch. vi. 13–20*), as if the false teachers among the Corinthians were not only loose livers, but taught licentious doctrines, and what was particularly fitted to the taste in this lewd city on the head of fornication. Such doctrine was not to be reckoned among hay and stubble, that would be consumed whilst the person who laid them on the foundation escaped the burning; for it tended to corrupt, to pollute, and destroy the church, which was a building erected for God, and consecrated to him, and therefore should be kept pure and holy. Those who spread principles of this sort would provoke God to destroy them.

Note, Those who spread loose principles, that have a direct tendency to pollute the church of God, and render it unholly and unclean, are likely to bring destruction on themselves. It may be understood also as an argument against their discord and factious strifes; division being the way to destruction. But what I have been mentioning seems to be the proper meaning of the passage: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" It may be understood of the church of Corinth collectively, or of every single believer amongst them. Christian churches are temples of God. He dwells amongst them by his Holy Spirit. "They are built together

who is not spiritual would require such a knowledge of the mind of the Lord as would qualify a person to instruct the Lord himself; since the persons who are to be judged are such as have the mind of Christ, inasmuch as his spirit dwelling in them and directing their thought, fashions them to his mind, and identifies their thinking with his thinking."

iii. 1. See chap. ii. 6–14; Heb. v. 14. "Carnal:" rather, "men of flesh." Paul is referring to his ministry at Corinth, when he was

compelled to confine himself to elementary teaching. He turns to their present condition at the end of verse 2, and what he blames is that they are still fleshly, and not capable of food for men.

iii. 5. "Apollos:" a Jew from Alexandria, mighty in the Scriptures, but instructed according to the imperfect views of the disciples of John the Baptist, and more perfectly taught by Aquila and Priscilla. (See Acts xviii. 25.) Afterwards he became a preacher in Corinth. There seems to have been perfect harmony between him

for an habitation of God through the Spirit," *Eph. ii. 22*. Every Christian is a living temple of the living God. God dwelt in the Jewish temple, took possession of it and resided in it, by that glorious cloud that was the token of his presence with that people. So Christ by his Spirit dwells in all true believers. The temple was devoted and consecrated to God, and set apart from every common to a holy use, to the immediate service of God. So all Christians are separate from common uses, and set apart for God and his service. They are sacred to him. A very good argument thus against all fleshly lusts, and all doctrines that give countenance to them. If we are the temples of God we must do nothing that shall alienate ourselves from him, or corrupt and pollute ourselves, and thereby unfit ourselves for his use; and we must hearken to no doctrine nor doctor that would seduce us to any such practices. Note, Christians are holy by profession, and should be pure and clean, both in heart and conversation. We should heartily abhor, and carefully avoid, what will defile God's temple, and prostitute what ought to be sacred to him.

18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. 20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

Here he prescribes humility, and a modest opinion of themselves for a remedy of the irregularities in the church of Corinth, the divisions and contentions among them. "Let no man deceive himself," ver. 18; that is, Do not be led away from the truth and simplicity of the Gospel by pretenders to science and eloquence, by a show of deep learning, or a flourish of words, by rabbies, orators, or philosophers. Note, We are in great danger of deceiving ourselves when we have too high an opinion of human wisdom and arts. Plain and pure Christianity will be likely to be despised by those who can suit their doctrines to the corrupt taste of their hearers, and set them off with fine language, or support them with a show of deep and strong reasoning. But he who seems to be wise must become a fool, that he may be wise. He must be sensible of his own ignorance, and lament it; he must distrust his own understanding, and not lean on it. To have a high opinion of our own wisdom is but to flatter ourselves; and self-flattery is the very next step to self-deceit. The way to true wisdom is to sink our opinion of our own to a due level, and be willing to be taught of God. He must become a fool [in his own estimation] who would be truly and thoroughly wise. The person who resigns his own understanding, that he may follow the instruction of God, is in the way to true and everlasting wisdom, [which no man does until he is born again.] "The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way," *Ps. xxv. 9*. He that has a low opinion of his own knowledge and powers will submit to better information; such a person may be informed and improved by revelation; but the proud man, conceited of his own wisdom and understanding, will undertake to correct even Divine wisdom itself, and prefer his own shallow reasonings to the revelations of infallible truth and wisdom. Note, We must abase ourselves before God if we would either be truly wise or good. "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," ver. 19. The wisdom which worldly men esteem, policy, philosophy, oratory, is foolishness with God. It is so in a way of comparison with his wisdom. "He chargeth his angels with folly," *Job iv. 18*; and much more the wisest among the children of men. "His understanding is infinite," *Ps. cxlvii. 5*. There can be no more comparison between his wisdom and ours than between his power and being and ours. There is no common measure by which to compare finite and infinite. And much more is the wisdom of man foolishness with God, when in competition with his. How justly doth he despise, how easily can he baffle and confound it. "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness," as it is written, *Job v. 13*; he catches them in their own nets, and entangles them in their own snares; he turns their most studied, and plausible, and promising schemes against themselves, and ruins them in their own contrivance. Nay, "He knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain," ver. 20; that they are vanity, *Ps. xciv. 11*. Note, That God has a perfect knowledge of the thoughts of men, the deepest thoughts of the wisest men, their most secret counsels and purposes. Nothing is hidden from him, but all things are naked and bare before him, *Heb. iv. 13*; and he knows them to be vanity. The thoughts of the wisest men in the world have a great mixture of vanity, of weakness and folly in them; and before God their very wisest and best thoughts are very vanity, compared, I mean, with his thoughts of things. And should not all this teach us modesty, diffidence in ourselves, and a deference to the wisdom of God; make us thankful for his revelations, and willing to be taught of God, and not be led away by specious pretences to human wisdom and skill from the simplicity of Christ, or a regard to his heavenly doctrine? Note, Who would be wise indeed must learn of God, and not set his own wisdom up in competition with God's.

21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your's; 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's; 23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Here the apostle founds an exhortation against overvaluing their teachers on what he had just said, and for that they had an equal interest in all their ministers. "Therefore let no man glory in men," ver. 21; forget that their ministers are men, or pay that deference to them as is due only to God; set them at the head of parties, have them in immoderate esteem and admiration, and servilely and implicitly follow their conduct or submit to their dictates; and especially in contradiction to God, and the truths taught by his Holy Spirit. Mankind are very apt to make the mercies of God cross their intentions. The ministry is a very useful and very gracious institution; and faithful ministers are a great blessing [and gift from God] to any people; and yet the folly and weakness of people may do much mischief by what is in itself a blessing. They may fall into factions, side with particular ministers, and set them at their head, glory in their leaders, and be carried by them they know not whither. The only way to avoid this mischief is to have a modest [and humble] opinion of ourselves, a due sense of the common weakness of human understanding, and an entire deference to the wisdom of God speaking in his word. Ministers are not to be set up in competition with one another. All faithful ministers are serving one

Lord and pursuing one purpose. They were appointed of Christ for the common benefit of the church. "Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas, are all yours." One is not to be set up against another, but all are to be valued and used for your own spiritual benefit. Upon this occasion also he gives in an inventory of the church's possessions, the spiritual riches of a true believer: "All is yours." Ministers of all ranks, ordinary and extraordinary; nay, the world itself is yours. Not that saints are proprietors of the world, but it stands for their sake; they have as much of it as Infinite Wisdom sees to be fit for them, and they have all they have with the Divine blessing. Life is yours, that you may have season and opportunity to prepare for the life of heaven; and death is yours, that you may go to the possession of it. It is the kind messenger that will fetch you to your Father's house. Things present are yours for your support on the road. Things to come are yours, to enrich and regale you for ever at your journey's end. Note, That if we belong to Christ, and are true to him, all good belongs to us and is sure to us. All is ours, time and eternity, earth and heaven, life and death. We shall want no good thing, *Ps. lxxxiv. 11*. But it must be remembered at the same time that we are Christ's, the subjects of his kingdom, his property. He is Lord over us, [he received us from his Father, he purchased us with his blood,] and we must own his dominion, and cheerfully submit to his command, and yield ourselves to his pleasure, if we would have all things minister to our advantage. All things are ours upon no other foot than our being Christ's. Out of him we are without just title or claim to any thing that is good. Note, They that would be safe for time, and happy to eternity, must be Christ's. "And Christ is God's." He is the Christ of God, anointed of God, and commissioned by him [from all eternity] to bear the office of Mediator, and to act therein for the purposes of his glory. Note, All things are the believer's, that Christ might have honour in his great undertaking, and God in all might have the glory. God in Christ reconciling a sinful world [his people] to himself, and shedding abroad the riches of his grace on a reconciled world, is the sum and substance of the Gospel.

CHAPTER IV.

In this chapter the apostle, I. Directs them how to account of him and his fellow-ministers, and therein tacitly, at least, reproves them for their unworthy carriage towards him, ver. 1—6. II. He cautions them against pride and self-elation, and hints at the many temptations they had to conceive too highly of themselves, and despise him, and other apostles, because of the great diversity in their circumstances and condition, ver. 7—14. III. He challenges their regard to him as their father in Christ, ver. 15—17. IV. He tells them of his having sent Timothy to them, and of his own purpose to come to them shortly, however some among them had pleased themselves, and grown vain upon the quite contrary expectation, ver. 18—21.



LET a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. 4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. 6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

Here, First. The apostle challenges the respect due to him, on account of his character and office, in which many among them had at least very much failed; "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God," ver. 1; though possibly others might have valued him too highly by setting him up as the head of a party, and professing to be his disciples. Note, In our opinion of ministers, as well as all other things, we should be careful to avoid extremes. Apostles themselves were, 1. Not to be overvalued, for they were ministers, not masters; stewards, not lords. They were servants of Christ, and no more, though they were servants of the highest rank, that had the care of the household, that were to provide food for the rest, and appoint and direct their work. Note, It is a very great abuse of their power, and highly criminal in common ministers, to lord it over their fellow-servants, and challenge authority over their faith or practice; for even apostles were but servants of Christ, employed in his work, and sent on his errand, and dispensers of the mysteries of God, or those truths which had been hidden from the world in ages and generations past. They had no authority to propagate their own fancies, but to spread Christian faith [truth]. 2. Apostles were not to be undervalued; for, though they were ministers, they were ministers of Christ. The character and dignity of their Master puts an honour on them. Though they are but stewards, they are not stewards of the common things of the world, but of Divine mysteries. They had a great trust, and for that reason had an honourable office. They were stewards of God's household,

and St. Paul; but "there may have been difference enough in the outward character and expression of the two to attract the lover of eloquence and philosophy rather to Apollos, somewhat perhaps to the disparagement of Paul."

iii. 10, 11. St. Paul showed his skill in laying a foundation. (Compare Luke vi. 49.) Whoever came after him must build on the same foundation, for there was but one—Jesus Christ. The consideration for those following him was how and with what materials they

built thereon; and so he goes on in the next verses to speak of the different ways of building upon it.

iii. 12—14. St. Paul is here speaking of the work of different ministers who are engaged in building parts of one and the same building; the gold, silver, &c., referring to the matter of their teaching. And he declares that each man's work shall be made evident, for the day of the Lord shall make it manifest; "the fire of judgment in which Christ will appear, and by which all works will be tried."

high stewards in his kingdom of grace. They did not set up for masters, but they deserved respect and esteem in this honourable service. Especially.

Secondly. When they did their duty in it, and approved themselves faithful. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful," ver. 2; trustworthily. The stewards in Christ's family must appoint what he hath appointed; they must not set their fellow-servants to work for themselves; they must not require any thing from them without their Master's warrant; they must not feed them with the chaff of their own inventions, instead of the wholesome food of Christian doctrine and truth; they must teach what he hath commanded, and not the doctrines and commandments of men. They must be true to the interests of their Lord, and consult his honour. Note. The ministers of Christ should make it their hearty and continual endeavour [in dependence on God's grace] to approve themselves trustworthily; and when they have the testimony of a good conscience, and the approbation of their Master, they must slight the opinions and censures of their fellow-servants; "But with me," saith the apostle, "it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment," ver. 3. Indeed, reputation and esteem amongst men is a good step towards usefulness in the ministry; and Paul's whole argument upon this head shews he had a just concern for his own reputation; but he that would make it his chief endeavour to please men would hardly approve himself a servant of Christ, *Gal. i. 10*. He that would be faithful to Christ must despise the censures of men for his sake. He must look upon it as a very little thing, if his Lord approves him, what judgment men form of him. They may think very meanly or very hardly of him whilst he is doing his duty; but it is not by their judgment he must stand or fall; and happy is it for faithful ministers that they have a more just and candid judge than their fellow-servants; one who knows and pities their imperfections, though he has none of his own. It is better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of men, *2 Sam. xxiv. 14*. The best of men are too apt to judge rashly, and hardly, and unjustly; but His judgment is always according to truth. It is a comfort men are not to be our final judges. Nay, we are not thus to judge ourselves; "Yea, I judge not myself; for though I know nothing by myself," cannot charge myself with unfaithfulness, [generally speaking,] "yet am I not hereby justified," this will not clear me of the charge; "but he that judgeth me is the Lord." It is his judgment that must determine me; by his sentence I must abide. Such I am as he shall find and judge me to be. Note. It is not judging well of ourselves, justifying ourselves, that will prove us safe and happy. Nothing will do this, but the acceptance and approbation of our sovereign Judge [and Master]. "Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but he whom the Lord commendeth," *2 Cor. x. 18*.

Thirdly. The apostle takes occasion from hence to caution the Corinthians against censoriousness, forward and severe judging of others; "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come," ver. 5. It is judging out of season, and judging at an adventure. He is not to be understood of judging by persons in authority, within the verge of their office; nor of private judging concerning facts that are notorious; but of judging [rashly] persons' future state, or the secret springs and principles of their actions, [when they may not have been unchristian,] or about facts doubtful in themselves. To judge in these cases, and give decisive sentence, is to assume the seat of God, and challenge his prerogative. Note. How bold a sinner is the forward and severe censurer! How ill-timed and arrogant are his censures! but there is One who will judge the censurer and those he censures without prejudice, passion, or partiality; and there is a time coming when men cannot fail of judging right concerning themselves and others by following his judgment. This should make them now cautious of judging others, and careful in judging themselves. There is a time coming, when "the Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart;" deeds of darkness that are now done in secret, and all the secret inclinations, purposes and intentions of the hidden man of the heart. Note. There is a day coming that will lighten the darkness, and lay open the face of the deep, will fetch men's secret sins into open day, and discover the secrets of their hearts. "The day shall declare it." The Judge will bring these things to light. The Lord Jesus Christ will manifest the counsels of the heart, of all hearts. Note. The Lord Jesus Christ must have the knowledge of the counsels of the heart, else he could not make them manifest. This is a Divine prerogative, *Jer. xvii. 10*; and yet it is what our Saviour challenges to himself in a very peculiar manner, *Rev. ii. 23*: "All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts, and will give to every one of you according to your works." Note. We should be very careful how we censure others, [more especially those who seem to be in Christ,] when we have to do with a Judge from whom we cannot conceal ourselves. Others do not lie open to our notice, but we all lie open to his; and when he comes to judge "every man shall have praise of God." "Every man," that is, every one qualified for it, [through grace,] every one who has done well. Though none of God's servants can deserve any thing from him, though there be much that is blamable [and sinful] even in their best services, yet shall their fidelity be commended and crowned by him; and should they be condemned, reproached or vilified by their fellow-servants, he will roll away all such unjust censures and reproaches, and shew them in their own amiable light. Note. Christians may well be patient under unjust censures, when they know such a day as this is coming, especially when they have their consciences testifying to their integrity. But how fearful should they be of loading any with reproaches now, whom their common Judge shall hereafter commend, [as good and faithful servants.]

Fourthly. The apostle here lets us into the reason why he had used his own name and Apollos' in this discourse of his; he had done it in a figure, and he had done it for their sakes. He chose rather to mention his own name, and the name of a faithful fellow-labourer, than the names of any heads of factions amongst them, that thereby he might avoid what would provoke, and so procure his advice the greater regard. Note. Ministers should use prudence in their advices and admonitions, but especially in their reproofs, lest they lose their end. The advice the apostle would by this means inculcate was, "that they might learn not to think of men above what is written, nor be puffed up for one against another," ver. 6; not above what he had been writing, [or what is written in Scripture.] Apostles were not to be esteemed other than planters or waterers in God's husbandry, than master builders in his building, than stewards of his mysteries, and servants of Christ; and common ministers cannot bear these characters in the same sense that apostles did. Note. We must be very careful not to transfer the honour and authority of the master to his servant. We must "call no man master on earth; one is our Master, even Christ," *Mat. xxiii. 8, 10*. We must not think of them above what is written. Note. The word of God is the best rule by which to judge concerning men; and again, judging rightly concerning men, and not judging more highly of them than is fit, is one way to prevent quarrels and contentions in the churches. Pride commonly lies at the bottom of these quarrels. Self-conceit [or spiritual pride] contributes very much to our immoderate esteem of our teachers, as well as ourselves. Our commendation of our own taste and judgment commonly goes along with our unreasonable applause, and always with a factious adherence to one teacher in opposition to others, that may be equally faithful and well qualified; but to think modestly of ourselves, and not above what is written of our

teachers, is the most effectual means to prevent quarrels and contests, sittings and parties in the church. We shall not be puffed up for one against another if we remember that they are all the instruments employed by God in his husbandry and building, and endowed by him with their various talents and qualifications.

7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? 8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. 9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto



COMBAT OF GLADIATORS.

the world, and to angels, and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. 11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; 12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: 13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

Here the apostle improves the foregoing hint to a caution against pride and self-conceit, and sets forth the temptations the Corinthians had to despise him, from the difference of their circumstances.

First. He cautions against pride and self-conceit, by this consideration, that all the distinction made among them was owing to God; "Who maketh thee to differ?" ver. 7; "and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" Here the apostle turns his discourse to the ministers who set themselves at the head of these factions, and did but too much encourage and abet the people in those feuds. What had they to glory in when all their peculiar gifts were from God? They had received them, and could not glory in them as their own without wronging God; at the same time as they reflected on them to feed their vanity they should have considered them as so many debts and obligations to Divine bounty and grace. But it may be taken as a general maxim. We have no reason to be proud of our attainments, enjoyments, or performances; all that we have, or are, or do that is good, is owing to the [sovereign] free and rich grace of God. Boasting is for ever excluded. There is nothing we have we can properly call our own; all is received from God. It is foolish in us therefore, and injurious to him, to brag of it; they who receive all should be proud of nothing, *Ps. cxv. 1*. Beggars and dependants may glory in their supports; but to glory in themselves is to be proud at once of meanness, impotence, and want. Note. That due attention to our obligations to Divine grace would cure us of arrogance and self-conceit.

Secondly. He presses the duty of humility upon them by a very smart irony, or at least reproves them for their pride and self-conceit. "Ye are full, ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us." You have not only a sufficiency, but an affluence of spiritual gifts; nay, you can make them the matter of your glory without us, that is, in mine absence, and without having any need of me. There is a very elegant gradation from sufficiency to wealth, and from thence to royalty, to intimate how much the Corinthians were elated by the [presumed] abundance of their wisdom and spiritual gifts, which was a humour that prevailed among them, whilst the apostle was away from them, and made them forget what an interest he had in all. Note. How apt pride is to overrate benefits, and overlook the benefactor; to swell upon its possessions, and forget from whom they come; nay, it is apt to behold them in a magnifying glass. "You have reigned as kings," saith the apostle, that is, in your own conceit; "and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." I wish

iii. 14. "If any man's work stand the fire, being of inconsumable materials, he shall be rewarded for his faithful and effectual work as a teacher" (Alford).

iii. 15. "If any man's work consist of such materials as the fire will destroy, he shall be mulcted, but he himself shall be saved (having held and built on the true foundation, Jesus Christ) so as through fire—i.e., as a builder whose building was consumed would escape with personal safety, but with the loss of his work" (Alford).

iv. 1. "Steward:" literally, "manager of a house." See 1 Tim. iii. 15, where the Church is called the house of God. These stewards are to distribute the hidden treasures of God, the riches of his grace. "It may be doubted whether, in the New Testament sense of mysteries, the sacraments can in any way be reckoned as such, for mystery is a (usually Divine) proceeding once hidden, but now revealed, or now hidden and to be revealed, under neither of which categories can the sacraments be classed" (Alford).

you had as much of the true glory of a Christian church upon you as you arrogate to yourselves. I should come in then for a share of the honour; I should reign with you. I should not be overlooked by you as now I am, but valued and regarded as a minister of Christ, and a very useful [and honoured] instrument amongst you. Note, Those do not commonly know themselves best who think best of themselves, who have the highest opinion of themselves. The Corinthians might have reigned, and the apostle with them, if they had not been blown up with an imaginary royalty. Note, Pride is a great [and fatal] prejudice to our improvement [in things spiritual]. He is stopped from growing wiser or better who thinks himself at the height; not only full, but rich, nay a king.

Thirdly, He comes to set forth his own, and the circumstances of the other apostles, and compares them with theirs. 1. To set forth the case of the apostles. "For I think it hath pleased God to set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death. For we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men." Paul and his fellow-apostles were exposed to great hardships. Never were any men in this world so hunted and worried. They carried their lives in their hands. "God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death," ver. 9. An allusion is made to some of the bloody spectacles in the Roman amphitheatres, where men were exposed to fight with wild beasts, or to cut one another to pieces to make diversion for the populace; where the victor did not escape with his life, though he should destroy his adversary, but was only reserved for another combat, and must be devoured or cut in pieces at last. So that such wretched criminals (for they were ordinarily condemned persons that were thus exposed) might very properly be called *ἐπιδεικνύμενοι*, persons devoted or appointed to death. They are said to be set forth at last, because the meridian gladiators, those who combated one another in the after part of the day, were most exposed, being obliged to fight naked. So that, as Seneca says, Epistle 7th, This was perfect butchery; and those exposed to beasts in the morning were treated mercifully in comparison of these. The general meaning is, that the apostles were thus exposed to continual danger of death, and that of the worst kinds, in the faithful discharge of their office. God hath set them forth, brought them into view, as the Roman emperors brought their combatants into the arena, the place of show, though not for the same purposes. They did it to please the populace, and humour their own vanity, and sometimes a much worse principle. The apostles were shewn to manifest the power of Divine grace, to confirm the truth of their mission and doctrine, and propagate religion [the Gospel of Christ] in the world. These were ends worthy of God; noble views, fit to animate them to the combat; but they had like difficulties to encounter, and were in a manner as much exposed, as these miserable Roman criminals. Note, The office of an apostle was, as an honourable, so a hard and hazardous one. "For we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and men," ver. 9. A show; we are brought into the theatre, brought out to the public view of the world. Angels and men are witnesses to our persecutions, sufferings, patience, and magnanimity. They all see that we suffer for our fidelity to Christ, and how we suffer; how great and imminent our dangers, and how bravely we encounter them; how sharp our sufferings, and how patiently we endure them by the power of Divine grace, and our Christian principles. Ours is hard work, but honourable; it is hazardous, but glorious. God will have honour from us; religion will be credited by us. The world cannot but see and wonder at our undaunted resolution, our invincible patience and constancy; and how contentedly they could be exposed both to sufferings and scorn for the honour of their Master! Note, The faithful ministers and disciples of Christ should contentedly undergo any thing for his sake and honour [who hath redeemed them with his blood]. 2. He compares his own case with that of the Corinthians; "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but ye are despised," ver. 11. "We are fools for Christ's sake." Such in common account, and we are well content to be so accounted. We can pass for fools in the world, and be despised as such, so the wisdom of God and the honour of the Gospel be by this means secured and displayed. Note, Faithful ministers can bear being despised, so that the wisdom of God and the power of his grace be thereby displayed. "But ye are wise in Christ." You have the fame [or claim it] of being wise and learned Christians, and you do not a little value yourselves upon it. We are under disgrace for delivering the plain truths of the Gospel, and in as plain a manner. You are in reputation for your eloquence and human wisdom, which amongst many make you pass for wise men in Christ. "We are weak, but ye are strong." We are suffering for Christ's sake, (so being weak plainly signifies, 2 Cor. xii. 10,) when you are in easy and flourishing circumstances. [See exposition of 2 Cor. xii. 10, where a preferable sense is given.] Note, All Christians are not alike exposed. Some suffer greater hardship than others, who are yet engaged in the same warfare. The standard-bearers in an army are most struck at. So ministers in a time of persecution are commonly the first and greatest sufferers. Or else, We pass upon the world for persons of but mean endowments, very striplings in Christianity; but you look upon yourselves, and are looked upon by others, as men, as those of a much more advanced growth and confirmed strength. Note, They are not always the greatest proficients in Christianity who think thus of themselves, or pass for such upon others. It is but too easy and common for self-love to commit such a mistake. Corinthians may think themselves, and be esteemed by others, as wiser and stronger men in Christ than apostles themselves; but, oh, how gross is the mistake!

"We are weak." We are timid and feeble, but you are daring, bold, and fearless. This is irony. The very reverse was probably true. Paul was bold, daring, fearless in declaring the truth, whatever opposition it might encounter; and probably many of them were timid and time-serving, and endeavouring to avoid persecution, and to accommodate themselves to the prejudices and opinions of the world. "Ye are honourable." Deserving of honour, and obtaining it. Still irony. You are to be esteemed as worthy of praise. "We are despised;" *ἀτιμίαι*. Not only actually contemned, but worthy to be so. This was irony also. And the design was to shew them how foolish was their self-confidence and self-flattery, and their attempt to exalt themselves.—A. B.]

Fourthly, He enters into some particulars of their sufferings. "Even to this present hour," that is, after all the service we have been doing among you and other churches, "we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our own hands," ver. 11, 12; nay, "they were made as the filth of the world, and of offscouring of all things," ver. 13. They were forced to labour with their own hands to get subsistence, and had so much, and so much greater business to mind that they could not attend enough to this, to get a comfortable livelihood, but were exposed to hunger, thirst, and nakedness; many times wanted both meat, and drink, and clothes. They were driven about the world without having any fixed abode, any stated habitation. Poor circumstances indeed, for the prime ministers of our Saviour's kingdom, to have no house nor home, and to be destitute of food and raiment! but yet no poorer than his, "who had not where to lay his head," Lu. ix. 58. But, oh glorious charity and devotion, that would carry them through all these hardships! How ardently did they love God, how vehemently did they thirst for the salvation of souls! Theirs was volumi-

nary, it was pleasing poverty; they thought they had a rich amends for all the outward good things they wanted, if they might but serve Christ, and save [win] souls; nay, though they "were made the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things." They were treated as men not fit to live, *περικαθήματα*. It is reasonably thought by the critics, that an allusion is here made to a common custom of many heathen nations, to offer men in sacrifice in a time of pestilence, or other like grievous calamity. These were ordinarily the vilest of men, persons of the lowest rank and worst character. Thus, in the first ages, Christians were counted the source of all public calamities, and were sacrificed to the people's rage, if not to appease their angry deities; and apostles could not meet with better usage. They suffered in their persons and characters as the very worst and vilest men, as the most proper to make such a sacrifice. Or else as the very dirt of the world, that was to be swept away. Nay, as "the offscouring of all things," the dross, the filings of all things. They were the common sewer into which all the reproaches of the world were to be poured. To be the offscouring of any thing is bad; but what is it to be the offscouring of all things? How much did the apostles resemble their Master, "and fill up that which was behind of his afflictions, for his body's sake, which is the church?" Col. i. 24; they suffered for him, and they suffered after his example. Thus poor and despised was he in his life and ministry; and every one who would be faithful in Christ Jesus must prepare for the same poverty and contempt. Note, They may be very dear to God, and honourable in his esteem, [heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ,] whom men may think unworthy to live, and use and scorn as the very dirt and refuse of the world. "God seeth not as man seeth," 1 Sam. xvi. 1.

Fifthly, We have here the apostles' behaviour under all, and the return they made for this maltreatment. "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat," ver. 12, 13. They returned blessings for reproaches, and intreaties and kind exhortations for the rudest slanders and defamations; and under the sharpest persecutions carried it with patience. Note, The [true] disciples of Christ, and especially his ministers, should [prayerfully] hold fast their integrity, and keep a good conscience, whatever opposition or hardships they meet with from the world. Whatever they suffer from men, they must follow the example, and fulfil the will and precepts of their Lord. They must be content with him, and for him, to be despised and abused.

14 I write not these things to shaine you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. 15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

Here Paul challenges their regard to him as their father. He tells them, First, That what he had written was not for their reproach, but admonition; not with the gall of an enemy, but the bowels of a father; ver. 14, "I write not to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you." Note, In reproving for sin, we should have a tender regard to the reputation, as well as the reformation of the sinner. We should aim to distinguish between them and their sins, and take care not to discover any spite against them ourselves, nor expose them to contempt and reproach in the world. Reproofs that expose commonly do but exasperate, when those that kindly and affectionately warn are likely [by God's blessing] to reform. When the affections of a father mingle with the admonitions of a minister, it is to be hoped they may at once melt and mend; but to lash like an enemy or executioner will provoke and render obstinate. To expose to too open shame is but the way to render shameless.

Secondly, He shews them upon what foundation he claimed paternal relation to them, and calls them his sons. They might have other pedagogues, [pedagogues, the word used by the apostle, were those who conducted boys to the public schools, and superintended their conduct,] instructors, but he was their father; "for in Christ Jesus he had begotten them by the Gospel," ver. 15. They were made Christians by his ministry. He had laid the foundation of a church among them. Others could only build upon it. Whatever other teachers they had, he [and he only] was their spiritual father. He first brought them off from pagan idolatry to the faith of the Gospel, and the worship of the true and living God. He was the instrument of their new birth, and therefore claimed the relation of a father to them, and felt the bowels of a father towards them. Note, There commonly is, and always ought to be, an endeared affection between faithful ministers and those they beget in Christ Jesus through the Gospel. They should love like parents and children.

Thirdly, We have here the special advice he urges on them. "Wherefore I beseech you be followers of me," ver. 16. This he elsewhere explains and limits; ch. xi. 1, "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." Follow me as far as I follow Christ. Come up as close as you can to my example in those instances wherein I endeavour to copy after his pattern. Be my disciples as far as I manifest myself to be a faithful minister and disciple of Christ, and no farther. "I would not have you be my disciples, but his. But I hope I have approved myself a faithful steward of the mysteries of Christ, and a faithful servant of my master Christ; so far follow me, and tread in my steps." Note, Ministers should so live as that their people may take pattern from them, and live after their copy. They should guide them by their lives as well as their lips; go before them in the way to heaven, and not content themselves with pointing it out. Note, That, as ministers are to set a pattern, others must take it. They should follow them as far as they are satisfied they follow Christ in faith and practice.

17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church. 18 Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. 19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. 20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in

Paul here speaks to all who fancied themselves superior to the men-bers of other parties.

iv. 8. Paul speaks ironically. "Already ye are filled full [with spiritual food]; already ye are rich; ye have seated yourselves upon your throne as kings without us." The emphasis is on "already" and "without us." They were so puffed up with pride, either in their own fancied attainments or in their favourite teachers, that they appeared to have nothing more to desire, and to be able to do without

iv. 2. Insert "here" after "moreover;" either "here on earth" or "in this matter."

iv. 4. "For I am conscious to myself of no (ministerial) delinquency."

iv. 6. "I have represented with the persons of Apollos and myself what really holds good of all teachers, making us two a figure or type of all others."

iv. 7. Pride is one of the fruitful sources of party division. St.

power. 21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?



PORT OF CORINTH.—VER. 18.

Here he tells them,

First. Of his having sent Timothy to them, "to bring them into remembrance of his ways in Christ, as he taught every where in every church," ver. 17; to mind them of his ways in Christ; to refresh their memory as to his preaching and practice, what he taught, and how he lived among them. Note, They who have had never so good teaching are apt to forget, and need to have their memories refreshed. The same truth taught over again, if it give no new light, may make new and quicker impression. He also lets them know that his teaching was the same every where and in every church. He had not one doctrine for one place and people, and another for a different one. He kept close to his instructions; what he received of the Lord that he delivered, *ch. xi. 23*. This was the gospel revelation, which was the equal concern of all men, and did not vary from itself. He therefore taught the same things in every church, and lived after the same manner in all times and places. Note, The truth of Christ is one and invariable. What one apostle taught every one taught. What one apostle taught at one time, and in one place, he taught at all times, and in all places. Christians may mistake and differ in their apprehensions, but Christ and Christian truth are "the same yesterday, to day, and for ever," *Heb. xiii. 8*. To render their regard to Timothy the greater, he gives them his character. He was his beloved son, a spiritual child of his as well as themselves. Note, Spiritual brotherhood should engage affection as well as what is common and natural. The children of one father should have one heart. But he adds, he was faithful in the Lord. Trustworthy, as one that feared the Lord. He will be faithful in that particular office he has now received of the Lord, the particular errand on which he comes; not only from me, but from Christ. He knows what I have taught, and what my conversation has been in all places, and you may depend upon it he will make a faithful report. Note, It is a great commendation of any minister, that he is faithful in the Lord, faithful to his soul, to his light, to his trust from God; and must go a great way in procuring regard to his message with them that fear God.

Secondly. He rebukes the vanity of those who imagined he would not come to them, by letting them know this was his purpose, though he had sent Timothy. "I will come to you shortly," though some of you are so vain as to think I will not. But he adds, "if the Lord will." It seems, as to the common events of life, apostles knew no more than other men, nor were they in these points under inspiration. For had the apostle certainly known the mind of God in this matter, he had not expressed himself with this uncertainty. But he sets a good example to us in it. Note, All our purposes must be formed with a dependence on providence, and a reserve for the overruling purposes of God. "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that," *Jas. iv. 15*.

Thirdly. He lets them know what would follow upon his coming to them. "I will know, not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power," ver. 19. He would bring the great pretenders among them to a trial, know what they were; not by their rhetoric or philosophy, but the authority and efficacy of what they taught, whether they could confirm it by miraculous operations, and whether it were accompanied with Divine influences and saving effects on the minds of men. "For," adds he, "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." It is not set up, nor propagated, nor established in the hearts of men, by plausible reasonings or florid discourses, but by the external power of the Holy Spirit in miraculous operations at first, and the powerful influence of Divine truth [equally the operation of the Holy Spirit] on the minds and manners of men. Note, It is a good way in the general to judge of a preacher's doctrine, to see whether the effects of it upon men's hearts be truly Divine. That is most likely to come from God which in its own nature is most fit, and in event is found to produce most likeness to God; to spread piety and virtue, to change men's hearts, and mend their manners.

Fourthly. He puts it to their choice, how he should come amongst them, whether "with a rod, or in love, and the spirit of meekness," ver. 21; that is, according as they were they would find him. If they continued perverse among themselves and with him, it would be necessary to come with a rod; that is, to exert his apostolical power in chastising them, by making some examples, and inflicting some diseases and corporal punishments, or by other censures for their faults. Note, Stubborn offenders must be used with severity. In families, in Christian communities, paternal pity and tenderness, Christian love and compassion, will sometimes force to use the rod. But this is far from being desirable, if it may be prevented. And therefore the apostle adds, that it was in their own option whether he should come with a rod, or in a quite different disposition and manner; "or in love, and the spirit of meekness." As much as if he had said, "Take warning, cease your unchristian feuds, rectify the abuses among you, and return to your duty, and you shall find me as gentle and benign as you can wish. It will be a force upon inclination to proceed with severity. I had rather come and display the tenderness of a father among you, than assert his authority. Do but your duty, and you have no reason to avoid my presence." Note, It is a happy temper in a minister to have the spirit of love and meekness predominant, and yet maintain his just authority.

their first spiritual fathers. He then drops the irony, and solemnly declares his wish that they had really made such progress, for this would redound to the honour of himself and those who laboured with him, for they would be his "crown of rejoicing."

iv. 9. "For:" assigning the reason for desiring that his reign with the Corinthians had come. "Last:" lowest and vilest.

iv. 10. Alford says, "Again the bitterest irony: 'How different our lot from yours! How are you to be envied, we to be pitied, on

CHAPTER V.

In this chapter the apostle, I. Blames them for their indulgence in the case of the incestuous person, and orders him to be excommunicated and delivered to Satan, ver. 1-7. II. He exhorts them to Christian purity, by purging out the old leaven, ver. 7, 8. And, III. Directs them to shun even the common conversation of Christians who were guilty of any notorious and flagitious wickedness, ver. 9-13.



It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

Here the apostle states the case, and,

First. Lets them know what was the common or general report concerning them, that one of their community was guilty of fornication, ver. 1. It was told in all places, to their dishonour, and the reproach of Christians. It was the more reproachful because it could not be repelled. Note, The heinous sins of professed Christians are quickly noted and noised abroad. We should walk circumspectly, for many eyes are upon us, and many mouths will be opened against us, if we fall into any scandalous practice. But this was not a common instance of fornication, but such as was "not so much as named among the Gentiles, that a man should have his father's wife." Either marry her whilst his father was alive, or keep her as his concubine, either when he was dead, or whilst he was alive. In either of these cases his criminal conversation with her might be called fornication; but had his father been dead, and he after his decease married to her, it had been incest still, but neither fornication nor adultery in the strictest sense. But to marry her, or keep her as a concubine, whilst his father was alive, though he had repudiated her, or she had deserted him, whether she were his own mother or not, was incestuous fornication. *Seculus incredible*, as Cicero calls it, *et prater unum in omni vita inaudium*.—Orat. pro Cluent.; when a woman had caused her daughter to be put away, and was married to her husband. 'Incredible wickedness!' says the orator, 'such I never heard of in all my life besides.' Not that there were no such instances of incestuous commerce or marriages among the heathens; but whenever they happened they gave a shock to every man of virtue and probity amongst them. They could not think of them without horror, nor mention them without dislike and detestation. Yet such a horrible wickedness was committed by one in the church of Corinth, and, as is probable, a leader of one of the factions amongst them; a principal man. Note, The best churches are in this state of imperfection, liable to very great corruptions. Is it any wonder, when so horrible a practice was tolerated in an apostolical church, a church planted by the great apostle of the Gentiles?

Secondly. He greatly blames them for their own conduct hereupon. They were "puffed up," ver. 2. They gloried, 1. Perhaps on account of this very scandalous person. [This interpretation appears to be erroneous. The apostle charges the Corinthians with arrogating to themselves superior wisdom and purity, while they ought to have been deeply humbled by the perpetration among them of this sin.] He might be a man of great eloquence, of deep science, and for this reason very greatly esteemed, and followed, and cried up by many amongst them. They were proud they had such a leader. Instead of mourning for his fall, and their own reproach upon his account, and renouncing him and removing him from the society, they continued to applaud him, and pride themselves in him. Note, Pride and self-esteem many times lie at the bottom of our immoderate esteem of others. And this makes us blind to their faults as to our own. It is true humility that will bring a man to a sight and acknowledgment of his errors. The proud man either wholly overlooks or artfully disguises his faults, or endeavours to transform his blemishes into beauties. Those of the Corinthians that were admirers of the incestuous person's gifts could overlook or extenuate his horrid practices. Or else, 2. It may intimate to us that some of the opposite party were puffed up. They were proud of their own standing, and trampled over him that fell. Note, It is a very wicked thing to glory over the miscarriages and sins of others. We should lay them to heart, and mourn for them, not be puffed up with them. Probably this was one effect of the divisions among them. The opposite party made their advantage of this scandalous lapse, and were glad of the opportunity. Note, It is a sad consequence of divisions among Christians, that it makes them apt to rejoice in iniquity. Others' sins should be our sorrow. Nay, churches should mourn for the scandalous behaviour of particular members, and, if they are incorrigible, should remove them. He that had done this wicked deed should have been taken away from among them.

Thirdly. We have the apostle's direction to them how they should now proceed with this scandalous sinner. He would have him excommunicated and delivered to Satan; ver. 3-5, "As absent in body, yet present in spirit, he had judged already as if he were present." That is, he had by revelation, and the

account of Christ. Our connection with him does nothing but reduce us to be fools, whereas ye have entered into full participation of him, and grown up to be wise, subtle Christians."

iv. 15. "I call you sons, for I alone am your father." Others may have been tutors, having the care and education of the children, but he alone the rights and affection of a father.

iv. 19, 20. "Power:" might in the spirit, as distinguished from mere empty, high-sounding speech.

miraculous gift of discerning vouchsafed him by the Spirit, as perfect a knowledge of the case, and had hereupon come to the following determination, not without special authority from the Holy Spirit. He says this to let them know that, though he was at a distance, he did not pass an unrighteous sentence, nor judge without having as full cognizance of the case as if he had been on the spot. Note, Those who would appear righteous judges to the world will take care to inform them they do not pass sentence without full proof and evidence. The apostle adds, "Him who hath so done this deed." The fact was not only heinously evil in itself, and horrible to the heathens, but there were some particular circumstances that greatly aggravated the offence. He had so committed the evil as to heighten the guilt by the manner of doing it. Perhaps he was a minister, a teacher, or a principal man amongst them. By this means the church and their profession were more reproached. Note, In dealing with scandalous sinners, not only are they to be charged with the fact, but the aggravating circumstances of it. He had judged that he should be delivered to Satan, ver. 5, and this was to be done in the name of Christ, and with the power of Christ, and in a full assembly, where the apostle would be also present in spirit, or by his spiritual gift of discerning at a distance. Some think that this is to be understood of a mere ordinary excommunication, and that delivering him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh is only meant of disowning him, and casting him out of the church, that by this means he might be brought to repentance, and his flesh might be mortified. Christ and Satan divide the world: and they that live in sin, when they profess relation to Christ, belong to another master, and by excommunication should be delivered up to him; and this in the name of Christ. Note, Church censures are Christ's ordinances, and should be dispensed in his name. It was to be done also when they were gathered together in full assembly. The more public, the more solemn; and the more solemn, the more likely to have good effect on the offender. Note, Church censures on notorious and incorrigible sinners should be passed with great solemnity. They who sin in this manner are to be rebuked before all, that all may fear, 1 Tim. v. 20. Others think the apostle is not to be understood of mere excommunication, but of a miraculous power or authority they had of delivering a scandalous sinner into the power of Satan, to have bodily diseases inflicted, to be tormented by him with bodily pains, which is their meaning of the destruction of the flesh. In this sense the destruction of the flesh has been a happy occasion of the salvation of the spirit. It is probable this was a mixed case. It was an extraordinary instance: and the church was to proceed against him by just censure; and the apostle, when they did so, put forth an act of extraordinary power, and gave him up to Satan; not for his destruction, but deliverance, at least for the destruction of the flesh, that the soul might be saved. Note, That the great end of church censures is the good of those who fall under them; their spiritual and eternal good. It is that their "spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," ver. 5. Yet it is not merely a regard to their benefit that is to be had in proceeding against them. For,

Fourthly, He hints the danger of contagion from this example. "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" The bad example of a man in rank and reputation is very mischievous; spreads the contagion far and wide. It did so probably in this very church and case: see 2 Cor. xii. 21. They could not be ignorant of this. The experience of the whole world was for it; one scabbed sheep infects a whole flock. A little leaven will quickly spread the ferment through a great lump. Note, Concern for their purity and preservation should engage Christian churches to remove gross and scandalous sinners.

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Here the apostle exhorts them to purity, by purging out the old leaven. In which observe,

First, The advice itself; addressed either, 1. To the church in general; and so purging out the old leaven that they might be a new lump, refers to the putting away from themselves that wicked person, ver. 13. Note, Christian churches should be pure and holy, and not bear such corrupt and scandalous members. They are to be unleavened, and should endure no such heterogeneous mixture to sour and corrupt them. Or, 2. To each particular member of the church. And so it implies, that they should purge themselves from all impurity of heart and life, especially from this kind of wickedness, to which the Corinthians were addicted to a proverb. See the argument at the beginning. This old leaven was in a particular manner to be purged out, that they might become a new lump. Note, Christians should be careful to keep themselves clean, as well as purge polluted members out of their society; and they should especially avoid the sins to which themselves were once most addicted, and the reigning vices of the places and people where they live. They were also to purge themselves from "malice and wickedness," all ill will and mischievous subtlety. This is leaven that sours the mind to a great degree. It is not improbable this was intended as a check to some who gloried in the scandalous behaviour of the offender, both out of pride and pique. Note, Christians should be particularly careful to keep free from malice and mischief. Love is the very essence and life of Christian religion. It is the fairest image of God, "for God is love," 1 Jno. iv. 16; and therefore it is no wonder if it be the greatest beauty and ornament of a Christian. But malice is murder in its principles. He that "hateth his brother is a murderer," 1 Jno. iii. 15; bears the image, and proclaims himself the offspring of him who was "a murderer from the beginning," Jno. viii. 44. How hateful should every thing be to a Christian that looks like malice and mischief!

Secondly, The reason with which this advice is enforced. "For Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," ver. 7. This is the great doctrine of the Gospel. The Jews, after they had killed the passover, kept the feast of unleavened bread. So must we, not for seven days only, but all our days. We should lie with our Saviour to sin; "be planted into the likeness of his death," by mortifying sin, and into "the likeness of his resurrection," by rising again to "newness of life," and that internal and external. We must have new hearts, and lead new lives. Note, The whole life of a Christian must be a feast of unleavened bread. His common conversation and his religious performances must be holy. He must "purge out the old leaven," and keep the feast with "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." He must be without guilt [that is, without cherished sin] in his carriage towards God and man. And the more there is of sincerity in our own profession the less shall we censure that of

others. Note on the whole, That the [atoning] sacrifice of our Redeemer is the strongest argument with a gracious heart for purity and sincerity. How sincere a regard did he shew to our welfare in dying for us! and how terrible a proof was his death of the detestable nature of sin, and God's displeasure against it! Heinous evil, that could not be expiated but with the blood of the Son of God! And shall a Christian love the murderer of his Lord? God forbid.

9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

Here the apostle advises them to shun the company and converse of scandalous professors. In which consider,

First, The advice itself. "I wrote to you in a letter not to company with fornicators," ver. 9. Some think this was an epistle written to them before, which is lost, [though containing nothing but what is to be found in this epistle.] Yet we have lost nothing by it, the Christian revelation being entire in those books of Scripture which are come down to us, which are all that were intended by God for the general use of Christians, or he could and would in his providence have preserved more of the writings of inspired men. Some think it is to be understood of this very epistle, that he had written this advice before he had full information of their whole case, but thought it needful now to be more particular; and therefore, on this occasion, he tells them, that if any man called a brother, any one professing Christianity, and being a member of a Christian church, were "a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer," &c., that they should not keep company with him, not so much as eat with such an one. They were to avoid all familiarity with him. They were to have no commerce with him; but, that they might shame him and bring him to repentance, must disclaim and shun him. Note, That Christians are to avoid the familiar conversation of fellow Christians that are notoriously wicked, and under just censure for their flagitious practices. Such disgrace the Christian name. They may call themselves brethren in Christ, but they are not Christian brethren. They are only fit companions for their brethren in iniquity, and to such company they should be left, till they mend their ways and doings.

Secondly, He limits this advice. He does not forbid Christians the like commerce with scandalously wicked heathens. He does not forbid them eating or conversing with the fornicators of this world, &c. They know no better. They profess no better. The gods they serve, and the worship they render to many of them, countenance such wickedness. [In the epistle to the Romans, the apostle sets forth their sinfulness.] And you must "needs go out of the world" if you will have no conversation with such men. Your Gentile neighbours are generally vicious and profane, and it is impossible, as long as you are in the world, and have any worldly business to do, but you must fall into their company; this cannot be wholly avoided. Note, Christians may and ought to testify more respect [or rather, sufferance] to loose worldlings than to loose Christians. This seems a paradox. Why should we shun the company of a profane or loose Christian rather than that of a profane or loose heathen?

Thirdly, The reason of this limitation is here assigned. It is impossible the one should be avoided. Christians must have gone out of the world to avoid the company of loose heathens; but this was impossible as long as they had business in the world. Whilst they are minding their duty, and doing their proper business, God can and will preserve them from contagion. Besides, they carry an antidote against the infection of their bad example, and are naturally upon the guard; they are apt to have a horror at their wicked practices. But the dread of sin wears off by familiar converse with wicked Christians. Our own safety and preservation [as well as a zeal for the purity of the church] is a reason of this difference. But, besides, heathens were such as Christians had nothing to do to judge and censure, and avoid upon a censure passed. For they "are without," ver. 12. Must be left to God's judgment, ver. 13. But as to members of the church, they are within, are professedly bound by the laws and rules of Christianity, and not only liable to the judgment of God, but to the censures of those who are set over them, and the fellow members of the same body, when they transgress those rules. Every Christian is bound to judge them unfit for communion and familiar converse. They are to be punished by having this mark of disgrace put upon them, that they may be shamed, and if possible reclaimed thereby. And the more, because the sins of such much more dishonour God than the sins of the openly wicked and profane can do. The church therefore is obliged to clear herself from all confederacy with them, or connivance at them, and to bear testimony against their wicked practices. Note, Though the church has nothing to do with those without, it must endeavour to keep clear of the guilt and reproach of those within.

Fourthly, He applies the argument to the case before him. "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person," ver. 13. Cast him out of your fellowship, and avoid his conversation.

CHAPTER VI.

In this chapter the apostle, I. Reproves them for going to law with one another about small matters, and bringing the cause before the heathen judges, ver. 1-3. II. He takes occasion hence to warn them against many gross sins to which they had been formerly addicted, ver. 9-12. III. And having cautioned them against the abuse of their liberty, he vehemently deborts them from fornication by various arguments, ver. 12-20.

v. 1. "This, practically speaking, forms the crisis of the whole epistle. It is as it were the burst of the storm, the mutterings of which, as Chrysostom observes, had already been heard in the earlier chapters, and of which the echoes are still discernible not only in this epistle but also in the second epistle, the first half of which is nothing less than an endeavour to allay the excitement and confusion created by this severe remonstrance" (Stanley). "Commonly:" generally. "It is reported that there is fornication generally among

you." Others take it with "reported," and render it "universally;" i.e., "there is nothing heard of except this." Alford: "actually;" "fornication is actually borne as a character among you." Omit "named." "Father's wife:" i.e., stepmother. For the father, see 2 Cor. vii. 12. Paul does not mean to say that this crime never occurred in history. Cases of this sort are indeed recorded, but they are always spoken of as rare exceptions, that excited the utmost public horror."



ARE any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Know ye

not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? 4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. 5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. 7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather *suffer yourselves to be defrauded*? 8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your brethren*.



ROMAN JUDGE.

Here the apostle reproves them for going to law with one another, before heathen judges, for little matters, and therein blames all venacious lawsuits. In the chapter before, he had directed them to punish heinous sins among themselves by church censures; here he directs them to determine controversies with one another by church counsel and advice. Concerning which, observe,

First. The fault he blames them for. It was going to law. Not but that "the law is good, if a man use it lawfully." But, 1. Brother went to law with brother, ver. 6. One member of the church with another. The near relation would not preserve peace and good understanding. The bonds of fraternal love were broken through. And "a brother offended," as Solomon saith, "is harder to be won than a strong city; their contentions are like the bars of a castle," *Pr. xviii. 19*. Note, Christians should not contend with one another, for they are brethren. This duly attended to would prevent lawsuits, and put an end to quarrels and litigations. 2. They brought the matter before the heathen magistrates. They went to law "before the unjust, not before the saints," ver. 1; brought the controversy before unbelievers, ver. 6; and did not compose it among themselves, Christians and saints, at least in profession. This tended much to the reproach of Christianity; it published at once their folly and unpeaceableness, whereas they pretended to be the children of wisdom, and the followers of the Lamb, the meek and lowly Jesus, the Prince of peace. And therefore, saith the apostle, "Dare any of you, having a" controversy with "another, go to law," plead him, bring the matter to a hearing before the

unjust? Note, Christians should not dare to do anything that tends to the [well-founded] reproach of their Christian name and profession. 3. Here is at least an intimation that they went to law for trivial matters, things of little value. For the apostle blames them that they did not take wrong rather than go to law, ver. 7, which must be understood of matters not very important. In matters of great damage to ourselves or families, we may use lawful means to right ourselves. We are not bound to sit down and suffer the injury tamely, without stirring for our own relief; but in matters of small consequence better put up with the wrong. Christians should be of a forgiving temper; and it is more for their ease and honour to suffer small injuries and inconveniences than seem to be contentious.

Secondly. He lays before them the aggravations of their fault. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" ver. 2; "shall judge angels," ver. 3; and are they unworthy to judge the smallest matters, the things of this life? It was a dishonour to their Christian character, a forgetting their real dignity as saints, for them to carry little matters about the things of life before heathen magistrates. When they were to judge the world, nay, to judge angels, it is unaccountable that they could not determine little controversies among one another. By judging the world and angels, some think is to be understood, their being assessors to Christ in the great judgment day; it being said of our Saviour's disciples, that they should at that day "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," *Mat. xix. 28*; and elsewhere we read of our Lord's coming "with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment on all," &c., *Jude 14, 15*; "he will come to judgment with all his saints," *1 Thes. iii. 13*. They themselves are indeed to be judged, see *Mat. xxv. 31-41*; but they may first be acquitted, and then advanced to the bench to approve and applaud the righteous judgment of Christ both on men and angels. And in no other sense can they be judges. They are not partners in their Lord's commission, but they have the honour to sit by, and see his proceedings against the wicked world, and approve it. Others understand this judging of the world to be meant, when the empire should become Christian. But it does not appear that the Corinthians had knowledge of the empire's becoming Christian; and if they had, in what sense could Christian emperors be said to judge angels? Others understand it of their condemning the world by their faith and practice, and casting out evil angels by miraculous power, which was not confined to the first ages or to the apostles. The first sense seems to be most natural; and at the same time gives the utmost force to the argument. Shall Christians have the honour to sit with the sovereign Judge at the last, whilst he passeth judgment on sinful men and evil angels, and are they not worthy to judge of the trifles about which you contend before heathen magistrates? Cannot they make up your mutual differences? Why must you bring them before heathen judges? When you are to judge them, is it fit to appeal to their judicature? Must you, about the affairs of this life, set them to judge who are of no esteem in the church? So some read, and perhaps most properly, ver. 4, heathen magistrates, *ἡσυχαστῶν*; the "things that are not," *ch. i. 28*. Must they be called in to judge in your controversies of whom you ought to entertain so low an opinion? Is not this shameful? ver. 5. Some who read it as our translators make it an ironical speech. If you have such controversies depending, set them to judge who are of least esteem among yourselves. The meanness of your own members are able sure to determine these disputes. Refer the matters in variance to any rather than go to law about them before heathen judges. They are trifles not worth contending about, and may easily be decided if you have first conquered your own spirits, and brought them into a true Christian temper. Bear and forbear, and the men of meanest skill among you may end your quarrels. "I speak it to your shame," ver. 5. Note, It is a shame that little quarrels should grow to such a head among Christians, that they cannot be determined by arbitration of the brethren.

Thirdly. He puts them on a method to remedy this fault, and this twofold. 1. By referring it to some to make it up. "Is it so that there is not a wise man amongst you?" No one "able to judge between his brethren?" ver. 5. You who value yourselves so much upon your wisdom and knowledge, who are so puffed up upon your extraordinary gifts and endowments, is there none among you fit for this office? none that has wisdom enough to judge in these differences? Must brethren quarrel, and the heathen magistrate judge, in a church so famous as yours for knowledge and wisdom? It is a reproach to you, that quarrels should run so high, and none of your wise men interpose to prevent it. Note, Christians should never engage in lawsuits till all other remedies are tried in vain. Prudent Christians should prevent, if possible, their disputes, [and terminate them when they arise by Christian and affectionate advice,] and not courts of judicature decide them, especially in matters of no great importance. 2. By suffering wrong, rather than taking this method to right themselves. It is utterly a fault among you to go to law in this matter. It is a fault of one side always to go to law, except in a case where the title is indeed dubious, and there is a friendly agreement of both parties to refer it to the judgment of those learned in the law to decide it. And this is referring it rather than contending about it, which is the thing the apostle here seems chiefly to condemn. Should you not rather take wrong, rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Note, A Christian should rather suffer a little injury than tease himself, and provoke others, by a litigious contest. The peace of his own mind, and the calm of his neighbourhood, is more worth than victory in such a contest, or reclaiming his own right, especially when the quarrel must be decided by those who are enemies to religion. But the apostle tells them, they were so far from bearing injuries, that they actually did wrong, and defrauded, and that their brethren. Note, It is utterly a fault to wrong and defraud any, but it is an aggravation of this fault to defraud our Christian brethren; the ties of mutual love ought to be stronger between them than between others. And "love worketh no ill to his neighbour," *Rom. xiii. 10*. Those who love the brotherhood can never, under the influence of this principle, hurt or injure them.

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

v. 2. "Taken away:" *i.e.*, by excommunication.

v. 5. "A more solemn mode of stating the fact of excommunication, as expressed by our Lord in *Matt. xviii. 17*; one designed to exhibit more vividly the sad condition of him who has been cast out from the kingdom of God, and so consigned into the hands of his great enemy, uncheered by the light and comforts of the Saviour."

v. 8. "The feast:" figurative for that consecrated life which should follow upon our union with Christ in his death.

v. 9. Alluding to a former short epistle, not preserved, in which the Corinthians imagined that he forbade all intercourse with "those outside." Thus verse 11 should be rendered, "Now—*i.e.*, the case being such that you must consort with fornicators among the heathen, I wrote (in the former letter) that," &c.

vi. 1. "Paul does not here condemn those who from necessity have a cause before unbelieving judges, as when a person is summoned to court, but those who of their own accord bring their brethren into

Here he takes occasion to warn them against many heinous evils to which they had been formerly addicted.

1. He puts it to them as a plain truth, of which they could not be ignorant, that such sinners should not inherit the kingdom of God. The meanest among them must know thus much, that "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God," ver. 9, shall not be owned as true members of his church on earth, nor admitted as glorious members of the church in heaven. All unrighteousness is sin, and all reigning sin, nay, every actual sin committed deliberately, and not repented of, shuts out of the kingdom of heaven. He instances in several sorts of sins,—against the first and second commandments, as idolaters; against the seventh, as adulterers, fornicators, effeminate, and sodomites; against the eighth, as thieves and extortioners, that by force or fraud wrong their neighbours; against the ninth, as revilers; and against the tenth, as covetous and drunkards, as those who are in a fair way to break all the rest. Those who knew anything of [gospel] religion, must know heaven could never be intended for these. The scum of the earth are no way fit to fill the heavenly mansions. They who do the devil's work can never receive God's wages, at least, so other than death, the just wages of sin, *Rom. vi. 23*.

Secondly, Yet he warns them against deceiving themselves. "Be not deceived." Those who cannot but know the forementioned truth are but too apt not to attend to it. Men are very much inclined to flatter themselves that God is such a one as themselves, and that they may live in sin and yet die in Christ; may live the life of the devil's children, and yet go to heaven with the children of God. But this is all a gross cheat. Note, It is very much the concern of mankind that they do not cheat themselves in the matters of their souls. We cannot hope to sow to the flesh and yet reap everlasting life.

Thirdly, He puts them in mind what a change the Gospel and grace of God had made in them. "Such were some of you," ver. 11; such notorious sinners as he had been reckoning up. The Greek word is *ταῦτα*, 'such things' were some of you, very monsters rather than men. Note, Some that are eminently good after their conversion have been as remarkably wicked before. *Quantum mutatus ab illo*.—"How glorious a change does grace make!" It changes the vilest of men into saints and the children of God. "Such were some of you, but" you are not what you were, "ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Note, The wickedness of men before conversion is no bar to their regeneration and reconciliation to God. The blood of Christ and the washing of regeneration can purge away all guilt and defilement. Here is a rhetorical change of the natural order; "Ye are sanctified, ye are justified." Sanctification is mentioned before justification; and yet the name of Christ, by which we are justified, is placed before the Spirit of God, by whom we are sanctified. Our justification is owing [solely] to the merit of Christ, our sanctification to the operation of the Spirit, but both go together. Note, None are cleansed from the guilt of sin and reconciled to God through Christ, but those who are also sanctified by his Spirit. All who are made righteous in the sight of God are made holy by the grace of God.

12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. 14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. 15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid. 16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

The 12th and former part of the 13th verse seem to relate to the early dispute among Christians about the distinction of meats, and yet to be prefatory to the caution that follows against fornication. The connexion seems plain enough, if we attend to the famous determination of the apostles, *Acts xv.*, where the prohibition of certain food was joined with that of fornication. Now some among the Corinthians seem to have imagined that they were as much at liberty in the point of fornication as of meats, especially because it was not a sin condemned by the laws of their country. They were ready to say even in the case of fornication, "All things are lawful for me." This pernicious conceit St. Paul here sets himself to oppose; tells them that many things lawful in themselves were not expedient at certain times and under particular circumstances; and Christians should not barely consider what was in itself lawful to be done, but what was fit for them to do, considering their profession, character, relations, and hopes, and that they should be very careful that, by carrying this maxim too far, they were not brought into bondage either to a crafty deceiver or a carnal inclination. "All things are lawful for me," saith he, "but I will not be brought into the power of any" ver. 12. Even in lawful things he would not

be subject to the impositions of an usurped authority; so far was he from apprehending, that in the things of God it was lawful for any power on earth to impose his own sentiments. Note, There is a liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, in which we must stand fast; but sure he would never carry his liberty so far as to put himself into the power of any bodily appetite. Though all meats were supposed lawful he would not become a glutton or a drunkard. And much less would he abuse the maxim of lawful liberty to countenance the sin of fornication, which, though it might be allowed by the Corinthian laws, was a trespass upon the laws of nature, [law of God,] and utterly unbecoming a Christian. He would not abuse this maxim about eating and drinking, to encourage any intemperance or indulge a carnal appetite. "Though meats are for the belly, and the belly for meats," ver. 13; though the belly was made to receive food, and food was originally ordained to fill the belly, yet if it be not convenient for me,—and much more, if it be inconvenient and likely to enslave me, if I am in any danger of being subjected to my belly and appetite,—I will abstain. "But God shall destroy both it and them," at least as to their mutual relation. There is a time coming when the human body will need no further recruits of food. Some of the ancients suppose that it is to be understood of abolishing the belly as well as the food; and that though the same body be raised at the great day, yet not with all the same members, some being utterly unnecessary in a future state, as the belly, for instance, when the man is never to hunger, nor thirst, nor eat, nor drink more. But, whether this be true or no, there is a time coming when the need and use of food shall be abolished. Note, The expectation we have of being without bodily appetites in a future life is a very good argument against being under their power in the present life. This seems to me the sense of the apostle's argument, and that this passage is plainly to be connected with his caution against fornication, though some make it a part of the former argument against litigious lawsuits, especially before heathen magistrates, and the enemies to true religion. These suppose that the apostle argues that, though it may be lawful to claim our rights, yet it is not always expedient, and it is utterly unfit for Christians to put themselves into the power of infidel judges, lawyers, and solicitors, on these accounts. But this connexion seems not so natural. The transition to his arguments against fornication, as I have laid it, seems very natural. "But the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body," ver. 13. Meats and the belly are for one another. Not so fornication and the body.

First, "The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord." This is the first argument he uses against this sin, for which the heathen inhabitants of this city were infamous, and the converts to Christianity retained too favourable an opinion of it. It is making things to cross their intention and use. "The body is not for fornication," it was never formed for any such use or purpose, "but for the Lord," for the service and honour of God. It is to be an instrument of righteousness to holiness, *Rom. vi. 19*, and therefore is never to be made an instrument of uncleanness. It is to be a member of Christ, and therefore must not be made the member of a harlot, ver. 15, "And the Lord for the body," that is, as some think, Christ is to be Lord of the body, to have property in it, and dominion over it, having assumed a body and been made to partake of our nature, that he might be head of his church and head over all things, *Heb. ii. 5, 18*. Note, We must take care that we do not use what belongs to Christ as if it were our own, and much less to his dishonour.

Secondly, Some understand this last passage, "the Lord for the body," that is, for its resurrection and glorification, according to what follows, ver. 14, which is a second argument against this sin, namely, the honour intended to be put on our bodies. "God hath both raised up our Lord, and will raise us up by his power," ver. 14, by the power of him "who shall change our vile body, and make it like to his glorious body, by that power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself," *Phil. iii. 20*. It is an honour done to the body that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, and it will be an honour to our bodies that they will be raised. Let us not abuse these bodies by sin, and make them vile, which, if they be kept pure, shall, notwithstanding their present vileness, be made like to Christ's glorious body. Note, The hopes [assurance] of a resurrection to glory should restrain Christians from dishonouring their bodies by fleshly lusts.

Thirdly, A third argument is the honour already put on them. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" ver. 15. If the soul be united to Christ by faith, the whole man is become a member of his mystical body; the body is in union with Christ as well as the soul. How honourable is this to the Christian; his very flesh is a part of the mystical body of Christ. Note, It is good to know in what honourable relations we stand, that we may endeavour to become them. But now, saith the apostle, "shall I take the members of Christ, and make them members of an harlot? God forbid." Or, take away the members of Christ? Were not this gross abuse, and the most notorious injury? Is it not dishonouring Christ and dishonouring ourselves to the very last degree? What, make Christ's members the members of a harlot, prostitute them to so vile a use! The thought is to be abhorred. God forbid. "Know ye not, that he who is joined to an harlot is one body," namely, with her's? "For two," saith he, "shall be one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit," ver. 16, 17. Nothing can stand in greater opposition to the honourable relations and alliances of a Christian man than this sin. He is joined to the Lord in union with Christ, and made partaker, by faith, of his Spirit. One spirit lives, and breathes, and moves in the head and members. Christ and his faithful disciples are one, *1 Jno. xvii. 21, 22*. "But he that is joined to an harlot is one body, for two shall be one flesh," namely, by carnal conjunction, which was ordained of God only to be in a married state. Now, shall one in so close union with Christ as to be one spirit with him, yet be so united to an harlot as to become one flesh with her? Is not this a vile attempt to make an union between Christ and harlots? And can a greater indignity be offered to him or ourselves? Can any thing be more inconsistent with our profession or relation? Note, The sin of fornication is a great injury in a Christian to his Head and Lord, and a great reproach and blot on his profession. It is no wonder, therefore, the apostle should say, "Flee fornication," ver. 18; avoid it, keep out of the reach of temptations to it, of provoking objects; direct the eyes and mind to other things and thoughts. *Alia vitia pugando, sola libido fugiendo vincitur*.—"Other vices may be conquered in fight, this only by flight," say many of the fathers.

Fourthly, A fourth argument is, that it is a sin against our own bodies. "Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body," ver. 18. Every sin, that is, every other sin, every external act of sin besides, is without the body; it is not so much an abuse of the body as of somewhat else, as wine by the drunkard, food by the glutton, &c. Nor doth it give the power of the body to another person; nor doth it so much tend to the reproach of the body, and to render it vile. This sin is in a peculiar manner styled uncleanness, pollution, because no sin has so much external turpitude in it, especially in a Christian. He sinneth against his own body; he defiles it, he degrades it, makes it one with the body of that vile creature with whom he sinneth; he casts vile reproach on what his Redeemer has dignified to the last degree, by taking it into union with himself. Note, We should not make our present vile bodies more vile by sinning against them.

this situation and harass them, as it were, through means of unbelievers, while it is in their power to employ another remedy" (Calvin). "And besides the scandal of such a proceeding, as exposing their internal differences to the eyes of the heathen, there were certain formularies to be gone through in the heathen law courts, such as adjuration by heathen deities, which would involve them in idolatrous practices" (Wordsworth).

vi. 2. Compare Matt. xii. 41; but see also (especially) Matt. xix.

28; Dan. vii. 22. St. Paul seems to mean here an active participation by the saints in the judicial work of Christ.

vi. 4. "If ye have judgments concerning civil cases ye set up as judges those who are of no account in the church (i.e., the heathen magistrates, by bringing cases before them);" or, "If such causes arise among you, set those to judge them who are of no account among you; do not go out of your own number to others to have them judged: the meanest among you is capable of doing it."

Fifthly. The fifth argument against this sin is, that the bodies of Christians are "the temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in them, and which they have of God," ver. 19. He that is joined to Christ is one spirit; he is yielded up to him, and is consecrated thereby, and set apart for his use, and is hereupon possessed, and occupied, and inhabited by his Holy Spirit. This is the proper notion of a temple: a place where God dwells, and sacred to his use, by his own claim and his creatures' surrender. Such temples real Christians are of the Holy Ghost. Must he not, therefore, be God? But the inference is plain, that hence we are not our own; we are yielded up to God, and possessed by and for God, nay, and this in virtue of a purchase made of us; "Ye are bought with a price." In short, our bodies were made for God; they were purchased for him. If we are Christians indeed, they are yielded to him, and he inhabits and occupies them by his Spirit; so that our bodies are not our own, but his. And shall we desecrate his temple, defile it, prostitute it, and offer it up to the use and service of a harlot? Horrid sacrifice! This is robbing God in the worst sense. Note, The temple of the Holy Ghost must be kept holy. Our bodies must be kept as his whose they are, and fit for his use and residence.

Sixthly. The apostle argues from the obligation we are under to "glorify God both with our body and spirit which are his," ver. 20. He made both, he bought both, and therefore both belonged to him, and should be used and employed for him, and therefore should not be defiled, alienated from him, and prostituted by us. No, they must be kept as vessels fitted for our Master's use. We must look upon our whole selves as holy to the Lord, and must use our bodies as what belongs to him and is sacred to his use and service. We are to honour him with our bodies and spirits, which are his; and therefore sure must abstain from fornication, and not only from the outward act, but from the adultery of the heart, as our Lord calls it, *Mat. v. 28*. Body and spirit are to be kept clean, that God may be honoured by both; but God is dishonoured when either is defiled by so heastly a sin. Therefore flee fornication, nay, and every sin. Use your bodies for the glory and service of their Lord and Master. Note, We are not proprietors of ourselves, nor have power over ourselves, and therefore should not use ourselves according to our own pleasure, but according to his will, and for his glory, whose we are, and whom we should serve, *Acts xxvii. 23*.

CHAPTER VII.

In this chapter the apostle answers some cases proposed to him by the Corinthians about marriage. He, I. Shews them that marriage was appointed as a remedy against fornication; and therefore persons had better marry than burn. ver. 1—10. II. He gives direction to those who were married to continue together, though they might have an unbelieving relative, unless the unbeliever would part, in which case a Christian would not be in bondage, ver. 10—16. III. He shews them that becoming Christians does not change their external state; and therefore advises every one to continue in the general in that state in which he was called, ver. 17—25. IV. He advises them by reason of the present distress to keep themselves unmarried. Hints the shortness of time, and how they should improve it so as to grow dead and indifferent to the comforts of the world; and shews them how worldly cares hinder their devotions, and distract them in the service of God, ver. 25—36. V. He directs them in the disposal of their virgins, ver. 36—39. VI. And closes the chapter with advice to widows how to dispose of themselves in that state, ver. 39, 40.



OW concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: *It is good for a man not to touch a woman.* 2 Nevertheless, *to avoid fornication,* let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence:

and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. 6 But I speak this by permission, *and* not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, *It is good for them if they abide even as I.* 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

The apostle comes now, as a faithful and skilful casuist, to answer some cases of conscience which the Corinthians had proposed to him. Those were things whereof they wrote to him, ver. 1. As the lips of ministers should keep knowledge, so the people should ask the law at their mouths. The apostle was as ready to resolve as they were to propose their doubts. In the former chapter he warns them to avoid fornication; here he gives some directions about marriage, the remedy God had appointed for it. He tells them in general,

First. That it was good, in that juncture of time at least, to abstain from marriage altogether; "It is good for a man not to touch a woman," not to take her to wife. By good here not understanding what is so conformable to the mind and will of God as if to do otherwise were sin,—an extreme into which many of the ancients have run in favour of celibacy and virginity. Should the apostle be understood in this sense he would contradict much of the rest of his discourse. But it is good, that is, either abstracting from circumstances there are many things in which the state of celibacy hath the advantage above the marriage state; or else at this juncture, by reason of the distresses of the Christian church, it would be a convenience for Christians to keep themselves single, provided they have the gift of continency, and at the same time can keep themselves chaste. The expression also may carry in it an intimation that Christians must avoid all occasions of this sin, and flee all fleshly lusts, and incentives to them; must neither look on nor touch a woman, so as to provoke lustful inclinations. Yet,

Secondly. He informs them that marriage, and the comforts and satisfactions of that state, are by Divine wisdom prescribed for preventing fornication, ver. 2. *Propter*, fornications, all sorts of lawless lust. To avoid these, "Let every man," saith he, "have his own wife, and every woman her own husband," that is, marry and confine themselves to their own mates. And when they are married, let each render the other due benevolence, ver. 3. that is, consider the disposition and exigency of each other, and render conjugal duty, which is owing to each other. For as the apostle argues, ver. 4, in the married state, neither person has power over their own body, but has delivered it into the power of the other; the wife her's into the power of the husband, the husband his into the power of the wife. Note, That polygamy, or the marriage of more persons than one, as well as adultery, must be a breach of marriage covenants and violation of the partner's rights; and therefore they should not defraud one another of the use of their bodies, nor any other of the comforts of the conjugal state, appointed of God for keeping "the vessel in sanctification and honour," and preventing the lusts of uncleanness. "Except it be with" mutual "consent," ver. 5, and "for a time" only, whilst they employ themselves in some extraordinary duties of religion, or give themselves "to fasting and prayer." Note, Seasons of deep humiliation require abstinence from lawful pleasures. But this separation between husband and wife must not be for a continuance, lest they expose themselves to Satan's temptations, by reason of their incontinence or inability to contain. Note, Persons expose themselves to great danger by attempting to perform what is above their strength, and at the same time not bound upon them by any law of God. If they abstain from lawful enjoyments they may be ensnared into unlawful ones. The remedies God hath provided against sinful inclinations are certainly best.

Thirdly. The apostle limits what he had said about every man's having his own wife, &c.; ver. 2, "I speak this by permission, not of command." He did not lay it as an injunction upon every man to marry without exception; any man might marry; no law of God prohibited the thing. But, on the other hand, no law bound a man to marry, so that he sinned if he did not; I mean, unless his circumstances required it for the preventing the lusts of uncleanness. It was a thing in which men by the laws of God were in a great measure left at liberty; and, therefore, Paul did not bind every man to marry, though every man had an allowance. No; he could wish all men were as himself, ver. 7; that is, single, and capable of living continently in that state. There were several conveniences in it, which at that season, if not at others, made it more eligible in itself. Note, It is a mark of true goodness [godliness] to wish all men as happy as ourselves; but it did not answer the intentions of Divine providence as well for all men to have as much command of this appetite as Paul had. It was a gift vouchsafed to such persons as Infinite Wisdom thought proper; "Every one hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that." Natural constitutions vary, and, where there may not be much difference in the constitution, different degrees of grace are vouchsafed, which may give some a greater victory over natural inclination than others. Note, The gifts of God both in nature and grace are variously distributed; some have them after this manner, and some after that. Paul could wish all men were as himself, but "all men cannot receive such a saying, save they to whom it is given," *Mat. xix. 11*.

Fourthly. He sums up his sense on this head; ver. 9, 10, "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows," to those in a state of virginity or widowhood, "It is good for them if they abide even as I." There are many conveniences, and especially at this juncture, in a single state, to render it preferable to a married one. It is convenient therefore, that the unmarried abide as I, which plainly implies that Paul was at that time unmarried. "But if they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn." This is God's remedy for lust. The fire may be quenched by the means he has appointed; and marriage, with all its inconveniences, is much better than to burn with impure and lustful desires. "Marriage is honourable in all;" but it is a duty to them who cannot contain, nor conquer those inclinations. [The passion here referred to is often compared to a fire: see *Virg. Æn. iv. 68*. It is better to marry, even with all the inconveniences attending the marriage life in a time of distress and persecution in the church, (ver. 26,) than to be the prey of raging, consuming, and exciting passions.—A. B.]

10 And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband: 11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife. 12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not

the body created for fornication, nor can this transitoriness be predicated of it: the body is for the Lord, and the Lord (in his mediatorial work) for the body; and God raised up the Lord and will raise up us (our bodies). So that the body is not perishable, and he that fornicates sins against his own body."

vii. 1. Alford says that this chapter was written under the strong impression of the near approach of the end of this state of affairs, and as advising them under circumstances in which persecution and

vi. 12—20. "All things are lawful:" words probably used by Paul referring to things indifferent, but perverted by some in Corinth, who argued that the existence of bodily appetites proved the lawfulness of their gratification. Alford says, "The argument is, meats are expressly created for the belly, and the belly for them, by its organisation being fitted to assimilate them; and both these are of a transitory nature. In the change to the more perfect state, God will do away with both. Therefore meats are indifferent. But neither is

under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. 16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save *thy* husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save *thy* wife?

In this paragraph the apostle gives them direction in a case which must be very frequent in that age of the world, especially among the Jewish converts, I mean whether they were to live with heathen relatives in a married state. Moses' law permitted divorce; and there was a famous instance in the Jewish state, when the people were obliged to put away their idolatrous wives, *Ezr. x. 3*. This might move a scruple in many minds, whether converts to Christianity were not bound to put away, or desert their mates, continuing infidels. Concerning this matter, the apostle here gives direction. And,

First. In general he tells them that marriage by Christ's command is for life: and, therefore, those who are married must not think of separation. The wife must not "depart from the husband," ver. 10; nor "the husband put away his wife," ver. 11. This "I command," saith the apostle, "yet not I, but the Lord;" not that he commanded any thing of his own head, or upon his own authority. Whatever he commanded was the Lord's command; dictated by his Spirit, and enjoined by his authority. But his meaning is, that the Lord himself with his own mouth had forbidden such separations, *Mat. v. 32; xix. 9; Mar. x. 11; Lu. xvi. 18*. Note, Man and wife cannot separate at pleasure, or dissolve when they will their matrimonial bonds and relation. They must not separate for any other cause than what Christ allows. And, therefore, the apostle advises that if any woman had been separated, either by a voluntary act of her own, or by an act of her husband, she should continue unmarried, and seek reconciliation with her husband, that they might cohabit again. Note, Husbands and wives should not quarrel at all, or should be quickly reconciled. They are bound to each other for life. The Divine law allows of no separation. They cannot throw off the burthen; and, therefore, should set their shoulders to it, and endeavour to make it as light to each other as they can.

Secondly. He brings the general advice home to the case of such as had an unbelieving mate, ver. 12. "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord;" that is, the Lord had not so expressly spoken to this case, as to the former of divorce. It doth not mean that the apostle spoke without authority from the Lord, or decided this case by his own wisdom, without the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. He closes this subject with a declaration to the contrary, ver. 40, "I think also, that I have the Spirit of God." But having thus prefaced his advice, we may attend, 1. To the advice itself; which is, that if an unbelieving husband or wife were pleased to dwell with a Christian relative the other should not separate. The husband should not put away an unbelieving wife, nor the wife leave an unbelieving husband, ver. 12, 13. The Christian calling did not dissolve the marriage covenant, but bind it the faster by bringing it back to the original institution, limiting it to two persons, and binding them together for life. The believer is not by faith in Christ loosed from matrimonial bonds to an unbeliever, but is at once bound and made apt to be a better relative; but though a believing wife or husband should not separate from an unbelieving mate, yet, if the unbelieving relative desert the believer, and no means can reconcile to a cohabitation, in such a case a brother or sister is not in bondage, ver. 15; not tied up to the unreasonable humour, and bound servilely to follow, or cleave to the malicious deserter, or not bound to live unmarried after all proper means for reconciliation have been tried, at least, if the deserter contracts another marriage, or be guilty of adultery, which was a very easy supposition, because a very common instance among the heathen inhabitants of Corinth. In such a case the deserted person must be free to marry again, and it is granted on all hands; and some think, that such a malicious desertion is as much a dissolution of the marriage covenant as death itself. For how is it possible that the two shall be one flesh, when the one is maliciously bent to part from, or put away the other? Indeed, the deserter seems still bound by the matrimonial contract; and therefore the apostle saith, ver. 11, that "if she depart" from her husband, upon account of his infidelity, "let her remain unmarried." But the deserted party seems to be left more at liberty, (I mean, supposing all the proper means have been used to reclaim the deserter, and other circumstances make it necessary,) to marry another person. It does not seem reasonable they should still be bound, when it is rendered impossible to perform conjugal duties, or enjoy conjugal comforts, through the mere fault of their mate. In such a case marriage would be a state of servitude indeed. [It is not improbable that the apostle meant merely that the party deserted was freed from many obligations to the other, not, that the marriage was dissolved.] But, whatever liberty be indulged Christians in such a case as this, they are not allowed for the mere infidelity of an husband or wife to separate; but, if the unbeliever be willing, they should continue in the relation, and cohabit as those who are thus related. This is the apostle's general direction. 2. We have here the reasons of this advice. 1st. Because the relation or state is sanctified by the holiness of either party; "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife by the husband," ver. 14; or, "hath been sanctified." The relation itself, and the conjugal use of each other, are sanctified to the believer; "to the pure all things are pure," *Tit. i. 15*. Marriage is a Divine institution, it is a compact for life by God's appointment. Should converse and congress with unbelievers in that relation defile the believer, or render him or her offensive to God, the ends of marriage would have been defeated, and the comforts of it in a manner destroyed, in the circumstances in which Christians then were. But the apostle tells them that, though they were yoked with unbelievers, yet, if themselves were holy, marriage was to them a holy state, and marriage comforts even with an unbelieving relative were sanctified enjoyments. It was no more displeasing to God for them to continue to live as they did before with their unbelieving or heathen relation, than if they had become converts together. If one of the relatives were become holy, nothing of the duties or lawful comforts of the married state could defile them, and render them displeasing to God, though the other were a heathen. He is sanctified for the wife's sake; she is sanctified for the husband's sake; both are one flesh. He is to be reputed clean who is one flesh with her who is holy, and vice versa: "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy," ver. 14; that is, they would be heathen, out of the pale of the church and covenant of God. They would not be of the holy seed, as the Jews are called, *Isa. vi. 13*; but common and unclean, in the same sense as heathens in general were styled in the apostle's vision, *Acts x. 28*. This way of speaking is according to the dialect of the Jews; among whom a child begot by parents yet heathens was said to be begotten out of holiness; and a child begotten by parents made proselytes is said to be begotten *intra sanctitatem*,—"within the holy inclosure." Thus Christians are called commonly saints, such they are by profession, separated to be a peculiar people of God, and as such distinguished from the world; and, therefore, the children born to Christians, though married to unbelievers, are not to be reckoned as part of the world, but of the church; a holy, not a common and unclean, seed. Continue, therefore, to live even with unbelieving relatives; for if you are holy the relation is so, the state is so, you may make a

holy use even of an unbelieving relative in conjugal duties, and your seed will be holy too. What a comfort is this, where both relatives are believers? 2nd. Another reason is, that God hath called Christians to peace, ver. 15. The Christian religion obliges us to carry it peaceably in all relations, natural and civil. We are bound as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all men, *Rom. xii. 18*; and, therefore, surely, to promote the peace and comfort of our nearest relatives, those with whom we are one flesh, nay, though they should be infidels. Note, It should be the labour and study of those who are married to make each other as easy and happy as possible. 3rd. A third reason is, that it is possible for the believing relative to be an instrument of the other's salvation; ver. 16, "What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?" Note, It is the plain duty of those in so near a relation to endeavour the salvation of their souls to whom they are related. Do not separate. There is other duty now called for; the conjugal relation calls for the most close and endeared affection, it is a contract for life. And should a Christian desert a mate, when an opportunity offers to give the most glorious proof of love? Stay, and labour heartily [and with prayer] the conversion of thy relative; endeavour to save a soul. Who knows but this may be the event? It is not impossible; and, though there be no great probability, saving a soul is so good and glorious a service, that the bare possibility should put one on exerting one's self. Note, Mere possibility of success should be a sufficient motive with us to use our diligent endeavours for saving the souls of our relations. "What know I but I may save his soul?" should move me to attempt it.

17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. 18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. 20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. 21 Art thou called *being* a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. 22 For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, *being* free, is Christ's servant. 23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. 24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

Here the apostle takes occasion to advise them to continue in the state and condition in which Christianity found them, and they became converts to it. And here,

First. He lays down this rule in general; as God hath distributed to every one. Note, Our states and circumstances in this world are distributions of Divine providence. This fixes the bounds of men's habitations, and orders their steps. God setteth up and pulleth down; and again, "as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk." Whatever his circumstances or condition were when he was converted to Christianity, let him abide therein, and suit his conversation to it: the rules of Christianity reach every condition, and in every state a man may live so as to be a credit to it. Note, It is the duty of every Christian to suit his behaviour to his condition, and the rules of religion; to be content with his lot, and carry himself in his rank and place as becomes a Christian. The apostle adds, that this was a general rule, to be observed at all times, and in all places; "So ordain I in all churches."

Secondly. He instances in particular cases, as, 1. That of circumcision. "Is any man called being circumcised? let him not be uncircumcised. Is any man called being uncircumcised? let him not become circumcised." It matters not, whether a man be a Jew or Gentile, within the covenant of peculiarity made with Abraham, or without it. He who is converted being a Jew has no need to give himself uneasiness upon that head, and wish himself uncircumcised. Nor is he who is converted from Gentilism under an obligation to be circumcised; nor should he be concerned because he wants that mark of distinction which did heretofore belong to the people of God. For, as the apostle goes on, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commands of God," ver. 19: in point of acceptance with God, it is neither here nor there whether men be circumcised or not. Note, It is practical religion, sincere obedience to the commands of God, [as the evidence of real faith,] on which the Gospel lays stress. External observances without internal piety are as nothing. Therefore, "let every man abide in the same calling," that is, state, "wherein he was called," ver. 20. 2. That of servitude and freedom. It was common in that age of the world for many to be in a state of slavery, bought and sold for money, and so the property of those who purchased them. Now, saith the apostle, "Art thou called being a servant? care not for it;" he not over-solicitous about it. It is neither inconsistent with thy duty, profession, nor hopes, as a Christian; "yet, if thou mayest be made free, use it rather," ver. 21. There are many conveniences in a state of freedom above that of servitude; a man has more power over himself, and more command of his time, and is not under the control of another lord; and, therefore, liberty is the more eligible state. But men's outward condition does not let nor further their acceptance with God. "For he that is called, being a servant, is the Lord's freed man," *אפדהו*, "as he that is called, being free, is the Lord's servant." Though he be not discharged from his Master's service, he is freed from the dominion and vassalage of sin; though he be not enslaved to Christ, yet he is bound to yield himself up wholly to his pleasure and service; and yet that service is perfect freedom. Note, Our comfort and happiness depend on what we are to Christ, not what we are in the world. The goodness of our outward condition doth not discharge us from the duties of Christianity, nor the badness of it debar us from Christian privileges. He who is a slave may yet be a Christian freeman; he who is a freeman may yet be Christ's servant. He is bought with a price, and should not therefore be the servant of man; not that he must quit the service of his master, or not take all proper measures to please him, this were to

family division for the Gospel's sake might at any time break up the relations of life. "Good:" as opposed to bad. Paul is not asserting the superiority of the unmarried state, but "starts with a broad and surely very credible proposition. 'There is,' he would say, 'nothing wrong, as the Jews argued, but rather something very proper, nay, very honourable, in having nothing to do with women carnally,' as there certainly was in Paul's case, and in that of many others who for wise reasons have given themselves up to a life of chaste celibacy."

vii. 6. "I say this by way of allowance, not by way of command;" i.e., he gives the recommendation in verse 5 as an allowance, not command.

vii. 8. "Even as I:" i.e., unmarried. It seems impossible to decide whether Paul had ever been married. These words would be equally applicable whether he had never been married or was at this time a widower. Alford holds that he never was married; Conybeare and Howson and others that he was a widower.

contradict the whole scope of the apostle's discourse. But he must not be so the servant of men but that Christ's will must be obeyed, and regarded more than his master's; he hath paid a much dearer purchase for him, and hath a much fuller property in him. He is to be served and obeyed without limitation or reserve. Note, The servants of Christ should be at the absolute command of no other master besides himself, should serve no man any farther than is consistent with their duty to him; "No man can serve two masters." Though some understand this passage of persons being bought out of slavery by the bounty and charity of fellow Christians, and read the passage thus, Have you been redeemed out of slavery with a price? do not again become enslaved, just as before he had advised that, if in slavery they had any prospect of being made free, they should choose it rather. This meaning the words will bear, but the other seems the more natural: see *ch. vi. 20*.

Thirdly, He sums up his advice; "Let every man wherein he is called therein abide with God," *ver. 24*. This is to be understood of the state wherein a man is converted to Christianity; no man should make his faith or religion an argument to break through any natural or civil obligations. He should quietly and comfortably abide in the condition in which he is, and this he may well do when he may abide therein with God. Note, The special presence and favour of God is not limited to any outward condition or performance; he may enjoy it who is circumcised, and so may he who is uncircumcised. He that is bound may have it as well as he who is free. In this respect, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free," *Col. iii. 11*. The favour of God is not bound.

25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. 26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, *I say*, that it is good for a man so to be. 27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. 28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. 29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; 30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; 31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. 32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. 34 There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. 35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

The apostle resumes his discourse, and gives directions to virgins how to act. Concerning which we may take notice.

First, Of the manner wherein he introduces them; "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord," *ver. 25*. I have no express and universal law delivered by the Lord himself concerning celibacy; but I give my judgment as one who hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful, namely, in his apostleship. He acted faithfully, and therefore his direction was to be regarded as a rule of Christ; for he gave judgment as one who was a faithful apostle of Christ. Though Christ had before delivered no universal law about that matter, he now gives direction by an inspired apostle, one who had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. Note, Faithfulness in the ministry is owing to the grace and mercy of Christ. It is what Paul was ready to acknowledge upon all occasions; "I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me," *ch. xv. 10*. And it is a great mercy they obtain from God who prove faithful in the ministry of his word, either ordinary or extraordinary.

Secondly, The determination he gives, which, considering the present distress, was, that a state of celibacy was preferable. "It is good for a man so to be," that is, to be single. "I suppose," saith the apostle, or, it is my opinion. It is worded with modesty, but delivered notwithstanding with apostolical authority. It is not the mere opinion of a private man, but the very determination of the Spirit of God in an apostle, though it be thus spoken; and it was thus delivered to give it the more weight. Those that were prejudiced against the apostle

might have rejected this advice had it been given with a mere authoritative air. Note, Ministers do not lose their authority by prudent condescensions. They must become all things to all men, that they may do them the more good. "This is good," saith he, "for the present distress." Christians, at the first planting their religion, were grievously persecuted. Their enemies were very bitter against them, and treated them very cruelly. They were continually liable to be tossed and hurried by persecution. This being the then state of things, he did not think it so advisable for Christians that were single to change conditions. The married state would bring more care and cumber along with it, *ver. 33, 34*, and would therefore make persecution more terrible, and render them less able to bear it. Note, Christians, in regulating their conduct, should not barely consider what is lawful in itself, but what may be expedient for them.

Thirdly, Notwithstanding he thus determines, he is very careful to satisfy them, that he does not condemn marriage in the gross, or declare it unlawful. And therefore, though he says, "If thou art loosed from a wife," in a single state, whether bachelor or widower, virgin or widow, "do not seek a wife," do not hastily change conditions; yet he adds, "If thou art bound to a wife, do not seek to be loosed;" it is thy duty to continue in the married relation, and do the duties of it. And though such, if they were called to suffer persecution, would find peculiar difficulties in it, yet, to avoid these difficulties, they must not cast off, or break through, the bonds of duty; duty must be done, and God trusted with events. But to neglect duty is the way to put ourselves out of Divine protection. He adds, therefore, "If thou marry, thou hast not sinned; or if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned; but such shall have trouble in the flesh." Marrying is not in itself a sin, but marrying at that time was likely to bring inconvenience upon them, and add to the calamities of the times; and therefore he thought it advisable and expedient that such as could contain should refrain from it; but adds, that he would not lay celibacy on them as a yoke, or by seeming to urge it too far draw them into any snare; and therefore says, "But I spare you." Note, How opposite in this the Papist casuists are to the apostle Paul. They forbid many to marry, and entangle them with vows of celibacy, whether they can bear the yoke or no.

Fourthly, He takes this occasion to give general rules to all Christians, to carry themselves with a holy indifferency towards the world, and every thing in it. 1. As to relations; "They that had wives" must be "as though they had none," that is, they must not set their hearts too much on the comforts of the relation; they must be as though they had none. They know not how soon they shall have none. This advice must be carried into every other relation. Those who have children should be as though they had none. They who were their comfort now may prove their greatest cross; and soon may the flower of all comforts be cut down. 2. As to afflictions; they that weep "must be" as though they wept not, that is, we must not be dejected too much with any of our afflictions, nor indulge ourselves in the sorrow of the world, but keep up a holy joy in God, in the midst of all our troubles, so that even in sorrow the heart may be joyful, and the end of our grief may be gladness; "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning;" and, if we can but get to heaven at last, "all tears shall be wiped from our eyes;" and the prospect of it now should make us moderate our sorrows, and refrain our tears. 3. As to worldly enjoyments; "They that rejoice" should be "as though they rejoiced not," that is, they should not take too great complacency in any of their comforts; they must be moderate in their mirth, and sit loose to the enjoyments they most value. Here is not their rest, nor are these things their portion; and therefore their hearts should not be set on them, nor should they place their solace or satisfaction in them. 4. As to worldly traffic and employment; "They that buy" must be "as though they possessed not;" those that prosper in trade, increase in wealth, and purchase estates, should hold their possessions as though they held them not. It is but setting their hearts on that which is not (*Pr. xiii. 5*) to do otherwise. Buying and possessing should not too much engage our minds; they hinder many people altogether from minding the better part. Purchasing land and trying oxen kept the guests invited from the wedding supper, *Lu. xiv. 18, 19*; and, when they do not altogether hinder men from minding their chief business, they do very much divert them from a close pursuit. They are most likely to run so as to obtain the prize who ease their minds of all foreign cares and cumberance. 5. As to all worldly concerns; "They that use this world as not abusing it," *ver. 31*. The world may be used, but must not be abused. It is abused when it is not used to those purposes for which it is given, to honour God, and do good to men; when, instead of being oil to the wheels of our obedience, it is a dead fuel to lust; when, instead of being a servant, it is made our master, our idol, and hath that room in our affections which should be reserved for God. And there is great danger of abusing it in all these respects, if our hearts are too much set upon it. We must keep the world as much as may be out of our hearts, that we may not abuse it when we have it in our hands.

The apostle enforces these advices with two reasons. 1st, "The time is short," *ver. 29*. We have but little time to continue in this world; but a short season for possessing and enjoying worldly things; *καρὸς συνταλαιμῶνος*. It is contracted, reduced to a narrow compass; it will soon be gone; it is just ready to be wrapt up in eternity, swallowed up of eternity; therefore do not set your hearts on worldly enjoyments, do not be overwhelmed with worldly cares and troubles. Possess what you must shortly leave without suffering yourselves to be possessed by it. Why should your hearts be much set on what you must quickly resign? 2nd, "The fashion of this world passeth away," *ver. 31*; *σχῆμα*, the habit, figure, appearance of the world passeth away. It is daily changing countenance; it is in a continual flux. It is not so much a world as the appearance of one. All is show; nothing solid in it; and yet it is transient show too, and will be quickly gone; [it passes like a pagant.] How proper and powerful an argument is this to enforce the former advice! How irrational is it to be affected with the images, the fading and transient images, of a dream! Surely man walketh in a vain show," *Ps. xxxix. 9*—in an image, amidst the faint and vanishing appearances of things. And should he be deeply affected, or grievously afflicted, with such a scene?

Fifthly, He presses his general advice, by warning them against the embarrassment of worldly cares; "But I would have you without carefulness," *ver. 3*. Indeed, to be careless is a fault; a wise concern about worldly interests is a duty; but to be careful, full of care, to have an anxious and perplexing care about them, is a sin. All that care which disquiets the mind, and distracts it in the worship of God, [and diverts it from his love,] is evil; for God must be attended upon without distraction, *ver. 35*. The whole mind should be engaged when God is worshipped. The work ceases whilst it diverts to any thing else, or is hurried and drawn hither and thither by foreign affairs and concerns. They who are engaged in Divine worship should attend to this very thing,—should make it their whole business. But how is this possible, when the mind is swallowed up of the cares of this life? Note, It is the wisdom of a Christian so to order his outward affairs, and choose such a condition in life, as to be without distracting cares, that he may attend upon the Lord with a mind at leisure, and disengaged. This is the general maxim by which the apostle would have Christians govern themselves; in the application of it Christian prudence must direct. That condition of life is best for every man which is best for his

vii. 10. "Not I, but the Lord:" see *Matt. v. 32, xix. 4*; *Mark x. 12*. "He was merely repeating what had already been enjoined by Christ himself," and so "not the Lord," in verse 12, would, according to *Alford*, mean that Christ had not given any direct command.

vii. 12. "The rest:" the other classes about which the Corinthians had asked—i.e., those involved in mixed marriages with unbelievers.

vii. 15. "The unbeliever may separate, but the main principle

remains to the Christian that he is called to peace, and therefore a peaceful disposition must always prevail, in order not to give cause on his or her side for separation. The possibility, however, cannot and must not be denied that the mind of the heathen party may also change after separation. It cannot, from this very possibility, be the apostle's meaning that the Christian party is at liberty to marry again when the heathen has left him or her; the Christian is only relieved from the obligation of living with a heathen, and this

and keeps him most clear of the cares and snares of the world. By this maxim the apostle solves the case put to him by the Corinthians, Whether it were advisable to marry? To this he says, That by reason of the present distress,—and it may be in general, to be sure at that time, when Christians were married to infidels, and perhaps under a necessity to do so if they married at all,—I say, in these circumstances to continue unmarried would be the way to free themselves from many cares and encumbrances, and allow them more vacation for the service of God. Ordinarily, the less care we have about the world, the more freedom we have for the service of God. Now, the married state at that time (if not at all times) did bring most worldly care along with it; “He that is married careth for the things of the world, that he may please his wife,” ver. 33. “And she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. But the unmarried man and woman mind the things of the Lord, that they may please the Lord, and be holy both in body and spirit,” ver. 32, 33. Not but the married person may be holy both in body and spirit too. Celibacy is not in itself a state of greater purity and sanctity than marriage; but the unmarried would be able to make religion more their business at that juncture, because they would have less distraction from worldly cares. Marriage is that condition of life that brings care along with it, though at some times it brings more than others. It is the constant care of those in that relation to please each other, though this is more difficult to do at some seasons, and in some cases, than in others. At that season therefore the apostle advises that those who were single should abstain from marriage, if they were under no necessity to change conditions. And, where the same reason is plain at other times, the rule is as plain, and as fit to be observed; and the very same rule must determine persons for marriage, where there is the same reason, that is, if in the unmarried state persons are likely to be more distracted in the service of God than if they were married, which is a case supposable in many respects. This is the general rule which every one’s discretion must apply to his own particular case; and by it should he endeavour to determine whether it be for marriage or against. That condition of life should be chosen by the Christian in which it is most likely he shall have the best helps and the least hindrances in the service of God, and the affairs of his own salvation.

36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. 37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. 38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.



GIVING IN MARRIAGE.

In this passage the apostle is commonly supposed to give advice about the disposal of children in marriage, upon the footing of his former determination; in which view the general meaning is plain. It was in that age, and those parts of the world, and especially among the Jews, reckoned a disgrace for a woman to remain unmarried past a certain number of years. It gave a suspicion of somewhat that was not for her reputation. Now, says the apostle, if any man think she behaves unhandsonly towards his daughter, and that it is not for her credit to remain unmarried when she is at full age, and that upon this footing it is needful to dispose of her in marriage, he may use his pleasure. It is no sin in him to dispose of her to a suitable mate. But if a man has determined in himself to keep her a virgin, and stands to this determination, and is under no necessity to dispose of her in marriage, but is at liberty, with her consent, to pursue his purpose, he doth well in keeping her a virgin. In short, “he that giveth her in marriage doeth well” but he that keeps her single, if she can be easy and innocent in such a state, does what is better; that is, more convenient for her in the present state of things, if not at all times and seasons. Note, 1. That children should be at the disposal of their parents, and not dispose of themselves in marriage. Yet, 2. That parents should consult their children’s inclinations both to marriage in general and to the person in particular, and not reckon they have uncontrollable power to do with them, and dictate to them, as they please. 3. It is our duty not only to consider what is lawful, but, in many cases at least, what is fit to be done, before we do it.

alone is intended by the words ‘is not bound’” (Olshausen). “The cases here spoken of are not so much regular divorces as accidental separations” (Stanley).

vii. 21. “Use it.” What? Two very different renderings have been given: 1. “Use it,” i.e., the opportunity of being free; 2. “Use it,” i.e., the slavery—“remain in slavery though the offer of freedom is made.” It is hard to decide which is the right rendering. Many of the ablest commentators adopt the latter.

But I think the apostle is here continuing his former discourse, and advising unmarried persons, who are at their own disposal, what to do; the man a virgin being meant of his virginity. *Τηρει την ελευθεριαν παρθενου*, seems to be rather meant of preserving his own virginity than keeping his daughter a virgin, though it be altogether uncommon to use the word in this sense. Several other reasons may be seen in Locke and Whithy, by those who will consult them. And it was a common matter of reproach, both among Jews and civilised heathens, for a man to continue single beyond such a term of years; though all did not agree in limiting the single life to the same term. The general meaning of the apostle is the same, that it was no sin to marry, if a man thought there was a necessity upon him to avoid popular reproach, much less to avoid the hurrying fervours of lust. But he that was in his own power stood firm in his purpose, and found himself under no necessity to marry, would at that season, and in the circumstances of Christians at that time, at least, make a choice every way most for his own convenience, ease, and advantage, as to his spiritual concerns. And it is highly expedient, if not a duty, for Christians to be guided by such a consideration. [The first of these interpretations is now generally received; the second appears to be inconsistent with the statement in ver. 34, and that in ver. 38.]

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. 40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

The whole is here closed up with an advice to widows. As long as the husband liveth the wife is bound by the law; confined to one husband, and bound to continue and cohabit with him. Note, The marriage contract is for life; death only can annul the bond. But, the husband being dead, she is at liberty to marry whom she will. There is no limitation by God’s law to be married only for such a number of times. It is certain second marriages are not unlawful, from this passage; for then the widow could not be at liberty to marry whom she pleased, nor to marry a second time at all; but the apostle asserts she has such a liberty when her husband is dead, only with a limitation that she marry in the Lord. In our choice of relations and change of conditions we should always have an eye to God. Note, Marriages are then only like to have God’s blessing when they are made in the Lord; when persons are guided by the fear of God, and the laws of God, and act in dependence on the providence of God, in the change and choice of a mate; when they can look up to God and sincerely seek his direction, and humbly hope for his blessing upon their conduct. “But she is happier,” saith the apostle, “if she so abide,” that is, continue a widow, “in my judgment: and I think I have the Spirit of God,” ver. 40. At this juncture at least, if not ordinarily, it will be much more for the peace and quiet of such, and give them less hindrance in the service of God, to continue unmarried; and this he tells them was by inspiration of the Spirit. Whatever your false apostles may think of me, I think, and have reason to know, that I have the Spirit of God. Note, Change of condition in marriage is so important a matter, that it ought not to be made but upon due deliberation; after careful consideration of circumstances, and upon very probable grounds at least, that it will be a change to advantage in our spiritual concerns.

CHAPTER VIII.

The apostle in this chapter answers another case proposed to him by some of the Corinthians, about eating those things that had been sacrificed to idols. I. He hints at the occasion of this case, and gives a caution against too high esteem of their knowledge, ver. 1—3. II. He asserts the vanity of idols, and the unity of Godhead, and the sole mediation of Christ between God and man, ver. 4—6. III. He tells them that, upon supposition that it were lawful in itself to eat of things offered to idols, for that they themselves are nothing, yet regard must be had to the weakness of Christian brethren, and nothing done that would lay a stumblingblock before them, and occasion their sin and destruction, ver. 7—13.



OW as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. 2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. 3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

The apostle comes here to the case of things that had been offered to idols, concerning which some of them sought satisfaction; a case that was frequent in that age of Christianity, when the church of Christ was among the heathen, and the Israel of God must live among the Canaanites. For the understanding of it the better, it must be observed, that it was a custom among the heathens to make feasts on their sacrifices; and not only to eat themselves, but invite their friends to partake with them. These were usually kept in the temple where the sacrifice was offered: see ver. 10; and if any thing were left when the feast ended, it was usual to carry away a portion to their friends; what remained after all belonging to the priests, who sometimes sold it in the markets: see ch. x. 25. Nay, feasts, as Athenaeus informs us, were always accounted among the heathen sacred and religious things, so that they were wont to sacrifice before all their feasts; and it was accounted a very profane thing amongst them, *ἀβύρα ἐπιβίειν*, to eat at their private tables any meat whereof they had not first sacrificed on such occasions.

In this circumstance of things, while Christians lived among idolaters, had many relations and friends that were such, with whom they must keep

vii. 26. “The present distress:” according to some, the famine under Claudius; according to others, the oppressions and persecutions of the Christians; the fearful crisis and bitter conflicts just preceding the coming of Christ, which was anticipated as near.

vii. 29. Alford translates, “the time that remains is short;” literally, “the time is shortened henceforth”—i.e., the interval between now and the coming of the Lord has arrived at an extremely contracted period.

quaintance, and maintain good neighbourhood, and therefore have occasion to eat at their tables, what should they do, if any thing that had been sacrificed should be set before them? What if they should be invited to feast with them in their temples? It seems as if some of the Corinthians were got into an opinion that even this might be done, because they knew an idol was "nothing in the world," ver. 4. The apostle seems to answer more directly to the case, ch. x., and here to argue, upon supposition of their being right in this thought, against their abuse of their liberty, to the prejudice of others; but plainly condemns such liberty in ch. x. The apostle introduces his discourse with some remarks about knowledge, that seem to carry in them a censure of such pretences to knowledge as I have mentioned; "We know," saith the apostle, "that we all have knowledge," ver. 1: as if he had said, "You are not the only knowing persons who take such liberty; we, who abstain, know as much as you of the vanity of idols, and that they are nothing; but we know too, that the liberty you take is very culpable, and that even lawful liberty must be used with charity, and not to the prejudice of weaker brethren." "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth," ver. 1. Note, 1. The preference of charity to conceited knowledge. That is best which is fitted to do the greatest good. Knowledge, or at least a high conceit of it, is very apt to swell the mind,—to fill it with wind, and so puff it up. This tends to no good to ourselves, but in many instances is much to the hurt of others. But true love and tender regard to our brethren will put us upon consulting their interest, and acting as may be for their edification. Observe, 2. That there is no more common evidence of ignorance than a conceit of knowledge. "If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." He that knows most best understands his own ignorance, and the imperfection of human knowledge. He who imagines himself a knowing man, and is vain and conceited on this imagination, has reason to suspect that he knows nothing aright,—nothing as he ought to know it. Note, It is one thing to know truth and another to know it as we ought, so as duly to improve our knowledge. Much may be known, when nothing is known to any good purpose; where neither ourselves nor others are the better for our knowledge. And they who think they know any thing, and grow vain hereupon, are of all men most likely to make no good use of their knowledge; neither themselves nor others are likely to be benefited by it. "But," adds the apostle, "if any man love God, the same is known of God." If any man love God, and is thereby influenced to love his neighbour, the same is known of God; that is, as some understand, is made by him to know, is taught of God. Note, They that love God are most likely to be taught of God, and be made by him to know as they ought. Some understand, [and this is the preferable sense,] 'shall be approved of God; he will accept him, and have pleasure in him. Note, The charitable person is most likely to have God's favour; [not for his charity, but, he loves God because God first loved him, and gave him his only begotten Son for him.] They who love God, and for his sake love their brethren, and seek their welfare, are likely to be beloved of God; and how much better is it to be approved of God than to have a vain opinion of ourselves.

4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that



GREEKS SACRIFICING BEFORE AN IDOL.

there is none other God but one. 5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) 6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord

Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

In this passage he shews the vanity of idols. "As to the eating of things that have been sacrificed to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world;" or, there is no idol in the world; or, an idol can do nothing in the world; for the form of expression in the original is elliptical. The meaning in the general is, that heathen idols have no divinity in them; and therefore, in the Old Testament, are commonly called lies and vanities, or lying vanities. They are mere imaginary gods, and many [all] of them no better than imaginary beings; and have no power to pollute the creatures of God, and thereby render them unfit to be eaten by a child or servant of God. "Every creature of God is good if it be received with thanksgiving," 1 Tim. iv. 4; and it is not in the power of the vanities of the heathens to change its nature. "And there is no other God but one." Heathen idols are not gods, nor to be owned and respected as gods, for there is no other God but one. Note, The unity of the godhead is a fundamental principle in Christianity, and in all right religion. The gods of the heathens must be nothing in the world, must have no divinity in them, nothing of real godhead belonging to them; for "there is no other God but one." Others may be called gods; there be that are called gods in heaven and earth, gods many and lords many." But they are there falsely thus called. The heathens had many such, some in heaven and some on earth; celestial deities, that were of highest rank and repute amongst them; and terrestrial ones, men made into gods, that were to mediate for men with the former, and were deputed by them to preside over earthly affairs. These are called Baalim commonly in the Scripture. They had gods of higher and lower degree; nay, many in each order, "gods many and lords many" but all titular deities and mediators; so called, but not such in truth. All their divinity and mediation were imaginary. For, 1. "To us there is but one God," saith the apostle, "the Father, of whom are all things, and we in" or for "him." We Christians are better informed; we well know there is but one God, the fountain of being, the author of all things, maker, preserver, and governor of the whole world, "of whom, and for whom, are all things;" not one God to govern one part of mankind, or one rank and order of men, and another to govern another. One God made all, and therefore has power over all. All things are of him, and we and all things else are for him. Called the Father here, not in contradistinction to the other persons of the sacred Trinity, and to exclude them from the Godhead, but in contradistinction to all creatures that were made by God, and whose formation is attributed to each of these three in other places of Scripture, and not appropriated to the Father alone. God the Father, as *fons et fundamentum Trinitatis*,—"as the first person in the Godhead, and the original of the other two," stands here for the Deity, which yet comprehends all three; the name God being sometimes in Scripture ascribed to the Father, κατ' ἐξουσίαν, or 'by way of eminency,' because he is *fons et principium Deitatis*, as Calvin observes, "the fountain of the Deity in the other two," they having it by communication from him. So that there is but one God, the Father, and yet the Son is God too, but is not another God; the Father with his Son and Spirit being the one God, but not without them, or so as to exclude them from the Godhead. 2. There is to us but one Lord, one Mediator between God and men, namely Jesus Christ. Not many mediators, as the heathen imagined, but one only, by whom all things were created, and do consist, and to whom all our hope and happiness are owing,—the man Christ Jesus; but a man in personal union with the Divine Word, or God the Son. This very man hath God made both Lord and Christ, Acts ii. 26. Jesus Christ, in his human nature and mediatorial state, has a delegated power; a name given him, though above every name, "that at his name every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord." And thus he is the only Lord and only Mediator that Christians acknowledge, the only person who comes between God and sinners, administers the world's affairs under God, and mediates for men with God. All the lords of this sort among heathens are mere imaginary ones. Note, It is the great privilege of us Christians that we know the true God and true Mediator between God and men; "The true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent," Jno. xvii. 3.

7 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. 8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. 9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of your's become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. 10 For if any man see thee which hath knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; 11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. 13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

The apostle having granted, and indeed confirmed the opinion of some among the Corinthians, that idols were nothing, proceeds now to shew them that their inference from this assumption was not just, namely, that therefore they might go into the idol temple and eat of the sacrifices, and feast there with their heathen neighbours. He does not indeed here so much insist upon the unlawfulness of the thing in itself as the mischief such freedom might do to weaker Christians, persons that had not the same measure of knowledge with these pretenders. And here he,

as to be able to eat of these portions without scruple. So St. Paul inculcates charity on the part of the stronger toward the weaker. Alford says, "The case supposed is the only one which can occur when love is absent and conceit present; a man can then only think he knows—no real knowledge being accessible without humility and love. Such a man 'knows not yet as he ought to know,' has had no real practice in the art of knowing. But those who become acquainted with God by love are the especial objects of the Divine knowledge,

vii. 36. "Virgin:" i.e., his virgin daughter. "Uncomely:" by withholding his consent to her marriage. "Let them marry:" i.e., his daughter and her lover.

viii. 1. Portions of the animals offered in sacrifice were eaten in private houses or sold in the markets, and hence the Christians were constantly meeting them. They were a source of greater scruple to some than to others. "All had knowledge:" i.e., knew that an idol was really nothing; but some had not so firm a grasp over this knowledge

first. Informs them every Christian man at that time was not so fully convinced and persuaded that an idol was nothing. "Howbeit there is not in every man this knowledge; for some with conscience of the idol, unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered unto an idol." "With conscience of the idol;" that is, some confused veneration for it. Though they were converts to Christianity, and professed the true religion, they were not perfectly cured of the old leaven, but retained an unaccountable respect for the idols they had worshipped before. Note, Weak Christians may be ignorant, or have but a confused knowledge of [some of] the great and plainer truths; such were those of the one God and one Mediator. And yet some of those who were turned from heathenism to Christianity among the Corinthians seem to have retained a veneration for their idols, utterly irreconcilable with those great principles; so as, when an opportunity offered to eat things offered to idols, they did not abstain to testify their abhorrence of idolatry, nor eat with a professed contempt of the idol by declaring they looked upon it to be nothing; and so their conscience, being weak, was denied; that is, they contracted guilt. They ate out of respect to the idol with an imagination that it had something Divine in it, and so committed idolatry; whereas the design of the Gospel was to turn men from dumb idols to the living God. They were weak in their understanding, not thoroughly apprized to the vanity of idols; and, whilst they ate what was sacrificed to them out of veneration for them, contracted the guilt of idolatry, and so greatly polluted themselves. This seems to be the sense of the place, [and the sense now generally received,] though some understand it of weak Christians defiling themselves by eating what was offered to an idol with an apprehension that thereby it became unclean, and made them so in a moral sense who should eat it; every one not having a knowledge that the idol was nothing, and therefore that it could not render what was offered to it in this sense unclean. Note, We should be careful to do nothing that may occasion weak Christians to defile their consciences.

Secondly. He tells them that mere eating and drinking had nothing in them virtuous or criminal, nothing that could make them better or worse, pleasing or displeasing to God. "Meat commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we eat not are we the worse," ver. 8. It looks as if some of the Corinthians made a merit of their eating what had been offered to idols, and that in their very temples too, ver. 10, because it plainly shewed they thought the idols nothing. But eating or drinking are in themselves actions indifferent. It matters little what we eat. What goes into the man of this sort neither purifies nor defiles; and flesh offered to idols may in itself be as proper for food as any other, and the bare eating or forbearing to eat has no virtue in it. Note, It is a gross mistake to think that distinction of food will make any distinction between men in God's account. Eating this food and forbearing that hath nothing in it to recommend a person to God.

Thirdly. He cautions them against abusing their liberty, the liberty they thought they had in this matter; for that they mistook this matter, and had no allowance to sit at meat in the idol's temple, seems plain from *ch. x. 20*, &c. But the apostle argues here, that, even upon supposition they had such power, they must be cautious how they use it: it might be a stumblingblock to the weak, ver. 9; it might occasion their falling into idolatrous actions, perhaps their falling off from Christianity, and revolting again to heathenism. "If a man see thee which hath knowledge," hath superior understanding to his, and hereupon conceiteth thou hast a liberty to sit at meat, or feast in an idol's temple, because an idol, thou sayest, is nothing,—shall not one who is less thoroughly informed in this matter, and thinks an idol something, be emboldened to eat what was offered to the idol, not as common food, but sacrifice, and thereby be guilty of idolatry? Such an occasion of falling they should be careful of laying before their weak brethren, whatever liberty or power themselves had.

The apostle backs this caution with two considerations: 1. The danger that might accrue to weak brethren, even those weak brethren for whom Christ died. We must deny ourselves even in what is lawful rather than occasion their stumbling and endanger their souls; ver. 11. "Through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish for whom Christ died?" Note, Those whom Christ hath redeemed with his most precious blood should be very precious and dear to us. If he had such compassion as to die for them that they might not perish, we should have as much compassion for them as to deny ourselves for their sakes in many instances, and not use our liberty to their hurt, to occasion their stumbling, or hazard their ruin, [or, more properly speaking, great injury to their spiritual interests, since they cannot perish if Christ died for them.] It is very little that man hath of the spirit of the Redeemer that had rather his brother did perish than himself be abridged in any respect of his liberty. He that hath the spirit of Christ in him will love those whom Christ loved so as to die for them, and will study to promote their spiritual and eternal welfare, and shun every thing that shall unnecessarily grieve them, and much more every thing that is likely to occasion their stumbling, or falling into sin. 2. The hurt done to them Christ takes as done to himself. "When ye sin against Christ," ver. 12. Note, Injuries done to Christians are injuries to Christ; especially to babes in Christ, to weak Christians; and most of all the involving them in guilt; wounding their consciences is wounding him. He hath a particular care of the lambs of the flock. "He gathers them with his arm, and carries them in his bosom," *Isa. xl. 11*. Strong Christians should be very careful to avoid what will offend weak ones, or lay a stumblingblock in their way. Shall we be void of compassion for them to whom Christ has shewn so much? Shall we sin against Christ, who suffered for us? Shall we set ourselves to defeat his gracious designs, and help to ruin those whom he died to save?

Fourthly. He enforces all with his own example; ver. 13. "Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh whilst the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." He doth not say he will never eat more. "This were to destroy himself, and to commit a heinous sin to prevent the sin and fall of a brother. Such evil must not be done that good may come of it. But, though it was necessary to eat, it was not necessary to eat flesh. And therefore, rather than occasion sin in a brother, he would abstain from it as long as he lived. He had such a value for the soul of his brother that he would willingly deny himself in a matter of liberty, and forbear any particular food which he might have lawfully eaten, and might like to eat, rather than lay a stumblingblock in a weak brother's way, and occasion him to sin by following his example, without being clear in his mind whether it were lawful or no. Note, We should be very tender of doing any thing that may be an occasion of stumbling to others, though it may be innocent in itself. Liberty is valuable, but the weakness of a brother should induce, and sometimes binds, us to waive it. We must not rigorously claim or use our own rights to the hurt and ruin of a brother's soul, and go to the injury of our Redeemer, who died for him. When it is certainly foreseen that by doing what I may forbear will occasion a fellow-Christian to do what he ought to forbear, I shall offend, scandalize, or lay a stumblingblock in his way; which to do is a sin, however lawful the thing itself be which is done. And, if we must be so careful not to occasion other men's sin, how careful should we be to avoid sin in ourselves? If we must not endanger other men's souls, how much should we be concerned not to destroy our own? [The whole passage, however, has reference to meats offered to idols, and its application is not to be stretched indefinitely.]

their being is pervaded by the Spirit of God, and the wisdom of God is shed abroad in their hearts."

viii. 4. Resumption of verse 1. "We know that there is no idol in the world;" i.e., the persons represented have no existence.

viii. 5. "All that he asserts is that the vast hierarchy of divinities which met their eyes and ears in the common parlance and customs of Greece and Asia, imposing as it might be, had for Christians no practical importance. They had but one supreme source and centre

CHAPTER IX.

In this chapter the apostle seems to answer some cavils against himself. I. He asserts his apostolical mission and authority, and gives in his success amongst them as a testimony to it, ver. 1, 2. II. He claims a right to subsist by his ministry, and defends it by several arguments from natural reason and the Mosaic law, and asserts it also to be a constitution of Christ, ver. 3–14. III. He shews that he had willingly waived this privilege and power for their benefit, ver. 15–18. IV. He instances in several other things in which he had denied himself for the sake of other men's spiritual interest and salvation, ver. 19–23. And, V. Concludes this argument, by shewing what animated him to this course, even the prospect of an incorruptible crown, ver. 24–27.



M I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? 2 If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

Blessed Paul, in the work of his ministry, not only met with opposition from those without, but discouragements from those within. He was under reproach; false brethren questioned his apostleship, and were very industrious to lessen his character and sink his reputation; particularly here at Corinth,—a place to which he had been instrumental in doing much good, and from which he had deserved well; and yet there were those among them who upon these heads created him great uneasiness. Note, It is no strange or new thing for a minister to meet with very unkind returns for great good-will to a people, and diligent and successful services among them. Some among the Corinthians questioned, if they did not disown, his apostolical character. To their cavils he here answers, and in such a manner as to set forth himself as a remarkable example of that self-denial for the good of others which he had been recommending in the former chapter. And,

First. He asserts his apostolical mission and character. "Am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" To be a witness of his resurrection was one great branch of the apostolical charge. Now, saith Paul, have not I seen the Lord, though not immediately after his resurrection, yet since his ascent: see *ch. iv. 8*. "Am I not free?" Have I not the same commission, and charge, and powers, with the other apostles? What respect, or honour, or substance can they challenge, which I am not at liberty to demand as well as they? It was not because he had no right to live of the Gospel that he maintained himself with his own hands, but for other reasons.

Secondly. He offers the success of his ministry among them, and the good he had done to them, as a proof of his apostleship. "Are not ye my work in the Lord?" Through the blessing of Christ on my labours have I not raised a church amongst you? "The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." Your conversion by my means is a confirmation from God of my mission. Note, The ministers of Christ should not think it strange to be put upon the proof of their ministry by some who have had experimental evidence of the power of it and the presence of God with it.

Thirdly. He justly upbraids the Corinthians with their disrespect; "Doubtless, if I am not an apostle to others, I am so to you," ver. 2. I have laboured so long, and with so much success among you, that you, above all others, should own and honour my character, and not call it in question. Note, It is no new thing for faithful ministers to meet with the worst treatment where they might expect the best. This church at Corinth had as much reason to believe, and as little reason to question, his apostolical mission, as any. They had as much reason, perhaps more, than any church, to pay him respect. He had been instrumental to bring them to the knowledge and faith of Christ. He laboured long amongst them, near two years, and he laboured to good purpose, God having much people among them: see *Acts xviii. 10, 11*. It was an aggravated ingratitude for this people to call in question his authority.

3 Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, 4 Have we not power to eat and to drink? 5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? 6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? 7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? 8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? 10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. 11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great

of the universe, on whom they had been taught to look, not as on a mere name, but as a loving Father, and with him one supreme controller of the universe; no dim hero of distant ages, or remote influence of planetary regions, but Jesus Christ, living in their own times, almost within their own knowledge. The heathen dwelt in a world of complicated shadows; Christians dwelt in a world of simple realities" (Stanley).

viii. 7. Meats offered to idols were in themselves indifferent, and

thing if we shall reap your carnal things? 12 If others be partakers of *this* power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of *the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are



TEMPLE RUIN AT CORINTH.

partakers with the altar? 14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

Having asserted his apostolical authority, he proceeds to claim the rights belonging to his office, especially that of being maintained by it. These he,

First, States; ver. 3-6, "Mine answer to them that do examine me," that is, inquire into my authority, or the reasons of my conduct, if I am an apostle, is this: "Have we not power to eat and drink," ver. 4, or a right to a maintenance? "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" And not only to be maintained ourselves, but have them maintained also. Though Paul was at that time single, he had a right to take a wife when he pleased, and to lead her about with him, and expect a maintenance for her, as well as himself, from the churches. Perhaps Barnabas had a wife, as the other apostles certainly had, and led them about with them. For that a wife is here to be understood by the sister woman, ἀδελφή γυναῖκα, is plain from hence, that it would have been utterly unfit for the apostles to have carried about women with them unless they were wives. The word implies that they had power over them, and could require their attendance on them; which none could have over any but wives or servants. Now, the apostles, who worked for their bread, do not seem to have been in a capacity to buy or hire servants, to carry with them. Not to observe that it would have raised suspicions to have carried about even women servants, and much more other women to whom they were not married, for which the apostles would never give any occasion. The apostle therefore plainly asserts he had a right to marry as well as other apostles, and claim a maintenance for his wife, nay, and his children too, if he had any, from the churches, without labouring with his own hands to procure it. "Or I only, and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?" ver. 6. In short, the apostle here claims a maintenance from the churches, both for him and his. This was due from them, and what he might claim.

Secondly, He proceeds by several arguments to prove his claim. 1. From the common practice and expectations of mankind. Those who addict and give themselves up to any way of business in the world expect to live out of it. Soldiers expect to be paid for their service. Husbandmen and shepherds expect to get a livelihood out of their labours. If they plant vineyards, and dress and cultivate them, it is with expectation of fruit. If they feed a flock, it is with the expectation of being fed and clothed by it; ver. 9, "Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charge? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? Who feedeth a flock, and eateth not the milk thereof?" Note, It is very natural and very reasonable for ministers to expect a livelihood out of their labours. 2. He argues it out of the Jewish law. "Say I these things as a man, or saith not the law the same also?" ver. 8. Is this merely a dictate of common reason, and according to common usage only? No, it is also consonant to the old law. God had therein ordered "that the ox should not be muzzled whilst he was treading out the corn," or hindered from eating whilst he was preparing the corn for man's use, and treading it out of the ear. But this law was not chiefly given out of God's regard to oxen, or concern for them, but to teach mankind that all due encouragement should be given to them who are employed by us, or labouring for our good; that the labourers should taste of the fruit of their labours. "They that plough should plough in hope, and they who thresh in hope should be partakers of their hope," ver. 10. The law saith this about oxen for our sakes. Note, They that lay themselves out to do our souls good should not have their mouths muzzled, but have food provided for them. 3. He argues from common equity. "If we have sown to you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" What they had sown was much better than they expected to reap. They had taught them the way to eternal life, and laboured heartily to put them in possession of it. It was no great matter sure, whilst they were giving themselves up to this work, to expect a support of their own temporal life. They had been instruments of conveying to them the greatest spiritual blessings, and had they no claim to as

great a share in their carnal things, as was necessary to subsist them? Note, Those who enjoy spiritual benefits by the ministry of the word should not grudge a maintenance to such as are employed in this work. If they have received real benefit, one would think they could not grudge them this. What, get so much good by them, and yet grudge to do so little good to them! Is this grateful or equitable? 4. He argues from the maintenance they afforded others. "If others are partakers of this power over you, are not we rather?" You allow others this maintenance, and confess their claim just, but who hath so just a claim as I from the church of Corinth? Who has given greater evidences of the apostolical mission, who has laboured so much for your good, or done like service amongst you? Note, Ministers should be valued and provided for according to their worth. Nevertheless, saith the apostle, "We have not used this power, but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the Gospel of Christ." We have not insisted on our right, but have rather been in straits, to serve the interests of the Gospel, and promote the salvation of souls. He renounced his right rather than, by claiming it, he would hinder his success. He denied himself for fear of giving offence, yet claims his right, lest his self-denial should prove prejudicial to the ministry. Note, He is likely to plead most effectually for the rights of others who shews a generous disregard to his own. It is plain in this case that justice, and not self-love, is the principle by which he is actuated. 5. He argues from the old Jewish establishment. "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?" ver. 13. And if the Jewish priesthood [of all ranks] were maintained out of the holy things that were then offered, shall not Christ's ministers have a maintenance out of their ministry? Is there not as much reason we should be maintained as they? 6. He asserts it to be the institution of Christ. "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel," ver. 14; should have a right to a maintenance, though not bound to demand it, and insist upon it. It is the people's duty to maintain their minister by Christ's appointment, though it be not a duty bound on every minister to call for or accept it. He may waive his right, as Paul did, without being a sinner; but they transgress an appointment of Christ who deny or withhold it. They who preach the Gospel have a right to live by it, and they who attend on their ministry, and yet take no thought about their subsistence, fail very much in their duty to Christ, and the respect [nay, common justice,] owing to them.

["Hath the Lord ordained."] Hath the Lord appointed, commanded, arranged that it should be so, (ἀπέταξε.) The word here means, that he has made this a law, or has required it. The word "Lord" here doubtless refers to the Lord Jesus, who has sent forth his ministers to labour in the great harvest of the world. Here we may observe, 1. That the command is, that they shall live (ζῶν) of the Gospel. It is not that they should grow rich, or lay up treasures, or speculate in it; but it is, that they should have such a maintenance as to constitute a livelihood. They should be made comfortable, not rich. They should receive so much as to keep their minds from being harassed with cares, and their families from want; not so much as to lead them to forget their dependence on God, or on the people. 2. This is a command of the Lord Jesus; and, if it is a command, it should be obeyed as much as any other law of the Redeemer. And if this is a command, then the minister is entitled to a support; and then also a people are not at liberty to withhold it. Farther, there are as strong reasons why they should support him as there are why they should pay a schoolmaster, a lawyer, a physician, or a day-labourer. The minister usually toils as hard as others; expends as much in preparing for his work; and does as much good. And there is even a higher claim in this case. God has given an express command in this case; he has not in the others. 3. The salary of a minister should not be regarded as a gift merely. He has a claim to it; and God has commanded that it should be paid. It is, moreover, a matter of stipulation and of compact, by which a people agree to compensate him for his services. And yet is there any thing in the shape of debt where there is so much looseness as in regard to this subject? Are men usually as conscientious in this as they are in paying a physician or a merchant? Are not ministers often in distress for that which has been promised them, and which they have a right to expect? And is not their usefulness, and the happiness of the people, and the honour of religion, intimately connected with obeying the rule of the Lord Jesus in this respect?—A. B.]

15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. 16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! 17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. 18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

Here he tells them he had, notwithstanding, waived his privilege, and lays down his reason for doing it.

First, He tells them he had neglected to claim his right in times passed; "I have used none of these things," ver. 15. Neither ate nor drank himself at their cost, nor led about a wife to be maintained by them, nor forbore working to maintain himself. From others he received a maintenance, but not from them, for some special reasons. Nor did he write this to make his claim now. Though he here asserts his right, yet he does not claim his due, but denies himself for their sakes, and the Gospel.

Secondly, We have the reason assigned of his exercising this self-denial. He would not have his glorying made void. It were better for him to die, than that any man should make his glorying void, ver. 15. This glorying did imply nothing in it of boasting or self-conceit, or catching at applause, but a high degree of satisfaction and comfort. It was a singular pleasure to him to preach the Gospel without making it burdensome; and he was resolved that among them he would not lose this satisfaction. His advantages for promoting the Gospel were his glory, and he valued them above his rights, or his very life. Better were it for him to die, than to have his glorying made void; than to have

therefore might be eaten, but there was a limit imposed by charity towards a weaker brother who would eat with "conscious awe of the idol."

viii. 10. "Emboldened:" literally, "built up"—built up not in good, but to the emboldening him to violate his conscience.

ix. 1. St. Paul's not receiving maintenance from the church was misinterpreted by those who sought to disparage his claims as an apostle. They regarded it not as an act of generous self-sacrifice,

but a confession that he had not the right to claim such support. In order to show the reality of the sacrifice, it was necessary to assert the rights which were not being acted on by him. He gives two marks of his apostleship: first, the sight of the Lord; second, the practical effect of his teaching. "Free:" i.e., to forbear working with his hands, and claim support from the church to whom he ministered. (Compare verse 6.)

ix. 3. "This:" referring to what he has just said; not, as in the

st justly said he preferred his wages to his work. No, he was ready to deny himself for the sake of the Gospel. Note, It is the glory of a minister to prefer the success of his ministry to his interests, and deny himself that he may serve Christ, and save souls. Not that in so doing he does more than he ought, he is still acting within the bounds of the law of charity; but he acts upon truly noble principles, he brings much honour to God in so doing, and those that honour him he will honour. It is what God will approve and commend, what a man may value himself for, and take comfort in, though he cannot make a merit of it before God.

Thirdly. He shews that this self-denial was more honourable in itself, and yielded him much more content and comfort, than his preaching did. "Though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing whereof to glory," (ver. 16), "for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel." It is my charge, my business. It is the work for which I am constituted an apostle, *ch. i. 17*. This is a duty expressly bound upon me; it is not in any degree a matter of liberty. "Necessity is upon me." I am false and unfaithful to my trust, I break a plain and express command, and "woe be to me, if I preach not the Gospel." Those that are set apart to the office of the ministry have it in charge to preach the Gospel. Woe be to them if they do not. From this none is excused. But it is not given in charge to all or any preacher of the Gospel to do his work gratis, to preach and have no maintenance out of it. It is not said, woe be to him if he doth not preach the Gospel, and yet maintain himself. In this point he is more at liberty. It may be his duty to preach at some seasons, and under some circumstances, without receiving a maintenance for it; but he has in the general a right to it, and may expect it from those among whom he labours. And when he renounces this right for the sake of the Gospel, and the souls of men, though he does not supererogate, he yet denies himself, waives his privilege and right; he does more than his charge and office in general, and at all times, obliges him to. Woe be to him if he does not preach the Gospel, but it may sometimes be his duty to insist on his maintenance for so doing; and whenever he forbears to claim it he parts with his right, though a man may be bound to do so at sometimes, by the general duties of love to God, and charity to men. Note, It is a high attainment in religion to renounce our own rights for the good of others, and will entitle to [receive] a peculiar reward from God for.

Fourthly. The apostle here informs us that doing our duty with a willing mind will meet with a gracious recompence from God. "If I do this thing," that is, either preach the Gospel or take no maintenance, "willingly, I have a reward." Indeed, it is willing service only that is capable of reward from God. It is not the bare doing any duty, but the doing it heartily, that is, willingly and cheerfully, that God has promised to reward. Leave the heart out of our duties, and God abhors them. They are but the carcases, without the life and spirit of religion. They must preach willingly who would be accepted of God in this duty; they must make their business a pleasure, and not esteem it a drudgery. And they that, out of regard to the honour of God, or good of souls, give up their claim to a maintenance, should do this duty willingly, if they would be accepted in it, or rewarded for it. But whether the duty of the office be done willingly or with reluctance, whether the heart be in it or averse from it, all in office have a trust and charge from God, for which they must be accountable. Ministers have a dispensation of the Gospel, or 'stewardship,' *οικονομία*, *Lut. xvi. 7*, committed to them. Note, Christ's willing servants shall not fail of a recompence, and that proportioned to their fidelity, zeal, and diligence; and his slothful and unwilling servants shall all be called to an account. Taking his name, and professing to do his business, will make men accountable at his bar; and how sad an account have slothful servants to give!

Fifthly. The apostle sums up the argument, by laying before them the encouraging hope he had of a large recompence for his remarkable self-denial. "What is my reward, then?" ver. 18. What is it I expect a recompence from God for? "That when I preach the Gospel, I may make it without charge, that I abuse not my power in the Gospel." Or, not so to claim my rights as to make them destroy the great intentions and ends of my office, but renounce them for the sake of those. It is an abuse of power to employ it against the very ends for which it is given; and the apostle would never use his power or privilege of being maintained by his ministry so as to frustrate the ends of it, but would willingly and cheerfully deny himself, for the honour of Christ, and the interest of souls. And that minister who follows his example may have cheerful expectations of a full recompence.

19 For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. 22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some. 23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*.

The apostle takes occasion, from what he had before discoursed, to mention some other instances of his self-denial, and parting with his liberty, for the benefit of others.

First. He asserts his liberty; ver. 19, "Though I be free from all men." He was freeborn, a citizen of Rome. He was in bondage to none, nor depended upon any for his subsistence; yet he made himself a servant to all, that he might gain the more. He carried it as a servant; he laboured for their good as a servant; he was careful to please as a servant his master. He acted in many cases as if he had no privileges; and this "that he might gain the more," or make the more converts to Christianity. He made himself a servant, that they might be made free.

Secondly. He instances in some particulars wherein he made himself a servant to all. He accommodated himself to all sorts of people. 1. "To the Jews," and those "under the law," he became "a Jew," and as "under the law," to

gain them. Though he looked on the ceremonial law as a yoke taken off by Christ, yet in many instances he submitted to it, that he might work upon the Jews, remove their prejudices, prevail with them to hear the Gospel, and win them over to Christ. 2. "To those that are without law, as without law;" that is, to the Gentiles, whether converted to the Christian faith or not. In innocent things he could comply with people's usages or humours for their advantage. He would reason with the philosophers in their own way. And as to converted Gentiles, he carried it amongst them as one that was not under the bondage of the Jewish law, as he had asserted and maintained concerning them; though he did not act as a lawless person, but as one who was bound by the laws of Christ. He would transgress no laws of Christ to please or humour any man, but he would accommodate himself to all men where he might do it lawfully, to gain some. Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, and so, one would have thought, might have excused himself from complying with the Jews; and yet to do them good, and win them over to Christ, he did, in innocent things, neglect the power he had to do otherwise, and conformed to some of their usages and laws. And though he might, by virtue of that character, have challenged authority over the Gentiles, yet he accommodated himself as much as he innocently might to their prejudices and ways of thinking. Doing good was the study and business of his life; and so he might reach this end, he did not stand on privileges and punctilios. 3. "To the weak he became as weak, that he might gain the weak," ver. 22. He was willing to make the best of them. He did not despise nor judge them, but became as one of them, forbore to use his liberty for their sake, and was careful to lay no stumblingblock in their way. Where any through the weakness of their understanding, or the strength of their prejudices, were likely to fall into sin, or fall off from the Gospel into heathen idolatry, through his use of his liberty, he refrained himself. He denied himself for their sakes, that he might insinuate into their affections, and gain their souls. In short, "he became all things to all men, that he might by all means," that is, all lawful means, "gain some." [And yet who ever pressed every doctrine of the Gospel with more determined urgency?] He would not sin against God, to save the soul of his neighbour, but he would very cheerfully and readily deny himself. The rights of God [and of the Redeemer's crown] he could not give up, but he might resign his own, and he very often did it for the good of others.

Thirdly. He assigns his reason for acting in this manner; ver. 23, "This I do for the Gospel sake, and that I might be partaker thereof with you;" that is, for the honour of Christ, whose the Gospel is, and for the salvation of souls, for which it was designed; and that he and they might communicate in the privileges of it, or partake together of them. For these ends did he thus condescend, deny himself as to his liberty, and accommodate himself to the capacities and usages of those with whom he had to do, where he lawfully might. Note. A heart warmed with zeal for God, and breathing after the salvation of men, will not plead and insist upon rights and privileges in bar to this design. They manifestly abuse their power in the Gospel who employ it not to edification, but destruction, and therefore breathe nothing of its spirit.

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that



VICTOR IN THE RACE RECEIVING THE CROWN.

ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

In these verses the apostle hints at the great encouragement he had to act in this manner. He had a glorious prize, an incorruptible crown, in view. And upon this head he compares himself to the racers and combatants in the Isthmian games, an allusion well known to the Corinthians, because they were celebrated in their neighbourhood. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one obtaineth the prize?" ver. 24. All run at your games, but one gets the race only, and wins the crown. And here he, first. Excites them to their duty. "So run that ye may obtain." It is quite

English version, to what follows. A full stop should be placed after verse 3.

ix. 5. "A wife:" to be likewise supported by the church. Stanley suggests that the fact of these women accompanying their husbands may be accounted for by the necessity of females to gain access to and to baptise female converts in Greece and other Oriental countries.

ix. 16. The preaching of the Gospel was entrusted to him; the

only matter for boasting that he had was that he did it without charge.

ix. 17. "For if I do this voluntarily (*i.e.*, of my own accord), I have a reward (a reward might be due to me from God), but if involuntarily (as an obligation laid upon me by another), with a stewardship have I been entrusted. I am like a steward simply doing his duty."

ix. 18. "Abuse not:" rather, "not to use." Some commentators

otherwise in the Christian race than in your races. Only one wins the prize in them; you may all run, so as to obtain. You have great encouragement therefore to persist constantly and diligently, and vigorously in your course. There is room for all to get the prize. You cannot fail if you run well, ["run with patience the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith."] Yet there should be a noble emulation. You should endeavour to outdo one another. And it is a glorious contest who shall get first to heaven, or have the best rewards in that blessed world. I make it my endeavour thus to run, so do you. No man ever more heartily pursued the prize in your Isthmian races than I do after the recompence of the reward. So do you, as you see me go before you. Note, It is the duty of Christians to follow their ministers closely in the chase of eternal glory, and the honour and duty of ministers to lead them the way.

Secondly, He directs them in their course by setting more fully to view his own example, still carrying on the allusion. 1. They that run in their games were kept to a set diet. "Every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things," ver. 25. The cuffers and wrestlers in your exercises are kept to strict diet and discipline; nay, they keep themselves to it. They do not indulge themselves, but restrain themselves from the food they eat, and so from the liberties they use on other occasions. And should not Christians much more abridge themselves of their liberty for so glorious an end, as winning the race, and obtaining the prize set before them? They used a very spare diet and coarse food, and denied themselves much to prepare for their race and combat; so do I. So should you, after my example. It is hard if for the heavenly crown you cannot abstain from heathen sacrifices. 2. They were not only temperate, but inured themselves to hardships. They who cuffed with one another in these exercises prepared themselves by beating the air, as the apostle calls it, or by throwing out their arms, and thereby inuring themselves beforehand to deal about their blows in close combat, or brandish them by way



ANTIQUE GROUP OF THE BOXERS.

of flourish. There is no room for any such exercise in the Christian warfare. Christians are ever in close combat. Their enemies make fierce and hearty opposition, and are ever at hand, and for this reason they must lay about them in earnest, and never drop the contest, or flag and faint in it. They must fight, not as those that beat the air, but must strive against their enemies with all their might. One enemy the apostle here mentions, namely, the body; this must be kept under, beaten black and blue, as the combatants were in these Grecian games, and thereby brought into subjection. By the body is to be understood fleshly appetites and inclinations. These the apostle set himself to curb and conquer, and in this the Corinthians were bound to imitate him. Note, They who would aright pursue the interests of their souls must beat down their bodies, and keep them under. They must combat hard with fleshly lusts till they have subdued them; and not indulge a wanton appetite, and long for heathenish sacrifices, or eat them to please their flesh, at the hazard of their brethren's souls. The body must be made to serve the mind, not suffered to lord over it, [and they have the promise of grace to aid them in the struggle.]

Thirdly, The apostle presses this advice on the Corinthians, by proper arguments drawn from the same contenders. 1. They take pains, and undergo all those hardships, "to obtain a corruptible crown," ver. 25, "but we an incorruptible." They who conquered in these games were only crowned with the withering leaves or boughs of trees, of olive, bays, or laurel. But Christians have an inheritance incorruptible, reserved in heaven for them; and would they yet suffer themselves to be outdone by these racers or wrestlers? Can they use abstinence in diet, exert themselves in racing, expose their bodies to so much hardship in a combat, who have no more in view but the trifling huzzas of a giddy multitude, or a crown of leaves? and shall not Christians, who hope for the approbation of the sovereign Judge, and a crown of glory from his hands, stretch forward in the heavenly race, and exert themselves in beating down their fleshly inclinations, and the strongholds of sin? 2. The racers in these games run at uncertainty. All run, "but one receives the prize," ver. 24; every racer therefore is at great uncertainty whether he shall win it or no. But the Christian racer is at no such uncertainty. Every one may run here so as to obtain, but then he must run within the lines; he must keep to the path of duty prescribed, which some think is the meaning of running not as uncertainly, ver. 26. He who keeps within the limits prescribed, and keeps on in his race, will never miss his crown, though others may get theirs before him. And would the Grecian racers keep within their bounds, and exert themselves to the very last, when one only could win, and all must be uncertain which that one would be? and shall not [real] Christians be much more exact and vigorous when all are sure of a crown when they come to the end of their race? 3. He sets before himself and them the danger of yielding to fleshly inclinations, and pampering the body, and its lusts and appetites. "I keep my body under, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway," ver. 27; 'rejected, disapproved,' ἀδόκιμος, one to

whom the *βοαστήρ*, 'the judge or umpire of the race, will not decree the crown. The allusion to the games runs through the whole sentence. [The metaphor is most probably changed here. This allusion seems to be to metals which, if they cannot stand the test, are rejected. The chief object of the apostle seems to be to impress ministers of the Gospel with the duty of seeking continually growing evidence of their own personal godliness, as well as of the outward success of their preaching.] Note, A preacher of salvation may yet miss it. He may shew others the way to heaven, and never get thither himself. To prevent this, Paul took so much pains in subduing and keeping under bodily inclinations, lest by any means he himself, who had preached to others, should yet miss the crown, be disapproved and rejected by his sovereign Judge. A holy fear of himself was necessary to preserve the fidelity of an apostle; and how much more necessary is it to our preservation! Note, Holy fear of ourselves, and not presumptuous confidence, is the best security against apostasy from God, and final rejection by him.

CHAPTER X.

In this chapter the apostle prosecutes the argument at the close of the last, and, I. Warns the Corinthians against security, by the example of the Jews; who, notwithstanding their profession and privileges, were terribly punished of God for their many sins, their history being left upon record for the admonition of Christians, ver. 1-14. II. He resumes his former argument, *ch. viii.*, about eating things offered to idols; and shews that it is utterly inconsistent with true Christianity, and downright gross idolatry, to eat them as things offered to idols. It is having fellowship with devils, which cannot consist with having fellowship with God, ver. 15-22. III. He lets them yet know that, though they must not eat of things sacrificed to idols as such, and out of any regard to the idol, yet they might buy such flesh in the markets, or eat it at the table of heathen acquaintance, without asking any questions; for that the heathens' abuse of them did not render the creatures of God unfit to be the food of his servants. Yet liberty of this kind must be used with a due regard to weak consciences, and no offence given by it to Jew or Gentile, or the church of God, ver. 23-32.



Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

In order to dissuade the Corinthians from communion with idolaters, and security in any sinful course, he sets before them the example of the Jews, the church under the Old Testament. They enjoyed great privileges, but having been guilty of heinous provocations they fell under very grievous punishments. In these verses he reckons up their privileges, which in the main were the same with ours.

First, He prefaces this discourse with a note of regard, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant;" I would not have you without the knowledge of this matter; it is a thing worthy both your knowledge and attention. It is a history very instructive and monitory. Judaism was Christianity under a veil, wrapt up in types and dark hints. The Gospel was preached to them in their legal rites and sacrifices; and the providence of God towards them, and what happened to them notwithstanding these privileges, may and ought to be warnings to us.

Secondly, He specifies some of their privileges. He begins, 1. With their deliverance from Egypt. "Our fathers," that is, the ancestors of us Jews, "were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea." They were all under the Divine covering and conduct. The cloud served for both purposes. It sometimes contracted itself into a cloudy pillar, shining on one side to shew them their way, dark on the other to hide them from their pursuing enemies; and sometimes spread itself over them as a mighty sheet, to defend them from the burning sun in the sandy desert, *Ps. cv. 39.* They were miraculously conducted through the Red sea, where the pursuing Egyptians were drowned. It was a lane to them, but a grave to these; a proper type of our redemption by Christ, who saves us by conquering and destroying his enemies and ours. They were very dear to God, and much in his favour, when he would work such miracles for their deliverance, and take them so immediately under his guidance and protection. 2. They had sacraments like ours. 1st. "They were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea," ver. 2, or into Moses; that is, brought under obligation to Moses' law and covenant, as we are by baptism under [those of] the Christian law and covenant. [The apostle's allusion is to baptism chiefly as a dedicating ordinance, wherein its recipients are solemnly enlisted under the banner of Christ.] It was to them a typical baptism. 2nd. "They did all eat of the same spiritual meat, and drink of the same spiritual drink," namely, that we do. The manna on which they fed was a type of Christ crucified, the bread which came down from heaven, which whoso eateth shall live for ever. Their drink was a stream fetched from a rock which followed them in all their journeyings in the wilderness, and this rock was Christ; namely, in type and figure. He is the rock on which the Christian church is built; and of the streams that issue from him do all believers drink, and are refreshed. Now all the Jews did eat of this meat, and drink of this rock, called here a spiritual rock, because it typified spiritual things. These were great privileges. One would think this should have saved them; that all who eat of that spiritual meat, and drank of that spiritual drink, should have been holy and acceptable to God. Yet was it otherwise. "With many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown

include the whole of this verse in the question, and find the answer in verse 19; the reward spoken of being that he "might gain the greater number."

x. 1. "Moreover," rather, "for," connecting this chapter with the last. There Paul had spoken of the need of self-denial, lest, notwithstanding all his privileges, a man should at the last be rejected. He takes in this chapter Israel as an illustration; for they, with all their privileges, were most of them castaways.

x. 2. "Baptised unto Moses:" literally, "baptised themselves," denoting the relation or fellowship into which they entered with Moses, the mediator of their covenant and representative of the law.

x. 3. "Spiritual meat:" the manna, so called in reference to its descent from heaven. (Compare *Psa. lxxviii. 24, 25.*)

x. 4. "The apostle has adopted the tradition current among the Jews, that the rock followed the Israelites in their journeyings. 'They drank from a miraculous rock which followed them.' But

in the wilderness," ver. 5. Note, Men may enjoy many and great spiritual privileges in this world, and yet come short of eternal life. Many of those who were baptised into Moses in the cloud and sea, that is, had their faith of his Divine commission confirmed by these miracles, yet were overthrown in the wilderness, and never saw the promised land. Let none presume upon their great privileges, or profession of the truth; these will not secure heavenly happiness, nor prevent Divine judgments here on earth, except the root of the matter be in us.

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

The apostle, having recited their privileges, proceeds here to an account of their faults and punishments, their sins and plagues, which are left upon record for an example to us; a warning against the like sins, if we would escape the like punishments. We must not do as they did, lest we suffer as they suffered. Several of their sins are instanced in, as cautions to us; as,

First. We should shun inordinate desires after carnal objects; must "not lust after evil things as they lusted," ver. 6. God fed them with manna, but they must have flesh, *Num. xi. 4*. They had food for their supply, but, not content with that, they asked meat for their lusts, *Ps. cvi. 14*. Carnal desires get head by indulgence, and therefore should be observed and checked in their first rise. If once they prevail, and bear sway in us, we know not whither they will carry us. This caution stands first, because carnal appetites indulged are the root and source of much sin.

Secondly. He warns against idolatry. "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." The sin of the golden calf is referred to, *Ex. xxxii. 6*. They first sacrificed to the idol, then feasted on the sacrifices, and then danced before it. Though only eating and drinking are mentioned here, yet the sacrifice is supposed. The apostle is speaking to the case of the Corinthians, who were tempted to feast on heathen sacrifices, things offered to idols, though they do not seem to have been under any temptation to sacrifice themselves. Even eating and drinking of the sacrifices before the idol, and as things sacrificed, was idolatry, which, by the example of the Israelites, they should be warned to avoid.

Thirdly. He cautions against fornication, a sin to which the inhabitants of Corinth were in a peculiar manner addicted. They had a temple among them dedicated to Venus, that is, to lust, with above a thousand priestesses belonging to it, all common prostitutes. How needful was a caution against fornication to those who lived in so corrupt a city, and had been used to such a dissolution of manners? especially when they were under temptations to idolatry too, and spiritual whoredom did in many cases lead to bodily prostitution. Most of the gods the heathens served were represented as very patterns of lewdness, and much lewdness was committed in the very worship of many of them. Many of the Jewish writers, and many Christians after them, think such worship was paid to Baal-peor; and that fornication was committed with the daughters of Moab, in the worship of that idol. They were enticed by these women both to spiritual and corporal whoredom, first to feast on the sacrifice, if not to do more beastly facts in honour of the idol, and then to defile themselves with strange flesh, *Num. xxv.* which brought on a plague that in one day slew twenty-three thousand, besides those which fell by the hand of public justice. Note, Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge, in whatever external relation they may stand to him, and whatever outward privileges he may bestow upon them. Let us fear the sins of Israel if we would shun their plagues.

Fourthly. He warns us against tempting "Christ, as some of them tempted, and were destroyed of serpents," ver. 9, or provoking him to jealousy, ver. 22. He was with the church in the wilderness. He was the angel of the covenant that went before them. But he was greatly grieved and provoked by them many ways. "They spoke against him and Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?" for which reason God sent fiery serpents among them, *Num. xxi. 5, 6*, by which many of them were stung mortally; and it is but just to fear that such as tempt Christ under the present dispensation should be left by him in the power of the old serpent.

Fifthly. He warns against murmuring. "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer," ver. 10; by a destroying angel, an executioner of Divine vengeance. They quarrelled with God, and murmured against Moses his minister, when any difficulties pressed them. When they met with discouragements in the way to Canaan they were very apt to fly in the face of their leaders, were for displacing them, and going

back to Egypt under the conduct of others of their own choosing. Somewhat like this seems to have been the case of the Corinthians. They murmured against Paul, and in him against Christ, and seem to have set up other teachers that would indulge and soothe them in their inclinations, and in a revolt to idolatry. Rather let them feast on idol sacrifices than bear the reproach, or expose themselves to the ill-will, of heathen neighbours. Such conduct was very provoking to God, and was likely to bring upon them swift destruction, as it did on the Israelites, *Num. xiv. 37*. Note, Murmuring against Divine disposals and commands is a sin that greatly provokes, especially when it grows to such a head as to issue in apostasy, and a revolt from him and his good ways.

The apostle to these particular cautions, 1. Subjoins a more general one, ver. 11, "All these things happened to them for ensamples, and were written for our admonition." Not only the laws and ordinances of the Jews, but the providences of God towards them, were typical. Their sins against God, and backslidings from him, were typical of the infidelity of many under the Gospel. God's judgments on them were types of spiritual judgments now. Their exclusion from the earthly Canaan typified the exclusion of many under the Gospel out of the heavenly Canaan for their unbelief. Their history was written to be a standing monitor to the church, even under the last and most perfect dispensation. "To us on whom the end of the world is come;" the concluding period of God's gracious government over men. Note, Nothing in Scripture is written in vain. God had wise and gracious purposes towards us in leaving the Jewish history upon record, and it is our wisdom and duty to receive instruction from it. Upon this hint the apostle grounds a caution; ver. 12, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Note, Others' harms should be cautions to us. He that thinks he stands should not be confident and secure, but upon his guard. Others have fallen, and so may we. And then we are most likely to fall when we are most confident of our own strength, and thereupon most apt to be secure, and off our guard. Distrust of himself, putting him at once upon vigilance and dependence on God, is the Christian's best security against all sin. Note, He who thinks he stands is not like to keep his footing if he fears no fall, nor guards against it. God hath not promised to keep us from falling if we do not look to ourselves. His protection supposes our own care and caution.

But to this word of caution he, 2. Adds a word of comfort, ver. 13. Though it is displeasing to God for us to presume, it is not pleasing to him for us to despair; if the former be a great sin, the latter is far from being innocent. Though we must fear, and take heed lest we fall, yet should we not be terrified and amazed; for either our trials will be proportioned to our strength or strength shall be supplied in proportion to our temptations. We live indeed in a tempting world, where we are compassed about with snares. Every place, condition, relation, employment, and enjoyment abounds with them; yet what comfort may we fetch from such a passage? For, 1st. "No temptation," saith the apostle, "hath ye taken you, but such as is common to man," what is humane, that is, such as you may expect from men of such principles as heathens, and such power; or else such as is common to mankind in the present state; or else such as the spirit and resolution of mere men may bear you through, [though not without the grace of God.] Note, The trials of common Christians are but common trials; others have the like burthens and the like temptations. What they bear up under and break through we may also. 2nd. "God is faithful." Though Satan be a deceiver, God is true. Men may be false, and the world may be false, but God is faithful, and our strength and security is in him. He keepeth his covenant, and will never fail the filial hope and trust of his children. 3rd. He is wise as well as faithful, and will proportion our burthen to our strength, [already given:] "He will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able." He knows what we can bear, and what we can bear up against, [give more grace:] and he will in his wise providence either proportion our temptations to our strength or make us able to grapple with them. He will take care that we be not overcome, if we rely upon him, and resolve to approve ourselves faithful to him. We need not perplex ourselves with the difficulties in our way, when God will take care that they shall not be too great for us to encounter, especially, 4th. When he will make them to issue well. "He will make a way to escape," that is, either the trial itself, or at least the mischief of it. There is no valley so dark but he can find a way through it; no affliction so grievous but he can prevent or remove, or enable us to support, and in the end overrule to our advantage. [God's people have a High Priest, who is touched with a feeling of their infirmities.]

And upon this argument he, 3. Grounds another caution against idolatry. "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." Observe, 1st. How he addresses them: "My dearly beloved." It is out of tender affection to them that he presses this advice upon them. 2nd. The matter of this advice. "Flee idolatry." Shun it, and all approaches towards it. Idolatry is the most heinous injury and affront to the true God; it is transferring his worship and honour to a rival. 3rd. The ground of this advice. Seeing you have such encouragement to trust God and be faithful, do you approve yourselves men; be not shaken by any discouragements your heathen enemies may lay before you. God will succour and assist, help you in your trials and help you out of them; and therefore be not guilty of any idolatrous compliances. Note, We have all the encouragement in the world to flee sin, and prove faithful to God; we cannot fall by a temptation if we cleave fast to him.

15 I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. 16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we *being* many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. 18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 20 But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 21 Ye cannot drink

(distinction between what they saw in the rock and what we see in it) the rock was Christ" (Alford). "Not one particular rock. The miracle happened at least twice. . . . Christ is called the Rock because it was through his agency that the several rocks, one after another, acquired the same water-yielding power" (Burger).

x. 16. "The cup of blessing;" answering to the Jewish "cup of blessing," over which thanks were offered at the Passover. (See Matthew xvi. 27.) This cup and the bread St. Paul calls the com-

munion, or "participation" of the blood and body of Christ, that whereby faith really but spiritually partakes of the body and blood of Christ. Hence the inconsistency of having fellowship with devils.

x. 17. "One bread, one body:" omit "and." Those partaking, although many, became "one bread" by the assimilation of that one bread partaken, and so one body with Christ and with one another.

x. 23. See chap. vi. 12.

x. 25. "Shambles:" the meat-market. The things thus sold are

the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. 22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

In this passage the apostle urges the general caution against idolatry, in the particular case of eating the heathen sacrifices as such, and out of any religious respect to the idol to whom they were sacrificed.

First. He prefaces his argument with an appeal to their own reason and judgment. "I speak to wise men, judge ye what I say," ver. 15, as if he had said, You are great pretenders to wisdom, to close reasoning and argument, I can leave it with your own reason and conscience whether I do not argue justly. Note, It is no dishonour to an inspired teacher, nor disadvantage to his argument, to appeal for the truth of it to the reason and consciences of his hearers; it comes upon them with the greater force when it comes with this conviction. Paul, an inspired apostle, would yet in some cases leave it with the Corinthians to judge whether what he taught was not conformable to their own light and sense.

Secondly. He lays down his argument for the Lord's supper. "The cup which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Is not this sacred rite an instrument of communion of God? Do we not therein profess to be in friendship, and to have fellowship with them? Is it not a token whereby we professedly hold communion with Christ, whose body was broken and blood shed to procure remission of our sins and the favour of God? And can we be in alliance [union] with Christ, or friendship [covenant] with God, without being devoted to him? In short, the Lord's supper is a feast on the sacrificed body and blood of our Lord, *epulum ex oblatis*. And to eat of the feast is to partake of the sacrifice, and so to be his guests to whom the sacrifice was offered, and this in token of friendship with him. Thus, to partake of the Lord's table is to profess ourselves his [accepted] guests and covenant people. This is the very purpose and intention of this symbolical eating and drinking. It is holding communion with God, and partaking of those privileges, and professing ourselves under those obligations, which result from the death and [atoning] sacrifice of Christ; and this in conjunction with all true Christians, with whom we have communion also in this ordinance. "Because the bread is one, we, being many, are one body, for we are made partakers of one bread," or loaf, ver. 17; which I think is thus more truly rendered: By partaking of one broken loaf, the emblem of our Saviour's broken body, who is the only true bread that came down from heaven, we coalesce into one body, [profess to] become members of him and one another. Those who truly partake by faith have this communion with Christ and one another; and those who eat the outward elements make profession of having this communion, of belonging to God, and the blessed fraternity of his people and worshippers. This is the true meaning of this holy rite.

Thirdly. He confirms this from the Jewish worship and customs. "Behold Israel after the flesh; are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" that is, of the sacrifices offered upon it. Those who were admitted to eat of the offerings were esteemed to partake of the sacrifice itself as made for them, and to be sanctioned thereby, and therefore sure to worship God and be in alliance or covenant with him, even the God of Israel, to whom the sacrifice was made. This was a symbol or token of holding communion with him.

Fourthly. He applies this to the argument against feasting with idolaters on their sacrifices, and to prove them that do so idolaters. This he does, 1. By allowing the principle on which they would argue it to be lawful; namely, that an idol was nothing. Many of them were nothing at all, none of them had any divinity in them; what was sacrificed to idols was nothing, no way changed from what it was before, but was every whit as fit for food, considered in itself. They indeed seem to argue that, because an idol was nothing, what was offered was no sacrifice, but common and ordinary food, of which they might therefore eat with as little scruple. Now the apostle allows that the food was not changed as to its nature, was as fit to be eaten as common food, where it was set before any who knew not of its having been offered to an idol; but, 2. He proves that eating it as part of a heathen sacrifice was, 1st. A partaking with them in their idolatry. It was having fellowship with devils, [certainly not fallen angels, for to these the Gentiles did not ascribe the most diabolical passions and acts, *evil demons*; all heathen worship was a work of Satan:] because what the Gentiles sacrificed they sacrificed to devils; and to feast with them upon these sacrifices was to partake in the sacrifice, and therefore to worship the god to whom it was made, and have fellowship or communion with him, just as he who eats the Lord's supper is supposed to partake in the Christian sacrifice, or as they which ate the Jewish sacrifices did partake of what was offered on their altar. But heathens sacrificed to devils; therefore do not feast on their sacrifices, doing it as a token of your having fellowship with the demons to whom they are offered. I would not have you be in communion with devils. 2nd. It was a virtual renouncing of Christianity. "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils," ver. 21. To partake of this Christian feast was to have communion with Christ; to partake of the feasts made out of honour to the heathen idols, and made of things sacrificed to them, was to have communion with devils. Now this was to compound contraries; it was by no means consistent. Communion with Christ and communion with the devil could never be had at once; one must be renounced if the other was maintained. He who held communion with Christ must renounce that with devils; he that held communion with devils must by that very deed renounce communion with Christ. And what a manifest self-contradiction must that man's conduct be that would partake of the Lord's table, and yet partake of the table of demons. God and mammon can never be served together, nor fellowship be at once had with Christ and Satan. Those who communicate with devils must virtually renounce Christ. This may also intimate that such as indulge themselves in gluttony or drunkenness, and by so doing make their own table the table of devils, or keep up fellowship with Satan by a course of known and wilful wickedness, cannot partake truly of the cup and table of the Lord. They may use the sign, but do not the thing signified thereby; for a man can never be at once in communion with Christ and his church and yet in fellowship with Satan. Note, How much reason have we to look to it, that every sin, an idol, be renounced by us, when we eat and drink at the Lord's table.

Fifthly. He warns them upon the whole against such idolatry, by signifying to them that God is a jealous God; ver. 22, "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" It is very likely many among the Corinthians made light of being at these heathen feasts, and thought there was no harm in it; but the apostle bids them beware. The reason with which the second commandment is enforced is, "I am a jealous God." God cannot

endure a rival in matter of worship, nor give his glory, nor suffer it to be given to another. They that have fellowship with other gods provoke him to jealousy, *Deu. xxxii. 16*; and before this he done persons should consider whether they are stronger than he. It is a dangerous thing to provoke God's anger, unless we could withstand his power. But who can stand before him when he is angry? *Nah. i. 6*. This should be considered by all who continue in the love and liking of sin, and in league with it, whilst yet they profess to keep up communion with Christ. Is not this the way to provoke his jealousy and indignation? Note, Attention to the greatness of God's power should restrain us from provoking his jealousy, from doing any thing to displease him. Shall we rouse almighty wrath? and how shall we withstand it? Are we a match for God? can we resist his power or control it? And if not, shall we arm it against us, by provoking him to jealousy? No, let us fear this power, and let this restrain us from all provocation.

23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. 24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. 25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: 26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. 27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. 28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: 29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? 30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? 31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: 33 Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

In this passage the apostle shews in what instances, notwithstanding, Christians might lawfully eat of what had been sacrificed to idols. They must not eat it out of religious respect to the idol, nor go into his temple, and hold a feast there, upon what they knew was an idol sacrifice, nor perhaps out of the temple, if they knew it was a feast held upon a sacrifice; but there were cases wherein they might eat what had been offered without sin. Some such the apostle here instances in; but,

First. Gives a caution against abusing our liberty in lawful things. That may be lawful which is not expedient, which will not edify; but a Christian must not barely consider what is lawful, but what is expedient, and for the use of edification. A private Christian should do so even in his private conduct. He must not seek his own only, but his neighbour's wealth, [not in the original.] He must be concerned not to hurt his neighbour, nay, he must be concerned to promote his welfare, and must consider how to act so as that he may help others, and not hinder them in their holiness, comfort, or salvation. They who allow themselves in every thing not plainly sinful in itself will often run into what is evil by accident, [a sinful carelessness,] and do much mischief to others. Every thing lawful in itself to be done is not therefore lawfully done. Circumstances may make that sin which in itself is none; and these must be weighed, and the expedience of an action, and its tendency to edification, must be considered before it be done. Note, The [spiritual] welfare of others, as well as our own convenience, must be consulted in many things we do, if we would do them well.

Secondly. He tells them that what was sold in the shambles they might eat without asking questions. The priest's share of heathen sacrifices was thus frequently offered to sale after it had been offered in the temple. Now the apostle tells them they need not be so scrupulous as to ask the butcher in the market whether the meat he sold had been offered to an idol; it was there sold as common food, and as such might be bought and used. "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," ver. 26; and the fruit and products of the earth were designed by him, the great Proprietor, for the use and subsistence of mankind, and more especially of his own children and servants. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer," 1 *Tim. iv. 4*: "To the pure all things are pure," *Tit. i. 15*. Note, Though it is sinful to use any food in an idolatrous manner, it is no sin after such abuse to apply it in a holy manner to its common use.

Thirdly. He adds, that if they were invited by any heathen acquaintance to a feast, they might go and eat what was set before them, without asking questions, ver. 27: nay, though they knew things sacrificed to idols were served up at such entertainments, as well as sold in the shambles. Note, The apostle doth not prohibit their going to a feast upon the invitation of them that believed not. There is a civility owing even to infidels and heathens. Christianity does by no means bind us up from the common offices of humanity, or allow us in an un courteous behaviour to any of our own kind, however they may differ from us in religious sentiments or practices. And when Christians were invited to feast with infidels, [then the bulk of the population,] they were not to ask needless questions about the food set before them, but eat without

harmless in themselves, and it is unwise, by asking questions, to raise needless scruples in your conscience.

x. 28. "Any man:" some weak brother wishing to warn you of what you are eating. Omit the last clause, "For the earth," &c.

x. 29, 30. "For:" either introducing a reason for verse 27, or connected with preceding clause, the sense being, "Why should I give occasion by the use of my liberty that another should condemn it?" "Why am I to be evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?"

xi. 1. This belongs to the end of chap. x., this chapter commencing at verse 2.

xi. 2. "Ordinances;" rather, "traditions;" apostolic directions, given either verbally or in writing. St. Paul praises their general practice, but proceeds to point out some exceptions. His reference seems to be principally to ceremonies.

xi. 3. "In the Corinthian church there was a departure from the prevailing custom of the East (according to which women went

scruple. Needless inquiries might perplex their minds and consciences, for which reason they were to be avoided. Any thing fit to be eaten that was set before them as a common entertainment they might lawfully eat. And why, then, should they scrupulously inquire whether what was set before them had been sacrificed? It is to be understood of civil feasting, not religious; for these last among the heathens were feasts upon their sacrifices, which he had condemned before as a participation in their idolatrous worship. At a common feast they might expect common food, and they needed not to move scruples in their own minds, whether what was set before them was otherwise or no. Note, Though Christians should be very careful to know and understand their duty, yet should they not, by needless inquiries, perplex themselves.

Fourthly. Yet even at such an entertainment, he adds, if any should say it was a thing that had been offered to idols, they should refrain; "Eat not, for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake." Whether it were the master or the feast or any of the guests,—whether it were spoken in the hearing of all, or whispered in the ear,—they should refrain for his sake who suggested this to them, whether he were an infidel or an infirm Christian; and for conscience sake, out of regard to conscience, that they might shew a regard to it in themselves, and keep up a regard to it in others. This he backs with the same reason as the former: "For the earth is the Lord's." There is food enough provided for our common Lord, of which we may eat without scruple. Note, The same doctrine may be variously improved, as here: "The earth is the Lord's," therefore you may eat anything without scruple that is set before you as common food. And yet, because the earth is the Lord's, eat nothing that will give offence, lay a stumblingblock before others, and encourage some in idolatry, or tempt others to eat when they are not clear in their own mind that it is lawful, and so sin and wound their own consciences. Note, Christians should be very cautious of doing what may thus prejudice the consciences of others and weaken their authority with them, which is by all means to be kept up, [while they labour prayerfully to enlighten weak consciences.]

Fifthly. He urges them to refrain where they will give offence, whilst yet he allows it lawful to eat what was set before them as common food, though it had been offered in sacrifice. Another man's conscience is no measure to our conduct. What he thinks unlawful is not thereby made unlawful to me, but may be a matter of liberty still; and as long as I own God as the giver of my food, and render him thanks for it, it is very unjust to reproach me for using it. This must be understood abstracted from the scandal given, by eating in the circumstance mentioned; though some understand it to mean, Why should I, by using the liberty I have, give occasion to those who are scandalised to speak evil of me? according to that advice of the apostle, *Rom. xiv. 16*, "Let not your good be evil spoken of." Note, Christians should take care not to use their liberty to the hurt of others, nor their own reproach.

Sixthly. The apostle takes occasion from this discourse to lay down a general rule for Christians' conduct, and apply it to this particular case, *ver. 31, 32*, namely, that in eating and drinking, and in all we do, we should aim at the glory of God, at pleasing and honouring him. This is the fundamental principle of practical godliness. The great end of all practical religion must direct us, where particular and express rules are wanting. Nothing must be done against the glory of God, and the good of our neighbours connected with it. Nay, the tendency of our behaviour to the common good, and the credit of our holy religion, should give direction to it. And, therefore, nothing should be done by us to offend any, whether Jew, or Gentile, or the church, *ver. 32*. The Jews should not be unnecessarily grieved or prejudiced, who have such abhorrence of idols, that they reckon everything offered to them thereby defiled, and that it will pollute and render culpable all who partake of it. Nor should heathens be contemned in their idolatry by any behaviour of ours, which they may construe as homage or honour done to their idols. [How sinful then are public compliances with idolatrous practices in any part of the world!] Nor young converts from Gentilism take any encouragement from our conduct, to retain any veneration for the heathen gods and worship which they have renounced. Nor should we do anything that might be a means to pervert any members of the church from their Christian profession or practice. Our own humour and appetite must not determine our practice, but the honour of God, and the good and edification of the church. We should not so much consult our own pleasure and interest as the advancement of the kingdom of God among men. Note, A Christian should be a man devoted to God, and of a public spirit, [rather, the spirit of Christ.]

Seventhly. He presses all upon them by his own example. "Even as I please all men" (or study to do it) in all things," (that I lawfully can,) "not seeking mine own profit, but that of many, that they may be saved," *ver. 33*. Note, A preacher may press his advice home with boldness and authority when he can enforce it with his own example. He is most likely to promote a public spirit in others who can give evidence of it in himself. And it is highly commendable in a minister to neglect his own advantages, that he may promote the salvation of his hearers. This shews that he hath a spirit suitable to his function, [an unction of the Spirit.] It is a station for [the highest] public usefulness, and can never be faithfully discharged by a man of a narrow spirit and selfish principles, [a man unrenewed.]

CHAPTER XI.

In this chapter the apostle blames, and endeavours to rectify, some great indecencies and manifest disorders in the church of Corinth. As, I. The misconduct of their women (some of whom seem to have been inspired) in the public assembly, who laid by their veils, the common token of subjection to their husbands in that part of the world. This behaviour he reprehends, requires them to keep veiled, asserts the superiority of the husband, yet so as to remember the husband that both were made for mutual help and comfort, *ver. 1-16*. II. He blames them for their discord, riot, and neglect and contempt of the poor at the Lord's supper, *ver. 17-22*. III. To rectify these scandalous disorders, he sets before them the nature and intention of this holy institution, directs them how they should attend on it, and warns them of the danger of a conduct so indecent as theirs, and of all unworthy receiving, *ver. 23-34*.



GREEK WOMEN SACRIFICING UNCOVERED.—*ver. 5.*

veiled), especially on the part of heathen converts, who, even in other respects, rather overstretch the idea of Christian liberty. Since I am here discussing a question of merely outward custom, it is interesting to observe how characteristically he surveys the smallest matters in connection with the greatest, and understands how to penetrate to the remotest particulars from the fundamental principles of the Christian life. He begins not with the custom itself, but with the leading idea that ought to govern it" (Neander).



Ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ. 2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you. 3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head. 5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. 6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. 8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. 9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. 10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. 12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. 13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? 14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? 15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering. 16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.



WOMAN OF THE EAST, VEILED.

Paul, having answered the cases put to him, proceeds in this chapter to the redress of grievances. The first verse of the chapter is put, by those who divided the epistle into chapters, as a preface to the rest of the epistle, but seems to have been a more proper close to the last, in which he had enforced the cautions he had given against the abuse of liberty by his own example.



"Head:" "By the term 'head' he expresses the next immediate relation sustained. The man has Christ for his head, to whom he is alone subordinate; while the woman who, as a member of the church, has indeed Christ in like manner for her head, is yet primarily subject to her husband, and in him has her support, her destiny, and her dignity" (Kling).

xi. 10. "Power:" i.e., the veil on her head as a sign of power or subjection. Neander explains it thus: "The wife should have upon

"Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ," ver. 1, fitly closes this argument; and the way of speaking in the next verse looks like a transition to another. But, whether it more properly belongs to this or the last chapter, it is plain from it, that Paul not only preached such doctrine as they ought to believe, but led such a life as they ought to imitate. "Be ye followers of me," is, Be imitators of me, live as you see me live. Note, Ministers are likely to preach most to the purpose when they can press their hearers to follow their example. Yet would not Paul be followed blindly neither. He encourages neither implicit faith nor obedience; he would be followed himself no farther than he followed Christ. Christ's pattern is a copy without a blot, so is no man's else. Note, We should follow no leader farther than he follows Christ. Apostles should be left by us when they deviate from the example of their Master. He passes next to reprehend and reform an indecency among them, of which the women were more especially guilty. Concerning which, observe,

First. How he prefaceth it. He begins with a commendation of what was praiseworthy in them; ver. 2, "I praise you, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you." Many of them, it is probable, did this in the strictest sense of the expression; and he takes occasion from thence to address the body of the church under this good character; and the body might, in the main, have continued to observe the ordinances and institutions of Christ, though in some things they deviated from and corrupted them. Note, That when we reprove what is amiss in any, it is very prudent and fit to commend what is good in them. It will shew that the reproof is not from ill-will, and a humour of censuring and finding fault; and it will therefore procure the more regard to it.

Secondly. He lays a foundation for his future reprehension by asserting the superiority of the man over the woman. "I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." Christ, in his mediatorial character and glorified humanity, is at the head of mankind. He is not only first of the kind, but Lord and Sovereign, [over all; a doctrine which cannot be set aside without shaking the whole gospel system.] "He has a name above every name;" though in this high office and authority he has a superior, God being his head. And as God is the head of Christ, [in his glory and humanity,] and Christ the head of the whole human kind, so the man is the head of the two sexes. Not indeed with such dominion as Christ has over the kind, or God has over the man Christ Jesus; but a superiority and headship he has. And the woman should be in subjection, and not assume or usurp the man's place. This is the situation in which God has placed her, and for that reason she should have a mind suited to her rank, and not do anything that looks like an affectation of changing places. Somewhat like this the women of the church of Corinth seem to have been guilty of, who were under inspiration, and prayed and prophesied even in their assemblies, ver. 5. It is indeed an apostolical canon, that the women should keep silence in the churches, *ch. xiv. 34*; *1 Tim. ii. 12*; which some understand without limitation, as if a woman under inspiration also must keep silence, which seems very well to agree with the connexion of the apostle's discourse, *ch. xiv.* Others with a limitation: though a woman might not from her own abilities pretend to teach, or so much as question and debate anything in the church, yet, when under inspiration, the case was altered, she had liberty to speak. Or, though she might not preach, even by inspiration, because teaching is the business of a superior, yet she might pray or utter hymns by inspiration, even in the public assembly; she did not shew any affectation of superiority over the man by such acts of public worship. It is plain the apostle doth not in this place prohibit the thing, but the manner of doing it; and yet he might utterly disallow the thing, and lay an unlimited restraint on the women, in another part of the epistle. These things are not contradictory. It is to his present purpose to reprehend the manner wherein the women prayed and prophesied in the church, without determining in this place whether they did well or ill in praying or prophesying. Note, The manner of doing a thing enters into the morality of it. We must not only be concerned to do good, but that the good we do be well done.

Thirdly. The thing he reprehends is the woman's praying or prophesying uncovered, or the man's doing either covered, ver. 4, 5. To understand this, it must be observed, that it was a signification either of shame or subjection for persons to be veiled or covered in the Eastern countries, contrary to the custom of ours, where the being bareheaded betokens subjection, and being covered superiority and dominion. And this will help us better to understand,

Fourthly. The reasons on which he grounds his reprehension. 1. "The man that prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonoureth his head," namely, Christ the head of every man, ver. 3, by appearing in a habit unsuitable to the rank in which God has placed him. Note, We should even in our dress and habit avoid everything that may dishonour Christ. "The woman," on the other hand, "who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head," namely, the man, ver. 3. She appears in the dress of her superior, and throws off the token of her subjection; and she might with equal decency cut her hair short, or cut it close, the common dress of the man in that age. This would be in a manner to declare that she was desirous of changing sexes; a manifest affectation of that superiority which God had conferred on the other sex. And this was properly the fault of these prophetesses in the church of Corinth. It was doing a thing which in that age of the world betokened superiority, and therefore a tacit claim of what did not belong to them, but the other sex. Note, The sexes should not affect to change places. The order in which Divine wisdom has placed persons and things is best and fittest; to endeavour to mend it is to destroy all order, and introduce confusion. Women should keep to the rank God has chosen for them, and not dishonour their head, for this in the result is to dishonour God. If she was made out of the man, and for the man, and made to be the glory of the man, she should do nothing, especially in public, that looks like a wish of having this order inverted. 2. Another reason against this conduct was, that "the man is the image and glory of God," the representative of that glorious dominion and headship which God has over the world. It is the man who is set at the head of this lower creation, and therein bears the resemblance of God. "The woman," on the other hand, "is the glory of the man," ver. 7. She is his representative. Not but she has dominion over the inferior creatures, as she is a partaker of human nature, and so far is God's representative too, but it is at second hand. She is the image of God, inasmuch as she is the image of the man. "For the man was not made out of the woman, but the woman out of the man," ver. 8. The man was first made, and made head of the creation here below, and therein the image of the Divine dominion; and the woman was made out of the man, and shone with a reflection of his glory, being made superior to the other creatures here below, but in subjection to her husband, and deriving that honour from him out of whom she was made. 3. "The woman was made for the man," to be his help-meet, "and not the man for the woman." She was naturally therefore made subject to him, because made for him, for his use, and help, and comfort. And she who was intended to be always in subjection to the man should do nothing in Christian assemblies that looked like an affectation of equality. 4. "She ought to have power on her head, because of the angels." Power, that is, a veil, [the Greek word is not

used in this sense in any other passage, but commentators, ancient and modern, agree generally in assigning to it this meaning here:] the token, not of her having power or superiority, but being under the power of her husband, and subject to him, and inferior to the other sex. Rebecca, when she met Isaac, and was delivering herself into his possession, put on her veil in token of her subjection, *Gen. xxiv. 65*. Thus would the apostle have the women appear in Christian assemblies, even though they spake there by inspiration, "because of the angels;" that is, say some, because of the evil angels. "The woman was first in the transgression, being deceived by the devil," *1 Tim. ii. 11*, which increased her subjection to the man, *Gen. iii. 16*. Now, because evil angels will be sure to mix in all Christian assemblies, therefore should women wear the tokens of their shamefacedness and subjection, which in that age and country was a veil. Others say, because of the good angels. Jews and Christians have had an opinion, that these ministering spirits are many of them present in their assemblies. Their presence should restrain Christians from all indecencies in the worship of God. [Other commentators understand by angels, messengers or spies sent by heathen authorities into the Christian assemblies; others think that by angels are meant the ministers. All these senses the Greek word will bear, but the second given above is now generally received.] Note, We should learn from all to carry it in the public assemblies of Divine worship so as to express a reverence for God, and a content and satisfaction with that rank in which he has placed us.

Fifthly. He thinks fit to guard his argument with a caution, lest the inference be carried too far, ver. 11, 12; "Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord." They were made for one another. "It is not good for him to be alone," *Gen. ii. 18*; and therefore was a woman made, and made for the man; and the man was intended to be a comfort, and help, and defence to the woman, though not so directly and immediately made for her. They were made to be a mutual comfort and blessing; not one a slave, and the other a tyrant. "Both were to be one flesh," *Gen. ii. 24*; and this for the propagation of a race of mankind. They are reciprocal instruments of each other's production. As the woman was first formed out of the man, the man is ever since propagated by the woman, ver. 12; all by the Divine wisdom and power of the First Cause so ordaining it. The authority and subjection should be no greater than is suitable to two in such near relation and close union to each other. Note, As it is the will of God that the woman know her place, so it is his will also that the man abuse not his power.

Sixthly. He enforces his argument from the natural covering provided for the woman, ver. 13—15; "Judge in yourselves," consult your own reason, hearken to what nature suggests, "is it comely for a woman to pray to God uncovered?" Should there not be a distinction kept up between the sexes in the wearing their hair, since nature has made one? Is it not a distinction which custom has kept up among all civilized nations? The woman's hair is a natural covering, to wear it long is a glory to her; but for a man to have long hair, or cherish it, is a token of softness and effeminacy. Note, It should be our concern, especially in Christian and religious assemblies, to make no breach upon the rules of natural decency.

Seventhly. He sums up all, by referring those who were contentious to the usages and customs of the churches, ver. 16. Custom is in a great measure the rule of decency. And the common practice of the churches is what he would have them govern themselves by. He does not silence the contentious by mere authority, but lets them know that they would appear to the world as very odd and singular in their humour, if they would quarrel for a custom to which all the churches of Christ were at that time utter strangers, or against a custom in which they all concurred, and that upon the foot of natural decency. It was the common usage of the churches for women to appear in public assemblies, and join in public worship, veiled, and it was manifestly decent that they should do so. They must be very contentious indeed who would quarrel with this custom, and lay it aside.

17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. 20 When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper. 21 For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

In this passage the apostle sharply rebukes them for much greater disorders than the former, in their partaking of the Lord's supper, which was commonly done in the first ages, as the ancients tell us, with a love feast annexed, which gave occasion to the scandalous disorders which the apostle here reprehends, Concerning which, observe,

First. The manner in which he introduces his charge. "Now in this that I declare to you, I praise you not," ver. 17. I cannot commend, but must blame and condemn you. It is plain, from the beginning of the chapter, that he was willing and pleased to commend, as far as he could. But such scandalous disorders, in so sacred an institution, as they were guilty of, called for a sharp reprehension. They quite turned the institution against itself. It was intended to make them better, to promote their spiritual interests, but it really made them worse. They came together, "not for the better, but for the worse." Note, That the ordinances of Christ, if they do not make us better, will be very apt to make us worse; if they do not do our souls good, they may do us harm; if they do not melt and mend, they will harden. Corruptions will be confirmed in us, if the proper means do not work a cure of them.

Secondly. He enters upon his charge against them in more particulars than one. 1. He tells them, that upon coming together they fell into divisions, schisms, *σχίσματα*. Instead of concurring unanimously in celebrating the ordi-

her head a symbol of the power which the man has over her." "Because of the angels:" supposed to be present with Christ in the assemblies of the church. Alluded to probably because of the joy they take in all that is good, and of the order reigning amongst them.

xi. 16. "If any man appears still to dispute this matter, neither we nor the churches of God have such a practice as that of women praying uncovered."

xi. 19. "Heresies:" not doctrinal errors, but confirmed schisms.

xi. 24. Compare Luke xxii. 19, 20. "The truth seems to be that Luke, seeking information from every quarter, sought it from the preaching of St. Paul; and the apostle in his turn employed the knowledge acquired from other sources by his disciple."

xi. 25. "The new covenant in (ratified by and standing in) my blood."

xi. 26. "Show:" rather, "publicly announce."

nance, they fell a quarrelling with one another. Note, There may be schism where there is no separation of communion. Persons may come together in the same church, and sit down at the same table of the Lord, and yet be schismatics. Uncharitableness, alienation of affection, especially if it grows up to discord, and feuds and contentions, constitute schism. Christians may separate from each other's communion, and yet be charitable one towards another; they may continue in the same communion, and yet be uncharitable. This last is schism rather than the former. The apostle had heard a report of the Corinthians' divisions, and he tells them he had too much reason to believe it; for, adds he, there must be heresies [parties or factions, perhaps separate bodies communicating apart from each other,] also; not only quarrels, but factions, and perhaps such corrupt opinions as strike at the foundation of Christianity, and all sound religion. Note, No marvel there should be breaches of Christian love in the churches, when such offences will come as shall make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Such offences must come. Not that men are necessitated to be guilty of them, but the event is certain; and God permits them, that they which are approved, such honest hearts as will bear the trial, may be set to view, and appear faithful by their constant adherence to the truths and ways of God, notwithstanding the temptations of seducers. Note, The wisdom of God can make the wickedness and errors of others a foil to the piety and integrity of the saints. 2. He charges them not only with discord and division, but with scandalous disorder. "For in eating, every one taketh before the other his own supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunken," ver. 21. Heathens used to drink plentifully at their feasts upon their sacrifices. Many of the wealthier Corinthians seem to have taken the same liberty at the Lord's table, or at least at their *ἀγάρα*, or love feasts, that were annexed to the supper. They would not stay for one another. The rich despised the poor, and ate and drank up the provisions themselves brought, before the poor were allowed to partake; and thus some wanted, whilst others had more than enough. This was profaning a sacred institution, and corrupting a Divine ordinance to the last degree. What was appointed to feed the soul was employed to feed their lusts and passions. What should have been a bond of mutual amity and affection was made an instrument of discord and disunion. The poor are deprived of the food prepared for them, and the rich turned a feast of charity into a debauch. This was scandalous irregularity.

Thirdly. The apostle lays the blame of this conduct closely on them, 1. By telling them that their conduct perfectly destroyed the purpose and use of such an institution. "This is not to eat the Lord's supper," ver. 20. It was coming to the Lord's table, and not coming. They had as good have stayed away. Thus to eat the outward elements was not to eat Christ's body. Note, There is such a careless and irregular eating of the Lord's supper which is as none at all; it will turn to no account, but to increase guilt. Such an eating was that of the Corinthians. Their practices were a direct contradiction to the purposes of this sacred institution. 2. Their conduct carried in it a contempt of God's house, or of the church, ver. 22. If they had a mind to feast, they might do it at home in their own houses; but to come to the Lord's table, and cabal and quarrel, and keep the poor from their share of the provision there made for them as well as the rich, was such an abuse of the ordinance, and such a contempt of the poorer members of the church, more especially, as merited a very sharp rebuke. Such a behaviour tended much to the shame and discouragement of the poor, whose souls were as dear to Christ, and cost him as much, as those of the rich. Note, Common meals may be managed after a common manner, but religious feasts should be attended religiously. Note also, That it is a heinous evil, and severely to be censured, for Christians to treat their fellow Christians with contempt and insolence, but especially at the Lord's table. This is doing what they can to pour contempt on Divine ordinances; and we should look carefully to it, that nothing in our carriage at the Lord's table have the appearance of contemning so sacred an institution.

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34

And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

To rectify these gross corruptions and irregularities, the apostle sets the sacred institution here to view. This should be the rule in the reformation of all abuses. He,

First, Tells us how he came by the knowledge of it. He was not among the apostles at the first institution; but "he had received from the Lord what he had delivered to them," ver. 23. He had the knowledge of this matter by revelation from Christ. [Some commentators are of opinion that the apostle did not receive the account of the institution of the ordinance directly from the Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek verb for *received* seems to intimate very plainly that he did so receive it.] And what he had received he communicated, without varying from the truth a tittle, without adding or diminishing.

Secondly. He gives us a more particular account of the institution than we meet with elsewhere. We have here an account, 1. Of the author, our Lord Jesus Christ. The King of the church only has power to institute sacraments. 2. The time of the institution. "It was the very night wherein he was betrayed;" just as he was entering on his sufferings, which are therein to be commemorated. 3. The institution itself. Our Saviour took bread, and when he had given thanks, or blessed, (as it is in *Mat. xxvi. 26.*) "He brake, and said, Take, eat: this is my body broken for you, this do in remembrance of me; and in like manner he took the cup when he had supped, saying, This is the new testament in my blood, this do as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me," ver. 24, 25. In which observe,

1st. The materials of this sacrament. Both, *First*. As to the visible signs. These are bread and the cup; the former of which is called bread many times over in this passage, even after what the papists call consecration. What is eaten is called bread, though it be at the same time said to be the body of our Lord. A plain argument that the apostle knew nothing of their monstrous and absurd doctrine of transubstantiation. The latter is as plainly a part of this institution as words can make it. St. Matthew tells us, our Lord bade them all drink of it, *Mat. xxvi. 27*, as if he would by this expression lay in a caveat against the papists depriving the laity of the cup. Bread and the cup are both made use of, because it is a holy feast. Nor is it here or anywhere made necessary that any particular liquor should be in the cup. In one evangelist, indeed, it is plain wine was the liquor used by our Saviour, though it was perhaps mingled with water according to the Jewish custom: see Lightfoot on *Mat. xxvi*. But this doth by no means render it unlawful to have a sacrament where persons cannot come at wine. And in every place of Scripture in which we have an account of this part of the institution, it is always expressed by a figure. The cup is put for what was in it, without once specifying what the liquor was, in the words of the institution. *Secondly*. The things signified by these outward signs, and they are Christ's body and blood; his body broken, his blood shed, together with all the benefits which flow from his death and sacrifice. It "is the new testament in his blood." His blood is the seal and sanction of all the privileges of the new covenant, and worthy receivers take it as such at this holy ordinance; they have the new testament, and their own title to all the blessings of the new covenant, confirmed to them by his blood.

2nd. We have here the sacramental actions; the manner in which the materials of the sacrament are to be used. *First*. Our Saviour's actions, which are, taking the bread and cup, giving thanks, breaking the bread, and giving about both one and the other. *Secondly*. The actions of the communicants, which were, to take the bread and eat, to take the cup and drink, and both in remembrance of Christ. But the external acts are not the whole, nor the principal part of what is to be done at this holy ordinance; each of them hath a significance. Our Saviour having undertaken to make an offering of himself to God, and procure by his death the remission of sins, with all other gospel benefits for true believers, did, at the institution, deliver his body and blood, [not carnally and corporally, but spiritually,] with all the benefits procured by his death, to his disciples, and continues to do the same every time the ordinance is administered to true believers. And this is here exhibited or set forth as the food of souls. And as food, though ever so wholesome or rich, will yield no nourishment without being eaten, here the communicants are to take and eat, or to receive Christ and feed upon him, his grace and benefits, and by faith convert them into nourishment to their souls. They are to take him as their Lord and life, yield themselves up to him, and live upon him. "He is our life," *Col. iii. 4*.

3rd. We have here an account of the ends of this institution. *First*. It was appointed to be done in remembrance of Christ, [neither an original sacrifice nor a sacrifice to a sacrifice,] to keep fresh in our minds an ancient favour, namely, his dying for us, as well as to remember an absent friend, even Christ interceding for us in virtue of his death, at God's right hand. The best of friends, and the greatest acts of kindness are here to be remembered. The motto on this ordinance, and the very meaning of it is, 'When this you see, remember me.' *Secondly*. It was to shew forth Christ's death, to declare and publish it. It is not barely in remembrance of Christ, of what he hath done and suffered, that this ordinance was instituted, but to commemorate, to celebrate, his glorious condescension and grace in our redemption. We declare his death to be our life, the spring of all our comforts and hopes. And we glory in such a declaration; we shew forth his death, and spread it before God as our accepted sacrifice and ransom. We set it in view of our own faith, for our comfort and quickening; and we own before the world, by this very service, that we are the disciples of Christ, who trust in him alone for salvation and acceptance with God.

It is moreover hinted here concerning this ordinance, 1st. That it should be frequent; "As often as ye eat this bread," &c. Our bodily meals return often. We cannot maintain life and health without this; and it is fit this spiritual diet should be taken often too. The ancient churches celebrated this ordinance every Lord's day, if not every day when they assembled for worship. 2nd. That it must be perpetual. It is to be celebrated till the Lord shall come; till he shall come the second time, without sin, for the salvation of them that believe, and to judge the world. This is our warrant for keeping this feast. It was our Lord's will that we should thus celebrate the memorials of his death and passion, till he come "in his own glory, and his Father's glory, with his holy angels," and put an end to the present state of things, and his own mediatorial administration, by passing the final sentence. Note, The Lord's supper is not a temporary, but a standing and perpetual ordinance.

Thirdly. He lays before the Corinthians the danger of receiving unworthily, of prostituting this institution as they did, and using it to the purposes of feasting and faction; with intentions opposite to its design, or a temper of mind altogether unsuitable to it; or keeping up the covenant with sin and death, whilst they are there professedly renewing and confirming their covenant with God. 1. It is great guilt which such contract. "They shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," ver. 27; of violating this sacred institution; of despising his body and blood. They act as if they "counted the blood of the covenant,

xi. 27. "Irreverent or contemptuous conduct towards the symbol is in fact a desecration of the object symbolised" (Kling).

xi. 29. "Damnation:" rather, "judgment." "Not discerning:" rather, "not duly judging," "not distinguishing or appreciating." Omit "unworthily," and render, "He that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning (i.e., if he does not discern) the Lord's body."

xii. 1. An occasion of disorder had been found amongst the

Corinthians in the exercise of spiritual gifts. "As every one thought of his own, and no one of his neighbour's good, those gifts were most highly coveted which were most astonishing."

xii. 2. "Carried away:" "led about," "blindly transported hither and thither." "Dumb idols:" in contrast to the living God, who speaks by his Spirit.

xii. 3. The operations of the Spirit were not confined to or principally manifested in supernatural gifts; his chief work was in the

whereby they are sanctified, an unholy thing," *Heb. x. 29*. They profane the institution, and in a manner crucify their Saviour over again. Instead of being cleansed by his blood, they are guilty of his blood. 2. It is a great hazard they run. They eat and drink judgment to themselves, *ver. 29*. They provoke God, and are likely to bring down punishment on themselves. No doubt but they incur great guilt, and so render themselves liable to damnation, to spiritual judgments, and eternal misery. Every sin is in its own nature damning; and therefore so heinous a sin as profaning such a holy ordinance to be sure is so. And it is profaned in the grossest sense by such irreverence and rudeness as the Corinthians were guilty of. But fearful believers should not be discouraged from attending at this holy ordinance by the sound of these words, as if they bound upon themselves the sentence of damnation by coming to the table of the Lord unprepared. This sin, as well as all others, leaves room for forgiveness upon repentance. And the Holy Spirit never indited this passage of Scripture to deter serious Christians from their duty, though the devil has often made this advantage of it, and robbed good Christians of their choicest comforts. The Corinthians came to the Lord's table as to a common feast, "not discerning the Lord's body;" that is, not making a difference or distinction between that and common food, but setting both on a level. Nay, they used much more indecency at this sacred feast than they would have done at a civil one. This was very sinful in them, and very displeasing to God, and brought down his judgments on them. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Some were punished with sickness, and some with death. Note, Careless and irreverent receiving the Lord's supper may bring temporal punishments. Yet the connexion seems to imply, that even those who were thus punished were in a state of favour with God, at least many of them. "They were chastened of the Lord, that they should not be condemned with the world," *ver. 32*. Now Divine chastening is a sign of Divine love. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," *Heb. xii. 6*, especially with so merciful a purpose, of preventing their final condemnation. In the midst of judgment God remembers mercy. He many times punishes those whom he tenderly loves. It is kindness to use the rod to prevent the child's ruin. He will visit such iniquity as this under consideration with stripes, and yet make those stripes the evidence of his lovingkindness. They were in the favour of God who yet so highly offended him in this instance, and brought down judgments on themselves: at least many of them were; for they were punished by him out of fatherly goodwill; punished now, that they might not perish for ever. Note, It is better to bear trouble in this world than be miserable to eternity; and God punishes his people now to prevent their eternal woe.

Fourthly. He points out the duty of those who would come to the Lord's table. 1. In general. "Let a man examine himself," *ver. 28*; try, and approve himself. Let him consider the sacred intention of this holy ordinance, its nature and use, [as well as his knowledge of all gospel truth, and let him use much prayer,] and compare his own views in attending on it, and his disposition of mind for it; and when he has approved himself to his own conscience in the sight of God, then let him attend. Such self-examination is necessary to a right attendance at his holy ordinance. Note, Those who through weakness of understanding cannot try themselves are by no means fit to eat of this bread and drink of this cup; nor those who, upon a fair trial, have just ground to charge themselves with impitenity, unbelief, and alienation from the life of God. They should have the wedding garment on who would be welcome at this marriage feast,—grace in habit, and grace in exercise. 2. The duty of those who were yet unpunished for their profanation of this ordinance. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged," *ver. 31*. If we would thoroughly search and explore ourselves, and condemn and correct what we find amiss, we should prevent Divine judgments. Note, To be exact and severe on ourselves and our own conduct, is the properest way in the world not to fall under the just severity of our heavenly Father. We must not judge others, lest we be judged, *Mat. vii. 1*; but we must judge ourselves, to prevent our being judged and condemned by God. We may be critical as to ourselves, but should be very candid in judging of others.

Fifthly. He closes all with a caution against the irregularities of which they were guilty, *ver. 33, 34*, charging them to avoid all indecency at the Lord's table. They were to eat for hunger and pleasure only at home, and not charge the holy supper to a common feast, and much less eat up the provisions before those who could bring none did partake of them, lest they came together for condemnation. Note, Our holy duties, through our own abuse, may prove matter of condemnation. Christians may keep sabbaths, hear sermons, attend at sacraments, and only aggravate guilt, and bring on a heavier doom. A sad but serious truth! Oh, let all look to it, that they do not come together at any time to God's worship, and all the while provoke him, and bring down vengeance on themselves. Holy things are to be used in a holy manner, or else they are profaned. What else was amiss in this matter he tells them he would rectify when he came to them.

CHAPTER XII.

In this chapter the apostle, I. Considers the case of spiritual gifts, which were very plentifully poured out on the Corinthian church. He considers their original, that they are from God; their variety and use, that they were all intended for one and the same general end, the advancement of Christianity, and the church's edification, *ver. 1–11*. II. He illustrates this by an allusion to a human body, in which all the members have a mutual relation and subserviency, and each its proper place and use, *ver. 12–26*. III. He tells us, that the church is the body of Christ, and the members are variously gifted for the benefit of the whole body, and each particular member, *ver. 27–30*. And then, IV. Closes with an exhortation to seek somewhat more beneficial than those gifts, *ver. 31*.

NOW concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. 3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the

heart of the believer. Under his influence none could reject Jesus (literally, "anathema Jesus"), nor could any man without his help say (i.e., from his heart believe and confess) that Jesus is the Lord.

xii. 5. "Administrations:" functions, or services.

xii. 8. "Word:" literally, "discourse," or capacity for discoursing; "the 'wisdom' denoting the direct intuition into Divine mysteries, and the 'knowledge' the apprehension gained by reflection" (Kling).

Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. 4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

The apostle comes now to treat of spiritual gifts which abounded in the church at Corinth, but were greatly abused. What these gifts were is at large told us in the body of the chapter: extraordinary offices and powers bestowed on ministers and Christians in the first ages, for conviction of unbelievers, and propagation of the Gospel. Gifts and grace, *χαρίσματα* and *χάρις*, greatly differ. Both indeed were freely given of God; but where grace is given it is for the salvation of those who have it. Gifts are bestowed for the advantage and salvation of others; and there may be great gifts where there is not a dram of grace, but persons possessed of them are utterly out of the Divine favour. They are great instances of Divine benignity to men, but do not by themselves prove those who have them the objects of Divine complacency. This church was rich in gifts, but there were many things scandalously out of order in it. Now concerning these spiritual gifts, that is, the extraordinary powers they had received from the Spirit, the apostle,

First. Tells them he would not have them ignorant neither of their original or use. They came from God and were to be used for him; and it would lead them far astray if they were ignorant of one or the other of these. Note, Right information is of great use as to all religious practice. It is wretched work gifted men make who either do not know or not advert to the nature and right use of the gifts with which they are endowed.

Secondly. He puts them in mind of the sad state out of which they had been recovered. "Ye were Gentiles, carried away to dumb idols, even as ye were led," *ver. 2*; and whilst they were so could have no pretensions to be spiritual men or have spiritual gifts. Whilst they were under the conduct of the spirit of Gentilism they could not be influenced by the Spirit of Christ. If they well understood their former condition they could not but know that all true spiritual gifts were from God. Now concerning this, observe,

1. Their former character. They were Gentiles; not God's peculiar people, but of the nations whom he had in a manner abandoned. The Jews were before his chosen people, distinguished from the rest of the world by his favour. To them the knowledge and worship of the true God were in a manner confined. The rest of the world "were strangers to the covenant of promise, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and in a manner 'without God,'" *Eph. ii. 12*. Such Gentiles were the body of the Corinthians before their conversion to Christianity. What a change was here! Christian Corinthians were once Gentiles. Note, It is of great use to the Christian, and a proper consideration to stir him up both to duty and thankfulness, to think what once he was: Ye were Gentiles.

2. The conduct they were under. "Carried away to these dumb idols, even as they were led." They were hurried upon the grossest idolatry, the worship even of stocks and stones, through the force of a vain imagination, and the fraud of their priests practising on their ignorance. For, whatever were the sentiments of their philosophers, this was the practice of the herd. The body of the people paid their homage and worship to dumb idols, "that had ears but could not ear, and mouths but could not speak," *Ps. cxv. 6*. Miserable abjectness of mind! And those that despised these gross conceptions of the vulgar, yet countenanced them by their practice. Oh dismal state of Gentilism! Could the Spirit of God be among such stupid idolaters, or they be influenced by it! How did the prince of this world triumph in the blindness of mankind! How thick a mist had he cast over their minds!

Thirdly. He shews them how they might discern those gifts that were from the Spirit of God, true, spiritual gifts. "No man, speaking by the Spirit, calls Jesus accursed." [Perhaps the very form of execration used by the Jews, and which persecutors required apostates to employ, in blaspheming Christ.] Thus did both Jews and Gentiles. They blasphemed him as an impostor, and execrated his name, and deemed it abominable. And yet many Jews that were exorcists and magicians went about pretending to work wonders by the Spirit of God, (see Lightfoot, *Horæ in loc.*) and many among the Gentiles pretended to inspiration. Now the apostle tells them, none could act under the influence, or by the power of the Spirit of God, that disowned and blasphemed Christ; for the Spirit of God bore uncontrollable witness to Christ by prophecy, miracles, his resurrection from the dead, the success of his doctrine among men, and its effect upon them, and could never so far contradict itself as to declare him accursed. And, on the other hand, "no man could say Jesus was the Lord," (that is, live by his faith, and work miracles to prove it,) "but" it must be "by the Holy Ghost." To own this truth before men, and maintain it to the death, and live under the influence of it, could not be done without the sanctification of the Holy Ghost. No man can call Christ Lord, with a believing subjection to him and dependence upon him, unless that faith be wrought by the Holy Ghost. No man can confess this truth in the day of trial but by the Holy Ghost animating and encouraging him. Note, We have as necessary a dependence on the Spirit's operation and influence for our sanctification and perseverance as on the mediation of Christ for our reconciliation and acceptance with God; and no man could confirm this truth with a miracle but by the Holy Ghost. No evil spirit would lend assistance, if it were in his power, to spread a doctrine and religion so ruinous to the devil's kingdom. The substance of what the apostle asserts and argues here is, that, whatever pretences there were to inspiration or miracles among those who were enemies

xii. 12. As there was one spirit, so was there one body—the mystical body of Christ, composed of all those who were so variously gifted, their variety being necessary to the completion of the body. "So also is Christ:" including the Church. "In the view of the apostle, Christ is the archetype of a new and glorified humanity, as it is developed in the Church. Hence the development of the Christian Church is nothing less than the progressive development of the image of Christ" (Neander).

to Christianity, they could not be from the Spirit of God; but no man could believe this with his heart, or prove with a miracle that Jesus was Christ, but by the Holy Ghost. So that the extraordinary operations and powers amongst them did all proceed from the Spirit of God. He adds,

Fourthly. These spiritual gifts, though proceeding from the same Spirit, are yet divers. They have one author and original, but are themselves of various kinds. A free cause may produce variety of effects; and the same giver may bestow various gifts; ver. 4. "There are diversity of gifts," such as revelations, tongues, prophecy, interpretations of tongues, "but the same Spirit." 1. There are differences of administrations, or different offices, and officers to discharge them; different ordinances and institutions, (see ver. 28—30), "but the same Lord," who appointed all; ver. 6. "There are diversity of operations," or miraculous powers, called *ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων*, ver. 10, as here *ἐνεργήματα*; but it is the same God which worketh all in all. There are various gifts, administrations, and operations, but all proceed from one God, one Lord, one Spirit; that is, from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the spring and origin of all spiritual blessings and bequests. All issue from the same fountain; all have the same Author. However different they may be in themselves, in this they agree, all are from God. 2. Several of the kinds are here specified, ver. 8—10. Several persons had their several gifts, some one, some another, all from and by the same Spirit. "To one was given the word of wisdom;" that is, say some, a knowledge of the mysteries of the Gospel, and ability to explain them; an exact understanding of the design, nature, and doctrines of the Christian religion; say others, an uttering grave sentences, like Solomon's proverbs. Some confine this word of wisdom to the revelations made to and by the apostles. "To another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;" that is, say some, the knowledge of mysteries, *ch. ii. 13*, wrapt up in the prophecies, types, and histories of the Old Testament: say others, a skill and readiness to give advice and counsel in perplexed cases. "To another faith by the same Spirit;" that is, the faith of miracles, or a faith in the Divine power and promise, whereby they were enabled to work miracles. Or, an extraordinary impulse from above, whereby they were enabled to trust God in any emergency, and go on in the way of their duty, and own and profess the truths of Christ, whatever were the difficulty or danger. "To another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit," namely, the sick, either by laying on hands, or anointing with oil, or with a bare word. "To another the working of miracles;" the efficacies of powers, *ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων*; such as raising the dead, restoring the blind to sight, giving speech to the dumb, and hearing to the deaf, and the use of limbs to the lame. "To another prophecy;" that is, ability to foretell future events, which is the more usual sense of prophecy; or to explain Scripture by a peculiar gift of the Spirit; see *ch. xiv. 24*. "To another the discerning of spirits;" power to distinguish between true and false prophets, or to discern the real and internal qualifications of any person for an office, or to discover the inward workings of the mind by the Holy Ghost, as Peter did those of Ananias, *Acts v. 3*. "To another divers kinds of tongues;" or ability to speak languages by inspiration. "To another the interpretation of tongues;" or ability to render foreign languages readily and properly into their own. With such variety of spiritual gifts were the first ministers and churches blessed.

Fifthly. The end for which these gifts were bestowed. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" ver. 7. The Spirit was manifested by the exercise of these gifts. His influence and interest appeared in them. But they were not distributed for the mere honour or advantage of those that had them, but for the benefit of the church, to edify the body, and spread and advance the Gospel. Note, Whatever gifts God confers on any man, he confers them that he may do good with them, whether they be common or spiritual. The outward gifts of his bounty are to be improved for his glory, and employed in doing good to others. No man has them merely for himself. They are a trust put into his hands to profit withal; and the more he profits others with them the more abundantly will they turn to his account in the end, *Phil. iv. 17*. And spiritual gifts are bestowed that men may with them profit the church and promote Christianity. They are not given for show, but for service; not for pomp and ostentation, but for edification; not to magnify those that have them, but to edify others.

Sixthly. The measure and proportion in which they are given. "All these worketh one and the same Spirit, dividing to every man as he will." It is according to the sovereign pleasure of the donor. What more free than gift? And shall not the Spirit of God do what he will with his own? May he not give to what persons he pleases, and in what proportion he pleases? and one gift to one man, and another to another; to one more, and another fewer, as he thinks fit? Is he not the best judge how his own purposes shall be served, and his own donatives bestowed? It is not as men will, nor as they may think fit, but as the Spirit pleases. Note, The Holy Ghost is a Divine person. He works Divine effects, and he divides Divine gifts as he will, by his own power, and according to his own pleasure without dependence or control. But, though he distributes these gifts free and uncontrolled, they are intended by him, not for private honour and advantage, but for public benefit, for the edification of the body, the church.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the

body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body? 20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked: 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

The apostle here makes out the truth of what was above asserted, and puts the gifted men among the Corinthians in mind of their duty, by comparing the church of Christ to a human body.

First. By telling us one body may have many members, and that the many members of the same body make but one body, ver. 12; and that the body is not one member only, but many; "so also is Christ;" that is, Christ mystical, as divines commonly speak. Christ and his church make one body, as head and members; this body is made up of many parts, or members, yet but one body. For all the members are baptized into the same body, and made to drink of the same Spirit, ver. 13. Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, are upon a level in this, — all are baptized into the same body, and communicate in the same Spirit. Christians become members of this body by baptism. They are baptized into one body. The outward rite is of Divine institution, significant of the new birth, called therefore "the washing of regeneration," *Tit. iii. 5*. But it is by the Spirit, by "the renewing of the Holy Ghost," that we are made members of Christ's body. It is the Spirit's operation, signified by the outward administration, that makes us members. [Not the outward administration, as many falsely maintain. Perhaps there may be no reference to any baptism but that of the Holy Spirit.] And by communion at the other ordinance are we sustained; but then it is not merely by drinking the wine, but by drinking into one Spirit. The outward administration is a means appointed of God for our participation in this great benefit. But it is baptism by the Spirit, it is internal renovation, and drinking into one Spirit, partaking of his sanctifying influences from time to time, that makes us true members of Christ's body, and maintains our union with him. Being animated by one Spirit makes Christians one body. Note, All who have the Spirit of Christ, without difference, are the members of Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, and none but such; and all the members of Christ make up one body; the members many, but the body one. They are one body because they have one principle of life. All are quickened and animated by the same Spirit.

Secondly. Each member has its particular form, place, and use. 1. The meanest member makes a part of the body. The foot and ear are less useful, perhaps, than the hand and eye; but because one is not a hand, and the other an eye, shall they say therefore they do not belong to the body? ver. 15, 16. So every member of the body mystical cannot have the same place and office; but what then? shall it hereupon disown relation to the body? Because it is not fixed in the same station, or favoured with the same gifts as others, shall it say, I do not belong to Christ? No, the meanest member of his body is as much a member as the noblest, and as truly regarded by him. All his members are dear to him. 2. There must be a distinction of members in the body. "Were the whole body eye, where were the hearing? were the whole ear, where were the smelling?" ver. 17. "If all were one member, where were the body?" ver. 19. "They are many members," and for that reason must have distinction among them, "and yet are but one body," ver. 20. One member of a body is not a body; this is made up of many, and among these many there must be a distinction, difference of situation, shape, use, &c. So it is in the body of Christ. Its members must have different uses, and therefore have different powers, and be in different places, some having one gift, and others a different one. Variety in the members of the body contributes to the beauty of it. What a monster would a body be that were all ear, or eye, or arm? So it is for the beauty and good appearance of the church that there should be diversity of gifts and offices in it. 3. The disposal of members to a natural body, and their situation, is as God pleases. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him," ver. 18. We may plainly perceive the Divine wisdom in the distribution of the members; but it was made according to the counsel of his will, he distinguished and distinguished them as he pleased. So it is also in the members of Christ's body. They are chosen out to such stations, and endued with such gifts as God pleases. He who is Sovereign Lord of all disposes his favours and gifts as he will. And who should gainsay his pleasure? What foundation is here for repining in ourselves, or envying others? We should be doing the duties of our own place, and not murmuring in ourselves, or quarrelling with others, that we are not in theirs. 4. All the members of the body are in some respect useful and necessary to each other. "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you; nay, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble," namely, the bowels, &c., "are necessary," ver. 21, 22. God has so fitted and tempered them together that they are all necessary to one another, and to the whole body. There is no part redundant and unnecessary. Every member serves some good purpose or other. It is useful to its fellow-members, and necessary to the good state of the whole body. Nor is there a member of the body of Christ but may and ought to be useful to his fellow-members, and at some times, and in some cases, is needful to them. None should

xii. 14—21. Those dissatisfied with their gifts should not consider themselves as excluded from the body, but as forming a necessary part.

xii. 22—26. Those highly gifted should not fancy that they could do without those less gifted; the weaker as well as the stronger members were necessary.

xii. 27. "Members in particular:" i.e., severally, individually, each in his assigned place.

xii. 31. "Emulously desire the greatest gifts:" if men are not to be discontent with their gifts, neither are they to neglect cultivating or acquiring greater ones, if it lays in their power to do so. And yet, besides exhorting them to seek the greatest gifts, he intends to show them a very excellent way to obtain these—through love.

xiii. 1. "On each side this chapter the tumult of argument and remonstrance still rages, but within it all is calm. The sentences move in almost rhythmical melody, the imagery unfolds itself in

despise and envy another, seeing God has made the distinction between them as he pleased, yet so as to keep them all in some degree of mutual dependence, and make them valuable to each other, and concerned for each other, because of their mutual usefulness. Those who excel in any one gift cannot say they have no need of them who in that gift are their inferiors, whilst perhaps in other gifts they exceed them. Nay, the lowest members all have their use, and the highest cannot do well without them. "The eye hath need of the hand, and the head of the feet." 5. Such is the man's concern for his whole body, "that on the less honourable members more abundant honour is bestowed, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness." Those parts which are not fit, like the rest, to be exposed to view, that are either deformed, or shameful, we most carefully clothe and cover; whereas the comely parts have no such need. The wisdom of Providence hath so contrived and tempered things that the more abundant regard and honour should be paid to that which most wanted it, ver. 24. So should the members of Christ's body carry it towards their fellow-members. Instead of despising them, or reproaching them for their infirmities, they should endeavour to cover and conceal them, and put the best face upon them that they can. 6. Divine wisdom has contrived and ordered things in this manner that the members of the body should not be schismatics, divided from each other, and acting upon separate interests, but well affected to each other; tenderly concerned for each other, having a fellow-feeling of each other's griefs, and a communion in each other's pleasures and joys, ver. 25, 26. God has tempered the members of the body natural in the manner mentioned, that "there might be no schism in the body," ver. 25, no rupture or disunion among the members, nor so much as the least mutual disregard. This should be avoided also in the spiritual body of Christ. There should be no schism in this body; but the members should be closely united by the strongest bonds of love. All decays of this affection are the seeds of schism. Where Christians grow cold towards each other they will be careless and unconcerned for each other. And this mutual disregard is a schism begun. The members of the natural body are made to have a care and concern for each other, to prevent a schism in it. So should it be in Christ's body; the members should sympathize with each other. As in the natural body the pain of the one part affects the whole, the ease and pleasure of one part affects the whole, so should Christians reckon themselves honoured in the honours of their fellow-Christians, and should suffer in their sufferings. Note, Christian sympathy is a great branch of Christian duty. We should be so far from slighting our brethren's sufferings, that we should suffer with them; so far from envying their honours, that we should rejoice in them, and reckon ourselves honoured by them.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

First. Here the apostle sums up the argument, and applies this similitude to the church of Christ. Concerning which, observe, 1. The relation wherein Christians stand to Christ and one another. The church, or whole collective body of Christians in all ages, is his body. Every Christian is a member of this body, and every other Christian stands related to him as a fellow-member; ver. 27. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," or particular members. Each is a member of the body, not the whole body; each stands related to the body as a part of it, and all have a common relation to one another, dependence upon one another, and should have a mutual care and concern. Thus are the members of the natural body, thus should the members of the mystical body, be disposed. Note, That mutual indifference, and much more contempt, and hatred, and envy, and strife, are very unnatural in Christians. It is like the members of the same body being destitute of all concern for one another, or quarrelling with each other. This is the apostle's scope in this argument. He endeavours in it to suppress the proud, and vaunting, and contentious spirit that had prevailed among the Corinthians, by reason of their spiritual gifts. 2. The variety of offices instituted by Christ, and gifts or favours dispensed by him; ver. 28. "God hath set some in the church, first apostles," the chief ministers intrusted with all the powers necessary to found a church, and make an entire revelation of God's will. "Secondarily prophets," or persons enabled by inspiration to prophesy, or interpret Scripture, or write by inspiration, as the evangelists did. "Thirdly teachers," those "who labour in the word and doctrine," whether with pastoral charge or without it. "After that miracles," or miracle workers. "Then gifts of healing," or those who had power to heal diseases. "Helps," or such as had compassion on the sick and weak, and ministered to them. "Governments," or such as had the disposal of the charitable contributions of the church, and dealt them out to the poor. "Diversities of tongues," or such as could speak divers languages. Concerning all which, observe,

1st. The plentiful variety of these gifts and offices. What a multitude are they. A good God was free in his communications to the primitive church. He was no niggard of his benefits and favours. No, he provided richly for them. They had no want, but a store; all that was necessary, and even more, what was convenient for them too. 2nd. Observe the order of these offices and gifts. They are here placed in their proper ranks. Those of most value have the first place. Apostles, prophets, and teachers, were all intended to instruct the people, to inform them well in the things of God, and promote their spiritual edification. Without them neither evangelical knowledge nor holiness could have been promoted. But the rest, however fitted to answer the great intentions of Christianity, had no such immediate regard to religion strictly so called. Note, God doth, and we should, value things according to their real worth; and the use of things is the best criterion of their real worth. Those are most valuable that best answer the highest purposes. Such were apostolical powers, compared with theirs, who had only the gift of healing and miracles. What holds the last and lowest rank in this enumeration is diversity of tongues. It is by itself the most useless and insignificant of all these gifts. To heal diseases, relieve the poor, help the sick, have their use; but how vain a thing is it to speak languages, if a man does it merely to amuse, or boast himself? This may indeed raise the admiration, but cannot promote the edification, of the hearers, nor do they any good. And yet it is manifest, from ch. 14, that the

Corinthians valued themselves exceedingly on this gift. Note, How proper a method it is to beat down pride, to let persons know the true value of what they pride themselves in. It is but too common a thing for men to value themselves most on what is least worth; and it is of great use to bring them to a sober mind, by letting them know how much they are mistaken. 3rd. The several distribution of these gifts, not all to one, nor to every one alike. All members and officers had not the same rank in the church, nor the same endowments; ver. 29, 30. "Are all apostles? are all prophets?" &c. This was to make the church a monster, all one as if the body were all ear or all eye. Some are fit for one office and employment, and some for another; and the Spirit distributes to every one as he will. We must be content with our own rank and share if it be lower and less than that of others. We must not be conceited of ourselves, and despise others if we are in higher rank, and have greater gifts. Every member of the body is to preserve its own rank, and do its own office; and all are to minister to one another, and promote the good of the body in general, without envying, or despising, or neglecting, or ill-using any one particular member. How blessed a constitution were the Christian church if all the members did their duty!

Secondly. He closes this chapter with an advice, as the generality read it, and a hint. 1. An advice to covet the best gifts, *χρησισματα τα κρειττονα, dona potiora, praestantiora*, either the most valuable in themselves or the most serviceable to others; and these are in truth most valuable in themselves, though men may be apt to esteem those most that will raise their fame and esteem highest. Those are truly best by which God will be most honoured and his church edified. Such gifts should be most earnestly coveted. Note, We should desire that most which is best and most worth. Grace is therefore to be preferred before gifts, and of gifts those are to be preferred which are of greatest use. But some read this passage, not as an advice, but a charge, *ἐνλοῦτε*; Ye are envious at each other's gifts. The same word is thus translated, ch. xiii. 4, "You quarrel and contend about them." This they certainly did; and this behaviour the apostle here reprehends and labours to rectify. "Only of pride cometh contention." These contests in the church of Corinth sprung from this original. It was a quarrel about precedence, (as most quarrels among Christians are, with whatever pretences they are gilded over;) and it is no wonder that a quarrel for precedence should extinguish charity. When all would stand in the first rank no wonder if they jostle, or throw down, or thrust back their brethren. Gifts may be valued for their use, but they are made mischievous when made the fuel of pride and contention. This therefore the apostle endeavours to prevent. 2. By giving them the hint of "a more excellent way," namely, of charity, of mutual love and good-will. This was the only right way to quiet and cement them, and make their gifts turn to the advantage and edification of the church. This would render them kind to each other, and concerned for each other, and therefore calm their spirits and put an end to their little piques and contests, their disputes about precedence. They would appear to be in the foremost rank, according to the apostle, who had most of true Christian love. Note, True charity is greatly to be preferred to the most glorious gifts. To have the heart glow with mutual love is vastly better than to glare with the most pompous titles, offices, or powers.

CHAPTER XIII.

In this chapter the apostle goes on to shew more particularly what that more excellent way was of which he had just before been speaking. He. 1. Recommends it by shewing the necessity and importance of it, ver. 1—3. II. By giving a description of its properties and fruits, ver. 4—7. III. By shewing how much it excels the best of gifts and other graces, by its continuance, when they shall be no longer in being or of any use, ver. 8—13.



THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Here the apostle shews what more excellent way he meant, or had in view, in the close of the former chapter; namely, charity, or, as it is commonly elsewhere rendered, love, *ἀγάπη*. Not what is meant by charity in our common use of the word, which most men understand of almsgiving, but love in its fullest and most extensive meaning: true love to God [to God as a reconciled God in Jesus Christ, which implies saving faith, the work of the Spirit—this exists only in converted souls] and man; a benevolent disposition of mind towards our fellow-Christians, growing out of sincere and fervent devotion to God. This living principle of all duty and obedience is the more excellent way of which the apostle speaks; preferable to all gifts. Nay, without this the most glorious gifts are nothing; of no account to us, of no esteem in the sight of God. He instances,

First. In the gift of tongues. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal," ver. 1. Could a man speak all the languages on earth, and that with the greatest propriety, elegance, or fluency, could he talk like an angel, and yet be without charity, it would be all empty noise, mere inharmonious and useless sound, that would neither profit nor delight. It is not talking freely, nor finely, nor learnedly, of the things of God that will save ourselves or profit others, if we are destitute of holy love. It is the charitable heart, not the voluble tongue, that is acceptable with God. The apostle instances first in this gift

almost dramatic propriety, the language arranges itself with almost rhetorical accuracy. We can imagine how the apostle's amanuensis must have paused to look up in his master's face at the sudden change of his style of dictation, and seen his countenance lighted up as it had been the face of an angel, as the sublime vision of divine perfection passed before him" (Stanley). "And of angels:" not to be pressed too closely. It is added to make the general statement stronger, not as expressing anything definite concerning the tongues

or languages of angels. "Sounding brass:" no particular instrument is meant, but brass of any kind struck and making a sound. "The man who speaks with never so many tongues, and is at the same time devoid of love, becomes but the organ of a foreign impulse, without independent worth" (Meyer). "Tinkling:" rather, "clanging."

xiii. 2. "All faith:" "all the faith requisite to," &c. (Matt. xvii. 20, xxi. 21).

because hereupon the Corinthians seemed chiefly to value themselves and despise their brethren.

Secondly. In prophecy, and the understanding of mysteries, and all knowledge. This without charity is as nothing, ver. 2. Had a man never so clear an understanding of the prophecies and types under the old dispensation, never so accurate a knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity, nay, and this by inspiration from the infallible dictates and illumination of the Spirit of God, without charity he would be nothing. All this would stand him in no stead. Note, A clear and deep head is of no signification without a benevolent and charitable [a renewed] heart. It is not great knowledge that God sets a value upon, but true and hearty devotion and love [as here understood].

Thirdly. In miraculous faith, the faith of miracles, or the faith by which persons were enabled to work miracles. "Had I all faith," (the utmost degree of this kind of faith,) "that I could remove mountains," (or say to them, Go hence into the midst of the sea, and have my command obeyed, *Mar. xi. 23*), "and had no charity, I am nothing" [of no account]. The most wonder-working faith, to which nothing is in a manner impossible, is itself nothing without charity. Moving mountains is a great achievement in the account of men, [it is merely a proverbial phrase used for overcoming great difficulties:] but one drachm of charity is in God's account of much greater worth than all the faith of this sort in the world. They may do many wondrous works in Christ's name whom yet he will disown, and bid depart from him as workers of iniquity, *Mat. vii. 22*. Saving faith is ever in conjunction with charity, but the faith of miracles may be without it.

Fourthly. He instances in the outward acts of charity; "Bestowing his goods to feed the poor," ver. 3. Should all a man hath be laid out in this manner, if he had no charity it would profit nothing. There may be an open and lavish hand where there is no liberal and charitable heart. The external act of giving alms may proceed from a very ill principle. Vainglorious ostentation, or a proud conceit of merit, may put a man to large expense this way who has no true love to God or men. Our doing good to others will do none to us, if it be not well done, namely, from a principle of devotion and charity, love to God and good-will to men. Note, If we leave charity out of religion, the most costly services will be of no avail to us. If we give away all we have, whilst we withhold the heart from God, it will not profit.

Fifthly. He instances even in sufferings, and those of the most grievous kind. "If we give our body to be burnt, without charity it profiteth nothing," ver. 3. Should we sacrifice our lives for the sake of the Gospel, and be burnt to death in maintenance of its truth, this will stand us in no stead without charity, unless we are animated to these sufferings by a principle of true devotion to God, and sincere love to his church and people, and good-will to mankind. The outward carriage may be plausible when the invisible principle is very bad. Some men have thrown themselves into the fire to procure a name and reputation amongst men. It is possible that the very same principle may have worked up some to resolution enough to die for their religion who never heartily believed and embraced it. But vindicating our religion at the cost of our lives will profit nothing if we feel not the power of it; and true charity is the very heart and spirit of religion. If we feel none of its sacred heat in our hearts it will profit nothing though we be burnt to ashes for the truth. Note, The most grievous sufferings, the most costly sacrifices, will not recommend us to God if we do not love the brethren; should we give our own bodies to be burned it would not profit us. How strange a way of recommending themselves to God are they got into who hope to do it by burning others, by murdering and massacring, and tormenting their fellow-Christians, or by any injurious usage of them! "My soul enter not thou into their secrets." If I cannot hope to recommend myself to God, by giving my own body to be burnt whilst I have no charity, I will never hope to do it by burning or maltreating others, in open defiance to all charity.

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

The apostle gives us in these verses some of the properties and effects of charity, both to describe and commend it; that we may know whether we have this grace, and that if we have not we may fall in love with what is so exceeding amiable, and rest not till we have obtained it. It is an excellent grace, and has a world of good properties belonging to it. As,

First. It is long-suffering; *μακροθυμεί*. It can endure evil, and injury, and provocation, without being filled with resentment, indignation, or revenge. It makes the mind firm, gives it power over the angry passions, and furnishes it with a persevering patience, that shall rather wish and wait for the reformation of a brother than fly out in resentment of his carriage. It will put up with many slights and neglects from the person it loves, and wait long to see the kindly effects of such patience on him.

Secondly. It is kind; *χρηστεύεται*. It is benign, bountiful. It is courteous and obliging. "The law of kindness is in her lips." Her heart is large and her hand open. She is apt to shew favour and to do good. She seeks to be useful, and not only seizes on opportunities of doing good, but searches for them. This is her general character. She is patient under injuries, and apt and inclined to do all good offices in her power. And under these two generals all the particulars of the character may be reduced.

Thirdly. Charity suppresses envy. "It envieth not." It is not grieved at the good of others. Neither at their gifts, nor good qualities, nor honours, nor estates. If we love our neighbour we shall be so far from envying his welfare, or being displeased with it, that we shall share in it, and rejoice at it. His bliss and satisfaction will be an addition to ours, instead of impairing or lessening it. This is the proper effect of kindness and benevolence. Envy is the effect of ill-will. The prosperity of those to whom we wish well can never grieve us; and the mind which is bent on doing good to all can never wish ill to any.

Fourthly. Charity subdues pride and vainglory. "It vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up;" is not bloated with self-conceit, does not swell upon its acquisitions, not arrogate to itself that honour or power, or respect, which doth not belong to it. It is not insolent, apt to despise others, or trample on them, or treat them with contempt and scorn. They that are animated with a principle of true brotherly love will "in honour prefer one another," *Rom. xii. 10*. They will "do nothing out of" a spirit of contention, or "vainglory, but in lowliness of mind will esteem others better than themselves," *Phil. ii. 3*. True love will give us an esteem of our brethren, raise our value for them; and this will

limit our esteem of ourselves, and prevent the tumours of self-conceit and arrogance. These ill qualities can never grow out of tender affection for the brethren, or a diffusive benevolence. The word rendered in our translation, vaunteth itself, bears other significations, nor is the proper meaning, as I can find, settled, but in every sense and meaning true charity stands in opposition to it. The Syriac renders it, *non tumultuatur*,—it does not raise tumults and disturbances. Charity calms the angry passions instead of raising them. Others render it, *non perperam et perverse agit*,—it does not act insidiously with any, seek to ensnare them, nor tease them with needless importunities and addresses. It is not forward, nor stubborn, nor untractable, nor apt to be cross and contradictory. Some understand it of dissembling and flattery, when a fair face is put on, and fine words said without any regard to truth or intention of good. Charity abhors such falsehood and flattery. Nothing is commonly more pernicious, nor apt to cross the purposes of true love and good-will.

Fifthly. Charity is careful not to pass the bounds of decency; *οὐκ ἀσχημονεί*. "It becometh not unseemly." It acts nothing indecorous, nothing that in the common account of men is [justly] base or vile. It does nothing out of place or time, but carries it towards all men as becomes their rank and ours; with reverence and respect to superiors, with kindness and condescension to inferiors, with courtesy and good-will towards all men. It is not for breaking order, confounding ranks, bringing all men on a level; but for keeping up the distinction God has made between men, and acting decently in its own station, and minding its own business, without taking upon it to mend, or censure, [except on Christian principle,] or despise the conduct of others. Charity would do nothing that misbecomes it.

Sixthly. Charity is an utter enemy to selfishness. "Seeketh not her own." Doth not inordinately desire, or seek its own praise, or honour, or profit, or pleasure. Indeed, self-love in some degree is natural to all men, enters into their very constitution; and a reasonable love of self is, by our Saviour, made the measure of our love to others, that charity which is here described: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The apostle doth not mean that charity destroys all regard to self. He does not mean that the charitable man should never challenge what is his own, but utterly neglect himself and all his interests. Charity must then root up that principle which is wrought into our very nature. But charity never seeks its own to the hurt of others, or with the neglect of others. It many times neglects its own for the sake of others, prefers their welfare and satisfaction, and advantage, to its own. And it ever prefers the weal of the public, of the community, whether civil or ecclesiastical, to its private advantage. It would not advance, or aggrandize, or enrich, or gratify itself at the cost and damage of the public.

Seventhly. It tempers and restrains the passions. *Οὐ παροξύνεται*, is not exasperated. It corrects a sharpness of temper, sweetens and softens the mind, so that it doth not suddenly conceive, nor long continue, a vehement passion. Where the fire of love is kept in, the flames of wrath will not easily kindle, nor long keep burning. Charity will never be angry without a cause, and will endeavour to confine the passion within proper limits, that it do not exceed the measure that is just, either in degree or duration. Anger cannot rest in the bosom where love reigns. It is hard to be angry with those we love, but very easy to drop our resentments, and be reconciled.

Eighthly. Charity "thinks no evil;" it cherishes no malice, nor gives way to revenge,—so some understand it. It is not soon nor long angry, but it is never mischievous nor inclined to revenge. It does not suspect evil of others, *οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν*, it doth not reason out evil, charge guilt upon them by inference and innuendo, when nothing of this sort appears open. True love is not apt to be jealous and suspicious; it will hide appearing faults, and draw a veil over them, instead of hunting and raking out those that lie covered and concealed. It will never indulge suspicions without proofs, but rather incline to darken and disbelieve evidence against the person it affects. It will difficultly give in to an ill opinion of another, and do it with regret and reluctance when the evidence cannot be resisted; and then to be sure will never be forward to suspect ill, and reason itself into a bad opinion upon mere appearances, or give way to suspicion without any. It will not make the worst construction of things, but put the best face that it can on circumstances that have no good appearance.

Ninthly. The matter of its joy and pleasure is here suggested. 1. Negatively. "It rejoiceth not in iniquity;" it takes no pleasure in doing injury or hurt to any; it thinketh not evil of any without very clear proof; it wishes ill to none, much less will it hurt or wrong any, and least of all make this the matter of its delight, rejoice in doing harm and mischief. Nor will it rejoice at the faults and failings of others, and triumph over them, either out of pride or ill-will, because it will set off its own excellences, or gratify its spite. The sins of others are rather the grief of a charitable spirit than its sport or delight. They will touch it to the quick, and stir all its compassion, but can give it no entertainment. It is the very height of malice to take pleasure in the misery of a fellow-creature. And is not falling into sin the greatest calamity that can befall one? How inconsistent is this with Christian charity, to rejoice at such fall! 2. Affirmatively. "It rejoiceth in the truth," is glad of the success of the Gospel, commonly called the truth, by way of emphasis, in the New Testament; and rejoices to see men moulded into an evangelical temper by it, and made good. It takes no pleasure in their sins, but is highly delighted to see them do well, to approve themselves men of [Christian] probity and integrity. It gives it much satisfaction to see truth and justice prevail amongst men, innocence cleared, and mutual faith and trust established, and to see piety and true religion flourish.

Tenthly. "It beareth all things, it endureth all things," *πάντα στέγει, πάντα υπομένει*. Some read the first, 'covers all things;' so the original also signifies. "Charity will cover a multitude of sins," 1 *Pet. iv. 8*; it will draw a veil over them as far as it can in consistence with duty. It is not for blazing and publishing the faults of a brother, till duty manifestly demands it; necessity only can extort this from the charitable mind. Though such a man may be free [nay, constrained] to tell his brother his faults in private, he is very unwilling to expose him by making them public. Thus we do by our own faults, and thus charity would teach us to do by the faults of others, not publish them to their shame and reproach, but cover them from public notice as long as we can, and be faithful to God and to others. Or, it "beareth all things," will pass by and put up with injuries without indulging anger, or cherishing revenge; will be patient upon provocation, and long patient, *πάντα υπομένει*; holds firm, though it be much shocked, and borne hard upon. Sustains all manner of injury and ill usage, and bears up under it, such as curses, contumacies, slanders, prison, exile, bonds, torments, and death itself, for the sake of the injurious, and of others; and perseveres in this firmness. Note, What a fortitude and firmness fervent love [the love of souls] will give the mind. What cannot a lover endure from the beloved, and for his sake! How many slights and injuries will he put up with, how many hazards will he run, and how many difficulties encounter!

Eleventhly. Charity believes and hopes well of others; "Believeth all things, hopeth all things." Indeed, charity doth by no means destroy prudence, and, out of mere simplicity and silliness, believe every word, *Pr. xiv. 17*. Wisdom

xiii. 4. "Suffereth long;" negative, withholding anger. "Is kind;" positive side, exercising kindness. "Vaunteth not itself;" does not make a display. "Puffed up;" applicable to the Corinthians (chap. iv. 6, viii. 1).

xiii. 5. "Thinketh no evil;" "imputeth not the evil." So far from devising evil, love takes a charitable view of others' faults.

xiii. 6. "Rejoiceth in the truth;" rather, "rejoiceth with the truth;" takes delight in the triumphs of truth.

xiii. 7. "Beareth;" used of water-tight vessels; hence, to conceal. "Endures without divulging its personal distress."

xiii. 8. "Never faileth;" endures for ever.

xiii. 9, 10. "Our knowledge and our prophesying (utterance of Divine things) are but partial, embracing but a part; but when that which is perfect (entire, universal) shall have come, this partial shall be abolished, superseded" (Alford).

xiii. 12. "Through a glass;" i.e., in a mirror; the reflected

may dwell with love, and charity be cautious; but it is apt to believe well of all, to entertain a good opinion of them when there is no appearance to the contrary; nay, to believe well when there may be some dark appearances, if the evidence of ill be not clear. All charity is full of candour, apt to make the best of every thing, and put on it the best face and appearance. It will judge well, and believe well, as far as it can with any reason; and rather stretch its faith beyond appearances for the support of a kind opinion. But it will go into a bad one with the utmost reluctance, and fence against it as much as it fairly and honestly can. And when in spite of inclination it cannot believe well of others, it will yet hope well, and continue to hope as long as there is any ground for it. It will not presently conclude a case desperate, but wishes [and prays] the amendment [conversion] of the worst of men, and is very apt to hope for what it wishes. How well-natured and amiable a thing is Christian charity. How lovely a mind is that which is tinctured throughout with such benevolence as it diffuses over its whole frame. Happy the man who has this heavenly fire glowing in his heart, flowing out of his mouth, and diffusing its warmth over all with whom he has to do. How lovely a thing would Christianity appear to the world, if those that profess it were more actuated and animated by this Divine principle, and paid a due regard to a command on which its blessed Author laid a chief stress, "A new commandment give I to you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another," *1 Jno. xiii. 34*; "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," *ver. 35*. Blessed Jesus, how few of thy professed disciples are to be distinguished and marked out by this characteristic!

8 Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Here the apostle goes on to commend charity, and shew how much it is preferable to the gifts on which the Corinthians were so apt to pride themselves, to the utter neglect, and almost extinction, of charity. This he makes out.

First. From its longer continuance and duration. "Charity never faileth;" it is a permanent and perpetual grace, lasting as eternity; whereas the extraordinary gifts, on which the Corinthians valued themselves, were of a short continuance. They were only to edify the church on earth, and that but for a time, not during its whole continuance in this world, but in heaven would be all superseded, which yet is the very seat and element of love. "Prophecy must fail," that is, either the prediction of things to come, which is its most common sense, or the interpretation of Scripture by immediate inspiration. "Tongues shall cease," that is, the miraculous power of speaking languages without learning them. There will be but one language in heaven. There is no confusion of tongues in the region of perfect tranquillity. And "Knowledge will vanish away;" not that in the perfect state above holy and happy souls shall be unknowing, ignorant. It is a very poor happiness that can consist with utter ignorance. The apostle is plainly speaking of miraculous gifts, and therefore of knowledge to be had out of the common way, (see *ch. xiv. 6*); a knowledge of mysteries supernaturally communicated. Such knowledge was to vanish away, [because all mysteries would then be made plain.] Some indeed understand it of common knowledge acquired by instruction, taught and learnt. This way of knowing is to vanish away, though the knowledge itself, once acquired, will not be lost. But it is plain the apostle is here setting the grace of charity in opposition to supernatural gifts; and it is more valuable because more durable. It shall last when they shall be no more; it shall enter into heaven, where they will have no place, because they will be of no use; though in a sense even our common knowledge may be said to cease in heaven, by reason of the improvement that will then be made in it. The light of a candle is perfectly obscured by the sun shining in its strength.

Secondly. He hints that these gifts are only adapted to a state of imperfection. "We know in part, and we prophesy in part," *ver. 9*. Our best knowledge, and our greatest abilities, are at present like our condition, narrow, and temporary. Even the knowledge they had by inspiration was but in part. How little a portion of God, and the unseen world, was heard even by apostles and inspired men! How much short do others come of them! But these gifts were fitted to the present imperfect state of the church, valuable in themselves, but not to be compared with charity, because they were to vanish with the imperfections of the church, nay, and long before, whereas charity was to last [and grow] for ever.

Thirdly. He takes occasion from hence to shew how much better it will be with the church hereafter than it can be here. A state of perfection is in view; *ver. 10*, "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." When the end is once attained, the means will of course be abolished. There will be no need of tongues, and prophecy, and inspired knowledge, in a future life, because then the church will be in a state of perfection, complete both in knowledge and holiness. God will be known then clearly, and in a manner by intuition, and as perfectly as the glorified mind's capacity will allow, not by such transient glimpses, and little portions, as here. The difference between the two states is here pointed out in two particulars, 1. The present state is a state of childhood, the future that of manhood. "When I was a child I spake as a child," that is, as some think, spake with tongues, "I understood as a child," *επονοουν*, *sapiebam*, that is, I prophesied, I was taught the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, in such an extraordinary way, as manifested I was not got out of my childish state, "I thought," or reasoned, *ἐλογίζετο*, "as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." Such is the difference between earth and heaven. What

narrow views, what confused and indistinct notions of things, have children in comparison of grown men! And how naturally do men, when reason is ripened and matured, despise and evacuate their infant thoughts, put them away, reject them,—esteem them as nothing. Thus shall we think of our most valued gifts and acquisitions in this world, when we come to heaven. We shall despise our childish folly, in priding ourselves on such things, when we are grown up to men in Christ. 2. Things are all dark and confused now, in comparison of what they will be hereafter. "Now we see through a glass darkly," (*εἰς ἀινικια*,—"in a riddle,") "then face to face; now we know in part, but then we shall know as we are known." Now we can only discern things at a great distance as through a telescope, and that involved in clouds and obscurity, [obscurely, as by means of those imperfect mirrors which were placed by the ancients in their windows;] but hereafter the things to be known will be near and obvious, open to our eyes; and our knowledge will be free from all obscurity and error. God is to be seen face to face, and we are to know him as we are known by him; not indeed as perfectly, but in some sense in the same manner. We are known to him by mere inspection; he turns his eye towards us, and sees and searches us throughout. We shall then fix our eye on him, and see him as he is, *1 Jno. iii. 2*; we shall know how we are known, enter into all the mysteries of Divine love and grace. O glorious change! to pass from darkness to light, from clouds to the clear sunshine of our Saviour's face, and in God's own light to see light! *Ps. xxxvi. 9*. Note, It is the light of heaven only that will remove all clouds and darkness from the face of God. It is at best but twilight whilst we are in this world; there it will be perfect and eternal day.

Fourthly. To sum up the excellences of charity, he prefers it not only to gifts, but to other graces, to faith and hope; *ver. 13*, "And now abideth faith, hope, and charity; but the greatest of these is charity." [They abide even in this world when extraordinary spiritual gifts shall have ceased.] True grace is much more excellent than any spiritual gifts whatever; and faith, hope, and love are the three principal graces, of which charity is the chief, being the end to which the other two are but means. This is the Divine nature, the soul's felicity, or its complacental rest in God, and holy delight in all his saints; and it is its everlasting work when faith and hope shall be no more. Faith fixes on the Divine revelation, [accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace,] and assents to that. Hope fastens on future felicity, and waits for that; and in heaven faith will be swallowed up of vision, and hope of fruition. There is no room to believe and hope [as on earth at least] when we see and enjoy. But love fastens on the Divine perfections themselves, and the Divine image on the creatures, and our mutual relation to both God and them. These will all shine forth in the most glorious splendours in another world; and there will love be made perfect. There we shall perfectly love God, because he will appear perfectly amiable for ever, and our hearts will kindle at the sight, and glow with perpetual devotion. And there shall we perfectly love one another, when all the saints meet there, when none but saints are there, and saints made perfect. O blessed state! how much surpassing the best below. O amiable and excellent grace of charity! how much doth it exceed the most valuable gifts, when it outshines every grace, and is the everlasting consummation of them! When faith and hope are at an end true charity will burn for ever with the brightest flame. Note, They border most upon the heavenly state and perfection whose hearts are fullest of this Divine principle, and burn with the most fervent charity. It is the surest offspring of God, and bears his fairest impression; for God is love, *1 Jno. iv. 8, 16*. And where God is to be seen as he is, and face to face, there charity is in its greatest height, there, and there only, will it be perfected.

[There seems to be a progression, an ascent by successive stages from a lower to a higher discipline, in the moral education and moral history of our species—whether we comprehend or not the various footsteps of it—as when the spirit of bondage gives way to the Spirit of adoption, or the oldness of the letter to the newness of the Spirit; or as when the terrors of the law are succeeded by a delight in the law; or as when the commandment, formerly graven on tables of stone, comes to be graven on the fleshly tables of the heart; or as when the law fulfils but the office of a preparatory schoolmaster for bringing men to Christ, or guiding them onward to the higher lessons of the Gospel; or, finally, as when the supremacy of law makes place for the supremacy of love, even of the charity which never faileth, but abideth and reigneth everlastingly in heaven, after that the means and the preparatives for this great consummation have all vanished away.—*Lectures on Romans xiii. 10, by Dr. Chalmers.*]

CHAPTER XIV.

In this chapter the apostle directs them about the use of their spiritual gifts, preferring those most that are best, and fitted to do the greatest good. I. He begins with advising them of all spiritual gifts to prefer prophesying, and shews this is much better than speaking with tongues, *ver. 1–6*. II. He goes on to shew them how unprofitable the speaking foreign languages was, and useless to the church; it is like piping in our tone, like sounding a trumpet without any certain note, like talking gibberish, whereas gifts should be used for the good of the church, *ver. 6–15*. III. He advises that worship should be celebrated so as the most ignorant might understand and join in prayer and praise, and presses the advice by his own example, *ver. 15–21*. IV. He informs them that tongues were a sign for unbelievers rather than those that believe; and represents the advantage of prophecy above speaking with tongues, from the different suggestions they would give to the mind of an unbeliever coming into their assemblies, *ver. 21–26*. V. Blames them for the disorder and confusion they had brought into the assembly by their vanity and ostentation of their gifts; directs them in using their gifts both of tongues and prophecy, *ver. 26–34*. VI. Forbids women speaking in the church, and closes this subject by requiring them to perform every thing in the public worship with order and decency, *ver. 34–40*.



FOLLOW after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. 2 For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. 3 But he that pro-

object appearing as if seen through the mirror. Ancient mirrors were of polished metal.

xiii. 13. There is an emphasis on "abideth." "Now" does not signify "in this present time," but forms an inference from what precedes. "Since these gifts just mentioned will all pass away, there abide permanently only these three." Love contains in itself the root of the other two.

xiv. 1. St. Paul returns from the digression in chap. xiii. to the

subject he had in hand—the use of spiritual gifts. "Pursue love (as your chief aim); meantime, however (as a secondary aim), strive for spiritual gifts; but more (more for this than for others) that ye may prophesy." Upon the subject of the gift of prophecy Conybeare and Howson remark, "In the scriptural sense of the term, a prophet does not mean a foreteller of future events, but a revealer of God's will to man; though the latter sense may (and sometimes does) include the former. So the gift of prophecy was that

phesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. 4 He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. 5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

The apostle, in the foregoing chapter, had himself preferred, and advised the Corinthians to prefer, Christian charity to all spiritual gifts. Here he teaches them, among spiritual gifts, which they should prefer, and by what rules they should make comparison. He begins the chapter.

First. With an exhortation to charity; ver. 1, "Follow after charity," pursue it. The original *διώκετε*, when spoken of a thing, signifies a singular concern to obtain it; and is commonly taken in a good and laudable sense. It is an exhortation to obtain charity, to get this excellent disposition of mind upon any terms, whatever pains or prayers it may cost; as if he had said, In whatever you fail, see you do not miss of this. The principal of all graces is worth your getting at any rate.

Secondly. He directs them which spiritual gift to prefer, from a principle of charity. "Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that you may prophesy," or chiefly that you may prophesy. Whilst they were in close pursuit of charity, and made this Christian disposition their chief scope, they might be zealous for spiritual gifts, be ambitious of them in some measure, but especially of prophesying, that is, of interpreting Scripture. This preference would most plainly discover that they were indeed upon such pursuit, that they had a due value for Christian charity, and were intent upon it. Note, Gifts are fit objects of our desire and pursuit, in subordination to grace and charity. That should be sought first, and with greatest earnestness, which is most worth.

Thirdly. He assigns the reasons of this preference. And it is remarkable here that he only compares prophesying with speaking with tongues. It seems this was the gift on which the Corinthians principally valued themselves. This was more ostentatious than the plain interpretation of Scripture; more fit to gratify pride, or do good to the souls of men; for, 1. He that spake with tongues must wholly speak between God and himself; whatever mysteries might be communicated in his language, none of his own countrymen could understand them, because they did not understand the language, ver. 2. Note, What cannot be understood can never edify. No advantage can be reaped from the most excellent discourses, if delivered in unintelligible language, such as the audience can neither speak or understand. But he that prophesies speaks to the advantage of his hearers; they may profit by his gift. Interpretation of Scripture will be for their edification. They may be exhorted and comforted by it, ver. 3; and, indeed, these two must go together. Duty is the proper way to comfort; and they that would be comforted must bear being exhorted. 2. He that speaks with tongues may edify himself, ver. 4. He may understand and be affected with what he speaks; and so every minister should. And he that is most edified himself is in the best disposition and fitness to do good to others by what he speaks; but he that speaks with tongues, or language unknown, can only edify himself; others can reap no benefit from his speech. Whereas the end of speaking in the church is to edify the church, ver. 4, to which prophesying, or interpreting Scripture by inspiration, or otherwise, is immediately adapted. Note, That is the best and most eligible gift which best answers the purposes of charity, and does most good; most that which can edify ourselves only, but that which will edify the church. Such is prophesying, or preaching, and interpreting Scripture, compared with speaking in an unknown tongue.

Indeed, no gift is to be despised, but the best are to be preferred. "I could wish," saith the apostle, "that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied," ver. 5. Every gift of God is a favour from God, and may be improved for his glory, and as such is to be valued and thankfully received; but then those are to be most valued that are most useful. "Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaks with tongues, unless he interpret, that the church may receive edifying," ver. 5. Benevolence makes a man truly great. "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and it is true [Christian] magnanimity to study and seek to be useful to others rather than to raise their admiration, and draw their esteem. Such a man has a large soul, copious and diffused in proportion to his benevolence and bent of mind for public good. Greater is he that interprets Scripture to edify the church than he that speaks tongues to recommend himself; and what other end he that speaks with tongues could have, unless he interpreted what he spake, is not easy to see. Note, That makes most for the honour of a minister [whose sole honour is from Christ, in honouring his works,] that is most for the church's edification, not what shews his gifts to most advantage. He acts in a narrow sphere whilst he aims at himself, but his spirit and character increase in proportion to his usefulness; I mean his own intention and endeavours to be useful.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? 7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or



PIPE AND LUTE.—FROM A TOMB AT POMPEII.

which enabled its possessor to utter Divine strains of warning, exhortation, encouragement, or rebuke; and to teach and enforce the truths of Christianity with supernatural energy and effect. St. Paul describes the marvellous effect of the inspired address thus spoken (verse 25)."

xiv. 8. "Uncertain:" i.e., as to meaning; for a particular succession of notes then, as now, gave the signal for attack or retreat, and various evolutions of the army.

harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? 8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? 9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. 10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification. 11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me. 12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. 13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret. 14 For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

In this paragraph he goes on to shew how vain a thing the ostentation of speaking unknown and unintelligible language must be. It was altogether unedifying and unprofitable; ver. 6, "If I come to you speaking with tongues, what will it profit you, unless I speak to you by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?" It would signify nothing to utter any of these in an unknown tongue. An apostle, with all his furniture, [graces and miraculous gifts,] could not edify, unless he spoke to the capacity of his hearers. New revelations, the most clear explications of old ones, the most instructive discourses in themselves, would be unprofitable in a language not understood.

[Though Paul should utter among them, as he had abundant ability to do, the most weighty and important truths, yet, unless he interpreted what he said in a manner clear from obscurity, like *revelation*; or intelligibly, and so as to constitute *knowledge*; or in the manner that the prophets spoke, in a plain and intelligible manner; or in the manner usual in simple and plain instruction,—it would be useless to them.—A. B.]

Nay, interpretations of Scripture made in an unknown tongue would need to be interpreted over again, before they could be of any use. This he illustrates by several allusions. 1. To a pipe and a harp playing always in one tone. Of what use can this be to those that are dancing? If there be no distinction of sounds, how should they order their steps or motions? Unintelligible language is like piping or harping without distinction of sounds. It gives no direction how a man should order his conversation, than a pipe with but one stop, or a harp with but one string, can direct a dancer how he should order his steps. [In the original there is no allusion to dancing, and it is not necessary to suppose any.]

["Or harp." This instrument (*καθάρτα*) was a stringed instrument, and was made in the same way as a modern harp. It usually had ten strings, and was struck with the plectrum, or with a key. It was commonly employed in praise. "Except they give a distinction in the sounds." Unless they give a difference in the tones, such as are indicated in the gamut for music. "How shall it be known," &c. That is, there would be no time, no music. Nothing would be indicated by it. It would not be fitted to excite the emotions of sorrow or of joy.—A. B.]

2. To a trumpet giving an uncertain sound, *ἀόριστον φωνήν*, a sound not manifest; either not the proper sound for the purpose, or not distinct enough to be discerned from every other sound. If, instead of sounding an onset, it sounded a retreat, or sounded one knew not what, who would prepare for the battle? To talk in an unknown language in a Christian assembly is altogether as vain, and to no purpose, as for a trumpet to give no certain sound in the field or day of battle. The army in one case, and the congregation in the other, must be all in suspense, and at a perfect nonplus. To speak words that have no significance to those who hear them is to leave them ignorant of what is spoken. It is speaking to the air, ver. 9. Words without a meaning can convey no notion or instruction to the mind; and words not understood have no meaning with those that do not understand them. To talk to them in such language is to waste our breath. 3. He compares this speaking in an unknown tongue to the gibberish of barbarians. There are, as he says, ver. 10, many kinds of voices in the world, none of which are without their proper signification. This is true of the several languages spoken by several nations; all of them have their proper signification. Without this they would be *φωνήν ἀφανήν*, "a voice and no voice;" for that is no language, nor can answer the end of speaking, which has no meaning. But whatever proper signification the words of any language may have in themselves, and to those who understand them, they are perfect gibberish to men of another language, that understand them not. In this case speaker and hearers are barbarians to each other, ver. 11. They talk and hear only sounds without sense; for this is to be a barbarian. For thus saith the polite Ovid, when banished into Pontus, *Barbarus hic ego sum, quia non intelligor ulli*.—I am a barbarian here, none understand me. To speak in the church in an unknown tongue is to talk gibberish, it is to play the barbarian; it is to confound the audience instead of instructing them, and for this reason utterly vain and unprofitable.

The apostle, having thus established his point, in the two next verses applies it. 1st. By advising them to be chiefly desirous of those gifts that were most for the church's edification; ver. 12, "Forasmuch as you are zealous of spiritual gifts," this way it will become commendable zeal. Be zealous to edify the church, to promote Christian knowledge and practice, and covet those gifts most that will do the best service to men's souls. This is the great rule he gives. Which, 2nd. He applies to the matter in hand, that, if they did speak a foreign language, they should beg of God the gift of interpreting it, ver. 13. That these were different gifts: see *ch. xii. 10*. They might speak and understand a foreign language who could not readily translate it into their own. And yet was this necessary to the church's edification; for the church must understand, that it might be edified; which yet it could not do, till the foreign language was translated into its own. Let him therefore pray for the gift of interpreting what he

xiv. 11. "Barbarian:" i.e., a foreigner; one who is ignorant of the speech and habits of a people.

xiv. 15. "What is it then?" i.e., "What then is my determination?" "I will pray with the understanding;" mind. Alford explains thus: "I will interpret my prayer for the benefit of myself and the church." This resolution or expression of self-obligation evidently leads to the inference, by-and-by clearly expressed (verse 28), that if he could not pray with the understanding he would keep silence."

speaks in an unknown tongue; or rather, covet and ask of God the gift of interpreting, than of speaking in a language that needs interpretation, this being most for the church's benefit, and therefore among the gifts that excel: see ver. 12. Some understand it, Let him pray so as to interpret what he utters in a language unintelligible without it. The sum is, that they should perform all religious exercises in their assemblies, so as that all might join in them, and profit by them. 3rd. He enforces this advice with a proper reason, that if he prayed in an unknown tongue, his spirit might pray, that is, a spiritual gift might be exercised in prayer, or his own mind might be devoutly engaged, but his understanding would be unfruitful, ver. 14; that is, the sense and meaning of his words would be unfruitful. He would not be understood, nor therefore would others join with him in his devotions. Note, It should be the concern of such as pray in public to pray intelligibly; not in a foreign language, nor in a language that, if it be not foreign, is above the level of his audience. Language that is most obvious and easy to be understood is the most proper for public devotions and other religious exercises.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. 16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? 17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. 18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: 19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. 20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

The apostle here sums up the argument hitherto, and, First, Directs them how they should sing and pray in public; ver. 15, "What is 't then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also. I will sing with the spirit," &c. He does not forbid their praying or singing under Divine affluents, or when they were inspired for this purpose, or had such a spiritual gift communicated to them; but he would have them perform both so as to be understood by others, that others might join with them. Note, Public worship should be performed so as to be understood.

Secondly, He enforces the argument with several reasons. 1. That otherwise the unlearned could not say Amen to their prayers or thanksgiving, could not join in the worship, for they did not understand it, ver. 16. He who fills up or occupies the place of the unlearned, that is, as the ancients interpret it, the body of the people, who in most Christian assemblies are illiterate, how should these say Amen to prayers in an unknown tongue? that is, how should they declare their consent and concurrence? This is saying Amen, so be it, God grant the thing we have requested. Or we join in the confession that hath been made of sin, in the acknowledgment that hath been made of Divine mercies and favours. This is the import of saying Amen. All should say Amen inwardly, and it is not improper to testify this inward concurrence in public prayers and devotions by an audible Amen. The ancient Christians said Amen aloud: see Just. Mart. *Apol. 2, prope fin.* Now, how should the people say Amen to what they did not understand? Note, There can be no concurrence in those prayers that are not understood. The intention of public devotions is therefore entirely destroyed if they be performed in an unknown tongue. He that performs may pray well, and give thanks well, but not in that time and place; because others are not, cannot be edified, ver. 17, by what they understand not.

2. He alleges his own example to make the greater impression. Concerning which, observe, 1st. That he did not come behind any of them in this spiritual gift. "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all," ver. 18, not only more than any single person among you, but more than all together. It was not envy at their better furniture [gifts] that made Paul depreciate what they so highly valued, and so much vaunted in. He surpassed them all in this very gift of tongues, and did not vilify their gift because he had it not. This spirit of envy is too common in the world. But the apostle took care to guard against this misconstruction of his purpose, by letting them know there was more ground for them to envy him upon this head than for him to envy them. Note, When we beat down men's unreasonable value for themselves, or any of their possessions or attainments, we should let them see, if possible, that this doth not proceed from an envious and grudging spirit. We miss our aim if they can fairly give our conduct this invidious turn. Paul could not be justly censured or suspected for any such principle in this whole argument. He spake more languages than they all. Yet, 2nd. He "had rather speak five words with understanding," that is, so as to be understood, and instruct and edify others, "than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue," ver. 19. He was so far from valuing himself upon talking languages, or making ostentation of his talents of this kind, that he had rather speak five intelligible words to benefit others, than make a thousand, ten thousand fine discourses, that would do no one else any good, because they did not understand them. Note, A truly Christian minister will value himself much more upon doing the least spiritual good to men's souls than upon procuring the greatest applause and commendation to himself. This is true grandeur and nobleness of spirit. It is acting up to his character; it is approving himself the servant of Christ, and not a vassal to his own pride and vanity.

3. He adds a plain intimation that the fondness they discovered for this gift was but too plain an indication of the immaturity of their judgment. "Brethren, be not children in understanding; in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men," ver. 20. Children are apt to be struck with novelty and strange appearances. They are taken with an outward show, without inquiring into the true nature and worth of things. Do not you act like them, and prefer noise and show to worth and substance. Shew a greater ripeness of judgment, and act a more manly part. Be like children in nothing but an innocent and inoffensive disposition. A double rebuke is couched in this passage, both of their pride

upon account of their gifts and their arrogance and haughtiness towards each other, and the contests and quarrels proceeding from them. Note, Christians should be harmless and inoffensive as children, void of all guile and malice: but should have wisdom and knowledge that is ripe and mature. They should not be unskilful in the word of righteousness, Heb. v. 13, though they should be unskilful in all the arts of mischief.

21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. 22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. 23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? 24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: 25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

In this passage the apostle pursues the argument, and reasons from other topics, as,

First. For that tongues, as the Corinthians used them, were rather a token of judgment from God, than mercy to any people, ver. 21; "In the law," that is, the Old Testament, "it is written, with men of other tongues, and other lips, will I speak to this people, and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord," Isa. xxviii. 11: compare Deu. xxviii. 46, 49. To both these places it is thought the apostle refers. Both are delivered by way of threatening, and one is supposed to interpret the other. The meaning in this view is, that it is an evidence that a people are abandoned of God when he gives them up to this sort of instruction, to the discipline of those that speak in another language. And sure the apostle's discourse implies you should not be fond of the tokens of Divine displeasure. God can have no gracious regards to those who are left merely to this sort of instruction, and taught in language which they cannot understand. They can never be benefited by such teaching as this. And when they are left to it, it is a sad sign that God gives them over as past cure. And should Christians covet to be in such a state, or bring the churches into it? Yet thus did the Corinthian preachers in effect, who would always deliver their inspirations in an unknown tongue.

Secondly. Tongues were rather a sign to unbelievers than to believers, ver. 22. It was a spiritual gift, intended for the conviction and conversion of infidels, that they might be brought into the Christian church; but converts were to be built up in Christianity by profitable instructions in their own language. The gift of tongues was necessary to spread Christianity and gather churches. It was proper, and intended to convince unbelievers of that doctrine which Christians had already embraced; but prophesying, and interpreting Scripture in their own language, were most for the edification of such as did already believe: so that speaking with tongues in Christian assemblies was altogether out of time and place; neither one nor the other was proper for it. Note, That gifts may be rightly used, it is proper to know the ends which they are intended to serve. To go about the conversion of infidels, as the apostles did, without the gift of tongues, and the discovery of this gift, had been a vain undertaking, [in their circumstances,] but in an assembly of Christians already converted to the Christian faith, to make use and ostentation of this gift would be perfectly impertinent, because it would be of no advantage to the assembly; not for conviction of truth, because they had already embraced it: not for their edification, because they did not understand, and could not get benefit without understanding what they heard.

Thirdly. The credit and reputation of their assemblies among unbelievers required them to prefer prophesying before speaking with tongues. For, 1. If, when they were all assembled for Christian worship, and their ministers, or all employed in public worship, should talk unintelligible language, and infidels should drop in, they would conclude them to be mad, to be no better than a parcel of wild fanatics. Who in their right senses could carry on religious worship in such a manner? Or what sort of religion is that which leaves out sense and understanding? Would not this make Christianity ridiculous to a heathen, to hear the ministers of it pray, or preach, or perform any other religious exercise, in a language that neither he nor the assembly understood. Note, Christian religion is a sober and reasonable thing in itself, and should not, by the ministers of it, be made to look wild or senseless. They disgrace their religion, and vilify their own character, who act any thing that has this aspect. But, on the other hand, 2. If, instead of speaking with tongues, those who minister plainly interpret Scripture, or preach, in language intelligible and proper, the great truths and rules of the Gospel, a heathen or unlearned person coming in would probably be convinced, and become a convert to Christianity, ver. 24, 25. His conscience will be touched, the secrets of his heart will be revealed to him, he will be condemned by the truth he hears, and so will be brought [by God's grace] to confess his guilt, to pay his homage to God, and own that he is indeed among you, present in the assembly. Note, Scripture truth, plainly and duly taught, has a marvellous aptness to awaken the conscience, and touch the heart. And is not this much more for the honour of our religion than that infidels should conclude the ministers of it a set of madmen, and their religious exercises only fits of frenzy? This last would at once cast contempt on themselves and their religion too. Instead of procuring applause for themselves, it would render them ridiculous, and involve their profession in the same censure; whereas prophesying would certainly edify the church, much better keep up their credit, [inspire deeper respect,] and might probably convince and convert infidels that might occasionally hear them. Note, Religious exercises in Christian assemblies should be such as are fit to edify the

xiv. 21. The quotation is from Isa. xxviii. 11. "The context there is this: the scoffers in Jerusalem (verse 14) are introduced as scorning the simplicity of the Divine commands, which were line upon line, precept upon precept, as if to children (verses 9, 10). Jehovah threatens them that, since they would not hear these simple commands, he would speak to them by men of other tongues, viz., the Assyrians, their captors. Here, as in many other cases, the historical sense is not so much considered as the aptness of the expressions used for

illustrating the matter in hand, viz., that belief would not be produced in the unbelieving by speaking to them in strange tongues" (Alford).

xiv. 26. "How is it then?" i.e., "What, then, is the inference to be drawn from what I have said? Whenever you meet in congregations, those of you who have spiritual gifts are ready each one to exercise his gift; one is ready to pour forth songs of praise, another has an exposition of doctrine, another is ready to speak in tongues," &c.

faithful, and convince, affect, and convert unbelievers. The ministry was not instituted to make ostentation of gifts and parts, but to save souls.

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. 27 If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. 28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. 29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. 30 If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. 31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the *author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

In this passage the apostle reproves them for their disorder, and endeavours to correct and regulate their conduct for the future.

First. He blames them for the confusion they introduced into the assembly by ostentation of their gifts; ver. 26, "When ye come together, every one hath a psalm, [a poetical effusion,] hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, &c.; that is, either you are apt to confound the several parts of worship, and whilst one has a psalm to utter by inspiration another has a doctrine or revelation; or else, you are apt to be confused in the same branch of worship, many of you having psalms or doctrines to propose at the same time, without staying for one another. Is not this perfect uproar? Can this be edifying? And yet all religious exercises in public assemblies should have this view. "Let all things be done to edifying."

Secondly. He corrects their faults, and lays down some regulations for their future conduct. As, 1. To speaking in an unknown tongue, he orders that no more than two or three should do it at one meeting, and this not all together, but successively, one after another; and even this was not to be done unless there were some one to interpret, ver. 27, 28, some other interpreter besides himself who spoke; for to speak in an unknown tongue what himself was afterwards to interpret could only be for ostentation. But if another were present who could interpret, two miraculous gifts might be exercised at once, and thereby the church edified, and the faith of the hearers confirmed at the same time. But if there were none to interpret, he was to be silent in the church, and only exercise his gift between God and himself, ver. 28; that is, as I think, in private at home, for all who are present at public worship should join in it, and not be at their private devotions in public assemblies. Solitary devotions are out of time and place when the church is met for social worship. 2. As to prophesying, he orders, 1st. That two or three only should speak at one meeting, ver. 29, and this successively, not all at once; and that the other should examine and judge what he delivered, that is, discern and determine concerning it, whether it were of Divine inspiration or no. There might be false prophets, mere pretenders to Divine inspiration, and the true prophets were to judge of these, and discern and discover who was Divinely inspired, and by such inspiration interpreted Scripture and taught the church, and who was not; what was of Divine inspiration, and what was not. This seems to be the meaning of this rule. For where a prophet was known to be such, and under the Divine afflatus, he could not be judged, for this were to subject even the Holy Spirit to the judgment of men. He who was indeed inspired, and known to be so, was above all human judgment. 2nd. He orders, that if any assistant prophet had a revelation whilst another was prophesying, that other should hold his peace, ver. 30, namely, before the inspired assistant uttered his revelation. Indeed, it is by many understood that the former speaker should immediately hold his peace. But this seems unnatural, and not so well to agree with the context; for why must one that was speaking by inspiration be immediately silent upon another man's being inspired, and suppress what was dictated to him by the same Spirit? Indeed, he who had the new revelation might claim liberty of speech in his turn, upon producing his vouchers. But why must liberty of speech be taken from him who was speaking before, and his mouth stopped, when he was delivering the dictates of the same Spirit, and could produce the same vouchers? Would the Spirit of God move one to speak, and, before he had delivered what he had to say, move another to interrupt him, and put him to silence? This seems to me an unnatural thought. Nor is it more agreeable to the context, and the reason annexed, ver. 31, "That all might prophesy one by one," or one after another, which could not be where any one was interrupted and silenced before he had done prophesying; but might easily be, if he, who was afterwards inspired, forbore to deliver his new revelation till the former prophet had finished what he had to say. And, to confirm this sense, the apostle quickly adds, "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets," ver. 32; that is, the spiritual gifts they have leave them still possessed of their reason, and capable of using their own judgment in the exercise of them. Divine inspirations are not like the diabolical possessions of heathen priests, violent and ungovernable, and prompting them to act as if they were beside themselves, but are sober, and calm, and capable of regular conduct. The man inspired by the Spirit of God may still act the man, and observe the rules of natural order and decency in delivering his revelations. His spiritual gift is thus far subject to his pleasure, and to be managed by his discretion.

Thirdly. The apostle gives the reasons of these regulations. As, 1. That they would be for the church's benefit, their instruction, and consolation. It is that "all may learn, and all may be comforted," or exhorted, that the prophets were to speak in that orderly manner the apostle advises. Note, The instruction, edification, and comfort of the church, is that for which God instituted the ministry. And sure ministers should as much as possible fit their ministrations to these purposes. 2. He tells them, "God is not the God of confusion, but of

peace and good order," ver. 33; and therefore Divine inspirations should by no means throw Christian assemblies into confusion, and break through all rules of common decency, which yet would be unavoidable if several inspired men should all at once utter what was suggested to them by the Spirit of God, and not wait to take their turns. Note, The honour of God requires that things should be managed in Christian assemblies so as not to transgress the rules of natural decency. If they are managed in a tumultuous and confused manner, what a notion must this give of the God who is worshipped to considerate observers? Doth it look as if he were the God of peace and order, and an enemy to confusion? Things should be managed so in Divine worship as that no unlovely or dishonourable notion of God should be formed in the minds of observers. 3. He adds, that things were thus orderly managed in all the other churches, "as in all the churches of the saints," ver. 33. They kept to these rules in the exercise of their spiritual gifts, which was a manifest proof that the church of Corinth might observe the same regulations; and it would be perfectly scandalous for them, who exceeded most churches in spiritual gifts, to be more disorderly than any in the exercise of them. Note, Though other churches are not to be our rule, [Christ has appointed an authority in his church for determining such points, but that authority must be guided by his word,] yet the regard they pay to the rules of natural decency and order should restrain us from breaking these rules. Thus far they may be proposed as examples, and it is a shame not to follow them.

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Here the apostle,

First. Enjoins silence to their women in public assemblies, and to such a degree that they must not ask questions for their own information in the church, but "ask their husbands at home." "They are to learn in silence with all subjection; but," saith the apostle, "I suffer them not to teach," 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12. There is indeed an intimation, ch. xi. 5, as if the women sometimes did pray and prophesy in their assemblies, which the apostle in that passage doth not simply condemn, but the manner of performance, namely, praying or prophesying with the head uncovered, which in that age and country was throwing off the distinction of sexes, and setting themselves on a level with the men; but here he seems to forbid all public performances of theirs. [His prohibition is express in as far as relates to preaching.] They are not permitted to speak, ver. 34, namely, in the church, neither in praying nor prophesying. The connexion seems plainly to include the last, in the limited sense in which it is taken in this chapter, namely, for preaching, or interpreting Scripture by inspiration. And, indeed, for a woman to prophesy in this sense were to teach, which doth not so well befit her state of subjection. A teacher of others has in that respect a superiority over them, which is not allowed the woman over the man, nor must she therefore be allowed to teach in a congregation. "I suffer them not to teach." But praying and uttering hymns inspired was not teaching; and seeing there were women who had spiritual gifts of this sort in that age of the church, see Acts xii. 9, and might be under this impulse in the assembly, must they altogether suppress it? Or why should they have this gift, if it must never be publicly exercised? For these reasons some think these general prohibitions are only to be understood in common cases, but that upon extraordinary occasions, when women were under a Divine afflatus, and known to be so, they might have liberty of speech. They were not ordinarily to teach, nor so much as to debate and ask questions in the church, but learn in silence there; and if difficulties occurred, "ask their husbands at home." Note, That, as it is the woman's duty to learn in subjection, it is the man's duty to keep up his superiority, by being able to instruct her. If it be her duty to ask her husband at home, it is his concern and duty to endeavour at least to be able to answer her inquiries. If it be a shame for her to speak in the church, where she should be silent, it is a shame for him to be silent when he should speak, and not be able to give an answer when she asks him at home.

Secondly. We have here the reason of this injunction, namely, it is God's law and commandment that they should be under obedience, ver. 34. They are placed in subordination to the man, and it is a shame for them to do any thing that looks like an affectation of changing ranks, which speaking in public seemed to imply, at least in that age, and among that people, as would public teaching much more. So that the apostle concludes it was a shame for women to speak in the church, in the assembly. Shame is the mind's uneasy reflection on having done an indecent thing; and what more indecent than for a woman to quit her rank, renounce the subordination of her sex, or do what in common account had such aspect and appearance? Note, Our spirit and conduct should be suitable to our rank. The natural distinctions God has made we should observe. Those he has placed in subjection to others should not set themselves on a level, or affect or assume superiority. The woman was made subject to the man, and she should keep her station, and be content with it. For this reason they must be silent in the churches, nor set up for teachers; for this is setting up for superiority over the men.

36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? 37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. 39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

In these verses the apostle closes his argument.

First. With a just rebuke of the Corinthians for their extravagant pride and self-conceit. They so managed with their spiritual gifts as no church did like them. They behaved in a manner by themselves, and would not easily endure

This was their state, what was to be done? "Let all these be exercised with a view to edification;" answering the question, "How is it then?"

xiv. 27. "By course;" i.e., "by turn." St. Paul means here that in one and the same assembly not more than two, or at most three, were to exercise the gift of tongues, and that in turn and when one was present who could interpret; thus limiting and regulating the exercise.

xiv. 28. If there was no interpreter, the person possessing the tongue is to remain silent, speaking privately, with only himself and God to witness it.

xiv. 29. "Let the other judge;" i.e., the other prophets, or those with discerning of spirits.

xiv. 30. "Let the first hold his peace;" i.e., give place to the one who has just had something revealed to him.

xiv. 31. "For ye have power one by one all to prophesy;" (i.e.,

control or regulation. Now, saith the apostle, to beat down this arrogant humour, "Came the Gospel out from you? or came it to you only?" ver. 36. Did Christianity come out of Corinth? Was its original among you? Or if not, is it now limited and confined to you? Are you the only church favoured with Divine revelations, that you will depart from the decent usages of all other churches? and, to make ostentation of your spiritual gifts, bring confusion into Christian assemblies? How intolerably assuming is this behaviour! Pray bethink yourselves. When it was needful or proper the apostle could rebuke with all authority; and sure his rebukes, if ever, were proper here. Note, They must be [faithfully] reproved and humbled whose spiritual pride and self-conceit throw Christian churches and assemblies into confusion; though such men will hardly bear even the rebukes of an apostle.

Secondly. He lets them know that what he said to them was the command of God; nor durst any true prophet, any one really inspired, deny it; ver. 37. "If any man think himself a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge," &c. Nay, let him be tried by this very rule. If he will not own what I deliver on this head to be the will of Christ, he himself never had the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Christ can never contradict itself. If it speak in me and in them, it must speak the same things in both. If their revelations contradict mine, they do not come from the same Spirit; either I or they must be false prophets. "By this therefore you may know them." If they say my directions in this matter are no Divine commandments, you may depend upon it they are not Divinely inspired. But if any continue after all, through prejudice or obstinacy, uncertain or ignorant, whether they or I speak by the Spirit of God, they must be left under the power of this ignorance, [to bear its punishment.]. If their pretences to inspiration can stand in competition with the apostolical character and powers which I have, I have lost all my authority and influence; and the persons that allow of this competition against me are out of the reach of conviction, and must be left to themselves. Note, It is just with God to leave them to the blindness of their own minds who wilfully shut out the light. They who would be ignorant in so plain a case were justly left under the power of their mistake.

Thirdly. He sums up all in two general advices.

1. That though they should not despise the gift of tongues, nor altogether disuse it under the mentioned regulations, yet they should prefer prophesying. This is indeed the scope of the whole argument. It was to be preferred to the other, because it was the more useful gift.

2. He charges them to "let all things be done decently and in order," ver. 40; that is, that they should avoid every thing that was manifestly indecent and disorderly. Not that they should hence take occasion to bring into the Christian church and worship any thing that a vain mind might think ornamental to it, and would help to set it off. Such indecencies and disorders as he had remarked upon were especially to be shunned. They must do nothing that was manifestly childish, ver. 20; or what would give occasion to say they were mad, ver. 22; nor so as to breed confusion, ver. 33. This would be utterly indecent; it would make a tumult and mob of a Christian assembly. But they were to do things in order. They were to speak one after another, and not all at once; take their turns, and not interrupt one another. To do otherwise was to destroy the end of a Christian ministry, and all assemblies for Christian worship. Note, Manifest indecencies and disorders are to be carefully kept out of all Christian churches, and every part of Divine worship. They should have nothing in them that is childish, absurd, ridiculous, wild, or tumultuous; but all parts of Divine worship should be carried on in a manly, grave, rational, composed, and orderly manner. God is not to be dishonoured, nor his worship disgraced, by our unbecoming and disorderly performance of it, and attendance at it.

[In view of this chapter, we may remark, (1.) That public worship should be in a language understood by the people, the language which they commonly employ. Nothing can be clearer than the sentiments of Paul on this. The whole strain of the chapter is to demonstrate this, in opposition to making use of a foreign and unintelligible language in any part of public worship. Paul specifies in the course of the discussion every part of public worship; "public preaching," ver. 2, 3, 5, 13, 19; "prayer," ver. 14, 15; "singing," ver. 15; and insists that all should be in a language that should be understood by the people. It would almost seem that he had anticipated the sentiments and practice of the Roman Catholic denomination. It is remarkable that a practice should have grown up, and have been defended, in a church professedly Christian, so directly in opposition to the explicit meaning of the New Testament. Perhaps there is not, even in the Roman Catholic denomination, a more striking instance of a custom or doctrine in direct contradiction to the Bible. If anything is plain and obvious, it is that worship, in order to be edifying, should be in a language that is understood by the people. (2.) Preaching should be simple and intelligible. There is a great deal of preaching which might as well be in a foreign tongue as in the language which is actually employed. The most successful preachers have been those who have been most remarkable for their simplicity and clearness. Nor are simplicity and intelligibility of manner inconsistent with bright thought and profound sentiments. (3.) We should learn to value useful talent more than that which is splendid and showy, ver. 3. The whole scope of this chapter goes to demonstrate that we should more highly prize and desire that talent which may be useful to the church, or which may be useful in convincing unbelievers, ver. 24, 25, than that which merely dazzles, or excites admiration. Ministers of the Gospel who preach as they should do, engage in their work to win souls to Christ, not to induce them to admire eloquence; they come to teach men to adore the great and dreadful God, not to be loud in their praises of a mortal man. Cowper has drawn the character of what a minister of the Gospel should be, in the well-known and most beautiful passage in the *Task*:

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master-strokes, and draw from his design.
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain;
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture; much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too; affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.

He establishes the strong, restores the weak,
Recl'ms the wanderer, binds the broken heart
And, arm'd himself in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms,
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect.—A. B. 1

CHAPTER XV.

In this chapter the apostle treats of that great article of Christianity, the resurrection of the dead. I. He establishes the certainty of our Saviour's resurrection, ver. 1—11. II. He, from this truth, sets himself to refute those who said, There is no resurrection of the dead, ver. 12—19. III. From our Saviour's resurrection he establishes the resurrection of the dead, and confirms the Corinthians in the belief of it by some other considerations, ver. 20—34. IV. He answers an objection against this truth, and takes occasion thence to shew what a vast change will be made in the bodies of believers at the resurrection, ver. 35—50. V. He informs us what a change will be made in them, that shall be living at the sound of the last trumpet, and the complete conquest the just shall then obtain over death and the grave, ver. 51—57. And, VI. Sums up the argument with a very serious exhortation to Christians, to be resolved and diligent in their Lord's service, because they know they shall be so gloriously rewarded by him, ver. 58.



Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 11 Therefore whether *it were* I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

It is the apostle's business in this chapter to assert and establish the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which some of the Corinthians flatly denied, ver. 10. Whether they turned this doctrine into allegory, as did Hymeneus and Philletus, by saying it was already past, 2 *Tim.* ii. 17, 18, and several of the ancient heretics, by making it mean no more than a changing their course of life, or whether they rejected it as absurd, upon principles of reason and science, it seems they denied it in the proper sense; and they disowned a future state of recompenses by denying the resurrection of the dead. Now that heathens and infidels should deny this truth doth not seem so strange, but that Christians, who had their religion by revelation, should deny a truth so plainly discovered, is surprising, especially when it is a truth of such [vital] importance. It was time for the apostle to confirm them in this truth, when the staggering of their faith in this point was likely to shake their Christianity, and they were yet in great danger of having their faith staggered. He begins with an epitome or summary of the Gospel, what he had preached amongst them, namely, the death and resurrection of Christ. Upon this foundation the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is built. Note. Divine truths appear with greatest evidence when they are looked upon in their mutual connection. The foundation must be strengthened, that the superstructure may be secured. Now concerning this Gospel, observe,

First. What a stress he lays on it; ver. 1, 2, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached to you." 1. It was what he constantly preached. His word was not yea and nay. He always preached the same Gospel, and taught the same truth. He could appeal to his hearers for this. Truth is in its own nature invariable, and the infallible teachers of Divine truth could never be at variance with themselves or one another. The doctrine which Paul had heretofore taught, he still taught. 2. It was what they had received, had been convinced of the faith, believed it in their hearts, or at least made profession of doing so with their mouths; it was no strange doctrine; it was that very Gospel in which, or by which, they had hitherto stood, and must continue to stand. If they gave up this truth, they left themselves no ground to stand upon, no footing in religion. Note, The doctrine of Christ's death and resurrection is at the foundation of Christianity. Remove this foundation and the whole fabric falls; all our hopes for eternity sink at once; and it is by holding this truth firm that Christians are made to stand in a day of trial, and kept faithful to God. 3. It was that alone by which they could hope for salvation, ver. 2; for there is no salvation in any other name, "no name given

"you have power to bring about this result—you can be silent if you please) in order that all may learn and all may be exhorted (or comforted)" (Alford).

xiv. 36. Alford thinks that St. Paul refers here to all the points of church custom which he has been noticing, showing them the unseemliness or absurdity of their pretending to originate customs unknown to other churches, as if the word of God first went forth from them.

xv. 1. "Now I make known unto you," &c.: not without approach that it should be necessary for him to declare again the Gospel which they had already received.

xv. 2. "Unless ye became believers in vain:" i.e., were deceived in what you believed. That they had not been deceived he shows in the chapter.

xv. 5. "The twelve:" Luke xxiv. 33—36. There were but eleven; twelve is retained as the term for the whole company of apostles.

under heaven by which we may be saved, but the name of Christ;" and there is no salvation in his name, but upon ascription of his death and resurrection. These are the saving truths of our holy religion. The death and revival, the crucifixion of our Redeemer, and his conquest over death, are the very source of our spiritual life and hopes. Now concerning these saving truths, observe, 1st. That they must be retained in mind; they must be held fast, so the word is translated, *Heb. x. 23*. "Let us hold fast the profession of faith." Note, The saving truths of the Gospel must be fixed on our mind, revolved much in our thoughts, and maintained and held fast to the end, if we would be saved. They will not save us if we do not attend to them and yield to their power, and continue to do so to the end, [perseverance necessarily belonging to the saints.] "He only that endureth to the end shall be saved," *Mat. x. 22*. 2nd. That we believe in vain unless we continue and persevere in the faith of the Gospel. We shall be never the better for a temporary faith; nay, we shall aggravate our guilt by relapsing into infidelity; and in vain is it to profess Christianity, or our faith in Christ, if we deny the resurrection; for this must imply and involve the denial of his resurrection, [with all its consequences.] And take away this, you make nothing of Christianity, you leave nothing for faith or hope to fix upon.

Secondly, Observe what this Gospel is, on which the apostle lays such stress. It was that doctrine which he had received, and delivered to them, *ἐκ πρώτης*, 'among the first,' the principal. It was a doctrine of the first rank, a most necessary truth, namely, how that Christ died for our sins, and was buried, and rose again; or, in other words, that "he was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification," *Rom. iv. 25*; that he was offered in sacrifice for our sins, and rose again, to shew that he had procured forgiveness for them, and was accepted of God in this offering [as our righteousness.] Note, Christ's death and resurrection are the very sum and substance of evangelical truth. Hence we derive our spiritual life now, and here we must find our hopes of everlasting life hereafter.

Thirdly, Observe how this truth is confirmed. 1. By Old Testament predictions. He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; he was buried and rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures; according to Scripture prophecies and Scripture types. Such prophecies as *Ps. xvi. 10*; *Isa. liii. 4-6*, &c.; *Dan. ix. 26, 27*; *Hos. vi. 2*; such Scripture types as Jonah, *Mat. xii. 40*; as Isaac, who is expressly said by the apostle to have been received from the dead in a figure, *Heb. xi. 19*. Note, It is a great confirmation of our faith of the Gospel to see how it corresponds with ancient types and prophecies. 2. By the testimony of many eye-witnesses, who saw Christ after he was risen from the dead; he reckons up five several appearances besides that to himself. "He was seen of Cephas," or Peter, "then of the twelve," called so, though Judas was no longer among them, because this was their usual number. "Then he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once," many of which were living when the apostle wrote this epistle, though some were fallen asleep; this was in Galilee, *Mat. xxviii. 10*. After that he was seen of James singly, and then by all the apostles when he was taken up into heaven. This was on mount Olivet, *Lu. xxiv. 50*; compare *Acts i. 2, 5-7*. Note, How uncontrollably evident was Christ's resurrection from the dead, when so many eyes saw him at so many several times alive, and when he indulged the weakness of one disciple so far as to let him handle him, to put his resurrection out of doubt? And what reason have we to believe those who were so steady in maintaining this truth, though they hazarded all that was dear to them in this world, by endeavouring to assert and propagate it! Even Paul himself was last of all favoured with the sight of him. It is one of the peculiar offices of an apostle to be a witness of our Saviour's resurrection, *Lu. xxiv. 48*; and when Paul was called to the apostolical office, he was made an evidence of this sort. "The Lord Jesus appeared to him by the way to Damascus," *Acts ix. 17*.

And, having mentioned this favour, he takes occasion from it to make an humble digression concerning himself. He was highly favoured of God, but he always endeavoured to keep up a mean opinion of himself, and to express it. So he does hereby, observing, 1st. That he was "one born out of due time," ver. 8; an abortive, *ἐκτροπία*, a child dead born, and out of time. Paul resembled such a birth, in the suddenness of his new birth, in that he was not matured for the apostolical function, as the others were, who had personal converse with our Lord. He was called to the office when such conversation was not to be had, he was out of time for it. He had not known nor followed the Lord, nor been formed in his family, as the others were, for this high and honourable function. This was in Paul's account a very humbling circumstance. 2nd. By owning himself inferior to the other apostles; "Not meet to be called an apostle." The least, because the last of them, called latest to the office, and not worthy to be called an apostle, neither to have the office and title, because he had been "a persecutor of the church of God," ver. 9. Indeed, he tells us elsewhere that he was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles," *2 Cor. xi. 5*; for gifts, graces, services, and sufferings, inferior to none of them. Yet some circumstances in his case made him think more meanly of himself than of any of them. Note, A humble spirit in the midst of high attainments is a great ornament to any man; it sets his good qualities off to much greater advantage. What kept Paul low in an especial manner was the remembrance of his former wickedness, his raging and destructive zeal against Christ and his members. Note, How easily God can bring good out of the greatest evil? When sinners are by Divine grace turned into saints, he makes the remembrance of their former sins very serviceable, to make them humble, and diligent, and faithful. 3rd. By ascribing all that was valuable in him to Divine grace; "But by the grace of God I am that I am," ver. 10. It is God's prerogative to say, "I am that I am." It is our privilege to be able to say, By God's grace we are what we are, we are nothing but what God makes us; nothing in religion, but what his grace makes us. All that is good in us is a stream from this fountain. Paul was sensible of this, and kept humble and thankful by this conviction; so should we. Nay, though he was conscious of his own diligence, and zeal, and service, so that he could say of himself, "The grace of God was not given me in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all;" he thought himself so much more the debtor to Divine grace. "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Note, Those that have the grace of God bestowed on them should take care that it be not in vain. They should cherish and exercise and exert this heavenly principle [with most fervent prayer.] So did Paul, and therefore laboured with so much heart, and so much success; and yet, the more he laboured, and the more good he did, the more humble was he in his opinion of himself, and the more disposed to own and magnify the favor of God towards him, his free and unmerited favour. Note, A humble spirit will be very apt to own and magnify the grace of God. A humble spirit is commonly a gracious one; where pride is subdued, there it is reasonable to believe grace reigns.

After this digression, the apostle returns to his argument, and tells them, (ver. 11), that he not only preached the same Gospel himself at all times, and in all places, but that all the apostles preached the same. "Whether it were they or I, so we preached, and so ye believed." Whether Peter or Paul, or any other apostle, had converted them to Christianity, all maintained the same truth, told the same story, preached the same doctrine, and confirmed it by the

same evidence. All agreed in this, that Jesus Christ, and him crucified, and slain, and then rising from the dead, was the very sum and substance of Christianity; and this all true Christians believe. All the apostles agreed in this testimony; all Christians agree in the belief of it. By this faith they live, in this faith they die.

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. 18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

Having confirmed the truth of our Saviour's resurrection, the apostle goes on to refute those among the Corinthians that said there would be none. "If Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" ver. 12. It seems from this passage, and the course of the argument, there were some among the Corinthians that thought the resurrection an impossibility. This was a common sentiment among the heathens. But against this the apostle produces incontestable matter of fact, namely, the resurrection of Christ; and goes on to argue against them from the absurdities that must follow from their principle. As,

First, "If there be," can be, "no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen," ver. 13; and again, "if the dead rise not," cannot be raised, or recovered to life, "then is not Christ raised," ver. 16. And yet it was foretold by ancient prophecies that he should rise; and it has been proved by multitudes of eye-witnesses that he is risen. And will you say, will any among you dare to say, that is not, cannot be, which God long ago said shall be, and is now undoubted matter of fact?

Secondly, It would follow hereupon that the preaching and faith of the Gospel would be vain. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith vain," ver. 14. This supposition admitted would destroy the principal evidence of Christianity, and so, 1. Make preaching vain. "We" apostles "should be found false witnesses of God." We pretend to be God's witnesses for this truth, and to work miracles by his power in confirmation of it, and are all the while deceivers; liars for God, if in his name, and by power received from him, we go forth and publish, and assert a thing false in fact, and impossible to be true. And doth not this make us the vainest fellows in the world, and our office and ministry the vainest and most useless thing in the world? What end could we propose to ourselves in undertaking this hard and hazardous service, if we knew our religion stood on no better a foot, nay, if we were not well assured of the contrary? What should we preach for? Would not our labour be wholly in vain? We can have no very favourable expectations in this life, and we could have none beyond it. If Christ be not risen, the Gospel is a jest; it is chaff and emptiness. 2. This supposition would make the faith of Christians vain, as well as the labours of ministers. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins," ver. 16; yet under the guilt and condemnation of sin, because it is through his death and sacrifice for sin alone that forgiveness is to be had. "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins," *Eph. i. 7*. No remission of sins is to be had but through the shedding of his blood. And had his blood been shed, and his life taken away without ever being restored, what evidence could we have had that through him we should have justification [be accepted as righteous through the imputation of his righteousness] and eternal life? Had he remained under the power of death, how should he have delivered us from its power? And how vain a thing is faith in him, upon this supposition! He must "rise for our justification, who was delivered for our sins," or in vain we look for any such benefit by him. There had been no justification nor salvation if Christ had not risen; and must not faith in Christ be vain, and of no signification, if he be still among the dead?

Thirdly, Another absurdity following from this supposition is, that "those who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." If there be no resurrection, they cannot rise, and therefore are lost; even those who have died in the Christian faith, and for it. It is plain from this, that those among the Corinthians who denied the resurrection meant thereby a state of future retribution, and not merely the revival of the flesh. They took death to be the destruction and extinction of the man, and not merely of the bodily life; for otherwise the apostle could not infer the utter loss of those that slept in Jesus, from the supposition they would never rise more, or that they had no hopes in Christ after life, [they had died in a faith destitute of foundation if the resurrection of Christ was not true, and thus they were utterly lost.] ver. 20; for they might have hope of happiness for their minds, if these survived their bodies; and this would prevent the limiting their hopes in Christ to this life only. Upon supposition there is no resurrection in your sense, no after state and life, then dead Christians are quite lost. How vain a thing were our faith and religion upon this supposition! And this,

Fourthly, Would infer, that Christ's ministers and servants were "of all men most miserable," as having hope in him in this life only, ver. 19; which is another absurdity that would follow from the asserting no resurrection. Their condition who hope in Christ would be worse than that of other men. Who "hope in Christ," [trust or confide in him.] Note, All that believe in Christ have hope in him; all who believe in him as Redeemer hope for redemption and salvation by him. But if there be no resurrection, nor state of future recompense, (which was intended by those who denied the resurrection at Corinth,) their hope in him must be limited to this life. And if all their hopes in Christ lie within the compass of this life, they are in much worse condition than the rest of mankind, especially at that time, and under those circumstances, in

xv. 8. "One whose relation to the rest of the apostles in point of worthiness was that of the immature and deformed child to the rest of the family" (Alford).

xv. 11. "So;" rather, "such" was our preaching, as given in verses 3, 4.

xv. 12. The denial of the resurrection of the dead was in fact a rejection of the apostle's preaching, for it implied that Christ had not risen. Alford says, these deniers of the resurrection "must have

been Gentile believers inheriting the unwillingness of the Greek mind to receive that of which a full account could not be given (see verses 35, 36), and probably of a philosophical and cavilling turn."

xv. 14. "Vain" here signifies "empty," "unreal;" in verse 17 "frustrated" (see *Rom. iv. 25*).

xv. 17, 18. "Here," says Stanley, "we find the climax of the whole argument. As may be seen from 1 Thess. iv. 13, one of the

which the apostle wrote; for then they had no countenance nor protection from the rulers of the world, but were hated and persecuted by all men. Preachers and private Christians therefore had a hard lot if in this life only they had hope in Christ. Better be any thing than a Christian upon these terms; for in this world they are hated, and hunted, and abused, stripped of all worldly comforts, and exposed to all manner of sufferings. They fare much harder than other men in this life, and yet have no farther nor better hopes. And is it not absurd for one who believes in Christ to admit a principle that involves so absurd an inference? Can that man have faith in Christ who can believe concerning him that he will leave his faithful servants, whether ministers or others, in a worse state than his enemies? Note, It is a gross absurdity in a Christian to admit the supposition of no resurrection or future state, [in other words, utterly to deny the faith.] It leaves him no hopes beyond this world, and this many times would make his condition the worst in the world; indeed, the Christian is by his religion crucified to this world, and taught to live upon the hope of another. Carnal pleasures are insipid to him in a great degree, and spiritual and heavenly pleasures are those which he affects and pants after. How sad is his case indeed, if he must be dead to worldly pleasures, and yet never hope for any better!

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 24 Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last



TREADING UNDER FOOT.

enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. 27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. 29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? 30 And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? 31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and

most harrowing thoughts to the apostolic Christians was the fear lest their departed brethren should, by a premature death, be debarred from that communion with the Lord which they hoped to enjoy; and in itself nothing could be more disheartening to the Christian's hope than to find that Christians had lived and died in vain."

xv. 19. The English version fails to give the full sense. The words are, "If in this life in Christ we have been hoping only;" that is, as Alford explains, "If all we have done is merely having

drink; for to-morrow we die. 33 Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners. 34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame.



COMBATS WITH WILD ANIMALS.—VER. 32.

In this passage the apostle establishes the truth of the resurrection of the dead, the holy dead, the dead in Christ,

First. On the resurrection of Christ. 1. Because he is indeed "the firstfruits of them that slept," ver. 20. He is truly risen himself, and he is risen in this very quality and character, as the firstfruits of them that sleep in him. As he is assuredly risen, so in his resurrection there is as much an earnest given that the dead in him shall rise as there was that the Jewish harvest in general should be accepted and blessed by the offering and acceptance of the firstfruits. The whole lump was made holy by the consecration of the firstfruits, *Rom. xi. 16*; and the whole body of Christ, all that are by faith united to him, are by his resurrection ascertained of their own. As he is risen they shall rise; just as the lump is holy, because the firstfruits are so. He is not risen merely for himself, but as head of the body the church; and those that sleep in him God will bring with him, *1 Thes. ix. 14*. Note, Christ's resurrection is a pledge and earnest of ours, if we are true believers in him; because he is risen, we shall rise. We are a part of the consecrated lump, and shall partake of the acceptance and favour vouchsafed the firstfruits. This is the first argument used by the apostle in confirmation of the truth; and it is, 2. Illustrated by a parallel between the first and second Adam. "For since by man *came* death," it was every way proper that by man should come deliverance from it, or, which is all one, a resurrection, ver. 21; and so, "as in Adam all die, in Christ shall all be made alive." As through the sin of the first Adam all men became mortal, [they incurred spiritual as well as natural death,] because all men derived from him the same sinful nature, so, through the merit and resurrection of Christ, shall all that are made to partake of his Spirit, and the spiritual nature, [all who are under the covenant of grace, whose covenant head he is, the elect of God,] revive, and become immortal. All that die through the sin of Adam. All that are raised, in the sense of the apostle, rise through the merit and power of Christ; but the meaning is not, that, as all men died in Adam, so all men without exception shall be made alive in Christ; for the scope of the apostle's argument restrains the general meaning. Christ rose as the firstfruits; therefore those that are Christ's, ver. 23, shall rise too. From hence it will not follow that all men without exception shall rise too; but it will fitly follow that all who thus rise, rise in virtue of Christ's resurrection, and so that their revival is owing to the man Christ Jesus, as the mortality of all mankind was owing to the first man; and so as by man *came* death, by man *came* deliverance. Thus it seemed fit to the Divine wisdom, that, as the first Adam ruined his posterity by sin, the second Adam should raise his seed to a glorious immortality. Before he leaves the argument, he observes, 3. That there will be an order observed in their resurrection. What that precisely will be we are nowhere told, but in the general only here, that there will be order observed. Possibly they may rise first who have held the highest rank, and done the most eminent service, or suffered the most grievous evils or cruel deaths for Christ's sake. It is only here said, that the firstfruits are supposed to rise first, and afterward all that are Christ's when he shall come again; not that Christ's resurrection must in fact go before the resurrection of any of his, but it must be laid as the foundation: as it was not necessary that those who lived remote from Jerusalem must go thither and offer the firstfruits before they could account the lump holy, but yet they must be set apart for this purpose till they could be offered, which might be done at any time from Pentecost till the feast of dedication: see Bishop Patrick on *Num. xxvi. 2*. The offering of the firstfruits was what made the lump holy, and the lump was made holy by this offering, though it was not made before the harvest was gathered in, so it were set apart for that end, and duly offered afterwards. So Christ's resurrection must in order of nature precede that of his saints, though some of these might rise in order of time before him. It is because he is risen that they rise. Note, Those that are Christ's must rise [to glory], [but only] because of their relation to him, [while those that are not Christ's shall be raised to the resurrection of condemnation.]

Secondly. He argues from the continuance of the mediatorial kingdom till all Christ's enemies are destroyed, the last of which is death, ver. 24—26. He

hoped in this life, and if it is then to end, and that hope have no result." "Most miserable;" "most to be pitied;" referring to the delusion under which Christians would live, and the disappointment they were destined to experience.

xv. 29. "Alford thinks that there is an allusion to a practice at Corinth of baptising a living person on behalf of a friend who died unbaptised. Thus St. Paul, without giving the least sanction to the practice, uses an *ad hominem* argument from it against its practisers,

is risen, and upon his resurrection was invested with sovereign empire, had all power in heaven and earth put into his hand, *Mat. xxviii. 18*; had a name given him above every name, that every knee might bow to him, and every tongue confess him Lord, *Phil. ii. 9-11*. And the administration of this kingdom must continue in his hands till all opposing power and rule and authority be put down, ver. 24; till all enemies are put under his feet, ver. 25; and till the last enemy is destroyed, which is death, ver. 26. Now this argument implies in it all these particulars. 1. That our Saviour rose from the dead to have all power put into his hands, and have and administer a kingdom as Mediator; "For this end he both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living," *Rom. xiv. 9*. 2. That this mediatorial kingdom is to have an end, at least as far as it is concerned in bringing his people safe to glory, and subduing all his and their enemies; "Then cometh the end," ver. 24. 3. That it is not to have an end till all opposing power be put down, and all enemies brought to his feet, ver. 24, 25. 4. That among other enemies death must be destroyed (ver. 26) or abolished; its power over his members must be annulled. Thus far the apostle is express, but he leaves us to make the inference that therefore the saints must rise, else death and the grave would have power over them, nor would our Saviour's kingly power prevail against the last enemy of his people, and annul its power. When saints shall live again, and die no more, then, and not till then, is death abolished, which must be brought about before our Saviour's mediatorial kingdom is delivered up, which yet must be in due time. The saints therefore shall live again, and die no more.

This is the scope of the argument; but the apostle drops several hints in the course of it that will be properly noticed. As, 1st. That our Saviour, as man, and Mediator between God and man, has a delegated royalty,—a kingdom given. "All things are put under him, he excepted that did put all things under him," ver. 27. As man, all his authority must be delegated. And though his mediation supposes [absolutely implies] his Divine nature, yet as Mediator he does not so explicitly sustain the character of God, but a middle person between God and man, partaking of both natures, (he acts not according to both natures,) human and Divine, as he was to reconcile both parties, God and man, and receiving commission and authority from God the Father to act in this office. The Father appears, in this whole dispensation, in the majesty, and with the authority, of God. The Son made man appears as the minister of the Father, though he is God as well as the Father. Nor is this passage to be understood of the eternal dominion over all his creatures, which belongs to him as God, but of a kingdom committed to him as Mediator and God-man, and that chiefly after his resurrection, when, having overcome, he sat down with his Father on his throne, *Rev. iii. 21*. Then was the prediction verified, "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion," *Ps. ii. 6*, placed him on his throne. This is meant by the phrase, so frequent in the writings of the New Testament, of "sitting at the right hand of God," *Mar. xvi. 19*; *Rom. viii. 34*; *Col. iii. 1, &c.*; "on the right hand of power," *Mar. xiv. 62*; *Lu. xx. 69*; "on the right hand of the Majesty on high," *Heb. i. 3*; "on the right hand of the throne of God," *Heb. xii. 2*; "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," *Heb. viii. 1*. Sitting down in this seat is taking upon him the exercise of this mediatorial power and royalty, which was done upon his ascension into heaven, *Mar. xvi. 19*; and it is spoken of in Scripture as a recompense made him for his deep humiliation and self-abasement in becoming man, and dying for man the accursed death of the cross, *Phil. ii. 6-12*. Upon his ascension he was made "head over all things to the church," had power given him to govern and protect it against all its enemies, and in the end destroy them, and complete the salvation of all that believe in him. This is not a power appertaining to Godhead as such; it is not original and unlimited power, but power given and limited to special purposes; and, though he who has it is God, yet (inasmuch as he is somewhat else besides God, and in this whole dispensation acts not as God, but as Mediator, not as the offended Majesty, but as one interposing in favour of his offending creatures, and this by virtue of his consent and commission who acts and appears always in that character,) he may properly be said to have this power given him. He may reign as God with power unlimited, and yet may reign as Mediator with a power delegated, and limited to these particular purposes. 2nd. That this delegated royalty must sometimes be delivered up to the Father from whom it was received, ver. 24; for it is a power received for particular ends and purposes, a power to govern and protect his church till all the members of it are gathered in, and the enemies of it for ever subdued and destroyed, ver. 25, 26. And when these ends shall be obtained there is no need that the power and authority should be continued. The Redeemer must reign till his enemies are destroyed, and the salvation of his church and people is accomplished; and when this end is attained then will he deliver up the power which he had only for this purpose, though he may continue to reign over his glorified church and body in heaven; and in this sense it may notwithstanding be said, that "He shall reign for ever and ever," *Rev. xi. 15*; "that he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end," *Lu. i. 33*; "that his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away," *Dan. vii. 14*; see also *Mic. iv. 7*. 3rd. The Redeemer shall certainly reign till the very last enemy of his people is destroyed, till death itself be abolished, till his saints revive, and recover perfect life, never to be in fear or danger of dying any more. He shall have all power in heaven and earth till then; "He who loved us, and gave himself for us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood;" he who is so nearly related to us, and so much concerned for us. What support should this be to his saints in every hour of distress and temptation! "He is alive who was dead, and liveth for ever," and doth reign, and will continue to reign, till the redemption of his people be completed, and the utter ruin of their enemies effected. 4th. When this is done, "and all things are put under his feet, then shall the Son become subject to him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all," ver. 28. The meaning of which I take to be, that then the man Christ Jesus, who has appeared in so much majesty during the whole administration of this kingdom, shall appear, upon the giving it up, to be a subject of the Father. Things are in Scripture many times said to be, when they are manifested and made to appear; and this delivering up the kingdom will make it manifest that he who appeared in the majesty of the Sovereign King was during this administration a subject of God. The glorified humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all the dignity and power conferred on it, was no more than a glorious creature. This will appear when the kingdom shall be delivered up; and it will appear to the Divine glory, that God may be all in all, that is, that the accomplishment of our salvation may appear all over Divine, and God alone may have the honour of it. Note, Though the human nature must be employed in the work of our redemption, yet God was all in all in it. It was the Lord's doing, and shall be marvellous in our eyes.

[The Son also himself.] The term "Son of God" is applied to the Lord Jesus with reference to his human nature, his incarnation by the Holy Ghost, and his resurrection from the dead: see note on *Rom. i. 4*. It refers, I apprehend, to that in this place. It does not mean that the second person in the Trinity, as such, should be subject to the first; but it means the incarnate Son, the Mediator,—the man that was born and that was raised from the dead, and to whom this wide dominion had been given,—should resign that dominion, and that the government should be reassumed by the Divinity as God. As

man he shall cease to exercise any distinct dominion. This does not mean, evidently, that the union of the Divine and human nature will be dissolved; nor that important purposes may not be answered by that continued union for ever; nor that the Divine perfections may not shine forth in some glorious way through the man Christ Jesus; but that the purpose of government shall no longer be exercised in that way; the mediatorial kingdom, as such, shall no longer be continued, and power shall be exercised by God as God. The redeemed will still adore their Redeemer as their incarnate God, and dwell upon the remembrance of his work and upon his perfections, (*Rev. i. 5, 6*; *v. 12*; *xi. 15*;) but not as exercising the peculiar power which he now has, which was needful to effect their redemption;—"That God may be all in all;" that God may be supreme; that the Divinity, the Godhead, may rule; and that it may be seen that he is the Sovereign over all the universe. By the word "God," (*ὁ Θεός*;) Whitby and Hammond, I think correctly, understand the Godhead, the Divine nature, the Divinity, consisting of the Three Persons, without respect to any peculiar office or kingdom.—A. B.]

Thirdly. He argues for the resurrection, from the case of those that were baptized for the dead; ver. 29, "What shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not? Why are they baptized for the dead?" What shall they do, if the dead rise not? What have they done? How vain a thing hath their baptism been! Must they stand by it, or renounce it? Why are they baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not? *ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν*. But what is this baptism for the dead? It is necessary to be known, that the apostle's argument may be understood; whether it be only *argumentum ad hominem* or *ad rem*, whether it concludes for the thing in dispute universally, or only against the particular persons who were baptized for the dead. But who shall interpret this very obscure passage, which, though it consists of no more than three words, besides the articles, has had more than three times three senses put on it by interpreters? it not being agreed what is meant by baptism, whether it be to be taken in a proper or figurative sense, and if in a proper sense, whether it be to be understood of Christian baptism properly so called, or other ablution. And as little is it agreed who are the dead, or in what sense the proposition *ὑπὲρ* is to be taken. Some understand the dead of our Saviour himself: see Whitby in *loc.* Why are persons baptized in the name of a dead Saviour, a Saviour who remains among the dead, if the dead rise not? But it is, I believe, an instance perfectly singular for *οἱ νεκροί* to mean no more than one dead person. It is a signification the words have nowhere else. And the *οἱ βαπτίζοντες*, 'the baptized,' seem plainly to mean some particular persons, not Christians in general, which yet must be the signification, if the *οἱ νεκροί*, 'the dead,' be understood of our Saviour. Some understand the passage of the martyrs. Why do they suffer martyrdom for their religion? This is sometimes called the baptism of blood by the ancients, and, by our Saviour himself, baptism indefinitely, *Mat. xx. 22*; *Lu. xii. 50*. But in what sense can they that die martyrs for their religion be said to be baptized, that is, die martyrs, for the dead? Some understand it of a custom that was observed, as some of the ancients tell us, among many that professed the Christian name in the first ages, of baptizing some in the name and stead of catechumens dying without baptism. But this savoured of such superstition, that, if the custom had prevailed in the church so soon, the apostle would hardly have mentioned it without signifying a dislike of it. Some understand it of baptizing over the dead, which was a custom they tell us that early obtained; and this to testify their hope of the resurrection. This sense is pertinent to the apostle's argument, but it appears not that any such practice was in use in the apostle's time. Others understand it of those who have been baptized for the sake, or on occasion, of the martyrs, that is, the constancy with which they died for their religion. Some there were, doubtless, converted to Christianity by observing this; and it would have been a vain thing for persons to have become Christians upon this motive, if the martyrs, by losing their lives for religion, became utterly extinct, and were to live no more. But the church at Corinth had not in all probability suffered much persecution at this time, or seen many instances of martyrdom among them, nor many converts made by the constancy and firmness which the martyrs discovered—not to observe, that *οἱ νεκροί* seems to be too general an expression to mean only the martyred dead. It is as easy an explication of the phrase as any I have met with, and as pertinent to the argument, to suppose *οἱ νεκροί* to mean some among the Corinthians who had been taken off by the hand of God. We read that many were sickly among them, and many slept, *ch. xi. 38*, because of their disorderly behaviour at the Lord's table. These executions might terrify some into Christianity, as the miraculous earthquake did the jailer, *Acts xv. 29, &c.* Persons baptized on such an occasion might be properly said to be baptized for the dead, that is, on their account. And the *οἱ βαπτίζοντες*, 'the baptized,' and the *οἱ νεκροί*, 'the dead,' answer to one another; and upon this supposition the Corinthians could not mistake the apostle's meaning. Now, says he, what shall they do, and why were they baptized, if the dead rise not? You have a general persuasion these men have done right, and acted wisely, and as they ought, on this occasion; but why, if the dead rise not? seeing they may perhaps hasten their death by provoking a jealous God, and have no hopes beyond it? But whether this be the meaning, or whatever else it be, doubtless the apostle's argument was good, and intelligible to the Corinthians. (Doddridge renders it, 'in the room of the dead, who are just fallen in the cause of Christ, but are yet supported by a succession of new converts, who immediately offer themselves to fill up their places, as ranks of soldiers that advance to the combat in the room of their companions who have just been slain in their sight.'—A. B. T. Scott approves of this interpretation.) And his next is as plain to us.

Fourthly. He argues from the absurdity of his own and other Christians' conduct upon this supposition.

1. It would be a foolish thing for them to run so many hazards; ver. 30, "Why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" Why do we expose ourselves to continual peril—we Christians, especially we apostles? Every one knows that it was dangerous being a Christian, and much more a preacher and apostle, at that time. Now, saith the apostle, what fools are we to run these hazards, if we have no better hopes beyond death,—if, when we die, we die wholly, and revive no more! Note, Christianity were a foolish profession if it proposed no hopes beyond this life, at least in such hazardous times as attended the first profession of it. It required men to risk all the blessings and comforts of this life, and to face and endure all the evils of it, without any future prospects. And is this a character of his religion fit for a Christian to endure? And must he not fix this character on it, if he gives up his future hopes, and denies the resurrection of the dead? This argument the apostle brings home to himself; "I protest," says he, "by your rejoicing in Christ Jesus," that is, by all the comforts of Christianity, all the peculiar succours and supports of our holy faith, that "I die daily," ver. 31. He was in continual danger of death, and carried his life, as we say, in his hand. And why should he thus expose himself if he had no hopes after life? To live in daily view and expectation of death, and yet have no prospect beyond it, must be very heartless and uncomfortable, and his case upon this account a very melancholy one. He had need be very well assured of the resurrection of the dead, or he was guilty of extreme weakness in hazarding all that was dear to him in this world, and his life into the bargain. He had encountered very great difficulties, and there

some of whom, though using it, denied the resurrection. Bengel translates, 'Over (immediately upon) the dead—i.e., who will be gathered to the dead immediately after baptism. The price they get for their trouble is, that they should be gathered to the dead for ever. Many in the ancient Church put off baptism till near death.' This seems the better view, though there may have been some rites of symbolical baptism at Corinth, now unknown, perhaps grounded on Jesus' words (*Mat. xx. 22, 23*), which St. Paul here alludes to."

xv. 31. "Your rejoicing," &c.: rather, "by the glorying which I have concerning you" (they were his "crown and rejoicing" as his converts). "I die daily," i.e., am daily in expectation of death.

xv. 32. "After the manner of men," i.e., merely as man, without any hope beyond the grave. "Fought with beasts," not literally; his rights of Roman citizenship would preclude his being thrown to the beasts. It must refer to some violent opposition which St. Paul had met with at Ephesus, the particulars of which are not recorded.

enemies; he had "fought with beasts at Ephesus," ver. 32, and was in danger of being pulled to pieces by an enraged multitude, stirred up by Demetrius and the other craftsmen, Acts xix. 28; though some understand this literally of Paul's being exposed to fight with wild beasts in the amphitheatre at a



AMPHITHEATRE AT EPHESUS.

Roman show in that city, and Nicephorus tells a formal story to this purpose, and of the miraculous complaisance of the lions to him, when they came near him. But so remarkable a trial and circumstance of his life, methinks, would not have been passed over by Luke, and much less by himself, when he gives us so large and particular a detail of his sufferings, 2 Cor. xi. 24-33. When he mentions that he was five times scourged of the Jews, thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice shipwrecked, it is strange he should not have said he was once exposed to fight with the beasts. I take it, therefore, that this fighting with beasts is a figurative expression; the beasts intended were men of a fierce and feline disposition, and that this refers to the passage above cited. Now, saith he, what advantage have I from such contests, "if the dead rise not?" Why should I die daily, expose myself daily to the danger of dying by violent hands, if the dead rise not? And if *post mortem nihil*,—"if I am to perish by death, and expect nothing after it, could any thing be more weak? And was Paul so senseless? Had he given the Corinthians any ground to entertain such a thought of him? If he had not been well assured death would have been to his advantage, would he in this stupid manner have thrown away his life? Could any thing but the sure hopes of a better life after death have extinguished the love of life in him to this degree? "What advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?" What can I propose to myself? Note, It is very lawful and fit for a Christian to propose advantage to himself by his fidelity to God. Thus did Paul; thus did our blessed Lord himself, Heb. xii. 2; and thus we are bid to do after his example, and "have our fruit to holiness, that our end may be everlasting life." This is the very end of our faith, namely, the salvation of our souls, 1 Pet. i. 9; not only what it will issue in, but what we should aim at.

2. It would be a much wiser thing to take the comforts of this life; "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," ver. 32, turn epicures: thus this sentence means in the prophet, Isa. xxii. 13. Let us even live like beasts, if we must die like them. This would be a wiser course, if there be no resurrection, no after-life or state, than to abandon all the pleasures of life, and offer and expose ourselves to all the miseries of life, and live in continual peril of perishing by savage rage and cruelty. This passage also plainly implies, as I have hinted above, that those who denied the resurrection among the Corinthians were perfect Sadducees, of whose principles we have this account in the holy writings, that they say, "There is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit," Acts xxiii. 8, that is, that the man is all body,—that there is nothing in him to survive the body; nor will that, when once he is dead, ever revive again. Such Sadducees were the men against whom the apostle argues here. Otherwise, his arguments had no force in them; for, though the body should never revive, yet as long as the mind survived it he might have much advantage from all the hazards he ran for Christ's sake. Nay, it is certain that the mind is to be the principal seat and subject of the heavenly glory and happiness. But if there be no hopes after death, would not every wise man prefer an easy, comfortable life before such a wretched one as the apostle led? nay, and endeavour to enjoy the comforts of life as fast as possible, because the continuance of it is short? Note, Nothing but the hopes of better things hereafter can enable a man to forego all the comforts and pleasures here, and embrace poverty, contempt, misery, and death. Thus did the apostles and primitive Christians; but how wretched was their case, and how foolish their conduct, if they deceived themselves, and abused the world with vain and false hopes!

Fifthly. The apostle closes his argument with a caution, exhortation, and reproof. 1. A caution against the dangerous conversation of ill men, men of loose lives and principles. "Be not deceived," says he, "evil communications corrupt good manners," ver. 33. Possibly some of those who said there was no resurrection of the dead were men of loose lives, and endeavoured to countenance their vicious practices by so corrupt a principle, and had that speech often in their mouths, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Now, the apostle grants that this talk was to the purpose if there were no future state; but, having confuted their principle, he now warns the Corinthians how dangerous such men's conversation must prove. He tells them they would likely be corrupted by them, and fall in with their course of life, if they gave in to their evil principles. Note, Bad company and conversation are likely to make bad men. Those who would keep their innocence must keep good company. Error and vice are infectious, and if we would avoid the contagion we must keep clear of those who have taken it. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed," Pr. xiii. 20. 2. Here is an exhortation to break off their sins and rouse themselves, and lead a more holy

and righteous life; ver. 34, "Awake to righteousness," or awake righteously, *ἐκνήψατε δικαιοσύνην*; "and sin not," or sin no more, [or awake, as you ought, and ear no more from the truth.] Rouse yourselves, break off your sins by repentance; renounce and forsake every evil way, correct whatever is amiss, and do not by sloth and stupidity be led away into such conversation and principles as will sap your Christian hopes, and corrupt your practice. The disbelief of a future state destroys all virtue and piety. But the best improvement to be made of the truth is, to cease from sin, and set ourselves to the business of religion, and that in good earnest. If there will be a resurrection and a future life, we should live and act as those that believe it; and should not give into such senseless and sottish notions as will debauch our morals, and render us loose and sensual in our lives. 3. Here is a reproof, and a sharp one, to some at least among them: "Some of you have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame." Note, It is a shame in [professed] Christians not to have the knowledge of God. Christian religion gives the best information that can be had about God, his nature, and grace, and government. Those who profess this religion reproach themselves by remaining without the knowledge of God; for it must be owing to their own sloth and slight of God that they are ignorant of him. And is it not a horrid shame for a [declared] Christian to slight God, and be so wretchedly ignorant in matters that so nearly and highly concern him? Note also, That it must be ignorance of God that leads men into the disbelief of a resurrection and future life. Those that know God know that he will not abandon his faithful servants, and leave them exposed to such hardships and sufferings without any recompense or reward. They would know he is not unfaithful, nor unkind, to forget their labour and patience, their faithful services and cheerful sufferings, nor let their labour be in vain. But I am apt to think the expression has a much stronger meaning—that there were atheistical people among them that hardly owned a God, or one that had any concern with, or took any cognizance of, human affairs, [perhaps some of the false teachers.] These were a scandal and shame to any Christian church indeed. Note, Real atheism lies at the bottom of men's disbelief of a future state. Those who own a God and a providence, and observe how unequal the distributions of the present life are, and how frequently the best men fare worst, can hardly doubt an after state. [But it is the gospel scheme only that clears up all difficulties, and vindicates the Divine government.]

35 But some *man* will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? 36 *Thou* fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: 37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: 38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. 39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but *there is one kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. 40 *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial is another. 41 *There is* one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for *one* star differeth from *another* star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit. 46 Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven. 48 *As is* the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy: and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

The apostle comes now to answer a plausible and principal objection against the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, concerning which observe the proposal of the objection; "Some man will say, How are the dead raised up,

xv. 36. "Thou fool:" emphatic, with appeal to the objector's own experience. St. Paul shows from the natural world, first, that death precedes the quickening into life of the seed; and secondly, the difference between the seed and the after-plant, and so meets some plausible objections to the resurrection.

xv. 39-42. "As the kinds of flesh, however widely differing from one another, are still bodies, all this is to illustrate the difference of the new celestial body from its terrestrial seed, whilst retaining

a substantial identity. As the various fountains of light, which is so similar in its aspect and properties, differ (the sun from the moon, and the moon from the stars, and even one star from another star, though all seem so much alike), so there is nothing unreasonable in the doctrine that our present bodies differ from our resurrection bodies, though still continuing bodies."

xv. 44. "The expression 'natural body' denotes, in general, an organisation that corresponds to the soul, and 'spiritual body' one

and with what body do they come?" ver. 35. The objection is plainly twofold: "How are they raised up? that is, by what means? How should they be raised? what power is equal to this effect?" It was an opinion that prevailed much among the heathens, and the Sadducees seem to have been in the same sentiment, that it was not within the compass of Divine power, *mortales aternitate donare, aut revocare defunctos*,—to make men immortal, or revive and restore the dead. Such sort of men they seem to have been who, among the Corinthians, denied the resurrection of the dead, and object here, how are they raised? How should they be raised? Is it not utterly impossible? The second part of the objection is about the quality of their bodies who shall rise; "With what body will they come?" Will it be with the same body? with like shape, and form, and stature, and members, and qualities, or various? The former objection is that of those who opposed the doctrine, the latter the enquiry of curious doubters.

First. To the former the apostle answers, by telling them this was to be brought about by Divine power, that very power which they had all observed to do somewhat very like it year after year, in the death and revival of the corn; and therefore it was an argument of great weakness and stupidity to doubt whether the resurrection of the dead might not be effected by the same power. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened unless it die," ver. 36. It must first corrupt before it will quicken and spring up; it not only sprouts after it is dead, but it must die that it may live. And why should any be so foolish as to imagine that the man once dead cannot be made to live again by the same power which every year brings the dead grain to life? This is the substance of what he answers to the first question. Note, It is a foolish thing to question the Divine Power to raise the dead, when we see him every day quickening and reviving things that are dead.

Secondly. But he is longer in answering the second inquiry. He begins, 1. By observing that there is a change made in the seed that is sown. "It is not that body which shall be" that is sown, "but bare grain" of wheat or barley, &c., but God gives it such a body as he will, and in such way as he will, only so as to distinguish every kind from each other. Every seed sown has its proper body, is constituted of such materials, and figured in such a manner, as is proper for it, proper to that kind. This is plainly in the Divine power, though we no more know how it is done than we know how a dead man is raised to life again. It is certain the grain undergoes a great change; and it is intimated in this passage that so will the dead, when they rise again and live again in their bodies after death.

2. He proceeds hence to observe, that there is a great deal of variety among other bodies, as there is among plants; as, 1st. In bodies of flesh; "All flesh is not the same." That of men is of one kind, that of beasts another, that of fishes another, and that of birds another, ver. 39. There is variety in all the kinds, and somewhat peculiar in every kind to distinguish it from the other. 2nd. In bodies celestial and terrestrial there is also a difference; and what is for the glory of one is not for the other, for the true glory of every being consists in its fitness for its rank and state. Earthly bodies are not adapted to the heavenly regions, nor heavenly bodies fitted to the condition of earthly beings. Nay, 3rd. There is a variety of glory among heavenly bodies themselves: "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differs from another star in glory," ver. 41. All this is to intimate to us that the bodies of the dead, when they rise, will be so far changed that they will be fitted for the heavenly regions, and that there will be a variety of glories among the bodies of the dead when they shall be raised, as there is among the sun, and moon, and stars, nay, among the stars themselves. And all this carries an intimation along with it that it must be as easy to Divine power to raise the dead, and recover their mouldered bodies, as out of the same materials to form so many different kinds of flesh and plants, and, for aught we know, celestial bodies as well as terrestrial ones. The sun and stars may, for aught we know, be composed of the same materials as the earth we tread on, though so much refined and changed by the Divine skill and power; and can he, out of the same materials, form such various beings, and yet not be able to raise the dead? Having thus prepared the way, he comes,

3. To speak directly to the point. "So also," saith he, "is the resurrection of the dead;" so as the plant growing out of the putrified grain, so as no longer to be a terrestrial but a celestial body, and varying in glory from the other dead who are raised, as one star doth from another. But he instances some particulars, as, 1st. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption." "It is sown;" burying the dead is like sowing them; it is like committing the seed to the earth, that it may spring out of it again. And our bodies that are sown are corruptible, liable to putrify and moulder, and crumble to dust; but when we rise they will be out of the power of the grave, and never more be liable to corruption. 2nd. "It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory:" ours is at present a vile body, *Phil. iii. 21*. Nothing is more loathsome than a dead body; it is thrown into the grave "as a despised and broken vessel, in which there is no pleasure;" but at the resurrection a glory will be put upon it, it will be made like the glorious body of our Saviour. It will be purged from all the dregs of earth and refined into ethereal substance, and shine out with a splendour resembling his. 3rd. "It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." It is laid in the earth a poor helpless thing, wholly in the power of death, deprived of all vital capacities and powers, of life and strength; it is utterly unable to move or stir. But when we rise, our bodies will have heavenly life and vigour infused into them. They shall be hale, and firm, and durable, and lively, and liable no more to any infirmity, weakness, or decay. 4th. "It is sown a natural" or animal "body;" *σῶμα ψυχικόν*, a body fitted to the low condition and sensitive pleasures and enjoyments of this life, which are all gross in comparison with the heavenly state and enjoyments. But when we rise it will be quite otherwise; our body will rise spiritual. Not that body will be changed into spirit, this would be a contradiction in our common conceptions; it would be as much as to say, body changed into what is not body, matter made immaterial. The expression is to be understood comparatively. We shall at the resurrection have bodies purified and refined to the last degree, made light and agile; and, though they are not changed into spirit, yet made fit to be perpetual associates of spirits made perfect. And why should it not be as much in the power of God to raise incorruptible, glorious, lively, spiritual bodies, out of the ruins of those vile, corruptible, lifeless, and animal ones, as first to make matter out of nothing, and then out of the same mass of matter produce such variety of beings both in earth and heaven? To God all things are possible; and this cannot be impossible.

4. He illustrates this by a comparison of the first and second Adam. "There is an animal body," saith he, "and there is a spiritual body," and then goes into the comparison in several instances: as, 1st. As we have our natural body, the animal body we have in this world from the first Adam, we expect our spiritual body from the second. This is implied in the whole comparison. 2nd. And this is but consonant to the different characters these two persons bear. "The first Adam was made a living soul," [a living animated being,] such a being as our-elves, and with a power of propagating such beings as himself, and conveying to them a nature and animal body like his own, but none other nor better. "The second Adam is a quickening spirit;" he is "the resurrec-

tion and the life," *Ino. xi. 25*; "He hath life in himself, and quickeneth whom he will," *Ino. v. 20, 21*; "The first man was of the earth," made out of the earth, and was "earthly;" his body was fitted to the region of his abode; but "the second Adam is the Lord from heaven," he who came down from heaven, and giveth life to the world, *Ino. vi. 33*; he who came down from heaven, and was in heaven at the same time, *Ino. iii. 13*; the Lord of heaven and earth. If the first Adam could communicate to us natural and animal bodies, cannot the second Adam make our bodies spiritual ones? If the deputed lord of this lower creation could do the one, cannot the Lord from heaven, the Lord of heaven and earth, do the other? 3rd. We must first have natural bodies from the first Adam, before we can have spiritual bodies from the second, ver. 46. We must bear the image of the earthly before we can bear the image of the heavenly; such is the established order of providence. We must have weak, frail, mortal bodies by descent from the first Adam, before we can have lively, spiritual, and immortal ones by the quickening power of the second. We must die before we can live to die no more. 4th. Yet if we are Christ's, true believers in him, (for this whole discourse relates to the resurrection of the saints,) it is as certain that we shall have spiritual bodies as it is now that we have natural or animal ones. By these we are as the first Adam, earthly, we bear his image; by those we shall be as the second Adam, have bodies like his own, heavenly, and so bear his image; and we are as certainly intended to bear the one as we have borne the other. As sure, therefore, as we have had natural bodies we shall have spiritual ones. The dead in Christ shall not only rise, but shall rise thus gloriously changed.

5. He sums up this argument by assigning the reason of this change; ver. 50, "Now this I say, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor doth corruption inherit incorruption." The natural body is flesh and blood, consisting of bones, muscles, nerves, veins, arteries, and their several fluids; and as such it is of a corruptible frame and form, liable to dissolution, to rot and moulder. But no such thing shall inherit the heavenly regions; for this were for corruption to inherit incorruption, which is little better than a contradiction in terms. The heavenly inheritance is incorruptible, and never fadeth away, *1 Pet. i. 4*. How can this be possessed by flesh and blood, which is corruptible, and will fade away? It must be changed into ever-enduring substance before it can be capable of possessing the heavenly inheritance. The sum is, that the bodies of the saints, when they shall rise again, will be greatly changed from what they are now, and much for the better. They are now corruptible flesh and blood; they will be then incorruptible, glorious, and spiritual bodies, fitted to the celestial world and state, where they are ever afterwards to dwell and have their eternal inheritance.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

To confirm what he had said of this change he here

First. Tells them what had been concealed from them, or unknown to them till then, that all the saints should not die, but all would be changed. They that are alive at our Lord's coming will be caught up into the clouds, without dying, *1 Thess. iv. 17*. But it is plain, from this passage, that it will not be without changing from corruption to incorruption. The frame of their living bodies shall be thus altered, as well as those that are dead, and this "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," ver. 52. What cannot almighty power effect? That power that calls the dead into life can surely thus soon and suddenly change the living—for changed they must be as well as the dead, because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." This is the mystery which the apostle shews the Corinthians; "Behold, I shew you a mystery," or bring into open light a truth dark and unknown before. Note, There are many mysteries shewn to us in the Gospel; many truths that before were utterly unknown are there made known; many truths that were but dark and obscure before are there brought into open day, and plainly revealed; and many things are in part revealed that will never be fully known nor perhaps clearly understood. The apostle here makes known a truth unknown before, namely, that the saints living at our Lord's second coming would not die, but be changed; that this change would be made "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and at the sound of the last trump." For, as he tells us elsewhere, "The Lord himself shall descend with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and the trump of God," *1 Thess. iv. 16*, so here the trumpet must sound. It is the loud summons of all the living and all the dead, to come and appear at the tribunal of Christ. At this summons the graves shall open, the dead saints shall rise incorruptible, and the living saints be changed into the same incorruptible state, ver. 52.

Secondly. He assigns the reason of this change; ver. 53, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." How otherwise could the man be a fit inhabitant of the incorruptible regions, or be fitted to possess the eternal inheritance? How can that which is corruptible and mortal enjoy what is incorruptible, permanent, and immortal? This corruptible body must be made incorruptible, this mortal body must be changed into immortal, that the man may be capable of enjoying the happiness designed for him. Note, It is "this corruptible must put on incorruption," the demolished fabric that must be reared again. What is sown must be quickened. Saints will come in their own bodies, ver. 38, not in other bodies.

Thirdly. He lets us know what will follow upon this change of the living and dead in Christ. "Then shall be brought to pass that saying, Death is swallowed

that corresponds to the spirit. The former is one which carries the impress of the soul, the other the impress of the spirit. The soul is that by means of which our spiritual part is linked to a physical life—a life of impulse and sensation, dependent for its nourishment upon a world of sense. The corporeity corresponding to this, and determined by it, is precisely on this account made dependent upon this outward world and is affected by it; and by reason of it it is exposed to all that which has just been expressed by the words 'corruption,'

'dishonour,' 'weakness,' of which death is the catastrophe. The nature of the spirit is, on the contrary, a free, super-mundane life of light and love in God; and the spiritual body is an organisation suited to its character, being lifted above all dependence on the outward world and the consequences following from it, and displays itself in incorruption, glory, and power" (Kling). "There is a natural body," &c.: rather, "If there is a natural body, there is also," &c.

xv. 54. "Death is swallowed up in victory;" see Isa. xlv. 8.

up in victory," or, He will swallow up death in victory, [unto victory, so that victory is obtained.] *Isa. xxv. 8*; for "mortality shall be then swallowed up of life," *2 Cor. v. 4*; and death perfectly subdued and conquered, and saints for ever delivered from its power. Such a conquest shall be obtained over it that it shall for ever disappear in those regions to which our Lord will bear his risen saints, and therefore will the saints hereupon sing their *ἐπαινον*, their song of triumph. Then, when this mortal shall have put on immortality, will death be swallowed up, for ever swallowed up, *εἰς νίκην*. Christ hinders it from swallowing his saints when they die; but when they rise again, death shall, as to them, be swallowed up for ever, and upon this destruction of death will they break out into a song of triumph.

1. They will glory over death as a vanquished enemy, and insult this great and terrible destroyer. "O death, where is thy sting?" "Where is now thy sting, thy power to hurt? What mischief hast thou done us? We were dead, but behold we live again, and shall die no more. Thou art vanquished and disarmed, and we are out of the reach of thy deadly dart. Where now is thy fatal artillery, thy stores of death? We fear no farther mischiefs from thee, nor heed thy weapons, but defy thy power and despise thy wrath." And, "O grave, where is thy victory?" "Where now is thy victory? what is become of it? where are the spoils and trophies of it? Once we were thy prisoners, but the prison doors are burst open, the locks and bolts have been forced to give way, and our shackles are knocked off, and we are for ever released."

"Captivity is taken captive." The imaginary victor is conquered, and forced to resign his conquests and release his captives. Thy triumphs, grave, are at an end. The bands of death are loosed, and we are at liberty, and are never more to be hurt by death or imprisoned in the grave. In a moment the power of death, and the conquests and spoils of the grave, are gone; and, as to the saints, the very signs of them will not remain. Where are they? Thus will they raise themselves, when they become immortal; and, to the honour of their Saviour and the praise of Divine grace, glory over vanquished death.

2. The foundation for this triumph is here intimated. 1st. In the account given whence death had its power to hurt. "The sting of death is sin," that gives venom to his dart, that only puts it into the power of death to hurt and kill. And sin unpardoned, and nothing else, can keep any under his power; and "the strength of sin is the law." It is the Divine threatening against the transgressors of the law, the curse there denounced, that gives power to sin. Note, Sin is the parent of death, and gives it all its hurtful power; "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," *Rom. v. 12*; it is its cursed progeny and offspring. 2nd. In the account given of the victory saints obtain over it through Jesus Christ, *ver. 57*. The sting of death is sin, but Christ, by dying, has taken out this sting; he has made atonement for sin, he has obtained remission of it, [for God's elect.] It may hiss, therefore, but it cannot hurt. "The strength of sin is the law," but the curse of the law is removed by our Redeemer's becoming a curse for us; so that sin is deprived of its strength and sting through Christ, that is, by his incarnation, suffering, and death. Death may seize the believer, but cannot sting him, cannot hold him in its power. There is a day coming when the grave shall open, the bands of death be loosed, the dead saints revive, and become incorruptible and immortal, and put out of the reach of death for ever; and then will it plainly appear, that as to them death will have lost its strength and sting, and all by the mediation of Christ, by his dying in their room. By dying he conquered death and spoiled the grave; and, through faith in him, believers become sharers in his conquests. They rejoice beforehand many times in the hope of this victory; and when they rise glorious from the grave will boldly triumph over death. Note, It is altogether owing to the grace of God, in Christ, that sin is pardoned and death disarmed. The law puts arms into the hands of death to destroy the sinner, but pardon of sin takes away this power from the law, and deprives death of its strength and sting. It is by the grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, that we are freely justified, *Rom. iii. 24*. It is no wonder, therefore, 3rd. If this triumph of the saints over death should issue in thanksgiving to God; "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Christ Jesus our Lord," *ver. 57*. The way to sanctify all our joy is to make it tributary to the praise of God; then only do we enjoy our blessings and honours in a holy manner when God has his revenue of glory out of it, and we are free to pay it to him. And this really improves and exalts our satisfaction; we are conscious at once of having done our duty and enjoyed our pleasure. And what can be more joyous in itself than the saints' triumph over death when they shall rise again? And shall they not then rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in the God of their salvation? Shall not their souls magnify the Lord? When he shews such wonders to the dead, shall they not arise and praise him? *Ps. lxxxviii. 10*. Those who remain under the power of death can have no heart to praise; but such conquests and triumphs will certainly tune the tongues of saints to thankfulness and praise, praise for the victory. It is great and glorious in itself and for the means whereby it is obtained; it is given of God through Christ Jesus; a victory obtained not by our power, but the power of God; not given because we are worthy, but because Christ is so, and has, by dying, obtained this conquest for us. Must not this circumstance endear the victory to us, and heighten our praise to God? Note, How many springs of joy to the saints, and thanksgiving to God, are opened by the death and resurrection, the sufferings and conquests, of our Redeemer! With what acclamations will saints, rising from the dead, applaud him! How will the heaven of heavens resound his praises for ever! "Thanks be to God" will be the burthen of their song, and angels will join in the chorus, and declare their consent with a loud Amen, hallelujah!

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

In this verse we have the improvement of the whole argument, in an exhortation, enforced by a motive resulting plainly from it.

First. An exhortation, and this threefold. 1. That they should be steadfast, *ἐπαροι*, firm, fixed in the faith of the Gospel, that Gospel which he had preached, and they had received, namely, "That Christ died for our sins, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures," *ver. 3, 4*; and the faith of the glorious resurrection of the sanctified dead, which, as he had shewn, had so near and necessary a connexion with the former. Do not let your belief of these truths be shaken or staggered; they are most certain and of the last importance. Note, Christians should be steadfast believers of this great article of the resurrection of the dead. It is evidently founded on the death of Christ. Because he lives, his servants shall live also, *Jno. xiv. 19*. And it is of the last importance. A disbelief of a future life will open a way to all manner of licentiousness, and corrupt men's morals to the last degree. It will be easy and natural from hence to infer that we may live like beasts, and eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. 2. He exhorts them to be immoveable, namely, in their

hope and expectation of this great privilege, of being raised incorruptible and immortal. Christians should not be moved away from this hope of the Gospel, *Col. i. 23*, this glorious and blessed hope. They should not [for a moment] renounce nor resign their comfortable expectations. They are not vain but solid hopes, built upon sure foundations, the purchase and power of their risen Saviour, and the promise of God, to whom it is impossible to lie—hopes that shall be their most powerful supports under all the pressures of life, the most effectual antidotes against the fears of death, and the most quickening motives to diligence and perseverance in Christian duty. Should they part with these hopes? Should they suffer them to be shaken? Note, Christians should live in the most firm expectation of a blessed resurrection. This hope should be an anchor to their souls, firm and sure, *Heb. vi. 19*. 3. He exhorts them to abound in the work of the Lord, and that always, in the Lord's service, in obeying the Lord's commands. They should be diligent and persevering herein, and going ever on towards perfection. They should be continually making advances in true piety, and ready and apt for every good work. The [most earnest prayerfulness, the] most cheerful duty, the greatest diligence, the most constant perseverance, is what becomes those who have such glorious hopes. Can we too much abound in zeal and diligence in the Lord's work, when we are secured of such abundant recompenses in a future life? What vigour and resolution, what constancy and patience, should those hopes inspire! Note, Christians should not stint themselves as to their growth in holiness, but be always improving in sound religion, [vital godliness,] and abounding in the work of the Lord.

Secondly. The motive resulting from the former discourse is that their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord; nay, they know it shall not. They have the best grounds to be expected. As sure as Christ is risen, they shall rise, and Christ is as surely risen as the Scriptures are true and the word of God. The apostles saw him after his death, testified this truth to the world in the face of a thousand deaths and dangers, and confirmed it by miraculous powers received from him. Is there any room to doubt a fact so well attested? Note, True Christians have undoubted evidence that their labour will not be in vain in the Lord. Not their most diligent services nor their most painful sufferings. They will not be lost labour. They may lose for God, but they shall lose nothing by him. Nay, there is more implied than is expressed in this phrase. It means that they shall be abundantly rewarded. He will never be found unjust to forget their labour of love, *Heb. vi. 10*. Nay, he will do exceeding abundantly above what they can now ask or think. Neither the services they do for him, nor the sufferings they endure for him here, are worthy to be compared with the joy hereafter to be revealed in them, *Rom. viii. 18*. Note, They that [truly] serve God have good wages. They cannot do too much, nor suffer too much, for so good a master. If they serve him now they shall see him hereafter; if they suffer for him on earth they shall reign with him in heaven; if they die for his sake they shall rise again from the dead, be crowned with glory, honour, and immortality, and inherit eternal life.

[Thus closes this chapter of inimitable beauty, and of unequalled power of argumentation. Such is the prospect which is before the Christian. He shall indeed die like other men. But his death is a sleep—a calm, gentle, undisturbed sleep, in the expectation of being again awakened to a brighter day, *ver. 6*. He has the assurance that his Saviour rose, and that his people shall therefore also rise, *ver. 12–20*. He encounters peril, and privation, and persecution; he may be ridiculed and despised; he may be subjected to danger, or doomed to fight with wild beasts, or to contend with men who resemble wild beasts; he may be doomed to the pains and terrors of a martyrdom at the stake; but he has the assurance that all these are of short continuance, and that before him there is a world of eternal glory, *ver. 29–32*. He may be poor, unhooured, and apparently without an earthly friend or protector; but his Saviour and Redeemer reigns, *ver. 25*. He may be opposed by wicked men, and his name slandered, and body tortured, and his peace marred, but his enemies shall all be subdued, *ver. 26, 27*. He will himself die, and sleep in his grave, but he shall live again, *ver. 22, 23*. He has painful proof that his body is corruptible, but it will be incorruptible; that it is now vile, but it will be glorious; that it is weak, frail, feeble, but it will yet be strong, and no more subject to disease or decay, *ver. 42, 43*. And he will be brought under the power of death, but death shall be robbed of its honours, and despoiled of its triumph. Its sting from the saint is taken away, and it is changed to a blessing. It is now not the dreaded monster, the king of terrors; it is a friend that comes to remove him from a world of toil to a world of rest—from a life of sin to a life of glory. The grave is not to him the gloomy abode, the permanent resting place of his body; it is a place of rest for a little time, grateful like the bed of down to a wearied frame, where he may lie down and repose after the fatigues of the day, and gently wait for the morning. He has nothing to fear in death; nothing to fear in the dying pang, the gloom, the chill, the sweat, the paleness, the fixedness of death; nothing to fear in the chillness, the darkness, the silence, the corruption of the grave. All this is in the way to immortality, and is closely and indissolubly connected with immortality, *ver. 55–57*. And in view of all this we should be patient, faithful, laborious, self-denying; we should engage with zeal in the work of the Lord; we should calmly wait till our change come, *ver. 58*. No other system of religion has any such hopes as this; no other system does anything to dispel the gloom, or drive away the horrors of the grave. How foolish is the man who rejects the Gospel—the only system which brings life and immortality to light! How foolish to reject the doctrine of the resurrection, and to lie down in the grave without peace, without hope, without any belief that there will be a world of glory—living without God, and dying like the brute. And yet infidelity seeks and claims its chief triumph in the attempt to convince poor dying man that he has no solid ground of hope; that the universe is "without a Father and without a God;" that the grave terminates the career of man for ever; and that in the grave he sinks away to eternal annihilation. Strange that man should seek such degradation! Strange that all men, conscious that they must die, do not at once greet Christianity as their best friend, and hail the doctrine of the future state, and of the resurrection, as that which is adapted to meet the deeply-felt evils of this world, to fill the desponding mind with peace, and to sustain the soul in the temptations and trials of life, and in the gloom and agony of death!—A. B.]

CHAPTER XVI.

In this chapter the apostle, I. Gives direction about some charitable collection to be made in this church, for the afflicted and impoverished churches in Judea, *ver. 1–4*. II. He talks of making them a visit, *ver. 5–9*. III. He recommends Timothy to them, and tells them Apollos intended to come to them, *ver. 10–13*. IV. He presses them to watchfulness, constancy, charity, and to pay a due regard to all who helped him and his fellow-labourers in their work, *ver. 13–18*. V. After salutations from others, and his own, he closes the epistle with a solemn admonition to them, and his good wishes for them, *ver. 19–24*.

xv. 55. St. Paul here makes a free translation from *Hos. xiii. 14*.

xv. 56. The meaning is that death has a sting imparted to it by means of sin. "The strength of sin is the law:" see *Rom. iii. 20*, *iv. 15*, *v. 13*.

xv. 58. Instead of listening to those who say there is no resurrection, believe rather that there is no such thing as real death to those in the Lord, either to themselves or their labour.

xvi. 1. "The conclusion of this epistle, as of that to the Romans,

Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Timothy, is taken up with matters more or less personal and secular. Of these the first is (the collection amongst the Gentile churches for the poorer Christians in Judea. From whatever cause, there was at this period much poverty in Palestine compared with the other eastern provinces of the Roman empire. The chief allusions contained in the apostolical epistles to the duties of the rich towards the poor, are those which we find in connection with the contribution here mentioned, and in the



OW concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 3 And when I

come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. 4 And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

In this chapter Paul closes this long epistle with some particular matters of less moment; but, as all was written by Divine inspiration, it is all profitable for our instruction. He begins with directing them about a charitable collection on a particular occasion, namely, the distresses and poverty of the Christians in Judea, that at this time were extraordinary, partly through the general calamities of that nation, and partly through the particular sufferings to which they were exposed. Now concerning this, observe,

First. How he introduces his direction. It was not a peculiar service which he required of them—he had given the like orders to the churches of Galatia, ver. 1. He desired them only to conform themselves to the same rules which he had given to other churches on the like occasion. He did not desire that others should be eased and they burdened, 2 Cor. viii. 13. He also prudently mentions these orders of his to the churches of Galatia, to excite emulation, and stir them up to be liberal according to their circumstances, and the occasion. Those who exceeded most churches in spiritual gifts, and, as it is probable, in worldly wealth, (see the argument,) sure would not suffer themselves to come behind any in their bounty to their afflicted brethren. Note, The good examples of other Christians and churches should stir in us a holy emulation. It is becoming a Christian not to bear to be outdone by a fellow-Christian in any thing virtuous and praiseworthy, provided this consideration only makes him exert himself, not envy others; and the more advantages we have above others the more should we endeavour to exceed them. The church of Corinth should not be outdone in this service of love by the churches of Galatia, who do not appear to have been enriched with equal spiritual gifts or outward ability.

Secondly. The direction itself. Concerning which, observe,

1. The manner in which the collection was to be made. Every one was to lay by in store, ver. 2; have a treasury or fund with himself for this purpose. The meaning is that he should lay by as he could spare from time to time, and by that means make up a sum for this charitable purpose. Note, It is a good thing to lay up a store for good uses. Those who are rich in this world should be rich in good works, 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. The best way to be so is to appropriate part of their income, and have a treasury for this purpose, a stock for the poor as well as themselves. By this means they will be ready to every good work as the opportunity offers; and many who labour with their own hands for a livelihood should so work "that they may have to give to him that needeth," Eph. iv. 28. Indeed their treasury for good works can never be very large, (though, according to circumstances, it may considerably vary,) but the best way in the world for them to get a treasury for this purpose is to lay by from time to time as they can afford. Some of the Greek fathers rightly observe here, that this advice was given for the sake of the poorer among them. They were to lay by from week to week, and not bring in to the common treasury, that by this means their contributions might be easy to themselves, and yet grow into a sum for the relief of their brethren. "Every little," as the proverb says, "would make a mickle." Indeed all our charity and benevolence should be free and cheerful, and for that reason should be made as easy to ourselves as may be. And what more likely way to make us easy in this matter than thus to lay by? We may cheerfully give when we know we can spare, and that we have been laying by in store that we may.

2. Here is the measure in which they are to lay by; "As God hath prospered him;" *καὶ ὡς εὐδοκῶντος*, as he hath been prospered, namely, by Divine providence; as God has been pleased to bless and succeed his labours and business. Note, All our business and labour is that to us which God is pleased to make it. It is not the diligent hand that will make rich by itself, without the Divine blessing; compare *Pr. x. 4, 22*. Our prosperity and success is from God, and not from ourselves. And he is to be owned in all and honoured with all. It is his bounty and blessing to which we owe all we have; and whatever we have is to be used, and employed, and improved for him. His right in ourselves, and all that is ours, is to be owned and yielded to him; and what argument more proper to excite us to charity to the people and children of God than to consider all we have as his gift, as coming from him? Note, When God blesses and prospers us we should be ready to relieve and comfort his needy servants. When his bounty flows forth upon us we should not confine it to ourselves, but let it stream out on others. The good we receive from him should stir us up to do good to others, to resemble him in our beneficence; and, therefore, the more good we receive from God the more we should do good to others. They were to lay by as God had blessed them, in that proportion. The more they had through God's blessing gained by their business or labour, their traffic or work, the more they were to lay by. Note, God expects that our beneficence to others should hold some proportion to his bounty to us. All we have is from God; the more he gives, (circumstances being considered,) the more he enables us to give, and the more he expects we should give; that we should give more than others that are less able; that we should give more than ourselves when we were less able; and, on the other hand, from him to whom God gives less he expects less. He is no tyrant or cruel taskmaster to exact brick without straw, or expect men should do more good than he gives ability. No, nor according to what he hath not, 2 Cor. viii. 12; but, as he prospers and blesses us, and puts us into a capacity to do good, he expects we should. The greater ability he gives, the more enlarged should our hearts be, and the more open our hands; but where the ability is less the hands cannot be as open, however willing the mind may be, and large the heart; nor doth God expect it.

3. Here is the time when this is to be done. "The first day of the week," *κατὰ μίαν σαββάτων*, *Lu. xxiv. 1*, the Lord's day, the Christian holiday, [sabbath,] when public assemblies were held, and public worship was celebrated, and the Christian institutions and mysteries (as the ancients called them) were attended upon; then let every one lay by him. It is a day of holy rest, and the more vacation the mind has from worldly cares and toils the more disposition hath it to shew mercy; and the other duties of the day should stir us up to the performance of this. Works of charity should always accompany works of piety. True piety towards God will beget kind and friendly dispositions towards men. "This command have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also," 1 *Jno. iv. 24*. Works of mercy are the genuine fruits of true love to God, and therefore are a proper service on his own day. Note, God's day is a proper season on which to lay up for charitable uses, or lay out in them, according as he hath prospered us. It is paying tribute for the blessings of the past week, and it is a proper way to procure his blessing on the work of our hands for the next.

Thirdly. We have here the disposal of the collections thus made. The apostle would have every thing ready against he came, and therefore gave direction as before. "That there be no gatherings when I come," ver. 2. But when he came, as to the disposal of it, he would leave it much to themselves. The charity was theirs, and it was fit they should dispose of it in their own way, so it answered its end, and was applied to the right use. Paul no more pretended to lord it over the purses of his hearers than over their faith. He would not meddle with their contributions without their consent. He tells them, 1. That they should give letters of credence, and send messengers of their own with their liberality, ver. 3. This would be a proper testimony of their respect and brotherly love to their distressed brethren, to send their gift by members of their own body, trusty and tender-hearted, that would have compassion on their suffering brethren, and a Christian concern for them, and not defraud them. It would argue they were very hearty in this service when they should send some of their own body on so long and hazardous a journey or voyage, to convey their liberality. Note, We should not only charitably relieve our poor fellow-Christians, but do it in such a way as will best signify our compassion to them, and care of them. 2. He offers to go with their messengers if they thought proper, ver. 4. His business, as an apostle, was not to serve tables, but to give himself to the word and prayer. But yet he was never wanting to set afoot or help forward a work of charity when an opportunity offered. He would go to Jerusalem to carry the contributions of the church of Corinth to their suffering brethren, rather than they should go without them, or the charity of the Corinthians fail of a due effect. It was no hindrance to his preaching work, but a great furtherance to the success of it, to shew such a tender and benign disposition of mind. Note, Ministers are doing their proper business when they are promoting or helping in works of charity. Paul stirs up the Corinthians to gather for the relief of the churches in Judaea, and he is ready to go with their messengers to convey what is gathered; and he is still in the way of his duty, in the business of his office.

5 Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. 6 And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go. 7 For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. 8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

In this passage the apostle notifies and explains his purpose of coming to visit them. Concerning which, observe,

First. His purpose. He intended to pass out of Asia, where he now was, ver. 8, 19, and to go through Macedonia into Achaia, [Greece was divided by Augustus into the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia, the former comprising Macedonia Proper, Illyricum, Epirus, and Thessaly; the latter, of which Corinth was the capital, all the country lying to the south of the former,] where Corinth was, and to stay some time with them, and perhaps the winter, ver. 5, 6. He had long laboured in this church, and done much good amongst them, and had his heart set upon doing much more, (if God saw fit,) and therefore he had it in his thoughts to see them, and stay with them. Note, The heart of a truly Christian minister must be much towards that people among whom he has laboured long, and with remarkable success. No wonder Paul was willing to see Corinth, and stay with them as long as the other duties of his office would permit. Though some among this people despised him, and made a faction against him, doubtless there were many who loved him tenderly, and paid him all the respect due to an apostle, and their spiritual father; and is it any wonder he should be willing to visit them, and stay with them? And as to the rest, who now carried it with disrespect, he might hope to reduce them to a better temper, and thereby rectify what was out of order in the church, by staying amongst them for some time. It is plain he hoped for some good effect, because he saith he intended to stay, that they might bring him on his journey whithersoever he went, ver. 6. Not barely set him going, as we say, accompany him a little way on the road, but expedite and furnish him for his journey, help and encourage him to it, and provide him for it. He is to be understood of being brought forward in his journey after a godly sort, as it is expressed 3 *Jno. 6*; so as nothing might be wanting to him, as himself speaks, *2d. iii. 13*. His stay amongst them he hoped would cure the factious humour, and reconcile them to himself, and their duty. Note, It was a just reason for an apostle to make his abode in a place that he had a prospect of doing good.

Secondly. His excuse for not seeing them now, namely, because it would be only by the way, ver. 7; *ἐν παραπομπῇ, en passant*,—"it would only be a transient visit." He would not see them because he could not stay with them. Such a visit would neither give him nor them any satisfaction or advantage. It would rather raise the appetite than regale it, rather heighten their desires of being together than satisfy them. He loved them so that he longed for an opportunity to stay with them, take up his abode amongst them for some length of time. This would be more pleasing to himself, and more serviceable to them, than a cursory visit in his way; and therefore he would not see them now, but another time when he could tarry longer.

Thirdly. We have the limitation of this purpose. "I trust to tarry awhile with you, if the Lord permit," ver. 7. Though the apostles wrote under inspiration, they did not now thereby now God would dispose of themselves. Paul

epistle of St. James and that to the Hebrews, both addressed, if not to Judea, at least to Jewish communities. And with this agrees the great stress laid in the Gospels on the duty of alms-giving. We learn also, from the account of the last struggle for independence in Josephus, how deeply the feelings of the poor were embittered against the rich in Jerusalem, so as to give to the intestine factions of that time something of the character of a social war. This was in part occasioned by the greater density of population in Palestine,

compared with the thinly-inhabited tracts of Greece and Asia Minor; in part, by the strongly-marked distinction of rich and poor, which had been handed down to the Jews from the earlier periods of their history, where we are familiar with it from the denunciations of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Nehemiah. The Christians besides were, as a general rule, from the poorer classes (*Jas. ii. 5*), and would be subject to persecutions and difficulties on account of their religion (*Heb. x. 24*). From the mention of the poor as a distinct class in the Chris-

had a purpose of coming to Corinth, and staying there, and hoped to do good thereby. This was not a purpose proceeding from any extraordinary motion or impulse of the Spirit of God, not the effect of inspiration; for, had it been such, he could not have spoken of it in this manner. A purpose formed thus in him must have been the purpose of God, signified to him by his Spirit. And could he say he would come to Corinth upon this view only, if God permit? that is, that he would execute God's own purpose concerning himself with God's permission? It is to be understood then of a common purpose formed in his own spirit; and, concerning all our purposes, it is fit we should say, we will execute them if the Lord permit. Note, All our purposes must be made with submission to the Divine providence. We should say, "If the Lord will we shall live, and do this and that," *Jas. iv. 15*. It is not in us to effect our own designs without the Divine leave. It is by God's power and permission, and under his direction and conduct, we must do every thing. Heathens have concurred in acknowledging this concern of Providence in all our actions and concerns. Sure we should readily own it, and frequently and seriously attend to it.

Fourthly. We have his purpose expressed of staying at Ephesus for the present. He says, he would stay there till Pentecost, ver. 8. It is very probable he was at the time of writing this epistle in Ephesus, from this passage compared with ver. 19, where he says, "The churches of Asia salute you." A proper salutation from Ephesus, but hardly so proper had he been at Philippi, as the subscription to this epistle in our common copies has it. The churches of Macedonia salute you, had been much more properly inserted in the close of a letter from Philippi than the other. But,

Fifthly. We have the reason given for his staying at Ephesus for the present; "Because a great door, and effectual, was opened to him, and there were many adversaries," ver. 9. A great door, and effectual, was opened to him. Many were prepared to receive the Gospel at Ephesus, and God gave him great success amongst them. He had brought over many to Christ, and he had great hope of bringing over many more. For this reason he determined to stay awhile at Ephesus. Note, Success, and a fair prospect of more, was a just reason to determine an apostle to stay and labour in a particular place. "And there are many adversaries," because a great door, and an effectual, was opened. Note, Great success in the work of the Gospel commonly creates many enemies. The devil opposes those most, and makes them most trouble, who most heartily and successfully set themselves to destroy his kingdom. "There were many adversaries," and therefore the apostle determined to stay. Some think he alludes in this passage to the custom of the Roman circus, and the doors of it, at which the charioteers were to enter, as their antagonists did at the opposite door. True courage is whetted by opposition, and it is no wonder the Christian courage of the apostle should be animated by the zeal of his adversaries. They were bent to ruin him, and prevent the effect of his ministry at Ephesus, and should he at this time desert his station, and disgrace his character and doctrine? No, the opposition of adversaries only animated his zeal. He was in nothing daunted by his adversaries, but the more they raged and opposed the more he exerted himself. Should such a man as he flee? Note, Adversaries and opposition do not break the spirits of faithful and successful ministers, [they know who has said to them, "Fear them not."] but only warm their zeal, and inspire them with fresh courage. Indeed, to labour in vain is heartless and discouraging. This damps the spirits and breaks the heart; but success will give life and vigour to a minister, though enemies rage, and blaspheme, and persecute. It is not the opposition of enemies, but the hardness and obstinacy of his hearers, and the backslidings and revolt of professors, that damp a faithful minister and break his heart.

10 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. 11 Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren. 12 As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

In this passage he, First, Recommends Timothy to them in several particulars. As, 1. He bids them take care that he should be among them without fear, ver. 10. Timothy was sent by the apostle to correct the abuses crept in amongst them, and not only to direct, but to blame, and censure, and reprove those that deserved. They were all in factions, and no doubt the mutual strife and hatred ran very high amongst them. There were some very rich, as it is probable, and many very proud, upon account both of their outward wealth and spiritual gifts. Proud spirits cannot easily bear reproof; it was reasonable, therefore, to think young Timothy might be roughly used, and the apostle warns them against using him ill. Not but that he was prepared for the worst; but, whatever his firmness and prudence might be, it was their duty to behave themselves well towards him, and not discourage and dishearten him in his Lord's work. They should not fly out into resentment at his reproof. Note, Christians should bear faithful reproof from their ministers, and not terrify and discourage them from doing their duty. 2. He warns them against despising him, ver. 11. He was but a young man, and alone, as Ecumenius observes. He had no one to back him, and his own youthful face and years commanded but little reverence; and, therefore, the great pretenders to wisdom amongst them might be apt to entertain contemptuous thoughts of him. Now, says the apostle, guard against this. Not that he distrusted Timothy; he knew that himself would do nothing to bring contempt on his character, he would do nothing to make his youth despicable; but pride was a reigning sin among the Corinthians, and such a caution was but too necessary. Note, Christians should be very careful not to pour contempt on any, but especially on ministers, the faithful ministers of Christ. These, whether young or old, are to be had in high esteem for their work's sake. 3. He tells them they should give him all due encouragement, use him well whilst he was with them, and, as an evidence of this, they should send him away in friendship, and well prepared for his journey back again to Paul. This, as I have above observed, is the meaning of bringing on his journey in peace, ver. 11. Note, Faithful ministers are not only to be well received by a people, among whom they may for a season minister, but are to be sent away with due respect.

tian Church in Acts ix. 37, and in the passages relating to the contribution now in question, it would seem that the community of property at Jerusalem must either have declined or failed of its object, and may even have contributed to occasion the great poverty which we thus find prevailing in the period of twenty or thirty years after its first mention. So pressing was the necessity at the time when St. Paul first parted from the church of Jerusalem, that an express stipulation was made on behalf of this very point (Gal. ii. 10).

Secondly. He assigns the reasons why they should carry it thus towards Timothy. 1. Because he was employed in the same work as Paul, and acted in it by the same authority, [the authority of Christ,] ver. 10. He did not come on Paul's errand amongst them, nor to do his work, but the work of the Lord. Though he was not an apostle, he was assistant to one, and was sent upon this very business by a Divine commission; and therefore to vex his spirit would be to grieve the Holy Spirit. To despise him would be to despise Him that sent him; that is, not Paul, but Paul's Lord and theirs. Note, Those that work the work of the Lord should be neither terrified nor despised, but treated with all tenderness and respect. Such are all the faithful ministers of the word, though not all in the same rank and degree, pastors and teachers as well as apostles and evangelists, and, whilst they are doing their duty, are to be treated with honour and respect. 2. Another reason is implied. As they were to esteem him for his work's sake, so also for Paul's sake, who had sent him to Corinth, not of his own errand indeed, but to work the work of the Lord. "Conduct him forth in peace, that he may come to me, for I look for him with the brethren," ver. 12. Or, "I with the brethren look for him;" the original will bear either, ἐκδέχομαι γὰρ αὐτὸν μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, I am expecting his return, and his report concerning you; and shall judge by your conduct towards him what your regard and respect will be towards me. Look to it that you send him back with no evil report. Paul might expect from the Corinthians that a messenger from him, upon such an errand, should be regarded and well treated. His services and success among them, his authority with them as an apostle, would challenge this at their hands. They would hardly dare to send back Timothy with a report that would grieve or provoke the apostle. I and the brethren expect his return, wait for the report he is to make, and therefore do not use him ill, but respect him, regard his message, and let him return in peace.

Thirdly. He informs them of Apollos' purpose to see them. 1. He himself had greatly desired him to come to them, ver. 12. Though one party amongst them had declared for Apollos against Paul, [if that passage be to be understood literally, see ch. iv. 6,] yet Paul did not hinder Apollos from going to Corinth in his own absence, nay, he pressed him to go thither. He had no suspicions of Apollos, as if he would lessen Paul's interest and respect among them to the advancement of his own. Note, Faithful ministers are not apt to entertain jealousies of each other, or to suspect of selfish designs. True charity and brotherly love think no evil, and where should these reign if not in the breasts of the ministers of Christ? 2. Apollos could not be prevailed on for the present to come, but would at a more convenient season. Perhaps their feuds and factions might render the present season improper; he would not go to be set at the head of a party, and countenance the dividing and contentious humour. When this was subsided by Paul's epistle to them, and Timothy's ministry among them, he might conclude a visit would be more proper. Apostles did not vie with each other, but consulted each other's comfort and usefulness. Paul signifies his great regard to the church of Corinth, when they had used him ill, by entreating Apollos to go to them; and Apollos shews his respect to Paul, and his concern to keep up his character and authority, by declining the journey till the Corinthians were in better temper. Note, It is very becoming the ministers of the Gospel to have and manifest a concern for each other's reputation and usefulness.

13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. 14 Let all your things be done with charity. 15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) 16 That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth. 17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. 18 For they have refreshed my spirit and your's: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

In this passage the apostle, First, Gives some general advice. As, 1. That they should watch, ver. 13; be wakeful, and upon their guard. A Christian is always in danger, and therefore should ever be on the watch; but the danger is greater at some times, and under some circumstances. The Corinthians were in manifest danger upon many accounts. Their feuds ran high, the irregularities among them were very great, there were deceivers got amongst them that endeavoured to corrupt their faith in the most important articles, those without which the practice of virtue and piety could never subsist; and sure in such dangerous circumstances it was their concern to watch. 2. If a Christian would be secure he must be on his guard [and pray much]. And the more his danger is, the greater vigilance is needful for his security. 2. He advises them to "stand fast in the faith," to keep their ground, adhere to the revelation of God, and not give it up for the wisdom of the world, nor suffer it to be corrupted by it. Stand for the faith of the Gospel, and maintain it even to death, and stand in it, so as to abide in the profession of it, and feel and yield to its influence. Note, A Christian should be fixed in the faith of the Gospel, and never desert or renounce it. [Wavering must be meant here, as no child of God can renounce his faith in Christ.] It is by this faith alone he will be able to keep his ground in an hour of temptation. It is by faith we stand, 2 Cor. i. 24. It is by this we must overcome the world, 1 Jno. v. 4, both when it fawns and when it frowns, when it tempts and when it terrifies. We must stand therefore in the faith of the Gospel if we would maintain our integrity. 3. He advises them to act like men, and be strong; act the manly, firm, and resolved part. Behave strenuously in opposition to the ill men that would divide and corrupt you—those who would split you into factions, or seduce you from the faith. Be not terrified nor inveigled by them; but shew yourselves men in Christ by your steadiness, by your sound judgment, and firm resolution. Note, Christians should be manly and firm in all their contests with their enemies, in defending their faith, and maintaining their integrity. They should in an especial manner be so in those points of faith that lie at the foundation of sound and practical religion, such as were attacked among the Corinthians: these must be maintained with solid judgment and strong resolution. 4. He advises them to do every thing in charity, ver. 14. Our zeal and

To 'remember the poor' was the one link by which the apostle of the Gentiles was still bound to the churches of Judea. The pledge was given probably before his second journey. But it was not till his third and last journey that the preparations were made for the great contribution of which he now speaks. From this passage, confirmed indirectly by Gal. ii. 10, vi. 10, it would appear that he had first given orders for the collection in the churches of Galatia. From 2 Cor. viii. 10, ix. 2, it also appears that the orders here given to the

constancy must be consistent with charity. When the apostle would have us play the man for our faith and religion, he puts in a caution against playing the devil for it. We may defend our faith, but we must at the same time maintain our innocence, and not devour and destroy, and think with ourselves that the wrath of man will work the righteousness of God, *Jas. i. 20*. Note, Christians should be careful that charity not only reigns in their hearts but shines out in their lives, nay, in their most manly defences of the faith of the Gospel. There is a great difference between constancy and cruelty, between Christian firmness and feverish wrath and transport. Christianity never appears to so much advantage as when the charity of Christians is most conspicuous; when they can bear with their mistaken brethren, and oppose the open enemies of their holy faith, in love; when every thing is done in charity; when they carry it towards one another and towards all men with a spirit of meekness and good-will.

Secondly, He gives some particular directions how they should carry it towards some that had been eminently serviceable to the cause of Christ among them.

1. He gives us their character. 1st. The household of Stephanas is mentioned by him, and their character is that they were "the firstfruits of Achaia," the first converts to Christianity in that region of Greece in which Corinth was. Note, It is an honourable character to any man to be early a Christian, betimes in Christ. But they had moreover addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, to serve the saints. They have disposed and devoted themselves, *ἑαυτὰς ὑποτάξαντες*, to serve the saints, to do service to the saints. It is not meant of the ministry of the word properly, but of serving them in other respects, supplying their wants, helping and assisting them upon all occasions, both in their temporal and spiritual concerns. The family of Stephanas seem to have been a family of rank and importance in those parts, and yet they willingly offered themselves to this service. Note, It is an honour to persons of the highest rank to devote themselves to the service of the saints. I do not mean to change ranks, and become proper servants to their inferiors, but freely and voluntarily to help them, and do good to them in all their concerns. 2nd. He mentions Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, as coming to him from the church of Corinth. The account he gives of them is that they supplied the deficiencies of the church towards him, and by so doing refreshed his spirit and theirs, *ver. 17, 18*; that is, they gave him a more perfect account of the state of the church by word of mouth than he could acquire by their letter, and by that means quieted his mind much, and upon their return from him would quiet the minds of the Corinthians. Report had made their case much worse than it was in fact, and their letters had not explained it enough to give the apostle satisfaction; but he had been made more easy by converse with them. It was a very good office they did, by truly stating facts, and removing the ill opinion Paul had received by common fame. They came to him with a truly Christian intention to set the apostle right, and gave him as favourable sentiments of the church as they could, as peacemakers. Note, It is a great refreshment to the spirit of a faithful minister, to hear better of a people by wise and good men of their own body than by common report; to find himself misinformed concerning them, that matters are not as bad as they had been represented. It is a grief to him to hear ill of those he loves; it gladdens his heart to hear the report is false. And the greater value he has for those who give him this information, and the more he can depend upon their truth, the greater is his joy.

2. Upon this account of the men, he directs how they should carry it towards them, and, 1st. He would have them acknowledged, *ver. 18*, that is, owned and respected. They deserve it for their good offices. Those who serve the saints, those who consult the honour and good esteem of the churches, and are concerned to wipe off reproaches from them, and take off from the ill opinion fame had propagated, are to be valued, and esteemed, and loved. Those who discover so good a spirit cannot easily be overvalued. 2nd. He advises that they should submit themselves to such, and to all who helped with the apostles, and laboured, *ver. 16*. This is not to be understood of subjection to proper superiors, but of a voluntary acknowledgment of their worth. They were persons to whom they owed peculiar respect, and whom they should have in veneration. Note, It is a venerable character they bear who serve the saints, and labour hard to help the success of the Gospel; who countenance and encourage the faithful ministers of Christ, and endeavour to promote their usefulness. Such should be had in honourable esteem.

19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. 20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss. 21 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. 22 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha. 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. 24 My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

The apostle closes his epistle,

First, With salutations to the church of Corinth, from those of Asia, from Priscilla and Aquila, (who seem to have been at this time inhabitants of Ephesus, see *Acts xviii. 26*), "with the church in their house," *ver. 19*, and from "all the brethren," *ver. 20*, namely, at Ephesus, where it is highly probable, at least, Paul then was. All these saluted the church at Corinth, by Paul. Note, Christianity does by no means destroy civility and good manners. Paul could find room, in an epistle treating of very important matters, to send the salutations of friends. Religion should promote a courteous and obliging temper towards all. They misrepresent and reproach it who would take any encouragement from it to be sour and morose. Some of these "salute" them much in the Lord. Note, Christian salutations are not empty compliments; they carry in them the real expression of goodwill, and are attended with hearty recommendations to the Divine grace and blessing. Those who salute in the Lord wish their brethren all good from the Lord, and breathe out their good wishes in fervent prayers. We read also of a church in a private family, *ver. 19*. It is very probable that the family itself is called the church in their house. Note, Every Christian family should in some respects be a Christian church. In some cases (as, for instance, were they cast away on a foreign shore where there are

no other Christians) they should be a church themselves, if large enough, and live in the use of all ordinances; but in common cases they should live under the direction of Christian rules, and daily offer up Christian worship. Wherever two or three are gathered together, and Christ is amongst them, there is a church. 1. To these salutations he subjoins an advice, that they should "greet one another with an holy kiss," [the token of brotherly love and spiritual equality, given before the sacrament was received,] *ver. 20*, or with sincere goodwill—a tacit reproof of their feuds and factions. When the churches of Asia, and the Christian brethren so remote, did so heartily salute them in the Lord, and own and love them as brethren, and expressed so much goodwill to them, it would be a shame for them not to own and love one another as brethren. Note, The love of the brethren should be a powerful incentive to mutual love. When the other churches of Christ love us all we are very culpable if we do not love one another. 2. He subjoins his own salutation; "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand," *ver. 21*. His amanuensis, it is reasonable to think, wrote the rest of his epistle from his mouth, but at the close it was fit himself should sign it, that they might know it to be genuine; and, therefore, it is added, 2 *Thes. iii. 17*, "Which is my token in every epistle," the mark of its being genuine. So he wrote in every epistle which he did not wholly pen, as he did that to the Galatians, *Gal. vi. 11*. Note, Those churches to whom apostolical letters were sent were duly certified of their being authentic and Divine; nor would Paul be behind the rest of the brethren, in respect to the Corinthians, and therefore, after he has given their salutations, he adds his own.

Secondly, With a very solemn warning to them: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha," *ver. 22*. We sometimes need words of threatening, that we may fear. "Blessed is he," saith the wise man, "who feareth always." Holy fear is a very good friend, both to holy faith and holy living. And how much reason have all Christians to fear falling under this doom! "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." Whence observe, 1. The person described who is liable to this doom. He that loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ: *Ἀπεχθώνος*, as some think, he that blasphemes Christ, disowns his doctrine, slights and contemns his institutions, or through pride of human knowledge and learning despises his revelations. It stands here as a warning to the Corinthians, and a rebuke of their criminal behaviour; it is an admonition to them not to be led away from the simplicity of the Gospel, or those principles of it which were the great motives to purity of life, by pretenders to science, by the wisdom of the world which would call their religion folly, and its most important doctrines absurd and ridiculous. Those men had a spite at Christ, and if the Corinthians gave ear to their seducing speeches they were in danger of apostatizing from him. Against this he gives them here a very solemn caution: "Do not give into such a conduct, if you would escape the severest vengeance." Note, Professed Christians will, by contempt of Christ, and revolt from him, bring upon themselves the most dreadful destruction. Some understand the words as they lie, in their plain and obvious meaning, for such as are without holy and sincere affection for the Lord Jesus Christ. Many who have his name much in their mouths have no true love to him in their hearts, will not have him to rule over them, *Luk. xix. 27*; no, not though they [appear to] have very towering hopes of being saved by him. And none love him in truth that do not love his laws and keep his commandments. Note, There are many Christians in name that do not love Christ Jesus the Lord in sincerity. But can any thing be more criminal or provoking! What, not love the most glorious lover in the world! Him who loved us, and gave himself for us! [if we are his.] Who shed his blood for us, to testify his love to us, and that after heinous wrong and provocation! What had we a power of loving for, if we are unmoved with such love as this, and without affection to such a Saviour? But, 2. We have here their doom; "Let him be Anathema, Maran-atha," lie under the heaviest and most dreadful curse. Let him be separated from the people of God, from the favour of God, and delivered up to his final, irrevocable, and inexorable vengeance. Maran-atha is a Syriac phrase, and signifies, 'the Lord cometh.' That very Lord whom they do not love, to whom they are inwardly and really disaffected, whatever outward profession they may make, he is coming to execute judgment; and to be exposed to his wrath, to be divided to his left hand, to be condemned by him—how dreadful! If he will destroy, who can save? Those who fall under his condemning sentence must perish, and that for ever. Note, Those who love not the Lord Jesus Christ must perish without remedy. The wrath of God abides on every one who believes not on the Son, *Jno. iii. 36*, and true faith in Christ will evermore be productive of sincere love to him. Those who love him not cannot be believers in him.

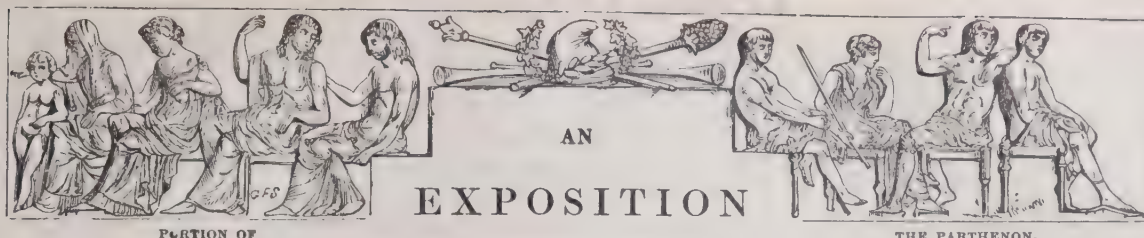
Thirdly, The apostle closes all with his good wishes for them, and expressions of goodwill to them. 1. With his good wishes, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you," *ver. 23*. As much as if he had said, "Though I warn you against falling under his displeasure, I heartily wish you an interest in his dearest love and his eternal favour." The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ comprehends in it all that is good, for time or eternity. To wish our friends may have this grace with them is wishing them the utmost good, and this we should wish all our friends and brethren in Christ. We can wish them nothing more, and we should wish them nothing less. We should heartily pray that they may value, and seek, and obtain, and secure the grace and goodwill of their Lord and Judge. Note, The most solemn warnings are the result of the tenderest affection, and the greatest goodwill. We may tell our brethren and friends with great plainness and pathos, that if they love not the Lord Jesus Christ they must perish, whilst we heartily wish the grace of Christ may be with them. Nay, we may give them this warning that they may prize and lay hold of this grace. Note also, How much true Christianity enlarges our hearts. It makes us wish those whom we love the blessings of both worlds. For this is implied in wishing the grace of Christ to be with them; and therefore it is no wonder, 2. That the apostle should close all with the declaration of his love to them in Christ Jesus; "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus, Amen," *ver. 24*. He had dealt very plainly with them in this epistle, and told them of their faults with just severity; but, to shew that he was not transported with passion, he parts with them in love, makes solemn profession of his love to them, nay to them all in Christ Jesus, that is, for Christ's sake. He tells them that his heart was with them, that he truly loved them; but, lest this after all should be deemed flattery and insinuation, he adds, that his affection was the result of his religion, and would be guided by the rules of it. His heart would be with them, and he would bear them dear affection, as long as their hearts were with Christ, and they bore true affection to his cause and interest. Note, We should be cordial lovers of all that are in Christ and that love him in sincerity. Not but that we should love all men, and wish them well, and do them what good is in our power; but they must have our dearest affection who are dear to Christ, and lovers of him. May our love be with all them that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Corinthians had been received by them a year before the time of the second epistle, and therefore some months before this epistle" (Stanley).

xvi. 22. "Maranatha;" "the Lord comes:" the anathema being confirmed by an allusion to the judgment.

Additional Notes.—Chap. ix. 24. Paul has spoken of his aim in life, he now speaks of the spirit in which each ought to pursue his high calling. "The stadium, or race-course, was an almost sacred edifice, under the tutelage of the patron deity of the Ionian tribes, and surrounded by the most solemn recollections of Greece; its white marble seats rising like the foundation of a temple in the grassy slope, under the shadow of the huge Corinthian citadel which guards the entrance of

the Peloponnesus. The race, in which all run; the pugilistic contests, in which they strove not 'to beat the air,' were solemn trials of the excellence of the competitors in the 'gymnastic art.' As the friends and relatives watched with breathless interest the issue of the contest, they knew that the victor would be handed down to posterity by having his name sung in triumphal odes, and his likeness placed in the long line of statues which formed the approach to the adjacent temple. The 'prize' was such as could awaken no mean or mercenary motives: it was a garland of the Grecian pine, which still clothes with its light green foliage the plains of the isthmus, and which was then consecrated to the sea-god around whose temple its groves were gathered" (Conybeare and Howson).



PORTION OF

AN EXPOSITION

THE PARTHENON.

OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

ST. PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

In his former epistle the apostle had signified his intention of coming to Corinth as he passed through Macedonia, *ch. xvi. 6*, but, being providentially hindered for some time, he writeth this second epistle to them about a year after the former; and there seem to be these two urgent occasions: 1. The case of the incestuous person that lay under censure required that with all speed he should be restored and received again into communion. This therefore he giveth directions about, *ch. ii.*; and afterwards, *ch. vii.*, he declareth the satisfaction he had upon the intelligence he received of their good behaviour in that affair. 2. There was a contribution now making for the poor saints at Jerusalem, which he exhorteth the Corinthians to join in, *ch. viii. and ix.*

There are divers other things very observable in this epistle; for example, I. The account the apostle giveth of his labours and success in preaching the Gospel in several places, *ch. ii.* II. The comparison he maketh between the Old and New Testament dispensation, *ch. iii.* III. The manifold sufferings that he and his fellow labourers met with, and the motives and encouragements for their diligence and patience, *ch. iv., v.* IV. The caution he giveth the Corinthians against mingling themselves with unbelievers, *ch. vi.* V. The way and manner in which he justifieth himself, and his apostleship, from the opprobrious insinuations and accusations of false teachers, that endeavoured to ruin his reputation at Corinth, *ch. x., xi., xii.*, and throughout the whole epistle.

[The epistle is substantially of the same character as the first. It was written to a church where great dissensions and other evils prevailed; it was designed to promote a reformation, and is a model of the manner in which evils are to be corrected in a church. In connection with the first epistle, it shews the manner in which offenders in the church are to be dealt with, and the spirit and design with which the work of discipline should be entered on and pursued. Though these were local evils, yet great principles are involved here, of use to the church in all ages; and to these epistles the church must refer at all times, as an illustration of the proper manner of administering discipline, and of silencing the calumnies of enemies. As to the time and place in which the epistle was written, it is manifest that this epistle was written from Macedonia, (see *ch. viii. 1—14*, and *ix. 2*.) and was sent by Titus to the church of Corinth. If so, it was written probably about a year after the former epistle. Paul was on his way to Corinth, and was expecting to go there soon. He had left Ephesus, where he was when he wrote the first epistle, and had gone to Troas, and from thence to Macedonia, where he had met with Titus, and had from him learned what was the effect of his first epistle. In the overflowing of his heart with gratitude for the success of that letter, and with a desire to carry forward the work of reformation in the church, and completely to remove all the objections which had been made to his apostolic authority, and to prepare for his own welcome reception when he went there, he wrote this letter—a letter which we cannot doubt was as kindly received as the former, and which, like that, accomplished the objects which he had in view.—A. B.]

A.D. 60.

A.D. 60.

CHAPTER I.

After the introduction, ver. 1, 2, the apostle begins with the narrative of his troubles and God's goodness, which he had met with in Asia, by way of thanksgiving to God, ver. 3—6; and for the edification of the Corinthians, ver. 7—11. Then he attests his and his fellow labourers' integrity, ver. 12—14; and afterwards vindicateth himself from the imputation of levity and inconstancy, ver. 15—24.



PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: 2 Grace *be* to you and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the introduction to this epistle, in which we have, First. The inscription; and therein, 1. The person from whom it was sent; namely, Paul, who calls himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." The apostleship itself was ordained by Jesus Christ, according to the will of God; and Paul was called to it by Jesus Christ, according to the will of God. He joins Timotheus with himself in writing this epistle; not because he needed his assistance, but that out of the mouth of two witnesses the word might be established; and his dignifying Timothy with the title of brother (either in the common faith, or in the work of the ministry) shews the humility of this great apostle, and his desire to recommend Timothy (though he was then a young man) to the esteem of the Corinthians, and give him a reputation among the churches. 2. The persons to whom this epistle was sent, namely, "the church of God at Corinth;" and not only to them, but also to "all the saints in all Achaia," that is, to all the Christians who lived in the region round about. Note, In Christ Jesus no distinction is made between the inhabitants of city and country; all Achaia stands upon a level in his account.

Secondly. The salutation or apostolical benediction, which is the same as in his former epistle; and therein the apostle desires the two great and comprehensive blessings, grace and peace, for those Corinthians. These two benefits are fitly joined together, because there is no good and lasting peace without true grace; and both of them come "from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ," who is the procurer and dispenser of those benefits to fallen man, and is prayed to as God.

3 Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. 6 And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.

After the foregoing preface, the apostle begins with the narrative of God's goodness to him and his fellow-labourers in their manifold tribulations, which he speaks of by way of thanksgiving to God, and to advance the Divine glory, ver. 3—6; and it is fit that in all things, and in the first place, God be glorified. Observe,

First. The object of the apostle's thanksgiving, to whom he offereth up blessing and praise, namely, the blessed God, who only is to be praised, whom he describeth by several glorious and amiable titles. 1. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;" ὁ Θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. God is the Father of Christ's Divine nature by eternal generation—of his human nature by miraculous conception in the womb of the Virgin—and of Christ, as God-man, and our Redeemer, by covenant relation—ad in and through him as

* Note by Rev. Daniel Mayo.

i. 1. This epistle was most probably written in Macedonia, in the autumn A.D. 57. Paul had written the first epistle at Ephesus in the spring, and had quitted that place during the summer. This was on his third missionary journey. On his way to Macedonia he stayed at Troas, expecting Titus, who had been sent to Corinth to make the collection for the poor Christians at Jerusalem, to report on the state of the Corinthian church, and enforce the admonitions of St. Paul. Titus was delayed, and the uncertainty respecting the Corinthians

caused Paul deep anxiety. After a stay of some weeks at Troas he started for Macedonia, and it is not unlikely that Philippi was the place where he wrote this second epistle. The arrival of Titus brought comfort to the apostle (see chap. vii. 6). The majority of the Corinthian church had submitted to his injunctions, and had excommunicated the incestuous person; a minority, however, maintained an opposition, even charging the apostle with selfish and mercenary motives, and with not venturing to come amongst them.

Mediator our God and our Father, *Jno. xx. 17.* In the Old Testament we often meet with this title, "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob," to denote God's covenant relation to them and their seed; and in the New Testament God is styled "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," to denote his covenant relation to the Mediator and his spiritual seed, *Gal. iii. 16.* 2. "The Father of mercies." There are a multitude of tender mercies in God essentially, and all mercies are from God originally. Mercy is his genuine offspring and his delight; "He delighteth in mercy," *Mic. vii. 18.* 3. The God of all comfort. From him proceedeth the Comforter, *Jno. xv. 26.* He giveth "the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," *ver. 22.* All our comforts come from God, and our sweetest comforts are in him.

Secondly. The reasons of the apostle's thanksgiving, which are these. 1. The benefits that he himself and his companions had received from God; for God had comforted them in all their tribulation, *ver. 4.* In the world they had trouble, but in Christ they had peace. The apostles met with many tribulations, but they found comfort in them all. Their sufferings (which are called the sufferings of Christ, *ver. 5.* because Christ sympathised with his members when suffering for his sake) did abound, but their consolation by Christ did abound also. Note, 1st. Then are we qualified to receive the comfort of God's mercies when we set ourselves to give him the glory of them. 2nd. Then we speak best of God and his goodness when we speak from our own experience, and in telling others tell God also what he hath done for our souls. 2. The advantage which others might receive; for God intended that they should be able to comfort others in trouble, *ver. 4.* by communicating to them their experiences of the Divine goodness and mercy; and the sufferings of good men have a tendency to this good end, *ver. 6.* when they are endured with faith and patience. Note, 1st. What favours God bestoweth on us are intended not only to make us cheerful ourselves, but also that we may be useful to others. 2nd. If we do imitate the faith and patience of good men in their afflictions, we may hope to partake of their consolations here and their salvation hereafter.

7 And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. 8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: 9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: 10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; 11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

In these verses the apostle speaketh for the encouragement and edification of the Corinthians, and tells them (*ver. 7.*) of his persuasion or stedfast hope that they should receive benefit by the troubles he and his companions in labour and travel had met with; that their faith should not be weakened, but their consolations increased. In order to this he tells them,

First. What their sufferings had been; *ver. 8.* "We would not have you ignorant of our trouble." It was convenient for the churches to know what were the sufferings of their ministers. It is not certain what particular troubles in Asia are here referred to; whether the tumult raised by Demetrius at Ephesus, mentioned *Acts xix.*; or the fight with beasts at Ephesus, mentioned in the former epistle, *ch. xv.*; or some other trouble, for the apostle was in deaths often. This however is evident, they were great tribulations. They "were pressed out of measure," to a very extraordinary degree, above the common strength of men, or of ordinary Christians, to bear up under them, insomuch that they "despaired even of life," *ver. 8.* and thought they should have been killed, or have fainted away and expired.

Secondly. What they did in their distress. They trusted in God; and therefore they were brought to that extremity, "that they should not trust in themselves, but in God," *ver. 9.* Note, God often bringeth his people into great straits that they may apprehend their own insufficiency to help themselves, and may be induced to place their trust and hope in his all-sufficiency. Our extremity is God's opportunity; "In the mount will the Lord be seen;" and we may safely trust in "God which raiseth the dead," *ver. 9.* God's raising the dead is a proof of his almighty power. He that can do that can do any thing, can do all things, and is worthy to be trusted in at all times. Abraham's faith fastened upon this instance of the Divine power. "He believed God who quickeneth the dead," *Rom. iv. 17.* If we should be brought so low as to despair even of life, yet we may then trust in God, who can bring back not only from the gates, but from the jaws of death.

Thirdly. What the deliverance was they had obtained, and this was seasonable and continued. Their hope and trust was not in vain, nor shall any that trust in him be ashamed. God had delivered them, and did still deliver them, *ver. 10.* "Having obtained help of God, they continued to that day," *Acts xxvi. 22.*

Fourthly. What use they made of this deliverance. "We trust that he will yet deliver us," *ver. 10.* that God will deliver to the end, and preserve to his heavenly kingdom. Note, Past experiences are great encouragements to faith and hope, and they lay great obligations to trust in God for time to come. We reproach our experiences if we distrust God in future straits, who hath delivered us in former troubles. David, even when a young man, and had but a small stock of experiences, argued after the manner the apostle here argueth, *1 Sam. xvii. 37.*

Fifthly. What was desired of the Corinthians upon this account, namely, that they would help together by prayer for them, *ver. 11.* by social prayer, agreeing and joining together in prayer on their behalf. Note, Our trusting in God must not supersede the use of any proper and appointed means; and prayer is one of those means. We should pray for ourselves, and for one another. The apostle had himself a great interest in the throne of grace, yet he desireth the help of others' prayers. And if we thus help one another by our prayers we may hope for an occasion of giving thanks by many for answer

of prayer. And it is our duty not only to help one another with prayer, but in praise and thanksgiving, and thereby to make suitable returns for benefits received.

12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. 13 For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; 14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The apostle in these verses attests their integrity by the sincerity of their conversation. This he doth not in a way of boasting and vain glory, but as one good reason the more comfortably to trust in God, and for desiring the help of prayer, *Heb. xiii. 18.*; and for the necessary vindication of himself from the aspersions of some persons at Corinth, who reproached his person, and questioned his apostleship. And here consider,

First. He appealeth to the testimony of conscience with rejoicing, *ver. 12.* In which observe, 1. The witness appealed to; namely, conscience, which is instead of a thousand witnesses. This is God's deputy in the soul, and the voice of conscience is the voice of God. They rejoiced in the testimony of conscience when their enemies reproached them, and were enraged against them. Note, The testimony of conscience for us, if that be right and upon good grounds, will be matter of rejoicing at all times, and in all conditions. 2. The testimony this witness gave. And here take notice, conscience witnessed, 1st. Concerning their conversation, that is, their constant course and tenor of life; and by that we may judge of ourselves, and not by this or that single act. 2nd. Concerning the nature or manner of their conversation, that it was in "simplicity and godly sincerity." This blessed apostle was a true Israelite, a man of plain dealing, you might know where to have him. He was not a man that seemed to be one thing and was another, but a man of sincerity. 3rd. Concerning the principle they acted upon in all their conversation, both in the world and towards these Corinthians; and that was not fleshly wisdom, or carnal politics and worldly views, but it was the grace of God, a vital gracious principle in the heart, that cometh from God, and tendeth to God. And then will our conversation be well ordered when we live and act under the influence and command of such a gracious principle in the heart.

Secondly. He appealeth to the knowledge of the Corinthians with hope and confidence, *ver. 13, 14.* Their conversation did in part fall under the observation of the Corinthians, and these knew how they behaved themselves, how holily, and justly, and unblameably; they never found any thing in them unbecoming an honest man. This they had acknowledged in part already, and he doubted not but they would still do so to the end; that is, that they should never have any good reason to think or say otherwise of him, but that he was an honest man, and so there would be mutual rejoicing in one another. "We are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." Note, It is happy when ministers and people do rejoice in each other here; and this joy will be complete in that day when the Great Shepherd of the sheep shall appear.

15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit; 16 And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judæa. 17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay? 18 But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. 20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. 21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; 22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. 23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. 24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

The apostle vindicateth himself from the imputation of levity and inconsistency in that he did not hold his purpose of coming to them at Corinth. His adversaries there sought all occasions to blemish his character, and reflect

i. 8. By the "trouble" here spoken of many think St. Paul means the uproar which took place at Ephesus (*Acts xix.*). Alford, however, thinks that he refers to some bodily sickness.

i. 9. "Sentence;" rather decree, or answer. "We had in ourselves the answer of death"—i.e., "To the question whether we should escape death or die, we could only answer die."

i. 11. "Gift;" the deliverance (whether from external danger or sickness) graciously bestowed by God. "By the means;" i.e., by the

intercession. Kling remarks, "Christians enjoy a threefold fellowship—in suffering, in consolation, and in prayer."

i. 15. "Before;" i.e., before he visited Macedonia, where he now was. "Second benefit;" the benefit would be the imparting of grace and spiritual gifts. He says a "second" benefit, because he had purposed twice (*verse 16.*) visiting them.

i. 18. "Our word was not yea and nay;" rather, "our doctrine is not yea and nay." He appeals to his preaching as a witness against

upon his conduct; and it seemed they took hold of this handle to reproach his person and discredit his ministry. Now, for his justification,

First. He avers the sincerity of his intention, ver. 15-17, and he doth this in confidence of their good opinion of him, and that they would believe him when he assured them he was minded, or did really intend, to come to them; and that with design, not that he might receive, but that they might receive, a second benefit, that is, some farther advantage by his ministry. He tells them he had not herein used lightness, ver. 17; that, as he aimed not at any secular advantage to himself, for his purpose was not "according to the flesh," that is, with carnal views and aims, so it was not a rash and inconsiderate resolution he had taken up, for he had laid his measures thus of passing by them to Macedonia, and coming again to them from Macedonia in his way to Judæa, ver. 16; and, therefore, they might conclude it was for some weighty reasons that he had altered his purpose, and that with him there was not yea yea, and nay nay, ver. 17; that is, he was not to be accused of levity and inconstancy, or a contradiction between his words and intentions.

[It seems more probable, however, that the phrase is designed to denote the ready compliance which an inconstant and unsettled man is accustomed to make with the wishes of others; his expressing a ready assent to what they propose; falling in with their views; readily making promises; and instantly, through some whim, or caprice, or wish of others, saying, "Yea, Nay," to the same thing; that is, changing his mind, and altering his purpose without any good reason, or in accordance with any fixed principle or settled rule of action. Paul says that this was not his character. He did not affirm a thing at one time and deny it at another—he did not promise to do a thing one moment and refuse to do it the next.—A. B.]

Note, Good men should be careful to preserve the reputation of sincerity and constancy; they should not resolve but upon mature deliberation, and they will not change their resolves but for weighty reasons.

Secondly. He would not have the Corinthians to infer that his Gospel was false or uncertain, or that it was contradictory in itself, or unto truth, ver. 18, 19. For if it had been so, that he had been fickle in his purposes, or even false in the promises he made of coming to them, (which he was not justly to be accused of, and so some understand this expression, ver. 18, "Our word toward you was not yea and nay,") yet it would not follow that the Gospel preached not only by him, but also by others in full agreement with him, was either false or doubtful.

[By us," &c. Silvanus, here mentioned, is the same person who in the *Acts of the Apostles* is called Silas. He was with Paul at Philippi, and was imprisoned there with him, *Acts* xvi., and was afterwards with Paul and Timothy at Corinth when he first visited that city, *Acts* xviii. 5. Paul was so much attached to him, and had so much confidence in him, that he joined his name with his own in several of his epistles, *1 Thes.* i. 1; *2 Thes.* i. 1.—A. B.]

For "God is true," and "the Son of God, Jesus Christ," is true. The true God and eternal life. Jesus Christ whom the apostle preached is not yea and nay, but in him was yea, ver. 19; nothing but infallible truth. And the promises of God in Christ are not yea and nay, but yea and Amen, ver. 20. There is an inviolable constancy and unquestionable sincerity and certainty in all the parts of the Gospel of Christ. If in the promises that the ministers of the Gospel do make as common men, and about their own affairs, they see cause sometimes to vary from them, yet the promises of the Gospel covenant which they preach stand firm and inviolable. Bad men are false, good men are fickle; but "God is true," neither fickle nor false.

[It is agreed, says Bloomfield, by the best commentators, ancient and modern, that by Jesus Christ is here meant his doctrine. The sense is, that the preaching respecting Jesus Christ did not represent him as fickle and changeable—as unsettled, and as unfaithful—but as true, consistent, and faithful. As that had been the regular and constant representation of Paul and his fellow-labourers in regard to the master whom they served, it was to be inferred that they felt themselves bound sacredly to observe the strictest constancy and veracity.—A. B.]

The apostle, having mentioned the stability of the Divine promises, maketh a digression to illustrate this great and sweet truth, that all the promises of God are yea and Amen. For, 1. They are the promises of the God of truth, ver. 20, of him that cannot lie, whose truth as well as mercy endureth for ever. 2. They are made in Christ Jesus, ver. 20, the Amen, the true and faithful witness. He hath purchased and ratified the covenant of promises, and is the "Surety of the covenant," *Heb.* vii. 22. 3. They are confirmed by the Holy Spirit. He doth establish Christians in the faith of the Gospel; he hath anointed them with his sanctifying grace, which in Scripture is often compared to oil; he hath sealed them for their security and confirmation; and he is given as an earnest in their hearts, ver. 21, 22. An earnest doth secure the promise, and is part of the payment. The illumination of the Spirit is an earnest of everlasting light, the quickening of the Spirit is an earnest of everlasting life, and the comforts of the Spirit are an earnest of everlasting joy. Note, The veracity of God, the mediation of Christ, and the operation of the Spirit, are all engaged that the promises shall be sure to all the seed, and the accomplishment of them shall be to the glory of God, ver. 20, for the glory of his rich and sovereign grace, and never-failing truth and faithfulness.

Thirdly. The apostle giveth a good reason why he did not come to Corinth as was expected, ver. 23. It was that he might spare them. They ought therefore to own his kindness and tenderness. He knew there were things amiss among them, and such as deserved censure, but was desirous to shew tenderness. He assureth them this was the true reason, after this very solemn manner, "I call God for a record upon my soul;" a way of speaking not justifiable where used in trivial matters, but this was very justifiable in the apostle for his necessary vindication, and for the credit and usefulness of his ministry, which was struck at by his opposers. He addeth, to prevent mistakes, that he did not pretend to "any dominion over their faith," ver. 24. Christ only is the Lord of our faith, he is the "author and finisher of our faith," *Heb.* xii. 2. He doth reveal to us what we must believe. Paul and Apollos, and the rest of the apostles, were but "ministers by whom they believed," *1 Cor.* iii. 5, and so the helpers of their joy, even the joy of faith; for by faith we stand firm, and live safely and comfortably. Our strength and ability is owing to faith, and our comfort and joy must flow from faith.

1. God is the only true and real source of comfort in times of trial, ver. 3. It is from him that all real consolation must come, and he only can meet and sustain the soul when it is borne down by calamity. 2. It is possible to bless God in the midst of trials, and as the result of trial. It is possible so clearly to see his hand, and to be so fully satisfied with the wisdom and goodness of his dealings, even when we are severely afflicted, as to see that he is worthy of our highest confidence and most exalted praise, ver. 3. God may be seen then to be the "Father of mercies," and he may impart, even then, a consolation which we never experienced in the days of prosperity. 3. Ministers of the Gospel may expect to be peculiarly tried and afflicted, ver. 5. So it was with Paul and his fellow-apostles, and so it has been since. 4. If we suffer much in the cause of the Redeemer, we may also expect much consolation, ver. 5. Christ will take care that our hearts shall be filled with joy and peace. As our trials in his cause are, so shall our consolations be. 5. In this chapter we have

a case of a near contemplation of death, ver. 8, 9. Paul expected soon to die. He had the sentence of death in himself. It is interesting, then, to inquire how Paul felt when he looked at death, how we should feel, and how we actually shall feel when we come to die. Now, a contemplation of death as near and certain is fitted to lead us to trust in God. This was the effect in the case of Paul, ver. 9. He had learned in health to put his trust in him; and now, when the trial was apparently near, he had nowhere else to go, and he confided in him alone. He felt that, if he was rescued, it could be only by the interposition of God, and that there was none but God who could sustain him if he should die. And what event can there be that is so well fitted to lead us to trust in God as death? And where else can we go in view of that dark hour? 6. We should regard our own restoration, or that of our friends, from dangerous sickness, and from imminent peril of death, as a kind of resurrection. So Paul regarded it, ver. 9. We should remember how easy it would have been for God to have removed us—how rapidly we were tending to the grave—how certainly we should have descended there, but for his interposition. We should feel that lives thus preserved, and thus recovered from danger, belong to God. He has preserved them. In the most absolute sense they belong to him, and to him they should be consecrated. So Paul felt; and his whole life shews how entirely he regarded himself as bound to devote a life often preserved in the midst of peril to the service of his kind benefactor. 7. All Christians should regard themselves as consecrated to God, ver. 21. They have been anointed, or set apart to his service. They should feel that they are as really set apart to his service as the ancient prophets, priests, and kings were to their appropriate offices by the ceremony of anointing. They belong to God, and are under every sacred and solemn obligation to live to him, and him alone. It is an inestimable privilege to be a Christian, ver. 21, 22. It is regarded as a privilege to be an heir to an estate, and to have an assurance that it will be ours. But the Christian has an "earnest," a pledge, that heaven is his. He is anointed of God, he is sealed for heaven. Heaven is his home; and God is giving to him daily evidence in his own experience that he will soon be admitted to its pure and blissful abodes. The joys of the Christian on earth are of the same nature as the joys of heaven. These comforts are an "earnest" of the future inheritance, a part of that which the Christian is to enjoy for ever. His joys on earth are "heaven begun;" and all that is needful to constitute heaven is that these joys should be expanded and perpetuated. There will be no other heaven than that which would be constituted by the expanded joys of a Christian. 8. Christians should be careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit; compare *Eph.* iv. 30. It is by that Spirit that they are "anointed" and "sealed," and it is by him that they have the earnest of their future inheritance. All good influences on their minds proceed from that Spirit, and it should be their high and constant aim not to grieve him. By no course of conduct, by no conversation, by no impure thought, should they drive that Spirit from their minds. All their peace and joy is dependent on their cherishing his sacred presence, and by all the means in their power they should strive to secure his constant agency on their souls.—A. B.]

CHAPTER II.

In this chapter the apostle proceedeth in the account of the reasons why he did not come to Corinth, ver. 1-4. Then he writeth concerning the incestuous person that lay under censure, and giveth direction for the restoring him, together with the reasons for their so doing, ver. 5-11. And afterwards informeth them of his labours and success in preaching the Gospel in several places, ver. 12-17.



UT I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. 2 For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me? 3 And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. 4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

In these verses,

First. The apostle proceedeth in giving an account of the reason why he did not come to Corinth as was expected, namely, because he was unwilling to grieve them or be grieved by them, ver. 1, 2; he hath determined not to come to them in heaviness, which yet he would have done had he come and found scandal among them not duly animadverted upon. This would have been cause of grief both to him and them, for their sorrow or joy at meeting would have been mutual. If he had made them sorry, that would have been a sorrow to himself, for there would have been none to have made him glad. But his desire was to have a cheerful meeting with them, and not have it embittered by any unhappy occasion of disagreeing.

Secondly. He tells them it was to the same intent that he wrote his former epistle, ver. 3, 4; namely, 1. That he might not have sorrow from them, of whom he ought to rejoice; and that he had written to them in confidence of their doing what was requisite in order to their benefit and his comfort. The particular thing referred to, as appeareth by the following verses, was the case of the incestuous person about whom he had written in the first epistle, *ch.* v. Nor was the apostle disappointed in his expectation. 2. He assureth them that he did not design to grieve them, but to testify his love to them, and that he wrote to them with much anguish and affliction in his own heart, and with great affection to them. He had written with tears, that they might know his abundant love to them. Note, 1st. That even in reproofs, admonitions, and

any fickleness. It was and is not now one thing and now another, but the same. He uses the present tense "is" because of the unchangeable character of the doctrine.

i. 23. His reason for not coming. Had he carried out his first purpose, he would have been obliged to have come with censure rather than praise.

i. 24. "He means that by their own faith—their belief and trust in the common objects of faith—they maintained their spiritual

position and character. Their reception of the truth was independent of any personal authority claimed by the apostle, nor was the exercise of any such authority required for their maintenance of it."

ii. 1. "Again:" implying that he had already paid a visit in grief. This was not his first visit, but was probably a short one paid during his stay at Ephesus, of which we have no account. The "grief" is not his grief alone, but theirs as well as his, he grieving them and they him.

acts of discipline, faithful ministers shew their love. 2nd. That needful censures, and the exercise of church discipline towards offenders, is a grief to tender-spirited ministers, and are administered with regret.

5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. 6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which *was inflicted* of many. 7 So that contrariwise ye *ought* rather to forgive *him*, and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm *your* love toward him. 9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I *for-give* also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave *it*, for your sakes *forgave I it* in the person of Christ; 11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

In these verses the apostle treateth concerning the incestuous person that had been excommunicated, which seemeth to be one principal cause of his writing this epistle. Here observe,

First. He tells them the crime of that person had grieved him in part; and that he was grieved also with a part of them, who, notwithstanding this scandal, had been found among them, were "puffed up, and had not mourned," 1 Cor. v. 2. However, he was unwilling to lay too heavy a charge upon the whole church, especially seeing they had cleared themselves in that matter, by observing the directions he had formerly given them.

Secondly. He tells them that the punishment which had been inflicted upon this offender was sufficient, ver. 6. The desired effect was obtained; for the man was humbled, and they had shewn the proof of their obedience to his directions.

Thirdly. He therefore directeth them with all speed to restore the excommunicated person, or to receive him again to their communion, ver. 7, 8. This is expressed several ways: he beseecheth them to forgive him, that is, to release him from church censures,—for they could not remit the guilt or offence against God,—and also to comfort him; for in many cases the comfort of penitents dependeth not only upon their reconciliation with God but with men also, whom they have scandalized or injured. They must also confirm their love to him; that is, they should shew their reproofs and censures did proceed from love to his person as well as hatred to his sin, and that their design was to reform, not to ruin him. Or, thus, if his fall had weakened their love to him, that they could not take that satisfaction in him as formerly, yet, now that he was recovered by repentance, they must renew and confirm their love to him.

Fourthly. He useth several weighty arguments to persuade them to do thus: for example, 1. The case of the penitent called for this, for he was in danger of being "swallowed up with overmuch sorrow," ver. 7. He was so sensible of his fault, and so much afflicted under his punishment, that he was in danger of falling into despair; and when sorrow is excessive it doth hurt. Even sorrow for sin is too great when it unfits for other duties, and driveth men to despair. 2. They had shewn obedience to his directions in passing a censure upon him, and now he would have them comply with his desire to restore him, ver. 9. 3. He mentions his readiness to forgive this penitent, and concur with them in this matter; "To whom ye forgive, I forgive also," ver. 10; that is, I will readily concur with you in forgiving him. And this he would do for their sakes, for love to them, and for their advantage; and for Christ's sake, or in his name, as his apostle, and in conformity to his doctrine and example, which is so full of kindness and tender mercy towards all them that truly repent. 4. He giveth another weighty reason; ver. 11, "Lest Satan get an advantage against us." Not only was there danger lest Satan should get an advantage of the penitent, by driving him to despair, but against the churches also, and the apostles or ministers of Christ, by representing them as too rigid and severe, and so frightening people from coming among them.

In this, as in other things, wisdom is profitable to direct, so to manage, according as the case may be, that the ministry may not be blamed for indulging sin on the one hand, or for too great severity towards sinners on the other. Note, Satan is a subtle enemy, and useth many stratagems to deceive us, and we should not be ignorant of his devices; and he is a watchful adversary, ready to take all advantages against us, and we should be very cautious lest we give him any occasion so to do.

12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, 13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. 14 Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. 15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16 To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is suffi-

cient for these things? 17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.



PORT OF TROAS.

After these directions concerning the excommunicated person, the apostle maketh a long digression to give the Corinthians an account of his travels and labours for the furtherance of the Gospel, and what success he had had therein; declaring at the same time how much he was concerned for them and their affairs; how he had no rest in his spirit, when he found not Titus at Troas, ver. 13, as he did expect, from whom he hoped to have understood more perfectly how it fared with them. And we find afterwards, ch. vii. 6, 7, that when the apostle was come into Macedonia he was comforted by the coming of Titus, and the information he gave him concerning them. So that we may look upon all that we read from this second chapter, ver. 12, to ch. vii. 5, as a kind of parenthesis. Observe here,

First. Paul's unwearied labour and diligence in his work, ver. 12, 13. He travelled from place to place to preach the Gospel. He went to Troas from Philippi by sea, Acts xx. 6; from thence he went to Macedonia, so that he was prevented from passing by Corinth, as he designed, ch. i. 16. But, though he was prevented in his design, as to the place of working, yet he was unwearied in his work.

Secondly. His success in his work. A great "door was opened to him of the Lord," ver. 12. He had a great deal of work to do wherever he came, and had good success in his work, for God made manifest the savour of his knowledge by him in every place where he came. He had an opportunity to open the door of his mouth freely, and God opened the hearts of his hearers, as the heart of Lydia, Acts xvi. 14; and the apostle speaketh of this as a matter of thankfulness to God, and of rejoicing to his soul; "Thanks be to God," saith he, "which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." Note, 1. A believer's triumphs are all in Christ. In ourselves we are weak, and have neither joy nor victory, but in Christ we may rejoice and triumph. 2. True believers have constant cause of triumph in Christ, for they are more than conquerors through him that hath loved them, Rom. viii. 37. 3. God causeth them to triumph in Christ. It is God that hath given us matter for triumph, and hearts to triumph. To him, therefore, be the praise and glory of all. 4. The good success of the Gospel is a good reason for a Christian's joy and rejoicing.

[The word which is here rendered "triumph," (θριαμβέοντι, from θριαμβεύειν) occurs in no other place in the New Testament, except in Col. ii. 15. It is there rendered "triumphing over them in it," that is, triumphing over the principalities and powers which he had spoiled or plundered, and it there means, that Christ led them in triumph after the manner of a conqueror. It was particularly applied, among both the Greeks and the Romans, to a public and solemn honour conferred on a victorious general on a return from a successful war, in which he was allowed a magnificent entrance into the capital. In these triumphs the victorious commander was usually preceded or attended by the spoils of war,—by the most valuable and magnificent articles which he had captured,—and by the princes, nobles, generals, or people whom he had subdued. Paul refers here to a victory which he had, and a triumph with which he was favoured by the Redeemer. It was a victory over the enemies of the Gospel—it was success in advancing the interests of the kingdom of Christ; and he rejoiced in that victory, and in that success, with more solid and substantial joy than a Roman victor ever felt on returning from his conquests over nations, even when attended with the richest spoils of victory, and by humble princes and kings in chains, and when the assembled thousands shouted, *Te triumphe*.—A. B.]

Thirdly. The comfort that the apostle and his companions in labour did find, when the Gospel was not successful to the salvation of some that heard it, ver. 15–17. Here observe,

1. The different success of the Gospel, and its different effects upon several sorts of persons to whom it is preached. The success is different; for some are saved by it, whilst others perish under it. Nor is this to be wondered at, considering the different effects the Gospel hath; for, 1. Unto some it is a "savour of death unto death." Those that are willingly ignorant, and wilfully obstinate, do disrelish the Gospel, as men dislike an ill savour, and therefore they are blinded and hardened by it. It stirs up their corruptions and exasperateth their spirits. They reject the Gospel to their ruin, even to spiritual and eternal death. 2. Unto others the Gospel is a "savour of life unto life." To humble and gracious souls the preaching of the word is most delightful and profitable. As it is sweeter than honey to the taste so it is more grateful than the most precious odours to the senses, and much more profitable; for as it quickened them at first, when they were dead in trespasses and sins, so it maketh them more lively, and will end in eternal life.

["The savour,"—*doxas*. The smell, the fragrance. The word in the New Testament is used to denote a pleasant or fragrant odour, as of incense or aromatics, Jno. xii. 3; see Eph. v. 2; Phil. iv. 18. There is an allusion here, doubtless, to the fact that in the triumphal processions fragrant odours were diffused around. So Paul speaks of knowledge—the knowledge of Christ. In his triumphings the knowledge of the Redeemer was diffused abroad, like the odours which were diffused in the triumphal march of the conqueror.—A. B.]

2. The awful impressions this matter made upon the mind of the apostle, and should also make upon our spirits; "Who is sufficient for these things?"

i. 2. He had no pleasure in their sorrow, nay, their sorrow removed his source of joy.

ii. 5. Alford renders, "Now if any one hath occasioned sorrow (a delicate way of pointing out the one who had occasioned it), he hath grieved not me (not 'not only me,' which destroys the meaning; 'I am not the aggrieved person, but you'), but, more or less (partially), that I be not too heavy on him, all of you."

ii. 6–12. The injunctions of St. Paul in his first epistle had been

acted upon, and the incestuous person had been brought to penitence by the punishment inflicted. Now St. Paul counsels kindness, lest "Satan get an advantage over us"—i.e., lest, by the despair of the penitent one, Satan rob us of him altogether.

ii. 13. He expected Titus to bring news of the state of the Corinthian church, and his anxiety caused him restlessness.

ii. 15. "The odour was Christ, who to the unbelieving is death—a mere announcement of a man crucified, and working death by un-

ver. 16. *Is he who is worthy to be employed in such weighty work,—a work of such vast importance, because of so great consequence? Who is able to perform such a difficult work, that requireth so much skill and industry? The work is great, and our strength is small, yea, of ourselves we have no strength at all; all our sufficiency is of God.* Note, If men did seriously consider what great things depend upon the preaching of the Gospel, and how difficult the work of the ministry is, they would be very cautious how they enter upon it, and very careful to perform it well.

3. The comfort which the apostle had under this serious consideration. 1st. Because faithful ministers shall be accepted of God, whatever their success be. "We are," if faithful, "unto God a sweet savour of Christ," ver. 15, in them that are saved, and in them also that perish. God will accept of sincere intentions and honest endeavours, though with many they are not successful. Ministers shall be accepted, and recompensed, not according to their success, but according to their fidelity. "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord," *Isa. xlix. 5.* 2nd. Because his conscience witnessed to his faithfulness, ver. 17. Though many did corrupt the word of God, ver. 17, yet the apostle's conscience witnessed to his fidelity. He did not mix his own notions with the doctrines and institutions of Christ; he durst not add to, nor diminish from, the word of God; he was faithful in dispensing the Gospel as he received it from the Lord, and had no secular turn to serve. His aim was to approve himself to God, remembering his eye was always upon him; he therefore spake and acted always as in the sight of God, and therefore in sincerity. Note, What we do in religion is not of God, doth not come from God, will not reach to God, unless it be done in sincerity, as in the sight of God.

[1. In this chapter, and in the management of the whole case to which Paul here refers, we have an instance of his tenderness in administering discipline. 2. Churches should be careful that Satan should not get an advantage over them, ver. 11. In every way possible he will attempt it, and perhaps in few modes is it more often done than in administering discipline. In such a case, Satan gains an advantage over a church in the following ways: 1st. In inducing it to neglect discipline. 2nd. Satan gains an advantage in discipline, sometimes by too great severity of discipline. 3rd. Satan gains an advantage in cases of discipline when the church is unwilling to re-admit to fellowship an offending but a penitent member. His spirit is broken, his usefulness is destroyed. The world usually takes side with him against the church, and the cause of religion bleeds. 3. Individual Christians, as well as churches, should be careful that Satan does not get any advantage over them, ver. 11. Among the ways in which he does this are the following: 1st. By inducing them to conform to the world. 2nd. By producing laxity of opinion in regard to doctrine. 3rd. By producing among Christians despondency, melancholy, and despair. 4th. By fanaticism. 5th. By contentions and strifes. 4. Ministers of the Gospel may have occasion to triumph in the success of their work. 5. The Gospel may be so preached as to be successful, ver. 14. In the hands of Paul it was successful; so it was with the other apostles; so it was with Luther, Knox, Calvin; so it was with Whitefield, Edwards, Wesley, and Payson. If ministers are not successful it is not the fault of the Gospel. 6. Much of the work of the ministry is pleasant and delightful. It is the savour of life unto life, ver. 15, 16. There is no joy on earth of a higher and purer character than that which the ministers of the Gospel have in the success of their work. 7. Let all ministers be careful that they do not corrupt the word of God, ver. 17. As they desire acceptance with God, and success in the work, let them preach the pure Gospel; not adulterating it with foreign admixtures; not endeavouring to change it so as to be palatable to the carnal mind; not substituting philosophy for the Gospel; and not withholding any thing in the Gospel because men do not love it; and let the people of God everywhere sustain the ministry by their prayers, and aid them in their work by daily commending them to the God of grace. So shall they be able to perform the solemn functions of their office to Divine acceptance, and so shall ministers and people find the Gospel to be "a savour of life unto life."—A. B.]

CHAPTER III.

The apostle maketh an apology for his seeming to commend himself, and is careful not to assume too much to himself, but to ascribe all praise unto God, ver. 1—5. He then runs a comparison between the Old Testament and the New, and sheweth the excellency of the latter above the former, ver. 6—11. From whence he infers what is the duty of gospel ministers, and the advantage of those who live under the Gospel above those who lived under the law, ver. 12—18.



O we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you? 2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: 3 *Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the

epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. 4 And such trust have we through Christ to Godward: 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

In these verses,

First. The apostle maketh an apology for his seeming to commend himself. He thought it convenient to protest his sincerity to them, because there were some at Corinth who endeavoured to blast his reputation; yet he was not desirous of vain glory. And he tells them, 1. They neither needed nor desired

any verbal commendation to them, nor letters testimonial from him, as some others did, meaning the false apostles or teachers, ver. 1. Their ministry among them had, without controversy, been truly great and honourable, how little soever their persons were in reality, or how contemptible soever some would have them thought to be. 2. The Corinthians themselves were their real commendation, and a good testimonial for them that God was with them of a truth, that they were sent of God. "Ye are our epistle," ver. 2. This was the testimonial they most delighted in, and what was most dear to them; they were written in their hearts. And this they could appeal to upon occasion, for it was, or might be, "known and read of all men." Note, There is nothing more delightful to faithful ministers, nor more to their commendation, than the success of their ministry, evidenced in the hearts and lives of those among whom they labour.

Secondly. The apostle is careful not to assume too much to himself, but to ascribe all the praise to God. Therefore, 1. He saith they were the epistle of Christ, ver. 3. The apostle and others were but instruments, Christ was the author of all the good that was in them. The law of Christ was written in their hearts, and the love of Christ shed abroad in their hearts. This epistle was not written with ink, "but with the Spirit of the living God;" nor was it written in tables of stone, as the law of God given to Moses, but on the heart, and that heart not a stony one, but a heart of flesh, upon the "fleshy" (not fleshly, as fleshliness denoteth sensuality) "tables of the heart," that is, upon hearts that are softened and renewed by Divine grace, according to that gracious promise, "I will take away the stony heart, and I will give you an heart of flesh," *Eze. xxxvi. 26.* This was the good hope the apostle had concerning these Corinthians, ver. 4, that their hearts were like the ark of the covenant, containing the tables of the law and the Gospel, written with the finger, that is, by the Spirit of the living God. 2. He utterly disclaimed the taking any praise to themselves, and ascribeth all the glory to God; "We are not sufficient of ourselves," ver. 5. We could never have made such good impressions on your hearts, nor upon our own. Such is our weakness and inability, that we cannot of ourselves think a good thought, much less raise any good thoughts or affections in other men. All "our sufficiency is of God;" to him therefore is owing all the praise and glory of that good which is done, and from him we must receive grace and strength to do more. This is true concerning ministers and all Christians; the best are no more than what the grace of God maketh them. Our hands are not sufficient for us, but our sufficiency is of God; and his grace is sufficient for us, to furnish us for every good word and work.

6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. 7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away: 8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? 9 For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. 10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. 11 For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious.

Here the apostle runs a comparison between the Old Testament and the New, the law of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and valueth himself and his fellow-labourers by this, that "they were able ministers of the New Testament," that God had made them so, ver. 6. And this he doth in answer to the accusations of false teachers, who magnify greatly the law of Moses.

"Who also hath made us able ministers." This refers properly to his sense of the responsibility and difficulty of the work of the ministry, and to the fact that he did not esteem himself to be sufficient for this work in his own strength, *ch. ii. 16; iii. 5;* and he here says that God had made him sufficient—not able, talented, learned, but sufficient, (*ικανωμεν ημεις*); he has supplied our deficiency; he has rendered us competent, or fit: if a word may be coined after the manner of the Greek here, 'he has *sufficienced* us for this work.' There is no assertion therefore here that they were men of talents, or peculiar ability, but only that God had qualified them for their work, and made them by his grace sufficient to meet the toils and responsibilities of this arduous office.—A. B.]

First. He distinguisheth between the letter and the spirit, even of the New Testament, ver. 6. And, as able ministers of the New Testament, they were ministers not merely of the letter, to read the written word, or to preach the letter of the Gospel only, but they were ministers of the Spirit also, that is, the Spirit of God did accompany their ministrations. The letter killeth; this is the letter of the law doth, for that is the ministration of death; and if we rest only in the letter of the Gospel we shall be never the better for so doing, for even that will be a savour of death unto death. But the Spirit of the Gospel, going along with the ministry of the Gospel, giveth life spiritual and life eternal.

Secondly. He sheweth the difference between the Old Testament and the New, and the excellency of the Gospel above the law; for, 1. The Old Testament dispensation was the "ministration of death," ver. 7, whereas that of the New Testament is the ministration of life. The law discovered sin, and the wrath and curse of God: that shewed us a God above us, and a God against us; but the Gospel discovereth grace and Immanuel, 'God with us.' Upon this account the Gospel is more glorious than the law, and yet that had a glory in it, witness the shining of Moses' face, an indication thereof, when he came down from the mount, with the tables in his hand, that reflected rays of brightness upon his countenance. 2. The law was the "ministration of condemnation," for that condemned and cursed every one that continued not in all things written therein to do them; but the Gospel is the "ministration of righteousness." Therein the righteousness of God by faith is revealed. This sheweth us the just shall live by his faith; this revealeth the grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ, for the obtaining the remission of sins and

belief; but to the believing, life—an announcement of his resurrection and life, and working in them life eternal by faith in him. The double working of the Gospel is set forth in *Matt. xxi. 44; Luke ii. 34; John ix. 39.*

iii. 1. "Again:" some had probably charged Paul with self-recommendation in his former letter. The letters of recommendation were those which members took with them when journeying from church to church. (See *Acts xviii. 27.*) Some who had come to

Corinth, and now opposed Paul, had brought and requested such letters, and the practice prevailed largely afterwards. St. Paul asks ironically if they thought he needed to be recommended to them, and shows that his recommendation was the work of Christ done by his means in their midst—a letter which he bore upon his heart (so great was his love for them), and was patent to all men.

iii. 7. "Written:" rather, "in letters," alluding to the literal precepts of the law bringing the knowledge of sin and death.

eternal life. The Gospel therefore doth so much exceed in glory, that in a manner it doth eclipse the glory of the legal dispensation, ver. 10. As the shining of a burning lamp is lost, or not regarded, when the sun riseth and goeth forth in his strength, so there was no glory in the Old Testament in comparison with that of the New. 3. The law is done away, but the Gospel doth and shall remain, ver. 11. Not only did the glory of Moses' face go away, but the glory of Moses' law is done away also; yea, the law of Moses itself is now abolished; that dispensation was only to continue for a time, and then to vanish away, whereas the Gospel shall remain to the end of the world, and is always fresh and flourishing, and remaineth glorious.

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: 13 And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: 14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. 15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.



READING THE LAW OF MOSES VEILED.

16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. 17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.

In these verses the apostle draweth two inferences from what he had said about the Old and New Testament.

First. Concerning the duty of the ministers of the Gospel to use great plainness or clearness of speech. They ought not, like Moses, to put a veil upon their faces, or obscure and darken those things they should make plain. The Gospel is a more clear dispensation than the law; the things of God are revealed in the New Testament, not in types and shadows, and ministers are much to blame if they do not set spiritual things, and Gospel truth and grace, in the clearest light that is possible. Though the Israelites could not, yet we may, look stedfastly to the end of what was commanded, but is now abolished. We may see the meaning of those types and shadows by the accomplishment, seeing the veil is done away in Christ, and he is come who was the end of the law for righteousness to all them that believe, and whom Moses and all the prophets pointed to and wrote of.

Secondly. Concerning the privilege and advantage of those who enjoy the Gospel above those who lived under the law; for,

1. Those who lived under the legal dispensation had their "minds blinded," ver. 14, and there was a "veil upon their heart," ver. 15. Thus it was formerly, and so it was especially as to them who remained in Judaism, after the coming of the Messiah and the publication of his Gospel. Nevertheless, the apostle tells us there is a time coming when this "veil also shall be taken away," and "when it" (the body of that people) "shall turn to the Lord," ver. 16. Or, when any particular person is converted to God, then the veil of ignorance is taken away—the blindness of the mind, and hardness of heart, is cured.

[This verse teaches, 1. That the time will come when the Jews shall be converted to Christianity, expressed here by their turning unto the Lord, that is, the Lord Jesus. 2. It seems to be implied that their conversion will be a conversion of the people at large—a conversion that shall be nearly simultaneous, a conversion *en masse*. Such a conversion we have reason to anticipate of the Jewish nation. 3. The effect of this will be to make them acquainted with the

iii. 10. The glory of the ministration of the Spirit is so surpassing, that "that which has been glorified (the law) has lost its glory in this respect."

iii. 13. "A mistake has been made with regard to the history in Exod. xxiv. 33—35, which has considerably obscured the understanding of this verse. It is commonly assumed that Moses spoke to the Israelites having the veil on his face, and this is implied in our version. But the LXX. and Hebrew give a different account. He

true sense of their own Script ~~res~~, and the light and beauty of the sayings of their own prophets. Now they are in deep darkness on the subject; then they will see how entirely they meet and harmonize in the Lord Jesus. 4. The true and only way of having a correct and full meaning of the Bible is by turning unto God. Love to him, and a disposition to do his will, are the best means of interpreting the Bible.—A. B.]

2. The condition of those who enjoy and believe the Gospel is much more happy; for, 1st. They have liberty. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is," and where he worketh, as he doth under the Gospel dispensation, "there is liberty," ver. 17; freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and from the servitude of corruption; liberty of access to God, and freedom of speech in prayer. The heart is set at liberty, and enlarged to run the ways of God's commandments. 2nd. They have light. For with "open face we behold the glory of the Lord," ver. 18. The Israelites saw the glory of God in a cloud, which was dark and dreadful; but Christians see the glory of the Lord as in a glass, more clearly and comfortably. It was the peculiar privilege of Moses for God to converse with him face to face in a friendly manner; but now all true Christians do see him more clearly with open face, he sheweth them his glory. 3rd. This light and liberty is transforming. We "are changed into the same image, from glory to glory," ver. 18, from one degree of glorious grace unto another, till grace here be consummated in glory for ever. How much therefore should Christians prize and improve these privileges! We should not rest contented without an experimental knowledge of the transforming power of the Gospel, by the operation of the Spirit, bringing us into a conformity to the temper and tendency of the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

[1. The best of all evidences of a call to the office of the ministry is the Divine blessing resting on our labours, ver. 1, 2. 2. The office of the ministers of the Gospel is glorious, and most honourable, ver. 7—9. 3. The responsibility and solemnity of the work of the ministry. It was a solemn and responsible work for Moses to give the law amidst the thunders of Sinai to the children of Israel. It is much more solemn to be the medium by which the eternal truths of the Gospel are made known to men. 4. We see the folly of attempting to be justified by the law, ver. 7, 9. It is the ministration of death and of condemnation. It speaks only to condemn. Law knows nothing of pardon. If pardoned, it must be by some other system than by the regular operation of law. So with the sinner against God. If the law is violated, it speaks only to condemn. If he is pardoned, it can be only by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. 5. The danger of grieving the Holy Spirit, ver. 8. The Gospel is the field of the operations of the Holy Spirit in our world. It is the ministration of the Spirit. It is the channel by which his influences descend on man. To reject that Gospel is to reject him, and to cut off the soul from all possibility of being brought under his saving influence and power for ever. He strives with men only in connexion with the Gospel; and all hope, therefore, of being brought under his saving power is in attending to that Gospel, and embracing its provisions. The multitudes, therefore, who are rejecting or neglecting that Gospel, are throwing themselves beyond his saving influences, and placing themselves beyond the possibility of salvation. 6. The Gospel is to spread around the world, and endure to the end of time, ver. 11. It is not like the institutions of Moses, to endure for a limited period and then to be done away. It abides. It is the last dispensation—the permanent economy—that under which the affairs of the world are to be brought to an end. It is, therefore, to be the fixed principle on which all Christians are to act, that the Gospel is to be permanent, and is to spread over all lands, and yet fill all nations with joy. And if so, how fervent and unceasing should be their prayers and efforts to accomplish this great and glorious result! 7. In reading the Old Testament, we see the importance of suffering the reflected light of the New Testament to be thrown upon it, in order correctly to understand it, ver. 13, 14. Thus read, the Old Testament will be to us of inestimable value, ver. 14. It is of value not only as introducing the Gospel; as furnishing the predictions whose fulfilment are full of demonstration of the truth of religion; as containing specimens of the sublimest and purest poetry in the world; but it is of value as embodying, though amidst many types and shadows and much obscurity, all the great doctrines of the true religion. It is no mark of piety or of wisdom to disparage the Jewish Scriptures; but the higher the attainments in Christian feeling the more will the writings of Moses and the prophets be loved.—A. B.]

CHAPTER IV.

In this chapter we have an account, 1. Of the constancy of the apostle and his fellow-labourers in their work. Their constancy is declared, ver. 1; their sincerity is vouched, ver. 2; an objection is obviated, ver. 3, 4; and their integrity proved, ver. 5—7. 11. Of their courage and patience under their sufferings; where see what their sufferings were, together with their allays, ver. 8—12; and what it was that kept them from sinking and fainting under them, ver. 13—18.



HEREFORE seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; 2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord;

spoke to them without the veil, with his face shining and glorified; when he had done speaking he placed the veil on his face, and that not because they were afraid to look on him, but, as here, 'that they might not look on the end or the fading of that transitory glory.' Thus the declaration of God's will to them was not with 'plainness,' but was interrupted and broken by intervals of concealment."

iii. 15. St. Paul, in speaking of the Israelites who are still under the law, regards the veil as now laid on their hearts.

and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

The apostle had in the foregoing chapter been magnifying his office, upon the consideration of the excellency or glory of that Gospel about which he did officiate; and now in this chapter his design is to vindicate their ministry from the accusation of false teachers, who charged them as deceitful workers, or endeavoured to prejudice the minds of the people against them on account of their sufferings. He tells them therefore how they did believe, and how they shewed their value for their office as ministers of the Gospel. They were not puffed up with pride, but spurred on to great diligence. Seeing we have this ministry, are so much distinguished and dignified, we do not take state upon ourselves, nor indulge in idleness, but are excited to the better performance of our duty. Two things in general we have an account of, namely,

I. Their constancy and sincerity in their work and labour. Concerning which, observe,

First, Their constancy and perseverance in their work is declared. "We faint not," ver. 1, under the difficulty of our work, nor do we desist from our labour. And this their steadfastness was owing to the mercy of God. From the same mercy and grace that they received the apostleship, *Rom. i. 5*, they received strength to persevere in the work of that office. Note, That as it is great mercy and grace to be called to be saints, and especially to be counted faithful, and be put into the ministry, *1 Tim. i. 12*, so it is owing to the mercy and grace of God if we continue faithful, and persevere in our work with diligence. The best men in the world would faint in their work, and under their burthens, if they did not receive mercy from God. "By the grace of God I am what I am," said this great apostle in his former epistle to these Corinthians, *ch. xv. 10*. And that mercy which hath helped us out, and helped us on hitherto, we may rely upon to help us even to the end.

Secondly, Their sincerity in their work is avouched, ver. 2, in several expressions. "We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty." The things of dishonesty are hidden things, that will not bear the light; and those that practise them are, or should be, ashamed of them, especially when they are known. Such things the apostle did not allow of, but did renounce and avoid with indignation. "Not walking in craftiness," or in disguise, acting with art and cunning, but in great simplicity and with open freedom. They had no base and wicked designs covered with fair and specious pretences of something that was good. Nor did they in their preaching handle "the word of God deceitfully." But, as he said before, they used great plainness of speech, and did not make their ministry to serve a turn, or to truckle to base designs. They had not cheated the people with falsehood instead of truth. Some think the apostle alludeth to the deceit which treacherous gamblers use, or that of hucksters in the market, that mix bad wares with good. The apostles acted not like such persons, but they "manifested the truth to every man's conscience," declaring nothing but what, in their own conscience, they believed to be true, and might serve for the conviction of their consciences who heard them, who were to judge for themselves, and to give an account for themselves. And all this they did as in the sight of God, desiring thus to commend themselves unto God, and to the consciences of men, by their undisguised sincerity. Note, That a steadfast adherence to the truths of the Gospel will commend ministers and people; and sincerity or uprightness will preserve a man's reputation, and the good opinion of wise and good men concerning him.

Thirdly, An objection is obviated, which might be thus formed: If it be thus, how then doth it come to pass that the Gospel is hid, and proveth ineffectual as to some that hear it? To which the apostle answereth by shewing this was not the fault of the Gospel, nor of the preachers thereof. But the true reasons of this were, 1. They are lost souls, to whom the Gospel is hid, or is ineffectual, ver. 3. Christ came to "save that which was lost," *Mat. xviii. 11*, and the Gospel of Christ is sent to save such, and if that do not find and save them they are lost for ever; they must never expect any thing else to save them, for there is no other method or means of salvation. The hiding of the Gospel therefore from souls is both an evidence and cause of their ruin. 2. "The god of this world hath blinded their minds," ver. 4. They are under the influence and power of the devil, who is here called the god of this world, and elsewhere the prince of this world, because of the great interest he hath in this world, and the homage that is paid to him by multitudes in this world, and the great sway that by Divine permission he beareth in the world, and in the hearts of his subjects, or rather slaves. And as he is the prince of darkness, and ruler of the darkness of this world, so he darkeneth the understandings of men, and increaseth their prejudices, and supporteth his interest by keeping them in the dark, blinding their minds with ignorance, and error, and prejudices, that they should not "behold the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ." [Greek, 'the Gospel of the glory of Christ,'—a Hebraism for the glorious Gospel. Mr. Locke renders it, 'the glorious brightness of the light of the Gospel of Christ,' and supposes it means the brightness, or clearness, of the doctrine wherein Christ is manifested in the Gospel. It is all light, and splendour, and beauty, compared with the dark systems of philosophy and heathenism. It is glorious, for it is full of splendour, makes known the glorious God, discloses a glorious plan of salvation, and conducts ignorant, weak, and degraded man to a world of light. No two words in our language are so full of rich and precious meaning as the phrase, "glorious Gospel."—A. B.] "Who is the image of God," [Christ is called the image of God, 1. In respect to his Divine nature, his exact resemblance to God in his Divine attributes and perfections, (see *Col. i. 15*, and *Heb. i. 3*); and, 2. In his moral attributes as Mediator, as shewing forth the glory of the Father to men. He resembles God, and in him we see the Divine glory and perfections embodied, and shine forth.—A. B.] Observe, 1. Christ's design by his Gospel is to make a glorious discovery of God to the minds of men. Thus, as the image of God, he demonstrateth the power and wisdom of God, and the grace and mercy of God for their salvation. But, 2. The design of the devil is to keep men in ignorance; and, when he could not keep the light of the Gospel out of the world, he maketh it his great business to keep it out of the hearts of men.

[Satan will practise every device and art possible to prevent the Gospel from shining upon the hearts of men. That light is painful and hateful to his eyes, and he will do all that can be done to prevent its being diffused. Every art which long-tried ingenuity and skill can devise will be resorted to, every power which he can put forth will be exerted. If he can blind the minds of men he will do it. If men can be hoodwinked, and ruled, it will be done.

If error can be made to spread, and be embraced—error smooth, plausible, cunning—it will be diffused. Ministers will be raised up to preach it, and the press will be employed to accomplish it. If sinners can be deceived, and made to remain at ease in their sins, by novels and seductive poetry—by books false in sentiments and perverse in morals—the press will be made to groan under works of fiction. If theatres are necessary to cheat and beguile men, they will be reared; and the song and the dance, the ball and the splendid party, will alike contribute to divert the attention from the cross of Christ, the worth of the soul, and the importance of a preparation to die. No art has been spared, or will be spared, to deceive men, and the world is full of the devices of Satan to hoodwink and blind the perishing, and lead them down to hell. Yet Satan is not alone to blame for this. He does all he can, and he has consummate skill and art. Yet let not the deluded sinner take comfort to himself because Satan is the tempter, and because he is deluded. The sinner is, after all, voluntary in his delusions. He does, or he might, know the truth. Who is to blame if he is lost? Who but himself?—A. B.]

Fourthly, A proof of their integrity is given, ver. 5. They made it their business to preach Christ and not themselves. "We preach not ourselves." Self was not the matter nor the end of the apostles' preaching. They did not give out their own notions and private opinions, nor their passions and prejudices, for the word and will of God; nor did they seek themselves to advance their own secular interest or glory; but they preached "Christ Jesus the Lord," and thus it did become them and behoove them to do, as being Christ's servants. Their business was to make their Master known to the world as the Messiah, or the Christ of God, and as Jesus, the only Saviour of men, and as the rightful Lord, and to advance his honour and glory. Note, All the lines of Christian doctrine centre in Christ, and in preaching Christ we preach all we should preach. As to ourselves, saith the apostle, We preach, or declare, that we are your servants for Jesus' sake. This was no compliment, but a real profession of a readiness to do good to their souls, and to promote their spiritual and eternal interests, and that for Jesus' sake, not for their own sake, or their own advantage, but for Christ's sake, that they might imitate his great example, and advance his glory. Note, Ministers should not be of proud spirits, lording it over God's heritage, who are servants to the souls of men.

[This implies the following things: 1. That the time of ministers belongs to the church, and should be employed in its welfare. 2. Their talents belong to the church. 3. Their best efforts and plans, the avails of their best thoughts and purposes, belong to the church, and should be honestly devoted to it. Their strength, and vigour, and influence should be devoted to it, as the vigour, and strength, and talent, and skill of a servant belong to his master: see *Ps. cxxxvii. 5, 6*. The language of the ministry, as of every Christian, should be—

I love thy church, O God,
Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
And graven on thy hand.
If e'er to bless thy sons
My voice or hands deny,
These hands let useful folk forsake,
This voice in silence die.
If e'er my heart forget
Her welfare or her woe,
Let every joy this heart forsake,
And every grief o'erflow.
For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end.—A. B.]

Yet, at the same time, they must avoid the meanness of spirit to become the servants of the humours or the lusts of men; if they should thus "seek to please men," they would not be the servants of Christ, *Gal. i. 10*. And there was good reason,

1. Why they should preach Christ. For by gospel light we have the "knowledge of the glory of God," which shineth in the "face of Jesus Christ," ver. 6; and the light of this Sun of righteousness is more glorious than that light which God commanded to shine out of darkness. It is a pleasant thing for the eye to behold the sun in the firmament, but it is more pleasant and profitable when the Gospel shineth in the heart. Note, As light was the first-born of the first creation, so it is in the new creation. The illumination of the Spirit is his first work upon the soul. The grace of God createth such a light in the soul that those who "were sometimes darkness are made light in the Lord," *Eph. v. 8*.

2. Why they should not preach themselves. Because they were but earthen vessels, things of little or no worth or value. Here seemeth to be an allusion to the lamps which Gideon's soldiers carried in earthen pitchers, *Jud. vii. 16*. The treasure of Gospel light and grace is put into earthen vessels; that is, the ministers of the Gospel are weak and frail creatures, and subject to like passions and infirmities as other men; they are mortal, and soon broken in pieces. And God hath so ordered it, that the weaker the vessels are the stronger his power may appear to be, that the treasure itself should be valued the more. Note, There is an excellency of power in the Gospel of Christ to enlighten the mind, to convince the conscience, to convert the soul, and to rejoice the heart; but, as all this power is from God the Author, and not from men, who are but instruments, so that God in all things must be glorified.

8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. 11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you. 13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also

iv. 1. Paul "now resumes the thread of the general argument, which he had twice taken up (chap. iii. 4, 12), but with the difference that from the confidence which he possesses in the greatness of his task, he now draws a new conclusion; not 'we use great plainness of speech,' as in chap. iii. 12, but 'we faint not'—a conclusion which, as it is more directly an answer to the question, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' in chap. ii. 16, so is it the basis of the ensuing chapters, iv. 7—v. 10. But with one of the inversions peculiar to

this epistle, he has hardly entered on this new topic before he drops it again. The charge of insincerity which had occasioned the digression in chap. iii. still lingers in his recollection, and accordingly he turns round upon it as if to give it one parting blow before he finally dismisses it from his mind. Hence chap. iv. 2—6 are still closely connected with chap. iii., while the new subject begun in verse 1 is not resumed till verse 7, where it is expanded in all its parts, so that the true close of the sentence commenced here does not occur till verse 16,

believe, and therefore speak; 14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. 15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. 16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

II. In these verses the apostle giveth an account of their courage and patience under all their sufferings. Whence observe, 1st. How their sufferings and patience under them is declared, ver. 8—12. The apostles were great sufferers; therein they followed their Master. Christ had told them "that in the world they should have tribulation," and so they had; yet they met with wonderful support, great relief, and many allays of their sorrows. "We are," saith the apostle, "troubled on every side," afflicted many ways, and meet with almost all sorts of troubles, "yet not distressed," ver. 8. We are not hedged in, or cooped up, because we can see help in God, and help from God, and have liberty of access to God. Again, we are perplexed, oftentimes uncertain, and in doubt what will become of us, and not always without anxiety in our mind on this account, yet "not in despair," ver. 8, even in our greatest perplexities, knowing that God is able to support us, and to deliver us, and in him we always place our trust and hope. Again, we are persecuted by men, pursued with hatred and violence from place to place, as men not worthy to live, yet "not forsaken" of God, ver. 9. Good men may be sometimes forsaken of their friends, as well as persecuted by their enemies; but God will never leave them nor forsake them. Again, we are sometimes dejected, or cast down; the enemy may in great measure prevail, and our spirits begin to fail us; there may be fears within as well as fightings without, yet we are not destroyed, ver. 8. Still they were preserved, and kept their heads above water. Note, Whatever condition the children of God may be in, in this world, they have a "but not" to comfort themselves with; their case sometimes is bad, yea very bad, but not so bad as it might be. The apostle speaketh of their sufferings as constant, and as a counterpart of the sufferings of Christ, ver. 10. The sufferings of Christ were after a sort reacted in the sufferings of Christians; thus did they "bear about the dying of the Lord Jesus" in their body, setting before the world the great example of a suffering Christ, "that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest;" that is, that people might see the power of Christ's resurrection, and efficacy of grace in and from the living Jesus, manifested in and towards them, who did yet live, though they were always delivered to death, ver. 11, and though death worked in them, ver. 12, they being exposed to death, and ready to be swallowed up by death continually. Thus great were the sufferings of the apostles, that in comparison with them other Christians were even at that time in prosperous circumstances. "Death worketh in us, but life in you," ver. 12.

Secondly. What it was that kept them from sinking and fainting under their sufferings, ver. 13—18. Whatever the burthens and troubles of good men may be, they have cause enough not to faint.

1. Faith kept them from fainting. "We have the same spirit of faith," ver. 13. That faith which is of the operation of the Spirit, the same faith by which the saints of old did and suffered such great things. Note, The grace of faith is a sovereign cordial and effectual antidote against fainting fits in troublous times. The spirit of faith will go far to bear up the spirit of a man under his infirmities; and as the apostle had David's example to imitate, who said, Ps. cxvi. 10, "I have believed, and therefore have I spoken," so he leaveth us his example to imitate; "We also believe," saith he, "and therefore speak." Note, As we receive help and encouragement from the good words and examples of others, so we should be careful to give a good example to others.

[No man should attempt to preach the Gospel who has not a firm belief of its truths, and he who does believe its truths will be prompted to make them known to his fellow-men. All successful preaching is the result of a firm and settled conviction of the truth of the Gospel, and when such a conviction exists it is natural to give utterance to the belief, and such an expression will be attended with happy influences on the minds of other men.—A. B.]

2. Hope of the resurrection kept them from sinking, ver. 14. They knew that Christ was raised, and that his resurrection was an earnest and assurance of theirs. This he had treated of largely in his former epistle to these Corinthians, ch. xv.; and therefore their hope was firm, being well-grounded, that he which raised up Christ the Head will raise up all his members. Note, The hope of the resurrection will encourage us in a suffering day, and set us above the fear of death; for what reason hath a good Christian to fear death, that dieth in hope of a joyful resurrection?

3. The consideration of the glory of God, and the benefit of the church, by means of their sufferings, kept them from fainting, ver. 15. Their sufferings were for the church's advantage: see ch. i. 6; and this did redound to God's glory; for when the church is edified then God is glorified, and we may well afford to bear sufferings patiently and cheerfully when we see others are the better for them,—if they are instructed and edified, if they are confirmed and comforted. Note, The sufferings of Christ's ministers, as well as their preaching and conversation, are intended for the good of the church and the glory of God.

4. The thoughts of the advantage their own souls would reap by the sufferings of their bodies kept them from fainting; "Though our outward man perish, our inward man is renewed day by day," ver. 16. Where note, 1st. We have every one of us an outward and an inward man, that is, a body and a soul. 2nd. If the outward man perish there is no remedy—it must and will be so, it was made to perish. 3rd. It is our happiness if the decays of the outward man do contribute to the renewing of the inward man, if afflictions outwardly are gain to us inwardly, if when the body is sick, and weak, and perishing, the soul is vigorous and prosperous. 4th. The best of men have need

of farther renewing of the inward man, even day by day. Where the good work is begun, there is more work to be done for the carrying it forward; and as in wicked men things grow every day worse and worse, so in godly men they grow better and better.

5. The prospect of eternal life and happiness kept them from fainting, and was a mighty support and comfort; as to which observe, 1st. The apostle and his fellow-sufferers saw these afflictions working towards heaven, and that there they would end at last, ver. 17; whereupon they weighed things aright in the balance of the sanctuary; they did, as it were, put the heavenly glory in one scale and their earthly sufferings in the other, and, pondering things in their thought, they found afflictions to be light, and the glory of heaven to be "a far more exceeding weight." That which sense was ready to pronounce heavy and long, grievous and tedious, faith perceived to be light, and short,—but for a moment. On the other hand the worth and weight of the crown of glory, as it is exceeding great in itself, so it is esteemed to be by the believing soul, it far exceeds all his expressions and thought; and it will be a special support in our sufferings when we can perceive them appointed as the way, and preparing us for the enjoyment of the future glory.

[In this exceedingly interesting passage, which is worthy of the deepest study of Christians, Paul has set in most beautiful and emphatic contrast the trials of this life and the glories of heaven. It may be profitable to contemplate at a single glance the view which he had of them, that they may be brought distinctly before the mind.

THE ONE IS.

1. Affliction, θλιψις.
2. Light, ελαφύς.

3. For a moment, παρῑτῑκα.

THE OTHER IS, (BY CONTRAST.)

1. Glory, δόξα.
2. Weight, βάρος.
3. Eternal, αἰώνιον.

4. Eminent, or excellent, καθ' ὑπερβολήν.
5. Infinitely excellent, eminent in the highest degree, εἰς ὑπερβολήν.

So the account stands in the view of Paul; and, with this balance in favour of the eternal glory, he regarded afflictions as mere trifles, and made it the favour purpose of his life to gain the glory of the heavens. What wise man, looking at the account, would not do likewise? A. B.]

2nd. Their faith enabled them to make this right judgment of things; "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," ver. 18. It is by faith we see God, who is invisible, Heb. xi. 27, and by that we look to an unseen heaven and hell, and faith is the evidence of things not seen. Note, 1st. There are unseen things as well as things that are seen. 2nd. There is this vast difference between them—unseen things are eternal, seen things but temporal, or temporary only. 3rd. It is by faith that we not only discern these things, and the great difference between them, but by that also we take our aim at unseen things, and chiefly regard them, and make it our end and scope not to escape present evils and obtain present good, both of which are temporal and transitory, but to escape future evil and obtain future good things, which, though unseen, are real, and certain, and eternal; and faith is "the substance of things hoped for," as well as the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1.

[It becomes us, then, as rational creatures, to look to that world, to act with reference to it, to feel and act as if we felt that all our interests were there. Were this life all, every thing in relation to us would be trifling. But when we remember that there is an eternity, that we are near it, and that our conduct here is to determine our character and destiny there, life becomes invested with infinite importance. Who can estimate the magnitude of the interests at stake? Who can appreciate aright the importance of every step we take, and every plan we form?—A. B.]

CHAPTER V.

The apostle proceedeth in shewing the reasons why they did not faint under their afflictions; viz. their expectation, desire, and assurance of happiness after death, ver. 1—5; and maketh an inference for the comfort of believers in their present state, ver. 6—8; and another to quicken them in their duty, ver. 9—11. Then he maketh an apology for seeming to commend himself, and giveth a good reason for his zeal and diligence, ver. 12—15; and mentions two things that are necessary, in order to our living to Christ, viz., regeneration and reconciliation, ver. 16—21.



OR we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. 5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body,

was the tabernacle or tent. The word here employed was frequently used by the Greeks for the earthly habitation or covering of the soul, and always with a temporary notion. "Of God:" rather, "from God." St. Paul does not mean to assert that the earthly body was not also from God, but that the resurrection body is "in an especial manner prepared by God." "Not made with hands:" the figure of a house is still in the apostle's mind, hence this mode of expression, by which he means the lower human origin of the earthly body.

where the same words are repeated—"for which cause we faint not" (Stanley.)

iv. 10. From his fellowship with Jesus, St. Paul regards his exposure to death in his cause as an exemplification of and sharing in the dying of Jesus.

iv. 12. We share specially in the trials and exposure to death, while you are full sharers in the life.

v. 1. "Tabernacle:" genitive of apposition to house; the house

and to be present with the Lord. 9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it* be good or bad. 11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

The apostle, in these verses, pursueth the argument of the former chapter, concerning the grounds of their courage and patience under afflictions; and,

First. He mentioneth their expectation, and desire, and assurance of eternal happiness after death, ver. 1—5. Observe particularly,

1. The believer's expectation of eternal happiness after death, ver. 1. He doth not only know, or is well assured by faith of the truth and reality of the thing itself, that there is another and a happy life after this present life is ended, but he hath good hope, through grace, of his interest in that everlasting blessedness of the unseen world—we know we have a building of God, we have a firm and well-grounded expectation of the future felicity. Let us take notice, 1st. What heaven is in the eye and hope of a believer. He looketh upon it as "an house," or habitation, a dwelling-place, a resting-place, a hiding-place, our Father's house where there are many mansions, and our everlasting home. It is a house in the heavens, in that high and holy place, which doth as far excel all the palaces of this earth as the heavens are high above the earth. It is a building of God, whose Builder and Maker is God, and therefore is worthy of its Author; the happiness of the future state is what God hath prepared for them that love him. It is "eternal in the heavens," everlasting habitations, not like the earthly tabernacles, the poor cottages of clay, in which our souls now dwell, that are mouldering and decaying, whose foundations are in the dust. 2nd. When it is expected this happiness shall be enjoyed; namely, immediately after death, as soon as "our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved." Note, *First*. That the body, this earthly house, is but a tabernacle, that must be dissolved shortly; the nails or pins will be drawn, and the cords be loosed, and then the body return to dust as it was. *Secondly*. When this comes to pass then cometh the "house not made with hands." The spirit returneth to God who gave it, and such as have walked with God here shall dwell with God for ever.

2. The believer's earnest desires after this future blessedness, which is expressed by this word, στενάζουεν,—"we groan;" which denoteth, 1st. A groaning of sorrow under a heavy load. So do believers groan under the burden of life; "In this we groan earnestly," ver. 2, that is, we that are in this tabernacle do groan, "being burdened," ver. 4. The body of flesh is a heavy burthen, the calamities of life are a heavy load. But believers do groan because burdened with a body of sin, and the many corruptions that are still remaining and raging in them. This maketh them complain, "O wretched man that I am!" *Rom. vii. 24.* 2nd. There is a groaning of desire after the happiness of another life, and thus believers do groan, earnestly desiring "to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven," ver. 2; to obtain a blessed immortality, "that mortality might be swallowed up of life," ver. 4; "That being clothed we shall not be found naked," ver. 3; that if it were the will of God we might not sleep, but be changed, for it is not desirable in itself to be unclothed. Death, considered merely as a separation of soul and body, is not to be desired, but dreaded rather; but, considered as a passage to glory, the believer is willing rather to die than live, "to be absent from the body, that he may be present with the Lord," ver. 8; to leave this body that he may go to Christ, and to put off these rags of mortality that he may put on the robes of glory. Note, *First*. Death will strip us of the clothing of flesh and all the comforts of life, as well as put an end to all our troubles here below; naked we came into this world, and naked shall we go out of it. But, *Secondly*. Gracious souls are not found naked in the other world; no, they are clothed with garments of praise, with robes of righteousness and glory. They shall be delivered out of all their troubles, and shall have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, *Rev. vii. 14.*

3. The believers' assurance of their interest in this future blessedness, on a double account: 1st. From the experience of the grace of God in preparing and making them meet for this blessedness. He that hath "wrought us for the selfsame thing is God," ver. 5. Note, All that are designed for heaven hereafter are wrought or prepared for heaven while they are here; the stones of that spiritual building and temple above are squared and fashioned here below; and he that hath wrought us for this "is God," because nothing less than a Divine power can make a soul partaker of a Divine nature, no hand less than the hand of God can work us for this thing. A great deal is to be done to prepare our souls for heaven, and that preparation of the heart is from the Lord. 2nd. The "earnest of the Spirit" gave them this assurance, for an earnest is part of payment, and secureth the full payment. The present graces and comforts of the Spirit are earnest of everlasting grace and comfort.

Secondly. The apostle maketh an inference for the comfort of believers in their present state and condition in this world, ver. 6—8; whence observe,

1. What their present state and condition is; they "are absent from the Lord," ver. 6. They are pilgrims and strangers in this world, they do but sojourn here in their earthly home or in this tabernacle; and though God is with us here, by his Spirit and in his ordinances, yet we are not with him as we hope to be; we cannot see his face whilst we live, "for we walk by faith, not by sight," ver. 7; that is, we have not that vision and fruition of God, as of an object that is present with us, and as we hope for hereafter, when we shall see as we are seen. Note, Faith is for this world, and sight is reserved for the other world; and it is our duty, and will be our interest, to walk by faith till we come to live by sight.

2. How comfortable and courageous we ought to be in all the troubles of life and in the hour of death; "Therefore we are," or ought to be, "always confident," ver. 6. And again, ver. 8, "We are confident and willing," rather to be absent from the body. True Christians, if they duly consider the prospect faith giveth them of another world, and the good reasons of their hope of blessedness after death, should be comforted under the troubles of life, and supported in the hour of death. They should take courage when they are encountering the last enemy, and be willing rather to die than live, when it is the will of God they should put off this tabernacle. Note, As those who are *in* from above do long to be there, so it is but being absent from the body, and we shall very soon be present with the Lord—but to die and be with

Christ—but to close our eyes to all things in this world, and we shall open them in a world of glory: faith will be turned into sight.

[Why should I shrink at pain or woe,
Or feel at death dismay?
I've Canaan's goodly land in view,
And realms of endless day.
Apostles, martyrs, prophets there,
Around my Saviour stand;
And soon my friends in Christ below
Will join the glorious band.
Jerusalem, my happy home,
My soul still pants for thee!
When shall my labours have an end
In joy, and peace, and thee!—C. Wesley.]

Thirdly. He proceedeth to make an inference to excite and quicken himself and others to duty, ver. 9—11. And so it is that well-grounded hopes of heaven will be far from giving the least encouragement to sloth and sinful security; but, on the contrary, they should stir us up to use the greatest care and diligence in religion. "Wherefore," or because we hope to be present with the Lord, "we labour," and take pains, ver. 9. Φιλοτιμούμεθα, 'we are ambitious,' and labour as industriously as the most ambitious men do to obtain what they aim at. Here observe,

1. What it was the apostle was thus ambitious of, and that was, acceptance with God. We labour that living and dying, "whether present" in the body "or absent" from the body, "we may be accepted of him," that is, the Lord, ver. 9; that we may please him who hath chosen us—that our great Lord may say to us, Well done. This they coveted as the greatest favour and the highest honour; it was the top of their ambition.

2. What farther quickening motives they had to excite their diligence, from the consideration of the judgment to come, ver. 10, 11. And there are many things relating to this great matter that should awe the best of men into the utmost care and diligence in religion; for example, the certainty of this judgment, for we must appear; the universality of it, for we must all appear; the great Judge, before whose judgment-seat we must appear, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ, who himself will appear in flaming fire; the recompense to be then received for things done in the body, which will be very particular unto every one, and very just, according to what we have done, whether good or bad. The apostle calls this awful judgment "the terror of the Lord," ver. 11; and by the consideration thereof was excited to persuade men to repent and live a holy life, that, when Christ shall appear terribly, they may appear before him comfortably. And concerning his fidelity and diligence he comfortably appealeth unto God and the consciences of them he wrote unto; "We are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."

[If we have ourselves any just views of the awful terrors of the day of judgment, and if we have any just views of the wrath of God, we should endeavour "to persuade" others to flee from the wrath to come. We should plead with them; we should entreat them; we should weep over them; we should pray for them, that they may be saved from going up to meet the awful wrath of God.—A. B.]

12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. 13 For whether we be beside ourselves, *it is* to God: or whether we be sober, *it is* for your cause. 14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

Here observe, *First*. The apostle maketh an apology for seeming to commend himself, ver. 12, and tells them, 1. It was not to commend themselves, or for their own sakes, that he had spoken of their fidelity and diligence in the former verses; nor was he willing to suspect their good opinion of him. But, 2. The true reason was this, to put an argument into their mouths wherewith to answer his accusers, who made vain boastings, and gloried in appearances only; that he might give them an "occasion to glory on their behalf," or to defend them against the reproaches of their adversaries. And if the people can say the word hath been manifested to their consciences, and been effectual to their conversion and edification, this is the best defence they can make for the ministry of the word when they are vilified and reproached.

Secondly. He giveth good reasons for their zeal and diligence. Some of Paul's adversaries had, it is likely, reproached him for his zeal and fervour, as if he had been a madman, or, in the language of our days, a fanatic; they imputed all to enthusiasm, as the Roman governor told him, "Much learning had made him mad," *Acts xxvi. 24*. But the apostle tells them,

1. It was for the glory of God and the good of the church he was thus zealous and industrious. "Whether we be beside ourselves, or whether we be sober," that is, whether you or others do think the one or the other, it is to God and for his glory; and it is for your cause, or to promote your good, ver. 13. If they manifested the greatest ardour and vehemency at some times, and used the greatest calmness in strong reasonings at other times, it was for the best ends, and in both methods they had good reason for what they did; for,

2. The love of Christ constrained them, ver. 14. They were under the sweetest and strongest constraints to do what they did. Love hath a constraining virtue to excite ministers and private Christians in their duty. Our love to Christ will have this virtue, and Christ's love to us, which was manifested in this great instance of his dying for us, will have this effect upon us if it be duly considered and rightly judged of; for observe how the apostle argued for the reasonableness of love's constraints, and declareth, 1st. What we were before, and must have continued to be, had not Christ died for us. We were dead; ver. 14, "If one died for all, then were all dead," dead in law, under sentence of death, and in sins and trespasses, spiritually dead. Note, This was the deplorable condition of all those that Christ died for; they were lost and undone, dead and ruined, and must have remained thus miserable for ever if Christ had not died for them. 2nd. What such should do for whom Christ died, namely, that they should live to him. This is what Christ

v. 4. "Not for that," &c.: rather, "because we are not willing to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon." The feeling expressed in these verses was one most natural to those who, as the apostles, regarded the coming of the Lord as near, and conceived the possibility of their living to behold it. It was "no terror of death as to its consequence, but a natural reluctance to undergo the mere act of death as such, when it was within possibility that this mortal might be superseded by the immortal, without it" (Alford).

vi. 1. St. Paul is describing generally his ministry as one of exhortation, and after a parenthesis resumes the description in verse 3, pointing out (verses 3—10) various characteristics of life and conversation which accompanied his exhortation.

vi. 3. Resumed from verse 1; showing (verses 3—10) "the pains and caution used by him to enforce this exhortation by his example as well as his precept."

vi. 11—13. "I use openness and freedom of speech to you, I pour

designed, that they which live, which are made alive unto God by means of his death, should live to "him that died for them, and rose again" for their sakes also, that they should not live to themselves, ver. 15. Note, We should not make ourselves, but Christ, the end of our livings and actings; and it was one end of Christ's death to cure us of this self-love, and to excite us always to act under the commanding influence of his love. A Christian's life should be consecrated to Christ, and then do we live as we ought to live when we live to Christ, who died for us.

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more. 17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18 And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

In these verses the apostle mentioneth two things that are necessary in order to our living to Christ, both of which are the consequences of Christ's dying for us, namely, regeneration and reconciliation.

First, Regeneration, which consisteth in two things, namely, 1. Weanedness from the world. "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh," ver. 16; that is, We do not own or affect any person or thing in this world for carnal ends and outward advantage; we are enabled, by Divine grace, not to mind or regard this world, or the things of the world, but to live above it; the love of Christ is in our hearts, and the world is under our feet. Note, Good Christians must enjoy the comforts of this life and their relations in this world with a holy indifference; "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet" (saith the apostle,) "we know him no more." It is questioned whether Paul had seen Christ in the flesh; however, the rest of the apostles had, and so might some amongst those he wrote unto. However, he would not have them value themselves upon that account, for even the bodily presence of Christ is not to be desired or doated upon by his disciples: we must live upon his spiritual presence, and the comfort of that. Note, Those who make images of Christ, and use them in their worship, do not take the way that God hath appointed for the strengthening their faith and quickening their affections; for it is the will of God we should not know Christ any more after the flesh.

[It does not mean that he had seen him in the flesh, but that he had formed, so to speak, carnal views of him, and such as men of this world regard as grand and magnificent in a monarch and conqueror. He had had no correct views of his spiritual character, and of the pure and holy purposes for which he would come into the world. "Yet now henceforth know we him no more." We know him no more in this manner. Our conceptions and views of him are changed. We no more regard him according to the flesh, we no longer esteem the Messiah who was to come as a temporal prince and warrior; but we look on him as a spiritual Saviour, a Redeemer from sin. The idea is, that his views of him had been entirely changed.—A. B.]

2. A thorough change of the heart. For "if any man be in Christ," that is, if any man be a Christian indeed, and will approve himself such, he is, or he must be, "a new creature," ver. 17. Some read it, Let him be a new creature. This ought to be the care of all who profess the Christian faith, that they be new creatures; not only that they have a new name, and wear a new livery, but that they have a new heart, and new nature. And so great is the change the grace of God makes in the soul, that, as it followeth, old things are passed away—old thoughts, old principles, and old practices are passed away, and all these things must become new. Note, Regenerating grace creates a new world in the soul—all things are new. The renewed man acteth from new principles, by new rules, with new ends, and in new company.

Secondly, Reconciliation, which is here spoken of under a double notion.

1. As an unquestionable privilege, ver. 15, 19. Reconciliation supposeth a quarrel or breach of friendship; and sin hath made a breach, it hath broken the friendship between God and man. The heart of the sinner is filled with enmity against God, and God is justly offended with the sinner. Yet, behold, there may be a reconciliation; the offended majesty of heaven is willing to be reconciled. And observe, 1st. He hath appointed the Mediator of reconciliation, Jesus Christ. He hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, ver. 18. God is to be owned from first to last in the undertaking and performance of the Mediator. All things relating to our reconciliation by Jesus Christ are of God, who, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, hath reconciled the world to himself, and out himself into a capacity of being actually reconciled to offenders, without any wrong or injury to his justice or holiness; and doth not impute to men their trespasses, but recedeth from the rigour of the first covenant which was broken, and doth not insist upon the advantage he might justly take against us for the breach of that covenant, but is willing to enter upon a new treaty, and into a new covenant of grace, and, according to the tenor thereof, freely to forgive us all our sins, and justify freely by his grace all those who do believe. 2nd. He hath appointed the "ministry of reconciliation," ver. 18. By the inspiration of God the Scriptures were written, which contain the word of reconciliation, shewing us that peace was made by the blood of the cross, that reconciliation is wrought, and directing us how we may be interested therein. And he hath appointed the office of the ministry, which is a ministry of reconciliation; that is, ministers are to open and proclaim to sinners the terms of mercy and reconciliation, and persuade them to comply therewith. For,

out my heart to you:" perhaps better, "my heart is wide enough to take you all in." And so he adds that any constraint or narrowness of heart they may feel towards him is not from any want of largeness of heart on his part, but on theirs, and so exhorts them (verse 13), as a return for his largeness of heart, to show like affection towards him.

vi. 14. "The following exhortations are general, and regard all possible connection and participation—all leanings towards a return

2. Reconciliation is here spoken of as our indispensable duty, ver. 20. As God is willing to be reconciled to us, we ought to be reconciled to God. And it is the great end and design of the Gospel, that word of reconciliation, to prevail upon sinners to lay aside their enmity against God; and faithful ministers are Christ's ambassadors sent to treat with sinners on peace and reconciliation. They come in God's name with his entreaties, and act in Christ's stead, doing the very thing he did when he was upon this earth, and what it is his will to be done now that he is in heaven. Wonderful condescension! Though God can be no loser by the quarrel, nor gainer by the peace, yet by his ministers he doth beseech sinners to lay aside their enmity, and accept of the terms he offereth, that they would be reconciled to him, to all his attributes, to all his laws, and to all his providences, to believe in the Mediator, to accept the atonement, and comply with his Gospel in all the parts of it, and in the whole design of it. And, for our encouragement so to do, the apostle subjoineth what should be well known and duly considered by us, ver. 20, namely, 1st. The purity of the Mediator, that he knew no sin. 2nd. The sacrifice he offered. He was made sin—not a sinner, but sin; that is, a sin-offering, a sacrifice for sin. 3rd. The end and design of all this. "That we might be made the righteousness of God in him;" that is, might be justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Note, First, As Christ that knew no sin of his own was made sin for us, so we that have no righteousness of our own are made the righteousness of God in him. Secondly, Our reconciliation to God is only through Jesus Christ, and for the sake of his merit; on him, therefore, we must rely, and make mention of his righteousness, and his only.

[Let us then, in view of this whole chapter, seek to be reconciled to God. Let us lay aside all our opposition to him. Let us embrace his plans. Let us be willing to submit to him, and to become his eternal friends. Let us seek that heaven to which he would raise us; and, though our earthly house of this tabernacle must be dissolved, let us be prepared, as we may be, for that eternal habitation which he has fitted up for all who love him in the heavens.—A. B.]

CHAPTER VI.

In this chapter the apostle giveth an account of his general errand to all that he preached unto; with the several arguments and methods he used, ver. 1–10. Then he doth address himself particularly to the Corinthians, giving them good cautions with great affection and strong arguments, ver. 11–18.



E then, as workers together with him, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. 2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: 4 But in all *things* approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, 5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; 6 By pureness, by knowledge by, long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, 7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the



ARMOUR.

to heathenism which might be bred by too great familiarity with heathens" (Alford).

vii. 1. To be connected with the previous chapter.

vii. 2. "Receive us:" the original word signifies "give us room in your hearts;" and the words are probably a resumption of the idea contained in the "be ye also enlarged" of chap. vi. 13. "Have wronged," &c.: omit "have" in the three places where it occurs in this verse. St. Paul is speaking generally of his residence

right hand and on the left, 8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; 9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; 10 As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

In these verses we have an account of the apostle's general errand and exhortation to all that he preached to in every place where he came, with the several arguments and methods he used. Observe,

First. The errand or exhortation itself, namely, to comply with the Gospel offers of reconciliation—that, being favoured with the Gospel, they would not receive this “grace of God in vain,” ver. 1. The Gospel is a word of grace sounding in our ears, but it will be in vain for us to hear it unless we believe it, and comply with the end and design of it; and, as it is the duty of the ministers of the Gospel to exhort and persuade their hearers to accept of grace and mercy that is offered to them, so they are honoured with this high title of co-workers with God. Note, 1. They must work, and must work for God and his glory, for souls, and their good; and they are workers with God, yet under him, as instruments only: however, if they are faithful, they may hope to find God working with them, and their labour will be effectual. 2. Observe the language and way of the spirit of the Gospel. It is not with roughness and severity, but with all mildness and gentleness to beseech and entreat, to use exhortations and arguments, in order to prevail with sinners and overcome their natural unwillingness to be reconciled to God, and to be happy for ever.

Secondly. The arguments and method which the apostle used.

“For he saith.” See *Isa. xlix. 8*. In that passage the declaration refers to the Messiah, and the design is there to shew that God would be favourable to him; that he would hear him when he prayed, and would make him the medium of establishing a covenant with his own people, and of spreading the true religion around the earth. This is the main idea of the passage as used by Paul. Under the Messiah, it is said by Isaiah, God would be willing to shew mercy. That would be an acceptable time. That time, says Paul, has arrived. The Messiah has come, and now God is willing to pardon and save. And the doctrine in this verse is, that, under the Messiah, or in the time of Christ, God is willing to shew mercy unto men. In him alone is the throne of grace accessible; and now that he has come God is willing to pardon, and men should avail themselves of the offers of mercy.—*A. B.*

And here he tells them,

1. The present time is the only proper season to accept of grace that is offered, and improve that grace which is afforded. “Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation,” ver. 2. The gospel day is a day of salvation, and the means of grace the means of salvation, and the offers of the Gospel the offers of salvation, and the present time the only proper time to accept of these offers; “To-day, while it is called to-day.” The morrow is none of ours; we know not what will be on the morrow, nor where we shall be; and we should remember that present seasons of grace are short and uncertain, and cannot be recalled when they are past. It is therefore our duty and interest to improve them whilst we enjoy them, and no less than our salvation depends upon our so doing.

“Behold now is the accepted time,” &c. The meaning of this passage is, ‘The Messiah is come. The time referred to by Isaiah has arrived. It is now a time when God is ready to shew compassion, to hear prayer, and to have mercy on mankind. Only through the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, does he shew mercy, and men should therefore now embrace the offers of pardon.’ The general sentiment of this passage may be thus expressed: 1. Under the Gospel it is an acceptable time, a day of mercy, a time when God is willing to shew mercy to men. 2. It is taught here, that the time will come when it will not be an accepted time. Now is the accepted time—at some future period it will not be. If men grieve away the Holy Spirit, if they continue to reject the Gospel, if they go unprepared to eternity, no mercy can be found. God does not design to pardon beyond the grave. He has made no provision for forgiveness there; and those who are not pardoned in this life must be unpardoned for ever.—*A. B.*

2. What caution they used not to give offence that might hinder the success of their preaching. “Giving no offence in any thing,” ver. 3. And the apostle had great difficulty to behave prudently and inoffensively towards the Jews and Gentiles, for many of both sorts watched for his halting, and sought occasion to blame him and his ministry, or his conversation; therefore he was very cautious not to give offence to those who were so apt to take offence, that he might not offend the Jews by unnecessary zeal against the law, nor the Gentiles by unnecessary compliances with such as were zealous for the law. He was careful in all his words and actions not to give offence, or occasion of guilt or grief. Note, When others are too apt to take offence, we should be cautious lest we give offence; and ministers especially should be careful lest they do any thing that may bring blame on their ministry, or render that unsuccessful.

3. Their constant aim and endeavour in all things to approve themselves faithful, as became the ministers of God, ver. 4. We see how much stress the apostle upon all occasions layeth on fidelity in our work, because much of our success doth depend upon that. His eye was single, and his heart upright in all his ministrations, and his great desire was to be the servant of God, and to approve himself so. Note, Ministers of the Gospel should look upon themselves as God's servants, or ministers, and act in every thing suitably to that character. So did the apostle.

1st. By much patience in afflictions. He was a great sufferer and met with many afflictions, oftentimes in necessities, and wanting the conveniences, if not the necessities, of life; in distresses, being straitened on every side, hardly knowing what to do; in stripes often, *ch. xi. 24*; in imprisonments; in tumults raised by the Jews and Gentiles against him; in labours, not only preaching the Gospel, but in travelling from place to place for that end, and working with his hands to supply his necessities; in watchings and in fastings, either voluntary upon a religious account, or involuntary for the sake of religion; but he exercised much patience in all, ver. 4, 5. Note, 1. It is the lot of faithful ministers often to be reduced to great difficulties, and to stand in need of much patience. 2. Those who would approve themselves to God must approve themselves faithful in trouble as well as in peace, not only in doing the work of God diligently but also in bearing the will of God patiently.

2nd. By acting from good principles. The apostle went by a good principle in all he did, and tells them what his principles were, ver. 6, 7; namely, pureness; and there is no piety without purity. A care to keep ourselves unspotted from the world is necessary in order to our acceptance with God; and, it may be added, with man also, [for wicked men can resist any thing else better than

they can a holy example. They can make a mock of preaching; they can deride exhortation; they can throw away a tract; they can burn the Bible; but what can they do against a holy example? No more than they can against the vivifying and enlightening beams of the sun; and a man who leads a holy life cannot help doing good, and cannot be prevented from doing good.—*A. B.*] Knowledge was another principle, and zeal without this is but madness. He also acted with long-suffering and kindness, being not easily provoked, but bearing with the hardness of men's hearts, and hard treatment from their hands, whom he kindly endeavoured to do good unto. He acted under the influence of the Holy Ghost, from the noble principle of unfeigned love, according to the rule of the word of truth, under the support and assistance of the power of God, having on the “armour of righteousness,” a consciousness of universal righteousness and holiness, which is the best defence against the temptations of prosperity on the right hand and of adversity on the left.

3rd. By a due temper and behaviour under all the variety of conditions in this world, ver. 8—10. We must expect to meet with many alterations of our circumstances and conditions in this world; and it will be a great evidence of our integrity, if we preserve a right temper of mind, and duly behave ourselves under them all. The apostles met with honour and dishonour, good report and bad report; and good men in this world must expect to meet with some dishonour and reproaches to balance their honour and esteem; and we stand in need of the grace of God to arm us against the temptations of honour on the one hand, and to bear good report without pride; and of dishonour on the other hand, and to bear reproaches without impatience or recrimination. It should seem that persons differently represented the apostles in their reports, that some represented them as the best, and others as the worst of men. By some they were counted deceivers, and run down as such—by others as true, preaching the Gospel of truth, and men that were true to the rest reposed in them. They were slighted by the men of the world as unknown, men of no figure or account, not worth the taking notice of; yet in all the churches of Christ they were well known, and of great account; they were looked upon as dying, being killed all the day long, and their interest was thought to be a dying interest; and yet, Behold, saith the apostle, we live, and live comfortably, and bear up cheerfully under all our hardships, and go on conquering and to conquer. They were chastened, and often fell under the lash of the law, yet not killed; and though it was thought they were sorrowful, a company of morose and melancholy men, always sighing and mourning, yet they were always rejoicing in God, and had the greatest reason to rejoice always. They were despised as poor upon the account of their poverty in this world; and yet they made many rich, by preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. They were thought to have nothing, and silver and gold they had none, houses and lands they had none, yet they possessed all things; they had nothing in this world, but they had a treasure in heaven. Their effects lay in another country, in another world. They had nothing in themselves, but possessed all things in Christ. Such a paradox is a Christian's life, and through such variety of conditions and reports lieth our way to heaven, and we should be careful in all these things to approve ourselves to God.

11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. 12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. 13 Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged. 14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

The apostle proceedeth to address himself more particularly to the Corinthians, and cautions them against mingling themselves with unbelievers. Whence observe,

First. How the caution is introduced with a profession, in a very pathetic manner, of the most tender affection to them, even like that of a father to his children, ver. 11—13. Though the apostle was happy in a great fluency of expressions, yet he seemed to want words how to signify the warm affection he had for these Corinthians, as if he had said, ‘O ye Corinthians, to whom I am now writing, I would fain convince you how well I love you. We are desirous to promote the spiritual and eternal welfare of all that we preach unto, yet “our mouth is open” unto you, and “our heart is enlarged” unto you, in a special manner.’ And because his heart was thus enlarged with love to them, therefore he opened his mouth so freely to them, in kind admonitions and exhortations. “Ye are not,” saith he, “straitened in us;” we would gladly do you all the service we can, and promote your comfort as helpers of your faith and your joy; and if it be otherwise the fault is in yourselves, it is because you are straitened in yourselves, and fail in suitable returns to us, through some misapprehensions concerning us; and all we desire as a recompence is only that you would be proportionably affected to us, as children should love their father. Note, It is desirable that there should be a mutual good affection between ministers and their people, and this would greatly tend to their mutual comfort and advantage.

“But ye are straitened in your own bowels;” that is, in the affection of your hearts. The word here used (*σπλῆγχους*) commonly means gentler emotions

among them at Corinth, probably meeting at the same time certain charges made by his opponents.

vii. 4. The former epistle had produced the desired results, and intelligence of this had caused the apostle comfort.

vii. 5. “The real weight which pressed upon him was the ‘care of all the churches;’ the real cause of his grief was the danger which now threatened the souls of his converts, not in Corinth only or in Galatia, but everywhere throughout the empire. . . . The struggle

at Corinth, the result of which he was now anxiously waiting, was only one out of many similar struggles between Judaism and Christianity.” (There was also a free-thinking party at Corinth.) “These were the ‘fightings without’ which filled him with ‘fears within;’ these were the agitations which ‘gave his flesh no rest’ and ‘troubled him on every side.’ At length the long-expected Titus arrived at Philippi, and relieved the anxiety of his master by better tidings than he had hoped to hear” (Conybeare and Howson).

the tender affections. The Greek word properly denotes the upper viscera—the heart, the lungs, the liver. It is applied by Greek writers to denote those parts of the victims which were eaten during or after the sacrifice.—*Robinson, (Lex.)* Hence it is applied to the heart, as the seat of the emotions and passions, and especially the gentler emotions, the tender affections,—compassion, pity, love, &c. Our word 'bowels' is applied usually to the lower viscera, and by no means expresses the idea of the word which is used in Greek. The idea here is, that they were straitened or were confined in their affections for him. It is the language of reproof, meaning that he had a right to expect, and which was a fair and proportionate return for the love bestowed on them. Probably he refers to the fact that they had formed parties, had admitted false teachers, and had not received his instructions as implicitly and as kindly as they ought to have done.—*A. B.]*

Secondly. The caution or exhortation itself, not to mingle themselves with unbelievers, not to be unequally yoked with them, ver. 14. Either,

1. In stated relations. It is an ill thing for good people to join in affinity with the wicked and profane; these will draw different ways, and that will be galling and grievous. Those relations that are our choice must be chosen by rule; and it is good for those that are themselves the children of God to join with those that are so likewise, for there is more danger that the bad will damage the good than hope that the good will benefit the bad.

2. In common conversation. We should not yoke ourselves in friendship and acquaintance with wicked men and unbelievers. Though we cannot wholly avoid seeing, and hearing, and being with such, yet we should never choose them for our bosom friends.

3. Much less should we join in religious communion with them. We must not join with them in their idolatrous services, nor concur with them in their false worship, nor any abominations; we must not confound together the table of the Lord and the table of devils, for the house of God and the house of Rimmon. The apostle giveth several good reasons against this corrupt mixture. 1st. It is a very great absurdity, ver. 14, 15. It is an unequal yoking of things together that will not agree together, as bad as for the Jews to have ploughed with an ox and an ass, or to have sown divers sorts of grain intermixed. What an absurdity is it to think of joining righteousness and unrighteousness, or mingling light and darkness, fire and water, together! Believers are and should be righteous, but unbelievers are unrighteous; believers are made light in the Lord, but unbelievers are in darkness, and what comfortable communion can these have together? Christ and Belial are contrary one to the other, they have opposite interests and designs, so that it is impossible there should be any concord or agreement between them. It is absurd, therefore, to think of listing under both; and if the believer hath part with an infidel, he doth what in him lieth to bring Christ and Belial together. 2nd. It is a dishonour to the Christian's profession, ver. 16; for Christians are by profession, and should be in reality, the "temples of the living God;" that is, dedicated to, and employed for, the service of God, who hath promised to reside in them, to dwell and walk in them, and stand in a special relation to them, and take a special care of them, that he will be their God, and they shall be his people. Now there can be no agreement between the temple of God and idols. Idols are rivals with God for his honour, and God is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another. 3rd. There is a great deal of danger in communicating with unbelievers and idolaters, danger of being defiled and of being rejected; therefore the exhortation is, ver. 17, to "come out from among them," and keep at a due distance; to be separate, as one would avoid the society of them that have the leprosy or the plague, for fear of taking infection, and not to "touch the unclean thing," lest we be defiled. And who can touch pitch and not be defiled by it? We must take care not to defile ourselves by converse with those who defile themselves with sin—so is the will of God, as we ever hope to be received, and not rejected, by him. 4th. It is base ingratitude to God for all the favours he hath bestowed upon believers, and promised to them, ver. 18. God hath promised to be a father to them, and that they shall be his sons and his daughters; and is there a greater honour or happiness than this? How ungrateful a thing then must it be if such who have this dignity and felicity should degrade and debase themselves by mingling with unbelievers? "Do we thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise?"

[Oh! if men could as easily be permitted to call themselves the sons of monarchs and princes—if they could as easily be admitted to the palaces of the great, and sit down at their tables, as they can enter heaven, how greedily would they embrace it! And yet how poor and paltry would be such honour and pleasure compared with that of feeling that we are the adopted children of the great and the eternal God!—*A. B.]*

CHAPTER VII.

This chapter begins with an exhortation to progressive holiness, and a due regard to the ministers of the Gospel, ver. 1–4. Then the apostle returns from a long digression to speak farther of the affair concerning the incestuous person, and tells them what comfort he received in his distress about that matter, upon his meeting with Titus, ver. 5–7, and how he rejoiced in their repentance, with the evidences thereof, ver. 8–11. And, lastly, he concludeth with endeavouring to comfort the Corinthians, upon whom his admonitions had had so good an effect, ver. 12–16.



AVING therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. 3 I speak not *this* to condemn *you*: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with *you*. 4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying

of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

These verses contain a double exhortation, First. To make progress in holiness, or to "perfect holiness in the fear of God," ver. 1. This exhortation is given with most tender affection to them that were dearly beloved, and enforced by strong arguments, even the consideration of those exceeding great and precious promises which were mentioned in the former chapter, and which the Corinthians had an interest in, and a title to. And the promises of God are strong inducements to sanctification in both the branches thereof; namely,

1. The dying unto sin, or mortifying our lusts and corruptions. We must "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit." Sin is filthiness, and there are defilements of body and mind; there are sins of the flesh, that are committed with the body, and sins of the spirit, spiritual wickednesses; and we must cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of both, for God is to be glorified both with body and soul.

2. The living unto righteousness and holiness. If we hope God is our Father, we must endeavour to be partakers of his holiness, to be holy, as he is holy, and perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. We must be still perfecting holiness, and not be contented with sincerity, which is our gospel perfection, without aiming at sinless perfection, though we shall always come short of it whilst we are in this world; and this we must do in the fear of God, which is the root and principle of all religion, and there is no holiness without it. Note, Faith and hope in the promises of God must not destroy our fear of God, "who taketh pleasure in them that fear him, and hope in his mercy."

Secondly. To shew a due regard to the ministers of the Gospel. "Receive us," ver. 2. Those that labour in the word and doctrine should be had in reputation, and be highly esteemed for their works' sake; and this would be a help to making progress in holiness. If the ministers of the Gospel are thought contemptible because of their office, there is danger lest the Gospel itself should be contemned also. The apostle did not think it any disparagement to court the favour of the Corinthians; and, though we must flatter none, yet we must be gentle towards all. He tells them,

1. He had done nothing to forfeit their esteem and good-will, but was cautious not to do any thing to deserve their ill-will; ver. 2, "We have wronged no man." We have done you no harm, but always designed you good. "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel," said he to the elders of Ephesus, Acts xx. 33. "We have corrupted no man;" by false doctrines, or flattering speeches. "We have defrauded no man;" that is, we have not sought ourselves, nor to promote our own secular interests by crafty and greedy measures, to the damage of any persons. This is an appeal like that of Samuel, 1 Sam. xii. Note, Then may ministers the more confidently expect esteem and favour from the people when they can safely appeal to them that they are guilty of nothing that deserveth disesteem or displeasure.

2. He did not herein reflect upon them for want of affection to him, ver. 3, 4. So tenderly and cautiously did the apostle deal with the Corinthians, among whom there were some that would be glad of any occasion to reproach him, and prejudice the minds of others against him. To prevent any insinuations against him on account of what he had said, as if he intended to charge them with wronging him, or unjust accusations of him for having wronged them, he assureth them again of his great affection to them, inasmuch that he could spend his last breath at Corinth, and live and die with them, if his business with other churches, and his work as an apostle, which was not to be confined to one place only, would permit him to do so. And he addeth, it was his great affection to them that made him use such boldness or freedom of speech towards them, and caused him to glory, or make his boast of them in all places and upon all occasions, being "filled with comfort, and exceeding joyful in all their tribulations."

5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without *we* were fightings, within *were* fears. 6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; 7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. 8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season. 9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourselves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

viii. 1. "Grace;" St. Paul here ascribes the readiness of the Macedonian churches to contribute for the poor Christians at Jerusalem to the grace of God working in them and animating them to deeds of liberality. (See Gal. ii. 10.) In addition to what is there stated, no doubt the liberality of the Gentile churches would have a conciliatory effect upon the Jewish Christians.

viii. 3–5. "For according to their power I testify, and beyond their power, voluntarily, with much exhortation beseeching of us the

grace and fellowship of the ministry to the saints (i.e., to allow them a share in that grace and fellowship), and not as we expected (i.e., far beyond our expectation), but themselves they gave first (i.e., above all, as the inducing motive; not first in point of time, but in point of importance, Rom. ii. 9, 10) to the Lord, and to us by the will of God (the giver of grace, who made them willing to do this)" (Alford).

viii. 15. Quoted from the Septuagint (Exod. xvi. 18). Bishop Wordsworth says that the manna which the several members of the

There seemeth to be a connexion between *ch. ii. 13* (where the apostle said he had "no rest in his spirit" when he found not Titus at Troas,) and the fifth verse of this chapter: and so great was his affection to the Corinthians, and his concern about their behaviour in relation to the incestuous person, that in his farther travels he still had no rest till he heard from them. And now he tells them,

First. How he was distressed, *ver. 5*. He was troubled when he did not meet with Titus at Troas, and afterwards when for some time he did not meet with him in Macedonia; this was a grief to him, because he could not hear what reception he met with at Corinth, or how their affairs went forward. And besides this they met with other troubles, with incessant storms of persecutions: there were fightings without, or continual contentions with, and opposition from, Jews and Gentiles; and there were fears within, and great concern for such as had embraced the Christian faith, lest they should be corrupted or seduced, and give scandal to others, or be scandalized.

Secondly. How he was comforted, *ver. 6, 7*. Whence observe, 1. The very coming of Titus was some comfort to him. It was matter of joy to see him, whom he long desired and expected to meet with. The very coming of Titus, and his company, who was dear to him as his "own son in the common faith," *Tit. i. 4*, was a great comfort to the apostle in his travels and troubles. But, 2. The good news which Titus brought concerning the Corinthians was matter of greater consolation. He found Titus to be comforted in them, and this filled the apostle with comfort, especially when he acquainted him with their earnest desire to give good satisfaction in the things about which the apostle had written to them; and of their mourning for the scandal that was found among them, and the great grief they had caused to others; and their fervent mind or great affection towards the apostle, who had dealt so faithfully with them in reproving their faults. So true is the observation of Solomon, *Pr. xxviii. 23*, "He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with his tongue." 3. He ascribeth all his comfort to God as the author. It was God that comforted him by the coming of Titus, even the God of all comfort, "God that comforteth those that are cast down," *ver. 6*. Note, We should look above and beyond all means and instruments unto God, as the author of all our consolation and the good we enjoy.

Thirdly. How greatly he was rejoiced at their repentance, and the evidences thereof. The apostle was sorry that he had grieved them, that some pious persons among them laid to heart very greatly what he said in his former epistle, or that it was needful he should make them sorry, whom he had rather have made glad, *ver. 8*. But now he rejoiced when he found they had "sorrowed to repentance," *ver. 9*. Their sorrow in itself was not the cause of his rejoicing; but the nature of it, and the effect of it, *viz.*, "repentance unto salvation," *ver. 13*, made him rejoice; for now it appeared that they had received damage by him in nothing; their sorrow was but for a season, it was turned into joy, and that joy was durable. Observe here,

1. The antecedent of true repentance is godly sorrow, that worketh repentance. It is not repentance itself, but it is a good preparation for repentance, and in some sense the cause that produceth repentance. The offender had great sorrow, he was in danger of being "swallowed up with overmuch sorrow;" and the society was greatly sorrowful, which before was puffed up; and this sorrow of theirs was after a godly manner, or according to God, (as it is in the original), that is, it was according to the will of God, and tending to the glory of God, and wrought by the Spirit of God. It was a godly sorrow, because a sorrow for sin, as an offence against God, an instance of ingratitude, and a forfeiture of God's favour. There is a great difference between this sorrow of a godly sort and the sorrow of this world. Godly sorrow produceth repentance and reformation, and will end in salvation; but worldly sorrow worketh death. The sorrows of worldly men for worldly things will bring down grey hairs the sooner to the grave; and such a sorrow even for sin as Judas had will have fatal consequences, as his had, which wrought death. Now, 1st. That repentance will be attended with salvation. Therefore, 2nd. True penitents will never repent that they have repented, nor of any thing that was conducive thereto. 3rd. Humiliation and godly sorrow are previously necessary in order to repentance, and both of them are from God, the giver of all grace.

2. The happy fruits and consequences of true repentance are mentioned, *ver. 11*, and those fruits that are meet for repentance are the best evidences of it; and where the heart is changed the life and actions will be changed too. The Corinthians made it evident their sorrow was a godly sorrow, and such as wrought repentance, because it wrought in them great carefulness about their souls, and to avoid sin, and please God; it wrought also a clearing of themselves, not by insisting upon their own justification before God, especially whilst they persisted in their sin, but by endeavours to put away the accursed thing, and so free themselves from the just imputation of approving the evil that had been done. It wrought indignation at sin, at themselves, at the tempter and his instruments; it wrought fear, a fear of reverence, a fear of watchfulness, and a fear of distrust—not a distrust of God, but of themselves; an awful fear of God, a cautious fear of sin, and a jealous fear of themselves. It wrought vehement desire after a thorough reformation of what had been amiss, and of reconciliation with God whom they had offended. It wrought zeal, a mixture of love and anger, a zeal for duty, and against sin. It wrought, lastly, revenge against sin and their own folly, by endeavours to make all due satisfaction for injuries that might be done thereby. And thus "in all things had they approved themselves to be clear in that matter." Not that they were innocent, but that they were penitent, and therefore clear of guilt before God, who would pardon and not punish them; and they ought no longer to be reproved, much less to be reproached, by men, for what they had truly repented of.

12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you. 13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all. 14 For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which *I made* before Titus, is found a truth. 15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remem-

bereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. 16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.

In these verses the apostle endeavoureth to comfort the Corinthians, upon whom his admonitions had had such good effect. And in order thereto,

First. He tells them, he had a good design in his former epistle, which might be thought severe, *ver. 12*. It was not chiefly "for his cause that did the wrong," that is, not only for his benefit, much less merely that he should be punished; nor yet was it only "for his cause that suffered wrong," namely, the injured father, and that he might have what satisfaction could be given him; but it was also to manifest his great and sincere concern and care for them, that is, the whole church, lest that should suffer by letting such a crime, and the scandal thereof, remain among them without due remark and resentment.

Secondly. He acquaints them with the joy of Titus as well as of himself, upon the account of their repentance and good behaviour. Titus was rejoiced, and his spirit refreshed with their comfort, and this comforted and rejoiced the apostle also, *ver. 13*; and as Titus was comforted whilst he was with them, so when he remembered his reception among them, expressing their obedience to the apostolical directions, and their fear and trembling at the reproofs that were given them, the thoughts of these things inflamed and increased his affections to them, *ver. 15*.

"And his inward affection," &c. He has become deeply and tenderly attached to you. His affectionate regard for you has been greatly increased by his visit. On the meaning of the word here rendered "inward affection," (*σπλάγχνα*, margin, "bowels,") see Note, *ch. vi. 12*. It denotes here deep, tender attachment, or love.—A. B.]

Note, There is great comfort and joy that followeth upon godly sorrow. As sin occasions general grief, so repentance and reformation occasion general joy. Paul was glad, and Titus was glad, and the Corinthians were comforted, and the penitent ought to be comforted; and well may all this joy be on earth, when there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

Thirdly. He concludeth this whole matter with expressing the entire confidence he had in them. He was not ashamed of his boasting concerning them to Titus, *ver. 14*. For he was not disappointed in his expectation concerning them, which he signified to Titus; and he could now with great joy declare what confidence he still had in them as to all things, that he did not doubt of their good behaviour for the time to come. Note, It is a great comfort and joy to a faithful minister to have to do with a people that he can confide in, and that he hath reason to hope will comply with every thing he propoeth to them that is for the glory of God, the credit of the Gospel, and their advantage.

CHAPTER VIII.

In this and the following chapter Paul is exhorting and directing the Corinthians about a particular work of charity, to relieve the necessities of the poor saints at Jerusalem and in Judea, according to the good example of the churches in Macedonia, *Rom. xv. 26*. The Christians at Jerusalem, through war, famine, and persecution, were grown poor, many of them fallen into decay, and perhaps most of them were but poor when they first embraced Christianity, for Christ said, The poor receive the Gospel. Now Paul, though he was the apostle of the Gentiles, had a tender regard and kind concern for those among the Jews that were converted to the Christian faith; and though many of them had not so much affection to the Gentile converts as they ought to have, yet the apostle would have the Gentiles to be kind to them, and stirred them up to contribute liberally for their relief. Upon this subject he is very large and copious, and writeth very affectingly. In this eighth chapter he acquainteth the Corinthians with, and commendeth the good example of, the Macedonians in this work of charity, and that Titus was sent to Corinth to collect their bounty, *ver. 1-6*. He then proceedeth to urge this duty with several cogent arguments, *ver. 7-15*; and commendeth the persons that were employed in this affair, *ver. 16-24*.

Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; 2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3 For to *their* power, I bear record, yea, and beyond *their* power *they were* willing of themselves; 4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 5 And *this they did*, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. 6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

Observe here, First. The apostle taketh occasion from the good example of the churches of Macedonia, that is, of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and others in the region of Macedonia, to exhort the Corinthians and the Christians in Achaia to the good work of charity. And,

1. He acquainteth them with their great liberality, which he calleth "the grace of God bestowed on the churches," *ver. 1*. Some think the words should be rendered, the gift of God given in or by the churches. He certainly meaneth the charitable gifts of these churches, which are called the grace or gifts of God,

same tent had gathered was put together into one common stock, and then meted out with an omer, so that each person had exactly an omer, neither more nor less. This St. Paul uses as an illustration of the abundance of one supplying the deficiency of another.

viii. 19. "Grace:" gift. "To the glory:" not to be joined with "administered by us," but referring to "the union of this brother with Paul in the matter of the alms, which was done to avoid suspicious detrimental to Christ's glory and to the zeal of the

apostle." The brother spoken of is generally believed to have been Luke, but the word "gospel" can hardly refer to his written gospel.

ix. 2. "Forwardness:" readiness. "Provoked:" stirred up.

ix. 4. "Unprepared:" *i.e.*, with their collection, of which he had boasted as being ready.

ix. 5. "Your bounty, whereof ye had notice before:" literally, "your long-promised or long-announced blessing"—*i.e.*, their beneficence, which had long been announced by the apostle to the

either because they were very large, or rather because their charity to the poor saints did proceed from God as the Author, and was accompanied with true love to God, which also was manifested this way. And the grace of God must be owned as the root and fountain of all the good that is in us, or done by us at any time; and it is great grace and favour from God, and bestowed on us, if we are made useful to others, and are forward to any good work.

2. He commendeth the charity of the Macedonians, and sets it forth with good advantage. He tells them, 1st. They were but in a low condition, and themselves in distress, yet they contributed to the relief of others. They were in great tribulation and deep poverty, ver. 2. It was a time of great affliction with them, as may be seen, *Acts xvi. and xvii.* The Christians in these parts met with ill treatment, which had reduced them to deep poverty; yet, as they had abundance of joy in the midst of tribulation, they abounded in their liberality; they gave out of a little, trusting in God to provide for them, and make it up to them. 2nd. They gave very largely, with "the riches of liberality," ver. 2; that is, as liberally as if they had been rich. It was a large contribution they made, all things considered; it was according to, yea beyond, their power, (ver. 3,) as much if not more than could well be expected from them. Note, That, though men may condemn the indiscretion, yet God will accept the pious zeal of those that in real works of piety and charity do rather beyond their power. 3rd. They were very ready and forward to this good work. "They were willing of themselves," ver. 3; and were so far from needing that Paul should urge and press them with many arguments, that they prayed him "with much intreaty to receive the gift," ver. 4. It seemeth that Paul was backward to undertake this trust, for he would give himself to the word and prayer; or it may be he was apprehensive how ready his enemies would be to reproach and blacken him upon all occasions, and might take a handle against him, upon account of so large a sum deposited in his hands, to suspect or accuse him of indiscretion and partiality in the distribution, if not of some injustice. Note, How cautious ministers should be, especially in money matters, not to give occasion to them that seek occasion to speak reproachfully. 4th. Their charity was founded in true piety, and this was the great commendation of it. They performed this good work in a right method; "First they gave themselves to the Lord, and then they gave 'unto us' their contributions 'by the will of God,'" ver. 5; that is, according as it was the will of God they should do, or to be disposed of as the will of God should be, and for his glory. This it seemeth exceeded the expectation of the apostle; it was more than he hoped for, to see such warm and pious affections shining in these Macedonians, and this good work performed with so much devotion and solemnity. They solemnly, jointly, and unanimously made a fresh surrender of themselves, and all they had, unto the Lord Jesus Christ. They had done this before, and now they do it again upon this occasion, sanctifying their contributions to God's honour by first giving themselves to the Lord. Note, 1st. We should give ourselves to God. We cannot bestow ourselves better. 2nd. When we give ourselves to the Lord, we then give him all we have, to be called for and disposed of according to his will. 3rd. Whatever we use or lay out for God, it is only giving to him what is his own. 4th. All we give or bestow for charitable uses will not be accepted of God, or turn to our advantage, unless we first give ourselves to the Lord.

Secondly, The apostle tells them Titus was desired to go and make a collection among them, ver. 6; and Titus he knew would be an acceptable person to them. He had met with a kind reception among them formerly; they had shewn good affection to him, and he had a great love for them. Besides, Titus had already begun this work among them, therefore he was desired to finish it. So that he was on all accounts a proper person to be employed; and when so good a work had already prospered in so good a hand, it would be pity if it should not proceed and be finished. Note, It is an instance of wisdom to use proper instruments in a work we desire to do well; and the work of charity will often succeed the best when the most proper persons are employed to ask for it, and dispose of it.

7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. 8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. 9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. 10 And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. 11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have. 12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. 13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: 14 But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: 15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.

In these verses the apostle useth several cogent arguments to stir up the Corinthians to this good work of charity.

Macedonians. "Not as of covetousness:" literally, "not as covetousness"—i.e., not of a covetous, niggardly spirit.

ix. 6. "Bountifully;" rather, "with blessings"—i.e., with a beneficent, charitable spirit. "He which soweth with blessings shall reap also with blessings." He that soweth in a beneficent, charitable spirit shall reap in the midst of blessings poured out upon him.

ix. 8. "God can bestow upon us abundantly not only the grace which makes us rejoice in the Lord, and so prepares us to give with

First. He urgeth upon them the consideration of their eminence in other gifts and graces, and would have them excel in this of charity also, ver. 7. There is great address and holy art here used by the apostle, when he would persuade the Corinthians to this good thing. He commendeth them for other good things that were found in them. Most people love to be spoken fair, especially when we ask a gift of them for ourselves or others; and it is a justice we owe to those in whom God's grace doth shine to give them their due commendation. Observe here what it was the Corinthians abounded in. Faith is mentioned first, for that is the root; and as without faith it is impossible to please God, *Heb. xi. 6*, so they that do abound in faith will abound in other graces and good works also, and this will work and shew itself by love. To their faith was added utterance, which is an excellent gift, and redounds much to the glory of God and the good of the church. Many have faith that want utterance. But these Corinthians excelled most churches in spiritual gifts, and particularly in utterance; and yet this was not in them, as in too many, both the effect and evidence of ignorance; for with their utterance there appeared knowledge, abundance of knowledge. They had a treasury of things new and old, and in their utterance they brought out of this treasury. They abounded also in all diligence. Oftentimes those who have great knowledge and ready utterance are not the most diligent Christians. Great talkers are not always the best doers; but these Corinthians were diligent to do, as well as know and talk, well. And farther, they had abundant love to their ministers; and were not like too many, that, having gifts of their own, are but too apt to slight their ministers, and neglect them. Now to all these good things the apostle desireth them to add this grace also, to abound in charity to the poor; that, where so much good was found, there should be found yet more good.

Before the apostle proceedeth to another argument he taketh care to prevent any misapprehensions of his design to impose on them, or to bind heavy burthens upon them by his authority; and tells them, (ver. 2) he did not speak by commandment, or in a way of authority: "I give my advice," ver. 10. He took occasion from the forwardness of others to propose what would be expedient for them, and would prove the sincerity of their love, or be the genuine effect and evidence thereof. Note, A great difference should be made between plain and positive duty and the improvement of a present opportunity of doing or getting good. Many a thing which is good for us to do, yet cannot be said to be, by express and indispensable commandment, our duty at this or that time.

Secondly, Another argument is taken from the consideration of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the best arguments for Christian duties are those that are taken from the love of Christ, that constraineth us. The example of the churches of Macedonia was such as the Corinthians should imitate; but the example of our Lord Jesus should have much greater influence. And "ye know," saith the apostle, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," ver. 9; that "though he was rich," as being God, equal in power and glory with the Father, rich in all the glory and blessedness of the upper world, "yet for your sakes he became poor." [It implies, 1. His pre-existence, for he became poor. He had been rich, yet not in this world. He did not lay aside wealth here on earth after he had possessed it, for he had none. He was not first rich and then poor on earth, for he had no earthly wealth. The Socinian interpretation is, that he was "rich in power and in the Holy Ghost;" but it was not true that he laid these aside, and that he became poor in either of them. He had power, even in his poverty, to still the waves, and to raise the dead, and he was always full of the Holy Ghost. His family was poor, and his parents were poor, and he was himself poor all his life. This, then, must refer to a state of antecedent riches before his assumption of human nature, and the expression is strikingly parallel to that in *Phil. ii. 6*, *seq.*: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation," &c. 2. He was rich as the Lord and Proprietor of all things. He was the Creator of all, *Jno. i. 3*; *Col. i. 16*; and as Creator he had a right to all things, and the disposal of all things.—A.B.] Not only did he become man for us, but he became poor also. He was born in poor circumstances, lived a poor life, and died in poverty; and this was for our sakes, that we thereby might be made rich—rich in the love and favour of God; rich in the blessings and promises of the new covenant; rich in the hopes of eternal life, being heirs of the kingdom. This is a good reason why we should be charitable to the poor out of that we have, because we ourselves live upon the charity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, Another argument is taken from their good purposes, and their forwardness to begin this good work. As to this, he telleth them,

1. It was expedient for them to perform what they purposed, and finish what they had begun, ver. 10, 11. What else did their good purposes and good beginnings signify? Good purposes indeed are good things; they are like buds and blossoms, pleasant to behold, and give hopes of good fruit, but they are lost, and signify nothing, without performances. So good beginnings are amiable, but we shall lose the benefit unless there be perseverance, and we bring forth fruit to perfection. Seeing, therefore, the Corinthians had shewed a readiness to will, he would have them be careful also in the performance, according to their ability. For,

2. This would be acceptable to God. This willing mind is accepted, ver. 12, when accompanied with sincere endeavours. When men do purpose that which is good, and endeavour according to their ability to perform also, God will accept of what they have, or can do, and not reject them for what they have not, and is not in their power to do; and this is true as to other things besides the work of charity. But let us note here, this Scripture will by no means justify those that think good meanings are enough, or that good purposes and the profession of a willing mind are sufficient to save them. It is accepted indeed where there is a performance as far as we are able, and when providence doth hinder the performance, as in David's case, concerning building a house for the Lord, *2 Sam. vii.*

Fourthly, Another argument is taken from the discrimination which Divine providence doth make in the distribution of the things of this world, and the mutability of human affairs, ver. 13—15. The force of the arguing seemeth to be this: providence giveth to some more of the good things of this world and to some less; and that with this design, that those who have a greater abundance might supply them that are in want, that there might be room for charity. And farther, considering the mutability of human affairs, and how soon there may be an alteration, so that those who now have an abundance may stand in need of being supplied themselves in their wants, this should induce them to be charitable whilst they are able. It is the will of God, by our mutually supplying one another, there should be some sort of equality; not an absolute equality indeed, or such a levelling as would destroy property, for in such a case there could be no exercise of charity. But as in works of charity there should be an equitable proportion observed, that the burthen should not lie too heavy on some, while others are wholly eased, so all should think themselves concerned to supply them that are in want. This is illustrated by the instance of gathering and distributing manna in the wilderness, concerning which, as we may read, *Ex. xvi.*, it was the duty of every family, and all in the family, to gather what they could; which, when it was gathered, was put into some common receptacle for each family, from whence the master of the family distributed to every one as he had occasion; to some more than they were able, through age and

joyful hearts (chap. viii. 2), but the grace which bestows on us that abundance of earthly blessings and that prosperity which enables us to give so liberally."

ix. 9. "As it is written:" i.e., realising the character described in *Psa. cxlii. 9*.

ix. 10. Rather, "He that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for eating, shall supply and multiply your seed (i.e., your means of liberality), and will increase the fruits of your righteousness."

firmity, to gather up; to others less than they gathered, because they did not need so much. And thus "he that had gathered much," that is, more than he had occasion for, had nothing over, when a communication was made to him "that had gathered little," who by this method had no lack. Note, Such is the condition of men in this world that we mutually depend on one another, and should help one another; and those who have never so much of this world have no more than food and raiment, and they who have but a little of this world seldom want that; nor, indeed, should those who have abundance suffer others to want, but be ready to afford supply.

[The Christian character is incomplete, unless there is a spirit of large and liberal beneficence. This is indispensable to the proper symmetry of the Christian graces, and this should be cultivated in order to give beauty and completeness to the whole. Yet it cannot be denied that there are true Christians, whose life is wanting. There are those who give every other evidence of piety, who are men of prayer, and who evince humility, and who are submissive in trials, and whose conversation is that of Christians, who are yet sadly deficient in this grace.—A. B.]

16 But thanks *be* to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. 17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. 18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches; 19 And not *that* only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and *declaration* of your ready mind: 20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: 21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. 22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which *I* have in you. 23 Whether *any* do enquire of Titus, *he is* my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren *be enquired of*, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. 24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

In these verses the apostle commendeth the brethren that were sent to them to collect their charity, and, as it were, giveth them letters credential, that if they were inquired after, (ver. 23.) that is, if any should be inquisitive, or suspicious concerning them, it might be known who they were, and how safely they might be trusted.

First. He commendeth Titus. 1. For his earnest care and great concern of heart for them, and desire in all things to promote their welfare. This is mentioned with thankfulness to God, ver. 16; and it is cause of thankfulness if God hath put into the hearts of any to do us or others any good. 2. For his readiness to this present service. He accepted of the office, and was forward to go upon this good errand, ver. 17. Asking of charity for the relief of others is by many looked upon as a thankless office, yet it is a good office, and what we should not be shy of when we are called to it.

Secondly. He commendeth another brother, who was sent with Titus. It is generally thought this was Luke. He is commended, 1. As a man whose praise was "in the Gospel throughout all the churches," ver. 18. His ministerial services of several kinds were well known, and he had approved himself praiseworthy in what he had done. 2. As one chosen of the churches, (ver. 19.) and joined with the apostle in his ministration. This was done, it is most likely, at the motion and request of Paul himself, for this reason, "that no man might blame him in that abundance which was administered by him," ver. 20: so cautious was the apostle to avoid all occasions that evil-minded men might lay hold on to blacken him. He would not give occasion to any to accuse him of injustice or partiality in this affair; and thought it to be his duty, as it is the duty of all Christians, "to provide for things honest, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men;" that is, to act so prudently as to prevent, as far as we can, all unjust suspicions concerning us, and all occasions of scandalous imputations. Note, We live in a censorious world, and should cut off occasion from them that seek occasion to speak reproachfully. It is the crime of others if they reproach or censure us without occasion; and it is our imprudence, at least, if we give them any occasion, when there may not be a just cause for them so to do.

Thirdly. He commendeth also another brother that was joined with the two former in this affair. This brother is thought to be Apollos. Whoever he was he had approved himself diligent in many things, and therefore was fit to be employed in this affair; moreover, he had a great desire to this work, because of the confidence or good opinion he had of the Corinthians, ver. 22. And it is a great comfort to see those employed in good works that have formerly approved themselves diligent.

Fourthly. He concludeth this point with a general good character of them all, ver. 23; as fellow-labourers with him for their welfare, as "the messengers of the churches," as "the glory of Christ;" that is, who were to him for a name and a praise, who brought glory to Christ as instruments, and had obtained

honour from Christ to be counted faithful, and employed in his service. Wherefore, upon the whole, he exhorteth them to shew their liberality, answerable to the great expectation of "us" had concerning them at this time; that these messengers of the churches, and the churches themselves, might see a full proof of their love to God, and to their afflicted brethren, and that it was with good reason the apostle had even boasted on their behalf, ver. 24. Note, "That others" good opinion of us should be an argument with us to do well.

[The churches should bear their just proportion in the cause of Christian beneficence, ver. 13—15. There are great interests of charity which must be sustained. The world cannot do without them. Not only must the poor be provided for, but the cause of temperance, and of Sabbath schools, and of missions, must be sustained. Bibles must be distributed, and men must be educated for the ministry, and the widow and the fatherless must be the objects of Christian benevolence. These burthens, if they are burthens, should be equally distributed. The rich should furnish their fair proportion in sustaining them; and those in more moderate circumstances must do their fair proportion also in sustaining them. If this were done, all the objects of Christian benevolence could be sustained, and they would in fact not be burthensome to the churches. With infinite ease all might be contributed that is necessary to send the Gospel around the world. Let all Christians, therefore, so live that it may be honestly said of them, they are "the glory of Christ," ver. 23. Let them aim so to live that it will be esteemed to be an honour to the Redeemer that he called them into his kingdom, and that he so richly endowed them by his grace. This would be a commendation to all men wherever they might go; to say this is enough to say of any men. None can have a higher character than to have it said with truth of him, "He is the glory of Christ; he is an honour to his Redeemer and to his cause."—A. B.]

CHAPTER IX.

In this chapter the apostle seemeth to excuse his earnestness in pressing the Corinthians to the duty of charity, ver. 1—5; and proceedeth to give directions about the acceptable way and manner of performing it, namely, bountifully, deliberately, and freely; and giveth good encouragement for so doing, ver. 6—15.



OR as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: 2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many. 3

Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: 4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting. 5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as *a matter of bounty*, and not as of covetousness.

In these verses the apostle speaketh very respectfully to the Corinthians, and with great skill; and, while he seemeth to excuse his urging them so earnestly to charity, doth still press them thereto, and sheweth how much his heart was set upon this matter.

First. He tells them it was needless to press them with farther arguments to afford relief to their poor brethren, ver. 1, being satisfied he had said enough already to prevail with them of whom he had so good an opinion. For, 1. He knew their forwardness to every good work, and how they had begun this good work a year ago. Inasmuch, that, 2. He had boasted of their zeal to the Macedonians, and this had provoked many of them to do as they had done. Wherefore he was persuaded that, as they had begun well, they would go on well; and so, commending them for what they had done, he lays an obligation on them to proceed and persevere.

Secondly. He seemeth to apologize for sending Titus and the other brethren to them. He is unwilling they should be offended at him for this, as if he was too earnest, and pressed too hard upon them, and tells the true reasons why he sent them, namely, 1. That having this timely notice they might be fully ready, ver. 3, and not surprised with hasty demands when he should come to them. And when we would have others do that which is good we must act towards them prudently and tenderly, and give them time. 2. That he might not be ashamed of his boasting concerning them, if they should be found unready, ver. 3, 4. He intimateth that some from Macedonia might haply come with him; and if the collection should not then be made, this would make him, not to say them, ashamed, considering the boasting of the apostle concerning them. Thus careful was he to preserve their reputation and his own. Note, Christians should consult the reputation of their profession, and endeavour to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

6 But this *I* say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bounti-

ix. 13. "By the experiment," &c.: rather, "by the proof or experience of (afforded by) this ministration." "Your professed subjection," &c.: the subjection of your confession—i.e., "that you who confess Christ are really and truly subject in holy obedience" (Alford).

x. 1. "Meekness:" internal disposition. "Gentleness:" external behaviour towards others. St. Paul appropriates ironically the imputation cast upon him by his opponents (see verse 10).

x. 2. "According to the flesh," influenced by fleshly motives, probably with idea of weakness.

x. 3. "For:" reason for "I beseech," &c. "War:" "They who accuse us of walking after the flesh shall find (to their cost) that we do not war after the flesh; therefore compel us not to use our weapons" (Alford).

x. 6. "Fulfilled:" rather, "completed." When the number of those obeying is complete, then those remaining in disobedience

fully shall reap also bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: 9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. 10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for *your* food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) 11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. 12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; 13 Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; 14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. 15 Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Here we have,

First. Proper directions to be observed about the right and acceptable manner of bestowing charity; and it is of great concernment that we do what is required so as is commanded. Now, as to the manner in which the apostle would have the Corinthians give, observe,

1. It should be bountifully. This was intimated, ver. 5, that a liberal contribution was expected, a matter of bounty, not what savoured of covetousness; and he offereth to their consideration that men who expect a good return at harvest do not use to pinch and spare in sowing their seed, for the return usually is proportionable to what they sow, ver. 6.

2. It should be deliberately. "Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart," ver. 7. Works of charity, like other good works, should be done with thought and design, whereas some do good only by accident; they comply, it may be hastily, with the importunity of others, without any good design, and give more than they intended, and then repent of it afterwards, or possibly, had they duly considered all things, they would have given more. Due deliberation as to this matter of our own circumstances, and those of them we are about to relieve, will be very helpful to direct us how liberal we should be in our contributions for charitable uses.

3. It should be freely, whatever we give, be it more or less; "not grudgingly, or of necessity," but cheerfully, ver. 7. Persons sometimes will give merely to satisfy the importunity of those that ask their charity, and what they give is in a manner squeezed or forced from them, and this unwillingness spoileth all they do. We ought to give more freely than the modesty of some necessitous persons will allow them to ask. We should not only deal out bread, but "draw out our souls" to the hungry, *Isa. lvi. 10*. We should give liberally with an open hand, and cheerfully with an open countenance, being glad we have ability and an opportunity to be charitable.

Secondly. Good encouragement to perform this work of charity in the manner thus directed; for example, here the apostle tells the Corinthians,

1. They themselves would be no losers by what they gave in charity. This may serve to obviate a secret objection in the minds of many against this good work, who are ready to think they may want what they give away; but such should consider what is given to the poor in a right manner is far from being lost. As the precious seed which is cast into the ground is not lost, though it is buried there for a time, for it will spring up and bear fruit, the sower shall receive it again with increase, ver. 6, such good returns may they expect that give freely and liberally in charity. For,

1st. God loveth a cheerful giver, ver. 7. And what may not they hope to receive who are the objects of the Divine love? Can a man be a loser by doing that with which God is pleased? May not such a one be sure he shall some way or other be a gainer? Nay, is not the love and favour of God better than all other things, better than life itself?

2nd. God is able to make our charity redound to our advantage, ver. 8. We have no reason to distrust the goodness of God, and to be sure we have no reason to question his power; he is "able to make all grace abound" towards us, and to abound in us, to give a large increase of spiritual and temporal good things. He can make us to have a sufficiency in all things, to be content with what we have, to make up what we give, to make us able to give yet more, as it is written, *Ps. cxii. 9*, concerning the charitable man, "He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness" that is, his almsgiving, "endureth for ever." The honour of it is lasting, the reward of it eternal, and he is still able to live comfortably himself, and give liberally to others.

3rd. The apostle puts up a prayer to God on their behalf, that they might be gainers and not losers, ver. 10, 11; where observe, *First*. To whom the prayer is made, namely, unto God, who "ministereth seed to the sower;" that is, who by his providence giveth such an increase of the fruits of the earth, that we have not only bread sufficient to eat for one year, but enough to sow again for a future supply. Or thus, it is God that giveth us not only a competency for ourselves, but that also wherewith we may supply the wants of others, and so should be as seed to be sown. *Secondly*. For what he prayeth; and there

shall be punished. "We should notice in verses 3 to 6 the completeness of the military allegory. The image is that of a campaign against rebels. Rock-forts (such as those on St. Paul's own Cilician coast) must be cast down, and when the general obedience of the country is secured, those who are still rebellious must be summarily punished" (Howson).

x. 9. Supply "I say this." "I say this lest I should seem to be terrifying with empty threats."

are several things he desireth for them, namely, that they may have "bread for their food," that is, always a good competency for themselves, food convenient; that God would "multiply their seed sown," that is, that they might still be able to do more good; and that there might be "an increase of the fruits of righteousness, that is, that they might reap plentifully, and have the best and most ample returns of their charity, so as to be "enriched in every thing to all bountifulness," ver. 11; that upon the whole they may find it true they shall be no losers, but great gainers. Note, Works of charity are so far from impoverishing us that they are the proper means truly to enrich us, or make us truly rich.

2. The poor distressed saints would be gainers, as they would be no losers, for this service would supply their wants, ver. 12. If we have reason to think them to be saints whom we believe to be of the household of faith, whose wants are great, how ready should we be to do them good? Our goodness cannot extend unto God, but we should freely extend it to these excellent ones of the earth, and thus shew that we delight in them.

3. This would redound to the praise and glory of God. Many thanksgivings would be given to God on this account, by the apostle, and by them that were employed in this ministration, ver. 11; these would bless God who had made them happy instruments in so good a work, and made them successful in it. Besides these, others also would be thankful: the poor that were supplied in their wants would not fail to be very thankful to God, and bless God for them; and all that wished well to the Gospel would glorify God for this experiment, or proof of subjection to the Gospel of Christ, and true love to all men, ver. 11. Note, 1. True Christianity is a subjection to the Gospel, a yielding ourselves to the commanding influence of its truths and laws. 2. We must evidence the sincerity of our subjection to the Gospel by works of charity. 3. This will be for the credit of our profession, and to the praise and glory of God. 4. Those whose wants were supplied would make the best returns they were able, by sending up many prayers to God for those who had relieved them, ver. 14. And thus should we recompense the kindnesses we receive when we are not in a capacity of recompensing them any other way; and, as this is the only recompense the poor can make, so it is many times greatly for the advantage of the rich.

Thirdly. The apostle concludeth this whole matter with this doxology, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift," ver. 15. Some think by this unspeakable gift he meaneth the gift of grace bestowed on the churches, in making them able and willing to supply the necessities of the saints, which would be attended with unspeakable benefits both to the givers and receivers. It should seem rather that he meaneth Jesus Christ, who is indeed the unspeakable gift of God unto this world; a gift we have all reason to be very thankful for.

"Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift." This is one of the most striking instances which occur in the New Testament, shewing that the mind of Paul was full of this subject; and that wherever he began, he was sure to end with a reference to the Redeemer. The invaluable gift of a Saviour was so familiar to his mind, and he was so accustomed to dwell on that in his private thoughts, that the mind naturally and easily glanced on that whenever anything occurred that by the remotest allusion would suggest it. The idea is, "Your benefactions are indeed valuable; and for them, for the disposition which you have manifested, and for all the good which you will be enabled thus to accomplish, we are bound to give thanks to God. All this will excite the gratitude of those who shall be benefited. But how small is all this compared with the great gift which God has imparted in bestowing a Saviour! That is unspeakable." The word here used (*ἀνεκδιμήτῃ*) means, what cannot be related, unutterable. It occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The idea is, that no words can properly express the greatness of the gift thus bestowed on man. It is higher than the mind can conceive, higher than language can express. On this verse we may observe, 1. That the Saviour is a gift to men. So he is uniformly represented: see *Jno. iii. 16*; *Gal. i. 4*; *ii. 20*; *Eph. i. 22*; *1 Tim. ii. 6*; *Tit. ii. 14*. Man had no claim on God. He could not compel him to provide a plan of salvation; and the whole arrangement, the selection of the Saviour, the sending him into the world, and all the benefits resulting from his work, are all an undeserved gift to man. 2. This is a gift unspeakably great, whose value no language can express, no heart fully conceive. It is so because, 1st. Of his own greatness and glory. 2nd. Because of the inexpressible love which he evinced. 3rd. Because of the unutterable sufferings which he endured. 4th. Because of the inexpressibly great benefits which result from his work. No language can do justice to this work in either of these respects; no heart in this world fully conceives the obligation which rests upon man in virtue of his work. 3. Thanks should be rendered to God for this. We owe him our highest praises for this. This appears, 1st. Because it was mere benevolence in God. We had no claim; we could not compel him to grant us a Saviour. The gift might have been withheld, and his throne would have been spotless. We owe no thanks where we have a claim; where we deserve nothing, then he who benefits us has a claim on our thanks. 2nd. Because of the benefits which we have received from him. Who can express this? All our peace and hope, all our comfort and joy in this life, all our prospect of pardon and salvation, all the offers of eternal glory are to be traced to him. Man has no prospect of being happy when he dies but in virtue of the "unspeakable gift" of God. And when he thinks of his sins, which may now be freely pardoned; when he thinks of an agitated and troubled conscience, which may now be at peace; when he thinks of his soul, which may now be unspeakably and eternally happy; when he thinks of the hell from which he is delivered, and of the heaven to whose eternal glories he may now be raised up by the gift of a Saviour, his heart should overflow with gratitude, and the language should be continually on his lips and in his heart, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." Every other mercy should seem small compared with this; and every manifestation of right feeling in the heart should lead us to contemplate the source of it, and to feel, as Paul did, that all is to be traced to the unspeakable gift of God.—A. B.]

CHAPTER X.

There was no place in which the apostle Paul met with more opposition from false apostles than at Corinth; he had many enemies there. Let not any of the ministers of Christ think it strange if they meet with perils, not only from enemies, but from false brethren, for blessed Paul himself did so. Though he was so blameless and inoffensive in all his carriage, so condescending and useful to all, yet there were those that bore him ill-will, that envied him, and did all they could to undermine him, and lessen his interest and reputation; therefore he vindicated himself from their imputations, and armeth the Corinthians against their insinuations. In this chapter the apostle, in a mild and humble manner, asserteth the power of his preaching, and to punish offenders, ver. 1-6. He then proceedeth to reason the case with the Corinthians, asserting his relation to Christ, and his authority as an apostle of Christ, ver. 7-11; and refuseth to justify himself, or to act by such rules as the false teachers did, but according to better rules he had fixed for himself, ver. 12-18.

x. 13. "Without measure:" there is no measure or standard for the man who measures himself by himself. "To reach:" "that we should reach as far as even you." St. Paul's measure was one which God had appointed.

x. 15. "Our success in your case will give us an important step towards further progress beyond you, according to our divinely-assigned apportionment of the area or sphere of our work."

xi. 1. Through fear for the Corinthians, who were disposed to lend



OW I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you: 2 But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

Here we may observe,

First. The mild and humble manner in which the blessed apostle addresseth the Corinthians, and how desirous he is that no occasion might be given him to use severity.

1. He addresseth them in a very mild and humble manner: "I, Paul, myself beseech you," ver. 1. We find in the introduction to this epistle he joined Timothy with himself, but now he speaketh only for himself, against whom the false apostles had particularly levelled their reproaches; yet in the midst of the greatest provocations he shewed humility and mildness, from the consideration of the "meekness and gentleness of Christ," and desireth this great example might have the same influence on the Corinthians. Note, When we find ourselves tempted, or inclined to be rough and severe towards anybody, we should think on the meekness and gentleness of Christ, that appeared in him in the days of his flesh, in the design of his undertaking, and in all the acts of his grace towards poor souls. How humbly also doth this great apostle speak of himself, as one "in presence base among them!" So his enemies spake of him with contempt, and this he seemeth to acknowledge; whilst others thought meanly and spake scornfully of him, he had low thoughts of himself, and spake humbly of himself. Note, We should be sensible of our own infirmities, and think humbly of ourselves, even when men reproach us for them.

2. He is desirous that no occasion might be given to use severity, ver. 2. He beseecheth them to give no occasion for him to be bold, or exercise his authority against them in general, as he had resolved to do against some that unjustly charged him as "walking according to the flesh;" that is, of regulating his conduct, even in his ministerial actings, according to carnal policy, or with worldly views. This was what the apostle had renounced, and this is contrary to the spirit and design of the Gospel, and was far from being the aim and design of the apostle. Hereupon,

Secondly. He asserteth the power of his preaching, and to punish offenders.

1. The power of his preaching, ver. 3-5. Where observe, 1st. The work of the ministry is a warfare, not after the flesh indeed, for it is a spiritual warfare, with spiritual enemies, and for spiritual purposes. And though ministers do walk in the flesh, or live in the body, and in the common affairs of life do act as other men, yet in their work and warfare they must not go by the maxims of the flesh, nor should they design to please the flesh. That must be crucified with its affections and lusts; it must be mortified and kept under. 2nd. The doctrines of the Gospel and discipline of the church are the weapons of this warfare, and these are not carnal. Outward force therefore is not the method of the Gospel, but strong persuasion by the power of truth and the meekness of wisdom. A good argument this is against persecution for conscience' sake. Conscience is accountable to God only; and people must be persuaded to God and their duty, not driven by force of arms. And so the weapons of our warfare are mighty, or very powerful: the evidence of truth is convincing and cogent. This indeed is through God, or owing unto him, because they are his institutions, and accompanied with his blessing, which maketh all opposition to fall before his victorious Gospel. Where we may observe, *First*. What opposition is made against the Gospel by the powers of sin and Satan in the hearts of men. Ignorance, prejudices, beloved lusts, are Satan's strongholds in the souls of some; vain imaginations, carnal reasonings, and high thoughts or proud conceits in others, do exalt themselves "against the knowledge of God;" that is, by these ways the devil endeavours to keep men from faith and obedience to the Gospel, and secureth his possession of the hearts of men as his own house or property. But then observe, *Secondly*. The conquest which the word of God doth gain. These strong-holds are pulled down, by the Gospel as the means, through the grace and power of God accompanying it as the principal efficient cause. Note, The conversion of the soul is the conquest of Satan in that soul.

[All Christians and all Christian ministers are engaged in a warfare, ver. 3. They are at war with sin in their own hearts, and with sin wherever it exists on earth, and with the powers of darkness. With foes so numerous and so vigilant they should not expect to live a life of ease or quietness. Peace, perfect peace, they may expect in heaven, not on earth. Here they are to fight the good fight of faith, and thus to lay hold on eternal life. It has been the common lot of all the children of God to maintain such a war, and shall we expect to be exempt?

' Shall I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

a more willing ear to false apostles than to himself, Paul is compelled to commend himself, and remind them of his disinterestedness, sufferings, and conflicts, in contrast to the self-seeking of his opponents. "Folly:" "The 'folly' by which the apostle describes the information concerning himself can only be taken in the sense of his opponents. The whole passage hereby acquires an ironical tinge, and a tendency towards reproach. Paul considers his readers as entering into the views of his antagonists, and thus entreats them to

Are there no foes for me to face;
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?—A. B.]

2. The apostle's power to punish offenders (and that in an extraordinary manner) is asserted in ver. 6. The apostle was a prime minister in the kingdom of Christ, and chief officer in his army, and had in readiness; that is, he had power and authority at hand "to revenge all disobedience," that is, to punish offenders in a most exemplary and extraordinary manner. The apostle speaketh not of personal revenge, but of punishing disobedience to the Gospel, and disorderly walking among church members, by inflicting church censures. Note, Though the apostle shewed meekness and gentleness, yet he would not betray his authority; and therefore intimateth that when he would commend them whose obedience was fulfilled or manifested, others would fall under severe censures.

7 Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he *is* Christ's, even so *are* we Christ's. 8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed: 9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. 10 For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible. 11 Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *will we be* also in deed when we are present.

In these verses the apostle proceedeth to reason the case with the Corinthians, in opposition to those who despised him, judged him, and spoke hardly of him. "Do ye," saith he, "look on things after the outward appearance?" ver. 7. Is this a fit measure or rule to make an estimate of things or persons by, and to judge between me and my adversaries? In outward appearance Paul was mean and despicable with some, he did not make a figure as perhaps some of his competitors might do; but this was a false rule to judge by. It should seem that some boasted mighty things of themselves, and made a fair show, but there are false appearances many times. A man may seem to be learned that hath not learned Christ, and appear virtuous that hath not a principle of grace in his heart. However, the apostle asserteth two things of himself:

First. His relation to Christ. "If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's," ver. 7. It should seem by this that Paul's adversaries boasted of their relation to Christ as his ministers and servants. Now the apostle reasoneth thus with the Corinthians: Suppose it to be so, allowing what they say to be true,—and let us observe that, in fair arguing, we should allow all that may be reasonably granted; and should not think it impossible but those who differ from us very much may yet belong to Christ, as well as we,—allowing them (might the apostle say) what they boast of, yet they ought also to allow this to us, that we also are Christ's. Note, 1. We must not, by the most charitable allowances we make to others that differ from us, cut ourselves off from Christ, or deny our relation to him. For, 2. There is room in Christ for many, and those that differ much from one another may yet be one in him. And it would go to heal the differences that are among Christians if they would remember that, how confident soever we may be that we belong to Christ, yet at the same time we must allow that they who differ from us may belong to Christ too, and therefore should be treated accordingly. We must not think we are the people, and that none belong to Christ but us. This we may plead for ourselves against those that judge us, and despise us, that how weak soever we are, yet as they are Christ's so are we; we profess the same faith, we walk by the same rule, we build upon the same foundation, and hope for the same inheritance.

Secondly. His authority from Christ as an apostle. This he had mentioned before, ver. 6; and now he tells them he might speak of it again, and that with some sort of boasting, seeing it was a truth that the Lord had given it to him, and it was more than his adversaries could justly pretend to; it was, to be sure, what he should not be ashamed of, ver. 8. Concerning which, observe, 1. The nature of his authority; it was for "edification, and not for destruction." This indeed is the end of all authority, civil and ecclesiastical, and was the end of that extraordinary authority which the apostles had, and of all church discipline. 2. The caution with which he speaketh of his authority, professing his design was not to terrify them with big words, nor by angry letters, ver. 9. Thus he seemeth to obviate an objection that might have been formed against him, ver. 10. But the apostle declareth he did not intend to frighten them that were obedient, nor did he write anything in his letters that he was not able to make good by deeds against the disobedient; and he would have his adversaries know this, ver. 11, that he would by the exercise of his apostolical power committed to him make it appear to have a real efficacy.

12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 13 But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. 14 For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our* measure, as though we reached

permit him to continue yet a little in his foolishness" (Olshausen). "And indeed bear;" rather, "and indeed ye do bear with me."

xi. 2. Paul justifies his self-commendation by his zealous care lest they should fall from Christ, to whom he has been the means of espousing them.

xi. 4. "Ye might well bear with him:" ironically, "There might appear some excuse for your bearing with such a teacher." But as there could be no other Jesus or Gospel, those bearing with such a

CHAPTER XI.

not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ: 15 Not boasting of things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, 16 To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. 17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

In these verses observe,
First. [They had accused him of a want of boldness and energy when present with them, ver. 1, 10. Here, in a strain of severe but delicate irony, he says he was not bold enough to do things which they had done. He did not dare to do the things which had been done among them. To such boldness of character, present or absent, he could lay no claim. "Or compare ourselves," &c. I am not bold enough for that. That requires a stretch of boldness and energy to which I can lay no claim.—A. B.] The apostle refuseth to justify himself, or to act by such rules as the false apostles did, ver. 12. He plainly intimateth they took a wrong method to commend themselves in "measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, which is not wise." They were pleased, and did pride themselves in their own attainments, and never considered those that far exceeded them in gifts and graces, in power and authority; and this made them haughty and insolent. Note, If we would compare ourselves with others that do excel us, this would be a good method to keep us humble; we should be pleased and thankful for what we have of gifts or graces, but never pride ourselves therein, as if there were none to be compared with us, or that do excel us. The apostle would not be of the number of such vain men; let us resolve we will not make ourselves of that number.

Secondly. He fixeth a better rule for his conduct; namely, "not to boast of things without his measure," which was the measure God had distributed to him, ver. 13. His meaning is either that he would not boast of more gifts or graces, or power and authority, than God had really bestowed on him; or, rather that he would not act beyond his commission as to persons or things, nor go beyond the line prescribed to him, which he plainly intimateth the false apostles did, while they boasted of "other men's labours." The apostle's resolution was to keep within his own province, and that compass of ground which God had marked out for him. His commission as an apostle was to preach the Gospel every where, especially among the Gentiles, and he was not confined to one place; yet he observed the directions of providence and the Holy Spirit as to the particular places whither he went, or where he did abide.

Thirdly. He acted according to this rule: "We stretch not ourselves beyond our measure," ver. 14. And particularly he acted according to this rule in preaching at Corinth, and in the exercise of his apostolical authority there. For he came thither by Divine direction, and there he converted many to Christianity; and, therefore, in boasting of them as his charge, he acted not contrary to his rule, he boasted not of "other men's labours," ver. 15.

Fourthly. He declareth his success in observing this rule. His hope was that their faith was increased, and that others beyond them, even in the remoter parts of Achaia, would embrace the Gospel also; and in all this he exceeded not his commission, nor acted in "another man's line."

Fifthly. He seemeth to check himself in this matter, as if he had spoken too much in his own praise. The unjust accusations and reflections of his enemies had made it needful he should justify himself; and the wrong methods they took gave him good occasion to mention the better rule he had observed; yet he is afraid of boasting, or taking any praise to himself, and therefore he mentioneth two things which ought to be regarded; namely, 1. That "he that glorieth should glory in the Lord," ver. 17. If we are able to fix good rules for our conduct, or act by them, or have any good success in so doing, the praise and glory of all is owing unto God. Ministers in particular must be careful not to glory in their performances, but must give God the glory of their work, and the success thereof.

[On this verse we may here remark, 1. That nothing is more common than for men to boast or glory. 2. The things of which they boast are very various. (1.) Many are proud of their personal beauty, many too, who would be unwilling to be thought proud of it. (2.) Many glory in their accomplishments; or, what is more likely, in the accomplishments of their children. (3.) Many glory in their talents; talents for any thing, valuable or not, in which they suppose they surpass others. (4.) Many glory in their property; in fine houses, extended plantations, or in the reputation of being rich; or in gorgeous dress, equipage, and furniture. In short, there is nothing which men possess in which they are not prone to glory. 3. If we glory, it should be in the Lord. We should ascribe our talents, wealth, health, strength, salvation, to him. We should rejoice, (1.) That we have such a Lord—so glorious, so full of mercy, so powerful, so worthy of confidence and love. (2.) We should rejoice in our endowments and possessions as his gift. We should rejoice that we may come and lay every thing at his feet; and whatever may be our rank, or talents, or learning, we should rejoice that we may come with the humblest child of poverty, and sorrow, and want, and say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake," Ps. cxv. 1.—A. B.]

2. That "not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth," ver. 18. Of all flattery, self-flattery is the worst; and self-applause is seldom any better than self-flattery and self-deceit. At the best, self-commendation is no praise, it is oftentimes as foolish and vain as it is proud; therefore, instead of praising or commending ourselves, we should strive to approve ourselves to God, and his approbation will be our best commendation.

[What a reverse of judgment there will yet be on human character! How many now commend themselves who will be condemned in the last day! How many men boast of their talents and morals, and even their religion, who will then be involved in indiscriminate condemnation with the most vile and worthless of the race! How anxious should we be, therefore, to secure the approbation of God! and, whatever our fellow-men may say of us, how infinitely desirable is it to be commended then by our heavenly Father!—A. B.]

one would be really without excuse. But if they received another teacher, how much more should they receive Paul, who "was not one whit," &c. ? (verse 5).

xi. 9. See Phil. iv. 15, 16.

xi. 16. "Again:" referring to verse 1; resuming and enlarging on the request there made.

xi. 20. "That such violence might literally be expected from the rulers of the early Christian society is also implied in 1 Tim. iii. 3;

In this chapter the apostle goes on with his discourse in opposition to the false apostles that were very industrious to lessen his interest and reputation among the Corinthians, and had prevailed too much by their insinuations. First, he apologiseth for his going about to commend himself, and giveth the reason for what he did, ver. 1—4. Afterwards he mentioneth, in his own necessary vindication, his equality with the other apostles, and with the false apostles, in this particular of preaching the Gospel to the Corinthians freely, without wages, ver. 5—15. Then he maketh another preface to what he was about farther to say in his own justification, ver. 16—21. And afterwards giveth a large account of his qualifications, labours, and sufferings, in which he exceeded the false prophets, ver. 22—33.



WOULD to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly: and indeed bear with me. 2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.

Here we may observe,
First. The apology the apostle maketh for going about to commend himself. He is loth to enter upon this subject of self-commendation. "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly," ver. 1. He calleth this folly, because too often it is really no better. In his case it was necessary; yet seeing others might apprehend it to be folly in him, he desireth them to bear with it. Note, As much against the grain as it is with a proud man to acknowledge his infirmities, so much is it against the grain with an humble man to speak in his own praise. It is no pleasure to a good man to speak well of himself, yet in some cases it is lawful; namely, when it is for the advantage of others, or for our own necessary vindication, as thus it was here. For,

Secondly. We have the reasons for what the apostle did; namely, 1. To preserve the Corinthians from being corrupted by the insinuations of the false apostles, ver. 2, 3. He tells them he was "jealous over them with godly jealousy;" that is, he was afraid lest their faith should be weakened by hearkening to such suggestions as tended to lessen their regard to his ministry, by which they were brought to the Christian faith. He had espoused them to one husband, that is, converted them to Christianity; and the conversion of a soul is its marriage to the Lord Jesus; and he was desirous to "present them as a chaste virgin;" that is, pure, and spotless, and faithful, not having their minds corrupted with false doctrines, by false teachers; so as Eve was beguiled by the subtilty of the serpent. This godly jealousy in the apostle was a mixture of love and fear; and faithful ministers cannot but be afraid and concerned for their people, lest they should lose that which they have received, and turn from what they have embraced, especially when deceivers are gone abroad, or have crept in among them.

[There is great danger of being corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Satan desires to destroy us; and his great object is readily accomplished if he can seduce Christians from simple devotedness to the Redeemer; if he can secure corruption in doctrine, or in the manner of worship, and can produce conformity in dress and in the style of living to this world. Formerly, he excited persecution; but in that he was foiled. The more the church was persecuted, the more it grew. Then he changed his ground. What he could not do by persecution he sought to do by corrupting the church; and in this he has been by far more successful. This can be done slowly, but certainly; effectually, but without exciting suspicion. And it matters not to Satan whether the church is crippled by persecution, or its zeal destroyed by false doctrine, and by conformity to the world. His aim is secured, and the power of the church destroyed. The form in which he now assails the church is by attempting to seduce it from simple and hearty attachment to the Saviour. And, O, in how many instances is he successful!—A. B.]

2. To vindicate himself against the false apostles, forasmuch as they could not pretend they had another Jesus, or another Spirit, or another gospel, to preach to them, ver. 4. If this had been the case there would have been some colour of reason to bear with them, or to hearken to them; but seeing there is but one Jesus, one Spirit, and one Gospel, that is, or at least that ought to be, preached to them, and received by them, what reason could there be why the Corinthians should be prejudiced against him, who first converted them to the faith, by the artifices of any adversary? It was a just occasion of jealousy that such persons designed to preach "another Jesus, another Spirit, and another gospel."

5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. 6 But though *I be* rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things. 7 Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you

Titus i. 7. Even so late as the seventh century, the Council of Braga, A.D. 675, orders that no bishop at his will and pleasure shall strike his clergy, lest he lose the respect which they owe him" (Stanley).

xi. 32. "Governor:" prefect stationed there by the Arabian king. Damascus was in a Roman province; but at this time Aretas had got possession of it, on the death of the emperor and consequent interruption of Vitellius's operations, who had been sent against Aretas.

xii. 1. "Truly it is not to my advantage to glory; for I will come

the gospel of God freely? 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages of *them*, to do you service. 9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep *myself*. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. 11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. 12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. 13 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

After the foregoing preface to what he was about to say, the apostle in these verses mentioneth.

First. His equality with the other apostles, that he was "not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles," ver. 5. This he expresseth very modestly, "I suppose so," and he might have spoken very positively. The apostleship, as an office, was equal in all the apostles; but the apostles, like other Christians, did differ one from another. These stars differed one from another in glory, and Paul was indeed of the first magnitude; yet he speaketh modestly of himself, and humbly owneth his personal infirmity, that he was "rude in speech;" that is, he had not such a graceful delivery as some other might have. Some think that he was a man of a very low stature, his voice was answerably small; others think he might have had some impediment in his speech, perhaps a stammering tongue. However, he was not rude in knowledge, he was not unacquainted with the best rules of oratory and art of persuasion, much less was he ignorant of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, as had been thoroughly manifested among them.

Secondly. His equality with the false apostles in this particular, the preaching the Gospel unto them freely, without wages. This the apostle largely insisteth on, and sheweth that as they could not but own him to be a minister of Christ, so they ought to acknowledge he had been a good friend to them. For,

1. He had preached the Gospel to them freely, ver. 7-10. He had proved at large, in his former epistle to them, the lawfulness of ministers receiving maintenance from the people, and the duty of the people to give them an honourable maintenance; and here he saith he himself had taken wages of other churches, ver. 8, so that he had a right to have asked and received from them; yet he waived his right, and chose rather to abase himself, by working with his hands, in the trade of tent-making, to maintain himself, than be burthensome to them, that they might be exalted, or encouraged to receive the Gospel, which they had so cheap; yea, he chose rather to be supplied from Macedonia than to be chargeable unto them.

2. He informeth them of the reason of this his conduct among them. And negatively,—it was not because he did not love them, ver. 11, or was unwilling to receive tokens of their love; for love and friendship is manifested by mutual giving and receiving. But positively,—it was to avoid offence, that he might "cut off occasion from them that desired occasion." He would not give occasion for any to accuse him of worldly designs in preaching the Gospel, or that he intended to make a trade of it to enrich himself; and that others who opposed him at Corinth might not in this respect gain an advantage against him; that wherein they gloried as to this matter, "they might be found even as he," ver. 12. It is not improbable to suppose that the chief of the false teachers at Corinth, or some among them, were rich, and taught (or deceived) the people freely, and might accuse the apostle, or his fellow-labourers, as mercenary men, that received hire or wages, and therefore the apostle kept to his resolution not to be chargeable to any of the Corinthians.

3. The false apostles are charged as "deceitful workers," ver. 13; and that upon this account, because they would transform themselves into the likeness of the apostles of Christ, and, though they were the ministers of Satan, would seem to be the ministers of righteousness. They would be as industrious and as generous in promoting error as the apostles were in preaching truth; they would endeavour as much to undermine the kingdom of Christ as the apostles did to establish it. There were counterfeit prophets under the Old Testament, that wore the garb, and learned the language, of the prophets of the Lord; so there were counterfeit apostles under the New Testament, that seemed in many respects like the true apostles of Christ. And no marvel, saith the apostle. Hypocrisy is a thing not to be much wondered at in this world, especially when we consider the great influence Satan hath upon the minds of many, who ruleth in the hearts of the children of disobedience; and as he can turn himself into any shape, and put on almost any form, and look sometimes like an angel of light, in order to promote his kingdom of darkness, so he will teach his ministers and instruments to do the same.

[The phrase, "An angel of light," means a pure and holy angel—light being the emblem of purity and holiness. Such are all the angels that dwell in heaven, and the idea is, that Satan assumes such a form as to appear to be such an angel. Learn here, 1. His power. He can assume such an aspect as he pleases. 2. His art. He is long practised in deceitful arts. For six thousand years he has been practising the art of delusion, and with him it is perfect. 3. We are not to suppose that all that appears to be piety is piety. Some of the most plausible appearances of piety are assumed by Satan and his ministers. 4. We are not to expect that Satan will appear to man to be as

bad as he is. He never shews himself openly to be a spirit of pure wisdom—or black and abominable in his character; or full of evil, and hateful. He would thus defeat himself. It is for this reason that wicked men do not believe that there is such a being as Satan. Though continually under his influence, and "led captive by him at his will," yet they neither see him nor the chains which lead them, nor are they willing to believe in the existence of the one or the other.—A. B.]

But it followeth, their "end is according to their works," ver. 15; that is, the end will discover them to be "deceitful workers," and their work will end in ruin and destruction.

16 I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little. 17 That which I speak, I speak *it* not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. 18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. 19 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye *yourselves* are wise. 20 For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour *you*, if a man take of *you*, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. 21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

Here we have a farther excuse that the apostle maketh for what he was about to say in his own vindication.

First. He would not have them think he was guilty of folly in saying what he had said to vindicate himself; "Let no man think me a fool," ver. 16. Ordinarily indeed it is unbecoming a wise man to be much and often speaking in his own praise; boasting of ourselves is usually not only a sign of a proud mind, but a mark of folly also. However, saith the apostle, yet "as a fool receive me;" that is, if ye do count it folly in me to boast a little, yet give due regard to what I shall say.

Secondly. He mentioneth a caution, to prevent abuse of what he should say, telling them what he spake. He did not speak after the Lord, ver. 17; that is, he would not have them think that boasting of ourselves, or glorying in what we have, is a thing commanded by the Lord in general unto Christians, nor yet that this is always necessary in our own vindication; though it may be lawfully used, because not contrary to the Lord, when, strictly speaking, it is not after the Lord. It is the duty and practice of Christians, in obedience to the command and example of the Lord, rather to humble and abase themselves; yet prudence must direct in what circumstances it is needful to do that which we may do lawfully, even speak of what God hath wrought for us, and in us, an 1 by us too.

Thirdly. He giveth a good reason why they should suffer him to boast a little, namely, because they suffered others to do so who had less reason. "Seeing many glory after the flesh," that is, of carnal privileges, or outward advantages and attainments, "I will glory also," ver. 18; but he would not glory in those things, though he had as much, or more, reason than others to do so. But he gloried in his infirmities, as he tells them afterwards. The Corinthians thought themselves wise, and might think it an instance of wisdom to bear with the weakness of others, and therefore suffered others to do what might seem folly, therefore the apostle would have them bear with him. Or these words, "Ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise," ver. 19, may be ironical, and then the meaning is this, Notwithstanding all your wisdom, you willingly suffer yourselves to be brought into bondage under the Jewish yoke, or suffer others to tyrannize over you, nay, to devour you, or make a prey of you, and take of your hire for their own advantage, and to exalt themselves above you, and lord it over you, nay, even to "smite you on the face," or impose upon you to your very faces, ver. 20, upbraiding you whilst they reproach me, as if you had been very weak in shewing regard to me, ver. 21. And seeing this was the case, that the Corinthians, or some among them, could so easily bear all this from the false apostles, it was reasonable for the apostle to desire and expect they should bear with what might seem to them an indiscretion in him, seeing the circumstances of the case were such as made it needful, that "whereinsoever any were bold" he should be "bold also," ver. 21.

22 Are they Hebrews? so *am* I. Are they Israelites? so *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so *am* I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28 Beside those

to visions and revelations," &c. "For:" i.e., "I will show the disadvantage of boasting, by introducing instances whereby this may be seen." He then mentions revelations and visions, such as might seem to make boasting pardonable, but adds that a corrective to such boasting was given (verse 7). Another reading is, "I must needs boast, though it be not expedient;" the "for" introduced (as above) is proof of the inexpediency of boasting.

xii. 2. "I knew a man:" rather, "I know a man," meaning him-

self. "Fourteen years:" i.e., during the time of his stay at Tarsus (Acts ix. 30, xi. 25), or during his second visit (after his conversion) to Jerusalem (Acts xxii. 17). "Third heaven:" "no fixed division, but a high degree of celestial exaltation" (Alford).

xii. 5. "The principle which lies at the basis of the whole passage is, that he was not to boast of such revelations as though they argued anything in his own favour, but only as an incident connected with a man in Christ who had been at this period completely lifted out of his

things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? 30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. 31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. 32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: 33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.



ROMAN LICTORS WITH FASCES.—VER. 25.

Here the apostle gives a large account of his own qualifications, labours, and sufferings; not out of pride or vainglory, but to the honour of God, who had enabled him to do and suffer so much for the cause of Christ, and wherein he excelled the false apostles, who would lessen his character and usefulness among the Corinthians. Observe,

First. He mentioneth the privileges of his birth, ver. 22, which were equal to any they could pretend to. He was "an Hebrew of the Hebrews," of a family among the Jews that never intermarried with the Gentiles; he was also an Israelite, and could boast of his being descended from the beloved Jacob, as well as they; and was also of the seed of Abraham, and not of the proselytes. It should seem from hence, that the false apostles were of the Jewish race, who gave disturbance to the Gentile converts.

Secondly. He maketh mention also of his apostleship, that he was more than an ordinary minister of Christ, ver. 23. God had counted him faithful, and had put him into the ministry; he had been a useful minister of Christ unto them; they had found full proofs of his ministry. "Are they ministers of Christ? I am more so."

Thirdly. He chiefly insisteth upon this, that he had been an extraordinary sufferer for Christ; and this is what he gloried in, or rather he gloried in the grace of God that had enabled him to be more abundant in labours, and to endure very great sufferings, such as "stripes above measure," frequent imprisonments, and often the dangers of death, ver. 23. Note, When the apostle would prove himself an extraordinary minister, he proveth he had been an extraordinary sufferer. Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles, and for that reason was hated of the Jews. They did all they could against him, and among the Gentiles also he met with hard usage. Bonds and imprisonments were familiar to him; never was the most notorious malefactor more frequently in the hands of public justice than Paul was for righteousness' sake. The jail and the whipping-post, and all other hard usages of those that are accounted the worst of men, were what he was accustomed to. As to the Jews, whenever he fell into their hands they never spared him. Five times he fell under their lash, and received "forty stripes, save one," ver. 24. Forty stripes were the utmost their law allowed, *Deu. xxv. 3*; but it was usual with them, that they might not exceed, to abate one, at least, of that number; and to have the abatement of one only was all the favour that ever Paul received from them. The Gentiles were not tied up to that moderation, and among them he was "thrice beaten with rods," of which we may suppose once was at Philippi, *Acts xvi. 22*; "once he was stoned" in a popular tumult, and was taken up for dead, *Acts xiv. 19*; he saith, that "thrice he suffered shipwreck," and we may believe him, though the sacred history giveth a relation but of one; "a night and a day he had been in the deep," ver. 25, that is, in some deep dungeon or other, shut up as a prisoner. Thus he was all his days a constant confessor; perhaps scarce a year of his life, after his conversion, passed without suffering some hardships or other for his religion. Yet this was not all, for wherever he went, he went in perils; he was exposed to perils of all sorts. If he journeyed by land, or voyaged by sea, he was in perils of robbers, or enemies of some sort; the Jews, his own countrymen, sought to kill him, or do him a mischief; the heathen, to whom he was sent, were not more kind to him, for

among them he was in peril. If he was in the city, or in the wilderness, still he was in peril. He was in peril not only amongst avowed enemies but among them also that called themselves brethren, but were "false brethren," ver. 26. Besides all this, he had great "weariness and painfulness" in his ministerial labours; and these are things that will come into account shortly, and people will be reckoned with for all the care and pains of their ministers concerning them. Paul was a stranger to wealth and plenty, power and pleasure, preferment and ease; he was "in watchings often," and exposed to "hunger and thirst;" and "fastings often," it may be out of necessity; and endured "cold and nakedness," ver. 27. Thus was he, who was one of the greatest blessings of the age, used as if he had been the burthen of the earth, and the plague of his generation. And yet this is not all, for, as an apostle, the "care of all the churches" lay on him, ver. 28. He mentions this last as if this lay the heaviest upon him, and as if he could better bear all the persecutions of his enemies than the scandals that were to be found in the churches he had the oversight of; "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" ver. 29. There was not a weak Christian that he did not sympathise with, nor any one scandalized but he was affected therewith. See what little reason we have to be in love with the pomp and plenty of this world, when this blessed apostle, one of the best of men that ever lived, excepting Jesus Christ, felt so much hardship in it. Nor was he ashamed of all this, but, on the contrary, it was what he accounted his honour; and therefore, as much against the grain as it was with him to glory, yet, saith he, "if I must needs glory," if my adversaries will oblige me to it in my own necessary vindication, I will glory in these my infirmities, ver. 30. Note, Sufferings for righteousness' sake will the most of any thing redound to our honour.

In the two last verses he mentioneth one particular part of his sufferings out of its place, as if he had forgotten it before, or because the deliverance God wrought for him was most remarkable, namely, the danger he was in at Damascus, soon after he was converted, and not settled in Christianity, at least in the ministry and apostleship. This is recorded, *Acts ix. 24, 25*. This was his first great danger and difficulty, and the rest of his life was of a piece with that. And it is observable that, lest it should be thought he spake more than was true, the apostle confirmeth this narrative with a solemn oath, or appeal to the omniscience of God, ver. 31. And it is a great comfort to a good man that "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," who is an omniscient God, doth know the truth of all he saith, and knoweth all he doth, and all he suffereth for his sake.

CHAPTER XII.

In this chapter the apostle proceedeth in maintaining the honour of his apostleship. He magnified his office, when there were those that vilified it. What he saith in his own praise was only in his own justification, and the necessary defence of the honour of his ministry, the preservation of which was necessary to the success thereof. First, he maketh mention of the favour God had shewn him, and the honour done him, and the methods God took to keep him humble, and the use he made of this dispensation, ver. 1—10. Then he addresseth himself to the Corinthians, blaming them for what was faulty among them, and giving a large account of his behaviour and kind intentions towards them, ver. 11—21.



It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. 6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. 7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may

own individuality, and had been thought worthy of such grace merely on account of his being in Christ" (Kling).

xii. 7. "A thorn:" the word also signifies a stake. A painful bodily infirmity is meant.

xii. 16. A possible insinuation of his opponents is here anticipated. "Be it so that you were not burdensome: this was only a deep, crafty scheme to catch us." To this he replies by pointing out the disinterestedness of his associates as well as of himself.

xiii. 1. "Third time:" there seems little doubt, from this place and chap. xii. 14, that Paul had already paid two visits to the Corinthians, of one only of which we have any account. The second most probably was a short one, paid during the beginning of the second year of his residence at Ephesus. He will institute impartial but strict investigations when he visits them.

xiii. 6. "Reprobates:" "worthless, unable to abide the proof to which you put us."

rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

["I will come;" marg., "For I will." Our translators have omitted the word *γάρ*, "for," in the text, evidently supposing that it is a mere expletive. Doddridge renders it, "nevertheless." But it seems to me that it contains an important sense, and that it should be rendered by 'then.' 'Since it is not fit that I should glory, *then* I will refer to visions,' &c. 'I will turn away, then, from that subject, and come to another.' Thus the word *γάρ* is used in *Jno. vii. 41*, "Shall, then, (*μή γάρ*) Christ come out of Galilee?" *Acts viii. 31*, "How can I, then, (*πῶς γάρ*) except some man should guide me?" See also *Acts xix. 35*; *Rom. iii. 3*; *Phil. i. 18*.—A. B.]

Here we may observe, First. The narrative the apostle giveth of the favours God had shewn him, and the honour he had done him; for doubtless he is the man in Christ of whom he speaketh. And concerning this we may take notice,

1. Of the honour itself which was done to the apostle, namely, he was "caught up into the third heaven," ver. 2. When this was we cannot say, whether it was during those three days that he lay without sight, at his conversion, or at some other time afterwards; much less can we pretend to say how this was, whether by a separation of his soul from his body, or by an extraordinary transport in the depth of contemplation. It would be presumption for us to determine, if not also to inquire, into this matter, seeing the apostle himself saith, "Whether in the body, or out of the body," he could not tell. It was certainly a very extraordinary honour done him; in some sense he was caught up into the third heaven, that is, the heaven of the blessed, above the aerial heavens, in which the fowls fly,—above the starry heavens, which is adorned with those glorious orbs. It was into the third heaven, where God doth most eminently manifest his glory. We are not capable of knowing all, nor is it fit we should know very much of the particulars of that glorious place and state; it is our duty and interest to give diligence to make sure to ourselves a mansion there; and, if that be cleared up to us, then we should long to be removed thither to abide there for ever. This third heaven is called, "Paradise," ver. 4, in allusion to the earthly Paradise, out of which Adam was driven for his transgression. It is called the Paradise of God, *Rev. ii. 7*, signifying to us that by Christ we are restored to all the joys and honours we lost by sin, yea, unto much better. The apostle doth not mention what he saw in the third heaven or Paradise, but tells us he "heard unspeakable words," such as it is not possible for a man to utter—such is the sublimeness of the matter, and our unacquaintance with the language of the upper world. Nor was it lawful to utter those words, because while we are here in this world we have a more sure word of prophecy than such visions and revelations, *2 Pet. i. 19*. We read of the "tongues of angels" as well as of men, and Paul knew as much of that as ever any man upon earth did, and yet preferred charity before it, that is, the sincere love of God and our neighbour. This account, which the apostle giveth us of his vision, should check our curious desires after forbidden knowledge, and teach us to improve the revelation God hath given us in his word. Paul himself, who had been in the third heaven, did not publish to the world what he had heard there, but adhered to the doctrine of Christ. On that foundation the church is built, and on that we must build our faith and hope.

[The transaction here referred to is very remarkable. It is the only instance in the Scriptures of anyone who was taken to heaven, either in reality or in vision, and who returned again to the earth, and was then qualified to communicate important truths about the heavenly world from personal observation. Of all the millions who have been taken to heaven, not one has been permitted to return to bear his testimony to its glories; to witness for God that he is faithful to his promises; to encourage his pious friends to persevere; or to invite his impenitent friends to follow him to that glorious world. And so fixed is the law, so settled is the principle, that even Lazarus was not permitted to go, though at the earnest request of the rich man in hell, and warn his friends not to follow him to that world of woe, *Lu. xvi. 27–31*. Mohammed, indeed, feigned that he had made a journey to heaven, and he attempts to describe what he saw, and the difference between true inspiration and false or pretended inspiration is strikingly evinced by the difference between Paul's dignified silence—*verba sacro digna silentio* (*Horace*)—and the puerilities of the prophet of Mecca: see the *Koran*, ch. xvii. The fact that Paul was not permitted to communicate what he had seen is very remarkable. It is natural to ask why it is so? I would, therefore, suggest that the following may have been some of the reasons why Paul was not permitted to communicate what he saw to men: 1. It was designed for the support of Paul himself, in view of the very remarkable trials which he was about to endure. 2. It is probable that if there were a full revelation of the glories of heaven, we should not be able to comprehend it; or, even if we did, we should be incredulous in regard to it. 3. There are great truths which it is not the design of God to reveal to men. The object is to communicate enough to win us, to comfort us, to support our faith—not to reveal all. 4. One other reason may be assigned why it was not proper for Paul to disclose what he saw, and why God has withheld more full revelations from men about heaven. It is, that his purpose is that we shall here walk by faith and not by sight. As it is, there is enough to support and comfort, not enough to make it the main and only reason why we serve God. It may be added, (1.) That we have all the truth which we shall ever have about heaven here below. No other messenger will come, none of the pious dead will return. If men, therefore, are not willing to be saved in view of the truth which they have, they must be lost. God will communicate no more. (2.) The Christian will soon know all about heaven. He will soon be there. He begins no day with any certainty that he may not close it in heaven; he lies down to rest at no time with any assurance that he will not wake in heaven, amidst its full and eternal splendours. (3.) The sinner will soon know fully what it is to lose heaven. A moment may make him fully sensible of his loss—for he may die; and a moment may put him for ever beyond the possibility of reaching a world of glory.—A. B.]

2. The modest and humble manner in which the apostle mentioneth this matter is observable. One would be apt to think that one who had had such visions and revelations as these would have boasted greatly of them; but, saith he, "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory," ver. 1. He therefore did not mention this immediately, not till "above fourteen years" after, ver. 2; and then it is not without some reluctance, as a thing which in a manner he was forced to, by the necessity of the case. Again, he speaketh of himself in the third person, and doth not say, I am the man that was thus honoured above other men. Again, his humility appeareth by *εἰ* check he seemeth to put upon himself in ver. 6, which plainly sheweth he delighted not to dwell upon this theme. Thus was he, who was not behind the chiefest of the apostles in dignity, very eminent for his humility. Note, It is an excellent thing to have a lowly spirit in the midst of high advancements, and those that abase themselves shall be exalted.

xiii. 7. "Reprobates:" unapproved, deprived of the occasion of exercising apostolic power. "We pray for your good, even if that tend to the non-exercise, and so depreciation, of our apostolic power."

Additional Notes.—Chap. i. 12. "For:" vindication of himself as not unworthy of their sympathy and prayers, alluding to those who accused him of dishonesty and inconsistency.

i. 13. Alford paraphrases, "My character in my writings is one and the same, not fickle and changing, but such as past facts have

Secondly. The apostle giveth an account of the methods God took to keep him humble, and to prevent his being lifted up above measure, and this he speaketh of to balance the account that was given before of the visions and revelations he had had. Note, When God's people communicate their experiences, let them always remember to take notice of what God hath done to keep them humble, as well as of what he hath done in favour to them and for their advancement. Here observe,

1. The apostle was pained with a "thorn in the flesh," and buffeted with "a messenger of Satan," ver. 7. We are much in the dark what this was, whether some great trouble or some great temptation. Some think it was an acute bodily pain or sickness; others think it was the indignities done him by the false apostles, and the opposition he met with from them, particularly on the account of his speech, which was contemptible. However this was, God oftentimes bringeth this good out of evil, that the reproaches of our enemies help to hide pride from us; and this is certain, what the apostle calleth a thorn in his flesh was for a time very grievous to him. But the thorns Christ wore for us, and with which he was crowned, do sanctify and make easy all the thorns in the flesh we may at any time be afflicted with; for he suffered being tempted, that he might be able to succour them that are tempted. Temptations to sin are most grievous thorns; they are messengers of Satan to buffet us. Indeed it is a great grievance to a good man to be so much as tempted to sin. (See upon *Gal. iv. 14*.)

2. The design of this was to keep the apostle humble, lest he "should be exalted above measure," ver. 7. Paul himself knew he had not yet attained, neither was already perfect, and yet he was in danger of being lifted up with pride. If God love us, he will hide pride from us, and keep us from being exalted above measure; and spiritual burthens are ordered, to cure spiritual pride. This thorn in the flesh is said to be a messenger of Satan, which he did not send with a good design, but, on the contrary, with ill intentions, to discourage the apostle, who had been so highly favoured of God, and hinder him in his work. But God designed this for good, and he overruled it for good, and made this messenger of Satan to be so far from being a hindrance that it was a help to the apostle.

3. The apostle prayed earnestly to God for the removal of this sore grievance. Note, Prayer is a salve for every sore, a remedy for every malady; and when we are afflicted with thorns in the flesh we should give ourselves to prayer; therefore we are sometimes tempted that we may learn to pray. The apostle "besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from him," ver. 8. Note, Though afflictions are sent for our spiritual benefit, yet we may pray to God for the removal of them. We ought, indeed, to desire also that they may reach the end for which they are designed. The apostle prayed earnestly, and repeated his requests, he besought the Lord thrice, that is, often; so that if an answer be not given to the first prayer, nor to the second, we must hold on, and hold out, till we receive an answer. Christ himself prayed to his Father thrice. As troubles are sent to teach us to pray, so they are continued to teach us to continue instant in prayer.

4. We have an account of the answer given to the apostle's prayer, that, although the trouble was not removed, yet an equivalent should be granted: "My grace is sufficient for thee." Note, 1st. Though God accepteth the prayer of faith, yet he doth not always answer it in the letter; as he sometimes granteth in wrath, so he sometimes denieth in love. 2nd. That when God doth not remove our troubles and temptations, yet, if he give us grace sufficient for us, we have no reason to complain, or to say he dealeth ill by us. It is a great comfort to us, whatever thorns in the flesh we are pained with, God's grace is sufficient for us. Grace signifieth two things, *First*. The good-will of God towards us, and that is enough to enlighten and enliven us, sufficient to strengthen and comfort us, to support our souls and cheer up our spirits, in all afflictions and distresses. *Secondly*. The good work of God in us, the grace we receive from the fulness that is in Christ our head, and from him there shall be communicated that which is suitable and seasonable, and sufficient for his members. Christ Jesus understands our case, and knows our need, and will proportion the remedy to our malady, and not only strengthen us, but glorify himself. His strength is made perfect in our weakness. Thus his grace is manifested and magnified; he ordaineth his praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings.

Thirdly. Here is the use which the apostle maketh of this dispensation, namely, he glorieth in his infirmities, ver. 9, and took pleasure in them, ver. 10. He doth not mean his sinful infirmities—those we have reason to be ashamed of and grieved at—but he meaneth his afflictions, his "reproaches, necessities, persecutions, and distresses for Christ's sake," ver. 10. And the reason of his glory and joy on account of these things was this, they were fair opportunities for Christ to manifest the power and sufficiency of his grace resting upon him, by which he had so much experience of the strength of Divine grace that he could say, "When I am weak, then am I strong." This is a Christian paradox: when we are weak in ourselves, then we are strong in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; when we see ourselves weak in ourselves, then we go out of ourselves to Christ, and are qualified to receive strength from him, and experience most of the supplies of Divine strength and grace.

11 I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. 12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. 13 For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong. 14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not your's, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. 16 But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless,

substantiated it to be, and as I hope future facts to the end of my life will continue to do."

i. 17. "Lightness:" i.e., levity, or caprice of purpose; St. Paul meeting the charge of feebleness or caprice. "Did I change my purpose simply from caprice? Do I purpose, as a fickle, worldly man, saying different things at the same time?"

i. 19. The doctrine could not be changeable which concerned Him who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

being crafty, I caught you with guile. 17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? 18 I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? *walked we* not in the same steps? 19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. 20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and *that* I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: 21 *And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

In these verses the apostle addresseth himself to the Corinthians two ways: First. He blameth them for what was faulty in them, namely, that they had not stood up in his defence as they ought to have done, and so made it the more needful for him to insist so much on his own vindication. They in a manner compelled him to commend himself who "ought to have been commended" of them, ver. 11. And had they or some among them not failed on their part, it would have been less needful for him to have said so much on his own behalf; and he tells them farther, they in particular had good reason to speak well of him, as being "in nothing behind the very chiefest apostles," because he had given them full proof and evidence of his apostleship; for "the signs of an apostle were wrought among them in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." Note, 1. It is a debt we owe to good men to stand up in the defence of their reputation; and we are under special obligations to those we have received benefit by, especially spiritual benefit, to own them as instruments, in God's hand, of good to us, and to vindicate them when they are calumniated by others. 2. How much soever we are or ought to be esteemed by others, we ought always to think humbly of ourselves. See an example of this in this great apostle, who thought himself to be nothing, though in truth he was not behind the chiefest apostles; so far was he from seeking praise from men, though he tells them their duty to vindicate his reputation; so far was he from applauding himself, when he was forced to insist upon his own necessary self-defence.

Secondly. He giveth a large account of his behaviour and kind intentions towards them, in which we may observe the character of a faithful minister of the Gospel.

1. He was not willing to be burthensome to them, nor did he seek theirs, but them. He saith, ver. 13, he had not been burthensome to them for the time past, and tells them, ver. 14, he would not be burthensome to them for the time to come, when he should come to them; he spared their purses, and did not covet their money: "I seek not yours, but you." He sought not to enrich himself, but to save their souls; he did not desire to make a property of them to himself, but to gain them over to Christ, whose servant he was. Note, Those who aim at clothing themselves with the fleece of the flock, and take no care of the sheep, are hirelings, and not good shepherds.

["For the children," &c. There is great delicacy and address in this sentiment. The meaning is, "It is not natural and usual for children to make provision for their parents. The common course of events and of duty is, for parents to make provision for their offspring. I, therefore, your spiritual father, choose to act in the same way. I make provision for your spiritual wants; I labour and toil for you as a father does for his children. I seek your welfare, as he does, by constant self-denial. In return, I do not ask you to provide for me, any more than a father ordinarily expects his children to provide for him. I am willing to labour, as he does, content with doing my duty, and promoting the welfare of those under me." The words rendered "ought not," *ou ophetai*, are to be understood in a comparative sense. Paul does not mean that a child ought never to provide for his parents, or to lay any thing up for a sick, a poor, and an infirm father, but that the duty of doing that was slight and unusual compared with the duty of a parent to provide for his children. The one was of comparatively rare occurrence—the other was constant, and was the ordinary course of duty. It is a matter of obligation for a child to provide for an aged and helpless parent, but commonly the duty is that of a parent to provide for his children. Paul felt like a father toward the church in Corinth; and he was willing, therefore, to labour for them without compensation.—A. B.]

2. He would gladly spend and be spent for them, ver. 15; that is, he was willing to take pains and to suffer loss for their good. He would spend his time, his parts, his strength, his interest, his all, to do them service; nay, so to spend as to be spent, and be like a candle, which consumeth itself to give light to others.

3. He did not abate in his love to them, notwithstanding their unkindness and ingratitude to him, and therefore was contented and glad to take pains with them, though the more abundantly he loved them the less he was loved, ver. 15. This is applicable to other relations; if others be wanting in their duty to us, it doth not follow, therefore, that we may neglect our duty to them.

4. He was careful not only that he himself should not be burthensome, but that none he employed should. This seemeth to be the meaning of what we read, ver. 16–18. If it should be objected by any that though he did not himself burthen them, yet that he, being crafty, caught them with guile, that is, he sent those among them that did pillage from them, and afterwards he shared with them in the profit; this was not so, saith the apostle, I did not make a gain of you myself, nor by any of them I sent, nor did Titus, nor any others; we walked by the same spirit and in the same steps. They all agreed in this matter, to do them all the good they could without being burthensome to them; to promote the Gospel among them, and make it as easy to them as possible. Or this may be read with an interrogation, as utterly disclaiming any guile in himself and others toward them.

5. He was a man that did all things for edifying, ver. 19. This was his great

aim and design, to do good; to lay the foundation well, and then with care and diligence to build the superstructure.

6. He would not baulk his duty for fear of displeasing them, though he was so careful to make himself easy to them; therefore he was resolved to be faithful in reproving sin, though he was therein found to be such as they would not, ver. 20. The apostle here mentioned several sins that are too commonly found among professors of religion, and are very reprobable, "debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults;" and, though those who are guilty of these sins can hardly bear to be reproved for them, yet faithful ministers must not fear offending the guilty by sharp reproofs, as they are needful in public and in private.

7. He was grieved at the apprehension that he should find scandalous sins among them not duly repented of. This, he tells them, would be the cause of great humiliation and lamentation. Note, 1st. The falls and miscarriages of professors cannot but be an humbling consideration to a good minister; and God sometimes taketh this way to humble those who might be under temptation to be lifted up; "I fear lest my God will humble me among you." 2nd. We have reason to bewail those that sin and do not repent, to "bewail many that have sinned and have not repented," ver. 21. If these have not as yet grace to mourn and lament their own case, their case is the more lamentable; and those that love God and love them should mourn for them.

CHAPTER XIII.

In this chapter the apostle threateneth to be severe against obstinate sinners, and assigneth the reason thereof, ver. 1–6. Then he maketh a suitable prayer to God on the behalf of the Corinthians, with the reasons inducing him thereto, ver. 7–10. And concludeth his epistle with a valediction and a benediction, ver. 11–14.



THIS is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. 2 I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare: 3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. 4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you. 5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? 6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

In these verses observe,

First. The apostle threateneth to be severe against obstinate sinners when he should come to Corinth, having now sent to them a first and second epistle, with proper admonitions and exhortations, in order to reform what was amiss among them; concerning which we may take notice of,

1. The caution with which he proceeded in his censures. He was not hasty in using severity, but gave a first and second admonition. So some understand his words, ver. 1, "This is the third time I am coming to you," referring to his first and second epistles, by which he admonished them, as if he were present with them, though in person he was absent, ver. 2. And according to this interpretation these two epistles are the witnesses he meaneth in the first verse, referring rather to the direction of our Saviour, *Mat. xviii. 16*, concerning the manner in which Christians should deal with offenders before they proceed to extremity, than to the law of Moses, *Deu. xvii. 6; xix. 5*, for the behaviour of judges in criminal matters. We should go [or send] to our brother once and again to tell him of his fault. Thus the apostle had told these Corinthians before, that is, in his former epistle; and now he tells them, or writeth "to them which heretofore had sinned, and to all other," giving warning unto all, before he came in person the third time, to exercise severity against scandalous offenders. Others think the apostle had designed and prepared for his journey to Corinth twice already, but was providentially hindered, and now informeth them of his intention a third time to come to them. However this be, it is observable he kept an account how often he endeavoured, and what pains he took with these Corinthians for their good; and we may be sure an account is kept in heaven, and we must be reckoned with another day for the helps we have had for our souls, and how we have improved them.

2. The threatening itself, that if (or when) he came again (in person) he would not spare obstinate sinners, and such as were impenitent in their scandalous enormities. He had told them before he feared God would humble him among them, because he should find some that had sinned and had not repented; and now he declareth he would not spare such, but would inflict church censures upon them, which are thought to have been accompanied, in those early times, with visible and extraordinary tokens of Divine displeasure. Note, Though it is God's gracious method to bear long with sinners, yet he will not bear always; at length he will come, and will not spare them who remain obstinate and impenitent, notwithstanding all his methods to reclaim and reform them.

which is on earth, in opposition to "in the heavens" and "from heaven" (verse 2).

v. 2. "To be clothed upon;" St. Paul here adopts the figure of a garment, and refers to the putting on of one garment over another. "The longing" is for a transformation in which the earthly body will not be laid aside (in death), but the heavenly will be thrown over it.

v. 3. "If so be;" rather, "seeing that being clothed, we," &c.;

ii. 12. See Introductory Notes on chap. i.

iii. 16. "It:" i.e., their heart.

iii. 18. "Open face," rather, "unveiled face." "In a glass;" rather, "in a mirror;" the Gospel being a mirror reflecting the glory of Christ.

v. 1. Dean Stanley suggests that the double metaphor of a tent and a garment may have been suggested by Paul's familiarity with the Cilician materials used in tent-making. "Earthly:" i.e., that

Secondly. The apostle assigneth a reason why he would be thus severe; namely, for "a proof of Christ speaking" in him, which they sought after, ver. 3. The evidence of his apostleship was necessary for the credit, and confirmation, and success, of the Gospel he preached; and therefore such as denied that were justly and severely to be censured. It was the design of the false teachers to make the Corinthians call this matter into question, which yet they had not weak, but strong or mighty proofs of, ver. 3, notwithstanding the mean figure he made in the world, and the contempt which by some was cast upon him. Even as Christ himself was crucified through weakness, or appeared in his crucifixion as a weak and contemptible person, but liveth by the power of God, or in his resurrection and life manifesteth his Divine power, ver. 4, so the apostles, how mean and contemptible soever they appeared to the world, did yet, as instruments, manifest the power of God, and particularly the power of his grace, in converting the world to Christianity; and, therefore, as a proof unto those who among the Corinthians sought a proof of Christ's speaking in the apostle, he puts them upon the proving their Christianity; ver. 5, "Examine yourselves," &c. Hereby he intimateth that if they could prove their own Christianity, this would be a proof of his apostleship; for if they were in the faith, if Jesus Christ was in them, this was a proof Christ spake in him, because it was by his ministry they did believe. He had been not only an instructor, but a father to them. He had begotten them again by the Gospel of Christ. Now it could not be imagined that a Divine power should go along with his ministrations if he had not his commission from on high. If, therefore, they could prove themselves not to be reprobates, that is, not to be rejected of Christ, he trusted they would know that he was not a reprobate, ver. 6, that is, not disowned by Christ.

What the apostle here saith of the duty of the Corinthians to examine themselves, &c., with the particular view already mentioned, is applicable to the great duty of all that call themselves Christians, to examine themselves concerning their spiritual state. We should examine whether we be in the faith, because it is a matter in which we may be easily deceived, and wherein a deceit is highly dangerous. We are therefore concerned to prove our own selves, to put the question to our own souls, whether Christ be in us or not; and Christ is in us, except we be reprobates. So that either we are true Christians or we are great cheats; and what a reproachful thing is it for a man not to know himself, not to know his own mind!

7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates. 8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. 9 For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, *even* your perfection. 10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

Here we have,

First. The apostle's prayer to God on the behalf of the Corinthians, that they might "do no evil," ver. 7. This is the most desirable thing we can ask of God, both for ourselves and for our friends, to be kept from sin, that we and they may do no evil; and it is most needful that we often pray to God for his grace to keep us, because without that we cannot keep ourselves. We are more concerned to pray that we may not do evil than that we may not suffer evil.

Secondly. The reasons why the apostle put up this prayer to God on behalf of the Corinthians, which reasons have a special reference to their case and the subject-matter about which he was writing to them. Observe, he tells them,

1. It was not so much for his own personal reputation as for the honour of religion; "Not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest," or decent, and for the credit of religion, though we should be reproached and vilified, and accounted as reprobates, ver. 7. Note, 1st. The great desire of faithful ministers of the Gospel is, that the Gospel they preach may be honoured, however their persons may be vilified. 2nd. The best way to adorn our holy religion is, to do that which is honest and of good report, to walk so as becometh the Gospel of Christ.

2. Another reason was this, that they might be free from all blame and censure when he should come to them. This is intimated in ver. 8; "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." If, therefore, they did not do evil, nor act contrary to their profession of the Gospel, the apostle had no power nor authority to punish them. He had said before, *ch. x. 8*, and saith here, ver. 10, "The power which the Lord had given him was to edification, not to destruction." So that, although the apostle had great powers committed to him for the credit and advancement of the Gospel, yet he could not do any thing to the disparagement of the truth, nor the discouragement of them who obeyed it. He could not, that is, he would not, he dared not, he had no commission to act against the truth; and it is remarkable how the apostle did rejoice in this blessed impotency; "We are glad," (saith he, ver. 9), "when we are weak, and ye are strong," that is, that we have no power to censure those who are strong in the faith and fruitful in good works. Some understand this passage thus: Though we are weak through persecutions and contempt, we bear it patiently, and also joyfully, while we see that you are strong, that you are prosperous in holiness, and persevering in well-doing; for,

3. He desired their perfection, ver. 9; that is, that they might be sincere, and aim at perfection; sincerity is our gospel perfection. Or else he wished there might be a thorough reformation amongst them. He not only desired that they might be kept from sin, but also that they might grow in grace and increase in holiness, and that all that was amiss among them might be rectified and reformed. This was the great end of his writing this epistle, and that freedom he used with them by writing these things, that is, those friendly admonitions and warnings, being absent, that so being present he should not "use sharpness," ver. 10; that is, not proceed to the utmost extremity in the exercise of the power which the Lord had given him as an apostle, "to revenge all disobediences," *ch. x. 6*.

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the

God of love and peace shall be with you. 12 Greet one another with an holy kiss. 13 All the saints salute you. 14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

Thus the apostle concludeth his epistle with,

First. A valediction. He giveth them a parting farewell, and taketh his leave of them for the present with hearty good wishes for their spiritual welfare. In order to which,

1. He giveth them several good exhortations; for example, 1st. To be perfect, or to be knit together in love, which would tend greatly to their benefit and advantage as a church, or Christian society. 2nd. To be of good comfort under all the sufferings and persecutions they might endure for the cause of Christ, or any calamities and disappointments they might meet with in the world. 3rd. To be of one mind, which would greatly tend to their comfort; for, the more easy we are with our brethren, the more ease we shall have in our own souls. The apostle would have them, as far as was possible, to be of the same opinion and judgment; however, if this could not be attained to, yet, 4th. He exhorteth them to live in peace, that difference in opinion should not cause an alienation of affections; that they should be at peace among themselves. He would have all the schisms healed that were among them, that there should be no more contentions and wrath found among them—to prevent which they should avoid "debates, envyings, backbitings, whisperings," and such like enemies to peace.

2. He encourageth them with the promise of God's presence among them. "The God of love and peace shall be with you," ver. 11. Note, 1st. God is the God of love and peace. He is the author of peace and lover of concord; he hath loved us and is willing to be at peace with us, and commands us to love him, and to be reconciled to him, and also that we love one another, and be at peace among ourselves. 2nd. God will be with them that live in love and peace. He will love them that love peace; he will dwell with them here, and they shall dwell with him for ever. Such shall have God's gracious presence here, and be admitted to his glorious presence hereafter.

3. He giveth directions to them to salute each other, and sends kind salutations to them from those that were with him, ver. 12, 13. He would have them testify their affection to one another by the sacred rite of a kiss of charity, which was then used, but hath long been disused, to prevent all occasions of wantonness and impurity, in the more declining and degenerate state of the church.

Secondly. The apostolical benediction; ver. 14, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." Thus the apostle concludeth his epistle, and thus it is usual and proper to dismiss worshipping assemblies. This plainly proveth the doctrine of the Gospel, and is an acknowledgment that Father, Son, and Spirit, are three distinct persons, yet but one God, and herein the same, that they are the fountain of all blessings to men. It likewise speaketh our duty, which is to have an eye by faith to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to live in a continual regard to the three persons in the Trinity, into whose name we were baptized, and in whose name we are blessed.

This is a very solemn benediction, and we should give all diligence to inherit this blessing, namely, the grace of Christ, the love of God, and the communion (or communication) of the Holy Ghost. The grace of Christ as Redeemer, the love of God that sent the Redeemer, and all the communications of this grace and love which come to us by the Holy Ghost; it is the communications of the Holy Ghost that qualify us for an interest in the grace of Christ, and the love of God; and we can desire no more to make us happy than the grace of Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

[In regard to this closing verse of the epistle, we may make the following remarks: 1. It is a prayer; and if it is a prayer addressed to God, it is no less so to the Lord Jesus and to the Holy Spirit. If so, it is right to offer worship to the Lord Jesus and to the Holy Spirit. 2. There is a distinction in the Divine nature; or there is the existence of what is usually termed three persons in the Godhead. If not, why are they mentioned in this manner? If the Lord Jesus is not Divine and equal with the Father, why is he mentioned in this connexion? 3. The Holy Spirit is a person, or has a distinct personality. He is not an attribute of God, nor a mere Divine influence. How could prayer be addressed to an attribute, or an influence? 4. The Lord Jesus is not inferior to the Father; that is, he has an equality with God. If he were not equal, how could he be mentioned, as he is here, as bestowing favours like God, and especially why is he mentioned first? Would Paul, in invoking blessings, mention the name of a mere man or an angel before that of the eternal God? 5. The passage, therefore, furnishes a proof of the doctrine of the Trinity that has not yet been answered, and it is believed, cannot be. On the supposition that there are three persons in the adorable Trinity, united in essence, and yet distinct in some respects, all is plain and clear. But, on the supposition that the Lord Jesus is a mere man, an angel, or an archangel, and that the Holy Spirit is an attribute, or an influence from God, how unintelligible, confused, strange, does all become! That Paul, in the solemn close of the epistle, should at the same time invoke blessings from a mere creature, and from God, and from an attribute, surpasses belief. But that he should invoke blessings from Him who was the equal with the Father, and from the Father himself, and from the sacred Spirit sustaining the same rank, and in like manner imparting important blessings, is in accordance with all that we should expect, and makes all harmonious and appropriate. 6. Nothing could be a more proper close of the epistle; nothing is a more appropriate close of public worship than such an invocation. It is a prayer to the ever-blessed God, that all the rich influences which he gives as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may be imparted; that all the benefits which God confers in the interesting relations in which he makes himself known to us, may descend and bless us. What more appropriate prayer can be offered at the close of public worship? How seriously should it be pronounced, as a congregation is about to separate, perhaps to come together no more! With what solemnity should all join in it, and how devoutly should all pray, as they thus separate, that these rich and inestimable blessings may rest upon them! With hearts uplifted to God it should be pronounced and heard; and every worshipper should leave the sanctuary deeply feeling that what he most needs, as he leaves the place of public worship—as he travels on the journey of life—as he engages in its duties or meets its trials—as he looks at the grave and eternity, is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the blessings which the Holy Spirit imparts in renewing, and sanctifying, and comforting his people. What more appropriate prayer than this for the writer and reader of these Notes! May that blessing rest alike upon us, though we may be strangers in the flesh; and may those heavenly influences guide us alike to the same everlasting kingdom of glory.—A. B.]

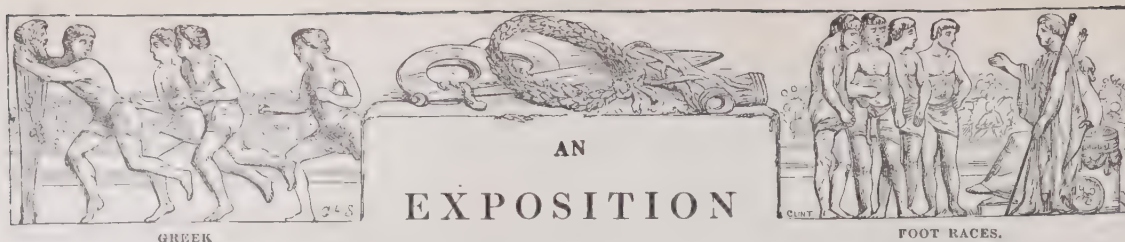
v. 11 "Being conscious of the fear of the Lord (as our guiding principle) we persuade men (of our integrity), but to God we are already manifested, and so have no need to persuade him of our integrity."

v. 14. "All dead:" rather, "all died"—i.e., in the death of Christ.

v. 16. "After the flesh:" i.e., according to his mere worldly and external relations.

i.e., because we shall be clothed with a body, and not be merely disembodied spirits; referring probably to the deniers of the resurrection.

v. 8. St. Paul had spoken above of an unwillingness to be unclothed of the body. Here he goes a step further, and asserts that even should that take place it would not shake his confidence, nay, he should even prefer it to being kept from the more immediate presence of his Lord.



ST. PAUL TO THE GALATIANS,

WITH
PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

THIS epistle of Paul is directed not to the church or churches of a single city, as some others are, but of a country or province, for so Galatia was. It is very probable that these Galatians were first converted to the Christian faith by his ministry; but if he was not the instrument of planting, yet at least he had been employed in watering, these churches, as is evident from this epistle itself, and also from *Acts xviii. 23*, where we find him going over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples. While he was with them they had expressed the greatest esteem and affection both for his person and ministry; but he had not been long absent from them before some Judaizing teachers got in among them, by whose arts and insinuations they were soon drawn into a meaner opinion, both of the one and of the other. That which these false teachers chiefly aimed at was, to draw them off from the truth as it is in Jesus, particularly in the great doctrine of justification, which they grossly perverted by asserting the necessity of joining the observation of the law of Moses with faith in Christ in order to it; and, the better to accomplish this their design, they did all they could to lessen the character and reputation of the apostle, and to raise up their own on the ruins of his, representing him as one who, if he was to be owned as an apostle, yet was much inferior to others, and particularly who deserved not such a regard as Peter, James, and John, whose followers it is likely they pretended to be; and in both these attempts they had but too great success. This was the occasion of his writing this epistle, wherein he expresses his great concern that they had suffered themselves to be so soon turned aside from the faith of the Gospel, vindicates his own character and authority as an apostle against the aspersions of his enemies, shewing that his mission and doctrine were both Divine, and that he was not upon any account "behind the very chiefest of the apostles," *2 Cor. xi. 5*. He then sets himself to assert and maintain the great gospel doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law, and to obviate some difficulties that might be apt to arise in their minds concerning it; and having established this important doctrine, he exhorts them to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, cautions them against the abuse of this liberty, gives them several very needful counsels and directions, and then concludes the epistle with giving them the true character of those false teachers by whom they had been ensnared, and, on the contrary, his own temper and behaviour. In all which his great scope and design was, to recover those that had been perverted, to settle those that might be wavering, and to confirm such among them as had kept their integrity.

A.D. 58.

A.D. 58.

CHAPTER I.

In this chapter, after the preface or introduction, ver. 1—5, the apostle severely reproves these churches for their defection from the faith, ver. 6—9; and then proves his own apostleship, which his enemies had brought them to question, 1. From his end and design in preaching the gospel, ver. 10. 11. From his having received it by immediate revelation, ver. 11, 12; for the proof of which, he acquaints them, 1. What his former conversation was, ver. 13, 14; 2. How he was converted and called to the apostleship, ver. 15, 16; 3. How he behaved himself afterwards, ver. 16—24.



PAUL, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) 2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: 3 Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: 5 To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

In these verses we have the preface or introduction to the epistle. Where observe,

First. The person or persons from whom this is sent. From Paul an apostle, &c., and all the brethren that were with him.

1. The epistle is sent from Paul. He only was the penman of it; and because there were some among the Galatians who endeavoured to lessen his character and authority, in the very front of it he gives a general account both of his office and the manner in which he was called to it, which afterwards, in this and the following chapter, he enlarges more upon. As to his office, he was an apostle; he is not afraid to style himself so, though his enemies would scarce

allow him this title. And to let them see that he did not assume this character without just ground, he acquaints them how he was called to this dignity and office, and assures them that his commission to it was wholly Divine, for he was an apostle, "not of men, neither by man." He had not the common call of an ordinary minister, but an extraordinary call from heaven, to this office; he neither received his qualification for it nor his designation to it by the mediation of men, but had both the one and the other directly from above. For he was an apostle "by Jesus Christ," he had his instructions and commission immediately from him; and, consequently, from "God the Father," who, in respect of his Divine nature, was one with him, and who, as Mediator, had appointed him to be the apostle and high priest of our profession, and as such to authorise others to this office.

[Note, 1. That the office of an apostle had this peculiar unto itself, that the designation of the person to undergo that office was not immediately by the election and suffrages of men, as it is in the calling of ordinary office-bearers, *Acts xiv. 23*, but immediately from God; so that the function of the apostles ceased with them, and did not pass by succession to a pope or any other; for in this respect Paul affirmeth he was an apostle, not by man, to wit, mere man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father. He was called immediately by God, *Acts ix. 15*. 2. That Jesus Christ is not mere man, but God also, appeareth from this, that the apostle opposeth Christ to man, and so he behoved to be more than man; and this was not an angel, *Heb. ii. 16*, and therefore he was also God; "Neither by man," saith he, to wit, mere man, "but by Jesus Christ." 3. When Scripture ascribeth an action to the Father, the first person of the blessed Trinity, as done by him, it is not to be so understood as if the Son and Holy Ghost were excluded from having hand in that action, but that they are rather included in the Father, as persons of the same Godhead; for the calling of the ministers of the Gospel, which is ascribed to God the Father, is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, *Acts xx. 28*; and Paul, who is here said to be called by God the Father, is by the Holy Ghost separated and sent forth unto a particular employment in his calling, *Acts xiii. 2, 4*; and the raising of Christ from the dead, in like manner ascribed to God the Father here, is ascribed to Christ also, *1 Jo. x. 18*, and to the Holy Ghost, *Rom. viii. 11*: "And God the Father, who raised him from the dead." All the external actions of the Godhead towards the creatures are common to the whole Trinity, *1 Jo. v. 19*; so that the ascribing of some actions to the Father is not as if any of the rest were not concurring, but because of the order of working, which is among the three Persons; the Father being the first fountain of working, as doing all things from himself, *1 Cor. viii. 6*; by the Son, *1 Cor. viii. 6*; and Holy Ghost, *1 Cor. xii. 6, 8*. Because of this order, those actions which are common to the whole Trinity are frequently ascribed unto the Father.]

And he adds, "Who raised him from the dead;" both to acquaint us that herein God the Father gave a public testimony to Christ's being his Son, and the promised Messiah, and also that, as his call to the apostleship was immediately from Christ, so it was after his resurrection from the dead, and when he was entered upon his exalted state. So that he had reason to look upon himself not only as standing upon a level with the other apostles, but as in some sort preferred above them; for, whereas they were called by him when on earth, he

* By the Rev. Joshua Bates. The additional Notes are from the Exposition of Paul's Epistles, by the Rev. James Fergusson, Minister of Kilwinning, N. B., 1658, (Ward's Edition.)

i. 1. Concerning the date of the epistle, considerable differences of opinion exist. Lightfoot fixes it about A.D. 57, 58, thus according with that adopted above. Accepting this date as on the whole most satisfactory, the epistle occupies an historical place between 2 Corinthians and Romans. The province of Galatia possessed many commercial advantages; position, soil, and climate being good. The inhabitants were a mixed race, but mainly Celtic. Their love of novelty, fickleness, irascibility, avarice, and superstitiousness have been noted

by heathen writers—hints of these may be traced in the epistle. Paul's weakness and earnestness combined to win upon the hearts of an excitable people, and their first reception of the Gospel was most promising (chap. v. 7, iv. 14, 15). But their fickleness was soon seen in the readiness with which they adopted the errors of the Judaizing party. To correct these errors was the main object of the epistle. "The two threads which run through this epistle—the defence of the apostle's own authority (verse 1), and the maintenance

had his call from him when in heaven. Thus doth the apostle (being constrained to it by his adversaries,) magnify his office; which shews that, though men should by no means be proud of any authority they are possessed of, yet that sometimes, and upon some occasions, it may become needful to assert it.

2. He joins all the brethren that were with him in the inscription of the epistle, and writes in their names as well as his own. By the brethren that were with him may be understood, either the Christians in common of that place where he now was, or such as were employed as ministers of the Gospel. These, notwithstanding his own superior character and attainments, he is ready to own as his brethren; and though he only wrote the epistle, yet he joins them with himself in the inscription of it. Wherein, as he shews his own great modesty and humility, and how remote he was from an assuming temper, so he might do this to dispose these churches to a greater regard to what he wrote, since hereby it would appear that he had their concurrence with him in the doctrine which he had preached, and was now about to confirm; and that it was no other than what was both published and professed by others, as well as himself.

Secondly, To whom this epistle is sent: "to the churches of Galatia." There were several churches at that time in this country, and it should seem that all of them were more or less corrupted through the arts of those seducers who had crept in among them; and therefore, Paul, on whom came daily the care of all the churches, being deeply affected with their state, and concerned for their recovery to the faith and establishment in it, writes this epistle to them. He directs it to all of them, as being all more or less concerned in the matter of it; and he gives them the name of churches, though they had done enough to forfeit it,—for corrupt churches are never allowed to be churches; and no doubt there were some among them who still continued in the faith, and he was not without hope that others might be recovered to it.

[We are not so to stumble at the many sinful failings, yea, gross enormities, which may be in churches, relating either to faith or manners, as presently to unchurch them, by denying them to be a church, or to separate from them, by refusing to keep communion with them in lawful and commanded ordinances, being purely administered according to the prescript of God's word; chiefly if their error be not contrary to fundamental truths, or at least if they err of human frailty, and not obstinately or avowedly.]

Thirdly, The apostolical benediction, ver. 3. Wherein the apostle and the brethren that were with him, wish these churches "grace and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." This is the usual blessing wherewith he bleaseth the churches in the name of the Lord, "Grace and peace." Grace includes God's goodwill towards us, and his good work upon us; and peace implies in it all that inward comfort, or outward prosperity, which is really needful for us; and they come from God the Father, as the fountain, through Jesus Christ, as the channel of conveyance; both these the apostle wishes for these Christians. But we may observe, first grace, and then peace; for there can be no true peace without grace. And having mentioned the Lord Jesus Christ, he cannot pass without enlarging upon his love, and therefore adds, ver. 4, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver" &c. Jesus Christ gave himself for our sins, as a great sacrifice, to make atonement for us; this the justice of God required, and this he freely submitted to for our sakes. And one great end hereof was "to deliver us from this present evil world;" not only to redeem us from the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, but also to recover us from the corruption that is in the world through lust, and to rescue us from the vicious practices and customs of it, unto which we are naturally enslaved; and possibly also to set us free from the Mosaic constitution, for so *αὐτοῦ αἰῶνος* is used, 1 Cor. ii. 6, 8. From whence we may note, 1. That this present world is an evil world. It has become so by the sin of man, and it is so on account of the sin and sorrow with which it abounds, and the many snares and temptations to which we are exposed, as long as we continue in it. But, 2. That Jesus Christ has died to deliver us from this present evil world, not presently to remove his people out of it, but [but first to renew their natures, and so separate them from the condition of unregenerate men, who are called the world, 1 Jno. v. 19; and then,] to rescue them from the power of it, to keep them from the evil of it, and in due time to possess them of another and better world. And this, the apostle informs us, he has done "according to the will of God and our Father." In offering up himself a sacrifice for this end and purpose, he acted by the appointment of the Father, as well as with his own free consent; and, therefore, we have the greatest reason to depend upon the efficacy and acceptableness of what he has done and suffered for us. Yea, from hence we have encouragement to look upon God as our Father; for thus the apostle here represents him, as he is the Father of our Lord Jesus, so in and through him he is also the Father of all true believers: as our blessed Saviour himself acquaints us, Jno. xx. 17, when he tells his disciples that he was ascending to his Father and their Father.

The apostle having thus taken notice of the great love wherewith Christ hath loved us, concludes this preface with a solemn ascription of praise and glory to him; ver. 5, "To whom be glory for ever and ever: Amen." Intimating that on this account he is justly entitled to our highest esteem and regard. Or this doxology may be considered as referring both to God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom he had just before been wishing grace and peace. They are both the proper objects of our worship and adoration, and all honour and glory is perpetually due to them; both on account of their own infinite excellencies, and also on account of the blessings we receive from them.

[The glory of the Redeemer, and of God who sent his Son to do that work, shall be the long-lasting and never-ending song of the redeemed ones through millions of imaginable ages, even to all eternity: so much doth the word rendered "for ever and ever" bear: for it signifieth to ages of ages, or innumerable ages. Our praise and thanksgiving to God must not be formal or verbal only, Mat. xv. 8; but ought to be fervent and serious, as proceeding from the most intimate affection of the heart, Lu. i. 46, 47, signified by the word "Amen," that is "Let it be so;" an earnest wish.]

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man

preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Here the apostle comes to the body of the epistle, and he begins it with a more general reproof of these churches for their unsteadiness in the faith, which he afterwards in some following parts of it enlarges more upon. Here we may observe,

First, How much he was concerned at their defection; "I marvel," &c. It at once filled him with the greatest surprise and sorrow. Their sin and folly were, that they did not hold fast the doctrine of Christianity, as it had been preached to them, but suffered themselves to be removed from the purity and simplicity of it. And there were several things by which their defection was greatly aggravated, as, 1. That they were removed from him that had called them. Not only from the apostle, who had been the instrument of calling them into the fellowship of the Gospel, but from God himself, by whose order and direction the Gospel was preached to them, and they invited to a participation in the privileges of it. So that herein they had been guilty of a great abuse of his kindness and mercy towards them. 2. They had been called into the grace of Christ. As the Gospel which had been preached to them was the most glorious discovery of Divine grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, so thereby they had been called to partake of the greatest blessings and benefits, such as justification and reconciliation with God here, and eternal life and happiness hereafter. These our Lord Jesus has purchased for us at the expense of his precious blood, and freely bestows upon all that sincerely accept of him. And, therefore, in proportion to the greatness of the privilege they enjoyed, such was their sin and folly in deserting it, and suffering themselves to be drawn off from the established way of obtaining these blessings. 3. That they were so soon removed. In a very little time they lost that relish and esteem of this grace of Christ which they seemed to have, and too easily fell in with those that taught justification by the works of the law, as many did that had been bred up in the opinions and notions of the Pharisees, which they mingled with the doctrine of Christ, and so corrupted it; and this, as it was an instance of their weakness, so it was a farther aggravation of their guilt. 4. That they were removed to another gospel, which yet was not another. Thus the apostle represents the doctrine of these Judaizing teachers; he calls it another gospel, because it opened a different way of justification and salvation from that which was revealed in the Gospel, namely, by works, and not by faith in Christ. And yet he adds, "which is not another;" that is, you will find it to be no gospel at all; not really another gospel, but the perverting of the Gospel of Christ, and the overturning of the foundations of that, whereby he intimates that they who go about to establish any other way to heaven than what the Gospel of Christ has revealed, are guilty of a gross perversion of it, and in the issue will find themselves wretchedly mistaken.

Thus the apostle endeavours to impress upon these Galatians a due sense of their guilt in forsaking the gospel way of justification; and yet at the same time he tempers his reproof with mildness and tenderness towards them, and represents them as rather drawn into it by the arts and industry of some that troubled them, than as coming into it of their own accord, which, though it did not excuse them, yet was some extenuation of their fault. And hereby he teaches us that in reproving of others, as we should be faithful, so we should also be gentle, and endeavour to restore them in the spirit of meekness, ch. vi. 1.

Secondly, How confident he was that the Gospel he had preached to them was the only true Gospel. He was so fully persuaded of this, that he pronounces an anathema upon those that pretended to preach any other gospel, ver. 8. And to let them see that did not proceed from any rashness or intemperate zeal in him, he repeats it again, ver. 9. This will not justify our thundering our anathemas against those that differ from us in lesser things. It is only against those that forge a new gospel, that overturn the foundation of the covenant of grace, by setting up the works of the law in the place of Christ's righteousness, and corrupting Christianity with Judaism, that Paul denounces this. He puts the case, Suppose we should preach any other gospel; nay, suppose an angel from heaven should, not as if it were possible for an angel from heaven to be the messenger of a lie, but it is expressed so, the more to strengthen what he was about to say. If you have any other gospel preached to you by any other person under our name, or under colour of having it from an angel himself, you must conclude you are imposed upon; and whoever preaches another gospel lays himself under a curse, and is in danger of laying you under it too.

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. 11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. 13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: 17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia,

of the doctrine of grace (verse 4)—are knotted together in the opening salutation" (Lightfoot). "Of men," "by man:" "of" referring to the fountain head, "by" to the channel; neither the source nor the medium of his authority was from man.

i. 6, 7. "Another Gospel, which is not another;" two different words are here rendered by the same English word. The force of the passage is thus weakened. The first Greek word refers to a difference in kind, and is translated "different" by Alford and Lightfoot. The

second word refers to a difference of identity or individuality. (Compare 2 Cor. xi. 4.) The verse thus means, "You are turned to a totally different kind of Gospel. Gospel, did I say? nay, there is no other besides that I have preached."

i. 10. "Do I now," &c.: the charge of inconsistency and temporising had been brought against St. Paul by the Judaizing party. Hence his question, "Do I now please men? does this strong language look like temporising?" "Servant of Christ:" Lightfoot

and returned again unto Damascus. 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. 20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. 21 Afterwards I came into

the regions of Syria and Cilicia; 22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judæa which were in Christ: 23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. 24 And they glorified God in me.



SELEUCIA IN CILICIA.

What Paul had said more generally in the preface of this epistle, he now proceeds more particularly to enlarge upon. There he had declared himself to be an apostle of Christ; and here he comes more directly to support his claim to that character and office. There were some in the churches of Galatia who were prevailed with to call this into question; for they that preached up the ceremonial law did all they could to lessen Paul's reputation, who preached the pure Gospel of Christ to the Gentiles. And, therefore, he here sets himself to prove the divinity both of his mission and doctrine, that thereby he might wipe off the aspersions which his enemies had cast upon him, and recover these Christians into a better opinion of the Gospel he had preached to them. This he gives sufficient evidence of:

First. From the scope and design of his ministry, which was not to persuade men but God, &c. The meaning of this may be either, that, in his preaching the Gospel, he did not act in obedience to men, but God, who had called him to this work and office; or, that his aim therein was not to bring persons to the obedience of men, but of God. As he professed to act by a commission from God, so that which he chiefly aimed at was to promote his glory, by recovering sinners into a state of subjection to him. And as this was the great end he was pursuing, so agreeably hereunto he did not seek to please men. He did not in his doctrine accommodate himself to the humours of persons, either to gain their affection or to avoid their resentment; but his great care was to approve himself to God. The Judaizing teachers, by whom these churches were corrupted, had discovered a very different temper; they mixed works with faith, and the law with the Gospel, only to please the Jews, whom they were willing to court and keep in with, that they might escape persecution. But Paul was a man of another spirit; he was not so solicitous to please them, or to mitigate their rage against him, as to alter the doctrine of Christ, either to gain their favour or to avoid their fury. And he gives this very good reason for it, that "if he yet pleased men, he should not be the servant of Christ." These he knew were utterly inconsistent, and that no man could serve two such masters; and, therefore, though he would not needlessly displease any, yet he dared not allow himself to gratify men at the expense of his faithfulness to Christ. Thus from the sincerity of his aims and intentions in the discharge of his office he proves that he was truly an apostle of Christ; and from this his temper and behaviour we may note, 1. That the great end which ministers of the Gospel should aim at is, to bring men to God. 2. That they who are faithful will not seek to please men, but to approve themselves to God. 3. That they must not be solicitous to please men, if they would approve themselves faithful servants to Christ. But if this argument should not be thought sufficient, he goes on to prove his apostleship.

Secondly. From the manner wherein he received the Gospel he preached to them; concerning which, he assures them, ver. 11, 12, that he had it not by information from others, but by revelation from heaven. One thing peculiar in the character of an apostle was, that he had been called to, and instructed for, this office immediately by Christ himself. And this he here shews he was by no means defective in, whatever his enemies might suggest to the contrary. Ordinary ministers, as they receive their call to preach the Gospel by the mediation of others, so it is by means of the instruction and assistance of others that they are brought to the knowledge of it. But Paul acquaints them that he had his knowledge of the Gospel, as well as his authority to preach it, directly from the Lord Jesus; the Gospel which he preached was not after man; he neither received it of man, nor was he taught it by man, but by immediate inspiration or revelation from Christ himself. This he was concerned to make out, to prove himself an apostle; and to this purpose,

1. He tells them what his education was, and what accordingly his conversation in time past had been, ver. 13, 14; particularly he acquaints them that he had been brought up in the Jewish religion, and that he had profited in it above many his equals of his own nation; that he had been exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the elders, such doctrines and customs as had been invented by their fathers, and conveyed down from one generation to another; yea, to that degree, that in his zeal for them he had beyond measure "persecuted the church of God, and wasted it." He had not only been a rejecter of the Christian religion, notwithstanding the many evident proofs that were given of its Divine original, but he had been a persecutor of it too, and had applied himself with the utmost violence and rage to destroy the professors of it. This Paul often takes notice of for the magnifying of that free and rich grace that had wrought so wonderful a change in him, whereby of so great a sinner he was made a sincere penitent, and from a persecutor was become an apostle. And it was very fit to mention it here; for from hence it would appear that he was not led to Christianity, as many others are, purely by education, since he had been bred up in an enmity and opposition to it; and they might reasonably suppose that it must be something very extraordinary that had made so great a change in him, which had conquered the prejudices of his education, and brought him not only to profess, but to preach, that doctrine which he had before so vehemently opposed.

2. In how wonderful a manner he was turned from the error of his ways,

brought to the knowledge and faith of Christ, and appointed to the office of an apostle, ver. 15, 16. This was not done in an ordinary way, or by ordinary means, but in an extraordinary manner. For, 1st. God had "separated him hereunto from his mother's womb." The change that was wrought in him was in pursuance of a Divine purpose concerning him, whereby he was appointed to be a Christian and an apostle before he came into the world, and had done either good or evil. 2nd. He was called by his grace. All that are savingly converted are called by the grace of God, their conversion is the effect of his good pleasure concerning them, and is effected by his power and grace in them. But there was something peculiar in the case of Paul, both in the suddenness and greatness of the change wrought in him, and also in the manner wherein it was effected, which was not by the mediation of others, as the instruments of it, but by Christ's personal appearance to him, and immediate operation upon him, whereby it was rendered a more special and extraordinary instance of Divine power and favour. 3rd. He had Christ revealed in him. He was not only revealed to him, but in him. It will but little avail us to have Christ revealed to us, if he is not also revealed in us; but this was not the case of Paul; it pleased God "to reveal his Son in him," to bring him to the knowledge of Christ and his Gospel by special and immediate revelation. And, 4th. It was with this design, that he should preach him among the heathen; not only that he should embrace him himself, but preach him to others; so that he was both a Christian and an apostle by revelation.

3. He acquaints them how he behaved himself hereupon, from ver. 16 to the end; being thus called to this work and office, he "conferred not with flesh and blood." This may be taken more generally, and so we may learn from it that, when God calls us by his grace, we must not consult flesh and blood. But the meaning of it here is, that he did not consult men; he did not apply himself to any others for their advice and direction; neither did he go up to Jerusalem "to those that were apostles before him," as though he needed to be approved by them, or to receive any farther instructions or authority from them; but, instead of that, he steered another course, and went into Arabia, either as a place of retirement proper for receiving farther Divine revelations, or in order to preach the Gospel there among the Gentiles, being appointed to be the apostle of the Gentiles; and from thence he returned again to Damascus; where he had first begun his ministry, and from whence he had with difficulty escaped the rage of his enemies, Acts ix. And it was not till three years after his conversion that he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and when he did so he made a very short stay with him, no more than fifteen days; nor while he was there did he go much into conversation, for other of the apostles he saw none, but "James the Lord's brother."

[That nothing of Peter's supposed supremacy over Paul and the rest of the apostles can be gathered from this place, as the papists do allege, appeareth from this, that Paul went first to his work before he came to Peter at all, and that his business with Peter was not to receive ordination from him, or to evidence his subjection to him, but from the respect and reverence he carried to him to give him a friendly visit; besides that, it is the apostle's scope in a great part of this epistle to shew that he was nothing inferior to Peter, or to any other of the apostles.]

So that it could not be well pretended that he was indebted to any other, either for his knowledge of the Gospel, or his authority to preach it; but it appeared that both his qualifications for, and his call to, the apostolic office were extraordinary and Divine. This account being of importance, to establish his claim to this office, to remove the unjust censures of his adversaries, and to recover the Galatians from the impressions they had received to his prejudice, he confirms it by a solemn oath, ver. 20, declaring, as in the presence of God, that what he had said was strictly true, and that he had not in the least falsified in what he had related; which, though it will not justify us in solemn appeals to God upon every occasion, yet shews that in matters of weight and moment this may sometimes not only be lawful, but duty. After this he acquaints them that he "came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;" having made this short visit to Peter, he returns to his work again; he had no communication at that time with the churches of Christ in Judæa, they had not so much as seen his face; but having heard that he who persecuted them in times past "now preached the faith which he once destroyed," they glorified God because of him; thanksgivings were rendered by many unto God on that behalf; the very report of this mighty change in him, as it filled them with joy, so it excited them to give glory to God on the account of it.

[Whensoever God is pleased to make a man instrumental, whether for our own particular good, or the more public benefit of Christ's church, as we would not be ungrateful unto the instruments themselves, Jud. ix. 16, &c., so neither are we to rest upon them, ascribing the praise of what they do to them; but as we would not provoke the Lord to smite them, or, at least, to make them useless to us, 1 Cor. iv. 6, we are to look unto God more than them, ascribing the praise of what they do unto him, as that which is his proper right and due; so do they ascribe to God the praise of any good which Paul did by his preaching; "They glorified God in me, or concerning me."]

has "I should not have been," and suggests that there is possibly an allusion to the marks of persecution (chap. vi. 17). "If I had pleased men, I should not have been branded as the slave of Christ."

i. 17. "Arabia;" of this sojourn, or its purpose, nothing is known. It seems probable that it was for retirement's sake. It is conjectured that the spot he visited was the Sinaitic peninsula. The same region is connected, as here, with Damascus in the history of Elijah (3 Kings xix. 15). The spot was full of interest and suggestive

associations to one in the condition St. Paul then was. The sojourn was probably not long. "Damascus:" St. Paul's life was in danger on this occasion.

i. 19. "James, the Lord's brother:" "I saw no apostle save James." The inference is that this James was styled an apostle, but it does not follow that he was one of the twelve. In any case the expression "the Lord's brother" distinguishes this James from the son of Zebedee, living at the time of this visit.

CHAPTER II.

The apostle in this chapter continues the relation of his past life and conduct, which he had begun in the former; and by some farther instances of what had passed between him and the other apostles makes it appear that he was not beheld to them, either for his knowledge of the Gospel or his authority as an apostle, as his adversaries would insinuate; but on the contrary that he was owned and approved even by them, as having an equal commission with them to this office. Particularly he, I. Informs them of another journey which he took to Jerusalem many years after the former, and how he behaved himself at that time, ver. 1—10. And, II. Gives them an account of another interview he had with the apostle Peter at Antioch, and how he was obliged to behave himself towards him there. And from the subject matter of that conversation he proceeds to discourse on the great doctrine of justification by faith in Christ without the works of the law, which it was the main design of this epistle to establish, and which he enlarges more upon in the two following chapters.



THEN fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputa-

tion, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. 3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: 5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. 6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. 10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

It should seem, by the account Paul gives of himself in this chapter, that from the very first preaching and planting of Christianity there was a difference of apprehension between those Christians that had first been Jews and those that had first been Gentiles. Many of those that had first been Jews retained a regard to the ceremonial law, and strove to keep up the reputation of that; but those that had first been Gentiles had no regard to the law of Moses, but took pure Christianity as perfective of natural religion, and resolved to stick to that. Peter was the apostle of the circumcision, preached the Gospel to them; and the ceremonial law, though dead with Christ, yet not being as yet buried, he connived at the respect kept up for it. But Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles; and though he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, yet he adhered to pure Christianity. Now in this chapter he tells us what passed between him and the other apostles, and particularly between him and Peter hereupon. In these verses he informs us of another journey which he took to Jerusalem, and of what passed between him and the other apostles there, from ver. 1 to 11. And here he acquaints us,

First, With some circumstances relating to this his journey thither. As particularly,

1. With the time of it. That it was not till fourteen years after the former, mentioned *ch. i. 18*, or, as others choose to understand it, from his conversion, or from the death of Christ. It was an instance of the great goodness of God that so useful a person was for so many years continued in his work. And it was some evidence that he had no dependence upon the other apostles, but had

an equal authority with them, that he had been so long absent from them, and all the while employed in preaching and propagating pure Christianity, without being called into question by them for it; which, it may be thought, they would have done had he been inferior to them, and his doctrine disapproved by them.

2. With his companions in it. He went up with Barnabas, and took with him Titus also. If the journey here spoken of was the same with that recorded *Acts xv.*, as many think, then we have a plain reason why Barnabas went along with him; for he was chosen by the Christians at Antioch to be his companion and associate in the affair he went about. But as it does not appear that Titus was put into the same commission with him, so the chief reason of his taking him along with him seems to have been to let them at Jerusalem see that he was neither ashamed nor afraid to own the doctrine which he had constantly preached; for, though Titus was now become not only a convert to the Christian faith, but a preacher of it too, yet he was by birth a Gentile, and uncircumcised. And therefore, by his making him his companion, it appeared that his doctrine and practice were of a piece; and that as he had preached the no-necessity of circumcision, and observing the law of Moses, so he was ready to own and converse with those that were uncircumcised.

3. With the reason of it, which was a Divine revelation he had concerning it. He "went up by revelation;" not of his own head, much less as being summoned to appear there, but by special order and direction from heaven. It was a privilege with which this apostle was often favoured, to be under a special Divine conduct in his motions and undertakings; and though this is what we have no reason to expect, yet it should teach us in every thing of moment we go about to endeavour, as far as we are capable, to see our way made plain before us, and to commit ourselves to the guidance of Providence.

Secondly, He gives us an account of his behaviour while he was at Jerusalem, which was such as made it appear that he was not in the least inferior to the other apostles, but that both his authority and qualifications were every way equal to theirs. Particularly he acquaints us,

1. That he there communicated the Gospel to them which he preached among the Gentiles, but privately, &c. Where we may observe both the faithfulness and prudence of our great apostle. 1st. His faithfulness in giving them a free and fair account of the doctrine which he had all along preached among the Gentiles, and was still resolved to preach; namely, that of pure Christianity, free from all mixtures of Judaism. This he knew was a doctrine that would be ungrateful to many there, and yet he was not afraid to own it; but in a free and friendly manner lays it open before them, and leaves them to judge whether or no it was the true Gospel of Christ. And yet, 2nd. He uses prudence and caution herein for fear of giving offence; he chooses rather to do it in a more private than in a public way, and "to them that were of reputation," namely, to the apostles themselves, or to the chief among the Jewish Christians, rather than more openly and promiscuously to all; because, when he came to Jerusalem, "there were multitudes that believed, and yet continued zealous for the law," *Acts xxi. 20*. And the reason of this his caution was "lest he should run, or had run, in vain;" that is, lest he should stir up opposition against him, and thereby either the success of his past labours should be lessened, or his future usefulness be obstructed; for nothing more hinders the progress of the Gospel than differences of opinion about the doctrines of it, especially when they occasion quarrels and contentions among the professors of it, as they too usually do. It was enough to his purpose to have his doctrine owned by those that were of greatest authority, whether it was approved by others or no. And therefore, to avoid offence, he judges it safest to communicate it privately to them, and not in public to the whole church. And this conduct of the apostle may teach all, and especially ministers, how much need they have of prudence, and how careful they should be to use it upon all occasions, as far as is consistent with their faithfulness.

[It is the part of a faithful minister not only to preach the Gospel and go about all the other parts of his ministerial office faithfully and painfully, and so as he may be approved unto the consciences of all, 2 *Tim. iv. 5*, but he must be also solicitous about the success of his pains towards those among whom he labourereth; for so was Paul, who compareth his continual labours and painfulness in his ministry to running a race, and yet was careful lest he had run in vain; that is, lest his labours had wanted fruit among the hearers; for otherwise, and as to the end intended to be brought about by God, 2 *Cor. ii. 15, 16*, or as to the promised reward, *Isa. xlix. 4*, the work of a faithful minister is never in vain: "Lest by any means I should run in vain," saith he.]

2. That in his practice he firmly adhered to the doctrine which he had preached. Paul was a man of resolution, and would stick to his principles; and therefore, though he had Titus with him, who was a Greek, yet he would not suffer him to be circumcised, because he would not betray the doctrine of Christ as he had preached it to the Gentiles. It does not appear that the apostles at all insisted upon this, for though they connived at the use of circumcision among the Jewish converts, yet they were not for imposing it upon the Gentiles. But there were others that did, whom the apostle here calls false brethren, and concerning whom he informs us that they were unawares brought in, that is, into the church, or into their company, and that they came only to spy out their liberty which they had in Christ Jesus, [Jesus Christ having, by that only sacrifice of himself upon the cross, fulfilled all those legal types and shadows of things to come, (*Heb. viii. 5; ix. 9*) hath purchased liberty unto the Christian church, and made them fully free from the observation of those Levitical ceremonies, *ch. v. 1*; hence this freedom is called "Our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus;"] or to see whether Paul would stand up in defence of that freedom from the ceremonial law which he had taught as the doctrine of the Gospel, and represented as the privilege of those who embraced the Christian religion. And their design herein was to bring them into bondage, which they would have effected, could they have gained the point they aimed at; for had they prevailed with Paul and the other apostles to have circumcised Titus they would easily have imposed circumcision upon other Gentiles, and so have brought them under the bondage of the law of Moses. But Paul, seeing their design, would by no means yield to them; he would not "give place by subjection, no, not for an hour." Not in this one single instance; and the reason of it was, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with them—that the Gentile Christians, and particularly the Galatians, might have it preserved to them pure and entire, and not corrupted with the mixtures of Judaism, as it would have been had he yielded in this matter. Circumcision was at that time a thing indifferent, and what in some cases might be complied with without sin; and accordingly we find even Paul himself sometimes giving way to it, as in the case of Timothy, *Acts xvi. 3*. But when it is insisted on as necessary, and his consenting to it, though only in a single instance, was like to be improved as giving countenance to such an imposition, he has too great a concern for the purity and liberty of the Gospel to submit to it; he would not yield to those that were for the Mosaic rites and ceremonies, but would stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free; which conduct of his may give us occasion to observe, that what under some circumstances may lawfully be complied with, yet, when that cannot be done without betraying the truth, or giving up the liberty of the Gospel, it ought to be refused.

3. That though he conversed with the other apostles, yet he did not receive any addition to his knowledge or authority from them, ver. 4. By those "who

ii. 1. "Fourteen years after:" after what? Two views are maintained—1, after his conversion; 2, after the visit mentioned in chap. i. 18. Of recent commentators Ellicott and Alford adopt the first; Lightfoot, however, gives some good reasons for maintaining the second. Nearly all recent writers agree in identifying this visit with the one mentioned in *Acts xv.* "There is a great concurrence of the best writers in placing this visit in either A.D. 50 or 51. St. Paul himself places it 'fourteen years' after either his conversion or the first

visit. In the former case we have 37 or 38 for the date of his conversion."

ii. 2. "By revelation:" in St. Luke's narrative (*Acts xv. 2*) the reason for the visit is stated to be the difficulties which were occurring at Antioch. St. Paul here attributes his action in the matter to the influence of the Holy Spirit, who unfolded to him the grave issues which were involved in the question. "Privately:" he laid before the apostles at Jerusalem the Gospel he had been preaching, lest by

seemed to be somewhat," he means the other apostles, particularly James, Peter, and John, whom he afterwards mentions by name, ver. 9. And concerning these he grants that they were deservedly had in reputation by all; that they were looked upon, and justly too, as pillars of the church, who were set not only for the ornament but support of it; and that on some accounts they might seem to have the advantage of him, in that they had seen Christ in the flesh, which he had not, and were apostles before him, yea, even while he continued a persecutor. But yet, whatever they were it was no matter to him. This was no prejudice to his being equally an apostle with them; for God does not accept the persons of men on the account of any such outward advantages. As he had called them to this office, so he was at liberty to qualify others for it, and to employ them in it. And it was evident in his case that he had done so; for "in conference they added nothing to him," they told him nothing but what he before knew by revelation, nor could they except against the doctrine which he communicated to them; from whence it appeared that he was not at all inferior to them, but was as much called and qualified to be an apostle as they themselves were.

4. That the issue of this conversation was, that the other apostles were fully convinced of his Divine mission and authority, and accordingly acknowledged him as their fellow-apostle, ver. 7—11. They were not only satisfied with his doctrine, but they saw a Divine power attending him, both in preaching it and in working miracles for the confirmation of it; "that he who wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in him towards the Gentiles," and from hence they justly concluded that the "Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to Paul, as the Gospel of the circumcision was to Peter." And therefore, perceiving the grace that was given to him, that he was designed to the honour and office of an apostle as well as themselves, they gave unto him and Barnabas "the right hand of fellowship," a symbol whereby they acknowledged their equality with them, and agreed that these should go to the heathen, while they continued to preach to the circumcision; as judging it most agreeable to the mind of Christ, and most conducive to the interest of Christianity, so to divide their work.

[Here note that, 1. The office of preaching the Gospel is a special trust, whereby a rich treasure of saving truths, 2 Cor. iv. 7, is concredited to weak men, who must be answerable to God how they keep, maintain, and dispose that treasure for the good of souls; hence he saith, "the Gospel was committed," or, as a rich treasure, entrusted to him; "The Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me." 2. It is not the pains of ministers, Isa. xlix. 4, or any virtue which is in the word preached, as of itself, 1 Cor. i. 18, from whence the success of the ministry among a people floweth, but from the effectual working of the Spirit of God, whereby he effectually worketh that which the word doth press upon us, 1 Cor. ii. 6; for Paul ascribeth the success both of his own and Peter's ministry to this; "He that wrought effectually in Peter, the same was mighty in me."]

And thus this meeting ended in an entire harmony and agreement; they approved both Paul's doctrine and conduct, they were fully satisfied in him, and heartily embraced him as an apostle of Christ, and had nothing farther to add, only that they would "remember the poor," which of his own accord he was very forward to do. The Christians of Judaea were at that time labouring under great wants and difficulties, and the apostles, out of their compassion to them, and concern for them, recommend their case to Paul, that he should use his interest with the Gentile churches to procure a supply for them. This was but a reasonable request, "for if the Gentiles were made partakers of their spiritual things, it was their duty to minister to them in carnal things," as Rom. xv. 27. And he very readily falls in with it, whereby he shewed his charitable and catholic disposition; how ready he was to own the Jewish converts as brethren, though many of them could scarce allow the like favour to the converted Gentiles, and that mere difference of opinion was no reason with him why he should not endeavour to relieve and help them. And herein he has given us an excellent pattern of Christian charity, and has taught us that we should by no means confine it to those that are just of the same sentiments with us, but be ready to extend it to all whom we have reason to look upon as the disciples of Christ.

11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? 15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. 17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

any means he should run in vain; not that St. Paul had any misgiving on the Gospel he had been preaching. This view is alien to the drift of his argument, which has affirmed his independence of the apostles of the circumcision; but "the words must be taken to express his fear lest the Judaic Christians, by insisting on the Mosaic ritual, might thwart his past and present endeavours to establish a church on a liberal basis" (Lightfoot).

ii. 4. Ellicott takes this verse as explaining why Titus was not

18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

From the account which Paul gives of what passed between him and the other apostles at Jerusalem, the Galatians might easily discern both the falseness of what his enemies had insinuated against him, and their own folly and weakness in departing from that Gospel which he had preached to them. But to give the greater weight to what he had already said, and more fully to fortify them against the insinuations of the Judaizing teachers, he acquaints them with another interview which he had with the apostle Peter at Antioch, and what passed between them there, ver. 11—14. Antioch was one of the chief churches of the Gentile Christians, as Jerusalem was of those Christians that turned from Judaism to the faith of Christ. There is no colour of reason for the supposition that Peter was bishop of Antioch. If he had been, surely Paul would not have withstood him in his own church, as we here find he did; but, on the contrary, it is here spoken of as an occasional visit which he made thither. In their other meeting there had been a good harmony and agreement. Peter and the other apostles had both acknowledged Paul's commission and approved his doctrine, and they parted very good friends. But in this Paul finds himself obliged to oppose Peter, for he was to be blamed; a plain evidence that he was not inferior to him, and consequently of the weakness of the pope's pretence to supremacy and infallibility, as the successor of Peter. Here we may observe,

First, Peter's fault. When he came among the Gentile churches he complied with them, and did eat with them, though they were not circumcised, agreeably to the instructions which were given in particular to him, Acts x. when he was warned by the heavenly vision to call nothing common or unclean. But when there came some Jewish Christians from Jerusalem he grew more shy of the Gentiles, only to humour them of the circumcision, and for fear of giving them offence, which doubtless was to the great grief and discouragement of the Gentile churches. Then "he withdrew, and separated himself." And his fault herein had an ill influence upon others, for the other Jews separated with him; though before they might be better disposed, yet now, from his example, they took on them to scruple eating with the Gentiles, and pretended they could not in conscience do it, because they were not circumcised. And (would you think it?) Barnabas himself, one of the apostles of the Gentiles, and one that had been instrumental in planting and watering the churches of the Gentiles, "was carried away with their dissimulation." Here note, 1. The weakness and inconstancy of the best of men when left to themselves, and how apt they are to falter in their duty to God, out of an undue regard to the pleasing of men. And, 2. The great force of bad examples, especially the examples of great men and good men, such as are in reputation for wisdom and honour.

Secondly, The rebuke which Paul gave him for his fault. Notwithstanding Peter's character, yet, when he observes him thus behaving himself, to the great prejudice both of the truth of the Gospel and the peace of the church, he is not afraid to reprove him for it. Paul stuck resolutely to his principles when others faltered in theirs; he was as good a Jew as any of them, for he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but he would magnify his office as the apostle of the Gentiles, and therefore would not see them discouraged and tripped upon. When he "saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel," that they did not live up to that principle which the Gospel taught, and which they had professed to own and embrace, namely, that by the death of Christ the partition wall between Jew and Gentile was taken down, and the observation of the law of Moses was no longer in force; when he observed this, as Peter's offence was public, so he publicly reproveth him for it; he said unto him before them all, "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" Herein one part of his conduct was a contradiction to the other; for if he who was a Jew could himself sometimes dispense with the use of the ceremonial law, and live after the manner of the Gentiles, this shewed that he did not look upon the observation of it as still necessary, even for the Jews themselves; and, therefore, that he could not consistently with his own practice impose it upon the Gentile Christians. And yet this Paul chargeth him with, yea, represents him as compelling the Gentiles to live as did the Jews,—not by open force and violence, but this was the tendency of what he did; for it was in effect to signify this, that the Gentiles must comply with the Jews, or else not be admitted into Christian communion.

Paul having thus established his character and office, and sufficiently shewn that he was not inferior to any of the apostles, no, not to Peter himself, from the account of the reproof he gave him he takes occasion to speak of that great fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, namely, that justification is only by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law, (though some think all that he saith to the end of the chapter is what he said to Peter at Antioch,) which doctrine condemned Peter for his symbolizing with the Jews. For, if it was the principle of his religion that the Gospel is [reveals] the instrument of our justification, and not the law, then he did very ill in countenancing them that kept up the law, and were for mixing it with faith in the business of our justification. This was the doctrine which Paul had preached among the Galatians, which he still adhered to, and which it is his great business in this epistle to mention and confirm. Now, concerning this, Paul acquaints us,

1. With the practice of the Jewish Christians themselves. "We," says he, "who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles," even we that have been born and bred in the Jewish religion, and not among the impure Gentiles, "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we" ourselves "have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law." And if we have thought it necessary to seek justification by the faith of Christ, why then should we hamper ourselves with the law? what did we believe in Christ for? was it not that we might be justified by the faith of Christ? and if so, is it not folly to go back to the law, and to expect to be justified either by the merit of moral works or the influence of any ceremonial sacrifices or purifications? And if it would be wrong in us, who are Jews by nature, to return to the law, and expect justification by it, would it not be much more so

circumcised: "now it was because," &c. Lightfoot would begin here a fresh sentence which is never completed: "But because of false brethren (to satisfy or disarm them), yet (verse 5) we did not yield." His conjecture is that in the incompleting sentence St. Paul hints at the influence brought to bear upon him to yield the point for the sake of peace. The sense would be, "Titus was not circumcised; but to satisfy the false brethren, some counselled me to submit, but not for a moment would we do so."

to require this of the Gentiles, who were never subject to it, since "by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified?" And, to give the greater weight to this, he adds, ver. 17, "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ the minister of sin?" that is, if while we seek justification by Christ alone, and teach others to do so, we ourselves are found giving countenance or indulgence to sin, or rather are accounted sinners of the Gentiles, and such as it is not fit to have communion with, unless we also observe the law of Moses—is "Christ the minister of sin?" will it not follow that he is so, if he engages us to receive a doctrine that gives liberty to sin, or by which we are so far from being justified that we remain impure sinners, and unfit to be conversed with? This he intimates would be the consequence, but he rejects it with abhorrence. God forbid, says he, that we should entertain such a thought of Christ, or of his doctrine, that thereby he should direct us into a way of justification that is defective and ineffectual, and leaves those that embrace it still unjustified, or that would give the least encouragement to sin and sinners. This would be very dishonourable to Christ, and it would be very injurious to them also. "For," says he, ver. 18, "if I build again the things which I destroyed;" if I (or any other) who have taught that the observation of the Mosaic law is not necessary to justification, should now by word or practice teach or intimate that it is necessary, "I make myself a transgressor." I own myself to be still an impure sinner, and to remain under the guilt of sin, notwithstanding my faith in Christ; or I shall be liable to be charged with deceit and prevarication, and acting inconsistently with myself.

["Thus by the preaching of the Gospel I have destroyed the law, that it may no more bear rule in the conscience. For when the new guest, Christ, comes into his new house, that he may dwell there alone, then the old colonist, Moses, must give way, and migrate elsewhere. Now, where Christ, the new guest, is, there the law, sin, wrath, death, have no place; but there are present only grace, righteousness, joy, life, a complete filial confidence in a pacified, gracious, and propitious Father through Christ. Then should I, by expelling Christ and destroying his kingdom, which by the Gospel I have planted, build the law again, and erect a kingdom for Moses? This is what I should do were I, as false apostles are wont to do, to teach circumcision and the keeping of the law as necessary to salvation: and in this manner I should restore, in the place of righteousness and life, sin and death; for the law only discovers sin, produces wrath, and kills."—*Luther on Galatians, as translated by Owen.*]

Thus does the apostle argue for the great doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law, from the principles and practice of the Jewish Christians themselves, and from the consequences that would attend their departure from it; from whence it appeared that Peter, and the other Jews, were much in the wrong for refusing to communicate with the Gentile Christians, and endeavouring to bring them under the bondage of the law.

2. He acquaints us what his own judgment and practice was.

1st. That he was "dead to the law." Whatever account others might make of it, yet for his part he was dead to it. He knew that the moral law denounced a curse against all that continue not in all things written therein to do them; and therefore he was dead to it, as to all hope of justification and salvation that way. And as for the ceremonial law, he also knew that was now antiquated and superseded by the coming of Christ, and therefore the substance being come, he had no longer any regard to the shadow. And he was thus dead to the law, through the law itself; it discovered itself to be at an end. By considering the law itself he saw that justification was not to be expected by the works of it, since none could perform a perfect obedience to it, and that there was now no farther need of the sacrifices and purifications of it—since they were done away in Christ, and a period was put to them by his offering up himself a sacrifice for us—and therefore the more he looked into it the more he saw that there was no occasion for keeping up that regard to it which the Jews pleaded for. But though he was thus "dead to the law," yet he does not look upon himself as without law; he had renounced all hopes of justification by the works of it, and was unwilling any longer to continue under the bondage of it, but he was far from thinking himself discharged from his duty to God; on the contrary, he was dead to the law "that he might live unto God." The doctrine of the Gospel, which he had embraced, instead of weakening the bond of duty upon him, did but the more strengthen and confirm it; and therefore, though he was dead to the law, yet it was only in order to his living a new and better life to God, as *Rom. vii. 4, 6*; such a life as would be more agreeable and acceptable to God than his observation of the Mosaic law could now be, namely, a life of faith in Christ, and under the influence thereof, of holiness and righteousness towards God. And agreeably hereunto he acquaints us,

2nd. That as he was dead to the law, so he was alive unto God through Jesus Christ; ver. 20, "I am crucified with Christ," &c. And here in his own person he gives us a most excellent description of the mysterious life of a believer. *First.* He is crucified, and yet he lives. The old man is crucified, *Rom. vi. 6*, out the new man living; he is dead to the world, and dead to the law, and yet alive to God and Christ. Sin is mortified, and grace quickened. *Secondly.* He lives, and yet not he; this is strange, "I live, and yet not I." He lives in the exercise of grace; he has the comforts and the triumphs of grace, and yet that grace is not from himself, but from another. Believers see themselves living in a state of dependence. *Thirdly.* He is "crucified with Christ," and yet Christ lives in him. This results from his mystical union with Christ, by means of which he is interested in the life of Christ, so as by virtue of that to die unto sin; and yet interested in the life of Christ, so as by virtue of that to live unto God. *Fourthly.* He lives in the flesh, and yet lives by faith. "To outward appearance he lives as other people do, his natural life is supported as others' are, but yet he hath a higher and nobler principle that supports and actuates him, namely, that of faith in Christ, and especially as eyeing the wonders of his love in giving himself for him; hence it is that, though he lives in the flesh, yet he does not live after the flesh. Note, They that have true faith do live by that faith; and the great thing which faith fastens upon is Christ's loving us, and giving himself for us. The great evidence of Christ's loving us is his giving himself for us; and this is that we are chiefly concerned to mix faith with, in order to our living to him.

[This verse shews more fully that justified persons are most strictly tied to mortify sin and lead a holy life, if so they walk according to the prescript of the doctrine of justification which was taught by Paul; for he, and by consequence all real believers, were "crucified with Christ," to wit, the old man of their indwelling corruption, *Rom. vi. 6*; it did receive the stroke of death by his death, he having by death redeemed them from the slavery of it, *Tit. ii. 24*; which crucifixion with Christ doth not destroy the natural life of believers, for so Paul sheweth he did live. Only the old man of corruption doth not live in them so as to act upon them in what they do, but Jesus Christ doth live in them, he being united to them as the root to the branches, or head to the members, and furnishing them with spiritual life and motion, whereby the very natural life which they live, and those things which concern that life, are ordered and gone about by virtue of strength drawn from Christ, by faith in him; and the consideration of Christ's love to them, and his dying for them because he loved them, is a great inducement unto justified persons so to live. Now, this being true in Paul, and in some measure in all believers, and seeing the principles of

the doctrine of justification did bind all to this, it is evident that to affirm this doctrine did tend to foster sin is but a foul-forged calumny. Note, That though the full persuasion and assurance of Christ's special love unto and his dying for me in particular, is not the very essence and being of saving faith, *Eph. i. 13*, for saving faith may be without it, *Isa. i. 10*, yet it is a thing which may be had without extraordinary revelation, the Spirit of God enabling the believer to discern in himself those graces (*1 Cor. ii. 12*) which are set down as marks of his special love and favour in Scripture, *1 Jno. iii. 14–24*, and bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God, *Rom. viii. 16*; and this assurance should be aimed at in the right method by all, *2 Pet. i. 10*; for Paul, speaking in the name of other believers, sheweth he had attained it; "Who loved me, and gave himself for me," saith he. This full persuasion and assurance, in its own nature, is so far from making those who have it loose the reins to wickedness and security, that, upon the contrary, it serveth as a strong incitement to make them mortify sin, and live that spiritual life of faith which is here spoken of; for it served for this use unto Paul: "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."]

The apostle concludes this discourse with acquainting us that by the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, without the works of the law, which he asserted, and others opposed, he avoided two great difficulties, which the contrary opinion was loaded with; namely, 1st. That he did not "frustrate the grace of God," which the doctrine of justification by the works of the law did; for, as he argues, *Rom. xi. 6*, "If it be of works, it is no more of grace." 2nd. That he did not frustrate the death of Christ, whereas "if righteousness come by the law," then it must follow "that Christ is dead in vain;" for if we look for salvation by the law of Moses, then we render the death of Christ needless; for to what purpose should he be appointed to die if we might have been saved without it?

CHAPTER III.

The apostle in this chapter, I. Reproves the Galatians for their folly in suffering themselves to be drawn away from the faith of the Gospel, and endeavours from several considerations to impress them with a sense of it. II. He proves the doctrine which he had reproved them for departing from, viz., that of justification by faith without the works of the law, 1. From the example of Abraham's justification; 2. From the nature and tenor of the law; 3. From the express testimony of the Old Testament. And, 4. From the stability of the covenant of God with Abraham. And lest any should hereupon say, wherefore then serveth the law? he answers, 1st. It was added because of transgressions; 2nd. It was given to convince the world of the necessity of a saviour. 3rd. It was designed as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. And then he concludes the chapter by acquainting us with the privilege of Christians under the gospel state.



FOOLISH Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? 2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? 4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. 5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?



ANCYRA—THE CAPITAL OF GALATIA.—VER. 1.

ii. 11–14. "Peter was to be blamed;" "was to be condemned," or "was condemned"—i.e., self-condemned by his own conduct. The date of this occurrence is placed by some before the visit to Jerusalem just spoken of, by others immediately after. The "withstanding of St. Peter was no opposition of Pauline to Petrine views; it was a faithful rebuke of blamable moral weakness." The progress of the defection at Antioch may be traced, Peter "gradually withdrew," and ultimately separated himself from the Gentile

converts with whom he had before freely associated. This conduct was out of deference to or fear of the converts from Judaism. This led the rest of the Jewish converts (other Jews) to act a similarly disingenuous part; and even Barnabas, adds St. Paul, was swept away by the flood of opinion.

iii. 4. "Have ye suffered," &c.: Alford and Lightfoot render, "Did ye suffer so many things in vain?" The history says nothing of these persecutions; but when the converts in the neighbouring

The apostle is here dealing with those that, having embraced the faith of Christ, yet still continued to seek for justification by the works of the law, that is, who depended upon their own obedience to the moral precepts as their righteousness before God, and wherein that was defective had recourse to the legal sacrifices and purifications to make it up. These he first sharply reproves, and then endeavours by the evidence of truth to convince them. And this is the right method, when we reprove any for a fault or an error, to convince them that it is an error, that it is a fault.

He reproves them, and the reproof is very close and warm; he calls them "foolish Galatians," ver. 1. Though as Christians they were wisdom's children, yet as corrupt Christians they were foolish children. Yea, he asks, "Who hath bewitched you?" whereby he represents them as enchanted by the arts and snares of their seducing teachers, and so far deluded as to act very unlike themselves; and that wherein their folly and infatuation appeared was, that they did "not obey the truth," that is, they did not adhere to the Gospel way of justification, wherein they had been taught, and which they had professed to embrace. Note, 1. It is not enough to know the truth, and to say we believe it; but we must obey it too, we must heartily submit to it, and steadfastly abide by it. And, 2. That those are spiritually bewitched who, when the truth as it is in Jesus is plainly set before them, will not thus obey it. Several things proved and aggravated the folly of these Christians.

First, Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth as crucified among them; that is, they had had the doctrine of the cross preached to them, and the sacrament of the Lord's supper administered among them, in both which Christ crucified had been set before them. Now, it was the greatest madness that could be for them, who had had acquaintance with such sacred mysteries, and admittance to such great solemnities, not to obey the truth which was thus published to them, and signed and sealed in that ordinance. Note, The consideration of the honours and privileges we have been admitted to as Christians should shame us out of the folly of apostasy and backsliding.

[Ministers ought not to rest upon a coldrite (inanimate) way of preaching truth, *Mat. vii. 29*, but are to endeavour the delivery of it with that perspicuity and plainness, *Col. iv. 4*, that power and liveliness, *1 Cor. ii. 4*, as it may penetrate the conscience of the hearers, and be as clear and evident to them as if it were pictured and painted out before their eyes; and, in order to this, they would not only labour to understand thoroughly what they preach, *1 Tim. i. 17*, but also to believe it themselves, *2 Cor. iv. 13*, and to have their own affections in some measure warmed with love to it, *1 Tim. i. 15*. And above all, would labour with God, that the effectual operation of his Spirit may come along with what they preach, *1 Cor. ii. 4*, that so the truth delivered may be the more lively, and convincingly represented to the hearers: for Paul did so preach; "Jesus Christ was evidently set forth, crucified among them, before their eyes;" he did so represent Christ and him crucified to their ears, by the preaching of the word, as if they had seen him with their eyes.]

Secondly, He appeals to the experiences they had had of the working of the Spirit upon their souls, ver. 2; he puts them in mind that upon their becoming Christians they had received the Spirit, that many of them at least had been made partakers, not only of the sanctifying influences, but of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, which were eminent proofs of the truth of the Christian religion, and the several doctrines of it, and especially of this, that justification is by Christ only, and not by the works of the law, which was one of the peculiar and fundamental principles of it. And to convince them of the folly of their departing from this doctrine, he desires to know how they came by these gifts and graces; was it "by the works of the law," that is, the preaching the necessity of these in order to justification? This they could not say, for that doctrine had not then been preached to them, nor had they, as Gentiles, any pretence to justification that way. Or was it by the "hearing of faith," that is, the preaching of the doctrine of faith in Christ, as the only way of justification? This, if they would say the truth, they were obliged to own, and therefore must be very unreasonable if they should reject a doctrine the good effects of which they had had such experience of. Note, 1. That it is usually by the ministry of the Gospel [Gospel preached and heard] that the Spirit is communicated to persons.

[Our justification before God, and the renovation of our natures by the Spirit of God, are so much conjoined, that the doctrine which, through God's blessing, is the means of working the former, is also the only doctrine appointed of God for holding forth the right way of attaining the latter: for Paul argueth that the doctrine of justification, without works, is divine, because that doctrine was the means of conveying sanctifying grace into their hearts; as appeareth from the scope of the argument here used, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"]

And, 2. That they are very unwise who suffer themselves to be turned away from that ministry and doctrine which has been blessed to their spiritual advantage.

Thirdly, He calls upon them to consider their past and present conduct, and from thence to judge whether they were not acting very weakly and unreasonably, ver. 3, 4. He tells them that they had "begun in the Spirit," but now were seeking to be "made perfect by the flesh;" they had embraced the doctrine of the Gospel, by means of which they had received the Spirit, and wherein only the true way of justification is revealed. And thus they had begun well; but now they were turning to the law, and expecting to be advanced to higher degrees of perfection, by adding the observation of it to faith in Christ, in order to their justification, which could end in nothing but their shame and disappointment: for this, instead of being an improvement upon the Gospel, was really a perversion of it; and while they sought to be justified in this way, they were so far from being more perfect Christians, that they were more in danger of becoming no Christians at all; hereby they were pulling down with one hand what they had built with the other, and undoing what they had hitherto done in Christianity. Yea, he farther puts them in mind that they had not only embraced the Christian doctrine, but suffered for it too, and therefore their folly would be the more aggravated, if now they should desert it; for in this case all that they had suffered would be in vain, it would appear that they had been foolish in suffering for what they now deserted, and their sufferings would be altogether in vain, and of no advantage to them. Note, 1. It is the folly of apostates that they lose the benefit of all they have done in religion, or suffered for it. 2. That it is very sad for any to live in an age of services and sufferings, of sabbaths, sermons, and sacraments, in vain; in this case former righteousness shall not be mentioned. [3. Though those who have suffered much for truth should afterward make defection from it, we are nevertheless to keep charity towards them, as hoping God will give them repentance, and reclaim them.]

Fourthly, He puts them in mind that they had had ministers among them, (and particularly himself,) who came with a Divine seal and commission; for they had ministered the Spirit to them and wrought miracles among them; and he appeals to them whether they did it "by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith;" whether the doctrine that was preached by them, and confirmed [not only by the fruits of the Spirit of regeneration and saving grace, but] by the miraculous gifts and operations of the Spirit, was that of justification by the works of the law, or by the faith of Christ; they very well knew it

was not the former, but the latter; and therefore must needs be inexcusable in forsaking a doctrine which had been so signally owned and attested, and exchanging it for one that had received no such attestations.

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. 15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. 16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. 18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

The apostle having reproved the Galatians for their not obeying the truth, and endeavoured to impress them with a sense of their folly herein, in these verses he largely proves the doctrine which he had proved them for the rejecting of; namely, that of justification by faith without the works of the law. This he does several ways.

First, From the example of Abraham's justification; which argument this same apostle uses, *Rom. iv.*; "Abraham believed God, and that was accounted to him for righteousness," ver. 6; that is, his faith fastened upon the word and promise of God, and upon his believing he was owned and accepted of God as a righteous man. And as on this account he is represented as the father of the faithful, so the apostle would have us to know that they who are of faith are the children of Abraham, ver. 7; not according to the flesh, but according to the promise, and consequently that they are justified in the same way that he was. Abraham was justified by faith, and so are they; and, to confirm this, the apostle acquaints us that the promise made to Abraham, *Gen. xii. 3*, "In thee shall all nations be blessed," had a reference hereunto, ver. 8. The Scripture is said to foresee, because he that indited the Scripture did foresee that God would justify the heathen world in the way of faith; and therefore in Abraham, that is, in the seed of Abraham, which is Christ, not the Jews only, but the Gentiles also, should be blessed; not only blessed in the seed of Abraham, but blessed as Abraham was, being justified as he was. This the apostle calls preaching the Gospel to Abraham, and from thence infers, ver. 9, that they who are of faith, that is, true believers, of what nation soever they be, "are blessed with the faithful Abraham." They are blessed with Abraham the Father of the faithful, by the promise made to him, and therefore by faith as he was. It was through faith in the promise of God that he was blessed and it is only in the same way that others obtain this privilege.

Secondly, He shews that we cannot be justified but by faith fastening on the Gospel, because the law condemn us. If we put ourselves upon trial in that court, and stand to the sentence of it, we are certainly cast, and lost, and undone; "for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse," that is, as many as depend upon the merit of their own works as their righteousness, that plead not guilty, and insist upon their own justification, the cause will certainly go against them; "for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," ver. 10; and *Deut. xxvii. 26*. The condition of life by the law is perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience,—the language of it is, Do this and live; or, as ver. 12, "The man that doeth them shall live in them," and for every failure

provinces of Pisidia, Lycania, and proconsular Asia suffered (*Acts xiv. xix. 23*; *2 Cor. i. 8*), it is unlikely the Galatians escaped.

iii. 5. "He that ministereth," or "supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh mighty works." "It is important," says Lightfoot, "to notice how here, as in the Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul assumes the possession of these extraordinary powers by his converts as an acknowledged fact."

iii. 8. "The promise to Abraham was an anticipation of the Gospel,

not only as announcing the Messiah, but as involving the doctrine of righteousness by faith." "Blessed:" in this quotation *Gen. xii. 3* and *Gen. xviii. 18* are blended together.

iii. 15. "Confirmed:" this word, both here and in verse 17, *Alford* renders "ratified." "Addeth thereto:" i.e., adds fresh clauses. "Covenant:" "The word may mean either testament or covenant, but in the New Testament, with only one exception (*Heb. ix. 15–17*), it means covenant" (*Lightfoot*).

herein the law denounces a curse. Unless our obedience be universal, continuing in all things that are written in the book of the law, and unless it be perpetual too—if in any instance, at any time, we fail and come short—we fall under the curse of the law. The curse is wrath revealed, and ruin threatened. It is a separation unto all evil, and this is in full force, power, and virtue against all sinners, and therefore against all men; for all have sinned and are become guilty before God; and if as transgressors of the law we are under the curse of it, it must be a vain thing to look for justification by it. But though this is not to be expected from the law, yet the apostle afterwards acquaints us that there is a way open to our escaping this curse, and regaining the favour of God, namely, through faith in Christ, who, as he says, ver. 13, “has redeemed us from the curse of the law,” &c. A strange method it was which Christ took to redeem us from the curse of the law; it was by his being himself made a curse for us; being made sin for us, he was made a curse for us; not separated from God, but laid for the present under that infamous token of the Divine displeasure, which the law of Moses had put a particular brand upon, *Deu. xxi. 23*; and the design of this was, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. [Or, as it is in the original, in Jesus Christ: so that this blessing is still in him, as the fountain and dispenser of it.] That all who believed on Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, might become heirs of Abraham’s blessing, and particularly of that “promise of the Spirit,” [promised Spirit.—*Luther*], which was peculiarly reserved for the times of the Gospel. And from hence it appeared that it was not by putting themselves under the law, but by faith in Christ, that they became the people of God and heirs of the promise. Here note, 1. The misery which as sinners we are sunk into; we are under the curse and condemnation of the law. [2. There is no delivery of enslaved man from this woful bondage but by giving satisfaction and by paying of a price for the wrong done to Divine justice, either by himself, or by some surety in his stead: God’s fidelity, *Gen. ii. 17*, his righteous nature, *Ps. xi. 6, 7*, and the inward desert of sin, *Rom. i. 32*, do call for it; for “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law;” the word signifieth to deliver by giving a price.] 3. The love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ towards us; he has submitted to be made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law. 4. The happy prospect which we now have through him, not only of escaping the curse, but of inheriting the blessing. 5. That it is only through faith that we can hope to obtain this favour. [6. Faith doth justify and make us blessed, not for any worth in itself, as if the work and merit of faith were reckoned to us for righteousness, but because it is the instrument, and, as it were, the hand of the soul, whereby we receive the promise, and Christ in the promise, whose satisfaction alone is our only righteousness before God, *Rom. v. 19*; for that Paul is to be understood thus all along this dispute appeareth from these two verses, wherein he ascribeth our delivery from the curse, and partaking of Abraham’s blessing, to Christ’s merit, or to his being made a curse for us, giving unto faith only the receiving and embracing of that satisfaction, as it is offered in the promise; “That we might receive the promise through faith,” saith he.]

Thirdly. To prove that justification is by faith, and not by the works of the law, the apostle alleges the express testimony of the Old Testament, ver. 11. The place referred to is *Hab. ii. 4*, where it is said, “The just shall live by faith;” it is again quoted, *Rom. i. 17*, and *Heb. x. 38*; and the design of it is to shew that they are only such as are just or righteous who do truly live, who are freed from death and wrath, and restored into a state of life in the favour of God; and that it is only through faith that persons become righteous, and as such obtain this life and happiness, that they are accepted of God, and enabled to live to him now, and are entitled to an eternal life in the enjoyment of him hereafter. And from hence the apostle says, it is evident, that “no man is justified by the law in the sight of God.” Whatever he may be in the account of others, yet he is not so in the sight of God, for the law is not of faith; that says nothing concerning faith in the business of justification, nor does it give life to those that believe; but the language of it is, “That the man that doth them shall live in them,” as *Lev. xviii. 5*. It requires perfect obedience as the condition of life, and therefore now can by no means be the rule of our justification; and this argument of the apostle’s may give us occasion to remark that justification by faith is no new doctrine, but what was established and taught in the church of God long before the times of the Gospel. Yea, it is the only way wherein any sinners ever were or can be justified.

Fourthly. To this purpose the apostle urges the stability of the covenant which God made with Abraham, which was not vacated or disannulled by the giving of the law to Moses, ver. 15, &c. Faith had the precedence of the law, for Abraham was justified by faith. It was a promise that he built upon, and promises are the proper objects of faith. God entered into covenant with Abraham, ver. 8; and this covenant was firm and steady; even men’s covenants are so, and therefore much more his. When a deed is executed, or articles of agreement sealed, both parties are bound, and it is too late then to settle things otherwise; and therefore it is not to be supposed that by the subsequent law the covenant of God should be vacated. The original word, *diathēkē*, signifies both a covenant and a testament. Now, the promise made to Abraham was rather a testament than a covenant. When a testament is become of force by the death of the testator, it is not capable of being altered; and therefore the promise that was given to Abraham being of the nature of a testament, it remains firm and unalterable; but if it should be said that a grant or testament may be defeated for want of persons to claim the benefit of it, therefore, ver. 16, he shews that there is no danger of that in this case. Abraham is dead, and the prophets are dead, but the covenant is made with Abraham and his seed; and he gives us a very surprising exposition of that. We should have thought it had been meant only of the people of the Jews; nay, saith the apostle, it is in the singular number, and points at a single person,—that seed is Christ. So that the covenant is still in force, for Christ abideth for ever in his person, and in his spiritual seed that are his by faith; and if it be objected that the law which was given by Moses did disannul this covenant, because that insisted so much upon works, and there was so little in it of faith or of the promised Messiah, he answers that the subsequent law could not disannul the precedent covenant or promise; for, ver. 18, “if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but,” says he, “God gave it to Abraham by promise,” and therefore it would be inconsistent with his holiness, wisdom, and faithfulness, by any subsequent act to set aside the promise, and so alter the way of justification, which he had thus established. If the inheritance was given to Abraham by promise, and thereby entailed upon his spiritual seed, we may be sure God would not retract that promise; for he is not a man that he should repent. [The only way of attaining right to this inheritance now, since the fall, is by God’s free gift, without the merit of works; for “God did give it to Abraham,” the father of all justified persons; the word signifieth he gave it freely, without respect had to Abraham’s works. The tender and offer of this gracious gift is made in the promises of the Gospel, which, being laid hold upon by faith, do entitle the believer to the tendered inheritance, *1 Jno. v. 10–12*; for, saith he, “God gave it by promise.”]

19 Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was

added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. 21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The apostle having just before been speaking of the promise made to Abraham, and representing that as the rule of our justification and not the law, lest they should think he did too much derogate from the law, and render it altogether useless, he from thence takes occasion to discourse of the design and tendency of it, and to acquaint us for what purposes it was given. It might be asked, if that promise was sufficient for salvation, wherefore then serveth the law? or why did God give the law by Moses? To this he answers:

First. That the law “was added because of transgressions,” ver. 19. It was not designed to disannul the promise, and to establish a different way of justification from that which was settled by the promise; but it was added to it, annexed on purpose to be subservient to it, and it was so because of transgressions. The Israelites, though they were chosen to be God’s peculiar people, yet were sinners as well as others, and therefore the law was given to convince them of their sin and of their obnoxiousness to the Divine displeasure on the account of it; “for by the law is the knowledge of sin,” *Rom. iii. 20*; and “the law entered that sin might abound,” *Rom. v. 20*; and it was also intended to restrain them from the commission of sin, to put an awe upon their minds, and be a curb upon their lusts, that they should not run into that excess of riot which they were naturally inclined to; and yet at the same time it was designed to direct them unto the true and only way whereby sin was to be expiated, and wherein they might obtain the pardon of it, namely, through the death and sacrifice of Christ, which was the special use for which the law of sacrifices and purifications was given.

And the apostle adds that the law was given for this purpose, “till the seed should come to whom the promise was made,” that is, either till Christ should come, the principal seed referred to in the promise, as he had before shewn, or till the gospel dispensation should take place, when Jews and Gentiles without distinction should, upon believing, become the seed of Abraham. The law was added because of transgressions, till this fulness of time, or this complete dispensation, was come. But when the seed was come, and a fuller discovery of Divine grace in the promise was made, then the law, as given by Moses, was to cease; that covenant, being found faulty, was to give place to another and a better, *Heb. viii. 7, 8*; and though the law, considered as the law of nature, is always in force, and still continues to be of use to convince men of sin, and to restrain them from it, yet we are no longer under the bondage and terror of that legal covenant. The law then was not intended to discover another way of justification different from that revealed by the promise, but only to lead men to see their need of the promise, by shewing them the sinfulness of sin, and to point them to Christ, through whom alone they could be pardoned and justified.

And as a farther proof that the law was not designed to vacate the promise, the apostle adds, that “it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” It was given to different persons, and in a different manner from the promise, and therefore for different purposes. The promise was made to Abraham and all his spiritual seed, including believers of all nations, even of the Gentiles as well as Jews; but the law was given to the Israelites as a peculiar people, and separated from the rest of the world. And whereas the promise was given immediately by God himself, the law was given by the ministry of angels, and the hand of a mediator, and from hence it appeared that the law could not be designed to set aside the promise; for, ver. 20, “a mediator is not a mediator of one,” that is, of one party only; but God is one, that is, but one party in the promise or covenant made with Abraham; and therefore it is not to be supposed that, by a transaction which passed only between him and the nation of the Jews, he should make void a promise which he had long before made to Abraham and all his spiritual seed, whether Jews or Gentiles. This would not have been consistent with his wisdom, or with his truth and faithfulness. Moses was only a mediator between God and the Israelites, not between God and the spiritual seed of Abraham; and therefore the law that was given by him could not affect the promise made to them, much less be subversive of it.

Secondly. The law was given to convince men of the necessity of a saviour. The apostle asks, ver. 21, as what some might be ready to object, “Is the law then against the promises of God?” do they really clash and interfere with

iii. 19, 20. “By angels:” “It was ordered or administered by means of angels. Angels were the instrumental enactors of law” (Alford). (Compare Acts vii. 53; Heb. ii. 2, 3; Deut. xxxiii. 2.) “Mediator:” Moses is generally allowed to be the mediator here referred to. The meaning appears to be, the idea of a mediator supposes two persons between whom the mediation is carried on; but God is one, he stands and acts alone, and dealt directly, without mediators, with Abraham.

iii. 23. “Before faith came, we were kept:” or, “kept in ward.”
iii. 24. “Schoolmaster:” the pedagogue or tutor was entrusted with the whole moral training of the child. The tempting explanation that the law was as “one to conduct us to the school of Christ” ought, says Lightfoot, probably to be abandoned. Christ is not represented as a teacher in the passage, but rather represents “the freedom of mature age, for which the constraints of childhood are a preparation.”

each other? or do you not set the covenant with Abraham and the law of Moses at variance with one another. To this he answers, God forbid; he was far from entertaining such a thought, nor could it be inferred from what he had said. The law is by no means inconsistent with the promise, but subservient to it, as the design of it is to discover men's transgressions, and to shew them the need they have of a better righteousness than that of the law. That consequence would much rather follow from their doctrine than from his; "for if there had been a law given that could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law," and in that case the promise would have been superseded, and rendered useless; but that in our present state could not be, for "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin," ver. 22; or declared that all, both Jew and Gentile, are in a state of guilt, and therefore unable to attain to righteousness and justification by the works of the law. That discovered their wounds, but could not afford them a remedy; it shewed that they were guilty, because it appointed sacrifices and purifications, which were manifestly insufficient to take away sin; and therefore the great design of it was "that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe;" that being convinced of their guilt, and the insufficiency of the law to effect a righteousness for them, they might be persuaded to believe on Christ, and so obtain the benefit of the promise.

Thirdly. The law was designed for a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ, ver. 24. In the foregoing verse the apostle acquaints us with the state of the Jews under the Mosaic economy; that before faith came, or before Christ appeared, and the doctrine of justification by faith in him was more fully discovered, they were "kept under the law," oblig'd on severe penalties to a strict observance of the various precepts of it; and at that time they were shut up, held under the terror and discipline of it as prisoners in a state of confinement; and the design of this was, that hereby they might be disposed more readily to embrace "the faith which should afterwards be revealed," or be persuaded to accept Christ when he came into the world, and to fall in with that better dispensation he was to introduce, whereby they were to be freed from that bondage and servitude, and brought into a state of greater light and liberty. Now in that state he tells them that the law was their schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, that they "might be justified by faith." As it declared the mind and will of God concerning them, and at the same time denounced a curse against them for every failure in their duty, so it was proper to convince them of their lost and undone condition in themselves, and to let them see the weakness and insufficiency of their own righteousness to recommend them to God; and as it obliged them to a variety of sacrifices, &c., which, though they could not of themselves take away sin, yet were typical of Christ, and of the great sacrifice which he was to offer up for the expiation of it, so it directed them (though in a more dark and obscure manner) to him, as their only relief and refuge. And thus it was their schoolmaster to instruct and govern them in their state of minority, or, as the word *παιδαγωγός* most properly signifies, their servant to lead and conduct them to Christ, (as children were wont to be led to school by those servants that had the care of them,) that they might be more fully instructed by him as their schoolmaster in the true way of justification and salvation, which is only by faith in him, and which he was appointed to give the fullest and clearest discoveries of. But lest it should be said, if the law was of this use and service under the Jewish, why may it not continue to be so under the Christian state too? the apostle adds, ver. 25, that "after faith is come," and the gospel dispensation had taken place, under which Christ, and the way of pardon and life through faith in him, is set in the clearest light, "we are no longer under a schoolmaster;" we have no such need of the law to direct us to him as there was then.

Thus the apostle acquaints us for what uses and purposes the law served; and from what he says concerning this matter we may observe, 1. The goodness of God to his people of old, in giving the law to them; for though in comparison of the gospel state it was a dispensation of darkness and terror, yet it furnished them with sufficient means and helps, both to direct them in their duty to God and to encourage their hopes in him. 2. The great fault and folly of the Jews, in mistaking the design of the law, and abusing it to a very different purpose from that which God intended in the giving of it; for they expected to be justified by the works of it, whereas it was never designed to be the rule of their justification, but only a means of convincing them of their guilt, and of their need of a Saviour, and of directing them to Christ, and faith in him, as the only way of obtaining this privilege: see *Rom. ix. 31, 32*; and *ch. x. 3, 4*. 3. The great advantage of the gospel state above the legal, under which we not only enjoy a clearer discovery of Divine grace and mercy than was afforded to the Jews of old, but are also freed from that state of bondage and terror under which they were held. We are not now treated as children in a state of minority, but as sons grown up to a full age, who are admitted to greater freedoms, and instated in larger privileges, than they were. This the apostle enlarges upon in the following verses. For, having shewn for what intent the law was given, in the close of the chapter he acquaints us with our privilege by Christ, where he particularly declares,

1st. That we "are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," ver. 26. And here we may observe, *First*. The great and excellent privilege which, under the Gospel, real Christians enjoy. They are the children of God; they are no longer accounted servants, but sons; they are not now kept at such a distance, and under such restraints, as the Jews were, but are allowed a nearer and freer access to God than was granted to them; yea, they are admitted into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of his children. *Secondly*. How they come to obtain this privilege; and that is "by faith in Christ Jesus." Having accepted him as their Lord and Saviour, and relying on him alone for justification and salvation, they are hereupon admitted into this happy relation to God, and are entitled to the privileges of it; for, *Jno. i. 12*, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." And this faith in Christ, whereby they became the children of God, he acquaints us, ver. 27, was what they professed in baptism; for, he adds, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Having in baptism professed their faith in him, they were thereby devoted to him, and had, as it were, put on his livery, and declared themselves to be his servants and disciples; and, being thus become the members of Christ, they were through him owned and accounted as the children of God. Here note, 1st. That baptism is now the solemn rite of our admission into the Christian church, as circumcision was into that of the Jews. Our Lord Jesus appointed it to be so in the commission he gave to his apostles, *Mat. xxviii. 19*, and accordingly it was their practice to baptize those whom they had disciples to the Christian faith. And perhaps the apostle might take notice of their baptism here, and of their becoming the children of God through faith in Christ professed therein, to obviate a further objection, which the false teachers might be apt to urge in favour of circumcision. They might be ready to say, though it should be allowed that the law as given at mount Sinai was abrogated by the coming of Christ the promised seed, yet what reason was there that circumcision should be set aside too, when that was given to Abraham together with the promise, and long before the giving of the law by Moses? But this difficulty is sufficiently removed when the apostle says, that they who are baptized into Christ have put on Christ; [it is a metaphor taken from the garments which men put on to

cover, adorn, and keep themselves warm;] for from thence it appears, that under the Gospel baptism comes in the room of circumcision, and that they who by baptism are devoted to Christ and do sincerely believe in him, are to all intents and purposes as much admitted into the privileges of the Christian state as the Jews were by circumcision into those of the legal. *Phil. iii. 3*; and therefore there was no reason why the use of that should still be continued. Note, 2nd. That in our baptism we put on Christ, therein we profess our discipleship to him, and are obliged to behave ourselves as his faithful servants. Being baptized into Christ we are baptized into his death; that, as he died and rose again, so, in conformity thereto, we should die unto sin, and walk in newness of life, *Rom. vi. 3, 4*, and it would be of great advantage to us did we oftener remember this.

2nd. That this privilege of being the children of God, and of being by baptism devoted to Christ, is now enjoyed in common by all real Christians. The law indeed made a difference between Jew and Greek, giving the Jews on many accounts the pre-eminence; that also made a difference between bond and free, master and servant, and between male and female, the males being circumcised; but it is not so now,—they all stand on the same level, and "are all one in Christ Jesus." As the one is not accepted on the account of any national or personal advantages he may enjoy above the other, so neither is the other rejected for the want of them; but all that sincerely believe on Christ, of what nation, or sex, or condition soever they be, are accepted of him, and become the children of God through faith in him.

3rd. That being Christ's, we are Abraham's seed, "and heirs according to the promise." Their Judaizing teachers would make them believe that they must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, or they could not be saved. No, says the apostle, there is no need of that; for "if ye be Christ's," if you sincerely believe on him who is the promised seed, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, you thereby become the true seed of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and as such "are heirs according to the promise," and consequently are entitled to the great blessings and privileges of it. And therefore, upon the whole, since it appeared that justification was not to be attained by the works of the law, but only by faith in Christ, and that the law of Moses was a temporary institution, and was given for such purposes as were only subservient to, and not subversive of, the promise, and that now under the Gospel Christians enjoy much greater and better privileges than the Jews did under that dispensation, it must needs follow that they were very unreasonable and unwise in hearkening to those who at once endeavoured to deprive them of the truth and liberty of the Gospel.

CHAPTER IV.

The apostle in this chapter is still carrying on the same general design as in the former, namely, to recover these Christians from the impressions made upon them by the Judaizing teachers, and to represent their weakness and folly in suffering themselves to be drawn away from the gospel doctrine of justification, and to be deprived of their freedom from the bondage of the law of Moses. To this purpose he makes use of various considerations, such as, I. The great excellence of the gospel state above the legal, ver. 1—7. II. The happy change that was made in them at their conversion, ver. 8—11. III. The affection they had for him and his ministry, ver. 12—16. IV. The characters of the false teachers by whom they had been perverted, ver. 17, 18. V. The very tender affection he had for them, ver. 19, 20. VI. The history of Isaac and Ishmael, by a comparison taken from which he illustrates the difference between such as rested in Christ and such as trusted in the law. And in all these, as he uses great plainness and faithfulness with them, so he expresses the tenderest concern for them.



OW I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; 2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: 4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

In this chapter the apostle deals plainly with those that hearkened to the Judaizing teachers, who cried up the law of Moses in competition with the Gospel of Christ, and endeavoured to bring them under the bondage of it; and to convince them of their folly, and to rectify their mistake therein, in these verses he prosecutes the comparison of a child under age, which he had touched upon in the foregoing chapter, and from thence shews what great advantages we have now under the Gospel above what they had under the law. And here, *First*. He acquaints us with the state of the Old Testament church. It was like a child under age, and it was used accordingly, being kept in a state of darkness and bondage, in comparison of that greater light and liberty which we enjoy under the Gospel. That was indeed a dispensation of grace, and yet it was comparatively a dispensation of darkness; for as the heir in his minority is "under tutors and governors till the time appointed of his Father," by whom he is educated and instructed in those things which at present he knows little of the meaning of, though afterwards they are likely to be of great use to him, so it was with the Old Testament church, the Mosaic economy which they were under was what they could not fully understand the meaning of;

iii. 27. "Have put on;" rather, "did put on Christ." The metaphor has been supposed to be taken from the white garments in which the newly-baptised were clothed. It seems, however, very doubtful whether the custom prevailed at so early a date.

iii. 28. "Are all one;" properly, "one man in Christ Jesus." (Compare Eph. ii. 15.)

iv. 1. "A child;" or, "an infant." The word probably is equivalent to a "minor" in any stage of his minority. His legal position

was much the same as that of a "slave" or "bond-servant." Such is the force of the word here used.

iv. 2. "Tutors and governors;" controllers of his person, his guardians, are meant by "tutors;" by "governors," the stewards or bailiffs appointed to manage his property.

iv. 3. "The elements of the world;" most probably, "elementary teaching," the elementary principles of religion, not necessarily erroneous, but suited to the "child" state of the world. Compare

for, as the apostle says, 2 Cor. iii. 13, "They could not stedfastly look to the end of that which was abolished." But to the church, when grown up to maturity in gospel days, it becomes of great use. And as that was a dispensation of darkness, so of bondage too; for "they were in bondage under the elements of the world," being tied to a great number of burdensome rites and observances, by which, as by a kind of first rudiments, they were taught and instructed, and whereby they were kept in a state of subjection, like a child under tutors and governors. The church then lay more under the character of a servant, being obliged to do every thing according to the command of God, without being fully acquainted with the reason of it; but the service under the Gospel appears to be more reasonable than that was. The time appointed of the Father being come, when the church was to arrive at its full age, now that darkness and bondage under which it before lay is removed, and we are under a dispensation of greater light and liberty.

Secondly, He acquaints us with the much happier state of Christians under the gospel dispensation; ver. 4-7, "When the fulness of time was come," the time appointed of the Father, when he would put an end to the legal dispensation, and set up another and a better in the room of it, he "sent forth his Son," &c. The person who was employed to introduce this new dispensation was no other than the Son of God himself, the only begotten of the Father, who, as he had been prophesied of and promised from the foundation of the world, so in due time was manifested for this purpose. He, in pursuance of the great design he had undertaken, submitted to be "made of a woman," there is his incarnation; and to be "made under the law," there is his subjection. He who was truly God, yet for our sakes became man; and he was Lord of all yet consented to come into a state of subjection, and to take upon him the form of a servant; and one great end of all this was "to redeem them that were under the law," to save us from that intolerable yoke, and to appoint gospel ordinances more rational and easy.

[1. Jesus Christ had a being and subsistence before his incarnation, he was even from all eternity truly God, *Ps. viii. 23*, for he is "sent forth" before "he was made of a woman." 2. The Father cannot but accept the obedience of Christ in the name of those for whom it is offered, and who do lay hold upon it by faith; seeing Christ did not come of himself, but was sent by the Father to pay, in obedience to the law, that he might redeem those that were under the law; for "God sent his Son," to wit, not by dispatching him from one place to another, (for the Son, being God, is present in all places, and can be absent from none,) but by making him appear invested with the human nature, which before he was not. 3. Jesus Christ is God's Son in a way proper to himself alone, as being his only Son by nature, *Jno. i. 14*; the eternally begotten Son of the Father, *Ps. ii. 7*; and the express image of the Father's glory, *Heb. i. 3*; for it is of him he speaketh while he saith, "God sent his Son." 4. It belongeth our Mediator to be true man, God's unchangeable justice so requiring, that the same nature which sinned should also suffer for sin; for he "was made of a woman." 5. Christ's human nature was miraculously formed by the Holy Ghost in the womb of a virgin without the company of any man; whence it followeth that he was free from the guilt of Adam's first sin, and consequently of original sin, which descendeth from Adam unto all his posterity, who come of him by ordinary generation, *Gen. v. 3*; but Christ did not so come of him, for he "was made of a woman," and not begotten by a man, *Mat. i. 28*. 6. The body of Christ was not created in heaven, and conveyed to the womb of the virgin, and from her to the world, without taking of its substance from her, as water is conveyed through a conduit, but it was framed in the virgin and of her substance; for "he was made of a woman." 7. Though there be two natures in Christ, as being both God and man, yet he is but one person; for the same Son who was sent by the Father is "made of a woman." 8. By virtue of this personal union of the two natures in Christ, those things which are only verified in the one nature are attributed unto and spoken of the whole person; for to be made of a woman (which agreeth only to the human nature) is ascribed to the person of the Son; "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman."]

He had indeed something more and greater in his view in coming into the world than merely to deliver us from the bondage of the ceremonial law; for he came into our nature, and consented to suffer and die for us, that hereby he might redeem us from the wrath of God, and from the curse of the moral law, which, as sinners, we all lay under. But that was one end of it, and a mercy reserved to be bestowed at the time of his manifestation; then the more servile state of the church was to come to a period, and a better to succeed in the place of it; for he was sent to redeem us, "that we might receive the adoption of sons," that we might no longer be accounted and treated as servants, but as sons grown up to maturity, who are allowed greater freedoms and admitted to larger privileges than while they were under tutors and governors. This, the course of the apostle's argument leads us to take notice of as one thing intended by this expression, though no doubt it may also be understood as signifying that gracious adoption which the Gospel so often speaks of as the privilege of those who believe in Christ. Israel was God's son, his firstborn, *Rom. ix. 4*; but now, under the Gospel, particular believers receive the adoption; and, as an earnest and evidence of it, they have together therewith the spirit of adoption, putting them upon the duty of prayer, and enabling them in prayer to eye God as a father; for, as it follows, ver. 6, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

[1. The Spirit here spoken of is not a naked quality, or operation and work only, but a person subsisting of himself, as appeareth from this, that he is said to be sent forth, which agreeth only to persons; "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son." 2. He is a Divine person, and no mere creature; for he dwelleth in the hearts of all believers, which can be said of no person but God; "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." 3. Whoever have this high dignity of adoption conferred upon them, must also have the Spirit of God given to reside, not in their brain only, to fill them with the gifts of knowledge, as he may be in hypocrites, *Mat. vii. 22*, but in their hearts also, by making a gracious change there, *Eph. iv. 23*, to be diffused from thence, as from the first principle of life, *Pr. iv. 23*, through all the faculties of the soul, and members of the body, *1 Thes. v. 23*; for, saith he, "Because ye are sons, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts."]

And hereupon, ver. 7, the apostle concludes this argument, by adding, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ;" that is, now under the gospel state we are no longer under the servitude of the law, but upon our believing in Christ become the sons of God; we are thereupon accepted of him, and adopted by him; and, being the sons, we are also heirs of God, and are entitled to the heavenly inheritance, as he also reasons, *Rom. viii. 17*. And therefore it must needs be the greatest weakness and folly to turn back to the law, and to seek justification by the works of it. From what the apostle says in these verses, we may observe,

1. The wonders of Divine love and mercy towards us, particularly of God the Father in sending his Son into the world to redeem and save us; of the Son of God in submitting so low, and suffering so much for us, in pursuance of that design; and of the Holy Spirit in condescending to dwell in the hearts of believers for such gracious purposes.

2. The great and invaluable advantages which Christians enjoy under the Gospel; for, 1st. We "receive the adoption of sons." Whence note, That it is

the great privilege which believers have through Christ that they are adopted children of the God of heaven. We, who by nature are children of wrath and disobedience, are become by grace children of love. 2nd. We receive "the spirit of adoption." Note, First. That all that have the privilege of adoption have the spirit of adoption; all that are received into the number partake of the nature of the children of God, for he will have all his children to resemble him. Secondly. That the spirit of adoption is always the spirit of prayer, and it is our duty in prayer to eye God as a Father. Christ hath taught us in prayer to eye God as our Father in heaven. Thirdly. If we are his sons, then his heirs. It is not so among men, with whom the eldest son is heir. But all God's children are heirs; they that have the nature of sons shall have the inheritance of sons.

[Paul has Christ ever in his mouth; he cannot forget him; for he foresaw that nothing would be less known in the world, even among those who would profess themselves to be Christians, than Christ and his Gospel. Hence he perpetually refers to him and places him before our eyes. And as often as he speaks of grace, righteousness, promise, filiation and heirship, he is ever wont to add, "in" or "through Christ," hereby alluding indirectly to law, as though he said, "These things come not to us by the law or its work, (much less by our own strength or the works of human traditions,) but by Christ alone.—Luther.]

8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? 10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. 11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

In these verses the apostle puts them in mind of what they were before their conversion to the faith of Christ, and what a blessed change their conversion had made upon them, and from thence endeavours to convince them of their great weakness in hearkening to those that would bring them under the bondage of the law of Moses.

First. He reminds them of their past state and behaviour, and what they were before the Gospel was preached to them. Then they knew not God, they were grossly ignorant of the true God, and the way wherein he is to be worshipped. And at that time they were under the worst of slaveries, for "they did service to them which by nature were no gods;" they were employed in a great number of superstitious and idolatrous services to those who, though they were accounted gods, yet were really no gods, but mere creatures, and perhaps of their own making, and therefore were utterly unable to hear and help them. Note, 1. That those who are ignorant of the true God cannot but be inclined to false gods. They who forsake the God that made the world, rather than be without gods, worshipped such as they themselves made. 2. That religious worship is due to none but to him who is by nature God; for when the apostle blames the doing service to such as by nature were no gods, he plainly shews that he only who is by nature God is the proper object of our religious worship.

Secondly. He calls upon them to consider the happy change that was made in them by the preaching of the Gospel among them. Now they had known God they were brought to the knowledge of the true God and of his Son Jesus Christ, whereby they were recovered out of that ignorance and bondage under which they before lay, or rather were known of God. This happy change in their state, whereby they were turned from idols to the living God, and through Christ had received the adoption of sons, was not owing to themselves, but to him. It was the effect of his free and rich grace towards them, and as such they ought to account it; and therefore hereby they were laid under the greater obligation to adhere to the liberty wherewith he had made them free. Note, That all our acquaintance with God begins with him; we know him, because we are known of him.

Thirdly. From hence he infers the unreasonableness and madness of their suffering themselves to be brought again into a state of bondage. He speaks of it with surprise and deep concern of mind, that such as they should do so; "How turn ye again?" &c., saith he, ver. 9; how is it that you, who have been taught to worship God in the gospel way, should now be persuaded to comply with the ceremonial way of worship? that you, who have been acquainted with a dispensation of light, liberty, and love, as that of the Gospel is, should now submit to a dispensation of darkness, and bondage, and terror, as that of the law is? This they had the less reason for, since they had never been under the law of Moses, as the Jews had been, and therefore on this account they were more inexcusable than the Jews themselves, who might be supposed to have some fondness for that which had been of so long standing among them. Besides, what they suffered themselves to be brought into bondage to were but weak and beggarly elements, such things as had no power in them to cleanse the soul, or to afford any solid satisfaction to the mind, and which were only designed for that state of pupillage under which the church had been, but which was now come to a period; and therefore their wickedness and folly were the more aggravated in submitting to them, and in symbolizing with the Jews in observing their various festivals, here signified by "days, and months, and times, and years." Here note, 1. That it is possible for those who have made great professions of religion to be afterwards drawn into very great defections from the purity and simplicity of it, for this was the case of these Christians. 2. That the more mercy God has shewn to any in bringing them into an acquaintance with the Gospel, and the liberties and privileges of it, the greater is their sin and folly in suffering themselves to be deprived of them; for this the apostle lays a special stress upon, that after they had known God, or rather were known of him, they desired to be in bondage under the weak and beggarly elements of the law.

Fourthly. Hereupon he expresses his fears concerning them. "Lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." He had been at a great deal of pains about them in preaching the Gospel to them, and endeavouring to confirm them in the faith and liberty of it; but now they were giving up these, and thereby rendering his labour among them fruitless and ineffectual, and this he could not but be deeply affected with the thoughts of. Note, 1. That a great deal of the labour of faithful ministers is labour in vain, and that when it is so it cannot but be a great grief to those who desire the salvation of souls. Note, 2. That the labour of ministers is in vain upon those that begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh, who, though they seem to set out well, yet afterwards

Col. ii. 8, 20, which seem to show that the expression refers to "a mode of instruction."

iv. 6. "Crying:" the word expresses earnest and importunate prayer. (See Isa. xix. 20; James v. 4.)

iv. 7. "An heir:" the best MSS. read "an heir through God"—i.e., an heir not by virtue of birth or merit, but through God, who adopted you.

iv. 8, 9. "Nevertheless, in an unfilial spirit, ye have subjected

yourselves again to bondage. Formerly your subjection to gods 'which by nature exist not' (Alford) was due to ignorance. Now, after having 'recognised' God, how turn you back?" The word rendered "known" in verse 9 is distinct from that rendered "knew" in verse 8; the latter brings out more strongly the recognition of facts. "Weak and beggarly:" weak, because powerless to rescue from condemnation; beggarly, because bringing no rich endowment of spiritual treasures.

turn aside from the way of the Gospel. Note, 3. That those will have a great deal to answer for upon whom the faithful ministers of Jesus Christ bestow labour in vain.

12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. 13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. 14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. 15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. 16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

That these Christians might be the more ashamed of their defection from the truth of the Gospel which Paul had preached to them, he here reminds them of the great affection they formerly had for him and his ministry, and puts them upon considering how very unsuitable their present behaviour was to what they then professed. And here we may observe,

First. How affectionately he addresses himself to them. He styles them brethren, though he knew their hearts were in a great measure alienated from him. He desires that all resentments might be laid aside, and that they would bear the same temper of mind towards him which he did to them; he would have them to be as he was, for he was as they were; and moreover tells them that they had not injured him at all. He had no quarrel with them upon his own account; though in blaming their conduct he had expressed himself with some warmth and concern of mind, yet he assures them that was not owing to any sense of personal injury or affront, as they might be ready to think, but proceeded wholly from a zeal for the truth and purity of the Gospel, and their welfare and happiness. Thus he endeavours to mollify their spirits towards him, that so they might be the better disposed to receive the admonitions he was giving them; and hereby teaches us that in our reproving others we should take care to convince them that our reproofs do not proceed from any private pique or resentment, but from a sincere regard to the honour of God and religion, and their truest welfare; for then they are like to be most successful when they appear to be most disinterested.

Secondly. How he magnifies their former affection to him, that hereby they might be the more ashamed of their present behaviour towards him. To this purpose, 1. He puts them in mind of the difficulty under which he laboured when he first came among them. "Ye know," says he, "how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first." What this "infirmity of the flesh" was, which in the following words he expresses by his temptation that was in his flesh, though no doubt it was well known to those Christians to whom he wrote, yet now we can have no certain knowledge of it. Some take it to have been the persecutions which he suffered for the Gospel's sake, others to have been something in his person or manner of speaking which might render his ministry less grateful and acceptable, referring to 2 Cor. x. 10, and to ch. xii. 7-10. But whatever it was it seems it made no impression on them to his disadvantage; for, 2. He takes notice that, notwithstanding this his infirmity, which might possibly lessen him in the esteem of some others, yet they did not despise or reject him on the account of it, but, on the contrary, received him "as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus;" they shewed a great deal of respect to him; he was a welcome messenger to them, even as though an angel of God, or Jesus Christ himself, had preached to them. Yea, so great was their esteem of him, that, if it would have been any advantage to him, they could have plucked out their own eyes and have given them to him. Note, How uncertain the respects of people are, how apt they are to change their minds, and how easily they are drawn into a contempt of those for whom they once had the greatest esteem and affection, so that they are ready to pluck out the eyes of those for whom they would before have plucked out their own! We should therefore labour to be accepted of God, "for it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment," 1 Cor. iv. 3.

Thirdly. How earnestly he expostulates with them hereupon. "Where is then," says he, "the blessedness ye spake of?" As if he had said, Time was when you expressed the greatest joy and satisfaction in the glad tidings of the Gospel, and were very forward in pouring out your blessings upon me as the publisher of them; whence is it that you are now so much altered, that you have so little relish of them or respect for me? You once thought yourselves happy in receiving the Gospel; have you now any reason to think otherwise? Note, Those that have left their first love would do well to consider where is now the blessedness they once spake of; what is become of that pleasure they used to take in communion with God, and in the company of his servants. And, the more to impress upon them a just shame of their present conduct, he again asks, ver. 16, "Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" How is it that I, who was heretofore your favourite, am now accounted your enemy? Can you pretend any other reason for it than that I have told you the truth, endeavoured to acquaint you with, and to confirm you in, the truth of the Gospel? and if not, how unreasonable must your disaffection be. Note, 1. That it is no uncommon thing for men to account those their enemies who are really their best friends; for so to be sure those are, whether ministers or others, who tell them the truth, and deal freely and faithfully with them in matters relating to their eternal salvation, as the apostle now did with these Christians. 2. That ministers may sometimes create enemies to themselves by the faithful discharge of their duty; for this was the case of Paul,—he was accounted their enemy for telling them the truth. 3. That yet ministers must not forbear speaking the truth for fear of offending others, and drawing their displeasure upon them. And, 4. That they may be easy in their own minds when they are conscious to themselves that, if others are become their enemies, it is only for telling them the truth.

17 They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

iv. 10. "Days:" the weekly-recurring Sabbaths. "Months:" or the new moons. "Times;" the annual festivals—Passover, Pentecost, &c. "Years:" the sacred years, as the Sabbatical year and year of jubilee. With regard to this latter, it has been calculated that the year 54-55 was a Sabbatical year.

iv. 12. "Be as I am:" i.e., "Be free from the bondage of ordinances as I am; for I am as ye are. I gave up my associations of race and custom as a Jew, to become like you. Ye did me no wrong, I have

18 But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

The apostle is still carrying on the same design as in the foregoing verses, which was to convince the Galatians of their sin and folly in departing from the truth of the Gospel; and having just before been expostulating with them about the change of their behaviour towards him who endeavoured to establish them in it, he here gives them the character of those false teachers who made it their business to draw them away from it, which, if they would attend to, they might soon see how little reason they had to hearken to them. Whatever apprehensions they might have of them, he tells them they were designing men, who were aiming to set up themselves, and who, under their specious pretences, were more consulting their own interest than theirs. "They zealously affect you," says he; they shew a mighty respect for you, and pretend a great deal of affection to you, "but not well;" they do it not with any good design, they are not sincere and upright in it, for "they would exclude you, that you might affect them." That which they are chiefly aiming at is, to engage your affections to them, and in order to this they are doing all they can to draw off your affections from me and from the truth, that so they may engross you to themselves. This, he assures them, was their design, and therefore they must needs be very unwise in hearkening to them. Note, 1. That there may appear to be a great deal of zeal where yet there is but little truth and sincerity. 2. That it is the usual way of seducers to insinuate themselves into people's affections, and by that means to draw them into their opinions. 3. That, whatever pretences such may make, they have usually more regard to their own interest than that of others, and will not stick at ruining the reputation of others, if by that means they can raise their own. On this occasion the apostle gives us that excellent rule which we have ver. 18, "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." What our translation renders, "in a good thing," some choose to render, "to a good man," and so consider the apostle as pointing to himself; and this sense they think is favoured both by the preceding context and also by the words immediately following, "and not only when I am present with you;" which may be as if he had said, Time was when you were zealously affected towards me, you once took me for a good man, and have now no reason to think otherwise of me: sure, then, it would become you to shew the same regard to me, now that I am absent from you, which you did when I was present with you. But if we adhere to our own translation, the apostle here furnishes us with a very good rule to direct and regulate us in the exercise of our zeal; and there are two things which to this purpose he more especially recommends to us. 1st. That it be exercised only upon that which is good; for zeal is then only good when it is in a good thing. They who are zealously affected to that which is evil will thereby only do so much the more hurt. And, 2nd. That herein it be constant and steady. It is good to be zealous always in a good thing, not for a time only, or now and then, like the heat of an ague fit, but, like the natural heat of the body, constant. And happy would it be for the church of Christ if this rule was better observed among Christians.

19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, 20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

That the apostle might the better dispose these Christians to bear with him in the reproofs which he was obliged to give them, he here expresses his great affection to them, and the very tender concern he had for their welfare. He was not like them, one thing when among them and another when absent from them; their disaffection to him had not removed his affection from them, but he still bore the same respect to them which he had formerly done. Nor was he like their false teachers, who pretended a great deal of affection to them, when at the same time they were only consulting their own interest; but he had a sincere concern for their truest advantage; he sought not theirs, but them. They were too ready to account him their enemy, but he assures them that he was their friend; nay, not only so, but that he had the bowels of a parent towards them. He calls them his children, as he justly might, since he had been the instrument of their conversion to the Christian faith; yea, he styles them his "little children," which, as it denotes a greater degree of tenderness and affection to them, so it may possibly have a respect to their present behaviour, whereby they shewed themselves too like little children, who are easily wrought upon by the arts and insinuations of others. He expresses his concern for them, and earnest desire of their welfare and soul-prosperity, by the pangs of a travelling woman; he travailed in birth for them: and the great thing that he was in so much pain about, and which he was so earnestly desirous of, was not so much that they might affect him, as that Christ might be formed in them; that they might become Christians indeed, and be more confirmed and established in the faith of the Gospel; from whence we may note, 1. The very tender affection which faithful ministers bear towards those among whom they are employed; it is like that of the most affectionate parents to their little children. 2. That the chief thing they are longing, and even travelling in birth for, on their account, is, that Christ may be formed in them; not so much that they may gain their affections, much less that they may make a prey of them, but that they may be renewed in the spirit of their minds, wrought into the image of Christ, and more fully settled and confirmed in the Christian faith and life. And how unreasonably must those people act who suffer themselves to be prevailed upon to desert or dislike such ministers. 3. That Christ is not fully formed in men till they are brought off from trusting in their own righteousness, and made to rely only upon him and his righteousness.

As a farther evidence of the affection and concern which the apostle had for these Christians, he adds, ver. 20, that he desired to be then present with them; he would be glad of an opportunity of being among them and conversing with them, and that thereupon he might find occasion to change his voice towards them, for at present he stood in doubt of them; he knew not well what to think of them. He was not so fully acquainted with their state as to know how to accommodate himself to them; he was full of fears and jealousies concerning them, which was the reason of his writing to them in such a manner as he had done. But he would be glad to find that matters were better with them than he feared, and that he might have occasion to speak them fair, instead of thus reproving and chiding them. Note,

1st. That though ministers too often find it necessary to reprove those they have to do with, yet this is no grateful work to them. They had much rather there was no occasion for it, and are always glad when they can see reason to change their voice towards them.

no personal ground of complaint." This clause may allude to some unknown circumstances.

iv. 13. "Through infirmity," &c.: because of an infirmity in my flesh. "Preached:" he was detained in Galatia through illness, it appears, and this first led to his preaching the Gospel among them. "First:" or at the former visit.

iv. 14. "My temptation," &c.: following the best MSS., we must read "your temptation which was in my flesh." The bodily weak-

[2nd. Though a minister may sometimes have reason to doubt what way to take with a people in order to their gaining, and be not a little perplexed lest there be not success answerable to his pains, yet he is not to give over, but must go on doing what is likeliest, and depending upon God for success. So doth Paul here; for though he stood in doubt of them, or was perplexed for them, yet he sendeth this epistle to them.]

21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? 22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise. 24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now. 30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

In these verses the apostle illustrates the difference between believers that rested in Christ only, and those Judaizers that trusted in the law, by a comparison taken from the story of Isaac and Ishmael. This he introduces in such a manner as was proper to strike and impress their minds, and to convince them of their great weakness in departing from the truth, and suffering themselves to be deprived of the liberty of the Gospel. "Tell me," says he, "ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?" He takes it for granted that they did hear the law, for among the Jews it was wont to be read in their public assemblies every sabbath day; and since they were so very fond of being under it, he would have them duly to consider what is written therein, referring to what is recorded *Gen. xvi. & xxi.*, which if they would do, they might soon see how little reason they had for it. And here, "For it is written that Abraham had two sons," &c., where he represents the different state and condition of these two sons of Abraham, that the one, namely, Ishmael, "was by a bondmaid;" and the other, namely, Isaac, "by a free woman;" and that whereas the former "was born after the flesh," or by the ordinary course of nature, the other "was by promise," when in the course of nature there was no reason to expect that Sarah should have a son.

Secondly. He acquaints them with the meaning and design of this history, or the use which he intended to make of it, ver. 24—27. "These things," says he, "are an allegory," wherein, besides the literal and historical sense of the words, the Spirit of God might design to signify something farther to us, and that was, that these two, namely, Agar and Sarah, "are the two covenants," or were intended to typify and prefigure the two different dispensations of the covenant. The former, namely, Agar, represented that which was given from mount Sinai, and which gendereth to bondage, which, though it was a dispensation of grace, yet in comparison of the Gospel state was a dispensation of bondage, and became more so to the Jews, through their mistake of the design of it, and expecting to be justified by the works of it. "For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia," (mount Sinai was then called Agar by the Arabians), "and it answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children;" that is, it justly represents the present state of the Jews, who, continuing in their infidelity, and adhering to that covenant, are still in bondage with their children. But the other, namely, Sarah, was intended to prefigure "Jerusalem which is above," or the state of Christians under the new and better dispensation of the covenant, which is free both from the curse of the moral and the bondage of the ceremonial law, and "is the mother of us all," a state into which all, both Jews and Gentiles, are admitted, upon their believing in Christ. And to this greater freedom and enlargement of the church under the gospel dispensation, which was typified by Sarah, the mother of the promised seed, the apostle refers that of the prophet, *Isa. liv. 1.*, where it is written, "Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not, break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband."

Thirdly. He applies the history thus explained to the present case; ver. 28. "Now we, brethren," says he, "as Isaac was, are the children of the promise. We Christians, who have accepted Christ, and rely upon him, and look for justification and salvation by him alone, as hereby we become the spiritual, though we are not the natural seed of Abraham, so we are entitled to the promised inheritance, and interested in the blessings of it. But lest these Christians should be stumbled at the opposition they might meet with from the Jews, who were so tenacious of their law as to be ready to persecute those that would not submit to it, he tells them that this was no more than *what* was pointed to in the type; for "as then he that was born after the flesh per-

secuted him that was born after the Spirit, they must expect it would be so now. But for their comfort in this case he desires them to consider what the Scripture saith, namely, *Gen. xxi. 10.*, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." Though the Judaizers should persecute and hate them, yet the issue would be that Judaism would sink, and wither, and perish, but true Christianity should flourish and last for ever. And then, as a general inference from the whole, or the sum of what he had said, he concludes, ver. 31, "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."

CHAPTER V.

In this chapter the apostle comes to make application of his foregoing discourse: he begins it with a general caution or exhortation, ver. 1, which he afterwards enforces by several considerations from ver. 2—12. He then presses them to serious practical godliness, which would be the best antidote against the snares of their false teachers, particularly, 1. That they should not strive with one another, ver. 13—15. 11. That they would strive against sin; where he shews, 1. That there is in every one a struggle between flesh and spirit, ver. 17: 2. That it is our duty and interest in this struggle to side with the better part, ver. 16, 18: 3. He instances the works of the flesh, which must be watched against and mortified, and the fruits of the Spirit, which must be brought forth and cherished; and shews of what importance it is that they be so, ver. 19—24. And then concludes the chapter with a caution against pride and envy.



TAND fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. 5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. 7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? 8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. 9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. 10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. 11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. 12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

In the former part of this chapter the apostle cautions the Galatians to take heed of the Judaizing teachers, who endeavoured to bring them back under the bondage of the law. He had been arguing against them before, and had largely shewn how contrary the principles and spirit of those teachers were to the spirit of the Gospel; and now this is, as it were, the general inference or application of all that discourse. Since it appeared, by what had been said, that we could only be justified by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by the righteousness of the law, and that the law of Moses was no longer in force, nor Christians under any obligation to submit to it, therefore he would have them to stand fast "in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Here observe, 1. That under the Gospel we are enfranchised, we are brought into a state of liberty, wherein we are freed from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and from the curse of the moral law; so that we are no longer tied to the observation of the one, nor tied up to the rigour of the other, which curses every one that continues not in all things written therein to do them, *ch. iii. 10.* 2. That we owe this liberty to Jesus Christ. It is he who has made us free; by his merits he has satisfied the demands of the broken law, and by his authority as a king he has discharged us from the obligation of those carnal ordinances which were imposed on the Jews. And, 3. That it is therefore our duty to stand fast in this liberty; that is, constantly and faithfully to adhere to the Gospel and to the liberty of it, and that we do not suffer ourselves upon any considerations to "be entangled again with the yoke of bondage," or persuaded to return back to the law of Moses. This is the general caution or exhortation, which in the following verses the apostle enforces by several reasons or arguments. As,

First. That their submitting to circumcision, and depending on the works of the law for righteousness, was an implicit contradiction of their faith as Christians, and a forfeiture of all their advantages by Jesus Christ, ver. 2—4. And here we may observe,

1. With what solemnity the apostle asserts and declares this; "Behold I Paul say unto you," ver. 2, and he repeats it, ver. 3, "I testify unto you;" as if he had said, I who have proved myself an apostle of Christ, and to have received my

ness of St. Paul was a trial to the Galatians. Yet they did not despise (treat with contemptuous indifference) nor actively loathe his teaching, but received him, &c.

iv. 17, 18. "Zealously affect you," &c.: "They (the Judaizing party) pay court zealously to you; nay, they wish to shut you out from their fellowship, that you may pay court to them. This indeed is good in a good cause. I remember your zealous affection. I would it had not grown cold in my absence."

v. 4. "Who are:" rather, "who would be justified in the law;" or, "all ye who are seeking justification," &c. "Ye are fallen;" Lightfoot sees in the word an allusion to the banishment of Hagar. "Ye are driven forth, are banished with Hagar, your mother."

v. 5, 6. Note the connection of the three Christian graces—hope of righteousness by faith, faith working by love. (Compare 1 Thess. i. 3; Col. i. 4, 5.) "Faith worketh by love." These words bridge over the gulf which seems to separate the language of St. Paul and

authority and instructions from him, do declare, and am ready to pawn my credit and reputation upon it, "that if you be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing." &c. Wherein he shews that what he was now saying was not only a matter of great importance, but what might be most assuredly depended on. He was so far from being a preacher of circumcision, as some might report him to be, that he looked upon it as a matter of the greatest consequence that they did not submit to it.

2. What it is which he so solemnly and with so much assurance declares. It is, that if they were circumcised Christ would profit them nothing, &c. We are not to suppose that it is mere circumcision which the apostle is here speaking of, or that it was his design to say that none who are circumcised could have any benefit by Christ, for all the Old Testament saints had been circumcised, and he himself had consented to the circumcising of Timothy; but he is to be understood as speaking of circumcision in the sense in which the Judaizing teachers did impose it, who taught "that except they were circumcised, and kept the law of Moses, they could not be saved," *Acts xv. 1*. And that this is his meaning appears from *ver. 4*, where he expresses the same thing by their being "justified by the law," or seeking justification by the works of it. Now, in this case, if they submitted to circumcision in this sense, he declares that Christ would profit them nothing; that they were debtors to do the whole law, that Christ was become of none effect to them, and that they were fallen from grace. From all which expressions it appears that thereby they renounced that way of justification which God had established; yea, that they laid themselves under an impossibility of being justified in his sight, for they became debtors to do the whole law, which required such an obedience as they were not capable of performing, and denounced a curse against those that failed in it, and therefore condemned, but could not justify them; and, consequently, that, having thus revolted from Christ, and built their hopes upon the law, Christ would profit them nothing, nor be of any effect to them. Thus, as by being circumcised they renounced their Christianity, so they cut themselves off from all advantage by Christ; and therefore there was the greatest reason why they should steadfastly adhere to that doctrine which they had embraced, and not suffer themselves to be brought under this yoke of bondage. Note, 1. That though Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost, yet there are multitudes to whom he shall profit nothing. 2. That all those who seek to be justified by the law do thereby render Christ of none effect to them. By building their hopes on the works of the law they forfeit all their hopes from him; for he will not be the Saviour of any who will not own and rely upon him as their only Saviour.

Secondly. To persuade them to steadfastness in the doctrine and liberty of the Gospel, he sets before them his own example, and that of other Jews who had embraced the Christian religion, and acquaints them what their hopes were; viz., that, through the Spirit, they were waiting "for the hope of righteousness by faith." Though they were Jews by nature, and had been bred up under the law, yet being, through the Spirit, brought to the knowledge of Christ, they had renounced all dependence on the works of the law, and looked for justification and salvation only by faith in him; and therefore it must needs be the greatest folly in them who had never been under the law to suffer themselves to be brought into subjection to it, and to found their hopes upon the works of it. Here we may observe,

1. What it is that Christians are waiting for. It is the hope of righteousness, by which we are chiefly to understand the happiness of the other world. This is called the hope of Christians, as it is the great object of their hope, which they are above every thing else desiring and pursuing; and the hope of righteousness, as their hopes of it are founded on righteousness not their own, but that of our Lord Jesus: for though a life of righteousness is the way that leads to this happiness, yet it is the righteousness of Christ alone which has procured it for us, and on the account of which we can expect to be brought to the possession of it.

2. How they hope to obtain this happiness; and that is, by faith, namely, in our Lord Jesus Christ; not by the works of the law, or any thing they can do to deserve it, but only by faith, receiving and relying upon him as the Lord our righteousness. It is in this way only that they expect either to be entitled to it here or possessed of it hereafter. And,

3. Whence it is that they are thus waiting for the hope of righteousness. It is through the Spirit. Herein they act under the direction and influence of the Holy Spirit. It is under his conduct, and by his assistance, that they are both persuaded and enabled to believe on Christ, and to look for the hope of righteousness through him. And when the apostle thus represents the case of Christians, it is implied that if they expected to be justified and saved in any other way they were like to meet with a disappointment, and therefore that they were greatly concerned to adhere to the doctrine of the Gospel which they had embraced.

Thirdly. He argues from the nature and design of the Christian institution, which was to abolish the difference between Jew and Gentile, and to establish faith in Christ, as the way of our acceptance with God. He tells them, *ver. 6*, that in Christ Jesus, or under the Gospel dispensation, "neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision." Though, while the legal state lasted, there was a difference put between Jew and Greek, between those that were and those that were not circumcised, the former being admitted to those privileges of the church of God from which the other were excluded, yet it was otherwise in the gospel state; Christ, who is the end of the law, being come, now it was neither here nor there whether a man was circumcised or uncircumcised, he was neither the better for the one nor the worse for the other, nor would either the one or the other recommend him to God; and therefore, as their Judaizing teachers were very unreasonable in imposing circumcision upon them, and obliging them to observe the law of Moses, so they must needs be very unwise in submitting to them herein. But though he assures them that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision would avail to their acceptance with God, yet he acquaints them what would do so, and that is, "faith which worketh by love;" such a faith in Christ as discovered itself to be true and genuine by a sincere love to God and our neighbour. If they had this, it mattered not whether they were circumcised or uncircumcised, but without it nothing else would stand them in any stead. Note, 1. That no external privileges or profession will avail to our acceptance with God, without a sincere faith in our Lord Jesus. 2. That faith, where it is true, is a working grace. It works by love, love to God, and love to our brethren; and faith thus working by love is all in all in our Christianity. [3. Though faith and love be always conjoined, yet faith, in order of nature at least, hath the precedency; being impossible that we can discharge any duty of love to God or our neighbour, sincerely or acceptably, before we close with Christ for the acceptance of our persons by faith, *Heb. xi. 6*, and thereby draw covenanted furniture from Christ for through-bearing in our duty, *1 Tim. i. 5*; for, saith he, "faith worketh by love," or is efficacious, and putteth forth its efficacy in love, as the fruit thereof.]

Fourthly. To recover them from their backslidings, and engage them to greater steadfastness for the future, he puts them in mind of their good beginnings, and calls upon them to consider whence it was that they were so much altered from what they had been, *ver. 7*.

St. James. Both assert a principle of practical energy, as opposed to a barren, inactive theory" (Lightfoot).

v. 7—10. The connection of these verses is not very obvious, but seems to be this: "Ye were running in fine style; who hindered you? The persuasion you have now adopted or countenanced is not from God; and though it may seem a trifling thing, or the promoters of it few in number, remember the proverb about the insidious power of leaven. Still, I trust you to perceive the danger. He that

1. He tells them that they did run well. At their first setting out in Christianity they had behaved themselves very commendably, they had readily embraced the Christian religion, and discovered a becoming zeal in the ways and work of it; as in their baptism they were devoted to God, and had declared themselves the disciples of Christ, so their behaviour was agreeable to their character and profession. Note, 1st. That the life of a Christian is a race, wherein he must run, and hold on, if he would obtain the prize. 2nd. That it is not enough that we run in this race, by a profession of Christianity, but we must run well, by living up to that profession. Thus these Christians had done for awhile; but they had been obstructed in their progress, and were either turned out of the way or at least made to flag and falter in it. Therefore,

2. He asks them, and calls upon them to ask themselves, Who did hinder them? or how it came to pass that they did not hold on in the way wherein they had begun to run so well? He very well knew who they were, and what it was that hindered them; but he would have them to put the question to themselves, and seriously consider whether they had any good reason to hearken to those that gave them this disturbance, and whether what they offered was sufficient to justify them in their present conduct. Note, 1st. That many who set out fair in religion, and run well for awhile, run within the bounds appointed for the race, and run with zeal and alacrity too, yet, by some means or other, are hindered in their progress, or turned out of the way. 2nd. That it concerns those who have run well, but now begin either to turn out of the way or to tire in it, to inquire what it is that hinders them. Young converts must expect that Satan will be laying stumblingblocks in their way, and doing all he can to divert them from the course they are in; but, whenever they find themselves in danger of being turned out of it, they would do well to consider who it is that hinders them. Whoever they were that hindered these Christians, the apostle tells them that, by hearkening to them, they were kept from obeying the truth, and thereby in danger of losing the benefit of what they had done in religion. The Gospel which he had preached to them, and which they had embraced and professed, he assures them was the truth; it was therein only that the true way of justification and salvation was fully discovered; and, in order to their enjoying the advantage of it, it was necessary that they should obey it, that they should firmly adhere to it, and continue to govern their lives and hopes according to the directions of it. If, therefore, they should suffer themselves to be drawn away from it, they must needs be guilty of the greatest weakness and folly. Note, First. That the truth is not only to be believed, but to be obeyed, not only to be received in the light of it, but in the love and power of it. Secondly. That they do not rightly obey the truth who do not steadfastly adhere to it. Thirdly. That there is the same reason for our obeying the truth which there was for our embracing it; and therefore they act very unreasonably who, when they have begun to run well in the Christian race, suffer themselves to be hindered so as not to persevere in it.

Fifthly. He argues for their steadfastness in the faith and liberty of the Gospel from the ill rise of that persuasion whereby they were drawn away from it; *ver. 8*, "This persuasion," says he, "cometh not of him that calleth you." The opinion or persuasion which the apostle here speaks of was, no doubt, that of the necessity of their being circumcised and keeping the law of Moses, or of their mixing the works of the law with faith in Christ in the business of justification. This was what the Judaizing teachers endeavoured to impose upon them, and what they had too easily fallen into. But, to convince them of their folly herein, he tells them that this persuasion did not come of him that called them; that is, either of God, by whose authority the Gospel had been preached to them, and they had been called into the fellowship of it, or of the apostle himself, who had been employed as the instrument of calling them hereunto. It could not come from God, for it was contrary to that way of justification and salvation which he had established; nor could they have received it from Paul himself, for, whatever some might pretend, he had all along been an opposer and not a preacher of circumcision; and if in any instance he had submitted to it for the sake of peace, yet he had never pressed the use of it upon Christians, much less imposed it upon them as necessary to salvation. Since, then, this persuasion did not come of him that had called them, he leaves them to judge from whence it must arise, and sufficiently intimates that it could be owing to none but Satan and his instruments, who by this means were endeavouring to overthrow their faith, and obstruct the progress of the Gospel, and therefore how much reason they had to reject it, and to continue steadfast in the truth which they before embraced. Note, 1. That in order to our judging aright of the different persuasions in religion there are among Christians, it concerns us to inquire whether they come of him that calleth us, whether or no they are founded upon the authority of Christ and his apostles. 2. That if upon inquiry they appear to have no such foundation, how forward soever others may be to impose them upon us, we should by no means submit to them, but reject them.

Sixthly. The danger there was of the spreading of this infection, and the ill influence it might have upon others, is a farther argument which the apostle urges against their complying with their false teachers, in what they would impose on them. It is possible that, to extenuate their fault, they might be ready to say that there were but few of those teachers among them who endeavoured to draw them into this persuasion and practice, or that they were only some lesser matters wherein they complied with them; that though they submitted to be circumcised, and to observe some few rites of the Jewish law, yet they had by no means renounced their Christianity, and gone over to Judaism. Or, suppose their complying thus far was so faulty as he would represent it, yet perhaps they might farther say there were but few among them that had done so, and therefore he need not be so much concerned about it. Now, to obviate such pretences as these, and to convince them that there was more danger in it than they were aware of, he tells them, *ver. 9*, that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump;" that the whole lump of Christianity may be tainted and corrupted by one such erroneous principle, or that the whole lump of the Christian society may be infected by one member of it; and therefore that they were greatly concerned not to yield in this single instance; or, if any had done so, to endeavour, by all proper methods, to purge out the infection from among them. Note, That it is dangerous for Christian churches to encourage those among them who entertain, especially who set themselves to propagate, destructive errors. This was the case here; the doctrine which the false teachers were industrious to spread, and which some in these churches had been drawn into, was subversive of Christianity itself, as the apostle had before shewn; and therefore though the number, either of the one or the other of these, might be but few, yet, considering the fatal tendency of it, and the corruption of human nature, whereby others were too much disposed to be infected with it, he would not have them on that account to be easy and unconcerned, but remember that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." If these were indulged, the contagion might soon spread farther and wider; and if they suffered themselves to be imposed upon in this instance it might soon issue in the utter ruin of the truth and liberty of the Gospel.

Seventhly. That he might conciliate the greater regard to what he had said, he expresses the hopes he had concerning them: *ver. 10*, "I have confidence in you," says he, "through the Lord, that you will be none otherwise minded." Though he had many fears and doubts about them, which was the occasion of

thus unsettles you shall bear his judgment, whatever his rank or position." "Run well;" St. Paul's favourite metaphor (*chap. ii. 2*; *1 Cor. ix. 24—27*; *Phil. iii. 14*; *2 Tim. iv. 7*). "Leaven;" "The leaven itself is born from corruption, and corrupts the mass with which it is mixed." This idea of corruption seems most prominent in the allusions and prohibitions of the Bible, as when the corrupt doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees is called by Christ "leaven" (*Matt. xvi. 6*). Its secretly penetrating and diffusive

his using so much plainness and freedom with them, yet he hoped that, through the blessing of God upon what he had written, they might be brought to be of the same mind with him, and to own and abide by that truth and liberty of the Gospel which he had preached to them, and was now endeavouring to confirm them in; wherein he teaches us that we ought to hope the best even of those concerning whom we have cause to fear the worst. [As the sinner's first conversion from sin to holiness is God's work, *Eph. ii. 5*, so the recovery of a sinner from his backsliding and defection is no less a work of infinite power, *Psa. li. 10*, and the only work of God; for the apostle, speaking of his confidence of their recovery, doth rely not upon their strength, but on the Lord, for bringing about the thing hoped for: "I have confidence in you through the Lord," saith he.] And that they might be the less offended at the reproofs he had given them for their unsteadfastness in the faith, he lays the blame of it more upon others than themselves, for he adds, "But he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be." He was sensible that there were "some that troubled them, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ," as *ch. i. 7*, and possibly he may point to some one particular man, who was more busy and forward than others, and might be the chief instrument of the disorder that was among them, and to this he imputes their defection or inconstancy more than to any thing in themselves, which may give us occasion to observe that, in reproving sin and error, we should always distinguish between the leaders and the led; such as set themselves to draw others thereto, and such as are drawn aside by them. Thus the apostle softens and alleviates the fault of these Christians, even while he is reproving them, that he might the better persuade them to return to and stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. But as for him or them that troubled them, whoever he or they were, he declares they should bear their judgment. He did not doubt but God would deal with them according to their deserts; and, out of his just indignation against them as enemies of Christ and his church, he wishes that "they were even cut off;" not cut off from Christ, and all hopes of salvation by him, but cut off by the censures of the church, which ought to witness against those teachers who thus corrupted the purity of the Gospel. Note, That those, whether ministers or others, who set themselves to overthrow the faith of the Gospel, and disturb the peace of Christians do thereby forfeit the privileges of Christian communion, and deserve to be cut off from them.

Eighthly. To dissuade these Christians from hearkening to their Judaizing teachers, and to recover them from the ill impressions they had made upon them, he represents them as men who had used very base and disingenuous methods to compass their designs, for they had misrepresented him, that they might the more easily gain their ends upon them. That which they were endeavouring was, to bring them to submit to circumcision, and to mix Judaism with their Christianity; and, the better to accomplish this design, they had given out among them that Paul himself was a preacher of circumcision; for when he says, *ver. 11*, "And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision," it plainly appears that they had reported him to have done so, and that they had made use of this as an argument to prevail with them to submit to it. It is likely they grounded this report upon his having circumcised Timothy, *Acts xvi. 3*. But though for good reasons he had yielded to circumcision in that instance, yet that he was a preacher of it, and especially in that sense wherein they imposed it, he utterly denies; and, to prove the injustice of this charge upon him he offers such arguments as, if they would allow themselves to consider, could not fail to convince them of it, namely,

1. That if he would have preached circumcision, he might have avoided persecution: If I yet preach circumcision, says he, "Why do I yet suffer persecution?" It was evident, and they could not but be sensible of it, that he was hated and persecuted by the Jews. But what account could be given of this their behaviour towards him, if he had so far symbolised with them as to preach up circumcision and the observation of the law of Moses as necessary to salvation? This was the great point they were contending for; and if he had fallen in with them herein, instead of being exposed to their rage he might have been received into their favour. When, therefore, he was suffering persecution from them, this was a plain evidence he had not complied with them, yea, that he was so far from preaching the doctrine he was charged with, that rather than do so he was willing to expose himself to the greatest hazards.

2. That if he had yielded to the Jews herein, then would the offence of the cross have ceased. They would not have took so much offence against the doctrine of Christianity as they did, nor would he and others have been exposed to so much suffering on the account of it as they were. He acquaints us, *1 Cor. i. 23*, that the preaching of the cross of Christ (or the doctrine of justification and salvation only by faith in Christ crucified) was to the Jews a stumblingblock. That which they were most offended at in Christianity was, that thereby circumcision, and the whole frame of the legal administration was set aside as no longer in force. This raised their greatest outcries against it, and stirred them up to oppose and persecute the professors of it. Now if Paul and others could have given in to this opinion that circumcision was still to be retained, and the observation of the law of Moses joined with faith in Christ as necessary to salvation, then their offence against it would have been in a great measure removed, and they might have avoided those sufferings they underwent for the sake of it. But, though others, and particularly those who were so forward to asperse him as a preacher of this doctrine, could easily come into, yet so could not he; he rather chose to hazard his ease and credit, yea, his very life itself, than thus to corrupt the truth, and give up the liberty of the Gospel. And hence it was that the Jews continued to be so much offended against Christianity, and against him as the preacher of it. Thus the apostle clears himself from the unjust reproach which his enemies had cast upon him, and at the same time shews how little regard was due to those men who could treat him in such an injurious manner, and how much reason he had to wish that they were even cut off.

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. 16 *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the

things that ye would. 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell



REVELLINGS.—GREEK FESTIVE DANCES.

you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

In the latter part of this chapter the apostle comes to exhort these Christians to serious practical godliness, as the best antidote against the snares of the false teachers. Two things especially he presses upon them,

First. That they should not strive with one another, but love one another. He tells them, *ver. 13*, that they had "been called unto liberty;" and he would have them to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free; but yet he would have them be very careful that they did not "use this liberty as an occasion to the flesh," that they did not from thence take occasion to indulge themselves in any corrupt affections and practices, and particularly such as might create distance and disaffection, and be the ground of quarrels and contentions among them. But, on the contrary, he would have them by love to serve one another, to maintain that mutual love and affection which, notwithstanding any lesser differences there might be among them, would dispose them to all those offices of respect and kindness to each other which the Christian religion obliged them to. Note, 1. That the liberty we enjoy as Christians is not a licentious liberty. Though Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, yet he has not freed us from the obligation of it. The Gospel is a doctrine according to godliness, *1 Tim. vi. 3*, and is so far from giving the least countenance to sin, that it lays us under the strongest obligations to avoid and subdue it. 2. That though we ought to stand fast in our Christian liberty, yet we should not insist upon it to the breach of Christian charity. We should not use it as an occasion of strife and contention with our fellow Christians, who may be differently minded from us, but should always maintain such a temper towards each other as may dispose us by love to serve one another. This the apostle endeavours to persuade these Christians to, and there are two considerations which he sets before them to this purpose:—

1st. That "all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," *ver. 14*. Love is the sum of the whole law; as love to God comprises the duties of the first table, so love to our neighbour those of the second. The apostle takes notice of the latter here, because he was speaking of their behaviour towards one another: and when he makes use of this as an argument to persuade them to mutual love, he intimates both that this would be a good evidence of their sincerity in religion and also the most likely means of rooting out those dissensions and divisions that were among them. It will appear that we are the disciples of Christ indeed when we have love one to another, *Jno. xiii. 35*; and where this temper is kept up, if it do not wholly extinguish those unhappy discords that are among Christians, yet at least it will so far accommodate them as that the fatal consequences of them may be prevented.

2nd. The sad and dangerous tendency of a contrary behaviour, *ver. 15*. But, says he, if instead of serving one another in love, and therein fulfilling the law of God, "ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." If, instead of acting like men and Christians, they would behave themselves more like brute beasts in tearing and rending one another, they could expect nothing else as the consequence of it but that they would be consumed one of another; and therefore they had the greatest reason not to indulge themselves in such quarrels and animosities. Note, That mutual strifes among brethren, if persisted in, are like to prove a common ruin; they that devour one another are in a fair way to be consumed one of another. Christian churches cannot be ruined but by their own hands; but if Christians, that should be helps to one another, and a joy one to another, be as brute beasts, biting and devouring each other, what can be expected but that the God of love should deny his grace to them, and the Spirit of love should depart from them, and that the evil spirit that seeks the destruction of them all should prevail?

Secondly. That they would all strive against sin; and happy would it be for the church if Christians would let all their quarrels be swallowed up of this, even a quarrel against sin,—if, instead of biting and devouring one another on the account of their different opinions, they would all set themselves against sin in themselves and the places where they live. This is what we are chiefly concerned to fight against, and that which above every thing else we should

power is also alluded to in other passages; see, for example, *1 Cor. v. 6*.

v. 11, 12. It seems from this that St. Paul had been accused of preaching circumcision. Alford renders verse 12 thus: "Would that they which unsettle you would even cut themselves off." Many think that the words "cut off" stand in antithesis to circumcision. Lightfoot paraphrases, "Why do they stop at circumcision? Why do they not mutilate themselves, like your priests of Cybele?"

v. 13. "Use not liberty:" or, rather, "turn not your liberty into," &c.

v. 17. "Ye cannot do:" Alford has, "so that ye may not do." The parallel passage (*Rom. vii. 15, 16*) perhaps best determines the meaning.

v. 19—21. The sins enumerated may be divided into four classes: (1) sensual—fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness (or wantonness); (2) idolatrous practices—idolatry, witchcraft (or sorcery);

make it our business to oppose and suppress. To excite Christians hereunto, and to assist them herein, the apostle shews,

1. That there is in every one a struggle between the flesh and the spirit; ver. 17, "The flesh," that is, the corrupt and carnal part of us, "lusteth," that is, strives and struggles with strength and vigour, "against the Spirit;" it opposes all the motions of the Spirit, and resists every thing that is spiritual. On the other hand, "the Spirit," that is, the renewed part of us, strives "against the flesh," and opposes the will and desire of it; and from hence it comes to pass "that we cannot do the things that we would;" as the principle of grace in us will not suffer us to do all the evil which our corrupt nature would prompt us to, so neither can we do all the good that we would, by reason of the oppositions we meet with from that corrupt and carnal principle. Even as in a natural man there is something of this struggle, the convictions of his conscience, and the corruption of his own heart, strive with one another; his convictions would suppress his corruptions, and his corruptions silence his convictions,—so in a renewed man, where there is something of a good principle, there is a struggle between the old nature and the new nature, the remainders of sin and the beginnings of grace; and this Christians must expect will be their exercise as long as they continue in this world.

2. That it is our duty and interest in this struggle to side with the better part, to side with our convictions against our corruptions, and with our graces against our lusts. This the apostle represents as our duty, and directs us to the most effectual means of success in it. If it should be asked, what course must we take that the better interest may get the better? he gives us this one general rule, which, if duly observed, would be the most sovereign remedy against the prevalence of corruption, and that is to walk in the Spirit; ver. 16, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." By the Spirit here may be meant either the Holy Spirit himself, who condescends to dwell in the hearts of those whom he has renewed and sanctified, to guide and assist them in the way of their duty, or that gracious principle which he implants in the souls of his people, and which lusts against the flesh, or that corrupt principle which still remains in them, as that does against it. Accordingly the duty here recommended to us is, that we set ourselves to act under the conduct and influence of the blessed Spirit, and agreeably to the motions and tendency of the new nature in us. And if this be our care in the ordinary course and tenor of our lives, we may depend upon it that, though we may not be freed from the stirrings and oppositions of our corrupt nature, yet we shall be kept from fulfilling it in the lusts thereof, so that, though it remain in us, yet it shall not obtain a dominion over us. Note, [1st. There is not any possibility of getting the power of inbred corruption subdued, or the lusts of sinful flesh curbed to any saving purpose by a natural man, or by any man, without a work of saving grace wrought in his heart by the Spirit of God; for he prescribeth unto them "walking in the Spirit," as the only remedy against "fulfilling the lusts of the flesh," which supposeth that the Spirit, or the work of saving grace and regeneration wrought by the Spirit, must be first in them.] 2nd. That the best antidote against the poison of sin is, to walk in the Spirit, to be much in conversing with spiritual things, to mind the things of the soul, which is the spiritual part of man, more than those of the body, which is his carnal part,—to commit ourselves to the guidance of the word, wherein the Holy Spirit makes known the will of God concerning us, and in the way of our duty to act in a dependence on his aids and influences. And as this would be the best means of preserving them from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, so it would be a good evidence that they were Christians indeed; for, says the apostle, ver. 18, "If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law," as if he had said, you must expect a struggle between flesh and spirit, as long as you are in the world, that the flesh will be lusting against the spirit, as well as the spirit against the flesh; but if in the prevailing bent and tenor of your lives you are led by the Spirit,—if you act under the guidance and government of the Holy Spirit, and of that spiritual nature and disposition he has wrought in you, if you make the word of God your rule, and the grace of God your principle,—it will from hence appear that you are not under the law, not under the condemning, though you are still under the commanding, power of it; for "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; and as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God," 1-John viii. 1-14.

3. The apostle instances the works of the flesh, which must be watched against and mortified, and the fruits of the Spirit, which must be cherished and brought forth, ver. 19, &c.; and by instancing particulars he farther illustrates what he is here upon. He begins,

1st. With "the works of the flesh," which, as they are many, so they are "manifest." It is past dispute that the things he here speaks of are the works of the flesh, or the product of corrupt and depraved nature; most of them are condemned by the light of nature itself, and all of them by the light of Scripture. The particulars he instances are of various sorts; some are sins against the seventh commandment, such as "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness," by which are meant not only the gross acts of these sins, but all such thoughts, or words, or actions, as have a tendency towards the great transgression. Some are sins against the first and second commandments, as idolatry and witchcraft; others are sins against our neighbour, and contrary to the royal law of brotherly love, such as hatred, variance, emulations, [not that good emulation whereby we strive to excel others in that which is good, not for love of applause or other by-respects, but merely from the love which we carry unto that which is good, (this is commanded, 1 Cor. xiv. 12.) but carnal emulations, whereby we are grieved at the good which is in others, not so much from hatred to their good as because it overshadoweth us, and therefore is joined with a desire to outstrip them in that good, which we are grieved for, wherewith it differeth from envy:] wrath, strife, which too often occasion seditions, heresies, envyings, and sometimes break out into murders, not only of the names and reputation, but even of the very lives of our fellow-creatures. Others are sins against ourselves, such as drunkenness and revellings; and he concludes the catalogue with an *et cætera*, and gives fair warning to all to take care of them, as they hope to see the face of God with comfort. Of these, and "such like," says he, "I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things," how much soever they may flatter themselves with vain hopes, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. These are sins which will undoubtedly shut men out of heaven. The world of spirits can never be comfortable to those that plunge themselves in the filth of the flesh; nor will the righteous and holy God ever admit such into his favour and presence, unless they are first "washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11.

2nd. He instances the fruits of the Spirit, or the renewed nature, which as Christians we are concerned to bring forth, ver. 22, 23. And here we may observe, that as sin is called the work of the flesh, because the flesh, or corrupt nature, is the principle that moves and excites men to it, so grace is said to be the fruit of the Spirit, because it wholly proceeds from the Spirit, as the fruit does from the root. And whereas, before the apostle had chiefly instanced those works of the flesh which were not only hurtful to men themselves, but tended to make them so to one another, so here he chiefly takes notice of those

fruits of the Spirit which had a tendency to make Christians agreeable one to another, as well as easy to themselves. And this was very suitable to the caution or exhortation he had before given, ver. 13, that they would "not use their liberty as an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another;" particularly he recommends to us love, namely, to God especially, and to one another for his sake; joy, by which may be understood cheerfulness in conversation with our friends, or rather a constant delight in God; peace, namely, with God and conscience, or a peaceableness of temper and behaviour towards others; longsuffering, that is, patience to defer anger, and a contentedness to bear injuries; gentleness, that is, such a sweetness of temper, and especially towards our inferiors, as disposes us to be affable and courteous, and easy to be entreated when any have wronged us; goodness, that is kindness and beneficence, which shews itself in a readiness to do good to all, as we have opportunity; faith, that is, fidelity, justice, and honesty in what we profess and promise to others; meekness, wherewith to govern our passions and resentments, so as not to be easily provoked, and when we are so, to be soon pacified; and temperance, namely, in meat and drink, and other enjoyments of life, so as not to be excessive and immoderate in the use of them. And concerning these things, or those in whom these fruits of the Spirit are found, the apostle says, "there is no law against them," that is, to condemn and punish them. Yea, from hence it appears that they are not under the law, but under grace; for these fruits of the Spirit, in whomsoever they are found, do plainly shew that such are "led by the Spirit," and consequently that they are not "under the law," as ver. 18. [In these words, (against which there is no law,) by a figure, or flower of speech, more is to be understood than is spoken, as Ps. li. 17, even that the moral law (concerning the standing whereof, as to its directing power, there was no controversy betwixt Paul and his adversaries) doth expressly command and commend them, which could not be said of those ceremonial abstinences or performances, so much urged by the false apostles.]

And as by instancing these works of the flesh, and fruits of the Spirit, the apostle directs us both what we are to avoid and oppose and what we are to cherish and cultivate, so, ver. 24, he acquaints us that this is the sincere care and endeavour of all real Christians. "And they that are Christ's," says he, "that is, they who are Christians indeed, not only in shew and profession, but in sincerity and truth, [all they who are led by and walk in the Spirit, or who are truly regenerate, and who are actually engaged in the work of mortifying their corrupt nature,] are Christ's in a peculiar manner, [to wit, by right of donation from the Father, *John*. vi. 37, by right of emption or redemption, 1 Cor. vi. 20, and by right of resignation, all such having actually resigned themselves unto Christ, as a mansion for him to dwell and walk in, 1 Cor. vi. 19, and in every thing to be guided by him, *Acts* ix. 6; for the apostle useth those expressions indifferently as being of equal extent; "Walk in the Spirit," ver. 16, and "if ye be led by the Spirit," ver. 18, and in this verse, "They who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," that is, the root of corruption, and then they have crucified all its branches, not only affections, or vexing passions, but also desirable lusts.] As in their baptism they were obliged hereunto, being baptized into Christ they were baptized into his death, *Rom.* vi. 3, so they are now sincerely employing themselves herein, and, in conformity to the Lord and head, are endeavouring to die unto sin, as he had died for it. They have not yet obtained a complete victory over it, they have still flesh as well as spirit in them, and that has its affections and lusts, which continue to give them no little disturbance; but as it does not now "reign in their mortal bodies, so as that they obey it in the lusts thereof," *Rom.* vi. 12, so they are seeking the utter ruin and destruction of it, and to put it to the same shameful and ignominious, though lingering, death which our Lord Jesus underwent for our sakes. [Note, 1. There is not any argument more moving or effectually exciting unto the work of mortification with a sincere Christian than that which is taken from his engagement to it by profession, and the first beginnings thereof wrought in him already by the Spirit of God; for this is the apostle's scope, that they would not walk in or fulfil the lusts of the flesh, because all of them were engaged by profession to crucify the flesh, and some had actually begun to do so already; "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh," saith he.] 2. That if we would approve ourselves to be Christ's, such as are united to him, and interested in him, we must make it our constant care and business to crucify the flesh with its corrupt affections and lusts. Christ will never own those as his who yield themselves the servants of sin. But though the apostle here only mentions crucifying of the flesh with the affections and lusts, as the care and character of real Christians, yet no doubt it is also implied that on the other hand we should shew forth those fruits of the Spirit which he had just before been instancing. This is no less our duty than that, nor is it less necessary to evidence our sincerity in religion. It is not enough that we cease to do evil, but we must learn to do well. Our Christianity obliges us not only to die unto sin, but to live unto righteousness; not only to oppose the works of the flesh, but to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit too. If, therefore, we would make it appear that we do indeed belong to Christ, this must be our sincere care and endeavour as well as the other. And that it was the design of the apostle to represent both the one and the other of these as our duty, and as necessary to support our character as Christians, may be gathered from what follows, ver. 25, where he adds, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit," that is, if we profess to have received the Spirit of Christ, or that we are renewed in the spirit of our minds, and ended with a principle of spiritual life, let us make it appear by the proper fruits of the Spirit in our lives. He had before told us that the Spirit of Christ is a privilege bestowed on all the children of God, *ch.* iv. 6. Now, says he, if we profess to be of this number, and as such to have obtained this privilege, let us shew it by a temper and behaviour agreeable hereunto, let us evidence our good principles by good practices. Our conversation will always be answerable to the principle which we are under the conduct and government of; as "they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, so they that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit," *Rom.* vii. 5. If, therefore, we would have it appear that we are Christ's, and that we are partakers of his Spirit, it must be by our "walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." We must set ourselves in good earnest both to mortify the deeds of the body and to walk in newness of life.

[The Lord's method in bestowing grace upon graceless sinners is, first, to infuse the principles of a new life, or gracious habits and powers in the soul; and next, to actuate these powers, making them actually to do those works which are spiritually good. Spiritual motion and action presupposeth a principle of a spiritual life, as a thing previous unto, and different from it; for, saith he, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."]

4th. The apostle concludes this chapter with a caution against pride and envy, ver. 26. He had before been exhorting these Christians by love to serve one another, ver. 13; and had put them in mind of what would be the consequence if, instead of that, they did "bite and devour one another," ver. 15. Now, as a means of engaging them to the one, and preserving them from the other of these, he here cautions them against being desirous of vain glory, or giving way to an undue affectation of the esteem and applause of men, because this, if it were indulged, would certainly lead them to provoke one another, and to envy one another. As far as this temper prevails among Christians

(3) unbrotherly feelings, growing in intensity—hatred, variance (or strife), emulations (or jealousy and rivalry), wrath, strife (or self-seeking or factious cabals), seditions (or divisions), heresies—the first being the temporary, the second the more permanent form—envyings, the wish to deprive another of what he has; (4) the outcome of all, the sin bringing forth death—murder.

v. 22, 23. The list falls into three groups of three: (1) Christian habits of mind—love, joy, peace; (2) social qualities—long-suffer-

ing, gentleness (or kindness), goodness; (3) general conduct—faith (or rather faithfulness, honesty), meekness (or gentleness), temperance.

v. 24. "Have crucified;" the word should be rendered "crucified." The tense expresses an act of the past, complete and decisive.

v. 26. "Desirous of vain-glory;" or, "let us not become vain-glorious."

vi. 1. The earnestness of this appeal, Lightfoot thinks, may be

they will be ready to slight and despise those whom they look upon as inferior to them, and to be out of humour if they are denied that respect which they think is their due from them; and they will also be apt to envy those by whom their reputation is in any danger of being lessened; and thus a foundation is laid for those quarrels and contentions which, as they are inconsistent with that love which Christians ought to maintain towards each other, so are greatly prejudicial to the honour and interest of religion itself. This therefore the apostle would have us by all means to watch against. Note, *First*. That the glory which comes from men is vain glory, which, instead of being desirous of, we should be dead to. Note, *Secondly*. That an undue regard to the approbation and applause of men is one great ground of the unhappy strifes and contentions that are among Christians.

CHAPTER VI.

This chapter chiefly consists of two parts: in the former the apostle gives us several plain and practical directions, which more especially tend to instruct Christians in their duty to one another, and to promote the communion of saints in love, from ver. 1—10. In the latter he revives the main design of the epistle, which was to fortify the Galatians against the arts of their Judaizing teachers, and to confirm them in the truth and liberty of the Gospel; to which purpose he, 1. Gives them the true character of these teachers, and shews them from what motives and with what views they acted, from ver. 11—14. And, 2. On the other hand he acquaints them with his own temper and behaviour; from both which they might easily see how little reason they had to slight him, and to fall in with them. And then he concludes the epistle with a solemn benediction.



BRETHREN, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3 For if a man think himself to be something,

when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. 4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For every man shall bear his own burden. 6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. 9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

The apostle having in the foregoing chapter exhorted Christians by love to serve one another, ver. 13, and also cautioned us, ver. 26, against a temper which, if indulged, would hinder us from shewing that mutual love and serviceableness which he had recommended, in the beginning of this chapter he proceeds to give us some farther directions, which, if duly observed, would both promote the one and prevent the other of these, and render our behaviour both more agreeable to our Christian profession and more useful and comfortable to one another; particularly,

First. We are here taught to deal tenderly with those that are overtaken in a fault, ver. 1. He puts a common case, "If a man be overtaken in a fault; he is brought to sin by the surprise of temptation. It is one thing to overtake a fault by contrivance, and deliberation, and full resolution in sin, and another thing to be overtaken in a fault. The latter is the case here supposed, and herein the apostle shews that great tenderness should be used. They which are spiritual, by whom is meant not only the ministers, as if none but they were to be called spiritual persons, but other Christians too, especially those of the higher forms in Christianity, these must 'restore such a one with the spirit of meekness.'" Here observe, 1. The duty we are directed to, which is to restore such: we should labour by faithful reproofs, and pertinent and reasonable counsels, to bring them to repentance. The original word *καταρτίσκει*, signifies to set in joint, as a dislocated bone is; accordingly we should endeavour to set them in joint again, to bring them to themselves, by convincing them of their sin and error, persuading them to return to their duty, and comforting them in a sense of pardoning mercy thereupon; and, having thus recovered them, to confirm our love to them. 2. The manner wherein this is to be done, namely, with the spirit of meekness; not in wrath and passion, as those that triumph in a brother's falls, but with meekness, as those that rather mourn for them. Many needful reproofs lose their efficacy by being given in wrath; but when they are managed with calmness and tenderness, and appear to proceed from a sincere affection to them, and concern for their welfare, they are like to make a due impression. 3. A very good reason why this should be done with meekness; "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." We ought to deal very tenderly with those that are overtaken in sin, because we none of us know but it may some time or other be our own case. We also may be tempted, yea, and overcome, by the temptation; and

therefore, if we rightly consider ourselves, this will dispose us to do by others as we desire to be done by in such a case.

Secondly. We are here directed to bear "one another's burdens," ver. 2. This may be considered either as referring to what goes before, and so may teach us to exercise forbearance and compassion towards one another in the case of those weaknesses, and follies, and infirmities which too often attend us,—that though we should not wholly connive at them, yet we should not be severe against one another on the account of them,—or as a more general precept, and so it directs us to sympathize with one another under the various trials and troubles that we may meet with, and to be ready to afford each other that comfort and counsel, that help and assistance, which our circumstances may require. And, to excite us hereunto, the apostle adds, by way of motive, that so we shall "fulfil the law of Christ." This is to act agreeably to the law of his precept, which is the law of love, and obliges us to a mutual forbearance and forgiveness, to sympathy with, and compassion towards, each other; and it would also be agreeable to his pattern and example, which has the force of a law to us. He bears with us under our weaknesses and follies; he is touched with a fellow-feeling of our infirmities; and therefore there is good reason we should maintain the same temper towards one another. Note, Though as Christians we are freed from the law of Moses, yet we are under the law of Christ; and therefore, instead of laying unnecessary burthens upon others, as those that urged the observation of Moses' law did, it much more becomes us to fulfil the law of Christ by bearing one another's burthens.

The apostle, being aware how great a hindrance pride would be to that mutual condescension and sympathy which he had been recommending, and that a conceit of ourselves would dispose us to censure and condemn our brethren, instead of bearing with their infirmities, and endeavouring to restore them when overtaken with a fault, he therefore, ver. 3, takes care to caution us against this. He supposes it as a very possible thing (and it would be well if it were not too common,) for a man to "think himself to be something," to entertain a fond opinion of his own sufficiency, to look upon himself as wiser and better than other men, and as fit to dictate and prescribe to them, when in truth he is nothing, has nothing of substance or solidity in him, or that can be a ground of that confidence and superiority which he assumes. And, to dissuade us from giving way to this temper, he tells us that such a one does but deceive himself; while he imposes upon others by pretending to what he has not, he puts the greatest cheat upon himself, and sooner or later will find the sad effects of it. This will never gain him that esteem either with God or men which he is ready to expect; he is neither the freer from mistakes nor will he be the more secure against temptations for the good opinion he has of his own sufficiency, but rather the more liable to fall into them, and to be overcome by them; for "he that thinks he stands had need to take heed lest he fall." Instead therefore of indulging such a vain-glorious humour, which is both destructive of that love and kindness we owe to our fellow Christians and also injurious to ourselves, it would much better become us to accept the apostle's exhortation, *Phil. ii. 3*, "To do nothing through strife or vain glory; but that in lowliness of mind we should each esteem other better than ourselves." Note, That self-conceit is but self-deceit. As it is inconsistent with that charity we owe to others, for "charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up," *1 Cor. xiii. 4*, so it is a cheat upon ourselves, and there is not a more dangerous cheat in the world than self-deceit is. As a means of preventing this evil,

Thirdly. We are advised every one to prove his own work, ver. 4. By our own work is chiefly meant our own actions or behaviour. These the apostle directs us to prove; that is, seriously and impartially to examine them by the rule of God's word, to see whether or no they are agreeable to it, and therefore such as God and conscience do approve of. And this he represents as the duty of every man; instead of being forward to judge and censure others, it would much more become us to search and try our own ways: our business lies more at home than abroad, with ourselves than with other men; for what have we to do to judge another man's servant? And from the connexion of this exhortation with what goes before, it appears that, if Christians did duly employ themselves in this work they might easily discover those defects and failings in themselves which would soon convince them how little reason they have either to be conceited of themselves or severe in their censures of others. And so it gives us occasion to observe, that the best way to keep us from being proud of ourselves is to prove our ourselves; the better we are acquainted with our own hearts and ways, the less liable shall we be to despise, and the more disposed to compassionate and help, others under their infirmities and afflictions. And that we might be persuaded to this necessary and profitable duty of proving our own work, the apostle urges two considerations very proper for this purpose.

1. That this is the way to have rejoicing in ourselves alone. If we set ourselves in good earnest to prove our own work, and upon the trial can approve ourselves to God, as to our sincerity and uprightness towards him, then may we expect to have comfort and peace in our own souls, having the testimony of our own consciences for us, as *2 Cor. i. 12*. And this he intimates would be a much better ground of joy and satisfaction than to be able to rejoice in another, either in the good opinion which the false teachers were wont to glory in, as we see ver. 13; or by comparing ourselves with others, as it should seem some did, who were ready to think well of themselves, because they were not so bad as some others. Too many are apt to value themselves upon such accounts as these; but the joy that results from thence is nothing to that which arises from an impartial trial of ourselves by the rule of God's word, and our being able thereupon to approve ourselves to him. Note, 1st. That though we have nothing in ourselves to boast of, yet we may have matter of rejoicing in ourselves. Our works can merit nothing at the hand of God, but if our consciences can witness for us, that they are such as he [hath wrought in us, and] for Christ's sake approves and accepts, we may upon good ground rejoice therein. 2nd. That the true way to have rejoicing in ourselves is to be much in proving our own works; in examining ourselves by the unerring rule of God's word, and not by the false measure of what others are, or may think of us. 3rd. That it is much more desirable to have matter of glorying in ourselves than in another. If we have the testimony of our consciences that we are accepted of God, we need not much concern ourselves about what others think or say of us; and without this the good opinion of others will stand us in little stead.

2. The other argument which the apostle uses to press upon us this duty of proving our own work is, that "every man shall bear his own burden," ver. 5; the meaning of which is, that at the great day every one shall be reckoned with according as his behaviour here has been. He supposes that there is a day coming when we must all give an account of ourselves to God; and he declares that then the judgment will proceed, and the sentence pass, not according to the sentiments of the world concerning us, or any ungrounded opinion we may have had of ourselves, or upon our having been better or worse than others, but according as our state and behaviour had really been in the sight of God. And if there be such an awful time to be expected, when he will render to every one according to his works, sure there is the greatest reason why we

explained by circumstances which were probably engaging St. Paul's attention when he wrote this epistle, viz., the grave offence committed at Corinth, and the almost undue severity which some there had been disposed to show to the offender. Compare *2 Cor. ii. 6—8*, where the tone is similar to this. "Overtaken in a fault;" not betrayed into sin, as in the Commentary, but if a man be caught in the act before escaping. "Considering thyself;" the transition in this clause to the singular from the plural gives point to the exhortation—

each one of those who had to deal with the offender should remember his own weakness.

vi. 2. "Burdens," "law;" the words seem used with reference to the ritualistic tendencies of the Galatians (see chap. v. 13, 14). "If you must have these burdens, &c., bear one another's," and the more so when a brother has fallen; and so fulfil Christ's law."

vi. 5. "Burden;" not the same word which is used in verse 2. The word there points to a load which may be fairly got rid of;

should prove our own works now; if we must certainly be called to an account hereafter, sure we ought to be often calling ourselves to an account here, to see whether or no we are such as God will own and approve then; and as this is our duty, so if it were more our practice, we should entertain more becoming thoughts both of ourselves and our fellow Christians; and instead of bearing hard upon one another, on the account of any mistakes or failings we may be guilty of, we should be more ready to fulfil that law of Christ by which we must be judged in bearing one another's burthens.

Fourthly, Christians are here exhorted to be free and liberal in maintaining their ministers; ver. 6, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." Where we may observe,

1. That the apostle speaks of it as a thing known and acknowledged, that as there are some to be taught, so there are others who are appointed to teach them. The office of the ministry is a Divine institution, which does not lie open in common to all, but is confined to those only whom God has qualified for it, and called to it. Even reason itself directs us to put a difference between the teachers and the taught; for if all were teachers there would be none to be taught, and the Scriptures sufficiently declare that it is the will of God we should do so.

2. That it is the word of God wherein ministers are to teach and instruct others; that which they are to preach is the word, 2 Tim. iv. 2; that which they are to declare is the counsel of God, Acts xx. 27; they are not "lords of our faith, but helpers of our joy," 2 Cor. i. 24. It is the word of God which is the only rule of faith and life; this they are concerned to study, and to open, and improve for the edification of others, but are no farther to be regarded than as they speak according to this rule.

3. That it is the duty of those who are taught in the word to support those who are appointed to teach them; for they are to communicate to them in all good things; that is, freely and cheerfully to contribute of the good things which God has blessed them with, what is needful for their comfortable subsistence. Ministers are to "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine," 1 Tim. iv. 13; they are not to "entangle themselves with the affairs of this life," 2 Tim. ii. 4; and therefore it is but fit and equitable that, while they are sowing to others spiritual things, they should reap their carnal things. And this is the appointment of God himself; for as, under the law, they who ministered about holy things lived of the things of the temple, so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel, 1 Cor. ix. 11, 13, 14.

4. The church's maintenance is only due unto such ministers as have abilities to preach the Gospel, and are faithful and diligent labourers in the word, according to those abilities wherewith they are endued; and therefore, though private men are not hereby warranted to withdraw the ordinary and allowed maintenance from their ministers upon pretence that they are either not able, or not painful, Mat. xiii. 2, 3, yet it concerneth those whom Christ hath intrusted to be overseers of his house to be careful that such who are either really unfit or unwilling to preach be removed from their charge, and not suffered to eat up the church's maintenance, feeding themselves, and starving the souls of people committed to their charge; therefore the apostle, while he pleadeth for maintenance to a minister, doth describe him from the actual exercise of his calling, "Let him communicate to him that teacheth."

Fifthly, Here is a caution to take heed of mocking God, or of deceiving ourselves, by imagining that he can be imposed upon by mere pretensions or professions; ver. 7, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." This may be considered as referring to the foregoing exhortation, and so the design of it is to convince those of their sin and folly who endeavoured by any plausible pretences to excuse themselves from doing their duty in supporting their ministers. Or, it may be taken in a more general view, as respecting the whole business of religion, and so as designed to take men off from entertaining any vain hopes of enjoying the rewards of it, while they live in the neglect of the duties of it. The apostle here supposes that many are apt to excuse themselves from the work of religion, and especially the more self-denying and chargeable parts of it, though at the same time they may make a show and profession of it; but he assures them that this their way is their folly, for though hereby they may possibly impose upon others, yet they do but deceive themselves if they think to impose upon God, who is perfectly acquainted with their hearts as well as actions, and as he cannot be deceived so will not be mocked.

[Note, 1. As the sin of backwardness in people to bestow any thing for upholding the Gospel in the public ministry thereof is very common, and hath begun early in the Christian church, so the minister of Christ may not, upon pretence of modesty, as being unwilling to kyth [appear] much in that wherein his particular advantage is any way concerned, suffer this sin to go unreprieved more than others; seeing it tendeth so much to the Gospel's prejudice, and that it is excess of modesty which impeded the practice of a necessary duty; for Paul, observing this sin to have been too common, even in his time, doth sharply admonish and rebuke those who were guilty of it, while he saith, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." 2. Neglecters of duty, and chiefly of expensive duties, such as is that of giving competent maintenance to the ministry, are very quick and witty to find out pretexts and excuses to colour their sin, and so to seal the eyes of those whom they have to do with; and this all that they may enjoy the profit of sin, and yet eschew the shame and imputation of it before men; for Paul doth here meet with such witty excuses, and with those who made use of them: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." 3. Though God be always the sinner's party, whatever sin he doth commit, Pr. li. 4, yet, seeing ministers are Christ's ambassadors, 2 Cor. v. 20, and that the contemning or discouraging of them by withholding competent maintenance from them doth so directly tend to the utter overthrow of religion and decay of all public worship; therefore he is in a singular manner party, and will kyth [show] himself to be so unto all who are guilty of so doing; for the apostle representeth the Lord as the party whom they had to deal with, while he saith, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked."] And therefore, to prevent this, he directs us to lay it down as a rule to ourselves, that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; or that according as we behave ourselves now, so will our account be in the great day. Our present time is seedtime, in the other world there will be a great harvest; and as the husbandman reaps in the harvest according as he sows in the seedness, so we shall reap then as we sow now. And he farther acquaints us, ver. 8, that as there are two sorts of seedness, namely, sowing to the flesh and sowing to the spirit, so accordingly will the reckoning be hereafter: "If we sow to the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap corruption; if we sow the wind, we shall reap the whirlwind." They that live a carnal, sensual life, who, instead of employing themselves to the honour of God, and the good of others, spend all their thoughts, and care, and time about the flesh, must expect no other fruit of such a course but corruption, a mean and short-lived satisfaction at present, and ruin and misery at the end of it. But, on the other hand, they that sow to the Spirit, who under the conduct and influence of the Spirit do live a holy and spiritual life, a life of devotedness to God, and of usefulness and serviceableness to others, may depend upon it that of the Spirit they "shall reap life everlasting;" they shall have the truest comfort in their present course, and an eternal life and happiness at the end of it.

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the word here is the term used for a "pack," or perhaps a soldier's "kit," which each is expected to bear.

vi. 6. Insert the word "but" at the beginning of this verse. Each is to bear his own, but the temporal wants of your teachers are to be supplied by you. "Taught;" i.e., instructed. "Communicate;" go shares with. "In all good things;" in his temporal blessings.

vi. 7, 8. "Be not deceived;" it has been noticed that avarice was a besetting sin of the Galatians. They had been asked (1 Cor. xvi. 1) to

Note, 1. That they who go about to mock God do but deceive themselves; hypocrisy in religion is the greatest folly as well as wickedness, since the God we have to do with can easily see through all our disguises, and will certainly deal with us hereafter, not according to our professions, but our practices. [2. Whatever sin a man committeth, it is most properly his own work, as flowing from the root of his own corrupt flesh; but the good which he doth is not so properly his own as God's, in so far as it floweth from the Spirit of God, and habits of grace which were wrought in him by the self-same Spirit, Phil. ii. 13; Col. iii. 10; for speaking of the flesh, he setteth it forth by the appropriating pronoun his, "He that soweth to his flesh;" but not so while he speaketh of the Spirit, "He that soweth to the Spirit;" not to his spirit.]

Sixthly, Here is a farther caution given us, "not to be weary in well doing," ver. 9. As we should not excuse ourselves from any part of our duty, so neither should we grow weary in it. There is in all of us too great a proneness hereunto; we are very apt to flag and tire in duty, yea, to fall off from it, particularly that part of it which the apostle here has a special regard to, namely, that of doing good to others. This, therefore, he would have us carefully to watch and guard against, and he gives this very good reason for it, because "in due season we shall reap if we faint not;" where he assures us, that there is [from free grace] a recompence of reward in reserve for all that sincerely employ themselves in well doing; that this reward will certainly be bestowed on us in the proper season,—if not in this world, yet to be sure in the next,—but then that it is upon supposition that we faint not in the way of our duty. If we grow weary of it, and withdraw from it, we shall not only miss of this reward, but lose the comfort and advantage of what we have already done; but if we hold on and hold out in well doing, though our reward may be delayed, yet it will surely come, and will be so great as to make us an abundant recompence for all our pains and constancy. Note, That perseverance in well doing is our wisdom and interest, as well as duty, for to this only is the reward promised.

Seventhly, Here is an exhortation to all Christians to do good in their places; ver. 10, "As we have therefore opportunity," &c. It is not enough that we be good ourselves, but we must do good to others, if we would approve ourselves to be Christians indeed. The duty here recommended to us is the same that is spoken of in the foregoing verses; and as there the apostle exhorts us to sincerity and perseverance in it, so here he directs us both as to the objects and the rule of it.

1. The objects of this duty are more generally all men; we are not to confine our charity and beneficence within too narrow bounds, as the Jews and Judaizing Christians were apt to do, but should be ready to extend it to all that partake of the same common nature with us, as far as we are capable, and they stand in need of us. But yet in the exercise of it we are to have special regard to the household of faith, or to those who profess the same common faith, and are members of the same body of Christ with us; though others are not to be excluded, yet these are to be preferred. The charity of Christians should be extensive charity, but yet therein a particular respect is to be had to good people. God doth good to all, but in an especial manner he is good to his own servants; and we must in doing good be followers of God as dear children.

2. The rule we are to observe in doing good to others is, as we have opportunity; which implies, 1st. That we should be sure to do it while we have opportunity, or while our life lasts, which is the only season wherein we are capable of doing good to them. If, therefore, we would behave ourselves aright in this matter, we must not, as too many do, neglect it in our lifetime, and defer it till we come to die, under pretence of doing something of this nature then; for as we cannot be sure that we shall then have an opportunity for it, so neither, if we should, have we any grounds to expect that what we do will be so acceptable to God, much less that we can atone for our past neglects by leaving something behind us for the good of others, when we could no longer keep it ourselves. But we should take care to do good in our lifetime, yea, to make this the business of our lives. And, 2nd. That we be ready to improve every opportunity for it; we should not content ourselves in having done some good already, but whenever fresh occasions offer themselves, as far as our capacity reaches, we should be ready to embrace them too, for we are directed to "give a portion to seven, and also to eight," Eccl. xi. 2. Note, First. That as God has made it our duty to do good to others, so he takes care in his providence to furnish us with opportunities for it: "The poor we have always with us," Mat. xxvi. 11. Secondly. That whenever God gives us an opportunity of being useful to others, he expects we should improve it, according to our capacity and ability. Thirdly. That we have need of godly wisdom and discretion to direct us in the exercise of our charity and beneficence, and particularly in the choice of the proper objects of it; for though none who stand in need of us are to be wholly overlooked, yet there is a difference to be made between some and others.

11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. 12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. 14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. 17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. 18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

aid in the collection for the poor in Judæa; they do not seem to have responded heartily. This rebuke may have a double force, alluding to the collection and generally to the support of their teachers. In the illustration employed—sowing and reaping—it is well to note the double comparison; in verse 7 the kind of seed, in verse 8 the nature of the ground.

vi. 9, 10. "Weary;" or turn cowards, lose heart. "Due season," "opportunity;" the two words are the same, signifying season. "At

The apostle having at large established the doctrine of the Gospel, and endeavoured to persuade these Christians to a behaviour agreeable to it, seems as if he intended here to have put an end to the epistle, especially when he had acquainted them that, as a particular mark of his respect to them, he had written this large letter with his own hand, and had not made use of another as his amanuensis, and only subscribed his name to it, as he was wont to do in his other epistles. But such was his affection to them, and concern to recover them from the ill impressions made upon them by their false teachers, that he cannot break off till he has once again given them the true character of those teachers, and an account of his own contrary temper and behaviour, that by comparing these together they might the more easily see how little reason they had to depart from the doctrine he had taught them, and to comply with theirs.

First. He gives them the true character of those teachers that were industrious to seduce them, in several particulars. As,

1. That they were men who desired "to make a fair show in the flesh," ver. 12. They were very zealous for the externals of religion, forward to observe, and to oblige others to observe, the rites of the ceremonial law, though at the same time they had little or no regard to real piety; for, as the apostle says of them in the following verse, "neither did they themselves keep the law." Proud, and vain, and carnal hearts desire nothing more than to make a fair show in the flesh, and they can easily be content with so much religion as will help them to keep up such a fair show; but many times those have least of the substance of religion who are most solicitous to make a show of it.

2. They were men that were afraid of suffering, for they constrained the Gentile Christians to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. It was not so much out of a regard to the law as to themselves; they were willing to sleep in a whole skin, and to save their worldly cargo, and cared not though they made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. That which they chiefly aimed at was to please the Jews, and to keep up their reputation among them, and so to prevent the trouble that Paul and other faithful professors of the doctrine of Christ lay open to. And,

3. Another part of their character was, that they were men of a party spirit, and who had no farther zeal for the law than as it subserved their carnal and selfish designs, for they desired to have these Christians circumcised, "that they might glory in their flesh," ver. 13, that they might say they had gained them over to their side, and made proselytes of them, of which they carried the mark in their flesh. And thus, while they pretended to promote religion, they were the greatest enemies of it, for nothing has been more destructive to the interest of religion than men's siding and party making.

Secondly. He acquaints us, on the other hand, with his own temper and behaviour, or makes profession of his own faith, and hope, and joy, particularly,

1. That his principal glory was in the cross of Christ. "God forbid," says he, "that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," ver. 14. By the cross of Christ is here meant his sufferings and death on the cross, or the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Redeemer. This was what the Jews stumbled at, and the Greeks accounted foolishness; and the Judaizing teachers themselves, though they had embraced Christianity, yet were so far ashamed of it, that in compliance with the Jews, and to avoid persecution from them, they were for mixing the observation of the law of Moses with faith in Christ, as necessary to salvation; but Paul had a very different opinion of it: he was so far from being offended at the cross of Christ, or ashamed of it, or afraid to own it, that he glories in it, yea, he desires to glory in nothing else, but rejects the thought of setting up anything in competition with it as the object of his esteem with the utmost abhorrence; "God forbid," &c. This was the ground of all his hope as a Christian. This was the doctrine which as an apostle he was resolved to preach, and whatever trials his firm adherence to it might bring upon him, he was ready for his sake, not only to submit to them, but to rejoice in them. Note, That the cross of Christ is a good [true] Christian's chiefest glory, and there is the greatest reason why we should glory in it, for to it we owe all our joys and hopes.

2. That he was dead to the world. By Christ, or by the cross of Christ, the world was crucified to him, and he to the world; he had experienced the power and virtue of it in weaning him from the world, and this was one great reason of his glorying in it. The false teachers were men of a worldly temper, their chief concern was about their secular interests, and therefore they accommodated their religion thereto. But Paul was a man of another spirit; as the world had no kindness for him, so neither had he any great regard to it; he was got above both the smiles and the frowns of it, and was become as indifferent to it as one that is dying out of it. This is a temper of mind that all Christians should be labouring after; and the best way to attain it is to converse much with the cross of Christ; the higher esteem we have of him the meaner opinion shall we have of the world, and the more we contemplate the sufferings our dear Redeemer met with from the world the less likely shall we be to be in love with it.

3. That he did not lay the stress of his religion on one side or other of the contesting interests, but on sound Christianity, ver. 15. There was at that time an unhappy division among Christians, and circumcision and uncircumcision were become names by which they were distinguished from each other; for, ch. ii. 9, 12, the Jewish Christians are called the circumcision, and they of the circumcision. The false teachers were very zealous for circumcision, yea, to that degree as to represent it as necessary to salvation, and therefore they did all they could to constrain the Gentile Christians to submit to it; wherein they had carried the matter much farther than others did, for though the apostles connived at the use of it among the Jewish converts, yet they were by no means for imposing it upon the Gentiles. But what they laid so great a stress upon Paul made very little account of. It was indeed of great importance to the interest of Christianity that circumcision should not be imposed on the Gentile converts, and therefore this he had set himself with the utmost vigour to oppose; but as for mere circumcision or uncircumcision, whether those who had embraced the Christian religion had been Jews or Gentiles, and whether they were for or against continuing the use of circumcision, so that they did not place their religion in it, this was comparatively a matter of little moment with him, for he very well knew that in Christ Jesus, that is, in his account, or under the Christian dispensation, "neither circumcision availed anything, nor uncircumcision," namely, as to men's acceptance with God, "but a new creature." Here he acquaints us both wherein real religion does not and wherein it does consist: it does not consist in circumcision or uncircumcision, in our being in this or the other denomination of Christians, but it consists in our being new creatures; not in having a new name, or putting on a new face, but in our being renewed in the spirit of our minds, and having Christ formed in us. This is of greatest account with God, and so it was with the apostle. If we compare this text with some others, we may more fully see what it is that renders us most acceptable to God, and which there-

fore we should be chiefly concerned about. Here we are told that it is "a new creature," and, ch. v. 6, that it is "faith which worketh by love," and 1 Cor. vii. 19 that it is "the keeping the commandments of God;" from all which it appears, that it is such a change of mind and heart whereby we are disposed and enabled to believe on the Lord Jesus, and to live a life of devotedness to God, and that where this inward, vital, practical religion is wanting, no outward professions or particular names will ever stand us in any stead, or be sufficient to recommend us to him. And were Christians duly concerned to experience this in themselves, and to promote it in others, if it did not make them lay aside their distinguishing names, yet it would at least take them off from laying so great a stress upon them as they too often do. Note, That Christians should take care to lay the stress of their religion where God has laid it, namely, on those things which are available to our acceptance with him, [which do evidence his acceptance by, and interest in, Christ.] So we see the apostle did, and it is our wisdom and interest herein to follow his example.

The apostle having shewn what was of chief consideration in religion, and what he laid the greatest stress upon, namely, not a mere empty name or profession, but a sound and saving change, in ver. 16 he pronounces a blessing upon all those that walk according to this rule, "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy upon the Israel of God." The rule which he here speaks of may be considered as signifying, either more generally the whole word of God, which is the complete and perfect rule of faith and life, or that doctrine of the Gospel, or way of justification and salvation, which he had laid down in this epistle, namely, by faith in Christ without the works of the law; or as more immediately referring to the new creature, which he had just before been speaking of. The blessings which he desires for those that walk according to this rule, or which he gives them the hope and prospect of, (for the words may be taken either as a prayer or a promise,) are peace and mercy: peace, that is, with God and conscience, and all the comforts of this life, as far as they are needful for them; and mercy, namely, an interest in the free love and favour of God in Christ, which is the spring and fountain of all other blessings. A foundation is laid for these in that gracious change which is wrought in them; and while they behave themselves as new creatures, and govern their lives and hopes by the rule of the Gospel, they may most assuredly depend upon them. And these he declares shall be the portion of all the Israel of God, by whom he means all sincere Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, all that are Israelites indeed, who, though they may not be the natural, yet are become the spiritual seed of Abraham; these being heirs of his faith, are also heirs together with him of the same promise, and consequently entitled to the peace and mercy here spoken of. The Jews and Judaizing teachers were for confining these blessings only to such as were circumcised and kept the law of Moses; but, on the contrary, the apostle declares that they belong to all who walk according to the rule of the Gospel, or of the new creature, even to all the Israel of God, intimating that those only are the true Israel of God who walk according to this rule, and not that of circumcision, which they insisted so much upon, and therefore that this was the true way to obtain peace and mercy. Note, 1st. That real Christians are such as walk by rule, not a rule of their own devising, but that which God himself has prescribed to them. 2nd. That even those who walk according to this rule do yet stand in need of the mercy of God. But, 3rd. That all who sincerely endeavour to walk according to this rule may be assured that peace and mercy shall be upon them; this is the best way to have peace with God, ourselves, and others; and hereupon, as we may be sure of the favour of God now, so we shall find mercy with him hereafter.

4. That he had cheerfully suffered persecution for the sake of Christ and Christianity, ver. 17. As the cross of Christ, or the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Redeemer, was what he chiefly gloried in, so he had been willing to run all hazards rather than he would betray this truth, or suffer it to be corrupted. The false teachers were afraid of persecution, and this was the great reason why they were so zealous for circumcision, as we see ver. 12. But this was the least of Paul's concern; he was not moved at any of the afflictions he met with, "nor did he count his life dear to him, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God," Acts xx. 24. He had already suffered much in the cause of Christ, for "he bare in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus," the scars of those wounds which he had sustained from persecuting enemies, for his steady adherence to him and that doctrine of the Gospel which he had received from him. And as from hence it appeared that he was firmly persuaded of the truth and importance of it, and that he was far from being a favourer of circumcision, as they had falsely reported him to be, so hereupon, with a becoming warmth and vehemence, suitable to his authority as an apostle, and to the deep concern of mind he was under, he insists upon it "that no man should henceforth trouble him," namely, by opposing his doctrine and authority, or by any such calumnies and reproaches as had been cast upon him; for, as both from what he had said and what he had suffered they appeared to be highly unjust and injurious, so also that they were very unreasonable who either raised or received them. Note, 1. That it may justly be presumed men are fully persuaded of those truths which they are willing to suffer in the defence of. And, 2. That it is very unjust to charge those things upon others which are contrary, not only to their profession but their sufferings too.

Thirdly. The apostle, having now finished what he intended to write for the conviction and recovery of the churches of Galatia, concludes the epistle with his apostolical benediction, ver. 18. He calls them his brethren, wherein he shews his great humility, and the tender affection he had for them, notwithstanding the ill treatment he had met with from them; and takes his leave of them with this very serious and affectionate prayer, that "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with their spirit." This was an usual farewell wish of the apostles, as we see, Rom. xvi. 20, 21; 1 Cor. xvi. 23. And herein he prays that they might enjoy the favour of Christ both in the special effects and the sensible evidences of it, that they might receive from him all that grace which was needful to guide them in their way, to strengthen them in their work, to establish them in their Christian course, and to encourage and comfort them under all the trials of life and the prospect of death itself. This is fitly called "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," as he is both the sole purchaser and the appointed dispenser of it; and though these churches had done enough to forfeit it, by suffering themselves to be drawn into an opinion and practice which was highly dishonourable to Christ, as well as dangerous to them, yet out of his great concern for them, and knowing of what importance it was to them, he earnestly desires it on their behalf, yea, that it might be with their spirit, that they might continually experience the influences of it upon their souls, disposing and enabling to act with sincerity and uprightness in religion. We need desire no more to make us happy than the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This the apostle begs for these Christians, and therein shews us what we are chiefly concerned to obtain; and, both for their and our encouragement to hope for it, he adds his Amen.

its own season, the fit time, the harvest, we shall reap; at the fit season (the opportunity, or the spring) sow in doing good."

vi. 11. Lightfoot says, "At this point the apostle takes the pen from his amanuensis, and writes the concluding paragraph himself." "How large a letter:" "see in how large letters," &c. The reference is to the size of the characters, not to the length of the epistle. Various reasons have been assigned for this calling attention to the size of the handwriting. Lightfoot says, "The size of the characters will arrest the attention of the readers." Ellicott inclines to the view that he calls attention to the handwriting of the "whole epistle,"

written by himself, to prevent any possible mistake about the authorship, as epistles had been forged in his name (2 Thess. ii. 2, iii. 17).

vi. 15. "Availeth:" the oldest authorities read "is anything."

vi. 17. "The marks of Jesus:" such is the reading adopted by Alford, Ellicott, and Lightfoot. These marks were the scars of persecution. There is a distinct allusion to the marks burnt on slaves, to denote to whom they belonged.

vi. 18. "Brethren:" in the Greek this word comes last, for the sake of emphasis. He had censured them, but they were still his brethren.



SACRIFICE



AN

EXPOSITION



TO DIANA.

OF THE EPISTLE OF

ST. PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

SOME think that this epistle to the *Ephesians* was a circular letter sent to several churches, and that the copy directed to the Ephesians happened to be taken into the canon, and so it came to bear that particular inscription. And they have been induced the rather to think this, because it is the only one of all St. Paul's epistles that has nothing in it peculiarly adapted to the state or case of that particular church, but has much of common concernment to all Christians, and especially of all who, having been Gentiles in times past, were converted to Christianity. But then it may be observed, on the other hand, that the epistle is expressly inscribed (*ch. i. 1*) to the saints which are at Ephesus; and in the close of it he tells them that he had sent Tychicus unto them, whom, in 2 *Tim. iv. 12*, he says he had sent to Ephesus. It is an epistle that bears date out of a prison. And some have observed that what this apostle wrote when he was a prisoner had the greatest relish and savour in it of the things of God. When his tribulations did abound, his consolations and experiences did much more abound. From whence we may observe that the afflictive exercises of God's people, and particularly of his ministers, do oftentimes tend to the advantage of others, as well as to their own. The apostle's design is to settle and establish the Ephesians in the truth, and, farther, to acquaint them with the mystery of the Gospel in order to it. In the former part he represents the great privileges of the Ephesians, who, being in time past idolatrous heathens, were now converted to Christianity, and received into covenant with God, which he illustrates from a view of their deplorable state before their conversion, *ch. i.—iii.* In the latter part (which we have in the 4th, 5th, and 6th chapters) he instructs them in the principal duties of religion, both personal and relative, and exhorts and quickens them to the faithful discharge of them. Zanchy observes that we have here an epitome of the whole Christian doctrine, and of almost all the chief heads of divinity.

A.D. 64.

CHAPTER I.

In this chapter we have, I. The introduction to the whole epistle, which is much the same as in others, ver. 1, 2. II. The apostle's thanksgivings and praises to God for his inestimable blessings bestowed on the believing Ephesians, ver. 3—14. III. His earnest prayers to God in their behalf, ver. 15—23. This great apostle was wont to abound in prayers, and in thanksgivings to almighty God, which he generally so disposes and orders as that at the same time they carry with them and convey the great and important doctrines of the Christian religion, and the most weighty instructions to all those who seriously peruse them.



PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is, First. The title St. Paul takes to himself, as belonging to him; "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ," &c. He reckoned it a great honour to be employed by Christ as one of his messengers to the sons of men. The apostles were prime officers in the Christian church, being extraordinary ministers appointed for a time only. They were furnished by their great Lord with extraordinary gifts, and the immediate assistance of the Spirit, that they might be fitted for publishing and spreading the Gospel, and for the governing the church in its infant state. Such a one St. Paul was, and that not by the will of man conferring that office upon him, not by his own intrusion into it, but by the will of God, very expressly and plainly signified to him, he being immediately called (as the other apostles were) by Christ himself to the work. And every faithful minister of Christ (though his call and office are not of so extraordinary a nature, yet) may, with our apostle, reflect on it as an honour and comfort to himself that he is what he is by the will of God.

Secondly. The persons to whom this epistle is sent. "To the saints which are at Ephesus," that is, to the Christians who were members of the church at Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia. He calls them saints, for so they were in profession, and such they were bound to be in truth and reality, and many of them were so. All Christians must be saints; and, if they come not under that character on earth, they will never be saints in glory. [Hence none ought to be considered as members of Christ's church but such as in the judgment of charity are holy persons called by Divine grace out of darkness into marvellous light.] He calls them "the faithful in Christ Jesus;" that is, believers in him, and firm and constant in their adherence to him, and to his truths and ways. They are not saints who are not faithful, believing in Christ, firmly adhering to him, and true to the profession they make of relation to their Lord. Note, It is not only the honour of ministers, but of private Christians too, to have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful in Christ Jesus, from whom they

derive all their grace and spiritual strength, and in whom their persons, and all that they perform, are made accepted.

Thirdly. The apostolical benediction. "Grace be to you," &c. This is the token in every epistle; and it speaks the apostle's goodwill to his friends, and a real desire of their welfare; by grace we are to understand the free and undeserved love and favour of God, and those graces of the Spirit which proceed from it; by peace all other blessings, spiritual and temporal, the fruits and product of the former. No peace without grace; no peace, nor grace, but "from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." These peculiar blessings proceed from God, not as a Creator, but as a Father by special relation. And they come from our Lord Jesus Christ, who, having purchased them for his people, has a right to bestow them upon them. Indeed, the saints and the faithful in Christ Jesus had already received grace and peace; but the increase of these is very desirable, and the best saints stand in need of fresh supplies of the graces of the Spirit, and cannot but desire to improve and grow. And, therefore, they should pray, each one for himself, and for one another, that such blessings may still abound unto them.

After this short introduction he comes to the matter and body of the epistle; and, though it may seem somewhat peculiar in a letter, yet the Spirit of God saw fit that his discourse of Divine things in this chapter should be cast into prayers and praises, which, as they are solemn addresses to God, so they convey weighty instructions to others. Prayer may preach, and praise may do so too.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might

* By the Rev. Samuel Rosewell, revised by Rev. Ingram Cobbin, M.A., Editor of the "Portable Commentary," "Domestic Bible," &c.

Introductory.—This epistle was unanimously received by the early Church as Pauline. It is generally admitted that it was written from Rome, where St. Paul was detained waiting for trial (Acts xxviii. 30), between A.D. 61 and 63. The epistle is divided into two portions—the first doctrinal, the second hortatory and practical.

i. 1, 2. The omission of the words "at Ephesus" in some earlier MSS. has given rise to the idea that this epistle was not solely addressed to the church at Ephesus, but was encyclical. The

"saints" and "faithful:" these expressions refer to the same persons, but, as Alf rd remarks, denote their spiritual life from its two sides—that of God who calls and sanctifies, that of themselves who believe.

i. 3. Ellicott gives the following summary: verses 3—6, the Father's work of love; verses 7—12, the Son's; verses 13, 14, the Holy Spirit's. "Who blessed us:" not "hath blessed us." The reference is to God's past work, "the historical fact in the councils of the

gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

He begins with thanksgivings and praise, and enlarges with a great deal of fluency and copiousness of affection upon the exceeding great and precious benefits which we enjoy by Jesus Christ. For the great privileges of our religion are very aptly recounted and enlarged upon in our praises to God.

In general, ver. 3, he blesses God for spiritual blessings, where he styles him "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;" for as Mediator, the Father was his God: as God, and the second person in the blessed Trinity, God was his Father. And it speaks the mystical union betwixt Christ and believers, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is their God and Father; and that in and through him all blessings come from God, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. No good can be expected from a righteous and holy God to sinful creatures but by his mediation; he "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings." Note, Spiritual blessings are the best blessings with which God blesseth us, and for which we are to bless him. He blesses us by bestowing such things upon us as make us really blessed. We cannot thus bless God again, but must do it by praising, and magnifying, and speaking well of him on that account. And whom God blesses with some he blesses with all spiritual blessings; to whom he gives Christ, he freely gives all these things. It is not so with temporal blessings; some are favoured with health, and not with riches, some with riches, and not with health, &c. But where God blesses with spiritual blessings he blesses with all. They are "spiritual blessings in heavenly places," that is, say some, in the church distinguished from the world, and called out of it. Or, it may be read, in heavenly things, such as come from heaven, and are designed to prepare men for it, and to secure their reception into it. We should hence learn to mind spiritual and heavenly things as the principal things, spiritual and heavenly blessings as the best blessings, with which we cannot be miserable, and without which we cannot but be so. Set not your affections on things on the earth, but on those things which are above; these we are blessed with in Christ. For as all our services ascend to God through Christ, so all our blessings are conveyed to us the same way—he being the Mediator betwixt God and us.

The particular spiritual blessings with which we are blessed in Christ, and for which we ought to bless God, are (many of them) here enumerated and enlarged upon.

First. Election and predestination, which are the secret springs from whence the others flow, ver. 4, 5, 11. Election, or choice, respects that lump or mass of mankind out of which some are chosen, from which they are separated and distinguished. Predestination hath respect to the blessings they are designed for, particularly "the adoption of children;" it being the purpose of God that in due time we should become his adopted children, and so have a right to all the privileges and to the inheritance of children. We have here the date of this act of love; it was "before the foundation of the world." Not only before God's people had a being, but before the world had a beginning; for they were chosen in the counsel of God from all eternity. And it magnifies these blessings to a high degree that they are the products of eternal counsel. The alms which you give to beggars at your doors proceed from a sudden resolve; but the provision which a parent makes for his children is the result of many thoughts, and is put into his last will and testament with a great deal of solemnity. And as this magnifies Divine love, so it secures the blessings to God's elect; for the purpose of God according to election shall stand. He acts in pursuance of his eternal purpose in bestowing spiritual blessings upon his people. He hath blessed us, "according as he hath chosen us in him;" that is, in Christ the great Head of the election, who is emphatically called God's elect, his chosen; and in the chosen Redeemer an eye of favour was cast upon them. Observe here one great end and design of this choice; chosen, "that we should be holy;" not because he foresaw they would be holy, but because he determined to make them so. All who are chosen to happiness as the end are chosen to holiness as the means. Their sanctification, as well as their salvation, is the result of the counsels of Divine love. "And without blame before him;" that is, that their holiness might not be only external, and in outward appearance, so as to prevent blame from men, but internal and real, and what God himself will account such, who looketh at the heart. Such holiness proceeds from love, that is, to God and to our fellow-creatures, this charity being the principle of all true holiness. The original word signifies such an innocence as no man can carp at; and therefore some understand it of that perfect holiness that the saints shall attain to in the life to come, which will be eminently before God, they being in his immediate presence for ever.

Here is also the rule and the fountal cause of God's election: it is "according to the good pleasure of his will," ver. 5; not for the sake of any thing in them foreseen, but because it was his sovereign will, and a thing highly pleasing to him. It is "according to the purpose," that is, the fixed and unalterable will of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," ver. 11; who powerfully accomplishes whatever concerns his elect, as he has wisely and freely foreordained and decreed; the last and great end and design of all which is his own glory.

[Εὐδοκία is a compound word: δόκη is a clear, eternal intention of that which is most agreeable to himself, most worthy of him, and which will afford him world without end, an infinite satisfaction in the being and accomplishment of it. Εὐδοκία is a perception that it is right: that all seen together in one view, in their place, order and connexion, are highly consistent with infinite, eternal, and unchangeable being, power, wisdom and love." Θελημα, a determination in consequence of intention of himself." This is the critical notice of Dr. Samuel Benson, on which M. Henry has remarked with approbation

in his Life of the Doctor, (*Miscellaneous Works*),—p. 1022: "He (says M. Henry) was sure God did not decree sin, nor did he see any necessity of asserting a positive decree to permit sin; nor could he by any means admit a decree to damn any man but upon the foresight of his being a sinner; but he thought the doctrine of particular, personal, absolute election and eternal life, so plainly revealed in Scripture, that he wondered how any who pretend to regulate their faith by the Bible should make any doubt of it. He was clear that it fastened upon the persons in their fallen state, and that it depended indeed upon foreknowledge and foresight, but not of any merit in their faith and repentance, but purely upon the victorious efficacy of Divine grace.]

"To the praise of the glory of his grace," ver. 6. [This is one of those strong and beautiful Hebraisms that the apostle frequently uses when his heart seems to glow with admiration and gratitude to the God of all grace. The original may be expressed, 'To the praise of his glorious grace.'] "That we should be to the praise of his glory," ver. 12; that is, that we should live and behave ourselves in such a manner that his rich grace might be magnified, and appear glorious and worthy of the highest praise. All is of God, and from him and through him, and therefore all must be to him, and centre in his praise. Note, "The glory of God is his own end, and it should be ours in all that we do." The next spiritus¹ blessing the apostle takes notice of is,

Secondly. Acceptance with God through Jesus Christ; "Wherein," or by which grace, "he hath made us accepted in the beloved," ver. 6. Jesus Christ is the beloved of his Father, (*Mat. iii. 17.*) as well as of angels and saints. It is our great privilege to be accepted of God, which implies his love to us, and his taking us under his care and into his family. We cannot be thus accepted of God but in and through Jesus Christ. He loves his people for the sake of the beloved.

Thirdly. Remission of sins and redemption through the blood of Jesus, ver. 7. No remission without redemption. It was by reason of sin that we were captivated, and we cannot be released from our captivity but by the remission of our sins. This redemption we have in Christ, and this remission through his blood. The guilt and the stain of sin could be no otherwise removed than by the blood of Jesus. All our spiritual blessings flow down to us in that stream. This great benefit, which comes freely to us, was dearly bought and paid for by our blessed Lord; and yet it is according to the riches of God's grace. Christ's satisfaction and God's rich grace are very consistent in the great affair of man's redemption. God was satisfied by Christ as our substitute and surety; but it was rich grace that would accept of a surety, when he might have executed the severity of the law upon the transgressor. And it was rich grace to provide such a surety as his own Son, and freely to deliver him up, when nothing of that nature could have entered into our thoughts, or have been any otherwise found out for us. In which instance he has not only manifested riches of grace, but "hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence," ver. 8; wisdom in contriving the dispensation, and prudence in executing the counsel of his will, as he has done. How illustrious have the Divine wisdom and prudence rendered themselves in so happily adjusting the matter between justice and mercy in this grand affair; in securing the honour of God and his law, at the same time that the recovery of sinners and their salvation are ascertained and made sure?

Fourthly. Another privilege which the apostle here blesseth God for is, Divine revelation, that God hath "made known unto us the mystery of his will," ver. 9. [We are not to suppose that this signifies a mystery which no man can understand, but only a truth before veiled in types and shadows, or not fully revealed,] that is, so much of his goodwill to men, which had been concealed for a long time, and is still concealed from so great a part of the world. This we owe to Christ, who, having laid in the bosom of the Father from eternity, came to declare his will to the children of men. "According to his good pleasure;" that is, his secret counsels concerning man's redemption, which he had purposed, or resolved upon, merely in and from himself, and not for any thing in them. In this revelation, and in his making "known unto us the mystery of his will," the wisdom and the prudence of God do abundantly shine forth. It is described at ver. 13 as "the word of truth, and the Gospel of your salvation." Every word of it is true; it contains and instructs us in the most weighty and important truths, and it is confirmed and sealed by the very oath of God; from whence we should learn to betake ourselves to it in all our searches after Divine truth. It is the Gospel of our salvation. It publishes the glad tidings of salvation, and contains the offer of it. It points out the way that leads to it, and the blessed Spirit renders the reading and the ministration of it effectual to the salvation of souls. Oh! how ought we to prize this glorious Gospel, and to bless God for it. This is the light shining in a dark place, for which we have reason to be thankful, and to which we should take heed.

Fifthly. Union in and with Christ is a great privilege, a spiritual blessing, and the foundation of many others. He does "gather together in one all things in Christ," ver. 10. All the lines of Divine revelation meet in Christ; all religion centres in him. Jews and Gentiles were united to each other by being both united to Christ. Things in heaven and things on earth are gathered together in him; peace made, correspondence settled, betwixt heaven and earth through him; the innumerable company of angels become one with the church through Christ. This God purposed in himself, and it was his design in that dispensation which was to be accomplished by his sending of Christ "in the fulness of time;" that is, at the exact time that God had prefixed and settled.

Sixthly. The eternal inheritance is the great blessing with which we are blessed in Christ: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance," ver. 11. Heaven is the inheritance, the happiness of which is a sufficient portion for a soul. It is conveyed in the way of an inheritance, being the gift of a father to his children. If children, then heirs. All the blessings that we have in hand are but small if compared with the inheritance. What is laid out upon an heir in his minority is nothing to what is reserved for him when he comes to age. Christians are said to have obtained this inheritance, as they have a present right to it, and even actual possession of it, in Christ their head and representative.

Seventhly. The seal and earnest of the Spirit are of the number of these blessings. We are said to be "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," ver. 13. [This is a Hebraism for the promised Spirit. It is by no means improbable that the apostle did here allude to the custom of the priests of Diana, who gave a ring with the figure of a he-goat, as a mark of initiation into the mysteries of the Ephesian goddess. The apostle there says, You have here a different seal from that which you once bore,—the seal of the Holy Spirit.] The blessed Spirit is holy himself, and he makes us holy. He is called "the Spirit of promise," as he is the promised Spirit. By him believers are sealed, that is, separated and set apart for God, and distinguished and marked as belonging to him. The Spirit "is the earnest of our inheritance," ver. 14. The earnest is part of payment, and it secures the full sum. So is the gift of the Holy Ghost; all his

* This passage has been understood by some in a very different sense, and with a special reference to the conversion of these Ephesians to Christianity. Those who have a mind to see what is said to this purpose may consult Mr. Locke, and other well-known writers on the place.

i. 5. See Rom. viii. 29, 30.

i. 6. The second clause of this verse is read by Alford, "which he bestowed upon us in the Beloved;" by Conybeare, "wherewith he favoured us in his Beloved;" by Tischendorf, "whereby he made us accepted in."

i. 7. Not "redemption," as in the Authorised Version, but "the redemption," that which was the subject of prophecy and revelation. "Through:" i.e., by means of; his blood was the price of it.

Father" (Alford). "In the heavenly places" (Alford); "in the heavens" (Conybeare). (Phil. iii. 20; Matt. vi. 20, 21; Col. iii. 1, 2; 1 Peter i. 4.) As Christians our hopes tend heavenwards, and will be fulfilled in heaven.

i. 4. See 2 Tim. i. 9. "Love:" "That which man lost at the fall, but which God is, and to which God restores man by redemption, is the great element in which, as in their abode and breathing-place, all Christian graces subsist," &c. (Alford).

influences and operations, both as a sanctifier and a comforter, are heaven begun, glory in the seed and bud. The Spirit's illumination is an earnest of everlasting light; sanctification is an earnest of perfect holiness, and his comforts are earnest of everlasting joys. He is said to be the earnest, "until the redemption of the purchased possession." It may be called here the possession, because this earnest makes it as sure to the heirs as though they were already possessed of it; and it is purchased for them by the blood of Christ. The redemption of it is mentioned, because it was mortgaged and forfeited by sin, and Christ restores it to us, and so is said to redeem it, in allusion to the law of redemption. Observe from all this, what a gracious promise that is which secures the gift of the Holy Ghost to them who ask him.

The apostle mentions the great end and design of God in bestowing one and all these spiritual privileges; "That we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ," that is, we to whom the Gospel was first preached, and who were first converted to the faith of Christ, and to the placing our hope and trust in him. Note, Seniority in grace is a preference, ("Who were in Christ before me," says the apostle, *Rom. xvi. 7*;) and they who have for a longer time experienced the grace of Christ are under more special obligations to glorify God. They should be strong in faith, and more eminently glorify him; but this should be the common end of all. For this we were made, and for this we were redeemed; this is the great design of our Christianity, and of God in all that he has done for us. "Unto the praise of his glory," ver. 14. He intends that his grace and power, and other perfections, should by this means become conspicuous and illustrious, and that the sons of men should magnify him.

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

We are come to the last part of this chapter, which consists of St. Paul's earnest prayer to God in behalf of these Ephesians. We should pray for the persons for whom we give thanks. Our apostle blesses God for what he had done for them, and then he prays he would do more for them. He gives thanks for spiritual blessings, and prays for farther supplies of them. For God will for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them. He has laid up these spiritual blessings for us in the hands of his Son the Lord Jesus; but then he has appointed us to draw them out and fetch them in by prayer. We have no part nor lot in the matter, any farther than we claim it by faith and prayer.

One inducement to pray for them was the good account he had of them, of their faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints; ver. 15. Faith in Christ and love to the saints will be attended with all other graces. Love to the saints, as such, and because they are such, must include love to God. They who love saints, as such, love all saints, how weak in grace, how mean in the world, how fretful and peevish soever, some of them may be. Another inducement to pray for them was because they had received the earnest of the inheritance. This we may observe from the words being connected with the preceding ones by the particle wherefore. Perhaps you will think that having received the earnest, it should follow, therefore ye are happy enough, and need take no farther care; you need not pray for yourselves, nor I for you. No, quite the contrary. Wherefore I "cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers," ver. 16. While he blesses God for giving them the Spirit, he ceases not to pray that he would give unto them the Spirit, ver. 17; that is, that he would give greater measures of the Spirit. Observe, Even the best of Christians need to be prayed for: and while we hear well of our Christian friends we should think ourselves obliged to intercede with God for them, that they may abound and increase yet more and more.

Now what is it that St. Paul prays for in their behalf? Why, not that they might be freed from persecution; nor that they might possess the riches, honours, or pleasures of the world; but the great thing he prays for is, the illumination of their understandings, and that their knowledge might increase and abound; he means it of a practical and experimental knowledge. The graces and comfort of the Spirit are communicated to the soul by the enlightening of the understanding. In this way he gains and keeps possession. Satan takes a contrary way; he gets possession by the senses and passions—Christ by the understanding. Observe.

First. Whence this knowledge must come; from "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ," ver. 17. The Lord is a God of knowledge; and there is no sound, saving knowledge but what comes from him, and therefore to him we must look for it, who is "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ," see ver. 3, and "the Father of glory." It is a Hebraism; God is infinitely glorious in himself; all glory is due to him from his creatures, and he is the author of all that glory with

which his saints are, or shall be, invested. Now he gives knowledge by giving the spirit of knowledge; for the Spirit of God is the teacher of the saints, [we can have no right knowledge of the mysteries of religion, but as the Holy Spirit unfolds them to the understanding.] the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. We have the revelation of the Spirit in the word. But will that avail us, if we have not the wisdom of the Spirit in the heart? If the same Spirit who indited the sacred Scriptures do not take the veil from off our hearts, and enable us to understand and improve them, we shall be never the better. In the knowledge of him, or for the acknowledgment of him; not only a speculative knowledge of Christ, and of what relates to him, but an acknowledgment of Christ's authority by an obedient conformity to him, which must be by the help of "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation." This knowledge is first in the understanding. He prays that "the eyes of their understanding may be enlightened," ver. 18. Observe, Those who have their eyes opened, and have some understanding in the things of God, have need to be more and more enlightened, and to have their knowledge more clear, and distinct, and experimental. Christians should not think it enough to have warm affections, but they should labour to have clear understandings; they should be ambitious of being knowing Christians, and judicious Christians.

Secondly. What is it he more particularly desires they should grow in the knowledge of? 1. "The hope of his calling," ver. 18. Christianity is our calling. God has called us to it, and on that account it is said to be his calling. There is a hope in his calling, for those who deal with God deal upon trust, and it is a desirable thing to know what this hope of our calling is; that is, to have such an acquaintance with the immense privileges of God's people, and the expectations they have from God, and with respect to the heavenly world, as to be quickened thereby to the utmost diligence and patience in the Christian course. We ought to labour after, and pray earnestly for, a clearer insight into, and a fuller acquaintance with, the great objects of a Christian's hopes and expectations. 2. "The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Besides the heavenly inheritance, prepared for the saints, there is a present inheritance in the saints; for grace is glory begun, and holiness is happiness in the bud. There is a glory in this inheritance, riches of glory, [or 'glorious riches,'] rendering the Christian more excellent and more truly honourable than all about him. And it is desirable to know this experimentally, to be acquainted with the principles, pleasures and powers, of the spiritual and Divine life. It may be understood of the glorious inheritance in, or among, the saints in heaven, where God does, as it were, lay forth all his riches to make them happy and glorious, and where all that the saints are in possession of is transcendently glorious; as much knowledge of which as is attainable upon earth is very desirable, and must be exceedingly entertaining and delightful. Let us endeavour then by reading, contemplation, and prayer, to know as much of heaven as we can, that we may be desiring and longing to be there. 3. The exceeding greatness of God's power towards them who believe, ver. 19. The practical belief of the all-sufficiency of God, and of the omnipotence of Divine grace, is absolutely necessary to a close and steady walking with him. It is a desirable thing to know experimentally the mighty power of that grace beginning and carrying on the work of faith in our souls. It is a difficult thing to bring a soul to believe fully in Christ, and to venture its all upon his righteousness, and upon the hope of eternal life. It is nothing less than an almighty power that will work this in us. [Eminent critics have all noticed the strong emphasis and force of the apostle's language, which has been rendered 'according to the energy of the power of his might.'] The apostle speaks here with a mighty fluency and copiousness of expression, and yet, at the same time, as if he wanted words to express the exceeding greatness of God's almighty power—that power which God exerts towards his people, and by which he raised Christ from the dead, ver. 20. That indeed was the great proof of the truth of the Gospel to the world. But the transcript of that in ourselves, (that is, our sanctification, and rising from the death of sin in conformity to Christ's resurrection,) is the great proof to us. Though this cannot prove the truth of the Gospel to another who knows nothing of the matter, (there the resurrection of Christ is the proof,) yet to be able to speak experimentally, as the Samaritans, We have heard him ourselves, we have felt a mighty change in our own hearts, will make us able to say with the fullest satisfaction, Now we believe and are sure that this is the Christ, the Son of God. Many understand the apostle here as speaking of that exceeding greatness of power which God will exert for the raising the bodies of believers to eternal life, even the same mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him, &c. And how desirable a thing must it be to become acquainted with that power at length, by being raised out of the grave thereby unto eternal life?

Having said something of Christ and his resurrection, the apostle digresses a little from the subject he is upon, to make some farther honourable mention of the Lord Jesus and his exaltation. He is set at the Father's "right hand in the heavenly places," &c., ver. 20, 21. Jesus Christ is advanced above all, and he is set in authority over all, they being made subject to him. All the glory of the upper world, and all the powers of both worlds, are entirely devoted to him. The Father "hath put all things under his feet," ver. 22, according to the promise, *Ps. cx. l.* All creatures whatsoever are in subjection to him; they must either yield him sincere obedience or fall under the weight of his sceptre, and receive their doom from him. God "gave him to be head over all things." It was a gift to Christ, considered as Mediator, to be advanced to such dominion and headship, and to have such a mystical body prepared for him; and it was a gift to the church, to be provided with a head endued with so much power and authority. God "gave him to be the head" (over all things); he gave him all power both in heaven and in earth. The Father loves the Son, and hath given all things into his hands. But that which completes the comfort of this is, that he is the head over all things to the church; that is, he is therefore intrusted with all power, that he may dispose of all the affairs of the providential kingdom in subserviency to the designs of his grace concerning his church. With this, therefore, we may answer the messengers of the nations, that the Lord hath founded Zion. The same power that supports the world supports the church; and we are sure he loves his church, for it is his body, ver. 23, his mystical body, and he will care for it. It is "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Jesus Christ filleth all in all; he supplies all defects in all his members, filling them with his Spirit, and even with "the fulness of God," *ch. iii. 19*. [Some render it 'with all.' Christ fills his members with all spiritual gifts and graces.] And yet the church is said to be his fulness, because Christ as Mediator would not be complete if he had not a church. How could he be a King if he had not a kingdom? This, therefore, comes into the honour of Christ, as Mediator, that the church is his fulness.

CHAPTER II.

This chapter contains an account, I. Of the miserable condition of these Ephesians by nature, ver. 1—3; and again, ver. 11, 12. II. Of the glorious change that was wrought in them by converting grace, ver. 4—10; and again, ver. 13. III. Of the great and mighty privileges that converted Jews and Gentiles both receive from Christ, ver. 14—22. The apostle endeavours to affect them with a due sense of the wonderful change which

i. 8. "Which he shed abundantly forth to us," &c. (Alford), "which he bestowed upon us above measure." "In all wisdom," &c.: Olshausen, Ellicott, and Harless maintain that these words cannot be applied to God. We may say of him, they argue, "in him is all wisdom," but not "he did this or that in all wisdom," as if commanding God, or as if he might not have acted most wisely. Olshausen, therefore, explains, "which he bestowed abundantly upon us, that we might walk in all wisdom, &c." Conybeare places a

semicolon after "us," and joins "in all wisdom," &c., to the following "having made known."

i. 11. "In whom we also received the portion of our lot, having been predestined thereto," &c. (Conybeare). "In whom also we are called, being," &c. (Tischendorf). So the best MSS.

i. 13. "In whom ye also;" i.e., Gentile Christians. "And you believed in him, and received his seal, the Holy Spirit of promise" (Conybeare).

Divine grace had wrought in them; and this is very applicable to that great change which the same grace works in all those who are brought into a state of grace: so that we have here a lively picture both of the misery of unregenerate men and of the happy condition of converted souls; enough to awaken and alarm those who are yet in their sins, and to put them upon hastening out of that state, and to comfort and delight those whom God hath quickened with a consideration of the mighty privileges with which they are invested.



AND you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

The miserable condition of the Ephesians by nature is here in part described. [Man by nature is spiritually dead. He can perform none of the functions of spiritual life, but lies a lifeless corpse in the grave of corruption. The mighty energy (*ἐνέργεια*, ch. ii. 19) necessary to raise the dead body from the grave must be put forth to raise the sinner from the death of sin to a life of righteousness. Not, indeed, that he is not a responsible creature, and this makes his condition the more awful,—for his inability to perform what is good and acceptable in the sight of God is what may be termed passive wickedness; for, while there is this deadness of the soul to God it is yet alive in the service of sin, walking and making progress in it.]

Observe, First. That unregenerate souls are “dead in trespasses and sins.” All those who are in their sins are dead in sins, yea, “in trespasses and sins;” which may signify all sorts of sins, habitual and actual, sins of heart and of life. Sin is the death of the soul. Wherever that prevails there is a privation of all spiritual life. Sinners are dead in state, being destitute of the principles and powers of spiritual life, and cut off from God, the Fountain of life; and they are dead in law, as a condemned malefactor is said to be a dead man.

Secondly. A state of sin is a state of conformity to this world, ver. 2. In the first verse he speaks of their internal state, in this of their outward conversation. “Wherein” that is, in which trespasses and sins, “in time past ye walked,” &c., that is, you lived and behaved yourselves in such a manner as the men of the world are used to do. [Walking is strikingly expressive of the habit and course of life, *Ps. i. 1*, *Rom. vi. 4*, as a progressive action is expressive of the tendency of sin from bad to worse.]

Thirdly. We are by nature bondslaves to sin and Satan. They who walk in trespasses and sins, and according to the course of this world, walk “according to the prince of the power of the air.” The devil, or the prince of devils, is thus described: see *Mat. xii. 24, 26*. The legions of apostate angels are as one power united under one chief; and therefore what is called the “powers of darkness” elsewhere is here spoken of in the singular number. “The air” is represented as the seat of his kingdom. And it was the opinion of the Jews and heathens both that the air is full of spirits, and that there they exercise and exert themselves. The devil seems to have some power (by God’s permission) in the lower region of the air; there he is at hand to tempt men, and to do as much mischief to the world as he can. But it is the comfort and joy of God’s people that he who is “Head over all things to the church” hath conquered the devil, and has him in his chain: but wicked men are slaves to Satan, for they walk according to him; that is, they conform their lives and actions to the will and pleasure of this great usurper. The course and tenor of their lives are according to his suggestions, and in compliance with his temptations; they are subject to him, and are led captive by him at his will; whereupon he is called the god of this world, and “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” The children of disobedience are such as choose to disobey God, and to serve the devil; in these he works very powerfully and effectually. As the good Spirit works that which is good in obedient souls, so this evil spirit works that which is evil in wicked men; and he now works, not only heretofore, but even since the world has been blessed with the light of the glorious Gospel. The apostle adds, “among whom also we all had our conversation in times past,” which words refer to the Jews, whom he signifies here to have been in the like sad and miserable condition by nature, and to have been as vile and wicked as the unregenerate Gentiles themselves, and whose natural state he farther describes in the next words. [It has been remarked here, that the apostle delicately includes himself, to shew that he did not claim to be better by nature than they were, and that all which any of them had of value was to be traced to the grace of God. “In the lusts of the flesh:” living to gratify the flesh, or the propensities of a corrupt nature.]

Fourthly. We are by nature drudges to the flesh, and to our corrupt affections, ver. 3. By fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, men contract that filthiness of flesh and spirit which the apostle exhorts Christians to cleanse themselves from, *2 Cor. vii. 1*. The “fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind” includes all that sin and wickedness that are acted in, and by, both the inferior and the higher and nobler powers of the soul. We lived in the actual commission of all those sins which corrupt nature inclined us unto. The carnal mind makes a man a perfect slave to his vicious appetite. “Fulfilling the wills of the flesh,” &c., so the word may be rendered, noting the efficacy of these lusts, and what power they have over those who yield themselves up unto them.

Fifthly. We are “by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” The Jews were so as well as the Gentiles, and one man is as much so as another by nature; that is, not only by custom and imitation, but from the time when we began to exist, and by reason of our natural inclinations and appetites. All men being naturally “children of disobedience,” are also by nature “children of wrath.” God is angry with the wicked every day. Our state and course are such as deserve wrath, and would end in eternal wrath, if Divine grace did not interpose. What reason have sinners then to be looking out for that grace that will make them, of children of wrath, children of God, and heirs of glory! Thus far the apostle has described the misery of a natural state in these verses which we shall find him pursuing again in some following ones.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. 11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Here the apostle begins his account of the glorious change that was wrought in them by converting grace; where observe,

First. By whom, and in what manner, it was brought about and effected. 1. Negatively; “Not of yourselves,” ver. 8. Our faith, our conversion, and our eternal salvation, are not the mere product of any natural abilities, or of any merit of our own. “Not of works, lest any man should boast,” ver. 9. These things are not brought to pass by any thing done by us, and therefore all boasting is excluded, that he who glories must not glory in himself, but in the Lord. There is no room for any man’s boasting of his own abilities and power, or as though he had done any thing that might deserve such immense favours from God. 2. Positively; “But God, who is rich in mercy,” &c., ver. 4. God himself is the author of this great and happy change, and his great love is the spring and fountal cause of it; from thence he resolved to shew mercy. Love is his inclination to do us good, considered simply as creatures. Mercy respects us as apostate and as miserable creatures. Observe, God’s eternal love of goodwill towards his creatures is the fountain from whence all his mercies vouchsafed to us proceed; and that love of God is great love, and that mercy of his is rich mercy, inexpressibly great and inexhaustibly rich. [This is another of the apostle’s strong expressions. “Mercy,” as one observes, “is the wealth of God.” Who can exhaust the riches of infinity? The poor and the needy may here find a perpetual supply. This bank can never be exhausted.] And then by grace ye are saved, ver. 5, and by grace are ye saved through faith. It is the gift of God, ver. 8. Note, Every converted sinner is a saved sinner: such are delivered from sin and wrath; they are brought into a state of salvation, and have a right given them by grace to eternal happiness. The grace that saves them is the free undeserved goodness and favour of God; and he saves them, not by the works of the law, but through faith in Christ Jesus, by means of which they come to partake of the great blessings of the Gospel; and both that faith and that salvation, on which it has so great an influence, are the gift of God. The great objects of faith are made known by Divine revelation, and made credible by the testimony and evidence which God hath given us; and that we believe to salvation, and obtain salvation through faith, is entirely owing to Divine assistance and grace. God has ordered all so that the whole shall appear to be of grace. Observe,

Secondly. Wherein this change consists. In several particulars, answering to the misery of our natural state, some of which are enumerated in this section, and others are mentioned below. 1. We who were dead are quickened, ver. 5; that is, we are saved from the death of sin, and have a principle of spiritual life implanted in us. Grace in the soul is a new life in the soul. As death locks up the senses, seals up all the powers and faculties, so doth a state of sin, as to any thing that is good; grace unlocks and opens all, and enlarges the soul. Observe, A regenerate sinner becomes a living soul. He lives a life of sanctification, being born of God; and he lives in the sense of the law, being delivered from the guilt of sin by pardoning and justifying grace. He “hath quickened us together with Christ.” Our spiritual life results from our union with Christ; it is in him that we live: “Because I live, ye shall live also.” 2. We who were buried are raised up, ver. 6. What remains yet to be done is here spoken of as though it were already past, though indeed we are raised up in virtue of our union with him whom God hath raised from the dead. When he raised Christ from the dead he did in effect raise up all believers together with him, he being their common head; and when he placed him at his right hand in heavenly places he advanced and glorified them in and with him, they raised and exalted head and forerunner. “And made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” This may be understood in another sense. Sinners roll themselves in the dust; sanctified souls sit in heavenly places, are raised above the world; the world is as nothing to them, compared with what it has been, and compared with what the other world is. Saints are not only Christ’s freemen, but they are assessors with him; by the assistance of his grace they have ascended with him above this world, to converse with another, and they live in the constant expectation of it. They are not only servants to the best of masters in the best world, but they are exalted to reign with him; they sit upon the throne with Christ, as he is set down with his Father on his throne.

Thirdly. Observe what is the great design and aim of God in producing and effecting this change. And this, 1. With respect to others; “That in the ages

idea; the spirit of man indwelt by the Spirit of God” (Alford). “In the knowledge;” rather, “in full knowledge.” The Greek is explained by Culverwell as “the bringing me better acquainted with a thing that I knew before.”

i. 18. “The eyes of your heart:” so best MSS. (Matt. vi. 22, 23.) “The hope of his calling:” see 1 John iii. 3. “The riches of the glory of his inheritance:” “The inheritance which God has in his saints, and they in him” (Stier).

i. 14. “Which,” or “who is the earnest:” “The word means the first instalment paid as a pledge that the rest will follow” (Alford). See Rom. viii. 23. Not “until,” but “for”—i.e., “in order to,” or “with a view to the full redemption,” &c.

i. 17. “The Father of glory:” “God is the Father, by being the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Christ, of that glory . . . which shone forth in the manhood of the only-begotten Son” (John i. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 6). “The spirit of wisdom and revelation:” “A complex

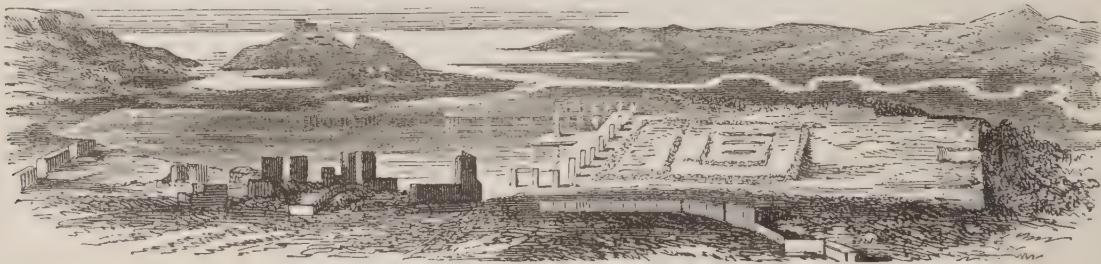
to come he might slay." &c., ver. 7; that is, that he might give a specimen and proof of his great goodness and mercy, for the encouragement of sinners in future time. Observe, That the goodness of God in converting and saving sinners heretofore is a proper encouragement to others in after time to hope in his grace and mercy, and to apply themselves to these. God having this in his design, poor sinners should take great encouragement from it. And what may we not hope for from such grace and kindness, from riches of grace, and from exceeding riches of grace, to which this change is owing? "through Christ Jesus," by and through whom God conveys all his favours and blessings to us. 2. With respect to the regenerated sinners themselves; "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," &c., ver. 10. It appears that all is of grace, because all our spiritual advantages are from God; "We are his workmanship;" he means in respect of the new creation, not only as men, but as saints. The new man is a new creature, and God is its Creator. It is a new birth, and we are born or begotten of his will. "In Christ Jesus;" that is, on the account of what he hath done and suffered, and by the influence and operation of his blessed Spirit. "Unto good works." The apostle having before ascribed this change to Divine grace, in exclusion of works, lest he should seem thereby to discourage good works, he here observes, that though the change is to be ascribed to nothing of that nature, for we are the workmanship of God, yet God in this new creation has designed and prepared us for good works. "Created unto good works;" that is, with a design that we should be fruitful in them. Wherever God by his grace implants good principles, they are intended to be for good works. "Which God hath before ordained;" that is, decreed and appointed. Or, the words may be read, "to which God hath before prepared us;" that is, by blessing us with the knowledge of his will, and with the assistance of his Holy Spirit, and by producing such a change in us. "That we should walk in them;" that is, glorify God by an exemplary conversation, and by our perseverance in holiness.

In the 11th and 12th verses the apostle proceeds in his account of the miserable condition of these Ephesians by nature. "Wherefore remember" &c., ver. 11; as if he had said, You should remember what you have been, and compare it with what you now are, in order to humble yourselves, and to excite your love and thankfulness to God. Note, Converted sinners ought frequently to reflect upon the sinfulness and misery of that estate they were in by nature. Gentiles in the flesh; that is, lying in the corruption of their natures, and being destitute of circumcision, the outward sign of an interest in the covenant of grace. "Who are called uncircumcision by that," &c.; that is, you were reproached and upbraided for it by the formal Jews, who made an external profession, and who looked no farther than the outward ordinance. Note, Hypocritical professors are wont to value themselves chiefly on their external privileges, and to reproach and despise others who are destitute of them. The apostle describes the misery of their case in several particulars; ver. 12, "At that time," that is, while ye were Gentiles, and in an unconverted state, ye were, 1. In a Christless condition, without the knowledge of the Messiah, and without any saving interest in him, or relation to him. It is true of all unconverted sinners, all those who are destitute of faith, that they have no saving interest in Christ; and it must be a sad and deplorable thing for a soul to be without Christ. Being without Christ, they were, 2. "Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel;" that is, they did not belong to Christ's church, and had no communion with it, that being confined to the Israelitish nation. It is no small privilege to be placed in the church of Christ, and to share with the members of it in the advantages peculiar to it. 3. They were "strangers from the covenants of promise." The covenant of grace hath ever been the same for substance; though, having undergone various editions and improvements in the several ages of the church, it is called covenants; and the covenants of promise, because it is made up of promises, and particularly contains the great promise of the Messiah, and of eternal life through him. Now, the Ephesians in their Gentileism were strangers from this covenant, having never had any information or overture of it; and all unregenerate sinners are strangers to it, as they have no interest in it. Those who are without Christ, and so have no interest in the Mediator of the covenant, have none in the promises of the covenant. 4. They had no hope, that is, beyond this life; no well-grounded hope in God,

no hope of spiritual and eternal blessings. They who are without Christ, and strangers from the covenant, can have no good hope; for Christ and the covenant are the ground and foundation of all the Christian's hopes. 5. They were in a state of distance and estrangement from God; "without God in the world." Not without some general knowledge of a Deity, for they worshipped idols; but living without any due regard to him, any acknowledged dependence on him, and any special interest in him. The words are, *atheists in the world*; for though they worshipped many gods, yet they were without the true God.

The apostle proceeds, ver. 13, farther to illustrate the happy change that was made in their state; "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off," &c. They were far off from Christ, from his church, from the promises, from the Christian hope, and from God himself, and therefore from all good; like the prodigal son in the far country. This has been represented in the preceding verses. Unconverted sinners remove themselves at a distance from God, and God puts them at a distance. He beholds the proud afar off. "But now in Christ Jesus" &c.; that is, upon their conversion, by virtue of their union with Christ, and their interest in him by faith, "are made nigh." They were brought home to God, received into the church, taken into the covenant, and possessed of all other privileges consequent upon these. Note, The saints are a people near to God. Salvation is far from the wicked, but God is a help at hand to his people; and this is "by the blood of Christ," that is, by the merit of his sufferings and death. Every believing sinner owes his nearness to God, and his interest in his favour, to the death and sacrifice of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.



REMAINS OF THE GREAT TEMPLE AT EPHESUS.

We are now come to the last part of the chapter, which contains an account of the great and mighty privileges that converted Jews and Gentiles both receive from Christ. The apostle here shews that they who were in a state of enmity are reconciled. Betwixt the Jews and the Gentiles there had been a great enmity; so there is betwixt God and every unregenerate man. Now Jesus Christ "is our peace," ver. 14. He made peace by the sacrifice of himself; and came to reconcile,

First, Jews and Gentiles to each other. He made both one, by reconciling these two divisions of men, who were wont to malign, to hate, and to reproach each other before. He broke down "the middle wall of partition," namely, the ceremonial law, that made the great feud, and was the badge of the Jews' peculiarity, called the partition wall by way of allusion to the partition in the temple, which separated the court of the Gentiles from that into which the Jews only had liberty to enter. Thus he "abolished in his flesh the enmity," ver. 15; by his sufferings in the flesh taking away the binding power of the ceremonial law, so removing that cause of enmity and distance betwixt them, which is here called "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," because it did enjoin a multitude of external rites and ceremonies, and consisted of many institutions and appointments about the outward parts of Divine worship. The legal ceremonies were abrogated by Christ, having their accomplishment in him. By taking those out of the way he formed one church of believers, whether they had been Jews or Gentiles. Thus he made "in himself of twain one new man." He framed both these parties into one new society, or body of God's people, uniting them to himself as their common Head; they being renewed by the Holy Ghost, and now concurring in a new way of gospel worship; "So making peace," that is, betwixt these two parties who were so much at variance before.

Secondly, There is an enmity betwixt God and sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, and Christ came to slay that enmity, and to reconcile them both to God, ver. 16. Sin breeds a quarrel betwixt God and men; Christ came to take up the quarrel, and to bring it to an end, by reconciling both Jew and Gentile, now collected and gathered into one body, to a provoked and offended God; and this by the cross, or by the sacrifice of himself upon the cross, "having slain the enmity thereby." He being slain or sacrificed, slew the enmity that there was betwixt God and poor sinners. The apostle proceeds to illustrate the great advantages which both parties gain by the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 17. Christ, who purchased peace on the cross, came, partly in his own person, as to the Jews, who are here said to have been nigh, and partly in his apostles, whom he commissioned to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, who are said to have been afar off, in the sense that has been given before. "And preached peace," or published the terms of reconciliation with God, and of eternal life. Note here, that when the messengers of Christ deliver his truths it is in effect the same as if he did it immediately himself. He is said to preach by them, inasmuch that he who receiveth them receiveth him, and he who despiseth them (acting by virtue of his commission, and delivering his message,) despiseth and rejecteth Christ himself. Now the effect of this peace is, the free access which both Jews and Gentiles have unto God: ver. 18, "For through him," &c. that is, in his name, and by virtue of his mediation, "we both have an access," that is, admission into the presence of God, who is become the common reconciled Father of both. The throne of grace is erected for us to come to, and liberty of approach to that throne is allowed us. Our access is by the Holy Spirit. Christ purchased for us leave to come to God, and the Spirit gives us a heart to come, and strength to come, even grace to serve God acceptably. Observe We draw nigh to God, through Jesus Christ, by the

i. 19. "His power;" in both raising us to spiritual life and raising Christ from the dead.

i. 22. "Head over all things to the Church;" "Sovereign Head of the Church" (Conybeare). "As Head over all things, as Head to the Church" (Ellicott).

i. 23. See John i. 16. His is the "fulness," and he imparts it to his Church; so, by virtue of her union with him, she is identified with him (Col. ii. 10). "Filleth all with all" (Col. i. 16-19).

ii. 1. "Dead in trespasses," &c.: "Dead of your sins, as we say dead of cholera" (Alford). "Hath he quickened" is not expressed, but the meaning is evident from the context.

ii. 2. "Of disobedience;" Tyndal and the Vulgate read "of unbelief;" but, as Alford, though unbelief is the source of disobedience, the actual conduct is here spoken of.

ii. 3. "We all;" all who are now Christians—Jews and Gentiles. "Had our conversation;" i.e., "lived." "Of the mind;" better, "of

of the Spirit, the Ephesians upon their conversion having such an access to God, as well as the Jews; and by the same Spirit the apostle tells them, "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners," &c., ver. 19. This he mentions by way of opposition to what he had observed of them in their heathenism. They were now no longer "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," and no longer what the Jews were wont to account all the nations of the earth besides themselves, namely, strangers to God, "but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;" that is, members of the church of Christ, and having a right to all the privileges of it. Observe here, that the church is compared to a city, and every converted sinner is free of it. It is also compared to a house, and every converted sinner is one of the domestics, one of the family; a servant and a child in God's house. In ver. 20 the church is compared to a building; the foundations of that building are "the apostles and prophets." They may be so called in a secondary sense, Christ himself being the primary foundation; but we are rather to understand it of the doctrine delivered by the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New. It follows, "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;" in him both Jews and Gentiles meet, and constitute one church. And Christ supports the building by his strength; "In whom all the building fitly framed together," &c., ver. 21, that is, all believers of which it does consist being united to Christ by faith, and amongst themselves by Christian charity, "grow unto an holy temple," become a sacred society, in which there is much communion betwixt God and his people, as in the temple; "in worshiping and serving him, he manifesting himself unto them; they offering up spiritual sacrifices to God, and he dispensing his blessings and answers to them. Thus the building, for the nature of it, is a temple, an holy temple; for the church is the place which God hath chosen to put his name there; and it becomes such a temple by grace and strength derived from himself, in the Lord. The universal church being built upon Christ as the foundation-stone, and united in Christ as the corner-stone, comes at length to be glorified in him as the top-stone; "In whom ye also are built together," &c., ver. 22. Observe, not only the universal church is called the temple of God, but particular churches; and even every true believer is a living temple, is "an habitation of God through the Spirit." God dwells in all believers now, they being become the temple of God through the operations of the blessed Spirit; and his dwelling with them now is an earnest of their dwelling together with him to eternity.

CHAPTER III.

This chapter consists of two parts. I. Of the account which St. Paul gives the Ephesians concerning himself, as he was appointed by God to be the apostle of the Gentiles, ver. 1—13. II. Of his devout and affectionate prayer to God for the Ephesians, ver. 14—21. We may observe it to have been very much the practice of this apostle to intermix with his instructions and counsels intercessions and prayers to God for those to whom he wrote, as knowing that all his instructions and teachings would be useless and vain, except God did co-operate with them and render them effectual. This is an example that all the ministers of Christ should copy after, praying earnestly that the efficacious operations of the Divine Spirit may attend their ministrations, and crown them with success.



OR this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby,

when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: 12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the

faith of him. 13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Here we have the account which St. Paul gives the Ephesians concerning himself, as he was appointed by God the apostle of the Gentiles.

First. We may observe that he acquaints them with the tribulations and sufferings which he endured in the discharge of that office, ver. 1. The first clause refers to the preceding chapter, and may be understood either of these two ways. "For this cause," 1. For having preached the doctrine contained in the foregoing chapter, and for asserting that the great privileges of the Gospel belong not only to the Jews, but to believing Gentiles also, though they are not circumcised. For this I am now a prisoner, but a "prisoner of Jesus Christ," as I suffer in his cause and for his sake, and continuing his faithful servant, and the object of his special protection and care, while I am thus suffering for him. Observe, Christ's servants, if they come to be prisoners, are his prisoners, and he despiseth not his prisoners. He thinks never the worse of them for the ill character which the world gives them, or the evil treatment that they meet with in it. Paul adhered to Christ, and Christ owned him when he was in the prison. "For you Gentiles." The Jews did therefore persecute and imprison him, because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and preached the Gospel to them. We may learn hence that the faithful ministers of Christ are to dispense his sacred truths, however disagreeable they may be to some, and whatever they themselves may suffer for doing so. Or, 2. The words may be thus understood, "For this cause," &c., that is, since you are no more strangers and foreigners, &c., as *ch. ii. 19*, but are united to Christ, and admitted into communion with his church, "I Paul," who am "the prisoner of Jesus Christ," &c., pray that you may be enabled to act as becomes persons thus favoured by God, and made partakers of so great privileges. To this purpose you find him expressing himself, ver. 14, where, after the digression contained in the several verses intervening, he proceeds with what he began in this first verse. Observe, Those who have received grace and signal favours from God stand in need of prayer, that they may improve and advance, and continue to act as becomes them. And seeing Paul, while he was a prisoner, employed himself in such prayers to God in behalf of the Ephesians, we should learn that no particular sufferings of our own should make us so solicitous about ourselves as to neglect the cases of others in our supplications and addresses to God.

He speaks again of his sufferings; "Wherefore I desire that you faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory," ver. 13. While he was in prison he suffered much there; and though it was upon their account that he suffered, yet he would not have them discouraged or dismayed at this, seeing God had done such great things for them by his ministry. What a tender concern was here for these Ephesians! The apostle here seems to have been more solicitous lest they should be discouraged and faint, upon his tribulations, than about what he himself endured; and to prevent this, he tells them that his sufferings were their glory, and would be so far from being a real discouragement, if they duly considered the matter, that they ministered cause to them for glorying and for rejoicing, as this discovered the great esteem and regard which God bore to them, in that he not only sent his apostles to preach the Gospel to them, but even to suffer for them, and to confirm the truths they delivered by the persecutions they underwent. Observe, Not only the faithful ministers of Christ themselves, but their people too, have some special cause for joy and glorying, when they suffer for the sake of dispensing the Gospel.

Secondly. The apostle informs them of God's appointing him to the office, and eminently fitting and qualifying him for it, by a special revelation that he made unto him. God appointed him to the office; "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward," ver. 2. They could not but have heard of this, and therefore he does not design to speak doubtfully of the matter; *eye* is sometimes an affirmative particle, and we may read it, 'since you have heard,' &c. He styles the Gospel "the grace of God" here, as in other places, because it is the gift of Divine grace to sinful men; and all the gracious overtures that it makes, and the joyful tidings that it contains, proceed from the rich grace of God; and it is the great instrument in the hands of the Spirit by which God works grace in the souls of men. He speaks of the dispensation of this grace given to him; he means as he was authorised and commissioned by God to dispense the doctrine of the Gospel, which commission and authority were given to him chiefly for the service of the Gentiles, "to you-ward." And again, speaking of the Gospel, he says, "Whereof I was made a minister," &c., ver. 7. Here he again asserts his authority; he "was made a minister," he did not make himself such; he took not to himself that honour. And he was made such "according to the gift of the grace of God" unto him. God did supply and furnish him for his work, and in the discharge of it did suitably assist and help him with all needful gifts and graces, both ordinary and extraordinary; and that "by the effectual working of his power," in himself more especially, and also in great numbers of those to whom he preached, by which means his labours amongst them were successful. Observe, that what God calls men to he fits them for, and doth it with an almighty power. There is an effectual working of Divine power attending the gifts of Divine grace. As God appointed him to the office, so he did eminently qualify him for it by a special revelation that he made unto him; and he makes mention both of the mystery that was revealed and of the revelation of it.

1. The mystery revealed is, "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel," ver. 6; that is, that they should be joint heirs with the believing Jews of the heavenly inheritance, and that they should be members of the same mystical body, that is, be received into the church of Christ, and be interested in the gospel promises as well as the Jews, and particularly in that great promise of the Spirit. And this "in Christ," that is, being united to Christ in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen, and "by the Gospel," that is, in the times of the Gospel, as some understand it. Or, by the Gospel preached to them, which is the great instrument and means by which God works faith in Christ, as others. This was the great truth revealed to the apostle, namely, that God would call the Gentiles to salvation by faith in Christ, and that without the works of the law.

2. Of the revelation of this truth he speaks ver. 3—5; where we may observe that the coalition of Jews and Gentiles in the gospel church was a mystery, a great mystery; what was designed in the counsel of God before all worlds, but what could not be fully understood for many ages, till the accomplishment expounded the prophecies of it. It is called a mystery, because the several circumstances and peculiarities of it, such as the time, and manner, and means by which it should be effected, were concealed and kept secret in God's own breast, till by an immediate revelation he made them known to his servant: see *Acts xxvi. 16—18*. And it is called the mystery of Christ, because it was revealed by him, *Gal. i. 12*, and because it relates so very much unto him. Of this the apostle had given him some hints "afore," or a little before, that is, in the preceding chapters; "whereby when ye read," or, as those words may be read, "unto which attending;" and it is not enough for us barely to read the Scriptures, unless we attend unto them, and seriously consider and lay to heart

our thoughts" (Alford); or "of our imagination" (Conybeare). "And were by nature," &c.: "It was once our state and condition, it is now so no longer" (Ellicott). This expression of the apostle's amounts to an assertion of the doctrine of original sin (Alford, Harless, Eadie).

ii. 4. See *Ezek. xviii. 23*.

ii. 5. Not "hath quickened," but "quickened." "Together with Christ;" "God vivified us together with Christ; in the one act and

fact of his resurrection he raised all his people to spiritual life, and in that to victory over death, both spiritual and therefore necessarily physical also" (Alford).

ii. 6. "In Christ Jesus:" our union with him is the means of our resurrection and glorification.

ii. 7. "Ages to come:" the successive ages till Christ's coming.

ii. 8. "For by grace:" taking up and expanding the parenthesis of verse 5. "And that:" i.e., "your salvation is not your own doing."

what we read. "Ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ," so as to perceive how God had fitted and qualified him to be an apostle to the Gentiles, which might be to them an evident token of his Divine authority. "This mystery," he says, "in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit," ver. 5; that is, it was not so fully and clearly discovered in the ages before Christ as it is now revealed unto the prophets, that is, of that age—the prophets of the New Testament, who were immediately inspired and taught by the Spirit. Let us observe, that the conversion of the Gentile world to the faith of Christ was an adorable mystery, and we ought to bless God for it. Who would have imagined that those who had been so long in the dark, and at so great a distance, should be enlightened with the marvellous light, and be made nigh? Let us learn from hence not to despair of the worst, of the worst of persons, and of the worst of nations. Nothing is too hard for Divine grace to do; none so unworthy but God may please to confer great grace upon them. And how much are we ourselves interested in this affair; not only as we live in a time in which this mystery is revealed, but particularly as we are a part of the nations which in times past were foreigners and strangers, and lived in gross idolatry, but are now enlightened with the everlasting Gospel, and partake of the promises of it.

Thirdly. The apostle acquaints them how he was employed in this office, and that with respect to the Gentiles and to all men.

1. With respect to the Gentiles, he preached to them "the unsearchable riches of Christ," ver. 8. Observe in this verse how humbly he speaks of himself, and how highly he speaks of Jesus Christ. 1st. How humbly he speaks of himself; "I am less than the least of all saints." [This expression must not be slightly passed over. It has been justly remarked by a popular modern commentator, that it is one of the class of expressions peculiar to Paul. The ordinary terms of language do not express the idea which he wishes to convey, and a word is therefore coined to convey an idea more emphatically. It is a comparative made from a superlative. The word means here, 'who am incomparably the least of all the saints, or who am not worthy to be reckoned among the saints.'] St. Paul, who was the chief of the apostles, calls himself "less than the least of all saints;" he means on the account of his having been formerly a persecutor of the followers of Christ. He was, in his own esteem, as little as could be. What can be less than the least? To speak himself as little as could be, he speaks himself less than could be. [Perhaps there was also in the apostle's mind a humbling sense of his own attainments in religion. The apostle never thought that he had reached perfection; and while he recommends to others to press towards the mark for the prize, he said of himself, 'I count not myself to have apprehended.'] Observe, Those whom God advances to honourable employments he humbles and makes low in their own eyes; and where God gives grace to be humble, there he gives all other grace. You may also observe in what a different manner the apostle speaks of himself and his office; while he magnifies that he debases himself. Observe, A faithful minister of Christ may be very humble, and think very meanly of himself, even when he thinks and speaks very highly and honourably of his sacred function. 2nd. How highly he speaks of Jesus Christ; "The unsearchable riches of Christ." [The commentator just referred to observes, "There is no more emphatic expression in the New Testament than this. It shows that the heart of the apostle was full of admiration of the sufficiency and glory that was in the Saviour, and that he wanted words to express it." There is a mighty treasury of mercy, grace, and love, laid up in Christ Jesus, and that for Jews and Gentiles both. Or, the riches of the Gospel are here spoken of as the riches of Christ; the riches which Christ purchased for, and bestows upon, all believers; and they are unsearchable riches, which we cannot find the bottom of, and which human sagacity could never have discovered, and men could no otherwise attain to the knowledge of them but by revelation. Now it was the apostle's business and employment to preach these unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles; and it was a favour he greatly valued, and looked upon it as an unspeakable honour to him. "Unto me is this grace given," this special favour God hath granted to such an unworthy creature as I am. And it is an unspeakable favour to the Gentile world that to them the unsearchable riches of Christ are preached. Though many remain poor, and are not enriched with these riches, yet it is a favour to have them preached among us, to have an offer of them made to us; and if we be not enriched with them it is owing to ourselves.]

2. With respect to all men, ver. 9. His business and employment was "to make all men see," that is, to publish and make known to the whole world, "what is the fellowship of the mystery" (that is, that the Gentiles, who have hitherto been strangers to the church, shall be admitted into communion with it), "which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God," kept secret in his purpose, "who created all things by Jesus Christ;" as *Jno. i. 3*, "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made;" and therefore no wonder that he saves the Gentiles as well as the Jews, for he is the common Creator of them both; and we may conclude that he is able to perform the work of their redemption, seeing he was able to accomplish the great work of creation. It is true that both the first creation, when God made all things out of nothing, and the new creation, whereby sinners are made new creatures by converting grace, are of God by Jesus Christ. The apostle adds, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God," ver. 10. This was one thing, among others, which God had in his eye in revealing this mystery, that the good angels, who have a pre-eminence in governing the kingdoms and principalities of the world, and who are endued with great power to execute the will of God on this earth, (though their ordinary residence and place of abode is in heaven,) may be informed, from what passes in the church, and is done in and by it, "of the manifold wisdom of God," that is, of the great variety with which God wisely dispenses things; or of his wisdom manifested in the many ways and methods he takes in ordering his church, in the several ages of it, and especially in receiving the Gentiles into it. The holy angels who look into the mystery of our redemption by Christ, could not but take notice of this branch of that mystery, that among the Gentiles is preached the unsearchable riches of Christ. And this is "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," ver. 11. Some read the words (*κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων*) thus, "according to the fore-disposing of the ages which he made," &c.; so Dr. Whitby, &c. "In the first of the ages," (says the mentioned author), "his wisdom seeing fit to give the promise of a Saviour to a fallen Adam; in the second age to typify and represent him to the Jews in sacred persons, rites, and sacrifices; and in the age of the Messiah, or the last age, to reveal him to the Jews and preach him to the Gentiles." Others understand it, according to our translation, of the eternal purpose which God purposed to execute in and through Jesus Christ the whole of what he has done in the great affairs of man's redemption being in pursuance of his eternal decree about that matter. [There is no evading of this truth: if God has any plan it must be eternal. He has no new schemes; he has no intentions which he did not always have.] The apostle, having mentioned our Lord Jesus Christ, subjoins concerning him, "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence, by the faith of him," ver. 12; that is, by or through whom we have liberty to open our

minds freely to God as to a Father, and a well-grounded persuasion of audience and of acceptance with him, and this by means of the faith we have in him as our great Mediator and Advocate. We may come with humble boldness to hear from God, knowing that the terror of the curse is done away; and we may expect to hear from him good words and comfortable. We may have access with confidence to speak to God, knowing that we have such a Mediator between God and us, and such an Advocate with the Father: see upon ver. 13, above. [It is a delightful truth that the believing Gentile has the same privileges with the believing Jew; and, unlike the Eleusinian mysteries, which were practised among the Ephesians as idolaters, Christianity has no gradations of knowledge for the purpose of distinguishing one from another: all are initiated into the same truth, and the privilege of every believer is to have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.]

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

We are now come to the second part of this chapter, which contains St. Paul's devout and affectionate prayer to God for his beloved Ephesians.

"For this cause." This may be referred either to the immediately foregoing verse, "That ye faint not" &c., or, rather, the apostle is here resuming what he began at the first verse, from which he digressed in those which are interposed. Observe to whom he prays; to God, as "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," of which see *ch. i. 3*. Observe farther, his outward posture in prayer, which was humble and reverent; "I bow my knees." Note, When we draw nigh to God we should reverence him in our hearts, and express it in the most suitable and becoming behaviour and gesture. And here, having mentioned Christ, he cannot pass without an honourable encomium on his love, ver. 15. The universal church hath a dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ. "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." The Jews were wont to boast of Abraham as their father; but now Jews and Gentiles both are denominated from Christ, so some; while others understand it of the saints in heaven, who wear the crown of glory, and of saints on earth, who are going on in the work of grace here. Both the one and the other make but one family, one household; and from him they are named Christians, as they really are such, acknowledging their dependence upon, and their relation to, Christ. Observe what the apostle asks of God for these his friends—spiritual blessings, which are the best blessings, and the most earnestly to be sought and prayed for by every one of us, both for ourselves and for our friends.

First. Spiritual strength for the work and duty to which we are called, and in which we are employed; "That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, [out of the inexhaustible stores of the glorious riches of his grace,] to be strengthened" &c.; "The inner man" is the heart or soul. To be "strengthened with might" is to be mightily strengthened, much more than they were at present; to be endued with a high degree of grace, and spiritual abilities for the discharging duty, the resisting temptations, the enduring persecutions, &c. And the apostle prays that this may be "according to the riches of his glory," or according to his glorious riches; that is, answerable to that great abundance of grace, mercy, and power, &c., which resides in God, and is his glory; and this by his Spirit, who is the immediate worker of grace in the souls of God's people, ["In the inner man;" that is, the heart, the mind, the soul.] Observe from these things, that strength from the Spirit of God in the inner man is the best and most desirable strength; strength of the soul; the strength of faith and other graces; strength to serve God and to do our duty, and to persevere in our Christian course with vigour and with cheerfulness. And let us farther observe, that as the work of grace is first begun, so it is continued and carried on, by the blessed Spirit of God.

Secondly. The indwelling of Christ in our hearts, ver. 17. Christ is said to dwell in his people, as he is always present with them by his gracious influences and operations. Observe that it is a desirable thing to have Christ dwell in our hearts; and if the law of Christ be written there, and the love of Christ be shed abroad there, then Christ dwells there. Christ is an inhabitant in the soul of every good Christian; where his Spirit dwells, there he dwells; and he dwells in the heart by faith, by means of the continual exercise of faith upon him. Faith opens the door of the soul to receive Christ; faith admits him, and submits to him. By faith we are united to Christ, and have an interest in him.

Thirdly. The fixing of pious and devout affections in the soul. "That ye being rooted and grounded in love," that is, steadfastly fixed in your love to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to all the saints the beloved of our Lord Jesus Christ. Many have some love to God, and to his servants, but it is a flash, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, it makes a great noise, but is gone presently. We should earnestly desire that good affections may be fixed in us, that we may be "rooted and grounded in love." Some understand it of their being settled and established in the sense of God's love to them, which would inspire them with greater ardours of holy love to him, and to one another. And how very desirable is it to have a settled, fixed sense of the love of God and Christ to our souls, so as to be able to say with the apostle, at all times, "He has loved me." Now, the best way to attain to this is to be careful that we maintain a constant love to God in our souls; this will be the evidence

"God justifies the believing man, not for the worthiness of his belief, but for the worthiness of Him in whom he believes" (Hooker).

ii. 10. See Titus iii. 5.

ii. 11. "The Gentiles were called, and were the uncircumcision; the Jews were called, but were not truly the circumcision" (Ellicott). (Col. ii. 11.)

ii. 12. "Here are three heads of misery—ye were without Christ, without the Holy Spirit, without God" (Bengel).

ii. 13. See chap. i. 7.

ii. 14–16. "For he:" he and none else. "Both one:" Jews and Gentiles. "And hath broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity (between us) in his flesh, even the law," &c.: "The reconciliation which Christ effected between Jew and Gentile was in fact only a subordinate step of the reconciliation of both to God, which he effected by his sacrifice in the flesh" (Alford).

ii. 17, 18. See John xx. 20, 21; Acts xxvi. 23.

of the love of God to us. We love him because he first loved us. In order to this he prays.

Fourthly. For their experimental acquaintance with the love of Jesus Christ. The more intimate acquaintance we have with Christ's love to us, the more love will be drawn out to him, and to those who are his, for his sake. "That you may be able to comprehend with all saints," &c., ver. 18, 19; that is, more clearly to understand and firmly to believe the wonderful love of Christ to his, which the saints do understand and believe in some measure, and shall understand more hereafter. Christians should not aim to comprehend above all saints, but be content that God deals with them as he uses to do with those who love and fear his name. We should desire to comprehend with all saints; that is, to have so much knowledge as the saints are allowed to have in this world. We should be ambitious of coming up with the first three; but not of going beyond what is the measure of the stature of other saints.

It is observable how magnificently the apostle speaks of the love of Christ. The dimensions of redeeming love are admirable: "The breadth, and length, and depth, and height." By enumerating these dimensions the apostle designs to signify the exceeding greatness of the love of Christ, the unsearchable riches of his love, (which is higher than heaven, deeper than hell, longer than the earth, and broader than the sea,) to allude to *Job* xi. 7, 8. Some describe the particulars thus: by the breadth of it we may understand the extent of it to all ages, nations, and ranks of men; by the length of it, its continuance from everlasting to everlasting; by the depth of it, its stooping to the lowest condition, with a design to relieve and save those who are sunk into the depths of sin and misery; by its height, its entitling and raising us up to the heavenly happiness and glory. We should desire to comprehend this love. It is the character of all the saints that they do so; for they all have a complacency and a confidence in the love of Christ: "And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," ver. 19. [No human or created intellect can describe its nature, fathom its motives, or conceive of its eternal effects.] It passeth knowledge, how can we know it? Why, we must pray and endeavour to know something, and should still covet and strive to know more and more of it, though after the best endeavours none can fully comprehend it; in its full extent it passeth knowledge. Though the love of Christ may be better perceived and known by Christians than it generally is, yet it cannot be fully understood on this side heaven. [And it will doubtless furnish the grand subject of contemplation in the heavenly world itself, even angels desiring to look into it, just as the never-ending theme of praise will be "Unto him who hath loved us." Note, The love of Christ, though incomprehensibly great, may yet be experimentally known.]

Fifthly. He prays that they "might be filled with all the fulness of God." It is a high expression; we dare not use it if we did not find it in the Scriptures. It is like those other expressions of being "partakers of a Divine nature," and of being "perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect." We are not to understand it of his fulness as God, in himself, but of his fulness as a God in covenant with us, as a God to his people; such a fulness as God is ready to bestow, who is willing to fill every one to the utmost of his capacity, and that with all those gifts and graces which he sees they need. They who receive grace for grace from Christ's fulness may be said to be filled with the fulness of God, according to their capacity; all which is in order to their arriving to the highest degree of the knowledge and enjoyment of God, and an entire conformity to him.

["Filled with all the fulness of God" is another of the apostle's astonishing expressions. We may conceive of the contents of the largest vessel that was ever made by human hands, for example, of the brazen sea—we may conceive of the fulness of the sea itself, though even that requires an extraordinary stretch of mind; but to conceive of the fulness of the Fountain of happiness and blessedness,—of God who fills all things,—entirely "passeth knowledge." Yet this blessedness is to be communicated to believers. Here, by degrees, we derive much from it, "grace upon grace," *1 John* i. 17. In heaven our capacities will be more and more enlarged; and, as they increase, that same fulness will supply them, always filling, always increasing, yet always full; each vessel having as much as it can contain. Then the apostle's sublime and fervent prayer will be realised to its fullest extent, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Note, Though God's fulness is not to be expressed, it is nevertheless to be enjoyed.]

The apostle closes the chapter with a doxology, ver. 20, 21. It is proper to conclude our prayers with praises. Our blessed Saviour hath taught us to do so. Take notice how he describes God, and how he ascribes glory to him. He describes him as a God that "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." There is an inexhaustible fulness of grace and mercy in God, which the prayers of all the saints can never draw dry. Whatever we may ask, or think to ask, still God is able to do more, abundantly more, exceedingly abundantly more. Open thy mouth never so wide, and he hath wherewithal to fill it. Note, In our applications to God we should encourage our faith by a consideration of his all-sufficiency and almighty power. "According to the power which worketh in us," as if he had said, We have already had a proof of this power of God, in what he hath wrought in us, and done for us, having quickened us by his grace, and converted us to himself. The power that still worketh for the saints is according to that power that hath wrought in them. Wherever God gives of his fulness he gives to experience his power. Having thus described God, he ascribes glory to him. When we come to ask for grace from God, we ought to give glory to God. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus. In ascribing glory to God we ascribe all excellencies and perfections to him, glory being the effluency and result of them all. Observe that the seat of God's praises is in the church. That little rent of praise which God receives from this world is from the church, a sacred society constituted for the glory of God, every particular member of which, both Jew and Gentile, does concur in this work of praising God. The Mediator of these praises is Jesus Christ. All God's gifts come from him to us through the hand of Christ, and all our praises pass from us to him through the same hand. And God should and will be praised thus "throughout all ages, world without end;" for he will ever have a church to praise him, and he will ever have his tribute of praise from his church. "Amen." So be it! and so it will certainly be.

[We may pause and meditate on these closing verses for hours, till the soul becomes completely wrapped in ecstasy, soaring with the apostle into the third heavens, and catching something of the devout enthusiasm of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Devout critics have pondered over it with amazement, and have confessed that the passage has baffled all their learned skill in conveying any suitable idea of its force and beauty. It contains what one of the learned calls one of the apostle's "self-invented phrases." It is an example of Paul's redundant expressions, as if his heart could not fully utter his feelings, and as if the richest of all languages was too poor to express what his heart was able to utter. It has been rendered literally "unto all generations of the ages of ages," and "unto all the generations of the eternity of eternities, or the eternity of ages." When long ages shall have rolled away, he shall still be glorified in his saints, and the glory shall still be given him in and by the church. The church triumphant will glorify him in far greater per-

fection than the church militant, reflecting back the glory with which itself is glorified, with an effluence conceivable by those only who dwell in the regions of unalloyed bliss.]

CHAPTER IV.

We have gone through the former part of this epistle, which consists of several important doctrinal truths, contained in the three preceding chapters. We enter now on the latter part of it, in which we have the most weighty and serious exhortations that can be given. We may observe, that in this (as in most others of St. Paul's epistles) the former part is doctrinal, and fitted to inform the minds of men in the great truths and doctrines of the Gospel; the latter is practical, and designed for the direction of their lives and manners, all Christians being obliged to endeavour after soundness in the faith, and regularity in life and practice. In what has gone before we have heard of Christian privileges, which are the matter of our comfort. In what follows we shall hear of Christian duties, and what the Lord our God requires of us, in consideration of such privileges vouchsafed to us. The best way to understand the mysteries and partake of the privileges of which we have read before, is conscientiously to practise the duties prescribed to us in what follows; as, on the other hand, a serious consideration and belief of the doctrines that have been taught us in the foregoing chapters will be a good foundation on which to build the practice of the duties prescribed in those which are yet before us: Christian faith and Christian practice do mutually benefit each other. In this chapter we have divers exhortations to important duties. I. One that is more general, ver. 1. II. An exhortation to mutual love, unity, and concord, with the proper means and motives to promote them, ver. 2—16. III. An exhortation to Christian purity and holiness of life; and that both more general, ver. 17—24, and in several particular instances, ver. 25—32.



THEREFORE, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

This is a general exhortation to walk as becomes our Christian profession. St. Paul was now a prisoner at Rome, and he was the "prisoner of the Lord," or, in the Lord, which signifies as much as for the Lord: see of this, *ch.* iii. 1. He mentions this once and again to shew that he was not ashamed of his bonds, well knowing that he suffered not as an evil doer; and likewise to recommend what he wrote to them with the greater tenderness, and with some special advantage. It was a doctrine he thought worthy suffering for, and therefore surely they should think it worthy their serious regards and their dutiful observance. We have here the petition of a poor prisoner, one of Christ's prisoners; "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you," &c. Considering what God hath done for you, and to what a state and condition he has called you, as has been discoursed before, I now come with an earnest request to you, (not to send me relief, or to use your interest for the obtaining my liberty, the first thing which poor prisoners are wont to solicit from their friends, but) that you would approve yourselves good Christians, and live up to your profession and calling; "That ye walk worthy," &c.; that is, agreeably, suitably, and congruously to those happy circumstances into which the grace of God hath brought you, whom he hath converted from heathenism to Christianity. [To walk, in Scripture, is expressive of the mode of a man's life; and in this passage it intimates that a Christian's life should be consistent, active, progressive, and persevering.] Observe, Christians ought to accommodate themselves to the Gospel, by which they are called, and to the glory to which they are called: both are their vocation. We are called Christians, we must answer that name, and live like Christians. We are called to God's kingdom and glory; that kingdom and glory therefore we must mind, and walk as becomes the heirs of them.

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. 7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the

ii. 20. "Apostles and prophets:" apostles representing the new, prophets the old dispensation; the teaching of both pointed to the same Head, and had the same end in view (*Rev.* xi. 9).

iii. 2—13. These verses are parenthetical.

iii. 3. "By revelation was made known:" so best MSS. "The mystery:" the admission of the Gentiles. "I wrote afore:" in chap. i. 9, 10, and chap. ii. 11—13.

iii. 6 Not "should be" but "are in Christ Jesus:" so best MSS.

iii. 8. A characteristic burst of humility (*1 Tim.* i. 13). "Unsearchable:" in its nature, extent, and application.

iii. 9. "Who created all things:" "The stress is on 'all things.' This concealment was nothing to be wondered at, for God of his own will and power created all things; a fact which involves his perfect right to adjust all things as he will" (*Alford*). Best MSS. omit "by Jesus Christ."

iii. 10. "By the Church:" "That the holy angels are capable of a

knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into

him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.



CAPTIVES LED IN CHAINS AFTER THE TRIUMPHAL CAR.—VER. 8.

Here the apostle proceeds to more particular exhortations. Two he enlarges upon in this chapter; namely, to unity and purity, holiness and love, which Christians should very much study. We do not "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called" if we be not faithful friends to all Christians, and sworn enemies to all sin. This section contains the exhortation to mutual love, unity, and concord, with the proper means and motives to promote them. Nothing is pressed upon us more earnestly in the Scriptures than this. Love is the law of Christ's kingdom, the lesson of his school, the livery of his family. Observe,

First. The means of unity; "Lowliness and meekness, long-suffering and forbearing one another in love," ver. 2. By lowliness we are to understand humility, and the entertaining mean thoughts of ourselves, which is opposed to pride. By meekness, that excellent disposition of soul which makes men unwilling to provoke others, and not easily to be provoked or offended with their infirmities; and it is opposed to angry resentments and peevishness. Long-suffering implies a patient bearing of injuries without seeking revenge; and forbearing one another in love signifies the bearing their infirmities out of a principle of love, and so as not to cease to love them on the account of these. The best Christians have need to bear one with another, and to make the best one of another, to provoke one another's graces, and not their passions. We find much in ourselves which it is hard to forgive ourselves; and therefore we must not think it much if we find that in others which we think hard to forgive them, and yet must forgive them as we forgive ourselves. Now, without these things, unity cannot be preserved. The first step towards unity is humility; without that there will be no meekness, no patience, nor forbearance, and without these no unity. Pride and passion break the peace, and make all the mischief. Humility and meekness, &c., restore the peace and keep it. Only by pride comes contention; only by humility comes love. The more lowly-mindedness the more like-mindedness. We do not walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called if we be not meek and lowly of heart; for he by whom we are called, he to whom we are called, was eminent for meekness and lowliness of heart, and hath commanded us therein to learn of him.

Secondly. We have an account of the nature of that unity which the apostle prescribes. It is "the unity of the Spirit," ver. 3. The seat of Christian unity is in the heart or spirit. It does not lie in one set of thoughts, nor in one form and mode of worship, but in one heart and one soul. This unity of heart and affection may be said to be of the Spirit of God; it is wrought by him, and is one of the fruits of the Spirit. This we should endeavour to keep. Endeavouring is a Gospel word. We must do our utmost. If others will quarrel with us, we must take all possible care not to quarrel with them. If others will despise and hate us, we must not despise and hate them. "In the bond of peace." Peace is a bond, as it unites persons, and makes them live friendly one with another. A peaceable disposition and conduct binds Christians together; whereas discord and quarrel disband and disunite their hearts and affections. Many slender twigs bound together become strong. "The bond of peace" is the strength of society. Not that it can be imagined that all good people, and all the members of societies, should be in every thing just of the same length, and the same sentiments, and the same judgment; but the bond of peace unites them all together, with a *non obstante*,—"notwithstanding," to these. As in a bundle of rods, they may be of different lengths, and different strength; but when they are tied together by one bond they are much stronger than any, even the thickest and strongest, were of themselves.

Thirdly. We have next the motives proper to promote this Christian unity and concord. The apostle urges several to persuade us to it.

1. Consider how many unities there are that are the joy and glory of our Christian profession. There should be one heart, for "there is one body and one spirit," ver. 4. Two hearts in one body would be monstrous. If there be but one body, all that belong to that body should have one heart. The catholic church is one mystical body of Christ, and all good Christians make up but one body, incorporated by one charter, that of the Gospel, animated by one Spirit the same Holy Spirit, who, by his gifts and graces, quickens, enlivens, and governs that body. If we belong to Christ, we are all actuated by one and the same Spirit, and therefore should be one, "Even as you are called in one hope of your calling." Hope is here put for its object, the thing hoped for, the heavenly inheritance to the hope of which we are called: all Christians are

called to the same hope of eternal life. There is one Christ that they all hope in, and one heaven that they are all hoping for; and therefore they should be of one heart. "One Lord," ver. 5; that is, Christ, the head of the church, to whom, by God's appointment, all Christians are immediately subject. One faith; that is, the Gospel, containing the doctrine of the Christian faith; or it is the same grace of faith (viz., faith in Christ) whereby all Christians are saved. "One baptism," by which we profess our faith, being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and so the same sacramental covenant, whereby we engage ourselves to the Lord Christ. "One God and Father of all," ver. 6. One God, who owns all the true members of the church for his children; for he is the Father of all such by special relation, as he is "the Father of all" men by creation. And he "is above all," by his essence, and with respect to the glorious perfections of his nature, and as he has dominion over all creatures, and especially over his church; "and through all," by his providence upholding and governing them; "and in you all," in all believers, in whom he dwells, as in his holy temple, by his Spirit and special grace. If then there be so many ones, it is pity but there should be one more—one heart, or one soul.

2. Consider the variety of gifts that Christ has bestowed among Christians. But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Though the members of Christ's church agree in so many things, yet there are some things wherein they differ; but this should breed no difference of affection among them, since they are all derived from the same bountiful Author, and designed for the same great ends. "Unto every one of us" Christians "is given grace," some gift or grace, in some kind or degree or other, for the mutual help of one another. "Unto every one of us" ministers "is given grace," to some a greater measure of gifts, to others a lesser measure. The different gifts of Christ's ministers proved a great occasion of contention among the first Christians. One was for Paul, and another for Apollos. The apostle shews that they had no reason to quarrel about them, but all the reason in the world to agree in the joint use of them, for common edification, because all was given "according to the measure of the gift of Christ," in such a measure as seemed best to Christ to bestow upon every one. Observe, All the ministers and all the members of Christ owe all the gifts and graces that they are possessed of to him; and this is a good reason why we should love one another, because to "every one of us is given grace." All to whom Christ hath given grace, and on whom he hath bestowed his gifts, (though they are of different sizes, different names, and different sentiments,) yet ought to love one another.

The apostle takes this occasion to instance some of the gifts which Christ bestowed. And that they were bestowed by Christ he makes appear by those words of David wherein he foretold this concerning him, *Ps. lxxviii. 18*, "Wherefore he saith," ver. 3, (that is, the Psalmist saith), "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." David prophesied of the ascension of Christ; and the apostle descants upon it here, and in the three following verses. "When he ascended up on high." We may understand the apostle both of the place into which he ascended in his human nature, that is, the highest heavens, and particularly of the state to which he was advanced, he being then highly exalted and eminently glorified by his Father. Let us set ourselves to think of the ascension of Jesus Christ: that our blessed Redeemer being risen from the dead, is gone to heaven, where he sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high, which completed the proof of his being the Son of God. As great conquerors, when they rode in their triumphal chariots, used to be attended with the most illustrious of their captives led in chains, and were wont to scatter their largesses and bounty among the soldiers and other spectators of their triumphs, so Christ, when he ascended into heaven as a triumphal conqueror, "led captivity captive." It is a phrase used in the Old Testament to signify a conquest over enemies, especially over such as formerly had led others captive: see *Jud. v. 12*. Captivity is here put for captives, and signifies all our spiritual enemies, who brought us into captivity before. He conquered those who had conquered us, such as sin, the devil, and death. Indeed, he triumphed over these on the cross; but the triumph was completed at his ascension, when he became Lord over all, and had the keys of death and Hades put into his hands. And he "gave gifts unto men," in the psalm it is, he "received gifts for men." He received for them, that he might give to them, a large measure of gifts and graces; particularly he enriched his disciples with the gift of the Holy Ghost. The apostle, thus speaking of the ascension of Christ, takes notice

specific increase of knowledge, and of a deepening insight into God's wisdom, seems from this passage clear and incontrovertible" (Ellicott). "The angels are instructed in God's wisdom by the great spiritual body constituted in Christ, which they contemplate" (Stier).

iii. 14. "For this cause:" because of their admission into the Church. Best MSS. omit "of our Lord Jesus Christ."

iii. 17. "In your hearts" (Rev. iii. 20). "Being rooted:" rather,

"having been." The next clause speaks of the result of their rooting and grounding in love after the process is completed, not while in progress.

iii. 18. Many explanations of these four terms have been given. Thus Bengel explains its "breadth" of Christ's world-wide love; "length," its extending through all ages; "depth," its profound wisdom; "height," its being beyond the power of enemies to destroy.

that he "descended first," ver. 9; as much as if he had said, When David speaks of Christ's ascension, he intimates the knowledge he had of Christ's humiliation on earth; for when it is said that he ascended, this implies that he first descended, for what is it but a proof or demonstration of his having done so? "Into the lower parts of the earth;" this may refer either to his incarnation, according to that of David, *Ps. cxxxix. 15*, "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth;" or to his burial, according to that of *Ps. lxxiii. 9*, "They that seek my soul to destroy it shall go into the lower parts of the earth." He calls his death (say some of the fathers) his descent into the lower parts of the earth. He descended to the earth in his incarnation. He descended into the earth in his burial. As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so was the Son of man in the heart of the earth. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens," ver. 10, that is, far above the airy and starry (which are the visible) heavens, into the heaven of heavens, "that he might fill all things," that is, all the members of his church with gifts and graces suitable to their several conditions and stations. Observe, our Lord humbled himself first, and then he was exalted. He descended first, and then ascended.

The apostle next tells us what were Christ's gifts at his ascension: "He gave some apostles," &c., ver. 11. Indeed, he sent forth some of these before his ascension, *Mat. x. 1-5*. But one was then added, *Acts i. 26*. And all of them were more solemnly installed, and publicly confirmed in their office, by his visible pouring forth the Holy Ghost in an extraordinary manner and measure upon them. Note, That the great gift that Christ gave to the church at his ascension was that of the ministry of peace and reconciliation. The gift of the ministry is the fruit of Christ's ascension. And ministers have their various gifts, which are all given them by the Lord Jesus.

The officers which Christ gave to his church were of two sorts. Extraordinary ones advanced to a higher office in the church; such were apostles, prophets, and evangelists—the apostles were chief. These Christ immediately called, furnished them with extraordinary gifts, and the power of working miracles, and with infallibility in delivering his truths. And they having been the witnesses of his miracles and doctrine, he sent them forth to spread the Gospel, and to plant and govern churches. The prophets seem to have been such as expounded the writings of the Old Testament, and foretold things to come. The evangelists were ordained persons, *2 Tim. i. 6*, whom the apostles took for their companions in travel, *Gal. ii. 1*, and sent them out to settle and establish such churches as the apostles themselves had planted, *Acts xix. 22*; and, not being fixed to any particular place, they were to continue till recalled, *2 Tim. iv. 9*.

And then there are ordinary ministers employed in a lower and narrower sphere, as pastors and teachers. Some take these two names to signify one office, implying the duties of ruling and teaching belonging to it. Others think they design two distinct offices, both ordinary and of standing use in the church; and then pastors are such as are fixed at the head of particular churches, with a design to guide, instruct, and feed them in the manner appointed by Christ; and they are frequently called bishops and elders. And the teachers were such whose work it was also to preach the Gospel, and to instruct the people by way of exhortation. We see here that it is Christ's prerogative to appoint what officers and offices he pleases in his church. And how rich is the church that had at first such a variety of officers, and hath still such a variety of gifts! How kind is Christ to his church! How careful of it, and of its edification! When he ascended he procured the gift of the Holy Ghost. And the gifts of the Holy Ghost are various; some have greater, others have lesser measures, but all for the good of the body: which brings us to the third argument,

3. Which is taken from Christ's great end and design in giving gifts unto men. The gifts of Christ were intended for the good of his church, and in order to advance his kingdom and interest among men. All these being designed for one common end is a good reason why all Christians should agree in brotherly love, and not envy one another's gifts. All are "for the perfecting of the saints," ver. 12; that is, according to the import of the original, to bring them into an orderly, spiritual state and frame, who had been as it were dislocated and dis-jointed by sin; and then to strengthen, confirm, and advance them therein; that so each in his proper place and function might contribute to the good of the whole. "For the work of the ministry," or, for the work of dispensation; that is, that they might dispense the doctrines of the Gospel, and successfully discharge the several parts of their ministerial function. "For the edifying of the body of Christ," that is, to build up the church, which is Christ's mystical body, by increase of their graces, and an addition of new members; all are designed to prepare us for heaven, "Till we all come," &c., ver. 13. The gifts and offices (some of them) which have been spoken of are to continue in the church till the saints be perfected, which will not be "till they all come in the unity of the faith;" that is, till all true believers meet together, by means of the same precious faith, "and of the knowledge of the Son of God;" by which we are to understand not a bare, speculative knowledge, or acknowledging of Christ to be the Son of God and the great Mediator, but such as is attended with appropriation and affection, with all due honour, trust, and obedience. "Unto a perfect man," to our full growth of gifts and graces, free from those childish infirmities that we are subject to in the present world. "Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," that is, so as to be Christians of a full maturity and ripeness in all the graces derived from Christ's fulness; or, according to the measure of that stature which is to make up the fulness of Christ, which is to complete his mystical body. Now we shall never come to the perfect man till we come to the perfect world. There is a fulness in Christ, and a fulness to be derived from him, and a certain stature of that fulness, and a measure of that stature, assigned in the counsel of God to every believer; and we never come to that measure till we come to heaven. God's children, as long as they are in this world, are in growing. Dr. Lightfoot understands the apostle as speaking here of Jews and Gentiles knit in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God; so making a perfect man, and the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The apostle farther shews, in the following verses, what was God's design in his sacred institutions, and what effect they ought to have upon us. As, 1st. "That we henceforth be no more children," &c., ver. 14; that is, that we may be no longer children in knowledge, weak in the faith, and inconstant in our judgments; easily yielding to every temptation, readily complying with every one's humour, and being at every one's beck. Children are easily imposed upon; we must take care of that, and of being "tossed to and fro," like ships without ballast, "and carried about," like clouds in the air, with such doctrines as have no truth nor solidity in them, but nevertheless "spread themselves far and wide," and are, therefore, compared to wind. "By the sleight of men;" it is a metaphor taken from gamsters, and signifies the mischievous subtlety of seducers: "and cunning craftiness," by which is meant their skillfulness in finding out ways to seduce and deceive; for it follows, "whereby they lie in wait to deceive," as in an ambush, in order to circumvent the weak, and draw them from the truth. Note, They must be very wicked and ungodly men who set themselves to seduce and deceive others into false doctrines and errors. The apostle describes them here as base men, using a great deal of devilish art

and cunning, in order thereunto. And the best method we can take to fortify ourselves against such is to study the sacred oracles, and to pray for the illumination and grace of the Spirit of Christ, that we may know the truth as it is in Jesus, and be established in it.

2d. That we should "speak the truth in love," ver. 15. Or, follow the truth in love; or, be sincere in love, that is, to our fellow Christians. While we adhere to the doctrine of Christ, which is the truth, we should live in love one with another. Love is an excellent thing, but we must be careful to preserve truth together with it. Truth is an excellent thing, yet it is requisite that we speak it in love, and not in contention. These two should go together, truth and peace.

3d. That we should grow up into Christ in all things. Into Christ, so as to be more deeply rooted in him. "In all things;" in knowledge, love, faith, and all the parts of the new man. We should grow up towards maturity, which is opposed to the being children. Those are improving Christians who grow up into Christ. The more we grow in an acquaintance with Christ, faith in him, love to him, dependence upon him, the more we shall flourish in every grace. He is the Head, and we should thus grow, that we may thereby honour our Head. The Christian's growth tends to the glory of Christ.

4th. We should be assisting and helpful one to another, as members of the same body, ver. 16; where the apostle makes a comparison betwixt the natural body and Christ's mystical body, that body of which Christ is the Head. And he observes that, as there must be communion and mutual communications of the members of the body among themselves, in order to their growth and improvement, so there must be mutual love and unity, together with the proper fruits of these, among Christians, in order to their spiritual improvement, and growth in grace. "From whom," says he, that is, from Christ their Head, who conveys influence and nourishment to every particular member, "the whole body" of Christians "fitly joined together and compacted;" that is, being orderly and firmly united among themselves, every one in his proper place and station, "by that which every joint supplieth," by the assistance which every one of the parts thus united gives to the whole; or, by the Spirit, faith, love, sacraments, &c., which (like the veins and arteries in the body) serve to unite Christians to Christ their Head, and to one another as fellow-members. "According to the effectual working in the measure of every part;" that is, say some, according to the power which the Holy Ghost exerts to make God's appointed means effectual for this great end; in such a measure as Christ judges to be sufficient and proper for every member, according to its respective place and office in the body; or, as others, according to the power of Christ, who as Head influenceth and enliveneth every member; or, according to the effectual working of every member, in communicating to others of what it hath received, nourishment is conveyed to all in their proportions, and according to the state and exigence of every part. "Maketh increase of the body;" that is, such an increase as is convenient for the body. Observe, particular Christians receive their gifts and graces from Christ for the sake and benefit of the whole body. "Unto the edifying of itself in love." We may understand this two ways; either, that all the members of the church may attain unto a greater measure of love to Christ and to one another, or that they are moved to act in the manner mentioned from love to Christ and to one another. Observe that mutual love among Christians is a great friend to spiritual growth. It is in love that the body edifies itself; whereas "a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand."

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and

iii. 21. Best MSS. read "in the Church and in Christ Jesus;" literally, "to all the generations of the age of the ages."

iv. 2. "Lowliness;" or "lowly-mindedness."

iv. 4. "One body:" Christ's mystical body. "One hope of your calling:" one hope which the calling works.

iv. 5. "One Lord:" the Head of the Church. "One faith:" in that Lord. "One baptism:" by which we are incorporated into the one body.

iv. 6. Best MSS. omit "you."

iv. 7. See Rom. xii. 6.

iv. 8. "He saith:" i.e., "God saith:" *Psa. lxxviii.*, a song of triumph. "The partial triumphs of David and Solomon only prefigured as in a prophetic mirror the universal and eternal triumph of the incarnate Son of God" (Alford). "Captivity captive:" or "a troop of captives captive." In the psalm, David's foes; in the antitypical meaning, the foes of Christ—sin, death, Satan. "Gave

wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

The apostle having gone through his exhortation to mutual love, unity, and concord, in the foregoing verses, there follows in these an exhortation to Christian purity and holiness of heart and life; and that both more general, ver. 17—24, and in several particular instances, ver. 25—32. This is solemnly introduced: "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord;" that is, seeing the matter is as above described, seeing you are members of Christ's body, and partakers of such gifts, this I urge upon your consciences, and bear witness to as your duty, in the Lord's name, and by virtue of the authority I have derived from him. And then the more general exhortation to purity and holiness of heart and life begins thus: "That ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk," &c.; that is, that for the time to come you do not live and behave yourselves as ignorant and unconverted heathens do, who are wholly guided by an understanding employed about vain things, (their idols, and their worldly possessions,) things which are no way profitable to their souls, and which will deceive their expectations. Converted Gentiles must not live as unconverted Gentiles do; though they live among them, they must not live like them. Here the apostle takes occasion to describe the wickedness of the Gentile world, out of which regenerate Christians were snatched as brands out of the burning.

First. Their understandings were darkened, ver. 18. They were void of all saving knowledge, yea, ignorant of many things concerning God which the light of nature might have taught them. They sat in darkness, and they loved it rather than light. And by their ignorance they were "alienated from the life of God;" they were estranged from, and had a dislike and an aversion to, a life of holiness, which is not only that way of life which God requires and approves of, and by which we live to him, but which resembles God himself, in his purity, righteousness, truth and goodness. Their wilful ignorance was the cause of their estrangement from this life of God, which begins in light and knowledge. Gross and affected ignorance is destructive to religion and godliness. And what was the cause they were thus ignorant? It was because of the blindness or the hardness of their hearts. It was not because God did not make himself known to them by his works, but because they would not admit the instructive rays of the Divine light. They were ignorant because they would be so. Their ignorance proceeded from their obstinacy and the hardness of their hearts, their resisting the light, and rejecting all the means of illumination and knowledge.

Secondly. Their consciences were debauched and seared: "Who being past feeling," ver. 19. They had no sense of their sin, or of the misery and danger of their case by means of it, whereupon they "gave themselves over unto lasciviousness." They indulged themselves in their filthy lusts, and yielding themselves up to the dominion of these they became the slaves and drudges of sin and the devil "working all uncleanness with greediness." They made it their common practice to commit all sorts of uncleanness, and even the most unnatural and monstrous sins, and that with insatiable desires. Observe. When men's consciences are once seared, there are no bounds to their sins. When they set their hearts upon the gratification of their lusts, what can be expected but the most abominable sensuality and lewdness, and that their horrid enormities will abound?

This was the character of the Gentiles, but these Christians must distinguish themselves from such Gentiles. "Ye have not so learned Christ," ver. 20. It may be read, 'But ye not so;' ye have learned Christ. Those who have learned Christ are saved from that darkness and defilement which others lie under; and as they know more they are obliged to live in a better manner than others. It is a good argument against sin that we have not so learned Christ. Learn Christ! is Christ a book, a lesson, a way, a trade? The meaning is, ye have not so learned Christianity, the doctrines of Christ and the rules of life prescribed by him. Not so as to do as others do. "If so be," or since, "that we have heard him," ver. 21, that is, have heard his doctrine preached by us, "and have been taught by him;" that is, inwardly and effectually by his Spirit. Christ is the lesson, we must learn Christ; and Christ is the teacher, we are taught by him, "as the truth is in Jesus." This may be understood two ways; either, 1. You have been taught the real truth as held forth by Christ himself, both in his doctrine and in his life. Or, 2. Thus the truth has made such an impression on your hearts, in your measure, as it did upon the heart of Jesus. The truth of Christ then appears in his beauty and power when it appears as in Jesus.

Another branch of the general exhortation follows in those words, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man," &c., ver. 22—24. This is a great part of the doctrine which has been taught you, and that you have learned. Here the apostle expresses himself in metaphors taken from garments. [Conversation means conduct.] The principles, habits, and dispositions of the soul must be changed before there can be a saving change of the life. There must be sanctification, which consists of these two things:

1st. The old man must be put off. The corrupt nature is called a man, because, like the human body, it consists of divers parts, mutually supporting and strengthening one another. It is the old man, as old as Adam, from whom we derived it; it is bred in the bone, and we brought it into the world with us. It is subtle as an old man; but in all God's saints decaying and withering as an old man, and ready to pass away. It is said to be corrupt,—for sin in the soul is the corruption of its faculties,—and where it is not mortified it grows daily worse and worse, and so tends to destruction. "According to the deceitful lusts." Sinful inclinations and desires are deceitful lusts. They promise men happiness, but render them more miserable, and betray men into destruction if they are not subdued and mortified. These therefore must be put off as an old garment that we would be ashamed to be seen in; that is, they must be subdued and mortified. These lusts prevailed against them in their "former conversation," that is, during the state of unregeneracy and heathenism.

2nd. The new man must be put on. It is not enough to shake off corrupt principles, but we must be actuated by gracious ones. We must embrace them, espouse them, and get them written on our hearts. It is not enough to cease to do evil, but we must learn to do well. "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind," ver. 23; that is, use the proper and prescribed means in order to have the mind, which is a spirit, renewed more and more. "And that ye put on the new man," ver. 24. By the new man is meant the new nature, the new creature, which is actuated by a new principle, even regenerating grace, enabling a man to lead a new life, that life of righteousness and holiness which Christianity requires. This new man is created, or produced, out of confusion and emptiness, by God's almighty power, whose workmanship it is, truly excellent and beautiful. After God: in imitation of him, and in conformity to that grand

exemplar and pattern. The loss of God's image upon the soul was both the sinfulness and misery of man's fallen state; and that resemblance which it bears to God is the beauty, the glory, and the happiness of the new creature. In righteousness towards men, including all the duties of the second table; and in holiness towards God, signifying a sincere obedience to the commands of the first table; true holiness, in opposition to the outward and ceremonial holiness of the Jews. We are said to put on this new man when, in the use of all God's appointed means, we are endeavouring after this Divine nature, this new creature. This is the more general exhortation to purity and holiness of heart and life.

The apostle proceeds to some things more particular, because generals are not so apt to affect; we are told what are those particular limbs of the old man that must be mortified, those filthy rags of the old nature that must be put off, and what the peculiar ornaments of the new man wherewith we should adorn our Christian profession.

First. Take heed of lying, and be ever careful to speak the truth; ver. 25. "Wherefore," &c.; that is, since you have been so well instructed in your duty, and are under such obligations to discharge it, let it appear in your future behaviour and conduct that there is a great and real change wrought in you, particularly by "putting away lying," which sin the heathens were very guilty of, affirming that a profitable lie was better than a hurtful truth; and therefore the apostle exhorts them to cease from lying, that is, from every thing that is contrary to truth. This is a part of the old man that must be put off; and that branch of the new man that must be put on in opposition to it is speaking the truth in all our converse with others. It is the character of God's people that they are children who will not lie, who dare not lie, who hate and abhor lying. All who have grace make conscience of speaking the truth, and would not tell a deliberate lie for the greatest gain and benefit to themselves. The reason here given for veracity is, "We are members of one another." Truth is a debt we owe one another; and if we love one another we shall not deceive nor lie one to another. We belong to the same society or body, which falsehood and lying tend to dissolve, and therefore we should avoid that, and speak truth. Observe. That lying is a very great sin, a peculiar violation of the obligations which Christians are under, and very injurious and hurtful to Christian society.

Secondly. Take heed of anger and ungoverned passions. "Be ye angry, and sin not," ver. 26. This is borrowed from the Septuagint translation of Ps. iv. 4, where we render it, 'Stand in awe, and sin not.' Here is an easy concession, for as such we should consider it, rather than as a command. Be ye angry. This we are apt enough to be, God knows; but we find it difficult enough to observe the restriction, "and sin not." If you have a just occasion to be angry at any time, see that it be without sin, and therefore take heed of excess in your anger. If we would be angry, and not sin, (says one,) we must be angry at nothing but sin. And we should be more jealous for the glory of God than for any interest or reputation of our own. One great and common sin in anger is to suffer it to burn into wrath, and then to let it rest; and therefore we are here cautioned against that. If you have been provoked, and your spirits greatly discomposed, and if you have bitterly resented any affront that has been offered, before night calm and quiet your spirits: be reconciled to the offender, and let all be well again. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." If it burn into wrath and bitterness of spirit, O see to it that you suppress it speedily. Observe. Though anger in itself is not sinful, yet there is the utmost danger of its becoming so if it be not carefully watched and speedily suppressed. And therefore, though anger may come into the bosom of a wise man, it rests only in the bosom of fools. "Neither give place to the devil," ver. 27. "They who persevere in sinful anger and in wrath let the devil into their hearts, and suffer him to gain upon them, till he bring them to malice, mischievous machinations, &c. Neither give place to the calumniator, or the false accuser, so some read the words; that is, let your ears be deaf to whisperers, talebearers, and slanderers.

Thirdly. We are here warned against the sin of stealing, the breach of the eighth commandment, and advised to honest industry and to beneficence. "Let him that stole steal no more," ver. 28. It is a caution against all manner of wrong-doing by force or fraud. Let those of you who in the time of your Gentilism have been guilty of this enormity be no longer guilty of it. But we must not only take heed of the sin, but conscientiously abound in the opposite duty. Not only take heed of the sin, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good. Idleness makes thieves, so Chrysostom, *το γαρ κλέπτειν ουσίαν βλάπτει*,—stealing is the effect of idleness. They who will not work, and who are ashamed to beg, expose themselves greatly to temptations to thievery. Men should therefore be diligent and industrious, not in any unlawful way, but in some honest calling. Working "the thing which is good." Industry in some honest way will keep people out of temptation of doing wrong. But there is another reason why men ought to be industrious, namely, that they may be capable of doing some good, as well as that they may be preserved from temptation. "That he may have to give to him that needeth." They must labour, not only that they may live themselves, and live honestly, but that they may distribute for supplying the wants of others. Observe. Even those who get their living by their labour should be charitable out of their little to those who are disabled for labour. So necessary and incumbent a duty is it to be charitable to the poor, that even labourers and servants, and those who have but little for themselves, must cast their mite into the treasury. God must have his dues, and the poor are his receivers. Observe farther. That those alms that are like to be acceptable to God must not be the produce of unrighteousness and robbery, but of honesty and industry. God hates robbery for burnt offerings.

Fourthly. We are here warned against corrupt communication, and directed to that which is useful and edifying, ver. 29. Filthy and unclean words and discourse are poisonous and infectious as putrid, rotten meat. They proceed from, and prove a great deal of corruption in, the heart of the speaker, and tend to corrupt the minds and manners of others who hear them; and therefore Christians should beware of all such discourse. It may be taken in general for all that which provokes the lusts and passions of others. We must not only put off corrupt communication, but "put on that which is good to the use of edifying." The great use of speech is to edify those with whom we converse. Christians should endeavour to promote an useful conversation, "That it may minister grace unto the hearers;" that is, that it may be good for, and acceptable to, the hearers, either in the way of information, counsel, pertinent reproof, or the like. Observe. It is the great duty of Christians to take care that they offend not with their lips, and that they improve discourse and converse as much as may be for the good of others.

Fifthly. Here is another caution against wrath and anger, and farther advice to mutual love and kindly dispositions towards each other, ver. 31, 32: see upon ver. 31, 32. By bitterness, wrath, and anger, are meant violent inward resentments and displeasure against others; and by clamour, big words, loud threatenings, and other intemperate speeches, by which that bitterness, wrath, and anger do vent themselves. Christians should not entertain these vile passions in their hearts, nor be clamorous with their tongues. Evil speaking signifieth all railing, reviling, and reproachful speeches against such as we are angry with; and by malice we are to understand that rooted anger which prompts men to design and to do mischief to others.

gifts:" as a token of his triumph he distributed, as a conqueror would, gifts to his friends.

iv. 11. "Resumption of the subject, the diversity of gifts, all bestowed by him as a motive to unity" (Alford).

iv. 12. "For the edifying of the body of Christ:" "building up" better conveys the sense than "edifying."

iv. 13. "True and full unity of faith is found, when all know Christ, the object of faith, alike, and that in his highest dignity as

the Son of God" (De Wette). "Perfect:" the standard of spiritual stature is Christ's.

iv. 15. Not "speaking," but "holding" or "doing the truth in love." "Let us follow the truth in love."

iv. 16. Compare Col. ii. 19. "Edifying" see on verse 12.

iv. 18. "Life of God:" "Spiritual life in believers is kindled by the very life of God" (Bengel). "Being alienated:" "Having a positive aversion to the very idea of spiritual life" (Webster and

The contrary to all this follows. "Be ye kind one to another;" which implies the principle of love in the heart, and the outward expression of it in an affable, humble, courteous behaviour and carriage. It becomes the disciples of Jesus to be kind one to another, as those who have learned and would teach the art of obliging. "Tender-hearted;" that is, merciful, and having a tender sense of the distresses and sufferings of others, so as to be quickly moved to compassion and pity. "Forgiving one another." Occasions of difference will happen among Christ's disciples, and therefore they must be placable and ready to forgive, therein resembling God himself, who, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven them, and that more than they can forgive one another. Note, With God there is forgiveness, and he forgives sin for the sake of Jesus Christ, and on the account of that atonement which he hath made to Divine justice. Note again, That they who are forgiven of God should be of a forgiving spirit; and that they should forgive even as God forgives, sincerely and heartily, readily and cheerfully, universally and for ever, upon the sinner's sincere repentance, as remembering that they pray, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us." Now,

We may observe concerning all these particulars that the apostle has insisted on, that they belong to the second table, from whence Christians should learn the strict obligations they are under to the duties of the second table; and that he who does not conscientiously discharge them can never fear nor love God in truth and in sincerity, whatever he may pretend to. In the midst of these exhortations and cautions the apostle interposes that general one, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God," ver. 30. And by looking to what precedes, and to what follows, we may see what it is that grieves the Spirit of God. In the verses before it is intimated that all lewdness and filthiness, lying and corrupt communications that stir up filthy appetites and lusts, grieve the Spirit of God. In what follows it is intimated that those corrupt passions of bitterness and wrath, anger and clamour, evil speaking and malice, do grieve this good Spirit, by which we are not to understand as though that blessed Being could properly be grieved or vexed as we are; but the design of the exhortation is, that we act not towards him in such a manner as is wont to be grievous and disquieting to our fellow-creatures. We must not do that which is contrary to his holy nature and his will; we must not refuse to hearken to his counsels, nor rebel against his government, which things would provoke him to act towards us as men are used to do towards them with whom they are displeased and grieved, withdrawing themselves and their wonted kindness from such, and abandoning them to their enemies. Oh! provoke not the blessed Spirit of God to withdraw his presence and his gracious influences from you! It is a great, good reason why we should not grieve him, because by him "we are sealed unto the day of redemption." There is to be a day of redemption; the body is to be redeemed from the power of the grave at the resurrection day, and then God's people will be delivered from all the effects of sin, as well as from all sin and misery, which they are not till rescued out of the grave, and then their full and complete happiness does commence. All true believers are sealed to that day. God has distinguished them from others, having set his mark upon them; and he gives them the earnest and assurance of a joyful and a glorious resurrection; and the Spirit of God is the seal. Wherever that blessed Spirit is as a sanctifier, he is the earnest of all the joys and glories of the redemption day; and we should be undone should God take away his Holy Spirit from us.

CHAPTER V.

We had several important exhortations in the close of the foregoing chapter, and they are continued in this: particularly, I. We have here an exhortation to mutual love and charity, ver. 1, 2. II. Against all manner of uncleanness, with proper arguments and remedies proposed against such sins; and some farther cautions are added, and other duties recommended, ver. 3—20. III. The apostle directs to the conscientious discharge of relative duties, from ver. 21, throughout this and in the beginning of the next chapter.



Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Here we have the exhortation to mutual love, or to Christian charity. The apostle had been insisting on this in the former chapter, and particularly in the last verses of it, to which the particle therefore refers, and connects what he had said there with what is contained in these verses; thus, Because God for Christ's sake has forgiven you, therefore be ye followers of God, or imitators of him, for so the word signifies. Pious persons should imitate the God whom they worship as far as he has revealed himself as imitable by them. They must conform themselves to his example, and have his image renewed upon them. This puts a great honour upon practical religion that it is in imitation of God. We must be holy as God is holy, merciful as he is merciful, perfect as he is perfect. But there is no one attribute of God more recommended to our imitation than that of his goodness. Be ye imitators of God, or resemble him in every grace, and especially in his love, and in his pardoning goodness. God is love, and they that dwell in love dwell in God, and God in them. Thus he has proclaimed his name, gracious and merciful, and abundant in goodness. "As children," who are wont to be greatly beloved by their parents, do usually resemble them in the lineaments and features of their faces, and in the dispositions and qualities of their minds; or, as becomes the children of God, who are beloved and cherished by their heavenly Father. Children are obliged to imitate their parents in what is good, especially when dearly beloved by them. The character that we bear of God's children obliges us to resemble him, especially in his love and goodness, in his mercy and readiness to forgive; and they only are God's dear children who do imitate him in these. It follows, "and walk in love," ver. 2. This godlike grace should conduct and influence our whole conversation, which is meant by walking in it. It should be the principle from which we act, it should direct the ends at which we aim. We should be more careful to give proof of the sincerity of our love one to another. "As Christ also hath loved us." Here the apostle directs us to the example of Christ, whom Christians are obliged to imitate, and in whom we have an instance of the most free and generous love that ever was, that great love wherewith he hath loved us. We are all joint sharers in that love, and partakers of the comfort of it, and therefore should love one another—Christ

having loved us all, and given such proof of his love to us, for "he hath given himself for us." The apostle designedly enlargeth on the subject, for what may yield us more delightful matter for contemplation than this? Christ gave himself to die for us; and the death of Christ was the great sacrifice of atonement. "An offering and a sacrifice to God;" or, an offering, even a sacrifice; a propitiatory sacrifice to expiate our guilt, which had been prefigured in the legal oblations and sacrifices, and this "for a sweet-smelling savour." Some observe that the sin offerings were never said to be of "a sweet-smelling savour;" but this is said of "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." As he offered himself with a design to be accepted of God, so God did accept, was pleased with, and appeased by that sacrifice. Note, As the sacrifice of Christ was efficacious with God, so his example should be prevailing with us, and we should carefully copy after it.

3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) 10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. 13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled



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with the Spirit; 19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

These verses contain a caution against all manner of uncleanness, with proper arguments and remedies proposed; and some farther cautions are added, and other duties recommended. Filthy lusts must be suppressed, in order to the supporting of holy love. Walk in love, and shun fornication and all uncleanness. Fornication is folly committed between unmarried persons. All uncleanness includes all other sorts of filthy lusts, which were too common among the Gentiles. Or covetousness; which being thus connected, and mentioned as a thing which should not be once named, some understand it, in the chaste style of the Scripture, of exorbitant, unnatural lust; while others take it in the more common sense, for an immoderate desire of gain, or an insatiable love of riches, which is spiritual adultery. For by this the soul, which was espoused to God, goes astray from him, and embraceth the bosom of a stranger; and therefore carnal worldlings are called adulterers. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?

[Covetousness is here classed with the worst of sins. Where it exists it is

Wilkinson). "Through the ignorance that is in them:" compare Rom. i. 21—28.

iv. 21. "If so be that ye have heard him:" or "if indeed." (Compare chap. iii. 2.)

iv. 22. "To forsake your former life and put off the old man" (Conybeare).

iv. 26. Anger which is sinless must have no personal element in it (Mark iii. 5).

v. 9. "The fruit of the light:" so best MSS.

v. 13. "When the light falls on any object, the object itself reflects the rays; moral evil will be recognised as evil by the conscience, if shown in its true colours by being brought into contrast with the laws of pure morality" (Conybeare). "Whatever is made manifest becomes light."

v. 14. "Wherefore?" man must be shone upon by Christ, that he may become light.

one of the most deep-rooted and destructive evils. It becomes a reigning principle in the heart, and is the parent of many other sins. It absorbs the affections of the soul, leaving none in reality for God, and is a dead weight pressing the spiritual part of the man to the earth, and "drawing men into perdition." It wears the garb of prudence, and so easily deceives; and not being generally stigmatized by the world often passes without reproach among even professors of religion, but the apostle couples it with "fornication and all uncleanness."

Now these sins must be dreaded and detested in the highest degree. "Let it not be once named amongst you," that is, never in a way of approbation, and without abhorrence, "as becometh saints," that is, holy persons, who are separated from the world, and dedicated unto God. The apostle not only cautions against the gross acts of sin, but against what some may be apt to make light of, and think to be excusable. "Neither filthiness," ver. 4, by which may be understood all wanton and unseemly gestures and behaviour; "nor foolish talking," that is, obscene and lewd discourse; or more generally such vain discourse as betrays much folly and indiscretion, and is far from edifying the hearers; "nor jesting," the Greek word, *εὐτραπελία*, is the same which Aristotle, in his *Ethics*, makes a virtue,—pleasantness of conversation. And there is, no doubt, an innocent and inoffensive jesting, which we cannot suppose the apostle does here forbid. Some understand him of such scurrilous and abusive reflections as tend to expose others, and to make them ridiculous. This is bad enough; but the context seems to restrain it to such pleasantries of discourse as is filthy and obscene, which he may also design by that corrupt, or putrid and rotten, communication that he speaks of, *ch. iv. 29*. Of these things, he says, they "are not convenient." Indeed there is more than inconvenience, even a great deal of mischief in them. They are so far from being profitable that they pollute and poison the hearers. But the meaning is, those things do not become Christians, and are very unsuitable to their profession and character. Christians are allowed to be cheerful and pleasant; but they must be merry and wise. The apostle adds, "but rather giving of thanks;" so far let the Christian's way of mirth be from that of obscene and profane wit, that he delight his mind, and make himself cheerful, by a grateful remembrance of God's goodness and mercy to him, and by blessing and praising him on the account of these. Note, 1. We should take all occasions to render thanksgivings and praises to God for his kindness and favours to us. 2. A reflection on the grace and goodness of God to us, with a design to excite our thankfulness to him, is proper to refresh and delight the Christian's mind, and to make him cheerful. Dr. Hammond thinks that *εὐχαριστία* may signify gracious, pious, religious discourse, in the general; by way of opposition to what the apostle condemns. Our cheerfulness, instead of breaking out into what is vain and sinful, and a profanation of God's name, should express itself as becomes Christians, and in what may tend to his glory. If men did abound more in good and pious expressions they would not be so apt to utter ill and unbecoming words; for shall blessing and cursing, lewdness and thanksgivings, proceed out of the same mouth? To fortify us against the sins of uncleanness, &c., the apostle urges several arguments, and prescribes several remedies, in what follows.

First. He urges several arguments. As,

1. Consider that these are sins which shut persons out of heaven; "For this ye know," &c., ver. 5. They knew it, being informed of it by the Christian religion. By a covetous man some understand a lewd, lascivious libertine, who indulges himself in those vile lusts which were accounted the certain marks of a heathen and an idolater. Others understand it in the common acceptance of the word; and such a man is an idolater, because there is spiritual idolatry in the love of this world. As the epicure makes a god of his belly, so the covetous man makes a god of his money, sets those affections upon it, and places that hope, confidence, and delight in worldly good which should be reserved for God only. He serves mammon instead of God. Of these persons it is said that they have no "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." That may be the kingdom of Christ, who is God; or the kingdom which is God's by nature, and Christ's as he is Mediator,—the kingdom which Christ hath purchased, and which God bestows. Heaven is here described as a kingdom (as frequently elsewhere) with respect to its eminency and glory, its fulness and sufficiency, &c. In this kingdom the saints and servants of God have an inheritance, for it is the inheritance of the saints in light. But those who are impenitent, and allow themselves either in the lusts of the flesh or the love of the world, are not Christians indeed, and so belong not to the kingdom of grace, nor shall they ever come to the kingdom of glory. Let us then be excited to be on our guard against those sins which would exclude and shut us out of heaven.

2. These sins bring the wrath of God upon those who are guilty of them. "Let no man deceive you with vain words," &c., ver. 6. Let none flatter you, as though such things were tolerable, and to be allowed of in Christians; or, as though they were not very provoking and offensive unto God; or, as though you might indulge yourselves in them, and yet escape with impunity. These are vain words. Observe, They who flatter themselves and others with hopes of impunity in sin do but put a cheat upon themselves and others. Thus Satan deceived our first parents "with vain words" when he said to them, "Ye shall not surely die." They are vain words indeed; for those who trust to them will find themselves wretchedly imposed upon, "for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." By children of disobedience may be meant the Gentiles, who disbelieved, and refused to comply with, and to submit themselves to, the Gospel. Or, more generally, all obstinate sinners, who will not be reclaimed, but are given over to disobedience. Disobedience is the very malignity of sin. And it is by an usual Hebraism that such sinners are called children of disobedience; and such indeed they are from their childhood, going astray as soon as they are born. The wrath of God comes upon such, because of their sins, sometimes in this world, but more especially in the next. And dare we make light of that which will lay us under the wrath of God? Oh! no; "be not ye therefore partakers with them," ver. 7. Do not partake with them in their sins, that you may not share in their punishment. We partake with other men in their sins, not only when we live in the same sinful manner that they do, and consent to comply with their temptations and solicitations to sin, but when we encourage them in their sins, prompt them to them, and do not prevent and hinder them, as far as it may be in our power to do so.

3. Consider what obligations Christians are under to live at another guess rate than such sinners do. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye," &c., ver. 8. The meaning is, Such courses are very unsuitable to your present condition; for, whereas in your Gentile and your unregenerate state ye were darkness, you have now undergone a great change. The apostle calls their former condition darkness in the abstract, to express the great darkness they were in. They lived wicked and profane lives, being destitute of the light of instruction without, and of the illumination and grace of the blessed Spirit within. Note, A state of sin is a state of darkness. Sinners, like men in the dark, are going they know not whither, and doing they know not what. But the grace of God had produced a mighty change in their souls, "Now are ye light in the Lord," that is, are savingly enlightened by the word and the Spirit of God. Now, that is, upon your believing in Christ, and your receiving the Gospel, "walk as children of light." Children of light, according to the Hebrew dialect, signifies those who are in a state of light, endued with know-

ledge and holiness. Now being such, let your conversation be suitable to your condition and privileges, and accordingly live up to the obligation you are under by that knowledge and those advantages you enjoy. "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord," ver. 10; that is, examining and searching diligently what God has revealed to be his will, and making it appear that you approve it by conforming yourselves unto it. Observe, We must not only dread and avoid that which is displeasing unto God, but inquire and consider what will be acceptable to him, searching the Scriptures with this view; thus keeping at the greatest distance from these sins.

Secondly. The apostle prescribes some remedies against them. As, 1. If we would not be entangled by the lusts of the flesh, we must bring forth "the fruits of the Spirit," ver. 9. This is expected from the children of light; that, being illuminated, they be also sanctified by the Spirit, and thereupon bring forth his fruit, which "is in all goodness;" that is, an inclination to do good and to shew mercy, and righteousness, which signifies justice in our dealings. Thus they are taken more strictly. But, more generally, all religion is goodness and righteousness, and in and with these must be truth, that is, sincerity and uprightness of heart.

2. We must have no fellowship with sin, nor sinners, ver. 11. Sinful works are works of darkness. They come from the darkness of ignorance. They keep the darkness of concealment, and they lead to the darkness of hell. These works of darkness are unfruitful works; there is nothing got by them at long run. Whatever profit is pretended by sin, it will by no means balance the loss for they issue in the utter ruin and destruction of the impenitent sinner. We must therefore have no fellowship with these unfruitful works; that is, as we must not practise them ourselves, so we must not countenance others in the practice of them. There are many ways of our being accessory to the sins of others, for example, by commendation, counsel, consent, or concealment. And if we share with others in their sin, we must expect to share with them in their plagues; nay, if we thus have fellowship with them, we shall be in the utmost danger of acting as they do ere long. But, rather than have fellowship with them, we must reprove them; implying that if we do not reprove the sins of others we have fellowship with them. We must prudently, and in our places, witness against the sins of others, and endeavour to convince them of their sinfulness, when we can do it seasonably and pertinently, in our words, but especially by the holiness of our lives, and a religious conversation. Reprove their sins by abounding in the contrary duties. One reason given is, "For it is a shame even to speak of those things," &c., ver. 12. They are so filthy and abominable, that it is a shame to mention them, except in a way of reproof; much more must it be a shame to have any fellowship with them. "The things which are done of them in secret." The apostle seems to speak here of the Gentile idolaters, and of their horrid mysteries, which abounded with detestable wickedness, and which none were permitted to divulge upon pain of death. Observe, A good man is ashamed to speak that which many wicked people are not ashamed to act. But, as far as their wickedness appears, it should be reprov'd by good men. There follows another reason for such reproof: "But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light," ver. 13; the meaning of which passage may be thus: All those unfruitful works of darkness which you are called upon to reprove are laid open, and made to appear in their proper colours to the sinners themselves, by the light of doctrine, or of God's word, in your mouths, as faithful reprovers; or by that instructive light which is diffused by the holiness of your lives, and by your exemplary walk. Observe, That the light of God's word, and the exemplification of it in a Christian conversation, are proper means to convince sinners of their sin and wickedness. It follows, "For whatsoever doth make manifest is light," that is, it is the light that discovers what was concealed before in darkness. And accordingly it becomes those who are children of light, who are light in the Lord, to discover to others their sins, and to endeavour to convince them of the evil and danger of them, thus shining as lights in the world. The apostle farther urges this duty from the example of God or Christ. "Wherefore he saith," &c., ver. 14, as if he had said, In doing this you will copy after the great God, who hath set himself to awaken sinners from the sleep, and to raise them from the death of sin, that they might receive light from Christ. "He saith:" The Lord is constantly saying, in his word, what is more particularly expressed *Isa. lx. 1*. Or, Christ, by his ministers, who preach the everlasting Gospel, is continually calling upon sinners to this purpose: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." The same thing in the main is designed by these different expressions; and they serve to remind us of the great stupidity, and the wretched security, of sinners; how insensible they are of their danger, and how unapt they naturally are to spiritual motions, sensations, and actions. And when God calls upon them to awake and to arise, his meaning is, that they would break off their sins by repentance, and enter on a course of holy obedience; and he encourages them to essay and to do their utmost that way by that gracious promise, "And Christ shall give thee light;" or, Christ shall enlighten thee, or shall shine upon thee. He shall bring thee into a state of knowledge, holiness, and comfort, assisting thee with his grace, and refreshing thy mind with joy and peace here, and rewarding thee with eternal glory at length. Observe, When we are endeavouring to convince sinners, and to reform them from their sins, we are imitating God and Christ in that which is their great design throughout the Gospel. Some indeed understand this as a call to sinners and to saints: to sinners, to repent and turn; to saints, to stir up themselves to their duty. The former must arise from their spiritual death, and the other must awake from their spiritual deadness.

3. Another remedy against sin is circumspection, care, and caution; ver. 15. "See then," &c. This may be understood either with respect to what immediately precedes, If you are to reprove others for their sins, and would be faithful to your duty in this particular, you must look well to yourselves, and to your own behaviour and conduct, (and indeed they only are fit to reprove others who walk with due circumspection and care themselves); or else, we have here another remedy, or rather preservative, from the before-mentioned sins, and this I take to be the design of the apostle, it being impossible to maintain purity and holiness of heart and life without great circumspection and care. "Walk circumspectly," or, as the word signifies, accurately, exactly, in the right way; in order to which we must be frequently consulting our rule, and the directions we have in the sacred oracles. "Not as fools," who walk at all adventures, and who have no understanding of their duty, nor of the worth of their souls, and through neglect, supineness, and want of care, fall into sin and destroy themselves; "but as wise,"—as persons taught of God, and endued with wisdom from above. Circumspect walking is the effect of true wisdom; but the contrary, of folly. It follows, "redeeming the time," &c., ver. 16; literally, buying the opportunity. It is a metaphor taken from merchants and traders, who diligently observe and improve the seasons for merchandise and trade. It is a great part of Christian wisdom to redeem the time. Good Christians must be good husbands of their time, and take care to improve it to the best purposes, by watching against temptations, by doing good while it is in the power of their hands, by filling it up with proper employment, one special preservative from sin. They should make the best use they can of the present seasons of grace. Our time is a talent given us by God for some good end; and it is mispent and lost when it is not employed according

v. 21. "In the fear of Christ:" so best MSS.

v. 23. Compare 1 Cor. xi. 3.

v. 26. Not "washing," but "the laver" (Titus iii. 5).

v. 30. Best MSS. omit "of his flesh and of his bones."

vi. 5. "Slaves" or "bondsmen" more correct than "servants."

vi. 8. "Receive:" "This he shall receive; changed, so to speak, into the currency of that new and final state" (Alford).

vi. 9. "That their Master and yours:" so best MSS.

vi. 12. "Against the rulers of this darkness:" so best MSS.

vi. 13. "The whole armour of God:" see Rom. xiii. 14.

vi. 14. "Truth," "righteousness:" see chap. v. 9. Truth in words, righteousness in deeds.

vi. 15. "The readiness of the Gospel of peace" (not "preparation")—i.e., readiness to do and suffer what God wills, which comes from the Gospel when heartily received.

vi. 16. "Of faith:" faith conquers the evil one (1 John v. 4).

to his design. If we have lost our time heretofore, we must endeavour to redeem it by doubling our diligence in doing our duty for the future. The reason given is, "because the days are evil;" either by reason of the wickedness of those who dwell in them, or rather, as they are troublesome and dangerous times to you who live in them. Those were times of persecution wherein the apostle wrote this. The Christians were in jeopardy every hour. When the days are evil we have one superadded argument to redeem time; especially because we know not how soon they may be worse. People are very apt to complain of bad times; it were well if that would stir them up to redeem time. "Wherefore," says the apostle, ver. 17, that is, because of the badness of the times, "be ye not unwise," that is, ignorant of your duty, and negligent about your souls; "but understanding what the will of the Lord is." Study, consider, and farther acquaint yourselves with the will of God, as determining your duty. Observe, Ignorance of our duty and neglect of our souls are evidences of the greatest folly; while an acquaintance with the will of God, and a care to comply with it, bespeak the best and truest wisdom. In the three following verses the apostle warns against some other particular sins, and urges some other duties.

1st. He warns against the sin of drunkenness; "And be not drunk with wine," ver. 18. This was a sin very frequent among the heathens, and particularly on occasion of the festivals of their gods, and more especially in their Bacchanalia. Then they were wont to inflame themselves with wine, and all manner of inordinate lusts were consequent upon it; and therefore the apostle adds, wherein, or in which drunkenness, is excess. The word *deus* may signify luxury, or dissoluteness, and it is certain that drunkenness is no friend to chastity and purity of life, but it virtually contains all manner of extravagance, and transports men into gross sensuality and vile enormities. Note, Drunkenness is a sin that seldom goes alone, but often involves men in other instances of guilt. It is a sin very provoking to God, and a great hindrance to the spiritual life. The apostle may design all such intemperance and disorder as are opposite to that sober and prudent demeanour he intends in his advice, to redeem the time.

2nd. Instead of being filled with wine he exhorts them to "be filled with the Spirit." Those who are full of drink are not likely to be full of the Spirit, and therefore this duty is opposed to the former sin. The meaning of the exhortation is, that men should labour for a plentiful measure of the graces of the Spirit, that would fill their souls with holy joy, strength, and courage; which things sensual men expect their wine should inspire them with. We cannot be guilty of any excess in our endeavours after these. Nay, we ought not to be satisfied with a little of the Spirit, but to be aspiring after great measures, so as to be filled with the Spirit. Now by this means we shall come to understand "what the will of the Lord is;" for the Spirit of God is given as a Spirit of wisdom and of understanding. And because those who are filled with the Spirit will be carried out in acts of devotion, and all the proper expressions of it, therefore the apostle exhorts,

3rd. To sing unto the Lord, ver. 19. Drunkards are wont to sing obscene and profane songs. The heathens in their Bacchanals used to sing hymns to Bacchus, whom they called the god of wine. Thus they express their joy; but the Christian's joy should express itself in songs of praise to his God. In these they should speak to themselves in their assemblies and meetings together for mutual edification. By psalms may be meant David's psalms, or such compositions as were fitly sung with musical instruments; by hymns may be meant such others as were confined to matter of praise, as those of Zacharias, Simeon, &c. Spiritual songs may contain a greater variety of matter, doctrinal, prophetic, historical, &c. Observe here, 1. That singing of psalms and hymns is a gospel ordinance; it is an ordinance of God, and appointed for his glory. 2. That though Christianity is an enemy to profane mirth, yet it encourages joy and gladness, and the proper expressions of these in the professors of it. God's people have reason to rejoice and to sing for joy. They are to "sing and to make melody in their hearts," not only with their voices, but with inward affection; and then their doing this will be as delightful and acceptable to God as music used to be to us. And it must be with a design to please him, and to promote his glory, that we do this, and then it will be done to the Lord.

4th. Thanksgiving is another duty that the apostle exhorts to, ver. 20. We are appointed to sing psalms, &c., for the expression of our thankfulness to God; but, though we are not always singing, we should be "always giving thanks," that is, we should never want a disposition for this duty, as we never want matter for it. We must continue it throughout the whole course of our lives; and we should give thanks for all things; not only for spiritual blessings enjoyed and eternal ones expected, for what of the former we have in hand, and for what of the other we have in hope, but for temporal mercies too: not only for our comforts, but also for our sanctified afflictions; not only for what immediately concerns ourselves, but for the instances of God's kindness and favour to others also. It is our duty in every thing to give thanks "unto God and the Father;" to God as the Father of our Lord Jesus-Christ, and our Father in him, in whose name we are to offer up all our prayers and praises, and spiritual services, that they may be acceptable to God.

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet

hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Here the apostle begins his exhortation to the discharge of relative duties; and, as a general foundation for these duties, he lays down that rule, ver. 21. There is a mutual submission that Christians owe one to another, condescending to bear one another's burthens; not advancing themselves above others, or domineering over one another, and giving laws to one another. St. Paul was an example of this truly Christian temper, who became all things to all men. We must be of a yielding and of a submissive spirit, and ready to all the duties of the respective places and stations that God hath allotted to us in the world. "In the fear of God," that is, so far as is consistent with the fear of God, and for his sake, and out of conscience towards him, and that hereby we may give proof that we truly fear him. Where there is this mutual condescension and submission, the duties of all relations will be the better performed. From ver. 22 to the end he speaks of the duties of husbands and wives; and he speaks of these in a Christian manner, setting the church as an example of the wife's subjection, and Christ as an example of love in husbands.

First. The duty prescribed to wives is, submission to their husbands in the Lord, ver. 22, which submission includes the honouring and the obeying them, and that from a principle of love to them. And they must do this in compliance with God's authority, who has commanded it, which is doing it "as unto the Lord." Or it may be understood by way of similitude and likeness, that the sense may be, as being devoted to God, you submit yourselves unto him. From the former sense we may learn, that by a conscientious discharge of the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures we obey and please God himself; and from the latter, that God not only requires and insists on those duties which immediately respect himself, but such as respect our neighbours too. The apostle assigns the reason of this submission from wives; "For the husband is the head of the wife," ver. 23. The metaphor is taken from the head in the natural body, which, being the seat of reason, of wisdom, and of knowledge, and the fountain of sense and motion, is more excellent than the rest of the body. God has given the man the pre-eminence, and a right to direct and govern by creation, and in that original law of the relation, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." And whatever there is of uneasiness in that it is an effect of sin coming into the world. And generally the man has (what he ought to have) a superiority in wisdom and knowledge. He is therefore the head, "even as Christ is the head of the church." There is a resemblance of Christ's authority over the church, in that superiority and headship which God hath appointed to the husband. The apostle adds, "And he is the Saviour of the body." Christ's authority is exercised over the church for the saving her from evil, and the supplying her with every thing good for her. In like manner should the husband be employed for the protection and comfort of his spouse; and therefore she should the more cheerfully subject herself unto him. So it follows, "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ," (ver. 24), with cheerfulness, with fidelity, with humility, &c., "so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing, that is, in every thing to which their authority justly extends itself, in every thing lawful and consistent with duty to God.

Secondly. The duty of husbands, on the other hand, is to love their wives, ver. 25; for without this they would abuse their superiority and headship, and wherever this prevails as it ought to do it will infer the other duties of the relation, it being a special and peculiar affection that is required in her behalf. And the love of Christ to the church is proposed as an example of this, which love of his is sincere, a pure, an ardent, and a constant affection, and that notwithstanding the imperfections and failures that she is guilty of. The greatness of his love to the church appeared in his giving himself unto the death for it. Observe, As the church's subjection to Christ is proposed as an exemplar to wives, so the love of Christ to his church is proposed as a pattern to husbands. And while such exemplars are offered to both, and so much required of each, neither has reason to complain of the Divine injunctions. The love which God requires from the husband in behalf of his wife will make an amends for that subjection that he demands from her to her husband. And the prescribed subjection of the wife will be an abundant return for that love of the husband which God hath made her due.

The apostle having mentioned Christ's love to the church, enlarges upon it, assigning the reason why he gave himself for it, namely, that he might sanctify it in this world, and glorify it in the next, ver. 26, 27: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word," ver. 26; that is, that he might cleanse all his members with a principle of holiness, and deliver them from the guilt, the pollution, and the dominion of sin. The instrumental means whereby this is effected are the instituted sacraments, particularly the washing of baptism and the preaching and reception of the Gospel. "And that he might present it to himself," &c. ver. 27. Dr. Lightfoot thinks the apostle alludes here to the Jews' extraordinary great curiousness in their washings for purification. They were careful that there should be no wrinkle to keep the flesh from the water and no spot or dirt which was not thoroughly washed. Others understand him as alluding to a garment come new out of the fuller's hand, purged from spots, stretched from wrinkles; the former newly contracted, the latter by long time and custom. "That he might present it to himself," that is, that he might perfectly unite it to himself in the great day. "A glorious church," that is, perfect in knowledge and in holiness, "not having spot, nor wrinkle, or any such thing," nothing of deformity or defilement remaining, but being entirely amiable and pleasant in his eye, "holy and without blemish," free from the least remains of sin. The church in general, and particular believers, will not be without spot, or wrinkle, till they come to glory. And from this and the former verse together we may take notice that the glorifying of the church is intended in the sanctifying of it; and that those, and those only, who are sanctified now, shall be glorified hereafter. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies," &c., ver. 28. The wife being made one with her husband, (not in a natural, but in a civil and in a relative sense,) this is an argument why he should love her with as cordial and as ardent an affection as that with which he loves himself. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh," ver. 29; that is,

vi. 17. "The word of God:" see Isa. lv. 11.

vi. 24. "In sincerity:" rather "in incorruptibility," with spiritual and eternal love. "This only is the word worthy to stand as the crown and climax of this glorious epistle" (Alford).

Additional Notes.—Chap. i.—iii. The following summary is given by Bishop Ellicott:—"The doctrinal portion opens with a brief address to the saints in Ephesus, and rapidly passes into a sublime ascription of praise to God the Father, who has predestinated us to the adoption

of sons, blessed and redeemed us in Christ, and made known to us his eternal purpose of uniting all in him (chap. i. 3—14). This not unnaturally evokes a prayer from the apostle that his converts may be enlightened to know the hope of God's calling, the riches of his grace, and the magnitude of that power which was displayed in the resurrection and transcendent exaltation of Christ—the head of his body, the Church (verses 15—23). Then, with a more immediate address to his converts, the apostle reminds them how, dead as they

no man in his right senses ever hated himself, however deformed, or whatever his imperfections might be; so far from it, that he "nourisheth and cherisheth it." He uses himself with a great deal of care and tenderness, and is industrious to supply himself with every thing convenient or good for him, with food and clothing, &c., "even as the Lord the church;" as the Lord nourisheth and cherisheth the church, which he furnishes with all things that he sees needful or good for her, with whatever conduces to her everlasting happiness and welfare. The apostle adds, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones," ver. 30. He assigns this as a reason why Christ does nourish and cherish his church, because all that belong to it "are members of his body," &c., that is, of his mystical body. Or, we are members out of his body. All that grace and glory which the church has is from Christ; as Eve was taken out of the man. But (as one observes) it being the manner of the sacred writings to express a complex body by the enumeration of the several parts of it, as the heaven and earth for the world, evening and morning for the natural day, &c., so here, by body, flesh, and bones, we are to understand himself, the meaning of the verse being that we are members of Christ. "For this cause," &c., ver. 31, (because they are one, as Christ and his church are one,) "shall a man leave his father and mother." The apostle refers to the words of Adam, when Eve was given to him for a meet help, *Gen. ii. 24*. We are not to understand by them as though a man's obligation to other relations were cancelled upon his marriage; but only that this relation is to be preferred to all others, there being a nearer union betwixt these two than betwixt any others; that the man must rather leave any of those than his wife. "And they two shall be one flesh," that is, by virtue of the matrimonial bond. "This is a great mystery," ver. 32. Those words of Adam, just mentioned by the apostle, are spoken literally of marriage; but they have also a hidden, mystical sense in them, relating to the union betwixt Christ and his church, of which the conjugal union betwixt Adam and the mother of us all was a type; though not instituted or appointed by God to signify this, yet it was a kind of natural type, as having a resemblance to it: "I speak concerning Christ and the church."

After this the apostle concludes this part of his discourse with a brief summary of the duty of husbands and wives; ver. 33, "Nevertheless," as if he had said, But though there be such a secret, mystical sense, yet the plain, literal sense concerns you. "Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself," that is, with such a sincere, peculiar, singular, and prevailing affection as that which he bears to himself; "and the wife see that she reverence her husband." Reverence consists of love and esteem, which produce a care to please; and of fear, which awakens a caution lest just offence be given; and that the wife thus reverence her husband is the will of God, and the law of the relation.

CHAPTER VI.

In this chapter, I. The apostle proceeds in the exhortation to relative duties which he began in the former; particularly he insists on the duties of children and parents, and of servants and masters. ver. 1—9. II. He exhorts and directs Christians how to behave themselves in the spiritual warfare with the enemies of their souls; and to the exercise of several Christian graces, which he proposes to them as so many pieces of spiritual armour, to preserve and defend them in the conflict, ver. 10—18. III. We have here the conclusion of the epistle, in which he takes his leave of them, recommending himself to the prayers of the believing Ephesians, and praying for them, ver. 19—24.



CHILDREN, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children

to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. 5 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: 8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free. 9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Here we have farther directions concerning relative duties, in which the apostle is very particular.

First. The duty of children to their parents; "Come, ye children, hearken to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord." The great duty of children is to obey their parents, ver. 1. Parents being the instruments of their being, God and nature have given them an authority to command, in subserviency to God. And if children will be obedient to their pious parents, they will be in a fair way to be pious as they are. And that obedience which God demands from their children, in their behalf, includes an inward reverence, as well as the outward expressions and acts: Obey "in the Lord." Some take this as a limitation, and

understand it thus, as far as is consistent with your duty to God. We must not disobey our heavenly Father in obedience to earthly parents, for our obligation to God is prior and superior to all others. I take it rather as a reason: Children, obey your parents, for the Lord hath commanded it. Obey them, therefore, for the Lord's sake, and with an eye to him. Or, it may be a particular specification of the general duty. Obey your parents, especially in those things which relate to the Lord. Your parents teach you good manners, and therein you must obey them. They teach you what is for your health, and in that you must obey them; but the chief things in which you are to do it are the things pertaining to the Lord. Religious parents charge their children to keep the ways of the Lord, *Gen. xviii. 19*. They command them to be found in the way of their duty towards God, and to take heed of those sins that their age is incident to; and in those things especially they must see that they be obedient. There is a general reason given; "For this is right," that is, there is a natural equity in it, and God hath enjoined it; and it highly becomes Christians. It is the order of nature that parents command and children obey. Though this may seem a hard saying, yet it is duty, and it must be done by such as would please God and approve themselves to him. For the proof of this, the apostle quotes the law of the fifth commandment, (which Christ was so far from designing to abrogate and repeal, that he came to confirm it, as appears by his vindicating it, *Mat. xv. 4*, &c.): "Honour thy father and mother," ver. 2, which honour implies reverence, obedience, and relief and maintenance, if these be needed. The apostle adds, "which is the first commandment with promise." Some little difficulty ariseth from this, which we should not overlook; because some who plead for the lawfulness of images bring this as a proof, that we are not obliged by the second commandment. But there is no manner of force in the argument. The second commandment hath not a particular promise, but only a general declaration, or assertion, which relates to the whole law, of God's keeping mercy for thousands. And then by this is not meant the first commandment of the decalogue that has a promise, for there is no other after it that has, and therefore it would be improper to say it is the first; but the meaning may be this, this is a prime or chief commandment, and it has a promise, and is the first commandment in the second table, and it hath a promise, and the promise is, "That it may be well with thee," &c., ver. 3. Observe, That whereas the promise in the commandment hath reference to the land of Canaan, the apostle hereby shews that that and other promises which we have in the Old Testament, relating to the land of Canaan, are to be understood more generally. That you may not think that the Jews only, to whom God gave the land of Canaan, were bound by the fifth commandment, he here gives it a farther sense, "That it may be well with thee," &c. Outward prosperity and long life are blessings promised to those who keep this commandment. "This is the way to have it well with us." And obedient children are often rewarded with outward prosperity. Not indeed, that it is always so; there are instances of such children who meet with much affliction in this life, but ordinarily it is thus rewarded, and where it is not it is made up with something better. Observe, 1. The Gospel has its temporal promises as well as spiritual ones. 2. Although the authority of God be sufficient to engage us in our duty, yet we are allowed to have respect to the promised reward. And, 3. Though it contain some temporal advantage, even that may be considered as a motive and encouragement to our obedience.

Secondly. The duty of parents; "And ye, fathers," ver. 4, or, ye parents, 1. Do not provoke your children to wrath. Though God has given you power, you must not abuse that power, remembering that your children are in a particular manner pieces of yourselves, and therefore ought to be governed with great tenderness and love. Be not impatient with them, use no unreasonable severities, and lay no rigid injunctions upon them. When you caution them, when you counsel them, when you reprove them, do it in such a manner as not to provoke them to wrath. In all such cases deal prudently and wisely with them, endeavouring to convince their judgments and to work upon their reason. 2. "Bring them up" well, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" in the discipline of proper and of compassionate correction, and in the knowledge of that duty which God requires of them, and by which they may become better acquainted with him. Give them a good education; it is the great duty of parents to be careful in the education of their children. Not only bring them up as the brutes do, taking care to provide for them, but bring them up in nurture and admonition, in such a manner as is suitable to their reasonable natures. Nay, not only bring them up as men, in nurture and admonition, but as Christians, in the admonition of the Lord. Let them have a religious education; instruct them to fear sinning, and inform them of, and excite them to, the whole of their duty towards God.

Thirdly. The duty of servants; and that also is summed up in one word, which is, obedience. He is largest on this article, as knowing there was the greatest need of it. These servants were generally slaves; civil servitude is not inconsistent with Christian liberty; they may be the Lord's freemen who are slaves to men. "Your masters according to the flesh," ver. 5, that is, who have the command of your bodies, but not of your souls and consciences; God alone has dominion over these. Now with respect to servants he exhorts, 1. That they obey "with fear and trembling." They are to reverence those who are over them, fearing to displease them, and trembling lest they should justly incur their anger and indignation. 2. That they be sincere in their obedience. "In singleness of heart," not dissembling obedience when they design disobedience, but serving them with faithfulness. 3. They should have an eye to Jesus Christ in all the service that they perform to their masters, ver. 5—7. "Doing service as to the Lord, and not to men," that is, not to men only, or principally. When servants, in the discharge of the duty of their places, have an eye to Christ, this puts an honour upon their obedience, and an acceptableness into it. Service done to their earthly masters, with an eye to him, becomes acceptable service to him also. To have an eye to Christ is to remember that he sees them, and is ever present with them, and that his authority obliges them to a faithful and conscientious discharge of the duties of their station. 4. They must not serve their masters "with eyeservice," ver. 6. Not only when their masters' eye is upon them, but they must be as conscientious in the discharge of their duty when they are absent and out of the way, because then their Master in heaven beholds them; and therefore they must not act "as men-pleasers," as though they had no regard to the pleasing of God and approving themselves to him, if they can impose on their masters. Observe, A steady regard to the Lord Jesus Christ will make men faithful and sincere in every station of life. 5. What they do they must do cheerfully. "Doing the will of God from the heart;" serving their masters, as God wills they should, not grudgingly, or by constraint, but from a principle of love to them and their concerns. This is doing it with good-will, ver. 7, which will make their service easy to themselves, pleasing to their masters, and acceptable to the Lord Christ. There should be good-will to their masters, good-will to the families they are in, and especially a readiness to do their duty to God. Observe, Service performed with conscience, and from a regard to God, though it be to unrighteous masters, will be accounted by Christ as service done to himself. 6. Let faithful servants trust God for their wages, while they do their duty in his fear. "Knowing that whatsoever good things," ver. 8, how poor and mean soever it may be, considered in itself, "the same shall he receive of the Lord:" that is, the reward of the same, by a metonymy.

had been in sin, God had quickened them, raised them, and even enthroned them with Christ, and how all was by grace, not by works (*chap. ii. 1—10*). They were to remember, too, how they had once been alienated and yet were now brought nigh in the blood of Christ; how he was their peace; how by him both they and the Jews had access to the Father, and how on him, as the corner-stone, they had been built into a spiritual temple to God (*verses 11—22*). On this account, having heard, as they must have done, how to the apostle

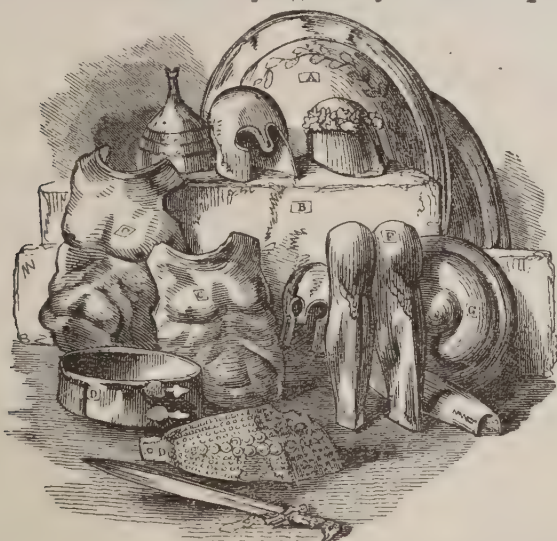
was revealed the profound mystery of this call of the Gentile world, they were not to faint at his troubles (*chap. iii. 1—13*). Nay, he prayed to the great Father of all to give them inward strength, to teach them with the love of Christ, and fill them with the fulness of God (*verses 13—19*). The prayer is concluded by a sublime doxology (*verse 20, 21*), which serves to usher in the more directly practical portion."

I. 10. "To have it declared when the time was full come, that all

Though his master on earth should neglect or abuse him, instead of rewarding him, he shall certainly be rewarded by the Lord Christ; "whether he be bond or free," whether he be a poor bond-servant, or a freeman, or master. Christ regards not these differences of men at present, nor will he in the great and final judgment. You think a prince, or a magistrate, or a minister, that does his duty here will be sure to receive his reward in heaven; but what capacity am I, a poor servant, in of recommending myself to the favour of God? Why God will as certainly reward thee for the meanest drudgery that is done from a sense of duty, and with an eye to himself. And what can be said more proper both to engage and to encourage servants to their duty?

Fourthly. The duty of masters. "And ye masters do the same things unto them," ver. 9, that is, act after the same manner. Be just to them, as you expect they should be to you; shew the like good-will and concern for them, and be careful herein to approve yourselves to God. Observe, Masters are under as strict obligations to discharge their duty to their servants as those which lie upon servants to be obedient and dutiful to them; "Forbearing threatening," *ἀνέχεσθαι*, moderating threatening, and remitting the evils which you threaten them with. Remember that your servants are made of the same mould with yourselves, and therefore be not tyrannical or imperious over them. "Knowing that your Master also is in heaven." Some copies read, "both your and their master;" you have a master to obey, who makes this your duty, and you and they are but fellow-servants in respect of Christ; that you will be as punishable by him, for the neglect of your duty, or for acting contrary to it, as any others of meaner condition in the world. You are therefore to shew favour to others, as ever you expect to find favour with him, and you will never be a match for him, though you may be too hard for your servants. "Neither is there respect of persons with him;" a rich, a wealthy, and a dignified master, if he be unjust, imperious, and abusive, is not a jot the nearer being accepted of God for his riches, wealth, and honour. He will call masters and servants to an impartial account for their carriage one to another; and will neither spare the one because they are more advanced, nor be severe towards the other because they are inferior and mean in the world. If masters and servants would both consider their relation and obligation to God, and the account they must shortly give to him, they would be more careful of their duty to each other. Thus the apostle concludes his exhortation to relative duties.

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer



GREEK AND ROMAN BREASTPLATES, GIRDLES, HELMETS, ETC., GROUPED FROM BRITISH MUSEUM.

A, Greek Shield. B, Greek Helmet. C, Roman Breastplate. D, Roman Girdles. E, Roman Sword. F, Greek Greaves. G, Greek Light Shield.

things," &c. (Tyndal). "That it should be dispensed in the fulness of times" (Conybeare). "Gather together in one;" literally, "unite under one head."

i. 12. "We who first trusted (or before hoped) in the Christ;" i.e., the Jewish-Christians, who before Christ came looked forward, waiting for the consolation of Israel. "We" here particularises from amongst "us" in verse 3, where all Christians are meant.

iv. —vi. "The apostle commences the more directly practical por-

and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Here is a general exhortation to constancy in our Christian course, and to courage in our Christian warfare. Is not our life a warfare? It is so; for we struggle with the common calamities of human life. Is not our religion much more a warfare? It is so; for we struggle with the opposition of the powers of darkness, and with many enemies who would keep us from God and heaven. We have enemies to fight against, a Captain to fight for, a banner to fight under, and certain rules of war by which we are to govern ourselves. "Finally, my brethren," ver. 10; as if he had said, There yet remains that you apply yourselves to your work and duty, as Christian soldiers. Now it is requisite that a soldier should have a good heart, and that he be well armed. If Christians be soldiers of Jesus Christ,

First. They must see that they have a good heart on it. This is prescribed here; "Be strong in the Lord," &c. Those who have so many battles to fight, and who in their way to heaven must dispute every step, like a pass, with dint of sword, have need of a great deal of courage. "Be strong, therefore," strong for service, strong for suffering, strong for fighting. Let a soldier be never so well armed without, if he have not within a good heart his armour will stand him in little stead. Note, Spiritual strength and courage are very necessary for our spiritual warfare. Be strong in the Lord; either in his cause and for his sake, or, rather, in his strength. We have no sufficient strength of our own. Our natural courage is as perfect cowardice, and our natural strength as perfect weakness; but all our sufficiency is of God. In his strength we must go forth and go on. By the actings of faith we must fetch in grace and help from heaven, to enable us to do that which of ourselves we cannot do, in our Christian work and warfare. We should stir up ourselves to resist temptations in a reliance upon God's all-sufficiency and the omnipotence of his might.

Secondly. They must be well armed. "Put on the whole armour of God," ver. 11; that is, make use of all the proper defensives and weapons for repelling the temptations and stratagems of Satan; for example, get and exercise all the Christian graces, the whole armour, that no part be naked and exposed to the enemy. Observe, That they who would approve themselves to have true grace must aim at all grace, "the whole armour." It is called the armour of God, because he both prepares and bestows it. We have no armour of our own that will be armour of proof in a trying time; nothing will stand us in stead but the armour of God. This armour is prepared for us, but we must put it on, that is, we must pray for grace; we must use the grace given us, and draw it out into act and exercise, as there is occasion. The reason assigned why the Christian should be completely armed is, "that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" that is, that ye may be able to hold out, and to overcome, notwithstanding all his assaults both of force and fraud, all the deceits he puts upon us, all the snares he lays for us, and all his machinations against us. This the apostle enlarges upon here, and shews,

1. What our danger is, and what need we have to put on this whole armour, considering what sort of enemies we have to deal with, the devil and all the powers of darkness. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood," &c., ver. 12. The combat for which we are to be prepared is not against ordinary human enemies, not barely with men compounded of flesh and blood, nor against our own corrupt natures singly considered, but against the several ranks of devils who have a government which they exercise in this world. We have to do, 1st. With a subtle enemy; an enemy that uses wiles and stratagems, as ver. 11. He has a thousand ways of beguiling unstable souls; hence he is called a serpent for subtlety, an old serpent, experienced in the art and trade of tempting. 2nd. He is a powerful enemy. Principalities, and powers, and rulers; they are numerous, they are vigorous, and rule in those heathen nations which are yet in darkness. The dark parts of the world are the seat of Satan's empire; yea, they are usurping princes over all men who are yet in a state of sin and ignorance. Satan's is a kingdom of darkness, whereas Christ's is a kingdom of light. 3rd. They are spiritual enemies. "Spiritual wickedness in high places;" or, wicked spirits, so some translate it. The devil is a spirit, a wicked spirit; and our danger is the greater from our enemies because they are unseen, and assault us ere we are aware of them. The devils are wicked spirits, and they do chiefly annoy the saints with, and provoke them to, spiritual wickednesses, pride, envy, malice, &c. These enemies are said to be in high places, or in heavenly places, so the word is; taking heaven, as one says, for the whole *expansum*, or spreading out of the air, betwixt the earth and the stars, the air being the place from which the devils assault us. Or, the meaning may be, We wrestle about heavenly places or heavenly things; so some of the ancients interpret it. Our enemies strive to prevent our ascent to heaven, to deprive us of heavenly blessings, and to obstruct our communion with heaven. They assault us in the things that belong to our souls, and labour to deface the heavenly image in our hearts; and therefore we have need to be upon our guard against them. We have need of faith in our Christian warfare, because we have spiritual enemies to grapple with, as well as of faith in our Christian work, because we have spiritual strength to fetch in. Thus you see your danger.

2. What our duty is, namely, to take and put on the whole armour of God, and then to stand our ground, and withstand our enemies. 1st. We must withstand, ver. 13. We must not yield to the devil's allurements and assaults, but oppose them. Satan is said to stand up against us, 1 *Chr.* xxi. 1. If he stand up against us, we must stand up against him; set up, and keep up, an interest in opposition to the devil. Satan is the wicked one, and his kingdom is the kingdom of sin; to stand against Satan is to strive against sin. "That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day," that is, in the time of temptation, or of any sore affliction. 2nd. We must stand our ground. "And having done all, to stand." [The term is military; Gurnall observes, that it implies in it 'firmness, order, and watchfulness.'] We must resolve, by God's grace, not to yield to Satan. Resist him, and he will flee; if we give back, he will get ground. If we distrust either our cause, or our leader, or our armour, we give him advantage. Our present business is to withstand the assaults of the devil, and to stand it out, and then, having done all that is incumbent on the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, our warfare will be accomplished, and we shall be finally victorious. 3rd. We must stand armed; and this is here most enlarged upon. [The figure here used must have been familiar to the apostle and the Christian converts, for the Roman armed soldiers were scattered everywhere through and about the empire.] Here is a Christian in complete armour, and the armour is Divine; "armour of God;" "armour of light," *Rom.* xiii. 12; "armour of righteousness," 2 *Cor.* vi. 7. The apostle instances the particulars of this armour, both offensive and defensive. Here is the military girdle or belt, the breastplate, the greaves or soldier's shoes, the shield, the helmet, and the sword. It is observable, among them all there is none for the back; if we turn our back upon the enemy we lie exposed.

First. Truth, or sincerity, is our girdle, ver. 14. [The military girdle, besides being an ornament, was a great strengthener of the loins, and a material covering for the joints of the armour.] It was prophesied of Christ, *Isa.* xi. 5,

tion by entreating them to walk worthy of their calling, and to keep the unity of the Spirit. There was but one body, one Spirit, one Lord, and one God (chap. iv. 1-6). Each, too, had his portion of grace from God (verses 7-10), who had appointed ministering orders in the Church, until all come to the unity of the faith, and grow up and become united with the living Head, even Christ (verses 11-16). Surely, then, they were to walk no longer as darkened, feelingless heathen; they were to put off the old man and put on

that "righteousness should be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." That which Christ was girt with all Christians must be girt with. God desireth truth, that is, sincerity, in the inward parts. This is the strength of our loins, and it girds on all the other pieces of our armour, and therefore is first mentioned. I know no religion without sincerity. Some understand it of the doctrine and the truths of the Gospel; they should cleave to us, as the girdle does to the loins, *Jer. xlii. 11*. This will restrain from all libertinism and licentiousness, as a girdle restrains and keeps in the body. This is the Christian soldier's belt; ungirt with this he is unblest.

Secondly. Righteousness must be our breastplate. The breastplate secures the vitals, shelters the heart. The righteousness of Christ imputed to us is our breastplate against the arrows of Divine wrath; the righteousness of Christ implanted in us is our breastplate to fortify the heart against the attacks which Satan makes against us. The apostle explains this in *1 The. v. 8*. "Putting on the breastplate of faith and love." Faith and love include all Christian graces; for by faith we are united to Christ, and by love to our brethren. These will infer a diligent observance of our duty to God, and a righteous deportment towards men, in all the offices of justice, truth, and charity.

Thirdly. Resolution must be as the greaves to our legs. "And their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace," *ver. 15*. Shoes, or greaves of brass, or the like, were formerly part of the military armour, *1 Sam. xvii. 6*; and the use of them was to defend their feet against the gall-traps and sharp sticks which were wont to be laid privily in the way, to obstruct the marching of the enemy, they who fell upon them being unfit to march. "The preparation of the Gospel of peace" signifies a prepared and resolved frame of heart to adhere to the Gospel and abide by it, which will enable us to walk with a steady pace in the way of religion, notwithstanding the difficulties and dangers that may be in it. It is styled "the Gospel of peace," because it brings all sorts of peace, peace with God, with ourselves, and with one another. It may also be meant of that which prepares for the entertainment of the Gospel, and that is repentance. With this our feet must be shod; for by living a life of repentance we are armed against temptations to sin and the designs of our great enemy. Dr. Whitby thinks this may be the sense of the word: that ye may be ready for the combat, be ye shod with the Gospel of peace; that is, endeavour after that peaceable and quiet mind the Gospel calls for. Be not easily provoked, or prone to quarrel; but shew all gentleness and all long-suffering to all men, and this will as certainly preserve you from many great temptations and persecutions as did those shoes of brass the soldiers from those gall-traps, &c.

Fourthly. Faith must be our shield. "Above all," or chiefly, "taking the shield of faith," *ver. 16*. This is more necessary than any of them. Faith is all in all to us in an hour of temptation. The breastplate secures the vitals, but with the shield we turn every way. This is the victory over the world, even our faith. We are to be fully persuaded of the truth of all God's promises and threatenings, such a faith being of great use against temptations. Consider faith as it is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for, and it will appear to be of admirable use for this purpose. And faith as receiving Christ and the benefits of redemption, so deriving grace from him, is like a shield, a sort of universal defence. Our enemy the devil is here called the wicked one; he is wicked himself, and he endeavours to make us wicked. His temptations are called darts, because of their swift and undiscerned flight, and the deep wounds that they give to the soul; "fiery darts," by way of allusion to the poisonous darts which were wont to inflame the parts which were wounded with them, and therefore were so called, as the serpents with poisonous stings are called fiery serpents. [These darts are said to be quenched; hence the allusion is rather to the fiery darts, which conveyed flaming combustibles, being shot slowly against the enemy, who often received the fire-bearing arrows on their metal-covered shields, or shields of wetted hides, by which means they were easily extinguished, but if not so received they gained strength, and did considerable damage.] Violent temptations, by which the soul is set on fire of hell, are the darts which Satan shoots at us; faith is the shield with which we must quench these fiery darts, wherein we should receive them, and so render them ineffectual, that they may not hit us, or at least they may not hurt us. Observe, Faith acted upon the word of God, and applying that, acted upon the grace of Christ, and improving that, quenches the darts of temptation.

Fifthly. Salvation must be our helmet, *ver. 17*; that is, hope, which has salvation for its object: so *1 The. v. 8*. The helmet secures the head. A good hope of salvation, well founded and well built, will both purify the soul and keep it from being defiled by Satan; and it will comfort the soul, and keep it from being troubled and tormented by Satan. He would tempt us to despair, but good hope keeps us trusting in God, and rejoicing in him.

Sixthly. The word of God is "the sword of the Spirit." The sword is a very necessary and useful part of a soldier's furniture. [The ancient sword was short and two-edged.] The word of God is very necessary and of great use to the Christian, in order to his maintaining, and his succeeding in, the spiritual warfare. It is called "the sword of the Spirit," because it is of the Spirit's inditing, and he renders it efficacious and powerful, and "sharper than a two-edged sword," like Goliath's sword, none like that. With this we assault the assailants. Scripture arguments are the most powerful arguments to repel a temptation with. Christ himself resisted Satan's temptations with, "It is written," *Mat. iv. 4*. "This being hid in the heart will preserve from sin," *Ps. cxix. 11*, and will mortify and kill those lusts and corruptions that are latent there.

Seventhly. Prayer must buckle on all the other parts of our Christian armour, *ver. 18*. We must join prayer with all these graces for our defence against these spiritual enemies, imploring help and assistance of God, as the case requires. And we must pray always; not as though we were to do nothing else but pray, for there are other duties of religion, and of our respective stations in the world, that are to be done in their place and season, but we should keep up constant times of prayer, and be constant to them. We must pray upon all occasions, and as often as our own and others' necessities call us to it. We must always keep up a disposition to prayer, and should intermix ejaculatory prayers with other duties, and with common business. Though set and solemn prayer may sometimes be unreasonable, as when other duties are to be done, yet pious ejaculations can never be so. We must pray "with all prayer and supplication," with all kinds of prayer, public, private, and secret, social and solitary, solemn and sudden; with all the parts of prayer, confession of sin, petition for mercy, and thanksgivings for favours received. We must pray in the spirit, that is, our spirits must be employed in the duty, and we must do it by the grace of God's good Spirit. We must watch thereunto, endeavouring to keep our hearts in a praying frame, and taking all occasions, and improving all opportunities, for the duty; watch to all the motions of our own hearts towards the duty. When God saith, "Seek ye my face," our hearts must comply, *Ps. xlvii. 8*. This we must do "with all perseverance." We must abide by the duty of prayer whatever change there may be in our outward circumstances, and we must continue in it as long as we live in the world. We must persevere in a particular prayer, not cutting it short, when our hearts are disposed to enlarge, and there is time for it, and our occasions

call for it. We must likewise persevere in particular requests, notwithstanding some present discouragement and repulses. And we must pray with supplication, not for ourselves only, but for all saints, for we are members one of another. Observe, None are so much saints, and in so good a condition in this world, but they need our prayers, and they ought to have them. Now from hence the apostle passeth to the conclusion of the epistle.

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. 21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: 22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts. 23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Here, First. He desires their prayers for him, *ver. 19*. Having mentioned "supplication for all saints," he puts himself into the number. We must pray for all saints, and particularly for God's faithful ministers. Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified. Observe, What it is he would have them pray for in his behalf. "That utterance may be given unto me;" that I may be enlarged from my present restraints, and so have liberty to propagate the faith of Christ, and that I may have ability to express myself in a suitable and becoming manner. "And that I may open my mouth boldly;" that is, that I may deliver the whole counsel of God without any base fear, shame, or partiality. "To make known the mystery of the Gospel;" some understand it of that part of the Gospel which concerns the calling of the Gentiles, that had hitherto, as a mystery, been concealed; but the whole Gospel was a mystery till made known by Divine revelation, and it is the work of Christ's ministers to publish it. Observe, St. Paul had a great command of language, (they called him Mercurius, because he was "the chief speaker," *Acts xiv. 12*.) and yet he would have his friends ask of God the gift of utterance for him. He was a man of great courage, and often signalized himself for it, yet he would have them pray that God would give him boldness. He knew as well what to say as any man, yet he desires them to pray for him, that he may "speak as he ought to speak." The argument with which he enforces his request is, that for the sake of the Gospel he was "an ambassador in bonds," *ver. 20*. He was persecuted and imprisoned for preaching the Gospel, though, notwithstanding, he continued in the embassy committed to him by Christ, and persisted in preaching it. Observe, 1. It is no new thing for Christ's ministers to be in bonds. 2. It is a hard thing for them to speak boldly when that is their case. And, 3. The best and most eminent ministers have need of, and may receive advantage by, the prayers of good Christians, and therefore should earnestly desire them. Having thus desired their prayers,

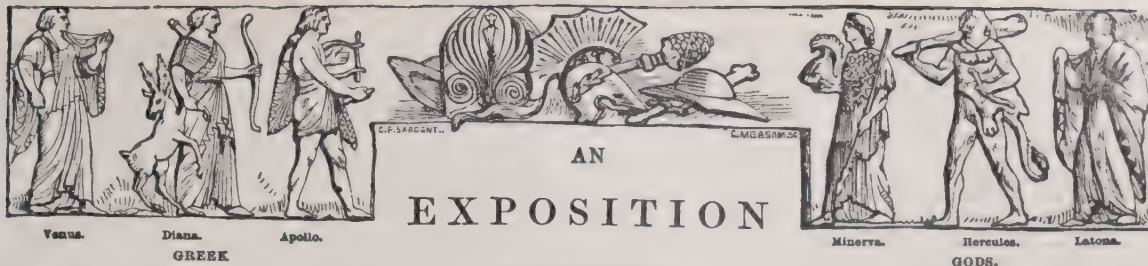
Secondly. He recommends Tychicus unto them, *ver. 21, 22*. He sent him with this epistle, that he might acquaint them with what other churches were informed of, namely, how he did, and what he did; how he was used by the Romans in his bonds, and how he behaved himself in his present circumstances. It is desirable to good ministers both that their Christian friends should know their state, and likewise to be acquainted with the condition of their friends, for by this means they may the better help each other in their prayers. "And that he might comfort their hearts;" by giving such an account of his sufferings, of the cause of them, and of the temper of his mind, and his behaviour under them, as might prevent their fainting at his tribulations, and even minister matter of joy and thanksgiving unto them. He tells them that Tychicus was "a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord." He was a sincere Christian, and so a brother in Christ; he was a faithful minister in the work of Christ; and he was very dear to St. Paul, which makes his love to these Christian Ephesians the more observable, in that he should now part with so good and dear a friend for their sakes, when his company and conversation must have been peculiarly delightful and serviceable to himself. But the faithful servants of Jesus Christ are wont to prefer a public good to their own private or personal interests.

Thirdly. He concludes with his good wishes and prayers for them, and not for them only, but for all the brethren, *ver. 23, 24*. His usual benediction was, "Grace and peace;" here it is, "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith." By peace we are to understand all manner of peace,—peace with God, peace with conscience, peace among themselves; and all outward prosperity is included in the word, as if he had said, I wish the continuance and increase of all happiness to you. "And love with faith." This in part explains what he means in the following verse by grace; not only grace in the fountain, or the love and favour of God, but grace in the streams, that is, the grace of the Spirit flowing from that Divine principle, faith and love including all the rest. And it is the continuance and increase of these that he desires for them, in whom they were already begun. It follows, "From God the Father," &c. All grace and blessings are derived to the saints from God, through the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The closing benediction is more extensive than the former, for in this he prays for all true believers at Ephesus, and everywhere else. It is the undoubted character of all the saints that they love our Lord Jesus Christ. Our love to Christ is not acceptable unless it be in sincerity; indeed, there is no such thing as love to Christ, whatever men may pretend, where there is not sincerity. The words may be read, Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption; that is, who continue constant in their love to him, so as not to be corrupted out of it by any baits or seductions whatsoever, and whose love to him is uncorrupted by any opposite lust, or the love of any thing displeasing to him. Grace, that is, the favour of God, and all good, spiritual and temporal, that is the product of it, is, and shall be, with all them who thus love our Lord Jesus Christ. And it is, or ought to be, the desire and prayer of every lover of Christ that it may be so with all his fellow Christians. "Amen," so be it.

the new (verses 17—24). This, too, was to be practically evinced in their outward actions—they were to be truthful, gentle, honest, pure, and forgiving; they were to walk in love (*chap. iv. 25—v. 2*). Fornication, covetousness, and impurity were not even to be named; they were once in heathen darkness, now they are light, and must reprove the deeds of the past (*chap. v. 3—14*). Thus they were to walk exactly, to be filled with joy, to sing, and to give thanks (verses 15—21). Wives were to be subject to their husbands, hus-

bands to love and cleave to their wives (verses 22—33); children to honour their parents, parents to bring up holly their children (*chap. vi. 1—4*); servants and masters were to perform to each other their reciprocal duties (verses 5—9). With a noble and vivid exhortation to arm themselves against their spiritual foes with the armour of God (verses 10—20), a brief notice of the coming of Tychicus (verses 21, 22), and a twofold doxology (verses 23, 24), this sublime epistle comes to its close" (Ellicott).



ST. PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS,

WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

PHILIPPI was a chief city of the western part of Macedonia, *πρώτη τῆς μερίδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις*, *Acts xvi. 12*. It took its name from Philip, the famous king of Macedon, who repaired and beautified it; and was afterwards made a Roman colony, [by which name they called themselves, *Acts xvi. 21*.] Near this place were the *Campi Philippii*, remarkable for the famous battles between Julius Cæsar and Pompey the Great, and that between Augustus and Antony on one side and Cæsar and Brutus on the other. But it is most remarkable among Christians for this epistle, which was written when Paul was a prisoner at Rome, A.D. 62, [or 63.] St. Paul seems to have had a very particular kindness for the church at Philippi, which he himself had been instrumental in planting; and though he had the care of all the churches, he had, upon that account, a particular fatherly tender care of this. Those whom God has employed us to do any good to we should look upon ourselves both encouraged and engaged to study to do more good to. He looked upon them as his children, and, having begotten them by the Gospel, he was desirous by the same Gospel to nourish and nurse them up. I. He was called in an extraordinary manner to preach the Gospel at Philippi, *Acts xvi. 9*, "A vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia to help us." He saw God going before him, and was encouraged to use all means for carrying on the good work which was begun among them, and building upon the foundation which was laid. II. At Philippi he suffered hard things, [1 *Thess. ii. 2*.] He was scourged and put into the stocks, *Acts xvi. 23, 24*. Yet he had not the less kindness for the place for the hard usage he met with there. We must never love our friends the less for the ill-treatment which our enemies give us. III. The beginnings of that church were very small; Lydia was converted there, and the jailer, and a few more; yet that did not discourage him. If good be not done at first, it may be done afterwards; and the "last works may be more abundant." We must not be discouraged by small beginnings. [IV. The Jews at that time, being but few in the place, had no synagogue, but only a *proseuche*, or oratory, to which they resorted for prayer, chiefly females, where Paul and his companions met them and discoursed with them, when the conversion of Lydia followed. Addresses at a meeting for prayer have frequently been rendered very beneficial. The ejection of the spirit of the Pythoness, or damsel with the gift of divination, led to his imprisonment and scourging. Worldly men's loss of gain by evil practices enrageth them against the Gospel and its abettors, to whom they ascribe it. The damage done by it to the silversmiths' craft at Ephesus set the whole city in an uproar, *Acts xix. 27*.] V. It seems by many passages in this epistle that this church at Philippi grew a flourishing church, and particularly was very kind to St. Paul. He had reaped of their temporal things, and he made a return in spiritual things. He acknowledges the receipt of a present they had sent him, *ch. iv. 18*, and that when "no church communicated with him as concerning giving and receiving besides," *ver. 15*; and he gives them a prophet's, an apostle's, reward in this epistle, which is of more value than "thousands of gold and silver." [VI. It was written, as we have seen, at Rome, while Paul was a prisoner there at his own hired house, Timothy, probably, being his amanuensis, whom he joins with him in his salutation, he having been with him at the formation of their society; and it was sent by Epaphroditus their pastor, on his return, who had cheerfully conveyed their gifts and tokens of regard to Paul at that city, and from whom the apostle learned the tidings of their affairs. VII. It is the only one of Paul's epistles in which there is no reproof or censure, although many warnings of danger, and exhortations to diligence. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." VIII. From his manner of expressing himself it appears that he was in great want of necessities before their contributions arrived; for, not having converted the Romans, he did not consider himself entitled to receive supplies from them, and, being a prisoner, he could not work with his hands as elsewhere, nor would he receive supplies from any church where factions were formed against him. We do not know that he received supplies from any other church than this at Philippi, which was to them a distinguishing honour. The style of this epistle is singularly animated, affectionate, and pleasing.]

A.D. 64.

A.D. 64.

CHAPTER I.

He begins with the inscription and benediction, *ver. 1, 2*. He gives thanks for the saints at Philippi, *ver. 3-6*. His great affection and concern for their spiritual welfare, *ver. 7, 8*. His prayers for them, *ver. 9-11*. His care to prevent their offence at his sufferings, *ver. 12-20*. His readiness to glorify Christ by life or death, *ver. 21-26*. He concludes with a double exhortation to strictness and constancy, *ver. 27-30*.



First. The persons writing the epistle, Paul and Timotheus. Though Paul

AUL and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have here the inscription and benediction. Observe,

* By the Rev. Dr. Harris; revised by the Rev. Dr. Leifchild, London.

only was Divinely inspired, he joins Timothy with himself, to express his own humility, and put honour upon Timothy. They who are aged, and strong, and eminent, should pay respect to, and support the reputation of, those who are younger, and weaker, and of less note. "The servants of Jesus Christ;" not only in the common relation of his disciples, but in the peculiar work of the ministry, the high office of an apostle and evangelist. Observe, The highest honour of the greatest apostle and most eminent ministers is to be the servants of Jesus Christ; not the masters of the churches, but the servants of Christ.

[Paul makes no mention here of his apostleship, which is the case also in three other of his epistles, for which some assign these reasons: in those to the *Thessalonians*, which are generally agreed to have been the first written, he omits it, as not having had it then contested by any false apostles, which was the case afterwards; in that to *Philemon* he omits it, since he wrote to him as a friend to solicit a favour, and will not lessen it by hinting at his spiritual right and authority; in this he had to acknowledge favours, and therefore gratefully receives them as a boon, when he might have claimed them as a due. The omissions of Scripture are not without a use of instruction, 2 *Cor. xii. 12, 13*; 1 *Thess. ii. 6*.] Observe,

Secondly. The persons to whom it is directed. 1. To "all the saints in Christ which were at Philippi." He mentions the church before the ministers, because the ministers are for the church, and for their edification and benefit; not the churches for the ministers, and for their dignity, dominion, and wealth. "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy," 2 *Cor. i. 24*. They are not only the servants of Christ, but the servants of the church for his sake. "Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," 2 *Cor. iv. 5*. Observe, The Christians are here called saints,—set apart for God, or sanctified by his Spirit, either by visible profession or real holiness. And they who are not really saints on earth will

Introductory.—No doubts were ever expressed in ancient times as to the genuineness of this epistle, and the doubts of modern writers have been pronounced by competent critics (Alford, Ellicott, Davidson, &c.) scarcely worthy of serious discussion. The date, from internal and external evidence, is fixed by Alford, Ellicott, and others as the spring or summer of A.D. 63. The occasion of the epistle, which was written at Rome, appears to have been a visit of Epaphroditus with supplies for the apostle from the church at Philippi. The

contents are therefore naturally less doctrinal than in the case of the Ephesians, Colossians, &c., and consist chiefly of thanks, earnest commendations, kindly warnings, and expressions of consolation and encouragement.

i. 1, 2. Address and greeting. "Saints in Christ Jesus:" only "in him," in union with him, can true saintliness be found. "With the bishops," &c.: "The shepherds naturally follow the sheep" (Ellicott).

never be saints in heaven. Observe, It is directed to all the saints, one as well as another, even the meanest, the poorest, and those of the least gifts. Christ makes no difference, the rich and the poor meet together in him; and the ministers must not make a difference in their care and tenderness upon these accounts. We must not "have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons," *Jas. ii. 1*. "Saints in Christ Jesus;" saints are accepted only by virtue of their being in Christ Jesus, or as they are Christians. Out of Christ the best saints will appear sinners, and unable to stand before God.

2. It is directed to the ministers, or church officers, "with the bishops and deacons." The bishops, or elders, in the first place, whose office it was to teach and rule; and the deacons, or overseers of the poor, who took care of the outward business of the house of God, the place, the furniture, the maintenance of the ministers, and provision for the poor; these were all the offices which were then known in the church, and which were of Divine appointment. The apostle, in the direction of his epistle to a Christian church, acknowledges but two orders, which he calls bishops and deacons. And whosoever shall consider that the same characters and titles, the same qualifications, the same acts of office, and the same honour and respect, are everywhere ascribed throughout the New Testament to those who are called bishops and presbyters, (as Dr. Hammond and other learned men allow,) will find it difficult to make them a different office, or distinct order of ministry, in the Scripture times.

[The church is mentioned before its officers, because it is first, and they are for it; and though a portion of it they are distinguished from it, as having a distinct rule and office. The reason of their distinct mention here might be, that this church was settled in its fixed officers before any other.]

Thirdly. Here is the apostolical benediction, ver. 2, "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." This is the same, almost word for word, in all the epistles, to teach us that we must not be shy of forms, though we are not to be tied down to them, especially such which are not Scriptural. The only form in the Old Testament is that of a benediction, *Num. vi. 23-26*. "On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." So in the New Testament, the good which is wished is spiritual good, grace and peace; the free favour and goodwill of God, and all the blessed fruits and effects of it; and that "from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ," jointly from them both, though in a different way. Observe, 1. No peace without grace. Inward peace springs from a sense of Divine favour. 2. No grace and peace, but from God our Father, the fountain and original of all blessings, the "Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift," *Jas. i. 17*. 3. No grace and peace from God our Father but in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ as Mediator is the channel of conveyance of all spiritual blessings to the church, and directs the disposal of them to all his members.

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; 6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

The apostle proceeds, after the inscription and benediction, to thanksgiving for the saints at Philippi. He tells them,

First. What it was he thanked God for upon their account. Observe here, 1. Paul remembered them. He bore them much in his thoughts; and though they were out of sight, and he was at a distance from them, yet they were not out of his mind. Or, 'Upon every mention of you,'—*ἐν παντί καὶ ὑμῶν θυμῷ*. As he often thought of them, so he often spoke of them, and delighted to hear them spoken of; the very mention of them was grateful to him. It is a pleasure to hear of the welfare of an absent friend.

2. He remembered them with joy. At Philippi he was evilly entreated; there he was scourged and put into the stocks, and for the present saw little of the fruit of his labour; and yet he remembers Philippi with joy. He looked upon his sufferings for Christ as his credit, his comfort, his crown, and was pleased at every mention of the place where he suffered. So far was he from being ashamed of them, or loath to hear of the scene of his sufferings, that he remembered it with joy.

[Some read it, that he thanked God for their continued remembrance of him, who had put it into their hearts thus to concur with him in the spread of the Gospel, so that his prayers for them were always with a joyful feeling, and were, therefore, prayers of fervency and faith.]

3. He remembered them in prayer; "Always in every prayer of mine for you all," ver. 4. The best remembrance of our friends is to remember them at the throne of grace. Paul was much in prayer for his friends, for all his friends, for these particularly. It should seem, by this manner of expression, that he mentioned at the throne of grace the several churches he was interested in, and concerned for, particularly and by name. He had seasons of prayer for the church at Philippi. God gives us leave to be thus free with him, though, for our comfort, he knows who we mean when we do not name them.

4. He thanked God upon every joyful remembrance of them. Observe, Thanksgiving must have a part in every prayer, and whatsoever is the matter of our rejoicing ought to be the matter of our thanksgiving. What we have the comfort of God must have the glory of. He thanked God, as well as made requests, with joy. As holy joy is the heart and soul of thankful praise, so thankful praise is the lip and language of holy joy.

5. As in our prayers, so in our thanksgiving, we must eye God as our God; "I thank my God." It encourages us in prayer, and enlarges the heart in praise, to see every mercy coming from the hand of God as our God. "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." We must thank our God for others' graces, and comforts, and gifts, and usefulness, as we receive the benefits of them, and God receives glory by them.

Secondly. But what is the matter of this thanksgiving?

1. He gives thanks to God for the comfort he had in them; ver. 5, "For your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now." Observe, That gospel fellowship is a good fellowship; and the meanest Christians have fellowship in the Gospel with the greatest apostles, for the gospel salvation is a "common salvation," *Jude 3*, and they "obtain like precious faith with them," *2 Pet. i. 1*. They who sincerely receive and embrace the Gospel have fellowship in it "from the very first day." A new-born Christian, if he is true born, is interested in all the promises and privileges of the Gospel from the first day of his becoming such

i. 3. The Epistle to the Galatians is the one sad exception in which the apostle cannot give thanks to God for the spiritual state of his converts. Not "every remembrance," as in the Authorised Version, but "all my remembrance," or "the whole of my remembrance of you" (Ellicott, Alford).

i. 5. Not "in" but "towards," or "with regard to the Gospel." "The fellowship of faith and love which they evinced towards the Gospel, primarily and generally in their concordant action in the fur-

"until now." Observe, that it is a great comfort to ministers when they who begin well hold on and persevere. Some, by their "fellowship in the Gospel," understand their liberality towards the propagating of the Gospel, and translate *κοινωνία*, not communion, but 'communication.' But comparing it with Paul's thanksgiving on the account of other churches, it rather seems to be taken more generally for the fellowship which they had in faith, and hope, and holy love with all good Christians; a fellowship in gospel promises, ordinances, privileges, and hopes, and this from the first day until now.

[Still it is more agreeable to the context to interpret it of their Christian liberality, as a special grace bestowed upon them, which he again speaks of as having been from the beginning, in *ch. iv. 15*.]

2. For the confidence he had concerning them; ver. 6. "Being confident of this very thing," &c. Observe, That the confidence of Christians is the great comfort of Christians, and that we may fetch matter of praise from our hopes as well as from our joys; we must give thanks, not only for what we have the present possession and evidence of, but what we have the future prospect of. Paul speaks with much confidence concerning the good estate of others, hoping well concerning them in the judgment of charity, and being confident in the judgment of faith that if they were sincere they would be happy. "That he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." A good work among you; *ἐν ὑμῖν*, so it may be read. Understand it, in the general, of the planting of the church among them. He who hath planted Christianity in the world will preserve it as long as the world stands. Christ will have a church till the mystery of God shall be finished, and the mystical body completed. The church is "built upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But it is rather to be applied to particular persons, and then it speaks of the certain accomplishment of the work of grace wherever it is begun. Observe here, 1st. The work of grace is a good work, a blessed work, for it makes us good, and is an earnest of good to us. It makes us like God, and fits us for the enjoyment of God. That may well be called a good work which does us the greatest good. 2nd. Wherever this good work is begun, it is of God's beginning; "He hath begun a good work in you." We could not begin it ourselves, for we are by nature dead in trespasses and sins; and what can dead men do towards raising themselves to life? or how can they begin to act till they are enlivened in the same respect in which they are said to be dead? It is God who quickeneth them who are thus dead, *Eph. ii. 1*; *Col. ii. 13*. 3rd. The work of grace is but begun in this life, it is not finished here; as long as we are in this imperfect state there is still something more to be done. 4th. If the same God who begins the good work did not undertake the carrying on and finishing it, it would lie for ever unfinished. He must perform it who began it. 5th. We may be confident, or well persuaded, that God not only will not forsake, but that he will finish and crown, the work of his own hands; for "as for God his work is perfect." 6th. The work of grace will never be perfected "till the day of Jesus Christ;" that is, the day of his appearance, when he shall come to judge the world, and finish his mediation; then this work will be complete, and the top-stone will be brought forth with shouting. We have this same expression, ver. 10.

[The grace of Christian love is also "a good work" of the Divine Spirit in any people, and most highly commended elsewhere by our apostle, and the apostle John. This grace shewed itself to be so rooted in the Philippians that Paul was persuaded of its continuance to the day of their death, when the reward would be assigned to them for it, which will be bestowed at the day of final recompence, agreeable to *Mat. xxv. 25*, &c.]

7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirma-



MAMERTINE PRISON AT ROME.

tion of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. 8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

The apostle expresses the mighty affection he had for them, and concern for their spiritual welfare; ver. 7, "I have you in my heart." He loved them as his own soul, and they lay near his heart. He thought much of them, and was in care about them. Observe,

First. Why he had them in his heart. "Inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel, you all are partakers of my grace," that is, they had received benefit by him, and by his ministry. They were partakers of that grace of God which, by him and through his hands, was communicated to them. This makes people dear to their ministers, their receiving benefit by their ministry. Or, "You are partakers of my grace," that is, you have joined with me in doing and suffering. They were partakers of his affliction by sympathy and concern, and readiness to assist him. This he calls being partakers of his grace; for they who suffer with the saints are, and shall be, comforted with them; and they shall share in the reward who bear

thence of it, secondarily and specially in their contribution and assistance to St. Paul" (Ellicott).

i. 6. "A good work;" their fellowship (see above on verse 5). Not "will perform," but "will perfect." "Shall go forth with it" (Tyn-dal). "The day of Jesus Christ;" the apostle assumes the nearness of the coming of the Lord, but practically the day of Christ comes to each one at his death.

i. 7. "It is meet;" understand "according to the law of love" (Vas-

their part of the burthen. He loved them, because they stuck to him in his bonds, and in the "defence and confirmation of the Gospel." They were as ready to appear in their places, and according to their capacity, for the defence of the Gospel, as the apostle was in his, and therefore he had them in his heart. Fellow-sufferers should be dear one to another; they who have ventured and suffered in the same good cause of God and religion should for that reason love one another dearly. Or, "Because you have me at heart," *διὰ τὸ ἔχειν με ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν*. They distinguished their respect to him by adhering firmly to the doctrine he preached, and readily suffering for it along with him. The truest mark of respect toward our ministers is receiving and abiding by the doctrine they preach.

Secondly, The evidence of it: "It is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart." By this it appeared that he had them in his heart, because he had a good opinion of them, and good hopes concerning them. Observe, It is very proper to think the best of other people, and as well as we can of them,—to suppose as well of them as the matter will admit, in all cases. [But he may mean, that as he thus knew himself to be living in their heart and affections, by their readiness, though of Roman extraction, and citizens of the place, to be known at Rome as taking his part and adventuring themselves with him, while suffering opprobrium and confinement, it was no wonder that his own bosom throbbed with the liveliest sympathy and longing for their welfare.]

Secondly, An appeal to God concerning the truth of this; ver. 8, "For God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." Having them in his heart, he longed after them, that is, either he longed to see them, longed to hear from them, or he longed for their spiritual welfare, and their increase and improvement in knowledge and grace. He had joy in them, ver. 4, because of the good he saw and heard of among them, yet still he longed after them to hear of more of it among them; and he longed after them all, not only those among them who were witty and wealthy, but even the meanest and poorest. And he longed greatly after them, or with strong affection, and great goodwill; and this "in the bowels of Jesus Christ," with that tender concern which Christ himself hath, and hath shewn to precious souls. Paul was herein a follower of Christ, and all good ministers should aim to be so. Oh the bowels of compassion which are in Jesus Christ to poor souls! It was in compassion to them he undertook their salvation, and put himself to so vast an expense to compass it. Now, in conformity to the example of Christ, Paul had a compassion for them, and longed after them all "in the bowels of Jesus Christ." Shall not we pity and love those souls whom Christ had such a love and pity for? And for this he appeals to God; "God is my record." It was an inward disposition of mind he expressed towards them, which God only is a witness to the sincerity of, and therefore to him he appeals. Whether you know it or no, or are sensible of it, God who knows the heart knows it.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; 11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

These verses contain the prayers he put up for them. Paul often lets his friends know what it was he begged of God for them, that they might know what to beg for themselves, and be directed in their own prayers, and that they might be encouraged to hope they should receive from God the quickening, strengthening, establishing, comforting grace, which so powerful an intercessor as Paul has asked of God for them. It is an encouragement to us to know that we are prayed for by our friends, who, we have reason to think, have an interest at the throne of grace. It is intended likewise for their direction in their walk, and that they might labour to answer his prayers for them, for by that it would appear that God had answered them. Paul in praying thus for them expected good concerning them. It is an inducement to us to do our duty, that we may not disappoint the expectations of praying friends and ministers. He prays,

First, That they might be a loving people, and that good affections might abound among them; "That your love might abound yet more and more." He means it of their love both to God and one another, and all men.—Love is the fulfilling both of the law and of the Gospel. Observe, They who abound much in any grace yet have still need to abound more and more, because there is still something wanting in it, and we are imperfect in our best attainments.

Secondly, That they might be a knowing, judicious people; that love might abound in "knowledge, and in all judgment." It is not a blind love will recommend us to God, but a love grounded upon knowledge and judgment. We must love God, because of his infinite excellence and loveliness; and love our brethren, because of what we see of the image of God upon them. Strong passions, without knowledge and a settled judgment, will not make us complete in the will of God, and sometimes do more hurt than good. The Jews had a zeal of God, but not "according to knowledge," and were transported by it to violence and rage, *Rom. x. 2*; *Jas. i. 2*.

Thirdly, That they might be a discerning people. This would be the effect of their knowledge and judgment; "That ye may approve the things which are excellent," ver. 10; or, as it is in the margin, "try the things which differ,"—*εἰς τὸ δοκιμαῖεν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα*, that we may approve the things which are excellent upon the trial of them, and discern their difference from other things. Observe, The truths and laws of Christ are excellent things; and it is necessary that we every one approve of them, and esteem them such. We only need to try them to approve of them, and they will easily recommend themselves to any searching and discerning mind.

Fourthly, That they might be an honest, upright-hearted people; "That ye may be sincere." Sincerity is our gospel perfection, that in which we should have our conversation in the world, and which is the glory of all our graces. When the eye is single, when we are inward with God in what we do, are really what we appear to be, and mean honestly, then we are sincere.

Fifthly, That they might be an inoffensive people: That ye may be "without offence until the day of Christ," not apt to take offence, and very careful not to give offence to God or their brethren. To "live in all good conscience before God," *Acts xxiii. 1*, and to "exercise ourselves to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men," *Acts xxiv. 16*. And we must continue to the end blameless, that we may be presented so at the day of Christ. He will present the church "without spot or wrinkle," *Eph. v. 27*, and present believers "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy," *Jude 24*.

Hengel). "It is in accordance with the genuine nature of my love to entertain such a confident hope" (Ellicott). See 1 Cor. xiii. 7. "The defence and confirmation;" "His employment in that situation, whether he refers to a public defence (2 Tim. iv. 16) or only to that defence of the Gospel which he was constantly making in private" (Alford). "Partakers of my grace;" "The grace or gift bestowed on St. Paul, and also on the Philippians, was the power of confirming the Gospel by their sufferings" (Conybeare).

Sixthly, That they might be a fruitful, useful people: ver. 11, "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness," &c. From God is our fruit found, and therefore from him it must be asked. The "fruits of righteousness," that is, the evidences and effects of our sanctification, the duties of holiness springing from a renewed heart, the root of the matter in us, being filled with them. Observe, They who do much good should still endeavour to do more. The fruits of righteousness brought forth for the glory of God, and edification of his church, should really fill us, and wholly take us up. Fear not being emptied by bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, for you will be filled with them. These fruits are by Jesus Christ, by his strength and grace, for without him we can do nothing. He is the root of the good olive, from which it derives its fitness. We are "strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. ii. 1, and "strengthened with might by his Spirit," *Eph. iii. 16*, and they are "unto the glory and praise of God." We must not aim at our own glory in our fruitfulness, but at "the praise and glory of God," that "God may be glorified in all things," 1 Pet. iv. 11, and "whatsoever we do we must do all to the glory of God," 1 Cor. x. 31. It is much for the honour of God when Christians not only are good, but do good, and abound in good works.

[His prayers were directions to them to seek, 1. The increase of the grace of love for which they had been commended. 2. A discerning mind to perceive the superiority of the doctrine he had preached, when compared with the notions of the Judaizing teachers, whom it is most likely he heard were thus tampering with them, so that they might not be "offended" or stumbled in their progress by any of their captious objections,—the word "offence" being capable of a passive as well as active signification, which Beza and other commentators consider to be the case here. And, 3. Renewed acts of kindness and generosity to the advocates of the Gospel; "righteousness" being used in Scripture, perhaps from *Deut. xxiv. 13*, for beneficence, and so to be here interpreted. Observe, To be filled with the fruits of Christian liberality is the best way of being preserved uprightly and progressively in the Christian course.]

12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. 18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. 19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

We see here the care the apostle takes to prevent their being offended at his sufferings. He was now a prisoner at Rome; this might be a stumblingblock to those who had received the Gospel by his ministry. They might be tempted to think, if this doctrine was indeed of God, God would not suffer one who was so active and instrumental in preaching and propagating it to be thrown by as a despised, broken vessel. They might be shy of owning this doctrine, lest they should be involved in the same trouble themselves. Now, to take off the offence of the cross, he expounds this dark and hard chapter of his sufferings, and makes it very easy, intelligible, and reconcileable to the wisdom and goodness of God, who employed him.

First, He suffered by the sworn enemies of the Gospel, who laid him in prison, and aimed at taking away his life; but they should not be stumbled at this, for good was brought out of it, and it tended to the furtherance of the Gospel; ver. 12 "The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel." A strange chemistry of Providence this, to extract so great a good out of so great an evil, as the enlargement of the Gospel by the confinement of the apostle; "I suffer trouble as an evil-doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound," 2 Tim. ii. 9. They cannot imprison the word of God; that has its free course, though I am confined. But how was this?

1. It alarmed those who were without; ver. 13, "My bonds in Christ," or for Christ, "are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places." The emperor, the courtiers, the magistrates, are convinced that I do not suffer as an evil-doer, but as an honest man, with a good conscience. They know I suffer for Christ, and not for any wickedness. Observe, 1st, Paul's sufferings made him known at court, where perhaps he would never have otherwise been known, and might lead some of them to inquire after the Gospel for which he suffered, which they might otherwise have never heard of. 2nd, When his bonds were manifest in the palace they were manifest in all other places. "The sentiments of the court have a great influence on the sentiments of the people,"—*Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis*.

2. It emboldened them who were within. As his enemies were startled at them, so his friends were heartened by them; "Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite. The

i. 9. "Your love . . . in knowledge and all judgment;" "All depends on their having that measure of knowledge short of which love will become the sport of every impulse of the heart, and lead to perversities, of which we may easily find examples enough in every age" (Wiesinger). Rheims and Conybeare read "understanding" for "judgment;" Ellicott, "perception."

i. 10. "That ye may approve," &c.: the original will bear two senses, either "that ye may approve of what is excellent," or "that

righteous also shall hold on his way, and he who hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger," *Job* xvii. 8, 9. So it was here, ver. 14, "Many of the brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my bonds." The expectation of trouble for their religion, in general, perhaps disheartened and discouraged them; but when they saw Paul imprisoned for Christ, they were so far from being deterred from preaching Christ, and praising his name, that it made them the more bold; for they could gladly suffer in Paul's company. If they should be hurried from the pulpit to the prison, they could be reconciled to it, because they should be there in such good company. Besides, the comfort which Paul had in his sufferings, his extraordinary consolations received from Christ in a suffering state, greatly encouraged them. They saw that they who served Christ served a good Master, who could both bear them up and bear them out in their sufferings for him: "Waxing confident by my bonds," *Περαιθόρας*. They were more fully satisfied and persuaded by what they saw. Observe the power of the Divine grace; that which was intended by the enemy to discourage the preachers of the Gospel was overruled for their encouragement. And "are much more bold to speak the word without fear;" they see the worst of it, and therefore are not afraid to venture. Their confidence gave them courage, and their courage preserved them from the power of fear.

Secondly, Paul suffered from false friends as well as from enemies; ver. 15, 16, "Some preach Christ even of envy and strife. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely." Now this would be a stumblingblock and discouragement to some, that there were those who envied Paul's reputation in the churches, and the interest he had among the Christians, and endeavoured to supplant and undermine him. They were secretly pleased when he was laid up in prison, that they might have the better opportunity to steal away the people's affections; and laid themselves out the more in preaching, that they might gain to themselves the reputation they envied him: "Supposing to add affliction to my bonds." They thought hereby to grieve his spirit, and make him afraid of losing his interest, uneasy under his confinement, and impatient for release. It is sad there should be men who profess the Gospel, especially who preach it, who are governed by such principles as these, who should preach Christ in spite to Paul, and to increase the affliction of his bonds. Let us not think it strange if, in these latter and more degenerate ages of the church, there should be any such. However, there were others who were animated by Paul's suffering to preach Christ the more vigorously: "Some also of goodwill and of love." From sincere affection to the Gospel, that the work might not stand while the workman was laid up. "Knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel." They knew that he was appointed to support and propagate the Gospel in the world, against all the violence and opposition of its enemies, and were afraid lest the Gospel should suffer by his confinement. This made them the more bold to preach the word, and supply his lack of service to the church.

[The Gospel which Paul had to defend and maintain was particularly that feature of it which related to the calling of the Gentiles to salvation without their being circumcised, which he calls his Gospel, *Rom.* xi. 23; and which he defended even against Peter, *Gal.* ii. 5, 11, 12. It was for this the professed Jewish converts hated him, and became the source of his greatest troubles and sorrows. Note, Some ministers are set to defend one part of the Gospel, as unpalatable truth, in one age, and some another in a future age, and it behoves them, like Paul, to be resolute in it, whatever they suffer.]

It is very affecting to see how easy the apostle was in the midst of all; ver. 18, "Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, I therein do rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice." Note, The preaching of Christ is the joy of all who wish well to his kingdom among men. Since it may tend to the good of many, we ought to rejoice in it, though it is done in pretence, and not in reality. It is God's prerogative to judge of the principles men act upon, and is out of our line. Paul was so far from envying those who had liberty to preach the Gospel, while he was under confinement, that he rejoiced in the preaching it, even by those who did it in pretence, and not in truth. How much more then should we rejoice in the preaching of the Gospel by them who do it in truth, yea, though it should be with much weakness, and some mistake! Two things made the apostle rejoice in the preaching the Gospel:

1. Because it tended to the salvation of the souls of men; ver. 19, "I know that this shall turn to my salvation." Observe, God can bring good out of evil; and what doth not turn to the salvation of the ministers may yet by the grace of God be made to turn to the salvation of the people. What reward can they expect who preach Christ out of strife, and envy, and contention, and to add affliction to a faithful minister's bonds,—who preach in pretence, and not in truth? and yet even this may turn to the salvation of others; and Paul's rejoicing in it turned to his salvation too. This is one of the things which accompanies salvation, to be able to rejoice that Christ is preached, though it be to the diminution of us, and our reputation. This noble spirit appeared in John the Baptist at the first public preaching of Christ; "This my joy is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease," *Jno.* iii. 29, 30. Let him shine, though I am obscured; and his glory be exalted, though upon my ruins. Others understand this expression of the malice of his enemies being defeated, and contributing towards his deliverance from his confinement; "Through your prayers, and the supply, or the aids and assistance of the Spirit of Christ." Note, Whatsoever turns to our salvation is by the supply, or aids and assistance, of the Spirit of Christ; and prayer is the appointed means of fetching in that supply. The prayers of the people may bring a supply of the Spirit to their ministers, to enable them in suffering, as well as in preaching the Gospel.

[May we not suppose that he rejoiced in the preaching of it chiefly as leading to the conversion of others, God overruling the preaching of his truth concerning Christ, even when taught by corrupt men, to the salvation of their hearers. This is not, indeed, his ordinary, but extraordinary way of working; and though the end that is answered justifies not the motive of the instrument, it may be rejoiced in, while that motive is condemned. The true minister rejoices if good is done, by whomsoever it is done, while he weeps over those who have wrong ends in doing it.]

2. Because it would turn to the glory of Christ, ver. 20; where he takes occasion to mention his own entire devotedness to the service and honour of Christ. "According to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed;" &c. Here observe, 1st. That the great desire of every true Christian is, that Christ may be magnified and glorified; that his name may be great, and his kingdom come. 2nd. That they who truly desire that Christ may be magnified desire that he may be magnified in their body. They present their "bodies a living sacrifice," *Rom.* xii. 1, and "yield their members as instruments of righteousness unto God," *Rom.* vi. 13. They are willing to serve his designs, and be instrumental to his glory, with every member of their body, as well as faculty of their soul. 3rd. That it is much for the glory of Christ that we should serve him boldly, and not be ashamed of him; with freedom and liberty of mind, and without discouragement; "That in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness Christ may be magnified." The boldness of Christians is the honour of Christ. 4th. That they who make Christ's glory their desire and design may make it their expectation and hope. If it be truly aimed at it shall certainly be attained. If in sincerity we pray, "Father, glorify thy name," we may be sure of the same answer to that prayer which Christ had:

"I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again," *Jno.* xii. 28. 5th. They who desire Christ may be magnified in their bodies have a holy indifference "whether it be by life or by death." They refer it to him, which way he will make them serviceable to his glory, whether by their labour or suffering, by their diligence or patience, by their living to his honour in working for him, or dying to his honour in suffering for him.

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. 23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. 25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; 26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

We have here an account of the life and death of blessed Paul. His life was Christ, and his death was gain. Observe, 1. It is the undoubted character of every good Christian that to him to live is Christ. The glory of Christ ought to be the end of our life, the grace of Christ the principle of our life, and the word of Christ the rule of it. The Christian life is derived from Christ, and directed to him. He is the principle, rule, and end of it. 2. All those to whom to live is Christ, to them to die will be gain. It is great gain, a present gain, everlasting gain. Death is a great loss to a carnal worldly man, for he loses all his comforts and all his hopes; but to a good Christian it is gain, for it is the end of all his weakness and misery, and the perfection of his comforts and accomplishment of his hopes. It delivers him from all the evils of life, and brings him to the possession of the chiefest good. Or, to me "to die is gain," that is, to the Gospel as well as to myself, which will receive farther confirmation by the seal of my blood, as it had before by the labours of my life. So Christ would be "magnified by his death," ver. 20. Some read the whole expression thus, "To me, living and dying, Christ is gain;" that is, I desire no more, neither while I live nor when I die, but to win Christ, and be found in him. It might be thought, if death was gain to him, he would be weary of life, and impatient for death. No, saith he, ver. 22, "If I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour," that is, Christ is. He reckoned his labour well bestowed if he could be instrumental to advance the honour and interest of the kingdom of Christ in the world. It is "the fruit of my labour," *Καρπὸς ἐργου*,—*opera pretium*. It is worth while for a good Christian, and a good minister, to live in the world, as long as he can glorify God and do good to his church. "Yet what I shall choose I wot not; for I am in a strait betwixt two." It was a blessed strait which Paul was in, not between two evil things, but between two good things. David was in a strait by three judgments—sword, famine, and pestilence. Paul was in a strait between two blessings, living to Christ, and being with him. Here we have him reasoning with himself upon the matter.

First, His inclination was for death. See the power of faith and of Divine grace. It can reconcile the mind to death, and make us willing to die, though death is the destruction of our present nature, and the greatest natural evil. We have naturally an aversion to death, but he had an inclination to it; ver. 23, "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." Observe, 1. It is being with Christ which makes a departure desirable to a good man. It is not simply dying, or putting off the body; it is not of itself, and for its own sake, a desirable thing. But it may be necessarily connected with something else, which may make it truly so. If I cannot be with Christ without departing, I shall reckon it desirable, upon that account, to depart. Observe, 2. As soon as ever the soul departs, it is immediately with Christ: "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," *Lu.* xxiii. 43; "Absent from the body, and present with the Lord," 2 *Cor.* v. 8, without any interval between. "Which is far better," *πολλὴ γὰρ μάλλον κρείσσον*,—"very much exceeding, or vastly preferable." They who know the value of Christ and heaven will readily acknowledge it far better to be in heaven than to be in this world, to be with Christ than to be with any creature; for in this world we are compassed about with sin, born to trouble, born again to it. But, if we come to be with Christ, farewell sin and temptation, farewell sorrow and death for ever.

Secondly, His judgment was rather to live awhile longer in this world, for the service of the church; ver. 24, "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." It is needful for the church to have ministers; and faithful ministers can ill be spared when the "harvest is plenteous, and the labourers few." Observe, That they who have most reason to desire to depart yet should be willing to continue in the world as long as God has any work for them to do. Paul's strait was not between living in this world and living in heaven,—between these two there is no comparison; but his strait was between serving Christ in this world, and enjoying him in another. Still it was Christ his heart was upon, though, to advance the interest of Christ and his church, he chose rather to tarry here, where he met with oppositions and difficulties, and to deny himself for awhile the satisfaction of his reward, "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith," ver. 25. Observe here, 1. What a great confidence Paul had in the Divine providence, that it would order all for the best to him. Having this confidence, that it will be needful for you that I shall abide in the flesh, I know that I shall abide. 2. Whatsoever is best for the church we may be sure God will do. If we know what is needful for the building up the body of Christ, we may certainly know what will be; for he will take care of its interests, and do what is best, all things considered, in every condition it is in. 3. What ministers are continued for; "For our furtherance and joy of faith," that is, our farther advancement in holiness and comfort. 4. What promotes our faith and "joy of faith" is very much for our furtherance in the way to heaven. The more faith the more joy, and the more faith and joy the more we are furthered in our Christian course. 5. There is need of a settled ministry, not only for the conviction and conversion of sinners, but for the edification of saints, and their furtherance in spiritual attainments. "That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me, by my coming to you again," ver. 26. They rejoiced in the hope of seeing him, and enjoying his farther labours among them. Observe, 1st. The continuance of ministers with the church ought to be the rejoicing of all who wish well to the church and to its interests. 2nd. That all our joys should terminate in Christ. Our joy in good ministers should be our

ye may discriminate between differing things"—i.e., between right and wrong. Thus Tyndal translates, "that ye might accept things most excellent;" Rheims, "that you may approve the better things;" but Geneva, "that ye may discern things that differ;" Conybeare, "teaching you to distinguish good from evil." The better sense must therefore be gathered from the context, and it certainly seems that the prayer that their love may be according to knowledge—not a mere sentimental love—would be better fulfilled if they approved those

things really worthy of love, than if they merely discerned the good from the evil. "Sincere;" better "pure." "Without offence;" i.e., "blameless."

i. 11. "Fruit;" not "fruits," as Authorised Version; so best MSS. "The negative side always implies the positive, a principle which is of great importance for the Christian life. By 'fruit of righteousness,' as in the case of other words similarly connected, such as 'fruit of the Spirit' (*Gal.* v. 22), 'fruit of the light' (*Eph.* v. 9), must

joy in Christ Jesus for them; for they are but the friends of the bridegroom, and are to be received in his name, and for his sake.

[To die is gain. The gain or advantage the apostle here speaks of seems not to apply to himself, in the first instance, as our translation would appear to imply, but only secondarily; it was honour brought to Christ which will be done by his martyred body, no less than by his devoted life. It is as if he had said, 'For Christ, or the serving and honouring of Christ, is the great gain or advantage I propose to myself in living or dying.' His embarrassment arose from the desirableness which he perceived of the lengthening of his life, for the strengthening of the Philippians and others in the faith; and his inward or miraculous assurance that this would be the case determined what would otherwise have been an insuperable difficulty, which of two things to prefer, a speedy death or prolonged existence on earth. Observe, It is well when the governing end of existence, the bringing of glory to Christ, is that which determines our preference for life or death.]

The life I live "in the flesh," is a phrase which denotes an idea of the contemptibleness of this life, in itself; and in the apostle's case a life only of "labour," which he was accustomed to, and even led to prefer to its cessation on account of the "fruit" that it might bear, namely, glory to Christ.]

27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. 29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; 30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

The apostle concludes the chapter with two exhortations.

First. He exhorts them to strictness of conversation; ver. 27, "Only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ." Observe, They who profess the Gospel of Christ should have their conversation as becomes the Gospel, or in a suitableness and agreeableness to it. Let it be as becomes those who believe gospel truths, submit to gospel laws, and depend upon gospel promises; and with an answerable faith, holiness, and comfort. Let it be in all respects as those who belong to the kingdom of God among men, and are members and subjects of it. It is an ornament to our profession when our conversation is of a piece with it. "That whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs." He had spoken, in ver. 26, of his coming to them again, and had spoken it with some assurance, though he was now a prisoner; but he would not have them build upon that. Our religion must not be bound up in the hands of our ministers. Whether I come or no, let me hear well of you, and do you "stand fast." Whether ministers come or no, Christ is always at hand. He is nigh to us, never far from us, and hastens his second coming; the "coming of the Lord draws nigh," *Jas. v. 8*. Let me hear of you, "That you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel." Three things he desired to hear of them, and they are all such as become the Gospel.

1. It becomes those who profess the Gospel to strive for it, to use a holy violence in taking the kingdom of heaven. The faith of the Gospel is the doctrine of faith, or the religion of the Gospel. There is that in the faith of the Gospel which is worth striving for. If religion is worth anything, it is worth every thing. There is much opposition, and there is need of striving. A man may sleep and go to hell; but he who will go to heaven must look about him and be diligent.

2. The unity and unanimity of Christians become the Gospel. Strive together, not strive one with another. All of you must strive against the common adversary. One spirit and one mind becomes the Gospel, for there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. There may be a oneness of heart and affection among Christians, where there is diversity of judgment and apprehensions about many things.

3. Steadfastness becomes the Gospel; "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind." Be steadfast and immovable by any opposition. It is a shame to religion when the professors of it are off and on, unfixed in their minds, and unstable as water; for they will never excel. They who would strive for the faith of the Gospel must stand firm to it.

Secondly. He exhorts them to courage and constancy in suffering; ver. 28, "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries." The professors of the Gospel have all along met with adversaries, especially at the first planting of Christianity. Our great care must be to keep close to our profession, and be constant to it. Whatsoever oppositions we meet with, we must not be frightened at them, considering the condition of the persecuted is much better and more desirable than the condition of the persecutors; for persecuting is an evident token of perdition. They who oppose the Gospel of Christ, and injure the professors of it, are marked out for ruin. But being persecuted is a token of salvation. Not that it is a certain mark,—many hypocrites have suffered for their religion; but it is a good sign that we are in good earnest in religion, and designed for salvation, when we are enabled in a right manner to suffer for the cause of Christ. "For to you it is given, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for his name," ver. 29. Here are two precious gifts given, and both on the behalf of Christ. 1st. To believe in him. Faith is God's gift on the behalf of Christ, who purchased for us, not only the blessedness which is the object of faith, but the grace of faith itself; the ability and disposition to believe is from God. 2nd. To suffer for the sake of Christ is a valuable gift too. It is a great honour, and a great advantage; for we may be very serviceable to the glory of God, which is the end of our creation, and encourage and confirm the faith of others. And there is a great reward attending it too. "Blessed are you when men shall persecute you, for great is your reward in heaven," *Mat. v. 11*. 12. And if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him," *2 Tim. ii. 12*. If we suffer reproach and loss for Christ, we are to reckon it a great gift, and prize it accordingly, always provided we carry it under our sufferings with the genuine temper of the martyrs and confessors; ver. 30, "Having the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me;" that is, you suffering in the same manner as you saw, and now hear of me that

I suffer. It is not simply the suffering, but the cause; and not only the cause, but the spirit, which makes the martyr. A man may suffer in an ill cause, and then he suffers justly; or in a good cause, but with a wrong mind, and then his sufferings lose their value.

[Their "adversaries," spoken of here, are the Judaizers, who opposed their faith in that feature of the Gospel which received men to salvation without circumcision, the great bone of contention at that period in most places, and in this place particularly. They were not to be "frightened" by their opposition, so as to be turned out of the way of contending for their essential prerogative of the gospel scheme. To the opposers of it, their inflexible adherence to it might seem an evident token of their being abandoned of God; but to themselves it was an evidence of greater honour designed by God for them, in thus having all suffering for a vilified truth, on which he had set his seal in their experience; and in evidencing which they might be animated by the recollection of what they saw him so cheerfully endure on the same account, and learnt that he was still, in the same spirit, enduring. Observe, We may well exhort others to the same faith, when we find it, and make it manifest, to be comforting to our own hearts.]

CHAPTER II.

The apostle proceeds to farther exhortations to several duties: to be like-minded and lowly-minded, which he presses from the example of Christ, ver. 1—11; and to diligence and seriousness in the Christian course, ver. 12, 13; and to adorn their Christian profession by several suitable graces, ver. 14—18; and concludes with particular notice and commendation of two good ministers, Timothy and Epaphroditus, whom he designed to send to them, ver. 19—30.



For there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The apostle proceeds in this chapter, where he left off in the last, with farther exhortations to Christian duties. He presses them largely to like-mindedness and lowly-mindedness, in conformity to the example of the Lord Jesus, the great pattern of humility and love. Where we may observe,

First. The great gospel precept pressed upon us; that is, to love one another. This is the law of Christ's kingdom, the lesson of his school, the livery of his family. This he represents, ver. 2, by being "likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." We are of a like mind when we have the same love. Christians should be one in affection, whether they can be one in apprehension or no. This is always in their power, and always their duty, and is the likeliest way to bring them nearer in judgment. "Having the same love." Observe, That the same love we are required to express to others, others are obliged to express to us. Christian love ought to be mutual love; love, and you shall be loved. "Being of one accord and of one mind." Not crossing and thwarting, or driving on separate interests; but unanimously agreeing in the great things of God, and keeping the unity of the Spirit in other differences. Here observe,

1. The pathetic pressing of the duty. He is very importunate with them, knowing what an evidence it is of our sincerity, and what a means of the preservation and edification of the body of Christ. The inducements to brotherly love are these, 1st. If there is any consolation in Christ. Have you experienced consolation in Christ? Evidence that experience by loving one another. The sweetness we have found in the doctrine of Christ should sweeten our spirits. Do we expect consolation in Christ? If we have not consolation in Christ, where else can we expect it? They who have an interest in Christ have consolation in him, strong and everlasting consolation, (*Heb. vi. 18*; *2 Thes. ii. 16*.) and therefore ought to love one another. 2nd. Comfort of love. If there

be understood fruit of righteousness in the sense of product thereof; and 'righteousness' does not express so much the justification as the new moral condition of the man, which is given along with it, and in which he 'bears fruit unto God in newness of the spirit.' The apostle adds 'which are by Jesus Christ,' since this fruit, along with the ground from which it springs, is a communication of the life of Christ to his own (*John xv. 5*; *Gal. ii. 20*.)

i. 13. "The palace:" the Greek word may be so translated; but

as there is no proof that it was ever used to denote the emperor's residence at Rome, it more probably means here the camp of the Praetorians. "And in all other places:" rather, "to all the rest." "The matter of fact interpretation would be that the soldiers, and those who visited him, carried the fame of his being bound for Christ over all Rome" (Alford).

i. 14. Best MSS. read "to speak the word of God without fear."

i. 16, 17. These verses are transposed in the Authorised Version

any comfort in Christian love, in God's love to us, in our love to God, or in our brethren's love to us; in consideration of all this, let us be like-minded. If you have ever found that comfort, if you would find it, if you indeed believe that the grace of love is a comfortable grace, abound in it. 3rd. "Fellowship of the Spirit." If there is such a thing as communion with God and Christ by the Spirit, such a thing as the communion of saints, by virtue of their being animated and acted by one and the same Spirit, be ye like-minded; for Christian love and like-mindedness will preserve to us our communion with God and with one another. 4th. "Any bowels and mercies," that is, in God and Christ, toward you. If you expect the benefit of God's compassions to yourselves, be ye compassionate one to another. If there is such a thing as mercy to be found among the followers of Christ, if all who are sanctified have a disposition to holy pity, make it appear this way. How cogent are these arguments! One would think them enough to tame the most fierce, and mollify the hardest heart. Another argument he insinuates, the comfort it would be to him; "Fulfil ye my joy." It is the joy of ministers to see people like-minded, and living in love. He had been instrumental in bringing them to the grace of Christ, and love of God. Now, saith he, if ye have found any benefit by your participation of the Gospel of Christ, if ye have any comfort in it, or advantage by it, fulfil the joy of your poor minister who preached the Gospel to you.

2. He proposes some means to promote it. 1st. Doing nothing "through strife and vainglory," ver. 3. There is no greater enemy to Christian love than pride and passion. If we do things in contradiction to our brethren, that is doing them through strife; if we do them through ostentation of ourselves, that is doing them through vainglory; both are destructive of Christian love, and kindle unchristian heats. Christ came to slay all enmities; therefore let there not be among Christians a spirit of opposition. Christ came to humble us; and therefore let there not be among us a spirit of pride. 2nd. We must esteem others in lowliness of mind better than ourselves; be severe upon our own faults, and charitable in our judgment to others; be quick in observing our own defects and infirmities, but ready to overlook, and make favourable allowances for, the defects of others. We must esteem the good which is in others above that which is in ourselves; for we best know our own unworthiness and imperfections. 3rd. We must interest ourselves in the concerns of others, not in a way of curiosity and censoriousness, or as "busybodies in other men's matters," but in Christian love and sympathy; ver. 4. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." A selfish spirit is destructive of Christian love. We must be concerned not only for our own credit, and ease, and safety, but for those of others also; and rejoice in others' prosperity as truly as in our own. We must "love our neighbour as ourselves," and make his case our own.

Secondly. Here is a gospel pattern proposed to our imitation, and that is the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," ver. 5. Observe, That Christians must be of Christ's mind. We must bear a resemblance to his life if we would have the benefit of his death. "If we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his," *Rom. viii. 9*. Now what was the mind of Christ? Why, he was eminently humble, and this is what we are peculiarly to learn of him; "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart," *Mat. xi. 29*. If we were lowly-minded, we should be like-minded; and if we were like to Christ we should be lowly-minded. We must walk in the same spirit, and in the same steps, with the Lord Jesus, who humbled himself to sufferings and death for us; not only to satisfy God's justice, and pay the price of our redemption, but to set us an example, and that we might follow his steps. Now here we have the two natures, and the two states, of our Lord Jesus. It is observable, that the apostle having occasion to mention the Lord Jesus, and the mind which was in him, takes the hint to enlarge upon his person, and to give a particular description of him. It is a pleasing subject, and a gospel minister need not think himself out of the way when he is upon it; any fit occasion should be readily taken.

1. Here are the two natures of Christ: his Divine nature and human nature. 1st. Here is his Divine nature. "Who, being in the form of God," ver. 6. Partaking of the Divine nature, as the eternal and only begotten Son of God. This agrees with *Jno. i. 1*, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God;" and is of the same import with being the "image of the invisible God," *Col. i. 15*, and the "brightness of his glory, and express image of his person," *Heb. i. 3*. "He thought it no robbery to be equal with God," did not think himself guilty of any invasion of what did not belong to him, or assuming another's right. He said, "I and my Father are one," *Jno. x. 30*. It is the highest degree of robbery for any mere man to pretend to be equal with God, or profess himself "one with the Father." This is for a "man to rob God," not in tithes and offerings, but of the rights of his godhead, *Mal. iii. 8*. Some understand "being in the form of God," *ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων*, of his appearance in a Divine majestic glory to the patriarchs, and the Jews under the Old Testament, which was often called the glory, and the Shechinah; and the word is used in such a sense by the Septuagint, and in the New Testament; *Mar. xvi. 12*. He "appeared to the two disciples," *ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ* "in another form;" *Mat. xvii. 2*, *μετεμορφώθη*, he "was transfigured before them." And, he "thought it no robbery to be equal with God;" that is, he did not greedily catch at, or covet and affect, to appear in that glory; he laid aside the majesty of his former appearance while he was here on earth, which is supposed the sense of the peculiar expression, *οὐκ ὀνταυμέν ἡγήσατο*; see *Bishop Bull's Def. cap. ii., sec. 4, et alibi*, and *Whitby in loc.*

2nd. His human nature. He was "made in the likeness of men," and "found in fashion as a man." He was really and truly man, took part of our flesh and blood, appeared in the nature and habit of man. And he voluntarily assumed human nature; it was his own act, and by his own consent. We cannot say that our participation of the human nature is so. And herein he emptied himself; divested himself of the honours and glories of the upper world, and of his former appearance, to clothe himself with the rags of human nature. He was in all things like to us, *Heb. ii. 17*.

2. Here are his two estates of humiliation and exaltation.

1st. His estate of humiliation. He not only took upon him the likeness and fashion of a man, but "the form of a servant," that is, a mean man. He was not only "God's servant whom he hath chosen;" but he came to minister to men, and was among them as "one who serveth," in a mean and servile state. One would think that the Lord Jesus, if he would be a man, should have been a prince, and appeared in splendour. But, quite the contrary, he took upon him "the form of a servant." He was brought up meanly, probably working with his supposed father at his trade. His whole life was a life of humiliation, of meanness, of poverty and disgrace; he had not where to lay his head; lived upon alms, was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" did not appear with external pomp, or any marks of distinction from other men. This was the humiliation of his life; but the lowest step of his humiliation was his dying the death of the cross; "He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross." He not only suffered, but was actually and voluntarily obedient; he obeyed the law which he brought himself under as Mediator, and by which he was obliged to die. "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again; this commandment have I received of my Father," *Jno. x. 18*. And he was "made under the law," *Gal. iv. 4*. There is an emphasis laid upon the manner

of his dying, which had in it all the circumstances possible which are humiliating, "even the death of the cross," a cursed, painful, and shameful death; a death accursed by the law: "Cursed is he that hangeth on a tree;" full of pain, the body nailed through the nervous parts,—the hands and feet,—and hanging with all its weight upon the cross; and the death of a malefactor and a slave, not of a free man, exposed as a public spectacle. Such was the condescension of the blessed Jesus.

[The form of God and the form of a servant are put in opposition. Christ was not only a servant, *Lu. ii. 27*, ministering unto others, *Mat. xx. 26—28*, and, though a Son, learning obedience by the things that he suffered, *Heb. v. 8*; but also in the appearance and condition of one. In like manner he was not only God with the Father, but shared equally with him in the manifested splendour and appearance of Deity, receiving equal homage and worship, both before the creation of this world and upon it afterward, in his appearances to the patriarchs, *Jno. xvii. 5*; *Heb. i. 3*. So far, however, from eagerly retaining this equality, he parted with it for our sakes, and emptied himself of it, by becoming a man of mean and suffering condition. And should not we, who are to copy him in self-denial, so look upon what would be advantageous to others as to be ready to give up some advantages of our own for their sakes? Observe, Then do we admire when we imitate.]

2nd. His exaltation. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." His exaltation was the reward of his humiliation: because he humbled himself, God exalted him; and he "highly exalted him," *ὑπερύψωκε*, raised him to an exceeding height. And he exalted his whole person, the human nature as well as the Divine; for he is spoken of as being in the form of God as well as in the fashion of a man. As it respects the Divine nature, it could only be a recognizing his rights, or the display and appearance of the "glory he had with the Father before the world was," *Jno. xvii. 5*; not any new acquisition of glory; and so the Father himself is said to be exalted. But the proper exaltation was of his human nature, which only seems to be capable of it, though in conjunction with the Divine. His exaltation here is made to consist in honour and power. In honour; so "He had a name above every name;" a title of dignity above all the creatures, men or angels. And in power; "Every knee must bow to him;" that is, the whole creation must be in subjection to him; "Things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," the inhabitants of heaven and earth, the living and the dead. "At the name of Jesus," not at the sound of the word, but the authority of Jesus, all should pay a solemn homage. [Or, rather, 'in' the name of Jesus, as it is in the Greek; namely, as the glorified Mediator.] And that "every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord;" every nation and language should publicly own the universal empire of the exalted Redeemer; and that "all power in heaven and earth is given to him," *Mat. xxviii. 18*. Observe the vast extent of the kingdom of Christ: it reaches to heaven and earth, and to all the creatures in each; to angels as well as men, and to the dead as well as the living. "To the glory of God the Father." Observe, It is the glory of God the Father to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; for it is his will that "all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father," *Jno. v. 23*. It redounds to the honour of the Father, whatsoever respect is paid to Christ. "He who receiveth me, receiveth him who sent me," *Mat. x. 40*.

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

First. He exhorts them to diligence and seriousness in the Christian course. "Work out your own salvation." It is the salvation of our souls, *1 Pet. i. 9*, and our eternal salvation, *Heb. v. 9*, and contains deliverance from all the evils sin had brought upon us, and exposed us to, and the possession of all good, and whatsoever is necessary to our complete and final happiness. Observe, It concerns us above all things to secure the welfare of our souls. Whatever becomes of other things, let us take care of our best interests; and it is our own salvation, the salvation of our own souls. It is not for us to judge other people, we have enough to do to look to ourselves; and though we must promote the common salvation, *Jude 3*, as much as we can, yet we must upon no account neglect our own. We are required to work out our salvation, *κατεργάζεσθε*; the word signifies working thoroughly at a thing, and taking true pains. Observe, we must be diligent in the use of all the means which conduce to our salvation. We must not only work at our salvation, by doing something now and then about it; but we must work out our salvation by doing all which is to be done, and persevering therein to the end. Salvation is the great thing we should mind, and set our hearts upon; and we cannot attain salvation without the utmost care and diligence. He adds, "With fear and trembling;" that is, with great care and circumspection,—tremble for fear lest you miscarry and come short. Be careful to do every thing in religion in the best manner; and fear lest under all your advantages you should so much as "seem to come short," *Heb. iv. 1*. Fear is a great guard and preservative from evil.

Secondly. He urges this from the consideration of their readiness always to obey the Gospel. "As ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence," ver. 12. You have been always willing to comply with every discovery of the will of God, and that in my absence as well as presence. You make it appear that regard to Christ, and care of your souls, sway more with you than any other respect whatsoever. They were not merely awed by the apostle's presence, but did it even much more in his absence. And because "it is God who worketh in you," do you work out your salvation, for it is God who worketh in you: work, for he worketh. It should encourage us to do our utmost, because our "labour shall not be in vain." God is ready to concur with his grace, and assist our faithful endeavours. Observe, Though we must use our utmost endeavours in working out our salvation, yet still we must go forth and go on in a dependence upon the grace of God. His grace worketh in us in a way suitable to our natures, and in concurrence with our endeavours; and the operations of God's grace are so far from excusing, that they are intended to quicken and engage our endeavours. And work out your salvation "with fear and trembling," for "he worketh in you." All our working depends upon his working in us. Do not trifle with God by neglects and delays, lest you provoke him to withdraw his help, and all your endeavours prove in vain. Work with fear, for he works of his good pleasure. "To will and to do" he gives the whole ability. It is the grace of God which inclines the will to that which is good, and then enables us to perform it, and to act according to our principles. "Thou hast wrought all our works in us," *Isa. xvi. 12*. "Of his good pleasure." As there is no strength in us, so there is no merit in us. As we cannot act without

from their original order. "To raise up tribulation (for me) in my bonds—i.e., endeavouring to take opportunity, by my being laid aside, to depreciate me and my preaching, and so to cause me trouble of spirit" (Alford). It seems that those to whom the apostle refers preached the truth, and that to the salvation of others, else why should he rejoice (verse 18)? but their motive was rather their own honour than the extension of Christ's kingdom.

i. 19, 20. St. Paul appears to be looking forward to the day when

salvation will be complete, and since this preaching of Christ, whether in love or pretence, has its origin in his labours, he looks to obtain through it a higher degree of blessing in the kingdom of the saved (Alford, Brown, &c.); and the means by which this happy result would be secured was the prayer of the Philippians and consequent outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

i. 21. "In my view and definition of the term, life is but another name for Christ" (Fleile).

God's grace, so we cannot claim it, or pretend to deserve it. God's goodwill to us is the cause of his good work in us; and he is under no engagements to his creatures but those of his gracious promise.

14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; 16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. 17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. 18 For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.



ROMAN PHAROS, OR LIGHT TOWER.—VER. 15.

The apostle exhorts them in these verses to adorn their Christian profession by a suitable temper and behaviour, in several instances.

First, By a cheerful obedience to the commands of God; ver. 14, "Do all things," that is, do your duty in every branch of it, "without murmurings." Do it, and do not find fault with it. Mind your work, and do not quarrel with it. God's commands were given to be obeyed, not to be disputed. This greatly adorns our profession, and shews we serve a good Master, whose service is freedom, and whose work is its own reward.

Secondly, By peaceableness, and love one to another. Do all things "without disputings," wrangling and debating one with another; because the light of truth, and the life of religion, are often lost in the heats and mists of disputation.

Thirdly, By a blameless conversation towards all men; ver. 15, "That ye may be blameless and harmless; the sons of God without rebuke." That ye may be injurious to any in word or deed, and give no just occasion of offence. We should endeavour not only to be harmless, but to be blameless; not only not to do hurt, but not to come under the just suspicion of it. "Blameless and sincere," so some read it; blameless before men, sincere towards God. "The sons of God;" it becomes them to be blameless and harmless who stand in such a relation, and are favoured with such a privilege. The children of God should differ from the sons of men. "Without rebuke," *ἀνεπίμνητος*. Momus was a carping deity among the Greeks, mentioned by Hesiod and Lucian, who did nothing himself, and found fault with every body and every thing; from him all carpers at other men, and rigid censurers of their works, were called Momi. The sense of the expression is, Walk so circumspectly that Momus himself may have no occasion to cavil at you, that the severest censurer may find no fault with you. We should aim at it, and endeavour it, not only to get to heaven, but to get thither without a blot; and, like Demetrius, to "have a good report of all men, and of the truth," 3 *Jno.* 12. "In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation;" that is, among the heathens, and those who are without. Observe, Where there is no true religion, little is to be expected but crookedness and perverseness; and the more crooked and perverse others are among whom we live, and the more apt to cavil, the more careful we should be to keep ourselves blameless and harmless. Abraham and Lot must not strive, "because the Canaanite and Perizzite dwelt in the land," *Gen.* xiii. 7. "Among whom ye shine as lights in the world." Christ is the Light of the world, and good Christians are lights in the world. When God raises up a good man in any place, he sets up a light in that place. Or, it may be read imperatively, "Among whom shine ye as lights;" compare *Mat.* v. 16, "Let your light so shine before men." Christians should not only endeavour to approve themselves to God, but to recommend themselves to others that they also may glorify God. They

must shine as well as be sincere. [It is the property of light to receive no contamination from the filthiest objects while it irradiates them. Excellent pattern for Christians.] "Holding forth the word of life," ver. 16. The Gospel is called the word of life, because it reveals and proposes to us eternal life through Jesus Christ. "Life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel," 2 *Tim.* i. 10. It is our duty not only to hold fast, but to hold forth, the word of life; not only to hold it fast for our own benefit, but to hold it forth for the benefit of others; to hold it forth, as the candlestick holds forth the candle, which makes it appear to advantage all around; or, as the luminaries of the heavens, which shed their influence far and wide; [or, as those buildings which we call lighthouses, the most illustrious of which was raised in the island of Pharos, where Ptolemy Philadelphus built that celebrated tower, (B.C. 283), on which a bright flame was always kept burning in the night, that mariners might see their way, and avoid the rocks which they were to pass in their entrance to the haven at Alexandria, upon which they would otherwise have been in the greatest danger of suffering shipwreck. Christians encourage their ministers when they let the light of the Gospel shine forth on all around them, not only by their holy living, but also by their evangelical teaching.] This Paul tells them would be his joy; "That I may rejoice in the day of Christ." Not only rejoice in your steadfastness, but in your usefulness. He would have them think his pains well bestowed, and that he had "not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." Observe

1. The work of the ministry requires the putting forth of the whole man; all that is within us is little enough to be employed in it, as in running and labouring. Running denotes vehemence, and vigour, and continual pressing forward; labouring, constancy and close application.

2. It is a great joy to ministers when they perceive that they have not "run in vain, neither laboured in vain;" and it will be their rejoicing in the day of Christ, when their converts will be their crown. "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? for ye are our glory and joy," 1 *The.* ii. 19, 20. The apostle not only ran and laboured for them with satisfaction, but shews that he was ready to suffer for their good; ver. 17; "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." He could reckon himself happy if he could promote the honour of Christ, the edification of the church, and the welfare of the souls of men; though it were not only by hazarding, but by laying down his life. He could willingly be a sacrifice at their altars to serve the faith of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." He could shed his blood for the service of the church, and shall we think much to take a little pains? Is not that worth our labour which he thought worth his life? "If I be offered," or poured out as the wine of the drink offerings, *συνδομαι*, 2 *Tim.* iv. 6, "I am now ready to be offered." He could rejoice to seal his doctrine with his blood; ver. 18. "For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me." It is the will of God that good Christians should be much in rejoicing; and they who are happy in good ministers have a great deal of reason to joy and rejoice with them. If the minister loves the people, and is willing to spend and be spent for their welfare, the people have reason to love the minister, and to joy and rejoice with him.

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. 20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. 22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. 23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. 24 But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly. 25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. 26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. 27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. 29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: 30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

St. Paul takes particular notice of two good ministers; for though he was himself a great apostle, and laboured more abundantly than they all, yet he took all occasions to speak with respect of those who were far his inferiors.

First, He speaks of Timothy, whom he intended to send to the Philippians, that he might have an account of their state. See Paul's care of the churches, and the comfort he had in their well doing. He was in pain when he had not heard of them a good while, and therefore would send Timothy to inquire, and bring him an account; "For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state." Timothy was a nonsuch. There were, no doubt, many good ministers, who were in care for the souls of those for whom they preached; but none

i. 22—26. "But if my living in the flesh, if this is to me the (medium of) fruit from my labour, then," &c. The apostle personally desired to die, that he might be with Christ; but if he could not thus labour for Christ, he was content to remain on earth, or at least not to seek his own perfect happiness at the expense of his fellow-believers' furtherance in the faith.

i. 23. Compare 2 *Thess.* i. 5—7.

i. 29. "The grace given to you is such that you are thereby

enabled not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for him; the double favour you have received affords the surer proof of the essentially divine nature of the token" (Elliecott).

i. 30. "Saw in me:" see *Acts* xvi. 16, &c.

ii. 1. "If then you can be entreated in Christ, if you can be persuaded by love, if you have any fellowship in the Spirit, if you have any tenderness or compassion, I pray you make my joy full," &c. (Conybeare).

comparable to Timothy, a man of an excellent spirit and tender heart. "Who will naturally care for your state." Observe, it is best with us when our duty becomes in a manner natural to us. Timothy was a genuine son of blessed Paul, and walked in the same spirit and the same steps; naturally, that is, sincerely, and not in pretence only; with a willing heart and upright view, so agreeably to the make of his mind. Note, 1. It is the duty of ministers to care for the state of their people, and be concerned for their welfare; "I seek not yours but you," 2 Cor. xii. 14. 2. It is a rare thing to find one who doth it naturally. Such a one is remarkable and distinguished among his brethren. "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's," ver. 21. What, did Paul say this in haste, as David said, "All men are liars?" Ps. cxvi. 11. Was there so general a corruption among ministers, so early, that there was not one among them who cared for the state of their people? We must not understand it so; he means the generality; all, that is, either the most or all in comparison of Timothy. Note, Seeking our own interest to the neglect of Jesus Christ is a very great sin, and very common among Christians and ministers. We are apt to prefer our own credit, ease, and safety, before truth, holiness and duty; the things of our own pleasure and reputation before the things of Christ's kingdom, and his honour and interest in the world; but Timothy was none of those. "Ye know the proof of him," ver. 22. Timothy was a man who had been tried, and had made "full proof of his ministry," 2 Tim. iv. 5; and was faithful in all which befel him. All the churches with whom he had acquaintance knew the proof of him; he was a man as good as he seemed to be, and "served Christ so as to be acceptable to God," and "approved of men," Rom. xiv. 18: as if he had said, You do not only know the name of him, and the face of him, but the proof of him, and have experienced his affection and fidelity in your service, "that as a son with a father he hath served with me in the Gospel." He was Paul's assistant in many places where he preached, and served with him in the Gospel, with all the dutiful respect which a child pays to a father, and with all the love and cheerfulness with which a child is servicable to his father. Their ministrations together were with great respect on the one side, and great tenderness and kindness on the other; an admirable example to elder and younger ministers, joined together in the same service. Paul designed to send him shortly; "Him therefore I hope to send presently, as soon as I shall see how it will go with me," ver. 23. He was now a prisoner, and did not know what would be the issue; but according as it turned he would dispose of Timothy. Nay, he hoped to come himself; ver. 24, "But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly." He hoped he should soon be set at liberty, and be able to give them a visit. Paul desired his liberty, not that he might take his pleasure, but that he might do good; "I trust in the Lord." He expresses his hope and confidence of seeing them with an humble dependence and submission to the Divine will; 1 Cor. iv. 19, "But I will come to you shortly if the Lord will;" Jas. iv. 15, "For that you ought to say, if the Lord will we shall live, or do this and that;" so Acts xviii. 21, and Heb. vi. 3.

Secondly. Concerning Epaphroditus, whom he calls his "brother and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier," that is, his Christian brother, to whom he bore a tender affection; and his companion in the work and sufferings of the Gospel, who submitted to the same labours and hardships with himself; and "their messenger," that is, one who was sent by them to him, probably to consult him about some affairs relating to their church, or to bring a present from them for his relief, for he adds, And "he who ministered to my wants;" he seems to be the same who is elsewhere called Epaphras, Col. iv. 12. He had an earnest desire to come to them, and Paul was willing he should. It seems,

1. Epaphroditus had been sick. "They had heard that he had been sick," ver. 26; and, "indeed he was sick nigh unto death," ver. 27. Sickness is a calamity common to men, to good men and ministers. But why did not the apostle heal him, who was endued with a power of curing diseases as well as raising the dead? Acts xx. 10. Probably because that was intended as a sign to others, and to confirm the truth of the Gospel, and therefore need not be exercised one towards another; "These signs shall follow them who believe; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," Mar. xvi. 17, 18; and perhaps they had not that power at all times, and at their own discretion, but only when some great end was to be served by it, and when God saw fit. It was proper to Christ, who had the Spirit above measure.

2. The Philippians were exceeding sorry to hear of his sickness. They were full of heaviness as well as he upon the tidings of it; for he was one, it seems, they had a particular respect and affection for, and thought fit to choose out to send to the apostle.

3. It pleased God to recover and spare him; "But God had mercy on him," ver. 27. The apostle owns it as a great mercy to himself as well as to Epaphroditus and others. Though the church was blessed at that time with extraordinary gifts, they could even then ill spare a good minister. He was sensibly touched with the thoughts of so great a loss; "Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow," that is, besides the sorrow of my own imprisonment, I should have the sorrow of his death. Or perhaps some other good ministers had died lately, which had been a great affliction to him; and if this had died now it would have been a fresh grief to him, and "sorrow added to sorrow."

4. Epaphroditus was willing to make a visit to the Philippians, that he might be comforted with those who had sorrowed for him when he was sick; "That when ye see him again ye may rejoice," ver. 28. That you may yourselves see how well he is recovered, and what reason you have of thankfulness and joy upon his account. He gave himself the pleasure of comforting them by the sight of so dear a friend.

5. Paul recommends him to their esteem and affection; "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation." Account such men valuable who are zealous and faithful, and let them be highly loved and regarded. Shew your joy and respect by all the expressions of hearty affection and good opinion. It seems he had caught his illness in the work of God. It was for "the work of Christ" that he was nigh to death, and to supply their lack of service to him. The apostle does not blame him for his indiscretion in hazarding his life, but reckons they ought to love him the more upon that account. Observe, 1st. They who truly love Christ, and are hearty in the interests of his kingdom, will think it very well worth their while to hazard their health and life to do him service, and promote the edification of his church. Observe, 2nd. They were to receive him with joy as newly recovered from sickness. It is an endearing consideration to have our mercies restored to us after danger of removal, and should make them the more valued and improved. What is given us in answer to prayer should be received with great thankfulness and joy.

CHAPTER III.

He cautions them against Judaizing seducers, ver. 1-3; proposes his own example, and here he enumerates the privileges of his Jewish state which he rejected, ver. 4-6; and describes the matter of his own choice, ver. 9-16; and closes with an exhortation to beware of wicked men, and to follow his example, ver. 17-21.

ii. 2. "Of one accord, of one mind;" rather, "with accordant souls, minding the one thing" (Ellicott); "with union of soul, unanimous" (Alford).

ii. 6. This verse refers plainly to Christ in his pre-incarnate state; in verse 7 the pre-incarnate passes into the incarnate; and in verses 8-12 the reference is to the incarnate Christ. "In the form:" see Heb. i. 3. "Thought it not robbery," &c.: rather, "He did not deem the being on an equality with God a thing to be seized



FINALLY, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous but for you it is safe. 2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.



WATCH DOG.—VER. 2.

It seems the church of the Philippians, though a faithful and flourishing church, was disturbed by the Judaizing teachers, who endeavoured to keep up the law of Moses, and mix the observances of it with the doctrine of Christ and his institutions. He begins the chapter with warnings against these seducers.

First. He exhorts them to "rejoice in the Lord," ver. 1, to rest satisfied in the interest they had in him, and the benefit they hoped for by him. It is the character and temper of sincere Christians to rejoice in Christ Jesus. The more we take of the comfort of our religion, the more closely we shall cleave to it; the more we rejoice in Christ, the more willing we shall be to do and suffer for him, and the less danger we shall be in of being drawn away from him. "The joy of the Lord is our strength," Neh. viii. 10.

Secondly. He cautions them to take heed of those false teachers. "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe," that is, the same things which I have already preached to you; as if he had said, What has been presented to your ears shall be presented to your eyes. What I have spoken formerly shall now be written, to shew that I am still of the same mind, [or the same things that Epaphroditus has to discourse of to you by my authority.] "To me indeed is not grievous." Observe, 1. Ministers must not think any thing grievous to themselves which they have reason to believe is safe and edifying to the people. Observe, 2. It is good for us often to hear the same truths, to revive the remembrance, and strengthen the impression of things of importance. It is a wanton curiosity to desire always to hear some new thing. It is a needful caution he here gives, "Beware of dogs," ver. 2. The prophet calls the false prophets dumb dogs, Isa. lvi. 10, to which the apostle here seems to refer. Dogs, for their malice against the faithful professors of the Gospel of Christ, barking at them, and biting them. They cried up good works in opposition to the faith of Christ; but Paul calls them "evil workers." They boasted themselves to be of the circumcision; but he calls them "the concision." They rent and tore the church of Christ, and cut it to pieces; or contended for an abolished rite, a mere insignificant cutting the flesh.

[The Jewish deceivers were cruel, fierce, and mischievous, as appears by what the same apostle says of them in Tit. i. 10, &c. And that might be the reason why they are here called "dogs," as it is why the crucifiers of Christ are so termed in Ps. xxii. 16, "Dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet." Compare also the passage in Isaiah referred to above, (Isa. lvi. 10), which it is by no means improbable the apostle had in his eye when he wrote these words, and ver. 19 of this chapter. Farther, it is not unlikely that, as the Jews trusted the Gentiles, and used to speak of them as dogs, Paul might here intend to turn upon themselves that name of reproach, for which he had good reason from their conduct and behaviour.]

Thirdly. He describes true Christians, who are indeed the circumcision, the spiritual circumcision, that is, the peculiar people of God who are in covenant with him, as the Old Testament Israelites were; "We are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Here are three characters: 1. They "worshipped in the Spirit," in opposition to the carnal ordinances of the Old Testament, which consisted in meats and drinks, and divers washings, &c. Christianity takes us off from these things, and teaches us to be inward with God in all the duties of religious worship; we must worship God in spirit, Jao. iv. 24. The work of religion is to no purpose any farther than the heart is employed in it; "Whatsoever we do, we must do it heartily as unto the Lord;" and we must worship God in the strength and grace of the Divine Spirit, which is so peculiar to the gospel state, which is "the ministration of the Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 8. 2. They "rejoice in Christ Jesus," and not in the peculiar privileges of the Jewish church, or what answers to them in the Christian church, mere outward enjoyments and performances. They rejoice in their relation to Christ, and interest in him: God made it the duty of the Israelites to rejoice before him in the courts of his house; but, now the substance is come, the shadows are done away, and we are

on (a state to be exclusively clutched at and retained as a prize), 'but emptied himself;' or, in other words, he did not insist on his own eternal prerogatives, but, on the contrary, humbled himself to the condition and sufferings of mortal man" (Ellicott).

ii. 9-11. "A name which is above every name:" "The very name which he bore in his humiliation, but which now is the highest and most glorious of all names, the name Jesus" (Alford). "A name with which now every highest attribute—grace, power, dominion—is

to rejoice in Christ Jesus only. 3. They have "no confidence in the flesh," that is, those carnal ordinances and outward performances. We must be taken off from trusting in our own bottom, that we may build only on Jesus Christ the everlasting foundation. Our confidence as well as our joy is proper to him.

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

The apostle here proposeth himself for an example of trusting in Christ only, and not in his privileges as an Israelite.

First. He shews what he had to boast of as a Jew and a Pharisee. Let none think that the apostle despised these things, as men commonly do, because he had them not himself to glory in. No, if he would have gloried and trusted in the flesh, he had as much cause to do so as any man. "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof to trust in the flesh, I more," ver. 4. He had as much to boast of as any Jew of them all. 1. His birthright privileges. He was not a proselyte, but a native Israelite, of the stock of Israel; and he was of the tribe of Benjamin, in which tribe the temple stood, and which adhered to Judaea when all the other tribes revolted. Benjamin was the father's darling, and this was a favoured tribe. A Hebrew of the Hebrews, that is, an Israelite on both sides, by father and mother, and from one generation to another; none of his ancestors had matched with Gentiles. 2. He could boast of his relation to the church and the covenant, for he was circumcised the eighth day. He had the token of God's covenant in his flesh, and was circumcised the very day which God had appointed. 3. For learning. He was a Pharisee, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, an eminent doctor of the law; and was a scholar learned in all the learning of the Jews, taught according to the perfect manner of the laws of the fathers, Acts xiii. 3; he was "a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee," Acts xxiii. 6; and "after the most strict sect of his religion, lived a Pharisee," Acts xxvi. 5. 4. He had a blameless conversation: "Touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless." As far as the Pharisees' exposition of the law went, and as to the mere letter of the law and outward observance of it, he could acquit himself from the breach of it, and could not be accused by any. 5. He had been an active man for his religion. As he made a strict profession of it under the title and character of a Pharisee, so he persecuted those whom he looked upon as enemies to it. "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church." 6. He shewed that he was in good earnest, though he had a zeal without knowledge to direct and govern the exercise of it. "I was zealous towards God, as ye all are this day, and I persecuted this way unto the death," Acts xxii. 3, 4. All this was enough to have made a proud Jew confident, and was stock sufficient to set up with for his justification. But,

Secondly. The apostle tells us here how little account he made of these in comparison of his interest in Christ, and his expectations from him; "But what things were gain to me, those have I counted loss for Christ," ver. 7; that is, those things which he had counted gain while he was a Pharisee, and which he had before reckoned up, "those I counted loss for Christ." I should have reckoned myself an unspeakable loser, if to adhere to them I had lost my interest in Jesus Christ. He counted them loss; not only insufficient to enrich him, but what would certainly impoverish and ruin him, if he trusted to them in opposition to Christ. Observe. The apostle did not persuade them to do any thing but what he himself did,—to quit any thing but what he had quitted himself, or venture on any other bottom but what he himself had ventured his immortal soul upon.

["Those I counted loss for Christ." The word *ζημία* signifies loss incurred in trade, and more especially that loss which is sustained at sea in a storm, when goods are thrown overboard for the sake of saving the passengers and the ship. The term, thus understood, gives a beautiful sense to the passage: saith the apostle, In making the voyage of life for the purpose of gaining salvation, I proposed to purchase it with my circumcision, and my care in observing the ritual precepts of the law, and I put a great value upon those things on account of the gain or advantage I was to make of them. But when I became a Christian I willingly threw them all overboard, as of no value in obtaining salvation; and this I did for the sake of gaining salvation through faith in Christ, my only Saviour.]

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ my Lord," &c., ver. 8. Here the apostle explains himself:—

1st. He tells us what it was he was ambitious of, and reached after. It was "the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;" a believing, experimental acquaintance with Christ as Lord, not a mere notional and speculative, but a practical and efficacious, knowledge of him. So knowledge is sometimes put for faith. By his knowledge, or the knowledge of him, "shall my righteous servant justify many," Isa. liii. 11; and it is the excellency of knowledge. There is an abundant and transcendent excellence in the doctrine of Christ, or the Christian religion above all the knowledge of nature, and improvements of human wisdom; for it is suited to the case of fallen sinners, and furnishes them with all they need, and all they can desire and hope for, with all saving wisdom and saving grace.

2nd. He shews how he had quitted his privileges as a Jew and a Pharisee. "Yea doubtless;" his expression rises with a holy triumph and elevation, *ἀλλὰ μὲν οὖν νῦν καὶ*. There are five particles in the original; "But indeed even also do I count all things but loss." He had spoken before of those things, his Jewish privileges; here he speaks of all things, all worldly enjoyments, and mere outward privileges whatsoever, things of a like kind, or any other kind which could stand in competition with Christ for the throne in his heart, or

pretend to merit and desert. There he had said he did count them but loss, but it might be asked, Did he continue still in the same mind? did he not repent his renouncing them? No; now he speaks in the present tense, "Yea doubtless, and I do count them but loss." But it may be said, It is easy to say so; but what would he do when he came to the trial? Why, he tells us that he had himself practised according to this estimate of the case; "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things." He had quitted all his honours and advantages as a Jew and a Pharisee, and submitted to all the disgrace and suffering which attended the profession and preaching of the Gospel. When he embarked in the bottom of the Christian religion he ventured all in it, and suffered the loss of all, for the privileges of a Christian. Nay, he not only counted them loss, but dung, *σκαβάλα*, offals thrown to dogs; they are not only less valuable than Christ, but in the highest degree contemptible when they come in competition with him. Note, The New Testament never speaks of saving grace in any terms of diminution, but on the contrary represents it as the fruits of the Divine Spirit, and the image of God in the soul of man, as a Divine nature, and the seed of God; and faith is called precious faith, and meekness is in the "sight of God of great price," 1 Pet. iii. 4; 2 Pet. i. 1, &c.

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing I *do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

We have heard what the apostle renounced; let us now see what he laid hold on, and resolved to cleave to, and that was, 1. Christ; and, 2. Heaven. He had his heart on these two great peculiarities of the Christian religion.

First. The apostle had his heart upon Christ as his righteousness. This is illustrated in several instances.

1. He desired to win Christ; and an unspeakable gainer he would reckon himself if he had but an interest in Christ and his righteousness, and he became his Lord and his Saviour. That I may win him, as the runner wins the prize, as the sailor makes the port he is bound for. The expression intimates that we have need to strive for him, and reach after him; and that all is little enough to win him.

2. That he might "be found in him," ver. 9; as the manslayer was found in the city of refuge, where he was safe from the avenger of blood, Num. xxxv. 25. Or it alludes to a judicial appearance; So we are to be "found of our judge in peace," 2 Pet. iii. 14. We are undone without a righteousness wherein to appear before God, for we are guilty. There is a righteousness provided for us in Jesus Christ, and it is a complete and perfect righteousness; none can have interest or benefit by it but those who come off from confidence in themselves, and are brought heartily to believe in him. "Not having my own righteousness which is of the law;" that is, not thinking that my outward observances and good deeds are able to atone for my bad ones, or that by setting the one over against the other I can come to balance accounts with God. No, the righteousness which I depend upon is that "which is through the faith of Christ;" not a legal, but evangelical righteousness; "The righteousness which is of God by faith;" that is, ordained and appointed of God. The Lord Jesus Christ is "the Lord our righteousness," Isa. xlv. 24. Had he not been God he could not have been our righteousness; the transcendent excellence of the Divine nature put such a value upon, and such a virtue into, his sufferings, that they became sufficient to satisfy for the sins of the world, and to bring in a righteousness which will be effectual to all who believe. And faith is the ordained means of actual interest and saving benefit in all the purchase of his blood. It is "by faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 25. ["And be found in him." Christians by being baptized into Christ have "put on" Christ, Gal. iii. 27; so that to God, now looking at them, there appears nothing but Christ. They are as it were covered all over with him, as a man is with the clothes he has put on.]

3. That he might know Christ; ver. 10, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." Faith is called knowledge, Isa. liii. 11. Knowing him here is believing in him; it is an experimental knowledge of "the power of his resurrection, and fellowship of his suffering," or feeling the transforming efficacy and virtue of them. Observe. The apostle was as ambitious of being sanctified as he was of being justified. He was as desirous to know the power of Christ's death and resurrection killing sin in him, and raising him up to newness of life, as he was to receive the benefit of Christ's death and resurrection in his justification.

4. That he might be conformable unto him, and that also is meant of his sanctification. We are then made conformable to his death when we die to sin, as Christ died for sin; when we are crucified with Christ, the flesh and affections of it mortified, and the world is crucified to us, and we to the world, by the virtue of the cross of Christ, this is our conformity to his death.

[Many understand the apostle to mean, by a "fellowship in Christ's sufferings," his willingness to undergo his portion of suffering for Christ's sake, as a member of his mystical body, (see Col. i. 24;) and a "being made conformable to his death," an experiencing of a similar violent and bloody death, if called to it. The expressions thus appear very consistent with the rest of the allegory, and represent his readiness to submit to any difficulties that might

eternally conjoined" (Ellicott). See Acts ix. 5. "That in the name of Jesus"—not "at," as in the Authorised Version—"every knee should bow:" that is, worship; we ask of God in the name or for the sake of Jesus. "To the glory of God the Father:" the confession of the lordship of Jesus redounds to the honour of his Father; "their honour is inseparable and their glory one" (Waterland).

ii. 12, 13. "Now much more," &c.: "In the absence of the apostle, the care of their salvation would rest with themselves alone"

(Wiesinger). "With fear," &c.: with distrust of their own powers (Eph. v. 6). "Your own salvation;" each one his individual salvation. "Work out:" better "carry out" or "complete" (Eph. vi. 13). "For it is God," &c.: "We acknowledge that by nature we have a will, but since by the corruption of sin it is an evil will, it begins to be good when it is reformed by God" (Calvin). See Ezek. xi. 19, 20.

ii. 14. "Without murmurings," &c.: Alford, Conybeare, and

attend him in his voyage, in order to gain the desired haven, *Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.*

Secondly, The apostle had his heart upon heaven as his happiness; "If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead," ver. 11. The happiness of heaven is here called "the resurrection of the dead," because though the souls of the faithful when they depart are immediately with Christ, yet their happiness will not be complete till the general resurrection of the dead at the last day, when soul and body shall be glorified together. *Ανάστασις* sometimes signifies the future state. This the apostle had his eye upon, this he would attain. There will be a resurrection of the unjust, who shall arise to shame and everlasting contempt, and our care must be to escape that; but the joyful and glorious resurrection of saints is called "the resurrection," *καὶ ἡ ζωὴ*, because it is in virtue of Christ's resurrection, as their head and first fruits; whereas the wicked shall rise only by the power of Christ, as their judge. To the saints it will be indeed a resurrection; that is, a return to bliss, and life, and glory; but the resurrection of the wicked is a rising from the grave, but a return to a second death. It is called "the resurrection of the just," and "the resurrection of life," *1 Jno. v. 29*; and they are "counted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead," *Lu. xx. 35*. This joyful resurrection the apostle pressed towards. He was willing to do any thing, suffer any thing, that he might attain that resurrection. The hope and prospect of it carried him with so much courage and constancy through all the difficulties he met with in his work. Observe, 1. He speaks as if they were in danger of missing it, and coming short of it. A holy fear of coming short is an excellent means of perseverance. 2. His care to be found in Christ was in order to his attaining the resurrection of the dead. Paul himself did not hope to attain it through his own merit and righteousness, but through the merit and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Let me be found in Christ, that I may attain the resurrection of the dead; that is, found a believer in him, and interested in him by faith. He looks upon himself to be in a state of imperfection and trial. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect," ver. 12.

[The apostle now passes from one metaphor to another, as is usual in the most correct writers; namely, from that of a voyager to that of a racer. The former had concluded with his arriving in any way at the resurrection, namely, "of the just," *Lu. xx. 35*, as a desired haven, which the resurrection of the unjust will not be. Here he speaks of himself as an athletic in the Grecian exercises, who was yet in the conflict, not having gained the victory, and "obtained" the prize which was the reward of it, but pressing on in the prescribed course, *2 Tim. ii. 5*, with all his powers on the full stretch, neglecting things behind, as men do which they have passed, and looking only to examples before them to quicken their speed, and especially to the glittering prize on the distant goal. Thus the heathen poet, "When they drive their chariots in a race, the rider of the chariot presseth to overtake those horses that are before him, but continues, and never looks after him that is behind, and outrun by him," *Hor. lib. i. Sat. 1.*]

Observe, The best men in the world will readily own their imperfection in the present state. We have not yet attained, are not already perfect; there is still much wanting in all our duties, and graces, and comforts. If Paul had not attained to perfection, who had reached to so high a pitch of holiness, much less have we. Again, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended," ver. 13. *Οὐ λογιζομαι*, I make this judgment of the case; I thus reason with myself. Observe, They who think they have grace enough, it is a sign they have little enough, and that they have none at all; because wherever there is true grace there is a desire of more grace, and a pressing towards the perfection of grace. Observe here,

1. What the apostle's actions were under this conviction. Considering that he had not already attained, and had not apprehended, he pressed forward; "I follow after," ver. 12; *διώκω*, I pursue with vigour, as one following after the game; I endeavour to get more grace, and do more good, and never think I have done enough; "If that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." Observe, 1st. From whence our grace comes. From our being apprehended of Christ Jesus. It is not our laying hold of Christ first, but his laying hold of us, which is our happiness and salvation; "We love him, because he first loved us," *1 Jno. iv. 19*. Nor our keeping hold of Christ, but his keeping hold of us, which is our safety. We are "kept by his mighty power through faith unto salvation," *1 Pet. i. 5*. Observe, 2nd. What the happiness of heaven is; it is "to apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Christ." When Christ laid hold of us it was to bring us to heaven; and to apprehend that for which he apprehended us is to attain the perfection of our bliss. He adds farther, ver. 13, "This one thing I do," this was his great care and concern, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before." There is a sinful forgetting of past sins and past mercies, which ought to be remembered for the exercise of constant repentance and thankfulness to God. But he forgot the things which are behind, so as not to be content with present measures of grace. He was still for having more and more; so he reached forth, *ἐπεκτεινόμενος*,—"stretched" himself forwards, bearing towards his point,—expressions of a vehement concern.

2. The apostle's aim in these actions; "I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," ver. 14. He pressed towards the mark. As he who runs a race never takes up short of the end, but is still making forward as fast as he can, so they who have heaven in their eye must still be pressing forward to it in holy desires and hopes, and constant endeavours and preparations. The fitter we grow for heaven the faster we must press towards it. Heaven is called here the mark, because it is that which the mark he designs to hit. "For the prize of the high calling." Observe, That a Christian's calling is a high calling; it is from heaven as its original, and it is to heaven in its tendency. Heaven is "the prize of the high calling," *τὸ βραβεῖον*, the prize we fight for, and run for, and wrestle for; what we aim at in all we do, and will reward all our pains. It is of great use in the Christian course to keep our eye upon heaven. This is proper to give us measures in all our service, and to quicken us every step we take; and it is of God,—from him we are to expect it, "Eternal life is the gift of God," *Rom. vi. 23*; but it is in Christ Jesus, through his hand it must come to us, as it is procured for us by him. There is no getting to heaven as our home but by Christ as our way.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. 16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Wiesinger refer this injunction to their behaviour to one another—murmurings arising from selfishness and pride; Ellicott refers it to murmurings and doubtings respecting God; Scott refers "murmurings" to conduct towards God, "disputings" to conduct towards men.

ii. 17. The apostle regards the pouring out of his blood as probable, and as the completion of the sacrifice of the Gentiles as an offering to God (*Rom. xv. 16*).

The apostle having proposed himself as an example, he urges the Philippians to follow it. Let the same mind be in us which was in blessed Paul. We see here how he was minded; let us be like-minded, and set our hearts upon Christ and heaven, as he did.

First, He shews that this was the thing wherein all good Christians were agreed, to make Christ all in all, and set their hearts upon another world. This is that "whereto we have already attained." However good Christians may differ in their sentiments about other things, this is what they are agreed in, that Christ is a Christian's all—that to win Christ, and to be found in him, is our happiness both here and hereafter; and therefore, "let us walk by the same rule," and "mind the same thing." Having made Christ our all to us, to us to live must be Christ. Let us agree to press towards the mark, and make heaven our end.

Secondly, That this is a good reason why Christians who differ in lesser matters should yet bear with one another, because they are agreed in the main matter. "If in any thing you be otherwise minded." If you differ from one another, and are not of the same judgments as to meats, and days, and other matters of the Jewish law, yet you must not judge one another, while you all meet now in Christ as your centre, and hope to meet shortly in heaven as your home. As for other matters of difference lay no great stress upon them, "God shall reveal even this unto you." Whatever it is wherein you differ you must wait till God give you a better understanding, which he will do in his due time. In the mean time, as far as we have attained, we must go together in the ways of God, join together in all the great things in which we are agreed, and wait for farther light in the lesser things wherein we differ.

[Thirdly, That those who were "perfect," or proficient in Christian knowledge and experience, should pursue the same course with himself, assuring them that while so engaged, namely, intent on making farther progress in the Divine life, according to gospel rules and precepts, clearer light would come to them on other and doubtful matters. Note, Obedience is the best path to knowledge; "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God:" see *Mat. xxv. 22, 23.*]

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example. 18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) 20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

He closes the chapter with warnings and exhortations.

First, He warns them against following the examples of seducers and evil teachers; ver. 18, 19, "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." Observe, There are many called by Christ's name who yet are enemies to Christ's cross, and the design and intention of it. Their walk is a surer evidence what they are than their profession; "By their fruits you shall know them," *Mat. vii. 20*. The apostle warns people against such, 1st. Very frequently; "I have told you often." We so little heed the warnings given us that we have need to have them repeated; "To write the same things is safe," ver. 1. 2nd. Feelingly and affectionately; "I now tell you weeping." Paul was upon proper occasions a weeping preacher, as Jeremiah was a weeping prophet. Observe, That an old sermon may be preached with new affections; what we say often we may say again, if we say it affectionately, and are ourselves under the power of it. He gives us the characters of those who were the enemies of the cross of Christ.

[By "enemies to the cross of Christ" he means particularly to the doctrine of the cross, or of salvation by a simple and entire dependence on his vicarious sufferings and merits, which they sought to subvert and render useless by directing the attention of believers to the ceremonial law of Moses, and so weakening and dividing their trust in Christ as to render it nugatory, *Gal. ii. 16–21.*]

1. Whose God is their belly; "that is, they mind nothing but their sensual appetites. A wretched idol it is, and a scandal for any, but especially for Christians, to sacrifice the favour of God, the peace of their conscience, and their eternal happiness to it. Gluttons and drunkards make a god of their belly, and all their care is to please it, and make provision for it. The same observance which good people give to God epicures give to their appetites. Of such he says, "They serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies," *Rom. xvi. 18.*

2. They "glory in their shame." They not only sin but brag of it, and glory in that which they ought to be ashamed of. Sin is the sinner's shame, especially when it is gloried in. They value themselves for what is their blemish and reproach.

3. They "mind earthly things." Christ came by his cross "to crucify the world to us and us to the world;" and they who mind earthly things act directly contrary to the cross of Christ, and this great design of it. They relish earthly things, and have no relish of the things which are spiritual and heavenly; they set their hearts and affections on earthly things; they love them, and even dote upon them, and have a confidence and complacency in them. He gives them this character to shew how absurd it would be for Christians to follow the example of such, or be led away by them. And to deter us all from it he reads their doom.

[These "earthly things" include the ceremonies and observances of the Jewish law, about which they were so much concerned, and in which they gloried; but which were in truth their shame, as it shewed them to be in reality ignorant of, and inattentive to, those spiritual and heavenly things which the Gospel of Christ brought before them, and which as far exceeded the former, that were but an administration of them, as the soul the body, or the substance

ii. 21. "All seek their own;" all those then with the apostle; who these were cannot be ascertained, but Wiesinger, by comparison of various passages and dates, proves that none of those mentioned in *Col. iv.* or *Philemon* were likely to be included in the censure.

ii. 30. No blame is intended to the Philippians, but rather the apostle commends Epaphroditus to their love. "That which you would have done if you could, he did for you; therefore receive him with all joy" (*Alford*).

its shadow. Farther, this glorying was their shame, as it took them off from the true ground of dependence for salvation with God, and the glorious future inheritance of the saints, namely, the sacrifice of Christ, to remain resting for their dignity and happiness on what, in comparison of those, "were weak and beggarly elements" *Gal. vi. 14, 15.*

4. "Whose end is destruction." Their way seems pleasant, but death and hell are at the end of it. "What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death," *Rom. vi. 21.* It is dangerous following them, though it is going down the stream; for if we choose their way we have reason to fear their end. Perhaps he alludes to the total destruction of the Jewish nation.

[Has he not here an eye to what he had said before of these men, *ch. i. 29*? They accounted Christians, for forsaking these ceremonies, and resting solely in Christ, to be in danger of destruction; but for endeavouring to wear them off from this, and neglecting it themselves, they would meet with that very destruction to which they doomed the sincere Philippians. It is a dreadful thing to oppose directly or indirectly the doctrine of salvation by Christ alone.]

Secondly He proposeth himself and his brethren for an example, in opposition to these evil examples. "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them who walk, as you have us for an example," *ver. 17.* Mark them out for your pattern. He explains himself, *ver. 20*, by their regard to Christ and heaven; "For our conversation is in heaven." Observe, Good Christians, even while they are here on earth, have their conversation in heaven. Their citizenship is there, *πολιτεία*; as if he had said, We stand related to that world, and are citizens of the New Jerusalem. This world is not our home, but that is. There our greatest privileges and concerns lie. And because our citizenship is there, our conversation is there; being related to that world we keep up a correspondence with it. The life of a Christian is in heaven, where his Head is, and his home is, and where he hopes to be shortly. He "sets his affections upon things above;" and where his heart is there will his conversation be.

[Thus Augustine views the saints as the *civitas Dei*, which "in *terris peregrina, in caelo fundata est.*" Such also is the view which one of the early fathers takes, in the following beautiful description,— "Christians are not separated from others by country, by language, or by customs. They are confined to no particular cities, use no particularities of speech, adopt no singularity of life. Dwelling in their cities, as every man's lot is cast, following the customs of each country in dress, and diet, and manner of life, they yet display the wonderful nature of their peculiar polity. They dwell in their own country but as sojourners; they abide on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. In a word, they are in the world what the soul is in the body. The soul is diffused through all the members of the body, and Christians through the cities of the earth. But the soul, though dwelling in the body, is not of the body; and Christians dwelling in the world are not of the world." The epistle which contains the *Acts of Polycarp's Martyrdom* is addressed from "the church of God which sojourns at Smyrna, to that which sojourns at Philippi, and in all places whither the holy catholic church sojourns throughout the world."]

The apostle had pressed them to follow him and other ministers of Christ. Why, might they say, you are a company of poor, despised, persecuted people, who make no figure, and pretend to no advantages in the world; who will follow you? Nay, saith he, but our conversation is in heaven. We have a near relation and a great pretension to the other world; and are not so mean and despicable as we are represented. It is good having fellowship with those who have fellowship with Christ, and conversation with those whose conversation is in heaven.

1. Because we look for the Saviour from thence; *ver. 20.* "From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." He is not here, he is ascended, he is "entered within the veil" for us; and we expect his second coming from thence to gather in all the citizens of that New Jerusalem to himself.

2. Because at the second coming of Christ we expect to be happy and glorified there. There is good reason to have our conversation in heaven, not only because Christ is now there, but because we hope to be there shortly. "Who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," *ver. 21.* There is a glory reserved for the bodies of the saints, which they will be instated in at the resurrection. The body is now at the best a vile body, *τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινότητος ἡμῶν*, "the body of our humiliation;" it hath its rise and original from the earth, it is supported out of the earth, and is subject to many diseases, and to death at last. Besides, it is often the occasion and instrument of much sin, which is called "the body of this death," *Rom. vii. 24.* Or, it may be understood of its vileness when it lies in the grave. At the resurrection it will be found a vile body, resolved to rottenness and dust, "the dust will return to the earth as it was," *Ecc. xii. 7*; but it will be made a glorious body, and not only raised again to life, but raised to great advantage. Observe, 1st. The sample of this change, and that is the glorious body of Christ, who, when he was transfigured upon the mount, "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light," *Mat. xvii. 2.* He went to heaven clothed with a body, that he might take possession of the inheritance of our nature, and be not only the "firstborn from the dead," but the "firstborn of the children of the resurrection." We shall be "conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren," *Rom. viii. 29.* Observe, 2nd. The power by which this change will be wrought. "According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." There is an efficacy of power, an exceeding greatness of power, and the "working of mighty power," *Eph. i. 19.* It is matter of comfort to us that he can "subdue all things to himself," and sooner or later will bring over all into his interest. And the resurrection will be wrought by this power: "I will raise him up at the last day," *Jno. vi. 44.* Let this confirm our faith of the resurrection, that we not only have the Scriptures, which assure us it shall be, but we know the power of God, which can effect it, *Mat. xxii. 29.* As Christ's resurrection was a glorious instance of the Divine power, and therefore "he is declared to be Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead," *Rom. i. 4*, so will our resurrection be; and his resurrection is a standing evidence as well as pattern of ours. And then all the enemies of the Redeemer's kingdom will be completely conquered; not only "he who had the power of death," that is, the devil, *Heb. ii. 14*, but the "last enemy shall be destroyed," that is, death, *1 Cor. xv. 26.* "Death will be swallowed up in victory," *ver. 24.*

CHAPTER IV.

Exhortations to several Christian duties, as steadfastness, unanimity, joy, &c., *ver. 1—9.* The apostle's grateful acknowledgments of the Philippians' kindness to him, with expressions of his own content, and desire of their good, *ver. 10—19.* He concludes the epistle with praise, salutations, and blessing, *ver. 20—23.*

iii. 2. "Dogs:" the impure (*Rev. xii. 15*). "Concision:" the apostle will not say "circumcision," as this, though now done away in Christ, had still some spiritual teaching; but uses a term of reproach—mere cutting, useless mutilation, on which the "evil workers" insisted as necessary to salvation.

iii. 7. "Gain to me:" these were gains to him as a Jew, giving him influence.

iii. 8. "Win Christ:" not the favour of Christ, as Grotius, but



HEREFORE, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. 2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life. 4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

The apostle begins the chapter with exhortations to divers Christian duties:

First. To steadfastness in our Christian profession, *ver. 1.* It is inferred from the close of the foregoing chapter, "Therefore stand fast," &c. Seeing our conversation is in heaven, and we look for the Saviour to come from thence, and fetch us thither, therefore let us stand fast. Note, The believing hope and prospect of eternal life should engage us to be steady, and even, and constant in our Christian course. Observe here.

1st. The compellations are very endearing. "My brethren dearly beloved, and longed for, my joy and crown;" and again, "My dearly beloved." Thus he expresses the pleasure he took in them, the kindness he had for them, to convey his exhortations to them with so much the greater advantage. He looked upon them as his brethren, though he was a great apostle; "All we are brethren." There is difference of gifts, graces, and attainments, yet being renewed by the same spirit, after the same image, we are brethren; as the children of the same parents, though of different ages, statures, and complexions. Being brethren, First. He loved them, and loved them dearly. "Dearly beloved," and again, "My dearly beloved." Warm affections become ministers and Christians towards one another. Brotherly love must always go along with the brotherly relation. Secondly. He loved them, and longed for them; longed to see them, and hear from them; longed for their welfare, and was earnestly desirous of it. "I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ," *ch. i. 8.* Thirdly. He loved them, and rejoiced in them. They were his joy; he had no greater joy than to hear of their spiritual health and prosperity. "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in the truth," *2 Jno. 4*; *3 Jno. 4.* Fourthly. He loved them, and gloried in them. They were his crown as well as his joy. Never was proud ambitious man more pleased with the ensigns of honour than Paul was with the evidences of the sincerity of their faith and obedience. All this is to prepare his way to greater regard.

2nd. The exhortation itself. "So stand fast in the Lord." Being in Christ, they must stand fast in him, that is, even and steady in their walk with him, and close and constant unto the end. Or, to "stand fast in the Lord" is to stand fast in his strength, and by his grace; not trusting in ourselves, and disclaiming any sufficiency of our own. We must be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," *Eph. vi. 10.* So stand fast, so as you have done hitherto; stand fast unto the end, so as you are my beloved, and my joy, and crown; so stand fast, as those in whose welfare and perseverance I am so nearly interested and concerned.

Secondly. He exhorts them to unanimity and mutual assistance; *ver. 2, 3.* "I beseech Euodias and Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." This is directed to some particular persons. Sometimes there is need of applying the general precepts of the Gospel to particular persons and cases. Euodias and Syntyche it seems were at variance, either one with the other or with the church; either upon a civil account,—it may be they were engaged in a lawsuit,—or upon a religious account, it may be they were of different opinions and sentiments. Pray, saith he, desire them from me to be of "the same mind in the Lord;" that is, that they will keep the peace, and live in love; be of the same mind one with another, not thwarting and contradicting; and that they be of the same mind with the rest of the church, not acting in opposition to them. Then he exhorts to mutual assistance, *ver. 3*, and that he directs to particular persons. "I intreat thee also, true yoke-fellow." Who this person was he calls "true yoke-fellow" is uncertain. Some think Epaphroditus, who is supposed to be one of the pastors of the church of the Philippians. Others think it was some eminent good woman, perhaps Paul's wife, because he exhorts

as Bishop Hall, "to lay fast hold of him, to receive him into our bosoms, and so to make him ours and ourselves his, that we may be joined to him as our head."

iii. 10. "Know him:" see 2 Pet. i. 8. "Power of his resurrection:" "As securing our final justification, our triumph over death, and participation in his glory" (Ellicott). See Col. iii. 1—4. "Conformable:" "Sharing the likeness of his death" (Conybeare). See Gal. ii. 20. "There should be no greater comfort to Christian persons than to be

his yoke-fellow to help the women which laboured with him. Whoever was the yoke-fellow with the apostle, must be a yoke-fellow too with his friends. It seems there were women who laboured with Paul in the Gospel; not in the public ministry, for the apostle expressly forbids that, 1 Tim. ii. 12, "I suffer not a woman to teach;" but by entertaining the ministers, visiting the sick, instructing the ignorant, convincing the erroneous. Thus women may be helpful to ministers in the work of the Gospel. Now, says the apostle, do thou help them. They who help others should be helped themselves when there is occasion. Help them, that is, join with them, strengthen their hands, encourage them in their difficulties.

[This "true yoke-fellow" is generally supposed to have been the husband of one of these women, the word being in the masculine, and probably an officer in the church. He was to help them to come to an agreement, (who so fit to advise and counsel for that purpose), either in co-operating with the church in the same work of Christian zeal as heretofore, or of opposition to Judaizing teachers. Observe, Men of standing in the church must interfere to prevent differences from impeding Christian affection and co-operation, as the strong ought to help the weak, that they may be kept from falling, and made to "stand fast in the Lord."]

"With Clement also, and other my fellow-labourers." Paul had a kindness for all his fellow-labourers; and as he had found the benefit of their assistance, he concluded how comfortable it would be to them to have the assistance of others. Of his fellow-labourers he saith, "Whose names are in the book of life;" that is, either they were chosen of God from all eternity, or registered and enrolled in the corporation and society to which the privilege of eternal life belongs, alluding to the custom among the Jews and Gentiles of registering the inhabitants or the freemen of a city. So we read of their "names being written in heaven," Lu. x. 20; and "not blotting his name out of the book of life," Rev. iii. 5; and of "them who are written in the Lamb's book of life," Rev. xxi. 27. Observe, There is a book of life; there are names in that book, and not characters and conditions only. We cannot search into that book, or know whose names are written there, but we may in a judgment of charity conclude, that they who labour in the Gospel, and are faithful to the interest of Christ and souls, have their names in the book of life.

[Does not the "book of life" refer here to the custom of enrolling the names of citizens who have conducted themselves well, with some mark of distinction and emphasis affixed to their names, as having to receive particular commendation and honour in the future assembling of them for the purpose of reviewing their conduct? All Christians have their names "written in heaven," but none with more distinct recognition than those that have been eminently pious and useful. Note, Co-operators with zealous and useful ministers will share in their recompense.]

Secondly, He exhorts to holy joy and delight in God. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice," ver. 4. All our joy must terminate in God, and our thoughts of God must be delightful thoughts. "Delight thyself in the Lord," Ps. xxxvii. 4, and "in the multitude of our thoughts within us" (grievous and afflicting thoughts), "his comforts delight our souls," Ps. xciv. 19, and our "meditation of him is sweet," Ps. civ. 34. Observe, It is our duty and privilege to rejoice in God, and to rejoice in him always, at all times, in all conditions, even when we suffer for him, or are afflicted by him. We must not think the worse of him or of his ways for the hardships we meet with in his service. There is enough in God to furnish us with matter of joy in the worst circumstance on earth. He had said it before, ch. iii. 1, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." Here he saith it again, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." Joy in God is a duty of great consequence in the Christian life; and Christians need to be again and again called to it. If good men have not a continual feast, it is their own fault.

[Joy is a duty at all times, to be moderated in a degree by circumstances that may shade it, when sorrow is allowable, ("If needs be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations," but not to be wholly superseded. As the Christian's cause for "joy in the Lord" is greater at all times than ever it can be for sorrow, such a preponderance of sorrow as excludes joy is a sin. Note, The sun of spiritual joy must not cease to give its light when covered with the darkest cloud, and to make it pierce through it.)]

Fourthly, We are here exhorted to candour, and gentleness, and good temper towards our brethren. "Let your moderation be known to all men," ver. 5, that is, in things indifferent do not run into extremes; avoid bigotry and animosity, judge charitably concerning one another. The word *moderation* signifies "a good disposition towards other men;" and this moderation is explained, Rom. xiv. Some understand it of patient bearing afflictions, or sober enjoyment of worldly good; and so it well agrees with the following verse. The reason is, "the Lord is at hand." The consideration of our Master's approach, and our final account, should keep us from smiting our fellow-servants, support us under present sufferings, and moderate our affections to outward good. He will take vengeance on your enemies, and reward your patience.

[Both the parts of this verse shew that he considers them as in a state of persecution; "moderation" (meekness or gentleness, as the word properly imports,) being peculiarly suited to that state, and the "Lord's being at hand" a cogent motive to excite them to it. And as the adversaries against whom he particularly encourages them were the Jews or Judaizing teachers, the Lord's being at hand may well enough be interpreted of the overthrow which the Lord would soon bring upon the Jews, and which by the destruction of the temple, and the abolition of the greatest part of the Jewish service, would in a manner put an end to their contest, as well as be an instance of vengeance on the virulent enemies of the Christian cause.]

Fifthly, Here is a caution against disquieting, perplexing care; ver. 16, "Be careful for nothing;" *μὴδὲν μεριμνᾶτε*, the same expression with that, Mat. vi. 25, "Take no thought for your life;" that is, anxious care and distracting thought in the wants and difficulties of life. Observe, That it is the duty and interest of Christians to live without care. There is a care of diligence, which is our duty, and consists in a wise forecast and due concern; but there is a care of diffidence and distrust, which is our sin and folly, and which only perplexes and distracts the mind. "Be careful for nothing," so as by your care to distrust God, and unfit yourselves for his service.

Sixthly, As a sovereign antidote against perplexing care, he recommends to us constant prayer. "In every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." Observe, 1. We must not only keep up stated times for prayer, but we must pray upon every particular emergency. "In every thing by prayer." When any thing burthens our spirits, we must ease our minds by prayer; when our affairs are perplexed or distressed, we must seek direction and support. 2. We must join thanksgiving with our prayers and supplications. We must not only seek supplies of good, but own receipts of mercy. Grateful acknowledgments of what we have argue a right disposition of mind, and are prevailing motives for farther blessings. 3. Prayer is offering up our desires to God, or making them known to him. "Let your requests be made known to God." Not that God needs to be told either our wants or desires, for he knows them better than we can tell him; but he will know them from us, and have us shew our regards and concern, express our value of the mercy, and sense of our dependence on him. 4. The

effect of this will be "the peace of God keeping our hearts," ver. 7. "The peace of God," that is, the comfortable sense of our reconciliation to God, and interest in his favour, and the hope of the heavenly blessedness and enjoyment of God hereafter, "which passeth all understanding," is a greater good than can be sufficiently valued or duly expressed; "It hath not entered into the heart of man," 1 Cor. ii. 9. This peace will "keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus," that is, keep us from sinning under our troubles, and from sinking under them; keep us calm and sedate, without discomposure of passion, and with inward satisfaction. "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee," Isa. xvi. 3.

Seventhly, We are exhorted to get and keep a good name; a name for good things with God and good men. "Whatsoever things are true and honest," ver. 8. A regard to truth in our words and engagements, and to decency and becomingness in our behaviour, suitable to our circumstances and condition of life. "Whatsoever things are just and pure," agreeable to the rules of justice and righteousness in all our dealings with men, and without the impurity or mixture of sin. "Whatsoever things are lovely and of good report," that is, amiable, and will render us beloved, and will make us well spoken of, as well as well thought of, by others. "If there is any virtue, if there is any praise," any thing really virtuous in any kind and worthy of commendation. Observe, 1. The apostle would have the Christians learn any thing which was good of their heathen neighbours. "If there be any virtue, think of these things;" imitate them in what is truly excellent among them, and let them not outdo you in any instance of goodness. We should not be ashamed to learn any good thing of bad men, or those who have not our advantages. 2. Virtue hath its praise, and will have. We should walk in all the ways of virtue, and abide therein; and then, whether our praise be of men or no, it will be of God, Rom. ii. 29.

In these things he proposeth himself to them for an example; ver. 9, "Those things which you have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do." Observe, Paul's doctrine and life were of a piece. What they saw in him was the same thing with what they heard from him. He could propose himself as well as his doctrine to their imitation. It gives a great force to what we say to others when we can appeal to what they have seen in us. And this is the way to have the God of peace with us, to keep close to our duty to him. "The Lord is with us while we are with him."

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. 14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. 15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning



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giving and receiving, but ye only. 16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. 17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. 18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of

made like unto Christ, by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses. . . . Our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with Christ, and our door to enter into eternal life is gladly to die with Christ" ("Visitation of the Sick").

iii. 11. "If by," &c.: not an expression of doubt, but of humility. "The resurrection:" the first resurrection (1 Thess. iv. 16; Rev. xx. 6).

iii. 12. The word rendered by "attain" in verses 11 and 12 in the

Authorised Version is not the same word in the Greek. "Already won," "already acquired" or "received," would in this verse be better." From verses 8—11 "it might almost seem as if he represented the whole work done, the victory already gained, the goal actually reached. It might have been said, 'This man exhibits himself to us as a specimen and model of absolute perfection.' . . . To disclaim such an assumption, to state explicitly what he is not, as well as what he is; to show what a Christian may say of himself, and

Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. 19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

In these verses we have the thankful grateful acknowledgment which the apostle makes of the kindness of the Philippians in sending him a present for his support, now he was a prisoner at Rome. And here,

First. He takes occasion from hence to acknowledge their former kindness to him, and to make mention of them, ver. 15, 16. Paul had a grateful spirit; for though what his friends did for him was nothing in comparison of what he deserved from them, and the obligations he had laid upon them, yet he speaks of their kindness as if it had been a piece of generous charity, when it was really far short of a just debt. If they had each of them contributed half their estates to him they had not given him too much, since they owed to him even their own souls; and yet, when they sent a small present to him, how kindly doth he take it, how thankfully doth he mention it, even in this epistle which was to be left upon record, and read in the churches through all ages! so that, wherever this epistle shall be read, there shall this which they did to Paul be told for a memorial of them. Surely never was present so well repaid. He minds them that "in the beginning of the Gospel no church communicated with him as to giving and receiving, but they only," ver. 15. They not only maintained him comfortably while he was with them, but when he departed from Macedonia they sent tokens of their kindness after him, and this when no other church did so besides. None but they sent after him their carnal things, in consideration of what they had reaped of his spiritual things. In works of charity we are ready to ask what other people do, but the church of the Philippians never considered that. It redounded so much the more to their honour that they were the only church who were thus just and generous. "Even in Thessalonica" (when he was departing from Macedonia) "you sent once and again to my necessity," ver. 15. Observe, 1. It was but little which they sent. They sent only to his necessity, just such things as he had need of; perhaps it was according to their ability; and he did not desire superfluities or dainties. 2. It is an excellent thing to see those to whom God has abounded in the gifts of his grace abounding in grateful returns to his people and ministers, according to their own ability and their necessity. "Ye sent once and again." Many people make it an excuse for their charity, that they have given once; why should the charge come upon them again? But the Philippians "sent once and again;" they oftentimes relieved and refreshed him in his necessities. He makes this mention of their former kindness, not only in his own gratitude, but for their encouragement.

[As what he says here is a tacit reflection on the Thessalonians, so it heightens his commendation of the Philippians. It is therefore a precious reflection which Chrysostom makes upon this place, when he says, this is a great commendation of the Philippians, that when he resided in the metropolis (Thessalonica) he should be supported by a little city (Philippi). That St. Paul was maintained at Thessalonica by his own labour, and not by their contributions, appears from 1 *Thes.* ii. 5, 6-9; 2 *Thes.* iii. 7, 8, 9.]

Secondly. He excuses their neglect of late. It seems for some time they had not sent to inquire after him, or sent him any present; but now at the last their care of him flourished again, ver. 10, like a tree in the spring which seemed all the winter to be quite dead. Now in conformity to the example of his great Master, instead of upbraiding them for their neglect, he makes an excuse for them: "Wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity." How could they lack opportunity, if they had been resolved upon it? they might have sent a messenger on purpose; but the apostle is willing to suppose, in favour of them, that they would have done it, if a fair opportunity had offered. How contrary is this to the carriage of many to their friends, by whom neglects which really are excusable are resented very heinously; when Paul excused that which he had reason enough to resent?

Thirdly. He commends their present liberality. "Notwithstanding ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction," ver. 14. It is a good work to succour and help a good minister in trouble. Here see what is the nature of true Christian sympathy; not only to be concerned for our friends in their troubles, but to do what we can to help them. They communicated with his affliction, in relieving him under it. He who saith, "Be ye warmed, be ye filled, and giveth not those things they have need of, what doth it profit," *Jam.* ii. 16. He rejoiced greatly in it, ver. 10; because it was an evidence of their affection to him, and the success of his ministry among them. When the fruit of their charity abounded towards the apostle, it appeared the fruit of his ministry abounded among them.

["I rejoiced in the Lord greatly." He uses a very skilful way here of commending the generosity of his benefactors, wherein he signifies, not only that they had done their duty, but that the Lord had favoured him by stirring them up to it, and that they had given him much occasion of thankfulness to the Lord; which shews his pious disposition, who in such things took special notice of the Lord's hand and kindness to him.]

Fourthly. He takes care to obviate the ill use some might make of his taking so much notice of what was sent him. It did not proceed either from discontent and distrust, ver. 11; or from covetousness and love of the world, ver. 12.

1. It did not come from discontent or distrust of Providence. "Not that I speak in respect of want," ver. 11; not in respect of any want he felt, or of any want he feared: as to the former he was content with the little he had, and that satisfied him; as to the latter he depended upon the providence of God to provide for him from day to day, and that satisfied him; so that he did not speak in respect of want any way. "For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." We have here an account of Paul's learning, not that which he got at the foot of Gamaliel, but that which he got at the feet of Christ. He had learned to be content; and that was a lesson he had as much need to learn as most men, considering the hardships and sufferings with which he was exercised. He was in bonds and imprisonments and necessities often; but in all he had learned to be content, that is, to bring his mind to his condition, and make the best of it. "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound," ver. 12. This is a special act of grace, to accommodate ourselves to every condition of life, and carry an equal temper of mind through all the varieties of our state. 1st. To accommodate ourselves to an afflicted condition; to know how to be abased, how to be hungry, how to suffer want, so as not to be overcome by the temptations of it, either to lose our comfort in God, or distrust his providence, or to take any indirect course for our own

supply. 2nd. To a prosperous condition; to know how to abound, how to be full, so as not to be proud, or secure, or luxurious. And this is as hard a lesson as the other; for the temptations of fullness and prosperity are not less than those of affliction and want. But how must we learn it? "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me," ver. 13. We have need of strength from Christ to enable us to perform not only those duties which are purely Christian, but even those which are the fruit of moral virtue. We need his strength to teach us to be content in every condition. The apostle had seemed to boast of himself and of his own strength, "I know how to be abased," ver. 12; but here he transfers all the praise to Christ. What, do I talk of knowing how to be abased, and how to abound? it is only "through Christ who strengtheneth me," that I can do it, not in my own strength. [Hence the fathers observe three things. 1. That the art of contentment requires much learning, exercise, and meditation. 2. That it is as difficult to learn how to be full as to be hungry; abundance having destroyed more than penury, and exposed them to more pernicious lusts. 3. That our proficiency in this, or any other virtue, is to be ascribed, not to ourselves, but to the Divine assistance.] So we are required to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," *Eph.* vi. 10, and to be "strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus," 2 *Tim.* ii. 1; and we are "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man," *Eph.* iii. 16. The word in the original is a participle of the present tense, ἐν τῷ ἰδυναιμένῳ με Χριστῷ, and denotes a present and continued act, as if he had said, Through Christ who is strengthening me, and does continually strengthen me; it is by his constant and renewed strength I am enabled to act in every thing; I wholly depend upon him for all my spiritual power.

2. It did not come from covetousness, or an affection to worldly wealth. "Not because I desire a gift," ver. 17; that is, I welcome your kindness, not because it adds to my enjoyments, but because it adds to your account. He desired it not so much for his own sake, but theirs. "I desire fruit that may abound to your account;" that is, that you may be enabled to make such a good use of your worldly possessions that you may give an account of them with joy. It is not with any design to draw more from you, but to encourage you to such an exercise of beneficence as will meet with a glorious reward hereafter. For my part, saith he, "I have all, and abound," ver. 18. What can a man desire more than enough? I do not desire a gift for the gift's sake, for, "I have all, and abound." They sent him a small token, and he desired no more; he was not solicitous for a present superfluity, or a future supply: "I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you." Note, A good man will soon have enough of this world; not only of living in it, but of receiving from it. A covetous worldling, if he has never so much, would still have more; but a heavenly Christian, though he hath little, hath enough.

Fifthly. The apostle assures them that God did accept, and would recompense, their kindness to him.

1. He did accept it: "It is an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." Not a sacrifice of atonement, for none makes atonement for sin but Christ; but a sacrifice of acknowledgment, and well-pleasing to God. It was more acceptable to God as it was the fruit of their grace, than it was to Paul as it was the supply of his want. "With such sacrifice God is well pleased," *Heb.* xiii. 16.

2. He would recompense it; "But my God shall supply all your wants according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus," ver. 19. He doth as it were draw a bill upon the exchequer in heaven, and leaves it to God to make them amends for the kindness they had shewed him. He shall do it not only as your God, but as my God, who takes what is done to me as done to himself. You supplied my needs, according to your poverty; and he shall supply yours, according to his riches. But still it is by Christ Jesus; through him we have grace to do that which is good, and through him we must expect the reward of it; not of debt, but of grace; for the more we do for God, the more we are indebted to him, because we receive the more from him.

20 Now unto God and our Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen. 21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. 22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household. 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

The apostle concludes the epistle in these verses.

First. With praises to God; "Now unto God and our Father *be* glory for ever and ever, Amen," ver. 20. Observe, 1. That God is to be considered by us as our Father; "Now unto God and our Father." It is a great condescension and favour in God to own the relation of Father to sinners, and allow us to say to him, "Our Father," and it is a title peculiar to the gospel dispensation; and it is a great privilege and encouragement to us to consider him as our Father, as one so nearly related, and who bears so tender an affection towards us. We should look upon God, under all our weakness and fears, not as a tyrant or an enemy, but as a Father, who is disposed to pity us, and help us. 2. We must ascribe glory to God as a Father; the glory of his own excellence, and of all his mercy unto us. We must thankfully own the receipt of all from him, and give the praise of all to him. And our praise must be constant and perpetual; it must be "Glory for ever and ever."

Secondly. With salutations to his friends at Philippi. "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus," ver. 21; that is, give my hearty love to all the Christians in your parts. He desires remembrances not only to the bishops and deacons, and the church in general, but to every particular saint. Paul had a kind affection to all good Christians.

Thirdly. He sends salutations from those who were at Rome. "The brethren who are with me salute you," that is, the ministers and all the saints here send their affectionate remembrances to you. "Chiefly they who are of Cæsar's household," the Christian converts who belong to the emperor's court. Observe, 1. There were saints in Cæsar's household. Though Paul was imprisoned at Rome for preaching the Gospel, by the emperor's command, yet there were some Christians in his own family. The Gospel early obtained among some of the rich and great. Perhaps the apostle fared the better, and received some favour by the means of his friends at court. 2. "Chiefly they, &c." Observe, That they being bred at court were more complaisant than the rest. See what an ornament to religion sanctified civility is.

Fourthly. The apostolical benediction as usual. "The grace of our Lord Jesus *be* with you all, Amen;" that is, the free favour and goodwill of Christ *be* your portion and happiness.

what he cannot say consistently with true humility, is the object of the paragraph before us. "Do not suppose me to mean that, when I became a Christian, I at once received, or that I have even now received, the whole thing aimed at and proposed to me" (Vaughan, "Lectures on Philippians").

iii. 20. "Conversation;" better translated by "country" or "state;" heaven is the country to which, as Christians, we belong; the spiritual constitution which we acknowledge (Gal. iv. 26; Eph. ii. 19).

iii. 21. Not "our vile body," but "the body of our humiliation" (Wickliffe, Rheims, Alford Ellicott, Wiesinger, &c.). "Christ once

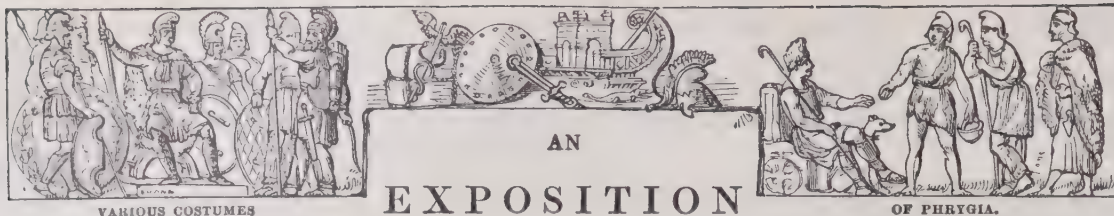
had such a humiliation, and has passed through it to his glory, and he shall change us so as to be like him" (Alford).

iv. 1. See 1 *Thess.* ii. 19.

iv. 3. Not "those women," &c., as Authorised Version, but "them"—i.e., Euodias and Syntyche. "Help them (to be reconciled), for they strove earnestly in the work of the glad tidings with me" (Conybeare).

iv. 5. "Moderation:" "The soul of law, the life of justice, and the spirit of right" (Daniel, quoted by Trench).

iv. 8. "Whatever virtue there is, whatever praise." "Praise, the companion of virtue" (Erasmus).



ST. PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

COLOSSE was a considerable city of Phrygia, and probably not far from Laodicea and Hierapolis; we find these three mentioned together, *ch. iv. 13*. It is now buried in ruins, and the memory of it chiefly preserved in this epistle. The design of the epistle is to warn them of the danger of the Jewish zealots, who pressed the necessity of observing the ceremonial law, and to fortify them against the mixture of the Gentile philosophy with their Christian principles. He professes a great satisfaction in their steadfastness and constancy, and encourages them to perseverance. It was written about the same time with the epistles to the *Ephesians* and *Philippians*, A.D. 62, and in the same place, while he was now prisoner at Rome. He was not idle in his confinement, and the word of God was not bound. This epistle, like that to the Romans, was written to those whom he had never seen, nor had any personal acquaintance with. The church planted at Colosse was not by Paul's ministry, but by the ministry of Epaphras, or Epaphroditus, an evangelist, one whom he delegated to preach the Gospel among the Gentiles; and yet, I. There was a flourishing church at Colosse, and one which was eminent and famous among the churches. One would have thought none should have come to be flourishing churches but they which Paul himself had planted; but here was a flourishing church planted by Epaphras. God is sometimes pleased to make use of the ministry of those who are of less note, and lower gifts, for the doing great service to his church. God uses what hands he pleases, and is not tied to those of note, that the excellence of the power may appear to be of God, and not of men, *2 Cor. iv. 7*. II. Though Paul had not the planting of this church, yet he did not therefore neglect it; nor, in writing his epistles, does he make any difference between that and other churches. The Colossians, who were converted by the ministry of Epaphras, were as dear to him, and he as much concerned for their welfare, as the Philippians, or any others who were converted by his ministry. Thus he put an honour upon an inferior minister, and teaches us not to be selfish, nor think all that honour lost which goes beside ourselves. We see, in his example, not to think it a disparagement to us to water what others have planted, or build upon the foundation which others have laid: as he himself, as a wise master-builder, laid the foundation, and another builded thereon, *1 Cor. iii. 10*.

[III. The epistle was directed against the tenets and practices of certain false teachers among them. Who these were is a point not satisfactorily determined. It is most probable that they were partly superstitious Judaizing teachers, who diligently inculcated not only the Mosaic laws, but also the absurd notions of the Rabbins; and partly converts from Gentilism, who blended Platonic notions with the doctrines of the Gospel. It is well known that the Platonists entertained singular ideas concerning demons, whom they represented as carrying men's prayers to God, and bringing back the blessings supplicated; and the doctrine of the Jews concerning angels was nearly the same. It appears from the epistle itself that these false teachers inculcated the worship of angels, together with abstinence from animal food, observance of Jewish festivals, mortification of the body by long fasting, and other superstitious rites of the same nature. The apostle waters with this epistle the plants of heavenly faith and love in the Colossians, to preserve them from being weakened and injured by these tares which the enemy had sown amongst them. Paul's prison was a common receptacle out of which have issued those living springs which water and refresh the city of God, and will furnish it to the end of the world with the streams it needs for its irrigation.—L.]

A.D. 64.

CHAPTER I.

The inscription as usual, ver. 1, 2. His thanksgiving to God for what he had heard concerning them—their faith, love, and hope, ver. 3—8. He prays for their knowledge, fruitfulness, and strength, ver. 9—11; gives them an admirable summary of the Christian doctrine concerning the operation of the Spirit, the person of the Redeemer, the work of redemption, and the preaching of it in the Gospel, ver. 12—29.



PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, 2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The inscription of this epistle is much the same with the rest, only it is observable, An apostle is a prime minister in the kingdom of Christ, immediately called by Christ, and extraordinarily qualified. Their work was peculiarly to plant the Christian church, and confirm the Christian doctrine. He attributes this not to his own merit, strength, or sufficiency, but to the free grace and goodwill of God. He thought himself engaged to do his utmost as an apostle, because he was made so by the will of God.

Secondly. He joins Timothy in commission with himself, which is another instance of his humility; and, though he elsewhere calls him his son, *2 Tim. ii. 1*, yet he here calls him his brother, which is an example to the elder and more

eminent ministers to look upon the younger and more obscure as their brethren, and to treat them accordingly with kindness and respect.

Thirdly. He calls the Christians at Colosse "saints and faithful brethren in Christ." As all good ministers, so all good Christians are brethren one to another, who stand in a near relation, and owe a mutual love. And towards God they must be saints, consecrated to his honour, and sanctified by his grace, bearing his image, and aiming at his glory. And in both these, as saints to God, and as brethren to one another, they must be faithful. Faithfulness runs through every character and relation of the Christian life, and is the crown and glory of them all.

"Brethren in Christ." Observe the superiority of this Christian brotherhood to natural consanguinity. This arises from a relation in common to one human parent, producing a family likeness and agreement, and a reciprocal affection and attachment; but that from a relation in common to one more than human,—Divine as well as human,—producing a Divine resemblance and agreement, and an affection, therefore, as superior to the other as the Spirit to the flesh, and the Divine to the human. When the true spirit of Christianity revives in the church, it will be seen in nothing more than in the union of sects in love. The difference between Christian and no Christian will be the great line of distinction and separation; that between Christian and Christian will, by the comparison, be lost sight of and vanish into insignificance. Happy the period when all Christians shall love one another as brethren in Christ!—L.]

Fourthly. The apostolical benediction is the same as usual. "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." He wishes them grace and peace, the free favour of God, and all the blessed fruits of it; all kinds of spiritual blessings, and that "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ;" jointly from both, and distinctly from each, as in the former epistle.

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, 5 For the hope

* By the Rev. W. Harris. Additional Notes from Ferguson's Commentary; and by Rev. Dr. Leifchild, London, marked L.

Introductory.—Of the genuineness of this epistle there were no doubts in ancient times, and, according to Alford and Ellicott, those urged in modern times are not such as to deserve serious consideration. Such as they are they have been completely answered by Davidson, De Wette, and others. For time and place of writing see Introduction to Ephesians.

i. 2. "Grace" in general signifies 'favour,' 'mercy,' 'bounty'; in particular it signifies a gift, more especially a 'spiritual gift,'

and in a yet more limited sense the gift of sanctification, or of such spiritual aids as may enable a man to will and do what God has commanded" (Waterland, &c.).

i. 4. "Faith in Christ Jesus:" Christ-centred faith.

i. 5. "Laid up," &c.: this phrase marks its security and futurity. "The word of truth, of the Gospel:" the word of truth, that is, of the Gospel, "in which nothing is contained except truth; in which He who is the truth itself speaks" (Zauchius).

which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; 6 Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth: 7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; 8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

Here he proceeds to the body of the epistle, and begins.

First. With thanksgiving to God for what he had heard concerning them. Though he had no personal acquaintance with them, and knew their state and character only by the reports of others, he gave thanks to God for them that they had embraced the Gospel of Christ, and given proofs of their fidelity to him. Observe, in his prayers for them he gave thanks for them. Thanksgiving ought to be a part of every prayer; and whatever is the matter of our rejoicing, ought to be the matter of our thanksgiving. Observe,

1. Whom he gives thanks to. "To God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." In our thanksgiving we must have an eye to God as God. He is the object of thanksgiving as well as prayer, and as "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," in and through whom all good comes to us. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as well as our Father; and it is matter of encouragement in all our addresses to God that we can look to him as "Christ's Father and our Father, as his God and our God," *Jno. xx. 17.*

2. What he gives thanks to God for. For the graces of God in them, which were evidences of the grace of God towards them. "Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love, you have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven," ver. 4, 5. Faith, hope, and love are the three principal graces in the Christian life, and proper matter of our prayer and thanksgiving. 1st. He gives thanks for their "faith in Christ Jesus." That they were brought to believe in him, and take upon them the profession of his religion, and venture their souls upon his undertaking. 2nd. For their love. Besides the general love which is due to all men, there is a particular love owing to the saints, or those who are of the Christian brotherhood, *1 Pet. ii. 17.* We must love all the saints, bear an extensive kindness and goodwill to good men, notwithstanding lesser points of difference, and many real weaknesses. Some understand it of their charity to the saints in necessity, which is one branch and evidence of Christian love. 3rd. For their hope. "The hope which is laid up for you in heaven," ver. 5. The happiness of heaven is called their hope, because it is "the thing hoped for; looking for the blessed hope," *Tit. ii. 13.* What is laid out upon believers in this world is much, but what is laid up for them in heaven is much more. And we have reason to give thanks to God for the hope of heaven which good Christians have, or their well-grounded expectation of the future glory. Their faith in Christ, and love to the saints, had an eye to the hope laid up for them in heaven. The more we fix our hopes on the recompence of reward in the other world, the more free and liberal shall we be of our earthly treasure upon all occasions of good doing.

Secondly. Having blessed God for these graces, he blesses God for the means of grace which they enjoyed. "Whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel." They had heard in the word of the truth of the Gospel concerning this hope laid up for them in heaven. Observe,

1. That the Gospel is the word of truth, and what we may safely venture our immortal souls upon. It proceeds from the God of truth, and the Spirit of truth, and is a faithful saying. He calls it "the grace of God in truth," ver. 6.

2. It is a great mercy to hear this word of truth, for the great thing we learn from it is the happiness of heaven. "Eternal life is brought to light by the Gospel," *2 Tim. i. 10.* They heard of the hope laid up in heaven in the word of the truth of the Gospel, which is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you," ver. 6. This Gospel is preached, and bringeth forth fruit in other nations: It has come to you, "as it is in all the world" according to the commission, "Go preach the Gospel in all the nations," and "to every creature." Observe, 1st. That all who hear the word of the Gospel ought to bring forth the fruit of the Gospel, that is, be obedient to it, and have their principles and lives formed according to it. This was the doctrine first preached, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance," *Mat. iii. 8;* and our Lord says, "If you know these things, happy are ye if you do them," *Jno. xiii. 17.* 2nd. That wherever the Gospel comes it will bring forth fruit to the honour and glory of God. "It bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you." We mistake if we think to monopolize the comforts and benefits of the Gospel to ourselves. Doth the Gospel bring forth fruit in us? so it doth in others.

["In all the world." The apostle seems here to have an eye chiefly to God's sending the Gospel to the Gentiles generally, without confining it to the Jews. This was much to his purpose, as it led the Colossians to observe that God had now put an end to the covenant of peculiarity formerly made with the Jews, and by sending his Gospel to the Gentiles, far and near, testified he did not expect they should submit to the Jewish law in order to their being accepted as his people; and by this he likewise magnified the gospel covenant, and the grace of it above the law, which reached to but a small canton of the world.—L.]

Thirdly. He takes this occasion to mention the minister by whom they believed; ver. 7. "As ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ." He mentions him with great respect, to engage their love to him.

1. He calls him his fellow-servant, to signify not only that they served the same Master, but that they were engaged in the same work. They were fellow-labourers in the work of the Lord, though one was an apostle and the other an ordinary minister.

2. He calls him his dear fellow-servant. All the servants of Christ ought to love one another; and it is an endearing consideration that they are engaged in the same service.

3. He represents him as one who was a faithful minister of Christ to them who discharged his trust and fulfilled his ministry among them. Observe, Christ is our proper Master, and we are his ministers. He does not say, Who is your minister, but, Who is the "minister of Christ for you." It is by his authority and appointment, though for the people's service.

4. He represents him as one who gave them a good word: "Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit," ver. 8. He recommends him to their affection from the good report he made of their sincere love to Christ and all

his members, which was wrought in them by the Spirit, and is agreeable to the spirit of the Gospel. Faithful ministers are glad to be able to speak well of their people.

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

The apostle proceeds in these verses to pray for them. He heard they were good, and he prayed that they might be better. He was constant in this prayer; "We do not cease to pray for you." It may be he could hear of them but seldom, but he constantly prayed for them. And "desire that you might be filled with the knowledge," &c. Observe, What it is that he begs of God for them.

First. That they might be knowing, intelligent Christians; "Filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Observe, 1. The knowledge of our duty is the best knowledge. Mere empty notion of the greatest truths is insignificant. Our knowledge of the will of God must be always practical; we must know it in order to do it. 2. Our knowledge is then a blessing indeed when it is wisdom; that is, when we know how to apply our general knowledge to our particular occasions, and to suit it to all emergencies. 3. Christians should endeavour to be filled with knowledge; not only to know the will of God, but to know more of it, and to "increase in the knowledge of God," as it is ver. 11, and to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour," *2 Pet. iii. 18.*

Secondly. That their conversation might be good. Good knowledge without a good life will not profit. Our understanding is then a spiritual understanding when we exemplify it in our way of living. "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," ver. 10; that is, as becomes the relation we stand in to him, and the profession we make of him. The agreeableness of our conversation to our religion is pleasing to God, as well as to good men. We walk unto all well-pleasing when we walk in all things according to the will of God. "Being fruitful in every good work." This is what we should aim at. Good words will not do without good works. We must abound in good works, and in every good work; not in some only which are more easy, and suitable, and safe, but in all and every instance of them. There must be a regular, uniform regard to all the will of God. And the more faithful we are in good works, the more we shall increase in the knowledge of God. "He who doth his will shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God," *Jno. vii. 17.*

Thirdly. That they might be strengthened, "strengthened with all might according to his glorious power," ver. 11; that is, fortified against the temptations of Satan, and furnished for all their duty. It is a great comfort to us that he who undertakes to give strength to his people is a God of power, and of glorious power. Where there is spiritual life, there is still need of spiritual strength, strength for all the actions of the spiritual life. To be strengthened is to be furnished by the grace of God for every good work, and fortified by that grace against every evil one. It is to be enabled to do our duty, and still to hold fast our integrity. The blessed Spirit is the author of this strength; for we are "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward man," *Eph. iii. 16.* The word of God is the means of it, by which he conveys it, and it must be fetched in by prayer. It was in answer to earnest prayer the apostle obtained sufficient grace. In praying for spiritual strength we are not straitened in the promises, and therefore should not be straitened in our own hopes and desires. Observe,

1. He prays that they might be strengthened "with might." This seems a tautology; but he means, that they might be mightily strengthened, or strengthened with might derived from another.

2. It is "with all might." It seems unreasonable that a creature should be strengthened with all might, for that is to make him almighty; but he means, with all that might which we have occasion for to enable us to discharge our duty, or preserve our innocence; that grace which is sufficient for us in all the trials of life, and able to "help us in time of need."

3. It is "according to his glorious power." He means, according to the grace of God; but the grace of God in the hearts of believers is the power of God; and there is a glory in this power; it is an excellent and sufficient power. And the communications of strength are not according to our weakness to whom the strength is communicated, but according to his power from whom it is received. When God gives, he gives like himself; and when he strengthens, he strengthens like himself.

4. The special use of this strength was for suffering work; "That you may be strengthened unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." He prays not only that they might be supported under their troubles, but strengthened for them; the reason is, there is work to be done even when we are suffering. And they who are strengthened "according to his glorious power," are strengthened, 1st. To all patience. When patience hath its perfect work, *Jas. i. 4*, then we are strengthened to all patience; when we not only bear our troubles patiently, but receive them as gifts from God, and are thankful for them. To you it is given to suffer, *Phil. i. 29*; when we bear our troubles well, though ever so many, and the circumstances of them ever so aggravating, then we bear them with all patience. And the same reason for bearing one trouble will hold for our bearing another, if it be a good reason. And all patience includes all the kinds of it; not only bearing patience, but waiting patience. 2nd. This patience is even unto longsuffering; that is, patience drawn out to a great length; not only to bear trouble for awhile, but to bear it as long as God pleases to continue it. 3rd. It is with joyfulness. To rejoice in tribulation; to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, and rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer for his name; to have joy as well as patience in the troubles of life. This we could never do by any strength of our own, but as we are strengthened by the grace of God.

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from

knowledge of God is the means by which the believer increases in holiness of living.

i. 11. Not "glorious power," but "power of his glory." "The power which is the attribute of his glory indicates the measure and degree in which the Colossians will be strengthened" (Ellicott).

i. 12. "The inheritance of the saints in light;" the saints enter on the full enjoyment of their inheritance only in heaven, though it may be in part enjoyed here also (1 John i. 5-7).

i. 6. Best MSS. read, "As in all the world it is bringing forth fruit and increasing." "The grace of God in truth:" as it is manifested in the word of truth, the Gospel.

i. 7. "Fellow-servant" of Christ, our common Lord.

i. 8. "Love in the Spirit:" "Towards me and all Christians" (Cornelius à Lapide.)

i. 9. "For this cause:" on account of your love.

i. 10. "By the knowledge," not "in" (Ellicott, Alford). The

the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell; 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: 23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; 24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; 26 *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

[The "us" and "we" in the 12th and 13th verse plainly signify the Gentile converts. These verses, therefore, may be considered as partly occasioned by what he had just said, of their bearing their sufferings with joyfulness, for they remind the Colossians of the reason they had for this, and put them in the way of doing it; namely, the great kindness of God towards them, in calling them out of their former heathenish state of ignorance and darkness, when they were the subjects of the devil's kingdom, to belong to the kingdom of God's dear Son, wherein they were no longer under the power of darkness, but the recipients and possessors of a glorious light.—L.]

Here is a summary of the doctrine of the Gospel concerning the great work of our redemption by Christ. It comes in here not as the matter of a sermon, but as the matter of a thanksgiving; for our salvation by Christ furnishes us with abundant matter of thanksgiving in every view of it. "Giving thanks unto the Father," ver. 12. He does not discourse of the work of redemption in the natural order of it; for then he should speak of the purchase of it first, and then of the application of it. But here he inverts the order, because, in our sense and feeling of it, the application goes before the purchase. We first find the benefits of redemption in our own hearts, and then are led by those streams to the original and fountain head. The order and connexion of the apostle's discourse may be considered in the following manner.

First. He speaks concerning the operations of the Spirit of grace upon us. And we must give thanks for them, because by these we are qualified for an interest in the mediation of the Son. "Giving thanks to the Father," &c., ver. 12, 13. It is spoken of as the work of the Father, because the Spirit of grace is the Spirit of the Father, and the Father works in us by his Spirit. They in whom the work of grace is wrought must give thanks unto the Father.

i. 13. "Darkness," as contrasted with "light" above. The Lord of Light is the ruler of the saints, the Prince of Darkness is the ruler of the ungodly. "His dear Son;" literally, "the Son of his love."

i. 15—17. The Redeemer in his pre-incarnate state, in relation to God and his creation. "In Christ appeared most perfectly how wise, powerful, and good God was." "The first-born of" (i.e., before) every creature. "The visible things in heaven are the sun, moon

If we have the comfort of it, he must have the glory of it. Now, what is it which is wrought for us in the application of redemption?

1. He hath "delivered us from the power of darkness," ver. 13. He has rescued us from the state of heathenish darkness and wickedness; that is, he has saved us from the dominion of sin, which is darkness, 1 *Jno.* i. 6, and from the dominion of Satan, who is the "prince of darkness," *Eph.* vi. 12, and from the damnation of hell, which is "outer darkness," *Mat.* xxv. 30. They are "called out of darkness," 1 *Pet.* ii. 9.

2. He hath "translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;" that is, brought us into the gospel state, and made us members of the church of Christ, which is a state of light and purity; "Ye were once darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord," *Eph.* v. 8; "Who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light," 1 *Pet.* ii. 9. They were made willing subjects of Christ who were the slaves of Satan. The conversion of a sinner is the translation of a soul into the kingdom of Christ out of the kingdom of the devil. The power of sin is shaken off, and the power of Christ submitted to. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes them free from the law of sin and death. And it is the kingdom of "his dear Son," or the Son of his peculiar love, his "beloved Son," *Mat.* iii. 17, and eminently "the beloved," *Eph.* i. 6.

3. He hath not only done this, but hath "made us meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light," ver. 12; that is, he hath prepared us for the eternal happiness of heaven, as the Israelites divided the promised land by lot; and given us the earnest and assurance of it. This he mentions first, because it is the first indication of the future blessedness, that by the grace of God we find ourselves in some measure prepared for it. God gives grace and glory, and we are here told what they both are. 1st. What that glory is. It is "the inheritance of the saints in light." It is an inheritance, and belongs to them as children, which is the best security, and the sweetest tenure; "If children, then heirs," *Rom.* viii. 17. And it is an inheritance of the saints, proper to sanctified souls. They who are not saints on earth will never be saints in heaven. And it is an inheritance in light; the perfection of knowledge, holiness, and joy, by communion with God, who is light, and the Father of lights, *Jas.* i. 17; *Jno.* i. 6. 2nd. What is this grace. It is a meetness for the inheritance; "He hath made us meet to be partakers;" that is, suited and fitted us for the heavenly state by a proper temper and habit of soul; and he makes us meet by the powerful influence of his Spirit. It is the effect of the Divine power to change the heart, and make it heavenly. Observe, That all who are designed for heaven hereafter are prepared for heaven now. As they who live and die unsanctified go out of the world with their hell about them, so they who are sanctified and renewed go out of the world with their heaven about them. They who have the inheritance of sons have the education of sons and the disposition of sons. They "have the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father," *Rom.* viii. 15; "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father," *Gal.* iv. 6. This meetness for heaven is the earnest of the Spirit in our heart, which is part of payment, and assures the full payment. They who are sanctified shall be glorified, *Rom.* viii. 30, and will be for ever indebted to the grace of God which hath sanctified them.

Secondly. Concerning the person of the Redeemer. And glorious things are here said of him; for blessed Paul was full of Christ, and took all occasions to speak honourably of him. He speaks of him distinctly as God and as Mediator.

1. As God he speaks of him, ver. 15—17.

1st. He is "the image of the invisible God." Not as man was made in the image of God, *Gen.* i. 27, in his natural faculties and dominion over the creatures. No, he is "the express image of his person," *Heb.* i. 3. He is so the image of God as the son is the image of his father, who has a natural likeness to him; and as he who hath seen him hath seen the Father; and his "glory was the glory of the only begotten of the Father," *Jno.* i. 14; xiv. 9.

2d. "The image of the invisible God." The representation of those perfections and attributes of the Divine essence, which are inapprehensive to all created beings, except through such an image or counterpart. This phrase destroys the two great heresies that have raged in the church; one, which confounds the persons of the Godhead, saying that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are but different names or manifestations of one and the same persons of the Deity. But though we can speak of one person being the image of another, it will be absurd to speak of him as the image of himself. The other heresy respects the nature of the Godhead. Christ is said, by such, to be the highest of all created beings, but not really God. How, then, could he be the express or perfect image of the invisible Deity, of his eternity, immensity, immutability, omniscience, and omnipresence? And here too we see the condemnation of the worship of images. What image can we have of the invisible Deity but that of Christ? Having this living, intelligent, Divine image of him, shall we add to it, or substitute for it, a dead, senseless, corruptible thing? What a corruption of Christianity is the papistical bowing to images. How can it be cleared from the idolatry so pointedly forbidden, and so fearfully threatened, in the second and third of the ten commandments? The Godhead, in the persons of the Trinity, is, according to the Scripture, the only proper object, in the whole universe, of devout reverence and worship, 1 *Cor.* viii. 5, 6. "Thou shalt have no other gods but me."—L.]

2nd. He is the "firstborn of every creature." Not that he is himself a creature; for it is *πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως*, born or begotten before "all the creation," or any creature was made; which is the Scripture way of representing eternity, and by which the eternity of God is represented to us. "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; when there was no depth—before the mountains were settled—while as yet he had not made the earth," *Pr.* viii. 23—26. And it signifies his dominion over all things; as the firstborn in a family is heir and lord of all, so he is the heir of all things, *Heb.* i. 2. The word, with only the change of the accent, *πρωτότοκος*, signifies actively, "the first begetter or producer of all things," and so it well agrees with the following clause.—*Vid. Isidor. Peleustotum*, Epist. 30, lib. 3.

3d. "Firstborn" does evidently not mean here primogeniture. The apostle's aim is to exalt Christ above all creatures; but how would this be done by saying he was the first of them? Priority is not necessarily superiority. Many things are first in order of time or being that are not so in excellence. The body of man was first made, and afterwards his intelligent, immortal spirit. But as the firstborn of the Jews was head and lord of the family, the phrase came at length to be used to signify only headship and government, irrespective of primogeniture, or even of being of the same race or kindred. God covenanted with David to make him "his firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth;" see *Ps.* lxxxix. 17. Certainly many of them were born before him, and of a different extraction from him; but he was far above them all in receiving his office immediately from God, and being designed in it a type of Christ, endowed with prophetic gifts, and indulged with Divine inspirations. So Christ above all creatures, and, therefore, as it follows, the head of them all; not from being before them merely, but from being of a transcendently higher nature, and, indeed, their Creator and Preserver. Note the absurd conclusions into which men will often run to avoid the clear and unambiguous sense of the Scriptures, as explained by itself.—L.]

stars; the invisible, the angels; the visible things on earth are plants, elements; animals: the invisible are human souls" (Davenport). "For him: — *the end*, destination of the world, here referred to the Son, is in *Rom.* xi. 36 referred to the Father. If the Son had not been God, such an interchange of important relations would never have seemed possible" (Ellicott). "By (rather 'in') him all things consist:" "This declaration," says Waterland, "is equivalent to *Acts* xvii. 28."

the Divine nature dwell in him, and because of all he has done for the Church. "By him (the Redeemer) to reconcile all things unto himself (God):" Ellicott warns against speculating too much on the reconciliation of the finite and infinite. "Things in heaven:" "How the reconciliation of Christ affects the spiritual world we know not and dare not speculate; this, however, we may fearlessly assert, that the efficacy of the sacrifice of the eternal Son is infinite and limitless, that it is the blessed medium by which, between God and

Old Testament? the answer is to be found in the construction the Jews, even the pious amongst them, put upon that conversion. It was the universal supposition that it would be through the door of circumcision, and the extension therefore of the Jewish religion and Jewish dominion throughout the world. From this fond conceit the apostles themselves were with difficulty, and but gradually, weaned. But Paul from the first understood the admission of Gentiles to the equal privileges and blessings of the Gospel by faith in Christ, without subjugation to the Mosaic yoke; and insisted upon it, till the breaking down of the whole Levitical system, by the destruction of Jerusalem, settled the controversy, and put an end to the dispute.—*L.*

4. The duty of those who are interested in this redemption. "If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which ye have heard," ver. 23. We must continue in the faith grounded and settled, and not be moved away from the hope of the Gospel, that is, so well fixed in our minds as not to be moved from it by any temptations. We must be steadfast and unmoveable, *1 Cor. xv. 58*, and "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering," *Heb. x. 23*. Observe, Then only can we expect the happy end of our faith when we continue in the faith, and are so far grounded and settled in it as not to be moved from it. We must not "draw back unto perdition, but believe unto the saving of the soul," *Heb. x. 39*. We must be "faithful to the death," through all trials, that we may receive "the crown of life, and receive the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls," *1 Pet. i. 9*.

CHAPTER II.

The apostle's concern for the Colossians, ver. 1—4; repeated again, ver. 5. He cautions them against false teachers among the Jews, ver. 6—8; and against the Gentile philosophy, ver. 9—13; represents the privilege of Christians, ver. 14—16; and concludes with a caution against the Judaizing teachers, and those who would introduce the worship of angels, ver. 17—22.



DOR I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; 2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding,

to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. 5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

We may observe here the great concern which Paul had for these Colossians, and the other churches, which he had not any personal knowledge of. The apostle had never been at Colosse, and the church planted there was not of his planting, and yet he had as tender a care of it as if it had been the only people of his charge; ver. 1, "For I would that you knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea; and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh." Observe, 1. Paul's care of the church was such as amounted to a conflict; he was in a sort of agony, and had a constant fear concerning them what would become of them. Herein he was a follower of his Master, who was in an agony for us, and was heard in that he feared. 2. We may keep up a communion by faith, hope, and holy love, even with those churches and fellow Christians of whom we have no personal knowledge, or any conversation with. We can think and pray, and be concerned for one another, at the greatest distance; and those we never saw in the flesh we may hope to meet in heaven.

First. But what was it the apostle desired for them? ver. 2, "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love." [He thought that the hearty love which Christians bore to one another, whereby they were joined together in a concern for their mutual welfare, would be a good means to fortify them against any ill impressions from seducers; compare *Eph. iv. 14—16*. And by this he thought their comfort could be best secured, and they be able more easily to edify in Christian knowledge.—*L.*] It was their spiritual welfare he was solicitous about. He doth not say that they may be healthy and merry, and rich, and great, and prosperous, but that their hearts may be comforted. Note, The prosperity of the soul is the best prosperity, and what we should be most solicitous about, for ourselves and others. We have here a description of soul prosperity:—

1. When our knowledge grows to an "understanding of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," then the soul prospers, when we come to have a more clear, distinct, methodical knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. To understand the mystery; that is, either what was before concealed, but is now made known, concerning the Father and Christ, or the mystery before mentioned, of calling the Gentiles into the Christian church, as the Father and Christ have revealed it in the Gospel; and not barely to speak of it by rote, or as we have been taught it by our catechisms, but to be led into it, and enter into the meaning and design of it. This is what we should labour after, and then the soul prospers.

2. When our faith grows to a full assurance and bold acknowledgment of this mystery. 1st. To a full assurance, or a well-settled judgment, upon their proper evidence, of the great truths of the Gospel, without doubting or calling them in question, but embracing them with the highest satisfaction, as "faithful sayings, and worthy of all acceptance." 2nd. When it comes to a free

acknowledgment, and we not only believe with the heart, but are ready, when called to it, to make confession with our mouth, and are not ashamed of our Master, and our holy religion, under the frowns and violence of their enemies. This is called the "riches of the full assurance of understanding." Great knowledge and strong faith make a soul rich. This is being rich toward God and rich in faith, and the true riches, *Lu. xii. 21*; *Jas. ii. 5*.

3. It consists in the abundance of comfort in our souls; "That their hearts might be comforted." The soul then prospers when it is filled with joy and peace, *Rom. xv. 13*, and has a satisfaction within which all the troubles without cannot disturb, and is able to joy in the Lord when all other comforts fail, *Hab. iii. 17, 18*.

4. The more intimate communion we have with our fellow Christians the more the soul prospers; "Being knit together in love." Holy love knits the hearts of Christians one to another, and faith and love both contribute to our comfort. The stronger our faith is, and the warmer our love, the more will our comfort be.

Having occasion to mention Christ, ver. 2, according to his usual way, he makes this remark to his honour; ver. 3, "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He had said, *ch. i. 19*, "that all fulness dwells in him." Here he instances particularly "the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," there is a fulness of wisdom in him, as he has perfectly revealed the will of God to mankind. Observe, The treasures of wisdom are hid, not from us, but for us in Christ. They who would be wise and knowing must apply themselves to Christ. We must spend upon the stock which is laid up for us in him, and draw from the treasures which are hid in him. He is the "wisdom of God," and is "of God made unto us wisdom," &c., *1 Cor. i. 24, 30*.

Secondly. His concern for them is repeated; ver. 5, "Though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ." Observe, 1. That we may be present in spirit with those churches and Christians from whom we are absent in body; for the communion of saints is a spiritual thing. Paul had heard concerning the Colossians, that they were orderly and regular; and though he had never seen them, nor was present with them, he tells them he could easily think himself among them, and look with pleasure upon their good behaviour. 2. The order and steadfastness of Christians is matter of joy to ministers; they joy when they behold their order, that is, their regular behaviour, and steadfast adherence to the Christian doctrine. 3. The more steadfast our faith in Christ is, the better order there will be in our whole conversation; for we live and walk by faith, *2 Cor. v. 7*; *Heb. x. 38*.

6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

The apostle had cautioned the Colossians against deceivers; ver. 4, "And this I say, lest any man beguile you with enticing words;" and ver. 8, "Lest any man spoil you." He insists so much upon the perfection of Christ and the gospel revelation, to preserve them from the ensnaring insinuations of those who would corrupt their principles. Note, 1. The way in which Satan spoils souls is by beguiling them. He deceives them, and by it slays them. He is the old serpent who beguiled Eve through his subtlety, *2 Cor. xi. 3*. He could not ruin us if he did not cheat us; and he could not cheat us but by our own fault and folly. 2. Satan's agents, who aim to spoil them, beguile them with enticing words. See the danger of enticing words; how many are ruined by the flattery of those who lie in wait to deceive, and by the false disguises and fair appearances of evil principles and wicked practices. By good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple, *Rom. xvi. 18*. 'You ought to stand upon your guard against enticing words, and be aware and afraid of those who would entice you to any evil; for that which they aim at is to spoil you.' "If sinners entice thee consent thou not," *Pr. i. 10*. Observe,

First. A sovereign antidote against seducers; ver. 6, 7, "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up," &c. Here note, 1. All Christians have, in profession at least, received Christ Jesus the Lord, received him as Christ, the great Prophet of the church, anointed by God to reveal his will; as Jesus, the great High Priest and Saviour from sin and wrath, by the expiatory sacrifice of himself; and as Lord, or Sovereign and King, whom we are to obey and be subject to. "Received him," consented to him, taken him for ours in every relation and capacity, and for all the purposes and uses of them.

[Here note that Jesus Christ is the sum and substance of all saving doctrine, *1 Cor. ii. 2*, the marrow of all the promises, *2 Cor. i. 20*; the fountain, furniture, and main scope of a holy life, *Eph. iv. 21, 22*; so that the receiving of him is the thing most to be aimed at in all the ordinances, as that which maketh our knowledge complete, our faith saving, our obedience acceptable.]

2. The great concern of those who have received Christ is "to walk in him," to make their practices conformable to their principles, and their conversation agreeable to their engagements. As we have received Christ, or consented to be his, so we must walk with him in our daily course, and keep up our communion with him. 3. The more closely we walk with Christ the more we are "rooted and established in the faith." A good conversation is the best establishment of a good faith. If we walk in him we shall be rooted in him; and the more firmly we are rooted in him, the more closely we shall walk in him;

his creatures, whether angelical, human, animate or inanimate, peace is wrought" (Ellicott). See *Rom. viii. 19*, &c.

i. 21, 22. "Hath he (God) reconciled, in the body of his (Christ's) flesh:" Meyer, Alford, Ellicott, &c., agree that this expression must have its ground in the necessity St. Paul found of enforcing the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice for reconciliation and redemption, as opposed to a false spiritualism then existent, which ascribed reconciling mediatorship with God partly to angelic beings.

i. 24. "Now with the chain round my wrist" (Eadie). This passage apparently must be understood as follows: The sufferings of Christians are spoken of as the sufferings of Christ. Whatever his body, the Church, has to suffer, she suffers in order to her perfecting; and thus the measure of the sufferings of Christ will not be filled up until the end of time. Each saint in his time and position is therefore, like St. Paul, filling up the "afflictions of Christ" in his flesh, and for "his body's sake."

*Rooted and built up. Observe, We cannot be built up in Christ unless we be first rooted in him. We must be united to him by a lively faith, and heartily consent to his covenant, and then we shall grow up in him in all things.

[Here note that, 1. The hold which faith doth take of Christ is like unto that which the tree hath in the ground, and so is most sure; for though the top of the tree doth shake, yet the root remaineth firm, and its firmness is from the solidity of the ground through which the roots are spread; its fruitfulness also is by virtue of sap conveyed from the ground by the roots; so the stability of believers floweth from Christ, *Jno. x. 28, 29*, and sap and influence is conveyed from him by faith, for making them fruitful, *Jno. xv. 5*. Thus the firmness of their faith is set forth by a metaphor, taken from trees deeply rooted, "rooted in him." 2. That the bond of faith, whereby believers are knit to Christ, is like that whereby the edifice is fastened to the foundation; the foundation upholdeth the house, so doth Christ the believer, *Mat. xvi. 18*. The rest of the building is made to conform to the foundation; so the copy of a believer's life is taken from Christ, *Mat. xi. 29*. The stones of the building, by taking band with the foundation, are fastened one to another; so faith taketh band upon Christ, and in him with others who are Christ's, *1 Jno. i. 7*; for faith is set forth with relation to Christ, by a second metaphor, taken from edifices strongly founded; "Built up in him."]

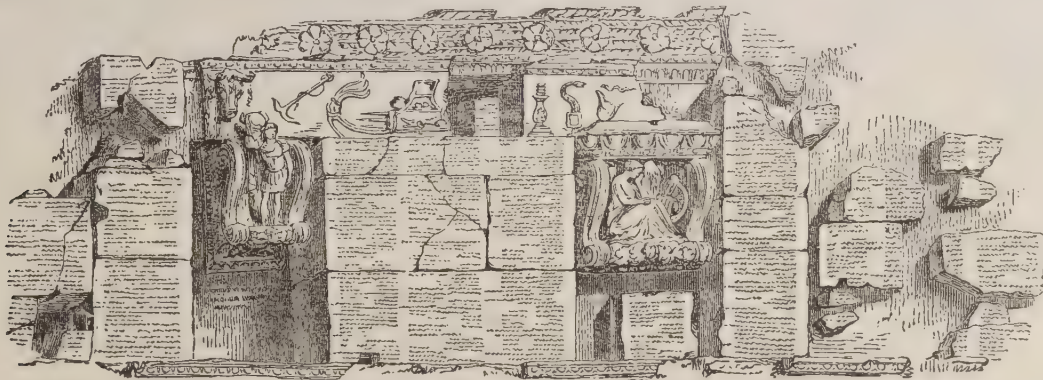
"As you have been taught;" according to the rule of the Christian doctrine, in which you have been instructed. Observe, A good education has a good influence upon our establishment. We must be "established in the faith, as we have been taught, abounding therein." Observe, Being established in the faith, we must abound therein, and improve in it more and more, and this with thanksgiving. The way to have the benefit and comfort of God's grace is to be much in giving thanks for it. We must join thanksgiving to all our improvements, and be sensible of the mercy of all our privileges and attainments. Observe,

Secondly. The fair warning given us of our danger; "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" ver. 8. There is a philosophy which is a noble exercise of our reasonable faculties, and highly serviceable to religion, such a study of the works of God as leads us to the knowledge of God and confirms our faith in him. But there is a philosophy which is vain and deceitful, which is prejudicial to religion, and sets up the wisdom of man in competition with the wisdom of God, and while it pleases men's fancies ruins their faith; as nice and curious speculations about things above us, or of no use and concern to us; or a care of words and terms of art, which have only an empty, and often a cheating, appearance of knowledge. "After the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world." This plainly reflects upon the Jewish pedagogy or economy, as well as the pagan learning. The Jews governed themselves by the traditions of their elders, and the rudiments or elements of the world, the rites and observances which were only preparatory and introductory to the gospel state; the Gentiles mixed their maxims of philosophy with their Christian principles; and both alienated their minds from Christ. Those who pin their faith on other men's sleeves, and walk in the way of the world, have turned away from following after Christ. The deceivers were especially the Jewish teachers, who endeavoured to keep up the law of Moses in conjunction with the Gospel of Christ, but really in competition with it and contradiction to it. Now here the apostle shews,

1. That we have in Christ the substance of all the shadows of the ceremonial law; for example,

1st. Had they then the Shechinah, or special presence of God, called the glory, from the visible token of it? So have we now in Jesus Christ; ver. 9. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Under the law the presence of God dwelt between the cherubim, in a cloud which covered the mercy-seat; but now it dwells in the person of our Redeemer, who partakes of our nature, and is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, and has more clearly declared the Father to us. It dwells in him bodily; not as the body is opposed to the spirit, but as the body is opposed to the shadow. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ really, and not figuratively, for he is both God and man.

2nd. Had they circumcision, which was the seal of the covenant? In Christ we are "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands," ver. 11, by the work of regeneration in us, which is the spiritual or Christian circumcision.



LAPIDES CAPITOLINI.

The apostle here represents the privileges we Christians have above the Jews, which are very great.

First. Christ's death is our life; "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him," ver. 13. A state of sin is a state of spiritual death. Those who are in sin are dead in sin. As the death of the body consists in its separation from the soul, so the death of the soul consists in its separation from God and the Divine favour. As the death of the body is the corruption and putrefaction of it, so sin is the corruption or depravation of the soul. As a man who is dead is unable to help himself by any power of his own, so an habitual sinner is morally impotent; though he has a natural power, or the power of a reasonable creature, he has not a spiritual power till he has the Divine life, or a renewed nature. It is principally to be understood of the Gentile world, who lay in wickedness. They were "dead in the uncircumcision of their flesh," being "aliens to the covenant of promise, and without God in the world," *Eph. ii. 11, 12*. By reason of their uncircumcision they were dead in their sins. It may be understood of the spiritual uncircumcision or corruption of nature; and so it shews that we

"He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart," *Rom. ii. 29*. This is owing to Christ, and belongs to the Christian dispensation; it is "made without hands," not by the power of any creature, but by the power of the blessed Spirit of God. We are "born of the Spirit," *Jno. iii. 5*; and it is "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit," *Tit. iii. 5*. It consists in "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," in renouncing sin and reforming our lives, not in mere external rites. It is not the "putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God," *1 Pet. iii. 21*. And it is not enough to put away some one particular sin, but we must put off the whole body of sin; "The old man must be crucified, and the body of sin destroyed," *Rom. vi. 6*. Christ was circumcised, and by virtue of our union to him, we partake of that effectual grace which puts off "the body of the sins of the flesh." Again, The Jews thought themselves complete in the ceremonial law; but we are "complete in Christ," ver. 10. That was imperfect and defective; "If the first covenant had been faultless, there would no place have been sought for the second," *Heb. vii. 7*; and "the law was but a shadow of good things, and could never, by those sacrifices, make the comers thereunto perfect," *Heb. x. 1*. But all the defects of it are made up in the Gospel of Christ, by the complete sacrifice for sin, and revelation of the will of God. "Which is the head of all principality and power." As the Old Testament priesthood had its perfection in Christ, so likewise had the kingdom of David, which was the eminent principality and power under the Old Testament, and which the Jews valued themselves so much upon. And he is the Lord and Head of all the powers in heaven and earth, of angels and men. "Angels, and authorities, and powers, are subject to him," *1 Pet. iii. 22*.

[Observe, 1. There is a fulness in Christ to be communicated unto all who, being sensible of their own emptiness, do by faith lay hold upon him, "In whom we are complete," which completeness consisteth in the enjoyment of sufficiency of means for salvation prescribed by him, *Heb. iii. 2*; and in the imputation of his most perfect righteousness, and in the begun renovation of our nature by the Spirit of Christ, *1 Cor. i. 30*; which shall be still upon the growing hand till grace be crowned with glory, *Eph. v. 27*. 2. Though there be a complete fulness in Christ the Mediator, from whence we may supply our emptiness, yet we cannot partake of that fulness except we first be "in him," and by faith be united to him; so "in him we are complete."]

2. We have communion with Christ in his whole undertaking; ver. 12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you have risen with him." We are both buried and rise with him, and both are signified by our baptism; not that there is anything in the sign or ceremony of baptism which represents this burying and rising, any more than the crucifixion of Christ is represented by any visible resemblance in the Lord's supper; and he is speaking of the "circumcision made without hands," and says it is "through the faith of the operation of God." But the thing signified by our baptism is that we are buried with Christ, as baptism is the seal of the covenant and an obligation to our dying to sin; and that we are raised with Christ, as it is a seal and obligation to our living to righteousness, or newness of life. God in baptism engages to be to us a God, and we become engaged to be his people, and by his grace to die to sin and to live to righteousness, or put off the old man and put on the new.

13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

are dead in law and dead in state: dead in law, as a condemned malefactor is called a dead man, because he is under a sentence of death; so sinners, by the guilt of sin, are under the sentence of the law, and "condemned already," *Jno. iii. 18*; and dead in state, by reason of "the uncircumcision of our flesh." An unsanctified heart is called an "uncircumcised heart;" this is our state. Now through Christ we, who were dead in sins, are quickened; that is, effectual provision is made for taking away the guilt of sin, and breaking the power and dominion of it. "Quickened together with him," by virtue of our union to him, and in conformity to him. Christ's death was the death of our sins; Christ's resurrection is the quickening of our souls.

[Whenever a man believeth in Christ, he is in the same moment of time united to Christ, and so that all which he did or suffered, as sustaining our person, or which he procured for our behoof, as being our head, whether in his death, burial, or resurrection, is imputed to us by God, and a right unto them derived to us, as if we had been personally present with him all those times, and given our consent to his doing of all those things in our name, and for our behalf. Hence is it that he is said to have "quickened those Colossians

ii. 1, 2. "Conflict;" "Intense and painful anxiety" (Eadie). "Laodicea," about eighteen miles west of Colossæ, was probably subject to similar evil influences of false teaching. "Full assurance," &c.: the completeness of the persuasion the apostle desires for his readers seems to indicate that he wished their assurance to be not only intellectual but also heartfelt. "And of the Father" is probably an interpolation, the sentence thus becoming "the mystery of God, even Christ" (Ellicott).

ii. 4. "Enticing;" see chap. i. 21, 22.
ii. 7. "Rooted and being built up;" not as Authorised Version. They had already been rooted, and were being built up; the process was daily proceeding.

ii. 8. "Lest there shall be any one that maketh you his prey;" so literally. "Rudiments;" see Gal. iv. 3.

ii. 9. see chap. i. 19.

ii. 10—12. "The Colossians seem to have been exposed to the

together with him," though Christ had risen from the dead some years before their conversion.

Secondly. Through him we have the remission of sins; "Having forgiven you all trespasses." This is our quickening. The pardon of the crime is the life of the criminal; and this is owing to the resurrection of Christ, as well as his death; for, as he "died for our sins," so he "rose again for our justification," *Rom. iv. 25*.

Thirdly. Whatever was in force against us is taken out of the way. He has obtained for us a legal discharge from "the handwriting of ordinances which was against us," *ver. 14*, which may be understood,

1. Of that obligation to punishment in which consists the guilt of sin. The curse of the law is the handwriting against us, like the handwriting on Balaazar's wall; "Cursed is every one who continues not in every thing." This was a handwriting which was "against us, and contrary to us;" for it threatened our eternal ruin. This was removed when he "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," *Gal. iii. 13*. He cancelled the obligation for all who repent and believe; "Upon me be the curse, my Father." He vacated and disannulled the judgment which was against us. When he was nailed to the cross, the curse was as it were nailed to the cross; and our indwelling corruption is crucified with Christ, and by virtue of his cross. When we remember the dying of the Lord Jesus, and see him nailed to the cross, we should see the handwriting against us taken out of the way. Or rather,

2. It must be understood of the ceremonial law, "the handwriting of ordinances," the ceremonial institutions or "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," *Eph. ii. 15*, which was a yoke to the Jews and a partition-wall to the Gentiles. The Lord Jesus "took it out of the way, nailed it to his cross;" that is, disannulled the obligation of it, that all might see and be satisfied that it was no more binding. When the substance came, the shadows fled away. It is abolished, *2 Cor. iii. 13*; and "that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away," *Heb. viii. 13*. The expressions are in allusion to the ancient methods of cancelling a bond, either by crossing the writing or striking it through with a nail.

Fourthly. He has obtained a glorious victory for us over the powers of darkness; "And, having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it," *ver. 15*. As the curse of the law was against us, so the power of Satan was against us. He treated with God as the Judge, and redeemed us out of the hands of his justice by a price; but out of the hands of Satan the executioner he redeemed us by power and with a high hand. He "led them captive." The devil and all the powers of hell were conquered and disarmed by the dying Redeemer. The first promise pointed at this; the bruising of the heel of Christ in his sufferings was the breaking of the serpent's head, *Gen. iii. 15*. The expressions are lofty and magnificent; let us turn aside and see this great sight. The Redeemer conquered by dying. See his crown of thorns turned into a crown of laurels. He spoiled them, broke the devil's power, and conquered and disabled him, and "made a show of them openly,"—exposed them to public shame, and made a show of them to angels and men. Never had the devil's kingdom such a mortal blow given to it as was given by the Lord Jesus. He tied them to his chariot wheels, and rode forth conquering and to conquer—alluding to the custom of a general's triumph, who returned victorious. "Triumphing over them in it;" that is, either in his cross and by his death; or, as some read it, in himself, by his own power; for he "trode the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with him."

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ. 18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. 20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

The apostle concludes the chapter with exhortations to proper duty, which he infers from the foregoing discourse.

First. Here is a caution to take heed of Judaizing teachers, or those who would impose upon Christians the yoke of the ceremonial law; "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, &c., *ver. 16*. Much of the ceremonies of the law of Moses consisted in the distinction of meats and days. It appears by *Rom. xiv.* that there were those who were for keeping up those distinctions; but here the apostle shews that since Christ has come, and has cancelled the ceremonial law, we ought not to keep it up. Let no man impose those things upon you, for God has not imposed them; if God has made you free, be not you again "entangled in that yoke of bondage." And this the rather because these things were shadows of things to come, *ver. 17*, intimating that they had no intrinsic worth in them, and that they are now done away. "But the body *is* of Christ." The body, of which they were shadows, has come; and to continue the ceremonial observances, which were only types and shadows of Christ and the Gospel, carries an intimation that Christ has not

yet come, and the gospel state has not yet commenced. Observe the advantages we have under the Gospel, above what they had under the law: they had the shadows, we have the substance.

Secondly. He cautions them to take heed of those who would introduce the worship of angels as mediators between God and them, as the Gentile philosophers did; "Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels," *ver. 18*. It looked like a piece of modesty to make use of the mediation of angels, as conscious to ourselves of our unworthiness to speak immediately to God; but, though it has a show of humility, it is a voluntary not a commanded humility, and therefore it is not acceptable; yea, it is not warrantable; it is taking that honour which is due to Christ only and giving it to a creature. Besides, the notions upon which this practice was grounded were merely the inventions of men and not by Divine revelation,—the proud conceits of human reason, which make a man presume to dive into things, and determine them, without sufficient knowledge and warrant. "Intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind;" pretending to describe the order of angels, and their respective ministries, which God has hidden from us; and therefore, though there was a show of humility in the practice, there was a real pride in the principle. They advanced those notions to gratify their own carnal fancy, and were fond of being thought wiser than other people. Pride is at the bottom of a great many errors and corruptions, and even of many evil practices, which have a great show and appearance of humility. Those who do so do "not hold the head," *ver. 19*. They do in effect disclaim Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man. It is the highest disparagement to Christ, who is the head of the church, for any of the members of it to make use of any intercessors with God but him. When men let go their hold of Christ, they catch at that which is next them and will stand them in no stead. "From which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." Observe, 1. Jesus Christ is not only a head of government over the church, but a head of vital influence to it. They are knit to him by joints and bands, as the several members of the body are united to the head, and receive life and nourishment from him. 2. The body of Christ is a growing body; "it increaseth with the increase of God." The new man is increasing, and the nature of grace is to grow, where there is not an accidental hindrance. "With the increase of God;" with an increase of grace which is from God as its author; or, in a usual Hebraism, with a large and abundant increase; "That you may be filled with all the fulness of God," *Eph. iii. 19*: see a parallel expression, "Which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, maketh increase of the body," *Eph. iv. 15, 16*.

[Observe, This Christian increase and Divine growth is attained unto by keeping strict union with Christ, and communion with his members; for their increasing with the increase of God supposeth "nourishment ministered from the head," and themselves "knit together with joints and bands."

Thirdly. He takes occasion hence to warn them again; "Wherefore, if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances?" *ver. 20*. If as Christians you are dead to the observances of the ceremonial law, why are you subject to them? Such observances as, "Touch not, taste not, handle not," *ver. 21, 22*.

[The authors of superstition are very diligent to have their superstitious fooleries punctually practised, and their commands for that end exactly obeyed. Thus he brings in the masters of superstition delivering their injunctions, as it were to every man in particular: "Touch not," in the singular number.]

Under the law there was a ceremonial pollution contracted by touching a dead body, or any thing offered to an idol; or by tasting any forbidden meats, &c., "which are all to perish with the using," having no intrinsic worth in themselves to support them, and those who used them saw them perishing and passing away; or, which tend to corrupt the Christian faith, having no other authority than the traditions and injunctions of men. [See additional notes on *Rom. vi., vii.*, for true import of the expression "If ye be dead with Christ."] "Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility." They thought themselves wiser than their neighbours, in observing the law of Moses together with the Gospel of Christ, that they might be sure in the one, at least, to be in the right; but, alas! it was but a show of wisdom, a mere invention and pretence. So they seem to neglect the body, by abstaining from such and such meats, and mortifying their bodily pleasures and appetites; but there is nothing of true devotion in these things, for the Gospel teaches us to worship God in spirit and truth, and not by ritual observances, and through the mediation of Christ alone, and not of any angels. Observe, 1. Christians are freed by Christ from the ritual observances of Moses's law, and delivered from that yoke of bondage which God himself had laid upon them. 2. Subjection to ordinances, or human appointments in the worship of God, is highly blameable, and contrary to the freedom and liberty of the Gospel. The apostle requires Christians "to stand fast in the liberty with which Christ hath made them free, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage," *Gal. v. 1*. And the imposition of them is invading the authority of Christ, the head of the church, and "introducing another law of commandments contained in ordinances," when Christ has abolished the old one, *Eph. ii. 15*. 3. Such things have only a show of wisdom, but are really folly. It is true wisdom to keep close to the appointments of the Gospel, and an entire subjection to Christ, the only head of the church.

CHAPTER III.

I. The apostle exhorts us to set our hearts upon heaven and take them off from this world, *ver. 1-4*. II. He exhorts to the mortification of sin, in the various instances of it, *ver. 5-11*. III. He earnestly presses to mutual love and compassion, *ver. 12-17*. And concludes with exhortations to relative duties, of wives and husbands, parents and children, masters and servants, *ver. 18-25*.



If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life,

influence of two fundamental errors: first, the belief that they were under the influence, or, at any rate, needed the assistance of intermediate intelligences; secondly, the persuasion that circumcision, the symbol of purification appointed by God, must still be necessary. The first is met by the clause 'who is the head' (verse 10); the second by 'wherein also' (verse 12)" (Ellicott).

ii. 11. Best MSS. omit "of the sins."

ii. 12. "Through the faith:" "Faith is not the means by which

the grace is wrought, effected, or conferred, but it may be and is the means by which it is accepted or received" (Waterland on "Justification").

ii. 14. "The handwriting in force against us by its decrees" (Ellicott). The whole law of God, whether written on stone or the tablets of the heart (*Rom. ii. 13-15, iii. 19*). This law, which must condemn us (*Gal. iii. 21*), was fulfilled for us by Christ. "While our Saviour bore the curse of the law, he destroyed its condemnatory

shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

The apostle, having described our privileges by Christ in the former part of the epistle, and our discharge from the yoke of the ceremonial law, comes here to press upon us our duty as inferred thence. Though we are made free from the obligation of the ceremonial law, it does not therefore follow that we may live as we list. We must walk the more closely with God in all the instances of evangelical obedience. He begins with exhorting them to set their hearts on heaven, and take them off from this world. "If you then have risen with Christ." It is our privilege that we have risen with Christ; that is, have benefit by the resurrection of Christ, and by virtue of our union and communion with him are justified and sanctified, and shall be glorified. Hence he infers that we must seek those things which are above. We must mind the concerns of another world more than the concerns of this. We must make heaven our scope and aim, seek the favour of God above, keep up our communion with the upper world by faith, and hope, and holy love, and make it our constant care and business to secure our title to, and qualifications for, the heavenly bliss. And the reason is, because Christ sits at the right hand of God. He who is our best friend and our head is advanced to the highest dignity and honour in heaven, and has gone before to secure to us the heavenly happiness; and therefore we should seek and secure what he has purchased at so vast an expense, and is taking so much care about. We must live such a life as Christ lived here on earth, and lives now in heaven, according to our capacities.

First. He explains this duty; ver. 2. "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." Observe. To seek heavenly things is to set our affections upon them, to love them, and let our desires be towards them. Upon the wings of affection the heart soars upwards, and is carried forth towards spiritual and Divine objects. We must acquaint ourselves with them, esteem them above all other things, and lay out ourselves in preparation for the enjoyment of them. David gave this proof of his loving the house of God, that he diligently sought after it, and prepared for it, *Ps. xxvii. 4*. This is to be spiritually minded, (*Rom. viii. 6*), and to seek and desire a better country, that is, a heavenly, *Heb. xi. 14, 16*. Things on earth are here set in opposition to things above. We must not dote upon them, nor expect too much from them, that we may set our affections on heaven; for heaven and earth are contrary one to the other, and a supreme regard to both is inconsistent; and the prevalence of our affection to one will proportionably weaken and abate our affection to the other.

Secondly. He assigns three reasons for this, ver. 3, 4:—

1. That we are dead; that is, to present things, and as our portion. We are so in profession and obligation; for we are "buried with Christ, and planted into the likeness of his death." Every Christian is "crucified unto the world, and the world is crucified unto him," *Gal. vi. 14*. And if we are dead to the earth, and have renounced it as our happiness, it is absurd for us to set our affections upon it, and seek it. We should be like a dead thing to it, unmoved, unaffected towards it. [Real believers are spiritually dead, not in sin, *Eph. ii. 1*, but to sin, *Rom. vi. 11*, the dominion and reign of sin being shaken off, *Rom. vi. 14*, and its strength much weakened by the power of grace, *Gal. v. 17*, though not totally subdued, *Rom. vii. 18*, and Christ having undertaken to subdue it wholly in them, *Eph. v. 27*.]

2. Our true life lies in the other world. "You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," ver. 3. The new man has its livelihood thence. It is born and nourished from above; and the perfection of its life is reserved for that state. It is "hid with Christ;" not hid from us only, in point of secrecy, but hid for us, denoting security. The life of a Christian "is hid with Christ." "Because I live you shall live also," *1 Jno. xiv. 19*. Christ is at present a hidden Christ, or one "whom we have not seen;" but this is our comfort, that our "life is hid with him," and laid up safely with him. As we have reason to "love him whom we have not seen," (*1 Pet. i. 8*), so we may take the comfort of a happiness out of sight, and reserved in heaven for us.

3. Because at the second coming of Christ we hope for the perfection of our happiness. If we live a life of Christian purity and devotion now, "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall also appear with him in glory," ver. 3. Observe, 1st. Christ is a believer's life. "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me," *Gal. ii. 20*. He is the principle and end of the Christian's life. He lives in us by his Spirit, and we live to him in all we do. "To me to live is Christ," *Phil. i. 21*. 2nd. Christ will appear again. He is now hid; and the heavens must contain him; but he will appear in all the pomp of the upper world, with his holy angels, and in "his own glory and his Father's glory," *Mar. viii. 38*; *Lu. ix. 26*. 3rd. We shall then appear with him in glory. It will be his glory to have him redeemed with him; he will come to be glorified in his saints, *2 Thes. i. 10*; and it will be their glory to come with him, and be with him for ever. At the second coming of Christ there will be a general meeting of all the saints; and those whose life is now "hid with Christ" shall then appear with Christ in that glory which he himself enjoys, *1 Jno. xvii. 24*. Do we look for such a happiness, and should we not set our affections upon that world, and live above this? What is there here to make us fond of it? What is there not there to draw our hearts to it? Our head is there, our home is there, our treasure is there, and we hope to be there for ever.

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

The apostle exhorts the Colossians to the mortification of sin, the great hindrance to seeking the things which are above. Since it is our duty to set our affections upon heavenly things, it is our duty to "mortify our members which are upon the earth," and which naturally incline us to the things of the world. Mortify them, that is, subdue the vicious habits of mind which prevailed in your Gentile state. Kill them, suppress them, as you kill an enemy who vermin which spread and destroy all about them, or as you kill an enemy who fights against you and wounds you. "Your members which are upon the earth;" either the members of the body, which are the earthly part of us, and were "curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth," (*Ps. cxxxix. 15*), or the corrupt affections of the mind, which lead us to earthly things, the members of the body of death, *Rom. vii. 24*. He specifies,

First. The lusts of the flesh, for which they were before so very remarkable.

power for ever; while he underwent sufferings and death, and the last efforts of baffled demoniacal malignity, he destroyed him that hath the power of death (*Heb. ii. 14*; *1 John iii. 8*)" (Ellicott).

ii. 15. "Triumphing over them in it" (*Eph. ii. 16*; *Col. i. 20*): the cross taken to represent all the sufferings connected with it, by which he was victorious. "He conquered the devils not by fighting, but suffering" (Grotius).

ii. 16. "Sabbath-days:" no argument for non-observance of the

"Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence,"—the various workings of the carnal appetites and fleshly impurities, which they indulged in their former course of life, and which were so contrary to the Christian state and the heavenly hope.

Secondly. The love of the world. "And covetousness, which is idolatry;" that is, an inordinate love of present good and outward enjoyments, which proceeds from too high a value in the mind, puts upon too eager a pursuit, hinders the proper use and enjoyment of them, and creates anxious fear and immoderate sorrow for the loss of them. Observe. Covetousness is spiritual idolatry; it is the giving of that love and regard to worldly wealth which are due to God only, and carries a greater degree of malignity in it, and is more highly provoking to God, than is commonly thought. And it is very observable that, among all the instances of sin which good men are recorded in the Scripture to have fallen into, (and there is scarcely any but some or other, in one or other part of their life, have fallen into,) there is no instance in all the Scripture of any good man charged with covetousness. He proceeds to shew how necessary it is to mortify sins, ver. 6, 7.

1. Because, if we do not kill them, they will kill us: "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience," ver. 3. See what we are all by nature more or less: we are "children of disobedience," not only disobedient children, but under the power of sin, and naturally prone to disobey. "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies," *Ps. lviii. 3*. And, being children of disobedience, we are "children of wrath," *Eph. ii. 3*. The wrath of God comes upon all the children of disobedience. Those who do not obey the precepts of the law incur the penalties of it. The sins he mentions were their sins in their heathen and idolatrous state, and they were then especially the children of disobedience; and yet these sins brought judgments upon them, and exposed them to the wrath of God.

2. We should mortify these sins because they have lived in us. "In which you also walked some time, when you lived in them," ver. 7. Observe. The consideration that we have formerly lived in sin is a good argument why we should now forsake it. We have walked in by-paths, therefore let us walk in them no more. "If I have done iniquity, I will do no more," *Job xxxiv. 32*. The time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, *1 Pet. iv. 3*. "When you lived among those who did such things," (so some understand it,) then you walked in those evil practices. It is a hard thing to live among those who do the works of darkness and not have fellowship with them, as it is to walk in the mire and contract no soil. Let us keep out of the way of evil-doers.

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

First. As we are to mortify inordinate appetites, so we are to mortify inordinate passions; ver. 8. "But now you also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice;" for these are contrary to the design of the Gospel, as well as grosser impurities; and, though they are more spiritual wickedness, have not less malignity in them. The gospel religion introduces a change of the higher as well as the lower powers of the soul, and supports the dominion of right reason and conscience over appetite and passion. Anger and wrath are bad, but malice is worse, because it is more rooted and deliberate; it is anger heightened and settled.

Secondly. As the corrupt principles in the heart must be cut off, so the product of them in the tongue; as blasphemy, which seems there to mean, not so much speaking ill of God as speaking ill of men, giving ill language to them, or raising ill reports of them, and injuring their good name by any evil arts,— "filthy communication," that is, all lewd and wanton discourse, which comes from a polluted mind in the speaker and propagates the same defilements in the hearers,—and lying. "Lie not one to another," ver. 9, for it is contrary both to the law of truth and the law of love; it is both unjust and unkind, and naturally tends to destroy all faith and friendship among mankind. Lying makes us like the devil, (who is the father of lies,) and is a prime part of the devil's image upon our souls; and therefore we are cautioned against this sin by this general reason, "Seeing you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man," ver. 10. The consideration that we have by profession put away sin and espoused the cause and interest of Christ, that we have renounced all sin and stand engaged to Christ, should fortify us against this sin of lying. Those who have put off the old man have put it off with its deeds; and those who have put on the new man must put on all its deeds,—not only espouse good principles but act them in a good conversation. The new man is said to be "renewed in knowledge," because an ignorant soul cannot be a good soul. Without knowledge the heart cannot be good, *Pr. xix. 2*. The grace of God works upon the will and affections by renewing the understanding. Light is the first thing in the new creation, as it was in the first. "After the image of him who created him." It was the honour of man in innocence that he was made after the image of God; but that image was defaced and lost by sin, and is renewed by sanctifying grace: so that a renewed soul is something like what Adam was in the day he was created. In the privilege and duty of sanctification "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free," ver. 11. There is now no difference arising from different country or different condition and circumstance of life; it is as much the duty of the one as of the other to be holy, and as much the privilege of the one as of the other to receive from God the grace to be so. Christ came to take down all partition-walls, that all might stand on the same level before God, both in duty and privilege. And for this reason, because "Christ is all in all," Christ is a Christian's all, his only Lord and Saviour, and all his hope and happiness. And to those who are sanctified, one as well as another and whatever they are in other respects, he is "all in all," the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end;" he is all in all things to them.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and

Lord's day can be founded on this; the Sabbath of the Jews was only a shadow of the Christian Lord's day. The shadow may be neglected when the reality is present.

ii. 19. "Of God:" which God supplies.

ii. 23. "Will worship:" i.e., self-imposed. "All which things have indeed the repute of wisdom in voluntary worship, and lowliness of mind, and unsparing treatment of the body, not in anything of real value, serving only to satisfy the flesh" (Ellicott).

beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye*. 14 And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

The apostle proceeds to exhort to mutual love and compassion: "Put on therefore bowels of mercy," ver. 12. We must not only put off anger and wrath, (as ver. 8,) but we must put on compassion and kindness; not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well; not only not do hurt to any, but do what good we can to all.

First. The argument here used to enforce the exhortation is very affecting. "Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved." Observe,

1. Those who are holy are the elect of God; and those who are the elect of God, and holy, are beloved,—beloved of God, and ought to be so of all men.

2. Those who are the elect of God, holy and beloved, ought to conduct themselves in every thing as becomes them, and so as not to lose the credit of their holiness, nor the comfort of their being chosen and beloved. It becomes those who are holy towards God to be lowly and loving towards all men. Observe, What we must put on in particular. 1st. Compassion towards the miserable; "Bowels of mercy," the tenderest mercies. Those who owe so much to mercy ought to be merciful to all who are proper objects of mercy. "Be ye merciful as your Father is merciful," *Lu. vi. 36*. 2nd. "Kindness" towards our friends, and those who love us. A courteous disposition becomes the elect of God; for the design of the Gospel is not only to soften the minds of men, but to sweeten them, and to promote friendship among men as well as reconciliation with God. 3rd. "Humbleness of mind," in submission to those above us, and condescension to those below us. There must not only be an humble demeanour, but an humble mind; "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart," *Mat. xi. 29*. 4th. Meekness towards those who have provoked us, or been any way injurious to us. We must not be transported into any indecency by our resentment of indignities and neglects; but must prudently bridle our own anger, and patiently bear the anger of others. 5th. "Long-suffering" towards those who continue to provoke us. "Charity suffereth long," as well "as is kind," *1 Cor. xiii. 4*. Many can bear a short provocation who are weary of bearing when it grows long. But we must suffer long both the injuries of men and the rebukes of Divine providence. If God is long-suffering to us, under all our provocations of him, we should exercise long-suffering to others in like cases. 6th. Mutual forbearance, in consideration of the infirmities and deficiencies under which we all labour; "Forbearing one another." We have all of us something which needs to be borne with, and this is a good reason why we should bear with others in what is disagreeable to us. We need the same good turn from others which we are bound to shew them. 7th. A readiness to forgive injuries; "Forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any." While we are in this world, where there is so much corruption in our hearts, and so much occasion of difference and contention, quarrels will sometimes happen, even among the elect of God, who are holy and beloved; as Paul and Barnabas had a "sharp contention, which parted them asunder one from the other," (*Acts xv. 39*.) and Paul and Peter, *Gal. ii. 14*. But it is our duty to forgive one another in such cases; not to bear any grudge, but put up with the affront and pass it by. And the reason is, "Even as Christ forgave you, so also do you." The consideration that we are forgiven by Christ so many offences is a good reason why we should forgive others. It is an argument of the Divinity of Christ that he had "power on earth to forgive sins;" and it is a branch of his example which we are obliged to follow, if we ourselves would be forgiven. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us," *Mat. vi. 12*.

Secondly. In order to all this, we are exhorted here to several things:—

1. To clothe ourselves with love; ver. 14. "Above all things put on charity: *ἐν πάσι δὲ τοῖς αἰσιν*—over all things." Let this be the upper garment, the robe, the livery, the mark of our dignity and distinction. Or, let this be principal and chief, as the whole sum and abstract of the second table. "Add to faith virtue, and to brotherly kindness charity," *2 Pet. i. 5–7*. He lays the foundation in faith, and the topstone in charity, "which is the bond of perfectness," the cement and centre of all happy society. Christian unity consists of unanimity and mutual love.

2. To submit ourselves to the government of the peace of God; ver. 15. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts," that is, God's being at peace with you, and the comfortable sense of his acceptance and favour. Or, a disposition to peace among yourselves, a peaceable spirit that keeps the peace and makes peace. This is called "the peace of God," because it is of his working in all who are his; "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace," *Rom. xiv. 17*. Let this peace "rule in your heart"—prevail and govern there, or as an umpire decide all matters of difference among you—"to which you are called in one body." We are called to this peace, to peace with God as our privilege, and peace with our brethren as our duty. Being united in one body, we are called to be at peace one with another, as the members of the natural body; for "we are the body of Christ, and members in particular," *1 Cor. xii. 27*. To preserve in us this peaceable disposition, we must be thankful. The work of thanksgiving to God is such a sweet and pleasant work that it will help to make us sweet and pleasant towards all men. "Instead of envying one another upon account of any particular favours and excellence, be thankful for his mercies, which are common to all of you."

3. To let the "word of Christ dwell in us richly," ver. 16. The Gospel is the word of Christ, which has come to us; but that is not enough, it must dwell in us, or "keep house"—*ἐνοικεῖται*, not as a servant in a family, who is under

another's control, but as a master, who has a right to prescribe to and direct all under his roof. We must take our instructions and directions from it, and our portion of meat and strength, of grace and comfort in due season, as from the master of the household. It must dwell in us; that is, be always ready and at hand to us in every thing, and have its due influence and use. We must be familiarly acquainted with it, and "know it for our good," *ob v. 27*. It must dwell in us richly; not only keep house in our hearts, but keep a good house. Many have the word of Christ dwelling in them, but it dwells in them but poorly; it has no mighty force and influence upon them. Then the soul prospers when the word of God dwells in us richly, when we have abundance of it in us, and are full of the Scriptures and of the grace of Christ. And this in all wisdom. The proper office of wisdom is to apply what we know to ourselves, for our own direction. The word of Christ must dwell in us, not in all notion and speculation, to make us doctors, but in all wisdom, to make us good Christians, and enable us to conduct ourselves in every thing as becomes wisdom's children.

4. To teach and admonish one another. This would contribute very much to our furtherance in all grace; for we sharpen ourselves by quickening others, and improve our knowledge by communicating it for their edification. We must "admonish one another in psalms and hymns." Observe, Singing of psalms is a Gospel ordinance; *ψαλμοὶ καὶ ὕμνοι καὶ ᾠδαὶ*—the Psalms of David, and spiritual hymns and odes, collected out of the Scripture, and suited to special occasions, instead of their lewd and profane songs in their idolatrous worship. Religious poetry seems countenanced by these expressions, and is capable of great edification. But, when we sing psalms, we make no melody unless we sing with grace in our hearts, unless we are suitably affected with what we sing, and go along in it with true devotion and understanding. Singing of psalms is a teaching ordinance as well as a praising ordinance; and we are not only to quicken and encourage ourselves, but to "teach and admonish one another," mutually excite our affections, and convey instructions.

5. All must be done in the name of Christ; ver. 17. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," according to his command and in compliance with his authority, by strength derived from him, with an eye to his glory, and depending upon his merit for the acceptance of what is good and the pardon of what is amiss. "Giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Observe, 1st. We must give thanks in all things; whatsoever we do, we must still give thanks; *Eph. v. 20*. "Giving thanks always for all things." 2nd. The Lord Jesus must be the Mediator of our praises as well as of our prayers; "We give thanks to God and the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," *Eph. v. 20*. Those who do all things in Christ's name will never want matter of thanksgiving to God, even the Father.

18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. 20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. 22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

The apostle concludes the chapter with exhortations to relative duties, as before in the epistle to the *Ephesians*. The epistles which are most taken up in displaying the glory of Divine grace, and magnifying the Lord Jesus, are the most particular and distinct in pressing the duties of the several relations. We must never separate the privileges and duties of the gospel religion.

First. He begins with the duties of wives and husbands; ver. 18. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Submission is the duty of wives, *ὑποτάσσεσθε*. It is the same word which is used to express our duty to magistrates, (*Rom. xiii. 1*), "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," and is expressed by subjection and reverence, *Eph. v. 24, 33*. The reason is that "Adam was first formed, then Eve: and Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression," *1 Tim. ii. 13, 14*. He was first in the creation and last in the transgression. "The head of the woman is the man;" and "the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man," *1 Cor. xi. 3, 8, 9*. It is agreeable to the order of nature and the reason of things, as well as the appointment and will of God. But then it is submission, not to a rigorous lord or absolute tyrant, who may do his will and is without restraints, but to a husband, and to her own husband, who stands in the nearest relation, and is under strict engagements to proper duty too. And "this is fit in the Lord," it is becoming the relation, and what they are bound in duty to do, as an instance of obedience to the authority and law of Christ. On the other hand, "husbands must love their wives, and not be bitter against them," ver. 19. They must love them with tender and faithful affection, as Christ loved the church, and as their own bodies, and even as themselves, (*Eph. v. 25, 28, 33*), with a love peculiar to the nearest relation and the greatest comfort and blessing of life. And they must not be bitter against them, not use them unkindly, with harsh language or severe treatment, but be kind and obliging to them in all things; for "the woman was made for the man, neither is the man without the woman, and the man also is by the woman," *1 Cor. xi. 9, 11, 12*.

Secondly. The duties of children and parents. "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord," ver. 20. They must be willing to do all their lawful commands, and be at their direction and disposal; as those who have a natural right, and are fitter to direct them, than themselves. The apostle (*Eph. vi. 2*) requires them to honour as well as obey their parents; they must esteem them and think honourably of them, as the obedience of their lives must proceed from the esteem and opinion of their minds.

iii. 17. "To God the Father;" so best MSS.

iv. 9. "Who is one of you:" "belongs to your city" (Ellicott).

iv. 10. "Aristarchus;" see Acts xx. 4, xxvii. 2. "Fellow-prisoner:" probably voluntarily so.

Additional Notes.—The following summary of the more difficult portion of the epistle is from Ellicott's article in "Smith's Dictionary":—"After his usual salutation (chap. i. 1, 2), the apostle returns thanks to God for the faith of the Colossians, the spirit of

iii. 2. "Above:" all things belonging to "Jerusalem which is above" (*Gal. iv. 26*; *Phil. iii. 20*).

iii. 5. Literally, "make dead therefore." As you died, and your true life is not on earth, act conformably to your condition, kill the desires of a merely earthly life. "Covetousness:" specially marked out as a deadly sin. "Because a covetous man places the chief good in riches, he worships them as God, he pays to them love, faith, service, which are owed only to God" (Poole).

And this is "well-pleasing to God, or acceptable to him; for it is "the first commandment with promise" (*Eph. vi. 2*) with an explicit promise annexed to it, namely, "That it shall be well with them, and they shall live long on the earth." Dutiful children are the most likely to prosper in the world and enjoy long life. And parents must be tender, as well as children obedient; *ver. 21*, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." Let not your authority over them be exercised with rigour and severity, but with kindness and gentleness, lest you raise their passions and discourage them in their duty, and by holding the reins too tight make them fly out with the greater fierceness. The bad temper and example of imprudent parents often prove a great hindrance to their children, and a stumblingblock in their way: see *Eph. vi. 4*. And it is by the tenderness of parents, and dutifulness of children, that God ordinarily furnishes his church with a seed to serve him, and propagates religion from age to age.

Thirdly. Servants and masters. "Servants, obey your masters in all things according to the flesh," *ver. 22*. Servants must do the duty of the relation in which they stand, and obey their master's commands in all things which are consistent with their duty to God their heavenly Master. "Not with eyeservice, as meek-pleasers." Not only when their master's eye is upon them, but when they are from under their master's eye, they must be both just and diligent. "In singleness of heart, fearing God." Without selfish designs, or hypocrisy and disguise, as those who fear God and stand in awe of him. Observe, The fear of God ruling in the heart will make people good in every relation. Servants who fear God will be just and faithful when they are from under their master's eye, because they know they are under the eye of God: see *Gen. xx. 11*, "Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place;" *Neh. v. 15*, "But so did not I, because of the fear of God;" "And whatsoever you do, do it heartily," *ver. 23*, with diligence, not idly and slothfully. Or, "Do it cheerfully, not discontented at the providence of God which put you in that relation." "As to the Lord, and not as to men." It sanctifies a servant's work when it is done as unto God, with an eye to his glory and in obedience to his command, and not merely as unto men, or with regard to them only. Observe, We are really doing our duty to God when we are faithful in our duty to men. And, for servants' encouragement, let them know that a good and faithful servant is never the farther from heaven for his being a servant. "Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for you serve the Lord Christ," *ver. 24*. Serving your masters according to the command of Christ, you serve Christ, and he will be your paymaster; you will have a glorious reward at last. Though you are now servants, you will receive the inheritance of sons. But, on the other hand, "He who does wrong will receive for the wrong which he has done," *ver. 25*. There is a righteous God, who, if servants wrong their masters, will reckon with them for it, though they may conceal it from their master's notice. And he will be sure to punish the unjust as well as reward the faithful servant: and so if masters wrong their servants. "And there is no respect of persons with him." The righteous Judge of the earth will be impartial, and carry it with an equal hand towards master and servant; not swayed by any regard to men's outward circumstance and condition of life. The one and the other will stand upon a level at his tribunal.

It is probable that the apostle has a particular respect, in all these instances of duty, to the case mentioned, *1 Cor. vii.*, of relations of a different religion, as a Christian and heathen, a Jewish convert and an uncircumcised Gentile, where there was room to doubt whether they were bound to fulfil the proper duties of their several relations to such persons. And, if it hold in such cases, it is much stronger upon Christians one towards another, and where both are of the same religion. And how happy would the gospel religion make the world if it everywhere prevailed; and how much would it influence every state of things; and every relation of life!

CHAPTER IV.

I. He continues his account of the duty of masters, from the close of the former chapter, *ver. 1*. II. He exhorts to the duty of prayer, *ver. 2-4*; and to a prudent and decent conduct towards those with whom we converse, *ver. 5, 6*. III. He closes the epistle with the mention of several of his friends, of whom he gives an honourable testimony, *ver. 7-18*.

MASTERS, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

The apostle proceeds with the duty of masters to their servants, which might have been joined to the foregoing chapter, and is a part of that discourse. Here observe,

First. Justice is required of them; "Give unto your servants that which is just and equal," *ver. 1*; not only strict justice, but equity and kindness. Be faithful to your promises to them, and perform your agreements; not defrauding them of their dues, nor "keeping back by fraud the hire of the labourers," *Jas. v. 4*. Require no more of them than they are able to perform; and do not lay unreasonable burthens upon them, and beyond their strength. Provide for them what is fit, supply proper food and physic, and allow them such liberties as may fit them the better for cheerful service and make it the easier to them, and this though they be employed in the meanest and lowest offices, and of another country and a different religion from yourselves.

Secondly. A good reason for this regard; "Knowing that you also have a Master in heaven." You who are masters of others have a Master yourselves, and are servants of another Lord. You are not lords of yourselves, and are accountable to one above you. Deal with your servants as you expect God should deal with you, and as those who believe they must give an account. You are both servants of the same Lord in the different relations in which you stand, and are equally accountable to him at last. "Knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him," *Eph. vi. 9*.

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in

bonds: 4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

If this be considered as connected with the foregoing verse, then we may observe that it is part of the duty which masters owe their servants to pray with them, and to pray daily with them, or "continue in prayer." They must not only do justly and kindly by them, but act a Christian and religious part, and be concerned for their souls as well as their bodies. "As parts of your charge, and under your influence, be concerned for the blessing of God upon them, as well as the success of your affairs in their hands." And this is the duty of every one, to "continue in prayer." Keep up your constant times of prayer, without being diverted from it by other business; keep your hearts close to the duty, without wandering or deadness, and even to the end of it. "Watching in the same." Christians should lay hold of all opportunities for prayer, and choose the fittest seasons, which are least liable to disturbance from other things, and keep their minds lively in the duty, and in suitable frames. "With thanksgiving," or solemn acknowledgment of the mercies received. Thanksgiving must have a part in every prayer. "Withal praying also for us," *ver. 3*. The people must pray particularly for their ministers, and bear them upon their hearts at all times at the throne of grace, as if he had said, Do not forget us, whenever you pray for yourselves, *Eph. vi. 19*; *1 Thee. v. 25*; *Heb. xiii. 18*. "That God would open to us a door of utterance," that is, either afford opportunity to preach the Gospel, (so he says, "a great door and effectual is opened to me," *1 Cor. xvi. 9*), or else give me ability and courage, and enable me with freedom and faithfulness; so *Eph. vi. 19*. "And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds;" that is, either the deepest doctrines of the Gospel with plainness, of which Christ is the principal subject, (he calls it "the mystery of the Gospel," *Eph. vi. 19*), or else he means the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentile world, which he calls "the mystery hidden from ages," *ch. i. 26*, and "the mystery of Christ," *Eph. iii. 4*. For this he was now in bonds. He was a prisoner at Rome by the violent opposition of the malicious Jews. He would have them pray for him, that he might not be discouraged in his work, nor driven from it by his sufferings. "That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak," *ver. 4*. That I may make this mystery known to those who have not heard of it, and make it plain to their understanding, in such a manner as I ought to do. He had been particular in telling them what he prayed for on their behalf, *ch. i*. Here he tells them particularly what he would have them pray for on his behalf. Paul knew as well as any man how to speak; and yet he begged their prayers for him, that he might be taught to speak. The best and most eminent Christians need the prayers of meaner Christians, and are not above asking them. The chief speakers need prayer that God would give them a door of utterance, and that they may speak as they ought to speak.

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

The apostle exhorts them farther to a prudent and decent conduct towards all those with whom they conversed, towards the heathen world, or those out of the Christian church among whom they lived; *ver. 5*, "Walk in wisdom towards those who are without." Be careful, in all your converse with them, to get no hurt by them, or contract any of their customs; for "evil communications corrupt good manners;" and to do no hurt to them, or increase their prejudices against religion, and give them an occasion of dislike. Yea, do them all the good you can, and by all the fittest means and in the proper seasons recommend religion to them. "Redeeming the time;" that is, either improving every opportunity of doing them good, and making the best use of your time in proper duty, (diligence in redeeming time very much recommends religion to the good opinion of others,) or else walking cautiously and with circumspection, to give them no advantage against you, nor expose yourselves to their malice and ill-will, *Eph. v. 15, 16*. "Walk circumspectly, redeeming the time, because the days are evil;" that is, dangerous, or times of trouble and suffering. And towards others, or those who are within, as well as those who are without, "Let your speech be always with grace," *ver. 6*. Let all your discourse be as becomes Christians, suitable to your profession, savoury, discreet, seasonable. Though it be not always of grace, it must be always with grace; and, though the matter of our discourse be that which is common, yet there must be an air of piety upon it, and it must be in a Christian manner. "Seasoned with salt." Grace is the salt which seasons our discourse, makes it savoury, and keeps it from corrupting. "That you may know how to answer every man." One answer is proper for one man, and another for another man, *Pr. xxvi. 4, 5*. We have need of a great deal of wisdom and grace to give proper answers to every man, particularly in answering the questions and objections of adversaries against our religion, giving the reasons of our faith, and shewing the unreasonableness of their exceptions and cavils to the best advantage for our cause and least prejudice to ourselves. "Be ready always to give an answer to every man who asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear," *1 Pet. iii. 15*.

7 All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: 8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts; 9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here. 10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) 11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom

love they had shown, and the progress which the Gospel had made amongst them, as preached by Epaphras (*chap. i. 3-8*). This leads him to pray without ceasing that they may be fruitful in good works, and especially thankful to the Father, who gave them an inheritance with his saints, and translated them into the kingdom of his Son—his Son, the image of the invisible God, the first-born before every creature, the Creator of all things earthly and heavenly, the

Church, he in whom all things consist, and by whom

all things have been reconciled to the eternal Father (*chap. i. 9-20*). This reconciliation, the apostle reminds them, was exemplified in their own cases; they were once alienated, but now so reconciled as to be presented holy and blameless before God, if only they continued firm in the faith, and were not moved from the hope of which the Gospel was the source and origin (*chap. i. 21-23*). Of this Gospel the apostle declares himself the minister; the mystery of salvation was that for which he toiled and for which he suffered (*chap. i. 24-29*).

of God, which have been a comfort unto me. 12 Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. 15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. 16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. 18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

In the close of this epistle the apostle does several of his friends the honour to leave their names upon record, with some testimony of his respect, which will be spoken of wherever the Gospel comes, and last to the end of the world.

First. Concerning Tychicus, ver. 7. By him this epistle was sent; and he does not give them an account in writing of his present state, because Tychicus would do it by word of mouth more fully and particularly. He knew they would be glad to hear how it fared with him. The churches cannot but be concerned for good ministers, and desirous to know their state. He gives him this character, "A beloved brother and faithful minister." Paul, though a great apostle, owns a faithful minister for a brother and a beloved brother. Faithfulness in any one is truly lovely, and renders him worthy our affection and esteem. "And a fellow-servant in the Lord." Ministers are servants to Christ, and fellow-servants to one another. They have one Lord, though they have different stations and capacities of service. Observe, It adds much to the beauty and strength of the gospel ministry when ministers are thus loving and condescending to one another, and by all just means support and advance one another's reputation. Paul sent him not only to tell them of his affairs, but to bring him an account of theirs; "Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts," ver. 8. He was as willing to hear from them as they could be to hear from him, and thought himself as much obliged to sympathise with them as he thought them obliged to sympathise with him. It is a great comfort, under the troubles and difficulties of life, to have the mutual concern of fellow Christians.

Secondly. Concerning Onesimus, ver. 9, "With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you." He was sent back from Rome along with Tychicus. This was he whom Paul had begotten in his bonds, *Phile.* 10. He had been servant to Philemon, and was a member, if not a minister, of their church. He was converted at Rome, whither he had fled from his master's service; and was now sent back, it is probable, with the epistle to *Philemon*, to introduce him again into his master's family. Observe, Though he was a poor servant, and had been a bad man, yet, being now a convert, Paul calls him "a faithful and beloved brother." The meanest circumstance of life, and greatest wickedness of former life, make no difference in the spiritual relation among sincere Christians: they partake of the same privileges, and are entitled to the same regards. The "richness of God by faith of Jesus Christ is unto all and upon all those that believe, for there is no difference," *Rom.* iii. 22; and "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, for you are all one in Christ Jesus," *Gal.* iii. 28. Perhaps this was some time after he was converted and sent back to Philemon, and by this time he had entered into the ministry, because Paul calls him a brother.

Thirdly. "Aristarchus, a fellow-prisoner." Those who join in services and sufferings should be thereby engaged to one another in holy love. Paul had a particular affection for his fellow-servants and his fellow-prisoners.

Fourthly. "Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas." This is supposed to be the same who wrote the Gospel which bears his name. "If he come unto you receive him." Paul had a quarrel with Barnabas upon the account of this Mark, who was his nephew, and "thought not good to take him with them, because he departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work," *Acts* xv. 38. He would not take Mark with him, but took Silas, because Mark had deserted them; and yet Paul is not only reconciled to him himself, but recommends him to the respect of the churches, and gives a great example of a truly Christian and forgiving spirit. If men have been guilty of a fault, it must not be always remembered against them. We must forget as well as forgive. "If a man be overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness," *Gal.* vi. 1.

Fifthly. Here is one who is called Jesus, which is the Greek name for the Hebrew Joshua. "If Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day," *Heb.* iv. 8. "Who is called Justus." It is probable that he changed his name for that of Justus, in honour to the name of the Redeemer. Or else Jesus was his Jewish name, for he was of the circumcision; and Justus his Roman or Latin name. "These are my fellow-labourers unto the kingdom of God, who have been a comfort unto me." Observe, What comfort the apostle had in the communion of saints and ministers! One is his fellow-servant, another his fellow-prisoner, and all his fellow-workers, who were working out their own salvation and endeavouring to promote the salvation of others. Good ministers take great comfort in those who are their fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God. Their friendship and converse together are a great refreshment under the sufferings and difficulties in their way.

Sixthly. "Epaphras," ver. 12, the same with Epaphroditus. He is "one of you," one of your church; "he salutes you," or sends his service to you, and his best affections and wishes. "Always labouring fervently for you in prayers." Epaphras had learned of Paul to be much in prayer for his friends. Observe, 1. In what manner he prayed for them. He laboured in prayer,

laboured fervently, and always laboured fervently for them. Those who would succeed in prayer must take pains in prayer; and we must be earnest in prayer, not only for ourselves, but for others also. It is the effectual fervent prayer which is the prevailing prayer, and availeth much, *Jas.* v. 16; and "Elias prayed earnestly that it might not rain," ver. 17. 2. What is the matter of this prayer; "That you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Observe, To stand perfect and complete in the will of God is what we should earnestly desire both for ourselves and others. We must stand complete in all the will of God; in the will of his precepts by a universal obedience, and in the will of his providence by a cheerful submission to it; and we stand perfect and complete in both by constancy and perseverance unto the end. The apostle was witness for Epaphras that he had a great zeal for them; "I bear him record;" I can testify for him that he has a great concern for you, and that all he does for you proceeds from a warm desire for your good. And his zeal extended to all about them; To "those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis." He had a great concern for the Christian interest in the neighbouring places, as well as among them.

Seventhly. Luke is another here mentioned, whom he calls the beloved physician. This is he who wrote the *Gospel* and *Acts*, and was Paul's companion. Observe, He was both a physician and an evangelist. Christ himself both taught and healed, and was the great physician as well as prophet of the church. He was the beloved physician; one who recommended himself more than ordinary to the affections of his friends. Skill in physic is a useful accomplishment in a minister, and may be improved to more extensive usefulness and greater esteem among Christians.

Eighthly. Demas. Whether this was written before the second epistle to *Timothy* or after is not certain. There we read, 2 *Tim.* iv. 10, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." Some have thought that this epistle was written after; and then it is an evidence that, though Demas forsook Paul, yet he did not forsake Christ; or he forsook him but for a time, and recovered himself again, and Paul forgave him and owned him as a brother. But others think more probably that this epistle was written before the other; this in A.D. 62, that in 66, and then it is an evidence how considerable a man Demas was, who yet afterwards revolted. Many who have made a great figure in profession, and gained a great name among Christians, have yet shamefully apostatized; "They went forth from us, because they were not of us," 1 *John* ii. 19.

Ninthly. The brethren in Laodicea are here mentioned, as living in the neighbourhood of Colosse; and Paul sends salutations to them, and orders that this epistle should be read in the church of the Laodiceans, ver. 16; that a copy of it should be sent thither, to be read publicly in their congregation. And some think Paul sent another epistle at this time to Laodicea, and ordered them to send for that from Laodicea, and read it in their church; "And that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." If so, that epistle is now lost, and did not belong to the canon; for all the epistles which the apostles ever wrote were not preserved, any more than the words and actions of our blessed Lord; "There are many other things which Jesus did, which if they should be written every one, I suppose the world itself could not contain the books which would be written," *John* xxi. 25. But some think it was the epistle to the *Ephesians*, which is still extant.

Tenthly. Nymphas is mentioned (ver. 15) as one who lived at Colosse, and had a church in his house; that is, either a religious family, where the several parts of worship were daily performed, or some part of the congregation met there, when they had no public places of worship allowed, and they were forced to assemble in private houses for fear of their enemies. "The disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews," *John* xx. 19, and the apostle preached in his "own lodging and hired house," *Acts* xxviii. 23, 30. In the former sense it shewed his exemplary piety; in the latter, his zeal and public spirit.

Eleventhly. Concerning Archippus, who was one of their ministers at Colosse. They are bidden to admonish him to mind his work as a minister, to "take heed to it, and to fulfil it;" to be diligent and careful of all the parts of it, and to persevere in it unto the end. They must attend to the main design of their ministry, without troubling themselves or the people with things foreign to it, or of less moment. Observe, 1. The ministry we have received is a great honour; for it is "received in the Lord," and is by his appointment and command. 2. Those who have received it must fulfil it, or do the full duty of it. Those betray their trust, and will have a sad account at last, who "do this work of the Lord negligently." 3. The people may put their ministers in mind of their duty, and excite them to it. "Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry," though no doubt with decency and respect, not from pride and conceit.

Twelfthly. Concerning himself; ver. 18, "The salutation of me Paul. Remember my bonds." He had a scribe to write all the rest of the epistle, but these words he wrote with his own hand. "Remember my bonds." He does not say, Remember I am a prisoner, and send me supply; but, Remember I am in bonds as the apostle of the Gentiles, and let this confirm your faith in the Gospel of Christ. It adds weight to this exhortation; "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy," *Eph.* iv. 1. "Grace be with you." The favour of God, and all good, the blessed fruits and effects of it, be with you, and be your portion.



COLOSSE.

And his sufferings were not only for the Church at large, but for them and others whom he had not personally visited, even that they might come to the full knowledge of Christ, and might not fall victims to plausible sophistries: they were to walk in Christ and to be built on him (chap. ii. 1-7). Especially were they to be careful that no philosophy should lead them from Him in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead, who was the head of all spiritual powers, and who had quickened them, forgiven them, and in his death had triumphed over all the hosts of darkness (chap. ii. 8-15). Surely,

with such spiritual privileges, they were not to be judged in the matter of mere ceremonial observances, or beguiled into creature worship. Christ was the head of the body, if they were truly united with him, to what need were bodily austerities? (chap. ii. 16-23). They were, then, to mind things above, spiritual things, not carnal ordinances, for their life was hidden with Christ (chap. iii. 1-4); they were to mortify their members, and the evil principles in which they once walked; the old man was to be put off, and the new man put on, in which all are one in Christ (chap. iii. 5-12)."



THESSALONIAN

AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF



CAVALRY.

ST. PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

THESSALONICA was formerly the metropolis of Macedonia. It is now called Salonichi, and is the best peopled, and one of the best towns for commerce, in the Levant. The apostle Paul being diverted from his design of going into the provinces of Asia, properly so called, and directed after an extraordinary manner to preach the Gospel in Macedonia, *Acts xvi. 9, 10*, in obedience to the call of God went from Tarsus to Samothracia, and from thence to Neapolis, and from thence to Philippi, where he had good success in his ministry, but met with hard usage, being cast into prison with Silas his companion in travel and labour, from whence, being wonderfully delivered, they comforted the brethren there and departed. Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where the apostle planted a church that consisted of some believing Jews, and many converted Gentiles, *Acts xvii. 1-4*; but, a tumult being raised in the city by the unbelieving Jews, and the few and baser sort of the inhabitants, Paul and Silas, for their safety, were sent away by night unto Berea, and afterwards Paul was conducted to Athens, leaving Silas and Timotheus behind him, but sent directions that they should come to him with all speed. When they were come, Timotheus was sent to Thessalonica to inquire after their welfare, and to establish them in the faith, *ch. iii. 2*, who returned to Paul while he tarried at Athens, and was sent again, together with Silas, to visit the churches in Macedonia; so that Paul being left at Athens alone, *ch. iii. 1*, departed from thence to Corinth, where he continued a year and a half; in which time Silas and Timotheus returned to him from Macedonia, *Acts xviii. 5*. And then he wrote this epistle to the church of Christ at Thessalonica, which, though it is placed after the other epistles of this apostle, is supposed to be first in time of all Paul's epistles, and to be written about A.D. 51; the main scope whereof is to express the thankfulness of this apostle for the good success his preaching had among them, and to establish them in the faith, and persuade them to a holy conversation.

A.D. 54.

CHAPTER I.

After the introduction, ver. 1, the apostle begins with a thanksgiving to God for the saving benefits bestowed on them, ver. 2-5; and then mentions the sure evidences of the good success of the Gospel among them, which was notorious and famous in several other places, ver. 6-10.



PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this introduction we have, First. The inscription; where we have,

1. The persons from whom this epistle came, or by whom it was written. Paul was the inspired apostle and writer of this epistle, though he maketh no mention of his apostleship, which was not doubted of by the Thessalonians; nor opposed by any false apostles among them. He joins Silvanus, or Silas, and Timotheus with himself, who were now come to him with an account of the prosperity of the churches in Macedonia, which sheweth this great apostle's humility, and how desirous he was to be put honour upon the ministers of Christ that were of an inferior rank and standing. A good example this is to such ministers as are of greater abilities and reputation in the church than some others.

2. The persons to whom this epistle is written; namely, the church of the Thessalonians, that is, the converted Jews and Gentiles in Thessalonica; and it is observable that this church is said to be "in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:" they had fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, *1 Jno. i. 3*. Therefore they were a Christian church, because they believed in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. They believed the principles both of natural and revealed religion. The Gentiles among them were turned to God from the idols, and the Jews among them believed Jesus to be the promised Messiah. All of them were devoted and dedicated to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. To God as their chiefest good and highest end; to Jesus Christ as their Lord, and Mediator between God and man. God the Father is the original and centre of all natural religion, and Jesus Christ is the author and centre of all revealed religion. "Ye believe in God," saith our Saviour, "believe also in me," *Jno. xiv. 1*.

* The Exposition of I and II Thessalonians is by the Rev. Daniel Mayo. The additional Notes are from the Exposition of Rev. R. Fergusson, of Kilwinning, except as otherwise marked.

Introductory Note.—This epistle was written from Corinth, after St. Paul's first visit to Thessalonica (*Acts xvii.*); the date of writing, according to Alford, being the winter of A.D. 52. Its authorship has been questioned in modern times by Baur and Schrader, but their objections have been answered by De Wette, Davidson, and others, and have never obtained even in Germany. The following summary of contents is from Dr. Vaughan's "Epistles of St. Paul for English Readers:"—"Beginning, as ever, with a word of kindly and Christian

Secondly. The salutation or apostolical benediction. "Grace be with you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." This is the same for substance as in the other epistles. Grace and peace are well joined together; for the free grace and favour of God is the spring and fountain of all that peace and prosperity we do or can enjoy; and where there are gracious dispositions in us we may hope for peaceful thoughts in our own breasts. Both grace and peace, and all spiritual blessings, do come to us from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: from God the original of all good, and from the Lord Jesus the purchaser of all good for us. From God in Christ, and so our Father in covenant, because he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Note, As all good cometh from God, so no good can be hoped for by sinners but from God in Christ. And the best good may be expected from God as our Father, for the sake of Christ.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; 4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. 5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

First. The apostle begins with thanksgiving unto God. Being about to mention the things that were matter of joy to him, and highly praiseworthy in them, and greatly for their advantage, he chooseth to do this by way of thanksgiving to God, who is the author of all that good that cometh to us, or is done by us at any time. God is the object of all religious worship of prayer and praise. And thanksgiving to God is a great duty to be performed always, or constantly; even when we do not actually give thanks to God by our words, we should have a grateful sense of God's goodness upon our minds. Thanksgiving should be often repeated; and not only should we be thankful for the favours we ourselves do receive, but for benefits bestowed on others also, upon our fellow creatures and fellow Christians. The apostle gave thanks not only for those that were his most intimate friends, or most eminently favoured of God, but for them all.

Secondly. He joined prayer with his praise or thanksgiving. When we do "in every thing by prayer and supplication make our requests known to God," we should join thanksgiving therewith, *Phil. iv. 6*; so when we give thanks for any

greeting, he gives thanks in the recollection of what he had himself witnessed of their faith, and love, and hope. He gathers from that remembrance the assurance of the good purpose of God towards them. Their example had become a gospel. All Macedonia and Achaia had heard of their great change. The way of the evangelist had been prepared by the tidings. It was known without his telling what the Gospel of Christ was in both its parts, in its doctrine and in its expectation (*chap. i.*). He goes back to the thought of his stay

benefit we receive, we should join prayer. We should pray always and without ceasing; and should pray not only for ourselves, but for others also—for our friends, and should make mention of them in our prayers. We may sometimes mention their names, and should make mention of their cases and condition; at least we should have their persons and circumstances in our minds, remembering them without ceasing. Note, As there is much that we ought to be thankful for on behalf of ourselves and our friends, so there is much occasion of constant prayer for farther supplies of good.

Thirdly. He mentions the particulars for which he was so thankful to God; namely,

1. The saving benefits bestowed on them. These were the grounds and reasons of his thanksgiving. For example, 1st. Their faith and their work of faith. This he tells them, ver. 8, was very famous and spread abroad. This is the radical grace; and their faith was a true and living faith, because a working faith. Note, Wherever there is a true faith it will work. It will have an influence upon heart and life; it will put us upon working for God and for our own salvation. Then we have comfort in our own faith, and the faith of others, when we perceive the work of faith. "Shew me thy faith by thy works," Jas. ii. 18. 2nd. Their love, and the "labour of love." Love is one of the cardinal graces, and of great use to us in this life, and will remain and be perfected in the life to come. "Faith works by love;" it shews itself in the exercise of love to God and love to our neighbour. As love will shew itself by labour, it will put us upon taking pains in religion. 3rd. Their hope, and the "patience of hope." We are saved by hope. This grace is compared to the soldier's helmet and sailor's anchor, and is of great use in times of danger. And wherever there is a well-grounded hope of eternal life, that will appear by the exercise of patience; in a patient bearing the calamities of the present time, and a patient waiting for the glory to be revealed; "For if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it," Rom. viii. 25. 4th. The apostle not only mentions these three cardinal graces, faith, hope, and love, but also taketh notice, *First*. Of the object and the efficient cause of these graces, namely, our Lord Jesus Christ. *Secondly*. Of the sincerity of them. Being in "the sight of God and our Father." The great motive to sincerity is the apprehension of God's eye as always upon us; and it is a sign of sincerity when in all we do we endeavour to approve ourselves to God; and that is right which is so in the sight of God. Then is the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, sincere, when it is done as under the eye of God. *Thirdly*. He mentions the fountain from whence these graces did flow, namely, God's electing love; "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God," ver. 4, [or, knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election.] Thus he runs up these streams to the fountain, and that was God's eternal election. Some by their election of God would understand only the temporary separation of the Thessalonians from the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles in their conversion; but this was according to the eternal "purpose of him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will," Eph. i. 11. And speaking of their election, he calls them "brethren beloved;" for the original of the brotherhood that is between Christians, and the relation wherein they stand one to another, is election; and that is a good reason why we should love one another, because we are all loved of God, and were loved of him and his counsels, when there was not any thing in us to merit his love. The election of these Thessalonians was known to the apostle, and therefore might be known to themselves, and that by the fruits and effects thereof, namely, their sincere faith, and hope, and love; by the successful preaching of the gospel among them. Observe, 1st. That all those who in the fulness of time are effectually called and sanctified were from eternity elected and chosen to salvation. 2nd. That that election of God is of his own good pleasure and mere grace, not for the sake of any merit in them that are chosen. 3rd. That the election of God may be known by the fruits thereof. 4th. That whenever we are giving of thanks to God for his grace, either to ourselves or others, we should run up the streams to the fountain, and give thanks to God for his electing love by which we are made to differ.

2. Another ground or reason of the apostle's thanksgiving is the success of his ministry among them. He was thankful on his own account as well as theirs, that he had not laboured in vain. He had the seal and evidence of his apostleship hereby, and great encouragement in his labours and sufferings. Their ready acceptance and entertainment of the Gospel he preached to them was an evidence of their being elected and beloved of God. It was by this way he knew their election. It is true he had been in the third heavens, but had not searched the records of eternity, and found their election there; but knew this by the success of the Gospel among them, ver. 5; and he taketh notice with thankfulness, 1st. That the Gospel came to them also, not "in words only but in power," that is, they did not only hear the sound of it, but submitted to the power of it. It did not only tickle the ear, and please the fancy, not only fill their heads with notions, and amuse their minds for awhile, but did affect their hearts. A Divine power went along with it for the convincing their consciences, and amending their lives. Note, That by this we may know our election, if we not only speak of the things of God by rote, as parrots, but feel the influence of those things in our hearts, mortifying our lusts, and weaning us from the world, and raising us up to heavenly things. 2nd. It came "in the Holy Ghost," that is, with the powerful energy of the Divine Spirit. Note, Wherever the Gospel comes in power, it is to be attributed to the operation of the Holy Ghost; and unless the Spirit of God accompanies the word of God, to render it effectual by his power, it will be to us but as a dead letter, and the letter killeth; it is the Spirit giveth life. 3rd. The Gospel came to them in much assurance. Thus did they entertain it by the power of the Holy Ghost: they were fully convinced of the truth of it, so as not to be easily shaken in mind by objections and doubts; they were willing to leave all for Christ, and to venture their souls and everlasting condition upon the verity of the gospel revelation. The word was not to them like the sentiments of some philosophers about matters of opinion and doubtful speculation, but the object of their faith and assurance. Their "faith was the evidence of things not seen;" and the Thessalonians did thus "know what manner of men" the apostle and his fellow-labourers were among them, and what they did for their sake, and with what good success.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: 7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. 9 For they them-

among them. They knew what his teaching had been, and what his life—how sincere the one; how pure, how devoted, and how laborious the other. He thanks God for the blessing granted to this twofold influence. They had listened, they had obeyed, and they had patiently suffered for the truth's sake (chap. ii. 1–16). Great had been his sorrow in leaving them, great his desire to return. Once and again had he purposed it, but was let hitherto. At last anxiety became intolerable, and he had sent Timotheus in his stead. The

selves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; 10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.



ACHAIA.—VER. 8.

In these words we have the evidence of the apostle's success among these Thessalonians, which were notorious and famous in several places: for,

First. They were careful in their holy conversation to imitate the good examples of the apostles and ministers of Christ, ver. 6. As the apostle took care to demean himself well, not only for his own credit's sake, but for the benefit of others, by a conversation suitable to his doctrine, that he might not pull down with one hand what he builded up with the other, so the Thessalonians, who observed what manner of men they were among them, how their preaching and living was all of a piece, shewed a conscientious care to be followers of them; that is, to imitate their good example; and herein they became also followers of the Lord, who is the perfect example we must strive to imitate; and we should be followers of others no farther than they are followers of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 1; and the Thessalonians acted thus notwithstanding their afflictions, that much affliction the apostles and themselves also were exposed to. They were willing to share in the sufferings that attended the embracing and professing Christianity. They entertained the Gospel, notwithstanding the troubles and hardships which attended the preachers and professors of it too. Perhaps this made the word more precious, being dear bought, and the examples of the apostles shone very bright under their afflictions; so that the Thessalonians embraced the word cheerfully, and followed the example of the suffering apostles joyfully, "with joy in the Holy Ghost;" such solid, and spiritual, and lasting joy as the Holy Ghost is the author of, who, when our afflictions do abound, maketh our consolations much more abound.

Secondly. Their zeal prevailed to that degree that they were themselves examples to all about them, ver. 7, 8. Observe here,

1. Their example was very effectual to make good impressions upon many others. They were *τοτοι*, 'stamps,' or instruments to make impression. They had themselves received good impressions from the preaching and conversation of the apostles; and they made good impressions, and their conversation had an influence upon others. Note, 1st. Christians should be so good as by their example to influence others. [2nd. There is not any one thing which maketh the Gospel sound louder, the sound of it to be heard better, and its offer embraced more readily, than when a sound profession is beautified, adorned, and seconded by sober, sincere, painful and conscientious practice; for it was such a profession seconded with such a practice, in these of Thessalonica, which made the Gospel sound from them in Macedonia and Achaia. The word signifies to sound shrill and far, as with the noise of a trumpet or voice of a lion-herald. 3rd. It tendeth much to giving credit to the Gospel far and near, that great cities and honourable personages did once receive it; for Thessalonica was the chief city in all Macedonia, where were many women of credit and note, Acts xvii. 4; and therefore, upon their receiving the Gospel, the word of the Lord did sound out in all Macedonia and Achaia.]

2. It was very extensive, and reached beyond the confines of Thessalonica, even to the believers of all Macedonia, and farther in Achaia. The Philippians and others, that received the Gospel before the Thessalonians, were edified by their example. Note, Some that were last hired into the vineyard may sometimes outstrip those that come in before them, and become examples to them.

3. It was very famous. The word of the Lord, or its wonderful effects upon the Thessalonians, sounded, or was famous and well known, in the regions round about that city, and in every place, not strictly every where, but here and there, up and down in the world; so that, from the good success of the Gospel among them, many others were encouraged to entertain it, and to be willing when called to suffer for it. Their faith was spread abroad. 1st. The readiness of their faith was famed abroad. These Thessalonians embraced the Gospel as soon as it was preached to them; so that every body took notice what manner of entering in among them the apostles had; that there were no such delays as at Philippi, where it was a great while before much good was done. 2nd. The effects of their faith were famous. *First*. They quitted their

report of their condition, brought by his friend, had filled him with joy. How can he thank God as he would for such consolation? May he grant a speedy re-union, and at all events a blessed assurance in the great day (chap. ii. 17–iii. 13). Let them, to this end, walk watchfully in Christ's way. In particular, let them keep themselves pure. Let them live a quiet and diligent life, in all love and honesty (chap. iv. 1–12). There was one subject on which he would correct a misapprehension—the condition and prospect of the Christian dead. They

idolatry; they turned from their idols, and abandoned all that false worship they had been educated in. *Secondly*. They gave themselves up to God, to the living and true God, and devoted themselves to his service. *Thirdly*. They set themselves to wait for the Son of God from heaven, ver. 10. And this is one of the peculiarities of our holy religion to wait for Christ's second coming, as those that believe he will come, and hope he will come to our joy. The believers under the Old Testament waited for the coming of the Messiah, and believers now wait for his second coming; he is yet to come. And there is good reason to believe he will come, because God hath raised him from the dead, which is a full assurance unto all men that he will come to judgment, *Acts xvii. 31*. And there is good reason to hope and wait for his coming, because he hath "delivered us from wrath to come." He came to purchase salvation, will when he cometh again bring salvation with him, full and final deliverance from sin, and death, and hell; from that wrath which is yet to come upon unbelievers, and which, when it is once come, will be yet to come, because it is "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," *Mat. xxv. 41*.

[We may learn hence divers doctrinal truths concerning Christ, wherein the apostle had doubtless instructed the Thessalonians at greater length, but doth now propound them in most wonderful brevity, as, 1. That Jesus Christ is true God; for he calls him the Son of the Father, and therefore of the same substance with him, even God himself; "To wait for the Son of God." 2. He is also man; for it is implied he was once dead, and therefore he behaved to be also man; "Whom he raised from the dead." 3. Though he have two natures, yet he is but one person; for he speaks of the Son of God and him who was dead, not as of two, but as of one and the same; "For his Son, whom he raised from the dead." 4. Jesus Christ, at his Father's appointment, (*Ps. xl.*) hath undertaken to be a Saviour, Redeemer, and Deliverer of the elect from that wrath which is due to them for sin; for therefore is he called "Jesus," which signifies a saviour, *Mat. i. 21*, and is said "to deliver us from the wrath to come." 5. Jesus Christ, the Lord of life, did give himself to death, thereby to satisfy provoked justice for the sins of the elect; for it is implied he was dead while it is said, "Whom he raised from the dead." 6. Jesus Christ, having satisfied the Father's justice by his death, was loosed out of prison, raised up from death, and absolved by the Father, as having performed all he undertook; for "He raised him from the dead." 7. Jesus Christ, after his resurrection, did ascend to heaven, to take possession of it in the name of the elect, *Eph. ii.*, and to make application unto the elect of all those good things which he had purchased by his death, *Acts v. 31*; for that they looked for him "from heaven," saith he is there, and consequently that he ascended thither. 8. Jesus Christ in his bodily presence doth now reside in heaven, and not upon earth; for there he resides, whence he is expected to come; "And to wait for his Son from heaven." 9. As Jesus Christ did deliver the elect from the wrath to come, by paying of a sufficient ransom to provoked justice in his death, so he is carrying on, while he is now in heaven, the work of their delivery towards perfection, by making application of the redemption purchased, both to pardon sin in its guilt and to subdue sin in its strength, *Acts v. 31*; for the word "delivered," in the original, may be read in the present time, as well as the preterit; "Who delivereth us." 10. Jesus Christ shall again return from heaven, and come to earth at the last day, to judge the quick and the dead, *2 Tim. iv. 1*, for his coming is waited for by believers, and therefore it must be: "To wait," for his coming. 11. Then, and at that time, shall Jesus Christ complete the work of the elect's delivery from that wrath to come, by acquitting them openly, and pronouncing, as their Judge, that blessed sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," *Mat. xxv.*; for so much is implied, while his delivering of us from the wrath to come is annexed to his second coming; "Look for his Son—who delivered, or delivereth us from the wrath to come." 12. Jesus Christ the Judge shall not then acquit or deliver all from that wrath, but only such who here have lived by faith, and fled to him for a refuge, and laid hold upon the ransom paid by him; for, saith he, who delivereth "us," to wit Paul with the believing Thessalonians, and such believers as they were, leaving all others to drink the dregs of that most bitter cup of God's unmixed wrath for ever and ever, *Jno. iii. 36*].

CHAPTER II.

In this chapter the apostle puts the Thessalonians in mind of the manner of his preaching among them, ver. 1—6; then of the manner of his conversation among them, ver. 7—12; afterwards of the success of his ministry, with the effects both on himself and themselves, ver. 13—16. And then apologizeth for his absence, ver. 17—20.



OR yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: 2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. 3

For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: 4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. 5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: 6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

must not allow themselves to doubt the place—the sure and foremost place—of them that are asleep, in all the glories of the promised advent. The time, indeed, of that great event is veiled from human knowledge, but not on that account can it come suddenly on the watchful (*chap. iv. 13—v. 11*). Various precepts of divine wisdom close the letter."

i. 1. From "peace" to the end of the verse is omitted by the Vatican MS. and ancient Syriac version.

Here we have an account of Paul's manner of preaching, and his comfortable reflection upon his entrance in among the Thessalonians. And as he had the testimony of his own conscience witnessing to his integrity, so he could appeal to the Thessalonians how faithfully he, and Silas, and Timotheus, his helpers in the work of the Lord, had discharged their office. "You yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you." Note, It is a great comfort to a minister to have his own conscience, and the consciences of others, witnessing for him, that he set out well, with good designs, and from good principles; and that his preaching "was not in vain," or, as some read it, "was not vain." The apostle here comforts himself either in the success of the ministry, that it was not fruitless or in vain, (according to our translation); or, as others think, reflecting upon the sincerity of his preaching, that it was not vain and empty, or deceitful and treacherous. The subject matter of the apostle's preaching was not vain and idle speculations about useless niceties and foolish questions, but sound and solid truth, such as was most likely to profit his hearers. A good example this is to be imitated by all the ministers of the Gospel. Much less was the apostle's preaching vain or deceitful. He could say to these Thessalonians what he told the Corinthians, *2 Cor. iv. 2*, "He had renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully." He had no sinister or worldly design in his preaching, which he puts them in mind to have been.

First, With courage and resolution. "We were bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel of God," ver. 2. The apostle was inspired with a holy boldness, nor was he discouraged at the afflictions he met with, or the opposition that was made against him. He had met with ill usage at Philippi, as these Thessalonians well knew; there it was that he and Silas were shamefully entreated, being put in the stocks; yet no sooner were they set at liberty but they went to Thessalonica and preached the Gospel with as much boldness as ever. Note, Suffering in a good cause should rather sharpen than blunt the edge of holy resolution. The Gospel of Christ at its first setting out in the world met with much opposition; and they that preached it preached it with contention, with great agony; which denoteth either the apostles' striving in their preaching, or their striving against the opposition they met with. This was Paul's comfort, he was neither daunted in his work nor driven from it.

Secondly, With great simplicity and godly sincerity. "Our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile," ver. 3. This no doubt was matter of the greatest comfort to the apostle, the consciousness of his own sincerity, and was one reason of his success. It was the sincere and uncorrupted Gospel that he preached and exhorted them to believe and obey. His design was not to set up a faction, to draw men over to a party, but to promote "pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father." The Gospel he preached was without deceit, it was true and faithful; it was not fallacious, nor a cunningly-devised fable. Nor was it of uncleanness; his Gospel was pure and holy, worthy of its holy Author, tending to discountenance all manner of impurity. The word of God is pure. There should be no corrupt mixtures therewith; and, as the matter of the apostle's exhortation was thus true and pure, the manner of his speaking was without guile. He did not pretend one thing and intend another; he believed, and therefore he spake. He had no sinister and secular aims and views, but was in reality what he seemed to be. The apostle not only asserts his sincerity, but subjoineeth the reasons and evidences thereof. The reasons are contained in ver. 4, 5, namely,

1. They were stewards, "put in trust with the Gospel;" and it is required of a steward that he be faithful. The Gospel which Paul preached was not his own, but the Gospel of God. Note, Ministers have a great favour shewn them, and honour put upon them, and trust committed to them. They must not dare to corrupt the word of God; they must diligently make use of what is intrusted with them, so as God hath allowed and commanded, knowing they shall be called to an account when they must be no longer stewards.

2. Their design was to please God and not men. God is a God of truth, and requireth truth in the inward parts; and if sincerity be wanting all that we do cannot please God. The Gospel of Christ is not accommodated to the vain fancies and lusts of men, to gratify their appetites and passions; but, on the contrary, it was designed for the mortifying their corrupt affections, and delivering them from the power of fancy, that they might be brought under the power of faith. "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ," *Gal. i. 10*.

3. They acted under the consideration of God's omniscience, as in the sight of him who "trieth our hearts." This is indeed the great motive to sincerity, to consider God not only seeth all that we do, but knoweth our thoughts afar off, and searcheth the heart. He is well acquainted with all our aims and designs, as well as our actions; and it is from this God that trieth our hearts that we must receive our reward.

The evidences of the apostle's sincerity do follow, and they are these:—

1st. He avoided flattery; "Neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know," ver. 5. He and his fellow-labourers preached Christ and him crucified, and did not aim to gain an interest in men's affections for themselves, by glorying, and fawning, and wheedling them. No, they were far from that; nor did they flatter men in their sins, nor tell them if they would be of his party they might live as they listed. He did not flatter them with vain hopes, nor indulge them in any evil work or way, promising them life, and so dabbling with untempered mortar.

2nd. He avoided covetousness. He did not make the ministry a cloak or a covering for covetousness, as God was witness, ver. 5. His design was not to enrich himself by preaching the Gospel; so far from that, he did not condition with them for bread. He was not like the false apostles, who "through covetousness with vain words made merchandise" of the people," *2 Pet. ii. 3*.

3rd. He avoided ambition and vain glory; "Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others," ver. 6. They neither expected people's purses, nor their caps, neither to be enriched by them, or caressed and adored by them, and called Rabbi. This apostle exhorts the Galatians, *ch. v. 26*, "not to be desirous of vain glory;" his ambition was to obtain "that honour which comes from God," *Jno. v. 44*. He tells them they might have used greater authority as apostles, and expected greater esteem, and demanded maintenance, which is meant by the phrase of "being burdensome," because perhaps some would have thought this too great a burthen for them to bear.

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: 8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. 9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for

i. 2, 3. "Without ceasing" belongs to "making mention," not to "remembering" (*Rom. i. 9*).

i. 4. "Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election:" not as Authorised Version. The apostle was assured of their election by their conduct since their reception of the Gospel (*verse 5*).

i. 10. Not "which delivered," but "who delivereth," or "who is our deliverer."

ii. 1. "Not in vain:" this does not refer to results, but to the

labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. 10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: 11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, 12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

In these words the apostle reminds the Thessalonians of the manner of their conversation among them. And,

First. He mentions the gentleness of their behaviour; "We were gentle among you," ver. 7. He shewed great mildness and tenderness who might have acted with the authority of an apostle of Christ. Such a behaviour greatly recommendeth religion, and is most agreeable to God's gracious dealings with sinners in and by the Gospel. This great apostle, though he abhorred and avoided flattery, was most condescending to all men. He accommodated himself to all men's capacities, and "became all things to all men." He shewed the kindness and care of "a nurse that cherisheth her children;" and this is the way to win people, rather than to rule with rigour. The word of God is indeed powerful; and as it cometh oftentimes with awful authority upon the minds of men, as it always hath enough in it to convince every impartial judgment, yet it cometh with the more pleasing power when the ministers of the Gospel recommend themselves to the affection of the people; and as a nursing mother beareth with forwardness in a child, and condescends to mean offices for its good, and draws out her breast, cherishing it in her bosom, so in like manner should the ministers of Christ behave towards their people. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, and patient," 2 Tim. ii. 24. This gentleness and goodness the apostle expressed several ways.

1. By the most affectionate desire of their welfare; "Being affectionately desirous of you," ver. 8. The apostle had a most affectionate love to their persons, and sought them, not theirs; themselves, not their goods; and to gain them, not to be a gainer by them, or to make a merchandise of them. It was their spiritual and eternal welfare and salvation that he was earnestly desirous of.

2. By great readiness to do them good; willingly imparting to them "not the Gospel of God only, but also their own souls," ver. 8. See here the manner of Paul's preaching; he spared no pains therein; he was willing to run hazards, and venture his soul or life in preaching the Gospel; he was willing to spend and be spent in the service of men's souls; and, as they who give bread to the hungry from a charitable principle are said to impart their souls in what they give, Isa. lviii. 10, so did the apostles in giving forth the bread of life; so dear were these Thessalonians in particular to this apostle, and so great was his love to them.

3. By bodily labour to prevent their charge; or that his ministry might not be expensive and burthensome to them; "You remember our labour and travail, for labouring night and day," &c., ver. 9. He denied himself the liberty he had of taking wages from the churches. As to the labour of the ministry he added that of his calling as a tentmaker, that he might get his own bread. We are not to suppose the apostle spent the whole night and day in bodily labour or work to supply the necessities of his body, for then he would have had no time for the work of the ministry; but he spent part of the night as well as the day in this work, and was willing to forego his rest in the night that he might have an opportunity to do good to the souls of men in the day time. A good example is here set before the ministers of the Gospel to be industrious for the salvation of men's souls, though it will not follow they are always obliged to preach freely. There is no general rule to be drawn from this instance, either that ministers may at no time work with their hands for supply of their outward necessities, or that they ought always so to do. [It is the duty of people to call to mind, and not to forget, the great pains and labour that ministers have been at for bringing about their spiritual good, that so they may be thankful to God, who hath stirred up and to lay their otherwise perishing condition so near to their heart, and acknowledge their obligation to instruments who have willingly spent themselves for their sake.]

4. By the holiness of their conversation concerning which he appeals not only to them, but to God also; ver. 10, "Ye are witnesses, and God also." They were observers of their outward conversation in public before men, and God was witness not only of their behaviour in secret, but of the inward principles from whence they acted. Their behaviour was holy towards God, just towards all men, and unblameable, without giving cause of scandal or offence; and they were careful not only not to give offence to them that were without, but to them also that did believe, that they might give no ill example—that their preaching and living might be all of a piece. Herein, said the apostle, "do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men," Acts xxiv. 16.

Secondly. He mentions their faithful discharge of the work and office of the ministry, ver. 11, 12. Concerning this also he could appeal to them as witnesses; Paul and his fellow-labourers were not only good Christians, but faithful ministers. And we should not only be good as to our general calling as Christians, but in our particular callings and relations. Paul exhorted the Thessalonians, not only informing them in their duty, but exciting and quickening them to the performance of it, by proper motives and arguments. And he comforted them also, endeavouring to cheer and support their spirits under the difficulties and discouragements they might meet with. And this he did not only publicly but privately also, and from house to house, Acts xx. 20; and charged every one of them by personal addresses; and this some think is intended by the similitude of a father's charging his children. This expression also denoteth the affectionate and compassionate counsels and consolations which this apostle used. He was their spiritual father; and as he cherished them like a nursing mother, so he charged them as a father, with a father's affection rather than a father's authority. "As my beloved sons I warn you," 1 Cor. iv. 14.

The manner of this apostle's exhortation ought to be regarded by ministers in particular for their imitation, and the matter of it is greatly to be regarded by them and all others; namely, that "they would walk worthy of God, who hath called them to his kingdom and glory," ver. 12. Observe, 1. What is our great gospel privilege. That God hath called us to his kingdom and glory. The Gospel calls us into the kingdom and state of grace here, and unto the kingdom and state of glory hereafter; to heaven and happiness as our end, and to holiness as the way to that end. 2. What is our great gospel duty. That we walk worthy of God; that the temper of our minds, and tenor of our lives, be answerable to

this call, and suitable to this privilege. We should accommodate ourselves to the intention and design of the Gospel, and live suitably to our profession and privileges, our hopes and expectations, as becometh those that are called with such a high and holy calling.

[There is not any thing of greater force to make a man walk worthy of God, by leading a holy life, than his well-grounded faith and hope of glory to be enjoyed in heaven: the man who looketh to be in heaven for ever cannot choose but have his conversation in heaven, and imitate himself somewhat to the customs and manners of that country wherein he intends to live eternally. For Paul makes the partaking of God's glory to follow necessarily upon reception to his kingdom, and both an argument to make them "walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."]

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. 14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judæa are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: 15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: 16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

Here observe, First. The apostle maketh mention of the success of his ministry among these Thessalonians, ver. 13; which is expressed,

1. By the manner of their receiving the word of God. "When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God." Where note, 1st. That the word of the Gospel is preached by men like ourselves, men of like passions and infirmities with others; "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." The word of God these Thessalonians received they heard from the apostles, 2nd. However, it is in truth the word of God. Such was the word the apostles preached by Divine inspiration, and such is that which is left upon record, written in the Scriptures by Divine inspiration; and such is that word which in our days is preached, being either contained, or evidently founded on, or deduced from, these sacred oracles. 3rd. They are greatly to blame who give out their own fancies or injunctions for the word of God. This is the vilest way of imposing upon people, and to deal unfaithfully. 4th. They are also to blame that, in hearing of the word, look no farther than to the ministry of men, or the words of men, who are only or chiefly pleased with the elegance of the style, or the beauty of the composure, or the voice and manner in which the word is preached, and expect to receive their advantage herein. 5th. We should receive the word of God as the word of God, with affections suitable to the holiness, wisdom, verity, and goodness thereof. The words of men are frail and perishing like themselves, and sometimes false, and foolish, and fickle. But God's word is holy, wise, just, and faithful, and, like its Author, liveth and abideth for ever. Let us accordingly receive and regard it.

2. By the wonderful operation of this word they received. It effectually worketh in them that believe, ver. 13. They that by faith receive the word find it profitable. It doth good to them that walk uprightly, and by its wonderful effects doth evidence itself to be the word of God. This converts their souls, and enlightens their minds, and rejoiceth their hearts, &c., Ps. xix; and such as have this inward testimony of the truth of the Scriptures, the word of God, by the effectual operations thereof on their hearts, have the best evidence of their Divine original to themselves, though this is not sufficient to convince others who are strangers thereto.

Secondly. He mentions the good effects his successful preaching had.

1. Upon himself and fellow-labourers. It was a constant cause of thankfulness; "For this cause thank we God without ceasing," ver. 13. The apostle expresses his thankfulness to God so often upon this account, that he seemeth to think he never could be sufficiently thankful that God had counted him faithful, and put him into the ministry, and made his ministrations successful.

2. Upon themselves. The word wrought effectually in them, not only to be examples unto others in faith and good works, which he had mentioned before, but also in constancy and patience under sufferings and trials for the sake of the Gospel. "Ye became followers of the churches of God, and have suffered like things as they have done," ver. 14; and with like courage and constancy, with like patience and hope. Note, The cross is the Christian's mark; if we are called to suffer, we are called only to be followers of the churches of God. "So persecuted they the prophets that were before you," Mat. v. 12. It is a good effect of the Gospel when we are enabled to suffer for its sake. The apostle mentions the sufferings of the churches of God, "which in Judæa were in Christ Jesus." Those in Judæa first heard the Gospel, and they first suffered for it; for the Jews were the most bitter enemies Christianity had, and were especially enraged against their countrymen that embraced Christianity. Note, Bitter zeal and fiery persecution will set countrymen at variance, and break through all the bonds of nature, as well as contradict all the rules of religion. In every city where the apostles went to preach the Gospel the Jews stirred the inhabitants up against them. They were the ring-leaders of persecution in all places, so in particular it was at Thessalonica, Acts xvii. 5. "The Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city in an uproar." Upon this occasion the apostle gives a character of the unbelieving Jews, ver. 15; enough to justify their final rejection, and the ruin of their place, and church, and nation, which was now approaching. 1st. They killed the Lord Jesus, and impudently and presumptuously wished that his blood might be on them, and their children. 2nd. They killed their own prophets; so they had done all along. Their fathers had done so; they had been a persecuting generation. 3rd. They hated the apostles, and did "them all the mischief they

character of the apostle's teaching; it was no empty scheme, no vain thing he came to tell them of.

ii. 2. "With much contention;" Wickliffe translates "with much business;" Tyndal, Cranmer, Geneva, "with much striving;" Rheims, "with much carefulness."

ii. 6. "'Burdensome' seems to denote here all that self-assertion and parade of office which might have claimed at their hands both extraordinary deference and also pecuniary maintenance" (Vaughan).

"When we might have stood on our dignity" (Alford). So Olshausen, Chrysostom, Calvin.

ii. 8. St. Paul here seems to place "our own lives" above the Gospel in value. A reference to 1 Cor. ix. 16 explains his feeling. He looked upon the "imparting the Gospel" as his duty, but giving up his life as a voluntary act of love.

ii. 12. "Who calleth you?" the sense is present, not past. "His kingdom and glory:" "kingdom" here is taken variously to signify

could. They persecuted them, and drove and chased them from place to place; and no marvel, if they killed the Lord Jesus, that they persecuted his followers. 4th. They pleased not God. They had quite lost all sense of religion, and due care to do their duty to God. It was a most fatal mistake to think they did God service by killing God's servants. Murder and persecution are most hateful to God, and cannot be justified on any pretence; it is so contrary to natural religion, that no zeal for any true or only pretended institution of religion can ever excuse it. 5th. They were contrary to all men. Their persecuting spirit was a perverse spirit; contrary to the light of nature, and contrary to humanity; contrary to the welfare of all men, and contrary to the sentiments of all men not under the power of bigotry. 6th. They had an implacable enmity to the Gentiles, and envied them the offers of the Gospel, forbidding the apostles to speak to them that they might be saved. The means of salvation had long been confined to the Jews: "Salvation is of the Jews," saith our Saviour. And they were envious against the Gentiles, and angry that they should be admitted to share in the means of salvation. Nothing provoked them more than our Saviour's speaking to them at any time concerning this matter; this enraged the Jews at Jerusalem, when in his defence Paul told them he was "sent unto the Gentiles," *Acts* xxii. 21. They heard him patiently till he uttered these words, but then could endure no longer, but "lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live." Thus did the Jews fill up their sins; and nothing tends more to any person's or people's filling up the measure of their sins than opposing the Gospel, and obstructing the progress of it, and hindering the salvation of precious souls. For the sake of these things "wrath is come upon them to the uttermost," that is, wrath was determined against them, and would soon overtake them. It was not many years after this that Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Jewish nation cut off by the Romans. Note, 1. When the measure of any man's iniquity is full, and he hath sinned to the uttermost, then cometh wrath, and that to the uttermost. [2. The more eminent mercies and favours from God a people or person have lived under and enjoyed, the more signal judgments shall they be surprised with, in case of their continued abuse of, and ingratitude for, such excellent receipts: for the Lord, in the point of mercy and favour, dealt so with the Jews as he did not with any people, *Pz.* cxlvii. 19, 20; and because of their ingratitude they are made examples of God's wrath and judgment. "The wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."]]

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. 18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us. 19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? 20 For ye are our glory and joy.

In these words, First. The apostle apologiseth for his absence. Here observe,

1. He tells them they were involuntarily forced from them. "We, brethren, were taken from you," ver. 17; such was the rage of his persecutors. He was unwillingly sent away by night to Berea, *Acts* xvii. 10.

2. Though he was absent in body, yet he was present in heart. He had still a remembrance of them, and great care for them.

3. Even his bodily absence was but for a short time, (the time of an hour.) Time is short; all our time on earth is short and uncertain, whether we are present with our friends or absent from them. This world is not a place where we are always or long to be together. It is in heaven holy souls shall meet, and never part more.

4. He earnestly desired and endeavoured to see them again. "We endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire," ver. 17. So that the apostle at least intended his absence should be but for a short time; his desire and endeavour was to return again very soon to Thessalonica. But men of business are not masters of their own time. Paul did his endeavour, and he could do no more, ver. 18.

5. He tells them Satan hindered his return, ver. 18; that is, either some enemy or enemies, or the great enemy of mankind, who stirred up opposition to Paul, either in his return to Thessalonica, when he intended to return thither, or stirred up such contentions or dissensions in those places whither he went as made his presence necessary. Note, 1st. Satan is a constant enemy to the work of God, and doth all he can to obstruct it. [2nd. As the child of God can no sooner enterprise that which is really good, but usually he doth as soon meet with some impediment, so, whoever be the means or instruments for impeding us in the way of duty, the devil himself, through God's permission, is the prime author of that woful work, and all others do but fight under his banner; for, though other means were doubtless accessory to Paul's stay, yet "Satan hindered us," saith he.]

6. He assureth them of his affection and high esteem for them, though he was not able as yet to be present with them, according to his desire. They were his "hope and joy, and crown of rejoicing, his glory and joy." These are expressions of great and endeared affection, and high estimation. And it is happy when ministers and people have such mutual affection and esteem of each other; and especially if they shall thus rejoice, if they that sow and they that reap shall then rejoice together, "in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming."

Secondly. The apostle here puts the Thessalonians in mind that, though he could not come to them as yet, and though he should never be able to come to them, yet our Lord Jesus Christ will come,—nothing shall hinder that. And farther, when he shall come, all must appear in his presence, or before him; ministers and people must all appear before him, and faithful people will be the glory and joy of faithful ministers in that great and glorious day.

CHAPTER III.

In this chapter the apostle giveth farther evidence of his love to the Thessalonians, reminding them of his sending Timothy to them, with the mention of his design therein, and his inducements so to do, ver. 1—3; by acquainting them with his great satisfaction at the return of Timothy with good tidings concerning them, ver. 3—10. And concludeth with fervent prayer for them, ver. 11—13.

the present possession of a Christian (*Col.* i. 13), or the future inheritance (*2 Tim.* iv. 18). "Glory" can refer only to the heavenly state.

ii. 13. Not as in Authorised Version, but "when ye received the word of God, hearing it from us, ye accepted not the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God," &c. The "as" inserted by Authorised Version before "the word of men" injures the sense; the apostle is not speaking of the opinion the Thessalonians formed of



HEREFORE when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; 2 And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: 3 That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. 4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. 5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

In these words the apostle gives an account of his sending Timothy to the Thessalonians. Though he was hindered from going to them himself, yet his love was such that he could not forbear sending Timothy to them; though he was very useful to him, and could not well spare him, yet he was content for their good to be left alone at Athens. Note, Those ministers do not duly value the establishment and welfare of their people who cannot deny themselves in many things for that end. Observe,

First. The character he giveth of Timothy; ver. 2. We "sent Timotheus our brother." Elsewhere he calls him "his son;" here he calls him "brother." Timothy was Paul's junior in age, his inferior in gifts and graces, and of a lower rank in the ministry. For Paul was an apostle, and Timothy but an evangelist; yet Paul calls him brother. This was an instance of the apostle's humility, and shewed his desire to put honour upon Timothy, and to recommend him to the esteem of the churches. He calls him also a "minister of God." Note, Ministers of the Gospel of Christ are ministers of God, to promote the kingdom of God among men. He calls him also his "fellow-labourer in the Gospel of Christ." Note, Ministers of the Gospel must look upon themselves as labourers in the Lord's vineyard; they have an honourable office, and hard work, yet a good work. "This is a true saying, If any man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," *1 Tim.* iii. 1. And ministers should look upon one another as fellow-labourers, and should therefore love one another, and strengthen one another's hands; not strive and contend one with another, which will hinder their work, but strive together to carry on the great work they are engaged in, namely, to preach and publish the Gospel of Christ, and to persuade people to embrace and entertain it, and live suitably thereto.

Secondly. The end and design why Paul sent Timothy, which was to establish them and comfort them concerning their faith, ver. 2. Paul had converted them to the Christian faith, and now he was desirous they might be confirmed and comforted; that they might be confirmed in the choice they had made of the Christian religion, and be comforted in the profession and practice of it. Note, The more we are comforted, the more we shall be confirmed; because, when we find pleasure in the ways of God, we shall thereby be engaged to continue and persevere therein. The apostle's design was to establish and comfort the Thessalonians concerning their faith; concerning the object of their faith, namely, the truths of the Gospel, and particularly that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of the world, and so wise and good, so powerful and faithful, that they might rely upon him; concerning the recompence of faith, which was more than sufficient to balance all their losses and reward all their labours.

Thirdly. The motives inducing Paul to send Timothy for this end; namely, a godly fear or jealousy, lest they should be moved from the faith of Christ, ver. 3. He was desirous that no man, not one among them, should be moved or shaken in mind; that they should not apostatise or waver in the faith, and yet, 1. He apprehended there was danger, and feared the consequence.

1st. There was danger, First. By reason of affliction and persecution for the sake of the Gospel, ver. 3. These Thessalonians could not but perceive what afflictions the apostles and preachers of the Gospel met with, and that might possibly stumble them; and also those who made profession of the Gospel were persecuted, and without doubt these Thessalonians themselves were afflicted. Secondly. By reason of the tempter's subtlety and malice. The apostle was afraid "lest by some means the tempter had tempted" them, ver. 5. The devil is a subtle and unwearied tempter, that seeks an opportunity to beguile and destroy us, and taketh all advantages against us, both in a time of prosperity and adversity, and hath often been successful in his attacks upon persons under afflictions. He hath often prejudiced the minds of men against religion, on account of the sufferings its professors are exposed to. We have reason therefore to be jealous over ourselves and others, lest we be ensnared by him.

2nd. The consequence the apostle feared was, lest his labour should be in vain. And thus it would have been if the tempter had tempted them, and prevailed against them to move them from the faith. They had lost what they had wrought, and the apostle would have lost what he laboured for. Note, It is the devil's design to hinder the good fruit and effect of the preaching the gospel. If he cannot hinder ministers from labouring in the word and doctrine, he will, if he be able, hinder them of the success of their labours. Note also, Faithful ministers are much concerned about the success of their labours. No one would willingly labour in vain; and ministers are loath to spend their strength, and pains, and time for nought.

2. To prevent this danger, with its bad consequence, the apostle tells them what care he took in sending Timothy. 1st. To put them in mind of what he had told them before concerning suffering tribulation, ver. 4, he saith, ver. 3, "We are appointed thereunto," that is, unto afflictions. So is the will and purpose of God, that "through many afflictions we must enter into his kingdom." Their troubles and persecutions did not come by chance, nor merely from the wrath and malice of the enemies of religion, but by the appointment of God. It only

the word, but of the fact that they accepted "the word of God" when they accepted the Gospel from him and his helpers. "On receiving a word of hearing from us of God, ye accepted not a word of men, but even as it is truly, a word of God" (Vaughan). So Alford and Olshausen.

ii. 15. "And the prophets;" all best MSS. omit "their own." Dr. Vaughan's paraphrase of verses 15 and 16 is as follows: "That blinded race, which having killed the prophets and the Saviour

came to pass according as God had determined, and they knew he had told them before it would be; so that they should not think it strange, and being forewarned they should be fore-armed. Note, The apostles were so far from flattering people with an expectation of worldly prosperity in religion, that on the contrary they told them plainly they must count upon trouble in the flesh. And herein they followed the example of their great Master, the author of our faith. Besides, it might prove a confirmation of their faith, when they perceived that it only happened to them, as was predicted before. 2nd. To know their faith, that so he might inform the apostles whether they remained stedfast under all their sufferings, whether their faith failed or not; because, if their faith did not fail, they would be able to stand their ground against the tempter and all his temptations. Their faith would be "a shield to defend them against all the fiery darts of the wicked," Eph. vi. 16.

6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: 7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: 8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. 9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; 10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

Here we have Paul's great satisfaction upon the return of Timothy with good tidings from the Thessalonians. In which we may observe,

First, The good report Timothy made concerning them, ver. 6. Without question he was a willing messenger of these good tidings. Concerning their faith, that is, concerning their stedfastness in the faith, that they were not shaken in mind, nor turned aside from the profession of the Gospel. Their love also did continue—their love to the Gospel, and the ministers of the Gospel; for they had a good and a kind remembrance of the apostles, and that constantly, or always. Their names were very dear to them, and the thoughts of them, and what they had received from them, were very precious, inasmuch that they desired greatly to see them again, and receive some spiritual gift from them; and there was no love lost, for the apostle was as desirous to see them. It is happy were there is such mutual love between ministers and people. This tends to promote religion, and the success of the gospel. The world hateth them, and therefore they should love one another.

Secondly, The great comfort and satisfaction the apostle had in this good report concerning them; ver. 7, 8, "Therefore, brethren, we were comforted in all our affliction and distress." The apostle thought this good news of them was sufficient to balance all the troubles he met with. It was easy to him to bear affliction, or persecution, or fightings from without, when he found the good success of his ministry, and constancy in the converts he made to Christianity; and his distress of mind on account of his fears within, lest he had laboured in vain, was now in a good measure over, when he understood their faith, and the perseverance of it. This put new life and spirit into the apostle, and made him vigorous and active in the name of the Lord. Thus he was not only comforted, but greatly rejoiced also: "Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord," ver. 8. It would have been a killing thing to the apostles, if the professors of religion had been unsteady, or proved apostates; whereas nothing was more encouraging than their constancy.

Thirdly, The effects of this were thankfulness and prayer to God on their behalf. 1. Observe, how thankful the apostle was, ver. 9. He was full of joy, and full of praise and thanksgiving. When we are most cheerful we should be most thankful. What we rejoice in we should give thanks for. This is to rejoice before our God, to spiritualize our joy. Paul speaketh as if he could not tell how to express his thankfulness to God, or his joy and rejoicing for their sakes; but he was careful God should not lose the glory of that comfort he received in the welfare of his friends. His heart was enlarged with love to them, and with thanksgiving to God: he was willing to express the one and the other as well as he could. As to thankfulness to God, this especially is very imperfect in the present state; but when we come to heaven we shall do this work better than now we can.

2. He prayed for them night and day, ver. 10; that is, evening and morning, or very frequently, in the midst of the business of the day, or slumber of the night, lifting up his heart to God in prayer. Thus we should pray always. And Paul's prayer was fervent prayer; he prayed exceedingly, and was earnest in his supplication. Note, When we are most thankful we should also give ourselves to prayer; and those we give thanks for yet have need to be prayed for. Those we most rejoice in and that are our greatest comforts, must be our constant care while in this world of temptation and imperfection. There was something still lacking in their faith that Paul desired might be perfected, and to see their face in order thereunto. Note, 1st. The best of men have something wanting in their faith; if not as to the matter of it, there being some mysteries or doctrines not sufficiently known or believed by them, yet as to the clearness and certainty of the faith, there being some remaining darknesses and doubtings, at least as to the effects and operations of it, these being not so conspicuous and perfect as they should be. And, 2nd. The ministry of the word and ordinances is helpful, and to be desired and used for the perfecting that which is lacking in our faith.

11 Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. 12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: 13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

himself, now pursues its course as the enemy of God and man, by obstructing our work everywhere as apostles to the Gentiles; and thus obstinately seals upon itself that fearful judgment which the full cup of its iniquity has made at last inevitable."

ii. 17. Olshausen remarks that the third chapter should begin with this verse, since the apostle here introduces a new subject, whereas between verse 20 and chap. iii. 1 there is no break, but an intimate connection.

In these words we have the earnest prayer of the apostle. He desired to be instrumental in the farther benefit of the Thessalonians: and the only way to do so whilst at a distance was by prayer for them, together with his writing or sending to them. He desired that their faith might be perfected, which he could not be the proper cause or author of; for he pretended not to dominion over their faith, nor to have the donation of it, and he therefore concludeth with prayer for them. In which observe,

First, Whom he prayeth to; namely, God and Christ. Prayer is a part of religious worship, and all religious worship is due unto God only. Prayer is here made to God, even the Father and our Father; and also to Christ, even our Lord Jesus Christ; therefore Jesus Christ our Lord is God, even as God our Father is God. Prayer is to be offered to God as our Father. So Christ taught his disciples to pray; and so the Spirit of adoption prompts them to pray, to cry, "Abba, Father." Prayer is not only to be offered in the name of Christ, but offered up to Christ himself as our Lord and our Saviour.

Secondly, What he prayeth for, with respect to himself and his fellow labourers, and on behalf of the Thessalonians.

1. He prayeth that they might have a prosperous journey to them by the will of God; that their way might be directed to them, ver. 11. The taking of a journey to this or that place, one would think, is a thing depending so much upon a man's own will, and lies so much in his own power, that Paul needed not by prayer to go to God about it; but the apostle knew that "in God we live, and move, and have our being;" that we depend upon God in all our motions and actions, as well as for the continuance of life and being; that Divine providence orders all our affairs, and that it is owing thereto if we prosper therein; that God our Father doth direct and order his children whither they shall go, and what they shall do; that our Lord Jesus Christ in a particular manner directs the motions of his faithful ministers, "those stars which he holdeth in his right hand." Let us acknowledge God in all our ways, and he will direct our paths.

2. He prayeth for the prosperity of the Thessalonians. Whether he should have an opportunity of coming to them or not, yet he earnestly prayeth for the prosperity of their souls; and there are two things he desired for them, which we should desire for ourselves and our friends.

1st. That they might "increase and abound in love," ver. 12; in love to one another, and in love to all men. Note, That mutual love is required of all Christians; and not only that they love one another, but that they also have a charitable disposition of mind, and due concern for the welfare of all men. Love is of God, and is the fulfilling of the Gospel as well as of the law. Timothy brought good tidings of their faith, yet something was lacking therein; and of their charity and love, and yet the apostle prayeth that that might increase and abound. Note, We have reason to desire to grow in every grace, and have need of the Spirit's influence in order to growth in grace; and the way to obtain that is prayer. We are beholden to God not only for the stock put into our hands at first, but for the improvement of it also. And to our prayer we must add endeavour. To excite this in the Thessalonians the apostle again mentions his love, his abounding love towards them. The more we are beloved, the more loving we should be.

2nd. That they might be established unblameable in holiness, ver. 13. This spiritual benefit is mentioned as an effect of increasing and abounding love. "To the end that he," that is, the Lord, "may stablish your hearts." Note, The more we grow and abound in grace, and particularly in the grace of love, the more we are established and confirmed in it. Note also, That holiness is required of all those that would go to heaven, and that therein we must be unblameable, that is, we must carry ourselves in every thing so as that we may not in the least contradict the profession we make of holiness. Our desire should be to have our hearts established in holiness before God, and be preserved safe to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that we may be unblameable before God, even the Father, now, and be presented blameless before the throne of his glory, when the Lord Jesus will come with all his saints. Note, First, The Lord Jesus will certainly come, and come in his glory. Secondly, When he cometh, his saints will come with him; they shall appear with him in glory. Thirdly, Then the excellency, as well as the necessity, of holiness will appear, because without this no hearts shall be established at that day, nor shall any one be unblameable, or avoid everlasting condemnation.

CHAPTER IV.

In this chapter the apostle gives earnest exhortations to abound in holiness, with a caution against uncleanness, enforced with several arguments, ver. 1—8. He then mentions the great duties of brotherly love, and quietness with industry in our callings, ver. 9—12. And concludeth with comforting them that mourned for their relations and friends that died in the Lord, ver. 13—18.



FURTHERMORE then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. 2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you

iii. 2. Best MSS. omit "and our fellow-labourer," and read "minister of God in the Gospel of Christ."

iii. 5. "Our labour be in vain:" or, "prove in vain." It might be in vain as far as the Thessalonians were concerned, if the tempter had prevailed, but not as it concerned the apostle, who had faithfully laboured amongst them (1 Cor. iii. 8).

iii. 11. "And our Lord Jesus (best MSS. omit "Christ"); it is worthy of remark that in the Greek the two nominatives "God

and testified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

Here we have,

First. An exhortation to abound in holiness; to "abound more and more" in that which is good, ver. 1, 2. In which we may observe,

1. The manner in which the exhortation is given; namely, very affectionately. The apostle entreateth them as brethren; he calls them so, and loved them as such; because his love to them was very great, he exhorts them very earnestly, "We beseech and exhort you." The apostle was unwilling to take any denial, and therefore repeateth his exhortation again and again.

2. The matter of his exhortation. That they would "abound more and more" in holy walking, or excel in those things that are good, in good works. Their faith was justly famed abroad, and they were already examples to other churches; however, the apostle would have them yet farther to excel others, and to make further progress in holiness. Note, 1st. Those who do most excel others yet fall short of perfection. The very best of us should "forget those things which are behind, and reach forth unto those things that are before." 2nd. It is not enough that we abide in the faith of the Gospel, but we must abound in the work of faith. We must not only persevere to the end, but we should grow better, and walk more evenly and closely with God.

3. The arguments with which the apostle enforceth his exhortation; namely, 1st. They had been informed of their duty. They knew their Master's will, and could not plead their ignorance as an excuse. Now as faith, so knowledge, is dead without practice. They had received of them who had converted them to Christianity, or been taught of them how they ought to walk; where observe, the design of the Gospel is not only to teach men what they should believe, but also how they ought to live; not so much to fill men's minds with notions, as to regulate their temper and behaviour. The apostle taught them how to walk, not how to talk. To talk well without living well will never bring us to heaven; for the character of those that are in Christ Jesus is this, "they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." 2nd. Another argument is, that the apostle taught and exhorted them in the name or by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was Christ's minister and ambassador, declaring to them what was the will and command of the Lord Jesus. 3rd. Another argument is this, herein they would please God. Holy walking is most pleasing to the holy God, who is glorious in holiness. This ought to be the aim and ambition of every Christian, to please God, and to be accepted of him. We should not be men pleasers, nor flesh pleasers, but should walk so as to please God. 4th. The rule according to which they ought to walk and act; that is, the commandments they had given them by the Lord Jesus Christ, which were the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, because given by authority and direction from him, and such as were agreeable to his will. The apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ were only commissioned by him to teach men to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them, *Mat. xxviii. 20*. Though they had great authority from Christ, yet that was to teach men what Christ had commanded, not to give forth commandments of their own. They did not act as "lords over God's heritage," *1 Pet. v. 3*, nor should any do so that pretend to be their successors. The apostle could appeal to the Thessalonians, who knew what commandments he gave them, that they were no other than what he had received from the Lord Jesus.

Secondly. A caution against uncleanness, that being a sin directly contrary to sanctification, or that holy walking he so earnestly exhorts them to. This caution is expressed and also enforced by many arguments.

1. It is expressed in these words, "That ye should abstain from fornication," ver. 3; by which words we are to understand all uncleanness whatsoever, either in a married or unmarried state: to be sure adultery is here included, though fornication is particularly mentioned. And other sorts of uncleanness are also forbidden, of which it is "a shame even to speak," though they are done by too many in secret. All that is contrary to chastity in heart, speech, and behaviour, is contrary to the command of God in the Decalogue, and contrary to that holiness the Gospel requireth.

2. There are several arguments to enforce this caution, As,

1st. This branch of sanctification in particular "is the will of God," ver. 8. Not only is it the will of God in general that we should be holy, because "he that called us is holy," and because we are chosen unto salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit; and not only doth God require holiness in the heart, but also purity in our bodies, and that we should cleanse ourselves from all "filthiness both of flesh and spirit," *2 Cor. vii. 1*. Wherever the body is as it ought to be, devoted to God, and dedicated and set apart for him, it should be kept clean and pure for his service; and as chastity is one branch of our sanctification, so this is one thing God commands in his law, and what his grace effects in all true believers.

2nd. This will be greatly for our honour; so much is plainly implied, ver. 4. Whereas the contrary will be a great dishonour, "And his reproach shall not be wiped away," *Pr. vi. 33*. The body is here called the vessel of the soul that dwells therein, so *1 Sam. xxi. 5*; and that must be kept pure from defiling lusts. Every one should be careful in this matter, as he valueth his own honour, and will not be contemptible on this account, that his inferior appetites and passions gain not the ascendancy, and tyrannize over his reason and conscience, and enslave the superior faculties of his soul. What can be more dishonourable than for a rational soul to be enslaved by bodily affections and brutal appetites?

3rd. To indulge the lusts of concupiscence is to live and act like heathens; "Even as the Gentiles which know not God," ver. 5. The Gentiles, and especially the Grecians, were commonly guilty of some sins of uncleanness, which were not so evidently forbidden by the light of nature. But they did not know God, nor his mind and will, so well as Christians do and should know this his will, namely, our sanctification in this branch of it. It is not so much to be wondered at therefore if the Gentiles indulge their fleshly appetites and lusts; but Christians should not walk as unconverted Gentiles, "in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings," &c., *1 Pet. iv. 3*; because they that are in Christ "have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts."

4th. The sin of uncleanness, especially adultery, is a great piece of injustice that God will be the avenger of; so we may understand those words, "That no man go beyond or defraud his brother," ver. 6, "in any matter,"—*ἐν τῇ προίτιᾳ*, this matter of which the apostle is speaking in the preceding and following verses, namely, the sin of uncleanness. Some understand these words as a farther warning and caution against injustice and oppression, all fraud and deceit in our dealings with men, which are certainly a crime, and which are contrary to the Gospel. And Christians should not impose upon the ignorance and necessity of those they deal with, and so go beyond them, nor should they by equivocations or lying arts defraud them; and although this may be practised by some, and lie long undiscovered, and so go unpunished among men, yet the righteous God will render a recompence. But the meaning may rather

be to shew the injustice and wrong that in many cases is done by the sin of uncleanness. Not only are fornication and other acts of uncleanness sins against his own body that committeth them, *1 Cor. vi. 18*; not only are they very injurious to the sinner himself, both in soul and body; but sometimes very injurious and no less than defrauding, and acts of injustice to others, particularly to them that are joined together in the marriage covenant, and to their posterity. And as this sin is of such a heinous nature, so it follows that God will be the avenger of it. "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge," *Heb. xiii. 4*. This the apostle had forewarned and testified by his Gospel; which, as it contained exceeding great and precious promises, so also it "revealed from heaven the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," *Rom. i. 18*.

5th. The sin of uncleanness is contrary to the nature and design of our Christian calling; "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness," ver. 7. The law of God forbids all impurity, and the Gospel requires the greatest purity; that calls us from uncleanness unto holiness.

6th. The contempt therefore of God's law and Gospel is the contempt of God himself. "He that despiseth, despiseth God, not man" only. Some might possibly make light of the precepts of purity and holiness, because they heard them from men like themselves; but the apostle lets them know that they were God's commands, and to violate them was no less than to despise God. He adds that God hath given Christians his Spirit, intimating that all sorts of uncleanness do in an especial manner grieve the Holy Spirit, and will provoke him to withdraw from us; and also the Holy Spirit is given unto us to arm us against these sins, and to help us to mortify these deeds of the body, that we may live, *Rom. viii. 13*.

9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. 10 And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; 11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; 12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

In these words the apostle mentions the great duties, First. Of "brotherly love." This he exhorts them to increase in yet more and more. The exhortation is introduced, not with a compliment, but with a commendation, because they were remarkable in the exercise of it, which made it less needful he should write to them about it, ver. 9. Thus by his good opinion of them he insinuated himself into their affections, and so maketh way for his exhortation to them. Note, We should take notice of that in others which is good to their praise, that by so doing we may lay engagements upon them to abound therein more and more. Observe,

1. What it is that the apostle commendeth in them. It was not so much their own virtue as God's grace, yet he taketh notice of the evidence they shewed of the grace of God in them. 1st. It was God's grace he taketh special notice of; that God had taught them this good lesson, "Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another," ver. 9. Whoever do that which is good are taught of God to do it, and God must have the glory. All that are savingly taught of God are taught this lesson, to love one another. This is the livery of Christ's family. Note also, That the teaching of the Spirit exceeds the teachings of men; and as no man should teach contrary to what God teacheth, so none can teach so effectually as he teacheth; and men's teaching is vain and useless unless God teach also. [2nd. Those are easily taught whom God doth teach; and therefore, though eminent abilities are much to be wished for in ministers, *Tit. i. 9*, yet we ought not to be so anxious about the weakness or eminency of gifts in them, as fervently desirous to have God's teaching to come along with theirs; for Paul shews that God, by his teaching those Thessalonians, had made them stand the less in need of being taught by him, while he saith, "Ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God." 3rd. The Thessalonians gave good evidence of their being taught of God by their love to "the brethren in all Macedonia," ver. 10. They not only loved them of their own city and society, or such as were near them, and just of their own sentiments; but their love was extensive; and a true Christian's is so to all the saints, though distant from him in place, and differing from him in some opinions or practices of less moment.]

2. The exhortation itself is to "increase more and more" in this great grace and duty of brotherly love, ver. 10. Though these Thessalonians had in some sense no need of an exhortation to brotherly love, as if it were wholly wanting, yet they must be exhorted to pray for more, and labour for more. There are none on this side heaven who love in perfection. Those that are eminent in this or any other grace have need of increase therein, as well as perseverance unto the end.

Secondly. Of quietness and industry in their callings. Observe, 1. The apostle exhorteth to these duties; that they should "study to be quiet," ver. 11. It is a most desirable thing to have a calm and quiet temper, and to be of a peaceable and quiet behaviour. This tends much to our own and others' happiness, and Christians should study how to be quiet. We should be ambitious and industrious how to be calm and quiet in our minds, and in patience to possess our own souls, and to be quiet towards others; or of a meek and mild, a gentle and peaceable disposition, not given to strife, or contention, or division. Satan is very busy to disquiet us; and we have that in our own hearts that disposeth us to be unquiet. Therefore let us study to be quiet. It follows, "Do your own business," and when we go beyond that we expose ourselves to a great deal of inquietude. Those who are busy-bodies, meddling in other men's matters, generally have but little quiet in their own minds, and cause great disturbances among their neighbours; at least they seldom mind the other exhortation, to be diligent in their own calling, "to work with their own hands." And yet this was what the apostle commanded them, and what is required of us also. Christianity doth not discharge us of the work and duty of our particular calling, but teacheth us to be diligent therein.

2. The exhortation is enforced with a double argument. Namely, 1st. So we shall live creditably. Thus we shall walk honestly, or decently and creditably, towards them that are without, ver. 12. This will be to act as becomes the Gospel, and will gain a good report from them that are strangers, yea, enemies to it. Note, It is a great ornament to a religion when the professors of it are of meek and quiet spirits, diligent to do their own business, and not busy-bodies

himself" and "Lord Jesus" are followed by a singular verb, which could scarcely be the case unless in the writer's mind absolute unity existed between them. Athanasius uses this passage in support of the unity of the Father and Son.

iv. 1. Not "by the Lord Jesus," in the form of an adjuration, but "in the Lord Jesus." The whole appeal is made as by one who is in Christ, united to him, and so has power to exhort Christians (*John xv. 4, 5*).

iv. 3—8. This whole passage refers to moral purity. Olshausen explains verses 4 and 5 thus: "Let each learn, by means of practice and experience, to guide and to master his body as a true instrument of the soul, and not abandon it to a fierce violence of the passions." Vaughan paraphrases, "Let nothing tempt you to think lightly of the sin of impurity. It is the business of every Christian to gain the mastery of his own body, to consecrate it wholly to God, and to treat it with the honour due to that which is thus dedicated. Leave to

in other men's matters. 2nd. We shall live comfortably, and "have lack of nothing," ver. 12. People oftentimes by their slothfulness bring themselves into narrow circumstances, and reduce themselves to great straits, and are liable to many wants; when such as are diligent in their own business live comfortably, and have lack of nothing. They are not burthensome to their friends, nor scandalous to strangers. They earn their own bread, and have the greatest pleasure in so doing.

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

In these words the apostle comforts the Thessalonians that mourned for the death of their relations and friends that died in the Lord. His design is to dissuade them from excessive grief or inordinate sorrow on that account. All grief for the death of friends is far from being unlawful; we may weep at least for ourselves, if we do not weep for them—weep for our own loss, though that may be their gain. Yet we must not be immoderate or excessive in our sorrows; because,

First. This looketh as if we had no hope, ver. 13. It is to act too much like the Gentiles, who had no hope of a better life after this: whereas we Christians, who have a most sure hope, the hope of eternal life after this, which God, who cannot lie, hath promised us, should moderate all our joys and our sorrows on account of any worldly thing. This hope is more than enough to balance all our griefs upon the account of any of the crosses of the present time.

Secondly. This is an effect of ignorance concerning those that are dead, ver. 13. There are some things which we cannot but be ignorant of concerning them that are asleep; for the land they are removed to is a land of darkness, which we know but little of, and have no correspondence with. To go among the dead is to go among we know not whom, and to live we know not how. Death is an unknown thing, and the state of the dead, or the state after death, we are much in the dark about; yet there are some things concerning them especially that die in the Lord that we need not, nor ought not, to be ignorant of; and if these things are rightly understood, and duly considered, they will be sufficient to allay our sorrow concerning them: namely,

1. They sleep in Jesus. They are asleep, ver. 13. They are "fallen asleep in Christ," 1 Cor. xv. 18. Death doth not annihilate them. It is but a sleep to them. It is the rest, and undisturbed rest. They are retired out of this troublesome world, to rest from all their labours and sorrows, and they sleep in Jesus, ver. 14. Being still in union with him, they sleep in his arms, and are under his special care and protection. Their souls are in his presence, and their dust under his care and power, so that they are not lost, nor are they losers, but great gainers by death, and their removal out of this world is into a better, [that is, who are dead in Christ, and shall continue in the faith whereby they are engrafted in Christ, Eph. iii. 17, to the last gasp.]

2. They shall be raised up from the dead, and awakened out of their sleep, for God "will bring them with him," ver. 14. They then are with God, and are better where they are than when they were here; and when God cometh he will bring them with him. [Through virtue of that union betwixt believers and Christ, it cometh to pass that whatever hath befallen Christ, as he is the head of believers, shall in God's due time be verified in believers themselves, that due proportion and distance being always kept which is betwixt head and members; for he inferreth that we shall be raised because he arose, because of our union with him: "Them will God bring with him." The doctrine of the resurrection, and the second coming of Christ, is a great antidote against the fear of death, and inordinate sorrow for the death of our Christian friends; and this doctrine we have a full assurance of, because "we believe that Jesus died and rose again," ver. 14. It is taken for granted, that as Christians they knew and believed this. The death and resurrection of Christ are fundamental articles of the Christian religion, and give us hope of a joyful resurrection; for "Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of them that sleep;" and therefore "they who are fallen asleep in him are not perished or lost," 1 Cor. xv. 18, 20. His resurrection is a full confirmation of all that is said in the Gospel, or by the word of the Lord, which hath brought life and immortality to light.

3. Their state and condition shall be glorious and happy at the second coming of Christ. This the apostle informeth the Thessalonians of "by the word of the Lord," ver. 15; that is, by Divine revelation from the Lord Jesus. For, though the resurrection of the dead, and future state of blessedness, were part of the creed of the Old Testament saints, yet it is much more clearly revealed in and by the Gospel. By this word of the Lord we know,

1st. That the Lord Jesus will come down from heaven in all the pomp and power of the upper world; ver. 16, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout." He ascended up into heaven after his resurrection, and is passed through these material heavens into the third heaven, that must retain him till the restitution of all things; and then he will come again, and appear in his glory. He will descend from heaven into this our air, ver. 17. The appearance will be with pomp and power, "with a shout;" the shout of a king, and the power and authority of a mighty king and conqueror. "With the voice of the archangel;" an innumerable company of angels will attend him; perhaps one, as general of those hosts of the Lord, shall give notice of his approach, and the glorious appearance of this great Redeemer and Judge shall

be proclaimed and ushered in by the trump of God: "For the trumpet shall sound," and that will wake them that sleep in the dust of the earth, and shall summon all the world to appear. For,

2nd. The dead shall be raised. "The dead in Christ shall rise first," ver. 16, that is, before those that are found alive at Christ's coming shall be changed; and so it appeareth that those who shall then "be found alive shall not prevent them that are asleep," ver. 15. The first cure of the Redeemer in that day will be about his dead saints; he will raise them before the great change passeth on them that shall be found alive; so that those that did not sleep in death will have no greater privilege nor joy at that day than those who fell asleep in Jesus.

3rd. They that shall be found alive will then be changed. They "shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air," ver. 17. At or immediately before this rapture into the clouds those that are alive will undergo a mighty change, that will be equivalent to dying. This change is so mysterious we cannot comprehend it, we know little or nothing of it, 1 Cor. xv. 51. Only, in the general, "this mortal must put on immortality;" and these bodies shall be made fit to inherit the kingdom of God, which flesh and blood in its present state is not capable of. This change will be "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," 1 Cor. xv. 52; in the very instant, or not long after the raising up of them that sleep in Jesus. And these who are raised and thus changed shall meet together in the clouds, and there meet with their Lord to congratulate his coming, and receive the crown of glory he will then bestow upon them, and to be assessors with him in judgment, approving and applauding that sentence he will then pass upon the prince of the power of the air, and all the wicked who shall be doomed to destruction with the devil and his angels.

4th. Here is the bliss of the saints at that day. They shall "be ever with the Lord," ver. 17. It will be some part of their felicity that all the saints shall meet together, and remain together for ever. But the principal happiness of heaven is this, to be with the Lord, to see him, live with him, and enjoy him for ever. This should comfort the saints upon the death of their pious friends; that, although death hath made a separation, yet their souls and bodies will meet again; we and they shall meet together again. We and they with all the saints shall meet our Lord, and be with him for ever, no more to be separated, either from him or from one another, for ever. And the apostle would have us "comfort one another with these words," ver. 18. We should endeavour to support one another in times of sorrow; not deaden one another's spirits, nor weaken one another's hands, but should comfort one another; and that may be done by serious consideration and discourse on the many good lessons to be learned from the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and the second coming of Christ, and the glory of the saints in that day.

[In the catacombs at Rome are epitaphs referring to the pagans and early Christians, whose remains are interred there. These shew how the two classes were influenced in the view of death—the one "having no hope," the believing friend of the other being regarded as "asleep" in Christ.

PAGAN EPITAPHS.

PROCOPE MANVS·LEBO·CONTRA
DEVN·QVI·ME·INNOCENTEM·SVS·
TVLIT·QVAE·VIXIT·ANNOS·XX
POS·PROCLVVS

1. Procope, lift up my hands against God, who snatched away me, innocent She lived twenty years. Proclus set up this.

C. IULIVS MAXIMVS

ANN. II. M. V.

ATROX O FORTVNA TRVCI QVAE FVNERE GAVDES
QVID MIHI TAM SVBITO MAXIMVS ERIPITVR
QVI MODO IVCVNDVS GREMIO SUPERESSE SOLEBAT
HIC LAPIS IN TVMVLO NVNC IACET ECCE MATER.

Caius Julius Maximus
(aged)

2 years and 5 months.

O relentless fortune, who delightest in cruel Death,
Why is Maximus so suddenly snatched from me?
He, who lately used to lie joyful on my bosom.
This stone now marks his tomb—behold his mother.

CHRISTIAN EPITAPHS.

A Christian fragment epitaph, found by Sponius, speaks a different language:

QVI DEDIT ET ABSTVLIT
OMNI BENEDIC
QVI VIXIT ANN
FACE CONS

"—Who gave and hath taken—blessed—of the Lord—who lived—years—in peace—in the consulate of—"

DORMITIO ELPIDIS

The sleeping-place of Elpis.

Of another we read—

GEMELLA SLEEPS IN PEACE.

Here lies Paulina.—Pacata, to whom she was nurse, buried her, an amiable and holy person—IN CHRIST.

And, lastly, we find the certainty of a resurrection expressed in the following—



PAX

HIC MIHI SEMPER DOLOR ERIT IN AEVO
ET TVM VENERABILEM VLTVM LICEAT VEDERE SO—ORE
CONIVNX ALBANAQVE MIHI SEMPER CASTA PVDICA
RELICTVM ME TVO GREMIO QVEROR
QVOD MIHI SANCTVM TE DEDERAT DIVINITVS AVTOR
RELICTIS TVIS IACES IN PACE SOPORE
MERITA RESVRGIS X TEMPORALIS TIBI DATA REQVETIO
QVE VIXIT ANNIS XLV MENV·DIES XIII
DEPOSITA IN PACE FECIT PLACVS 7 MARITVS

PEACE.

This grief will always weigh upon me: may it be granted me to behold in sleep your revered countenance. My wife Albana, always chaste and modest, grieve over the loss of your support: for our Divine Author gave you to me as a sacred (loom.) You, well-deserving one, having left your (relations,) lie in peace—in sleep—you will arise—a temporary rest is granted you. She lived forty-five years, five months, and thirteen days: buried in peace. Placius, her husband, set up this.—*Maitland's Church in the Catacombs.*

idolatrours Gentiles the indulgence of lawless lusts. Wrong not one another by trespassing upon the sanctity of marriage."

iv. 13–18. The best MSS. read "we" for "I" in verse 13. For general sense of this passage, see Dr. Vaughan's summary in the Introductory Notes. "Them which are asleep:" the Greek expresses "those who from time to time are laid to rest." "As others:" literally, "the rest"—i.e., those who have not the Christian's hope of a joyful resurrection. "Them also which sleep in Jesus:" literally,

"through Jesus;" through his instrumentality, his work, his promise, his power, their death was what it was, a falling asleep in sure and certain hope. "We which are alive," &c.: "A living man naturally classes himself with the living, in contradistinction to those who are dead" (Vaughan). St. Paul does not here assert that he should be amongst the living at Christ's advent; he did not expect that event immediately (2 Thess. ii. 3). He uses the "we" as in 1 Cor. xv. 52. "In the clouds;" rather, "in" or "amongst clouds."

[Learn hence, (says Barnes,) 1. That the world without religion is destitute of hope. It is just as true of the heathen world now as it was of the ancient pagans, that they have no hope of a future state. They have no evidence that there is any such future state of blessedness; and without such evidence there can be no hope. Compare *Eph. ii. 12*. 2. That the excessive sorrow of the children of this world, when they lose a friend, is not to be wondered at. They bury their hopes in the grave. 3. It is only the hope of future blessedness that can mitigate this sorrow. 4. It is a sad thing to die without hope—so to die as to have no hope for ourselves, and to leave none to our surviving friends that we are happy. Such is the condition of the whole heathen world; and such the state of those who die in Christian lands, who have no evidence that their peace is made with God. As I love my friends—my father, my mother, my wife, my children, I would not have them go forth and weep over my grave as those who have no hope in my death. I would have their sorrow for my departure alleviated by the belief that my soul is happy with my God, even when they commit my cold clay to the dust; and were there no other reason for being a Christian, this would be worth all the effort which it requires to become one. It would demonstrate the unspeakable value of religion, that my living friends may go forth to my grave and be comforted in their sorrows with the assurance that my soul is already in glory, and that my body will rise again! No eulogium for talents, accomplishments, or learning; no panegyrs of praise for eloquence, beauty, or martial deeds; no remembrances of wealth and worldly greatness, would then so meet the desires which my heart cherishes, as to have them enabled, when standing around my open grave, to sing the song which only Christians can sing:—

Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb,
Take this new treasure to thy trust;
And give these sacred relics room
To seek a slumber in the dust.
Nor pain, nor grief, nor anxious fear
Invade thy bounds. No mortal woes
Can reach the peaceful sleeper here,
While angels watch the soft repose.
So Jesus slept: God's dying Son
Passed thro' the grave, and blest the bed;
Rest here, blest saint, till from his throne
The morning break, and pierce the shade.
Break from his throne, illustrious morn;
Attend, O Earth, his sovereign word;
Restore thy trust—a glorious form—
Called to ascend, and meet the Lord.—*Watts.*]

CHAPTER V.

The apostle having spoken in the end of the foregoing chapter concerning the resurrection, and the second coming of Christ, he proceeds to speak concerning the uselessness of inquiring after the particular time of Christ's coming, which would be sudden and terrible to the wicked, but comfortable to the saints, ver. 1–5. He then exhorts them to the duties of watchfulness, sobriety, and exercise of faith, love, and hope, as being suitable to their state, ver. 6–10. In the next words he exhorts them to several duties they owed to others, or to one another, ver. 11–15; and afterwards to several other Christian duties of great importance, ver. 16–22. And then concludes this epistle, ver. 23–28.



OF the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

In these words observe,

First. The apostle tells the Thessalonians it was useless or needless to inquire about the particular time of Christ's coming: "Of the times and seasons ye need not that I write unto you," ver. 1. The thing is certain that Christ will come, and there is a certain time appointed for his coming; but there was no need that the apostle should write about that, and therefore he had no revelation given him. Nor should they or we inquire into this secret, "which the Father hath reserved in his own power;" "Of that day and hour knoweth no man." Christ himself did not reveal this while upon earth; it was not in his commission as the great Prophet of the church. Nor did he reveal this to his apostles; there was no need of this. There are times and seasons for us to do our work in, that it is our duty and interest to know and observe; but the time and season when we must give up our account we know not, nor is it needful we should know that. Note, There are many things which our vain curiosity desireth to know which there is no necessity at all of our knowing, nor would our knowledge of them do us good.

Secondly. He tells them the coming of Christ would be sudden, and a great surprise to most men, ver. 2. And this is what they knew perfectly, or might know, because our Lord himself had so said: "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh," *Mat. xxiv. 44*. So *Mar. xiii. 35, 36*, "Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping." And no doubt the apostle had told them, as of the coming of Christ, so also of his coming suddenly, which is the meaning of his coming as a thief in the night, *Rev. xvi. 15*. As the thief usually cometh in the dead time of the night, when he is least expected, such a surprise will the

day of the Lord be; so sudden and surprising his appearance. And the knowledge of this will be more useful than to know the exact time, because this should awaken us to stand upon our watch, that we may be ready whenever he cometh.

Thirdly. He tells them how terrible Christ's coming would be to the ungodly, ver. 3. It will be to their destruction in that day of the Lord. The righteous God will bring ruin upon his and his people's enemies; and this their destruction, as it will be total and final, so, 1. It will be sudden. It will overtake them, and fall upon them in the midst of their carnal security and jollity; when they say in their hearts, "Peace and safety," when they dream of felicity, and please themselves with vain amusements of their fancies or their senses, and think not of it, "as travail cometh upon a woman with child," at the set time indeed, but was not perhaps just then expected, nor greatly feared. 2. It will be unavoidable destruction too. "They shall not escape;" they shall in no wise escape; there will be no means possible for them to avoid the terror or the punishment of that day. There will be "no place where the workers of iniquity shall be able to hide themselves;" no shelter from the storm, nor shadow from the burning heat that shall consume the wicked.

Fourthly. He tells them how comfortable this day will be to the righteous, ver. 4, 5; where observe,

1. Their character and privilege. They are not in darkness; they are the children of the light, &c. This was the happy condition of the Thessalonians, and of all true Christians; they were not in a state of sin and ignorance, as the heathen world. They were "sometime darkness, but were made light in the Lord." They were favoured with the Divine revelation of things that are unseen and eternal, particularly concerning the coming of Christ and the consequences thereof. They were "the children of the day," for "the day star had risen upon them," yea, the Sun of righteousness had shined on them with healing under his wings. They were no longer under the darkness of heathenism, nor under the shadows of the law, but under the Gospel, which brings life and immortality to light.

2. Their great advantage on this account; "That that day should not overtake them as a thief," ver. 4. It was at least their own fault if they were surprised by that day. They had fair warning and sufficient helps to provide against that day, and might hope to stand with comfort and confidence before the Son of man. This would be a time of "refreshing to them from the presence of the Lord," who to "them that look for him will appear without sin unto their salvation," and will come to them as a friend in the day, not as a thief in the night.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

From what had been said the apostle grounds seasonable exhortations to several needful duties.

First. To watchfulness and sobriety, ver. 6. These duties are distinct, yet they mutually befriend one another; for whilst we are compassed about with so many temptations to intemperance and excess we shall not keep sober, unless we be upon our guard; and unless we keep sober we shall not long watch.

1. Then "let us not sleep as *do* others, but let us watch;" that is, we must not be secure and careless, nor indulge spiritual sloth and idleness. We must not be off our watch, but continually upon our guard against sin and temptation to it. The generality of men are too careless of their duty and regardless of their spiritual enemies. They say "Peace and safety" when they are in the greatest danger, and doze away their precious moments, on which eternity depends, indulging idle dreams; and have no more thoughts and cares about another world than men that are asleep have about this. Either they do not consider the things of another world at all, because they are asleep, or they do not consider them aright, because they dream. But let us watch, and act like men that are awake, and that stand upon their guard.

2. Let us also be sober, or temperate, and moderate. Let us keep our natural desires and appetites after the things of this world within due bounds. Sobriety is usually opposed to excess in meats and drinks, and here particularly in is opposed to drunkenness. But it also extends to other temporal things. Thus our Saviour warned his disciples to "take heed lest their hearts were overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon them unawares," *Lu. xxi. 34*. "Our moderation," then, as to all temporal things "should be known to all men, because the Lord is at hand."

Besides this, watchfulness and sobriety are most suitable to the Christian's character and privilege, as being "children of the day," because "they that sleep sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night," ver. 7. It is a most reproachful thing for men to sleep away the daytime, which is for work, and not for sleep; to be drunken in the day, when so many eyes are upon them to behold their shame. It was not so strange if those who had not the benefit of Divine revelation suffered themselves to be lulled asleep by the devil in carnal security, and if they laid the reins upon the neck of their appetites, and indulged themselves in all manner of riot and excess,—for it was night time with them: "they were not sensible of their danger, therefore they slept; they were not sensible of their duty, therefore they were drunk. But it ill becomes Christians to do thus. What! shall Christians, who have the light of the blessed Gospel shining in their faces, be careless about their souls, and mindless of another world? They that have so many eyes upon them should carry themselves decently.

Secondly. To be well armed as well as watchful; to put on the whole armour of God. And this is necessary, in order to such sobriety as becomes us, and will be a preparation for the day of the Lord, because our spiritual enemies are many, and mighty, and malicious. They draw many to their interest, and keep them in it, by making them careless, and secure, and presumptuous; by making them drunk,—drunk with pride, drunk with passion, drunk and giddy with self-conceit, drunk with the gratifications of sense; so that we have need to arm ourselves against their attempts, by putting on the spiritual breastplate to keep

"Robed round with upbearing clouds" (Ellicott). "Wherefore comfort one another with these words:" observe the apostle's tone of perfect satisfaction, as opposed to the sadness of heathen writers. "Suns can set and rise again; when once our brief light sets, we must sleep through one perpetual night" (Catullus). "Hopes are for the living; the dying are without hope" (Theocritus).

v. 1–3. The apostle passes from the circumstances of the resurrection to the time. This he declares unknown equally to himself and

others. "Neither is it to be asserted 'the Lord is coming even now,' nor yet 'he comes not now, but only at such and such a time;' every fixing of the time, be it of a positive or of a negative nature, is of evil. In this acceptance, the doctrine of the advent is of a truly practical nature, in that it promotes moral watchfulness without countenancing anything fanatical" (Olshausen).

v. 4. "Not in darkness:" spiritual or moral.

v. 5. Literally, "For all ye are sons of light and sons of day."

the heart, and the spiritual helmet to secure the head; and this spiritual armour consists of the three great graces of the Christians, faith, love, and hope, ver. 8.

1. We must live by faith, and that will keep us watchful and sober. If we believe that the eye of God, who is a spirit, is always upon us; that we have spiritual enemies to grapple with, that there is a world of spirits to prepare for, we shall see reason to watch and be sober. Faith will be our best defence against the assaults of our enemies.

2. We must get a heart inflamed with love; and this also will be our defence. True and fervent love to God, and the things of God, will keep us watchful and sober, and hinder our apostasy in times of trouble and temptation.

3. We must make salvation our hope, and should have a lively hope of it. This good hope, through grace, of eternal life, will be as a helmet to defend the head, and hinder our being intoxicated with the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season. If we have hope of salvation let us take heed of doing any thing that shall shake our hopes, or render ourselves unworthy of, or unfit for, the great salvation we hope for. Having mentioned salvation and the hope of it, the apostle shews what grounds and reasons the Christians have to hope for it, the apostle shews, as to which observe he saith nothing of their meriting it. No; the doctrine of our merits is altogether unscriptural and antisciptural. There is no foundation of any good hope upon that account. But our hopes are to be grounded, 1st. Upon God's appointment; because "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation," ver. 9. If we would trace our salvation to the first cause, that is God's appointment. Those that live and die in darkness and ignorance, that sleep and are drunken, as in the night, it is but too plain they are appointed to wrath; but as for those who are of the day, if they watch and be sober, it is evident they are appointed to obtain salvation. And the sureness and firmness of the Divine appointment is the great support and encouragement of our hope. Were we to obtain salvation by our own merit or power, we could have but little or no hope of it; but seeing we are to obtain it by virtue of God's appointment, which we are sure cannot be shaken, "for his purpose according to election shall stand," on that we build unshaken hope; especially when we consider, 2nd. Christ's merit and grace, and that salvation is "by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us." Our salvation therefore is owing to, and our hopes of it grounded on, Christ's atonement as well as God's appointment; and as we should think on God's gracious design and purpose, so also on Christ's death and sufferings for this end, "that whether we wake or sleep," that is, whether we live or die, for death is but a sleep to believers, as the apostle had before intimated, "we should live together with Christ," that is, live in union with him, and in glory with him for ever. And as it is the salvation that Christians hope for, to "be for ever with the Lord," so one foundation of their hope is their union with him. And if they are united with Christ, and live in him, and live to him here, the sleep of death will be no prejudice to the spiritual life, much less to the life of glory hereafter. On the contrary, Christ hath died for us, that living and dying we might be his, that we might live to him whilst we are here, and live with him when we go hence.

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. 12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. 14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

In these words the apostle exhorts the Thessalonians to several duties.

First. Towards those that were nearly related one to another. Such should comfort themselves, or exhort one another, and edify one another, ver. 11.

1. They must comfort or exhort themselves and one another, for the original word may be rendered both these ways. And we may observe, as those are most able and likely to comfort others who can comfort themselves, so the way to have comfort ourselves, or to administer comfort to others, is by compliance with the exhortation of the word. Note, We should not only be careful about our own comfort and welfare, but to promote the comfort and welfare of others also. He was a Cain that said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" We "must bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

2. They must edify one another, by "following after those things whereby one may edify another." Rom. xiv. 19. As Christians are "lively stones built up together a spiritual house," they should endeavour to promote the good of the whole church by promoting the work of grace in one another. And it is the duty of every one of us to study that which is for the edification of those with whom we converse, to please all men for their real profit. We should communicate our knowledge and experiences one to another; we should join in prayer and praise one with another; we should set a good example one before another. And it is the duty of those especially that live in the same vicinity and family thus to comfort and edify one another; and this is the best neighbourhood, the best means, to answer the end of society. Such as are nearly related together, and have affection for one another, as they have the greatest opportunity, so they are under the greatest obligation, to do this kindness one to another. This the Thessalonians did, which also ye do; and this is what they are exhorted to continue and increase in doing. Note, Those that do that which is good have need of further exhortations to excite them to do good, to do more good, as well as continue in doing what they do.

Secondly, He sheweth them their duty towards their ministers, ver. 12, 13. Though the apostle himself was driven from them, yet they had others who laboured among them, and to whom they owed these duties. The apostle here exhorts them to observe,

1. How the ministers of the Gospel are described by the work of their office; and they should rather mind the work and duty they are called to than affect venerable and honourable names they may be called by. Their work is very weighty, and very honourable and useful. 1st. Ministers must labour among their people, labour with diligence, and unto weariness, so the word in the original imports, "They must labour in the word and doctrine," 1 Tim. v. 17. They are called labourers, and should not be loiterers; they must labour with

their people, that is, to instruct, and comfort, and edify them. And, 2nd. Ministers are to rule the people also, so the word is rendered, 1 Tim. v. 17; not rule with rigour, but with love. They must not exercise dominion as temporal lords, but rule as spiritual guides, by setting a good example to the flock. They are over the people in the Lord, to distinguish them from civil magistrates, and to denote also that they are but ministers under Christ, appointed by him, and must rule the people by Christ's laws, and not by laws of their own. This may also intimate the end of their office and all their labour, namely, the service and honour of the Lord. 3rd. They must also admonish the people, and that not only publicly, but privately, as there may be occasion. They must instruct them to do well, and should reprove them when they do ill. It is their duty not only to give good counsel, but also to give admonition; to give warning to the flock of the dangers they are liable to, and reproof for negligence, or what else may be amiss.

2. What the duty of the people is towards their ministers. There is a mutual duty between ministers and people. If ministers should labour among the people, then, 1st. The people must know them. As the shepherd should know his flock, so the sheep must know their shepherd. They must know his person, and hear his voice, and acknowledge him for their pastor, and pay due regard to his teaching, and ruling, and admonitions. 2nd. They must esteem their ministers highly in love. They should greatly value the office of the ministry, and honour and love the persons of their ministers, and shew their esteem and affection in all proper ways, and this "for their work's sake," because their business is to promote the honour of Christ, and the welfare of men's souls. Note, 1. Faithful ministers ought to be so far from being lightly esteemed because of their work, that they should be highly esteemed on the account thereof. The work of the ministry is so far from being a disgrace to them who upon other accounts deserve esteem, that it puts an honour upon them who are faithful and diligent, which otherwise they could lay no claim to, and will procure them that esteem and love among good people which otherwise they could not expect. [2. So great an enemy is Satan to the ordinance of a public ministry, 1 Thes. ii. 18,—so necessary is it that people do countenance that ordinance, and encourage those who are intrusted with it, even for their own good, Heb. xiii. 17,—so ignorant, unmindful, and neglective are they of those duties which they ought to perform for that end, 2 Cor. xii. 11,—that the servants of Christ should, with much seriousness and affectionate insinuation, press upon the Lord's people all such duties of respect, reverence, love, obedience, submission, Heb. xiii. 17, and gratitude, Gal. vi. 6, as they owe unto their ministers and those who are over them in the Lord; so far should they be from a total neglect of pressing any such duties, under a pretence of self-denial, or from preposterous modesty; for Paul doth here most seriously and affectionately press duties of that kind: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know" &c.]

Thirdly, He giveth divers other exhortations touching the duty Christians owe to one another.

1. To "be at peace among themselves," ver. 13. Some understand this exhortation, according to the reading in some copies, as referring to the people's duty to their ministers, to live peaceably with them, and not raise or promote dissensions at any time between minister and people, which will certainly prove a hindrance to the success of a minister's work and the edification of the people. This is certain: ministers and people should avoid every thing that tends to alienate their affections one from another; and the people should be at peace among themselves, doing all they can to hinder any differences from rising or continuing among them, and using all proper means to preserve peace and harmony.

2. To "warn the unruly," ver. 14. There will be in all societies some that walk disorderly, who go out of their rank and station; and it is not only the duty of ministers, but of private Christians also, to warn and admonish them. Such should be reprov'd for their sin, and warned of their danger, and told plainly of the injury they do their own souls, and the hurt they may do to others. Such should be put in mind of what they should do, and be reprov'd for doing otherwise.

3. To "comfort the feeble-minded," ver. 14. By these are intended the timorous and faint-hearted, or such as are dejected and of a sorrowful spirit. Some are cowardly, and afraid of difficulties, and disheartened at the thoughts of hazards, and losses, and afflictions. Now such should be encouraged; we should not despise them, but comfort them. And who knows what good a kind and comfortable word may do them?

4. To "support the weak," ver. 14. Some are not well able to perform their work, nor bear up under their burthens; we should therefore support them and help their infirmities, and lift at one end of the burthen, and so help to bear it. It is the grace of God indeed that must strengthen and support such, but we should tell them of that grace, and endeavour to minister of that grace to them.

5. To "be patient towards all men," ver. 14. We must bear and forbear. We must be long-suffering, and suppress our anger, if it begins to rise upon the apprehension of affronts or injuries; at least we must not fail to moderate our anger, and this duty must be exercised towards all men, good and bad, high and low, &c. We must not be high in our expectations and demands, nor harsh in our resentments, nor hard in our impositions; but endeavour to make the best we can of every thing, and think the best we can of every body.

6. Not to "render evil for evil to any man," ver. 15. This we must look to, and be very careful about; that is, we must by all means forbear to revenge ourselves: if others do us an injury, that will not justify us in returning it, in doing the same, or the like, or any other injury to them. It becomes us to forgive, as those that are, and that hope to be, forgiven of God.

7. "Ever to follow that which is good," ver. 15; that is, in the general we must study to do what is our duty, and pleasing to God in all circumstances, whether men do us good turns or ill turns; whatever men do to us, we must do good to others. We must always endeavour to be beneficent, and instrumental to promote the welfare of others, both among ourselves, in the first place to "them that are of the household of faith," and then "as we have opportunity unto all men," Gal. vi. 10.

16 Rejoice evermore. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. 19 Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings. 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Here we have divers short exhortations, that will not burthen our memories, but will be of great use to direct the motions of our hearts and lives; for the duties are of great importance. And we may observe how they are connected together, and have a dependence upon one another.

This expression seems to involve the idea of having received one's higher life from the Light (John i. 9).

v. 9. "Others:" literally, "the rest" (chap. iv. 13).

v. 10. "Whether we wake or sleep:" these words seem at first sight strange, since in verse 6 sleeping among the faithful was forbidden, and spoken of as the sin of the unconverted. The explanation must be that the apostle uses the word in different senses in the two passages—in verse 6 apathy to spiritual things is indicated; in

verse 10 sleep signifies death, waking, life. Hence the meaning of St. Paul is, that our hope of salvation through our Lord is equally certain of fulfilment, whether we live to see his coming or die before he comes (Rom. xiv. 8).

v. 12, 13. "Know:" i.e., acknowledge, recognise their due position amongst you. "Are over you in the Lord" &c.: "Have the oversight of you in the Lord, and give you exhortation." So Cranmer, Tyndal, Geneva. "Very highly:" literally, "more than abundantly."

First. "Rejoice evermore," ver. 16. This must be understood of spiritual joy; for we must rejoice in our creature comforts as if we rejoiced not, and must not expect to live many years, and rejoice in them all. But if we do rejoice in God, we may do that evermore; in him our joy will be full, and it is our fault if we have not a continual feast. If we are sorrowful upon any worldly account, yet still we may always rejoice, 2 Cor. vi. 10. Note, A religious life is a pleasant life, it is a life of constant joy.

Secondly. "Pray without ceasing," ver. 17. Note, The way to rejoice evermore is to pray without ceasing. We should rejoice more if we did pray more. We should keep up stated times for prayer, and continue instant in prayer. Pray always, and not faint; pray without weariness, and continue in prayer, till we come to that world where prayer shall be swallowed up in praise. The meaning is not, that men should do nothing but pray, but that nothing else we do should hinder prayer in its proper season. Prayer will help forward, and not hinder all other lawful business, and every good work.

Thirdly. "In every thing give thanks," ver. 18. And if we pray without ceasing, we shall not want matter for thanksgiving, in every thing. As we must in every thing make our requests known to God by supplications, so we must not omit thanksgiving, *Phi. iv. 6*. We should be thankful in every condition, even in adversity as well as prosperity. It is never so bad with us but it might be worse. If we have never so much occasion to make our humble complaints to God, we never can have any reason to complain of God, and have always much reason to praise and give thanks; and the apostle saith, "This is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us," that we do give thanks; that is, seeing God is reconciled to us in Christ Jesus; in him and through him, and for his sake, he alloweth us to rejoice evermore, and appointeth us in every thing to give thanks. It is pleasing to God.

Fourthly. "Quench not the Spirit," ver. 19. For it is this Spirit of grace and supplication that helpeth our infirmities, that assisteth us in our prayers and thanksgivings. Christians are said "to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." He worketh as fire, by enlightening, and enlivening, and purifying the souls of men. We must be careful not to quench this holy fire. As fire is put out by withdrawing fuel, so we quench the Spirit if we do not stir up our spirits, and all that is within us, to comply with the motions of the good Spirit; and as fire is quenched by pouring water, or putting a great quantity of dirt upon it, so we must be careful not to quench the Holy Spirit, by indulging in carnal lusts and affections, or minding only earthly things.

Fifthly. "Despise not prophesyings," ver. 20. For if we neglect the means of grace, we forfeit the Spirit of grace. By prophesyings here we are to understand the preaching of the word, the interpretation and applying of the Scriptures; and this we must not despise, but should prize and value, because it is the ordinance of God, appointed of him for our furtherance and increase in knowledge and grace, and holiness and comfort. We must not despise preaching, though it be plain, and not with enticing words of men's wisdom, and though we are told no more than what we knew before. It is useful, and many times needful, to have our minds stirred up, our affections and resolutions excited, to those things that we knew before to be our interest and our duty.

Sixthly. "Prove all things, but hold fast that which is good," ver. 21. This is a needful caution to prove all things; for, though we must put a value on preaching, we must not take things upon trust from the preacher, but try them by the law and the testimony. We must search the Scriptures, whether what they say be true or not. We must not believe every spirit, but must try the spirits; but we must not be always trying, always unsettled; no, at length we must be settled, and "hold fast that which is good." When we are satisfied that any thing is right, and true, and good, we must hold it fast, and not let it go, whatever opposition or whatever persecution we meet with for the sake thereof. Note, The doctrines of human infallibility, and implicit faith, and blind obedience, are not the doctrines of the Bible. Every Christian hath, and ought to have, the judgment of discretion, and should have his "senses exercised in the discerning between good and evil," truth and falsehood, *Heb. v. 13, 14*. And proving all things must be in order to the holding fast that which is good. We must not always be seekers, or fluctuating in our minds, "like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine."

Seventhly. "Abstain from all appearance of evil," ver. 22. And this is a good means to prevent our being deceived with false doctrines, or unsettled in our faith; for our Saviour hath told us, *Jno. vii. 17*, "If a man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Corrupt affections indulged in the heart, and evil practices allowed of in the life, will greatly tend to promote fatal errors in the mind; whereas purity of heart, and integrity of life, will dispose men to receive the truth in the love of it. We should therefore abstain from evil, and all appearances of evil, from sin, and that which looks like sin, and that leads to it, and borders upon it. He that is not shy of the appearances of sin, and who shuns not the occasions of sin, and who avoids not the temptations and approaches to sin, will not long abstain from the actual commission of sin.

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you

wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. 25 Brethren, pray for us. 26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss. 27 I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

These words conclude this epistle. In which observe, First, Paul's prayer for them, ver. 23. He had told them, in the beginning of this epistle, he always made mention of them in his prayers; and now he is writing to them, he lifteth up his heart to God in prayer for them. Take notice,

1. To whom the apostle prays; namely, "The very God of peace." He is the God of grace, and the God of peace and love; he is the author of peace and lover of concord; and by their peaceableness and unity, from God as the author, those things would best be obtained which he prays for.

2. The things he prays for on behalf of the Thessalonians are,—their sanctification, that God would sanctify them wholly; and their preservation, that they might be "preserved blameless." He prays they may be wholly sanctified, that is, that the whole man might be sanctified; and then that the whole man, spirit, soul, and body, might be preserved. Or, he prays that they might be wholly sanctified, that is, more perfectly, for the best are sanctified but in part, while in this world; and therefore we should pray for, and press towards, complete sanctification. And where the good work of grace is begun, it shall be carried on, be protected and preserved; and all those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus shall be preserved to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And because, if God did not carry on his good work in the soul, that would miscarry, we should pray God to perfect his work, and preserve us blameless, that is, free from sin and impurity, till at length we are presented faultless before the throne of his glory with exceeding joy.

Secondly. His comfortable assurance that God would hear his prayer. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it," ver. 24. The kindness and love of God had appeared to them in calling them to the knowledge of his truth, and the faithfulness of God was their security that they should persevere to the end; and therefore, the apostle assures them God would do what he desired; he would effect what he had promised; he would accomplish all the good pleasure of his goodness towards them. Note, That our fidelity to God depends upon his faithfulness to us.

Thirdly. His request of their prayers; "Brethren, pray for us," ver. 25. We should pray one for another, and brethren should thus express brotherly love. This great apostle did not think it beneath him to call the Thessalonians brethren, nor below him to request their prayers. Ministers stand in need of their people's prayers; and the more people do pray for their ministers the more good ministers may have from God, and the people may receive by their ministry.

Fourthly. His salutation. "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss," ver. 26. Thus the apostle sends a friendly salutation from himself, and Silvanus and Timothy; and would have them salute each other in their names. And thus he would have them signify their mutual love and affection to one another, by the kiss of charity, 1 *Pet. v. 14*; which is here called an holy kiss, to intimate how cautious they should be of all impurity in the use of this ceremony then commonly practised; as it should not be a treacherous kiss like that of Judas, so not a lascivious kiss like that of the harlot, *Pr. vii. 13*: see on *Rom. xvi. 16*.

Fifthly. His solemn charge for the reading this epistle, ver. 27. This is not only an exhortation, but an adjuration by the Lord. And this epistle was to be read to all the holy brethren. It is not only allowed to the common people to read the Scriptures, and what none should prohibit, but it is their indispensable duty, and what they should be persuaded to do; and in order to this, these holy oracles should not be kept concealed in an unknown tongue, but be translated into the vulgar languages; that, all men being concerned to know the Scriptures, they all may be able to read them, and be acquainted with them. The public reading of the law was one part of the worship of the sabbath among the Jews in their synagogues, and the Scriptures should be read in the public assemblies of Christians also.

Sixthly. The apostolical benediction that is usual in other epistles. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen," ver. 28. We need no more to make us happy than to know that grace which our Lord Jesus Christ hath manifested, and be interested in that grace he hath purchased, and partake of that grace that dwells in him as the Head of the church. This is an ever-flowing and overflowing fountain of grace to supply all our wants.



TREADING THE GRAPES.
1 Tim. v. 18.

"For their work's sake:" "the work of forwarding your salvation and the kingdom of God." "Be at peace among yourselves:" the "and" of the Authorised Version is not in the Greek. Most connect this charge with the preceding subject, though in somewhat varying senses. "Here the charge follows closely upon the call to appreciate and esteem the Christian ministry. Subordination is peace" (Vaughan). "Where teachers and taught stand in a false position towards each other, there the peace of the Church is already undermined" (Olshausen). "Let there not only be peace between ministers and their flocks, but also no party rivalries among yourselves—one contending in behalf of one favourite minister, another in behalf of another" (Fausset).

v. 14. "Support the weak, be patient toward all men:" "There is no believer who needs not the exercise of patience 'toward' him; there is none to whom a believer ought not to show it. Many show it more to strangers than to their own families, more to the great than to the humble; but we ought to show it 'toward all men'" (Bengel).

v. 22. The Authorised Version, "from all appearance of evil," cannot be sustained. The reading "from every form of evil" is supported by Ellicott, Conybeare, Alford, Olshausen, and others. The apostle is not distinguishing between "good" and the appearance of evil, but actual evil in any form: "Hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil."



GREEK

OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

CHARIOTS.

ST. PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This second epistle was written soon after the former, and seems to be designed to prevent their running into a mistake, which might arise from some passages in the former epistle, concerning the second coming of Christ, as if it were near at hand. The apostle in this epistle is careful to prevent any wrong use some among them might make of those expressions of his, that were agreeable to the dialect of the prophets of the Old Testament, and informeth them that there were many intermediate counsels yet to be fulfilled before that day of the Lord shall come, though because it is sure he had spoken of it as near. There are other things he writeth about for their consolation under sufferings, and exhortation and direction in duty.

A.D. 54.

A.D. 54.

CHAPTER I.

After the introduction, ver. 1, 2, the apostle begins this epistle with an account of his high esteem for these Thessalonians, ver. 3, 4. He then comforteth them under their afflictions and persecutions, ver. 5—10; and tells them what his prayers were to God for them, ver. 11, 12.



AUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; 4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

Here we have,

First. The introduction, ver. 1, 2, in the same words as in the former epistle; from whence we may observe, that as this apostle did not account it grievous to him to write the same things, *Phil. iii. 1*, in his epistles that he had delivered in preaching, so he willingly wrote the same things to one church as he did to another. And here the same words in the second epistle, as in the former, sheweth us that ministers ought not so much to regard the variety of expression and elegance of style as the truth and usefulness of the doctrines they preach. And great care should be taken lest, from an affectation of novelty in method and phrases, we advance new notions or doctrines contrary to the principles of natural or revealed religion, upon which this church of the Thessalonians was built, as all true churches are; namely, "in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Secondly. The high esteem this apostle had for them. He not only had a great affection for them, as he had expressed in his former epistle, and now again, in his pious wish of grace and peace for them, but he also expresseth his great esteem for them. Concerning which observe,

1. How his esteem of them is expressed, namely,

1st. He glorifieth God on their behalf; "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet," ver. 3. He chooseth rather to speak of what was praiseworthy in them in a way of thanksgiving to God than by commendation of them; and as what he mentions was matter of his rejoicing, he accounted it matter of thanksgiving; and it was meet or fit it should be so, for we are bound, and it is our duty, to be thankful to God for all the good that is found in us or others; and it not only is an act of kindness to our fellow Christians, but our duty, to thank God on their behalf.

2nd. He also glories in them before the churches of God, ver. 4. The apostle

never flattered his friends, but he took pleasure in commending them, and speaking well of them, to the glory of God, and for the excitement and encouragement of others. Paul did not glory in his own gifts, nor his labour among them, but he gloried in the grace of God which was bestowed upon them, and so his glorying was good; because all the commendation he gave to them, and the pleasure he took himself, centred in the praise and glory of God.

2. For what he esteemed them and thanked God; namely, the increase of their faith, and love, and patience. In his former epistle, *ch. i. 3*, he gave thanks for their faith, and love, and patience; here he giveth thanks for the increase of all those graces, that they were not only true Christians, but growing Christians. Note, 1st. That where there is the truth of grace there will be increase of it. The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day; and where there is the increase of grace God must have all the glory of it. We are as much indebted to him for the improvement of grace, and the progress of that good work, as we are for the first work of grace, and the very beginning of it. We may be tempted to think that though, when we were bad, we could not make ourselves good, yet when we are good we can easily make ourselves better; but we have as much dependence on the grace of God for the increasing the grace we have as for the planting of grace when we had it not. [2nd. As the Lord giveth sometimes way unto the rage and fury of men and devils, to trouble and persecute his dearest saints for righteousness' sake, so it usually falleth out that the more they rage the less they gain their intent; the more they stain the church's outward beauty the more doth her inward beauty, the sanctifying graces of God's Spirit and faith in Jesus Christ, increase and grow; for so was it with this persecuted and afflicted church, as the general scope of this part of the chapter, which is to comfort them under their sufferings, doth imply, and the following verse doth express; and yet Paul affirmeth here, their faith did grow exceedingly, and their charity abound.] The matter of the apostle's thanksgiving and glorying on behalf of the Thessalonians was,

1st. That their faith did grow exceedingly, ver. 3. They were more confirmed in the truth of gospel revelations, and confided in gospel promises, and had lively expectations of another world. The growth of their faith appeared by the works of faith; and where faith groweth all other graces grow proportionably.

2nd. Their charity abounded, ver. 3; that is, their love to God and man. Note, Where faith groweth love will abound, for faith worketh by love; and not only the charity of some few of them, but of every one to each other, did abound. There were no such divisions among them as in some other churches.

3rd. Their patience as well as faith did increase in all their persecutions and tribulations. And then patience hath its perfect work when it extendeth itself to all trials. There were many persecutions which the Thessalonians endured for the sake of righteousness, as well as other troubles which they met with in this calamitous life; yet they endured all these, by faith "seeing him that is invisible," and looking to the recompence of reward; and endured them with patience, not with an insensibility under them, but with patient bearing them, and that from Christian principles, which kept them quiet and submissive, and afforded them inward strength and support.

5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: 6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them

Introductory Note.—This epistle was written from Corinth, probably about a year after the first epistle—i.e., about the autumn of A.D. 53. For (1) the state of the Thessalonian church described in the two epistles is almost identical; (2) the same cause was exciting the church—misapprehension as to the nearness of the advent of the Lord; (3) some neglected their duty, on this account. (Compare 2 Thess. iii. 6—14, 1 Thess. iv. 10—12.) The excitement and misapprehension seems to have been aggravated by some writing that

had reached Thessalonica, purporting to be from St. Paul (*chap. ii. 2*); and the apostle hearing of this writes this epistle to quiet and instruct the church. The objections to the genuineness and authenticity of this epistle are all modern, and are stated by Ellicott to be of a most arbitrary and subjective character, and not deserving serious consideration; they have been answered by Davidson, "Introduction," vol. ii., p. 454, &c.

i. 4—7. That which at times seemed strange to David (*Psa. lxxiii.*)

that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

Having mentioned their persecutions and tribulations, which they endured principally for the cause of Christ, the apostle proceedeth to offer several things for their comfort under them; as,

First. He tells them of the present happiness and advantage of their sufferings, ver. 5. Their faith being thus tried, and patience exercised, they were improved by their sufferings, inasmuch that they were "counted worthy of the kingdom of God." Their sufferings were "a manifest token" of this, that they were worthy or meet to be accounted Christians indeed, seeing they could suffer for Christianity. And the truth is, religion, if it is worth any thing, is worth every thing; and those either have no religion at all, or none that is worth having, or know not how to value it, that cannot find in their hearts to suffer for it. Besides, from their patient suffering it appeared that according to the righteous judgment of God they should be counted worthy of the heavenly glory; not by worthiness of condignity, but of congruity only; not that they could merit heaven, but were made meet for heaven. We cannot by all our sufferings, any more than by our services, merit heaven as a debt; but by our patience under our sufferings we are qualified for the joy that is promised to patient sufferers in the cause of God.

Secondly. He tells them next of the future recompence that shall be given to persecutors and persecuted, namely,

1. There will be a punishment inflicted on persecutors. God will "recompence tribulation to them that trouble you," ver. 6. And there is nothing that doth more infallibly mark a man for eternal ruin than a spirit of persecution and enmity to the name and people of God. As the faith, and patience, and constancy of the saints is to them an earnest of everlasting rest and joy, so the pride, and malice, and wickedness of their persecutors is to them an earnest of everlasting misery; for every man carries about with him, and carries out of the world with him, either his heaven or his hell. God will render a recompence, and will trouble them that trouble his people. This he hath done sometimes in this world, (witness the dreadful end of many persecutors;) but especially this he will do in the other world, where the portion of the wicked must be "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

2. There is a reward for them that are persecuted. God will recompence their trouble with rest, ver. 7. There is a rest that remains for the people of God, a rest from sin and sorrow. Though many may be the troubles of the righteous now, yet God will deliver them out of them all; the future rest will abundantly recompence all their present troubles. "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed." There is enough in heaven to countervail all that we may lose or suffer for the name of Christ in this world. The apostle saith, "To you that are troubled, rest with us." In heaven ministers and people shall rest together, and rejoice together, who suffer together here; and the meanest Christian shall rest with the greatest apostle; nay, what is far more, if we suffer for Christ, we shall also reign with him, 2 Tim. ii. 12. Concerning this future recompence we are farther to observe,

1st. The certainty of it proved by the righteousness and justice of God. "It is a righteous thing with God," ver. 6, to render to every man according to his works; and the thoughts of this should be terrible to wicked men and persecutors, and the great support of the righteous, and such as are persecuted; for seeing there is a righteous God, there will be a righteous recompence, and God's suffering people shall lose nothing by their sufferings, and their enemies will gain nothing by their advantages against them.

2nd. The time when this righteous recompence shall be made; namely, "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven," ver. 7. That will be the day of "the revelation of the righteous judgment of God;" for then will God judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath appointed, even Jesus Christ, the righteous Judge. The righteousness of God doth not so visibly appear unto all men in the procedure of his providence as it will in the process of the great judgment-day. The Scripture hath made known to us the judgment to come, and we are bound to receive the revelation here given concerning Christ; as,

First. That the Lord Jesus will in that day appear from heaven. Now the heavens retain him, they conceal him, but then he will be revealed and made manifest; he will come in all the pomp and power of the upper world, from whence we look for the Saviour.

Secondly. He will be revealed with his mighty angels, ver. 7, or the angels of his power. These will attend upon him to grace the solemnity of that great day of his appearance; they will be the ministers of his justice and mercy in that day; they will summon the criminals to his tribunal, and gather in the elect, and be employed in executing his sentence.

Thirdly. He will come in flaming fire, ver. 8. A fire goeth before him that shall consume his enemies. The earth and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. This will be a trying fire to try every man's works; a refining fire to purify the saints, who shall share in the purity, and partake of the felicity, of the new heaven and the new earth; a consuming fire to the wicked. His light will be piercing, and his power consuming, to all those who in that day shall be found as chaff.

Fourthly. The effects of this appearance will be terrible to some and joyful to others.

1st. They will be terrible to some, for he will then take vengeance on the wicked. (1.) On those that sinned against the principles of natural religion, and rebelled against the light of nature; "That know not God," ver. 8; though the invisible things of him are manifested in the things that are seen. (2.) On those that rebel against the light of revelation, who "obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light. This is the great crime of multitudes,—"the Gospel is revealed to them, and they will not believe it; or, if they pretend to believe it, they will not obey it." Note, The believing truths of the Gospel is in order to our obeying the precepts of the Gospel; there must be the obedience of faith. To such persons as are here mentioned the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ will be terrible, because of their doom which is mentioned, ver. 9. Where observe, (1st.) They will then be punished. Though sinners may be long reprieved, yet they will be punished at last. Their misery will be a proper punishment for their crimes, and only what they have deserved. They did sin's work, and must receive sin's wages. (2nd.) Their

punishment will be no less than destruction, not of their being, but of their bliss, not that of the body alone, but both as to body and soul. (3rd.) This destruction will be everlasting. They shall be always dying, and yet never die. Their misery will run parallel with the line of eternity. The chains of darkness are everlasting chains, and the fire everlasting fire. It must needs be so, since the punishment is inflicted by an eternal God, fastening upon an immortal soul, set out of the reach of Divine mercy and grace. (4th.) This destruction shall come from the presence of the Lord, that is, immediately from God himself. Here God punisheth sinners by creatures, by instruments, but then he will take the work into his own hands. It will be destruction from the Almighty, more terrible than the consuming fire which consumed Nadab and Abihu, which came from before the Lord. (5th.) It shall come from the glory of his power, or from his glorious power. Not only the justice of God, but his almighty power, will be glorified in the destruction of sinners; and who knows the power of his anger? He is able to cast into hell.

2nd. It will be a joyful day to some, even to the saints, unto them that do believe and obey the Gospel. And then the apostle's testimony concerning this day will be confirmed and believed, ver. 10. In that bright and blessed day, (1.) Christ Jesus will be glorified and admired by his saints. They shall behold his glory, and admire it with pleasure; they will glorify his grace, and admire the wonders of his power and goodness towards them, and sing Hallelujahs to him in that day of his triumph, for their complete victory and happiness. (2.) Christ will be glorified and admired in them. His grace and power will then be manifested and magnified, when it shall appear what he hath purchased for, and wrought in, and bestowed upon, all those that believe in him. As his wrath and power will be made known in and by the destruction of his enemies, so his grace and power will be magnified in the salvation of his saints. Note, 1. Christ's dealings with those that believe will be what the world shall one day wonder at. Now they are "a wonder to many," but how will they be wondered at in this great and glorious day; or, rather, how will Christ, whose name is Wonderful, be admired when the mystery of God shall be finished? Christ will not be so much admired in the glorious esteem of angels that he will bring from heaven with him, as in the many saints, the many sons, he will bring to glory. [2. As it is the duty of Christ's ministers to make application of general promises unto the particular case of the Lord's people to whom they are sent, so they should carefully guard lest they apply those promises unto any but such as are so qualified as the promise doth require; otherwise they speak peace to whom the Lord doth not speak peace; for the apostle applyeth the general comfort unto them in particular, having found them endued with faith, that necessary qualification which is required in the person to whom the promise doth belong; "Because our testimony was believed among you," saith he.]

11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power: 12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In these verses the apostle again tells the Thessalonians of his earnest and constant prayer for them. He could not be present with them, yet he had a constant remembrance of them; they were much upon his thoughts, and he wished them well, and could not express his goodwill and good wishes to them better than in earnest, constant prayer to God for them: "Wherefore also we pray," &c. Note, The believing thoughts and expectation of the second coming of Christ should put us upon prayer to God for ourselves and others; we should "watch and pray." So our Saviour directeth his disciples, *Lu. xxi. 36*, "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that you may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of man." Observe,

First. What the apostle prayed for, ver. 11. And it is of great concern to be well instructed what to pray for; and without Divine instruction we know not what to pray for, as without Divine assistance we shall not pray in such a manner as we ought. Our prayers should be suitable to our expectations. Thus the apostle prayeth for them,

1. That God would begin his good work of grace in them; so we may understand this expression, "That our God would count you" (or, as it may be read, make you,) "worthy of this calling." We are called with a high and holy calling; we are called to God's kingdom and glory; and no less than the inheritance of the saints is the hope of our calling, nothing less than the enjoyment of that glory and felicity which shall be revealed when Christ Jesus shall be revealed from heaven. Now, if this be our calling, our great concern should be to be worthy of it, or meet and prepared for this glory. And because we have no worthiness of our own but what is owing purely to the grace of God, we should pray that he would make us worthy, and then count us worthy, of his calling, or that he would make us meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light, *Col. i. 12*.

2. That God would carry on the good work that is begun, and "fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness." The good pleasure of God denoteth his gracious purposes towards his people, which flow from his goodness, and are full of goodness towards them, and it is from thence that all good doth come to us. If there be any good in us, it is the fruit of God's goodwill to us, it is owing to the good pleasure of his goodness, and therefore it is called grace. Now there are various and manifold purposes of grace and goodwill in God towards his people, and the apostle prays that all of them may be fulfilled or accomplished towards these Thessalonians. There are several good works of grace begun in the hearts of God's people, which proceed from this good pleasure of God's goodness, and we should desire that they may be completed and perfected. In particular the apostle prayeth that God would fulfil in them "the work of faith with power." Note, 1st. The fulfilling the work of faith is in order to the fulfilling of every other good work. And, 2nd. It is the power of God, that not only begins, but that carrieth on and perfecteth, the work of faith. [3rd. As God doth not accomplish all the good pleasure of his goodness unto the elect at once, but by degrees and measures, until it be fully accomplished in glory, *Mat. xxv. 34*, so, though no endeavours of ours could have any influence on God for moving him to enact such a gracious decree in our favour, *Rom. ix. 11*, yet they may promote the execution of it; and especially fervent prayer is a mean appointed by God for furthering his decree to its full accomplishment; for the apostle, by praying unto God that "he would fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness," doth intimate the usefulness of prayer in order to that end.]

Secondly. Why the apostle prayed for these things, ver. 12, namely, "That the name of the Lord Jesus might be glorified;" and this is the end we should

and to Jeremiah (*Jer. xii. 1-4*) was no mystery to St. Paul. To refer the "just judgment" (Authorised Version, "righteous judgment") only to the perfecting of the saints through suffering does not fully satisfy the sense, as Olshausen seems to think; rather, as Ellicott writes, "the apostle's argument is that their endurance of suffering in faith is a token of God's righteous judgment and of a future reward, which will display itself in rewarding the patient sufferers, as surely as it will inflict punishment on their persecutors."

"Seeing it is a righteous thing:" rather, "if so be that it is righteous." No doubt is expressed here; "as we know it is" must be understood, as if the apostle would say, "Our own feeling of what is just confirms what we know by revelation." "With his mighty angels:" rather, "with the angels of his power," the exponents and instruments of his power.

i. 8. "In flaming fire;" or, "fire of flame"—i.e., accompanied or encompassed by flame. Here the same mode of manifestation is

aim at in every thing we do and desire, that God and Christ in all things might be glorified. Our own and others' happiness should be subordinate unto this ultimate end. Our good works should so shine before men that others may glorify God, that Christ may be glorified in and by us, and then we shall be glorified in and with him. And this is the great end and design of the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ, which is manifested to us, and wrought in us; or thus, it is according to the grace of God and Christ, that is, it is an agreeable thing, considering the grace that is manifested to us, and bestowed on us by God and Christ, that we direct all we do to the glory of our Creator and Redeemer.

CHAPTER II.

The apostle is very careful to hinder the spreading of an error which some among them had fallen into concerning the coming of Christ, as being very near, ver. 1—3. Then he proceedeth to confute this error he cautioned them against, by telling them of two great events that were antecedent to the coming of Christ, namely, a general apostasy, and the revelation of Antichrist, concerning whom the apostle tells them many remarkable things about his name, his character, and his rise, and his fall, and his reign, and the sin and ruin of his subjects, ver. 3—12. He then comforts them against the terror of this apostasy, and exhorts them to steadfastness, ver. 13—15. And concludeth with a prayer for them, ver. 16, 17.



NOW we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man

deceive you by any means:—

From these words it appeareth that some among the Thessalonians had mistaken the apostle's meaning in what he had written in his former epistle about the coming of Christ, by thinking it was near at hand, that Christ was just ready to appear, and come to judgment; or it may be, some among them pretended that they had the knowledge of this by particular revelation from the Spirit, or else from some words they had heard from the apostle when he was with them, or some letter he had written, or they pretended he had written, to them or some other person; and hereupon the apostle is careful to rectify this mistake, and to prevent the spreading of this error. Observe, If errors and mistakes arise among Christians, we should take the first opportunity to rectify them, and hinder the spreading thereof; and good men will be especially careful to suppress errors that may arise from a mistake of their words and actions, though that which was spoken or done was never so innocent or well. We have a subtle adversary, who watcheth all opportunities to do mischief, and will sometimes promote errors even by means of the words of Scripture. Observe,

First. How very earnest and solicitous this apostle was to prevent mistakes. "We beseech you, brethren," &c., ver. 1. He entreats them as brethren, who might have charged them as a father chargeth his children; he sheweth great kindness and condescension, and insinuateth himself into their affection. And this is the best way to deal with men, when we would preserve or recover them from errors, to deal gently and lovingly with them; rough and rigorous treatment will but exasperate their spirits, and prejudice them against the reasons we may offer. He obtests, and even conjureth them in the most solemn manner, "By the coming of Christ," &c. The words are in the form of an oath, and his meaning is, that if they believed Christ would come, and if they desired he would come, and rejoiced in the hope of his coming, they should be careful to avoid the error, and the evil consequence thereof, that he was now cautioning them against. From this form of obtestation used by the apostle, we may observe,

1. That it is most certain that the Lord Jesus Christ will come to judge the world, that he will come in all the pomp and power of the upper world in the last day, to execute judgment upon all. Whatever uncertainty we are at, or whatever mistakes may arise, about the time of his coming, his coming itself is certain. This hath been the faith and hope of all Christians in all ages of the church, nay, it was the faith and hope of the Old Testament saints, ever since Enoch the seventh from Adam, who said, "Behold, the Lord cometh," &c., Jude 14.

3. At the second coming of Christ all the saints will be gathered together to him; and this mention of the gathering of the saints together unto Christ at his coming, sheweth that the apostle speaketh of Christ's coming to judgment at the last day, and not of his coming to destroy Jerusalem. He speaketh of a proper, and not a metaphorical advent; and, as it will be part of Christ's honour in that day, so it will be the completing of the happiness of his saints. 1st. That they all shall be gathered together. There will then be a general meeting of all the saints, and none but saints; all the Old Testament saints that got acquaintance with Christ by the dark shadows of the law, and saw this day at a distance, and all the New Testament saints, to whom life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel—they will all be gathered together. There will then come from the four winds of heaven all that are, or ever were, or ever shall be, from the beginning to the end of time; all shall be gathered together. 2nd. That they shall be gathered together to Christ. He will be the great centre of their unity. They shall be gathered together to him, to be attendants on him, to be assessors with him, to be presented by him to the Father, to be with him for ever, and altogether happy in his presence to all eternity.

3. The doctrines of Christ's coming, and our gathering together to him, are of great moment and importance to Christians, otherwise they would not be the proper matter of the apostle's obtestation. We ought, therefore, not only to believe these things, but highly to account of them also, and look upon them as things we are greatly concerned in, and should be much affected with.

Secondly. The thing itself the apostle cautions the Thessalonians against is, that they should not be deceived about the time of Christ's coming, and so be "shaken in mind, or be troubled." Note, That errors in the mind tend greatly to weaken our faith, and cause us trouble; and such as are weak in faith,

and of troubled minds, are oftentimes apt to be deceived, and fall a prey to seducers.

1. The apostle would not have them be deceived. "Let no man deceive you by any means," ver. 3. There are many that lie in wait to deceive, and they have many ways of deceiving; we have reason therefore to be cautious, and stand upon our guard. Some deceivers will pretend new revelations, and others misinterpret Scripture, and others will be guilty of gross forgeries, divers means and artifices of deceit men will use, but we must be careful that no man deceive us by any means. The particular matter in which the apostle cautions them not to be deceived is about the near approach of Christ's coming, as if it was to have been in the apostle's days; and, as harmless as this error might have seemed to many, yet, because it was indeed an error, it would have proved of bad consequence to many persons. Therefore,

2. He giveth them warning, and would not have them soon shaken in mind, or be troubled. 1st. He would not have their faith weakened. We should firmly believe the second coming of Christ, and be settled and established in the faith of this; but there was danger lest the Thessalonians, if they apprehended the coming of Christ was just at hand, upon the finding they, or others whom they too much regarded, were mistaken as to the time, should thereupon question the truth or certainty of the thing itself, whereas they ought not to waver in their minds as to this great thing, which is the faith and hope of all the saints. False doctrines are like the winds that toss the water to and fro, and they are apt to unsettle the minds of men, who are sometimes as "unstable as water." Then, 2nd. He would not have their comforts lessened, that they should not be troubled or affrighted with false alarms. It is likely the coming of Christ was represented in so much terror as to trouble many serious Christians among them, though in itself it should be matter of the believer's hope and joy; or else many might be troubled with the thoughts how surprising this day would be, or with the fear of their unpreparedness, or upon the reflection on their mistake about the time of Christ's coming. We should always watch and pray, but must not be discouraged nor uncomfortable at the thoughts of Christ's coming.

3—For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying



HOUSE OF LORETTO.

wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they

ascribed to the Son which the Old Testament ascribes to the Father (Exod. iii. 2, xix. 18).

i. 9. "Everlasting destruction:" "All the sounder commentators on this text recognise in *αἰώνιος* a testimony to the eternity of future punishment that is not easy to be explained away" (Ellicott).

i. 10. "That had believed;" not as Authorised Version.

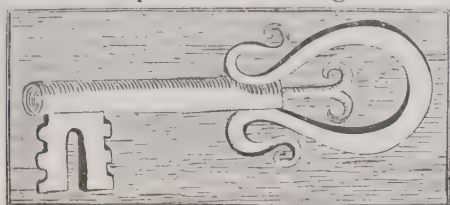
ii. 1. The Authorised Version, "by the coming," &c., is inadmissible (Ellicott, Alford), as it involves a construction not found in

the New Testament. Conybeare translates, "But concerning the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to meet him," &c. Alford reads, "Touching the coming of," &c.

ii. 2. "By spirit;" i.e., of prophecy, possibly assumed for a purpose. "Nor by word, nor by letter as from us:" "Let no pretended saying, no pretended epistle of mine, shake you in this matter" (Alford).

ii. 3—12. "Man of sin" or "of lawlessness," as the Sinaitic and

received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.



KEY OF HOUSE OF LORETTO.

In these words the apostle confuteth the error he had cautioned them against, and giveth the reasons why they should not expect the coming of Christ as just at hand. There were several events previous to the second coming of Christ; in particular he tells them,

First. There would be a general apostasy; there would come "a falling away first," ver. 3. By this apostasy we are not to understand a defection in the state or from civil government, but in spiritual or religious matters, from sound doctrine, and instituted worship, and church government, and a holy life. The apostle speaks of some very great apostasy which would be very general, and not only of some converted Jews or Gentiles, but such as should be very general, though gradual, and what would give occasion to the revelation or rise of Antichrist, that man of sin. This he tells them, ver. 5, he had told them of when he was with them, with design, no doubt, that they should not take offence or be stumbled at it. And let us observe, that no sooner was Christianity planted and rooted in the world, but there began to be a defection in the Christian church. It was so in the Old Testament church; presently after any considerable advance made in religion there followed a defection. Soon after the promise there was revolting; for example, soon after that men began to call upon the name of the Lord, all flesh corrupted their way; soon after the covenant with Noah, the Babel builders had defiance to heaven; soon after the covenant with Abraham, his seed degenerated in Egypt; soon after the Israelites were planted in Canaan, when the first generation was worn off, they forsook God and served Baal; soon after God's covenant with David, his seed revolted and served other gods; soon after the return out of captivity there was a general decay of piety, as appeareth by the story of Ezra and Nehemiah; and therefore it was not strange thing that after the planting of Christianity there should come a falling away.

Secondly. There would be a revelation of "that man of sin," ver. 3; that is, Antichrist, who would take his rise from this general apostasy. The apostle afterwards speaks of the revelation of "that wicked" one, ver. 8; intimating the discovery was made of his wickedness, in order to his ruin. Here he seemeth to speak of a rise, which should be occasioned by that general apostasy he had mentioned; and seemeth to intimate that all sorts of false doctrines and corruptions should centre in him. Great disputes have been, who or what is intended by this man of sin, and son of perdition; and if it is not certain that the papal power and tyranny is principally or only intended, yet this is plain, what is here said doth very exactly agree thereto. For observe, 1. The names of this person, or rather, the state and power here spoken of. He is called "the man of sin," to denote his egregious wickedness; not only he is addicted to, and practiseth wickedness himself, but he doth also promote and countenance, and command sin and wickedness in others. And he is "the son of perdition," because he himself is devoted to certain destruction, and is the instrument of destroying many others, both in soul and body. These names may properly be applied for these reasons to the papal state, and thereto agree also.

2. The characters here given, ver. 4; namely, 1st. That he "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped;" and thus have the bishops of Rome not only opposed God's authority, and that of the civil magistrate, who are called gods, but have exalted themselves above God, and earthly governors, in demanding greater regard to their commands than to the commands of God, or the magistrate. 2nd. "As God, he sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." As God was in the temple of old, and worshipped there, and is in and with his church now, so the Antichrist here mentioned is some usurper of God's authority in the Christian church who claims Divine honours; and to whom can this better agree than to the bishops of Rome? to whom the most blasphemous titles have been given, as *Dominus Deus noster papa*,—"Our Lord God the pope," *Deus alter in terra*,—"Another God on earth," *Idem est Dominum et papa*,—"The dominion of God and the pope is the same."

3. His rise is mentioned, ver. 6, 7. Concerning which we are to observe two things: 1st. That there was something that did hinder, or withhold, or did "let, until it was taken away." This is supposed to be the power of the Roman empire, which the apostle did not think fit to mention more plain, at that time; and it is notorious that while this power continued, that prevented the advances of the bishops of Rome to that height of tyranny which soon afterwards they arrived to.

[The simple facts are these: (1.) There were early corruptions in the church of Rome, as there were elsewhere, but peculiarly there, as Rome was the seat of philosophy and of power. (2.) There were great efforts made by the bishop of Rome to increase his authority, and there was a steady approximation to what he subsequently claimed—that of being universal bishop. (3.) There was a constant tendency to yield to him deference and respect in all matters. (4.) This was kept in check as long as Rome was the seat of the imperial power. Had that power remained there, it would have been impossible for the Roman bishop ever to have obtained the civil and ecclesiastical eminence which he ultimately did. Rome could not have had two heads, both claiming and exercising supreme power; and there never could have been a "revelation of the man of sin." (5.) Constantine removed the seat of empire to Constantinople; and this removal or "taking away" of the only restraint on the ambitious projects of the Roman bishops, gave all the opportunity which could be desired for the growth of the papal power. In all history there cannot, probably, be found a series of events corresponding more accurately with a prophetic statement than this; and there is every evidence, therefore, that these are the events to which the Spirit of inspiration referred.—Barnes.]

Vatican MSS. read. "The fearful child of man, of whom sin is the special characteristic and attribute, and in whom it is as it were impersonated and incarnate" (Ellicott). Rightly, therefore, interpreted by the Fathers and others to be Antichrist. But who is this Antichrist? That he has not yet been destroyed (verse 8) seems clear, therefore no interpretation of the prophecy can be satisfactory which assumes that it is already fulfilled. Another interpretation adopted by many modern German expositors, and in England by

2nd. That this mystery of iniquity was gradually to arrive to its height. And so it was in effect that the universal corruption of doctrine and worship in the Romish church did come in by degrees, and the usurpation of the bishops of Rome was gradual, not all at once; and thus the mystery of iniquity did the more easily, and almost insensibly, prevail. The apostle justly calls it a "mystery of iniquity," because wicked designs and actions were concealed under false shows and pretences; at least they were concealed from the common view and observation. By pretended devotion, superstition and idolatry were advanced; and, by a pretended zeal for God and his glory, idolatry and persecution were promoted. And he tells us this mystery of iniquity did even then begin, or did already work, (while the apostles were yet living, "the enemy came and sowed tares;") there were then the deeds of the Nicolaitans, persons that pretended zeal for Christ, but really opposed him. Pride and ambition, and worldly interest of church pastors and church rulers, as in Diotrophes and others, were the early working of the "mystery of iniquity," which by degrees came to that prodigious height as hath been visible in the church of Rome.

4. The fall or ruin of the antichristian state is declared, ver. 8. The head of this antichristian kingdom is called "that wicked" one, or that lawless person who sets up a human power in competition with, and contradiction to, the Divine dominion and power of the Lord Jesus Christ; but, as he would thus manifest himself to be the man of sin, so the revelation or discovery of this to the world would be the sure presage and the means of his ruin. The apostle doth assure the Thessalonians the Lord would consume and destroy him; the consuming him precedeth his final destruction, and that is by "the Spirit of his mouth," by his word of command. The pure word of God, accompanied with the Spirit of God, will discover this mystery of iniquity, and make the power of Antichrist to consume and waste away; and in due time it shall be totally and finally destroyed, and this will be by the brightness of Christ's coming. Note, The coming of Christ to destroy the wicked will be with peculiar glory, and eminent lustre and brightness.

5. The apostle farther describeth the reign and rule of this man of sin. Where we are to observe, 1st. The manner of his coming or ruling, and working. In the general, that it is after the example of Satan, the grand enemy of souls, the great adversary of God and man. He is the great patron of error and lies; the sworn enemy of "the truth as it is in Jesus," and all the faithful followers of Jesus. More particularly it is with Satanical power and deceit. A Divine power is pretended for the support of this kingdom, but it is only after the working of Satan; signs and wonders, visions and miracles, are pretended. By these the papal kingdom was first set up, and hath all along been kept up, but they have false signs to support false doctrines; and lying wonders, or only pretended miracles that have served their cause, things false in fact, or fraudulently managed, to impose upon the people; and the diabolical deceptions are notorious with which the antichristian state hath been supported.

[It is hardly necessary to remark, that the Papacy has always relied for support on its pretended miracles. Even in our own age the wonders performed by the prince Hohenlohe, and by the pretended seamless garment of the Saviour, have been proclaimed as true miracles, and as furnishing indubitable evidence of the truth of the Roman Catholic system. The dissolving of the blood of St. Januarius, the removal of Pilate's stairs to Rome, and the transportation to Italy of the "house of our lady," (see wood engraving,) are among the miracles to which there is a constant reference in the papal communion. In addition to these and to all similar pretensions, there is the power claimed of performing a miracle at the pleasure of the priest, by the change of bread and wine into the "body and blood, the soul and Divinity," of the Lord Jesus. In 1756, there was published in London a book entitled, *The Miraculous Power of the Church of Christ asserted through each successive century, from the apostles down to the present time*. The power of working miracles has been one of the standing claims of the Papacy.—Barnes.] It was said that this was the very house which the virgin mother, with the infant Saviour and Joseph inhabited at Nazareth, and that it was transported by angels from Palestine to Italy. (Our wood engraving is copied from a Popish work.) It was placed under the dome of a magnificent church, erected for the purpose; princes and prelates, rich and poor, basted to venerate it, and to implore the protection of the Virgin. Gifts and votive offerings, gold, silver, diamonds, and all sorts of treasures, accumulated, various edifices rose round it, and Loreto became, as it still continues, a large and populous city.—See *Eustace's Classical Tour*, Vol. i. p. 300.]

The apostle calls it "all deceivableness of unrighteousness," ver. 10. Others may call them pious frauds, but the apostle called them unrighteous and wicked frauds; and indeed, all fraud which is contrary to truth is an impious thing. Many are the subtle artifices the man of sin hath used, and various are the plausible pretences by which he hath beguiled unwary and unstable souls to embrace false doctrine, and submit to his usurped dominion. 2nd. The persons are described who are his willing subjects, or most likely to become such, ver. 10; they are such as love not the truth, that they may be saved. They heard the truth it may be, but they did not like it, or love it; they could not bear sound doctrine, and, therefore, easily imbibed false doctrines. They had some notional knowledge of what was true, but they indulged some powerful prejudices, and so became a prey to seducers. Had they loved the truth they would have persevered in it, and been preserved by it; but no wonder if they easily parted with what they never had any love to. And of these persons it is said, that they perish or are lost; they are in a lost condition, and in danger to be lost for ever. For,

6. We have the sin and ruin of the subjects of Antichrist's kingdom declared, ver. 11, 12. Their sin is this, "They believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." They did not love the truth, and therefore they did not believe it; and because they did not believe the truth, therefore they had pleasure in unrighteousness, or in wicked actions, and were pleased with false notions. Note, An erroneous mind and vicious life do often go together, and help forward one another. 2nd. Their ruin is thus expressed, "God shall send them strong delusions to believe a lie." Thus he will punish men for their unbelief, and for their dislike of the truth, and love to sin, and wickedness. Not that God is the author of sin, but in righteousness he sometimes withdraws his grace from such sinners as are here mentioned. He giveth them over to Satan, or leaveth them to be deluded by his instruments; he giveth them up to their own hearts' lusts, and leaveth them to themselves, and then sin will follow of course; yea, the worst of wickedness, that shall end at last in eternal damnation. And God is just when he inflicts spiritual judgments here, and eternal punishments hereafter, upon such as have no love to the truths of the Gospel, who will not believe them, nor live suitable to them, but indulge false doctrines in their minds, and wicked practices in their lives and conversations.

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation

Jowett and others, viz., that the apostle is here merely describing his own anticipations of the opposition of good and evil in the future of the Christian Church, cannot be accepted by any who believe that St. Paul wrote under the influence of a spirit higher than his own. The only interpretations remaining that seem worthy of consideration are those which refer the prophecy to some development of Popery or infidelity. And whichever theory we adopt we can scarcely conclude that the final and highest embodiment possible of "lawless-

through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

Here observe. First. The consolation the Thessalonians might take against the terrors of this apostasy, ver. 13, 14. For they were "chosen to salvation," and called to the obtaining of glory. Note, When we hear of the apostasy of many, it is matter of great comfort and joy that there is "a remnant according to the election of grace," that do and shall persevere; and especially we should rejoice, if we have reason to hope that we are of that number. The apostle reckoned himself bound in duty to be thankful to God on this account: "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you." He had often given thanks on their behalf, and he is still abounding in thanksgiving for them; and there was good reason, because they were "beloved of the Lord," as appeared in this matter, their security from apostatising. And this preservation of the saints is owing.

1. To the stability of the election of grace, ver. 13. And therefore were they beloved of the Lord, because God had chosen them from the beginning. He had loved them with an eternal and everlasting love. Concerning this election of God we may observe, 1st. The eternal date thereof. It is from the beginning; not the beginning of the Gospel, but the beginning of the world, before the foundation of the world, *Eph. i. 4*. Then, 2nd. The end to which they were chosen, and that is salvation, complete and eternal salvation from sin and misery, and the full fruition of all good. 3rd. The means in order to obtaining this end; namely, "sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." The decree of election therefore connecteth the end and the means, and these must not be separated. We are not elected of God because we were holy, but that we might be holy. Being chosen of God, we must not live as we list; but if we are chosen to salvation as the end, we must be prepared for it by sanctification, as the necessary means to obtain that end; which sanctification is by the operation of the Holy Spirit as the Author, and by faith on our part. There must be the belief of the truth, without which there can be no true sanctification, nor perseverance in grace, nor obtaining salvation. Faith and holiness must be joined together, as well as holiness and happiness; therefore our Saviour prayed for Peter that his faith might not fail, *Lu. xxii. 32*; and for his disciples, *Jno. xvii. 17*, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

2. To the efficacy of the gospel call, ver. 14. As they were chosen to salvation, so they were called thereunto by the Gospel; "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called," *Rom. viii. 30*. The outward call of God is by the Gospel, and this is rendered effectual by the inward operation of the Spirit. Note, Wherever the Gospel comes, it calls and inviteth men to the obtaining of glory; it is a call to honour and happiness, even "the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ;" that is, the glory he hath purchased, and the glory he is possessed of, to be communicated unto them that believe in him, and obey his Gospel. Such shall be with Christ to behold his glory, and they shall be glorified with Christ, and partake of his glory. Hereupon there followeth,

Secondly. An exhortation to stedfastness and perseverance. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast," ver. 15. Observe, he doth not say, Ye are chosen to salvation, and therefore ye may be careless and secure; but, "Therefore stand fast." God's grace in our election vocation is so far from superseding our diligent care and endeavour, that it should quicken and engage us to the greatest resolution and diligence. So the apostle John, having told them he wrote unto that they "had received the anointing which should abide in them," and that they "should abide in him," (in Christ,) subjoineth this exhortation, "Now abide in him," *1 Jno. ii. 27, 28*. The Thessalonians are exhorted to stedfastness in their Christian profession, or to "hold fast the traditions which they had been taught;" that is, the doctrine of the Gospel, which had been delivered by the apostle, by word or epistle. As yet the canon of Scripture was not complete, and therefore some things were delivered by the apostles in their preaching under the conduct of the infallible Spirit, which Christians were bound to observe as coming from God. Other things were afterwards by them committed to writing, as the apostle had written a former epistle to these Thessalonians; and these epistles were written as the writers were moved by the Holy Ghost. Note, There is no argument from hence for regarding oral traditions in our days, now the canon of Scripture is complete, as of equal authority with the sacred writings. Such doctrines and duties as were taught by the inspired apostles we must stedfastly adhere to; but we have no certain evidence of any thing delivered by them more than what we find contained in the holy Scriptures.

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, 17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

In these words we have the apostle's earnest prayer for them; in which observe,

First. To whom he prayeth; namely, to "our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father." We may and should direct our prayers, not only to God the Father through the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, but also "unto our Lord Jesus Christ himself;" and should pray in his name unto God, not only as his Father, but as our Father in and through him.

[Note, 1. Precepts and exhortations to duty do not infer a power in man's free-will to obey: for he here prayeth that God would work that in them which he hath presently pressed upon them; "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself," &c. 2. That Jesus Christ is true God, equal with the Father, appeareth from this, that not only he is one who heareth prayer, the author and bestower of all spiritual blessings which are here sought from him, and said to be already bestowed by him, but also he is named before the Father, which certainly had been blasphemous if he were not also true God. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father," &c. 3. That Christ is a distinct person from the Father, though one in substance with him, appears from this, that they are here distinguished by Paul: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father." 4. That God the Father is usually named before the Son doth not infer any inequality betwixt them, but only the order of subsistence and working which is among the persons of the blessed Trinity; for

here Christ the second person is named first, to shew there is not any such inequality: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father."]

Secondly. From what he taketh encouragement in his prayer; namely, from the consideration of what God had already done for him and them; "Which hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace," ver. 16. Where observe, 1. The love of God is the spring and fountain of all the good we have or hope for; our election, vocation, justification, and salvation is all owing to the love of God in Christ Jesus. 2. From this fountain in particular doth all our consolation flow; and the consolation of the saints is an everlasting consolation. The comforts of the saints are not dying things; they shall not die with them. The spiritual consolations God giveth none can deprive them of; and God will not take them away, because he loveth them with an everlasting love, therefore they shall have everlasting consolations. 3. Their consolation is founded on the hope of eternal life. They rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and are not only patient but joyful in tribulations; and there is good reason for these strong consolations, because the saints have good hope. Their hope is grounded on the love of God, and the promise of God, and the experience they have had of the power, the goodness, and the faithfulness of God. And it is good hope through grace: the free grace and mercy of God is what they hope for, and what their hopes are founded on, and not any worth or merit of their own.

Thirdly. What it is that he asketh of God for them. That he would "comfort their hearts, and establish them in every good word and work," ver. 17. God had given them consolations, and he prayeth that they might have more abundant consolation. There was good hope through grace they should be preserved, and he prayeth they might be established; and it is observable how comfort and establishment are here joined together. Note, therefore, 1. That comfort is a means of establishment; for the more pleasure we take in the word, and work, and ways of God, the more likely we shall be to persevere therein. And, 2. Our establishment in the ways of God is a likely means in order to comfort; whereas if we are wavering in faith, and of a doubtful mind, or if we are halting and faltering in our duty, no wonder if we are strangers to the pleasures and joys of religion. What is it that lieth at the bottom of all our uneasiness, but our unsteadiness in religion? We must be established in "every good word and work," in the word of truth and the work of righteousness; and Christ must be honoured by our good works and good words. And they who are sincere will endeavour to do both, and in so doing they may hope for comfort and establishment, till at length our holiness and our happiness be completed.

CHAPTER III.

In the close of the foregoing chapter the apostle had prayed earnestly for the Thessalonians, and now he desireth their prayers, encouraging them to trust in God, to which he subjoins another petition for them, ver. 1-5. He then proceedeth to give them commands and directions for the correcting some things he was informed were amiss among them, ver. 6-15. And concludeth with benedictions and prayers, ver. 16-18.



FINALLY, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: 2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: 3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. 4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you. 5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

In these words observe,

First. The apostle desires the prayers of his friends. "Finally, brethren, pray for us," ver. 1. He always remembered them in his prayers, and would not have them forget him and his fellow-labourers, but bear them on their hearts at the throne of grace. Note, 1. This is one way by which the communion of saints is kept up, not only by their praying together or with one another, but by their praying for one another, when they are absent from one another. And thus they that are at a great distance may meet together at the throne of grace; and thus they that are not capable of doing or receiving any other kindness may yet this way do and receive real and very great kindness. 2. It is the duty of people to pray for their ministers; and not only for their own pastors, but also for all good and faithful ministers. And, 3. Ministers need, and therefore should desire, the prayers of their people. How remarkable is the humility, and how engaging the example, of this great apostle, who was so mighty in prayer himself, and yet despised not the prayers of the meanest Christian, but desired an interest in them. Observe farther, what they are desired and directed to pray for; namely,

1. For the success of the gospel ministry. "That the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified," ver. 1. This was the great thing that blessed Paul was most solicitous about. He was more solicitous that God's name might be sanctified, and his kingdom come, and his will be done, than he was about his own daily bread. He desired the word of the Lord might run, so it is in the original; that is, that it might get ground, that the interest of religion in the world might go forward and not backward, and not only go forward, but go apace. All the forces of hell were then and still are, more or less, raised and mustered to oppose the word of the Lord, to hinder its publication and success; we should pray therefore that oppositions may be removed, that so the Gospel may have free course to the ears, and to the hearts and consciences of men, that it may be glorified in the conviction and conversion of sinners, the confutation of gainsayers, and the holy conversation of the saints. God, who "magnified the law, and made it honourable," will glorify the Gospel and make that honourable and so will glorify his own name. And

ness" has yet appeared, though both systems have produced characters which may fairly be claimed as in some degree types of Antichrist. Speaking of this view, Ellicott says, "If asked to name them (types of Antichrist), we shrink not from pointing to this prophecy, and saying that in whomsoever these distinctive features be found, whosoever wields temporal, or temporal and spiritual power, in any degree similar to that in which the man of sin is here described as wielding it, be he the Pope or potentate, is beyond all

doubt a distinct type of Antichrist." The power spoken of as restraining or withholding the man of sin may in either case be taken to be well-ordered civil rule, which is alike opposed to the development of superstition and licence.

ii. 4. "As God" is not found in best MSS.

ii. 8. Not "brightness," but "manifestation of his coming." Best MSS. have "Lord Jesus," not merely "Lord."

ii. 11. "God sendeth;" so best MSS. The mystery of iniquity

good ministers and good Christians may very well be contented to be little, to be any thing, to be nothing, if Christ be magnified and his Gospel be glorified. Paul was now at Athens, or as some think at Corinth, and would have the Thessalonians pray that he might have as good success there as he had had at Thessalonica, that it might be as well with others even as it was with them. Note, If ministers have been successful in one place, they should desire to be successful in every place where they may preach the Gospel.

2. For the safety of gospel ministers. He doth not ask their prayers for preferment, but for preservation: "That we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men," ver. 2. Note, That they who are enemies to the preaching of the Gospel, and persecutors of the faithful preachers of it, are "unreasonable and wicked men." They act against all the rules and laws of reason and religion, and are guilty of the greatest absurdity and impiety. Not only in the principles of atheism and infidelity, but also in the practice of vice and immorality, and especially in persecution, there is the greatest absurdity in the world, as well as impiety. There is need of the spiritual protection, as well as the assistance of godly and faithful ministers, for these are as the standard-bearers that are most struck at; and therefore all that wish well to the interest of Christ in the world should pray for them, "for all men have not faith," that is, many [even of those who profess it] do not believe the Gospel; they will not embrace it themselves, and no wonder if such are restless and malicious in their endeavours to oppose the Gospel, decry their ministry, and disgrace the ministers of the word; and too many have not common faith or honesty: there is no confidence that we can safely put in them, and we should pray to be delivered from such who have no conscience nor honour, who never regard what they say or do. We may sometimes be in as much or more danger from false and pretended friends as from open and avowed enemies.

Secondly, He encourageth them to trust in God. We should not only pray to God for his grace, but also place our trust and confidence in his grace, and humbly expect what we pray for. Observe,

1. What the good is which we may expect from the grace of God; namely, establishment and preservation from evil, and the best Christians stand in need of these benefits. 1st. That God would establish them. This the apostle had prayed for on their behalf, *ch. ii. 17*; and now he doth encourage them to expect this favour. And we can stand no longer than God holds us up; unless he "hold up our goings in his paths, our feet will slide," and we shall fall. 2nd. That God will keep them from evil. We have as much need of the grace of God for our perseverance to the end as for the beginning of the good work. The evil of sin is the greatest evil, but there are other evils God will also preserve his saints from,—the evil that is in the world; yea, from all evil to his heavenly kingdom.

2. What encouragement we have to depend upon the grace of God. "The Lord is faithful;" he is faithful to his promises, and is the Lord who cannot lie, who will not alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth. When once the promise therefore is made, performance is sure and certain. He is faithful to his relation, a faithful God, and a faithful friend; we may depend upon his filling up all the relations he stands in to his people. Let it be our care to be true and faithful in our promises, and to the relations we stand in to this faithful God.

[This is an exceedingly interesting declaration, and is a beautiful illustration of the resource which a truly pious mind will feel that it has when disposed to despond, and to ask whether religion can be advanced in the midst of so much indifference and opposition? At such times, how consoling it is to turn, as Paul did, to one who is faithful; who never fails us, and who will certainly accomplish his benevolent purposes. Men may be faithless and false, but God never is. They may refuse to embrace the Gospel, and set themselves against it, but God will not abandon his great purposes. Many who are in the church may forget their solemn and sacred vows, and may shew no fidelity to the cause of their Saviour, but God himself will never abandon that cause. To a pious mind it affords unspeakably more consolation to reflect that a faithful God is the friend of the cause which we love, than it would were all men, in and out of the church, its friends.—*Barnes*.] He adds,

3. A farther ground of hope that God would do this for them, seeing they did and would do the things they were commanded, ver. 4. The apostle had this confidence in them, and that was founded upon his confidence in God; for there is otherwise no confidence in man. Their obedience is described by doing what he and his fellow labourers had commanded them; which was no other thing than the commandments of the Lord; for the apostles themselves had no farther commission than to teach men to "observe and do what their Lord had commanded them," *Mat. xxviii. 20*. And as the experience the apostle had of their obedience for the time past was one ground of his confidence that they would do the things commanded them for the time to come, so this is one ground to hope that "whatsoever we ask of God we shall receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight," *1 Jno. iii. 22*.

Thirdly, He maketh a short prayer for them, ver. 5: it is a prayer for spiritual blessings. Two things of the greatest importance the apostle prayeth for:—

1. That their hearts might be brought "into the love of God;" that is, to be in love with God as the most excellent and amiable being, the best of all beings; and this is not only most reasonable and necessary in order to our happiness, but is our happiness itself. It is a great part of the happiness of heaven itself, where this love shall be made perfect. And we can never attain to this unless God by his grace direct our hearts aright, for our love is apt to go astray after other things. Note, We sustain a great deal of damage by the misplacing our affections. It is our sin and our misery that we misplace our affections upon wrong objects; and if God direct our love aright upon himself, the rest of the affections will thereby be rectified.

2. That all "patient waiting for Christ" might be joined with this love of God. There is no true love of God without faith in Christ Jesus: we must wait for Christ, which supposeth our faith in him, that we believe he came once in flesh, and will come again in glory; and we must expect this second coming of Christ, and be careful to get ready for it. There must be a patient waiting, enduring with courage and constancy all that we may meet with in the mean time; and we have need of patience, and need of Divine grace to exercise Christian patience, "the patience of Christ," as some read the words, that is, patience for Christ's sake and after Christ's example.

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. 7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. 10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. 13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. 14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

The apostle having commended their obedience for the time past, and mentioned his confidence in their obedience for the time to come, proceedeth to give them commands and directions to some that were faulty, correcting some things that were amiss among them. Observe, That the best society of Christians may have some faulty persons among them, and some things that ought to be reformed. Perfection is not to be found on this side heaven. Evil manners beget good laws. The disorders that Paul was informed of as among the Thessalonians occasioned the good laws we find in these verses, that are of constant use to us, and all others whom they may concern. Observe,

First, That which was amiss among the Thessalonians, which is expressed, 1. More generally. There were some that walked disorderly, not after the tradition they received from the apostle, ver. 6. Some of the brethren were guilty of this disorderly walking; that is, they did not live regularly, nor govern themselves according to the rules of Christianity, nor agreeably to their profession of religion, nor according to the precepts delivered by the apostle, which they had received and pretended to pay a regard unto. Note, It is required of those who have received the Gospel, and profess a subjection to it, that they live according to the Gospel; if they do not they are to be counted disorderly persons.

2. In particular. There were among them some idle persons and busy-bodies, ver. 11. This the apostle was so credibly informed of, that he had sufficient reason to give commands and directions with relation to such persons, how they ought to behave, and how the church should carry it towards them.

1st. There were some among them that were idle, not working at all, or doing nothing. It doth not appear that they were gluttons or drunkards, but idle, and therefore disorderly people. It is not enough for any to say they do no hurt, for it is required of all persons that they do good in the places and relations Providence hath placed them. It is probable these persons had a notion, by misunderstanding some passages in the former epistle, concerning the near approach of the coming of Christ, which served them for a pretence to leave off the work of their callings, and live in idleness. Note, It is a great error or abuse of religion to make it a cloak for idleness or any other sin. If we were sure that the day of judgment were never so near, we must notwithstanding do the work of the day in its day, that when our Lord cometh he may find us so doing. The servant that waiteth for the coming of his lord aright must be working as his lord hath commanded, that all may be ready when he cometh. Or, it may be, these disorderly persons pretended that the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free discharged them from the services and business of their particular callings and employments in the world; whereas they were "to abide in the same calling wherein they were called of God, and therein abide with God," *1 Cor. vii. 20, 24*. Industry in our particular calling as men is a duty required of us by our general calling as Christians. Or perhaps the general charity that was then among Christians to their poor brethren encouraged some to live in idleness, as knowing the church would maintain them. Whatever was the cause, they were much to blame.

2nd. There were busy-bodies among them; and it should seem by the connexion that the same persons who were idle were busy-bodies also. This may seem to be a contradiction, but so it is that most commonly such persons as have no business of their own to do, or who neglect that, do busy themselves in other men's matters. If we are idle, the devil and a corrupt heart will soon find us somewhat to do. The mind of man is a busy thing; if it be not employed in doing good, it will be doing evil. Note, Busy-bodies are disorderly walkers; that is, such as are guilty of vain curiosity and impertinent meddling with things that do not concern them, and troubling themselves and others with other men's matters. The apostle warns Timothy, *1 Tim. v. 13*, to beware of such "who learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and are not only idle but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not."

Secondly, The good laws which were occasioned by these evil manners. Concerning which we may take notice,

1. Whose laws they are. They are the commands of the apostles of our Lord, given in the name of their Lord and ours, that is, the commands of our Lord himself, "We command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," ver. 6; again, "We command and exhort you by our Lord Jesus Christ," ver. 12. The apostle useth words of authority and entreaty; and where disorders are to be rectified or prevented, there is need of both. The authority of Christ should awe our minds unto obedience, and his grace and goodness should allure us.

2. What the good laws and rules are. The apostle giveth directions to the whole church, and commands to those disorderly persons, and an exhortation to those in particular who did well among them.

1st. His commands and directions to the whole church regard,

First, Their behaviour towards the disorderly persons that were among them; which is thus expressed, ver. 6, to "withdraw themselves from such," and afterwards to mark "that man and have no company with him, that he may be

was already working (verse 7), and bringing down on its persistent adherents judicial blindness.

ii. 15. "Therefore," &c.: Jowett here accuses the apostle of logical inconsistency in appealing to them to do something ("stand fast") when he had just stated the fact of their election by God. His accusation is well answered by Alford: "The apostle was deeply conscious, as ever, of the logical necessity of the only practical inference which man can draw from God's gracious purposes towards

him. No human reasoning powers can connect the two—God's sovereignty and man's free will; all we know of them is that the one is as certain a truth as the other. In proportion, then, as we assert the one strongly, we must ever implicate the other as strongly—a course which the great apostle never fails to pursue" (Phil. ii. 12, 13; Heb. iv. 1, &c.). The "traditions" or "instructions" evidently refer to his own instructions to them, as opposed to those mentioned in verse 2, which were not his.

ashamed; yet not to count him as an enemy, but to admonish him as a brother." The directions of the apostle are carefully to be observed in this matter, how we are to carry it to disorderly persons. We must be very cautious in church censures and church discipline. We must, 1st. Note that man who is suspected or charged with not obeying the word of God, or walking contrary thereto; that is, we must have sufficient proof of his fault before we proceed further. We must, 2nd. Admonish him in a friendly manner. We must put him in mind of his sin and of his duty; and this should be done privately, *Mat. xviii. 15*. Then, if he will not hear, we must, 3rd. Withdraw from him, and not company with him; that is, we must avoid familiar converse and society with such, for two reasons, namely, that we may not learn his evil ways; for he that followeth vain and idle persons, and keepeth company with such, is in danger of becoming like them; and another reason is, for the shaming, and so the reforming, them that offend, that when idle and disorderly persons see how their loose practices are disliked by all wise and good people, they may be ashamed of them, and walk more orderly. Love, therefore, to the persons of our offending brethren, even when we hate their vices, should be the motive even of our withdrawing from them; and even those that are under the censures of the church must not be accounted as enemies, *ver. 15*, for if they be reclaimed and reformed by these censures they will recover their credit and comfort, and right to church privileges as a brother.

Secondly. Their general conduct and behaviour ought to be according to the good example the apostle and those which were with him had given them; "Yourselves know how ye ought to follow us," *ver. 7*. Those that planted religion among them had set a good example before them; and the ministers of the Gospel should be ensamples to the flock. And it is the duty of Christians not only to walk according to the traditions of the apostles and the doctrines they preached, but also according to the good example they had set before them; to be followers of them, so far as they were followers of Christ. The particular good example the apostle mentions was their diligence, that was so different from that which was found in those disorderly walkers he takes notice of: "We behaved not ourselves disorderly among you," *ver. 7*; that is, we did not spend our time idly, in idle visits, idle talk, idle sports. They took pains in their ministry, in preaching the Gospel, and in getting their own living; "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought," *ver. 8*; though he might justly have demanded a maintenance, because they that preach the Gospel may of right expect to live by the Gospel. This is a just debt that people owe to their ministers, and the apostle had power or authority to have demanded this, *ver. 9*, but he waived his right from affection to them, and for the sake of the Gospel, and that he might be an example for them to follow, *ver. 9*, that they might learn how to fill up time, and always be employed in somewhat that would turn to good account.

2nd. He commands and directs those that lived idle lives to reform and set themselves to their business. He had given commandments to this purpose, as well as a good example of this when he was among them; "Even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any man would not work neither should he eat," *ver. 10*. It was a proverbial speech among the Jews, "He that doth not labour doth not deserve to eat." The labourer is worthy of his meat, but what is the loiterer worthy of? It is the will of God every man should have a calling, and mind his calling, and make a business of it, and not live like useless drones in the world. Such persons do what in them lieth to defeat the sentence, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread." It was not only the humour of the apostle, who was an active stirring man himself, and therefore would have every body else to be so too, but it was the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, that "with quietness we work, and eat our own bread," *ver. 12*. Men ought some way or other to earn their own living, otherwise they do not eat their own bread. Observe, There must be work or labour, in opposition to idleness; and there must be quietness, in opposition to being busy-bodies in other men's matters. We must study to be quiet and do our own business. This is an excellent but rare composition, to be of an active yet quiet spirit; active in our own business, and yet quiet as to other people's.

3rd. He exhortheth those that did well not to be "weary in well doing," *ver. 13*, as if he had said, Go on and prosper. The Lord is with you while you are with

him. See that whatever you do that is good you persevere therein. Hold on your way, and hold out to the end. You must never give over, nor tire in your work. It will be time enough to rest when you come to heaven, that "everlasting rest that remains for the people of God."

16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all. 17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

In this conclusion of the epistle we have the apostle's benediction and prayers for these Thessalonians. Let us desire them for ourselves and our friends. There are three blessings pronounced upon them, or desired for them.

First. That God would give them peace. Note, 1. Peace is the blessing pronounced or desired, and by peace we may understand all manner of prosperity. Here it may signify, in particular, peace with God; peace in their own minds and consciences; peace among themselves, and peace with all men. 2. This peace is desired for them always, or in every thing; and he desired they might have all good things at all times. 3. Peace by all means. That as they enjoyed the means of grace, they might with success use all the means and methods of peace too; for peace is often difficult, as it is always desirable. 4. That God would give them peace, who is the Lord of peace; and if we have any peace that is desirable, God must give it, who is the "author of peace and lover of concord." We shall neither have peaceable dispositions ourselves nor find men disposed to be at peace with us, unless the God of peace give us both.

Secondly. That the presence of God might be with them; "The Lord be with you all." And we need nothing more to make us safe and happy, nor can we desire anything better for ourselves and our friends, than to have God's gracious presence with us and them. This will be a guide and guard in every way that we may go, and our comfort in every condition we may be in. It is the presence of God that maketh heaven to be heaven, and that will make this earth to be like to heaven. No matter where we are if God be with us, nor who is absent if God be present with us.

Thirdly. That "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" might be with them. So this apostle concluded his first epistle to these Thessalonians. And it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that we may comfortably hope to have peace with God, and enjoy the presence of God, for he hath made "them nigh that were afar off." It is this grace that is all in all to make us happy. That is what the apostle admired and magnified on all occasions, what he delighted and trusted in; and by this salutation or benediction written with his own hand, as the token of every epistle, when the rest was written by an amanuensis, he took care lest the churches he wrote unto should be imposed on by counterfeit epistles, which he knew would be of dangerous consequence.

[Whatever be the eminence of a person or persons, for their inherent graces and gracious qualifications, yet it is only God's free grace and undeserved favour, and not their own merit, which must be relied on for closing their accounts, or for obtaining any spiritual or temporal mercy at the hands of God; for, though he commended them highly for their patience, faith, love, and other graces, *ch. i. 3, 4*, yet he closeth all by wishing God's free grace and favour to them, as the fountain cause of all things they stood in need of or could expect. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."]

Let us be thankful that we have the canon of Scripture complete, and by the wonderful and special care of Divine providence preserved pure and uncorrupt, through so many successive ages, and not dare to add to it nor diminish from it. Let us believe the Divine original of the sacred Scriptures, and conform our faith and practice to this our sufficient and only rule, "which is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Amen.



THESSALONICA.

iii. 5. Not "the patient waiting for Christ," but "the patience of Christ"—i.e., which Christ showed. The Greek is *υπομονή*, which Chrysostom calls "the queen of virtues," and of which Ellicott says it marks "the brave patience with which the Christian contends against the various hindrances, persecutions, and temptations that befall him in his conflict with the inward and the outward world." (See also Trench, "New Testament Synonyms.")

iii. 11. "Working not at all," &c.: there is a play of words in the original not shown in the Authorised Version. "Busybodies who do no business" (Conybeare). "Working nothing but over-working" (Barrow).

iii. 17. "Which is the token in every epistle:" the apostle's reason for this caution is found in chap. ii. 2, and it was used whenever necessary. Thus, *Gal. vi. 11*; *1 Cor. xvi. 21*; *Col. iv. 18*. Other epistles which were sent by a trusty messenger—as *2 Corinthians* by Titus, *Philippians* by Epaphroditus—did not need the token, nor the epistles to individuals, being most probably autographic (*Philemon 19*) all through. *1 Thessalonians* being written before the rise of spurious epistles, of course is an exception.

iii. 18. The same form of benediction as in *1 Thessalonians*, except the addition here of "all;" all were to share his benediction and farewell prayer.



JEWISH



AN



TEACHERS.

EXPOSITION

OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF

S T. P A U L T O T I M O T H Y,

WITH

P R A C T I C A L O B S E R V A T I O N S.

HITHERTO Paul's epistles were directed to churches: now follow some to particular persons; two to Timothy, one to Titus, and another to Philemon, all three ministers. Timothy and Titus were evangelists, an inferior order to the apostles, as appears by that, *Eph. iv. 11*, "Some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists." Their commission and work were much the same with that of the apostles, to plant churches, and water the churches that were planted; and accordingly they were itinerants, as we find Timothy was. Timothy was converted by Paul, and therefore he calls him his own son in the faith; we read of his conversion, *Acts xvi. 1-3*. The scope of these two epistles is, to direct Timothy how to discharge his office as an evangelist at Ephesus, where he now was, and where Paul ordered him for some time to reside, to perfect the good work which he had begun there. As for the ordinary pastoral charge of that church, he had very solemnly committed it to the presbytery, as appears from *Acts xx. 28*, where he charges the presbyters "to feed the flock of God, which he had purchased with his own blood." [These two epistles, and that also to Titus, should be diligently studied by ministers of the Gospel, and by candidates for the sacred office. The instructions and admonitions contained in them in relation to it are of permanent use and authority. This epistle seems to have been written shortly after Paul left Ephesus to go into Macedonia, *Acts xxi. 1*, A.D. 57 or 58. The common subscription, which states it to have been sent from Laodicea, is of no authority.]

A.D. 65.

CHAPTER I.

After the inscription in ver. 1, 2, we have, I. The charge given to Timothy, ver. 3, 4. II. The true end of the law, ver. 5-11; where he shews it is entirely agreeable to the Gospel. III. He mentions his own call to be an apostle; for which he expresses his thankfulness, ver. 12-16. IV. His exhortation, ver. 17. V. A renewal of the charge to Timothy, ver. 18; and of Hymenæus and Alexander, ver. 19-20.



AUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is our hope*; 2 Unto Timothy, *my own son in the faith*: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. 3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus,

when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do*.

Here is, First. The inscription of the epistle, from whom it is sent; "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ," constituted an apostle "by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ." His credentials were unquestionable; he had not only a commission, but a commandment, not only from God our Saviour, but from Jesus Christ. He was a preacher of the Gospel of Christ, and a minister of the kingdom of Christ. Observe, God is our Saviour. [The Father reconciles us to himself by his Son, *2 Cor. v. 18*.] "Jesus Christ, which is our hope." Observe, Jesus Christ is a Christian's hope; our hope is in him, all our hope of eternal life is built upon him; Christ is in us the hope of glory, *Col. i. 27*. He calls Timothy his own son, because he had been an instrument of his conversion, and because he had been a son that served him, served with him in the Gospel, *Phil. ii. 22*. Timothy had not been wanting in the duty and observance of a son to Paul, and Paul was not wanting in the care and tenderness of a father to him.

Secondly. The benediction is, "Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father." Some have observed, that whereas in all the epistles to the churches the apostolical benediction is grace and peace, in these two epistles to Timothy, and that of Titus, it is "grace, mercy, and peace," as if ministers had more need of God's mercy than other men. Ministers need more grace than others, to discharge their duty faithfully; and they need more mercy than others to pardon what is amiss in them; and if Timothy, so eminent a minister, must be indebted to the mercy of God, and needed the increase and continuance of it, how much more do we ministers in these times, who have so little of his excellent spirit. "And Jesus Christ our Lord;" as the Father and the Son

are conjoined by him in the exercise of authority, ver. 1, so they are here united as the Fountain of grace and mercy.]

Thirdly. Paul tells Timothy what was the end of his appointing him to this office; "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus." Timothy had a mind to have gone with Paul, was loth to go from under his wing, but Paul would have it so; it was necessary for the public service. "I besought thee," saith he; though he might assume an authority to command him, yet for love's sake he chose rather to beseech him. Now his business was to take care to fix [by the continuous inculcation of the apostle's doctrine] both the ministers and the people of that church. "Charge them that they teach no other doctrine" than what they have received, that is, that they do not add to the Christian doctrine, under pretence of improving it, or making up the defects of it; that they do not alter it, but stick to it as it was delivered to them. Observe,

1. Ministers must not only be charged to preach the true doctrine of the Gospel, but charged to preach no other doctrine; "If an angel from heaven preached any other doctrine, he was an anathema," *Gal. i. 8*. Observe,

2. That in the times of the apostles there were attempts made to corrupt Christianity, ("We are not as many that corrupt the word," *2 Cor. ii. 17*), otherwise this charge to Timothy might have been spared.

3. He must not only see to it, that he did not preach any other doctrine, but he must charge others that they might not add any thing of their own unto the Gospel, or take any thing from it, but that they preach it pure and uncorrupt. He must also take care to prevent their regarding "fables and endless genealogies" and strifes of words. This is often repeated in these two epistles, as *ch. iv. 7*; *vi. 4*; *2 Tim. ii. 23*, as well as in the epistle to Titus. As among the Jews there were some that brought Judaism into Christianity, so among the Gentiles there were some that brought Paganism into Christianity. Take heed of those, saith he, watch against them; it will be the corrupting and ruining of religion among you, for "these minister questions rather than edifying." [The parties referred to seem rather to have been of the former class than of the latter; and the "fables and endless genealogies" were not the subtleties of the pagan philosophy, but the fabulous traditions and genealogical tables of the Jews; by the former of which they corrupted, and sometimes superseded, the word of God, while by the latter they sought to establish their lineal descent from some one or other of their famous ancestors.] Observe, That that which ministers questions is not for edifying; that which gives occasion for doubtful disputes pulls down the church rather than builds it up. And I think, by a parity of reason, every thing else that ministers questions rather than godly edifying should be disclaimed and disregarded by us, such as an uninterrupted succession in the ministry, from the apostles down to these times, the absolute necessity of episcopal ordination, and of the intention of the minister to the efficacy and validity of the sacraments he administers, &c. These are as bad as Jewish fables and endless genealogies, for they involve us in inextricable difficulties, and tend only to shake the foundations of a Christian's hope, and to fill his mind with perplexing doubts and fears. Observe here, That godly edifying should be the end ministers should aim at in all their discourses, that Christians may be improving in godliness, and growing up to a greater likeness to the blessed God. Observe farther, That godly edifying must be in faith. The Gospel is the foundation on which we build, and it is by faith that we come to God at first, *Heb. xi. 6*; and it must be in the same way, and by the same principle of faith, that we must be edified. Again, ministers should avoid as much as may be what will occasion disputes, and would do well to insist on the great and practical points of religion, about which there can be no disputes; for even disputes about great and necessary truths draw off the mind from the main design of Christianity, and eat out the vitals of religion, which consist in practice and obedience, as well as in faith, that we may not hold the truth in unrighteousness, but may keep the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity

Introductory Note.—The Epistles to Timothy and Titus, known as the Pastoral Epistles, are similar in style and subject. They were received by the ancient Church as canonical and Pauline; the Gnostics, against whose errors they inveigh, alone denying their genuineness. German critics have attacked them, but have been convincingly answered by Davidson, Alford, &c. The dates and places of writing of these epistles are fully discussed by Conybeare and Howson ("Life and Times of St. Paul"), and Alford ("Greek

Testament"). It appears that the apostle was released from prison in Rome during A.D. 63; that he then visited Crete, where he left Titus, and Colossæ, where he stayed with Philemon; that going into Macedonia, he asked Timothy to remain at Ephesus, and proceeding to Philippi and Corinth, thence wrote his First Epistle to Timothy and his Epistle to Titus. The winter of A.D. 64 the apostle passed at Nicopolis, in Epirus; in the spring of 65 he went through Dalmatia, visited Troas, and soon afterwards was apprehended and sent to

out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: 6 From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; 7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. 8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; 11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

Here the apostle instructs Timothy how to guard against the Judaizing teachers, or others that mingled fables and endless genealogies with the Gospel. He shews the use of the law, and glory of the Gospel.

First. He shews the end and use of the law. It is intended to promote love; "for love is the fulfilling of the law," *Rom. xiii. 10.*

1. "The end of the commandment is charity," or love, *Rom. xiii. 8.* The main scope and drift of the Divine law is to engage us to the love of God and one another; and whatever tends to weaken either our love to God or love to the brethren tends to defeat the end of the commandment. And surely the Gospel that obliges us to love our enemies, to do good to them that hate us, &c., *Mat. v. 44.* does not design to lay aside or supersede a commandment the end whereof is love; so far from it, that on the other side we are told, that though we had all advantages, and wanted charity, we are but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, *1 Cor. xiii. 1.* "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another," *Jno. xiii. 35.* Those therefore who boasted of their knowledge of the law, but used it only as a colour for the disturbance that they gave to the preaching of the Gospel, under pretence of zeal for the law, dividing the church, and distracting it, they defeated that which was the very end of the commandment, and that is love,—love "out of a pure heart," a heart purified by faith, purified from corrupt affections. In order to the keeping up of holy love, our hearts must be cleansed from all sinful love, love out of "a good conscience" kept without offence. Those that are careful to keep a good conscience from a real belief of the truth of the word of God, which doth enjoin it, here called a faith unfeigned, those answer the end of the commandment. Here we have the concomitants of that excellent grace, charity; they are three. 1st. A pure heart; there it must be seated, and from thence it must take its rise. 2nd. A good conscience, in which we must exercise ourselves daily, that we may not only get it, but that we may keep it, *Acts xxiv. 16.* 3rd. Faith unfeigned must also accompany it; for, as it is love without dissimulation, the faith that works by it must be of the like nature,—genuine and sincere. Now some that set up for teachers of the law swerved from the very end of the commandment; set up for disputers, but their disputers proved "vain jangling;" set up for teachers, but they pretended to teach others what they themselves did not understand. If the church be corrupted by such teachers, we must not think it strange, for we see from the beginning it was so. Observe, First. When persons, especially ministers, swerve from the great law of charity, the end of the commandment, they will turn aside to vain jangling. When a man misses his end and scope it is no wonder every step he takes is out of the way. Secondly. Jangling, especially in religion, is vain; it is unprofitable and useless as to all that is good, and it is very pernicious and hurtful; and yet many people's religion consists of little else but vain jangling. Thirdly. Those who deal much in vain jangling are fond and ambitious to be teachers of others; they desire, that is, they affect, the office of teaching. Fourthly. It is too common for men to intrude into the office of the ministry when they are very ignorant of those things about which they are to speak; they understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm, and by such learned ignorance, no doubt, they edify their hearers very much!

[Nothing is more necessary to the Christian minister than a clear understanding of the different offices of the law of the Gospel. Let each be taught, but each for its own purposes, and in its true relation to the other:—the law to bring us to the Gospel for salvation, and to prescribe rules of conduct; and the Gospel, while it saves us freely by sovereign grace, through faith, to supply us with motives to obey the law.]

2. The use of the law: ver. 8, "The law is good, if a man use it lawfully." The Jews used it unlawfully, as an engine to divide the church, a cover to the malicious opposition they made to the Gospel of Christ; they set it up for justification, and so used it unlawfully. We must not therefore think to set it aside, but "use it lawfully," that is, for the restraint of sin. The abuse which some have made of the law does not take away the use of it; but when a Divine appointment hath been abused, call it back to its right use, and take away the abuses, for the law is still very useful as a rule of life; though we are not under it as under a covenant of works, yet it is good to teach us what is sin and what is duty. It is "not made for a righteous man," that is, it is not made for those that do observe it, for if we could keep the law righteousness would be by the law, *Gal. iii. 21*, but it is made for wicked persons, to restrain them, to check them, and to put a stop to vice and profaneness. It is the grace of God that changes men's hearts, but the terrors of the law may be of use to tie their hands and restrain their tongues. A righteous man does not want those restraints which are necessary for the wicked, or at least the law is not made primarily and principally for the righteous, but for sinners of all sorts, whether in a greater or lesser measure, ver. 9, 10. In this black roll of sinners he particularly mentions breaches of the second table duties, which we owe to our neighbour, against the fifth and sixth commandments, murderers of fathers and mothers, and man-slayers; against the seventh, whoremongers, and them that defile themselves with mankind; against the eighth, men-stealers; against the ninth, liars and perjured persons; and then he closes his account with this, "and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine."

Some understand this as an institution of a power in the civil magistrate to make laws against such notorious sinners as are instanced, and to see those laws put in execution.

Secondly. He shews the glory and grace of the Gospel, [and its harmony with the law.] Paul's epithets are expressive, significant, and many times every one is a sentence; as here, ver. 11, "According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." Let us learn from hence, 1. To call God "the blessed God," infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself and his own perfections. 2. To call the Gospel "the glorious Gospel," for so it is. Much of the glory of God appears in the works of creation and providence, but much more in the Gospel, where it shines in the face of Jesus Christ. Paul reckoned it a great honour put upon him, and a great favour done him, that this glorious Gospel was committed to his trust, that is, the preaching of it; the framing of it is not committed to any man or company of men in the world. The settling of the terms of salvation in the Gospel of Christ is God's own work, but the publishing of it to the world is committed to the apostles and ministers. Note here, 1st. The ministry is a trust, for the Gospel was committed unto this apostle. It is an office of trust as well as of power, and the former more than the latter; for this reason ministers are called stewards, *1 Cor. iv. 1.* 2nd. It is a glorious trust, because the Gospel committed to them is a glorious Gospel; it is a trust of very great importance, God's glory is very much concerned in it. Lord, what a trust is committed to us! How much grace do we want to be found faithful in this great trust!

[The Gospel inculcates morality in all its branches not less than the law. They are not opposed to each other, as some think, nor is the Gospel designed to relax the bonds of moral obligation. On the contrary, to uphold the law in its precepts and sanctions is to preach "according to the Gospel."]

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. 17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Here he, First. Returns thanks to Jesus Christ for putting him into the ministry. Observe, 1. It is Christ's work to put men into the ministry, *Acts xxvi. 16, 17.* God condemned the false prophets among the Jews in these words, "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied," *Jer. xxiii. 21.* Ministers, properly speaking, cannot make ministers, much less can persons make themselves ministers; for it is Christ's work, as King and Head, Prophet and Teacher, of his church. 2. Those whom he puts into the ministry he enables for it, whom he calls he qualifies. Those ministers that are no way fit for their work, nor have ability for it, are not of Christ's putting into the ministry, though there are different qualifications as to gifts and graces. 3. Christ gives not only ability, but fidelity, to those whom he puts into the ministry. He "counted me faithful," and none are counted faithful but those whom he makes so. Christ's ministers are trusty servants, and they ought to be so, who have so great a trust committed to them. 4. A call to the ministry is a great favour, for which those that are so called ought to give thanks to Jesus Christ. [No office is in itself more honourable, none more productive of blessed results. In proportion to our view of its dignity, and of our sympathy with its great design, will be the gratitude which we who sustain it shall feel that it has been conferred upon us.] "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord," who hath put me into the ministry. Now, the more to magnify the grace of Christ in putting him into the ministry, he,

Secondly. Gives an account of his conversion.

1. What he was before his conversion; "A blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious." Saul "breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," *Acts ix. 1.* He made havoc of the church, *Acts viii. 3*; a blasphemer of God, a persecutor of the saints, and injurious to both. Many times those that are designed for great and eminent services are left to themselves before their conversion, to fall into great wickedness, that the mercy of God may be the more glorified in their remission, and the grace of God in their regeneration. The greatness of sin is no bar to our acceptance with God; no, nor to our being employed for him if it be truly repented of. Observe here, 1. Blasphemy, persecution, and injuriousness, are very great and heinous sins, and those who are guilty of them are sinners before God exceedingly. To blaspheme God is immediately and directly to strike at God; to persecute his people is to endeavour to wound him through their sides; and to be injurious is to be like Ishmael, whose hand was against every one, and every one was against him. For such invade God's prerogative, and encroach upon the liberties of their fellow-creatures. 2. True penitents, to serve a good purpose, will not be backward to own their former condition before they were brought home to God. This good apostle often confessed what his former life had been, as *Acts xxii. 4*; *xxvi. 9–11.*

2. See the great favour of God to him; "But I obtained mercy." This was a blessed, but indeed a great favour, that so notorious a rebel should find mercy with his prince. If Paul had persecuted the Christians wilfully, knowing them to be the people of God, for aught I know he had been guilty of the unpardonable sin; but because he did it ignorantly and in unbelief he obtained mercy. Note, 1st. What we do ignorantly is a less crime than what we do knowingly. A sin of ignorance is a sin, for he that knew not his Master's will, but did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes,

Rome, whence he wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy shortly before his martyrdom, which took place in 67 or 68 A.D.

i. 1. "An apostle of Jesus Christ:" see *1 Cor. ix. 1.*

i. 4. "Fables" may mean any legends, whether of Jewish or Gnostic origin, which would corrupt Christianity if admitted into it. "Endless genealogies:" "interminable lists of Gnostic emanations introduced by those who mixed up their so-called philosophy with Christianity, pretending to possess a knowledge (*gnosis*) which

penetrated into hidden mysteries, and despising simple faith in revealed truth" (Webster and Wilkinson). Not "godly edifying," but "God's dispensation, which is in faith:" so best MSS. "Has its sphere and development amongst men in faith" (Alford).

i. 5. "The commandment:" in verse 11 "the Gospel." The apostle has in view the law in the Gospel (*Rom. x. 4*), and the aim of this is not foolish talking and disputings, but love and faith.

i. 7. "Teachers of the law:" "Either Judaizers, who insisted on

Lu. xii. 43. Ignorance in some cases will extenuate a crime, though it do not take it away. 2nd. Unbelief is at the bottom of what sinners do ignorantly; they do not believe God's threatenings, otherwise they could not do as they do. 3rd. For these reasons St. Paul obtained mercy; "But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." 4th. Here was mercy for a blasphemer, a persecutor, and for an injurious person; "But I obtained mercy," I a blasphemer, &c. Here he takes notice of the abundant grace of Jesus Christ, ver. 14. The conversion and salvation of great sinners is owing to the grace of Christ, his "exceeding abundant" grace; even that grace of Christ which appears in his glorious Gospel, ver. 15. "With faith and love." These graces were implanted in his heart when he was converted, and were the proofs of his conversion: faith as opposed to his former rejection of Christ, and love, to his former cruel persecution of the followers of Christ. "This is a faithful saying," &c. Here we have the sum of the whole Gospel, "that Jesus Christ came into the world;" the Son of God took upon him our nature, was "made flesh, and dwelt among us," *Jo. i. 14.* He came into the world "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," *Mat. ix. 13.* His errand into the world was to seek and find, and so save them that were lost, *Lu. xix. 10.* The ratification of this is, that it is "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance." It is good news "worthy of all acceptance," and yet not too good to be true, for it is "a faithful saying," "It is a faithful saying," and therefore worthy to be embraced in the arms of faith. It is "worthy of all acceptance," and therefore to be received with holy love, which refers to the foregoing verse, where the grace of Christ is said to abound in "faith and love." And in the close of the verse Paul applies it to himself; "Of whom I am chief." Paul was a sinner of the first rank; so he acknowledges himself to have been, for he breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, &c., *Acts ix. 1, 2.* Persecutors are some of the worst of sinners; such a one Paul had been; or, "of whom I am chief," that is, of pardoned sinners I am chief. It is an expression of his great humility; he that elsewhere calls himself the least of saints, *Eph. iii. 8.* here calls himself the chief of sinners. Observe, *First.* Christ Jesus is come into the world; the prophecies concerning his coming are now fulfilled. *Secondly.* He came to save sinners; he came to save those that could not save and help themselves. *Thirdly.* Blasphemers and persecutors are the chief of sinners; so St. Paul reckoned them. *Fourthly.* The chief of sinners may become the chief of saints; so this apostle was, for he was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles, *2 Cor. xi. 5:* for Christ came to save the chief of sinners. *Fifthly.* This is a very great truth, it is a faithful saying; these are true and faithful words, which may be depended on. *Sixthly.* It deserves to be received, to be believed by all of us for our comfort and encouragement.

3. The mercy which Paul found with God, notwithstanding his great wickedness before his conversion. He speaks, 1st. For the encouragement of others to repent and believe; ver. 16. "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe." It was an instance of the long-suffering of Christ that he would bear so much with one that had been so very provoking, and it was designed for a pattern to all others, that the greatest of sinners might not despair of mercy with God. Note here, *First.* Our apostle was one of the first great sinners converted to Christianity. [The apostle however refers, I conceive, not to priority of time, but, as before, to the pre-eminence of his guilt; not that he was the first, or one of the first, great sinners converted, but that he obtained mercy though so great a sinner as to rank first in point of guilt.] *Secondly.* He was converted and obtained mercy for the sake of others as well of himself; he was a pattern to others. *Thirdly.* The Lord Jesus Christ shews great long-suffering in the conversion of great sinners. *Fourthly.* Those that obtain mercy believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; for without faith it is impossible to please God, *Heb. xi. 6.* *Fifthly.* Those that believe on Christ believe on him to life everlasting; they "believe to the saving the soul," *Heb. x. 39.* 2nd. He mentions it to the glory of God. Having spoken of the mercy he had found with God, he could not go on with his letter without inserting a thankful acknowledgment of God's goodness to him; "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." Observe, *First.* That grace which we have the comfort of God must have the glory of. Those that are sensible of their obligations to the mercy and grace of God will have their hearts enlarged in his praises. Here is praise ascribed to him as "the King eternal, immortal, invisible." *Secondly.* When we have found God good, we must not forget to speak him great; and his kind thoughts of us must not at all abate our high thoughts of him, but rather increase them. God had taken particular cognizance of Paul, and shewed him mercy, and taken him into communion with himself, and yet he calls him "the King eternal," &c. God's gracious dealings with us should fill us with admiration of his glorious attributes. He is eternal, without beginning of days, or end of life, or change of time; he is the Ancient of days, *Dan. vii. 9.* He is immortal, and the original of immortality; he only hath immortality, *ch. vi. 16.* for he cannot die. Invisible, for he cannot be seen with mortal eyes, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, or can see, *ch. vi. 16.* The only wise God, *Jude 25;* he only is infinitely wise, and the fountain of all wisdom. "To him be glory for ever and ever;" that is, let me be for ever employed in giving honour and glory to him, as the thousand thousands do, *Rev. v. 12, 13.*

18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; 19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 20 Of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Here is the charge he gives to Timothy to proceed in his work with resolution, ver. 18. Observe here, the Gospel is a charge committed to the ministers of it; it is committed to their trust to see that it be duly applied according to the intent and meaning of it, and the design of its great Author. It seems there had been prophecies before concerning Timothy, that he should be taken into the ministry, and should prove eminent in the work of the ministry; and this encouraged Paul to commit this charge to him. Observe,

First. The ministry is a warfare; it is a good warfare against sin and Satan, and under the banner of the Lord Jesus, who is the Captain of our salvation, *Heb. ii. 10;* and in his cause, and against his enemies, ministers are in a particular manner engaged.

the permanent obligation of the Mosaic law, or Platonising expounders of the law, like Philo, who professed to teach the true and deep view of the law" (Conybeare and Howson).

i. 8—10. The true use of the law is to deter from sin. "Not made for a righteous man;" see Gal. v. 18. Those who are under the Holy Spirit's guidance do right, not from fear of the penalties of the law, but through the influence of the Spirit. "Men-stealers:" literally, "slave-dealers."

Secondly. Ministers must war this good warfare; that is, must execute their office diligently and courageously, notwithstanding their oppositions and discouragements. Note, The prophecies which went before concerning Timothy are here mentioned as a motive to stir him up to a vigorous and conscientious discharge of his duty; so the good hopes that others have entertained concerning us should excite us to our duty: "That thou by them mightest war a good warfare." "Holding faith and a good conscience," ver. 19. Observe, that we must hold both faith and a good conscience; and those that put away a good conscience will soon make shipwreck of faith. Let us live up to the directions of a renewed, enlightened conscience, and keep "conscience void of offence," *Acts xxiv. 16;* a conscience not debauched by any vice or sin, and that will be a means of preserving us sound in the faith; and we must look to the one as well as the other, for the mystery of the faith must be held in a pure conscience, *ch. iii. 9.* As for those that had made shipwreck of the faith, he instances two, Hymenæus and Alexander, that had made a profession of the Christian religion, but had quitted that profession; and Paul had delivered them to Satan, had declared them to belong to the kingdom of Satan, and, as some think, had, by an extraordinary power, delivered them to be terrified or tormented by Satan, "that they might learn not to blaspheme," that is, not to contradict or revile the doctrine of Christ, and the good ways of the Lord. Observe the primary design of the highest censures in the primitive church was to prevent farther sin, and to reclaim the sinner. In this case it was for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, *1 Cor. v. 5.* Observe, 1. Those who love the service and work of Satan are justly delivered over to the power of Satan: "Whom I have delivered to Satan." 2. God can, if he pleases, work by contraries. Hymenæus and Alexander are delivered to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme, when one would rather think they would learn of Satan to blaspheme. [Or, rather, the meaning seems to be that they may be deterred from blaspheming, and reclaimed from it, and so "learn not to blaspheme," by an experience of the dreadful punishment incurred by it.] 3. Those that have put away a good conscience, and made shipwreck of faith, will not stick at any thing, blasphemy not excepted. 4. Therefore let us hold fast and a good conscience, if we would keep clear of blasphemy, for if we once let go our hold of these we do not know where we shall stop.

CHAPTER II.

In this chapter St. Paul treats, I. Of prayer, with many reasons for it, ver. 1—8. II. Of women's apparel, ver. 9, 10. III. Of their subjection, with the reasons of it, ver. 11—14. IV. A promise given for their encouragement in child-bearing, ver. 15.



P EXHORT therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. 8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.



LIFTING UP HANDS.

Here is, *First.* A charge given to Christians to pray for all men in general, and particularly for all in authority. Timothy must take care that this was done. Paul doth not send him any prescribed form of prayer, as we have reason to think he would if he had intended that ministers should be tied to that way of praying; but in general that they should make "supplications and prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks;" supplications for the averting of evil, prayers for the obtaining of good, intercessions for others, and thanksgivings for mercies already received. Paul thought it enough to give them general heads; they having the Scripture to direct them in prayer, and the Spirit of prayer poured out upon them, needed not any farther direction. Observe, The design of the Christian religion was to promote prayer; and the disciples of Christ must be praying people: pray "always with all prayer," *Eph. vi. 18.* Prayers for ourselves in the first place, that is implied here; we must also pray for all men, for the world of mankind in general, for particular persons that need or desire our prayers. See how far the Christian religion was from being a sect, when it taught men this diffusive charity—to pray, not only for those of their own way, but for all men. Pray for kings, ver. 2; though the kings at this time were heathens, enemies to Christianity, and persecutors of Christians, yet they must pray for them, because it is for the public good that there should be civil government, and proper persons intrusted with the administration

i. 11. The Gospel of the glory of the blessed God," not "the glorious Gospel." The Gospel is the glad tidings of the glory of God in forgiving sinners for Christ's sake.

i. 12. "I thank Him who has strengthened my heart, Christ Jesus our Lord, that he accounted me faithful," &c. (Conybeare).

i. 13. "Ignorantly in unbelief;" he did not persecute and blaspheme in spite of knowledge, but through lack of it (2 Cor. iii. 13—16), a lesson to form charitable judgments of even persecutors.

of it, whom therefore we ought to pray for, yea, though we ourselves suffer under them. [This exhortation to pray for kings was the more necessary as many of the Jews at this time maintained the seditious principle that obedience was not due from them to heathen governments; and there was a danger lest converts from among them should bring this notion into the Christian church.] For kings, and all that are in authority, that is, inferior magistrates. We must pray for them, and we must give thanks for them, pray for their welfare, and pray for the welfare of their kingdoms, and therefore must not plot against them, for the peace thereof we may have peace and give thanks for them, and for the benefit we have under their government; "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Here see what we must desire for kings, that God will so turn their hearts and direct them, and make use of them, that we under them "may lead a quiet and peaceable life." He doth not say, that we may get preferments under them, grow rich, and be in honour and power under them. No, the top of the ambition of a good Christian is to lead a quiet and peaceable life; "to get through the world unmolested in a low, private station. We should desire that we and others may lead a peaceable life: all godliness and honesty;" implying that we cannot expect to be kept quiet and peaceable unless we keep "in all godliness and honesty." Let us mind our duty, and then we may expect to be taken under the protection, both of God and the government. "In all godliness and honesty;" here we have our duty as Christians summed up in two words: godliness, that is, the right worshipping of God; and honesty, that is, a good carriage towards all men. These two must go together: we are not truly honest if we be not godly, and do not render to God his due; and we are not truly godly except we be honest, for "God hates robbery for burnt offering." Here we observe, 1. Christians are to be men much given to prayer; they ought to abound herein, and should use themselves to prayers, supplications, &c. 2. In our prayers we are to have a generous concern for others as well as for ourselves; we are to pray for all men, and to give thanks for all men, and must not confine our prayers or thanksgivings to our own persons or families. 3. Prayer consists of various parts, of supplications, intercessions, and thanksgivings, for we must pray for the mercies we want, as well as be thankful for mercies already received; and we are to deprecate the judgments our own or others sins have deserved. 4. All men, yea, kings themselves, and those that are in authority, are to be prayed for. They want our prayers, for they have many difficulties to encounter, many snares to which their exalted stations expose them. 5. In praying for our governors we take the most likely course to lead a peaceable and quiet life. The Jews at Babylon were commanded to seek the peace of the city, whither the Lord had caused them to be carried captives, and to pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof they should have peace, *Jer. xxix.* 7. 6. If we would lead a peaceable and quiet life, we must live in all godliness and honesty; we must do our duty to God and man. "He that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile, let him eschew evil and do good, let him seek peace and ensue it." *1 Pet. iii.* 10, 11. Now the reason he gives for this is, "because this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;" that is, the Gospel of Christ requires this. That which is [good in itself, and] acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, we should do and should abound in.

Secondly. As a reason why we should in our prayers concern ourselves for all men, he shews God's love to mankind in general, *ver. 4.* [But first he says that it is in itself good; a thing both proper in itself to be done and of excellent use to allay jealousies and persecutions. It would conciliate their enemies and persecutors when they were seen to behave themselves with meekness and patience, to live as good citizens, and to pray for all men, not excepting those who treated them with contempt and malice.]

1. One reason why all men are to be prayed for is, because there is one God, and that God bears a goodwill to all mankind. There is one God, *ver. 5.* and one only; there is no other, there can be no other, for there can be but one infinite. This one God "will have all men to be saved;" that is, he desires not the death and destruction of any, *Eze. xxxiii.* 11, but the welfare and salvation of all. Not that he hath decreed the salvation of all, for then all men would be saved; but he hath a goodwill to the salvation of all, and none perish but it is their own fault, *Mat. xxiii.* 37. He will have all to be saved "and to come unto the knowledge of the truth;" that is, to be saved in the way that he hath appointed, and not otherwise. It concerns us to get the knowledge of the truth, because that is the way to be saved. "Christ is the way and the truth, and so he is the life."

2. There is one Mediator, and that Mediator gave himself a ransom for all. As the mercy of God extends itself to all his works, so the mediation of Christ extends itself thus far to all the children of men, that he paid a price sufficient for the salvation of all mankind. He brought mankind to stand upon new terms with God, so as that they are not now under the law as a covenant of works, but as a rule of life. But under grace; not under the covenant of innocence, but under a new covenant. He "gave himself a ransom." Observe, That the death of Christ was a ransom, a counter-price: we deserved to have died; Christ died for us to save us from death and hell. He gave himself a ransom voluntarily, a ransom for all; so that all mankind are put in a better condition than that of devils. He died to work out a common salvation; in order hereunto he put himself into the office of Mediator between God and man. A mediator supposes a controversy. Sin had made a quarrel between us and God; Jesus Christ is a Mediator that undertakes to make peace, to bring God and man together, in the nature of an umpire or arbitrator, a daysman that lays his hand upon us both, *Job ix.* 33. He is a ransom that was "to be testified in due time;" that is, in the Old Testament times. His sufferings, and the glory that should follow, were spoken of as things to be revealed in the last times, *1 Pet. i.* 10, 11; and they are accordingly revealed by the same token that Paul himself was "ordained a preacher and an apostle," to publish to the Gentiles the glad tidings of redemption and salvation by Jesus Christ. This doctrine of Christ's mediation Paul was intrusted to preach to every creature, *Mar. xvi.* 15. He was appointed to be a teacher of the Gentiles; besides his general call to the apostleship he was commissioned particularly to preach to the Gentiles in faith and truth, that is, faithfully and truly. Note, 1st. It is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour that we pray for kings and for all men, and also that we lead a peaceable and quiet life, &c.; and this is a very good reason why we should do the one as well as the other. 2nd. God hath a goodwill to the salvation of all; so that it is not so much the want of a will in God to save them as it is a want of will in themselves to be saved in God's way. Here our blessed Lord charges the fault: "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life," *Jno. v.* 40; "I would have gathered you, and ye would not." 3rd. Those that are saved must come to the knowledge of the truth, for that is God's appointed way to save sinners. Without knowledge the heart cannot be good; if we do not know the truth we cannot be ruled by it. 4th. It is observable that the unity of God is asserted and joined with the unity of the Mediator, and the church of Rome might as well maintain a plurality of gods as a plurality of mediators. 5th. He that is a Mediator in the New Testament sense gave himself a ransom. Vain, then, is the pretence of the Romanists that there is but one Mediator of satisfaction, but many of intercession; for, according to St. Paul, Christ giving himself a ransom was a necessary part of the Mediator's

office; and indeed this lays the foundation for his intercession. 6th. St. Paul was ordained a minister to declare this to the Gentiles, that Christ is the one Mediator between God and men, who gave himself a ransom for all. This is the substance of that which all ministers are to preach to the end of the world; and St. Paul magnified his office, as he was the apostle of the Gentiles, *Rom. xi.* 13. Lastly, Ministers must preach the truth, what they apprehend to be so, and they must believe it themselves; they are, like our apostle, to preach in faith and verity; and they must also be faithful and trusty.

Thirdly. A direction how to pray, *ver. 8.* 1. Now, under the Gospel, prayer is not to be confined to any one particular house of prayer, but men must pray everywhere. No place is amiss for prayer; no one place more acceptable to God than another; *Jno. iv.* 21, "Pray everywhere;" that is, we must pray in our closets, and pray in our families, pray at our meals, pray when we are in journeys, pray in the solemn assemblies, whether more public or more private. 2. It is the will of God that in prayer we should lift up holy hands; "Lifting up holy hands" or pure hands, pure from the pollution of sin, washed in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; "I will wash my hands in innocence; so will I compass thine altar, O Lord," *Ps. xxvi.* 6. 3. We must pray in charity; without wrath, or malice, or anger, at any person. 4. We must pray in faith, "without doubting," *Jas. i.* 6; or, as some read it, "without disputing;" and then it falls under the head of charity.

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. 11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. 15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

Here is, First. A charge that women that profess the Christian religion should be modest, and sober, and silent, and submissive, as becomes their place.

1. They must be very modest in their apparel, not affecting gaudiness, or gaiety, or costliness, (you may read the vanity of a person's mind by the gaiety and gaudiness of their habit,) because they have better ornaments with which they should "adorn themselves as becomes women professing godliness, with good works." Note, Good works are the best ornament; these are, in the sight of God, of great price. Those that profess godliness should, in their dress, as well as other things, carry it as becomes their profession; instead of laying out their money on fine clothes, they must lay it out in works of piety and charity, which are properly called good works. 2. Women must learn, learn the principles of their religion, learn Christ, learn the Scriptures; they must not think that their sex excuses them from that learning which is necessary to salvation. 3. They must be silent, and submissive, and subject, and not "usurp authority;" and the reason given is, because "Adam was first formed, then Eve" out of him, to denote her subordination to him, and dependence upon him; and that she was made for him to be a helpmeet for him. And as she was last in the creation, which is one reason for her subjection, so she was first in the transgression, and that is another reason. "Adam was not deceived," that is, not first; the serpent did not immediately set upon him, but the woman was first in the transgression, *2 Cor. xi.* 3; and it was part of the sentence, "Thy desire shall be to thine husband, and he shall rule over thee," *Gen. iii.* 16. [It does not, I think, appear that Adam was deceived at all; nor is there any ground in the language, or reasoning of the apostle in this place, to suppose that he teaches that he was, only not first. On the contrary, he says absolutely, "Adam was not deceived." What he did on that fatal occasion he did knowingly, and because he either could not or would not withstand the solicitations of his wife.] But it is a word of comfort, *ver. 15.* that they that continue in sobriety shall be "saved in child-bearing" or, with child-bearing. The Messiah, who was born of a woman, should break the serpent's head, *Gen. iii.* 15. Or, the sentence which they are under for sin shall be no bar to their acceptance with Christ, "if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety."

Secondly. Here we observe, 1. The extensiveness of the rules of Christianity. They not only reach to men, but women; not only to their persons, but also to their dress, which must be modest like their sex; and to their outward deportment and behaviour,—it must be in silence, with all subjection. 2. Women are to profess godliness as well as men, for they are baptized, and thereby stand engaged to exercise themselves to godliness; and, to their honour be it spoken, many of them were eminent professors of Christianity in the days of the apostles, as the book of *Acts* will inform us. 3. Women being more in danger of exceeding in their apparel, it was more necessary to caution them in this respect. 4. The best ornaments for professors of godliness are good works. 5. According to St. Paul, women must be learners, and are not allowed to be public teachers in the church, for teaching is an office of authority; whereas she must not usurp authority over the man, but is to be in silence. But, notwithstanding this prohibition, good women may, and ought, to teach their children at home the principles of religion. Timothy, from a child, had known the holy Scriptures; and who should teach him but his mother and grandmother, *2 Tim. iii.* 15. Aquila and his wife Priscilla expounded unto Apollos the way of God more perfectly; but then they did it privately, for they took him unto them, *Acts xviii.* 26. 6. Here are two very good reasons given for the man's authority over the woman, and her subjection to the man, *ver. 13.* 1. Adam was first formed, then Eve; she was created for the man, and not the man for the woman, *1 Cor. xi.* 9; then she was deceived, and brought the man into the transgression. 7. Though the difficulties and dangers of child-bearing are many and great, as they are part of the punishment inflicted on the sex for Eve's transgression, yet here is much for her support and encouragement, "Notwithstanding she shall be saved," &c. Though in sorrow, yet she shall bring forth, and be a living mother of living children; with this proviso, that they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety; and women under the circumstance of child-bearing should, by faith, lay hold on this promise for their support in the needful time. [Or rather, she shall be saved

"Injurious;" the word does not convey the same meaning as formerly; it is better rendered by Alford, "an insulter;" or Tyndal, "a tyrant;" or Conybeare, "a doer of outrage."

i. 17. "Wise;" omitted by best MSS.

i. 18. "Prophecies;" intimations of the Holy Spirit (see *Acts xiii.* 1, 2). "By them;" better, "in them"—i.e. clad or armed with them as encouragements to boldness (Alford, Wiesinger, &c.).

i. 20. "The salvation of the persons concerned is the end the

apostle has in view" (Wiesinger). "May learn:" literally, "be instructed by punishment."

ii. 1, 2. It was needful that Christians should pray for civil rulers—(1) that rulers might be kept from becoming persecutors; (2) for their own sakes, that they might thus answer those who accused them of rebellious tendencies.

ii. 5. God is one in essence and purpose. He has not different intentions towards different nations or individuals (*Rom. iii.* 29, 30),

through or by child-bearing; that is, not saved in the time of child-bearing, but saved; it does not refer to deliverance in that crisis, but to salvation, and saved by means of child-bearing; that is, by means of the incarnation of the promised seed.]

CHAPTER III.

In this chapter our apostle treats of church officers. And, I. He gives us the qualifications of a person to be admitted to the office of a bishop, ver. 1—7. II. Of the qualifications of deacons, ver. 8—10; and of their wives, ver. 11; and again of the deacons, ver. 12, 13. III. Of the reasons of his writing to Timothy, whereupon he speaks of the church and the foundation truth professed therein, ver. 14—16.



THIS is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

The two epistles to Timothy, and that to Titus, contain a Scripture plan of church government, or a direction to ministers. Timothy, we suppose, was an evangelist that was left at Ephesus to take care of those whom the Holy Ghost had made bishops there; that is, the presbyters, as appears by *Acts* xx. 29, where the care of the church was committed to the presbyters, and they were called bishops. It seems they were very loath to part with Paul, especially because he told them they should "see his face no more," *Acts* xx. 38; for their church was but newly planted. They were afraid of undertaking the care of it, and therefore Paul left Timothy with them to set them in order. And here we have the character of a gospel minister, whose office it is, as a bishop, to preside in a particular congregation of Christians. "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work," ver. 1.

First. The ministry is a work. However the office of a bishop may be now thought a good preferment, then it was thought a good work. Observe, 1. The office of a Scripture bishop is an office of Divine appointment, and not of human invention; the ministry is not a creature of the state, and it is a pity that the minister should be at any time the tool of the state. The office of the ministry was in the church before the magistrate countenanced Christianity, for this office is one of the great gifts Christ hath bestowed on the church, *Eph.* iv. 8—11. 2. This office of a Christian bishop is a work which requires diligence and application. The apostle represents it under the notion and character of a work, not of a great honour and advantage; for ministers should always look more to their work than to the honour and advantage of their office. 3. It is a good work, a work of the greatest importance, and designed for the greatest good. The ministry is conversant about no lower concerns than the life and happiness of immortal souls; it is a good work, because designed to illustrate the Divine perfections, in bringing many sons into glory; the ministry is appointed to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, &c., *Acts* xxvi. 18. 4. There ought to be an earnest desire of the office in those who would be put into it. If a man desires, he should earnestly desire, for the prospect he hath of bringing greater glory to God, and of doing the greatest good to the souls of men by this means. This is the question proposed to those who offer themselves to the ministry in the church of England, Do you think you are moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office? [For parents or patrons to destine a youth to the Christian ministry irrespectively of any desire to or fitness for, it on his part, is a flagrant profanation of the sacred office, and has done incalculable mischief to the church, and been the ruin of souls, by filling the pulpits with unconverted ministers.]

Secondly. In order to the discharge of this office, the doing of this work, the workman must be duly qualified. 1. A minister must be "blameless;" that is, not lie under any scandal; he must give as little occasion for blame as can be, because that will be a prejudice to his ministry, and will reflect reproach upon his office. 2. He must be "the husband of one wife." Not having given a bill of divorce to one, and then taking another; or, not having many wives at once, as at that time was too common both among Jews and Gentiles, especially among the Gentiles. 3. He must be "vigilant," and watchful against Satan, that subtle enemy; he must watch over himself and the souls of those that are committed to his charge, of whom, having taken the oversight, he must improve all opportunities of doing them good. A minister ought to be vigilant, because our adversary the devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, *1 Pet.* v. 8. 4. He must be "sober;" that is, temperate, moderate in all his actions, and in the use of all creature comforts. Sobriety and watchfulness are often, in Scripture, put together, because they mutually befriended one another; "Be sober, be vigilant." 5. He must be "of good behaviour," composed and solid, and not light, and vain, and frothy. [The gravity of his manners should correspond with the dignity of his office. This word prescribes the proper regulation of the conduct; the preceding, the proper government of the mind.] 6. He must be "given to hospitality;" open-handed to strangers, and

ready to entertain them according to his ability, as one that doth not set his heart upon the wealth of the world, and that is a true lover of his brethren. 7. "Apt to teach." Therefore this is a preaching bishop that Paul describes,—one that is both able and willing to communicate to others the knowledge which God hath given him; one that is fit to teach, and ready to take all opportunities of giving instruction; that is himself well instructed in the things of the kingdom of heaven, and is communicative of what he knows to others. [It is of great importance that a minister should possess not only a mind well furnished with Divine truth, but also the ability to set it forth in a perspicuous and persuasive manner. Many are willing to communicate what they know, but for want of a clear method, or a ready utterance, are unable.] 8. No drunkard; "not given to wine." The priests were not to drink wine when they went in to minister, *Lev.* x. 8, 9, "lest they drink and pervert the law." 9. "No striker;" that is, one that is not quarrelsome, nor apt to use violence to any, but doth every thing with mildness, love, and gentleness. The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle towards all, &c., *2 Tim.* ii. 24. 10. One that is "not greedy of filthy lucre;" that is, that doth not make his ministry to trundle to any secular design or interest; that useth no mean, base, sordid ways of getting money; that is dead to the wealth of this world, and lives above it, and makes it appear he is so. 11. He must "be patient," and "not a brawler;" of a mild disposition. Christ, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, is so. Not apt to be angry or quarrelsome; as not a striker with his hands, so not a brawler with his tongue; for how shall men teach others to govern their tongues who do not make conscience of keeping them under good government themselves? 12. "Not covetous." Covetousness is bad in any, but it is worst in a minister, whose calling leads him to converse so much with another world. 13. He must be one that keeps his family in good order, "that rules well his own house;" that he may set a good example to other masters of families to do so too; and that he may thereby give a proof of his ability to take care of the church of God; "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God." Observe, The families of ministers ought to be examples of good to all other families. Ministers must have their children in subjection; then it is the duty of ministers' children to submit to the instructions that are given them. "With all gravity." Observe, That the best way to keep inferiors in subjection is to be grave with them. Not having his children in subjection with all austerity, but with all gravity. 14. He must "not be a novice;" that is, not one newly brought to the Christian religion; or, not one that is but meanly instructed in it, that knows no more of religion than the surface of it, for such a one is apt to be "lifted up with pride;" the more ignorant men are the more proud they are. "Lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil." The devils feed through pride, which is a good reason why we should take heed of pride, because it is a sin that turned angels into devils. 15. He must be of good reputation among his neighbours, and under no reproach from former conversation; for the devil will make use of that to ensnare others, and work in them an aversion to the doctrine of Christ, preached by those that have not had a good report.

Thirdly. Now upon the whole, having briefly gone through the qualifications of a gospel bishop, we may, 1. With great reason cry out as St. Paul doth, "Who is sufficient for these things?" *2 Cor.* ii. 16. *Hic labor hoc opus*,—this is a work indeed. What piety, what prudence, what zeal, what courage, what faithfulness, what watchfulness over ourselves, our lusts, appetites, and passions, and over those under our charge,—I say, what holy watchfulness,—is necessary in this work! 2. Have not the best qualified, and the most faithful and conscientious, ministers just reason to complain against themselves, that so much is requisite by way of qualification, and so much work is necessary to be done? And, alas! how far short do the best come of what they should be, and what they should do! 3. Yet let those bless God and be thankful whom the Lord hath enabled, and counted faithful, putting them into the ministry. If God is pleased to make any, in some degree, able and faithful, let him have the praise and glory of it. 4. For the encouragement of all faithful ministers we have Christ's gracious word of promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," *Mat.* xxviii. 20. And if he be with us, he will fit us for our work in some measure, and carry us through the difficulties of it with comfort, and graciously pardon our imperfections, and reward our faithfulness with a crown of glory that fadeth not away, *1 Pet.* v. 4. [5. Since the office of the Christian bishop or pastor demands such qualifications, let the churches be careful whom they call to it, or encourage as candidates for it; and let much prayer be offered that God would supply them with a constant succession of holy men whom he has himself called and anointed.]

8 Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless. 11 Even so *must* their wives *be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. 12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

We have here the character of deacons. These had the care of the temporal concerns of the church; that is, the maintenance of the ministers, and provision for the poor. They served tables, while the ministers or bishops gave themselves only to the ministry of the word and prayer, *Acts* vi. 2, 4. Of the institution of this office, with that which gave occasion to it, you have an account in *Acts* vi. 1—6. Now it was requisite the deacons should have a good character, because they were assistants to the ministers, appeared and acted publicly, and had a great trust reposed in them. They must be grave; gravity becomes all Christians, but especially those that are in office in the church. "Not double-tongued;" that will say one thing to one, and another thing to another, according as their interest leads them; a double tongue comes from a double heart,—flatterers, slanderers, are double-tongued. "Not given to much wine;" for that is a great disparagement to any man, especially to a Christian and one in office, discredits men for business, opens the door to many temptations. "Not greedy of filthy lucre." This would especially be bad in the

therefore all must come within the range of our prayers. "The man Christ Jesus;" "One between God and man, which is the man Christ Jesus" (Tyndal). The manhood of Christ is insisted on, because it was necessary for his mediatorship.

ii. 8—15. The relative duties of men and women in public worship. Not "men," as Authorised Version, but "the men," as distinguished from the women. Not "doubting," but "disputing;" "strife," Wickliffe; "altercation," Rheims.

ii. 9. "Shame-facedness" is wrong, and conveys a wrong idea; it is a printer's corruption from "shame-fastness," which appears in all the English versions except Rheims, which reads "demureness." "Shame-fastness" is that quality which shrinks from overpassing the limits of womanly reserve and modesty, as well as from the dishonour which would justly attach thereto (French, "New Testament Synonyms"). "Sobriety;" better, "self-restraint," or "habitual inner self-government."

deacons that were intrusted with the church's money, and if they were covetous and greedily of filthy lucre, would be tempted to embezzle it, and convert that to their own use which was intended for the public service. "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience," ver. 9. Note, The mystery of faith is best held in a pure conscience. The practical love of truth is the most powerful preservative from error and delusion. If we keep a pure conscience, that is, take heed of every thing that debauches conscience and draws us away from God, that will preserve in our souls "the mystery of the faith." [By "the mystery of the faith" is meant not any particular doctrine of the Gospel, which may be more mysterious than the rest, but the Gospel at large, which is called in ver. 16 "the mystery of godliness."] Deacons should be men holding fast the true faith in an enlightened and upright conscience. Let these also first be proved," ver. 10. It is not fit the public trusts should be lodged in the hands of any till they are first proved, and found fit for the business they are to be intrusted with; the soundness of their judgments, their zeal for Christ, and the blamelessness of their conversation, must be proved.

Their wives likewise must have a good character, ver. 11; they must be of a grave behaviour, "not slanderers," tale-bearers, carrying stories to make mischief and sow discord; they must be "sober and faithful in all things;" not given to any excess, but trusty in all that is committed to them. All that are related to ministers must double their care to walk as becomes the Gospel of Christ, lest if they in any thing walk disorderly the ministry be blamed. As he said before of the bishops or ministers, so here of the deacons, they must be "the husband of one wife," such as had not put away their wives upon dislike, and married others; they must "rule their children and their own houses well;" families of ministers should be examples to other families. And the reason why the deacons must be thus qualified is, ver. 13, because, though the office of a deacon be an inferior degree, yet it is a step towards the higher degree; and they that had served tables well, the church might see cause afterwards to discharge them from that service, and prefer them to serve in preaching the word, and in prayer. Or it may be meant of the good reputation that a man would gain by his fidelity in this office; they will purchase to themselves "great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Observe, 1. In the primitive church there were but two orders of ministers or officers, bishops and deacons, *Phil. i. 1*. After ages have invented the rest. The office of the bishop, presbyter, pastor, or minister, was confined to prayer and to the ministry of the word; and the office of the deacon was confined to, or at least principally conversant about, serving tables. Clemens Romanus, in his epistle to the Christians, *cap. 42, 44*, speaks very fully and plainly to this purpose, that the apostles foreknowing, by our Lord Jesus Christ, there would arise in the Christian church a controversy about the name episcopacy, appointed the forementioned orders, bishops and deacons. 2. The Scripture deacon's main employment was to serve tables, and not to preach or baptize. It is true, indeed, Philip did preach and baptize many in Samaria, *Acts viii.*; but you read he was an evangelist, *Acts xxi. 8*, and he might preach and baptize, and perform any other part of the ministerial office under that character. But still the design of the deacon's office was to mind the temporal concerns of the church, such as the salaries of the ministers and providing for the poor. 3. Several qualifications were very necessary, even for these inferior officers; "The deacons must be grave," &c. 4. Some trial should be made of persons' qualifications before they are admitted into office in the church, or have any trust committed to them; let these also first be proved. 5. Integrity and uprightness in an inferior office is the way to be preferred to a higher station in the church; they "purchase to themselves a good degree." 6. This will also give a man great boldness in the faith, whereas a want of integrity and uprightness will make a man timorous and ready to tremble at his own shadow. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion," *Pr. xxviii. 1*.

14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

He concludes the chapter with a particular direction to Timothy.

First. He hoped shortly to come to him to give him farther directions and assistance in his work, and to see that Christianity was well planted, and took root well, at Ephesus; he therefore wrote the more briefly to him. But,

Secondly. He wrote lest he should tarry long, that he might know how to behave himself in the house of God; that is, how to carry himself as became an evangelist and a substitute of the apostles. Observe, Those that are employed in the house of God must see to it that they behave themselves well, lest they bring reproach upon the house of God, and that worthy name by which they are called. Ministers ought to behave themselves well, and to look not only to their praying and preaching, but to their behaviour. Their office binds them to their good behaviour, for any behaviour will not do in this case. Timothy must know how to behave himself, not only in that particular church where he was now appointed to reside for some time; but, being an evangelist and substitute of the apostles, he must learn how to behave himself in other churches, where he should in like manner be appointed to reside for some time; and therefore it is not the church of Ephesus, but the catholic church, which is here called "the house of God, which is the church of the living God." Observe here,

1. God is the living God. He is the fountain of life, he is life in himself, and he gives life, breath, and all things to his creatures; in him we live, and move, and have our being, *Acts xvii. 25, 28*.

2. The church is the house of God; he dwells there. The Lord hath chosen Zion to dwell there: This is my rest, here will I dwell, for I have chosen it; there may we see God's power and glory, *Ps. lxxiii. 2*. It is the great support of the church that it is the church of the living God, the true God in opposition to false gods, dumb and dead idols; "The pillar and ground of truth;" that is, either,

1st. The church itself, that is the pillar and ground of truth. Not that the authority of the Scriptures depends upon that of the church, as the papists pretend, for truth is the pillar and ground of the church; but the church holds forth the Scripture and the doctrine of Christ, as the pillar to which a proclamation is affixed holds forth the proclamation, "Even to the principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God," *Eph. iii. 10*.

ii. 15. Women faithfully performing their part in doing and suffering what God has assigned to them—child-bearing and home duties, their sphere as distinguished from public teaching, which is man's—shall be saved.

iii. 6. "He may not be a young scholar, lest he swell and fall into the judgment of the evil speaker" (Tyndal). "The condemnation of the devil:" i.e., the same condemnation that came upon him through pride.

2nd. Others understand it of Timothy. He, not he himself only, but he as an evangelist, he and other faithful ministers, are the pillars and ground of truth; that is, it is their business to maintain, hold up, and publish the truths of Christ in the church. It is said of the apostles that "they seemed to be pillars," *Gal. ii. 9*. First. Let us be diligent and impartial in our own inquiries after truth; let us buy the truth at any rate, and not think much of any pains to discover it. Secondly. Let us be careful to keep and preserve it; "Buy the truth and sell it not," *Pr. xxiii. 23*; do not part with it on any consideration. Thirdly. Let us take care to publish it, and to transmit it safe and uncorrupted unto posterity. Fourthly. When the church ceases to be the pillar and ground of truth we may and ought to forsake her; for our regard to truth should be greater than our regard to the church. We are no longer obliged to continue in the church than she continues to be the pillar and ground of truth.

3. What is the truth which the churches and ministers are the pillars and grounds of? He tells us, ver. 16, that "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness." The learned Camero joins this with what goes before, and then it runs thus, 'The pillar and ground of the truth, and without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.' He supposes this mystery to be the pillar, &c. Observe,

1st. That Christianity is a mystery, a mystery that could not have been found out by reason or the light of nature, and cannot be comprehended by reason, because it is above reason, though not contrary thereunto. It is a mystery, not of philosophy or speculation, but, 2nd. It is a mystery of godliness, designed to promote godliness; and herein it exceeds all the mysteries of the Gentiles. 3rd. It is a revealed mystery, not shut up and sealed; and it does not cease to be a mystery because now in part revealed. Now, what is the mystery of godliness? It is Christ; and here are six things concerning Christ which make up the mystery of godliness. First. That he is God manifest in the flesh. "God was manifest in the flesh." This proves that he is God, the eternal Word that was made flesh, and was manifest in the flesh. When God was to be manifested to man he was pleased to manifest himself in the incarnation of his own Son; "The Word was made flesh," *Jno. i. 14*. Secondly. He is "justified in the Spirit;" that is, whereas he was reproached as a sinner, and put to death as a malefactor, he was raised again by the Spirit, and so was justified from all calumnies with which he was loaded. "He was made sin for us, and was delivered for our offences;" but being raised again, he was justified in the Spirit; that is, it was made to appear that his sacrifice was accepted, and so "He rose again for our justification," as he was "delivered for our offences," *Rom. iv. 25*. He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, *1 Pet. iii. 18*. [The attestation of Christ by the Spirit must not be restricted to his resurrection. It was given also at his baptism, and in our Lord's miracles, and still farther in his miraculous descent and extraordinary agency on the day of Pentecost.] Thirdly. He was "seen of angels." They worshipped him, *Heb. i. 6*; they attended his incarnation, his temptation, his agony, his death, his resurrection, his ascension. This is much to his honour, and shews what a mighty interest he hath in the upper world, that angels ministered to him, for he is the Lord of angels. Fourthly. He is "preached unto the Gentiles." This is a great part of the mystery of godliness, that Christ was offered to the Gentiles a Redeemer and Saviour; that whereas, before, salvation was of the Jews, the partition wall was now taken down, and the Gentiles were taken in; "I have set them to be a light of the Gentiles," *Acts xiii. 47*. Fifthly. That he was "believed on in the world," so that he was not preached in vain. Many of the Gentiles welcomed the Gospel which the Jews rejected. Who would have thought that the world that lay in wickedness would have believed in the Son of God? would take him to be their Saviour who was himself crucified at Jerusalem? But, notwithstanding all the prejudices they laboured under, he was believed on, &c. Sixthly. He was "received up into glory," in his ascension. This indeed was before he was believed on in the world; but it is put last, because it was the crown of his exaltation, and because it is not only his ascension that is meant, but his sitting at the right hand of God, where "he ever lives, making intercession," and hath all power both in heaven and earth; and because in the apostasy, of which he treats in the following chapter, his remaining in heaven would be denied by those who pretend to bring him down on their altars in the consecrated wafers. Observe, 1st. He who was manifest in flesh was God, really and truly God, God by nature, and not only so by office, for this makes it to be a mystery. 2nd. God was manifest in flesh, real flesh; forasmuch as children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, *Heb. ii. 14*. And, what is more amazing, he was manifest in the flesh, after all flesh had corrupted his way, though he himself was holy from the womb. 3rd. Godliness is a mystery in all its parts and branches, from the beginning to the end, from Christ's incarnation to his ascension. 4th. It being a great mystery, we should rather humbly adore it, and piously believe it, than curiously pry into it, or be too positive in our explications of it, and determinations about it, farther than the holy Scriptures have revealed it to us. 5th. It betrays either great ignorance or great prejudice to reject Christianity because it contains mysteries. If they abound in nature and providence, much more may they be expected in revelation. "A religion without mysteries is a temple without its god." 6th. It is both unphilosophical and impious, under pretence of simplifying the word of God, to endeavour to explain away every thing in it that is mysterious. Instead of a system of revealed doctrine worthy of the blessed of God, it would thus become a scheme of mere human rationality and moral virtue.]

CHAPTER IV.

St. Paul here foretels, I. A dreadful apostasy, ver. 1—3. II. He treats of Christian liberty, ver. 4, 5. III. He gives Timothy divers directions which respect himself, his doctrine, and the people under his care, ver. 6—16.



OW the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to

iii. 9. "The mystery of the faith:" mystery, since man did not know it till God revealed it, and even yet in parts mysterious (verse 16).

iii. 11. "The women," not "wives" as Authorised Version. These are, according to Chrysostom and most ancient writers, "deaconesses" (*Rom. xvi. 1—3*; so also De Wette, Wiesinger, Alford, &c.).

iii. 13. "A good degree:" i.e., a good position through the right performance of his duties, and hence influence and weight which

abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

We have here a prophecy of the apostasy of the latter times, which he had spoken of as a thing expected and taken for granted among Christians, 2 *Thes. ii.* In the close of the foregoing chapter we had the mystery of godliness summed up, and therefore very fitly in the beginning of this chapter we have the mystery of iniquity summed up. "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." Whether he means the Spirit in the Old Testament, or the Spirit in the prophets of the New Testament, or both, the prophecies concerning Antichrist, as well as the prophecies concerning Christ, come from the Spirit. The Spirit in both spake expressly of a general apostasy from the faith of Christ, and the pure worship of God. This should come in "the latter times," that is, during the Christian dispensation, for those are called the latter days; in the following ages of the church, for the mystery of iniquity now began to work. "Some shall depart from the faith," or there shall be an apostasy from the faith; "some," not all; for in the worst of times "God will have a remnant, according to the election of grace." They "shall depart from the faith," the faith delivered to the saints, *Jude 3*; and it was delivered at once, that is, the sound doctrine of the Gospel. "Giving heed to seducing spirits;" that is, men that pretended to the Spirit, but were not really guided by the Spirit. "Beloved, believe not every spirit," *1st Jno. iv. 1*; that is, every one that pretends to the Spirit. Now observe,

First. One of the greatest instances of that apostasy, namely, giving heed to doctrines of demons, or concerning demons; that is, those doctrines which teach the worship of saints and angels as a middle sort of deities, between the immortal God and mortal men, such as the heathen called demons, and worshipped under that notion. Now this plainly agrees to the church of Rome, and it was one of the first steps towards that great apostasy, the enshrining of the relics of martyrs, paying Divine honours to them, erecting altars, burning incense, consecrating images and temples, and making prayers and praises to the honour of saints departed. This demon worship is paganism revived, the image of the first beast.

Secondly. The instruments of promoting and propagating this apostasy and delusion. It will be done by hypocrisy of those that speak lies; ver. 2. "Speaking lies in hypocrisy;" that is, the agents and emissaries of Satan that promote these delusions by lies and forgeries, and pretended miracles. It is done by their hypocrisy, professing honour to Christ, and yet at the same time fighting against all his anointed offices, and corrupting or profaning all his ordinances. The hypocrisy likewise of those that have "their consciences seared with a hot iron;" that is, that are perfectly lost to the very first principles of virtue and moral honesty. If men had not their consciences seared as with a hot iron, they could never maintain a power to dispense with oaths for the good of the Catholic cause, could never maintain that no faith is to be kept with heretics, could never divest themselves of all remains of humanity and compassion, and clothe themselves with the most barbarous cruelty, under pretence of promoting the interest of the church. Another part of their character is, that they "forbid to marry," forbid their clergy to marry, and speak very reproachfully of marriage, though an ordinance of God; and that they command "to abstain from meats," and place religion in that at certain times and seasons, only to exercise a tyranny over the consciences of men.

Now, 1. The apostasy of the latter times should not surprise us, because it was expressly foretold by the Spirit. 2. The Spirit is God, otherwise he could not certainly foresee such distant events, which as to us are uncertain and contingent, depending on the tempers, humours, and lusts of men. 3. The difference between the predictions of the Spirit and the oracles of the heathen. The Spirit speaketh expressly, but the oracles of the heathen were always doubtful and uncertain. 4. It is comfortable to think that in such general apostasies all are not carried away, but only some. 5. It is common for seducers and deceivers to pretend to the Spirit, which is a strong presumption that all are convinced that this is the most likely to work in us an approbation of what pretends to come from the Spirit. 6. Men must be hardened, and their consciences seared, before they can depart from the faith, and draw in others to side with them. 7. It is a sign men have departed from the faith, when they will command what God hath forbidden, such as saint and angel, or demon, worship, and forbid what God hath allowed or commanded, such as marriage and meats.

Thirdly. Upon occasion of the mentioning of their hypocritical fastings, the apostle lays down the doctrine of Christian liberty, which we enjoy under the Gospel, of using God's good creatures; that whereas under the law there was a distinction of meats between clean and unclean, such sort of flesh they might eat, and such they might not eat, all that is now taken away; and we are to "call nothing common or unclean," *Acts x. 15*. 1. We are to look upon our food as that "which God hath created;" we have it from him, and therefore must use it for him. 2. God in making those things had a special regard to "them which believe and know the truth;" that is, good Christians, which have a covenant right to the creatures, whereas others have only a common right. 3. What God hath created is to be "received with thanksgiving." We must not refuse the gifts of God's bounty, nor be scrupulous in making differences where God hath made none; but take it and be thankful, acknowledging the power of God the maker of them, and the bounty of God the giver of them. 4. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused," ver. 4. This plainly sets us at liberty from all the distinctions of meats appointed by the ceremonial law, as particularly that of swine's flesh, which the Jews were forbidden to eat, but is allowed to us Christians by this rule, "Every creature of God is good," &c. Observe, that God's good creatures are good, and doubly sweet to us when they are received with thanksgiving. 5. "For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer," ver. 5. It is a desirable thing to have a sanctified use of our creature comforts. Now they are sanctified to us, 1st. By the word of God; not only his permission, allowing us the liberty of the use of these things, but his promise to feed us with food convenient for us. This gives us a sanctified use of creature comforts. 2nd. By prayer, which blesses our meat to us. The word of God and prayer must be brought to our common actions and affairs, and then we do all in faith. Observe, *First*. Every creature is God's, for he made them; "Every beast in the forest is mine," says God, "and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are mine," *Ps. l. 10, 11*. *Secondly*. Every creature of God is good. When the blessed God took a survey of all his works, God saw all that was made, "and behold it was very good," *Gen. i. 31*. *Thirdly*. The blessing of God

makes every creature nourishing to us; Man lives not by bread alone, "but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God," *Mat. iv. 4*; and therefore nothing ought to be refused. *Fourthly*. We ought therefore to ask his blessing by prayer, and so to sanctify the creatures we receive by prayer. [It is an ungrateful and ungodly practice, in which those allow themselves who sit down from day to day at a table covered with the gifts of God's bounty, and neither give him thanks for his mercies nor ask his blessing on their use.]

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. 7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation. 10 For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. 11 These things command and teach. 12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. 15



ORDINATION.

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. 16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

"If thou put the brethren in remembrance," &c. He would have Timothy to instil such notions as these into the minds of Christians, which might prevent their being seduced by the Judaizing teachers. Observe, Those are good ministers of Jesus Christ that are diligent in their work, not that study to advance new notions, but that "put the brethren in remembrance of those things that they have received and heard." Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them," *2nd Pet. i. 12*; and elsewhere, "I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance," *2nd Pet. iii. 1*; and says the apostle Jude, "I will therefore put you in remembrance," *Jude 5*. You see the apostles and apostolical men reckoned it a main part of their work to put their hearers in remembrance, for we are apt to forget, and slow to learn and remember, the things of God. "Nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained." Observe, 1. That even ministers themselves have need to be growing and increasing in the knowledge of Christ and his doctrine; they must be nourished up in the words of faith. 2.

would be advantageous to him and to the church, if he became a presbyter.

iii. 15. Some suppose that Timothy is referred to in the words "pillar and ground of the truth;" others that the Church of God is meant, which view is supported by Chrysostom, Calvin, Beza, and many others. "The house of God, which is the congregation of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth" (Tyndal).

iii. 16. Sinaitic and Alexandrine MSS. read "who" for "God."

Alford strongly supports this reading; Conybeare is content with Authorised Version. Those who read "who" of course refer it to Christ.

iv. 1. Not "latter times" in the sense of future ages, but merely times after those in which the apostle is writing, as in *Acts xx. 29*. "Doctrines of devils;" "Doctrines taught by, suggested by devils" (Alford, Conybeare, &c.).

iv. 6. "Of the faith and the good doctrine:" &c., the faith and

Observe, The best way for ministers to grow in knowledge and faith is to put the brethren in remembrance; while we teach others we teach ourselves. 3. They whom ministers teach are brethren, and are to be treated like brethren; for ministers are not lords of God's heritage.

First. Godliness is here pressed upon him and others; "Refuse profane and old wives' sayings," ver. 7, 8. The Jewish traditions which some people fill their heads with have nothing to do with them; "But exercise thyself rather unto godliness;" that is, mind practical religion. Those that would be godly must exercise themselves unto godliness; it requires a constant exercise. The reason is taken from the gain of godliness: "Bodily exercise profiteth little," or for a little time. Abstinence from meats, and marriage, and the like, though they pass for acts of mortification and self-denial, yet they profit little, they turn to little account. What will it avail us to mortify the body, if we do not mortify sin? Observe that there is a great deal to be got by godliness; it will be of use to us in the conduct of our whole conversation; "For it hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Observe, that the gain of godliness lies much in the promise; and the promises made to godly people relate to the life that now is, but especially they relate to the life which is to come. Under the Old Testament, the promises were mostly of temporal blessings; but under the New Testament, of spiritual and eternal blessings. [Though there is no promise in the New Testament by which the good things of this life, such as health and prosperity, are secured to the godly, yet it is obvious to all, that the natural tendency of a virtuous and godly course of conduct is to promote our temporal welfare, and to preserve us from all those calamities, diseases, and afflictions which are the immediate effects of vice. Besides which the very trials of the godly are blessings in disguise.] If godly people have but little of the good things of the life that now is, yet it shall be made up to them in the good things of the life that is to come. Observe farther, there were profane and old wives' fables in the days of the apostles; and Timothy, though an excellent man, was not above such a word of advice, "refuse profane," &c. Again, it is not enough that we refuse profane and old wives' fables, but we must exercise ourselves to godliness; we must not only cease to do evil, but we must learn to do well, *1st* i. 16, 17; and we must make a practice of exercising ourselves to godliness. And, lastly, those that are truly godly shall not be losers at last, whatever becomes of those who content themselves with bodily exercise, for godliness "hath the promise," &c.

Secondly. The encouragement which we have to proceed in the ways of godliness, and to exercise ourselves to it, notwithstanding the difficulties and discouragement that we meet with in it. He had said, ver. 8, that "it is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life which now is." But the question is, whether the profit will balance the loss? for if it will not it is not profit. Yes, we are sure it will. Here is another of Paul's "faithful sayings" worthy of all acceptance, that all our labours and losses in the service of God and work of religion will be abundantly recompensed. So that, though we lose for Christ, we shall not lose by him; therefore we labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God," ver. 10. Observe, 1. That godly people must labour and expect reproach; they must do well, and yet expect at the same time to suffer ill. Toil and trouble are to be expected by us, not only as men, but as saints in this world. 2. Those that labour and suffer reproach in the service of God, and the work of religion, may depend upon the living God that they shall not lose by it. Let this encourage them, "We trust in the living God." The consideration of this, that that God who hath undertaken to be our paymaster is the living God, who doth himself live for ever, and is the fountain of life to all that serve him, should encourage us in all our services, and in all our sufferings for him, especially considering that he is "the Saviour of all men;" that is, 1st. By his providence he protects the persons and prolongs the lives, of the children of men. 2nd. He hath a general goodwill to the eternal salvation of all men thus far, that he is not willing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance; he desires not the death of sinners. He is thus far the Saviour of all men, that none are left in the same desperate condition that fallen angels are in. Now, if he be thus the Saviour of all men, we may from hence infer that much more he will be the rewarder of those that seek and serve him; if he have such a goodwill for all his creatures, much more will he provide well for those that are his new creatures, that are born again. He is the Saviour of all men, but "especially of those that believe," and the salvation he hath in store for those that believe is sufficient to recompense them for all their services and sufferings. [3rd. He has provided a sacrifice sufficient to atone for the sins of all men. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." *1 Jno* ii. 1, 2. The blood that atones for one is so precious that it needs no more and no other to atone for all. But its saving benefit is appropriated by faith; "Specially of those that believe." "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." *Jno* iii. 18.]

Here we see, *First*. The life of a Christian is a life of labour and suffering, we labour and suffer. *Secondly*. The best we can expect to suffer in the present life is reproach for our well-doing, for our work of faith, and labour of love. *Thirdly*. True Christians trust in the living God, for cursed is the man that trusteth in man, or in any but the living God, and they that trust in him shall never be ashamed; trust in him at all times. *Fourthly*. God is the general Saviour of all men, as he hath put them into a salvable state; but he is in a peculiar manner the Saviour of true believers. There is then a general and a special redemption.

Thirdly. He concludes the chapter with an exhortation to Timothy, 1. To "command and teach these things" that he had now been teaching him. Command them to exercise themselves unto godliness; teach them the profit of it, and that if they serve God they serve one who will be sure to bear them out.

2. He charges him to carry himself with that gravity and prudence as might gain him respect notwithstanding his youth. "Let no man despise thy youth," that is, give no man an occasion to despise thy youth. Men's youth will not be despised if they do not by youthful vanities and follies make themselves despicable; and that men may do who are old, and may thank themselves if they be despised.

3. He charges him to confirm his doctrine by a good example; "Be thou an example of the believers," &c. Observe, Those that teach by their doctrine must teach by their life, else they pull down with one hand what they build up with the other; they must be examples both "in word and conversation." Their discourse must be edifying, and that will be a good example; their conversation must be strict, and that will be a good example. They must be examples in charity, or love to God and all good men; examples in spirit, that is, in spiritual-mindedness, in spiritual worship; in faith, that is, in the profession of Christian faith; and in purity, or chastity.

4. He charges him to study hard; "Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, to meditation upon these things," ver. 13. Though Timothy had extraordinary gifts, yet he must use ordinary means. Or, it may be meant of the public reading of the Scriptures; he must read and exhort, that is, read and expound, read and press what he read upon them. He must expound it both by way of exhortation and by way of doctrine; that is, he

must teach them both what to do and what to believe. Observe, 1st. Ministers must teach and command the things that they are taught, and commanded themselves to do; they must teach people to observe all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded, *Mat* xxviii. 20. 2nd. The best way for ministers to prevent being despised is to teach and practise the things that are given them in charge. No wonder if ministers are despised who do not teach these things, or, instead of being examples of good to believers, act directly contrary to the doctrines they preach; for ministers are to be examples of their flock. 3rd. Those ministers who are the best accomplished for their work must yet mind their studies, that they may be improving in knowledge; and they must mind also their work; they are to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee," ver. 14. The gifts of God will wither if they be neglected; it may be understood either of the office to which he was advanced or of his qualifications for that office: if of the former, it was ordination in an ordinary way; if of the latter, it was extraordinary. It seems to be the former, for it was by "laying on of hands," &c. Here see the Scripture way of ordination; it was by laying on of hands, and laying on the hands of the presbytery. Observe, Timothy was ordained by men in office. It was an extraordinary gift that we read elsewhere was conferred on him, by the laying on of Paul's hands, but he was invested in the office of the ministry by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. *First*. We may note the office of the ministry. It is the gift of Christ; when he ascended up on high he received gifts for men, and he gave some apostles, &c., and some pastors and teachers, *Eph* iv. 8, 11; and this was a very kind gift to his church. *Secondly*. Ministers ought not to neglect whatever gift is bestowed upon them. Whether by gift we are here to understand the office of the ministry, or qualifications for that office, neither the one nor the other must be neglected. *Thirdly*. Though there was prophecy in the case of Timothy, (the gift was given by prophecy,) yet it was accompanied with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery; that is, a number of presbyters. The office was conveyed to him this way; and I should think here is a sufficient warrant for ordination by presbyters, since it doth not appear St. Paul was concerned in Timothy's ordination. It is true, extraordinary gifts were conferred on him by the laying on of the apostle's hands, *2 Tim* i. 6; but if he was concerned in his ordination, the presbytery was not excluded, for that is particularly mentioned, from whence it seems pretty evident that the presbytery have the inherent power of ordination.

Having this work committed to him, he must give himself wholly to it; Be wholly in those things, "that thy profiting may appear." He was a wise, knowing man, and yet he must still be profiting, and make it appear that he improved in knowledge. 1st. Ministers are to be much in meditation. They are to consider beforehand how and what they must speak; they are to meditate on the great trust committed to them, of the worth and value of immortal souls, and of the account they must give at the last. 2nd. Ministers must be wholly in these things. They must mind these things as their principal work and business; "Give thyself wholly to them." 3rd. By this means their profiting will appear in all things, as well as to all persons. This is the way for them to profit in knowledge and grace, and also to profit others.

5. He presses it upon him to be very cautious. "Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine;" consider what thou preachest. "Continue in them," that is, in the truths that thou hast received; and this will be the way to "save thyself and those that hear thee." Observe, 1st. Ministers are engaged in saving work, which makes it a good work. 2nd. The care of ministers should be, in the first place, to save themselves; Save thyself in the first place, so shalt thou be instrumental to save them that hear thee. 3rd. Ministers, in preaching, should aim at the salvation of those that hear them, next to the salvation of their own souls. 4th. The best way to answer both these ends is to take heed to ourselves, &c.

CHAPTER V.

Here the apostle directs Timothy, I. How to reprove, ver. 1, 2. II. Of widows, both elder and younger, ver. 3—16. III. Of elders, ver. 17—19. IV. Of public reproof, ver. 20. V. A solemn charge of ordination, ver. 21, 22. VI. Of his health, ver. 23; and of men's sins being very different in their effects, ver. 24, 25.



REBUKE not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; 2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

Here the apostle gives rules to Timothy, and in him to other ministers, in reproof. Ministers are reprovers by office. Now the rule is,

First. To be very tender in rebuking elders, elders in age, elders by office. Respect must be had to the dignity of their years and place, and therefore they must not be rebuked sharply nor magistratically; but Timothy himself, though an evangelist, must intreat them as fathers, for that would be the likeliest way to work upon them and to win upon them.

Secondly. The younger must be rebuked as brethren with love and tenderness, not as desirous to spy faults or pick quarrels, but as those that are willing to make the best of them. There is need of a great deal of meekness in reproofing those that deserve reproof.

Thirdly. The elder women must be reproofed, when there is occasion. They must be reproofed as mothers; *Hos* ii. 2, "Plead with your mother, plead."

Fourthly. The younger women must be reproofed, but reproofed "as sisters, with all purity." If Timothy, so mortified a man to this world, and to the flesh, and the lusts of it, had need of such a caution as this, much more have we. Observe, 1. Ministers are reprovers by office; it is a part, though the least pleasing part, of their office. They are to preach the word, &c.; to reprove and rebuke, *2 Tim* iv. 2. 2. A great difference is to be made in our reproofs, according to the age, quality, and other circumstances of the persons rebuked; thus an elder in age or office must be intreated as a father. "Of some have compassion, making a difference," *Jude* 22.

3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. 4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

teaching of the Gospel. "Whereunto thou hast attained:" rather, "which thou hast followed." Tyndal, Cranmer, and Geneva read "continually followed."

iv. 8. "Bodily exercise profiteth to a small extent:" "It has its uses, but those uses only partial" (Alford, Bengel, &c.).

iv. 10. "Who is the Saviour of all men:" God is a Saviour of all, but all will not be saved; it is man's sin, not God's will, that destroys some for whom Christ died (*John* v. 40). "The prominence given to

the universality of salvation seems to imply that it was denied by the Ephesian false teachers. So the Gnostics considered salvation as belonging only to the enlightened few, who in their system constituted a kind of spiritual aristocracy" (Conybeare and Howson).

iv. 14. See Note on *2 Tim* i. 6.

iv. 16. "In doing this;" the pastor best forwards his own salvation by faithfully working for that of others.

v. 3. Here the apostle seems to speak of widows generally, who

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. 6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. 7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. 8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. 9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, 10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. 11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; 12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. 13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. 14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 15 For some are already turned aside after Satan. 16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.



WIDOW DESOLATE.—ver. 5.

Directions are here given concerning the taking of widows into the number of those that were employed by the church, and had maintenance from the church; "Honour widows that are widows indeed." Honour them, that is, maintain them, admit them into office. There was in those times an office in the church in which widows were employed, and that was to tend the sick and the aged, to look to them by the direction of the deacons. [They seem to have been employed also in teaching and watching over the younger members and catechumens of their own sex.] We read of the care taken of widows immediately upon the first forming of the Christian church, *Acts vi. 1*, where the Grecians "thought their widows were neglected in the daily ministration" and provision that was made for poor widows. The general rule is to "honour widows that are widows indeed," that is, to maintain them, relieve them with respect and tenderness.

First, It is appointed that those widows only should be relieved by the charity of the church that were pious and devout, and not wanton widows, that "lived in pleasure," ver. 5, 6. She is to be reckoned a widow indeed, and fit to be maintained at the church's charge, that being "desolate, trusteth in God." Observe, That it is the duty and comfort of those that are desolate to trust in God. Therefore God sometimes brings his people into such straits that they have nothing else to trust to, that they may with more confidence trust in him. Widowhood is a desolate estate; but "let the widows trust in me," *Jer. xlix. 11*, and rejoice that they have a God to trust to. Again, They that trust in God must "continue in prayer." If by faith we confide in God, by prayer we must give glory to God, and commit ourselves to his conduct. Anna was a widow indeed, that "departed not from the temple," *Lu. ii. 37*, "but served God with fasting and prayer night and day;" but she is not a widow indeed that "liveth in pleasure," ver. 6, or that liveth licentiously. A jovial widow is not a widow indeed, not fit to be taken under the care of

the church. "She that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives," is no living member of the church, out as a carcass in it, or a mortified member. We may apply it more generally; those that live in pleasure are dead while they live, spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins; they are in the world to no purpose, buried alive as to the great ends of living.

Secondly, Another rule he gives is, that the church should not be charged with the maintenance of those widows that had relations of their own that were able to maintain them. This is mentioned several times; ver. 4, "If any widow have children or nephews," that is, grandchildren or near relations, let them maintain them, and let not the church be burthened; so ver. 16. This is called shewing "piety at home," ver. 4, or shewing piety towards their own families. Observe, That the respect of children to their parents, and their care of them, is fitly called piety. This is requiting their parents. Children can never sufficiently requite their parents for the care they have taken of them, and the pains they have taken with them; but, however, they must endeavour to do it. It is the indispensable duty of children, if their parents be in necessity, and they are in ability to relieve them, to do it to the utmost of their power, "for that is good and acceptable before God." The Pharisees taught that a gift to the altar was more acceptable to God than relieving a poor parent, *Mat. xv. 5*; but here we are told that this "is better than all burnt offerings and sacrifices; this is good and acceptable," &c. He speaks of this again, ver. 8, "If any provide not for his own," &c., that is, if any man or woman do not maintain their own poor relations that belong to them, they do in effect "deny the faith;" for the design of Christ was to confirm the law of Moses, and particularly the law of the fifth commandment, which is, "Honour thy father and mother," so that they deny the faith that disobey that law, much more if they provide not for their wives and children, and those that are parts of themselves. If they spend that upon their lusts that should maintain their families, they have denied the faith, "and are worse than infidels." One reason why this care must be taken that those that were rich should maintain their poor relations, and not burthen the church with them is, ver. 16, "That it may relieve them that are widows indeed." Observe, That charity misplaced is a great hindrance to true charity; therefore there should be prudence in the choice of the objects of charity, that it may not be thrown away upon those that are not properly so, that there may be the more for those that are real objects of charity.

Thirdly, He gives directions concerning the characters of the widows that were to be taken into the number to receive the church's charity: not under sixty years old.

[It can scarcely be imagined that the apostle meant to preclude the church from affording relief to any widow unless she were of this age, since the necessities of younger widows might be very urgent, and render them proper objects of compassion. We must suppose, therefore, that these aged widows formed a particular class or order, who were employed, as mentioned above, by the church, and, in consideration of their services, were either wholly or in great part maintained by it. Into the number of those thus employed a widow might not be taken, unless she were sixty. Some of the continental Protestant churches have an order of deaconesses, but it is rarely, if ever, to be met with in our British churches. The office is clearly not of permanent obligation, like those of pastor and deacons, but is left to be used or not, as the requirements and discretion of particular churches may determine. Its revival, under judicious pastoral oversight and guidance, might, in many cases, prove a valuable auxiliary to the church.]

Nor any that have divorced their husbands, or been divorced from them, and have married again; she must have been "the wife of one man," such as had been a housekeeper, had a good name for hospitality and charity, "well reported of for good works." Observe, That particular care ought to be taken to relieve those when they fall into decay who, when they had wherewithal, were ready to every good work. Here are instances of such good works as are proper to be done by good wives: "If she have brought up children," he doth not say, If she have borne children, (children are a heritage of the Lord, that depend on the will of God,) but if she had not children of her own, yet she brought up children; "If she have lodged strangers," and "washed the saints' feet," that is, if she have been ready to give entertainment to good Christians and good ministers, when they were in their travels for the spreading of the Gospel, (washing of the feet of their friends was a part of their entertainment;) "If she have relieved the afflicted," when she had ability,—let her be relieved now. Observe, That those that would find mercy when they are in distress, must shew mercy when they are in prosperity.

Fourthly, He cautions them to take heed of admitting into the number those that are likely to be no credit to them; ver. 11, "The younger widows refuse," &c. They will be weary of their employments in the church, and of living by rule, as they must do; so they will marry and cast off their first faith. You read of a first love, *Rev. ii. 4*, and here of a first faith; that is, the engagements they gave to the church to behave themselves well, and as became the trust reposed in them. It does not appear that by their first faith is meant their vow not to marry, for the Scripture is very silent on that head; besides the apostle here adviseth the younger widows to marry, ver. 14, which he would not if hereby they must have broken their vows. Dr. Whitby well observes, "If this faith referred to a promise made to the church not to marry, it could not be called their first faith;" ver. 13, "Withal they learn to be idle—and not only idle, but tattlers," &c. Observe, That it is seldom that those that are idle are only idle, they learn to be "tattlers and busybodies," and to make mischief among neighbours, and sow discord among brethren. Those that had not attained to such a gravity of mind as was fit for the deaconesses, or the widows that were taken among the church's poor, let them "marry, bear children," &c., ver. 14. Observe, If housekeepers do not mind their business, but are tattlers, they give occasion to the adversaries of Christianity to reproach the Christian name, which it seems there were some instances of, ver. 15.

We learn hence, 1. In the primitive church there was care taken of poor widows, and provision made for them, and the churches of Christ in these days should follow so good an example as far as they are able. 2. In the distribution of the church's charity or alms, great care is to be taken that those share in the public bounty who most want it and best deserve it. A widow was not to be taken into the primitive church that had relations who were able to maintain her, or who was not well reported of for good works, but lived in pleasure; "But the younger widows refuse; for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry." 3. The credit of religion, and the reputation of Christian churches, is very much concerned in the character and behaviour of those that are taken into any employment in the church, though of a lower nature, such as the business of deaconesses, or that receive alms of the church; if they do not behave well, but are tattlers, busy-bodies, &c., they will give occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 4. Christianity obliges its professors to relieve their indigent friends, particularly poor widows, that the church may not be charged with them,—that it may relieve them that are widows indeed. Rich people should be ashamed to burthen the church with their poor relations, when it is with difficulty that those are supplied who have no children or nephews, that is, grandchildren, that are in a capacity to relieve them.

17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy

were from the first (if they needed) supported by the church. "Widows indeed:" in contrast to those who had relatives to support them.

v. 4. "Good and:" omitted in best MSS.

v. 8. "Faith does not set aside natural duties, but perfects and strengthens them" (Bengel).

v. 9, 10. A special band of widows apparently are referred to here, who had dedicated themselves to the service of God, and were officially recognised and supported by the church (*Acts ix. 41*). "Of

one man:" i.e., clearly married but once. (See Additional Note on chap. iii. 2.) "Brought up children:" if not her own, possibly orphans under the care of the church. "Washed the saints' feet:" see John xiii. 14; possibly metaphorical for showing a spirit of Christ-like humility.

v. 12. "Condemnation," or "judgment," rather than "damnation."

v. 14. "The adversary:" "The adversary is eager to exaggerate

of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward. 19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. 20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. 21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. 22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. 23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. 24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. 25 Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

Here are directions concerning ministers:

First. Care must be taken that they be honourably maintained; ver. 17, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour," that is, of double maintenance, double to what they have had, or to what others have. [Or, rather, the apostle uses a definite for an indefinite term; his meaning is, that they should have a liberal maintenance.] "Especially they who labour in the word and doctrine," that is, those that are more laborious than others.

Observe. The presbytery ruled, and the same that ruled were those that laboured in the word and doctrine; they had not one to preach to them and another to rule them, but the work was done by one and the same person. Some have imagined by "the elders that rule well" the apostle means lay elders, who were employed in ruling, but not in teaching; they were concerned in church government, but did not meddle with the administration of the word and sacraments, and I confess this is the plainest text of Scripture that can be found to countenance such an opinion; but it seems a little strange that mere ruling elders should be accounted worthy of double honour—when the apostle preferred preaching to baptizing, and much more would he prefer it to ruling the church; and it is more strange the apostle should take no notice of them when he treats of church officers; but, as it is hinted before, they had not in the primitive church one to preach to them and another to rule them, but ruling and teaching were performed by the same persons, only some might labour more in the word and doctrine than others. Here we have,

1. The work of ministers. It consists principally in two things, ruling well, and labouring in the word and doctrine. This was the main business of elders, or presbyters, in the days of the apostles.

2. The honour due to them who were not idle but laborious in this work; they were worthy of double honour, esteem, and maintenance. He quotes a Scripture to confirm this command concerning the maintenance of ministers that we should think foreign, but it intimates what a significance there was in many of the laws of Moses, and particularly in that, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," *Deut. xxv. 4*. The beasts that were employed in treading out the corn (for that way they took instead of threshing it) were allowed to feed while they did work, so that the more work they did the more food they had; therefore let the elders that labour in the word and doctrine be well provided for, for the labourer is worthy of his reward, *Mat. x. 10*, and there is all the reason in the world he should have it. We hence learn, 1st. God, both under the law and now under the Gospel, hath taken care that his ministers be well provided for. Doth God take care for oxen, and will he not take care of his own servants? The ox only treadeth out the corn of which they make the bread that perisheth, but ministers break the bread of life which endureth for ever. 2nd. The comfortable subsistence of ministers. As it is God's appointment that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel, *1 Cor. ix. 14*, so it is their just due, as much as the reward of the labourer; and those who would have ministers starved, or not comfortably provided for, God will require it of them another day.

Secondly. Concerning the accusation of ministers; ver. 19, "Against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses." Here is the Scripture method of proceeding against an elder when accused of any crime. Observe,

1. There must be an accusation. It must not be a flying, uncertain report, but an accusation, containing a certain charge, must be drawn up. Farther, He is not to be proceeded against by way of inquiry, that is, according to the modern practice of the inquisition, which draws up articles for men to purge themselves of such crimes, or else to accuse themselves, but, according to the advice of St. Paul, there must be an accusation brought against an elder.

2. This accusation is not to be received unless supported by two or three credible witnesses, and the accusation must be received before them; that is, the accused must have the accusers face to face, because the reputation of a minister is in a particular manner a tender thing; and therefore, before any thing be done in the least to blemish that reputation, great care must be taken that the thing alleged against him be well proved, that he be not reproached upon an uncertain surmise; but, ver. 20, "Them that sin, rebuke before all;" that is, thou needest not be so tender of other people, but rebuke them publicly. Or, them that sin before all, rebuke before all, that the plaster may be as wide as the wound, and that those who are in danger of sinning by the example of their fall may take warning by the rebuke given them for it, that others also may fear. 1st. Public scandalous sinners must be rebuked publicly. As their sin hath been public, and committed before many, or at last come to the hearing of all, so their reproof must be public and before all. 2nd. Public rebuke is designed for the good of others, that they may fear, as well as for the good of the party rebuked; as it was ordered under the law, that public offenders should receive public punishment, and all Israel shall hear and fear, and do no more wickedly.

Thirdly. Concerning the ordination of ministers; ver. 22, "Lay hands sud-

denly on no man." It seems to be meant of the ordaining of men to the office of the ministry, which ought not to be done rashly and inconsiderately, and before due trial made of their gifts and graces, their abilities and qualifications for it. Some understand it of absolution. Be not too hasty in laying hands on any; remit not the censure of the church to any till first time be taken for the proof of their sincerity in their repentance; "Neither be partaker of other men's sins;" implying that those that are too easy in remitting the censures of the church encourage others in the sins which are thus connived at, and make themselves thereby guilty. Observe, We have great need to watch over ourselves at all times that we do not make ourselves partakers of other men's sins. Keep thyself pure, not only from doing the like thyself, but from countenancing it, or being any way accessory to it in others. Here is, 1. A caution against rash ordinations of ministers, or absolution of those that have been under church censures: lay hands suddenly on no man. 2. Those that are rash, either in the one case or the other, will make themselves partakers in other men's sins. 3. We must keep ourselves pure if we would be pure. The grace of God makes and keeps us pure, but it is by our own endeavours.

This (ver. 24, 25) seems to refer to absolution; "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some follow after," &c. Observe, Ministers have need of a great deal of wisdom to know how to accommodate themselves to the variety of offences and offenders that they have occasion to deal with. 1st. Some men's sins are so plain and obvious, and not found by secret search, that there is no dispute concerning the bringing of them under the censures of the church; they go before to judgment to lead them to censure. 2nd. Others they follow after; that is, their wickedness doth not presently appear, nor till after a due search hath been made concerning it. Or, as some understand it, some men's sins continue after they are censured; they are not reformed by the censure, and in that case there must be no absolution. 3rd. As to the evidences of repentance, "the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise," that is, whose good works do not appear, their wickedness "cannot be hid," and so it will be easy to discern who are to be absolved and who are not. First. There are secret and there are open sins. Some men's sins are open beforehand, and going before unto judgment, and some they follow after. Secondly. Sinners must be differently dealt with by the church. Thirdly. The effects of church censures are very different. Some are thereby humbled and brought to repentance, so that their good works are manifest beforehand, while it is quite otherwise with others. Fourthly. The incorrigible cannot be hid; for God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of all hearts.

Fourthly. As to Timothy himself.

1. Here is a charge to him to be careful of his office, and a solemn charge it is. "I charge thee before God," as thou wilt answer it to God before holy and elect angels, "observe these things without partiality," ver. 21. Observe, It will become ministers to be partial, and to have respect of persons, and to prefer one before another upon any secular account. [As in civil transactions, so also in church affairs, it is of the utmost importance that every thing should be done on the principle of rectitude, and not from partiality or any spirit of favouritism. Great responsibility rests on those who rule, and ordain, and appoint to offices in the church; and they should be especially careful in these matters so to acquit themselves as that none shall be able to accuse, or even to suspect them of being influenced by any sinister motive, or by a desire to put forward their own personal friends or relatives into posts of honour and emolument, especially if this be done to the disparagement of others who may have superior or even equal claims.] He charges him by all that is dear "before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels," to guard against partiality.

2. Ministers must give an account to God and the Lord Jesus Christ whether and how they have observed all things given them in charge; and woe to them if they have been partial in their ministrations out of any worldly politic view.

3. He charges him to take care of his health. "Drink no longer water," &c. It seems Timothy was a mortified man to the pleasures of sense; he drank water, and he was a man of no strong constitution of body, and for that reason Paul advises him to use wine for the helping of his stomach, and the recruiting of his nature. Observe, It is a little wine, for ministers must not be given to much wine, so much as may be for the health of the body, not so as to distemper it; for God hath made wine to rejoice man's heart. 1st. It is the will of God that people should take all due care of their bodies. As we are not to make them our masters, so neither our slaves, but to use them so as they may be most fit and helpful to us in the service of God. Observe, 2nd. Wine is most proper for sickly and weakly people, whose stomachs are often out of order, and who labour under infirmities. "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts," *Pr. xxxi. 6*. 3rd. Wine should be used as a help, and not a hindrance, to our work and usefulness.

CHAPTER VI.

I. He treats of the duty of servants, ver. 1, 2. II. Of false teachers, ver. 3—5. III. Of godliness and covetousness, ver. 6—10. IV. What Timothy was to flee, and what to follow, ver. 11, 12. V. A solemn charge, ver. 13—16. And, VI. A charge for the rich, ver. 17—19; and lastly, a charge to Timothy, ver. 20, 21.



ET as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. 2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. 3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

v. 17. "Especially they who," &c.: hence it is evident that all presbyters did not publicly teach (Conybeare, Alford, &c.).

v. 21. Best MSS. read "before God and Christ Jesus." "Elect angels:" the angels who are God's chosen ministers (*Heb. i. 14*; *Psa. xci. 11*).

v. 22. "The reference is primarily to presbyters, of course extending also in its spirit to all other church officers" (Alford). The second clause depends on the first; if Timothy carelessly ordained

the faults of a few, and to lay the blame on the whole church and its doctrines" (Bengel). "Not Satan, but any adversary, Jew or Gentile, who may be on the watch to get occasion, by the lax conduct of the believers, to slander the church" (Alford).

v. 16. Best MSS. omit "man or;" the sense therefore would be, "If any believing woman have widows belonging to her requiring support, let her care for them, thus easing the church and guarding herself from the evils of idleness."

4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

Here is, First. The duty of servants. He had spoken before of church relations, here of family relations. Servants are here said to be "under the yoke," which notes both subjection and labour; they are yoked to work, not to be idle. If Christianity finds servants under the yoke, it continues them under it, for the Gospel does not cancel the obligations any lie under, either by the law of nature or by mutual consent. They must respect their masters, "count them worthy of all honour," because they are their masters; that is, of all the respect, and observance, and compliance, and obedience that is justly expected from servants to their masters. Not that they were to think that of them which they were not; but, as their masters, they must count them worthy of all that honour which was fit for them to receive, "that the name of God be not blasphemed." If servants that embraced the Christian religion should grow insolent and disobedient to their masters, the doctrine of Christ would be reflected on for their sakes, as if it had made men worse masters than they had been before they had received the Gospel. Observe, If the professors of religion misbehave themselves, "the name of God and his doctrine" is in danger of being blasphemed by those that seek occasion to speak evil of that worthy name by which we are called. And this is a good reason why we should all carry ourselves well, that we may prevent the occasion which many seek, and will be very apt to lay hold of, to speak ill of religion for our sakes. Or, suppose the master were a Christian and a believer, and the servant a believer too, would not that excuse him, because "in Christ there is neither bond nor free?" No, by no means, for Jesus Christ did not come to dissolve the bond of civil relation, but to strengthen it. "They that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren;" for that brotherhood relates only to spiritual privileges, not to any outward dignity or advantage. Those misunderstand and abuse their religion who make it a pretence for denying the duties that they owe to their relations; nay, "rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved." They must think themselves the more obliged to serve them, because the faith and love that bespeaks men Christians obliges them to do good, and that is all wherein their service consists. Observe, That it is a great encouragement to us in doing our duty to our relations, if we have reason to think they are faithful and beloved, and "partakers of the benefit," that is, of the benefit of Christianity. Observe, Believing masters and servants are brethren, and partakers of the benefit, for in Christ Jesus there is neither bond nor free, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus, Gal. iii. 28; Timothy is appointed to "teach and exhort these things." Observe, That ministers must preach not only the general duties of all, but the duties of particular relations.

[The persons to whom Timothy was to give these instructions were not servants in our sense of the word, but slaves; and if, notwithstanding the injustice done them, as involved in the very condition of slavery, they were to treat their masters with the obedience and respect here enjoined, how much more incumbent is similar conduct upon Christian servants! Perhaps, taken as a class, few persons have greater opportunities of exhibiting the influence of Christianity upon the daily life and temper than they have, and few, if any, are under greater obligations to it for the improvement of their social condition. It is Christianity that has abolished slavery and established the mutual respect, good-will, and kindness which obtain in all well-regulated families between masters and servants. Are you a servant? then think how much you may promote the happiness of the family in which you live by your respectful and quiet deportment, and by your cheerful obedience in all things to the commands of your employers. Let conscientiousness, integrity, and an assiduous attention to your duties be apparent in every part of your conduct, and they will be constrained to pay a just tribute of respect to you personally; and what is more, and will give you greater satisfaction, they will acknowledge the excellence of your religion, though they may have none themselves. If it is your happiness to live in a godly family, then remember that, while faith in Christ makes you partakers together of religious privileges, it does not confound social distinctions. The various ranks and subordinations in society are not the result of human contrivance, but of Divine appointment. You were as much made a servant by providence as you were made a Christian by grace. That servant therefore will act in a manner unworthy of his Christian profession who, because he is employed by a pious master, presumes to treat him with rudeness and impertinent familiarity, or allows himself to disobey or neglect his orders. And let me add, that masters who have pious and faithful servants should be sensible of the advantage, and treat them with respect and kindness. When it is remembered how much we must of necessity depend upon them, confide in them, and commit the interests of our families to their hands, it seems but a reasonable return, if they serve us with fidelity, that we should in every considerate way promote their welfare.]

Secondly. Paul here warns Timothy to withdraw from those that corrupted the doctrine of Christ, and made it the subject of strife, and debate, and controversy. "If any man teach otherwise," ver. 3-5; that is, do not preach practically, do not teach and exhort that which is for the promoting of serious godliness; if he will not consent to wholesome words, words that have a direct tendency to heal the soul, if he will not consent to these, even "the words of our Lord Jesus Christ." Observe, We are not required to consent to any words as wholesome words but only the words of our Lord Jesus Christ; but those we must give our unfeigned assent and consent to; [Observe, What the apostles wrote by inspiration are "the words of our Lord Jesus Christ." They speak his meaning, and are clothed with his authority. "We have the mind of Christ," 1 Cor. ii. 16;] and "to the doctrine which is according to godliness." Observe, The doctrine of our Lord Jesus is a doctrine according to godliness; it hath a direct tendency to make people godly; but he that doth not do so is proud, ver. 4, and contentious, ignorant, and doth a great deal of mischief to the church, knowing nothing. Observe, Commonly those are most proud that know least, for with all their knowledge they do not know themselves. "But doting about questions." Those who fall off from the plain practical doctrines of Christianity fall into controversies which eat out the life and power of religion; they dote about questions and strifes of words, which do a great deal of mischief in the church, are the occasion of "envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings." When men are not content with the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, but will frame notions of their own, and impose them and that too in their own words, which man's wisdom teacheth, and not in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, 1 Cor. ii. 13, they sow the seeds of all mischief in the church. Hence come "perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds," ver. 5, disputes that are all subtlety and no

solidity. Observe, Men of corrupt minds are destitute of the truth. The reason why men's minds are corrupt is, because they do not stick to "the truth as it is in Jesus." "Supposing that gain is godliness;" that is, the making religion truckle to their secular interests: from such as these Timothy is warned to withdraw himself. We observe, 1. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ are wholesome words, they are the fittest to prevent or heal the church's wounds, as well as to heal a wounded conscience; for Christ hath "the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to him that is weary," Isa. l. 4. The words of Christ are the best to prevent ruptures in the church; for none that profess faith in him will dispute the aptness or authority of his words, who is their Lord and teacher. And it hath never gone well with the church since the words of men have claimed a regard equal to his words, and in some cases a much greater. 2. Whoever doth teach otherwise, and doth not consent to these wholesome words, "He is proud, knowing nothing," for pride and ignorance commonly go together. 3. St. Paul sets a brand only on those that consent not to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness; they are "proud, knowing nothing," &c.; other words more wholesome he knew not. 4. We learn the sad effects of "doting about questions and strifes of words." Of such doting about questions "cometh envy, strife, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings." When men leave the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, they will never agree in other words, either of their own or other men's inventions, but will perpetually wrangle and quarrel about them; and this will produce envy, when they see the words of others preferred to those they have adopted for their own; and this will be attended with jealousies and suspicions of one another, called here "evil surmisings;" then they will proceed to "perverse disputings." 5. Such persons who are given to perverse disputings appear to be men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, and who act in this manner for the sake of gain, which is all their godliness, "supposing gain to be godliness," contrary to the apostle's judgment, who reckoned godliness great gain. 6. Good ministers and Christians will withdraw themselves from such. "Come out from among them, my people, and be ye separate," says the Lord; from such withdraw thyself.

[Christians are to contend, and to contend earnestly, for the faith; to contend against infidelity which would subvert it, against superstition which would corrupt it, against false doctrine which would distort it; but they must beware that controversy does not degenerate into perverse disputings and a mere strife of words. Alas! how many of the controversies which have torn and rent the church, and divided Christians into sects, have been little better. How unseemly are such strifes among brethren, and how detrimental to the very truth they all love, and all seek to promote.]

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.



INTERIOR OF COLOSSEUM.—VER. 12.

unfit men, he would not be free from blame if they created mischief or scandal in the church. Ellicott, Wiesinger, and others understand "lay hands suddenly" of the restoring to church fellowship those who had fallen into sin.

v. 24, 25. Of some the sins are notorious, so that they are known to the judge before the man appears before him; of others the sins are concealed, and only to be discovered by careful examination. So also with good deeds—some are manifest, others require searching

out, being done secretly. Hence, as Alford remarks, "The tendency of this verse (25) is to warn Timothy against hasty condemnation, as the former had done against hasty approval."

vi. 1, 2. Christian slaves under the yoke (i.e., slaves of unbelieving masters) are not to bring reproach on the God whom they serve by insubordinate conduct, thinking themselves superior to their masters because of their religion. Also Christian slaves having Christian masters must not think this a reason for neglecting their duty, but

From the meritorious of the abuse which some put upon religion, making it to serve their secular advantages, the apostle takes occasion to shew the excellency of contentment, and the evil of covetousness.

First. The excellency of contentment for this world, though in the sense they meant it is false, yet it is undoubtedly true that, though Christianity is the worst trade, it is the best calling for this world, will be disappointed, and find it it merely to serve their turn for as their calling, and make a business of it, will find it a gainful calling, for it hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come. The truth he lays down is, that "godliness with contentment is great gain." Some read it, godliness with a competency, that is, if a man have but a little in this world, yet, if he have but enough to carry him through it, he needs desire no more, his godliness with that will be his great gain; "for a little which a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." *Ps. xxxvii. 16.* We read it, "godliness with contentment;" godliness is itself great gain, it is profitable to all things, and wherever there is true godliness there will be contentment; but those that are arrived to the highest pitch of contentment with their godliness are certainly the easiest, and happiest people in this world. "Godliness with contentment," that is, Christian contentment, (content must come from principles of godliness,) that is great gain, it is all the wealth in the world. He that is godly is sure to be happy in another world, and if withal he do by contentment accommodate himself to his condition in this world, he hath enough. Here we have, 1. A Christian's gain; it is godliness with contentment, this is the true way to gain, yea, it is gain itself. 2. A Christian's gain is great; it is not like the little gain of worldlings, who are so fond of a little worldly advantage. 3. Godliness is ever accompanied with contentment, in a greater or lesser degree. All truly godly people have learned with St. Paul in whatever state they are to be therewith content, *Phil. iv. 11*; they are content with what God allots for them, well knowing that is best for them. Let us all then endeavour after godliness with contentment. The reason he gives for it is, "For we brought nothing with us into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out," *ver. 7.* This is a reason why we should be content with a little.

1st. Because we can challenge nothing as a debt that is due to us, for we came naked into the world. Whatever we have had since, we are obliged to the providence of God for it; but he that gave may take what and when he pleases. We had our beings, our bodies, our lives, which are more than meat, which are more than raiment, when we came into the world, though we came naked and brought nothing with us; may we not then be content while our beings and lives are continued to us, though we have not everything we would have? We brought nothing with us into this world, and yet God provided for us, care was taken of us, we have been fed all our lives long unto this day, and therefore, when we are reduced to the greatest straits, we cannot be poorer than when we came into this world, and yet then we were provided for; therefore let us trust in God for the remaining part of our pilgrimage.

2nd. We shall carry nothing with us out of this world. A shroud, a coffin, and a grave, are all that the richest man in the world can have from his thousands. Therefore why should we covet much? Why should we not be content with a little, because how much soever we have we must leave it behind us? *Ecc. vi. 15, 16.*

From hence he infers, *ver. 8*, "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." Food and a covering, including habitation as well as raiment. Observe, If God give us the necessary supports of life, we ought to be content therewith, though we have not the ornaments and delights of it. If nature should be content with a little, grace should be content with less; though we have not dainty food, though we have not costly raiment, if we have but food and raiment convenient for us, we ought to be content. This was Agur's prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me," *Pr. xxx. 8.* Here we see, First. The folly of placing our happiness in these things, when we did not bring anything into this world with us, and we can carry nothing out. What will these do when death shall strip them of their happiness and portion, and they must take an everlasting farewell of all these things on which they have so much doted? They may say with poor Micah, "Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?" *Jud. xviii. 24.* Secondly. The necessities of life are the bounds of a true Christian's desire, and with these he will endeavour to be content; his desires are not insatiable; no, a little, a few of the comforts of this life will serve him, and these he may hope to enjoy "having food and raiment."

Secondly. The evil of covetousness; *ver. 9*, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare;" that is, that set their hearts upon the wealth of this world, and are resolved, right or wrong, they will have it. It is not said, they that are rich, but they that will be rich, that is, that place their happiness in worldly wealth, that covet it inordinately, and are eager and violent in the pursuit of it. They that are such "fall into temptation and a snare," unavoidably, for when the devil sees which way their lusts carry them, he will soon bait his hook accordingly. He knew how fond Achan would be of a wedge of gold, and therefore laid that before him. They fall into many foolish and hurtful lusts. The apostle supposes, 1. Some will be rich, that is, they are resolved upon it, nothing short of a great abundance will satisfy. 2. Such will not be safe or innocent, for they will be in danger of ruining themselves for ever; they "fall into temptation and a snare," &c. 3. Worldly lusts are foolish and hurtful, for they "drown men in destruction and perdition." 4. It is good for us to consider the mischievousness of worldly fleshly lusts. They are foolish, and therefore we should be ashamed of them, hurtful, and therefore we should be afraid of them, especially considering to what degree they are hurtful, for they "drown men in destruction and perdition." "The love of money is the root of all evil," *ver. 10.* What sins will not men be drawn into by the love of money! Particularly this was at the bottom of the apostasy of many from the faith of Christ; while they coveted money they "erred from the faith," they quitted their Christianity, and "pierced themselves through with many sorrows." 1st. Observe what is the root of all evil. The love of money. People may have money, and yet not love it; but if they love it inordinately it will push them on to all evil. 2nd. Covetous persons will quit the faith, if that be the way to get money; "Which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith;" Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world," *2 Tim. iv. 10*; for the world was dearer to him than Christianity. Observe, Those that err from the faith pierce themselves with many sorrows; they that depart from God do but treasure up sorrows for themselves.

Thirdly. Hence he takes occasion, both to caution Timothy against their lusts, and to counsel him to keep in the way of God and his duty, and particularly to fulfil the trust reposed in him as a minister. He addresses himself to him as a "man of God." Ministers are men of God, and ought to carry themselves accordingly in everything; men employed for God, devoted to his honour more immediately. The prophets under the Old Testament were called men of God.

1. He charges Timothy to take heed of the love of money, which had been so pernicious to many: "Flee these things." It is ill becoming any men, but especially men of God, to set their hearts upon the things of this world; men of God should be taken up with the things of God.

rather for better service, since "those who receive the benefit (of their service) are faithful and beloved." The Authorised Version here is incorrect grammatically (Alford, Conybeare).

vi. 5. The Authorised Version here inverts the true order; it should read, "supposing that godliness is gain." Best MSS. omit "from such withdraw thyself."

vi. 6. "But godliness," &c.: "The gain is in the very fact of possessing piety joined with contentment, and thus being able to

2. To arm him against the love of the world, he directs him to follow that which is good: "Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." Righteousness in his conversation towards men, godliness towards God, faith and love as living principles to support him and carry him on in the practice both of righteousness and godliness. They that follow after righteousness and godliness from a principle of faith and love have need to put on patience and meekness; patience to bear both the rebukes of providence and the reproaches of men; and meekness wherewith to instruct gainsayers, and pass by the injuries and affronts that are done us. Observe, It is not enough that men of God flee these things, but they must follow after what is directly contrary thereto; farther, what excellent persons men of God are, who follow after righteousness, &c. They are the excellent of the earth, and being acceptable to God they should be approved of men.

3. He exhorts him to do the part of a soldier: "Fight the good fight of faith." Note, Those that will get to heaven must fight their way thither. There must be a conflict with corruption and temptations, and the opposition of the powers of darkness. Again, it is a good fight, it is a good cause, and it will have a good issue; farther, it is the fight of faith: "We do not war after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal," *2 Cor. x. 3, 4.*

4. He exhorts him to "lay hold on eternal life." Observe, 1st. Eternal life is the crown proposed to us for our encouragement to war, and to fight the good fight of faith, the good warfare. 2nd. This we must lay hold on as those that are afraid of coming short of it, and losing it. Lay hold, and take heed of losing our hold. Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown, *Rev. iii. 11.* 3rd. We are called to the fight, and to lay hold on eternal life. 4th. The profession Timothy and all faithful ministers make before many witnesses is a good profession, for they profess and engage to fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life; their calling and their own profession oblige them unto this.

[This is one of those exhortations in which the apostle borrows his metaphor from the Grecian games. Sometimes he compares the Christian course to the races in which the competitors engaged. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run that ye may obtain," *1 Cor. ix. 24.* But in this he alludes to the combats in which they fought for the victory. So he says of himself, "I have fought a good fight," *2 Tim. iv. 7.* Eternal life is represented as a prize for which the Christian is to contend; he is to "lay hold on it," to seize it, and hold it fast, as having won the victory. In order to this, 1. Let everything else be pursued in subordination to it. 2. Oppose a determined resistance to all sin. 3. Diligently cultivate all that is in harmony with it, and that conduces to its ultimate attainment. 4. Fix a steady faith on the cross and righteousness of Christ.]

13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; 14 That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 15 Which in his times he shall shew, *who* is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. 17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. 20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

He charges him to "keep this commandment without spot;" that is, the whole work of his ministry, all the trust reposed in him, all the service expected from him, he must keep it without spot, unrebukeable, that is, he must carry himself so in his ministry as that he might not lay himself open to any blame, nor incur any blemish. What are the motives to move him to this?

First. He gives him a solemn charge; "I give thee a charge in the sight of God, that thou do this." He charges him as he will answer it at the great day, to that God whose eye is upon us all, who sees what we are, and what we do. "God who quickeneth all things," that is, who hath life in himself, and is the fountain of life. This should quicken us to the service of God, that we serve a God who quickens all things. He charges him before Christ Jesus, to whom in a peculiar manner he stood related as a minister of his Gospel, "who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession." Observe, Christ died not only as a sacrifice, but as a martyr, and he witnessed a good confession, when he was arraigned before Pilate, saying, (*Jno. xviii. 36, 37*) "My kingdom is not of this world; I am come to bear witness unto the truth." That good confession of his before Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world," should be effectual to draw off all his followers, both ministers and people, from the love of this world.

Secondly. He minds him of the confession that he himself had made. "Thou hast professed a good profession before many witnesses," *ver. 12*, when he was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. The obligation of

dispense with those things which we cannot carry away with us" (Alford).

vi. 13. "Who before Pontius Pilate," &c.: the fact that our Lord made his confession when in danger is used to confirm Timothy in firm adherence to his confession.

vi. 16. "Who only hath immortality." God only is intrinsically immortal, not by the will of another, but of himself. Some heathen philosophers attributed indestructibility to the soul in itself.

that was still upon him, and he must live up to that, and be quickened by that, to do the work of his ministry.

Thirdly. He minds him of Christ's second coming. "Keep this commandment, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ," that is, keep it as long as thou livest, till Christ come at death to give thee a discharge. Keep it with an eye to his second coming, when we must all give an account of the talents we have been intrusted with, *Lu. xvi. 2*. 1st. The Lord Jesus Christ will appear, and it will be a glorious appearing, not like his first appearing in the days of his humiliation. 2nd. Ministers should have an eye to this appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ in all their ministrations. 3rd. Till his appearing they are to keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable. Mentioning the appearance of Christ as one that loved it, Paul loves to speak of it, and loves to speak of him who shall then appear. The appearing of Christ is certain, "He shall shew" it; but it is not for us to know the time and season of it, for the Father hath kept that in his own power. Let this suffice us, that in time he shall shew it, in the time that he thinks fit for it.

1. Concerning Christ, and God the Father, he here speaks great things. 1st. That God is the "only Potentate;" the powers of earthly princes are all derived from him, and depend upon him; the powers that be are ordained of God, *Rom. xiii. 1*. He is the only Potentate that is absolute, and sovereign, and perfectly independent. 2nd. He is the blessed and only Potentate, infinitely happy, and nothing can in the least impair his happiness. 3rd. He is "King of kings, and Lord of lords." All the kings of the earth derive their power from him, he gave them their crowns, and they hold them under him, and he hath a sovereign dominion over them. This is Christ's title, *Rev. xix. 16*, "upon his vesture and his thigh," for he hath a name higher than the kings of the earth. 4th. He only hath immortality. He only is immortal in himself, and hath immortality as he is the fountain of it, for the immortality of angels and spirits is derived from him. 5th. He dwells in inaccessible light; "Light which no man can approach unto;" that is, no man can get to heaven but those whom he is pleased to bring thither, and admit into his kingdom. 6th. He is invisible. "Whom no man hath seen, nor can see." It is impossible that mortal eyes should bear the brightness of the Divine glory. No man can see God and live.

2. Having mentioned these glorious attributes, he concludes with a doxology; "To him be honour and power everlasting, Amen." God having all power and honour to himself, it is our duty to ascribe all power and honour to him. Note, 1st. What an evil is sin when committed against such a God, the blessed and only Potentate. The evil of it rises in proportion to the dignity of him against whom it is committed. 2nd. Great is his condescension to take notice of such mean and vile creatures as we are. What are we then that the blessed God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, should seek after us? 3rd. Blessed are they who are admitted to dwell with this great and blessed Potentate. "Happy are thy men," says the queen of Sheba to king Solomon; "happy are these thy servants, who stand continually before thee," *1 Kiz. x. 8*. Much more happy are they who are allowed to stand before the King of kings. 4th. Let us love, adore, and praise the great God; for who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy, *Rev. xv. 4*.

Fourthly. The apostle adds by way of postscript, 1. A lesson for rich people, ver. 17—19. Timothy must charge them that are rich to take care of the temptations, and improve the opportunities, of their prosperous estate. 1st. Caution them to take heed of pride. That is a sin that easily besets rich people whom the world smiles upon. "Charge them that they be not high-minded," nor think of themselves above what is meet, nor beuffed up with their wealth. 2nd. Caution them against vain confidence in

their wealth. Charge them that they "trust not in uncertain riches." Nothing more uncertain than the wealth of this world; many have had much of it one day, and been stripped of all the next. Riches make themselves wings, and fly away as an eagle, &c., *Pr. xxiii. 5*. 3rd. He must charge them to trust in God, the living God, to make him their hope "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." Thou that art rich must see God giving them their riches, and giving to enjoy them richly, for many have riches, but enjoy them poorly, not having a heart to use them. 4th. He must charge them to do good with what they have, for what is the best estate worth, any more than as it gives a man an opportunity of doing so much the more good? "That they be rich in good works." Those are truly rich that are rich in good works. That they be "ready to distribute, willing to communicate." Not only do it, but do it willingly, for "God loveth a cheerful giver." 5th. He must charge them to think of another world, and prepare for that, which is done by works of charity, "laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that they may take hold on eternal life." Note, 1st. Ministers must not be afraid of the rich; be they ever so rich, they must speak to them, and charge them. 2nd. They must caution them against pride and vain confidence in their riches, "that they be not high-minded, nor trust," &c. Stir them up to works of piety and charity, "that they do good," &c. 3rd. This is the way for the rich to lay up in store for themselves for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. In the way of well doing we are to seek for glory, honour, and immortality, "and eternal life will be the end of all," *Rom. ii. 7*.

2. Here is a lesson for ministers in the charge given to Timothy, "Keep that which is committed to thy trust." Every minister is a trustee, and it is a treasure committed to his trust, which he hath to keep. The truths of God, the ordinances of God, keep these, "avoiding profane and vain babbling." Not affecting human eloquence, which the apostle calls vain babbling, or human learning, which many times opposes the truths of God; but keep close to the written word, for that is committed to our trust. [By the "vain babblings" the apostle refers to the empty discourses of those who wished to impose on Christian converts the foolish traditions of the Jewish scribes, and the now obsolete rites of the Mosaic law; and by "the oppositions of science," the metaphysical speculations of the Grecian philosophy; which were not true science, but were "falsely so called."] Some that have been very proud of their learning, their "science which is falsely so called," have by that been debauched in their principles, and been drawn away from the faith of Christ, which is a good reason why we should keep to the plain word of the Gospel, and resolve to live and die by that. Observe, 1st. Ministers cannot be too earnestly exhorted to keep what is committed to their trust, because it is a great trust lodged with them. "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust," as if he had said, I cannot conclude without charging thee again—whatever thou dost, be sure keep this trust, for it is too great a trust to be betrayed. 2nd. Ministers are to avoid babblings, if they would keep what is committed to them, because they are vain and profane. 3rd. That science that opposes the truth of the Gospel is falsely so called; it is not true science, for if it was it would approve of the Gospel and consent to it. 4th. Those who are so fond of such science are in the great danger of erring concerning the faith; they who are for advancing reason above faith are in danger of leaving faith.

Fifthly. Our apostle concludes with a solemn prayer and benediction; "Grace be with thee, Amen." Observe, this is a short, yet comprehensive prayer for our friends. Grace be with them, for grace comprehends in it all that is good; and grace is an earnest, yea, a beginning of glory, for wherever God gives grace he will give glory, and will not withhold any good thing from him that walketh uprightly. Grace be with you all. Amen.



NIEAPOLIS, IN PHRYGIA.—*Acts xvi. 1—6; Col. iv. 13.*

vi. 17. Not "uncertain riches," but "uncertainty of riches." (So Wickliffe, Rheims, and Alford.) Best MSS. omit "the living."

vi. 19. Best MSS. read "that which is really life," or "the true life," not "eternal life."

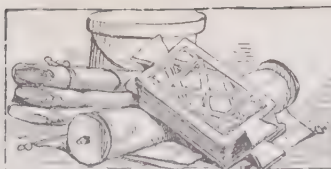
vi. 20, 21. "That which is committed to thy trust:" the care of the church and the truth. "Keep, says he, the deposit. What is the 'deposit'?"—that which was entrusted to thee, not found out by thee; that which you have received, not thought out. . . . Guard, he says, the deposit; preserve intact and unimpaired the talent of the catholic faith. That which was entrusted to you, let that remain with you, let that be handed down by you. You have received gold, give back gold" (Vincentius Lirinensis). "Science falsely so called:" "The antitheses of the falsely-named knowledge" (Conybeare). The Gnostics took their name from *gnosis*, "knowledge."

Additional Notes.—Chap. iii. 1—7. The qualifications for an overseer of the church. The identity of "overseers" and "elders" in apostolic times is evident from Phil. i. 1, where the apostle addresses

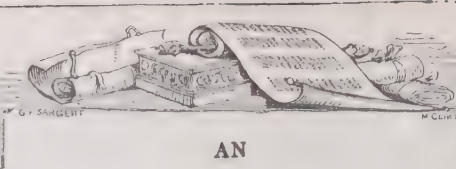
presbyters as overseers, and from Titus i. 5—7, where the same persons are spoken of as overseers and elders; "elder" intimated the rank, "overseer" the office filled. Unfortunately, the Authorised Version sometimes translates the original word "overseer," sometimes "bishop." "The husband of one wife;" this precept has been variously understood. The Church of Rome holds the "one wife" to be the Church. Some have thought it a prohibition of polygamy, but this was not allowed to any Christians, so would scarcely need mention in the case of an overseer of the church. The views which are supported most strongly by commentators, and for which much may be said, are two: (1) that the apostle forbids a second marriage when (as was often the case amongst the heathen) the first, on either side, had been dissolved by divorce; (2) that he advises that an *episkopos* should marry but once.

iv. Prediction of coming false teachers. Exhortations to Timothy concerning them, and as to his general life.

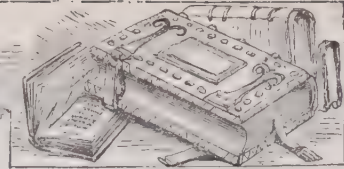
v. 11. "Refuse:" i.e., to place in the number of special widows.



ANCIENT ROLLS,



AN



BOOKS, ETC.

EXPOSITION

OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

S. T. PAUL TO TIMOTHY,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

This second epistle Paul wrote to Timothy from Rome, when he was a prisoner there, and in danger of his life, by these words, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand," *ch. iv. 6*. It appears that his removal out of this world, in his own apprehension, was not far off, especially considering the rage and malice of his persecutors, and that he had been brought before the emperor Nero, which he calls his first answer, when no man stood with him, but all men forsook him, *ch. iv. 16*. And interpreters agree that this was the last epistle he wrote. Where Timothy now was is not certain. The scope of this epistle somewhat differs from that of the former, not so much relating to his office as an evangelist as to his personal conduct and behaviour. [Though it is a question much debated among learned men, whether the apostle was twice imprisoned at Rome, the weight of evidence seems to favour the opinion that he was. The epistles to the *Philippians*, *Colossians*, and *Philemon*, were written during his first imprisonment, and this epistle to *Timothy* in his second. From his first imprisonment he was liberated, and resumed his apostolic labours; but this second was terminated by martyrdom. Foreseeing that this was likely to be its issue, he was desirous once more to see Timothy, whom he loved as a son, and that he might at such a time be solaced with his company. And this he desired all the more, as most of his personal friends had left him,—Crescens had gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia, Tychicus he had sent to Ephesus, and Demas had forsaken him. He writes this epistle therefore to urge Timothy to come to him with as little delay as possible, and to bring Mark with him, *ch. i. 3, 4*; *iv. 10—12*. As already intimated, this was the last epistle the apostle Paul wrote. Such a circumstance must be felt to give it a solemn and peculiar interest. They are the dying words of "the chiefest of the apostles," the last counsels of "such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ." To young ministers especially they are a legacy of inestimable value.]

A.D. 66.

A.D. 66.

CHAPTER I.

After the introduction, ver. 1, 2, we have, I. Paul's sincere love to Timothy, ver. 3—5. II. Divers exhortations given to him, ver. 6—14. III. He speaks of Phygellus and Hermogenes, with others, and closes with Onesiphorus, ver. 15—18.



PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 3 I thank God, whom I serve from my fore-

fathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; 4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; 5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

Here is, First. The inscription of the epistle. Paul calls himself "an apostle by the will of God," merely by the good pleasure of God, and by his grace, which he professes himself unworthy of, "according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus," that is, according to the Gospel. [His meaning probably is, that he was made an apostle in order that by his ministry the promise of life in Christ Jesus might be declared. It was part of the design of the blessed God that the gospel message of pardon and life in Christ should be proclaimed by ministers appointed for that purpose, and in accordance with this design Paul was called to be an apostle.] The Gospel is the promise of life in Christ Jesus; life the end, and Christ the way, *Jno. xiv. 6*. The life is put into the promise, and both are sure in Christ Jesus, the faithful witness, for all the promises of God in Christ Jesus are yea, and all Amen, *2 Cor. i. 20*. He calls Timothy his "beloved son;" Paul had a dear love for him, both because he had been an instrument of his conversion and because as a son with his

father he had served with him in the Gospel. We here learn, 1. St. Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. As he did not receive the Gospel of man, nor was taught it, but had it by the revelation of Jesus Christ, *Gal. i. 12*, so his commission to be an apostle was not by the will of man, but of God. In the former epistle he says it was by the commandment of God our Saviour, and here by the will of God; God called him to be an apostle. 2. We have the promise of life, blessed be God for it: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began," *Tit. i. 2*. It is a promise to discover the freeness and the certainty of it. 3. This as well as all other promises are in and through Christ Jesus; they all take their rise from the mercy of God in Christ, and they are sure, and we may safely depend on them. 4. The grace, mercy, and peace, which even St. Paul's dearly beloved son Timothy wanted, comes from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord; and therefore the one as well as the other is the giver of these blessings, and ought to be applied to for them. 5. The best want these blessings, and they are the best we can ask for our dearly beloved friends, that they may have grace to help them in the time of need, and mercy to pardon what is amiss, and so may have peace with God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Secondly. Paul's thanksgiving to God for Timothy's faith and holiness. He thanks God that he remembered Timothy in his prayers. Observe that, whatever good we do, and whatever good office we perform for our friends, God must have the glory of it, and we must give him thanks. It is he that puts it into our hearts to remember such and such in our prayers. Paul was much in prayer, he prayed night and day; in all his prayers he was mindful of his friends, he particularly prayed for good ministers, he prayed for Timothy, and had "remembrance of him in his prayers night and day." He did this "without ceasing." Prayer was his constant business, and he never forgot his friends in his prayers, as we often do. Paul served God from his forefathers with a pure conscience. It was a comfort to him that he was born in God's house, and was of the seed of those that served God; as likewise that he had served him with a pure conscience, according to the best of his light: he had kept conscience void of offence, and made it his daily exercise to do so, *Acts xxiv. 16*. He greatly desired to see Timothy, out of the affection he had for him, that he might have some conversation with him, being mindful of his tears at their last parting. Timothy was sorry to part with Paul, he wept at parting; and therefore Paul desired to see him again, because he had perceived by that what a true affection he had for him. He thanks God that Timothy kept up the religion of his ancestors, ver. 5. Observe the entail of religion descended upon Timothy by the mother's side; he had a good mother, and a good grandmother. They believed, though his father did not, *Acts xvi. 1*. It is a comfortable thing when children imitate the faith and holiness of their godly parents, and tread in their steps, *3 Jno. 4*; Dwelt in thy grandmother and thy mother, and "I am persuaded that in thee also." Paul had a very charitable opinion of his friends, was very willing to hope the best concerning them; indeed, he had a great deal of reason to believe well of Timothy, for he had "no man like-minded," *Phil. ii. 20*. Observe, 1. We are, according to St. Paul, to serve God with a pure conscience, so did his and our pious forefathers; this is to draw near "with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," *Heb. x. 22*. 2. In our prayers we are to remember without ceasing our friends, especially the faithful ministers of Christ; St. Paul had remembrance of his dearly beloved son Timothy in his prayers night and day. 3. The faith that dwells in real believers is unfeigned, it is without hypocrisy; it is a faith that will stand the trial, and it dwells in them as a living principle. It was the matter of St. Paul's thanksgiving that Timothy inherited the faith of his mother Eunice, and his grandmother Lois, and ought to be ours whenever we see the

* The Author of the Exposition of 1 and II Timothy was the Rev. B. A. Atkinson, and the Exposition on both Epistles has been revised for this edition by the Rev. Dr. Steane, of Camberwell.

Introductory Note.—"This epistle is the last testament and swan-like death-song of Paul" (Bengel). "No summary of its contents can give any notion of the pathetic tenderness and deep solemnity of this epistle" (Conybeare and Howson). The apostle urges on Timothy boldness in his ministry, having possibly noticed some signs of timidity or nervous hesitation in his conduct.

i. 1—5. "From my forefathers," &c.: St. Paul's assertion is "that the worship of God had been handed down to him by his forefathers,

and that as a Christian he was in truth following his hereditary faith" (*Acts xxiii. 1*; *Gal. iii. 24*). An Israelite, unbiassed by sectarian prejudices, would receive Christianity when instructed in its facts and doctrines (*Acts xvii. 11, 12*).

i. 6—14. "The gift of God," &c.: the grace received either at his ordination or his special setting apart for the work at Ephesus. In 1 Tim. iv. 14 we find "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," here "by the putting on of my hands." The apostle

like; we should rejoice whosoever we see the grace of God, so did Barnabas, Acts xi. 23, 24. "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in the truth," 2 *Jno.* 4.

[The church of God in all ages has been under great obligation to pious mothers. Many of the most eminent and useful ministers have been indebted for their early knowledge and love of the word of God to the instructions communicated by them. What the future man will be is much more determined, in most cases, by the mother's influence upon the character of the boy, than by the father's. This fact should deepen in the minds of Christian mothers a sense of their responsibility; while the example of Timothy's early conversion and subsequent usefulness, and many such examples beside, may greatly encourage their efforts and their prayers.]

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. 7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; 9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: 11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. 13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

Here is an exhortation and excitation of Timothy to his duty: ver. 6, "I put thee in remembrance." The best men need remembrancers. What we know we should be minded of; 2 *Pet.* iii. 1, "I write this to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance."

First. He exhorts him to "stir up the gift of God" that was in him; stir it up as fire under the embers. It is meant of all the gifts and graces that God had given him to qualify him for the work of an evangelist, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the extraordinary gifts that were conferred by the imposition of the apostle's hands. These he must "stir up," that is, he must exercise them, and so increase them. Use gifts and have gifts; "To him that hath shall be given," *Mat.* xxv. 29. He must take all opportunities to use these gifts, and so stir them up, for that is the best way of increasing them. Whether the gift of God in Timothy was ordinary or extraordinary, though I incline to the latter, yet he must stir it up, otherwise it would decay. Farther, you see that gift was in him by the putting on of the apostle's hand, which I take to be distinct from his ordination, which was performed by the hands of the presbytery, 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. And it is likely Timothy had the Holy Ghost in his extraordinary gifts and graces conferred on him by the laying on of the apostle's hands, (for I reckon none but the apostles had the power of giving the Holy Ghost,) and afterwards being thus richly furnished for the work of the ministry, was ordained by the presbytery.

1. The great hindrance of usefulness in the increase of our gifts is, slavish fear; therefore he warns him against this; "God hath not given us the spirit of fear," ver. 7. It was through base fear that the evil servant buried his talent, and did not trade with it, *Mat.* xxv. 25. Now God hath therefore armed us against the spirit of fear, by often bidding us fear not. Fear not the face of man; fear not the dangers you may meet with in the way of your duty. God hath delivered us from the spirit of fear, and hath given us "the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." The spirit of power, that is, of courage and resolution, to encounter difficulties and dangers;—the spirit of love to God, which will carry us through the opposition we may meet with, as Jacob made nothing of the hard service he was to endure for Rachel; the spirit of love to God will set us above the fear of man, and all the hurt that man can do us;—and the spirit of "a sound mind," or quietness of mind, a peaceable enjoyment of ourselves, for we are oftentimes discouraged in our way and work by the creatures of our own fancy and imagination, which a sober, solid, thinking mind would obviate, and should easily answer.

2. The spirit God gives to his ministers is not a fearful, but a courageous spirit. It is a spirit of power, for they speak in his name who hath all power, both in heaven and earth; and it is a spirit of love, for love to God and the souls of men must inflame ministers in all their service; and it is a spirit of a sound mind, for they speak the words of truth and soberness.

Secondly. He exhorts him to count upon afflictions, and get ready for them; "Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner." Be not thou ashamed of the Gospel, of the testimony thou hast borne to it.

1. The Gospel of Christ is what we have none of us reason to be ashamed of.

was the chief in the ordination, the instrument in conveying to Timothy the gift of God; the presbytery were assistants. Not "God hath not given," but "did not give us the spirit of fear," when separated for his work, "but of power." Fear is the result of the spirit of bondage (*Rom.* viii. 15), "power" is the gift of the Holy Spirit (*Acts* i. 8). "Of a sound mind:" rather, "of bringing others to a sound mind." "Before the world began:" rather, "before the periods of ages." "The grace which believers receive in time

We must not be ashamed of those that are suffering for the Gospel of Christ. Timothy must not be ashamed of good old Paul, though he was now in bonds. As he must not be afraid of suffering himself, so he must not be afraid of owning those that were sufferers for the cause of Christ. 1st. The Gospel is a testimony of our Lord. In and by that he bears testimony of himself to us; and by professing our adherence to it we bear testimony of him and for him. 2nd. St. Paul was the Lord's prisoner, his prisoner, for his sake he was bound with a chain, *Eph.* iv. 1. We have no reason to be ashamed either of the testimony of our Lord or of his prisoners; if we are ashamed of either now, Christ will be ashamed of us hereafter. But "be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God;" that is, expect afflictions for the Gospel's sake, prepare for them, count upon them, be willing to take thy lot with the suffering saints in this world. "Be partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel," or, as it may be read, 'Do thou suffer with the Gospel.' Not only sympathize with those that do suffer for it, but be ready to suffer with them, and suffer like them. If at any time the Gospel be in distress, he that hopes for life and salvation by it will be content to suffer with it. Observe, *First.* Then we are likely to bear afflictions well when we fetch strength and power from God to enable us to bear them. Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel, according to the power of God. *Secondly.* All Christians, but especially ministers, must expect afflictions and persecutions for the sake of the Gospel. *Thirdly.* These shall be proportioned according to the power of God (1 *Cor.* x. 13) resting upon us.

2. Mentioning God and the Gospel, he takes notice what great things God hath done for us by the Gospel, ver. 9, 10. To encourage him to suffer, he urges two considerations:—

1st. He shews him the nature of that Gospel which he was called to suffer for, and the glorious and gracious designs and purposes of it. It is usual with Paul, when he mentions Christ, and the Gospel of Christ, to digress from his subject, and enlarge upon them, so full was he of that which is all our salvation, and ought to be all our desire. Observe, *First.* The Gospel aims at our salvation; he "hath saved us;" and we must not think much to suffer for that which we hope to be saved by. He hath begun to save us, and will complete it in due time, for God calls those things that be not, that is, that are not yet completed, as though they were, *Rom.* iv. 17; therefore he says, who hath saved us. *Secondly.* It is designed for our sanctification; "And called us with a holy calling," that is, called us to holiness. Christianity is a calling, a holy calling; it is the calling wherewith we are called, that is, it is the calling to which we are called to labour in it. Observe, All that shall be saved hereafter are sanctified now. Wherever the call of the Gospel is an effectual call, it is found to be a holy call, making those holy who are effectually called. *Thirdly.* The rise of it is the free grace and eternal purpose of God in Jesus Christ. If we had merited it, it had been hard to suffer for it; but our salvation by it is of free grace, and not according to our works, and therefore we must not think much to suffer for it. This grace is said to be given us "before the world began," that is, in the purpose and design of God from all eternity, "in Christ Jesus;" for all the gifts that come from God to sinful man come in and through Christ Jesus. *Fourthly.* The Gospel is the manifestation of this purpose and grace, "by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ," who had lain in the bosom of the Father from eternity, and was perfectly apprized of all his gracious purposes; and by his appearing that gracious purpose was made manifest to us. Did Jesus Christ suffer for it, and shall we think much to suffer for it? *Fifthly.* By the Gospel of Christ death is abolished; He "hath abolished death;" not only weakened it, but taken it out of the way, hath broken the power of death on us. By taking away sin he hath abolished death, for "the sting of death is sin," 1 *Cor.* xv. 56, in altering the property of it, and breaking the power of it. Death now of an enemy has become a friend, and is the gate by which we pass out of a troublesome, vexatious, sinful world, into a world of perfect peace and purity; and the power thereof is broken, for death doth not triumph over those who believe the Gospel, but they triumph over it. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 *Cor.* xv. 55. *Sixthly.* He hath "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel;" that is, he hath shewed us another world more clearly than it was before discovered under any former dispensation, and the happiness of that world, the certain recompense of our obedience by faith,—we all with open face, as in a glass, behold the glory of God. He hath brought it to light; not only set it before us, but offered it to us by the Gospel. Let us value the Gospel more than ever, as it is that whereby life and immortality are brought to light, for herein it hath the pre-eminence above all former discoveries; so that it is the Gospel of life and immortality, as it discovers them to us, and directs us in the ready way that leads thereto, as well as proposes the most weighty motives to excite our endeavours in seeking after glory, honour, and immortality.

2nd. Consider the example of blessed Paul, ver. 11, 12. He was appointed to preach the Gospel, and particularly appointed to teach the Gentiles. He thought it a cause worth suffering for, and why should not Timothy think so too? No man need to be afraid or ashamed to suffer for the cause of the Gospel. "I am not ashamed," saith Paul, "for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Observe, *First.* Good men often suffer many things for the best cause in the world; "For the which cause I suffer these things," that is, for my preaching and adhering to the Gospel. *Secondly.* They need not be ashamed, the cause will bear them out; but those that oppose it shall be clothed with shame. *Thirdly.* Those that trust in Christ know whom they have trusted. He speaks with a holy triumph and exultation, as much as to say, I stand on firm ground; I know I have lodged the great trust in the hands of the best trustee, "and am persuaded," &c.

[This is the language of holy confidence in the prospect of death and eternity. It is a practical illustration of "the full assurance of faith." Paul was now in the immediate prospect of martyrdom, and he avows his conviction that the principles on which he had acted since the memorable day of his conversion would support him in the last extremity. It did not shake his fortitude that the death he had in prospect might be sudden and sanguinary. Bonds and imprisonment were nothing to him, and nothing to him was the executioner's sword. He was ready to repeat his memorable words, "None of these things move me." He was neither ashamed to suffer nor afraid to die. Nor does he leave us in doubt what it was that afforded him this solid comfort. It arose from his having committed himself to the care of Christ, whom he loved, and served, and believed in, and of whom he had the firm persuasion that he was able to perform the part of a Saviour. This was the ground of his confidence. It rested on a rational and sure basis, which long experience has shewn can never be moved.]

What must we commit to Christ? Why, the salvation of our souls, and their preservation to the heavenly kingdom; and what we so commit to him he will keep. There is a day coming when our souls will be inquired after: "Man! woman! thou hadst a soul committed to thee, what hast thou done with it?" To whom was it offered, to God or Satan? How was it employed; in the service of sin, or in the service of Christ? There is a day coming, and it will be a very solemn and awful day, when we must give an account of our stewardship, *Lu.* xvi. 2, give an account of our souls. Now if, by an active, obedient

is spoken of as imparted to them from eternity, since that which God determined in eternity is as good as already accomplished in time" (Alford). Conybeare and Howson render "before the times of old," and say, "The grace of Christ was virtually bestowed on mankind in the Mosaic covenant, though only made manifest in the Gospel." "That which I have committed unto him:" the figure is that of one depositing a pledge with a trusted depositary. St. Paul had entrusted himself to God, and was confident of his preserving care.

faith, we commit it to Jesus Christ, we may be sure he is able to keep it, and it shall be forthcoming to our comfort in that day.

Thirdly, He exhorts him to "hold fast the form of sound words," ver. 13.

1. "Have a form of sound words," so it may be read. A short form, a catechism, an abstract of the first principles of religion, according to the Scriptures; a scheme of sound words, a brief summary of the Christian faith, in a proper method, drawn out by thyself from the holy Scriptures for thy own use; or rather, by the form of sound words, I understand the holy Scriptures themselves.

[This form of sound words which Timothy is exhorted to hold fast he had received from the apostle; "Which thou hast received of me." Was it a written compendium of Christian doctrine? If so, what has become of it? There is no trace of any such document ever having existed. What is called the apostle's creed has no pretension to an apostolic origin. Had there been such a summary, it is very improbable that it would have been lost; much more probable that it would have been regarded as inspired, and have been kept with great care among the other writings of the apostles. May not the expression refer to oral instruction which Timothy had received from Paul, in which the apostle had, no doubt, given him a general outline and summary of Christian truth?]

2. Having it, "hold it fast," remember it, retain it, stick to it. Adhere to that in opposition to all heresies and false doctrine, which corrupt the Christian faith. Hold that fast "which thou hast heard of me," Paul was Divinely inspired. It is good sticking to those forms of sound words which we have in the Scriptures, for those we are sure were Divinely inspired. That is sound speech which cannot be condemned, *Ti. ii. 8*. But how must it be held fast? "In faith and love;" that is, assent to it as "a faithful saying," and bid it welcome as "worthy of all acceptance." Hold it fast in a good heart, that is the ark of the covenant, in which the tables both of law and Gospel are most safely and profitably deposited, *Ps. cxix. 11*. Faith and love must go together. It is not enough to believe the sound words, and to give an assent to them; but we must love them, believe their truth, and love their goodness, and we must propagate the form of sound words in love, "speaking the truth in love," *Eph. iv. 15*. "Faith and love which is in Christ Jesus;" that is, it must be Christian faith and love, faith and love fastening upon Jesus Christ, in and by whom God speaks to us and we to him. Timothy, as a minister, must "hold fast the form of sound words" for the benefit of others. "Of healing words," so it may be read. There is a healing virtue in the word of God. "He sent his word and healed them." To the same purpose is that, ver. 14, "That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us." That good thing was the form of sound words, the Christian doctrine which was committed to Timothy in his baptism and education as he was a Christian, and in his ordination as he was a minister. The Christian doctrine is a trust committed to us; it is committed to Christians in general, but to ministers in particular; it is a good thing, of unspeakable value in itself, and that will be of unspeakable advantage to us. It is a good thing indeed, it is an inestimable jewel, for it discovers to us the unsearchable riches of Christ, *Eph. iii. 8*. It is committed to us to be preserved pure and entire, and to be transmitted to those that shall come after us, and we must keep it, and not contribute any thing to the corrupting of its purity, the weakening of its power, or the diminishing of its perfection. "Keep it by the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in us." Observe, Even those that are never so well taught cannot keep what they have learned, any more than they could at first learn it, without the assistance of the Holy Spirit. We must not think to keep it by our own strength, but "keep it by the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost dwells in all good ministers and Christians. They are his temples, and he enables them to keep the Gospel pure and uncorrupt; and yet they must use their best endeavours to keep this good thing, for the assistance and indwelling of the Holy Ghost doth not exclude men's endeavours, but they very well consist together.

15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. 16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: 17 But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. 18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

Having exhorted Timothy to "hold fast," &c., ver. 13, 14, the apostle mentions, First. The apostasy of divers from the doctrine of Christ, ver. 15. It seems in the best and purest ages of the church there were those that had embraced the Christian faith, and yet afterwards revolted from it; nay, there were many such. He doth not say that they were turned away from the doctrine of Christ, though it should seem they were, but they were turned away from him, turned their backs upon him, and disowned him in the time of his distress. And should we wonder at it, when many turned their backs on a much better than St. Paul? I mean the Lord Jesus Christ, *Jno. vi. 66*.

Secondly, He mentions the constancy of one that adhered to him, that was "Onesiphorus; for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain," ver. 16. Observe,

1. What kindness Onesiphorus had shewed to Paul. He refreshed him; he often refreshed him with his letters, and counsels, and comforts, "and he was not ashamed of my chain;" was not ashamed of him, notwithstanding the disgrace he was now under. He was kind to him not once or twice, but often; not only when he was at Ephesus among his own friends, but when Onesiphorus was at Rome, he took care to seek Paul out very diligently, and found him, ver. 17. Observe, That a good man will seek opportunities of doing good, and will not shun any that offer. At Ephesus he had ministered to him, and been very kind to him; Timothy knew it.

2. How Paul returns his kindness, ver. 16—18. He that receives a prophet shall have a prophet's reward. He repays him with his prayers; The Lord give mercy unto Onesiphorus. It is like Onesiphorus was now absent, it is probable he was now with Paul, and he prays that his house might be kept during his absence; though the papists will have it he was now dead, and, from his praying for him that he might find mercy, they conclude the warrantableness of praying for the dead; but who told them that Onesiphorus was dead? And can it be safe to ground a doctrine and practice of such importance on a mere supposition, and very great uncertainty. He prays for Onesiphorus himself,

i. 16—18. The assumption that Onesiphorus was dead is quite gratuitous; the passage would equally agree with his absence from home (Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," Webster and Wilkinson; Fausset, "Portable Commentary").

ii. 2. "To faithful men;" Mack, the Romish commentator, adduces this passage as in favour of the reception of oral tradition; but it in truth rather shows how precarious such a method of preserving revealed truth would be, since the unfaithfulness of one individual

as well as for his house, "that he might find mercy in that day," in the day of death and of judgment, when Christ will recount all the good offices done to his poor members as done to himself. Observe, 1st. The day of death and judgment is an awful day, that may be emphatically called "that day." 2nd. We need desire no more to make us happy than to find mercy of the Lord in that day, when those that have shewed no mercy will have judgment without mercy. 3rd. The best Christians will want mercy in that day, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ," *Jude 21*. 4th. If you would have mercy then you must seek for it now of the Lord. 5th. It is of and from the Lord we must have mercy, for unless the Lord hath mercy on us in vain will be the pity and compassion of men or angels. 6th. We are to seek and ask for mercy of the Lord, who is the giver and bestower of it, for the Lord Christ hath satisfied justice, that mercy might be displayed. We are come to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need. Finally, The best thing we can ask, either for ourselves or our friends, is, that the Lord will grant to them that they may find mercy of the Lord in that day, when they must pass out of time into eternity, and exchange this world for the other, and appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. The Lord then grant unto all of us that we may find mercy of the Lord in that day.

CHAPTER II.

In this chapter our apostle gives Timothy many exhortations and directions, which may be of great use to others, both ministers and Christians, for whom they were designed as well as for him. 1. He encourages him in his work, shewing him from whence he must fetch help, ver. 1. II. He must take care of a succession in the ministry, that the office might not die with him, ver. 2. III. He exhorts him to constancy and perseverance in his work, as a soldier, and as a husbandman, considering what would be the end of all his sufferings, &c., ver. 3—15. IV. He must shun profane and vain babblings, for they will be pernicious and mischievous, ver. 16—18. V. He speaketh of the foundation of God, which standeth sure, ver. 19—21. VI. What he is to avoid—youthful lusts, and foolish and unlearned questions; and what to do, ver. 22—26.



THOU therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. 3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. 6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. 7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

Here, First. Paul encourages Timothy to constancy and perseverance in his work; ver. 1, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Those that have work to do for God must stir up themselves to do it, and strengthen themselves for it. Being "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" may be understood, 1. In opposition to the weakness of grace. Where there is the truth of grace there must be a labouring after the strength of grace. As our trials increase we had need to grow stronger and stronger in that which is good; our faith stronger, our resolution stronger, our love to God and Christ stronger. 2. In opposition to our being strong in our own strength, be strong, not confiding in thy own sufficiency, but in the grace that is in Jesus Christ: compare *Eph. vi. 10*, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." When Peter promised rather to die for Christ than to deny him, he was strong in his own strength; had he been strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, he had kept his standing better. [This exhortation to constancy is given to Timothy, all the rather because of the defection of others, (*ct. i. 15; ii. 17, 18*); "Thou therefore, my son, be strong." The falls of professors should be used as occasions by faithful ministers to exhort and encourage those who stand, to put them upon their guard, and to direct them to that grace which alone is able to uphold them.] 1st. There is grace in Christ Jesus, for the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, *Jno. i. 17*. There is grace enough in him for all of us. 2nd. We must be strong in this grace, not in ourselves, in our own strength, or in the grace we have already received, but in the grace that is in him, and that is the way to be strong in grace. 3rd. As a father exhorts his son, so doth St. Paul exhort Timothy, with great tenderness and affection: "Thou therefore, my son," &c.

Secondly, Timothy must count upon sufferings, even unto blood. And, therefore,

1. He must train up others to succeed him in the ministry of the Gospel, ver. 2. 1st. He must instruct others, and train them up for the ministry, and so commit to them the things which he had heard. 2nd. He must ordain them to the ministry, lodge the Gospel as a trust in their hands, and so commit to them the things which he had heard. Two things he must have an eye to in ordaining ministers. First. Their fidelity and integrity; Commit them to "faithful men," that will sincerely aim at the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the welfare of souls, and the advancement of the kingdom of the redeemer among men. Secondly. Their ministerial ability. They must not only be knowing themselves, but be able to teach others also, and be apt to teach. [The things which Timothy was to commit to faithful men was, what he had heard from the apostle "among many witnesses." There is probably an allusion here to some occasion, perhaps when he was ordained, on which Paul publicly,

might fatally affect its accuracy, and therefore we cannot be too thankful to God for his written word.

ii. 3. "Endure hardness;" rather, "take thy share in suffering" (Conybeare).

ii. 4. "Affairs of this life;" all occupations save those that are religious are not here forbidden, but the becoming "entangled" or overmuch taken up with them. St. Paul himself was a tent-maker.

ii. 5. "If any one contend in the games," or, as Conybeare, "the

in the presence of the presbyters and the assembled church, gave the Gospel in charge to Timothy, expounding its doctrines to him before them, who were consequently witnesses of the trust reposed in him, and would know if he transmitted that trust with fidelity to others. Here we have, 1st. The things Timothy was to commit to others. What he had heard of the apostle among many witnesses; he must not deliver any thing besides, and what St. Paul delivered to him and others he had received of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2nd. He was to commit them as a trust, as a sacred depositum, which they are to keep, and to transmit pure and uncorrupt to others. 3rd. Those to whom he was to commit these things must be faithful; that is, trusty men, and who were skilful to teach others. 4th. Though men were both faithful and able to teach others, yet these things must be committed to them by Timothy, a minister, a man in office; for none must intrude themselves into the ministry, but must have these things committed to them by those already in that office.

2. He must "endure hardness;" ver. 3, "Thou therefore," &c. 1st. All Christians, but especially ministers, are soldiers of Jesus Christ; they fight under his banner, in his cause, and against his enemies, for he is the Captain of our salvation, *Heb. ii. 10*. 2nd. The soldiers of Jesus Christ must approve themselves good soldiers, faithful to their captain, resolute in his cause, and must not give over fighting till "they are made more than conquerors, through him that loved them," *Rom. viii. 37*. 3rd. Those that would approve themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ must "endure hardness;" that is, we must expect it, and count upon it in this world, must endure and accustom ourselves to it, and bear it patiently when it comes, and not be moved by it from our integrity.

3. He must not entangle himself in the affairs of this world, ver. 4. A soldier, when he is listed, leaves his calling, and all the business of it, that he may attend his captain's orders. If we have given up ourselves to be Christ's soldiers, we must sit loose to this world, and though there is no remedy but we must employ ourselves in the affairs of this life, (while we are here we have something to do here,) yet we must not entangle ourselves with those affairs, so as by them to be diverted, and drawn aside, from our duty to God, and the great concerns of our Christianity. They that will war the good warfare must sit loose to this world, that we may please him who hath chosen us to be soldiers. Observe, The great care of a soldier should be to please his general; so the great care of a Christian should be to please Christ, to approve ourselves to him. Observe farther, The way to please him who hath chosen us to be soldiers is not to entangle ourselves with the affairs of this life, but to be free from such entanglements as would hinder us in our holy warfare.

4. We must see to it that in warring our spiritual warfare we go by rule, we observe the laws of war; ver. 5, "If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." We are striving for mastery, to get the mastery of our lusts and corruptions, to excel in that which is good, but we cannot expect the prize unless we observe the laws. In doing that which is good we must take care that we do it in a right manner, that our good may not be evil spoken of. We observe here, 1st. A Christian is to strive for masteries; he must aim at mastering his own lusts and corruptions. 2nd. Yet he must strive according to the laws given to him; he must strive lawfully. 3rd. Those that do so shall be crowned at last, after a complete victory is obtained.

5. We must be willing to wait for a recompence; ver. 6, "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits." Or, as it should be read, the husbandmen labouring first must partake of the fruits, as appears by comparing it with *Jas. v. 7*. If we would be partakers of the fruits we must labour; if we would gain the prize we must run the race. And, farther, we must first labour as the husbandman doth, with diligence and patience, before we are partakers of the fruit; we must do the will of God before we receive the promises, for which reason we have need of patience, *Heb. x. 36*.

Thirdly, Paul commands Timothy to consider these things that he admonished him about; ver. 7, "Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." Timothy must be minded to use his considering faculties about the things of God. Consideration is as necessary to a good conversation as to a sound conversion. He prays for him; "The Lord give thee understanding in all things." Observe, 1. That it is God that gives understanding. The most intelligent men need more and more of this gift. If he that gave the revelation in the word doth not give the understanding in the heart, we are nothing. 2. Together with our prayers for others, that the Lord would give them understanding in all things, we must exhort and stir them up to consider what we say; for consideration is the way to understand, remember, and practise what we hear or read.

8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: 9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. 10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: 12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: 13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

First. To encourage Timothy in suffering, the apostle puts him in mind of the resurrection of Christ; ver. 8, "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my Gospel." This is the great proof of his Divine mission, and therefore a great confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion; and the consideration of it should make us faithful to our Christian profession, and should particularly encourage us in suffering for it. Let suffering saints remember this. Observe, 1. We are to look to "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God," *Heb. xii. 2*. 2. The incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ, heartily believed, and rightly considered, will support a Christian under all sufferings in the present life.

This exhortation to remember the resurrection of Christ implies a tendency to forget it. Without great care to fix and retain it in the mind, it will slide, or be pushed out, by other things. But the habitual recollection of it

will have the happiest effect in counteracting our latent unbelief and the secularising influence of worldly things. It will give stability to our faith in the Divine origin of Christianity, and in the Divine nature of our Lord; it will inspire confidence in him as a Saviour; it will produce heavenly-mindedness; and it will fix in our thoughts the certainty of the universal resurrection and the last judgment.]

Secondly. Another thing to encourage him in sufferings was, that he had Paul for an example; ver. 9, "Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil-doer;" and let not Timothy the son expect any better treatment than Paul the father. Paul was a man that did good, and yet suffered as an evil-doer; we must not think it strange if those that do well fare ill in this world, and if the best of men meet with the worst of treatment; but this was his comfort, that the word of God is not bound. Persecuting powers may silence ministers, and restrain them, but they cannot hinder the operation of the word of God upon men's hearts and consciences; that cannot be bound by any human force. This might encourage Timothy not to be afraid of bonds for the testimony of Jesus; for the word of Christ, which ought to be dearer to him than liberty, or life itself, should in the issue suffer nothing by those bonds. Here we see, 1. The good apostle's treatment in the world; "I suffer trouble," to this he was called and appointed. 2. The pretence and colour under which he suffered; "I suffer as an evil-doer." So the Jews said to Pilate, concerning Christ, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee," *Jno. xviii. 30*. 3. The real and true cause of his suffering trouble as an evil-doer; "Wherein," that is, in or for the sake of the Gospel. 4. The apostle suffered trouble unto bonds, and afterwards he "resisted unto blood, striving against sin," *Heb. xii. 4*. Though the preachers of the word are often bound, yet the word is never bound. "I endure all things for the elect's sakes," ver. 10. Observe, 1st. That good ministers may and should encourage themselves in the hardest services and the hardest sufferings with this, that God will certainly bring good to his church, and benefit to his elect, out of them, "that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus." Next to the salvation of our own souls we should be willing to do and suffer any thing to promote the salvation of the souls of others. Observe, 2nd. The elect are designed to obtain salvation; "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation," *1 Thes. v. 9*. Again, this salvation is in Christ Jesus, in him as the fountain, the purchaser, and giver of it, and it is accompanied with eternal glory; there is no salvation in Christ Jesus without it. 3rd. The sufferings of our apostle were for the elect's sake, for their confirmation and encouragement.

Thirdly. Another thing with which he encourages Timothy is, the prospect of a future state.

1. Those that faithfully adhere to Christ and to his truths and ways, whatever it costs them, will certainly have the advantage of it in another world; "If we be dead with him, we shall live with him," ver. 11; if in conformity to Christ we be dead to this world, and the pleasures, profits, and honours of it, we shall go to live with him in a better world, to be for ever with him. Nay, though we be called out to suffer for him, we shall not lose by that. They that suffer for Christ on earth shall reign with Christ in heaven, ver. 12. They that suffered with David in his humiliation were preferred with him in his exaltation; so it will be with the Son of David.

2. It is at our peril if we prove unfaithful to him; "If we deny him, he also will deny us." If we deny him before man, he will deny us before his Father, *Mat. x. 33*; and that man must needs be for ever miserable whom Christ disowns at last. This will certainly be the issue, whether we believe it or no; ver. 13, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself." Faithful to his threatenings, faithful to his promises; neither one nor the other shall fall to the ground, no, not the least jot or tittle of them. If we be faithful to Christ he will certainly be faithful to us; if we be false to him he will be faithful to his threatenings; "He cannot deny himself," cannot recede from any word that he hath spoken, for he is Yea and Amen, the faithful witness.

Observe, 1st. Our being dead with Christ precedes our living with him, and is connected with it, and the one is in order to the other; so our suffering for him is the way to reign with him. "You that have followed me," in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, "ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel," *Mat. xix. 28*. 2nd. This is a faithful saying, and may be depended on, and ought to be believed. But, 3rd. If we deny him out of fear or shame, or for the sake of some temporal advantage, he will deny and disown us, and will not deny himself, but will continue faithful to his word when he threatens as well as when he promises.

14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. 15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenæus and Philletus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

Having thus encouraged Timothy to suffer, he comes in the next place to direct him in his work.

First. He must make it his business to edify those that were under his charge, for "put them in remembrance" of those things which they did already know, for that is the work of ministers; not to tell people that which they never knew before, but to put them in mind of that which they do know, "charging them that they strive not about words." Observe, Those that are disposed to strive commonly strive about matters of very small moment. Strifes of words are very destructive to the things of God. That they strive not about words "to no profit." If people did but consider of what little use most of the controversies in religion are, they would not be so zealous in their strifes of words, "to the subverting of the hearers," to the drawing them away from the great things of God, and occasioning unchristian heats and animosities, by which truth is often in danger of being lost.

[Men of a contentious and wrangling spirit are a great bane in the church; they contribute little or nothing to its edification, and often disturb its peace,

ii. 10. The meaning is, "For this reason (which follows) I bear up against sufferings, with a view to forwarding the faith of God's elect, that they as well as myself," &c.

ii. 11-13. "Faithful is the saying;" the phrase with which St. Paul often introduces current Christian sayings (1 Tim. i. 15, iii. 1, iv. 9; Titus iii. 8). "Probably the utterances originally of the Spirit by those who spoke 'prophecies' in the church" (Alford). This "saying," like 1 Tim. iii. 16, appears from its rhythmical form to be part of

wrestler does not win the crown unless he wrestles lawfully." The rules laid down must be observed, or the competitor is disqualified (*John x. 1*).

ii. 7. "The Lord will give thee understanding;" not a prayer, but an assertion. Timothy was not left to his own unaided efforts after wisdom; Divine help was promised to Christ's disciples.

ii. 8, 9. "My Gospel, wherein;" i.e., the Gospel entrusted to me to preach, in doing which I suffer," &c.

hinder its usefulness, and bring about its decay and dissolution. They mistake a bigoted attachment to their own modes of stating truth for zeal for the truth itself; and, while they are earnest in contending for what they call purity of doctrine, may often neglect and depreciate holiness of life, and shew little love for spiritual discourse, or social devotion. Again, there may be much talk about religion which tends to no profit; vain babbling, when it is not profane babbling. A few words spoken in love and sincerity are better than all the disputations and fluent discourse in which babbling and wrangling professors indulge.]

Observe, People are very prone to strive about words, and such strife never answers any other ends but to shake some and subvert others; they are not only useless, but they are very hurtful, and therefore ministers are to charge them that they do not strive about words, and then they are most likely to be regarded when they charge them before the Lord, that is, in his name and from his word, when they produce their warrant for what they say. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, and to be accepted of him, and to shew that they are so approved unto God. In order thereto there must be constant care and industry; study to shew thyself such a one, 'a workman that needs not be ashamed.'" Ministers must be workmen, they have work to do, and they must take pains in it; workmen that are either unskilful, or unfaithful, or lazy, have need to be ashamed, but those that mind their business, and keep to their work, are workmen that need not be ashamed. And what is their work? It is rightly to divide the word of truth. Not to invent a new gospel, but rightly to divide the Gospel that is committed to their trust: to speak terror to those to whom terror belongs, comfort to whom comfort; to "give to every one their portion in due season," *Mat. xxiv. 45.* Observe here. 1. The word which ministers preach is the word of truth, for the author of it is the God of truth. 2. It requires great wisdom, study, and care, to divide this word of truth rightly. Timothy must study in order to do this well.

Secondly. He must take heed of that which would be a hindrance to him in his work, *ver. 16.* He must take heed of error; "Shun profane and vain babblings." The heretics, that boasted of their notions and their arguments, thought their performances such as might recommend themselves, but the apostle calls them "profane and vain babblings." And when once men take to be fond of such, they will increase unto more ungodliness. The way of error is down-hill; one absurdity being granted or contended for, a thousand follow. "Their word will eat as doth a canker," or gangrene; that is, when errors or heresies come into the church, the infecting of one often proves the infecting of many, or the infecting of the same person with one error often proves the infecting of him with many errors. Upon this occasion the apostle instances some that had lately advanced erroneous doctrines—Hymeneus and Philetus. He names these corrupt teachers, by which he sets a brand upon them, to their perpetual infamy, and warns all people against hearkening to them; they have erred concerning the truth, that is, concerning one of the fundamental articles of the Christian religion, which is truth. The resurrection of the dead is one of the great doctrines of Christ. Now see the subtlety of the serpent, and the serpent's seed. They did not deny the resurrection, for that had been boldly and avowedly to confront the word of Christ, but they put a corrupt interpretation upon that true doctrine, saying, that the resurrection is past already, that is, that what Christ spoke concerning the resurrection is to be understood mystically, and by way of allegory, that it must be meant of a spiritual resurrection only. It is true there is a spiritual resurrection, but from thence to infer that there will not be a true and real resurrection of the body at the last day is to dash one truth of Christ in pieces against another. By this they "overthrew the faith of some," that is, took them off from the belief of the resurrection of the dead; and if there be no resurrection of the dead, no future state, no recompence of our services and sufferings in another world, we are of all men the most miserable, *1 Cor. xv. 19.* What takes away the doctrine of a future state overthrows the faith of Christians. The apostle had largely disproved this error, *1 Cor. xv.*, and therefore doth not here enter into the arguments against it. 1st. The babblings Timothy was to shun were profane and vain, they were empty shadows, and led to profaneness, "for they will increase unto more ungodliness." 2nd. Error is very fruitful and productive, and on that account the more dangerous; it will eat like a gangrene. 3rd. When men err concerning the truth, they always endeavour to have some plausible pretence for it; Hymeneus and Philetus did not deny a resurrection, but pretended it was already past. 4th. Error, especially that affects the foundation, will overthrow the faith of some.

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that



SCALA GEMONIA AND ENTRANCE TO THE DUNGEONS AT ROME.

a hymn. "The Greek may be easily sung to the music of one of the ancient ecclesiastical chants" (Conybeare). "If we died with him:" a past event spoken of (*Rom. vi. 3, 4, 8; Col. ii. 12.*) "The death which takes place at baptism in all those who are his" (Alford). "He cannot deny himself;" "Three things are impossible to God—to die, to lie, and to be deceived" (Augustine).

ii. 19. "Nevertheless the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal" (Alford, Ellicott); not as the Authorised Ver-

are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. 20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Here we see what we may comfort ourselves with in reference to this, and the like errors and heresies, that both infect and infest the church, and do mischief.

First. It may be a great comfort to us that the unbelief of men cannot make the promise of God of none effect. Though the faith of some particular persons be overthrown, yet "the foundation of God standeth sure," *ver. 19;* it is not possible they should deceive the elect. Or it may be meant of the truth itself which they do impugn. All the attacks which the powers of darkness have made upon the doctrine of Christ cannot shake it; it stands firm, and weathers all the storms which have been raised against it. The prophets and apostles, that is, the doctrine of the Old and New Testament, is still firm, and this hath a seal with two mottoes upon it, one on the one side and the other on the other, as is usual in a broad seal. 1. One speaks our comfort, that "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and them that are not; knows them, that is, he owns them, so knows them that he will never lose them. Though the faith of some be overthrown—yet the Lord is said to "know the ways of the righteous," *Ps. i. 6*—yet not the faith of any whom God hath chosen. 2. Another speaks our duty, that every one that names the name of Christ must depart from iniquity. Those that would have the comfort of the privilege must make conscience of the duty. If the name of Christ be called upon by us, we must depart from iniquity, else he will not own us; he will tell us in the great day, *Mat. vii. 23*, "Depart from me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity." Observe, 1st. Whatever errors are introduced into the church, the foundation of God standeth sure, his purpose can never be defeated. 2nd. God hath some in the church which are his, and which he knows to be his. 3rd. Professing Christians name the name of Christ, are called by his name, and therefore are bound to depart from iniquity, for Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, *Tit. ii. 14.*

Secondly. Another thing that may comfort us is that, though there be some whose faith is overthrown, yet there are others who keep their integrity, and hold it fast; *ver. 20.* "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver." &c. The church of Christ is a great house, a well furnished house; now the furniture of this house is some of it of great value, as the plate in a house; some of small value, and put to mean uses, as the vessels of wood and earth; so it is in the church of God. There are some professors of religion that are like the vessels of wood and earth, they are vessels of dishonour; but at the same time all are not vessels of dishonour, there are "vessels of gold and silver" that are vessels of honour, "that are sanctified and meet for the master's use." When we are discouraged by the badness of some, we must encourage ourselves by the consideration of the goodness of others. Now we should see to it that we be vessels of honour: we must "purge ourselves from these corrupt opinions," that we may be sanctified for our Master's use.

[Would you attain to honour and usefulness in the church? Then be careful what doctrines you hold, what spirit you indulge, what company you keep. Reject all heretical perversions of the truth. Suppress every disposition for mere verbal strife, and unprofitable debate about forms of phraseology, and eschew the company of empty talkers and contentious wranglers. These are things from which a man must purge himself who would be a vessel unto honour.]

Observe, 1. In the church there are some vessels of honour, and some of dishonour; there are some vessels of mercy, and other vessels of wrath, *Rom. ix. 22, 23.* Some dishonour the church by their corrupt opinions and wicked lives, and others honour and credit it by their exemplary conversation. 2. A man must purge himself from these before he can be a vessel of honour, or meet for his Master's use. 3. Every vessel must be fit for his Master's use; every one in the church, whom God approves, must be devoted to his Master's service, and meet for his use. 4. Sanctification in the heart is our preparation for every good work. The tree must be made good, and then the fruit will be good.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. 24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

First. Timothy must take care of youthful lusts, *ver. 22.* Though he was a holy, good man, very much mortified to the world, yet Paul thought it necessary to caution him against youthful lusts: Flee them, take all possible care and pains to keep thyself pure from them. The lusts of the flesh are youthful lusts, which young people must carefully watch against, and the best must not be secure. He prescribes an excellent remedy against youthful lusts: "Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace," &c. Observe, 1. Youthful lusts are very dangerous, for which reason even hopeful young people should be warned of them, for they war against the soul, *1 Pet. ii. 11.* 2. That the exciting of our

sion. The foundation signifies, according to some, the doctrine of the resurrection; others, the promises of God; others, "the congregation of the faithful considered as the foundation of a building laid by God, the house spoken of in the next verse" (Alford); if so, the words "having this seal" would refer to the practice of engraving inscriptions over doors or on foundation-stones.

ii. 22. There should be no comma after "peace." "Out of a pure heart:" a distinction thus made between single-minded worshippers

graces will be the extinguishing of our corruptions; the more we follow that which is good, the faster and the farther we shall flee from that which is evil. Righteousness, and faith, and love, will be excellent antidotes against youthful lusts. Holy love will cure impure lust. Follow peace with them that call on the Lord. The keeping up of the communion of saints will take us off from all fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness. See the character of Christians; they are such as "call on the Lord Jesus Christ, out of a pure heart." Observe, Christ is to be prayed to. It is the character of all Christians that they call upon him; but our prayers to God and Christ are not acceptable or successful except they come out of a pure heart.

Secondly. He cautions him against contention; and to prevent that, ver. 23, cautions him against "foolish and unlearned questions," that tend to no benefit, strifes of words. They that advanced them and doted upon them thought themselves wise and learned, but Paul calls them foolish and unlearned. The mischief of these is that they do "gender strifes," that is, that they breed debates and quarrels among Christians and ministers. It is very remarkable how often, and with what seriousness, the apostle cautions Timothy against the disputes in religion, which surely was not without some such design as this, to shew us that religion consisteth more in believing and practising what God requires than in subtle disputes. Now "the servant of the Lord must not strive," ver. 24. Nothing worse becomes the servant of the Lord Jesus, (who did not strive nor cry, *Mat. xii. 19*, but was himself a pattern of meekness and mildness, and gentleness to all,) than strife and contention. The servant of the Lord must be "gentle unto all men," and thereby shew that he is himself subject to the commanding power of that holy religion which he is employed in preaching and propagating; apt to teach. Those are unapt to teach that are apt to strive, and are fierce and froward. Ministers must be patient, bearing with evil, and "in meekness instructing," ver. 25, not only those that subject themselves, but those that oppose themselves. Observe, 1. Those that oppose themselves to the truth are to be instructed, for instruction is the Scripture method of dealing with the erroneous,—that is more likely to convince them of their errors than fire and faggot; he does not bid us kill their bodies under pretence of saving their souls. 2. Such who oppose themselves are to be instructed in meekness; for our Lord is meek and lowly, *Mat. xi. 29*; and this agrees well with the character of the servant of the Lord, ver. 24, "He must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient." This is the way to convey truth in its light and power, and to overcome evil with good, *Rom. xii. 21*. And that which ministers must have in their eye, in instructing those that oppose themselves, must be their recovery. "If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." Observe, 1st. That repentance is God's gift. 2nd. It is a gift with a peradventure, in the case of those that oppose themselves; and therefore, though we are not to despair of the grace of God, yet we must take heed of presuming upon it. "To the acknowledging of the truth." 3rd. The same God who gives us the discovery of the truth doth, by his grace, bring us to the acknowledging of it, otherwise our hearts would continue in rebellion against it, for we are to confess with our mouths, as well as to believe with our hearts, *Rom. x. 9, 10*. And thus sinners recover themselves out of the snare of the devil; see here, ver. 26. *First*. The misery of sinners. They are in the "snare of the devil," and are led "captive by him at his will;" they are slaves to the worst of taskmasters, he is the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, *Eph. ii. 2*. They are taken in a snare, and in the worst snare, because it is the devil; they are as fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare. Farther, they are under Ham's curse, "a servant of servants shall he be," *Gen. ix. 25*; they are slaves to him who is but a slave and vassal. *Secondly*. The happiness of those that repent. They recover themselves out of this snare, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and they have escaped, and the greater the danger the greater the deliverance. When sinners repent, they who before were led captive by the devil at his will, come to be led into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and have their wills melted into the will of the Lord Jesus. The good Lord recover us all out of the snare.

CHAPTER III.

I. He foretells Timothy what the last days would be, with the reasons thereof, ver. 1—9. II. Prescribes various remedies against them, ver. 10—17, particularly his own example, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine," &c., and the knowledge of the holy Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation, and will be the best antidote against the corruptions of the times we live in. In this chapter Paul tells Timothy how bad others would be, and therefore how good he should be; and this use we should make of the badness of others, thereby to engage us to hold our own integrity so much the faster.



THIS know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Timothy must not think it strange if there were in the church bad men, for the net of the Gospel was to inclose both good fish and bad, *Mat. xiii. 47, 49*. Jesus Christ had foretold, *Mat. xxiv. 24*, that there would come seducers, and therefore we must not be offended at it, nor think the worse of religion, or the church, for it. Even in gold ore there will be dross, and a great deal of chaff among the wheat when it lies on the floor.

of Christ and those who pretended godliness for gain or other interested motives. With such we cannot be at peace, in its highest sense of perfect agreement and communion; we may love them, but must oppose their aims and teachings (*Rom. xii. 18*).

ii. 26. "At his will:" or, "so as to follow his will."

iii. 1. "The last days:" the days of the Gospel dispensation, as distinguished from the Mosaic (*Acts ii. 17*; *Heb. i. 2*; 1 Peter i. 20).

First. Timothy must know that in "the last days," ver. 1, that is, in gospel times, there would come "perilous times." Though gospel times were times of reformation in many respects, let him know that even in gospel times there would be perilous times, not so much on the account of persecutions from without as on the account of corruptions within. These would be difficult times, wherein it would be difficult for a man to keep a good conscience. He doth not say, perilous times shall come, for both Jews and Gentiles shall be combined to root out Christianity; but, perilous times shall come for such who have "the form of godliness," ver. 5, shall be corrupt and wicked, and do a great deal of damage to the church. Two traitors within the garrison may do more hurt to it than two thousand besiegers without. "Perilous times shall come," for men shall be wicked. Note, 1. Sin makes the times perilous. When there is a general corruption of manners, and of the tempers of men, that makes the times dangerous to live in, for it is hard to keep our integrity in the midst of general corruption. 2. The coming of perilous times is an evidence of the truth of Scripture predictions. If the event in this respect did not answer the prophecy, we might be tempted to question the divinity of the Bible. 3. We are all concerned to know this, to believe and consider it, that we may not be surprised when we see the times perilous: "This know also."

Secondly. Then he tells Timothy what would be the occasion of making these times perilous, or what shall be the marks and signs whereby these times may be known, ver. 2, and following verses.

1. Self-love will make the times perilous. Who is there that doth not love himself? but this is meant of an irregular, sinful, self-love. Men love their carnal selves better than their spiritual selves. Men love to gratify their own lusts, and make provision for them, more than to please God and do their duty. Instead of Christian charity, that takes care for the good of others, they will mind themselves only, and prefer their own gratification before the church's edification.

2. Covetousness. Observe, Self-love brings in a long train of sins and mischiefs. When men are lovers of themselves no good can be expected from them, as all good may be expected from those that love God with all their hearts. When covetousness generally prevails, and every man is for what he can get, and keeping what he hath, this makes men dangerous to one another, and obliges every man to stand on his guard against his neighbour.

3. Pride and vainglory make the times perilous. When men, being proud of themselves, are boasters and blasphemers,—boasters before men whom they despise and look upon with scorn, and blasphemers of God, and of his name; when men do not fear God they will not regard man, and so vice versa.

4. When children are disobedient to their parents, and break through the obligations which they lie under to them both in duty and gratitude, and frequently in interest, having their dependence upon them, and their expectation from them, that makes the times perilous; for what wickedness will they stick at that will be abusive to their own parents, and rebel against them?

5. Unthankfulness and unholiness make the times perilous, and those two commonly go together. What is the reason that men are unholy and without the fear of God, but that they are unthankful for the mercies of God? Ingratitude and impiety go together; for, call a man ungrateful, and you can call him by no worse name. Unthankful and impure, defiled with fleshly lusts, which is an instance of great ingratitude to that God who hath provided so well for the support of the body; but we abuse his gifts if we make them the food and fuel of our lusts.

6. The times are perilous when men will not be held by the bonds either of nature or common honesty; when they are "without natural affection, and truce-breakers," ver. 3. There is a natural affection due to all. Wherever there is the human nature there should be humanity towards those of the same nature, but especially between relations. Times are perilous when children are disobedient to their parents, ver. 2, and when parents are without natural affection to their children, ver. 3. See what a corruption of nature sin is, how it deprives men even of that which nature hath implanted in them for the support of their own kind; for the natural affection of parents to their children is that which contributes very much to the keeping of mankind upon the earth. And those that will not be bound by natural affection, no marvel they will not be bound by the most solemn leagues and covenants. They are truce-breakers, that make no conscience of the engagements they have laid themselves under. Again, the times are perilous when men are false accusers one of another, *διδόκοι*,—"devils" one to another, no regard had to the good name of others, nor to the religious obligations of an oath, but think themselves at liberty to say and do what they please, *Ps. xii. 4*.

7. When men have no government of themselves and their own appetites. Not of their own appetites, for they are incontinent; not of their own passions, for they are fierce. Have no rule over their own spirits, and therefore are like a city that is broken down and hath no walls; they are soon fired upon the least provocation.

8. When that which is good and ought to be honoured is generally despised and looked upon with contempt. It is the pride of persecutors that they look with contempt upon good people, though they are more excellent than their neighbours.

9. When men are generally treacherous, wilful, and haughty, the times are perilous; ver. 4, when men are "traitors, heady, highminded." Our Saviour hath foretold that the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son, *Mat. x. 21*; and those are the worst sort of traitors. Those that delivered up their Bibles to persecutors were called traditores, for they betrayed the trust committed to them. When men are petulant and puffed up, carrying it scornfully to all about them, and when this temper generally prevails, then the times are perilous.

10. When men are generally "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God," when there are more epicures than true Christians, then the times are bad indeed. God is to be loved above all; that is a carnal mind, and is full of enmity against him, which prefers any thing before him, especially such a sordid thing as carnal pleasure is.

11. All this notwithstanding, all these have the "form of godliness," ver. 5; that is, are called by the Christian name, baptized into the Christian faith, make a show of religion; but, how plausible soever their form of godliness is, they deny the power of it. When they take upon them the form, which should and would bring along with it the power thereof, they will put asunder what God hath joined together. They will assume the form of godliness to take away their reproach, but they will not submit to the power of it to take away their sin. Observe here, 1st. Men may be very bad and wicked under a profession of religion; they may be lovers of themselves, &c., yet have a form of godliness. 2nd. A form of godliness is a very different thing from the power of it; men may have the one, and be wholly destitute of the other; yea, they deny it, at least practically, in their lives. 3rd. From such good Christians must withdraw themselves.

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins,

iii. 2. Not "covetous" in a general sense, but "lovers of money."

iii. 6. "Laden with sins:" this is the reason they fall a prey so easily to those false teachers who promise them ease of conscience if they will obey them. "Divers lusts:" not only those leading to a vicious life, but the passion for change in doctrine and ritual; the love of novelty; "the running after fashionable men and fashionable tenets, which draw them in flocks in the most opposite and inconsistent directions" (Alford).

led away with divers lusts, 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. 9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their's also was.

Here Paul warns Timothy to take heed of certain seducers, not only that he might not be drawn away by them himself, but that he might arm those that were under his charge against their seduction.

First. He shews how industrious they were to make proselytes; ver. 6, they applied themselves to particular persons, visited them in their houses, not daring to appear openly, for they that do evil hate the light, *Jno. iii. 20*. They were not forced into houses, as good Christians often were by persecution, but they of choice crept into houses to insinuate themselves into the affections and good opinion of people, and so to draw them over to their party. And see what sort of people they were that they gained and made proselytes of; they were such as were weak, "silly women;" and such as were wicked, "laden with sins, and led away with divers lusts:" a foolish head, and a filthy heart, make persons, especially women, an easy prey to seducers.

Secondly. He shews how far they were from coming "to the knowledge of the truth," though they pretend to be "ever learning," ver. 7. In one sense we must all be ever learning, that is, growing in knowledge, following on to know the Lord, pressing forwards; but these were sceptics, giddy and unstable, that were forward to inhale every new notion, under pretence of advancement in knowledge, but never came to a right understanding of the truth as it is in Jesus.

Thirdly. He foretells the certain stop that should be put to their progress, ver. 8, 9. Comparing them to the Egyptian magicians that withstood Moses, they are here named Jannes and Jambres; though the names are not to be met with in the story of the Old Testament, yet they are found in some old Jewish writers. Moses came with a Divine commission to fetch Israel out of Egypt, these magicians opposed him, and thus those heretics resisted the truth, and, like them, were "men of corrupt minds;" men that had their understandings perverted, biassed, and prejudiced against the truth, and reprobate concerning the faith, that is, very far from being true Christians; but they shall proceed no farther, or not much farther, as some read it.

Observe, 1. Seducers seek for corners, and love obscurity; for they are afraid to appear in public, and therefore creep into houses. Farther, they attack those that are the least able to defend themselves; they are silly and wicked women. 2. Seducers in all ages are much alike, their characters are the same, "men of corrupt minds;" &c., and their conduct much the same; they resist the truth, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and they will be alike in their disappointment. 3. Those that resist the truth are guilty of folly, yea, of egregious folly, for *magna est veritas, et praevalabit*—"great is the truth, and shall prevail." 4. Though the spirit of error may be let loose for a time, God hath it in a chain. Satan can deceive the nation and the churches no farther, nor any longer, than God will permit him. "Their folly shall be manifest:" that is, it shall appear that they are impostors, and every man shall abandon them.

[In these verses there can, I think, be no question that the apostle refers to the great apostasy of which he had spoken in his former epistle to *Timothy*, ch. iv., as well as in other parts of his writings, especially in *2 Thess. ii.* A correspondence may, perhaps, be traced between some particular parts of his prophetic description and individual corrupt teachers, who, at all times, have arisen among the churches, and propagated doctrines subversive alike of religion and morality; but no impartial person can fail to see that in its entireness it suits exclusively the Romish priesthood, while to their principles, practices, and pretensions, it suits exactly. For it is with truth alleged against the system of popery, that, while it introduced new and impious doctrines, it subverted at the same time the foundation of morals, and openly inculcated and defended many of the worst vices by which human nature is disgraced. And this it did under the guise of an extraordinary sanctity, pleading the obligations of fidelity, chastity, and spirituality, to cover the perpetration of the foulest crimes. Its hypocrisy is consummate, and most determined and fierce has ever been its opposition to the truth. But it is doomed. The apostle, while he predicts its rise, and draws its character, foretells also its downfall. And these predictions may assure us that, since this great and terrible apostasy was permitted to take place, its whole course and developments have been, and still are, controlled, and shall issue in the ruin of its deluded votaries, and be the occasion of the more glorious manifestation and triumph of the true church of God.]

10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of *them* all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

Here the apostle, to confirm Timothy in that way wherein he walked,

First. Sets before him his own example, which Timothy had been an eyewitness of, having long attended Paul; ver. 10, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine." The more fully we know the doctrine of Christ and the apostles, the more closely we shall cleave to it; and the reason why many sit loose to it is, because they do not fully know it. Christ's apostles had no enemies but those that did not know them, or not know them fully; those that knew them best loved and honoured them the most. Now, what is it that Timothy had so fully known in Paul?

1. The doctrine that he preached. Paul kept back nothing from his hearers, but declared to them "the whole counsel of God," *Acts xx. 27*; so that, if it were

iii. 7. "Ever learning," &c.: from curiosity, having no real trust in anything, possessing a character of feverish instability, which prevents true spiritual progress.

iii. 8. "Men of corrupt minds, reprobate," &c.: see *Rom. i. 28*.

iii. 9. "No further;" it has been thought that this passage contradicts the assertion in chap. ii. 16. "There is no contradiction, for the present passage speaks of outward success, the former of inward deterioration" (*Conybeare*).

not their own fault, they might fully know it. Timothy had a great advantage in being trained up under such a tutor, and being apprized of the doctrine he preached.

2. He had fully known his conversation; Thou hast known my doctrine, and "manner of life;" and the manner of his life was of a piece with his doctrine, and did not contradict it. He did not pull down by his living what he built up by his preaching. Those ministers are likely to do good, and leave lasting fruits of their labours, whose manner of life agrees with their doctrine, as on the contrary those cannot expect to profit at all that preach well and live ill.

3. Timothy fully knew what was the great thing that Paul drove at, both in his preaching and in his conversation. Thou hast known my purpose; that is, what I drive at, how far it is from any worldly, carnal, secular design, and how sincerely I aim at the glory of God and the good of the souls of men.

4. Timothy fully knew Paul's good character, which he might gather from his doctrine, manner of life, and purpose; for he gave proofs of his faith, that is, of his integrity and fidelity, or, his faith in Christ, his faith concerning another world, by which Paul lived; his long-suffering towards the churches to which he preached, and over which he presided; his charity towards all men, and his patience. These were graces that Paul was eminent for, and Timothy knew it.

5. He knew that he had suffered ill for doing well; ver. 11, Thou hast fully known the "persecutions and afflictions which came unto me." He instances those only which happened to him while Timothy was with him at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, and therefore let it be no surprise to thee if thou suffer hard things; it is no more than I have endured before.



ICONIUM (KONIAH).

6. He knew what care God hath taken of him; Notwithstanding "out of them all the Lord delivered me;" as he never failed his cause, so his God never failed him. Thou hast fully known my afflictions. When we know the afflictions of good people but in part, they are a temptation to us to decline that cause which they suffer for; when we only know the hardships they undergo for Christ, we may be ready to say, We will depart from that cause that is like to cost us so dear in the owning of it; but when we fully know the afflictions, not only how they suffer, but how they are supported and comforted under their sufferings, then instead of being discouraged we shall be encouraged by them, especially considering that we are told before that we must count upon such things; ver. 12, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Not always alike; at that time they that professed the faith of Christ were more exposed to persecution than at other times, but at all times, more or less, they "that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." They must expect to be despised, and that their religion will stand in the way of their preferment; they that will live godly must expect it, especially they that will "live godly in Christ Jesus," that is, according to the strict rules of the Christian religion, will wear the livery and bear the name of the crucified Redeemer; all that will shew their religion in their conversation, that will not only be godly but live godly, let them expect persecution, especially when they are resolute in it.

Observe, 1st. The apostle's life was very exemplary to, three things: for his doctrine, which was according to the will of God; for his life, which was agreeable to his doctrine; and for his persecutions and sufferings. 2nd. Though his life was a life of great usefulness, yet it was a life of great sufferings, and none I believe came nearer to their great Master for eminent service and great sufferings than St. Paul; he suffered almost in every place: the Holy Ghost witnessed that bonds and afflictions did abide him, *Acts xx. 23*. Here he mentions his persecutions and afflictions at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, besides what he suffered elsewhere. 3rd. The apostle mentions the Lord's delivering him out of all for Timothy's and our encouragement under sufferings. 4th. We have the practice and treatment of true Christians; they live godly in Jesus Christ,—that is their practice; and they shall suffer persecution,—that is the usage they must expect in this world.

Secondly. He warns Timothy of the fatal end of seducers as a reason why he should stick close to the truth as it is in Jesus; ver. 13, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse." &c. Observe, That as good men by the grace of God grow better and better, so bad men, through the subtlety of Satan, and the power of their own corruptions, grow worse and worse. The way of sin is down-hill, for such proceed from bad to worse, "deceiving and being deceived." Those that deceive others do but deceive themselves; those that draw others into error, run themselves into more and more mistakes, and they will find it so at last to their cost.

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith

iii. 11. Lystra and Derbe are generally mentioned together (*Acts xiv. 6, xvi. 1*), here only Lystra; and a reference to the history of St. Paul's journeys shews that he suffered no persecution at Derbe.

iii. 15. "Wise unto salvation;" "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite to salvation" (*Art. VI. "Book of Common Prayer"*).

which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

First. He directs him to keep close to a good education, and particularly to what he had learned out of the holy Scriptures; ver. 14, 15, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned." Note, It is not enough to learn that which is good, but we must continue in it, and persevere in it unto the end; "Then are we Christ's disciples indeed," *Jno. viii. 31*. We should not be any more children, "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive," *Eph. iv. 14*: "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace," *Heb. xiii. 9*. And for this reason we should continue in the things we have learned from the holy Scriptures; not that we ought to continue in any errors and mistakes which we may have been led into in the time of our childhood and youth, for these, upon an impartial inquiry and full conviction, we should forsake; but this makes nothing against our continuing in those things the holy Scriptures plainly assert, and which he that runs may read.

Secondly. If Timothy would stick to the truth as he had been taught it, that would arm him against the snares and insinuation of seducers. They are "the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of."

1. It is a great happiness to know the certainty of the things wherein we have been instructed, *Lu. i. 4*; not only to know what the truths are, but to know that they are of undoubted certainty. What we have learned we must labour to be more and more assured of; that, being grounded in the truth, we may be guarded against error, for certainty in religion is of great importance and advantage. Knowing, 1st. That thou hast had good teachers: "Consider of whom thou hast learned them." Not of evil men and seducers, but good men, that had themselves experienced the power of the truths they taught thee, and been ready to suffer for them, and thereby would give the fullest evidence of their belief of these truths. 2nd. Knowing especially the firm foundation upon which thou hast built, namely, that of the Scripture; ver. 15, "That from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures."

2. Those that would acquaint themselves with the things of God, and be assured of them, must know the holy Scriptures, for those are the summary of Divine revelation.

3. It is a great happiness to know the holy Scriptures from our childhood, and children should betimes get the knowledge of the Scriptures. The age of children is the learning age, and those that would get true learning must get it out of the Scriptures.

[Timothy enjoyed the inestimable advantage of having a pious mother, and she, with his no less pious grandmother also, early taught him to read the Bible; and doubtless, as he read, unfolded to him its meaning, and aimed to impress its truths upon his heart. It is impossible to say at how early a period the infantile mind may receive a saving knowledge of the word of God; but parents cannot begin too young the practice of reading to them and with them its sacred pages. This is one of the first and most important of parental obligations, and it cannot be neglected without criminality. At the same time discretion is needed to guide in the selection of proper portions of Scripture, suited to the youthful capacity, and to prevent the sacred book ever appearing in a repulsive light. We may regard the apostle's notice of Timothy's early acquaintance with the Scriptures as a commendation of his parents; and if parents ourselves, we should be stimulated by it to imitate their excellent example.]

4. The Scriptures we are to know are the holy Scriptures. They came from the holy God, and were delivered by holy men, and contain holy precepts, and treat of holy things, and were designed to make us holy, and to lead us in the way of holiness to happiness. Being called the holy Scriptures, they are by that distinguished from profane writings of all sorts, and from those that only treat of morality and common justice and honesty, but do not meddle with holiness. If we would know the holy Scriptures we must read and search them daily, as the noble Bereans did, *Acts xvii. 11*; they must not lie by us neglected, and seldom or never looked into. Now here observe,

1st. What is the excellency of the Scripture. It is "given by inspiration of God," ver. 16, and therefore is his word. It is a Divine revelation, which we may depend upon as infallibly true. The same Spirit that breathed reason into us breathes revelation among us; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men spake as they were moved or carried forth by the Holy Ghost, *2 Pet. i. 21*. The prophets and apostles did not speak from themselves, but what they received of the Lord that they delivered unto us. That the Scripture was given by inspiration of God appears by the majesty of its style, and the truth, purity, and sublimity of the doctrines contained in it; from the harmony of its several parts; from its power and efficacy on the minds of multitudes that converse with it; from the accomplishment of many prophecies relating to things beyond all human foresight; and from the uncontrollable miracles that were wrought in proof of its Divine original, "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will," *Heb. ii. 4*.

2nd. What use it will be of to us. First. It is able to make us wise to salvation; that is, it is a sure guide in our way to eternal life. Note, Those are wise indeed that are wise to salvation. The Scriptures are able to make us truly wise, wise for our souls and another world; "To make thee wise to salvation through faith." Observe, The Scriptures will make us wise to salvation, if they be mixed with faith, and not otherwise, *Heb. iv. 2*; for if we do not believe their truth and goodness they will do us no good.

Secondly. It is profitable to us for all the purposes of the Christian life, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." It answers all the ends of Divine revelation; it instructs us in that which is true, reproves us for that which is amiss, directs us in that which is good. It is of use to all, for we all need to be instructed, corrected, and reproofed; and whence can they fetch it better than from the Scripture? "That the man of God may be perfect," ver. 17. The Christian, the minister, is the man of God. That which finishes a man of God in this world is the Scripture: by it we are "thoroughly furnished for every good work." There is that in the Scripture which suits every case. Whatever duty we have to do, whatever service is required from us, we may find enough in the Scriptures to furnish us for it. 1st. We see the Scripture hath various uses, and answers divers ends and purposes; it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction of all errors in judgment and practice, and for instruction in righteousness. 2nd. The Scripture is a perfect rule of faith and practice, and was designed for the

man of God, the minister, as well as the Christian who is devoted to God, for it is profitable for doctrine, &c. 3rd. If we consult the Scripture that was given by inspiration of God, and follow its directions, we shall be made men of God, perfect, and thoroughly furnished to every good work. 4th. We farther learn there is no occasion for the writings of the philosophers, nor for rabbinical fables, nor popish legends, nor unwritten traditions, to make us perfect men of God, since the Scripture answers all these ends and purposes. O that we may love our Bibles more, and keep closer to them than ever, and then shall we find the benefit and advantage designed thereby, and shall at last attain the happiness therein promised and assured to us!

CHAPTER IV.

In this chapter, I. St. Paul doth with great solemnity and earnestness press Timothy to the diligent and conscientious discharge of his work and office as an evangelist; and the charge given to him all gospel ministers are to take to themselves, ver. 1—5. II. The reason of his concern in this case. Why must Timothy now be instant in season, &c., in a particular manner? Because the church was likely to be deprived of the apostle's labours, for his departure was at hand, ver. 6—8. III. Divers particular matters, with a hint and caution about Alexander the coppersmith, ver. 9—15. IV. He informeth him of what befel him at his first answer: though men forsook him, the Lord stood by him, and that encouraged him to hope for future deliverance, ver. 16—18. And then he concludes with salutations and a benediction, ver. 19—22.



CHARGE thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. 6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Observe, First. How awfully this charge is introduced; ver. 1, "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom." Observe, The best of men have need to be awed into the discharge of their duty. The work of a minister is not an indifferent thing, but absolutely necessary. Woe be to him if he preach not the Gospel, *1 Cor. ix. 16*; "I charge thee," to induce him to faithfulness. He must consider,

1. That the eye of God and Jesus Christ was upon him. "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ:" that is, as thou tenderest the favour of God and Jesus Christ; as thou wilt approve thyself to God and Jesus Christ, by the obligations both of natural and revealed religion; as thou wilt make due returns to the God that made thee, and the Lord Jesus Christ that redeemed thee.

2. He charges him, as he will answer it at the great day, minding him of the judgment to come, which is committed to the Lord Jesus. He shall "judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and in his kingdom," that is, when he appears in his kingdom. It concerns all, both ministers and people, seriously to consider the account that they must shortly give to Jesus Christ, of all the trusts reposed in them. "Christ shall judge the quick and the dead;" that is, those that at the last day shall be found alive, and those that shall be raised to life out of the grave. Note, 1st. The Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and dead. "God hath committed all judgment unto the Son," and hath appointed him judge of quick and dead, *Acts x. 42*. 2nd. He will appear. He will come the second time, and it will be a glorious appearance, as the word *ἐπιφάνεια* signifies. 3rd. Then his kingdom shall appear in his glory, "at his appearing and kingdom," for he will then appear in his kingdom, sitting on a throne to judge the world.

Secondly. What is the matter of the charge, ver. 2—5. He is charged, 1. To "preach the word." That is a minister's business; a dispensation is committed to them. It is not their own notions and fancies that they are to preach, but the pure, plain word of God, and they must not corrupt it, "but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God they speak in Christ," *2 Cor. ii. 17*.

2. To urge what he preached, and to press it with all earnestness upon his hearers. "Be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort;" that is, do this work with all fervency of spirit. Call upon those under thy charge to take heed of sin, to do their duty. Call upon them to repent and believe, and live a holy life, and this both "in season and out of season." "In season"

iii. 16. "Inspiration:" "The inspiration gives the Divine sanction to all the words of Scripture, though those words be the utterances of the individual writer, and only in special cases revealed directly by God (*1 Cor. ii. 13*). . . . There are degrees of revelation in Scripture, but not of inspiration. The sacred writers did not always know the full significance of their own God-inspired words (*1 Peter i. 10—12*). Verbal inspiration does not mean mechanical dictation, but 'all Scripture is (so) inspired by God' that everything in it, its

narratives, prophecies, citations, the whole—ideas, phrases, and words—are such as he saw fit to be there. The present condition of the text is no ground for concluding against the original text being inspired, but is a reason why we should use all critical diligence to restore the original inspired text. Again, inspiration may be accompanied by revelation or not, but it is as much needed for writing known doctrines or facts authoritatively, as for communicating new truths" (Tregelles).

that is, when they are at leisure to hear thee, when some special opportunity offers itself of speaking to them with advantage. Nay, do it "out of season," even when there is not that apparent probability of fastening something upon them; because thou dost not know but the Spirit of God may fasten upon them, for the wind bloweth where it listeth; and "in the morning we must sow our seed, and in the evening not withhold our hand," *Ecc. i. 6*. We must do it "in season," that is, let slip no opportunity; and do it "out of season," that is, we must not shift off the duty, under pretence that it is out of season."

3. He must tell people of their faults: "Reprove them, rebuke them;" convince wicked people of the evil and danger of their wicked courses. Endeavour, by dealing plainly with them, to bring them to repentance. Rebuke them with gravity and authority, in Christ's name, that they may take thy displeasure against them as an indication of God's displeasure.

4. He must direct, encourage, and quicken, those that began well. "Exhort them," persuade them to hold on, and endure to the end, and this "with all longsuffering and doctrine." 1st. He must do it very patiently; "with all longsuffering." If thou do not see the effect of thy labours presently, yet do not therefore give up the cause, be not weary of speaking to them; while God shews to them all longsuffering, let ministers exhort with all longsuffering. 2nd. He must do it rationally, not with passion, but "with doctrine;" that is, in order to the reducing of them to good practices, instil into them good principles. Teach them the truth as it is in Jesus, and reduce them to a firm belief of that, and that will be a means both to reclaim them from evil and to bring them to good. Observe, *First*. A minister's work hath various parts; he is to preach the word, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort. *Secondly*. He is to be very diligent and careful; he must be instant in season and out of season; he must spare no pains nor labour, but must be urgent with them to take care of their souls and their eternal concerns.

5. He must "watch in all things," that is, seek an opportunity of doing them a kindness; let no fair occasion slip through thy negligence. Watch to thy work; watch against the temptations of Satan, by which thou mayest be diverted from it; watch over the souls of those that are committed to thy charge.

6. He must count upon afflictions, and endure them, make the best of them. *Κακοπάθειον*,—endure patiently; be not discouraged by the difficulties thou meetest with, but bear them with an evenness of spirit. Inure thyself to hardships.

7. He must remember his office, and discharge that; "Do the work of an evangelist." The office of the evangelists was, as the apostle's deputies, to water the churches that they planted. They were not settled pastors, but for some time resided in, and presided over, the churches that the apostles had planted, till they were settled under a standing ministry. This was Timothy's work.

8. He must fulfil his ministry; "Make full proof of it." It was a great trust that was reposed in him, and therefore he must answer it, and perform all the parts of his office with diligence and care.

Observe, 1st. A minister must expect afflictions in the faithful discharge of his duty. 2nd. He must endure them, that is, bear them patiently like a Christian hero. 3rd. These must not discourage him in his work, for he must do his work and fulfil his ministry. 4th. The best way to make full proof of our ministry is to fulfil it, to fill it up in all its parts with proper work.

Thirdly. The reasons to enforce the charge to creep into the church, by which the minds of many professing Christians would be corrupted; ver. 3, 4, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." Therefore improve the present time, when they will endure it; be busy now, for it is seed time. When the fields are white unto the harvest, but in the sickle, for the present gale of opportunity will be soon over. "They will not endure sound doctrine;" there will be those that will "heap to themselves corrupt teachers, and will turn away their ears from the truth;" and therefore secure as many as thou canst, that when these storms and tempests do arise they may be well fixed, and their apostasy may be prevented. People must hear, and ministers must preach, for the time to come, and guard against the mischief that are likely to arise hereafter, though they do not yet arise. They will "turn away their ears from the truth," that is, they will grow sick of the old plain Gospel of Christ, and then they will be greedy of fables, and take pleasure in them, and God shall give them up to those strong delusions, because they received not the truth in the love of it, 2 *Thes. ii. 11, 12*. Observe, 1st. These teachers were of their own heaping up, and not of God's sending; but they chose them to gratify their lusts, and to please their itching ears. 2nd. People do so when they will not endure sound doctrine, that preaching which is searching, plain, and to the purpose; then they will have teachers of their own. 3rd. There is a wide difference between the word of God and the words of such teachers; the one is sound doctrine, the word of truth, the other is only fables. 4th. They that are turned unto fables first turn away their ears from the truth, for they cannot bear and mind both any more than they can serve two masters; nay, farther, it is said they shall be turned unto fables. God justly suffers them to turn to fables who grow weary of the truth, and gives them up to be led aside from the truth by fables.

2. Because Paul, for his part, had almost done his work. Do thou make full proof of thy ministry, "for I am now ready to be offered," ver. 6. And, 1st. Therefore there will be the more occasion for thee. When labourers are removed out of the vineyard, it is no time for them to loiter that are left behind, but to double their diligence. The fewer hands there are to work, the more industrious those hands must be that are at work. 2nd. I have done the work of my day and generation; do thou in like manner do the work of thy day and generation.

3. The comfort and cheerfulness of Paul in the prospect of his approaching departure might encourage Timothy to the utmost industry, and diligence, and seriousness in his work. Paul was an old soldier of Jesus Christ, Timothy was but newly enlisted. Come, saith Paul, I have found our Master kind, the cause good, and I can look back upon my warfare with a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction, and therefore be not afraid of the difficulties thou must meet with. The crown of life is as sure to thee as if it were already upon thy head, and therefore endure afflictions, and make full proof of thy ministry. The courage and comfort of dying saints and ministers, and especially dying martyrs, is a great confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion, and a great encouragement to living saints and ministers in their work. Here,

1st. He looks forward upon his death approaching; "I am now ready to be offered." The Holy Ghost witnessed in every city that bonds and afflictions did abide him, *Acts xx. 23*. He was now at Rome, and it is probable he had particular intimations from the Spirit that there he should seal the truth with his blood; and he looks upon it now as near at hand. I am "already poured out," so it is in the original, *ἤδη σπένδωμι*; that is, I am already a martyr in affection. It alludes to the pouring out of the drink offerings; for the blood of the martyrs, though it was not a sacrifice of atonement, yet it was a sacrifice of acknowledgment to the honour of the grace of God and his truths. Observe with what pleasure he speaks of dying. He calls it his departure. Though it is probable he foresaw he must die a violent, bloody death, yet he calls it his

departure, or his release. Death to a good man is his release from the imprisonment of this world, and his departure to the enjoyments of another world; he doth not cease to be, but is only removed from one world to another.

2nd. Observe with what pleasure he looks back upon the life he had lived; ver. 7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course," &c. He therefore did not fear death, because he had the testimony of his conscience that, by the grace of God, he had in some measure answered the ends of living. As a Christian, as a minister, he had "fought the good fight." He had done the service, gone through the difficulties of his warfare, and had been instrumental in carrying on the glorious victories of the exalted Redeemer over the powers of darkness. His life was a course, and he had now finished it; as his warfare was accomplished, so his race was run. "I have kept the faith." I have kept the doctrines of the Gospel, and never betrayed any of them. Note, *First*. The life of a Christian, but especially of a minister, is a warfare, and a race; sometimes compared to the one in the Scripture, and sometimes to the other. *Secondly*. It is a good fight, a good warfare; the cause is good, and the victory is sure, if we continue faithful and courageous. *Thirdly*. We must fight this good fight, we must fight it out, and finish our course. We must not give over till we are made more than conquerors through him that hath loved us, *Rom. viii. 37*. *Fourthly*. It is a great comfort to a dying saint, when he can look back upon his past life, and say with our apostle, "I have fought," &c.; I have kept the faith, the doctrine of faith, and the grace of faith. Towards the end of our days to be able to speak in this manner, what comfort, unspeakable comfort, will it afford! Let it then be our constant endeavour, by the grace of God, that we may finish our course with joy, *Acts xx. 24*.

3rd. With what pleasure he looks forward to the life he was to live hereafter; ver. 8, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," &c. He had lost for Christ, but he was sure he should not lose by him, *Phil. iii. 8*. Let this encourage Timothy to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, that there is a crown of life before us, the glory and joy of which will abundantly recompense all the hardships and toils of our present warfare. Observe, It is called "a crown of righteousness," because it will be the recompense of our services, which God is not unrighteous to forget; and because our holiness and righteousness will there be perfected, and that will be our crown. God will give it as a righteous God, who will let none lose by him. And yet this crown of righteousness was not peculiar to Paul, as if it belonged only to apostles, and eminent ministers and martyrs, but to "all them also that love his appearing." Observe, It is the character of all the saints that they love the appearing of Jesus Christ. They love his first appearing, when he appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself, *Heb. ix. 26*. They love to think of it; they love his second appearing at the great day; love it, and long for it. And those that love the appearing of Jesus Christ, he shall appear to their joy; there is a crown of righteousness reserved for them, which shall then be given them, *Heb. ix. 28*. We learn hence, *First*. The Lord is the righteous Judge, for his judgment is according to truth. *Secondly*. The believers' crown is a crown of righteousness, purchased by the righteousness of Christ, and bestowed as the reward of the saints' righteousness. *Thirdly*. This crown, which believers shall wear, is laid up for them; they have it not at present, for they are but heirs; they have it not in possession, and yet it is sure, for it is laid up for them. *Fourthly*. The righteous Judge will give it to all that love, prepare, and long for his appearing. "Surely I come quickly: Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus."

9 Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: 10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. 12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. 13 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou



1. (Cups) Persian. 2. Greek. 3. Asia Minor. 4. Roman.
ANCIENT CLOAKS.

comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: 15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

Here are divers particular matters which Paul mentioned to Timothy now at this: closing of the epistle.

iv. 1. "I adjure thee before God and Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom—his coming, at which we shall stand before him; his kingdom, in which we hope to reign with him" (Alford).

iv. 2. "In season, out of season;" see *Ezek. ii. 4, 5*. "For even as fountains, though none draw from them, flow on; and rivers, though none drink of them, still run; so must we also in speaking, though none give heed, thoroughly do our part" (Chrysostom, *Hom. xxx*).

iv. 5. "But thou be sober;" not as in Authorised Version, "watch." The Greek word signifies "be wary;" be cool and collected amidst the enemies of the faith.

iv. 7. Literally, "I have completed the glorious contest."
iv. 8. Not "a" but "the crown." "A man is justified by the merits of Christ through faith, and when he is so justified God accepts his works, and honours them with a reward which is not their due, but is given of grace" (Fausset, "Port. Com.").

First. He bids him hasten to him, if possible; ver. 9, "Do thy diligence to come shortly to me." For Timothy was an evangelist that was not a fixed pastor of any one place, but attended the motions of the apostles, to build upon their foundation. Paul wanted Timothy's company and help, and the reason he gives is, because several had left him, ver. 10; one from an ill principle, that was Demas, who abides under an ill name for it: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." He quitted Paul and his interest, either for fear of suffering, (because Paul was now a prisoner, and he was afraid of coming into trouble upon his account,) or being called off from his ministry by secular affairs, which he entangled himself in, his first love to Christ and his Gospel was forsaken and forgotten, and he fell in love with the world. Note, Love to this present world is oftentimes the cause of apostasy from the truths and ways of Jesus Christ. He is gone off, is "departed unto Thessalonica;" called thither perhaps by trade, or by some other worldly business. Crescens is gone one way, and Titus another way, and only Luke was with Paul, ver. 10, 11; was not that enough? Paul did not think it so; he loved the company of his friends.

Secondly. He speaks respectfully concerning Mark. "He is profitable to me for the ministry." It is supposed this Mark was he about whom Paul and Barnabas fell out, Acts xv. 39. Paul would not take him with him to the work, because he had once flinched and drawn back. But now, saith he, take Mark and bring him with thee. By this it appears that Paul was now reconciled to Mark, and had now a better opinion of him than he had had formerly. This teaches us to be of a forgiving spirit; and those that are profitable and useful, though they may have done amiss, yet we must not therefore disclaim for ever making use of them.

Thirdly. Paul orders Timothy to come to him, bids him as he came through Troas to bring with him from thence those things which he had left behind him there, ver. 13. His cloak he had left there, which, it may be, Paul had the more occasion for in a cold prison. It is probable it was the habit that Paul usually wore, a plain dress. Some read it, 'the roll of parchment that I left at Troas;' others, 'the desk that I left.' Paul was guided by Divine inspiration, and yet he would have his books with him. Whereas he had exhorted Timothy to give attendance to reading, so he did himself, though he was now ready to be offered; as long as we live we must be still learning. "But especially the parchments," which some think were the originals of his epistles; others think they were the skins of which he made his tents, whereby he got a livelihood, working with his own hands.

Fourthly. He mentions Alexander, and the mischief that he had done him, ver. 14, 15. This is he that is spoken of Acts xix. 33. It should seem he had been a professor of the Christian religion, a forward professor, for he was there particularly maligned by the worshippers of Diana, and yet he did Paul much evil. Paul was in as much danger from false brethren, 2 Cor. xi. 26, as from open enemies. Paul foretels that God would reckon with him. It is a prophetic denunciation of the just judgment of God that would befall him. "The Lord will reward him according to his works." He cautions Timothy to take heed of him; "Of whom be thou aware also," that he do not, under pretence of friendship, betray thee to mischief. It is dangerous having any thing to do with those that would be enemies to such a man as Paul. Observe, 1. Some that were once Paul's hearers and admirers did not give him reason to remember them with much pleasure; for one forsook him, and another did him much evil, and greatly withstood his words. Yet, 2. At the same time he mentions some with pleasure, (the badness of some did not make him forget the goodness of others,) such as Timothy, Titus, Mark, and Luke. 3. The apostle hath left a brand on the names and memory of two persons; the one is Demas, who forsook him, having loved the present world, and the other is Alexander, who greatly withstood his words. 4. God will reward evil-doers, particularly apostates, according to their works. 5. Of such that are of Alexander's spirit and temper we should beware, for they will do us no good, but all the mischief that is in their power.

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. 17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the



EXTERIOR OF COLOSSEUM.

Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 19 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. 21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. 22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

Here he, First. Gives Timothy an account of his own present circumstances.

1. He had lately been called to appear before the emperor, upon his appeal to Caesar, and then no man stood with him, ver. 16, to plead his cause, to bear testimony for him, or so much as to keep him in countenance, but all men forsook him. This was strange, that so good a man as Paul should have nobody to own him, even at Rome, where there were many Christians, whose faith was spoken of throughout all the world, Rom. i. 8. But men are but men. The Christians at Rome were forward to go and meet him, Acts xxviii. 15; but when it came to the pinch that they would be in danger of suffering with him, then they all forsook him. He prays that God would not lay it to their charge, intimating that it was a great fault, and God might justly be angry with them, but he prays God to forgive them. See what distinction is put between sins of presumption and sins of infirmity. Alexander the coppersmith, that maliciously withstood Paul, he prays against him, "The Lord reward him according to his works;" but these Christians that through weakness shrunk from Paul in time of trial, The Lord lay it not to their charge. Here we see, 1st. St. Paul had his trials in his friends forsaking him in a time of danger, as well as in the opposition made by enemies; all forsook him. 2nd. It was their sin not to appear for the good apostle, especially at his first answer; but it was a sin of weakness, and therefore the more excusable. Yet, 3rd. God might lay it to their charge, but St. Paul endeavours to prevent it by his earnest prayers: "Let it not be laid to their charge."

2. Notwithstanding this, God stood by him, ver. 17; that is, gave him extraordinary wisdom and courage, to enable him to speak so much the better himself. When he had nobody to keep him in countenance, God made his face to shine. "That by me the preaching might be fully known;" that is, God brought me out from that difficulty, that I might preach the Gospel, which is my business. Nay, it should seem that he might preach the Gospel at that time; for Paul knew how to preach at the bar as well as in the pulpit. "And that all the Gentiles might hear," the emperor himself, and the great men, that would never have heard Paul preach if he had not been brought before them. "And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion," that is, of Nero, as some think, or some other judge. Some understand it only as a proverbial form of speech, to signify that he was in imminent danger. [Still, says Barnes, 'it is quite as natural to suppose, that the punishment which had been appointed for him, or to which he would have been subjected, was, to be thrown to lions, and that in some way, now unknown to us, he had been delivered from it; see 1 Cor. xv. 32.] "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work." See how Paul improved his experiences; he that hath delivered doth deliver, and we trust, he shall yet deliver. "Shall deliver me from every evil work;" that is, from doing any ill myself, and having any ill done to me by others, "And shall preserve me to his heavenly kingdom." And for this he gives glory to God, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. 1st. If the Lord stand by us, he will strengthen us in a time of difficulty and danger, and his presence will more than supply every one's absence. 2nd. When the Lord preserves his servants from great and imminent danger, it is for eminent work and service. Paul was preserved, that by him the preaching might be fully known, &c. 3rd. Former deliverances should encourage future hopes. 4th. There is a heavenly kingdom, to which the Lord will preserve his faithful, witnessing, or suffering servants. 5th. We ought to give God the glory of all past, present, and future deliverances; "To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Secondly. He sends salutations to "Aquila, and Priscilla, and the household of Onesiphorus," ver. 19. He mentions his leaving Trophimus sick at Miletum, ver. 20, by which it appears that, though the apostles healed all manner of diseases miraculously, for the confirmation of their doctrine, yet they did not exert that power upon their own friends, lest it should have looked like a collusion.

Thirdly. He hastens Timothy to come to him before winter, ver. 21, because he longed to see him, and because in the winter the journey or voyage would be more dangerous.

Fourthly. He sends commendations to him from Eubulus, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. One of the heathen writers at this time mentions one Pudens and his wife Claudia, and saith that Claudia was a Briton; whence some have gathered that it was this Pudens, and that Claudia here was his wife, and that they were eminent Christians at Rome.

Fifthly. He concludes with a prayer, that the Lord Jesus would be with his spirit. We need no more to make us happy than to have the Lord Jesus Christ with our spirits; for in him all spiritual blessings are summed up. And it is the best prayer we can put up for our friends, that the Lord Jesus Christ may be with their spirits, to sanctify and save them, and at last to receive them to himself, as Stephen the protomartyr prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," Acts vii. 59; as if he had said, Lord Jesus, receive that spirit thou hast been with whilst it was united to the body; do not now leave it in its separate state. "Grace be with you. Amen." This was our apostle's token in every epistle; so he wrote, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen," 2 Thes. iii. 17, 18. And if grace be with us here to convert and change us, to make us holy, and to keep us humble, and to enable us to persevere to the end, glory will crown us hereafter; "For the Lord is a sun, and a shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee," Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 12. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, our Saviour, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

have thought this only an expression for great danger, some that it referred to Nero; but Alford and others argue with much force that the devil is meant. "The falling into the power of the tempter, the giving way, in his own weakness and the desertion of all, and betraying the Gospel for which he was sent as a witness" (Alford).

iv. 22. "With thy spirit:" "The third and highest part in man" (Ellicott).

iv. 13. "The mention of his 'cloak,' so far from being unworthy of inspiration, is one of those graphic touches which sheds a flood of light on the last scene of Paul's life, on the confines of two worlds; in this wanting a cloak to cover him from the winter cold, in that covered with the righteousness of the saints" (Gaussen).

iv. 14. "The Lord will reward him;" not a prayer, as in Authorised Version; so oldest MSS.

iv. 17. "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion:" some



AN EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO TITUS, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

THIS epistle of Paul to Titus is much of the same nature with those to Timothy; both were converts of Paul, and his companions in labours and sufferings, both in the office of evangelists, whose work was to water the churches planted by the apostles, and to set in order the things that were wanting in them. They were vice-apostles, as it were, "working the work of the Lord, as they did," and mostly under their direction, though not despotic and arbitrary, but with the concurring exercise of their own prudence and judgment, 1 *Cor.* xvi. 10, 12. We read much of this Titus, his titles and character, and active usefulness in many places. He was a Greek, *Gal.* ii. 3; St. Paul called him his "son," *ch.* i. 4; his "brother," 2 *Cor.* ii. 13; his "partner and fellow-helper," 2 *Cor.* viii. 23; "one that walked in the same spirit, and in the same steps with himself." He went up with the apostle to the church at Jerusalem, *Gal.* ii. 1; was much conversant at Corinth, for which church he had an earnest care, 2 *Cor.* viii. 16. Paul's second epistle to them, and probably his first also, was sent by his hand, 2 *Cor.* viii. 16—18, 23; ix. 2—4; and xii. 18. He was with the apostle at Rome, and thence went into Dalmatia, 2 *Tim.* iv. 10; after which no more occurs of him in the Scriptures. So that by them he appears not to have been a fixed bishop: if such he were, and in those times, the church of Corinth, where he most tended, had best title to him. In Crete, (now called Candia, formerly Hecatompolis, from the hundred cities that were in it,) a large island at the mouth of the *Ægean* Sea, the Gospel had got some footing; and here Paul and Titus were in one of their travels, cultivating this plantation; but the apostle of the Gentiles, having on him "the care of all the churches," could not himself tarry long at this place, therefore left Titus some time there to carry on the work which he had begun; wherein, probably meeting with more difficulty than ordinary, Paul wrote this epistle to him; and yet perhaps not so much for his own sake as for the people's, that the endeavours of Titus, strengthened with apostolic advice and authority, might be more significant and effectual among them. He was to see all the cities furnished with good pastors; to reject and keep out the unmeet and unworthy; to teach sound doctrine, and instruct all sorts in their duties; to set forth the free grace of God in man's salvation by Christ; and withal to shew the necessity of maintaining good works by those who have believed in God, and hope for eternal life from him.

A.D. 65.

A.D. 65.

CHAPTER I.

In this chapter we have the preface or introduction to the epistle, shewing from and to whom it was written, with the apostle's salutation and prayer for Titus, wishing all blessings to him, ver. 1—4. Entrance into the matter, by signifying the end of Titus's being left at Crete, ver. 5. And how the same should be pursued, in reference both to good and bad ministers, from ver. 6—16.



PAUL, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; 2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; 3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

I. Here is the preface to the epistle. Shewing, First. The writer. Paul, a Gentile name, taken by the apostle of the Gentiles, *Acts* xiii. 9, 46, 47. Ministers will accommodate even smaller matters, so as they may be any furthering of acceptance in their work. When the Jews rejected the Gospel, and the Gentiles received it, we read no more of this apostle by his Jewish name, Saul, but by his Roman one, Paul. "A servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ." Here he is described by his relation and office. A servant of God, not in the general sense only, as a man and a Christian; but specially as a minister, "serving God in the Gospel of his Son," *Rom.* i. 9. This is a high honour. It is the glory of angels that they and "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation," *Heb.* i. 14. Yea, more especially a chief minister, "an apostle of Jesus Christ," one who had seen the Lord, and was immediately called and commissioned by him, and had his doctrine from him. Observe, The highest officers in the church are but servants. There is much divinity and devotion in the inscriptions of the epistles. The apostles of Jesus Christ, who were em-

ployed to spread and propagate his religion, were therein also the servants of God; they did not set up any thing inconsistent with the truths and duties of natural religion. Christianity, which they preached, was in order to clear and enforce those natural principles, as well as to advance them, and to superadd what was fit and necessary in man's degenerate and revolted state. Therefore the apostles of Jesus Christ were the servants of God. [There is too much honour here given to what is called natural religion. As to the expression "servant of God, and apostle of Jesus Christ," see on *Rom.* i. 1.] "According to the faith of God's elect." Their doctrine agreed with the faith of all the elect from the beginning of the world, and was for propagating and promoting of the same. Observe, There are elect of God, 1 *Pet.* i. 2, and in these the Holy Spirit works precious, Divine faith, proper to those who are chosen to eternal life; 2 *Thes.* ii. 13, 14, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereto he called you by our Gospel." Faith is the first principle of sanctification. "And the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness." The Gospel is truth: the great, sure, and saving truth: *Col.* i. 5, "the word of the truth of the Gospel." Divine faith rests not on fallible reasonings, or probable opinions, but on the infallible word, the truth itself, "which is after godliness;" that is, of a godly nature and tendency, pure, and purifying the heart of the believer. By this mark judge of doctrines and of spirits, whether they be of God or not; what is impure, and prejudicial to true piety and practical religion, cannot be of Divine origin. All gospel truth is after godliness, teaching and nourishing reverence and fear of God, and obedience to him. It is truth not only to be known, but acknowledged; it must be held forth in word and practice. *Phil.* ii. 15, 16; "With the heart man believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," *Rom.* x. 10. Such as retain the truth in unrighteousness neither know nor believe as they ought. To bring to this knowledge and faith, to the acknowledging and profession of the "truth which is after godliness," is the great end of the gospel ministry, even of the highest degree and order in it. Their teachings should have this chief aim, namely, to beget faith and confirm in it; ver. 2, "In (or for) hope of eternal life." This is the farther intent of the Gospel, to beget hope as well as faith; to take off the mind and heart from the world, and to raise them to heaven and the things above. The faith and godliness of Christians lead to eternal life, and give hope and well-grounded expectation of it; for God, that cannot lie, hath promised it. It is the honour of God that he cannot lie or deceive, and the comfort of believers, whose treasure is laid up in his faithful promises.

But, *Question.* How is he said to promise before the world began? *Answer.* By promise some understand his decree, he purposed it in his eternal counsels, which was, as it were, his promise in embryo; or rather, say some, *πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων*, is 'before ancient times,' or many ages ago, referring to the promise darkly delivered, *Gen.* iii. 15.

"Before the world began." That is, the purpose was then formed, and the promise may be considered as in fact then made; for a purpose in the mind of God, though it is not as yet made known, is equivalent to a promise.]

Here is the stability and antiquity of the promise of eternal life to the saints; "God, that cannot lie, hath promised before the world began," that is, many ages since. How excellent, then, is the Gospel, that was the matter of Divine

* By the Rev. Jeremiah Smith. Additional notes from Albert Barnes.

Introductory Note.—For place and date of writing, see Introduction to Epistles to Timothy.

i. 1—4. These somewhat involved sentences are thus rendered by Conybeare and Howson: "Paul, a bondsman of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, sent forth to bring God's chosen to faith, and to the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, with hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the times of old (but he made known his word in due season, in the message com-

mitted to my trust by the command of God our Saviour, to Titus," &c. The expression "servant" or "bondsman of God," here and here only used by St. Paul of himself, is a proof of the genuineness of this epistle; no forger would have ventured on applying a new epithet to the apostle. "Before the world began;" see Note on 2 *Tim.* i. 9. "Grace, mercy, and peace;" "mercy" omitted by the oldest MSS. "From God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour:" so the oldest MSS.

promise so early; and how much to be esteemed by us, and what thanks due for our privilege beyond those before us! "Blessed are your eyes, for they see," &c. No wonder if the contempt of it be punished severely, since he hath not only promised it of old, "but," ver. 3, "faith in due times manifested his word through preaching;" that is, made that his promise, so darkly delivered of old, "in due times," that is, the proper season before appointed, more plain by preaching; that which some called "foolishness of preaching" hath been thus honoured. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," namely, by the word preached. "Which is committed unto me." The ministry is a trust; none taketh this honour but he that is thereunto appointed, and whoso is appointed and called must preach the word; 1 Cor. ix. 16, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." Unpreaching ministers are none of the apostles' successors. "According to the commandment of God our Saviour," preaching is a work appointed by God as a Saviour. See a proof here of Christ's deity, for by him was the Gospel committed to Paul, when he was converted, Acts ix. 15, 17; xxii. 10, 14, 15; and again when Christ appeared to him, Acts v. 17-21. He, therefore, is this Saviour; not but that the whole Trinity concur therein: the Father saves by the Son, through the Spirit, and all concur in sending ministers. Let none rest, therefore, in men's calling without God's; he furnishes, and inclines, and authorises, and gives opportunity for the work.

4 To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Secondly. Here is the person written to described,

1. By his name. Titus, a Gentile Greek, yet called both to the faith and ministry. Observe, The grace of God is free and powerful. What worthiness or preparation was there in one of heathen stock and education? "Mine own (or my genuine) son," not by natural generation, but by supernatural regeneration. "I have begotten you through the Gospel," said he to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. iv. 15. Ministers are spiritual fathers to those whom they are the means of converting, and will tenderly affect and care for them, and must be answerably regarded by them. "Mine own son after the common faith;" that is, that faith which is common to all the regenerate, and which thou hast in truth, and expressest to the life. This might be said to distinguish Titus from hypocrites and false teachers, and to recommend him to the regard of the Cretians, as being among them a lively image of the apostle himself, in faith, and life, and heavenly doctrine. To this Titus, deservedly so dear to the apostle, is—

Thirdly. The salutation and prayer, wishing all blessings to him: "Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour." Here are,

1. The blessings wished: "Grace, mercy, and peace." Grace, that is, the free favour of God, and acceptance with him. Mercy, that is, the fruits of that favour in pardon of sins, and freedom from all miseries by it, both here and hereafter. And peace, the positive effect and fruit of mercy. Peace with God through Christ, who is our peace, and with the creatures and ourselves, outward and inward peace, comprehending all good whatsoever, that makes for our happiness in time and to eternity. Observe, Grace is the fountain of all blessings; mercy and peace, and all good, spring out of this. Get into God's favour, and all must be well; for,

2. These are the persons from whom blessings are wished. "From God the Father," the fountain of all good. Every blessing and comfort comes to us from God as a Father; he is the Father of all by creation, but of the good by adoption and regeneration. "And the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour," namely, as the way and means of procurement and conveyance. All is from the Father by the Son, who is Lord by nature, heir of all things, and our Lord, Redeemer, and Head, ordering and ruling his members. All are put under him. We hold of him as in *capite*, and owe subjection and obedience to him, who is also Jesus and Christ, the anointed Saviour, and especially our Saviour who believe in him, delivering us from sin and hell, and bringing us to heaven and happiness.

Thus far is the preface to the epistle, then follows:—

II. The entrance into the matter, by signifying,

First. The end of Titus's being left in Crete.

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:



CRETE—RUINS OF GORTYNA.

Here is the end expressed,

1. More generally: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting." This was the business of evangelists, in which office Titus was, to water where the apostles had planted, 1 Cor. iii. 6; furthering and finishing what they had begun, so much *ἐπιδοποιῶν* imports, 'to order after another.' Titus was to go on in settling what the apostle himself

had not time for in his short stay there. Observe, 1st. The apostle's great diligence in the Gospel; when he had set things on foot in one place, he hastened away to another. He was debtor to the Greeks, and to the barbarians, and laboured to spread the Gospel as far he could among them all. And observe, 2nd. His faithfulness and prudence. He neglected not the places that he went from; but left some to cultivate the young plantation, and carry on what was begun. And observe, 3rd. Likewise his humility. He disdained not to be helped in his work, and that by such as were not of so high a rank in the ministry, nor of so great gifts and furniture as himself. So the Gospel might be furthered, and the good of souls promoted, he willingly used the hands of others in it; a fit example for exciting zeal and industry, and engaging to faithfulness and care of the flock, and present or absent, living and dying, for ministers, as much as in them lies, to provide for the spiritual edification and comfort of their people. We may here also observe, 4th. That Titus, though inferior to an apostle, yet was above the ordinary fixed pastors or bishops, who were to attend particular churches, as their peculiar stated charge; but Titus was in a higher sphere, to ordain such ordinary pastors where wanting, and settle things in their first state and form, and then to pass to other places for like service, as there might be need. Titus was not only a minister of the catholic church, as all others also are, but a catholic minister. Others had power habitual, and in *actu primo*,—'original authority,' to minister anywhere, upon call and opportunity; but evangelists, such as Titus was, had power in *actu secundo et exercitio*,—'exercised secondary authority,' and could exercise their ministry wherever they came, and claim maintenance of the churches; they were everywhere actually in their diocese or province, and had right to direct and guide, and preside among the ordinary pastors and ministers. Where an apostle could act as an apostle, an evangelist could as an evangelist; for "they worked the work of the Lord, as they did," 1 Cor. xvi. 10, in a like unfixed and itinerant manner.

"[That thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting." Margin, 'left undone.' The Greek is, 'the things that are left;' that is, those which were left unfinished; referring, doubtless, to arrangements which had been commenced, but which for some cause had been left incomplete. Whether this had occurred because he had been driven away by persecution, or called away by important duties demanding his attention elsewhere, cannot now be determined. The word rendered 'set in order,' *ἐπιδοποιῶν*, occurs now here else in the New Testament. It means, properly, 'to make straight upon,' and then to put farther to rights, to arrange farther.—*Robinson, Lex.* There were things left unfinished, which he was to complete. One of these things, and perhaps the principal, was to appoint elders in the various cities where the Gospel had been preached.]

Here, at Crete, Titus was but occasionally, and for a short time; Paul willed him to despatch the business he was left for, and come to him at Nicopolis, where he purposed to winter; after this he was sent to Corinth, with the apostle at Rome, and was sent thence into Dalmatia, which is the last we read of him in Scripture, so that from thence no fixed episcopacy in him does appear. He left Crete, and we find not in Scripture that he returned thither any more.

But, Q. What power had either Paul or Titus here? Was not what they did an encroachment on the rights of civil rulers? A. In no sort; they came not to meddle with the civil rights of any. Lu. xii. 14, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Their work was spiritual, to be carried on by conviction and persuasion, no way interfering with, or prejudicing, or weakening, the power of magistrates, but securing and strengthening it rather; the things wanting were not such as civil magistrates are the fountains or authors of, but Divine and spiritual ordinances and appointments for spiritual ends, and derived from Christ, the King and Head of the church; for settling these was Titus left. And observe, No easy thing is it to raise churches, and bring them to perfection. Paul had himself been here labouring, and yet were there things wanting. Materials are out of square, need much hewing and fitting to bring them into right form, and when they are set therein, to hold and keep them so. The best are apt to decay and to go out of order. Ministers are to help against this, to get what is amiss rectified, and what is wanting supplied. This in general was Titus's work in Crete; and

2. In special to "ordain elders in every city;" that is, ministers who were mostly out of the elder and most understanding and experienced Christians; or if younger in years, yet such as were grave and solid in their deportment and manners.

"[Elders." Gr., 'presbyters;' see the comment on Acts xiv. 23. These elders, or presbyters, were also called bishops, (compare notes on 1 Tim. iii. 1,) for Paul immediately, in describing their qualifications, calls them bishops: "Ordain elders in every city—if any be blameless—for a bishop must be blameless," &c. If the elders and bishops in the times of the apostles were of different ranks, this direction would be wholly unmeaning. It would be the same as if the following direction were given to one who was authorised to appoint officers over an army: 'Appoint captains over each company, who shall be of good character, and acquainted with military tactics, for a brigadier-general must be of good character, and acquainted with the rules of war.' That the same rank is denoted also by the terms presbyter and bishop here, is farther apparent, because the qualifications which Paul states as requisite for the 'bishop' are not those which pertain to a prelate or a diocesan bishop, but to one who was a pastor of a church, or an evangelist; 'pastors,' says Thomas Scott, 'who are called elders and bishops indiscriminately.']

These were to be set where was any fit number of Christians, as in bigger towns and cities it first and mostly was, though villages too might have them where were Christians enough for it. These presbyters or elders were to have the ordinary and stated care and charge of the churches; to feed and govern them, and perform all pastoral work and duty in and towards them. The word is used sometimes more largely for any that bear ecclesiastical functions in the church, and so the apostles were presbyters or elders, 1 Pet. v. 1; but here it is meant of ordinary fixed pastors, who "laboured in the word and doctrine," and were "over the churches in the Lord," such as are described here throughout the chapter. This word presbyter some use in the same sense as *sacerdos*, and translate it 'priests,' a term not given to gospel ministers, unless in a figurative or allusive way, as all God's people are said to be made "kings and priests unto God," (1 Pet. ii. 9,) it is not *πρεσβύτερος*,) to offer up spiritual sacrifices of prayers, and praises, and alms, &c. But properly we have no priests under the Gospel, but Christ alone, "the high priest of our profession," Heb. iii. 1, who offered up himself a sacrifice to God for us, and ever lives, in virtue thereof, to make intercession in our behalf. Presbyters here, therefore, are not proper priests to offer sacrifices, either typical or real; but only gospel ministers, to dispense Christ's ordinances, and to "feed the church of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers." Observe, 1st. A church without a fixed and standing ministry in it is imperfect and wanting. 2nd. Where a fit number of believers is, presbyters or elders must be set; their continuance in churches is as necessary as their first appointment, "for perfecting the saints, and edifying the body of Christ, till all come to a perfect man in Christ;" that is, till the whole number of God's chosen be called and united to Christ in one body, and brought to their full stature and strength, and that measure of grace that is proper, and designed for them, Eph. iv. 12, 13. Work this is that must and will be doing to the world's end; to which, therefore, the

person. The Greek word translated "bishop" here is the same that more correctly is rendered "overseer" in Acts xx. 28. "Elder" denotes the rank, "overseer" the duty. "Every 'elder' was by his office an 'overseer,' but Titus had power over all elders, and so was an overseer in a higher sense of the term" (Burton).

i. 6-9. "Blameless:" specially needful for one who had to reprove such profligates as the Cretians, who would respect none against whom they could find an accusation, however groundless. "Self-

necessary and appointed means for it must last. What praise is due to God for such an institution! What thankfulness from those that enjoy the benefits of it! what pity and prayer for such as want it! "Pray the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." "Faith comes by hearing," and is preserved, and maintained, and made fruitful through it also. Ignorance and corruption, decay of good, and increase of all evil, come by want of a teaching and quickening ministry. On such accounts, therefore, was Titus left in Crete, to "set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city;" but this he was to do, not *ad libitum*, or according to his own will, or fancy, but according to apostolic direction, which is,

3. The rule of his proceeding. "As I had appointed thee," probably when he was going from him, and in the presence and hearing of others, which now he may refer to, not so much for Titus's own sake as for the people's, that they might the more readily yield obedience unto Titus, knowing and minding that in what he did he was warranted and supported by apostolic injunction and authority. As under the law all things were to be made according to the pattern shewn to Moses in the mount, so under the Gospel all must be ordered and managed according to the direction of Christ, and of his chief ministers, who were infallibly guided by him. Human traditions and inventions may not be brought into the church of God. Prudent disposals for carrying on the ends of Christ's appointments, according to the general rules of the word, such may, yea, must be; but none may alter any thing in the substance of the faith, or worship, or order and discipline of the churches; if an evangelist might not do any thing but by appointment, much less may others. The church is the house of God, and to him it belongs to appoint the officers and orders of it as he pleaseth; the "as" here refers to the qualifications and characters of the elders that he was to ordain. "Ordain elders in every city, as I appointed thee;" that is, such as I then described, and shall now again more particularly point out to thee, which he does from the 6th verse to the 9th, inclusive. And here is,

Secondly. The second thing in the matter of the epistle, namely, the directions that the apostle gives Titus about ordination, shewing whom he should ordain, and whom not.

1. Of those whom he should ordain. He points out their qualifications and virtues; such as respect their life and manners, and such as relate to their doctrine; the former in the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses, and the latter in the 9th.

6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

1st. Their qualifications respecting their life and manners are,

First. More general. "If any be blameless;" not absolutely without fault, so none are; for "there is none that liveth and sinneth not;" nor altogether unblamed, that is rare and hard. Christ himself and his apostles were blamed, though not worthy of it. In Christ, to be sure, was nothing blameable, and his apostles were not such as their enemies charged them to be; but the meaning is, he must be one that lies not under an ill character, but rather must have a good report, even "from those that are without;" not grossly or scandalously guilty, so as would bring reproach upon their holy function; he must not be such an one.

Secondly. More particularly.

1st. There is his relative character. In his own person he must be of conjugal chastity, "the husband of one wife." The church of Rome saith the husband of no wife; but from the beginning it was not so. Marriage is an ordinance from which no profession or calling is a bar; 1 Cor. ix. 5, "Have I not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles," saith St. Paul. "Forbidding to marry" is one of the erroneous doctrines of the antichristian church, 1 Tim. iv. 3. Not that ministers must be married, that is not meant; but the "husband of one wife" may be either, not having divorced his wife and married another, as was too common among them of the circumcision, even for slight causes; or "the husband of one wife," that is, at one and the same time—no bigamist. Not that he might not be married to more than one wife successively; but being married he must have but one wife at once, not two or more, according to the too common sinful practice of those times, by a perverse imitation of the patriarchs, from which evil custom our Lord taught a reformation. Polygamy is scandalous in any, as also having a harlot or concubine with his lawful wife; such sin, or any wanton, libidinous carriage, must be very remote from such as would enter into so sacred a function. And as to his children, "having faithful children;" that is, obedient and good, brought up in the true Christian faith, and living according to it, at least as much as the parents can will that it be so. It is for the honour of ministers that their children be faithful and pious, and such as become their religion. "Not accused of riot, or unruly;" that is, not justly so accused, as having given ground and occasion for it, for otherwise the most innocent may be falsely so charged; they must look to it, therefore, that there be no colour for such censure. Children so faithful, and obedient, and temperate, will be a good sign of faithfulness and diligence in the parent who has so educated and instructed them; and from his faithfulness in the less there may be encouragement to commit to him the greater, namely, the rule and government of the church of God. The ground of this qualification is shewn from the nature of his office; ver. 7. "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God." Those before termed presbyters, or elders, are in this verse styled bishops, and such they were, having no ordinary fixed and standing officers above them. Titus's business here, it is plain, was but occasional, and his stay short, as before was noted. Having ordained elders, and settled things in their due form, he went and left all, for aught appears in Scripture, in the hands of those elders, whom here he calls bishops and stewards of God. We read not in the sacred writings of any successor he had in Crete; but to those elders or bishops was committed the full charge of feeding, and ruling, and watching over their flock; they wanted not any powers necessary for carrying on religion and the ministry of it among them, and deriving it down to succeeding ages. Now, being such bishops and overseers of the flock, who were to be examples to them, and God's stewards to take care of the affairs of his house, to provide

for and dispense to them things needful, here is great reason that their characters should be clear and good, that they should be blameless. How else could it be but that religion must suffer, their work be hindered, and souls prejudiced and endangered, whom they were set to save? These are the qualifications relative, with the ground of them.

2nd. The more absolute ones are expressed.

(1.) Negatively, shewing what an elder or bishop must not be; "Not self-willed." The prohibition is of large extent, excluding self-opinion, or overweening conceit of parts and abilities, and abounding in one's own sense, and self-love, and self-seeking, making self the centre of all; also self-confidence and trust, and self-pleasing, little regarding or setting by others; not proud, stubborn, froward, inflexible, set on one's own will and way, or churlish, as Nabai; to such sense do expositors carry it. A great honour it is to a minister not to be thus affected, to be ready to ask and to take advice, to be ready to defer as much as reasonably may be to the mind and will of others, becoming all things to all men, that they may gain some. "Not soon angry," *μὴ ὀργίζου*,—"not one of a hasty, angry temper, soon and easily provoked and inflamed. How unfit are they to govern a church who cannot govern themselves, their own turbulent and unruly passions! The minister must be meek, and gentle, and patient towards all men. "Not given to wine;" no greater reproach on a minister than to be a wine-bibber, one that loves it, and gives himself undue liberty this way, who continues at the wine or strong drink till it inflames him. Seasonable and moderate use of this, as of other of God's good creatures, is not unlawful. "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities," said Paul to Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 23; but excess therein is shameful in all, especially in a minister. "Wine takes away the heart," turns the man into a brute. Here most proper is that exhortation of the apostle, Eph. v. 18, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." Here is no exceeding, but in the former too easily there may; take heed, therefore, of going too near the brink. "No striker;" namely, in any quarrelsome or contentious manner, not injuriously, or out of revenge, with cruelty or unnecessary roughness. "Not given to filthy lucre;" not greedy of it, as 1 Tim. iii. 3, whereby is not meant refusing a just return for their labours, in order to their necessary support and comfort; but not making gain their first or chief end, not entering into the ministry, or managing it, with base worldly views. Nothing more unbecoming a minister, who is to direct his own and others' eyes to another world, than to be too intent upon this. It is called "filthy lucre," from its defiling the soul that inordinately affects or greedily looks after it, as if it were any otherwise desirable than for the good and lawful uses of it. Thus of the negative part of the bishop's character; but,

(2.) Positively he must be, ver. 8, "A lover of hospitality." As an evidence that he is not given to filthy lucre, but is willing to use what he hath to the best purposes, not laying up for himself so as to hinder charitable laying out for the good of others; "receiving and entertaining strangers," as the word imports; a great and necessary office of love, especially in such times as then were, of affliction and distress. When Christians were put to fly and wander for safety from persecution and enemies, or in travelling to and fro where were not such public houses for reception as in our days—nor it may be had many poor saints sufficiency of their own for such uses—then to receive and entertain them was good and pleasing to God. And such a spirit and practice, according to ability and occasion, is very becoming such as should be examples of good works. "A lover of good men," or of good things; ministers should be exemplary in both; this will evidence their open piety and likeness to God and their Master, Jesus Christ. "Do good to all, but especially to them of the household of faith;" these that are the excellent of the earth, in whom should be all our delight. Sober, or prudent, as the word signifies, a needful grace in a minister, both for his ministerial and personal carriage and management. He should be a wise steward, and one that is not rash, or foolish, or heady, but who can govern well his passions and affections. "Just;" namely, in things belonging to civil life, and moral righteousness, and equity in dealings, giving to all their due. "Holy;" in what concerns religion; one that reverences and worships God, and is of a spiritual and heavenly conversation. "Temperate;" it comes from a word that signifies strength, and notes one that hath power over his appetite and affections, or in things lawful can, for good ends, restrain and hold them in. Nothing more becoming a minister than such things as these—sobriety, temperance, justice, and holiness; sober in respect of himself, just and righteous towards all men, and holy towards God. And thus of the qualifications respecting the minister's life and manners; relative and absolute, negative and positive; what he must not, and what he must be and do. Now,

2nd. As to doctrine.

First. Here is the duty. "Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught;" that is, keeping close to the doctrine of Christ, "the word of his grace," adhering thereto according to the instructions he hath received, holding it fast in his own belief and profession, and in teaching others. Observe, 1st. The word of God, revealed in the Scripture, is a true and infallible word; the word of him that is "the Amen, the true and faithful witness," and whose Spirit guided the penmen of it; "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2nd. Ministers must hold fast and hold forth the faithful word, in their teaching and life. "I have kept the faith" was Paul's comfort, 2 Tim. iv. 7, and "not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God;" there was his faithfulness, Acts xx. 27.

Secondly. Here is the end; "That he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers;" that is, to persuade and draw others to the true faith, and convince the contrary-minded. Which how should he do if himself were uncertain or unsteady, not holding fast that "faithful word and sound doctrine" which should be the matter of this teaching, and the means and ground of convincing those that oppose the truth? See we here summarily the great work of the ministry,—to exhort those who are willing to know and do their duty, and to convince them that contradict; both which are to be done by sound doctrine, that is, in a rational, instructive way, by Scripture arguments and testimonies, which are the infallible words of truth, what all may and should rest and be satisfied in, and determined by. And thus of the qualifications of the elders that Titus was to ordain.

Secondly. The apostle's directory shews whom he should reject or avoid—men of another character, the mention of whom is brought in as a reason of that care he had recommended about the qualifications of ministers, why they should be such, and only such, as he had described. The reasons he takes both from bad teachers and hearers among them, from ver. 10 to the end.

1. From bad teachers.

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: 11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

i. 10. "Deceivers;" teachers who delude the minds of their disciples with casuistical sophistries. "They soothe the minds of men, and as it were bewitch them" (Calvin).

i. 12. "The Cretians are always liars;" seems to have been a proverbial expression. The apostle's quotation is from the works of Epimenides. His sarcasm is, that though Crete was free from wild beasts, its inhabitants supply their place. "Slow bellies;" given up to sloth, as wild beasts when gorged with prey.

willed;" "A self-loving spirit, which in seeking only to gratify itself is regardless of others" (Ellicott). "A lover of hospitality;" in the early times of the Church, Christians travelling were entertained and forwarded on their journey by their brethren. This is the hospitality so often commended in the New Testament (Rom. xii. 13; Heb. xiii. 2; 1 Peter iv. 9). "Sober;" i.e., discreet, or self-restrained. "Temperate;" "One having his passions, tongue, hands, and eyes at command" (Chrysostom).

1st. Those false teachers are described. They were unruly, headstrong, and ambitious of power; refractory and untractable, as some render it, and such as would not bear or submit themselves to the discipline and necessary order in the church, impatient of good government and of sound doctrine. "And vain talkers and deceivers," conceiting themselves to be wise, but really foolish, and thence great talkers, and falling into errors and mistakes, and fond of them; they were studious and industrious to draw others into the same.

[There are many persons who are indisposed to submit to authority (see the word "unruly" in ver. 6), many who are vain talkers—who are more given to talk than to the duties of practical religion, (see the character of "Talkative" in the *Pilgrim's Progress*), and many who live to deceive others under the mask of religion. They make great pretensions to piety; they are fluent in argument, and they urge their views in a plausible manner.]

Many such there were, "especially they of the circumcision," converts, as they pretended, at least, from the Jews, who yet were for mingling Judaism and Christianity together, and so making a corrupt medley. These were the false teachers. And,

2nd. There is the apostle's direction how to deal with them; ver. 11, "Their mouths must be stopped;" not by outward force; Titus had no such power, nor are those the Gospel methods, but by confutation and conviction, shewing them their error, not giving place to them, even for an hour. In case of obstinacy, indeed, and breaking the peace of the church, and corrupting other churches, censures are to have place; the last means for recovering the faulty, and preventing the hurt of many. Observe, Faithful ministers must timely oppose seducers, that their folly being made manifest they may proceed no farther.

3rd. The reasons are given for this. *First*. From the pernicious effects of their errors; they "subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not," namely, the necessity of circumcision, and of keeping the law of Moses, &c.; so subverting the Gospel and the souls of men; not some few only, but whole families. It was unjustly charged on the apostles, "that they turned the world upside down;" but justly on these false teachers, that they drew many from the true faith to their ruin. The mouths of such should be stopped; especially considering, *Secondly*. Their base end in what they do; namely, "for filthy lucre's sake," serving a worldly interest under pretence of religion. "Love of money is the root of all evil." Most fit that such should be resisted, and confuted, and put to shame, by sound doctrine, and reasons from the Scriptures.

[No people can be too vigilant in regard to pretended religious teachers; and while it is undoubtedly their duty to contribute liberally for the support of the Gospel, and the promotion of every good cause, it is no less their duty to examine with care every proposed object of benevolence, and to watch with an eagle eye those who have the disbursement of the charities of the church. It is very rare that ministers ought to have much to do with disposing of the funds given for benevolent purposes; and when they do, they should in all cases be associated with their lay brethren: see *Paley's Horæ Paulinæ*, ch. iv., No. 1, 3, note.]

Thus of the grounds respecting the bad teachers.

2. In reference to their people or hearers, who are described from ancient testimony given of them.

12 One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. 13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; 14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

1st. Here is the witness; ver. 12, "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said;" that is, one of the Cretians, not of the Jews, namely, Epimenides, a Greek poet, likely to know, and unlikely to slander them. A prophet of their own; so their poets were accounted writers of Divine oracles, as they esteemed them. These often witnessed against the vices of the people: Aratus, Epimenides, and others among the Greeks; Horace, Juvenal, and Persius among the Latins; much smartness did they use against divers vices.

[Epimenides was one of the seven wise men of Greece. He was a contemporary of Solon, and was born at Phæstus, in the island of Crete, B.C. 659, and is said to have reached the age of one hundred and fifty-seven years. Many marvellous tales are told of him, (see *Anthol. Class. Dic.*) which are commonly supposed to be fabulous, and which are to be traced to the invention of the Cretians. The event in his life which is best known is, that he visited Athens, at the request of the inhabitants, to prepare the way by sacrifices for the introduction of the laws of Solon. He was supposed to have intercourse with the gods, and it was presumed that a peculiar sacredness would attend the religious services in which he officiated. On this account, also, as well as because he was a poet, the name prophet may have been given him.]

2nd. Here is the matter of the testimony, *Κῆρες ἀεὶ ψεύσται, κακὰ θήρια, ἡστέρες ἀργαί*. "The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies," even to a proverb; they were infamous for falsehood and lying, *κρητίζεν*,—to play the Cretian, or to lie, is the same; and they were compared to evil beasts for their sly hurtfulness and savage nature, and called slow bellies for their laziness and sensuality, more inclined to eat than to work, and live by some honest employment. Observe, Such scandalous vices as were the reproach of heathens should be far from Christians. Falsehood and lying, invidious craft and cruelty, all beastly and sensual practices, and idleness and sloth, are sins condemned by the light of nature; for these were the Cretians taxed by their own poets. And,

3rd. Here is the verification of this by the apostle himself; ver. 13, "This witness is true." The apostle saw too much ground for that character. The temper of some nations is more inclined to some vices than others. The Cretians were too generally such as here described,—slothful and ill-natured, false and perfidious, as the apostle himself vouches. And thence

4th. He instructs Titus how to deal with them; "Wherefore rebuke them sharply." When Paul wrote to Timothy he bade him "instruct with meekness;" but now he writes to Titus he bids him "rebuke them sharply." The reason of the difference may be taken either from the different temper of Timothy and Titus; the former might have more keenness in his disposition, and be apt to be warm in reproof, whom therefore he bids to "rebuke with meekness;" and the latter (Titus) might be one of more mildness, therefore he quickens him, and bids him rebuke sharply; or rather it was from the difference of the case and people. Timothy had a more polite people to deal with, and therefore he must "rebuke them with meekness;" and Titus had to do with those who were more rough and uncultivated, and therefore he must "rebuke them sharply;" their corruptions were many and gross, and committed without shame or modesty, and therefore should be dealt with accordingly.

i. 16. "They profess," or better, "they confess that they know God, but by their works they deny him." This justifies the charge of the preceding verse, that they are unbelievers in reality, though not in name. "Abominable:" "This was one of the terms which the advocates of a spurious philosophy applied very freely to the common people (John vii. 49); the apostle retorts upon them their own terms." "Reprobate;" or incapable, unfit when put to the proof.

There must, in reproof, be a distinguishing of sins and sins; some are more gross and heinous in their nature, or in the manner of their commission, with openness and boldness, to the greater dishonour of God, and danger and hurt to men; and between sinners and sinners; some are of a more tender and tractable temper, apter to be wrought on by gentleness, and to be sunk and discouraged by too much roughness and severity; others more hardy and stubborn, and needing more cutting language to beget remorse and shame. Wisdom, therefore, is requisite to temper and manage reproofs aright, as may be most likely to do good; *Jude* 22, 23, "Of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." The Cretians' sins and corruptions were many, and great, and habitual; therefore they must be rebuked sharply. But, that such direction might not be misconstrued,

5th. Here is the end of it noted: "That they may be sound in the faith;" ver. 14, "Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men that turn from the truth;" that is, that they may be, and shew themselves, truly and effectually changed from such evil temper and manners, as those Cretians in their natural state lived in; and might not adhere to or regard (as some that were converted might be too ready to do) the Jewish traditions, and superstitions of the Pharisees, which would be apt to make them disrelish the Gospel, and the sound and wholesome truths of it. Observe, *First*. The sharpest reproofs must aim at the good of the reproofed; they must not be of malice, or hatred, or ill-will, but of love; not to gratify pride, or passion, or any evil affection in the reproofer, but to reclaim and reform the erroneous and the guilty. *Secondly*. Soundness in the faith is most desirable and necessary. This is the soul's health and vigour, pleasing to God, comfortable to the Christian, and what makes ready to, cheerful and constant in, duty. *Thirdly*. A special means to soundness in the faith is, to turn away the ear from fables, and the fancies of men; 1 *Tim.* i. 4, "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, that minister questions rather than edifying, which is in faith;" so *ch.* iv. 7, "Refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather to godliness. Fancies and devices of men in the worship of God are contrary to truth and piety. Jewish ceremonies and rites, that were at first Divine appointments, the substance being come and their season and use over, are now but unwarranted commands of men, which not only stand not with, but turn from, the truth; that is, the pure gospel truth, and spiritual worship, set up by Christ instead of that bodily service under the law." *Fourthly*. A fearful judgment it is to be turned away from the truth,—to leave Christ for Moses,—the spiritual worship of the Gospel for the carnal ordinances of the law, or the true Divine institutions and precepts for human inventions and appointments. "Who hath bewitched you?" said Paul to the Galatians, *ch.* iii. 1, "that ye should not obey the truth?" Having begun in the Spirit are you made perfect by the flesh?" Thus, having shewn the end of sharply reproofing the corrupt and vicious Cretians, that they might be sound in the faith, and not heed Jewish fables and commands of men,

6th. He gives the reasons of this, from the liberty we have by the Gospel from legal observances, and the evil and mischief of a Jewish spirit under the Christian dispensation, in the two last verses, namely,

15 Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. 16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

To good Christians [truly converted persons] that are sound in the faith, and thereby purified, "all things are pure;" meats and drinks, and such things that were forbidden under the law, and in which observance some were still apt to stick, in these there is now no distinction; all are pure, that is, lawful and free in their use; "But to them that are defiled, and unbelieving, nothing is pure;" things lawful and good they abuse and turn to sin; they suck poison out of that from which others draw sweetness. Because their mind and conscience, those leading faculties, are defiled, a taint is derived to all they do. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord," *Pr.* xv. 8; and *ch.* xxi. 4, "The ploughing of the wicked is sin," not in itself, but as done by him; the carnality of the mind and heart mars all the labour of the hand.

[But there may be a somewhat higher application of the words—that every ordinance of religion, every command of God, every event that occurs in Divine providence, tends (through grace) to promote the holiness of one who is of pure (renewed) heart. He can see a sanctifying tendency in every thing, and can derive from all that is commanded, and all that occurs, the means of making the heart more holy. While a depraved mind will turn every such thing to a pernicious use, and make it the means of augmenting its malignity and corruption—to the pure mind it will be the means of increasing its confidence in God, and of making itself more holy. To such a mind every thing may become a means of grace.]

Objection. But are not these Judaizers, as you call them, men that profess religion, and speak well of God and Christ, and righteousness of life, and should they be so severely taxed? *Answer*. Ver. 16, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate." There are many who in word and tongue profess to know God, and yet in their lives and conversations deny and reject him; their practice is a contradiction to their profession. "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words; but they will not do them: with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness," *Eze.* xxxiii. 31. "Being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate." The apostle instructing Titus to rebuke sharply, does himself rebuke sharply; he gives them very hard words; yet, doubtless, no harder than their case warranted, and their need required. "Being abominable," *βδελυκτοί*, but deserving that God and good men should turn away their eyes from them as nauseous and offensive. "And disobedient," *ἀπειθεῖς*,—unpersuadable, and "unbelieving;" they might do divers things; but it was not the obedience of faith, not what was commanded, or short of the command. "To every good work reprobate;" without skill or judgment to do any thing aright. See the miserable condition of hypocrites, such as have a form of godliness, but without the power. [Alas! taking the church at large, there are many such, and the fact that there are such persons is the grand hindrance to the triumphs of religion on the earth. *The way to heaven is blocked up by dead professors of religion.*] Yet be we not so ready to fix this charge on others as careful that it agree not to ourselves, that there be not in us "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God;" but that we be "sincere and without offence, till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God," *Phil.* i. 10, 11.

ii. 1, 2. "The apostle deals more in exhortations, because those intent on useless questions needed chiefly to be recalled to the study of a holy, moral life; for nothing so effectually allays men's wandering curiosity as the being brought to recognise those duties in which they ought to exercise themselves" (Calvin). "Sound in faith," &c.: literally, healthy, free from disease—i.e., error or weakness.

ii. 3—5. "The aged women likewise to let their deportment testify of holiness" (Conybeare and Howson). "Teachers of that

CHAPTER II.

The apostle here directs Titus about the faithful discharge of his own office, generally, ver. 1; and particularly as to several sorts of persons, ver. 2-10; and gives the grounds of those and of other following directions, ver. 11-14; with a summary direction in the close, ver. 15.



UT speak thou the things which become sound doctrine :

Thirdly. Here is the third thing in the matter of the epistle. In the chapter foregoing the apostle had directed Titus about matters of government, and to set in order the things that were wanting in the churches: now here he exhorts him,

1. Generally to a faithful discharge of his own office. His ordaining others to preach would not excuse himself from preaching, nor might he take care of ministers and elders only, but he must instruct private Christians also in their duty. The adverbative particle, *ἵνα*, here points

back to the corrupt teachers, who invented fables, things vain and unprofitable: in opposition to them, saith he, "But speak thou the things that become sound doctrine;" that is, what is agreeable to the word, which is pure and uncorrupt, healthful and nourishing to eternal life. Observe, 1st. The true doctrines of the Gospel are sound doctrines, formally and effectively; they are in themselves good and holy, and make the believers so; they make fit for, and vigorous in, the service of God. 2nd. Ministers must be careful to teach only such truths; if common talk of Christians must "be uncorrupt to the use of edifying, such as may minister grace to the hearers," *Eph. iv. 29*, much more must ministers' preaching be such. Thus the apostle exhorts Titus generally; and then,

2. Specially and particularly he instructs him to apply this sound doctrine to several sorts of persons, from ver. 2-10. Ministers must not stay in generals, but must divide to every one his portion, what belongs to his age, or place, or condition of life; they must be particular as well as practical in their preaching; they must teach men their duty, and must teach all and each his duty. Here is an excellent Christian directory, accommodated to the old and to the young, to men and women, to the preacher himself, and unto servants.

1st. To the aged men.

2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

By aged men some understand elders by office, including deacons, &c.: but it is rather to be taken of the aged in point of years. Old disciples of Christ must carry themselves in every thing agreeably to the Christian doctrine. "That the aged men be sober," not thinking that the decays of nature, which they feel in old age, will justify them in any inordinacy, or intemperance, whereby they conceit to repair them; they must keep measure in things, both for health and for fitness for counsel and example to the younger. "Grave:" levity is unbecoming in any, but especially in the aged; they should be composed and staid, grave in habit, and speech, and behaviour. Crisiness in dress, levity and vanity in the carriage, how unbecoming is it in their years! "Temperate:" moderate and prudent, one that governs well his passions and affections, so as not to be hurried away by them to any thing that is evil or indelicate. "Sound in the faith:" that is, sincere and steadfast, constantly adhering to the truth of the Gospel, not fond of novelties, or easy to run into corrupt opinions, or parties, or to be taken with Jewish fables or traditions, or the dotages of their rabbins. The full of years should be full of grace and goodness, the inner man renewing more and more as the outer decays. "In charity:" or love; this is fitly joined with faith, which works by, and must be seen in, love; love to God and men, and soundness therein. It must be sincere love, without dissimulation; love of God for himself, and of men for God's sake; the duties of the second table must be done in virtue of those of the first; love to men as men, and to the saints as the excellencies of the earth, in whom must be special delight; and love at all times, in adversity as well as prosperity: thus must there be soundness in charity. "In patience:" aged persons are apt to be peevish, and fretful, and passionate, and therefore need to be on their guard against such infirmities and temptations; faith, and love, and patience, are three main Christian graces, and soundness in these is much of gospel perfection. There is enduring and waiting patience, both must be looked after; to bear evils becomingly, and contentedly to wait the good till we are fit for it, and it for us, being "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Thus as to the aged men.

2nd. To the aged women,

3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things ;

These also must be instructed and warned. Some by these aged women understand the deaconesses, who were mostly employed in looking after the poor, and tending the sick; but it is rather to be taken, as we render it, of all aged women professing religion; they must "be in behaviour as becometh holiness." Both men and women must accommodate their behaviour to their profession; those virtues before mentioned, namely, sobriety, gravity, temperance, soundness in the faith, and charity and patience, recommended to aged men, are not proper to them only, but applicable to both sexes, and to be looked to by aged women as well as men. Women are to hear and learn their duty from the word, as well as the men; there is not one way of salvation for one sex or sort, and another for another; but both must learn and practise the same things, both as aged and as Christians; the virtues and duties are common. "The aged women likewise," that is, as well as the men, "be in behaviour as becometh holiness," or as becometh is proper for holy persons, such as they profess to be, and should be; keeping a pious decency and decorum in clothing and gesture, in looks and speech, and all other deportment; and this from an inward principle and habit of holiness, influencing and ordering the outward carriage at all times. Observe, Though express Scripture does not occur, or be not brought for every word, or look, or fashion in particular, yet general rules there are, according to which all must be ordered: *1 Cor. x. 31*, "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God;" and *Phil. iv. 8*, "Whatever things

are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. And here, whatsoever things are beseeching or unbeseeching, holiness is a measure and rule of carriage to be looked to. "Not false accusers," *μὴ ψευδοῦντες*, no calumniators or sowers of discord, slandering and backbiting their neighbours, a great and too common fault; not only loving to speak, but to speak ill of people, and to separate very friends. A slanderer is one whose tongue is set on fire of hell; so much, and so directly, do these do the devil's work, that for it the devil's name is given to such. This is a sin contrary to the great duties of love, and justice, and equity, between one another; it springs often from malice and hatred or envy, and such like evil causes, to be shunned as well as the effect. "Not given to much wine;" the word notes such addictedness thereto as to be under the power and mastery of it. This is unseemly and evil in any, but especially in this sex and age, and too much to be found among the Greeks of that time and place. How immodest and shameful, corrupting and destroying purity both of body and mind. Of what evil example and tendency, unfitting for the next thing, which is a positive duty of aged matrons, namely, to be "teachers of good things." Not public preachers, that is forbidden; *1 Cor. xiv. 34*, "I permit not a woman to speak in the church;" but otherwise, teach they may and should, namely, by example and good life. Whence observe, Those whose action and carriage are as becomes holiness, are thereby "teachers of good things;" and, beside that, they may and should also teach by doctrinal instruction at home, and in a private way; *1ro. xxxi. 1*, "The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy his mother taught him." Such a woman is praised; *1ro. xxxi. 26*, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness." "Teachers of good things" is opposed to things corrupt, or to what is trifling and vain, of no good use or tendency; old wives' fables, or superstitious sayings and observances; in opposition to these their business is, and they may be called on to it, to be "teachers of good things." For,

3rd. There are lessons for young women also, which the aged women must teach, and instruct, and advise them in; the duties of religion according to their years.

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

For teaching such things many times they have better access than the men, even than ministers have, and which therefore they must improve in instructing the young women, especially the young wives; for he speaks of their duty to their husbands and children; these young women the more aged must teach.

First. To bear a good personal character, namely, to be sober and discreet, contrary to that vanity and rashness which younger years are subject to; discreet in their judgments, and sober in their affections and carriage. Discreet and chaste stand well together; many expose themselves to fatal temptations by that which at first might be but indiscretion. "Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee from the evil way," *1ro. ii. 11*. "Chaste and keepers at home," are well joined too. Dinah, when she went to see the daughters of the land, lost her chastity. Those whose home is their prison, it is to be feared their chastity is their fetters. Not but occasions there are, and will be, of going abroad; but a gadding temper for merriment and company sake, to the neglect of domestic affairs, or from uneasiness at being in her place, that is the opposite evil intended, which is commonly accompanied with, or draws after it, other evils. "They learn to be idle, wandering from house to house, and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not," *1 Tim. v. 13, 14*. Their business is to guide the house, and should give no occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully. "Good," namely, generally in opposition to all vice; and specially in her place, kind, and helpful, and charitable, as Dorcas, "full of good works, and almsdeeds." Also it may have, as some think, a more particular sense, one of a meek and yet cheerful spirit and temper, not sullen, or bitter, or taunting, or fretting and galling any; not of a troublesome or a jarring disposition, uneasy in herself, and to those about her; but of a good nature and pleasing conversation, and likewise helpful by her advice and pains; thus "building her house, and doing her husband good, and not evil, all her days." Thus, in their personal character, "sober, discreet, chaste, keepers at home, and good." And,

Secondly. In their relative capacities; "To love their husbands," and to be obedient to them. And where there is true love there will be no difficult command. God in nature, and by his will, hath made his subordination. "I suffer not a woman to usurp authority over the man," *1 Tim. ii. 12*; and ver. 13, the reason is added, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression; she fell first, and was the means of seducing the husband. She was given to be an helper, but proved a most grievous hinderer, even the instrument of his fall and ruin, on which the bond of subjection was confirmed and tied faster on her; *Gen. iii. 16*. "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee," namely, with less easiness, it may be, than before. It is therefore doubly enjoined; first in innocence, when was settled, a subordination of nature—Adam being first formed, and then Eve, and the woman being taken out of the man; and then upon the fall, the woman being first in the transgression, and seducing the man; here now began to be a subjection not so easy and comfortable, being part of the penalty in her case, but yet through Christ is this nevertheless a sanctified state; *Eph. v. 22*, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord;" as owning Christ's authority in them, whose image they bear; "for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body." God would have a resemblance of Christ's authority over the church, held forth in the husband's over the wife. Christ is the head of the Church, to protect and save it, and to supply it with all good, and secure or deliver it from evil; and so is the husband over the wife, to keep her from injuries, and to provide comfortably for her, according to his ability. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the "wives be unto their own husbands, as is fit in the Lord," *Col. iii. 18*; that is, as stands with the law of Christ, and is for his and the Father's glory: It is not then an absolute, or unlimited, or a slavish subjection that is required; but a loving subordination, to prevent disorder or confusion, and to further all the ends of the relation. Thus, in reference unto the husbands, wives must be instructed in the duties of love and subjection to them. "And to love their children," not with a natural affection only, but a spiritual; a love springing from a holy, sanctified heart, and regulated by the word; not a fond foolish love, indulging them in evil, neglecting due reproof and correction where necessary; but it must be a true Christian love, shewing itself in their pious education,

which is good;" before the apostle mentions this duty of instructing others, he insists on the personal qualities of governing the tongue and restraining the appetite, intimating thereby that instructions have little weight unless enforced by example. The teaching here spoken of (verses 4, 5) is not public (*1 Cor. xiv. 34*), but addressed to women by women, probably in house visitation (district visiting). "Discreet" of the Authorised Version is better than "self-restrained," as some would read. There is in the latter, says Alford, an implica-

tion of effort which destroys the spontaneity, and brushes off, so to speak, the bloom of this best of female graces. "Keepers at home:" "house-wifely," as Tyndal and Cramer render it. Some MSS. give "workers at home." "That the word of God be not blasphemed:" i.e., "as encouraging wives to neglect their husbands and children on pretence of attending on the offices of religion" (Macknight). "The virtues to be inculcated on women are those of domestic and private life" (Webster and Wilkinson).

forming their life and manners aright, taking care of their souls as well as of their bodies; of their spiritual welfare as well as of their temporal; of the former chiefly, and in the first place. The reason is added, namely, "That the word of God may not be blasphemed." Failures in such relative duties would be greatly to the reproach of Christianity. What are these the better for this their new religion? would the infidels be ready to say. The word of God and Gospel of Christ is pure, and excellent and glorious in itself, and the excellency of it should be expressed and shewn in the lives and carriage of its professors, especially in relative duties. Failures here bring disgrace; *Rom. ii. 24*, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you." Judge what a God he is, would they be ready to say, by these his servants; and what his word, and doctrine, and religion is, by these his followers. Thus would Christ "be wound in the house of his friends." Thus of the duties of the younger women.

6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

They are apt to be eager and hot, thoughtless and precipitant, therefore must be earnestly called upon and exhorted to be considerate, and not rash; advisable and submissive, not wilful and headstrong; humble and mild, not haughty and proud; for there are more young people ruined by pride than by any other sin. The young in years should be grave and solid in their deportment and manners, joining the seriousness of age with the liveliness and vigour of youth. This will make even those younger years to pass to good purpose, and yield matter of comfortable reflection when the evil days come; it will be preventive of much sin and sorrow, and lay the ground for doing and enjoying much good. Such shall not mourn at the last, but have peace and comfort in death, and after it a glorious crown of life. Now with these instructions to Titus what he should teach others, the aged men and women, and the younger of both sexes, Titus himself probably at this time being a young man also, the apostle inserts,

[Young men should be "steady in their behaviour, superior to sensual temptations, and constant in the exercise of every part of self-government."—*Doddridge*. The reasons for this are obvious; 1. The hopes of the church depend much on them. 2. A young man who cannot govern himself gives little promise of being useful or happy. 3. Indulgence in the propensities to which young men are prone will, sooner or later, bring ruin to the body and the soul. 4. They are just at the period of life when they are exposed to peculiar temptations, and when they need to exercise a peculiar guardianship over their own conduct. 5. Like others, they may soon die; and they should be habitually in such a frame of mind as to be prepared to stand before God. A young man who feels that he may be soon in the eternal world cannot but be sensible of the propriety of having a serious mind, and of living and acting as in the immediate presence of his Maker and Judge.]

5th. Some direction to himself. He could not expect so successfully to teach others if he carried not himself well both in his conversation and preaching.

7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, 8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

First. Here is direction for his conversation: "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works;" without this he would pull down with one hand what he built with the other. Observe, Preachers of good works must be patterns of them also; good doctrine and good life must go together. "Thou that teacheth another, teacheth thou not thyself?" A defect here is a great blemish, and a great hindrance. "In all things," some read 'above all things,' or, 'above all men.' Instructing and informing others in the particulars of their duty is necessary, and above all things example, especially that of the teacher himself, is needful; hereby both light and influence are more likely to go together. Let them see a lively image of those virtues and graces in thy life which must be in theirs. Example may both teach and impress the things taught. When they see purity and gravity, sobriety and all good life, in thee, they may be more easily won and brought thereto themselves; they may become pious and holy, sober and righteous, as thou art. Ministers must be examples to the flock, and the people "followers of them as they are of Christ." And here is direction,

Secondly. For his teaching and doctrine, as well as for his life. "In doctrine, shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned." They must make it appear that the design of their preaching is purely to advance the honour of God, and interest of Christ and his kingdom, and the welfare and happiness of souls; that it was not with secular views this office was entered into, or is used, not from ambition or covetousness, but a pure aim at the spiritual ends of its institution. In their preaching, therefore, the display of wit, or parts, or of human learning or oratory, is not to be affected; but "sound speech" must be used, "which cannot be condemned;" Scripture language, as far as well may be, in expressing Scripture truths. This is "sound speech that cannot be condemned." We have more than once these duties of a minister set together; *1 Tim. iv. 16*, "Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine;" and ver. 12 of the same chapter, "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of believers in word." In thy speech, as a Christian, being grave and serious, and to the use of edifying; and in thy preaching, that it be the pure word of God, or what is agreeable to it, and founded on it: thus be an example in word, and in conversation, the life corresponding with the doctrine. In doing this "thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." In *2 Tim. iii. 10*, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, and the manner of life," said the same apostle, namely, how agreeable these have been. And so must it be with others; their teaching must be agreeable with the word, and their life with their teaching. This is the true and good minister; *1 Thes. ii. 9, 10*, "Labouring night and day, we preached to you the Gospel of God; and ye are our witnesses, and God also, how holy, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you." This must be looked to, as the next words shew: which are

Thirdly. The reason both for the strictness of the minister's life and the gravity and soundness of his preaching. "That he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." Adversaries would be seeking occasion to reflect, and would do so, could they find any thing amiss in doctrine or life; but if both were right and good, such ministers might set calumny itself at defiance; they would have no evil thing to say justly, and so must be ashamed of their opposition. Observe, Faithful ministers will have enemies watching for their halting, such as will endeavour to find or pick holes in their teaching or behaviour; the more need therefore for them to look to themselves, that no just occasion be found against them. Opposition and

calumny perhaps may not be escaped. Men of corrupt minds will resist the truth, and often reproach the preachers and professors of it; but let them see that "with well doing they put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; that when they speak evil of them as evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse their good conversation in Christ." This is the direction to Titus himself, and so of the duties of free persons, male and female, old and young. Then follows,

6th. The directions respecting servants.

9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; 10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Servants must not think their mean and low state puts them beneath God's notice, or the obligation of his laws; that because they are servants of men they are thereby discharged from serving of God. No. Servants must know and do their duty to their earthly masters, but with an eye to their heavenly one; and Titus must not only instruct and warn earthly masters of their duties, but servants also of theirs, both in his public preaching and private admonitions. Servants must attend the ordinances of God for their instruction and comfort as well as the masters themselves. In this direction to Titus there are the duties themselves to which he must exhort servants, and a weighty consideration wherewith he was to enforce them.

First. The duties themselves are these:—

1st. "To be obedient to their own masters." This is the prime duty, that by which they are characterised; *Rom. vi. 16*, "His servants ye are to whom ye obey." There must be inward subjection, and dutiful respect and reverence in the mind and thoughts. "If I be a master, where is my fear?" saith God; that is, the dutiful affection you shew to me, together with the suitable outward significations and expressions of it, in doing what I command you. This must be in servants; their will must be subject to their master's will, and their time and labour at their master's disposal and command; *1 Pet. ii. 18*, "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." The duty results from the will of God, and the relation in which, by his providence, he hath put such, not from the quality of the person; if he be a master, the duties of a servant are to be paid to him as such. Servants, therefore, are to be exhorted to be obedient to their own masters; and,

2nd. "To please them well in all things," that is, in all lawful things, and such as belong to them to command, or, at least, as are not contrary to the will of their great and superior Lord. We are not to understand it either of obeying or pleasing them absolutely, without any limitation, but always with a reserve of God's right, which may in no case be intrenched upon. If his command and the earthly master's come in competition, we are instructed to obey God rather than man; but servants then must be upon good grounds in this, that there is an inconsistency, else are they not held to be excused; and not only must the will of God be the measure of the servant's obedience, but the reason of it also; all must be done with a respect to him, and in virtue of his authority, and for pleasing him primarily and chiefly; *Col. iii. 22—24*, "Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but with singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ." In serving the earthly master according to Christ's will he is served; and such shall be rewarded by him accordingly. But, *Q.* How are servants to please their masters in all things, and yet not be men-pleasers? *A.* Men-pleasers in the faulty sense are such as eye men alone, or chiefly, in what they do, leaving God out, or subordinating him to man; when the will of man shall carry it, though against God's will, or man's pleasure is more regarded than his; when that can content them, that the earthly master is pleased though God be displeased; or more care or more satisfaction is taken in man's being pleased than in God's: this is sinful man-pleasing, which all must take heed of; *Eph. vi. 5—7*, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, with singleness of your heart, as unto Christ: not with eye-service as men-pleasers," who look at nothing but the favour or displeasure of men, or nothing so much as that, "but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with goodwill doing service as to the Lord, and not to men," namely, not to them chiefly, but to Christ, who requires and who will reward any good done, whether by bond or free. Observe, Therefore Christian liberty stands well with civil servitude and subjection. Persons may serve men, and yet be the servants of Christ; these are not contrary, but subordinate, so far as serving men is according to Christ's will, and for his sake. Christ came not to destroy or prejudice civil order and differences; "Art thou called, being a servant? Care not for it," *1 Cor. vii. 21*. Let not that trouble thee, as if it were a condition unworthy of a Christian, or wherein the person so called is less pleasing unto God; "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman," not free from that service, but free in it; free spiritually, though not in a civil sense. "Likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant," he is bound to him, though he be not under civil subjection to any; so that "bond or free, all are one in Christ." Servants therefore should not regret, or be troubled at their condition, but be faithful and cheerful in the station wherein God hath set them, striving to please their masters in all things. Hard it may be under some churlish Nabals, but must be endeavoured all that they are able.

3rd. "Not answering again," not contradicting them, or disputing it with them; not giving them any disrespectful or provoking language. Job complained of his servants, that he "called them, and they gave him no answer;" and that was faulty another way. *Non respondere pro convito est*,—"such silence is contempt;" but here it is respect, rather to take a check or reproof with humble silence, not making any confident or bold replies. When conscious of a fault, to palliate or stand in justification of it, doubles it. Yet this not answering again excludes not turning away wrath with a soft answer, when season and circumstances admit. God and wise masters will be ready to hear, and do right; but answering unseasonably, or in an unseemly manner, or where the case admits not excuse to be pert or confident, shews want of such humility and meekness, which such relation requires.

4th. "Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity." This is another great essential of good servants, to be honest; never converting that to their own use which is their master's, nor wasting the goods they are intrusted with; that is purloining. They must be just and true, and do for them as they would or should for themselves; *Pr. xxviii. 24*, "Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith it is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer;" he will be ready to join with them. Thus, having such light thoughts of taking beyond what is right, though it be from a parent or master, is like to harder

ii. 7. The Sinaitic and Alexandrine MSS. omit "sincerity." "Uncorruptness;" this word may refer to the teaching of Titus, or to his motive in teaching. In the one case it would imply that he was to set forth "uncorruptness" or purity as to be striven after, in the other that his motive in teaching must be pure, disinterested.

ii. 8. "No evil thing to say of you:" many of the best MSS. read "to say of us." The apostle feels that any unsound teaching on the part of Titus would reflect discredit on him as well as on Titus.

ii. 9: "To please them well;" as it is commonly expressed now "to give satisfaction."

ii. 11. The connection is wrong in the Authorised Version; it should read, "For the grace of God, bringing salvation to all men, has been manifested." The reason for the foregoing exhortations from verse 1.

ii. 12. "Teaching" or disciplining us, in order that, denying ungodliness, &c. "Grace exercises its discipline on us (Heb. xii. 6)

conscience to go farther; it is both wicked in itself, and it tends to more. Be it so that the master is hard and strait, scarce making sufficient provision for servants, yet may they not be their own carvers, or go about by theft to right themselves? They must bear their lot, committing their cause to God for righting and providing for them. I speak not of cases of extremity, for preserving life, the necessities for which the servant hath a right to. "Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity." He must not only not steal or waste, but must improve his master's goods, and promote his prosperity and thriving what he can. He that increased not his master's talent is accused of unfaithfulness, though he had not embezzled or lost it. Faithfulness in a servant lies in ready, punctual, and thorough executing his master's orders; keeping his secrets and counsels, dispatching his affairs, and managing with frugality, and to as much just advantage for his master as he is able; looking well to his trusts, and preventing what he can all spoil, or loss, or damage. This is a way to bring a blessing upon himself, as the contrary often brings utter ruin; *Lu. xvi. 12*, "If you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" Thus of the duties themselves, to which servants are to be exhorted. Then,

Secondly. Here is the consideration with which Titus was to enforce them; "That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;" that is, that they may recommend the Gospel, and Christ's holy religion, to the good opinion of them that are without, by their meek, humble, obedient and faithful carriage in all things. Even servants, though they may think that such as they, in so low and inferior a condition, can do little to bring repute to Christianity, or adorn the doctrine of Christ, and set forth the excellencies of his truth and ways, yet, if they are careful to do their duty, it will redound to the glory of God, and credit of religion. The unbelieving masters would think the better of that despised way, which was every where spoken against, when they found that their servants which were Christians were better than their other servants; more obedient and submissive, more just and faithful and diligent in their places. True religion is an honour to it, but adorn it rather in all that they are able. Our light must "shine among men, so that they seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven." And thus of the apostle's directions to Titus, about the discharge of his office, in reference to several sorts of persons. Next follow,

3. The grounds or considerations upon which all the directions are urged, taken from the nature and design of the Gospel, and the end of Christ's death.

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

1st. Here are motives from the nature and design of the Gospel. Let young and old, men and women, masters and servants, and Titus himself. Let all sorts do their respective duties, for this is the very aim and business of Christianity, to instruct, and help, and form persons, under all distinctions and relations, to a right frame and carriage. For this,

First. They are put under the dispensation of the grace of God; so the Gospel is called, *Eph. iii. 2*. It is grace in respect of the spring of it, the free favour and goodwill of God, not any merit or desert in the creature, and as manifesting and declaring this goodwill in an eminent and signal manner; and as it is the means of conveying and working grace in the hearts of believers. Now grace is obliging and constraining to goodness; "Let not sin reign, but yield yourselves unto God; for you are not under the law, but under grace," *Rom. vi. 12-14*. "The love of Christ constrains us," namely, not to live to self, but to him, *2 Cor. v. 14, 15*; without this effect grace is received in vain.

Secondly. This gospel grace brings salvation; it reveals, and offers, and ensures it to believers. Salvation from sin and wrath, from death and hell; whence it is called the word of life. It brings to faith, and so to life; the life of holiness now, and of happiness hereafter. The law is the ministration of death, but the Gospel the ministration of life and peace. This, therefore, must be received as salvation, its rules minded, its commands obeyed, that the end of it may be obtained, the salvation of the soul. And more inexcusable will the neglectors of this grace of God bringing salvation now be, since,

Thirdly. It "hath appeared," or shone out, namely, more clearly and illustriously than ever before. The old dispensation was comparatively dark and shadowy, this is a clear and shining light; and as it is now more bright, so more diffused and extensive also. For,

Fourthly. It "hath appeared unto all men;" not to the Jews only, as the glory of God appeared at mount *Sinai* to that particular people, but out of the ken of all others; but gospel grace is open to all, and all are invited to come and partake of the benefit of it, Gentiles as well as Jews. The publication of it is free and general. "Disciple all nations; preach the Gospel to every creature." The pale is broken down, there is no such inclosure now as formerly. "The preaching of Jesus Christ, which was kept secret since the world began, now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith," *Rom. xvi. 25, 26*. The doctrine of grace and salvation by the Gospel is for all ranks and conditions of men, slaves and servants as well as masters; therefore engaging and encouraging all to receive and believe it, and walk suitably to it, adorning it in all things.

Fifthly. This gospel revelation is to teach, and not by way of information and instruction only, as a schoolmaster does his scholars; but by way of precept and command, as a sovereign that gives laws unto his subjects. It directs what to shun, and what to follow: what to avoid and what to do. The Gospel is not for speculation only or chiefly, but for practice and right ordering of life. It teaches,

1st. To abandon sin; "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts." To renounce and have no more to do with these as we have had. "Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt;" that is, the whole body of sins, distributed here into ungodliness and worldly lusts. Put away ungodliness and irreligion, all unbelief, neglect, or disrespect of the Divine Being, not loving, or fearing, or trusting in him, or obeying him as we should, neglecting his ordinances, slighting his worship, profaning his name or day, &c. Thus "ungodliness," that is, hate and put it away. "And worldly lusts;" all

corrupt and vicious desires and affections that prevail in worldly men, and carry out to worldly things. "The lusts of the flesh, and of the eye, and the pride of life." All sensuality and filthiness, covetous desires and ambition, seeking and valuing more the praise of men than of God;—put away all these. An earthly, sensual conversation suits not a heavenly calling; "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." They have done it by covenant engagement and promise, and have initially and prevalently done it in act, and are going on in the work, cleansing themselves more and more from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. Thus the Gospel first unteaches that which is evil, to abandon sin; and then,

2nd. To make conscience of that which is good; "To live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Religion is not made up of negatives only, there must be doing good as well as eschewing evil; in these conjunctly is sincerity proved, and the Gospel adorned. We should live soberly with respect to ourselves, in the due government of our appetites and passions, keeping the limits of moderation and temperance, avoiding all inordinate excesses. Righteously toward all men; rendering to all their due, and injuring none, but rather doing good to others according to our ability and their need. This seems a part of justice and righteousness, for we are not born for ourselves alone, and therefore may not live only to ourselves. "We are members one of another," and "must seek every man another's wealth," *1 Cor. x. 24*; *xii. 25*. The public especially, which includes the interests of all, must have the regards of all. Selfishness is a sort of unrighteousness, it robs others of that share in us which is their due. How amiable, then, will a just and righteous carriage be! It secures and promotes all interests, not particular only, but general and public, and so makes for the peace and happiness of the world. Live righteously, therefore, as well as soberly; and godly towards God, in the duties of his worship and service. Regards to him, indeed, should run through all; *1 Cor. x. 31*, "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Personal and relative duties must be done in obedience to his command, with due aim at pleasing and honouring him, from principles of holy love and fear of him. But there is an express and direct duty also that we owe to God, namely, belief and acknowledgment of his being and perfections, paying him internal and external worship and homage; loving, and fearing, and trusting in him, and depending on him, and devoting ourselves to him; observing all those religious duties and ordinances that he hath appointed, praying to him, and praising of him, meditating on his word and works. This is godliness, looking and coming to God, as our state now is, not immediately, but as he has manifested himself in Christ; so does the Gospel direct and require. To go to God any other way, namely, by saints or angels, is unsuitable, yea, contrary to the gospel rule and warrant. All communications from God to us are through his Son, and our returns must also be by him. God in Christ we must look at, as the object of our hope and worship. Thus must we exercise ourselves to godliness, without which there can be no adorning that Gospel which is according to it, which teaches and requires such a deportment. A gospel conversation must needs be a godly conversation, expressing our love, and fear, and reverence of God; our hope, and trust, and confidence in him, as manifested in his Son. "We are the circumcision," who have in truth what was signified by that sacrament, "who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." See in how little a compass our duty is comprised; it is put in a few words, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." The Gospel teaches us not only how to believe and hope well, but also to live well, as becomes that faith and hope in this present world, and as expectants of another and better. There is "the world that now is, and that which is to come;" the present is the time and place of our trial, and the Gospel teaches us to live well here, not as our final state, but with an eye chiefly to a future. For,

3rd. It teaches in all to look for the glories of another world, to which the sober, righteous, and godly life in this is preparative; "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Hope, by a metonymy, is put for the thing hoped for, namely, heaven and the felicity thereof, called emphatically that hope, because it is the great thing we look, and long, and wait for; and a blessed hope, because when attained we shall be completely happy for ever. "And the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." This notes both the time of the accomplishing our hope and the sureness and greatness of it; it will be at the second appearing of Christ, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels, *Lu. ix. 26*. His own glory, which he had before the world was; and his Father's, being "the express image of his person," and God-man, his delegated Ruler and Judge; and of the holy angels, as his ministers and glorious attendants. His first coming was in meanness, to satisfy justice, and purchase happiness; his second will be in majesty, to bestow and instate his people in it. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation," *Heb. ix. 28*. "The great God and our Saviour" (or "even our Saviour") "Jesus Christ;" for they are not two subjects, but one only, as appears by the single article, *τὸ θεῶν καὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος*, not *καὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος*, and so is *καὶ* rendered, *1 Cor. xv. 24*. "When he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father;" *τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί*. [See Bloomfield, *Rec. Syn.*, and Notes, *in loc.* He contends that the meaning is, "the glorious appearance of that Great Being who is our God and Saviour." The arguments for this opinion are well summed up by Bloomfield.] Christ, then, is the great God, not figuratively, as magistrates and others are sometimes called gods, or as appearing and acting in the name of God, but properly and absolutely the true God, *1 Jno. v. 20*; "The mighty God," *Isa. ix. 6*; "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," *Phil. ii. 6*. In his second coming he will reward his servants, and bring them to glory with him. Observe, (1.) There is a common and blessed hope for all true Christians in the other world. "If in this life only they had hope in Christ, they were of all men the most miserable," *1 Cor. xv. 19*. By hope is meant the thing hoped for, namely, Christ himself, who is called our hope, *1 Tim. i. 1*, and blessedness in and through him, even riches of glory, *Eph. i. 18*, hence fitly termed here that blessed hope. (2.) The design of the Gospel is to stir up all to a good life, by this blessed hope; *1 Pet. i. 13*. "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." To the same purpose here, "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope; not as mercenaries, but as dutiful and thankful Christians. "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening to the coming of the day of God," *2 Pet. iii. 11, 12*. "Looking and hastening," that is, expecting and diligently preparing for it. (3.) At and in the glorious appearing of Christ will the blessed hope of Christians be attained; for their felicity will be that, "to be where he is, and to behold his glory," *Jno. xvi. 24*. The glory of "the great God and our Saviour" will then break out as the sun. Though in the exercise of his judiciary power he will appear as the Son of man, yet will he be mightily declared to be the Son of God too; the divinity, that on earth was much veiled, will shine out then as the sun in its strength. Hence the work and design of the Gospel is to raise the heart to wait for this second appearing of Christ. "We are begotten again to a lively

before its benefits can be fully felt or thankfully acknowledged; the heart must be rectified, and the affections chastened, before sanctifying grace can have its full issues" (Ellicott).

ii. 13. "The glorious appearing;" rather, "the manifestation of the glory." There has been considerable discussion whether the next words should be as in the Authorised Version, or "of the great God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ." The Greek Fathers and others support the Authorised Version; but Alford combats this with much

force, and is supported by many modern commentators. The strength of the testimony to our Lord's divinity is almost equally great in either case. In the first he is identified with "the great God," in the second he is placed by his side as his equal in glory, which would be a blasphemous assertion if it referred to any human being.

ii. 14. "A peculiar people;" i.e., peculiarly his own, as Israel of old (*Exod. xix. 5*; *Psa. cxxxv. 4*).

iii. 1. "Put them in mind;" they knew their duty, but were apt

hope of it." 1 *Pet.* i. 3; turned "to serve the living God, and wait for his Son from heaven." 1 *Thes.* i. 9, 10. Christians are marked by this, "expecting their Master's coming," *Lu.* xii. 36; "loving his appearance," 2 *Tim.* iv. 8. Look we then to this hope; let our loins be girt, and our lights burning, and ourselves like those that wait for our Lord. The day or hour we know not, but "he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry," *Heb.* x. 37. (4.) The comfort and joy of Christians is, that their Saviour is "their great God," and will gloriously manifest himself at his second coming. Power and love, majesty and mercy, will then appear together in highest lustre, to the terror and confusion of the wicked, but to the everlasting triumph and rejoicing of the godly. Were he not thus "the great God," and not a mere creature, he could not be their Saviour, nor their hope. Thus far of the considerations to enforce the directions for all sorts to their respective duties, from the nature and design of the Gospel, which is to teach and persuade to those things. And herewith is connected another ground, namely,

2nd. From the end of Christ's death; ver. 14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." To bring us to holiness and happiness was the end of Christ's death, as well as the scope of his doctrine. Here we have,

First. The purchaser of salvation: "Who," that is, Jesus Christ, "that great God and our Saviour," who saves, not simply as God, much less as man alone; but as God-man, two natures in one person: man, that he might obey, and suffer, and die for man, and be meet to deal with him and for him; and God, that he might support the manhood, and give worth and efficacy to his undertakings, and have due regard to the rights and honour of the Deity, as well as the good of his creature, and bring about the latter to the glory of the former. Such an one became one of us; and this was,

Secondly. The price of our redemption, "He gave himself;" the Father gave him, but he gave himself too; and in the freeness and voluntariness, as well as the greatness of the offering, lay the acceptableness and merit of it; *Jno.* x. 17, 18, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself;" *so Jno.* xvii. 19, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," that is, separate and devote myself to this work, to be both a priest and a sacrifice to God for the sins of men. The human nature was the offering, and the Divine the altar, sanctifying the gift, and the whole the act of the person. "He gave himself a ransom for all," 1 *Tim.* ii. 6; "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." He was the priest and sacrifice too. "We are redeemed not with silver and gold, but the precious blood of Christ," 1 *Pet.* i. 18, 19; called the blood of God, *Acts* xx. 28, that is, of him who is God.

Thirdly. The persons for whom. For us; namely, poor perishing sinners, gone off from God, and turned rebels against him. He gave himself for us, not only for our good, but in our stead. Messiah was cut off, not for himself, but for us; "He suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," 1 *Pet.* iii. 18. He "was made sin for us," that is, an offering and sacrifice for sin, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 *Cor.* v. 21. Wonderful condescension and grace! "He loved us, and gave himself for us;" what can we do less than love and give up ourselves to him? especially considering,

Fourthly. The ends of his giving himself for us; namely, 1st. "That he might redeem us from all iniquity." This is fitted to the first lesson, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts;" Christ gave himself to redeem us from these, therefore put them away. To love and live in sin is to trample under foot redeeming blood, to despise and reject one of the greatest benefits of it, and to act counter to its design. But, Q. How could the short sufferings of Christ redeem us from all iniquity? A. Through the infinite dignity of his person. He, who was God, suffered, though not as God. The acts and properties of either nature are attributed to the person. "God purchased" his church "with his own blood," *Acts* xx. 28. Could payment be made at once, no need of suffering for ever. A mere creature could not do this, from the finiteness of his nature; but God-man could. "The great God and our Saviour gave himself for us;" that accounts for it. "By one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified," *Heb.* ix. 25, 26. He needed not to offer himself often, nor could he be holden of death, when he had once undergone it. Happy end and fruit of Christ's death, by redemption from all iniquity! Christ died for this. And,

2nd. "To purify to himself a peculiar people." This enforces the second lesson: "To live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Christ died to purify, as well as to pardon; to obtain grace, to heal the nature, as well as to free from guilt and condemnation. He gave himself for his church to cleanse it. Thus does he make "to himself a peculiar people," by purifying of them. Thus are they distinguished from the world that lies in wickedness; they are born of God and assimilated to him, bear his image, are holy as their heavenly Father is holy. Observe, Redemption from sin and sanctification of the nature go together, and both make a peculiar people unto God; freedom from guilt and condemnation, and from the power of lusts, and purification of soul by the Spirit. These are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and so a peculiar people," *And,*

3rd. "Zealous of good works." This peculiar people, as they are made so by grace purifying them, so must they be seen to be so, by doing good, and a zeal therein. Observe, The Gospel is not a doctrine of licentiousness, but of holiness and good life. We are redeemed from our vain conversation to serve God "in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life." See we then that we do good, and have zeal in it; only looking that zeal be guided by knowledge, and spirited with love, directed to the glory of God, and always in some good thing; and thus of the motive to the duties directed, from the end of Christ's death. Then,

4th. The apostle closeth the chapter, as he began it, with a summary direction to Titus upon the whole.

15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Here is the matter and manner of the ministers' teaching, and a special instruction to Titus in reference to himself.

First. The matter of ministers' teaching; "These things," namely, the before-mentioned, not Jewish fables and traditions, but the truths and duties of the Gospel, of avoiding sin, and "living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Observe, Ministers in their preaching must keep close to the word of God; 1 *Pet.* iv. 11, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God," and not the figments and inventions of his own brain.

Secondly. The manner; namely, by "doctrine, and exhortation, and reproof with all authority," 2 *Tim.* iii. 16. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness;" that is, to teach sound doctrine, to convince of sin, and refute error, to reform the life, and to carry forward in what is just and good, "that the man of God," Christian or minister, "may be perfect, thoroughly

furnished to all good works," namely, that are to be practised by himself, or to be taught others. Here is what will furnish for all parts of his duty, and the right discharge of them. "These things speak," or teach; shun not to declare the whole counsel of God. The great and necessary truths and duties of the Gospel especially, these "speak and exhort," *παρακαλεῖται*,—press with much earnestness. Ministers must not be cold and lifeless in delivering heavenly doctrine and precepts, as if they were indifferent things, or of little concern; but they must urge them with earnestness suitable to their nature and importance. They must call upon persons to mind and heed, and not be "hearers only, deceiving themselves, but doers of the word, that they may be blessed therein." And rebuke, convince and reprove such as contradict, or gainsay, or neglect, and receive not the truth as they should, or retain it in unrighteousness; those who hear it not with such a believing and obedient mind and heart as they ought, but instead of that, it may be, live in contrary practices, shewing themselves stubborn and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate. "Rebuke with all authority," as coming in the name of God, and armed with his threatenings and discipline, which, whoever make light of, at their peril it will be. Ministers are reprovers in the gate.

Thirdly. Here is a special instruction to Titus in reference to himself; "Let no man despise thee," that is, give no occasion to do so, nor suffer it without reproof, considering "he that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God." Or, "thus speak, and exhort, these things;" press them upon all, as they may respectively be concerned; with boldness and faithfulness reprove sin; and carefully look to thyself, and thy own carriage, and then none will despise thee. The most effectual way for ministers to secure themselves from contempt is to keep close to the doctrine of Christ, and imitate his example; to preach and live well, and do their duty with prudence and courage; this will best preserve both their reputation and comfort. Perhaps too an admonition might be here intended to the people; that Titus, though young, and but a substitute of the apostle, yet should not be contemned by them; but considered and respected as a faithful minister of Christ, and encouraged and supported in his work and office; 1 *Thes.* v. 12, 13, "Know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake." Mind their teaching, respect their persons, support them in their function, and what in you lies further their endeavours for the honour of God and the salvation of souls.

CHAPTER III.

Of duties which concern Christians more in common, and the reasons of them, ver. 1—8. What Titus in teaching should avoid, and how he should deal with a heretic, with some other directions, ver. 9—14. And salutations in the close, ver. 15.



UT them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, 2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

Fourthly. Here is the fourth thing in the matter of the epistle. The apostle had directed Titus in reference to the particular and special duties of several sorts of persons; now he bids him exhort to what concerned them more in common, namely, to quietness and submission to rulers, and readiness to do good, and to equitable and gentle behaviour towards all men; things comely and ornamental of religion; he must therefore put them in mind of such things. Ministers are people's remembrancers of their duty; as they are remembrancers for the people to God in prayers, *Isa.* lxii. 6, so are they from God to them in preaching; 2 *Pet.* i. 12, "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance." Forgetfulness of duty is a common frailty; there is need therefore of minding and quickening them thereto. Here are the duties themselves, and the reasons of them.

1. The duties themselves, which they were to be minded of. 1st. "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates." Magistracy is God's ordinance for the good of all, and therefore must be regarded and submitted to by all; not for wrath and by force only, but willingly and for conscience' sake. "Principalities, and powers, and magistrates," that is, all civil rulers, whether supreme and chief, or subordinate in the government under which they live, of whatever form it be, that they be subject to them and obey them, namely, in things lawful and honest, and that belong to their office to require. The Christian religion was misrepresented by its adversaries as prejudicial to the rights of princes and civil powers, and tending to faction and sedition, and to rebellion against lawful authority; therefore, "to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," and stop the mouths of malicious enemies, Christians must be minded to shew themselves examples rather of all due subjection and obedience to the government that is over them. Natural desire of liberty must be guided and bounded by reason and Scripture. Spiritual privileges do not make void or weaken, but confirm and strengthen, their obligations to civil duties. Mind them, therefore, "to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates." And,

2nd. "To be ready to every good work." Some refer this to such good works as are required by magistrates, and within their sphere; whatever tends to good order, and to promote and secure public tranquillity and peace, be not backward but ready to promote such things. But though this be included, if not first intended, yet is it not to be hereto restrained; it respects doing good in all kinds, and on every occasion that may offer, whether respecting God, ourselves, or our neighbour; what may bring credit to religion in the world. "Whatever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things," *Phil.* iv. 8, namely, to do, and follow, and further them. Mere harmlessness, or good words, and good meanings only, are not enough without good works. Of pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and keep unspotted from the world." Not only take, but seek occasion for doing good, keep fitness and readiness that way, put it not off to others, but embrace and lay hold on it thyself, delight and rejoice therein, put all in mind of all this. And,

3rd. "To speak evil of no man;" *ὀνειδίζεσθαι*, 'to revile,' or 'curse,' or 'blaspheme none;' or, (as our translation more generally) "to speak evil of

to forget it. The fact of Cretan turbulence is established by the testimony of Diodorus Siculus.

iii. 4. "Kindness;" it is difficult to render the full meaning of the Greek word into English. Wickliffe's and the Rheims versions give "benignity," of which Jerome writes, "Benignity is a gentle virtue, kind, calm, and fitted for the society of all that is good" (Trench, "New Testament Synonyms").

iii. 5. Not the "washing" but the "bath" or "laver of regenera-

tion." Here the baptismal font; the visible instrument put for the invisible grace. "The apostles were accustomed to draw an argument from the sacraments to prove the thing therein signified, because it should be a recognised principle amongst the devout that God does not mock us with empty signs, but by his power makes good inwardly that which he demonstrates by the outward sign. Wherefore baptism is congruously and truly called the laver of regeneration. It will rightly hold the power and utility of sacra-

none," unjustly, and falsely, or unnecessarily, without call, and when it may do hurt, but no good to the person himself or any other. If no good can be spoken, rather than speak evil unnecessarily, say nothing. We must never take pleasure in speaking ill of others, or make the worst of any thing, but the best that we can. We must not "go up and down as tale bearers," carrying ill-natured stories, to the prejudice of our neighbour's good name, and destruction of brotherly love. Misrepresentations, or ill insinuations of bad intent, or of hypocrisy in what is done, things out of our reach, or cognizance, these come within the reach of this prohibition. An evil this is, as too common, so of great malignity; *Jas. i. 26*, "If any man seemeth to be religious, and brideth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain." Such loose, uncharitable talk, is displeasing to God, and hurtful among men; *Pr. xvii. 9*, "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love," namely, to himself by this tenderness and charity, or rather to the transgressor, "but he that repeateth a matter," who blazes and tells the faults of another abroad, "separateth very friends;" he raiseth dissensions, and alienates his friend from himself and perhaps from others: this is among the sins to be put off, *Eph. iv. 31*, or if indulged, unfit for Christian communion here, and the society of the blessed in heaven, *1 Cor. vi. 10*. Mind them therefore to avoid this. And,

4th. "To be no brawlers;" ἀμαχοὺς εἶναι,—"no fighters," either with hand or tongue; that is, no quarrelsome, contentious persons, apt to give or return ill and provoking language. A holy contending there is for matters good and important, and in a manner suitable and becoming, not with wrath or injurious violence. Christians must follow the things that make for peace, and that in a peaceful, not a rough, and boisterous, and hurtful way, but as becomes the servants of the God of peace and love. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath," *Rom. xii. 19*. This is the Christian's wisdom and duty. The glory of a man is to pass over a transgression; the duty of a reasonable, and therefore to be sure of a Christian man, whose reason is improved and advanced by religion. Such may not, will not, presently fall foul on one that hath offended him; but, like God, will be "slow to anger, and ready to forgive." Contention and strife arises from men's lusts, and exorbitant, unruly passions, which must be curbed and moderated, not indulged; and Christians need to be minded of these things, that they do not by a wrathful contentious spirit and carriage displease and dishonour God, and discredit religion, promoting feuds in the places where they live. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty," and he that "ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." Wherefore it follows,

5th. "But gentle;" ἐπιεικής,—"equitable and just," or candid and fair in constructions of things, not taking words or actions in the worst sense; and for peace sometimes yielding somewhat of strict right. And,

6th. "Shewing all meekness to all men." We must be of a mild disposition, and not only having meekness in our hearts, but shewing it in our speeches and carriage. "All meekness," that is, meekness in all instances and occasions, not towards friends only, but "to all men," though still with wisdom, as James admonishes, *Jas. iii. 13*. Distinguish the person and the sin, pity the one and hate the other. And so of sin and sin; look not on all alike, there are motives and beams. And of sinner and sinner; "Of some have compassion, others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, thus making a difference," *Jude 22, 23*. Mind these things; "The wisdom that is from above is pure and peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated." Meekness of spirit and carriage renders religion amiable; it is a commanded imitation of Christ the grand exemplar, and what brings its own reward with it in the ease and comfort of the disposition itself, and the blessings accompanying it. These shall be glad and rejoice, shall be taught and guided in their way, and satisfied with bread, and beautified with salvation.

Thus of the duties themselves which Titus was to put people in mind of, for which,

2. He adds the reasons,

1st. From their own past condition, which he next describes,

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

Observe, Consideration of men's natural condition is a great means and ground of equity, and gentleness, and all meekness towards those who are yet in such a state. This hath aptness to abate pride, and to work pity and hope in reference to those who are yet unconverted; we ourselves also were so and so, corrupt and sinful, therefore we should not be impatient and bitter, hard and severe toward those who are but as ourselves once were. Would we then have been contemned, and proudly and rigorously dealt with? No, but would have been treated with gentleness and humanity, and therefore should we now so treat those who are unconverted, according to that rule of equity, *Quod tibi non vis fieri, alteri ne feceris*,—"What you would not have done to you, that do not you to another." Their past natural condition is set forth in divers particulars. "We ourselves also were sometimes,"

First. "Foolish;" without true spiritual understanding and knowledge, ignorant of heavenly things. Observe, They should be most disposed to bear with others' follies who may remember many of their own; they should be meek, and gentle, and patient toward them who once needed, and, doubtless, then expected, the same. "We ourselves also were sometimes foolish." And,

Secondly. "Disobedient;" heady and unpersuadable, resisting the word, and rebellious, even against the natural laws of God, and those which human society requires. Well are these set together, foolish and disobedient. For what folly like this to disobey God and his laws, natural or revealed? This is contrary to right reason, and men's true and greatest interests; and what so foolish as to violate and go counter to these?

Thirdly. "Deceived;" or wandering; namely, out of the ways of truth and holiness. Man in this his degenerate state is of a straying nature, thence compared to a lost sheep; this must be sought and brought back, and guided in the right way, *Ps. cxix. 176*. He is weak and ready to be imposed upon by the wiles and subtleties of Satan, and of men lying in wait to seduce and mislead.

Fourthly. "Serving divers lusts and pleasures;" namely, as vassals and slaves under them. Observe, 1st. Men deceived are easily entangled and ensnared. They would not otherwise serve divers lusts and pleasures, as they do, were they not blinded and beguiled into it. See here, too, what a different notion the word gives of a sensual and fleshly life from what the world generally hath of it. Carnal people think they enjoy their pleasures; the word calls it servitude and vassalage. They are very drudges and bond slaves under them; so far are they from freedom and felicity in them that they are captivated by them, and serve them as taskmasters and tyrants. 2nd. It is the misery of the servants of sin, that they have many masters, one lust hurrying them one way, and another another; pride commands one thing, covetousness another, and often a contrary. What vile slaves are sinners, while they conceit themselves free? The

lusts that tempt them promise them liberty, but in yielding they become the servants of corruption; for "of whom a man is overcome, of the same he is brought into bondage."

Fifthly. "Living in malice;" one of those lusts that bear rule in them. Malice desires hurt to another, and rejoices in it.

Sixthly. "And envy," which grudges and repines at another's good, frets at his prosperity and success in any thing. Both roots of bitterness whence many evils spring; evil thoughts and speeches, "tongues set on fire of hell," detracting from and impairing the just and due praises of others. "Their words are swords" wherewith they slay the good name and honour of their neighbour; the sin of Satan and of Cain, who was of that evil one, and slew his brother,—and wherefore slew he him, but of this envy and malice? "Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous." These were some of the sins in which we lived in our natural state, And

Seventhly. "Hateful," or odious, deserving to be hated.

Eighthly. And "hating one another." Observe, Those that are sinful, that is, living and allowing themselves in sin, are hateful to God and all good men. Their temper and ways are so, though not simply their persons; and it is the misery of sinners that they hate one another, as it is the duty and happiness of saints to love one another. What contentions and quarrels flow from men's corruptions, such as were in the nature of those that by conversion are now good, but in their unconverted state made them ready to run like furious wild beasts one upon another! The consideration of its having been thus with us should moderate our spirits, and dispose us to be more equal and gentle, meek and tender-hearted, towards those who are such. This is the argument from their own past condition here described. And he reasons,

2nd. From their present state. We are delivered out of that our miserable condition by no merit or strength of our own, but only by the mercy and free grace of God, and merit of Christ, and operation of his Spirit; therefore we have no ground in respect of ourselves to condemn those who are yet unconverted, but rather to pity them, and cherish hope concerning them, that they, though in themselves as unworthy and unmeet as we were, yet may obtain mercy, as we have; and so upon this occasion the apostle again opens the causes of our salvation, ver. 4-7.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

First. We have here the prime Author of our salvation; namely, God the Father, therefore termed here "God our Saviour." "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ," *2 Cor. v. 18*. All things belonging to the new creation and recovery of fallen man to life and happiness, of which he is there speaking, all these things are of God the Father, as contriver and beginner of this work. There is an order in acting as in subsisting. The Father begins, the Son manages, and the Holy Spirit works and perfects, all. God, namely, the Father, is a Saviour by Christ, through the Spirit. "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," *Jno. iii. 16*. He is the Father of Christ, and through him the Father of mercies; all spiritual blessings are by Christ from him. "We joy in God through Jesus Christ," *Eph. i. 3*. "And with one mind, and with one mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," *Rom. v. 11*.

Secondly. spring and rise of it. The Divine philanthropy or kindness and love of God to man. By grace we are saved from first to last; this is the ground and motive. God's pity and mercy to man in misery was the first wheel, or rather the spirit in the wheels, that sets and keeps them all in motion. God is not, cannot be, moved by any thing out of himself; the occasion is in man, namely, his misery and wretchedness; but sin bringing that misery, wrath might have issued out, rather than compassion; but God knowing how to adjust all with his own honour and perfections, would pity and save rather than destroy. He delights in mercy. "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." We read of "riches of goodness and mercy," *Rom. ii. 4*; *Eph. ii. 7*. Acknowledge we this, and give him the glory of it, not turning it to wantonness, but to thankfulness and obedience.

Thirdly. Here is the means or instrumental cause; namely, the shining out of this love and grace of God in the Gospel, after it appeared, namely in the word. Love and grace appearing hath, through the Spirit, great virtue to soften and change, and turn to God, and so is "the power of God to salvation, to every one that believeth." Thus having asserted God to be the author, his free grace the spring, and the manifestation of this in the Gospel the means of salvation, that the honour of all still may be the better secured to him,

Fourthly. False grounds and motives are here removed; "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us;" not for foreseen works of ours, but his own free grace and mercy alone. Works must be in the saved, (where is room for it), but not among the causes of his salvation; they are the way to the kingdom, not the meriting price of it: all is upon the foot of undeserved favour and mercy from first to last. Election is of grace; we are chosen to be holy, not because antecedently seen we would be so, *Eph. i. 4*. It is the fruit, not the cause of election. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," *2 Thes. ii. 13*. So effectual calling, in which election breaks out and is first seen: "He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," *2 Tim. i. 9*. We "are justified freely by grace," *Rom. iii. 24*, and "sanctified and saved by grace." By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," *Eph. ii. 8*. Faith and all saving graces are God's free gift and works; the beginning, and increase, and perfection of them in glory, all is from this. In building men up to be a holy temple unto God, from the foundation to the top stone, we must cry nothing but "Grace, grace," unto it. It is "not of works, lest any man should boast; but of grace, that he that glorieth should glory only in the Lord." Thus the true cause is shewn, and the false removed.

Fifthly. Here is the formal cause of salvation, or that wherein it lies, the beginnings of it at least, in regeneration, or spiritual renewing, as it is here called. "Old things pass away, and all things become new," namely, in a moral

ments who so connects the reality and the sign as not to make the sign empty and ineffectual; nor yet for the sake of honouring it takes away from the Holy Spirit that which is his" (Calvin). "The sacrament of baptism is selected as being the initiatory rite of discipleship, to represent all the outward means and ordinances, all the hopes and privileges, implied in the condition of discipleship" (Webster and Wilkinson). "And renewing of the Holy Ghost:" "Baptismal regeneration is the distinguishing doctrine of the new covenant,

(Matt. iii. 11); but let us take care that we know and bear in mind what baptism means—not the mere ecclesiastical act, not the mere fact of reception by that act among God's professing people, but that completed by the Divine act, manifested by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart and through the life" (Alford).

iii. 7. "According to the hope of eternal life:" i.e., consistently with the hope, so that the inheritance does not disappoint, but fully satisfies the hope.

and spiritual, not in a physical and natural sense; it is the same man, but with other dispositions and habits. Evil ones are done away, as to the prevalence of them at present, and all remains of them in due time will be so, namely, when the work shall be perfected in heaven. A new prevailing principle of grace and holiness is wrought, which inclines, and sways, and governs, and makes the man a new man, a new creature; new thoughts, desires, and affections, a new and holy turn of life and actions; the life of God in man, not only from God in a special manner, but conformed and tending to him. Here is salvation begun, and which will be growing and increasing to perfection; therefore it is said, He saved us. What is so begun, as sure to be perfected in time, is expressed as if it already were so. Look we to this therefore without delay; we must be initially saved now by regeneration, if on good ground we would expect complete salvation in heaven. The change then will be but in degree, not in kind. Grace is glory begun, as glory is but grace in its perfection. How few mind this! Most carry it as if they were afraid to be happy before the time. They would have heaven, they pretend, at last, yet care not for holiness now; that is, they would have the end without the beginning, so absurd are sinners; but without regeneration, that is the first resurrection, no attaining the second glorious one, the resurrection of the just. Here then is formal salvation in the new Divine life, wrought by the Gospel.

Sixthly. Here is the outward sign and seal thereof in baptism, called therefore "the washing of regeneration." The work itself is inward and spiritual, but this is outwardly signified and sealed in this ordinance. Water is of a cleansing and purifying nature, does away the filth of the flesh, and so was apt to signify the doing away the guilt and defilement of sin by the blood and spirit of Christ; though that aptness alone, without Christ's institution, had not been sufficient. This it is that makes it of this signification on God's part, a seal of righteousness by faith, as circumcision was, in the place of which it succeeds, and on ours an engagement to be the Lord's. This baptism saves figuratively, and sacramentally, where it is rightly used. "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord," *Acts xxii. 16.* *So Eph. v. 26.* "That he might sanctify and cleanse us by the washing of water, by the word." Slight not this outward sign and seal, where it may be had according to Christ's appointment; yet rest not in the outward washing only, but look to the "answer of a good conscience," without which the external washing will avail nothing. The covenant sealed in baptism binds to duties, as well as exhibits and conveys benefits and privileges; if the former be not minded, in vain are the latter expected. Sever not what God has joined, in both the outer and inner parts is baptism complete. As he that was circumcised became debtor to the whole law, *Gal. v. 3.* so is he that is baptized to the Gospel to observe all the commands and ordinances thereof, as Christ appointed: "Disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," *Mat. xxviii. 19, 20.* This is the outward sign and seal of salvation, baptism, called here "the washing of regeneration."

Seventhly. Here is the principal efficient; namely, the Spirit of God; it is the "renewing of the Holy Ghost;" not excluding the Father and the Son, who in all works without themselves are concurring; nor the use of means, namely, the word and sacraments, by which the Spirit works; through his operation it is that they have their saving effect. In the economy of our salvation the applying and effecting part is specially attributed to the Holy Spirit. We are said "to be born of the Spirit; to be quickened and sanctified by the Spirit; to be led and guided, strengthened and helped, by the Spirit." Through him we mortify sin, perform duty, walk in God's ways. All the acts and operations of the Divine life in us, the works and fruits of righteousness without us, all are through this blessed and holy Spirit, who is therefore called the Spirit of life, and of grace and holiness; all grace is from him. Earnestly, therefore, is he to be sought, and greatly to be heeded by us, that we quench not his holy motions, nor resist and oppose him in his workings. *Res delictula est Spiritus.* "The Spirit is a tender thing." As we carry toward him, so may we expect he will to us. If we slight, and resist, and oppose his workings, he will slack them; if we continue to vex him, he will retire. "Grieve not, therefore, the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption," *Eph. iv. 30.* The Spirit seals by his renewing and sanctifying, his witnessing and assuring work; he distinguishes and marks out for salvation, fits for it; it is his work. We could not turn to God by any strength of our own, any more than we can be justified by any righteousness of our own.

Eighthly. Here is the manner of God's communicating this Spirit in the gifts and graces of it, not with a scanty and niggardly hand, but most freely and plentifully: "Which he shed on us abundantly." More of the Spirit in its gifts and graces is poured out under the Gospel than was under the law, whence it is eminently styled the ministration of the Spirit, *2 Cor. iii. 8.* A measure of the Spirit the church hath had in all ages, but more in gospel times, since the coming of Christ, than before; "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ," that is, a more plentiful effusion of grace, fulfilling the promises and prophecies of old; *Isa. xlv. 3.* "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; this greatest and best of blessings, an effusion of grace, and of the sanctifying gifts of the Spirit. "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," *Joel ii. 28.* not on Jews only, but Gentiles also. This was to be in gospel times, and accordingly, *Acts ii. 17, 18, 33.* speaking of Christ risen and ascended, "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth (saith Peter) this, that ye now see and hear;" and *ch. x. 44, 45.* "The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word," namely, Gentiles as well as Jews. Miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost indeed those were in great measure, but not without the sanctifying graces of it also accompanying many, if not all of them. There was then great abundance of common gifts of illumination, outward calling and profession, and general faith, and of more special gifts of sanctification too, such as faith, and hope, and love, and other graces of the Spirit. Get we a share in these. What will it signify if much be shed forth, and we remain dry? Our condemnation will but be aggravated the more, if under such a dispensation of grace we remain void of grace. "Be filled with the Spirit," saith the apostle; it is duty as well as privilege, because of the means which God in the Gospel is ready to bless and make effectual. This is the manner of God's communicating grace and all spiritual blessings under the Gospel,—plentifully; he is not straitened towards us, but we towards him, and in ourselves.

Ninthly. Here is the procuring cause of all; namely, Christ: "Through Jesus Christ our Saviour." He it is who purchased the Spirit, and his saving gifts and graces; all come through him, and through him as a Saviour, whose undertaking and work it is to bring to grace and glory; he is our righteousness and peace, and our head, from whom we have all spiritual life and influences. "He is made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Praise we God for him above all, go we to the Father by him, improve him to all sanctifying and saving purposes. Have we grace? Thank him with the Father and Spirit for it. "Account all things but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of him," and grow and increase therein more and more.

Tenthly. Here are the ends why we are brought into this new spiritual con-

dition; namely, justification, and heirship, and hope of eternal life: "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life." Justification in the gospel sense is the free remission of a sinner, and accepting him as righteous through the righteousness of Christ received by faith. In it there is removing guilt that bound to punishment, and accepting and dealing with the person as one that now is righteous in God's sight. This God does freely as to us, yet through the intervention of Christ's sacrifice and righteousness, laid hold on by faith. *Rom. iii. 20, &c.* "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified," but through "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe;" whence, *ver. 24.* we are said to be "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." God, in justifying a sinner in the way of the Gospel, is gracious to him, and yet just to himself and his law; forgiveness being through a perfect righteousness and satisfaction made to justice by Christ, who is the propitiation for sin, and not merited by the sinner himself. So it is here, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." It is by grace, as the spring and rise, as was said, though "through the redemption that is in Christ," as making the way, God's law and justice being thereby satisfied; and by faith applying that redemption. "By him," that is, by Christ, "all that believe are justified, from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses," *Acts xiii. 39;* whence the apostle desires "to be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Trust we not therefore in our own righteousness or merit of good works, but to Christ's righteousness alone, received by faith for justification and acceptance with God. Inherent righteousness we must have, and the fruits of it in works of obedience; not as our justifying righteousness before God, but as fruits of our justification, and evidences of our interest in Christ, and qualification for life and happiness, and the very beginning and part of it; but the procuring of all this is by Christ, that "being justified by his grace we should be made heirs." Observe, Our justification is by the grace of God, and our justification by that grace is necessary in order to our being made "heirs of eternal life;" without such justification no adoption and sonship, and so no right of inheritance. "Whoever received him," namely, Christ, "to them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," *Jno. i. 12.* Eternal life is set before us in the promise, the Spirit works faith in us, and hope of that life, and so are we made heirs of it, and have a kind of possession of it even now; faith and hope bring it near, and fill with joy in the well-grounded expectation of it. The meaneat believer is a great heir, though he have not his portion in hand; he has good hope through grace, and may bear up under all difficulties; there is a better state in view, he is waiting for "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for him." How well may such comfort themselves with these words! And now all this gives good reason why we should "shew all meekness to all men," because we have experienced so much benefit by the kindness and love of God to us, and may hope that they, in God's time, may be partakers of the like grace as we are. And thus of the reasons of equal and gentle, meek and tender, carriage towards others, from their own bad condition in time past, and the present more happy state into which they are brought without any merit or deservings of their own, and whereunto by the same grace others may be brought also.

3. The apostle having opened the duties of Christians in common, with the reasons respecting themselves, adds another from their goodness and usefulness to men.

8 *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*

Observe, 1st. When he hath opened the grace of God toward us, he immediately presseth the necessity of good works, for we must not expect the benefit of God's mercy unless we make conscience of our duty. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly;" that is, this is a true Christian doctrine of highest importance, and which ministers must most earnestly and constantly press and inculcate, that they which have believed in God do not think that a bare naked faith will save them, but it must be an operative working faith, bringing forth the fruit of righteousness; they must make it their care to maintain good works, not to do them occasionally only, and when opportunities come in their way, but to seek opportunities for doing them. "These things are good and profitable unto men;" these good works, say some, or the teaching of these things, rather than idle questions, as follows. These things are good in themselves, and the teaching of them useful to mankind, making persons a common good in their places. 2nd. Ministers in teaching must see that they deliver what is sound and good in itself, and profitable to them that hear; all must be to the use of edifying both of persons and societies.

Fifthly. Here is the fifth and last thing in the matter of the epistle: what Titus should avoid in teaching; how he should deal with a heretic; with some other directions.

9 *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.*

1. That the apostle's meaning here might be more clear and full, and specially fitted to the time and state of things there, and the many Judaizers among them, he tells Titus what in teaching he should shun. There are needful questions to be discussed and cleared, such as make for improvement in useful knowledge; but idle and foolish inquiries, tending neither to God's glory or the edification of men, these must be shunned. Some may have a show of wisdom, but are vain, as many among the Jewish doctors, as well as of later schoolmen, who abound with questions of no moment or use to faith or practice; avoid these. "And genealogies;" of the gods, say some, that the heathen poets made such noise about, or rather, those that the Jews were so curious in. Some lawful and useful inquiries might be made into these things, to see the fulfilling of the Scriptures in some cases, and specially in the descent of Christ the Messiah; but all that served to pomp only, and feed vanity, in boasting of a long pedigree, and much more such as the Jewish teachers were

iii. 8. Not as in Authorised Version, as if it referred to the clause following, but "Faithful is the saying, and concerning these things I will that thou affirm constantly, in order that they which have believed God may be careful to practise good works."

iii. 10. "An heretic;" i.e., one who founds or belongs to an heresy. The Greek word means originally one taking his own course, separating himself from others. Here "an heretic" is one departing from the teaching and practice of the Church.

iii. 11. "Condemned of himself;" after a double admonition, no heretic could say that he knew no better; the plea of ignorance would no longer be a true one.

iii. 12. "When I shall send;" i.e., "When I shall have sent Artemas or Tychicus to supply thy place in Crete, be diligent to come," &c. Artemas is said to have been afterwards bishop of Lystra. Tychicus was probably one of those who accompanied St. Paul on his missionary journey when he passed from Troas to

ready to busy themselves in, and trouble their hearers with, even since Christ was come, and that distinction of families and tribes had been taken away, as if they would build again that polity that now is abolished; these Titus must withstand as foolish and vain. "And contentions and strivings about the law." There were those that were for the Mosaic rites and ceremonies, and would have them continued in the church, though by the Gospel and coming of Christ they were superseded and done away. Titus must give no countenance to these, but avoid and oppose them. "For they are unprofitable and vain;" this is to be referred to all those "foolish questions and genealogies," as well as those "strivings about the law." They are so far from instructing and building up in godliness, that they are hindrances of it rather. Christian religion and good works, which are to be maintained, will hereby be weakened and prejudiced, the peace of the church disturbed, and progress of the Gospel stayed. Observe, Ministers must not only teach things good and useful, but shun and oppose the contrary, what would corrupt the faith, and hinder godliness and good works; nor should people have itching ears, but love and embrace sound doctrine, which tends most to the use of edifying.

2. But because after all there will be heresies and heretics in the church, the apostle next directs Titus what to do in such a case, and how to deal with such.

10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; 11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

He that forsakes the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and broaches false doctrines, and propagates them to the corrupting of the faith in weighty and momentous points, and breaks the peace of the church about them, let such an one be rejected, after due means used to reclaim him. Admonish him once and again, that if possible he may be brought back, and thou mayest gain thy brother; but if that will not reduce him, that others be not hurt, cast him out of the communion, and warn all Christians to avoid him. "Knowing that he that is such is subverted," that is, turned off from the foundation, and sinneth grievously, being self-condemned. Those that will not be reclaimed by admonitions, but are obstinate in their sins and errors, are subverted and self-condemned; they inflict that punishment upon themselves that the governors of the church should inflict upon them, that is, they throw themselves out of the church, and throw off its communion, and so are self-condemned. Observe, 1st. How great an evil proper heresy is; not lightly therefore to be charged upon any, though greatly to be taken heed of by all. Such an one is subverted or perverted, a metaphor from a building so ruined, as it is hard, if possible, to repair and raise it up again. Proper heretics have seldom been recovered to the true faith; not so much defect of judgment, as perverseness of the will, being in the case, through pride, or ambition, or self-will, or covetousness, or such like corruption, which therefore must be taken heed of. Be humble, love the truth, and practise it, and damning heresy will be escaped. 2nd. Pains and patience must be used about those that err most grievously. They are not easily and soon to be given up and cast off, but competent time and means must be tried for their recovery. 3rd. The church's means, even with heretics, are persuasive and rational. They must be admonished, instructed, and warned; so much *voubeia* does import. 4th. Upon continued obstinacy and irreclaimableness, the church hath power, and is obliged to preserve its own purity, by severing such a corrupt member, which discipline may, too, by God's blessing, become effectual to reform the offender, or leave him the more inexcusable in his condemnation.

3. The apostle subjoins some farther directions.

12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. 13 Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

Here are two personal things enjoined, namely,
1st. That Titus should hold himself ready to come to Paul at Nicopolis, a city in Thrace, as is reckoned, on the borders of Macedonia; so soon as

Artemas or Tychicus should be sent to Crete to supply his place, and take care of the churches there when he should leave them. The apostle would not have them in their young and weak state be without one or other of chief sufficiency to guide and help them. Titus, it seems, was not their ordinary fixed bishop or pastor, but an evangelist; otherwise Paul would not have called him so much from his charge. Of Artemas we read little, but Tychicus is mentioned on many occasions with respect. Paul calls him "a beloved brother," and "faithful minister," and "fellow-servant in the Lord," one fit therefore for the service intimated. When Paul saith to Titus, "Be diligent to come to me to Nicopolis, for I have determined there to winter," it is plain the epistle was not written from Nicopolis, as the postscript would have it, for then he would have said, I determined here, not there, to winter.

2nd. The other personal charge to Titus is, that he would bring two of his friends on their journey diligently, and see them furnished, so that nothing should be wanting to them. This was to be done, not as a piece of common civility only, but of Christian piety, out of respect both to them and the work they were sent about, which probably was to preach the Gospel, or to be some way serviceable to the churches. Zenas is styled the lawyer, whether in reference to the Roman or the Mosaic law, as having some time been his profession, is doubtful. Apollos was an eminent and faithful minister. Accompanying such part of their way, and accommodating them for their work and journeys, was a pious and needful service. And to further this, and lay in for it, what before the apostle had before bid Titus teach, ver. 8, he repeats here,

14 And let our's also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

Let Christians, those that have believed in God, learn "to maintain good works," especially such as these, supporting ministers in their work of preaching and spreading the Gospel, hereby becoming "fellow-helpers to the truth," 3 Jno. 8, "that they be not unfruitful." Christianity is not a fruitless profession; the professors of it must be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God." It is not enough that they be harmless, but they must be profitable, doing good, as well as eschewing evil. "Let ours" set up and maintain some honest labour and employment, to provide for themselves and their families, that they be not unprofitable burthens on the earth, so some understand it. Let them not think that Christianity gives them a writ of ease, no, it lays an obligation upon them to seek some honest work and calling, and therein "to abide with God." This is of good report, will credit religion, and be good to mankind; they will not be unprofitable members of the body, or burthensome and chargeable to others, but enabled to be helpful to those in want. "To maintain good works for necessary uses;" not living like drones on the labours of others, but themselves fruitful to the common benefit.

III. The apostle concludes with salutations and benedictions.

15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Though perhaps not personally known, some of them at least, yet all by Paul testify their love and good wishes to Titus, owning him thereby in his work, and heartening him to go on therein. Great comfort and encouragement it is to have the heart and prayers of other Christians with and for us. "Greet them that love us in the faith," or, "for the faith," that is, who are our loving fellow Christians; holiness, or the image of God in any, is the great endearing thing, what gives strength to all other bonds, and is itself the best. "Grace be with you all. Amen." This is the closing benediction, not to Titus alone, but to all the faithful with him, which shews, though the epistle bears the single name of Titus in the inscription, yet it was for the use of the churches there, and they were in the eye and upon the heart of the apostle in the writing of it. "Grace be with you all," that is, the love and favour of God, with the fruits and effects thereof, according to need, spiritual ones especially, and the increase and feeling of them more and more in their souls. This is the apostle's wish and prayer, shewing his affection to them, and desire of their good, and a means of obtaining for them, and bringing down upon them, the thing requested. Observe, Grace is the chief thing to be wished and begged for, with respect to ourselves or others; it is, summarily, all good. "Amen" shuts up the prayer, expressing desire and hope, that so it may be, and "shall be."



GENEALOGICAL TABLE.—VER. 9.

Macedonia (Acts xx. 1-6). He was the bearer of the Epistle to the Colossians from St. Paul, then a prisoner at Rome, and had at the same time the care of Onesimus. He was, it seems, an Ephesian by birth, and is said to have subsequently become Bishop of Chalcedon, in Bithynia. "Nicopolis:" it is not to be assumed that St. Paul was at Nicopolis when he wrote this epistle. There seems but little doubt that the Nicopolis here spoken of is the celebrated city of Epirus. This city was built by Augustus in memory of the battle of Actium, hence its name—"the city of victory." Many of the handsomest parts of the town were built by Herod the Great. The city was situated on a peninsula to the west of the Bay of Actium, in a low and unhealthy position. The spot is now very desolate. The situation was very convenient for apostolic journeys in the eastern parts of Achaia and Macedonia, and also to the north.

iii. 13. "Zenas the lawyer:" probably a scribe who, when con-

verted, yet retained the name of his former calling, as "Matthew the publican."

iii. 14. "Ours:" our fellow-believers who are with you. "Also:" i.e., the Cretan Christians were to aid in furnishing Zenas and Apollos with all that they needed. "For necessary uses:" i.e., to supply the necessary wants of Christian missionaries and brethren, as in the preceding verse.

iii. 15. "Greet them that love us in the faith:" "Those who love us in the sphere of faith, as the common principle which bound together and hallowed their common love" (Ellicott). This form of salutation, different from any occurring in St. Paul's other epistles, is a proof of genuineness. No forger would have altered the apostle's usual form of salutation. "Grace be with you:" literally, "the grace"—i.e., "the grace of God." "Amen" is omitted in the best MSS.



DOMESTIC



AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE EPISTLE OF



SLAVES.

S T. P A U L T O P H I L E M O N ,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

THIS epistle to Philemon is placed the last of those with the name of Paul to them, perhaps because the shortest, and of an argument peculiar and different from all the others; yet such as the Spirit of God, which indited it, saw would, in its kind, be very instructive and useful in the churches. The occasion of it was this: Philemon, one of note, and probably a minister in the church of Colosse, a city of Phrygia, had a servant named Onesimus, who having purloined his goods, ran away from him,—[we should not take it for granted that he had defrauded his master, for that is not necessarily implied in what is said in ver. 18, and we should not impute crimes to men without proof; nor should we take it for granted that he feared to be punished as a runaway slave, for that cannot be proved; but some one or more of these reasons doubtless operated to make him apprehensive that if he returned he would meet with, at least, a cold reception,]—and in his rambles came to Rome, where Paul was then a prisoner for the Gospel, and providentially coming under his preaching there, was, by the blessing of God, converted by him; after which he ministered awhile to the apostle in bonds, and might have been farther useful to him, but understanding him to be another man's servant, he would not, without his consent, detain him, but sends him back with this letter commendatory, wherein he earnestly sues for his pardon and kind reception.

[There can be no doubt that this letter was written from Rome about the time when the epistle to the *Colossians* was written. The circumstances which conduct to this conclusion are such as the following: 1. Paul at the time when it was written was a prisoner; ver. 1. "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ;" ver. 10, "Whom I have forgotten in my bonds." Comp. ver. 23, "Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus." 2. It was written when he had hopes of obtaining his liberty, or when he had such a prospect of it that he could ask Philemon, with confidence, to "prepare him a lodging," ver. 22. 3. Timothy was with him at the time when it was written, ver. 1; and we know that Paul desired him to come to him to Rome, when he was a prisoner there, as soon as possible; 2 *Tim.* iv. 9, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me." 4. We know that Onesimus was actually sent by Paul to Colosse while he was a prisoner at Rome, and it would be morally certain that, under the circumstances of the case, he would send the letter to his master at that time. The same persons are mentioned in the salutations in the two epistles; at least, they are so far the same as to make it probable that the epistles were written at the same time, for it is not very probable that the same persons would in another place, and on another occasion, have been with the apostle. Thus Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas, join in the salutations both to the church at Colosse and to Philemon. These considerations make it clear that the epistle was written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome, and at about the same time with the epistle to the *Colossians*. If so, it was about A. D. 62.

It is impossible (says Doddridge) to read over this admirable epistle without being touched with the delicacy of sentiment, and the masterly address, that appear in every part of it. We see here, in a most striking light, how perfectly consistent true courtesy is,—not only with all the warmth and sincerity of a friend, but even with the dignity of the Christian and the apostle. And if this letter were to be considered in no other view than as a mere human composition, it must be allowed to be a masterpiece in its kind. As an illustration of this remark, it may not be improper to compare it with an epistle of Pliny, that seems to have been written on a similar occasion, (*Lib. ix., Let. 21.*) which, though penned by one that was reckoned to excel in the epistolary style, though it has undoubtedly many beauties, yet must be acknowledged by every impartial reader to be vastly inferior to this animated composition of the apostle.—As a specimen of the courtesy and politeness which the Christian ought to practise at all times, as well as furnishing many valuable lessons on Christian duty, it deserves a place in the volume of inspiration; and a material chasm would be produced in the instructions which are needful for us, if it were withdrawn from the sacred canon.—*Barnes.*]

Before we enter on the exposition, such general things as follow may be taken notice of from the epistle, and what relates to it; namely, First. The goodness and mercy of God to a poor wandering sinner, bringing him by his gracious providence under the means, and making them effectual to his conversion. Thus came he to be sought of him that asked not for him, and to be found of him that sought him not, *Isa. lxx. 1.* Secondly. The great and endeared affection between a true convert and him whom God used to be the instrument of his conversion. Paul regards this poor fugitive now as his son in the faith, and terms him his own bowels; and Onesimus readily serves Paul in prison, and would gladly have continued to do so, would duty have permitted; but, being another's servant, he must return and submit himself to his master, and be at his disposal. Thirdly. The tender and good spirit of this blessed apostle Paul. With what earnestness does he concern himself for the poor slave! Being now, through his preaching, reconciled to God, he labours for reconciliation between him and his master. How pathetic a letter does he here write in his behalf! scarce any argument is forgotten that could possibly be used in the case, and all pressed with such force, that had it been the greatest favour to himself that he was asking he could not have used more. Fourthly. The remarkable providence of God in preserving such a short writing as this, that might be thought of little concern to the church, being not only a letter to a particular person, as those to Timothy, and Titus, and Gaius, and the elect lady, likewise were, but of a private, personal matter; namely, the receiving of a poor fugitive servant into the favour and family of his injured master. What in this is there that concerns the common salvation? And yet over this hath been a special Divine care, it being given, as the other Scriptures were, by inspiration of God; and in some sort, as they are, profitable for doctrine, and for reproof, and for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. God would have extant a proof and instance of his rich and free grace for the encouragement and comfort of the meanest and vilest of sinners looking to him for mercy and forgiveness; and instruction to ministers and others not to despise any, much less to judge them as to their final state, as if they were utter castaways; but rather to attempt their conversion, hoping they may be saved; likewise how to carry toward them, and how they should carry. Joy must be on earth, as well as there is in heaven, over one sinner that repenteth; they must now be loved, and helped, and confirmed in good, and furthered in it; and in their outward concerns, their comfort and welfare must be consulted and promoted what in us lies. And on their part they must be humble and grateful, acknowledging God and his instruments, in what good they have received, ready to all suitable returns, making what reparation they can in case of injuries, and living a life of thankfulness and obedience. To such purposes may this epistle have been written and preserved. And perhaps, Fifthly. There may be something farther in all this; at least, by way of allusion, it is applicable to the mediation and intercession of Christ for poor sinners. We, like Onesimus, were revellers from God's service, and had injured him in his rights. Jesus Christ finds us, and by his grace works a change in us, and then intercedes for us with the Father, that we may be received into his favour and family again, and past offences may be forgiven; and we are sure the Father heareth him always. There is no reason to doubt but Paul prevailed with Philemon to forgive and receive Onesimus; and more reason have we to be confident that the intercession of Christ with the Father is prevalent for the acceptance of all whose case he takes in hand, and recommends to him. From these general observations come we to the epistle itself.

* By the Rev. Jeremiah Smith.

Introductory Note.—The genuineness and authenticity of this epistle are attested by ample authority. Though from its brevity it is not often quoted by the Fathers, yet strong external testimonies of antiquity are not wanting. Eusebius speaks of it as among the universally acknowledged epistles of the canon. For interesting proofs drawn from undesigned coincidences, see Paley's "*Horæ Paulinæ.*" The arguments brought against its canonicity are mostly of an arbitrary and subjective character. Baur's arguments, for

example, are grounded on the occurrence of some words in this epistle which are not found elsewhere in St. Paul's writings. The date above mentioned is the same as that assigned to the epistle by Ellicott. Some, however, place it somewhat later, as it was clearly written when St. Paul had good grounds for expecting his liberation from imprisonment (verse 22), and the date of his release is fixed A.D. 64 by the best chronologists.

1. "Paul, a prisoner:" "Considering," says Ellicott, "the

in this epistle we have the preface, ver. 1—7; the substance and body of it, ver. 8—21; and then the conclusion, ver. 22—25.



AUL, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer, 2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:

I. In these two verses of the preface are the persons from and to whom it is written, with some annexed note or title, implying somewhat of argument to the purpose of the letter.

First. The persons writing. Paul, the principal, who calls himself "a prisoner of Jesus Christ," that is, for Jesus Christ. A prisoner simply is no comfort or honour, but such as Paul was "for the faith and preaching of the Gospel," this was true glory, and proper to move Philemon upon the request made to him by such an one. A petition from one suffering for Christ and his Gospel sure would be tenderly regarded by a believer and minister of Christ, and especially when strengthened too with the concurrence of Timothy, one eminent in the church, sometimes called by Paul his "son in the faith," but now it is likely, grown more in years, he styles him his "brother." What could be denied to two such petitioners? Paul is not slight in serving a poor convert; he gets all the additional help he could in it.

Secondly. The persons written to are Philemon and Apphia, and with them Archippus, and the church in Philemon's house. Philemon, the master of Onesimus, was the principal to whom the letter is inscribed; the head of the family, in whom was the authority and power of taking in or shutting out, and whose property Onesimus was; with him, therefore, chiefly lay the business. "To Philemon, our dearly beloved and fellow-labourer;" a good man he was, and probably a minister, and on both accounts dearly beloved by Paul. A lover of good men is one property of a good minister, *Tit. i. 8*; and especially must such love those that labour with them in the work of the Gospel, and who are faithful therein. The general calling as Christians knits those together who are Christians; but when conjunction in the special calling as ministers is added this will be farther endearing. Paul, in the highest degree of ministry, not only calls Timothy, an evangelist, his brother, but Philemon, an ordinary pastor, his "dearly beloved fellow-labourer;" an example of humility, and condescension, and of all loving regards, even in those that are highest in the church, toward others that are labourers in the same special heavenly calling. With Philemon Apphia is joined, probably his yokefellow; and, having a concern in the domestic affairs, the apostle directs to her likewise. She was a party offended and injured by Onesimus, and therefore proper to be taken notice of in a letter for reconciliation and forgiveness. Justice and prudence would direct Paul to this express notice of her, who might be helpful and furthering of the good ends of his writing. She is set before Archippus, as more concerned and having more interest. A loving conjunction there is in domestic matters between husband and wife, whose interests are one, and affections and actions must be according. These are the principal parties written to. The less principal are Archippus and the church in Philemon's house. Archippus was a minister in the church of Colosse, Philemon's friend, and probably co-pastor with him. Paul might think him one whom Philemon would advise with, and who might be capable of furthering the good work of peace-making and forgiveness, and therefore might judge fit to put him in the inscription of the letter, with the adjunct of "fellow-soldier." He had called Philemon his "fellow-labourer." Ministers must look on themselves as labourers and soldiers, who must therefore take pains and endure hardship; they must stand on their guard, and make good their post, and must look on one another as fellow-labourers and fellow-soldiers, who must stand together, and strengthen one another's hearts and hands in any work of their holy function and calling. They need see to it that they be provided with spiritual weapons and skill to use them; as labourers they must minister the word, and sacraments, and discipline, and watch over souls, as those that must give an account of them; and as soldiers they must fight the Lord's battles, and not entangle themselves in the things of this life, but attend to the pleasing of him who hath chosen them to be soldiers, *2 Tim. ii. 4*. To these it is added, "And to the church in thy house," that is, his whole family, in which the worship of God was kept up, so that he had, as it were, a church in his house. Observe, Families which generally may be most pious and orderly, yet may have one or other in them impious and wicked. This was the aggravation of Onesimus's sin, that it was where he might and should have learned better; it is like he was secret in his misdeeds till his flight discovered him. Hearts are unknown but to God, till overt acts discover them; yet this one evil servant did not hinder Philemon's house from being called and counted a church, for the religious worship and order that was kept up in it. And such should all families be, nurseries of religion, societies where God is called on, his word read, and sabbaths observed, and the members instructed in the knowledge of him and of their duty to him; neglect of which is followed with ignorance and all corruption. Wicked families are nurseries for hell, as good ones are for heaven. Masters and others of the family must not think it enough to be good, singly and severally, in their personal capacities, but they must be socially so, as here Philemon's house was a church; and Paul, for some concern that all might have in this matter of Onesimus, directs to them all, that their affection, as well as Philemon's, might return to him, and that in their way and place they might further, and not hinder, the reconciliation wished and sought. Desirable it is that all in a family be well affected toward one another, for furthering their particular and the common good and benefit of all. On such accounts might it be that Paul inscribes his letter here so generally, that all might be the more ready to own and receive this poor convert, and to carry lovingly toward him. Next to this inscription is,

Thirdly. The apostle's salutation of those named by him.

3 Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the token in every epistle; so the apostle writes. He is a hearty well-wisher to all his friends, and wishes for them the best things; not gold, or

subject of the epistle, no title could be more appropriate, or more feelingly prepare Philemon for the request which the apostle is about to make to him." "Philemon;" a member of the church at Colosse (compare verse 10 with *Col. iv. 9*). He owed his conversion, under God, to St. Paul (verse 19). By his zeal in the Christian cause (verse 5) he had shown himself worthy of the apostle's confidence. His house at Colosse was shown in the time of Theodoret, and tradition represents him to have been bishop of that city.

silver, or any earthly good in the first or chiefest place, but grace and peace from God and Christ. He cannot give them himself, but he prays for them from him who can bestow them. "Grace," that is, the free favour and goodwill of God, the spring and fountain of all blessings; "and peace," that is, all good, as the fruit and effect of that grace; "to you," that is, be bestowed on you, and continued to you, with the comfortable feeling and sense of it in yourselves; "from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." The Holy Spirit also is understood, though not named; for all acts towards the creatures are of the whole Trinity: from the Father, who is our Father in Christ, the first in order of acting as of subsisting; and from Christ, his favour and goodwill as God, and the fruits of it through him as Mediator, God-man. It is in the beloved that we are accepted, and through him we have peace and all good things; who is, with the Father and Spirit, to be looked to, and blessed, and praised for all, and to be owned, not only as Jesus and Christ, but as Lord also. In *2 Cor. xiii. 14* the apostle's benediction is full: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen." Observe, Spiritual blessings are first and especially to be sought for ourselves and others. The favour of God and peace with him, as in itself it is the best and most desirable good, so is it the cause of all other, and what puts sweetness into every mercy, and can make happy even in the want of all earthly things: "Though there be no herd in the stall, and the labour of the olive fail," &c., yet may such "rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of their salvation," *Hab. iii. 17, 18*; "There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?" But if God "lift up the light of his countenance," that will put more joy and gladness into the heart than all worldly increase, *Ps. iv. 6, 7*; "The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace," *Num. vi. 6*. In this is summarily all good, and from this one fountain, God the Father, Son, and Spirit, all comes. After this salutation of the apostle to Philemon, and his friends and family, for better making way still for his suit to him,

Fourthly. He expresses the singular affection he had for him, by thanksgiving and prayer to God in his behalf, and the great joy for the many good things he knew and heard to be in him, in the four next following verses.

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, 5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; 6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. 7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

The apostle's thanksgiving and prayer here for Philemon are set forth by the object, and circumstance, and matter of them, with the way whereby much of the knowledge of Philemon's goodness came to him.

1. Here is the object of Paul's praises and prayers for Philemon: "I thank my God, making mention of thee in my prayers." Observe, 1st. God is the author of all the good in any, or that is done by them; "From me is thy fruit found," *Hos. xiv. 8*. 2nd. To him, therefore, is all the praise due: "But (or for) who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee," *1 Chr. xxix. 13, 14*, both wherewith to offer and the will and heart to do it; on which account, says he, "we thank thee our God, and praise thy glorious name." 3rd. It is the privilege of good men that in their praises and prayers they come to God as their God; "Our God, we thank thee," said David; and "I thank my God," said Paul. 4th. Our prayers and praises should be offered up to God, not for ourselves only, but for others also. Private addresses should not be altogether with a private spirit, minding our own things only, but others must be remembered by us; we must be affected with joy and thankfulness for any good in them, or done by them, or bestowed on them, as far as is known to us, and seek for them what they need. In this lies no little part of the communion of saints. St. Paul, in his private thanksgivings and prayers, was often particular in remembering his friends: "I thank my God, making mention of thee in my prayers;" sometimes it may be by name, or however having them particularly in the thoughts, and God knows who is meant, though not named. This is a means of exercising love, and obtaining good for others. "Strive with me by your prayers to God for me," said the apostle; and what he desired for himself to be sure he practised on others' behalf, and so should all do. "Pray one for another," says St. James, *ch. v. 16*.

2. Here is the circumstance; "Always making mention of thee." "Always," that is, usually, not once or twice only, but frequently. So must we remember Christian friends much, and often, as their case may need, bearing them in our thoughts and upon our hearts before our God.

3. Here is the matter both of his praises and prayers, in reference to Philemon.

1st. Of his praises. First. He thanks God for the love which he heard Philemon had towards the Lord Jesus. He is to be loved as God superlatively, as his Divine perfections require, and as related to us; the Lord, and our Lord, our Maker, Redeemer, and Saviour, who loved us and gave himself for us. Paul thanks God for what he heard of this, the signal marks and expression of it in Philemon. And, Secondly. For his faith in Christ also. Love to Christ, and faith in him, are prime Christian graces, for which there is great ground of praise to God, where he hath blessed any with them; "I thank my God, because your faith is published throughout the world," *Rom. i. 8*; and in reference to the Colossians, "We give thanks to God since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus," *Col. i. 3, 4*. This is a saving grace, and the very principle of Christian life and of all good works. Thirdly. He praiseth God likewise for his love to all the saints. These two must go together, for he who loveth him that begat must and will love them also that are begotten of him. The apostle joins them in that; "We give thanks to God, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints," *Col. i. 3, 4*. These bear the image of Christ, which will be loved by every Christian. Different sentiments and ways in what is not essential will not make difference of affection, that is, as to the truth; though difference in the degrees of love will be according as more or less of that image is discerned. Mere external differences are nothing here; Paul calls a poor converted slave his bowels. We must love, as God does, all saints. Paul thanked God not only for the good that was in the churches, but in the particular persons he wrote to; and though he had his account by report, "Hearing of the love and faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints" This was

2. "Apphia;" Chrysostom and the Greek commentators were disposed to regard Apphia as Philemon's wife; modern writers adopt the conjecture as probable. In this case it seems natural to suppose that Archippus was their son, or at any rate a member of their house and family. "The church in thy house;" not merely the household of Philemon, as in Notes above, but the assembly of Christians who used to meet at Philemon's house, and unite in public worship.

6. This verse depends on verse 4. "I thank God, and pray to

what he inquired after concerning his friends, the truth, and growth, and fruitfulness of their graces, their faith in Christ, and love to him, and to all the saints. Love to saints, if it be sincere, will be catholic and universal, love toward all saints; but faith and love, as in the heart, are hidden things, they are known by the effects of them. Therefore,

2nd. The apostle joins prayer with his praises, that the fruits of Philemon's faith and love might be more and more conspicuous, so as that the communication of them might constrain others to the acknowledgment of all the good things that were in him, and in his house, toward Christ Jesus, that is, that their "light might so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, might" be stirred up to imitate them, and to "glorify their Father which is in heaven." Good works must be done not of vain glory, to be seen, yet such as may be seen, to God's glory and the good of men.

4. He adds a reason both of that his prayer and praises; ver. 7, "For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother." [The word "bowels" here probably means, minds, hearts, for it is used in the Scriptures to denote the affections.] The good thou hast done and still doest is abundant matter of joy and comfort to me and others, who therefore desire you may continue and abound in such good fruits more and more, to God's honour and the credit of religion; 2 Cor. ix. 12, "The ministration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God."

Thus far is the preface to this epistle. Now,

II. He comes to that which is the main business of it; namely, to plead with Philemon in behalf of Onesimus, to receive him, and be reconciled to him. Many arguments he urges to this purpose, from ver. 8 to 21, inclusive.

8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, 9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

Here is the

1st Argument from what was before noted, and is carried in the illative "wherefore;" that is, seeing so much good is reported of thee and found in thee, especially "thy love to all saints," now let me see it on a fresh and farther occasion; refresh the bowels of Onesimus and mine also, in forgiving and receiving him who is now a convert, and so a saint indeed, and meet for thy favour and love. Observe, A disposition to do good, and past instances and expressions of it, is a good handle to take hold on for pressing unto more; "Be not weary of well doing," go on as thou art able, and as new objects and occasions occur, to do the same still. The

2nd Argument is from the authority of him that is now making this request to him. "I might be much bold in Christ, to enjoin thee that which is convenient." The apostles had, under Christ, great power in the church over the ordinary ministers, as well as the members of it, for edification; they might require of them what was fit, and were therein to be obeyed, which Philemon should consider. This was a matter within the compass of the apostle's power to require, though he would not in this instance act up to it. Observe, Ministers, whatever their power be in the church, are to use prudence in the exercise of it; they may not unseasonably, or farther than is requisite, put it forth,—in all they must use godly wisdom and discretion. Wherefore this may be a

3rd Argument; waiving the authority which yet he had to require, he chooses to entreat it of him; ver. 9, "Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee." Observe, It is no disparagement for those that have power, yet to be condescending, and sometimes even to beseech, where in strictness of right they might command. So does Paul here; though an apostle, he entreats where he might enjoin; he argues from love rather than authority, which doubtless must carry engaging influence with it. And especially, which may be a

4th Argument, when any circumstance of the person pleading gives additional force to his petition, as here; "Being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ." Years bespeak respect, and the motions of such in things lawful and fit should be received with regard. The request of an aged apostle, and now suffering for Christ and his Gospel, would be tenderly considered. If thou wilt do any thing for a poor aged prisoner, to comfort me in my bonds, and make my chain lighter, grant me this which I desire; hereby in a sort you will do honour to Christ, in the person of an aged suffering servant of his, which doubtless he will take as done to himself. He makes also a

5th Argument from the spiritual relation now between Onesimus and himself.

10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

Though of right and in civil respect he be thy servant, yet in a spiritual sense he is now a son to me, God having made me the instrument of his conversion, even here, where I am a prisoner for Christ's sake. So does God sometimes honour and comfort his suffering servants, not only working good in themselves by their sufferings, exercising and improving thereby their own graces, but making them a means of much spiritual good to others, either to their conversion, as of Onesimus here, or of their confirmation and strengthening, as Phil. i. 14, "Many brethren, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word of the Lord without fear." When God's servants are bound, yet his word and Spirit are not bound; spiritual children may then be born to them. The apostle lays an emphasis here, "My son, whom I have begotten in my bonds;" he was dear to him, and he hoped would be so to Philemon, under that consideration. Prison mercies are sweet and much set by. Paul makes an argument to Philemon from this dear relation that now was between Onesimus and him, his son begotten in his bonds. [The order of the Greek is this, "I entreat thee concerning a son of mine, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus." Here the name is not suggested, until he had mentioned that he sustained to him the relation of a son, and also till he had added that his conversion was the fruit of his labours "while he was a prisoner." Then, when the name of Onesimus is mentioned, it would occur to Philemon not primarily as the name of an ungrateful and disobedient servant, but as the interesting case of one converted by the labours of his own friend in prison. Was there ever more delicacy evinced in preparing the way for disarming one of prejudice, and carrying an appeal to his heart?] And a

6th Argument is from Philemon's own interest.

11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

him that the communication of thy faith may become effectual in, or better, unto Christ Jesus; and this by the acknowledging, or the full knowledge, of every good thing which is in us." The best MSS. read "us" instead of "you." The word refers to "us Christians." In the kindness and faith of Philemon the power of the Divine good would be known.

7. "Bowels;" "hearts" will better sustain the idea of the apostle.

Observe, 1. Unsanctified persons are unprofitable persons, they answer not the great end of their being and relations. Grace makes good for somewhat, "In time past unprofitable, but now profitable;" that is, inclined and fitted to be so, and will be so to thee, his master, if thou receive him, as he hath since his conversion been here to me, ministering to me in my confinement. There seems an allusion to the name Onesimus, which signifies profitable; now he will answer this name. It may be noted also how the apostle speaks in this matter, not as Onesimus's former case and carriage might warrant; he had wronged his master, and ran away from him, and lived as if he were his own and not his; yet as God covers the sins of penitents, forgives and does not upbraid, so should men. How softly does Paul here speak! Not that Onesimus's sin was small, or that he would have any, much less himself, to take it so; but having been humbled for it, and doubtless taken shame to himself on account thereof, the apostle now would not sink his spirit by continuing to load and burthen him therewith, but speaks thus tenderly when he was pleading with Philemon not to make severe reflections on his servant's miscarriage, but to forgive. 2. What happy changes conversion makes; of evil, good; of unprofitable, useful. Religious servants are a treasure in a family; "Now profitable to thee and to me." Such will make conscience of their time and trusts, promoting the interests of those whom they serve, and managing all they can for the best. This then is the argument here urged: It will now be for thy advantage to receive him; thus changed as he is, thou mayest expect him to be a dutiful and faithful servant, though in time past he was not so. Whereupon,

7th Argument, he urges Philemon from the strong affection that he had to Onesimus. He had mentioned the spiritual relation before, "My son begotten in my bonds," and now he signifies how dear he was to him.

12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

I love him as I do myself, and have sent him back to thee for this end, that thou shouldst receive him; do it therefore for my sake, receive him as one thus dear to me.

[So far as appears, Paul neither advised Onesimus to return nor did he compel him, nor did he say one word to influence him to do it, nor did he mean or expect that he would be a slave when he should have been received again by his master. "Thou, therefore, receive him, that is, mine own bowels." There is great delicacy also in this expression. If he had merely said, "Receive him," Philemon might have thought only of him as he formerly was. Paul, therefore, adds, "That is, mine own bowels," one whom I so tenderly love that he seems to carry my heart with him wherever he goes.—Doddridge.]

Observe, Even good men may sometimes need great earnestness and entreaty to lay their passions, and let go their resentments, and forgive those who have injured and offended them. Some have thought it to look this way, when Paul is so pathetic and earnest, mustering up so many pleas and arguments to gain what he requests. Philemon, a Phrygian, might perhaps be naturally of a rough and difficult temper, and thence need no little pains in touching all the springs that might move him to forgiveness and reconciliation; but rather should we strive to be like God, who is "slow to anger and ready to forgive, and abundant in pardons." And again, an

8th Argument is from the apostle's denying himself in sending back Onesimus; though he might have presumed upon Philemon's leave to detain him longer, yet he would not.

13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: 14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

Paul was now in prison, and wanted a friend or servant to act for him, and assist him, for which he found Onesimus fit and ready, and therefore would have detained him to minister to him instead of Philemon himself, whom if he had requested to have come to him in person for such purpose, he might have presumed he would not have refused; much less might he have reckoned that he would be unwilling his servant should do this in his stead. But yet he would not take this liberty, though his circumstances needed it; I have sent him back to thee, that any good office of thine to me might not be of necessity, but willingly. Observe, Good deeds are most acceptable to God and man when done with most freedom. And Paul herein, notwithstanding his apostolical power, would shew what regard he had to civil rights, which Christianity does by no means supersede or weaken, but rather confirm and strengthen. Onesimus he knew was Philemon's servant, and therefore without his consent not to be detained from him. In his unconverted state he had violated that right, and withdrawn himself to his master's wrong, but now he had seen his sin and repented; he was willing and desirous to return to his duty, and Paul would not hinder, but further this rather. He might indeed have presumed of Philemon's willingness; but, notwithstanding his need, he would deny himself rather than take that way. And he urges farther,

9th Argument, that such a change was now wrought in Onesimus that Philemon need not fear his ever running from him, or injuring him any more. There are those of whom Solomon saith, "If thou deliver them, thou must do it again," Pr. ix. 19; but the change wrought in Onesimus was such that he would never again need one thus to intercede for him.

15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him for ever;

Charity would so hope and judge, yea, so it would be; yet the apostle speaks cautiously, that none might be bold to make another such experiment in expectation of a like gracious issue. Observe, 1. In matters that may be wrested to ill, ministers must speak warily, that kind providences of God toward sinners be not abused to encouragements to sin, or abatements of just abhorrence of it; "Perhaps he therefore departed from thee for a season," &c. 2. How softly still the sins of penitents are spoken of; he calls it a departure for a season, instead of giving it the term that it deserved. As overruled and ordered by God it was a departure; but in itself, and in respect of the disposition and manner of the act, it was a criminal going away. When we speak of the nature of any sin or offence, as against God, the evil of it is not to be lessened; but in the person of a penitent sinner, as God covers it, so must we. "He departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him for ever;" that is,

8. "Convenient;" the modern sense of this word does not suit the apostle's meaning. Alford and Ellicott translate "fitting." (Compare Eph. v. 4.)

9. "Being such an one;" these words are not to be connected with what follows, but with verse 8. Commonly they are taken with the words "as Paul the aged," as though the apostle said, "Being such as I am now, Paul aged and a prisoner, I beseech thee for," &c. It seems agreed that the true force of the phrase refers to the bold-

that upon conversion he may return, and be a faithful and useful servant to thee as long as he lives. "Bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his folly depart from him;" but it is not so with true penitents, they will not return to folly. 3. The wisdom, and goodness, and power of God in issuing that so happily that was begun and carried on for some time so wickedly, thus regarding a poor vassal, one of such low rank and condition, and so little regarded by men; working so good and great a change in him that was so far gone in evil ways, that had wronged a master so good, had run from a family so pious, from the means of grace, the church in his house, that he should be led into the way of salvation that had fled from it, and find means made effectual at Rome who had been hardened under them at Colosse. What riches are here of Divine grace! None so low, or mean, or vile, as utterly to be despaired of. God can meet with them when running from him, can make means effectual at one time and place which have not been so at another. So was it in this instance of Onesimus; being returned to God, he now returns to his master, who will have more service and better hold of him than ever; namely, by conscience of his duty and faithfulness in it to his life's end; his interest therefore it will be now to receive him. So God often brings gain to his out of their losses. And beside interest, a

10th Argument is taken from the capacity under which Onesimus now would return, and must be received by Philemon.

16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?

"Not now as a servant;" that is, not merely or so much, "but above a servant," namely in a spiritual respect, "a brother beloved;" one to be owned as a brother in Christ, and to be loved as such, upon this holy change that is wrought in him, and one, therefore, that will be useful unto thee upon better principles, and in a better manner than before; that will love and promote the best things in thy family, and be a blessing in it, and help to keep up "the church that is in thy house." Observe, 1. There is a spiritual brotherhood between all true believers; however differenced in civil and outward respects, they are all children of the same heavenly Father, have right to the same spiritual privileges and benefits, must love and do all good offices to and for one another as brethren, though still in the same rank, and degree, and station wherein they were called. Christianity doth not annul or confound respective civil duties, but strengthens the obligation to them, and directs to a right discharge of them. 2. Religious servants are more than mere ordinary servants; they have a grace in their hearts, and have found grace in God's sight, and so will in the sight of religious masters. "Mine eyes are upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me," Ps. ci. 6. Onesimus being now become such, receive and affect him as one that is partaker of the same common faith, and so "a brother beloved, specially to me," who have been the instrument of his conversion. Good ministers love not so much according to the outward good which they receive, as the spiritual good which they do. Paul called Onesimus his "own bowels," and other converts his "joy and crown." A brother beloved specially to me, but how much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord? by a double tie, therefore; namely, both civil and religious. Thy servant, thy property, one of thy house and family, and in a spiritual respect now thy brother in Christ, which heightens the engagement; he is God's servant and thine too. Here are more ties than he is under unto me; how readily therefore should he be received and loved by thee, as one of thy family, and one of the true faith, one of thy house, and one of the church in thy house?

(On this important verse, in relation to the use which is so often made of this epistle by the advocates of slavery, to shew that Paul sanctioned it, and that it is a duty to send back those who have escaped from their masters, that they may again be held in bondage, we may remark, 1. There is no certain evidence that Onesimus was ever a slave at all. 2. At all events, even supposing that he had been a slave, Paul did not mean that he should return as such, or to be regarded as such. 3. Paul did not send him back in order that he might be a slave. 4. It is clear that, even if Onesimus had been a slave before, it would have been contrary to the wishes of Paul that Philemon should now hold him as such. Paul wished him to regard him "not as a servant," but as a "beloved brother." 5. This passage, therefore, may be regarded as full proof that it is not right to send a slave back against his will, to his former master, to be a slave. It is right to help one if he wishes to go back; to give him a letter to his master, as Paul did to Onesimus; to furnish him money to help him on his journey, if he desires to return; and to commend him as a Christian brother, if he is such; but beyond that the example of the apostle Paul does not go. 6. In confirmation of this, and as a guide in duty now, it may be observed that Paul had been educated as a Hebrew, that he was thoroughly imbued with the doctrines of the Old Testament, and that one of the elementary principles of that system of religion was, that a runaway slave was in no circumstances to be returned by force to his former master. "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from his master unto thee," Deut. xxiii. 15. 7. It may be added, that if the principles here acted on by Paul were carried out, slavery would speedily cease in the world. Very soon would it come to an end if masters were to regard those whom they hold, "not as slaves," but "as beloved Christian brothers;" not as chattels and things, but as the redeemed children of God. Thus regarding them, they would no longer feel that they might chain them, and task them, and sell them as property. They would feel that as Christians and as men they were on a level with themselves, and that they who were made in the image of God, and who had been redeemed with the blood of his Son, ought to be free.)

And this argument is strengthened by another; namely,

11th Argument, from the communion of saints.

17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

There is a fellowship among saints, they have interest one in another, and must love and act accordingly. Now, shew thy love to me, and the interest I have in thee, by loving and receiving one so near and dear to me, even as myself; own and treat him as thou wouldst me, with a like ready and true, though perhaps not equal, affection.

But, Question, Why such concern and earnestness for a servant, a slave, and such an one as had miscarried? Answer. Onesimus being now penitent, it was doubtless to encourage him, and to support him against the fears he might have in returning to a master whom he had so much abused and wronged, to keep him from sinking in despondency and dejection, and hearten him to his duty. Wise and good ministers will have great and tender care of young converts, to encourage and hearten them what they can to and in their duty. Objection.

ness which he might have used—"Being such an one who would rather beseech thee for love's sake, than avail myself of boldness to enjoin." "Aged;" the apostle is conjectured by some to have been about sixty years of age. Broken as he was with cares and anxieties, his premature old age might entitle him to call himself an old man, even if we adopted the calculation which makes him to have been not more than fifty at this time.

11. "Profitable;" the play on the words here is generally

But Onesimus had wronged as well as offended his master. The answer to this makes a

12th Argument; a promise of satisfaction to Philemon.

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; 19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

Here are three things, namely,

1. A confession of Onesimus's debt to Philemon; "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought." It is not an "if" of doubting, but of illation and concession; "seeing he hath wronged thee," and thereby is become indebted to thee: such an "if" as Col. iii. 1, and 2 Pet. ii. 4, &c. Observe, True penitents will be ingenuous in owning their faults, as doubtless Onesimus had been to Paul, upon his awakening and being brought to repentance; and especially is this to be done in cases of injury to others. Onesimus by Paul owns the wrong. And,

2. Paul here engages for satisfaction; "Put that on my account, I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it." Whence observe, 1st. The communion of saints does not destroy distinction of property. Onesimus now converted and become "a brother beloved," yet is Philemon's servant still, and indebted to him for wrongs that he had done, and not to be discharged but by free and voluntary remission, or on reparation made by himself or some other in his behalf, which part, rather than fail, the apostle undertakes for him. Upon which observe, 2nd. Suretyship is not in all cases unlawful, but in some is a good and merciful undertaking. Only know the person and case: be not surety for a stranger, Pr. xi. 15, and go not beyond ability; help thy friend thou mayest, as far as will stand with justice and prudence. And how happy for us that Christ would be made the surety of a better covenant, Heb. vii. 22, that he would be made "sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him!" And, 3rd. Formal securities by writing, as well as by word and promise, may be required and given. Persons die, and words may be forgotten or mistaken; writing better preserves right and peace, and hath been in use with good persons, as well as others, in all ages, Jer. xxxii. 9, &c.; Lu. xvi. 5-7. It was much that Paul, who lived on contributions himself, would undertake to make good all loss by an evil servant to his master; but hereby he expresses his real and great affection for Onesimus, and his full belief of the sincerity of his conversion; and he might have hope, notwithstanding this generous offer, Philemon would not insist on it, but freely remit all, considering,

3. The reason of things between him and Philemon; "Albeit, I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides," that is, thou wilt remember, without my minding thee, thou art on other accounts more in debt to me than this comes to. Modesty in self-praises is true praise. The apostle glances at it, how beneficial he had been to Philemon: That thou art any thing in grace and acceptance with God, or enjoyest any thing in a right and comfortable manner, it is under God owing to my ministry; I have been the instrument in his hand of all that spiritual good to thee, and what thy obligation to me on this account is I leave thee to consider. Thy forgiving a pecuniary debt to a poor penitent for my sake, and on my request, and which, however, I now take upon myself to answer, thy remitting it to him, or to me, now his surety, thou wilt confess is not so great a thing; here is more, *per contra*,—on the contrary, "Thou owest to me even thine own self besides." Observe, How great the endearments are between ministers and those toward whom their endeavours have been blessed to their conversion or spiritual edification; "If it had been possible," said Paul to the Galatians, "ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me," Gal. iv. 15. On the other hand he calls them his children, "of whom he travailed again, till Christ was formed in them," that is, the likeness of Christ more fully. So, 1 Thes. ii. 8, "We were willing to have imparted to you not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us." By way of allusion, this may illustrate Christ's undertaking for us; we were revolted from God, and by sin had wronged him, but Christ undertakes to make satisfaction, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God." If the sinner owes thee ought, put it upon my account, I will pay the debt; let his iniquity be laid on me, I will bear the penalty. Farther, a

13th Argument, is from the joy and comfort the apostle hereby would have on Philemon's own account, as well as on Onesimus's, in such a seasonable and acceptable fruit of Philemon's faith and obedience.

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

• Philemon was Paul's "son in the faith," yet he entreats him as "a brother;" Onesimus a poor slave, yet he solicits for him as if he were seeking some great thing for himself. How pathetic is he! "Yea, brother," or "O my brother!" (it is an adverb of wishing or desiring,) "let me have joy of thee in the Lord." Thou knowest that I am now a prisoner of the Lord, that is, for his sake and cause, and need all the comfort and support that my friends in Christ can give me. Now this will be a joy to me, I shall have "joy of thee in the Lord," as seeing such an evidence and fruit of thy own Christian faith and love, and on Onesimus's account, who hereby will be relieved and encouraged. Observe, 1. Christians should do the things that may joy the hearts of one another, both people and ministers reciprocally, and ministers of their brethren: from the world they expect trouble, and where may they look for comfort and joy but in one another? 2. Fruits of faith and obedience in people are the minister's greatest joy, especially the more of love appears in them to Christ and his members, forgiving injuries, shewing compassion, being merciful, as their heavenly Father is merciful. "Refresh my bowels in the Lord." It is not any carnal, selfish respect I am acted by, but what is pleasing to Christ, and that he may have honour therein. Observe, 1st. The Lord's honour and service is a Christian's chief aim in all things. And, 2nd. It is meat and drink to a good minister to see people ready and zealous in what is good, especially in acts of charity and beneficence, as occasions occur, forgiving injuries, and remitting somewhat of their right, and the like. And once more, his last, which is the

14th Argument, lies in his good hope and opinion which he expresseth of Philemon.

21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

recognised. "Onesimus" means profitable. He did not once answer to his name, for by running away, and (apparently) by theft (verse 18), he proved himself unprofitable, but now profitable in a higher sense than he could have been before his conversion. Philemon lost a servant to find a brother (verses 15, 16).

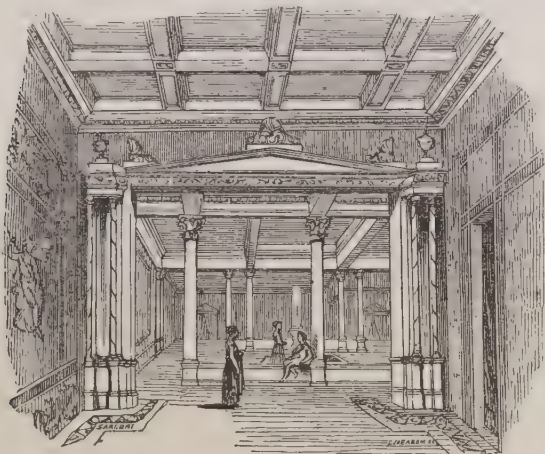
12. "Whom I have sent again," or better, "back." "To thee" is added in best MSS. Here, as in verse 7, "heart" conveys a better sense than "bowels."

Good thoughts and expectations of us more strongly move and engage to do the things expected from us. The apostle knew Philemon to be a good man, and was thence persuaded of his readiness to do good, and that not in a scanty and niggardly manner, but with a free and liberal hand. Observe, Good persons will be ready for good works, and not narrow and pinching, but abundant in them. "The liberal deviseth liberal things," *Isa. xxxii. 8*. The Macedonians "first gave themselves to the Lord," and then "to his apostles by the will of God," to do what good they could with what they had, according as occasions offered.

Thus far is the substance and body of the epistle. Now he comes, III. To the conclusion; where,

First. He signifies his good hope of deliverance through their prayers, and that shortly he might see them, desiring Philemon to make provision for him.

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.



INTERIOR OF A GREEK HOUSE.

"But withal," or "moreover." He comes to another thing, yet, as may seem, not without some eye to the matter which he had been upon, that might be furthered by this intimation, that he hoped he should himself soon follow, and know the effect of his epistle, which Philemon would therefore be the more stirred up to see might be to his satisfaction. Now here is,

1. The thing requested. "Prepare me also a lodging;" under this, all necessities for a stranger are included. He wills Philemon to do it, intending to be his guest, as most to his purpose. Observe, Hospitality is a great Christian duty, especially in ministers, and towards ministers, such as the apostle was, coming out of such dangers and sufferings for Christ and his Gospel. Who would not shew the utmost of affectionate regards to such an one? It is an honourable title he gives Gaius; *Rom. xvi. 23*, "Mine host, and of the whole church." Onesiphorus is also affectionately remembered by the apostle on this account; *2 Tim. i. 16, 18*, "The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus; for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; and in how many things he ministered to me at Ephesus thou knowest."

2. Here is the ground of the apostle's request: "For I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you." He did not know how God might deal with him, but the benefit of prayer he had often found, and hoped he should again, for deliverance, and liberty to come to them. Observe, 1st. Our dependence is on God for life, and liberty, and opportunity of service; all is by Divine pleasure. 2nd. When abridged of these, or any other mercies, our trust and hope must be in God, without fainting or succumbing, while our case is depending. But yet, 3rd. Trust must be with the use of means, prayer especially; though no other should be at hand, this hath unlocked heaven, and opened prison doors. "The fervent effectual prayer of the righteous availeth much." 4th. Prayer of people for ministers, especially when they are in distress and danger, is their great duty; ministers need and request it. Paul, though an apostle, did so with much earnestness, *Rom. xv. 30*; *2 Cor. i. 11*; *Eph. vi. 18, 19*; *1 Thes. v. 25*. The least may this way be helpful to the greatest. Yet, 5th. Though prayer obtains, yet it does not merit the things obtained. They are God's gifts, and Christ's purchase: "I trust that through your prayers," (*χαρισθῆναι ὑμῖν*), "I shall be freely bestowed on you." What God gives, yet he will be sought to for, that mercies may be valued the more, and known whence they come, and God may have the praise. Ministers' lives and labours are for the people's good; the office was set up for them: "He gave gifts for men, apostles," &c., *Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12*. Their gifts, and labours, and lives, all are for their benefit: "All things are yours, Apollos, Cephas," &c., *1 Cor. iii. 21, 22*. 6th. In praying for faithful ministers, people, in effect, pray for themselves. "I trust I shall be given unto you," that is, for your service, and comfort, and edification in Christ: see *2 Cor. iv. 15*. 7th. The humility of the apostle. His liberty, should he have it, he would own to be through their prayers, as well as, or more, than his own; he mentions them only through the high thoughts he had of the prayers of many, and the regards God would shew to his praying people. Thus of the first thing in the apostle's conclusion.

Secondly. He sends salutations from one that was his fellow-prisoner, and four more that were his fellow-labourers.

23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; 24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers,

14, 15. "But without thy mind;" or consent, or approval. Thy "benefit;" or thy good service. "That the good or beneficence thou mayest do, whatever it be, may be of free will." "For a season," "for ever;" not merely perpetually, "but that thou mightest possess him eternally in the brotherhood of Christ."

20. "Joy;" rather, "Let me have profit of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ." So best MSS.

23, 24. "Epaphras" may be the same as Epaphroditus (compare *Phil. ii. 25*), but of this there is no certainty. Epaphras seems to have been a Colossian by birth (*Col. iv. 12*); he was a faithful teacher among the Colossians (*Col. i. 7*). He is called a "fellow-prisoner." This may either mean that he was actually imprisoned for the faith, or may be a graceful acknowledgment of the devotion

Saluting is wishing health and peace. Christianity is no enemy to courtesy, but enjoins it, *1 Pet. iii. 8*. It is a meet expression of love and respect, and meant to preserve and nourish it; "There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus." He was of Colosse, and so countryman and fellow-citizen with Philemon; by office he seems to have been an evangelist, who laboured among the Colossians, if he was not the first converter of them, for whom he had special affection. "Our dear fellow-servant," said St. Paul, "and for you a faithful minister of Christ," *Col. i. 7*; and, *ch. iv. 12, 13*, "a servant of Christ, always labouring for you in prayers." I bear him record that he hath a great zeal for you," &c. A very eminent person therefore this was, who, being at Rome, perhaps accompanying Paul, and labouring in the same work of preaching and propagating the Gospel, was confined in the same prison, and for the same cause; both termed prisoners in Christ Jesus, intimating the ground of their imprisonment,—not any crime or wickedness, but for the faith of Christ, and their service to him. An honour it is to suffer shame for Christ's name. "My fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus" is mentioned as his glory, and the apostle's comfort; not that he was a prisoner, and so hindered from his work, that was matter of affliction, but that, seeing God thus permitted and called him to suffer, his providence so ordered it that they suffered together, and so had the benefit and comfort of one another's prayers, and help it may be in some things; this was a mercy. So God sometimes lightens the sufferings of his servants by the communion of saints, the sweet fellowship they have one with another in their bonds; never more enjoyment of God have they found than when suffering together for God. So Paul and Silas, when their feet were fast in the stocks, their tongues were at liberty, and their hearts tuned for the praises of God. "Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers." The mention of these seems in a sort to interest them in the business of the letter. How ill would it look by denial of the request of it to slight so many worthy names, as most of these (at least) were? Marcus, cousin of Barnabas, and son of Mary, who was so hospitable to the saints at Jerusalem, *Col. iv. 10*; *Acts xii. 12*, and whose house was the place of meeting for prayer and worship of God. Though some failing seems to have been in him when Paul and he parted, yet in conjunction with Barnabas he went on with his work, and here Paul and he, we see, were reconciled, and differences forgotten; *2 Tim. iv. 11*, he bids Mark to be brought to him, "for he is profitable to me for the ministry," namely, of an evangelist. Aristarchus is mentioned with Marcus, *Col. iv. 10*, and called there by Paul his "fellow-prisoner;" and speaking there of Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, he adds, "touching whom ye received commandment, if he come unto you receive him," and evidence that himself had received him, and was reconciled to him. Next is Demas, who hitherto it seems appeared not faulty, though, *2 Tim. iv. 10*, he is censured as having forsaken Paul from "love of this present world." But how far his forsaking was, whether total from his work and profession, or partial only, and whether he repented and turned to his duty, Scripture is silent, and so must we be. No mark of disgrace lay on him here, but he is joined with others that were faithful, as he is also in *Col. iv. 14*. Lucas is the last, that beloved physician and evangelist, who came to Rome, companion with Paul, *Col. iv. 14*; *2 Tim. iv. 11*. He was Paul's associate in his greatest dangers, and fellow-labourer. The ministry is not a matter of carnal ease or pleasure, but of pain; if any are idle in it they answer not their calling. Christ bids to "pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers," not loiterers, "into his harvest," *Mat. ix. 38*. And the people are bid "to know them that labour among them, and are over them in the Lord, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake," *1 Thes. v. 12, 13*. "My fellow-labourers," saith the apostle. Ministers must be helpers together of the truth; they serve the same Lord, in the same holy work and function, and are expectants of the same glorious reward, therefore must be assistants to each other in furthering the interest of their great and common Master. Thus of the salutations, and then,

Thirdly. Here is the apostle's closing prayer and benediction.

25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Here is, 1. What is wished and prayed for; namely, "grace," that is, the free favour and love of God, together with the fruits and effects of it in all good things, for soul and body, for time and eternity. Observe, Grace is the best wish for ourselves and others; with this the apostle begins and ends.

2. From whom; namely, "Our Lord Jesus Christ;" that is, the Son of God, second Person in the Trinity, Lord by natural right, "by whom and for whom all things were created," *Col. i. 16*; *Jno. i. 1-3*, "and who is heir of all things," and, as God-man and Mediator, who purchased us, and to whom we are given by the Father: Jesus, that is, the Saviour, *Mat. i. 21*. We were lost and undone, he recovers us, and repairs the ruin; he saves by merit, procuring pardon and life for us; and by power, rescuing us from sin, and Satan, and hell, and renewing us to the likeness, and bringing us to the enjoyment, of God. Thus is he Jesus, and Christ, the Messiah or Anointed, that is, consecrated and fitted to be king, priest, and prophet to his church. To all those offices were there anointings under the law with oil, and to them was the Saviour spiritually anointed with the Holy Ghost, *Acts x. 38*. In none but he were all these together, and in such eminence; "He was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows," *Psa. xlv. 7*. This Lord Jesus Christ is ours by original title to us, and by gospel offers and gift, his purchase of us, and our own acceptance of him, and resignation to him, and mystical union with him; "our Lord Jesus Christ." Observe, All grace to us is from Christ; he purchased and he bestowed it; "Of his fulness we all receive, and grace for grace," *Jno. i. 16*; "He filleth all in all," *Eph. i. 23*.

3. To whom; "Your spirit,"—*μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν*; not Philemon's only, but of all that were named in the inscription. "With your spirit;" that is, with you, the soul or spirit being the immediate seat of grace, whence it influences the whole man, and flows out in gracious and holy actings. All the house saluted are here joined in the closing benediction, the more to mind and quicken all to further the end of the epistle.

"Amen" is added, not only for strong and affectionate summing up the prayer and wish, "So let it be," but as an expression of faith that it will be heard, "So shall it be." And what need we more to make us happy than to have the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with our spirit? This is the usual benediction, but it may be taken here to have some special respect also to the occasion; the grace of Christ with their spirits, Philemon's especially, would sweeten and mollify them, and take off too deep and keen resentments of injuries, and dispose to forgive others as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

to the apostle (compare *Rom. xvi. 13*). "Marcus;" probably John Mark, cousin to Barnabas (*Col. iv. 10*), and fellow-labourer with both St. Paul and St. Peter (*1 Pet. v. 13*). See *Acts xii. 12, 25*. He has been identified by some with the young man mentioned in *Mark xiv. 51, 52*. There seems little reason to doubt that he is the same as Mark the Evangelist. "Aristarchus," a Thessalonian (*Acts xx. 4*), a companion of St. Paul on his third missionary journey, was seized, together with Gaius, in the tumult at Ephesus (*Acts xix. 29*); said to have been afterwards Bishop of Apamea. "Demas," companion and fellow-worker, who afterwards deserted St. Paul (*Col. iv. 14*; *2 Tim. iv. 10*), is always mentioned with "Lucas," the evangelist and beloved physician, who remained faithful when others forsook the apostle (*2 Tim. iv. 11*).



OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

CONCERNING this epistle, we must inquire, I. Into the Divine authority of it; for this has been questioned by some whose distempered eyes could not bear the light of it, or whose errors have been confuted by it; such as the Arians, who deny the Godhead and self-existence of Christ, and the Socinians, who deny his satisfaction. But after all the attempts of such men to disparage this epistle, the Divine original of it shines forth with those strong and unclouded rays that he that runs may read it as an eminent part of the canon of Scripture. The Divinity of the matter, the sublimity of the style, the excellency of the design, the harmony of this with other parts of Scripture, and its general reception in the church of God in all ages, these are the evidences of its Divine authority. II. As to the Divine amanuensis or penman of this epistle, we are not so certain; it beareth not the name of any in the front of it, as the rest of the epistles do; and there has been some dispute among the learned to whom they should ascribe it. Some have assigned it to Clemens of Rome, others to Luke, and many to Barnabas, thinking that the style and manner of expression is very agreeable to the zealous, authoritative, affectionate temper that Barnabas appears to be of, in the account we have of him in the *Acts of the Apostles*; and one ancient father quotes an expression out of this epistle as the words of Barnabas. But it is generally assigned to the apostle Paul; and some later copies and translations have put Paul's name in the title. In the primitive times it was generally ascribed to him; and the style and scope of it very well agrees with his spirit, who was a person of a clear head and a warm heart, whose main end and endeavour was to exalt Christ. And some think that the apostle Peter refers to this epistle, and proves Paul to be the penman of it, by telling the Hebrews, to whom he wrote, of Paul's having written to them, *2 Pet. iii. 15*; and we read of no other epistle that he ever wrote to them but this. And though it has been objected that, since Paul put his name to all his other epistles, he would not have omitted it here, yet others have well answered, that he being the apostle of the Gentiles, who were odious to the Jews, might think fit to conceal his name lest their prejudices against him might hinder them from reading and weighing it as they ought to do. III. As to the scope and design of this epistle, it is very evident it was to inform the minds, and strongly to confirm the judgment, of the Hebrews, in the transcendent excellency of the Gospel above the laws, and so to take them off from the ceremonies of the law, to which they were so wedded, of which they were so fond, that they even doted on them. And those of them that were Christians retained too much of the old leaven, and wanted to be purged from it. The design of this epistle was to persuade and press the believing Hebrews to a constant adherence to the Christian faith, and perseverance in it, notwithstanding all the sufferings they might meet with in so doing. In order to this, he speaks much of the excellency of the author of the Gospel, the glorious Jesus, whose honour he advances, and whom he justly prefers before all others, shewing him to be all in all, and this in lofty strains of holy rhetoric. It must be acknowledged there are many things in this epistle hard to be understood; but the sweetness we shall find therein will make us abundant amends for all the pains we take to understand it. And indeed, if we compare all the epistles of the New Testament, we shall not find any of them more replenished with Divine heavenly matter than this to the Hebrews. [The Bible would have been incomplete without this book; and when I think of the relation between the Jewish and the Christian systems—when I look on the splendid rites of the ancient economy, and ask their meaning—when I wish a full guide to heaven, and ask for that which gives completeness to the whole, I turn instinctively to the epistle to the *Hebrews*. When I wish also that which shall give me the most elevated view of the Great Author of Christianity and of his work, and the most clear conceptions of the sacrifice which he made for sin; and when I look for considerations that shall be most effectual in restraining the soul from apostacy, and for considerations to enable it to bear trials with patience and with hope, my mind recurs to this book, and I feel that the book of revelation, and the hopes of man, would be incomplete without it.—*Barnes*.]

A.D. 64.

CHAPTER I.

In this chapter we have a twofold comparison stated: I. Between the evangelical and legal dispensation; and the excellency of the Gospel above that of the law is asserted and proved, ver. 1—3. II. Between the glory of Christ and that of the highest creatures, the angels; where the pre-eminence is justly given to the Lord Jesus Christ, and clearly demonstrated to belong unto him, from ver. 4—12.



GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

A.D. 64.

Here the apostle begins with a general declaration of the excellency of the gospel dispensation above that of the law, which he demonstrates from the different way and manner of God's communicating himself and his mind and will to men in the one and in the other. Both these dispensations were of God, and both of them very good, but there is a great difference in the way of their coming from God.

First. Observe the way wherein God communicated himself and his will to men under the Old Testament. And we have here an account,

1. Of the persons by whom God spoke his mind under the Old Testament, and they were the prophets; that is, persons chosen of God, and qualified by him for that office of revealing the will of God to men. No man taketh this honour to himself unless called; and whoever are called of God are qualified by him.

2. The persons to whom God spake by the prophets to the fathers; that is, to all the Old Testament saints that were under that dispensation. God favoured and honoured them with much clearer light than that of nature, under which the rest of the world were left.

3. The order in which God spake to men in those times that went before the Gospel, those past times. He spake to his ancient people at sundry times, and in divers manners. 1st. At sundry times, or 'by several parts,' as the word signifies, which may refer either to the several ages of the Old Testament dispensation, the patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the prophetic, or to the several gradual openings of his mind piecemeal concerning the Redeemer. To Adam, that the Messiah should come of the seed of the woman; to Abraham, that he should spring from his loins; to Jacob, that he should be of the tribe of Judah; to David, that he should be of his house; to Micah, that he should be born at Bethlehem; to Isaiah, that he should be born of a virgin. 2nd. "In divers manners," according to the different ways in which God thought fit to communicate his mind to the prophets, sometimes by the illapses of his Spirit, sometimes by dreams, sometimes by visions, sometimes by an audible voice, sometimes by legible characters under his own hand, as when he wrote the ten commandments on tables of stone. Of some of these different ways God himself gave an account in *Num. xii. 6—8*, "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak to him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses. With him I will speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches."

* By the Rev. W. Tong, with additions from Commentary of Rev. David Dickson, professor of theology in the University of Glasgow, 1680.

Introductory Note.—The canonical authority of the epistle may be considered well established. By orthodox Christians it was universally admitted during the first century after it was written. Clement (A.D. 70 or 95) refers to this epistle in the same way as and more frequently than to any other canonical book. About the close of the second century, its canonical authority was questioned by some of the orthodox Christians of the North African Church; but no Greek or Syriac writer seems to have expressed a doubt. The

question of authorship has been widely and warmly debated. It has been assigned to Barnabas, Apollos, Silas, Luke; among German writers the disposition has been to ascribe the epistle to some other writer than St. Paul. Alford has adopted the view that it was written by Apollos, about A.D. 69. On the other hand, the opinion that St. Paul was the author both of the language and the thoughts of the epistle has been maintained by many respectable authorities. The probable opinion is one which reconciles both

Secondly. Observe God's method of communicating himself and his mind and will under the New Testament dispensation, these last days as they are called, that is, either towards the end of the world or the end of the Jewish state. The times of the Gospel are the last times. The gospel revelation is the last we are to expect from God. There was first the natural revelation; then the patriarchal by dreams, visions, and voices; then the Mosaic in the law given forth and written down; then the prophetic in explaining the law, and giving clearer discoveries of Christ; but now we must expect no new revelation, but only more of the Spirit of Christ to help us better to understand what is already revealed. Now the excellency of the gospel revelation above the former consists in two things.

1. It is the final, the finishing revelation, given forth in the last days of Divine revelation, to which nothing is to be added but the canon of Scripture, to be settled and sealed; so that now the minds of men are no longer kept in suspense by the expectation of new discoveries, but they rejoice in a complete revelation of the will of God, both perceptive and providential, so far as is necessary for them to know in order to their direction and comfort. For the Gospel includes a discovery of the great events that shall befall the church of God to the end of the world.

2. It is a revelation which God has made by his Son, the most excellent messenger that was ever sent into the world, far superior to all the ancient patriarchs and prophets, by whom God communicated himself to his people in former times. And here we have an excellent account of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1st. The glory of his office, and that in three respects. *First*. God hath appointed him to be heir of all things. As God, he was equal to the Father, but as God-man and Mediator he was appointed by the Father to be the heir of all things, that is, the Sovereign Lord of all, the absolute disposer and director and governor of all persons and of all things, *Ps. ii. 6, 7*: "All power in heaven and earth is given to him; all judgment is committed to him," *Mat. xxviii. 18*; *Jno. v. 22*. *Secondly*. By him God made the worlds, both visible and invisible, the heavens and the earth, not as an instrumental cause, but as his essential word and wisdom. By him he made the old creation, and by him he makes the new creature, and by him he rules and governs both. *Thirdly*. He upholds all things by the word of his power. He keeps the world from dissolving; by him all things consist. The weight of the whole creation is laid upon Christ; he supports the whole and all the parts. When upon the apostasy the world was breaking to pieces under the wrath and curse of God, the Son of God, undertaking the work of redemption, has bound it up again and established it by his almighty power and goodness. None of the ancient prophets sustained such an office as this, none was sufficient for it.

2nd. From hence the apostle passes to the glory of the person of Christ, who was able to execute such an office. He was the brightness of his Father's glory, and "the express image of his person," *ver. 2*. This is a high and lofty description of the glorious Redeemer; this is an account of his personal excellency. *First*. He is in person the Son of God, the only begotten Son of God, and as such he must have the same nature. This personal distinction always supposes one and the same nature. Every son of man is man; were not the nature the same the generation would be monstrous. *Secondly*. The person of the Son is the glory of the Father shining forth with a truly Divine splendour. As the beams are effulgent emanations of the sun, the father and fountain of light, Jesus Christ in his person is God manifest in the flesh: he is Light of light, the true Shechinah. *Thirdly*. The person of the Son is the true image and character of the person of the Father; being of the same nature, he must bear the same image and likeness. In beholding the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ, we behold the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Father, for he hath the nature and perfections of God in him. "He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father," that is, he hath seen the same Being. He that hath known the Son hath known the Father, *Jno. xiv. 7-9*; for the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son; the personal distinction is no other than will consist with essential union. This is the glory of the person of Christ; the fulness of the Godhead dwells, not typically, but really in him.

3rd. From the glory of the person of Christ he proceeds to mention the glory of his grace; his condescension itself was truly glorious. The sufferings of Christ had this great honour in them, to be a full satisfaction for the sins of his people. By himself he purged away our sins, that is, by the proper innate merit of his death and bloodshed; by their infinite intrinsic value, as they were the sufferings of himself, he has made atonement for sin himself. The glory of his person and nature gave to his sufferings such merit as was a sufficient reparation of honour to God, who had suffered an infinite injury and affront by the sins of men.

4th. From the glory of his sufferings we are at length led to consider the glory of his exaltation; when by himself he had "purged away our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," at his Father's right hand. As Mediator and Redeemer he is invested with the highest honour, authority, and activity, for the good of his people. The Father now does all things by him, receives all the services of his people from him. Having assumed our nature, and suffered in it on earth, he has taken it up with him to heaven, and there it has the high honour to be next to God; and this was the reward of his humiliation.

Now it was by no less a person than this that God has in these last days spoken to men; and the dignity of the messenger gives authority and excellency to the message, and therefore the dispensations of the Gospel must needs exceed, and very far exceed, the dispensation of the law.

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? 6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. 7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. 8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the

sceptre of thy kingdom. 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

The apostle having proved the pre-eminence of the Gospel above the law, from the pre-eminence of the Lord Jesus Christ above the prophets, now proceeds to shew that he is not only much superior to the prophets, but to the angels themselves. In this he obviates an objection that the Jewish zealots would be ready to make, that the law was not only delivered by men, but "ordained by angels," *Gal. iii. 19*, that they attended at the giving forth of the law, the hosts of heaven being drawn forth to attend the Lord Jehovah on that awful occasion. Now the angels are very glorious beings, far more glorious and excellent than men; the Scripture always represents them as the most excellent of all creatures, and we know of no being but God himself that is higher than the angels; and therefore that law that was ordained by angels ought to be held in great esteem. To take off the force of this argument the penman of this epistle proceeds to state the comparison between Jesus Christ and the holy angels, both in nature and office, and to prove that Christ is vastly superior to the angels themselves. "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Here observe,

First. The superior nature of Christ is proved from his superior name. The Scripture does not give high and glorious titles without a real foundation and reason in nature, nor would such great things have been said of our Lord Jesus Christ if he had not been as great and excellent as those words import. When it is said that Christ was made so much better than the angels, we are not to imagine that he was a mere creature as the angels are; the word γενόμενος, when joined with an adjective, is nowhere to be rendered created, and here may very well be rendered, 'being more excellent,' as the Syriac version hath it: we read γενέσθαι ὁ θεὸς ἀληθινός, 'let God be true,' not made so, but 'acknowledged' to be so.

Secondly. The superiority of the name and nature of Christ above the angels is declared in the holy Scriptures, and to be deduced from thence. We should have known little or nothing either of Christ or of the angels without the Scriptures, and we must therefore be determined by them in our conceptions of the one and the other. Now here are several passages of Scripture cited, in which those things are said of Christ that were never said of the angels.

1. It was said of Christ, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," *Ps. ii. 7*, which refers either to his eternal generation, or to his resurrection, or to his solemn inauguration into his glorious kingdom at his ascension and session at the right hand of the Father. Now this was never said concerning the angels, and therefore by inheritance he has a more excellent nature and name than they.

2. It is said concerning Christ, but never concerning the angels, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son," taken from *2 Sam. vii. 14*. Not only, I am his Father, and he is my Son, by nature and eternal promanation, but I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son, by wonderful conception, and this his sonship shall be the fountain and foundation of every gracious relation between me and fallen man.

3. It is said of Christ, "When God bringeth his first-begotten into the world, let all the angels of God worship him;" that is, either when he is brought into this lower world at his nativity let the angels attend and honour him, or when he is brought into the world above at his ascension, to enter upon his mediatorial kingdom, or when he shall bring him again into the world to judge the world, then let the highest creatures worship him. God will not suffer an angel to continue in heaven that will not be in subjection to Christ, and pay adoration to him, and he will at last make the fallen angels and wicked men to confess his Divine power and authority, and to fall before him; they that would not have him to reign must then be "brought forth and slain before him." The proof of this is taken out of *Ps. cxvii. 7*, "Worship him all ye gods," that is, all ye that are superior to men, own yourselves to be inferior to Christ in nature and power.

4. God hath said concerning Christ, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," &c., *ver. 8-12*; but of the angels he hath only said that he hath made them "spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire," *ver. 7*. Now upon comparing what he here saith of the angels with what he saith to Christ, the vast inferiority of the angels to Christ will plainly appear.

1st. What doth God say here of the angels? "He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." This we have in *Ps. civ. 4*, where it seems to be more immediately spoken of the winds and lightning, but is here applied to the angels, whose agency the Divine providence makes use of in the winds, and in thunder and lightnings. Here, *First*. The office of the angels; they are God's ministers or servants, to do his pleasure. It is the glory of God that he has such servants; it is yet more so that he does not need them. *Secondly*. How the angels are qualified for this service. He makes them spirits and a flame of fire, that is, he endows them with light and zeal, with activity and ability, readiness and resolution, to do his pleasure. They are no more than what God hath made them to be, and they are servants to the Son as well as to the Father. But,

2nd. Observe how much greater things are said of Christ by the Father. Here two passages of Scripture are quoted, one out of *Ps. xlv. 6, 7*, where God declares of Christ,

First. His true and real Divinity, and that with much pleasure and affection, not grudging him that glory; "Thy throne, O God." Here one Person calls another person God, "O God." And if God the Father declares him to be so, he must be really and truly so, for God calls persons and things as they are. And now let who will deny him to be essentially God at their peril, but let us own and honour him as God; for if he had not been God, he had never been fit to have done the Mediator's work, or to have worn the Mediator's crown.

Secondly. God declares his dignity and dominion, as having a throne, a kingdom, and a sceptre of that kingdom. He has all right, rule, authority, and power, both as the God of nature, grace, and glory, and as Mediator; and so he is adequate and sufficient to all the intents and purposes of his mediatorial kingdom.

Thirdly. God declares the eternal duration of the dominion and dignity of Christ, founded upon the Divinity of his person. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," from everlasting to everlasting, through all the ages of time, maugre all the attempts of earth and hell to undermine and overthrow it, and through all the endless ages of eternity, when time shall be no more. This distinguishes Christ's throne from all earthly thrones, which are tottering, and will at length tumble down; but the throne of Christ shall be as the days of heaven.

Fourthly. God declares of Christ the perfect equity of his administration, and of the execution of his power, through all the parts of his government. "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom," *ver. 8*. He came

extreme theories, and is adopted in the main by the Alexandrian Fathers, and in later times by Davidson, Stuart, Wordsworth, and others. According to this opinion, the epistle was written by one of St. Paul's companions, under the apostle's own direction, not dictation, as in other epistles. There seem very fair grounds for the supposition that St. Luke was the writer, and that the epistle is St. Paul's in the same sense that the speech in Acts xiii. is St. Paul's. It was addressed to Jews, and in all probability to the Jews of

Palestine—most likely before the destruction of Jerusalem. The date which best agrees with the views above is about A.D. 63.

i. 1. "Sundry times and in divers manners:" "times," literally "portions." Various portions of truth were revealed to the prophets, one receiving one portion, and another another. "Divers manners:" sometimes by visions, sometimes by word; at other times by inward impulse and teaching.

1. 3. "Brightness of his Father's glory:" the effulgence, the

righteously to the sceptre, and he uses it in perfect righteousness; and the righteousness of his government proceeds from the righteousness of his person, from an essential eternal love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, not merely from considerations of prudence or interest, but from an inward and immovable principle; "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity," ver. 9. Christ came to fulfil all righteousness, to bring in an everlasting righteousness; and he was righteous in all his ways, and holy in all works. He has recommended righteousness to men, and restored it among them as a most excellent and amiable thing. He came to finish transgression, and to make an end of sin, as a hateful as well as hurtful thing.

Fifthly. God declares of Christ how he was qualified for the office of Mediator, and how he was installed and confirmed in it; ver. 9, "Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." 1st. Christ hath the name Messiah from his being anointed. God's anointing of Christ signifies both his qualifying of him for the office of the Mediator with the Holy Spirit and all his graces, and likewise his inauguration of him into the office, as prophets, priests, and kings were, by anointing. "God, even thy God," imports the confirmation of Christ in the office of Mediator by the covenant of redemption and peace that was between the Father and the Son. God is the God of Christ, as Christ is man and Mediator. 2nd. This anointing of Christ was "with the oil of gladness," which signifies both the gladness and cheerfulness with which Christ undertook and went through the office of Mediator, finding himself so absolutely sufficient for it, and also that joy that was set before him as the reward of his service and sufferings, that crown of glory and gladness he should wear for ever after the suffering of death. 3rd. This anointing of Christ was above the anointing of his fellows. "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Who are Christ's fellows? Has he any equals? Not as God, except the Father and Spirit, but these are not here meant. But as man he has his fellows, and as an anointed person, but his unction is beyond all theirs. (1.) Above the angels, who may be said to be his fellows, as they are the sons of God by creation, and God's messengers, whom he employs in his service. (2.) Above all prophets, priests, and kings, that ever were anointed with oil, to be employed in the service of God on earth. (3.) Above all the saints, who are his brethren, children of the same Father, as he was a partaker with them of flesh and blood. 4th. Above all those that were related to him as man, above all the house of David, all the tribe of Judah, all his brethren and kinsmen in the flesh. All God's other anointed ones had only the Spirit in a certain measure, Christ had the Spirit above measure, without any limitation. None therefore goes through his work as Christ did, none takes so much pleasure in it as Christ does; for he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.

The other passage of Scripture, in which is the superior excellence of Christ to the angels, is taken out of *Ps. cii. 25-27*, and is thus recited here:—

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: 11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; 12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

In these verses the omnipotency of the Lord Jesus Christ is declared, as it appears both in creating the world and in changing it.

First. In creating the world; ver. 10, "And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands." The Lord Christ had the original right to govern the world, because he made the world in the beginning; his right as Mediator was by commission from the Father; his right as God with the Father was absolute, resulting from his creating power. This power he had before the beginning of the world, and he exerted it in giving a beginning and being to the world. He must therefore be no part of the world himself, for then he must give himself a beginning. He was *πρὸ πάντων*,—"before all things," and "by him all things consist," *Col. i. 17*. Not only above all things in condition, but before all things in existence; and therefore must be God and self-existent. He laid the foundations of the earth, did not only introduce new forms into pre-existent matter, but made out of nothing the foundations of the earth, the *primordia rerum*,—"the first principles of things." He not only founded the earth, but the heavens too are the work of his hands, both the habitation and the inhabitants, the hosts of heaven, the angels themselves, and therefore he must needs be infinitely superior to them.

Secondly. In changing the world that he has made; and here the mutability of this world is brought in to illustrate the immutability of Christ.

1. This world is mutable; all created nature is so. This world has passed through many changes, and shall pass through more: all these changes are by the permission, and under the direction, of Christ, that made the world; ver. 11, 12, "They shall perish, they shall all wax old as doth a garment; as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed." This our visible world, both the earth and visible heavens, are growing old. Not only men, and beasts, and trees grow old, but this world itself grows old, and is hastening to its dissolution; it changes like a garment, has lost much of its beauty and strength; it grew old betimes on the first apostacy, and it has been waxing older and growing weaker ever since; it bears the symptoms of a dying world. But then its dissolution shall not be its utter destruction, but its change. Christ will fold up this world as a garment, not to be abused any longer, not to be any longer used so as it has been. Let us not then set our hearts upon that which is not what we take it to be, and will not be what it now is. Sin has made a great change in the world for the worse, and Christ will make a great change in it for the better. We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Let the consideration of this wean us from the present world, and make us watchful, diligent, and desirous of that better world, and let us wait on Christ to change us into a meetness for that new world that is approaching; we cannot enter into it till we be new creatures.

2. Christ is immutable. Thus the Father testifies of him, "Thou remainest, thy years shall not fail." Christ is the same in himself, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, and the same to his people in all the changes of time. And this may well support all that have an interest in Christ under all the changes they meet with in the world, and under all they feel in themselves. Christ is immutable and immortal, his years shall not fail. This may comfort us under all decays of nature that we may observe in ourselves or in our friends, though our flesh and heart fail, and our days are hastening to an end. Christ lives to take care of us while we live, and of ours when we are gone, and this

radiant beam. Some think there is an allusion to the Shekinah (*Exod. xvi. 7, 10*). "Express image of his person," or his substance, essence. "Express image;" the word strictly means the instrument for marking, or graving—*e.g.*, the die by which the impression is made. Thence it came to be used for the stamp—the impression itself. Both are true of Christ, who not only expresses God (compare *John i. 1* and *xiv. 8*) to us, but also impresses the image and super-scription of God upon those who receive him. (Compare *John i. 12*

should quicken us all to make our interest in him clear and sure, that our spiritual and eternal life may "be hid with Christ in God."

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

This concludes the comparison between Christ and the angels, and the preference of Christ to them; God never said to the angels what he has said to Christ.

First. What hath God said to Christ? He hath said, "Sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool," *Ps. cx. 1*, that is, Receive thou glory, dominion and rest, and remain in the administration of thy mediatorial kingdom until all thine enemies shall either be made thy friends, by conversion, or thy footstool. Note,

1. Christ Jesus has his enemies; would one think it? Enemies even among men, enemies to his sovereignty, to his cause, to his people; such as will not have him to reign over them. Let us not think it strange then if we have our enemies. Christ never did any thing to make men his enemies; he has done a great deal to make them all his friends and his Father's friends, and yet he has his enemies.

2. All the enemies of Christ shall be made his footstool, either by humble submission and entire subjection to his will, casting themselves down at his feet, or by utter destruction; he shall trample upon those that continue obstinate, and shall triumph over them.

3. God the Father hath undertaken for this, and he will see it done, yea, he will himself do it; and though it be not done presently, it shall certainly be done, and Christ waits for it; and so must Christians wait till God has wrought all their works in them, for them, and by them.

4. Christ shall go on to rule and reign till this is done; he shall not leave any of his great designs unfinished, he shall go on conquering and to conquer. And it becomes his people to go on in their duty, being what he would have them to be, doing what he would have them to do, avoiding what he would have them to avoid, bearing what he would have them to bear, till he makes them conquerors, and more than conquerors, over all their spiritual enemies.

Secondly. What hath God said of the angels? He never said to them as he said to Christ, "Sit ye at my right hand;" but he has said of them here that they are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation." Note,

1. What the angels are as to their nature. They are "spirits," that is, without bodies, or inclination to bodies, and yet they can assume bodies, and appear in them when God pleases. They are spirits, incorporeal, intelligent, active substances; they excel in wisdom and strength.

2. What the angels are as to their office. They are "ministering spirits." Christ, as Mediator, is the great minister of God in the great work of redemption. The Holy Spirit is the great minister of God and Christ in the application of this redemption. Angels are ministering spirits under the blessed Trinity, to execute the Divine will and pleasure; they are the ministers of Divine Providence.

3. The angels are sent forth for this end, to minister to "them who shall be the heirs of salvation." Here observe, 1st. The description given of the saints. They are "heirs of salvation;" at present they are under age, heirs, not inheritors. They are heirs, because they are the children of God; "if children, then heirs." Let us make sure that we are children by adoption and regeneration, having made a covenant resignation of ourselves to God, and walking before him in a gospel conversation, and then we are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." [And they shall surely get salvation, as a heritage never to be taken from them.] 2nd. The dignity and privilege of the saints—the angels are sent forth to minister for them. Thus they have done in attending and acting at the giving forth of the law, in fighting the battles of the saints, in destroying their enemies. They still minister for them in opposing the malice and power of evil spirits, in protecting and keeping their bodies, pitching their tents about theirs, instructing, quickening, and comforting their souls under Christ and the Holy Ghost; and thus they shall do in gathering all the saints together at the last day. Bless God for the ministration of angels, keep in God's way, and take the comfort of this promise, that he will "give his angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your feet against a stone," *Ps. xci. 11, 12*.

CHAPTER II.

In this chapter the apostle, I. Makes some application of the doctrine laid down in the foregoing chapter concerning the excellency of the person of Christ, both by way of exhortation and argument, ver. 1-4. II. Enlarges farther upon the pre-eminence of Christ above the angels, ver. 5-9. III. He proceeds to remove the scandal of the cross, ver. 10-15. IV. To assert the incarnation of Christ, taking upon him not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, and assigns the reason of his so doing, ver. 16-18.



HEREFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

and 2 Cor. iii. 18.) "All things;" Alford renders "the universe." "When he had," &c.: the words "by himself" and "our" are wanting in oldest MSS. "Purged;" having made a purification from sins. The allusion to Levitical rites is too distinct to be overlooked. The word (purification) is used in the Septuagint (*Exod. xxix. 36, xxx. 10*). Christ made purification, thus enabling those who were unclean because of sins to draw near. (Compare *Heb. x. 19*).

i. 4. "Being made so much better;" or having become so much

4 God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

The apostle proceeds in the plain, profitable method of doctrine, reason, and use through this epistle. Here we have the application of the truths before asserted and proved; this is brought in by the illative particle, "therefore," with which this chapter begins, and which shews its connexion with the former; where the apostle having proved Christ to be superior to the angels, by whose ministry the law was given, and therefore that the gospel dispensation must be more excellent than the legal, he now comes to apply this doctrine, both by way of exhortation and argument.

First. By way of exhortation; ver. 1, "Therefore we ought to give the more diligent heed to the things which we have heard." This is the first way by which we are to shew our esteem of Christ and of the Gospel. It is the great concern of every one under the Gospel to give the most earnest heed to all gospel discoveries and directions; that is, to prize them highly in our judgments as matters of the greatest importance, to hearken to them diligently in all the opportunities we have for that purpose, to read them frequently, to meditate on them closely, and to mix faith with them; to embrace them in our hearts and affections, to retain them in our memories, and finally to regulate our words and actions according to them.

Secondly. By way of argument, he adds strong motives to enforce the exhortation.

1. From the great loss we shall sustain if we do not take this earnest heed to the things we have heard; we shall "let them slip." They will leak and run out of our heads, lips and lives, and we shall be great losers by our neglect. Learn, 1st. That when we have received gospel truths into our minds, we are in danger of letting them slip. Our minds and memories are like a leaking vessel, they do not without much care retain what is poured into them; this proceeds from the corruption of our natures, the enmity and subtlety of Satan, he steals away the word; from the entanglements and snares of the world, the thorns that choke the good seed. 2nd. That those meet with an inconceivable loss who let gospel truths which they had received slip out of their minds; they have lost a treasure far better than thousands of gold and silver. The seed is lost, their time and pains in hearing lost, and their hopes of a good harvest lost; all is lost if the Gospel be lost. 3rd. This consideration should be a strong motive, both to our attention to the Gospel and retention of it; and, indeed, if we do not well attend, so we shall not long retain the word of God; inattentive hearers will soon be forgetful hearers.

2. Another argument is taken from that dreadful punishment we shall incur if we do not this duty, a more dreadful punishment than those fell under who neglected and disobeyed the law, ver. 2-4. Here observe,

1st. How the law is described. It was "the word spoken by angels," and declared to be "steadfast." It was the word spoken by angels; because given by the ministration of angels, they sounding the trumpet, and perhaps forming the words according to God's direction; and God, as Judge, will make use of the angels to sound the trumpet a second time, and gather all to his tribunal to receive their sentence, as they have conformed or not conformed to the law. And this law is declared to be steadfast; it is like the promise, "Yea, and amen;" it is truth and faithfulness, and it will abide and have its force whether men obey it or no; for "every transgression and disobedience will receive a just recompence of reward." If men trifle with the law of God, the law will not trifle with them; it has taken hold of the sinners of former ages, and will take hold of them in all ages. God, as a righteous Governor and Judge, when he had given forth the law, would not let the contempt and breach of it go unpunished; but he has from time to time reckoned with the transgressors of it, and recompensed them according to the nature and aggravation of their disobedience. Observe, The severest punishment God ever inflicted upon sinners is no more than what sin deserves; it is "just recompence of reward." Punishments are as just, and as much due to sin, as rewards are to obedience; yea, more due than rewards are to imperfect obedience.

2nd. How the Gospel is described. It is salvation, a great salvation; "so great salvation," that no other salvation can compare with it; so great that none can fully express, no, nor yet conceive how great it is. It is a great salvation that the Gospel discovers; for it discovers a great Saviour, one that has manifested God to be reconciled to our nature, and reconcilable to our persons. It shews how we may be saved from so great sin and so great misery, and be restored to so great holiness and so great happiness. The Gospel discovers to us a great Sanctifier, to qualify us for salvation, and to bring us to the Saviour. The Gospel unfolds a great and excellent dispensation of grace, a new covenant; the great charter, deed and instrument is settled and secured to all those that come into the bond of the covenant.

3rd. How sinning against the Gospel is described. It is declared to be a neglect of this great salvation, it is a contempt put upon the saving grace of God in Christ, making light of it, not caring for it, not thinking it worth their while to acquaint themselves with it, not regarding either the worth of gospel grace, or their own want of it, and undone state without it; not using their endeavours to discern the truth of it, and assent to it, nor to discern the goodness of it so as to approve of it, or apply it to themselves. In these things they discover a plain neglect of this great salvation. Let us all take heed that we be not found among those wicked, wretched sinners that neglect the grace of the Gospel.

4th. How the misery of such sinners is described, and it is declared to be unavoidable; ver. 3, "How shall we escape?" This intimates, First. That the despisers of this salvation are condemned already; under arrest, and in the hands of justice already. So they were by the sin of Adam; and they have strengthened their bonds by their personal transgression; *Jno. iii. 18*, "He that believeth not is condemned already." Secondly. There is no escaping out of this condemned state, but by accepting the great salvation discovered in the Gospel: as for those that neglect it, the wrath of God is upon them, and it abides upon them; they cannot disengage themselves, they cannot emerge, they cannot get from under the curse. Thirdly. That there is a yet more aggravated curse and condemnation waiting for all those that despise the grace of God in Christ, and that most heavy curse they cannot escape; they can neither conceal their persons at the great day, nor deny the fact, nor bribe the Judge, nor break the prison. There is no door of mercy left open for them, there shall "be no more sacrifice for sin," they are irrevocably lost. The unavoidableness of the misery of such is here expressed by way of question, "How shall we escape?" It is an appeal to universal reason, to the consciences of sinners themselves, it is a challenge to all their power and policy, to all their interest and alliances, whether they, or any for them, can find out, or can force out, a way of escape from the vindictive justice and wrath of God. It intimates that the neglecters of this great salvation will be left not only without power, but without plea and excuse, at the judgment-day. If they be asked what they have to say that the sentence should not be executed upon them, they will be speechless and self-condemned by their own consciences, even to a greater degree of misery than

those fell under that neglected the authority of the law, or that sinned without the law.

3. Another argument to enforce the exhortation is taken from the dignity and excellency of the person by whom the Gospel began to be spoken; ver. 3, "It began at first to be spoken by the Lord," that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Jehovah, the Lord of life and glory, Lord of all, and, as such, possessed of unerring and infallible wisdom, infinite and inexhaustible goodness, unquestionable and unchangeable veracity and faithfulness, absolute sovereignty and authority, and irresistible power. This great Lord of all was the first that began to speak it plainly and clearly without types and shadows, as it was before he came. Now surely it may be expected that all will reverence this Lord, and take heed to a Gospel that began to be spoken by one that "spoke so as never man spoke."

4. Another argument is taken from the character of those that were witnesses to Christ and the Gospel; ver. 3, 4, "It was confirmed to us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness." Observe,

1st. The promulgation of the Gospel was continued and confirmed by those that heard Christ; by the evangelists and apostles, who were eye and ear-witnesses of what Jesus Christ "began both to do and to teach," *Acts i. 1*. These witnesses could have no worldly end or interest of their own to serve hereby. Nothing could induce them to give in their evidence but the Redeemer's glory, and their own and others' salvation; they exposed themselves by their testimony to the loss of all that was dear to them in this life, and many of them sealed it with their blood.

2nd. "God himself bore witness" to those that were witnesses for Christ; he testified that they were authorised and sent by him to preach Christ and salvation by him to the world. And how did he bear them witness? Not only by giving them great peace in their own minds, great patience under all their sufferings, and unspeakable courage and joy, though these were witnesses to themselves; but he bore them witness "by signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." First. With "signs;" signs of his gracious presence with them, and of his power working by them. Secondly. "Wonders;" works quite beyond the power of nature, and out of the course of nature, filling the spectator with wonder and admiration, stirring them up to attend to the doctrine preached, and to inquire into it. Thirdly. "Divers miracles," or mighty works; in which an almighty agency did appear beyond all reasonable controversy. Fourthly. "Gifts of the Holy Ghost;" qualifying, enabling, and exciting them to do the work to which they were called; "Divisions or distributions of the Holy Ghost, diversities of gifts," *1 Cor. xii. 4, &c.* And all this according to God's own will; it was the will of God that we should have sure footing for our faith, and a strong foundation for our hope in receiving the Gospel. As at the giving forth of the law there were signs and wonders by which God testified the authority and excellency of it, so he witnessed to the Gospel by more and greater miracles, as to a more excellent and abiding dispensation.

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. 6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? 7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

The apostle having made this serious application of the doctrine of the personal excellency of Christ above the angels, he now returns to that pleasant subject again, and pursues it farther; ver. 5, "For unto the angels hath he not put into subjection the world to come, whereof we speak."

First. Here the apostle lays down a negative proposition, including a positive one, that the state of the gospel church, which is here called "the world to come," is not subjected to the angels, but under the special care and direction of the Redeemer himself. Neither the state in which the church is at present, nor that more completely restored state to which it shall arrive, when the prince of this world is cast out, and the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdom of Christ, is left to the government of the angels, but Jesus Christ will take to him his great power, and will reign. He does not make that use of the ministration of angels to give the Gospel as he did the law, which was the state of the old or antiquated world.

[He calleth the world under the kingdom of the Messias "the world to come;" first to put a difference betwixt the estate of the world considered as under sin and under the Messias. It is called "the world to come" also, because, albeit this change began with the work of grace before Christ came, yet it was nothing in comparison of the world to come under the Messias. And that which is now under the Gospel is little or nothing in comparison of that glorious change of the nature and use of all things, under Christ's subjects, which is to be revealed at his last coming. Then whatsoever thing we have hitherto found to our good, since we knew Christ, it is but little to what shall be. Our world is but to come, *1 Cor. xv. 9*.]

This new world is committed to Christ, and only put in absolute subjection to him in all spiritual and eternal concerns. Christ has the administration of the gospel church, which at once speaks Christ's honour, and the church's happiness and safety. It is certain that neither the first creation of the gospel church, nor its after-edification or administration, nor its final judgment and perfection, are committed to the angels, but to Christ. God would not put so great a trust in his holy ones; his angels were too weak for such a charge.

Secondly. We have a Scripture account of that blessed Jesus to whom the gospel world is put into subjection. It is taken from *Ps. vii. 4-6*, "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of

better. Christ was, originally and essentially, the brightness of his Father's glory, and so better, superior to angels. The force of being made so much better, &c., is to be found in chap. ii. 9, for he was made lower than the angels for the purposes of redemption.

i. 7. "Who maketh his angels spirits;" rather, "winds." This makes the double comparison clear—winds and flames. The Targum paraphrase of *Psa. civ. 4* is, "Who maketh his messengers swift as winds, and his ministers strong as flaming fire."

i. 14. "To minister for them;" Alford renders, "Sent forth for ministry on account of them"—i.e., not necessarily to those who shall be heirs, but all the ministry of these angels tends to the welfare of God's children. (Compare *Rom. viii. 28*.)

ii. 1. "Let them slip;" rather, lest we should "flow past them," or "drift away from them," hence be diverted from them. The fear is lest we should drift from the anchorage.

ii. 2. "Steadfast;" or proved to be of authority. Alford renders

him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" &c. These words are to be considered both as applicable to mankind in general and as applied here to the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. As applicable to mankind in general; where we have an affectionate, thankful expostulation with the great God concerning his wonderful condescension and kindness to the sons of men. 1st. In remembering them, or being mindful of them, when yet they had no being but in the counsels of Divine love. The favours of God to men all spring up out of his eternal thoughts and purposes of mercy for them; as all our dutiful regards to God spring forth from our remembrance of him. God is always mindful of us, let us never be forgetful of him. 2nd. In visiting him; God's purpose of favours for men is productive of gracious visits to them; he comes to see us, how it is with us, what we all, what we want, and by his visitation our spirit is preserved. Let us so remember God as daily to approach him in a way of duty. 3rd. In making him the head of all the creatures in this lower world, the topstone of this building, the chief of the ways of God on earth, and only "a little lower than the angels," in place and respect to the body while here, and to be made like the angels, and "equal to the angels at the resurrection of the just." *Lu. xx. 36.* 4th. In crowning him with glory and honour, the honour of having noble powers and faculties of soul, excellent organs and parts of body; whereby he is allied to both worlds, capable of serving the interests of both worlds, and of enjoying the happiness of both. 5th. In giving him right to, and dominion over, the inferior creatures, which did continue so long as he continued in his allegiance and duty to God.

2. This is here plainly applied to the Lord Jesus Christ; and the whole that is here said can only be applied to him, ver. 8, 9. And here you may observe, 1st. What is the moving cause of all the kindness God shews to men in giving Christ for them, and to them; and that is "the grace of God." For what is man? 2nd. What are the fruits of this free grace of God with respect to the gift of Christ for us and to us, as related in this Scripture testimony. *First.* That God was mindful of Christ for us in the covenant of redemption. *Secondly.* That God visited Christ on our account; and it was concluded between them that, in the fulness of time, Christ should come into the world as the great archetypal sacrifice. *Thirdly.* That God had made him "a little lower than the angels," in his being made man, that he might suffer and humble himself to death. *Fourthly.* That God crowned the human nature of Christ with glory and honour in his being perfectly holy, and having the Spirit without measure, and by an ineffable union with the Divine nature in the second person of the Trinity; "The fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily," that by his sufferings he might make satisfaction, tasting death for every man, that is, sensibly feeling and undergoing the bitter agonies of that shameful, painful, and cursed death of the cross, hereby putting all mankind into a new state of trial. *Fifthly.* That as a reward of his humiliation in suffering death, he was "crowned with glory and honour;" advanced to the highest dignity in heaven, and having absolute dominion over all things; thus accomplishing that ancient Scripture in Christ, which never was so accomplished or fulfilled in any mere man that ever was upon earth.

10 For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. 13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

Having mentioned the death of Christ, the apostle proceeds to prevent and remove the scandal of the cross; and this he does by shewing both how it became God that Christ should suffer, and how much man should be benefited by those sufferings.

First. How it became God that Christ should suffer; ver. 10. "For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and to whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Where,

1. God is described as the final end and first cause of all things; and, as such, it became him to secure his own glory in all that he did, not only to act so as that he might in nothing dishonour himself, but that he might from every thing have a revenue of glory.

2. He is declared to have acted up to this glorious character in the work of redemption; and that both as to the choice of the end and means.

1st. In the choice of the end; and that was to "bring many sons to glory," to present glory in enjoying the glorious privileges of the Gospel, and to future glory in heaven, which will be glory indeed, an exceeding, eternal weight of glory. Here observe, *First.* We must be the sons of God, both by adoption and regeneration, before we can be brought to the glory of heaven. Heaven is the inheritance, and only those that are the children are heirs of that inheritance. *Secondly.* All true believers are the children of God; "To them that receive Christ he has granted the power and privilege of being the children of God, even to as many as believe on his name," *Jno. i. 12.* *Thirdly.* That though the sons of God are but a few in one place, and at one time, yet, when they shall be all brought together, it will appear that they are many. Christ is "the first-born among many brethren." *Fourthly.* That all the sons of God, how many soever they are, or however dispersed and divided, shall at length be brought together to glory.

2nd. In the choice of the means. *First.* In finding out such a person as should be "the Captain of our salvation." Those that are saved must come to that salvation under the conduct of a Captain and leader sufficient for that purpose; and they must be all listed under the banner of this Captain. "They must endure hardship as good soldiers of Christ;" they must follow their Captain, and they that do so shall be brought safely off, and shall inherit great glory and honour. *Secondly.* In making this Captain of our salvation "perfect through sufferings." God the Father made the Lord Jesus Christ the Captain of our salvation; that is, he consecrated, he appointed him to that office, he gave him a commission for it, and he made him a perfect Captain. He had perfection of wisdom, and courage, and strength by the Spirit of the Lord, which

he had without measure; he was made "perfect through sufferings," that is, he perfected the work of our redemption by shedding his blood, and was thereby perfectly qualified to be a Mediator between God and man. He found his way to the crown by the cross, and so must his people too. The excellent Dr. Owen observes, that the Lord Christ, being consecrated and perfected through suffering, hath consecrated the way of suffering for all his followers to pass through unto glory; and hereby their sufferings are made necessary and unavoidable, they are hereby made honourable, useful, and profitable.

Secondly. He shews how much they would be benefited by the cross and sufferings of Christ. As there was nothing unbecoming God and Christ, so there was that which would be very beneficial to men in these sufferings. Hereby they are brought into a near union with Christ, and into a very endearing relation.

1. Into a near union; ver. 11. "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Observe, Christ is he that sanctifieth, he hath purchased and sent the sanctifying Spirit; he is the head of all sanctifying influences. The Spirit sanctifieth as the Spirit of Christ. True believers are they who are sanctified, endowed with holy principles and powers, separated and set apart from mean and vile uses to high and holy uses and purposes; for so they must be before they can be brought to glory. Now Christ, that is the agent in this work of sanctification, and Christians that are the recipient subjects, are all of one. How? Why, 1st. They are all of one heavenly Father, and that is God. God is the Father of Christ by eternal generation, and by miraculous conception, &c.; of Christians by adoption and regeneration. 2nd. They are of one earthly father, Adam. Christ and believers have the same human nature. 3rd. Of one spirit, one holy and heavenly disposition. The same mind is in them that was in Christ, though not in the same measure. The same Spirit informs and actuates the head and all the members.

2. Into an endearing relation. This results from the union; and here first he declares what this relation is, and then he quotes three texts out of the Old Testament to illustrate and prove it.

1st. He declares what this relation is; he and believers being all of one, he therefore is not ashamed to call them brethren. Observe, *First.* Christ and believers are brethren; not only bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, but spirit of his spirit; brethren by the whole blood, in what is heavenly as well as in what is earthly. *Secondly.* Christ is not ashamed to own this relation; he is not ashamed to call them brethren, which is wonderful goodness and condescension in him, considering their meanness by nature, and vileness by sin; but he will never be ashamed of any that are not ashamed of him, and that take care not to be a shame and reproach to him and to themselves.

2nd. He illustrates this from three texts of Scripture. The first is out of *Ps. xlii. 22.* "I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praises unto thee." This psalm was an eminent prophecy of Christ; it begins with his words on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Now here it is foretold, *First.* That Christ should have a church or congregation in the world, a company of volunteers, freely willing to follow him. *Secondly.* That these should not only be brethren to one another, but to Christ himself. *Thirdly.* That he would declare his Father's name to them, that is, his nature, attribute, his mind and will; and that he did in his own person while he dwelt among us, and by his Spirit poured out upon his disciples, enabling them to spread the knowledge of God in the world from one generation to another to the end of the world. *Fourthly.* That Christ would sing praise to his Father in the church. The glory of the Father was what Christ had in his eye; his heart was set upon it, he laid out himself for it, and he would have his people to join with him in it. The second Scripture is quoted from *Ps. xviii. 2.* "And again I will put my trust in him." That psalm sets forth the troubles that David, as a type of Christ, met with, and how he in all his troubles put his trust in God. Now this shews, that besides his Divine nature, which needed no supports, he was to take another nature upon him, that would want those supports that none but God could give. He suffered and trusted as our head and president.—Owen, *in loc.* His brethren must suffer and trust too. The third Scripture is taken from *Isa. viii. 18.* "Behold, I and the children which God hath given me." This proves Christ really and truly man, for parents and children are of the same nature with Christ. Children were given him of the Father in the counsel of his eternal love, and that covenant of peace that was between them; and they are given to Christ at their conversion. When they take hold of his covenant, then Christ receives them, rules over them, rejoices in them, perfects all their affairs, takes them up to heaven, and there presents them to his Father, "Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me."

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him the seed of* Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining to* God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Here the apostle proceeds to assert the incarnation of Christ, as taking upon him not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham; and he shews the reason and design of his so doing.

First. The incarnation of Christ is asserted; ver. 16. "Verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He took part of flesh and blood: though as God he pre-existed from all eternity, yet in fulness of time he took one of our nature into union with his Divine nature, and became really and truly man. He did not lay hold of angels, but he laid hold of the seed of Abraham. The angels fell, and he let them go, and lie under the desert, deilement, and dominion of their sin, without hope or help. Christ never designed to be the Saviour of the fallen angels; as their tree fell, so it lies, and must lie to eternity, and therefore he did not assume their nature: the

"binding." "Transgression and disobedience;" the first word refers to the actual breach of ascertained and known commandments, the second to neglect in ascertaining the rule of duty.

ii. 3. "Neglect;" if we have neglected, or if we have no care for, have been careless of a salvation which is so great. "Seeing that it, having begun to be spoken by the Lord, was confirmed," &c.

ii. 4. "Bearing them witness;" omit "them." The witness of God by signs, &c., is to the great salvation—the Gospel.

ii. 7. "And didst set him over the works of thy hands:" these words are omitted in some MSs.

ii. 9. The arrangement of this verse as given in Alford's translation gives a different turn to the thought. In the English version the train of thought suggested is that Jesus was made a little lower than the angels that he might suffer death. Alford's version brings out the real point, which is that Jesus, on account of his suffering death, is crowned, &c. His translation is, "But him that is made a little

nature of angels could not be an atoning sacrifice for the sin of man. Now Christ resolving to recover the seed of Abraham, and raise them up from their fallen state, he took upon him the human nature from one descended from the loins of Abraham, that the same nature that had sinned might suffer to restore human nature to a state of hope and trial, and all that accepted of mercy to a state of special favour and salvation. Now there is hope and help for the chief of sinners in and through Christ. Here is a price paid sufficient for all, and suitable to all, for it was in our nature. Let us to all then know the day of our gracious visitation, and improve that distinguishing mercy which has been shewn to fallen men, not to the fallen angels.

Secondly. The reasons and designs of the incarnation of Christ are declared, 1. Because "the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he must take part of the same, and be made like his brethren," ver. 14, 15. For no higher nor lower nature than man's that had sinned could so suffer for the sin of man as to satisfy the justice of God, and raise man up to a state of hope, and make believers the children of God, and so brethren to Christ.

2. He became man, that he might die. As God, he could not die, and therefore he assumes another nature and state. Here the wonderful love of God appeared, that when Christ knew what he must suffer in our nature, and how he must die in it, yet he so readily took it upon him. The legal sacrifices and offerings God could not accept as a propitiation. A body was prepared for Christ, and he said, "Lo! I come, I delight to do thy will."

3. "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," ver. 14. The devil was the first sinner, and the first tempter to sin, and sin was the procuring cause of death; and he may be said to have the power of death, as he draws men into sin, the ways whereof are death, and as he is often permitted to terrify the consciences of men with the fear of death, and as he is the executioner of Divine justice, haling their souls from their bodies to the tribunal of God, there to receive their doom; and then being their tormentor, as he was before their tempter; in these respects he may be said to have had the power of death. But now Christ has so far destroyed him that had the power of death that he can keep none under the power of spiritual death, nor can he draw any into sin, (the procuring cause of death,) nor require the soul of any from the body, nor execute the sentence upon any but those who choose and continue to be his willing slaves, and persist in their enmity to God.

4. That he might deliver his own people from that slavish fear of death that they are often subject to. This may refer to the Old Testament saints, who were more under a spirit of bondage, because life and immortality were not so fully brought to light as now they are by the Gospel; or, it may refer to all the people of God, whether under the Old Testament or the New, whose minds are often in perplexing fears about death and eternity. Christ became man, and died to deliver them from those perplexities of soul, by letting them know that death is not only a conquered enemy, but a reconciled friend; not sent to hurt the soul, or separate it from the love of God, but to put an end to all their grievances and complaints, and to give them a passage to eternal life and blessedness. So that death now to them is not in the hand of Satan, but in the hand of Christ; not Satan's servant, but Christ's servant; has not hell following it, but heaven to all that are in Christ.

5. Christ must be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the things pertaining to the justice and honour of God, and to the support and comfort of his people. He must be faithful to God and merciful to men,

1st. In things pertaining to God, to his justice, and to his honour, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, to make all the attributes of the Divine nature, and all the persons subsisting therein, harmonize in man's recovery, and fully to reconcile God and man. Observe, *First*. There was a great breach and quarrel between God and man by reason of sin. *Secondly*. Christ by becoming man, and dying, hath taken up the quarrel, and made reconciliation so far as that God is ready to receive all into favour and friendship that come to him through Christ.

2nd. In things pertaining to his people, to their support and comfort; ver. 18, "In that he suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Where observe, *First*. Christ's passion. He suffered being tempted, and his temptations were not the least part of his sufferings; "He was in all things tempted as we are, yet without sin," *ch. iv. 15*. *Secondly*. Christ's compassion. He is able to succour them that are tempted; he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities; a sympathising physician, tender and skilful, he knows how to deal with tempted sorrowful souls, because he has been himself sick of the same disease, not of sin, but of temptation and trouble of soul. The remembrance of his own sorrows and temptations makes him mindful of the trials of his people, and ready to help them. Here observe, 1st. The best of Christians are subject to temptations, to many temptations while in this world; let us never count upon an absolute freedom from temptations in this world. 2nd. Temptations bring our souls into such distress and danger as to need support and succour. 3rd. That Christ is ready and willing to succour those that under their temptations apply themselves to him, and that he became man, and was tempted, that he might be every way qualified to succour his people.

CHAPTER III.

In this chapter the apostle applies what he had said in the foregoing chapter concerning the priesthood of Christ: 1. In a serious pathetic exhortation that this great High Priest, that was discovered to them, might be seriously considered by them, ver. 1-6. 2. And then adds many weighty counsels and cautions, ver. 7-19.



WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; 2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house. 3 For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. 4 For

every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things is God. 5 And Moses verily *was*



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faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; 6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

In these verses we have the application of that doctrine laid down in the close of the last chapter concerning the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And observe,

First. In how fervent and affectionate a manner the apostle exhorts Christians to have this High Priest much in their thoughts, and to make him the object of their close and serious consideration, and surely no one in earth or heaven deserves our consideration more than he. That this exhortation might be made the more effectual,

[As we get farther light of Christ, we are bound to farther use making of our light. And that as farther is revealed unto us of Christ, so must we set our minds on work to ponder and weigh what is revealed, that the matter may sink deeper in our mind and in our heart. Except we shall consider seriously what is spoken of Christ we can make no profitable use of the doctrine; for such high mysteries are not soon taken up, and the heart is not soon wrought upon, so as to receive impression of his excellency, except after due consideration.] Observe,

1. The honourable compellation used to those to whom he wrote. "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." 1st. Brethren, not only my brethren, but the brethren of Christ, and in him brethren to the saints; all the people of God are brethren, and should love and live like brethren. 2nd. Holy brethren, holy not only in profession and title, but in principle and practice, in heart and life. This has been turned by some into scorn,—"These, say they, are holy brethren; but it is dangerous jesting with such edge-tools: 'Be not mockers, lest your hands be made strong.'" Let those that are thus despised and scorned labour to be holy brethren indeed, and approve themselves so to God; and they need not be ashamed of the title, nor value the scoffs of the profane. The day is coming when those that make this a term of reproach would count it their greatest honour and happiness to be taken into this sacred brotherhood. 3rd. Partakers of the heavenly calling. Partakers of the means of grace, and of the Spirit of grace that came from heaven, and by which Christians are effectually called out of darkness into marvellous light; that calling that brings down heaven into the souls of men, and raises them up to a heavenly temper and conversation, and prepares them to live for ever with God in heaven.

2. The titles he gives to Christ, whom he would have them consider, 1st. As the apostle of our profession, the prime minister of the gospel church; a messenger, and a principal messenger of God to men, upon the most important errand, the great revealer of that faith which we profess to hold, and of that hope which we profess to have. 2nd. Not only the apostle, but the high priest too of our profession, the chief officer of the Old Testament as well as the New, the head of the church in every state, and under each dispensation, upon whose satisfaction and intercession we profess to depend for pardon of sin and acceptance with God. 3rd. As Christ the Messiah, anointed and every way qualified for the office both of apostle and high priest. 4th. As Jesus, our Saviour, our healer, the great physician of souls, typified by the brazen serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness, that those who were stung by the fiery serpents might look to him and be saved.

Secondly. We have the duty we owe to him who bears all these high and honourable titles, and that is to consider him as thus characterised. Consider what he is in himself, and what he is to us, and what he will be to us hereafter and for ever; consider him, fix your thoughts upon him with the greatest attention, and act towards him accordingly; look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. Here observe, 1. Many that profess faith in Christ have not a due consideration for him; he is not so much thought of as he deserves to be, and desires to be, by those that expect salvation from him. 2. Close and serious consideration of Christ would be of great advantage to us, to increase our acquaintance with, and to engage our love and our obedience to, him, and reliance on him. 3. Even those that are holy brethren, and partakers of the heavenly calling, have need to stir up one another to think more of Christ than they do, to have him more in their minds; the best of his people think too seldom and too slightly of him. 4. We must consider Christ as he is described to us in the Scriptures, and form our apprehensions of him from thence, not from any vain conceptions and fancies of our own.

Thirdly. We have several arguments drawn up to enforce this duty of considering Christ the Apostle and High Priest of our profession.

1. The first is taken from his fidelity, ver. 2. He was faithful to him that appointed him, as Moses was in all his house. 1st. Christ is an appointed

lower than the angels, even Jesus, we behold, on account of his suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."

ii. 14. "That through death;" or "through his death." "Him that had (rather "hath") the power of death;" not the power of putting to death, but the power of leading to sin, which gives death its sting (1 Cor. xv. 56.)

ii. 16. The verse does not refer to the incarnation. This idea is imported into the verse by the words supplied in italics in the

English Version. The margin gives a more literal and truer rendering. Alford's translation is: "For as we know it is not angels that he helpeth, but it is the seed of Abraham that he helpeth." Verse 17 then follows naturally. As it is man that he is helping, so it is to man that it behoved him to be made like.

iii. 1. "Holy brethren, partakers of a (not the) heavenly calling;" they are partners in a calling which is heavenly, not earthly. "Consider;" the word may be paraphrased "consider attentively."

Mediator; God the Father hath sent and sealed him to that office, and therefore his mediation is acceptable to the Father. 2nd. He is faithful to that appointment, punctually observing all the rules and orders of his mediation, and fully executing the trust reposed in him by his Father and by his people. 3rd. That he is as faithful to him that hath appointed him as Moses was in all his house. Moses was faithful in the discharge of his office to the Jewish church in the Old Testament, and so is Christ under the New. This was a proper argument to urge upon the Jews who had so high an opinion of the faithfulness of Moses, and yet his faithfulness was but typical of Christ's.

2. Another argument is taken from the superior glory and excellence of Christ above Moses, ver. 3-6; therefore they were more obliged to consider Christ. 1st. Christ was a maker of the house, Moses but a member in it. By the house we are to understand the church of God, that is, the people of God incorporated together under Christ, their Maker and Head, and under subordinate officers, according to his law, observing his institutions. Christ is the maker of this house of the church in all ages. Moses was a minister in the house, he was instrumental under Christ in governing and edifying the house; but Christ is the maker of all things; for he is God, and no less than God could build the church, either lay the foundation or carry on the superstructure. No less power was requisite to make the church than to make the world. The world was made out of nothing, the church made out of materials altogether unfit for such a building. Christ, who is God, drew the platform of the church, provided the materials, and by almighty power disposed them to receive the reform. He has compacted and united this his house, and has settled the orders of it, and crowned all with his own presence, which is the true glory of this house of God. 2nd. Christ was the master of this house, as well as the maker, ver. 5, 6. This house is styled his house, as the Son of God. Moses was only a faithful servant for a testimony of those things that were to be spoken after Christ. As the eternal Son of God he is the rightful owner and sovereign ruler of the church; Moses was only a typical governor for a testimony of all those things relating to the church, which would be more clearly, completely, and comfortably revealed in the Gospel by the Spirit of Christ; and therefore Christ is worthy of more glory than Moses, and of greater regard and consideration. This argument the apostle concludes, *First*. With a comfortable accommodation of it to himself and all true believers; ver. 6, "Whose house are we." Each of us personally, as we are temples of the Holy Ghost, and Christ dwells in us by faith; all of us jointly, as we are united by the bonds of graces, truths, ordinances, gospel discipline, and devotions. *Secondly*. With a characteristic description of those persons that constitute this house; "If we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end," that is, if we maintain a bold and open profession of the truths of the Gospel, upon which our hopes of grace and glory are built, and live upon and up to those hopes so as to have a holy rejoicing in them, which shall abide firm to the end, notwithstanding all that we may meet with in so doing.

[He expoundeth this house to be the company of true believers. Then, 1. The church of God under the law, and under the Gospel, are one church, one house of God in substance, and all the faithful, then and now, lively stones of this house. 2. The church have God dwelling, and conversing, and familiarly manifesting himself amongst them. He addeth a condition, whereby he neither importeth the possibility of final apostasy of the saints, nor yet mindeth he to weaken the confidence of believers, more than he doth of his own perseverance, or mindeth to weaken his own faith; for he joineth himself with them, saying, "If we hold fast." But, writing to the number of the visible church, of whom some, not being sound, might fall away, and by their example make some weak ones, though sound, stumble for a time, to the dishonour of the Gospel, he putteth a difference betwixt true believers, who do indeed persevere, and time-servers, who do not persevere, to whom he doth not grant, for the present, the privilege of being God's house.]

So that you see there must not only being a setting out well in the ways of Christ, but a steadfastness and perseverance therein unto the end. We have here a direction what those must do that would partake of the dignity and privileges of the household of Christ. 1st. They must take the truths of the Gospel into their heads and hearts. 2nd. They must build their hopes of happiness upon those truths. 3rd. They must make an open profession of these truths. 4th. They must live so up to them as to keep their evidences clear, and may rejoice in hope, and then they must in all persevere to the end. In a word, they must walk closely, comfortably, courageously and constantly in the faith and practice of the Gospel, that their Master when he comes may own and approve them.

7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) 12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; 15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose

carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Here the apostle proceeds, pressing upon them serious counsels and cautions to the close of the chapter, and he recites a passage out of Ps. xcv. 7, &c. where observe.

First. What he counsels them to do; and that is, to give a speedy and present attention to the call of Christ. Hear his voice, assent to, approve of, and consider, what God in Christ speaks unto you, and apply it to yourselves with suitable affections and endeavours, and set about it this very day, for to-morrow it may be too late.

Secondly. What he cautions them against; namely, hardening their hearts, turning the deaf ear to the calls and counsels of Christ, when he tells you of the evil of sin, the excellency of holiness, the necessity of receiving him by faith as your Saviour; do not shut your ear and heart against such a voice as this.

Thirdly. Whose example he warns them by, even that of the Israelites their fathers in the wilderness, as in the provocation and day of temptation; this refers to that remarkable passage at Massah Meribah, Ex. xvii. 2-7. Observe,

1. Days of temptation are often days of provocation.

2. That to provoke God when he is trying us, and letting us see that we entirely depend and immediately live upon him, is a provocation with a witness.

3. That our hardening our hearts is the spring of all our other sins.

4. That the sin of others, especially our relations, should be a warning to us. Our fathers' sins and punishments should be remembered by us, to deter us from following their evil examples. Now as to the sin of the fathers of the Jews here reflected upon, observe, 1st. The state in which these fathers were when they thus sinned. They were in the wilderness, brought out of Egypt, but not got into Canaan, the thoughts whereof should have restrained them from sin. 2nd. The sin they were guilty of. They tempted and provoked God; they distrusted God, and murmured against Moses, and would not attend to the voice of God. 3rd. The aggravations of their sin. They sinned in the wilderness, where they had a more immediate dependence upon God; they sinned when God was trying them; they sinned when they saw his works,—works of wonder, wrought for their deliverance out of Egypt, and their support and supply in the wilderness from day to day. They continued thus to sin against God forty years. These were heinous aggravations. 4th. The source and spring of such aggravated sins; which were, *First*. They erred in their hearts; and these heart errors produced many other errors in their lips and lives. *Secondly*. They did not know God's ways, though he had walked before them. They did not know his ways; neither those ways of his providence in which he had walked towards them, nor those ways of his precept in which they ought to have walked towards God; they did not observe either his providences or his ordinances in a right manner. 5th. The just and great resentment God had at their sins, and yet the great patience he exercised towards them; ver. 10, "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation," &c. Note, *First*. All sin, especially sin committed by God's professing privileged people, does not only anger and affront God, but it grieves him. *Secondly*. God is loath to destroy his people in or for their sin; he waits long to be gracious to them. *Thirdly*. God keeps an exact account of the time that people go on in sinning against him, and in grieving him by their sins; but at length, if they by their sins continue to grieve the Spirit of God, their sins shall be made grievous to their own spirits, either in a way of judgment or mercy. 6th. The irreversible doom passed upon them at last for their sins. God swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest, either the rest of an earthly or heavenly Canaan. Observe, *First*. Sin, long continued in, will kindle the Divine wrath, and make it flame out against sinners. *Secondly*. That God's wrath will discover itself in its righteous resolution to destroy the impenitent. He will swear in his wrath, not rashly but righteously, and his wrath will make their condition a restless condition; there is no resting under the wrath of God.

Fourthly. What use the apostle makes of their awful example, ver. 12, 13, &c. He gives the Hebrews a proper caution, and enforces it with an affectionate compellation.

1. He gives the Hebrews a proper caution. The word is, "Take heed," *Dénéte*, look to it; look about you; be upon your guard against enemies both within and without; be circumspect. You see what kept many of your forefathers out of Canaan, and made their carcasses fall in the wilderness; take heed lest you fall into the same sin, and snare, and dreadful sentence. For you see Christ is Head of the church, a much greater person than Moses, and your contempt of him must be a greater sin than their contempt of Moses; and so you are in danger of falling under a severer sentence than they. Observe. The ruin of others should be warnings to us to take heed of the rock they split upon. Israel's fall should for ever be a warning to all that come after them; for "all these things happened to them for ensamples," 1 Cor. x. 11, and should be remembered by us. Take heed; all that would get safe to heaven must look about them.

2. He enforces the admonition with an affectionate compellation. "Brethren," not only in the flesh, but in the Lord; brethren whom I love, and for whose welfare I labour and long. And here he enlarges upon the matter of the admonition; "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;" where observe, 1st. That a heart of unbelief is an evil heart. Unbelief is a great sin; it vitiates the heart of man. 2nd. That an evil heart of unbelief is at the bottom of all our sinful departures from God. It is a leading step to apostasy; if we once allow ourselves to distrust God, we may soon desert him. 3rd. That Christian brethren have need to be cautioned against apostasy; "Let them that think they stand take heed lest they fall."

3. He subjoins good counsel to the caution, and advises them to that which would be a remedy against this evil heart of unbelief; namely, that they should "exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day," ver. 13. Observe, 1st. We should be doing all the good we can to one another while we are together, which will be but a short and uncertain time. 2nd. Since to-morrow is none of ours, we must make the best improvement of this day. 3rd. If Christians do not exhort one another daily, they will be in danger of being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Note, 1st. There is a great deal of deceitfulness in sin. It appears fair, but is filthy; it appears pleasant, but is pernicious; it promises much, but performs nothing. 2nd. The deceitfulness of sin is of a hardening nature to the soul. One sin allowed prepares for another; every act of sin confirms the habit. Sinning against conscience is the way to sear the conscience; and therefore it should be the great concern of every one to exhort himself and others to beware of sin.

4. He comforts those that not only set out well, but hold on well, and hold out to the end; ver. 14, "We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end." Here observe, 1st. The

It denotes the turning of the mind to a subject for a practical end, not merely theoretically. "Apostle and High Priest of our profession;" Alford renders, "of our confession"—i.e., Christ is the Apostle and High Priest belonging to the faith which we confess. The term Apostle is appropriate, and would be understood by the Hebrew Christians, inasmuch as it was the word used of the delegates sent by the high priest to collect the Temple tribute from Jews residing in foreign countries. (Compare Matt. xxi. 37.)

iii. 2. Introduces the particular feature which we are to consider, viz., his faithfulness. Translate, "that he is faithful."

iii. 3, 4. For "builded," in these verses, Alford translates "established."

iii. 5. "As a servant;" this is not the word used by St. Paul (Rom. i. 1) of himself, and which signifies "a slave," but one which denotes one who "occupied a more confidential position; that a freer service, a higher dignity was his, than that merely of a slave,

saints' privilege. They are made partakers of Christ, that is, of the spirit, nature, graces, righteousness, and life of Christ; they are interested in all that is Christ's, in all that he is, in all that has done or can do. 2nd. The condition on which they hold that privilege, and that is, their perseverance in the bold and open profession and practice of Christ and Christianity unto the end. Not but they shall persevere, being kept by the mighty power of God through faith to salvation, but to be pressed thus to it is one means by which Christ helps his people to persevere. This tends to make them watchful and diligent, and so keeps them from apostasy. Here observe, *First*. The same spirit with which Christians set out in the ways of God they should maintain and evidence to the end. They that begin seriously, and with lively affections, and holy resolutions, and humble reliance, should go on in the same spirit. But, *Secondly*. There are a great many, who, in the beginning of their profession, shew a great deal of courage and confidence, but do not hold it fast to the end. *Thirdly*. Perseverance in faith is the best evidence of the sincerity of our faith.

5. The apostle resumes what he had quoted before from *Ps. xcv. 7, &c.*; and he applies it close to those of that generation, ver. 15, 16, &c., while it is said, "To-day if ye will hear," &c. As if he should say, What was recited before from that Scripture belonged not only to former ages, but to you now, and to all that shall come after you; that you take heed you fall not into the same sins, lest you fall under the same condemnation. The apostle tells them that, though some who had heard the voice of God did provoke him, yet all did not so. Observe, 1st. Though the greatest part of hearers provoked God by unbelief, yet some there were that believed the report. 2nd. That though the hearing of the word be the ordinary means of salvation, yet, if it be not hearkened to, it will expose men more to the anger of God. 3rd. God will have a remnant that shall be obedient to his voice, and he will take care of such, and make mention of them with honour. 4th. That if these should fall into a common calamity, yet they shall partake of eternal salvation, while disobedient hearers perish for ever.

6. And, lastly, The apostle puts some queries upon what had been before mentioned, and gives proper answers to them; ver. 17—19, "But with whom was he grieved forty years? With them that sinned. And to whom did he swear?" &c. From whence observe, 1st. That God is only grieved with those of his people that sin against him, and continue in sin. 2nd. That God is grieved and provoked most by sins publicly committed, by the generality of a nation; when sin becomes epidemic it is most provoking. 3rd. That God grieves long and bears long when pressed with the weight of general and prevailing wickedness, yet he will at length ease himself of public offenders by public judgments. 4th. That unbelief, and rebellion, which is the consequent of it, is the great damning sin of the world, especially of those that have a revelation of the mind and will of God. This sin shuts up the heart of God, and shuts up the gate of heaven against them; it lays them under the wrath and curse of God, and leaves them there, so that, in truth and justice to himself, he is obliged to cast them off for ever.

CHAPTER IV.

The apostle having in the foregoing chapter set forth the sin and punishment of the ancient Jews, proceeds in this, I. To declare that our privileges by Christ under the Gospel exceed the privileges of the Jewish church under Moses, as a reason why we should make a right improvement of them, ver. 1—4. II. Assigns the cause why the ancient Hebrews did not profit by their religious privileges, ver. 2. Then, III. Confirms the privileges of those that believe, and the misery of those that continue in unbelief, ver. 3—10. Then, IV. Concludes with proper and powerful arguments and motives to faith and obedience, ver. 11—16.



LET us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that

heard it. 3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. 5 And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his

rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

Here, *First*. The apostle declares that our privileges by Christ under the Gospel are not only as great, but greater, than those enjoyed under the Mosaic law. And he instances this, that we have a promise left us of "entering into his rest," that is, of entering into a covenant relation to Christ, and a state of communion with God through Christ, and of growing up therein, till we are made perfect in glory. We have discoveries of this rest, and proposals, and the best directions how we may attain unto it. This promise of spiritual rest is a promise left us by the Lord Jesus Christ in his last will and testament; as a precious legacy. Our business is to see to it that we be the legatees; that we lay our claim to that rest and freedom from the dominion of sin, Satan, and the flesh, by which the souls of men are kept in servitude, and deprived of the true rest of the soul, and may be also set free from the yoke of the law, and all the toilsome ceremonies and services of it, and may enjoy peace with God, in his ordinances, providences, and in our own consciences, and so have the prospect and earnest of perfect and everlasting rest in heaven.

Secondly. He demonstrates the truth of his assertion that we have as great advantages as they; "For," says he, ver. 2, "unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them." The same Gospel for substance was preached under both Testaments, though not so clearly, not in so comfortable a manner under the Old as under the New. The best privileges the ancient Jews had were their gospel privileges, the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Old Testament were the Gospel of that dispensation, and whatever was excellent in it was respect it had to Christ. Now if this was their highest privilege, we are not inferior to them; for we have the Gospel as well as they, and in greater purity and perspicuity than they had.

Thirdly. He assigns the reason why so few of the ancient Jews profited by that dispensation of the Gospel which they enjoyed, and that was their want of faith; "The word preached did not profit them, because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard him," ver. 2. Observe, 1. The word is preached to us that we may profit by it, that we may gain spiritual riches by it; it is a price put into our hands to get wisdom, the rich endowment of the soul. 2. There have been in all ages a great many unprofitable hearers; many that seem to deal much in sermons, in hearing the word of God, but gain nothing to their souls thereby; and they that are not gainers by hearing are great losers. 3. That which is at the bottom of all our unprofitableness under the word is our unbelief. We do not mix faith with what we hear; it is faith in the hearer that is the life of the word. Though the preacher believes the Gospel, and endeavours to mix faith with his preaching, and to speak as one that has believed and so spoken, yet if the hearers have not faith in their souls to mix with the word, they will be never the better for it. This faith must mingle with every word, and be in act and exercise, while we are hearing; and when we have heard the word, assenting to the truth of it, approving of it, accepting the mercy offered, applying the word to ourselves, with suitable affections, then we shall find great profit and gain by the word preached.

Fourthly. On these considerations the apostle grounds his repeated and earnest caution and counsel, that they who enjoy the Gospel should maintain a holy fear and jealousy over themselves, lest latent unbelief should rob them of the benefit of the word, and of that spiritual rest that is discovered and tendered in the Gospel; ver. 1, "Let us fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Observe, 1. Grace and glory are attainable by all under the Gospel. There is an offer, and a promise to those that shall accept the offer. 2. Those that may attain them may also fall short. They that might have attained salvation by faith may fall short by unbelief. 3. That it is a dreadful thing so much as to seem to fall short of the gospel salvation; to seem so to themselves, to lose their comfortable hope, and to seem so to others, so losing the honour of their holy profession. But if it be so dreadful to seem to fall short of this rest, it is much more dreadful really to fall short; such a disappointment must be fatal. 4. One good means to prevent either our real falling short or seeming to fall short is to maintain a holy and religious fear, lest we should fall short. This will make us vigilant and diligent, sincere and serious; this fear will put us upon examining our faith, and exercising it; whereas presumption is the high road to ruin.

Fifthly. The apostle confirms the happiness of all those that truly believe the Gospel; and that he does,

1. By asserting so positively the truth of it, from the experience of himself and others; ver. 3, "We which have believed do enter into rest." We do enter into a blessed union with Christ, and into a communion with God through Christ, and in this state we do actually enjoy many sweet communications of pardon of sin, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and earnest of glory; resting from the servitude of sin, and reposing ourselves in God till we are prepared to rest with him in heaven.

2. He illustrates and confirms it, that they that believe are thus happy, and do enter into rest. 1st. From God's finishing his work of creation, and so entering into his rest, ver. 3, 4, appointing our first parents to rest the seventh day, to rest in God. Now, as God finished his work, and then rested from it, and acquiesced in it, so he will cause those that believe to finish their work, and then to enjoy their rest. 2nd. From God's continuing the observation of the sabbath after the fall and revelation of a Redeemer. They were to keep the seventh day a holy sabbath to the Lord, therein praising him who had raised them up out of nothing by creating power, and praying to him, that he create them anew by his Spirit of grace, and direct their faith to the promised Redeemer and Restorer of all things, by which faith they find rest in their souls.

3. From God's promising Canaan as a typical rest for the Jews that believed; and as those that did believe, namely, Caleb and Joshua, did actually enter into Canaan, so those that now believe shall enter into rest.

4. From the certainty of another rest besides that seventh day of rest instituted and observed both before and after the fall, and besides that typical Canaan rest which most of the Jews fell short of by unbelief; for the Psalmist hath spoken of another day, and another rest. From whence it is evident that there is a more spiritual and excellent sabbath remaining for the people of God than that into which Joshua led the Jews, ver. 6—8; and this rest remaining is, 1st. A rest of grace, and comfort, and holiness in the gospel state. This is the rest wherewith the Lord Jesus, our Joshua, causes weary souls and awakened consciences to rest, and this is the refreshing. 2nd. A rest in glory. The everlasting sabbatism of heaven, which is the repose and perfection of nature and grace, too, where the people of God shall enjoy the end of their faith, and the object of all their desires.

5. This is further proved from the glorious forerunners, who have actually taken possession of this rest, God and Christ. It is certain God, after the creating of the world in six days, entered into his rest; and it is certain that Christ, when he had finished the work of our redemption, entered into his rest; and these were not only examples but earnest, that believers shall enter into their rest; ver. 10, "He that hath entered into rest hath also ceased from his own works, as God did from his." Every true believer hath ceased from his own

"of his sin." But does not the warning rather refer to the sin of which their fathers had been guilty, viz., apostasy through unbelief? "Take heed lest among you any should fall after the same example." (Compare chap. iv. 11.) This harmonises with the remainder of the chapter.

iii. 16. Alford turns both clauses of this verse into a question: "For who were they that heard and provoked? Nay, was it not all that came out of Egypt by Moses?"

approaching more closely to that of a steward" (Trench, "New Testament Synonyms").

iii. 6. "The rejoicing of the hope;" rather, the matter or ground of our rejoicing, or of our glorying, boasting. It is the bold and resolute maintenance of the ground of our hope which is here urged.

iii. 12, 13. "In any of you," &c.: "lest there be among you any," &c. The warning is pointed to the Hebrew Christians. "Hardened through the deceitfulness of sin;" of what sin? Alford renders,

works of sin, from relying on his own works of righteousness, and from the burdensome works of the law, as God and Christ have ceased from their works of creation and redemption.

Sixthly. The apostle confirms the misery of those that do not believe. They shall never enter into this spiritual rest, either of grace here or glory hereafter. This is as certain as the word and oath of God can make it; as sure as God is entered into his rest, so sure it is that obstinate unbelievers shall be excluded; as sure as the unbelieving Jews fell in the wilderness, and never reached the promised land, so sure it is that unbelievers shall fall into destruction, and never reach heaven; as sure as Joshua, the great captain of the Jews, could not give them possession of Canaan because of their unbelief, notwithstanding his eminent valour and conduct, so sure it is that even Jesus himself, the Captain of our salvation, notwithstanding all that fulness of grace and strength that dwells in him, will not, cannot, give to final unbelievers either spiritual or eternal rest; it only remains for the people of God, others by their sin abandon themselves to eternal restlessness.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts



PRIEST DIVIDING THE SACRIFICE.

and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. 14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

In this latter part of the chapter the apostle concludes, first, with a serious, repeated exhortation, and then with proper and powerful motives.

First. Here we have a serious exhortation; ver. 11, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest." Observe, 1. The end proposed. Rest, spiritual and eternal; the rest of grace here, and glory hereafter; in Christ on earth, with Christ in heaven. 2. The way to this end prescribed, and that is labour, diligent labour. This is the only way to rest; they that will not work now shall not rest hereafter. After due and diligent labour sweet and satisfying rest shall follow, and labour now will make that rest more pleasant when it comes; "The sleep of the labouring man is sweet," *Eccl. v. 12*. Let us, therefore, labour, let us all agree, and be unanimous in this, and let us quicken one another, and call upon one another to this diligence. It is the truest act of friendship, when we see our fellow Christians loiter, to call upon them to mind their business, and labour at it in earnest. Come, sirs, let us all go to work; why do we sit still? why do we loiter? Come, let us labour, now is our working time, our rest remains. Thus should Christians call upon themselves, and one another, to be diligent in duty, and so much the more as we see the day approaching.

Secondly. Here we have proper and powerful motives to make the advice effectual, which are drawn,

1. From the dreadful example of those that have already perished by unbelief; "lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." To have seen so many fall before us will be a great aggravation of our sin, if we will not take warning by them: their ruin calls loudly upon us their lost and restless souls cry to us

from their torments, that we do not, by sinning as they did, make ourselves miserable as they are.

2. From the great help and advantage we may have from the word of God to strengthen our faith and excite our diligence, that we may obtain this rest; ver. 12, "The word of God is quick and powerful," &c. By the word of God we may understand either the essential or the written word; the essential Word, that "in the beginning was with God, and was God," *Jno. i. 1*, the Lord Jesus Christ, and indeed what is said in this verse as concerning him; but most understand of the written word, the holy Scriptures, which are the word of God. Now of this word it is said,

1st. That it is quick. It is very lively and active in all its efforts in seizing the conscience of the sinner, in cutting him to the heart, and in comforting him and binding up the wounds of the soul. They know not the word of God that call it a dead letter, as the Papists and the Quakers do; it is quick, compared to the light—and nothing quicker than the light. It is not only quick, but quickening; it is a vital light; it is a living word, *Gen.* Saints die, and sinners die; but the word of God lives. "All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever," *1 Pet. i. 24, 25*. "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? But my words, which I commanded the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers?" *Zec. i. 5, 6*.

2nd. It is powerful. When God sets it home by his Spirit it convinces powerfully, converts powerfully, and comforts powerfully. It is so powerful as to pull down strongholds, *2 Cor. x. 4, 5*; to raise the dead, to make the deaf to hear, and the blind to see, and the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk. It is powerful to batter down Satan's kingdom, and to set up the kingdom of Christ upon the ruins thereof.

3rd. It is "sharper than any two-edged sword." It cuts both ways; it is "the sword of the Spirit," *Eph. vi. 17*. It is the two-edged sword that cometh out of the mouth of Christ," *Rev. i. 16*. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, for it will enter where no other sword can, and make a more critical dissection; it pierceth to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the soul and its habitual prevailing temper; it makes a soul that has been a long time of a proud spirit to be humble, of a perverse spirit to be meek and obedient. Those sinful habits that are become as it were natural to the soul, and radicately deeply in it, and become in a sort one with it, are separated and cut off by this sword. It cuts off ignorance from the understanding, rebellion from the will, enmity from the mind, which, when carnal, is enmity itself against God. This sword divides between "the joints and the marrow," the most secret, close, and intimate parts of the body; this sword can cut off the lusts of the flesh as well as the lusts of the mind, and make men willing to undergo the sharpest operation for the mortifying of sin.

4th. It is "a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart," even the most secret and remote thoughts and designs. It will discover to men the variety of their thoughts and purposes, the villeness of them, the bad principles they are actuated by, the sinister and sinful ends they act to. The word will turn the inside of a sinner out, and let him see all that is in his heart. Now such a word as this must needs be a great help to our faith and obedience.

3. From the perfections of the Lord Jesus Christ, both of his person and office.

1st. Person particularly. His omniscience; ver. 13, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but," &c. This is agreeable to what Christ speaks of himself, *Rev. ii. 23*, "All the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts." None of the creatures can be concealed from Christ, none of the creatures of God, for Christ is the creator of them all; none of the motions and workings of our heads and hearts, which may be called creatures of our own, but what are open and manifest to him with whom we have to do as the object of our worship, and the High Priest of our profession. He, by his omniscience, cuts up the sacrifice we bring to him, that it may be presented to the Father. Now, as the high priest inspected the sacrificed beasts, cut them up to the backbone, to see whether they were sound at heart, so all things are thus dissected, and lie open to the piercing eye of our great High Priest; and he that now tries our sacrifices will at length, as Judge, try our state; we shall have to do with him as one that will determine our everlasting state. Some read the words, to whom with us there is an account or reckoning. Christ hath an exact account of us all; he has accounted for all that believe on him, and he will account with all; our accounts are before him. This omniscience of Christ, and the account we owe of ourselves to him, should engage us to persevere in faith and obedience till he has perfected all our affairs.

2nd. We have an account of the excellency and perfection of Christ, as to his office, and this particular office of our High Priest. The apostle first instructs Christians in the knowledge of their High Priest, what kind of priest he is; and then puts them in mind of the duty they owe on this account.

First. What a kind of high priest Christ is; ver. 14, "Seeing we have such an High Priest;" that is, 1st. A great high priest, much greater than Aaron, or any of the priests of his order. The high priests under the law were accounted great and venerable persons; but they were but faint types and shadows of Christ. The greatness of our High Priest is set forth, (1.) By his being passed into the heavens. The high priest under the law once a year went out of the people's sight within the veil, into the holiest of all, where were the sacred signals of the presence of God; but Christ once for all is passed into the heavens, to take the government of all upon him, to send the Spirit to prepare a place for his people, and to make intercession for them. Christ executed one part of the priesthood on earth in dying for us; the other he executes in heaven by pleading the cause, and presenting the offerings, of his people. (2.) The greatness of Christ is set forth by his name Jesus, a Physician and a Saviour, and one of a Divine nature, the Son of God by eternal generation; and, therefore, having Divine perfection, able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. 2nd. He is not only a great, but a gracious High Priest, merciful, compassionate, and sympathizing with his people; ver. 15, "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Though he is so great, and so far above us, yet he is very kind and tenderly concerned for us. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities in such a manner as none else can be; for he was himself tried with all the afflictions and troubles that are incident to our nature in its fallen state, and this not only that he might be able to satisfy for us, but to sympathize with us. But then, 3rd. He is a sinless high priest. He was in all things tempted as we are, yet without sin. He was tempted by Satan, but he came off without sin. We seldom meet with temptations but they give us some shock. We are apt to give back, though we do not yield; but our great High Priest came off clear in his encounter with the devil; he could neither find any sin in him nor fix any stain upon him. He was tried severely by the Father. It pleased the Lord to bruise him; and yet he sinned not, either in thought, word, or deed. He had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled; and such a high priest became us. Having thus told us what a one our High Priest is, the apostle proceeds to shew us,

Secondly. How we should demean ourselves towards him. "Let us hold fast our profession" of faith in him, ver. 14. Let us never deny him, never be ashamed of him before men. Let us hold fast the enlightening doctrines of

iv. 1. "Being left us;" or "being still left us." The promise of entering rest descends as a heritage, and still remains to the Israel of God (verses 3—9). "Should seem to come:" rather, "to have come short of it;" either should be found when the great trial of all shall take place to have come short (Alford), or "should seem"—i.e., lest there should be any appearance of having fallen short of the promise and the rest. Another view of the verse, favoured by Baugarten, Ebrard, &c., makes it a caution: "lest any

should think that he has arrived too late, and so come short of the benefit of the promise." The former view seems more consonant with the apostle's argument.

iv. 2. "Not being mixed with faith:" by some this is understood to mean that the word preached was not mixed with or fraught with a power of faith—i.e., the word of the Old Testament possessed no power like that of the New to pierce the heart and work faith there. (Compare verse 12.) Against this is to be set the fact that

Christianity in our heads, and the enlivening principles of it in our hearts, and the open profession of it in our lips, and our practical and universal subjection to it in our lives. Observe here, 1st. We ought to be possessed of the doctrines, principles, and practice of the Christian life. 2nd. When we are so we may be in danger of losing our hold, from the corruption of our hearts, the temptations of Satan, and the allurements of this evil world. 3rd. That the excellency of the High Priest of our profession would make our apostasy from him most heinous and inexcusable; it would be the greatest folly, and the basest ingratitude. 4th. Christians must not only set out well, but they must hold out; they that endure to the end shall be saved, and none but they.

3rd. We should encourage ourselves by the excellency of our High Priest to "come boldly to the throne of grace," ver. 16. Where observe, *First*. There is a throne of grace set up, a way of worship instituted, in which God may with honour meet poor sinners, and treat with them, and they may with hope draw nigh to him, repenting and believing. God might have set up a tribunal of strict and inexorable justice, dispensing death, the wages of sin, to all that are convicted before it; but he has chosen to set up a throne of grace. A throne speaks authority, and bespeaks awe and reverence; a throne of grace speaks great encouragement even to the chief of sinners: there grace reigns, and acts with sovereign freedom, power, and bounty. [The throne of grace, or the mercy-seat, was above the ark, within the sanctuary, and represented God in Christ reconciled to his people, gracious and merciful unto them. To this he alludeth, and by this means teacheth us that the substance of that typical mercy-seat is to be found in Christ under the Gospel. In him God is ever to be found on his throne of grace.] *Secondly*. It is our duty and interest to be often found before this throne of grace, waiting on the Lord in all the duties of his worship, secret, private, and public. It is good for us to be there. *Thirdly*. Our business and errand at the throne of grace should be, that we obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Mercy and grace are the things we want; mercy to pardon all our sins, and grace to purify our souls. *Fourthly*. That besides the daily dependence we have upon God for present supplies, there are some seasons in which we shall most sensibly need the mercy and grace of God; and we should lay up prayers against such seasons, times of temptation, either by adversity or prosperity, and especially a dying time; we should every day put up a petition for mercy in our last day. The Lord grant unto us that we may find mercy of the Lord at that day, 2 Tim. i. 18. *Fifthly*. That in all our approaches to this throne of grace for mercy we should come with an humble freedom and boldness, with a liberty of spirit and a liberty of speech; we should ask in faith, nothing doubting; we should come with a spirit of adoption, as children, to a reconciled God and Father. We are indeed to come with reverence and godly fear, but not with terror and amazement; not as if we were dragged before the tribunal of justice, but kindly invited to the mercy-seat, where grace reigns, and loves to exert and exalt itself towards us. *Sixthly*. That the office of Christ, as being our High Priest, and such a high priest, should be the ground of our confidence in all our approaches to the throne of grace. Had we not a Mediator we could have no boldness in coming to God, for we are guilty and polluted creatures; all we do is polluted. We cannot go into the presence of God alone; we must either go in the hand of a Mediator or our hearts and our hopes will fail us. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; he is our Advocate, and while he pleads for his people he pleads with the price in his hand, by which he has purchased all that our souls want or can desire.

CHAPTER V.

In this chapter the apostle continues his discourse upon the priesthood of Christ, a sweet subject, which he would not too soon dismiss. And here, I. He explains the nature of the priestly office in general, ver. 1-3. II. The proper and regular call there must be to this office, ver. 4-6. III. The requisite qualifications for the work, ver. 7-9. IV. The peculiar order of the priesthood of Christ; it was not after the order of Aaron, but of Melchisedec, ver. 6-10. V. He reproves the Hebrews that they had not made those improvements in knowledge as might have made them capable of looking into the more abstruse and mysterious parts of Scripture, ver. 11-14.



OR every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: 2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with

infirmity. 3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. 4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. 5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. 6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience

by the things which he suffered; 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;



SUPPLIANTS BEARING OLIVE BRANCHES.—ver. 7.

We have here an account of the nature of the priestly office in general, though with an accommodation to the Lord Jesus Christ, where we are told,

First. Of what kind of beings the high priest must be. He must be taken from among men; he must be a man, one of ourselves, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and spirit of our spirits, a partaker of our nature, and a standard-bearer among ten thousand. This implies, 1. That man had sinned. 2. That God would not admit sinful man to come to him immediately and alone without a high priest, who must be taken from among men. 3. That God was pleased to take one from among men by whom they might approach God in hope, and he might receive them with honour. 4. That every one shall now be welcome to God that comes to him by this high priest.

Secondly. For whom every high priest is ordained. "For men in things pertaining to God," that is, for the glory of God, and the good of men, that he might come between God and man. So Christ did; and therefore let us never attempt to go to God but through Christ, nor expect any favour from God but through Christ.

Thirdly. For what purpose was every high priest ordained. "That he might offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin."

1. "That he might offer gifts," or free-will offerings, brought to the high priest, so offered for the glory of God, and as an acknowledgment that our all is of him, and from him; we have nothing but what he is pleased to give us, and of his own we offer to him an oblation of acknowledgment. This intimates, 1st. That all we bring to God must be free, and not forced; it must be a gift, it must be given, and not taken away again. 2nd. That all we bring to God must go through the High Priest's hands, as the great agent between God and man.

2. "That he might offer sacrifices for sin;" that is, the offerings that were appointed to make atonement, that sin might be pardoned, and sinners accepted. Thus Christ is constituted a high priest for both these ends. Our good deeds must be presented by Christ to render ourselves and them acceptable; and our evil deeds must be expiated by the sacrifice of himself, that they may not condemn and destroy us. And now, as we value acceptance with God, and pardon, we must apply ourselves by faith to this our great High Priest.

Fourthly. How this High Priest must be qualified, ver. 2.

1. He must be one that can have compassion on two sorts of persons. 1st. "On the ignorant," or those that are guilty of sins of ignorance. He must be one that can find in his heart to pity them, and intercede with God for them; one that is willing to instruct them that are dull of understanding. 2nd. On those that are out of the way, out of the way of truth, duty, and happiness; and he must be one that has tenderness enough to lead them back from the by-paths of error, sin, and misery, into the right way. And this will require great patience and compassion, even the compassion of a God.

2. He must also be "compassed with infirmity," and so be able from himself, feelingly, to consider our frame, and to sympathize with us. Thus Christ was qualified; he took upon him our sinless infirmities; and this gives us great encouragement to apply ourselves to him under every affliction, for in all the afflictions of his people he is afflicted.

Fifthly. How the high priest was to be called of God; and he must have both an internal and an external call to his office; for "no man taketh the honour to himself," ver. 4; that is, no man ought to do it, no man can do it legally; if any does it, he must be reckoned an usurper, and treated accordingly. Here observe,

1. The office of the priesthood was a very great honour, to be employed to stand between God and man; one while representing God, and his will to men, at another time representing man and his case to God; and dealing between them about matters of the highest importance, intrusted on both sides with the honour of God, and the happiness of man, must render the office very honourable.

2. That the priesthood is an office and honour that no man ought to take to himself; if he does, he can expect no success in it, nor any reward for it, only from himself. He is an intruder who is not called of God, as was Aaron. Observe, 1st. God is the Fountain of all honour, especially true, spiritual honour. He is the Fountain of true authority, whether he calls any to the priesthood in an extraordinary way, as he did Aaron, or in an ordinary way, as he called his successors. 2nd. That those only can expect assistance from God, and acceptance with him, and his presence and blessing on them and their administrations, that are called of God; others may expect a blast instead of a blessing.

Sixthly. How this is brought home and applied to Christ; ver. 5, "So Christ

the force of the warning (chap. iii. 17-19) turns not on the weakness of the promise, but the want of faith in those who heard it. The discussion of the weakness of the old covenant comes later (chap. viii. 7-9).

iv. 3. "Do enter;" or "are entering into rest." "Although the works," &c.: Ebrard understands the passage thus:—"Although the way of entering into rest by works was open from the foundation of the world—i.e. we are entering rest, but it is by faith; for though

the way by works was open, God's word declared none should enter." "As I have sworn," &c.: but better is it to take it as declaring that the way of true rest was open from the beginning (the works finished surely refer to God resting on the seventh day), and that the only cause of failure was in man's unbelief. We are entering by the way of faith which existed from old time, and which Israel missed.

iv. 6, 7. These verses must be connected. Their drift seems to be, "Seeing that some must enter, for the promise of rest was not ex-

glorified not himself. Observe here, though Christ reckoned it his glory to be made a High Priest, yet he would not assume that glory to himself. He could truly say, "I seek not mine own glory," *Jno. viii. 50*. Consider him as God; he was not capable of any additional glory, but as man and Mediator he did not run without being sent; and if he did not, surely others should be afraid to do it.

Seventhly. The apostle prefers Christ before Aaron, both in the manner of his call, and in the holiness of his person.

1. In the manner of his call, in which God said unto him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," quoted from *Ps. ii. 7*, referring both to his eternal generation as God, his wonderful conception as man, and his perfect qualification as Mediator. Thus God solemnly declares his dear affection to Christ, his authoritative appointment of him to the office of a Mediator, his instalment and approbation of him in that office, his acceptance of him, and of all he had done or should do in the discharge of it. Now God never said thus to Aaron. Another expression that God used in the call of Christ we have in *Ps. cx. 4*, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec," ver. 6. God the Father appointed him a priest of a higher order than that of Aaron. The priesthood of Aaron was to be temporary, the priesthood of Christ was to be perpetual; the priesthood of Aaron was to be successive, descending from the fathers to the children; the priesthood of Christ, after the order of Melchisedec, was to be personal, and the High Priest immortal as to his office, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, as it is more largely described in the seventh chapter, and will be opened there.

2. Christ is here preferred to Aaron in the holiness of his person. Other priests were to offer up sacrifices, as for the sins of others, so for themselves, ver. 3. But Christ need not to offer for sins for himself, "for he had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth," *Isa. liii. 9*. And such a High Priest became us.

Eighthly. We have an account of Christ's discharge of this his office, and of the consequences of that discharge, ver. 7—9.

1. The discharge of his office of the priesthood; ver. 7, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears," &c. Where observe, 1st. That he took to him flesh, and for some days he tabernacled therein; that is, he became a mortal man, and reckoned his life by days; herein setting us an example how we should reckon ours. Would we reckon our lives by days, it would be a means to quicken us to do the work every day in its day. 2nd. That Christ, in the days of his flesh, subjected himself to death; he was a hungered, tempted, bleeding, dying Jesus! His body is now in heaven, but it is a spiritual, glorious body. 3rd. God the Father was able to save him from death. He could have prevented his dying, but he would not; for then the great design of his wisdom and grace must have been defeated. What would have become of us if God had saved Christ from dying? The Jews reproachfully said, "Let him deliver him now, if he will have him," *Mat. xxvii. 43*. But it was in kindness to us that the Father would not suffer that bitter cup to pass away from him; for then we must have drunk the dregs of it, and been miserable for ever. 4th. Christ, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications to his Father, as an earnest of his intercession in heaven. A great many instances we have of Christ's praying. This refers to his prayer in his agony, *Jno. xvii. 39*, and *ch. xvii. 46*, and to that before his agony, *Jno. xvii.*, which he put up for his disciples, and all that should believe on his name. 5th. The prayers and supplications that Christ offered up were joined with strong cries and tears; herein setting us an example not only to pray, but to be fervent and importunate in prayer. How many dry prayers, how few wet ones, do we offer up to God! 6th. That Christ was heard in that he feared. How? Why, he was answered by present supports in and under his agonies, and in being carried well through death, and delivered from it by a glorious resurrection; he was "heard in that he feared." He had an awful sense of the wrath of God, of the weight of sin. His human nature was ready to sink under the heavy load, and would have sunk, had he been quite forsaken in point of help and comfort from God; but he was heard in this, he was supported under the agonies of death. He was carried through death, and there is no real deliverance from death but to be carried well through it. We may have many recoveries from sickness, but are never saved from death till we are carried well through it. And they that are thus saved from death shall be fully delivered at last by a glorious resurrection, of which the resurrection of Christ was the earnest and first-fruits.

2. The consequences of this discharge of his office, ver. 8, 9, &c. 1st. By his sufferings, he learned obedience, though he was a Son, ver. 8. Here observe, *First*. The privilege of Christ. He was a Son, the only begotten of the Father. One would have thought this might have exempted him from suffering, but it did not. Let none, then, who are the children of God by adoption, expect an absolute freedom from suffering; "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" *Secondly*. Christ made improvement by his sufferings. He learned obedience; by his passive obedience he learned active obedience; that is, he practised that great lesson, and made it appear that he was well and perfectly learned in it. Though he never was disobedient, yet he never performed such an act of obedience as when he became obedient to death, even to the death of the cross. Here he hath left us an example that we should learn by all our afflictions a humble obedience to the will of God. We need affliction to teach us submission. 2nd. By these, his sufferings, he was made perfect, and became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him, ver. 9. *First*. Christ, by his sufferings, was consecrated to his office, consecrated by his own blood. *Secondly*. By his suffering he consummated that part of his office which was to be performed on earth, making reconciliation for iniquity; and in this sense he is said to be made perfect, a perfect propitiation. *Thirdly*. Hereby he is become the Author of eternal salvation to men. He has, by his sufferings, purchased a full deliverance from sin and misery, and a full fruition of holiness and happiness for his people. Of this salvation he hath given notice in the Gospel; he has made a tender of it in the new covenant, and has sent the Spirit to enable men to accept this salvation. *Fourthly*. This salvation is actually bestowed on none but those that obey Christ. It is not sufficient that we have some doctrinal knowledge of Christ, or that we make a profession of faith in him, but we must hearken to his word, and obey him. He is exalted to be a Prince to rule us, as well as a Saviour to deliver us; and he will be a Saviour to none but to those to whom he is a Prince, and who are willing that he should reign over them; the rest he will account his enemies, and treat them accordingly. But to those that obey him, devoting themselves to him, denying themselves, and taking up their cross and following him, he will be the Author, *aioros*, the grand cause of their salvation, and they shall own him as such for ever.

10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. 11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be

teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Here the apostle returns to what he had in ver. 6 cited out of *Ps. cx.*, concerning the peculiar order of the priesthood of Christ, that is, "the order of Melchisedec." And here,

First. He declares he had many things which he could not say to them concerning this mysterious person called Melchisedec, whose priesthood was eternal; and therefore the salvation procured thereby should be eternal also. We have a more particular account of this Melchisedec in *ch. vii*. Some think the things which the apostle means, that were hard to be uttered, were not so much concerning Melchisedec himself as concerning Christ, of whom Melchisedec was the type. And doubtless this apostle had many things to say concerning Christ that were very mysterious, hard to be uttered; there are great mysteries in the person and offices of the Redeemer. Christianity is the great mystery of godliness.

Secondly. He assigns the reason why he did not say all those things concerning Christ, our Melchisedec, that he had to say, and what it was that made it so difficult for him to utter them, and that was the dullness of the Hebrews to whom he wrote; "Ye are dull of hearing." There is a difficulty in the things themselves, and there may be a weakness in the ministers of the Gospel to speak clearly about these things; but generally the fault is in the hearers. Dull hearers make the preaching of the Gospel a difficult thing; and even those that have some faith may be dull hearers, dull of understanding, and slow to believe: the understanding is weak, and does not apprehend these spiritual things; the memory is weak, and does not retain them.

Thirdly. He insists upon the faultiness of this infirmity of theirs. It was not a mere natural infirmity, but it was a sinful infirmity, and more in them than others, by reason of the singular advantages they had enjoyed for improving in the knowledge of Christ; ver. 12, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God." Where observe,

1. What proficiency might have been reasonably expected from these Hebrews; namely, that they might have been so well instructed in the doctrine of the Gospel as to have been teachers of others. Hence learn, 1st. That God takes notice of the time and helps we have for gaining Scripture knowledge. 2nd. That from those to whom much is given much is expected. 3rd. That those who have a good understanding in the Gospel should be teachers of others, if not in a public, yet in a private station. 4th. That none should take upon them to be teachers of others but those who have made a good improvement in spiritual knowledge themselves.

2. Observe the sad disappointment of those just expectations; "Ye have need that one should teach you again," &c. Here note, 1st. That in the oracles of God there are some first principles, plain to be understood, and necessary to be learned. 2nd. That there are also deep and sublime mysteries, which those should search into that have learned the first principles, that so they may stand complete in the whole will of God. 3rd. That some persons, instead of going forward in Christian knowledge, forget the very first principles that they had learned long ago; and, indeed, they that are not improving under the means of grace will be losing. 4th. It is a sin and shame for persons that are men for their age and standing in the church to be children and babes in understanding.

Fourthly. The apostle shews how the various doctrines of the Gospel must be dispensed to different persons. There are in the church babes and persons of full age, ver. 12—14; and there are in the Gospel milk and strong meat. Observe, 1. Those that are babes, unskilful in the word of righteousness, must be fed with milk; they must be entertained with the plainest truths, and these delivered in the plainest manner; "There must be line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," *Isa. xxviii. 10*. Christ despiseth not his babes; he hath provided suitable food for them. It is good to be babes in Christ, but not always to continue in that childish state; we should endeavour to pass the infant state. We should always remain in malice children, but in understanding we should grow up to a manly maturity. 2. There is strong meat for those that are of full age, ver. 14. The deeper mysteries of religion belong to those that are of a higher class in the school of Christ, who have learned the first principles, and well improved them; so that by reason of use they have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, duty and sin, truth and error. Observe, 1st. There have been always in the Christian state children, young men, and fathers. 2nd. Every true Christian, having received a principle of spiritual life from God, stands in need of nourishment to preserve that life. 3rd. That the word of God is food and nourishment to the life of grace; "As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 4th. That it is the wisdom of ministers rightly to divide the word of truth, and to give to every one his portion; milk to babes, and strong meat to those of full age. 5th. That there are spiritual senses, as well as those that are natural. There is a spiritual eye, a spiritual appetite, a spiritual taste. The soul has its sensations as well as the body; these are much depraved and lost by sin, but they are recovered by grace. 6th. It is by use and exercise that these senses are improved, made more quick and strong to taste the sweetness of what is good and true, and the bitterness of what is false and evil. Not only reason and faith, but spiritual sense, will teach men to distinguish between what is pleasing and what is provoking to God, between what is helpful and what is hurtful to our own souls. [7th. To get a man's wits exercised requirerth frequent use of and acquaintance with the Scripture. And without this haunting our mind in the Scriptures, and observing the Lord's counsel therein, a man cannot be able, although he were versed in human writings, to discern false doctrine from true.]

CHAPTER VI.

In this chapter the apostle proceeds to persuade the Hebrews to make a better proficiency in religion than they had done, as the best way to prevent apostasy, the dreadful nature and consequences of which sin he sets forth in a serious manner, ver. 1—8; and then expresses his good hopes concerning them, that they would persevere in faith and holiness, to which he exhorts them, and sets before them the great encouragement they have from God, both with respect to their duty and happiness, ver. 9—20.

haunted, though so many failed through unbelief, he again fixes (not 'again he limiteth') a certain day (to-day), saying in David, so long a time afterward, 'To-day, if ye hear,' &c.

iv. 12. "For the word of God is quick:" i.e., "living." Some have taken this "word of God" to refer to the Word (*Logos*) made flesh, others to the written word. The truth may well combine both, for as the word without the Word is a dead letter, so neither is the Word made known now but by the word.

v. 2. "Who can have compassion:" or deal tenderly with the ignorant and erring. "Infirmity:" "Here, as in chap. vii. 28, the word refers to that native moral weakness with which man is encompassed, not so much as by a garment as by light, or by the skin, so that he can in no condition of earthly life be conceived as separated from it."

v. 7. "Was heard in that he feared:" literally, "was heard from his fear." Some interpret, "Being graciously delivered from what



AHEREFORE leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit. 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. 7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: 8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

[He calleth the principles of religion the principles of the doctrine of Christ. Then, 1. The doctrine of Christ is the sum of religion. He that hath learned Christ well hath learned all. 2. Nothing to be taught in Christ's house but his doctrine, which cometh from him, and tendeth to him.]

First. We have here the apostle's advice to the Hebrews, that they would grow up from a state of childhood to the fullness of the stature of the new man in Christ, and he declares his readiness to assist them all he could in their spiritual progress; and for their greater encouragement he puts himself with them; "Let us go on." Here observe,

1. In order to their growth, Christians must leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ. How must they leave them? They must not lose them, they must not despise them, they must not forget them; they must lay them up in their hearts, and lay them as the foundation of all their profession and expectation. But they must not rest and stay in them; they must not be always laying the foundation, but they must go on and build upon it; there must be a superstructure, for the foundation is laid on purpose to support the building. Here it may be inquired, Why did the apostle resolve to set strong meat before the Hebrews, when he knew they were but babes? Answer, 1st. Though some of them were but weak, yet others of them had gained more strength, and they must be provided for suitably. And as those that are grown Christians must be willing to hear the plainest truths preached for the sake of the weak, so the weak must be willing to hear the more difficult and mysterious truths preached for the sake of those that are strong. 2nd. He hoped they would be growing in their spiritual strength and stature, and so be able to digest stronger meat.

2. The apostle mentions several foundation principles, which must be well laid at first, and then built upon; neither his time nor theirs must be spent in laying these foundations over and over again. These foundations are six:—

1st. Repentance from dead works; that is, conversion and regeneration, repentance from a spiritually dead state and course; as if he had said, Have a care of destroying the life of grace in your souls. Your minds were changed by conversion, and so were your lives; take care that you return not to sin again, for then you must have the foundation to lay again. There must be a second conversion, a repenting not only of but from dead works. Observe here, *First*. That the sins of persons unconverted are dead works; they proceed from persons spiritually dead, and they tend to death eternal. *Secondly*. That repentance for dead works, if it be right, is repentance from dead works; a universal change of heart and life. *Thirdly*. That repentance for and from dead works is a foundation principle, which must not be laid again, though we must renew our repentance daily.

2nd. Faith towards God; a firm belief of the existence of God, of his nature, attributes, and perfection, the trinity of persons in the unity of essence, the whole mind and will of God as revealed in his word, particularly what relates to the Lord Jesus Christ. We must by faith acquaint ourselves with these things, we must assent to them, we must approve of them, and apply all to ourselves with suitable affections and actions. Observe, *First*. That repentance from dead works, and faith towards God, are connected, and always go together; they are inseparable twins; the one cannot live without the other. *Secondly*. Both of these are foundation principles, which should be once well laid, and never pulled up, so as to need to be laid over again; we must not relapse into infidelity.

3rd. The doctrine of baptisms; that is, of being baptized by a minister of Christ with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as the initiating sign or seal of the covenant of grace, strongly engaging the person so baptized to get acquainted with the new covenant, to adhere to it, and prepare to renew it at the table of the Lord, and sincerely to regulate himself according to it; and relying upon the truth and faithfulness of God for the blessings contained in it; and the doctrine of inward baptism, that of the Spirit sprinkling the blood of Christ upon the soul, for justification, and the graces of the Spirit for sanctification. This ordinance of baptism is a foundation to be rightly laid, and daily remembered, but not repeated.

4th. Laying on of hands, either on persons passing solemnly from their initi-

ated state by baptism to the confirmed state, by returning the answer of a good conscience towards God, and sitting down at the Lord's table. This passing from incomplete to complete church membership was performed by the laying on of hands, which the extraordinary conveyance of the gift of the Holy Ghost continued. This once done, all are obliged to abide by, and not to need another solemn admission, as at first, but to go on and grow up in Christ. Or by this may be meant ordination of persons to the ministerial office, who are duly qualified for it, and inclined to it; and this by fasting and prayer, with laying on of the hands of the presbytery, and this is to be done but once.

5th. The resurrection of the dead, that is, of dead bodies, and their reunion with their souls, to be eternal companions together in weal or woe, according as their state was towards God when they died, and the course of life they led in this world.

6th. Eternal judgment, determining the soul of every one, when it leaves the body at death, and both soul and body at the last day, to their eternal state; every one to his proper society and employment to which they were entitled and fitted here on earth,—the wicked to everlasting punishment, the righteous to life eternal.

These are the great foundation principles which ministers should clearly and convincingly unfold and closely apply. In these the people should be well instructed and established, and from these they must never depart; without these, other parts of religion have no foundation to support them.

Secondly. The apostle declares his readiness and resolution to assist the Hebrews in building themselves up on these foundations till they arrive at perfection; ver. 3, "And this we will do, if God permit." And hereby he teaches them, 1. That right resolution is very necessary in order to progress and proficiency in religion. 2. That resolution is right which is not only made in the sincerity of our hearts, but in an humble dependence upon God, both for strength, for assistance and righteousness, for acceptance, and for time and opportunity. 3. That ministers should not only teach people what to do, but go before them and along with them in the way of duty.

Thirdly. He shews that this spiritual growth is the surest way to prevent that dreadful sin of apostasy here from the faith. And here,

1. He shews how far persons may go in religion, and after all fall away and perish for ever, ver. 4, 5. 1st. They may be enlightened. Some of the ancients understand this of their being baptized, but it is rather to be understood of notional knowledge and common illumination, of which persons may have a great deal, and yet come short of heaven. "Balaam was the man whose eyes were opened," Num. xxiv. 3; and yet with his eyes open he went down to utter darkness. 2nd. They may taste of the heavenly gift, feel something of the efficacy of the Holy Spirit in his operations upon their souls, causing them to taste something of religion, and yet be like persons in the market, that taste of what they will not come up to the price of, and so but take a taste and leave it. Persons may taste religion, and seem to like it, if they could have it upon easier terms than denying themselves, and taking up their cross and following Christ. 3rd. They may be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, that is, of his extraordinary and miraculous gifts; they may have cast out devils in the name of Christ, and done many other mighty works. Such gifts in the apostolic age were sometimes bestowed upon those that had no true saving grace. 4th. They may taste of the good word of God, they may have some relish of gospel doctrines, may hear the word with pleasure; they may remember much of it and talk well of it, and yet never be cast into the form and mould of it, nor have it dwell richly in them. 5th. They may have tasted of the powers of the world to come; they may have been under strong impressions concerning heaven and hell, some desires of heaven, and dread of going to hell. These lengths hypocrites may go, and after all turn apostates. Now hence observe, *First*. That those great things are spoken here of those that may fall away, yet it is not here said of them, that they were truly converted, or that they were justified. There is more in true saving grace than all that is here said of apostates. *Secondly*. This therefore is no proof of the final apostasy of true saints. These indeed may fall frequently and foully, but yet they shall not totally nor finally fall from God; the purpose and the power of God, the purchase and the prayer of Christ, the promise of the Gospel, the everlasting covenant that God has made with them, ordered in all things and sure, the indwelling of the Spirit, and the immortal seed of the word,—these are their security. But the tree that hath not these roots will not stand.

2. The apostle describes the dreadful case of such as fall away after they had gone so far in the profession of religion.

1st. The greatness of the sin of apostasy. It is crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to open shame. They declare that they approve of what the Jews did in crucifying Christ, and that they would be glad to do the same thing again if it were in their power. They pour the greatest contempt upon the Son of God, and therefore upon God himself, who expects all should reverence his Son, and honour him as they honour the Father. They do what in them lies to represent Christ and Christianity as a shameful thing, and would have him to be a public shame and reproach. This is the nature of apostasy.

2nd. The great misery of apostates. *First*. It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; it is extremely hazardous. Very few instances can be given of those that have gone so far and fallen away, and yet were brought to true repentance, such a repentance as is indeed a renovation of the soul. Some have thought this is sin against the Holy Ghost, but without ground. The sin here mentioned is plainly apostasy, both from the truth and ways of Christ. God can renew them to repentance, but he seldom does it; and with men themselves it is impossible. *Secondly*. Their misery is exemplified by a proper similitude, taken from the ground that after much cultivation brings forth nothing but briers and thorns, "and therefore is nigh unto cursing, and its end is to be burned" ver. 8. And, to give this the greater force, here is observed the difference that there is between the good ground and the bad, that these contraries, being set one over against the other, may illustrate each other. 1st. Here is a description of the good ground; it drinketh in the rain that cometh often upon it. Believers do not only taste of the word of God, but they drink it in; and this good ground bringeth forth fruit answerable to the cost laid out for the honour of Christ and the comfort of his faithful ministers, who are, under Christ, dressers of the ground; and this fruit-field or garden receives the blessing. God declares fruitful Christians blessed, and all wise and good men account them blessed. They are blessed with increase of grace, and with farther establishment and glory at last. 2nd. Here is the different case of the bad ground. "It beareth briers and thorns;" not only barren of good fruit, but fruitful in that which is bad, briers and thorns, fruitful in sin and wickedness, which is troublesome to all about them, and will be most so to sinners themselves at last; and then such ground is rejected. God will concern himself no more about such wicked apostates; he will let them alone, and cast them out of his care; he will command the clouds that they rain no more upon them. Divine influences shall be restrained; and that is not all, but such ground is "nigh unto cursing;" so far from receiving the blessing, that a dreadful curse hangs over it; though yet, through the patience of God, the curse is not fully executed. Lastly, its "end is to be burned." Apostasy will be punished with everlasting burnings, the fire that shall never be quenched. This is the

he dreaded." Alford renders, "Being heard by reason of his reverent submission." The word rendered "fear," "submission," primarily meant the cautious handling of a precious or fragile vessel. It is used only twice in the New Testament, here and in chap. xii. 28.

v. 9. "Being made perfect:" or completed. "Brought to the end or goal of his learning and suffering through death" (Alford).

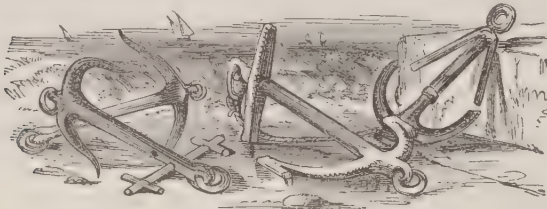
v. 11. "Ye are dull:" or, better, "ye have become dull of hearing."

v. 12. "Ye have need;" Alford renders, "Ye have need that some one teach you the rudiments," &c., not "which be the first," &c.

vi. 1. "Let us go on unto perfection;" this might refer to the intention of the writer to carry on his subject further, but it cannot be without application to the condition of the Hebrew Christians. "He (the writer) with his work of teaching, comes down to the level of learning, and regards that teaching and learning as all one work going on together, himself and them as bound up in one progress"

and end to which apostasy leads, and therefore Christians should go on and grow in grace, lest, if they do not go forward, they should go backward, till they bring matters to this woful extremity of sin and misery. [They must not rest on illumination, or common gifts, how glorious soever, nor tastings and feelings, how sweet soever, but seek still into a more near communion with Christ, and still more to mortify our lusts, and still to abound in the fruits of love to Christ and his church.]

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. 10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, 14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. 17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul,



ANCIENT ANCHORS.

both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

The apostle having applied himself to the fears of the Hebrews, for the exciting their diligence and preventing their apostasy, now proceeds to apply himself to their hopes, and candidly declares the good hope he had concerning them, that they would persevere, and proposes to them the great encouragements they had in the way of their duty.

First. He freely and openly declares the good hope he had concerning them, that they would endure to the end: ver. 9, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you." Observe, 1. There are things that accompany salvation, things that are never separated from salvation, things that shew the person to be in a state of salvation, and will issue in eternal salvation. 2. The things that accompany salvation are better things than ever any hypocrite or apostate enjoyed. They are better in their nature and in their issue. 3. That it is our duty to hope well of those in whom nothing appears to the contrary. 4. Ministers must sometimes speak by way of caution to those of whose salvation they have good hopes. And those that have in themselves good hopes as to their eternal salvation should yet consider seriously how fatal a disappointment it would be if they should fall short. Thus they are to work out their salvation with fear and trembling.

Secondly. He proposes arguments and encouragements to them to go on in the way of their duty. 1. That God had wrought a principle of holy love and charity in them which had discovered itself in suitable works which would not be forgotten of God; ver. 10, "God is not unrighteous to forget your labour of love," &c. Good works and labour proceeding from love to God are commendable, and what is done to any in the name of God shall not go unrewarded. What is done to the saints as such God takes as done to himself. 2. Those that expect a gracious reward for their labour of love must continue in it as long as they have ability and opportunity. "Ye have ministered to the saints, and ye do minister; and we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence." 3. Those that persevere in a diligent discharge of their duty shall attain to the full assurance of hope in the end. Observe, 1st. Full assurance is a higher degree of hope, is full assurance of hope; they differ not in nature,

but only in degree. 2nd. Full assurance is attainable by great diligence and perseverance to the end.

Thirdly. He proceeds to set before them caution and counsel how to attain this "full assurance of hope to the end." 1. That they should not be slothful—that will clothe a man with rags; they must not love their ease, nor lose their opportunities. 2. That they would follow the good examples of those that had gone before, ver. 12. Where learn, 1st. There are some who, from assurance, are gone to inherit the promises. They believed them before, now they inherit them; they are got safe to heaven. 2nd. The way by which they came to the inheritance was that of faith and patience. These graces were implanted in their souls, and drawn forth into act and exercise in their lives. And if we ever expect to inherit as they do, we must follow them in the way of faith and patience. And those that do thus follow them in the way shall overtake them at the end, and be partakers of the same blessedness.

Fourthly. The apostle closes the chapter with a clear and full account of the assured truth of the promises of God, ver. 13–20. They are all confirmed by the oath of God, and they are all founded in the eternal counsel of God, and therefore may be depended upon.

1. They are all confirmed by the oath of God. He has not only given his people his word, and his hand and seal, but his oath. And here you will observe, he instanteth the oath of God to Abraham, which being sworn to him as the father of the faithful, remains in full force and virtue to all true believers. "When God made a promise unto Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself." Observe, 1st. What was the promise? "Surely, blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee." The blessing of God is the blessedness of his people; and those that he hath blessed indeed he will go on to bless, and will multiply blessings till he hath brought them to perfect blessedness. 2nd. What was the oath by which this promise was ratified? "He swore by himself." He staked down his own being and his own blessedness upon it; no greater security can be given or desired. 3rd. How was the oath accomplished? Abraham, in due time, obtained the promise. It was made good to him after he had "patiently endured." First. There is always an interval, and sometimes a long one, between the promise and the performance. Secondly. That interval is a trying time to believers, whether they have patience to endure to the end. Thirdly. Those that patiently endure shall assuredly obtain the blessedness promised, as sure as Abraham did. Fourthly. The end and design of an oath is to make the promise sure, and to encourage those to whom it is made to wait with patience till the time for performance comes, ver. 16. An oath with men is for confirmation, and is an end of all strife. This is the nature and design of an oath, in which men swear by the greater,—not by creatures, but by the Lord himself; and it is to put an end to all dispute about the matter, either to disputes within our own breasts, doubts and distrusts, or disputes with others, especially with the promiser. Now if God would condescend to take an oath to his people, he will surely remember the nature and design of it.

2. The promises of God are all founded in his eternal counsel, and this counsel of his is an immutable counsel. 1st. The promise of blessedness which God has made to believers is not a rash and hasty thing, but the result of God's eternal purpose. 2nd. That this purpose of God was agreed upon in counsel, and settled there between the eternal Father, Son, and Spirit. 3rd. These counsels of God can never be altered; they are immutable. God never needs to change his counsels, for nothing new can arise to him who sees the end from the beginning.

3. These promises of God, that are founded in the immutable counsel of God, and confirmed by the oath of God, may safely be depended upon; for here we have "two immutable things," the counsel and the oath of God, in which it is impossible for God to lie, contrary to his nature as well as to his will. Here observe,

1st. Who they are to whom God has given such full security of happiness. First. They are the heirs of the promise; such as have a title to the promises by inheritance, by virtue of their new birth and union with Christ. We are all by nature children of wrath. The curse is the inheritance we are born to; it is by a new and heavenly birth that any are born heirs to the promise. Secondly. They are such as have fled for refuge to the hope set before them. Under the law there were cities of refuge provided for those that were pursued by the avenger of blood. Here is a much better refuge prepared by the Gospel, a refuge for all sinners that shall have the heart to flee to it; yea, though they have been the chief of sinners.

2nd. What God's design towards them is in giving them such securities, that they might have strong consolation. Observe, First. God is concerned for the consolation of believers, as well as for their sanctification. He would have his children walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. Secondly. The consolations of God are strong enough to support his people under their strongest trials. The comforts of this world are too weak to bear up the soul under temptation, persecution, and death; but the consolations of the Lord are neither few nor small.

3rd. What use the people of God should make of their hope and comfort, that most refreshing and comfortable hope of eternal blessedness that God has given them. Why this, is, and must be unto them, for "an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast," &c., ver. 19. Here, First. We are in this world as a ship at sea, liable to be tossed up and down, and in danger of being cast away. Our souls are the vessels; the comforts, and expectations, and graces, and happiness of our souls are the precious cargo with which these vessels are laden; heaven is the harbour to which we sail; the temptations, persecutions, and afflictions that we encounter are the winds and waves that threaten our shipwreck. Secondly. We have need of an anchor to keep us sure and steady, or we are in continual danger. Thirdly. Gospel hope is our anchor. As in our day of battle it is our helmet, so in our stormy passage through this world it is our anchor. Fourthly. It is "sure and steadfast," or else it could not keep us so.

1st. It is sure in its own nature, for it is the special work of God in the soul; it is good hope through grace; it is not a flattering hope made out of the spider's web, but it is a true work of God,—it is a strong and substantial thing. 2nd. It is steadfast as to its object. It is an anchor that has taken good hold; it enters into that which is within the veil. It is an anchor that is cast upon the rock, the Rock of ages; it does not think to fasten in the sands, but enters within the veil, and fixes there upon Christ; he is the object, he is the anchor-hold, of the believer's hope. As an unseen glory within the veil is what the believer is hoping for, so an unseen Jesus within the veil is the great foundation of his hope; the free grace of God, the merits and mediation of Christ; and the powerful influences of his Spirit, are the grounds of his hope, and so it is a steadfast hope. Jesus Christ is the object and ground of the believer's hope in several respects. (1.) As he is entered within the veil to intercede with God in virtue of that sacrifice which he offered up without the veil, hope fastens upon his sacrifice and intercession. (2.) As he is the Forerunner of his people, gone within the veil to prepare a place for them, and to assure them that they shall follow him, he is the earnest and first-fruits of believers, both in his resurrection and ascension. (3.) As he abides there a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, "a priest for ever," whose priesthood shall never cease, never fail, till it has accomplished its whole work and design, which is the full and

(Alford). The word rendered "let us go on" implies continuance in the course on which they have entered: "let us press forward with sustained effort."

vi. 1, 2. The Jewish character of the hearers must not be forgotten; the force of the passage depends much on this fact. There are three pairs of truths enumerated, and all of them are such that Jewish believers might have known something of from the Old Testament.

vi. 5, 6. "The powers of the world to come:" the miraculous powers of the expected age—i.e., of the Christian dispensation. "If they shall fall away:" or "and yet have fallen away"—i.e., "if with all these privileges they have fallen," &c. "To renew them again:" there is an accumulation of words denoting repetition: "again to make them new creatures." "Unto repentance:" "so as to effect again an entire change in the governing principle of the soul" (Webster and Wilkinson).

final happiness of all that have believed on Christ. Now this should engage us all to clear up our interest in Christ, that we may fix our hopes in him as our Forerunner, that is entered thither for us, for our sakes, for our safety, to watch over our highest interests and concerns. And then let us love heaven the more on his account, and long to be there with him, where we shall be for ever safe, and for ever satisfied.

CHAPTER VII.

The doctrine of the priestly office of Christ is so excellent in itself, and so essential a part of the Christian faith, that the apostle loves to dwell upon it. Nothing made the Jews so fond of their Levitical dispensation as the high esteem they had of their priesthood, and it was doubtless a sacred and most excellent institution. It was a very severe threatening denounced against the Jews, *Hos. iii. 4*, that the children of Israel should "abide many days without a prince or priest, and without a sacrifice, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." Now the apostle assures them that by receiving the Lord Jesus they would have a much better high priest, a priesthood of a higher order, and consequently a better dispensation or covenant, a better law and testament. This he shews in this chapter, where, I. We have a more particular account of Melchisedec, ver. 1—3. II. The excellency of the priesthood before that of Aaron, ver. 4—10. III. An accommodation of all to Christ, to shew the superior excellency of his person, office, and covenant, ver. 11—28.



OR this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.



SALEM, APPROACH TO JERUSALEM.

The chapter foregoing ended with a repetition of what had been cited once and again before out of *Ps. cx. 4*, "Jesus, an High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." Now this chapter is as a sermon upon the text; here the apostle sets before them some of the strong meat he had spoken of before, hoping they would by greater diligence be better prepared to digest it.

First. The great question that first offers itself is, Who was this Melchisedec? All the account we have of him in the Old Testament is in *Gen. xiv. 18, 19, &c.*, and in *Ps. cx. 4*. Indeed we are much in the dark about him; God has thought fit to leave us so, that this Melchisedec might be a more lively type of him whose generation none can declare. If men will not be satisfied with what is revealed, they must rove about in the dark in endless conjectures, some fancying him to have been an angel, others the Holy Ghost, but the opinions concerning him, that are best worthy our consideration, are these three:—

1. The Rabbins, and most of the Jewish writers, think he was Shem the son of Noah, who was king and priest to those they descended from, after the manner of the other patriarchs; but it is not probable he should thus change his name. Besides, we have no account of his settling in the land of Canaan.

2. Many Christian writers have thought him to be Jesus Christ himself, appearing by a special dispensation and privilege to Abraham in the flesh, and who was known to Abraham by the name Melchisedec, which agrees very well to Christ, and to what is said, *Jno. viii. 56*, "Abraham saw his day and rejoiced." Much may be said for this opinion, and what is said in ver. 3 does not seem to agree with any mere man; but then it seems strange to make Christ a type of himself.

3. The most received opinion is, that he was a Canaanite king, that reigned in Salem, and kept up religion and the worship of the true God; that he was raised to be a type of Christ, and was honoured by Abraham as such.

But we shall leave these conjectures, and labour to understand, as far as we can,

Secondly. What is here said of him by the apostle, and how Christ is represented thereby, ver. 1—3.

1. Melchisedec was a king, and so is the Lord Jesus,—a king of God's anointing. The government is laid upon his shoulders, and he rules over all for the good of his people.

2. That he was "King of righteousness;" his name signifies, the righteous King. Jesus Christ is a rightful and a righteous King, rightful in his title, righteous in his government. He is the Lord our righteousness, he has fulfilled all righteousness, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, and he loves righteousness and righteous persons, and hates iniquity.

3. He was "King of Salem," that is, "King of peace," "first King of righteousness, and after that also first King of peace." So is our Lord Jesus; he by his righteousness made peace; the fruit of righteousness is peace. Christ speaks peace, creates peace, he is our Peacemaker.

4. He was "priest of the most high God," qualified and anointed in an extraordinary manner to be his priest among the Gentiles. So is the Lord Jesus; he is the Priest of the most high God, and the Gentiles must come to God by him; it is only through his priesthood that we can obtain reconciliation and remission of sin.

5. "He was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life," ver. 3. This must not be understood according to the letter, but the Scripture has chosen to set him forth as an extraordinary person, without giving us his genealogy, that he might be a fitter type of Christ, who as a man was without father, as God without mother; whose priesthood is without descent, did not descend to him from another, nor from him to another, but is personal and perpetual.

6. That he met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him. The story is recorded, *Gen. xiv. 18*; he brought forth bread and wine to refresh Abraham and his servants when they were weary; he gave as a king, and blessed as a priest. Thus our Lord Jesus meets his people in their spiritual conflicts, and refreshes them, and renews their strength, and blesses them.

7. That Abraham gave him "a tenth part of all," ver. 2; that is, as the apostle explains it, of all the spoils; and this Abraham did, either as an expression of his gratitude for what Melchisedec had done for him, or as a testimony of his homage and subjection to him as a king, or as an offering vowed and dedicated to God, to be presented by his priest. And thus are we obliged to make all possible returns of love and gratitude to the Lord Jesus for all the rich and royal favours we receive from him, and to pay our homage and subjection to him as our King, and to put all our offerings into his hands, to be presented by him to the Father, in the incense of his own sacrifice.

8. That this Melchisedec was "made like unto the Son of God, and abideth a priest continually." He bore the image of God in his piety and authority, and stands upon record as an immortal high priest,—the ancient type of him who is the eternal and only begotten of the Father, who abideth a priest for ever.

4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. 7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. 8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

Let us now consider, as the apostle advises, how great this Melchisedec was, and how far his priesthood was above that of the order of Aaron; ver. 4, 5, &c. "Now consider how great this man was," &c. The greatness of this man and his priesthood appear.

First. From Abraham's paying the tenth of the spoils unto him; and it is well observed that Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec in Abraham, ver. 10. Now Levi received the office of the priesthood from God, and was to take tithes of the people, yet even Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec, as to a greater and higher priest than himself; therefore that high priest who should afterwards appear, of whom Melchisedec was a type, must be much superior to any of the Levitical priests who paid tithes in Abraham to Melchisedec. And now by this argument, of persons doing things that are matters of right or injury in the loins of their predecessors, we have an illustration how we may be said to have sinned in Adam, and fallen with him in his first transgression. We were in Adam's loins when he sinned, and that guilt and pravity that was contracted by the human nature, when it was in our first parents, is equitably imputed and derived to the same nature as it is in all other persons naturally descended from them. It justly adheres to the nature, and it must be by an act of grace if ever it be taken away.

Secondly. From Melchisedec's blessing of Abraham, who "had the promises," ver. 6, 7. "And without contradiction the less is blessed of the greater." Where, 1. Observe Abraham's great dignity and felicity, that he had the promises. He was one in covenant with God, to whom God had given exceeding great and precious promises. That man is rich and happy indeed that hath an estate in bills and bonds, under God's own hand and seal. These promises are both of the life that now is and of that which is to come; this honour have all those who receive the Lord Jesus, in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen. 2. Melchisedec's greater honour, in that it was his place and privilege to bless Abraham; and it is an uncontested maxim, that the less is blessed of the greater, ver. 7. He that gives the blessing is greater than he that receives it, and therefore Christ, the antitype of Melchisedec, the meritor and mediator of all blessings to the children of men, must be greater than all the priests of the order of Aaron.

vi. 7. "For them by whom," &c.: rather as in the margin, "for whom it is dressed"—i.e., for them on whose account it is dressed.

vi. 8. "Rejected:" or proved to be worthless. The word implies that it has been tried and found worthless. Note the likeness of this allegory to the parable of the sower.

vi. 9. "Things that accompany salvation:" this answers to the expression "nigh unto cursing," in verse 8. The things bound to or linked with salvation.

vi. 12. "Not slothful:" "that ye become not slothful, but followers or imitators of them who inherit, or are inheriting, the promises."

vi. 16. "End of all strife:" or contradiction, or gainsaying,—i.e., so that those who take the oath cannot gainsay it. This suits the expression, "it was impossible for God to lie" (verse 18).

vi. 19, 20. "Veil:" i.e., the second veil, which shut in the holiest of all, "where, as forerunner for us (i.e., in our behalf) entered Jesus" (Alford).

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For *it is evident* that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God. 20 And inasmuch as not without an oath *he was made priest*: 21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. 23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

Observe the necessity there was of raising up another "priest after the order of Melchisedec," and not "after the order of Aaron," by whom that perfection should come that could not come by the Levitical priesthood, which therefore must be changed, and the whole economy with it, ver. 11, 12, &c. Here,

First. It is asserted, that perfection could not come by the Levitical priesthood and the law; they could not put those that came to them into the perfect enjoyment of the good things they pointed out unto them; they could only direct them to look farther,—they could only shew them the way.

Secondly. That therefore another priest must therefore be raised up after the order of Melchisedec, by whom, and his law of faith, perfection might come to all that obey him. And, blessed be God, that we may have perfect holiness and perfect happiness by Christ in the covenant of grace, according to the Gospel, for we are complete in him.

Thirdly. It is asserted that, the priesthood being changed, there must of necessity be a change of the law, there being so near a relation between the priesthood and the law. The dispensation could not be the same under another priesthood; a new priesthood must be under a new regulation, managed in another way, and by rules proper to its nature and order.

Fourthly. It is not only asserted, but proved, that the priesthood and law are changed, ver. 13, 14. That priesthood and law, by which perfection could not come, are abolished, and a Priest is risen, and a dispensation now set up, by which true believers may be made perfect. Now that there is such a change is obvious.

1. In the tribe of which the priesthood comes. Before, it was the tribe of Levi; but our great High Priest sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood, ver. 14. This change of the family shews a real change of the law of priesthood.

2. In the form and order of making the priests. Before, in the Levitical priesthood, they were made after the law of a carnal commandment; but our present High Priest was made after the power of an endless life. The former law appointed that the office should descend, upon the death of the father, unto his eldest son, according to the order of carnal or natural generation; for none of the high priests under that law were without father or mother, or without descent; they had not life and immortality in themselves. They had both beginning of days and end of life, and so the carnal commandment or law of primogeniture directed their succession, as it did in matters of civil right and inheritance. But the law by which Christ was constituted a priest after the order of Melchisedec was the power of an endless life. That life and immortality which he had in himself was his right and title to the priesthood, not his descent from former priests. This makes a great difference in the priesthood, and in the economy too, and gives the preference vastly to Christ and the Gospel. The very law which constituted the Levitical priesthood supposed the priests to be weak, frail, dying creatures, not able to preserve their own natural lives, but must be content and glad to survive in their posterity after the flesh; much less could they by any power or authority they had convey spiritual life and blessedness to those that came to them. But the High Priest of our profession holds his office by that innate power of endless life which he has in himself, not only to preserve himself alive, but to communicate spiritual and eternal life to all those that duly rely upon his sacrifice and intercession. Some think "the law of the carnal commandment" refers unto the external rites of consecration, and the carnal offerings that were made; but "the power of an endless life" to the spiritual living sacrifices proper to the Gospel, and the spiritual and eternal privileges purchased by Christ, who was consecrated by the eternal Spirit of life that he received without measure.

3. There is a change in the efficacy of the priesthood. The former was weak and unprofitable, made nothing perfect; the latter brought in "a better hope, by which we draw near to God," ver. 18, 19. The Levitical priesthood brought nothing to perfection; it could not justify men's persons from guilt; it could not sanctify them from inward pollution; it could not cleanse the consciences of the worshippers from dead works; all it could do was to lead them to the antitype. But the priesthood of Christ carries in it, and brings along with it, a better hope; it shews us the true foundation of all that hope we have towards God for pardon and salvation; and it more clearly discovers the great objects of our hope, and so it tends to work in us a more strong and lively hope of acceptance with God. And by this hope we are encouraged to draw nigh unto God, to enter into a covenant union with him, to live a life of converse and communion with him. We may now draw near with a true heart, and with the full assurance of faith, having our minds sprinkled from an evil conscience. The former priesthood rather kept men at a distance, and under a spirit of bondage.

4. There is a change in God's way of acting in this priesthood. He has taken an oath to Christ, which he never did to any of the order of Aaron. God never gave them any such assurance of their continuance, never engaged himself by oath or promise, that theirs should be an everlasting priesthood; and therefore gave them no reason to expect the perpetuity of it, but rather to look upon it as a temporary law. But Christ was made a priest with the oath of God; "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," ver. 21. Here God has upon oath declared the immutability, excellency, efficacy, and eternity of the priesthood of Christ.

5. There is a change in that covenant, of which the priesthood was a security, and the priest a surety; that is, a change in the dispensation of that covenant. The gospel dispensation is more full, free, more perspicuous, more spiritual, and more efficacious, than that of the law. Christ is in this gospel covenant a surety for us to God, and for God to us, to see that the articles be performed on both parts. He as surely has tied the Divine and human nature together in his own person, and therein given assurance of reconciliation; and he has as surely tied God and man together in the bond of the everlasting covenant. He pleads with men to keep their covenant with God, and he pleads with God that he will fulfil his promises to men, which he is always ready to do in a way suitable to his majesty and glory, that is, through a Mediator.

6. There is a remarkable change in the number of the priests under these different orders. In that of Aaron, there was a multitude of priests, of high priests, not at once, but successively; but in this of Christ there is but one and the same. The reason is plain, the Levitical priests were many, because "they were not suffered to continue by reason of death." Their office, how high and honourable soever, could not secure them from dying; and as one died another must succeed, and after awhile must give place to a third, till the number was become very great. But this our High Priest continues for ever, and his priesthood is ἀκατάβατον, "an unchangeable one," that does not pass from one to another, as the former did; it is always in the same hand. There can be no vacancy in this priesthood, no hour or moment in which the people are without a priest to negotiate their spiritual concerns in heaven. Such a vacancy might be very dangerous and prejudicial to them; but this is their safety and happiness, that this ever-living High Priest is able to save to the utmost, in all times, in all cases, in every juncture, all "that come to God by him," ver. 25. So that here is a manifest alteration much for the better.

7. There is a remarkable difference in the moral qualifications of the priests. Those that were of the order of Aaron were not only mortal men, but sinful men, that had their sinful as well as natural infirmities; they needed to offer up sacrifices first for their own sins, and then for the people. But our High Priest, who was consecrated by the word of the oath, needed only to offer up once for the people, never at all for himself; for he has not only an immutable consecration to his office, but an immutable sanctity in his person. He is "such an High Priest as became us, holy, harmless, and undefiled," &c., ver. 26—28. Here observe,

1st. Our case as sinners needed a high priest to make satisfaction and intercession for us.

2nd. No priest could be suitable, or sufficient for our reconciliation to God, but one that was perfectly righteous in his own person; he must be righteous in himself, or he could not be a propitiation for our sin, or our advocate with the Father.

3rd. That the Lord Jesus was exactly such a high priest as we wanted; for he has a personal holiness, absolutely perfect. And observe the description we have of the personal holiness of Christ expressed in various terms, and some learned divines think they all of them relate to his perfect purity.

First. He is "holy;" that is, perfectly free from all the habits or principles of sin, not the least disposition to it in his nature; no sin dwells in him, though it does in the best of Christians, not the least sinful inclination.

Secondly. He is "harmless;" that is, perfectly free from all actual transgression, has done no violence, nor is there any deceit in his mouth, never did the least wrong to God or man.

Thirdly. He is "undefiled;" that is, was never accessory to other men's sins.

vii. 11—16. "Perfection . . . under it the people," &c. The whole of this passage is difficult to analyse. The opinion of De Wette, Bleek, and Delitzsch is, that it is to be considered as paving the way for what follows, and laying down the ground why, not without urgent cause, the priesthood is changed (De Wette, quoted in Lange). The word "another" ("another priest," verses 11, 15) points to a difference in kind. It is by some rendered in both verses "a different priest." For some remarks on the word, see Notes on Gal. i. 6, 7.

vii. 25. "Save them to the uttermost:" completely, unto perfection, to the consummation. The reference is not so much to time, as stating that Christ can always save, but to the completeness of that salvation which he gives to those who come unto God by him. "The perpetuity of his priesthood enables him to 'carry through' the salvation which he has commenced" (Kendrick, in Lange). (Compare Psa. cxxxviii. 8; 2 Tim. i. 12; Heb. xii. 2.)

viii. 1. "This is the sum:" the word does not refer to any summary

The best of Christians have need to pray that God would forgive them their other men's sins. It is a difficult thing to keep ourselves pure, so as not to partake in the guilt of other men's sins, by contributing some way towards them, or not doing what we ought to prevent them. Christ was undefiled; though he took upon him the guilt of our sins, yet he never involved himself in the fact and fault of them.

Fourthly. He is "separate from sinners," not only in his present state, having entered as our High Priest into the holiest of all, into which nothing defiled can enter; but in his personal purity he has no such union with sinners, either natural or federal, as can devolve upon him original sin. This comes upon us by virtue of our natural and federal union with the first Adam, we descending from him in the ordinary way. But Christ was, by his ineffable conception in the Virgin, separate from sinners; though he took a true human nature, yet the miraculous way in which he was conceived set him upon a separate footing from all the rest of mankind.

Fifthly. He is "made higher than the heavens." Most expositors understand this concerning his state of exaltation in heaven, at the right hand of God, to perfect the design of his priesthood. But Dr. Goodwin thinks this may be very justly referred to the personal holiness of Christ, that is greater and more perfect than the holiness of the hosts of heaven; that is, the holy angels themselves, who, though they are free from sin, yet are not in themselves free from all possibility of sinning. And therefore we read, "God putteth no trust in his holy ones, and he chasteth his angels with folly," *Job* iv. 18; that is, with weakness, peccability. They may be angels one hour, and devils another, as many of them were; and that the holy angels shall not now fall does not proceed from a defectibility of nature, but from the election of God; they are elect angels. It is very likely this explanation of the words, "made higher than the heavens," may be thought too much strained, and that it ought to be understood of the dignity of Christ's state, and not the perfect holiness of his person, and the rather because it is said he was "made higher," *γενόμενος*; but it is well known that word is used in a neutral sense, as where it is said, *γενέσθαι ὁ Θεὸς ἄληθης*, "Let God be true." [A priest meet for us behaved to have his residence in heaven, and have commandment over heaven to open it unto us, and give us entry. Then, none other but Christ could suffice us, on whom by nature the doors of heaven are closed. No priest out of heaven is meet for us.]

The other characters in the verse plainly belong to the personal perfection of Christ in holiness, as opposed to the sinful infirmities of the Levitical priests; and it seems congruous to think this must do so too, if it may be fairly taken in such a sense; and it appears yet more probable, since the validity and prevalence of Christ's priesthood, in ver. 27, is placed in the impartiality and disinterestedness of it. He needed not to offer up for himself; it was a disinterested mediation; he mediated for that mercy for others which he did not need for himself. Had he needed it himself he had been a party, and could not have been a Mediator—a criminal, and could not have been an advocate for sinners. Now, to render his mediation the more impartial and disinterested, it seems requisite not only that he had no present need of that favour for himself which he mediated for in behalf of others, but that he never could stand in need of it. Though he needed it not to-day, yet if he knew he might be in those circumstances as to need it to-morrow, or in any future time, he must have been thought to have had some eye upon his own interest, and therefore could not act with that impartial regard and pure zeal for the honour of God on one hand, and that tender, pure compassion for poor sinners on the other. I pretend not here to follow the notes of our late excellent expositor, into whose labours we have entered, but have taken the liberty to vindicate this notion of the learned Dr. Goodwin from the exceptions that I know have been made to it; and I have the rather done it because, if it will hold good, it gives us farther evidence how necessary it was that the Mediator should be God, since no mere creature is of himself possessed of that impeccability which will set him above all possible need of favour and mercy for himself.

[Observe, 1. That the Scripture knoweth no priest but the Levitical priests of Aaron's posterity for the time of the law; or else that one priest which was made by an oath for the time of the Gospel. 2. That to have priests now after the similitude of the priests under the law were to remove the difference which God hath made betwixt the law and the Gospel. 3. That to make a priest in the Gospel, who is not consecrated by an oath to abide for evermore in the office, but may be changed, and another come in his place, is contrary to the institution of the evangelical priesthood. 4. That to make plurality of priests in the Gospel is to alter the order of Melchisedec, sworn with an oath, and to renounce the mark set betwixt the law and the Gospel. 5. That to make a man priest now is to mar the Son of God's privilege, to whom the privilege only belongeth. 6. That to make a sinful and weak man a priest now is to weaken the priesthood of the Gospel, and make it like the law. 7. That as long as Christ's consecration lasteth none must meddle with his office. 8. That law instituting priests was not God's last will, but might suffer addition; but the evangelical oath is since the law, and God's last and unchangeable will. Therefore to add unto it, and bring in as many priests now as did serve in the temple of old, is to provoke God to add as many plagues as are written in God's book upon themselves and their priests also.]

CHAPTER VIII.

In this chapter the apostle pursues his former subject, the priesthood of Christ. And, I. He sums up what he had already said, ver. 1, 2. II. He sets before them the necessary parts of the priestly office, ver. 3—5. And, III. Largely illustrates the excellency of the priesthood of Christ, by considering the excellency of that new dispensation or covenant of which Christ is the Mediator, ver. 6—13.



OW of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Here is a summary recital of what had been said before concerning the excellency of Christ's priesthood, shewing both what we have in Christ, where he now resides, and what sanctuary he is the minister of.

or recital of the past argument, but to the fixing of the attention upon one salient point, so that the rendering might better be, "Now of the things which are being spoken, this is a chief or principal point."

viii. 2. "True tabernacle:" there are two Greek words rendered by the English word "true." "Of the one (*ἀληθής*) we may affirm that he fulfils the promise of his lips, but the other (*ἀληθινός*) the wider promise of his name. Whatever that name imports—taken in its

First. What we have in Christ. We have a High Priest, and such a high priest as no other people ever had, no age of the world, or of the church, ever produced; all others were but types and shadows of this high priest. He is adequately fitted and absolutely sufficient to all the intents and purposes of a high priest, both with respect to the honour of God and the happiness of men and himself; the great honour of all those that have an interest in him.

Secondly. Where he now resides; "He is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty" on high; that is, of the glorious God of heaven. There the Mediator is placed, and he is possessed of all authority and power both in heaven and upon earth; this is the reward of his humiliation; this authority he exerciseth for the glory of his Father, for his own honour, and for the happiness of all that belong to him; and he will by his almighty power bring every one of them in their own order to the right hand of God in heaven, as members of his mystical body, that where he is they may be also.

Thirdly. What is that sanctuary of which he is a minister. "Of the true tabernacle, which the Lord hath pitched, and not man," ver. 2. The tabernacle which was pitched by man, according to the appointment of God. There was an outer part, in which was the altar where they were to offer their sacrifices, and this typified Christ dying; and there was an interior part within the veil, which typified Christ interceding for the people in heaven. Now this tabernacle Christ never entered into; but, having finished the work of satisfaction in "the true tabernacle" of his own body, he is now a minister of the sanctuary, the holy of holies, the true tabernacle of heaven, there taking care of his people's affairs, interceding with God for them, that their sins may be pardoned, and their persons and services accepted through the merit of his sacrifice. He is not only in heaven enjoying great dominion and dignity, but, as the High Priest of his church, executing this office for them all in general, and every member of the church in particular.

3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. 4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.*

Here the apostle sets before the Hebrews the necessary parts of Christ's priesthood, or what it was that belonged to that office, in conformity to what every high priest is ordained to.

First. "Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices;" whatever was brought by the people to be presented to God, whether expiatory sacrifices, or peace offerings, or thank offerings. These must be offered by the priest, who was to expiate their guilt by the blood of the sacrifice, and perfume their gifts and services by his holy incense, to render their persons and performances typically acceptable; so then it necessarily belongs to the priesthood of Christ that he should have somewhat to offer; and he as the antitype had himself to offer, his human nature upon the altar of his Divine nature, as the great atoning sacrifice that finished transgression, and made an end of sin once for all; and he hath the incense of his own righteousness and merits too to offer with all that his people offer up to God by him, to render them acceptable. We must not dare to approach to God, or to present anything to him, but in and through Christ, depending upon his merits and mediation; for if we are accepted it is in the Beloved.

Secondly. Christ must now execute his priesthood in heaven, in the holy of holies, "the true tabernacle" which the Lord hath fixed. Thus the type must be fully answered; having finished the work of sacrificing here, he must go into heaven to present his righteousness, and to make intercession there. For, 1. "If Christ were on earth, he should not be a priest," ver. 4; that is, not according to the Levitical law, as not being of the line of that priesthood; and so long as that priesthood continued there must be a strict regard had to the Divine institution in every thing. 2. All the services of the priest, under the law, and every thing in that tabernacle which was framed according to the pattern in the mount, were only samples and "shadows of heavenly things," ver. 5. Christ is the substance and end of the law for righteousness. Something therefore there must be in Christ's priesthood that answers to the high priest's entering within the veil to make intercession, without which he could not have been a perfect priest; and what is that but the ascension of Christ into heaven, and his appearance there in the sight of God for his people, to present their prayers, and plead their cause? So that if he had still continued on earth he could not have been a perfect priest, and an imperfect one he could not be.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. 7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the

highest, deepest, widest sense—whatever according to that he ought to be, that he is to the full" (Trench). The latter is the word used here and in John xv. 1 (see Notes there). "The former excludes the untrue and unreal, the latter excludes that which does not correspond to its idea. The measure of the one is the actual, the measure of the other is the ideal" (Kahnis, in Lange). These explanations find their illustration in the language of verse 5. The true (ideal) is the heavenly real, of which but a copy or pattern is given to man.

Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

In this part of the chapter the apostle illustrates and confirms the superior excellency of the priesthood of Christ above that of Aaron, from the excellency of that covenant, or that dispensation of the covenant of grace, of which Christ was the Mediator, ver. 6; his ministry is more excellent, by how much he is the Mediator of a better covenant. The body and soul too of all divinity (as some observe) consist very much in rightly distinguishing between the two covenants, the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, and between the two dispensations of the covenant of grace, that under the Old Testament and that under the New. Now observe,

First. What is here said of the old covenant, or rather of the old dispensation of the covenant of grace. Of this it is said,

1. That it was made with the fathers of the Jewish nation at mount Sinai, ver. 9; and Moses was the mediator of that covenant, when God took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, which speaks the great affection, condescension, and tender care of God towards them.

2. That this covenant was not found faultless, ver. 7, 8. It was a dispensation of darkness and dread, tending to bondage, and only a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; it was perfect in its kind, and fitted to answer its end, but very imperfect in comparison of the Gospel.

3. That it was not sure or steadfast, for the Jews continued not in that covenant, and the Lord regarded them not, ver. 9. They dealt ungratefully with their God, and cruelly with themselves, and fell under God's displeasure. God will regard those that remain in his covenant, but will reject those that cast away his yoke from them.

4. That it is decayed, grown old, and vanisheth away, ver. 13. It is antiquated, cancelled, out of date, of no more use in gospel times than candles are when the sun is risen. Some think the covenant of peculiarity did not quite decay until the destruction of Jerusalem, though it was forfeited at the death of Christ, and was made old, and was now to vanish and perish, and the Levitical priesthood vanished with it.

Secondly. What is here said of the New Testament dispensation to prove the superior excellency of Christ's ministry. It is said,

1. That it is "a better covenant," ver. 6; a more clear and comfortable dispensation and discovery of the grace of God to sinners, bringing in holy light and liberty to the soul; it is without fault, well ordered in all things; it requires nothing but what it promises grace to perform; it accepts of godly sincerity, accounting it gospel perfection. Every transgression does not turn us out of covenant; all is put into a good and safe hand.

2. That it is "established upon better promises," more clear and express, more spiritual, more absolute. The promises of spiritual and eternal blessings are in this covenant positive and absolute; the promises of temporal blessings with a wise and kind proviso, as far as shall be for God's glory and his people's good. This covenant contains in it promises of assistance and acceptance in duty, promises of progress and perseverance in grace and holiness, of bliss and glory in heaven, which were more obscurely shadowed forth by the promises of the land of Canaan, a type of heaven.

3. It is "a new covenant," even that new covenant that God long ago declared he would make with the house of Israel, that is, all the Israel of God. This was promised in Jer. xxxi. 31, 32, and accomplished in Christ. This will always be a new covenant, in which all that truly take hold of it shall be always found preserved by the power of God. It is God's covenant; his mercy, love, and grace moved for it, his wisdom devised it, his Son purchased it, his Spirit brings souls into it, and builds them up in it.

4. The articles of this covenant are very extraordinary, which are sealed between God and his people by baptism and the Lord's supper, whereby they bind themselves to their part, and God assures them he will do his part; and his is the main and principal part, on which his people depend for grace and strength to do theirs. Here,

1st. God articles with his people that he will "put his laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts," ver. 10. He once wrote his laws to them, now he will write his laws in them; that is, he will give them understanding to know and to believe his laws. He will give them memories to retain them; he will give them hearts to love them, consciences to recognise them; he will give them courage to profess them, and power to put them in practice; the whole habit and frame of their souls shall be a table and transcript of the law of God. This is the foundation of the covenant; and when this is laid, duty will be done wisely, sincerely, readily, easily, resolutely, constantly, and comfortably.

2nd. He articles with them to take them into a near and very honourable relation to himself. First. He will be to them a God; that is, he will be all that to them, and do all that for them, that God can be and do. Nothing more can be said in a thousand volumes than is comprehended in these few words, "I will be a God to them." Secondly. They shall be to him a people; to love, honour, observe, and obey him in all things; complying with his cautions, conforming to his commands, comporting with his providences, copying out his example, taking complacency in his favour. This those must do and will do that have God for their God; this they are bound to do as their part of the contract; this they shall do, for God will enable them to do it, as an evidence that he is their God, and that they are his people; for it is God himself that first founds the relation, and then fills it up with grace suitable and sufficient, and helps them in their measure to fill it up with love and duty, so that God engages both for himself and themselves.

3rd. He articles with them that they shall grow more and more acquainted with their God; ver. 11, "They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest,"

insomuch as that there shall not be so much need of one neighbour teaching another the knowledge of God. Here observe, First. That in the want of better instruction, one neighbour should be teaching another to know the Lord, as they have ability and opportunity for it. Secondly. That this private instruction shall not be so necessary under the New Testament as under the Old. The old dispensation was shadowy, dark, ritual, and less understood; their priests preached but seldom and but a few at a time, and the Spirit of God was more sparingly given out. But under the new dispensation there shall be such plenty of public qualified preachers of the Gospel, and dispensers of ordinances stately in the solemn assemblies, and so great a flocking to them, as doves to their windows, and such a plentiful effusion of the Spirit of God to make the ministration of the Gospel effectual, that there should be a mighty increase and spreading of Christian knowledge in persons of all sorts, of all sexes, and all ages. O that this promise might be fulfilled in our days; that the hand of God may be with his ministers, that a great number may believe, and be turned to the Lord!

[1. While he saith, "They shall not teach every one his neighbour," he doth not mean that his word and ordinances, and ministry appointed by him, or brotherly communion for mutual edification, shall be disregarded or not made use of, but, by the contrary, that he will himself be their teacher, in these his own means, first giving his children a greater measure of the Spirit, and a more near communion with himself, than of old. 2. Making his children so wise unto salvation as they shall not hang their faith upon man's authority, but search by all means till they understand the mind of God the infallible teacher, as he hath revealed himself in his word. 3. So clearing the truth which is outwardly taught unto them by his own instruments, after so sure and persuasive a manner, by his Spirit inwardly, that the outward teaching shall be no teaching, in comparison of the inward concurrence; according as we hear those Samaritans were taught, who believed indeed the woman's report, that they might go to Christ, but, when they were come to him, got so great satisfaction from himself, that they said unto her, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ," *Jno. iv. 42*. So will the Lord inwardly make his truth powerful unto salvation to his own, that they may say to those that are his instruments, "Now we believe, not because of your saying, but because we have heard him ourselves."]

4th. God articles with them about the pardon of their sins, as what always accompanies the true knowledge of God; ver. 12, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness," &c. Observe, First. The freeness of this pardon. It does not result from merit in man, but from mercy in God; he pardons for his own name's sake. Secondly. The fulness of this pardon. It extends to their unrighteousness, sins, and iniquities; to all kinds of sin, to sins highly aggravated. Thirdly. The fixedness of this pardon. It is so final and so fixed, that God will remember their sins no more; he will not recall his pardon; he will not only forgive their sins, but forget them, treat them as if he had forgot them. This pardoning mercy is connected with all other spiritual mercies. Unpardoned sin prevents mercy and pulls down judgments, but the pardon of sin prevents judgment, and opens a wide door to all spiritual blessing. It is the effect of that mercy that is from everlasting, and the earnest of that mercy that shall be to everlasting. This is the excellency of the new dispensation, and these the articles of it; and therefore we have no reason to repine, but great reason to rejoice, that that former dispensation is antiquated and vanished away.

[1. In saying, "For I will be merciful," 1st. He maketh his mercy, pardoning sin, the reason of his bestowing the former good things; his giving of one grace the reason of giving another, even grace for grace. 2nd. He maketh his mercy the ground of all this favour, and nothing in the man's person, or works, or worthiness of his faith. 3rd. The word "merciful" is in the original, "pacified," and doth import both God's respect to the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, which pacifieth him towards us and also our duty in looking towards it as the price of our reconciliation. 2. In that the Lord joineth the promise of putting his law in the mind, and writing it in our heart, with the promise of remission of sins, he teacheth us that he will have every confederate soul that seeketh the benefit of this covenant to join all these benefits together in their claim, with remission of sin, seeking to join the illumination of their mind, renovation of their heart and life, at least in their desires and endeavours, and not to sever one of them from another, but study in uprightness to have them all. 3. While he saith he will remember their sins no more, he teacheth, 1st. That he will never forgive sin nor forget it, but set it ever in his sight, till a man enter into this covenant with him through Christ. 2nd. That when he hath forgiven sin, he forgetteth sin also: whatsoever he remitteth he removeth from his remembrance. Ver. 13. From the name that the Lord giveth this covenant, in calling it new, he draweth two consequences: the first, that the former covenant, by this word, was declared old. Next, that as it was declared old, so was it declared shortly after to be abolished. Then, 1. The least word that proceedeth out of God's mouth is weighty and worthy of consideration. 2. Whatsoever God's word doth import, by due consequence, must be taken for God's truth and God's mind, as if it were expressed. 3. Seeing Christ is come, and the time is now of this new covenant, we know that by God's authority the Levitical ordinances and whole form of the legal covenant and ceremonial forms of worship are abrogated.]"

CHAPTER IX.

The apostle having declared the Old Testament dispensation antiquated and vanishing away, proceeds to let the Hebrews see the correspondence there was between the Old Testament and the New; and that whatever was excellent in the Old was typical and representative of the New; which therefore must as far excel the Old as the substance does the shadow. The Old Testament was never intended to be rested in, but to prepare for the institutions of the Gospel. And here he treats, I. Of the tabernacle, the place of worship, ver. 1—5. II. Of the worship and services performed in the tabernacle, ver. 6, 7. III. Delivers the spiritual sense and the main design of all, ver. 8—28.



HEN verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. 2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. 3 And after the second veil,

viii. 8. "Finding fault with them:" some insert "while" before "finding fault." "For while finding fault (not with them, but to them), he saith." The real blame falls on the people, but it is made clear that the old covenant was not able to secure righteousness among the people.

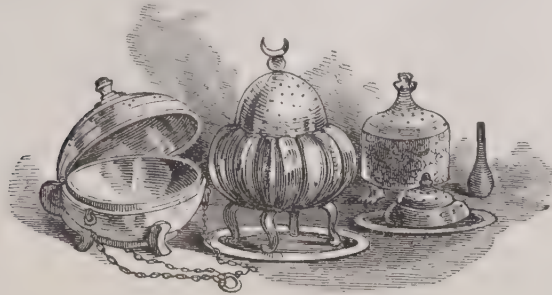
ix. 1. "Then verily:" or, as Alford, "now accordingly." The discourse is resumed from chap. viii. 4—6. "Divine service, and a worldly sanctuary:" the contrast between the worldly and the heavenly

is taken up from verse 5 of the preceding chapter, and is brought forward again in verses 11 and 24 of this. The Jews, it seems, were accustomed to regard the outer tabernacle as the emblem of this world, and the inner, or most holy place, as the emblem of heaven.

ix. 2. "The shewbread:" or the setting forth of the loaves.

ix. 3, 4. "After the second veil . . . the holiest of all:" or, rather, "the holy of holies." "The golden censor:" there has been some division of opinion respecting this word. Some refer it to the altar

the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the



CENSERS.

covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.



TEMPLE ARTICLES, FROM THE ARCH OF TITUS.—VER. 2.

The apostle gives an account here of the tabernacle, that place of worship which God appointed to be pitched on earth. It is called a worldly sanctuary, wholly of this world as to the materials of which it was built, and a building that must be taken down. Is called "a worldly sanctuary," because it was the court and palace of the king of Israel. God was their king, and, as other kings, had his court or place of residence, and attendants, furniture, and provision suitable thereto. This tabernacle, of which we have the model, *Ex. xxv.—xxvii.*, was a moving temple, shadowing forth the unsettled state of the church militant, and the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. Now of this tabernacle it is said,

First. That it was divided into two parts, called a first and second tabernacle, an inner and an outer part, representing the two states of the church, militant and triumphant, and the two natures of Christ, human and Divine.

Secondly. We are told what was placed in each part of the tabernacle.

1. In the outer part. And there were several things of which you have here a sort of schedule:—

1st. The candlestick; and, doubtless, not an empty and unlighted one, but where the lamps were always burning. And there was need of it, for there were no windows in the sanctuary; and this was to convince the Jews of the darkness and mysterious nature of that dispensation. Their light was only candle-light in comparison of the fulness of light which Christ the Sun of righteousness would bring along with him, and communicate to his people; for all our light is derived from him the fountain of light.

2nd. "The table, and the shewbread" set upon it. This table was set directly opposite to the candlestick, which shews, that by light from Christ we must have communion with him, and one with another. We must not come in the dark to his table, but by light from Christ must discern the Lord's body. On this table were placed twelve loaves for the twelve tribes of Israel, a loaf for a tribe, which stood from sabbath to sabbath, and on that day were renewed. This shewbread may be considered either as the provision of the palace, (though the king of Israel needed it not, yet, in resemblance of the palaces of earthly kings, there must be this provision laid in weekly,) or the provision made in Christ for the souls of his people, suitable to the wants and to the relief of their souls. He is the bread of life. In our Father's house there is bread enough and to spare. We may have fresh supplies from Christ, especially every Lord's day. This outer part is called the sanctuary, or holy, because erected to the worship of a holy God, to represent a holy Jesus, and to entertain a holy people for their farther improvement in holiness.

2. We have an account of what was in the inner part of the sanctuary, which was within the second veil, and is called "the holiest of all." This second veil, which divided between the holy and the most holy place, was a type of the body of Christ; by the rending whereof, not only a view, but a way, was opened for us into the holiest of all, the type of heaven itself. Now in this part were,

1st. "The golden censer," which was to hold the incense, or the golden altar set up to burn the incense upon. Both the one and the other were typical of Christ, of his pleasing and prevailing intercession which he makes in heaven, grounded upon the merits and satisfaction of his sacrifice, upon which we are to depend for acceptance and the blessing from God.

of incense, and others, as in the English Version, to the golden censer. The fact that the "altar of incense" did not form part of the furniture of the holy of holies, but stood (not after) but before the second veil, seems to favour the latter view; for although the censer was kept in the outer sanctuary, yet it was used within the holiest of all on the great day of atonement.

ix. 6 "These things being thus" is Alford's rendering. He keeps the present tense in this and the following verse: "the priests

2nd. "The ark of the covenant overlaid round about with pure gold," ver. 4. This typified Christ and his perfect obedience to the law, and fulfilling all righteousness for us. Now here we are told both what was in this ark and what was over it.

First. What was in it. 1st. "The golden pot that had manna," which, when preserved by the Israelites in their own houses, contrary to the command of God, presently putrefied and stank; but now, being by God's appointment deposited here in his house, was kept from putrefaction, always pure and sweet, and this to teach us that it is only in Christ that our persons, our graces, our performances, are kept pure. It was also a type of that bread of life we have in Christ, the true ambrosia that gives immortality. This was also a memorial of God's miraculously feeding his people in the wilderness, that they might never forget such signal favour, nor distrust God for the time to come. 2nd. "Aaron's rod that budded," and thereby shewed that God had chosen him of the tribe of Levi to minister before him of all the tribes of Israel, and so an end was put to the murmuring of the people, and to their attempt to invade the priests' office, *Num. xvii.* This was the rod with which Moses and Aaron wrought such wonders; and this was a type of Christ, who is styled "the Man, the Branch," *Zec. vi. 12*, by whom God has wrought wonders for the spiritual deliverance, defence, and supply of his people, and for the destruction of their enemies. It was a type of Divine justice, by whom Christ the Rock was smitten, and from whom the cool refreshing waters of life flow into our souls. 3rd. "The tables of the covenant," in which the moral law was written, signifying the regard God hath to the preservation of his holy law, and the care we all ought to have that we keep the law of God; that this we can only do in and through Christ by strength from him: nor can our obedience be accepted but through him.

Secondly. What was over the ark, ver. 5. "Over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat." 1st. The mercy-seat, which was the covering of the ark. It was called "the propitiatory," and it was of pure gold, as long and as broad as the ark in which the tables of the law were laid; it was an eminent type of Christ and of his perfect righteousness, ever adequate to the dimensions of the law of God, and covering all our transgressions, interposing between the Shechinah or symbol of God's presence and our sinful failures, and covering them. 2nd. The cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat, representing the holy angels of God, who take pleasure in looking into the great work of our redemption by Christ, and are ready to perform every good office under the Redeemer for those that are the heirs of salvation. The angels attended Christ at his birth, in his temptation, under his agonies, at his resurrection, and in his ascension, and will attend his second coming. God manifest in the flesh was seen, observed, visited by the angels.

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

From the description of the place of worship in the Old Testament dispensation, the apostle proceeds to speak of the duties and services performed in those places, ver. 6: when the several parts and furniture of the tabernacle were thus settled, then what was to be done there? Why,

First. The ordinary priests "went always into the first tabernacle" to accomplish the service of God. Observe,

1. None but priests were to enter into the first part of the tabernacle; and this to teach us all that persons not qualified, not called of God, must not intrude into the office and work of the ministry.

2. The ordinary priests were only to enter into the first part of the tabernacle; it would have been fatal presumption in them to have gone into the holiest of all. And this teaches us that even ministers themselves must know and keep in their proper stations, and not presume to usurp the prerogative of Christ by offering up incense of their own, or adding their own inventions to the ordinances of Christ, or lording it over men's consciences.

3. That these ordinary priests were to enter into the first tabernacle always; that is, they were to devote themselves and all their time to the work of their office, and not alienate themselves at any time from it; and that they should be in an habitual readiness for the discharge of their office, and that at all stated appointed times they should actually attend to their work.

4. The ordinary priests must enter into the first tabernacle, that they might there accomplish the service of God. They must not do the work of God partially or by halves, but stand complete in the whole of his will and counsel, not only beginning well, but proceeding well, and persevering to the end, they fulfil the ministry they have received.

Secondly. Into the second, the interior part, "went the high priest alone," ver. 7. This part was an emblem of heaven, and Christ's ascension thither. Here observe,

1. None but the high priest must go into the holiest; so none but Christ could enter into heaven in his own name, and by his own right, and by his own merits.

2. In entering into the holiest, the high priest must first go through the outer sanctuary, and through the veil; signifying that Christ went to heaven through a holy life and a violent death; the veil of his flesh was rent asunder.

3. That the high priest entered but once a year into the holiest, and in this the antitype excels the type, (as in every thing else,) for he has entered once for all, during the whole dispensation of the Gospel.

4. The high priest must not enter without blood; signifying that Christ, having undertaken to be our High Priest, he could not have been admitted into heaven without shedding his blood for us; and that none of us can enter either into God's gracious presence here or his glorious presence hereafter but by the blood of Jesus.

5. That the high priest under the law, entering into the holiest, offered up that blood for himself and his own errors first, and then for the errors of the people, ver. 7. This teaches us that Christ is a more excellent person and high priest than any under the law, for he has no errors of his own to offer for. And it teaches us that ministers, when in the name of Christ they intercede for others, must first apply the blood of Christ to themselves for their pardon.

6. That when the legal high priest had offered for himself, he must not stop there, but must also offer for the errors of the people. Our High Priest, though he needs not to offer for himself, yet he forgets not to offer for his people; he pleads the merit of his sufferings for the benefit of his people on earth. Observe, 1st. Sins are errors, and great errors, both in judgment and practice. We greatly err when we sin against God; and who can understand all his errors? 2nd. They are such errors as leave guilt upon the conscience, not to be washed

enter;" "the high-priest offereth for himself and for the ignorances (errors) of the people."

ix. 8, 9. "Was not yet open," or "was not yet manifest." The first tabernacle, the which is a figure (parable or image) for the time then (or now) present. The paraphrase of Webster and Wilkinson is, "which is a typical representation down to the present time;" or, as being that which was a parable (for) in reference to the present time.

away but by the blood of Christ; and the sinful errors of priests and people must be all done away by the same means, the application of the blood of Christ. We must plead this blood on earth, while he is pleading it in heaven for us.

8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. 11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered



SYRIAN GOATS.

in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

In these verses the apostle undertakes to deliver to us the mind and meaning of the Holy Ghost, in all the ordinances of the tabernacle and legal economy, both place and worship. The Scriptures of the Old Testament are of inspiration of God; holy men of old spoke and wrote as the Holy Ghost directed them. And these Old Testament records are of great use and significance, not only to those that first received them, but even to Christians, who ought not to satisfy themselves to read the institutes of the Levitical law, but to learn what the Holy Ghost signifies and suggests to them thereby. Now here are several things mentioned, as the things that the Holy Ghost signified and certified to his people hereby.

First. That "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest," while the first tabernacle was standing, ver. 8. This was one lesson the Holy Ghost would teach us by these types; the way to heaven was not so clear and plain, nor so much frequented, under the Old Testament as under the New. It is the honour of Christ and the Gospel, and the happiness of those that live under it, that now life and immortality are brought to light. There was not that free access to God then as now; God has now opened a wider door, and there is room for more, yea, even for as many as are truly willing to return unto him by Christ.

Secondly. That the first tabernacle was only "a figure for the time then present," ver. 9. It was a dark dispensation, and but of short continuance, only designed for awhile to typify the great things of Christ and the Gospel, that were in due time to shine forth in their own brightness, and thereby cause all the shadows to flee away and disappear, as the stars before the rising sun.

Thirdly. That none of the gifts and sacrifices there offered could make the offerers perfect, "as pertaining to conscience," ver. 9. That is, they could not take away either the desert, or defilement, or dominion of sin; they could not deliver conscience from a dread of the wrath of God; they could neither discharge the debts nor resolve the doubts of him that did the service. A man might run through them all in their several orders and frequent returns, and continue to do so all his days, and yet neither find his conscience pacified nor purified by them; he might thereby be saved from corporal and temporal punishments that were threatened against non-observers, but he could not be saved by them from sin or hell, as all those are that believe in Christ.

Fourthly. The Holy Ghost hereby signifies that the Old Testament institutions were but external "carnal ordinances imposed upon them until the time of reformation," ver. 10. Their imperfection lay in three things,

1. Their nature. They were but external and carnal meats and drinks, and divers washings. All these were bodily exercises which profit little; they could only satisfy the flesh, or at best sanctify to the purifying of the flesh.

2. That they were not such as were left indifferent to them to use or disuse, but they were imposed upon them by grievous corporal punishments, and this was ordered on purpose to make them look more to the promised seed, and long more for him.

3. That these were never designed for a perpetuity, but only to continue till the time of reformation, till the better things provided for them were actually bestowed upon them. Gospel times are and should be times of reformation, of clearer light as to all things necessary to be known, of greater love, bearing ill-will to none and goodwill to all, and having complacency in all that are like unto God, of greater liberty and freedom both of spirit and speech, and of a more holy living according to the rule of the Gospel. We have far greater advantages under the Gospel than they had under the law, and we must either be better or we shall be worse than they. A conversation becoming the Gospel is an excellent way of living; nothing mean, or foolish, or vain, or servile, becomes the Gospel.

Fifthly. The Holy Ghost signifies to us hereby that we never make the right use of types but when we apply them to the antitype, and whenever they do so it will be very evident that the antitype, as in reason it should, does greatly excel the type, which is the main drift and design of all that is said. And as he writes to those that believed that Christ was come, and that Jesus was the Christ, so he very justly infers that he is infinitely above all the legal high priests, ver. 11, 12, and he illustrates it very fully. For,

1. "Christ is the high priest of good things to come;" by which may be understood, 1st. All the good things that were to come during the Old Testament, and now are come under the New. All the spiritual and eternal blessings the Old Testament saints had in their day, and under their dispensation, were owing to the Messiah to come, on whom they believed. The Old Testament set forth in shadows what was to come; the New Testament is the accomplishment of the Old. 2nd. All the good things yet to come and to be enjoyed in a gospel state, when the promises and prophecies made to the gospel church in the latter days shall be accomplished; all these depend upon Christ and his priesthood, and shall be fulfilled. 3rd. Of all the good things to come in the heavenly state, which will perfect both the Testaments, as the state of glory will perfect the state of grace. This state will be in a much higher sense the perfection of the New Testament than the New Testament was the perfection of the Old. Observe, All good things, past, present, and to come, were and are founded upon, and flowing from, the priestly office of Christ.

2. Christ is a High Priest by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, &c., ver. 11. "A tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;" that is, his own body, or rather, human nature, conceived by the Holy Ghost overshadowing the blessed Virgin. This was a new fabric, a new order of building, infinitely superior to all earthly structures, not excepting the tabernacle or the temple itself.

3. Christ our High Priest is entered into heaven, not as their high priest entered into the holiest, with the blood of bulls and of goats, but by his own blood typified by theirs, and infinitely more precious. And this,

4. Not for one year only, which shewed the imperfection of that priesthood, that it did but typically obtain a year's reprieve or pardon; but our High Priest entered into heaven once for all, and has obtained not a yearly respite but eternal redemption, and so needs not to make an annual entrance. In each of the types there was something that shewed it was a type, and resembled the antitype, and something that shewed it was but a type, and fell short of the antitype, and therefore ought by no means to be set up in competition with the antitype.

5. The Holy Ghost farther signified and shewed what was the efficacy of the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices, and from thence infers the much greater efficacy of the blood of Christ. 1st. The efficacy of the blood of the legal sacrifices extended to the purifying of the flesh, ver. 13; it freed the outward man from ceremonial uncleanness, and from temporal punishment, and entitled to, and fitted for, some external privileges. 2nd. He infers very justly from hence the far greater efficacy of the blood of Christ; ver. 14. "How much more shall the blood of Christ," &c. [Note, There are two sorts of sanctification; one external, of the flesh, which maketh man holy to the church, whatsoever he be within; another internal, of the conscience and inner man, which maketh a man holy before God.] Here observe, First. What it was that gave such efficacy to the blood of Christ. 1st. It was his offering himself to God, the human nature upon the altar of his Divine nature, he being both priest, altar and sacrifice, his Divine nature serving for the two first, and his human nature for the last. Now such a priest, altar, and sacrifice, could not but be propitiatory. 2nd. It was Christ's offering up himself to God "through the eternal Spirit," not only as the Divine nature supported the human, but the Holy Ghost, which he had without measure, helping him in all, and in this great act of obedience offering himself. 3rd. It was Christ's offering himself to God "without spot," without any sinful stain either in his nature or life. This was conformable to the law of sacrifices, which were to be without blemish. Now farther observe, Secondly. What the efficacy of Christ's blood is; it is very great. For, [1st. Sins are but dead works flowing from nature dead in sin; and not only deserving, but also drawing on death upon the sinner. 2nd. The conscience lieth polluted with the filthiness of dead works till the virtue of the blood of Jesus applied bring intimation of absolution.] 3rd. It is sufficient to "purge the conscience from dead works," it reaches to the very soul and conscience; the defiled soul, defiled with sin, which is a dead work, proceeds from spiritual death, and tends to death eternal. As the touching a dead body gave a legal uncleanness, so meddling with sin gives a moral and real defilement, fixes it in the very soul [and conscience]; but the blood of Christ has that efficacy as to purge it out. [4th. Christ's blood doth not purge the conscience from dead works that a man should go wallow in them again, but that he may serve the living God more acceptably.] 5th. It is sufficient to enable us to serve the living God, not only by purging away that guilt that separates between God and sinners, but by sanctifying and renewing the soul through the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, purchased by Christ for this purpose, that we might be enabled to serve the living God in a lively manner.

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. 16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. 18 Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.

ix. 12. "Having obtained eternal redemption;" he entered once for all into the holy place, and obtained, &c.

ix. 13, 14. The contrast between the offerings of the law (verse 13) and the offering made by Christ is not to be overlooked. Christ offered himself; the act was purely voluntary; the offering was thus precious (compare John x. 17, 18). "Through the eternal Spirit," it seems best to take this as referring to "Christ's eternal Spirit," or "his own Divine personality." Some understand the expression

of the Third Person of the Trinity; the absence of the definite article is against this.

ix. 15. This verse becomes clearer if we render, with Alford, "And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that, death having taken place, for the propitiation of transgressions under the first covenant, they," &c.

ix. 16-20. In these verses the word which has been hitherto translated "covenant" is rendered "testament." The reason for the

19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, 20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. 21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

In these verses the apostle considers the Gospel under the notion of a will or testament, the new or last will and testament of Christ, and shews the necessity and efficacy of the blood of Christ to make this testament valid and effectual.

First, The Gospel is here considered as a testament; the new and last will and testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; It is observable, that the solemn transactions that pass between God and man are sometimes called a covenant, here a testament. A covenant is an agreement between two or more parties about things that are in their own power, or may be so, and this either with or without a mediator; and this agreement takes effect at such time and in such manner as is therein declared. A testament is a voluntary act and deed of a single person, duly executed and witnessed, bestowing legacies on such legatees as are described and characterised by the testator, and which can only take effect upon his death. Now observe, Christ is "the mediator of a new testament," ver. 15, and he is so for several ends and purposes here mentioned. 1. To redeem persons from their transgressions committed against the law or first testament, which makes every transgression a forfeiture of liberty, and makes men debtors, and slaves or prisoners, that need to be redeemed. 2. To qualify all those that are effectually called to receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. These are the great legacies that Christ by his last will and testament has bequeathed to the true characterised legatees.

Secondly, To make this new testament effectual, it was necessary that Christ should die; the legacies accrue by means of death. This he proves by two arguments.

1. From the general nature of every will or testamentary disposition; ver. 16, "Where a testament is," where it acts and operates, "there must of necessity be the death of the testator;" till then the property is still in the testator's hand, and he has power to revoke and cancel, or alter his will as he pleases; so that no estate, no right, is conveyed by will, till the testator's death hath made it unalterable and effectual.

2. From the particular method that was taken by Moses in the ratification of the first testament, which was not done without blood, ver. 18, 19, &c. All men by sin were become guilty before God, had forfeited their inheritance, their liberties, and their very lives, into the hands of Divine justice; but God, being willing to shew the greatness of his mercy, proclaimed a covenant of grace, and ordered it to be typically administered under the Old Testament, but not without the blood and life of the creature, and God accepted the blood of bulls and goats as typifying the blood of Christ; and by these means the covenant of grace was ratified under the former dispensation. The method taken by Moses, according to the direction he had received from God, is here particularly related.

1st, Moses "spoke every precept to all the people according to the law," ver. 19. He published to them the tenor of the covenant, both the duties required, the rewards promised to those that did their duty, and the punishment threatened against the transgressors; and he called for their consent to the terms of the covenant, and this in an express manner.

2nd, Then he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and applied this blood by sprinkling it. This blood and water signified the blood and water that came out of our Saviour's pierced side, for justification and sanctification, and also shadowing forth the two sacraments of the New Testament, baptism and the Lord's supper, with scarlet wool, signifying the righteousness of Christ with which we must be clothed, the hyssop signifying that faith by which we must apply all. Now with these Moses sprinkled, *First*, The book of the law and covenant; to shew that the covenant of grace is confirmed by the blood of Christ, and made effectual to our good. *Secondly*, The people; intimating that the shedding of the blood of Christ will be no advantage to us if it be not applied to us. And the sprinkling of both the book and the people signified the mutual consent of both parties, God and man, and their mutual engagements to each other in this covenant through Christ; Moses at the same time using these words, "This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you." This blood typifying the blood of Christ, is the ratification of the covenant of grace to all true believers. *Thirdly*, He sprinkled the tabernacle and all the utensils of it, intimating that all the sacrifices offered up, and services performed there, were accepted only through the blood of Christ, which procures the remission of that iniquity that cleaves to our holy things, which could not have been remitted but by that atoning blood. [He saith "almost" because of some purging which was done by washing, and yet even that washing also drew the virtue of ceremonial purging from the sacrifice whereunto the washing was annexed.]

23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

In this last part of the chapter the apostle goes on to tell us what the Holy Ghost has signified to us by the legal purification of the patterns of the things in heaven, inferring from thence the necessity of better sacrifices to consecrate the heavenly things themselves.

First, The necessity of purifying "the patterns of the things in heaven," ver. 23. This necessity arises both from the Divine appointment, which must always be obeyed, and from the reason of that appointment, which was to preserve a proper resemblance between the things typifying and the things typified. It is observable here, that the sanctuary of God on earth is a pattern of heaven, and communion with God in his sanctuary is to his people a heaven upon earth.

Secondly, The necessity that the heavenly things themselves should be purified with better sacrifices than of bulls and goats. The things themselves are better than the patterns, and must therefore be consecrated with better sacrifices. These heavenly things are the privileges of the gospel state, begun in grace, perfected in glory; these must be ratified by a suitable sanction or consecration, and that was the blood of Christ. Now it is very evident that the sacrifices of Christ are vastly better than those of the law.

1. From the places in which the sacrifices under the law and those under the Gospel were offered. Those under the law were the holy places made with hands, which are but figures of the true sanctuary, ver. 24. Christ's sacrifice, though offered upon earth, was by himself carried up into heaven, and is there presented in a way of daily intercession, for he appears in the presence of God for us. He is gone to heaven, not only to enjoy the rest and receive the honour due to him, but to appear in the presence of God for us, to present our persons and our performances, to answer and rebuke our adversary and accuser, to secure our interest, to perfect all our affairs, and to prepare a place for us.

2. From the sacrifices themselves, ver. 26. Those under the law were the lives and blood of other creatures of a different nature from the offerers, the blood of beasts, a thing of small value, and would have been of none at all in this matter had it not had a typical respect to the blood of Christ; but the sacrifice of Christ was the oblation of himself. He offered his own blood, truly called, by virtue of the hypostatical union, the blood of God, and therefore of infinite value.

3. From the frequent repetition of the legal sacrifices. This shewed the imperfection of that law; but it is the honour and perfection of Christ's sacrifice, that it being once offered was sufficient to all the ends of it; and indeed the contrary would have been absurd, for then he must have been still dying and rising again, and ascending, and then again descending and dying, &c., and the great work had been always *in fieri*,—always a doing, and always to do, but never finished, which would be as contrary to reason as it is to revelation and to the dignity of his person; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The Gospel is the last dispensation of the grace of God to men.

4. From the inefficacy of the legal sacrifice, and the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice. The legal sacrifices could not of themselves put away sin, neither procure pardon for it nor power against it,—sin would still have lain upon us, and had dominion over us; but Jesus Christ, by one sacrifice, has made an end of sin, he has destroyed the works of the devil.

Thirdly, The apostle illustrates the argument from the appointment of God concerning men, ver. 27, 28; and observes something like it in the appointment of God concerning Christ.

1. The appointment of God concerning man contains in it two things:—1st, That they must once die, or, however, undergo a change equivalent to death. It is an awful thing to die; to have the vital knot loosed or cut asunder, all relations here dropped at once, an end put to our probation and preparation state, to enter into another world. It is a great work; and it is a work that can be but once done, and therefore had need to be well done. This is matter of comfort to the godly, that they shall die well, and die but once; but it is matter of terror to the wicked, that die in their sins, that they cannot return again to do that great work better. 2nd, It is appointed to men that after death they shall come to judgment, to a particular judgment immediately after death; for the soul returns to God as to its judge, to be determined as to its eternal state; and men shall be brought to the general judgment at the end of the world. This is the unalterable decree of God concerning men: they must die, and they must be judged; it is appointed for them, and it is to be believed and seriously considered by them.

2. The appointment of God concerning Christ, bearing some resemblance to the other. 1st, He must be "once offered to bear the sins of many" of all the Father had given to him, of all that should believe in his name. He was not offered for any sin of his own; he was wounded for our transgressions. God laid on him the iniquity of all his people, and these are many; though not so many as the rest of mankind; yet when they are all gathered to him he will be the firstborn among many brethren. [2nd, It is as unreasonable that Christ should offer himself oftener than once, as it is to exact of him the laying down of his life oftener than once, for that is to exact more than the severity of God's justice requireth of him. Christ's death was not for any sin in him, but for our sins.] 3rd, It is appointed that Christ shall appear the second time without sin, to the salvation of those that look for him. *First*, He will then appear without sin. At his first appearance, though he had no sin of his own, yet he stood charged with the sins of many; he was the Lamb of God that bore upon him the sins of the world, and then he appeared in the form of sinful flesh. But his second appearance will be without any such charge upon him, he having fully discharged it before; and then his visage shall not be marred, but shall be exceeding glorious. *Secondly*, This will be to the salvation of all that look for him; he will then perfect their holiness, their happiness. Their number shall then be accomplished, and their salvation completed. Observe, It is the distinguishing character of true believers that they are looking for Christ; they look to him by faith; they look for him by hope and holy desires. They look for him in every duty, in every ordinance, in every providence now; and they expect his second coming, and are preparing for it; and though it will be sudden destruction to the rest of the world, that scoff at the report of it, it will be eternal salvation to those that look for it.

change is easily seen. The illustration in verses 16, 17 suggested the making of a will or testament rather than a covenant. Some, however, prefer the uniform translation of the word by "covenant." Archbishop Whateley says the idea of a will is familiar to us, but was unknown to the Hebrews, and regrets that the word "covenant" was not retained everywhere, especially in the words of Christ at the last supper. "After men are dead:" this is literally "over the dead," and is translated by Alford "in the case of the dead." The phrase "over

the dead" is intelligible when the word "covenant" is used, for a covenant was ratified over the bodies of the slain victims. The above is the view held by many authorities. On the other hand, there seems a difficulty in the word "testator" (better "he who made it"), for this cannot be understood of the victim in a covenant. The word being somewhat ambiguous, it is not unlikely that the illustrations afforded by both meanings would be pressed into service by the apostle.

CHAPTER X.

The apostle knew very well the Hebrews, to whom he wrote, were strangely fond of the Levitical dispensation, and therefore he fills his mouth with arguments to wean them from it; and in order thereto proceeds in this chapter, I. To run down and lay low the whole of that priesthood and sacrifices, ver. 1-7. II. He raises and exalts the priesthood of Christ very high, that he might effectually recommend him and his Gospel to them, ver. 7-19. III. He shews to believers the honours and dignities of their state, and calls them to suitable duties, ver. 19-39.



OR the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

Here the apostle, by the direction of the Spirit of God, sets himself to run down and lay low the Levitical dispensation; for though it was of Divine appointment, and very excellent and useful in its time and place, yet when it was set up in competition with Christ, to whom it was only designed to lead the people, it was very proper and necessary to shew the weakness and imperfection of it, which the apostle does effectually from several arguments; as,

First. That the law had a shadow, and but "a shadow of good things to come." And who would dote upon a shadow, though of good things, especially when the substance is come? Observe, 1. The things of Christ and the Gospel are "good things." They are the best things; they are best in themselves, and the best for us; they are realities of an excellent nature. 2. These good things were under the Old Testament "good things to come," not clearly discovered, nor fully enjoyed. 3. That the Jews then had but the shadow of the good things of Christ, some adumbrations of them; we under the Gospel have the substance.

Secondly. That the law was not the very image of the good things to come. An image is an exact draught of the thing represented thereby; the law did not go so far, but was only a shadow, as the image of a person in a looking-glass is a much more perfect representation than his shadow upon the wall. The law was a very rough draught of the great design of Divine grace, and therefore not to be so much doted on.

Thirdly. The legal sacrifices, being offered year by year, could never make the comers thereunto perfect; for then there would have been an end of offering them, ver. 1, 2. Could they have satisfied the demands of justice, and made reconciliation for iniquity; could they have purified and pacified conscience, then they had ceased, as being no farther necessary; since the offerers would have had no more sin lying upon their consciences. But this was not the case; after one day of atonement was over the sinner would fall again into one fault or other, and so there would be need of another day of atonement, and of one every year, besides the daily ministrations. Whereas now, under the Gospel, the atonement is perfect, and not to be repeated; and the sinner once pardoned is ever pardoned as to his state, and only needs to renew his repentance and faith, that he may have a comfortable sense of a continued pardon.

Fourthly. As the legal sacrifices did not of themselves take away sin, so it was impossible they should, ver. 4. There was an essential defect in them. 1. They were not of the same nature with us that sinned. 2. They were not of sufficient value to make satisfaction for the affronts done to the justice and government of God, as they were not of the same nature that offended and so could not be suitable. They were much less of the same nature that was offended, and nothing less than the nature that was offended could make the sacrifice a full satisfaction for the offence. 3. The beasts offered up under the law could not consent to put themselves in the sinner's room and place. The atoning sacrifice must be one capable of consenting, and must voluntarily substitute himself in the sinner's stead: Christ did so.

Fifthly. There was a time fixed and foretold by the great God; and that time was now come when these legal sacrifices would be no longer accepted by him, or useful to men. God never did desire them for themselves, and now he abrogated them; and therefore to adhere to them now would be resisting God and rejecting him. This time of the repeal of the Levitical laws was foretold by David, Ps. xl. 6, 7, and is recited here as now come. Thus industriously does the apostle lay low the Mosaic dispensation.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law: 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O

God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

Here the apostle raiseth up and exalteth the Lord Jesus Christ as high as he had laid the Levitical priesthood low. He recommends Christ to them as the true High Priest, the true atoning sacrifice, the antitype of all the rest; and this he illustrates,

First. From the purpose and promise of God concerning Christ, which is frequently recorded in the volume of the book of God, ver. 7. God had not only decreed, but declared by Moses and the prophets that [when the legal sacrifices are found and declared unable to pacify] Christ should come and be the great High Priest of the church, and should offer up a perfect and a perfecting sacrifice. It was written of Christ in the beginning of the book of God, that "the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head;" and the Old Testament abounds with prophecies concerning Christ. Now since he is the person so often promised, so much spoken of, so long expected, by the people of God, he ought to be received with great honour and gratitude. [Note, That Christ did not think it due time for himself to come into the world till it should be found that without him neither God could be satisfied nor man saved by any other mean but by his obedience.]

Secondly. From what God had done in preparing a body for Christ, that is, a human nature, that he might be qualified to be our Redeemer and advocate. Uniting the two natures in his own person, he was a fit Mediator to go between God and man, a days-man to lay his hand upon both, a peacemaker to reconcile them, and an everlasting band of union between God and the creature; as Ps. xl. 6, "Mine ears hast thou opened," that is, thou hast fully instructed me, furnished and fitted me for the work, and engaged me in it. Now a Saviour thus provided and prepared by God himself in so extraordinary a manner ought to be received with great affection and gladness.

Thirdly. From the readiness and willingness that Christ discovered to engage in this work, when no other sacrifice would be accepted, ver. 7-9. When no lesser sacrifice would be a proper satisfaction to the justice of God than that of Christ himself, then Christ voluntarily came into it; "Lo, I come!" I delight "to do thy will, O God!" Let thy curse fall upon me, but let these go their way. Father, I delight to fulfil thy counsels, and my covenant with thee for them; I delight to perform all thy promises, to fulfil all the prophecies. This should endear Christ and our Bibles to us, that in Christ we have the fulfilling of the Scriptures.

Fourthly. From the errand and design upon which Christ came, and that was to do the will of God; not only as a Prophet to reveal the will of God, nor only as a King to give forth Divine laws, but as a Priest to satisfy the demands of justice, and to fulfil all righteousness. Christ came to do the will of God in two instances:—

1. In taking away the first priesthood, which God had no pleasure in. Not only taking away the curse of the covenant of works, and cancelling the sentence denounced against us as sinners, but taking away the insufficient typical priesthood, and blotting out the handwriting of ceremonial ordinances, and nailing it to his cross.

2. In establishing the second, that is, his own priesthood, and the everlasting Gospel, the most pure and perfect dispensation of the covenant of grace. This is the great design upon which the heart of God was set from all eternity. "The will of God centres and terminates in it; and it is not more agreeable to the will of God than it is advantageous to the souls of men;" "For it is by this will that we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," ver. 10. Observe, 1st. What is the fountain of all that Christ has done for his people, the sovereign will and grace of God. [2nd. All those for whom Christ did offer himself are sanctified in God's decree, and in due time, by virtue of Christ's offering. 3rd. Those who are never sanctified, the body of Christ was never offered for them.] 4th. How we come to partake of what Christ has done for us; and that is, by being sanctified, converted, effectually called, wherein we are united to Christ, and so partake of the benefits of his redemption; and this sanctification is owing to that oblation he made of himself to God.

Fifthly. From the perfect efficacy of the priesthood of Christ; ver. 14, "By one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified." He has and will perfectly deliver those that are brought over to him, from all the guilt, and power, and punishment of sin, and will put them into the sure possession of perfect holiness and felicity. This is what the Levitical priesthood could never do; and if we indeed are aiming at a perfect state we must receive the Lord Jesus as the only High Priest that can bring us to that state.

Sixthly. From the place to which our Lord Jesus is now exalted, the honour he has there, and the farther honour he shall have; ver. 12, 13, "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." Here observe, 1st. To what honour Christ, as man and Mediator, is exalted—to "the right hand of God," the seat of power, and interest, and activity; the giving hand,—all the favours that God bestows on his people are handed to them by Christ;

x. 1. "The law having a shadow," &c.: the verse seems to take up the thought of the "figures" and "patterns" which the last chapter spoke of (see verses 23, 24). The emphasis in the original is marked by the order of the words: "For a shadow the law having of good things (or, rather, of the good things) to come." "Not the very image:" the contrast between "shadow" and "image" is not merely that between the "outline" and "the finished picture;" it is the difference between the statue and the shadow cast by it.

x. 2. The worshippers once (or "once for all") cleansed, would have no more conscience—i.e., consciousness, or moral consciousness of sin.

x. 5. "A body hast thou prepared me:" the Hebrew text in Ps. xl. 6, 7, has, "Ears hast thou dug for me." "Some take this to refer to the piercing or boring of the ear-lobe in the case of the servant who was willing to remain with his master, when he might have claimed his freedom (Exod. xxi. 6; Deut. xv. 17). With this reference, the

the receiving hand,—all the duties that God accepts from men are presented by Christ; the working hand,—all the kingdoms of providence and grace are administered by Christ, and therefore this is the highest post of honour. 2nd. How did Christ come to this honour? Not merely by the purpose or donation of the Father, but by his own merit and purchase, as a reward due to his sufferings; and, as he can never be deprived of an honour so much his due, so he will never quit it nor cease to employ it for his people's good. 3rd. How does he enjoy this honour? even with the greatest satisfaction and rest. He is for ever sat down there. The Father acquiesces and is satisfied in him; he is satisfied in his Father's will and presence. This is his rest for ever: here he will dwell; for he has both desired and deserved it. 4th. He has farther expectations, which shall not be disappointed, for they are grounded upon the promise of the Father, who hath said unto him, "Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool," *Ps. cx. 1*. One would think such a person as Christ could have no enemies except in hell; but it is certain he has enemies on earth, and very many, and very inveterate ones. Let not Christians, then, wonder that they have enemies, though they desire to live peaceably with all men. But Christ's enemies shall be made his footstool, some by conversion, others by confusion; and which way soever it be Christ will be honoured. Of this Christ is assured, and this he is expecting, and his people should rejoice in the expectation of it: for when his enemies are subdued their enemies that are so for his sake shall be subdued also.

Seventhly. The apostle recommends Christ from the witness the Holy Ghost has given in the Scriptures concerning him; and this relates chiefly to what should be the happy fruit and consequence of his humiliation and sufferings, which in general is that new and gracious covenant that is founded upon his satisfaction, and sealed by his blood; *ver. 15*, "Whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness," &c. [Where note that the Holy Ghost is author of the Scripture, and doth speak unto us thereby. He declareth the new covenant to be of the Holy Ghost's making, and calleth him the Lord. Wherein he teaches us, 1. That the Holy Ghost is a distinct person of the Godhead, bearing witness by himself to the church of the truth. 2. And one in essence with the Father and the Son, even the Lord Jehovah, author of the new covenant with the Father and the Son.] The passage is cited from *Jer. xxxi. 31*, in which covenant God promises, 1. That God would pour out his Spirit upon his people, so as to give them skill, and will, and power to obey his word; he will put his laws in their hearts, and write them in their minds, *ver. 16*; this will make their duty plain, easy, and pleasant. 2. Their sins and iniquities he will remember no more, *ver. 17*; which will alone shew the riches of Divine grace and the sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction, that it needs not to be repeated, *ver. 18*. For there shall be no more remembrance of sin against true believers, either to shame them now or to condemn them hereafter. This was much more than the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices could effect.

And now we have gone through the doctrinal part of the epistle, in which we have met with many things dark and difficult to be understood, which we must impute to the weakness and dullness of our own minds. The apostle now proceeds to apply this great doctrine, so as to influence their affections and direct their practice, setting before them the dignities and duties of the gospel state.

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. 26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living*

God. 32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. 35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Here the apostle sets forth, First. The dignities of the gospel state. It is fit that believers should know the honours and privileges that Christ has procured them, that while they take the comfort they may give him the glory of all. The privileges are, 1. "Boldness to enter into the holiest." They have access to God, light to direct them, liberty of spirit and of speech to conform to the direction; they have a right to the privilege, and a readiness for it; assistance to use and improve it, and assurance of acceptance and advantage. They may enter into the gracious presence of God in his holy oracles, ordinances, providences and covenant, and so into communion with God, where they receive communications from him, till they are prepared to enter into his glorious presence in heaven. 2. "An high priest over the house of God;" even this blessed Jesus, who presides over the church militant and every member thereof on earth, and over the church triumphant in heaven. God is willing to dwell with men on earth, and to have them dwell with him in heaven; but fallen man cannot dwell with God without a high priest, who is the Mediator of reconciliation here, and of fruition hereafter.

Secondly. The apostle tells us the way and means by which Christians enjoy such privileges, and in general declares it to be "by the blood of Jesus," by the merit of that blood which he offered up to God as an atoning sacrifice. He has purchased for all that believe in him free access to God in the ordinances of his grace here, and in the kingdom of his glory. This blood being sprinkled on the conscience chases away slavish fear, and gives the believer assurance both of his safety and welcome into the Divine presence. Now the apostle having given this general account of the way by which we have access to God, he enters farther into the particulars of it, *ver. 20*. As, 1. It is the only way; there is no other left but this; the first way to the tree of life is and has been long shut up. 2. It is a new way; both in opposition to the covenant of works and to the antiquated dispensation of the Old Testament; it is *via novissima*,—the last way that will ever be opened to men. That way will not enter in the way exclude themselves for ever; it is a way that will always be effectual. 3. It is a living way; it would be death to attempt to come to God in the way of the covenant of works; but this way we may come to God and live. It is by a living Saviour, who, though he was dead, is alive; and it is a way that gives life and lively hope to those that enter into it. [As Elijah's chariot, so is Christ's manhood and sufferings. Get up here by faith in him, and thou shalt go up to God. This way is that of eagles' wings. Lay first hold upon Jesus Christ, God manifested in the flesh, and he will mount up with thee, and carry thee through the wilderness to Canaan, from the natural misery and sins which thou liest in, unto heaven.] 4. It is a way that Christ has consecrated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh. The veil in the tabernacle and temple signified the body of Christ; when he died, the veil of the temple was rent in sunder, and this was at the time of the evening sacrifice, and gave the people a surprising view into the holy of holies, which they never had before. Our way to heaven is by a crucified Saviour; his death is to us the way of life. To those that believe this he will be precious. This "way" leadeth through the veil, to teach us that we coming to Christ's manhood, must not subsist there, but by this mean seeking to God, who dwelleth in him, that our faith and hope may be in God. We enter by the man Christ, and do rest on God in Christ, on the fulness of the Godhead, which dwelleth bodily in Christ. This is to distinguish the natures of Christ, and to keep the unity of his person rightly.]

Thirdly. The apostle proceeds to shew the Hebrews the duties which they were obliged to upon the account of these privileges conferred upon them in such an extraordinary way, *ver. 22, 23*, &c.

1. They must draw near to God, and that in a right manner. They must draw near to God; since such a way of access and return to God is opened, it would be the greatest ingratitude and contempt of God and Christ still to keep at a distance from him. They must draw near by conversion and by taking hold of his covenant; they must draw near in all holy conversation, like Enoch walking with God. They must draw near in humble adorations, worshipping at his footstool; they must draw near in holy dependence, and in a strict observation of the Divine conduct towards them; they must draw near in conformity to God, and communion with him, living under his blessed influence; still endeavouring to get nearer and nearer, till they come to dwell in his presence. But they must see to it that they make their approach to God after a right manner. 1st. With a true heart; without any allowed guile or hypocrisy. God is the searcher of hearts, and he requires truth in the inward parts. Sincerity is our gospel perfection, though not our justifying righteousness. 2nd. "In full assurance of faith;" with a faith grown up to a full persuasion that when we come to God by Christ we shall have audience and acceptance. We should lay aside all sinful distrust; without faith we cannot please God, and the stronger our faith is, the more glory we give to God. And, 3rd. "Having

voluntariness of Christ's self-surrender would be the drift of the clause. The reference to this Jewish custom is, however, not certain, and the Hebrew text is taken to be equivalent to 'Thou hast opened mine ears.' (Compare *Isa. l. 4, 5*.) The expression then would be equivalent to 'Thou hast made me obedient; thou hast imparted the spirit and disposition through which alone sacrifices can be acceptable' (Webster and Wilkinson). The drift of the passage is not materially different in either case.

x. 10. "By the which will," or "in pursuance of which will we have been sanctified," &c. (Alford). The will is not the will and obedience of Christ, but the will of God which Christ came to fulfil. "We have been sanctified" must clearly not be understood of that actual personal sanctification which is progressive, but of the bringing into a holy relation and state, the objective reception into 'true relationship to God.'

x. 14. "The 'once for all' of Christ's offering is the burden and

our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." By a believing application of the blood of Christ to our souls they may be cleansed from guilt, from filth, from sinful fear and torment, from all aversion to God and duty, from ignorance, and error, and superstition, and whatever evils the consciences of men are subject to by reason of sin. 4th. "Our bodies washed with pure water," that is, with the water of baptism; by which we are recorded among the disciples of Christ, members of his mystical body. Or, with the sanctifying virtue of the Holy Spirit reforming and regulating our outward conversation as well as our inward frame, cleansing from the filthiness of the flesh, as well as of the spirit. The priests under the law were to wash before they went into the presence of the Lord to offer before him. There must be a due preparation for making our approaches to God.

2. The apostle exhorts believers to "hold fast the profession of their faith," ver. 23, where we observe, 1st. The duty itself; "To hold fast the profession of our faith;" that is, to be well apprised in all the truths and ways of the Gospel, to get fast hold of them, and to keep that hold against all temptation and opposition. Our spiritual enemies will do what they can to wrest our faith, and hope, and holiness, and comfort out of our hands, but we must hold fast our religion as our best treasure. 2nd. The manner how we must do this; "Without wavering," without doubting, without disputing, without dallying with temptation to apostasy. Having once settled these great things between God and our souls, we must be steadfast and immovable. They that begin to waver in matters of Christian faith and practice are in danger of falling away. 3rd. The motive or reason enforcing this duty; "He is faithful that hath promised." God has made great and precious promises to believers, and he is a faithful God, true to his word; there is no falseness or fickleness with him, and there should be none with us. His faithfulness should excite and encourage us to be faithful, and we must depend more upon his promises to us than upon our promises made with him, and we must plead with him the promise of grace sufficient.

Fourthly. We have the means prescribed for preventing our apostasy, and promoting our fidelity and perseverance, ver. 24, 25, &c. He mentions several, as,

1. That we should "consider one another to provoke to love and to good works." Christians ought to have a tender consideration and concern for one another; they should affectionately consider what their several wants, and weaknesses, and temptations are, and they should do this not to reproach one another, not to provoke one another to anger, but to love and good works; calling upon ourselves and one another to love God and Christ more, to love duty and holiness more, to love our brethren in Christ more, and to do all the good offices of Christian affection both to the bodies and souls of each other. A good example given to others is the best and most effectual provocation to love and good works.

2. Not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, ver. 25. It is the will of Christ that his disciples should assemble themselves together; sometimes more privately for conference and prayer, and in public for hearing and joining in all the ordinances of gospel worship. There were in the apostles' times, and should be in every age, Christian assemblies for the worship of God, and for mutual edification. And it seems even in those times there were some that forsook these assemblies, and so began to apostatise from religion itself. The communion of saints is a great help and privilege, and a good means of steadiness and perseverance; hereby their hearts and hands are mutually strengthened.

3. To exhort one another; to exhort ourselves and each other, to warn ourselves and one another of the sin and danger of backsliding, to put ourselves and our fellow Christians in mind of our duty, of our failures and corruptions, to watch over one another, and be jealous of ourselves and one another with a godly jealousy. This managed with a true gospel spirit would be the best and most cordial friendship.

4. That we should observe the approaching of times of trial, and be thereby quickened to greater diligence; "So much the more as ye see the day approaching." Christians ought to observe the signs of the times, such as God has foretold them of. There was a day approaching, a terrible day to the Jewish nation, when their city should be destroyed, and the body of the people rejected of God for rejecting Christ. This would be a day of dispersion and temptation to the chosen remnant. Now the apostle puts them upon observing what signs there were of the approach of such a terrible day, and be the more constant in meeting together and exhorting one another, that they might be the better prepared for such a day. There is a trying day coming on us all, the day of our death, and we should observe all the signs of its approaching, and improve them to greater watchfulness and diligence in duty.

Fifthly. After having mentioned these means of establishment, the apostle proceeds, in the close of the chapter, to enforce his exhortations to perseverance, and against apostasy, by many very weighty considerations, ver. 26, 27, &c.

1. From the description he gives of the sin of apostasy. It is "sinning wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth," sinning wilfully against that truth we have had convincing evidence of. This text has been the occasion of great distress to some gracious souls; they have been ready to conclude that every wilful sin after conviction, and against knowledge, is the unpardonable sin. But this has been their infirmity and error. The sin here mentioned is a total and final apostasy,—when men with a full and fixed will and resolution despise and reject Christ, the only Saviour; despise and resist the Spirit, the only Sanctifier; and despise and renounce the Gospel, the only way of salvation, and the words of eternal life; and all this after they have known, owned, and professed the Christian religion, and continue to do so obstinately and maliciously: this is the great transgression. The apostle seems to refer to the law concerning presumptuous sinners, Num. xv. 30, 31; they were to be cut off.

2. From the dreadful doom of such apostates. 1st. There remains no more sacrifice for such sins; no other Christ to come to save such, they sin against the last resort and remedy. There were some sins under the law for which no sacrifices were provided. But yet if they that committed them did truly repent, though they must not escape temporal death, they might escape eternal destruction; for Christ would come and make atonement. But now those under the Gospel that will not accept of Christ, that they may be saved by him, have no other refuge left them. 2nd. There remains only for them "a certain fearful looking for of judgment," ver. 27. Some think this refers to the dreadful destruction of the Jewish church and state, but certainly it refers also to the utter destruction that waits for all obstinate apostates at death and judgment, when the Judge will discover a fiery indignation against them that will devour the adversaries. They will be consigned over to the devouring fire, and to everlasting burnings. Of this destruction God gives some notorious sinners, while on earth, a fearful foreboding in their own consciences, a dreadful looking for it, with a despair of ever being able either to endure or escape it.

3. From the methods of Divine justice with those that "despised Moses' law;" that is, sinned presumptuously, despising his authority, his threatenings, and power. These, when convicted, by two or three witnesses, were put to death: they died without mercy, a temporal death. Observe, Wise governors should be careful to keep up the credit of their government, and the authority

of the laws, by punishing presumptuous offenders. But then, in such cases, there should be good evidence of the fact. Thus God ordained in Moses' law; and from hence the apostle infers the heavy doom that will fall upon those that apostatise from Christ. And here he refers himself to their own consciences, to judge how much sorer punishment the despisers of Christ (after they have professed to know him) are like to undergo; and they may judge of the greatness of the punishment by the greatness of the sin.

1st. They have "trodden under foot the Son of God." To trample upon an ordinary person shews intolerable insolence; to treat a person of honour in that vile manner is insufferable; but to deal thus with the Son of God, who himself is God, must be the highest provocation; to trample upon his person, denying him to be the Messiah; to trample upon his authority, and undermine his kingdom; to trample upon his members as the obscuring of all things, and not fit to live in the world,—what punishment can be too great for such men?

2nd. They have "counted the blood of the covenant," wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing. The blood of Christ, with which the covenant was purchased and sealed, and wherewith Christ himself was consecrated, or wherewith the apostate was sanctified, that is, baptised, visibly initiated into the new covenant by baptism, and admitted to the Lord's supper. Observe, There is a kind of sanctification which persons may partake of, and yet fall away. They may be distinguished by common gifts and graces, by an outward profession, by a form of godliness, a course of duties, and a set of privileges, and yet fall away finally. Men that have seemed before to have the blood of Christ in high esteem may come to account it an unholy thing; no better than the blood of a malefactor, though it was the world's ransom, and every drop of it of infinite value.

3rd. They have "done despite unto the Spirit of grace." The Spirit that is graciously given to men, and that works grace wherever it is; the Spirit of grace, that should be regarded and attended to with the greatest care. This Spirit they have grieved, resisted, quenched; yea, done despite to him, which is the highest act of wickedness, and makes the case of the sinner desperate, refusing to have the gospel salvation applied to him. Now he leaves it to the consciences of all, appeals to universal reason and equity, whether such aggravated crimes ought not to receive a suitable punishment, a sorer punishment than they had that died without mercy? But what punishment can be sorer than to die without mercy? I answer, To die by mercy, by that mercy and grace which they have despised. How dreadful is the case, when not only the justice of God, but his abused grace and mercy, call for vengeance!

4. From the description we have in the Scripture of the nature of God's vindictive justice, ver. 30. We know that he has said, "Vengeance is mine," &c. This is taken out of Ps. xciv. 1, "Vengeance belongs unto me," the terrors of the Lord are known both by revelation and reason. Vindictive justice is a glorious, though terrible attribute of God; it belongs to him, and he will use and execute it upon the heads of such sinners as despise his grace; he will avenge himself, and his Son, and Spirit, and covenant, upon apostates. And how dreadful then will their case be! The other quotation is from Deu. xxxii. 36, "The Lord will judge his people;" he will search and try his visible church, and will discover and detect those that say they are Jews, but are not; he will make them of the synagogue of Satan, and separate the precious from the vile, and will punish the sinners in Zion with the greatest severity. Now that they "know him who hath said, Vengeance belongeth to me, I will recompense," must needs conclude as the apostle does, ver. 31, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." They that know the joy that results from the favour of God can thereby judge of the power and dread of his vindictive wrath. Observe here what will be the eternal misery of impenitent sinners and apostates; they shall "fall into the hands of the living God." Their punishment shall come from God's own hand; he takes them into the hand of his justice. He will deal with them himself; their greatest misery will be the immediate impressions of Divine wrath on the soul. When he punishes them by creatures, the instrument abates something of the force of the blow; but when he does it by his own hand it is infinite misery. This they shall have at God's hand. They shall lie down in sorrow, their destruction shall come from his glorious, powerful presence. When they make their woful bed in hell, they will find that God is there, and his presence will be their greatest terror and torment. And he is a living God; he lives for ever, and will punish for ever.

5. He presses them to perseverance, by putting them in mind of their former sufferings for Christ; ver. 32, "But call to mind the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions." In the early days of the Gospel there was a very hot persecution raised up against the professors of the Christian religion; and the believing Hebrews had their share of it. He would have them to remember,

1st. When they had suffered. In former days, after they were illuminated; that is, as soon as God had breathed life into their souls, and caused Divine light to spring up in their minds, and taken them into his favour and covenant; then earth and hell combined all their force against them. Here observe, A natural state is a dark state, and those that continue in that state meet with no disturbance from Satan and the world; but a state of grace is a state of light, and therefore the powers of darkness will violently oppose it. They that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.

2nd. What they suffered. They endured a great fight of afflictions. Many and various afflictions united together against them, and they had a great conflict with them. Many are the troubles of the righteous. First. They were afflicted in themselves. In their own person; they were made "gazing-stocks, spectacles to the world, angels and men," 1 Cor. iv. 9. In their names and reputation, ver. 33. By many reproaches Christians ought to value their reputation, and they do so especially because the reputation of religion is concerned; this makes reproach a great affliction. They were afflicted in their estates, by the spoiling of their goods by fines and forfeitures. Secondly. They were afflicted in the afflictions of their brethren; "Partly while ye became companions" of those that were so used. The Christian spirit is a sympathising spirit, not a selfish spirit but a compassionate spirit; it makes every Christian's suffering our own, puts us upon pitying them, visiting them, helping them, and pleading for them. Christians are one body, animated by one spirit, embarked in one common cause and interest, and are the children of that God who is afflicted in all the afflictions of his people. If one member of the body suffers, all the rest suffer with it. And the apostle takes particular notice how they had sympathised with him; ver. 34, "Ye had compassion on me in my bonds." We must thankfully acknowledge the compassions our Christian friends have shewed for us under our afflictions.

3rd. How they had suffered. They had been mightily supported under their former sufferings; they took their sufferings patiently, and not only so, but joyfully received it from God as a favour and honour conferred upon them, that they should be thought worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Christ. God can strengthen his suffering people with all might in the inner man, to all patience and long-suffering, and that with joyfulness, Col. i. 11.

4th. What it was that enabled them thus to bear up under their sufferings. They knew in themselves that they had in heaven a better and a more enduring substance. Observe, First. The happiness of the saints in heaven is substance,

crown of the thought, verses 1—10; in verses 11—14 the ever-during throne, after a once for ever completed sacrifice, occupies the foreground" (Delitzsch, in Lange). "He hath perfected those who are being sanctified;" such is the force of the original. All those who are being from day to day brought into a holy relation to God have been perfected by the one offering of Christ; that is, they are in a perfect condition, though not perfected in that condition.

x. 20, 21. "Consecrated;" or "inaugurated for us," &c.

x. 34. "Compassion of me," &c.: some MSS. read, "For ye both had compassion of them that were in bonds, and took," &c. Most authorities omit "in heaven" from the last clause of the verse. Alford renders, "ye have of your own a better," &c.

x. 36. "Ye have need of patience," &c.: or, "Ye have need of endurance, that ye may do the will of God, and receive the promise." The English, "that after ye have done," does not yield so clear a sense. The sentence, however, will admit of either rendering.

something of real weight and worth; all things here are but shadows. *Secondly.* It is a better substance than any thing they can have or lose here. *Thirdly.* It is an enduring substance; it will outlive time, and run parallel with eternity. They can never spend it; their enemies can never take it from them as they did their earthly goods. *Fourthly.* This will make a rich amends for all they can lose and suffer here. In heaven they shall have a better life, a better estate, better liberty, better society, better hearts, better work, every thing better. *Fifthly.* That Christians should know this in themselves; they should get the assurance of it in themselves. The Spirit of God witnessing with their spirits for the assured knowledge of this will help them to endure any fight of afflictions they may be encountered with in this world.

6. He presses them to persevere from that recompence of reward that waited for all faithful Christians; ver. 35, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward." Where, 1st. He exhorts them not to cast away their confidence, that is, their holy courage and boldness, but to hold fast that profession for which they had suffered so much before, and borne those sufferings so well. 2nd. He encourages them to this by assuring them that the reward of their holy confidence would be very great; it carries a present reward in it, in holy peace and joy, and much of God's presence and his power visiting upon them; and it shall have a great recompence of reward hereafter. 3rd. He shews them how necessary a grace the patience is in our present state; ver. 36, "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise;" that is, this promised reward. Observe, The greatest part of the saints' happiness is in promise; that they must first do the will of God before they receive the promise, and that after they have done the will of God they have need of patience to wait for the time when the promise shall be fulfilled; they have need of patience to live till God calls them away. It is a trial of the patience of Christians to be content to live after their work is done, and to stay for the reward till God's time to give it them is come. We must be God's waiting servants when we can be no longer his working servants; they that have had and exercised much patience already must have and exercise more till they die. 4th. To help their patience he assures them of the near approach of Christ's coming to deliver and to reward them; ver. 37, "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." He will soon come to them at death, and put an end to all their sufferings, and give them a crown of life. He will soon come to judgment, and put an end to the sufferings of the whole church, (all his mystical body,) and give them an ample and glorious reward in the most public manner. There is an appointed time for both, and beyond that time he will not tarry, *Hab. ii. 3.* The Christian's present conflict may be sharp, but it will be soon over.

7. And lastly, he presses them to perseverance by telling them that this is the distinguishing character, and will be the happiness, whereas apostasy is the reproach, and will be the ruin, of all that are guilty of it; ver. 38, 39, "Now the just shall live by faith," &c. 1st. It is the honourable character of just men that, in times of the greatest afflictions, they can live by faith; they can live upon the assured persuasion they have of the truth of God's promises. Faith puts life and vigour into them; they can trust God, and live upon him, and wait his time; and as their faith maintains their spiritual life now, it shall be crowned with eternal life hereafter. 2nd. That apostasy is the mark of the brand of those in whom God takes no pleasure; and it is a cause of God's severe displeasure and anger. God never was pleased with the formal profession, and external duties and services, of such as do not persevere; he saw the hypocrisy of their hearts then, and he is greatly provoked when their formality in religion ends in an open apostasy from religion; he beholds them with great displeasure; they are an offence to him. 3rd. The apostle concludes with declaring his good hope concerning himself and these Hebrews, that they should not forfeit the character and happiness of the just, and fall under the brand and misery of the wicked; ver. 39, "But we are not," &c., as if he had said, I hope we are not of them who draw back, I hope you and I, who have met with great trials already, and have been supported under them by the grace of God strengthening our faith, shall not be at any time left to ourselves, to draw back to perdition; but that God will still keep us by his mighty power through faith unto salvation. Observe, *First.* Professors may go a great way, and after all draw back; and that drawing back from God is drawing on to perdition. The farther we depart from God, the nearer we approach to ruin. *Secondly.* Those that have been kept faithful in great trials for the time past have reason to hope that the same grace shall be sufficient to help them still to live by faith till they receive the end of their faith and patience, even the salvation of their souls. If we live by faith, and die in faith, our souls are safe for ever.

CHAPTER XI.

The apostle having in the close of the foregoing chapter recommended the grace of faith and a life of faith, as the best preservative against apostasy, he now enlarges upon the nature and fruits of this excellent grace. I. The nature of it, and the honour it reflects upon all that live in the exercise of it, ver. 1—3. II. The great examples we have in the Old Testament of those that lived by faith, and did and suffered extraordinary things by the strength of this grace, ver. 4—38. And, III. The advantages that we have in the Gospel for the exercise of this grace above what they had that lived in the times of the Old Testament, ver. 39, 40.



appear.

Here we have, *First.* A definition or description of the grace of faith in two parts.

1. It "is the substance of things hoped for." Faith and hope go together; and the same things that are the object of our hope are the object of our faith. It is a firm persuasion and expectation that God will perform all that he has

promised to us in Christ; and this persuasion is so strong that it gives the soul a kind of possession and present fruition of those things, gives them a subsistence in the soul by the first-fruits and foretastes of them. So that believers in the exercise of faith are filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Christ dwells in the soul by faith, and the soul is filled with the fulness of God; as far as his present measure will admit, he experiences a substantial reality in the objects of faith.

2. It is "the evidence of things not seen." Faith demonstrates to the eye of the mind the reality of those things that cannot be discerned by the eye of the body. Faith is the firm assent of the soul to the Divine revelation, and every part of it, and sets to its seal that God is true. It is a full approbation of all that God has revealed as holy, just, and good, and it helps the soul to make application of all to itself, with suitable affections and endeavours, and so it is designed to serve the believer instead of sight, and to be to the soul all that the senses are to the body; that faith is but opinion or fancy that does not realize invisible things to the soul, and excite the soul to act agreeably to the nature and importance of them.

[In describing faith, he ascribeth unto it the property of the word which faith layeth hold upon; for it is the word properly which is the substance of things not seen. Then there is such an union betwixt faith and the word, that what the word is in force and effect that faith is said to be in force and effect also. As faith honoureth the word, so God honoureth faith, in giving it the like commendation for force with the word. What is the original of the being and existence of any thing, but this? God willeth it to be, or promiseth that it shall come to pass, or commandeth that it may be. Therefore, let faith get a hold of the promise or word, and it taketh hold of the thing promised by the root thereof. And in the hand of faith doth truth bud out, and flourish unto the ripe fruit of full satisfaction in performance.]

Secondly. An account of the honour it reflects upon all those that have lived in the exercise of it; ver. 2. "By it the elders obtained a good report;" the ancient believers that lived in the first ages of the world. Observe,

1. That true faith is an old grace, and has the best plea to antiquity. It is not a new invention, a modern fancy; it is a grace that has been planted in the soul of man ever since the covenant of grace was published in the world; and it has been practised from the beginning of the revelation; the eldest and best men that ever were in the world were believers.

2. That their faith was their honour. It reflected honour upon them; they were an honour to their faith, and their faith was an honour to them. It put them upon doing the things that were of good report, and God has taken care that a record shall be kept, and report made, of the excellent things they did in the strength of this grace. The genuine actings of faith will bear to be reported, and deserve to be reported, and will, when reported, redound to the honour of true believers.

Thirdly. We have here one of the first acts and articles of faith, which has a great influence on all the rest, and which is common to all believers in every age and part of the world, and that is, the creation of the worlds by the word of God, not out of pre-existent matter, but out of nothing, ver. 3. The grace of faith has a retrospect as well as prospect; it looks not only forward to the end of the world, but back to the beginning of the world. By faith we understand much more of the formation of the world than ever could be understood by the naked eye of natural reason. Faith is not a force upon the understanding, but a friend and a help to it. Now what does faith give us to understand concerning the worlds, that is, the upper, middle, and lower regions of the universe? 1. That these worlds were not eternal, nor did they produce themselves, but they were made by another. 2. That the Maker of the worlds is God; he is the Maker of all things; and whoever is so must be God. 3. That he made the world with great exactness; it was a framed work, in every thing duly adapted and disposed to answer its end, and to express the perfections of the Creator. 4. That God made the world by his word; that is, by his essential wisdom, and eternal Son, and by his active will, saying, Let it be done, and it was done, *Ps. xxxiii. 9.* 5. That the world was thus framed out of nothing, out of no pre-existent matter, contrary to the received maxim, that out of nothing nothing can be made, which, though true of created power, can have no place with God, who can call things that are not as if they were, and command them into being. These things we understand by faith. The Bible gives us the truest and most exact account of the origin of all things, and we are to believe it, and not to wrest or run down the Scripture account of the creation because it does not suit with some fantastical hypotheses of our own, which has been in some learned, but conceited men, the first remarkable step towards infidelity, and has led them into many more. [6. The works of creation stand upon no better ground than God's word. This sentence, "God shall make our vile bodies like unto the glorious body of Christ Jesus," is as powerful to make us so as this sentence, "Let there be light," was powerful to create light when there was none before.]

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. 5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. 7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he

x. 37. "He that shall come:" rather, "he that is coming," "the coming one."

xi. 1. "Substance:" the basis or foundation, the substantial ground, the confidence in blessings hoped for. "The evidence:" or "the conviction."

xi. 2. "By it:" or "in it," or "therein." "Obtained a good report" sounds somewhat ambiguous: "in this (i.e., faith) they were attested, or had testimony borne to them."

xi. 3. "We understand:" apprehend intellectually. "That things which," &c.: the best authorities have the singular number—"that that which is seen was not made," &c.

xi. 4. "Abel . . . a more excellent sacrifice" (compare Gen. iv. 7). The difference of spirit in which the two offerings were made caused the diversity of acceptance. Faith was the motive power in the case of Abel, and his offering may have been in consequence a better and fuller one. Some have thought that Abel brought both

went. 9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

The apostle, having given us a more general account of the grace of faith, now proceeds to set before us some illustrious examples of it in the Old Testament times; and these may be divided into two classes:—1. Those whose names are not only mentioned, but the particular exercise and actings of their faith specified. 2. Those whose names are barely mentioned, and an account given in general of the exploits of their faith, which it is left to the reader to accommodate, and apply to the particular persons, from what he gathers up in the sacred story.

We have here those whose names are not only mentioned, but the particular trials and actings of their faith subjoined; and in these verses are included the several instances, from Abel to Isaac.

First. The leading instance and example of faith here recorded is that of Abel. It is observable the Spirit of God has not thought fit to say anything here of the faith of our first parents; and yet the church of God has generally by a pious charity taken it for granted that God gave them repentance and faith in the promised seed; that he instructed them in the mystery of sacrificing, and that they instructed their children in it, and that they found mercy with God after they had ruined themselves and all their posterity. But God has left the matter still under some doubt, as a warning to all that have great talents given to them, and a great trust reposed in them, that they do not prove unfaithful, since God would not enrol our first parents among the number of believers in this blessed calendar. It begins with Abel, one of the first saints, and the first martyr for religion of all the sons of Adam; one that lived by faith and died for it, and therefore a fit pattern for the Hebrews to imitate. Observe,

1. What Abel did by faith. He offered up "a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," a "more full and perfect sacrifice," *ἁλίστην θυσίαν*. Hence learn, 1st. That after the fall God opened a new way for the children of men to return to him in religious worship. This is one of the first instances that is upon record of fallen men going in to worship God, and it was a wonder of mercy that all intercourse between God and man was not cut off by the fall. 2nd. That after the fall God must be worshipped by sacrifices, a way of worship which carries in it a confession of sin, and of the desert of sin, and a profession of faith in a Redeemer, who was to be a ransom for the souls of men. 3rd. That from the beginning of this kind there has been a remarkable difference between the worshippers. Here were two persons, brethren: both go in to worship God, and yet there was a vast difference; Cain was the elder brother, but Abel has the preference. It is not seniority of birth, but grace, that makes men truly honourable. The difference is observable in both their persons,—Abel was an upright person, a righteous man, a true believer; Cain was a formalist, had not a principle of special grace; and in their principles,—Abel acted under the power of faith, Cain only from the force of education or natural conscience; and there was a very observable difference in their offerings,—Abel brought a sacrifice of atonement, brought of the firstlings of the flock, acknowledging himself to be a sinner that deserved to die, and only hoped for mercy through the great sacrifice. Cain brought only a sacrifice of acknowledgment, a mere thank offering, the fruit of the ground, which might, and perhaps must, have been offered in innocence. Here was no confession of sin, no regard to the ransom; this was an essential defect in Cain's offering. There will always be a difference between those that worship the true God; some will compass him about with lies, others will be faithful with the saints. Some, like the Pharisee,

will lean to their own righteousness; others, like the publican, will confess their sin, and cast themselves upon the mercy of God in Christ.

2. What Abel gained by his faith. The original record is in *Gen. iv. 4*, "God had respect to Abel and to his offering;" first to his person as gracious, then to his offering as proceeding from grace, especially from the grace of faith. In this place we are told that he obtained by his faith some special advantages; as, 1st. Witness that he was righteous, a justified, sanctified, and accepted person; this very probably was attested by fire from heaven kindling and consuming his sacrifice. 2nd. God gave witness to the righteousness of his person, by testifying his acceptance of his gifts. When the fire, an emblem of God's justice, accepted the offering, it was a sign that the mercy of God accepted the offer, for the sake of the great sacrifice. 3rd. By it he being dead yet speaketh. He had the honour to leave behind him an instructive speaking case, and what does it speak to us? What should we learn from it? *First*. That fallen man has leave to go in to worship God with hope of acceptance. *Secondly*. That if our persons and offerings be accepted, it must be through faith in the Messiah. *Thirdly*. That acceptance with God is a peculiar and distinguishing favour. *Fourthly*. That those who obtain this favour from God must expect the envy and malice of the world. *Fifthly*. That God will not suffer the injuries done to his people to remain unpunished, nor their sufferings unrewarded. These are very good and useful instructions, and yet the blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than that of Abel. *Sixthly*. That God would not suffer Abel's faith to die with him, but would raise up others, that should obtain like precious faith; and so he did in a little time, for in the next verse we read,

Secondly. Of the faith of Enoch, ver. 5. He is the second of those elders that through faith have obtained a good report. And observe,

1. What is here reported of him. Why, in this place and in *Gen. v. 22, &c.*, we read, 1st. That he walked with God; that is, that he was really, eminently, actively, progressively and perseveringly religious in his conformity to God, communion with God, and complacency in God. 2nd. That "he was translated, that he should not see death," nor any part of him be found upon earth; for God took him, soul and body, into heaven, as he will do those of the saints that shall be found alive at his second coming. 3rd. That "before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." He had the evidence of it in his own conscience, and the Spirit of God witnessed with his spirit. Those that by faith walk with God in a sinful world are pleasing to him, and he will give them marks of his favour, and put honour upon them.

2. What is here said of his faith, ver. 6. Why, it is said, that without this faith it is impossible to please God, without such a faith as helps us to walk with God, an active faith; and that we cannot come to God unless we "believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him." 1st. He must believe that God is, and that he is what he is, what he has revealed himself to be in the Scripture, that is, a Being of infinite perfections, subsisting in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Observe. The practical belief of the existence of God, as revealed in the word, would be a powerful awe-band upon our souls,—a bridle of restraint to keep us from sin, and a spur of constraint to put us upon all manner of gospel obedience. 2nd. That he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Here observe, *First*. By the fall we have lost God. We have lost the Divine light, life, love, likeness, and communion. *Secondly*. God is again to be found of us through Christ, the second Adam. *Thirdly*. God has prescribed means and ways wherein he may be found; to wit, a strict attention to his oracles, attendance on his ordinances, and ministers duly discharging their office and associating with his people, observing his providential conduct, and in all things humbly waiting for his gracious presence. *Fourthly*. They that would find God in these ways of his must seek him diligently; they must seek early, earnestly, and perseveringly; then shall they seek him and find him, if they seek him with all their heart; and when once they have found him, as their reconciled God, they will never repent the pains they have spent in seeking after him.

Thirdly. The faith of Noah, ver. 7. Observe,

1. The ground of Noah's faith, and that was a warning he had received from God of things as yet not seen. He had a Divine revelation; whether by voice or vision does not appear, but it was such as carried in it its own evidence. He was forewarned of things not seen as yet, that is, of a great and severe judgment, such as the world had never yet seen, and of which in the course of second causes there was not yet the least sign. This secret warning he was to communicate to the world, who would be sure both to despise him and his message. God usually warns sinners before he strikes, and where his warnings are slighted the blow will fall the heavier.

2. The actings of Noah's faith, and the influence it had both upon his mind and practice. 1st. Upon his mind. It impressed his soul with a fear of God's judgments; he was proved with fear. Faith first influences our affections, then our actions; and faith works upon those affections that are suitable to the matter revealed. If it be some good thing, faith stirs up love and desire; if some evil thing, faith stirs up fear. 2nd. His faith influenced his practice. His fear thus excited by believing God's threatening, moved him to prepare an ark, in which, no doubt, he met with the scorn and reproaches of a wicked generation. He did not dispute with God why he should make an ark, nor how it should be capable of containing what was to be lodged in it, nor how such a vessel could possibly weather out so great a storm. His Father silenced all objections, and set him to work in earnest. 3rd. The blessed fruits and rewards of Noah's faith. *First*. Hereby himself and his house were saved, when a whole world of sinners were perishing about them. God saved his family for his sake; it was well for them that they were Noah's sons and daughters; it was well for those women that they married into Noah's family; perhaps they might have married to great estates in other families, but then they had been drowned. We used to say, It is good to be akin to an estate, but surely it is good to be akin to the covenant. *Secondly*. Hereby he judged and "condemned the world." His holy fear condemned their security and vain confidence, his faith condemned their unbelief, his obedience their contempt and rebellion. Good examples will either convert sinners or condemn them. There is something very convincing in a life of strict holiness and regard to God; it commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, and they are judged by it. This is the best way the people of God can take to condemn the wicked; not by harsh and censorious language, but by a holy, exemplary conversation. *Thirdly*. Hereby he became "heir of the righteousness which is by faith." 1st. He was possessed of a true justifying righteousness; he was heir to it. And, 2nd. This his right of inheritance was through faith in Christ as a member of Christ, a child of God, and if a child then an heir. His righteousness was relative, resulting from his adoption through faith in the promised seed. As ever we expect to be justified and saved in "the great and terrible day of the Lord," let us now prepare an ark, secure an interest in Christ, and in the ark of the covenant, and do it speedily, before the door be shut, for there is not salvation in any other.

Fourthly. The faith of Abraham, the friend of God, and father of the faithful, in whom the Hebrews boasted, and from whom they derived their pedigree and privileges. And therefore the apostle, that he might both please and profit them, enlarges more upon the heroic achievements of Abraham's faith than any other of the patriarchs; and in the midst of his account of the faith of

fruits of the ground and the firstlings of his flock. This seems at least doubtful. "The view so often expressed that Abel's bloody sacrifice resulted from a more profound religious apprehension than that of Cain, which was 'without shedding of blood,' seems to agree with the general bearing of the text" (Kurtz).

xi. 7. "Moved with fear:" the reference is rather to the foresight with which Noah, in faith, proceeded to his preparations. Alford translates, "taking forethought."

xi. 11. "Through faith also Sara herself:" the emphatic addition of the word "herself" serves to recall the fact that Sarah at first doubted the promise.

xi. 13. "And were persuaded of them:" these words are rejected by the unanimous testimony of the best MSS. "And embraced them:" or hailed, greeted, saluted them. The image is of saluting from a distance one's native land.

xi. 14. "That they seek a country:" Alford renders "a home"

Abraham he inserts the story of Sarah's faith, whose daughters those women are that continue to do well. Observe,

1. The ground of Abraham's faith; and that was the call and promise of God, ver. 8.

1st. This call, though it was a very trying call, yet it was the call of God, and therefore a sufficient ground for faith and rule of obedience. The manner in which he was called Stephen relates in *Acts* vii. 2, 3, "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee." This was an effectual call, by which he was converted from the idolatry of his father's house, *Gen.* xii. 1. This call was renewed after his father's death in Charran. Observe, *First*. The grace of God is absolutely free in taking some of the worst, and making them the best of men. *Secondly*. That God must come to us before we come to him. *Thirdly*. That in calling and converting sinners God appears as a God of glory, and works a glorious work in the soul. *Fourthly*. That that calls us not only to leave sin, but sinful company, and whatever is inconsistent with our devotedness to him. *Fifthly*. That we need not only to be called to set out well, but to go on well. *Sixthly*. That he will not have his people take up that rest any where short of the heavenly Canaan.

2nd. The promise of God. God promised Abraham that the place he was called to he should afterwards receive for an inheritance; after awhile he should have the heavenly Canaan for his inheritance, and in process of time his posterity should inherit the earthly Canaan. Observe here, *First*. God calls his people to an inheritance; by his effectual call he makes them children, and so heirs. *Secondly*. That this inheritance is not immediately possessed by them, but they must wait some time for it. But the promise is sure, and shall have its seasonable accomplishment. *Thirdly*. The faith of parents often procures blessings for their posterity.

2. The exercise of Abraham's faith. He yielded an implicit regard to the call of God. 1st. "He went out, not knowing whither he went." He put himself into the hand of God, to send him whithersoever he pleased: he subscribed to God's wisdom, as fittest to direct, and submitted to his will, as fittest to determine every thing that concerned him. Implicit faith and obedience are due to God, and to him only; all that are effectually called resign up their own will and wisdom to the will and wisdom of God, and it is their wisdom to do so; though they know not always their way, yet they know their guide, and that satisfies them. 2nd. "He sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country." This was an exercise of his faith. Observe, *First*. How Canaan is called the land of promise, because yet only promised, not possessed. *Secondly*. How Abraham lived in Canaan, not as heir and proprietor, but as a sojourner only. He did not serve an ejection or raise a war against the old inhabitants to dispossess them, but contented himself to live as a stranger, to bear their unkindnesses patiently, and to receive any favours from them thankfully, and to keep his heart fixed upon his home, the heavenly Canaan. 3rd. He dwelt in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. He lived there in an ambulatory moving condition, living in a daily readiness for his remove. And thus should we all live in this world. He had good company with him, and they were a great comfort to him in his sojourning state. Abraham lived till Isaac was seventy-five years old, and Jacob fifteen. Isaac and Jacob were heirs of the same promise; for the promise was renewed to Isaac, *Gen.* xxvi. 3, and to Jacob, *Gen.* xxviii. 13. All the saints are heirs of the same promise; the promise is made to believers and their children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call. And it is pleasant to see parents and children sojourning together in this world as heirs of the heavenly inheritance.

3. The supports of Abraham's faith; ver. 10. "He looked for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Observe here, 1st. The description given of heaven. It is a city, a regular society, well established, well defended, and well supplied; it is a city that hath foundations, even the immutable purposes and almighty power of God, the infinite merits and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the promises of an everlasting covenant, its own purity, and the perfection of its inhabitants. And it is a city "whose builder and maker is God." He contrived the model; he accordingly made it, and he has laid open a new and living way into it, and prepared it for his people; and he puts them into possession of it, and prefers them in it, and is himself the substance and felicity of it. 2nd. Observe the due regard that Abraham had to this heavenly city. He looked for it; he believed there was such a state; he waited for it, and in the mean time he conversed in it by faith; he had raised and rejoicing hopes that in God's time and way he should be brought safely to it. 3rd. The influence this had upon his present conversation. It was a support to him under all the trials of his sojourning state, helped him patiently to bear all the inconveniences of it, and actively to discharge all the duties of it, persevering therein unto the end.

Fifthly. In the midst of the story of Abraham we have inserted an account of the faith of Sarah. Here observe,

1. The difficulties of Sarah's faith, which were very great. As, 1st. The prevalence of unbelief for a time; she laughed at the promise, as impossible to be made good. 2nd. She had gone out of the way of her duty through unbelief, in putting Abraham upon taking Hagar to his bed, that he might have a posterity. Now this sin of hers would make it more difficult for her to act by faith afterwards. 3rd. The great improbability of the thing promised, that she should be the mother of a child, when she was of sterile constitution naturally, and now past the prolific age.

2. The actings of her faith. Her unbelief is pardoned and forgotten, but her faith prevailed, and is recorded; "She judged him faithful who had promised," ver. 11. She received the promise as the promise of God; and, being convinced of that, she truly judged he both could and would perform it, how impossible soever it might seem to reason; for the faithfulness of God will not suffer him to deceive his people.

3. The fruits and rewards of her faith. 1st. "She received strength to conceive seed." The strength of nature as well as grace is from God; he can make the barren soul fruitful as well as the barren womb. 2nd. She "was delivered of a child," a man child, a child of the promise, the comfort of his parents' advanced years, and the hope of future ages. 3rd. From them, by this son, sprang a numerous progeny of illustrious persons, "as the stars of the sky," ver. 12; a great, powerful, and renowned nation above all the rest in the world; and a nation of saints, the peculiar church and people of God; and, which was the highest honour and reward of all, of these, according to the flesh, the Messiah came, who is over all, God blessed for evermore.

Sixthly. The apostle proceeds to make mention of the faith of the other patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob, and the rest of this happy family, ver. 13. Where observe, 1. The trial of their faith in the imperfection of their present state. They had not received the promises; that is, they had not received the things promised, they had not yet been put into possession of Canaan, they had not yet seen their numerous issue, they had not seen Christ in the flesh. Observe, 1st. Many that are interested in the promises do not presently receive the things promised. 2nd. That one imperfection of the present state of the saints on earth is, that their happiness lies more in promise and reversion than in actual enjoyment of possession. The gospel state is much more perfect than the patriarchal,

because more of the promises are now fulfilled. The heavenly state will be most perfect of all; for there all the promises will have their full accomplishment.

2. The actings of their faith during this imperfect state of things. Though they had not received the promises, yet, 1st. They saw them afar off. Faith has a clear and a strong eye, and can see promised mercies at a great distance. Abraham saw Christ's day when it was afar off, and rejoiced, *Jno.* viii. 56. 2nd. They were persuaded of them that they were true, and should be fulfilled. Faith sets to its seal that "God is true," and thereby settles and satisfies the soul. 3rd. They embraced them. Their faith was a faith of consent. Faith has a long arm, and can lay hold of blessings at a great distance; can make them present, can love them, and rejoice in them, and thus antedate the enjoyment of them. 4th. They "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth." Observe, *First*. Their condition; "Strangers and pilgrims." They are strangers as saints, whose home is heaven; they are pilgrims as they are travelling towards their home, though oftentimes meanly and slowly. *Secondly*. Their acknowledgment of this their condition. They were not ashamed to own it; both their lips and their lives confessed their present condition; they expected little from the world, they cared not to engage much in it. They endeavoured to lay aside every weight, to gird up the loins of their minds, to mind their way, to keep company and pace with their fellow-travellers, looking for difficulties, and bearing them, and longing to get home. 5th. Hereby they declared plainly that they sought another country, ver. 14,—heaven, their own country; for their spiritual birth and breeding is from thence, and there are their best relations, and there is their inheritance. This country they seek; their designs are for it, their designs are after it, their discourse is about it; they diligently endeavour to clear up their title to it, to have their temper suited to it, to have their conversation in it, and to come to the enjoyment of it.

6th. They gave full proof of their sincerity in making such a confession; for, *First*. They were not "mindful of that country from whence they came," ver. 15. They did not hanker after the plenty and pleasures of it, nor regret and repent that they had left it; they had no desire to return to it. Note, Those that are once effectually and savingly called out of a sinful state have no mind to return into it again; they now know better things. *Secondly*. They did not take the opportunity that offered itself for their return. They might have had such an opportunity: they had time enough to return; they had natural strength to return; they knew the way; those with whom they sojourned would have been willing enough to have parted with them; their old friends would have been glad to receive them. They had sufficient to bear the charges of their journey; and flesh and blood, a corrupt counsellor, would be sometimes suggesting to them a return, but they steadfastly adhered to God and duty under all discouragements, and against all temptations to revolt from him; and so should all of us do. We shall not want opportunities to revolt from God; but we must shew the truth of our faith and profession by a steady adherence to him to the end of our days. *Thirdly*. Their sincerity appeared not only in not returning to their former country, but in desiring a better country, that is, a heavenly. Observe, 1st. The heavenly country is better than any upon earth. It is better situated, better stored with every thing that is good, better secured from every thing that is evil; the employments, the enjoyments, the society, and every thing in it, is better than the best in this world. 2nd. All true believers desire this better country. True faith draws forth sincere and fervent desires, and the stronger faith is the more fervent those desires will be. 7th. They died in the faith of those promises; not only lived by the faith of them, but died in the full persuasion that all the promises should be fulfilled to them and theirs, ver. 13. That faith held out to the last. By faith, when they were dying, they received the atonement; they acquiesced in the will of God; they quenched all the fiery darts of the devil; they overcame the terrors of death, disarmed it of its sting, and bade cheerful farewell to this world, and to all the comforts and crosses of it. These were the actings of their faith. Now observe,

3. The gracious and great reward of their faith, ver. 16. God is not ashamed to be their God, for he hath prepared for them a city. Note, 1st. God is the God of all true believers; faith gives them an interest in God, and in all his fulness. 2nd. He is called their God; he calls himself so; "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And he gives them leave to call him so, and he gives them the Spirit of adoption to enable them to cry, "Abba, Father." 3rd. Notwithstanding their meanness by nature, vileness by sin, and the poverty of their outward condition, God is not ashamed to be called their God. Such is his condescension, such his love, to them; therefore let them never be ashamed of being called his people, nor of any of those that are truly so, how much soever despised in the world. Above all, let them take care that they be not a shame and reproach to their God, and so provoke him to be ashamed of them; but let them act so as to be to him for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory. 4th. As the proof of this, God has prepared for them a city, a happiness suitable to the relation into which he has taken them. For there is nothing in this world commensurate to the love of God, in being the God of his people; and if God neither could nor would give his people something better than this world affords he would be ashamed to be called their God. If he takes them into such a relation to himself he will provide for them accordingly. If he takes to himself the title of their God he will fully answer it, and act up to it. And he has prepared that for them in heaven that will fully answer this character and relation, so that it shall never be said to the reproach and dishonour of God that he has adopted a people to be his own children, and then taken no care to make a suitable provision for them. The consideration of this should inflame the affections, enlarge the desires, and excite the diligent endeavours of the people of God after this city that he has prepared for them.

Seventhly. Now, after the apostle has given this account of the faith of others, with Abraham, he returns to him again, and gives us an instance of the greatest trial and act of faith that stands upon record, either in the story of the father of the faithful or of any of his spiritual seed, and that was his offering up of Isaac; ver. 17, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son." In this great example observe,

1. The trial and exercise of Abraham's faith. He was tried indeed. It is said, *Gen.* xxii. 1, "God in this tempted Abraham," not to sin, for so God tempteth no man, but only tried his faith and obedience to purpose. God had before this tempted or tried the faith of Abraham, when he called him away from his country and father's house; when by a famine he was forced out of Canaan into Egypt; when he was obliged to fight with five kings to rescue Lot; when Sarah was taken from him by Abimelech, and in many other instances. But this trial was greater than them all; he was commanded to offer up his son Isaac. Read the account of it, *Gen.* xxii. 2, and there you will find every word was a trial; "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Take thy son, not one of thy beasts or slaves, thine only son by Sarah, Isaac thy laughter, the child of thy joy and delight, whom thou lovest as thine own soul; take him away to a distant place, three days' journey, the land of Moriah; do not only leave him there, but offer

in this verse and in verse 16. Some prefer "their country." The word is not simply expressive of any region or country, but that country with which their associations are united—"their fatherland."

xi. 19. "In a figure;" or "in a parable." "The true identification," says Alford, "of the parable is, I am persuaded, to be found in the figure under which Isaac was sacrificed, viz., the ram, as already hinted by Chrysostom. Abraham virtually sacrificed his son; God

designated Isaac for the burnt-offering, but provided a ram in his stead. Under the figure of that ram Isaac was slain, being received back by his father in his proper person, risen from the death which he had undergone in and under the figure of the ram." This view is pronounced by some unnatural. Another view is to take "in a figure" as meaning "in a typical representation;" for Isaac was in a manner dead in his father's opinion and his own. "Abraham received him back from the altar on which he had virtually been

him for a burnt offering. A greater trial was never put upon any creature. The apostle here mentions some things that very much add to the greatness of this trial.

1st. He was put upon it after he had received the promises that this Isaac should build up his family, and that "in him his seed should be called," ver. 18, and that he should be one of the progenitors of the Messiah, and all nations blessed in him; so that in being called to offer up his Isaac he seemed to be called to destroy and cut off his own family, to cancel the promises of God, to prevent the coming of Christ, to destroy the whole world, to sacrifice his own soul and his hopes of salvation, and to cut off the church of God at one blow; a most terrible trial!

2nd. That this Isaac was his only begotten son by his wife Sarah, and the only one he was to have by her, and the only one that was to be the child and heir of the promise. Ishmael was to be put off with earthly greatness. Either the promises of a posterity, and of the Messiah, must be fulfilled by means of this son, or not at all; so that, besides his most tender affection to this his son, all his expectations were bound up in him, and if he perished, must perish with him. If Abraham had never so many sons, this was the only son that could convey to all nations the promised blessing; a son for whom he waited so long, received in so extraordinary a manner, upon whom his heart was set,—to have this son offered up as a sacrifice, and that by his own hand. It was a trial that would have overset the firmest and the strongest mind that ever informed a human body.

3. The actings of Abraham's faith in so great a trial. He obeyed; he offered up Isaac. He intentionally gave him up by his submissive soul to God, and was ready to have done it actually, according to the command of God; and he went as far in it as to the very critical moment, and would have gone through with it if God had not prevented him. Nothing could be more tender and moving than those words of Isaac, "My father, here is the wood, here is the fire, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" little thinking that he was to be the lamb; but Abraham knew it, and yet he went on with the great design.

4. The supports of his faith; and they must be very great, suitable to the greatness of the trial. He "accounted that God was able to raise him from the dead," ver. 19. His faith was supported by the sense he had of the mighty power of God, who was able to raise the dead; and he reasoned thus with himself, and so he resolved all his doubts. It does not appear that he had any expectation of being countermanded and prevented from offering up his son; the expectation of that would have spoiled the trial, and consequently the triumph, of his faith. But he knew that God was able to raise him from the dead; and he did believe that God would do so, since such great things depended upon this son, which must have failed if Isaac had not a farther life. Observe, 1st. God is able to raise the dead, to raise dead bodies, and to raise dead souls. 2nd. The belief of this will carry us through the greatest difficulties and trials that we can meet with. 3rd. It is our duty to be reasoning down our doubts and fears by the consideration of the almighty power of God.

4. The reward of his faith in this great trial, ver. 19. He received his son from the dead in a figure, in a parable. 1st. He received his son. He had parted with him to God, and God gave him back again. The best way to enjoy our comforts with comfort is, to resign them up to God; he will then return them, if not in kind, yet in kindness. 2nd. He received him from the dead, for he gave him up for dead; he was as a dead child to him, and the return was to him no less than a resurrection. 3rd. This was a figure or parable of something farther. It was a figure of the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ, of whom Isaac was a type. It was a figure and earnest of the glorious resurrection of all true believers, whose life is not lost, but hid with Christ in God. We come now to the faith of other Old Testament saints mentioned by name, and by the particular trials and actings of their faith.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning upon the top of his staff*. 22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the



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departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. 23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. 24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. 27 By faith he for-

sook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. 28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. 29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry *land*: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. 31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

In this roll of believers we have an account,

First. Of the faith of Isaac. Something of him we had before interwoven with the story of Abraham; here we have something of a distinct nature, that by faith he blessed his two sons, Jacob and Esau, "concerning things to come." Where observe,

1. The actings of his faith. He "blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." He blessed them; that is, he resigned them up to God in covenant; he recommended God and religion to them; he prayed for them, and prophesied concerning them, what would be their condition, and the condition in times to come. The account we have of this in *Gen. xxvii*. Observe, 1st. Both Jacob and Esau were blessed as Isaac's children, at least as to temporal good things. It is a great privilege to be the offspring of good parents, and many times the wicked children of good parents fare the better in this world for their parents' sake, for things present are in the covenant; they are not the best things, and no man knoweth love or hatred by having or wanting such things. 2nd. That Jacob had the precedence and the principal blessing, which shews that it is grace and the new birth that exalts persons above their fellows, and qualifies them for the best blessings; and that it is owing to the sovereign free grace of God that in the same family one is taken and another left, one loved and the other hated, since all the race of Adam are by nature hateful to God; that if one has his portion in this world, and the other in the better world, it is God that makes the difference, for even the comforts of this life are more and better than any of the children of men deserve.

2. The difficulties Isaac's faith struggled with. 1st. He seemed to have forgotten how God had determined the matter at the birth of these his sons, *Gen. xxv*. 23. This should have been a rule to him all along, but he was rather swayed by natural affection and general custom, that gave the double portion of honour, affection, and advantage to the first-born. 2nd. He acted in this matter with some reluctance when he came to pronounce the blessing; *Gen. xxvii*. 33, "He trembled very exceedingly," and charged Jacob that he had subtly taken away Esau's blessing, ver. 33, 35. But for all this Isaac's faith recovered itself, and he ratified the blessing; "I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed." Rebecca and Jacob are not to be justified in the indirect means they used to obtain this blessing, but God will be justified in overruling even the sins of men to serve the purposes of his glory. Now, the faith of Isaac thus prevailing over his unbelief, it has pleased the God of Isaac to pass by the weakness of his faith, and commend the sincerity of it, and record him among the elders that "through faith have obtained a good report." We now go on to,

Secondly. The faith of Jacob, ver. 21, who "when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." There were a great many instances of the faith of Jacob; his life was a life of faith, and his faith met with great exercise. But it has pleased God to single two instances out of many of the faith of this patriarch, besides what has been already mentioned in the account of Abraham. Where observe,

1. The actings of his faith here mentioned, and they are two. 1st. He blessed both the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. *First*. He adopted them into the number of his own sons, and so into the congregation of Israel, though they were born in Egypt. And it is doubtless a great blessing to be joined to the visible church of God in profession and privilege, but more to be so in spirit and truth. *Secondly*. He made them both heads of different tribes, as if they had been his own immediate sons. *Thirdly*. He prayed for them, that they might both be blessed of God. *Fourthly*. He prophesied that they should be blessed; but, as before Isaac did, so now Jacob prefers the younger, Ephraim; and though Joseph had placed them so as that the right hand of his father should be laid on Manasseh the elder, Jacob wittingly laid it on Ephraim, and to this by Divine direction, for he could not see; to shew that the Gentile church, the younger, should have a more abundant blessing than the Jewish church, the elder. 2nd. "He worshipped, leaning on his staff;" that is, he praised God for what he had done for him, and for the prospect he had of approaching blessedness; and he prayed for those he was leaving behind him, that religion might live in his family when he was gone. He did this "leaning on the top of his staff;" not, as the papists dream, that he worshipped some image of God engraven on the head of his staff, but intimating to us his great natural weakness, that he was not able to support himself so far as to sit up in his bed without a staff, and yet that he would not make this an excuse for neglecting the worshipping of God; he would do it as well as he could with his body, as well as with his spirit, though he could not do it as well as he would. He shewed hereby his dependence upon God, and testified his condition here as a pilgrim with his staff, and his weariness of the world, and willingness to be at rest.

2. The time and season when Jacob thus acted his faith: "When he was dying." He lived by faith, and he died by faith and in faith. Observe, Though the grace of faith is of universal use throughout our whole lives, yet it is especially so when we come to die. Faith has its greatest work to do at last, to help the believers to finish well, to die to the Lord so as to honour him, by patience, hope, and joy, so as to leave a witness behind them of the truth of God's word, and the excellency of his ways, for the conviction and establishment of all that attend them in their dying moments. The best way in which parents can finish their course is, blessing their families, and worshipping their God. We are now come to,

Thirdly. The faith of Joseph, ver. 22. And here also we consider,

1. What he did by his faith. He "made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones;" the passage is out of *Gen. l*. 24, 25. Joseph was eminent for his faith, though he had not enjoyed the helps for it that the rest of his brethren had; he was sold into Egypt, he was tried by temptations, by sin, by persecution, for retaining his integrity; he was tried by preferment and power in the court of Pharaoh, and yet his faith held out, and carried him through to the last. 1st. He "made mention by faith of

offered up" (Webster and Wilkinson, whose comment seems substantially to agree with the opinions of Bleek, Stier, De Wette, and Delitzsch).

xi. 21. "Leaning:" not expressed in the original. "He worshipped on the top of his staff." In *Gen. xlvii*. 31 we read that Jacob bowed himself upon the bed's head. "The Hebrew word, without the vowel points, means either 'bed' or 'staff.' The only distinction is in the vowel points, which do not exist in the more ancient MSS. . . .

It is quite possible that the meaning is, as the apostle quotes the passage, that after Joseph had sworn to bury him in Canaan, Jacob bowed himself upon the staff which had gone with him through all his wanderings (*Gen. xxxii*. 10), and so worshipped God. And this seems the more likely from the fact that it is not till after these things that one told Joseph, 'Behold, thy father is sick' (*Gen. xlviii*. 1), so that Jacob probably had not as yet taken to his bed" (Bishop Browne in "Speaker's Commentary"). May not, however, the words be

the departing of the children of Israel," that the time should come when they should be delivered out of Egypt; and he did this both that he might ease them against the thoughts of settling in Egypt, which was now a place of misery and ease to them, and also that he might keep them from sinking under afflictivities and distresses which he foresaw were coming upon them there; and he does it to comfort himself, that though he should not live to see their deliverance, yet he could die in the faith of it. 2nd. He "gave commandment concerning his bones," that they should preserve them unburied in Egypt, till God should deliver them out of that house of bondage, and that then they should carry his bones along with them into Canaan, and deposit them there. Though the believers' chief concern is for their souls, yet they cannot wholly neglect their bodies, as being members of Christ, and parts of themselves, which shall at length be raised up, and be the happy companions of their glorified souls to all eternity. Now Joseph gave this order, not that he thought his being buried in Egypt would either prejudice his soul or prevent the resurrection of his body, (some of the rabbins fancied that all the Jews that were buried out of Canaan must be conveyed underground to Canaan before they could rise again;) but he gave this order to testify, *First*, That though he had lived and died in Egypt, yet he did not live and die an Egyptian, but an Israelite. *Secondly*, That he preferred a significant burial in Canaan before a magnificent one in Egypt. *Thirdly*, That he would go as far with his people as he could, though he could not go as far as he would. *Fourthly*, That he believed the resurrection of the body, and the communion that his soul should presently have with departed saints, as his body had with their dead bodies. *Fifthly*, To assure them that God would be with them in Egypt, and deliver them out of it in his own time and way.

2. When it was that the faith of Joseph acted after this manner, and that was, as in the case of Jacob, when dying, God often gives his people living comforts in dying moments, and, when he does, it is their duty, as they can, to communicate them to those about them for the glory of God, for the honour of religion, and for the good of their brethren and friends. We go on now to.

Fourthly. The faith of the parents of Moses, which is cited from *Ex. ii. 3, &c.* Where observe,

1. The acting of their faith. They hid their son three months. Though the mother of Moses is only mentioned in the history, yet, by what is here said, it seems his father not only consented to it, but consulted about it. It is a happy thing where yokefellow draw together in the yoke of faith, as the heirs of the grace of God; and when they do this in a religious concern for the good of their children, to preserve them not only from those that would destroy their lives, but corrupt their minds. Observe, Moses was persecuted betimes, and forced to be concealed; in this he was a type of Christ, who was persecuted almost as soon as he was born, and his parents forced to flee with him into Egypt for his preservation. It is a great mercy to be free from wicked laws and edicts; but when we are not, we must use all lawful means for our security. In this faith of Moses's parents there was a mixture of unbelief, but God was pleased to overlook it.

2. The reasons of their thus acting. No doubt natural affection could not but move them; but there was something farther, "They saw he was a proper child," "a goodly child," *Ex. ii. 2*, "exceeding fair," as in *Acts vii. 20*, ἀρετικὸν τέκνον, *venustus Deo*,—fair to God; there appeared in him something uncommon. The beauty of the Lord sat upon him, as a presage that he was born to great things, and that by conversing with God his face should shine, *Ex. xxxiv. 29*, and what bright and illustrious actions he should do for the deliverance of Israel, and how his name should shine in the sacred records. Sometimes, not always, the countenance is the index to the mind.

3. The prevalency of their faith over their fear. They were not afraid of the king's commandment, *Ex. i. 22*. That was a wicked and a cruel edict, that all the males of the Israelites should be destroyed in their infancy; and so the name of Israel must be destroyed out of the earth. But they did not so fear as presently to give up their child; they considered that if none of the males were preserved there would be an end and utter ruin of the church of God and the true religion, and that though in their present state of servitude and oppression one would praise the dead rather than the living, yet they believed God would preserve his people, and the time was coming when it would be worth the while for an Israelite to live. Somebody must hazard their own lives to preserve their children, and they were resolved to do it. They knew the king's commandment was evil in itself, contrary to the laws of God and nature, and therefore of no authority or obligation. Faith is a great preservative against the sinful, slavish fear of men, as it sets God before the soul, and shews the vanity of the creature, and its subordination to the will and power of God. The apostle next proceeds to,

Fifthly. The faith of Moses himself, ver. 24, 25, &c. Where observe,

1. An instance of his faith in conquering the world. *1st*. He "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," whose founding he was, and her fondling too. She had adopted him for her son, and he refused it. Observe, *First*. How great a temptation Moses was under. Pharaoh's daughter is said to have been his only child, and was herself childless; and having found Moses, and saved him as she did, they resolved to take him and breed him up as her son; and so he stood fair to be in time king of Egypt, and he might thereby have been serviceable to Israel. He owed his life to this princess; and to refuse such kindness from her would look not only like ingratitude to her, but a neglect of providence, that seemed to intend his advancement, and his brethren's advantage. *Secondly*. How glorious was the triumph of his faith in so great a trial! He "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," lest he should undervalue the truer honour of being a son of Abraham, the father of the faithful; "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," lest it should look like renouncing his religion as well as his relation to Israel; and no doubt both these he must have done if he had accepted this honour; he therefore nobly refuses it.

2nd. He chose rather "to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," ver. 25. He was willing to take his lot with the people of God here, though it were a suffering lot, that he might have his portion with them hereafter, rather than to enjoy all the sensual, sinful pleasures of Pharaoh's court, which would be but for a season, and then punished with everlasting misery. Herein he acted rationally as well as religiously, and conquered the temptation to worldly pleasure, as he had done before to worldly preferment. Here observe, *First*. The pleasures of sin are and will be but short; they must either end in speedy repentance or ruin. *Secondly*. That the pleasures of this world, and especially those of a court, are too often the pleasures of sin; and they are always so when we cannot enjoy them without deserting God and his people; and a true believer will despise them when they are offered upon such terms. *Thirdly*. Suffering is to be chosen rather than sin, there being more evil in the least sin than there can be in the greatest suffering. *Fourthly*. It greatly alleviates the evil of suffering, when we suffer with the people of God, embarked in the same interest, and animated by the same spirit.

3rd. He esteemed "the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt," ver. 26. [Then, 1. Moses, and God's people in his time, did know Christ, else they could not have borne his cross and suffered for him. 2. Chris-

tianity is as old as true religion.] See how Moses weighed matters: in one scale he put the worst of religion, "the reproaches of Christ;" in the other scale the best of the world, "the treasures of Egypt;" and in his judgment, directed by faith, the worst of religion weighed down the best of the world. "The reproaches of the church of God are 'the reproaches of Christ,' who is and has ever been the head of the church. Now here Moses conquered the riches of the world, as before he had conquered its honours and pleasures. God's people are, and always have been, a reproached people. Christ accounts himself reproached in their reproaches; and while he thus interests himself in their reproaches they become riches, and greater riches than the treasures of the richest empire in the world; for Christ will reward them with a crown of glory that fades not away. Faith discerns this, and determines and acts accordingly.

Observe, *First*. That the circumstance of time is taken notice of when Moses, by his faith, gained this victory over the world, in all its honours, pleasures, and treasures; "When he was come to years," ver. 24; not only to years of discretion, but of experience, to the age of forty years, when he was great, or come to maturity. Some would take this as an extenuation of his victory, that he gained it so late, that he did not make this choice sooner; but it is rather an enhancement of the honour of his self-denial and victory over the world that he made this choice when he was grown ripe for judgment and enjoyment, able to know what he did, and why he did it. It was not the act of a child, that prefers counters to gold, but it proceeded from mature deliberation. It is an excellent thing for persons to be seriously religious when in the midst of worldly business and enjoyments; to despise the world when they are most capable of relishing and enjoying it.

Secondly. What it was that supported and strengthened the faith of Moses, to that degree as to enable him to gain such a victory of the world. "He had respect to the recompence of reward," that is, say some, the deliverance out of Egypt; but doubtless it means much more the glorious reward of faith and fidelity in the other world. Observe here, *1st*. Heaven is a great reward, not only surpassing all our deservings, but all our conceptions. It is a reward suitable to the price paid for it, the blood of Christ, suitable to the perfections of God, and fully answering all his promises. It is a "recompence of reward," because given by a righteous Judge, for the righteousness of Christ, to righteous persons, according to the righteous rule of the covenant of grace. *2nd*. Believers may and ought to have respect to this "recompence of reward." They should acquaint themselves with it, approve of it, and live in the daily and delightful expectation of it. And thus it will prove a landmark to direct their course, a loadstone to draw their hearts, a sword to conquer their enemies, and a spur to quicken them to duty; a cordial to refresh them under all the difficulties of doing and suffering work.

2. We have another instance of the faith of Moses, and that was in forsaking Egypt; ver. 27. "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." Twice Moses forsook Egypt, (1.) As a criminal, when the king's wrath was incensed against him for killing the Egyptian, where it is said he did fear, *Ex. ii. 14, 15*; not with a fear of despondency, but of discretion, to save his life. (2.) As a commander and ruler in Jeshurun, after God had employed him to humble Pharaoh, and make him willing to let Israel go. Observe here,

1st. The product of his faith. He forsook Egypt, and all its power and pleasure, and undertook the conduct of Israel out of it.

2nd. The prevalency of his faith. It raised him above the fear of the king's wrath; though he knew it was great, and levelled at him in particular that it marched at the head of a numerous host to pursue him, he was not dismayed, and he said to Israel, "Fear not," *Ex. xiv. 13*. Those that forsake Egypt must expect the wrath of men; but they need not fear it, for they are under the conduct of that God that is able to make the wrath of man to praise him, and restrain the remainder of it.

3rd. The principle upon which his faith acted in these his motions. "He endured, as seeing him that is invisible;" he bore up with invincible courage under all danger, and endured all the fatigue of his employment, which was very great, and this by seeing the invisible God. Observe, *First*. The God with whom we have to do is an invisible God; he is so to our senses, to the eye of the body; and this shews the folly of those that pretend to make images of God, whom no man hath seen or can see. *Secondly*. By faith we may see this invisible God; we may be fully assured of his existence, and of his providence, and of his gracious and powerful presence with us. *Thirdly*. Such a sight of God will enable believers to endure to the end, whatever they may meet with in the way.

3. We have yet another instance of the faith of Moses in keeping "the passover and sprinkling of blood," ver. 28. The account of this we have in *Ex. xii. 13—23*. Though all Israel kept this passover, yet it was by Moses that God delivered the institution of it; and, though it was a great mystery, Moses by faith both delivered it to the people and kept it that night in the house where he lodged. The passover was one of the most solemn institutions of the Old Testament, and a very significant type of Christ. The occasion of its first observation was extraordinary: it was in the same night that God slew the firstborn of the Egyptians; but though the Israelites lived among them, the destroying angel passed over their houses, and spared them and theirs. Now, to entitle them to this distinguishing favour, and to mark them out for it, a lamb must be slain, the blood of it must be sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop upon the lintel of the door, and on the two side-posts; and the flesh of the lamb must be roasted with fire, and it must be all of it eaten that very night with bitter herbs, in a travelling posture, their loins girt, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand. This was accordingly done, and the destroying angel passed over them, and slew the first-born of the Egyptians. And this opened a way for the return of Abraham's posterity into the land of promise. The accommodation of this type is not difficult. *1st*. Christ is that Lamb; he is our Passover, he was sacrificed for us. *2nd*. His blood must be sprinkled; it must be applied to those who have the saving benefit of it. *3rd*. It is only applied effectually to the Israelites, the chosen people of God. *4th*. It is not owing to our inherent righteousness, or best performances, that we are saved from the wrath of God, but unto the blood of Christ and his imputed righteousness. If any of the families of Israel had neglected the sprinkling of this blood upon their doors, though they should have spent all the night in prayer, the destroying angel would have broken in upon them, and slain their first-born. *5th*. Wherever this blood is applied, the soul receives a whole Christ by faith, and lives upon him. *6th*. This true faith makes sin bitter to the soul, even while it receives the pardon and atonement. *7th*. That all our spiritual privileges on earth should quicken us to set out early, and get forward in our way to heaven. *8th*. Those that have been marked out must ever remember and acknowledge free and distinguishing grace.

Sixthly. The next instance of faith is that of the Israelites passing through the Red Sea, under the conduct of Moses their leader, ver. 29. The story we have in *Ex. xiv.*; where observe,

1. The preservation and safe passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, when there was no other way to escape from Pharaoh and his host, that were closely pursuing them; where we may observe, *1st*. That Israel's danger was very great; an enraged enemy with chariots and horsemen behind them, steep

expressive of the spiritual confidence of Jacob? His worshipped God, and that which sustained his faith was the recollection of the care of God through the long and evil years of his pilgrimage; and of this his staff was the emblem. (Compare *Gen. xlviii. 16*.)

xi. 23. "A proper child;" or that the child was beautiful, or comely, or bore marks of being designed for distinguished service. (Compare *Acts vii. 20*.) "This is mentioned as that which converted natural feeling into an act of faith" (Webster and Wilkinson).

xi 24. "When he was come to years;" "having become great" is the literal translation. Some have referred the expression to the wealth and rank which Moses had attained, but the majority of critics understand it of having reached a mature age. Verse 26 speaks of the worldly advantages he forsook.

xi. 31. "Believed not." Alford renders, "with them that were disobedient." The terms in which Rahab is described cannot be otherwise understood than as affirming her sinful life. It has,

rocks and mountains on each hand, and the Red Sea before them. 2nd. That their deliverance was very glorious. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land. The grace of faith will help us through all the dangers we meet with in our way to heaven.

2. The destruction of the Egyptians. They, presumptuously attempting to follow Israel through the Red Sea, being thus blinded and hardened to their ruin, were all drowned. Their rashness was great, and their ruin was grievous. When God judges, he will overcome; and it is plain that the destruction of sinners is of themselves.

Seventhly. The next instance of faith is that of the Israelites under Joshua their leader before the walls of Jericho. The story we have *Jos. vi. 5*; where observe,

1. The means prescribed of God to bring down the walls of Jericho; and that was, that they should compass the walls about once a day for seven days together, and seven times the last day, and that the priests should carry the ark when they compassed the walls about, and should blow with trumpets made of rams' horns, and sound a longer blast than before, and then all the people should shout, and the walls of Jericho should fall before them. Here was a great trial of their faith; the method prescribed seemed very improbable to answer such an end, and would doubtless expose them to the daily contempt of their enemies; the ark of God would seem to be in danger. But this was the way God commanded them to take, and he loves to do great things by small and contemptible means, that his own arm may be made bare.

2. The powerful success of the prescribed means. The walls of Jericho fell before them. This was a frontier town in the land of Canaan, the first that stood out against the Israelites. God was pleased, in this extraordinary manner, to slight and dismantle it, to magnify himself, to terrify the Canaanites, to strengthen the faith of the Israelites, and to exclude all boasting. God can and will, in his own time and way, cause all the powerful opposition that is made to his interest and glory to fall down; and the grace of faith is mighty, through God, for the pulling down of strongholds. He will make Babylon fall before the faith of his people; and when he has some great thing to do for them he raises up great and strong faith in them.

Eighthly. The next instance is the faith of Rahab, ver. 31. Among the noble army of believing worthies, bravely marshalled by the apostle, Rahab comes in the rear, to shew that God is no respecter of persons. Here consider,

1. Who this Rahab was. 1st. She was a Canaanite, a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, and had but little help for faith, and yet she was a believer. The power of Divine grace greatly appears when it works without the usual means of grace. 2nd. She was a harlot, and lived in a way of sin. She was not only a keeper of a public house, but a common woman of the town, and yet she believed. The greatness of sin, if truly repented of, shall be no bar to the pardoning mercy of God; Christ has saved the chief of sinners: "Where sin has abounded, grace has superabounded."

2. What she did by her faith. She "received the spies with peace," which were the men that Joshua had sent to spy out Jericho, *Jos. ii. 6, 7*. She not only bade them welcome, but she concealed them from their enemies that sought to cut them off, and she made a noble confession of her faith, ver. 9-11. She engaged them to covenant with her to shew favour to her and hers, when God should shew kindness to them, and that they would give her a sign, which they did,—a line of scarlet, which she was to hang forth out of the window. She sent them away with prudent and friendly advice. Learn here, 1st. That true faith will shew itself in good works, especially towards the people of God. 2nd. Faith will venture all hazard in the cause of God and his people. A true believer will sooner expose his own person than God's interest and people. 3rd. A true believer is desirous not only to be in covenant with God, but in communion with the people of God, and is willing to cast in his lot with them, and to fare as they fare.

3. Observe what Rahab gained by her faith. She escaped perishing with those that believed not. Observe, 1st. The generality of her neighbours, friends, and fellow-citizens perished; it was an utter destruction that befel that city, man and beast were cut off. 2nd. The cause of the people of Jericho's destruction, and that was unbelief. They believed not that Israel's God was the true God, and that Israel was the peculiar people of God, though they had evidence sufficient of it. 3rd. The signal preservation of Rahab. Joshua gave a strict charge that she should be spared, and none but she and hers; and she, taking care that the sign, the scarlet thread, should be hung out, her family were marked out for mercy, and perished not. Singular faith, when the generality are not only unbelievers, but against believers, will be rewarded with singular favours in times of common calamity.

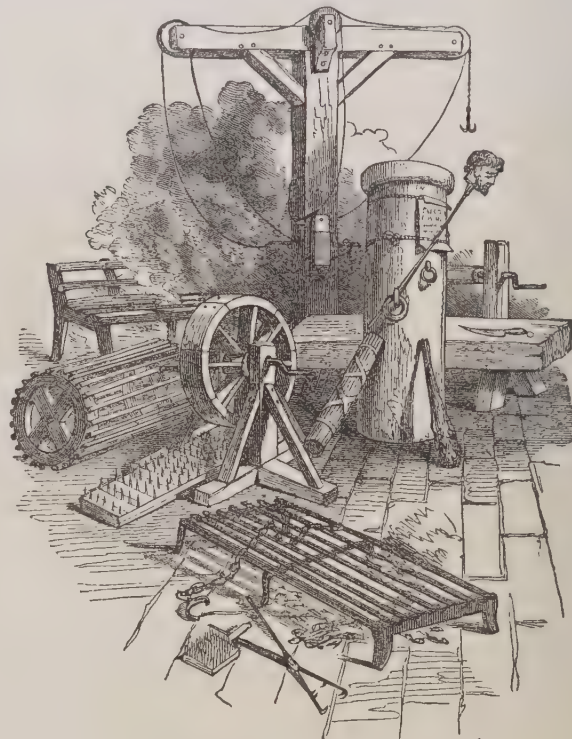
32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and



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indeed, been proposed to translate the word in *Josh. ii. 1* by "inn-keeper" or "hostess;" others have taken the term as equivalent to "an idolater," but neither suggestion is accepted by the majority of critics, and Rahab remains "an example under the law, similar to that under the Gospel, of a woman that was a 'sinner,' yet, because of her faith, was not only pardoned but exalted to the highest honour. Rahab was both admitted to be of the people of God, intermarried into a chief family of a chief tribe, and found a place

Samu^l, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting



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deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy :) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

The apostle, having given us a classis of many eminent believers, whose names are mentioned, and the particular trials and actings of their faith recorded, he now concludes his narrative with a more summary account of another set of believers, where the particular acts are not ascribed to particular persons by name, but left to be applied by those that are well acquainted with the sacred story; and, like a Divine orator, he prefaces this part of the narrative with an elegant expostulation; "What shall I more say? time would fail me;" as if he had said, It is in vain to attempt to exhaust this subject; should I not restrain my pen it would soon run beyond the bounds of an epistle, and therefore I shall but just mention a few more, and leave you to enlarge upon them. Observe, 1. After all our researches into the Scripture, there is still more to be learned from them. 2. That we must well consider in Divine matters what we should say, and suit it as well as we can to the time. 3. We should be pleased to think how great the number of believers was under the Old Testament, and how strong their faith, though the objects thereof were not then so fully revealed. And, 4. We should lament it, that now in gospel times, when the rule of faith is more clear and perfect, the number of believers should be so small, and their faith so weak.

amongst the best-remembered ancestors of King David and of Christ" ("Speaker's Commentary" on *Josh. ii. 1*).

xi. 35. "And others were tortured:" rather, "but others were." The word translated "torture" refers to "an engine of torture in the form of a wheel, upon which the tortured person was stretched out like the skin of a kettledrum, and frequently beaten to death."

xi. 37. "Being destitute, afflicted, tormented;" or "in misery." "Goat-skins:" skins of the animals with the hair still on. The

First. In this summary account the apostle mentions,

1. Gideon, whose story we have in *Jud. vi. 11, &c.* He was an eminent instrument raised up of God to deliver his people from the oppression of the Midianites. He was a person of a mean tribe and family, called from a mean employment, thrashing wheat, and saluted by an angel of God in this surprising manner, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of war." Gideon could not at first receive such honours, but humbly expostulates with the angel about their low and distressed state. The angel of the Lord delivered him his commission, and assured him of success, confirming it by fire out of the rock. Gideon is directed to offer sacrifice, and instructed in his duty, goes forth against the Midianites, when his army was reduced from thirty-two thousand to three hundred; yet by these, with their lamps and pitchers, God put the whole army of the Midianites to confusion and ruin. And the same faith that gave Gideon so much courage and honour enabled him to act with great meekness and modesty towards his brethren afterward. It is the excellency of the grace of faith that, while it helps men to do great things, it keeps them from having high and great thoughts of themselves.

2. Barak, another instrument raised up to deliver Israel out of the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, *Jud. iv.*; where we read, 1st. That though he was a soldier yet he received his commission and instructions from Deborah, a prophetess of the Lord, and he insisted upon having this Divine oracle with him in his expedition. 2nd. He obtained a great victory, by his faith, over all the host of Sisera. 3rd. That his faith taught him to return all the praise and glory to God. This is the existent nature of faith; it has recourse unto God in all dangers and difficulties, and then makes grateful returns to God for all mercies and deliverances.

3. Samson, another instrument that God raised up to deliver Israel from the Philistines. His story we have in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of *Judges*; and from it we learn that the grace of faith is the strength of the soul for great service. If Samson had not had a strong faith as well as a strong arm, he had never performed such exploits. 1st. That by faith the servants of God shall overcome even the roaring lion. 2nd. That true faith is acknowledged and accepted even when mingled with many failings. 3rd. That the believer's faith endures to the end, and in dying gives him victory over death and all his deadly enemies; his greatest conquest he gains by dying.

4. Jephthah, whose story we have *Jud. xi.*, before Samson; he was raised up to deliver Israel from the Ammonites. As various and new enemies rise up against the people of God, various and new deliverers are raised up for them. In the story of Jephthah observe, 1st. That the grace of God often finds out and fastens upon the most undeserving and ill-deserving persons, to do great things for them and by them: Jephthah was the son of a harlot. 2nd. That the grace of faith, wherever it is, will put men upon acknowledging God in all their ways, *ch. xi. 11*: Jephthah rehearsed "all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh." 3rd. The grace of faith will make men bold and venturesome in a good cause. 4th. That faith will not only put men upon making their vows to God, but upon paying their vows after the mercy received; yea, though they have vowed to their own great grief, hurt, and loss, as in the case of Jephthah and his daughter.

5. David, that great man after God's own heart. Few ever met with greater trials, and few ever discovered a more lively faith. His first appearance on the stage of the world was a great evidence of his faith; having, when young, slain the lion and the bear, his faith in God encouraged him to encounter the great Goliath, and helped him to triumph over him. The same faith enabled him to bear patiently the ungrateful malice of Saul and his favourites, and to wait till God should put him into possession of the promised power and dignity. The same faith made him a very successful and victorious prince; and after a long life of virtue and honour, (though not without some foul stains of sin,) he died in faith, relying upon that everlasting covenant that God had made with him and his, ordered in all things and sure. And he has left behind him such excellent memoirs of the trials and acts of faith in the book of *Psalms* as will ever be of great esteem and use to the people of God.

6. Samuel, raised up to be a most eminent prophet of the Lord to Israel, as well as a ruler over them. God revealed himself to Samuel when he was but a child, and continued to do so till his death. In his story observe, 1st. That those are like to grow up to some eminency in faith that begin betimes in the exercise of it. 2nd. They whose business it is to reveal the mind and will of God to others had need to be well established in the belief of it themselves. To Samuel he adds, "and of the prophets," who were extraordinary ministers of the Old Testament church, employed of God sometimes to denounce judgment, sometimes to promise mercy, always to reprove sin; sometimes to foretell remarkable events, known only to God; and chiefly to give notice of the Messiah, his coming, person, and offices; for in him the prophets, as well as the law, centre. Now a true and strong faith was very requisite for the right discharge of such an office as this.

Secondly. And now, having done naming particular persons, he proceeds to tell us what things were done by their faith. He mentions some things that easily apply themselves to one or other of the persons named; but he mentions other things that are not so easy to be accommodated to any here named, but must be left to general conjecture or accommodation.

1. By faith they "subdued kingdoms," *ver. 33*. This did David, Joshua, and many of the judges. Learn hence, 1st. The interests and powers of kings and kingdoms are often set up in opposition to God and his people. 2nd. That God can easily subdue all those kings and kingdoms that set themselves to oppose him. 3rd. That faith is a suitable and excellent qualification of those that fight in the wars of the Lord; it makes them just, bold, and wise.

2. They wrought righteousness both in their public and personal capacities. They turned many from idolatry to the ways of righteousness: they believed God, and it was imputed to them for righteousness; they walked and acted righteously towards God and man. It is a greater honour and happiness to work righteousness than to work miracles. Faith is an active principle of universal righteousness.

3. They obtained promises, both general and special. It is faith that gives us an interest in the promises; it is by faith that we have the comfort of the promises; and it is by faith that we are prepared to wait for the promises, and in due time to receive them.

4. They "stopped the mouths of lions," so did Samson, *Jud. xiv. 5, 6*, and David, *1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35*, and Daniel, *ch. vi. 22*. Here learn, 1st. That the power of God is above the power of the creature. And, 2nd. That faith engages the power of God for his people whenever it shall be for his glory to overcome brute beasts and brutish men.

5. They "quenched the violence of fire," *ver. 33*. So Moses, by the prayer of faith, quenched the fire of God's wrath that was kindled against the people of Israel, *Num. xi. 1, 2*. So did the three children, or rather mighty champions, *Dan. iii. 17-27*; their faith in God, refusing to worship the golden image, exposed them to the fiery furnace which Nebuchadnezzar had prepared for them, and their faith engaged for them that power and presence of God in the furnace which quenched the violence of the fire, so that not so much as the smell thereof passed on them. Never was the grace of faith more severely tried, never more nobly exerted, nor ever more gloriously rewarded, than theirs was.

description recalls those prophets who were spoken of as "hairy men" (2 Kings i. 8).

xi. 38. "Of whom the world was not worthy;" this seems introduced to meet the insinuation that these martyrs were "mere outcasts;" or is it not rather the genuine expression of the apostle's own enthusiastic admiration of these men?

xi. 39 "Good report through faith;" Alford's rendering is, "being borne witness to through faith."

6. They "escaped the edge of the sword." Thus David escaped the sword of Goliath and of Saul, and Mordecai and the Jews escaped the sword of Haman. The swords of men are held in the hand of God, and he can blunt the edge of the sword, and turn it away from his people against their enemies when he pleases. Faith takes hold of that hand of God which has hold of the swords of men, and God has often suffered himself to be prevailed upon by the faith of his people.

7. "Out of weakness they were made strong." From national weakness, into which the Jews often fell by their unbelief, upon the revival of faith, all their interest and affairs revived and flourished. From bodily weakness: thus Hezekiah, believing the word of God, recovered out of a mortal distemper; and he ascribed his recovery to the promise and power of God; *Isa. xxxviii. 15*, "What shall I say? He hath spoken it, and he hath also done it. Lord, by these things men live, and in these is the life of my spirit." And it is the same grace of faith that from spiritual weakness helps men to recover and renew their strength.

8. They "grew valiant in fight;" so did Joshua, the judges, and David. True faith gives truest courage and patience, as it discerns the strength of God, and thereby the weakness of all his enemies; and they were not only valiant but successful. God, as a reward and encouragement of their faith, put to flight the armies of aliens; of those that were aliens to their commonwealth, and enemies to their religion. God made them flee and fall before his faithful servants. Believing and praying commanders, at the head of believing and praying armies, have been so owned and honoured of God that nothing could stand before them.

9. "Women received their dead raised to life again," *ver. 35*. So did the widow of Zarephath, *1 Kin. xvii. 23*, and the Shunammite, *2 Kin. iv. 36*. 1st. In Christ there is neither male nor female. Many of the weaker sex have been strong in faith. 2nd. Though the covenant of grace takes in the children of believers, yet it leaves them subject to natural death. 3rd. Poor mothers are loath to resign up their interest in their children, though death has taken them away from them. 4th. God has sometimes yielded so far to the tender affections of sorrowful women as to restore their dead children to life again. Thus Christ had compassion on the widow of Nain, *Lu. vii. 12*. 5th. This should confirm our faith in the general resurrection.

Thirdly. The apostle tells us what these believers endured by faith.

1. They "were tortured, not accepting deliverance," *ver. 35*. They were put upon the rack to make them renounce their God, their Saviour, and their religion; and they bore the torture, and would not accept of deliverance upon such vile terms; and that which animated them to suffer was, the hope they had of obtaining a better resurrection, and deliverance upon more honourable terms. This is thought to refer to that memorable story, *2 Maccabees vii. &c.*

2. They endured "trials of cruel mockings, and scourgings, and bonds, and imprisonment," *ver. 36*. They were persecuted in their reputation by mockings, which are cruel to an ingenuous mind; in their persons by scourging, the punishment of slaves; in their liberty by "bonds and imprisonment." Observe how inveterate is the malice that wicked men have towards the righteous, how far it will go, and what a variety of cruelties it will invent and exercise upon those against whom they have no cause of quarrel, except in the matters of their God.

3. They were put to death in the most cruel manner; some "were stoned," as Zechariah, *2 Chr. xxiv. 21*; "sawn asunder," as Isaiah by Manasseh. They were "tempted," some read it 'burnt,' *2 Maccabees vii. 5*. They were "slain with the sword." All sorts of deaths were prepared for them; their enemies clothed death in all the array of cruelty and terror, and yet they boldly met it and endured it.

4. Those that escaped death were used so ill as that death might seem more eligible than such a life. Their enemies spared them only to prolong their misery, and wear out all their patience; for they were forced to "wander about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented; they wandered about in deserts, and on mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth," *ver. 37, 38*. They were stripped of the conveniences of life, turned out of house and harbour; they had not raiment to put on, but were forced to cover themselves with the skins of slain beasts; they were driven out of all human society, and forced to converse with the beasts of the field, to hide themselves "in dens and caves," and make their complaint to rocks and rivers, not more obdurate than their enemies. Such sufferings as these they endured then for their faith, and such they endured through the power of the grace of faith. And which shall we most admire, the wickedness of human nature, that is capable of acting such cruelties on fellow-creatures, or the excellency of Divine grace, that is able to bear up the faithful under such cruelties, and to carry them safely through all?

Fourthly. What they obtained by their faith.

1. A most honourable character and commendation from God, the true Judge and Fountain of honour; that is, that the world was not worthy of such men. The world did not deserve such blessings; they did not know how to value them, nor how to use them. Wicked men! The righteous are not worthy to live in the world; and God declares the world is not worthy of them; and though they widely differ in their judgment, they agree in this, that it is not fit good men should have their rest in this world; and therefore God receives them out of it to that world that is suitable to them, and yet far beyond the merit of all their services and sufferings.

2. They "obtained a good report," *ver. 39*, of all good men, and of the truth itself, and have the honour to be enrolled in this sacred calendar of the Old Testament worthies, God's witnesses; yea, they had a witness for them in the consciences of their enemies, who, while they thus abused them, were condemned by their own consciences as persecuting those that were more righteous than themselves.

3. They obtained an interest in the promises, though not the full possession of them. They had a title to the promises, though they received not the great things promised. This is not meant of the felicity of the heavenly state, for that they did receive when they died, in the measure of a part, in one constituent part of their persons, and the much better part; but it is meant of the felicity of the gospel state. They had types, but not the antitype; they had shadows, but had not seen the substance; and yet under this imperfect dispensation they discovered this precious faith. And this the apostle insists upon to render their faith more illustrious, and to provoke Christians to a holy jealousy and emulation; that they should not suffer themselves to be outdone in the exercise of faith by those that came so short of them in all the helps and advantages for believing. He tells the Hebrews God had "provided some better things" for them, *ver. 40*, and therefore they might be assured he expected at least as good things from them; and that since the Gospel is the end and perfection of the Old Testament, which had no excellency but in its reference to Christ and the Gospel, it was expected that their faith should be as much more perfect than the faith of the Old Testament saints. Or, their state and dispensation was more perfect than the former, and was indeed the perfection and completion of the former; for without the gospel church the Jewish church must have remained in an incomplete and imperfect state. This reasoning is strong, and should be effectually prevalent with us all.

xi. 40. "They without us," i.e., "that they apart from as do not attain the consummation of their hope." "The reason of the fact just mentioned (viz., that they received not the promise) is God's gracious regard for us, which has led him to adopt such an arrangement that the actual receiving of the promise is accorded to us if we abide in the faith; while yet those fathers who are eulogised for their faith are not excluded, but attain in like manner the consummation, only not without us, as would have been the case if their

CHAPTER XII.

The apostle in this chapter applies what he had collected in the chapter foregoing, and makes use of it as a great motive to patience and perseverance in the Christian faith and state, pressing home the argument, 1. From a greater example than he had yet mentioned, and that is Christ himself, ver. 1—3. II. From the gentle and gracious nature of the afflictions they endured in their Christian course, ver. 4—17. III. From the communion and conformity between the state of the gospel church on earth and the triumphant church in heaven, ver. 18—29.



AFORE seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our

faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Here observe what is the great duty which the apostle urges upon the Hebrews, and which he so much desires they would comply with, and that is to "lay aside every weight, and the sin that did so easily beset them, and run with patience the race set before them." The duty consists of two parts, the one preparatory, the other perfective.

First. Preparatory. "Lay aside every weight, and the sin," &c. 1. Every weight, that is, all inordinate affection and concern for the body, and the present life and world. Inordinate care for the present life, and fondness for it, is a dead weight upon the soul, that pulls it down when it would ascend upwards, and pulls it back when it should press forward. It makes duties and difficulties harder and heavier than they would be. 2. "The sin that does so easily beset us." The sin that has the greatest advantage against us by the circumstances we are in, our constitution, our company. This may mean either the damning sin of unbelief, or rather the darling sin of the Jews, an over-fondness for their own dispensation. Let us lay aside all external and internal hindrances.

Secondly. Perfective. "Run with patience the race that was set before them." The apostle speaks in the gymnastic style, taken from the Olympic and other exercises.

1. Christians have a race to run. A race of service, and a race of sufferings; a course of active and passive obedience.

2. This race is set before them; it is marked out unto them, both by the word of God and the examples of the faithful servants of God, that cloud of witnesses with which they are compassed about. It is set out by proper limits and directions; the mark they run to, and the prize they run for, are set before them.

3. This race must be run with patience and perseverance. There will be need of patience to encounter the difficulties that lie in our way, of perseverance to resist all temptations to desist or turn aside. Faith and patience are the conquering graces, and therefore must be always cultivated and kept in lively exercise.

4. Christians have a greater example to animate and encourage them in their Christian course than any or all that have been mentioned before, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ; ver. 2, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Where observe,

1st. What our Lord Jesus is to his people. He is "the author and finisher of their faith;" the beginning, and perfecter, and rewarder of it. **First.** He is "the author" of their faith; not only the object, but "the author." He is the great leader and precedent of our faith, he trusted in God; he is the purchaser of the spirit of faith, the publisher of the rule of faith, the efficient cause of the grace of faith, and in all respects "the author of our faith." **Secondly.** He is "the finisher of our faith." He is the fulfiller and the fulfilling of all Scripture promises and prophecies; he is the perfecter of the canon of Scripture; he is the finisher of grace and work of faith with power in the souls of his people; and he is the judge and the rewarder of their faith; he determines who they are that reach the mark, and from and in him they have the prize.

2nd. What trials Christ met with in his race and course. **First.** He endured the "contradiction of sinners against himself," ver. 3. He bore the opposition that they made to him both in their words and behaviour. They were continually contradicting him, and crossing in upon his great designs; and though he could easily have both confuted and confounded them, and sometimes gave them a specimen of his power, yet he endured their evil manners with great patience. Their contradictions were levelled against Christ himself, against his person as God-man, against his authority, against his preaching, and yet he endured all. **Secondly.** He endured the cross—all those sufferings that he met with in the world; for he took up his cross betimes, and was at length nailed to it, and endured a painful, ignominious, and accursed death, in which he was numbered with the transgressors, the vilest malefactors; yet all this he endured with invincible patience and resolution. **Thirdly.** He despised the shame, all the reproaches that were cast upon him both in this life and at his death. He despised them all, was infinitely above them; he knew his innocence, and his own excellency, and despised the ignorance and malice of his despisers.

3rd. What it was that supported the human soul of Christ under these unparalleled sufferings; and that was the joy that was set before him. He had something in view under all his sufferings which was pleasant to him; he rejoiced to see that by his sufferings he should make satisfaction to the injured justice of God, and give security to his honour and government; that he should make peace between God and man; that he should seal the covenant of grace, and be the Mediator of it; that he should open a way of salvation to the chief of sinners, and that he should effectually save all those that the Father had

given him, and himself be the first-born among many brethren. This was the joy that was set before him.

4th. The reward of his suffering. He is "set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Christ, as Mediator, is exalted to a station of the highest honour, of the greatest power and influence; he is at the right hand of the Father; nothing passes between heaven and earth but by him; he does all that is done; he ever lives to make intercession for his people.

5th. What is our duty with respect to this Jesus. We must, **First.** Look unto him; that is, [1. The Christian race-runner hath Jesus before him in the way to help him in everything that may befall him in his course. 2. Christ must be looked upon by him who would be helped in the race; the eye of the soul being drawn off of everything which might divert the man or discourage him, and our minds fixed on Christ with loving and longing looks, which may draw life and strength from him. 3. We must look on him as Jesus, the deliverer from sins and giver of salvation, even him who saveth his people from their sins. 4. We must look upon him as the author and finisher of our faith; that is, as our God, who hath begun his good work in us, and will also perfect it, who hath given us grace to believe, and will surely continue this grace with us, even to the end, lest the fears of our faith failing make us to faint.] 5. We must set him continually before us as our example, and our great encouragement; we must look to him for direction, for assistance, and for acceptance in all our sufferings. **Secondly.** We must "consider him;" meditate much upon him, and reason with ourselves from his case to our own. We must "analogize," as the word is; compare Christ's suffering and ours, and we shall find that, as his sufferings far exceeded ours in the nature and measure of them, so his patience far excels ours, and is a perfect pattern for us to imitate.

6th. The advantage we shall reap by thus doing. It will be a means to prevent our weariness and fainting; ver. 3, "Lest ye be weary, and faint in your minds." Observe, **First.** There is a proneness in the best to grow weary, and to faint under their trials and afflictions, especially when they prove heavy, and of long continuance. This proceeds from the imperfection of grace, and remains of corruption. **Secondly.** The best way to prevent this is to "look unto Jesus," and to "consider him." Faith and meditation will fetch in fresh supplies of strength, comfort, and courage; for he has assured them, if they suffer with him, they shall also reign with him. And this hope will be their helmet.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth



ROMAN INSTRUMENTS OF SCOURGING.

every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which

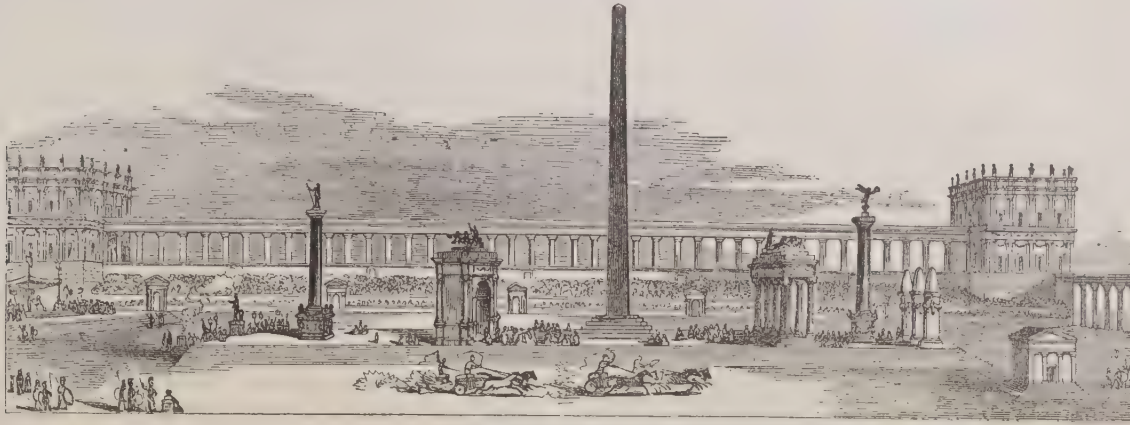
faith had been immediately rewarded with the promised good, and no interval had come in between the faith and the attainment. Since, then, the consummation still also awaits us, and will be attained only at the second coming of Christ; we are on the one hand on a level with the fathers, and, notwithstanding our faith, have, like them, to submit to a period of waiting, which also gives ample scope for Christian endurance, while thus their life of faith can furnish us a comforting and stimulating example; and, on the other, a better thing

has been provided for us. The fulfilment of the Messianic promise has, with the appearance of Jesus Christ and his entrance into the heavenly All Holy, become matter of historical fact, so that the prophecy of Jeremiah is fulfilled—chap. viii. 6, &c. (Lange). This quotation serves as well to introduce chap. xii. as to close chap. xi.

xii. 1. "Wherefore let us lay:" i.e., as well as they. "Witnesses:" the word is not that which describes a "spectator," but witnesses ("martyrs," literally), who have borne testimony to the

are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. 14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trou-

ble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.



GREEK STADIUM.—VER. 13.

Here the apostle presses the exhortation to patience and perseverance by an argument taken from the gentle measure and gracious nature of those sufferings the believing Hebrews endured in their Christian course.

First, From the gentle and moderate degree and measure of their sufferings: "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin," ver. 4. Observe,

1. He owns they had suffered much; they had been striving to an agony against sin. Here, 1st. The cause of the conflict was sin; and to be engaged against sin is to fight in a good cause; for sin is the worst enemy both to God and man. Our spiritual warfare is both honourable and necessary; for we are only defending ourselves against that which would destroy us if it should get the victory over us. We fight for ourselves, for our lives; and therefore ought to be patient and resolute. 2nd. Every Christian is listed under Christ's banner to strive against sin, against sinful doctrines, and sinful practices, and sinful habits and customs, both in themselves and others.

2. He puts them in mind that they might have suffered more, (others have suffered more;) for they "had not yet resisted unto blood." They had not been called to martyrdom as yet, though they knew not how soon they might be. Learn here, 1st. Our Lord Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, does not use to call his people out to the hardest trials at the first, but wisely trains them up by lesser sufferings to be prepared for greater. He will not put new wine into weak vessels; he is the gentle Shepherd, that will not overdrive the young ones of the flock. 2nd. It becomes Christians to take notice of the gentleness of Christ in accommodating their trial to their strength; they should magnify their afflictions, but should take notice of the mercy that is mixed with them, and should pity those that are called to the fiery trial to resist to blood; not to the shedding the blood of their enemies, but to sealing their testimony with their own blood. 3rd. Christians should be ashamed to faint under lesser trials when they see others bear up under greater, and do not know how soon they may meet with greater themselves. "If we run with the footmen, and they have wearied us, how shall we contend with horses? If we be wearied in a land of peace, what shall we do in the swellings of Jordan?" Jer. xii. 5.

Secondly, He argues from the peculiar and gracious nature of those sufferings that befall the people of God. Though their enemies and persecutors may be the instruments of inflicting such sufferings on them, yet they are Divine chastisements; their heavenly Father has his hand in all, and his wise end to serve by all, and of this he has given them due notice, and they should not forget it, ver. 5. Observe,

1. That those afflictions which may be truly persecution, as far as men are concerned in them, are fatherly rebukes and chastisements, as far as God is concerned in them. Persecution for religion is sometimes a correction and rebuke for the sins of professors of religion. Men persecute them because they are religious; God chastises them because they are not more so. Men persecute them because they will not give up their profession; God chastises them because they have not lived up to their profession.

2. God has directed his people how they ought to behave themselves under all their afflictions. They must avoid the extremes that many run into. 1st. They must not despise the chastening of the Lord; they must not make light of afflictions, and be stupid and insensible under them; for they are the hand and rod of God, and his rebukes for sin. They that make light of affliction make light of God, and make light of sin. 2nd. They must not faint when they are rebuked; they must not depend and sink under their trial, nor fret and repine, but bear up with faith and patience. 3rd. If they run into either of these extremes, it is a sign they have forgotten their heavenly Father's advice and exhortation, which he has given them in true and tender affection.

3. Afflictions rightly endured, though they may be the fruits of God's displeasure, yet they are proofs of his paternal love to his people, and care for them; ver. 6, 7, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Observe, 1st. The best of God's children need chastisement; they have their faults and follies, which need to be corrected. 2nd. Though God may let others alone in their sins, he will correct sin in his own children; they are of his family, and shall not escape his rebukes when they want them. 3rd. That in this he acts as becomes a father, and treats them

like children. No wise and good father will wink at those faults in his own children as he would in others; his relation and his affections oblige him to take more notice of the faults of his own children than of others. 4th. To be suffered to go on in sin without rebuke is a sad sign of alienation from God; such are bastards, not sons. They may call him Father, because born in the pale of the church; but they are the spurious offspring of another father, not of God, ver. 7, 8.

4. Those that are impatient under the discipline of their heavenly Father carry it worse towards him than they would do towards earthly parents, ver. 9, 10. Here, 1st. The apostle commends a dutiful and submissive behaviour in children towards their earthly parents; "We gave them reverence" even when they corrected us. It is the duty of children to give the reverence of obedience to the just commands of their parents, and the reverence of submission to their correction when they have been disobedient. Parents have not only authority, but a charge from God to give their children correction when it is due, and he has commanded children to take such correction well; and to be stubborn and discontented under due correction is a double fault, for the correction supposes there has been a fault already committed against the parents' commanding power, and superadds a farther fault against his chastising power. 2nd. From hence he recommends an humble and submissive behaviour towards our heavenly Father when under his correction, and this he does by an argument from the less to the greater.

First, Our earthly fathers are but the fathers of our flesh, but God is the Father of our spirits. Our fathers on earth were instrumental in the production of our bodies, which are but flesh, a mean, mortal, vile thing, formed out of the dust of the earth, as the bodies of the beasts are; and yet as they are curiously wrought, and made parts of our persons, and a proper tabernacle for the soul to dwell in, and an organ for it to act by, we owe reverence and affection to those that were instrumental in their procreation; but then we must owe much more to him who is the Father of our spirits. Our souls are not of a material substance, not of the most refined sort; they are not *ex traduce*,—"by tradition"; to affirm it is bad philosophy and worse divinity. They are the immediate offspring of God, who, after he had formed the body of man out of the earth, breathed into him a vital spirit, and so he became a living soul.

Secondly, Our earthly parents chastened us for their own pleasure. Sometimes they did it to gratify their passion, rather than to reform our manners. This is a weakness the fathers of our flesh are subject to, and this they should carefully watch against; for hereby they dishonour that parental authority that God has put upon them, and very much hinder the efficacy of their chastisements. But the Father of our spirits never grieves willingly, nor afflicts the children of men, much less his own children. It is always for our profit, and the advantage he intends us thereby is no less than our being partakers of his holiness; it is to correct and cure those sinful disorders that make us unlike to God, and to improve and increase those graces, which are the image of God in us, that we may be and act more like our heavenly Father. God loves his children so that he would have them to be as like himself as can be, and for this end he chastises them when they need it. Thirdly, The fathers of our flesh corrected us for a few days, in our state of childhood, when minors; and though we were in that weak and peevish state we owed them reverence, and when we came to maturity we loved and honoured them the more for it. Why, our whole life here is a state of childhood, minority and imperfection, and therefore we must submit to the discipline of such a state; and when we come to a state of perfection we shall be fully reconciled to all the measures of God's discipline over us now. Fourthly, God's correction is no condemnation; his children may at first fear lest affliction should come upon that dreadful errand, and we cry, "Do not condemn me, but shew me wherefore thou contendest with me," Job x. 2. But that is so far from being the design of God to his own people, that he therefore "chastens them now, that they may not be condemned with the world," 1 Cor. xi. 32. He does it to prevent the death and destruction of their souls, that they may live to God and like God, and be for ever with him.

5. The children of God, under their afflictions, ought not to judge of his dealings with them by present sense, but by reason, and faith, and experience; ver. 11, "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous;

truth and faithfulness of God and the power of faith. "Every weight, and the sin," &c.: some consider the second word as explanatory of the first, "every weight, even the sin, &c., which 'doth so easily beset us,'" expressed by one word in the original. It is used nowhere else in the New Testament, and its meaning is differently understood. Some refer it to sin, like a garment closely and constantly encompassing and hindering the runner; others to the fact that sin every where besets us and subtly encompasses us, or obstructs

our way. Alford renders, "and sin, which doth naturally enwrap us." Webster and Wilkinson say that the sin to which these Hebrew Christians were most tempted was the sin of apostasy; there are hints of this in the epistle. (Compare chap. vi. 9, x. 38, 39.)

xii. 2. "Looking unto the author and perfecter of our faith, even Jesus" (Alford). The word translated "author" signifies more than the mere "originator" who works in us the beginning of faith, but, as at chap. ii. 10, the leader, marshal, who, in the exhibition of

nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness." Where observe,

1st. The judgment of sense in this case. Afflictions are not grateful to the sense, but grievous; the flesh will feel them, and be grieved by them, and groan under them.

2nd. The judgment of faith, which corrects that of sense, and declares that a sanctified affliction produceth the fruits of righteousness; and these fruits are peaceable, tend to the quieting and comforting of the soul. Affliction produces peace, by producing more righteousness; for the fruit of righteousness is peace. And if the pain of the body contribute thus to the peace of the mind, and short, present affliction, produceth blessed fruits of a long continuance, they have no reason to fret or faint under it, but their great concern is that the chastening they are under may be endured by them with patience, and improved to a greater degree of holiness.

First. That their affliction may be endured with patience, which is the main drift of the apostle's discourse on this subject; and he again returns to exhort them, that for the reason before mentioned they should "lift up their hands that hang down, and the feeble knees," ver. 12. A burthen of affliction is apt to make the Christian's hands hang down and his knees grow feeble, to dispirit him and discourage him; but this he must strive against, and that for two reasons. 1st. That he may the better run his spiritual race and course. Faith, and patience, and holy courage and resolution, will make him walk more steadily, keep a straighter path, prevent wavering and wandering. 2nd. That he may encourage and not discourage others that are in the same way with him. There are many that are in the way to heaven that yet walk but weakly and lamely in it. Such are apt to discourage one another, and hinder one another; but it is their duty to take courage, and act by faith, and so help one another forward in the way to heaven.

Secondly. That their afflictions may be improved to a greater degree of holiness. Since this is God's design, it ought to be the design and concern of his children, that with renewed strength and patience they may "follow peace with all men, and holiness," ver. 14. If the children of God grow impatient under affliction, they will neither walk so quietly and peaceably towards men nor so piously towards God as they should do; but faith and patience will enable them to follow peace and holiness too, as a man follows his calling, constantly and diligently, and with pleasure. Observe, 1st. It is the duty of Christians, even when in a suffering state, "to follow peace with all men," yea even with those that may be instrumental in their sufferings. That is a hard lesson, and a high attainment, but it is what Christ has called his people to. Sufferings are apt to sour the spirit, and sharpen the passions; but the children of God must "follow peace with all men." 2nd. Peace and holiness are connected together; there can be no right peace without holiness. There may be prudence and discreet forbearance, and a shew of friendship and goodwill to all; but this true Christian peaceableness is never found separate from holiness. We must not, under pretence of living peaceably with all men, leave the ways of holiness, but cultivate peace in a way of holiness. 3rd. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The vision of God our Saviour in heaven is reserved as the reward of holiness, and the stress of our salvation is laid upon our holiness, though a placid, peaceable disposition contributes much to our meetness for heaven.

6. Where afflictions and sufferings for the sake of Christ are not considered by men as the chastisement of their heavenly Father, and improved as such, they will be a dangerous snare and temptation to apostasy, which every Christian should most carefully watch against; ver. 15, 16, "Looking diligently, lest any man fall of the grace of God," &c. And here the apostle enters a serious caveat against apostasy, and backs it with an awful example:—

1st. He enters a serious caveat against apostasy, ver. 15. Where you may observe, First. The nature of apostasy. It is "failing of the grace of God;" it is to become bankrupts in religion, for want of a good foundation, and suitable care and diligence. It is "failing of the grace of God;" coming short of a principle of true grace in the soul, notwithstanding the means of grace, and a profession of religion, and so coming short of the love and favour of God here and hereafter. Secondly. The consequences of apostasy. Where persons fail of having the true grace of God, a "root of bitterness" will spring up; corruption will prevail and break forth; a root of bitterness, a bitter root, producing bitter fruits to themselves and others; to themselves, corrupt principles, which lead to apostasy, and are greatly strengthened and radicated by apostasy; damnable errors, to the corrupting the doctrine and worship of the Christian church, and corrupt practices. Apostates generally grow worse and worse, and fall into the grossest wickedness, which usually ends either in downright atheism or in despair; and this produces bitter fruits to others, to the churches to whom these men belonged. By their corrupt principles and practices many are troubled, the peace of the churches is broken, the peace of men's minds disturbed, and many defiled, tainted with those bad principles, and drawn into defiling practices, so that the churches suffer both in their purity and peace. But the apostates themselves will be the greatest sufferers at last.

2nd. The apostle backs the caution with an awful example, and that is that of Esau; who, though born within the pale of the church, and having the birthright as the eldest son, and so might have had the privilege of being prophet, priest, and king, in his family, was so profane as to despise these sacred privileges, and to sell "his birthright for a morsel of meat." Where observe, First. Esau's sin. He profanely despised and sold the birthright, and all the advantages attending it. So apostates, that to avoid persecution and enjoy sensual ease and pleasure, though they bore the character of the children of God, and had a visible right to the blessing and inheritance, give up all the pretensions thereto. Secondly. Esau's punishment suitable to his sin. His conscience was convinced of his sin and folly when it was too late; "He would afterward have inherited the blessing," but "he was rejected," &c. His punishment lay in two things. 1st. He was condemned by his own conscience. He now saw that the blessing he had made so light of was worth the having, worth the seeking, though with much carefulness, and many tears. 2nd. He was rejected of God. "He found no place of repentance" in God, in his Father, or of true repentance in his own soul; the blessing was given to another, even to him to whom he sold it for a mess of pottage. Esau, in his great wickedness, had made the bargain, and God, in his righteous judgment, ratifies and confirms it, and would not suffer Isaac to reverse it. Learn, (1.) Apostasy from Christ is the fruit of preferring the gratification of the flesh before the blessing of God and the heavenly inheritance. (2.) Sinners will not always have such mean thoughts of the Divine blessing and inheritance as now they have. The time is coming when they will think no pains too great, no cares, no tears, too much, to obtain the lost blessing. (3.) That when the day of grace is over (as sometimes it may be in this life) they will find no place for repentance. They cannot repent aright of their sin; and God will not repent of the sentence he has passed upon them for their sin. And therefore, as the design of all, Christians should never give up their title and hope of their Father's blessing and inheritance, and expose themselves to his irrevocable wrath and curse, by deserting their holy religion to avoid suffering; which, though this may be persecution as far as wicked men are concerned in them, are only a rod of correction

and chastisement in the hand of their heavenly Father, to bring them near to himself in conformity and communion. This is the force of the apostle's arguing from the nature of the sufferings of the people of God, even when they suffer for righteousness' sake; and the reasoning is very strong.

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) 22 But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. 25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: 26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.

Here the apostle goes on to engage the professing Hebrews to perseverance in their Christian course and conflict, and not to relapse again into Judaism. And this he does by shewing them how much the state of the gospel church differed from that of the Jewish church, and how much it resembles the state of the church in heaven; and on both accounts demands and deserves our diligence, patience, and perseverance in Christianity.

First. How much the gospel church differs from the Jewish church, and how much it excels. And here we have a very particular description of the state of the church under the Mosaic dispensation, ver. 18—21.

1. It was a gross, sensible state. Mount Sinai, on which that church state was constituted, was a "mount that might be touched," ver. 18, a gross, palpable place; and so was the dispensation. It was very much external, earthly and sensitive, and so more heavy. The state of the gospel church on mount Zion is more spiritual, rational, and easy.

2. It was a dark dispensation. Upon that mount there was "blackness and darkness," and that church state was covered with dark shadows and types. The gospel state is much more clear and bright.

3. It was a dreadful and terrible dispensation. The Jews could not bear the terror of it; the thunder and the lightning, the trumpet sounding, the voice of God himself speaking to them, struck them with such dread, that they "intreated the word should not be spoken to them any more," ver. 19. Yea, Moses himself said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." The best of men on earth are not able to converse immediately with God and his holy angels. The gospel state is mild, and kind, and condescending, suited to our weak frame.

4. It was a limited dispensation; all might not approach to that mount, but only Moses and Aaron. Under the Gospel we have all access with boldness to God.

5. It was a very dangerous dispensation. The mount "burned with fire," and whatever man or beast touched the mount, they must "be stoned, or thrust through with a dart," ver. 20. It is true it will be always dangerous for presumptuous and brutish sinners to draw nigh to God; but it is not immediate and certain death, as here it was. This was the state of the Jewish church, fitted to awe a stubborn and hard-hearted people, and to set forth the strict and tremendous justice of God, and to wean the people of God from that dispensation, and make them more readily to embrace the sweet and gentle economy of the gospel church, and adhere to it.

Secondly. He shews how much the gospel church represents the church triumphant in heaven, what communication there is between the one and the other. The gospel church is called mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, which is free, in opposition to mount Sinai, which tendeth to bondage, Gal. iv. 24.

patient and victorious faith, has preceded us as a pattern and an aid. (Compare chap. ii. 13, iii. 2.)

xii. 7. "If ye endure:" the majority of ancient MSS. read, "unto chastisement ye are enduring"—i.e., "it is for chastisement that ye are enduring."

xii. 12. "Wherefore lift up:" "The thought and language of the first clause are apparently suggested by Isa. xxxv. 3, while the second clause reflects Prov. iv. 26. The language is very condensed. It is

not meant that making a path even would tend to heal the lame, or that bringing back is to be considered as healing; but not only should even paths be made for the benefit of the lame, that they may not forsake them for others, but also, instead of such an unhappy result, the lame should be healed. The scope of the admonition is to teach and learn the way of righteousness plainly, and promote the inclination and ability to follow it" (Webster and Wilkinson).

xii. 14, 15. For "holiness" Alford has "sanctification," and for

There is the hill on which God set his king the Messiah. Now, in coming to mount Zion, believers come into heavenly places, and into a heavenly society.

1. Into heavenly places. 1st. To "the city of the living God." God has taken up his gracious residence in the gospel church, which on that account is an emblem of heaven. There his people may find him ruling, guiding, sanctifying and comforting them; there he speaks to them by the gospel ministry; there they speak to him by prayer, and he hears them; there he trains them up for heaven, and gives them the earnest of their inheritance. 2nd. To "the heavenly Jerusalem," as born and bred there, as free denizens there. Here believers have clearer views of heaven, plainer evidences for heaven, and a greater meekness and more heavenly temper of soul.

2. To a heavenly society. 1st. "To an innumerable company of angels," who are of the same family with the saints, under the same head, and in a great measure employed in the same work, ministering to believers for their good, and keeping them in all their ways, and pitching their tents about them. These for number are innumerable, and for order and union are a company, and a glorious one. And those that by faith are joined to the gospel church are joined to the angels, and shall at length be like them, and equal with them. 2nd. "To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven," that is, to the universal church, however dispersed. By faith we come to them, have communion with them in the same Head, by the same Spirit, and in the same blessed hope, and walk in the same way of holiness, grappling with the same spiritual enemies, and hasting to the same rest, victory, and glorious triumph, where will be the general assembly of the first-born, the saints of former and earlier times, who saw the promises of the gospel state but received them not, as well as those that first received them under the Gospel, and were regenerated thereby, and so were the first-born and the first-fruits of the gospel church, and thereby, as the first-born, advanced to greater honours and privileges than the rest of the world. Indeed, all the children of God are heirs, and every one hath the privileges of the first-born. The names of these are written in heaven, in the records of the church here; have a name in God's house, written among the living in Jerusalem; have a good repute for their faith and fidelity, and are enrolled in the Lamb's book of life, as citizens are enrolled in the lively books. 3rd. "To God the Judge of all;" that great God who will judge both Jew and Gentile according to the law they are under. Believers come to him now by faith, and make supplication to their Judge, and receive a sentence of absolution in the Gospel, and in the court of their consciences now, by which they know they shall be justified hereafter. 4th. "To the spirits of just men made perfect." To the best sort of men, the righteous, who are more excellent than their neighbours; to the best part of just men, their spirits, and to these in their best state, made perfect. Believers have union with departed saints in one and the same Head and Spirit, and a title to the same inheritance, of which those on earth are heirs, those in heaven possessors. 5th. "To Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." This is none of the least of the many encouragements there are to perseverance in the gospel state, since it is a state of communion with Christ the Mediator of the new covenant, and of communication of his blood, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. First. The gospel covenant is a new covenant, distinct from the covenant of works; and it is now under a new dispensation, distinct from that of the Old Testament. Secondly. Christ is the Mediator of this new covenant. He is the middle person that goes between both parties, God and man, to bring them together in this covenant; to keep them together, notwithstanding the sins of the people, and God's displeasure against them for sin; to offer up our prayers to God, and to bring down the favours of God to us; to plead with God for us, and to plead with us for God; and at length to bring God and his people together in heaven, and to be a Mediator of fruition between them for ever; they beholding and enjoying God in Christ, and God beholding and blessing them in Christ. Thirdly. This covenant is ratified by the blood of Christ sprinkled upon our consciences, as the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon the altar and the sacrifice. This blood of Christ pacifies God, and purifies the consciences of men. Fourthly. This is speaking blood, and it speaks better things than that of Abel. 1st. It speaks to God in behalf of sinners. It pleads not for vengeance, as the blood of Abel did on him that shed it, but for mercy. 2nd. To sinners, in the name of God, it speaks pardon to their sins, peace to their souls; and bespeaks their strictest obedience, and highest love and thankfulness.

Thirdly. The apostle having thus enlarged upon the argument to perseverance, taken from the heavenly nature of the gospel church state, he closes the chapter by improving the argument in a manner suitable to the weight of it; ver. 25, &c., "See then that ye refuse not him that speaketh;" that speaketh by his blood, and not only speaketh after another manner than the blood of Abel spoke from the ground, but than God spoke by the angels, and by Moses spoke on mount Sinai: then he spoke on earth, now he speaks from heaven. Here observe,

1. That when God speaks to men in the most excellent manner, he justly expects from them the most strict attention and regard. Now it is in the Gospel that God speaks to men in the most excellent manner. For, 1st. He now speaks from a higher and more glorious seat and throne; not from mount Sinai, which was on this earth, but from heaven. 2nd. He speaks now more immediately by his inspired word, and by his Spirit, which are his witnesses. He speaks not now any new thing to men, but by his Spirit speaks the same word home to the conscience. 3rd. He speaks now more powerfully and effectually. Then, indeed, his voice shook the earth, but now, by introducing the gospel state, he hath not only shaken the earth, but the heavens; not only shaken the hills and mountains, or the spirits of men, or the civil state of the land of Canaan, to make room for his people; he hath not only shaken the world, as he then did, but he hath shaken the church, that is, the Jewish nation, and shaken them in their church state, which was in Old Testament times a heaven upon earth: this their heavenly spiritual state he hath now shaken. It is by the Gospel from heaven that God shook to pieces the civil and ecclesiastical state of the Jewish nation, and introduced a new state of the church that cannot be removed, shall never be changed for any other on earth, but shall remain till it be made perfect in heaven.

2. When God speaks to men in the most excellent manner, the guilt of those that refuse him is the greater, and their punishment will be more unavoidable and intolerable; there is no escaping, no bearing it, ver. 25. The different manner of God's dealing with men under the Gospel in a way of grace assures us that he will deal with the despisers of the Gospel after a different manner than he does with other men in a way of judgment. The glory of the Gospel, which should greatly recommend it to our regard, appears in these three things:—1st. It was by sound of the gospel trumpet that the former dispensation and state of the church of God was shaken and removed. And shall we despise that voice of God that pulled down a church and state of so long standing, and of God's own building? 2nd. It was by the sound of the gospel trumpet that a new kingdom is erected for God in the world, that can never be so shaken as to be removed. This was a change made once for all, no other change after it till time shall be no more. We have now received a kingdom that cannot be moved, shall never be removed, never give way to any new dispensation. The canon of Scripture is now perfected; the spirit of prophecy is ceased; the mystery of God

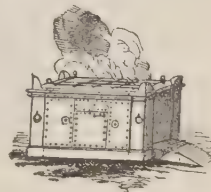
finished; he has put his last hand to it. The gospel church may be made more large, more prosperous, more purified from contracted pollution; but it shall never be altered for another dispensation; they that perish under the Gospel perish without remedy. And from hence the apostle justly concludes, *First*. How necessary it is for us to obtain grace from God to serve him acceptably. If we be not accepted of God under this dispensation, we shall never be accepted at all; and we lose all our labour in religion if we be not accepted of God. *Secondly*. We cannot worship God acceptably unless we worship him with godly reverence and fear. As faith, so holy fear, is necessary to acceptable worship. *Thirdly*. It is only the grace of God that enables us to worship God in a right manner. Nature cannot come up to it; it can neither produce that precious faith nor that holy fear that is necessary to acceptable worship. *Fourthly*. God is the same just and righteous God under the Gospel as he appeared to be under the law. Though he be our God in Christ, and now deals with us in a more kind and gracious way, yet he is in himself a consuming fire; that is, a God of strict justice, and will avenge himself on all the despisers of his grace, and upon all apostates. Under the Gospel the justice of God appears in a more awful manner, though not in so sensible a manner as under the law. For here we behold Divine justice seizing upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and making him a propitiatory sacrifice, his soul and body an offering for sin, which is a display of justice far beyond what was seen and heard on mount Sinai when the law was given.

CHAPTER XIII.

The apostle having treated largely of Christ, and faith, and free grace, and gospel privileges, and warned the Hebrews against apostasy, now in the close of all recommends several duties to them, as the proper fruits of faith, ver. 1—17; then bespeaks their prayers for him, and offers up his prayers to God for them, gives them some hope of seeing himself and Timothy, and ends with the general salutation and benediction, ver. 18—25.



ET brotherly love continue. 2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. 3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. 4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. 7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation: 8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. 9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. 10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. 15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate



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"fail of the grace of God" he has "falling short of the grace of God."

xii. 16, 17. "Esau found no place of repentance:" this is frequently understood as applying to a change of purpose on the part of Isaac. The tears of Esau did not avail to reverse the blessing once given. It seems, however, more natural, and more in harmony with the context, to refer his "repentance" to Esau himself. He "found no place of repentance:" he found no place, or scope, of

reaching a higher tone of moral feeling, "though he sought it"—not the repentance, but the blessing. "He stands as the type of him who wantonly turns away and rejects, with carnal and sensual mind, the blessings of God's spiritual covenant" (Delitzsch, in Lange). Even in his more hopeful state of mind, it was the blessing, not the moral good, of which he regretted the loss.

xii. 20. The words "thrust through with a dart" are not found in any of the ancient MSS.

forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. 17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

The design of Christ in giving himself for us is, that he may purchase to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Now, the apostle calls the believing Hebrews to the performance of many excellent duties in which it becomes Christians to excel.

First. To "brotherly love," ver. 1. By which he does not only mean a general affection to all men as our brethren by nature, all made of the same blood, nor that more limited affection that is due to those that are of the same immediate parents, but that special and spiritual affection which ought to be among the children of God.

1. It is here supposed that the Hebrews had this love one for another. Though at this time that nation was miserably divided and distracted among themselves, both about matters of religion and the civil state, yet there was true brotherly love left among those of them that believed on Christ. And this appeared in a very eminent manner presently after the shedding forth of the Holy Ghost, when they had all things in common, and sold their possessions to make a general fund of subsistence to their brethren. The spirit of Christianity is a spirit of love; faith works by love. The true religion is the strongest bond of friendship; if it be not so, it has its name for nothing.

2. This brotherly love was in danger of being lost, and that in a time of persecution, when it would be most necessary. It was in danger of being lost by those disputes that were among them concerning the respect they ought still to have to the ceremonies of the Mosaic law. Disputes about religion too often produce a decay of Christian affection; but this must be guarded against, and all proper means used to preserve brotherly love. Christians should always love and live as brethren; and the more they grow in devout affection to God their heavenly Father, the more they will grow in love to one another for his sake.

Secondly. To hospitality; ver. 2, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers." We must add to brotherly kindness charity. Where observe,

1. The duty required. "To entertain strangers;" both those that are strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to our persons, especially those that know themselves to be strangers here, and are seeking another country, which is the case of the people of God, and was so at this time; the believing Jews were in a desperate and distressed condition. But he seems to speak of strangers as such; though we know not who they are, nor whence they come, yet, seeing they are without any certain dwelling-place, we should allow them room in our hearts, and in our houses, as we have opportunity and ability.

2. The motive. "Thereby some have entertained angels unawares." So Abraham did, *Gen. xviii.*, and Lot, *Gen. xix.* And one of those that Abraham entertained was the Son of God. And though we cannot suppose this will ever be our case, yet what we do to strangers in obedience to him he will reckon and reward as done to himself; *Mat. xxv. 35.*, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in." God has often bestowed honours and favours upon his hospitable servants, beyond all their thoughts, unawares.

Thirdly. To Christian sympathy; ver. 3, "Remember those that are in bonds," &c. Where observe,

1. The duty to "remember those that are in bonds," and adversity. 1st. God oftentimes orders it so that, while some Christians and churches are in adversity, others enjoy peace and liberty. All are not called at the same time to resist unto blood. 2nd. Those that are themselves at liberty must sympathize with "those that are in bonds" and adversity, as if they were bound with them in the same chain. They must feel the sufferings of their brethren.

2. The reason of the duty. "As being yourselves in the body;" not only in the body natural, and so liable to the like sufferings, (and you should sympathize with them now, that others may sympathize with you when your time of trial comes,) but in the same mystical body, under the same head: "And if one member suffer, all the rest suffer with it," *1 Cor. xii. 26.* It would be unnatural in Christians not to bear each other's burthens.

Fourthly. To purity and chastity, ver. 4. Where you have,

1. A recommendation of God's ordinance of marriage, that it is honourable in all, and ought to be esteemed by all, and not denied to those to whom God has not denied it. It is honourable, for God instituted it for man in paradise, knowing it was not good for him to be alone. He married and blessed the first couple, the first parents of mankind, to direct all to look unto God in that great concern, and to marry in the Lord. Christ honoured marriage with his presence and first miracle. It is honourable, as a means to prevent impurity, and a defiled bed; it is honourable and happy when persons come together pure and chaste, and preserve the marriage bed undefiled, not only from unlawful but inordinate affections.

2. A dreadful but just censure of impurity and lewdness; "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." 1st. God knows who are guilty of such sins; no darkness can hide them from him. 2nd. He will call such sins by their proper names, not by the names of love and gallantry, but of whoredom and adultery; whoredom in the single state, and adultery in the married state. 3rd. He will bring them into judgment. He will judge them either by their own consciences here, and set their sins in order before them for their deep humiliation, (and conscience when awakened will be very severe upon such sinners,) or he will set them at his tribunal at death and in the last day, and convict them, and condemn them, and cast them out for ever, if they die under the guilt of this sin.

Fifthly. To Christian contentment, ver. 5, 6. Where observe,

1. The sin that is contrary to this grace and duty, and that is covetousness; an over-eager desire of the wealth of this world, envying those that have more than we. This sin we must allow no place in our conversation; for though it be a secret lust lurking in the heart, if it be not subdued it will enter into our conversation, and discover itself in our manner of speaking and acting; we must take care not only to keep this sin down, but to root it out of our souls.

2. The duty and grace that is contrary to covetousness, and that is being satisfied and pleased with such things as we have, present things; for past things cannot be recalled, and future things are only in the hand of God. What God gives us from day to day we must be content with; though it fall short of what we have enjoyed heretofore, and though it do not come up to our expectations for the future, we must be content with our present lot, we must bring our minds to our present condition, and this is the sure way to contentment; and they that cannot do it would not be contented though God should raise their condition to their minds, for the mind would rise with the condition. Haman was the great court favourite, and yet not contented; Ahab

on the throne, and yet not contented; Adam in paradise, and yet not contented; yea, the angels in heaven, and yet not contented; but Paul, though abased and empty, had learned in every state, in any state, therewith to be content.

3. What reason Christians have to be contented with their present lot. 1st. "God hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," ver. 5, 6. This was said to Joshua, *ch. i. 5.*, but belongs to all the faithful servants of God; Old Testament promises may be applied to New Testament saints. This promise contains the sum and substance of the promises; "I will never," no never, "leave thee, nor" ever "forsake thee." Here are no less than five negatives heaped together to confirm the promise. The true believer shall have the gracious presence of God with him in life, at death, and for ever. 2nd. From this comprehensive promise they may assure themselves of help from God; ver. 6, "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what men shall do unto me." Men can do nothing against God, and God can make all that men do against his people to turn to their good.

Sixthly. To the duty Christians owe to their ministers; and that both to those that are dead and to those that are yet alive.

1. To those that are dead; ver. 7, "Remember them that have had the rule of you," &c. Where observe,

1st. The description given of them. They were such as had the rule over them, and had spoken to them the word of God; their guides and governors, who had spoken to them the word of God. Here is the dignity to which they were advanced; to be rulers and leaders of the people, not according to their own will, but the will and word of God; and this character they filled up with suitable duty. They did not rule at a distance, and rule by others; but they ruled by personal presence and instruction according to the word of God.

2nd. The duty owing to them even when they were dead.

First. Remember them, their preaching, their praying, their private counsel, their example.

Secondly. Follow their faith; be steadfast in the profession of that faith they preached to you, and labour after that grace of faith by which they lived and died so well. Consider the end of their conversation, how quickly, how comfortably, how joyfully, they finished their course. Now this duty of following the same true faith in which they had been instructed the apostle enlarges much upon, and presses them earnestly to it, not only from the remembrance of their faithful deceased guides, but from several other motives.

1st. From the immutability and eternity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though their ministers were some dead, others dying, yet the great Head and High Priest of the church, the bishop of their souls, ever lives, and is ever the same; and they should be steadfast and immovable in imitation of Christ, and should remember that Christ ever lives to observe and reward their faithful adherence to his truths, and to observe and punish their sinful departure from him. Christ is the same in the Old Testament day, in the gospel day, and will be so to his people for ever.

2nd. From the nature and tendency of those erroneous doctrines that they were in danger of falling in with. (1) They were divers and various, ver. 9; different from what they had received from their former faithful teachers, and inconsistent with themselves. (2) They were strange doctrines, such as the gospel church was unacquainted with, foreign to the Gospel. (3) They were of an unsettling, distracting nature, like the wind by which the ship is tossed, and in danger of being driven from its anchor, and carried away and split upon the rocks. They were quite contrary to that grace of God that fixes and establishes the heart, which is an excellent thing. These strange doctrines keep the heart always fluctuating and unsettled.

[1. The ground of devising and urging of superstitious ceremonies is the unquietness and unstableness of men's hearts wanting satisfaction in God and his ordinances; and therefore seeking to support themselves by means of their own devising. 2. It is the doctrine of justification by grace only, and nothing of our doings, which getteth true rest to our hearts, and quiet settling to the consciences.]

(4) They are mean and low as to their subject; they are about external, little, perishing things, such as meats and drinks, &c. (5) They were unprofitable. Those that were most taken with them, and employed about them, got no real good by them to their own souls; they did not make them more holy, nor more humble, nor more thankful, nor more heavenly. (6) They would exclude those that embraced them from the privileges of the Christian altar; ver. 10, "We have an altar," &c. This is an argument of great weight, and therefore the apostle insists the longer upon it. Observe, (1st.) The Christian church has its altar. It was objected against the primitive Christians that their assemblies were destitute of an altar, but that was not true. "We have an altar," not a material altar, but a personal one, and that is Christ; he is both our altar and our sacrifice; he sanctifies the gift. The altars under the law were types of Christ; the brazen altar of the sacrifice, the golden altar of his intercession. (2nd.) This altar furnishes out a feast for true believers; a feast upon the sacrifice, a feast of fat things; spiritual strength, and growth, and holy delight, and pleasure. The Lord's table is not our altar, but it is furnished with provision from the altar, "Christ our passover for us," *1 Cor. v. 7*; and it follows, "Therefore let us keep the feast." The Lord's supper is the feast of the gospel passover. (3) Those that adhere to the tabernacle, or the Levitical dispensation, or return to it again, exclude themselves from the privileges of this altar, from the benefits purchased by Christ. If they serve the tabernacle, they are resolved to subject themselves to antiquated rites and ceremonies, to renounce their right to the Christian altar; and this part of the argument he first proves and then improves. [1.] He proves that this servile adherence to the Jewish state is a bar to the privileges of the gospel altar. And he argues thus under the Jewish law:—No part of the sin offering was to be eaten, but all must be burned without the camp, while they dwelt in tabernacles, and without the gates when they dwelt in cities. Now if they will still be subject to that law, they cannot eat at the gospel altars; for that which is eaten there is furnished from Christ, who is the great sin offering. Not that it is the very sin offering itself, as the papists affirm, for then it was not to be eaten, but burned; but the gospel feast is the fruit and procurement of the sacrifice, which they have no right to that do not acknowledge the sacrifice itself.

[In that he saith, They have no right to eat, learn, 1. That Jesus is our food who believe in him, by whom our souls are kept alive, and maintained every day spiritually, as the priests were maintained by the old altar bodily. 2. That before a man attains to eat, or draw benefit from Christ, he must have a right unto him. There is a possession following the right, and the right tendeth to the possession. 3. He who loveth to have the right must take the course which Christ prescribeth, without mixing any thing therewith.]

And that it might appear that Christ was really the antitype of the sin offering, and as such might sanctify or cleanse his people with his own blood, he conformed himself to the type in suffering without the gate. A great degree this was of his humiliation, as if he had not been fit either for sacred or civil society! And this shews, [1st.] How sin, which was the meritorious cause of the sufferings of Christ, is a forfeiture of all sacred and civil rights, and the sinner a common plague and nuisance to all society, if God should be strict

xii. 28. For "moved" read "shaken." The word is the same as in verses 26, 27. "Let us have grace," or thankfulness, "whereby let us serve God acceptably, with reverent fear; for indeed 'our God is,'" &c.

xiii. 4. "Marriage;" the word used here is employed elsewhere in the New Testament to denote the wedding and its celebration. Alford renders "your marriage;" "Let your marriage be held in honour in all things."

xiii. 7. "Them which have;" or, rather, "which had the rule over you—your leaders." "Who have spoken;" better, "who spoke." "Whose faith follow, considering;" Alford inverts these two clauses, and translates, "The end of whose life is their death by martyrdom—*e.g.*, Stephen and James."

xiii. 8. Supply "is;" "Jesus Christ is the same." The reference to verse 7 is in the form of an encouragement.

to mark iniquity. [2nd.] [How basely soever men did use Christ's body in casting of it without the city, yet was his blood in high estimation with God; it made atonement for the people, and sanctified them.] And having thus shewed that adherence to the Levitical law would, even according to its own rules, debar men from the Christian altar, he proceeds, [2.] To improve this argument, ver. 13—15, in suitable advice. [1st.] "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp;" go forth from the ceremonial law, from sin, from the world, from ourselves, our very bodies, when he calls us. [2nd.] Let us be willing to "bear his reproach;" be willing to be accounted the outcasts of all things, not worthy to live, not worthy to die a common death. This was his reproach, and we must submit to it. And we have the more reason, because, whether we go forth from this world to Christ or no, we must necessarily go forth in a little time by death; for here we have no continuing city. Sin, sinners, death, will not suffer us to continue long here; and therefore we should go forth now by faith, and seek in Christ that rest and settlement that this world cannot afford us, ver. 14. [3rd.] Let us make a right use of this altar; not only partake of the privilege of it, but discharge the duties of the altar, as those that Christ has made priests to attend on this altar. Let us bring our sacrifices to this altar, and to this our High Priest, and offer them up by him, ver. 15, 16. Now what are the sacrifices which we must bring and offer on this altar, even Christ? not any expiatory sacrifices, there is no need of them. Christ has offered the great sacrifice of atonement; ours are only the sacrifices of acknowledgment, and they are, [1st.] The sacrifice of praise to God, which we should offer up to God continually. In this is included all adoration and prayer, as well as thanksgiving; this is the fruit of our lips; we must speak forth the praises of God from unfeigned lips. And this must be only offered to God, not to angels or saints, or any creature but to the name of God alone; and it must be by Christ, in a dependence upon his meritorious satisfaction and intercession. [2nd.] The sacrifice of alms deeds and Christian charity; ver. 16, "To do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." We must, according to our power, communicate to the necessities of the souls and bodies of men; not contenting ourselves to offer the sacrifice of our lips, mere words, but the sacrifice of good deeds. And these we must lay down upon this altar, not depending upon the merit of our good deeds, but of our great High Priest; and with such sacrifices as these, adoration and alms thus offered up, God is well pleased. He will accept the offering with pleasure, and will accept and bless the offerers through Christ.

2. Having thus told us the duty Christians owe to their deceased ministers, which principally consist in following their faith, and not departing from it, the apostle tells us what is the duty that people owe to their living ministers, in ver. 17, and the reasons of that duty.

1st. The duty to obey them, and submit themselves to them. It is not an implicit obedience nor absolute submission that is here required, but only so far as is agreeable to the mind and will of God revealed in his word; and yet it is truly obedience and submission, and that not only to God, but to the authority of the ministerial office, which is of God as certainly, in all things belonging to that office, as the authority of parents or the civil magistrate in the things within their sphere. Christians must submit to be instructed by their ministers, and not think themselves too wise, or too good, or too great to learn from them; and when they find that ministerial instructions are agreeable to the written word, they must obey them.

2nd. The motives to this duty. First. They have the rule over the people. Their office, though not magisterial, yet it is truly authoritative. They have no authority to lord it over the people, but to lead them in the ways of God, by informing and instructing them, explaining the word of God to them, and applying it to their several cases. They were not to make laws of their own, but to interpret the laws of God. Nor is their interpretation to be immediately received without examination, but the people must search the Scriptures; and so far as the instructions of their ministers are according to that rule, they ought as receive them; not as the word of men, but, as they are indeed, the word of God, that works effectually in those that believe. Secondly. They watch for the souls of the people, not to ensnare them, but to save them; not to gain them to themselves, but to Christ; to build them up in knowledge, faith, and holiness. They are to watch against every thing that may be hurtful to the souls of men, and to give them warning of dangerous errors, of the devices of Satan, of approaching judgments; they are to watch for all opportunities of helping the souls of men forward in the way to heaven. Thirdly. They must give an account how they have discharged their duty, and what is become of the souls committed to their trust; whether any have been lost through their neglect, and whether any of them have been brought in and built up under their ministry. Fourthly. They would be glad to give a good account of themselves and their hearers. If they can then give in an account of their own fidelity and success, it will be a joyful day to them; those souls that have been converted and confirmed under their ministry will be their joy and their crown in the day of the Lord Jesus. Fifthly. If they give up their account with grief, it will be the people's loss as well as theirs. It is the interest of hearers that the account their ministers give of them may be with joy and not with grief. If faithful ministers be not successful, the grief will be theirs, but the loss will be the people's. Faithful ministers have delivered their own souls, but a fruitless and faithless people's blood and ruin will be upon their own heads.

18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. 19 But I beseech *you* the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. 20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen. 22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words. 23 Know ye that *our* brother

Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. 24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. 25 Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

Here, First. The apostle recommends himself and his fellow-sufferers to the prayers of the Hebrew believers; ver. 18, "Pray for us," for me and Timothy, mentioned ver. 23, and for all those of us that labour in the ministry of the Gospel.

1. This is one part of the duty people owe to their ministers. They need the prayers of the people; and the more earnestly the people pray for their ministers the more benefit they may expect to reap from their ministry. They should pray that God would teach those that are to teach them; that he would make them vigilant, and wise, and zealous, and successful; that he would assist them in all their labours, support them under all their burthens, and strengthen them under all their temptations.

2. There are good reasons why people should pray for their ministers. He mentions two:—1st. "We trust we have a good conscience," &c. ver. 18. Many of the Jews had an ill opinion of Paul, because he, being a Hebrew of the Hebrews, had cast off the Levitical law, and preached up Christ. Now he here modestly asserts his own integrity; "We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly;" "We trust," he might have said, "We know," but he chose to speak in a humble style, to teach us all not to be too confident of ourselves, but to maintain a godly jealousy over our own hearts. "We trust we have a good conscience," an enlightened and well-informed conscience, a clean and pure conscience, a tender and faithful conscience, a conscience testifying for us, not against us. "A good conscience in all things," in the duties both of the first and second table, towards God and towards men, and especially "in all things" pertaining to our ministry; we would act honestly and sincerely in all things. Observe, First. "A good conscience" has respect to all God's commands, and all our duty. Secondly. That those that have this good conscience yet need the prayers of others. Thirdly. Conscientious ministers are public blessings, and deserve the prayers of the people. 2nd. Another reason why he desires their prayers is, that he hoped thereby to be the sooner restored to them, ver. 19, intimating he had been formerly among them, that now he was absent from them, that he had a great desire and real intention to come again to them; and that the best way to facilitate his return to them, and to make it a mercy to him and them, was to make it the matter of their prayer. When ministers come to a people as a return of prayer, they come with greater satisfaction to themselves and success to the people. We should fetch in all our mercies by prayer.

Secondly. He offers up his prayers to God for them, being willing to do for them as he desired they should do for him; ver. 20, "Now the God of peace," &c. In this excellent prayer observe,

1. The title given to God, "The God of peace," who has found out a way for peace and reconciliation between himself and sinners, and who loves peace on earth, and especially in his churches.

2. The great work ascribed to him. He hath "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus," &c. Jesus raised himself by his own power, and yet the Father was concerned in it, attesting thereby that justice was satisfied, and the law fulfilled. He rose again for our justification; and that Divine power by which he was raised is able to do every thing for us that we stand in need of.

3. The titles given to Christ. Our Lord Jesus, our Sovereign and our Saviour, and the great Shepherd of the sheep, promised in *Isa.* xl. 11; declared by himself to be so, *Jno.* x. 14, 15. Ministers are under-shepherds; Christ is the Great Shepherd. This denotes his interest in his people,—they are the flock of his pasture; and his care and concern for them,—he feeds them, and leads them, and watches over them.

4. The way and method in which God is reconciled, and Christ raised from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The blood of Christ satisfied Divine justice, and so procured Christ's release from the prison of the grave, as having paid our debt, according to an eternal covenant or agreement between the Father and the Son; and this blood is the sanction and seal of an everlasting covenant between God and his people.

5. The mercy prayed for; ver. 21, "Make you perfect in every good work," &c. Observe, 1st. The perfection of the saints "in every good work" is the great thing desired by them, and for them, that they may here have a perfection of integrity, a clear mind, a clean heart, lively affections, regular and resolved wills, and suitable strength for every good work to which they are called now, and at length a perfection of degrees to fit them for the employment and felicity of heaven. 2nd. The way in which God makes his people perfect. It is by working in them always what is "pleasing in his sight," and that "through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory for ever." Observe, First. There is no good thing wrought in us but it is the work of God; he works in us before we are fit for any good work. Secondly. No good thing is wrought in us by God but "through Jesus Christ," for his sake, and by his Spirit. And therefore, Thirdly. Eternal glory is due to him who is the cause of all the good principles wrought in us, and all the good works done by us; and to this every one should say, "Amen."

Thirdly. He gives the Hebrews an account of Timothy's liberty, and hopes of seeing them with him in a little time, ver. 23. It seems Timothy had been a prisoner, doubtless for the Gospel, but now he was set at liberty. The imprisonment of faithful ministers is an honour to them, and their enlargement matter of joy to the people. He was pleased with the hopes of not only seeing Timothy, but seeing the Hebrews with him. Opportunities of writing to the churches of Christ are desired by the faithful ministers of Christ, and pleasant to them.

Fourthly. Having given a brief account of this his letter, and begged their attention to it, ver. 22, he closes with salutations, and a solemn, though short, benediction.

1. The salutation. 1st. From himself to them, directed to all their ministers that had the rule over them, and to all the saints; to them all, ministers and people. 2nd. From the Christians in Italy to them. It is a good thing to have the law of holy love and kindness written in the hearts of Christians one towards another. Religion teaches men the truest civility and good breeding. It is not a sour or morose thing.

2. The solemn, though short, benediction; ver. 25, "Grace *be* with you all. Amen." Let the favour of God be towards, and his grace continually working in, you, and with you, bringing forth the fruits of holiness, as the first-fruits of glory. When the people of God have been conversing together by word or writing, it is good to part with prayer, desiring for each other the continuance of the gracious presence of God, that they may meet together again in the world of praise.

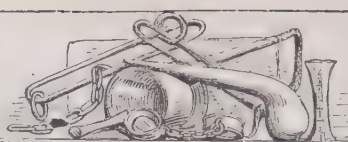
xiii. 10. "The apostle did not mean that they who served the tabernacle had no right to believe in Christ, but that they who served the tabernacle, not believing in Christ, or adhering too closely to the legal oblations, had no right or title to partake of the sacrifice or atonement made by Christ. The thought is similar to that in *Gal.* v. 2—4" (Waterland, quoted in Webster and Wilkinson).

xiii. 19. "I beseech you the rather:" or, "I the more abundantly beseech you to do this, that," &c.

xiii. 20. A different connection is given to the clauses of this verse by the change of order adopted by Alford. "The God of peace, that brought up from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, the great Shepherd," &c. "From the dead:" "This is the only place," says Delitzsch, "where our author mentions the resurrection. Everywhere else he lifts his eyes from the depth of our Lord's humiliation, passing over all that is intermediate, to the highest point of his exaltation."



VISITING THE



AN



AFFLICTED.

EXPOSITION

OF THE

GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

THE writer of this epistle was not James the son of Zebedee, for he was put to death by Herod, *Acts* xii., before Christianity had gained so much ground among the Jews of the dispersion as is here implied; but it was the other James, the son of Alphaeus, who was cousin-german to Christ, and one of the twelve apostles, *Mat.* x. 3. He is called "a pillar," *Gal.* ii. 9; and this epistle of his cannot be disputed without loosening a foundation stone. [Some writers hold that three persons bearing this name (James) are mentioned in the New Testament, namely, 1. James, the son of Joseph and Mary, called the brother of our Lord; 2. James, the son of Zebedee; 3. James, the son of Alphaeus. Those who adopt this opinion suppose that the one first-named was the author of this epistle: see *Rosenmüller, Scholia in N. T.*] It is called a "general epistle," because, as some think, not directed to any particular person or church; but such a one as we call a circular letter. Others think it is called general or catholic, to distinguish it from the epistles of Ignatius, Barnabas, Polycarp, and others that were noted in the primitive times, but not generally received in the church, and on that account not canonical, as this is. Eusebius tells us that this epistle was generally read in the churches with the other catholic epistles.—*Hist. Eccles.* p. 53, *Ed. Valer., Anno.* 1678. [Noesselt says that the name was originally given to 1 John and 1 Peter to distinguish these from others of the same writers, whose authority was for a time doubted; afterwards, when the name was given to the epistles of James and Jude, it was intended to distinguish them from the epistles of Paul. A catholic epistle, therefore, is a legitimate one, and universally recognized as such. *Legitima omniumque consensu probata.*] St. James, our author, was called the just, for his great piety. He was an eminent example of those graces which he presses upon others. He was so exceedingly revered for his justice, temperance and devotion, that Josephus the Jewish historian records it as one of the causes of the destruction of Jerusalem, 'that St. James was martyred in it.' This is mentioned in hope of procuring the greater regard to what is penned by so holy and excellent a man. The time when this epistle was written is uncertain. [Biblical critics generally are agreed that this epistle was written about A.D. 61. Its canonical authority has been questioned, but without reason. Luther called it a "strawy epistle," and rejected it from the canon of Scripture, on account of its supposed opposition to the great doctrine of justification by grace only; thus giving a lamentable instance of the rashness into which the best of men may be betrayed by zeal without knowledge. Clement of Rome alludes to it; Origen quotes it as genuine, as also do Jerome, Athanasius, and many others of the fathers. It is found in all the ancient catalogues and the Syriac translation, made near the close of the first century, or beginning of the second. Nor is the internal evidence of its authenticity less strong than the external. Beyond a doubt it is a part of the precious word of God.] The design of it is to reprove Christians for their great degeneracy both in faith and manners; and to prevent the spreading of those libertine doctrines which threatened the destruction of all practical godliness, (particulars shall be laid down in the contents at the beginning of each chapter.) It was also a special intention of the author of this epistle to awaken the Jewish nation to a sense of the greatness and nearness of those judgments which were coming upon them; and to support all true Christians in the way of their duty, under those calamities and persecutions they might meet with. The truths laid down are very momentous and necessary to be maintained; and the rules for practice as here stated are such as ought to be observed in our times as well as in preceding ages.

A.D. 60.

A.D. 60.

CHAPTER I.

After the inscription and salutation, ver. 1, Christians are taught how to carry it when under the cross. Several graces and duties are recommended; and those who endure their trials and afflictions, as the apostle here directs, are pronounced blessed, and are assured of a glorious reward, ver. 2—12. But those sins which bring sufferings, or those weaknesses and faults men are chargeable with under them, are by no means to be imputed to God, who cannot be the author of sin, but is the author of all good, ver. 13—18. All passion and rash anger, and vile affections, ought to be suppressed. The word of God should be made our chief study; and what we hear and know of it we must take care to practice, otherwise our religion will prove but a vain thing. To which is added an account wherein pure religion consists, ver. 19—27.



JAMES, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. 2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. 5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and

it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. 9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: 10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. 11 For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. 12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

We are here to consider, first the inscription of this epistle, and then the matter of it.

First. The inscription has three principal parts.

1. The character by which our author desires to be known; "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." Though he was a prime

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Introductory Note.—It is generally allowed that "James the Lord's brother" (*Gal.* i. 19) was the writer of this epistle; but there is great doubt if he can be identified with "James the son of Alphaeus." Dean Alford thinks that the writer was "the Lord's brother," the eldest of the sons of Joseph and Mary, and therefore the cousin of the "son of Alphaeus." The epistle is addressed to believing Jews. It was written at Jerusalem, where St. James was head of the church. The date of writing is variously placed. Those who think that St. James wrote to

correct the false notions of justification by faith, which had arisen from a perversion of St. Paul's teaching, place it as late as the year before St. James' martyrdom, which took place in A.D. 69. But others, with more probability, since the epistle contains no trace of the relation of Jew to Gentile in the church, refer it to a period anterior to the council held at Jerusalem A.D. 50 (*Acts* xv.). Its tone is hortatory, and at times threatening. Those to whom it is addressed had fallen into various errors. Their trials had not produced in them good

minister in Christ's kingdom, yet he styles himself only a servant. Note here, that those who are highest in office or attainments in the church of Christ yet are but servants; they should not therefore act as masters, but as ministers. Farther, though St. James is called by the evangelist the brother of our Lord, yet it was his glory to serve Christ in the spirit rather than to boast of his being akin according to the flesh. From hence let us learn to prize this title above all others in the world, the "servants of God and of Christ." Again, it is to be observed that St. James professes himself a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to teach us that in all services we should have an eye to the Son as well as the Father. We cannot acceptably serve the Father unless we are also servants of the Son. God will have "all men to honour the Son as they honour the Father," *Jno. v. 23*; looking for acceptance in Christ, and assistance from him, and yielding all obedience to him, thus "confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

2. The apostle here mentions the condition of those to whom he writes; "The twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." Some understand this of the dispersion upon the persecution of Stephen, *Acts viii.*; but that only reached to Judæa and Samaria. Others, by the Jews of the dispersion understand those that were in Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, and other kingdoms into which their wars had driven them. The greatest part indeed of ten of the twelve tribes were lost in captivity; but yet some of every tribe were preserved, and are still honoured with the ancient style of "twelve tribes." [The twelve tribes scattered abroad, or the Jews of the dispersion, *Jno. vii. 35*, were, in general, those families who at various times, and from various causes, had removed from Judæa, and were permanently settled in other countries. The great body of the ten tribes never returned from their captivity, and many of those who were carried to Babylon remained in that region. From the days of Alexander the Great large numbers emigrated from Judæa for purposes of trade; and at the time when James wrote the Jews were numerous in all the chief seats of commerce in Asia, Africa, and Europe.] These, however, were scattered and dispersed. 1st. They were dispersed in mercy. Having the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the providence of God so ordered it, that they were scattered in several countries for the diffusing of the light of Divine revelation. 2nd. They began now to be scattered in wrath. The Jewish nation was crumbling into parties and factions, and many were forced to leave their own country, as being now grown too hot for them; even good people among them shared in the common calamity. 3rd. These Jews of the dispersion were those that had embraced the Christian faith. They were persecuted and forced to seek for shelter in other countries, the Gentiles being kinder to Christians than the Jews were. Note here, that it is often the lot even of God's own tribes to be "scattered abroad." The gathering day is reserved for the end of time, when all the dispersed children of God shall be gathered together to Christ their head. In the mean time, while God's tribes are scattered abroad, he will send to look after them. Here is an apostle writing to the scattered; an epistle from God to them, when driven away from his temple, and seemingly neglected by him. Apply here that of the prophet Ezekiel, *Eze. xi. 16*, "Thus saith the Lord God, Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come." God hath a particular care of his outcasts; "Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab," *Isa. xvi. 3, 4*. God's tribes may be scattered, therefore we should not value ourselves too much on outward privileges. And, on the other hand, we should not despond and think ourselves rejected, under outward calamities, because God does remember and send comfort to his scattered people.

3. St. James here shews the respect he had even for the dispersed. Greeting, saluting them, wishing peace and salvation to them. True Christians should not be the less valued for their hardships. It was the desire of this apostle's heart that those who were scattered yet might be comforted; that they might do well and fare well, and be enabled to rejoice even in their distresses. God's people have reason to rejoice in all places, and at all times, as will abundantly appear from what follows.

Secondly, We next come to consider the matter of this epistle. And in the verses now before us we have these following things to be observed:—

1. The suffering state of Christians in this world is represented, and that in a very instructive manner, if we attend to what is plainly and necessarily implied, together with what is fully expressed. 1st. It is implied that troubles and afflictions may be the lot of the best Christians, even of those who have the most reason to think and hope well of themselves. Such as have a title to the greatest joy yet may endure very grievous afflictions. As good people are liable to be scattered, they must not think it strange if they meet with troubles. 2nd. These outward afflictions and troubles are temptations to them. The devil endeavours by sufferings and crosses to draw men to sin, and to deter them from duty, or unfit them for it; but, as our afflictions are in God's hand, they are intended for the trial and improvement of our graces. The gold is put into the furnace that it may be purified. 3rd. These temptations may be numerous and various; "divers temptations," as the apostle speaks. Our trials may be of many and different kinds, and therefore we have need to put on the whole armour of God. We must be armed on every side, because temptations lie on all sides. 4th. The trials of a good man are such as he does not create to himself, or sinfully pull upon himself; but they are such as he is said to "fall into," and for this reason they are the better borne by him. [The word "fall into" is the same as that used *Lu. x. 30*, "fall among." To court or rush into trials is both foolish and sinful; it is to tempt God. We must just leave ourselves in the hands of our gracious God and Father.]

2. The graces and duties of a state of trial and affliction are here pointed out to us; and could we attend to these things, and grow in them as we should do, how good would it be for us to be afflicted!

1st. One Christian grace to be exercised is joy; "Count it all joy," *ver. 2*. We must not sink into a sad and disconsolate frame of mind, that would make us faint under our trials, but must endeavour to keep our spirits dilated and enlarged, the better to take in a true sense of our case, and with greater advantage to set ourselves to make the best of it. Philosophy may instruct men to be calm under their troubles; but Christianity teaches them to be joyful, because such exercises proceed from love and not fury in God. In them we are conformable to Christ our head, and they become marks of our adoption; and by suffering in the ways of righteousness we are serving the interests of our Lord's kingdom among men, and edifying the body of Christ. And our trials will brighten our graces now, and our crown at last; therefore there is reason to count it all joy when trials and difficulties become our lot in the way of our duty. And this is not purely a New Testament paradox, but even in Job's time it was said, "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth." There is the more reason for joy in afflictions if we consider the other graces that are promoted by them, *Rom. v. 3, 5*.

2nd. Faith is a grace that one expression supposes, and another expressly requires. "Knowing this, that the trial of your faith," *ver. 3*; and then, in *ver. 5*, Let him ask in faith. There must be a sound believing of the great truths of Christianity, and a resolute cleaving to them in times of trial. That faith which is spoken of here as tried by afflictions, consists in a belief of the power,

and word, and promise of God, and in fidelity and constancy to the Lord Jesus. [The trial or trying of faith by means of afflictions of all kinds, and especially those endured for Christ's sake, at once proves its genuineness, its preciousness, and its strength. As the precious metal is proved to be such by the refiner's fire, so do outward trials evince the existence of precious faith. Nothing else can carry a man through them.]

3rd. There must be patience. The trial of faith "worketh patience." Trying of one grace produces another, and the more the suffering graces of a Christian are exercised the stronger they grow. "Tribulation worketh patience," *Rom. v. 3*. Now to exercise Christian patience aright we must, *First*, "Let it work." It is not a stupid but an active thing. A stoical apathy and a Christian patience are very different; by the one men become in some measure insensible of their afflictions, but by the other they become triumphant in and over them. Let us take care in times of trial that patience and not passion be set at work in us. Whatever is said or done let patience have the saying and doing of it; do not let the indulging of our passions hinder the operation and noble effects of patience; give it leave to work, and it will work wonders in a time of trouble. *Secondly*, We must let it have its perfect work: do nothing to limit it, or to weaken it, but let it have its full scope. If one affliction come upon the heels of another, and a train of them are drawn upon us, yet let patience go on till its work is perfected. When we hear all that God appoints, and as long as he appoints, and with a humble obedient eye to him, and when we not only bear troubles but rejoice in them, then patience hath its perfect work. *Thirdly*, When the work of patience is complete, then the Christian is entire, and nothing will be wanting. It will furnish us with all that is necessary for our Christian race and welfare, and will enable us to persevere to the end, and then its work will be ended, and crowned with glory. After we have abounded in other graces we "have need of patience," *Heb. x. 36*. But let patience have its perfect work, and we shall be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing," [free from all defects, possessing every grace. In this expression there seems to be an allusion to the sacrificial law, which required that the victims should be faultless, perfect.]

4th. Prayer is a duty recommended also to suffering Christians. And here the apostle shews, *First*, What we ought more especially to pray for, wisdom; "If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God." We should not pray so much for the removal of an affliction as for wisdom to make a right use of it. And who is there that does not want wisdom under any great trials or exercises, to guide him both in his judging of things and in the conduct of his own spirit and temper, and in the management of his affairs? To be wise in trying times is a special gift of God; and to him we must seek for it. *Secondly*, In what way this is to be obtained; namely, upon our petitioning or asking for it. Let the foolish become beggars at a throne of grace, and they are in a fair way to be wise. It is not said, Let such ask of man, nor of any man, but let him ask of God who made him, and gave him his understanding and reasonable powers at first; and of him in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Let us confess our want of wisdom to God, and daily ask it of him. *Thirdly*, We have the greatest encouragement to do this; he "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not;" yea, it is expressly promised "it shall be given," *ver. 5*. Here is something in answer to every discouraging turn of the mind, when we go to God, under a sense of our own weakness and folly, to ask for wisdom. He to whom we are sent we are sure has it to give; and he is of a giving disposition, inclined to bestow this upon those that ask. And no fear of his favours being limited to some in this case, so as to exclude others, or any humble petitioning soul; for "he gives to all men." And if you should say you want a great deal of wisdom, a small portion will not serve your turn, why, he gives liberally; and lest you should be afraid of going to him unseasonably, or being put to shame for your folly, it is added, he "upbraideth not." Ask when you will, and as often as you will, you will meet with no upbraidings. And if, after all, any should say, This may be the case with some, but I fear I shall not succeed so well in my seeking for wisdom as some others may, let such consider how particular and express the promise is, "It shall be given him." Justly then must fools perish in their foolishness, if wisdom may be had for asking, and they will not pray to God for it. But, *Fourthly*, There is one thing necessary to be observed in our asking, namely, that we do it with a believing, steady mind; *ver. 6*, "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." The promise above is very sure, taking this proviso along with us: wisdom shall be given to those that ask it of God, provided they believe that God is able to make the simple wise, and is faithful to make good his word to those that apply to him. This was the condition Christ insisted on, in treating with those that came to him for healing; "Believest thou that I am able to do this?" There must be no wavering, no staggering at the promise of God through unbelief, or through a sense of any disadvantages that lie on our own part. Here, therefore, we see,

5th. That oneness and sincerity of intention, and a steadiness of mind, is another duty required under affliction. "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed." To be sometimes lifted up by faith, and then thrown down again by distrust,—to mount sometimes towards the heavens, with an intention to secure glory, and honour, and immortality, and then to sink again in seeking the ease of the body, or the enjoyments of this world,—this is very fitly and elegantly compared to a wave of the sea that rises and falls, swells and sinks, just as the wind tosses it higher or lower, that way or this. A mind that has but one single and prevailing regard to its spiritual and eternal interest, and that keeps steady in its purposes for God, will grow wise by afflictions, will continue fervent in its devotions, and will be superior to all trials and oppositions. Now, for the cure of a wavering spirit and a weak faith, the apostle shews the ill effects of these. *First*, In that the success of prayer is spoiled hereby; *ver. 7*, "Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." Such a distrustful, shifting, unsettled person, is not likely to value a favour from God as he should do, and therefore cannot expect to receive it. In asking for Divine and heavenly wisdom we are never like to prevail if we have not a heart to prize it above rubies, and the greatest things in this world. *Secondly*, A wavering faith and spirit has an ill influence upon our conversations; *ver. 8*, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." ["Double-minded" lit with two souls; that is, a man whose principles and sentiments are unfixed, who is one moment ready to give up all for Christ, and the next as ready to renounce him for the sake of present enjoyment.] When our faith and spirits rise and fall with second causes, there will be great unsteadiness in all our conversation and actions. This may sometimes expose men to contempt in the world; but it is certain such ways cannot please God, nor procure any good for us in the end. While we have but one God to trust to, we have but one God to be governed by; and this should keep us even and steady. He that is unstable as water shall not excel. Hereupon,

3. The holy humble temper of a Christian, both in advancement and debasement, is described; and both poor and rich are directed on what grounds to build their joy and comfort, *ver. 9–11*. Here we may observe, 1st. That those of low degree are to be looked upon as brethren; "Let the brother of low degree," &c. Poverty does not destroy the relation among Christians. 2nd. That good Christians may be rich in the world, *ver. 10*. Grace and wealth are not wholly inconsistent. Abraham, the father of the faithful, was rich in silver

effects. "The characteristic of his readers was the lack of living faith—the falling asunder, as it has been well called, of knowledge and action, of head and heart" (Alford).

i. 1. "Servant:" implying devotion to God and his work. St. James only mentions our Lord twice in this epistle. Bengel suggests that "if he had often spoken of Jesus, it might have seemed that he did so from vanity, when he was the brother of the Lord." Another reason may be that the epistle is practical rather than doctrinal.

i. 2. "Temptations:" i.e., trials, or distresses of any kind, that are sent by God to test and purify the Christian's faith.

i. 3. "The trying of your faith:" "the proving of" (Wickliffe). "Worketh patience;" see Note on 2 Thess. iii. 5.

i. 5. Not "liberally," as in Authorised Version, but "simply," or "frankly"—that is to say, God gives without adding anything that might detract from the graciousness of the gift. "And upbraideth not;" "casteth no man in the teeth" (Tyndal, Cranmer, Geneva).

and gold. 3rd. That both these are allowed to rejoice. No condition of life puts us out of a capacity of rejoicing in God. If we do not rejoice in him always, it is our own fault. Those of low degree may rejoice, if they are exalted to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom of God, (as Dr. Whitby explains this place.) And the rich may rejoice in humbling providences, as they produce a lowly and humble disposition of mind, which is highly valuable in the sight of God. Where any are made poor for righteousness' sake, their very poverty is their exaltation. It is an honour to be dishonoured for the sake of Christ; "To you it is given to suffer," *Phil. i. 29*. All that are brought low, and made lowly by grace, may rejoice in the prospect of their exaltation at last in heaven. 4th. What reason rich people have, notwithstanding their riches, to be humble and low in their own eyes, because both they and their riches are passing away. "As the flower of the grass he shall pass away," he and his wealth with him; *ver. 11*, "For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat" [scorching wind,] "but it withereth the grass" [*καυσων*]; most commentators understand by this term, not the heat of the rising sun, but a 'hot wind,' or a 'burning wind.' This wind often blows at sunrise, and, coming up from the hot deserts of Arabia, at once withers herbs and flowers.] Note hence, that worldly wealth is a withering thing. Riches are too uncertain, (says Mr. Baxter on this place,) too inconsiderable things, to make any great or just alteration in our minds. As a flower fades before the heat of the scorching sun, "so shall the rich man fade away in his ways." His projects, counsels, managements for this world, are called his ways here; in these he shall fade away. For this reason let him that is rich rejoice, not so much in the providence of God that makes him rich, as in the grace of God that makes and keeps him humble; and in those trials and exercises that teach him to seek his felicity in and from God, and not from these perishing enjoyments.

4. A blessing is pronounced on those who endure their exercises and trials as here directed; *ver. 12*, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." Observe, 1st. It is not the man that suffers only who is blessed, but he that endures, who with patience and constancy goes through all difficulties in the way of his duty. 2nd. That afflictions cannot make us miserable, if it be not our own fault. A blessing may arise from them, and we may be blessed in them. They are so far from taking away a good man's felicity, that they really increase it. 3rd. That sufferings and temptations are the way to eternal blessedness. "When he is tried he shall receive the crown of life;" *δοκιμος γενομενος*, "when he is approved," when his graces are found to be true, and of the highest worth, (so metals are tried as to their excellency by the fire,) and his integrity is manifested, and all is approved of the great Judge. Note hence, that to be approved of God is the great aim of a Christian in all his trials; and it will be his blessedness at last, when he shall receive the crown of life. The tried Christian shall be a crowned one; and the crown he shall wear will be a crown of life. It will be life and bliss to him, and it will last for ever. We only bear the cross for awhile, but we shall wear the crown to eternity. 4th. That this blessedness and crown of life is a promised thing to the righteous sufferer. It is therefore what we may most surely depend upon; for, when "heaven and earth shall pass away," this word of God shall not fail of being fulfilled. But withal let us take notice that our future reward comes not as a debt, but by a gracious promise. 5th. That our enduring temptations must be from a principle of love to God, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, or otherwise we are not interested in this promise; "The Lord hath promised to them that love him." St. Paul supposes that a man may for some point of religion even give his body to be burnt, and yet not be pleasing to God, nor regarded by him, because of his want of charity, or a prevailing sincere love to God and man, *1 Cor. xiii. 3*. 6th. The crown of life is promised not only to great and eminent saints, but to all those that have the love of God reigning in their hearts. Every soul that truly loves God shall have its trials in this world fully recompensed in that world above, where love is made perfect.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 16 Do not err, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. 18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

We are here taught several things.

First. We are taught that God is not the author of any man's sin. Whoever they are that raise persecutions against good men, and whatever injustice and sin they may be guilty of in proceeding against them, God is not to be charged with it. And whatever sins good men may themselves be provoked to by their exercises and afflictions, God is not the cause of them. It seems to be here supposed that some professors might fall in the hour of temptation, that the rod resting upon them might carry some into ill courses, and make them "put forth their hands unto iniquity." But though this should be the case, and though such delinquents should attempt to lay their faults on God, yet the blame of their miscarriages must lie entirely upon themselves; for,

1. There is nothing in the nature of God that they can lay the blame upon. "Let no man say when he is tempted," (to take any evil course, or do any evil thing,) "I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil." All moral evil is owing to some disorder in the being that is chargeable with it; either to want of wisdom, or want of power, or want of decorum and purity in the will. But who can impeach the holy God with the want of these, which are his very essence? No exigence of affairs can ever tempt him to dishonour or deny himself, and therefore he cannot be tempted with evil.

2. There is nothing in the providential dispensations of God that the blame of any man's sin can be laid upon; *ver. 13*, "Neither tempteth he any man." As God cannot be tempted with evil himself, so neither can he be a tempter of others. He cannot be a promoter of what is repugnant to his nature. The carnal mind is willing to charge its own sins on God. There is something hereditary in this. Our first father Adam tells God, that "the woman thou gavest me tempted

me;" thereby, in effect, throwing the blame upon God, for giving him the tempter. Let no man speak thus: it is very bad to sin, but it is much worse when we have done amiss to charge it upon God, and say it was owing to him. They that lay the blame of their sins either upon their constitution or upon their condition in the world, or pretend they are under a fatal necessity of sinning, they wrong God, as if he was the author of sin. Afflictions as sent by God are designed to draw out our graces, but not our corruptions.

Secondly. We are taught where the true cause of evil lies, and where the blame ought to be laid; *ver. 14*, "Every man is tempted" (in an ill sense) "when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." In other Scriptures the devil is called the tempter; and other things may sometimes concur to tempt us, but neither the devil nor any other person or thing is to be blamed so as to excuse ourselves. For the true original of evil and temptation is in our own hearts. The combustible matter is in us, though the flame may be blown up by some outward causes. And therefore, "If thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it," *Pr. ix. 12*. Observe here,

1. The method of sin in its proceeding. First it draws away, then entices. As holiness consists of two parts, forsaking that which is evil, and cleaving to that which is good, so these two things reversed are the two parts of sin. The heart is carried from that which is good, and enticed to cleave to that which is evil. It is first by corrupt inclinations, or by lusting after and coveting some sensual or worldly thing, estranged from the life of God, and then by degrees fixed in a course of sin. We may observe from hence,

2. The power and policy of sin. The word here rendered "drawn away" signifies a being forcibly haled or compelled. The word translated "enticed" signifies being "whedled and beguiled" by allurements and deceitful representations of things; *ἐξαλαβόμενος καὶ δολιχόμενος*. There is a great deal of force done to conscience and to the mind by the power of corruption; and there is a great deal of cunning, and deceit, and flattery in sin to gain us to its interests. The force and power of sin could never prevail, were it not for its cunning and guile. Sinners that perish are whedled and flattered into their own destruction, and this will justify God for ever in their damnation, that they destroyed themselves. Their sin lies at their own door, and therefore their blood will lie upon their own heads.

3. The success of corruption in the heart; *ver. 15*, "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin;" that is, sin being allowed to excite desires in us, it will soon ripen those desires into consent; and then it is said to have conceived. The sin truly exists, though it be but in embryo; and when it is grown to its full size in the mind it is then brought forth in actual execution. Stop the beginnings of sin, therefore, or else all the evil it produces must be wholly charged upon us.

4. The final issue of sin, and how it ends; "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." After sin is brought forth in actual commissions, the finishing of it, as Dr. Manton observes, is its being strengthened by frequent acts, and settled into a habit. And when the iniquities of men are thus filled up, death is brought forth. There is a death upon the soul, and death comes upon the body; and, besides death spiritual and temporal, the wages of sin is eternal death too. Let sin therefore be repented of and forsaken before it be finished. "Why will ye die, O house of Israel," *Eze. xxxiii. 11*. God has no pleasure in your death, as he has no hand in your sin; but both sin and misery are owing to yourselves. Your own hearts' lusts and corruptions are your tempters; and when by degrees they have carried you off from God, and finished the power and dominion of sin in you, then they will prove your destroyers.

Thirdly. We are taught yet farther that, whilst we are the authors and procurers of all sin and misery to ourselves, "God is the Father and Fountain of all good," *ver. 16, 17*. We should take particular care not to err in our conceptions of God. "Do not err, my beloved brethren;" *μὴ λαλᾶσθε*, "Do not wander;" that is, from the word of God, and the accounts of him you have there. Do not stray into erroneous opinions, and go off from the standard of truth, the things which you have received from the Lord Jesus, and by the direction of his Spirit. The loose opinions of Simon and the Nicolaitans, (from whom the Gnostics, a most sensual, corrupt set of people arose afterward,) may, perhaps, by the apostle here, be more especially cautioned against. Those who are minded to look into these may consult the first book of Irenæus against heresies. Let corrupt men run into what notions they will, the truth as it is in Jesus stands thus, that God is not, cannot be, the author and patronizer of any thing that is evil; but must be acknowledged as the cause and spring of every thing that is good; *ver. 17*, "Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights," &c. Here observe,

1. God is "the Father of lights." The visible light of the sun and heavenly bodies is from him. He said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Thus God is at once represented as the Creator of the sun and in some respects compared to it. "As the sun is the same in its nature and influences, though the earth and clouds often interposing make it seem to us as varying, by its rising and setting, and by its different appearances, or entire withdrawalment, when change is not in it; so God is unchangeable, and our changes and shadows are not from any mutability, or shadowy alterations in him, but from ourselves," —Mr. Baxter. "The Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." What the sun is in nature, God is in grace, providence, and glory. Aye, and infinitely more; for,

2. Every good gift is from him. As the Father of lights he gives the light of reason; "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding," *Job xxxii. 8*. He gives also the light of learning. Solomon's wisdom in the knowledge of nature, and in the arts of government, and in all his improvements, is ascribed to God. The light of Divine revelation is more immediately from above. The light of faith, purity, and all manner of consolation is from him; so that we have nothing good but what we receive from God, as there is no evil or sin in us, or done by us, but what is owing to ourselves. We must own God as the author of all the powers and perfections that are in the creature, and the giver of all the benefits which we have in and by those powers and perfections. But none of their darknesses, their imperfections, or their ill actions, are to be charged on "the Father of lights." From him proceeds every good and perfect gift, both pertaining to this life and that which is to come.

3. That as every good gift is from God, so particularly the renovation of our natures, our regeneration, and all the holy, happy consequences of it, must be ascribed to him; *ver. 18*, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth," &c. [The natural, carnal mind has nothing spiritually good; by regeneration the fountain of feeling and action is purified; the new heart—which God only can give—is the seal and source of all excellence in the character and life.] Here let us take notice, 1st. That a true Christian is a creature begotten anew. He becomes as different a person from what he was before the renewing influences of Divine grace as if he were formed over again, and born afresh. 2nd. The original of this good work is here declared. It is of God's own will; not by our skill or power, not from any good foreseen in us, or done by us, but purely from the goodwill and grace of God. 3rd. The means whereby this is effected are pointed out; the word of truth, that is, the Gospel; as St. Paul expresses it more plainly, *1 Cor. iv. 15*, "I have begotten you in Jesus Christ through the Gospel." This Gospel is indeed a word of truth; or else it could never produce such real, such lasting, such great and noble effects. We may

God does not reproach the suppliant with past gifts misused. Fausset quotes here the Jewish prayer, "Let me not have need of the gifts of men, whose gifts are few, but their upbraidings manifold; but give me out of thy large and full hand."

i. 6. "In faith, nothing wavering," or "doubting." He must ask in the full persuasion that God can and will give. The word here translated "wavering" is not equivalent to "disbelieving." Faith says "Yes," and unbelief says "No;" doubting is the union of

"yes" and "no," but so that "no" is weightier: it is that inward giving way which leans not to faith but to unbelief. (Compare Alford.)

i. 7. "That he shall receive anything;" i.e., for which he is asking; some things he and all receive constantly—life, health, &c.

i. 8. This is not a general proposition, as in Authorised Version, but should read "a man double-souled, unstable in all his ways," referring to the doubting asker.

rely upon it, and venture our immortal souls upon it; and we shall find it a means of our sanctification, as it is "a word of truth," *Jas. xvii. 17.* 4. The end and design of God's giving renewing grace is here laid down; "That we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." That we should be God's portion and treasure, and a more peculiar property to him, as the first-fruits were; and that we should become holy to the Lord, as the first-fruits were consecrated to him. Christ is the first-fruits of Christians; Christians are the first-fruits of creatures. [Some think that James here refers to the Jewish Christians. They were the first to receive the Gospel, and thus were the first-fruits of that great harvest of which Christ speaks, *Mat. ix. 37.* But we may also apply the word to all Christians, to express their entire consecration to God, and his special interest in them.]

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. 21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. 26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. 27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

In this part of the chapter we are required, First, To restrain the workings of passion. This lesson we should learn under affliction; and this we shall learn if we are indeed begotten again by the word of truth. For thus the connexion stands: an angry and hasty spirit is soon provoked to ill things by afflictions; and errors and ill opinions become prevalent through the workings of our own vile and vain affections. But the renewing grace of God, and the word of the Gospel, teach us to subdue these; "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath," &c. This may refer,

1. To "the word of truth" spoken of in the verse foregoing. And so we may observe, that it is our duty rather to hear God's word, and apply our minds to understand it, than to speak according to our own fancies, or the opinions of men, and to run into heat and passion thereupon. Let not such errors as that of God's being the occasion of men's sin ever be hastily, much less angrily, mentioned by you, (and so as to other errors,) but be ready to hear and consider what God's word teaches us in all such cases.

2. This may be applied to the afflictions and temptations spoken of in the beginning of the chapter. And then we may observe, that it is our duty rather to hear how God explains his providences, and what he designs by them, than to say as David did in his haste, "I am cut off;" or as Jonah did in his passion, "I do well to be angry." Instead of cursing God under our trials, let us open our ears and hearts to hear what he will say to us.

3. This may be understood as referring to the disputes and differences that Christians in those times of trial were running into among themselves. And so this part of this chapter may be considered without any connexion with what goes before. And here we may observe that, whenever matters of difference arise among Christians, each side should be willing to hear the other. People are many times stiff in their own opinions, because they are not willing to hear what others have to offer against them; whereas we should be swift to hear reason and truth on all sides, and be slow to speak any thing that should prevent this. And when we do speak there should be nothing of wrath, for "a soft answer turneth away wrath;" and, as this epistle is designed to correct a variety of disorders that were among Christians, these words, "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath," may be very well interpreted according to this last explication. And we may further observe from them that, if men would govern their tongues, they must govern their passions. When Moses' spirit was provoked, he spake unadvisedly with his lips. If we would be slow to speak, we must be slow to wrath.

Secondly. A very good reason is given for suppressing of anger; ver. 20, "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." It is as if the apostle had said, Whereas men often pretend zeal for God and his glory in their heat and passion, let them know that God needs not the passions of any man; his cause is better served by mildness and meekness than by wrath and fury. Solomon says, "The words of the wise are heard in quiet, more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools," *Ecc. ix. 17.* Dr. Manton here says of some assemblies, "That if we were as swift to hear as we are ready to speak, there would be less of wrath, and more of profit, in our meetings. I remember when a Manichee contested with Augustine, and with impudent clamour cried I hear me! hear me! the father modestly replied, *Nec ego te, nec tu me, sed ambo audiamus apostolum.*" "Neither let me hear thee, nor do thou hear me, but let us both hear the apostle." The worst thing we can bring to a religious controversy is anger. This, however it pretends to be raised by a concern for what is just and right, yet is not to be trusted. Wrath is a human thing; and

the wrath of man stands opposed to the righteousness of God. Those who pretend to serve the cause of God hereby shew that they are neither acquainted with God nor his cause. This passion must especially be watched against when we are hearing the word of God: see *1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.*

Thirdly. We are called upon to suppress other corrupt affections, as well as rash anger; ver. 21, "Lay aside all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness," &c. The word here translated "filthiness" signifies those lusts which have the greatest turpitude and sensuality in them. And the words rendered "superfluity of naughtiness" may be understood of the overflows of malice, or any other spiritual wickednesses. Hereby we are taught, as Christians, to watch against and lay aside, not only those more gross and fleshly dispositions and affections which denominate a person filthy, but all the disorders of a corrupt and naughty heart, which would prejudice it against the word and ways of God. Observe, 1. That sin is a defiling thing; it is called "filthiness" itself. 2. That there is abundance of that which is evil in us to be watched against; there is superfluity of naughtiness. 3. It is not enough to restrain evil affections, but they must be cast from us, or laid apart. "Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say, Get ye hence," *Isa. xxx. 22.* 4. This must extend not only to outward sins and greater abominations, but to all sin, of thought and affection as well as speech and practice. *ἅπαν ῥυπαρίας*, "All filthiness," every thing that is corrupt and sinful. 5. Observe from the foregoing parts of this chapter, that the laying apart all filthiness is what a time of temptation and affliction calls for, and is necessary to the avoiding of error, and rightly receiving and improving the word of truth. For,

Fourthly. We are here fully, though briefly, instructed concerning hearing the word of God.

1. We are required to prepare ourselves for it, ver. 21; to get rid of every corrupt affection, and of every prejudice and prepossession; and to lay aside those sins which pervert the judgment, and blind the mind. "All that filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness," before explained, must in an especial manner be subdued and cast off, by all such as attend on the word of the Gospel.

2. We are directed how to hear it. "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." 1st. In hearing the word of God we are to receive it, assent to the truths of it, consent to the laws of it; receive it as the stock does the graft, so that as the fruit which is produced may be not according to the nature of the sour stock, but according to the nature of that word of the Gospel which is engrafted into our souls. 2nd. We must therefore yield ourselves to the word of God, with most submissive, humble, and tractable tempers. This is to receive it with meekness. Being willing to hear of our faults, and taking it not only patiently but thankfully; desiring also to be moulded and formed by the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel. 3rd. In all our hearing we should aim at the salvation of our souls. It is the design of the word of God to make us wise to salvation; and they that propose any meaner or lower ends to themselves in attending upon it dishonour the Gospel, and disappoint their souls. We should come to the word of God, both to read and hear it, as those that know it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," *Rom. i. 16.*

3. We are taught what is to be done after hearing; ver. 22, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Observe here, 1st. That hearing is in order to doing. The most attentive and the most frequent hearing of the word of God will not avail us, unless we be also doers of it. If we were to hear a sermon every day of the week, and an angel from heaven were the preacher, yet, if we rested in bare hearing, it would never bring us to heaven. Therefore the apostle insists much upon it, (and without doubt it is indispensably necessary,) that we practice what we hear. "There must be inward practice by meditation, and outward practice in true obedience."—*Mr. Baxter.* It is not enough to remember what we hear, and to be able to repeat it, and to give testimony to it, and commend it, and write it, and preserve what we have written; but that which all this is in order to, and which crowns the rest, is, that we be doers of the word.

2nd. That bare hearers are self-deceivers. The original word, *παρολογίζομενοι*, signifies men's arguing sophistically to themselves. Their reasoning is manifestly deceitful and false, when they would make one part of their work discharge them from the obligation they lie under to another; or persuade themselves that filling their heads with notions is sufficient, though their hearts be empty of good affections and resolutions, and their lives fruitless of good works. Self-deceit will be found the worst deceit at last.

4. The apostle shews what is the proper use of the word of God, and who they are that do not use it as they ought, and who they are that do make a right use of it, ver. 23—25. Let us consider each of these distinctly:—

1st. The use we are to make of God's word may be learned from its being compared to a glass, in which a man may behold his natural face. As a looking-glass shews us the spots and defilements upon our faces, that they may be remedied and washed off, so the word of God shews us our sins that we may repent of them, and get them pardoned, and shews us what is amiss that it may be amended. There are glasses that will flatter people, but that which is truly the word of God is no flattering glass. If you flatter yourselves, it is your own fault; the truth as it is in Jesus flatters no man. Let the word of truth be carefully attended to, and it will set before you the corruption of your nature, the disorders of your hearts and lives; it will tell you plainly what you are. St. Paul describes himself as insensible of the corruption of his nature till he saw himself in the glass of the law; *Rom. vii. 9.* I was alive without the law; that is, I took all to be right with me, and thought myself not only clean, but, compared with the generality of the world, that I was beautiful too. "But when the commandment came," when the glass of the law was set before me, "then sin revived and I died." Then I saw my spots and deformities, and discovered that amiss in myself which before I was not aware of; and such was the power of the law and of sin, that I then perceived myself in a state of death and condemnation. Thus, when we attend to the word of God so as to see ourselves, our true state and condition, to rectify what is amiss, and to form and dress ourselves anew by the glass of God's word, this is to make a proper use of it.

2nd. We have here an account of those who do not use this glass of the word as they ought; ver. 24, "He that beholdeth himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." This is the true description of one that hears the word of God, and does it not. How many are there that, when they sit under the word, are affected with their own sinfulness, and misery, and danger, acknowledge the evil of sin, acknowledge their need of Christ, but when their hearing is over, all is forgotten, convictions are lost, good affections are vanished, and pass away like the waters of a land flood; he straightway forgets, &c. "The word of God," as Dr. Manton speaks, "discovereth how we may do away our sins, and deck and attire our souls with the righteousness of Jesus Christ." *Maculae sunt peccata, quae ostendit lex; aqua est sanguis Christi, quem ostendit evangelium.*—"Our sins are the spots which the law discovers; Christ's blood is the laver which the Gospel shews." But in vain do we hear God's word, and look into the gospel glass, if we go away and forget our spots instead of washing them off, and forget our remedy instead of applying to it. This is the case of those who do not hear the word as they ought.

i. 12. "He hath promised" not "the Lord hath," according to best MSS.

i. 13. "For God cannot be tempted with evil;" Alford would read, "God is unversed in things evil"—i.e., has no experience of; and the original favours this interpretation. The apostle's argument thus far may be briefly summed up thus: "Your trial works patience; patience, having her perfect work, life; lust produces sin; sin, when completed, death."

i. 16—18. The idea that God tempts to sin has been as yet only negatively contradicted, but not only does he not tempt to evil, he is the author of all good. "First-fruits;" a figure familiar to the Jews. "Believers are the first of God's regenerated creatures, and thus a pledge of the ultimate regeneration of all creation" (Fausset). See *Rom. viii. 20, 21.*

i. 19. The best MSS. read, "know" or "ye know," not "wherefore." The connection, therefore, would be "ye know it"—i.e., the

3rd. Those also are described, and pronounced blessed, that hear aright, and that use the glass of God's word as they should do; ver. 25, "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein," &c. ["Looketh into;" it is the same word as that employed, 1 Pet. i. 12, "angels desire to look into," and expresses an earnest desire for thorough and comprehensive knowledge.] Observe here, that the Gospel is a law of liberty, or, as Mr. Baxter expresses it, of liberation, giving us deliverance from the Jewish law, and from sin and guilt, and wrath and death. The ceremonial law was a yoke of bondage, the Gospel of Christ is a law of liberty. [The Gospel establishes the law, it secures free obedience, it comes with all the force of law; men are bound to obey it.] Observe again, that it is a perfect law; nothing can be added to it. Observe farther, that in hearing the word we look into this perfect law; we consult it for counsel and direction; we look into it that from thence we may take our measures. But observe withal, that then only do we look into the law of liberty as we should when we "continue therein;" "when we dwell in the study of it till it turn to a spiritual life engrafted and digested in us." Mr. Baxter. When we are not forgetful of it, but practise it as our work and business, set it always before our eyes, and make it the constant rule of our conversation and behaviour, and model the temper of our minds by it. Observe once more from this place, that they who thus do and continue in the law and word of God are, and shall be, "blessed in their deed;" blessed in all their ways, according to the first Psalm, which some think St. James here alludes to. He that meditates in the law of God, and walks according to it, the Psalmist says, shall prosper in whatsoever he does. And he that is not a perfunctory hearer, but a doer of the work which God's word sets him about, St. James says, "shall be blessed." The papists pretend that here we have a clear text to prove we are blessed for our good deeds; but Dr. Manton, in answer to that pretence, puts the reader upon marking the distinctness of Scripture phrase: the apostle does not say for his deeds that any man is blessed, but in his deed. This is a way in which we shall certainly find blessedness, but not the cause of it. This blessedness does not lie in knowing, but in doing, the will of God; *Jno.* xiii. 17, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." It is not talking but walking that will bring us to heaven.

Fifthly. The apostle next informs us how we may distinguish betwixt a vain religion and that which is pure and approved of God. Great and hot disputes there are in the world about this matter,—what religion is false and vain, and what is true and pure. I wish men would agree to let the holy Scripture in this place determine the question. And here it is plainly and peremptorily declared,

1. What is a vain religion; ver. 26, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." Here are three things to be observed:—

1st. In a vain religion there is much of show, and affecting to seem religious in the eye of others. This I think is mentioned in a manner that should fix our thoughts on the word "seemeth." When men are more concerned to seem religious than really to be so, it is a sign their religion is but vain. Not that religion itself is a vain thing,—they do it a great deal of wrong that say, "It is in vain to serve the Lord;" but it is possible people may make it a vain thing, if they have only a form of godliness, and not the power.

2nd. In a vain religion there is much censuring, reviling, and detracting of others. The not bridling the tongue here is chiefly meant of not abstaining from these evils of the tongue. When we hear people ready to speak of the faults of others, or to censure them as holding scandalous errors, or to lessen the wisdom and piety of those about them, that themselves may seem the wiser and better, this is a sign that they have but a vain religion. That man who has a detracting tongue cannot have a truly humble, gracious heart. He that delights to injure his neighbour in vain pretends to love God; therefore a reviling tongue will prove a man a hypocrite. Censuring is a pleasing sin, extremely compliant with nature, and therefore evidences a man's being in a natural state. These sins of the tongue were the great sins of that age in which St. James wrote, as other parts of this epistle fully shew, and it is an ill sign of a vain religion, says Dr. Manton, "to be carried away with the evil of the times." This has ever been a leading sin with hypocrites, that the more ambitious they have been to seem well themselves, the more free they are in censuring and running down others; and there is such quick intercourse betwixt the tongue and the heart, that the one may be known by the other. On these accounts it is that the apostle has made an unbridled tongue an undoubted, certain proof of a vain religion. There is no strength nor power in that religion which will not enable a man to bridle his tongue. [An unbridled tongue is not merely one which utters slanders or passionate language, but also one which is silent when it should speak out for Christ, or in the way of admonition and advice to others. Horses are bridled, not only to restrain them, but to render them useful. But observe, that while an unbridled tongue is a proof of a vain religion, James does not say that a bridled tongue is a certain proof of true religion, for men may be temperate in speech while they are strangers to godliness.]

3rd. In a vain religion a man "deceiveth his own heart." He goes on in such a course of detracting from others, and making himself seem somebody, that at last the vanity of his religion is consummated by the deceiving of his own soul. When once religion comes to be a vain thing, how great is the vanity!

2. It is here plainly and peremptorily declared wherein true religion consists; ver. 27, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this." [Pure religion is this,—as to its outward evidences, its visible fruits; its existence is proved, and its real nature is displayed, by active love, by readiness for every good word and work, and by self-denial. Without some degree of this holy love, and deadness to the world, neither zeal for doctrinal truth, nor the rigid observance of outward forms, will prove a man to be a child of God.] Observe,

1st. It is the glory of religion to be "pure and undefiled," not mixed with the inventions of men, nor the corruptions of the world. False religions may be known by their impurity and uncharitableness; according to that of St. John, "He that doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother," 1 *Jno.* iii. 10. But, on the other hand, a holy life and a charitable heart shew a true religion. Our religion is not, says Dr. Manton, adorned with ceremonies, but purity and charity; and it is a good observation of his, that a religion which is pure should be kept undefiled.

2nd. That religion is pure and undefiled which is so before God and the Father. That is right which is so in God's eye, and which chiefly aims at his approbation. True religion teaches us to do everything as in the presence of God, and to seek his favour, and study to please him in all our actions.

3rd. That compassion and charity to the poor and distressed is a very great and necessary part of true religion; "Visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction." Visiting is here put for all manner of relief which we are capable of giving to others; and fatherless and widows are here particularly mentioned, because they are generally most apt to be neglected or oppressed, but by them are meant all others that are objects of charity, all that are in affliction. It is very remarkable that, if the sum of religion be drawn up in two articles, this is one, to be charitable and relieve the afflicted.

4th. That an unspotted life must accompany an unfeigned love and charity;

truth of the foregoing statement; "but" (consequently) "let every man," &c. "Wrath;" not sudden passion, but revengeful anger (Trench, "New Testament Synonyms").

i. 20. "The wrath of man," &c.: "How many an endeavour which might have ended in 'working the righteousness of God' has been diverted and blighted by hasty speaking and anger, and ended only in disgracing ourselves, and him whom we would have served, before men!" (Alford).

"To keep himself unspotted from the world." The world is apt to spot and blemish the soul, and it is hard to live in it, and have to do with it, and not be defiled, but this must be our constant endeavour. Herein consists pure and undefiled religion. The very things of the world too much taint our spirits if we are much conversant with them, but the sins and lusts of the world deface and defile them very woefully indeed. St. John comprises "all that is in the world" which we are not to love under three heads,—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; and to keep one's-self unspotted from all these is to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. May God by his grace keep both our hearts and lives clean from the love of the world, and from the temptations of wicked, worldly men.

[The original expositor has omitted to notice the expression "Father," used by the apostle, and doubtless with reference to the way in which true religion operates in the production of benevolence. The man, once alienated, who believes in Christ, now returns to God as, in him, his reconciled Father, and is furnished with unutterably powerful motives, alike for the love of God and of his fellow-creatures. He loves God, who has forgiven all his iniquities, and restored him to the number, and given him a right to the privileges, of his children. He loveth him as a Father, and looking upon all mankind as created after the Divine image, he grieves at its effacement, and seeks its restoration by their being brought to believe in Him who is the way, the truth, and the life. Nor will he, whilst desiring their spiritual, be indifferent to their temporal good. The Divine law now written in his heart will prompt him to corresponding duty,—duty having respect to the body as well as to the soul,—to the concerns of time as well as of eternity. Such the source, and such the manifestation, of Christian philanthropy,—a philanthropy of which, if you asked the extent or the boundary of its field, we should answer, in the language of inspiration, that the field is the world,—a philanthropy which overlooks all the distinctions of caste and of colour, and spreads its ample regards over the whole brotherhood of the species,—a philanthropy which attaches itself to man in the general; to man throughout all his varieties; to man as the partaker of one common nature, and who, in whatever clime or latitude you may meet with him, is found to breathe the same sympathies, and to possess the same high capabilities, both of bliss and of improvement. It is true that, upon this subject, there is often a loose and unsettled magnificence of thought, which is fruitful of nothing but empty speculation. But the men to whom we allude have not imaged the enterprise in the form of a thing unknown. They have given it a local habitation. They have bodied it forth in deed and in accomplishment. They have turned the dream into a reality. In them, the power of a lofty generalization meets with its happiest temperament, in the principle and perseverance, and all the chastening and subduing virtues of the New Testament. And, were we in search of that fine union of grace and of greatness which we have now been insisting on, and in virtue of which the enlightened Christian can at once find room in his bosom for the concerns of universal humanity, and for the play of kindness towards every individual he meets with—we could no where more readily expect to find it than with the worthies of our own land—the Howard of a former generation, who paced over Europe in quest of the unseen wretchedness which abounds in it—or in such men of our present generation as Wilberforce, who lifted his unwearied voice against the biggest outrage ever practised on our nature, till he wrought its extermination—and Clarkson, who plied his assiduous task at rearing the materials of its impressive history, and at length carried, for this righteous cause, the mind of parliament—and Carey, from whose hand the generations of the East are now receiving the elements of their moral renovation—and, in fine, those holy and devoted men who count not their lives dear unto them; but, going forth every year from the island of our habitation, carry the message of heaven over the face of the world; and, in the front of severest obloquy, are now labouring in remotest lands, and are reclaiming another and another portion from the wastes of dark and fallen humanity; and are widening the domains of gospel light and gospel principle amongst them; and are spreading a moral beauty around the very spot on which they pitch their lowly tabernacle; and are at length compelling even the eye and the testimony of gainsayers, by the success of their noble enterprise; and are forcing the exclamation of delighted surprise from the charmed and the arrested traveller, as he looks at the softening tints which they are now spreading over the wilderness, and as he hears the sound of the chapel bell, and as in those haunts where, at the distance of half a generation, savages would have scowled upon his path, he reposes himself with the hum of missionary schools, and the lovely spectacle of peaceful and Christian villages.]—*Chalmers's Astronomical Discourses.*

CHAPTER II.

In this chapter the apostle condemns a sinful regarding the rich, and despising the poor, which he imputes to partiality and injustice, and shews it to be an acting contrary to God, who has chosen the poor, and whose interest is often persecuted, and his name blasphemed, by the rich, ver. 1—7. He shews that the whole law is to be fulfilled, and that mercy should be followed as well as justice, ver. 8—13. He exposes the error and folly of those that boast of faith without works; telling us that this is but a dead faith, and such a faith as devils have, not the faith of Abraham, or of Rahab, ver. 14—26.



Y brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. 2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: 4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? 5 Harken, my beloved

i. 21. "The engrafted word;" or, the implanted word; the same that is called (verse 18) "the word of truth"—the Gospel in its fullness. (See the Parable of the Sower.)

ii. 1. "In respectings of persons;" plural, to show that the fault may occur in various forms, one of which is then mentioned.

ii. 2. "Your assembly;" in the Greek, "synagogue." This is the only place in the New Testament where the word is used with reference to Christian worship; it was associated with Jewish worship,

brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? 6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you; and draw you before the judgment seats? 7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?



ROMAN CITIZENS, RICH AND POOR.

[The first verse is variously translated. Some render it affirmatively, "Ye have not the faith (that is, ye adhere not to the teaching) of our Lord Jesus," thus making it a charge against those to whom James wrote. Others render it interrogatively, "In having respect to persons, can ye hold the faith?" While others regard it as an exhortation, "Do not so hold the faith as to shew respect to persons." Whichever of these be correct, it is plain that the apostle is here reproving a very corrupt practice.]

The apostle is here reproving a very corrupt practice. He shews how much mischief there is in the sin of *προσωποληψία*, "respect of persons," which seemed to be a very growing evil in the churches of Christ, even in those early ages, and which in these after times has sadly corrupted and divided Christian nations and societies. And here we have,

First. A caution against this sin laid down in general; ver. 1, "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." Observe here,

1. The character of Christians fully implied. They are such as have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. They embrace it, they receive it, they govern themselves by it; they entertain the doctrine, and submit to the law and government of Christ; they have it as a trust, they have it as a treasure.

2. How honourably St. James speaks of Jesus Christ. He calls him "the Lord of glory," for he is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the "express image of his person."

3. Christ's being "the Lord of glory" should teach us not to respect Christians for anything so much as their relation and conformity to Christ. "You that profess to believe the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, which the poorest Christian shall partake of equally with the rich, and to which all worldly glory is but vanity, you should not make men's outward and worldly advantages the measure of your respect." In professing the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, we should not shew respect to men, so as to cloud or lessen the glory of our glorious Lord. However any may think of it, this is certainly a very heinous sin.

Secondly. We have this sin described and cautioned against by an instance or example of it; ver. 2, 3. "For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, &c. Assembly here is meant of those meetings which were appointed for deciding matters of difference among the members of the church, or for determining when censures should be passed upon any, and what those censures should be. Therefore the Greek word here used, *συναγωγή*, signifies such an assembly as that in the Jewish synagogues when they met to do justice. Maimonides says, (as I find the passage quoted by Dr. Manton,) 'That it was expressly provided by the Jews' constitutions, that when a poor man and rich plead together, the rich shall not be bidden to sit down, and the poor stand or sit in a worse place, but both sit or both stand alike.' To this the phrases used by the apostle have a most plain reference, and therefore the assembly here spoken of must be some such as the synagogue assemblies of the Jews were, when they met to hear causes and to execute justice. To these the arbitrations and censures of their Christian assemblies are compared. But we must be careful not to apply what is here said to the common assemblies for worship, for in these certainly there may be appointed different places for persons, according to their rank and circumstances, without sin. They do not understand the apostle who fix his severity here upon this practice; they do not mind the word judges, used in ver. 4, nor what is said of their being convicted as transgressors by the law, if they had such a respect of persons as is here spoken of, according to ver. 9. Thus, now put the case: There comes into your assembly (when of the same nature with some of those at the synagogue,) a man that is distinguished by his dress, and that makes a figure; and there comes in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye carry it partially, and determine wrong or ill things, merely because the one makes a better appearance, or is in better circumstances than the other.

[Assembly.] That this word is used in the sense of meetings for Christian worship, is evident from *Heb. x. 25*. In this place there is not the shadow of authority for taking it in the sense of 'your judicial assemblies.' What the apostle condemns is, the regarding wealth and splendour as necessarily honourable, and poverty as necessarily disgraceful. Such conduct is sinful in any assembly, but above all in one met for Christian worship, where rich and poor are on a common level. If the sin referred to were partiality in deciding

causes, we may be sure that the apostle would have denounced so gross an iniquity in more pointed and severe terms.] Observe from hence,

1. That God has his remnant among all sorts of people; among those that wear soft and gay clothing, and among those that wear poor and vile raiment. But observe,

2. That in matters of religion rich and poor stand upon a level; no man's riches set him in the least nearer to God, nor does any man's poverty set him at a distance from God. With the Most High there is no respect of persons, and therefore in matters of conscience there should be none with us.

3. That all undue honouring of worldly greatness and riches should especially be watched against in Christian societies. St. James does not here encourage rudeness or disorder; civil respect must be paid, and some difference may be allowed in our carriage towards persons of different ranks, but this respect must never be such as to influence the proceedings of Christian societies, in disposing of the offices of the church, or in passing the censures of the church, or in anything that is purely a matter of religion; here we are to know no man after the flesh. It is the character of a citizen of Zion, that in "his eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord." If a poor man be a good man we must not value him a whit the less for his poverty; and if a rich man be an ill man, though he may have both gay clothing and a gay profession, we must not value him any whit the more for his riches.

4. Of what importance it is to take care what rule we go by in judging of men. If we allow ourselves commonly to judge by outward appearance, this will too much influence our spirits and our conduct in religious assemblies. There is many a man whose wickedness renders him vile and despicable, that yet makes a figure in the world. And, on the other hand, there is many a humble, heavenly, good Christian that is clothed meanly, but neither should he nor his Christianity be thought the worse of on this account.

Thirdly. We have the greatness of this sin set forth, ver. 4, 5. It is great partiality, it is injustice, and it is to set ourselves against God, who has chosen the poor, and will honour and advance them, if good, let who will despise them.

1. In this sin there is shameful partiality. "Are ye not then partial in yourselves?" The question is here put, as what could not fail of being answered by every man's conscience that would put it seriously to himself. According to the strict rendering of the original, the question is, Have ye not made a difference? And, in that difference, do not you not judge by a false rule, and go upon false measures? And does not the charge of a partiality, condemned by the law, lie fully against you? Does not your own conscience tell you that you are guilty? Appeals to conscience are of great advantage when we have to do with such as make a profession, even though they may be fallen into a very corrupt state.

2. This respect of persons is owing to the evil and injustice of the thoughts. As the temper, carriage, and proceedings are partial, so the heart and thoughts, from whence all flow, are evil. "Ye are become judges of evil thoughts;" ye are judges according to those unjust estimations and corrupt opinions which you have formed to yourselves. Trace your partiality till you come to those hidden thoughts which accompany and support it, and you will find those to be exceeding evil. You secretly prefer outward pomp before inward grace, and the things that are seen before those which are not seen. The deformity of sin is never truly and fully discerned till the evil of our thoughts be disclosed. And it is this which highly aggravates the faults of our tempers and lives, that the imagination of the thoughts of the heart is evil, *Gen. vi. 5*.

3. This respect of persons is a heinous sin, because it is to shew ourselves most directly contrary to God; ver. 5, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?" &c., "but ye have despised" them, ver. 6. God has made them heirs of a kingdom that you make of no reputation, and has given them very great and glorious promises to whom you can hardly give a good word, or a respectful look. And is not this a monstrous iniquity in you that pretend to be the children of God, and conformed to him? "Hearken, my beloved brethren;" by all the love I have for you, and all the regards you have to me, I beg you would consider these things. Take notice of it, that many of the poor of this world are the chosen of God. Their being God's chosen doth not prevent their being poor; their being poor doth not at all prejudice the evidences of their being chosen; *Mat. xi. 5*, the poor are evangelized. God designed to recommend his holy religion to men's esteem and affection, not by the external advantages of gaiety and pomp, but by its intrinsic worth and excellency, and therefore chose the poor of this world. Again take notice, that many poor in the world yet are "rich in faith;" thus the poorest may become rich, and this is what they ought to be especially ambitious of. It is expected from those who have wealth and estates that they be rich in good works, because the more they have the more they have to do good with; but it is expected from the poor in the world that they be "rich in faith," for the less they have here the more they may and should live in the believing expectation of better things in a better world. Take notice farther, that believing Christians are rich in title, and in being heirs of a kingdom, though they may be very poor as to present possessions; what is laid out upon them is but little, what is laid up for them is unspeakably rich and great. Note again, that where any are rich in faith there will be also Divine love. Faith working by love will be it, all the heirs of glory. Note once more under this head, that heaven is a kingdom, and a kingdom promised to them that love God. We read of the crown promised to them that love God, in the former chapter, ver. 12; we here find there is a kingdom too; and, as the crown is a crown of life, so the kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. All these things laid together shew how highly the poor in this world, if rich in faith, are now honoured, and shall hereafter be advanced, by God, and consequently how very ill a thing it was for them to despise the poor. After such considerations as these the charge is cutting indeed, "But ye have despised the poor," ver. 6.

4. Respecting persons, in the sense of this place, on account of their riches or outward figure, is shewn to be a very great sin, because of the mischiefs which are owing to worldly wealth and greatness, and the folly which there is in Christians paying undue regards to those who had so little regard either to their God or them. "Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?" ver. 6, 7. Consider how commonly riches are the incentives of vice and mischief, of blasphemy and persecution; consider how many calamities you yourselves sustain, and how great reproaches are thrown upon your religion, and your God, by men of wealth, and power, and worldly greatness; and this will make your sin appear exceeding sinful and foolish, in setting up that which tends to pull you down, and to destroy all that you are building up, and to dishonour "that worthy name by which you are called." The name of Christ is a "worthy name," and reflects an honour, and gives worth to them that wear it.

8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: 9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye com-

and was gradually dropped as the enmity between the Jews and Christianity increased, and the word "ecclesia" superseded it. "Synagogue" implies merely an assembly, but "ecclesia" a people united by laws and bonds even when not assembled. Thus the Church of Christ is properly denoted by the latter term, as being a society knit together by the closest spiritual bonds, and altogether independent of space. (See Trench, "New Testament Synonyms," and Vitranga.)

ii. 4. "Did you not doubt within yourselves, and become judges

of evil thoughts?" (Alford): i.e., "Did ye not practically doubt the teaching of your faith, which would make you regard the poor as equal to the rich brother, or even more than his equal, if he had more of Christ's spirit?"

ii. 6, 7. "Rich men:" not, of course, brethren here. Further proof that rich men, as such, do not demand more respect than poor, for they may persecute.

ii. 8—11. The sense is thus summed up by Alford: "All this

mit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. 10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

The apostle having condemned the sin of those who had an undue respect of persons, and having urged what was sufficient to convict them of the greatness of this evil, he now proceeds to shew how the matter may be mended. It is the work of a gospel ministry not only to reprove and warn, but to teach and direct; Col. i. 28, "Warning every man, and teaching every man." And here,

First, We have the law that is to guide us, in all our regards to men, set down in general; ver. 8, "If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well." Let any should think St. James had been pleading for the poor, so as to throw contempt on the rich, he now lets them know that he did not design to encourage an ill carriage toward any. They must not hate, or be rude to, the rich, any more than despise the poor; but, as the Scripture teacheth us to love all our neighbours, be they rich or poor, as ourselves, so in our having a steady regard to this rule we shall do well. Observe from hence,

1. That the rule for Christians to walk by is settled in the Scriptures. If "according to the Scriptures," &c. It is not great men, nor worldly wealth, nor corrupt practices among professors themselves, that must guide us, but the Scriptures of truth.

2. The Scripture gives us this as a law, to love our neighbour as ourselves. It is what still remains in full force; and is rather carried higher and farther by Christ than made less important to us.

3. This law is a "royal law." It comes from the King of kings. [It is the law of him whom God hath set as King in his holy hill of Zion,—it is the law of our King,—it is the law of laws, on which "all the law and the prophets do hang."] Its own worth and dignity deserve that it should be thus honoured. And the state in which all Christians now are, as it is a state of liberty, and not of bondage or oppression, makes this law, by which they are to regulate all their actions to one another, a royal law.

4. That a pretence of observing this royal law, when it is interpreted with partiality, will not excuse men in any unjust proceedings. It is implied here, that some were ready to flatter rich men, and be partial to them, because if they were in the like circumstances they should expect such regards to themselves; or they might plead, that to shew a distinguished respect to those whom God in his providence had distinguished by their rank and degree in the world, this was but doing right; therefore the apostle allows that, so far as they were concerned to observe the duties of the second table, they did well in giving honour to whom honour was due, &c. But this fair pretence would not cover their sin in that undue respect of persons which they stood chargeable with. For,

Secondly, This general law is to be considered together with a particular law; ver. 9, "If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors." Notwithstanding the law of laws, to love your neighbour as yourselves, and to shew that respect to them you would be apt to look for yourselves if in their circumstances, yet this will not excuse your distributing either the favours or censures of the church, according to men's outward condition. But here you must look to a particular law, which God, who gave the other, has given you together with it; and by this you will stand fully convicted of the sin I have charged you with. This law is in Lev. xix. 15, "Thou shalt do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour." Yea, the very royal law itself, rightly explained, would serve to convict them; because it teaches them to put themselves as much in the places of the poor as in those of the rich; and so to carry it equitably toward one as well as the other. Hence he proceeds,

Thirdly, To shew the extent of the law, and how far obedience must be paid to it. They must fulfil the royal law, have a regard to one part as well as another; otherwise it would not stand them in stead, when they pretended to urge it as a reason for any particular actions; ver. 10, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all." This may be considered,

1. With reference to the case St. James has been upon. Do you plead for your respect to the rich because you are to "love your neighbour as yourselves?" Why then, shew also an equitable and due regard to the poor, because you are to love your neighbour as yourself; or else your offending in one point will spoil your pretence of observing that law at all. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law," if he offend "in one point" wilfully, allowedly, and with continuance, and so as to think he shall be excused in some matters because of his obedience in others, he is guilty of all. That is, he incurs the same penalty, and is liable to the same punishment by the sentence of the law, as if he had broken it in other points, as well as that he stands chargeable with; not that all sins are equal, but that all carry the same contempt of the authority of the lawgiver, and so bind over to such punishment as is threatened on the breach of that law. This shews us what a vanity it is to think that our good deeds will atone for our bad deeds, and plainly puts us upon looking for some other atonement.

2. This is further illustrated by putting a case different from that before mentioned; ver. 11, "For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet, if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." One perhaps is very severe in the case of adultery, or what tends to such pollutions of the flesh, but less ready to condemn murder, or what tends to ruin the health, break the hearts, and destroy the lives of others. Another has a prodigious dread of murder, but has more easy thoughts of adultery. Whereas one that looks at the authority of the lawgiver more than the matter of the command will see the same reason for condemning the one as the other. Obedience is then acceptable when all is done with an eye to the will of God; and disobedience is to be condemned, in whatever instance it be, as it is a contempt of the authority of God. And for that reason, if we offend in one point, we condemn the authority of him that gave the whole law, and so far are guilty of all. Thus, if you look to the law of old, you stand con-

demned; for, "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10.

Fourthly, St. James directs Christians to govern and conduct themselves more especially by the law of Christ; ver. 12, "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." This will teach us not only to be just and impartial, but very compassionate and merciful, to the poor; and it will set us perfectly free from all sordid and undue regards to the rich. Observe here,

1. The Gospel is called a law. It has all the requisites of a law; precepts, with rewards and punishments annexed. It prescribes duty, as well as administers comfort. And Christ is a king to rule us, as well as a prophet to teach us, and a priest to sacrifice and intercede for us. [Yet it is not, as some vainly teach, a new and less strict law adapted to the weakness of fallen man. While all who believe the Gospel are for ever freed from the law as a covenant, they are still bound by it as a rule of life, and are brought under higher obligations, and under the influence of mightier motives drawn from the cross of Jesus, to keep it perfectly.] As Paul and James wrote under the guidance of the same Spirit, we know that there can be no real opposition between them. But how is the seeming contrariety between them to be explained? Paul declares that the Gospel establishes the law; the faith of which he speaks "works by love." It is not a bare intellectual assent to abstract truths, but a principle of action giving colour to the whole inward and outward life of the believer. In all the epistles he unfolds and enforces the doctrine of justification by faith, he exhorts Christians to the performance of the very duties on which James insists. On this head they are as one. Both teach that without holiness no man can see the Lord. When Paul says "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," he excludes all works, "not by deeds of law." But the faith of which James speaks when he says, "A man may say, I have faith, you have works," is not the faith of Paul. James shews that Abraham had no such faith wholly separate from works, but one which prompted him to holy action. The faith against which James argues is an inactive, dead faith. This is widely different from the faith of Paul, which he describes as "faith with the heart." James does not say that Abraham was justified by works only, but that his "faith wrought with (συνεργησεν) his works;" it resulted in, or completed itself in, works. Paul had respect to those who maintained that men are justified before God by their own works. James has reference to those who made a bare profession of the Gospel all-sufficient. Against them he teaches that real faith is ever productive of all holy obedience. We are under the law to Christ.

2. It is a "law of liberty." A law that we have no reason to complain of as a yoke or burthen; for the service of God according to the Gospel is perfect freedom. It sets us at liberty from all slavish regards either to the persons or things of this world.

3. We must all be judged by this law of liberty. Men's eternal condition will be determined according to the Gospel. This is the book that will be opened when we shall stand before the judgment-seat. There will be no relief to those whom the Gospel condemns; nor will any accusation lie against those whom the Gospel justifies.

4. It concerns us therefore so to speak and act now as becomes those that must shortly be judged by this law of liberty; that is, that we come up to gospel terms, that we make conscience of gospel duties, that we be of a gospel temper, and that our conversation be a gospel conversation, because by this rule we must be judged.

5. The consideration of our being judged by the Gospel should engage us more especially to be merciful in our regards to the poor; ver. 13, "For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." Take notice here, that the doom which will be passed upon impenitent sinners at last will be "judgment without mercy." There will be no mixtures or allays in the cup of wrath and of trembling, the dregs of which they must drink. Take notice, again, that such as shew no mercy now shall find no mercy in the great day. But we may note, on the other hand, that there will be such as shall become instances of the triumph of mercy, in whom mercy rejoices against judgment. All the children of men, in the last day, will be either vessels of wrath or vessels of mercy. It concerns all to consider amongst which they shall be found. And let us remember that "blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? 17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. 19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified,

is true of the rich; still I do not say hate them, drive them from your assemblies, &c. If you observe the great command, "Love others as yourselves," in your conduct to all, well and good: but respect of persons, instead of being a keeping, is a breach of this law."

ii. 14. We must bear in mind that those whom the apostle is addressing had once relied for salvation on their descent from Abraham; now it would appear that they trusted in a mere theological faith—a belief in the historical truths respecting God and

Christ; and this faith—very different from faith such as St. Paul speaks of (Rom. iii. 22)—he declares to be profitless, having no results—an impossibility with faith in the highest sense.

ii. 19. This profitless belief in and assent to the truth of certain truths is possessed by the evil spirits, but is neither useful nor consolatory to them; on the other hand, Abraham and Rahab had faith which compelled them to act, and so was proved to be valuable faith—living, not dead.

and not by faith only. 25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

In this latter part of the chapter the apostle shews the error of those who rested in a bare profession of the Christian faith, as if that would save them, while the temper of their minds, and the tenor of their lives, were altogether disagreeable to that holy religion they professed. To let them see, therefore, what a wretched foundation they built their hopes upon, it is here proved at large that a man is justified not by faith only, but by works. Now upon this arises a very great question, namely, how to reconcile St. Paul and St. James? St. Paul, in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians, seems to assert the direct contrary thing to what St. James here lays down; saying it often, and with a great deal of emphasis, that we are justified by faith only, and not by the works of the law. *Amice scripturarum lites, utinam et nostra.*—“There is a very happy agreement betwixt one part of Scripture and another, notwithstanding seeming differences; it were well if the differences among Christians were as easily reconciled.” Nothing (says Mr. Baxter) but men’s misunderstanding the plain drift and sense of Paul’s epistles, could make so many take it for a matter of great difficulty to reconcile Paul and James. A general view of those things which are insisted on by the Antinomians may be seen in Mr. Baxter’s paraphrase. And many ways might be mentioned which have been invented amongst learned men to make the two apostles agree. But it may be sufficient only to observe these few things following:—

1. When St. Paul says, that “a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law,” *Rom. iii. 28*, he plainly speaks of another sort of works than St. James does, but not of another sort of faith. St. Paul speaks of works wrought in obedience to the law of Moses, and before men’s embracing the faith of the Gospel; and he had to do with those who valued themselves so highly upon those works that they rejected the Gospel, as *Rom. x.* at the beginning most expressly declares. But St. James speaks of works done in obedience to the Gospel, and as the proper and necessary effects and fruits of a sound believing in Christ Jesus. Both are concerned to magnify the faith of the Gospel as that which alone could save us and justify us. But St. Paul magnifies it by shewing the insufficiency of any works of the law before faith, or in opposition to the doctrine of justification by Jesus Christ. St. James magnifies the same faith by shewing what are the genuine and necessary products and operations of it.

2. St. Paul does not only speak of different works from those insisted on by St. James, but he speaks of quite a different use that was made of good works from what is here urged and intended. St. Paul had to do with those who depended on the merit of their works in the sight of God; and thus he might well make them of no manner of account. St. James had to do with those that cried up faith, but would not allow works to be used even as evidences. They depended upon a bare profession as sufficient to justify them; and with these he might well urge the necessity and vast importance of good works. As we must not break one table of the law, by dashing it against the other, so neither must we break in pieces the law and the Gospel by making them clash with one another. Those that cry up the Gospel so as to set aside the law, and those that cry up the law so as to set aside the Gospel, are both in the wrong. For we must take our work before us; there must be both faith in Jesus Christ and good works the fruit of faith.

3. The justification of which St. Paul speaks is different from that spoken of by St. James. The one speaks of our persons being justified before God; the other speaks of our faith being justified before men. “Shew me thy faith by thy works,” says St. James. Let thy faith be justified in the eyes of them that behold thee by thy works. But St. Paul speaks of justification in the sight of God; who justifies them only that believe in Jesus, and purely on account of the redemption that is in him. And thus we see that our persons are justified before God by faith; but our faith is justified before men by works. And this is so plainly the scope and design of the apostle James, that he is but confirming what St. Paul in other places says of his faith, that it is a “laborious faith,” and a “faith working by love,” *Gal. v. 6; 1 Thes. i. 3; Tit. iii. 8*; and many other places.

4. St. Paul may be understood as speaking of that justification which is inchoate, St. James of that which is complete. It is by faith only that we put into a justified state; but then good works come in for the completing of our justification at the last great day. Then, “Come ye children of my Father;” “For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat,” &c.

Thus, having cleared this part of Scripture from every thing of a contradiction to other parts of it, let us see what is more particularly to be learnt from this excellent passage of James. We are taught,

First. That faith without works will not profit, and cannot save us; ver. 14, “What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?” Observe here,

1. That faith which does not save will not really profit us. A bare profession may sometimes seem to be profitable, to gain the good opinion of those who are truly good, and it may procure in some cases worldly good things; but what profit will this be, for any to gain the world and to lose their souls? “What doth it profit?” “Can faith save him?” All things should be accounted profitable or unprofitable to us as they tend to forward or hinder the salvation of our souls. And above all other things we should take care thus to make account of faith, as that which does not profit if it do not save, but will aggravate our condemnation and destruction at last.

2. That for a man to have faith and to say he has faith are two different things. The apostle does not say, If a man have faith without works, for that is not a supposable case. The drift of this place of Scripture is plainly to shew, that an opinion, or speculation, or assent without works, is not faith. But the case is put thus, If “a man say he hath faith,” &c. Men may boast of that to others, and be conceited of that in themselves, which yet they are really destitute of.

Secondly. We are taught that, as love or charity is an operative principle, so is faith, or that neither of them are good for any thing. And by trying how it looks for a person to pretend he is very charitable who yet never does any works of charity, you may judge what sense there is in pretending to have faith without the proper and necessary fruits of it; ver. 15–17, “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?” What will such a charity as this, that consists in bare words, avail either you or the poor? Will you come before God with such empty shows of charity as these? Why, you might as well pretend that your love and charity will stand the test without acts of mercy, as think that a profession of faith will bear you out before God

without works of piety and obedience; ver. 17. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” We are too apt to rest in a bare profession of faith, and to think that this will save us. It is a cheap and easy religion to say, We believe the articles of the Christian faith; but it is a great delusion to imagine that this is enough to bring us to heaven. Those that argue thus wrong God, and put a cheat upon their own souls. A mock faith is as hateful as a mock charity, and both shew a heart dead to all real godliness. You may as soon take pleasure in a dead body, void of soul, or sense, or action, as God take pleasure in a dead faith, where there is no works.

Thirdly. We are taught to compare a faith boasting of itself without works, and a faith evidenced by works, by looking on both together, to try how that will work upon our minds; ver. 18, “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.” Suppose a true believer thus pleading with a boasting hypocrite, “Thou makest a profession, and sayest thou hast faith; I make no such boasts, but leave my works to speak for me. Now give any evidence of having the faith thou professest without works if thou canst, and I will soon let thee see how my works flow from, and are the undoubted evidences of, faith.” This is the evidence by which the Scriptures all along teach men to judge both of themselves and others. And this is the evidence according to which Christ will proceed at the day of judgment; *Rev. xx. 12*, “The dead were judged according to their works.” How will they be exposed, then, who boast of that which they cannot evidence, or who go about to evidence their faith by any thing but works of piety and mercy!

Fourthly. We are taught to look upon a faith of bare speculation and knowledge as the faith of devils; ver. 19, “Thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble.” That instance of faith which the apostle here chooses to mention is the first principle of all religion. Thou believest there is a God, against the atheists; and that there is but one God, against the idolaters; thou doest well, so far all is right. But to rest here, and take up a good opinion of thyself, or of thy state towards God, merely on account of thy believing in him, this will render thee miserable; “The devils also believe and tremble.” If thou contentest thyself with a bare assent to articles of faith, and some speculations upon them, thus far the devils go; and as their faith and knowledge only serve to excite horror, so in a little time will thine. The word “tremble” is commonly looked upon as denoting a good effect of faith; but here it may rather be taken as a bad effect, when applied to the faith of devils. They tremble not out of reverence, but hatred and opposition, to that one God on whom they believe. To rehearse that article of our creed, therefore, “I believe in God the Father Almighty,” will not distinguish us from devils at last, unless we now give up ourselves to God as the Gospel directs, and love him, and delight ourselves in him, and serve him, which the devils do not, cannot do.

Fifthly. We are taught that he who boasts of faith without works is to be looked upon at present as a foolish, condemned person; ver. 20, “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” The words translated “vain man,” *ἀνθρωπος κενός*, are observed to have the same signification with the word “*vaca*,” which must never be used to private persons, or as an effect of anger, *Mat. v. 22*, but may be used as here, to denote a just detestation of such a sort of men as are empty of good works, and yet boasters of their faith; and it plainly declares them fools and objects in the sight of God. Faith without works is said to be dead, not only as void of all those operations which are the proofs of spiritual life, but as unavailable to eternal life. Such believers as rest in a bare profession of faith are dead while they live.

Sixthly. We are taught that a justifying faith cannot be without works, from two examples, Abraham and Rahab.

1. The first instance is that of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and the prime example of justification; to whom the Jews had a special regard; ver. 21, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” St. Paul, on the other hand, says, in the 4th chapter of the epistle to the *Romans*, that “Abraham believed, and it was counted to him for righteousness.” But these are well reconciled, by observing what is said in *Heb. xi.*, which shews that the faith both of Abraham and Rahab was such as to produce those good works of which St. James speaks, and which are not to be separated from faith as justifying and saving. By what Abraham did it appeared that he truly believed. Upon this footing the words of God himself plainly put this matter; *Gen. xxii. 16, 17*, “Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, therefore in blessing I will bless thee.” Thus the faith of Abraham was a working faith; ver. 22, “It wrought with his works, and by works was made perfect.” And by this means you come to the true sense of that Scripture which saith, ver. 23, “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness;” and thus he became the friend of God. Faith, producing such works, endeared him to the Divine Being, and advanced him to very peculiar favours and intimacies with God. It is a great honour done to Abraham that he is called and counted the friend of God. You see there, ver. 24, “how that by works a man is justified,” comes into such a state of favour and friendship with God, “and not by faith only;” not by a bare opinion or profession, or believing without obeying, but by having such a faith as is productive of good works. Now besides the explication of this passage and example, as thus illustrating and supporting the argument St. James is upon, many other useful lessons may be learned by us, from what is here said concerning Abraham. 1st. Those that would have Abraham’s blessings must be careful to copy after his faith. To boast of being Abraham’s seed will not avail any, if they do not believe as he did. 2nd. Those works which evidence true faith must be works of self-denial, and such as God himself commands, as Abraham’s offering up his son, his only son, was, and not such works as are pleasing to flesh and blood, and may serve our interest, or are the mere fruits of our own imagination and devising. 3rd. What we piously purpose, and sincerely resolve, to do for God, is accepted as if actually performed. Thus Abraham is regarded as offering up his son, though he did not actually proceed to make a sacrifice of him. It was a done thing in the mind, and spirit, and resolution of Abraham, and God accepts it as if fully performed and accomplished. 4th. The actings of faith make it grow perfect, as the truth of faith makes it act. 5th. Such an acting faith will make others, as well as Abraham, friends of God. Thus Christ says to his disciples, *Jno. xv. 15*, “I have called you friends.” All transactions betwixt God and the truly believing soul are easy, pleasant, and delightful. There is one will and one heart, and there is a mutual complacency. God rejoiceth over them that truly believe to do them good, and they delight themselves in him.

2. The second example of faith’s justifying itself and us with and by works, is Rahab; ver. 25, “Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?” The former instance was of one renowned for his faith all his life long; this is of one noted for sin, whose faith was meaner, and of a much lower degree, so that the strongest faith will not do, nor the meanest be allowed to go, without works. Some say that the word here rendered harlot was the proper name of Rahab. Others tell us, that it signifies no more than an hostess, or one that keeps a public house, with whom, therefore, the spies lodged. But it is very probable her character was infamous; and such an

iii. 1. “Masters,” as Authorised Version, or “teachers:” in the first case the signification would be “censors,” or judges of others; in the second, “teachers,” publicly in the congregation. The apostle is warning the members of the church against over-eagerness to teach others—against taking upon themselves, of their own will and too hastily, the office of teaching; for if that office is not faithfully performed, the erring teacher incurs a stronger condemnation than those who are not teachers.

iii. 2. “Offend not in word:” a form of offence to which a teacher is specially liable, as having more opportunities of speaking than others.

iii. 3. The fact just asserted, that one who can govern the tongue can bridle the whole body, is exemplified by the fact that the horse is ruled by the bit. “Behold” of Authorised Version is not supported by best MSS. The true reading is, “But if,” &c., “we turn about their whole body.”

instance is mentioned to shew that faith will save the worst, when evidenced by proper works; and it will not save the best without such works as God requires. This Rahab believed the report she had heard of God's powerful presence with Israel; but that which proved her faith sincere was, that to the hazard of her life she "received the messengers, and sent them another way." Observe here, 1st. The wonderful power of faith in transforming and changing sinners. 2nd. The regard which an operative faith meets with from God, to obtain his mercy and favour. 3rd. Observe, that where great sins are pardoned there must be great acts of self-denial. Rahab must prefer the honour of God, and the good of his people, before the preservation of her own country. Her former acquaintance must be discarded, and her former course of life entirely abandoned; and she must give signal proof and evidence of this before she can be in a justified state. 4th. After she is justified, yet her former character must be remembered; not so much to her dishonour as to glorify the rich grace and mercy of God. Though justified, she is called "Rahab the harlot."

Seventhly. And now, upon the whole matter, the apostle draws this conclusion: ver. 26, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." These words are read differently, some reading them, As the body without the breath is dead, so is faith without works; and then they shew that works are the companions of faith, as breathing is of life. Others read them, As the body without the soul is dead, so faith without works is dead also; and then they shew that as the body has no action nor beauty, but becomes a loathsome carcass when the soul is gone, so a bare profession without works is useless, yea, loathsome and offensive. [The former is the true rendering, otherwise the analogy does not hold. Good works are not the soul of faith, but they are to it what respiration is to the body, the evidence of life.] Let us, then, take heed of running into extremes in this case; for, 1. The best works without faith are dead; they want their root and principle. It is by faith that any thing we do is really good, as done with an eye to God, and in obedience to him, and so as to aim principally at his acceptance. 2. The most plausible profession of faith, without works, is dead, as the root is dead when it produces nothing green, nothing of fruit. Faith is the root, good works are the fruits: and we must see to it that we have both. We must not think that either, without the other, will justify and save us. This is the grace of God wherein we stand, and we should stand to it.

CHAPTER III.

The apostle here reproves ambition, and an arrogant magisterial tongue; and shews the duty and advantage of bridling it, because of its power to do mischief. Those who profess religion ought especially to govern their tongues, ver. 1—12; true wisdom makes men meek, and avoiders of strife and envy; and hereby may easily be distinguished from a wisdom that is earthly and hypocritical, ver. 13—18.



Y brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. 2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. 3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths,

that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. 7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of



ANCIENT BITS.—VER. 3.

iii. 4, 5. These verses must be taken in connection, as a comparison. "Boasteth great things;" "Vaunts great words, which bring about great acts of mischief" (Alford). Verse 5 should end with "great things." A new comparison is introduced with "behold." The Authorised Version, "how great a matter," is incorrect. "Lo, how little fire burneth a full great wood" (Wickliffe). "Behold how much fire, what a great wood it kindleth" (Rheims).

iii. 6. The stop at "iniquity" is omitted by Tischendorf and 968

things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: 8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. 11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? 12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.



HUNTING WITH HAWKS.—VER. 7.

The foregoing chapter shews how unprofitable and dead faith is without works; it is plainly intimated by what this chapter first goes upon, that such a faith is, however, apt to make men conceited and magisterial in their tempers and their talk. Those who set up faith in the manner the former chapter condemns are most apt to run into those sins of the tongue which this chapter condemns; and indeed the best need to be cautioned against a dictating, censorious, mischievous use of their tongues. We are therefore taught,

First. Not to use our tongues so as to lord it over others; ver. 1, "My brethren, be not many masters," &c. These words do not forbid doing what we can to direct and instruct others in the way of their duty, or to reprove them in a Christian way for what is amiss; but we must not affect to speak and act as those that are continually assuming the chair. We must not prescribe one to another, so as to make our own sentiments a standard, by which to try all others; because God gives various gifts to men, and expects from each according to that measure of light which he gives. Therefore be not many masters, or teachers, as some read it. Do not give yourselves the air of teachers, and imposers, and judges, but rather speak with the humility and spirit of learners. Do not censure one another, as if all must be brought to your standard. This is enforced by two reasons: 1. Those who thus set up for judges and censurers shall receive the greater condemnation. Our judging others will but make our own judgment the more strict and severe, Mat. vii. 1, 2. Those who are curious to spy out the faults of others, and arrogant in passing censures upon them, may expect that God will be as extreme in marking what they say and do amiss. 2. Another reason given against such acting the master is, because we are all sinners; ver. 2, "In many things we offend all." Were we to think more on our own mistakes and offences we should be less apt to judge other people. Whilst we are severe against what we count offensive in others, we do not consider how much there is in us which is justly offensive to them. Self-justifiers are commonly self-deceivers. We are all guilty before God; and they that vaunt it over the frailties and infirmities of others little think how many things they offend in themselves. Nay, perhaps their magisterial managements and censorious tongues may prove worse than any faults they condemn in others. Let us learn to be severe in judging ourselves, but charitable in our judgments of other people.

Secondly. We are taught to govern our tongues so as to prove ourselves perfect and upright men, and such as have an entire government over ourselves. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." It is here implied that he who makes conscience of tongue sins, and takes care to avoid them, is an upright man, and has an undoubted sign of true grace. But, on the other hand, if a man "seem to be religious," as was declared in the first chapter, "and brideth not his tongue," whatever profession he makes, that man's "religion is vain." Farther, he that "offends not in word" will not only prove himself a sincere Christian, but a very much advanced and improved Christian. For that wisdom and grace which enables him to rule his tongue will enable him also to rule all his actions.

This we have illustrated by two comparisons:—
1. The governing and guiding all the motions of a horse by the bit which is put into his mouth; ver. 3, "Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body." There is a great deal of brutish fierceness and wantonness in us; this shews itself very much by the

Lachmann, on the authority of several of the best MSS., and they read, "A world of iniquity is the tongue amongst our members, defiling," &c.

iii. 7. Not "every kind of beasts," &c., as Authorised Version, but "every nature"—i.e., disposition, or character—"hath been tamed by the nature of man."

iii. 9. "The Lord and Father;" so best MSS. "After the similitude of God:" man, no doubt, has lost much of his likeness to God;

tongue, so that this must be bridled, according to *Ps. xxxix. 1*, "I will keep my mouth with a bridle," or, I will bridle my mouth, "while the wicked is before me." The more quick and lively the tongue is, the more should we thus take care to govern it. Otherwise, as an unruly and ungovernable horse runs away with his rider, or throws him, so an unruly tongue will serve those in like manner that have no command over it. Whereas, let resolution and watchfulness, under the influence of the grace of God, bridle the tongue, and then all the motions and actions of the whole body will be easily guided and overruled.

2. The governing of a ship by the right management of the helm; ver. 4, 5, "Behold also the ships, which, though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth; even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things." As the helm is a very small part of the ship, so is the tongue a very small part of the body; but the right governing of the helm or rudder will steer and turn the ship as the governor pleases, and a right management of the tongue is, in a great measure, the government of the whole man. There is a wonderful beauty in these comparisons, to shew how things of small bulk yet may be of vast use. And from hence we should learn to make the due management of our tongues more our study, because though they are little members they are capable of doing a great deal of good or a great deal of hurt. [A single word may sometimes stir the very depths of human passion, and may make an ineffaceable impression upon the mind of the hearer. No wonder it is said, "By thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned."] Therefore,

Thirdly. We are taught to dread an unruly tongue, as one of the greatest and most pernicious evils. It is compared to "a little fire" placed amongst a great deal of combustible matter, which soon raises a flame and consumes all before it; ver. 5, 6, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth; and the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity," &c. There is such an abundance of sin in the tongue that it may be called a "world of iniquity." How many defilements does it occasion! how many and dreadful flames does it kindle! "So is the tongue among the members, that it defileth the whole body." Observe from hence, there is a great pollution and defilement in sins of the tongue. Defiling passions are kindled, and vented, and cherished, by this unruly member; and the whole body is often drawn into sin and guilt by the tongue. Therefore Solomon says, "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin," *Ecc. v. 6*. The snares into which men are sometimes led by the tongue are insufferable to themselves and destructive of others. It "setteth on fire the course of nature;" "course of nature," that is, the whole course of life, the whole conduct. The affairs of mankind, and of societies, are often thrown into confusion, and all is on a flame, by the tongues of men. Some read it, All our generations are set on fire by the tongue. There is no age of the world, nor any condition of life, private or public, but will afford examples of this. "And it is set on fire of hell." Observe from hence, that hell has more to do in promoting the fire of the tongue than men are generally aware of. It is from some diabolical temptations, and to serve some diabolical designs, that men's tongues are inflamed. The devil is expressly called a liar, a murderer, an accuser of the brethren; and whenever men's tongues are employed in any of these ways, they are "set on fire of hell." The Holy Ghost, indeed, once descended in "cloven tongues as of fire," *Acts ii*. And where the tongue is thus guided and wrought upon by a fire from heaven, there it kindleth good thoughts, holy affections, and ardent devotions; but when it is set on fire of hell, as in all undue heats it is, there it is mischievous, producing rage and hatred, and those things which serve the purposes and designs of the devil. As, therefore, you would dread fires and flames, you should dread contentions, revilings, slanders, lies, and every thing that would kindle the fire of wrath in your own or others' spirits. But,

Fourthly. We are next taught how very hard a thing it is to govern the tongue; ver. 7, 8, "For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind; but the tongue can no man tame." As if the apostle had said, Lions, and the most savage beasts, as well as horses, and camels, and creatures of the greatest strength, have been tamed and governed by men; and so have birds, notwithstanding their wildness and timorousness, and their wings to bear them up continually out of our reach. And even serpents, notwithstanding all their venom, and all their cunning, yet have been made familiar and harmless; and things in the sea have been taken by men and made serviceable to them. And these creatures have not been subdued or tamed only by miracle,—as the lions crouched to Daniel, instead of devouring him; and ravens fed Elijah; and a whale carried Jonah through the depths of the sea to dry land,—but what is here spoken of is something commonly done; not only hath been tamed, but is tamed of mankind. Yet the tongue is worse than these, and cannot be tamed by that power and art which serves to tame these things. "No man can tame the tongue" without supernatural grace and assistance. The apostle does not intend to represent it as a thing impossible [in itself], but as a thing extremely difficult, and therefore will require great watchfulness, and pains, and prayer to keep it in due order. [Unless Divine grace interposes, the right government of the tongue is impossible. Men may restrain themselves from angry words, but to use the tongue aright, to speak what they ought to speak, and to do so at the right time, surpasses the power of the natural man.] And sometimes all is too little; "For it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." Brute creatures may be kept within certain bounds, they may be managed by certain rules, and even serpents may be so used as to do no hurt with all their poison. But the tongue is apt to break through all bounds and rules, and to spit out its poison on one occasion or other, notwithstanding the utmost care. So that it does not need only to be watched, and guarded, and governed as much as an unruly beast, or a hurtful and poisonous creature, but much more care and pains will be needful to prevent the mischievous outbursts and effects of the tongue. However,

Fifthly. We are taught to think of the use we make of our tongues in religion, and in the service of God, and by such a consideration to keep it from cursing, censuring, and every thing that is evil, on other occasions; ver. 9, 10, "Therewith bless we God even the Father; and therewith curse we men which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." How absurd is it, that they who use their tongues in prayer and praise should ever use them in cursing, slandering, and the like? If we bless God as our Father, it should teach us to speak well of, and kindly to, all that bear his image. That tongue that addresses with reverence the Divine being, cannot without the greatest inconsistency turn upon fellow-creatures with reviling, brawling language. It is said of the seraphim, [rather, of Michael the archangel, *Jude 9*. The Scripture gives us too little information respecting the angelic world to warrant such a use of the term seraphim as is made by the annotator. In *Isa. vi. 2, 6*, the name is given to the heavenly hosts; but whether Michael the archangel, who contended about the body of Moses, may properly be called a seraph, is a point which we cannot determine. On such topics we should not go beyond the very words of the Bible,] that praise God, they dare not bring a railing accusation; and for men to reproach those who have not only the image of God in their natural faculties, but are renewed after the image of God by the grace of the Gospel, this is a most shameful contradiction to all their pretensions of honouring the great

Original. "These things ought not so to be;" and, if such considerations were always at hand, surely they would not be. Piety is disgraced in all the shews of it, if there be not charity. That tongue confutes itself, that one while pretends to adore the perfections of God, and to refer all things to him, and another while will condemn even good men, if they do not just come up to the same words or expressions used by itself.

Farther, to fix this thought, the apostle shews that contrary effects from the same cause are monstrous, and not to be found in nature, and therefore cannot be consistent with grace; ver. 11, 12, "Doth a fountain send forth, at the same place, sweet water and bitter? Can the fig-tree bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? Or doth the same spring yield both salt water and fresh?" True religion will not admit of contradictions, and a truly religious man can never allow of them either in his words or his actions. How many sins would this prevent, and recover men from, to put them upon being always consistent with themselves! [A holy heart is a fountain from which pure and living waters ever will and must flow; if the precious faith of God's elect dwells in the soul, holy love, joy, peace, meekness, yea, every grace, will be more or less exhibited in the daily conduct.]

13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. 14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

As the sins before condemned arise from an affectation of being thought more wise than others, and being endued with more knowledge than they, so the apostle in these verses shews the difference betwixt men's pretending to be wise and their being really so; and betwixt wisdom which is from beneath, from earth or hell, and that which is from above.

First. We have some account of true wisdom, with the distinguishing marks and fruits of it; ver. 13, "Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge amongst you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." A truly wise man is a very knowing man. He will not set up for the reputation of being wise, without laying in a good stock of knowledge; and he will not value himself merely upon knowing things, if he has not wisdom to make a right application and use of that knowledge. These two things must be put together to make up the account of true wisdom; "Who is wise, and endued with knowledge?" Now where this is the happy case of any, there will be these following things:—

1. A good conversation. If we are wiser than others, this should be evidenced by the goodness of our conversation, not by the roughness or vanity of it. Words that inform, and heal, and do good, are the marks of wisdom; and not those that look great, and do mischief, and are the occasions of evil, either in ourselves or others. [The good conversation of the truly wise man will be shown by his acting suitably to the condition in which the providence of God has placed him; however humble it may be, he will labour to do the will of God diligently, cheerfully, meekly.]

2. True wisdom may be known by its works. The conversation here does not refer only to words, but to the whole of men's practice; therefore it is said, Let him shew out of a good conversation his works. True wisdom does not lie in good notions or speculations so much as in good and useful actions. Not he that thinks well, or he that talks well, that in the sense of Scripture is allowed to be wise, if he do not live and act well.

3. True wisdom may be known by the meekness of the spirit and temper; "Let him shew with meekness," &c. It is a great instance of wisdom prudently to bridle our own anger, and patiently to bear the anger of others. And as wisdom will evidence itself in meekness, so meekness will be a great friend to wisdom. For nothing hinders that regular apprehension, solid judgment, and impartiality of thought, which is necessary to our acting wisely, so much as passion doth. When we are mild and calm, we are best able to hear reason, and best able to speak it. Wisdom produces meekness, and meekness increaseth wisdom.

Secondly. We have the glorying of those taken away that are of a contrary character to that now mentioned, and their wisdom exposed in all its boasts and productions; ver. 14–16, "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not," &c. Pretend what you will, and think yourselves never so wise, ye have abundance of reason to cease your glorying, if you run down love and peace, and give way to bitter envying and strife. Your zeal for truth or orthodoxy, and your boasts of knowing more than others, if you do this only to make others hateful and to shew your own spite, and heart-burnings against them, is a shame to your profession of Christianity, and a downright contradiction to it. Lie not thus against the truth. Observe,

1. That envying and strife are opposed to the meekness of wisdom. The heart is the seat of both; but envy and wisdom cannot dwell together in the same heart. Holy zeal and bitter envying are as different as the flames of seraphim and the fire of hell.

2. The order of things here laid down. Envying is first, and excites strife; strife endeavours to excuse itself by vain-glorying and lying; and then, ver. 16, hereupon ensues "confusion and every evil work." Those that live in malice, and envy, and contention, they live in confusion, and are liable to be provoked and hurried to any evil work. Such disorders raise many temptations, and strengthen temptations, and involve men in a great deal of guilt. One sin begets another, and it cannot be imagined how much mischief is produced; there is every evil work; and is such wisdom to be gloried in as produces these effects? This cannot be without giving the lie to Christianity, and pretending that this wisdom is what it is not. For observe,

3. From whence such wisdom cometh. It "descendeth not from above," but ariseth from beneath; and, to speak plainly, it is "earthly, sensual, devilish," ver. 15. It springs from earthly principles, and acts upon earthly motives, and is intent upon serving earthly purposes. It is sensual, indulging the flesh, and

but he retains much—body, soul, spirit (1 Thess. v. 23), a triune nature—the creative faculty, in a sense in which no other creature possesses it, &c.

iii. 12. Literally, "nor can salt bring forth sweet water." "If the mouth emit cursing, thereby making itself a brackish spring, it cannot to any purpose also emit the sweet stream of praise and good words; if it appear to do so, all must be hypocrisy and mere seeming" (Alford).

iii. 14. Not as in Authorised Version, "strife in your hearts;" the word so translated signifies rivalry or party spirit, not strife generally.

iii. 15. "Sensual" does not convey the real meaning, which, indeed, can hardly be expressed in an epithet. The word in the original has reference to the soul, as distinguished from the spirit. Trench remarks on this word ("New Testament Synonyms"), "That old philosophy knew of nothing higher than the soul of man; but reve-

making provision to fulfil the lusts and desires of it. Or, according to the original word, *ψυχῆς*, it is animal or human; the mere working of natural reason without any supernatural light. And it is devilish; such wisdom being the wisdom of devils to create uneasiness, and to do hurt, and being inspired by devils, whose condemnation is pride, 1 *Tim.* iii. 6, and who are noted in other places of Scripture for their wrath, and their accusing of the brethren; and, therefore, those who are lifted up with such wisdom as this must fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Thirdly. We have the lovely picture of that wisdom which is from above more fully drawn, and set in opposition to this which is from beneath; ver. 17, 18, "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable," &c. Observe here that true wisdom is God's gift. It is not gained by conversing with men, or by the knowledge of the world, (as some think and speak,) but it comes from above. And it consists of these several things:—

1. It is "pure," without mixture of maxims or aims that would debase it. And it is free from iniquity and defilements, not allowing of any known sin, but studious of holiness both in heart and life.

2. The wisdom that is from above is "peaceable." Peace follows purity, and depends upon it. Those who are truly wise do what they can to preserve peace, that it may not be broken; and to make peace, that where it is lost it may be restored. In kingdoms, in families, in churches, in all societies, and in all affairs and converses, heavenly wisdom makes men peaceable.

3. It is "gentle," not standing upon extreme right in matters of property; not saying or doing any thing rigorous in points of censure, not being furious about opinions, urging our own beyond their weight, or theirs who oppose us beyond their intention; not being rude and overbearing in conversation, nor harsh and cruel in temper. Gentleness may thus be opposed to all these.

4. Heavenly wisdom is "easy to be entreated;" *εὐμενής*, it is very persuadable, either to what is good, or from what is evil. There is an easiness that is weak and faulty; but it is not a blameable easiness to yield ourselves to the persuasions of God's word, and to all just and reasonable counsels or requests of our fellow-creatures; no, nor to give up a dispute where there appears a good reason for it, and a good end may be answered by it.

5. Heavenly wisdom is full of mercy and good fruits. Inwardly disposed to every thing that is kind and good, both to relieve those that want, and forgive those that offend, and actually to do this whenever proper occasions offer.

6. Heavenly wisdom is "without partiality." The original word, *ἀδύκροτος*, signifies to be 'without suspicion,' or free from judging; making no undue surmises, or differences in our carriage toward one person more than another. The margin reads it 'without wrangling.' Not acting the part of sectaries, and disputing merely for the sake of a party; or censuring others purely on account of their differing from us. The wisest men are least apt to be censurers.

7. That wisdom which is from above is "without hypocrisy." It has no disguises or deceptions. It cannot fall in with those managements the world counts wise, which are crafty and guileful; but it is sincere and open, and steady and uniform, and consistent with itself. O that you and I might always be guided by such wisdom as this! That with St. Paul we might be able to say, "Not with fleshly wisdom, but in simplicity and godly sincerity, by the grace of God, we have our conversation." And then,

8. True wisdom will go on to sow the fruits of righteousness in peace; and thus, if it may be, to make peace in the world, ver. 18; and that which is sown in peace will produce a harvest of joys. Let others reap the fruits of contentions, and all the advantages they can propose to themselves by them; but let us go on peacefully to sow the seeds of righteousness, and we may depend upon it our labour shall not be lost. For "light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart;" and the "work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."

CHAPTER IV.

In this chapter we are directed to consider, I. Some causes of contention, besides those mentioned in the foregoing chapter, and to watch against them, ver. 1–5. II. We are taught to abandon the friendship of this world, so as to submit and subject ourselves entirely to God, ver. 4–10. III. All detraction and rash judgment of others is to be carefully avoided, ver. 11, 12. IV. We must preserve a constant regard and pay the utmost deference to the disposals of Divine providence, ver. 13–17.



FROM whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? 2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. 3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. 4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. 5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? 6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and

purify your hearts, ye double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

The former chapter speaks of envying one another, as the great spring of strifes and contentions. This chapter speaks of a lust after worldly things, and a setting too great value upon worldly pleasures and friendships, as that which carried their divisions to a shameful height. And therefore the apostle here,

First. Reproves the Jewish Christians for their wars, and for their lusts, as the cause of them; ver. 1, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members?" The Jews were a very seditious people, and had therefore frequent wars with the Romans; and they were a very quarrelsome, divided people, often fighting among themselves; and many of those corrupt Christians, against whose errors and vices this epistle was written, seem to have fallen in with the common quarrels. Hereupon our apostle informs them that the original of their wars and fightings was not (as they pretended) a true zeal for their country, and for the honour of God; but that their prevailing lusts were the cause of all. Observe from thence, that many times what is sheltered and shrouded under a specious pretence of zeal for God and religion, yet really comes from men's pride, malice, covetousness, ambition, and revenge. The Jews had many struggles with the Roman power before they were entirely destroyed. They often unnecessarily embroiled themselves, and then fell into parties and factions about the different methods of managing their wars with their common enemies; and hence it comes to pass, that when their cause might be supposed good, yet their engaging in it, and their management of it, came from a bad principle; their worldly and fleshly lusts raised and managed their wars and fightings; but one would think here is enough said to subdue those lusts. For,

1. They make a war within, as well as fightings without. Impetuous passions and desires first war in their members, and then raise feuds in their nation. There is war between conscience and corruption, and there is war also between one corruption and another, and from these contentions in themselves arose their quarrels with each other. Apply this to private cases, and may we not then say of fightings and strifes among relations and neighbours, that they come from those lusts which war in their members? From lust of power and dominion, lust of pleasure, or lust of riches, from some one or more of these lusts arise all the broils and contentions that are in the world. And since all wars and fightings come from the corruptions of our own hearts, it is therefore the right method for the cure of contention to lay the axe to the root, and mortify here those lusts that war in the members.

2. It should kill these lusts to think of their disappointment; ver. 2, "Ye lust and have not, ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain." You covet great things for yourselves, and you think to obtain them by your victories over the Romans, or by suppressing this and the other party among yourselves. You think you shall secure great pleasures and happiness to yourselves by overthrowing every thing which thwarts your eager wishes. But, alas! you are losing your labour and your blood, while you kill one another with such views as these. Inordinate desires are either totally disappointed, or, however, not to be appeased and satisfied by obtaining the things desired. The words here rendered "cannot obtain," signify cannot gain the happiness sought after. Note hence, that worldly and fleshly lusts are a distemper which will not allow of contentment or satisfaction in the mind.

3. Sinful desires and affections generally exclude prayer, and the working of our desires towards God. "Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not." You fight and do not succeed, because you do not pray. You do not consult God in your undertakings, whether he allow of them or not. And you do not commit your way to him, and make known your requests to him, but follow your own corrupt views and inclinations, therefore you meet with continual disappointments. Or else,

4. Your lusts spoil your prayers, and make them an abomination to God whenever you put them up to him; ver. 3, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts;" as if it had been said, "Though perhaps you may sometimes pray for success against your enemies, yet it is not your aim to improve the advantages you gain so as to promote true piety and religion, either in yourselves or others; but pride, and vanity, and luxury, and sensuality, is what you would serve by your successes and by your very prayers. You want to live in great power and plenty, in voluptuousness and a sensual prosperity; and thus you disgrace devotion and dishonour God by such gross and base ends, and therefore your prayers are rejected."

Let us learn from hence, in the management of all our worldly affairs, and in our prayers to God for success in them, to see that our ends be right. When men follow their worldly business, (suppose them tradesmen or husbandmen,) and ask of God prosperity, but do not receive what they ask for, it is often because they ask with wrong aims and intentions. They ask God to give them success in their callings or undertakings, not that they may glorify their heavenly Father, and do good with what they have, but that they may "consume it upon their lusts;" that they may be enabled to eat better meat, and drink better drink, and wear better clothes, and so gratify their pride, and vanity, and voluptuousness. But if we thus seek the things of this world, it is just in God to deny them; whereas if we seek any thing that we may serve God with it, we may expect he will either give what we seek for, or give hearts to be content without it, and give opportunities of serving and glorifying him some other way. Let us remember this, that when we speed not in our prayers, it is because we ask amiss. Either we do not ask for right ends, or not in a right manner; not with faith, or not with fervency. Unbelieving and cold desires beg denials. And this we may be sure of, that when our prayers are rather the language of our lusts than of our graces, they will return empty.

Secondly. We have fair warning to avoid all criminal friendships with this world; ver. 4, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" [They are guilty of spiritual adultery; they break the solemn vow and covenant to be the Lord's, into which they once entered. From hence we may learn how great is their guilt.] Worldly people are here called adulterers and adulteresses, because of their perfidiousness to God, whilst they give their best affections to the world. Covetousness is elsewhere called idolatry, and it is here called adultery. It is a forsaking him to whom we are devoted and espoused, to cleave to other things. There is this brand put upon worldly-mindedness, that it is enmity to God. A man may have a competent portion of the good things of this life, and yet may keep himself in the love of God; but he that sets his heart upon the world, that places his happiness in it, and will conform himself to it, and do any thing rather than lose its friendship, he is an enemy to God. It is constructive treason and rebellion against God to set the world upon his throne in our hearts. "Whoever, therefore, would be a friend of the world is an enemy to God." He

lution knows of the Spirit of God, and of him making his habitation with men, and calling out an answering spirit in them. The *ψυχῆς* of Scripture is one for whom the *ψυχῆς* (soul) is the highest motive power of life and action; in whom the spirit, as the organ of the Divine Spirit, is suppressed, dormant—for the time as good as extinct; whom the operations of this Divine Spirit have never lifted into the region of spiritual things."

iv. 4. The best MSS. omit "ye adulterers," and Theile and

others argue it is unnecessary; for God is the Lord and husband of every soul that is his as well as of the Church, and the indignation "ye adulteresses" of the apostle applies as well to each one who forsakes his or her God as to an apostate church.

iv. 5. The quotation is not in the actual words, but the general sense of Scripture. It continues the idea above, according to De Wette, Alford, and others, thus: "The spirit that he hath placed in us jealously desireth us"—i.e., God is a jealous God over those

that will act upon this principle, to keep in the smiles of the world, and to have its continual friendship, cannot but shew himself in spirit, and in his actions too, an enemy to God. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," *Mat. vi. 24*. From hence arise wars and fightings, even from this adulterous, idolatrous love of the world, and serving of it. For what peace can there be among men so long as there is enmity towards God? Or who can fight against God and prosper? Think seriously with yourselves what the spirit of the world is, and you will find that you cannot suit yourselves to it as friends, but it must occasion your being envious and full of evil inclinations, as the generality of the world are. "Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?" *ver. 5*. The account given in the holy Scriptures of the hearts of men by nature is evil. "That their imagination is evil," only evil, and that continually," *Gen. vi. 5*. Natural corruption principally shews itself by envying; and there is a continual propensity to this. The spirit which naturally dwells in man is always producing one evil imagination or another; always enululating such as we see and converse with, and seeking those things which are possessed and enjoyed by them. Now this way of the world, affecting pomp and pleasure, and falling into strifes and quarrels for the sake of these things, is the certain consequence of being friends to the world; for there is no friendship without a oneness of spirit. And therefore Christians, to avoid contentions, must avoid the friendship of the world, and must shew that they are actuated by nobler principles, and that a nobler spirit dwelleth in them. For if we belong to God, he giveth more grace than to live and act as the generality of the world do. The spirit of the world teaches men to be churls, God teaches them to be bountiful. The spirit of the world teaches us to lay up, or lay out, for ourselves, and according to our own fancies; God teaches us to be willing to communicate to the necessities and to the comfort of others, and so as to do good to all about us according to our ability. The grace of God is contrary to the spirit of the world, and therefore the friendship of the world is to be avoided, if we pretend to be friends of God. Yea, the grace of God will correct and cure the spirit that naturally dwells in us. Where he giveth grace he giveth another spirit than that of the world.

Thirdly. We are taught to observe the difference God makes betwixt pride and humility; *ver. 6*. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." This is represented as the language of Scripture in the Old Testament. For so it is declared in the book of *Psalms*, that God "will save the afflicted people," (if their spirits be suited to their condition,) "but will bring down high looks," *Psa. xlii. 7*. And in the book of *Proverbs* it is said, "He scorneth the scornors, and giveth grace unto the lowly," *Prov. iii. 34*. Two things are here to be observed, 1. The disgrace cast upon the proud. God resists them; the original word, *avresaserai*, signifies God setting himself as in battle array against them. And can there be a greater disgrace than for God to proclaim a man a rebel, an enemy, a traitor to his crown and dignity, and to proceed against him as such? The proud resisteth God. In his understanding he resisteth the truths of God, in his will he resisteth the laws of God, in his passions he resisteth the providence of God, and therefore no wonder that God sets himself against the proud. Let proud spirits hear this and tremble; God resists them. Who can describe the wretched state of those that make God their enemy? He will certainly fill the faces of such with shame, sooner or later, as have filled their hearts with pride. We should therefore resist pride in our hearts, if we would not have God to resist us.

2. Observe the honour and help God gives to the humble. Grace, as opposed to disgrace, is honour; this God gives to the humble. And where God gives grace to the humble, there he will give all other graces; and, as in the beginning of this sixth verse, he will give more grace. Wherever God gives true grace, he will give more. For to him that hath, and useth what he hath aright, more shall be given. He will especially give more grace to the humble, because they see their need of it, will pray for it, and be thankful for it, and such shall have it. For this reason,

Fourthly. We are taught to submit ourselves entirely to God: *ver. 7*, "Submit yourselves therefore to God: resist the devil and he will flee from you." Christians should forsake the friendship of the world, and watch against that envy and pride which they see prevailing in natural men, and should, by grace, learn to glory in their submissions to God. "Submit yourselves" to him as subjects to their prince in duty, and as one friend to another in love and interest. Submit your understandings to the truths of God, submit your wills to the will of God, the will of his precept, the will of his providence. We are subjects, and as such must be submissive, not only through fear, but through love; not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. Submit yourselves to God, as considering how many ways you are bound to this, and as considering what advantage you will gain by it. For God will not hurt you by his dominion over you, but will do you good. Now, as this subjection and submission to God is what the devil most industriously strives to hinder, so we ought with great care and steadiness to resist his suggestions. If he would represent a tame yielding to the will and providence of God as what will bring calamities, and expose to contempt and misery, we must resist those suggestions of fear. If he would represent submission to God as a hindrance to our outward ease, or worldly preferments, we must resist these suggestions of pride and sloth. If he would tempt us to lay any of our miseries, and crosses, and afflictions to the charge of providence, so as that we might avoid them by following his directions instead of God's, we must resist these provocations to anger, not "fretting ourselves in anywise to do evil." Let not the devil, in these or the like attempts, prevail upon you; but resist him, and he will flee from you. If we basely yield to temptations, the devil will continually follow us; but if we put on the whole armour of God, and stand it out against him, he will be gone from us. Resolution shuts and bolts the door against temptation.

Fifthly. We are directed how to carry it towards God in our becoming submissive to him, *ver. 8* and *10*.

1. "Draw nigh to God." The heart that has rebelled must be brought to the foot of God; the spirit that was distant, and estranged from a life of communion and converse with God, must become acquainted with him. Draw nigh to God in his worship and institutions, and in every duty he requires of you.

2. "Cleanse your hands." He that comes unto God must have clean hands. St. Paul therefore directs to "lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting," *1 Tim. ii. 8*; hands free from blood, and bribes, and every thing that is unjust or cruel, and free from every defilement of sin. He is not subject to God who is a servant of sin. The hands must be cleansed by faith, repentance, and reformation, or it will be in vain for us to draw nigh to God in prayer, or in any of the exercises of devotion.

3. The hearts of the world are here meant by "the double-minded." To purify the heart is to be sincere, and to act upon this single aim and principle, rather to please God than to seek after any thing in this world. Hypocrisy is heart impurity; but they who submit themselves to God aright will purify their hearts as well as cleanse their hands.

4. "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep." What afflictions God sends, take them as he would have you, and be duly sensible of them. "Be afflicted" when afflictions are sent upon you, and do not despise them. Or, "be afflicted" in your sympathies with those that are so, and in laying to heart the calamities of the

whom he has united to himself, and will not suffer them to be friends with his enemies—to forsake him for them. "The apostle is speaking of the eager and jealous love of God towards those whom he has united, as it were, in a bond of marriage with himself."

iv. 10. Conclusion of the exhortation arising from the knowledge of God's jealous love for his people. Submit, draw near to him; humble yourselves, and he shall exalt you.

iv. 11, 12. The apostle proceeds to show that evil-speaking arises

church of God. "Mourn and weep" for your own sins, and the sins of others. Times of contention and division are times to mourn in; and the sins that occasion wars and fightings should be mourned for. "Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." This may be taken either as a prediction of sorrow or a prescription of seriousness. Let men think to set grief at defiance, yet God can bring it upon them. None laugh so heartily but he can turn their laughter into mourning. And this the unconcerned Christians St. James wrote to are threatened should be their case. They are therefore directed, before things come to the worst, to lay aside their vain mirth, and their sensual pleasures, that they might indulge in godly sorrow and penitential tears.

5. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord." Let the inward acts of the soul be suitable to all those outward expressions of grief, affliction, and sorrow before mentioned. Humility of spirit is here required, as in the sight of him who looks principally at the spirits of men. Let there be thorough humiliation in a bewailing every thing that is evil; let there be great humility in doing that which is good. Humble yourselves.

Sixthly. We have great encouragement to carry it thus towards God. He will draw nigh to them that draw nigh to him, *ver. 8*; and he will lift up those that humble themselves in his sight, *ver. 10*. Those that draw nigh to God in a way of duty shall find God drawing nigh to them in a way of mercy. Draw nigh to him in faith, and trust, and obedience, and he will draw nigh to you for your deliverance. If there be not a close communion between God and us, it is our fault, and not his. He shall lift up the humble. Thus much our Lord himself declared, "He that shall humble himself shall be exalted," *Mat. xxiii. 12*. If we are truly penitent and humble under the marks of God's displeasure, we shall in a little time know the advantages of his favour. He will lift us up out of trouble, or he will lift us up in our spirits and comforts under trouble. He will lift us up to honour and safety in the world, or he will lift us up in our way to heaven, so as to raise our hearts and affections above the world. "God will revive the spirit of the humble," *Isa. lvii. 15*; and he "will hear the desire of the humble," *Psa. x. 17*; and he will at last lift them up to glory. Before honour is humility. The highest honour in heaven will be the reward of the greatest humility on earth.

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He

that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his

brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the

law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer

of the law, but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver,

who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou

that judgest another? 13 Go to now, ye that say,

To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and

continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get



EASTERN BAZAAR.

gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. 16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. 17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

In this part of the chapter we are, First. Cautioned against the sin of evil speaking; *ver. 11*, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren." The Greek word *καταλαλετε* signifies speaking any thing that may hurt or injure another. We must not speak evil things of others, though they are true, unless we be called to it, and there be some necessary occasion for it. Much less must we report evil things when they are false, or,

from the same cause as those fightings and lustings before reprobated—viz., self-exaltation (*verse 6*). "Judgeth the law:" i.e., pronounces upon its observance by others, and so sets himself up above both his brother and the law. "Such a one acts as though the law could not perform its own office of judging" (*Bengel*). "There is one lawgiver and judge" (so the best MSS.); he can and will judge and execute judgment. "It is not for us to judge, especially as we cannot carry out our judgment" (*Bengel*).

for aught we know, may be so. Our lips must be guided by the law of kindness, as well as truth and justice. This, which Solomon makes a necessary part of the character of his virtuous woman, that she "openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness," *Pr. xxxi. 26*, must needs be a part of the character of every true Christian. "Speak not evil one of another."

1. Because ye are "brethren." The compellation, as used by the apostle here, carries an argument along with it. Since Christians are brethren, they should not revile or defame one another. It is required of us that we be tender of the good name of our brethren. Where we cannot speak well, we had better say nothing than speak evil. We must not take pleasure in making known the faults of others, divulging things that are secret merely to expose them; nor in making more of their known faults than really they deserve; and least of all in making false stories, and spreading things concerning them of which they are altogether innocent. What is this but to raise the hatred and encourage the persecutions of the world against those who are engaged in the same interests with yourselves, and therefore with whom you yourselves must stand or fall? Consider, ye are brethren.

2. Speak not evil one of another, because this is to judge the law. "He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law." The law of Moses says, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people," *Lev. xix. 16*. The law of Christ is, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," *Mat. vii. 1*. The sum and substance of both is, that men should "love one another." A detracting tongue, therefore, condemns the law of God, and the commandment of Christ, when it is defaming its neighbour. To break God's commandments is, in effect, to speak evil of them, and to judge them, as if they were too strict, and laid too great a restraint upon us. The Christians to whom St. James wrote were apt to speak very hard and ill things of one another, because of their differences about indifferent things, (such as the observance of meats and days, as appears from *Rom. xiv.*) Now, says the apostle, he that censures and condemns his brother for not agreeing with him in those things which the law of God has left indifferent, thereby censures and condemns the law as if it had done him in leaving them indifferent. He that quarrels with his brother, and condemns him for the sake of any thing not determined in the word of God, does thereby reflect on that word of God as if it were not a perfect rule. Let us take heed of judging the law, for the law of the Lord is perfect. If men break the law, leave that to judge them; if they do not break it, let not us judge them. This is a heinous evil, because it is to forget our place, that we ought to be doers of the law; and it is to set up ourselves above it, as if we were to be judges of it. He that is guilty of the sin here cautioned against is "not a doer of the law, but a judge." He assumes an office and place that does not belong to him, and he will be sure to suffer for it in the end. Those that are most ready to set up for judges of the law generally fail most in their obedience to it.

3. Speak not evil one of another, because God the lawgiver has reserved the power of passing the final sentence on men wholly to himself; ver. 12. "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who art thou that judgest another?" Princes and states are not excluded by what is here said from making laws, nor are subjects at all encouraged to disobey human laws; but God is still to be acknowledged as the supreme lawgiver, who only can give law to the conscience, and who alone is to be absolutely obeyed. His right to enact laws is incontestable, because he has such power to enforce them. He "is able to save and to destroy" so as none other can. He has power fully to reward the observance of his laws, and to punish all disobedience. He can save the soul, and make it happy for ever; or he can, after he has killed, cast into hell, and therefore should be feared and obeyed as the great lawgiver, and all judgment should be committed to him. Since there is one lawgiver, we may infer that it is not for any man, or company of men in the world, to pretend to give laws immediately to bind conscience; for that is God's prerogative, which must not be invaded. As the apostle had before warned against being many masters, so here he cautions against being many judges. Let us not prescribe to our brethren, let us not censure and condemn them. It is sufficient that we have the law of God, which is a rule to us all, and therefore we should not set up other rules. Let us not presume to set up our own particular notions and opinions as a rule to all about us. "There is one lawgiver," &c.

Secondly, we are cautioned against a presumptuous confidence of the continuance of our lives, and against forming projects thereupon with assurance of success, ver. 13, 14. The apostle having reproved those who were judges and condemners of the law, now reproves such as were disregarding of providence. "Go to, now." An old way of speaking, designed to engage attention. The Greek word may be rendered, 'Behold, now!' or 'See, and consider!' Ye that say, "To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain;" reflect a little on this way of thinking and talking; call yourselves to account for it. Serious reflection on our words and ways would shew us many evils that we are apt through inadvertency to run into, and continue in. There were some that said of old, as too many say still, "We will go to such a city," and do this or that for such a term of time, whilst all serious regards to the disposals of providence were neglected. Observe here,

1. How apt worldly and projecting men are to leave God out of their schemes. Where any are set upon earthly things, these have a strange power of engrossing the thoughts and the heart. We should therefore have a care of growing intent or eager in our pursuits after any thing here below.

2. How much of a worldly happiness lies in the promises men make to themselves beforehand. Their heads are full of fine visions as to what they shall do, and be, and enjoy, in some future time, when they can neither be sure of time, nor of any of the advantages they promise themselves. Therefore observe,

3. How vain a thing it is to look for any thing good in futurity, without the concurrence of Providence. "We will go to such a city," say they, perhaps to Antioch, or Damascus, or Alexandria, which were then the great places for traffic. But how could they be sure when they set out that they should reach any of these cities? Something might possibly stop their way, or call them elsewhere, or cut the thread of life. Many that have set out on a journey have gone to their long home, and never reached their journey's end. But suppose they should reach the city they designed, how did they know they should continue there? Something might happen to send them back, or to call them from hence, and to shorten their stay. Or suppose they should stay the full time they proposed, yet they could not be certain that they should buy and sell there. Perhaps they might lie sick there, or they might not meet with those to trade with whom they expected. Yea, suppose they should go to that city, and "continue there a year," and should "buy and sell," yet they might not "get gain." Getting of gain in this world is at best but an uncertain thing; and they might probably make more losing bargains than gainful ones. And then, as to all these particulars, the frailty, and shortness, and uncertainty of life, ought to check the vanity and presumptuous confidence of such projectors for futurity; ver. 14. "What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." God hath wisely left us in the dark concerning future events, and even concerning the duration of life itself. "We know not what shall be on the morrow." We may know what we intend to do, and to be, but a thousand things may happen to prevent us. We are not sure

of life itself, since it is but as "a vapour;" something in appearance, but nothing solid or certain; easily scattered and gone. We can fix the hour and minute of the sun's rising and setting to-morrow, but we cannot fix the certain time of a vapour's being scattered; such is our life; "It appears but for a little time, and then vanisheth away." It vanisheth as to this world, but there is a life that will continue in the other world; and, since this life is so uncertain, it concerns us all to prepare and lay up in store for that to come.

Thirdly, We are taught to keep up a constant sense of our dependence on the will of God for life, and all the actions and enjoyments of it; "Ye ought to say, If the Lord will we shall live, and do this or that," ver. 15. The apostle, having reproved them for what was amiss, now directs them how to be and do better: "Ye ought to say it in your hearts at all times, and with your tongues upon proper occasions, especially in your constant prayers and devotions, that if the Lord will give leave, and if he will own and bless you, that you have such and such designs to accomplish. This must be said, not in a slight, and formal, and customary way, but so as to think what we say, and so as to be reverent and serious in what we say. It is good to express ourselves thus when we have to do with others, but it is indispensably requisite that we should say this to ourselves in all that we go about. *Σὺν ὁρῶν*," with the leave and blessing of God, was used by the Greeks in the beginning of every undertaking.

1. "If the Lord will, we shall live." We must remember that our times are not in our own hands, but at the disposal of God. We live as long as God appoints, and in the circumstances God appoints, and therefore must be submissive to him, even as to life itself; and then,

2. "If the Lord will, we shall do this or that." All our actions and designs are under the control of heaven. Our heads may be filled with cares and contrivances; this and the other thing we may propose to do for ourselves, or our families, or our friends; but providence sometimes breaks all our measures, and throws our schemes into confusion. Therefore both our counsels for action and our conduct in action should be entirely referred to God; all we design and all we do should be with a submissive dependence on God.

Fourthly, We are directed to avoid vain boasting, and to look upon it not only as a weak, but a very evil thing; "Ye rejoice in your boastings; all such rejoicing is evil," ver. 16. They promised themselves life and prosperity, and great things in the world, without any just regards to God; and then they boasted of these things. Such is the joy of worldly people, to boast of all their successes, yea, many times to boast of their very projects before they know what success they shall have. How common is it for men to boast of things which they have no other title to but what arises from their own vanity and presumption! "Such rejoicing," says the apostle, "is evil;" it is foolish and it is hurtful. For men to boast of worldly things, and of their aspiring projects, when they should be attending to the humbling duties before laid down in ver. 8—10, is a very ill thing. It is a great sin in God's account; it will bring great disappointments upon themselves, and it will prove their destruction in the end. If we rejoice in God that our times are in his hand, that all events are at his disposal, and that he is our God in covenant, this rejoicing is good; the wisdom, power, and providence of God are then concerned to make all things work together for our good. But if we rejoice in our own vain confidences and presumptuous boasts, this is evil; it is an evil carefully to be avoided by all wise and good men.

Fifthly, We are taught, in the whole of our conduct, to act up to our own convictions; and whether we have to do with God or men, to see that we never go contrary to our own knowledge; ver. 17. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." It is aggravated sin, it is sinning with a witness; and it is to have the worst witness against a man that can be, when he sins against his own conscience. Observe,

1. This stands immediately connected with the plain lesson of saying, "If the Lord will, we shall do this or that." They might be ready to say, "This is a very obvious thing; who knows not that we all depend upon Almighty God for life, and breath, and all things? Remember, then, if you do know this, that whenever you carry it unsuitably to such a dependence, 'to him that knoweth to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin,' the greater sin." Observe again,

2. Omissions are sins that will come into judgment, as well as commissions. He that does not the good he knows should be done, as well as he who does the evil he knows should not be done, will be condemned. Let us, therefore, take care that conscience be rightly informed, and then that it be faithfully and constantly obeyed; for, if "our own hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God;" but if we say, "We see," and do not act suitably to our sight, then our "sin remaineth," *Jno. ix. 41*.

CHAPTER V.

In this chapter the apostle denounces the judgments of God upon those rich men that oppress the poor; shewing them how great their sin and folly is in the sight of God; and how grievous the punishments would be which should fall upon themselves, ver. 1—6. Hereupon all the faithful are exhorted to patience under their trials and sufferings, ver. 7—11; the sin of swearing is cautioned against, ver. 12; we are directed how to carry it both under affliction and in prosperity, ver. 13; prayer for the sick, and anointing with oil, are prescribed, ver. 14, 15; Christians are directed to acknowledge their faults one to another, and to pray one for another, and the efficacy of prayer is proved, ver. 16—18. And lastly, it is recommended to us to do what we can for the reducing of them that stray from the ways of truth, ver. 19, 20.



O to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.

Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. 4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are

iv. 14. Not as in Authorised Version, according to MSS., but "For what is your life? for ye are a vapour, &c.," as if the apostle would add force to his depreciation of their pride: "Ye yourselves are only a vapour; your life is certainly not more enduring."

iv. 17. The general principle that the last example illustrated is here stated—viz., that knowledge without practice is imputed to men as sin.

v. 3. "The rust of them shall be a witness against you:" rust does not happen to gold and silver; but these are here used generally to denote wealth. The apostle seems to intend a warning against three evil courses connected with riches: hoarding (verses 2, 3), defrauding to obtain riches (verse 4), wasting in riotous living (verse 5).

v. 4. This is the only passage in the New Testament where "the Lord of Sabaoth"—i.e., "of hosts"—is used. The Jewish character of the epistle accounts for this; *Rom. ix. 29* is a quotation.

entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. 5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. 6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. 7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. 9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. 10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. 11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

The apostle is here addressing first sinners, and then saints.

First, Let us consider the address to sinners; and here we find St. James seconding what his great Master had said, "Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation," *Lu. vi. 24*. The rich people, to whom this word of warning was sent, were not such as professed the Christian religion, but the worldly and unbelieving Jews, such as are here said to condemn and kill the just, which the Christians had no power to do; and though this epistle was written for the sake of the faithful, and was sent principally to them, yet, by an apostrophe, the infidel Jews may be well supposed here spoken to. They would not hear the word, and therefore it is written, that they might read it. It is observable, in the inscription of this epistle, that it is not directed, as Paul's epistles were, "to the brethren in Christ," but, in general, "to the twelve tribes;" and the salutation is not, "grace and peace from Christ," but, in general, "greeting," *ch. i. 1*. The poor among the Jews received the Gospel, and many of them believed; but the generality of the rich rejected Christianity, and were hardened in their unbelief, and hated and persecuted those who believed on Christ. To these oppressing, unbelieving, persecuting, rich people, the apostle directs himself in the first six verses.

1. He foretells the judgments of God that should come upon them, *ver. 1-3*. They should have miseries come upon them, and such dreadful miseries that the very apprehension of them was enough to make them weep and howl—misery that should arise from the very things in which they placed their happiness, and misery that should be completed by these things witnessing against them at the last, to their utter destruction; and they are now called to reason upon and thoroughly to weigh the matter, and to think how they will stand before God in judgment; "Go to now, ye rich men."

1st. You may be assured of this, that very dreadful calamities are coming upon you, calamities that shall carry nothing of support nor comfort in them, but all misery, misery in time, misery to eternity, misery in your outward afflictions, misery in your inward frame and temper of mind, misery in this world, misery in hell. You have not a single instance of misery only coming upon you, but miseries. The ruin of your church and nation is at hand; and there will come a day of wrath, when riches shall not profit men, but all the wicked shall be destroyed.

2nd. The very apprehension of such miseries as were coming upon them is enough to make them weep and howl. Rich men are apt to say to themselves, and others are ready to say to them, "Eat, drink, and be merry;" but God says, "Weep and howl!" It is not said, Weep and repent, for this the apostle does not expect from them, (he speaks in a way of denouncing rather than admonishing); but, "Weep and howl," for when your doom comes there will be nothing but weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Those who live like beasts are called to howl like such. Public calamities are most grievous to rich people, who live in pleasure, and are secure and sensual; and therefore they shall weep and howl more than other people, for the miseries that shall come upon them.

["Miseries," &c. It is highly probable that the apostle here refers to those tremendous judgments which our Lord predicted were about to come upon Jerusalem and the Jewish people, and which were inflicted soon after this epistle was written. All the hoarded treasures of the rich would be worse than useless to them in that day of rebuke. "The enumeration of the various kinds of wealth," says Bishop Jebb, "is a poetical amplification, containing also a climax. Three kinds of wealth are intended: 1. Stores of corn, wine, oil, &c., liable to putrefaction; 2. Wardrobes of rich garments, among the ancients a chief part of their riches, and proverbially the prey of the moth; 3. Treasures of gold and silver, liable to rust, or at least to change colour. The rust or tarnishing of the precious metals rising as a witness against avaricious hoarders, is a noble figure; and the terror is greatly heightened when it is described as a fire eating their very vitals.]

3rd. Their misery shall arise from the very things in which they placed their happiness. Corruption, decay, rust, and ruin, will come upon all your goodly things; *ver. 2*, "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten." These things, which you now inordinately affect, will hereafter insupportably wound you. They will be of no worth, of no use to you, but, on the contrary, they will pierce you through with many sorrows.

For, 4th. "They will witness against you, and they will eat your flesh, as it were fire," *ver. 3*. Things inanimate are frequently represented in Scripture as witnessing against wicked men. Heaven, earth, the stones of the field, the productions of the ground, and here the very rust and canker of ill-gotten and ill-kept treasures, are said to witness against impious rich men. They think to heap up treasure for their last days, to live plentifully upon them when they come to be old; but, alas! they are only heaping up treasures to become a prey to others, (as the Jews had all taken from them by the Romans,) and treasures

that will prove at last to be only treasures of wrath, in "the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Then shall their iniquities, in the punishment of them, eat their flesh as it were fire. In the ruin of Jerusalem, many thousands perished by fire. In the last judgment the wicked shall be condemned to "everlasting burnings, prepared for the devil and his angels." The Lord deliver us from the portion of wicked rich men! And in order to this, let us take care that we do not fall into their sins, which we are next to consider.

2. The apostle shews what those sins are which should bring such miseries. To be in so deplorable a condition must doubtless be owing to some very heinous crimes.

1st. Covetousness is laid to the charge of this people. They laid by their garments till they bred moths, and were eaten. They hoarded up their gold and silver till they were rusty and cankered. It is a very great disgrace to these things that they carry in them the principles of their own corruption and consumption; the garment breeds the moth that frets it; the gold and silver breeds the canker that eats it. But the disgrace falls most heavily upon those who hoard and lay up these things till they come to be thus corrupted, and cankered, and eaten. God gives us our worldly possessions that we may honour him and do good with them; but if, instead of that, we sinfully hoard them up, through an undue affection toward them, or a distrust of the providence of God for the future, this is a very heinous crime, and will be witnessed against by the very rust and corruption of the treasure thus heaped together.

2nd. Another sin charged upon those against whom St. James writes, is oppression; *ver. 4*, "Behold the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth," &c.

["The hire of the labourers," &c. This is an awful word to all oppressors of the poor, and especially to those in Christian lands who hold their fellow-men in bondage, robbing them not only of the fruits of their labour, but even of their persons.]

Those that have wealth in their hands get power into their hands, and then they are tempted to abuse that power to oppress such as are under them. The rich we here find employing the poor in their labours; and the rich have as much need of the labours of the poor as the poor have of wages from the rich, and could as ill be without them; but yet, not considering this, they kept back the hire of the labourers. Having power in their hands, it is probable they made as hard bargains with the poor as they could; and even after that would not make good their bargain, as they should have done. This is a crying sin, an iniquity that cries so as to reach the ears of God. And in this case God is to be considered as "the Lord of sabaoth," or "the Lord of hosts,"

Κυριος σαβαωθ,—a phrase often used in the Old Testament when the people of God were defenceless, and wanted protection, and when their enemies were numerous and powerful. The Lord of hosts, who has all ranks of beings and creatures at his disposal, and who sets all in their several places, he hears the oppressed when they cry by reason of the cruelty or injustice of the oppressor, and he will give orders to some of those hosts that are under him, (angels, devils, storms, distempers, or the like,) to avenge the wrongs done to those who are dealt with unrighteously and unmercifully. Take heed of this sin of defrauding and oppressing, and avoid the very appearances of it.

3rd. Another sin here mentioned is, sensuality and voluptuousness; *ver. 5*, "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton," &c. God does not forbid us to use pleasures; but to live in them as if we lived for nothing else is a very provoking sin; and to do this on the earth, where we are but strangers and pilgrims, where we are to continue but for awhile, and where we ought to be preparing for eternity, this, this is a grievous aggravation of the sin of voluptuousness. Luxury makes people wanton, as in *Hos. xiii. 6*, "According to their pasture so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me." Wantonness and luxury are commonly the effects of great plenty and abundance. It is hard for people to have great estates and not too much indulge themselves in carnal, sensual pleasures; "Ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter." Ye live as if it was every day a day of sacrifices, a festival; and hereby your hearts are fattened and nourished to stupidity, and dulness, and pride, and an insensibility of the wants and afflictions of others. Why, some may say, What harm is there in good cheer, provided people do not spend above what they have? What! is it no harm for people to make gods of their bellies, and to give all to these, instead of abounding in acts of charity and piety? Is it no harm for people to unfit themselves for minding the concerns of their souls, by indulging the appetites of their bodies? Surely that which brought flames upon Sodom, and would bring these miseries, for which rich men are here called to weep and howl, must be a heinous evil. Pride, and idleness, and fulness of bread, mean the same thing with living in pleasure, and being wanton, and nourishing the heart as in a day of slaughter.

4th. Another sin here charged on the rich was persecution; *ver. 6*, "Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you." This fills up the measure of their iniquity. They oppressed and acted very unjustly to get estates; when they had them they gave way to luxury and sensuality till they had lost all sense and feeling of others' wants or afflictions, and then they persecute and kill without remorse. They pretend to act legally, indeed; they condemn before they kill. But unjust persecutions, whatever colour of law they may carry in them, will come into the reckoning when God shall make inquisition for blood, as well as massacres and downright murders. Observe here, that the just may be condemned and killed. But then again observe, that when such do suffer, and without resistance yield to the unjust sentence of oppressors, that this is marked by God to the honour of the sufferers and the infamy of their persecutors. This commonly shews that judgments are at the door; and we may certainly conclude that a reckoning day will come to reward the piety of the oppressed and to break to pieces the oppressor. Thus far the address to sinners goes.

Secondly. We have next subjoined an address to saints. Some have been ready to despise or to condemn this way of preaching, when ministers in their application have brought a word to sinners and a word to saints; but from the apostle's here taking this method we may conclude that this is the best way rightly to divide the word of truth. From what has been said concerning wicked and oppressing rich men, occasion is given to administer comfort to God's afflicted people. Be patient, therefore, since God will send such miseries on the wicked. You may see what is your duty, and where your greatest encouragement lies.

1. Attend to your duty. "Be patient," *ver. 7*; "Stablish your hearts," *ver. 8*; "Grudge not one against another, brethren," *ver. 9*. Consider well the meaning of these three expressions.

1st. "Be patient." Bear your afflictions without murmuring, your injuries without revenge; and though God should not in any signal manner appear for you immediately, wait for him. "The vision is for an appointed time; at the end it will speak, and will not lie: therefore wait for it. It is but a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Let your patience be lengthened out to long-suffering, as the word here used, *μακροθυμια*, signifies. When we have done our work we have need of patience to stay for our reward. This Christian patience is not a mere yielding to necessity, as the moral patience taught by some philosophers was; but it is a humble acquiescing in the wisdom and will of God, with an eye to a future glorious recompence; "Be patient

the curtain falls. Be patient, brethren, wait" (Herder, quoted by Wiesinger).

v. 7—11. Suffering believers must patiently wait for the Lord's coming, who will exalt them and reward their trustful patience.

v. 12. "Swear not," through impatience to which trials may tempt you.

v. 15. "Shall save the sick;" i.e., from his sickness. "And if he have," &c.: i.e., if he is suffering on account of certain sins com-

v. 5. "As" is omitted by best MSS. "In a day of slaughter:" i.e., instead of preparing for the future, they had lived careless of death, which must soon come. "They are like flocks which, up to the very day of slaughter, feed themselves and feast, joyful and careless" (Theile).

v. 6. "He doth not resist you:" "This last clause serves as a note of transition to what follows" (Alford). "Thus we have standing before us the slain and unresisting righteous man, when, lo!

to the coming of the Lord." And because this is a lesson Christians must learn, though never so hard or difficult to them, it is repeated in the 8th verse, "Be ye also patient."

2nd. "Stablish your hearts." Let your faith be firm without wavering, your practice of what is good constant, and continued without tiring; and your resolutions for God and heaven fixed, in spite of all sufferings or temptations. The prosperity of the wicked and the affliction of the righteous have in all ages been a very great trial to the faith of the people of God. David tells us that "his feet were almost gone, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked." *Ps. lxxiii. 2.* And some of those Christians to whom St. James wrote might probably be in the same tottering condition, and therefore they are called upon to establish their hearts. Faith and patience will establish the heart.

3rd. "Grudge not one against another." These words signify, "Grieve not one against another," *μη στυγέετε*; that is, do not make one another uneasy by your murmuring groans at what befalls you, or by your distrustful groans as to what may farther come upon you, or by your revengeful groans against the instruments of your sufferings, or by your envious groans at those who may be free from your calamities. Do not make yourselves uneasy, and make one another uneasy, by thus groaning to and grieving one another. "The apostle seemeth to me," says Dr. Manton, "to be here taxing those mutual injuries and animosities wherewith the Christians of those times, having banded under the names of circumcision and uncircumcision, did grieve one another, and give each other cause to groan; so that they did not only sigh under the oppressions of the rich persecutors, but under the injuries which they sustained from many of the brethren, who, together with them, did profess the holy faith." Those who are in the midst of common enemies, and in any suffering circumstances, should be more especially careful not to grieve or to groan against one another, otherwise judgments will come upon them as well as others; and the more such grudgings prevail the nearer do they shew judgment to be.

2. Consider what encouragement here is for Christians to be patient, to establish their hearts, and not to grudge one against another. And,

1st. Look to the example of the husbandman. He "waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." When you sow your corn in the ground, you wait many months for the former and latter rain, and are willing to stay till harvest for the fruit of your labour; and shall not this teach you to bear a few storms, and to be patient for a season, when you are looking for a kingdom, and everlasting felicity? Consider him that waits for a crop of corn, and will not you wait for a crown of glory? If you should be called to wait a little longer than the husbandman does, is it not something proportionably greater, and infinitely more worth your waiting for? But,

2nd. Think how short your waiting time may possibly be; ver. 8, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh," and ver. 9, "Behold the Judge standeth before the door." Do not be impatient, do not quarrel with one another; the great Judge, who will set all to rights, who will punish the wicked and reward the good, is at hand. He should be conceived by you to stand as near as one that is just knocking at the door. The coming of the Lord to punish the wicked Jews was then very nigh, when St. James wrote this epistle. And whenever the patience and other graces of his people are tried in an extraordinary manner, the certainty of Christ's coming as Judge, and the nearness of it, should establish their hearts. The Judge is now a great deal nearer in his coming to judge the world than when this epistle was written; nearer by one thousand seven hundred [one thousand eight hundred] years almost; and therefore this should have the greater effect upon us. [Christ's second coming is an argument for walking in all holy conversation, of which all the apostles, in all their epistles, make great use. The believer should have it constantly before him, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.]

3rd. The danger of our being condemned when the Judge appears should excite us to mind our duty as before laid down. "Grudge not, lest ye be condemned." Fretfulness and discontent expose us to the just judgment of God, and we bring more calamities upon ourselves by our murmuring, distrustful, envious groans, and grudgings against one another, than we are aware of. If we avoid these evils, and be patient under our trials, God will not condemn us. Let us encourage ourselves with this.

4th. We are encouraged to be patient, by the example of the prophets; ver. 10, "Take the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience." Observe here, that the prophets, on whom God put the greatest honour, and for whom he had the greatest favour, yet were most afflicted. And when we think that the best men have had the hardest usage in this world, we should hereby be reconciled to affliction. Observe farther, that those who were the greatest examples of suffering affliction are also the best and greatest examples of patience. Tribulation worketh patience. Hereupon St. James gives it us as the common sense of the faithful; ver. 11, "We count them happy which endure." We look upon righteous and patient sufferers as the happiest people: see *ch. i. 2-12*.

5th. Job also is proposed as an example, for the encouragement of the afflicted; ver. 11, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord," &c. In the case of Job you have an instance of a variety of miseries, and of such as were very grievous; but under all he could bless God, and as to the general bent of his spirit he was patient and humble. And what came to him in the end? Why, truly God accomplished and brought about those things for him that plainly prove "the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." The best way to bear afflictions is to look to the end of them; and the pity of God is such that he will not delay the bringing them to an end, when his purposes are once answered; and the tender mercy of God is such, that he will make his people an abundant amends for all their sufferings and afflictions. His bowels are moved for them whilst suffering, his bounty is manifested afterward. Let us serve our God, and endure our trials, as those that believe; the end will crown all.

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation. 13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. 14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up:

mitted by him, these shall be forgiven him, as well as his sickness be healed. The application of this whole passage, or any part of it, to the rite of extreme unction is, as Cardinal Cajetan admits, impossible. Extreme unction is administered to the actually dying, to save the soul; St. James's unction was to heal the body, when accompanied by faithful prayer.

v. 16. "Confess your faults one to another:" here there is no sanction given to auricular or sacramental confession. As Cajetan

and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 16 Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that he may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. 17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. 19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

This epistle now drawing to a close, the penman goes off very quick from one thing to another. Hence it is that matters so very different are insisted on in these few verses.

First. The sin of swearing is cautioned against; ver. 12, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not," &c. Some understand this too strictly, as if the meaning was, "Swear not at your persecutors," at those that reproach you, and say all manner of evil of you; be not put into a passion by the injuries they do you, so as in your passion to be provoked to swear." This swearing is no doubt forbidden here; and it will not excuse those that are guilty of this sin, to say they swear only when they are provoked to it, and before they are aware. But the apostle's warning extends to other occasions of swearing as well as this. Some have translated the words, *πρὸ πάντων*,—"before all things;" and so have made the sense of this place to be, that they should not in common conversation, before every thing they say, put an oath. All customary, needless swearing is undoubtedly forbidden, and all along in Scripture condemned as a very grievous sin. Profane swearing was very customary among the Jews; and since this epistle is directed in general to "the twelve tribes scattered abroad," (as before has been observed,) we may conceive this exhortation sent to those who believed not. It is hard to suppose that swearing should be one of the spots of God's children; since Peter, when he was charged with being a disciple of Christ, and would disprove the charge, cursed and swore, thereby thinking most effectually to convince them that he was no disciple of Jesus, it being well known of such, that they durst not allow themselves in swearing. But possibly some of the looser sort of them that were called Christians might, amongst other sins here charged upon them, be guilty also of this. And it is a sin that in later years has most scandalously prevailed, even amongst those that would be thought above all others entitled to the Christian name and privileges. It is very rare indeed to hear of a dissenter from the Church of England who is guilty of swearing; but amongst those who glory in their being of the established church nothing more common; and indeed, the most execrable oaths and curses now daily wound the ears and hearts of all serious Christians. [So the original commentators. It is hoped that there is now less swearing even among members of the established church. But whether in or out of the establishment, all require to take heed to the exhortation which follows.] St. James here says, "above all things swear not;" but how many are there that mind this the least of all things, and that make light of nothing so much as common profane swearing! But why, "above all things," is swearing here forbidden? Because it strikes most directly at the honour of God, and most expressly throws contempt upon his name and authority. Because this sin has, of all others, the least temptation to it; it is neither gain, nor pleasure, nor reputation, that can move men to it, but a wantonness in sinning, and a needless shewing an enmity to God. "Thine enemies take thy name in vain," *Ps. cxxxix. 20.* This is a proof of men's being enemies to God, however they may pretend to call themselves by his name, or sometimes to compliment him in acts of worship. Because it is a sin that is most hardly left off when once men are accustomed to it, therefore it should, above all others, be watched against. And, once more, "above all things swear not;" for how can you expect the name of God should be a strong tower to you in your distress if you profane it, and play with it at other times? But (as Mr. Baxter observes) "All this is so far from forbidding necessary oaths, that it is but to confirm them, by preserving the due reverence of them." And then he farther notes, "That the true nature of an oath is, by our speech, to pawn the reputation of some certain or great thing, for the averring of a doubted lesser thing; and not (as is commonly held) an appeal to God, or other judge." Hence it was that swearing by the heavens, and by the earth, and by the other oaths the apostle refers to, came to be in use. The Jews thought, if they did but omit the great oath of "Chi Elohah," they were safe. But they grew so profane as to swear by the creature as if it was God; and so advanced it into the place of God. While, on the other hand, they that swear commonly and profanely by the name of God do hereby put him upon the level with every common thing. "But let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest you fall into condemnation;" that is, let it suffice you to affirm or deny a thing, as there is occasion; and be sure to stand to your word, and be true to it, so as to give no occasion for your being suspected of falsehood; and then you will be kept from the condemnation of backing what you say or promise by rash oaths, and from profaning the name of God to justify yourselves. It is being suspected of falsehood that leads men to swearing. Let it be known that you keep to truth, and are firm to your word, and by this means you will find there is no need to swear to what you say. Thus shall you escape the condemnation which is expressly annexed to the third commandment; "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." [The Christian, above all others, should be one upon whose simple word the utmost reliance can be placed; his yea should be yea, and his nay, nay; that is, what he affirms should be true, what he denies false.]

Secondly. As Christians we are taught to suit ourselves to the dispensations of Providence; ver. 13, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." Our condition in this world is various; and our wisdom is to submit to its being so, and to carry it as becomes us, both in prosperity and under affliction. Sometimes we are in sadness, sometimes in mirth; God has set these one over against the other, that we may the better observe the several duties he enjoins, and that the impressions made on our passions and affections may be rendered serviceable to our devotions. Afflictions should put us upon prayer, and prosperity should make us abound in praise. Not

again admits, "this passage is not concerning sacramental confession."

v. 17. "Prayed earnestly:" literally, "prayed with prayer," an Hebraism, signifying continuance in or intensity of prayer.

v. 19. Not "do err," as Authorised Version, but "be seduced." The word is passive.

v. 20. "Shall hide a multitude of sins:" not his own, but those of the one he converts. Prov. x. 12 refers to charity covering the

that prayer is to be confined to a time of trouble, or singing to a time of mirth; but these several duties may be performed with special advantage, and to the happiest purposes, at such seasons.

1. In a day of affliction nothing more seasonable than prayer. The person afflicted must pray himself, as well as engage the prayers of others for him. Times of affliction should be praying times. To this end God sends afflictions, that we may be engaged to seek him early, and that those who at other times have neglected him may be brought to inquire after him. The spirit is then most humble, the heart is broken and tender; and prayer is most acceptable to God when it comes from a contrite, humble spirit. Afflictions naturally draw out complaints, and to whom should we complain but to God in prayer? It is necessary to exercise faith and hope under afflictions; and prayer is the appointed means both for obtaining and increasing these graces in us. "Is any afflicted? let him pray."

2. In a day of mirth and prosperity "singing psalms is very proper and seasonable." In the original it is only said, "sing," (*ψαλλέτω*), without the addition of psalms, or any other word. And we learn from the writings of several in the first ages of Christianity, particularly from a letter of Pliny's, and from some passages in Justin Martyr and Tertullian, that the Christians were used to sing hymns, either taken out of Scripture, or of more private composition, in their worship of God. Though some have thought that St. Paul's advising both the Colossians and Ephesians to "sing to one another," (*ψάλλοντες ἀλλήλοις καὶ ψόδαις ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις*) "in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," means only the compositions of Scripture, the *Psalms of David* being distinguished in the Hebrew by *Shurim, Tehillim* and *Mizmorim*, words that exactly answer these of the apostle. Let that be as it will, this however we are sure of, that singing psalms is a gospel ordinance, and that our joy should be holy joy, consecrated to God. Singing is so directed to here as to shew that if any be in circumstances of mirth and prosperity, he should turn his mirth, though alone, and by himself, into this channel. Holy mirth becomes families and retirements, as well as public assemblies. Let our singing be such as to "make melody with our hearts unto the Lord," and no doubt but God will be well pleased with this kind of devotion.

Thirdly. We have particular directions given as to sick persons; and healing, pardoning mercy promised, upon the observance of those directions.

1. If any be sick they are required to send for the elders, (*πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας*), the presbyters, pastors or ministers of the church, ver. 14. It lies upon sick people as a duty to send for ministers, and to desire their assistance and their prayers.

2. It is the duty of ministers to pray over the sick, when desired and called for. "Let them pray over him;" let their prayers be suited to his case, and their intercessions be as becomes those that are affected with his calamities.

3. In the times of miraculous healing the sick were to be "anointed with oil in the name of the Lord." Expositors generally confine this anointing with oil to such as had the power of working miracles; and when miracles ceased, this institution ceased also. In St. Mark's Gospel we read of the apostles "anointing with oil many that were sick, and healing them," *Mar. vi. 13*. And we have accounts of this being practised in the church two hundred years after Christ; but then the gift of healing also accompanied it; and when that miraculous gift ceased, this rite was laid aside. The papists, indeed, have made a sacrament of this, which they call the extreme unction. They use it not to heal the sick, as it was used by the apostles; but, as they generally run counter to Scripture in the appointments of their church, so here they ordain that this should be only administered to such as are at the very point of death. The apostle's anointing was in order to heal the disease; the popish anointing is for the expulsion of the relics of sin, and to enable the soul (as they pretend) the better to combat with the powers of the air. When this cannot prove by any visible effects that Christ owns them in the continuance of this rite, they would, however, have people to believe that the invisible effects are very wonderful. But it is surely much better to omit this anointing with oil than to turn it quite contrary to the purposes spoken of in Scripture. Some protestants have thought that this anointing was only permitted or approved by Christ, not instituted. But it should seem by the words of St. James here that it was a thing enjoined in cases where there was faith for healing. And some protestants have argued for it, with this view. It was not to be commonly used, not even in the apostolical age; and some have thought that it should not be wholly laid aside in any age; but where there are extraordinary measures of faith in the person anointing, and in those that are anointed, there may an extraordinary blessing attend the observance of this direction for the sick. However that be, there is one thing carefully to be directed here, that the saving of the sick is not ascribed to the anointing with oil, but to prayer; ver. 15 "The prayer of faith shall save the sick," &c. So that,

4. "Prayer over the sick must proceed from, and be accompanied with, a lively faith." There must be faith both in the person praying, and the person prayed for. In a time of sickness it is not the cold and formal prayer that is effectual, but the prayer of faith.

5. We should observe the success of prayer. "The Lord shall raise him up;" that is, if he be a person capable and fit for deliverance, and if God has any thing farther for such a person to do in the world. And "if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him;" that is, where sickness is sent as a punishment for some particular sin, that sin shall be pardoned; and, in token thereof, the sickness shall be removed. As when Christ said to the impotent man, "Go and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee," it is intimated that some particular sin was the cause of his sickness. The great thing, therefore, we should beg of God for ourselves and others in the time of sickness, is the pardon of sin. Sin is both the root of sickness and the sting of it. If sin be pardoned, either affliction shall be removed in mercy, or we shall see there is mercy in the continuance of it. When healing is founded upon pardon, we may say as Hezekiah did, "Thou hast," in love to my soul, "delivered me from the pit of corruption," *Isa. xxxviii. 17*. When you are sick, and in pain, it is most common to pray and cry, "O give me ease! O restore me to health! But your prayer should rather chiefly be, O that God would pardon my sins!

Fourthly. Christians are directed to "confess their faults one to another," and so to join in their prayers with, and for, one another ver. 16. Some expositors connect this 16th verse with the 14th; as if when sick people send for ministers to pray over them, they should then confess their faults to them. Indeed, where any are conscious that their sickness is a vindictive punishment of some particular sin, and they cannot look for the removal of their sickness without particular applications to God for the pardon of such a sin, there it may be proper to acknowledge and tell his case, that those who pray over him may know how to plead rightly for him. But the confession here required is, that of Christians one to another; and not as the papists would have it, to a priest. Where persons have injured one another, acts of injustice must be confessed to those against whom they have been committed. Where persons have tempted one another to sin, or have consented in the same evil actions, there they ought mutually to blame themselves, and excite each other to repentance. Where crimes are of a public nature, and have done any public mischief, there they ought to be more publicly confessed, so as may best reach to all that are concerned. And sometimes it may be well to confess our faults

to some prudent minister, or praying friend, that they may help us to plead with God for mercy and pardon. But then we are not to think St. James puts us upon telling every thing that we are conscious is amiss in ourselves, or in one another. But so far as confession is necessary to our reconciliation with such as are at variance with us, or for reparation of wrongs done to any, or for the gaining information in any point of conscience, and making our own spirits quiet and easy, so far we should be ready to confess our faults. And sometimes also it may be of good use to Christians to disclose their peculiar weaknesses and infirmities to one another, where there are great intimacies and friendships, and where they may help each other by their prayers to obtain pardon of their sins, and power against them. Those who make confession of their faults one to another, should thereupon pray with, and for, one another. The 13th verse directs persons to pray for themselves; "Is any afflicted? let him pray." The 14th verse directs to seek for the prayers of ministers. The 16th verse directs private Christians to pray for one another; so that here we have all sorts of prayer (ministerial, social, and secret) directed to.

Fifthly. The great advantage and efficacy of prayer is declared; and proved; "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," whether he pray for himself or for others: witness the example of Elias, ver. 17, 18. He that prays must be a righteous man, not righteous in an absolute sense, for this Elias was not, who is here made a pattern to us, but righteous in a gospel sense, not loving or approving of any known iniquity; "I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer," *Ps. lxxvi. 18*. Farther, the prayer itself must be a fervent, unwrought, well-wrought prayer; it must be a pouring out the heart to God, and it must proceed from a faith unfeigned. Such prayer avails much; it is of great advantage to ourselves; it may be very beneficial to our friends, and we are assured of its being acceptable to God. It is good having those for friends whose prayers are available in the sight of God. The power of prayer is here proved from the success of Elias. And this may be encouraging to us even in common cases, if we consider that Elias was a man of like passions with us. He was a zealous good man, and a very great man, but he had infirmities, and was subject to disorder in his passions as well as others. In prayer we must not look to the merit of man, but to the grace of God. Only in this we should copy after Elias, that "he prayed earnestly," or as it is in the original, "in prayer he prayed." It is not enough to say a prayer, but we must pray in prayer; our thoughts must be fixed, our desires firm and ardent, and our graces in exercise; and when we thus pray in prayer we shall speed in prayer. Elias prayed "that it might not rain," and God heard him in his pleading against an idolatrous, persecuting country, so that "it rained not on the earth, by the space of three years and six months. Again he prayed, and the heaven gave rain," &c. This you see prayer is the key which opens and shuts heaven. To this there is an allusion, *Rev. xi. 6*, where the two witnesses are said to "have power to shut heaven, that it rain not." This instance of the extraordinary efficacy of prayer is recorded for encouragement even to ordinary Christians to be instant and earnest in prayer. God never says to any of the seed of Jacob, "Seek my face in vain." If Elias by prayer could do such great and wonderful things, surely the prayers of no righteous man shall return void. Where there may be as much of grace.

Sixthly. This epistle concludes with an exhortation to do all we can in our places to further and promote the conversion and salvation of others, ver. 19, 20. Some interpret these verses as an apology which the apostle is making for himself, that he should so plainly and sharply reprove the Jewish Christians for their many faults and errors. And certainly St. James gives a very good reason why he was so much concerned to reclaim them from their errors; because in thus doing he should save souls, and "hide a multitude of sins." But we are not to restrain this place to the apostle's converting such as erred from the truth; no, nor to other ministerial endeavours of the like nature; since it is said, "If any err, and one convert him," let him be who he will that does so good an office for another, he is therein an instrument of "saving a soul from death." Those whom the apostle is here called to convert, he yet supposes liable to err. It is no mark of a wise or holy man to boast of his being free from error, or to refuse to acknowledge when he is in an error. But if any do err, be they never so great, you must not be afraid to shew them their error; and be they never so weak or little, you must not disdain to make them wiser and better. If they err from the truth, that is, from the Gospel, the great rule and standard of truth, whether it be in opinion or practice, you must endeavour to bring them again to the rule. Errors in judgment and in life generally go together. There is some habitually bad but it is upon some bad practical miscarriage. There is none habitually bad but it is upon some bad principle. Now to convert such is to reduce them from their error, and to reclaim them from the evils they have been led into. We are not presently to accuse and exclaim against an erring brother, and seek to bring reproach and calamities upon him, but to convert him. And if by all our endeavours we cannot do this, yet we are nowhere empowered to persecute and destroy him. If we are instrumental in the conversion of any, we are said to convert them, though this be principally and efficiently the work of God. And if we can do no more toward the conversion of sinners, yet we may do this, pray for the grace and Spirit of God to convert and change them. And let those that are any way serviceable to convert others know what will be the happy consequences of their doing this. They may take great comfort in it at present, and they will meet with a crown at last. He that is said to "err from the truth" in ver. 19, is described as erring in his way in ver. 20, and we cannot be said to convert any, merely by altering their opinions, unless we can bring them to correct and amend their ways. This is conversion, to turn a "sinner from the error of his ways," and not to turn him from one party to another, or merely from one notion and way of thinking to another. He that thus converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, "shall save a soul from death." There is a soul in the case, and what is done towards the salvation of that shall certainly turn to good account. The soul being the principal part of man, the saving of that only is mentioned, but it includes the salvation of the whole man. The spirit shall be saved from hell, and the body raised from the grave, and both saved from eternal death. And then by such conversion of heart and life a multitude of sins shall be hid. A most comfortable passage of Scripture this is. We learn from hence, that though our sins are many, even a multitude, yet they may be hid or pardoned; that when sin is turned from or forsaken it shall be hid, never to appear in judgment against us. And let people contrive to cover or excuse their sin as they will, there is no way effectually and finally to hide it but forsaking it. Some make the sense of this text to be, that conversion shall prevent a multitude of sins; and that is a truth beyond dispute, that many sins are prevented in the party converted; many also may be prevented in others that they may have an influence upon or may converse with. Upon the whole, how should we lay out ourselves with all possible concern for the conversion of sinners! It will be for the happiness and salvation of the converted; it will prevent much mischief, and the spreading and multiplying of sin in the world; it will be for the glory and honour of God; and it will mightily redound to our comfort and renown in the great day. "They that turn many to righteousness," and they that help to do so, "shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

sins of others from men. This passage represents that one who converts another from error is the agent by whom that other's sins are hid from God—he becoming a believer.

Additional Notes.—Chap. i. 9–11. "But let the brother," &c.: i.e., the best safeguard against being "double-souled" is that Christian spirit by which the brother of low degree may rejoice in that he is exalted, by being accounted one of the brotherhood of Christ, his poverty and trials (2 Thess. i. 4, 5) for his Lord's sake

being pledges to him of his future reward; while the rich may rejoice "in that he is made low," by being stripped of his riches for Christ's sake, or by trials which, making him lowly in mind, are in reality blessings.

i. 26, 27. Not "seem to be," but "thinketh himself." "Religion in its rise interests us about ourselves; in its progress, about our fellow-creatures; in its highest stage, about the honour of God" (Fausset).



EASTERN



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SHEPHERDS.

EXPOSITION

OF THE FIRST

EPISTLE GENERAL OF ST. PETER,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

Two epistles we have enrolled in the sacred canon of the Scripture, written by Peter, who was a most eminent apostle of Jesus Christ, and whose character shines bright, as it is described in the four Gospels, and in the *Acts of the Apostles*; but, as it is painted by the papists and legendary writers, it represents a person of extravagant pride and ambition. It is certain, from Scripture, that Simon Peter was one of the first of those whom our Lord called to be his disciples and followers; that he was a person of excellent endowments, both natural and gracious; of great parts and ready elocution; quick to apprehend and bold to execute whatever he knew to be his duty. When our Saviour called his apostles and gave them their commission, he nominated him first in the list; and, by his behaviour towards him, seems to distinguish him as a special favourite among the twelve. Many instances of our Lord's affection to him, both during his life and after his resurrection, are upon record. But there are many things confidently affirmed of this holy man that are directly false; as, that he had a primacy, and superior power over the rest of the apostles; that he was more than their equal; that he was their prince, monarch, and sovereign, and that he exercised jurisdiction over the whole college of the apostles. Moreover, that he was the sole universal pastor over all the Christian world; the only vicar of Christ upon earth; and that he was for above twenty years bishop of Rome; and that the popes of Rome succeed to St. Peter, and derive from him an universal supremacy and jurisdiction over all churches and Christians upon earth; and that all this was by our Lord's ordering and appointment. Whereas, Christ never gave him any pre-eminence of this kind, but positively forbade it, and gave precepts to the contrary. The other apostles never consented to any such claim: Paul declares himself "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles," 2 *Cor.* xi. 5; xii. 11, "In nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles." Here is no exception of St. Peter's superior dignity, whom St. Paul took the freedom to blame, and "withstood him to the face," *Gal.* ii. 11. And Peter himself never assumed anything like it, but modestly styles himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ;" and when he writes to the presbyters of the church, he humbly placeth himself in the same rank with them. "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder," *ch.* v. 1: see Dr. Barrow on the Pope's Supremacy. The design of this first epistle is, I. To explain more fully the doctrines of Christianity to these newly converted Jews. [See additional note, *ch.* i. 1.] II. To direct and persuade them to a holy conversation in the faithful discharge of all personal and relative duties, whereby they would secure their own peace, and effectually confute the slanders and reproaches of their enemies. III. To prepare them for sufferings. This seems to be his principal intention, for he has something to this purpose in every chapter, and doth by a great variety of arguments encourage them to patience and perseverance in the faith, lest the persecutions and sad calamities that were coming upon them should prevail with them to apostatize from Christ and the Gospel. It is remarkable that you find not so much as one word savouring of the spirit and pride of a pope in either of these epistles.

A.D. 60.

CHAPTER I.

In which the apostle describes the persons to whom he writes, and salutes them, *ver.* 1, 2; blesteth God for their regeneration to a lively hope of eternal salvation, 3—5; in the hope of which salvation he shews they had great cause of rejoicing, though for a little while they were in heaviness and affliction for the trial of their faith, which would produce joy unspeakable and full of glory, *ver.* 6—9. This is that salvation which the ancient prophets foretold, and the angels desire to look into, *ver.* 10—12. He exhorteth them to sobriety and holiness, which he presseth from the consideration of the blood of Jesus, the invaluable price of man's redemption, *ver.* 13—20; and to brotherly love, from the consideration of their regeneration, and the excellency of their spiritual state, *ver.* 21—25.



PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of

Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

In this inscription we have three parts.

First. The author of it described,

1. By his name, "Peter." His first name was Simon, and Jesus Christ gave him the surname of Peter, which signifies 'a rock,' as a commendation of his faith, and to denote that he should be an eminent pillar in the church of God, *Gal.* ii. 9.

2. By his office: "An apostle of Jesus Christ." The word signifies 'one sent, a legate, a messenger, any one sent in Christ's name, and about his work; but more strictly it signifies the highest office in the Christian church; 1 *Cor.* xii. 28, "God hath set some in the church, first apostles." Their dignity and pre-eminence lay in these things. They were immediately chosen by Christ himself; they were first witnesses, then preachers of the resurrection of Christ, and so of the entire gospel dispensation. Their gifts were excellent and extraordinary; they had a power of working miracles, not at all times, but when Christ pleased; they were led into all truth, and were endowed with the spirit of prophecy, and they had an extent of power and jurisdiction beyond all others: every apostle was a universal bishop in all churches, and over all ministers. In this humble manner Peter, 1st. Asserts his own character as an apostle. Hence learn, that a man may lawfully acknowledge, and sometimes is bound to assert, the gifts and graces of God to him. To pretend to



ACROPOLIS OF AMASSIA.—VER. 1.

* By the Rev. Zech. Merrill. The additional notes (marked L. and B.) are from Archbishop Leighton's Commentary, and (by the kind permission of the author) from the Expository Discourses, by the Rev. John Brown D.D., professor of exegetical theology to the United Presbyterian Church.

Introductory Note.—Simon—surnamed by the Lord, Peter—was the son of Jonas, and was born at Bethsaida, on the sea of Galilee. In early life he carried on the business of a fisherman at Capernaum, residing with his wife's mother. Tradition represents his wife's name as Concordia, or Perpetua, and states that she was martyred during her husband's lifetime. After the Ascension, St. Peter took the lead amongst the disciples of Christ, and the Church was largely increased through his preaching (*Acts* ii., iii.). His prominence in the Church's

history continues till, under Divine direction, he baptised Cornelius and his friends. Then, the door being opened for the larger work of the conversion of the Gentiles, the Apostle of the Gentiles occupies the foremost place. The Roman Catholic assertion that Peter was for twenty-five years Bishop of Rome is chronologically impossible, as, on that supposition, he must have been for some years Bishop of Rome when, according to St. Paul (*Gal.* ii. 11), he was living at Antioch. The First Epistle of Peter was universally received by the

what we have not is hypocrisy, and to deny what we have is ingratitude. 2nd. He mentions his apostolical function as his warrant and call to write this epistle to these people. Learn, It concerns all, but especially ministers, to consider well their warrant and call from God to their work. This will justify them to others, and give them inward support and comfort under all dangers and discouragements.

Secondly. We have here the persons to whom this epistle was addressed, and they are described.

1. By their external condition. Strangers dispersed throughout Pontus, Galatia, &c. They were chiefly Jews, descended (as Dr. Prideaux thinks) from those Jews that were transplanted from Babylon, by order of Antiochus, king of Syria, about two hundred years before the coming of Christ, and placed in the cities of lesser Asia. It is very likely that our apostle had been among them, and converted them, being the apostle of the circumcision, and afterwards writes this epistle to them from Babylon, where multitudes of the Jewish nation then resided.

[The general opinion is, that the persons referred to were Christians, converted from both Jews and Gentiles, with no particular reference to their extraction; that there were those among them who had been converted from the Jews, and those who had been Gentiles, and that the apostle addresses them as Christians, though employing language such as the Jews had been accustomed to, when speaking of those of their own nation who were scattered abroad.—Barnes.]

At present their circumstances were poor and afflicted. Learn, 1st. The best of God's servants may, through the hardships of times and providences, be dispersed about, and forced to leave their native countries. Those of whom the world was not worthy have been forced to wander in mountains, in dens, and caves of the earth. 2nd. We ought to have a special regard to the dispersed, persecuted servants of God. These were the objects of this apostle's particular care and compassion. We should proportion our regard to the excellency and to the necessity of the saints. 3rd. The value of good people ought not to be estimated by their external present condition. Here was a set of excellent people, beloved of God, and yet strangers, dispersed and poor in the world; the eye of God was upon them in all their dispersions, and the apostle was tenderly careful to write to them for their direction and consolation.

2. They are described by their spiritual condition: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," &c. These poor strangers that were oppressed and despised in the world were nevertheless in high esteem with the great God, and in the most honourable state that any person can be in during this life; for they were,

1st. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Election is either to an office,—and so Saul was the man whom the Lord chose to be king, 1 Sam. x. 24; and our Lord tells his apostles, "Have not I chosen you twelve?" Jno. vi. 70. Or, to a church state, for the enjoyment of special privileges; and thus Israel was God's elect; Deut. vii. 6. "For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth." Or, to eternal salvation. God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

[I apprehend the word "elect" here, and in a number of other places in the New Testament, does not refer directly to what has been termed the electing decree, but to the manifestation of it in the actually selecting certain individuals from amidst a world lying in wickedness, that they may be set apart to God, and become his peculiar people. The remark of Leighton appears to me very judicious: "Election here means the selecting them out of the world, and joining them to the fellowship of the people of God."—B.]

This is the election here spoken of, importing God's gracious decree or resolution to save some, and bring them, through Christ, by proper means, to eternal life. This election is said to be according to the foreknowledge of God. Foreknowledge may be taken two ways. First. For mere prescience, foresight, or understanding, that such a thing will be before it comes to pass. Thus a mathematician certainly foreknows that such a time there will be an eclipse. This sort of foreknowledge is in God, who, at one commanding view, sees all things that ever were, or are, or ever will be. But such a prescience is not the cause why any thing is so or so, though in the event it certainly will be so, as the mathematician that foresees an eclipse does not thereby cause that eclipse to be. Secondly. Foreknowledge sometimes signifieth counsel, appointment, and approbation; Acts ii. 23. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." The death of Christ was not only foreseen but foreordained, as ver. 20. "Take it thus, so the sense is, "elect according to the counsel, ordination, and free grace of God." It is added, "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." By the Father we are here to understand the first person of the blessed Trinity. There is an order among the three persons, though no superiority; they are equal in power and glory, and there is an agreed economy in their works. Thus, in the affair of man's redemption, election is by way of eminency ascribed to the Father, as reconciliation is to the Son, and sanctification to the Holy Ghost; though in each of these one person is not so entirely interested as to exclude the other two. Hereby the persons of the Trinity are more clearly discovered to us, and we are taught what obligations we are under to each of them distinctly.

2nd. They were elect through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The end and last result of election is eternal life and salvation. But before that can be accomplished, every elect person must be sanctified by the Spirit, and justified by the blood of Jesus. God's decree for man's salvation always operates through sanctification of the Spirit and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. By "sanctification" here understand, not a federal sanctification only, but a real one, begun in regeneration, whereby we are renewed after the image of God, and become new creatures, and carried on in the daily exercise of holiness, mortifying our sins more and more, and living to God in all the duties of a Christian life, which is here summed up in one word, "obedience," comprehending all the duties of Christianity. By "the Spirit" some would have the apostle to mean the spirit of man, the subject sanctified. The legal or typical sanctification did operate no farther than the purifying of the flesh, but the Christian dispensation takes effect upon the spirit of man, and purifies that. Others, with better reason, think that by the Spirit is meant the Holy Ghost, the author of sanctification. He renews the mind, mortifies our sins, Rom. viii. 13, and produces his excellent fruits in the hearts of Christians, Gal. v. 22, 23. This sanctification of the Spirit implies the use of means; "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth," Jno. xvii. 17. "Unto obedience." This word, as it is pointed in our translation, is referred to what goes before it, and denotes the end of sanctification, which is to bring rebellious sinners to obedience again, to universal obedience, to obey the truth and Gospel of Christ; ver. 22, "You have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit."

3rd. They were elected to the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." They were designed, by God's decree, to be sanctified by the Spirit, and to be purified by the merit and blood of Christ. Here is a manifest allusion to the typical sprinklings of blood under the law, which language these Jewish converts understood very well. The blood of the sacrifices must not only be shed, but

sprinkled, to denote that the benefits designed thereby are applied and imputed to the offerers. Thus the blood of Christ, the grand and all-sufficient sacrifice, typified by the legal sacrifices, was not only shed, but must be sprinkled, and communicated to every one of these elect Christians, "that through faith in his blood they may obtain remission of sins," Rom. iii. 25. This blood of sprinkling justifies before God, Rom. v. 9, seals the covenant between God and us, of which the Lord's supper is a sign, Lu. xxii. 20, cleanseth from all sin, 1 Jno. i. 7, and admits us into heaven, Heb. x. 19. Note, First. That God hath elected some to eternal life,—some, not all; persons, not qualifications. Secondly. All that are chosen to eternal life as the end, are chosen to obedience as the way. Thirdly. Unless a person be sanctified by the Spirit, and sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, there will be no true obedience in the life. Fourthly. There is a consent and co-operation of all the persons of the Trinity in the affair of man's salvation, and their acts are commensurate one to another. Whoever the Father does elect, the Spirit does sanctify unto obedience, and the Son does redeem and sprinkle with his blood. Fifthly. The doctrine of the Trinity does lie at the foundation of all revealed religion. If you deny the proper deity of the Son and Holy Spirit, you invalidate the redemption of the one and the gracious operations of the other, and by that means destroy the foundation of your own safety and comfort.

Thirdly. The salutation follows, "Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied." 1. The blessings desired for them are grace and peace. 1st. "Grace." The free favour of God with all its proper effects,—pardoning, healing, assisting, and saving. 2nd. "Peace." All sorts of peace may be here intended,—domestic, civil, ecclesiastical peace in the church, and spiritual peace with God, and the feeling of it in our own consciences.

2. Here is the request or prayer in relation to these blessings, that they may "be multiplied;" which implies that they were already possessed in some degree of these blessings, and he wishes them the continuation, the increase, and the perfection of them. Learn, 1st. They that possess spiritual blessings in their own souls do earnestly desire the communication of the same to others. The grace of God is a generous, not a selfish principle. 2nd. The best blessings we can desire for ourselves, or for one another, are grace and peace, with the multiplication of them; therefore the apostles so often make this their prayer in the beginning and end of their epistles. 3rd. Solid peace cannot be enjoyed where there is no true grace; first grace, then peace. Peace without grace is mere stupidity; but grace may be true where there is for a time no actual peace, as Heman was distracted with terror, and Christ was once in an agony. 4th. The increase of grace and peace, as well as the first gift of them, is from God. Where he giveth true grace, he will give more grace; and every good man does earnestly desire the improvement and multiplication of these blessings in himself and others.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

We come now to the body of the epistle, which begins with a congratulation of the dignity and happiness of the state of these believers, brought in under the form of a thanksgiving to God.

[It is a cold and lifeless thing to speak of spiritual things on mere report; but when men can speak of them as their own—as having share and interest in them, and some experience of their sweetness—their discourse of them is enlivened with firm belief and ardent affection; they cannot mention them, but straight their hearts are taken with such gladness as they are forced to vent in praises.]

Other epistles begin in like manner, 2 Cor. i. 3; Eph. i. 3. Here we have, First. The duty performed, which is, blessing God. A man blesteth God by a just acknowledgment of his excellency and blessedness.

Secondly. Here is the object of this blessing described by his relation to Jesus Christ; "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here are three names of one person, denoting his threefold office. 1. He is "Lord," a universal King or Sovereign. 2. "Jesus," a Priest or Saviour. 3. "Christ," a Prophet anointed with the Spirit, and furnished with all gifts necessary for the instruction, conduct, and salvation of his church. This God, so blessed, is the God of Christ according to his human nature, and his Father according to his Divine nature.

Thirdly. You have the reasons that oblige us to this duty of blessing God, which are in general, "his abundant mercy." All our blessings are owing to God's mercy, not to man's merit, particularly regeneration. He hath begotten us again, and this deserves our thanksgiving to God, especially if we consider the fruit it produceth in us, which is that excellent grace of hope, and that not such a vain, dead, perishing hope, as that of worldlings and hypocrites, but a lively hope, a living, strong, quickening, and durable hope, as that hope must needs be that hath such a solid foundation as the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1. That a good Christian's condition is never so bad but he hath great reason still to bless God. As a sinner hath always reason to mourn, notwithstanding his present prosperity, so good people, in the midst of their manifold difficulties, have reason still to rejoice and bless God.

2. In our prayers and praises we should address God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is only through him that we and our services are accepted.

3. The best of men owe their best blessings to the abundant mercy of God. All the evil in the world is from man's sin, but all the good in it is from God's mercy. Regeneration is expressly ascribed to the abundant mercy of God; and so are all the rest; we subsist entirely upon Divine mercy. Of the nature of regeneration, see Jno. iii. 3.

4. Regeneration produceth a lively hope of eternal life. Every unconverted person is a hopeless creature. Whatever he pretends to of that kind is all confidence and presumption. The right Christian hope is what a man is begotten again unto by the Spirit of God; it is not from nature, but free grace. They that are begotten to a new and spiritual life are begotten to a new and spiritual hope.

5. The hope of a Christian hath this excellency, it is a living hope. The hope of eternal life in a true Christian is a hope that keeps him alive, quickens him, supports him, and conducts him to heaven. Hope invigorates and spirits up the soul to action, to patience, to fortitude, and perseverance to the end. The delusive hopes of the unregenerate are vain and perishing. The hypocrite and his hope expire and die both together, Job xxvii. 8.

6. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the ground or foundation of a Christian's hope. The resurrection of Christ is the act of the Father as a Judge, of the Son as a Conqueror. His resurrection demonstrates that the Father accepts his death in full discharge for our ransom; that he is victorious over death, the grave, and all our spiritual enemies. And it is also an assurance

ancient Church as a part of the Christian Scriptures. In modern times objectors have doubted its genuineness, chiefly for reasons derived from the epistle itself, such as want of originality, &c.; but these objections are ably answered by Alford. The epistle was addressed to the Christian converts, both Jews and Gentiles, in the churches named in verse 1, and was written from Babylon, on the Euphrates. Its date is variously placed by commentators, but the strongest evidence seems in favour of the years between 63 and 67 A.D.

i. 1, 2. Literally, "to the elect sojourners of the dispersion." See Heb. xi. 13, where the same word is rendered "pilgrims." "To the chosen men, to the strangers of the scattering abroad" (Wickliffe). See also John vii. 35 on the dispersed converts. "According to the foreknowledge:" "The fact of knowledge is specially put forward, seeing that all God's decrees rest on the ground of his omniscience" (Huther). "Unto obedience," &c.: shows that the election here spoken of was to salvation; all the persons of the Holy

of our own resurrection, there being an inseparable union between Christ and his flock; they rise by virtue of his resurrection as a Head, rather than by virtue of his power as a Judge. "We are risen with Christ," *Col. i. 1*. From all this taken together Christians have two fast, solid foundations whereon to build their hope of eternal life.

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

The apostle continues his thanksgiving to God; and having congratulated these people on their new birth, and their hope of everlasting life, he goes on to describe that life under the notion of an inheritance. A most proper way of speaking to these people. For, 1. They were poor and persecuted, perhaps turned out of their inheritances to which they were born. To allay this grievance, he tells them they were new born to a new inheritance infinitely better than what they had lost. 2. They were Jews, most of them, and so had a mighty affection to the land of Canaan, as the land of their inheritance, settled upon them by God himself; and to be driven out from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord was looked upon as a sore judgment, *1 Sam. xxvi. 19*. To comfort them under this, they are put in mind of a noble inheritance reserved in heaven for them, such a one as the land of Canaan was but a mere shadow in comparison with it. Note.

First. That heaven is the undoubted inheritance of all the children of God; all that are born again are born to an inheritance, as a man makes his child his heir. The apostle argues, "If children, then heirs," *Rom. viii. 17*. God giveth his gifts unto all, but the inheritance to none but his children. Those that are his sons and daughters by regeneration and adoption receive the promise of eternal inheritance," *Heb. ix. 15*. This inheritance is not our purchase, but our Father's gift; not wages that we merit, but the effect of grace, which first makes us children, and then settles this inheritance upon us by a firm, unalterable covenant.

Secondly. The incomparable excellencies of this inheritance, which are four:

1. It is "incorruptible." In which respect it is like its Maker, who is called "the incorruptible God," *Rom. i. 23*. All corruption is a change from better to worse; but heaven is without change and without end. The house is "eternal in the heavens," and the possessors must subsist for ever, "for their corruptible must put on incorruption," *1 Cor. xv. 53*.

2. This inheritance is "undefiled," like the great High Priest that is now in possession of it, who is "holy, harmless, and undefiled," *Heb. vii. 26*. Sin and misery, the two grand defilements that spoil this world and mar its beauty, have no place there.

3. It "fadeth not away," but always retains its vigour and beauty, and remains immarcescible, ever entertaining and pleasing the saints that possess it, without the least weariness or distaste.

4. "Reserved in heaven for you." Which expression teaches us, 1st. That it is a glorious inheritance, for it is in heaven, and all that is there is glorious, *Eph. i. 18*. 2nd. It is certain, a reversion in another world, safely kept and preserved till we come to the possession of it. 3rd. The persons for whom it is reserved are described, not by their names, but by character: "For you," or us, or every one that is begotten again to a lively hope. This inheritance is preserved for them, and none but them; all the rest will be shut out for ever.

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

This inheritance being described as future, and distant both in time and place, the apostle supposeth some doubt or uneasiness yet to remain upon the minds of these people, whether they might not possibly fall short by the way. Though the happiness be safe in heaven, yet we are still upon earth, liable to abundance of temptations, miseries, and infirmities. Are we in such safe state that we shall certainly come there? To this he answers that they should be safely guarded and conducted thither; they should be kept and preserved from all such destructive temptations and injuries as would prevent their safe arrival at eternal life. The heir to an earthly estate hath no assurance that he shall live to enjoy it, but the heirs of heaven shall certainly be conducted safe to the possession of it. The blessing here promised is preservation, "Ye are kept;" the author of it, God. The means in us made use of for that end are our own faith and care; the end to which we are preserved is salvation, and the time when we shall see the safe end and issue of all is the last time.

Note, 1. Such is the tender care of God over his people, that he not only gives them grace, but preserves them unto glory. Their being kept implies both danger and deliverance. They may be attacked, but shall not be overcome.

2. The preservation of the regenerate to eternal life is the effect of God's power. The greatness of the work, the number of enemies, and our own infirmities, are such as no power but what is almighty can preserve the soul through all unto salvation. Therefore the Scripture often represents man's salvation as the effect of Divine power, *2 Cor. xii. 9*; *Rom. xiv. 4*. 3. The preservation of God's power does not supersede man's endeavour and care for his own salvation. Here are God's power and man's faith, which implies an earnest desire of salvation, a reliance upon Christ, according to his invitations and promises, a vigilant care to do every thing pleasing to God, and avoid whatever is offensive; an abhorrence of temptations, a respect to the recompence of reward, and persevering diligence in prayer. By such a patient, operating, conquering faith, we are kept under the assistance of Divine grace unto salvation. Faith is a sovereign preservative of the soul through a state of grace unto a state of glory. 4. This salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time. Here are three things asserted about the salvation of the saints. 1st. That it is now prepared and made ready, and reserved in heaven for them. 2nd. Though it be made ready now, yet it is in a great measure hidden and unrevealed at present, not only to the ignorant, blind world, that never inquire after it, but even to the heirs of salvation themselves; "It does not yet appear what we shall be," *1 Jno. iii. 2*. 3rd. That it shall be fully and completely revealed in the last time, or at the last day of judgment. Life and immortality are now brought to light by the Gospel; but this life will be revealed more gloriously at death, when the soul shall be admitted into the presence of Christ, and behold his glory. And even beyond this there will be a farther and a final revelation of the amplitude and transcendence of the saints' felicity at the last day, when their bodies shall be raised and reunited to their souls, and judgment shall pass upon angels and men, and Christ shall publicly honour and applaud his servants in the face of all the world.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

Trinity are represented as acting together in man's salvation. "By this description of the readers, an anticipation is given of the whole train of thought in the epistle, the aim of which is to impress the blessed certainty of salvation, and with that the obligations incurred by receiving God's gift."

i. 4. "An inheritance," &c.: this inheritance the apostle elsewhere speaks of as "salvation" (verses 5, 9), "grace" (verse 13), "the grace of life" (chap. iii. 7), "glory" (chap. v. 1), "an unfading

The first word, "wherein," refers to the apostle's foregoing discourse about the excellency of their present state, and their grand expectations for the future. In this condition "you greatly rejoice, though now for a season," or a little while, "if need be, ye are made sorrowful through manifold temptations." The apostle grants they were in great affliction, and propounds several things in mitigation of their sorrows.

Note, 1. Every sound Christian hath always something wherein he may greatly rejoice. Great rejoicing contains more than an inward, placid serenity of mind, or sensation of comfort. It will shew itself in the countenance and carriage, but especially in praise and gratitude. 2. The chief joy of a good Christian ariseth from things spiritual and heavenly,—from his relation to God and to heaven. In these every sound Christian greatly rejoiceth. His joy ariseth from his treasure, which consists in matters of great value, and the title to them is sure. 3. The best Christians, those that have reason greatly to rejoice, may yet be in great heaviness through manifold temptations. All sorts of adversities are temptations or trials of faith, patience, and constancy. These seldom go singly, but are manifold, and come from different quarters; the effect of all which is great heaviness. As men, we are subject to sorrows, personal and domestic, and as Christians our duty to God obliges us to frequent sorrow; and our compassion towards the miserable, the dishonour done to God, the calamities of his church, and the destruction of mankind, from their own folly and from Divine vengeance, raises, in a generous and pious mind, almost, continual sorrow: "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart," *Rom. ix. 2*. 4. The afflictions and sorrows of good people are but for a little while, they are but for a season. Though they may be smart, they are but short. Life itself is but for a little while, and the sorrows of it cannot survive it. The shortness of any affliction does much abate the heaviness of it. 5. Great heaviness is often necessary to a Christian's good: "If need be ye are in heaviness." God does not afflict his people willingly, but acts with judgment in proportion to our needs. There is a conveniency and fitness, nay, an absolute necessity, in the case; for so the expression signifies it must be. Therefore "no man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto," *1 Thes. iii. 3*. These troubles that lie heavy never come upon us but when we have need, and never stay any longer than needs must.

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:



REFINERS SITTING AT WORK.

These words express the end of good people's afflictions, and the ground of their joy under them. The end of afflictions is the trial of their faith. The nature of this trial: it is "much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire." The result and effect of the trial is this, it will "be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Note, 1. That the afflictions of serious Christians are designed for the trial of their faith. God's design in afflicting his people is their probation, not their destruction; their advantage, not their ruin. A trial, as the word signifies, is any experiment or search made upon a man by some affliction, to prove the value and strength of his faith. This trial is made upon faith principally, rather than any other grace, because the trial of that is in effect the trial of all that is good in us. Our Christianity depends upon our faith; if that be wanting, there is nothing else that is spiritually good in us. Christ prays for this apostle, that his faith might not fail; if that be supported, all the rest will stand firm. The faith of good people is tried, that they themselves may have the comfort of it, God the glory of it, and others the benefit of it.

[In turning over the plates in Rosellini's great work on Egyptian Antiquities, we remember to have noticed a figure of a refiner, sitting on a three-legged stool, and watching the furnace with the utmost attention. A correspondent of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* (1834) relates that a lady, apprehending there was something remarkable in the expressions of the text, determined to call on a silversmith and make inquiries of him, without naming her object. In answer to her inquiries the process of silver-refining was fully explained to her. "But, Sir," said she, "do you sit, while the work of refining is going on?"—"O, yes, Madam," replied the silversmith, "I must sit, with my eye steadily fixed on the furnace; for, if the time necessary for refining be exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver is sure to be injured." At once, we are told, she saw the beauty, and comfort too, of the expression. As she was going, the silversmith called her back, to mention the further fact, that he only knew when the process of purifying was complete by seeing his own image reflected in the silver.—"Beautiful figure! when Christ sees his own image in his people, his work of purifying is accomplished."—*Pictorial Bible*.]

2. A tried faith is much more precious than tried gold. Here is a double comparison of faith and gold, and the trial of the one with the trial of the other. Gold is the most valuable, pure, useful, and durable, of all the metals; so is faith among the Christian virtues; it lasts till it brings the soul to heaven, and then it issues in the glorious fruition of God for ever. The trial of faith is much more precious than the trial of gold. In both there is a purification, a separation of the dross, and a discovery of the soundness and goodness of the things. Gold does not increase and multiply by trial in the fire, it rather grows

crown of glory" (chap. v. 4), "eternal glory" (chap. v. 10). "Our inheritance is glorious in three respects—it is in substance incorruptible, in purity undefiled, in beauty unfading" (Alford); and this inheritance is laid up in the heavens, "that we may know it to be beyond danger" (Calvin).

i. 5. "Kept by the power of God:" the only one who can guard us surely. "It is his power which saves us from our enemies, it is his long-suffering which saves us from ourselves" (Bengel). "Unto

less; but faith is established, improved, and multiplied by the oppositions and afflictions that it meets with. Gold must perish at last—"gold that perisheth;" but faith never will. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not," *Lu. xii. 32.*

3. The trial of faith will be found to praise, and honour, and glory. Honour is properly that esteem and value which one hath with another; and so God and man will honour the saints. Praise is the expression or declaration of that esteem; so Christ will commend his people in the great day, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," &c. Glory is that lustre wherewith a person so honoured and praised shines in heaven. "Glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good," *Rom. ii. 10.* If a tried faith be found to praise, honour, and glory, let this recommend faith to you as much more precious than gold, though it be assailed and tried by afflictions. If you make your estimate either from present use, or the final event of both, it will be found true. However, the world takes it for an incredible paradox.

4. That Jesus Christ will appear again in glory; and when he does so, the saints will appear with him, and their graces will appear illustrious; and the more they have been tried, the more bright they will then appear; the trial will soon be over, but the glory, honour, and praise, will last to eternity. This should reconcile you to your present afflictions; "They work for you a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory."

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

The faith of these primitive Christians is farther commended upon two accounts:—

First. The excellency of its object: the unseen Jesus. The apostle had seen our Lord in the flesh, but these dispersed Jews never did, and yet they believed in him. It is one thing to believe God or Christ,—so the devils believe,—another thing to believe in him, which denotes subjection, reliance, and expectation of all promised good from him.

Secondly. On account of two notable productions or effects of their faith, love and joy; and this joy so great, as to be above description. "Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Learn, 1. The faith of a Christian is properly conversant about things revealed, but not seen. Sense converseth with things sensible and present; reason is a higher guide, and that, by sure deductions, can infer the operation of causes, and the certainty of events; but faith ascends farther still, and assures us of abundance of particulars, that sense and reason could never have found out, upon the credit of revelation; it is "the evidence of things not seen." 2. True faith is never alone, but produceth a strong love to Jesus Christ. True Christians have a dear love to Jesus, because they believe in him. This love discovers itself in highest esteem for him, affectionate desires after him, willingness to be dissolved to be with him, delightful thoughts, cheerful services and sufferings, &c. 3. Where there are true faith and love to Christ there is, or may be, "joy unspeakable and full of glory." This joy is inexpressible; it cannot be described by words; the best discovery is by an experimental taste of it; it is full of glory, full of heaven. There is much of heaven and the future glory in the present joy of improved Christians; their faith removes the causes of sorrow, and affords the best reasons for joy. Though good people sometimes walk in darkness, it is often owing to their own mistakes and ignorance, or to a fearful, melancholy disposition; or to some late sinful miscarriage; or perhaps to some sad occurrence of Providence, that sinks their comfort for the present; yet they have reason to "rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of their salvation." *Hab. iii. 18.*

9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.

Well might these Christians rejoice with joy unspeakable, since they were every day receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. Note,

First. The blessing they were receiving: "The salvation of souls;" the more noble part being put for the whole man; which salvation is here called the end of their faith, the end wherein faith terminates; it helps to save the soul; then it hath done its work, and ceaseth for ever.

Secondly. He speaks of the present time. You are now actually "receiving the end of your faith," &c.

Thirdly. The word used alludes to the games at which the conqueror received or bore away from the judge of the contest a crown or reward, which he carried about in triumph. So the salvation of the soul was the prize these Christians sought for, the crown they laboured for, the end they aimed at, which came nearer and more within their reach every day.

Learn, 1. That every faithful Christian is daily receiving the salvation of his soul. Salvation is one permanent thing, begun in this life, not interrupted by death, and continued to all eternity. These believers had the beginnings of heaven in the possession of holiness and a heavenly mind, in their duties and communion with God, in the earnest of the inheritance, and the witness of the Divine Spirit. This was properly urged to these distressed people; they were on the losing side in the world. The apostle puts them in mind of what they were receiving. If they lost an inferior good, they were all the while receiving the salvation of their souls. 2. It is lawful for a Christian to make the salvation of his soul his end. The glory of God and our own felicity are so connected, that, if we regularly seek the one, we must attain the other.

10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you:

The apostle having described the persons to whom he wrote, and declared to them the excellent advantages they were under, he goes on to shew them what warrant he had for what he had delivered; and because they were Jews, and had a mighty veneration for the Old Testament, he produceth the authority of the prophets, to convince them that the doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ was no new doctrine, but the same which the old prophets did inquire and search diligently into. Note,

First. Who made this diligent search. The prophets, who were persons inspired by God to the doing or saying things extraordinary, above the reach of their own studies and abilities, foretelling things to come, and revealing the will of God, by the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly. The object of their search, which was salvation, and the "grace of God which should come unto you;" the general salvation of men of all nations by Jesus Christ, and more especially the salvation afforded to the Jews, the grace that should come to them from him who was not sent but to the lost

sheep of the house of Israel. They foresaw glorious times of light, grace, and comfort, coming upon the church, which made the prophets and righteous desire to see and hear the things which came to pass in the days of the Gospel.

Thirdly. The manner of their inquiry. They "inquired and searched diligently." The words are strong and emphatical, alluding to miners that dig to the bottom, and break through, not only the earth, but the rock, to come to the ore; so these holy prophets had an earnest desire to know, and were proportionably diligent in their inquiries after, the grace of God, which was to be revealed in the days of the Messiah. Their being inspired did not make their industrious search needless; for, notwithstanding their extraordinary assistance from God, they were obliged to make use of all the ordinary methods of improvement in wisdom and knowledge. Daniel was a man greatly beloved and inspired, yet he understood, by books and study, the computations of time, *ch. ix. 2.* Even their own revelation required their study, meditation, and prayer; for many prophecies had a double meaning. In their first intention they aimed at some person or event near at hand; but their ultimate design was to describe the person, sufferings, or kingdom of Christ. Observe,

1. The doctrine of man's salvation by Jesus Christ hath been the study and admiration of the greatest and wisest of men. The nobleness of the subject, and their own concern in it, have engaged them with most accurate attention and seriousness to search into it.

2. A good man is much affected and pleased with the grace and mercy of God to others as well as to himself. The prophets were highly delighted with the prospects of mercy to be shewn both to Jews and Gentiles at the coming of Christ.

3. They that would be acquainted with this great salvation, and the grace that shines therein, must inquire and search diligently into it. If it were necessary for an inspired prophet to do so, much more for persons so weak and injudicious as we are.

4. The grace that came by the Gospel excels all that was before it. The gospel dispensation is more glorious, evident, intelligible, extensive, and effectual, than any dispensation that ever did precede it.

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

The particular matters which the ancient prophets chiefly searched into are here expressed. Jesus Christ was the main subject of their studies, and in relation to him they were most inquisitive into,

First. His humiliation and death, and the glorious consequences of it; "The sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." This inquiry would lead them into a view of the whole Gospel, the sum whereof is this, that Christ Jesus was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

Secondly. The time, and the manner of the times, wherein the Messiah was to appear. Undoubtedly these holy prophets earnestly desired to see the days of the Son of man; and therefore, next to the thing itself, their minds were set upon the time of its accomplishment, so far as the Spirit of Christ which was in them had signified any thing toward that purpose. The nature of the times were also under their strict consideration, whether they would be quiet or troublesome times; times of peace, or times of war.

Learn, 1. Jesus Christ had a being, and did exist, before his incarnation; for his Spirit did then exist in the prophets, and therefore he whose that Spirit then was must be being also. 2. The doctrine of the Trinity was not wholly unknown to the faithful in the Old Testament. The prophets knew that they were inspired by a Spirit that was in them. This Spirit they knew to be the Spirit of Christ, and consequently distinct from Christ himself. Here is a plurality of persons, and from other parts of the Old Testament a Trinity may be collected. 3. The works here ascribed to the Holy Ghost prove him to be God. He "did signify," discover, and manifest to the prophets, many hundred years beforehand, the sufferings of Christ, with a multitude of particular circumstances attending them. And he did also testify, or give proof and evidence, beforehand, of the certainty of that event, by inspiring the prophets to reveal it, to work miracles in confirmation of it, and by enabling the faithful to believe it. These works prove the Spirit of Christ to be God, since he is possessed of almighty power and infinite knowledge.

4. From the example of Christ Jesus learn to expect a time of services and sufferings before you are received to glory. It was so with him, and the discipline is not above his Lord. The suffering time is but short, but the glory is everlasting. Let the suffering season be never so sharp and severe, it shall not hinder, but "work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

These words contain an answer to the prophet's inquiry. Their holy endeavours to inform themselves were not slighted, for God gives them a satisfactory revelation to quiet and comfort their minds. They were informed that these things should not come to pass in their time; but yet all was firm and certain, and should come to pass in the times of the apostles: "Not unto themselves, but to us;" and we must report them, under the infallible direction of the Holy Ghost, to all the world, "which things the angels," &c. You have here three sorts of students, or inquirers, into the great affair of man's salvation by Jesus Christ. First. The prophets search diligently into it. Secondly. The apostles, who consulted all the prophecies, and were witnesses of the accomplishment of them, and so reported what they knew to others in the preaching of the Gospel. Thirdly. The angels, who most attentively pry into these matters.

Learn, 1. A diligent endeavour after the knowledge of Christ and our duty will certainly be answered with good success. The prophets were answered with a revelation. Daniel studies and receives information; the Bereans searched the Scriptures, and were confirmed. 2. The holiest and best of men sometimes have their lawful and pious requests denied. It was both lawful and pious for these prophets to desire to know more than they were permitted to know about the time of the appearance of Christ in the world, but they were denied. It is lawful and pious for good parents to pray for their wicked children, for the poor to pray against poverty, for a good man to pray against death; yet in these honest requests they often are denied. God is pleased to answer our

salvation;" salvation in itself is only a negative idea—preservation from evil—but it came to mean in the New Testament positive blessing in its highest development. (Compare James i. 21, &c.) "In the last time:" when Christ shall be revealed, through whom we have salvation.

i. 7. Alford and others object on grammatical grounds to the translation "of gold," preferring "gold," and referring it to faith, not the trial of faith. So Tyndal: "that your faith once tried,

being much more precious than gold that perisheth." So also Rheims. The apostle's meaning is clearly, "If gold, which perishes, yet requires fire to prove and purify it, much more your faith, which is imperishable, requires a fiery trial to remove what is defective, and thus to strengthen it. "Unto praise," &c.: i.e., the praise of God, who is glorified by the faithfulness of his people and their holy lives (*chap. iv. 11*).

i. 9. "Receiving," &c.: this word excludes the idea of present

necessities rather than our requests. 3. It is the honour and practice of a Christian to be useful to others in many cases, rather than to himself. These prophets ministered to others, not unto themselves; "None of us liveth to himself," *Rom. xiv. 7*. Nothing more contrary to man's nature, and Christian principles, than for a man to make himself his own end, and live to himself. 4. The revelations of God to his church, though gradual, and given by parcels, are all perfectly consistent; the doctrine of the prophets and of the apostles do exactly agree, as coming from the same Spirit of God. [The sweet stream of their doctrine made its own banks fertile and pleasant, as it ran by and flowed still forward to after ages, and, by the confluence of more such prophecies, grew larger as it proceeded, till it fell in with the main current of the gospel revelation; and thus united into one river, clear as crystal, this doctrine of salvation hath still refreshed the city of God, and shall continue to do so till it empty itself into the ocean of eternity.—*L.*] 5. The efficacy of the evangelical ministry depends upon the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The Gospel is the ministration of the Spirit; the success of it depends upon his operation and blessing. 6. The mysteries of the Gospel, and the methods of man's salvation, are so glorious, that the blessed angels do earnestly desire to look into them. They are curious, accurate, and industrious in prying into them; they consider the whole scheme of man's redemption with deep attention and admiration, particularly these points the apostle had been discoursing of; "Which things the angels desire to" stoop down and "look into," as the cherubims did continually towards the mercy-seat. [7. What is the subject of the constant intense contemplation of angels surely deserves our most careful study. We are far more closely connected with, far more deeply interested in, the subject of study than they. The salvation they desire to look into will promote, but it will but indirectly promote, their happiness. Their happiness may be secure without reference to it. But as to us, this salvation must be ours, or we are undone for ever and ever. It is now that an interest is to be obtained in it, if obtained at all. It is only by knowing and believing the truth about this salvation that an interest in it is to be obtained. Oh, then, let us, with intensest ardour, seek the knowledge of this salvation! If we die unacquainted with it, we die uninterested in it; and if we die uninterested in it, it never, never can become ours. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."—*B.*]

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Here the apostle begins his exhortation to them whose glorious state he had before described, thereby instructing us that Christianity is a doctrine according to godliness, designed not only to make us wiser, but better. [This is the effect which the believing contemplation of the heavenly blessedness is calculated and intended to have on the mind. It is not intended to afford an indolent delight, but a powerful excitement.—*B.*] Wherefore, since you are so honoured and distinguished, as above,

First, "Gird up the loins of your mind." You have a journey to go, a race to run, a warfare to accomplish, and a great work to do. As the traveller, the racer, the warrior, and the labourer, gather in and gird up their long and loose garments, that they may be more ready, prompt, and expeditious in their business, so do you, by your minds, your inner man, and affections seated there, gird them, gather them in, let them not hang loose and neglected about you; restrain their extravagances, and let the loins or strength and vigour of your minds be exerted in your duty. Disengage yourselves from all that would hinder you, and go on resolutely in your obedience.

Secondly, "Be sober," be vigilant, against all your spiritual dangers and enemies; and be temperate and modest in eating, drinking, apparel, recreation, business, and in the whole of your behaviour. Be sober-minded also in opinion, as well as in practice, and humble in your judgment of yourselves.

Thirdly, "And hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Some refer this to the last judgment, as if the apostle did direct their hope to the final revelation of Jesus Christ; but it seems more natural to take it, as it might be rendered, Hope perfectly or thoroughly for the grace that is brought to you in, or by, the revelation of Jesus Christ; that is, by the Gospel, which brings life and immortality to light. Hope perfectly, trust without doubting, to that grace which is now offered to you by the Gospel.

Learn, 1. The main work of a Christian lies in the right management of his heart and mind. The apostle's first direction is, to gird up the loins of the mind. 2. The best Christians have need to be exhorted to sobriety. These excellent Christians are put in mind of it. It is required of a bishop, *1 Tim. iii. 2*; of aged men, *Tit. ii. 2*. The young women are to be taught it, and the young men are directed to be sober-minded, *Tit. ii. 4, 6*. 3. A Christian's work is not over as soon as he has got into a state of grace. He must still hope and strive for more grace. When he hath entered the strait gate, he must still walk in the narrow way, and gird up the loins of his mind for that purpose. 4. A strong and perfect trust in God's grace is very consistent with our best endeavours in our duty. We must hope perfectly, and yet gird up our loins, and address ourselves vigorously to the work we have to do, encouraging ourselves from the grace of Jesus Christ.

[It is a foolish, misgrounded fear, and such as argues inexperience of the nature and workings of Divine grace, to imagine that the assured hope of salvation will beget unholiness and presumptuous boldness in sin. Our apostle is not so sharp-sighted as these men think themselves; he apprehends no such matter; he, indeed, supposes the contrary as unquestionable; he takes not assured hope and holiness as enemies, but joins them as honest friends. Hope perfectly, in order to your being holy in all manner of conversation. The more assurance of salvation, the more holiness, the more delight in it, the more study of it, as the only way to that end: and as labour is then most pleasant when we are made sure that it shall not be lost, nothing doth make the soul so nimble and active in obedience as this oil of gladness, this assured hope of glory.—*L.*]

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

The exhortation is continued, and the words may be taken either as a rule of holy living, which is both positive, You ought to live as obedient children, as those whom God hath adopted into his family, and regenerated by his grace,—and negative, You must not fashion yourselves "according to the former lusts in your ignorance," or the words may be taken as an argument to press them to holiness from the consideration of what they now are—children of obedience, and what they were when they lived in lust and ignorance.

Learn, 1. The children of God ought to prove themselves to be such by their obedience to God; by their present, constant, universal obedience. 2. The best of God's children have had their times of lust and ignorance. The time hath been when the whole scheme of their lives, their way, and fashion, was to

accommodate and gratify their unlawful desires and vicious appetites, being grossly ignorant of God and themselves, of Christ and the Gospel. 3. Persons converted differ exceedingly from what they were formerly. They are people of another fashion and manner from what they were before; their inward frame, behaviour, speech, and conversation, are much altered from what it was in times past. 4. The lusts and extravagances of sinners are both the fruits and signs of their ignorance.

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Here is a noble rule enforced by strong arguments; "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation." Who is sufficient for this? And yet it is required in strong terms, and enforced by three reasons, taken from the grace of God in calling us; from his command, "It is written;" and from his example, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Learn, 1. The grace of God in calling a sinner is a powerful engagement to holiness. It is a mighty favour to be called effectually by Divine grace out of a state of sin and misery into the possession of all the blessings of the new covenant, and great favours are strong obligations. It does enable as well as oblige to holiness. 2. Complete holiness is the desire and duty of every Christian. Here is a twofold rule of holiness: 1st. It must, for the extent of it, be universal, must "be holy," and be so "in all manner of conversation;" in all civil and religious affairs; in every condition, prosperous or adverse; towards all people, friends or enemies; in all our intercourse and business, still we must be holy. 2nd. For the pattern of it we must be holy as God is holy; we must imitate him, though we can never equal him; he is perfectly, unchangeably, eternally, holy; and we should aspire after such a state. The consideration of the holiness of God should oblige us to the highest degrees of holiness, we can attain unto. 3. The written word of God is the surest rule of a Christian's life, and by this rule we are commanded to be holy every way. 4. The Old Testament commands are to be studied and obeyed in the times of the New Testament. The apostle, by virtue of a command delivered several times by Moses, requires holiness in all Christians.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

The apostle does not here express any doubt at all whether these Christians would call upon their heavenly Father, but supposes they would certainly do it, and from that argues with them to pass the time of their sojourning here in fear. If you own the great God as a Father and a Judge, you ought to live the time of your sojourning here in his fear.

Learn, 1. All good Christians look upon themselves in this world as pilgrims and sojourners, as strangers in a distant country, passing to another, to which they properly belong, *Ps. xxxix. 12; Heb. xi. 13*. 2. The whole time of our sojourning here is to be passed in the fear of God. 3. The consideration of God as a Judge is not improper for those that can truly call him Father. Holy confidence in God as a Father, and an awful fear of him as a Judge, are very consistent. To regard God as a Judge is a singular means to endear him to us as a Father. 4. The judgment of God will be without respect of persons: "according to every man's works." No external relation to him will protect any. The Jew may call God Father, and Abraham father, but God will not respect persons, or favour their cause from personal considerations, but judge them according to their work. The works of men will in the great day discover their persons. God will make all the world to know who are his by their works. We are obliged to faith, holiness, and obedience, and our works will be an evidence whether we have complied with our obligations or no.

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

The apostle having exhorted to pass the time of our life in the fear of God from this consideration, that we call on the Father, he adds in these words a second argument, because or forasmuch as we are redeemed by the Son, &c. Wherein he puts them in mind, First. That they were redeemed, or brought back again by a ransom paid to the Father. Secondly. What the price paid for their redemption was; "Not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Thirdly. They knew this; "Forasmuch as ye know," and cannot pretend ignorance of this great affair. Fourthly. From what they were redeemed; from a "vain conversation received by tradition."

Learn, 1. That the consideration of our redemption ought to be a constant and powerful inducement to holiness and the fear of God. [This is an answer for all the enticements of sin and of the world,—Except you can offer my soul something beyond the price that was given for it on the cross, I cannot hearken to you. Far be it from me that I should prefer a base lust, or any thing in this world, or it all, to him who gave himself to death for me, and paid my ransom with his blood. His matchless love has freed me from the miserable captivity of sin, and hath for ever fastened me to the sweet yoke of obedience. Let him alone to dwell and rule in me, and let him never go forth from my heart, who, for my sake, refused to come down from the cross.—*L.*] 2. God expects that a Christian should live answerably to what he knows, and therefore we have great need to be put in mind of what we already know, *Ps. xxxix. 4*. 3. Neither silver nor gold, nor any of the corruptible things of this world, can redeem so much as one soul. They are often snares, temptations, and hindrances to man's salvation, but they can by no means purchase or procure it. They are corruptible, and therefore cannot redeem an incorruptible and immortal soul. 4. The blood of Jesus Christ is the only price of man's redemption. The redemption of man is real, not metaphorical; "We are bought with a price," and the price is equal to the purchase, for it is the precious blood of Christ; it is the blood of an innocent person, a Lamb without blemish and without spot, whom the paschal lamb did represent; and of an infinite person, being the Son of God, and therefore is called the blood of God, *Acts xx. 28*. 5. The design of Christ in shedding his most precious blood was to redeem us

realisation of the "unspeakable joy," as it is always used of the future. (See *2 Cor. v. 10; Eph. vi. 8; Col. iii. 25*.) "Believing, ye that believe shall have joy and gladness that may not be told out, and ye shall be glorified and have the end of your faith, the health of your souls" (Wickliffe).

i. 10—12. "Searched," &c.: "The prophets, as private individuals, had to reflect on the hidden and far-reaching sense of their own prophecies; because their words, as prophets in their public

function, were not so much their own as the Spirit's, speaking by and in them. Thus Caiaphas" (Fausset). "Angels desire," &c.: see *Eph. iii. 10*. They, as ministers to the heirs of salvation, naturally are deeply interested in the plan of salvation.

i. 15. Best MSS. read, "Ye shall be holy."

i. 21. "In God:" "Your faith rests on Christ's resurrection—it was God who raised him; your hope on Christ's glorification—it is God who has given him that glory" (Alford).

not only from eternal misery hereafter, but from a vain conversation in this world. That conversation is vain that is empty, frivolous, trifling, and unserviceable to the honour of God, the credit of religion, the conviction of unbelievers, and the comfort and satisfaction of a man's own conscience. Not only the open wickedness, but the vanity and unprofitableness of our conversation is highly dangerous. 6. It is possible a man's conversation may carry an appearance of devotion, and may plead antiquity, custom, and tradition in its defence, and yet after all be a most vain conversation. The Jews had a deal to say from these heads for all their formalities; and yet their conversation was so vain, that only the blood of Christ could redeem them from it. Antiquity is no certain rule of verity, nor is it a wise resolution, I will live and die in such a way, because my forefathers did so.

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

First. The Redeemer is farther described, not only as a Lamb without spot, but as one,

1. That was foreordained before the foundation of the world,—"foreordained," or foreknown. When prescience is ascribed to God, it implies more than bare prospect or speculation. It does import an act of the will, a resolution that the thing shall be, *Acts ii. 23*. God did not only foreknow, but determine and decree, that his Son should die for man, and this decree was "before the foundation of the world." Time and the world began together; before the commencement of time there was nothing but eternity.

2. That he was manifest in these last days for you. He was manifested or demonstrated to be that Redeemer whom God had foreordained. He was manifest by his birth, by his Father's testimony, and by his own works, especially by his resurrection from the dead, *Rom. i. 4*. This was done "in these last times" of the New Testament, and of the Gospel, "for you," you Jews, you sinners, you afflicted ones; you have the comfort of the manifestation and appearance of Christ, if you believe on him.

3. That God raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory. The resurrection of Christ, considered as an act of power, is common to all the three persons; but as an act of judgment, it is peculiar to the Father, who, as a Judge, released Christ, and raised him from the grave, and "gave him glory," proclaimed him to all the world to be his Son by his resurrection from the dead, advanced him to heaven, crowned him with glory and honour, invested him with all power in heaven and earth, and glorified him with that glory which he had with God before the world was.

Secondly. The redeemed are also described here by their faith and hope, the cause of which is Jesus Christ; you "do by him believe in God." By him as the author, encourager, support, and finisher of your faith; your faith and hope now may be in God, as reconciled to you by Christ the Mediator.

[When you look through a red glass the whole heavens seem bloody, but through pure, uncoloured glass, you receive the clear light, that is so refreshing and comfortable to behold. When sin unpardoned is betwixt, and we look on God through that, we can perceive nothing but anger and enmity in his countenance; but make Christ once the medium, our pure Redeemer, and through him, as clear transparent glass, the beams of God's favourable countenance shine in upon the soul; the Father cannot look upon his well-beloved Son but graciously and pleasantly. Therefore set him always betwixt, and by him we shall believe in God.]

The warrant and ground of believing in God by Christ is this, that God raised him from the dead and gave him glory, for this end expressly, that our faith and hope might be in God: the last end is, that we may have life and glory through him; the nearer end, that in the meanwhile, till we attain them, we may have firm belief and hope of them, and rest on God as the giver of them, and so in part enjoy them beforehand, and be upheld in our joy and conflicts by the comfort of them; and as St. Stephen in his vision, *Acts vii. 55*. Faith doth, in a spiritual way, look through all the visible heavens, and see Christ at the Father's right hand, and is comforted by that in the greatest troubles, though it were amidst a shower of stones, as St. Stephen was. The comfort is no less than this, that being by faith made one with Christ, his present glory, wherein he sits at the Father's right hand, is assurance to us "that where he is we shall be also," *Jno. xiv. 3.—L.*

Learn, 1. The decree of God to send Christ to be a Mediator was from everlasting, and was a just and merciful decree, which yet does not at all excuse man's sin in crucifying him, *Acts ii. 23*. God hath purposes of special favours towards his people long before he makes any manifestations of such grace unto them. 2. Great is the happiness of the last times in comparison with what the former ages of the world did enjoy. The clearness of light, the supports of faith, the efficacy of ordinances, and the proportion of comforts, these are all much larger since the manifestation of Christ than they were before. Our gratitude and services should be suitable to such favours. 3. The redemption of Christ belongs to none but true believers. A general imputation is asserted by some and denied by others, but none pretend to a general application of Christ's death for the salvation of all. Hypocrites and unbelievers will be ruined for ever, notwithstanding the death of Christ. 4. God in Christ is the ultimate object of a Christian's faith, which is strongly supported by the resurrection of Christ, and the glory that did follow.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

Here the apostle begins another exhortation to brotherly love, wherein he supposeth that the Gospel had already such an effect upon them as to purify their souls, while they obeyed it through the Spirit, and that it had produced at least an "unfeigned love of the brethren;" and from thence he argues with them to proceed to a higher degree of affection, to "love one another with a pure heart fervently."

Learn, 1. It is not to be doubted but that every sincere Christian purifies his soul. The apostle takes that for granted, "Seeing ye have," &c. To purify the soul supposeth some great uncleanness and defilement which hath polluted it, and that this defilement is removed. Neither the Levitical purifications under the law, nor the hypocritical purifications of the outward man, can effect this. 2. The word of God is the great instrument of a sinner's purification: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth." The Gospel is called truth

in opposition to types and shadows, and to error and falsehood. This truth is effectual to purify the soul, if it be obeyed, *Jno. xvii. 17*. Many hear the truth, but are never purified by it; because they will not submit to it, nor obey it. 3. The Spirit of God is the great agent in the purification of man's soul. The Spirit convinceth the soul of its impurities, furnishes those virtues and graces that do both adorn and purify, such as faith, *Acts xv. 9*; hope, *1 Jno. iii. 3*; the fear of God, *Ps. xxxiv. 9*; and the love of Jesus Christ. The Spirit excites our endeavours and makes them successful. The aid of the Spirit does not supersede our own industry; these people purified their own souls, but it was through the Spirit. 4. The souls of Christians must be purified before they can so much as love one another unfeignedly. There are those lusts and partialities in man's nature, that without Divine grace we can neither love God nor one another as we ought to do. There is no charity but out of "a pure heart." 5. It is the duty of all Christians sincerely and fervently to love one another. Our affection to one another must be sincere and real, and it must be fervent, constant, and extensive.

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

This duty of loving one another with a pure heart fervently the apostle does farther press upon Christians, from the consideration of their spiritual relation; they are all "born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God," &c. [That word is eternal truth. That truth, introduced into the heart through Divine influence, by being understood and believed, becomes a living, active, operative principle there, producing holiness and joy. And it "abideth for ever;" it dwells an ever-living principle in an indestructible shrine, the never-dying human spirit; and dwelling for ever there, in the case of all the holy family, it forms an everlasting link of connexion with their common Father, and with each other.—B.] From whence we may

Learn, 1. That all Christians are born again. The apostle speaks of it as what is common to all serious Christians, and by this they are brought into a new and a near relation one to another; they become brethren by their new birth. 2. The word of God is the great means of regeneration, *Jas. i. 18*. The grace of regeneration is conveyed by the Gospel. 3. This new and second birth is much more desirable and excellent than the first. This the apostle teacheth by preferring the incorruptible to the corruptible seed. By the one we become the children of men, by the other the sons and daughters of the Most High. The word of God being compared to seed teacheth us, that though it be little in appearance, yet it is wonderful in operation; though it lies hid awhile, yet grows up and produceth excellent fruit at last. 4. Those that are regenerate should love one another with a pure heart fervently. Brethren by nature are bound to love one another; but the obligation is double where there is a spiritual relation; they are under the same government, partake of the same privileges, and are embarked in the same interest. 5. The word of God liveth and abideth for ever. This word is a living word, or a lively word, *Heb. iv. 12*. It is a means of spiritual life, to begin it and preserve in it, animating and exciting us in our duty, till it brings us to eternal life; and it is abiding; it remains eternally true, and abides in the hearts of the regenerate for ever.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

The apostle having given an account of the excellency of the renewed spiritual man as born again, not of corruptible, but incorruptible seed, he now sets before us the vanity of the natural man, taking him with all his ornaments and advantages about him; "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass," and nothing can make him a solid, substantial being, but the being born again of the incorruptible seed, the word of God, which will transform him into a most excellent creature, whose glory will not fade like a flower, but shine like an angel; and this word is daily set before you in the preaching of the Gospel.

Learn, 1. Man, in his utmost flourish and glory, is still a withering, fading, dying creature. Take him singly, all flesh is grass. In his entrance into the world, in his life, and in his fall, he is like to grass, *Job xiv. 2*; *Jsa. xl. 6, 7*. Take him in all his glory, even that is as the flower of grass; his wit, beauty, strength, vigour, wealth, honour, these are but as the flower of grass, which soon withers and dies away. 2. The only way to render this perishing creature solid and incorruptible is to entertain and receive the word of God, for that remains everlasting truth, and, if received, will preserve him to everlasting life, and abide with him for ever. 3. The prophets and apostles preached the same doctrine. This word, which Isaiah and others delivered in the Old Testament, is the same which the apostles preached in the New.

CHAPTER II.

The general exhortation to holiness is continued and enforced by several reasons taken from the foundation on which Christians are built, Jesus Christ, and from their spiritual blessings and privileges in him. The means of obtaining it, the word of God, is recommended, and all contrary qualities are condemned, ver. 1—12. Particular directions are given how subjects ought to obey the magistrates, and servants their masters, patiently suffering in well doing, in imitation of Christ, ver. 13—25.

HEREFORE laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocries, and envies, and all evil speakings,

The holy apostle had been recommending mutual charity, and setting forth the excellencies of the word of God, calling it an incorruptible seed, and saying that it liveth and abideth for ever; he pursues his discourse, and very properly comes in with this necessary advice, "Wherefore laying aside all malice," &c. These are such sort of sins as do both destroy charity and hinder the efficacy of the word, and consequently prevent our regeneration.

i. 22. Best MSS. omit "through the Spirit."

i. 23. "Liveth and abideth;" these words may refer to God or to the word of God, the latter probably, from verse 25. "For ever" is not found in oldest MSS.

i. 24. "All its glory;" not "the glory of man," as Authorised Version. Best MSS. omit "thereof."

ii. 1—10. "This portion of the epistle is singularly rich in thought and expression, and bears the peculiar impress of the apostle's mind,

in which Judaism is spiritualised, and finds its full development in Christ" (Cook).

ii. 1. "Malice," &c.: "Malice is delighted by another's injury; envy is tormented by another's profit" (Augustine).

ii. 2. "Milk of the word" is quite inadmissible; the literal translation is, "desire the reasonable, guileless milk." The apostle uses milk, as the natural and most nutritious food of "new-born babes," to represent the spiritual food of converts, and speaks of this

His advice is to lay aside, or put off, sin, as one would do an old rotten garment, cast it away with indignation, never put it on more. The sins to be put off, or thrown aside, are,

First, "Malice," which may be taken more generally for all sorts of wickedness, as *Jas. i. 21*; *1 Cor. v. 8*. But, in a more confined sense, malice is anger resting in the bosom of fools; settled, overgrown anger; retained till it inflames a man to design mischief, to do mischief, or delight in any mischief that befalls another.

Secondly, "Guile," or deceit in words. So it comprehends flattery, falsehood, and delusion, which is a crafty imposing upon another's ignorance or weakness, to his damage.

Thirdly, "Hypocrisies." The word being plural, comprehends all sorts of hypocrisies. In matters of religion, hypocrisy is counterfeit piety. In civil conversation, hypocrisy is counterfeit friendship, which is much practised by those that give high compliments which they do not believe, or make promises which they never intend to perform, or pretend friendship when mischief lies in their hearts.

Fourthly, All "envies." Every thing that may be called envy, which is a grieving at the good and welfare of another,—at their abilities, prosperity, fame, or successful labours.

Fifthly, "Evil-speaking," which is detraction, speaking against another, or defaming him; it is rendered "backbiting," *2 Cor. xii. 20*; *Rom. i. 30*.

Learn, 1. The best Christians have need to be cautioned and warned against the worst sins, such as malice, hypocrisy, envy. They are but sanctified in part, and are still liable to temptations. 2. Our best services towards God will neither please him nor profit us, if we are not conscientious in our duties to men. The sins here mentioned are offences against the second table. These must be laid aside, or else we cannot receive the word of God as we ought to do. 3. Whereas it is said, "all malice," "all guile," learn, That one sin not laid aside will hinder our spiritual profit and everlasting welfare. 4. Malice, envy, hatred, hypocrisy, and evil-speaking, generally go together. Evil-speaking is a sign that malice and guile lie in the heart, and all of them combine to hinder our profiting by the word of God.

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

The apostle, like a wise physician, having prescribed the purging out vicious humours, goes on to direct to wholesome and regular food, that they may grow thereby. The duty exhorted to is a strong and constant desire after the word of God, which word is here called reasonable milk; only, that phrase not being proper English, our translators turned it "the milk of the word," by which we are to understand food proper to the soul, or a reasonable creature, whereby the mind, not the body, is nourished and strengthened. This milk of the word must be sincere, not adulterated by the mixtures of men, who often corrupt the word of God, *2 Cor. ii. 17*. [The word of God is pure truth, without the slightest admixture of error; it is only in the degree in which this pure truth is contained in any statement, that that statement is spiritually nourishing; and this pure word is unadulterated; it does what it professes to do, it really nourishes. "It converts the soul, it makes wise the simple, it rejoices the heart, it enlightens the eyes." It "is able to save the soul." *Ps. xix. 7*; *2 Tim. iii. 15*; *Jas. i. 21*.] The manner how they are to desire this sincere milk of the word is stated thus: "As new-born babes." He puts them in mind of their regeneration. A new life requires suitable food. They being newly born must desire the milk of the word. Infants desire common milk, and their desires towards it are fervent and frequent, arising from an impatient sense of hunger, and accompanied with the best endeavours the infant is capable of; such must Christians' desires be after the word of God; and that for this end, that they may "grow thereby," that they may improve in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, *2 Pet. iii. 18*.

Learn, 1. Strong desires and affection to the word of God are a sure evidence of a person's being born again. If they be such desires as the babe hath for the milk, they prove that the person is new-born. They are the lowest evidence, but yet they are certain. 2. Growth and improvement in wisdom and grace are the design and desire of every Christian; all spiritual means are for edification and improvement. The word of God rightly used does not leave a man as it finds him, but improves and makes him better.

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

"If so be," or 'since that,' or 'forasmuch,' as ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. The apostle does not express a doubt, but affirms that these good Christians had tasted the goodness of God; and from hence argues with them, You ought to lay aside these vile sins, ver. 1, you ought to desire the word of God, you ought to grow thereby, since you cannot deny but that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. The next verse assures us that the Lord here spoken of is the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence,

Learn, 1. That our Lord Jesus Christ is very gracious to his people. He is in himself infinitely good; he is very kind, free, merciful to miserable sinners; he is pitiful and good to the undeserving; he hath in him a fulness of grace. 2. The graciousness of our Redeemer is best discovered by an experimental taste of it. There must be an immediate application of the object to the organ of taste. We cannot taste at a distance as we may see, and hear, and smell. To taste the graciousness of Christ experimentally supposeth our being united to him by faith, and then we may taste his goodness in all his providences, in all our spiritual concerns, in all our fears and temptations in his word and worship every day. ['That is to taste,' says Luther, 'when I with the heart believe that Christ has been sent for me, and is become mine own; that my miseries are his and his life mine. When this truth enters into the heart, then it is tasted.'] 3. The best of God's servants have in this life but a taste of the grace of Christ. A taste is but a little; it is not a draught, nor does it satisfy. It is so with the consolations of God in this life. 4. The word of God is the great instrument whereby he discovers and communicates his grace to men. They that feed upon the sincere milk of the word, they taste and experience most of his grace. In our converse with his word we should endeavour always to understand and experience more and more of his grace.

4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

The apostle here enters upon a description of Jesus Christ, which he continues to ver. 9; though to a capricious wit, or an infidel, the description of Christ by a stone may seem rough and harsh, yet to the Jews, who placed much of their religion in their magnificent temple, and who understood the prophetic style which calls the Messiah "a stone," *Isa. viii. 14*, *xviii. 16*, this manner of speaking was very elegant and proper. In this metaphorical

description of Jesus Christ, he is called a stone to denote his invincible strength and everlasting duration, and to teach his servants that he is their protection and security, the foundation on which they are built, and a rock of offence to all their enemies. He is the "living stone," having eternal life in himself, and being the Prince of life to all his people.

[He is here called a living stone, not only because of his immortality and glorious resurrection, being a Lamb that was slain, and is alive for ever and ever, but because he is the principle of spiritual and eternal life to us,—a living foundation that transfuses its life into the whole building and every stone of it, "in whom," united to whom, "all the building is fully framed." It is the spirit that flows from him which enlivens it, and knits it together, not as a dead mass, but as "a living body." This foundation, from the peculiarity of the case, does for its living superstructure what the root does in the vegetable world to the trunk, the branches, and the leaves, and what the head or the heart in the animal body does to all the members.—L.]

The reputation and respect he hath with God and man is very different. He is "disallowed of men," reprobated or rejected by his own countrymen, the Jews, and by the generality of mankind; but chosen of God, separated and fore-ordained to be the foundation of the church, as *ch. i. 20*; and "precious," a most honourable, choice, worthy person, both in himself, in the esteem of God, and in the judgment of all that believe on him.

To this person so described we are obliged to come. "To whom coming," not by a local motion,—for that is impossible since his exaltation,—but by faith, whereby we are united to him at first, and draw nigh to him ever after.

Learn, 1. That Jesus Christ is the very foundation-stone of all our hopes and happiness. He communicates the true knowledge of God, *Mat. xi. 27*. By him we have access to the Father, *Jno. xiv. 6*; and through him are made partakers of all spiritual blessings, *Eph. i. 3*. 2. Men in general do disallow and reject Jesus Christ; they slight him, dislike him, oppose and refuse him, as Scripture and experience declare, *Isa. liii. 3*. 3. However Christ be disallowed by an ungrateful world, yet he is chosen of God, and precious in his account. He is chosen and fixed upon to be the Lord of the universe, the Head of the church, the Saviour of his people, and the Judge of the world. He is precious in the excellency of his nature, the dignity of his office, and the gloriousness of his services. 4. Those that expect mercy from this gracious Redeemer must come to him, which is our act, though done by God's grace; an act of the soul, not of the body; a real endeavour, not a fruitless wish.

5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

The foundation was laid, ver. 4; here is the superstructure, the materials built upon it, "Ye also as living stones are built up." The apostle is recommending the Christian church and constitution to these dispersed Jews. It was natural for them to object that the Christian church had no such glorious temple, nor such a numerous priesthood; but its dispensation was mean, the services and sacrifices of it having nothing of that pomp and grandeur which the Jewish dispensation had. To which the apostle answers, that the Christian church is a much nobler fabric than the Jewish temple; it is a living temple, consisting not of dead materials, but of living parts. Christ, the foundation, is a living stone, and Christians are lively stones, and these make a spiritual house, and they are a holy priesthood; and though they have no bloody sacrifices of beasts to offer, yet they have much better and more acceptable, and they have an altar too on which to present their offerings; for they offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Learn, 1. That all sincere Christians have in them a principle of spiritual life derived to them from Christ their head; therefore, as he is called a living stone, so they are called lively, or living stones; not dead in trespasses and sins, but alive to God by regeneration and the working of the Divine Spirit. 2. The church of God is "a spiritual house." The foundation is Christ, *Eph. ii. 20*; the builders are ministers, *1 Cor. iii. 10*; the inhabitant is God, *Eph. ii. 22*. It is a house for its strength, beauty, variety of parts, and usefulness of the whole; it is spiritual in its foundation, Christ Jesus; in the materials of it, spiritual persons; in its furniture, the graces of the Spirit; in its connexion, being held together by the Spirit of God, and by one common faith; and in its use, which is spiritual work, to offer up spiritual sacrifices. This house is daily built up, every part of it improving, and the whole supplied in every age by the addition of new particular members. 3. All good Christians are "an holy priesthood." The apostle speaks here of the generality of Christians, and tells them they are a holy priesthood; they are all select persons, sacred to God, serviceable to others, well endowed with heavenly gifts and graces, and well employed. 4. This "holy priesthood" must, and will, offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. The spiritual sacrifices which Christians are to offer are their bodies, souls, affections, prayers, praises, alms, and other duties. 5. The most spiritual sacrifices of the best men are not acceptable to God but through Jesus Christ. He is the only great High Priest through whom we and our services can be accepted; therefore bring all your oblations to him, and by him present them to God.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

What was asserted before of Christ,—his being "a living stone," &c.—is here proved from *Isa. xxviii. 16*, where observe the manner of the apostle's quoting Scripture, not by book, chapter, and verse, for those distinctions were not then made; so no more was said than a reference to Moses, David, or the prophets, except once a particular psalm was named, *Acts xiii. 33*. In their quotations they kept rather to the sense than the words of the Scripture, as appears from what is recited from the prophet in this place. He doth not quote the Scripture, either the Hebrew or Seventy, word for word, yet makes a just and true quotation. The true sense of Scripture may be justly and fully expressed in other than in Scripture words. "It is contained." The verb is active, but our translators render it passively, to avoid the difficulty of finding a nominative case for it, which had puzzled so many interpreters before them. The matter of the quotation is this, "Behold, I lay in Zion."

Learn, 1. In the weighty matters of religion we must depend entirely upon Scripture proof. Christ and his apostles appealed to Moses, David, and the ancient prophets. The word of God is the only rule God hath given us; it is a perfect and sufficient rule, and it is an intelligible and a certain rule. 2. The accounts that God hath given us in Scripture concerning his Son Christ Jesus are what require our strictest attention. "Behold, I lay." John calls for the

as reasonable and guileless, that is, having only one object—to benefit the soul. This milk, doubtless, is "the word of God," but is not so expressed in the Greek. (Compare Wickliffe, Tyndal, Cranmer, Rheims, and Alford.) "This may truly be rendered 'reasonable milk,' as some read it, but certainly that reasonable milk is the word of God, 'the milk of the word'" (Leighton). "That ye may grow thereby unto salvation:" so all best MSS.

ii. 3. "Gracious:" *chrēstos*. "Wine is *chrēstos*, which has been

mellowed by age (Luke v. 39); Christ's yoke is *chrēstos*, as having nothing harsh or galling about it—Matt. xi. 30" (Trench, "New Testament Synonyms"). See *Psa. xxxiv. 8*.

ii. 4, 5. "To whom coming:" the verb is present, implying a continual coming, a daily habit. "A living stone:" "as unto" of Authorised Version is incorrect, and must be omitted. "Peter, so named by Christ, from *petra* (a stone) delights in the metaphor of a stone, and teaches by his own example that all should be stones—i.e.,

like attention, *Isa.* i. 29. These demands of attention to Christ shew us the excellency of the matter, the importance of it, and our own stupidity and dullness. 3. The constituting Christ Jesus head of the church is an eminent work of God. "I lay in Zion." The setting up the pope for head of the church is a human contrivance, and an arrogant presumption. Christ only is the foundation and head of the church of God. 4. Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone that God hath laid in his spiritual building. The corner-stone stays inseparably with the building, supports it, unites it, and adorns it; so does Christ by his holy church, his spiritual house. 5. Jesus Christ is a corner-stone for the support and salvation of none but such as are his sincere people. None but Zion, and such as of Zion; not for Babylon, not for his enemies. 6. True faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to prevent a man's utter confusion. Three things put a man into great confusion, and faith prevents them all—disappointment, sin, and judgment. Faith hath a remedy for each.

7 Unto you therefore which believe *he is precious*: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

These words are an inference from what went before; Jesus Christ is said to be the chief corner-stone, &c. Hence the apostle infers,

First. With respect to good men: "To you, therefore, which believe, he is precious;" or 'he is an honour.' Christ is the crown and honour of a Christian; you that believe will be so far from being ashamed of him, that you will boast of him, and glory in him for ever.

Secondly. As to wicked men. The disobedient will go on to disallow and reject Jesus Christ; but God is resolved that he shall be, in despite of all opposition, the head of the corner.

Learn, 1. Whatever is by just and necessary consequence deduced from Scripture, may be depended upon with as much certainty as if it were contained in express words of Scripture. The apostle draws an inference from the prophet's testimony. The prophet did not expressly say so, but yet he said that from which the consequence was unavoidable. Our Saviour bids them "search the Scriptures," because they testified of him; and yet no place in those Scriptures to which he there refers them said that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. But yet those Scriptures do say, that he that would be born of a virgin, before the sceptre departed from Judah, during the second temple, and after Daniel's seventy weeks, was the Messiah: but such was Jesus Christ. To collect which conclusion, one must make use of reason, history, eyesight, experience; and yet it is an infallible Scripture conclusion for all that. 2. The business of a faithful minister is to apply general truths to the particular condition and state of their hearers. The apostle quotes a passage (*ver.* 6) out of the prophet, then he applies it severally to good and bad. This requires wisdom, courage, and fidelity; but it is very profitable to the hearers. 3. Jesus Christ is exceeding precious to all the faithful. The majesty and grandeur of his person, the dignity of his office, his near relation, his wonderful works, his immense love,—every thing engages the faithful to the highest esteem and respect to Jesus Christ. 4. Disobedient people have no true faith; by disobedient people, understand them that are unpersuadable, incredulous, and impenitent. These may have some right notions, but no solid faith. 5. They that ought to be builders of the church of Christ are often the worst enemies that Christ hath in the world. In the Old Testament the false prophets did the most mischief; and in the New Testament the greatest opposition and cruelty that Christ met with was from the scribes, Pharisees, chief priests, and those that pretended to build and take care of the church. Still the hierarchy of Rome is the worst enemy in the world to Jesus Christ and his interest. 6. God will carry on his own work, and support the interest of Jesus Christ in the world, notwithstanding the falseness of pretended friends and the opposition of his worst enemies.

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

The words are taken from *Isa.* viii. 13, 14, "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and he shall be for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence." From whence it is plain that Jesus Christ is the Lord of hosts, and consequently the Most High God. The builders, the chief priests, refused him, and the people followed their leaders; and so Christ became to them "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence," at which they stumbled and hurt themselves. And in return he fell upon them as a mighty stone or rock, and punished them with destruction; *Mat.* xxi. 44, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

Learn, 1. All those that are disobedient take offence at the word of God. They "stumble at the word, being disobedient." They are offended with Christ himself, with his doctrine, and the purity of his precepts; but the Jewish doctors more especially stumbled at the meanness of his appearance, and the proposal of trusting only to him for their justification before God. They could not be brought to seek justification by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; "For they stumbled at that stumblingstone," *Rom.* ix. 32. 2. The same blessed Jesus, who is the author of salvation to some, is to others the occasion of their sin and destruction. He is set for the rising and fall of many in Israel. He is not the author of their sin, but only the occasion of it; their own disobedience makes them stumble at him, and reject him, which he punishes, as a Judge, with destruction. They that rejected him as a Saviour will split upon him as a Rock. 3. God himself hath appointed everlasting destruction to all those who "stumble at the word, being disobedient." All those that go on resolutely in their infidelity and contempt of the Gospel are appointed to eternal destruction; and God from eternity knows who they are. 4. To see the Jews generally rejecting Christ, and multitudes in all ages slighting him, ought not to discourage us in our love and duty to him. For this hath been foretold by the prophets long ago, and is a confirmation of our faith both in Scriptures and in the Messiah.

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

The Jews were exceeding tender of their ancient privileges, of being the only people of God, taken into a special covenant with him, and separated from

the rest of the world. Now, say they, if we submit to the gospel constitution, we shall lose all this, and stand upon the same level with the Gentiles. To this objection the apostle answers,

First. That if they did not submit they were ruined, *ver.* 7, 8.

Secondly. That if they did submit they should lose no real advantage, but continue still what they desired to be, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood," &c.

Learn, 1. That all true Christians are "a chosen generation." They all make one family, a sort and species of people distinct from the common world, of another spirit, principle, and practice, which they could never be if they were not chosen in Christ to be such, and sanctified by his Spirit. 2. All the true servants of Christ are "a royal priesthood." They are royal in their relation to God and Christ, in their power with God, and over themselves and all their spiritual enemies. They are princely in the improvements and excellency of their own spirits, and in their hopes and expectations. They are "a royal priesthood," separated from sin and sinners, consecrated to God, and offering to God spiritual services and oblations acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 3. All Christians, whosoever they be, compose one holy nation; they are one nation collected under one head; agreeing in the same manners and customs, and governed by the same laws. And they are "a holy nation," because consecrated and devoted to God, renewed and sanctified by his Holy Spirit. 4. It is the honour of the servants of Christ that they are God's "peculiar people." They are the people of his acquisition, choice, care, and delight. These four dignities of all genuine Christians are not natural to them, for their first state is a state of horrid darkness, but they are effectually "called out of darkness" into a state of "marvellous light," joy, pleasure, and prosperity, with this intent and view, that they should shew forth by words and actions the virtues and praises of him that hath called them.

[This light, this state of knowledge, purity, and happiness, is also termed marvellous, "God's marvellous," strange, wonderful "light." The light which emblematised it, the pillar of fire, was a marvellous light. It was supernatural, and so is this light. "It is the doing of the Lord, and it is marvellous" in the eyes of all who behold it. It produces marvellous effects, enabling us to see things invisible and eternal; and, by its brightness, casting into the shade things seen and temporal, it enables us to "see the King in his beauty, and to behold the land which is afar off." It enables us to penetrate into the true characters of objects, and to distinguish shadows from realities, and realities from shadows. It converts a spiritual waste into the garden of the Lord, blooming with beauty, rich in the fruits of righteousness.]

"Struck by that light, the human heart—

A barren soil no more—

Sends the sweet smell of grace abroad,

Where serpents lurk'd before,

The soul—a dreary province once

Of Satan's dark domain—

Feels a new empire form'd within,

And owns a heavenly reign."]

10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

To make this people content and thankful for the great mercies and dignities brought unto them by the Gospel, the apostle adviseth them to compare their former and their present state. Time was when they were not a people, nor had they obtained mercy, but were solemnly disclaimed and divorced, *Jer.* ii. 8; *Hos.* i. 6, 9; but now they are taken in again to be the people of God, and have obtained mercy.

Learn, 1. The best people ought frequently to look back upon what they were in time past. 2. The people of God are the most valuable people in the world; all the rest are not a people, good for little. 3. To be brought into the number of the people of God is a very great mercy, and it may be obtained.

[4. How different the state of the believer and the unbeliever; how happy the one, how miserable the other! Look at the two, and say if he who has secured the former has not reason to say that the Lord has been gracious to him for; there was no alternative. If he had not obtained the honour and happiness of the believer, the shame and ruin of the unbeliever must have been his.]

[5. If you be persuaded to be earnest suitors for this mercy, and to fly unto Jesus, who is the true mercy-seat, then be assured it is yours. Thou art nothing, and worse than nothing; true! but all that ever obtained this mercy were once so: they were nothing of all that which it hath made them to be; they were not a people, had no interest in God, were strangers to mercy, yea, heirs of wrath; yea, they had not so much as a desire after God, until this mercy prevented them, and showed itself to them, and them to themselves, and so moved them to desire it, and caused them to find it,—caught hold on them and plucked them out of the dungeon. And it is unquestionably still the same, and fails not; ever expending, and yet never all spent; yea, not so much as at all diminished; flowing as the rivers from one age to another, serving each age in the present, and yet no whit the less to those that come after. He who exercises it is the Lord, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin to all that come unto him, and yet still keeping mercy for thousands that come after, *Ex.* xxxiv. 7.—*L.*]

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

Even the best of men, the chosen generation, the people of God, need an exhortation to abstain from the worst sins, which the apostle here proceeds most earnestly and affectionately to warn them against. Knowing the difficulty, and yet the importance, of the duty, he useth his utmost interest in them: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you." The duty is to abstain from, and to suppress the first inclination or rise of, "fleshly lusts." There are many of them that proceed from the corruption of nature, which in their exercise depend upon the body, gratifying some sensual appetite or inordinate inclination of the flesh. These Christians ought to avoid, considering,

First. The respect they have with God and good men. They are "dearly beloved."

Secondly. Their condition in the world. They are "strangers and pilgrims," and should not impede their passage by giving into the wickedness and lusts of the country through which they pass.

Thirdly. The mischief and danger these sins do. They war against the soul; and therefore your souls ought to war against them.

Learn, 1. The grand mischief that sin does to man is this—it "wars against the soul;" it destroys the moral liberty of the soul; it weakens and debilitates the soul by impairing its faculties; it robs the soul of its comfort and peace; it

living stones built upon Christ by faith" (Gerhard). "A spiritual house:" the Sinaitic MS. reads, "a house of the Spirit." "A holy priesthood:" "The adoption of these titles shows that in the Christian Church there is no need of the mediation of priests to present our prayers to God. Every true worshipper has access to God through Christ" (Webster and Wilkinson).

ii. 7. "He is precious;" Authorised Version here incorrect. "Is the honour" is the literal translation. The apostle has just quoted

the words, "he that believeth in him shall not be ashamed," and now enforces them in his own language; the honour belonging to the stone with which believers are united is theirs by association and union. "Therefore honour to you that believe" (Wickliffe, and so Rheims and Alford).

ii. 8. "Who stumble, being disobedient to the word:" this is the true connection, not as Authorised Version. Thus the following sentence bears a different meaning, viz., that God has appointed

debases and destroys the dignity of the soul, hinders its present prosperity, and plunges it into everlasting misery. 2. Of all sorts of sins, none more injurious to the soul than "fleshy lusts." Carnal appetites, lewdness, and sensuality, are most odious to God, and destructive to man's soul. It is a sore judgment to be given up to them.

12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

These Christian people are here exhorted to adorn their profession by an honest conversation. Their conversation, in every turn, every instance, and every action of their lives, ought to be honest; that is, good, lovely, decent, amiable, and without blame; and that because they lived among the Gentiles, people of another religion, and who were inveterate enemies to them, that did already slander them, and constantly speak evil of them as of evil-doers.

[The primitive Christians were very generally represented as monsters of wickedness, as guilty of the most unnatural and atrocious crimes, as atheists and haters of mankind. They were represented as cannibals, magicians, infanticides, and as indulging in the most shocking impurities at their nocturnal assemblies.—*Just. Apolog. i. Ecumen. in loc. Euseb. iv. 7; v. 1. August. de Civ. Dei, xviii. 53.—B.*]

A clean, just, good conversation, may not only stop their mouths, but may possibly be a means to bring them to glorify God, and turn to you, when they shall see you excel all others in good works. They now call you evil-doers,—vindicate yourselves by good works, and this is the way to convince them. There is a "day of visitation" coming, wherein God may call them by his word and his grace to repentance, and then they will glorify God, and applaud you for your excellent conversation, *Lu. i. 68*. When the Gospel shall come among them, and take effect, a good conversation will encourage them in their conversion, but an evil one will obstruct.

Note, 1. A Christian profession should be attended with an honest conversation, *Phil. iv. 8*. 2. It is the common lot of the best Christians to be evil spoken of by wicked men. 3. Those that are under God's gracious visitation do presently change their opinion of good people, glorifying God, and commending them whom before they railed at as evil-doers.

13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

The general rule of a Christian conversation is this, it must be honest, which it cannot be if there be not a conscientious discharge of all relative duties. The apostle does here begin to treat of those distinctly. Christians were not only reputed innovators in religion, but disturbers of the state. It was highly necessary the apostle should settle the rules and measures of obedience to the civil magistrate, which he does here. Where,

First. The duty required is submission, which contains loyalty and reverence to their persons, obedience to their just laws and commands, and subjection to legal penalties.

Secondly. The persons or objects to whom this submission is due are described. 1. More generally: "Every ordinance of man." Magistracy is certainly of Divine right; but the particular form of government, the power of the magistrate, and the persons who are to execute this power, are of human institution, and are governed by the laws and constitution of each particular country. And this is a general rule, binding in all nations, let the established form of government be what it will. (See additional Note on *Rom. xiii. 1-6*.) 2. Particularly: "To the king, as supreme," first in dignity and most eminent in degree; the king is a legal person, not a tyrant; "or unto governors," deputies, proconsuls, rulers of provinces, who "are sent by him," that is, commissioned by him to govern. 3. The reasons to enforce this duty are, 1st. It must be done for the "Lord's sake," who hath ordained magistracy for the good of mankind, who hath required obedience and submission, *Rom. xiii.*, and whose honour is concerned in the dutiful behaviour of subjects to their sovereigns. 2nd. From the end and use of the magistrate's office, which is to punish evil-doers, and to praise and encourage all them that do well; they were appointed for the good of societies; and where this end is not pursued, the fault is not in their institution, but their practice.

Learn, 1. True religion is the best support of civil government; it requires submission "for the Lord's sake," and for conscience' sake. 2. All the punishments, and all the magistracies in the world, cannot hinder, but there will still be evil-doers in it. 3. The best way the magistrate can take to discharge his own office, and to amend the world, is to punish well [justly and impartially] and reward well.

15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

Here is another reason why Christians should submit to the civil magistrate, because it is "the will of God," and consequently their duty; and because it is the way to put to silence the malicious slanders of ignorant and foolish men.

Learn, 1. "The will of God" is to a good man the strongest reason for any duty. 2. Obedience to magistrates is a considerable branch of a Christian's duty; "So is the will of God." 3. A Christian must endeavour in all relations to behave himself so as to put to silence the unreasonable reproaches of the most ignorant and foolish men. 4. Those that speak against religion and religious people are ignorant and foolish.

16 As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

The Jews, from *Deu. xvii. 15*, concluded that they were bound to obey no sovereign but one taken from among their own brethren; and the converted Jews thought they were free from subjection by their relation to Christ. To prevent these mistakes, the apostle tells the Christians that they were free; but from what? not from duty and obedience to God's law, which requires subjection to the civil magistrate. They were free spiritually from the bondage of sin and Satan, and the ceremonial law; but they must not make their Christian

liberty a cloak or covering for any wickedness, or the neglect of any duty towards God, or towards their superiors; but must still remember they were "the servants of God."

[It intimates that, being set at liberty by Christ they are not to enthrall themselves to any creature, however elevated; nor to submit to any human institution as slaves, as if the ordinance or institution itself, as a human ordinance and institution, did, by any inherent power, bind the conscience; but that, as the Lord's freemen, in a manner becoming so exalted a character, they should yield a cheerful subjection to the power of civil magistrates, and a ready obedience to their lawful commands, from a regard to the authority of Christ, the sole Lord of their conscience, requiring them so to do,—taking heed "not to use their liberty for an occasion to the flesh," not making that a cloak or excuse for disrespect or disobedience to their civil superiors; for though, in the highest sense of the term, they be not the servants of men, but of God, and therefore are not bound to obey any human command without a reference to the authority of God requiring them to do so; yet, on the ground of his command to be subject to the higher powers, they are bound to yield to them such honour and obedience as does not interfere with the supreme reverence and obedience which they owe to him as the only Lord of the conscience.—*Bp. Sanderson, as quoted by Dr. Brown.*]

Learn, 1. All the servants of Christ are free men, *Jno. viii. 36*. They are free from Satan's dominion, the law's condemnation, the wrath of God, the uneasiness of duty,—[meaning that they find duty not burdensome, but pleasant; the yoke is easy to them, the burden light; see *1 Jno. v. 4, 5*],—and the terrors of death. 2. The servants of Jesus Christ ought to be very careful not to abuse their Christian liberty; they must not make it a cover or cloak for any wickedness against God, or disobedience to superiors.

17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

The apostle concludes his discourse, concerning the duty of subjects, with four admirable precepts.

First. "Honour all men." A due respect is to be given to all men. The poor are not to be despised, *Pr. xvii. 5*. The wicked must be honoured, not for their wickedness, but for any other qualities, such as wit, prudence, courage, eminency of employment, or the hoary head. Abraham, Jacob, Samuel, the prophets and apostles, never scrupled to give due honour to bad men.

[The Romans, when they meant to set a mark of public disgrace or dishonour on any eminent person, did manifest their intention by throwing down, breaking, trampling upon, or doing some other like disgrace to their statues or pictures; and Solomon, in sundry places, interpreteth all acts of oppressing, mocking, or otherwise despising our neighbours, not without a strong reflection upon God himself; as leading to the contempt and dishonour of their Maker. "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker; but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor." "Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker;" and surely there is much force in this interrogation, "Why settest thou at nought, not only thine own brother, but the brother of the Lord of glory?" Why despisest thou him for whom Christ died? *Pr. xiv. 31; xvii. 5; Rom. xiv. 10, 15.—Sanderson.* The sentiment of honour for man should manifest itself in the whole of our conduct to our fellow-men, especially to those who in any respect may be our inferiors, whether in intellect, or talent, or acquirement, or moral worth, or rank, or wealth, leading us to "condescend to them that are of low estate;" but it takes its best form when it leads us to use all the means in our power to raise our fellow-men in the scale of true honour and excellence; to rescue them from the influence of ignorance, and error, and superstition; to put down slavery, oppression, war, and misgovernment, in all its endlessly varied forms; to make men free, intelligent, industrious, moral, religious, and happy, to the greatest attainable degree on earth; to save them from the shame and everlasting contempt which awaits unimproved advantages and unanswered responsibilities in eternity; and to secure to them that "glory, honour, and immortality" which, while "the gift of God through Jesus Christ," is to be sought for and obtained "in a constant continuance in well-doing." *Rom. vi. 23; xi. 7.—B.* See Note on *Jas. i. 27.*]

Secondly. "Love the brotherhood." All Christians are a fraternity, united to Christ the head, alike disposed and qualified, nearly related, in the same interest, having communion one with another, and going to the same home, and therefore should love one another with an especial affection.

Thirdly. "Fear God," with the highest reverence, duty, and submission. If this be wanting, none of the other three duties can be performed as they ought.

Fourthly. "Honour the king," with that highest honour that is peculiarly due to him above other men.

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

The case of servants wanted an apostolical determination as well as that of subjects; for they imagined that their Christian liberty did set them free from their unbelieving and cruel masters. To this the apostle answers, "Servants, be subject." By "servants" he means those that were strictly such, whether hired or bought with money, or taken in the wars, or born in the house, or those that serve by contract for a limited time, as apprentices. These he orders to "be subject," to do their business faithfully and honestly; to carry themselves as inferiors ought, with reverence and affection, and to submit patiently to hardships and inconveniences. This subjection they owe to their masters, who have a right to their service, and that "not only to the good and gentle," such as do use them well, and abate somewhat of their right, but even to the crooked and perverse, who are scarce to be pleased at all.

Learn, 1. Servants ought to carry themselves to their masters with submission and fear of displeasing them. 2. The sinful miscarriage of one relation does not justify the sinful behaviour of the other; the servant is bound to his duty, though the master be sinfully froward and perverse. 3. Good people are meek and gentle to their servants and inferiors.

19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

that those who disobey his word shall stumble—i.e., incur punishment; whereas the Authorised Version might mean that God had appointed men to disobedience.

ii. 11—iv. 6. So far the apostle has been exhorting believers to make their life worthy of their high calling, as distinguished from their former mode of life; now he exhorts them to glorify God amongst the ungodly by holy living.

ii. 12. "Whereas:" rather, "in the matter in which"—that is, in

their Christian course of action. "In that thing that they backbite of you" (Wickliffe). "In that wherein they misreport of you" (Rheims). The very acts which, as Christians, they must do, and which would at first offend the heathen, would, when carefully considered by them, redound to God's praise. Thus Tertullian mentions that the Christians would not frequent the amphitheatres, gave up slaves, nursed the heathen sick when their relatives had deserted them, were imprisoned, but for their faith, not for crime; all which things,

Our holy apostle shews his love and concern for the souls of poor servants, as well as for higher people. Herein he ought to be imitated by all inferior ministers, who should distinctly apply their counsels to the lower, the meaner, the younger, and the poorer sort of their hearers, as well as others. Having charged them to be subject, he condescends to reason with them about it. If they were patient under their hardships, while they suffered unjustly, and continued doing their duty to their unbelieving and untoward masters, this would be acceptable to God, and he would reward all that they suffered for conscience towards him. But to be patient when they were justly chastised, this deserves no commendation at all. It is only doing well, and suffering patiently for that, which is "acceptable with God."

Learn, 1. There is no condition so mean but a man may live conscientiously in it, and glorify God in it. The meanest servant may do so. 2. The most conscientious persons are very often the greatest sufferers. For conscience towards God they suffer wrongfully; they do well, and suffer for it. But these sort of sufferers are praiseworthy; they do honour to God and to religion, and they are accepted of him; and this is their highest support and satisfaction. 3. Deserved sufferings must be endured with patience. If ye are "buffeted for your faults," ye must "take it patiently." Sufferings in this world are not always pledges of our future happiness. If children or servants are rude and undutiful, and suffer for it, it will neither be "acceptable with God" nor procure the praise of men.

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

More reasons are given to encourage Christian servants to patience under unjust sufferings.

First. From their Christian calling and profession: "Hereunto were ye called."

Secondly. From the example of Christ, who suffered for us, and so became our example, that we should follow his steps. From whence,

Learn, 1. That good Christians are a sort of people called to be sufferers, and therefore they must expect it. By the terms of Christianity they are bound to deny themselves, and take up the cross. They are called by the commands of Christ, by the dispensations of Providence, by the preparations of Divine grace; and by the practice of Jesus Christ they are bound to suffer when thus called to it. 2. Jesus Christ suffered for you, or for us; it was not the Father that suffered, but he whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world for that end. It was both the body and soul of Christ that suffered; and he suffered for us, in our stead, and for our good, ver. 24. 3. The sufferings of Christ should quiet us under the most unjust and cruel sufferings we meet with in the world. He suffered voluntarily,—not for himself, but for us,—with the utmost readiness, with perfect patience, from all quarters; and all this, though he was God-man. Shall not we sinners, that deserve the worst, submit to the light afflictions of this life, which work for us unspeakable advantages afterwards?

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

The example of Christ's subjection and patience is here explained and amplified. Christ suffered,

First. Wrongfully, and without cause; for he "did no sin," *Isa. liii. 9*. He had done no violence, no injustice or wrong to any one; he wrought no iniquity of any sort whatever, "neither was guile found in his mouth;" his words, as well as actions, were all sincere, just, and right.

Secondly. Patiently: "When he was reviled, he reviled not again." When they blasphemed him, mocked him, called him foul names, he was dumb, and opened not his mouth. When they went farther, to real injuries,—beating, buffeting, and crowning him with thorns,—he threatened not; but committed both himself and his cause to God, "that judgeth righteously," who would in time clear his innocence, and avenge him on his enemies.

Learn, 1. Our blessed Redeemer was perfectly holy, and so free from sin that no temptation, no provocation whatsoever, could extort from him so much as the least sinful or indecent word. 2. Provocations to sin can never justify the commission of it. The rudeness, cruelty, and injustice of enemies will not justify Christians in reviling and revenge. The reasons for sin can never be so great but we have always stronger reasons to avoid it. 3. The judgment of God will determine justly upon every man and every cause, and thither we ought with patience and resignation to refer ourselves.

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Least any should think, from what is said, ver. 21—23, that Christ's death was designed only for an example of patience under sufferings, the apostle here adds a more glorious design and effect of it; "Who his own self," &c. Where note,

First. The person suffering: Jesus Christ, "his own self, in his own body." The expression, "his own self," is emphatical, and necessary to shew that he verified all the ancient prophecies, to distinguish him from the Levitical priests, who offered the blood of others; but he by himself purged our sins, *Heb. i. 3*, and to exclude all others from participation with him in the work of man's redemption. It is added, "in his body." Not but that he suffered in his soul, *Mat. xxvi. 38*; but the sufferings of the soul were inward and concealed, when those of the body were visible, and more obvious to the consideration of those suffering servants for whose sake the example is produced.

Secondly. The sufferings he underwent were stripes, wounds, and death, the death of the cross—servile and ignominious punishments!

"He himself bare our sins in his own body to the tree," *Ερι το ξυλον*. Vide *Robinson on Epi. iii. 6*, (a) and (β); *Mat. iii. 13*; *xii. 28*; *xxii. 34*; *Acts iv. 26*; *Lu. iii. 2*; *2 Thes. i. 10*; *1 Pet. iii. 12*: see Dr. Brown's illustration of this rendering, ii. 97, et seq. It is the same word that in the verse before us is rendered *on*, that in the following verse is rendered *to*, "Ye are returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls." This, then, we apprehend, is the apostle's statement, "He himself bare our sins in his own body to the tree."—B.]

Thirdly. The reason of his sufferings. He "bare our sins;" which teaches, 1. That Christ in his suffering stood charged with our sins, as one that had undertaken to put them away by the sacrifice of himself, *Isa. liii. 6*. 2. That he bare the punishment of them, and thereby satisfied Divine justice. 3. That thereby he takes away our sins, and removes them away from us, as the scape-goat did typically bear the sins of the people on his head, and then carried them quite away, *Lev. xvi. 21, 22*. So the Lamb of God does first "bear our sins in his own body," and thereby "take away the sin of the world," *Jno. i. 29*.

Fourthly. The fruits of Christ's sufferings are, 1. Our sanctification; consisting of the death, the mortification of sin, and a new, holy life of righteousness; for both which we have an example, and powerful motives and abilities also, from the death and resurrection of Christ. 2. Our justification. Christ was bruised and crucified as an expiatory sacrifice, and by his stripes we are healed.



ver. 24.

Learn, 1. Jesus Christ bore the sins of all his people, and expiated them by his death upon the cross. 2. No man can depend safely upon Christ, as having borne his sin and expiated his guilt, till he dies unto sin and lives unto righteousness. [Meaning that a death unto sin, and a new life to righteousness, is the unfailing attendant of saving faith in Christ, and that the evidence of the latter is afforded in our experience of Divine grace producing the former.]

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

The apostle concludes his advice to Christian servants, putting them in mind of the difference between their former and present condition.

First. They "were as sheep going astray;" which represents, 1. Man's sin; he goes "astray." It is his own act; he is not driven, but does voluntarily go astray. 2. His misery. He goes astray from the pasture, from the Shepherd, and from the flock, and so exposes himself to innumerable dangers.

Secondly. Here is the recovery of these by conversion; "But are now returned." The word is passive, and shews that the return of a sinner is the effect of Divine grace. This return is from all their errors and wanderings to Christ, who is the true, careful Shepherd that loves his sheep, and laid down his life for them; who is the most vigilant pastor, and bishop, or overseer of souls.

Learn, 1. Sinners, before their conversion, are always "going astray;" their life is a continued error. 2. Jesus Christ is the supreme "Shepherd and Bishop of souls," who is always resident with his flock, and watchful over them. 3. Those that expect the love and care of this universal Pastor must return to him; must die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

CHAPTER III.

Wherein the apostle describes the duties of husbands and wives one to another, beginning with the duty of the wife, ver. 1—7. He exhorts Christians to unity, love, compassion, peace, and patience under sufferings; to oppose the slanders of their enemies, not by returning evil for evil, or railing for railing, but by a blessing; by a ready account of their faith and hope, and by keeping a good conscience, ver. 8—17. To encourage them to this, he propothes the example of Christ, who suffered, the just for the unjust; but yet punished the old world for their disobedience, and saved the few that were faithful in the days of Noah, ver. 18—22.



LIKEWISE, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

The apostle, having treated of the duties of subjects to their sovereigns, and

ii. 15. "Ignorance of foolish men:" "Not simple ignorance of this or that fact, but a state of lack of knowledge or understanding, habitual ignorance" (Alford). See *1 Cor. xv. 34*.

ii. 16. "Maliciousness" possibly here means a readiness to rebel against earthly rulers, on the plea of the service of Christ.

ii. 21. "For you, leaving you:" so best MSS.

iii. 1. Omit "also." "They shall be won without word:" so best MSS. "Without word," or "without the word," are equally correct

though at first liable to misconstruction, through prejudice or hasty judgment, would be approved on careful consideration. "The day of visitation;" this is generally understood to mean the day of grace, during which God offers mercy to man, though some think it refers to the day of inquisition before earthly magistrates, and some to the day of judgment.

ii. 13. "For the Lord's sake:" his honour is concerned in the behaviour of his followers.

of servants to their masters, he comes now to explain the duty of wives to their husbands; for fear the Christian matrons should imagine that their conversion to Christ, and their interest in all Christian privileges, did exempt them from subjection to their pagan or Jewish husbands. The apostle here tells them that the duty of wives consists,

First, "In subjection," or a loving submission to the will, and obedience to the just authority, of their own husbands; which obliging carriage would be the most likely way to win those disobedient and unbelieving husbands who had rejected the word, or who attended to no other evidence of the truth of it but what they saw in the prudent, peaceable, and exemplary conversation of their wives.

Secondly, In a "chaste conversation," which their unbelieving husbands would accurately observe and attend to.

Thirdly, In "fear," or reverence to their husbands, *Eph. v. 33.*

Learn, 1. Every distinct relation hath its particular duties, which ministers ought to preach, and the people ought to understand. 2. A cheerful subjection, and a loving, reverential respect, are duties which Christian women owe their husbands, whether they be good or bad. These were due from Eve to Adam, before the fall, and are still required, though much more difficult now than they were before, *Gen. iii. 16; 1 Tim. ii. 11.* 3. Though the design of the word of the Gospel is to win and gain souls to Christ Jesus, yet there are many so obstinate that they will not be won by the word. 4. There is nothing more powerful, next to the word of God, to win people than a good conversation, and the careful discharge of relative duties. 5. Irreligion and infidelity doth not dissolve the bonds, nor dispense with the duties, of civil relations. The wife must discharge her duty to her own husband, though he "obey not the word." 6. Evil men are strict observers of the conversation of the professors of religion; their curiosity, envy, and jealousy make them watch narrowly the ways and lives of good people. 7. A "chaste conversation," attended with due and proper respect to every one, is an excellent means to win them to the faith of the Gospel and obedience to the word.

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;



1. Greek Virgin. 2. Greek Matron. 3. Roman Virgin. 4. Roman Matron.
GREEK AND ROMAN FEMALES.

This rule relates to the dress of religious women. Here are three sorts of ornaments forbidden: "Plaiting the hair," which was commonly used in those times by lewd women. "Wearing of gold," or ornaments made of gold, was practised by Rebecca and Esther, and other religious women, but afterwards became the attire chiefly of abandoned women and wicked people. "Putting on of apparel" is not absolutely forbidden, but only too much curiosity and costliness in apparel.

Learn, 1. Religious people should take care that all their external behaviour be answerable to their profession of Christianity; they must be holy in all manner of conversation. 2. The "outward adorning" of the body is very often sinful and excessive. For instance, when it is immoderate, and above your degree and station in the world; when you are proud of it, and puffed up with it; when you dress, designing to allure and tempt others; when your apparel is too rich, curious, or superfluous; when your fashions are fantastical, imitating the levity and vanity of the worst people; and when they are immodest and wanton. The attire of a harlot can never become a chaste Christian matron.

[Such excessive costliness both argues and feeds the pride of the heart, and defrauds, if not others of their dues, yet the poor of their charity, which in God's sight is a due debt, too; and far more comfort shall I have on my death-bed to remember that at such a time, instead of putting lace on my own clothes, I helped a naked back to clothing; I abated somewhat of my former superfluities to supply the poor with necessities;—far sweeter will this be than to remember that I could needlessly cast out many pounds to serve my pride, while I grudged a penny to relieve the poor.—L.] There is still another hint which this negative injunction is intended and fitted to give. That dress should not occupy an undue share of the attention and time of Christian wives. The apostle intimates that it is a very subordinate thing. No Christian woman will suffer the adorning of her body to be either her business or her delight. She will not render herself responsible at the bar of God for the work of hours, days, weeks, months, in a long life of years, which might, which ought to, have been otherwise and more worthily employed; in a way more becoming rational, responsible, immortal beings.—B.]

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

translations, but it seems preferable to drop "the," and understand the apostle to mean that the conduct of the wives, without exhortations, shall win the unbelieving husbands, rather than that they should be won without "the word" (of God), especially as the wives' conduct would be a living testimony to the goodness of that word, and arise from its teaching.

iii. 4. "Meek and quiet:" "Gentle, one who does not make disturbance; quiet, one who calmly bears the disturbances of others."

Instead of the outward adorning of the body, the apostle directs Christian wives to put on much more excellent and beautiful ornaments. Where note,

First. The part to be adorned: "The hidden man of the heart;" that is, the soul; the hidden, the inner man. Take care to adorn and beautify your souls rather than your bodies.

Secondly. The ornaments prescribed. It must, in general, be something not corruptible that beautifies the soul; that is, the graces and virtues of God's holy Spirit. The ornaments of the body are destroyed by the moth, and perish in the using; but the grace of God, the longer we wear it, the brighter and better it is. More especially, the finest ornament of Christian women is "a meek and quiet spirit;" a tractable, easy temper of mind, void of passion, pride, and immoderate anger; discovering itself in a quiet, obliging behaviour towards their husbands and families. If the husband be harsh, and averse to religion, (which was the case of these good wives to whom the apostle gives this direction,) there is no way so likely to win him as a prudent, meek behaviour. However, a quiet spirit will make a good woman easy to herself, which, being visible to others, becomes an amiable ornament to a person in the eyes of the world.

Thirdly. The excellency of it. This meekness and calmness of spirit is "in the sight of God of great price." It is amiable in the sight of men, and precious in the sight of God.

Learn, 1. A true Christian's chief care lies in the right ordering and commanding of his own spirit. Where the hypocrite's work ends, there the true Christian's work begins. 2. The endowments of the inner man are the chief ornaments of a Christian; but especially a composed, calm, and quiet spirit renders either man or woman beautiful and lovely.

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

The duties of Christian wives being in their nature difficult, the apostle enforceth them by the example,

First. Of the holy women of old who trusted in God. You can pretend nothing of excuse from the weakness of your sex but what they might. They lived in old time, and had less knowledge to inform them, and fewer examples to encourage them; yet in all ages they practised this duty. They were holy women, and therefore their example is obliging; they "trusted in God," and yet did not neglect their duty to man. The duties imposed upon you of a quiet spirit, and of subjection to your own husband, are not new, but what have ever been practised by the greatest and best women in the world.

Secondly. Of Sarah, who obeyed her husband, and followed him when he went from Ur of the Chaldeans, not knowing whither he went, and called him lord, thereby shewing him reverence, and acknowledging his superiority over her; and all this though she was declared a princess by God from heaven, by the change of her name,—"whose daughters ye are," if you imitate her in faith and good works, and do not, through fear of your husbands, either quit the truth you profess, or perform your duty to them, but readily perform it, without either fear or force, out of conscience towards God and sense of duty to them.

Learn, 1. God takes exact notice, and keeps an exact record, of the actions and carriage of all men and women in the world. 2. The subjection of wives to their husbands is a duty which hath been practised universally by holy women in all ages. 3. The greatest honour of any man or woman lies in a humble and faithful deportment of themselves, in the relation or condition in which Providence hath placed them. 4. God takes notice of the good that is in his servant to their honour and benefit, but covers a multitude of failings. Sarah's infidelity and derision is overlooked when her virtues are celebrated. 5. Christians ought to do their duty to one another, not out of fear, nor from force, but from a willing mind, and in obedience to the command of God. Wives should be in subjection to their churlish husbands, not from dread and amazement, but from a desire to do well, and to please God.

7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

The husband's duty to the wife comes next to be considered, the particulars whereof are,

First. Cohabitation; which forbids unnecessary separation, and implies a mutual communication of goods and persons, one to another, with delight and concord.

Secondly. Dwelling with the wife "according to knowledge;" not according to lust, as brutes, nor according to passion, as devils, but according to knowledge, as wise and sober men, that know the word of God and their own duty.

Thirdly. "Giving honour to the wife." Giving due respect unto her, and maintaining her authority; protecting her person, supporting her credit, delighting in her conversation, affording a handsome maintenance, and placing a due trust and confidence in her. The reasons are, because she is the weaker vessel, by nature and constitution, and so ought to be defended. But then the wife is, in other and higher respects, equal to her husband; they are "heirs together of the grace of life," of all the blessings of this life and another; and therefore should live peaceably and quietly one with another, which, if they do not, their prayers one with another, and one for another, will be hindered; so that often you will not pray at all, or if you do, you will pray with a discomposed, ruffled mind, and so without success.

Learn, 1. The weakness of the female sex is no just reason either for separation or contempt, but, on the contrary, it is a reason for honour and respect; "Giving honour to the wife as unto the weaker vessel." 2. There is an honour due to all that are "heirs of the grace of life." 3. All married people should take care to behave themselves so lovingly and peaceably one to another that they may not by their broils hinder the success of their prayers.

8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion

iii. 6. "Afraid with any amazement:" "afraid of every shadow" (Tyndal). So afraid of the anger of their husbands as to deny Christ, or act in opposition to his commands.

iii. 7. "The apostle prescribes two things: 1, consideration for the wife, as of the weaker sex; 2, honour for the wife, as a fellow-heir of the grace of life" (Alford).

iii. 10. The sense of "will love life" may be, as Alford suggests, "he that loves life, and wishes to continue to do so."

one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

The apostle does here pass from special to more general exhortations. He advises Christians to be all of one mind, to be unanimous in the belief of the same faith and practice of the same duties of religion. And whereas the Christians at that time were, many of them, in a suffering condition, therefore he charges them to have compassion one of another, to "love as brethren," to pity those that were in distress, and to "be courteous" to all. Hence,

Learn, 1. Christians should endeavour to be all of one mind in the great points of faith, in real affection, and in Christian practice. They should be like-minded one to another, according to Christ Jesus, *Rom. xv. 5*; not according to man's pleasure, but God's word. 2. Though Christians cannot be exactly of the same mind, yet they should have "compassion one of another," and "love as brethren." They ought not to persecute or hate one another, but love one another with more than common affection. They should "love as brethren." 3. Christianity requires pity to the distressed, and civility to all. He must be a flagrant sinner, or a vile apostate, that is not a proper object of civil courtesy, *1 Cor. v. 11*; *2 Jno. 10, 11*.

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

The former direction teacheth us how Christians and friends should treat one another; this verse instructs us how to behave towards enemies. The apostle knew that Christians would be hated and evil entreated of all men for Christ's sake; therefore he warns them not to return "evil for evil, or railing for railing;" but, on the contrary, when they rail at you, do you bless them. When they give you evil words, do you give them good ones; for Christ hath, both by his word and example, called you to "bless them that curse you," and hath settled a blessing on you, as your everlasting inheritance, though you were unworthy. To bear evils patiently, and to bless your enemies, is the way to obtain this blessing of God.

Learn, 1. To render evil for evil, or railing for railing, is a sinful, unchristian practice. The magistrate may punish evil-doers, and private men may seek a legal remedy when they are wronged, but private revenge by duelling, scolding, or secret mischief, is forbidden, *Pr. xx. 22*; *Lu. vi. 27*; *Rom. xii. 17*; *1 Thes. v. 15*. To rail is to revile another in bitter, fierce, and reproachful terms; but for ministers to rebuke sharply, and to preach earnestly, against the sins of the times, is not railing; all the prophets and apostles practised it, *Isa. lvi. 10*; *Zeph. iii. 3*; *Acts xx. 29*. 2. The laws of Christ oblige us to return blessing for railing; "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute you," *Mat. v. 44*. You must not justify them in their sin, but you must do for your enemies all that justice requires or charity commands. We must pity, pray for, and love them that rail at us. 3. A Christian's calling, as it invests him with glorious privileges, so it obligeth him to difficult duties. 4. All the true servants of God shall infallibly inherit a blessing. They have it already in a great degree, but the full possession of it is reserved to another state and world.

10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

We have here an excellent prescription for a comfortable, happy life, in this quarrelsome, ill-natured world, taken from *Ps. xxxiv. 12-14*. If you earnestly desire that your life should be long, and your days peaceable and prosperous, keep your tongue from reviling, evil-speaking, and slandering, and your lips from lying, deceit, and dissimulation. Avoid doing any real damage or hurt to your neighbour, but be ever ready to do good, and to overcome evil with good. Seek peace with all men, and pursue it, though it retire from you. This will be the best way to dispose people to speak well of you, and live peaceably with you.

Learn, 1. That good people, under the Old and New Testament, were obliged to the same moral duties. To refrain the tongue from evil, and the lips from guile, was a duty in David's time as well as now. 2. It is lawful to consider temporal advantages as motives and encouragements to religion. 3. The practice of religion, particularly the right government of the tongue, is the best way to make this life comfortable and prosperous. A sincere, inoffensive, discreet tongue, is a singular means to pass us peaceably and comfortably through the world. 4. The avoiding of evil and doing of good is the way to contentment and happiness both here and hereafter. 5. It is the duty of Christians not only to embrace peace when it is offered, but to seek and pursue it when it is denied. Peace with societies, and peace with particular persons, in opposition to division and contention, is what is here intended.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

The allegation is continued from the 34th psalm. Christians need not fear that such patient, inoffensive behaviour as is prescribed, ver. 10, 11, will invite and encourage the cruelty of their enemies, for God will thereby be engaged on their side; "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous." He taketh special notice of them, and exercises a providential, constant government over them, and bears a special respect and affection to them; "His ears are open to their prayers." So that if any injuries be offered to them, they have this remedy, they may complain of it to their heavenly Father, whose ears are always attentive to the prayers of his servants in their distresses, and who will certainly aid them against their unrighteous enemies; "But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil;" his anger, and displeasure, and revenge, will pursue them; for he is more an enemy to wicked persecutors than men are.

Learn, 1. That we must not in all cases adhere to the express words of Scripture, but study the sense and meaning of them, otherwise we shall be led into blasphemous errors and absurdities. We must not imagine that God hath eyes, and ears, and face, though these are the express words of Scripture. 2. God hath a special care and paternal affection towards all his righteous people. 3. God doth always hear the prayers of the faithful, *Jno. ix. 31*; *1 Jno. v. 14*; *Heb. iv. 16*. 4. Though God is infinitely good, yet he abhorreth

impenitent sinners, and will pour out his wrath upon them that do evil. He will do himself right, and do all the world justice; and his goodness is no obstruction to his doing so.

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? 14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

The patient, humble behaviour of Christians, recommended above, is here urged again, from two considerations:—

First. This will be the best and surest way to prevent suffering, for "who is he that will harm you?" This, I suppose, is spoken of Christians in an ordinary condition, not in the heat of persecution. Ordinarily there will be but few so diabolical and impious as to harm them that live so innocently and usefully as you do.

Secondly. This is the way to improve sufferings. "If you be followers of that which is good," and yet suffer, this is suffering for righteousness' sake, and that will be your glory and your happiness, as it entitles you to the blessing promised by Christ, *Mat. v. 10*. Therefore you need not be afraid of anything they can do to strike you with terror, neither be much troubled or concerned about the rage or force of your enemies.

Learn, 1. To follow always that which is good is the best course we can take to keep out of harm's way. 2. To suffer for righteousness' sake is the honour and happiness of a Christian; to suffer for the cause of truth, a good conscience, or any part of a Christian's duty, is a great honour; the delight of it is greater than the torment, the honour more than the disgrace, and the gain much greater than the loss. 3. Christians have no reason to be afraid of the threats or rage of any of their enemies. Your enemies are God's enemies; his face is against them, his power is above them; they are the objects of his curse, and can do nothing to you but by his permission; therefore trouble not yourselves about them.

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Instead of terrifying yourselves with the fear of men, be sure to "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; let him be your fear, and let him be your dread," *Isa. viii. 12, 13*. "Fear not them that can only kill the body, but fear him that can destroy body and soul," *Lu. xii. 4, 5*. We sanctify the Lord God in our hearts when we, with sincerity and fervency, adore him; when our thoughts of him are awful and reverent; when we rely upon his power, trust unto his faithfulness, submit to his wisdom, imitate his holiness, and give him the glory due to his most illustrious perfections. We sanctify God before others when our deportment is such as invites and encourages others to glorify and honour him; both are required, *Lev. x. 3*. When this principle is laid deep into your hearts, the next thing as to men is to be always ready, that is, able and willing to give an answer, or make an apology or defence of the faith you profess, and that to "every man that asketh a reason of your hope,"—what sort of hope you have for which you suffer such hardships in the world.

Learn, 1. An awful sense of the Divine perfections is the best antidote against the fear of sufferings. Did we fear God more we should certainly fear men less. 2. That the hope and faith of a Christian is defensible against all the world. There may be a good reason given for religion; it is not a fancy, but a rational scheme, revealed from heaven, suited to all the necessities of miserable sinners, and centering entirely in the glory of God through Jesus Christ. 3. Every Christian is bound to answer and apologise for the hope that is in him. Christians should have a reason ready for their Christianity, that it may appear they are not actuated either by folly or fancy. This defence may be necessary more than once or twice, so that Christians should be always prepared to make it, either to the magistrate, if he demand it, or to any inquisitive, serious Christian that desires to know it, for his information or improvement. 4. These confessions of our faith ought to be made with meekness and fear; apologies for our religion ought to be made with modesty and meekness, in the fear of God, with jealousy over ourselves and reverence to our superiors.

16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. 17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

The confession of a Christian's faith cannot credibly be supported but by the two means here specified, a good conscience and a good conversation. Conscience is good when it does its office well; when it is kept pure, and uncorrupted, and clear from guilt, then it will justify you, though men accuse you. A "good conversation in Christ" is a holy life, according to the [grace] doctrine and example of Christ. Look well to your conscience and to your conversation, and then, though men "speak evil of you, and falsely accuse you, as evil-doers," you will clear yourselves and bring them to shame. Perhaps you may think it hard to suffer for well-doing, for keeping a good conscience and a good conversation; but be not discouraged, for it is better for you, though worse for your enemies, that you suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing.

Learn, 1. That the most conscientious persons cannot escape the censures and slanders of evil men. They will speak evil of them as of evil-doers, and charge them with crimes which their very souls abhor. Christ and his apostles were so used. 2. A good conscience and a good conversation are the best means to secure a good name; these give a solid reputation and a lasting one. 3. False accusation generally turns to the accuser's shame, by discovering at last the accuser's indiscretion, injustice, falsehood, and uncharitableness. 4. It is sometimes the will of God that good people should suffer for well-doing, for their honesty, and for their faith. 5. As well-doing does sometimes expose a good man to suffering, so evil-doing will not exempt an evil man from it. The apostle supposeth here that a man may suffer for both. If the sufferings of good people for well-doing be so severe, what will the sufferings of wicked people be for evil-doing? It is a sad condition that person is in upon whom sin and suffering meet together at the same time. Sin makes sufferings to be extreme, unprofitable, comfortless, and destructive.

iii. 14. "For righteousness' sake:" "Not the punishment, but the cause makes a martyr" (Augustine). "Be not afraid:" literally, "Be not afraid with their fear"—i.e., the fear with which persecutors seek to inspire their victims.

iii. 15. "A reason of the hope that is in you:" "how this hope arose, what it contains, and on what it rests" (Stieger, in Fausset). "The hope of Christians often moves others to make inquiry" (Bengel).

iii. 18. Not "by the Spirit," as Authorised Version, but "in the Spirit." So Wickliffe, Tyndal, Cranmer, Geneva, Rheims, Vulgate.

iii. 19. "In which" (i.e., in the Spirit) "he went," &c.: many interpretations of this most difficult passage have been offered. Some think that it refers to Christ's spirit acting in Noah, who preached to the disbelieving before the Flood; but the plain words are "to the spirits in prison," not to the unbelievers on earth. Others say, Christ went and preached salvation to the disembodied spirits. But

18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

The example of Christ is here proposed as an argument for patience under sufferings, the strength of which will be discerned, if we consider the several points contained in the words. [Our Lord is termed the Christ, or Anointed One, as standing apart by himself, far elevated above all other anointed persons; just as he is, amid the countless millions of the sons of men, termed the Son of man.—B.] Observe, therefore,

First. Jesus Christ himself was not exempted from sufferings in this life, though he had no guilt of his own, and could have declined all suffering if he had pleased.

Secondly. The reason or meritorious cause of Christ's suffering was the sins of men; Christ "suffered for sins." The sufferings of Christ were a true and proper punishment. This punishment was suffered to expiate and to make an atonement for sin, and it does extend to all sins.

Thirdly. In the case of our Lord's suffering, it was the Just [the Just One, *Pe. xxiv. 19*, compare with *20; Isa. liii. 11; Zec. ix. 9*] that suffered for the unjust. He substituted himself in our room and stead, and bore our iniquities. He that knew no sin suffered instead of them that knew no righteousness.

Fourthly. The merit and perfection of Christ's sacrifice was such, that for him to suffer once was enough. The legal sacrifices were repeated from day to day, and from year to year; but the sacrifice of Christ once offered purgeth away sin, *Heb. vii. 27; ix. 26, 28; x. 10, 12, 14*.

Fifthly. The blessed end and design of our Lord's sufferings was to "bring us to God," to reconcile us to God, to give us access to the Father, to render us and our services acceptable, and to bring us to eternal glory, *Eph. ii. 13, 18; iii. 12; Heb. x. 21, 22*.

Sixthly. The issue and event of Christ's suffering as to himself was this, he was put to death in his human nature, but he was quickened and raised again by the Spirit.

Now, if Christ was not exempted from sufferings, why should Christians expect it? If he suffered to expiate sins, why should not we be content when our sufferings are only for trial and correction, but not for expiation? If he, though perfectly just, why should not we, who are all criminals? If he once suffered, and then entered into glory, shall not we be patient under trouble, since it will be but a little time, and we shall follow him to glory? If he suffered to bring us to God, shall not we submit to difficulties, since they are of so much use to quicken us in our return to God, and in the performance of our duty to him?

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

Here the apostle passeth from the example of Christ to that of the old world, and sets before the Jews, to whom he wrote, the different event of them that believed and obeyed Christ preaching by Noah, from them that continued disobedient and unbelieving; intimating to the Jews that they were under a like sentence. God would not wait much longer upon them. They had now an offer of mercy; those that accepted of it should be saved, but those that rejected Christ and the Gospel should be as certainly destroyed as ever the disobedient in the times of Noah were. Observe here,

First. The preacher, Christ Jesus, who interested himself in the affairs of the church, and of the world, ever since he was first promised to Adam; *Gen. iii. 15*, "He went," not by a local motion, but by special operation, as God is frequently said to move, *Gen. xi. 5; Hos. v. 15; Mic. i. 3*. He went and preached by his Spirit striving with them, and inspiring and enabling Enoch and Noah to plead with them and preach righteousness to them, as *2 Pet. ii. 5*.

Secondly. The hearers; who, because they were dead and disembodied when the apostle speaks of them, therefore he properly calls them spirits now in prison; not that they were in prison when Christ preached to them, as the vulgar Latin translation and the popish expositors pretend.

Thirdly. The sin of these people. They were "disobedient," that is, 'rebellious, unpersuadable, and unbelieving,' as the word signifies. Their sin is aggravated from the patience and longsuffering of God, which once waited upon them one hundred and twenty years together, while Noah was preparing the ark, and by that, as well as by his preaching, giving them fair warning of what was coming upon them.

Fourthly. The event of all. Their bodies were drowned, and their spirits cast into hell, which is called a prison, *Mat. v. 25; 2 Pet. ii. 4, 5*; but Noah and his family, that believed and were obedient, were saved in the ark.

[See *XVI. of Dr. Brown's Expository Discourses*, and Appendix to it, for a full discussion of this difficult text. The following is his version of it. For, even Christ, once, on account of sins, suffered,—the righteous in the room of the unrighteous,—that he might bring us to God; having become dead, with respect to the flesh, but quickened with respect to the spirit, whereby he went and preached even to the spirits in prison, who were in former times disobedient, when the patience of God continued waiting in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, in which few,—that is, eight,—souls were saved by water, which also now—the antitype baptism—saves us, not as the removal of the filth of the flesh, but as the profession of a good conscience towards God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having passed into heaven, angels, and authorities, and powers, having been subjected to him. He adds: 'This view of the subject has this additional advantage, that it preserves the connexion of the passage, both grammatical and logical. The words of the apostle, thus explained, plainly bear on his great practical object. Be not afraid, be not ashamed of suffering in a good cause, in a right spirit. No damage comes from well-doing, or from suffering in well-doing. Christ, in suffering, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, suffered for well-doing; and, though his sufferings ended in his dying bodily, they ended also in his being spiritually quickened; and, through the effectual manifestation of the truth, becoming the "Author of eternal salvation to all who obey him." Nor is this all. Even his mortal body has, in consequence of these sufferings, been raised from the grave; and in that body he is "gone into heaven, and has sat down on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject to him."' I am farther confirmed in this view of the passage by observing that in one very important part of it I have the support of Arch-

bishop Leighton. In the text of his commentary he interprets the passage according to the usual Protestant mode of exposition; but in a note he observes—Thus I then thought, but do now apprehend another sense as more probable. The mission of the Spirit, and the preaching of the Gospel by it, after his resurrection: preaching to sinners, and converting them according to the prophecy which he first fulfilled in person, and after, more amply, in his apostles; that prophecy, I mean *Isa. lxi.*, The Spirit was upon him, and was sent from him to his apostles, to preach to spirits in prison, to preach liberty to the captives, captive spirits, and therefore called spirits in prison, to illustrate the thing the more by opposition to that Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of liberty, setting them free; and this to shew the greater efficacy of Christ's preaching than of Noah's: though he was a signal preacher of righteousness, yet only himself and his family, eight persons, were saved by him, but multitudes of all nations by the Spirit and preaching of Christ in the Gospel.—B.]

Learn, 1. That God takes exact notice of all the means and advantages that people in all ages have had for the salvation of their souls. It is put to the account of the old world that Christ offered them his help, sent his Spirit, gave them fair warning by Noah, and waited a long time for their amendment. 2. Though the patience of God wait long upon sinners, yet it will expire at last. It is beneath the majesty of the great God always to wait upon man in vain. 3. The spirits of disobedient sinners, as soon as they are out of their bodies, are committed to the prison of hell, from whence there is no redemption. 4. The way of the most is neither the best, the wisest, nor the safest way to follow. Better to follow the eight in the ark, than the eight millions drowned by the flood, and damned to hell.

21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Noah's salvation in the ark upon the water did prefigure the salvation of all good Christians in the church by baptism. That temporal salvation by the ark was a type, the antitype whereunto is the eternal salvation of believers by baptism.

[The words may be rendered with perfect accuracy, 'which was a type or figure of the baptism which saves us;' that is, which water of the deluge is a type, or significant resemblance (for that it was a type in the strict sense of the word, as a foreshowing dimly to the antediluvians Christian baptism, or its meaning, is a principle utterly without support) of baptism which saves us.—B.]

To prevent mistakes about which, the apostle does, First. Declare what he means by saving baptism; not the outward ceremony or washing with water, which in itself does no more than put away "the filth of the flesh," but it is that baptism wherein there is a faithful answer or restitution of a resolved good conscience, engaging to believe in, and be entirely devoted to, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; renouncing at the same time the flesh, the world, and the devil. The baptismal covenant made and kept will certainly save us. Washing is the visible sign; this is the thing signified.

Secondly. The apostle shews that the efficacy of baptism to salvation depends not upon the work done, but upon the resurrection of Christ; which supposeth his death, and is the foundation of our faith and hope to which we are rendered conformable by dying to sin, and rising again to holiness and newness of life.

Learn, 1. That the sacrament of baptism rightly received is a means and a pledge of salvation. Baptism now saveth us. God is pleased to convey his blessings to us in and by his ordinances, *Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16*. 2. The external participation of baptism will save no man without an answerable good conscience and conversation. There must be the "answer of a good conscience" towards God. Objection. Infants cannot make such an answer, and therefore ought not to be baptized. Answer. The true circumcision was that of the heart and of the spirit, *Rom. ii. 29*, which children were no more capable of than our infants are capable of making this answer now; yet they were allowed circumcision at eight days old. The infants of the Christian church therefore may be admitted to the ordinance with as much reason as the infants of the Jewish, unless they are barred from it by some express prohibition of Christ.

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

The apostle having mentioned the death of Christ, ver. 18, and his resurrection, ver. 21, he proceeds to speak of his ascension, and sitting at the right hand of the Father, as a subject fit to be considered by these believers for their comfort in their suffering condition. If the advancement of Christ was so glorious after his deep humiliation, let not his followers despair, but expect that after these short distresses they shall be advanced to transcendent joy and glory.

Learn, 1. That Jesus Christ, after he had finished his labours and his sufferings upon earth, did ascend triumphantly into heaven, of which see *Acts i. 9—11; Mar. xvi. 19*. He went to heaven to receive his own acquired crown and glory, *Jno. xvi. 5*; to finish that part of his mediatorial work which could not be done on earth, and make intercession for his people; to demonstrate the fulness of his satisfaction, to take possession of heaven for his people, and prepare mansions for them, and to send down the Comforter, which was to be the first-fruits of his intercession, *Jno. xvi. 7*. 2. Upon his ascension into heaven Christ is enthroned at the right hand of the Father. His being said to sit there imports absolute rest and cessation from all farther troubles and sufferings, and an advancement to the highest personal dignity and sovereign power. 3. That "angels, authorities, and powers," are all made subject to Christ Jesus; "all power in heaven and earth," to command, to give law, issue orders, and pronounce a final sentence, is committed to Jesus, God-man, which his enemies will find to their everlasting sorrow and confusion, but his servants to their eternal joy and satisfaction.

CHAPTER IV.

The work of a Christian is twofold: doing the will of God, and suffering his pleasure. This chapter directs us in both. The duties we are here exhorted to employ ourselves in are the mortification of sin, living to God, sobriety, prayer, charity, hospitality, and the best improvement of our talents, which the apostle preseth upon Christians from the consideration of the time they have lost in their sins, and the approaching end of all things, ver. 1—12. The directions for sufferings are, that we should not be surprised at them, but rejoice in them, only take care not to suffer as evil-doers. He intimates that their trials were near at hand, that their souls were in danger as well as their bodies; and the best way to preserve their souls is to commit them to God in well doing, ver. 13—19.

to what end? Holy Scripture represents the final state of souls as fixed when they leave the body, though not fully coming upon them till the resurrection. The most simple explanation seems to be that the spirit of our Lord went to the place of departed spirits, waiting for the resurrection (see Article III. of Church of England, exposition by Bishop Browne), and there announced to those who had trusted in the promised Messiah that he had accomplished Messiah's work, and their trust was justified. The only difficulty in this inter-

pretation is the special mention of the disobedient in the days of Noah; but Bishop Horsley thinks he has observed in some parts of Scripture an anxiety, if the expression may be allowed, of the sacred writers to convey distinct intimations that the antediluvian race is not uninterested in the redemption and final retribution. It may be conceived, too, he thinks, that those who perished in the most awful of God's temporal judgments would, more than any, need and look for the comfort of Christ's presence; for, as he and many others have



ORASMUCH then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

The apostle here draws a new inference from the consideration of Christ's sufferings. As he had before made use of it to persuade to patience in suffering, so here to mortification of sin. The antecedent or supposition is, that "Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh," or in his human nature. The consequent or inference is, "arm" and fortify "yourselves likewise with the same mind," courage, and resolution. The word flesh in the former part of the verse signifies Christ's human nature, but in the latter part it signifies man's corrupt nature. So the sense is, As Christ suffered in his human nature, do you, according to your baptismal vow and profession, make your corrupt nature suffer, by putting to death the body of sin, by self-denial and mortification; for if you do thus suffer in the flesh, or make the flesh suffer, you will be conformable to Christ in his death and resurrection, and will cease from sin.

[See additional notes on *Rom. vi* for true import of this latter clause. Barnes says, "To 'suffer in the flesh' is to die. The expression here has a proverbial aspect, and seems to have meant something like this: 'When a man is dead, he will sin no more,' referring of course to the present life. So, if a Christian becomes dead in a moral sense—dead to this world, dead by being crucified with Christ—he may be expected to cease from sin. The reasoning is based on the idea that there is such a union between Christ and the believer that his death on the cross secured the death of the believer to the world: compare 2 *Tim. ii. 11*; *Col. ii. 20*; *iii. 3*."—Barnes. So also Leighton: Christ and the believer do not only become one in law, so as his death stands for theirs, but are one in nature, so as his death for sin causes theirs to it; *Rom. vi. 3*, "Baptized into his death."—L.]

Learn, 1. Some of the strongest and best arguments against all sorts of sin are taken from the sufferings of Christ. All sympathy and tenderness for Christ as a sufferer is lost if you do not put away sin. He died to destroy it; and though he could cheerfully submit to the worst sufferings, yet he could never submit to the least sin. 2. The beginning of all true mortification lies in the mind, not in penances and hardships upon the body. The mind of man is carnal, full of enmity; the understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God, *Eph. iv. 18*. Man is not a sincere creature, but partial, blind, and wicked, till he be renewed and sanctified by the regenerating grace of God—grace received through union to Christ, and so enabling us to suffer in the flesh with him, and to cease from sin.

2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Here the apostle explains what he means by being dead to sin, and ceasing from sin. Negatively a Christian ought no longer to live the rest of his time in the flesh to the sinful lusts and corrupt desires of carnal, wicked men; but positively he ought to conform himself to the revealed will of the holy God.

Learn, 1. The lusts of men are the springs of all their wickedness, *Jas. i. 13, 14*. Let occasional temptations be what they will, they could not prevail, were it not for men's own corruptions. 2. All good Christians make the will of God, not their own lusts or desires, the rule of their lives and actions. 3. True conversion makes a marvellous change in the heart and life of every one that partakes of it. It brings a man off from all his old, fashionable, and delightful lusts, and from the common ways and vices of the world to the will of God. It alters the mind, judgment, affections, way, and conversation of every one that hath experienced it.

3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

Here the apostle argues from equity. It is but just, equal, and reasonable, that, as you have hitherto all the former part of your life served sin and Satan, so you should now serve the living God. Though these were Jews to whom the apostle writes, yet, living among the Gentiles, they had learned their way.

Learn, 1. When a man is truly converted, it is very grievous to him to think how the time past of his life has been spent; the hazard he hath run so many years, the mischief he hath done to others, the dishonour done to God, and the loss he hath sustained, are very afflicting to him. 2. Whilst the will of man is unsanctified and corrupt, he walks continually in wicked ways, he makes them his choice and delight, his work and business, and he makes a bad condition daily worse and worse. 3. One sin allowed draws on another. Here are six named, and they have a connexion and dependence one upon another. 1st. "Lasciviousness," or wantonness, expressed in looks, gesture, or behaviour, *Rom. xiii. 13*. 2nd. "Lusts;" acts of lewdness, such as fornication and adultery. 3rd. "Excess of wine;" though short of drunkenness, an immoderate use of it, to the prejudice of health or business, is here condemned. 4th. "Revellings;" or luxurious feastings, too frequent, too full, or too expensive. 5th. "Banquetings;" by which is meant gluttony, or excess in eating. 6th. "Abominable idolatries;" the idol worship of the Gentiles was attended with lewdness, drunkenness, gluttony, and all sorts of brutality and cruelty; and these Jews, living long amongst them, were, some of them at least, debauched and corrupted by such practices. 4. It is a Christian's duty not only to abstain from what is grossly wicked, but also from those things that are generally the occasions of sin, or carry the appearance of evil. Excess of wine and immoderate feasting are forbidden as well as lust and idolatry.

4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not

with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

Here you have the visible change wrought in those who, in the foregoing verse, were represented as having been, in the former part of their life, very wicked. They no longer run on in the same courses, or with the same companions, as they used to do. Hereupon observe the carriage of their wicked acquaintance towards them.

First, "They think it strange;" they are surprised, and wonder at it, as at something new and unusual, that their old friends should be so much altered, and not run with as much violence as they used to do, to "the same excess of riot," to the same sottish excesses and luxury which before they had greedily and madly followed.

Secondly, They speak evil of them. Their surprise carries them to blasphemy. They speak evil of their persons, of their way, their religion, and their God.

Learn, 1. They that are once really converted will not return to their former course of life, though never so much tempted by the frowns or flatteries of others to do so. Neither persuasion nor reproach will prevail with them to be or to do as they were wont to do. 2. The temper and behaviour of true Christians seems very strange to ungodly men. That they should despise that which every one else is fond of; that they should believe many things which to others seem incredible; that they should delight in what is irksome and tedious, and be zealous where they have no visible interest to serve, and that they should depend so much upon hope. 3. The best actions of religious people cannot escape the censures and slanders of them that are irreligious. Those actions which cost a good man the most pains, hazard, and self-denial, shall be most censured by the uncharitable and ill-natured world; they will speak evil of good people, though they themselves reap the fruits of their charity, piety, and goodness.

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

For the comfort of the servants of God, it is here added, that all wicked people, especially those that speak evil of them that are not as bad as themselves, shall give an account, and be put to give a reason of their behaviour, "to him that is ready to judge;" that is, both able, and duly authorised, and that will, ere long, judge and pass sentence upon all that shall then be found alive, and all such as, being dead, shall then be raised again, *Jas. v. 8, 9*; 2 *Pet. iii. 7*.

Learn, That the malignant world shall, in a little time, give an account to the great God of all their evil speeches against his people, *Jude 14, 15*. They will soon be called to a sad account for all their curses, their foolish jests, their slanders and falsehoods, uttered against the faithful people of God.

6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Some understand this difficult place thus: "For this cause was the Gospel preached" to all the faithful of old, that are now dead in Christ, that thereby they might be taught and encouraged to bear the unrighteous judgments and persecutions which the rage of men did put upon them in the flesh, but might live in the spirit unto God. Others take the expression, "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh." In a spiritual sense thus: The Gospel was preached to them, to judge them, condemn them, and reprove them for the corruption of their natures and the viciousness of their lives, which they lived after the manner of the heathen, or the mere natural man; and that, having thus mortified their sins, they might "live according to God," a new and spiritual life. Take it thus; and thence,

Learn, 1. That the mortifying our sins, and living to God, are the expected effects of the Gospel preached unto us. 2. That God will certainly reckon with all those that have had the Gospel preached unto them, but without these good effects produced by it. God is ready to judge all those that have received his Gospel in vain. 3. It is no matter how we are "judged according to men in the flesh," if we do "but live according to God in the spirit." [The argument in this verse is, that in the trials which we endure on account of religion, we should remember the example of those who have suffered for it, and should remember why the Gospel was preached to them. It was in a subordinate sense, indeed, that they might glorify God by a martyr's death; but in a higher sense, that in this world and the next they might truly live. The flesh might suffer in consequence of their embracing the Gospel that was preached to them, but the soul would live. Animated by their example, we should be willing to suffer in the flesh, if we may for ever live with God.—Barnes.]

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

We have here an awful position or doctrine, and an inference drawn from it. The position is, that "the end of all things is at hand." The miserable destruction of the Jewish church and nation, foretold by our Saviour, is now very near; consequently the time of their persecution and your suffering is but very short. Your own life, and that of your enemies, will soon come to their utmost period. Nay, the world itself will not continue very long. The conflagration will put an end to it, and all things must be swallowed up in an endless eternity. The inference from this is, "Be ye therefore sober." Let the frame and temper of your minds be grave, staid, and solid; and observe strict temperance and sobriety in the use of all worldly enjoyments. Do not suffer yourselves to be caught with your former sins and temptations; ver. 3, "And watch unto prayer." Take care that you be continually in a calm, sober disposition, fit for prayer; and that you be frequent in prayers, lest this end come upon you unawares, *Lu. xxi. 34*; *Mat. xxvi. 40, 41*.

Learn, 1. The consideration of our approaching end is a powerful argument to make us sober in all worldly matters, and earnest in religious affairs. 2. They that would pray to purpose must "watch unto prayer." They must watch over their own spirits, and watch all fit opportunities, and do their duty in the best manner they can. 3. The right ordering of the body is of great use to promote the good of the soul. When the appetites and inclinations of the body are restrained and governed by God's word and true reason, [and above all by Divine grace received in answer to believing prayer,] and the interests of the body are submitted to the interests and necessities of the soul—then it is not the soul's enemy, but its friend and helper.

held, it follows not that all who perished in the Flood must perish everlastingly, since (Bengel and Luther) many may have repented at the last moment.

iii. 21. "Which—the antitype, even baptism—doth now save you (so best MSS.), not," &c.: "Water saved Noah not of itself, but by sustaining the ark, built in faith, resting on God's word. . . . The antitypical water—viz., baptism—saves you also, not of itself, not the mere material water, but the spiritual thing conjoined with

it, repentance and faith" (Fausset). "Seeking after God in a good and pure conscience, which is the aim and end of the Christian baptismal life" (Alford). "By the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" "not" to "God" is a parenthesis; so this clause must follow "doth now save us." "His resurrection and entrance into his kingdom giving us by him . . . an entrance also into his kingdom, by means of his appointed sacrament of holy baptism, spiritually received" (Alford).

iv. 1. "He that hath suffered," &c.: a general proposition. Since

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

Here is a noble rule in Christianity. The grace recommended is, "Charity among yourselves." Christians ought to love one another; which implies an affection to their persons, a desire of their welfare, and a hearty endeavour to promote it. The degree of this mutual affection is, it must not be cold, but fervent; that is, sincere, strong, and lasting. This sort of earnest affection is recommended "above all things," which shews the importance of it, *Col. iii. 14*. It is greater than faith or hope, *1 Cor. xiii. 13*. One excellent effect of it is, that it will "cover the multitude of sins."

Learn, 1. There ought to be in all Christians a more fervent charity towards one another than towards other men. Have "charity among yourselves." He does not say for pagans, for idolaters, or for apostates, but "among yourselves." [Of course this does not exclude love for pagans, for idolaters, or even apostates: *Lu. x. 25-37*; *Gal. vi. 10*; Note on *Jas. i. 27*; *1 Pet. iii. 17*, first clause.] "Let brotherly love continue," *Heb. xiii. 1*. There is a special relation between all sincere Christians, and a particular amiableness and good in them, which requires special affection. 2. It is not enough for Christians not to bear malice, or to have common respects for one another, they must intensely and fervently love each other. 3. It is the property of true charity to "cover a multitude of sins." It inclines people to forgive and forget offences against themselves; to cover and conceal the sins of others, rather than aggravate them, and spread them abroad. It teaches us to love them that are but weak, and that have been guilty of many ill things before their conversion; and it prepares for mercy at the hand of God, who hath promised to forgive them that forgive others, *Mat. vi. 14*.

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

The hospitality here required is a free and kind entertainment of strangers and travellers. The proper objects of a Christian's hospitality are one another. The nearness of their relation, and the necessity of their condition in those times of persecution and distress, did oblige Christians to be hospitable one to another. Sometimes Christians were despoiled of all they had, and were driven away to distant countries for safety. In this case they must starve, if their fellow-Christians would not receive them. Therefore it was a wise and necessary rule which the apostle here laid down. It is elsewhere commanded, *Rom. xii. 13*; *Heb. xiii. 1, 2*. The manner of performing this duty is this: it must be done in an easy, kind, handsome manner; "without grudging," or grumbling at the expense or trouble.

Learn, 1. That Christians ought not only to be charitable but hospitable one to another. 2. Whatever a Christian does by way of charity, or of hospitality, he ought to do it cheerfully, and without grudging. Freely you have received, freely give.

10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Here the apostle gives directions about the improvement of talents. The rule is, that whatever gift, ordinary or extraordinary, whatever power, ability, or capacity of doing good, is given to us, we should minister or do service with "the same one to another;" accounting ourselves not masters, but only "stewards of the manifold grace," or the various gifts of God.

Learn, 1. Whatever ability we have of doing good, we must own it to be the gift of God, and ascribe it to his grace. 2. Whatever gifts we have received, we ought to look upon them as received for the use one of another. We must not assume them to ourselves, or hide them in a napkin, but do service with them one to another in the best manner we are able. 3. In receiving and using the manifold gifts of God we must look upon ourselves as stewards only, and act accordingly. The talents we are intrusted with are our Lord's goods, and must be employed as he directs. And it is required in a steward that he be found faithful.

11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The apostle exemplifies his direction about gifts in two particulars: speaking and ministering; concerning which he gives these rules: First, If any man, whether a minister in public or a Christian in private conference, do speak or teach, he must do it "as the oracle of God;" which directs us as to the matter of our speech. What Christians in private, or ministers in public, teach and speak, must be the pure word and oracles of God. As to the manner of speaking, it must be with that seriousness, reverence, and solemnity that becomes those holy and Divine oracles. Secondly, "If any man minister," either as a deacon distributing the alms of the church, and taking care of the poor, or as a private person, by charitable gifts and contributions, "let him do it as of the ability which God giveth." He that hath received plenty and ability from God ought to minister plentifully, and according to his ability. These rules ought to be followed and practised for this end, "that God in all things," in all your gifts, ministrations, and services, "may be glorified;" that others "may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," *Mat. v. 16*; "through Jesus Christ," who hath procured and given these gifts to men, *Eph. iv. 8*; and through whom alone we and our services are accepted of God, *Heb. xiii. 15*; to which Jesus Christ "be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Learn, 1. It is the duty of Christians in private, as well as ministers in public, to speak to one another of the things of God, *Mal. iii. 16*; *Eph. iv. 29*; *Ps. cxlv. 10-12*. 2. It highly concerns all preachers of the Gospel to keep close to the word of God, and to treat that word as becomes the oracles of God. 3. Christians must not only do the duties of their place, but they must do it with vigour, and according to the best of their abilities. The nature of a Christian's work, which is high work, and hard work, the goodness and kindness of the Master, and the excellency of the reward, do all require that our endeavours should be serious and vigorous; and that whatever we are called to do for the honour of God, and the good of others, we should do it with all our might. 4. In all the duties and services of life we should aim at the glory

of God as our chief end; all other views must be subservient to that, which would sanctify our common actions and affairs, *1 Cor. x. 31*. 5. God is not glorified by any thing we do, if we do not offer it to him through the mediation and merits of Jesus Christ. "God in all things must be glorified through Jesus Christ," who is the only way to the Father. 6. The apostle's adoration of Jesus Christ, and ascribing unlimited and everlasting praise and dominion to him, proves that Jesus Christ is the most high God over all, blessed for evermore. Amen.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

The frequent repetition of counsel and comfort to Christians, considered as sufferers, in every chapter of this epistle, sheweth that the greatest danger these new converts were in arose from the persecutions to which their embracing Christianity did expose them. The creditable behaviour of Christians under sufferings is the most difficult part of their duty, but yet necessary both for the honour of Christ and their own comfort; and therefore the apostle, having exhorted them in the former part of this chapter to the great duty of mortification, does here come to direct them in the necessary duty of patience under suffering. An unmortified spirit is very unfit to bear trials. Observe,

First, The apostle's kind manner of address to these poor, despised Christians. They were his "beloved."

Secondly, His advice to them, relating to their sufferings; which is, that they should not think them strange, nor be surprised at them, as if some unexpected event befel them; for, though they be sharp and fiery, yet they are designed only to try, not to ruin them; to try their sincerity, strength, patience, and trust in God. On the contrary, they ought rather to rejoice under their sufferings, because theirs may properly be called Christ's sufferings. They are of the same kind and for the same cause that Christ suffered; they make us conformable to him; he suffers in them, and feels our infirmities; and if we be partakers of his sufferings, we shall also be made partakers of his glory, and shall meet him with exceeding joy at his great appearing to judge his enemies, and crown his faithful servants, *2 Thes. i. 7*.

Learn, 1. True Christians do love and own the children of God in their lowest and most distressing circumstances. The apostle owns these poor, afflicted Christians, and calls them his beloved. True Christians never look more amiable one to another than in their adversities. 2. There is no reason for Christians to think it strange, or to wonder at the unkindnesses and persecutions of the world, because they are forewarned of them. Christ himself endured them; and the forsaking all, denying ourselves, and bearing the cross, are the terms upon which Christ accepts of us to be his disciples. 3. Christians ought not only to be patient, but to rejoice in their sharpest and sorest sufferings for Christ, because they are tokens of Divine favour; they promote the Gospel, and prepare for glory. They that rejoice in their sufferings for Christ shall eternally triumph and rejoice with him in glory.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

From the fiery trial the apostle descends to a lower degree of persecution,—that of the tongue by slander and reproach. He supposeth this sort of suffering would fall to their lot; they would be reviled, evil-spoken of, and slandered, for the name or sake of Christ. In such case he asserts, "Happy are ye." The reason of which is, because ye have the Spirit of God with you to fortify and comfort you; and the Spirit of God is also the Spirit of glory that will carry you through all, and bring you off gloriously, and will prepare and seal you up for eternal glory. This glorious Spirit "resteth upon you," resideth with you, dwelleth in you, supporteth you, and is pleased with you; and is not this a mighty happiness? By your patience and fortitude in suffering, by your dependence upon the promises of God, and adhering to the word which the Holy Spirit hath revealed, he is "on your part glorified;" but by the contempt and reproaches cast upon you the Spirit itself is evil-spoken of and blasphemed.

Learn, 1. The best men, and the best things, do usually meet with reproaches in the world. Jesus Christ and his followers, the Spirit of God and the Gospel, all are evil-spoken of. 2. The happiness of good people does not only consist with, but even flow from, their afflictions. "Happy are ye." 3. That man that hath the Spirit of God resting upon him cannot be miserable, let his afflictions be never so great. "Happy are ye; for the Spirit of God" &c. 4. The blasphemies and reproaches which evil men cast upon good people [believers] are taken by the Spirit of God as cast upon himself; "On their part he is evil-spoken of." 5. When good people are vilified "for the name of Christ," his Holy Spirit is glorified in them.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

One would think such a caution as this needless to such an excellent set of Christians as these were; but their enemies did charge them with these and other foul crimes; therefore the apostle, when he was settling the rules of the Christian religion, thought these cautions necessary, forbidding to every one of them to hurt the life, or the estate and property, of any one, or to do any sort of evil; or, without call and necessity, to play the bishop in another man's charge, or busy one's self "in other men's matters." To this caution he adds a direction, that "if any man suffer" for the cause of Christianity, and with a patient, Christian spirit, he ought not to account it a shame, but an honour to him; and ought to glorify God who hath thus dignified him.

Learn, 1. The best of men need to be warned against the worst of sins. 2. There is very little comfort in sufferings when we bring them upon ourselves by our own sin and folly. It is not the suffering but the cause makes the martyr.

the flesh is the seat of sin, he who has subdued the flesh has rid himself of sin.

iv. 3. "For the time past may suffice to have wrought," &c.: so best MSS.

iv. 6. "Them that are dead:" i.e., past generations. "According to men," &c.: those who are dead had the Gospel preached to them, which, though it did not save them from paying the penalty of sin in the flesh—death—yet gave them a higher life, a spiritual one, with

God. Both St. Peter and St. Paul are careful to impress upon us the equality of the dead, the living, and those who shall be alive at Christ's coming, with respect to future glory (*1 Thess. iv. 15*).

iv. 8. "Covereth a multitude:" so most old MSS. In the first place meaning mutual love hiding rather than exposing faults; possibly, also, endeavouring to cover them from God's sight, by praying for their pardon. (See Note on James v. 20.)

iv. 11. "As oracles of God," not "the oracles:" he is to speak

3. We have reason to thank God for the honour, if he calls us out to suffer for his truth and Gospel, for any of the doctrines or duties of Christianity.

17 For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

The usual method of Providence hath been this:—When God brings great calamities and sore judgments upon whole nations, he generally begins with his own people, *Isa. x. 12; Jer. xxv. 29; Eze. ix. 6*. Such a time of universal calamity is now at hand, which was foretold by our Saviour, *Mat. xxiv. 9, 10*. This renders all the foregoing exhortations to patience necessary for you. And you have two considerations to support you: First. That these judgments will but begin with you that are God's house and family, and will soon be over. Your trials and corrections will not last long. Secondly. Your troubles will be but light and short in comparison of what shall befall the wicked world,—your own countrymen the Jews, and the infidels and idolatrous people among whom you live. "What shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?"

Learn, 1. The best of God's servants, his own household, have so much amiss in them as renders it fit and necessary that God should sometimes correct and punish them with his judgments. "Judgment begins at the house of God." 2. They that are the family of God have their worst things in this life. Their worst condition is tolerable, and will soon be over. 3. Such persons or societies of men as disobey the Gospel of God are not of his church and household, though possibly they may make the loudest pretensions to it. The apostle distinguisheth the disobedient from the house of God. 4. The sufferings of good people in this life are demonstrations of the unspeakable torments that are coming upon the disobedient and unbelieving. "What shall the end be of those that obey not the Gospel?" Who can express or say how dreadful their end will be?

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

This whole verse is taken from *Pr. xi. 31*, "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; how much more the wicked and the sinner?" This the Seventy translate exactly as the apostle here quotes it. Whence we may

Learn, 1. That the grievous sufferings of good people in this world are sad presages of much heavier judgments coming upon impenitent sinners. But if we take the salvation here in the highest sense, then we may learn, 2. That it is as much as the best can do to secure the salvation of their souls; there are so many sufferings, temptations, and difficulties to be overcome; so many sins to be mortified; the gate is so strait, and the way so narrow, that it is as much as the righteous can do to be saved. Let the absolute necessity of salvation balance the difficulty of it. Consider, your difficulties are greatest at first: God offers his grace and help; the contest will not last long. Be but faithful to the death, and God will give you the crown of life, *Rev. ii. 10*. 3. The ungodly and the sinner are unquestionably in a state of damnation. Where shall they appear? How will they stand before their Judge? Where can they shew their heads? "If the righteous scarcely be saved," the wicked must certainly perish.

19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Here the apostle finisheth his discourse concerning sufferings, and gives this general advice, "Let them that suffer according to the will of God" look chiefly to the safety of their souls, which are put into hazard by afflictions, and cannot be kept secure otherwise than by committing them to God, who will undertake the charge, if we commit them to him in well-doing; for he is their Creator, and hath, out of mere grace, made many kind promises to them of eternal salvation, in which he will shew himself faithful and true.

Learn, 1. That all the sufferings that befall good people come upon them "according to the will of God." 2. It is the duty of Christians, in all their distresses, to look more to the keeping of their souls than to the preserving of their bodies. The soul is of greatest value, and yet in most danger. If suffering from without raise uneasiness, vexation, and other sinful and tormenting passions within, the soul is then the greatest sufferer. If the soul be not well kept, persecution will drive people to apostasy, *Ps. cxv. 3*. 3. The only way to keep the soul well is to commit it to God in well-doing. Commit your souls to God by solemn dedication, prayer, and patient perseverance in well-doing, *Rom. ii. 7*. 4. Good people, when they are in affliction, have great encouragement to commit their souls to God, because he is their Creator, and faithful in all his promises.

CHAPTER V.

In which the apostle gives particular directions, first to the elders, how to behave themselves towards their flock, in the first four verses; then to the younger, to be obedient and humble, and to cast their care upon God, in the next three verses. From thence to the end he exhorts all to sobriety, watchfulness against temptations, and steadfastness in the faith, praying earnestly for them; and so concludes his epistle with a solemn doxology, mutual salutations, and his apostolical benediction.



HE elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

Here we may observe, First. The persons to whom this exhortation is given. To the presbyters, pastors, and spiritual guides of the church; elders by office rather than by age, ministers of those churches to whom he wrote this epistle.

Secondly. The person who gives this exhortation, the apostle Peter: "I exhort." And, to give force to his exhortation, he tells them he was their brother

presbyter or fellow-elder, and so puts nothing upon them but what he was ready to perform himself. He was also "a witness of the sufferings of Christ," being with him in the garden, attending him to the palace of the high priest, and very likely was a spectator of his suffering upon the cross, at a distance among the crowd, *Acts iii. 15*. He adds that he was also a "partaker of the glory" that was in some degree revealed at the transfiguration, *Mat. xvii. 1—3*, and shall be completely enjoyed at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Learn, 1. They whose office it is to teach others ought carefully to study their own duty, as well as to teach the people theirs. 2. How different the spirit and behaviour of Peter was from that of his pretended successors! He does not command and domineer, but exhort. He does not claim sovereignty over all pastors and churches, nor style himself prince of the apostles, vicar of Christ, or head of the church, but values himself upon being "an elder." All the apostles were elders, though every elder was not an apostle. 3. It was the peculiar honour of Peter, and a few more, to be the witnesses of Christ's sufferings, but it is the privilege of all true Christians to be partakers of the glory that shall be revealed.

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Here you have the pastor's duty described, and the manner how that duty ought to be performed. The pastoral duty is threefold:—

First. To "feed the flock," by preaching to them the sincere word of God, and ruling them according to such directions and discipline as the word of God prescribes, both which are implied in this expression, "Feed the flock."

Secondly. The pastors of the church must "take the oversight thereof." The elders are exhorted to do the office of bishops, as the word signifies, by personal care and vigilance over all the flock committed to their charge.

Thirdly. They must be "examples to the flock," and practise that holiness, self-denial, mortification, and all other Christian duties which they preach and recommend to their people.

These duties must be performed, not by constraint, not because you must do them, not from compulsion of the civil power, or constraint of fear or shame, but from a willing mind, that takes pleasure in the work. Not for "filthy lucre," or any emoluments and profits attending the place where you reside, or any perquisite belonging to the office, "but of a ready mind;" regarding the flock more than the fleece, sincerely and cheerfully endeavouring to serve the church of God. Neither as being "lords over God's heritage," tyrannising over them by compulsion and coercive force, or imposing unscriptural and human inventions upon them, instead of necessary duty, *Mat. xx. 25, 26; 2 Cor. i. 24*.

Learn, 1. The eminent dignity of the church of God, and all the true members of it. These poor, dispersed, suffering Christians were the flock of God. The rest of the world is a brutal herd. These are an orderly flock, redeemed to God by the great Shepherd, living in holy love and communion one with another, "according to the will of God." They are also dignified with the title of God's heritage or clergy; his peculiar lot, chosen out of the common multitude for his own people, to enjoy his special favour and to do him special service. The word is never restrained in the New Testament to the ministers of religion only. 2. The pastors of the church ought to consider their people as the flock of God, as God's heritage, and treat them accordingly. They are not theirs to be lorded over at pleasure, but they are God's people, and should be treated with love, meekness, and tenderness, for the sake of him to whom they belong. 3. Those ministers that are either driven to the work by necessity, or drawn to it by "filthy lucre," can never perform their duty as they ought, because they do not do it willingly, and with a "ready mind." 4. The best way a minister can take to engage the respect of a people is to discharge his own duty among them in the best manner that he can, and to be a constant example to them of all that is good.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

In opposition to that "filthy lucre" which many proposed to themselves, as their principal motive in their undertaking and discharge of the pastoral office, the apostle sets before them the "crown of glory," designed by the great Shepherd, Jesus Christ, for all his faithful ministers.

Learn, 1. That Jesus Christ is "the chief Shepherd" of the whole flock and heritage of God. He bought them and ruleth them; he defendeth and saveth them for ever. He is also the chief Shepherd over all inferior shepherds; they derive their authority from him, act in his name, and are accountable to him at last. 2. This "chief Shepherd" will appear to judge all ministers and under-shepherds, to call them to account, whether they have faithfully discharged their work, both publicly and privately, according to the foregoing directions. 3. They that are found to have done their duty shall have what is infinitely better than temporal gain; they shall receive from the grand Shepherd a high degree of everlasting glory, "a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Having settled and explained the duty of the pastors, or spiritual guides of the church, he comes now to instruct the flock how to behave themselves to their ministers, and to one another. He calls them the younger, as being generally younger than their grave pastors, and to put them in mind of their inferiority; the term younger being used by our Saviour to signify an inferior, *Luk. xxii. 26*. He exhorteth these that are younger and inferior to submit themselves to the elder, to give due respect and reverence to their persons, and to yield to their admonitions, reproof, and authority, enjoining and commanding what the word of God requires, *Heb. xiii. 17*. As to one another, the rule is, that they should all "be subject one to another," so far as to receive the reproofs and counsels one of another, and be ready to bear one another's burdens, and perform all the offices of friendship and charity one to another; and particular persons should submit to the directions of the whole society, *Eph. v. 21; Jas. v. 16*. These duties of submission to superiors in age or office, and subjection to one another, being contrary to the proud nature and selfish interests

what he speaks as God's sayings, not his own. He is God's steward. "Which God giveth," the word signifies the supplying a chorus, with everything needful for their parts. "Amen;" not a note of conclusion, but of strong emotion of heart (Alford).

iv. 14. All oldest MSS. omit "on their part" to end of verse. iv. 17—19. Christians may rejoice in present suffering, since God chastens his people to wean them from the world, and punishes their sin now; but in the great day of his wrath they will be free.

v. 1. "Partaker of," according to Christ's promise (John xiii. 36).

v. 2. Sinaitic and Vatican omit "taking the oversight."

v. 3. Vatican MS. omits this verse, "Lords over God's heritage;" "God" is not expressed in the Greek; literally, "the heritages" or "portions" entrusted to you. "Not as though ye were lords over the parishes" (Tyndal).

v. 10. "Who called you, shall himself perfect you," &c.: so best MSS.

of men, he advises them to "he clothed with humility." Let your minds, behaviour, garb, and whole frame, be adorned with humility, as the most beautiful habit you can wear. This will render obedience and duty easy and pleasant; but if you be disobedient and proud, God will set himself to oppose and crush you; for he "resisteth the proud," when he "giveth grace to the humble."

Learn, 1. Humility is the great preserver of peace and order in all Christian churches and societies; consequently, pride is the great disturber of them, and the cause of most dissensions and breaches in the church. 2. There is a mutual opposition between God and the proud, so the word signifies. They war against him, and he scorneth them. He "resisteth the proud," because they are like the devil—enemies to himself and to his kingdom among men, *Pr. iii. 34*. 3. Where God giveth grace to be humble he will give more grace, more wisdom, faith, holiness, and humility.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Since "God resisteth the proud," but "giveth grace to the humble," therefore humble yourselves not only one to another, but to the great God, whose judgments are coming upon the world, and must begin at the house of God, *ch. iv. 17*. His hand is almighty, and can easily pull you down if you be proud, or exalt you if you be humble; and will certainly do it, either in this life, if he see it best for you, or at the day of general retribution.

Learn, 1. The consideration of the omnipotent hand of God should make us humble and submissive to him in all that he brings upon us. 2. Humbling ourselves to God under his hand is the next way to deliverance and exaltation. Patience under his chastisements, submission to his pleasure, repentance, prayer, and hope in his mercy, will engage his help and release in due time, *Jas. iv. 7, 10*.

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

The apostle, knowing that these Christians were already under very hard circumstances, does rightly suppose that what he had foretold of greater hardships yet a coming might excite in them abundance of care and fear about the event of these difficulties, what the issue of them would be to themselves, their families, and the church of God. Foreseeing this anxious care would be a heavy burthen, and a sore temptation, he gives them the best advice, and supports it with a strong argument; his advice is, to cast all their care, or all care of themselves, upon God. Throw your cares, which are so cutting and distracting,—that wound your souls and pierce your hearts,—upon the wise and gracious providence of God; trust in him with a firm composed mind, "for he careth for you." He is willing to release you of your fear, or support you under it. He will order all events to you, so as shall convince you of his paternal love and tenderness towards you; and all shall be so ordered that no hurt, but good, shall come unto you, *Mat. vi. 25; Ps. lxxiv. 11; Rom. viii. 28*.

Learn, 1. The best of Christians are apt to leopour under the burthen of anxious and excessive care. The apostle calls it "all your care," intimating that the cares of Christians are various, and of more sorts than one,—personal cares, family cares, cares for the present, and cares for the future, for themselves, for others, for the church. 2. The cares even of good people are very burthensome, and too often very sinful. When they arise from unbelief and diffidence, when they torture and distract the mind, unfit us for the duties of our place, and hinder our delightful service of God, they are very criminal. 3. The best remedy against immoderate care is, to cast our care upon God, and resign every event to his wise and gracious determination. A firm belief of the rectitude of the Divine will and counsels calms the spirit of man. "We ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done," *Acts xxi. 14*.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

Here the apostle does three things:

First. He shews them their danger from an enemy more cruel and restless than even the worst of men, whom he describes, 1. By his characters and names. He is an "adversary," that adversary of yours; not a common adversary, but an enemy that impleads you, and litigates against you in your grand depending cause, and aims at your very souls. 2. "The devil," the grand accuser of all the brethren. This title is derived from a word which signifies, 'to strike through,' or to stab. He would strike malignity into our natures, and poison into our souls. If he could have struck these people with passion and murmuring in their sufferings, perhaps he might have drawn them to apostasy and ruin. 3. He is "a roaring lion," hungry, fierce, strong, and cruel,—the fierce and greedy pursuer of souls. 2. By his business. He "walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." His whole design is to devour and destroy souls; to that end he is unwearied and restless in his malicious endeavours; for he always, night and day, goes about studying and contriving whom he may ensnare to their eternal ruin.

Secondly. Our duty inferred from hence is, 1. To "be sober," and to govern both the outward and the inward man by the rules of temperance, modesty, and mortification. 2. To "be vigilant." Not secure, or careless, but rather suspicious of constant danger from this spiritual enemy; and, under that apprehension, to be watchful and diligent to prevent his designs, and save our souls. 3. To resist him "stedfast in the faith." It was the faith of these people that Satan aimed at. If he could overturn their faith, and draw them into apostasy, then he knew he should gain his point, and ruin their souls. Therefore, to destroy their faith, he raises bitter persecutions, and sets the grand potentates of the world against them. This strong trial and temptation they must resist, by being well grounded, resolute and "stedfast in the faith." To encourage them to this,

Thirdly. The apostle tells them that their care was not singular, for they knew that the like afflictions befell their brethren in all parts of the world, and that all the people of God were their fellow-soldiers in this warfare.

Learn, 1. All the great persecutions that ever were in the world were raised, spirited up, and conducted by the devil. He is the grand persecutor, as well as the deceiver and accuser of the brethren. Men are his willing, spiteful instruments, but he is the chief adversary that wars against Christ and his people, *Gen. iii. 15; Rev. xii. 12*. 2. The design of Satan in raising persecutions against the faithful servants of God is to bring them to apostasy, by reason of their sufferings, and so to destroy their souls. 3. Sobriety and watchfulness

are necessary virtues at all times, but especially in times of suffering and persecution. You must moderate your affection to worldly things, or else Satan will soon overcome you. 4. If you would overcome Satan, either as a tempter, accuser, or persecutor, you must resist him "stedfast in the faith." If your faith give way, you are gone; therefore, "above all, take the shield of faith," *Eph. vi. 16*. 5. The consideration of what others suffer is proper to encourage us to bear our own share in any affliction. The same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

We come now to the conclusion of this epistle, which the apostle begins with a most weighty prayer, which,

First. He addresseth to God, as "the God of all grace," the Author and Finisher of every heavenly gift and quality; acknowledging on their behalf that God had already called them to be partakers of that eternal glory which, being his own, he had promised and settled upon them through the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ.

Secondly. You may observe what he prays for on their account. Not that they might be excused from sufferings, but that their sufferings might be moderate and short; and, "after they had suffered awhile," that God would restore them to a settled and peaceable condition, and perfect his work in them; that he would stablish them against wavering either in faith or duty, that he would strengthen them that are weak, and settle them upon Christ, the foundation, so firmly, that their union with him might be indissoluble and everlasting.

Learn, 1. That all grace is from God. It is he that restrains, converts, comforteth, and saveth men by his grace. 2. All that are called into a state of grace are called to partake of eternal glory and happiness. 3. Those that are called to be heirs of eternal life through Jesus Christ must nevertheless suffer in this world, but their sufferings will be but for a little while. 4. The perfecting, stablishing, strengthening, and settling of good people in grace, and their perseverance therein, is so difficult a work, that only "the God of all grace" can accomplish it; and therefore he is earnestly to be sought unto, by continual prayer and dependence upon his promises.

11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

From this doxology we may learn, that they that have obtained grace from "the God of all grace" should and will ascribe glory, dominion, and power to him "for ever and ever."

12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

Here the apostle does,

First. Recapitulate the design of his writing this epistle to them; which was, 1. To testify, and in the strongest terms to assure them, that the doctrine of salvation, which he had explained, and they had embraced, was the true account of the grace of God, foretold by the prophets and published by Jesus Christ. 2. To exhort them earnestly that, as they had embraced the Gospel, they would continue stedfast in it, notwithstanding the arts of seducers or the persecutions of enemies.

Secondly. He recommends Silvanus, the person by whom he sent them this brief epistle, as a brother that he esteemed faithful and friendly to them, and hoped they would account him so, though he was a minister of the uncircumcision.

Learn, 1. That an honourable esteem of the ministers of religion tends much to the success of their labours. When we are convinced they are faithful, we shall profit more by their ministerial services. The prejudices that some of these Jews might have against Silvanus as a minister of the Gentiles would soon wear off, when they were once convinced that he was "a faithful brother." 2. The main thing that ministers ought to aim at in their labours is, to convince their people of the certainty and excellency of the Christian religion. This the apostles did exhort and testify with all their might. 3. A firm persuasion that we are in the true way to heaven will be the best motive to stand fast and persevere therein.

13 The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

St. Peter being at Babylon in Assyria when he wrote this epistle, (whither he travelled, as the apostle of the circumcision, to visit that church, which was the chief of the dispersion,) sends the salutation of that church to the other churches to whom he wrote, telling them that God had elected or chosen the Christians at Babylon out of the world to be his church, and to partake of eternal salvation through Christ Jesus, together with them and all other faithful Christians, *ch. i. 2*. In this salutation he particularly joins Mark the evangelist, who was then with him, and who was his son in a spiritual sense, being begotten by him to Christianity.

Learn, That all the churches of Jesus Christ ought to have a most affectionate concern one for another. They should love, and pray for, and be as helpful one to another as they possibly can.

14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

He exhorts them to fervent love and charity one towards another, and to express this by giving the kiss of peace, according to the common custom of those times and countries; and so concludes with a benediction, which he confines to those only "that are in Christ Jesus," united to him by faith and sound members of his mystical body. The blessing he pronounceth upon these is peace, by which he means all necessary good, all manner of prosperity. To this he adds his "Amen" in token of his earnest desire and undoubted expectation that the blessing of peace would be the portion of all the faithful.

v. 13. "She at Babylon:" so literally. Generally understood of the sister church of Babylon, as in Authorised Version.

Additional Notes.—Chap. i. 3. "Hath begotten us:" referring to the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. "Unto a living hope:" better than Authorised Version, "lively hope." The Christian's life is a life of hope, and that hope is strong by reason of the resurrection of Christ.

i. 6. "Wherein," Authorised Version: rather, "in which."

i. 8. "Ye shall rejoice:" the reference is to the present time.

i. 13. "Wherefore:" here follow various exhortations to holy life, grounded on the knowledge of what God has done for us.

i. 14. "As children of obedience," not as Authorised Version: "This mode of expression must be referred to the more vivid way of regarding things prevalent among the Orientals, which treats intimate connection, derivation, and dependence, even in spiritual matters, as the relation of a child" (Winer).



RIDING ON ASSES.



AN



ESCAPING FROM THE CITY.

EXPOSITION

OF THE SECOND

EPISTLE GENERAL OF ST. PETER,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

THE penman of this epistle appears plainly to be the same who wrote the foregoing; and whatsoever difference some learned men apprehend they discern in the style of this epistle from that of the former, this cannot be a sufficient argument to assert that it was written by Simeon, who succeeded the apostle James in the church at Jerusalem; inasmuch as he who wrote this epistle calls himself "Simon Peter, and an apostle," ver. 1, and says that he was one of the three apostles that were present at Christ's transfiguration, ver. 18; and says expressly, that he had written a former epistle to them, *ch.* iii. 1. [There is also an allusion in *ch.* i. 14, which Peter only could appropriately make: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." Here there is an evident reference to the Saviour's prediction of the death of Peter, recorded in *Jno.* xxi. 18, 19.—Probably the year 64 or 65 would not be far from the real date of this epistle. If so, it was, according to Calmet, one year only before the martyrdom of Peter, A.D. 66, and six years before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, A.D. 71. As to the persons to whom this epistle was written there is no room for doubt. They are the same with those to whom the previous epistle had been addressed, for, in *ch.* iii. 1, the writer says, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance."] The design of this second epistle is also the same with that of the former, as is evident from the 1st verse of the 3rd chapter; whence observe, that in the things of God we have need of "precept upon precept, and line upon line," and all little enough to keep it in remembrance; and yet these are the things which should be most faithfully recorded, and frequently remembered by us. [This epistle is characterised by the same earnest and tender manner as the first, and by a peculiarly "solemn grandeur of imagery and diction." The apostle, in the two last chapters, had to meet great and dangerous errors, and the style of rebuke was appropriate to the occasion. He felt that he himself was soon to die, and, in the prospect of death, his own mind was peculiarly impressed with the solemnity and importance of coming events. The occasion required that he should state in a solemn manner what was the truth in regard to the second advent of the Lord Jesus; what great changes were to occur; what the Christian might look for hereafter; and his soul kindles with the sublime theme, and he describes in glowing imagery, and in impassioned language, the end of all things, and exhorts them to live as became those who were looking forward to so important events. The practical effect of the whole epistle is to make the mind intensely solemn, and to put it into a position of waiting for the coming of the Lord.]

A.D. 66.

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CHAPTER I.

In this chapter we have, I. An introduction, or preface, making way for, and leading to, what is principally designed by the apostle, ver. 1—4. II. An exhortation to advance and improve in all Christian graces, ver. 5—7. To enforce this exhortation, and engage them seriously and heartily to comply with it, he adds, 1. A representation of the very great advantage which will thereby accrue to them, ver. 8—11. 2. A promise of the best assistance the apostle was able to give to facilitate and forward this good work, ver. 12—15. 3. A declaration of the certain truth and Divine original of the Gospel of Christ, in the grace whereof they were exhorted to increase and persevere, ver. 16—21.



SIMON Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The apostle Peter, being moved by the Holy Ghost to write once more to those who from among the Jews were turned to faith in Christ, begins this second epistle with an introduction, wherein the same persons are described, and the same blessings are desired, that are in the preface to his former letter; but there are some additions or alterations which ought to be taken notice of in all the three parts of the introduction.

First. We have here a description of the person that wrote the epistle, by the name *Simon*, as well as *Peter*, and by the title of servant as well as that of apostle. Peter, being in both epistles, seems to be the name most frequently used, and with which he may be thought to be best pleased, being given him by our Lord, upon his confessing Jesus to be Christ, the son of the living God, and the very name signifying and sealing that truth to be the fundamental article, the rock on which all must build. But the name *Simon*, though omitted in the former epistle, is mentioned in this, lest the total omission of that name which was given him when he was circumcised should make the Jewish believers, who were all zealous of the law, to become jealous of the apostle, as if he disclaimed and despised circumcision. He here styles himself "a servant," as well as "an apostle, of Jesus Christ." In this he may be allowed to glory, as David does, *Ps.* cxvi. 16. The service of Christ is the way to the highest honour, *Jno.* xii. 26. Christ himself is "King of kings, and Lord of lords;" and he makes all his servants "kings and priests unto God" *Rev.* i. 6. How great an honour is it to be the servants of this Master! This is what we cannot, without sin, be ashamed of. To triumph in being Christ's servant is very proper for those who are engaging others to enter into or abide in the service of Christ.

Secondly. We have an account of the people to whom the epistle is written. They have been described in the former epistle as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," and here, as "having obtained precious faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;" for the faith here mentioned is vastly different from the false faith of the heretic, and the feigned faith of the hypocrite, and the fruitless faith of the formal professor, how orthodox soever he is. It is "the faith of God's elect," *Tit.* i. 1, wrought by the Spirit of God in effectual calling. Observe,

1. True saving faith is a precious grace, and that not only as it is very uncommon, very scarce even in the visible church, a very small number of true believers among a great multitude of visible professors, *Mat.* xxii. 14; but true faith is very excellent, and of very great use and advantage to those who have it. The just live by faith a truly Divine spiritual life. Faith procures all the necessary supports and comforts of this excellent life. Faith goes to Christ, and buys the wine and milk, *Isa.* lv. 1, that are the proper nourishment of the new creature. Faith buys and brings home the tried gold, the heavenly treasure that does enrich. Faith takes and puts on the white raiment, the royal robes that clothe and adorn, *Rev.* iii. 18.

2. Faith is alike precious in the private Christian and in the apostle; it produces the same precious effects in the one and in the other. Faith unites the

* By the Rev. Joseph Hill. Additional Notes from Barnes.

Introductory Note.—Doubts concerning the genuineness of this epistle have been held since the earliest times. It was not admitted formally into the canon until the Council of Hippo, A.D. 393, and is less often and directly quoted by early writers than the First Epistle. But the testimony for is stronger than that against its reception. It was not likely to be much quoted in early times, as it was addressed to members of the Church who had little intercourse with the rest of Christendom, on a special occasion, and for a special object. It was

ultimately received into the canon, doubtless not without positive attestation from the successors of those to whom it was first addressed. With regard to the objection from the similarity of 2 Pet. 1—19 and Jude 3—16, it has been remarked that supposing this epistle copied by St. Jude, we have the strongest possible testimony to its authenticity; but if, on the other hand, the writer of this epistle copied St. Jude, it seems quite incredible that a forger, personating the chief of the apostles, should select the least important of all the apostolical

weak believer to Christ as really as it does the strong one, and purifies the heart of one as truly as of another; and every sincere believer is, by his faith, justified in the sight of God, and that from all sins, *Acts* xiii. 39. Faith, in whomsoever it is, takes hold of the same precious Saviour, and applies the same precious promises.

3. This precious faith is obtained of God. Faith is the gift of God, wrought by the Spirit, who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead.

4. The preciousness of faith, as well as our obtaining it, is through the righteousness of Christ. The satisfactory, meritorious righteousness and obedience of Christ gives faith all its value and preciousness; and the righteousness of such a person cannot but be of infinite value to those who by faith receive it. For, 1st. This Jesus Christ is God, yea, 'our God,' as it is in the original. He is truly God, an infinite Being, who has wrought out this righteousness, and therefore it must be of infinite value. 2nd. He is the Saviour of them that believe, and as such he yielded this meritorious obedience; and therefore is it of such great benefit and advantage to them, because, as surety and Saviour, he wrought out this righteousness in their stead.

Thirdly. We have the apostolical benediction, wherein he wishes for the multiplication and increase of the Divine favour to them, and the advancement and growth of the work of grace in them; and that peace with God and in their own consciences, which cannot be without grace, may abound in them. This is the very same benediction that is in the former epistle; but here he adds,

1. An account of the way and means whereby grace and peace are multiplied; it is "through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ." This acknowledging and believing in the only living and true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, is the great improvement of spiritual life, or it could not be the way to life eternal, *1 Jno.* xviii. 3. We have,

2. The ground of the apostle's faith in asking, and of the Christian's hope in expecting, the increase of grace. What we have already received should encourage us to ask for more. He that has begun the work of grace will perfect it. Observe, 1st. The fountain of all spiritual blessings is the Divine power of Jesus Christ, who could not discharge all the office of Mediator, unless he was God as well as man. 2nd. All things that have any relation to and influence upon the true spiritual life, the life and power of godliness, is from Jesus Christ; in him all fulness dwells, and it is from him we receive, and "grace for grace," *1 Jno.* i. 16; even all that is necessary for the preserving, improving, and perfecting of grace and peace, which are called here in this verse godliness and life, according to some expositors. 3rd. Knowledge of God, and faith in him, are the channel whereby all spiritual supports and comforts are conveyed to us. But then we must own and acknowledge God as the Author of our effectual calling, for so he is here described, "Him that has called us to glory and virtue." Observe here, that the design of God in calling or converting men is to bring them to glory and virtue, that is, peace and grace, as some understand it; but many prefer the marginal rendering, 'by glory and virtue.' And so we have the effectual calling set forth as the work of "the glory and virtue," or the glorious power of God, which is described *Eph.* i. 19. It is the glory of God's power to convert sinners; this is that power and glory of God which are seen and experienced in his sanctuary, *Ps.* lxxiii. 2. This power or virtue is to be extolled by all that "are called out of darkness into marvellous light," *1 Pet.* ii. 9. In the 4th verse the apostle goes on to encourage their faith and hope in looking for an increase of grace and peace, because the same glory and virtue are employed and evidenced in giving the promises of the Gospel that are exercised in our effectual calling. Observe, *First*. The good things which the promises make over are exceeding great. Pardon of sin is one of the blessings here intended. How great this is, all who know any thing of the power of God's anger will readily confess. And this is one of those promised favours in bestowing whereof "the power of the Lord is great," *Num.* xiv. 17. To pardon sins that are numerous and heinous (every one of which deserves God's wrath and curse, and that for ever) is a wonderful thing, and so called, *Ps.* cxix. 18. *Secondly*. The promised blessings of the Gospel are very precious. As the great promise of the Old Testament was the seed of the woman, the Messiah, *Heb.* xi. 39, so the great promise of the New Testament is the Holy Ghost, *Lu.* xxiv. 49. And how precious must the enlivening, enlightening, sanctifying Spirit be! *Thirdly*. They who receive the promises of the Gospel do partake of the Divine nature. These are renewed in the spirit of their mind after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; their hearts are set for God and his service; they have a Divine temper and disposition of soul. Though the law be the ministration of death, and the letter killeth, yet the Gospel is the ministration of life, and the Spirit quickeneth those who are naturally dead in trespasses and sins. *Fourthly*. Those in whom the Spirit does work the Divine nature are freed from the bondage of corruption. They who are by the Spirit of grace renewed in the spirit of their mind, are translated into the liberty of the children of God; for it is the world in which corruption does reign. They who are not of the Father, but of the world, are under the power of sin. "The world lies in wickedness," *1 Jno.* v. 19; and the dominion that sin has in the men of the world is through lust; their desires are to it, and therefore it rules over them. The dominion sin has over us is according to the delight we have in it.

[Here let us remark, 1. That man only, of all the dwellers on the earth, is capable of rising to this condition. The nature of all the other orders of creatures here below is incapable of any such transformation that it can be said that they become "partakers of the Divine nature." 2. It is impossible now to estimate the degree of approximation to which man may yet rise towards God, or the exalted sense in which the term may yet be applicable to him; but the prospect before the believer in this respect is most glorious. 3. Here we attempt to climb the hill of knowledge, and having gone a few steps—while the top is still lost in the clouds—we lie down and die. We look at a few things, become acquainted with a few elementary principles, make a little progress in virtue, and then all our studies and efforts are suspended, and 'we fly away.' In the future world we shall have an eternity before us to make progress in knowledge, and virtue, and holiness uninterrupted; and who can tell in what exalted sense it may yet be true that we shall be "partakers of the Divine nature," or what attainments we may yet make?]

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

In these words the apostle comes to the chief thing intended in this epistle, to excite and engage them to advance in grace and holiness, they having already

writings for imitation; whereas it is probable that St. Peter might choose to give the stamp of his personal authority to a document bearing so powerfully upon practical and doctrinal error in the churches which he addressed. Dr. Wordsworth thinks that St. Peter predicts a state of things which St. Jude describes as actually existing. The object of the epistle is twofold—to set its readers on their guard against false teachers, and to urge them to grow in the knowledge of Christ. It is apparently addressed to the same persons

obtained precious faith, and been made partakers of the Divine nature. This is a very good beginning, but it is not to be rested in as if we were already perfect. The apostle had prayed that grace and peace might be multiplied to them, and now he exhorts them to press forward for the obtaining of more grace. We should, as we have opportunity, exhort those we pray for, and excite them to the use of all proper means to obtain what we desire God to bestow upon them. And they who will make any progress in religion must be very diligent and industrious in their endeavours. Without giving all diligence there is no gaining any ground in the work of holiness. They who are slothful in the business of religion will make nothing of it. We must strive if we will enter in at the strait gate, *Lu.* xiii. 24. Here we cannot but observe how the believer's way is marked out step by step.

First. He must get "virtue," by which some understand justice; and then the knowledge, temperance, and patience that follow, being joined with it, the apostle may be supposed to put them upon pressing after the four cardinal virtues, or the four elements that go to the making up of every virtue or virtuous action. But seeing it is a faithful saying, and constantly to be asserted, that they who have faith be careful to maintain good works, *Tit.* iii. 8; by virtue here we may understand strength and courage, without which the believer cannot stand up for good works by abounding and excelling in them. The righteous must be bold as a lion, *Pr.* xxviii. 1. A cowardly Christian, who is afraid or ashamed to profess the doctrines, or practise the duties, of the Gospel, must expect that Christ will be ashamed of him another day. Let not your hearts fail you in the evil day, but shew yourselves valiant in standing against all opposition, and resisting every enemy,—world, flesh, devil, yea, and death too. We have need of virtue while we live, and it will be of excellent use when we come to die.

Secondly. The believer must add "knowledge" to his virtue, prudence to his courage. There is a knowledge of God's name which must go before our faith, *Ps.* ix. 10; and we cannot approve of the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, till we know it. But there are proper circumstances for duty which must be known and observed; we must use the appointed means, and observe the accepted time. Christian prudence regards the persons we have to do with and the place and company we are in. Every believer must labour after that knowledge and wisdom that is profitable to direct, both as to the proper method and order wherein all Christian duties are to be performed, and as to the way and manner of performing them.

Thirdly. We must add "temperance" to our knowledge. We must be sober and moderate in our love to, and use of, the good things of this life; and if we have a right understanding and knowledge of outward comforts, we shall see their worth and usefulness are vastly inferior to that of spiritual mercies. Bodily exercises and bodily privileges profit but little, and therefore are to be esteemed and used accordingly. The Gospel teaches sobriety as well as honesty, *Tit.* ii. 12. We must be moderate in desiring and using the good things of natural life, such as meat, drink, clothes, sleep, recreations, credit, &c. An inordinate desire after these is inconsistent with an earnest desire after God and Christ; and they who take more of these than is due can neither render to God nor man what is due to them.

Fourthly. Add to temperance "patience," which must have its perfect work, or we cannot be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing," *Jam.* i. 4; for we are born to trouble, and must, through many tribulations, enter into the kingdom of heaven. And it is this tribulation (*Rom.* v. 3) which worketh patience, that is, requires the exercise and occasions the increase of this grace, whereby we bear all calamities and crosses with silence and submission, without murmuring against God, or complaining of him, but justifying him who lays all affliction upon us; owning that our sufferings are less than our sins deserve, and believing they are no more than we ourselves do need.

Fifthly. To patience we must add "godliness;" and this is the very thing which is produced by patience, for that works experience, *Rom.* v. 4. When Christians bear afflictions patiently they get an experimental knowledge of the loving-kindness of their heavenly Father, which he will not take from his children, even "when he visits their iniquity with the rod, and their transgression with stripes," *Ps.* lxxxix. 32, 33. And hereby they are brought to that child-like fear and reverential love wherein true godliness does consist. To which,

Sixthly. We must add "brotherly kindness," a tender affection to all our fellow-Christians, who are children of the same Father, servants of the same Master, members of the same family, travellers to the same country, and heirs of the same inheritance; and therefore are to be loved with a pure heart, fervently, with a love of complacency, as those who are peculiarly near and dear to us, in whom we take particular delight, *Ps.* xvi. 3.

Seventhly. "Charity," or a love of goodwill to all mankind, must be added to the love of delight which we have for those who are the children of God. God has made of one blood all nations, and all the children of men are partakers of the same human nature, and are all capable of the same mercies, and liable to the same afflictions; and therefore, though upon a spiritual account Christians are distinguished and dignified above those who are without Christ, yet are they to sympathise with others in their calamities, and relieve their necessities, and promote their welfare both in body and soul, as they have opportunity. Thus must all believers in Christ evidence that they are the children of God, who is good to all, but is especially good to Israel.

All the forementioned graces must be had, or we shall not be thoroughly furnished for all good works,—for the duties of the first and second table, for active and passive obedience, and for those services wherein we are to imitate God, as well as for those wherein we only obey him.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

To engage us to an industrious and unwearied pursuit of all the forementioned graces, the apostle sets forth the advantages that redound to all who

as the First Epistle—to the dispersed believers in Cappadocia, Asia, &c. Its date is uncertain; Alford, Fausset, &c., place it about A.D. 68.

i. 1. "In the righteousness that cometh of our God," &c. (Tyndal). "In the justice of our God" (Rheims). Alford renders, "In the righteousness of our God," and says, "In his righteousness, which makes no difference between the one party and the other, God has given to you the like precious faith as to us."

i. 2. "By the knowing of" (Wickliffe). The vehicle of the multi-

writings for imitation; whereas it is probable that St. Peter might choose to give the stamp of his personal authority to a document bearing so powerfully upon practical and doctrinal error in the churches which he addressed. Dr. Wordsworth thinks that St. Peter predicts a state of things which St. Jude describes as actually existing. The object of the epistle is twofold—to set its readers on their guard against false teachers, and to urge them to grow in the knowledge of Christ. It is apparently addressed to the same persons

successfully labour, so as to get these things to be and abound in them. This is proposed.

First. More generally, ver. 9. The having these things make not "barren," or slothful, "nor unfruitful;" where, according to the style of the Holy Ghost, we must understand a great deal more than is expressed; for when it is said, concerning Ahaz, the vilest and most provoking of all the kings of Judah, that "he did not right in the sight of the Lord," 2 *Kin.* xvi. 2, we are to understand as much as if it had been said he did what was most offensive and abominable, as the following account of his life does show. So when it is here said that the being and abounding of all Christian graces in us will make neither inactive nor unfruitful, we are thereby to understand that it will make very zealous and lively, vigorous and active, in all practical Christianity, and eminently fruitful in the works of righteousness. These will bring much glory to God, by bringing forth much fruit among men, being fruitful "in knowledge," or the acknowledging "of our Lord Jesus Christ;" owing him to be their Lord, and evidencing themselves to be his servants, by their abounding in the work that he has given them to do. This is the necessary consequence of adding one grace to another; for where all Christian graces are in the heart, they improve and strengthen, encourage and cherish one another; so they all thrive and grow, as the apostle intimates in the beginning of the 5th verse; and wherever grace abounds there will be an abounding in good works. How desirable it is to be in such a case the apostle evidenceth, ver. 9, where he sets forth how miserable it is to be without those quickening, fructifying graces; for he who hath not, or though he pretends or seems to have the forementioned graces, does not exercise and improve them, is blind, that is, as to spiritual and heavenly things, as the next word explains it, "he cannot see far off." This present evil world he can see, and does dote upon, but has no discerning at all of the world to come, so as to be affected with the spiritual privileges and heavenly blessings thereof. He that sees the excellencies of Christianity must needs be diligent in endeavours after all those graces that are absolutely necessary for obtaining glory, honour, and immortality; but where these graces are not obtained nor endeavoured after, men are not able to look forward to the things that are but a little way off in reality, though in appearance or in their apprehension they are at a great distance, because they put them far away from them. And how wretched is their condition who are thus blind as to the awfully great things of the other world! who cannot see any thing of the reality and certainty, the greatness and nearness, of the glorious rewards God will bestow on the righteous, and the dreadful punishment he will inflict on the ungodly! But this is not all the misery of those who do not add to their faith virtue, knowledge, &c. They are as unable to look backward as forward. Their memories are slippery, and unable to retain what is past, as their sight is short, and unable to discern what is future. They forget that they have been baptised, and had the means, and been laid under the obligations, to holiness of heart and life. By baptism we are engaged in a holy war against sin, and are solemnly bound to fight against flesh, world, and devil. Often call to mind and seriously meditate on your solemn engagement to be the Lord's, and your peculiar advantages and encouragements to lay aside all filthiness of flesh and spirit.

Secondly. The apostle proposes two particular advantages that will attend or follow upon diligence in the work of a Christian: 1. Stability in grace. 2. A triumphant entrance into glory. These he brings in by resuming his former exhortation, and laying it down in other words; for what, ver. 5, is expressed by giving diligence to add to faith virtue, &c., is here expressed by "giving diligence to make our calling and election sure." Where we may observe, 1st. It is the duty of believers to make their election sure, to clear it up to themselves that they are the chosen of God. 2nd. The way to make sure their eternal election is to make out their effectual calling. None can look into the book of God's eternal counsels and decrees; but as much as whom God did predestinate, them he also called, if we can find we are effectually called, we may conclude we are chosen to salvation. 3rd. It requires a great deal of diligence and labour to make sure our calling and election. There must be a very close examination of ourselves, a very narrow search and strict inquiry, whether we are thoroughly converted, our minds enlightened, our wills renewed, and our whole souls changed, as to the bent and inclination thereof. And to come to a fixed certainty in this requires the utmost diligence, and cannot be attained and kept without Divine assistance, as we may learn from *Ps.* cxxxix. 23; *Rom.* viii. 16. But how great soever the labour is, do not think much of it, for great is the advantage you gain by it. For, *First*. By this you will be kept from falling, and that at all times and seasons, even in those hours of temptation that shall be on the earth; when others shall fall into heinous and scandalous sin, these shall be enabled to walk circumspectly, and keep on in the way of their duty; and when many fall into errors these shall be preserved sound in the faith, and stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. *Secondly*. They who are diligent in the work of religion shall have a triumphant entrance into glory. Whilst of those few who get to heaven some are scarcely saved, 1 *Pet.* iv. 18, with a great deal of difficulty, "even as by fire," 1 *Cor.* iii. 15, those who are growing in grace, and abounding in the work of the Lord, shall have an abundant entrance into the joy of their Lord, even that everlasting kingdom where Christ reigns; and they shall reign with him for ever and ever.

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. 13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; 14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. 15 Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

First. The importance and advantage of progress and perseverance in grace and holiness makes the apostle to be very diligent in doing the work of a minister of Christ, that he might thereby excite and assist them to be diligent in the duty of Christians. If ministers be negligent in their work, it can hardly be expected the people will be diligent in theirs. Therefore St. Peter will not be negligent; that is, at no time or place, in no part of his work, to no part of his charge; but will be exemplarily and universally diligent, and that in the work of a remembrancer. This is the office of the best ministers, even the apostles themselves. They are the Lord's remembrancers, *Isa.* lxi. 6; they are especially bound to make mention of the promises, and put God in mind of

his engagements to do good to his people; and they are the people's remembrancers, making mention of God's precepts, and putting them in mind of the doctrines and duties of Christianity, that they may remember God's commandments to do them. And this the apostle does, though some persons might think it needless, inasmuch as they already knew these things that he writes about, and were established in the very truth that he does insist upon. Observe.

1. We need to be put in mind of what we do already know, to prevent our forgetting it, and to improve our knowledge and reduce all to practice.

2. We must be established in the belief of the truth, that we may not be shaken by every wind of doctrine, and especially in that which is the present truth; what is the truth more peculiarly necessary for us to know in our day what belongs to our peace; and what is more especially opposed in our time. The great doctrines of the Gospel, that Jesus is the Christ, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, that those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved, and all who believe in God must be careful to maintain good works,—these are truths the apostles insisted on in their day; these are "faithful sayings, and worthy of all acceptance" in every age of the Christian church. And as these must be constantly affirmed by ministers, *Tit.* iii. 8, so the people are to be well instructed and established therein; and yet must after all their attainments in knowledge, be put in mind of such things as cannot be too clearly known, nor too firmly believed. The most advanced Christians cannot, while in this world, be above ordinances, or beyond the need of those means which God has appointed and does afford. And if the people need teaching and exhortation while they are in the body, it is very meet and just that ministers should, as long as they are in this tabernacle, instruct and exhort them, and bring those truths to their remembrance that they have formerly heard, this being a proper means to stir them to be diligent and lively in a course of gospel obedience.

Secondly. The apostle, being set upon the work, tells us, ver. 14, what makes him earnest in this matter, even the knowledge he had, not only that he must certainly, but also that he must shortly, put off this tabernacle. Observe,

1. The body is but the tabernacle of the soul. It is a mean and moveable structure, whose stakes can be easily removed, and its cords presently broken.

2. This tabernacle must be put off. We are not to continue long in this earthly house. As at night we put off our clothes, and lay them by, so at death we must put off our bodies, and they must be laid up in the grave till the morning of the resurrection.

3. The nearness of death makes the apostle diligent in the business of life. Our Lord Jesus had shewn him that the time of his departure was at hand, and therefore he bestirs himself with greater zeal and diligence because the time is short; he must soon be removed from those to whom he wrote, and his ambition being that they should remember the doctrine he had delivered to them, after he himself was taken away from them, he commits his exhortation to writing. The apostle had not any great opinion of oral tradition; that was not so proper a means to reach the end he was in pursuit of. He would have them always to remember these things, and not only to keep them in mind, but also to make mention of them, as the original words do import. They who fear the Lord make mention of his name, and talk of his loving-kindness. This is the way to spread the knowledge of the Lord, and this the apostle had at heart; and they who have the written word of God are thereby put into a capacity to do this.

[We may learn from this, 1. That when a Christian grows old, and draws near to death, his sense of the value of Divine truth by no means diminishes. 2. We may learn from what Peter says here, that it is the duty of those who are drawing near to the eternal world, and who are the friends of religion, to do all they can that the truths of Christianity "may be always had in remembrance." Every man's experience of the value of religion, and the results of his examination and observation, should be regarded as the property of the world, and should not be lost. As he is about to die, he should seek, by all the means in his power, that those truths should be perpetuated and propagated. A tract may live long after the author is in the grave; and who can calculate the results which have followed the efforts of Baxter and Edwards to keep up in the world the remembrance of the truths which they deemed of so much value? This little epistle of Peter has shed light on the path of men now for eighteen hundred years, and will continue to do it until the second coming of the Saviour.]

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from



TRANSFIGURATION.—ver. 18.

plication of grace and peace is the increasing knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus.

i. 3—11. Exhortation to advance in the graces of the spiritual life, introduced (verses 3, 4) by a consideration that God bestows all things belonging to that life by the knowledge of him, and that the aim of his promises is that we should be partakers of the Divine nature.

i. 3. "By his own glory and virtue;" so best MSS.

i. 4. "Whereby:" by his glory and virtue; his glory making the promises great, his virtue making them precious. "By the means whereof are given unto us excellent and most great promises, that by the help of them ye should be partakers of the godly nature, in that ye fly the corruption of worldly lust" (Tyndal).

i. 5. Not "beside this," as Authorised Version; rather, "wherefore"—introducing side by side with God's gift diligence on your part. Not merely "add to your faith virtue," &c., as Authorised

God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

Here we have the reason of giving the foregoing exhortation, and that with so much diligence and seriousness. These things are not idle tales, or a vain thing, but of undoubted truth and vast concern. The Gospel is not a "cunningly devised fable." These are not the words of one that hath a devil, or the contrivance of any number of men, who, by cunning craftiness, endeavour to deceive. The way of salvation by Jesus Christ is eminently the counsel of God, the most excellent contrivance of the infinitely-wise Jehovah; it was he invented this way of saving sinners by Jesus Christ, whose power and coming are set forth in the Gospel, and the apostle's preaching was a making these things known.

First. The preaching of the Gospel is a making known the power of Christ, that he is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him. He is the mighty God, and therefore can save from both the guilt and filth of sin.

Secondly. The coming of Christ also is made known by the preaching of the Gospel. He that was promised immediately after the fall of man, as in the fulness of time to be born of a woman, is now come in the flesh, and whosoever denies this is an antichrist, *1 Jno. iv. 3*; he is actuated and influenced by the spirit of antichrist; but those who are the true apostles and ministers of Christ, and are directed and guided by the Spirit of Christ, they evidence that Christ is come according to the promise, which all the Old Testament believers died in the faith of. *Heb. xi. 39* Christ is come in the flesh; inasmuch as those whom he undertakes to save are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself also took part of the same, that he might suffer in their nature and stead, and thereby make an atonement. This coming of Christ the Gospel is very plain and circumstantial in setting forth. But there is a second coming, which it likewise mentions, which the ministers of the Gospel ought also to make known, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels, for he is appointed to be Judge both of quick and dead. He will come to judge the world in righteousness by the everlasting Gospel, and call us all to give account of all things done in the body, whether good or evil.

Thirdly. Though this Gospel of Christ has been blasphemously called a fable by one of those wretches who call themselves the successors of St. Peter, (see on *Rev. ix. 21*), yet our apostle proves that it is of the greatest certainty and reality, inasmuch as during our blessed Saviour's abode here on earth, when he took on him the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man, he sometimes manifested himself to be God, and particularly to our apostle and the two sons of Zebedee, who were eyewitnesses of his Divine majesty, when "he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them." This Peter, James, and John were eyewitnesses of, and therefore might and ought to attest it; and surely their testimony is true, and therefore might what they have seen with their eyes, yea, and heard with their ears; for, besides the visible glory that Christ was vested with here on earth, there was an audible voice from heaven. Where observe,

1. What a gracious declaration was made: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" the best voice that ever came from heaven to earth,—God is well pleased with Christ, and with us in him. This is the Messiah that was promised, through whom all who believe in him shall be accepted and saved.

2. This declaration is made by God the Father, who thus publicly owns his Son, even in his state of humiliation, when he was in the form of a servant; yea, proclaims him to be his beloved Son when he was in that low condition; yea, so far as Christ's mean and low circumstances from abating the love of the Father to him, that his laying down his life is said to be one special reason of the Father's love, *Jno. x. 17*.

3. The design of this voice is to do our Saviour a singular honour while he was here below. "He received honour and glory from God the Father." This is the person whom God delights to honour. As he requires us to give honour and glory to his Son by confessing him to be our Saviour, so does he give glory and honour to our Saviour by declaring him to be his Son.

4. This voice is from heaven, called here the excellent glory, which still reflects a greater glory upon our blessed Saviour. This declaration is from God, the fountain of honour, and from heaven, the seat of glory, where God is most gloriously present.

5. This voice was heard, and that so as to be understood by Peter, James, and John. They not only heard a sound, as the people did, *Jno. xii. 28, 29*, but they understood the sense. God opens the ears and understandings of his people to receive what they are concerned to know, when others are like Paul's companions, who only heard a sound of words, *Acts ix. 7*, but understood not the meaning thereof, and therefore are said not to hear the voice of him that spake, *Acts xxii. 9*. Blessed are those who not only hear, but understand; who believe the truth, and feel the power of the voice from heaven, as he did who testified these things; and we have all the reason in the world to receive his testimony; for who would refuse to give credit to what is so circumstantially laid down as this account of the voice from heaven, of which the apostle tells us.

6. That it was heard by them in the holy mount when they were with Jesus. The place wherein God affords any peculiarly gracious manifestation of himself is thereby made holy, not with an inherent holiness, but as the ground was holy where God appeared to Moses, *Ex. iii. 5*, and the mountain holy on which the temple was built, *Ps. lxxxvii. 1*. Such places are relatively holy, and to be regarded as such, during the time that men do in themselves experience, or may, by warrant from the word, believingly expect the special presence and gracious influence of the holy and glorious God.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Version: "There is more than a mere enumeration of these Divine graces; there is also implied how naturally they rise one out of another, and that they have a causal dependence one of another" (H. More). "Each present step prepares and makes easy the following; the following qualifies and completes the preceding" (Bengel). "Knowledge:" see *Eph. v. 17*.

i. 6. "Temperance:" i.e., "self-government." "Patience:" or, "patient endurance."

In these words the apostle lays down another argument to prove the truth and reality of the Gospel, and intimates that this second proof is more strong and convincing than the former, and does more unanswerably make out that the doctrine of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is not a mere fable, or cunning contrivance of men, but the wise and wonderful counsel of the holy and gracious God. For this is foretold by the prophets and penmen of the Old Testament, who spake and wrote under the influence, and according to the direction, of the Spirit of God. Here note,

First. The description that is given of the Scriptures of the Old Testament; they are called "a more sure word of prophecy."

It is a prophetic declaration of the power and coming, the Godhead and incarnation of our Saviour, which we have in the Old Testament. It is there foretold that "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." His power to destroy the devil and his works, and his being made of a woman, are there foretold; and the great and awful Old Testament name of God, Jehovah, as read by some, signifies only "he will be;" and that name of God, *Ex. iii. 14*, is rendered by many, "I will be that I will be;" and, thus understood, they point at God's being incarnate in order to the redemption and salvation of his people as what was to come. But the New Testament is a history of that whereof the Old Testament is a prophecy; "All the prophets and the law prophesied until John," *Mat. xi. 13*. And the evangelists and apostles have written the history of what was before delivered as prophecy. Now the accomplishment of the Old Testament by the New, and the agreeableness of the New Testament to the Old, is a full demonstration of the truth of both. Read the Old Testament as a prophecy of Christ, and with diligence and thankfulness use the New as the best exposition of the Old.

2. The Old Testament is "a more sure word of prophecy." It is so to the Jews, who received it as the oracles of God. Following prophets confirmed what had been delivered by those who went before; and these prophecies had been written by the express command, and preserved by the special care, and many of them fulfilled by the wonderful providence of God, and therefore were more certain to them who had all along received and read the Scriptures than the apostle's account of this voice from heaven. Moses and the prophets do more powerfully persuade than even miracles themselves, *Lu. xvi. 31*. How firm and sure should our faith be, who have such a firm and sure word to rest upon! All the prophecies of the Old Testament are more sure and certain to us, who have the history of the exact and most minute accomplishment of them.

Secondly. The encouragement the apostle gives us to search the Scriptures. He tells us we do well if we take heed to them; that is, apply our minds to understand the sense, and our hearts to believe, the truth, of this sure word; yea, to bend ourselves to it, that we may be moulded and fashioned by it. The word is that form of doctrine into which we must be cast, *Rom. vi. 17*; that formulary of knowledge, *Rom. ii. 20*, by which we are to regulate our thoughts and sentiments, our words and confessions, our whole life and conversation. If we thus apply ourselves to the word of God, we certainly do well in all respects what is pleasing to God and profitable to ourselves, and is indeed but a paying that regard which is due to the oracles of God. But in order to this giving heed to the word, the apostle suggests some things that are of singular use to those who would attend to the Scriptures to any good purpose.

1. They must account and use the Scripture as a light which God has sent into, and set up in, the world, to dispel that darkness which is upon the face of the whole earth. The word is a lamp to the feet of those who use it aright; this discovers the way wherein men ought to walk; this is the means whereby we come to know the way of life.

2. They must acknowledge their own darkness. This world is a place of error and ignorance, and every man in the world is naturally without that knowledge which is necessary in order to attain eternal life.

3. If ever men are made wise to salvation, it is by the shining of the word of God into their hearts. Natural notions of God are not sufficient for fallen man, who does at best actually know a great deal less, and yet does absolutely need to know a great deal more, of God than Adam did while he continued innocent.

4. When the light of the Scripture is darted into the blind mind and dark understanding by the Holy Spirit of God, then the spiritual day does dawn, and the day-star does arise in that soul. This enlightening of a dark, benighted mind is like the daybreak that improves and advances, spreads and diffuses itself through the whole soul, till it makes perfect day, *Ps. iv. 18*. It is a growing knowledge; they who are thus way enlightened never think they know enough, till they come to know as they are known. To give heed to this light must needs be the interest and duty of all, and all that do truth come to this light, while evil-doers keep at a distance from it.

5. It may apply also to the progress of truth in the world as well as in the hearts of individuals. The period referred to here by the approaching day that is to diffuse the light may be when the Saviour shall return in the full revelation of his glory—the splendour of his kingdom. Then all will be clear. Till that time we should search the prophetic records, and seek to strengthen our faith, and we comfort our hearts, by the predictions of the future glory of his reign. Whether this refers, as some suppose, to his reign on earth, either personally or by the principles of his religion universally prevailing,—or, as others suppose, to the brighter revelations of heaven when he shall come to receive his people to himself,—it is equally clear that a brighter time than any that has yet occurred is to dawn on our race, and equally true that we should regard the prophecies, as we do the morning star, as the cheering harbinger of day.

Thirdly. The apostle lays down one thing as previously necessary in order to our giving heed to, and getting good by, the Scriptures, and that is, the knowing that all prophecy is of Divine original. Now this important truth he not only asserts, but proves.

1. Observe that no Scripture prophecy is of "private interpretation," or a man's own proper opinion, an explication of his own mind, but the revelation of the mind of God. This was the difference between the prophets of the Lord and the false prophets who have been in the world. The prophets of the Lord did not speak or do any thing of their own mind, as Moses, the chief of them, says expressly, *Num. xvi. 28*, "I have not done any of the works" (nor delivered any of the statutes and ordinances) "of my own mind." But false prophets "speak a vision of their own heart, not out of the mouth of the Lord," *Jer. xxiii. 16*. The prophets and penmen of the Scripture spake and wrote what was the mind of God; and though, when under the influence and guidance of the Spirit, it may well be supposed that they were willing to reveal and record such things, yet it is because God would have them spoken and written. But though the Scripture be not the effusions of man's own private opinion or inclination, but the revelation of the mind and will of God, yet every private man ought to search it, and come to understand the sense and meaning thereof.

2. This important truth of the Divine original of the Scriptures, that what is contained in them is the mind of God and not of man, is to be known and owned by all that will give heed to the sure word of prophecy. That the

i. 8, 9. Reasons for the above exhortations—(1) the good result of these graces; (2) the evil result of their absence. Not "in the knowledge" but "towards the knowledge." "These virtues are all regarded as so many steps in advancing towards the knowledge of Christ, which is the great complex end of the Christian life" (Alford).

i. 10, 11. The exhortations are further pressed on account of the blessed results which will hereafter follow their acceptance. "To make your calling," &c.: the Greek is in the middle voice, signifying,

Scriptures are the word of God is not only an article of the true Christian's faith, but it is also matter of science or knowledge. As a man doth not barely believe, but know assuredly, that that very person is his particular friend in whom he sees all the proper, peculiar, distinguishing marks and characters of his friend—so the Christian knows that book to be the word of God, in and upon which he sees all the proper marks and characters of a divinely inspired book. He tastes a sweetness, and feels a power, and sees a glory in it truly Divine.

3. The Divinity of the Scriptures must be known and acknowledged, in the first place, before men can profitably use them, before they can give good heed to them. To call off our minds from all other writings, and apply them in a peculiar manner to these as the only certain and infallible rule, does necessarily require our being fully persuaded that these are Divinely inspired, and contain what is truly the mind and will of God. Now, seeing it is so absolutely necessary that persons be fully persuaded of the Scripture's Divine original, the apostle (ver. 21) tells us how the Old Testament came to be compiled, and that, 1st. Negatively, "It came not by the will of man." Neither the things themselves that are recorded, and make up the several parts of the Old Testament, are the opinions of men, nor was the will of any of the prophets or penmen of the Scriptures the rule or reason why any of those things were written which make up the canon of Scripture. 2nd. Affirmatively: "Holy men of God spake as moved by the Holy Ghost." Observe, *First*. They were "holy men of God," who were employed about that book which we receive as the word of God. If Balaam and Caiaphas, and others, who were destitute of holiness, had any thing of the spirit of prophecy upon occasion, yet such sort of persons were not employed to write any part of the Scriptures for the use of the church of God. All the penmen of the Scriptures were holy men of God. *Secondly*. These holy men were "moved by the Holy Ghost" in what they delivered as the mind and will of God. The Holy Ghost is the supreme agent, the holy men are but instruments. 1st. The Holy Ghost inspires and dictates to them what they were to deliver of the mind of God. 2nd. He powerfully excites and effectually engages them to speak and write what he had put into their mouths. 3rd. He does so wisely and carefully assist and direct them in the delivery of what they had received from him, that they were effectually secured from any the least mistake in expressing what they revealed. So that the very words of Scripture are to be accounted the words of the Holy Ghost; and all the plainness and simplicity, all the power and virtue, and all the elegance and propriety of the very words and expressions, are to be regarded by us as proceeding from God. Mix faith, therefore, with what you find in the Scriptures; esteem and reverence your Bible as a book written by holy men,—inspired, influenced, and assisted by the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER II.

The apostle having, in the foregoing chapter, exhorted them to proceed and advance in the Christian race, he now comes to remove, as much as in him lay, what he could not but apprehend would hinder their complying with his exhortation. He therefore gives them fair warning of false teachers, by whom they might be in danger of being seduced. To prevent this, I. He describes these seducers as impious in themselves, and very pernicious to others, ver. 1—3. II. He assures them of the punishment that shall be inflicted on them, ver. 4—6. III. He tells us how contrary the method is which God takes with those who fear him, ver. 7—9. IV. He fills up the rest of the chapter with a farther description of those seducers of whom he would have them beware.



BUT there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious

ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you:

In the end of the former chapter there is mention made of "holy men of God," that lived in the times of the Old Testament, and were used as the amanuenses of the Holy Ghost, in writing the sacred oracles; but in the beginning of this he tells us they had, even in that time, false prophets in the church as well is true.

First. In all ages of the church, and under all dispensations, when God sends true prophets, the devil sends some to seduce and deceive; false prophets in the Old Testament, and false Christs, and false apostles, and seducing teachers, in the New. Concerning these observe, 1. Their business is to bring in destructive errors, even "damnable heresies," as the business of teachers sent of God is to shew the way of truth, even the true way to everlasting life. There are damnable heresies as well as damnable practices; and false teachers are industrious to spread pernicious errors. 2. Damnable heresies are commonly brought in privily, under the cloak and colour of truth. They who introduce destructive heresies "deny the Lord that bought them." They reject and refuse to hear and learn of the great Teacher sent from God, though he is the only Saviour and Redeemer of men, who paid a price sufficient to redeem as many worlds of sinners as there are sinners in the world. 4. They who bring in errors destructive to others, bring "swift," and therefore sure, "destruction" upon themselves. Self-destroyers are soon destroyed; and those who are so hardened as to propagate errors destructive to others shall surely and suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Secondly. He proceeds in the second verse to tell us the consequence with respect to others; and here we may learn, 1. Corrupt leaders seldom fail of many to follow them: though the way of error is a pernicious way, yet many are ready to walk therein. Men drink in iniquity like water, and are pleased to live in error. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the people love to have it so." 2. The spreading of error will bring up an evil report on the way of truth; that is, the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life." Christian religion is from the God of truth as the author,

and leads to true happiness in the enjoyment of the true God as the end, and works truth in the inward part as the means of acceptably serving God; and yet this way of truth is traduced and blasphemed by those who embrace and advance destructive errors. This the apostle has foretold as that should certainly come to pass. Let us not be offended at any thing of this in our day, but take care that we give no occasion to the enemy to blaspheme the holy name whereby we are called, or speak evil of that way whereby we hope to be saved.

Thirdly. Observe, in the next place, the method seducers take to draw disciples after them. They use feigned words—they flatter; and, by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple, inducing them to give in entirely into the opinions which these seducers endeavour to propagate, and sell and deliver themselves over to the instruction and government of these false teachers, who make a gain of them whom they make their proselytes, serving themselves and making some advantage of them; for all this is through covetousness, with a desire and design to get more wealth, or credit, or commendation, by increasing the number of their followers. The faithful ministers of Christ, who shew men the way of truth, desire the profit and advantage of their followers, that they may be saved; but these seducing teachers desire and design only their own temporal advantage and worldly grandeur.

— Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. 4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; 5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

Men are apt to think that a reprieve is the forerunner of a pardon; and if judgment be not speedily executed, it is, or will be, certainly reversed. But the apostle tells us, that how successful and prosperous soever false teachers may be, and that for a time, yet their judgment lingereth not. God hath determined long ago how he will deal with them. Such unbelievers who endeavour to turn others from the faith, are condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on them. The righteous Judge will speedily take vengeance; the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. [Mr. Blackwell observes that this is a most beautiful figure, representing the vengeance that shall destroy such incorrigible sinners as an angel of judgment pursuing them on the wing, continually approaching nearer and nearer, and in the mean time keeping a watchful eye upon them, that he may at length discharge an unerring blow.—Doddridge.] To prove this assertion, here are several examples of the righteous judgment of God in taking vengeance on sinners proposed to our serious consideration.

First. See how God dealt with the angels that sinned. Observe, 1. No excellency will exempt a sinner from punishment. If the angels, who excel us vastly in strength and knowledge, violate the law of God, the sentence which that law does award shall be executed upon them, and that without mercy or mitigation, for God did not spare them. Whence observe, 2. By how much the more excellent the offender, by so much the more severe the punishment. These angels, who had the advantage of men as to the dignity of their nature, are immediately punished. There is no sparing them for a few days, no favour at all shewn them. 3. Sin does debase and degrade the persons who commit it. The angels of heaven are cast down from the height of their excellency, and divested of all their glory and dignity, upon their disobedience. Whoever sins against God does a manifest hurt to himself. 4. They that rebel against the God of heaven shall all be sent down to hell. There is no place or state between the height of glory and the depth of misery in which they shall be allowed to rest. If creatures sin in heaven, they must suffer in hell. 5. Sin is the work of darkness, and darkness is the wages of sin. The darkness of misery and torment follows the darkness of sin. They who will not walk according to the light and direction of God's law shall be deprived of the light of God's countenance, and the comforts of his presence. 6. As sin binds men over to punishment, so misery and torment hold men under punishment. The darkness which is their misery keeps them so as that they cannot get away from their torment. 7. The last degree of torment is not till the day of judgment. The sinning angels, though in hell already, yet are reserved to the judgment of the great day.

Secondly. See how God dealt with the old world, even in much the same way that he dealt with the angels. He spared not the old world. Here observe, 1. The number of offenders signifies no more to procure any favour than the quality. If the sin be universal, the punishment shall likewise extend to all. But, 2. If there be but a few righteous, they shall be preserved. God does not destroy the good with the bad. He doth in wrath remember mercy. 3. They who are preachers of righteousness in an age of universal corruption and degeneracy, holding forth the word of life in an unblameable and exemplary conversation, shall be preserved in a time of general destruction. 4. God can make use of those creatures as the instruments of his vengeance in punishing sinners which he at first made and appointed for their service and benefit. He destroyed the whole world by water. But observe, 5. What is the procuring cause of this,—it was a world of ungodly men. Ungodliness puts men out of Divine protection, and exposes them to utter destruction.

Thirdly. See how God dealt with Sodom and Gomorrah. Though they were situated in a country like the garden of the Lord, yet if in such a fruitful soil they shall abound in sin, God can soon turn a fruitful land into barrenness, and a well-watered country into dust and ashes. Observe, 1. No political union or confederacy can keep off judgments from a sinful people. Sodom, and the neighbouring cities, were no more secured by their regular government than the angels by the dignity of their nature, or the old world by their vast number. 2. God can make use of contrary creatures to punish incorrigible sinners. He destroys the old world by water, and Sodom by fire. He that keeps fire and water from hurting his people, *Isa. xlii. 2.* can make either to destroy his enemies, therefore they are never safe. 3. Most heinous sins bring most grievous judgments. They who are abominable in their vices were remarkable for their plagues. They who are sinners exceedingly before the Lord must expect the most dreadful vengeance. 4. The punishment of sinners in former ages is designed for the example of those who come after, not only in the time of

therefore, "to make for your part," or "on your side," "as far as depends on you." To make absolutely and finally is God's only. "Ministered;" rather, "furnished;" the same word as in verse 5, where it is rendered "add to." "Furnish forth your own lives with these Christian graces, so shall be furnished to you," &c. (Alford).

i. 14. "Shortly;" better, "swift is the putting off," &c., referring to the manner, not time of his death. Christ had foretold the one, not

the other (John xxi. 18, 19). Death would come to the apostle at once, not by failing health or long sickness; therefore he must not trust to the effect of a dying appeal to strengthen their faith and knowledge.

i. 16—18. The apostle recalls the wonders of the transfiguration which he, James, and John witnessed, to confirm their faith in the Lord's power and glory (Matt. xvii. 1—7).

i. 19. The apparent meaning of the Authorised Version, that the

living, but follow them in their course and way of living. Men who live ungodly must see what they are to expect if they go on still in a course of impiety. Let us take warning by all the instances of God's taking vengeance, which are recorded for our admonition, and to prevent our promising ourselves impunity, though we go on in a course of sin.

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) 9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

When God sends destruction on the ungodly he commands deliverance for the righteous; and if he rain fire and brimstone on the wicked, he will cover the head of the just, and they shall be hid in the day of his anger. This we have an instance of in his preserving Lot. Where observe,

First. The character given of Lot. He is called a just man. This he was as to the generally prevailing bent of his heart, and through the main of his conversation. God does not account men just or unjust from one single act, but from the general course of life. And here is a just man in the midst of a most corrupt and profligate generation, universally gone off from all good. He does not follow the multitude to do evil, but in a city of injustice he walks uprightly.

Secondly. The impression the sins of others have upon this righteous man. Though the sinner takes pleasure in his wickedness, it is grief and vexation to the soul of the righteous. In bad company we cannot escape either guilt or grief. Let the sins of others be a trouble to us, otherwise it will not be possible for us to keep ourselves pure.

Thirdly. Here is particular mention of the duration and continuance of this good man's grief and vexation; it was "from day to day." Being accustomed to see and hear their wickedness did not reconcile him to it, nor abate the horror that was occasioned by it. This is the righteous man that God preserved from the desolating judgment that destroyed all round about him. And from this instance we are taught to argue that God knows how to deliver his people, and punish his enemies. It is here presupposed that the righteous must have their temptations and trials. The devil and his instruments will thrust sore at them, that they may fall; and if we will get to heaven, it must be through many tribulations: it is then our duty to reckon upon and prepare for them. Observe here, 1. The Lord knows them that are his. He has set apart him that is godly for himself, and if there is but one in five cities, he knows him; and where there is a greater number he cannot be ignorant, or overlook any one of them. 2. The wisdom of God is never at a loss about ways and means to deliver his people. They are often utterly at a loss, and can see no way; he can discover a great many. 3. The deliverance of the godly is the work of God; that which he concerns himself in, both his wisdom to contrive the way, and his power to work out the deliverance out of temptation, to prevent their falling into sin, and their being ruined by their troubles. And surely, if he can deliver out of temptation, he can keep from falling into it, if he did not see such trials to be necessary. 4. God makes a very great difference in his dealings with the godly and the wicked. When he saves his people from destruction he delivers over his enemies to deserved ruin. The unjust has no share in the salvation God works out for the righteous. The wicked are reserved to the day of judgment. Here we see, 1st. There is a day of judgment. God has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world. 2nd. The preservation of impenitent sinners is only a reserving them to the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. 12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; 13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; 14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: 15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.

written word of God, the "word of prophecy," is more sure than the voice of God from heaven, must be erroneous. The most probable interpretation of "a more sure word," &c., or, rather, as the Greek, "the word of prophecy more sure," is that the apostle means that the word of prophecy is to him and his fellow-believers more sure since the manifestation and recognition of Christ's glory on the mount (Psa. ii. 7), which was a fulfilment of prophecy. Of the latter part of this verse, the rendering of Tregelles seems best:

17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. 18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. 20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

The apostle's design being to warn us of, and arm us against, seducers, he now returns to discourse more particularly of them, and give us an account of their character and conduct, which does abundantly justify the righteous Judge of the world in reserving them in an especial manner for the most severe and heavy doom,—as Cain is taken under special protection, that he might be kept for uncommon vengeance. But why will God deal thus with these false teachers? This he shews in what follows:—

First. These "walk after the flesh;" they follow the devices and desires of their own hearts. They give up themselves to the conduct of their own fleshly mind, refusing to make their reason stoop to Divine revelation, and bring every thought to the obedience of Christ; they in their lives act directly contrary to God's righteous precepts, and comply with the demands of corrupt nature. Evil opinions are often accompanied with evil practices; and they who are for propagating error are for improving in wickedness. They will not sit down contented in the measure of iniquity to which they have attained, nor is it enough for them to stand up, and maintain, and defend what wickedness they have already committed; but they walk after the flesh, they go on in their sinful course, and increase unto more ungodliness, and greater degrees of impurity and uncleanness too. They also pour contempt on those whom God has set in authority over them, and requires them to honour; these, therefore, despise the ordinance of God; and we need not wonder at it, for they are bold and daring, obstinate and refractory, and will not only in their hearts despise, but with their tongues will utter slanderous and reproachful words of those who are set over them.

Secondly. This he aggravates by setting forth the very different conduct of more excellent creatures, even the angels. Of whom observe, 1. They are greater in power and might, and that even than those who are clothed with authority and power among the sons of men, and much more than those false teachers who are slanderous revilers of magistrates and governors. The good angels vastly excel us in all natural and moral excellencies,—in strength, understanding, and holiness too. 2. Good angels are accusers of sinful creatures, either of their own kind or ours, or both. They who are allowed to behold the face of God, and stand before his throne, cannot but have a zeal for his honour, and accuse and blame those who dishonour him. 3. Angels bring their accusations of sinful creatures before the Lord. They do not publish their faults and tell their crimes to their fellow-creatures in a way of calumny and slander, but it is before the Lord, who is the Judge, and will be the Avenger of all impiety and injustice. 4. The good angels mingle no bitter revilings, or base reproaches, with any of their accusations or charges they bring against the wickedest and worst of criminals. Let us, who pray that God's will may be done "on earth as it is in heaven," imitate the angels in this particular. If we complain of wicked men, let it be to God, and that not with rage and reviling, but with compassion and composure of mind, that they may evidence that we belong to Him who is meek and merciful.

Thirdly. The apostle, having shewn in the 11th verse how unlike seducing teachers are to the most excellent creatures, proceeds, ver. 12, to shew how like they are to the most inferior. They are like the horse and mule, which have no understanding; they are as natural brute beasts, "made to be taken and destroyed." Men, under the power of sin, are so far from observing Divine revelation, that they do not exercise reason, or act according to the direction thereof: they walk by sight, and not by faith, and judge of things according to their senses; as they represent things pleasant and agreeable, so they must be approved and esteemed. Brute creatures follow the instinct of their sensitive appetite, and sinful man follows the inclination of his carnal mind. These refuse to employ the understanding and reason God has given them, and so are ignorant of what they might and ought to know. And therefore observe,

1. Ignorance is the cause of evil speaking. And, 2. Destruction will be the effect of it. These persons shall be utterly destroyed in their own corruption. Their vices not only expose them to the wrath of God in another world, but many times bring them to misery and ruin in this life. And surely such sort of impudent offenders, who glory in their shame, and to whom openness in sin is an improvement of the pleasure of sinning, do most justly deserve all the plagues of this life and the pains of the next in the greatest extremity; therefore whatever they meet with is the just reward of their unrighteousness. Such sinners, who sport themselves in mischief, deceive themselves, and disgrace all they belong to; for by one sort of sins they prepare themselves for another; and their extravagant feastings, their intemperance in eating and drinking, bring them to commit all manner of lewdness, so that their eyes are "full of adultery." Their wanton looks shew their own impure lusts, and are designed and directed to enkindle the

"Whereunto ye do well to take heed (as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day have dawned and the morning star arisen) in your hearts." For, as Fausset remarks, the day has already dawned in the heart of believers; they only wait for its visible manifestation at Christ's coming.

i. 20, 21. "Private" in verse 20 is explained "by the will of man" in verse 21. The prophets themselves could not always fully interpret the prophecies they spoke, because they spoke not of

like in others; and this is what they cannot cease from. The heart is insatiate in lusting, and the eye incessant in looking after what may gratify their unclean desires. And they who are themselves impudent and incessant in sin are very diligent, and often successful, in deceiving others, and drawing others into the same excess of riot. But here observe who they are who are in the greatest danger of being led away into error and impiety, even the unstable. Those whose hearts are not established with grace are easily turned into the way of sin, or else such sort of sensual wretches will not be able to prevail upon them; for these are not only riotous and lascivious, but covetous also; and these kind of practices their hearts are exercised with. They pant after riches, and the desire of their souls is to the wealth of this world. It is a considerable part of their work to contrive to get wealth; in this their hearts are exercised, and then they execute their projects. And if men abandon themselves to all sorts of lusts we cannot wonder that the apostle should call them "cursed children;" for they are liable to the curse of God denounced against such ungodly, unrighteous men, and they bring a curse upon all that hearken and adhere to them.

Fourthly. The apostle, ver. 15, 16, proves that they are cursed children, even such covetous persons as the Lord abhors, by shewing,

1. They have "forsaken the right way," and it cannot be but such self-seekers must be out of the right way, which is a self-denying way.

2. They are gone into a wrong way; they have erred and strayed from the way of life, and gone over into the path which leads to death, and takes hold of hell; and this he makes out by shewing it to be "the way of Balaam the son of Bosor." 1st. That is a way of unrighteousness into which men are led by the wages of unrighteousness. 2nd. Outward temporal good things are the wages sinners expect and promise themselves, though they are often disappointed. 3rd. The inordinate love of the good things of this world turns men out of the way which leads to the unspeakably better things of another life. Love of riches and honour turned Balaam out of the way of his duty, although he knew that the way he took displeased the Lord. 4th. They who from the same principle are guilty of the same practices with notorious sinners, are, in the judgment of God, the followers of such vile offenders, and therefore must reckon upon being at last where they are. They shall have their portion with those in another world whom they imitated in this. 5th. Heinous and hardened sinners do sometimes meet with rebukes for their iniquity. God stops them in their way, and does open the mouth of conscience, or by some startling providence startle and affright them. 6th. Though some more uncommon and extraordinary rebukes may for a little while cool men's courage, and hinder their violent progress in the way of sin, it will not make them forsake the way of iniquity, and go over into the way of holiness. If rebuking a sinner for his iniquity would have made a man return to his duty, surely the rebuke of Balaam must have produced this effect; for here was a surprising miracle wrought. The dumb ass, in whose mouth no man can expect to meet with reproof, is enabled to speak, and that with a human voice, and to her owner and master, who is here called a prophet, for the Lord appeared, and spake sometimes to him, *Num. xxii. 23, 24*. But indeed he was among the prophets of the Lord as Judas among the apostles of Christ. And she exposes the madness of his conduct, and opposes his going on in this evil way, and yet all in vain. They who will not yield to usual methods of reproof will be but little influenced by miraculous appearances to turn them from their sinful courses. He is indeed restrained from actually cursing the people, but he had so strong a desire after the honours and riches that were promised him, that he went as far as he could, and did his uttermost to get from under the restraint that was upon him.

Fifthly. The apostle proceeds in the 17th verse to a farther description of seducing teachers, whom he sets forth as "wells" or fountains "without water." Observe,

1. Ministers should be as wells or fountains where the people may find instruction, direction, and comfort. But,

2. False teachers have nothing of this to impart to those who consult them. The word of truth is the water of life, which refreshes the souls that receive it; but these deceivers are set upon spreading and promoting error, and therefore are set forth as empty, because there is no truth in them. In vain, then, are all our expectations of being fed and filled with knowledge and understanding by those who are themselves ignorant and empty. They are also "clouds carried with a tempest." When we see a cloud we expect a refreshing shower from it; but these are clouds which yield no rain, for they are driven with the wind, but not of the Spirit, but the stormy wind or tempest of their own ambition and covetousness. They espouse and spread those opinions that will procure most applause and advantage to themselves. And as clouds obstruct the light of the sun, and darken the air, so do these darken counsel by words without knowledge, and wherein there is no truth. And seeing these men are for promoting darkness in this world, it is very just that the mist of darkness should be their portion in the next. Utter darkness was prepared for the devil, the great deceiver, and his angels, those instruments that he uses to turn men away from the truth; and therefore for them it is reserved, and that for ever. The fire of hell is everlasting, and the smoke of the bottomless pit riseth up for ever and ever. And it is just with God to deal thus with them, because, 1st. They allure those they deal with, and draw them into a net, or catch them as men do fish. And, 2nd. It is with "great swelling words of vanity," lofty expressions, which have a great sound, but little sense. 3rd. They work upon the corrupt affections and carnal fleshly lusts of men, proposing what is grateful to them. And, 4th. They seduce persons who in reality avoided and kept at a distance from those who spread and those who embraced hurtful and destructive errors. Observe, *First*. By application and industry men attain a skillfulness and dexterity in promoting error; they are as artful and as successful as the fisher that makes angling his daily employment. The business of these men is to draw disciples after them, and in their methods and management there are some things worth observing, how they suit their bait to those they desire to catch. *Secondly*. Erroneous teachers have a peculiar advantage to win men over to them, because they have sensual pleasures to take them with; whereas the ministers of Christ put men upon self-denial, and the mortifying of those lusts that others gratify and please. Wonder not, therefore, that truth prevails no more, or that errors spread so much. *Thirdly*. Persons who have for awhile adhered to the truth, and kept clear of errors, may, by the subtlety and industry of seducers, be so far deceived as to fall into these errors they had for awhile clean escaped. Be therefore always upon your guard, maintain a godly jealousy of yourselves, search the Scriptures, pray for the Spirit to instruct and establish you in the truth, walk humbly with God, and watch against every thing that may provoke him to give you up to a reprobate mind, "that you may not be taken with the fair and specious pretences of these false teachers, who promise liberty to all that will hearken to them, but not true Christian liberty for the service of God, but a licentiousness in sin, to follow the devices and desires of their own hearts. To prevent these men's gaining proselytes, he tells us that, in the midst of all their talk of liberty, they themselves are the vilest slaves, for they are the servants of corruption. Their own lusts have gotten a complete victory over them, and they are actually in bondage to them, making provision for the flesh to satisfy its cravings, and comply with its directions, and obey its commands.

Their minds and hearts are so far corrupted and depraved that they have neither power nor will to refuse the task that is imposed on them. They are conquered and captivated by their spiritual enemies, and yield their members servants of unrighteousness. And what a shame is it to be overcome and commanded by those who are themselves the servants of corruption and slaves to their own lusts! This consideration should prevent our being led away by these seducers. And to this he adds another, ver. 20; it is not only a shame and disgrace to be seduced by those who are themselves the slaves of sin, and led captive by the devil at his pleasure, but it is a real detriment to those who have clean escaped from them who live in error, for hereby "their latter end is made worse than their beginning." Here we see, 1st. It is an advantage to escape the pollutions of the world, to be kept from gross and scandalous sins, though men are not thoroughly converted, and savingly changed; for hereby we are kept from grieving those who are truly serious, and emboldening those who are openly profane. Whereas, if we run with others to the same excess of riot, and abandon ourselves to the sins of the age, we afflict and dishearten those who endeavour to walk as becomes the Gospel, and strengthen the hands of those who are already engaged in open rebellion against the Most High, as well as alienate ourselves more from God, and harden our hearts against him. 2nd. Some men are for a time kept from the pollutions of the world by the knowledge of Christ, who are not savingly renewed in the spirit of their mind. A religious education has restrained many whom the grace of God has not renewed. If we receive the light of the truth, and have a notional knowledge of Christ in our head, it may be of some present service to us; but we must receive the love of the truth, and hide God's word in our hearts, or it will not sanctify and save us. 3rd. Those who have for a time escaped the pollutions of the world are at first ensnared and entangled by false teachers. They first perplex men with some plausible and specious objections against the truths of the Gospel, and the more ignorant and unstable are hereby made to stagger, and brought to question the truth of doctrines they have received, because they cannot solve all the difficulties, nor answer all the objections, that are urged by these seducers. 4th. When men are once entangled they are easily overcome; therefore should Christians keep close to the word of God, and watch against those who seek to perplex and bewilder them; and that because, if men that have once escaped "are again entangled, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."

Sixthly. The apostle does in the last two verses of the chapter set himself to prove that a state of apostasy is worse than a state of ignorance; for this is a condemning the way of righteousness after they have had some knowledge of it, and expressed some liking to it. This carries in it a declaring that they have found some iniquity in the way of righteousness, and some falsehood in the word of truth. Now to bring up such an evil report upon the good way of God, and such a false charge against the way of truth, must necessarily expose to the heaviest condemnation. The misery of such deserters of Christ and his Gospel is more unavoidable and more intolerable than that of other offenders; for, 1. God is more highly provoked by them who do by their conduct despise the Gospel, as well as disobey the law, and do reproach and pour contempt upon God and his grace. 2. The devil does more narrowly watch, and more closely confine, those whom he has recovered, after they had once gone off from him, and professed to be the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, *Mat. xii. 45*. They are kept under a stronger guard; and no wonder it should be so, when they have licked up their own vomit again, returning to the same errors and impieties that they had once cast off, and seemed to detest and loathe, and wallow in that filthiness from which they appeared once to be really cleansed. Well, if the Scripture gives such an account of Christianity on the one hand, and of sin on the other, as we have here in these two verses, we certainly ought highly to approve of the former, and persevere therein, because it is a way of righteousness, and a holy commandment; and to loathe and keep at the greatest distance from the latter, because it is set forth as most offensive and abominable.

[This passage is often quoted to prove "the possibility of falling from grace, and from a very high degree of it too." But it is one of the last passages in the Bible that should be adduced to prove that doctrine. The true point of this passage is to shew that the persons referred to never were changed; that whatever external reformation might have occurred, their nature remained the same; and that when they apostatized from their outward profession, they merely acted out their nature, and shewed that in fact there had been no real change. This passage will prove, what there are abundant facts to confirm, that persons may reform externally, and then return again to their former corrupt habits; it can never be made to prove that one true Christian will fall away and perish. It will also prove that we should rely on no mere external reformation, no outward cleansing, as certain evidence of piety. Thousands who have been externally reformed have ultimately shown that they had no religion, and there is nothing in mere outward reformation that can fit us for heaven. God looks upon the heart, and it is only the religion that has its seat there that can secure our final salvation.]

CHAPTER III.

I. The apostle, drawing towards the conclusion of his second epistle, begins this last chapter of it with repeating the account of his design and scope in writing a second time to them, ver. 1, 2. II. He proceeds to mention one thing that induced him to write this second epistle, namely, the coming of scoffers, whom he describes, ver. 3-7. III. He instructs and establishes them in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to judgment, ver. 8-10. IV. He sets forth the use and improvement which Christians ought to make of Christ's second coming, and that dissolution and renovation of things which will accompany that solemn coming of our Lord, ver. 11-18.



and Saviour :

HIS second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord

themselves, but through the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Peter i. 10-12). "For prophecy was never (not as Authorised Version, 'in old time') borne (to us) by the will of man, but holy men of God (one MS. reads 'men from God') spoke, being borne along by the Holy Spirit." (See Note on 2 Tim. iii. 16.)

ii. This chapter relates to false teachers, their ungodliness and punishment.

ii. 1. "But:" in contrast to the true prophet's just spoken of. Not

"damnable heresies," as Authorised Version; rather, "heresies of destruction"—i.e., leading to destruction. "Who bought them?" "By the use of this particular predication for Christ here, those heresies seem especially to be aimed at which denied or explained away the virtue of the propitiatory sacrifice of our Lord, by which he has bought us to himself" (Alford). Not "and bring," but "bringing upon themselves," &c.

ii. 2. "Licentious," not "pernicious," as Authorised Version.

That the apostle might the better reach his end in writing this epistle, which is to make them steady and constant in a fiducial and practical remembrance of the doctrine of the Gospel, he,

First, Expresses his special affection and tenderness for them by calling them beloved, hereby evidencing that he added to godliness brotherly kindness, as he had, *ch. i. 7*, exhorted them to do. Ministers must be examples of love and affection, as well as life and conversation.

Secondly, He evidences a sincere love to them, and hearty concern for them, by writing the same thing to them, though in other words. It being safe for them, it shall not be grievous to him to write upon the same subject, and pursue the same design by those methods which are most likely to succeed.

Thirdly, The better to recommend the matter, he tells them that what he would have them to remember are, 1. "The words spoken by the holy prophets," who were Divinely inspired, both enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Ghost; and seeing these persons' minds were purified by the sanctifying operation of the same Spirit, they were the better disposed to receive and retain what came from God by the holy prophets. 2. "The commandments of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour," and therefore the disciples and servants of Christ ought to regard what those, who are sent by him, have declared unto them to be the will of their Lord. What God has spoken by the prophets of the Old Testament, and Christ has commanded by the apostles of the New, cannot but demand and deserve to be frequently remembered; and they who meditate on these things will feel the quickening virtue thereof. It is by these things the pure minds of Christians are to be stirred up, that they may be active and lively in the work of holiness, and zealous and unwearied in the way to heaven.

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

To quicken and excite us to a serious minding and firm adhering to what God has revealed to us by the prophets and apostles, we are told that there will be scoffers, men who will both make a mock of sin and of salvation from it. God's way of saving sinners by Jesus Christ is what men will scoff at, and that in the last days under the Gospel. This indeed may seem very strange, that the New Testament dispensation of the covenant of grace, which is spiritual, and therefore more agreeable to the nature of God than the Old, should be ridiculed and reproached; but the spirituality and simplicity of the New Testament worship is directly contrary to the carnal mind of man. And this accounts for what the apostle seems here to hint at, namely, that scoffers shall be more numerous and more bold in the last days than ever before. Though, in all ages, those who were born and walked after the flesh did persecute, revile, and reproach them who were born and did walk after the Spirit; yet in the last days there will be a great improvement in the art and impudence of bantering serious godliness, and those who firmly adhere to that circumspection and self-denial which the Gospel prescribes. This is what is mentioned as a thing well known to all Christians, and therefore they ought to reckon upon it, that they may not be surprised and shaken, as if some strange thing happened unto them. Now, to prevent the true Christian's being overcome, when attacked by these scoffers, we are told,

First, What sort of persons they are. They "walk after their own lusts;" they follow the devices and desires of their own hearts, and carnal corrupt affections, and not the dictates and directions of right reason and an enlightened, well-informed judgment. This they do in the course of their conversation,—they live as they list, and they speak as they list; it is not only their inward minds that are evil, and opposite to God, as the mind of every unrenewed sinner is, (*Rom. viii. 7*), alienated from God, ignorant of him, and averse to him; but they are grown to such a height of wickedness that they proclaim openly what is in the hearts of others who are yet carnal; they say their tongues are their own, and their strength, and time, and all is their own, and who is Lord over them? Who shall contradict or control them, or ever call them to account for what they say or do? And as they scorn to be confined by any laws of God in their conversation, so neither will they bear that the revelation of God should dictate and prescribe to them what they are to believe. As they will walk in their own way, and talk their own language, so will they also think their own thoughts, and form principles which are altogether their own. Here also their own lusts alone shall be consulted by them. None but such accomplished libertines as are here described can take a seat, at least they cannot sit in the seat of the scornful. By this ye shall know them, that ye may the better be upon your guard against them.

Secondly, We also are foretold how far they will proceed. They will attempt to shake and unsettle us, even as to our belief of Christ's second coming. They will scoffingly say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" *ver. 4*. Without this all the other articles of the Christian faith will signify very little. This is that which fills up and gives the finishing stroke to all the rest. The promised Messiah is come; he was made flesh, and dwelt among us; he is altogether such a one as is stated before, and has done all that for us which has been before taken notice of. These principles the enemies of Christianity have all along endeavoured to overturn; but as these do all rest upon facts which are already past, and of which this and the other apostles have given us the most sure and satisfying evidence, it is probable they will at last grow weary of their opposition to them. And yet, while one very principal article of our faith does refer to what is still behind, and only has a promise to rest upon, here they will still attack us, even to the end of time. Till our Lord is come, they will not themselves believe that he will come; nay, they will laugh at the very mention of his second coming, and do what in them lies to put all out of countenance who do seriously believe and wait for it. Now, therefore, let us see how this point stands, both

on the believer's part, and on the part of these seducers. The believer does not only desire that he may come, but, having a promise that he will come, a promise that he himself has made and oft repeated,—a promise received and reported by faithful witnesses, and left upon sure record,—he is also firmly and fully persuaded that he will come. On the other hand, these seducers, because they wish he never may, therefore do all that in them lies to cheat themselves and others into a persuasion that he never will come. If they cannot deny that there is a promise, yet they will laugh at that very promise, which argues much higher degrees of infidelity and contempt. "Where is the promise," say they, "of his coming?"

Thirdly, We are also forewarned of the method of their reasoning, for while they laugh, they will pretend to argue too. To this purpose they add, that "since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," *ver. 4*. This is a subtle, though not a solid, way of reasoning; it is apt to make impressions upon weak minds, and especially upon wicked hearts. Because sentence against them is not speedily executed, therefore they flatter themselves that it never will; whereupon "their hearts are fully set in them to do evil," *Ecc. viii. 11*. Thus they act themselves, and thus they would persuade others to act. So here, say they, the fathers are fallen asleep, they are all dead to whom the promise was made, and it never was made good in their time, and there is no likelihood that it ever will be in any time.

Why should we trouble ourselves about it? If there had been any truth or certainty in the promise you speak of, we should surely have seen somewhat of it before this time—some signs of his coming, some preparatory steps in order to it; whereas we find to this very day "all things continue as they were," without any change, even "from the beginning of the creation." Since the world has undergone no changes in the course of so many thousand years, why should we fright ourselves as if it were to have an end? Thus do these scoffers argue. "Because they see no changes, therefore they fear not God," *Ps. lv. 19*. They neither fear him nor his judgments; what he never has done, they would conclude he never can, or never will do.

Fourthly, Here is the falsehood of their argument detected: whereas they confidently had said there had not been any change from the beginning of the creation, the apostle puts us in remembrance of a change already past, which, in a manner, does equal that which we are called to expect and look for, which was the drowning of the world in the days of Noah. This these scoffers had overlooked, they took no notice of it; though they might have known it, and ought to have known it, yet "this they willingly are ignorant of," *ver. 5*. They choose to pass it over in silence, as if they had never heard or known any thing of it. If they knew it, they did not like to retain it in their knowledge; they did not receive this truth in the love of it, neither did they care to own it. Note, It is hard to persuade men to believe what they are not willing to find true; they are ignorant in many cases, because they are willing to be ignorant; and they do not know, because they do not care to know. But let not sinners think that such ignorance as this will be admitted as an excuse for whatever sin it may betray them into. They who crucified Christ did not know who he was, for "had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," *1 Cor. ii. 8*. But though ignorant, they were not therefore innocent; their ignorance itself was a sin, willing and wilful ignorance, and one sin can be no excuse for another. So it is here, had these known of the dreadful vengeance with which God swept away a whole world of ungodly wretches at once, they would not surely have scoffed at his threatenings of any after, equally terrible, judgment. But here they were willingly ignorant; they did not know what God had done, because they had no mind to know it. Now, therefore, we shall proceed to consider the representation which the apostle here lays down, both of the destruction of the old world by water, and that which does await this present world at the final conflagration. He mentions the one as what God has done, to convince and persuade us the rather to believe that the other both may be and will be. And,

1. We begin with the apostle's account of the destruction which has once already come upon the world, *ver. 5, 6*: "By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." Originally the world was otherwise situated. The waters were most wisely divided at the creation, and most beneficially for us; some of the waters had proper repositories above the firmament, here called the heavens, (as it is also *Gen. i. 8*); and others under the firmament, gathered together unto one place: there were then both sea and dry land, a commodious habitation for the children of men. But now at the time of the universal deluge the case is strangely altered; the waters which God had divided before, and assigned to each part its convenient receptacle, now does he in anger throw together again in a heap; "He breaks up the fountains of the great deep, and throws open the windows," that is, the clouds, "of heaven," *Gen. vii. 11*, till the whole earth was overflowed with water, and not a spot upon the highest mountains but what was fifteen cubits under water, *Gen. vii. 20*. Thus did he make known at once his terrible power and his fierce anger, and made an end of a whole world at once. "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished," *ver. 6*. Is not here a change, and a most awful change! And then it is to be observed, that all this was done "by the word of God." It was by his powerful word that the world was made at first, and made in so commodious and beautiful a frame and order *Heb. xi. 3*, *καταρτίσθαι*. "He said, Let there be a firmament," &c. *Gen. i. 6, 7*; and, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place," &c., *ver. 9, 10*. Thus "He spake, and it was done," *Ps. xxxiii. 9*. Thus, says our apostle, "by the word of the Lord the heavens were" as they were "of old," that is, at the first creation; "and the earth" (as it was at first, a terraqueous globe) "standing out of the water and in the water." Nor was it only the first frame and order of the world that is here said to be "by the word of God," but the after confusion and ruin of the world, as well as the utter destruction of its inhabitants, was also "by the same word." None but that God who stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth, could destroy and overthrow such a vast fabric at once. This was done by the word of his power, and it was also done according to the word of his promise. God had said that he would destroy man, even all flesh, and that he would do it by bringing a flood of waters upon the earth, *Gen. vi. 7, 13, 17*. This was the change which God had before brought upon the world, and which these scoffers had overlooked. And now we are to consider,

2. What the apostle says of the destructive change which is yet to come upon it. [They who maintained that the prediction that the earth would be destroyed was improbable, affirmed that there were no signs of such an event; that the laws of nature were stable and uniform; and that, as those laws had been so long and so uniformly unbroken, it was absurd to believe that such an event could occur. To meet this, all that was necessary was to shew that, in a case where the same objections substantially might be urged, it had actually occurred that the world had been destroyed. There was, in itself considered, as much improbability in believing that the world could be destroyed by water as that it would be destroyed by fire, and consequently the objection had no real force. Notwithstanding the apparent stability of the laws of nature, the world had been once destroyed; and there is, therefore, no improbability that it may be again.]

ii. 3. "In," not "through;" the element in which these false teachers live is covetousness (*verse 15*). Instances of God's punishment of the ungodly follow:—

ii. 4. The rebellious angels.

ii. 5. The people before the Flood.

ii. 6. Sodom and Gomorrah.

ii. 10. "Dignities;" literally, "glories" "Them that are in authority" (Tyndal). "Them that excel in worship" (Cranmer).

ii. 11. Angels do not act thus. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread" (Pope).

ii. 12. "But these as irrational animals, born naturally for capture and destruction, speaking of the things they understand not, shall even perish in their corruption, receiving the reward of unrighteousness" (Alford). The stop should apparently be at "unrighteousness," as in Tyndal, Cranmer, and Alford; a fresh sentence then commencing.

"The heavens and the earth which now are, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fires against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," ver. 7; where we have an awful account of the final dissolution of the world, and which we are yet more nearly concerned in. The ruin that came upon the world and its inhabitants by the flood we read, and hear, and think of with concern, though those who were swept away by it were such as we never knew; but the judgment here spoken of is yet to come, and will surely come, though we know not when, nor upon what particular age or generation of men; and therefore we are not, we cannot be, sure that it may not happen in our own times; and this makes a very great difference, though it should be admitted that they were equal in every other respect, which yet must not be allowed, for there were some, though very few, who escaped that deluge, but not one can escape in this conflagration: besides that, we were not in reach of the one, but are not sure that we shall not be included in the other calamity. Now, therefore, to see the world to which we belong destroyed at once; not a single person only, not a particular family only, nor yet a nation, (even that which we are most nearly interested in and concerned for,) but the whole world, I say, sinking at once, and no ark provided, no possible way left of escaping for any one from the common ruin; this makes a difference between the desolation that has been, and what we yet are to expect. The one is already past, and never to return upon us any more; for God has said expressly that there shall "never any more be a flood to destroy the earth," *Gen. ix. 11-17*. The other is still behind, and as certain to come as the truth and the power of God can make it. The one came gradually upon the world, and was growing upon its inhabitants forty days, before it made an utter end of them, *Gen. vii. 12, 17*. This other will come upon them swiftly, and all at once, *2 Pet. ii. 1*. Besides that, there were in that overthrow, as we have said, a few who did escape, but the ruin which does yet await this world, whenever it comes, will be absolutely a universal one; not any part but what the devouring flames will seize upon; not a sanctuary left any where for the inhabitants to flee to; not a single spot in all this world where any one of them can be safe. Thus, whatever differences may be assigned between that destruction of the world and this here spoken of, they do indeed represent the approaching as the most terrible judgment; yet that the world has once been destroyed by an universal deluge does render it the more credible that it may again be ruined by an universal conflagration. Let, therefore, the scoffers, who laugh at the coming of our Lord to judgment at last, consider that it may be. There is nothing said of it in the word of God but what is within reach of the power of God; and, though they still should laugh, they shall not put us out of countenance; we are well assured that it will be, because he has said it, and we can depend upon his promise. They do err, not knowing (at least, not believing) the Scriptures, nor the power of God; but we know, and we do or ought to depend upon, both. Now that which he has said, and which he will certainly make good, is, that "the heavens and the earth which now are," which we are now related to, and which still subsist in all the beauty and order in which we see them, and which are so agreeable and useful to us, as we find they are; they are kept in store, not to be what earthly minds would wish to have them, treasures for us, but to be what God will have them, in his treasury, securely lodged and kept safe for his purposes; it follows, they are "reserved unto fire." Observe, God's following judgments are more terrible than those which went before. The old world was destroyed by water, but this is reserved unto fire, which shall burn up the wicked at the last day; and though this seems to be delayed, yet, as this wicked world is upheld by the word of God, so it is only reserved for the vengeance of Him to whom vengeance belongs, who will at the day of judgment deal with an ungodly world according to their deserts: for "the day of judgment" is the day of the "perdition of ungodly men." They who now scoff at a future judgment shall find it a day of vengeance and utter destruction. Beware, therefore, of being among those scoffers. Never question but the day of the Lord will come. Give diligence, therefore, to be found in Christ, that it may be a time of refreshment and day of redemption to you, which will be a day of indignation and wrath to the ungodly world.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

The apostle comes in these words to instruct and establish Christians in the truth of the coming of the Lord, where we may clearly discern the tenderness and affection wherewith he speaks to them, calling them "beloved." He had a compassionate concern and a love of goodwill for the ungodly wretches who refused to believe Divine revelation; but he has a peculiar respect for the true believers, and the remaining ignorance and weakness that he apprehends to be in them make him jealous, and put him on giving them a caution. And here we may observe,

First. The truth which the apostle asserts, that "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Though in the account of men there is a great deal of difference between a day and a year, and a vast deal more between one day and a thousand years, yet in the account of God, who inhabits eternity, in which there is no succession, there is no difference; for all things past, present, and future, are ever before him, and the delay of a thousand years cannot be so much to him as the deferring any thing for a day or hour is to us.

Secondly. The importance of this truth. This is the one thing the apostle would not have us ignorant of. A holy awe and reverential fear of God is necessary in order to our worshipping and glorifying him, and a belief of the inconceivable distance between him and us is very proper to beget and maintain that religious fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom. This is a truth that belongs to our peace, and therefore he endeavours it may not be hid from our eyes, as it is in the original, "Let not this one thing be hid from you." If men have no knowledge or belief of the eternal God, they will be very apt to

think him such an one as themselves. And yet how hard is it to conceive of eternity. It is, therefore, not very easy to attain such knowledge of God as is absolutely necessary.

Thirdly. In the 9th verse we are told the Lord is not slack; he does not delay beyond the appointed time. As God kept the time that he had appointed for the delivering Israel out of Egypt to a day, *Ex. xii. 41*, so he will keep to the time appointed in coming to judge the world. What a difference is there between the account which God makes and that which men make! Good men are apt to think God stays beyond the appointed time, that is, the time which they have set for their own and the church's deliverance; but they set one time, and God sets another, and he will not fail to keep the day which he has appointed; and ungodly men, they dare charge a culpable slackness upon God, as if he had slipped the time, and laid aside the thoughts of coming. But the apostle assures us that what men count slackness is truly long-suffering, and that to us-ward it is a giving more time to his own people, whom he has chosen, before the foundation of the world, many of whom are not as yet converted; and those who are in a state of grace and favour with God are to advance in knowledge and holiness, and in the exercise of faith and patience, to abound in good works, doing and suffering what they are called to, that they may bring glory to God, and improve in a meetness for heaven; for God is "not willing that any" of these "should perish, but that all of them should come to repentance." Here observe, 1. Repentance is absolutely necessary in order to salvation; "except we repent we shall perish," *Luk. xiii. 3, 5*. 2. God has no delight in the death of sinners. As the punishment of sinners is a torment unto his creatures, a merciful God does not take pleasure in it; and though the principal design of God in his long-suffering is the blessedness of them "whom he has chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," yet his goodness and forbearance do in their own nature invite and call to repentance all those to whom they are exercised. And if men continue impenitent, when God gives them space to repent, he will deal more severely with them, though the great reason why he did not hasten his coming was because he had not accomplished the number of his elect. Abuse not, therefore, the patience and long-suffering of God, by abandoning yourselves to a course of ungodliness. Presume not to go on boldly in the way of sinners, nor to sit down securely in an unconverted, impenitent state, as he that said, *Mat. xxiv. 48*, "My Lord delayeth his coming, lest he come and surprise you;" for as we read, ver. 10, "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." Where we may observe,

1st. The certainty of the day of the Lord. Though it is now above sixteen hundred years since this epistle was written, and the day is not yet come, it assuredly will come. "God has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness," and he will keep his appointment. "It is appointed to men once to die, and after this judgment," *Heb. ix. 27*. Settle it, therefore, in your hearts that the day of the Lord will certainly come, and you shall certainly be called to give an account of all things done in the body, whether good or evil; and let your exact walking before God, and your frequent judging yourselves, evidence your firm belief of a future judgment, when many live as if they were never to give any account at all.

2nd. The suddenness of this day. It will come "as a thief in the night," at a time when men are sleeping and secure, and have no manner of apprehension or expectation of the day of the Lord, no more than men have of a thief when they are in a deep sleep in the dark and silent night. "At midnight there was a cry, Behold the bridegroom comes," *Mat. xxv. 6*; and at that time not only the foolish, but also the wise virgins slumbered and slept. The Lord will come in a day when we look not for him, and an hour when men are not aware. That time which men think to be the most improper and unlikely, and therefore are most secure, will be the time of the Lord's coming. Let us, then, beware how we in our thoughts and imaginations put that day far away from us, but rather suppose it to be so much nearer in reality by how much farther off it is in the opinion of the ungodly world.

3rd. The solemnity of this coming. 1st. "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise." The visible heavens, as unable to abide, when the Lord shall come in his glory, shall pass away, they shall undergo a mighty alteration; and this shall be very sudden, and with such a noise as the breaking and tumbling down of so great a fabric must necessarily occasion. 2nd. "The elements shall melt with fervent heat." At this coming of the Lord it shall not only be very tempestuous round about him, so that the very heavens shall pass away as in a mighty, violent storm, but "a fire shall go before him," that shall melt the elements of which the creatures are composed. 3rd. "The earth also, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up." The earth and its inhabitants, and all the works, whether of nature or art, shall be destroyed. The stately palaces and gardens, and all the desirable things wherein worldly-minded men did seek and place their happiness, all of them shall be burnt up. All sorts of creatures which God has made, and all the works of men, must submit; all must pass through the fire, which shall be a consuming fire to all that sin has brought into the world, though it may be but a refining fire to the works of God's hand, that, the glass of the creation being made much brighter, the saints may much better discern the glory of the Lord therein.

[As to the possibility or probability of such a destruction by fire as is here predicted, no one can have any doubt who is acquainted with the disclosures of modern science in regard to the internal structure of the earth. Even the ancient philosophers, from some cause, supposed that the earth would yet be destroyed by fire; and modern science has made it probable that the interior of the earth is a melted and intensely heated mass of burning materials; that the habitable world is but a comparatively thin crust or shell over those internal fires; that earthquakes are caused by the vapours engendered by that heated mass when water comes in contact with it; and that volcanoes are but vent-holes through which those internal flames make their way to the surface. Whether these fires will everywhere make their way to the surface, and produce a universal conflagration, perhaps could not be determined by science; but no one can doubt that the simple command of God would be all that is necessary to pour those burning floods over the earth, as he once caused the waters to roll over every mountain and through every valley. As to the question whether it is probable that such a change produced by fire, and bringing the present order of things to a close, will occur, it may be remarked farther that there is reason to believe that such changes are in fact taking place in other worlds. "During the last two or three centuries, upwards of thirteen fixed stars have disappeared. One of them, situated in the northern hemisphere, presented a peculiar brilliancy, and was so bright as to be seen by the naked eye at mid-day. It seemed to be on fire, appearing at first of a dazzling white, then of a reddish yellow, and lastly of an ashy pale colour. La Place supposes that it was burned up, as it has never been seen since. The conflagration was visible about sixteen months.]"

And now, who can but observe what a difference there will be between the first coming of Christ and the second! And yet that is called "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" *Mal. iv. 5*. How much more dreadful must this coming to judgment be! May we be so wise as to prepare for it, that it may not be a day of vengeance and destruction unto us. Oh, what will become of us if we set our affections on this earth, and make it our portion, seeing all

ii. 13. "Counting as pleasure that delicate living which is but for a day" (Alford). "They count it pleasure to live deliciously for a season" (Tyndal). The Authorised Version, "riot," is a mistranslation. "Spots, &c. in your feasts of charity," or "love-feasts:" see Jude 12.

ii. 14. "A heart practised in covetousness, children of the curse:" so literally.

ii. 15. Their covetousness leads to their being cursed.

ii. 17. "Mists driven by a whirlwind:" so best MSS.

ii. 18. Most MSS. read "those who had nearly escaped." Those who were nearly free from the errors in doctrine and practice of the heathen are laid hold of by these deceivers, who (verse 19) promise them Gospel freedom while they themselves are still in bondage to corruption, and know nothing of true liberty. (Compare the whole passage, verses 1-18, with Jude 4-13.)

ii. 20. Sin against knowledge is more fatal than ignorant sin.

these things shall be burnt up! Look out, therefore, and make sure of a happiness beyond this visible world, which must all be melted down.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. 15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. 17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. 18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

First. The apostle having instructed them in the doctrine of Christ's second coming, he takes occasion thence to exhort them to purity and godliness in their whole conversation. All the truths which are revealed in Scripture should be improved for our advancement in practical godliness. "This is the effect that knowledge must produce, or we are never the better for it; 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.' Seeing all these things must be dissolved, how holy should we be that are assured of it, departing from and dying to sin, that has so corrupted and defiled all the visible creation that there is an absolute need of its dissolution! All that was made for man's use is subject to vanity by man's sin; and if the sin of man has brought the visible heavens, and the elements, and earth, under a curse, from which they cannot be freed without being dissolved, what an abominable evil is sin, and how much to be hated by us! And inasmuch as this dissolution is in order to their being restored to their primitive beauty and excellency, how pure and holy should we be, in order to our being fit for the new heaven and new earth, wherein dwells righteousness! It is a very exact and universal holiness that he exhorts to, not resting in any lower measure or degree, but labouring to be eminent beyond what is commonly attained. Holy in God's house and in our own, holy in our worshipping of God, and in our conversing with men, all our conversations, whether with high or low, rich or poor, good or bad, friends or enemies, must be holy. We must keep ourselves 'unspotted from the world' in all our converse with it; we must be 'perfecting holiness in the fear of God,' and in the love of God too. We must exercise ourselves unto godliness of all sorts in all its parts, trusting in God, and delighting in God only, who continues the same when the whole visible creation shall be dissolved; devoting ourselves to the service of God, and designing the glorifying and enjoyment of God, who endures for ever; whereas, what worldly men delight in and follow after must all be dissolved. These things, which we now see, must in a little while pass away, and be no more as they now are. Look, therefore, at what shall abide and continue, which, though it is not present, is certain, and not far off. This looking for the day of God is one of the directions the apostle gives us in order to our being eminently holy and godly in all manner of conversation. Look for the day of God as what you firmly believe shall come, and what you earnestly long for. The coming of the day of God is what every Christian must hope for and earnestly expect; for it is a day when Christ shall appear in the glory of the Father, and evidence his Divinity and Godhead, even to those who counted him a mere man. The first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he appeared in the form of a servant, was what the people of God did earnestly wait and look for; that coming was for 'the consolation of Israel,' *Lu. ii. 25*. How much more should they wait with expectation and earnestness for his second coming, which will be the day of their complete redemption, and of his most glorious manifestation. Then he shall come to be admired in his saints, and glorified in all them that believe; for though it cannot but terrify and affright the ungodly to see the visible heavens all in a flame, and the elements melting, yet the believer, whose faith is the evidence of things not seen, can rejoice in hope of more glorious heavens, after these have been melted and refined by that dreadful fire which shall burn up all the dross of this visible creation. Here we must take notice,

i. What true Christians look for, and that is, "new heavens and a new earth," in which a great deal more of the wisdom, power, and goodness of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ will be clearly discerned than we are able to discover in what we now see. For in these new heavens and earth, freed from the vanity the former were subject to, and the sin they were polluted with, only righteousness shall dwell; this is to be the habitation of such righteous persons who do righteousness, and are free from the power and pollution of sin. All the wicked shall be turned into hell. Those only who are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, shall be admitted to dwell in this holy place.

2. What is the ground and foundation of this expectation and hope; it is the promise of God. To look for any thing which God has not promised is presumption; but if our expectations are according to the promise, both as to the things we look for, and the time and way of their being brought about, we cannot meet with a disappointment; for he is faithful who has promised. See, therefore, that you raise and regulate your expectations of all the great things that are to come according to the word of God; and, as to the new heaven and new earth, look for them, as God has allowed and directed by the passages we have in this portion of Scripture now before you, and in *Isa. lvi. 17; lvi. 22*, to which the apostle may be thought to allude.

Secondly. As in the 11th verse he exhorts to holiness, from the consideration that the heavens and earth shall be dissolved, so in ver. 14 he resumes his exhortation, from the consideration that they shall be again renewed. Seeing you expect the day of God, when our Lord Jesus Christ will appear in his glorious majesty, and these heavens and earth shall be dissolved and melted down, and, being purified and refined, shall be erected and rebuilt, prepare to meet him. It nearly concerns us to see in what state we are when the Judge of all the world comes to pass sentence upon men, and to determine how it shall be with them to all eternity. This is the court of judicature whence there lies no appeal. Whatever sentence is here passed by this great Judge is irreversible; therefore get ready to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. And see to it,

1. "That you are found of him in peace;" in a state of peace and reconciliation with God through Christ, in whom alone God is reconciling the world to himself; and all that are out of Christ are in a state of enmity, and reject and oppose the Lord and his Anointed, and shall therefore "be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power." They whose sins are pardoned, and their peace made with God, are the only safe and happy people; therefore follow after peace, and that with all. 1st. Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2nd. Peace in our own consciences, through the Spirit of grace, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God. 3rd. Peace with men, by having a calm and peaceable disposition wrought in us, resembling that of our blessed Lord.

2. That ye be found of Christ "without spot, and blameless." Follow after holiness as well as peace, and even spotless and perfect; not only take heed of all spots which are not the spots of God's children, this only prevents our being found of men without spot,—but we must be found of Christ without spot; we must be pressing towards spotless purity, absolute perfection. Christians must be perfecting holiness, that they may be not only blameless before men, but also in the sight of God. And all this deserves and needs the greatest diligence. He that does this work negligently can never do it successfully. Never expect to be found at that day of God in peace, if you are lazy and idle in this your day, in which we must finish the work that is given us to do. It is only the diligent Christian that will be the happy Christian in the day of the Lord. Our Lord will suddenly come to us, or shortly call us to him, and would you have him find you idle? Remember, there is a curse denounced against him who does the work of the Lord negligently, *Jer. xlviii. 10*. Heaven will be a sufficient recompence for all our diligence and industry; therefore let us labour and take pains in the work of the Lord. He will certainly reward us if we be diligent in the work he has allotted us.

Now that you may be diligent, "account the long-suffering of our Lord to be salvation." Does your Lord delay his coming? Do not think this is to give more time to make provision for your lusts, to gratify them; it is so much space to repent and work out your salvation. It proceeds not from a want of concern or compassion for his suffering servants, nor is it designed to give countenance and encouragement to the world of the ungodly, but that men may have time to prepare for eternity. Learn, then, to make a right use of the patience of our Lord, who does as yet delay his coming. Follow after peace and holiness, or else his coming will be dreadful unto you. And inasmuch as it is difficult to prevent men's abuse of God's patience, and engage them in the right improvement thereof, our apostle quotes St. Paul as directing men to make the same good use of the Divine forbearance, that in the mouth, or from the pen, of two apostles the truth might be confirmed. And we may here observe with what esteem and affection he speaks of him, who had formerly publicly withstood and sharply reproved St. Peter. If a righteous man smite one that is truly religious, it shall be received as a kindness; and let him reprove, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall soften and sweeten the good man that is reproved when he does amiss. What an honourable mention does this apostle of the circumcision make of that very man who had openly, before all, reproved him, as not walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel! 1st. He calls him brother; whereby he means not only that he is a fellow-Christian, in which sense the word brethren is used, *1 Thes. v. 27*, or a fellow-preacher, in which sense St. Paul calls Timothy the evangelist a brother, *Col. i. 1*, but a fellow apostle, one who had the same extraordinary commission, immediately from Christ himself, to preach the Gospel in every place, and to disciple all nations. Though many seducing teachers denied Paul's apostleship, yet St. Peter owns him to be an apostle. 2nd. He calls him beloved, and they, being both alike commissioned, and both united in the same service of the same Lord, it would have been very unseemly if they had not been united in affection to one another, for the strengthening one another's hands, mutually desirous of, and rejoicing in, one another's success. 3rd. He mentions St. Paul as one who had an uncommon measure of wisdom given unto him. He was a person of eminent knowledge in the mysteries of the Gospel, and did neither in that or any other qualification come behind any of all the other apostles. How desirable is it that those who preach the same Gospel would treat one another according to the pattern St. Peter here sets them! It is surely their duty to endeavour, by proper methods, to prevent or remove all prejudices that hinder ministers' usefulness, and to beget and improve that esteem and respect in the minds of people toward their ministers as may promote the success of their labours. And let us also here observe, First. The excellent wisdom that was in St. Paul is said to be given him. That understanding and knowledge that qualifies men to preach the Gospel is the gift of God. We must seek for knowledge and labour to get understanding, in hopes that it shall be given us from above, while we are diligent in using proper means to attain it. Secondly. The apostle imparts to men according as he had received from God. He endeavours to lead others as far as he himself was let into the knowledge of the mysteries of the Gospel. He is not an intruder into those things he had not seen or been fully assured of, and yet he does not fail to declare the whole counsel of God, *Acts xx. 27*. Thirdly. The epistles, which were written by the apostle of the Gentiles, and directed to those Gentiles who believed in Christ, are designed for the instruction and edification of those who, from among the Jews, were brought to believe in Christ; for it is generally thought what is here alluded to is contained in the epistle to the *Romans, ch. ii. 4*, though in all his epistles there are some things that refer to one or other of the subjects treated of in this and the foregoing chapter; and it cannot seem strange that those who were pursuing the same general design should in their epistles insist upon the same things. But the apostle Peter proceeds to tell us that in those things which are to be met with in St. Paul's epistles there are some things hard to be understood. Among the variety of subjects treated of in

ii. 22. These men knew the truth, but it had not affected their hearts and lives, so they fell away and returned to sinful practices and teaching.

iii. The certainty of Christ's coming, in spite of the scoffs of the unbelieving. God's long-suffering gives time for repentance. Exhortation to grow in the knowledge of Christ.

iii. 1. "Pure minds:" the word translated "pure" may mean transparent, "clear," or "purged," and hence "sincere."

iii. 2. The best MSS. read "of your apostles" in place of, as Authorised Version, "of us the apostles." "The words spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour given by your apostles" (Alford). "The apostles who live amongst you in the present times, in contrast to the Old Testament prophets" (Fausset).

iii. 3. Best MSS. read "scoffers in scoffing"—i.e., revelling in scoffing.

Scripture, some are not easy to be understood, because of their own obscurity, such as prophecies; others cannot be so easily understood, because of their excellency and sublimity, as the mysterious doctrines; and others are with difficulty taken in, because of the weakness of men's minds, such are the things of the Spirit of God, mentioned 1 Cor. ii. 14. And here the unlearned and unstable make wretched work; for they wrest and torture the Scriptures to make them speak what the Holy Ghost did not intend. Those who are not well instructed and well established in the truth are in great danger of perverting the word of God. They who have heard and learned of the Father are best secured from misunderstanding and misapplying any part of the word of God; and where there is a Divine power to establish as well as to instruct men in Divine truth, persons are effectually secured from falling into errors. And how great a blessing this is, we learn by observing what is the pernicious consequence of the errors that ignorant and unstable men fall into, even their own destruction. Errors in particular concerning the holiness and justice of God are the utter ruin of multitudes of men. Let us, therefore, earnestly pray for the Spirit of God to instruct us in the truth, that we may know it as it is in Jesus, and have our hearts established with grace, that we may stand firm and unshaken, even in most stormy times, when others are tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine.

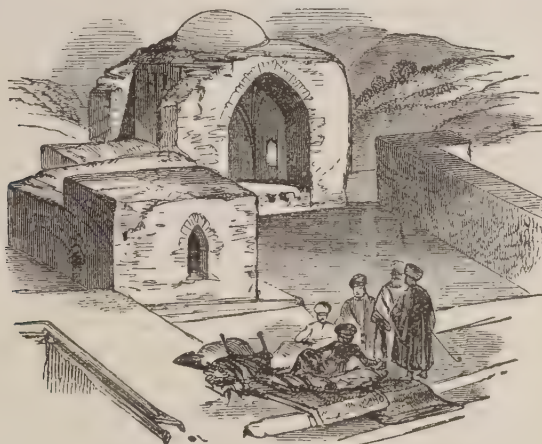
[He refers not to the difficulty of understanding what Paul meant, but to the difficulty of comprehending the great truths which he taught. This is, generally, the greatest difficulty in regard to the statements of Paul. The difficulty is not that the meaning of the writer is not plain, but it is either, 1. That the mind is overpowered by the grandeur of the thought, and the incomprehensible nature of the theme; or, 2. That the truth is so unpalatable, and the mind is so prejudiced against it, that we are unwilling to receive it. Many a man knows well enough what Paul means, and would receive his doctrines without hesitation, if the heart was not opposed to it; and in this state of mind Paul is charged with obscurity, when the real difficulty lies only in the heart of him who makes the complaint. If this be the true interpretation of this passage, then it should not be adduced to prove that Paul is an obscure writer, whatever may be true on that point. There are, undoubtedly, obscure things in his writings, as there are in all other ancient compositions, but this passage should not be adduced to prove that he had not the faculty of making himself understood. An honest heart, a willingness to receive the truth, is one of the best qualifications for understanding the writings of Paul; and when this exists, no one will fail to find truth that may be comprehended, and that will be eminently adapted to sanctify and save the soul.—Barnes. It is incredible, says Bishop Horsley, to any one who has not made the experiment, what a proficiency may be made in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, by studying the Scriptures in this manner, without any other commentary or exposition than what the different parts of the sacred volume mutually furnish for each other. Let the most illiterate Christian study them in this manner, and let him never cease to pray for the illumination of that Spirit by which these books were dictated, and the whole compass of abstruse philosophy and recorded history shall furnish no argument with which the perverse will of

man shall be able to shake this learned Christian's faith.—Horsley's Nine Sermons. pp. 224—238.]

Thirdly. In ver. 17 the apostle gives them a word of caution, where he intimates that the knowledge we have of these things should make us very wary and watchful, inasmuch as there is a twofold danger:—

1. We are in great danger of being seduced and turned away from the truth. The unlearned and unstable, and they are very numerous, do generally wrest the Scripture. Many who have the Scriptures, and read them, do not understand what they read; and too many of those who have a right understanding of the sense and meaning of the word are not established in the belief of the truth, and all these are liable to fall into error. Few attain to the knowledge and acknowledgment of doctrinal Christianity; and fewer find, so as to keep in the way of practical godliness, which is the narrow way which only leadeth unto life. There must be a great deal of self-denial and suspicion of ourselves, and submitting to the authority of Christ Jesus our great prophet, before we can heartily receive all the truths of the Gospel, and therefore we are in great danger of rejecting the truth.

2. We are in great danger by being seduced. For, 1st. So far as we are turned from the truth, so far are we turned out of the way to true blessedness into the path which leads to destruction. If men corrupt the word of God it tends to their own utter ruin. 2nd. When men wrest the word of God, they fall into "the error of the wicked," men without law, that keep to no rules, set no bounds to themselves, a sort of free-thinkers, which the psalmist does detest; Ps. cxix. 113, "I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love." Whatever opinions and thoughts of men are not conformable to the law of God, and warranted by it, the good man does disclaim and abhor; they are the conceits and counsels of the ungodly, who have forsaken God's law; and if we imbibed their opinions we shall too soon imitate their practices. 3rd. They who are led away by error "fall from their own steadfastness." They are wholly unhinged and unsettled, and know not where to rest, but are at the greatest uncertainty, like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. It nearly concerns us, therefore, to be upon our guard, seeing the danger is so great. Now that we may the better avoid being led away, the apostle, ver. 18, directs us what to do. And we must "grow in grace." He had, in the beginning of the epistle, exhorted us to add one grace to another, and here he advises us to grow in all grace, in faith, and virtue, and knowledge. By how much the stronger grace is in us, by so much the more steadfast shall we be in the truth. We must grow in "the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Follow on to know the Lord. Labour to know him more clearly and more fully, to know more of Christ, and to know him to better purpose, so as to be more like him, and to love him better. This is the knowledge of Christ the apostle Paul did reach after, and desire to attain to, Phil. iii. 10. Such a knowledge of Christ as conforms us more to him, and endears him more to us, must needs be of great use to us to preserve us from falling off in times of general apostacy; and they who experience this effect of the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will, upon receiving such grace from him, give thanks and praise to him, and join with our apostle in saying, "To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."



WELL AT ENROGEL IN JERUSALEM.

iii. 4. "The length of the interval gives occasion for the scoff of the unbeliever, and exercises the patience of the saints" (Webster and Wilkinson). See Isa. v. 18, 19. His coming is here looked upon as equivalent to the end of the world.

iii. 5—7. The apostle argues that since the world has once been destroyed, the scoffers cannot assume that such an event is impossible in the future, and that their assertion, "All things," &c., is not true. "The earth that was in the water appeared up out of the water by the word of God" (Tyndal). See Gen. i. 9. "Whereby," or "by which," in the original plural, therefore referring to the waters (Gen. vii. 11). "Perished," not was annihilated, but lost its original appearance. As the original creation was changed by the flood, so the present will be by fire (Rev. xxi. 1).

iii. 8—10. Second reason why God's delay is not an argument against the fulfilment of his promise, since his thoughts are not as ours; he is above all human limits of time. "God's age-meter (if it is lawful so to call it) differs from man's hour-meter. His dial shows all the hours at once," &c. (Bengel).

iii. 11, 12. Not interrogatory, but exclamatory. "Hastening!" better than "hasting unto" of the Authorised Version. "They hasten it by perfecting, in repentance and holiness, the work of the Gospel, and thus diminishing the need of the long-suffering to which the delay of that day is owing" (De Wette).

iii. 13. "But," not "nevertheless," as Authorised Version. "As the flood was the baptism of the earth, eventuating in a renovated earth, partially delivered from the curse, so the baptism with fire shall purify the earth, so as to be the renovated abode of regenerated man, wholly freed from the curse" (Fausset).

iii. 14. Not "of him," but "in his sight."

iii. 15. "Paul . . . hath written unto you:" Alford thinks this refers to 1 Thess. iv. 13—v. 11.

iii. 16. "The other Scriptures:" St. Paul's epistles were therefore at this time recognised as Scripture.

iii. 18. "The grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ:" grace of which Christ is giver, knowledge of which Christ is the object.



EXPOSITION OF THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

[Little need be said respecting the authenticity of this epistle, or the evidence that it was written by the apostle John. There are, in general, two sources of evidence in regard to ancient writings: the external evidence, or that which may be derived from the testimony of other writers; and the evidence which may be derived from some marks of the authorship in the writing itself, which is called the internal evidence. Both of these are remarkably clear in regard to this epistle. 1. The external evidence. It is quoted or referred to by the early Christian writers as the undoubted production of the apostle John. It is referred to by Polycarp in the beginning of the second century; it is quoted by Papias, and also by Irenæus. Origen says, 'John, beside the gospel and *Revelation*, has left us an epistle of a few lines. Grant also a second and a third; for all do not allow these to be genuine.' See Lardner, vi. 275, and Lucke, Einlei. i. Dionysius of Alexandria admitted the genuineness of John's first epistle; so also did Cyprian. All the three epistles were received by Athanasius, by Cyril of Jerusalem, and by Epiphanius. Eusebius says, 'Beside his gospel, his first epistle is universally acknowledged by those of the present time and by the ancients; but the other two are contradicted.']

2. Though the continued tradition of the church attests that this epistle came from St. John the apostle, yet we may observe some other evidence that will confirm, or with some, perhaps, even outvie the certainty of that tradition. It should seem that the penman was one of the apostolical college, by the sensible, palpable assurance he had had of the truth of the Mediator's person in his human nature: "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life," ver. 1. He here takes notice of the evidence the Lord gave to Thomas of his resurrection, by calling him to feel the prints of the nails and of the spear,—which is recorded by John. And he must have been one of the disciples present when the Lord came, on the same day in which he arose from the dead, and shewed them his hands and his side, *Jno.* xx. 20. But, that we may be assured which apostle this was, there is scarce a critic or competent judge of diction, or style of argument and spirit, but will adjudge this epistle to the writer of that Gospel that bears the name of the apostle John. They [the gospel and the epistle] wonderfully agree. 1. In the titles and characters of the Redeemer—"the Word, the Life, the Light;" compare *ch.* i. 1, and *ch.* v. 7, with *Jno.* i. 1 and *Rev.* xix. 13. 2. In the commendation of God's love to us; *ch.* iii. 1, and *ch.* iv. 9, with *Jno.* iii. 16. 3. In speaking of our regeneration, or being born of God; *ch.* iii. 9, *ch.* iv. 7, and *ch.* v. 1, with *Jno.* iii. 5, 6. [They agree, farther, in strong statements on the subjects of the free gift and the present enjoyment of eternal life through and with Christ Jesus; the value of the inspired record or testimony concerning him; the solemn obligation, and the instant efficacy of faith in his name on the warrant of this Gospel-word; the necessary working of faith by love, love especially to our brother believers; and, yet again, its hard struggle with, but habitual victory over, "the world."] Lastly, (to add no more instances, which may be easily seen on comparing this epistle with that gospel,) in the allusion to, or application of, that passage in that gospel which relates, and which relates alone, to the issuing of water and blood out of the Redeemer's open side: "This is he that came by water and blood," *ch.* v. 6. Thus the epistle plainly appears to flow from the same pen as that gospel did. Now, I know not that the text or the intrinsic history of any of the Gospels gives us such assurance of its writer or penman as that ascribed to John plainly does. There, (*viz.*, *ch.* xxi. 24,) the sacred historian thus notices himself: "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true." Now, who is this disciple but he concerning whom Peter asked, "What shall this man do?" and concerning whom the Lord answered, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" ver. 21, 22. And who, in ver. 20, is described by these three characters, 1st. That he is the disciple whom Jesus loved, the Lord's peculiar friend. 2nd. That he also leaned on his breast at supper. 3rd. That he said unto him, "Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee?" As sure, then, as it is that that disciple was John, so sure may the church be that that gospel and this epistle came from the beloved John. The epistle is styled general, as being not inscribed to any particular church: it is a circular letter, or visitation charge, sent to divers churches, (some say of Parthia,) in order to confirm them in their steadfast adherence to the Lord Christ, and to the sacred doctrine concerning his person and office, against various seducers; and to instigate them to adorn that doctrine by love to God and man, and particularly to each other, as being descended from God, united by the same Head, and travelling towards the same eternal life.

[One practical observation, characteristic of this whole epistle, may usefully accompany us throughout the ensuing exposition of its profound, yet familiar, teachings. John was as eminently the apostle of truth as of charity. Full of "gracious words" for the "dear children" of his charge, his epistles are yet marked by much of controversial allusions, and by a severe fidelity in dealing with antichristian error. As one has well remarked, he 'doth not content himself with simply affirming or denying a thing, but, to strengthen his affirmation, he denies its contrary. In like manner, to strengthen his denial of a thing, he affirms its contrary. His writings, almost more than those of any other apostle, teem with the peculiarities of the gospel-theology; and in the statement of them he is precise, dogmatic, and uncompromising. Moreover, the very "love" of which he says so much, as a matter both of Christian law and of regenerate instinct, is none other than the mutual love of true believers, springing from a common love of the faith, and of its great Author and Finisher. Little, if anything, is here expressed on the subject of a general philanthropy; and still less as to the tenderness and forbearance due to those who deny, or have erred from, essential truth; although, doubtless, the same spiritual motives and principles which impel to brotherly love will move Christian hearts, after the pattern of Christ's own, to pity and care for those that are ignorant and out of the way. It is a wild mistake of men of latitudinarian sentiments to allege the authority of parts of this epistle for setting charity among men either against or above the truth of God. Nay, it is strange to find some that are really familiar with this epistle, and both submissive and attached to its theological teachings, placing charity in the order of operation, before subjective truth. St. John represents them as inseparable; and, farther, without any prejudice to the just hope that a greater union of heart and action among Christians will pave the way for a more harmonious judgment on some subordinate and still disputed points, he establishes, with all the authority of inspiration, the necessary antecedence of a catholic faith to a truly catholic love. He shews that the spiritual, God-regarding, and God-resembling, love, on which, after his Master's manner, he lays unceasing stress, is such as none, but "the brethren," begotten of God through the truth, and mutually known by its heavenly impress on the character of each, can either exercise, receive, or reciprocate. As he explains in the salutation of his second epistle, it is "love in the truth"—love between them "that have known the truth"—love "for the truth's sake, which," experimentally and practically, "dwelleth in us, and," doctrinally also, "shall be with us for ever." Observe, likewise, how pointedly we are taught in *ch.* v. 1, 2, of this first epistle, that the only proper object of that elevated and unworldly affection is he "whoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ," the anointed and alone Saviour so peculiarly set forth throughout the epistle, and who is thereby "born of God;" and that the only possible subject of it is the man who, to express the same change by other characters and effects, "loveth God, and keepeth his commandments."]

* By the Rev. John Reynolds. Revised by the Rev. W. M. Bunting, M. A., London.

Introductory Note.—The authorship of this First Epistle is ascribed to the apostle and evangelist St. John by the almost unanimous voice of antiquity; Polycarp, Papias, Irenæus, and Tertullian refer to it. This, with the Second and Third Epistles, were most probably written by St. John during his residence at Ephesus, where he spent his latter years after his release from Patmos. It appears to have been written after his gospel, and to have been addressed primarily to the churches at and around Ephesus; and was designed, at least

in part, to meet the germs of heresies which subsequently troubled the Christian Church. "For the maintenance of that fellowship with the Father and with the Son, which it is her main object to inculcate as essential to Christianity and necessary to salvation, the apostle insists on the necessity of walking in the light, of holding and exemplifying the truth as it is in Jesus. Errors of doctrine touching the person of Christ, and looseness of life touching the laws of morality, alike aggravate each other. The life is not in the right among

CHAPTER I.

Evidence given concerning Christ's person and excellency, ver. 1, 2; the knowledge thereof gives us communion with God and Christ, ver. 3; and joy, ver. 4; a description of God, ver. 5; how we are thereupon to walk, ver. 6; the benefit of such walking, ver. 7; the way to forgiveness, ver. 9; the evil of denying our sin, ver. 8—10.



AT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

The apostle omits his name and character, (as also the author to the Hebrews does), either out of humility, or as being willing that the Christian reader should be swayed by the light and weight of the things written, rather than by the name that might recommend them. And so he begins,

First. With an account or character of the Mediator's person. He is the great subject of the Gospel, the foundation and object of our faith and hope, the bond and cement that unite us unto God. He should be well known, and he is represented here.

1. As "the Word of life," ver. 1. In the Gospel these two are disjoined, and he is called, first, "the Word" *Jno. i. 1*, and afterward Life, intimating, withal, that he is intellectual life; "In him was life, and that life was," efficiently and objectively, "the light of men." *Jno. i. 4*. Here both are conjoined, "the Word of life," the vital word. In that he is the Word, it is intimated that he is the word of some person or other, and that is God, even the Father. He is the Word of God, and so he is intimated to issue from the Father, as truly (though not in the same manner) as a word (or speech, which is a train of words) from a speaker. But he is not a mere vocal word, (a bare λόγος προφορικὸς,) but a vital one. "The Word of life," the living word, and thereupon,

2. As eternal life. (Here, as in *ch. v. 20*, this life is spoken of in its source, not as in Scripture it mostly is, in its gracious emanations to the creature. Eternal life is put, by *metonymy*, for a Divine person, whose attribute it is, as God, both to have life in himself, and to be the sole Fountain of life to whomsoever he will. And the title is given with a special fitness and emphasis to that Person of the Holy Trinity whose condescending incarnation and redeeming merits are the procuring cause of new being and a blessed immortality to fallen man.) His duration shews his excellency. He was from eternity, and so is, in Scripture account, necessary, essential, uncreated life. That the apostle speaks of his eternity, *a parte ante*, as they say, and as from everlasting, seems evident, in that he speaks of him as he was in and from the beginning, when he was then with the Father, before his manifestation to us, yea, before the making of all things that were made, as *Jno. i. 2, 3*; so that he is the eternal, vital, intellectual Word of the eternal, living Father.

3. As life manifested, ver. 2; manifested in the flesh, manifested to us. The eternal Life would assume mortality, would put on flesh and blood, (in the entire human nature,) and so dwell among us, and converse with us, *Jno. i. 14*. Here was condescension and kindness indeed, that eternal Life (a person of eternal, essential life) should come to visit mortals, and to procure eternal life for them, and then confer it on them!

Secondly. With the evidences, and convictive assurances, that the apostle and his brethren had of the Mediator's presence and converse in the world. There were sufficient demonstrations of the reality of his abode here, and of the excellency and dignity of his person in the way of his manifestation. The Life, the Word of life, the eternal Life, as such, could not be seen and felt, but the life manifested might be, and was so. The Life was clothed with flesh, put on the state and habit of abased human nature, and as such gave sensible proof of its existence and transactions here. The Divine Life, or Word incarnate, presented and evinced itself to the very senses of the apostles, as,

1. To their ears; "That which we have heard," ver. 1, 3. The Life assumed a mouth and tongue, that he might utter words of life. The apostles not only heard of him, but they heard him himself. Above three years might they attend his ministry, and be auditors of his public sermons and private expositions, (for he expounded them in the house,) and be charmed with the words of him that spake as never man spake before or since. The Divine Word would employ the ear, and the ear should be devoted to the Word of life. And it was meet that they that were to be his representatives and imitators to the world should be personally acquainted with his ministrations.

2. To their eyes; "That which we have seen with our eyes," ver. 1—3. The Word would become visible, would not only be heard, but be seen,—seen publicly, privately, at distance, and at nearest approach, which may be intimated in the expression "with our eyes," with all the use and exercise that we could make of our eyes. We saw him in his life and ministry,—saw him in his transfiguration on the mount,—hanging, bleeding, dying, and dead upon the cross; and we saw him after his return from the grave and resurrection from the dead. His apostles must be eye-witnesses as well as ear-witnesses of him. "Wherefore, of these men that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection," *Acts i. 21, 22*. And "we were eyewitnesses of his majesty," *2 Pet. i. 16*.

3. To their internal sense, to the eyes of their mind; for so, possibly, may

the next clause be interpreted, "which we have looked upon." This may be distinguished from the foregoing perception, "seeing with the eyes," and may be the same with what the apostle says in his Gospel, *ch. i. 14*, "And we beheld (ἐθεασαμεθα) his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Where the word is not applied to the immediate object of the eye, but that which was rationally collected from what they saw. What we have well discerned, contemplated, and viewed, what we have well known of this Word of life, we report to you. The senses are to be the informers of the mind.

4. To their hands and sense of feeling; "And our hands have handled" (touched and felt) "of the Word of life." This surely refers to the full conviction our Lord afforded his apostles of the truth, reality, solidity, and organization of his body, after his resurrection from the dead. When he shewed them his hands and his side, it is probable he gave them leave to touch him; at least he knew of Thomas's unbelief, and his professed resolution, too, not to believe till he had found and felt the places and signatures of the wounds by which he died. Accordingly, at the next congress he called Thomas, in the presence of the rest, to satisfy the very curiosity of his unbelief. And probably others of them did so too. "Our hands have handled of the Word of life." [This sentence is the crown of a climax, the force of which is, we cannot have been mistaken as to the facts whereto we testify. We have heard—yea, have seen with our own eyes—yea, more, have continually and familiarly looked upon—yea, more convincingly than all, have reverently handled—the embodied Word of life. With the multitude we have thronged, and with a certain woman touched, him; we have clasped and clung to him in times of danger; his hands have washed the feet of all his disciples; and one of us, whom Jesus loved, hath leaned on his breast at supper, and told the pulses of a heart such as had never beat in human breast before!—John felt it to be fully as important to prove that the Son of God was really made man, as to evince, by a higher order of evidence, that the Son of man is God.—Let it be noted, in the same connection, that the invisible Life and Word was no despiser of the testimony of sense.] Sense, in its place and sphere, is a means that God hath appointed, and the Lord Christ hath employed, for our information. Our Lord took care to satisfy, as far as might be, all the senses of his apostles, that they might be the more authentic witnesses of him to the world. They that apply all this to the hearing of the Gospel lose the variety of sensations here mentioned, and the propriety of the expressions, and the reason of their inculcation and repetition here. I say, "That which we have seen and heard," and found, "declare we unto you," ver. 3. The apostles could not be deceived in such long and various exercise of their sense. Sense must minister to reason and judgment, and reason and judgment must minister to the reception of the Lord Christ and his Gospel. The rejection of the Christian revelation is, at last, resolved into the rejection of sense itself: "He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed them not who had seen him after he was risen," *Mar. xvi. 14*.

Thirdly. With a solemn assertion and attestation of these grounds and evidences of the Christian truth and doctrine the apostles publish these assurances for our satisfaction: "We bear witness, and shew unto you," ver. 2; "that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you," ver. 3. It became the apostles to open to the disciples the evidence by which they were led, the reasons by which they were constrained to proclaim and propagate the Christian doctrine in the world. Wisdom and integrity obliged them to demonstrate that it was not either private fancy or a cunningly devised fable that they presented to the world. Evident truth would open their mouths and force a public profession; "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard," *Acts iv. 20*. It concerned the disciples to be well assured of the truth of the institution they had embraced. They should see the evidences of their holy religion. It fears not the light, nor the most judicious examination; it is able to afford rational conviction, and solid persuasion of mind and conscience; "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have" (or concern of mind) "for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts might be knit together in love, and unto all riches of full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, even of the Father, and of Christ," *Col. ii. 1, 2*.

"We have seen it, and bear witness." Note here, again, that the peculiar commission of the apostles was to bear witness of the great facts which were at the foundation of Christianity; and that their indispensable qualification for that office was their having personally and familiarly been witness to them: see *Jno. xv. 27*; *Acts i. 21, 22*, &c. In the apostleship, therefore, as distinct from the ordinary pastoral ministry, they could have no successors, and never have had any in men, who, however well qualified in other respects, have not seen and heard for themselves that which they have ministerially declared,—who neither were with the Lord before or after his resurrection, nor have ever been favoured, (like one that was born out of due time,) with the equivalent of a miraculous vision of him. No! plain Christian ministers must repudiate the fanaticism of a transmitted apostleship, and must take with thankfulness a lower place. Called of God through his church, we may teach and disseminate the same substantial truth as did the chosen witnesses,—but not with the same personal authority; because that was derived in their case, as to the sensible facts of the Gospel, from their claim of personal knowledge, and as to its supernatural doctrines, from their possession of supernatural gifts. We are neither proper witnesses nor infallible enunciators of the truth, but accepted reporters and publishers of it at second-hand, that is, on the written testimony (not more accessible to us than to millions besides,) of these apostles, and of their Master. That testimony makes up, together with the ancient Scriptures, the one only Word of God; and our simple yet solemn office, as Christian preachers—not without special promises of the Spirit—is to recite, expound, and enforce its faultless teachings.]

Fourthly. With the reason of the apostle's exhibiting and asserting this summary of sacred faith, and this breviate of evidence attending it. And this reason is twofold:—

1. That the believers of it may be advanced to the same happiness with them, (with the apostles themselves); "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us," ver. 3. The apostle means not personal fellowship, or consociation in the same church administrations, but such as is consistent with personal distance from each other. It is communion with heaven, and in blessings that come from thence, and tend thither. This we declare and testify, that you may share with us in our privileges and happiness. Gospel spirits, or those that are made happy by gospel grace, would fain have others happy too. We see, also, there is a fellowship or communion that runs through the whole church of God. There may be some personal distinctions and peculiarities, but there is a communion (or common participation of privilege and dignity) belonging to all saints, from the highest apostle to the lowest believer. As there is the same precious faith, there are the same precious promises dignifying and crowning that faith, and the same precious blessings and glories enriching and filling those promises. Now, that believers may be ambitious of this communion, that they may be instigated to retain and hold fast the faith that is the means of such communion, that the apostles as so may manifest their love to the disciples in assisting them to the same communion with themselves, they indicate what it is, and where it is; "And

classes characterised by practical or systematic indifference to modes of faith" (Webster and Wilkinson).

i. 1. "Was:" compare *John i. 1*. The verb signifies uncreated existence, as contrasted with "to become." The Word "was," but the Word "became" flesh. The subject in this verse is resumed in verse 3. (Compare *Prov. viii. 23*.)

i. 2. Parenthesis introduced, justifying the expression, "Word of life." The Life, the source of all life (*John i. 4*). "Eternal life:"

"He joins 'eternal' to 'life,' he joins 'life' to 'God.' If the life is that which was manifested in Christ, in his words and acts, it is a life of gentleness, justice, truth. You cannot measure these by the clocks; you do not wish or try to measure them. You never did so when you were thinking about the gentleness, or justice, or truth of a friend. . . . He who came into the world and showed forth that life in it whereof St. John speaks, said, 'I come from a Father; my life is the image of his life, therefore it is an eternal life'" (*Maurice*).

truly our fellowship," or communion, "is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ." We have communion with the Father (and with the Son of the Father, as, 2 *Jno.* 3, he is most emphatically styled) in our happy relation to them, in our receiving heavenly blessings from them, and in our spiritual converse with them. We have now such supernatural conversation with God and the Lord Christ as is an earnest and foretaste of our everlasting abode with them, and enjoyment of them, in the heavenly glory. See to what the gospel revelation tends—to advance us far above sin and earth, and to carry us to blessed communion with the Father and the Son. See for what end the eternal life was made flesh—that he might advance us to eternal life in communion with the Father and himself. See how far those live beneath the dignity, use, and end of the Christian faith and institution, who have not spiritual, blessed communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

"With the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Frequently in the epistles, when the name of the First Person of the Trinity is coupled with that of the Second—particularly if to the latter be affixed some designation of the Son's economical character, such as Jesus Christ—the great truth seems to be expressed, that the Father can only be known, worshipped, and enjoyed, in and through the Son. To understand this, we must farther notice, that the Father not seldom in the New Testament represents the pure Godhead—the whole triune Deity, as being *Tous et Principium Deitatis*; while the Son, (although so called properly with respect to his Divine relation and nature,) stands out distinctly, in these particular connections, as that God-man Mediator in whom alone, by the agency of the co-eternal Spirit, the Deity is brought near to man. Fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ is not, therefore, some sort of mystical communion with each distinctly, as a subsistence in the glorious Godhead; neither do we think that the language refers to the Christian's privileged acquaintance with the Father and the Son in those various relations of grace which they are severally pleased to sustain,—with the Father, for instance, as our adopting, or with the Son as our atoning, God. It rather expresses our adoring intercourse with Jehovah as maintained solely by means of our believing intercourse with Emmanuel. Fellowship with the Father is real religion; fellowship with the Son Jesus Christ is, specifically and emphatically, evangelism. And St. John would teach us that those sentiments are, like their respective immediate objects, inseparable, and essentially one. There is no religion for sinful man except in the way of the Gospel; and hence the necessity for the foregoing explicit declaration of its fundamental truth.]

2. That believers may be enlarged and advanced in holy joy; "And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full," ver. 4. The gospel dispensation is not properly a dispensation of fear, sorrow, and dread, but of peace and joy. Terror and astonishment may well attend mount Sinai, but exultation and joy mount Zion, where appears the eternal Word, the eternal life, manifested in our flesh. The mystery of the Christian religion is directly calculated for the joy of mortals. It should be joy to us that the eternal Son should come to seek and save us, that he has made a full atonement for our sins, that he has conquered sin and death, and hell, that he lives as our Intercessor and Advocate with the Father, and that he will come again to perfect and glorify his persevering believers. And therefore those live beneath the use and end of the Christian revelation who are not filled with spiritual joy. Believers should rejoice in their happy relation to God, as his sons and heirs, his beloved and adopted—in their happy relation to the Son of the Father, as being members of his beloved body, and co-heirs with himself—in the pardon of their sins, the sanctification of their natures, the adoption of their persons, and the prospect of grace and glory that will be revealed at the return of their Lord and Head from heaven. Were they confirmed in their holy faith, how would they rejoice! "The disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost," *Acts* xiii. 52.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

The apostle, having declared the truth and dignity of the author of the Gospel, brings a message or report from him, from which a just conclusion is to be drawn for the consideration and conviction of the professors of religion, or professed entertainers of this glorious Gospel.

First. Here is the message or report that the apostle avers to come from the Lord Jesus: "This then is the message which we have heard of him," ver. 5, of his Son Jesus Christ. As he was the immediate sender of the apostles, so he is the principal person spoken of in the preceding context, and the next antecedent also to whom the pronoun 'him' can relate. The apostles and apostolical ministers are the messengers of the Lord Jesus; it is their honour, the chief they pretend to, to bring his mind and messages to the world and to the churches. This is the wisdom and present dispensation of the Lord Jesus, to send his messages to us by persons like ourselves. He that put on human nature will honour earthen vessels. It was the ambition of the apostles to be found faithful, and faithfully to deliver the errands and messages they had received. What was communicated to them they were solicitous to impart; "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you." A message from the Word of life, from the eternal Word, we should gladly receive; and the present one is this, (relating to the nature of God whom we are to serve, and with whom we should covet all indulged communion,) "That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all," ver. 5.

"The message which we have heard of him." Mark a striking change in the mode of speaking. Of the appearance of the living Word in human nature John had boldly and earnestly borne witness; but concerning the glorious character of Jehovah, and the majestic moral altitude in which he receives the advances of his various worshippers, even an apostle could no more than convey a message from that Word himself. The reason is apparent, and impressive. The first-mentioned fact belonged to that class of earthly things, palpable to sense, and within the knowledge of many besides the chosen official witnesses, which our Lord rebuked Nicodemus (*Jno.* xxx.) for not believing on other testimony besides His own. But the character and counsels of the great God, on the contrary, are among those eminently heavenly things which no man (not having ascended up to heaven,) could possibly know or make known, except by revelation, either verbally from "him that came down from heaven, even the

Son of man, which is in heaven," or mentally from that Divine Spirit who also "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." John had derived his elementary knowledge of these sublime realities from the former source; and from the latter he drew those ampler disclosures of them which this glorious epistle reflects.]

This report asserts the excellency of the Divine nature. He is all that beauty and perfection that can be represented to us by light. He is a self-active, uncompounded spirituality, purity, wisdom, holiness, and glory. And then the absolute fullness of that excellency and perfection. There is no defect or imperfection, no mixture of any thing alien or contrary to absolute excellency, no mutability nor capacity of any decay in him; "In him is no darkness at all," ver. 5. Or this report may more immediately relate to what is usually called the moral perfection of the Divine nature, what we are to imitate, or what is more directly to influence us in our gospel work. And so it will comprehend the holiness of God, the absolute purity of his nature and will, his penetrative knowledge (particularly of hearts), his jealousy and justice, which burn as a most bright and vehement flame. It is meet that to this dark world the great God should be represented as pure and perfect light. It is the Lord Jesus that best of all opens to us the name and nature of the unsearchable God: "The only-begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, the same hath declared him." It is the prerogative of the Christian revelation to bring us the most noble, the most august and agreeable, account of the blessed God; such as is most suitable to the light of reason and what is demonstrable thereby, most suitable to the magnificence of his works round about us, and to the nature and office of him that is the supreme administrator, governor, and judge of the world. What more (relating to and comprehensive of all such perfection) could be included in one word than in this, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Then,

Secondly. There is a just conclusion to be drawn from this message and report, and that for the consideration and conviction of professors of religion, or professed entertainers of this Gospel. This conclusion issues into two branches:—

1. For the conviction of such professors as have no true fellowship with God: "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." It is known that to walk, in Scripture account, is to order and frame the course and actions of the moral life, that is, of the life so far as it is capable of subjection to the Divine law. To "walk in darkness" is to live and act according to such ignorance, error, and erroneous practice, as are contrary to the fundamental dictates of our holy religion. [More distinctly, as purity, benevolence, wisdom, moral beauty, and holy happiness, each finds its expressive and pleasing emblem in some one of the properties of light,—so whatever in the spirit or practice of a professor is opposed to those godlike qualities is necessarily a thing of darkness. Nay, the simple absence of light is darkness; and, in like manner, the absence of holiness, which ensues whenever God's good Spirit withdraws his shining from the soul—that of itself is sin. They with whom this state is habitual (as it is, alas! with all the unregenerate,) are said to walk in darkness. Gross works of darkness, hidden practices of iniquity, doubtless deepen the condemnation of the sinner; but the darkness itself, the simple want of loving, spiritual, and happy affections is enough to shew that there is no permanent irradiation from God, and to rebuke the profession of fellowship with him.] Now there may be those who may pretend to great attainments and enjoyments in religion; they may profess to have communion with God, and yet their lives may be irreligious, immoral, and impure. To such the apostle would not fear to give the lie: "They lie, and do not the truth." They belie God, for he holds no heavenly fellowship or intercourse with unholy souls. What communion hath light with darkness? They belie themselves, or lie concerning themselves; for they have no such communications from God nor access to him. There is no truth in their profession nor in their practice, or their practice gives their profession and pretences the lie, and demonstrates the folly and falsehood of them.

2. For the conviction and consequent satisfaction of those that are near to God: "But if we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." As the blessed God is the eternal, boundless light, and the Mediator is, from him, the light of the world, so the Christian institution is the great luminary that appears in our sphere, and shines here below. A conformity to this in spirit and practice demonstrates fellowship or communion with God. Those that so walk shew that they know God, that they have received of the Spirit of God, and that the Divine impress or image is stamped upon their souls.

"In the light." The glory of the Divine excellence, the very nature of holiness in God, is a dazzling mystery. When we attempt to elucidate the apostle's brief sentence on this subject by earthly comparisons or analogies, we feel like him who, in presence even of the transfigured Son of man, wist not what to say. But we do know what constitutes sanctity in a Christian, and can conceive several reasons why it should be described as it is above. For instance, 1. Christian holiness springs from an illumined mind, a true and spiritual knowledge of Christianity. 2. Its actions are such as will bear the light, and even court it. 3. Its principle and spirit in many respects resemble that greatest glory of the material creation—in this, particularly, (to adopt a familiar metaphor of Bishop Horne's,) that, like the light, a holy character may come in contact with much that is corrupt and impure, and yet pass through all undefiled, *Jas.* i. 27; 2 *Pet.* i. 4. "We walk in the light, as he is in the light." Let us be suitably impressed with the infinite moral disparity between God and the most godly of men. He is in the light; nay, he is light, "and in him is no darkness at all;" in him, truth, rectitude, and goodness are essential, unaugmentable, immaculate. The best of men, on the contrary, have all needed to be brought out of darkness into light; and even now they need to walk therein according to rule rather than instinct; with measured advances towards even a comparative perfection; with considerate and watchful steps; and with a constant care to maintain nearness to him in whose light alone they shine. For let us mark what follows:—If we walk in the light as he is in the light,—if we are habitually and progressively holy, as he which hath called us is essentially and infinitely holy,—then we verify our professions; we give evidence that we have fellowship one with another,—saint with saint, and all with a sanctifying God,—and that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. Only by such communications with and from God could we have been made thus life unto him; and again, only through fellowship with the Son, and by the virtue of his atoning blood, could we have attained fellowship with the Father, so as to have received from him the effusions of his purifying and transforming Spirit. Hence we are said here to be cleansed from sin by that blood, and elsewhere to have become light in the Lord; that is, we are more or less beautified with holiness, it is altogether by the beams of that grace, which the Lord Jesus as our wisdom has revealed, as our righteousness has entitled us to claim, as our sanctification has poured down upon our souls, and as our redemption will crown with the full glories of life and incorruption. This view of the connection between the first and the two latter clauses of the 7th verse we deem not only correct, but highly important. There is, however, a different one adopted by some expositors, which reverses the foregoing order in the experiences of sanctified persons, and which may be expressed as follows.]

i. 3 "Fellowship:" one of the key-words of the epistle. St. John desires that they also who had not seen or handled might share in that fellowship which those who had seen enjoyed. He proceeds to state what that fellowship was.

i. 5. "God is light:" There is not one dark spot in this Being; not one evil, malicious thought against any creature whom he has formed. All is clear, unbroken light. And this word 'light' is at once the simplest, and the fullest, and the deepest which can be

used in human discourse. . . . It does not only tell of a goodness and truth without a flaw, it tells of a goodness and truth that are always seeking to spread themselves abroad, to send forth rays that shall penetrate everywhere and scatter the darkness which opposes them" (Maurice's "Lectures").

i. 6. "He introduces, in order to refute, the errors of two opposite classes: first, of those who claimed an interest in Christ while living in sin; and, secondly, of those who would not acknowledge themselves

"Then we have fellowship one with another," they with us, and we with them, and both with God, in his blessed or beatific communication to us. And this is one of those beatific communications to us, that his Son's blood or death is applied or imputed to us; "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The eternal life, the eternal Son, hath put on flesh and blood, and so became Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ hath shed his blood for us, or died to wash us from our sins in his blood. His blood applied to us discharges us from the guilt of all sin, both original and actual, inherent and committed; and so far we stand righteous in his sight; and not only so, but his blood procures for us those sacred influences by which sin is to be subdued more and more till it is quite abolished, *Gal. iii. 13, 14.*

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Here, First. The apostle, having supposed that even those of this heavenly communion have yet their sin, proceeds here to justify that supposition; and this he does by shewing the dreadful consequences of denying it, and that in two particulars:—

1. "If we say, We have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," ver. 8. We must beware of deceiving ourselves in denying or excusing our sins. The more we see them, the more we shall esteem and value the remedy. If we deny them, the truth is not in us, either the truth that is contrary to such denial (we lie in denying our sin), or the truth of religion is not in us. The Christian religion is the religion of sinners, of such as have sinned, and in whom sin in some measure still dwells. The Christian life is a life of continued repentance, humiliation for and mortification of sin, of continual faith in, thankfulness for, and love to the Redeemer, and hopeful, joyful expectation of a day of glorious redemption, in which the believer shall be fully and finally acquitted, and sin abolished for ever.

2. "If we say, We have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us," ver. 10. The denial of our sin not only deceives ourselves, but reflects dishonour upon God. It challenges his veracity. He has abundantly testified of, and testified against, the sin of the world. "And the Lord said in his heart," (determined thus with himself,) "I will not again curse the ground" (as he had then lately done) "for man's sake; for" (or, with the learned Bishop Patrick, 'though,') "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," *Gen. viii. 21.* But God has given his testimony to the continued sin and sinfulness of the world, by providing a sufficient, effectual sacrifice for sin, that will be needed in all ages, and to the continued sinfulness of believers themselves, by requiring them continually to confess their sins, and apply themselves by faith to the blood of that sacrifice. And therefore, if we say either that we have not sinned, or do not yet sin, "the word of God is not in us," neither in our minds, as to the acquaintance we should have with it, nor in our hearts, as to the practical influence it should have upon us.

Secondly. The apostle then instructs the believer in the way to the continued pardon of his sin. Here we have,

1. His duty in order thereto; "If we confess our sins," ver. 9. Penitent confession and acknowledgment of sin are the believer's business, and the means of his deliverance from his guilt. And,

2. His encouragement thereto, and assurance of the happy issue. This is the veracity, righteousness, and clemency of God, to whom he makes such confession; "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," ver. 9. God is faithful to his covenant and word, wherein he has promised forgiveness to penitent, believing confessors. He is just to himself and his glory, who has provided such a sacrifice, by which his righteousness is declared in the justification of sinners. He is just to his Son, who has not only sent him for such service, but promised to him that those who come through him shall be forgiven on his account. "By his knowledge" (by the believing apprehension of him) "shall my righteous servant justify many," *Isa. liii. 11.* He is clement and gracious also, and so will forgive to the contrite confessor all his sins, cleanse him from the guilt of all unrighteousness, and in due time deliver him from the power and practice of it.

CHAPTER II.

Here the apostle encourages against sins of infirmity, ver. 1, 2; shews the true knowledge and love of God, ver. 3–6; renews the precept of fraternal love, ver. 7–11; addresses the several ages of Christians, ver. 12–14; warns against worldly love, ver. 15–17; against seducers, ver. 18, 19; shews the security of true Christians, ver. 20–27; and advises to abide in Christ, ver. 28, 29.



My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

These verses relate to the concluding subject of the foregoing chapter, in which the apostle proceeds upon the supposition of the real Christian's sin; and he here gives them both dissuasion and support.

First, Dissuasion. He would leave no room for sin; "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not," ver. 1. The design or purport of this letter, the design of what I have just said concerning communion with God, and the overthrow of it by an irreligious course, [and also concerning the rich provision which is made in Christ for your inward sanctification,] is to dissuade and drive you from sin. See the familiar, affectionate compellation with

which he introduces his admonition: "My little children," children as having perhaps been begotten by his Gospel; "little children," as being much beneath him in age and experience; "my little children," as being dear to him in the bonds of the Gospel. Certainly the Gospel most prevailed where and when such ministerial love most abounded. Or perhaps the judicious reader will find reason to think that the apostle's meaning in this dissuasion or caution is this, or amounts to this reading, "These things write I unto you, not that you sin." And so the words will look back to what he had said before concerning the assured pardon of sin; "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," &c., *ch. i. 9.* And so the words are a preclusion of all abuse of such favour and indulgence. Though sins will be forgiven to penitent confessors, yet this I write, not to encourage you in sin, but upon another account. Or this clause will look forward to what the apostle is going to say about the Advocate for sinners; and so it is a prolepsis, a prevention of the like mistake or abuse; These things write I unto you, not that you sin, but that you may see your remedy for sin. And so the following particle, as the learned know, may be rendered adversatively; "But, if a man sin," he may know his help and cure. And so we see.

Secondly. The believer's support and relief in case of sin; "And" (or 'but') "if any man sin," (any of us, or of our aforesaid communion,) "we have an Advocate with the Father," &c., ver. 1. Believers themselves, those that are advanced to a happy gospel state, have yet their sins. There is a great distinction therefore between the sinners that are in the world. There are Christianized (such as are instated in the sacred, saving privileges of Christ's mystical or spiritual body) and unchristianized, converted and unconverted sinners. There are some who, though they really sin, yet, in comparison with others, are said not to sin, as *ch. iii. 9.* Believers, as they have an atonement applied unto them at their entrance into a state of pardon and justification, so they have an Advocate in heaven, still to continue to them that state, and procure their continued forgiveness. And this must be the support, satisfaction, and refuge of believers (or real Christians) in or upon their sins; "We have an Advocate." The original name is sometimes given to the Holy Ghost, and then it is rendered, "the Comforter." He acts within us; he puts pleas and arguments into our hearts and mouths; and so is our Advocate, by teaching us to intercede for ourselves. But here is an Advocate without us, in heaven and with the Father. The proper office and business of an advocate is with the judge; with him he pleads the client's cause. The Judge with whom our Advocate pleads is the Father, his Father and ours. He who was our Judge in the legal court (the court of the violated law) is our Father in the gospel court, the court of heaven and of grace. His throne or tribunal is the mercy-seat. And he that is our Father is also our Judge, the supreme Arbitrator of our state and circumstances, either for life or death, for time or eternity; "You have come to God, the Judge of all," *Heb. xii. 23.* That believers may be encouraged to hope that their cause will go well, as their Judge is represented to them in the relation of a Father, so their Advocate is recommended to them upon these considerations:—

1. By his person and personal names; "It is Jesus Christ the Son of the Father," one anointed by the Father for the whole office of mediation, the whole work of salvation, and consequently for that of the intercessor or advocate.

2. By his qualification for the office; "It is Jesus Christ the righteous," the righteous one in the court and sight of the Judge. This is not so necessary in another advocate. Another advocate, or an advocate in another court, may be an unjust person himself, and yet may have a just cause, and the cause of a just person in that case, to plead, and may accordingly carry his cause. But here the clients are guilty; their innocence and legal righteousness cannot be pleaded; their sin must be confessed or supposed. It is the Advocate's own righteousness that he must plead for the criminals. He has been righteous to the death, righteous for them; he has brought in everlasting righteousness. This the Judge will not deny. Upon this score he pleads that the clients' sins may not be imputed to them.

3. By the plea he has to make, the ground and basis of his advocacy; "And he is the propitiation for our sins," ver. 2. He is the expiatory victim, the propitiatory sacrifice that has been offered to the Judge for all our offences against his majesty, and law, and government. In vain do the professors of Rome distinguish between an advocate of redemption and an advocate of intercession, or a mediator of such different service. The Mediator of intercession, the Advocate for us, is the Mediator of redemption the propitiation for our sins. It is his propitiation that he pleads. And we might be apt to suppose that his blood had lost its value and efficacy if no mention had been made of it in heaven since the time it was shed. But now we see it is of esteem there, since it is continually represented in the intercession of the great Advocate (the attorney-general) for the church of God. He ever lives to make intercession for those that come to God through him.

4. By the extent of his plea, the latitude of his propitiation. It is not confined to one nation, and not particularly to the ancient Israel of God; "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only," (not only for the sins of us Jews, us that are Abraham's seed according to the flesh,) "but also for those of the whole world," ver. 2; not only for the past, or us present believers, but for the sins of all who shall hereafter believe on him, or come to God through him. The extent and intent of the Mediator's death reach to all tribes, nations, and countries. As he is the only, so he is the universal, atonement and propitiation for all that are saved and brought home to God, and [restored] to his favour and forgiveness. [Or the meaning may more naturally be this: Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins,—for the backslidings, the wanderings, and the haltings, of us his people, whom he hath called into his light, and whom he enables habitually to walk therein. Nor does he propitiate Divine justice for the sins of such only, but also for the sins, far more grievous and condemning, of those who have never yet sought or experienced this great salvation. The repenting are pardoned, and the impenitent spared "in hope," through the sprinkling of the same blood.]

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. 6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

These verses,—[although they form a natural sequel to ver. 1 and 2, and present fresh guards against the abuse of those most precious doctrines of grace which are enshrined in that and in some preceding parts of the context,

sinners, and therefore denied the necessity of a redeemer, intercessor, and sanctifier" (Webster and Wilkinson).

ii. 1. "My little children:" a term of endearment appropriately used by one who was far advanced in years and the last of the apostles, and round whom was a new generation, many of whom he had watched over from the first. It spoke, too, of a tenderer relation between him and his Ephesian flock than the use of any merely official title. Mr. Maurice well observes, "It is a sad day for

churches, yes, and for nations, when men begin to regard themselves chiefly as officials sent forth by some central government to do its jobs, and not as men who are bound by sacred affinities and actual relations to those whom they preside over" ("Lectures"). "That ye sin not;" "In order (purpose in thus writing) that ye may not sin;" the tense employed implying the absence not only of the habit, but of single acts of sin" (Alford). "Advocate;" "paraclete," same word as used of the Holy Ghost (*John xiv. 16*).

yet to other readers,]—may seem to relate to the seventh verse of the former chapter; [as if] between that and these verses there occurred an incidental discourse concerning the believer's duty and relief in case of sin, occasioned by the mention of one of the believer's privileges; namely, his being cleansed from sin by the Mediator's blood. In that verse the apostle asserts the beneficial consequence of walking in the light; we have then fellowship with one another, such Divine fellowship and communion as is the prerogative of the church of Christ. Here now succeeds the trial or test of our light and of our love.

First. The trial of our light: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments," ver. 3. Divine light and knowledge is the beauty and improvement of the mind. It becomes the disciples of the Mediator to be persons of wisdom and understanding. Young Christians are apt to magnify their new light, and applaud their own knowledge, especially if it has been suddenly, or in a short time, communicated; and old ones are apt to suspect the sufficiency and fulness of their knowledge. They lament that they know God, and Christ, and the rich contents of his Gospel, no more. But here is the evidence of the soundness of our knowledge, if it constrain us to keep God's commands. Each perfection of his nature enforces his authority. The wisdom of his counsels, the riches of his grace, the grandeur of his works, recommend his law and government. A careful, conscientious obedience to his commands shews that the apprehension and knowledge of these things is graciously impressed upon the soul. And thereupon it must follow in the reverse that "he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him," ver. 4. Professors of the truth are often ashamed of their ignorance, or ashamed to own it; they frequently pretend to great attainments in the knowledge of Divine mysteries; "Thou makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest," in thy rational judgment, "the things that are more excellent; being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art," or art fit to be "a guide to the blind," &c., *Rom. ii. 17, &c.* But what knowledge of God can that be that sees not that he is most worthy of the most entire and intense obedience? And if that be seen and known, how vain and superficial is even that knowledge when it sways not the heart unto obedience? A disobedient life is the confutation and shame of pretended religious knowledge; it gives the lie to such boasts and pretences, and shews that there is neither religion nor honesty in them.

[It is very plain, however, and very important to be noted, that the relative "him" in these four verses refers to the immediate antecedent, namely, "Jesus Christ the righteous." And the meaning is, that "hereby we do know that we know him," experimentally, in all those evangelical and saving relations which have just been unfolded, "if we keep his," Christ's, "commandments;" if we cherish, that is, the whole moral law of God as spiritually expounded and amplified by him, and more especially, that one particular application of it which, for certain reasons, he has termed his own, and even his new, commandment. With what exquisite skill does love's own disciple and apostle approach his favourite theme, and bespeak for it the affection of his Christian readers! As if he would say, He whom we know and bless as our propitiation, our righteousness, our advocate—our fountain of life, and light, and joy—our Lord that bought us, and our God that was made flesh for us—what commands may he not lay upon our willing gratitude? And, of all his commands, what one more welcome than this, that we walk in love, even as Christ loved us? Nay, how can we have known him as our Saviour, or how can we prove that we "abide in the light" of his grace, unless we be thereby conformed to his law, and to his likeness?]

Secondly. The trial of our love: "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him," ver. 5. To keep the word of God, or of Christ, is sacredly to attend thereto in all the conduct and motion of life. In him that does so is "the love of God perfected." Possibly, some may here understand God's love to us;—[of which we have seen such bright displays in the opening of this epistle, in the incarnation of God's own Son, and the absolution and sanctification of believers through his blood.] To be sure, his love to us cannot be perfected, or [according to the proper force of that term] obtain its perfect design and fruit [in us], without our practical observance of his word. We are chosen to be holy and blameless before him in love; we are redeemed, to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works; we are pardoned and justified, that we may be partakers of larger measures of the Divine Spirit for sanctification; we are sanctified, that we may walk in ways of holiness and obedience. No act of Divine love, that here terminates upon us, obtains its proper tendency, issue, and effect, without our holy attendance to God's word. But [perhaps] the phrase rather denotes here our love to God. So, ver. 15, "The love of" (that is, to) "the Father is not in him;" so *ch. iii. 17*, "How dwelleth the love of" (that is, to) "God in him?" Now light is to kindle love; and love must, and will, keep the word of God. It inquires wherein the beloved may be pleased and served; and, finding he will be so by an observance of his declared will, there it employs and exerts itself; there love is demonstrated; there it has its perfect or complete exercise, operation, and delight. And "hereby," by this dutiful attendance to the will of God or Christ, "know we that we are in him," ver. 5. We know that we belong to him, and that we are united to him by that Spirit that elevates and assists us to this obedience. And if we acknowledge our relation to him, and our union with him, it must have this continued enforcement upon us, "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself to walk as he walked," ver. 6. The Lord Christ was an inhabitant of this world, and walked here below. Here he gave a shining example of absolute obedience to God. [As God, of God, he is light, of light, and eternally in the light; but as the Son of Man he deigned to walk in all the paths of a regulated and obedient holiness, so as to become a fit exemplar to the sanctified from among men.] They that profess to be on his side, and to abide with him, must [therefore] walk with him, walk after his pattern and example. The partizans of the several sects of philosophers of old paid great regard to the dictates and practice of their respective teachers and sect-masters. Much more should the Christian (he that professes to abide in and with Christ,) aim to resemble his infallible Master and Head, and conform to his course and prescriptions; "Then are ye my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command ye," *Jno. xv. 14*.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. 8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. 9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in

darkness even until now. 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. 11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

The seventh verse may be supposed either to look backward to what immediately preceded—and then it is walking as Christ walked that is here represented as no new, but an old commandment; it is that which the apostles would certainly inculcate wherever they brought Christ's Gospel; or [the words may be taken] to look forward to what the apostle is now going to recommend, and that is the law of fraternal love. This is the message "heard from the beginning," *ch. iii. 11*; and the old commandment, *2 Jno. 5*. Now, while the apostle addresses himself to the recommendation of such a practice, he is ready to give an instance thereof in his affectionate appellation, "Brethren," you that are dear to me in the bond of that love to which I would solicit you, And so the precept of fraternal love is recommended.

First. As an old one: "I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning," ver. 7. The precept of love must be as old as human nature; but it might admit divers enactments, enforcements, and motives. In the state of innocence (had human nature then been propagated) men must have loved one another, as being of one blood, made to dwell on the earth; as being God's offspring, and bearing his image. In the state of sin and promised recovery they must love one another; as related to God their Maker, as related to each other by blood [Divine], and as partners in the same hope. When the Hebrews were peculiarly incorporated they must, accordingly, love each other, as being the privileged people, whose were the covenants and the adoption, and of whose race the Messiah and Head of the church must spring. And the law of love must be conveyed, with new obligations, to the new Israel of God, to the gospel church; and so it is "the old commandment," or the word which the children of the gospel Israel "have heard from the beginning," ver. 7.

Secondly. As a new one. Again (to constrain you to this duty the more) "a new commandment I write unto you;" the law of the new society, the Christian corporation. "Which thing is true in him." The matter of which was first true in and concerning the Head of it. The truth of it was first, and was abundantly, in him. He loved the church, and gave himself for it. "And in you." This law is, in some measure, written upon your hearts. Ye are taught of God to love one another; and that because (or since, or forasmuch as) "the darkness is past," the darkness of your prejudiced, unconverted (whether Jewish or Gentile) minds; your deplorable ignorance of God and of his Christ is now passed, "and the true light now shineth," ver. 8. The light of evangelical revelation hath shone with life and efficacy into your hearts. Hence you have seen the excellency of Christian love, and the fundamental obligation thereto. Hence we see the fundamentals, and particularly the fundamental precepts, of the Christian religion may be represented either as new or old. The reformed doctrine, or doctrine of religion in the reformed churches, is new and old. New, as taught, after long darkness, by the lights of the reformation; new, as purged from the adulterations of Rome; but old, as having been taught and heard from the beginning. We should see that that grace or virtue that was true in Christ should be true also in us. We should be conformable to our Head. The more our darkness is past, and gospel light shines into us, the deeper should our subjection be to the commandments of our Lord, whether considered as old or new.

[It is not unlikely that by the "old commandment" is meant that relating to general purity of life, as expressed in ver. 29; *ch. iii. 3–11*, &c.; and, by the "new commandment,"—which was so designated by Christ himself, and which is ceaselessly enforced throughout this epistle,—the commandment that (having believed on the name of Jesus Christ,) we believers should "love one another." Alusively, the two classes of things are conjoined, yet clearly distinguished, in *ch. iii. 10*. Now, it is true that the principle of the latter duty, the principle of mutual love, has pervaded the whole moral system of revealed religion from the beginning: that principle, therefore, is no new matter of requirement. But the form or direction of it in this particular commandment is "new." A general philanthropy, on the one hand, or else, on the other, an exclusive, and, at the same time, too indiscriminating, love for their own nation and national church, was the only impress left by the second table of the moral law on the mind and character of the devout Jews before Christ. This, at least, was all they could retain, after that the law itself had come to be incrustated with traditions, or in parts worn down and reduced by interpretation. Comprehensively, mankind were their "brethren;" in a special and religious sense, Jews were so; and only as fellow-men, or as co-members of the commonwealth of Israel, were they recognised and loved. Now, without discrediting either of these sentiments,—nay, while distinctly sanctioning each in its purer state and exercise,—our blessed Master has given express definition, and not only renewed but absolutely new force and attractions, to a sentiment markedly different from both. Brotherly love, as enjoined by him, has neither the latitude of philanthropy, nor the restricted, yet undiscerning, character of sectarianism. No! it is a spiritual affection, and can only be felt by, and towards, spiritual men. In a word, catholicity; the mutual love of true believers; of true believers as such; and, therefore, of believers only, and of all believers, without regard to national or ecclesiastical distinctions. This is the scope and point of the "new commandment." That commandment, written in the heart, creates, so to speak, a new virtue in the church of God. And this "thing is true in him, and in you;" this virtue was beautifully embodied in Christ's own distinguishing love towards those whom the Father had given him, and who had kept his word; and the same large yet eclectic charity was verified in a high degree—verified in its attainableness, its blessedness, and its fragrant, refreshing influence on general society—by true Christians in primitive times. And this new thing in the earth, (actually new, at least, when Christ's law first went forth,—and, alas! too much so, now that the law has been for centuries promulgated among us,) this new sentiment sprang up how or why? Because the darkness was past, and the true light now shone. Observe, dear Christian reader, Christ's new commandment arose naturally out of his new revelations. The law had long awaited the dawn of the Gospel, as requisite to the full development of its own meaning and spirit, and especially to a discovery of the perfect oneness in principle of its two great commandments. The gospel light broke forth and straightway revealed to its disciples, so as they had never perceived them before, on the one hand, the spirituality of God's nature and worship, and, on the other, (in the radiance of that primary truth,) the real unity of all spiritual men. Hence arose the natural reason and obligation of that which Christ soon embodied in a special command,—we mean the principle that spiritual men, as delighting in God, should, from the very

ii 3–6. Holiness of life and obedience are evidences of knowledge of Christ. Likewise, as the commandments of God reflect his character, their observance will add to increased and assured knowledge of God. To be like Christ in heart is to be like him in life. If one or other side be wanting, there is falsehood.

ii. 7. "From the beginning;" from the time when they first heard the Gospel, or perhaps better still, from what follows, from the very beginning, for the law of love has always been incumbent upon

men. It has, however, become new in the life and death of Christ, having thereby received new force.

ii. 8. "Which thing is true?" i.e., the fact that the commandment which is called old is also new.

ii. 9–12. Christ, the universal Brother, introduces men into the true state of brotherhood. A newer and higher state, a tenderer expression of the law of love, is thus introduced by Christ. To hate our brother, to refuse to take up our position in this brotherhood, is

same radical affection, delight in and cleave to or another. If, therefore, we walk in the light of these and other gospel revelations, and if, at the same time, we feel the glow of evangelical and regenerate affections,—we shall certainly see in every Christian, in virtue of his sonship to God, a brother, and, in consequence of his nearness to Christ, a heart-neighbour, of our own; and we shall as certainly love him as ourselves. We shall love him, not merely as a fellow-man, but for the sake of his religious relations to God; and, again, not merely as an outward worshipper of God in our own forms, but because he worships him, whether in those forms or not, in spirit and in truth, and is made a partaker of the Divine nature. Thus, by calling forth a far more godlike affection than could arise out of any natural or ecclesiastical sympathies,—an affection which first soars to God, and from him descends to and finds its delight with those all, and those only, of the sons of men who bear his moral likeness,—in short, a love to brethren in Christ, which is but a refracted ray of our love to Christ, and truth, and holiness,—by calling forth such an affection, this “new commandment” has gained the glory of combining, in a singular degree, the religious element of the first with the social principle of the second table of the law, and so of developing its unity and perfection.]

Light should produce a suitable heat. Accordingly, here is another trial of our Christian light: before, it was to be approved by obedience to God; here, by Christian love.

1. He that wants such love in vain pretends his light; “He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now,” ver. 9. It is proper for sincere Christians to acknowledge what God has done for their souls. But in the visible church there are often those that assume to themselves more than is true. There are those that say they are in the light, the Divine revelation has made its impression upon their minds, and yet they walk in hatred and enmity towards their Christian brethren. These cannot be swayed by the sense of the love of Christ to their brethren; and therefore remain in their dark state, notwithstanding their pretended conversion to the Christian religion.

2. He that is managed by such love approves his light to be good and genuine; “He that loveth his brother,” as his brother in Christ, “abideth in the light,” ver. 10. He sees the foundation and reason of Christian love; he discerns the weight and value of the Christian redemption; he sees how meet it is that we should love those whom Christ hath loved; and then the consequence will be that “there is no occasion of stumbling in him,” ver. 10. He will be no scandal, no stumblingblock to his brother; he will conscientiously beware that he neither induce his brother to sin, nor turn him out of the way of religion. Christian love teaches us highly to value our brother’s soul, and dread every thing that will be injurious to his innocence and peace.

3. Hatred is a sign of spiritual darkness: “But he that hateth his brother is in darkness,” ver. 11. Spiritual light is instilled by the Spirit of grace; and one of the first-fruits of that Spirit is love. He, then, that is possessed with malignity towards the Christian brother must needs be destitute of spiritual light; consequently, “he walks in darkness,” ver. 11; his life is agreeable to a dark mind and conscience; “and he knows not whither he goes;” he sees not whither this dark spirit carries him, and particularly that it will carry him to the world of outer darkness: “Because that darkness hath blinded his eyes,” ver. 10. The darkness of ungenerosity, evidenced by a malignant spirit, is contrary to the light of life. Where that darkness dwells, the mind, the judgment, and the conscience will be darkened, and so will mistake the way to heavenly, endless life. Here we may observe how effectually our apostle is now cured of his once hot and flaming spirit. Time was when he was for calling for fire from heaven upon poor, ignorant Samaritans that received them not, *Lu. ix. 54*. But his Lord and shewn him that he knew not his own spirit, nor whither it led him. Having now imbibed more of the Spirit of Christ, he breathes out goodwill to man, and love to all the brethren. It is the Lord Jesus that is the great master of love; it is his school, his own church, that is the school of love. His disciples are disciples of love, and his family must be the family of love.

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. 15 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

This new command of holy love, with the incentives thereto, [which are mentioned both before and after,] may possibly be directed [indeed we cannot doubt that they all are] to the several ranks of disciples that are here accosted. The several graduates in the Christian university (the catholic church) must be sure to preserve the bond of sacred love. Or, there being an important dehortation and dissuasion to follow,—without the observance of which vital religion, in the love of God, and love of the brethren, cannot subsist,—the apostle may justly seem to preface it with a solemn address to the several forms or orders in the school of Christ. Let the infants, (or minors,) the adult, the seniors, (or the *adepts*, the *τέλειοι*, ‘the most perfect,’ in the Christian institution know that they must not love this world; and so,

First. We have the address itself made to the various forms and ranks in the church of Christ. All Christians are not of the same standing and stature. There are babes in Christ, there are grown men, and old disciples. As these have their peculiar states, so they have their peculiar duties; but there are precepts and obedience that are common to them all, as particularly mutual love and contempt of the world. We see also that wise pastors will judiciously distribute the word of life, and give to the several members of Christ’s family their several suitable portions; I write unto you, children, fathers, and young men. In this distribution the apostle addresses, first, the lowest in the Christian school; “I write unto you, little children,” ver. 12. There are novices in religion, babes in Christ; those that are learning the rudiments of Christian godliness. The apostle may seem to encourage them, by applying to them first; and it may be useful to the greater proficients to hear what is said to their juniors. Elements are to be repeated. First principles are the foundation of all. He addresses the children in Christianity, upon two accounts:—

1. Because their sins were forgiven them for his name’s sake, ver. 12. The youngest sincere disciple is pardoned; the communion of saints is attended with the forgiveness of sins. Sins are forgiven, either for God’s name’s sake, for the praise of his glory, his glorious perfections displayed in forgiveness; or for Christ’s name’s sake, that is, upon his score, and upon the account of the redemption that is in him. And they that are forgiven of God are strongly obliged to relinquish this world, which so interferes with the love of God.

2. Because of their knowledge of God; “I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father,” ver. 13. Children are wont to know none so soon as their father. Children in Christianity must and do know God; “They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest,” *Heb. viii. 11*. Children in Christ should know that God is their Father; it is their wisdom. We say it is a wise child that knows his father; these children cannot but know theirs. They can well be assured by whose power they are regenerated, and by whose grace they are adopted. They that know the Father may well be withdrawn from the love of this world. Then the apostle proceeds, secondly, to those of the highest station and stature, to the seniors in Christianity, to whom he gives an honourable appellation; “I write unto you, fathers,” ver. 13, 14. To you, Mnsos, you old disciples, *Acts xxi. 16*. The apostle immediately passes from the bottom to the top of the school, from the lowest form to the highest, that they in the middle may hear both lessons, may remember what they have learned, and perceive what they must come to. “I write unto you, fathers.” They that are of longest standing in Christ’s school have need of farther advice and instruction. The oldest disciple must go to heaven (the university above) with his book (his Bible) in his hand. Fathers must be written unto, preached unto; none too old to learn. He writes to them upon the account of their knowledge; “I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning,” ver. 13, 14. Old men have knowledge and experience, and expect deference thereupon. The apostle is ready to own the knowledge of old Christians, and to congratulate them thereupon. They know the Lord Christ particularly, “Him that was from the beginning,” as *ch. i. 1*. As Christ is Alpha and Omega, so he must be the beginning and end of our Christian knowledge; “I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,” *Phil. iii. 8*. They that know him that was from the beginning, before this world was made, may well be induced thereby to relinquish this world. Then, thirdly, he speaks to the middle age of Christians, to those that are in their bloom and flower; “I write unto you, young men,” ver. 13, 14. They are the adult in Christ Jesus; those that are arrived to strength of spirit, and sound sense, can discern between good and evil. The apostle applies to them upon these accounts: 1st. Upon the account of their martial exploits. Dexterous soldiers they are in the camp of Christ; “Because ye have overcome the wicked one,” ver. 13. There is a wicked one that is continually warring against souls, and particularly against the disciples. But they that are grown [up to young men] in Christ’s school can handle their arms, and vanquish the evil one; and they that can vanquish him may be called to vanquish the world too, which is so great an instrument for the devil. 2nd. Upon the account of their strength, discovered in this their achievement; “Because ye are strong, and ye have overcome the wicked one,” ver. 14. Young men are wont to glory in their strength. It will be the glory of youthful persons to be strong in Christ, and in his grace; it will be their glory, and it will try their strength to overcome the devil. If they are not too hard for the devil, he will be too hard for them. Let vigorous Christians shew their strength in conquering the world; and the same strength must be exerted in overcoming this world as is employed in overcoming the devil.

3. Because of their acquaintance with the word of God; “And the word of God abideth in you,” ver. 14. The word of God must abide in the adult disciples; it is the nutriment and supply of strength to them; it is the weapon by which they overcome the wicked one; “The sword of the Spirit, whereby they quench his fiery darts.” And they in whom the word of God dwells are well furnished for the conquest of the world.

Secondly. We have the dehortation or dissuasion thus prefaced and introduced, a caution fundamental to vital, practical religion; “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,” ver. 15. Be crucified to the world; be mortified to the things, to the affairs and enticements of it. The several degrees of Christians should unite in this, in being dead to the world. Were they thus united, they would soon unite upon other accounts; the love should be reserved for God. Throw it not away upon the world. Now here we see the reasons of this dissuasion and caution; and they are several, and had need to be so; it is hard to dissuade disciples themselves from the love of the world. The first is taken from the inconsistency of this love with the love of God; “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,” ver. 15. The heart of man is narrow, and cannot contain both loves. The world draws down the heart from God; and so the more the love of the world prevails, the more the love of God dwindles and decays. The second is taken from the prohibition of worldly love or lust. It is not ordained of God; “It is not of the Father, but is of the world,” ver. 16. This love or lust is not appointed of God, he calls us from it; but it intrudes itself from the world. The world is a usurper of our affection. Now here we have the due consideration and notion of the world, according to which it is to be crucified and renounced. The world, physically considered, is good, and is to be admired as the work of God, and a glass in which his perfections shines. But it is to be considered in its relation to us now in our corrupted state, and as it works upon our weakness, and instigates and inflames our vile affections. There is great affinity and alliance between this world and the flesh; and this world intrudes and encroaches upon the flesh, and thereby makes a party against God. The things of the world, therefore, are distinguished into three classes, according to the three predominant inclinations of depraved nature. As,

1. There is “the lust of the flesh.” The flesh here, being distinguished from the eyes and the life, imports the body; the lust of the flesh is, subjectively, the humour and appetite of indulging fleshly pleasure; and, objectively, all those things that excite and inflame the pleasures of the flesh. This lust is usually called luxury.

2. There is “the lust of the eyes.” The eyes are delighted with treasures,

to reject Christ, who is the light of the world, and so to abide in the darkness of sin and selfish isolation.

ii. 12. “Little children:” same word as in verse 1, but different from that in verse 13. Here it seems used as in verse 1, as a general term for all whom he addresses. These he proceeds to divide into three classes.

ii. 13. “The fathers, appropriately to their age, are characterised by knowledge; the young men, appropriately to theirs, by activity in

conflict. The fathers, too, have conquered, but now their active service is past, and they and the children alike are characterised by knowing: the fathers know Christ, ‘him that was from the beginning; the children know the Father. The first thing that the little children realise is that God is their Father’ (“Critical and Explanatory Commentary”).

ii. 18. “See James v. 3; 1 Peter i. 20; Jude 18. These passages refer to the times since the coming of Christ, in which the power of

Riches and rich possessions are craved by an extravagant eye. This is the lust of covetousness.

3. There is "the pride of life." A vain mind craves all the grandeur, equipage, and pomp of a vainglorious life. This is ambition and thirst after honour and applause; this is, in part, the disease of the ear. It must for rather will be flattered with admiration and praise. The objects of these appetites must be abandoned and renounced. As they engage and engross the affection and desire, "they are not of the Father, but of the world," ver. 16. The Father disallows them, and the world should keep them to itself. The lust and appetite to these things must be mortified and subdued. And so the indulging of it is not appointed by the Father, but is insinuated by the ensnaring world. The next argument is taken from the vain and vanishing state of earthly things, and the enjoyment of them: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof," ver. 17. The things of the world are fading and dying apace; the lust itself, and the pleasure of it, withers and decays. Desire itself will ere long fail and cease, *Ecc. xii. 5*; and what is become of all the pomp and pleasure of all those that now lie mouldering in the grave? The last reason is from the immortality of the Divine lover, the lover of God: "But he that doth the will of God," which must be the character of the lover of God, in opposition to this lover of the world, "abideth for ever," ver. 17. The object of his love, in opposition to the world that passeth away, "abideth for ever." His sacred passion or affection, in opposition to the lust that passeth away, "abideth for ever." Love shall never fail; and he himself is an heir of immortality and endless life, and shall in time be translated thither. From the whole of these verses we should observe the purity and spirituality of the apostolic doctrine. The animal life must be subjected to the Divine. The body, with its affections, should be subjugated to the soul, and should be swayed by religion, or the victorious love of God.

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Here is, First. A moral prognostication of the time. The end is coming; "Little children, it is the last time," ver. 18. Some may suppose that the apostle here addresses the first rank of Christians again. The juniors are most apt to be seduced; and therefore, "Little children," you that are young in religion, take heed to yourselves, that ye be not corrupted.

[Indeed, this seems to be the proper place for suggesting a somewhat different arrangement of the characters and counsels which occupy a considerable section of the epistle (from the 11th to the 28th verse) to that hitherto proceeded upon in the exposition. Part of our clue to more perfect accuracy on this point (by no means an immaterial or unpractical one) is found in the distinction between two words, which our translators have rendered alike. The first, occurring in ver. 12, and again in ver. 28, and repeatedly in other parts of the epistle, is properly a term of endearment, applicable, and plainly addressed, to all real Christians into whose hands the epistle comes: it should have been translated, 'my dear children,' that is, converts of the apostolic ministry, and in many cases, probably, of my own. But the other word in question, which is used in ver. 13 and 18, and in no other place, is strictly a designation of immature age; is pointed exclusively to babes in Christ; and is rightly rendered little, or young, children. 1. Now, in the beginning of the section, John summons to the hearing of his solemn message the whole body of the converts, affectionately challenging them by the first-mentioned epithet, 'dear children;' and declaring of them all, (what is true of all believers in all times, antecedently to any spiritual distinction between one and another,) that their sins are forgiven them for Christ's name's sake. May God help the reader to ponder the apostle's doctrine, and then to examine himself whether he be in the faith! 2. After this he proceeds to distinguish the believers into three classes, according to their comparative standing or attainments in the Christian life. He salutes them as fathers, young men, and little ones, or babes, in Christ. These severally he twice characterises; and, in two cases, adds pointed and appropriate counsels. (1.) The fathers, first, he congratulates on their mature, enlarged, and beatifying knowledge of Him that is from the beginning; who is thus by a single feature identified to us (according to St. John's constant manner,) as the incarnate and life-giving Word, (*ch. i. 1*, &c.) But, as if modestly forbearing, though himself a father, to offer them any advice peculiar to their class, he leaves them under the quickening impressions of his general message. (2.) Next, he distinguishes the young men, or considerably established converts, as strong, especially in the faith of Jesus; so cherishing the gospel word of God, by meditation and prayer, as to feel it abiding in them; and thus, much more easily than once they did, "overcoming the wicked one," in his assaults, by means of antichrist, on their evangelical confidence and peace. To this class, directly and particularly, he addresses the fatherly warnings which follow immediately after the repetition of their characteristics, ver. 15-17. Ye have overcome the devil, he says, in his own personally applied powers of mental temptation; now prepare for as perilous a trial from the world, the corrupt and corrupting world of sense without and around you. This is your present and peculiar danger; by such and such considerations guard against it. (3.) And thirdly, the venerable pastor portrays and encourages the little ones, that have but lately believed in Christ, yea, even the least and feeblest among them, as having "known the Father," as their Father by a Divine adoption; and again, (the above cautions to the young men being interposed,) as being, through their subsistence "in the Son," habitually in fellowship with the Father, and partakers of the unction of his Spirit; ver. 20, 24, 27. And Christians of this grade, by no means so experienced in the usual wiles of the devil with young believers, or so strong in their actual means of defence as Christians of the grade above them, are most appropriately cautioned and encouraged against antichrist; that is, against any teacher, or system, or even satanic suggestion to the mind, which would seduce them from their simple trust in Jesus as the Christ, the anointed Messiah and Saviour. The division into classes terminates at ver. 28, where the apostle again accosts Christians generally as dear children in the Lord.]

But it may be [used practically, here as well] as elsewhere, [in the way of] a universal appellation, introductory of an alarm to all Christians: "Little children, it is the last time." Our Jewish polity in church and state is hastening to an end. The Mosaic institution and discipline is just upon its vanishing away. Daniel's weeks are now expiring, the destruction of the Hebrew city and sanctuary approaching, "the end whereof must be with a flood," and to

"the end of the war desolations are determined," *Dan. ix. 26*. It is meet that the disciples should be warned of the haste and end of time, and apprised, as much as may be, of the prophetic periods of time.

Secondly. The sign of this last time: "Even now there are many antichrists," ver. 18; many that oppose the person, and doctrine, and kingdom of Christ. It is a mysterious portion of providence that antichrist should be permitted. But when they are come, it is good and safe that the disciples should be informed of them. Ministers should be watchmen to the house of Israel. Now, it should be no great offence or prejudice to the disciples that there are such antichrists.

1. One great one has been foretold: "As ye have heard that antichrist shall come," ver. 18. The generality of the church have been informed by Divine revelation that there must be a long and fatal adversary to Christ and his church, *2 Thes. ii. 8-10*. No wonder, then, there are many harbingers and forerunners of the great one. "Even now there are many antichrists." The mystery of iniquity already worketh.

2. They were foretold also as the sign of this last time; "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect," &c., *Mat. xxiv. 24*. And these were the forerunners of the dissolution of the Jewish state, nation, and religion, whereby we know "it is the last time," ver. 18. Let the prediction that we see there has been of seducers arising in the Christian world fortify us against their seduction.

Thirdly. Some account of these seducers or antichrists.

1. More positively. They were once entertainers or professors of apostolical doctrine: "They went out from us," ver. 19, from our company and communion; possibly, from the church of Jerusalem, or some of the churches of Judæa; as *Acts xv. 1*, "Certain men came down from Judæa, and taught the brethren," &c. The purest churches may have their apostates and revolvers. The apostolical doctrine did not convert all whom it convinced of its truth.

2. More privately. They were not inwardly such as we are: "But they were not of us;" they had not from the heart obeyed the form of sound doctrine delivered to them. They were not of our union with Christ the Head. Then here is, 1st. The reason upon which it is concluded that they were not of us, were not what they pretended, or what we are, and that is their actual defection: "For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us," ver. 19. Had the sacred truth been rooted in their hearts, it would have held them with us. Had they had the anointing from above, (by which they had [would have] been made true and real Christians,) they had not turned antichrists. They that apostatize from religion sufficiently indicate that, before, they were hypocrites in religion. They that have imbibed the spirit of gospel truth have a good preservative against destructive error. 2nd. The reason why they are permitted thus to depart from apostolical doctrine and communion,—that their insincerity may be detected. But this was done, or they went out, "that they may be made manifest that they were not all of us," ver. 19. The church knows not well who are its vital members, and who are not. And, therefore, the church, considered as internally sanctified, may well be styled invisible. Some of the hypocritical must be manifested here, and that for their own shame and benefit too,—in their reduction to the truth, if they have not sinned unto death,—and for the terror and caution of others; "Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace," &c. *2 Pet. iii. 17, 18*.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. 23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. 24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. 26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Here, First. The apostle encourages the disciples (to whom he writes) in these dangerous times, in this hour of seducers; he encourages them in the assurance of their stability in this day of apostasy: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." We see,

1. The blessing wherewith they were enriched. An unguent from heaven; "Ye have an unction." True Christians are anointed ones; their name intimates as much. They are anointed with the oil of grace; with gifts and spiritual endowments, by the Spirit of grace. They are anointed into a similitude of their Lord's offices, as subordinate prophets, priests, and kings unto God. The Holy Spirit is compared unto oil, as well as to fire or water; and the communication of his saving grace is our anointing.

2. From whom this blessing comes: "From the Holy One;" either from the Holy Ghost, or from the Lord Christ, as *Rev. iii. 7*, "These things saith he that is holy." "The Holy One." The Lord Christ is glorious in his holiness. The Lord Christ disposes of the graces of the Divine Spirit, and he anoints the disciples to make them like to himself, and to secure them in his interest.

ii. 20. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One;" allusion to the consecration of kings, priests, and prophets with oil. There is an emphasis on "ye." "Ye," as contrasted with the antichrists. "Ye have the *chrism* (i.e., an anointing with the Holy Spirit) from Christ (the 'Anointed One'), and so are able to detect and resist the antichrists."

ii. 24. "Let that," &c. : i.e., the truth respecting the Father and the Son.

the world is in part broken, but will be wholly destroyed only at his second advent" (Webster and Wilkinson). "Antichrist;" the word "anti" may mean either "against" or "in the stead of." According to the meaning we give it, will the antichrist be one who opposes or merely usurps Christ's place. St. John (who is the only New Testament writer who uses the word antichrist) seems to use it in the former sense, for one who manifests resistance to Christ and defies his authority.

3. The effect of this unction. It is a spiritual eye-salve; it enlightens and strengthens the eyes of the understanding. "And," thereby, "ye know all things," ver. 20. All these things concerning Christ and his religion. It was promised and given you for that end, *Jno. xiv. 25*. [He becomes your Anointed, to enable you to know him as God's Anointed.] The Lord Christ does not deal alike by all his professed disciples. Some are more anointed than others. There is great danger lest those that are not thus anointed should be so far from being true to Christ, as that they should on the contrary turn antichrists, and prove adversaries to Christ's person, and kingdom, and glory.

Secondly. The apostle indicates to them the mind and meaning with which he wrote to them.

1. By way of negation. Not as suspecting their knowledge, or supposing their ignorance in the grand truths of the Gospel; "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth," ver. 21. I could not then be so well assured of your stability therein, nor congratulate your unction from above. It is good to surmise well concerning our Christian brethren; we ought to do so till evidence overthrows our surmise. A just confidence in religious persons may both encourage and contribute to their fidelity.

2. By way of assertion and acknowledgment. As relying upon their judgment in these things; "But because ye know it," (ye know the truth in Jesus,) "and that no lie is of the truth." They that know the truth in any kind are thereby prepared to discern what is contrary thereto, and inconsistent therewith. *Rectum est index sui et obliqui*.—Truth reveals both itself and whatever is opposed to it. Truth and falsehood do not well mix and suit together. They that are well acquainted with Christian truth are thereby well fortified against antichristian error and delusion. No lie belongs to religion, either natural or revealed. The apostles most of all condemned lies, and shew the inconsistency of lies with their doctrine. They would be the most self-condemned persons, should they propagate the truth by lies. It is a commendation of the Christian religion that it so well accords with natural religion, which is the foundation of it; that it well accords with the Jewish religion, which contained the elements or rudiments of it. "No lie is of the truth." Frauds and impostures, then, are very unfit means to support and propagate the truth. I suppose it had been better with the state of religion if they had never been used. The result of them appears in the infidelity of our age. The detection of ancient pious frauds and wiles has almost run our age into atheism and irreligion. But the greatest actors and sufferers for the Christian revelation would assure us that "no lie is of the truth."

Thirdly. The apostle farther impleads and arraigns these seducers that were newly arisen.

1. They are liars, egregious opposers of sacred truth. "Who is a liar" (or the liar, the notorious liar of the time and age in which we live) "but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" The great and pernicious lies that the father of lies (or of liars) spreads in the world were of old, and usually are, falsehoods and errors relating to the person of Christ. There is no truth so sacred and fully attested but some or other will contradict or deny it. That Jesus of Nazareth was the Son and the Christ of God had been attested by heaven, and earth, and hell. It should seem that some in the tremendous judgment of God are given up to strong delusions.

2. They are direct enemies to God, as well as to the Lord Christ; "He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son," ver. 22. He that opposes Christ denies the witness and testimony of the Father, and the seal that he hath given to his Son; "For him hath God the Father sealed," *Jno. vi. 27*. And he that denies the witness and testimony of the Father concerning Jesus Christ, denies that God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ; and, consequently, abandons the knowledge of God in Christ; and, thereupon, the whole revelation of God in Christ, and particularly of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

[In truth, the full emphasis of the statement, the liar, or antichrist, is "he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ," or, otherwise speaking, "that denieth the Father and" or in, "the Son"—can only be felt by referring to some explanations already given. St. John rarely presents in one passage a perfect view of Christ's unique and glorious character; he scatters its parts and elements, as in a dissected map, throughout the whole epistle. But, when put together in proper adjustment, they shew that his object is to teach and maintain, not simply the divinity or Divine Sonship, nor yet the real humanity, of Christ, but the mediation of this God-man with the Father, and our acceptance and right to eternal life solely through his propitiatory sacrifice. This is true Christianity. Christ is the exponent of the whole gospel system. Antichrist, therefore, is the system, or the teacher, (and of each the name is Legion,) that sets up any thing whatever, either against, or in place of, Emmanuel as the appointed Saviour. This is the sting and venom of the denial of the Father as in the Son, of Jesus as the Christ, of Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh, (*ch. iv. 3*), and the like. No spirit confesseth Jesus "Christ who is come in the flesh," (for so should that passage run,) which would either supersede or assist him by its false suggestions in that work of "saving sinners," for the doing of which he came. Not merely anti-trinitarianism, as some would have us believe, but all anti-evangelism, and pre-eminently Popery under all its modifications, is antichrist, and a lie.]

And, therefore, the apostle may well infer, "Whosoever denies the Son, the same hath not the Father," ver. 23. He hath not the true knowledge of the Father; for the Son hath most and best revealed him. He hath no interest in the Father; in his favour, and grace, and salvation; "For none cometh to the Father but by the Son." But (as some copies add) he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also," ver. 23. As there is an intimate relation between the Father and the Son, so there is an inviolable union in the doctrine, knowledge, and interests of them both; so that he that hath the knowledge of, and right to the Son, hath the knowledge of, and right to the Father also. They that adhere to the Christian revelation hold the light and benefit of natural religion withal.

Fourthly. Hereupon the apostle adviseth and persuadeth the disciples to continue in the old doctrine at first communicated to them; "Let that, therefore, abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning," ver. 24. Truth is older than error. The truth concerning Christ, that was at first delivered to the saints, is not to be exchanged for novelties. So sure were the apostles of the truth of what they had delivered concerning Christ, and from him, that, after all their toils and sufferings, they were not willing to relinquish it. The Christian truth may plead antiquity, and be recommended thereby. This exhortation is enforced by these considerations:—

1. From the sacred advantage they will receive by adhering to the primitive truth and faith. 1st. They will continue thereby in holy union with God and Christ. "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father," ver. 24. It is the truth of Christ abiding in you is the means of severing us from sin, and uniting us to the Son of God, *Jno. xv. 3, 4*. It is the Son is the medium, or Mediator, by whom we are united to the Father. What value, then, should we put upon gospel truth! 2nd. They will thereby secure the promise of eternal life; "And this is the promise that he" (even God the Father, *ch. v. 11*), "hath promised us, even eternal life," ver. 25. Great is the promise that God makes to his

faithful adherents; it is suitable to his own greatness, power, and goodness; it is eternal life, which none but God can give. It is great value that the blessed God puts upon his Son, and the truth relating to him, that he is pleased to promise to those that continue in that truth, (that is, under the light, and power, and influence of it,) eternal life. Then the exhortation afore-said is enforced.

2. From the design of the apostle's writing to them. This letter is to fortify them against the deceivers of the age; "These things have I written to you concerning them that seduce you," ver. 26; and, therefore, if ye continue not in what you have heard from the beginning, my writing and service will be in vain. We should beware lest the apostolical letters, yea, lest the whole Scripture of God, should be to us insignificant and fruitless. "I have written to him the great things of my law," (and my Gospel too,) "but they were counted as a strange thing," *Hos. viii. 12*.

3. From the instructive blessing they had received from heaven: "But the anointing which ye have received from him abideth in you," ver. 27. True Christians have an inward confirmation of the Divine truth they have imbibed. The Holy Spirit has imprinted it on their minds and hearts. It is meet the Lord Jesus should have a constant witness in the hearts of his disciples. The unction, the pouring out of the gifts of grace upon sincere disciples, is a seal to the truth and doctrine of Christ, since none giveth that seal but God; "Now he who stablisheth us with you" (and you with us) "in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God," 2 *Cor. i. 21*. This sacred chrism, or Divine unction, is commended on these accounts: 1st. It is durable and lasting. Oil or unguent is not so soon dried up as water; "It abideth in you," ver. 27. Divine illumination, in order to confirmation, must be something continued or constant. Temptations, snares, and seductions arise; the anointing must abide. 2nd. It is better than human instruction; "And ye need not that any man teach you," ver. 27. Not that this anointing will teach you without the appointed ministry; it could, if God so pleased, but it will not, but will teach you better than we can; "And ye need not that any man teach you," ver. 27. Ye were instructed by us before ye were anointed; but now our teaching is nothing in comparison to that. "Who teacheth like him?" *Job xxxvi. 22*. The Divine unction does not supersede ministerial teaching, but surmount it. 3rd. It is a sure evidence of truth; and all that it teacheth is infallible truth; "But as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie," ver. 27. The Holy Spirit must needs be the Spirit of truth, as he is called, *Jno. xiv. 17*. The instruction and illumination that he affords must needs be in and of the truth. The Spirit of truth will not lie. And he teacheth all things, that is, all things in the present dispensation; all things necessary to our knowledge of God in Christ, and their glory in the Gospel. And, 4th. It is of a conservative influence; it will preserve those in whom it abides against seducers and their seduction; "And even as it hath taught you ye shall abide in him," ver. 27. It teaches you to abide in Christ; and, as it teaches you, it secures you. It lays a restraint upon your minds and hearts, that you may not revolt from him; "And hath anointed us, is God; who also hath sealed us," (for himself,) "and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," 2 *Cor. i. 21, 22*.

28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. 29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

From the blessing of the sacred unction the apostle proceeds in his advice and exhortation to constancy in and with Christ; "And now, little children, abide in him," ver. 28. The apostle repeats his kind appellation, "little children," which, I suppose, does not so much denote the diminitiveness of them as the affection of him; and therefore, I judge, may be rendered, 'dear children.' He would persuade by love, and prevail by endearment, as well as by reason. [And he seems to glide back from a particular admonition into the general discourse in this manner:—What I have just said to babes in Christ, I am thus reminded to urge on you all, as the sum of your duty and your blessedness,—dear children, abide in him.] Not only the love of Christ, but the love of you constrains us to inculcate your perseverance, and that "you would abide in him," in the truth relating to his person, and in your union with him, and allegiance to him. Evangelical privileges are obligatory to evangelical duties. And they that are anointed by the Lord Jesus are highly obliged to abide with him in opposition to all adversaries whatever. And this duty of perseverance and constancy in trying times is strongly urged by two following considerations.

First. From the consideration of his return at the great day of account; "That when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming," ver. 28. It is here taken for granted that the Lord Jesus will come again. This was part of that truth they had heard from the beginning. And when he comes again, he will publicly appear, be manifested to all. When he was here before he came privately, in comparison; he proceeded from a womb, and was introduced into a stable; but when he comes again he will come from the opened heavens, and every eye shall see him; and then they that have continued with him throughout all their temptations shall have confidence, assurance, and joy in the sight of him. They shall lift up their heads with unspeakable triumph, as knowing that their complete redemption comes along with him. On the contrary, they that have deserted him shall "be ashamed before him;" they shall be ashamed of themselves, ashamed of their unbelief, their cowardice, ingratitude, temerity, and folly in forsaking so glorious a Redeemer. They shall be ashamed of their hopes, expectations, and pretences, and ashamed of all the wages of unrighteousness, by which they were induced to desert him; "That we may have confidence, and we may not be ashamed." The apostle includes himself in the number. Let not us be ashamed of you, as well as, you will not be ashamed of yourselves. Or (*μη αισχυνησιντες υμιν αλληλους*) 'that we be not ashamed;' that is, made ashamed, or put to shame, "by him at his coming." At his public appearance he will shame all those that have abandoned him; he will disclaim all acquaintance with them; will cover them with shame and confusion; will abandon them to darkness, devils, and endless despair, by professing before men and angels that he is ashamed of them, *Mar. viii. 38*. Now to the same advice and exhortation, he proceeds.

Secondly. From the consideration of the dignity of those that still adhere to Christ and his religion. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him," ver. 29. The particle here rendered "if," seems not to be *vox dubitantis*, but *concedentis*; not so much a conditional particle as a suppositional one, if I may call it so, a note of allowance or concession, and so seems to be of the same import with our English 'inasmuch,' or 'whereas,' or 'since.' So the sense runs more clear. "Since ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is

ii. 27. The possession of the *chrism* was a proof that they remained in the truth. The fulfilment of the promise of the "paraclete" (John xiv. 26) rendered it unnecessary for them to go in search of any extraneous teacher.

ii. 28. "Little children:" same word as in verses 12, &c., and referring to believers of all ages. "Abide in him:" compare John xv. 4. "Not be ashamed:" not shrink back with shame from him.

ii. 29. To be joined rather with next chapter. "God is righteous,

and therefore the source of righteousness. When, then, a man doeth righteousness, we know that the source of his righteousness is God; that, consequently, he has acquired by new birth from God that righteousness which he had not by nature. We argue from his doing righteousness, to his being born of God. The error of Pelagians is to conclude that doing righteousness is a condition of becoming a child of God" (Alford).

iii. 1. St. John had spoken, in chap. ii. 29, of a godly life as the

born of him." "He that doth righteousness may here be justly enough assumed as another name for him that abideth in Christ; for he that abideth in Christ abideth in the law and love of Christ, and, consequently, in his allegiance and obedience to him; and so must do, or work, or practise righteousness, or the parts of gospel holiness. Now, such a one must needs be born of him. He is renewed by the Spirit of Christ, after the image of Christ; "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath foreordained that they should walk in them," *Eph. ii. 10*. Since, then, you know that the Lord Christ is righteous, righteous in his quality and capacity, the Lord our righteousness, and the Lord our Sanctifier, or our sanctification, as *1 Cor. i. 30*, [or, more generally, since you know that "the Lord our God is holy,"] ye cannot but know thereupon (or know ye, it is for your consideration and regard) that he that (by the continued practice of Christianity) abideth in him, is "born of him." The new spiritual nature is derived from the Lord Christ. He that is constant to the practice of religion in trying times gives good evidence that he is born from above, from the Lord Christ. The Lord Christ is an everlasting Father. It is a great privilege and dignity to be "born of him;" [or begotten, relatively by adoption, and personally by a change of nature, most usually termed regeneration. "Every one that doeth righteousness" proves himself to be a partaker of both: but the reference in this present connexion is chiefly to the latter.] They that are so are the children of God; "To as many as received him, to them gave he power" [that is, as Mediator, secured to them the privilege] "to become the sons of God," *1 Jo. i. 12*. [And, after all that has been remarked above, it is proper we should understand that it is of God, and not personally of the Lord Christ, that believing and holy men are said to be the begotten sons. We must not always be guided in John's epistles by the immediate antecedent. It is the Father, properly speaking, that adopts unto himself those whom the Son, on his part, hath redeemed, (*Eph. i. 5*; *Gal. iv. 3*), and that regenerates them in the moral likeness of the Godhead by the agency of the Holy Ghost.] And this introduces the context of the following chapter.

CHAPTER III.

The apostle here magnifies the love of God in our adoption, ver. 1, 2; he thereupon argues for holiness, ver. 3; and against sin, ver. 4—10; he presseth brotherly love, ver. 11—18; how to assure our hearts before God, ver. 19—22; the precept of faith, ver. 23; and the good of obedience, ver. 24.



BEHOLD, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

The apostle, having shewn the dignity of Christ's faithful followers, that they are born of him, and thereby nearly allied to God, now here,

First. Breaks forth into the admiration of that grace that is the spring of such a wonderful vouchsafement. "Behold" (see ye, observe) "what manner of love" (or how great love) "the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called" (effectually called; he that calls things that are not makes them to be what they were not) "the sons of God." The Father adopts all the children of the Son. The Son indeed calls them, and makes them his brethren, and thereby he confers upon them the power and dignity of the sons of God. It is wonderful condescending love of the eternal Father, that such as we should be made and called his sons; we, that by nature are heirs of sin, and guilt, and the curse of God. We, that by practice are children of corruption, disobedience, and ingratitude. Strange that the holy God is not ashamed to be called our Father, and to call us his sons. [Note, That his love is as much shewn in calling us to bear some image of his holiness, as in conferring upon us the privileges of adoption, *Eph. i. 3—5*. God's manner of loving and blessing us, which is by making us holy, should guide our own desires.] Thence the apostle,

Secondly. Infers the honour of believers above the cognizance of the world. Unbelievers know little of them; "Therefore" (or wherefore, upon this score) "the world knoweth us not," ver. 1. Little does the world perceive the advancement and happiness of the genuine followers of Christ. They are here exposed to the common calamities of earth and time; all things fall alike to them as to others, unless they are subject to the greater sorrows; for they have often reason to say, "If in this life only we had hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," *1 Cor. xv. 19*. The unchristian world, therefore, that walks by sight, knows not their dignity, their privileges, the enjoyments they have in hand, or what they are entitled to. Little does the world think that these poor, humble, condemned ones are the favourites of heaven, and will be inhabitants there ere long. And they may bear their case the better, since their Lord was here unknown, as well as they; "Because it knew him not," ver. 1. [It did not recognize God in his own Son incarnate; how should it appreciate or love his image in his adopted, earthly, and erring children?] Little did the world think how great a person was once sojourning here—that the Maker of it was once an inhabitant of it. Little did the Jewish world think that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was one of their blood, and dwelt in their land. He came to his own, and his own received him not; he came to his own, and his own crucified him. But surely, had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory, *2 Cor. ii. 8*. Let the followers of Christ be content with hard fare here, since they are in a land of strangers, among those that little know them, and their Lord was so treated before them. Then the apostle,

Thirdly. Exalts these persevering disciples in the prospect of the certain revelation of their state and dignity. Where,

1. Their present honourable relation is asserted; "Beloved," (ye may well be

fruit and proof of spiritual birth; he now calls attention, as to something wonderful ("Behold"), to the fact of God's claiming us as his children. Thus this verse is connected with chap. ii. 29. "Remember always that this relation is one between God and your spirits; hidden, therefore, from the world; not to be recognised by those who see with the world's eyes" (Maurice). Compare John xvi. 3, xvii. 25.

2. "Doth not yet appear:" rather, "it hath not yet (at any

our beloved, for ye are beloved of God,) "now are we the sons of God," ver. 2. We have the nature of sons by regeneration; we have the title, and [attesting] Spirit, and right to the inheritance of sons by adoption. [*Rom. xv. 15—17*] "This honour have all his saints."

2. The discovery of the bliss belonging and suitable to this relation is denied "And it doth not yet appear what we shall be," ver. 2. The glory pertaining to the sonship and adoption is adjoined and reserved for another world. The discovery of it here would put a stop to the current of affairs, that must now proceed. The sons of God must walk by faith, and live by hope.

3. The time of the revelation of the sons of God in their proper state and glory is determined; and that is when their Elder Brother comes to call and collect them all together. "But we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him." That the particle *εἰ*, usually translated "if," is here well rendered "when," may appear, not only because the Hebrew particle (to which this is thought to correspond) is observed so to signify, (as Dr. Whitby has here noted,) and not only is *εἰ* sometimes used for *ὅταν*, but some copies even here read *ὅταν*; "when;" and, accordingly, it seems proper so to render it in *1 Jo. xiv. 3*, where we read it, "And if I go and prepare a place, (but more naturally and properly, "when I shall have gone, and shall have prepared the place,") "I will come again and receive you unto myself," (or, *παράλθωμαι*, "I will take you along with myself,") "that where I am there ye may be also." When the Head of the church, the only begotten of the Father, shall appear, his members, the adopted of God, shall appear and be manifested together with him. They may, then, well wait, in faith, hope, and earnest desire, for the revelation of the Lord Jesus, as even the creation itself waiteth for their perfection, and the public "manifestation of the sons of God," *Rom. viii. 19*. The sons of God will be known and be made manifest by their likeness to their Head; "They shall be like him," like him in honour, and power, and glory. Their vile bodies shall be made like his glorious body; they shall be filled with life, light, and bliss from him; "When he who is their life shall appear, they also shall appear with him in glory," *Col. iii. 4*. Then,

4. Their likeness to him is argued from the sight they shall have of him; "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Either their likeness will be the cause of that sight they shall have of him,—indeed, all shall see him, but not as they do, not as he is, namely, to those in heaven. They shall see him in his frowns, in the terror of his majesty, and splendour of his avenging perfections. But these shall see him in the smiles and beauty of his face, in the correspondence and amiableness of his glory, in the harmony and agreeableness of his beatific perfections. Their likeness shall enable them to see him, as the blessed do in heaven,—or, the sight of him shall be the cause of their likeness. It shall be a transformative sight; they shall be transformed into the same image by the beatific view that they shall have of him. Then the apostle,

Fourthly. Urges the engagement of these sons of God to the prosecution of holiness; "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure," ver. 3. The sons of God know that their Lord is holy and pure; he is of purer heart and eyes than to admit any pollution or impurity to dwell with him. They, then, that hope to live with him must study utmost purity from the world, and flesh, and sin; they must grow in grace and holiness. Not only does their Lord command them to do so, but their new nature inclines them so to do; yea, their hope of heaven will dictate and constrain them so to do. They know their High Priest is holy, harmless, and undefiled. They know that their God and Father is the High and Holy One; that all the society is pure and holy; that their inheritance is an inheritance of saints in light. It is a contradiction to such hope to indulge sin and impurity; and therefore, as we are sanctified by faith, we must be sanctified by hope; that we may be saved by hope, we must be purified by hope. It is the hope of hypocrites, and not of the sons of God, that makes an allowance for the gratification of impure desires and lusts.

4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. 5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. 6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. 7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

The apostle, having alleged the believer's obligation to purity, from his hope of heaven, and of communion with Christ in glory, at the day of his appearance, now proceeds to fill his own mouth and the believer's mind with multiplied arguments against sin, and all communion with the impure, unfruitful works of darkness. And so he reasons and argues,

First. From the nature of sin, and the intrinsic evil of it. It is a contrariety to the Divine law; "Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also" (or even) "the law;" (or whosoever committeth sin, even committeth enormity, or aberration from law, or from the law;) "for sin is the transgression of the law," (or is lawlessness,) ver. 4. Sin is the destitution or privation of correspondence and agreement with the Divine law; that law that is the transcript of the Divine nature and purity; that contains his will for the government of the world; that is suitable to the rational nature, and enacted for the good of the world; that shews man the way of felicity and peace, and conducts him to the Author of his nature and of the law. The current commission of sin now

time) been manifested." "When he shall appear:" rather, "If it be manifested, we shall be like him (God)."

iii. 4. "Whosoever," &c.: rather, "every one who," in contrast to verse 3. "Transgresseth also the law:" i.e., God's law of purity, thereby showing that he has no hope of being hereafter pure, as God is pure, and therefore that he is not born of God. "He was manifested:" see verse 8.

iii. 9, 10. "What he says here—what he is bound to say, unless

is the rejection of the Divine law, and that is the rejection of the Divine authority, and consequently of God himself.

Secondly. From the design and errand of the Lord Jesus in and to this world, which was to remove sin; "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin," ver. 5. The Son of God appeared and was known in our nature; and he came to vindicate and exalt the Divine law, and that by obedience to the precept, and by subjection, and suffering under the penal sanction, under the curse of it. He came, therefore, "to take away our sins;" to take away the guilt of them by the sacrifice of himself; to take away the commission of them by implanting a new nature in us, for we are sanctified by virtue of his death; and to dissuade and save from it by his own example. "And" (or for) "in him was no sin," or he takes sin away, that he might conform us to himself; "and in him is no sin." They that expect communion with Christ above should study communion with him here in utmost purity. And the Christian world should know and consider the great end of the Son of God's coming hither. It was to take away our sin; "And ye know" (and this knowledge should be deep and effectual) "that he was manifested to take away our sins."

Thirdly. From the opposition between sin and a real union with, or adhesion unto, the Lord Christ; "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not," ver. 6. To sin here is the same as to commit sin, ver. 8, 9, and to commit sin is to practise sin. He that abideth in Christ continues not in the practise of sin. As vital union with the Lord Jesus broke the power of sin in the heart and nature, so continuance therein prevents the rule and prevalence thereof in the life and conduct. Or the negative expression here is put for the positive. He "sinneth not," that is, he is obedient, "he keeps the commandments," (in sincerity, and in the ordinary course of life,) "and does those things that are pleasing in his sight," as is said, ver. 22. They that abide in Christ abide in their covenant with him, and consequently watch against the sin that is contrary thereto. They abide in the potent light and knowledge of him, and therefore it may be concluded that he that sinneth (abideth in the predominant practice of sin) "hath not seen him," (hath not his mind impressed with a sound, evangelical discerning of him,) "neither known him" (hath no experimental acquaintance with him.) Practical renunciation of sin is the great evidence of spiritual union with, continuance in, and saving knowledge of, the Lord Christ.

Fourthly. From the connexion between the practice of righteousness and a state of righteousness, intimating withal, that the practice of sin and a justified state are inconsistent; and this is introduced with a supposition that a surmise to the contrary is a gross deceit: "Little children," (dear children, and, as much children as ye are, herein,) "let no man deceive ye." There will be those that will magnify your new light and entertainment of Christianity; that will make you believe that your knowledge, profession, and baptism, will excuse you the care and accuracy of the Christian life. But beware of such self-deceit. "He that does righteousness is righteous." It may appear that righteousness may in several places of Scripture be justly rendered religion, as *Mat. v. 10*, "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake," that is, for religion's sake. And, *1 Pet. iii. 14*, "But if ye suffer for righteousness' sake," (that is, religion's sake,) "happy are ye." And so *2 Tim. iii. 16*, "All Scripture" (or the whole Scripture) "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, and for instruction in righteousness," that is, in the nature and branches of religion. To do righteousness, then, (especially being set in opposition to the doing, committing, or practising of sin,) is to practise religion. Now, he that practiseth religion is righteous; he is the righteous person on all accounts; he is sincere and upright before God. The practice of religion cannot subsist without a principle of integrity and conscience. He has that righteousness that consists in pardon of sin and right to life, founded upon the imputation of the Mediator's righteousness. He has a title to "the crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge will give" (according to his covenant and promise) "to those that love his appearing," *2 Tim. iv. 8*. He has communion with Christ in conformity to the Divine law, being, in some measure, practically righteous as he; and has communion with him in the justified state, being now relatively righteous together with him. [But the former, practical or personal righteousness, is meant here. No man, whatever his pretensions to an imputed righteousness, can be accepted as a righteous man, unless, through grace, he habitually doeth righteousness.]

Fifthly. From the relation between the sinner and the devil; and thereupon from the design and office of the Lord Christ towards the devil.

1. From the relation between the sinner and the devil. As elsewhere sinners and saints are famously distinguished, though even saints are sinners, largely so called—so, to commit sin, is here so to practise it as sinners do that are distinguished from saints—to live under the power and dominion of it. And he that does so "is of the devil;" his sinful nature is inspired by, agreeable and pleasing to, the devil; and he belongs to the party, and interest, and kingdom of the devil. It is he that is the author and patron of sin, and has been a practitioner of it, a tempter and instigator to it, even from the beginning of the world. And thereupon we must see how he argues,

2. From the design and office of the Lord Christ against the devil: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil," ver. 8. The devil has designed and endeavoured to ruin the work of God in this world. The Son of God hath undertaken the holy war against him. He came into our world, and was manifested in our flesh, that he might conquer him and dissolve his work. Sin will he loosen and dissolve more and more, till he has quite destroyed it. Let not us serve or indulge what the Son of God came to destroy.

Sixthly. From the connexion between regeneration and the relinquishment of sin; "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." To be born (or, begotten) of God is to be inwardly renewed and restored to a holy integrity or rectitude of nature, by the power of the Spirit of God. Such a one committeth not sin, does not work iniquity and practise disobedience; that is, contrary to his new nature and the regenerate complexion of his Spirit. "For," (as the apostle adds,) "his seed remaineth in him;" either the word of God (in its light and power) remaineth in him, as *1 Pet. i. 23*, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, who liveth and abideth for ever;" or, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit;" the spiritual seminal principle of holiness remaineth in him. Renewing grace is an abiding principle. Religion (in the spring of it) is not an art, an acquired dexterity and skill, but a new nature. And thereupon the consequence is, the regenerate person cannot sin. That he cannot commit an act of sin, I suppose, no judicious interpreter understands. That would be contrary to *1 J. i. 9*, where it is made our duty to confess our sins, and supposed our privilege thereupon to have our sins forgiven. He, therefore, "cannot sin," in the sense [in which] the apostle says he "cannot" commit sin. He cannot continue in the course and practice of sin. He cannot so sin as to denominate him a sinner, in opposition to a saint or servant of God. Again, he cannot sin comparatively, as he did before he was born of God, and as others do that are not so. And the reason is, "because he is born of God," which will amount to all this inhibition and impediment. 1. There is that light in his mind that shews him the evil and malignity of sin. 2. There is that bias upon his heart that disposes him to loathe and hate sin. 3. There is the spiritual,

seminal principle or disposition, that breaks the force and fulness of the sinful acts. They proceed not from that plenary power of corruption, as they do in others, nor obtain that plenitude of heart, spirit, and consent, as they do in others. "The Spirit lusteth against the flesh;" and therefore in respect to such sin it may be said, It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. It is not reckoned the person's sin in the gospel account, [so as to expose him to the condemnation of a wilful transgressor,] where the bent and frame of the mind and spirit is against it. Then, 4. There is a disposition for humiliation and repentance for sin, when it has been committed; "He that is born of God cannot sin. Here we may call to mind the usual distinction of natural and moral impotency. The unregenerate person is morally unable for what is religiously good. The regenerate person is (happily) disabled for sin. There is a restraint, an embargo (as we may say) laid upon his sinning powers. It goes against him sedately and deliberately to sin. We usually say of a person of known integrity, he cannot lie, he cannot cheat, and commit other enormities. "How can I commit this great wickedness, and sin against God," *Gen. xxxix. 9*; and so, they that persist in sinful life sufficiently demonstrate that they are not born of God.

Seventhly. From the discrimination between the children of God and the children of the devil. They have their distinct characters. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil," ver. 10. In the world (according to the old distinction) there is the seed of God, and the seed of the serpent. Now the seed of the serpent is known by these two signatures: 1. By neglect of religion; "Whosoever doeth not righteousness" (omits and disregards the rights and dues of God; for religion is but our righteousness towards God, or giving him his due; and whosoever does not conscientiously do this) "is not of God," but, on the contrary, of the devil. The devil is the father of unrighteous or irreligious souls. And, 2. By hatred of fellow-Christians; "Neither he that loveth not his brother," ver. 10. True Christians are to be loved for God's and Christ's sake. They that so love them not (but despise, and hate, and persecute them) have the serpentine nature still abiding in them.

[Loveth not his brother. Any one, that is, who would be his Christian brother, supposing that he himself was what he professes to be,—a child of God. For it is the professor that is here compelled to the test of a special and spiritual love. But his disinclination to own any consistent Christian as a brother, or his entire want of complacency in, and congeniality with, him, invalidates that very supposition. He himself cannot belong to the brotherhood. No semblance of family features is to be trusted, in the total absence of family feelings. He that is practically ungodly is not more manifestly unbegotten of God than he who, pretending to godliness, recoils from God's likeness in another. Godliness and brotherly kindness have one and the same seminal principle, (*2 Pet. i. 7*;) and, as the collocation in this 10th verse implies, so likewise have their contraries.]

11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. 13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

The apostle, having intimated that one note of the devil's children is hatred of the brethren, takes occasion thence,

First. To recommend fraternal Christian love, and that from the excellence, or antiquity, or primariness of the injunction relating thereto. And "this is the message" (the errand or charge) "which ye heard from the beginning," (this came among the principal parts of practical Christianity,) "that we should love one another," ver. 11. We should love the Lord Jesus, and value his love, and consequently love all the objects of it, and thereupon all our brethren in Christ. [Nay, and from the beginning of the world, and of God's moral government in it, the principle of mutual love was made binding on all mankind. The reference to Cain suggests this larger view.]

Secondly. To dissuade from what is contrary thereto, all ill-will towards the brethren, and that by the example of Cain. His envy and malignity should deter us from harbouring the like passion, and that upon these accounts. 1. It shewed that he was as the firstborn of the serpent's seed, even he, the eldest son of the first man, was of the "wicked one." He imitated and resembled the first wicked one, the devil. 2. His ill-will had no restraint; it proceeded so far as to contrive and accomplish murder, and that of a near relation, and that in the beginning of the world, when there were but few to replenish it. "He slew his brother," ver. 12. Sin indulged knows no bounds. And, 3. It proceeded so far, and had so much of the devil, that he murdered his brother for religion's sake. He stomachs the meliority [resented the superiority] of Abel's service, and envied him the favour and acceptance he had with God. And for these he martyred his brother. "And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous," ver. 12. Ill-will will teach us to hate and revenge what we should admire and imitate. [But we see this connection between the two symptoms of unregeneracy, namely, an unholiness conversation and an unloving spirit, (ver. 10,) illustrated in many milder forms. To mention one of the mildest,—the dislike and avoidance of Christian men of one class, on the part of some Christian professors of another, arise simply from a distaste for true piety and devotedness, and from the consciousness in their own case of much worldliness of mind and life.] And then,

Thirdly. To infer that it is no wonder, then, that good men are so served now; "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you," ver. 13. The serpentine nature still continues in the world. The great serpent himself reigns as the god of this world. Wonder not, then, that the serpentine world hates and hisses at you that belong to that seed of the woman that is to bruise the serpent's head.

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. 16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid

all his former teaching respecting God was to be void—is, that no evil thought, word, act, whatsoever can have God for its author. But the evil acts which I do proceed from me. I cannot shift them upon any one else. How, then, can I say that I am born of God? I do not say it: that evil act is a disclaimer of my heavenly birth: here is the greatest proof that it is a lying act. I make myself another man; I choose another parent. Your common language justifies this teaching. You say to a child, or a friend, 'It was not your own true

self which came out in those words and acts.' . . . St. John gives us the rationale of these common expressions. That man, he says, who does the sinful act is not God's child: he cannot sin; the seed out of which he is formed is altogether good. What is the practical inference? That every one who has disclaimed his true birth by an evil act should reclaim it. When he 'comes to himself'—this is our Lord's expression—he will remember his true Father; he will say, 'I will arise, and go to him;' he will find his Father on his way to meet

down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

The beloved apostle can scarce touch upon the mention of sacred love, but he must enlarge upon the enforcement of it, as he here does by divers arguments and incentives thereto; as,

First. That it is a note of our evangelical justification, of our transition into a state of life: "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren," ver. 14. We are by nature children of wrath, and heirs of death. By the Gospel (the gospel covenant or promise) our state (towards another world) is altered and changed. We pass from death to life, from the guilt of death to the right of life; and this transition is made upon our believing in the Lord Jesus. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not hath the wrath of God abiding on him," *Jno. iii. 36*. Now, this happy change of state we may come to be assured of; "we know that we have passed from death to life;" and we may know it by the evidences of our faith in Christ, of which this love to our brethren is one, which leads us to characterize this love that is such a mark of our justified state. It is not a zeal for a party in the common religion, or an affection for, or an affectation of, those that are of the same denomination and subordinate sentiments with ourselves. But this love,

1. Supposes a general love to mankind; the law of Christian love (in the Christian community) is founded on the catholic law, (in the society of mankind,) "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Mankind is to be loved (principally) on these two accounts: As the excellent work of God; and, As being beloved in Christ. 1st. As the excellent work of God, made by him, and made in wonderful resemblance of him. The reason that God assigns for the certain punishment of a murderer, is a reason against our hatred of any of the brethren of mankind, and consequently a reason for our love to them; "for in the image of God made he man," *Gen. ix. 6*. 2nd. As being (in some measure) beloved in Christ. The whole race of mankind (the *gens humana*) should be considered as being, in distinction from fallen angels, a redeemed nation, as having a Divine Redeemer designed, prepared, and given for them. "So God loved the world," even this world, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life," *Jno. iii. 16*. A world so beloved of God should accordingly be loved by us. And this love will exert itself in earnest desires, and prayers, and attempts for the conversion and salvation of the yet uncalled, blinded world; "My heart's desire and prayer for Israel is, that they may be saved." And then this love will include all due love to enemies themselves. Then this Christian love,

2. Includes a peculiar love to the Christian society, to the catholic church, and that for the sake of her Head, as being his body, as being redeemed, justified, and sanctified in and by him; and this love particularly acts and operates towards those of the catholic church, that we have an opportunity of being personally acquainted with, or credibly informed of. And so they are not so much loved for their own sakes as for the sake of God and Christ, that have loved them. And it is God and Christ (or if you will, the love of God and grace of Christ) that is beloved and valued in them, and towards them. And so this is the issue of faith in Christ, and is thereupon a note of our passage from death to life.

Secondly. The hatred of our brethren is on the contrary a sign of our deadly state, and of our continuance under the legal sentence of death; "He that loveth not his brother" (his brother in Christ) "abideth in death," ver. 14. He yet stands under the curse and condemnation of the law. This the apostle argues by a clear syllogism. Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him; but he that hates his brother is a murderer; and therefore ye cannot but know that he that hates his brother hath not eternal life abiding in him, ver. 15, or "he abideth in death," as it is expressed, ver. 14. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." For hatred of the person is, so far as it prevails, a hatred of life and welfare, and naturally tends to desire the extinction of it. Cain hated and then slew his brother. And then hatred will shut up the bowels of compassion from the poor brethren, and will thereby expose them to the sorrows of death. And it has appeared that hatred of the brethren has in all ages dressed them up in ill names, odious characters and calumnies, and exposed them to persecution and the sword. No wonder, then, that he that pretty well knows the heart of man, (or is taught by Him that fully knows it,) that knows the natural tendency and issue of vile and violent passions, and knows withal the fulness of the Divine law, declares him that hates his brother to be a murderer. Now he that by the frame and disposition of his heart is a murderer "cannot have eternal life abiding in him." For he that is such must needs be carnally minded, and "to be carnally minded is death," *Rom. viii. 6*. The apostle, by the expression of having eternal life abiding in us, may seem to mean the possession of an internal principle of endless life; according to that of the Saviour, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst;" (shall never be totally destitute thereof;) "but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," *Jno. iv. 14*. And thereupon some may be apt to surmise that the passing from death to life," ver. 14, does not signify the relative change made in our justification of life, but the real change made in the regeneration to life. And accordingly, that the "abiding in death," mentioned ver. 14, is continuance in spiritual death (as it is usually called) or abiding in the corrupt deadly temper of nature. But as these passages more naturally denote the state of the person, whether adjudged to life or death, so the relative transition from death to life may well be proved or disproved by the possession or non-possession of the inward principle of eternal life; since washing from the guilt of sin, and from the filth and power of sin, are inseparably united. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," *1 Cor. vi. 11*.

Thirdly. The example of God and Christ should inflame our hearts with this holy love; "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren," ver. 16. [The words "of God," are not in the original; but, considering that they occur in the next verse, which in the argument hangs upon this, the ellipsis is properly filled up by such words.] The great God hath given his Son to the death for

us. But since this apostle hath declared that the Word was God, and that he became flesh for us, I see not why we may not interpret this of God "the Word." Here is the love of God himself, of him who in his own person is God, (though not the Father,) that he assumed a life, that he might lay it down for us! Here is the condescension, the miracle, the mystery, of Divine love, that God would redeem the church with his own blood. [The dying love of Christ being here held up as the great model of love to the brethren, the apostle must be speaking of him rather as the propitiation for our sins, for all the foreseen sins of us his people, (see note on ver. 21, also on ch. ii. 2,) than as the general Redeemer of mankind. Not seldom in the New Testament has the atoning cross this special aspect toward the church of God.] And surely we should love those whom God hath loved, and so loved! and shall certainly do so, if we have any love for God. The apostle, having proposed this flaming, constraining example of, and motive to, love, proceeds to shew us what should be the temper and effect of this our Christian love. And so,

1. It must be, in the highest degree, so fervent as to make us willing to suffer even to the death, for the good of the church, for the safety and salvation of the dear brethren. "And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren," ver. 16, either in our ministrations and service to them; "yea, and if I be offered upon the service and sacrifice of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all," (I shall congratulate your felicity,) *Phil. ii. 17*. Or, in exposing ourselves to hazards, when called thereto, for the safety and preservation of those that are more serviceable to the glory of God and the edification of the church than we can be: "Who have for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles," *Rom. xvi. 4*. How mortified should the Christian be to this life! How prepared to part with it! And how well assured of a better!

2. It must be, in the next degree, compassionate, liberal, and communicative to the necessities of the brethren. For, "whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up the bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" ver. 17. It pleases God that some of the Christian brethren should be poor, for the exercise of the charity and love of those that are rich. And it pleases the same God to give to some of the Christian brethren this world's good, that they may exercise their grace in communicating to the poor saints. And they that have this world's good must love a good God more, and their good brethren more, and be ready to distribute it for their sakes. It appears here that this love to the brethren is founded upon love to God, in that it is here called so by the apostle. How dwelleth "the love of God in him?" This love to the brethren is love to God in them; and where there is none of this love to them, there is no true love to God at all. [Or, the meaning may be, how can such an one pretend to shew any resemblance or representation of Christ's love in his unworthy character? Christ's love ought still to dwell with men on the earth, in the spirit and conduct of his followers. But doth it dwell, or is it impersonated, in him who will not spare even of his substance for the needy, after the Master has laid down his life for the offending? I was going to intimate the third and lowest degree in the next verse, but the apostle has prevented me by intimating that this last charitable, communicative love in persons of ability is the lowest that can consist with the love of God. But there may be other fruits of this love; and therefore the apostle desires that in all it should be unfeigned and operative, as circumstances will allow. "My little children" (my dear children in Christ!) "let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth," ver. 18. Compliments and flatteries become not Christians; but the sincere expressions of sacred affection, and the services or labours of love do. Then,

Fourthly. This love will evince our sincerity in religion, and give us hope towards God: "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him," ver. 19. It is a great happiness to be assured of our integrity in religion. They that are so assured may have holy boldness or confidence towards God; they may appeal to him from the censures and condemnation of the world. The way to arrive at the knowledge of our own truth and uprightness in Christianity, and to secure our inward peace, is to abound in love, and in the works of love towards the Christian brethren.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. 22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

The apostle, having intimated that there may be, even among us, such a privilege as an assurance or sound persuasion of heart towards God, proceeds here,

First. To establish the court of conscience, and to assert the authority of it: "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things," ver. 20. "Our heart" here is our self-reflecting, judicial power; that noble, excellent ability whereby we can take cognizance of ourselves, of our spirits, or dispositions and actions, and accordingly pass a judgment upon our state towards God. And so it is the same with conscience, or the power of moral self-consciousness. This power can act both as witness, judge, and executioner of judgment. It either accuses or excuses, condemns or justifies. It is set and placed in this office by God himself. "The spirit of man" (thus capacitated and empowered) "is the candle of the Lord" (a luminary lighted and set up by the Lord) "searching all the inward parts of the belly," (taking into scrutiny and viewing the *penetralia*, the 'private recesses,' and secret transactions of the inner man,) *Fr. xi. 21*. Conscience is God's vicegerent, calls the court in his name, and acts for him; "The answer of a good conscience towards God," *1 Pet. iii. 21*. God is Chief Judge of the court. "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart;" that is, superior to our heart and conscience, in power and judgment. Hence the act and judgment of the court is the act and judgment of God. As,

1. If conscience condemns us, God does so too; "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things," ver. 20. God is a greater witness than our conscience, and knoweth more against us than it does. He "knoweth all things." He is a greater Judge than conscience; for as he is supreme, so his judgment shall stand, and shall be fully and finally executed. And this seems to be the design of another apostle, when he says, "For I know nothing by myself," that is, in the case wherein I am censured by some. I am not conscious of any guilt, or allowed unfaithfulness in mystewardship and ministry, "yet am I not hereby justified;" it is not by my own conscience that I must ultimately stand or fall; the justification, or justifying sentence, of my conscience, or self-consciousness, will not determine the controversy between you and me. As you do not appeal to its sentence so neither will you be concluded by its decision. "But he that judgeth me" (supremely and finally

him. Before that he was not himself; he had lost himself." (See Maurice.)

iii. 20. "It is asserted that in the exercise of sincere and practical love we possess an approving self-consciousness, and also a confident appeal to God and assurance in his sight; and the apostle proceeds to show that the former involves the latter. He does this by bringing into consideration the opposite state of things. If our self-consciousness testifies against us *à fortiori*, he who knows us better

than we know ourselves must condemn us too. We have a right, then, to insist upon the same connection in the case supposed. If our self-consciousness acquit us, we have reason to believe that we stand clear in the sight of God" (Webster and Wilkinson).

iii. 22. Keeping God's commandments is the proof of submission of the human will to the Divine, and therefore of that spirit which asks for nothing contrary to the will of God.

iii. 23. Observe the connection between faith and love. The

judgeth me, and by whose judgment you and I must be determined) "is the Lord." 1 Cor. iv. 4. Or,

2. If conscience acquit us, God does so too. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, [the conclusion is not in terms, neither doth God condemn us; perhaps, lest we should forget that there are many things in the most upright and sanctified of men, by themselves undetected or misjudged, which His purity and perfect law must needs condemn. But, so long as they preserve innocence of will and consciousness, together with humble faith, he accepts for them the intercession of his servant Jesus, covers their sins of ignorance, condemns not themselves for the things he could not but condemn in them, continues to them the testimony and comfort of his Spirit, and so enables them to say,] then have we confidence towards God," ver. 21. Then have we assurance that he accepts us now, and will acquit us in the great day of account. But, possibly, may some presumptuous soul here say, 'I am glad of this; my heart does not condemn me, and therefore I may conclude God does not.' As, on the contrary, upon the foregoing verse, some pious, trembling soul will be ready to cry out, 'God forbid!' My heart or conscience condemns me, and must I then infallibly expect the condemnation of God! But let such know that the errors of the witnesses are not here reckoned as the acts of the court. Ignorance, error, prejudice, partiality, and presumption, may be said to be faults of the officers of the court, or of the attendants of the judge (as the mind, the will, appetite, passion, sensual disposition, or disordered brain) or of the jury, that give a false verdict, not of the judge itself. Conscience (*conscience*) is properly self-consciousness; acts of ignorance and error are not acts of self-consciousness, but of some mistaken power. And the court of conscience is here described in its process according to the original constitution of it by God himself; according to which process, what is bound in conscience is bound in heaven. Let conscience therefore be heard, be well informed, and diligently attended unto.

Secondly, To indicate the privilege of those that have a good conscience towards God. They have interest in heaven and in the court above; their suits are heard there; "And whatsoever we ask we receive of him," ver. 22. It is supposed that the petitioners do not desire (or do not intend to desire) any thing that is contrary to the honour and glory of the court, or to their own intended spiritual good. And then they may depend upon receiving the good things they ask for. And this supposition may well be made concerning the petitioners, or they may well be supposed to receive the good things they ask for, considering their qualifications and practice; "Because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight," ver. 22. Obedient souls are prepared for blessings, and they have promise of audience. They that commit things displeasing to God cannot expect that he should please them in hearing and answering their prayers, *Ps. lvi. 18; Pr. xxviii. 9.*

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. 24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

The apostle, having mentioned keeping the commandments, and pleasing of God, as the qualification of effectual petitioners in and with heaven, here suitably proceeds,

First, To represent unto us what those commandments primarily and summarily are. They are comprehended in this double one: "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment," ver. 23. [The name of his Son Jesus Christ is an epitome of the mystery of the faith. It suggests that whole doctrine of his complex character and commission which, as being the matter of our faith, and the motive of our love, it is the apostle's primary object in this epistle to develop, vindicate, and apply.] To believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ is, 1. To discern what he is according to his name, to have an intellectual view of his person and office, as the Son of God, and the anointed Saviour of the world; "That every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life," *Jno. vi. 40.* 2. To approve him in judgment and conscience (that is, in conviction and consciousness of our case) as one wisely and wonderfully prepared and adapted for the whole work of the eternal salvation. 3. To consent to, and acquiesce in him, as our Redeemer and Recoverer unto God. 4. To trust to, and rely upon him, for the full and final discharge of his saving office. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee," *Ps. ix. 10.* "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," *2 Tim. i. 12.* This faith is a needful requisite to those that would be prevalent petitioners with God. Because it is by the Son that we must come to the Father; through his grace and righteousness our persons must be accepted or ingratiated with the Father, *Eph. i. 6*; through his purchase all our desired blessings must come; and through his intercession our prayers must be heard and answered. This is the first part of the commandment, that must be observed by acceptable worshippers. The second is, "That we love one another, as he gave us commandment," ver. 23. The command of Christ must be continually before our eyes. Christian love must possess our souls when we go to God in prayer. To this end we must remember that our Lord obliges us, 1st. To forgive those that offend us, *Mat. vi. 14*; and, 2nd. To reconcile ourselves to those that we have offended, *Mat. v. 23, 24.* As goodwill to men was proclaimed from heaven, so goodwill to men (and particularly to the brethren) must be carried in the hearts of those that go to God and heaven.

Secondly, To represent to us the blessedness of obedience to these commands. The obedient enjoy communion with God; "And he that keepeth his commandments" (and particularly these of faith and love) "dwelleth in him, and he in him," ver. 24. We dwell in God by a happy relation to him, and spiritual union with him, through his Son, and by a holy converse with him; and God dwells in us by his word, and our faith fixed on him, and by the operations of his Spirit. And then there occurs the trial of this Divine inhabitation; "And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us," ver. 24; by that sacred disposition and frame of soul that he hath conferred upon us, which being a spirit of faith in God and Christ, and of love to God and man, appears to be of God.

CHAPTER IV.

In this chapter the apostle exhorts to try spirits, ver. 1; gives a note to try by, ver. 2, 3; shews who are of the world, and who of God, ver. 4-6; urges Christian love by diverse considerations, ver. 7-16; describes our love to God, and the effect of it, ver. 17-21.

apostle includes both under one commandment. There can be no faith without love ("the greatest of these is charity"), and no love without faith. To believe on Christ implies love towards him, and therefore love towards our fellow-men.

iv. 1. "Try:" "make trial of," "put to the proof." He proceeds to give some tests in verses 2, 3. "Prophets:" not in the sense of foretellers of events to come, but "teachers."

iv. 2. "Is come:" the tense implies not merely a past historical



ELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

The apostle, having said that God's dwelling in and with us may be known by the Spirit that he hath given us, intimates that that Spirit may be discerned and distinguished from other spirits that appear in the world. And so here,

First, He calls his disciples, to whom he writes, to caution and scrutiny, about the spirits and spiritual professors that were now risen.

1. To caution: "Beloved, believe not every spirit;" regard not, trust not, follow not every pretender to the Spirit of God, or every professor of vision, or inspiration, or revelation from God. Truth is [accidentally] the foundation of simulation and counterfeits. There had been real communications from the Divine Spirit, and therefore others pretended thereto. God will take the way of his own wisdom and goodness, though it may be liable to abuse. He has sent inspired teachers to the world, and given us a supernatural revelation, though others may be so evil and so impudent as to pretend to the same. Every pretender to the Divine Spirit, or to inspiration, and extraordinary illumination thereby, is not to be believed. Time was when "the spiritual man" (the man of the Spirit that made a great noise about, and boast of, the Spirit) "was mad," *Hos. ix. 7.*

2. To scrutiny, to examination of the claims that are laid to the Spirit: "But try the spirits whether they are of God," ver. 1. God has given of his Spirit in these latter ages of the world; but not to all that profess to come furnished therewith. To the disciples is allowed a judgment of discretion in reference to the spirits that would be believed and trusted in the affairs of religion. A reason is given for this trial; "Because many false prophets are gone out into the world," ver. 1. There being, much about the time of our Saviour's appearance in the world, a general expectation among the Jews of a Redeemer to Israel; and the humiliation, spiritual reformation and sufferings of the Saviour being taken as a prejudice against him, others were induced to set up as prophets and Messiahs to Israel, according to the Saviour's prediction, *Mat. xxiv. 23, 24.* It should not seem strange to us that false teachers set themselves up in the church. It was so in the apostles' times. Fatal is the spirit of delusion; sad that men should vaunt themselves for prophets and inspired teachers that are by no means so!

Secondly, He gives a test whereby the disciples may try these pretending spirits. These spirits set up for prophets, doctors, or dictators in religion, and so they are to be tried by their doctrine; and the test whereby, in that day, or in that part of the world where the apostle now resided (for in various seasons, and in various churches, tests were different) must be this, "hereby know ye the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God," ver. 2. Or, "that confesseth Jesus Christ, that came in the flesh." [Think, reader; if Jesus Christ were a mere man, how unsuitable the form of the announcement, that he came, and came in the flesh; as though he had existed previously to his so coming, and could have come in some other nature! And how strange, that the confession of a truism, including what logicians call a *suggestio falsi*, should be the test and token of a sound Christian teacher! And how wonderful that the apostle John should be at the pains to write an epistle to the churches mainly in defence of the allegation that a certain man was born in human nature! But away with such trifling. The truth and worth of the supposed confession turn entirely on its recognising Jesus Christ as that Incarnate Son of God who should come, and come to save sinners.] Jesus Christ is to be confessed as the Son of God, the eternal Life and Word that was with the Father from the beginning; as the Son of God that came into, and came in, our human mortal nature, and therein suffered and died at Jerusalem. He that confesses and preaches this, by a mind supernaturally instructed and enlightened therein, does it by the Spirit of God, or God is the Author of that illumination. And, on the contrary, "every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (or that Jesus Christ, that came in the flesh) "is not of God," ver. 4. God has given so much testimony to Jesus Christ, that was lately here in the world and in the flesh, (or in a fleshly body like ours,) though now in heaven, that ye may be assured that any impulse or pretended inspiration that contradicts this is far from being from heaven and of God. The sum of revealed religion is comprehended in the doctrine concerning Christ, his person and office. We see then the aggravation of a formed opposition against him and it. "And this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world," ver. 3. It was foreknown by God that antichrists would arise, and antichristian spirits oppose his Spirit and his truth. It was foreknown, also, that one eminent antichrist would arise, and make a long and fatal war against the Christ of God, and his institutions, and honour, and kingdom in the world. This great antichrist would have his way prepared, and his rise facilitated, by other lesser antichrists, and the spirit of error working, and disposing men's minds for him. The antichristian spirit began betimes, even in the apostles' days. Dreadful and unsearchable is the judgment of God, that persons should be given over to an antichristian spirit, and to such darkness and delusion as to set themselves against the Son of God, and all the testimony that the Father hath given to the Son. But we have been foretold and forewarned that such opposition would arise. We should therefore cease to be offended; and the more we see the word of Christ fulfilled, the more confirmed we should be in the truth of it.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have

fact, but the continuance of it to the present—i.e., not merely that the incarnation took place, but still is. The statement here made also implies that he who came in the flesh had a previous existence (see verse 15; also John i. 14). The Docetæ denied the reality of our Lord's humanity, and Cerinthus asserted that the heavenly Christ was united to the man Jesus at his baptism. St. John's statement cuts at the root of both these errors.

iv. 3. "Antichrist:" see Note to chap. ii. 18.

overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

In these verses the apostle encourages the disciples against the fear and danger of this seducing, antichristian spirit, and that by such methods as these:—

First. He assures them of a more Divine principle in them: "Ye are of God, little children," ver. 4. "Ye are God's little children." "We are of God," ver. 6. "We are born of God, taught of God, anointed of God, and so secured against infectious, fatal delusions. God has his chosen, that shall not be mortally seduced."

Secondly. He gives them hope of victory: "And have overcome them," ver. 4. "Ye have hitherto overcome these deceivers, and their temptations; and there is good ground of hope that ye will do so still, and that upon these two accounts. 1. There is a strong preserver within you, 'because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world,' ver. 4. The Spirit of God dwells in you; and that Spirit is more mighty than men or devils. It is a great happiness to be under the influence of the Holy Ghost. 2. Ye are not of the same temper with these deceivers. The Spirit of God hath framed your mind for God and heaven. 'But they are of the world.' The spirit that prevails in them leads them to this world; their heart is addicted thereto. They study the pomp, the pleasure, and interest, of the world; 'And therefore speak they of the world.' They profess a worldly Messiah and Saviour; they project a worldly kingdom and dominion. The possessions and treasures of the world would they engross to themselves, forgetting that the true Redeemer's kingdom is not of this world. And this worldly design procures them proselytes; 'And the world heareth them,' ver. 5. They are followed by such as themselves. The world will love its own, and its own will love it. But they are in a fair way to conquer pernicious seductions that have conquered the love of this seducing world. Then,

Thirdly. He represents to them that though their company might be the smaller, yet it was the better; they had more Divine and holy knowledge: "He that knoweth God, heareth us." He that knows the purity and holiness of God, the love and grace of God, the truth and faithfulness of God, the ancient word and prophecies of God, the signals and testimonials of God, must know that he is with us. And he that knows this will attend to us, and abide with us. He that is well furnished with natural religion will the more faithfully cleave to the Christian. "He that knoweth God" (in his natural and moral excellencies, revelations, and works) "heareth us," ver. 6. As, on the contrary, "He that is not of God heareth not us." He that knows not God regards not us. He that is not born of God (walking according to his natural disposition) walks not with us. The farther any are from God, (as appears in all ages,) the farther they are from Christ and his faithful servants. And the more addicted persons are to this world, the more remote they are from the spirit of Christianity. And thus you have a distinction betwixt us and others; "Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error," ver. 6. This doctrine concerning the Saviour's person, leading you from the world to God, is a signature of the spirit of truth, in opposition to the spirit of error. The more pure and holy any doctrine is, the more likely to be of God.

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

As the spirit of truth is known by doctrine, (so spirits are to be tried,) it is known by love likewise. And so here follows a strong, fervent exhortation to holy Christian love: "Beloved, let us love one another," ver. 7. The apostle would unite them together in his love, that he may unite them in love to each other. "Beloved," I beseech ye, by the love I bear to you, that you put on unfeigned mutual love. This exhortation is pressed and urged with variety of argument. As,

First. From the high and heavenly descent of love; "For love is of God." He is the Fountain, Author, Parent, and Commander of love; it is the sum of his law and Gospel; "and every one that loveth" (whose spirit is framed to judicious holy love) "is born of God," ver. 7. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of love. The new nature in the children of God is the offspring of his love; and the temper and complexion of it is love. "The fruit of the Spirit is love," Gal. v. 22. Love comes down from heaven.

Secondly. Love argues a true and just apprehension of the Divine nature: "He that loveth, knoweth God," ver. 7. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God," ver. 8. What attribute of the Divine majesty so clearly shines in all the world as his communicative goodness, which is love! The wisdom, the greatness, the harmony and usefulness of the vast creation, that so fully demonstrate his being, do at the same time shew and prove his love. And natural reason inferring and collecting the nature and excellence of the most absolute perfect

being, must collect and find that he is most highly good. And "he that loveth not" (is not quickened by the knowledge he hath of God to the affection and practice of love) "knoweth not God." It is a convictive evidence that the sound and due knowledge of God dwells not in such a soul. His love must needs shine among his primary, brightest perfections. "For God is love," ver. 8. His nature and essence is love; his will and works are (primarily) love. Not that this is the only conception we are to have of him. We have found that he is light as well as love, ch. i. 5; and God is principally love to himself, and he has such perfections as arise from the necessary love he must bear to his necessary existence, excellence, and glory. But love is natural and essential to the Divine majesty; "God is love." That God is love is argued from the display and demonstration that he hath given of it; as,

1. That he hath loved us, such as we are: "In this was manifested the love of God towards us," ver. 9, towards us mortals, us ungrateful rebels. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were sinners Christ died for us," Rom. v. 8. Strange that God should love impure, vain, vile dust and ashes!

2. That he hath loved us at such a rate, at such an incomparable value, as he has given for us; he has given his own, only beloved, blessed Son for us: "Because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him," ver. 9. This person is in some peculiar distinguishing way the Son of God; he is the only begotten. Should we suppose him begotten as a creature, or created being, he is not the only begotten. Should we suppose him a natural, necessary irradiation from the Father's glory, or glorious essence, (or substance,) he must be the only begotten. And then it will be a mystery and miracle of Divine love that such a Son should be sent into our world for us. It may well be said, "so" (so wonderfully, so amazingly, so incredibly) "God loved the world."

3. That God loved us first, and in the circumstances in which we lay: "Herein is love," (unusual, unprecedented love,) "not that we loved God, but that he loved us," ver. 10. He loved us when we had no love for him, when we lay in our guilt, misery, and blood; when we were undeserving, ill-deserving, polluted, and unclean, and wanted to be washed from our sins in sacred blood.

4. That he gave us his Son for such service and such an end. For such service; "To be the propitiation for our sins." Consequently, to die for us, to die under the law and curse of God, to bear our sins in his own body, to be crucified, to be wounded in his soul and pierced in his side, to be dead and buried for us, ver. 10. And then for such an end, for such a good and beneficial end to us, "that we might live through him," ver. 9; might live for ever through him; might live in heaven, live with God, and live in eternal glory and blessedness with him and through him. O what love is here! (It may be observed that in these verses, 9 and 10, and again in ver. 14, 15, the apostle collects into one complete though compendious Gospel those fragments of truth, each glancing the prismatic hues of the whole, and manifesting its own relation to it, which are found throughout the epistle in such forms as "Jesus the Son of God," "Jesus the Christ," "Christ come in the flesh," &c.) Then,

Thirdly. Divine love to the brethren should constrain ours: "Beloved," I would adjure you by your interest in my love to remember, "if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another," ver. 11. This should be an invincible argument; the example of God should press us. "We should be followers (or imitators) of him as his dear children." The objects of the Divine love should be the objects of ours. Shall we refuse to love those whom the eternal God hath loved? We should be admirers of his love, and lovers of his love, (of that benevolence and complacency that is in him,) and consequently lovers of those whom he loves. The general love of God to the world should induce an universal love among mankind: "That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust," Mat. v. 45. The peculiar love of God to the church and to the saints should be productive of a peculiar love there. If God so loved us, we ought surely, in some measure suitably thereto, to love one another.

Fourthly. The Christian love is an assurance of the Divine inhabitation; "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us," ver. 12. Now God dwelleth in us, not by any visible presence, or immediate appearance to the eye; "No man hath seen God at any time," ver. 12; but by his Spirit, ver. 13; or, "No man hath seen God at any time," he does not here present himself to our eye, or to our immediate intuition; and so he does not that way demand and exact our love; but he demands and expects it in that way in which he has thought meet to deserve and claim it. And that is in the illustration that he has given of himself and of his love, and thereupon of his loveliness too, in the catholic church, and particularly in the brethren, the members of that church. In them, and in his appearance for them and with them, is God to be loved.

[Or, rather, the meaning is, Though we cannot see God, or comprehend his sublime essence, yet we may spiritually know him, and even have something of God dwelling in us, through the action and reaction of holy love; for, having first experienced his love toward us, in the blessings of attested pardon and adoption, we then become blissfully conscious of a love to our heavenly Father and to one another, as his children, so congenial to the Divinity, so certainly of God, that we may be said, without irreverence, to know something of what he is by what his wonder-working grace has made even to us to be: see ver. 13 and last clause of ver. 17. O for the full fellowship of this mystery!]

"Thee may I love, for God thou art;
Thee may I feel, for God is love!"]

And thus, "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us." The sacred lovers of the brethren are the temples of God; the Divine Majesty has a peculiar residence there.

Fifthly. Therein the Divine love attains a considerable end and accomplishment in us; "And his love is perfected in us," ver. 12. It hath obtained its completion in and upon us. God's love is not perfected in him, but in and with us. His love could not be designed to be ineffectual and fruitless upon us. When its proper, genuine end and issue are attained and produced thereby, it may be said to be perfected; so faith is perfected by its works, and love perfected by its operations. When the Divine love hath wrought us to the same image, to the love of God, and thereupon to the love of the brethren, the children of God, for his sake, it is therein and so far perfected and completed; though this love of ours is not at present perfect, nor the ultimate end of the Divine love to us. How ambitious should we be of this fraternal, Christian love, when God reckons his own love to us perfected thereby! To this the apostle, having mentioned the high favour of God's dwelling in us, subjoins the note and character thereof; "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit," ver. 13. Certainly this mutual inhabitation is something more noble and great than we are well acquainted with or can declare. One would think that for God to dwell in us, and we in him, were words too high for mortals to use, had not God gone before us herein. What it is hath been briefly said on ch. iii. 24; what it fully is must be left to the revelation of the blessed word. But this mutual inhabitation "we know," says the apostle, "because he hath given us of his Spirit." He hath lodged the image and fruit of his Spirit in our hearts, ver. 13; and the

iv. 6. "The apostle is giving a test to distinguish, not the children of God from those who are not the children of God, but the spirit of truth from the spirit of error. And this he does by saying that in the case of the teachers of truth, they are heard and received by those who apprehend God, but refused by those who are not of God" (Alford).

iv. 6. "Hereby:" "from this"—i.e., what has been just said, in verses 5, 6. "Know:" "distinguish," "recognise."

iv. 7. Resumption of the exhortation to love, but in nearer and deeper connection with our birth from and knowledge of God, who is love.

iv. 12. "No man hath seen God," &c.: explaining why, in verse 11, instead of saying, "If God so loved us, we ought also to love God," he had said, "we ought to love one another;" the brethren being the visible recipients of our outward kindness, which flows from love to God.

Spirit that he hath given us appears to be his, or of him, since it is "the Spirit of power," (of zeal and magnanimity for God,) "of love," (to God and man,) and "of a sound mind," of an understanding well instructed in the affairs of God and religion, and his kingdom among men, 2 Tim. i. 7.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

Since faith in Christ works love to God, and love to God must kindle love to the brethren, the apostle here confirms the prime article of the Christian faith as the foundation of such love; where,

First. He proclaims the fundamental article of the Christian religion, which is so representative of the love of God; "And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," ver. 14. We here see, 1. The Lord Jesus' relation to God. He is Son to the Father, such a Son as no one else is, and so as to be God with the Father.

2. His relation and office towards us; "The Saviour of the world." He saves us by his death, and example, and intercession, and Spirit, and power against the enemies of our salvation.

3. The ground on which he became so. By the mission of him; "The Father sent the Son." He decreed and willed his coming hither, in and with the consent of the Son.

4. The apostle's assurance of this. He and his brethren had seen it. They had seen the Son of God in his human nature, in his holy converse and works, in his transfiguration on the mount, in his death and resurrection from the dead, and royal ascent to heaven. They had so seen him as to be satisfied that he was "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

5. The apostle's attestation of this, in pursuance of such evidence; "We have seen, and do testify." The weight of this truth obliges us to testify it; the salvation of the world lies upon it; the evidence of the truth warrants us to testify it; our eyes, and ears, and hands have been witnesses of it. Thereupon,

Secondly. The apostle states the excellency, or the excellent privilege attending the due acknowledgment of this truth; "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God," ver. 15. This confession seems to include faith in the heart as the foundation of it; acknowledgment with the mouth to the glory of God and Christ; and profession in the life and conduct, in opposition to the flatteries or frowns of the world. Thus "no man says that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," by the external attestation and internal operation of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 3. And so he that thus confesses Christ, and God in him, is enriched with or possessed by the Spirit of God, and has a complacental knowledge of God and much holy enjoyment of him. Then,

Thirdly. The apostle applies this in order to the excitation of holy love. God's love is thus seen and exerted in Christ Jesus; "And" thus "have we known and believed the love that God hath to us," ver. 16. The Christian revelation is what should endear it to us, the revelation of the Divine love. The articles of our revealed faith are but so many articles relating to the Divine love. The history of the Lord Christ is the history of God's love to us. All his transactions in and with his Son were but testifications of his love to us, and means to advance us to the love of God; "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," 2 Cor. v. 19. And hence we may learn,

1. That "God is love," ver. 16. He is essential, boundless love. He has incomparable, incomprehensible love for us of this world, which he has demonstrated in the mission and whole mediation of his beloved Son. It is the great objection and prejudice against the Christian revelation that the love of God should be so strange and unaccountable as to give his own eternal Son for us. It is the prejudice of many against the eternity and deity of the Son, that so great a person should be given for us. It is, I confess, mysterious and unsearchable; but there are unsearchable riches in Christ. It is pity the vastness of the Divine love should be made a prejudice against the revelation and the belief of it. But what will not God do, when he designs to demonstrate the height of any perfection of his! When he would shew somewhat of his power and wisdom, he makes such a world as this. When he would shew more of his grandeur and glory, he makes heaven for the ministering spirits that are before the throne. What will he not do, then, when he designs to demonstrate his love, and to demonstrate his highest love, or that "he himself is love," or that love is one of the most bright, dear, transcendent, operative excellencies of his unbounded nature, and to demonstrate this not only to us but to the angelic world, and to the principalities and powers above; and this not for our surprise for awhile, but for the admiration, and praise, and adoration of our most exalted powers to all eternity? What will not God then do? Surely, then, it will look more agreeable to the design, and grandeur, and pregnancy of his love, (if I may so call it,) to give an eternal Son for us, than to make a son on purpose for our relief. In such a dispensation as that of giving a natural, eternal Son for us and to us, he will commend his love to us indeed. And what will not the God of love do when he designs to commend his love, and to commend it in the view of heaven, and earth, and hell! and when he will commend himself and recommend himself to us and to our highest conviction, and also affection, as love itself! And what if it should appear at last, which I shall only offer to the consideration of the judicious, that the Divine love, and particularly God's love in Christ, should be the foundation of the glories of heaven, in the present enjoyment of those ministering spirits that comported with it, and of the salvation of this world, and of the torments of hell? This last will seem most strange. But what if therein it should appear not only that God is love to himself in vindicating his own law, and government, and love, and glory, but that the damned ones are made so, or are so punished, 1st. Because they despised the love of God already manifested and exhibited. 2nd. Because they refused to be beloved in what was farther proposed and promised. And, 3rd. Because they made themselves unmeet to be the objects of Divine complacency and delight. If the consciences of the damned should accuse them of these things, and especially of rejecting the highest instance of Divine love; if the far greatest part of the intelligent creation should be everlastingly blessed, through the highest instance of the Divine love, then may it well be inscribed upon the whole creation of God, God is love.

2. That hereupon "he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him," ver. 16. There is great communion between the God of love and the

loving soul; that is, him that loves the [living and spiritual] creation of God, according to its different relation to God, and reception from him, and interest in him. He that dwells in sacred love has the love of God shed abroad upon his heart, has the impress of God upon his spirit, the Spirit of God sanctifying and sealing him, lives in the meditation, views, and tastes of the Divine love, and will, ere long, go to dwell with God for ever.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love him, because he first loved us. 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

The apostle, having thus excited and enforced sacred love, from the great pattern and motive of it,—the love that is and dwells in God himself,—proceeds to recommend it farther by other considerations; and he recommends it in both the branches of it, both as love to God and love to our brother or Christian neighbour.

First. As love to God, to the *primum amabile*,—"the first and chief of all amiable beings and objects;" he that hath the confluence of all beauty, excellence, and loveliness in himself, and confers on all other beings whatever renders them good and amiable. Love to God seems here to be recommended on these accounts:—

1. It will give us peace and satisfaction of spirit in the day when it will be most needed, or when it will be the greatest pleasure and blessing imaginable: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment," ver. 17. There must be a day of universal judgment. Happy they that shall have holy, fiducial boldness before the Judge at that day! that shall be able to lift up their heads, and to look him in the face, as knowing he is their Friend and Advocate! Happy they that have holy boldness and assurance in the prospect of that day; that look and wait for it, and for the Judge's appearance! So do, and so may do, the lovers of God. Their love to God assures them of God's love to them, and consequently of the friendship of the Son of God. The more we love our Friend, especially when we are sure that he knows it, the more we can trust his love. As God is good, and loving, and faithful to his promise, so we can easily be persuaded of his love, and the happy fruits of his love, when we can say, Thou that knowest all things, knowest that we love thee. "And hope maketh not ashamed," (our hope conceived by the consideration of God's love will not defeat us,) "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, that is given to us," Rom. v. 5. Possibly here by "the love of God" may be meant our love to God, that is shed abroad upon our hearts by the Holy Ghost; this is the foundation of our hope, or of our assurance that our hope will hold good at last. Or, if by "the love of God" is meant the sense and apprehension of his love to us, yet that must suppose or include us as lovers of him in this case, and indeed the sense and evidence of his love to us sheds abroad upon our hearts love to him; and thereupon we have confidence towards him, and peace and joy in him. He will give the crown of righteousness to all that love his appearing. And we have this boldness towards Christ because of our conformity to him; "Because as he is, so are we in this world," ver. 17. Love hath conformed us to him. As he was the great lover of God and man, he hath taught us in our measure to be so too; and he will not deny his own image. Love teaches us to conform in sufferings too. We suffer for him and with him, and therefore cannot but hope and trust that we shall also be glorified together with him, 2 Tim. ii. 12.

2. It prevents or removes the uncomfortable result and fruit of servile fear; "There is no fear in love," ver. 18. So far as love prevails, fear ceases. We must here distinguish, I judge, between fear and being afraid; or in this case, between the fear of God and being afraid of him. The fear of God is oft mentioned and commanded as the substance of religion, 1 Pet. ii. 17; Rev. xiv. 7; and so it imports the high regard and veneration we have for God, and his authority and government. Such fear is consistent with love; yea, with perfect love, as being in the angels themselves. But then there is a being afraid of God; this arises from a sense of guilt, and a view of his vindictive perfections; in the view of them God is represented as a consuming fire. And so fear here may be rendered dread. There is no dread in love; love considers its object as good and excellent, and therefore amiable and worthy to be beloved. Love considers God as most eminently good, and most eminently loving us in Christ, and so puts off dread and puts on joy in him; and as love grows joy grows too; so that "perfect love casteth out fear," or dread. They that perfectly love God are, from his nature, and counsel, and covenant, perfectly assured of his love; and consequently are perfectly free from any dismal, dreadful suspicions of his punitive power and justice as armed against them. They well know that God loves them, and they thereupon triumph in his love. That perfect love casteth out fear the apostle thus sensibly argues, that which casteth out torment, casteth out fear or dread; "Because fear hath torment," ver. 18. Fear is known to be a disquieting, torturing passion, especially such a fear as is the dread of an almighty, avenging God; but perfect love casteth out torment, for it teaches the mind a perfect acquiescence and complacency in the beloved; and therefore "perfect love casteth out fear," or, which is here equivalent, "He that feareth is not made perfect in love," ver. 18. It is a sign that our love is far from being perfect, since our doubts, and fears, and dismal apprehensions of God are so many. Let us long for and hasten to, the world of perfect love, where our serenity and joy in God will be as perfect as our love!

3. From the source and rise of it, which is the antecedent love of God; "We love him, because he first loved us," ver. 19. His love is the incentive, the motive and moral cause of ours. We cannot but love so good a God, that was first in the act and work of love; that loved us when we were both unloving and unlovely; that loved us at so great a rate; that has been seeking and soliciting our love at the expense of his Son's blood; and hath condescended to beseech us to be reconciled unto him. Let heaven and earth stand amazed at

recognition of God's love is a condition of abiding in him and he in us."

iv. 17. Here the apostle grounds our confidence on the fact of the absolute likeness of the Christian to Christ; for Christ will not condemn those who bear his own likeness.

iv. 20. "The man says, 'I love God.' St. John meets him with the question, 'What do you love?' An unseen Being, if it is the true God whom you love; but an unseen Being who has declared

such love! His love is the productive cause of ours; "Of his own will," of his own free, loving will, "begat he us." To those that love him all things work together for good; "to them who are the called according to his purpose." They that love God are the called thereto according to his purpose, *Rom. viii. 28*. According to whose purpose they are called is sufficiently intimated in the following clauses; "whom he did predestinate," or antecedently purpose, namely, to the image of his Son, "them he also called," effectually recovered thereto. The Divine love instamped love upon our souls. May the Lord still and farther direct our hearts into the love of God! *2 Thes. iii. 5*.

Secondly, As love to our brother and neighbour in Christ. Such love is argued and urged on these accounts:—

1. As suitable and consonant to our Christian profession. In the profession of Christianity we profess to love God as the root of religion. "If then a man say," or profess as much as thereby to say, "I love God," am a lover of his name, and house, and worship, "and" yet "hateth his brother," whom he should love for God's sake, "he is a liar," *ver. 20*; he therein giveth his profession the lie. That such an one loveth not God the apostle proveth by the usual facility of loving what is seen rather than what is unseen; "For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" *ver. 20*. The eye is wont to affect the heart; things unseen do less catch the mind, and thereby the heart. The incomprehensibility of God does very much arise from his invisibility. The member of Christ has much of God visible in him. How, then, shall the hater of a visible image of God pretend to love the unseen Original, the invisible God himself!

2. As suitable to the express law of God and the just reason of it; "And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also," *ver. 21*. As God has communicated his image in nature and in grace, so he would have our love to be suitably diffused. We must love God originally and supremely, and others in him, on the account of their derivation and reception from him, and of his interest in them. Now, our Christian brethren having a new nature and excellent privileges derived from God, and God having his interest in them as well as in us, it cannot but be a natural, suitable obligation that he that loves God should love his brother also.

CHAPTER V.

In this chapter the apostle asserts, I. The dignity of believers, *ver. 1*. II. Their obligation to love, and the trial of it, *ver. 1—3*. III. Their victory, *ver. 4, 5*. IV. The credibility and confirmation of their faith, *ver. 6—10*. V. The advantage of their faith in eternal life, *ver. 11—13*. VI. The audience of their prayers, unless for those that have sinned unto death, *ver. 14—17*. VII. Their preservation from sin and Satan, *ver. 18*. VIII. Their happy distinction from the world, *ver. 19*. IX. Their true knowledge of God, *ver. 20*; upon which they must depart from idols, *ver. 21*.



WHOEVER believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3 For this is the

love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. 4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

First: The apostle having, as was there observed, in the conclusion of the last chapter, urged Christian love upon those two accounts,—as suitable to Christian profession, and as suitable to the Divine command,—here (as a third: Such love is suitable, or indeed demanded, by their eminent relation. Our Christian brethren, or fellow-believers, are nearly related to God: they are his children. "Whoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born [or begotten] of God," *ver. 1*. Wherein the Christian brother is,

1. Described by his faith. He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ; that he is Messiah, the Prince; that he is the Son of God by nature and office; that he is the chief of all the anointed world; chief of all the priests, prophets, or kings that were ever anointed by God or for him; that he is perfectly prepared and furnished for the whole work of the eternal salvation. And the believer accordingly yields himself up to his care and conduct. And then is,

2. Dignified by his descent: "He is born of God," *ver. 1*. This principle of faith, and the new nature that attends it, or from which it springs, is ingenerated by the Spirit of God; and so sonship and adoption are not now appropriated to the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, nor to the ancient Israel of God. All believers, though by nature sinners of the Gentiles, are spiritually descended from God, and accordingly are to be beloved; as it is added, "Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him," *ver. 1*. It seems but natural that he that loves the Father should love the children also, and that in some proportion to their resemblance to their Father, and to the Father's love to them. And so we must first and principally love the Son of the Father, as he is most emphatically styled, *2 Jno. 3*, the only necessarily begotten and the Son of his love; and then those that are voluntarily begotten and renewed by the Spirit of grace. [Hence, brotherly love can only be reciprocated between brethren in Christ. We have only leave thus to love the regenerate; and we have only power thus to love as we ourselves are so. This next verse implies both conditions.] Thereupon,

Secondly. The apostle shews,

1. How we may discern the truth, or the true evangelical nature, of our love to the regenerate; the ground of it must be our love to God, whose they are, "By this we know that we love the children of God," [as such], "when we love

God," *ver. 2*. [This proposition is the converse of the preceding one, which might have run, By this we know that we love God, when we love the children of God.] Our love to them appears to be sound and genuine when we love them not merely upon any secular account, as because they are rich, or learned, or kind to us, or of our denomination among religious parties; but because they are God's children, his regenerating grace appears in them, his image and supscription is upon them, and so in them God himself is loved. And so we see what that love to the brethren is, that is so pressed in this epistle; it is love to them as the children of God and the adopted brethren of the Lord Jesus. [Now, we can only be sure that our love to them is of this nature and origin when, from other evidence, and especially that of a conscious general conformity to this holy law, we have reason humbly to believe that we love God, and are men of a spiritual mind.]

2. How we may learn the truth of our love to God; it appears in our holy obedience: "When we love God and keep his commandments," *ver. 2*; then we truly, and in gospel account, love God when we keep his commandments; for this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and the keeping of his commandments requires a spirit inclined thereto, and delighting therein, "and" so "his commandments are not grievous," *ver. 3*. Or, This is the love of God, that as thereby we are determined to obedience, and to keep the commandments of God, so his commandments are thereby made easy and pleasant to us. The lover of God says, "O how I love thy law! I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart," *Ps. cxix. 32*: when thou shalt either enlarge it with love, or with thy Spirit that is the spring of love.

3. What is and ought to be the result and effect of regeneration, namely, an intellectual, spiritual conquest of this world: "For whatsoever is born of God," (or, as in some copies, 'whosoever is born of God,') "overcometh the world," *ver. 4*; [which is the chief thing that makes this commandment grievous and difficult of practising.] He that is born of God is born for God, and consequently for another world. He has a temper and disposition that tend to a higher, better world; and he is furnished with such arms, or such a weapon, whereby he can repel and conquer this; as it is added, "and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith," *ver. 4*. Faith is the cause of victory, the means, the instrument, the spiritual armour and artillery by which we overcome. For, 1st. In and by faith we cleave to Christ, in contempt of and opposition to the world. 2nd. Faith works in and by love to God and Christ, and so withdraws us from the love of the world. 3rd. Faith sanctifies the heart, and purifies it from those sensual lusts by which the world obtains such sway and dominion over souls. 4th. It receives and derives strength from the object of it, the Son of God, for conquering the frowns and flatteries of the world. 5th. It obtains by gospel promise a right to the indwelling Spirit of grace, that is greater than he that dwells in the world. 6th. It sees an invisible world at hand, with which this world is not worthy to be compared, and into which it tells the soul in which it resides it must be continually prepared to enter. And thereupon,

Thirdly. The apostle concludes that it is the real Christian that is the true conqueror of the world. "Who is he" then "that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" *ver. 5*. It is the world that lies in our way to heaven, and is the great impediment to our entrance there. But he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God, believes therein that Jesus came from God to be the Saviour of the world, and powerfully to conduct us from the world to heaven and to God, who is fully to be enjoyed there. And he that so believes must needs, by this faith, overcome the world; for,

1. He must be well satisfied that this world is a vehement enemy to his soul, to his holiness, his salvation, and his blessedness; "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world," *ch. ii. 16*.

2. He sees it must be a great part of the Saviour's work, and of his own salvation, to be redeemed and rescued from this malignant world; "Who gave himself for us, that he might deliver us from this present evil world," *Gal. i. 4*.

3. He sees in and by the life and conduct of the Lord Jesus on earth that this world is to be renounced and overcome.

4. He perceives that the Lord Jesus conquered the world not for himself only, but for his followers, and they must study to be partakers of his victory; "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

5. He is taught and influenced by the Lord Jesus's death to be mortified and crucified to the world; "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world," *Gal. vi. 14*.

6. He is begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to the lively hope of a blessed world above, *1 Pet. i. 3*.

7. He knows that the Saviour is gone to heaven, and is there preparing a place for his serious believers, *Jno. xiv. 2*.

8. He knows that his Saviour will come again from thence, and will put an end to this world, and judge the inhabitants of it, and receive his believers to his presence and glory, *Jno. xiv. 3*.

9. He is possessed with a spirit and disposition that cannot be satisfied with this world, that look beyond it, and are still tending, striving, and pressing towards the world in heaven; "In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," *2 Cor. v. 2*. So that it is the Christian religion that affords its pre-elytes an universal empire. It is the Christian revelation on that is the great means of conquering the world, and gaining another that is most pure and peaceful, blessed and eternal. It is there, in that revelation, that we see what is the occasion and ground of the quarrel and contest between the holy God and this rebellious world. It is there we meet with sacred doctrine, both speculative and practical, that is quite contrary to the tenor, temper, and tendency of this world. It is by that doctrine that a spirit is communicated and diffused that is superior and adverse to the spirit of the world. It is there we see that the Saviour himself was not of this world; that his kingdom was not and is not so; that it must be separated from the world and gathered out of it for heaven and for God. There we see that the Saviour resigns not this world for the inheritance and portion of his saved company. As he is gone to heaven himself, so he assures them he goes to prepare for their residence there, a designing they should always dwell with him, and allowing them to believe that if in this life, and this world only, they had hope in him, they should at last be but miserable. It is there that the eternal, blessed world is most clearly revealed and proposed to our affection and pursuit. It is there we are furnished with the best arms and artillery against the assaults and attempts of the world. It is there we are taught how the world may be outshot in its own bow, or its artillery turned against itself, and its oppositions, encounters, and persecutions be made serviceable to our conquest of the world, and to our motion and ascent to the higher, heavenly world; and there we are encouraged by a whole army and cloud of holy soldiers, that have in their several ages, posts, and stations, overcome the world and won the crown. It is the real Christian that is the proper hero, that vanquishes the world, and rejoices in a universal victory; and then, as being far superior to the Grecian monarch, mourns not that there is not another world to be subdued, but lays hold on the eternal world of life, and, in a sacred

that the beings you see, you converse with, are made in his image; a Father who has said, 'These are my offspring.' And these images of his have nothing that attracts you! this offspring of his you positively hate! There is but one word for such profession, from whomsoever it comes—it is a lie. If you have an aversion for the human likeness, you must have an aversion for the Divine prototype." (See Maurice's "Lectures.")

v. 1. Compare chap. iv. 20. St. John first points out who it is who is

"begotten of God"—viz., he who believeth that Jesus is the Christ—and then asserts that every one loving God, who had thus begotten, must of necessity extend his love to the brother begotten of God.

v. 2. See chap. iv. 20. As there our love to our brother was made the sign and condition of our love to God, so here our love to God, shown by obedience to his commands, is the measure of our love to the children of God. Either of the two being present, the other is sure to follow.

course, takes the kingdom of heaven by violence too. Who in all the world but the believer on Jesus Christ can thus overcome the world?

6 This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. 9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

The faith of the Christian believer, or the believer in Christ, being thus mighty and victorious, it had need to be well founded, to be furnished with unquestionable, celestial evidence concerning the Divine mission, authority, and office of the Lord Jesus. And it is so; he brings his credentials along with him; and he brings them both in the way by which he came and in the witness that attends him.

First. In the way and manner by which he came; not barely by which he came into the world, but by and with which he came, and appeared, and acted as a Saviour in the world; "This is he that came by water and blood;" [as it had been appointed and promised that God's Son and Messiah should come. Jesus, therefore, is that very person.] He came to save us from our sins, to give us eternal life, and to bring us to God; and that he might the more assuredly do this, "he came by," or with, "water and blood, even Jesus Christ;" Jesus Christ, I say, did so, and none but he; and I say it again, "not by," or with, "water only, but by" and with "water and blood," ver. 6. Jesus Christ came with water and blood, as the notes and signatures of the true effectual Saviour of the world. And he came by water and blood, as the means by which he would heal and save us. That he must and did thus come in his saving office may appear by our remembering these things:—

1. We are inwardly and outwardly defiled; inwardly by the power and pollution of sin in our nature. For our cleansing from this we need spiritual water, such as can reach the soul, and the powers of it. Accordingly there is in and by Christ Jesus the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. And this was intimated to the apostles by our Lord when he washed their feet, and said to Peter, that refused it, "Except I wash thee, thou hast no part in me." Outwardly [or relatively] by the guilt and condemning power of sin upon our persons. By this we are separated from God, and banished from his favourable, gracious, beatific presence for ever. From this we must be purged by atoning blood. It is the law, or determination, in the court of heaven, that "without shedding of blood there shall be no remission." *Heb. ix. 22.* The Saviour from sin, therefore, must come with blood.

2. Both these ways of cleansing were represented in the old ceremonial institutions of God. Persons and things must be purified by water and blood; "There were divers washings and carnal ordinances imposed till the time of reformation," *Heb. ix. 10.* "The ashes of an heifer," mixed with water, "sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh," *Heb. ix. 13.* *Num. xix. 9.* and likewise, "Almost all things are, by the law, purged with blood," *Heb. ix. 22.* As these shew us our double defilement, so they indicate the Saviour's twofold purgation.

3. At and upon the death of Jesus Christ, his side being pierced with a soldier's spear, out of the wound there immediately issued water and blood. This the beloved apostle saw, and seems to be affected with the sight; and he alone records it, and seems to reckon himself obliged to record it, as containing something mysterious in it. "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth" (being an eyewitness) "that he saith true, that ye might believe," and that ye may believe this particularly, that out of his pierced side "forthwith there came water and blood." *Jno. xix. 34, 35.* Now this water and blood are comprehensive of all that is necessary and effectual to our salvation. By the water our souls are washed and purified for heaven and the region of saints in light; by the blood God is glorified, his law is honoured, and his vindictive excellencies illustrated and displayed. "Whom God hath set forth," or purposed or proposed, "a propitiation through faith in his blood," or a propitiation in or by his blood through faith, "to declare his righteousness, that he may be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," *Rom. iii. 25, 26.* By the blood we are justified, reconciled, and presented righteous to God; by the blood the curse of the law being satisfied, the purifying spirit is obtained for the internal ablation of our natures. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit" (the promised Spirit) "through faith," *Gal. iii. 13, &c.* The water as well as the blood issued out of the side of the sacrificed Redeemer.

[Not by water only, but by water and blood, is an essential principle of experimental religion. There is no sanctification to be experienced but in connexion with the previous pardon of sin and purging of the conscience from dead works, through the pleaded and applied blood of Christ. And the sanctifying influence, not less than the pardoning mercy, is procured to us by his atonement. The blood of Jesus cleanse us from all sin. All life flows in a deep-stained stream from his once lifeless heart; in other words, from his accomplished sacrificial death.]

The water and the blood, then, comprehend all things that can be requisite to our salvation; they will consecrate and sanctify to that purpose all that God shall appoint or make use of in order to that great end. "He loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church," *Eph. v. 25-27.* He that comes by water and blood is a perfect Saviour; and this is he that comes by water and blood, even Jesus Christ. Thus we see in what way and manner he comes. But see we his credentials also:—

Secondly. In the witness that attends him, and that is, the Divine Spirit; that Spirit to whom the perfecting of the works of God is usually attributed: "And it is" [or was] "the Spirit that beareth" [or bare] "witness," ver. 6. It was meet that the commissioned Saviour of the world should have a constant agent to support his work, and testify him to the world. It was meet a Divine power should attend him, his Gospel and servants, and notify to the world upon what errand and office they came, and by what authority they were sent; and

this was done in and by the Spirit of God, according to the Saviour's own prediction, "He shall glorify me," even when I shall be rejected and crucified by men, "for he shall receive" or take, "of mine." He shall not receive of mine, shall proceed on the foundation I have laid, shall take up my institution, and truth, and cause, "and shall" farther "shew it unto you," and by you to the world, *Jno. xvi. 14.* And then the apostle adds the commendation or the acceptableness of this witness; "Because the Spirit is truth," ver. 6. He is the Spirit of God, and cannot lie. There is a copy that would afford us a very suitable reading, thus, 'Because,' or that, 'Christ is the truth.' And so it indicates the matter of the Spirit's testimony, the thing which he attests, and that is the truth of Christ. "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness" that Christ is the truth, and consequently that Christianity, or the Christian religion, is the truth of the day, the truth of God. But it is not meet that one or two copies should alter the text; and our present reading is very agreeable, and so we retain it. "The Spirit is truth;" he is indeed the Spirit of truth, *Jno. xiv. 17.* And that the Spirit is truth, and a witness worthy of all acceptance, appears in that he is a heavenly witness, or one of the witnesses, that in and from heaven bear testimony concerning the truth and authority of Christ. "Because," or for, "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." And so the 7th verse most appositely occurs as a proof of the authenticity of the Spirit's testimony. He must needs be true, or even truth itself, if he be not only a witness in heaven, but even one (not in testimony only, for so an angel may be, but in being and essence) with the Father and the Word.

But here we are stopped in our course by the contest there is about the genuineness of the 7th verse. It is alleged that many old Greek manuscripts have it not. We shall not here enter into the controversy. It should seem that the critics are not agreed what manuscripts have it, and what not; nor do they sufficiently inform us of the integrity and value of the manuscripts they peruse. Some may be so faulty (as I have an old printed Greek Testament so full of errata) that one would think no critic would establish a various lection thereupon. But let the judicious collators of copies manage that business. There are some rational surmises that seem to support the present text and reading; as,

1. If we admit the 8th verse in the room of the 7th, it looks too like tautology and repetition of what was included in the 6th; "This is he that came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness; for there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood." This does not assign near so noble an introduction of these three witnesses as our present reading does.

2. It is observed that many copies read that distinctive clause, 'upon the earth,' 'there are three that bear record upon the earth.' Now this bears a visible opposition to some witness or witnesses elsewhere; and therefore we are told by the adversaries of the text that this clause must be supposed to be omitted in most books that want the 7th. But it should, for the same reason, be so in all. Take we the 6th verse, "This is he that came by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." It would not now naturally and properly be added, "for there are three that bear record on earth," unless we would suppose that the apostle would tell us that all the witnesses are such as are on earth, when yet he would assure us that one is infallibly true, or even truth itself.

3. It is observed that there is variety of reading even in the Greek text, as in the 7th verse. Some copies read *ἐν αἵματι*, 'are one;' others, at least the Complutensian, *ἐν τῷ αἵματι*, 'are to one,' or 'agree in one;' and in ver. 8, in that part that it is supposed should be admitted, instead of the common *ἐν τῷ γῆ*, 'on earth,' the Complutensian reads, *ἐν τῇ γῆ*, which seems to shew that that edition depended upon some Greek authority, and not merely, as some would have us believe, upon the authority either of the vulgar Latin, or of Thomas Aquinas, though his to 'imony may be added thereto.

4. The 7th verse is very agreeable to the style and the theology of our apostle, as

1st. He delights in the title, "the Father;" whether he indicates thereby God only, or a Divine Person distinguished from the Son. "I and the Father are one." "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter." "If a y man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "Grace be with you, and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father," *2 Jno. 8.* Then,

2nd. The name, "the Word," is known to be almost, if not quite, peculiar to this apostle. Had the text been devised by another, it had been more easy and obvious, from the form of baptism and the common language of the church, to have used the name Son in stead of that of "the Word." As it is observed that Tertullian and Cyprian use that name, even when they refer to this verse; or it is made an object on against their referring to this verse, because they speak of the Son, not the Word; and yet Cyprian's expression seems to be very clear by the citation of Facundus himself: *Quod Johannis apostoli testimonium beatus Cyprianus, Carthaginensis antistes et martyr, in epistola suo libro, quem de Trinitate scripsit, de Patre, Filio, et Spiritu sancto dictum intelligit; ait enim, Dicit Dominus, ego et Pater unum sumus; et iterum de Patre, Filio, et Spiritu sancto scriptum est, et hi tres unum sunt.* Blessed Cyprian, the Carthaginian bishop and martyr, in the epistle or book he wrote concerning the Trinity, considered the testimony of the apostle John as relating to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; for he says, The Lord says, I and the Father are one; and again of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit it is written, And they three are one. Now, it is nowhere written that these are one but in the 7th verse. It is probable, then, that St. Cyprian, either depending on his memory, or rather intending things more than words, persons more than names, or calling persons by their names more usual in the church, both in popular and polemic discourses, called the second by the name of the Son rather than of "the Word." If any man can admit Facundus's fancy, namely, that St. Cyprian meant that the Spirit, the water and the blood, were indeed the Father, Word and Spirit that St. John said were one, he may enjoy his opinion to himself. For, *First.* He must suppose that Cyprian not only changed all the names, but the apostle's order too. For the blood, the Son, which Cyprian puts second, the apostle puts last. And, *Secondly.* He must suppose that Cyprian thought that by the blood which issued out of the side of the Son, the apostle intended the Son himself, who might as well have been denoted by the water; that by the water, which also issued from the side of the Son, the apostle intended the Person of the Holy Ghost; that by the Spirit (which in ver. 6 is said to be truth, and in the Gospel is called the Spirit of truth), the apostle meant the Person of the Father, though he is nowhere else so called, when joined with the Son and the Holy Ghost; which had need of good proof that the Carthaginian father could so understand the apostle. And he that so understands him must believe too that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are said to be three witnesses on earth. *Thirdly.* Facundus acknowledges that St. Cyprian says, that of his three it is written, *Et hi tres unum sunt.* "And these three are one." Now, these are the words not of the 8th, but of the 7th verse. Not used concerning the three on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, but the three in heaven, the Father, and the Word,

v. 4. "For:" introducing the reason why God's commandments are not grievous; for he who is born of God prevails over the spirit of disobedience, and shall obtain final and complete victory. The great weapon in this warfare is faith, and this faith prevails because it brings us into union with Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

v. 6. "Came by water and blood:" referring to the baptism and death of Christ. By an emphatic repetition St. John impresses upon his readers that the baptism of Christ was more than one of water.

"It is the Spirit," &c.: the Holy Spirit is an additional witness, besides the water and the blood, to the Messiahship of Jesus (see verse 8); and the force of the Spirit's testimony is in this, that he is truth.

v. 7. "The words, 'in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one; and there are three that bear witness in earth,' are omitted by all Greek MSS. (till the sixteenth century), all the Greek fathers, and the ancient versions, and most

and the Holy Ghost. So we are told that the author of the book, *De Baptismo Hæreticorum* (allowed to be contemporary with Cyprian) cites St. John's words, agreeably to the Greek manuscripts and the ancient versions, thus:—*At enim Johannes de Domino nostro in epistola nos docens, hic est qui venit per aquam et sanguinem. Jesus Christus, non in aqua tantum, sed in aqua et sanguine; et Spiritus est qui testimonium perhibet, quia Spiritus est veritas; quia tres testimonium perhibent, Spiritus et aqua et sanguis, et isti tres in unum sunt.*—For John, in his epistle, says, concerning our Lord, This is he, Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood, not in water only, but in water and blood; and it is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth; for there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one.* If all the Greek manuscripts and ancient versions say concerning the Spirit, the water, and the blood, that, *in unum sunt*,—they agree in one; then it was not of them that Cyprian spake, whatever variety there might be in the copies in his time, when he said it is written, *unum sunt*,—they are one.† And therefore Cyprian's words seem still to be a firm testimony to the 7th verse, and an intimation, likewise, that a forger of the text would have scarce so exactly hit upon the apostolical name for the second witness in heaven, "the Word." [Thus much for the Father and the Word.] Then,

3rd. As this apostle only records the history of the water and blood flowing out of the Saviour's side, so it is he only, or he principally, that registers to us the Saviour's promise and prediction of the Holy Spirit's coming to glorify him, and to testify of him, and to convince the world of its own unbelief, and of his righteousness, as in his Gospel, *Jno. xiv. 16, 17, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7—15*. It is most suitable, then, to the dictation and to the Gospel of this apostle thus to mention the Holy Ghost [also] as a witness for Jesus Christ. Then, [as a fifth general reason in favour of the disputed verse,]

5. It was far more easy for a transcriber, by turning away his eye, or by the obscurity of the copy, it being obliterated or defaced in the top or bottom of a page, or worn away in such materials as the ancients had to write upon, to lose and omit the passage, than for an interpolator to devise and insert it; he must be very bold and impudent that could hope to escape detection and shame, and profane, too, that durst venture to make an addition to a supposed sacred book. And,

6. It can scarce be supposed that when the apostle is representing the strength of the Christian's faith in overcoming the world, and the foundation it relies upon in adhering to Jesus Christ, and the various testimony that was given to Jesus Christ in the world, he should omit the supreme testimony that attended him, especially when we consider that he meant to infer, (as he does ver. 9,) "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this" (that he had rehearsed before) "is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son." Now, in the three witnesses on earth, there is neither all the witnesses of God, nor indeed any witness that is truly and immediately God. The antitrinitarian opposers of the text will deny that either the Spirit or the water or the blood are God himself; and others may say that the Spirit here is some created effect of God. But upon our present reading here is a noble enumeration of the several witnesses and testimonies supporting the truth of the Lord Jesus, and the Divinity of his institution. Here is the most excellent abridgment or breviate of the motives to faith in Christ, of the credentials the Saviour brings with him, of the evidences of our Christianity, that is to be found, I think, in the Book of God, upon which single account, even waiving the doctrine of the Divine Trinity, the entire text is worthy of all acceptance.

Having these rational grounds on our side, we proceed.

Thirdly. The apostle having told us that the Spirit that bears witness to Christ is truth, shews us that he is so by assuring us that he is in heaven, and that there are others also, who cannot but be true, or truth itself, concurring in testimony with him; and "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," ver. 7.

1. Here is a Trinity of heavenly witnesses, such that have testified and avouched to the world the veracity and authority of the Lord Jesus in his office and claims.

The first that occurs in order is, "the Father." He set his seal to the commission of the Lord Christ, all the while he was here, more especially, 1st. In proclaiming him at his baptism, *Mat. iii. 17*. Then, 2nd. In confirming his character at the transfiguration, *Mat. xvi. 5*. Then, 3rd. In accompanying him with miraculous power and works; "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him, *Jno. x. 37, 38, 41*. In avouching at his death, *Mat. xxvii. 54*. 5th. In raising him from the dead, and receiving him up to his glory. He shall convince the world "of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more," *Jno. xvi. 10*, and *Rom. i. 4*.

The second witness is, "the Word." A mysterious name! importing the highest nature that belongs to the Saviour Jesus Christ, that wherein he existed before the world was, and whereby he made the world, and whereby he was truly God with the Father. He [in this Divine nature as the Son] must bear witness to the human nature, or to the man Christ Jesus, in and by whom he redeemed and saved us; and he bore witness, 1st. By the mighty works that he wrought; *Jno. v. 17*, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." 2nd. In conferring a glory upon him at his transfiguration: "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," *Jno. i. 14*. 3rd. In raising him from the dead; *Jno. ii. 19*, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

The third witness is the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Spirit, an august, venerable name,—the possessor, proprietor, and author of holiness. True and faithful must he be to whom the Spirit of holiness sets his seal and solemn testimony. So he did to the Lord Jesus, the head of the Christian world, and that in such instances as these, 1st. In the miraculous production of his immaculate human nature in the virgin's womb: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," *Luk. i. 35*, &c. 2nd. In the visible descent upon him at his baptism. The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, *Luk. iii. 22*, &c. 3rd. In an effectual conquest of the spirits of hell and darkness: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you," *Mat. xii. 28*. 4th. In the visible, potent descent upon the apostles to furnish them with gifts and powers to preach him and his Gospel to the world, after he himself was gone to heaven, *Acts. i. 4, 5; ii. 2—4*, &c. 5th. In supporting the name, Gospel, and interest of Christ, by miraculous gifts and operations, by and upon the disciples, and in the churches, for two hundred years, *1 Cor. xii. 7*; concerning which see Dr. Whitby's excellent discourse in the preface to the second volume of his *Commentary on the New Testament*. These are witnesses in heaven; and they bear record from heaven; and they are one, it should seem, not only in testimony, for that is implied in their being three witnesses, that is, to one and the same thing, but upon a higher account, as they are in heaven; they are one in their heavenly being and essence; and if one with the Father, they must be one God. Then,

2. To these there is opposed, though with them conjoined, a Trinity of witnesses on earth, such as continue here below: "And there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one," ver. 8.

Of these witnesses the first is, "the Spirit." This must be distinguished

of the Latin fathers" (Alford). Read, therefore, verses 7, 8 thus: "For they that bear witness are three—the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one."

v. 9. Read latter clause thus: "The testimony of God is this, that he hath borne testimony concerning his Son."

v. 10. "Hath the witness in himself;" he in whom the testimony of God has produced faith in Christ has in that very faith a testimony in himself (see *1 Cor. xii. 3*), where the apostle ascribes

from the Person of the Holy Ghost, who is in heaven. We must say, then, with the Saviour, according to what is reported by this apostle, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," *Jno. iii. 6*. The disciples of the Saviour are, as well as others, born after the flesh; they come into the world endued with a corrupt, carnal disposition, which is enmity to God. This disposition must be mortified and abolished; a new nature must be communicated, old lusts and corruptions must be eradicated, and the true disciple become a new creature. The regeneration and renovation of souls [by the Spirit] is a testimony to the Saviour [as is also, and most emphatically, his bearing witness within our spirits that we are the accepted children of God by faith in Christ Jesus]. It is his actual, though initial, salvation. It is a testimony on earth, because it continues with the church there, and is not performed in that conspicuous, astonishing manner in which signs from heaven are accomplished. To this Spirit belong, not only the regeneration and conversion of the church, but her progressive sanctification, victory over the world, her peace, and love, and joy, and all that grace by which she is made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. [We have no doubt, however, that (whatever the meaning of the same term in ver. 6) "the Spirit" in this place stands for the Word of truth which he inspired, and by and in which he in all ages bears outward testimony to Jesus as the Christ, and to Christ as our life. So, in this connection, "the water and the blood" denote respectively baptism and the Lord's supper, and nothing more; and it is observable that the express word takes precedence of the sacramental signs. But there is no space for further suggestions on the subject of these various witnesses.]

Then the second is, "the water." This was before considered as a means of salvation, now as a testimony to the Saviour himself, and intimates his purity and purifying power. And so it seems to comprehend, 1st. The purity of his own nature and conduct in the world. He was "holy, harmless, and undefiled." 2nd. The testimony of John's baptism, who bore witness of him, and prepared a people for him, and referred them unto him, *Mar. i. 4, 7, 8*. 3rd. The purity of his own doctrine, by which souls are purified and washed. "Now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you," *Jno. xv. 3*. 4th. The actual and active purity and holiness of his disciples. His body is the holy catholic church. "Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit," *1 Pet. i. 22*. And this signed and sealed by 5th. The baptism that he has appointed for the initiation or introduction of his disciples, in which he signally, or by that sign, says, "Except I wash thee, thou hast no part in me. Not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God," *1 Pet. iii. 21*.

Then there is, thirdly, "the blood." This he shed, and this was our ransom. This testifies for Jesus Christ, 1st. In that it sealed up and finished the sacrifices of the Old Testament; "Christ our passover was sacrificed for us." 2nd. In that it confirmed his own predictions, and the truth of all his ministry and doctrine, *Jno. xviii. 37*. 3rd. In that it shewed unparalleled love to God, in that he would die a sacrifice to his honour and glory, in making atonement for the sins of the world, *Jno. xiv. 30, 31*. 4th. In that it demonstrated unspeakable love to us; and none will deceive those whom they entirely love, *Jno. xiv. 13—15*. 5th. In that it demonstrated the disinterestedness of the Lord Jesus, as to any secular interest and advantage. No impostor or deceiver ever proposes to himself contempt, and violent cruel death, *Jno. xviii. 36*. 6th. In that it lays obligation on his disciples to suffer and die for him. No deceiver would invite proselytes to his side and interest at the rate that the Lord Jesus did; "Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake. They shall put ye out of their synagogues;" and "the time comes, that whosoever kills you will think that he doth God service," *Jno. xvi. 2*. And he frequently calls his servants to a conformity with him in sufferings; "Let us go forth, therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach," *Heb. xiii. 13*, which shews that neither he nor his kingdom is of this world. Then, 7th. The benefits accruing and procured by his blood, well understood, must immediately demonstrate that he is indeed the Saviour of the world. And then, 8th. These are signified and sealed in the institution of his own supper: "This is my blood of the New Testament," (which ratifies the New Testament,) "which is shed for many for the remission of sins," *Mat. xxvi. 28*. Such are the witnesses on earth; such is the various testimony given to the Author of our religion. No wonder if the rejecter of all this evidence be judged as a blasphemer of the Spirit of God, and be left to perish without remedy in his sins. These three witnesses, being more different than the three former, are not so properly said to be one as to be for one,—to be for one and the same purpose and cause, or to agree in one,—in one and the same thing among themselves, and in the same testimony with those that bear record from heaven. [Besides, the three witnesses on earth are mere things, and may more properly be said to agree in one; the three witnesses in heaven are Divine Persons, and essentially are One.] Whereupon,

Fourthly. The apostle justly concludes, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God that he hath testified of his Son," ver. 9. Where we have,

1. A supposition well founded upon the premises. Here is the witness of God, the witness whereby God hath testified of his Son, which surely must intimate some immediate, irrefragable testimony, and that of the Father concerning his Son; he has by himself proclaimed and avouched him to the world.

2. The authority and acceptableness of this testimony, and that argued from the less to the greater: "If we receive the witness of men, and such testimony is and must be admitted in all judicatories, and in all nations, 'the witness of God is greater.' It is truth itself, of highest authority, and most unquestionable infallibility. And then there is,

3. The application of the rule to the present case; "For this is the witness," and here is the witness, "of God," even of the Father as well as of the Word and Spirit, "which he hath testified of," and wherein he hath attested, "his Son." God, that cannot lie, hath given sufficient assurance to the world that Jesus Christ is his Son, the Son of his love, and Son by office, to reconcile and recover the world unto himself; he testified therefore the truth and Divine original of the Christian religion; and that it is the sure appointed way and means of bringing us up to God.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on

confession of (and consequently faith in) Jesus Christ to the Holy Spirit's influence.

v. 12. On this verse Bengel remarks that it has two clauses: in the former the Son is mentioned without the addition "of God," for believers know the Son; in the second clause the addition "of God" is made, that unbelievers may know thereby what a serious thing it is not to love him: and that in the former clause "hath" bears the emphasis, in the second "life." Faith is the means whereby Christ

the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

In these words we may observe,

First. The privilege and stability of the real Christian: "He that believeth on the Son of God," hath been prevailed with unfeignedly to cleave to him for salvation, "hath the witness in himself," ver. 10. He hath not only the outward evidence that others have, but he hath in his own heart a testimony for Jesus Christ. He can allege what Christ and the truth of Christ have done for his soul, and what he has seen and found in him. As, 1. He has deeply seen his sin, and guilt, and misery, and his abundant need of such a Saviour. 2. He has seen the excellency, beauty, and office of the Son of God, and the incomparable suitability of such a Saviour to all his spiritual wants and sorrowful circumstances. 3. He sees and admires the wisdom and love of God in preparing and sending such a Saviour to deliver him from sin and hell, and to raise him to pardon, peace, and communion with God. 4. He hath found and felt the power of the word and doctrine of Christ, wounding, humbling, healing, quickening and comforting his soul. 5. He finds that the revelation of Christ, as it is the greatest discovery and demonstration of the love of God, so it is the most apt and powerful means of kindling, fomenting, and inflaming love to the holy blessed God. 6. He is born of God by the truth of Christ, as ver. 1. He hath a new heart and nature,—a new love, disposition, and delight, and is not the man that formerly he was. 7. He finds yet such a conflict with himself, with sin, with the flesh, the world, and invisible wicked powers, as is described and provided for in the doctrine of Christ. 8. He finds such prospects and such strength afforded him by the faith of Christ, that he can despise and overcome the [present] world, and travel on towards a better. 9. He finds what interest the Mediator hath in heaven, by the audience and prevalence of those prayers that are sent thither in his name, according to his will, and through his intercession. 10. He is begotten again unto a lively hope, to a holy confidence in God, in his goodwill and love, to a pleasant victory over terrors of conscience, dread of death and hell, to a comfortable prospect of life and immortality, being enriched with the earnest of the Spirit, and sealed to the day of redemption. Such assurance has "he gospel believer,"—he has a witness in himself. Christ is formed in him, and is growing up to the fulness and perfection (or perfect image) of Christ in heaven.

Secondly. The aggravation of the unbeliever's sin,—the sin of unbelief: "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar." He does in effect give God the lie; "Because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son," ver. 10. He must believe either that God did not send his Son into the world, when he has given us such manifold evidence that he did; or, that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God, when all that evidence relates to, and terminates upon, him; or, that he sent his Son to deceive the world, and to lead it into error and misery; or, that he permits men to devise a religion, which, in all the parts of it, is a pure, holy, heavenly, undefiled institution, and so worthy to be embraced by the reason of mankind, and yet is but a delusion and a lie; and then lends them his Spirit and power to recommend and obtrude it upon the world; which is to make God the father, that is, the author or abettor, of the lie.

[Note, in passing, a threefold object placed before us within this one verse, ver. 10, whereto saving faith must necessarily have respect. It must "believe God," firmly basing itself on his essential rectitude and benevolence; it must consequently "believe the record that God gave of his Son," feeling it to be infallible and faithful as his nature; and it must thereupon "believe on the Son of God," leaning the soul's whole weight on his cross, and expecting "eternal life" in "fellowship with" him.]

Thirdly. The matter, the substance, or contents of all this Divine testimony concerning Jesus Christ; "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son," ver. 11. This is the sum of the Gospel. This is the sum and epitome of the whole record given us by all the aforesaid six witnesses.

1. That "God hath given to us eternal life." He hath designed it for us in his eternal purpose; he hath prepared all the means that are necessary to bring us thither; he hath made it over to us by his covenant and promise; and he actually confers a right and title thereto, on all that believe on, and actually embrace, the Son of God. Then,

2. This life is in the Son. The Son is life, eternal life in his own essence and person, *John* i. 4; *1 John* i. 2. He is eternal life to us, the spring of our spiritual and glorious life, *Col.* iii. 4. From him life is communicated to us, both here and in heaven; and thereupon it must follow, 1st. "He that hath the Son hath life," ver. 12. He that is united to the Son is united to life; he that hath title to the Son hath title to life, to eternal life. Such honour hath the Father put upon the Son. Such honour must we put upon him too. We must come and kiss the Son, and we shall have life. 2nd. "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life," ver. 12. He continues under the condemnation of the law, *John* iii. 36. He refuses the Son, who is life itself, who is the procurer of life, and the way to it; he provokes God to deliver him over to endless death, for making him a liar, since he believes not this record that God has given concerning his Son.

Fourthly. The end and reason of the apostle's preaching this to believers.

1. For their satisfaction and comfort: "These things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life," ver. 13. Upon all this evidence, and these witnesses, it is but just and meet that there should be those that believe on the name of the Son of God. God increase their number! How much testimony from heaven has the world to answer for! And to three witnesses in heaven must the world be accountable. These believers have eternal life; they have it in the covenant of the Gospel, in the beginning and first-fruits of it within them, and in their Lord and Head in heaven. These believers may come to know that they have eternal life, and should be quickened, encouraged, and comforted in the prospect of it; and they should value the Scriptures, that are so much written for their consolation and salvation.

2. For their confirmation and progress in their holy faith: "And that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God," ver. 13; that is, may go on believing, [strengthened by what you have now heard from me.] Believers must persevere, or they do nothing. To withdraw from believing on the name of the Son of God is to renounce eternal life, and to draw back unto perdition. And therefore the evidences of religion, and the advantage of faith, are to be presented to believers, in order to narten and encourage them to persevere to the end.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us,

becomes a present possession; and having him is to have life, in its germ and reality now, and its fully-developed manifestation hereafter.

v. 13. Omit the words "that believe on the name of the Son of God" in the first clause (they are wanting in the oldest MSS.), and read the rest of the verse thus: "That ye may know that ye have eternal life, even to you that believe on the name of the Son of God." Great stress is to be laid on the words "ye know." The phrase "we

whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. 16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

Here we see, First. A privilege belonging to faith in Christ; and that is, audience in prayer; "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us," ver. 14. The Lord Christ emboldens us to come to God in all circumstances, with all our supplications and requests; and through him our petitions are admitted and accepted of God. The matter of our prayer must be agreeable to the declared will of God. It is not fit that we should ask what is contrary either to his majesty and glory, or to our own good, who are his, and dependent on him. And then we may have confidence that the prayer of faith shall be heard in heaven.

Secondly. The advantage accruing to us by such privilege; "And if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him," ver. 15. Great are the deliverances, mercies, and blessings the holy petitioner needs. To know that his petitions are heard, or accepted, is as good as to know that they are answered; and therefore that he is so pitied, pardoned, counselled, sanctified, assisted, and saved, or shall be so, as he is allowed to ask of God.

Thirdly. Direction in prayer in reference to the sins of others; "If any man see his brother sin a sin, which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death: There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it," ver. 16. Where we may observe,

1. That we ought to pray for others, as well as for ourselves; for our brethren of mankind, that they may be enlightened, converted, and saved; for our brethren in the Christian profession, that they may be sincere, and may be pardoned their sins, delivered from evils and the chastisements of God, and preserved in Christ Jesus.

2. That there is great distinction in the heinousness and guilt of sin. There is "a sin unto death," ver. 16, and "there is a sin not unto death," ver. 17. 1st. There is a sin unto death. All sin, as to the merit and legal sentence of it is unto death; "The wages of sin is death; and cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them," *Gal.* iii. 10. But there is sin unto death in opposition to such sin as is here said not to be unto death. There is therefore, 2nd. A sin not unto death. And that surely must be all such sin as by Divine or human constitution may consist with life; in the human constitution with temporal or corporal life; in the Divine constitution with corporal, or with spiritual, evangelical life.

First. There are sins that by human, righteous constitution are not unto death,—as divers pieces of injustice, which may be compensated without the death of the delinquent. In opposition to which there are sins that by righteous constitution are to death, or to a legal forfeiture of life,—such as we call capital crimes. Then, Secondly. There are sins that by Divine constitution are unto death, and that either death corporal, or spiritual and evangelical. 1st. Such as are, or may be, to death corporal. And such may the sins be either of gross hypocrites, as Ananias and Sapphira, or, for aught we know, of sincere Christian brethren; as when the apostle says of the offending members of the church of Corinth, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep," *1 Cor.* xi. 30. There may be sin unto corporal death among those that may not be condemned with the world. Such sin, I said, is, or may be, to corporal death. The Divine, penal constitution in the Gospel does not positively and peremptorily threaten death to the more visible sins of the members of Christ, but only some gospel chastisement; "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," *Heb.* xii. 6. There is room left for Divine wisdom or goodness, or even gospel severity, to determine how far the chastisement or the scourge shall proceed; and we cannot say but that sometimes it may, in *terrorem*,—for warning to others,—proceed even to death. Then, 2nd. There are sins that by Divine constitution are unto death spiritual and evangelical; that is, are inconsistent with spiritual and evangelical life,—with spiritual life in the soul, and with an evangelical right to life above. Such are total impenitence and unbelief for the present; final impenitence and unbelief are infallibly to death eternal; as also a blaspheming of the Spirit of God in the testimony that he has given to Christ and his Gospel, and a total apostasy from the light and convictive evidence of the truth of Christian religion. These are sins deriving the guilt of everlasting death. Then comes,

Fourthly. The application of the direction for prayer, according to the different sorts of sin, thus distinguished. The prayer is supposed to be for life; "He shall ask, and he," God, "shall give them life." Life is to be asked of God; he is God of life, and gives it when and to whom he pleases, and takes it away, either by his constitution, or providence, or both, as he thinks meet. In the case of a brother's sin, that is not, in the manner already mentioned, unto death, we may, in faith and hope, pray for him, and particularly for the life of soul and body. But in case of the sin unto death, in the forementioned ways, we have no allowance to pray. Perhaps the apostle's expression, "I do not say he shall pray for it," may intend no more than, I have no promise for you in that case—no foundation for the prayer of faith.

1. The laws of punitive justice must be executed for the common safety and benefit of mankind. And even an offending brother in such a case must be resigned to public justice, which, in the foundation of it, is Divine, and at the same time also to the mercy of God.

2. The removal of evangelical penalties, as they may be called, or the prevention of death, that may seem to be so consequential upon, or inflicted for, some particular sin, can be prayed for only conditionally or provisionally; that is, with proviso that it consist with the wisdom, will, and glory of God that they should be removed, and particularly such death prevented.

3. We cannot pray that the sins of the impenitent and unbelieving should, while they are such, be forgiven them; or that any mercy of life or soul, that supposes the forgiveness of sin, should be granted to them while they continue such. But we may pray for their repentance, supposing them but in the common case of the impenitent world, and for their being enriched with faith in Christ, and thereupon for all other saving mercies.

4. In case it should appear that any have committed the irremissible blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and the total apostasy from the illuminating convictive powers of the Christian religion, it should seem that they are not to be prayed for at all; for what remains but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, to consume such adversaries? *Heb.* x. 27. And these last seem to be sins chiefly intended by the apostle by the name of sins unto death. Then,

know" occurs no fewer than five times in the succeeding verses. The apostle of love is also the apostle of knowledge. Through him we learn that to know God and his Son is eternal life (*John* xvii. 3); and he strongly asserts that personal knowledge which gave him a right to speak. (Compare *1 John* i. 1.)

v. 14. In the former verse St. John had spoken of their knowing that they had eternal life. From that knowledge would result the confidence in prayer here mentioned. The "him" and "his will"

5. The apostle seems to argue that there is sin that is not unto death; thus, "All unrighteousness is sin," ver. 17. But were all unrighteousness unto death, since we have all some unrighteousness towards God or man, or both, in omitting and neglecting something that is our duty, then we were all peremptorily bound over to death; but since it is not so, the Christian brethren, generally speaking, having right to life, there must be sin that is not unto death. Though there is not venial sin, in the common acceptance, there is pardoned sin—sin that does not derive a plenary obligation to eternal death. If it were not so there could be no justification or continuance of the justified state. The gospel constitution or covenant abbreviates, abridges, or rescinds the guilt of sin.

[Surely too much of mystery has been thrown over the meaning of these two verses. Do they not relate to the same class of cases as those provided for by the Holy Ghost in the close of St. James's epistle, *ch. v. 14-16*? Is not the emergency supposed an extraordinary one, somewhat abruptly introduced to illustrate and magnify the power of prayer, on the part of eminently righteous and believing men? Is it not simply that of some urgent bodily sickness, occasioned proximately by some presumptuous sin? Is not the offender an unsaved, or rather a backsliding, member of the church? ("If any man" of you "see his brother sin a sin," &c. "Is any among you sick? and if he have committed sins," &c. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth," &c.) Is not the power of obtaining spared life for such an one, though doubtless encouraging to devout men in all times,—yet granted here, properly, to men rich in the supernatural gifts of the apostolic age, the gifts of discernment, healing, and prayer? (*Jas. v. 16*, the "inwrought," or inspired, "prayer of a righteous man availeth much.") Is not the excepted case that of one whose sin is inevitably unto bodily death; inevitably, either because it is not confessed or repented of, *Jas. v. 16*, or because it has been of a peculiarly grievous character, perhaps some death-working "lust of the flesh?" In such a case, would not spiritually-gifted men find themselves wanting in the inwrought prayer of faith, and be rather restrained from "asking life?" And yet, does not St. James, while extending the injunction and promise to the exigency of all sick brethren, whether suffering for sin or not, give encouragement to hope that, even where life is irrecoverably forfeited, the soul may by counsel and intercession be converted and saved eternally? *ch. v. 19, 20.*]

18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. 19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. 20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. 21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.



GREEK AND ROMAN IDOLS.

Here we have, First, A recapitulation of the privileges and advantages of the sound Christian believers.

1. They are secured against sin, against the fulness of its dominion or the fulness of its guilt: "We know that whosoever is born of God," and the believer in Christ is born of God, ver. 1. "sinneth not," ver. 18; sinneth not with that fulness of heart and spirit as the unregenerate do; as was said, *ch. iii. 6, 9*, and, consequently, not with that fulness of guilt that attends the

sins of others; and so he is secured against that sin that is unavoidably unto death, or that infallibly binds the sinner over unto the wages of eternal death. The new nature, and the inhabitation of the Divine Spirit, thereby prevent the admission of such unpardonable sin.

2. They are fortified against the devil's destructive attempts; "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself," that is, is enabled to guard himself, "and the wicked one touches him not," ver. 18; that is, that the wicked one may not touch him, namely to death. It seems not to be barely a narration of the duty or the practice of the regenerate, but an indication of their power by virtue of their regeneration; they are thereby prepared and principled against the fatal touches (that is, the sting) of the wicked one. He touches not their souls to infuse that venom there that he does to others; or to expel that regenerative principle that is an antidote to his poison; or to induce them to that sin that by gospel constitution conveys an indissoluble obligation to eternal death. He may prevail too far with them to draw them to some acts of sin; but it seems to be the design of the apostle to assert that their regeneration secures them from such assaults of the devil as will bring them into the same case and actual condemnation with the devil.

3. They are on God's side and interest, in opposition to the state of the world; "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness," ver. 19. Mankind is divided into two great parties or dominions; that which belongs to God, and that which belongs to wickedness, or to the wicked one. The Christian believers belong to God. They are of God, and from him, and to him, and for him. They succeed into the right and room of the ancient Israel of God, of whom it is said, "The Lord's people is his portion," his estate in this world, "Jacob is the lot of his inheritance," the dividend that has fallen to him by the lot of his own determination, *Deu. xxxii. 9*. While, on the contrary, "the whole world," the rest being by far the major part, "lieth in wickedness," in the jaws, in the bowels of the wicked one. There are, indeed, were we to consider the individuals, many wicked ones; many wicked spirits in the heavenly, or the ethereal, places; but they are united in wicked nature, policy, and principle, and they are united also in one head. There is the prince of the devils and of the diabolical kingdom. There is a head of the malignity and of the malignant world; and he has such sway here that he is called the god of this world. Strange that such a knowing spirit should be so implacably incensed against the Almighty and all his interests, when he cannot but know that it must end in his own overthrow and everlasting damnation! How tremendous is the judgment of God upon that wicked one! May the God of the Christian world continually demolish his dominion in this world, and translate souls into the kingdom of his dear Son!

4. They are enlightened in the knowledge of the true, eternal God; "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true," ver. 20. The Son of God is come into our world; and we have seen him, and know him by all the evidence that has already been asserted; and he hath revealed unto us the true God, as *Jno. i. 18*; and he hath opened our minds, too, to understand that revelation; given us an internal light in our understandings, whereby we may discern the glories of the true God; and we are assured that it is the true God that he hath discovered to us. He is infinitely transcendent in purity, power, and perfection, to all the gods of the Gentiles. He has all the excellencies, beauties, and riches of the living and true God. It is the same God that, according to Moses' account, made the heavens and the earth; the same that took our fathers, the patriarchs, into peculiar covenant with himself; the same that brought our ancestors out of Egypt; that gave us the fiery law upon mount Sinai; that gave us his holy oracles, and promised the call and conversion of the Gentiles. By his counsels and works, by his love and grace, by his terrors and judgments, we know that he, and he alone, in the fulness of his being, is the living and true God. It is a great happiness to know the true God, to know him in Christ; it is eternal life, *Jno. xvii. 3*. It is the glory of the Christian revelation that it gives the best account of the true God, and administers the best eye-salve for our discerning the living and true God.

5. They have a happy union with God and his Son: "And we are in him that is true, even," or and, "in his Son Jesus Christ," ver. 20. The Son leads us to the Father, and we are in both; in the love and favour of both; in covenant and federal alliance with both; in spiritual conjunction with both, by the inhabitation and operation of their Spirit. And that you may know how great a dignity and felicity this is, you must remember that this true one is the true God and eternal life; or rather, as it should seem a more natural construction, this same Son of God is himself also the true God and eternal life, *Jno. i. 1*, and here, *ch. i. 2*. So that in union with either much more with both, we are united to the true God and eternal life.

[Without doubt this latter is the true construction. To have said that the true God is the true God, (as some actually read it) would have been an absurdity exactly parallel to that, pointed out at *ch. iv. 2*, of saying that a certain mere man was born in human nature. The apostle closes the epistle as he opened it, by declaring that "we are in him that is true," the true God, in virtue of our being "in his Son Jesus Christ," *ch. i. 3*; nay, that this Jesus Christ is himself, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, "the true God, and," both essentially as God and relatively to man, "eternal life." "Dear children," he therefore subjoins, "keep yourselves from idols;" as creatures, from all objects of worship, and as Christians, from all objects of faith, rival to "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ!" Then we have,

Secondly, The apostle's concluding monition; "Little children," dear children, as it has been interpreted, "keep yourselves from idols," ver. 21. Since ye know the true God, and are in him, let your light and love guard you against all that is advanced in opposition to him, or competition with him. Flee from the false gods of the heathen world; they are not comparable to the God whose you are, and whom you serve. Adore not your God by statues and images, which share in his worship. Your God is an incomprehensible Spirit, and is disgraced by such sordid representations. Hold no communion with your heathen neighbours in their idolatrous worship. Your God is jealous, and would have you come out, and be separated from among them. Mortify the flesh, and be crucified to the world, that they may not usurp the throne and dominion in the heart, which is due only to God. The God whom you have known is he that made you, that redeemed you by his Son, that has sent his Gospel to you, that hath pardoned your sins, and begotten you unto himself by his Spirit, and given you eternal life; cleave to him in faith, and love, and constant obedience, in opposition to all things, brethren, that would alienate your mind and heart from God. To this living and true God be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen.

must refer to God the Father. "According to his will:" "The condition here attached is, in fact, no limitation within the reality of the Christian life—i.e., in St. John's way of speaking according to the true ideal. For God's will is that to which our glorious Head himself submitted, and which rules the whole course of the Christian life, for our good and his glory; and he who, in prayer or otherwise, tends against God's will, is thereby and in so far transgressing the bounds of his life in God. (See James iv. 3.) By the continual feeling of submission to his will, joined with continual increase in knowledge of that will, our prayers will be both chastened and directed aright. If we knew his will thoroughly, and submitted to it heartily, it would be impossible for us to ask anything, for the spirit or the body, which he should not hear and perform. And it is this ideal state, as always, which the apostle has in view" (Alford).

v. 16. "He shall give," &c.: i.e., the asker shall give. He shall be the means, by his intercessory prayer, of obtaining from God life for his sinning brother. "I do not say," &c.: Alford considers this as implying a prohibition; other commentators think that St. John is merely excluding the subject which follows from his present teaching. There is a difference between the "ask" and "pray"—the former being used of a humble petition, the latter of the request as of one on an equality, or, at least, on terms of familiarity. Alford says, "To request for a sin unto death (intercede, as it were, authoritatively for it; as though we were more merciful than God) would savour of presumption, prescribing to God how he shall inflict and withhold his righteous judgments." The sin unto death being, according to Bengel, "a state of soul in which faith, love, and hope—in short, the new life—is extinguished."



AN EXPOSITION OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

HERE we find a canonical epistle inscribed principally, not only to a single person, but to one also of the softer sex. And why not to one of that sex? In gospel redemption, privilege, and dignity, there is neither male nor female; they are both one in Christ Jesus. Our Lord himself neglected his own repast to commune with the woman of Samaria, in order to shew her the fountain of life. And, when almost expiring upon the cross, he would, with his dying lips, bequeath his blessed mother to the care of this beloved disciple, and thereby instruct him to respect female disciples for the future. It was to one of the same sex that our Lord chose to appear first after his return from the grave, and to send by her the news of his resurrection to this as well as to the other apostles. And we find afterwards a zealous Priscilla so well acquitting herself in her Christian race, and particularly in some hazardous service towards the apostle Paul, that she is not only often mentioned before her husband, but to her as well as to him, not only the apostle himself, but also all the Gentile churches, were ready to return their thankful acknowledgments. No wonder, then, that an heroine in Christian religion, honoured by Divine Providence, and distinguished by Divine grace, should be dignified also by an apostolical epistle.

[The canonical authority of the second and third epistles of John depends on the following things: 1. On the evidence that they are the writings of the apostle John. In proportion as that evidence is clear, their canonical authority is of course established. 2. Though brief, and though addressed to individuals, they are admitted into the canon of Scripture with the same propriety as the epistles to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon, for those were addressed also to individuals. 3. Like those epistles, also, these contain things of general interest to the church. There is nothing in either that is inconsistent with what John has elsewhere written, or that conflicts with any other part of the New Testament; there is much in them that is in the manner of John, and that breathes his spirit; there is enough in them to tell us of the way of salvation. Of the time when these epistles were written, and the place where, nothing is known, and conjecture would be useless, as there are no marks of time or place in either, and there is no historical statement that gives the information. It has been the common opinion that they were written at Ephesus, and when John was old. The appellation which he gives of himself, "the elder," accords with this supposition, though it does not make it absolutely certain.]

A.D. 90.

A.D. 90.

The apostle here salutes an honourable matron and her children, ver. 1-4; recommends to them faith and love, ver. 5, 6; warns them of deceivers, ver. 7; and to take heed to themselves, ver. 8; teaches how to treat those that bring not the doctrine of Christ, ver. 10, 11, and referring other things to personal discourse, concludes the epistle, ver. 12, 13.



THE elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; 2 For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.

Ancient epistles began, as here, with salutation and good wishes. Religion consecrates, as far as may be, old forms, and turns compliments into real expressions of life and love. Here we have, as usually,

First. The saluter; not expressed by name, but by a chosen character, "the elder." The expression, and style, and love, do intimate that the penman was the same with that of the foregoing epistle. He is now "the elder," emphatically and eminently so; possibly the oldest apostle now living; the chief elder in the church of God. An elder in the ancient house of Israel was revered, or to be revered; much more he that is so in the Gospel-Israel of God. An old disciple is honourable; an old apostle and leader of disciples is more so. He was now old in holy service and experience, had seen and tasted much of heaven, and was much nearer than when at first he believed.

Secondly. The saluted—a noble Christian matron and her children: to "the elect lady and her children." A lady, a person of eminent quality for birth, breeding, and estate. It is well the Gospel has got among such. It is pity but lords and ladies should be acquainted with the Lord Christ and his religion. They owe more to him than others do, though usually "not many noble are called." Here is a pattern for persons of quality of the same sex. "The elect lady;" not only a choice one, but one chosen of God. It is brave to see Divine election running among the ladies; it is lovely and beautiful to see ladies, by holy walking, demonstrate their election of God. "And her children;" probably the lady was a widow. She and her children, then, are the principal part of the family; and so this may be styled an economical epistle. Families may

well be written to and encouraged, and further directed in their domestic love, and order, and duties. We see that children may well be taken notice of in Christian letters, and they should know it too; it may avail to their encouragement and caution. They that love and commend them will be apt to inquire after them. This lady and her children are farther notified by the respect paid them, and that, 1. By the apostle himself; "Whom I love in the truth," or in truth; whom I sincerely and heartily love. He that was the beloved disciple had learned the art or exercise of love; and he especially loved those that loved him (the Lord). 2. By all her Christian acquaintance, all the religious that knew her; "And not I only, but also all they that have known the truth." Virtue and goodness, in an elevated sphere, shine bright. Truth demands acknowledgment. They that see the evidences of pure religion should confess and attest them. It is a good sign and great duty to love and value religion in others. Then here is the ground of this love and respect thus paid to this lady and her children; "For the truth's sake," (or true religion's sake,) "which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever." Christian love is founded upon the appearance of Christian, vital religion. Likeness should beget affection. They that love truth and piety in themselves should love it in others too, or love others upon the account of it. The apostle and the other Christians loved this lady, not so much for her honour as her holiness; not so much for her bounty as her serious Christianity. We should not be religious merely by fits and starts, in certain moods and moons, but religion should still dwell within us, in our minds and hearts, in our faith and love. It is to be hoped that where religion once truly dwells it will abide for ever. The spirit of Christianity, we may suppose, will not be totally extinguished; which "shall be with us for ever."

3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. 4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

Here we see,

First. The salutation, which is, indeed, an apostolical benediction; "Grace be with you, mercy and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love." Sacred love pours out blessings upon this honourable Christian family. To them that have more shall be given. These blessings are craved, 1. "From God the Father," the God of all grace. He is the fountain of blessedness, and of all the blessings that must

* Exposition of II and III John by Rev. John Revnolds. Additional Notes from Barnes.

Introductory Note to 2 and 3 John.—That these epistles were written by the same author appears from their similarity of tone, style, and sentiments. That John, the beloved disciple, was the author of them, as well as of the First Epistle, appears from Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Dionysius of Alexandria, Alexander of Alexandria, and others. From the brevity and private nature of their contents, they were less generally read in the earliest Christian assemblies, and were also less quoted by the Fathers. Hence arose their non-uni-

versal recognition at the first. Their private nature makes them less likely to be spurious, for there seems no purpose in their forgery. Their style and colouring, too, accord with the style of the First Epistle. They were probably written by the apostle during his old age, when a resident at Ephesus, to which place he returned after his release from the island of Patmos.

1. "Elder:" literally, "presbyter," from which our English word "priest" is a contraction, and is used in this sense in our Book

bring us thither. 2. "From the Lord Jesus Christ." He is also author and communicator of these heavenly blessings; and he is distinguished by this emphatical character, "the Son of the Father." Such a Son as none else can be; such a Son as is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, who, with the Father, is also eternal life, 1 *Jno.* i. 2. From these Divine persons is craved, 1st. Grace; Divine favour and goodwill, the spring of all good things. It is grace, indeed, that any spiritual blessings should be conferred on sinful mortals. 2nd. Mercy; free pardon and forgiveness. They that are already rich in grace have need of continual forgiveness. 3rd. Peace; tranquillity of spirit and serenity of conscience, in an assured reconciliation with God, together with all safe and sanctified outward prosperity. And these are desired "in truth and love;" either by sincere and ardent affection in the sinner, (in faith and love he prays them from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,) or as productive of continued truth and love in the saluted. These blessings will continually preserve true faith and love in the elect lady and her children,—and may they do so!

Secondly. The congratulation upon the prospect of the exemplary conversation of other children of this excellent lady. Happy parent, that was blessed with such a numerous religious offspring! "I rejoiced greatly, that I found of thy children, walking in the truth, as we have received commandment from the Father." Possibly the lady's sons travelled abroad, either for accomplishment and acquaintance with the world, or on the account of their own business, or the common affairs of the family, and in their travels might come to Ephesus, where the apostle is now supposed to reside, and might there happily converse with him. See how good it is to be trained up to early religion. Though religion is not to be founded upon education, yet education may be and often is blest, and is the way to fortify youth against irreligious infection. And hence let young travellers learn to carry their religion along with them, and not either leave it at home or learn the ill customs of the countries whence they come. It may be observed, also, that sometimes election runs in a direct line. Here is an elect lady and her elect children. Children may be beloved for the parents' sake, but both by virtue of free grace. From the apostle's joy herein we may observe, that it is pleasant to see children treading in good parents' steps; and they that see this may well congratulate the parents thereupon; and that both to excite their thankfulness to God for, and to enlarge their comfort in, so great a blessing. How happy a lady was this, that had brought forth so many children for heaven and for God! And how great a joy must it be to her ladyship to hear so good an account of them from so good a judge! And we may farther see that it is joyful to good old ministers, and accordingly to other good old disciples, to see a hopeful rising generation, that may serve God and support religion in the world when they are dead and gone. We see here also the rule of true walking, the commandment of the Father; then is our walk true, our converse right, when it is managed by the word of God.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. 6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

We come now more into the design and substance of the epistle; and here we have,

First. The apostle's request; "Now I beseech thee, lady." Considering what it is that he entreats, the way of address is very remarkable. It is not any particular boon or bounty to himself, but common duty and observance of Divine command. Here he might command or charge; but harsher methods are worse than needless where milder will prevail; and the apostolical spirit is, of all other, the most tender and endearing. Whether out of deference to her ladyship, or apostolical meekness, or both, he condescends to beseech; "And now, I beseech thee, lady." He may be supposed speaking as another apostle does to a certain master to whom he writes, "Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ," and according to the power with which Christ hath entrusted me, "to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such a one as the aged, the elder." Love will avail where authority will not; and we may often see that the more authority is urged the more it is slighted. The apostolical minister will love and beseech his friends into their duty.

Secondly. The thing requested of the lady and her children—Christian, sacred love; "That we love one another," ver. 5. They that are eminent in any Christian virtue have yet room to grow therein. "But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. But we beseech you, brethren, and sisters, "that ye increase more and more," 1 *Thes.* iv. 9, 10. This love is, 1. Recommended, 1st. From the obligation thereto; "The commandment." Divine commandment should sway our mind and heart. 2nd. From the antiquity of the obligation; "Not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning," ver. 5. This commandment of mutual Christian love may be said to be a new one, in respect of its new enactment and sanction by the Lord Christ; but yet, as to the matter of it, mutual, holy love, it is as old as natural, Jewish, or Christian religion. This commandment must everywhere attend Christianity, that the disciples of it must love one another. Then this love is, 2. Illustrated from the fruitful nature of it; "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments," ver. 6. This is the test of our love to God, our obedience to him. This is love to ourselves, to our own souls, that we walk in obedience to Divine commands; "In keeping them there is great reward." This is love to one another, to engage one another to walk in holiness; and this is the note of our sincere, mutual, Christian love, that we in other things walk after God's commands. There may be mutual love that is not religious and Christian; but we know ours to be so by our attendance to all other commands besides that of mutual love. Universal obedience is the proof of the goodness and sincerity of Christian virtues; and they that aim at all Christian obedience will, to be sure, attend to Christian love. That is a fundamental duty in the Gospel charter. "This is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it," ver. 6, that is, walk in this love. The foresight of the decay of this love, as well as of other apostacy, might engage the apostle to inculcate this duty and this primordial command the more frequently, the more earnestly.

7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the

flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. 9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

First. In this principal part of the epistle we find, 1. The ill news communicated to the lady. Seducers are abroad: "For many deceivers are entered into the world." This report is introduced by a particle that bespeaks a reason of the report. You have need to maintain your love, for there are destroyers of it in the world; they that subvert the faith destroy the love. The common faith is one ground of the common love; or, you must secure your walk according to the commands of God,—that will secure you. Your stability is like to be tried; "For many deceivers are entered into the world." Sad and saddening news may be communicated to our Christian friends; not that we should love to make them sorry, but to forewarn them is the way to forearm them against their trials. Now here is, 1. The description of the deceiver and his deceit. He confesses not "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," ver. 7. He brings some error or other concerning the person of the Lord Jesus. He either confesses not that Jesus Christ is the same person, or that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Anointed of God, the Messiah promised of old for the redemption of Israel; or that the promised Messiah and Redeemer is come in the flesh, or into the flesh, into our world, and into our nature; such an one pretends that he is yet to be expected. Strange, that after such evidence any should deny that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God and Saviour of the world! 2. The aggravation of the case. Such an one "is a deceiver and an antichrist," ver. 7. He deludes souls, and undermines the glory and kingdom of the Lord Christ. He must be an impostor, a wilful deceiver, after all the light that has been afforded, and all the evidence that Christ hath given concerning himself, and the attestation God hath given concerning his Son; and he is a wilful opposer of the person, and honour, and interest of the Lord Christ, and as such shall be reckoned with when the Lord Christ comes again. Let us not think it strange there are deceivers and opposers of the Lord Christ's name and dignity now; there were such of old, even in the apostle's times.

Secondly. The counsel given to this elect household hereupon. Now care and caution is needful; "Look to yourselves," ver. 8. The more deceivers and deceits do abound the more watchful the disciples must be. Delusions may so prevail as that even the elect may be endangered thereby. Two things they must beware of: 1. That they lose not what they had wrought, ver. 8; that is, what they have done, or what they have gained. It is pity that any religious labour should be in vain. Some begin well, but at last lose all their pains. The hopeful gentleman that had kept the commands of the second table, from his youth up, lost all for want of less love to the world and more love to Christ. Nor what they have gained; many have not only gained a fair reputation for religion, but much light therein, much conviction of the evil of sin, the vanity of the world, the excellency of religion, and the power of God's word. They have even tasted of the powers of the world to come, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and yet at last lose all. "Ye did run well; who hindered ye, that ye should not obey," or not go on to obey, "the truth?" Sad it is that fair, splendid attainments in the school of Christ should all be lost at last. 2. That they lose not their reward, none of it; no portion of that honour, or praise, or glory, that they once stood fair for. "That we," or ye, as in some copies, "receive a full reward." Secure ye as full a reward as will be given to any in the church of God. If there are degrees of glory, lose none of that grace, that light, or love, or peace, that is to prepare ye for the higher elevation in glory. "Hold fast that which thou hast," in faith, and hope, and a good conscience, "that no man take thy crown," that thou neither lose it nor any jewel out of it, *Rev.* iii. 11. The way to attain the full reward is to abide true to Christ and constant in religion to the end.

Thirdly. The reason of the apostle's counsel, and of their care and caution about themselves, which is twofold: 1. The danger and evil of departure from gospel light and revelation. It is in effect and reality a departure from God himself; "Whosoever transgresseth," transgresseth at this dismal rate, "and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." It is the doctrine of Christ that is appointed to guide us to God; it is that whereby God draws souls to salvation and to himself. They that revolt from thence, in so doing revolt from God. 2. The advantage and happiness of firm adherence to Christian truth. It unites us to Christ, the object or subject-matter of that truth, and thereby to the Father also, for they are one. "He that abideth," rooted and grounded, "in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." By the doctrine of Christ we are enlightened in the knowledge of the Father and the Son; by it we are sanctified for the Father and the Son, and thereupon are enriched with holy love to the Father and the Son, and thereby prepared for the endless enjoyment of the Father and the Son; "Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken to you," *Jno.* xv. 3. That purity makes meet for heaven. The great God, as he has set his seal to, so he puts a value upon, the doctrine of Christ. We must retain that holy doctrine in faith and love, as we hope or desire to arrive at blessed communion with the Father and the Son.

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

Upon due warning given concerning seducers, the apostle gives direction concerning the treatment of such: They are not to be entertained as the ministers of Christ. The Lord Christ will distinguish them from such, and so would he have his disciples. The direction is negative.

First. Support them not; "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine," concerning Christ as the Son of God, the Messiah, and Anointed of God, for our redemption and salvation, "receive him not into your house." Possibly this lady was like Gaius, whom we read of in the next epistle, a generous housekeeper and hospitable entertainer of travelling ministers and Christians. These deceivers might, possibly, expect the same reception with others, or with the best that came there, as the blind are often bold enough. But the apostle allows it not; do not welcome them into your family. Doubtless such may be relieved in their pressing necessities, but not encouraged for

of Common Prayer. "Elect lady:" understood by some to be a person named Electa; by others a person named Kyria (Kyria being the Greek word translated "lady"). Others suppose some particular church to be personified, others the Church Universal. The epistle is evidently addressed to a person at the head of a family, and in some influential position. She was probably a resident in one of the cities of Asia Minor, a visit to which St. John was contemplating from Ephesus.

1, 2. "In the truth . . . for the truth's sake." "Gospel truth is the ground and bond of Christian union. Love of the truth leads to mutual love."

3. "Grace . . . mercy . . . peace." Trench, in his "New Testament Synonyms," says, "Grace has reference to the sins of men, mercy to their misery. God's grace is extended to men as they are guilty; his mercy is extended to them as they are miserable." Peace is the result of the possession of God's grace and mercy.

ill service. But deniers of the faith are destroyers of souls; and it is supposed that even ladies themselves should have good understanding in the affairs of religion.

Secondly. Bless not their enterprises; "Neither bid them God speed." Attend not their service with your prayers and good wishes. Ill work should not be consecrated or recommended to the Divine benediction. God will be no patron of falsehood, seduction, and sin. We ought to bid God speed to evangelical ministration; but the propagation of fatal error, if we cannot prevent, we must not dare to countenance. Then,

Thirdly. Here is the reason of such direction, forbidding the support and patronage of the deceiver; "For he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." Favour and affection partake of the sin. We may be sharers in the iniquities of others. How judicious and how cautious should the Christian be! There are many ways of sharing the guilt of other folks' transgressions; it may be done by culpable silence, indolence, unconcernedness, private contribution, public countenance and assistance, inward approbation, open apology and defence. The Lord pardon our guilt of other persons' sins!

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. 13 The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

The apostle concludes his letter.

First. With an adjournment of many things to personal conference: "Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink; but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full:" where it is supposed that some things are better spoken than written. A pen and ink may be a mercy and a pleasure; but a personal interview may be more so. The apostle was not yet too old for travel, nor, consequently, for travelling service. The communion of saints should be, by all methods, maintained; their communion should tend to their mutual joy. Excellent ministers may have their joy advanced by their Christian friends; "That I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me," *Rom. i. 12*.

Secondly. With the presentation of service and salutation from some near relations to the lady: "The children of thy elect sister greet thee." Grace was abundant towards this family. Here are two elect sisters, and probably their elect children. How will they admire this grace in heaven! The apostle condescends to insert the nieces' duty, as we should call it, or dutiful salutation to their aunt. The duty of inferior relations is to be cherished. Doubtless the apostle was easy of access, and would admit all friendly and pious communication, and was ready to enhance the good lady's joy in her nieces as well as her children. May there be many such gracious ladies rejoicing in their gracious descendants and other relations! Amen.

[In view of the exposition of this epistle we may make the following remarks:—1. It is desirable for a family to have a character for piety so consistent and well understood that all who know it shall perceive it and love it, ver. 1. In the case of this lady and her household, it would seem that, as far as they were known, they were known as a well-ordered Christian household. Such a family John said he loved; and he said that it was loved by all who had any knowledge of them. What is more lovely to the view than such a household? What is better fitted to make an impression on the world favourable to religion? 2. It is a matter of great rejoicing when any part of a family become truly religious, ver. 4. We should rejoice with our friends, and should render unfeigned thanks to God, if any of their children are converted, and walk in the truth. No greater blessing can descend on a family than the early conversion of children; and as angels rejoice over one sinner that is converted, we should rejoice when the children of our friends are brought to a knowledge of the truth, and devote themselves to God in early life. 3. It is our duty to be on our guard against the arts of the teachers of error, ver. 7. They abound in every age. They are often learned, eloquent, and profound. They study and understand the arts of persuasion. They adapt their instructions to the capacity of those whom they would lead astray. They flatter their vanity; accommodate themselves to their peculiar views and tastes; court their society, and seek to share their friendship. They often appear to be eminently meek, and serious, and devout, and prayerful, for they know that no others can succeed who profess to inculcate the principles of religion. There are few arts more profound than that of leading men into error; few that are studied more, or with greater success. Every Christian, therefore, should be on his guard against such arts; and while he should on all subjects be open to conviction, and be ready to yield his own opinions when convinced that they are wrong, yet he should yield to truth, not to men; to argument, not to the influence of the personal character of the professed religious teacher. 4. We may see that it is possible for us to lose a portion of the reward which we might enjoy in heaven, ver. 8. The rewards of heaven will be apportioned to our character, and to our services in the cause of religion in this life, and they who "sow sparingly shall reap also sparingly." Christians often begin their course with great zeal,

and as if they were determined to reap the highest rewards of the heavenly world. If they should persevere in the course which they have commenced, they would indeed shine as the stars in the firmament. But, alas! their zeal soon dies away. They relax their efforts, and lose their watchfulness. They engage in some pursuit that absorbs their time, and interferes with their habits of devotion. They connive at error and sin; begin to love the comforts of this life; seek the honours or the riches of this world; and though they may be saved at last, yet they lose half their reward. It should be a fixed purpose with all Christians, and especially with such as are just entering on the Christian life, to wear in heaven a crown as bright, and studded with as many jewels, as can possibly be obtained. 5. We may learn from this epistle how to regard and treat the teachers of error, ver. 10. We are not to do any thing that can be fairly construed as countenancing their doctrines. This simple rule would guide us to a course that is right. We are to have minds open to conviction. We are to love the truth, and be ever ready to follow it. We are not to be prejudiced against any thing. We are to treat all men with kindness; to be true, and just, and faithful in our intercourse with all: to be hospitable, and ever ready to do good to all who are needy, whatever their name, colour, rank, or opinions. We are not to cut the ties which bind us to our friends and kindred, though they embrace opinions which we deem erroneous or dangerous; but we are in no way to become the patrons of error, or to leave the impression that we are indifferent as to what is believed. The friends of truth and piety we should receive cordially to our dwellings, and should account ourselves honoured by their presence, *Ps. ci. 6, 7*; strangers we should not forget to entertain, for thereby we may entertain angels unawares, *Heb. xiii. 2*; but the open advocate of what we regard as dangerous error we are not to receive in any such sense or way as to have our treatment of him fairly construed as patronising his errors, or commending him as a teacher to the favourable regards of our fellow-men. Neither by our influence, our names, our money, our personal friendship, are we to give him increased facilities for spreading pernicious error through the world. As men, as fellow-sufferers, as citizens, as neighbours, as the friends of temperance, of the prisoner, of the widow, the orphan, and the slave, and as the patrons of learning, we may be united in promoting objects dear to our hearts; but as religious teachers we are to show them no countenance, not so much as would be implied in the common form of salutation wishing them success. In all this there is no breach of charity, and no want of true love, for we are to love the truth more than we are the persons of men. To the man himself we should be ever ready to do good. Him we should never injure in any way, in his person, property, or feelings. We should never attempt to deprive him of the right of cherishing his own opinions, and of spreading them in his own way, answerable, not to us, but to God. We should impose no pains or penalties on him for the opinions which he holds. But we should do nothing to give him increased power to propagate them, and should never place ourselves, by any alliance of friendship, family, or business, in such a position that we shall not be perfectly free to maintain our own sentiments, and to oppose what we deem to be error, whoever may advocate it.]

[There is a love founded on a common apprehension of the truth between mind and mind, and a mutual acknowledgment of that truth in each other; but in counterpoint to this there is an alienation of affection that takes place, when there arises the suspicion or imagination of an error, and, more particularly, when it amounts to the conception of a heresy. I believe that at this moment I labour under a suspicion of this sort; and I feel a consequent distrust and perhaps even dislike of me as the effect of it.—My God, give me to walk aright under this visitation—to walk in the truth even when accused for delinquency or of hostility to the truth. Guide my thoughts aright, and along with these my feelings and my conduct aright. Let all things be done with charity, even while I quit myself like a man. Give me, O Lord, to experience in mind and heart the precious conjunction of truth and love. Give me the unction that is from the Holy One—the anointing which remaineth; and then not only shall the truth dwell in us and be with us for ever, but we shall be grounded and settled in love—that first and foremost of the Spirit's fruits. But let me not forget that God's commandment is not barely that we should walk aright, but, in order to this, that we should walk in truth. The commandment includes both the truth and the walk. Give me, O Lord, the love of the truth that I might be saved. How intimately love and truth are blended together in this epistle!—we are commanded to walk in truth—we are beseeched to love; and this love is said to lie in our walking after the commandments. And all is here urged on the ground that error is abroad—error so deadly as to involve in it the denial of Christ, even amounting to its being an antichrist. To deny that Christ came in the flesh is to deny the literal sacrifice made by him for the sins of the world—analogueous to the denial spoken of by Peter, regarding those who denied the Lord that bought them, *2 Pet. ii. 1*. This is a damnable heresy; and let us mark the reiterated testimony which the apostle gives as to the importance of right doctrine—nay, the sanction which he confers—if not on our hostility to, at least on our alienation from, all those who bring not the right doctrine along with them. With such there should be a suspension of all intercourse, at least of all hospitality. Give me, O Lord, to conduct myself aright amid these various elements and various considerations. Let me not undervalue doctrine, and not only seek earnestly, but contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints—else I may lose the things which I have wrought, and fall short of a full reward.—*Chalmers's Posthumous Works.*]

4. "Walking in truth." Not merely honestly and truthfully, but in that truth of God which has been manifested in Christ, who is "the Truth." This "walking in the truth," the apostle goes on to say, was according to the commandment received from the Father, who had so bidden them to walk. Alford observes that the apostle had apparently, in some place where he was, lit upon these children of the elect lady, and sends her their good report. "They were probably on a visit to their cousins (say Webster and Wilkinson), who lived at Ephesus, or in its neighbourhood." It is an ingenious remark made by Bengel, that the children here spoken of are at least four in number, as more than one were with her (verse 1), and more than one were absent.

5. "And now:" these words serve to introduce the subject of the letter, which is Christian love—its due exhibition, its proper objects, its limitations.

6. "This is the commandment:" rather, "the commandment is this"—viz., love, in which all God's other commandments are summed up, for "love is the fulfilling of the law." It is the union between love and truth, especially the truth set forth with living force in the Incarnation; this causes the apostle to add the warning in the next verse. "That ye should walk in it:" i.e., in love. Love and obedience, it is well remarked, are convertible terms (*John xiv. 15, 21*). This is love, that we obey his commandments; this is his (great) commandment, to walk in love.

8. "That we lose not . . . that we receive," &c.: the oldest MSS. and versions read, "that ye lose not, but that ye receive, which we have wrought." "Look that ye lose not the believing state of truth and love, which we, as God's workmen, were the instruments of working in you."

9. "Whosoever transgresseth," &c., may be rendered, "transgresseth by not abiding." After the word "transgresseth" we may supply, from verses 4–6, "the commandment;" or we may compare *Acts i. 25*, "by transgression fell," and render "he who apostatises and abideth not," or "by abiding not."

10. The reference is evidently not to a mere traveller seeking hospitality, but to one in the character and engaged in the work of a teacher, whose teaching is opposed to the truth. "It must be remembered that persons who were to be thus treated were evidently those who came to a church claiming recognition as ministers in communion with it, and designing to make use of their reception as a means of corrupting it by heretical teaching, and procuring favourable introductions elsewhere" (*Webster and Wilkinson*).

12. "Paper:" made of the films or inner skins of the stem of the Egyptian reed *papyrus*, or *biblos*. "Ink:" *atramentum*, made of soot or charcoal, more like paint or rich oil than our ink.

13. "Elect sister." The reference will depend on the meaning given to the word "lady" at the commencement of the epistle, whether it be understood of a person or a church.



EXPOSITION OF THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CHRISTIAN communion is exerted and cherished by letter. Christians are to be commended in the practical proof of their professed subjection, to the gospel of Christ. The animating and countenancing of generous and public-spirited persons is doing good to many. To this end the apostle sends this encouraging epistle to his friend Gaius; in which, also, he complains of the quite opposite spirit and practice of a certain minister, and confirms the good report concerning another, more worthy to be imitated.

A.D. 90.

In this epistle the apostle congratulates Gaius upon the prosperity of his soul, ver. 1, 2; upon the fame he had among good Christians, ver. 3, 4; upon his charity and hospitality to the servants of Christ, ver. 5, 6; he complains of contemptuous treatment by an ambitious Diotrephes, ver. 9, 10; recommends Demetrius, ver. 12; and hopes to visit Gaius shortly, ver. 13, 14.



HE elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Here we see, First. The sacred penman that writes and sends the letter. Not here, indeed, notified by his name, but a more general character, "the elder." He that is so by years and by office. Honour and deference is due to both. Some have questioned whether this were John the apostle, or no; but his style and spirit seem to shine therein. They that are beloved of Christ will love the brethren for his sake. Gaius could not question from whom the letter came. The apostle might have assumed many more illustrious characters, but it becomes not Christ's ministers to affect swelling, pompous titles. He almost levels himself with the more ordinary pastors of the church, while he styles himself "the elder." Or, possibly, most of the extraordinary ministers, the apostles, were now dead, and this holy survivor would countenance the continued standing ministry, by assuming the more common title, "the elder." "The elders I exhort, who am also an elder," 1 Pet. v. 1.

Secondly. The person saluted and honoured by the letter. The former was directed to an elect lady, this to a choice gentleman. Such are worthy of esteem and value. He is notified, 1. By his name, Gaius. We read of several of that name, particularly of one whom the apostle Paul baptized at Corinth, who, possibly, might be also the apostles host and kind entertainer there, Rom. xvi. 23. If this be not he, it is his brother in name, estate, and disposition. Then, 2. By the kind expressions of the apostle to him: "The well beloved," and "whom I love in the truth." Love expressed is wont to kindle love. Here seems to be either the sincerity of the apostle's love, or the religion of it, and then there is both. The sincerity of it; "Whom I love in truth." Whom I truly, cordially love. The religion of it; "Whom I love in the truth," that is, for the truth's sake: as abiding and walking in the truth as it is in Jesus. To love our friends for the truth's sake is true love, religious, gospel love.

Thirdly. The salutation or greeting, containing a prayer introduced by an affectionate compellation; "Beloved." Thou beloved one in Christ. The minister that would gain love must shew it himself. Here is, 1. The apostle's good opinion of his friend—that his soul prospered. There is such a thing as soul prosperity, the greatest blessing on this side heaven. This supposeth regeneration, and an inward fund of spiritual life. This stock is increasing; and, while spiritual treasures are advancing, the soul is in a fair way to the kingdom of glory. 2. His good wish for his friend, that his body may prosper and be in health, as well as his soul. [Not only as well as his soul, but he prays that in all other respects he might be prospered as much as he was in his soul. It argues a high state of piety when we can, as the expression of our highest desire for the welfare of our friends, express the hope that they may be in all respects as much prospered as they are in their spiritual concerns.] Grace and health are two rich companions. Grace will improve health, health will employ grace. It frequently falls out that a rich soul is lodged in a crazy body. Grace must be exercised in submission to such a dispensation. We may well wish and pray that they that have prosperous souls may have healthful bodies too. Their grave will shine in a larger sphere of activity.

1. "Gaius:" the name was very common; and whether the Gaius of Macedonia (Acts xix. 29), or of Corinth (Rom. xvi. 23; 1 Cor. i. 14), or of Derbe (Acts xx. 4), or a different person altogether, it is hard to decide. Some have supposed him to have been the same with a bishop of Pergamos who bore this name.

5. "To the brethren and to strangers:" rather, "towards the brethren, and that (and those brethren) strangers." These strangers from verse 7 appear to have been evangelists; and on their return

A.D. 90.

3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. 5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; 6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: 7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.

In these verses we have,

First. The good report that the apostle had received concerning this friend of his; "The brethren came, and testified of the truth that is in thee," ver. 3; "Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church," ver. 6. Where we may see, 1. The testimony or thing testified concerning Gaius; "The truth that was in him;" the reality of his faith, the sincerity of his religion and devotedness to God; and this evinced by his charity, which includes his love to the brethren, kindness to the poor, hospitality to Christian strangers, and readiness to accommodate them for the service of the Gospel. Faith should work by love. It gives a lustre in and by the offices of love, and induces others to commend its integrity. 2. The witnesses; brethren that came from Gaius testified and bore witness. A good report is due from those that have received good. Though a good name is but a small reward for costly service, yet it is better than precious ointment, and will not be refused by the ingenious and religious. 3. The auditory or judicatory before which the report and testimony were given; "Before the church." This seems to be the church at which the apostle now resided. What church that was we are not sure. What occasion they had thus to testify his faith and love before the church we cannot tell; possibly out of the fulness of the heart the mouth spake; they could not but testify what they found and felt. Possibly they would engage the church's prayer for the continued life and usefulness of such a patron,—that he might prosper and be in health as his soul prospered.

Secondly. The report the apostle himself gives of him, introduced by an endearing appellation again; "Beloved, thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost to the brethren, and to strangers," ver. 5. 1. He was hospitable; good to the brethren, even to strangers. It was enough to recommend them to Gaius's house that they belonged to Christ, or he was good to the brethren of the same church with himself, and to those that came from far. All of the household of faith were welcome to him. 2. He seems to be of a catholic spirit. He could overlook the petty differences among serious Christians, and be communicative to all that bore the image and did the work of Christ. And, 3. He was conscientious in what he did; "Thou dost faithfully," thou makest faithful work of, "whatsoever thou dost." Thou dost it as a faithful servant; and from the Lord Christ mayest thou expect the reward of the inheritance. Such faithful souls can hear their own praises without being puffed up. The commendation of what is good in us is designed, not for our pride, but for our encouragement to continue therein, and should be accordingly improved.

Thirdly. The apostle's joy therein, in the good report itself, and the good ground of it; "I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified," &c., ver. 3. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth," that is, in the precepts of the Christian religion. [That they adhere steadfastly to the truth, and that they live in accordance with it.] The best evidence of

would report to the church not only their missionary success, but the kindness they had experienced at the hands of Gaius.

7. "His name's sake:" *i.e.*, on behalf of the name of Christ. "Taking nothing;" the words imply that it was the deliberate purpose and continued habit of these men to receive no pay from the Gentiles.

8. "Receive:" the oldest MSS. read "take up." As they take nothing from the Gentiles, we ought to take them up so as to

our having the truth is our walking in the truth. Good men will greatly rejoice in the soul prosperity of others, and they are glad to hear of the grace and goodness of others: "And they glorified God in me." Love envieth not, but rejoiceth in the good name of other folks. As it is joy to good parents, it will be joy to good ministers, to see their children evidence their truth in religion, and adorn their profession.

Fourthly. The direction the apostle gives his friend concerning farther treatment of the brethren that were with him; "Whom, if thou bring forward on their journey, after a godly sort, thou shalt do well." It was customary, in those days of love, to attend travelling ministers and Christians at least some part of their road, 1 Cor. xvi. 6. It is a kindness to a stranger to be guided in his way—a pleasure to travellers to meet with suitable company. This is a work that may be done "after a godly sort," in a manner worthy of God, that is, suitable to the deference and relation we bear to God. Christians should consider not only what they must do, but what they may do; what they may most honourably and laudably do. The liberal mind deviseth liberal, generous things. Then Christians should do even the common actions of life and of goodwill after a godly sort, as serving God therein, and designing his glory. Then.

Fifthly. The reasons of this directed conduct. These are two: 1. "Because that for his name's sake 'these brethren' went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles." It appears thus that these were ministerial brethren, that they went forth to preach the Gospel and propagate Christianity. Possibly they might be sent out by this apostle himself. They went forth to convert the Gentiles. This was excellent service. They went forth for God and his name's sake. This is the minister's highest end, and should be his principal spring and motive, to gather and to build up a people for his name. They went forth also to carry a free Gospel about with them—to make it unchangeable where they came—taking nothing of the Gentiles." These were worthy of double honour. There are those that are not called to preach the Gospel themselves, that yet may much contribute to the progress of it. The Gospel should be made without charge to those to whom it is first preached. They that know it not cannot be expected to value it. The churches and Christian patriots ought to concur to support the propagation of holy religion in the pagan countries. Public spirits should concur according to their several capacities. They that are freely communicative of Christ's Gospel should be assisted by those that are communicative of their purses. 2. "We ought therefore to receive such, that we may be fellow-helpers to the truth," that is, to true religion. The institution of Christ is the true religion. It has been attested by God. They that are true in it and true to it will earnestly desire and pray for, and contribute to, its propagation in the world. Many ways may the truth be befriended and assisted. They that cannot themselves proclaim it, may yet receive, accompany, help, and countenance those that do.

9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. 11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

First. Here is a very different example and character. An officer, a minister in the church less generous, catholic, and communicative than the private Christians. Ministers may sometimes be outshone, outdone. In reference to this minister, we see, 1. His name: a Gentile name, Diotrephes, attended with an unchristian spirit. 2. His temper and spirit: full of pride and ambition. He loves to have the pre-eminence. This ferment sprung and wrought betimes. It is an ill, unbecoming character of Christ's minister to love pre-eminence, to affect presidency and pre-eminence in the church of God. [The single word rendered "who loveth to have the pre-eminence" (*φιλονεικεῖν*), occurs nowhere in the New Testament. It means simply, who loves to be first—meaning that he loved to be at the head of all things, to rule, to lord it over others. It is clearly supposed here that the church would have complied with the request of the writer if it had not been for this man.] 3. His contempt of the apostle's authority, and letter, and friends. Of his authority: the deeds which he doeth, contrary to our appointment; "Prating against us with malicious words." Strange that the contempt should run so high; but ambition will breed malice against those that oppose it. Malice and ill-will in the heart will be apt to vent itself by the lips. The heart and mouth are both to be watched. Of his letter: "I wrote to the church," ver. 9, namely, in recommendation of such and such brethren. "But Diotrephes receiveth us not;" admits not our letter and testimony therein. This seems to be the church of which Gaius was a member. A gospel church seems to be such a society as to which a letter may be written and communicated. Gospel churches may well expect and be allowed credentials with the strangers that desire to be admitted among them. The apostle seems to write by and with these brethren. To an ambitious, aspiring spirit, apostolical authority or epistle signifies but little. Of his friends, the brethren he recommended; "Neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church," ver. 10. There might be some differences or different customs between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians. Pastors should seriously consider what differences are tolerable. The pastor is not at absolute liberty, nor lord over God's heritage. It is bad to do no good ourselves, but it is worse to hinder those that would. Church power and church censures are often abused. Many are cast out of the church that should be received there with satisfaction and welcome. But woe to those that cast out the brethren whom the Lord Christ will take into his own communion and kingdom. 4. The apostle's menace of this proud domineer: "Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth," ver. 10; will remember to censure them. This seems to intimate apostolical authority. But the apostle seems not to hold an episcopal court, to which Diotrephes must be summoned, but will come to take cognizance of this affair in the church to which it belongs. Acts of ecclesiastical domination and tyranny ought to be aimed at and upon. May it be better agreed to whom that power belongs!

Secondly. Here is counsel upon that different character; dissuasion from copying such a pattern, and indeed any evil at all; "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good," ver. 11. Imitate not such ecclesiastical, unchristian, pernicious evil; but pursue the contrary good in wisdom, purity,

peace, and love. Caution and counsel are not needless to those that are good already. Those cautions and counsels are most like to be accepted that are seasoned with love. "Beloved, follow not that which is evil." To this caution and counsel a reason is respectively subjoined. 1. To the counsel: "Follow that which is good;" for "he that doth good," naturally and genuinely doth good, as delighting therein, "is of God," that is, is born of God. The practice of goodness is the evidence of our filial, happy relation to God. 2. To the caution: "Follow not that which is evil." "He that doth evil," with bent of mind pursues it, "hath not seen God," is not duly sensible of his holy nature and will. Evil workers vainly pretend or boast an acquaintance with God.

12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true. 13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: 14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

Here we see, First. The character of another person, one Demetrius, not much known otherwise; but here his name will live. A name in the Gospel, a fame in the churches, is better than that of sons and daughters. His character was his commendation. His commendation was, 1. General: "Demetrius hath a good report of all men." Few are well spoken of by all. And sometimes it is ill to be so. But universal integrity and goodness is the way to, and sometimes obtains, the universal applause. 2. Deserved and well founded: "And of the truth itself," ver. 12. Some have a good report, but not of the truth itself. Happy they whose spirit and conduct commend them before God and men. 3. Confirmed by the apostle's and his friends' testimony: "Yea, and we also bear record," and that with an appeal to Gaius's own knowledge; "And ye," you and your friends, "know that our record is true." Probably this Demetrius was known to the church where the apostle now resided, and to that where Gaius was. It is good to be well known, or known for good. We must be ready to bear our testimony to those that are good. It is a debt to virtue and goodness. It is well for those that are commended when those that commend them can appeal to the conscience of those that know them most.

Secondly. The conclusion of the epistle. In which we may observe, 1. The referring of some things to personal interview; "I have many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen, but I trust I shall shortly see thee," ver. 13, 14. Many things may be more proper for immediate communication than for letter. A little personal conference may spare the time, trouble, and charge of many letters. And good Christians may well be glad to see one another. 2. The benediction; "Peace be to you;" that is, all felicity attend you. They that are good and happy themselves wish others so too. 3. The public salutation sent to Gaius; "Our friends salute thee." A friend to the propagation of religion deserves a common remembrance. And these pious persons shew their friendship to religion as well as to Gaius. 4. The apostle's particular salutation of the Christians in Gaius's church or vicinity; "Greet the friends by name." I doubt they were not very many that must be so personally saluted. But we must learn humility as well as love. The lowest in the church of Christ should be greeted. And they may well salute and greet one another on earth that hope to live together in heaven. And the apostle that had lain in Christ's bosom lays Christ's friends in his heart.

[From this epistle we may learn, 1. It is proper to desire for our friends all temporal good, to wish their happiness in every respect, ver. 2. It is not common that in their spiritual interests they are so much more prosperous than they are in other respects that we can make the standard of our wishes in regard to them, but it sometimes does occur, as in the case of Gaius. In such cases we may indeed rejoice with a friend, and feel that all will be well with him. But in how few cases, even among professed Christians, can we with propriety make the prosperity of the soul the standard by which to measure the happiness which we desire for them in other respects! Doddridge says, 'What a curse would this bring upon many to wish that they might prosper even as their souls prospered!' Of how much property would they at once be deprived; how embarrassed would be their affairs; how pale, and wan, and sickly would they be, if they should be in all respects as they are in their spiritual interests. 2. It is an unspeakable pleasure to a Christian to learn that his friends are living and acting as becomes sincere Christians; that they love what is true, and abound in the duties of hospitality, charity, and benevolence, ver. 3-6. 3. It is the duty and the privilege of those who love the cause of religion to go and preach the Gospel to those who are destitute, expecting to receive nothing from them, and doing it as a work of pure benevolence, ver. 7. The missionary spirit existed early in the Christian church, and indeed may be regarded as the prevailing spirit in those times. It has always been the prevailing spirit when religion has flourished in the church. And as we in Christian lands owe the blessings which we enjoy to the fact that in former times there were those who were willing thus to go forth, so it will be true that the richest blessings which are to descend on India, and Africa, and the islands of the sea, will be traced in future times to the fact that there are in our age those who are willing to follow the example of the apostles in going forth to do good to a dying world. 4. It is our duty to contribute to the support of those who thus go among the heathen, and to aid them in every way in which we can promote the object which they have in view. So John felt it to be the duty of the church in regard to those who went forth in his time; and so, when the church, under the influence of Diotrephes, had refused to do it, he commended Gaius for performing that duty, ver. 6, 8. 5. For the same reason it is our duty to contribute to the support of missionaries in the destitute places of our own land, ver. 8. They often go among a people who are as destitute and who will as little appreciate the Gospel, and who are as much prejudiced against it, and who are as poor, as the heathen. 6. We may see from this epistle that churches ought to be united in promoting the cause of religion, ver. 8, 9. They should regard it as a common cause, in which one has as much concern as another, and where each should feel it a privilege to co-operate with his brethren. One church, in proportion to its ability, has as much interest in the spread of Christianity as another, and should feel that it has much responsibility in doing it. 7. We may see, from this epistle, the evil of having one troublesome man in the church, ver. 10. Such a man, by his talents, his address, his superior learning, his wealth, or by his arrogance, pride, and self-confidence, may control a church, and effectually hinder its promoting the work of religion. Yet how often has the spirit which actuated Diotrephes prevailed in the church! 8. There may be circumstances where it is proper—where it is a duty—to receive those who have been cast out of the church, ver. 8.]

support them, that we may become fellow-workers with them for the truth.

9. "The church:" i.e., of which Gaius was a member, and over whom Diotrephes desired to rule. "Not receiving:" i.e., not recognising the authority of the apostle.

10. "The brethren:" i.e., the evangelists mentioned above. Diotrephes not only neglected to entertain these evangelists, but forbade those who would receive them, and cast out of the church

those who received them. "He was evidently one high in power, and able to forbid and to punish the reception of the travelling brethren."

12. "Of the truth itself:" "The objective truth of God, which is the divine rule of the walk of all believers, gives a good testimony to him who really walks in the truth. This witness lies in the accordance of his walk with the requirement of God's truth" (Alford).



DELIVERING LETTERS.



EXPOSITION

OF THE



EASTERN MESSENGERS.

GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE,

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

THIS epistle (as are some few others) is styled general or catholic, for that it is not immediately directed to any particular person, family, or church, but to the whole society of Christians of that time, lately converted to the faith of Christ, whether from Judaism or paganism. And it is and will be of standing, lasting, and special use, in and to the church, as long as Christianity, that is, as time, shall last. [Under that false shew of learning which distinguishes the rationalistic school some have attempted to set aside the Divine authority of this book. The attempts of the more notorious writers of that school are too wicked to deceive those desiring to find the truth, and too absurd long to continue to delude any. The epistle was probably written late in the first century.] This epistle (as most of the rest do) consists of, I. A preface, or introduction, ver. 1, 2. II. The body of the epistle, ver. 3—23, inclusive. III. The conclusion by way of doxology, ver. 24, 25. The general scope of it is much the same with that of the second chapter of the second epistle of Peter, which having been already explained, the less will need to be said on this. It is designed to warn us against seducers and their seduction, to inspire us with a warm love to, and a hearty concern for, truth, (evident and important truth,) and that in the closest conjunction with holiness, of which charity, or sincere, unbiassed, brotherly love, is a most essential character and inseparable branch. [It is full of seasonable and practical instruction, suited to meet many of the evils of their days.] The truth we are to hold fast, and endeavour that others may be acquainted with, and not depart from, hath two special characters. 1. It is "the truth as it is in Jesus," *Eph. iv. 21*; and, 2. It is "the truth after," or which is according to, "godliness," *Tit. i. 1*. The Gospel is the Gospel of Christ, he hath revealed it to us, and he is the main subject of it; and therefore we are indispensably bound to learn from thence all we can of his person, natures, and offices. Indifference as to this is inexcusable in any who call themselves Christians, and we know from what fountain we are wholly and solely to draw all necessary saving knowledge. Farther, it is also a doctrine of godliness; whatever doctrines favour the corrupt lusts of men cannot be of God, let the pleas and pretensions for them be what they will. Errors dangerous to the souls of men soon sprang up in the church. The servants slept, and tares were sown; but such was the wisdom and kindness of Providence that they began sensibly to appear and shew themselves while some at least of the apostles were yet alive to confute them, and warn others against them. We are apt to think if we had lived in their times we should have been abundantly fenced against the attempts and artifices of seducers, but we have their testimony and their cautions, which is sufficient; and if we will not believe their writings, neither would we have believed or regarded their sayings, if we had lived amongst them and conversed personally with them. We come now to consider, I. The preface or introduction to this epistle, ver. 1, 2.

A.D. 66.

Some of the chief things contained in this chapter summarily are, I. An account of the penman of it, a character of the church, the blessings and privileges of that happy society, ver. 1, 2. II. The occasion of writing this epistle, ver. 3. III. A character of evil and perverse men, who were already sprung up in that infant state of the church, and would be succeeded by others of the like evil spirit and temper in after times, ver. 4. IV. A caution against hearkening to and following after such, from the severity of God towards the unbelieving, murmuring Israelites at their coming out of Egypt, the angels that fell, the instance of Sodom and Gomorrah, their sin and punishment, ver. 5—7. V. To these the apostle likens the seducers against whom he was warning them, and describes them at large, from ver. 8—13, inclusive. VI. Then, as specially suitable to his argument, he cites an ancient prophecy of Enoch, foretelling and describing the future judgment, ver. 14, 15. VII. Enlargeth on the seducer's character, guards against the offence which honest minds might be apt to take at the so early permission of such things, by shewing that it was foretold long before, that so it must be, ver. 16—19. VIII. Exhorts them to perseverance in the faith, fervency in prayer, watchfulness against falling from the love of God, and a lively hope of eternal life, ver. 20, 21. IX. Directs them how to carry themselves towards the erroneous and scandalous, ver. 22, 23. And, X. Closeth with an admirable doxology, in the last two verses.

A.D. 66.

brought before Domitian: *Eccles. Hist.*, lib. iii., ch. xix. xx. This is another testimony against the forbidding to marry of the Roman apostacy. The Divine authority of Jude is clear, from the testimonies of the early fathers—Clement, and Origen, and Tertullian, who says, 'Enoch is quoted by the apostle Jude.' The internal evidences are very strong and conclusive. Its predictions, as already fulfilled, have proved its Divine inspiration, and their future fulfilment will doubtless yet more abundantly do so.]

He was namesake to one of his ancestors, the patriarch son of Jacob, the most eminent, though not the first-born, of his sons, out of whose loins (lineally, in a most direct succession) the Messiah came. This was a name of worth, eminency, and honour, yet, 1. He has a wicked namesake. There was one Judas, one of the twelve, surnamed Iscariot, from the place of his birth, who was a vile traitor, the betrayer of his and our Lord. The same names may be common to the best and worst persons. It may be instructive to be called after the names of eminently good men, but there can be no inference drawn thence what we shall prove, though we may even thence conclude what sort of persons our good parents or progenitors desired and hoped we should be. But, 2. Our Judas was quite another man. He was an apostle, so was Iscariot; but he was a sincere disciple and follower of Christ, so was not the other; he was a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, the other was his betrayer and murderer; therefore here the one is very carefully distinguished from the other. Dr. Manton's note upon this is, that God takes great care of the good name of his sincere and useful servants. Why then should we be prodigal of our own or one another's reputation and usefulness? Our apostle here calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ, esteeming that a most honourable title. It is more honourable to be a sincere and useful servant of Christ than to be an earthly king, how potent and prosperous soever. He might have claimed kindred to Christ, according to the flesh, but he waives that, and rather glories in being his servant. Observe, 1st. It is really a greater honour to be a faithful servant of Jesus Christ than to be akin to him according to the flesh. Many of Christ's natural kindred, as well as of his progenitors, perished; not from want of natural affection in him as man, but from infidelity and obstinacy in themselves, which should make the descendants and near relatives of persons most eminent for sincere and exemplary piety jealous over themselves with a godly jealousy. A son of Noah may be saved in the ark from a flood of temporal destruction, and yet be overwhelmed at last in a deluge of Divine wrath, and suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. Christ himself tells us that he that "heareth his word and doeth it," namely, he only, "is as his brother, and sister, and mother;" that is, more honourably and advantageously related to him than the nearest and dearest of his natural relatives, considered merely as such; see *Mat. xii. 48—50*. Note farther, 2nd. In that the apostle Jude styles himself a servant, though an apostle, a dignified officer in Christ's kingdom, that it is a great honour to the meanest sincere minister, (and it holds proportionably as to every upright Christian,) that he



UDE, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: 2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

Here we have,

First. An account of the penman of this epistle, Jude, or Judas, or Judah.

[Jude, the apostle of Christ, is generally believed to be the writer of this epistle. He had also the name of Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddæus, *Mat. x. 3*; *Mar. iii. 18*; *Lu. vi. 16*. It is probable that Jude the apostle was the author of the epistle. Dr. Olshausen, however, supposes it was another Jude, the brother of our Lord; but see *Lardner*, vol. iii., 4to., pp. 437—447, and *Greswell's Dissertations*. It is probable that Jude was married, and had children, as Eusebius reports that some of the grandchildren of Jude were

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* Dr. Watts, in his copy of Matthew Henry's *Exposition*, states that the Exposition on Jude was prepared by Mr. John Billingsley; and it appears from his statements that he had material help from Matthew Henry's own writings. This revision of it is by the Rev. Edward Bickersteth, rector of Watton, Hertfordshire.

Introductory Note.—The writer of this epistle styles himself "Jude, the brother of James," and has been usually identified with the apostle Judas Lebbaeus or Thaddæus (*Luke vi. 16*). But this mode of supplying the ellipsis is questionable, and there are strong reasons for rendering the words "Judas, the son of James." See verse 17, where the writer seems to distinguish himself from the apostles, and rests his teaching rather on their authority than his own. The most probable conclusion is that the author was Jude, one of

the brethren of Jesus, and brother of James; not the apostle, the son of Alphaeus, but Bishop of Jerusalem, of whose dignity and authority in the Church he avails himself to introduce his epistle to his readers. From the references to the Old Testament history and Jewish traditions, it seems most probable that the epistle was in the first instance addressed to Jewish Christians. The persons blamed were libertines and heretics in doctrine. Insubordination, self-seeking, and licentiousness, the fruit of Antinomian

is the servant of Jesus Christ. They were servants before they were apostles, and they were but servants still. Away then with all pretensions in the ministers of Christ to lordly dominion, either over one another or the flocks committed to their charge. Let us ever have that of our dear Redeemer in actual view, "it shall not be so among you," *Mat. xx. 25, 26*. "And brother of James," to wit, of him whom the ancients style 'the first bishop of Jerusalem,' of whose character and martyrdom Josephus makes mention, and ascribes the horrible destruction of that city and nation to this wicked cruelty, as one of its principal causes: see *Josephus*, b. xx., ch. iii.; and *Euseb. Eccl. Hist. b. ii. ch. xlii.* Of this James our Jude was brother; whether in the strictest or a larger, though very usual, acceptance, I determine not. He, however, reckons it an honour to him that he was the brother of such an one. We ought to honour those who are above us in age, gifts, graces, station; not to envy them, yet neither to flatter them, nor be led merely by their example, when we have reason to think they act wrong. Thus the apostle Paul withstood his fellow-apostle Peter to the face, notwithstanding the high esteem he had of him, and the affectionate love he bare to him, when he saw that he was to be blamed, that is, really blameworthy, *Gal. ii. 11*, and following verses.

Secondly. We are informed to whom this epistle is directed; namely, to all them who are "sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." I begin with the last, called; that is, called Christians, namely, in the judgment of charity, farther than which we cannot, nor in justice ought, to go in the judgments or opinions we form or receive of one another; for what appears not, is not, nor ought to come into account in our dealings with, and censures of, one another, whatever abatements the Divine goodness may see fit to make for an honest though misguided zeal. The church pretends not (I am sure it ought not) to judge of secret or hidden things, or drawn into the light before the time, lest our rash and preposterous zeal do more harm than ever it has done, or I am afraid ever will do, good. "The tares and wheat" (if Christ may be Judge) "must grow together till the harvest," *Mat. xiii. 28-30*. And then he himself will by proper instruments take timely care to separate them. We ought to think the best we can of every man till the contrary appear; not be forward to receive or propagate, much less invent, disadvantageous characters of our brethren. This is the least we can make of the apostle's large and excellent description of charity, *1 Cor. xiii.*, and this we ought to make conscience of acting up to, which, till we do, the Christian churches will (as, alas! they are at this day) be filled with "envying and strife, confusion and every evil work," *Jas. iii. 16*. Or, called to be Christians by the preaching of the word, which they gladly receive, and profess cordially to believe, and so are received into the society and fellowship of the church; namely, Christ the Head, and believers the members; real believers really, professed believers visibly. Note, Christians are the called, called out of the world, the evil spirit and temper of it; above the world, to higher and better things, heaven, &c., things unseen and eternal; called from sin to Christ, from vanity to seriousness, from uncleanness to holiness; and this in pursuance of Divine purpose and grace; "for whom he did predestinate, them he also called," *Rom. viii. 30*. Now they who are thus called are,

1. Sanctified; "Sanctified by God the Father." Sanctification is usually spoken of in Scripture as the work of the Holy Spirit, yet here it is ascribed to God the Father, because the Spirit works it as the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Note, All who are effectually called are sanctified; "Made partakers of a Divine nature," *2 Pet. i. 4*; "For without holiness no man shall see the Lord," *Heb. xii. 14*. Observe, Our sanctification is not our own work. If any are sanctified, they are so by God the Father, not excluding Son or Spirit, for they are one, that is, one God. Our corruption and pollution are of ourselves; but our sanctification and renovation are of God and his grace; and therefore if we perish in our iniquity we must bear the blame; but if we be sanctified and glorified, all the honour and glory must be ascribed to God, and to him alone. I own it is hard to give a clear and distinct account of this, but we must not deny or disregard necessary truth because we cannot fully reconcile the several parts of it to each other; for, on that supposition, we might deny that any one of us could stir an inch from the place we are at present in, though we see the contrary every day and hour.

2. The called and sanctified are preserved in Christ Jesus. As it is God who begins the work of grace in the souls of men, so it is he who carries it on, and perfects it. Where he begins he will perfect; though we are fickle, he is constant; "He will not forsake the work of his own hands," *Ps. cxxxviii. 8*. Let us not therefore trust in ourselves, nor in our stock of grace already received, but in him, and in him alone; still endeavouring by all proper and appointed means to keep ourselves as ever we would hope he should keep us. "Preserved" from the gates of hell, and to the glory of heaven: "Preserved in Christ Jesus." Observe, All who are preserved are preserved in Jesus Christ; in him as their citadel and stronghold, no longer than they abide in him, and solely by virtue of their union with him. [We have a beautiful summary description of true Christians: sanctified in being set apart by God the Father, as a gift to his Son; preserved in Christ Jesus, secured in his keeping, so that none can pluck them thence; and called effectually, by the Holy Ghost, to this holy and happy state. The Lord make every reader one of this happy company.]

Thirdly. The apostolical benediction; "Mercy to you," &c. From the mercy, peace, and love of God all our comfort flows, all our real enjoyment in this life, all our hope of a better. 1st. The mercy of God is the spring and fountain of all the good we have or hope for; mercy not only to the miserable but the guilty. 2nd. Next to mercy is peace, which we have from the sense of having obtained mercy. We can have no true and lasting peace but what flows from our reconciliation with God by Jesus Christ. 3rd. As from mercy springs peace, so from peace springs love; his love to us, our love to him, and our brotherly love (forgotten, wretchedly neglected grace!) to one another. These the apostle prayeth may be multiplied, that Christians may not be content with scraps and narrow scantlings of them; but that souls and societies may be top, brim, swimming full of them. Note, God is ready to supply us with all grace, and a fulness in each grace. We are not straitened (if we are straitened) in him, but in ourselves. [The more grace we have, the more we may hope for. There is no end of the Divine bounty.]

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

We have here the design of the apostle in writing this epistle to the lately converted Jews and Gentiles, namely, to establish them in the Christian faith, and a practice and conversation truly consonant and conformable thereunto,

teachings, are the evils against which Jude warns his readers, and urges them to build themselves in their most holy faith, and to pray in the Holy Ghost, as the only effectual safeguards. Where the Jewish Christians lived is uncertain, nothing definite being said in the epistle. "They evidently," says Alford, "dwelt among a wicked population, probably of a commercial character. Hence some have thought of Corinth as their abode; some of Egypt, to which land it is said the physical phenomena are suitable (see verse 12); some of

and in an open and bold profession thereof; especially in times of notorious opposition, whether by artful seduction or violent and inhuman persecution. But then we must see to it very carefully that it be really the Christian faith that we believe, profess, propagate, and contend for; not the discriminating badges of this or the other party; not any thing of later date than the inspired writings of the holy evangelists and apostles. Here observe,

First. That the gospel salvation is a "common salvation;" that is, in a most sincere offer and tender of it to all of mankind whom the notice of it reacheth. For so the commission runs, *Mat. xvi. 15, 16*, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," &c. Sure God means as he speaks, (he doth not delude us with vain words, whatever men do,) and therefore none are excluded from the benefit of these gracious offers and invitations but they who obstinately, impudently, finally, exclude themselves; "Whoever will may come and drink of the water of life freely," *Rev. xii. 17*. [It is common as it is free to all—common as the air we breathe, the sun that shines over the earth, and the rain that descends from heaven, revealing one Father, one Redeemer, one Sanctifier for all.] The application of it is made to all believers, and only to such; it is made to the weak as well as to the strong; let none discourage themselves on the account of hidden decrees which they can know little of, and with which they have nothing to do. God's decrees are dark, his covenants are plain. All good Christians meet in Christ the common Head, are actuated by one and the same Spirit, are guided by one rule, meet here at one throne of grace, and hope shortly to meet in one common inheritance, a glorious one to be sure, but what or how glorious we cannot, nor at present need to, know; but such it will be as vastly to exceed all our present hopes and expectations.

Secondly. This common salvation is the subject matter of the faith of all the saints. The doctrine of it is what they all most heartily consent to; they esteem it as "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance," *1 Tim. i. 15*; it is the faith once, or at once, once for all, delivered to the saints; to which nothing can be added, from which nothing may be detracted, in which nothing more nor less should be altered. Here let us abide: here we are safe; if we stir a step farther we are in danger of being either entangled or seduced.

Thirdly. The apostles and evangelists all wrote to us of this common salvation. This cannot be doubted by those who have carefully read their writings. It is hard any should think they wrote chiefly to maintain particular schemes and opinions, especially such as they never did nor could think of. It is enough that they have fully declared to us, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, all that is necessary for every one to believe and do, in order to obtain a personal interest in the common salvation.

Fourthly. They who preach or write of the common salvation should give all diligence to do it well. Not allow themselves to offer to God, or his people, that which cost them nothing, or next to nothing, little or no pains or thought, *2 Sam. xxiv. 24*. This were to treat God irreverently and man unjustly. The apostle, though inspired, "gave all diligence to write of the common salvation;" what then will become of those who, though uninspired, give no diligence, or next to none, but say to the people, even in the name of God, *quicquid in buccam venerit*, "what comes next;" so they use Scripture words—care not how they interpret or apply them. They who speak of sacred things ought always to speak of them with the greatest reverence, care, and diligence.

Fifthly. They who have received the doctrine of this common salvation must contend earnestly for it: "Earnestly," not furiously. They who strive for the Christian faith, or in the Christian course, must strive lawfully, or they lose their labour, and run great hazard of losing their crown, *2 Tim. ii. 5*. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," *Isa. i. 20*. Lying for the truth is bad, and scolding for it is not much better. Observe, They who have received the truth must contend for it. But how? As the apostles did; by suffering patiently and courageously for it, not by making others suffer if they will not presently embrace every notion that we are pleased (proved or unproved) to call faith or fundamental. We must not suffer ourselves to be robbed of any essential article of Christian faith by the cunning craftiness, or specious plausible pretences, of any who "lie in wait to deceive," *Eph. iv. 14*. The apostle Paul tells us he preached the Gospel, mind it was the Gospel, "with much contention," *1 Thes. ii. 2*; that is, (as I understand it,) with great earnestness, with a hearty zeal, and a great concern for the success of what he preached. But if we will understand contention in the common acceptance of the word, we must impartially consider with whom the apostle contended, and how, the enlarging on which would not be proper for this place. [Earnest contention for the faith amid abounding errors may be a prior duty to that of enlarging on the common salvation. Christians are to maintain the Gospel against its enemies.]

We have here the occasion the apostle had to write to this purpose. As evil manners give rise to good laws, so dangerous errors often give just occasion to the proper defence of important truth.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here observe, First. That ungodly men are the great enemies of the faith of Christ and the peace of the church. They who deny or corrupt the one, and disturb the other, are here expressly styled ungodly men. We might have truth with peace, a most desirable thing, were there none, ministers or private Christians, in our particular churches and congregations but truly godly men; a blessing scarcely to be looked or hoped for on this side heaven. Ungodly men raise scruples, start questions, cause divisions, widen breaches, merely to advance and promote their own selfish, ambitious, and covetous ends. This has been the plague of the church in all past ages, and I am afraid no age is, or will be, wholly free from such men and such practices as long as time shall last. The late excellent Mr. Henry's pious and charitable note on this passage, and I wish it were duly laid to heart by all of us who yet survive, is, that nothing cuts us off from the church but that which cuts us off from Christ, namely, reigning infidelity and ungodliness. We must (as he goes on excellently) abhor the thought of branding particular parties (I add, or persons) with this character; especially the doing it without the least proof, or (as it too often happens) the least shadow of it. Those are ungodly men who live without God in the world, who have no regard to God and conscience. They (as the good man goes on) are to be dreaded, and consequently to be avoided, not only who are wicked by sins of commission, but also who are ungodly by sins of omission; who, for example, restrain prayer before God, who dare not reprove a rich man, when it is the duty of their place so to do, for fear they lose his favour, and the advantage they promise themselves therefrom, who "do the work of the Lord negligently," &c.

2. That they are the worst of ungodly men who turn "the grace of God into

a commercial city in Syria, seeing that Palestine, where St. Jude dwelt, must at the time of writing the epistle have been in a state of commotion, to which there is no allusion in it."

1. "Sanctified;" read, "beloved in God the Father." (Compare verse 21.) Read also, "kept for Jesus Christ"—i.e., "to be his at the day of his coming."

2. "Mercy;" associated with grace and peace in *1 Tim. i. 2*; *2 Tim. i. 2*; *Titus i. 4*; *2 John 3*. (Compare verse 21.) "Be multi-

lasciviousness;" that is, who take encouragement to sin more boldly, because the grace of God hath abounded, and doth still abound so wonderfully; who are hardened in their impieties by the extent and fulness of gospel grace, the design of which is to reduce men from sin, and bring them unto God. Thus therefore to wax wanton under so great grace, and turn it into an occasion of working all uncleanness with greediness, and hardening ourselves in such a course by that very grace, which is the last and most forcible means to reclaim us from it, is to render ourselves the vilest, the worst, and most hopeless of sinners.

Thirdly. They who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness do in effect deny the Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ; that is, as Mr. Henry well expresseth it, they deny both natural and revealed religion. They (as he justly goes on) strike at the foundations of natural religion, for they deny the only Lord God; and they overturn all the frame of revealed religion, for they deny the Lord Jesus Christ. Now his great design in establishing his (that is, revealed) religion in the world was to bring us unto God. Note, They who deny our Lord Jesus Christ do, in effect, deny the only Lord God. To deny revealed religion is virtually to overturn natural religion, for they stand or fall together, and they mutually yield light and force to each other. Would to God our modern deists, who live in the midst of gospel light, would seriously consider this, and cautiously, diligently, and impartially examine what it is that hinders their receiving the Gospel, while they profess themselves fully persuaded of all the principles and duties of natural religion. Never two tallies answered more exactly to each other than these do, so that it seems absurd to receive the one and reject the other. One would think it were the fairer way to receive both or reject both; though perhaps the more plausible method, especially in this age, is to act the part they do. [Enoch, as the apostle afterwards notices, and the apostle Peter in his second epistle, and St. Paul, in his epistles to the *Thessalonians* and to *Timothy*, as well as other sacred writers, both in the Old and New Testament, wrote before (προγεγραμμενοι) of this corruption of the Gospel. The insidious approach of error creeping in unawares is truly despicable of the rise and course of popery and infidelity; but, though unawares to man, God had foreseen and foretold them from the beginning.]

Fourthly. They who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness are ordained unto condemnation; so Mr. Henry, and no doubt it is a great truth. They (as he speaks) sin against the last, the greatest, and most perfect remedy, and so are without excuse. They who thus sin must needs die of their wounds, of their disease; are of old ordained to this condemnation, whatever that expression means. But what if our translators had thought fit to have rendered the word in the original, which I shall not trouble the English reader with, 'of old fore-written of,' as persons who would, through their own sin and folly, become the proper subjects of this condemnation, where had the harm been? Plain Christians had not been troubled with dark, doubtful, and perplexing thoughts about reprobation, which the strongest heads cannot enter far into, can indeed bear but little of, without much loss and damage. Is it not enough that early notice was given by inspired writers that such seducers and wicked men should arise in later times, and that every one being forewarned of, should be forearmed against them?

["Denying the only Lord," &c. Not outwardly, or there would be no mystery in the iniquity, no deceptableness in the unrighteousness. "Popery deny the Father! Oh, no; she has such reverence for the greatness of the Father she thinks him too great to be approached without human mediators. Popery deny the Son! Why, she has crucifixes in every corner." Yet how truly, how practically, are the Father and the Son denied by this great apostasy,—the commands of the Father trampled on and broken,—the second commandment generally left out altogether,—the tenderness, and grace, and sympathy of the Son denied, and transferred to the Virgin Mary, while Christ is represented as a solemn Judge only. God preserve us from all these snares of the enemy to destroy our souls! What Socinianism does explicitly Popery does covertly; both set aside Christ.]

Fifthly. We ought to contend earnestly for the faith, in opposition to those who would corrupt or deprave it—such as are "crept in unawares;" a wretched character to be sure, but often very ill applied by weak and ignorant people, and even by those who themselves creep in unawares, who think their *ipse dixit* should stand for a law to all their followers and admirers. Surely faithful, humble ministers, are helpers of their people's joy, peace, comfort, not lords of their faith. Whoever attempt to corrupt the faith, we ought to contend earnestly against them. The more busy and crafty the instruments and agents of Satan are to rob us of the truth, the more solicitous should we be to hold it fast; always provided we be very sure that we fasten no wrong or injurious characters on persons, parties, or sentiments.

The fair warning which the apostle, in Christ's name, gives to those who, having professed his holy religion, do afterwards desert and prove false to it.

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. 6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

We have here a recital of the former judgments of God upon sinners, with design to awaken and terrify those to whom warning is given in this epistle. Observe, The judgments of God are often denounced and executed in *terrorem*,—"for warning to others," rather than from immediate or particular displeasure against the offenders themselves; not that God is not displeased with them, but perhaps not more with them than with others, who, at least for the present, do escape. "I will put you in remembrance." Observe, that what we do already know we still need to be put in remembrance of. Therefore there will always be need and use of a standing, stated ministry in the Christian church, though all the doctrines of faith, the essentials, are so plainly revealed in express words, or by the most near plain, and immediate consequence,

that he who runs may read and understand them. There want no infallible interpreters (really or conceitedly such) for any such end or purpose. Some people do, weakly enough, suggest, if the Scriptures do so plainly contain all that is necessary to salvation, what need or use can there be of a standing ministry? Why may we not content ourselves with staying at home and reading our Bibles? But hold, not so fast; fair and softly. The inspired apostle has here fully, though not wholly, answered this objection. Preaching is not designed to teach us something new in every sermon, somewhat that we knew nothing of before; but to put us in remembrance, to call to mind things forgotten, to affect our passions, and engage and fix our resolutions, that our lives may be answerable to our faith. Though you know these things, yet, as good Mr. Henry says, you still need to know them better. There are many things we have known which yet we have unhappily forgotten. Is it of no use or service to be put afresh in remembrance of them?

Now what are these things (I use the very words of the late excellent Mr. Henry, which in this exposition, which is designed, and accordingly modelled, as a small part of the continuation of his, I always do, where I well can) which we Christians need to be put in remembrance of.

First. The destruction of the unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness, ver. 5. St. Paul puts the Corinthians in mind of this, *1 Cor. x.* The first ten verses of that chapter, as the Scripture is always the best commentary upon itself, are the best explication of the 5th verse of this epistle of *Jude*. None, therefore, ought to presume upon their privileges, since many who were brought out of Egypt by a series of amazing miracles yet perished in the wilderness, by reason of their unbelief. "Let us not therefore be high-minded, but fear," *Rom. xi. 20.* "Let us fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest any of you should seem to come short of it," *Heb. iv. 1.* They had miracles in plenty, they were, as Mr. Henry styles it, their daily bread, yet even they perished in unbelief. We have greater, much greater, advantages than they had. Let their error, their so fatal error, be our awful warning. [The constant recollection of God's truth is needful for its sanctifying and saving power, *1 Cor. xv. 2.* Let us then read the Bible constantly. May we Protestant churches, who have been saved out of popery, be preserved from infidelity.]

Secondly. We are here put in remembrance of the fall of the angels, ver. 6. There were a great number of the angels who "left their own habitation;" that is, who were not pleased with the posts and stations the supreme Monarch of the universe had assigned and allotted to them, but thought (like discontented ministers in our age, I might say in every age) they deserved better. They would, with the title of ministers, be sovereigns, and in effect the Sovereign should be their minister—do all, and only what they would have him. Thus was pride the main and immediate cause or occasion of their fall. Thus they quitted their post, and rebelled against God, their Creator and Sovereign Lord. But God did not spare them, high and great as they were; he would not truckle to them; he threw them off, as a wise and good prince will a selfish and deceitful ministry; and the great, the all-wise God, could not be ignorant, as the wisest and best of earthly princes often are, what designs they were hatching. After all what became of them? They thought to have dared and out-faced Omnipotence itself; but God was too hard for them; he cast them down to hell. They who would not be servants to their Maker and his will in their first state, were made captives to his justice, and are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness. Here see what the condition of fallen angels is—they are in chains bound under the Divine power and justice, bound over to "the judgment of the great day." They are under darkness who were once angels of light. So horribly in the dark are they that they continue to fight against God, as if there were yet some small hope at least left them of prevailing and overcoming in the conflict. Dire infatuation! Light and liberty concur, chains and darkness, how well do they agree, and suit each other! [Whenever we admit a sin into our soul we place a chain on our freedom, and make a dungeon for our souls, and this, in its nature, everlasting. How terrible then the chains of pride, ambition, love of dominion, and hatred of God, and his truth, and his people, and of every thing good, which imprison evil angels with all their high intellect in eternal darkness!] The devils, once angels in the best sense, are reserved, &c. Observe, There is, undoubtedly there is, a judgment to come. The fallen angels are reserved to "the judgment of the great day;" and shall fallen men escape it? Surely no. Let every reader consider this in due time. Their chains are called everlasting, because it is impossible they should ever break loose from them, or make an escape. They are held fast and sure under them. The decree, the justice, the wrath of God are the very chains under which fallen angels are held so fast. Hear and fear, O sinful mortals of mankind!

Thirdly. The apostle here calls to our remembrance the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, ver. 7. "Even as," &c. And it is in allusion to the destruction of Pentapolis, or the five cities, that the miseries of the damned are set forth by a lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. They were guilty of abominable wickedness, not to be named or thought of but with the utmost abhorrence and detestation. Their ruin is a particular warning to all people to take heed of, and fly from, "fleshly lusts which war against the soul," *1 Pet. ii. 11.* [See the warnings given from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha and the cities of the plain, Admah and Zeboim, *Deu. xxix. 19–25; Eze. xvi. 48–51.* These lusts consumed the Sodomites with fire from heaven, and they are now "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;" therefore take heed, imitate not their sins, lest the same plagues overtake you as did them. God is the same holy, just, pure Being now as then. And can the beastly pleasures of a moment make amends for your "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire?" "Stand in awe, therefore, and sin not," *Ps. iv. 4.*

The charge the apostle exhibits against deceivers who were now seducing the disciples of Christ from the profession and practice of his holy religion.

8 Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. 9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. 10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. 11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the

plied?" "Peculiar (as used in the salutation) to Jude, and 1 and 2 Peter" (Webster and Wilkinson).

3. "Common salvation." it was a salvation in which all classes and conditions of men were interested, and this common interest between himself and his hearers constituted the ground of his addressing them. "Once;" rather, "once for all." No other faith or revelation to supersede it. St. Jude means that having intended to write generally of the common salvation, he found it necessary from

the existing evils in the Church to write especially that they should contend for the faith against those evils.

4. "Of old ordained;" rather, "fore-written"—i.e., in the Old Testament prophecies and those of the New Testament which had been already written. The passage certainly does not mean that God's eternal purpose had appointed these individuals to judgment, but, as all Scripture, in the punishments it recounts, teaches, that such characters are ordained to condemnation.

gainsaying of Core. 12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; 13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.



WANDERING STARS.

He calls them "filthy dreamers," forasmuch as delusion is a dream, and the beginning of, and inlet to, all manner of filthiness. Note, Sin is filthiness. It renders men odious and vile in the sight of the most holy God; and makes them, sooner or later, as penitent or as punished to extremity, and without resource, vile in their own eyes; and in a while they become vile in the eyes of all about them. These filthy dreamers dream themselves into a fool's paradise on earth, and into a real hell at last. Let their character, course, and end be our reasonable and sufficient warning. Like sins will produce like punishments and miseries.

First. Here the character of these deceivers is described.

1. They "defile the flesh." The flesh or body is the immediate seat, and often the irritating occasion, of many horrid pollutions; yet these, though done in and against the body, do greatly defile, and grievously maim and wound, the soul; "Fleshly lusts do war against the soul," 1 *Pet.* ii. 11. And in 2 *Cor.* vii. 1, we read of filthiness of flesh and spirit, each of which, though of different kinds, defile the whole man.

2. They "despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities." Are of a disturbed mind, and a seditious spirit; forgetting that "the powers that be are ordained of God," *Rom.* xiii. 1. God requires us "to speak evil of no man," *Tit.* iii. 2. But it is a great aggravation of the sin of evil-speaking when what we say is pointed at magistrates, men whom God has set in authority over us, by blaspheming or speaking evil of whom we blaspheme God himself. Or, if we understand it with respect to religion, as some do, that ought to have the dominion in this lower world, such evil-speakers despise the dominion of conscience, make a jest of it, and would banish it out of the world; and for the word of God, the rule of conscience, they despise that; the revelations of the divine will go for little with them; they are a rule of faith and manners, but not till they have explained them, and imposed their sense of them upon all about them. Or, as others account for the sense of this passage, the people of God, truly and specially so, are the dignities here spoken of, or referred to; according to that of the psalmist, *Psa.* cv. 15, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." They "speak evil of," &c. Observe, Religion, and its serious professors, have been always and every where evil-spoken of; though there is nothing in religion but what is very good, and deserves our highest regards, both as it is perfective of our natures and subservient to our truest and highest interests; yet this sect, as its enemies are pleased to call it, "is every where spoken against," *Acts* xviii. 22.

On this occasion the apostle brings in "Michael the archangel," &c., ver. 9. Interpreters are at a loss what is here meant by "the body of Moses." Some think that the devil contended that Moses might have a public and honourable funeral, that the place where he was interred might be generally known, hoping thereby to draw the Jews, so naturally prone thereto, to a new and fresh instance of idolatry. Dr. Scott thinks that by "the body of Moses" we are to understand the Jewish church, whose destruction the devil strove and contended for; as the Christian church is called the body of Christ in the New Testament style. Others bring other interpretations, which I will not here trouble the reader with. [There is not merely a conflict going on between men and men, but a higher and more mysterious conflict connected with it, in the heavenly places, *Eph.* vi. 12; and all our struggles with sin and Satan are matters of intense interest to angels. The account of the Lord's burying the body of Moses is given *Deut.* xxxiv. 5, 6. Probably the devil was already pre-anticipating his system of relics, by which he has in popery done so much evil in the church of Christ.] Though this contest was mighty eager and earnest, and Michael was victorious in the issue, yet he would not bring a "railing accusation" against the devil himself. He knew a good cause needed no such weapons to be employed in its defence. It is said, "He durst not bring," &c. Why durst he not? Not that he was afraid of the devil, but he believed God would be offended if, in such a dispute, he went that way to work; he thought it below him to engage in a trial of skill with the great enemy of God and man, which of them should outscold or outtrail the other. A memorandum, saith good Mr. Henry, to all disputants never to bring railing accusations into their disputes. Truth needs no supports from falsehood or scurrility. Some say, Michael would not bring a railing accusation against the devil, as knowing beforehand that he would be too hard for him at that weapon. Some think the apostle refers here to the remarkable passage we have *Num.* x. 7-14. Satan would have represented Moses under disadvantageous colours, which he, good man, had, at that time, and upon that occasion, given but too much handle for. Now Michael, according to this account, stands up in defence of Moses, and in the zeal of an upright and bold spirit says to Satan, "The Lord rebuke thee." He would not stand disputing with the devil, nor enter into a particular debate about the merits of that special cause. He knew Moses was his fellow-servant, a favourite of God, and he would not patiently suffer him to be insulted, no, not by the prince of devils, but in a just indignation cries out, "The Lord rebuke thee." Like that of our Lord himself, *Mat.* iv. 10, "Get thee hence, Satan." Moses was a dignitary, a magistrate, one beloved and preferred by the great God; and the archangel thought it insufferable that such

a one should be so treated by a vile apostate spirit, of how high an order soever. So the lesson hence is, that we ought to stand up in defence of those whom God owns, how severe soever Satan and his instruments are in their censures of them and their conduct. They who censure, in particular, upright magistrates upon every slip in their behaviour, may expect to hear, "The Lord rebuke thee;" and Divine rebukes are harder to be borne than careless sinners now think for.

3. But these speak evil of the things which they know not," &c., ver. 10. Observe. They who speak evil of religion and godliness speak evil of the things which they know not; for if they had known them they would have spoken well of them; for nothing but good and excellent can be truly said of religion; and it is sad any thing different or opposite should ever be justly said of any of its professors. A religious life is the most safe, happy, comfortable, and honourable life that is. [The lawless call a righteous government, and restraint of evil, "tyranny." The papists call real religion "heresy."] Observe, That men are most apt to speak evil of those persons and things which they know least of. How many had never suffered by slanderous tongues if they had been better known; as on the other hand retirement screens some even from just censure. "But what they know naturally," &c. Observe, It is hard, if not impossible, to find any obstinate enemies to the Christian religion who do not, in their stated course, live in open or secret contradiction to the very principles of natural religion. This many think hard and uncharitable; but I am afraid it will appear too true in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. The apostle likens such to brute beasts, though they often think and boast themselves if not the wisest, yet at least the wittiest part of mankind. "In those things they corrupt themselves;" that is, in the plainest and most natural and necessary things; things that he most open and obvious to natural reason and conscience, even in those things they corrupt, debase, and defile themselves. The fault, whatever it is, lies not in their understandings or apprehensions, but in their depraved wills, disordered appetites and affections. They could, and might, have acted better; but then they must have offered violence to those vile affections which they obstinately chose rather to gratify than mortify.

4. In ver. 11 he represents them as followers of Cain; and in ver. 12, 13, as atheistical and profane people, that thought little, and perhaps believed not much of God or a future world; as greedy and covetous, who so they could but gain present worldly advantages cared not what came next. Rebels to God and man, who, like Core, ran into attempts in which they must assuredly perish, as he did. [The sins of the last days concentrate all the errors and sins of preceding times, and so bring special woe. The "way of Cain," *Gen.* iv. 3-8, brizing the fruits of his labours as a sacrifice instead of the lamb; "the error of Balaam," loving money and seducing God's people; the "gainsaying of Korah," corrupt authority in the priesthood.]

Of these the apostle farther says—

1st. "These are spots in your feasts of charity," ver. 12—the *Ἀγίαρ*, or 'love feasts,' so much spoken of by the ancients. These happened, by whatever means, or mischance, to be admitted among them, but were spots in them, defiled and defiling. Observe, It is a great reproach, though unjust and accidental, to religion, when they who profess it, and join in the solemnest institution of it, are in heart and life unsuitable and even contrary to it. "These are spots." Yet how common in all Christian societies here on earth, the very best not excepted, are such blemishes. The more is the pity; the Lord remedy it in his due time and way, not in men's blind and rigorous way of plucking up the wheat with the tares. But in the heaven we are waiting, hoping, and preparing for, there is none of this mad work, none of these disorderly doings.

2nd. "When they feast with you they feed themselves without fear." Arrant gluttons no doubt they were, such as only minded the gratifying of their appetites with the daintiness and plenty of their fare. They had no regard to Solomon's caution, *Pr.* xxiii. 2. Mr. Henry's note on this passage is, in common eating and drinking a holy fear is necessary, much more in feasting; though we may sometimes be more easily and insensibly overcome at a common meal than at a feast; for, in the case supposed, we are less upon our guard, and sometimes, at least to some persons, the plenty of a feast is its own antidote—as to others it may prove a dangerous snare.

3rd. "Clouds they are without water," which promise rain in time of drought, but perform nothing of what they promise. Such is the case of formal professors, who at first setting out promise much, like early blossoming trees in a forward spring, but in conclusion bring forth little or no fruit. [God preserve us from a mere appearance of good—a mere show of religion without the reality.] "Carried about of winds," light and empty, easily driven about this way or that, as the wind happens to sit. Such are empty, ungrounded professors, an easy prey to every seducer. It is amazing to hear many talk so confidently of so many things of which they know little or nothing, and yet have not the wisdom and humility to discern and be sensible how little they know. How happy would our world be if men either knew more, or practically knew how little they know!

4th. "Trees whose fruit withereth," &c. Trees they are, for they are planted in the Lord's vineyard, yet fruitless ones. Observe, They whose fruit withereth may be justly said to be without fruit. As good never a whit as never the better. It is a sad thing when men seem to begin in the spirit and end in the flesh, which is almost as common a case as it is an awful one. The text speaks of such as being twice dead; one would think to be once dead were enough. We none of us, till grace renew us to a higher degree than ordinary, love to think of dying once, though this is appointed for us all. What then is the meaning of this being twice dead? Take Mr. Henry's answer, in his own words. They had been once dead in their natural, fallen, lapsed state; but they seemed to recover, and, as a man in a swoon, to be brought to life again, when they took upon them the profession of the Christian religion. But now they are dead again by the evident proofs they have given of their hypocrisy; whatever they seemed they had nothing truly vital in them. "Plucked up by the roots," as we commonly serve dead trees, from which we expect no more fruit. They are dead, dead, dead; why cumber they the ground? away with them to the fire.

5th. "Raging waves of the sea," ver. 13; boisterous, noisy, and clamorous; full of talk and turbulence, but with little, if any, sense or meaning. "Foaming out their own shame," creating much uneasiness to men of better sense and calmer tempers, which yet will in the end turn to their own greater shame and just reproach. The psalmist's prayer ought always to be that of every honest and good man; "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me," *Psa.* xxv. 21; and if it will not, let me be unpreserved. If honesty signify little now, knavery will signify much less, and that in a very little while. Raging waves are a terror to sailing passengers; but when they are got to port the waves are forgotten, as no longer in being. Their noise and terror is for ever ended.

6th. "Wandering stars;" planets that are erratic in their motions, keep not that steady, regular course the fixed ones do, but shift their stations, that one has sometimes much ado to know where to find them. This allusion carries in it a lively emblem of false teachers, who are sometimes here and sometimes there, so that one knows not where nor how to fix them. In the main things,

5-7. Containing examples of Divine judgments. First example, that of unbelieving Israel in the wilderness. Translate, "I wish to remind you, knowing as ye do all things (i.e., that I am referring to), shat Jesus," &c. "Afterward," rather, "secondly," indicating a second deed of the Lord following that of the deliverance out of Egypt.

6. Second example of Divine judgment. "Their first estate:" "This has been referred by some to *Gen.* vi. 2, according to the

legendary, patristic interpretation, and the visions of the Book of Enoch (Jerome on *Psa.* cxxiv.). The splendid use made of the expression by Milton in 'Paradise Lost,' Book V., is worth noticing" (Webster and Wilkinson). Alford says we cannot explain the apparent difference between what is here stated and the description elsewhere given of the activity of the evil spirits. Another explanation is, "He means not literal chains and darkness, but figurative in this present world, where, with restricted powers

at least, one would think something should be fixed and steady; and I should think this might be without infallibility, or any pretensions to it, in us poor mortals. In religion and politics, the great subjects of present debate, surely there are certain stamina in which wise and good, honest and disinterested men might agree, without throwing the populace into the utmost anguish and distress of mind, or blowing up their passions into rage and fury, without letting them know what they say, or whereof they affirm. [There is an appearance as of a real star, a true minister of Christ; but it is only a falling meteor, speedily going out in utter darkness.]

Secondly, The doom of these wicked people is declared: "To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." Observe, False teachers are to expect the worst of punishments in this and a future world. Not every one who teacheth by mistake any thing that is not exactly true, (for who then in any public assembly durst open a Bible to teach others, unless he thought himself equal or superior to the angels of God in heaven?) but he who prevaricates, dissembles, would lead others into by-paths and side-ways, that he may have opportunity to make a gain or prey of them; or, in the apostle's phrase, to make merchandise of them, *2 Pet. ii. 3.* But enough of this. As for "the blackness of darkness for ever," I shall only say that this terrible expression, with all the horror it imports, belongs to false teachers, (truly, not slanderously, so called,) who corrupt the word of God, and betray the souls of men. And if this will not make both ministers and people cautious, I know not what will.

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. 16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

This prophecy of Enoch we have no mention made of in any other part or place of Scripture, yet now it is Scripture that there was such a prophecy; one plain text of Scripture is proof enough of any one point that we are required to believe, especially when relating to a matter of fact; but in matters of faith, necessary, saving faith, God has not seen fit (blessed be his holy name he has not,) to try us so far. There is no fundamental of Christian religion, truly so called, which we have not inculcated over and over in the New Testament, by which we may know what the Holy Ghost does, and consequently we ought to lay the greatest stress upon. Some say this prophecy of Enoch was preserved by tradition in the Jewish church; others that the apostle Jude was immediately inspired with the notice of it. Be that how it will, it is certain there was such a prophecy of ancient date, of long standing, and universally received in the Old Testament church; and it is a main point of our New Testament creed. [The account of Enoch, in *Gen. v. 21-24*, is very brief; but in *Heb. xi.* we learn that faith was the real root of his holy character; and here we see on what that faith was specially exercised. Through the long vista of five thousand years by faith he beheld the Lord's coming to judgment, and calls all men also to behold it.] Observe,

First, That Christ's coming to judgment was prophesied of as early as the middle of the patriarchal age, and was therefore even then a received and acknowledged truth. "The Lord cometh with his holy myriads," including both angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. What a glorious time will that be when Christ shall come with ten thousand of these! And we are told for what great and awful ends and purposes he will come so accompanied and attended; namely, to execute judgment upon all. Observe,

Secondly, It was spoken of then, so long ago, as a thing just at hand; behold, "the Lord cometh;" he is just a coming, he will be upon you before you are aware, and unless you be very cautious and diligent, before you are provided to meet him comfortably. He cometh, 1. To execute judgment upon the wicked. 2. To convince them. Observe, Christ will condemn none without precedent, trial, and conviction, such conviction as shall at least silence even themselves; they shall have no excuse or apology to make that they either can or dare then stand by. Then every mouth shall be stopped, the Judge and his sentence shall be, by all the impartial, approved and applauded, and even the guilty condemned criminal shall be speechless, though at present they want not bold and specious pleas, which they vent with all assurance and confidence; and yet it is sure that the mock trials of prisoners in the goal among themselves, and the real trial at the bar before the proper judge, soon appear to be very different things. [The certain judgment coming upon the wicked is a great help in evil days to a bold and close walk with God.]

I cannot pass this 15th verse without taking notice how often, and how emphatically, the word "ungodly" is repeated in it; no less than four times—ungodly men, ungodly sinners, ungodly deeds, and, as to the manner, ungodly committed. Godly or ungodly signifies little with men now a days, unless it be to scoff at and deride even the very expressions; but it is not so in the language of the Holy Ghost. Observe, Omissions as well as commissions must be accounted for in the day of judgment. Observe farther, Hard speeches of one another, especially if ill-grounded, will most certainly come into account at the judgment of the great day. Let us all take care in time. If thou, saith one of our good old puritans, smite a miscalled heretic, or a schismatic, and God find a real saint bleeding, look thou to it, how thou wilt answer it; it may be too late to say, before the angel, it was an error, *Ecc. v. 6.* I only here allude to that expression of the Divinely inspired writer.

In the 16th verse the apostle enlarges farther on the character of these evil men and seducers; "They are murmurers, complainers," &c. Observe, that a murmuring, complaining temper, indulged and expressed, lays men under a very ill character. Such are very weak at least, and for the most part very wicked. They murmur against God and his providence, against men and their conduct; they are angry at every thing that happens, and never pleased with their own state and condition in the world, as not thinking it good enough for them. Such "walk after their own lusts;" their will, their appetite, their fancy, is their only rule and law. Mr. Henry's note here is, that they who please their sinful appetites are most prone to yield to their ungovernable passions. [We may observe an awful likeness in the sinners before the deluge,

in the time of Enoch, and sinners before the last fire: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man," *Lu. xvii. 26, 27.* How many, alas, in our day are speaking great swelling words of the wonders of arts and science, and improved knowledge, and admiring man more than God!]

The exhortation the apostle here gives to those to whom he wrote, which, with the doxology in the last two verses, concludes the epistle.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. 19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. 20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. 22 And of some have compassion, making a difference: 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

First. He calls them to remember how they had been forewarned: "But, beloved, remember," &c., ver. 17. Remember, take heed that ye think it not strange, namely, so as to stumble, and be offended, and have your faith staggered by it, that such people as the seducers before described and warned against should arise, and that early, in the Christian church,—seeing all this was foretold by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the accomplishment of it in the event is a confirmation of your faith, instead of being in the least an occasion of shaking and unsettling you therein. Observe, 1. They who would persuade must make it evident that they sincerely love those whom they would persuade. Bitter words and hard usage never did nor ever will convince, much less persuade any body. [Christians are beloved of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; beloved of angels and of their fellow-Christians. One delightful, heavenly atmosphere of love embraces the whole family of God.] 2. The words which inspired persons have spoken or written, duly remembered and reflected on, are the best preservative against dangerous errors. This will always be so till men have learnt to speak better than God himself. 3. We ought not to be offended if errors and persecutions arise and prevail in the Christian church. This was foretold, and therefore we should not think worse of Christ's person, doctrine, or cross, when we see it fulfilled: see *2 Tim. iv. 1*; *2 Tim. iii. 1*; *2 Pet. iii. 3*. Therefore we must not think it strange, but comfort ourselves with this, that in the midst of all this hurly-burly Christ will maintain his church, and make good his promise that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," *Mat. xvi. 18*. [Jude, by referring to the testimony of the apostles, and especially of Peter, *2 Pet. iii. 3*, shews that his own epistle was late among the writings of the New Testament. Mocking is the consummation of wickedness, *Ps. i. 1*. The expression "the last times," when compared with the words of Peter, "In the last days perilous times shall come," naturally lead our thoughts to the close of the Christian dispensation, before the Lord's coming, *2 Pet. iii. 3-10*. The book of *Revelation* is a fuller exposition of these prophecies.] 4. The more religion is ridiculed and persecuted the faster hold we should take and keep of it. Being forewarned we should shew that we are forearmed under such trials; we should stand firm, and "not be soon shaken in mind," *2 Thes. ii. 2*.

Secondly, He guards them against seducers, by a farther description of their odious characters: "These be they who separate," &c., ver. 19. Observe, 1. Sensualists are the worst separatists. They separate themselves from God, and Christ, and his church, to the devil, world, and flesh, by their ungodly courses and vicious practices, and that is a great deal worse than separation from any particular branch of the visible church, on account of opinions or modes and circumstances of external government or worship; though many can patiently bear with the former, while they are plentifully and almost perpetually railing at the latter, as if no sin were damnable but what they are pleased to call schism. [The Gospel is an uniting and not a separating religion. We must not separate from true churches of Christ or true Christians, holding and loving the great truths of the Gospel, even though there be many lesser differences, *Rom. xiv. 1*.] 2. That sensual men have not the Spirit, namely, of God and Christ, the Spirit of holiness, which whoever has not is none of Christ's, does not belong to him, *Rom. viii. 9*. 3. The worse others are the better should we endeavour and approve ourselves to be. The more busy Satan and his instruments are to pervert others in judgment or practice, the more tenacious should we be of sound doctrine and a good conversation, holding fast the faithful word, as we have been divinely taught, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, *Tit. i. 9*; *1 Tim. iii. 9*. [The highest and holiest duties of the Christian life may be carried on in the midst of a world lying in wickedness.]

Thirdly, He exhorts them to persevering constancy in truth and holiness.

1. "Building up," &c., ver. 20. Observe, The way to hold fast our profession is to hold on in it. Having laid our foundation well in a sound faith and a sincere, upright heart, we must build upon it, that is, make farther progress continually. And we should take care with what materials we carry on our building, namely, gold, silver, precious stones, not wood, hay, stubble, *1 Cor. iii. 12*. Right principles and a regular conversation will stand the test even of the fiery trial; but whatever we mix of baser alloy, though we be in the main sincere, we shall suffer loss by it; and though our persons be saved, all that part of our work shall be consumed; and if we ourselves escape it will be with great danger and difficulty, as from a house on fire on every side.

2. "Praying in the Holy Ghost." Observe, 1st. Prayer is the nurse of

and liberties, shut out from heaven, they, like condemned prisoners, await their doom."

7. "Even as:" rather, "how," depending on "I wish to remind you" (verse 5), and introducing the third example. "Strange flesh:" "other flesh than that appointed by God for the fulfilment of natural desire" (Alford). "Eternal fire:" "Undergoing the punishment, as may even now be seen, of eternal fire, of that fire which shall never be quenched" (Alford).

8. "Dreamers:" omit "filthy," and read, "these men dreaming" (compare *1 Thess. v. 6, 7*), Scripture representing sinners as asleep. Bengel has well observed, "As a man dreaming seems to himself to be seeing and hearing many things, so the natural man's lusts are agitated by joy, distress, fear, and other passions; but he is a stranger to self-command. Hence, although he bring into play all the powers of reason, he cannot conceive the true liberty which the sons of light enjoy." This term ("dreamers") very

faith; the way to build up ourselves in our most holy faith is to continue instant in prayer, *Rom. xii. 12*. 2nd. Our prayers are then most likely to prevail when we pray in the Holy Ghost; that is, under his guidance and influence, according to the rule of his word, with faith, fervency, and constant, persevering importunity. This is praying in the Holy Ghost, whether it be done by or without a set, prescribed form. [It is easy to repeat forms of prayer, or by the intellect to pray extempore, but there is no real prayer from the heart of fallen man except what the Holy Ghost inspires.]

3. "Keep yourselves," &c., ver. 21; that is, 1st. Keep up the grace of love to God in its lively, vigorous actings and exercises in your souls. 2nd. Take heed of throwing yourselves out of the love of God to you, or its delightful, cheering, strengthening manifestations. Keep yourselves in the way of God if you would continue in his love.

4. "Looking for the mercy," &c. Observe, 1st. Eternal life is to be looked for only through mercy. Mercy is our only plea, not merit; or if merit, not our own but another's, who has merited for us what otherwise we could have laid no claim to, nor have entertained any well-grounded hope of. 2nd. It is said, not only through the mercy of God as our Creator, but through the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ as Redeemer. All that come to heaven must come thither "through our Lord Jesus Christ," "for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," but that of the Lord Jesus only, *Acts iv. 12*, compared with ver. 10. 3rd. That a believing expectation of eternal life will arm us against the snares of sin, *2 Pet. iii. 14*. A lively faith of the blessed hope will help us to mortify our cursed lusts. [Continually realise God's love to your soul. Spell it out from the midst of your trials, and dwell in it, and rejoice in it every day. And after you have done all, look only for mercy, and mercy in Jesus, as your solid foundation of hope for eternal life.]

Fourthly. He directs them how to behave towards erring brethren; "And of some have compassion," &c., ver. 22, 23. Observe,

1. We ought to do all we can to rescue others out of the snare of the devil, that they may be saved from (or recovered, when entangled therein, out of) dangerous errors or pernicious practices. We are not only, under God, our own keepers, but every man ought to be, as much as in him lies, his brother's keeper. None but a wicked Cain will contradict this, *Gen. iv. 9*. We must watch over one another, faithfully, yet prudently, reprove each other, set a good example to all about us.

2. And this must be done "with compassion, making a difference." How is that? We must distinguish between the weak and the wilful. 1st. Of some we must have compassion, treat them with all tenderness, restore them in the spirit of meekness, not be needlessly harsh and severe in our censures of them and their actions, nor proud and haughty in our carriage towards them; not implacable, averse to reconciliation with them, or admitting them to the friendship they formerly had with us, when they give evident or even strongly hopeful tokens of a sincere repentance. If God hath forgiven them, why should not we? We infinitely more need his forgiveness than they do, or can do, ours, though perhaps neither they nor we are justly or sufficiently sensible of this. 2nd. "Others save with fear." Urging upon them the terrors of the Lord, endeavour to frighten them out of their sins; preach hell and damnation to them, so good Mr. Henry. But what if prudence and caution in administering even the most just and severe reproofs be what is primarily and chiefly here intimated? (I do but offer it.) As if he had said, 'Fear, lest you frustrate your own good intentions and best designs by rash and imprudent management, that you do not harden instead of reclaiming, even where greater degrees of severity are requisite than in the immediately foregoing instance.' We are often apt to overdo when we are sure we mean honestly, and think we are right in the main; yet the very worst are not needlessly, or rashly, or to extremity to be provoked, lest they be thereby farther hardened through our default. "Hating even the garment," &c.; that is, keeping yourselves at the utmost distance from what is or appears evil, and designing and endeavouring that others may do so too. Avoid, as Mr. Henry speaks, all that leads to sin, or that looks like sin, *1 Thes. v. 22*.

Fifthly. The apostle concludes this epistle with solemn ascription of glory to the great God. Note, Whatever is the subject or argument we have been treating of, ascribing glory to God is fittest for us to conclude with, ver. 24, 25. Note farther, God is able, and he is as willing as able, to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless "before the presence of his glory;" not as those who have never been faulty, (for what has once been done can never be

rendered undone, even by Omnipotence itself, for that implies a contradiction,) but as those whose faults shall not be imputed to their ruin, which, but for God's mercy, and a Saviour's merits, they might most justly have been. "Before the presence of his glory." Observe, 1. That the glory of the Lord will shortly be present. We now look upon it as distant, and too many look upon it as uncertain, but it will come, and it will be manifest and apparent; "Every eye shall see him," *Rev. i. 7*. This is now the object of our faith, but hereafter (and sure it cannot now be long to) it will be the object of our sense. When we now believe in him we shall shortly see to our unspeakable joy and comfort, or inexpressible terror and consternation, *1 Pet. i. 8*. 2. That all real, sincere believers shall be presented, at the Lord Redeemer's appearance and coming, by him their glorious Head, to the Father, in order to his approbation, acceptance, and reward. "They were given him of the Father, and of all that were given him he has lost none, nor will lose any one, not an individual, a single soul, but will present them all perfectly holy and happy, when he shall surrender his mediatorial kingdom to his God and our God, his Father and our Father, *Jno. vi. 39*; *xvii. 12*; *1 Cor. xv. 24*. [Our preservation from falling is founded on the ability of him who is omnipotent; however difficult, then, it is sure to all the sheep of Christ. The certain result of the Divine dispensations is, that every child of God shall be found faultless, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. O the fulness of joy to Christ the Lord, to holy angels, to all the saints, will that day bring!] 3. When believers shall be presented faultless, it will be with exceeding joy. Alas! now our faults fill us with fears, doubts, and sorrows. But be of good cheer; if we are sincere we shall be, our dear Redeemer has undertaken for it we shall be, presented faultless. Where there is no sin there will be no sorrow; where there is the perfection of holiness there will be the perfection of joy. Surely the God who can and will do all this is worthy to have glory, majesty, dominion, and power ascribed to him, both now and for ever. And to this we may well with the apostle fix our hearty Amen.

[With all my dislike of a certain ultraism in our church, let me not forget the obligation of contending earnestly for the faith—one leading and pre-eminent article of which I hold to be justification by faith alone: and yet the first deviation from the faith which our apostle here specifies, and most dwells upon, is the converting of God's grace unto sin, as if the doctrine of our Saviour were not a doctrine according to godliness and all purity. No doubt the denial of Jesus Christ, whether in his person or work, is also noted; but what is chiefly insisted on is the practical abuse of gospel mercy. Preserve me from all such abuses, O God—from vile lusts, from covetousness, from insolence, whether in thought or speech, against the authorities, whether of church or state. They are probably the ecclesiastical dignities which are here referred to; but how aptly may it often be said, that in speaking evil of them we speak of what we know not; we meddle with matters too high for us! What fearfully expressive images are here made use of—clouds without water, or having the semblance and the promise of what is good, whilst utterly void thereof—carried about of winds, the sport of every incitement—trees having the leaves of profession, but all the fruits of righteousness either withering or wanting—twice dead, the death in trespasses and sins before entering the church, the sins unto death of the irrecoverable backslider after it—stars of brilliancy and conspicuousness, it may be, wandering here and there, but soon to be extinguished for ever. Save me, O God, from such a moral and spiritual catastrophe as this! Root out my sensuality, and give me thy Spirit. Let me henceforth be habitual and diligent in practising that lesson of the inner man, the truly important one which is here given, for keeping my heart in the love of God. Let me build myself up both on the securities and sanctities of the faith—looking for mercy, yet praying for holiness—fearing God, yet hoping in his mercy. Thus the exercise of faith, and the presence of its objects to the mind, keep alive the gratitude, while the most holy character of these objects waking a kindred character in us, ensures the process that by looking unto God we become like unto God. Let the terrors of the Lord, so forcibly depicted in this chapter, keep me back from the ways of destruction—let the winning love and compassion of my Saviour maintain me in constant adherence to him, so that I may abide in him continually. To thy wisdom, O God, would I refer the whole conduct of my soul. Keep me from falling, and present me faultless before thy throne. Thus shall I indeed be preserved in Christ Jesus; and while on myself there would be realised the two clauses of the Bethlehem proclamation—"peace on earth and goodwill to men"—the last clause of "Glory to God in the highest" would have its illustrious verification.—*Chalmers's Posthumous Works.*]

fitly describes various sects of mystics. Under the plea of advancing spiritual life, many of these have indulged in sensuality, and so defile the flesh; at other times this mysticism has identified itself with tenets inconsistent not with one form of civil government, but with all, and so has taught men to "despise dominion;" and further, its supporters, in forming low and gross conceptions of the celestial beings and their glories, have spoken evil of dignities. Thus has the spiritual hope of Christ's Church been degraded to the level of the sensual paradise of Mahomet.

9. Reference to Satan's former dignity withheld the archangel. (See *Dan. x. 13*, *xii. 1*; *Rev. xii. 7*.) On this contention Alford remarks, "St. Jude took the incident from primitive tradition, which tradition, slightly modified, is also given by the prophet Zechariah (*iii. 1-8*). That the incident is related as matter of fact is evident by the very form of it. That being thus related as matter of fact, it is matter of fact, is a conclusion which will or will not be made, according as we are persuaded of the authenticity of the epistle as a part of canonical Scripture, and according as we esteem that canonical Scripture itself."

11. "Cain:" following his selfish and envious nature. (See *1 John iii. 11-15*.) "Balaam:" reckless of what it costs, they rush after gain like Balaam. Either "perished by gainsaying, as Korah," or "perished in (as included in) the gainsaying of Korah"—i.e., when we read of Korah we read of these too, as perishing after the same example. The three men here mentioned seem to represent three types of godlessness—self-sufficient pride, greedy avarice, and turbulent ambition.

12. "Spots;" rather, "rocks," threatening their love-feasts with shipwreck. Read "feasting with you, pasturing themselves." "Clouds," from which rain would be expected. "Trees whose fruit withereth;" rather, "trees of the late autumn." "Twice dead:" first, as they seem in winter; and secondly, when "plucked up by the roots." So these apostates had been dead in sin before their conversion, and were now dead, having become apostates. Observe the climax—not only without leaves and fruit, but dead; not only dead, but plucked up, and cast aside.

13. See *Isa. lvii. 20*; *2 Pet. ii. 17*. "Wandering stars:" erratic comets, or meteors, blazing and passing away into darkness.

14. "It is not clear whether Jude is making a citation from a work already in the hands of his readers, or is employing a traditional prophecy not at that time committed to writing, but afterwards embodied in the apocryphal work named the Book of Enoch." "The seventh from Adam:" Enoch is called so to distinguish him from Enoch the son of Cain. (See *Gen. iv. 17*.) "Ten thousands of his saints:" literally, "in the midst of his holy myriads." These may therefore be angels or saints.

15. "To execute judgment:" rather, "to hold judgment"—i.e., to perform the office of a judge, and undertake universal, judicial administration. "Against him:" in *2 Pet. iii. 4* we have an example of this ungodly speaking against the Lord. The reference here may well include the hard speeches made against God's children, and so against God in their persons. Noah, Lot, the apostles and prophets, may furnish examples.

16. "Murmurers:" like the discontented and rebellious among the Israelites of old. (Compare *1 Cor. x. 10*.) "Complainers:" those who find fault with their lot in life. "Great swelling words:" i.e., the language of insolent pride or boasting. (Compare *2 Pet. ii. 18*.) Among such might be included those who insolently abused their Christian liberty, to gratify their uncurbed inclinations. "Having men's persons," &c.: i.e., paying court to the rich and powerful for the sake of their own interests.

17. "The words," &c.: warnings such as this are to be found in *Acts xx. 29, 30*; *2 Thess. ii. 3-12*; *1 Tim. iv. 1*; *2 Tim. iii. 1*; *2 Pet. iii. 2, 3*.

18. "Last time;" similar expressions are found in *James v. 3*; *2 Pet. iii. 3*. See also *2 Tim. iii. 1*; *1 Tim. iv. 1*; *Acts xx. 29*. The phrase is used for the times of the Christian dispensation (*Acts ii. 17*; *Heb. i. 2*; *1 Pet. i. 20*).

19. "The Spirit:" "The higher spiritual life of man's spirit in communion with the Holy Spirit" (Alford).

20. Resumption from verse 17.

23. Read "And some indeed convict when contending with you, but others save, snatching them from the fire, and others compassionate in fear, hating even," &c. "Avoiding all familiarity with them, as they would avoid touching the garment infected from the flesh of one who had died of pestilence."



AN EXPOSITION
OF THE
REVELATION OF ST. JOHN
THE DIVINE,
WITH
PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.*

It ought to be no prejudice to the credit and authority of this book that it has been rejected by men of corrupt minds, such as Cerdon and Marcion, and doubted of by men of a better character; for that has been the lot of other parts of holy writ, and of the Divine Author of the Scripture himself. The image and superscription of this book is truly sacred and Divine; the matter of it agreeable with other prophetic books, particularly Ezekiel and Daniel; the church of God has generally received it, and found good counsel and great comfort in it.

[It is a remarkable circumstance, says Mr. Horne, that the authenticity of this book was very generally, if not universally, acknowledged during the first two centuries, and yet in the third century it began to be questioned. This seems to have been occasioned by some absurd notions concerning the Millennium, which a few well-meaning but fanciful expositors grounded on this book; which notions their opponents injudiciously and presumptuously endeavoured to discredit, by denying the authority of the book itself. So little, however, has this portion of holy writ suffered from the ordeal of criticism to which it has in consequence been subjected, that (as Sir Isaac Newton has long since remarked) there is no other book of the New Testament so strongly attested, or commented upon so early, as the Apocalypse. The external evidence for the authenticity and inspiration of the Apocalypse is to be collected from the same sources as the evidence for the other books of the New Testament, namely, from the testimonies of those ancient writers who, living at a period near to its publication, appear by their quotations or allusions to have received it as a part of sacred Scripture. And this evidence is so abundant and explicit, that—we are authorised to affirm that the Apocalypse has been generally received in all ages. To borrow the eloquent sentiments of Dr. Woodhouse,—‘We have seen its rise, as of a pure fountain, from the sacred rock of the apostolical church. We have traced it through the first century of its passage, flowing from one fair field to another, identified through them all, and every where the same. As it proceeded lower, we have seen attempts to obscure its sacred origin, to arrest or divert its course, to lose it in the sands of antiquity, or bury it in the rubbish of the dark ages. We have seen these attempts repeated in our own times, and by a dexterous adversary. But it has at length arrived to us, such as it flowed forth at the beginning.’ The internal evidence we may reduce to three points. 1. The Apocalypse corresponds in doctrine and imagery with other books of Divine authority. 2. The sublimity of the ideas and imagery is another striking internal evidence of the genuineness and Divine origin of the Apocalypse. 3. The style of the Apocalypse coincides with the style of the undisputed writings of St. John. For farther evidences of the genuineness of this book, see Horne’s *Introduction*, iv. 479, where also is an account of larger works on the same subject. See also *Preliminary Essay*, and *Appendix* to Elliott’s *Horæ Apocalyptice*, vol. i.]

From the beginning the church of God has been blessed with prophecy. That glorious prediction of breaking the serpent’s head was the stay and support of the patriarchal age, and the many prophecies there were concerning the Messiah to come were the Gospel of the Old Testament. Christ himself prophesied of the destruction of Jerusalem; and about the time in which that was accomplished he entrusted the apostle John with this book of *Revelation*, to deliver it to the church as a prediction of the most important events that should happen to the end of time, for the support of the faith of his people and the direction of their hope. [As to the time when this book was written, the most probable and generally received opinion is, that John was banished into Patmos towards the end of Domitian’s reign, by virtue of his edicts for persecuting the Christians, and that he had the Revelations contained in the Apocalypse during his exile; though the book itself could not have been published until after the apostle’s release and return to Ephesus. Domitian’s death is related to have happened in September, A.D. 96. The Christian exiles were then liberated, and John was permitted to return to Ephesus. As, however, the emperor’s decease, and the permission to return, could not be known in Asia immediately, some time must intervene before the apostle could be at liberty either to write the Apocalypse at Ephesus, or to send it by messengers from Patmos. We conclude, therefore, with Turretin, Mosheim, Dr. Mill, Le Clerc, Basnage, Dr. Lardner, Bishop Tomline, Dr. Woodhouse, Neander, Elliott, and other eminent critics, in placing the Apocalypse in the year 96 or 97. It is important to bear this in mind in the perusal of the following Exposition, as the author, by giving an earlier date, has been led to apply predictions to events, such as the destruction of Jerusalem, which, if the date above assigned be correct, had previously taken place.] It is called the *Revelation*, because God therein discovers those things which could never have been sifted out by the reasonings of human understanding; those deep things of God which no man knows, and the Spirit of God, and those to whom he reveals them.

• By the Rev. W. Tong. See Preface to Vol. III.

Introductory Note.—The question of the canonical authority of the Book of Revelation is identical with the question of its authorship. The book for almost two centuries was accepted as St. John’s. The doubt then suggested has found supporters in later times, but it seems next to impossible to overlook the fact that the writer represents himself as John the Evangelist. If to the claim advanced by the writer be added the weight of historical evidence, commencing with the early witness of Papias (himself a hearer of St. John and a

friend of Polycarp), and supported since that date (A.D. 116) by the testimonies of Justin Martyr (A.D. 150), the author of the Muratorian fragment (A.D. 170), Melito of Sardis (same date), Eusebius, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and followed in the third and fourth centuries by Ephrem Syrus, Basil, Athanasius, Augustine, and Jerome, we shall not be surprised that there has been claimed “an overwhelming weight of testimony in favour of the canonical authority and authorship of this book.”

CHAPTER I.

This chapter is a general preface to the whole book, and contains. I. An inscription, declaring the original and the design of it, ver. 1, 2. II. The apostolical benediction pronounced on all those that shall pay a due regard to the contents of this book, ver. 3—8. III. A glorious vision or appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ to the apostle John, when he delivered to him this Revelation, from ver. 9 to the end of the chapter.



HE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: 2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Here we have,

First. What we may call the pedigree of this book.

1. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ. The whole Bible is so; for all revelation comes through Christ, and all centres in him; and especially in these last days God has spoken to us by his Son, and concerning his Son. Christ, as the King of his church, has been pleased thus far to let his church know by what rules and methods he will proceed in his government; and, as the Prophet of the church, he has made known to us the things that shall be hereafter.

2. It is a revelation which God gave unto Christ. Though Christ is himself God, and as such has light and life in himself, yet, as he sustains the office of Mediator between God and man, he receives his instructions from the Father. The human nature of Christ, though endowed with the greatest sagacity, judgment, and penetration, yet could not in a way of reason discover these great events, which not being produced by natural causes, but wholly depending upon the will of God, could only be the object of Divine prescience, and must come to a created mind only by revelation. Our Lord Jesus is the great trustee of Divine revelation; it is to him we owe the knowledge we have of what we are to expect from God, and what he expects from us.

3. This revelation Christ sent and signified by his angel. Observe here the admirable order of Divine revelation. God gave it to Christ, and Christ employed an angel to communicate it to the churches. The angels are God's messengers; they are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation; they are Christ's servants. Principalities and powers are subject to him; all the angels of God are obliged to worship him.

4. The angel signified it to the apostle John. As the angels are the messengers of Christ, the ministers are the messengers of the churches; what they receive from heaven they are to communicate to the churches. John was the apostle chosen for this purpose. Some think he was the only one surviving, the rest having sealed their testimony with their blood. This was to be the last book of Divine revelation, and therefore notified to the church by the last of the apostles. John was the beloved disciple; he was under the New Testament as the prophet Daniel under the Old, a man greatly beloved. He was the servant of Christ; he was an apostle, an evangelist, and a prophet; he served Christ in all the three extraordinary offices of the church. James was an apostle, but not a prophet nor evangelist; Matthew was an apostle and evangelist, but not a prophet; Luke was an evangelist, but neither a prophet nor apostle; but John was all three, and so Christ calls him in an eminent sense his servant John.

5. John was to deliver this revelation to the church, to all his servants; for the revelation was not designed only for the use of Christ's extraordinary servants, the ministers, but for all his servants, the members of the church; they have all a right to the oracles of God, and all have their concern in them.

Secondly. Here we have the subject-matter of this revelation, namely, the things that must shortly come to pass. The evangelists give us an account of the things that are past, prophecy gives us an account of things to come. These future events are shewed, and not in the clearest light in which God could have set them, but in such a light as he saw most proper, and which would best answer his wise and holy purposes. Had they been as clearly foretold in all their circumstances as God could have revealed them, the prediction might have prevented the accomplishment; but they are foretold more darkly, to beget in us a veneration for the Scripture, and to engage our attention, and excite our inquiry. And we have in this revelation a general idea of the methods of Divine providence and government in and about the church, and many good lessons may be learned hereby. These events, it is said, were such as should not only come to pass surely, but shortly; that is, they would begin to come to pass very shortly, and the whole would be accomplished in a short time; for now the last ages of the world were come.

Thirdly. Here is an attestation of the prophecy, ver. 2. It was signified to John, who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. It is observable that the historical books of the Old Testament have not always the name of the historian prefixed to them, as in the book of *Judges, Kings, Chronicles*; but in the prophetic books the name is always prefixed, as *Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c.* So in the New Testament, though John did not prefix his name to his first epistle, yet he does to this prophecy, as ready to vouch and answer for the truth of it; and he does not only give us his name but his office. He was one who bare record of the word of God in general, and of the testimony of Jesus in particular, and of all things that he saw; he was an eye-witness, and he concealed nothing that he saw. Nothing recorded in this revelation was his own invention or imagination; but all was the record of God, and the testimony of Jesus; and, as he added nothing to it, so he kept back no part of the counsels of God.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

i. 1. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ:" i.e., the revelation belonging to him, and coming from him as his gift from the Father to us. God the Father gave it to the Son, and the Son to his Church. "Shortly:" from this word many of the Præterist school argue that the prophecies of the Apocalypse must all have been fulfilled within a comparatively short period of their first delivery. But the meaning of the word is amply satisfied by the immediate commencement of the early scenes of this great prophetic drama.



IHN to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; 5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. 8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

We have here an apostolical benediction on those that should give a due regard to this Divine revelation; and this benediction is given more generally and more specially.

First. More generally, to all that either read or hear the words of the prophecy. This blessing seems to be pronounced with a design to encourage us to study this book, and not be weary of looking into it upon the account of the obscurity of many things in it; it will repay the labour of the careful and attentive reader. Observe, 1. It is a blessed privilege to enjoy the oracles of God. This was one of the principal advantages the Jews had above the Gentiles. 2. It is a blessed thing to study the Scriptures. They are well employed that search the Scriptures. 3. It is a privilege not only to read the Scriptures ourselves, but to hear them read by others, who are qualified to give us the sense of what they read, and to lead us into an understanding of them. 4. It is not sufficient to our blessedness that we read and hear the Scriptures, but we must keep the things that are written; we must keep them in our memories, in our minds, in our affections, and in practice, and we shall be blessed in the deed. 5. The nearer we come to the accomplishment of the Scriptures, the greater regard we should give unto them. The time is at hand, and we should be so much the more attentive as we see the day approaching.

Secondly. The apostolical benediction is pronounced more specially, and particularly to the seven Asiatic churches, ver. 4. These seven churches are named in ver. 11, and distinct messages sent to each of them respectively in the chapters following. The apostolical blessing is more expressly directed to these, because they were nearest to him, who was now in the isle of Patmos, and perhaps he had the peculiar care of them and superintendency over them, not excluding any of the rest of the apostles, if any of them were now living. Here observe,

1. What the blessing is which he pronounceth on all the faithful in these churches: grace and peace, holiness and comfort. Grace, that is, the goodwill of God towards us, and his good work in us; and peace, that is, the sweet evidence and assurance of this grace. There can be no true peace where there is not true grace; and where grace goes before, peace will follow.

2. From whence this blessing is to come. In whose name does the apostle bless the churches? Why, in the name of God, of the whole Trinity; for this is an act of adoration, and God only is the proper object of it; his ministers must bless the people in no name but his alone. And here, 1st. The Father is first named—God the Father; which may be taken either essentially for God as God, or personally, for the first person in the ever-blessed Trinity, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and he is described as the Jehovah, which is, and which was, and which is to come; eternal, unchangeable, the same to the Old Testament church which was, and to the New Testament church which is; and will be the same to the church triumphant which is to come. 2nd. The Holy Spirit, called the seven Spirits; not seven in number or in nature, but the infinite, perfect Spirit of God, in whom there is a diversity of gifts and operations. He is before the throne; for as God made, so he governs all things by his Spirit. 3rd. The Lord Jesus Christ. He mentions him after the Spirit, because he intended to enlarge more upon the person of Christ, as God manifested in the flesh, whom he had seen dwelling on earth before, and now saw again in a glorious form; and observe the particular account we have here of Christ, ver. 5. First. He is the faithful Witness. He was from eternity a witness to all the counsels of God, *Jno.* xi. 18, and he was in time a faithful witness to God's revealed will, who has now spoken to us by his Son, and upon his testimony we may safely depend, for he is a faithful witness, cannot be deceived, and cannot deceive us. Secondly. He is the first begotten or first-born from the dead, or the first Parent and Head of the resurrection, the only one that raised himself by his own power, and who will by the same power raise up his people from their graves to everlasting honour. For he has begotten them again to a lively hope by his resurrection from the dead. Thirdly. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth. From him they have their authority; by him their power is limited, and their wrath restrained; by him their counsels are overruled, and to him they are accountable. This is good news to the church, and it is good evidence of the Godhead of Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords. Fourthly. He is the great Friend of his church and people; one that has done great things for them, and this out of pure disinterested affection; he has loved them, and in pursuance of that everlasting love he has, 1st. Washed them from their sins in his own blood. Sins leave a stain upon the soul, a stain of guilt and of pollution; nothing can fetch out this stain but the blood of Christ; and, rather than it should not be washed out, Christ was willing to

i. 2. "And of all things that he saw:" Alford, following the best MSS., omits "and," and renders "as much as he saw."

i. 3. "He that readeth:" understood by some of the public reader.

i. 4. "Asia:" i.e., not what we call Asia Minor, but the strip of western seaboard, in extent not more than one-third of Asia Minor. (Compare 1 Pet. i. 1; Acts ii. 9.) "Him which is to come:" this affirms not merely future existence, as the expressions "which is"

shed his own blood to purchase pardon and purity for them. *2nd.* He has made them kings and priests to God and his Father. Having justified and sanctified them, he makes them kings to his Father, that is, in his Father's account, and with his approbation, and for his glory. As kings they overcome the world, mortify sin, govern their own spirit, conquer Satan, have power and prevalency with God in prayer, and shall judge the world. He hath made them priests, given them access to God, enabled them to enter into the holiest, and to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices; has given them an unction suitable to this character; and for these high honours and favours they are bound to ascribe to him dominion and glory for ever. *Fifthly.* He will be the Judge of the world; ver. 7, "Behold he cometh, and every eye shall see him." This book, the *Revelation*, begins and ends with a prediction of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. We should set ourselves to meditate frequently upon the second coming of Christ, and keep it in the eye of our faith and expectation. John speaks as if he saw that day; "Behold he cometh," as sure as if you beheld him with your eyes. "He cometh with clouds," which are his chariot and pavilion. He will come publicly, every eye shall see him,—the eye of his people, the eye of his enemies, every eye, yours and mine. He shall come to the terror of those that pierced him, and have not repented, and of all that have wounded and crucified him afresh by their apostasy from him, and to the astonishment of the pagan world. For he comes to take vengeance on those that know not God, as well as on those that obey not the Gospel of Christ. *Sixthly.* This account of Christ is ratified and confirmed by himself, ver. 8, in which our Lord Jesus justly challenges the same honour and power that is ascribed to the Father, ver. 4. He is the beginning and the end; all things are from him and for him; he is the Almighty; he is the same eternal and unchangeable One. And surely, whoever presumes to blot out one character of this name of Christ deserves to have his name blotted out of the book of life. They that honour him he will honour; but they that despise him shall be lightly esteemed.

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. 19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

We are now come to that glorious vision that the apostle had of the Lord Jesus Christ, when he came to deliver this revelation to him. Where observe, *First.* The account given of the person who was favoured with this vision. And he describes himself,

1. By his present state and condition. He was the brother and companion of these churches in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Christ. He was at this time, as the rest of true Christians were, a persecuted man, banished

and perhaps imprisoned, for his adherence to Christ. He was their brother, though an apostle. He seems to value himself upon his relation to the church, rather than his authority in it. Judas may be an apostle, but not a brother in the family of God; he was their companion. The children of God should choose communion and society with each other. He was their companion in tribulation. The persecuted servants of God do not suffer alone, the same trials are accomplished in others. He was their companion in patience; not only a sharer with them in suffering circumstances, but in suffering graces. If we have the patience of the saints, we should not grudge to meet with their trials. He was their brother and companion in the patience of the kingdom of Christ, a sufferer for Christ's cause, for asserting his kingly power over the church and the world, and for adhering to it against all that would usurp upon it. By this account he gives of his present state he acknowledges his engagements to sympathise with them, and to endeavour to give them counsel and comfort, and bespeaks their more careful attention to what he had to say to them from Christ their common Lord.

2. By the place where he was when he was favoured with this vision. He was in the isle Patmos. He does not say who banished him thither. It becomes Christians to speak sparingly and modestly of their own sufferings. Patmos is said to be an island in the Ægean Sea, one of those called Cyclades, [it is now called Palmosa, is a rocky and bare island, about eighteen miles in circumference, sixteen miles north-west from Samos, and the inhabitants amount to between four and five thousand,] and was about thirty-five miles in compass; but under this confinement it was the apostle's comfort that he did not suffer as an evil-doer, but it was for the testimony of Jesus, for bearing witness to Christ as the Emmanuel, the Saviour. This was a cause worth suffering for; and the Spirit of glory and of God rested upon this persecuted apostle.

3. The day and time in which he had this vision. It was the Lord's day; the day which Christ had separated and set apart for himself, as the eucharist is called the Lord's supper. Surely this can be no other than the Christian sabbath,—the first day of the week, to be observed in remembrance of the resurrection of Christ. Let us who call him our Lord honour him on his own day, the day which the Lord hath made, and in which we ought to rejoice.

4. The frame that his soul was in at this time. He was in the Spirit; he was not only in a rapture when he received the vision, but before he received it; he was in a serious, heavenly, spiritual frame, under the blessed, gracious influences of the Spirit of God. God usually prepares the souls of his people for uncommon manifestations of himself by the quickening, sanctifying influences of his good Spirit. Those that would enjoy communion with God on the Lord's day must endeavour to abstract their thoughts and affections from flesh and fleshly things, and be wholly taken up with things of a spiritual nature.

Secondly. The apostle gives an account of what he heard when thus in the Spirit. An alarm was given as with the sound of a trumpet, and then he heard a voice, the voice of Christ, applying to himself the character before given, the First and the Last, and commanding the apostle to commit to writing the things that were now to be revealed to him, and to send it immediately to the seven Asiatic churches, whose names are mentioned. Thus our Lord Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, gave the apostle notice of his glorious appearance as with the sound of a trumpet.

Thirdly. We have now an account of what he saw. He turned to see the voice, whose it was and whence it came, and then a wonderful scene of vision opened itself to him.

1. He saw a representation of the church under the emblem of seven golden candlesticks, as it is explained in the last verse of the chapter. The churches are compared to candlesticks, because they hold forth the light of the Gospel to advantage. The churches are not candles.—Christ only is our light, and his Gospel our lamp; but they receive their light from Christ and the Gospel, and hold it forth to others. They are golden candlesticks, for they should be precious and pure, comparable to fine gold. Not only the ministers, but the members of the churches ought to be such; their light should so shine before men as to engage others to give glory to God.

2. He saw a representation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of the golden candlesticks; for he has promised to be with his churches always to the end of the world, filling them with light, and life, and love, for he is the very animating, informing soul of the church. And here we observe,

1st. The glorious form in which Christ appeared in several particulars. *First.* He was clothed with a garment down to the foot, a princely and priestly robe, denoting righteousness and honour. *Secondly.* He was girt about with a golden girdle, the breastplate of the high priest, on which the names of his people are engraven. He was ready girt to do all the work of a Redeemer.

Thirdly. His head and hairs were white, like wool or snow. He was the Ancient of days; his hoary head was no sign of decay, but it was indeed a crown of glory. *Fourthly.* His eyes were as a flame of fire, piercing and penetrating into the very hearts and reins of men, scattering terrors among his adversaries. *Fifthly.* His feet were like unto fine burning brass, strong and stedfast, supporting his own interest, and subduing his enemies, and treading them to powder. *Sixthly.* His voice was as the sound of many waters, of many rivers falling in together. He can and will make himself heard to those that are afar off, as well as to those that are near. His Gospel is a profuent and mighty stream, fed by the upper springs of infinite wisdom and knowledge. *Seventhly.* He had in his right hand seven stars, that is, the ministers of the churches, who are under his direction, have all the light and influence from him, and are secured and preserved by him. *Eighthly.* Out of his mouth went a two-edged sword, his word, which both wounds and heals, strikes at sins on the right hand and on the left. *Ninthly.* His countenance was as the sun shining, its strength too bright and dazzling for mortal eyes to behold.

2nd. The impression this appearance of Christ made upon the apostle John, ver. 17. He fell at the feet of Christ as dead; he was overpowered with the greatness of that lustre and glory in which Christ appeared, though he had been so familiar with him before. How well is it for us that God speaks to us by men like ourselves, whose terrors shall not make us afraid, for none can see the face of God and live!

3rd. The condescending goodness of the Lord Jesus to his disciple, ver. 17. He laid his hand upon him, he raised him up. He did not plead against him with his great power, but he put strength into him, he spoke kind words to him.

First. Words of comfort and encouragement: "Fear not." He commanded away the slavish fears of his disciple. *Secondly.* Words of instruction; telling him particularly who he was that thus appeared to him. And here he acquaints him, *1st.* With his Divine nature: "the First and the Last." *2nd.* With his former sufferings: "I was dead." The very same that his disciples saw upon the cross dying for the sins of men. *3rd.* With his resurrection and life: "I live and am alive for evermore."—have conquered death, and opened the grave, and am partaker of an endless life. *4th.* With his office and authority: "I have the keys of hell and of death," a sovereign dominion in and over the invisible world, opening and none can shut, shutting so as that none can open; opening the gates of death when he pleases, and the gates of the eternal world, of happiness or misery, as the Judge of all, from whose sentence there lies no appeal. *5th.* With his will and pleasure that John should write both the things he had seen, and the things that are, and that should be hereafter. *6th.* With the meaning of the seven stars,—

and "which was" had asserted the past and present existence, but strikes the key-note of the book. "For what is the key-note to this whole book? Surely it is 'I come quickly.' 'The world seems to have all things its own way, to kill my servants, but I come quickly.' With this announcement the book begins (chap. i. 7), with this it ends (chap. xxi. 7, 12, 20); and this is a constantly recurring note through it all (chaps. ii. 5, 16, iii. 11, vi. 17, xi. 18, xiv. 7, xvi. 15, xviii. 20). It is Christ's word of comfort, or, where

they need it, of warning to his friends, of terror to his foes. We may say, indeed, that in some sort 'he which is to come' is a proper name of our Lord (Matt. xi. 3; Heb. x. 37; John i. 15, 27). Compare Mal. iii. 1; Hab. ii. 3" (Trench).

i. 5. "Him that loved us:" the old MSS. have the present tense, "who loveth us." "Washed us," some MSS. read "loosed us," but the parallel passage (chap. vii. 14) seems to favour the retention of the word "washed us," &c.

that they are the ministers of the churches; and of the seven candlesticks,—that they are the seven churches, to whom Christ would now send by him particular and proper messages.

[This is a glorious chapter, and one that I have ever valued for the strength and clearness of its attestations to the divinity of Christ. But let me first remark on the decisive announcement here given to the authorship of this prophecy, and also to the vast and urgent importance of the prophecy itself. Let me read it, O God, and O do thou enable me to apply it aright, and this under the solemn impression that the time is at hand. Give me, give me, O Lord, to keep and well to observe, both discerningly and earnestly, the things which are written therein. And now let me here note the concatenation of evidence which there is for the Godhead of our Saviour. One who is distinct from Jesus Christ, even God the Father, is spoken of as he which is, and which was, and which is to come. Again, one, in ver. 8, even the Lord, announces himself as one which is, and which was, and which is to come—thus identifying himself, in the attribute of eternity at least, with him who is read of in the fourth verse. Again, in ver. 11, one announces himself by a voice which is heard behind him as Alpha and Omega, one of the clauses of description given of him who puts forth the utterance of ver. 8. And to do away the last and the least remainders of uncertainty, we have both the sight and hearing of the apostle, fixing it down that Jesus Christ is indeed the personage of ver. 8, 11, and 18; for he says of himself what is said of him in ver. 11, that he is the First and the Last; and further says, "I am he that liveth, and was dead"—thus completing the proof that Jesus is indeed the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending—the Almighty, ver. 8; and so the mighty God, *Isa. ix. 6*, as well as one in eternity with the everlasting Father.—*Chalmers's Posthumous Works*, vol. iv.]

CHAPTER II.

The apostle John having in the foregoing chapter written the things which he had seen, now proceeds to write the things that are according to the command of God, *ch. i. 19*; that is, the present state of the seven churches of Asia, with which he had a particular acquaintance, and for which he had a tender concern. He was directed to write to every one of them according to their present state and circumstances, and to inscribe every letter to the angel of that church, to the minister or rather ministry of that church, called angels because they are the messengers of God to mankind. In this chapter we have, I. The message sent to Ephesus, ver. 1—7; II. To Smyrna, ver. 8—11; III. To Pergamos, ver. 12—17; IV. To Thyatira, ver. 18 to the end.



AND to the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them

which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh



EPHESUS.—VER. 1.

will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

We have here,

First, The inscription. Where observe,

[1. That Christ ordered the seven epistles to be sent to the seven churches, *ch. i. 11*. Therefore, though directed to the pastors, the churches themselves are to be considered as concerned and included in them. The admonition added at the close of each epistle to the churches intimates that the things written therein are to be applied to all other churches in every place and age.—*Guyse*.] 2. To whom the first of these epistles is directed: to the church of Ephesus, a famous church planted by the apostle Paul, *Acts xix.*, and after that watered and governed by St. John, who had his residence very much there. We can hardly think that Timothy was the angel or sole pastor and bishop of this church at this time,—that he who was of a very excellent spirit, and naturally cared for the good state of the souls of the people, should become so remiss as to deserve the rebukes given to the ministry of this church.

[Ephesus was an ancient and celebrated city. Its temple, dedicated to the great goddess Diana, (*Acts xix.*) was one of the seven wonders of the world; and its theatre, now in ruins, (see wood engravings, *1 Cor. xv. 32; Eph. ii.*), could have conveniently seated between twenty and thirty thousand persons. Contrasting the present and former state of Ephesus, there is sufficient room for astonishment at the mighty change. The plough has passed over the site of the city; and we saw the green corn growing in all directions, amidst the forsaken ruins. There is at present only one individual who bears the name of Christ!—and where, in the whole region, do we discover any semblance of primitive Christianity? The country once favoured with the presence of St. Paul, of Timothy, and St. John, is now in the situation of those lands of which it is said, "Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people." He, then, "that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Observe,

3. From whom this epistle to Ephesus was sent. And here we have one of those titles that were given to Christ in his appearance to John in the chapter foregoing; namely, "He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," *ch. i. 13, 16*. This title consists of two parts. 1st. He that holds the stars in his right hand. The ministers of Christ are under his special care and protection. It is the honour of God that he knows the number of the stars, calls them by their names, binds the sweet influences of Pleiades, and looses the bands of Orion; and it is the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ that the ministers of the Gospel, who are greater blessings to the church than the stars are to the world, are in his hand; he directs all their motions, he disposes of them into their several orbs, he fills them with light and influence, he supports them, or else they would soon be falling stars; they are instruments in his hand, and all the good they do is done by his hand with them. 2nd. He walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks. This speaks his relation to his churches, as the other his relation to his ministers. Christ is in an intimate manner present and conversant with his churches; he knows and observes their state, he takes pleasure in them as a man does to walk in his garden. Though Christ be in heaven, he walks in the midst of his churches on earth, observing what is amiss in them, and what it is they want. And this is a great encouragement to those that have the care of the churches, that the Lord Jesus has graven them upon the palms of his hands.

Secondly, The contents of the epistle, in which, as in most of those that follow, we have,

1. The commendation Christ gave this church, ministers and members, which he always brings in, by declaring that he knows their works, and therefore both his commendation and reprehension are to be strictly regarded; for he does not in either speak at a venture; he knows what he says. Now the church of Ephesus is commended, 1st. For their diligence in duty; ver. 2, "I know thy works, and thy labour." This may more immediately relate to the ministry of this church, which had been laborious and diligent. Dignity calls for duty. Those that are stars in Christ had need to be always in motion, dispensing light to all about them. "For my name's sake thou hast laboured and hast not fainted," ver. 3. Christ keeps an account of every day's work, and every hour's work, his servants do for him, and their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

[Christ knows the thoughts, the secret springs of action, and the whole moral character of men. The knowledge thus asserted in the most solemn message to each of the churches is clearly shewn to include the most perfect acquaintance with the sincerity or hypocrisy of individuals, and with all the complication of human feelings and actions. This is real omniscience, and is again asserted in the strongest and plainest terms, ver. 23; and we find in ver. 6, and elsewhere, the Lord Jesus purifying, correcting, and rewarding the professors of religion, in pursuance of his perfect knowledge of their hearts and characters. The very nature of the acts specified implies a complete dominion over the arrangements of Providence—the present life, and its fullest powers in reference to the future state.—*J. P. Smith*.]

2nd. For their patience in suffering; ver. 2, "Thy labour and thy patience." It is not enough that we be diligent, but we must be patient, and endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ. Ministers must have and exercise great patience, and no Christian can be without it. There must be bearing patience to endure the injuries of men and the rebukes of Providence, and there must be waiting patience, that, when they have done the will of God, they may receive the promise, "Thou hast borne, and hast patience," ver. 3. We shall meet with such difficulties in our way and work as require patience to go on and finish well. 3rd. For their zeal against what was evil; ver. 2, "Thou canst not bear them that are evil." Where observe, it consists very well with Christian patience not to dispense with sin, much less allow it. Though we must shew all meekness to men, yet we must shew a just zeal against their sins. This their zeal was the more to be commended because it was according to knowledge, a discreet zeal upon a previous trial made of the pretences, practices, and tenets of evil men. "Thou hast tried them that say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." True zeal proceeds with discretion; none should be cast off till they be tried. Some were risen up in this church that pretended to be not ordinary ministers, but apostles; their pretensions had been examined, and found to be vain and false. Those that impartially search after truth may come to the knowledge of it.

2. The rebuke given to this church; ver. 4, "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee." Those that have much good in them may have something much amiss in them, and our Lord Jesus, as an impartial Master and Judge, takes notice of both; though he first observes what is good, and is most ready to mention that, yet he also observes what is amiss, and will faithfully reprove them for it. The sin that Christ charged this church with is, their decay and declension in holy love and zeal. "Thou hast left thy first love;" not left and forsaken the object of it, but lost the fervent degree of it that at first appeared. Observe, 1st. The first affections of men towards Christ, and holiness, and heaven, are usually lively and warm. God remembered the love of Israel's espousals, when she would follow him whithersoever he went. 2nd. These lively affections will abate and cool, if great care be not taken, and diligence

ing "glowing brass." To this the words which follow give force and plausibility.

i. 18. "Of hell and of death;" rather, "of death and of hades;" death being as it were the king, and hades, or the grave, his realm.

ii. 1. "Of Ephesus;" rather, "in Ephesus." The chief city of Ionia—"the light of Asia," "the chief of Asia." Smyrna and Pergamos had disputed with Ephesus the primacy of Asia, but in

i. 6. "Hath made us kings:" rather, "a kingdom, even priests unto God." The royal priesthood of the redeemed springs from that of the Redeemer, who is the King-Priest, the Melchizedek. (Compare Heb. vi. 20, vii. 21; *Psa. cx. 4; Zech. vi. 13; 1 Pet. ii. 9*.)

i. 15. "Fine brass:" the word is *chalcobitanus*. "The precise meaning," says Alford, "is unknown." Trench, however, adopts an explanation proposed by Bochart, which regards the word as a hybrid formation, the combination of a Greek word and a Hebrew, signify-

used, to preserve them in constant exercise. 3rd. That Christ is grieved and displeased with his people when he sees them grow remiss and cold towards him, and he will one way or other make them sensible that he does not take it well from them.

3. The advice and counsel given them from Christ; ver. 5. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent," &c. 1st. Those that have lost their first love must remember from whence they are fallen; they must compare their present with their former state, and consider how much better it was with them then than now; how much peace, strength, purity and pleasure they have lost by leaving their first love; how much more comfortably they could lie down and sleep at night; how much more cheerfully they could awake in the morning; how much better they could bear afflictions, and how much more becomingly they could enjoy the favours of Providence; how much easier the thoughts of death were to them, and how much stronger their desires and hopes of heaven. 2nd. They must repent, they must be inwardly grieved and ashamed for their sinful declining; they must blame themselves, and shame themselves for it, and humbly confess it in the sight of God, and judge and condemn themselves for it. 3rd. They must return and do their first works; they must, as it were, begin again, go back, step by step, till they come to the place where they took the first false step; they must endeavour to revive and recover their first zeal, tenderness, and seriousness, and must pray as earnestly and watch as diligently as they did when they first set out in the ways of God. Now this good advice is forced and urged. *First*. By a severe threatening if it should be neglected; "I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of its place." If the presence of Christ's grace and Spirit be slighted we may expect the presence of his displeasure; he will come in a way of judgment, and that suddenly and surprisingly upon impenitent churches and sinners; he will unchurch them, take away his Gospel, his ministers, and his ordinances from them, and what will the churches, or the angels of the churches, do when the Gospel is removed? *Secondly*. By an encouraging mention that is made of what was yet good among them; ver. 6. "This thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." Though thou hast declined in thy love to what is good, yet thou retainest thy hatred to what is evil, especially to what is grossly so. The Nicolaitanes were a loose sect, that sheltered themselves under the name of Christianity; they held hateful doctrines, and they were guilty of hateful deeds, hateful to Christ and to all true Christians; and it is mentioned to the praise of the church of Ephesus that they had a just zeal and abhorrence of those wicked doctrines and practices. An indifference of spirit between truth and error, good and evil, may be called charity and meekness, but it is not pleasing unto Christ. Our Saviour subjoins this kind commendation to his severe threatening, to make the advice more effectual.

Thirdly. We have the conclusion of this epistle, in which, as in those that follow, we have,

1. A call to attention; "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Observe, 1st. What is written in the Scriptures is spoken by the Spirit of God. 2nd. What is said to one church concerns all the churches, in every place and age. 3rd. We can never employ our faculty of hearing better than in hearkening to the word of God, and we deserve to lose it if we do not employ it to this purpose. And they that will not hear the call of God now will wish at length they had never had a capacity of hearing any thing at all.

2. Promise of great mercy to those that overcome. The Christian life is a warfare against sin, Satan, the world, and the flesh. It is not enough that we engage in this warfare, but we must pursue it to the end; we must never yield to our spiritual enemies, but fight the good fight till we gain the victory, as all persevering Christians shall do; and the warfare and victory shall have a glorious triumph and reward. That which is here promised is to "eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." They shall have that perfection of holiness, and that confirmation therein, that Adam should have had. If he had gone well through the course of his trial, then he should have eaten of the tree of life that was in the midst of paradise, and that would have been the sacrament of confirmation to him in his holy and happy state. So all that persevere in their Christian trial and warfare shall derive from Christ, as the tree of life, perfection and confirmation in holiness and happiness in the paradise of God; not in the earthly paradise, but the heavenly, *ch. xxii. 1, 2.*

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; 9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. 10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

We now proceed to the second epistle, sent to another of the Asiatic churches, where, as before, observe,

First. The preface or inscription in both parts.

1. The superscription, telling us to whom it was more expressly and immediately directed: to the angel of the church of Smyrna, a place well known at this day by our merchants, a city of great trade and wealth, perhaps the only city of all the seven that is still known by the same name, but now no longer a Christian church, but overrun with Mahometanism. The pastor of the church in Smyrna is supposed to have been Polycarp, who was burnt alive there, A.D. 167, and whom the exhortation in *ch. ii. 10* would be peculiarly calculated to support and encourage. We visited the stadium where Polycarp was martyred for the truth, A.D. 167. It stands on the face of a hill, the sides of a concave valley forming a natural amphitheatre for the accommodation of spectators. Near it is a range of broken arches, which formed part of the vaults where the wild beasts were kept. From one of these the people urged the Ariarch to let loose a lion against Polycarp. In the midst of this stadium

the aged man of God was fixed to a stake, and the fire kindled around him, but the flame leaving him unconsumed, he was dispatched by the sword of the Roman confector. This very stadium was the spot where his soul ascended up to heaven, "receiving his portion," according to his own prayer, "in the number of martyrs in the cup of Christ." After serving his Lord, and directing his flock, by his steps as well as by his voice, during eighty and six years, he was found faithful unto death, and received the crown of life. The epistle to the church of Smyrna seemed doubly interesting to us now; a voice seemed still to echo round the spot, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer!" A grave close by, over which a tall cypress grows, is said to be the grave of Polycarp.—*Bonar and M'Cheyne's Narrative.* For wood engraving see end of book 1.

2. The subscription, containing another of the glorious titles of our Lord Jesus, the first and the last, he that was dead and is alive, taken out of *ch. i. 17, 18.* 1st. Jesus Christ is the first and the last. It is but a little scantling of time that is allowed to us in this world, but our Redeemer is the first and the last; he is the first, for by him all things were made, and he was before all things, with God, and was God himself. He is the last, for all things are made for him, and he will be the Judge of all. This surely is the title of God from everlasting to everlasting, and it is the title of one that is an unchangeable Mediator between God and man, Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He was the first, for by him the foundation of the church was laid in the patriarchal state. And he is the last, for by him the top-stone will be brought forth and laid in the end of time. 2nd. "He was dead, and is alive." He was dead, and died for our sins; he is alive, for he rose again for our justification, and he ever lives to make intercession for us. He was dead, and by dying purchased salvation for us; he is alive, and by his life applies this salvation to us. And if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled by his death, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. His death we commemorate every sacrament day, his resurrection and life every sabbath day.

Secondly. The subject-matter of this epistle to Smyrna, where, after the common declaration of Christ's omniscience and that perfect cognizance he has of all the works of men, and especially of his churches, he takes notice,

1. Of the improvement they had made in their spiritual state. This comes in, in a short parenthesis, but is very emphatical; "But thou art rich," ver. 9. Poor in temporals, but rich in spirituals; poor in spirit, and yet rich in grace; their spiritual riches are set off by their outward poverty. Many that are rich in temporals are poor in spirituals. Thus it was with the church of Laodicea. Some that are poor outwardly are inwardly rich,—rich in faith, in good works, rich in privileges, rich in bonds and deeds of gift, rich in hope, rich in reversion. Spiritual riches are usually the reward of great diligence; the diligent hand maketh rich. Where there is spiritual plenty, outward poverty may be better borne; and when God's people are impoverished in temporals for the sake of Christ and a good conscience, he uses to make all up to them in spiritual riches, which are much more satisfying and enduring.

2. Of their sufferings; "I know thy tribulation and thy poverty." The persecution they underwent, even to the spoiling of their goods. They that will be faithful to Christ must expect to go through many tribulations; but Jesus Christ takes particular notice of all their troubles; in all their afflictions he is afflicted, and he will recompense tribulation to those that trouble them, but to them that are troubled rest with himself.

3. He knows the wickedness and the falsehood of their enemies; "I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, but are not;" and that is, 1st. Of those that pretend to be the only peculiar covenant people of God, as the Jews boasted themselves to be, even after God had rejected them. Or, 2nd. Of those that would be setting up the Jewish rites and ceremonies, that were now not only antiquated but abrogated. These may say they only are the church of God in the world, when indeed "they are the synagogue of Satan." Observe, *First*. That as Christ has a church in the world, the spiritual Israel of God, so the devil has his synagogue. Those assemblies that are set up in opposition to the truths of the Gospel, and that promote and propagate damnable errors; those that are set up in opposition to the purity and spirituality of gospel worship, and promote and propagate the vain inventions of men, and rites and ceremonies which never entered into the thoughts of God; and those assemblies which are set up to revile and persecute the true worship and worshippers of God,—these are all synagogues of Satan; he presides over them; he works in them, his interests are served by them, and he receives a horrid homage and honour from them. *Secondly*. For the synagogues of Satan to give themselves out to be the church or Israel of God is no less than blasphemy. God is greatly dishonoured when his name is made use of to promote and patronise the interests of Satan; and he has a high resentment of this blasphemy, and will take a just revenge on those that persist in it.

4. He foreknows the future trials of his people, and forewarns them of them, and forewarns them against them. 1st. He forewarns them of future trials; ver. 10. "The devil shall cast some of you into prison, and you shall have tribulation." The people of God must look for a series and succession of troubles in this world, and their troubles usually rise higher; they had been impoverished by their tribulations before, now they must be imprisoned. Observe, It is the devil that stirs up his instruments, wicked men, to persecute the people of God; tyrants and persecutors are the devil's tools, though they gratify their own sinful malignity, and know not that they are actuated by a diabolical malice. 2nd. Christ forewarns them against these approaching troubles. *First*. By his counsel,—"Fear none of these things." This is not only a word of command but of efficacy; not only forbidding slavish fear, but subduing it, and furnishing the soul with strength and courage. *Secondly*. By showing them how their sufferings would be alleviated and limited. 1st. They should not be universal; it would be some of them, not all, that should be cast into prison,—those that were best able to bear it, and might expect to be visited and comforted by the rest. 2nd. It was not to be perpetual, but for a set time, and a short time—ten days. It should not be everlasting tribulation, the time should be shortened for the elect's sake. 3rd. It should be to try them, not to destroy them, that their faith, and patience, and courage might be proved and improved, and be found to honour and glory. *Thirdly*. By proposing and promising a glorious reward to their fidelity; ver. 10. "Be thou faithful to death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Observe, 1st. The sureness of the reward; "I will give thee." He hath said it that is able to do it, and he has undertaken that he will do it. They shall have the reward from his own hand, and none of their enemies shall be able to wrest it out of his hand, or to pull it from their heads. 2nd. The suitableness of it. (1.) A crown to reward their poverty, and their fidelity, and their conflict. (2.) A crown of life to reward those that are faithful even unto death, are faithful till they die, and that part with life itself in fidelity to Christ; that life so worn out in his service, or laid down in his cause, shall be rewarded with another and a much better life, that shall be eternal. 3rd. The conclusion of this message, and that as before, (1.) With a call to universal attention, that all men, all the world, should hear what passes between Christ and his churches, how he commends them, how he comforts them, how he reproves their failures, how he rewards their fidelity. It concerns all the inhabitants of the world to observe God's dealings with his own people; all the world may learn instruction and wisdom thereby. (2.) With a gracious promise to the conquering Christian; ver. 11, "He that overcometh shall not

the time of St. John the wealth and prosperity of Ephesus, its celebrated Temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world, had set it far in advance of its competitors. St. Paul had laboured there for three years (Acts xx. 31); he had ordained Timothy to be bishop there. St. John made it the scene of his labours during the closing years of his life. Much had been given to Ephesus, much would be required.

ii. 5. "Remove thy candlestick;" it is mentioned by Trench that

one who lately visited the ruins of Ephesus found in the vicinity only three Christians, and these sunken in such ignorance and apathy as scarcely to have heard the names of St. Paul or St. John.

ii. 6. "Nicolaitanes;" see Note on verses 14, 15.

ii. 7. "He that hath an ear;" these words occur in all the epistles, but with this difference, that in the former three they occur before, in the latter four after the final promise. Trench, who notices this difference in the position of the words, thinks it not

be hurt of the second death." Observe, [1.] That there is not only a first, but second death, a death after the body is dead. [2.] This second death is unspeakably worse than the first death, both in the dying pangs and agonies of it, which are the agonies of the soul, without any mixture of support; and in the duration it is eternal death, dying the death, to die and to be always dying; this is hurtful indeed, it is fatally hurtful to all that fall under it. [3.] From this hurtful, this destructive death Christ will save all his faithful servants. The second death shall have no power over those that are partakers of the first resurrection. The first death shall not hurt them, and the second death shall have no power over them.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even where Satan's seat is*: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. 16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.



PERGAMOS.—VER. 12.

Here also we are to consider,

First. The inscription of this message.

1. Who it was sent to: to the angel of the church of Pergamos. Whether this was a city raised up out of the ruins of old Troy, a *Troy novant*, as our London was once called, or some other city of the same name, is neither certain nor material. It was a place where Christ had called and constituted a gospel church, by the preaching of the Gospel, and the grace of his Spirit, making the word effectual. [Pergamos was a town of the Great Mysia, the capital of a kingdom of the same name. Even now, under the name of Bergano, it is a place of considerable importance, containing a population estimated at 14,000, of whom about 3,000 are Greeks, 300 Armenians, and the rest Turks. It was the most warlike of all the cities, being the capital of the kingdom of Attalus, and hence perhaps the warlike strain in which it is addressed by him who had the two-edged sword.]

2. Who it was that sent this message to Pergamos: the same Jesus who here describes himself as one that hath the sharp sword with two edges; *ch. i. 18*, "Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." Some have observed that in the several titles of Christ, which are prefixed to the several epistles, there is something suited to the state of those churches, as in that to Ephesus. What could be more proper to awaken and recover a drowsy and declining church than to hear Christ speaking as one that held the stars in his hand, and walked in the midst of the golden candlesticks? &c.

The church of Pergamos was infested with men of corrupt minds, that did what they could to corrupt both the faith and manners of the church; and Christ being resolved to fight against them by the sword of his word, takes

the title of him that hath the sharp sword with two edges. 1st. The word of God is a sword; it is a weapon both offensive and defensive; it is in the hand of God able to slay both sin and sinners. 2nd. It is a sharp sword; no heart so hard but it is able to wound it, no knot so closely tied but it is able to cut it; it can divide asunder between the soul and the spirit, that is, between the soul and those sinful habits that by custom are become another soul, or seem to be essential to it. 3rd. It is a sword with two edges; it turns and cuts every way. There is the edge of the law against the transgressors of that dispensation, and the edge of the Gospel against the despisers of that dispensation. There is an edge to make a wound, and an edge to open a festered wound in order to its healing. There is no escaping the edge of this sword; if ye turn aside to the right hand, it has an edge on that side; if on the left hand, you fall upon the edge of the sword on that side; it turns every way.

Secondly. From the inscription we proceed to the contents of this epistle in which the method is much the same that is observed in the rest. Here,

1. Christ takes notice of the trials and difficulties this church encountered with; *ver. 13*, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest," &c. The works of God's servants are best known when their circumstances under which they did those works are duly considered. Now that circumstance which added very much lustre to the good works of this church was the circumstance of the place where this church was planted, a place where Satan's seat was. As our great Lord takes notice of all the advantages and opportunities we have for duty by the places where we dwell, so he takes notice of all the temptations and discouragements we meet with from the places where we dwell, and makes gracious allowances for them. This people dwelt where Satan's seat was, where he kept his court; his circuit is throughout the world, his seat is in some places that are infamous for wickedness, error, and cruelty. Some think the Roman governor in this city was a most violent enemy to the Christians, and the seat of persecution is Satan's seat.

2. He commends their steadfastness; *ver. 13*, "Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith." These two expressions are much of the same sense; it may be the former may signify the effect, and the latter the cause or means. 1st. "Thou holdest fast my name;" thou art not ashamed of thy relation to me, but accountest it thine honour that my name is named on thee; that, as the wife bears the name of the husband, so thou art called by my name. This thou holdest fast as thine honour and privilege. 2nd. That which has made thee thus faithful is the grace of faith. Thou hast not denied the great doctrines of the Gospel, nor departed from the Christian faith, and by that means thou hast been kept faithful; and indeed our faith will have a great influence upon our faithfulness. Men that deny the faith of Christ may boast very much of their sincerity and faithfulness to God and conscience; but it has been seldom known that those who let go the true faith retain their fidelity; usually on that rock on which men make shipwreck of their faith they make shipwreck of a good conscience too. And here our blessed Lord aggrandises the fidelity of this church, from the circumstance of the times as well as of the place where they lived. They had been steadfast even in those days wherein Antipas, his faithful martyr, was slain among them. Who this person was, and whether there be any thing mysterious in his name, we have no certain account. He was a faithful disciple of Christ; he suffered martyrdom for it, and sealed his faith and fidelity with his blood, in the place where Satan dwelt; and though the rest of the believers there knew this and saw it, yet they were not discouraged nor drawn away from their steadfastness; this is mentioned as an addition to their honour.

3. He reproves them for their sinful failures; *ver. 14*, "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam," &c., and "them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which things I hate." There were some that taught it was lawful to eat things sacrificed to idols, and that simple fornication was no sin. They by an impure worship drew men into impure practices, as Balaam did the Israelites. Observe. 1st. The filthiness of the spirit and the filthiness of the flesh often go together; corrupt doctrines and a corrupt worship often lead to a corrupt conversation. 2nd. That it is very lawful to fix the names of the leaders of any heresy upon those that follow them; it is the shortest way of telling who we mean. 3rd. That to continue in communion with persons of corrupt principles and practices, or displeasing to God, draws a guilt and blemish upon the whole society; they become partakers of other men's sins: though the church, as such, has no power to punish the persons of men, either for heresy or immorality with corporal penalties, yet they have power to exclude them from their holy communion; and if they do not so, Christ the Head and Lawgiver of the church will be displeased with them.

4. He calls them to repentance; *ver. 16*, "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly," &c. Observe here, 1st. Repentance is the duty of saints as well as sinners; it is a gospel duty. 2nd. It is the duty of churches and communities as well as particular persons; they that sin together should repent together. 3rd. It is the duty of Christian societies to repent of other men's sins, as far as they have been accessory to them, though but so much as by connivance. 4th. When God comes to punish the corrupt members of a church, he rebukes that church itself for allowing such to continue in its communion, and some drops of the storm fall upon the whole society. 5th. That no sword cuts so deep, nor inflicts so mortal a wound, as the sword of Christ's mouth. Let but the threatenings of the word be set home upon the conscience of a sinner, and he will soon be a terror to himself; and let these threatenings be executed, and the sinner is utterly cut off. The word of God will take hold of sinners sooner or later, either for their conviction or confusion.

Thirdly. We have the conclusion of this epistle, where, after the usual demand of universal attention, there is the promise of great favour to those that overcome; "They shall eat of the hidden manna, and have the new name and the white stone, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it," *ver. 17*.

1. The hidden manna, the influences and comforts of the Spirit of Christ in communion with him, coming down from heaven into the soul from time to time for his support, to let him taste something how saints and angels live in heaven; this is hidden from the rest of the world. A stranger intermeddles not with this joy, and it is laid up in Christ, the ark of the covenant, in the holy of holies.

2. The white stone with a new name engraven upon it. This white stone is absolution from the guilt of sin, alluding to the ancient custom of giving a white stone to those acquitted on trial, and a black stone to those condemned. The new name is the name of adoption; adopted persons took the name of the family into which they were adopted. None can read the evidences of a man's adoption but himself; he cannot always read it; but if he persevere he shall have both the evidence of sonship and the inheritance.

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass; 19 I know thy works, and charity,

without meaning. "Tree of life:" the promise corresponds with the character of the fidelity displayed: "Those who have abstained from idol meats, from the sinful dainties of the flesh and world, shall in return 'eat of the tree of life.'"

ii. 8. "Smyrna:" the next city in natural order to Ephesus. It was situated a little to the north of Ephesus, and was one of the fairest and most favourably-placed cities of Ionia. Its name has become familiar in ecclesiastical history through the heroism and

sufferings of Polycarp, who was probably the angel to whom this epistle was addressed.

ii. 12. "Pergamos:" "Famous for its immense library, the splendid temples of Zeus, Athené, and Apollo, but chiefly for the worship of Æsculapius, the remains of whose magnificent temple outside the city still remain" (French).

ii. 14, 15. "The doctrine of Balaam . . . Nicolaitanes:" Trench identifies those who hold the doctrine of Balaam with those that held

and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. 20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. 22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. 24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. 25 But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come. 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star. 29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.



THYATIRA.—ver. 18

The form of each epistle is very much the same, and in this, as the rest, we have to consider the inscription, contents, and conclusion.

First. The inscription, telling us, 1. To whom it is directed. "To the angel of the church of Thyatira," a city of the proconsular Asia, bordering upon Mysia on the north and Lydia on the south, a town of trade, from whence came the woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, who being at Philippi, in Macedonia, probably about the business of her calling, heard Paul preach there, and God opened her heart that she attended to things that were spoken, and believed, and was baptized, and entertained Paul and Silas there. Whether it was by her means that the Gospel was brought into her own city, Thyatira, is not certain, but that it was there, and successful to the forming of a gospel church, this epistle assures us. (It is remarkable, in connexion with the passage in *Acts*, referred to in the exposition, that among the ruins of Thyatira there is an inscription extant which was originally made by the corporation of dyers, in honour of Antonius Claudius Alphareus, in the reign of Caracalla. Even at the present time the best scarlet dye in all Asia is produced and sent to Smyrna and other places for sale. Ak-hissar, the modern Thyatira, is situated on a plain, and is embosomed in cypresses and poplars. The buildings are in general mean; but the khan, in which we are at present residing, is by far the best which I have yet seen. The Greeks are said to occupy three hundred houses and the Armenians thirty. Each of them have a church, though they do not retain the living faith of the primitive Christians.)

2. By whom it was sent. By the Son of God, who is here described as having eyes like a flame of fire, and feet like as fine brass. His general title is here the Son of God; that is, the eternal and only begotten Son of God, which denotes that he has the same nature with the Father, but with a distinct and subordinate manner of subsistence. The description we have here of him is in two characters:—1st. That his eyes are like unto a flame of fire, signifying his piercing, penetrating, perfect knowledge, a thorough insight into all persons and all things—one who searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children

of men, ver. 23, and will make all the churches to know he does so. 2nd. That his feet are like fine brass, that the outgoings of his providence are steady, awful, and all pure and holy. As he judges with perfect wisdom, so he acts with perfect strength and steadiness.

Secondly. The contents or subject-matter of this epistle, which, as the rest, includes,

1. The honourable character and commendation Christ gives of this church, ministry, and people; and this given by one who was no stranger to them, but well acquainted with them, and with the principles from which they acted. Now in this church Christ makes honourable mention, 1st. Of their charity. Either more general, a disposition to do good to all men; or more special, to the household of faith. There is no religion where there is no charity. 2nd. Their service, their ministrations. This respects chiefly the officers of the church who had laboured in the word and doctrine. 3rd. Their faith, which was the grace that actuated all the rest, both their charity and their service. 4th. Their patience; for those that are most charitable to others, most diligent in their places, and most faithful, must yet expect to meet with that which will exercise their patience. 5th. Their growing fruitfulness. Their last works were better than the first. This is an excellent character; when others had left their first love, and lost their first zeal, these were growing wiser and better. It should be the ambition and earnest desire of all Christians that their last works may be their best works, that they may be better and better every day, and best at last.

2. A faithful reproof for what was amiss. And this is not so directly charged upon the church itself as upon some wicked seducers that were among them. The church's fault was that she connived too much at them.

1st. These wicked seducers are compared to Jezebel, and called by her name. Jezebel was a persecutor of the prophets of the Lord, and a great patroness of idolaters and false prophets. The sin of these seducers, which was then attempted to draw the servants of God into fornication, was to offer sacrifices to idols. They called themselves prophets, and so would claim a superior authority and regard to the ministers of that church. Two things aggravated the sin of these seducers, who, being one in their spirit and design, are spoken of as one person. First. They made use of the name of God to oppose the truth of his doctrine and worship; this very much aggravated their sin. Secondly. They abused the patience of God to harden themselves in their wickedness. God gave them space for repentance, but they repented not. Observe, 1st. Repentance is necessary, to prevent the sinner's ruin. 2nd. Repentance requires time, a course of time, and time convenient; it is a great work, and a work of time. 3rd. Where God gives space for repentance, he expects fruits meet for repentance. 4th. Where the space for repentance is lost the sinner perishes with a double destruction.

2nd. Now why should the wickedness of this Jezebel be charged upon the church of Thyatira? Why, because that church suffered her to seduce the people of that city. But how could they help it? They had not, as a church, civil power to banish or imprison her; but they had ministerial power to censure and to excommunicate her; and it is probable that neglecting to use the power they had made them sharers in her sin.

3. The punishment of this seducer, this Jezebel ver. 22, 23, in which is couched a prediction of the fall of Babylon. 1st. "I will cast her into a bed," into a bed of pain, not of pleasure, into a bed of flames; and they that have sinned with her shall suffer with her, but this may yet be prevented by their repentance. 2nd. "I will kill her children with death;" that is, the second death, which does the work effectually, and leaves no hope of future life; no resurrection for those that are killed by the second death, but only to shame and everlasting contempt.

4. The design of Christ in the destruction of these wicked seducers, and that was the instruction of others, especially of his churches: "All the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and the hearts; and I will give to every one of you according to your works." God is known by the judgments that he executeth; and by this revenge taken upon seducers he would make known, 1st. His infallible knowledge of the hearts of men, of their principles, designs, frame, and temper, their formality, their indifference, their secret inclinations to symbolise with idolaters. 2nd. His impartial justice, in giving every one according to his work, that the name of Christians should be no protection, their churches should be no sanctuaries for sin and sinners.

5. The encouragement given to those that kept themselves pure and undefiled; ver. 24, "But to you I say, and to the rest," &c. Observe, 1st. What these seducers called their doctrines: depths, profound mysteries, amusing the people, and endeavouring to persuade them that they had a deeper insight into religion than their own ministers had attained to. 2nd. What Christ called them: depths of Satan, satanical delusions and devices, diabolical mysteries; for there is a mystery of iniquity as well as the great mystery of godliness. It is a dangerous thing to despise the mystery of God, and it is as dangerous to receive the mysteries of Satan. 3rd. How tender Christ is of his faithful servants; ver. 25, "I will lay upon you no other burden; but that which you have already, hold fast till I come." I will not overburden your faith with any new mysteries, nor your consciences with any new laws. I only require your attention to what you have received; "Hold that fast till I come," and I desire no more. Christ is coming to put an end to all the temptations of his people; and if they hold fast faith and a good conscience till he comes, all the difficulty and danger is over.

Thirdly. We now come to the conclusion of this message, ver. 26—29; where you have,

1. The promise of an ample reward to the persevering, victorious believer, in two parts: 1st. Very great power and dominion over the rest of the world. Power over the nations, which may refer either to the time when the empire should turn Christian, and the world be under the government of the Christian emperor, as in Constantine's time; or to the other world, when believers shall sit down with Christ on his throne of judgment, and join with him in trying, and condemning, and consigning over to punishment the enemies of Christ and the church. The upright shall have dominion in the morning. 2nd. Knowledge and wisdom, suitable to such power and dominion. I will give him the morning star. Christ is the morning star; he brings day with him into the soul, the light of grace and of glory; and he will give his people that perfection of light and wisdom that is requisite to that state of dignity and dominion that they shall have in the morning of the resurrection.

2. This epistle ends with the usual demand of attention; "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." In the foregoing epistles this demand of attention comes before the concluding promise; but in this and all that follow it comes after, and tells us that we should all attend to the promises as well as to the precepts that Christ delivers to the churches.

CHAPTER III.

Here we have three more of the epistles of Christ to the churches. I. To Sardis, ver. 1—4. II. To Philadelphia, ver. 7—13. III. To Laodicea, ver. 14 to the end.

the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. The name Nicolas is but a Grecising of Balaam, both signifying "destroyer of the people." The Nicolaitanes, then, or Balaamites, are no sect that in apostolic times bore one of these names or the other, but those who, after the pattern of Balaam's sin, sought to introduce a false freedom—a freedom of the flesh—into the Church of God.

ii. 18. "Thyatira:" a city of no first-rate dignity, and a Macedonian colony. (Compare *Acts* xvi. 14.)

ii. 20. "That woman Jezebel:" Alford renders, "thy wife Jezebel." "A comparison of this verse with verses 14—16 leaves no doubt," says Trench, "that the Jezebelites, and Balaamites, and Nicolaitanes, with secondary differences no doubt, were yet substantially the same."

iii. 1. "Sardis:" now Sart, situated on the river Pactolus. "A name to live:" some earlier commentators conjectured that this expression contained an allusion to the name of the angel of the



AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things

which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. 6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.



SARDIS.—VER. 4.

Here, First. The preface, shewing, 1. To whom this letter is directed, "To the angel of the church of Sardis," an ancient city of Lydia, on the banks of the mountain Tmolus, said to have been the chief city of Asia the Less, and the first city in that part of the world that was converted by the preaching of St. John; and some say the first that revolted from Christianity, and one of the first that was laid in its ruins, in which it still lies, without any church or ministry.

[This morning I have visited Sardis, once the splendid capital of Lydia, the famous residence of Croesus, the resort of Persian monarchs, and one of the most ancient and magnificent cities of the world. Now, how fallen! The ruins are, with one exception, more entirely gone to decay than those of most of the ancient cities which we have visited. No Christians reside on the spot; two Greeks only work in a mill here, and a few wretched Turkish huts are scattered among the ruins. We saw the churches of St. John and the Virgin, the theatre, and the building styled the palace of Croesus; but the most striking object at Sardis is the temple of Cybele. I was filled with wonder and awe at beholding the two stupendous columns of this edifice, which are still remaining; they are silent but impressive witnesses of the power and splendour of antiquity. I read, amidst the ruins, the epistle, *Rev. iii. 1-6*, addressed to the church once fixed here. What an impressive warning to Christian churches! A name to live, while dead!]

2. By whom this message was sent. The Lord Jesus, who here assumes the character of him that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, taken out of *ch. i. 4*, where the seven Spirits are said to be before the throne. 1st. He hath the seven Spirits, that is, the Holy Spirit, with his various powers, graces, and operations; for he is personally one, though efficaciously various, and may be said here to be seven, which is the number of the churches, and of the angels of the churches—to shew that to every minister and to every church there is a dispensation and measure of the Spirit given for them to profit withal,—a stock of spiritual influence for that minister and church to improve both for enlargement and continuance, which measure of the Spirit is not ordinarily withdrawn from them till they forfeit it by misimprovement. Churches have their spiritual stock and fund, as well as particular believers; and this epistle, being sent unto a languishing ministry and church, therefore they are very fitly put in mind that Christ has the seven Spirits, the Spirit without mea-

sure, and in perfection, to whom they may apply themselves for the reviving of his work among them. 2nd. He hath the seven stars, the angels of the churches. They are disposed of by him, and accountable to him, which should make them faithful and zealous. He hath ministers to employ, and spiritual influences to communicate to his ministers for the good of his church: the Holy Spirit usually works by the ministry, and the ministry will be of no efficacy without the Spirit; and the same Divine hand holds them both.

Secondly. The body of this epistle; and there is this observable in it, that, whereas in the other epistles Christ begins with commending what was good in the churches, and then proceeds to tell them what was amiss,—in this, and in the epistle to Laodicea, he begins,

1. With a reproof, and a very severe one: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead." Hypocrisy, and a lamentable decay in religion, are the sins charged upon this church by one that knew her well, and all her works. 1st. This church had gained a great reputation; it had a name, and a very honourable one, for a flourishing church,—a name for vital, lively religion, for purity of doctrine, unity among themselves, uniformity in worship, decency, and order. We read not of any unhappy divisions among themselves; every thing appeared well as to what falls under the observation of men. 2nd. This church was not really what it was reputed to be. They had a name to live, but they were dead; there was a form of godliness but not the power; a name to live, but not a principle of life. If there was not a total privation of life, yet there was a great deadness in their souls, and in their services; a great deadness in the spirits of their ministers, and a great deadness in their ministrations, in their praying, in their preaching, in their converse; and a great deadness in the people in hearing, in prayer, and in conversation. What little life was yet left among them was in a manner expiring, ready to die.

2. Our Lord proceeds to give this degenerate church the best advice; "Be watchful, and strengthen the things," &c., ver. 2. 1st. He advises them to be upon their watch; the cause of their sinful deadness and declension was, that they had let down their watch. Whenever we are off our watch we lose ground, and therefore must return to our watchfulness against sin, and Satan, and whatever is destructive to the life and power of godliness. 2nd. To strengthen the things that remain, and that are ready to die. Some understand this of persons; there were some few that had retained their integrity, but they were in danger of declining with the rest. It is a difficult thing to keep up to the life and power of godliness ourselves, when we see a universal deadness and declension prevailing round about us; or it may be understood of practices, as it follows, "I have not found thy works perfect before God," not filled up; there is something wanting in them; there is the shell, but not the kernel; there is the carcass, but not the soul—the shadow, but not the substance. The inward thing is wanting; thy works are hollow and empty. Prayers are not filled up with holy desires, alms-deeds are not filled up with true charity, sabbaths not filled up with suitable devotion of soul to God; there are not inward affections suitable to outward acts and expressions. Now when the spirit is wanting the form cannot long subsist. 3rd. To recollect themselves, and remember how they had received and heard, ver. 3. Not only to remember what they had received and heard, what messages they had received from God, what tokens of his mercy and favour towards them, what sermons they had heard—but how they had received and heard, what impressions the mercies of God had made upon their souls at first, what affections they felt working under the word and ordinances; the love of their espousals, the kindness of their youth; how welcome the Gospel and the grace of God were to them when they first received them;—where is the blessedness they then spoke of? 4th. To hold fast what they had received, that they might not lose all, and repent sincerely that they had lost so much of the life of religion, and had run the risk of losing all.

3. Christ enforces his counsel with a dreadful threatening in case it should be despised; ver. 3, "I will come unto thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know the hour." Observe, 1st. When Christ leaves a people as to his gracious presence, he comes to them in judgment, and his judicial presence will be very dreadful to those that have sinned away his gracious presence. 2nd. His judicial approach to a dead, declining people will be surprising. Their deadness will keep them in security; and as it procures an angry visit from Christ to them, it will prevent their discerning it, and preparing for it. 3rd. Such a visit from Christ will be to their loss; he will come as a thief to strip them of their remaining enjoyments and mercies,—not by fraud, but in justice and righteousness, taking the forfeiture they have made of all to him.

4. Our blessed Lord does not leave this sinful people without some comfort and encouragement; in the midst of judgment he remembers mercy, ver. 4. And here, 1st. He makes honourable mention of the faithful remnant in Sardis, though but small; "Thou hast a few names in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments," had not given in to the prevailing corruptions and pollution of the day and place in which they lived. God takes notice of the smallest number of those who abide with him, and the fewer they are the more precious in his sight. 2nd. He makes a very gracious promise to them, "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy;" in the stola, the white robes of justification, and adoption, and comfort, or in the white robes of honour and glory in the other world. They shall walk with Christ in the pleasant walks of the heavenly paradise, and what delightful converse will there be between Christ and them when they thus walk together! And this is an honour proper and suitable to their integrity, and which their fidelity has prepared them for, and which it is no way unbecoming Christ to confer upon them; though it is not a legal but a Gospel worthiness that is ascribed to them; not merit, but meekness; they that walk with Christ in the clean garments of real practical holiness here, and keep themselves unspotted from the world, shall walk with Christ in the white robes of honour and glory in the other world. This is a suitable reward.

Thirdly. We now come to the conclusion of this epistle, in which, as before, we have,

1. A great reward promised to the conquering Christian, ver. 5; and it is very much the same with what has been already mentioned; "He that overcometh shall be clothed in white raiment." The purity of grace shall be rewarded with the perfect purity of glory. Holiness, when perfected, shall be its own reward; glory is the perfection of grace, differing not in kind, but in degree. Now to this is added another promise, very suitable to the case; "I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Observe, 1st. Christ has his book of life, a register and roll of all that shall inherit eternal life. First. The book of eternal election. Secondly. The book of remembrance of all those that have lived to God, and have kept up the life and power of godliness in evil times. 2nd. Christ will not blot the names of his chosen and faithful ones out of this book of life. Men may be enrolled in the registers of the church as baptized as making a profession, as having a name to live, and that name may come to be blotted out of the roll, when it appears it was but a name, a name to live without spiritual life. Such oftentimes lose the very name before they die; they are left of God to blot out their own names by their gross and open wickedness; but the names of those that overcome shall never be blotted out. 3rd. Christ

church of Sardis, whose name may have been a compound word signifying "life-bearing" or "living," such as *Zosimos*. But this seems a far-fetched conjecture, especially as the Greeks used the word "name" as equivalent to fame or reputation, just as we do in English.

iii. 2 "Be watchful;" or, as Trench suggests, "become watchful." "The things which remain;" this, though the Greek expression is in the neuter, is taken by many commentators as equivalent

to "those which remain"—i.e., the rest who are not yet dead, though close upon it. "We gather from these words that, with few exceptions, the entire Sardian church shared in this deadness of its chief pastor; while he, in seeking to revive their life, to chafe their dead limbs, would best revive and recover the warmth of his own. Their present abject and fallen condition is excellently expressed by the use of the neuter" (Trench). "Perfect before God;" the word rendered "perfect" here is not the same as that

will produce this book of life, and confess the names of the faithful that stand there, before God and all the angels. He will do this as their Judge, when the books shall be opened; he will do this as their Captain and Head, leading them with him triumphantly to heaven, presenting them to the Father; "Behold me, and the children that thou hast given me!" How great will this honour and reward be!

2. The demand of universal attention finishes the message. Every word from God deserves attention from men; that which may seem more particularly directed to one body of men has something in it instructive to all.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; 8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. 9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.



PHILADELPHIA.—ver. 7.

We are now come to the sixth letter, sent to one of the Asiatic churches. Where observe,

First. The inscription. Shewing, 1. For whom it was more immediately designed; "The angel of the church of Philadelphia." This also was a city in the lesser Asia, seated upon the borders of Mysia and Lydia, and had its name from that brotherly love for which it was eminent.

[The town is situated on a rising ground, beneath the snowy mount Tmolus. The houses are embosomed in trees, which have just assumed their fresh green foliage, and give a beautiful effect to the scene. I counted six minarets. We entered through a ruined wall—massy, but by no means of great antiquity. The streets are excessively ill paved and dirty. It is an interesting circumstance to find Christianity more flourishing here than in many other parts of the Turkish empire. There is still a numerous Christian population, occupying three hundred houses. Divine service is performed every Sunday, in five churches; and there are twenty of a smaller description, in which, once a year, the Liturgy is read. But though the candlestick remains, its light is obscured: the lamp still exists, but where is its oil? Where is now the word of our Lord's patience?—It is conveyed in sounds unintelligible to those who hear. When the very epistle to their own church is read, they understand it not! The word of legendary superstition and of multifarious will-worship is now familiar to their ears. And where is the bright exhibition of Christian virtues?—Unhappily, the character of Christians in these countries will scarcely bear comparison with that of Mahometans themselves! In a word, Philadelphia has had her share in that utter apostasy from true and practical Christianity which has been the bane of the East.]

which is commonly translated "perfect"—e.g., in Phil. iii. 15, or in Heb. v. 14 (where we have it translated "full age")—but it is a word which rather refers to the fulfilling of the works and duties appointed by God; these the angel of Sardis had not fulfilled.

iii. 7. "Philadelphia," situated on the banks of the river Cogamus, was built by Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamos, from whom it derived its name. No city in Asia Minor suffered so much from earthquakes. Strabo alludes to these, and says it was almost

We can hardly suppose that this name was given to it after it received the Christian religion, and that it was so called from that Christian affection that all believers have, and should have, one for another, as the children of one Father, and the brethren of Christ; but rather that it was its ancient name, on the account of that love and kindness which the citizens had, and shewed to each other as a civil fraternity, which was an excellent spirit; and when sanctified by the grace of the Gospel would render them an excellent church, as indeed they were; for here is no one fault found with this church, and yet doubtless there were faults in it of common infirmity; but love covers such faults.

2. By whom this letter was signed, even by the same Jesus, who is alone the universal Head of all the churches. And here observe by what title he chooses to represent himself to this church, namely, "He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David," &c. You have his personal character; "He that is true," and "he that is true," holy in his nature, and therefore cannot but be true to his word, for he hath spoken in his holiness. And you have also his political character; "He hath the key of David, he openeth, and no man shutteth," &c.; the key of the house of David, the key of government and authority in and over the church. Where, 1st. Observe the acts of his government. First. He opens. He opens a door of opportunity to his churches; he opens a door of utterance to his ministers; he opens a door of entrance, opens the heart; he opens a door of admission into the visible church, laying down the terms of communion, and he opens the door of admission into the church triumphant, according to the terms of salvation fixed by him. Secondly. He shuts the door. When he pleases he shuts the door of opportunity and the door of utterance, and leaves obstinate sinners shut up in the hardness of their hearts; and shuts the door of church fellowship against unbelievers and profane persons; and he shuts the door of heaven against the foolish virgins that have slept away their day of grace, and against the workers of iniquity, how vain and confident soever they may be. 2nd. The way and manner in which he performs these acts, and that is absolute sovereignty, independent upon the will of men, and irresistible by the power of men; "He openeth, and no man shutteth, he shutteth, and no man openeth;" he works to will and to do, and when he works none can let. These were proper characters for him, when speaking to a church that had endeavoured to be conformed to Christ in holiness and truth, and that had enjoyed a wide door of liberty and opportunity under his care and government.

Secondly. The subject-matter of this epistle. Where, 1. Christ puts them in mind of what he had done for them; ver. 8, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." I have set it open, and kept it open, though there be many adversaries. Learn here, 1st. Christ is to be acknowledged as the author of all the liberty and opportunity his churches enjoy. 2nd. He takes notice, and keeps account, how long he has preserved their spiritual liberties and privileges for them. 3rd. That wicked men envy the people of God their door of liberty, and would be glad to shut it against them. 4th. That if we do not provoke Christ to shut this door against us, men cannot do it.

2. This church is commended; ver. 8, "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." In this there seems to be couched a gentle reproof; "Thou hast a little strength," a little grace, which, though it be not proportionate to the wide door of opportunity which I have opened to thee, yet is true grace, and has kept thee faithful. True grace, though weak, has the Divine approbation; but though Christ accepts a little strength, yet believers should not rest satisfied in a little, but should strive to grow in grace, to be strong in faith, giving glory to God. True grace, though weak, will do more than the greatest gifts, or highest degrees of common grace, for it will enable the Christian to keep the word of Christ, and not to deny his name. Obedience, fidelity, and a free confession of the name of Christ, are the fruits of true grace, and are pleasing to Christ as such.

3. Here is a promise of the great favours God would bestow on this church, ver. 9, 10. This favour consists in two things. 1st. Christ would make this church's enemies subject to her. First. Those enemies are described to be such as said they were Jews, but lied in saying so; pretended to be the only and peculiar people of God, but were really the synagogue of Satan. Assemblies that worship God in spirit and in truth are the Israel of God, assemblies that either worship false gods or the true God in a false manner are the synagogues of Satan, though they may profess to be the only people of God—their profession is a lie. Secondly. Their subjection to the church is described. They shall worship at thy feet, not pay a religious and Divine honour to the church itself, or to the ministry of it, but shall be convinced that they have been in the wrong; that this church is in the right, and is beloved by Christ; and they shall desire to be taken into communion with her, and that they may worship the same God, after the same manner. And how shall this great change be wrought? By the power of God upon the hearts of his enemies, and by signal discoveries of his peculiar favour to his church. They shall know that I have loved thee. Observe, 1st. The greatest honour and happiness any church can enjoy is the peculiar love and favour of Christ. 2nd. Christ can discover this his favour to his people in such a manner as that their very enemies shall see it, and be forced to acknowledge it. 3rd. That this will, by the grace of Christ, soften the hearts of their enemies, and make them desirous to be admitted into communion with them. 2nd. Another instance of favour that Christ promises to this church is persevering grace in the most trying times, ver. 10, and this as the reward of their past fidelity; "To him that hath shall be given." Here observe, First. The Gospel of Christ is the word of his patience; it is the fruit of the patience of God to a sinful world; it sets before men the exemplary patience of Christ in all his sufferings for men; it calls those that receive it to the exercise of patience in conformity to Christ. Secondly. This Gospel should be carefully kept by all that enjoy it; they must keep up to the faith, and practice, and worship prescribed in the Gospel. Thirdly. After a day of patience we must expect an hour of temptation; a day of gospel peace and liberty is a day of God's patience, and it is seldom so well improved as it should be, and therefore often followed by an hour of trial and temptation. Fourthly. Sometimes the trial is more general and universal; it comes upon all the world, and when it is so general it is usually the shorter. Fifthly. They that keep the Gospel in a time of peace shall be kept by Christ in an hour of temptation. By keeping the Gospel they are prepared for the trial, and the same Divine grace that has made them fruitful in times of peace will make them faithful in times of persecution.

4. Christ calls the church to that duty which he before promised he would enable her to do, and that is to persevere, to hold fast that which she had. 1st. The duty itself. Hold fast that which thou hast; that faith, that truth, that strength of grace, that zeal, that love to the brethren; thou hast been possessed of this excellent treasure, hold it fast. 2nd. The motives taken from the speedy appearance of Christ; "Behold, I come quickly." See I am just a coming to relieve them under the trial, and to reward their fidelity, and to punish those that fall away. They shall lose that crown that they once seemed to have a right to, and that they hoped for, and pleased themselves with the thoughts of. The persevering Christian shall win the prize from backsliding professors that once stood fair for it.

depopulated in consequence. In the great earthquake in the reign of Tiberius it was nearly destroyed. "He that is holy, he that is true;" two out of three of the oldest MSS. change the order. Alford renders "the true one, the holy one." "Key of David," &c.: the allusion to the prophecy concerning Eliakim (Isa. xxii. 15–23; see especially verse 22) is too obvious to be overlooked.

iii. 14. "Laodicea:" midway between Philadelphia and Colosse. Its earliest name was Dospolis, then Rhoads. It was rebuilt and

Thirdly. The conclusion of this epistle, ver. 12, 1., where, 1. After his usual manner our Saviour promises a glorious reward to the victorious believer in two things. 1st. He shall be a monumental pillar in the temple of God; not a pillar to support the temple; heaven needs no such props, but a monument of the free and powerful grace of God, a monument that shall never be defaced or removed, as many stately pillars erected in honour to the Roman emperors and generals are. 2nd. On this monumental pillar there shall be an honourable inscription, as in those cases is usual. *First.* The name of God, in whose cause he engaged, whom he served, and for whom he suffered in this warfare, and the name of the city of God, the church of God, the new Jerusalem, which came down from heaven. On this pillar shall be recorded all the services the believer did to the church of God, how he asserted her rights, enlarged her borders, maintained her purity and honour; this will be a greater name than Asiaticus or Africanus, a soldier under God, in the wars of the church. And then another part of the inscription is, *Secondly.* The new name of Christ, the Mediator, the Redeemer, the Captain of our salvation; by this it will appear under whose banner this conquering believer was listed, under whose conduct he acted, by whose example he was encouraged, and under whose influence he fought the good fight, and came off victorious.

2. The epistle is closed up with the demand of attention; "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," how Christ loves and values his faithful people, how he commends, and how he will crown their fidelity.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.



LAODICEA.—ver. 14.

We are now come to the last and worst of all the seven Asiatic churches, the reverse of the church of Philadelphia; for, as there was nothing reprov'd in that, here is nothing commended in this; and yet this was one of the seven golden candlesticks; for a corrupt church may be still a church here, as before.

First. The inscription, to whom and from whom.

1. To whom: to the angel of the church of Laodicea. This was a once famous city near the river Lycus, had a wall of vast compass, and three marble theatres, and, like Rome, was built on seven hills. It seems the apostle Paul was very instrumental in planting the Gospel in this city, and from hence he wrote a letter, which he mentions in the epistle to the *Colossians*, the last chapter, and sends salutations to them, as being not above twenty miles distant from Colosse. In this city was held a council in the fourth century, but

adorned by Antiochus II., king of Syria, who called it Laodicea, after his wife Laodice, by whom he was afterwards poisoned. Its commerce was considerable, its trade consisting chiefly of wools grown in the neighbourhood, which were valued for their colour and texture. During the Mithridatic war it suffered much, and in the great earthquake it was much injured. "Angel:" it has been conjectured by some that this was the Archippus to whom St. Paul sent the admonition in Col. iv. 17. The conjecture receives

it has been long since demolished, and lies in its ruins to this day—an awful monument of the wrath of the Lamb.

[The first object which attracts attention at Laodicea is the great number of sarcophagi. In these, I reflected, the material part of many Laodicean Christians has returned, "earth to earth—ashes to ashes—dust to dust;" their spirits have long since given account of the manner in which they availed themselves of the faithful admonitions of the Apocalypse. The city of Laodicea was seated on a hill of moderate height, but of considerable extent. Its ruins attest that it was large, populous, and splendid. There are still to be seen an amphitheatre, a theatre, an aqueduct, and many other buildings. But its present condition is in striking conformity with the rebuke and threatening of God. Not a single Christian resides at Laodicea! No Turk even has a fixed residence on this forsaken spot. Infidelity itself must confess that the menace of the Scriptures has been executed. It now stands neglected of God and deserted of men; its glory a ruin, its name a reproach. (See *Researches in Greece*, by Rev. John Hartley, whence this account of the seven Apocalyptic churches (which he visited in 1826) has been principally taken.) Besides these seven churches we find in Scripture mention made of Hierapolis, now Pambock Kaladi, without a single Christian inhabitant; and Colosse, now Konas, where a band of about thirty Greek Christians are found. In Antioch of Pisidia, now Isbarta, are several Greek churches. Iconium is well known under the name of Konieh, and is a flourishing city; but Derbe, the birthplace of Gaius and Timothy, and Lystra, where Paul was stoned, have not yet been described by any traveller.]

2. From whom this message was sent. Here our Lord Jesus styles himself "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." 1st. "The Amen," one that is steady and unchangeable in all his purposes and promises, which are all yea, and all amen. 2nd. "The faithful and true witness," whose testimony of God to men ought to be received and fully believed, and whose testimony of men to God will be fully believed and regarded, and will be a swift but true witness against all indifferent, lukewarm professors. 3rd. "The beginning of the creation of God," either of the first creation, and so he is the beginning, that is, the First Cause, the Creator, and the Governor of it; or of the second creation, the church; and so he is the Head of that body, the first-born from the dead, as it is in *ch. i. 5*, from whence these titles are taken. Christ having raised up himself by his own Divine power, as the Head of a new world, raises up dead souls to be a living temple and church to himself.

Secondly. The subject-matter; in which observe, 1. The heavy charge drawn up against this church, ministers, and people, by one that knew them better than they knew themselves; ver. 15, "Thou art neither cold nor hot," but worse than either; "I would thou wert cold or hot." Lukewarmness, or indifference in religion, is the worst temper in the world. If religion be a real thing, it is the most excellent thing, and therefore we should be in good earnest in it; if it be not a real thing, it is the vilest imposture, and we should be earnest against it. If religion be worth any thing it is worth every thing—an indifference here is inexcusable; "Why halt ye between two opinions? If God be God, follow him; if Baal be God, follow him." Here is no room for neutrality. An open enemy shall have fairer quarter than a perfidious neuter, and there is more hope of a heathen than of such. Christ expects that men should declare themselves in earnest either for him or against him.

2. A severe punishment threatened; "I will spue thee out of my mouth." As lukewarm water turns the stomach, and provokes to a vomit, lukewarm professors turn the heart of Christ against them; he is sick of them, and cannot long bear them; they may call their lukewarmness charity, meekness, moderation, and a largeness of soul; it is nauseous to Christ, and makes those so that allow themselves in it. They shall be rejected, and finally rejected; for far be it from the holy Jesus to return to that which has been thus rejected.

3. We have one cause of this indifference and inconsistency in religion assigned, and that is self-conceit and self-delusion; they thought they were very well already, and therefore they were very indifferent whether they grew better or no; "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods," &c., ver. 17. Here observe what a difference there was between the thoughts they had of themselves and the thoughts that Christ had of them. 1st. The high thoughts they had of themselves; "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;" rich, and growing richer, and increased to that degree as to be above all want, or possibility of wanting. Perhaps they were well provided for as to their bodies, and that made them overlook the necessities of their souls; or they thought themselves well furnished in their souls; they had learning, and they took it for religion; they had gifts, and they took them for grace; they had wit, and they took it for true wisdom; they had ordinances, and they took up with them instead of the God of ordinances. How careful should we be not to put the cheat upon our own souls? Doubtless there are many in hell that once thought themselves to be in the way to heaven. Let us daily beg of God that we may not be left to flatter and deceive ourselves in the concerns of our souls. 2nd. The mean thoughts that Christ had of them; and he was not mistaken. He knew, though they knew not, that they were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; their state was wretched in itself, and such as called for pity and compassion from others; though they were proud of themselves, they were pitied by all that knew their case. For, *First.* They were poor, really poor, when they said and thought they were rich; they had no provision for their souls to live upon; their souls were starving in the midst of their abundance; they were vastly in debt to the justice of God, and had nothing to pay off the least part of the debt. *Secondly.* They were blind; they could not see their state, nor their way, nor their danger; they could not see into themselves; they could not look before them; they were blind, and yet they thought they saw; the very light that was in them was darkness, and then how great must that darkness be! They could not see Christ, though evidently set forth, and crucified, before their eyes; they could not see God by faith, though always present in them; they could not see death, though it was just before them; they could not look into eternity, though they stood upon the very brink of it continually. *Thirdly.* They were naked, without clothing, and without house and harbour for their souls; they were without clothing, had neither the garment of justification nor of sanctification; their nakedness, both of guilt and pollution, had no covering; they lay always exposed to sin and shame; their righteousnesses were but filthy rags; they were rags, and would not cover them—filthy rags, and would defile them; and they were naked, without house or harbour, for they were without God, and he has been the dwelling-place of his people in all ages; in him alone the soul of man can find rest and safety, and all suitable accommodations. The riches of the body will not enrich the soul; the sight of the body will not enlighten the soul; the most convenient house for the body will not afford rest or safety to the soul; the soul is a different thing from the body, and must have accommodation suitable to its nature, or else in the midst of bodily prosperity it will be wretched and miserable.

4. We have good counsel given by Christ to this naughty people, and that is, that they drop their vain and false opinion they had of themselves, and endeavour to that really which they would seem to be; "I counsel thee to buy of

support from the fact that Archippus is named in the apostolical constitutions as the first bishop of Laodicea.

iii. 17. "Knowest not that?" &c. Both Alford and Trench adopt a more forcible rendering: "knowest not that thou art the wretched one and the miserable one ('the pitiable one,' so Alford), and poor and blind," &c.

iv. 1. "A door was opened," &c.: Alford renders, "Behold a door set open in heaven, and the former voice which I heard," &c. "It

me," &c., ver. 18. Observe, 1st. That our Lord Jesus continues to give good counsel to those that have cast his counsels behind their backs. 2nd. The condition of sinners is never desperate while they enjoy the gracious calls and counsels of Christ. 3rd. That our blessed Lord, the Counsellor, always gives the best advice, and that which is most suitable to the sinner's case; as here, *First*. These people were poor. Christ counsels them to buy of him gold tried in the fire, that they might be rich; he lets them know where they might have true riches, and how they might have them—where they might have them, from himself; he sends them not to the streams of Pactolus, nor to the mines of Potosia, but invites them to himself, who is the Pearl of price. And how must they have this true gold from him? They must buy it. That seems to be unsaying all again. How can they that are poor buy gold? Why, as they may buy of Christ wine and milk, that is, without money and without price, *Isa. lv. 1*. Something, indeed, must be parted with, but it is nothing of a valuable consideration, it is only to make room for receiving true riches. Part with sin and self-sufficiency, and come to Christ with a sense of your poverty and emptiness, that you may be filled with his hidden treasures. *Secondly*. These people were naked. Christ tells them where they might have clothing, and such as would cover the shame of their nakedness. This they must receive from Christ; and they must only put off their filthy rags that they might put on the white raiment that he had purchased and provided for them—his own imputed righteousness for justification, and the garments of holiness and sanctification. *Thirdly*. They were blind, and he counsels them to buy of him eye-salve, that they might see; to give up their own wisdom and reason, which is but blindness in the things of God, and resign themselves to his word and Spirit; and their eyes should be opened to see their way and their end, their duty and their true interest; a new and glorious scene would then open itself to their souls; a new world, furnished with the most beautiful and excellent objects, and this light would be marvellous to them that were but just now delivered from the powers of darkness. This is the wise and good counsel Christ gives to careless souls, and, if they follow it, he will judge himself bound in honour to make it effectual.

5. Here is added great and gracious encouragement to this sinful people to take the admonition and advice well that Christ had given them, ver. 19, 20. He tells them, 1st. It was given them in true and tender affection; "Whom I love, I rebuke and chasten." You may think I have given you hard words and severe reproofs; it is all out of love to your souls. I would have them openly rebuked and corrected, your sinful lukewarmness and vain confidence; if I had not been a lover of your souls, had I hated you, I would have let you alone to go on in sin till it had been your ruin. Sinners ought to take the rebukes of God's word and rod as tokens of his goodwill to their souls, and should accordingly repent in good earnest, and turn to him that smites them: better are the frowns and wounds of a friend than the flattering smiles of an enemy. 2nd. That if they would comply with his admonitions, he was ready to make them good to their souls; "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," &c., ver. 20. Here observe, *First*. That Christ is graciously pleased by his word and Spirit to come to the door of the heart of sinners; he draws near to them in a way of mercy, ready to make them a kind visit. *Secondly*. He finds this door shut against him; the heart of man is by nature shut up against Christ by ignorance, unbelief, sinful prejudices. *Thirdly*. When he finds the heart shut, he does not immediately withdraw, but he waits to be gracious, even till his head be filled with the dew. *Fourthly*. He uses all proper means to awaken sinners, and to cause them to open to him; he calls by his word, he knocks by the impulses of his Spirit upon their consciences. *Fifthly*. They that open to him shall enjoy his presence to their great comfort and advantage; he will sup with them, he will accept of what is good in them, he will eat his pleasant fruit, and he will bring the best part of the entertainment with him. If what he finds would make but a poor feast, what he brings will make up the deficiency; he will give fresh supplies of graces and comforts, and thereby stir up fresh actings of faith, and love, and delight; and in all this Christ and his repenting people will enjoy pleasant communion with each other. Alas! what do careless, obstinate sinners lose by refusing to open the door of the heart to Christ!

Thirdly. We now come to the conclusion of this epistle, and here, as before, 1. The promise made to the overcoming believer. It is here implied, 1st. That though this church seemed to be wholly overrun and overcome with lukewarmness and self-confidence, yet it was possible that by the reproofs and counsels of Christ they might be inspired with fresh zeal and vigour, and might come off conquerors in their spiritual warfare. 2nd. That if they did so, all former faults should be forgiven, and they should have a great reward. And what is that reward? "They shall sit down with me on my throne, as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne," ver. 21. Here it is intimated, *First*. That, Christ himself had met with his temptations and conflicts. *Secondly*. That he overcame them all, and was more than a conqueror. *Thirdly*. That, as the reward of his conflict and victory, he is set down with God the Father on his throne, possessed of that glory which he had with the Father from eternity, but which he was pleased very much to conceal on earth; leaving it, as it were, in the hands of the Father, as a pledge that he would fulfil the work of a Saviour before he reassumed that manifestative glory, and having done so, then he does *pignus repositum*,—demands the pledge, to appear in his Divine glory equal to the Father. *Fourthly*. That those that are conformed to Christ in his trials and victories shall be conformed to him in his glory; they shall sit down with him on his throne, on his throne of judgment, at the end of the world, on his throne of glory to all eternity, shining in his beams by virtue of their union with him, and relation to him, as the mystical body of which he is the Head.

2. All is closed up with the general demand of attention, ver. 22, putting all to whom these epistles shall come in mind that what is contained in them is not of private interpretation, not intended only for the instruction, and reproof, and correction of those particular churches, but of all the churches of Christ, in all ages and parts of the world; and as there will be a resemblance in all succeeding churches to these, both in their graces and sins, so they may expect that God will deal with them as he dealt with these, which are patterns to all ages what faithful and fruitful churches may expect to receive from God, and what those that are unfaithful may expect to suffer from his hand; yea, that God's dealings with his churches may afford useful instruction to the rest of the world, to put them upon considering, "if judgment begin at the house of God, what shall the end of them be that do not obey the Gospel of Christ?" 1 *Pet. iv. 17*. And thus end the messages of Christ to the Asiatic churches, the epistolary part of this book. We now come to the prophetic part.

CHAPTER IV.

In this chapter the prophetic scene opens; and, as the epistolary part opened with a vision of Christ, *ch. i.*, so this part is introduced with a glorious appearance of the great God, whose throne is in heaven, compassed about with the heavenly host. This discovery was made to John, and in this chapter he, 1. Records the heavenly sights he saw, ver. 1—7. And then, 2. The heavenly songs he heard, ver. 8 to the end.



AFTER this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. 2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. 4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. 5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunders and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. 6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

We have here an account of a second vision with which the apostle John was favoured. After this,—that is, not only after I had seen the vision of Christ walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, but after I had taken his messages from his mouth, and written and sent them to the several churches according to his command,—after this I had another vision. Those that will improve the discoveries they have had of God already are prepared thereby for more, and may expect them. Observe,

First. The preparation made for the apostle's having this vision.

1. "A door was opened in heaven." Whence we learn, 1st. That whatever is transacted on earth is first designed and settled in heaven; there is the model of all the works of God; all of them are therefore before his eye, and he lets the inhabitants of heaven see as much of them as it is fit for them. 2nd. We can know nothing of future events but what God is pleased to discover to us; they are within the veil till God opens the door. But, 3rd. So far as God reveals his designs to us we may and ought to receive them, and not pretend to be wise above what is revealed.

2. To prepare John for the vision a trumpet was sounded, and he was called up into heaven to have a sight there of the things which were to be hereafter. He was called into the third heavens. 1st. There is a way opened into the holiest of all, into which the sons of God may enter by faith and holy affections, now in their spirits when they die, and in their whole persons at the last day. 2nd. We must not intrude into the secret of God's presence, but stay till we are called up to it.

3. To prepare for this vision the apostle was in the Spirit, he was in a rapture, as before, *ch. i. 10*. Whether in the body or out of the body we cannot tell; perhaps he himself could not; however, all bodily actions and sensations were for a time suspended, and his spirit was possessed with the spirit of prophecy, and wholly under a Divine influence. The more we abstract ourselves from all corporeal things, the more fit we are for communion with God; the body is a veil, a cloud and clog to the mind in its transactions with God. We should, as it were, forget it when we go in before the Lord in duty, and be willing to drop it, that we may go up to him in heaven. This was the apparatus to the vision. Now observe,

Secondly. The vision itself. And it begins with the strange sights that the apostle saw, and they were such as these:—

1. He saw a throne set in heaven, the seat of honour, and authority, and judgment. Heaven is the throne of God; there he resides in glory, and from thence he gives laws to the church, and to the whole world; and all earthly thrones are under the jurisdiction of this throne that is set in heaven.

2. He saw a glorious one upon the throne. This throne was not empty, there was one in it that filled it, and that was God, who is here described by those things that are most pleasant and precious in our world; his countenance was like a jasper and a sardine stone; he is not described by any human features, so as to be represented by an image, but only by his transcendent brightness. The jasper is a transparent stone, which yet offers to the eye a variety of the most vivid colours, signifying the glorious perfections of God; the sardine stone is red, signifying the justice of God—that essential attribute which he does never divest himself of in favour of any, but does gloriously exert in the government of the world, and especially of the church, through our Lord Jesus Christ. This attribute is displayed in pardoning as well as in punishing, in saving as well as destroying sinners.

3. "He saw a rainbow about the throne like unto an emerald," ver. 3. The rainbow was the seal and token of the covenant of providence that God made with Noah and his posterity with him, and is a fit emblem of that covenant of

is not necessary to suppose that external objects were really presented to the 'waking sense;' there was probably a suspension of the natural use of the faculties, and the mind was supernaturally impressed with ideas adapted to the illustration of the subjects to be revealed" (Webster and Wilkinson).

iv. 3. "He that sat," &c.: the vision of Ezekiel may be profitably compared with the vision in this chapter (see *Ezek. i.*). "Jasper:" this stone was the last of the twelve in the high-priest's breastplate

(*Exod. xxviii. 20*), and the first of the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem (*Rev. xxi. 19*). It is here emblematical of the Divine glory. The stone which we call jasper does not correspond with the descriptions of the stone so called in Scripture—"most precious," and "like crystal." "Sardine:" the first stone in the high-priest's breastplate (*Exod. xxviii. 17*), and the sixth foundation of the New Jerusalem (*Rev. xxi. 20*); a superior variety of agate, and a favourite stone for engraving, on account of its toughness, facility of working,

promise that God has made with Christ as the head of the church, and all his people in him; which covenant is as the waters of Noah unto God, an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure. This rainbow looked like the emerald; the most prevailing colour was a pleasant green, to shew the reviving and refreshing nature of the new covenant.

4. He saw four and twenty seats round about the throne, not empty, but filled with four and twenty elders, presbyters, representing, very probably, the whole church of God, both in the Old Testament and New Testament state; not the ministers of the church, but rather the representatives of the people. Their sitting denotes their honour, and their rest, and satisfaction; their sitting about the throne signifies their relation to God, their nearness to him, the sight and enjoyment they have of him, and their continual regards to him. They are clothed in white raiment, the righteousness of the saints, both imputed and inherent; they had on their heads crowns of gold, signifying the honour and authority given them of God, and the glory they have with him. All these may in a lower sense be applied to the gospel church on earth, in its worshipping assemblies; and, in the highest sense, to the church triumphant in heaven.

5. He perceived lightnings and voices proceed out of the throne; that is, the awful declarations that he makes to his church of his sovereign will and pleasure. Thus he gave forth the law on mount Sinai, and the Gospel has not less glory and authority than the law, though it be of a more spiritual nature.

6. He saw seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are explained to be the seven Spirits of God, ver. 5. The various gifts, and graces, and operations of the Spirit of God in the churches of Christ; these are all dispensed according to the will and pleasure of him that sits upon the throne.

7. He saw before the throne a sea of glass, like unto crystal. As in the temple there was a great vessel of brass filled with water, in which the priests were to wash when they went to minister before the Lord, and this was called a sea,—so, in the gospel church, the sea or laver for purification is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, that cleanses from all sin, even from sanctuary sins. And in this all those must be washed that are admitted into the gracious presence of God on earth, or his glorious presence in heaven.

8. He saw four animals, living creatures, between the throne and the circle of the elders, as seems most probable, standing between God and the people. These seem to signify the ministers of the Gospel, not only because of this their situation nearer to God, and between him and the elders or representatives of the Christian people, and because fewer in number than the people, but as they are here described: 1st. By their many eyes, denoting sagacity, vigilance, and circumspection. 2nd. By their lion-like courage, their great labour and diligence, in which they resemble the ox; their prudence and discretion, becoming men; and their sublime affections and speculations, by which they mount up with wings like eagles towards heaven, ver. 7; and these wings full of eyes within, to shew that in all their meditations and ministrations they are to act with knowledge, and especially should be well acquainted with themselves and the state of their own souls, and see their own concern in the great doctrines and duties of religion, watching over their own souls as well as the souls of the people. 3rd. By their continual employment, and that is praising God, and not ceasing to do so night and day. The elders sit and are ministered unto, they stand and minister, they rest not night and day. This now leads to the other part of the representation.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

We have considered the sights that the apostle saw in heaven, now let us observe the songs that he heard, for there is in heaven not only that to be seen that will highly please a sanctified eye, but there is that to be heard that will greatly delight a sanctified ear. It is true concerning the church of Christ here, which is a heaven upon earth, and it will be eminently so in the church made perfect in the heaven of heavens.

First. He heard the song of the four living creatures, or the ministers of the church, which refers to the prophet Isaiah's vision, *Isa. vi.* And here, 1. They adore one God, and one only, the Lord God Almighty, unchangeable and everlasting. 2. They adore three holies in this one God,—the holy Father, the holy Son, and the holy Spirit,—and these are one infinitely holy and eternal Being, that sits upon the throne, and lives for ever and ever. In this glory the prophet saw Christ and spake of him.

Secondly. He heard the adorations of the four and twenty elders; that is, of the Christian people represented by them; the ministers led, and the people followed in the praises of God, ver. 10, 11. Where observe,

1. The object of their worship, the same with that which the ministers adored, him that sat on the throne, the eternal, ever-living God. The true church of God has one and the same object of worship: two different objects of worship, either co-ordinate or subordinate, would confound the worship and divide the worshippers. It is unlawful to join in Divine worship with those that either mistake or multiply the object. There is but one God, and he alone as God is worshipped by the church on earth and in heaven.

2. The acts of adoration. 1st. They fell down before him that sat on the throne; they discovered the most profound humility, reverence, and godly fear. 2nd. They cast down their crowns before the throne; they gave God the glory of that holiness wherewith he had crowned their souls on earth, and that honour and happiness with which he crowns them in heaven. They owe all their graces and all their glories to him, and acknowledge that his crown is

infinitely more glorious than theirs, and that it is their glory to be glorifying God.

3. The words of adoration; they said, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power," ver. 11. Observe, 1st. They do not say, We give thee glory, and honour, and power; for what can any creature pretend to give unto God? but they say, "Thou art worthy to receive glory." 2nd. In this they tacitly acknowledge that God was exalted far above all blessing and praise; he was worthy to receive glory, but they were not worthy to praise, nor able to do it, according to his infinite excellencies.

4. We have the ground and reason of their adoration, which is threefold: 1st. He is the Creator of all things, the First Cause; and none but the Creator of all things should be adored, no made thing can be the object of religious worship. 2nd. He is the preserver of all things, and his preservation is a continual creation; they are created still by the sustaining power of God; all beings but God are dependent upon the will and power of God, and no dependent being must be set up as an object of religious worship: it is the part of the best dependent beings to be worshippers, not to be worshipped. 3rd. He is the final cause of all things; "For thy pleasure they are and were created." It was his will and pleasure to create all things; he was not put upon it by the will of another; there is no such thing as a subordinate creator, that acts under and by the will and power of another; and if there were, he ought not to be worshipped: and as he made all things at his pleasure, he made them for his pleasure, to deal with them as he pleases, and to glorify himself by them one way or other. Though he delights not in the death of sinners, but rather that they should turn and live, yet he "hath made all things for himself," *Pr. xvi. 4.* Now if these be true and sufficient grounds for religious worship, as they are proper to God alone, Christ must needs be God, one with the Father and Spirit, and be worshipped as such; for we find the same causality ascribed to him, *Col. i. 16, 17,* "All things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

CHAPTER V.

In the foregoing chapter the prophetic scene was opened in the sight and hearing of the apostle, and he had a sight of God, the creator and ruler of the world, and the great king of the church. He saw God on the throne of glory and government, surrounded with his holy ones, and receiving their adorations. Now the counsels and decrees of God are set before the apostle, as in a book, which God held in his right hand. And this book is represented, 1. As sealed in the hand of God, ver. 1.—6. 11. As taken into the hand of Christ the Redeemer, to be unsealed and opened, ver. 7 to the end.



AND I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Hitherto the apostle had only seen the great God and governor of all things; now,

First. He is favoured with a sight of the model and methods of his government, as they are all written down in a book which he holds in his hand; and this we are now to consider as shut up and sealed in the hand of God. Observe, 1. That the designs and methods of Divine providence towards the church and the world are stated and fixed: they are resolved upon, and agreed to, as that which is written in a book: the great design is laid, every part adjusted, all determined, and every thing passed into decree, and made a matter of record. The original and first draught of this book is the book of God's decrees, laid up in his own cabinet, in his eternal mind. But there is a transcript of so much as was necessary to be known in the book of the Scripture in general, in the prophetic part of Scripture especially, and in this prophecy in particular. 2. God holds this book in his right hand, to declare the authority of the book, and his readiness and resolution to execute all the contents thereof, all the counsels and purposes therein recorded. 3. This book in the hand of God is shut up and sealed; it is known to none but himself till he allows it to be opened. Known unto God, and to him alone, are all his works, from the beginning of the world; but it is his glory to conceal the matter as he pleases. The times and seasons, and their great events, he hath kept in his own hand and power. 4. It is "sealed with seven seals." This tells us with what inscrutable secrecy the counsels of God are laid, how impenetrable by the eye and intellect of the creature, and also points us to seven several parts of this book of God's counsels. Each part seems to have its particular seal, and when opened discovers its proper events; and these seven parts are not unsealed and opened at once, but successively, one scene of providence introducing another, and explaining it, till the whole mystery of God's counsel and conduct be finished in the world. [These might be seven sheets or skins of parchment: the first rolled, as was common, on a piece of wood, and sealed; a second rolled and sealed on this; and so forth, till all were sealed. The opening of each seal would then liberate one skin, containing the delineation of a distinct scene. See wood engraving, *Ezr. vi. 2.*]

beauty of colour, and susceptibility of high polish. "Emerald:" this stone was first in the second row of the high-priest's breastplate, and the fourth foundation of the New Jerusalem. Under the word which we here render "emerald" the ancients seem to have included all gems of a fine green colour.

vs. 11. "Thou art worthy, O Lord:" Alford has "our Lord and God," and puts the definite article before the words "glory, honour," &c.: "to receive the glory," &c.

v. 1. "A book:" "To conceive this vision we must imagine a roll of parchment wrapped round a rod. St. John calls it a roll sealed with seven seals by anticipation, for it could not be perceived that it had seven seals till it was unfolded. The seals were broken successively as the volume was unrolled (in separate sheets)."

v. 5. "The Lion of the tribe of Juda . . . hath prevailed:" Alford renders, "The Lion, which is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, conquered (so as) to open," &c. The translation "hath

Secondly. He heard a proclamation made concerning this sealed book. 1. The crier was "a strong angel;" not that there are any weak ones among the angels in heaven, though there are many among the angels of the churches. This angel seems to come out, not only as a crier, but as a champion, with a challenge to any or all the creatures, to try the strength of their wisdom in opening the counsels of God; and, as a champion, he cried with a loud voice, that every creature might hear. 2. The cry or challenge proclaimed was, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof," ver. 2. If there be any creature that thinks himself sufficient either to explain or execute the counsels of God, let him stand forth and make the attempt. 3. None in heaven or earth could accept the challenge, and undertake the task. None in heaven, none of the glorious holy angels, though before the throne of God, and the ministers of his providence; they, with all their wisdom, cannot dive into the decrees of God. None on earth, no man, the wisest or the best of men; none of the magicians and soothsayers; none of the prophets of God, any farther than he reveals his mind to them. "None under the earth;" none of the fallen angels, none of the spirits of men departed, though they should return to our world, can open this book. Satan himself, with all his subtlety, cannot do it; the creatures cannot open it, nor look on it; they cannot read it: God only can do it.

Thirdly. He felt a great concern in himself about this matter: the apostle wept much; it was a great disappointment to him. By what he had seen in him that sat upon the throne, he was very desirous to see and know more of his mind and will; and this desire, when not presently gratified, filled him with sorrow, and fetched many tears from his eyes. Here observe, 1. Those that have seen most of God in this world are most desirous to see more; and they that have seen his glory desire to know his will. 2. Good men may be too eager and too hasty to look into the mysteries of Divine conduct. 3. Such desires, not presently answered, turn to grief and sorrow. Hope deferred makes the heart sick.

Fourthly. The apostle was comforted, and encouraged to hope this sealed book should yet be opened. Here observe, 1. Who it was that gave St. John the hint; "One of the elders." God had revealed it to his church. If angels do not refuse to learn from the church, ministers should not disdain to do it. God can make his people to instruct and inform their teachers when he pleases. 2. Who it was that would do the thing; the Lord Jesus Christ, called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," according to his Divine nature, alluding to Jacob's prophecy, *Gen. xlix. 10*; and "the root of David," according to his Divine nature, though a branch of David according to the flesh. He who is a middle person, God and man, and bears the office of Mediator between God and man, is fit and worthy to open and execute all the counsels of God towards men. And this he does in his mediatorial state and capacity, as "the root of David," and "the offspring of Judah," and as the King and Head of the Israel of God; and he will do it to the consolation and joy of all his people.

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. 11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. 13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. 14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Here, First. The apostle beholds this book taken into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to its being opened and executed by him. Here Christ is described, 1. By his place and station; "In the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and of the elders." He was on the same throne with the Father; he was nearer to him than either the elders or ministers of the churches. Christ as man and Mediator is subordinate to God the Father, but is nearer to him than all the creatures; for "in him all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily." The ministers stand between God and the people; Christ stands as Mediator between God and both ministers and people. 2. The form in which he appeared. Before he is called a Lion; here he appears "as a Lamb slain." He is a Lion to conquer Satan, a Lamb to satisfy the justice of God. He appears with the marks of his sufferings upon him, to shew that he intercedes in heaven, in the virtue of his satisfaction.

[The Divine nature of our Lord is unchangeable, and incapable of suffering. It was as man that he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; and the efficacy of these sufferings, in promoting the salvation of man, is derived from the union of his human nature with the Deity. The fact of the Lamb being slain, and redeeming us to God by his blood, is a proper foundation of homage to him who, though he could not die, took the nature which could and did.—J. P. Smith.]

He appears as "a Lamb, having seven horns and seven eyes;" ["seven," a word expressive of perfection,] perfect power to execute all the will of God, and perfect wisdom to understand it all, and to do it in the most effectual manner; for he hath the seven Spirits of God; he has received the Holy Spirit without measure, in all perfection of light, and life, and power, by which he is able to reach and rule all parts of the earth. 3. He is described by his act and deed; "He came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne," ver. 7; not by violence, nor by fraud; but he prevailed to do it, as, ver. 5, he prevailed by his merit and worthiness; he did it by authority, and by the Father's appointment. God very willingly and justly put the book of his eternal counsels into the hand of Christ, and Christ as readily and gladly took it into his hand; for he delights to reveal and do the will of his Father, *Mat. xxviii. 18*; *Eph. i. 21*.

Secondly. The apostle observes the universal joy and thanksgiving that filled heaven and earth upon this transaction. No sooner had Christ received this book out of the Father's hand than he receives the applauses and adorations of angels and men, yea, of every creature. And indeed it is just matter of joy to all the world to see that God does not deal with men in a way of absolute power and strict justice, but in a way of grace and mercy, through the Redeemer. He governs the world not merely as Creator and Lawgiver, but as our God and Saviour. All the world [church] has reason to rejoice in this.

[This act gave unbounded joy to the church, which hailed with a shout of praise her Saviour's entrance on his difficult but glorious work. She knew that his power and wisdom were adequate to its triumphant execution. Though yet afar off, and though many a gloomy dispensation was to intervene, and though many a hard struggle had to be endured, and many a powerful enemy had to be struck down, yet the church confidently anticipated, now that she saw the sealed roll in the hand of the Lamb, the advent of victory, because, though distant, it was certain. She knew that the administration of her Head could have only one issue, and that issue unspeakably glorious and blessed.—S. V.]

The song of praise that was offered up to the Lamb on this occasion consists of three parts; one part sung by the church, another by the church and the angels, the third by every creature.

1. The church begins the doxology, as being more immediately concerned in it, ver. 8, the four living creatures, and "the four and twenty elders," the Christian people under their minister, they lead up the choros. Where observe, 1st. The object of their worship—"the Lamb," the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the declared will of God that all men "should honour the Son as they honour the Father," for he has the same nature. 2nd. Their posture; they "fell down before him," gave him not an inferior sort of worship, but the most profound adoration. 3rd. The instruments used in their adorations; "Harps and vials." The harps were the instruments of praise, the vials of prayer. [Vials, not small bottles, like those we now call by the name of vials, but shallow vessels, in allusion to the censers of gold in which the priests offered incense in the temple.] Prayer and praise should always go together. 4th. The matter of their song; it was suited to the new state of the church, the gospel state in this new Son. First. They acknowledge the infinite fitness and worthiness of the Lord Jesus for this great work of opening and executing the counsel and purposes of God; ver. 9, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; every way sufficient for the work and deserving of the honour. Secondly. They mention the grounds and reasons of this worthiness; and though they do not exclude the dignity of his person as God, without which he had not been sufficient for it, yet they chiefly insist upon the merit of his sufferings, which he had endured for them; these more sensibly struck their souls with thankfulness and joy. Here, 1st. They mention his suffering; "Thou wast slain," slain as a sacrifice; thy blood was shed. 2nd. The fruits of his sufferings. (1.) Redemption to God. Christ has redeemed his people from the bondage of sin, guilt, and Satan; redeemed them to God, set them at liberty to serve him and to enjoy him. (2.) High exaltation; thou "hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth," ver. 10. Every ransomed slave is not immediately preferred to honour; he thinks it a great favour to be restored to liberty. But when the elect of God were made slaves by sin and Satan, in every nation of the world, Christ not only purchased their liberty for them, but the highest honour and preferment, made them kings and priests—kings to rule over their own spirits, and to overcome the world and the evil one; and he has made them priests, given them access to himself, and liberty to offer up spiritual sacrifices; and they "shall reign on earth," they shall with him judge the world at the great day.

2. The doxology thus begun by the church is carried on by the angels. They take the second part, in conjunction with the church, ver. 11. They are said to be innumerable, and to be the attendants on the throne of God, and guardians to the church; and though they did not need a Saviour themselves, yet they rejoice in the redemption and salvation of sinners. And they agree with the church in acknowledging the infinite merits of the Lord Jesus, as dying for sinners, that he is "worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." 1st. He is worthy of that office and authority, which requires the greatest power and wisdom, the greatest fund, all excellency, to discharge it aright. And, 2nd. That he is worthy of all honour, and glory, and blessing, because he is sufficient for the office, and faithful in it.

3. This doxology, thus begun by the church, and carried on by the angels, is resounded and echoed by the whole creation, ver. 13. Heaven and earth ring with the high praises of the Redeemer; the whole creation fares the better for Christ; "By him all things consist." And all the creatures that had the sense and language would adore that great Redeemer, who delivers the creature from that bondage under which it groans, through the corruption of men and the just curse denounced by the great God upon the fall. That part that, by a *prosopopœia*, is made for the whole creation, is a song of blessing, and

prevailed" tends to put out of sight the reference to the victory of Christ on earth, after which he said, "All power is given unto me in heaven."

v. 8. "When he had taken:" render with Alford, "when he took." "Full of odours;" better, "full of incense." (Compare chap. viii. 4.)

v. 10. "Hast made us," &c.: rather, "didst make us . . . a kingdom and priests." (Compare chap. i. 6.)

vi. 1. "I heard, as it were the noise of thunder:" Alford translates, "I heard one of the living beings saying, as it were the voice of thunder, Come." The words "and see" are omitted by two out of the three oldest MSS. In other MSS. the expression is found, but in different words from the received text. Altogether it seems probable that the words are a later addition. On exegetical grounds the simpler form "Come" is to be preferred. Alford rightly argues that the expression "Come and see" is meaningless as addressed to John.

honour, and glory, and power, 1st. "To him that sitteth on the throne," to God, as God; or to God the Father, as the first person in the Trinity, and the first in the economy of our salvation. And, 2nd. "To the Lamb," as the second person in the Godhead and the Mediator of the new covenant; not that the worship paid to the Lamb is of another nature, an inferior worship, for the very same honour and glory is in the same words ascribed to the Lamb, and to him that sits on the throne; their essence being the same, but their parts in the work of our salvation being distinct, they are distinctly adored. We worship and glorify one and the same God for our creation and for our redemption.

We see how the church that begun the heavenly anthem, finding heaven and earth join in the concert, closes all with their Amen, and end, as they began, with a low prostration before the eternal and everlasting God. Thus we have seen this sealed book passing with great solemnity from the hand of the Creator into the hand of the Redeemer.

[This is a truly noble and instructive chapter, and views of deepest interest present themselves on the comparison of it with the preceding. The book containing the prophecy could be opened and read by none but the Son of God, who was also the Son of man, here called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" and "Root of David." O blessed Jesus, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the whole Bible is to me a sealed book; but do thou unseal it to the eye of my mind, and open mine eyes to behold the wondrous things which are contained in it! But what to me is of chiefest concern in this passage is, that here the Lamb of God—not spoken of before, is represented as placed in the very same situation and surrounded by the very same objects with the Lord God Almighty in the preceding chapter—even he who created all things, and for whose pleasure they are and they were created. This Lamb that had been slain had seven horns and seven eyes; and these are said to be the seven Spirits of God, which, in the former description, (ch. iv. 5,) were the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne. What a mysterious union, and incorporation, and identity is here! There God is on the throne, and sat; here Christ is in the midst of the throne, and stood; there the seven Spirits of God are lamps of fire burning before the throne; here they are the seven eyes of the Lamb. Let us view with holy and humble reverence this triune representation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and still more, to compensate for the sublime obscurity of such a contemplation, let us rejoice in the unequivocal testimonies here given to the Godhead of the Saviour. Let us especially note the identity of those ascriptions given to the Lamb that was slain, and to Him by whom all things were created: "Worthy is the Lord God Almighty (ch. iv. 8) to receive glory, and honour, and power," (ch. iv. 11); and "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," ver. 12. And as if to identify or conjoin the Father with the Son, it is again said in ver. 13. "Blessing, honour, glory, and power be to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Son, for ever and ever." I would cherish the thought of Christ's divinity; I would mix the consideration of his person with his work—that I may behold in the deity of Christ the completeness of that redemption, the efficacy of that atonement, the regenerative power of that grace by which the restoration of the human family is carried into effect.—*Chalmers's Posthumous Works*, vol. iv.]

CHAPTER VI.

The book of the Divine counsels being thus lodged in the hand of Christ, he loses no time, but immediately enters upon the work of opening the seals and publishing the contents; but this is done in such a manner as still leaves the predictions very abstruse, and difficult to be understood. Hitherto the waters of the sanctuary have been as those in Ezekiel's vision, only to the ankles, or to the knees, or to the loins at least; but here they begin to be a river that cannot be passed over. The visions which John saw, the epistles to the churches, the songs of praise, in the two foregoing chapters, had some things dark and hard to be understood; and yet they were rather "milk for babes" than "meat for strong men." But now we are to launch into the deep, and our business is not so much to fathom it as to let down our net to take a draught. We shall only hint at what seems most obvious. The prophecies of this book are divided into seven seals opened, seven trumpets sounding, and seven vials poured out. It is supposed that the opening of the seven seals discloses those providences that were conversant about the church in the first three centuries, from the ascension of our Lord and Saviour to the reign of Constantine. This was represented in a book rolled up, and sealed in several places; so that, when one seal was opened, you might read so far of it, and so on till the whole was unfolded. Yet we are not here told what was written in the book, but what John saw in figures enigmatical and hieroglyphic; and it is not for us to pretend to know "the times and the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power." In this chapter six of the seven seals are opened, and the visions attending them are related. The first seal in ver. 1, 2; the second seal in ver. 3, 4; the third seal in ver. 5, 6; the fourth seal in ver. 7, 8; the fifth seal in ver. 9—11; the sixth seal in ver. 12, 13, &c., to the end of the chapter.



AND I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Here, First. Christ the Lamb opens the first seal; he now enters upon the great work of opening and accomplishing the purposes of God towards the church and the world.

Having exhibited in symbol Christ's installation on the right hand of God, and his entrance on his great work, the Apocalypse next presents in figure the various acts of his administration. First of all, the ground had to be cleared. When Christ ascended and sat down at the right hand of God, the ground where he had purposed to plant his church was occupied by the old pagan empire of Rome. A most degrading polytheism, deeply founded in the passions and lusts of men, attired in the garb of a most fascinating poetry, enjoying the venerable prestige of a high antiquity, sanctioned by the laws, and protected and upheld by the military power of the state, was so interwoven with the fabric of the empire that it had become necessary, in order to eradicate the one

and strip it of its props and defences, that the framework of the other should be shaken and rent. This was accomplished in the opening of the seals.—S. V.]

Secondly. One of the ministers of the church calls upon the apostle, with a voice like thunder, to come near and observe what then appeared.

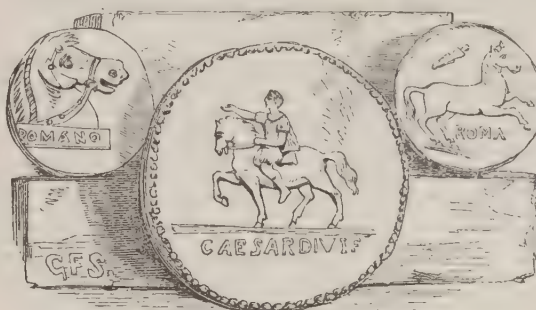
Thirdly. We have the vision itself, ver. 2.

1. The Lord Jesus appears riding on "a white horse." White horses are generally refused in war, because they make the rider a mark for the enemy; but our Lord Redeemer was sure of the victory, and a glorious triumph, and he rides on the white horse of a pure but despised Gospel, with great swiftness through the world.

2. He had "a bow" in his hand. The convictions impressed by the word of God are sharp arrows; they reach at a distance, and, though the ministers of the word draw the bow at a venture, God can and will direct it to the joints of the harness; this bow, in the hand of Christ, "abides in strength," and, like that of Jonathan, never returns empty.

3. "A crown" was given him; importing that all who receive the Gospel must receive Christ as a king, and must be his loyal and obedient subjects; he will be glorified in the success of the Gospel. When Christ was going to war, one would think a helmet had been more proper than a crown; but a crown is given him as the earnest and emblem of victory.

4. "He went forth conquering, and to conquer." As long as the church continues militant Christ will be conquering; when he has conquered his enemies in one age he meets with new ones in another age. Men go on opposing, and Christ goes on conquering; and his former victories are pledges of future victories. He conquers his enemies in his people; their sins are their enemies and his enemies. When Christ comes with power into their soul he begins to conquer these enemies, and he goes on conquering in the progressive work of sanctification till he has gained us a complete victory; and he conquers his enemies in the world, wicked men, some by bringing them to his foot, others by making them his footstool. Observe from this seal opened, 1st. That the successful progress of the Gospel of Christ in the world is a glorious sight, worth beholding, the most pleasant and welcome sight that a good man can see in this world. 2nd. That whatever convulsions and revolutions happen in the states and kingdoms of the world, the kingdom of Christ shall be established and enlarged in spite of all opposition. 3rd. That a morning of opportunity usually goes before a night of calamity. The Gospel is preached before the plagues are poured forth. 4th. Christ's work is not all done at once. We are ready to think when the Gospel goes forth it should carry all the world before it; but it often meets with opposition, and moves slowly. However, Christ will do his own work effectually, in his own time and way.



THE ROMAN HORSE.

[The first four seals are characterised by the symbol of a horse, and appear to indicate one object, which is held by Mr. Elliott, in his recent work (*Horæ Apocryphæ*) to be, not the Christian church, under the direction of the Redeemer, but a nation or empire, and, in his opinion, the Roman empire, which adopted the horse as its national emblem; as Persia did the ram, and Macedonia the goat. He shews that it was, in fact, one of the ancient Roman standards, and that coins still exist, as represented in the wood engraving, illustrative of this recognised connexion as referring to the different character of the events which befell the empire; the riders as pointing out the chief agents or agencies, such as the Roman emperors or others, by whom it would be acted upon; and the crown, the bow, the sword, and the balance, as serving more particularly and accurately to distinguish who the parties were, and what the period in which they flourished. 'Forasmuch' (he says, in his *Review of Evidence*, vol. iv.) 'as the colour on the successive horses, interpreted agreeably with the Roman and Greek understanding of them, did conjunctively, with certain explanatory words in each case accompanying, indicate states respectively of national triumph, happiness, and prosperity, of bloody civil war, of impoverishment and want, and of extraordinary mortality,—this last by the agencies of sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts, such as to cause, in the horse, the hue of a body in dissolution,—it was inferred that successive eras of prosperity, civil war, impoverishment, and mortality corresponding, were portended to the Roman empire; the first to begin very soon, according to the revealing angel's express pre-intimation, (*Apoc. iv. 1*) after the time of St. John's banishment in Patmos; the rest to follow in succession. Can we well have been wrong in these our inferences as to the meaning of the symbols? And what then the result of appeal to history in verification of them? It was found that Gibbon marked out four eras, or epochs, in the Roman imperial history, precisely agreeing with the prefigurations;—the first, one of both early and later signal triumphs, and moreover of a prolonged general happiness and prosperity unexampled, he says, in the world's history, beginning from Nerva's accession, the very next year after St. John's seeing the vision in Patmos, and lasting eighty years and more, to the death of the second Antonine; the second, one of civil war and bloodshed, almost as remarkable, begun with the murder of Antonine's son and successor, Commodus, near the end of the second century, and extended, with intervals of intermission, far onwards into the eras of the two next seals; the third, one of fiscal oppression, and consequent impoverishment and distress of the Roman people, dated by Gibbon from a memorable edict of the emperor Caracalla, issued towards the close of the first quarter of the third century, and noted by him as one of the permanent causes of the empire's decline; the fourth, beginning about twenty years later, one of some twenty years and more of continued mortality, through three chiefly out of the four predicted agencies of destruction, to an extent such, he says, that we might suspect, from certain statistical tables, 'that war, pestilence, and

But if we understand the word "Come" in each of the seals addressed to Him whose very title (chap. i. 4) is the Coming One, then we hear in it the universal cry of the Church in all ages. (See verse 10, xxi. 17, 20; and compare 2 Peter iii. 4, James v. 8.) On the interpretation of the seals it will be seen that very different opinions prevail. The Notes above, enclosed within brackets, give a valuable resumé of Elliott's views. His work, as the ablest exposition of the views of the historical school of interpreters, is worthy of careful

study; but the interpretations suggested by the writers of this school far from exhaust the significance of the prophecies. It seems quite in harmony with the scriptural system of prophecy to believe that one event contemplated by a prediction by no means represents its entire fulfilment. The familiar example of the prophecies of Matt. xxiv., where the siege of Jerusalem and the final coming of Christ are foretold in mingled terms, serves to confirm this view.

vi. 2. "Crown:" the word here is *stephanos*, and is usually

famine had consumed in a few years a moiety of the human species,' and with such effect on the empire as to make it seem as if 'approaching to the last and fatal moment of its dissolution.'—E.]

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4 And there went out another horse *that was red*: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. 5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. 7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

The next three seals give us a sad prospect of great and desolating judgments, with which God uses to punish those that either refuse or abuse the everlasting Gospel. Though some understand them of the persecutions that befell the church of Christ, and others of the destruction of the Jews, they rather seem more generally to represent God's terrible judgments, by which he avenges the quarrel of his covenant upon those that make light of it.

First. Upon opening the second seal, to which John was called to attend, another horse appears, of a different colour from the former, "a red horse," ver. 4. This signifies the desolating judgment of war. He that sat upon this red horse had power to take peace from the earth, and that the inhabitants of the earth should kill one another. Who this was that sat upon the red horse, whether Christ himself, as Lord of hosts, or the instruments that he raised up to conduct the war, is not clear; but this is certain, 1. That those who will not submit to the bow of the Gospel must expect to be cut in sunder by the sword of Divine justice. 2. That Jesus Christ rules and commands, not only in the kingdom of grace, but of providence. And, 3. That the sword of war is a dreadful judgment. It takes away peace from the earth, one of the greatest blessings, and it puts men upon killing one another. Men that should love one another, and help one another, are, in a state of war, set upon killing one another.

Secondly. Upon opening the third seal, which John is bid to observe, another horse appears, different from the former, "a black horse," signifying famine, that terrible judgment; and he that sat on that horse "had a pair of balances in his hand," ver. 5; signifying that men must now eat their bread by weight, as was threatened, Lev. xxvi. 26, "They shall deliver your bread to you by weight." That which follows in the 6th verse, of the voice that cried, "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine," has made some expositors think this was not a vision of famine, but of plenty. But if we consider the quantity of their measure, and the value of their penny, at the time of this prophecy, the objection will be removed. Their measure was but a single quart, and their penny was our sevenpence-halfpenny, and that is a great deal to give for a quart of wheat. However, it seems this famine, as all others, fell most severely upon the poor; whereas the oil and the wine, which were dainties of the rich, were not hurt. But if bread, the staff of life, be broken, dainties will not supply the place of it.

[Whereas it seems reasonable to suppose that in perfect prefigurative pictures, such as all must be that have a Divine original, not the mere nature only, but the instrumental causes also, of these states of prosperity or of suffering might probably be revealed, and the riders of the horses characterised by their respective badges in the vision appeared to be the fit symbols to foreshew it,—a comparison was instituted in each vision between the prophecy and the history on this point also. And on examination it appeared that whereas, according to Gibbon's declaration, the instrumental causes of the white of the first era were the five good emperors, from Nerva to the second Antonine inclusive, (a line united as one by successive adoptions, and, as traced up to Nerva, its head, of Cretic original;) of the red of the second era those that had the power of the sword, that is, the military power, including its chief generals very specially; and of the black of the third era the provincial governors in their several provinces of administration,—so, 1. The crown, the imperial crown, given to the rider of the white horse, did in fact mark him out as the representative of emperors, and the bow in his hand (strange as this might appear) as the representative, according to clear antiquarian evidence, of persons of Cretan provincial origin. 2. The sword given to the rider of the red horse (the word 'given,' where used and where omitted, should not be unnoticed) marked him out as the representative of the soldiery generally, and more particularly of the prætorian prefects and imperial lieutenants; these being at Rome and in the provinces respectively the only functionaries invested with the judicial power of the sword over the soldiers, as well as military use of it against the enemy, and in token thereof solemnly presented with a sword within or outside of the walls of Rome. 3. The holding of the balance, and the words addressed to him from the throne respecting the corn, wine, and oil, did as distinctively mark out the rider of the black horse to be the representative of Roman provincial governors—the balance being the emblem struck by them

frequently on their own coins, in promise of equity of administration, upon their appointment to office, (on which, as on other points, medals were exhibited to the reader's eye in evidence,) and the words from the throne almost the very words addressed by the Roman law (as well as by that equity which is ascribed to God's throne in Scripture) to these provincial administrators. As to the



ROMAN EMBLEM OF A BALANCE, EAR OF WHEAT, AND CORN MEASURE.

rider of the fourth horse, his name and appearance, Death, might have been supposed sufficient of itself to indicate that he was the personification of every destroying power of human life. As if, however, to guard against the view of him as a mere destroyer of political life, Hades, or the grave, was seen to follow as his badge, the gaping recipient of the spoil of corpses.—E.]

Here observe, 1. That when a people loathe their spiritual food, God may justly deprive them of their daily bread. 2. That one judgment seldom comes alone, and the judgment of war naturally draws after it that of famine; and those that will not humble themselves under one judgment must expect another and yet greater; for when God contends he will prevail. The famine of bread is a terrible judgment, but the famine of the word is more so, though careless sinners are not sensible of it.

Thirdly. Upon the fourth seal, which John is commanded to observe, there appears another horse, "of a pale colour." Where observe, 1. The name of the rider, "Death," the king of terrors; the pestilence, which is death in its empire, death reigning over a place or nation; death on horseback, marching about, and making fresh conquests every hour. 2. The attendants or followers of this king of terrors; and that is, "hell," a state of eternal misery to all those that die in their sins; and in times of such a general destruction multitudes go down unprepared into the valley of destruction. It is an awful thought, and enough to make the whole world to tremble, that eternal damnation immediately follows upon the death of an impenitent sinner. [Death and Hades, Rev. xx. 13.] Observe, 1st. There is a natural as well as judicial connexion between one judgment and another. War is a wasting calamity, and draws scarcity and famine after it; and famine, not allowing men proper sustenance, and forcing them to take that which is unwholesome, often draws the pestilence after it. 2nd. God's quiver is full of arrows; he is never at a loss for ways and means to punish a wicked people. 3rd. In the book of God's counsels he has prepared judgments for scorners as well as mercy for returning sinners. 4th. In the book of the Scriptures God hath published threatenings against the wicked as well as promises to the righteous; and it is our duty to observe and believe the threatenings as well as the promises.

Fourthly. After the opening of these seals of approaching judgments, and the distinct account of them, we have this general observation, That God gave power to them "over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth," ver. 8; he gave them power, that is, those instruments of his anger, or those judgments themselves. He that holds the winds in his hand has all public calamities at his command, and they can only go when he sends them, and no farther than he permits. To the three great judgments of war, famine, and pestilence, is here added "the beasts of the earth," another of God's sore judgments, mentioned Eze. xiv. 21, and mentioned here the last; because when a nation is depopulated by the sword, famine, and pestilence, the small remnant that continue in a waste and howling wilderness encourage the wild beasts to make head against them, and they become an easy prey. Others, by the beasts of the field, understand brutish, cruel, savage men, that, having divested themselves of all humanity, delight to be the instruments of the destruction of others.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. 12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together

applied to the wreath of the victor; a different word is employed in chap. xix. 12. There the sacred personage appears crowned with diadems—the crowns of kingship.

vi. 4. "Red," or "fiery red." "The word here used for 'sword' is not the same as that employed in verse 8. The word there used denotes the barbarian scimitar here the imperial sword" (Webster and Wilkinson).

vi. 5. "Balances:" Woodhouse and others rendered the word

"yoke" instead of "balances." It is so rendered elsewhere in the New Testament. They interpret the vision as signifying the bondage of ceremonial and superstitious observance. (Compare Acts xv. 10.) But the translation "balances" is now generally preferred, and better suits the tenor of the passage.

vi. 6. "A measure:" literally, a *chanix*, a measure equivalent to two or three pints. A *chanix* of grain was the daily allowance for a soldier, whose pay was a penny (*denarius*) a day. (Compare Matt.

and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?



A VASE OF MARTYR'S BLOOD IN THE CATACOMBS AT ROME.

In the remaining part of this chapter we have the opening of the fifth and the sixth seals.

First. The fifth seal. And here is no mention made of any one that called the apostle to make his observation; either because the decorum of the vision was to be observed, and each of the four living creatures had discharged their duty of a monitor before, or because the events here opened lay out of the sight, and beyond the time of the present ministers of the church; or because it does not contain a new prophecy of any future events, but rather opens a spring of support and consolation to those that had been, and still were, under great tribulation for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. Here observe,

1. The sight this apostle saw at the opening of the fifth seal; and it was a very affecting sight; ver. 9, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." He saw the souls of the martyrs. Here observe, 1st. Where he saw them; "Under the altar;" at the foot of the altar of incense, in the most holy place. He saw them in heaven, at the foot of Christ. Hence note, *First*. That persecutors can only kill the body, and after that there is no more that they can do, their souls live. *Secondly*. God has provided a good place in the better world for those who are faithful to death, and are not allowed a place any longer on earth. *Thirdly*. That holy martyrs are very near to Christ in heaven; they have the highest place there. *Fourthly*. That it is not their own death, but the sacrifice of Christ, that gives them a reception into heaven, and a reward there; they do not wash their robes in their own blood, but in the blood of the Lamb. 2nd. What was the cause in which they suffered; "The word of God, and the testimony which they held;" for believing the word of God, and attesting or confessing the truth of it. This profession of their faith they held fast without wavering, even though they died for it. A noble cause! the best that any man can lay down his life for: faith in God's word, and a confession of that faith.

2. The cry he heard. It was a loud cry, and contains a humble expostulation about the long delay of avenging justice against their enemies; "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" ver. 10. Observe, 1st. That even "the spirits of just men made perfect" retain a proper resentment of the wrong they have sustained by their cruel enemies; and, though they die in charity, praying, as Christ did, that God would forgive them, yet they are desirous that, for the honour of God, and Christ, and the Gospel, and for the terror and conviction of others, God will take a just revenge upon the sin of persecution, even while he pardons and saves the persecutors. 2nd. That they commit their cause to him "to whom vengeance belongeth," and leave it in his hand; they are not for avenging themselves, but leave all to God. 3rd. That there will be joy in heaven at the destruction of the implacable enemies of Christ and Christianity, as well as at the conversion of other sinners. When Babylon falls, it will be said, "Rejoice over her, O thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her," *ch. xviii. 20*.

3. He observed the kind return that was made to this cry, ver. 11, both what was given them, and what was said to them. 1st. What was given to them: "White robes," the robes of victory and of honour. Their present happiness was an abundant recompence of their past sufferings.

[These persons are described as slain, and the giving to them white robes must refer to their being immediately admitted, says Scott, into a state of felicity as accepted and holy.—White robes are given unto every one of them, as a token of their justification and acceptance with God; and they are exhorted to rest for a season, till the number of the martyrs be completed, when they shall receive their full reward. Where Mr. Lowman observes very well, that "this representation seems much to favour the immediate happiness of departed saints, and hardly to consist with that uncomfortable opinion, the insensible state of departed souls, till after the resurrection." The scene is laid in heaven, and the scenery is drawn in allusion to (*Num. i. 1*) the encampment of the chil-

dren of Israel in the wilderness. God is represented sitting on his throne, as in the tabernacle, much in the same manner as the prophet Ezekiel (*Eze. i. 26-28*) hath described him. Next to the tabernacle the priests and Levites, and next to the throne were four and twenty elders sitting, answering to the princes of the four and twenty courses of the Jewish priests, clothed in white raiment as emblems of their purity and sanctity; and they had on their heads crowns of gold, Christ having made them (*1 Pet. ii. 9*) a royal priesthood, and (*Rev. v. 10*) kings and priests unto God. Before the throne there was also a sea of glass, like unto crystal, answering to the great molten sea or laver in the temple of Solomon; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, that is, before and behind, and on each side of the throne, were four beasts, or rather four living creatures, (*Gen.*) representing the heads of the whole congregation in the four quarters of the world, and resembling the cherubim and seraphim in Ezekiel's and Isaiah's visions, *Eze. i. x; x. 14; Isa. vi. 2, 3.—Bp. Newton.*]

2nd. What was said to them; that they should be satisfied, and easy in themselves, for it would not be long but the number of their fellow-sufferers should be fulfilled. This is a language rather suited to the imperfect state of the saints in this world, than to the perfection of their state in heaven. There is no impatience, no uneasiness, no need of admonition; but in this world there is great need of patience.

[The Christian church and fathers passed through and out of the period of the fifth seal, and of the persecutions referred to in it, with the distinct conviction impressed on their minds, even as by a voice from heaven, that there only needed to be completed another and different series of martyrs, namely, those to be slain under antichrist; and that then, without farther delay, their Redeemer would surely manifest himself, and execute final vengeance on their enemies.—*E.*]

Observe, *First*. There is a number of Christians known to God, that are appointed as sheep for the slaughter, set apart to be God's witnesses. *Secondly*. That, as the measure of the sin of persecutors is filling up, so is the number of the persecuted, martyred servants of Christ. *Thirdly*. That, when this number is fulfilled, God will take a just and glorious revenge upon their cruel persecutors; he will recompense tribulation to those that trouble them, and to those that are troubled full and uninterrupted rest.

[There were other persecutions before, but this was by far the most considerable, the tenth and last general persecution, which was begun by Diocletian, and continued by others, and lasted longer, and extended farther, and was sharper and more bloody than any or all preceding; and therefore this was particularly predicted. Eusebius and Lactantius, who were two eye-witnesses, have written large accounts of it. Orosius asserts that this persecution was longer and more cruel than all the past; for it raged incessantly for ten years, by burning the churches, proscribing the innocent, and slaying the martyrs. Sulpicius Severus, too, describes it as the most bitter persecution, which for ten years together depopulated the people of God: at which time all the world almost was stained with the sacred blood of the martyrs, and was never more exhausted by any wars. So that this became a memorable era to the Christians, under the name of the era of Diocletian, or, as it is otherwise called, the era of martyrs.—*Bp. Newton.*]

In the catacombs at Rome, (see Note on *1 Thes. iv. 13*.) whether the persecuted Christians fled for concealment in that day of trouble, memorials still exist with inscriptions rudely sculptured to their memory, and vases of small size sometimes beside them, inscribed with the single but significant word, 'Sanguis,' (blood ver. 10,) whereinto had been poured, as would seem, what the Christian bystanders could collect of life in the ebbing flood at the scene of martyrdom.—*E.*

ALEXANDER MORTVVS NON EST SED VIVIT SVPER ASTRA
ET CORPVS IN HOC TVMVLO QVIESCIT VITAM EXPLEVIT
SVB ANTONINO IMP. QVIVBI MVLTVM BENE FITII ANTEVENIRE
PRAEVIDERET PRO GRATIA ODIVM REDDIDIT GENVA
ENIM FLECTENS VERO DEO SACRIFICATVRVS AD
SVPLPICIÀ DVCTVRO TEMPORA INFAVSTA QVIBVS
INTER SACRA ET VOTA NE IN CAVERNIS QVIDEM
SALVARI POSSIMVS QVID MISERIVS VITA SED QVID
MISERIVS IN MORTE CVM AB AMICIS ET PARENTIBVS
SEPELIRI NEQVEANT TANDEM IN COELO CORVSCANT
PARVM VIXIT QVI VIXIT IV. X. TEM.

In Christ. Alexander is not dead, but lives above the stars, and his body rests in this tomb. He ended his life under the emperor Antonine, who, foreseeing that great benefit would result from his services, returned evil for good. For, while on his knees, and about to sacrifice to the true God, he was led away to execution. O sad times! in which, among sacred rites and prayers, even in caverns, we are not safe. What can be more wretched than such a life? and what than such a death? when they cannot be buried by their friends and relations—at length they sparkle in heaven. He has scarcely lived, who has lived in Christian times.

†
LANNVS XPI·MA
RTIR HC REQVIESC
IT·SUB E·P·S DIOCLETIANO
PASSVS

Lannus, Christ's martyr, rests here. He suffered under Diocletian. (The sepulchre is) also for his successors.

xx. 2.) The day's wages would be entirely consumed in purchasing the day's food. "In the days of Cicero a *denarius* would procure sixteen *chances* of wheat, in those of Trajan twenty" (Woodhouse).

vi. 8. "Death and hell;" or, rather, "hades" was following him. "Power:" Alford renders, "authority was given," &c.

vi. 10. "O Lord:" Alford translates "master." It is not the word usually rendered "the Lord," "Master" or "sovereign" better express the meaning.

vi. 12. "The moon:" rather, "the whole or full moon" became as blood.

vi. 13. "Untimely figs:" or "unripe figs" (Alford). These are the winter figs, *grossos*; such as grow under the leaves and do not ripen at the proper season, but hang upon the trees during the winter.

vii. 1. "Wind should not blow:" Compare the vision of Ezekiel (chap. ix. 1-6). Compare also with this retention or staying of the

PRIMITVS IN PACE QVI POST
MVLTAS ANGVSTIAS FORTISSIMVS MARTYR
ET VIXIT ANNOS P. M. XXXVIII CONIVG. SVO
PERDVLCISSIMO BENEMERENTI FECIT

These woodcuts and inscriptions are copied from *The Church in the Catacombs*, by Maitland, who says, 'Although the church took but little care to record her sufferings under Diocletian, we have a proof of their sweeping severity in the inscriptions raised by that emperor and his colleague. According to Gruter, they were found on two columns in Spain.

DIOCLETIAN. CAES.
AVG. GALERIO. IN ORI
ENTE. ADOPT. SYPER
TITIONE. CHRIST.

VBIQ. DELETA. ET. CVL
TV. DEOR. PROPAGATO
DIOCLETIANVS IOVIVS ET
MAXIMIAN. HERCVLEVS
CAES. AVGG.

AMPLIFICATO PER ORIENTEM ET OCCIDENTEM
IMP. ROM.

ET
NOMINE. CHRISTIANORVM
DELETO QVI
REMP. EVER
TEBANT.

The first of these celebrates the universal extinction of the Christian superstition in the East, and the propagation of polytheism under Diocletian and Galerius. The second extols Diocletian and Maximian for having extended the Roman empire, and extinguished the name of the Christians, who were overturning the republic. We have here a monument raised by paganism over the grave of its vanquished foe. But in this "the people imagined a vain thing;" so far from being deceased, Christianity was on the eve of final and permanent triumph, and the stone guarded a sepulchre empty as the urn which Electra washed with her tears. Neither in Spain nor elsewhere can be pointed out the burial-place of Christianity; "it is not: for the living hath no tomb."

Secondly, We have here the sixth seal opened, ver. 12. Some refer this to the great revolutions in the empire in Constantine's time, the downfall of paganism; others, with great probability, to the destruction of Jerusalem, as an emblem of the general judgment and destruction of the wicked at the end of the world. And, indeed, the awful characters of this event are so much the same with those signs mentioned by our Saviour, as foreboding the destruction of Jerusalem, that it hardly leaves any room for doubting but that the same thing is meant in both places, though some think that event was past already: see *Mat. xxiv. 29, 30.*

The general intent of this vision does not seem to me to have been difficult to understand. It surely betokened some sudden and extraordinary revolution in the Roman empire, which would follow chronologically after the era of martyrdoms depicted under the seal preceding; a revolution arising from the triumph of the Christian cause over its enemies, and in degree complete and universal. Doubtless, according to mere human probabilities, it must have appeared most unlikely that such a consummation should be brought about, and at such a time,—a time when Christians constituted but a small minority of the population, and when, by the long previous persecution, they had been reduced apparently to the lowest point of depression. But unto Him who ruleth all things after his will, both in heaven and on earth, what are difficulties, what are improbabilities, to frustrate the accomplishment of his declared purpose? Rather, as has been often and most truly observed, man's extremity is God's opportunity. That precisely at the time depicted in the vision,—the time following on the era of the Diocletian martyrdoms,—a revolution of the character described took place in the Roman empire, is one of the most memorable and most astonishing facts of history,—a revolution, Mr. E. elsewhere says, 'sudden, and accomplished through fierce wars, in which the forces on either side were recognised as respectively the champions of paganism and Christianity; the result of which was that, within some ten or fifteen years after, the whole power of paganism was swept from its elevation in the political heavens, and ere the lapse of half a century more, nearly the whole Roman empire, in respect of religious profession, converted into a Christianized kingdom. Nor let me omit to observe, in farther confirmation of this explanation, that the infidel illustration of the apocalyptic prefiguration fails us here, as usual, to add his corroborative testimony. The ruin of the pagan religion, says Gibbon, is described by the sophists as a dreadful and amazing prodigy, which covered the earth with darkness, and restored the ancient dominion of chaos and of night.'—E. The above author, whilst thus considering the civil establishment of Christianity, as denoted by the description in ver. 12—17, illustrates such an application of the strong language there used, by referring to passages of Scripture where similar terms are employed in relation to similar events: *Isa. xlii. 9; Jer. iv. 23; Eze. xxxii. 7, 8, 11; Hos. x. 8.* Here observe,

1. The tremendous events that were hastening; and here are several occurrences that contribute to make that day and dispensation very dreadful. 1st. "There was a great earthquake." This may be taken in a political sense; the very foundations of the Jewish church and state would be terribly shaken, though they seemed to be as stable as the earth itself. 2nd. "The sun became black as sackcloth of hair," either naturally, by a total eclipse, or politically, by the fall of the chief rulers and governors of the land. 3rd. The moon should become as blood. The inferior officers, or their military men, they should be all wallowing in their own blood. 4th. The stars of heaven should fall to the earth, ver. 13; and that "as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind." The stars may signify all the men of note and influence among them, though in lower spheres of activity there should be a general desolation. 5th. The heaven should depart as a scroll when it is rolled together. That may intend, their ecclesiastical state shall perish and be laid aside for ever. 6th. Every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places. The destruction of the Jewish nation should affect and affright all the nations round about; those that were highest in honour, and those that seemed to be best secured. It would be a judgment that should astonish all the world. This leads to,

2. The dread and terror that would seize upon all sorts of men in that great and awful day, ver. 15. Neither authority, nor grandeur, nor riches, nor valour, nor strength, would be able to support men at that time. Yea, the very poor slaves, that one would think had nothing to fear, because they had nothing to lose, would be all in amazement at that day. Here observe, 1st. The degree of their terror and astonishment; it should prevail so far as to make them, like distracted, desperate men, to call to the mountains to fall upon them, and to the hills to cover them; they would be glad to be no more seen; yea, to have no longer any being. 2nd. The cause of their terror; and that was, the angry

countenance of "him that sitteth on the throne, and the wrath of the Lamb. Observe, *First.* That which is matter of displeasure to Christ is so to God. They are so entirely one that what pleases or displeases the one pleases or displeases the other. *Secondly.* Though God be invisible, he can make the inhabitants of this world sensible of his awful frowns. *Thirdly.* Though Christ be a Lamb, yet he can be angry, even to wrath, and that the wrath of the Lamb is exceeding dreadful: for if the Redeemer, that appeases the wrath of God, himself be our wrathful enemy, where shall we have a friend to plead for us? They perish without remedy that perish by the wrath of the Redeemer. *Fourthly.* That, as men have their day of opportunity, and their seasons of grace, so God has his day of righteous wrath; and when that day comes, the most stout-hearted sinners will not be able to stand before him. All these terrors actually fell upon the sinners in Judea and Jerusalem, in the day of their destruction, and they will all, in the utmost degree, fall upon impenitent sinners at the general judgment of the last day.

CHAPTER VII.

The things contained in this chapter come in after the opening of the six seals, which foretold great calamities in the world, and before the sound of the seven trumpets, which gave notice of great corruptions arising in the church. Between these comes in this comfortable chapter, which secures the graces and comforts of the people of God in times of common calamity. We have, I. An account of the restraint laid upon the winds, ver. 1—3. II. The sealing of the servants of God, ver. 4—8. III. The songs of angels and saints on this occasion, ver. 9—12. IV. A description of the honour and happiness of those that had faithfully served Christ, and suffered for him, ver. 13 to the end.



AND after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascending

from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

Here we have an account of the restraint laid upon the winds. By these winds, we suppose, are meant those errors and corruptions in religion which would occasion a great deal of trouble and mischief to the church of God. Sometimes the Holy Spirit is compared to the wind; here the spirits of error are compared to the four winds, contrary one to another, but doing much hurt to the church, the garden and vineyard of God; breaking the branches, and blasting the fruits of his plantation. The devil is called "the prince of the power of the air;" he by a great wind overthrew the house of Job's eldest son. Errors are as wind, by which they that are unstable are shaken and carried to and fro, *Eph. iv. 14.* Observe, 1. These are called "the winds of the earth," because they blow only in these lower regions near the earth. Heaven is always clear and free from them. 2. They are restrained by the ministry of angels, "standing on the four corners of the earth;" intimating that the spirit of error cannot go forth till God permits it, and that the angels minister to the good of the church by restraining its enemies. 3. Their restraint was only for a season; and that was, till the servants of God were sealed in their foreheads. God has a particular care and concern for his own servants in times of temptation and corruption; and he has a way to secure them from the common infection. He first establishes them, and then he tries them; he has the timing of their trials in his own hand.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.* 5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. 6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthali were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. 7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. 8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

blast of destruction (*Isa. xxvii. 8*) our Lord's promise that for the elect's sake, whom the Lord had chosen, he would shorten the days of tribulation (*Matt. xxiv. 22*)."

vii. 5—8. The tribe of Dan is omitted in the list. Besides the conjecture given in the Notes above, it appears that there is Hebrew authority for saying that the tribe of Dan had been for long extinct. It was reduced to the one family of Hussim, which afterwards perished. A passage in the Old Testament (*2 Chron. ii. 14*) suggests

that the Danites had not kept their lineage pure, but had intermarried with the Phœnicians. The omission of the tribe in the genealogies (*1 Chron. ii. —xii.*) may be accounted for by the supposition that its genealogies had perished, and that little care had been taken to preserve the records of a tribe which had left its original seat (compare *Judges xviii.*), near the head quarters of the nation, and given its name to a distant city notorious only as the seat of a rival and idolatrous worship.

We have here an account of the sealing of the servants of God. Where observe, 1. To whom this work was committed; to an "angel," another angel. While some of the angels were employed to restrain Satan and his agents, another angel was employed to mark out and distinguish the faithful servants of God. 2. How they were distinguished; a seal of God was set upon their foreheads; a seal known to him, and as plain as if it appeared in their forehead. By this mark they were set apart for mercy and safety in the worst of times. 3. The number of those that were sealed. Where observe, 1st. A particular account of those that were sealed of the twelve tribes of Israel, twelve thousand out of every tribe; the whole sum amounting to an hundred and forty-four thousand. In this list the tribe of Dan is omitted, perhaps because they were greatly addicted to idolatry; and the order of the tribes is altered, perhaps according as they had been more or less faithful to God. Some take these to be a select number of the Jews, that were reserved for mercy, at the destruction of Jerusalem; others think that time was past, and therefore it is to be more generally applied to God's chosen remnant in the world. But if the destruction of Jerusalem was not yet over, (and I think it is hard to prove that it was,) it seems more proper to understand this of the remnant of that people which God had reserved according to the election of grace; only here we have a definite number for an indefinite. 2nd. A general account of those that were saved out of other nations; ver. 9, "A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." Though these are not said to be sealed, yet they were selected by God out of all nations, and brought into his church, and there stood before the throne. Observe, *First*. God will have a greater harvest of souls among the Gentiles than he had among the Jews; more are the children of the desolate than of the married woman. *Secondly*. The Lord knows who are his, and he will keep them safe in times of dangerous temptation. *Thirdly*. That though the church of God is but a little flock in comparison of the wicked world, yet it is no contemptible society, but really large, and to be still more enlarged.

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Here we have the songs of saints and angels on this occasion. Where observe.

First. The praises offered up by the saints, and, as it seems to me, by the Gentile believers for the care of God in reserving so large a remnant of the Jews, and saving them from infidelity and destruction. The Jewish church prayed for the Gentiles before their conversion, and the Gentile churches have reason to bless God for his distinguishing mercy to so many of the Jews when the rest were cut off. Here observe, 1. The posture of these praising saints; they "stood before the throne, and before the Lamb;" before the Creator and the Mediator. In acts of religious worship we come nigh to God, and are to conceive ourselves as in his special presence. And we must come to God by Christ; the throne of God would be inaccessible to sinners, were it not for a Mediator. 2. Their habit; they were "clothed with white robes, and had palms in their hands." They were invested with the robes of justification, holiness, and victory; and had palms in their hands, as conquerors used to appear in their triumphs. Such a glorious appearance will the faithful servants of God make at last, when they have "fought the good fight of faith," and finished their course. 3. Their employment; they "cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb." This may be understood either as a hosannah, wishing well to the interest of God and Christ in the church and in the world, or as a hallelujah, giving to God and the Lamb the praise of the great salvation. Both the Father and the Son are joined together in these praises; the Father contrived this salvation, the Son purchased it; and they that enjoy it must and will bless the Lord and the Lamb; and they will do it publicly, and with becoming fervour.

Secondly. Here is the song of the angels, ver. 11, 12; where observe, 1. Their station; "Before the throne of God," attending on him, and about the saints, ready to serve them. 2. Their posture, which is very humble, and expressive of the greatest reverence; "They fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God." Behold the most excellent of all the creatures, that never sinned, that are before him continually, not only covering their faces, but falling down on their faces before the Lord! What humility, then, and what profound reverence, become us vile, frail creatures, when we come into the presence of God! We should fall down before him; there should be both a reverential frame of spirit and a humble behaviour in all our addresses to God. 3. Their praises; they consented to the praises of the saints, said their Amen thereto. There is in heaven a perfect harmony between the angels and the saints. And then they added more of their own, "saying, Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever, Amen." Where, 1st. They acknowledge the glorious attributes of God, his wisdom, his power, and his might. 2nd. They declare that, for these his Divine perfections, he ought to be blessed, and praised, and glorified to all eternity, and they confirm it by their Amen. We see what is the work of heaven, and we ought to begin it now; to get our hearts tuned for it, to be much in it, and long for that world where our praises, as well as happiness, will be perfect.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white

vii. 9. "White robes . . . palms." palms were the symbol of joy and triumph. They were used at the feast of tabernacles (the fifteenth day of the seventh month), when they held the feast of thanksgiving for the ingathered fruits. The allusions to Jewish customs must be noted if we would rightly understand the symbolism of the Apocalypse.

vii. 11. "Beasts;" to be rendered here, as in chap. iv., "beings," or "living beings."

robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Here we have a description of the honour and happiness of those that have faithfully served the Lord Jesus Christ, and suffered for him. Where observe,

First. A question asked by one of the elders, not for his own information, but for John's instruction. Ministers may learn from the people, especially from aged and experienced Christians. The lowest saint in heaven knows more than the greatest apostle in the world. Now the question has two parts: 1. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes?" 2. "Whence came they?" It seems to be spoken by way of admiration, as *Cant. iii. 6*, "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness?" Faithful Christians deserve our notice and respect; we should "mark the upright."

Secondly. The answer returned by the apostle; in which he tacitly acknowledges his own ignorance, and sues to this elder for information, "Thou knowest." Those that would gain knowledge must not be ashamed to own their ignorance, nor to desire instruction from any that are able to give it.

Thirdly. The account given to the apostle concerning that noble army of martyrs that "stood before the throne of God," with white robes and palms of victory in their hands; and of them it is here observed, 1. The low and desolate state they had formerly been in; they had been in "great tribulation," persecuted by men, tempted by Satan, sometimes troubled in their own spirits; they had suffered the spoiling of their goods, the imprisonment of their persons, yea, the loss of life itself. The way to heaven lies through many tribulations; but tribulation, how great soever, shall not separate us from the love of God. Tribulation, when gone through well, will make heaven more welcome and more glorious. [These are they which are to come, *οι ἐρχόμενοι*.] 2. The means by which they had been prepared for that great honour and happiness they now enjoyed; ver. 14, they had "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." It is not the blood of the martyrs themselves, but the blood of the Lamb, that can wash away sin, and make the soul pure and clean in the sight of God: other blood stains; this is the only blood that makes the robes of the saints white and clean. 3. The blessedness to which they are now advanced, being thus prepared for it. 1st. They are happy in their station; for "they are before the throne of God night and day, and he dwells among them;" they are in that presence where there is fulness of joy. 2nd. They are happy in their employment, for they serve God continually, and that without weakness, drowsiness, or weariness. Heaven is a state of service, though not of suffering; it is a state of rest, but not of sloth; it is a praising, delightful rest. 3rd. They are happy in their freedom from all the inconveniences of this present life. *First*. From all want, and sense of want; they "hunger and thirst no more;" all their wants are supplied, and all the uneasiness caused thereby is removed. *Secondly*. From all sickness and pain; they shall never be scorched by the heat of the sun any more. 4th. They are happy in the love and conduct of the Lord Jesus; "He shall feed them, he shall lead them to living fountains of waters;" he shall put them into the possession of every thing that is pleasant and refreshing to their souls, and therefore "they shall hunger and thirst no more." 5th. They are happy in being delivered from all sorrow, or occasion of it; "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." They have formerly had their sorrows, and shed many tears, both upon the account of sin and affliction; but God himself, with his own gentle and gracious hand, will wipe those tears away, and they shall return no more for ever; and they would not have been without those tears when God comes to wipe them away. In this he deals with them as a tender father that finds his beloved child in tears; he comforts him, he wipes his eyes, and turns his sorrow into rejoicing. This should moderate the Christian's sorrow in his present state, and support him under all the troubles of it; for "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy; and they that now go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them."

[After these things, ver. 1, especially after such an event as the civil establishment of Christianity by Constantine, we expect to be instantly told of its universal reign. But instead thereof we find the four winds of the earth, which evidently signify, not, as Mr. Tong supposes, religious errors and corruptions, but tempests, symbolising civil ravages, and revolutions. The question very naturally arises, to use the words of Mr. Elliott, "Wherefore such a commission of wrath against the empire, after the glorious religious revolution just effected therein, and the triumph and establishment of Christianity?" To this question we reply in the words of Dr. Cumming, (*Apocalyptic Sketches*, containing a compendium of Mr. Elliott's work,) "The truth is, the church suffered more in the sunshine of the royal countenance than amid the blaze of burning faggots: the persecution of the heathen did not injure her so much as the patronage of the professing Christian. In the one case, she grasped her white robes more closely about her; in the other, and in unsuspecting moments, she let them go. Forgetting that this world was not her rest, she laid aside, in the intoxication of her visible prosperity, her diadem of beauty, her raiment of victory—parted with her eyesight, and put on the livery of Caesar, and ground at his mill a miserable drudge; and all the seeds of the apostacy, predicted in the Scriptures, and sown broadcast by Satan in the days of persecution, shot up under the imperial patronage into a disastrous and rapid harvest. After the adoption of Christianity by Constantine, the profession of the Gospel became fashionable—it was the religion of the court, the aristocracy, and the higher classes of society—its creed was no longer a loss, but a profit—the principles that once preceded their earnest advocates to prison, to the stake, and to the wild beasts, now paved the pathway to honour, office, and preferment. Christianity, in short, became a

vii. 14. "Sir, thou knowest:" Alford, following three out of the four oldest MSS., renders "My Lord." "Great tribulation:" the Greek has "the great tribulation." This is identified by some expositors with the persecution to which the martyrs were exposed under the fifth seal, and with the great tribulation predicted by our Lord (Matt. xxiv. 21).

vii. 17. "Feed them:" Alford has "tend them," a word which expresses more generally the shepherd's care. "Living fountains:"

qualification for office, a recommendation to Cæsar, a passport to honour. The catacombs, in which the early Christians had worshipped in silence and secrecy heretofore, and in which, as recorded by Dr. Maitland, they had left so many inscriptions that demonstrate the primitive character of Protestantism, were now exchanged for magnificent cathedrals; the tombs around which the persecuted clustered, as the only unmolested places on the earth in which they could worship the God that made it, were abandoned for temples towering to the skies; the earthen vessels used heretofore in the celebration of the communion were displaced by golden and silver chalices—ceremonies became outwardly splendid—the once lowly ministers of the cross became the companions of kings, and mitres, adorned with precious stones, covered those heads that were recently exposed to winds and rains, and all the elements of heaven. The baptismal font was surrounded with innumerable candidates, drawn to it rather by the prospect of temporal preferment than by attachment to Christian truth; and the visible church at length rose above the state, and dictated terms to the monarchs of the world, little remembering that such a height was real depression. What we call Puseyism in the nineteenth century was the predominating religion of the fourth. The first seed of the apostasy was the universal perversion of the sacrament of baptism, and the invention of new ceremonies in the celebration of it. In fact this beautiful initiatory ordinance had ceased to be what its Divine Author has constituted it, and instead, it had been caricatured into an amulet—an exorcism—a potent chemical drug, that served as an antidote to sin and a specific for regeneration. Milner, the historian, justly remarks of this period,—"There was much outward religion, but the true doctrine of justification was scarcely seen; real conversion was very much lost, and external baptism placed in its stead." (The same work is afterwards quoted with the letters A. S. subjoined.) Such was the state of wide-spread and fearful corruption to which Christianity was brought after its establishment by Constantine, in consequence of which the four winds of the earth were commissioned to go forth as they actually did, commencing at the period, and in the form, mentioned in the eighth chapter, when "the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound." But, in the meantime, a restraint was laid upon these four winds. "I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow," &c. Gibbon's language in reference to this period, as quoted by Mr. Elliott, is strikingly illustrative of the interpretation which is generally given to the first trumpets, as signifying the incursions and ravages of barbarous tribes: "The threatening tempest of barbarians," he says, "which so soon subverted the foundation of Roman greatness was still repelled or suspended on the frontiers." And why so? The angel, in ver. 2, "cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not, till we have sealed the servants of our God." "Ere the angels could let loose their tempests, another and greater angel, described as having the seal of the life-giving God, appeared rising from the East; who, after charge to the destroyers to refrain till the sealing work was done, proceeded to seal a certain small but perfect number, one hundred and forty-four thousand; as an election, not out of the heathen world, but out of the mass of the professing Israel. Consequent on which there was added another evidently connected, and as evidently prospective or anticipative, vision, respecting the ultimate salvation and introduction into paradisaical blessedness of a certain palm-bearing company; depicted as a multitude innumerable, out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, that had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: the which company, it was evident, was of the same class as "the sealed ones;" only made up, as would seem from its number, of their many successive generations, and gathered (in part at least) out of a world larger and more various in its population than the then world of vision. So the continuous preservation of this election of grace was foreshewn to the evangelist, through all the seductions of the apostasy within, and the desolating judgments from without, even to the final consummation,—it being further intimated, however, that they would be thus preserved to blessedness, only as saved ones out of a great—indeed the great tribulation; the same that had been predicted to the souls of the martyrs under the fifth seal, and which was to be greater even than that experienced by those martyrs themselves."—E.]

CHAPTER VIII.

We have already seen what occurred upon opening six of the seals: we now come to the opening of the seventh, which introduced the sounding of the seven trumpets; and a direful scene now opens. Most expositors agree the seven seals represent the interval between the apostle's time and the reign of Constantine; but the seven trumpets are designed to represent the rise of antichrist, some time after the empire became Christian. In this chapter we have, I. The preface or prelude to the sounding of the trumpets, ver. 1—6. II. The sounding of four of the trumpets, ver. 7 to the end.



AND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and

thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. 6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

In these verses we have the prelude to the sounding of the trumpets in several parts.

First. The opening of the last seal. This was to introduce a new set of prophetic iconisms and events; there is a continued chain of providence, one part linked to another; where one ends another begins; and though they may differ in nature and in time, they all make up one wise, well-connected, and uniform design in the hand of God.

Secondly. A profound silence in heaven for the space of half an hour; which may be understood either, 1. Of the silence of peace, that for this time no complaints were sent up to the ear of the Lord God of sabbath; all was quiet and well in the church, and therefore all silent in heaven; for whenever the church on earth cries through oppression, that cry comes up to heaven, and resounds there; or, 2. A silence of expectation. Great things were upon the wheel of providence, and the church of God, both in heaven and earth, stood silent, as became them, to see what God was doing, according to that of Zec. ii. 13, "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, for he is risen up out of his holy habitation." And elsewhere, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Thirdly. The trumpets were delivered to the angels who were to sound them. Still the angels are employed as the wise and willing instruments of Divine providence, and they are furnished with all their materials and instructions from God our Saviour. As the angels of the churches are to sound the trumpet of the Gospel, the angels of heaven are to sound the trumpet of providence, and every one has his part given him.

Fourthly. To prepare for this, another angel must first offer incense, ver. 3. It is very probable this other angel is the Lord Jesus, the High Priest of the church, who is here described in his sacerdotal office, having a golden censer and much incense, a fulness of merit in his own glorious person; and this incense he was to offer up with the prayers of all the saints, upon the golden altar of his Divine nature. Observe, 1. All the saints are a praying people, none of the children of God are born dumb. A spirit of grace is always a spirit of adoption and supplication, "Teaching us to cry, Abba, Father." Ps. xxxii. 6. "For thus shall every one that is godly pray unto thee." 2. Times of danger should be praying times, and so should times of great expectation. Both our fears and our hopes should put us upon prayer; and where the interest of the church of God is deeply concerned, the hearts of the people of God in prayer should be greatly enlarged. 3. The prayers of the saints themselves stand in need of the incense and intercession of Christ to make them acceptable and effectual, and there is provision made by Christ for that purpose; he has his incense, his censer, and his altar; he is all himself to his people. 4. The prayers of the saints come up before God in a cloud of incense; no prayer thus recommended was ever denied audience and acceptance. 5. These prayers that were thus accepted in heaven produced great changes upon earth in return to them. The same angel that in his censer offered up the prayers of the saints, in the same "censer took of the fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth," and this presently caused strange commotions, "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." These were the answers God gave to the prayers of his saints, and tokens of his anger against the world, and that he would do great things to avenge himself and his people of their enemies; and now, all things being thus prepared, the angels discharge their duty.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. 8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. 10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. 12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. 13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

more full of teaching is the rendering, "unto the fountains of the waters of life, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." There the redeemed will receive the supplies of Divine strength direct from the fountain source, just as they will no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face.

viii 1. "Silence:" this silence has been differently understood. Some see in it merely "a solemn pause introductory to the fearful representations which were about to form the vision of the seventh

seal." According to this view, we must regard the seven trumpet periods as contained within the seventh seal period. Others, however, view this silence as the Sabbath close of the seal periods. "After the six days' toil of the Church, the peace of the eternal Sabbath begins" (Wordsworth). According to this view, the seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, represent parallel periods, each closing with the consummation of all things, the rest of the faithful, and the judgment of the world.

Observe. First. The first angel sounded the first trumpet, and the events which followed were very dismal: "There followed hail and fire mingled with blood," &c., ver. 7. Here was a terrible storm; but whether it is to be understood of a storm of heresies, a mixture of monstrous errors falling on the church,—for in that age Arianism prevailed,—or a storm and tempest of war falling on the civil state, expositors are not agreed. Mr. Mede takes it to be meant of the Gothic inundation that broke in upon the empire in the year 395, and continued from A.D. 396 to A.D. 410, the same year that Theodosius died, when the northern nations, under Alaricus, king of the Goths, broke in upon the western parts of the empire. [Also the descent of Rhadagaisus, with his hosts of Vandals, Suevi, and Burgundians, who, as Gibbon says, "burst like a dark thunder-cloud on the Rhotian and Italian valleys."] However, here we observe, 1. That it was a very terrible storm; fire, and hail, and blood—a strange mixture. 2. The limitation of it. It fell on the third part of the trees, and on the third part of the grass, and blasted and burnt it up; that is, say some, upon the third part of the clergy, and the third part of the laity; or, as others who take it to fall upon the civil state, upon the third part of the great men, and upon the third part of the common people; either upon the Roman empire itself, which was a third part of the then known world, or upon a third part of that empire. [In the time of Constantine, the Roman empire was divided into three great sections: to Constantine was assigned Gaul, Spain, Britain, Italy, Africa; to Licinius, the Illyrian Prefecture; to Maximian, the Asiatic provinces and Egypt. Each section had its share of the Mediterranean, and its frontier river, the Rhine, the Danube, or the Euphrates. The four first trumpets apply to the western third of the empire.] The most severe calamities have their bounds and limits set them by the great God.

Secondly. The second angel sounded, and the alarm was followed, as in the first, with terrible events; "A great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood," ver. 8. By this mountain some understand the leader or leaders of the heretics; others, as Mr. Mede, the city of Rome, which was five times sacked by the Goths and Vandals, within the compass of one hundred and thirty-seven years; first by Alaricus, in the year 410, with great slaughter and cruelty. [Or rather, the Vandals under Genseric, who began in 429 to desolate Africa with burning and slaughter, and by means of his fleet ravaged the coast of Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia.] In these calamities a third part of the people (called here the sea or collection of waters) were destroyed. Here was still a limitation to the third part; for "in the midst of judgment God remembers mercy." This storm fell heavy upon the maritime and merchandizing cities and countries of the Roman empire.

Thirdly. The third angel sounded, and the alarm had the like effects as before; "There fell a great star from heaven," &c., ver. 10. Some take this to be a political star, some eminent governor; and they apply it to Augustulus, who was forced to resign the empire to Odoacer, in the year 480. Others take it to be an ecclesiastical star, some eminent person in the church, compared to a burning lamp; and they fix it upon Pelagius, who proved about this time a falling star, and greatly corrupted the church of Christ.

[Rathor, Attila, king of the Huns, who, returning from his eastern wars in A.D. 450, crossed the Rhine as high as Basle, reducing to ashes Strasburg, Worms, Spire, Mentz, Treves. After having thus burned up the rivers, he pushed his victorious forces toward the mountains contiguous to the Alps. Pavia, Verona, Mantua, Milan, successively were embittered with wormwood, and were made to drink waters of gall, and were scorched and destroyed by the heat of this "great star, burning as a lamp." Suddenly, and apparently without cause, he returns, re-crosses the Danube, and is struck dead with apoplexy—the meteor, having done its work, was quenched, and its last lurid rays mingled with the expiring echoes of the third trumpet.—A. S.]

Observe. 1. Where this star fell: "Upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters," ver. 10. 2. What effect it had upon them; it turned those springs and streams into wormwood, made them very bitter, that men were poisoned by them. Either the laws, that are springs of civil liberty, and property, and safety, were poisoned by arbitrary power; or the doctrines of the Gospel, the springs of spiritual life, refreshment, and vigour to the souls of men, were so corrupted and embittered, by a mixture of dangerous errors, that the souls of men found their ruin where they sought for their refreshment.

Fourthly. The fourth angel sounded, and the alarm was followed with further calamities. Observe. 1. The nature of this calamity; it was darkness; it fell, therefore, upon the great luminaries of the heaven that give light to the world,—the sun, and the moon, and the stars; either the guides and governors of the church, or of the state, who are placed in higher orbs than the people, and are to dispense light and benign influences to them. 2. The limitation; it was confined to a third part of these luminaries; there was some light both of the sun by day, and of the moon and stars by night, but it was only a part of what they had before. Without determining what is matter of controversy in these points among learned men, we rather choose to make these plain and practical remarks:

[The fourth trumpet sounds. The western empire has been desolated by land, by sea, and along its rivers—but its sun, and moon, and stars were still shining. Suddenly one third of each of these luminaries is darkened, and the whole firmament over that third is covered with blackness. How was this fulfilled? Thus, the Roman empire had lost its provinces, its maritime possessions, its armies and navies, and all the sinews of its strength—but it still retained the titles and insignia of sovereignty. It had the outward splendour without the solid foundations of a nation. One other blow, and only one, was required to be struck to complete the entire desolation of the western third—the work was to be done—the workman was at hand. Odoacer, one of the chiefs of Attila, starts suddenly into prominence—marches at the head of the Heruli into the very heart of Italy, and commands that the office of Roman emperor of the West shall be abolished, and the last shadow of departing sovereignty—Romulus Augustus,—a name that ominously embraced those of the founder and of the greatest ruler of the empire,—abdicated without an attempt at resistance; and the imperial insignia were transferred to Constantinople, and the emperor of the East exercised the sovereignty thenceforth. Thus one third of the imperial sun was extinguished, and, after senators and consuls had twinkled for a little, a night of darkness and unparalleled calamities fell upon the mistress of the earth—the queen of nations—the persecutor of the saints. Its foundations, righteousness and truth, perished, and it fell.—A. S. "I have now accomplished," says Gibbon, "the laborious narrative of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, from the fortunate age of Trajan and the Antonines to its utter extinction in the West, about five centuries after the Christian era. At that unhappy period the Saxons fiercely struggled with the natives for the possession of Britain. Gaul and Spain were divided between the powerful monarchies of the Franks and the Visigoths, and the dependent kingdoms of the Suevi and the Burgundians. Africa was exposed to the cruel persecution of the Vandals, and to the savage insults of the Moors. Rome and Italy, as far as the banks of the Danube, were afflicted by an array of barbarian mercenaries, whose lawless tyranny was succeeded by the reign of Theodoric, the Ostrogoth." (Supplementary Note on Daniel vii.) "All the subjects of the empire who, by the use of the Latin language, more particularly deserved,

the names and privileges of Romans, were oppressed by the disgrace and calamities of foreign conquest; and the victorious nations of Germany established a new system of manners and government in the western countries of Europe."—After above a century and a half of calamities unexampled almost, as Dr. Robertson (chap. v., p. 11) most truly represents it in the history of nations, the statement of Jerome—a statement couched under the very apocalyptic figure of the text, but prematurely pronounced on the first taking of Rome by Alaric—might be considered as at length accomplished: *Clarissimum terrarum lumen extinctum est*,—"the world's glorious sun has been extinguished;" or, as the modern poet has expressed it, still under the same apocalyptic figure, "She saw her glories, star by star, expire," till not even one star remained to glimmer on the vacant and dark night.—E.]

1st. That where the Gospel comes to a people, and is but coldly received, and has not its proper effects upon their hearts and lives, it is usually followed with dreadful judgments. 2nd. God gives warning to men of his judgments before he sends them; he uses to sound an alarm by the written word, by ministers, by men's own consciences, and by the signs of the times; so that if a people be surprised, it is their own fault. 3rd. That the anger of God against a people makes dreadful work among them; it embitters all their comforts, and makes even life itself bitter and burdensome. 4th. That God does not in this world stir up all his wrath, but sets bounds to the most terrible judgments. 5th. That corruption of doctrine and worship in the church are themselves great judgments, and the usual causes and tokens of other judgments coming on a people.

Fifthly. Before the other three trumpets are sounded, here is a solemn warning given to the world, how terrible the calamities would be that should follow them, and how miserable those times and places would be on which they fell. 1. The messenger was "an angel flying in the midst of heaven," ver. 13, as in haste, and coming on an awful errand. 2. The message was a denunciation of further and greater woe and misery than the world had hitherto endured. Here are three woes, to shew how much the calamities coming should exceed those that had been already, or to hint how every one of the three succeeding trumpets should introduce its particular and distinct calamity. Observe, if lesser judgments do not take effect, but the church and the world grow worse under them, they must expect greater, and God will be known by the judgments that he executes; and he expects, when he comes to punish the world, the inhabitants thereof should tremble before him.

[The state of the bishops and priesthood, and church generally, alike in East and West, (for even as regarded antichrist the eastern patriarch was just as much prepared to enact the character as the western, could he have but accomplished it.) I say the ecclesiastical state, alike of East and West, was such as to call for the signal judgments of God. Already,—excepting the *φύσος*, the religious murders,—there was not a single one of the catalogue of sins enumerated under the sixth trumpet, as the cause of that woe and of the woe preceding, (ch. ix. 20, 21,) that had not, at the close of the sixth century, become markedly characteristic of the professed Christian church and clergy. There was the worship of demons, or saints canonized, and of images or idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which could neither see, nor hear, nor walk; and there were the sorceries, or lying charms and miracles; and there were the fornications, and priestly religious thefts. And must not all these have seemed to an enlightened Christian to cry to Heaven for vengeance? Of the causes of coming woe against Judah and Jerusalem specified by the ancient prophets, and of those afterwards specified by Christ and his apostles, how few were there but now applied to corrupted Christendom! Isa. v. 1; xxx. 1; Eze. xiii. 3; Pr. vii. 13; Hab. ii. 19; Mat. xxiii. 13; Jude 11. Specially it was for its rejection, its determined rejection, of his own blessed gospel dispensation long offered it, that the Lord Jesus had finally denounced woe against Jerusalem—a denunciation of which that maniac prophet's cry, which Josephus describes to us, of "Woe, woe, woe to the city and the temple," was but the echo. And if woe was then boded against Jerusalem, how not, at this fearful crisis of its apostasy, against Roman Christendom also? Surely the very air must have seemed vocal to each thoughtful Christian, into which ascended the incense of its Christ-denying worship and blasphemies. And though to the West, perhaps, if his suspicion were right respecting antichrist, a temporary freedom from the woe might be allowed, in order to admit of antichrist's development and the fulfilment of Scripture prophecy, yet, sooner or later, the woe must be expected to embrace it: so that the forewarning cry, not unlike that or the apocalyptic angel in mid-heaven, would seem to sound aloud in his ears, "Woe, woe, woe, against all the inhabitants of the apostate Roman earth!"—E.]

CHAPTER IX.

In this chapter we have an account of the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets, the appearances that attended them, and the events that were to follow. The fifth trumpet, ver. 1–12. The sixth, ver. 13 to the end.



AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. 3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. 5 And to them it was given

viii. 2. "Stood." Alford has the present tense, "which stand." Compare Luke i. 19: "I am Gabriel, which stand," &c. See also in the apocryphal Book of Tobit (chap. xii. 15): "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One."

viii. 4. "Incense, which came with the prayers of the saints." The incense did not ascend with the prayers of the saints, but was mingled with them by the angel, as verse 3 shows. Alford's transla-

tion makes this clearer: "The smoke of the incense ascended up to the prayers of the saints out of the angel's hand before God. The prayers and the incense rose up, the one from the earth, the other from the golden altar in heaven, and, like two columns of smoke, blended together as they rose before God's throne."

viii. 7. "The third part of trees," &c.: another clause is introduced in all the best MSS.—"The third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of trees," &c.

that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. 6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. 7 And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth *were* as the teeth of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. 10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt men five months. 11 And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon. 12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

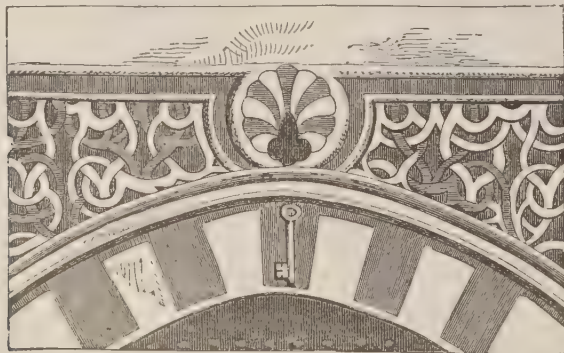
Upon the sounding of this trumpet the things to be observed are, First. A star falling down from heaven to the earth. Some think this star represents some eminent bishop in the Christian church, some angel of the church; for, in the same way of speaking by which pastors are called stars, the church is called heaven; but who this is expositors do not agree. Some understand it of Boniface, the third bishop of Rome, who assumed the title of universal bishop, by the favour of the emperor Phocas, who, being a usurper and tyrant in the state, allowed Boniface to be so in the church as the reward of his flattery.

[The grandfather of Mahomet, and his lineal ancestors, says Gibbon, 'appeared in foreign and domestic transactions as the princes of their country.' They were, writes Mr. Elliott, 'in the view of the Syrian Greeks, as among the stars in the horizon of the political heaven. But just after his birth his father died, and very soon after his grandfather also, and the governorship of Mecca, headship of the tribe, and keys of the Caaba, passed into the hands of another branch of the family.' His prospects of greatness seemed all blasted by their deaths. He found himself, so he recounted his own history afterwards, a neglected and destitute orphan; though by birth a star in the horizon of the political firmament, he was now, at the opening of the seventh century, a star fallen to the ground, and must so have appeared to the Romans and Syrians, when, in the character of servant of the widow Cadijah, he came to traffic in the markets of Damascus.' It is in referring to this very period of his life that Mahomet observes, 'Cadijah believed in me when men despised me; she relieved my wants when I was poor and persecuted by the world.']

Secondly. To this fallen star was given the key of the bottomless pit. Having now ceased to be a minister of Christ, he becomes the antichrist, the minister of the devil; and by the permission of Christ, who had taken from him the keys of the church, he becomes the devil's turnkey, to let loose the powers of hell against the churches of Christ.

Thirdly. Upon the opening of the bottomless pit there arose a great smoke, which darkened the sun and the air. The devils are the powers of darkness, hell is the place of darkness. The devil carries on his designs by blinding the eyes of men, by extinguishing light and knowledge, and promoting ignorance and error; he first deceives men, and then destroys them; wretched souls follow him in the dark, or they durst not follow him.

[The very emblem of the key, here figured as given to Mahomet, might almost seem to have been selected in allusive contrast to its counterpart in the Koran. In the latter, the key of God is asserted to have been given to the prophet; that which was to open to believers the portals of the true religion and of heaven. Hence it was borne by his followers subsequently, at least by those of them who achieved the western conquests of Islam, even as the holy cross by Christians, as both a religious and a national emblem; and the sculpture on the proud gate of justice in the Moorish Alhambra still retains and exhibits this symbol. But the



KEY ON THE ARABIC ARCH, ALHAMBRA.

ix. 1. "Bottomless pit:" rather, "the pit of the abyss." "Bottomless pit" gives an erroneous idea; the true notion being that of an inner prison (pit) in the great depth (abyss), or, as Milton expresses it, 'in the lowest deep, a lower deep.'" (Webster and Wilkinson).

ix. 2. "Smoke . . . sun and air darkened:" some have interpreted this of the cloud of false doctrine (e.g., gnosticism) by which the light of the Gospel was obscured; others to the secret sources whence this and other errors proceeded.

apocalyptic vision more truly represented it as the key of the abyss, and the smoke which rose from the abyss on its opening it as the fumes and the pestilential darkness of hell. The Koran itself constantly refers to the key of God, which opened to Mahometans the gates of the world and of religion. 'Did not God,' it is written in the Koran, 'give to his legate the power of heaven which is above, and fire which is beneath? with the key did he not give him the title and power of a porter, that he may open to those whom he shall have chosen?' See wood engraving.]

Fourthly. Out of this dark smoke there came a swarm of locusts, one of the plagues of Egypt, the devil's emissaries headed by antichrist, all the rout and rabble of antichristian orders, to promote superstition, idolatry, error, and cruelty; and these had, by the just permission of God, power to hurt those that had not the mark of God in their foreheads.

[These symbols, as Mr. Elliott has shewn, are invariably to be explained on the principal of local, historical, or national allusion. This, in fact, is the key to all the symbols of Scripture. The fig-tree and the vine, for instance, are the emblems of Judah; the reed and the crocodile of Egypt; the willow denotes Babylon, the wild ass Ishmael, the eagle Edom, and the ship Tyre. It is by following out these precedents of interpreted symbols already set us in Scripture that we arrive at a consistent exposition of the symbols used in the Apocalypse. The composite character of the locust creature employed in the description of this woe, violating, as it does, all the facts of natural history, shews plainly that it is a symbol, and as such is to be explained. The locust symbol indicates that the invader of the guilty lands, marked out for punishment, would rush forward in countless swarms after the manner of locusts. The horse-like appearance denotes that the invading forces would consist mainly of hordes of cavalry. The lion-likeness intimates their daring and irresistible ferocity; and the scorpion sting, which does not kill the sufferer, indicates the torment they would inflict on those whom they would not be allowed to destroy. The locality from which they would come is plainly shewn to be the East. Thus, in *Ex. x. 3*, it is written, "The east wind brought the locusts" into Egypt from Arabia; and Volney, the sceptic historian, states that locusts come constantly from the deserts of Arabia. And, in *Jud. vi. 5*, the name *Arbah* for a locust is plainly associated with the name *Arbi*, an Arab, when it is stated that they, the Arabs, came as locusts for multitude. (See Supplementary Note on *Joel ii. 20*.) In this very century, A. D. 672, Mahometanism appeared in Arabia; that terrible smoke which darkens still so large and so beautiful a portion of the earth,—a system replete with fanaticism, fraud, sensualism, pride; which crushes wherever it conquers, and has extinguished the energy, the life, the freedom, of every country of which it has taken possession. And it was after embracing the tenets and imbibing the spirit of this false superstition that the Saracen hordes of cavalry issued in propagandist swarms with the fierceness of lions, and the fleetness of horses, and the stings of scorpions, upon guilty Christendom; they were resolved on victory or death; for, in the one case, they anticipated license upon earth; and, in the other, sensual indulgence as the reward of their exploits in heaven. 'The religion of Mahomet,' says Hallam, 'is essentially a military system; the people of Arabia found in the law of their prophet, not a license, but a command to desolate the world.' 'The Arabs or Saracens,' says Gibbon, 'had languished in poverty and contempt till Mahomet breathed into those savage hordes the soul of enthusiasm.' Schlegel, who was at once the philosopher and historian, in true apocalyptic terms, called Mahometanism 'the infernal spirit,' (smoke from the bottomless pit,) 'that produced that antichristian combination of spiritual and temporal authority.—A. S., whence also the remaining extracts in this chapter.]

Fifthly. The hurt they were to do them was not a bodily, but a spiritual hurt; they should not in a military way destroy all by fire and sword; the trees and the grass should be untouched, and those they hurt should not be slain; it should not be a persecution, but a secret poison and infection in their souls, which should rob them of their purity, and afterwards of their peace. Heresy is a poison in the soul, working slowly and secretly, but will be bitterness in the end. [It was also commanded them, we read, that "they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any tree." This was almost verbatim the commission given to the Saracens; for the caliph, in conformity with the prescription of the Koran, issued this order, 'Destroy no palm-trees, nor any fields of corn; cut down no fruit-trees.' And, in this respect, the conduct of the Saracens presented a favourable contrast to the practice of the Goths, who invariably destroyed every trace of vegetation, and left what was a garden in their van a desert in their rear.]

Sixthly. They had no power so much as to hurt those that had the seal of God in their foreheads; God's electing, effectual, distinguishing grace will preserve his people from total and final apostasy. [What remarkably identifies the symbol in the text with the people to whom we have applied it, is the commission to hurt "only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads." Mahomet himself told his followers that their mission was to execute judgment against the idolaters of the earth, and specially against the Christians of the Roman empire, who, by their worship of the Virgin Mary, even in the judgment of Mahomet, had become idolaters. Gibbon also states that the Christians of the seventh century had 'relapsed into the semblance of paganism, their public and private vows were addressed to images and relics that disgraced the temples of the earth, and the throne of the Almighty was darkened by a cloud of martyrs, saints, and angels, the objects of popular veneration.' Thus the sceptic historian attests the apostate character of those the false prophet believed himself commissioned to punish.]

Seventhly. The power given to these factors for hell is limited in point of time—five months; a certain season, and but a short season, though how short we cannot tell. Gospel seasons have their limits, and times of seduction are limited too.

[They were to torment for five months; that is, one hundred and fifty prophetic days, or one hundred and fifty literal years. In 612 Mahomet first proclaimed his mission. This date was, therefore, the commencement of the Saracenic invasion. After Mahomet had thus appointed one to begin the terrible course of ruthless and inexorable proselytism, which imparted to that system its temporary success, and after conquests and occasional repulses, the dynasty of the Ommyiads was supplanted in the caliphate by the dynasty of Abassides, in 755; and the caliphate, heretofore so powerful, from its unity, was rent in twain, and the dynasty of the East became the antagonist of that of the West. Another capital, Medinat al Salem, or 'the city of peace,' farther eastward of Christendom, was selected, A. D. 762, and there the turbaned locusts settled. 'The colossus,' says Sismondi, 'that had bestridden the whole South, was broken; and this revolution did more for the deliverance of Europe from the Mussulman arms than even the battle of Poitiers.' 'War,' says Gibbon, 'was now no longer the passion of the Saracens—there the luxury of the caliphs relaxed the nerves, and terminated the progress of the Arabian empire.' From A. D. 612, the date of its rise, to A. D. 762, the date of its decay, is a period of one hundred and fifty years, or precisely the five prophetic months, or five times thirty prophetic days, that is, literal year, or the Apocalypse. These striking coincidences are surely not accidental. Gibbon had his mission, and that mission an important one. He is the reluctant commentator on the Apocalypse—

ix. 4. "Not hurt the grass:" showing the mystical character of these locusts—they would be restrained from injuring that which supplied them with their natural food (*Exod. x. 15*; *Joel ii. 3*).

ix. 6. "Desire to die:" the word expresses strong desire—"shall vehemently or eagerly desire to die."

ix. 10. "Tails like unto scorpions:" "Their tails were like that of the amphisbæna, which is said to have its tail shaped like a head, and to be able to sting with it."

the register of its prophecies fulfilled, the lasting evidence that God's word, which he denounced as false, is true.]

Eighthly. Though it would be short, it would be very sharp, inasmuch that those who were made to feel the malignity of this poison in their consciences would be weary of their lives; ver. 6, "A wounded spirit, who can bear?"

[In the year 629 the Saracens first issued from the desert; and in A.D. 636 they came down upon Damascus and Jerusalem like a resistless and overflowing torrent; and before A.D. 637 a Mahometan mosque was built upon the very site of the ancient temple of Solomon, and the cry of the Muezzim was heard where the voice of inspiration had been uttered before—the crescent waved victorious over Egypt, Spain, Persia, and India. In ten years, that is, from A.D. 634 to A.D. 644, the Saracens reduced three thousand and sixty cities, destroyed four thousand churches, and raised one thousand four hundred mosques; and, as if to shew how truly the punishment they inflicted "was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man," and that "in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them," the Christians they spared were tormented with the most cruel and protracted oppression,—their rites were mocked at, their worship degraded, their persons assailed, and insults, without ceasing, were heaped upon their churches; and the common language addressed to them was, 'Ye Christian dogs, ye know your option—the Koran, the tribute, or the sword!']

Ninthly. These lucusts were of a monstrous size and shape, ver. 7, 8, &c. They were equipped for their work like horses prepared to battle. 1. They pretended to great authority, and seemed to be assured of victory. They had crowns like gold on their heads; it was not a true, but a counterfeit authority. 2. They had the show of wisdom and sagacity, the faces of men, though the spirit of devils. 3. They had all the allurements of seeming beauty to ensnare and defile the minds of men, hair like women; their way of worship was very gaudy and ornamental. [They are represented to have 'faces as men,' 'the long hair of women,' 'breastplates,' and 'crowns' adorned with gold upon their heads; that is, the courage and the aspect of the man, the effeminacy of the woman, invulnerability in battle, and continuous victory. Pliny describes the Arabs as wearing the moustache on the upper lip, having long hair and crowns, or turbans, on their heads. In the *Antar*, an Arabic poem, belonging to the age which we are now describing, we have frequent mention of the long hair of the Arabs streaming from beneath their turbans.] 4. Though they appeared with the tenderness of women, they had the teeth of lions, were really cruel creatures. 5. They had the defence and protection of earthly powers, 'breastplates of iron.' 6. They made a mighty noise in the world; they flew about from one country to another, and the noise of their motion was like that of an army with chariots and horses. 7. Though at first they soothed and flattered men with a fair appearance, their was a sting in their tails; the cup of their abominations contained that which, though luscious at first, would at length bite as a serpent, and sting like an adder. 8. The king and commander of this hellish squadron is here described, 1st. As an angel; so he was by nature an angel, once one of the angels of heaven. 2nd. The angel of the bottomless pit; an angel still, but a fallen angel, fallen into a bottomless pit, vastly large, and out of which there is no recovery. 3rd. In these infernal regions he is a sort of prince and governor, and has the powers of darkness under his rule and command. 4th. That his true name is Abaddon, Apollyon, 'a destroyer,' for that is his business, his design, and employment, to which he diligently attends, in which he is very successful, and takes a horrid, hellish pleasure. It is about this destroying work that he sends out his emissaries and armies to destroy the souls of men. And now here we have the end of one woe; and where one ends another begins.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. 16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. 20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: 21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Here let us consider the preface to this vision, and then the vision itself.

First. The preface to this vision, ver. 13, 14. A voice was heard from the horns of the golden altar; where observe, 1. That the power of the church's enemies is restrained till God gives the word to have them turned loose. 2. That when nations are ripe for punishment, those instruments of God's anger that were before restrained are now let loose upon them, ver. 14. 3. The instruments that God makes use of to punish a people may sometimes lie at a great distance from them, so as that no danger may be apprehended from them. These four messengers of Divine judgment lay bound in the river Euphrates, a great way from the European nations. Here the Turkish power had its rise, which seems to be the story of this vision.

Secondly. The vision itself, ver. 15, 16. And the four angels that had been bound in the great river Euphrates were now loosed. And here observe,

[1. These four angels are referred to in *ch. vii.* as the tempest-restraining angels. The judgments which they were commissioned to execute had been going on under the previous symbols. But at Bagdad, on the Euphrates, these ceased, for there the Saracenic empire was rent in twain, and the conquests of the Moors ceased; and there, consequently, the angels paused in their dread work, and were bound. A commission was given to those four angels to arise from this spot where they were bound, and to let loose a new judgment—that of the Turks. Togrul Beg was declared to be head of the Turkish empire, and the protector and governor of Mecca. He forthwith declared war against Christendom—in other words, the instant the sixth trumpet sounded the four angels were let loose, and judgments immediately followed. The Turks, we are told, invaded Christendom, and commenced a war against it, under Alp Arslan, called 'the valiant lion.' He crossed the Euphrates in the year 1063, at the head of immense masses of Turkish cavalry. He carried victory in his van, and havoc and destruction in his rear. Hence, at the end of the fourteenth century, after the crusades and all their glory had passed away, we read that the Turks again crossed the Danube, and fell on Constantinople; and Gibbon, the historian, makes the remark, that, for the first time in the history of Europe, 'Constantinople was surrounded both on the Asiatic and European side,' by the forces of the Turks, led by the Sultan Hunkiar, whose name in the Turkish language is, literally, 'the slayer of men;' as if to describe his mission to be "to slay the third part of men," as it is declared and defined in the Apocalypse.]

2. The time of their military operations and executions is limited to "an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year." Prophetic characters of time are hardly to be understood by us; but in general, the time is fixed to an hour, when it shall begin, and when it shall end; and how far the execution shall prevail, even to a third part of the inhabitants of the earth. God will make the wrath of man praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain.

[A prophetic year may be taken at three hundred and sixty-five and a quarter prophetic days, or literal years. The prophetic month is thirty prophetic days, or thirty literal years; a prophetic day is one literal year. (See Supplementary Note on *Dan. vii.*) And thus a day in the Apocalypse means a year; a year signifies three hundred and sixty-five and a quarter such prophetic days, or literal years. And, using this explanation, the hour, the day, the month, and the year, are thus exactly met; and, within a day, describe the period which extends from the time when the Turkish forces left Bagdad on the Euphrates, till the time that Constantinople fell, and all the grandeur of the East set in gloom and darkness, which has not yet been dissipated. We find three hundred and sixty-five and a quarter years—a month or thirty years—a day or one year—an hour or fifteen days, make three hundred and ninety-six years and one hundred and six days. Now the time when the Turks left Bagdad was A.D. 1075; the time when Constantinople fell under their arms was A.D. 1453; the former period commencing January 18, and the latter period ending on May the 29th, that is, three hundred and ninety-six years and one hundred and six days; the dates thus recorded in history correspond precisely with the prophetic period specified in the Apocalypse. And it is thus more decisive evidence that our identification of the sixth trumpet with the Turkish invasion and the fall of Constantinople is a great and all but indubitable fact.]

3. The army that was to execute this great commission is mustered, and the number found to be of horsemen "two hundred thousand thousand," [Myriads of myriads; a numeral phrase, indefinite. Gibbon speaks of 'the myriads of the Turkish horse overspreading the Greek frontier from the Taurus to Erzeroum;' or of the cavalry of the earlier Turks of mount Altai, 'being, both men and horses, proudly computed by millions;'] but we are left to guess what the infantry must be. In general it tells us, the armies of the Mahometan empire should be vastly great; and so it is certain they were. 4. Their formidable equipage and appearance, ver. 17. As the horses were fierce like lions, and eager to rush into the battle, so they that sat upon them were clad in bright and costly armour, with all the ensigns of martial courage, zeal, and resolution. 5. The vast havoc and desolation that they made in the Roman empire, which was now become antichristian; a third part of them were killed;



TURKISH STANDARD.

ix. 13. "From the four horns:" it is uncertain whether the words "four horns" should stand as part of the text. The Sinaitic MS. omits the words "the four horns," and reads, "I heard the voice of the golden altar." The sense, however, remains, that the apostle heard a voice sounding from the altar.

ix. 14. "In the great river:" this should be "on or at the great river Euphrates." Wordsworth understands this figuratively, just as Babylon is used figuratively. He interprets the four angels of

the fourfold gospel, which in a sense has been bound at the great river Euphrates—the mystical Babylon, the Church of Rome—for that great city has put fetters on the word of God. The structure of the vision, however, seems to suggest the visitation of some judgment.

ix. 17. "Breastplates of fire:" Alford renders, "Breastplates red as fire, and blue as smoke, and yellow as brimstone."

ix. 18. "By these three," &c.: the oldest MSS. have, "By these

they went as far as their commission suffered them, and they could go no farther. 6. Their artillery, by which they made such slaughter, described by fire, smoke, and brimstone, issuing out of the mouths of their horses, and the stings that were in their tails. It is Mr. Mede's opinion that this is a prediction of great guns, those instruments of cruelty which make such destruction; and observes, These were first used by the Turks at the siege of Constantinople, and being new and strange, were very terrible, and did great execution.

[We read that in the siege of Constantinople, the last stronghold of apostate Christendom, the fall of which was the most dreadful calamity to the East, as the fall of Rome was the most disastrous to the West, new elements of destruction were recently introduced in war—that gunpowder and cannon were employed; and it was only by their instrumentality that this illustrious city was reduced to ruins. The sultan, on this occasion, hearing that a foundry of cannon had deserted from the enemy, put the question to him, "Canst thou found a cannon large enough to batter down the walls of Constantinople?"—and in the course of a few months a whole park of artillery were pouring death and destruction on the devoted walls of that illustrious eastern capital. And so much did this fact strike Gibbon, that he states, in his history of the siege of Constantinople—after giving an account of that mysterious mixture of saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal—that "fortifications, that had stood for ages against the Goth, the Hun, the Vandal, and the Saracen, now fell before the mighty power of cannon." Constantinople fell amid the groans of the Christian and the shouts of the Moslem, and the empire of the East set never again to rise. "For their power is in their tails; for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them do they hurt," ver. 19. The same expression is used of the Saracens, who embraced the same religion—namely, Mahometanism, that their power (*ἐξουσία*, "jurisdiction," "authority") was in their tails. It is recorded in history that one of the Turkish chiefs had lost his standard in the battle, and that on discovering his loss he cut off the tail of the horse on which he rode, mounted it on a pole, and announced to the Turks that it was to be the standard of their nation, and round it thenceforth they rallied to the havoc and to victory. From that moment the horse's tail became the most distinctive official symbol of the Turks; so much so, that at the present day it is the very word for honour and power: the number of tails a Turk has is the expression of the amount of official power to which he is raised. A pasha of one tail is of the lowest rank—of two tails higher—and a pasha of three tails is a still higher rank. The fact fulfils (seems to fulfil) the prophecy.—A. S. See wood engraving.]

However, here seems to be an allusion to what is mentioned in the former vision, that as antichrist had his forces of a spiritual nature, like scorpions poisoning the minds of men with error and idolatry, so the Turks, that were raised up to punish the antichristian apostacy, had their scorpions and their stings too, to hurt and kill their bodies, who had been the murderers of so many souls. 7. Observe the impenitency of the antichristian generation under these dreadful judgments, ver. 20; the rest of the men that were not killed repented not, they still persisted in those sins for which God was so severely punishing them, which were, 1st. Their idolatry. They would not cast away their images, though they could do them no good, could "neither see, nor hear, nor walk." 2nd. Their murders, ver. 21, which they had committed upon the saints and servants of Christ. Popery is a bloody religion, and seems resolved to continue so. 3rd. Their sorceries. They have their charms and magic arts, and rites in exorcism and other things. 4th. Their fornications. They allow both spiritual and carnal impurity, and promote it in themselves and others. 5th. Their thefts. They have by unjust means heaped together a vast deal of wealth to the injury and impoverishing of families, cities, princes, and nations. These are the flagrant crimes of antichrist and his agents; and though God has revealed his wrath from heaven against them, they are obstinate, hardened, and impenitent, and judiciously so, for they must be destroyed. From this sixth trumpet learn, *First*. That God can make one enemy of the church to be a scourge and plague to another. *Secondly*. That he who is the Lord of hosts, has vast armies at his command to serve his own purposes. *Thirdly*. That the most formidable powers have limits set them, which they cannot transgress. *Fourthly*. That when God's judgments are in the earth, he expects the inhabitants thereof should "repent of sin and learn righteousness." *Fifthly*. That impenitency under Divine judgments is an iniquity that will be the ruin of sinners; for where God judges he will overcome.

CHAPTER X.

This chapter is an introduction to the latter part of the prophecies of this book. Whether what is contained between this and the sounding of the seventh trumpet, in *ch. xi.* 15, be a distinct prophecy from the other, or only a more general account of some of the principal things included in the other, is disputed by our curious inquiries into these abstruse writings. However, here we have, I. A remarkable description of a very glorious angel with an open book in his hand, ver. 1—3. II. An account of seven thunders which the apostle heard, as echoing to the voice of this angel, and communicating some discoveries, which the apostle was not yet allowed to write, ver. 4. III. The solemn oath taken by him who had the book in his hand, ver. 5—7. IV. The charge given to the apostle, and observed by him, ver. 8—11.



AND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: 2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his

right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, 3 And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up

three plagues were the third part," &c. This reading seems against Wordsworth's interpretation.

x. 1. "Rainbow;" not "a rainbow," but "the rainbow." The definite article (found in the best MSS.) seems to throw back our attention to the vision in chap. iv. 3; the emblem of Divine justice and mercy rested upon him who is the angel of the covenant.

x. 2. "Little book:" this is interpreted by Wordsworth of the completion of the canon of Scripture. "This vision is intended to

those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. 5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, 6 And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: 7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Here we have an account of another vision the apostle was favoured with, between the sounding of the sixth trumpet and that of the seventh. And we observe,

First. The person that was principally concerned in communicating this discovery to John; an angel from heaven, "another mighty angel;" who is so set forth as would induce one to think it could be no other than our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. [1. Power is the attribute by which this angel is mainly characterized. He is the Mighty One; as God, he laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the workmanship of his hand: as Mediator, he sits on the right hand of power in the heavens, and has all power in heaven and earth committed to him. How many displays has he given of his great power in the ancient days, in the generation of old. But, among all the past acts which have marked the course of his administration, there is not one equal to that which he reserved for the last.—S. V., whence also remaining extracts on this chapter.] 2. He was "clothed with a cloud;" he veils his glory, which is too great for mortality to behold; and he throws a veil upon his dispensations: "Clouds and darkness are round about him." 3. "A rainbow was upon his head;" he is always mindful of his covenant: and when his conduct is most mysterious, yet it is perfectly just and faithful. 4. His face was as the sun, all bright and full of lustre and majesty," *ch. i.* 16. 5. His feet were as pillars of brass; all his ways, both of grace and providence, are pure and steady.

Secondly. His station and posture; "He set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth;" to shew the absolute power and dominion he hath over the whole world. "And he held in his hand a little book open;" probably the same that was before sealed, but was now opened, and gradually fulfilled by him.

[We are persuaded that the opinion held concerning the little book by Mede, in which he was followed by Vitranga and Sir Isaac Newton, and others, is the sound one. It is represented with great propriety as "a little book," because the space of time comprehended in it is much shorter than that included in the other. We have already said, that when the western empire was destroyed at the sounding of the fourth trumpet, the scene of judgment was transferred to the eastern world. The fifth trumpet, or first woe trumpet, was sounded, introducing the plague of the locusts, or Saracens. The sixth trumpet, or second woe trumpet, was next sounded, introducing the plague of the horse-men, or Turks, by whom the eastern empire was destroyed. But during the infliction of these woes in the East, popery was gradually rising in the West. On it the third woe was now to be inflicted; therefore it was necessary to retrograde in the symbolic narrative, in order to bring up the history of affairs in the West from the time the western empire had been overthrown. This the little book does. It exhibits the rise of antichrist, and his gradual ascent to universal dominion. Once again, and a third time, are we told the story of that eventful period: first, in the witnesses who prophesy in sackcloth, are slain, and obliged to flee into the wilderness; and yet again, in the history of the beast of the sea and the beast of the earth; which last grew to such a height of power, and waxed so self-willed and imperious, that he would permit no one to buy or sell who did not wear his mark in his forehead or in his right hand. Thus the prophecy is thrice given, and each time under different imagery; because God had established the thing, and would surely bring it to pass; and also, that opportunity might be given minutely to paint antichrist in his character and actions, in order that the church might know him when he appeared. Such, then, is the subject of the little book. It supplies the history of some most important events which took place during the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets,—that is, from the close of the fifth to the beginning of the sixteenth century,—and the knowledge of which is essential to the right understanding of the closing acts in the great apocalyptic drama.]

Thirdly. His awful voice. He cried aloud, "as when a lion roareth," ver. 3. And his awful voice was echoed by "seven thunders," seven solemn and terrible ways of discovering the mind of God.

[The angel speaks with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and the seven thunders are the re-echo of the angel's voice. Similar in character to the original sound must be the reverberations. The voice denoted the awful events of the coming dispensation, especially those that were to bring about "the consummation;" and so must the seven thunders which were awakened by that voice. They relate, we are strongly persuaded, to the plagues that were to constitute the third woe,—the judgments by which the ruin of the papacy was to be accomplished. If so, they are the same as the plagues of the seven vials, with which they correspond in point of number; and the words of the angel that follow give ground to conclude that they correspond with the vials in point of time also; that, in fact, both relate to the same events.]

Fourthly. The prohibition given to the apostle, that he should not publish, but conceal what he had learned from the seven thunders, ver. 4. The apostle was for preserving and publishing every thing he saw and heard in these visions, but the time was not yet come. [Why was it said to John, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not?" Obviously because the events they announced were to be afterwards revealed to him in symbol under the seventh trumpet. They were sealed up now, because John had first to be shewn the rise and reign of that terrible power on which the plagues which the thunders announced were to be inflicted. It would have violated the proprieties of the apocalyptic drama to write the doom before the object of that doom had arisen.]

Fifthly. The solemn oath taken by this mighty angel. 1. The manner of his swearing; he "lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth

give Divine sanction to that important act." Others take it as indicating the supplementary prophecy which gives a fuller account of the growth of Christianity.

x. 6. "There should be time no longer;" rather, "there shall be delay no longer." The connection with verse 7 then becomes clearer. There should be delay no longer, but when the seventh angel was about to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, according to the glad tidings declared.

for ever;" by himself, as God often has done; or by God as God, to whom he, as Lord, Redeemer, and Ruler of the world now, now appeals. 2. The matter of the oath: "That there should be time no longer;" either, 1st. That there shall be now no longer delay in fulfilling the predictions of this book than till the last angel shall sound, then every thing should be put into speedy execution, "the mystery of God shall be finished," ver. 7. Or, 2nd. That when this mystery of God is finished, time itself shall be no more; as is the measure of things that are in a mutable, changing state; but all things shall be at length for ever fixed, and so time itself swallowed up in eternity.

[Every one qualified to consult the original will at once admit that our translation does not give the precise import of the angel's oath,—*χρόνος οὐκ ἔσται*, literally, "The time shall not be yet." The angel refers plainly to the time when some event, important in itself, and anxiously desired and expected by John, as representative of the church, should happen, and of which the angel had just spoken, and been answered by the thunders which had disclosed the particulars of that great event. When, then, shall it be? "But," continues the angel, "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." That it was some joyful event, to the church at least, whatever its aspect to the world, is undoubted, from the term which the angel employs when speaking about it,—*εὐγγελισαί*,—the same word which is employed to denote the preaching of the gospel. It had been declared as good news. We learn farther from the angel's oath, that the event had ere now been foretold. It had been declared,—preached as good news,—to the prophets. To which of the prophets? Is there any of them to whom we find a revelation made,—a revelation on oath,—of the consummation, or the finishing of some grand epoch in God's government of the world? We find such a revelation made to Daniel, conveyed in terms and accompanied with imagery so very nearly identical with those of the vision before us, that we can have no doubt the allusion is to that prophet: see *Dan. xii. 6, 7*. The epoch, which was to bear a complex character, in as much as it was to be a period of unexampled trouble, and of deliverance equally unexampled, was then far distant: accordingly, Daniel was told, "the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." The vision of Daniel helps us to interpret that of John. In the above passage there is a reference made to a noted period in the Apocalypse,—*"a time, times, and a half,"* that is, a year, two years, and half a year, that is, twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days, or years. The period, we say, is a strongly marked one in the Apocalypse, seeing it embraces the reign of antichrist. At the end of that period all these wonders of judgment and deliverance are to happen. This enables us to determine what is here meant by the mystery of God, which shall be finished in the days of the voice of the seventh angel. It also goes a great way to determine with certainty what the things were which the seven thunders uttered, but which John was forbidden to write. Seeing we are informed in Daniel that they were to take place at the close of the twelve hundred and sixty days, we infer that they were the seven last plagues, by which antichrist was to be slowly consumed, and at length suddenly and fearfully destroyed. The history of "the little book" begins after the sounding of the fourth trumpet; from which period, speaking generally, we date the rise of antichrist. The oath of the angel, touching the finishing of the mystery of God in his destruction, bore that it should not be yet. A full millennium had to intervene,—from the fifth to the sixteenth century; not sooner should antichrist reach his meridian. But, having attained the height of his power, the seventh angel should sound; and then, as sure as God possessed almighty power and eternal being, antichrist should be destroyed.]

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. 10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. 11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

Here we have,

First. A strict charge given to the apostle, which was, 1. That he should "go and take the little book" out of the hands of that mighty angel mentioned before. This charge was given, not by the angel himself that stood upon the earth, but by the same voice from heaven that, in the fourth verse, had laid an injunction upon him not to write what he had discerned by the seven thunders. 2. To eat the book. This part of the charge was given by the angel himself, hinting to the apostle that before he should publish what he had discovered, he must more thoroughly digest the predictions, and be in himself suitably affected with them.

Secondly. An account of the taste and relish which this little book would have when the apostle had taken it in. 1. While "in his mouth, sweet." All persons feel a pleasure in looking into future events, and in having them foretold; and all good men love to receive a word from God, of what import soever it be. But, 2. When this book of prophecy was more thoroughly digested by the apostle the contents would be bitter. These were things so awful and terrible, such grievous persecutions of the people of God, and such desolation made in the earth, that the foresight and foreknowledge of them would not be pleasant, but painful to the mind of the apostle. Thus was Ezekiel's prophecy to him, *Eze. iii. 3*.

Thirdly. The apostle's discharge of the duty he was called to; ver. 10, he "took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up," and he found the relish to be as was told him. 1. It becomes the servants of God to digest in their own souls the messages they bring to others in his name, and to be suitably affected with it themselves. 2. It becomes them to deliver every message with which they are charged, whether it would be pleasing or displeasing to men. That which is least pleasing may be most profitable; however, God's messengers must not keep back any part of the counsel of God.

Fourthly. The apostle is made to know that this book of prophecy, that he had

now taken in, was not given him merely to gratify his own curiosity, or to affect him with pleasure or pain, but to be communicated by him to the world. Here his prophetic commission seems to be renewed, and he is ordered to prepare for another embassy, to convey those declarations of the mind and will of God, which are of great importance, to all the world, and to the highest and greatest men in the world, and such should be read and recorded in many languages; and so it is: we have them in our language, and are all obliged to attend unto them, and humbly to inquire into the meaning of them, and firmly to believe that every thing shall have its accomplishment in the proper time; and when the prophecies are fulfilled, the sense and truth of them will appear, and the omniscience, power, and faithfulness of the great God will be adored.

[The vision ends with an intimation to John to receive the book from the angel, and eat it. He did so: "And it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter." To eat the book denoted the exercise of his mind respecting it. To understand a matter at once important and profound is pleasant,—sweet as honey; but, alas! the book contained heavy tidings to the church: it announced a period of twelve hundred and sixty years of sorrow to her, and of triumph to her foes: "And as soon as I had eaten (understood) it, my belly was bitter." Once more was the voice of prophecy to be heard in the world before it should become silent for ever. "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." John was the last of the prophets, and this was the last prophecy. It respected the church's last enemy; and as soon as this prediction should be published, the volume of prophecy would be closed. John was not in person to publish these sayings to the world. He was a prisoner in Patmos, kept there by the tyrant who now governed the world. But though he had been permitted that very day to leave the shores of the lonely isle, he was too full of years and sufferings to journey through the countries, and proclaim what was now made known to him. He was soon, by death, to rejoin in glory that Lord whose chosen and best beloved companion he had been during his humiliation on earth. But, being inspired to write the visions of Patmos, he is prophesying to this hour before peoples and nations. And by the church he has ever been held to be one of the greatest of those prophets which, though dead, yet speak unto her.]

CHAPTER XI.

In this chapter we have an account, 1. Of the measuring-reed given to the apostle to take the dimensions of the temple, ver. 1, 2. 11. Of the two witnesses of God, ver. 3—13. 111. Of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and what followed upon it, ver. 14 to the end.



And there was given me a reed like unto a rod. and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two month.

This prophetic passage about measuring the temple is a plain reference to what we find in Ezekiel's vision, *Eze. xl. 3*; but how to understand either the one or the other is not so easy. It should seem the design of measuring the temple in the former case was in order to the rebuilding of it, and that with advantage. The design of this measure seems to be either, 1. For the preservation of it in those times of public danger and calamity that are here foretold; or, 2. For its trial, that it may be seen how far it agrees with the standard or pattern in the mount. Or, 3. For its reformation; that what is redundant, deficient, or changed, may be regulated according to the true model. Observe, First. How much was to be measured. 1. The temple. The gospel church in general, whether it be so built, so constituted, as the gospel rule directs; whether it be too narrow or too large,—the door too wide or too strait. 2. The altar. That which was the place of the most solemn acts of worship may be put for religious worship in general; whether the church has the true altar, both as to substance and situation; as to substance, whether they take Christ for their altar, and lay down all their offerings there; and in situation, whether the altar be in the holiest, that is, whether they worship God in the Spirit and in truth. 3. The worshippers too must be measured, whether they make God's glory their end and his word their rule, in all their acts of worship; and whether they come to God with suitable affections, and whether their conversation be as becomes the Gospel.

Secondly. What was not to be measured, ver. 2, and why it should be left out. 1. What was not to be measured; "The court which is without the temple, measure it not." Some say Herod, in the additions made to the temple, built an outer court, and called it, 'the court of the Gentiles.' Some tell us Adrian built the city and an outer court, and called it, *Ælia*, and gave it to the Gentiles. 2. Why was not the outer court mentioned? This was no part of the temple, according to the model either of Solomon or Zerubbabel, and therefore God would have no regard to it. He would not mark it out for preservation, but as it was designed for the Gentiles, to bring pagan ceremonies and customs, and to annex them to the gospel churches, so Christ abandoned it to them, to be used as they pleased; and both that and the city were trodden under foot for a certain time, "forty and two months," which some will have to be the whole time of the reign of antichrist. They that worship in the outer court are either such as worship in a false manner, or with hypocritical hearts; and these are rejected of God, and will be found among his enemies. From the whole observe, 1st. God will have a temple and an altar in the world till the end of time. 2nd. That he has a strict regard to this temple, and observes how every thing is managed in it. 3rd. Those that worship in the outer court will be rejected, and only those that worship within the veil accepted. 4th. "The holy city," the visible church, is very much trampled upon in the world. But, 5th. The desolations of the church are for a limited time, and for a short time; and she shall be delivered out of all her troubles.

[The author of *Horæ Apocalyptice* makes the symbol of the rod to carry the royal supremacy in matters ecclesiastical; and on the symbol so interpreted

x. 11. "He said:" the best MSS. have "they say unto me." This eating of the book is considered by some to mark, as in Ezekiel's case (*Ezek. iii. 1—3*), the inauguration of the apostle to a fresh stage in his prophetic office.

xi. 1. "Reed like unto a rod:" compare *Ezek. xl. 3* and *Rev. xxi. 15*. Some refer this to the canon and rule of Holy Scripture, completed by St. John. The reed was like to a rod. There seems to be an allusion to the rod of iron (*Psa. ii. 9*), which cannot be

bent or broken, but which will break in pieces all opposing forces. "And the angel stood:" these words are omitted in the best MSS. The word "saying" is thus made to agree with "reed." The reed, or canon of Holy Scripture, the measuring reed of the Church, the rule of faith, speaks the word of command, and is itself the measure. Compare chap. xvi. 7, where, according to the best MSS., the altar is represented as speaking.

xi. 2. "Forty and two months:" i.e., the three years and a half,

he founds the grave inference that the royal supremacy is lawful, and tenders an admonition to those who impugn it. 'The apocalyptic prophecy,' he says, 'seems to have pronounced distinctly against them, representing, as it does, the original constitution of the Lutheran and Anglican reformed churches on that very principle,—not as any act of sinful Erastianism, but as Christ's own doing, and so with the stamp of his approbation on it.' Dr. Candlish, in his *Four Letters*, and the author of the *Seventh Vial*, discuss this opinion. Bishop Warburton, in one of his *Letters to Bishop Hurd* (1809; p. 192), makes the following observations, which may be useful in reference to it: 'I greatly approve of your design of a dialogue on the effect of transferring supremacy in religious matters. A thousand curious hints will arise to you as you proceed in contemplation of the subject. One now, for instance, occurs to me: Could any thing be more absurd than that, when the yoke of Rome was thrown off, they should govern the new church, erected in opposition to it, by the laws of the old? The pretence was, that this was only by way of *interim*, till a body of ecclesiastical laws could be formed. But whoever considers that the canon laws proceeded from, and had perpetual reference to, an absolute spiritual monarch, and were formed upon the genius, and did acknowledge the authority, of the civil laws, the issue of civil despotism,—I say, whoever considers this will be inclined to think that the crown contrived this *interim* from the use the canon law was of to the extension of the prerogative. However, it is certain that the succeeding monarchs, Elizabeth, James, and Charles, prevented our ever having a body of new ecclesiastical laws from a sense of this utility in the old ones, and a consciousness if ever they submitted a body of new laws to the legislature, the parliament would form them altogether upon the genius of a free church and state.' 'The interior temple,' says Vitrinæ, 'means true Christians; the exterior, false Christians, heretics, &c.; the altar means Christ; measuring the temple and worshippers is scrutinizing the character of Christians, real or professed; the casting out of the outer court is excommunicating false professors; the heathen who are to tread down the temple and city are Christians in name only, (and therefore called heathen), who are to form an external church, and have dominion over it,—suppressing at the same time the true worshippers of God, until at last God shall exclude them from even the external pale of his church.' 'What could be the use,' justly asks Mr. Elliott, 'of resembling the measuring reed to a simple stick, or staff?' 'But let it be resembled,' says Dr. Candlish, 'to the rod of sovereignty and judgment in the hand of Christ, the Lord; and how appropriate—how significant—is the similitude! The temple is to be measured; a holy and peculiar people are to be separated, and kept separate, from the heathenism of professing Christendom. For this end a spiritual ministry is ordained; and, in addition to the commission of preaching, there is given to that ministry authority to draw the line—to mark out the character and limits of the altar-court and its worshippers—to make a distinction between the select company who adhere to the one righteousness and the one sacrifice through which alone worship can be acceptable, and the miscellaneous crowd who more or less conform to popery and formality. And, as the emblem or symbol of this authority, a measuring reed is given; a measuring reed, bearing a resemblance to a rod, or sceptre. What rod? What sceptre? Would any of those to whom the revelation was first addressed hesitate for a moment? The only rod—the only sceptre—that could be a fitting model of this measuring reed, must be that of Christ himself; the badge of his own sovereignty; which he is to exercise at last, in judging between the sheep and the goats; gathering to himself his little ones under his sceptre of peace, and smiting the wicked with his "rod of iron." Yes. It is to Christ's sceptre that the measuring reed is likened, and not to that of earthly kings. The commission to preach, and the commission to measure, come equally from him; and, by his own Spirit blessing the execution of this double office, he is separating unto himself a peculiar people, who shall be to the praise of his glory in the day of his appearing. There is some use, I apprehend, in resembling the measuring reed to this rod, the rod wielded by Christ himself; his ministry on earth being, as to its authority and tendency,—its commission to preach to all, and its efficacy to separate a peculiar people,—the result, alike, and the reflected image, of his own glorious supremacy.'—The Gentiles were not merely to possess the court which was without the temple, they were to tread under foot the holy city. Jerusalem is here used as the symbol of the Christian church. The term "treading under foot" denotes the subjection in which the church would be held, and the indignities with which she should be treated. Like Jerusalem, when taken by the Chaldeans, or rather like the same city when its site was ploughed by the Romans, its walls broken down, its stately palaces demolished, and the foe walking in triumph over the ruins, so the church of God was to exhibit, during this long and calamitous period, a spectacle of desolation. Her rights and privileges were to be taken from her; her ordinances were to be profaned; her Head was to be insulted, and her members persecuted and slain. These oppressions she should suffer for forty-two months, which is the precise length of time that the witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth; the only difference being, that the period of the witnesses is given in days,—that of the treading under foot of the outer court by the Gentiles, in months (forty-two months, or forty-two times thirty days, that is, one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic days or years). This, to our mind, is completely satisfactory that the profanation of the outer court and the prophesying of the witnesses were to be contemporaneous; and that it is the same event that is prefigured by both symbols,—the apostacy of the heathenish and persecuting church of Rome, and the indignities and oppressions to be endured by the true church during the continuance of that apostacy. We cannot but admire the appropriateness of the symbols, and the exact and lively picture which they exhibit of the leading events of the grand apostacy. John receives a measuring reed; the angel commands him to rise and measure the temple. He does so. On the authority of his Divine commission, and in the application of a Divine rule, he draws a line of separation between the pure and holy worshippers at the altar and the unclean and idolatrous multitude in the outer court. We behold Christendom divided into two ecclesiastical confederacies, vastly dissimilar in point of numbers, as well as in point of character. During one period of the forty-two prophetic months we behold the one company grown so small, that the inaccessible cliffs and caves of the Piedmontese Alps sufficed for their dwelling; and, though driven by the rage of man to dwell here, beloved of God, and enjoying access to him through the one Intercessor,—kings and priests unto God; while the other company was so numerous, that the wide plains and populous cities of the rest of Europe could scarce contain them. John, in measuring the temple, acted, as we have said, on a Divine commission, and by the application of a Divine rule; plainly though symbolically teaching us, that everything about the church,—her government, her worship, the admission of her members,—is to be regulated by the word of God.—S. V.]

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These

are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. 6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. 7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. 10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. 11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

In this time of treading down God has reserved to him his faithful witnesses, that will not fail to attest the truth of his word and worship, and the excellency of his ways. Here observe,

First. The number of these witnesses; and it is but a small number, and yet it is sufficient. 1. It is but small. Many will own and acknowledge Christ in times of prosperity that will desert and deny him in times of persecution. One witness when the cause is upon trial is worth many at other times. 2. It is a sufficient number; for in the mouth of "two witnesses" every cause shall be established. Christ sent out his disciples two by two to preach the Gospel. Some think these two witnesses are Enoch and Elias, that are to return to the earth for a time. Others, the church of the believing Jews, and that of the Gentiles. It should rather seem they are God's eminent, faithful ministers, that shall not only continue to profess the Christian religion, but to preach it in the worst of times.

Secondly. The time of their prophesying, or bearing their testimony for Christ; "A thousand two hundred and threescore days;" that is, as many think, to the period of the reign of antichrist; and if the beginning of that interval could be ascertained, this number of prophetic days, taking a day for a year, would give us a prospect when the end shall be.

Thirdly. Their habit and posture. They prophesy in sackcloth, as those that are deeply affected with the low and distressed state of the churches and interest of Christ in the world.

4. How they were supported and supplied during the discharge of their great and hard work; they stood before the God of the whole earth, and he gave them power to prophesy. He made them to be like Zerubbabel and Joshua, the two olive-trees and candlesticks in the vision of Zechariah, *Zec. iv. 3, &c.* God gave them the oil of holy zeal, and courage, and strength, and comfort; made them olive-trees, and their lamps of profession were kept burning by the oil of inward, gracious principles, which they received from God. They had not only oil in their lamps, but in their vessels. Habits of spiritual life, light, and zeal.

Fifthly. Their security and defence during the time of their prophesying, ver. 5; if any attempted to hurt them, fire proceeded out of their mouths, and devoured them. Some think this alludes to Elias, his calling for fire from heaven to consume the captains and their companies that came to seize him, *2 Kin. i. 12*. God promised the prophet Jeremiah, *Jer. v. 14*, "Behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people shall be wood, and it shall devour them." By their praying, and preaching, and courage in suffering, they shall gall and wound the very hearts and consciences of many of their persecutors, that shall go away self-condemned, and be even terrors to themselves, like Pashur at the words of the prophet Jeremiah, *Jer. xx. 4*. They shall have that free access to God, and that interest in him, that at their prayers God will inflict plagues and judgments upon their enemies, as he did on Pharaoh, turning

the 1260 days of the next verse. There is a correspondence in form to be noticed between Scripture periods. Our Lord's ministry lasted (according to the usual reckoning) about three years and a half. For this length of time the oppressions of Antiochus lasted. For three years and a half the drought in the days of Elijah lasted. Some have noted the similarity between the forty-two months here and the forty-two sojournings of Israel (*Numb. xxxiii. 1–50*).

xi. 3. "Power:" this word is not to be found in the original.

It runs, "I will give unto my two witnesses." On the meaning of these two witnesses, the Notes above give the interpretation most usually adopted by historical interpreters. Others, who regard the fulfilment of the Apocalypse still mostly future, interpret the two witnesses as two prophets who will appear on the earth during the time of the great apostacy. Among them De Burgh interprets the witnesses of Moses and Elijah, who will again appear. (Compare *Mal. iv. 5, 6*; *Matt. xvii. 11*; *Acts iii. 21*.) It is a custom among

their rivers into blood, and restraining the dews of heaven,—shutting heaven up, that no rain shall fall for many days, as he did at the prayer of Elias, 1 *Kin.* xvii. 1. God has ordained his arrows for the persecutors, and is often plaguing them while they are persecuting his people: they find it hard work to “kick against the pricks.”

Sixthly. The slaying of the witnesses, to make their testimony more strong; they must seal it with blood. Here observe, 1. The time when they should be killed; “When they have finished their testimony.” They are immortal, they are invulnerable, till their work be done. Some think it ought to be rendered, “When they were about to finish their testimony;” when they had prophesied in sackcloth the greatest part of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years, then they should feel the last effect of antichristian malice. 2. The enemy that should overcome and slay them; “The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit.” Antichrist, the great instrument of the devil, he shall make war against them, not only with the arms of subtle and sophistical learning, but chiefly with open force and violence; and God would permit his enemies to prevail against his witnesses for a time. 3. The barbarous usage of these slain witnesses; the malice of their enemies was not satiated with their blood and death, but pursued even “their dead bodies.” 1st. They would not allow them a quiet grave; their bodies were cast out in the open street, the high street of Babylon, or in the high road leading to the city. This city is spiritually called Sodom, for monstrous wickedness; and Egypt, for idolatry and tyranny; and here Christ in his mystical body has suffered more than in any place in the world. 2nd. Their dead bodies were insulted by the inhabitants of the earth, and their death was a matter of mirth and joy to the antichristian world, ver. 10. They were glad to be rid of these witnesses, that by their doctrine and example had teased, terrified, and tormented the consciences of their enemies. These spiritual weapons cut wicked men to the heart, and fill them with the greatest rage and malice against the faithful.

Seventhly. The resurrection of these witnesses, and the consequences thereof. Where, 1. The time of their rising again; after they had lain dead “three days and an half,” ver. 11; a short time in comparison of that in which they had prophesied. Here may be a reference to the resurrection of Christ, who is “the resurrection and the life:” “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.” Or to the resurrection of Lazarus on the fourth day, when they thought it impossible. God’s witnesses may be slain, but they shall rise again; not in their persons, till the general resurrection, but in their successors. God will revive his work when it seems to be dead in the world. 2. The power by which they were raised; “The Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet.” God put not only life but courage into them. God can make the dry bones to live; it is the Spirit of life from God that quickens dead souls, and shall quicken the dead bodies of his people, and his dying interest in the world. 3. The effect of this upon their enemies; “Great fear fell upon them.” The reviving of God’s work and witnesses will strike terror into the souls of his enemies. Where there is guilt there is fear; and a persecuting spirit, though cruel, is not a courageous, but a cowardly spirit. Herod feared John the Baptist.

Eighthly. The ascension of the witnesses into heaven, and the consequences thereof, ver. 12, 13. Observe, 1. Their ascension. By heaven we may understand, either some more eminent station in the church, the kingdom of grace in this world, or to a high place in the kingdom of glory above. The former seems to be the meaning. “They ascended to heaven in a cloud,” in a figurative, not in a literal sense; “and their enemies beheld them.” It will be no small part of the punishment of persecutors, both in this world and at the great day, that they shall see the faithful servants of God greatly honoured and advanced. To this honour they did not attempt to ascend, till God called them, and said, “Come up hither.” The Lord’s witnesses must wait for their advancement, both in the church and in heaven, till God calls them; they must not be weary of sufferings and services, nor too hastily grasp at the reward, but stay till their Master calls them, and then they may gladly ascend to him. 2. The consequences of their ascension; and that was a mighty shock and convulsion in antichristian empire, and the fall of a tenth part of the city. Some refer this to the beginning of the reformation from popery, when many princes and states fell off from their subjection to Rome. This great work met with great opposition, all the western world felt a great concussion, and the antichristian interest received a great blow, and lost a great deal of ground and interest. 1st. By the sword of war, which was then drawn, and many of those that fought under the banner of antichrist were slain by it. 2nd. By the sword of the Spirit; “The fear of God fell upon many.” They were convinced of their errors, superstition, and idolatry; and by true repentance, and embracing the truth, they “gave glory to the God of heaven.” Thus, when God’s work and witnesses revive, the devil’s work and witnesses fall before him.

“I will give unto my two witnesses,” for so runs the original. The question is, What shall be given? The implied answer of our translation is, we think, the right one,—“power.” The power is spiritual; power to perceive the truth and reject the errors by which so many were to be misled; power to cleave to the truth, and resist the temptations before which the majority were to fall; power to proclaim the truth, and, by doing so, to convert others who might stand in their room and maintain their testimony when they should be called away, so that the line of witnesses should not be cut off, but ran continuously on till better times should come. Individually they would be removed by death or persecution, but as a body the witnesses should be inviolable. Their work is next defined: “They shall prophesy.” Prophesying means here, as in many other passages of the New Testament, every kind of preaching by Divine aid. The prophesying of the witnesses was not to consist in the revelation of new truths, but in condemning the world for its defection from old ones. They were to receive and profess the whole body of doctrine revealed by Christ and his apostles, and in doing so they should testify against the Romish apostasy. Hence the name given unto them,—“witnesses.” The name is borrowed from the Old Testament; “Ye are my witnesses,” said God to the ancient Israel. We are disposed, continues the author of the *Seventh Vial*, to concur in the opinion of Mr. Elliot, Mr. Faber, and others, that the reference here is to the eastern and western churches. The former has, with great historical research, and with complete success, traced a succession of witnesses in both churches, from the close of the sixth century till the Reformation. Such of our readers as may wish to have fuller information respecting the two witnesses, their reduced numbers, and their sore trials during the long period of their prophesying in sackcloth, may consult the *Horæ Apocalypticæ*. Speaking of the eastern Christians, and shewing their claim to be regarded as one of the two apocalyptic witnesses, Mr. Elliot remarks:—First, then, in regard both of ministers and congregations, the teachers and the taught, it is notorious that they bore a continuous and unvarying protest against those grosser superstitions of saint-mediatorship, image-worship, and other kinds of idolatry, through which the so-called Christians of the Roman world had degenerated into Gentiles of the outer court; and against which, consequently, witnesses answering to those of the Apocalypse must needs have testified. Second, though before the eyes of men the self-styled Catholics of the eastern and western Roman world seemed to constitute Christendom,—though they filled, as it were, the whole visible temple,—yet did these Paulicians’ (the name given

to the eastern Christians) ‘regard and speak of them throughout as those who belonged not to the church of Christ, but, being apostates, belonged rather to the Gentile or outer court. Small as their numbers were, yet they called their assemblies the Catholic church, and said, “We are Christians, you are Romans.” As regards the witnesses of western origin, who has not heard of the Waldenses? Inhabiting the Cottian Alps, and those deep valleys through which the Rhone rolls, they maintained through successive ages their testimony against the corrupt churches of Roman Christendom. Mr. Elliot has likewise traced their history from the close of the sixth century till the era of the Reformation, not, indeed, without some breaks in the chain, which are not surprising when we take into account the remoteness of their times, and the obscurity in which they lived, but still with wonderful continuity. Here, amid these Alpine regions, they kept alive the lamp of truth, while darkness covered the rest of Europe. They were renowned for the purity of their faith, the



WALDENSIAN CANDLESTICK.

(The heraldic arms of the Waldenses and their chief town, Lucerna, was the precise apocalyptic symbol of a lighted candlestick in the surrounding night, with the motto, ‘The light shineth in darkness.’)

simplicity of their life, and the constancy with which they testified against the Romish doctrines, resisting even unto blood. That the papal or Romish system was that of antichrist, which, from infancy in apostolic times, had grown gradually, by the increase of its constituent parts, to the stature of a full-grown man; that its prominent characteristics were, to defraud God of the worship due to him, rendering it to creatures, whether departed saints, relics, images, or antichrist, that is, the antichristian body itself; to defraud Christ, by attributing justification and forgiveness to antichrist’s authority and words, to saints’ intercessions, to the merit of men’s own performances, and to the fire of purgatory; to defraud the Holy Spirit, by attributing regeneration and sanctification to the *opus operatum* (I borrow the Fridentine term used afterwards) of the two sacraments, that the origin of this antichristian religion was the covetousness of the priesthood; its tendency to lead men away from Christ; its essence a vain ceremonial; its foundation the false notions of grace and forgiveness.—The visible assemblies of the Paulicians or Albigeois were extirpated by fire and sword, and the bleeding remnant escaped by flight, concealment, or Catholic conformity. But the invincible spirit which they had kindled still lived and breathed in the western world. In the state, the church, and even in the cloister, a latent succession was preserved of the disciples of St. Paul, who protested against the tyranny of Rome, embraced the Bible as the rule of faith, and purified their creed from all the visions of the Gnostic theology. The struggles of Wickliffe in England, and of Huss in Bohemia, were premature and ineffectual; but the names of Zuinglius, Luther, and Calvin, are pronounced with gratitude as the deliverers of nations!—Gibbon. How striking a testimony, says Mr. Cunningham, is here given by an enemy of Christianity to the fulfilment of prophecy! Gibbon writing an involuntary comment on St. John.

The time when the witnesses should be slain is marked by these words: “When they shall have finished their testimony.” The verb ‘to finish’ is used in numerous passages in the New Testament in two distinct and different senses: first, to finish in point of time, so that the person ceases to act. Second, to finish in the way of perfecting the work on which he is employed; he has perfected, matured it; and, though he still repeats it, he ceases to perform it more completely or perfectly. Seeing the word is used in these two senses,—that of finishing a course of acting, and that of completing an act by performing all its parts, the question remains, In which of these senses is it here used? Whether does it relate to the time of prophesying,—the twelve hundred and sixty days,—or to the witness-bearing, *μαρτυρία*, abstractedly viewed? The more natural reference, we admit, is to the time of prophesying; and were there no elements of judgment but such as are found in the verse before us, we would at once grant that this is the true reference. But other considerations, springing from other parts of the Apocalypse, render this supposition impossible, and constrain us to apply the words to the *μαρτυρία*, ‘testimony,’ that is, to regard the slaying of the witnesses as foretold to happen, not at the end of the twelve hundred and sixty days, but as soon as they should have completed their testimony, which might be expected to happen whenever popery should be fully developed, and the testimony of the church have come to be pointed against all the leading errors in the papal system, which should then be seen and proclaimed to be the antichrist. But how stand the facts of history with our interpretation? They are in perfect accordance therewith. The Waldenses, the Vaudois, and other bodies of Christians, had borne an open testimony from the beginning against the various corruptions of Rome,—her errors in doctrine, her idolatries in worship, and her immoralities of life;—but at last, in the end of the twelfth century,—the same century in which, according to Gibbon, the meridian of

some Jews, at some of their feasts, to leave a vacant chair for Elijah, whom they still expect to appear suddenly.

xi. 4. “Before the God:” all the ancient MSS. read “the Lord of the earth.”

xi. 5, 6. The miracles here described forcibly remind us of the miracles of Moses and Elijah—the shutting of the heavens from rain (1 Kings xvii. 1), the destruction of the enemies by fire (2 Kings i. 10), the water turned to blood. “The dews of Divine

grace are withheld from all who scorn the two witnesses. The heavens are brass, the earth is iron to their foes (Deut. xxviii. 23). The waters of salvation become blood to revilers or scoffers of Scripture. To them the blessing is a bane, the Scripture a scourge, preaching a plague, the word a woe” (Wordsworth).

xi. 8. “Their dead bodies:” two out of the three best MSS. have the singular number, “their dead body.” “The great city . . . where also their (so all the best MSS. read) Lord was crucified:”

papal greatness was attained,—they proclaimed her to be the antichrist of Scripture—the harlot of the Apocalypse. Thus and then did the witnesses fulfil their testimony. It was foretold that this should be the signal for the beast to make war with them; and so it was. Rome as a body now moved against them, which she had not done before. The peaceful and fertile valleys of the Vaudois and the Waldenses were invaded, and speedily devastated with fire and sword; their towns and villages were burnt.—S. V. 'Milton,' says Dr. Keith, 'describes the scene with the power, without the fiction, of a poet. And without looking alone to the righteous retribution which awaits iniquity, he has obviously in view the words of the prophet,—that higher inspiration which no poetry alone can ever reach:

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,
E'en them that kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not; in thy book record their groans,
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
An hundred-fold, who, having learned the way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe!"

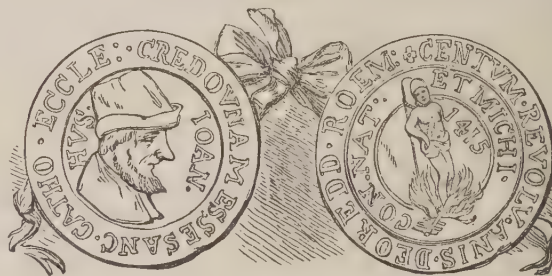
Calculations have been formed of the numbers whom popery has slain. From the year 1540 to the year 1570, comprehending only the space of thirty years, no fewer than nine hundred thousand Protestants were put to death by papists in the different countries of Europe. During the short pontificate of Paul the Fourth, which lasted only four years, the Inquisition alone, on the testimony of Vergerius, destroyed a hundred and fifty thousand. Those that perished in Germany during the wars of Charles the Fifth, and in Flanders under the infamous Alva, are counted by hundreds of thousands. For a number of years, especially after the Reformation, these countries swarmed with executioners, and were covered with scaffolds and fires. In France several millions were destroyed in the innumerable massacres that took place in that kingdom. It has been calculated that, since the rise of the papacy, not fewer than fifty millions of persons have been put to death on account of religion. Of this inconceivable number the greater part have been cut off during the last six hundred years, for the papacy persecuted very little during the first half of its existence; it was not till the witnesses completed their testimony that it made war against them. Fifty millions in the space of six hundred years gives a rate of upwards of eighty thousand every year. Let us think of eighty thousand human beings destroyed year after year for the long period of six hundred years, till at last the numbers are swelled to the overwhelming amount of fifty millions! What a fearful meaning does this give to the words of John, "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth!"

The two witnesses were not individuals, but organized societies—churches. Their death, therefore, must needs be symbolic; not their death as individuals, but their apparent extermination as organized societies—the suppression of that public testimony which these churches had borne before Christendom. Now, if we look back, we discover but one period in the history of Christendom to which the prediction can apply,—the period we have indicated,—the beginning of the sixteenth century, just before the Reformation. 'In turning from prophecy to history,' says Mr. Elliot, 'from the symbolic picture to the thing symbolized, it seems almost impossible to mistake the precise scene and occasion alluded to. It can surely be none other than that of the very Lateran Council held from 1512 to 1517, under the pontificates of Julius the Second, and Leo the Tenth, just before the Reformation.' Having stated that the object for which this council was assembled was the suppression of all that might yet remain in western Christendom of witnesses for Christ, and particularly the Bohemian Hussites,—for both the Lollards of England and the Waldenses of Piedmont had been reduced to silence,—Mr. Elliot resumes:—'In a papal bull issued, with approbation of the council, in the very next or eighth session, held December 1513, a charge was issued summoning the dissidents in question (the Bohemian witnesses) without fail to appear and plead before the council at its next session; unless indeed they should have previously done so before a neighbouring papal legate, the object declared being their conviction, and reduction within the bosom of the Catholic church; and the time finally fixed for the said important session, May the 5th, in the spring ensuing.' Thus was the crisis come which was to try the faith of this bleeding remnant of witnesses, and exhibit its vitality or death. And would they then face their Lord's enemies? Would they brave the terrors of death, and plead his cause before the lordly legate, or the antichristian council; like the Waldenses at Albi and at Pamiers, like Wickliffe and Cobham in England, like Huss and Jerome at the Constance Council, or Luther afterwards at Augsburg and at Worms? Alas, no! The day of the ninth session arrived. The council met. But no report from the cardinal legate gave intimation either of the pleading, or even of any continued stirring, of the Bohemian heretics. No officer of the council announced the arrival of deputies from them to plead before it. Nor, again, was there a whisper wafted to the synod from any other state, or city, or town in Christendom, of a movement made, or a mouth opened, to promulgate or support the ancient heresies. Throughout the length and breadth of Christendom Christ's witnessing servants were silenced; they appeared as dead. The orator of the session ascended the pulpit, and amid the applause of the assembled council, uttered that memorable exclamation of triumph,—an exclamation which, notwithstanding the long multiplied anti-heretical decrees of popes and councils,—notwithstanding the yet more multiplied anti-heretical crusades and inquisitorial fires,—was never, I believe, pronounced before, and certainly never since: '*Jam nemo reclamatur, nullus obsistit!*'—There is an end of resistance to the papal rule and religion; oppressors there exist no more.' So did 'they from the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations,' assembled in the *πρωτεύς*, or 'broad place of the great city,' look on Christ's witnesses as (from thenceforth) dead. Let the reader well mark the description, for it is a description from the life; and let him well mark the day, for it seems scarce possible that we can be mistaken in regarding it as the precise commencing date of the predicted three and a half years, during which Christ's witnesses were to appear as dead corpses in the face of Christendom. It was May 5, 1514. So ended the long and furious war waged by the beast against the witnesses. Christianity, after existing during fifteen centuries, had become extinct, as regarded the public profession of it. There were a few individual saints still upon the earth, but there was nowhere a church. There were none who now dared open their mouth and proclaim Rome to be antichrist. The event was astounding; and yet it was only what the prophecy had foretold: "The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." It was a dark night, yet but the prelude

to a glorious morning. It is well remarked by Mr. Elliot, that it is clear from these words, "they of [from] the people, and kindreds," &c., that there was to be an assembly of deputies from all parts of the papal world, at the time that the dead bodies of the witnesses should be lying on the street of the city, who should behold and enjoy the spectacle. This was remarkably fulfilled in the Lateran Council then met at Rome, composed, as it was, of princes and prelates from every part of the Roman world. But what are we to understand by the prediction, "and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves?" Mr. Elliot mentions a fact which we presume to think is the true explanation of the matter. The same day on which it was proclaimed that there were no longer any opposers to the papal rule and religion the council issued an edict cutting off all heretics, of whatever kind, and of whatever nation, from the church, and decreeing against them the usual punishments. Seeing that, on the avowal of Rome herself, there was no longer any organized church anywhere opposing her authority, the edict could have respect only to individual dissentients which might and did exist, though concealed, in some places,—the corpses of the witnesses. These, by her edict, she cast out of the church, and adjudged to contempt and punishment. By her famous proclamation, '*Jam nemo reclamatur, nullus obsistit!*' she affirmed that the witnesses were slain; by the edict that followed, she proclaimed that their remains were still upon the earth. That edict, in truth, served the same end to these remains of the witnesses which the refusal of burial does to a dead body,—it kept them in the sight of men. Now, indeed, there was rejoicing. The two witnesses were slain, and every square and street of the great city rang with shouts of triumph over their death,—"rejoicing and making merry, and sending gifts one to another"—whose terms are borrowed from the customs of ancient festive occasions, is finely and vividly descriptive of the unbounded exultation and congratulation which reigned throughout the Roman world, now that all heresy, as was supposed, was for ever suppressed. But since man was placed upon the earth the triumphing of the wicked is short. Accordingly, the next event that happens on the apocalyptic scene is the resurrection of the slain witnesses. "And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them." 'But does the chronology suit?' asks Mr. Elliot. 'It was predicted that for three and a half days the witnesses were to be looked on as dead; in other words, that there was to be the interval of three and a half years between the first recognition of their extinction by the assembled deputies from the states of Christendom, and their resuscitation. Was this the interval between that memorable day of the ninth session of the Lateran Council, on which the orator pronounced his pan of triumph over the extinction of heretics and schismatics, and the first and yet more memorable act of protestation by Luther? Let us calculate. The day of the ninth session was, as we have seen, May 5, 1514; the day of Luther's posting up his theses at Wittenberg, (the well-known epoch of the Reformation), October 31, 1517. Now, from May 5, 1514, to May 5, 1517, are three years; and from May 5, 1517, to October 31 of the same year, 1517, the reckoning in days is as follows:

May 5—31.....	27	August.....	31
June.....	30	September.....	30
July.....	31	October.....	31

In all one hundred and eighty, or half three hundred and sixty, days; that is, just half a year. So that the whole interval is precisely, to a day, three and a half years,—precisely, to a day, the period predicted in the apocalyptic prophecy! Oh, wonderful prophecy! is the exclamation that again forces itself on my mind. Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the foreknowledge of God!—That the symbol of the rising from the dead was fulfilled in the fact that although the martyrs continued in their graves, the cause for which they had suffered arose, we may appeal to the testimony of both friends and foes. 'And I,' said John Huss, speaking of the gospel preachers that should appear after he had suffered at the stake, 'and I, awakening as it were from the dead, and rising from the grave, shall rejoice with exceeding great joy.' Again, in 1523, after the Reformation had broken out, we find Pope Hadrian saying, in a missive addressed to the Diet at Nuremberg,—'The heretics Huss



JOHN HUSS.

and Jerome are now alive again in the person of Martin Luther.' The consternation and dismay which fell upon all the adherents of the papacy when Luther arose, and the Reformation under him began to gain ground, is a fact too well known to every reader of the history of the period to need any particular illustration here. "And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them." Christ, after his resurrection, ascended to heaven in a cloud; so was his church received up at the Reformation. Whatever tended to give protection and influence to the church of the Reformation, may be justly regarded as the fulfilment of this symbol,—the civil laws passed in her favour, by which, in several of the countries of Europe, she was placed in the enjoyment of full religious toleration, and could worship without incurring, as aforesaid, either civil or ecclesiastical penalties. The exposition most in harmony with this ascension symbol is that given by Dr. Candlish, in his *Four Letters to Elliot*, and which is as follows: 'Thus, generally, it may be said concerning the apocalyptic distinction between the heaven and the earth, that the one represents the region of influence, the other the region of events: the one the seat of power, the other the seat of action; the first the ideal locality, or, as it were, retiring-room, in which the unseen agencies that tell upon the world's history meet, and mingle, and adjust themselves,—the last the actual locality, or open stage on which the palpable occurrences of that history are enacted. Thus, on the earth the Reformation is begun. For a time, the agents in that mighty work,—Luther and his compeers,—are like passive instruments, acted upon rather than acting,—Luther himself being like one blindly driven by a superior force, which he can neither measure nor explain. He puts forth vast power, but it is as one impelled or possessed. He cannot regulate his own movements; he

this phrase, which clearly points to Jerusalem, is understood by some of the futurist interpreters as denoting the literal Jerusalem, which is to become the centre of the world's apostacy. Those who understand the whole prophecy as pointing to the struggles of pure faith against Romish error, take the names as having a spiritual significance. "The characteristic of Sodom is pollution, of Egypt tyranny, of Jerusalem apostacy. Hence Rome is called Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem, as having the three characteristics united."

xi. 15. "The seventh angel sounded:" the angel who sounds the trumpet of Christ's final triumph. Compare chap. x. 7, where the language indicates a preparation, as it were, for the final sounding of the trumpet. "The kingdoms:" Alford, following all the ancient MSS., renders, "The kingdom over the world is become our Lord's, and of his Christ."

xi. 17. "Which art to come:" nearly all the old MSS. omit these words. Their omission is most natural, for the words of blessing no

recoils, and is reluctant; he knows not whither his steps are leading him, and he staggers as he finds himself in front of the papal bull. But, by and by, the principles thus rudely wrought out, in the region of events, pass again, with their great Author and Inspirer, into the region of influence. The Reformation becomes something more than an uncontrollable effect; it becomes a commanding cause. The motives and impulses which, as if spontaneously and simultaneously, stirred everywhere the irrepressible revolt against Rome's intolerable tyranny, are gathered up, systematized, and elevated into the high position of a ruling power, not only in morals and religion, but in the whole economy, also, of the social system of the world. In a word, the scheme of Protestant doctrine,—based upon the sole supremacy of the Scriptures as the rule of faith, and of the Spirit as the interpreter of the Scriptures,—was settled and promulgated, as a testimony for Christ, open, authoritative, and influential; and the harmony of the Reformed confessions became, as to its spirit and substance, the true ascension of the witnesses. Certainly, nothing has more struck and startled their enemies than this, in so far as it has been wrought out. It has been really, in an intellectual and spiritual point of view, more noticeable, as a source of real trouble to them, than all the Protestant establishments in Christendom put together. Their very anxiety to exaggerate real and to invent imaginary discrepancies among Protestants proves how keenly they are stung by the essential and Divine unity of the Reformation testimony, in favour of a free salvation by grace, through faith alone. It is this holy and heavenly system that they hate and fear; and its exaltation, as by a voice from heaven, into a principle of paramount influence, in the teaching and standards of the Reformers, is the real cause of the amazement with which "their enemies beheld them." The resurrection of the witnesses, like that of their Lord, was accompanied by an earthquake. The earthquake was connected with, and sprung out of, the resurrection, and may therefore be viewed as symbolizing a revolution mainly of a moral or religious character. In the earthquake, "the tenth part of the city fell." To explain this, we have only to bear in mind that the city was constituted of the ten Roman kingdoms of Europe confederated under the papacy. Which of these ten kingdoms was it that fell at the Reformation, as a popish country? The answer is, Britain. The fall of this tenth part (the tithe) of this city was the first-fruits, as it were, of that great harvest of destruction awaiting the papacy. An important announcement follows: "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly." The second woe, the Turks, came to its height in 1572, about the same time that the Reformation was established; but could not be said to be past, till about the middle of the eighteenth century. The third woe was to begin when the seventh trumpet should be sounded, and was to comprehend the seven last plagues of mystic Babylon. "The third woe cometh quickly." There was an interval of five hundred years between the first and second woe; but the second was to be followed by the third, at the distance of only about fifteen years. It was to do its work quickly, after it did come. By a series of fearful and exterminating judgments, following each other with astounding rapidity, was Rome to be brought down. The seventh trumpet now to be sounded was her death-knell; but though to her a terrific peal, it was a trumpet of jubilee to the church; it announced the destruction of her great enemy, and the deliverance of the nations, who were henceforth to become the kingdoms of her Lord, and of her Christ. Accordingly, no sooner did it sound than great voices were heard in heaven, proclaiming the reduction of the world under the reign of God.—S. V.]

14 The second woe is past; *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. 15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come;—because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

We have here the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet, which is ushered in by the usual warning and demand of attention: "The second woe is past, and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly." Then "the seventh angel sounded." This had been suspended for some time, till the apostle had been made acquainted with some intervening occurrences of very great moment, and worthy of his notice and observation. But what he before expected he now heard, the seventh angel sounding. And here observe the effects and consequences of this trumpet thus sounded.

First. Here were loud and joyful acclamations of the saints and angels in heaven. Where observe, 1. The manner of their adorations. They rose from their seats, and "fell upon their faces, and worshipped God." They did it with reverence and humility. 2. The matter of their adorations. 1st. They thankfully recognize the right of our God and Saviour to rule and reign over all the world; ver. 15, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." They were always so in title, both by creation and

purchase. 2nd. They thankfully observe his actual possession of them, and reign over them. They give him thanks because he had taken to him his great power, asserted his rights, and exerted his power, and so turned title into possession. 3. They rejoice that this his reign shall never end: "He shall reign for ever and ever, till all enemies be put under his feet;" none shall ever wrest the sceptre out of his hand.

Secondly. Here were angry resentments in the world, at these just appearances and acts of the power of God, ver. 18. The nations were angry; not only had been so, but were so still. Their hearts rose up against God,—they met his wrath with their own anger; it was a time when God was taking a just revenge upon the enemies of his people, recompensing tribulation to them that had troubled them. It was a time in which he was beginning to reward his people's faithful services and sufferings; and their enemies could not bear it,—they fretted against God, and so increased their guilt, and hastened their destruction.

Thirdly. Another consequence was the opening of the temple of God in heaven. Whereby may be meant, that here is now a more free communication between heaven and earth; prayer and praises more freely and frequently ascending, and graces and blessings plentifully descending. But it rather seems to intend, the church of God on earth, a heavenly temple. And it is an allusion to the various circumstances of things in the time of the first temple, under idolatrous and wicked princes, it was shut up and neglected; but under religious and reforming princes it was opened and frequented. So, during the power of antichrist, the temple of God seemed to be shut up, and was so in a great degree; but now it was opened again. And at this opening of it observe, 1. What was seen there; "The ark of God's testament." This was in the holy of holies; in this ark the tables of the law were kept. As before Josiah's time the law of God had been lost, but was then found, so in the reign of antichrist God's law was laid aside, and made void by their traditions and decrees; the Scriptures were locked up from the people, and they must not look into these Divine oracles; now they are opened, now they are brought to the view of all. This was an unspeakable and invaluable privilege; and this, like the ark of the testament, was a token of the presence of God returned to his people, and his favour towards them in Jesus Christ the propitiation. 2. What was heard and felt there; "Lightnings, voices, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail." The great blessing of the Reformation was attended with very awful providences, and, by terrible things in righteousness, God would answer those prayers that were presented in his holy temple, now opened. All the great revolutions of the world are concerted in heaven, and are the answers of the prayers of the saints.

CHAPTER XII.

It is generally agreed by the most learned expositors that the narrative we have in this and the two following chapters, from the sounding of the seventh trumpet to the opening of the vials, is not a prediction of things to come, but rather a recapitulation and representation of things past; which, as God would have the apostle to foresee while future, he would have him to review now they were past, that he might have a more perfect idea of them in his mind, and might observe the agreement between the prophecy and that Providence that is always fulfilling the Scriptures. In this chapter we have an account of the contest between the church and antichrist: the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. I. As it was begun in heaven, ver. 1—14. II. As it was carried on in the wilderness, ver. 15 to the end.



AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days. 7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were

longer need speak of him who "is to come," for he that was to come has come, taken his great might, and reigns for ever.

x. 19. "The temple of God was opened." "More open discoveries were made to the seer, or rather, a clearer manifestation of the innermost and most spiritual truths of the Gospel" (Webster and Wilkinson).

xii. 1. "A great wonder:" rather, "a great sign." The word has not been used before in the Apocalypse, though it would well describe

many of the preceding representations. The only visions to which it is applied afterwards are those of the beast (verse 3) and of the seven angels of the last plagues. Perhaps it denotes not so much that which is significant as remarkable, something surpassingly sublime or terrific, extraordinary in its mystic character among mysteries, as miracles (to which the same word is sometimes applied) are among common events (Webster and Wilkinson). "Woman clothed with the sun;" compare the description in S. Song. vi. 10.

cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Here we see that early prophecy eminently fulfilled, in which God said he would put enmity between the seed of woman and the seed of the serpent, *Gen. iii. 15*. Where you will observe,

First. The attempts of Satan and his agents, to prevent the increase of the church, by devouring her offspring as soon as it was born. Of this we have a very lively description, in the most proper images.

1. We see how the church is represented in this vision. 1st. As "a woman," the weaker part of the world; but the spouse of Christ, and the mother of the saints. 2nd. As "clothed with the sun," the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Having put on Christ, who is "the Sun of righteousness," she, by her relation to Christ, is invested with honourable rights and privileges, and shines in his rays. 3rd. As having "the moon under her feet," that is, the world. She stands upon it, but lives above it; her heart and hope is not set upon sublunary things, but on the things that are in heaven, where her Head is. 4th. As having on "her head a crown of twelve stars;" that is, the doctrine of the Gospel preached by the twelve apostles, which is a crown of glory to all true believers. 5th. As in travail, crying out, "and pained to be delivered." She was pregnant, and now in pain to bring forth a holy progeny to Christ. Desirous that what was begun in the conviction of sinners might end in their conversion; and when the children were brought to the birth, there might be strength to bring forth, and that she might see of the travail of her soul.

2. How the grand enemy of the church is represented. 1st. As "a great red dragon." "A dragon," for strength and terror; "a red dragon," for fierceness and cruelty. 2nd. As "having seven heads," that is, placed on seven hills, as Rome was; and therefore it is probable pagan Rome is here meant. 3rd. As "having ten horns," divided into ten provinces, as the Roman empire was by Augustus Cæsar. 4th. As having "seven crowns upon his heads," which is after expounded to be seven kings, *ch. xvii. 10*. 5th. As drawing with his tail a "third part of the stars of heaven," and casting them down to the earth. Turning the ministers and professors of the Christian religion out of their places and privileges, and making them as weak and useless as he could. 6th. As standing "before the woman, to devour her child as soon as it should be born." Very vigilant to crush the Christian religion in its birth, and entirely to prevent the growth and continuance of it in the world.



FROM MEDAL OF MAXIMIN AS HERCULES DESTROYING THE HYDRA OF CHRISTIANITY.

Secondly. The unsuccessfulness of these attempts against the church. For, 1. She was safely delivered of "a man-child," *ver. 5*. By which some understand Christ; others, Constantine; but others, with greater propriety, a race of true believers, strong and united, resembling Christ, and designed, under him, to rule the nations with a rod of iron; that is, shall judge the world, by their doctrine and lives now, and as assessors with Christ at the great day.

2. Care was taken of this child; it "was caught up to God, and to his throne;" that is, taken into his special, powerful, and immediate protection. The Christian religion has been, from its infancy, the special care of the great God, "and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

3. Care was taken of the mother, as well as of the child; *ver. 6*, she "fled into the wilderness; a place prepared" both for her safety and sustenance. The church was in an obscure state, dispersed; and this proved her security, through the care of Divine providence. This, her obscure and private state, was for a limited time, not to continue always.

Thirdly. The attempts of the dragon do not only prove unsuccessfull against the church, but fatal to his own interests; for, upon his endeavour to devour the man-child, he engaged all the powers of heaven against him; *ver. 7*, "There was war in heaven." Heaven will espouse the quarrel of the church. Here observe,

1. The seat of this war; in heaven, in the church, which is the kingdom of heaven on earth; and under the care of Heaven, and in the same interest.

2. The parties; "Michael and his angels" on one side, and "the dragon and his angels" on the other. Christ, the great angel of the covenant, and his faithful followers; and Satan and all his instruments. This latter party would be much superior in number and outward strength to the other; but the strength of the church lies in having the Lord Jesus for the Captain of their salvation.

3. The success of the battle; "The dragon and his angels fought, and prevailed not." There was a great struggle on both sides, but the victory fell to Christ and his church; and the dragon and his angels were not only conquered, but cast out. The pagan idolatry, which was worshipping devils, was extirpated out of the empire in the time of Constantine.

Fourthly. The triumphant song that was composed and used on this occasion, *ver. 11*. Where observe,

1. How the Conqueror is adored; "Now is come salvation, and strength, and

the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ." Now God hath shewn himself to be a mighty God; now Christ hath shewn himself to be a strong and mighty Saviour. His own arm has brought salvation, and now his kingdom will be greatly enlarged and established. The salvation and strength of the church is all to be ascribed to the King and Head of the church.

2. How the conquered enemy is described. 1st. By his malice. He was "the accuser of the brethren," and "accused them before their God, night and day." He appeared before God as an adversary to the church, continually bringing in indictments and accusations against them, whether true or false. Thus he accused Job, and thus he accused Joshua the high priest, *Zec. iii. 1*. Though he hates the presence of God, yet he is willing to appear there to accuse the people of God. Let us therefore take heed that we give him no cause of accusation against us; and that, when we have sinned, we presently go in before the Lord, and accuse and condemn ourselves, and commit our cause to Christ, as our advocate. 2nd. By his disappointment and defeat. He and all his accusations are cast out, the indictments quashed, and the accuser turned out of the court with just indignation.

3. How the victory was gained. The servants of God overcame Satan, 1st. "By the blood of the Lamb," as the meritorious cause. Christ, by dying, destroyed him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil. 2nd. "By the word of their testimony," as the great instrument of war, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." By a resolute, powerful preaching the everlasting Gospel, "which is mighty through God, to pull down strongholds." By their courage and patience in sufferings; "They loved not their lives unto the death." When the love of life stood in competition with their loyalty to Christ, they loved not their lives so well but they could give them up to death, could lay them down in Christ's cause. Their love to their own lives was overcome by stronger affections of another nature; and this, their courage and zeal, helped to confound their enemies, and to convince many of the spectators, and to confirm the souls of the faithful, and so contributed greatly to this victory.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. 13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast



IMPERIAL DRAGON STANDARD.

out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

We have here an account of this war, so happily finished in heaven, or in the church, as it was again renewed and carried on in the wilderness, the place to which the church was fled, and where she had been for some time secured, by the special care of her God and Saviour. Observe,

First. The warning given of that distress and calamity that should fall upon the inhabitants of the world in general, through the wrath and rage of the devil; for though his malice is chiefly bent against the servants of God, yet he

The clothing with the sun is understood by some to indicate the Church invested with the light of Divine truth, of spiritual life, and salvation to enlighten and revive the world. "The moon under her feet," taken by some to indicate the Church in her temporal aspect, subject to change; by others to mean the inferiority and fickleness of world-religions, which failed to give enduring light to men. "Twelve stars:" by some referred to the twelve tribes of Israel, by others to the twelve apostles.

xii. 5. "Rod of iron:" understood by Wordsworth and others of the inflexible rule of God's Word. "With it the masculine spirits of the Church, being endowed with power by Christ, overcome the world; they shiver into atoms the earthy, brittle theories of corrupt religion and carnal philosophy" (Wordsworth).

xii. 11. "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb:" Alford here and in the next clause renders "because of." The preposition here used is followed by the accusative case, and points to the antecedent

is an enemy and hater of mankind as such; and, being defeated in his designs against the church, he is resolved to give all the disturbance he can to the world in general; ver. 12, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and sea." The rage of Satan grows so much the greater as he is limited both in place and time. When he was confined to the wilderness, and had but a short time to reign there, he comes with the greater wrath.

Secondly. His second attempt upon the church now in the wilderness; "He persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child," ver. 13. Observe, 1. The care that God had taken of his church. He had conveyed her, as on eagles' wings, into a place of safety provided for her, where she was to continue for a certain space of time, couched in prophetic characters, taken from *Jaan. vii. 25*.

2. The continual malice of the dragon against the church. Her obscurity could not altogether protect her. The old subtle serpent, that at first lurked in paradise, now follows the church into the wilderness, and casts out a flood of error and heresy, which were breathed by Arius, Nestorius, Pelagius, and many more, by which the church of God was in danger of being overwhelmed and carried away. The church of God is in more danger from heretics than from persecutors; and heresies are as certainly from the devil as open force and violence.

Thirdly. The seasonable help provided for the church in this dangerous juncture; ver. 16, "The earth helped the woman, and opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood." Some think we are to understand the swarms of Goths and Vandals that invaded the Roman empire, and found work for the Arian rulers, that otherwise would have been as furious persecutors as the pagan had been, and had exercised great cruelties already; but God opened a breach of war, and the flood was in a manner swallowed up thereby, and the church enjoyed some respite. God often sends the sword to avenge the quarrel of his covenant. And when men choose new gods, then there is danger of war in the gates. Intestine broils and contentions often end in the invasions of a common enemy.

Fourthly. The devil, being thus defeated in his designs upon the universal church, now turns his rage against particular persons and places. His malice against the woman pushes him on "to make war with the remnant of her seed." Some think hereby are meant the Albigeuses, that were first by Diocletian driven up into barren and mountainous places, and afterwards cruelly murdered by popish rage and power, for several generations; and for no other reason but because they kept the commandments of God, and held the testimony of Jesus Christ. Their fidelity to God and Christ, both in doctrine, worship, and practice, was that which exposed them to the rage of Satan and his instruments; and will do so still, less or more, to the end of the world, when the last enemy shall be destroyed.

[The period when the woman was thus arrayed and ready to bring forth the man-child, or when the church was exhibited in her children as in a state of grandeur, prosperity, and power, was about the year 313, when the celebrated decree of Licinius and Constantine was issued; when two-thirds of the Roman empire became professedly Christian, and only one third of it continued pagan, under Maximin, and continued to persecute the Christians. We have, then, the Christian church united—bright from trials she had passed through—ascendant in the political firmament—emperors shedding on it the rays of the imperial sun, and her chief ministers a starry coronal around her head. Now, the commencement of the woman's gestation was the year 33, the year of our Lord's resurrection, when the church, properly speaking, became developed. From that period there elapsed, on obvious grounds, the number of nine prophetic months, or forty prophetic weeks, or two hundred and eighty prophetic days; that is, two hundred and eighty literal years, which is the illustration of the chronological period here mysteriously shadowed forth. Adding, then, to the year 33—the year of our Lord's resurrection—the nine prophetic months, or the two hundred and eighty literal years, we come down to the year 313, when the Milan decree was issued. Her travail began a prophetic week, or seven literal years, previously in the Diocletian persecution, and amid the prosperity, toleration, and countenance accorded to the Christians, the man-child was brought forth, and speedily raised to imperial power, invested with all the patronage of emperors, and while the old pagan Roman power, or the dragon, concentrated in Maximin, the ruler of a third of the empire, stood by ready to destroy him, but was prevented from accomplishing his purpose. "Then," says Gibbon, "the death of Maximin delivered the church from the last and most implacable of her enemies." In other words, in A. D. 313, when the woman brought forth the man-child, the dragon lost his power; he beheld the outpeering grandeur and elevation of the Christian church, or, in the words of Gibbon, "Christianity seated on the throne of the Roman world," and Theodosius and the Christians already ruling the pagans with a rod of iron. It is said, "I heard a loud voice from heaven," that is, from the firmamental heaven, from which Mahomet, as a star, fell; that is, the high places of authority and power "saying, Now is come salvation," &c. It was the song of the rejoicing Christians, at length raised from their outward affliction to prosperity and grandeur,—a period at which they most erroneously, but naturally, on so great and unexpected a transition, supposed that the millennial kingdom had arrived. It was an era so bright and brilliant that dawned upon the world, that even the martyrlogist, Fox, has recorded it as his conviction, that the millennium began when Constantine established the Christian church.

After this song was sung by the Christians raised to power and authority, it is said, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth." But this woe, mentioned in ver. 12, is no part of the song of victor, and it is to be regretted that the break in the chapter is not marked to shew at such is the case. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them." Then a new paragraph, being no part of the song of the triumphant Christians, but dictated to John by the Holy Spirit, begins: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea; for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Now, after this prosperity—this outward and visible prosperity, which encompassed the outward and the visible church—is there in the page of history the record of any woe that fell speedily on Christendom? At the very period when the church rose to almost more than earthly grandeur, there burst upon the world a woe almost unprecedented in the history of the past; that woe was the outbreak of the most pestilent heresy that ever tormented the church—what is called the Arian heresy. Arius, a presbyter or minister of Alexandria, first denied the deity of Christ, and, of necessity, rejected the atonement. Such, then, was the woe that fell upon the church of those times—a dark and blasting stain—distinct from popery in its dogmas, but conspiring with it against truth, the one a negation of truth—the other a deadly corruption of it. After this we read of the woman's flight into the wilderness; that is, true Christians ceased to be seen—they did not appear to the world; and Milner, the historian, gives the best fulfilment of this when he states that, in consequence of Arianism without, and the church's exaltation to civil and imperial greatness, "the practical use of a crucified Saviour for troubled consciences was scarcely to be seen, and the real Gospel of Christ began to be hidden from men,—the true church, in short, was about to retire

into the wilderness. 'Godliness,' he adds, 'lived obscure in hermitages, and abroad the Gospel was almost buried in faction and ambition.' And Mosheim also, a less spiritual but no less true historian, says, 'Good men were mixed with the bad; but, by degrees, the bad so multiplied that men truly holy and devoted to God appeared more rarely, and the pious few were almost crushed by the vicious multitude;' and 'fictions,' adds Mosheim, 'of early origin, about saint-veneration and relics, and purifying, or fire, and celibacy, now so prevailed as, in course of time, almost to thrust true religion aside, or at least to obscure and tarnish it.' But we find another incident recorded in this chapter; two wings of a great eagle were given to the woman to help her to go into the wilderness. The recognition of vital Christianity by the pious emperor Theodosius aided Christ's people. He cast the Arians out from the churches, restored, we are told, the Trinitarians, and saved the empire for eighteen years from the impending irruption of the Goths—during which suspense and interval the woman had time to prepare for her flight into the wilderness. These eighteen years were the respite. It is a remarkable fact, that the Vandals, Visigoths, and Huns, who had adopted universally the Arian or Socinian creed, rushed into Rome, endeavouring to exterminate Trinitarians wherever they found them, and to establish the Arian heresy as supreme over the length and breadth of the empire. But it is added here, that when the dragon poured these floods after her, "the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth." What is the solution of this? We find that when the Arian Goths invaded Rome, they did not, as the Mahometans, retain their own religion and their own king, and insist on the conquered adopting them. On the contrary, they parted with all—they were quite absorbed by the orthodox Romans—they renounced their Arianism as they settled, and were merged amid the Trinitarian population; and thus the earth, in the language of the Apocalypse, swallowed up the flood, and helped the woman in her flight into the wilderness.—A.S.]

CHAPTER XIII.

We have in this chapter a farther discovery and description of the church's enemies, not other enemies than are mentioned before, but described after another manner, that the methods of their enmity may more fully appear. They are represented as two beasts: the first you have an account of, ver. 1—11; the second, ver. 12 to the end. By the first some understand Rome pagan; and by the second, Rome papal. But others understand Rome papal to be represented by both these beasts; by the first in its secular power, by the second in its ecclesiastical.



AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

We have here an account of the rise, figure, and progress of the first beast. And observe.

or remoter cause. They overcame because of the blood of the Lamb—i.e., because Christ had died for them. So also "because of the word"—i.e., on account of the word of their testimony.

xii. 12. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth:" all the old MSS. read, "Woe to the earth and the sea."

xii. 14. "Two wings:" rather, "two wings of the great eagle." Compare *Exod. xix. 4*, to which allusion may be here made. The powerful support and protection of the Divine Providence here indi-

cated has been manifested both to the Church of the Old Testament and of the New.

xii. 15. "Flood:" Alford renders "river" in both this verse and the following.

xiii. 1. "And I stood:" some of the best MSS. read "he stood." This throws the reference back to the closing verse of chap. xii. The dragon standing on the sand of the sea gave his power to the beast which rose out of it. "A beast:" rendered by Alford "wild

First. From what situation the apostle saw this monster. He seemed to himself to stand upon the sea-shore, though it is probable he was still in a rapture; but he took himself to be in "the island Patmos;" but whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell.

Secondly. From whence this beast came; "Out of the sea." And yet, by the description of it, it should be more likely to be a land monster; but the more monstrous every thing about it was, the more proper an emblem it would be to set forth the mystery of iniquity and tyranny.

Thirdly. What was the form and shape of this beast. It was, for the most part, "like a leopard," but its feet were like "the feet of a bear, and its mouth as the mouth of a lion;" it had "seven heads and ten horns, and upon its heads the name of blasphemy;" a most horrid, hideous monster! In some part of this description here seems to be an allusion to Daniel's vision of the four beasts which represented the four monarchies, *Dan. vii. 1-3, &c.* One of those beasts was like a lion, another like a bear, and another like a leopard. This beast was a sort of composition of those three, with the fierceness, strength, and swiftness of them all. The seven heads, and the ten horns, seem to design its several powers; the ten crowns, its tributary princes; the word "blasphemy" on its forehead proclaims its direct enmity and opposition to the glory of God, by promoting idolatry.

Fourthly. The source and spring of his authority; and that was, "the dragon;" he "gave him his power, and seat, and great authority." He was set up by the devil, and supported by him to do his work, and promote his interest; and he lent him all the assistance he could.

Fifthly. A dangerous wound given him, and yet unexpectedly healed, *ver. 3.* Some think, by this wounded head, we are to understand the abolishing of pagan idolatry; and, by the healing of the wound, the introducing the popish idolatry; the same in substance with the former, only in a new dress, and which as effectually answers the devil's design as that did.

Sixthly. The honour and worship paid to this infernal monster; "All the world wondered after the beast." They all admired his power, and policy, and success, and they worshipped the dragon, that gave power to the beast; and they worshipped the beast. They paid honour and subjection to the devil and his instruments, and thought there was no power able to withstand them; so great was the darkness, degeneracy, and the madness of the world.

[There had been very recently a new election to the papedom. The announcement was made at the time from the window of the conclave of cardinals: 'I tell you tidings of great joy; a new pope is elected, Leo X.:' and the festivities began, on his coronation at St. Peter's, immediately after. But the grander ceremonial of his going to take possession of the church of his bishopric, St. John Lateran,—that church by the bishopric of which, as the mother and mistress of all churches, he is to be constituted not only bishop of Rome, but, by consequence, of the church universal,—was delayed for a month, to allow of the proper pomp attending it. And now the day is come for its celebration. The city is thronged with visitors on the occasion. Besides the hierarchy of Rome, there appear many of the independent princes of Italy; ambassadors, also, from most of the states of western Christendom; and, moreover, the episcopal and ecclesiastical deputies that have assembled to represent the church universal in the general council now holden at the Lateran.—The horses of the bishops and cardinals preceding him are covered from head to foot with white trappings. He comes forth himself, too, on a white horse; a cope of richest brocade mantling him; the ring of espousal with the universal church glittering on his right hand ring-finger; and on his head the regno, or imperial tiara of three crowns. A canopy is borne over him by the chief Roman authorities. The streets are strewn with tapestry and flowers for him to pass over. The welkin rings with acclamations of welcome. The multitudes fall on their knees, as he approaches, to receive his benediction. 'It seemed to me,' says the narrator of the pageant, 'that it was the Redeemer of mankind on the Palm Sunday going to Jerusalem; there being substituted only for "Hosannah to the Son of David!" the acclamation, "Viva papa leone!"—Life to the pope, the lion!'—In the triumphal arc, near the bridge of St. Angelo, there appear two lions, each with one foot on the papal insignia, to designate that it is the pope they symbolize, the other on the mundane globe, and with the legends, as the cry uttered by them, 'The prey is worthy of my glory,' and, 'To me the charge belongs.' With which last we may associate that in the Via Pontificum, where a pope sits enthroned, and two kings, having cast their crowns before him, kneel and worship. These a lion is represented as blandly licking and fondling. But on other two, that appear armed and hostile in the distance, another lion seems as about to spring, and the motto, 'Prostratis placidus, rebelibus ferox,' proclaims, as with lion's roar, that submission, implicit submission, is the law of this pontifical empire.—*Elliott*, vol. ii., p. 49-57, where see authorities.]



ROMISH MEDAL OF THE POPE AS LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH.

Seventhly. How he exercised his infernal power and policy. He had a "mouth speaking great things and blasphemies." He blasphemed God, the name of God, the tabernacle of God, and all them that dwell in heaven; and he made war with the saints, and overcame them, and gained a sort of universal empire in the world. Observe, 1. His malice was principally levelled at the God of heaven and his heavenly attendants; at God, in making images of him that is invisible, and in worshipping them; at the tabernacle of God, that is, say some, at the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, in which God dwells as in a tabernacle; (this is dishonoured by their doctrine of transubstantiation, that will not suffer his body to be a true body, and will put it into the power of every priest to prepare a body for Christ); and against them that dwell in heaven, the glorified saints, by putting them into the place of the pagan demons; and praying to them, which they are so far from being pleased with, that they

truly judge themselves wronged and dishonoured by it. Thus the malice of the devil shews itself against heaven and the blessed inhabitants of heaven. These are above the reach of his power; all he can do is to blaspheme them. But the saints on earth are more exposed to his cruelty, and he sometimes is permitted to triumph over them and trample upon them.

Eighthly. The limitation of the devil's power and success, and that both as to time and persons. 1. He is limited in point of time; his reign is to "continue forty and two months," *ver. 5*, suitable to the other prophetic characters of the reign of antichrist. 2. He is limited as to the persons and people that he shall entirely subject to his will and power; it will be only those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. Christ had a chosen remnant redeemed by his blood, recorded in his book, sealed by his Spirit; and though the devil and antichrist might overcome their bodily strength, and take away the natural life, they could never conquer their souls, nor prevail with them to forsake their Saviour and revolt to his enemies.

Ninthly. Here is a demand of attention to what is here discovered of the great sufferings and troubles of the church, and an assurance given, that when God has accomplished his work on Mount Zion, his refining work, then he will turn his hand against the enemies of his people; and they that have killed with the sword shall themselves fall by the sword, *ver. 10*; and they that led the people of God into captivity shall themselves be made captives. And here now is that which will be proper exercise for the patience and faith of the saints; patience under the prospect of so great sufferings, and faith in the prospect of so glorious a deliverance.

[St. John saw this beast rising out of the sea, but the Roman empire was risen and established long before St. John's time; and therefore this must be the Roman empire, not in its then present, but in some future, shape and form; and it arose in another shape and form, after it was broken in pieces by the incursions of the northern nations. The beast hath seven heads and ten horns, which are the well known marks and signals of the Roman empire; the seven heads alluding to the seven mountains whereon Rome was situated, and to the seven forms of government which successively prevailed there; and the ten horns signifying the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided. It is remarkable that the dragon had seven crowns upon his heads, but the beast hath upon his horns ten crowns; so that there had been in the meanwhile a revolution of power from the heads of the dragon to the horns of the beast, and the sovereignty, which before was exercised by Rome alone, was now transferred and divided among ten kingdoms; but the Roman empire was not divided into ten kingdoms till after it was become Christian. Although the heads had lost their crowns, yet they still retained the name of blasphemy. In all its heads, in all its forms of government, Rome was still guilty of idolatry and blasphemy. Imperial Rome was called, and delighted to be called, 1. The eternal city, the heavenly city, the goddess of the earth, the goddess; and had her temples and altars with incense and sacrifices offered up to her; and how the papal Rome likewise hath arrogated to herself Divine titles and honours, there will be a fitter occasion of shewing in the following part of this description. As Daniel's fourth beast (*Dan. vii. 7*) was without a name, and devoured and brake in pieces the three former, so this beast (*ver. 2*) is also without a name, and partakes of the nature and qualities of the three former, having the body of a leopard, which was the third beast, or Grecian empire, and the feet of a bear, which was the second beast, or Persian empire; and the mouth of a lion, which was the first beast, or Babylonian empire; and consequently this must be the same as Daniel's fourth beast, or the Roman empire. But still it is not the same beast, the same empire entirely, but with some variation. And, 2. The dragon gave him his power, *divine*, or 'his armies, and his seat,' *thronos*, or 'his imperial throne,' and great authority or jurisdiction over all the parts of his empire. The beast, therefore, is the successor and substitute of the dragon or of the idolatrous heathen Roman empire; and what other idolatrous power hath succeeded to the heathen emperors in Rome, all the world is a judge and a witness. The dragon, having failed in his purpose of restoring the old heathen idolatry, delegates his power to the beast, and thereby introduces a new species of idolatry, nominally different, but essentially the same,—the worship of angels and saints instead of the gods and demigods of antiquity. Another mark whereby the beast was peculiarly distinguished was "one of his heads as it were wounded to death," *ver. 3*.—*Bishop Newton*. Let us here avail ourselves of the aid of an interpreter who, we are sure, will not mislead us. In *Rev. xvii. 9, 10*, we are told the seven heads have a twofold signification: 1st. They symbolize the seven hills which were to be the seat of the government of the kingdom. We are farther informed that the seven heads also symbolize seven kings, that is, seven forms of government. Now, such is the number of distinct forms of government which the Roman empire has assumed from first to last—kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes, emperors. Of these kings, or forms of governments, it was said, "Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come." Five of these had fallen before the days of John; the sixth, namely, the imperial, was then in being; and the seventh was then future. It was intimated, "and when he" (the seventh head) "cometh, he must continue a short space." Who is this seventh head, whose term of existence was to be so brief? On no point are apocalyptic commentators more divided, or their conclusions more vague. Mede makes the seventh head the demi-Cesar, or western emperor. Bishop Newton thinks the dukedom of Rome, established after the conquest of the Heruli, is meant. Others suppose that the Christian emperors constituted the seventh head, and had its wound by the sword of the Heruli. Mr. Elliott finds the seventh head in the change of government that took place under Diocletian, who, together with his successors, in place of emperor or general of the Roman armies, became king or lord; and in place of the laurel, crown, and purple, assumed the diadem and robe of silk—the Asiatic symbols of absolute rule. This was followed by great and fundamental changes in the administration, and is marked by Gibbon as the "new form of administration." These are the nearest approaches which have been made to the solution of the difficulty of the seventh head, "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death." This form of government was extinguished by the sword of the Goths. A new head was to arise in the room of that which was cut off; and this, though it should count only as the seventh, would in reality be the eighth; and under it the beast was to go into perdition: "he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." Who is the eighth head? To this question an answer is given by the angel himself: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth." From which we infer that the papacy is the eighth head. This is a singular and apparently contradictory account of the beast,—the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. How was it possible that both statements could be true,—that the beast had ceased to exist, and yet was in existence, that is, when it was the object of wonder to all who dwelt on the earth? And yet this account is perfectly consistent with fact. Pagan and imperial Rome had existed; but the Gothic invasion had brought its existence to an end, apparently for ever; but it rose again in its decem-regal state. It was the same empire in reality which existed now in the ten kingdoms, as had existed in its undivided form before the Gothic invasion. We have already shewn the identity of the seven-headed and the ten-horned beast of the abyss or sea with Daniel's fourth monarchy. But Daniel's fourth monarchy was the

beast." Man without God becomes degraded to the level of the beasts that perish. The nobler capacities are neglected, the lower are cultivated, and the ascendancy of the lower is man's degradation. This is the lesson of the transformation of Nebuchadnezzar; pride and self-complacent boasting drove him forth among the beasts.

xiii. 2. The description of the wild beast here is a kind of combination of the beasts of *Dan. vii.* A common usage makes wild

animals represent the base and greedy passions of men. (Compare *Jer. v. 6*.)

xiii. 3. "His deadly wound was healed:" or, with *Alford*, "the stroke of its death was healed."

xiii. 4. "The dragon which gave:" rather, "they worshipped the dragon because he gave."

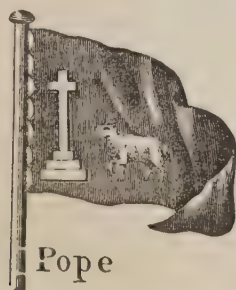
xiii. 6. "Them that dwell in heaven:" omit "and them." "They blaspheme his name and tabernacle, which," &c.

Roman empire, and therefore the symbol before us is that of the Roman empire, which again reappeared. It had apparently been wounded to death; but it was resuscitated, and mainly through the papacy.—S. V. Gibbon says, 'Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage, the name of Rome must have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been actuated by a vital principle which restored her to honour and dominion.' This vital principle he explains to be a tradition that two Jewish teachers, a tent-maker and a fisherman, had been executed at Rome, in the circus of Nero—that after five hundred years their genuine or fictitious relics were adored as the palladium of Rome—and that about this time the bishopric of Rome was filled by one of living energy, the first of the Gregories. And two writers, describing the time when the eighth head thus became Satan's compensation for the wounding and death of the seventh head, or paganism, that passed away, neither of them of great celebrity, thus write:—Augustin Steuchus: 'The empire having been overthrown, unless God had raised up the pontificate, Rome would have become uninhabitable.' Blondus writes: 'The princes of the world now adore and worship as perpetual dictators the successors, not of Caesar, but of the fisherman Peter, that is, the supreme pontiff, the substitute of the afore-mentioned emperor.' And Muller, the celebrated German historian, gives a confirmation of the Apocalypse, when he remarks, 'With the exception of the papacy, these ten kingdoms had no other point of union.'—A. S.]

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. 16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Those that think the first beast signifies Rome pagan, by this second beast would understand Rome papal, that does promote idolatry and tyranny, but in a more soft and lamb-like manner. Those that understand the first beast of the secular power of the papacy take the second to intend its spiritual and ecclesiastical powers, which act under the disguise of religion and charity to the souls of men. Here observe,

First. The form and shape of this second beast; "He had two horns like a lamb," but a mouth that spake like the dragon. All agree this must be some great impostor, that under a pretence of religion shall deceive the souls of men. The papists would have it to be Apollonius Tyanæus; but Dr. More has rejected that opinion, and fixes it upon the ecclesiastical powers of the papacy. The pope shews the horns of a lamb, pretends to be the vicar of Christ upon earth, and so to be vested with his power and authority; but his speech betrays him; for he gives forth those false doctrines and cruel decrees as shew him to belong to the dragon, and not to the lamb. [Among the different flags of all the kingdoms of the world, as may be seen by referring to Danville's atlas, on the edge of a map there is one,—a lamb at the foot of the cross, thus:—]



Secondly. The power which he exerciseth; all the power of the former beast, ver. 12. He promotes the same interest, pursues the same design in substance, which is, to draw men off from worshipping the true God, to worship those that by nature are no gods, and subject the souls and consciences of men to the will and authority of men, in opposition to the will of God. This design is promoted by popery as well as by paganism, and by the crafty arts of popery as well as by the secular arm; both serving the interests of the devil, though in a different manner.

Thirdly. The methods by which this second beast carried on his interests and designs; and they are of three sorts: 1. Lying wonders, pretended miracles, by which they should be deceived, and prevailed with to worship the former beast in this new image or shape that was now made for him. They would pretend to bring down fire from heaven, as Elias did. And God sometimes permits his enemies, as he did the magicians of Egypt, to do things that seem very wonderful, and by which unwary persons may be deluded. It is well known the papal kingdom has been long supported by pretended miracles. 2. Excommunications, anathemas, severe censures, by which they pretend to cut men off from Christ, and cast them into the power of the devil, but do indeed deliver them over to the secular power, that they may be put to death. And thus, notwithstanding their vile hypocrisy, they are justly charged with killing those that they cannot corrupt. 3. By disfranchisement; allowing none to enjoy natural, civil, or municipal rights, that will not worship that papal beast, that is, the image of the pagan beast. It is made a qualification for buying and selling the rights of nature, as well as for places of profit and trust, that they have the mark of the beast in their forehead, and in their right hand, and that they have the name of the beast and the number of his name. It is probable the mark, the name, and the number of the beast, may all signify the same thing, that they make an open profession of their subjection and obedience to the papacy, which is receiving the mark in their forehead, and that they oblige themselves to use all their interest, power, and endeavour to promote the papal authority, which is receiving the mark in their right hands. We are told, Pope Martyn V., in his bull added to the Council of Constance, prohibits Roman Catholics to suffer any heretics to dwell in their countries, or to make any bargains, use any trades, or bear any civil offices; which is a very clear interpretation of this prophecy.

Fourthly. We have here the number of the beast in such a manner given as shews the infinite wisdom of God, and will sufficiently exercise all the wisdom and accuracy of men; the number is, "the number of a man," computed after the usual manner among men, and it is 666. Whether this be the number of the errors and heresies that are contained in popery, or, rather, as others, the number of the years from its rise to its fall, is not certain, much less what that period is which is described by these prophetic numbers. The most admired dissertation on this intricate subject is that of Dr. Potter, where the curious may find sufficient entertainment. It seems to me to be one of those seasons which God has reserved in his own power. Only this we know, God has written *Mene, Tekel*, upon all his enemies; he has numbered their days, and they shall be finished; but his own kingdom shall endure for ever.

[Mention having been made of the number of the beast, or the number of his name, (for they are both the same), the prophet proceeds to inform us what that number is, leaving us from the number to collect the name; ver. 18, "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast." It is not, therefore, a vain and ridiculous attempt to search into this mystery, but, on the contrary, is recommended to us upon the authority of an apostle. For "it is the number of a man;" it is a method of numbering practised among men; as the measure of a man (ch. xxi. 17) is such a measure as men commonly make use of in measuring. It was a method practised among the ancients, to denote names by numbers; as the name of Thouth, or the Egyptian Mercury, was signified by the number 1218. St. Barnabas, the companion of St. Paul, in his epistle discovers in like manner the name of Jesus crucified in the number 318; and other instances might be produced if there was occasion. It hath been the usual method in all God's dispensations, for the Holy Spirit to accommodate his expressions to the customs, fashions, and manners of the several ages. Since, then, this art and mystery of numbers was so much used among the ancients, it is less wonderful that the beast also should have his number, and his number is 666. No name appears more proper and suitable than that famous one mentioned by Irenæus, who lived not long after St. John's time, and was the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John. He saith that "the name *Latineus* contains the number of 666; and it is very likely, because the last kingdom is so called, for they are Latins who now reign; but in this we will not glory;" that is, as it becomes a modest and pious man in a point of such difficulty, he will not be too confident of his explication. After the division of the empire, the Greeks and other Orientalists called the people of the western church, or church of Rome, Latins; and as Dr. Henry Moore expresseth it, they Latinize in every thing,—mass, prayers, hymns, litanies, canons, decretals, bulls, are conceived in Latin. The papal councils speak in Latin. Women themselves pray in Latin. Nor is the Scripture read in any other language under popery than Latin. Wherefore the council of Trent commanded the vulgar Latin to be the only authentic version. Nor do their doctors doubt to prefer it to the Hebrew and Greek text itself, which was written by the prophets and apostles. In short, all things are Latin; the pope having communicated his language to the people under his dominion, as the mark and character of his empire. They themselves, indeed, chose rather to be called Romans, and more absurdly still, Roman Catholic; and probably the apostle, as he hath made use of some Hebrew names in this book, as Abaddon (ch. xi. 11) and Armageddon (ch. xvi. 16), so might in this place likewise allude to the name in the Hebrew language. Now Romith is the Hebrew name for the Roman beast, or Roman kingdom; and this word, as well as the former word *Latineus*, contains the just and exact number, 666.

L	30	7	200
A	1	1	6
T	300	2	40
E	5	1	10
I	10	1	10
N	50	1	400
O	70		
S	200		666

It is really surprising that there should be such a fatal coincidence in both names in both languages. Mr. Pyle asserts, and I believe he may assert very truly, that "no other word in any language whatever can be found to express both the same number and the same thing."—Bishop Newton.

We are told, says Dr. Chalmers, of another, or second, or representative power, subordinate to the primary one, and helpful in confirming his ascendancy over the spirits of men. The plausibilities which are to mislead those of our own land might not issue as before from the monasteries and charitable

xiii. 10. Alford's rendering of this verse is, "If any is for captivity, into captivity he goeth; if any to be slain with the sword, he must be slain with the sword. Here is," &c. According to the English version, the words are a warning to persecutors, like that of our Lord, "He that taketh the sword shall perish with the sword." But the verse really inculcates patience and submission on the part of the persecuted; even the oppressed have the consolation of knowing that their trials are apportioned by a wise Providence.

xiii. 13. "Fire come down from heaven:" "from heaven" is omitted by two of the most ancient MSS.

xiii. 18. "Count:" Alford has "calculate." The number is given in one MS. as six hundred and sixteen. The variation of reading was mentioned by Irenæus as early as the second century.

xiv. 1. "A Lamb:" rather, "the Lamb." for such is the reading of all the ancient MSS. "Having his Father's name:" all the oldest MSS. read, "having his name and his Father's written on

institutes of the middle ages; but we have talking senators now, and their underlings, who would confound every distinction between truth and error—calling evil good, and good evil, and who would lull us into the delusion that there is no danger to be apprehended from the insidious and ever-plotting Jesuitism that is now every where at work. They might even deceive us by the marvellous results of their civilizing and educational processes. But let us not be deceived; and at the hazard of forfeiting all civil advantages, nay, even life itself, let us be enabled to stand up for the paramount claims of that knowledge which alone can sanctify and save, even the knowledge of the one Mediator between God and man, and to whom all power has been given in heaven and earth. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.—*Posthumous Works*, vol. iv.]

CHAPTER XIV.

After an account of the great trials and sufferings which the servants of God had endured, we have now a more pleasant scene opening: the day begins now to dawn. And here we have represented, I. The Lord Jesus at the head of his faithful followers, ver. 1—5. II. Three angels sent successively to proclaim the fall of Babylon, and the things antecedent and consequent to so great an event, ver. 6—12. III. The vision of the harvest, ver. 13 to the end.



AND I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Here we have one of the most pleasant sights that can be viewed in this world, the Lord Jesus Christ at the head of his faithful adherents and attendants. Where observe,

First. How Christ appears; as a lamb standing upon Mount Sion. Mount Sion is the gospel church; Christ is with his church, and in the midst of her in all her troubles, and therefore she is not consumed. It is his presence that secures her perseverance. He appears as a Lamb, a true Lamb, the Lamb of God. There was a counterfeit lamb rose out of the earth in the last chapter, but was really a dragon. Here Christ appears as the true paschal Lamb, to shew that his mediatorial government is the fruit of his sufferings, and the cause of his people's safety and fidelity.

Secondly. How his people appear; very honourably. 1. As to the numbers; they are many, even all that were sealed; not one of them lost in all the tribulations through which they had gone. 2. Their distinguishing badge; they had the name of God written in their foreheads. They made a bold and open profession of their faith in God and Christ; and this being followed by suitable actions, they are known and approved. 3. Their congratulations and songs of praise, which were peculiar to the redeemed, ver. 3. Their praises were loud as the thunder, or as the voice of many waters; they were melodious, as of harpers; they were heavenly, before the throne of God. The song was new, suited to the new covenant, and unto that new and gracious dispensation of providence under which they now were. And their song was a secret to others; strangers intermeddled not with their joy. Others might repeat the words of the song, but they were strangers to the true sense and spirit of it. 4. Their character and description. 1st. They are described by their chastity and purity. They were virgins; they had not defiled themselves either with corporal or spiritual adultery. They had kept themselves clean from the abominations of the antichristian generation. 2nd. By their loyalty and steadfast adherence to Christ; they "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." They follow the conduct of his word, Spirit, and providence, leaving it to him to lead them into what duties and difficulties he pleases. 3rd. By their former designation to this honour; "These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb," ver. 4. Here is plain evidence of a special redemption, "they were redeemed from among men." Some of the children of men are, by redeeming mercy, distinguished from others; they were the "first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb"; his choice ones, eminent in every grace, and the earnest of many more that should be followers of them, as they were of Christ. 4th. By their universal integrity and conscientiousness. There was no guile found in them, and they were "without fault before the throne of God"; they were without any prevailing guile, any allowed fault, their hearts were right with God; and as for their human infirmities, they were freely pardoned in Christ. This is the happy remnant who attend upon the Lord Jesus as their Head and Lord; he is glorified in them, and they in him.

their foreheads." (Compare John xvii. 3.) The redeemed here pictured are called by Auberlen "the Divine kernel of humanity, the positive fruits of the history of the world and the Church."

xiv. 2. "I heard the voice of harpers:" here Alford renders, "And the voice which I heard was as of harpers," &c.

xiv. 4. "These were redeemed," &c.: both here and in verse 3 Alford substitutes the word "purchased" for "redeemed." "These were purchased from among men as a firstfruit unto God," &c.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. 8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. 9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. 12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

In this part of the chapter we have three angels or messengers sent from heaven, to give notice of the fall of Babylon, and of those things that were antecedent and consequent to that great event.

First. The first angel was sent on an errand antecedent to it, and that was, to "preach the everlasting Gospel," ver. 6, 7. Observe, 1. The Gospel is an everlasting Gospel; it is so in its nature, and shall be so in its consequences. Though all flesh be grass, "the word of the Lord endureth for ever." 2. It is a work fit for an angel to preach this everlasting Gospel. Such is the dignity, and such the difficulty, of that work; and yet we have this treasure in earthen vessels. 3. That the everlasting Gospel is of great concern to all the world; and as it is the concern of all, it is very much to be desired that it should be made known to all, even "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." 4. That the Gospel is the great means whereby men are brought to fear God and to give glory to him. Natural religion is not sufficient to keep up the fear of God, nor to secure to him glory from men. It is the Gospel that revives the fear of God, and retrieves his glory in the world. 5. When idolatry creeps into the churches of God, it is by the preaching of the Gospel, attended by the power of the Holy Spirit, that men are turned from idols to serve the living God, as the Creator of the "heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters," ver. 7. To worship any God besides him that created the world is idolatry.

Secondly. The second angel follows the other, and proclaims the actual fall of Babylon. The preaching of the everlasting Gospel had shaken the foundations of antichristianism in the world, and hastened its downfall. By Babylon is generally understood Rome, which was before called Sodom and Egypt, for wickedness and cruelty, and is now first called Babylon, for her pride and idolatry. Observe, 1. What God has foreordained and foretold shall be done as certainly as if it were done already. 2. The greatness of the papal Babylon will not be able to prevent her fall, but will make it more dreadful and remarkable. 4. The wickedness of Babylon, in corrupting, debauching, and intoxicating the nations round about her, will make her fall just, and will declare the righteousness of God in her utter ruin, ver. 8. Her crimes are recited as the just cause of her destruction.

Thirdly. A third angel follows the other two, and gives warning to all of that Divine vengeance which would overtake all those that obstinately adhered to the antichristian interest, after God had thus proclaimed its downfall, ver. 9, 10. If, after this, (this threatening denounced against Babylon, and in part already executed,) any should persist in their idolatry, professing subjection to the beast and promoting his cause, they must expect to drink deep "of the wine of the wrath of God." They shall be for ever miserable in soul and body; Jesus Christ shall inflict this punishment upon them, and the holy angels shall behold it and approve of it. Idolatry, both pagan and papist, is a damning sin in its own nature, and will prove fatal to those that persist in it after fair warning given by the word of Providence. They that refuse to come out of Babylon when thus called, and resolve to partake of her sins, must receive of her plagues. And the guilt and ruin of such incorrigible idolaters will serve to set forth the excellency of the patience and obedience of the saints. These graces shall be rewarded with salvation and glory. When the treachery and rebellion of others shall be punished with everlasting destruction, then it will be said, to the honour of the faithful, "Here is the patience of the saints," ver. 12. You have before seen their patience exercised, now you see it rewarded.

[It is generally admitted by the best interpreters that the three angels introduced in these and the following verses were emblematical heralds of the progressive reformation from popery. When, therefore, the extent and prevalence of the power of the beast at its full height had been predicted in the foregoing chapter, the diminution and weakening of it, as introductory to his destruction, is intimated in this. It is also worthy of notice, that about this era the opinion began to be publicly avowed by several persons, that the church, court, and city of Rome were Babylon, and so inevitably doomed to destruction. It may also be very well worth inquiring whether there are not some remains of the papal

xiv. 8. "Babylon:" according to the oldest MSS. we should read, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, which hath made," &c.

xiv. 13. "Blessed . . . from henceforth:" "They who die during this period are represented as dying happy, in peace, as having seen the salvation of the Lord, the day of the Church's deliverance from persecution and apostasy, the day of Gospel light and glory" (Webster and Wilkinson). "For they rest," Alford renders "that they may rest from their labours."

superstition and corruption, even in Protestant churches; and how far they, whose grand object it seems to be to contend *most*, and most *vehemently*, not to say *virulently*, for that which admits of the least scriptural proof, keep at a proper distance from this tremendous warning.—*T. Scott.*]

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. 14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. 17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Here we have the vision of the harvest and vintage, introduced with a solemn preface. Observe,

First. The preface, ver. 13. Where note, 1. From whence this prophecy about the harvest came; it came down from heaven, and not from men, and therefore it is as certain truth, and great authority. 2. How it was to be preserved and published; by writing. It was to be matter of record that the people of God might have recourse to it for their support and comfort upon all occasions. 3. What it principally intended; and that is, to shew the blessedness of all the faithful saints and servants of God, both in death and after death. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth," &c. Where observe, 1st. The description of those that are and shall be blessed; such as die in the Lord, either die in the cause of Christ, or rather die in a state of vital union with Christ; that are found in Christ when death comes. 2nd. The demonstration of their blessedness; "they rest from their labours," and "their works follow them." First. They are blessed in their rest; they rest from all sin, temptation, sorrow, and persecution; "There the wicked cease from troubling, there the weary are at rest." Secondly. They are blessed in their recompence, "their works follow them;" they do not go before them as their title, or price of purchase, but follow them as their evidence of having lived and died in the Lord; and the memory of them will be pleasant, and the reward glorious, far above the merit of all their services and sufferings. Thirdly. They are happy in the time of their dying, when they have lived to see the cause of God reviving, the peace of the church returning, and the wrath of God falling upon their idolatrous, cruel enemies. Such times are good times to die in; they have Simeon's desire, "Now, Lord, let thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." And all this is ratified and confirmed by the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing with their spirits, and with the written word.

Secondly. We have the vision itself, represented by a harvest and a vintage. 1. By an harvest, ver. 14, 15; an emblem that sometimes signifies the cutting down of the wicked, when ripe for ruin, by the judgments of God; and sometimes the gathering in of the righteous, when ripe for heaven, by the mercy of God. This seems rather to represent God's judgments against the wicked. And here observe, 1st. The Lord of the harvest, one so like unto the Son of man, that he was the same, even the Lord Jesus; who is described, First. By the chariot, in which he saw a white cloud, a cloud that had a bright side turned to the church, how dark soever it might be to the wicked. Secondly. By the ensign of his power; on his head was a golden crown, authority to do all that he did, and whatsoever he would do. Thirdly. By the instrument of his providence; "in his hand a sharp sickle." Fourthly. By the solicitations he had from the temple to perform this great work. What he did, he was desired to do by his people; and though he was resolved to do it, he would for this thing be sought unto by them, and so it should be in return to their prayers. 2nd. Observe, The harvest work; which is, to thrust the sickle into the corn, and reap the field. The sickle is the sword of God's justice, the field is the world; reaping is cutting the inhabitants of the earth down, and carrying them off. 3rd. The harvest time, and that was when the corn is ripe; when the measure of the sins of men is filled up, and they are ripe for destruction. The most inveterate enemies of Christ and his church are not destroyed, till by their sin they are ripe for ruin, and then he will spare them no longer; he will thrust in his sickle, and the earth shall be reaped.

2. A vintage, ver. 17. Some think these two are only different emblems of the same judgment; others, that they refer to distinct events of Providence

before the end of all things. Observe, 1st. To whom this vintage work was committed; to an angel, "another angel that came out from the altar;" that is, from the holiest of all in heaven. 2nd. At whose request this vintage work was undertaken; and it was as before, at the cry of an angel out of the temple, the ministers and churches of God on earth. 3rd. The work of the vintage, which consists of two parts: First. The cutting off and gathering the "clusters of the vine," which were now ripe and ready, "fully ripe," ver. 18. Secondly. Casting these grapes into the wine-press, ver. 19. And here we are told, 1st. What was the wine-press; it was "the wrath of God," the fire of his indignation, some terrible calamity, very probably the sword, shedding the blood of the wicked. 2nd. Where was the place of the wine-press; "without the city," where the army lay that came against Babylon. 3rd. The quantity of the wine; that is, of the blood that was drawn forth by this judgment; it was for depth up to the horses bridles, and for breadth and length "a thousand and six hundred furlongs," ver. 20; that is, say some, two hundred Italian miles, which is thought to be the measure of the Holy Land, and may be meant of the patrimony of the holy see, encompassing the city of Rome. But here we are left to doubtful conjectures. Perhaps this great event has not yet had its accomplishment, but the vision is for an appointed time; and therefore, though it may seem to tarry, we are to wait for it. "But who shall live when the Lord does this?"

CHAPTER XV.

Hitherto, according to the judgment of very eminent expositors, God had represented to his servant John, I. The state of the church under the pagan powers, in the six seals opened; and then, II. The state of the church under the papal powers, in the vision of the six trumpets that began to sound upon the opening of the seventh seal. III. And then is inserted a more general and brief account of the past, present, and future state of the church, in the little book, &c. He now proceeds, IV. To shew him how antichrist should be destroyed, by what steps that destruction should be accomplished, in the vision of the seven vials. This chapter contains an awful introduction or preparation for the pouring out of the vials; in which we have, 1. A sight of those angels in heaven that were to have the execution of this great work, and with what acclamations of joy the heavenly hosts applauded the great design, ver. 1—4. 2. A sight of these angels coming out of heaven to receive those vials which they were to pour out, and the great commotions that this caused in the world, ver. 5 to the end.



ND I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. 4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

Here we have the preparation of matters for the pouring out of the seven vials, which was committed to seven angels; and observe how these angels appeared to the apostle—"in heaven." It was in a wonderful manner, and that upon the account, 1. Of the work they had to do, and that was, to finish the destruction of antichrist. God was now about to pour out his seven last plagues upon that interest; and as the measure of Babylon's sins was filled up, they should now find the full measure of his vindictive wrath. 2. The spectators and witnesses of this their commission, all that had gotten the victory over the beast, &c. These stood on a sea of glass, representing this world, as some think, a brittle thing, that shall be broken to pieces; or, as others, the gospel covenant, alluding to the brazen sea in the temple, in which the priests were to wash (the faithful servants of God stand upon the foundation of the righteousness of Christ); or, as others, the Red Sea, that stood, as it were, congealed while the Israelites went through; and the pillar of fire reflecting light upon the waters, they would seem to have fire mingled with them; and this to shew that the fire of God's wrath against Pharaoh and his horses should dissolve the congealed waters, and destroy them thereby, to which there seems to be an allusion by their singing the song of Moses; in which, 1st. They extol the greatness of God's works, and the justice and truth of his ways, both in delivering his people and destroying their enemies; they rejoiced in hope, and the near prospect they had of this, though it was not yet accomplished. 2nd. They call upon all nations to render unto God that fear, glory, and worship which was due to such a discovery of his truth and justice; ver. 4, "Who shall not fear thee?"

5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with

mingled elements of water and fire seem to point to the twofold baptism of the saved—viz., the baptism of water and of the Spirit (John iii. 5) of all who are made kings and priests of the heavenly temple, and the baptism of fire through which all who are followers of the Lamb must pass. (Compare Luke iii. 16, xii. 49, 50; Mark x. 38—40; 1 Cor. iii. 13.) The words "and over his mark" are omitted by all the ancient MSS.

xv. 3. "Thou King of saints:" this reading has no authority

xiv. 20. "Without the city:" the largest wine-presses were usually outside the city. Blood and wine are sometimes used interchangeably. (Compare Gen. xlix. 11; Deut. xxxii. 14; Ps. lxxv. 8; Isa. xxix. 9, li. 21.)

xv. 1. "The seven last plagues:" Alford's rendering is more emphatic—"seven plagues which are the last."

xv. 2. "Sea of glass mingled with fire:" besides the allusion to the brazen laver of the Temple for the purification of the priests, the

golden girdles. 7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Observe, First. How these angels appeared coming out of heaven, to execute their commission; ver. 5. "The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened." Here is an allusion to the holiest of all in the tabernacle and temple, where was the mercy-seat, covering the ark of the testimony, where the high priest made intercession, and God communed with his people, and heard their prayers. Now by this, as it is here mentioned, we may understand, 1. That, in the judgments God was now about to execute upon the antichristian interest, he was fulfilling the prophecies and promises of his word and covenant, which was there always before him, and of which he was ever mindful. 2. That in this work he was answering the prayers of the people, which were offered to him by their great High Priest. 3. That he was herein avenging the quarrel of his own Son, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, whose offices and authority had been usurped, his name dishonoured, and the great designs of his death opposed by antichrist and his adherents. 4. That he was opening a wider door of liberty for his people to worship him in numerous solemn assemblies, without the fear of their enemies.

Secondly. How they were equipped and prepared for their work. Where observe, 1. Their array. They were "clothed in pure and white linen," and had "their breasts girded with golden girdles," ver. 6. This was the habit of the high priests when they went in to inquire of God, and came out with an answer from him. This shewed these angels were acting in all things under the Divine appointment and direction, and that they were going to prepare a sacrifice to the Lord, called "the supper of the great God," *ch. xix. 17*. The angels are the ministers of Divine justice, and they do every thing in a pure and holy manner. 2. Their artillery; what it was, and from whence they received it. Their artillery, by which they were to do this great execution, was, "seven vials filled with the wrath of God." They were armed with the wrath of God against his enemies. The meanest creature, when it comes armed with the anger of God, will be too hard for any man in the world; but much more an angel of God. This wrath of God was not to be poured out all at once, but was divided into seven parts, which should successively fall upon the antichristian party. Now from whence did the angels receive these vials? From one of the four living creatures, one of the ministers of the true church; that is, in answer to the prayers of the ministers and people of God, and to avenge their cause, in which the angels are willingly employed.

Thirdly. The impressions these things made upon all that stood near the temple; they were all, as it were, wrapt up in clouds of smoke, which filled the temple, from the glorious and powerful presence of God; so that "no man was able to enter into the temple" till the work was finished. The interests of antichrist were so interwoven with the civil interests of the nations, that he could not be destroyed without giving a great shock to all the world. And the people of God would have but little rest and leisure to assemble themselves before him, while this great work was a doing; for the present their sabbaths would be interrupted, ordinances of public worship intermitted, and all thrown into a general confusion. God himself was now preaching to the church, and to all the world, by terrible things in righteousness; but when this work was done, then the churches would have rest; the temple would be opened, and the solemn assemblies gathered, edified, and multiplied. The greatest deliverances of the church are brought about by awful and astonishing steps of Providence.

[Contemporaneously with the French Revolution, (see Supplementary Note on following chapter,) or immediately subsequent, there was a signal revival of the evangelic and missionary spirit in Britain. Numerous societies were formed for the spread of the Gospel and the circulation of the Scriptures. Missions were set on foot to almost all parts of the world,—the West Indies, the South Sea Islands, Africa, Australia, Greenland. The evangelization of India was a work not too mighty to be undertaken. The Jews were visited; and even the benighted and idolatrous churches of eastern and western Christendom were not neglected. The French Revolution opened great part of Europe to the preaching of the Gospel. Thus the temple was opened; and the ark of the Testament—*ch. xi. 15–19*—the Bible and Gospel,—which popery had veiled, was anew discovered to the Roman nations. But this statement must be taken in connection with another most important intimation, in the end of *ch. xv.*, respecting the temple now open: "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." Till God had vindicated his holiness by the infliction of these awful plagues, no man was able to enter into the temple. Nevertheless, all the while the storm was raging, it stood open, revealing, as it were, to the nations the sanctuary of safety, and the temple of worship, where they should ultimately be gathered. Since evangelic agencies began to be employed on the continent of Europe there have been individual conversions not a few; but there has been no general or national evangelization; nor are we to expect that there will be, till the judgment of the seventh vial is ended.—*S. V.* It is also highly probable that the same judgments by which the antichristian power and other enemies of the church shall be destroyed will be employed to purify even the less corrupt parts of it, and in proportion to the degree in which unscriptural usages are contended for and imposed, or scriptural truths and duties are neglected, even professed Protestant churches will drink of the same cup, *Isa. v. 9*; *i. 21*. "God will purify his church by such signal judgments as shall arouse the attention of the whole world."—*Bishop Horsley*. So that the happy estate of the true church, as perhaps implied by entering into the temple, will not commence till, by the same awful dispensations, obstinate enemies shall be destroyed, and lukewarm, superstitious, or formal Christians shall be purified. Thus, whatever is anti-scriptural or unscriptural in every company being purged away, the whole brought to purity, unity, and spirituality in worship, discipline, doctrine, and practice, shall be firmly established, *Zeph. iii. 9–17*.—*T. Scott*.

CHAPTER XVI.

In this chapter we have an account of the pouring forth of these vials that were filled with the wrath of God, and they were poured out upon the whole antichristian empire, and on every thing appertaining to it. 1. Upon the earth, ver. 2. Then, 11. Upon the sea, ver. 3. 111. Upon the rivers and fountains of waters, ver. 4. Here the heavenly

hosts proclaim and applaud the righteousness of the judgments of God. *IV.* The fourth vial was poured out on the sun, ver. 8. *V.* The fifth on the seat of the beast. *VI.* The sixth on the river Euphrates. *VII.* The seventh in the air, upon which the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon came in remembrance before God.



ND I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. 2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. 3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. 4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. 7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

We had in the foregoing chapter the great and solemn preparation that was made for the pouring out of the vials; now we have the performance of that work. Where observe,

First. That though every thing was made ready before, yet nothing was to be put in execution without an immediate, positive order from God; and this he gave out of the temple, answering the prayers of his people, and avenging their quarrel.

Secondly. No sooner was the word of command given but it was immediately obeyed; no delay, no objection made. We find some of the best of men, as Moses and Jeremiah, did not so readily come in and comply with the call of God to their work; but the angels of God not only excel in strength, but in a readiness to do the will of God. God says, "Go your ways, and pour out the vials," and immediately the work is begun. We are taught to pray, that the will of God may be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

And now we enter upon a series of very terrible dispensations of Providence; of which it is difficult to give the certain meaning, or to make the particular application. But in the general it is worth our observation,

1. That here is a reference and allusion to several of the plagues of Egypt, such as the turning their waters into blood, smiting them with boils and sores. Their sins were alike, and so were their punishments.

2. These vials have a plain reference to the seven trumpets, which represented the rise of antichrist; and we learn hence, that the fall of the church's enemies shall bear some resemblance to their rise; and that God can bring them down in such ways as they chose to exalt themselves. And the fall of antichrist shall be gradual; as Rome was not built in one day, so neither shall it fall in one day, but it falls by degrees: it shall fall so as to rise no more.

3. The fall of the antichristian interest should be universal. Every thing that any ways belonged to them, or could be serviceable to them,—the premises and all their appurtenances,—are put into the writ for destruction; their earth, their air, their sea, their rivers, their cities, all consigned over to ruin, all accursed for the sake of the wickedness of that people. Thus the creation groans and suffers through the sins of men. Now we proceed to,

1st. The first angel who poured out his vial, ver. 2; and observe, *First*. Where it fell; "Upon the earth;" that is, say some, upon the common people; others, upon the body of the Romish clergy, that were the basis of the papacy, and of an earthly spirit, all carrying on earthly designs. *Secondly*. What it produced: "Noisome and grievous sores" on all that had the mark of the beast. They had marked themselves by their sin, now God marks them out by his judgments. This sore, some think, signifies some of the first appearances of Providence against their state and interest, which gave them great uneasiness, as it discovered their inward distemper, and was a token of farther evil: the plague-tokens appeared.

2nd. "The second angel poured out his vial;" and here we see, *First*. Where it fell; "Upon the sea;" that is, say some, upon the jurisdiction and dominion of the papacy; others, upon the whole system of their religion, their false doctrines, corrupt glosses, their superstitious rites, their idolatrous worship, their pardons, indulgences, a great conflux of wicked inventions and institutions, by which they maintain a trade and traffic advantageous to themselves, but injurious to all that deal with them. *Secondly*. What it produced: It turned the sea into blood, "as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul died in the sea." God discovered not only the vanity and falsehood of their religion, but the pernicious and deadly nature of it, that the souls of men were poisoned by that which was pretended to be the sure means of their salvation.

3rd. The next angel poured out his vial; and we are told, *First*. Where that fell; "Upon the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;" that is, say some very learned men, upon their emissaries, and especially the Jesuits, who, like streams, conveyed the venom and poison of their errors and idolatries from the spring-head through the earth. *Secondly*. What effect it had upon them; it

from the best MSS. The majority of ancient MSS. have "thou King of the nations;" one, the Parisian MS., has "King of the ages."

xv. 4. "Judgments are manifest." Alford renders, "because thy righteous acts have been made manifest." The whole progress of history is to declare God's righteousness; this righteousness the Gospel declares in love (*Rom. iii. 25, 26*), while history from age to age unfolds it in operation, for history read aright is little more

than the perpetual proclamation of the moral laws of the righteous King of the ages.

xv. 6. "Clothed in pure and white linen;" or better, "clothed in linen pure and shining." (Compare Transfiguration, *Matt. xvii. 2*.)

xvi. 1. "As Moses took ashes from an earthly, common furnace, so angels, as priestly ministers in the heavenly temple, take holy fire in sacred vials, or bowls, from the heavenly altar to pour down, (Compare chap. viii. 5.) The same heavenly altar which would have

turned them into blood; some think, it stirred up Christian princes to take just revenge upon them that had been the great incendiaries of the world, and had occasioned the shedding of the blood of armies, and of martyrs; and the following doxology favours this sense, ver. 5, 6, wherein the instrument that God makes use of in this work is called "the angel of the waters," who extols the righteousness of God in this retaliation, "They have shed the blood of thy saints, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy;" to which another angel answered by full consent, ver. 7.

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. 10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

In these verses we see the work going on in the appointed order.

4th. The fourth angel poured out his vial, and that fell upon the sun; that is, say some, upon some eminent prince of the popish communion that should renounce their false religion a little while before its utter downfall; and some expect it will be the German emperor. And now, what will be the consequence of this? That sun, which before cherished them with warm and benign influences, shall now grow hot against these idolaters, and shall scorch them. Princes shall use their power and authority to suppress them, which yet would be so far from bringing them to repentance, that it should cause them to curse God and their king, and look upward, throwing out their blasphemous speeches against the God of heaven. They were hardened to their ruin.

5th. The fifth angel poured out his vial, ver. 10; and observe, *First*. Where that fell: "Upon the seat of the beast;" upon Rome itself, the mystical Babylon, the head of the antichristian empire. *Secondly*. What effect it had there: the whole kingdom of the beast was "full of darkness" and distress; from that very city, which was the seat of their policy, the source of all their learning, and all their knowledge, and all their pomp and pleasure, it now becomes a source of darkness, and pain, and anguish. Darkness was one of the plagues of Egypt, and it is opposed to lustre and honour, and so forebodes the contempt and scorn to which the antichristian interest should be exposed. Darkness is opposed to wisdom and penetration, and forebodes the confusion and folly which the idolaters should discover at that time. It is opposed to pleasure and joy, and so signifies their anguish and vexation of spirit when their calamities thus came upon them.

[In *The Discourse of the Rise and Fall of Papacy*, published by its author in the year 1701, it is said, "The pouring out of this vial on the sun must denote the humiliation of some eminent potentates of the Romish interest, whose influence and countenance cherish and support the papal cause. And these, therefore, must be principally understood of the house of Austria and Bourbon, though not exclusively of other popish princes.—I cannot but hope that some new mortification of the chief supporters of antichrist will then happen; and perhaps the French monarchy may begin to be considerably humble about that time; that whereas the French king takes the sun for his emblem, and this for his motto, *Nec pluribus impar*, he may at length, or rather his successors, and the monarchy itself, (at least before the year 1794,) be forced to acknowledge, that (in respect to neighbouring potentates) he is even *singulis impar*."—*Rev. R. Fleming*, 1701. We leave the reader to trace the singular coincidence between these intimations and the actual occurrences of the period referred to, only observing that, subsequent to 1794, writers on the Apocalypse have entered into lengthened historical proofs of the prediction being then fulfilled. Mr. Elliott, commenting on another part of this same vial—on the power given to the angel—observes, "It is evidently to the angel that poured out of the vial that this power belonged. But, just as in the case of the angel Abaddon, that conducted the locust-plague of the fifth trumpet, so here too we may suppose a visible and earthly agency operating, under the invisible angelic agency, to execute the judgment of the vial. And certainly such an agent was Napoleon. It was given him to scorch the men with fire. It is suggested by Dr. Keith that there may be an allusion in this expression to the artillery used by the French emperor, to an extent beyond all former example in military annals, as the great arm of his victories. Nor is he unwarranted in this supposition by the analogy of prophecy. If the fire noted under the sixth trumpet, as that by which the Greek empire was to fall, was literally the fire of artillery, why not the same here? But the fulfilment of the expression, taken in its common figurative sense of fiery affliction and suffering, is equally clear in the history of the wars and conquests of Napoleon. It was given him to scorch men with fire; and they were 'scorched with great heat.' As a specimen, the following extract, borrowed by Mr. Cunningham (p. 281) from official reports, in 1813, may suffice: 'The destruction and distress which marked the countries through which the French army fled from the bloody fields of Leipzig were altogether indescribable. Dead bodies covered the roads. Half-consumed French soldiers were found in the villages destroyed by the flames. Whole districts were depopulated by disease. For a month after the retreat no human being, no domestic animal, no poultry, nay, not even a sparrow was to be met with: only ravens in abundance feeding on corpses.' It is added of the men thus scorched with great heat, that "they blasphemed the name of God, who had power over these plagues, and repented not to give him glory." From the first outbreak of the revolutionary venom in France to the final prostration of the German empire in opposing it, no evidence appeared of these judgments having been effective for their intended purpose, no case of the suffering nations renouncing the papal apostacy for a purer faith, and turning, like some at the Reformation, to the God that smote them. There had been no repenting in France to give God glory. The same was substantially the case in Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal: the Romish superstition being professed nationally, the French infidelity cherished in the heart; and, together with it, instead of humiliation under God's judgments, a bitter, blaspheming rebelliousness of spirit against him who sent them.—*Rev. E. B. Elliott*, 1847. The fifth vial is to be poured on the throne or seat of the beast, that is, upon Rome itself; where the Holy Spirit no longer conceals the matter under the veil of figures and allegories, perhaps on account of the great light that should then

be reflected upon the prophecies—so that it shall no longer be counted what part of the vial is already accomplished, and what remains to be accomplished. By this disaster of the Roman city, the papal name shall not indeed be altogether destroyed, but spoiled of its glory and splendour, so that they shall gnaw their tongues for pain. In the mean time, however, persevering in their impenitency and obduracy, they shall abuse their pains to further degrees of blasphemy.—*Mede*, 1632. We repeat that virtually the temporal power of the pope is abolished. He can neither appoint his ministers nor dismiss them, or direct their measures. His presidency is merely nominal; and even that shadow of authority he will probably not be suffered to retain. The Roman hierarchy is destroyed—destroyed by suicide—but Rome will soon discover its error. The rich leavings by which the court and capital were supported owned at best but a reluctant submission to the pope himself. How will they now endure to maintain the licentious indolence of the usurping metropolis? Rome, deprived of its ecclesiastical court, unsafe as the resort of wealthy travellers, without commerce or manufactures, and surrounded by its unwholesome desert, where existence is perpetual warfare against nature, must fast sink into the decay and ruin from which it was only rescued as the capital of the Roman Catholic world. We cannot pretend to lament the danger or downfall of the church of Rome.—*Quarterly Review*, June, 1848.]

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

6th. The sixth angel poured out his vial; and observe, *First*. Where it fell; "Upon the great river Euphrates." Some take it literally, from the place where the Turkish power and empire begun; and they think this is a prophecy of the destruction of the Turkish monarchy and idolatry, which they think will be effected about the same time with that of the papacy, as another antichrist, and that thereby a way shall be made for the convenience of the Jews, those princes of the east. Others take it for the river Tiber; for as Rome is mystical Babylon, Tiber is mystical Euphrates. And when Rome is destroyed, her river and merchandise must suffer with her. [Since 1820, how have the waters of the symbolic Euphrates been dried up! They have receded from Greece on the west, Algiers and Egypt on the south, Wallachia and Moldavia on the north. And if we look to the central empire, in what a state of decrepitude do we find it!—a feeble government, an exhausted treasury, the provinces groaning under rapacious pachas, and the population yearly diminishing under the influence of tyranny, famine, and plague; so that, in the memorable phrase of Lamartine, "Turkey is dying out for want of Turks." The sixth angel has poured out his vial, and the waters of the great river Euphrates are rapidly drying up.—*S. V.*] *Secondly*. What did this vial produce? 1st. The drying up of the river, which furnished the city with wealth, provisions, and all sorts of accommodations. 2nd. A way is hereby prepared for "the kings of the East." The idolatry of the church of Rome had been a great hindrance both to the conversion of the Jews, who have been long cured of their inclination to idols, and of the Gentiles, who are hardened in their idolatry, by seeing that which so much symbolizes with it among those called Christians. And therefore it is very probable the downfall of popery, removing these obstructions, will open a way for both the Jews and other eastern nations to come into the true church of Christ. And if we suppose that Mahometanism shall fall at the same time, there will be still a more open communication between the western and eastern nations, that may facilitate the conversion of the Jews, and of "the fulness of the Gentiles." And when this work of God appears, and is about to be accomplished, no wonder if it occasion another consequence, which is, 3rd. The last effort of the great dragon; he is resolved to have another push for it, that, if possible, he may retrieve the ruinous posture of his affairs in the world. He is now rallying his forces, re-collecting all his spirits, to make one desperate rally before all be lost. This is occasioned by the pouring out of the sixth vial. And here observe, (1.) The instruments he makes use of to engage the powers of the earth in his cause and quarrel; "Three unclean spirits, like frogs," come forth, one "out of the mouth of the dragon," another "out of the mouth of the beast," and a third "out of the mouth of the false prophet." Hell, the secular power of antichrist, and the ecclesiastical power, all combine to send their several instruments furnished with hellish malice, with worldly policy, and with religious falsehood and deceit; and these should muster up the devil's forces for a decisive battle. (2.) The means these instruments should use to engage the powers of the earth in this war. They should work pretended miracles,—the old stratagem of him "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness," 2 *Thess.* ii. 9, 10. Some think, a little before the fall of antichrist, the popish pretence of power to work miracles will be revived, and will very much amuse and deceive the world. (3.) The field of battle, a place called Armageddon; that is, say some, the mount of Megiddo, near to which, by a stream issuing from thence, Barak overcame Sisera, and all the kings in alliance with him, *Jud.* v. 19. And in the valley of Megiddo Josiah was slain. This place had been famous for two events of a very different nature, the first very happy for the church of God, the latter very unhappy; but it should now be the field of the last battle in which the church shall be engaged, and she shall be victorious. This battle required time to prepare for it, and therefore the farther account of it is suspended till we come to the nineteenth chapter, ver. 19, 20. (4.) The warning which God gives of this great and decisive trial, to engage his

kindled the sweet incense of prayer, bringing down blessing upon earth, by man's sin kindles the fiery descending curse; just as the river Nile, which ordinarily is the source of Egypt's fertility, became blood and a curse through Egypt's sin" (Fausset).

xvi. 12. "Dried up;" the literal Babylon was taken when the channel of the Euphrates was laid dry by Cyrus. "Kings of the east;" the kings which come from the rising of the sun. Our Lord is called "the dayspring from on high" (Luke i. 78). Compare Zech.

iii. 8, vi. 12. The saints are meant, as the co-heirs of the Redeemer's kingdom, kings and priests unto Christ, the Sun of Righteousness (Wordsworth). "Some understand by 'the kings of the east' the Jewish nation, and by their 'way' their return to Palestine. This interpretation is grounded on Zech. x. 10, 11, which, however, was fulfilled in the return from the Babylonish and Egyptian captivity" (Webster and Wilkinson).

xvi. 14. "Devils;" rather, "demons." Concerning this passage,

people to prepare for it, ver. 15. It would be sudden and unexpected, and therefore Christians should be clothed, and armed, and ready for it, that they might not be surprised and ashamed. When God's cause comes to be tried, and his battles to be fought, all his people should be ready to stand up for his interest, and be faithful and valiant in his service.

[We determine the character of these three frogs, or spirits, by tracing their origin. The first issues from the mouth of the dragon, which is the old serpent the devil. This can be nothing else than infidelity, the religion of Rome in its dragon form, in conjunction with its usual concomitants, democracy, and rebellion against all authority, Divine and human. The next issues from the mouth of the beast; that is, the seven-headed and ten-horned beast. The characteristic principle of this beast, as distinguished from that of the false prophet, is despotism. The third and last spirit comes from the mouth of the false prophet, and, beyond question, is popery. These symbolic frogs covered Europe, penetrating everywhere, loading the air with their croakings, and polluting the earth with their filth. But, though individually insignificant and base, collectively they have been the authors of a tremendous catastrophe. In the execution of their commission, they have gathered the kings of the earth and of the whole world to "the battle of that great day of God Almighty." This is the next terrible scene that opens before us. On the very eve of battle a solemn warning is tendered: "Behold, I come as a thief;" for this event is to overtake the world with unprecedented and startling suddenness. "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." This warning plainly imports that, immediately before that great day, individuals and churches should be exposed to peculiar temptation to forsake their principles, here symbolized by their garments. The temptation will not arise from the persecution of force, but from the seduction of these three spirits. Do recent events throw no light on this prediction? Has not Puseyism solicited some to part with the doctrine of Christ's atonement and intercession? Has not Erastianism solicited others to give up the headship of the Lord Jesus? And has not neology tempted others to make shipwreck of the faith altogether? A peculiar blessedness will be his who "watcheth and keepeth his garments."—S. V. The coincidence between this prophecy and the following, as unfulfilled prophecies in the Old Testament, is worthy of special notice by all who would patiently investigate the true meaning, and not run away with hasty, and crude, and partial, though plausible, interpretations, grounded on incidental resemblances, *Ps. clix. 7-9; Isa. xxxiv. 1-6; Eze. xxxviii. 1-xxix. 21; Dan. ii. 44, 45; vii. 9-12; xi. 40-45; Mic. v. 10-15; vii. 4-17; Zec. xiv. 12-19.*—T. Scott.]

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. 19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Here we have an account of the seventh and last angel pouring forth his vial, contributing his part towards the accomplishment of the downfall of Babylon, which was the finishing stroke. And here, as before, observe,

First. Where this plague fell; on the air, that is, upon the prince of the power of the air, that is, the devil. His powers were restrained, his policies confounded, he was bound in God's chain, the sword of God was upon his eye and upon his arm; for he, as well as the powers of the earth, is subject to the almighty power of God. He had used all possible means to preserve the antichristian interest, and to prevent the fall of Babylon; all the influence that he has upon the minds of men, binding their judgments, and perverting them; hardening their hearts, raising their enmity to the Gospel as high as could be. But now here is a vial poured out upon his kingdom, and he is not able to support his tottering cause and interest any longer.

Secondly. What it produced: 1. A thankful voice from heaven, pronouncing that now the work was done. The church triumphant in heaven saw it, and rejoiced; the church militant on earth saw it, and became triumphant: "It is finished." 2. A mighty commotion on the earth, an earthquake, so great as never was before, shaking the very centre; and this ushered in by the usual concomitants of thunder and lightnings. 3. The fall of Babylon, which was divided into three parts, called "the cities of the nations," ver. 19, having had rule over the nations, and taken in the idolatry of the nations, incorporating into her religion something of the Jewish, something of the pagan, and something of the Christian religion; and so was three cities in one. God now remembered this great and wicked city, though for some time he seemed to have forgotten her idolatry and cruelty, yet now he gives "unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." And this downfall extended farther than to the seat of antichrist; it reached from the centre to the circumference; and every island, and every mountain, that seemed by nature and situation the most secured, were carried away in the deluge of this ruin.

Thirdly. How the antichristian party were affected with it. Though it fell upon them as a dreadful storm, as if the stones of the city, tossed up into the air, came down upon their heads, like hailstones of a talent weight each, yet they were so far from repenting, that they blasphemed that God who thus punished them. Here was a dreadful plague of the heart, a spiritual judgment more dreadful and destructive than all the rest. Observe, 1. The greatest calamities that can befall men will not bring them to repentance without the grace of God

working with them. 2. Those who are not made better by the judgments of God are always the worse for them. 3. To be hardened in sin and enmity against God, by his righteous judgments, is a certain token of utter destruction.

CHAPTER XVII.

This chapter is another representative of those things that had been revealed before concerning the wickedness and ruin of antichrist. This antichrist had been before represented as a beast, and is now described as a great whore. And here, 1. The apostle is invited to see this vile woman, ver. 1, 2. II. He tells us what an appearance she made, ver. 3-6. III. The mystery of it is explained to him, ver. 7-12. And, IV. Her ruin foretold, ver. 13 to the end.



AND there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. 3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5 And upon her forehead was a name, written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.



ROMISH COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL OF THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW, PARIS.

Here we have a new vision, not as to the matter of it, for that is contemporary with what came under the three last vials, but as to the manner of description, &c. Observe,

First. The invitation given to the apostle to take a view of what was here to be represented; ver. 1. "Come hither, and I will shew thee the judgment of the great whore." &c. This is a name of great infamy. A whore is one that is married, and has been false to her husband's bed; has forsaken the guide of her youth, and broken the covenant of God. She had been a prostitute to the kings of the earth, whom she had intoxicated "with the wine of her fornication."

Secondly. The appearance she made, and it was gay and gaudy, like such sort of creatures; ver. 4. "She was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls." Here were all the allure-

Wordsworth thinks that it betokens "an alliance of infidel, democratical, and papal powers. There will be a league of corrupt religion with lawlessness, blasphemy, infidelity." "To gather them:" this is exactly the action and effect of the diffusion and prevalence of opinion. Webster and Wilkinson quote Canning's saying: "The next great war will be a war of opinion."

xvii. 1. "Whore," or "harlot:" the term is frequently applied to the Jewish Church—e.g., Isa. i. 21; Jer. ii. 20. The church and nation

of Israel were regarded as betrothed to God. (Compare *Psa. xlv. 1; Hos. ii.*) Faithlessness to him and his worship was described, therefore, as harlotry. Following the same analogy, the Christian Church is the bride, the Lamb's wife (*chap. xxi. 2, 9*), the woman who, amid all trials and persecutions, remains faithful to her absent lord. (Compare *chap. xii. 6*.) Hence, to preserve the harmony of the interpretation, it seems natural to understand the harlot as representing some faithless or apostate church.

ments of worldly honour and riches, pomp and pride, suited to sensual and worldly minds.

Thirdly. Her principal seat and residence; "Upon the beast that had seven heads and ten horns," &c.; that is to say, Rome, the city on seven hills, infamous for idolatry, tyranny, and blasphemy.

Fourthly. Her name, which "was written on her forehead." It was the custom of impudent harlots to hang out signs, with their names, that all might know what they were. Now in this observe, 1. She is named from her place of residence, Babylon the Great. But, that we might not take it for the old Babylon, literally so called, we are told there is a mystery in the name, it is some other great city resembling the old Babylon. 2. She is named from her infamous way and practice. Not only a harlot, but a mother of harlots; breeding up harlots, and nursing and training them up to idolatry, and all sort of lewdness and wickedness; the parent and nurse of all false religion and filthy conversation.

Fifthly. Her diet; she satiated herself with "the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus." She drank their blood with that greediness that she intoxicated herself with it. It was so pleasant to her that she could not tell when she had enough of it. She was satiated, but never satisfied.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. 8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. 9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. 10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. 11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. 12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. 13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

Here we have the mystery of this vision explained. The apostle wondered at the sight of this woman; the angel undertakes to open this vision to him, it being the key of the former visions. And he tells the apostle what was meant by the beast on which the woman sat; but it is so explained as still to need farther explanation. 1. This beast "was, and is not, and yet is;" that is, it was a seat of idolatry and persecution; and is not, that is, not in the ancient form, which was pagan; and yet it is, it is truly the seat of idolatry and tyranny, though of another sort and form. It "ascends out of the bottomless pit." Idolatry and cruelty are the issue and product of hell, and it shall return thither and go into perdition. 2. This beast had seven heads; which have a double signification: 1st. "Seven mountains;" the seven hills on which Rome stands. And, 2. "Seven kings," or sorts of government. Rome was governed by kings, consuls, tribunes, decemviri, dictators, emperors that were pagan, and emperors that were Christian; five of these were extinct when this prophecy was written; one was then in being, that is, the pagan emperor; and the other, that is, the Christian emperor, was yet to come, ver. 10. This beast, the papacy, makes an eighth governor, and sets up idolatry again. 3rd. This beast had "ten horns," which are said to be "ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet;" "as yet," that is, as some, shall not rise up till the Roman empire be broken in pieces; or, as others, shall not rise up till near the end of antichrist's reign; and so shall reign but as it were one hour with her, but shall for that time be very unanimous and very zealous in that interest, and entirely devoted to it, divesting themselves of their prerogatives and revenues, things so dear to princes, out of an unaccountable fondness for the papacy. (See Supplementary Notes on ch. xiii., and at end of book.)

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. 15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17 For

God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. 18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

Here we have some account of the downfall of Babylon, to be more fully described in the following chapter.

First. Here is a war begun between the beast and his followers and the Lamb and his followers; the beast and his army, to an eye of sense, appear much stronger than the Lamb and his army. One would think an army with a lamb at the head of them could not stand before "the great red dragon." But,

Secondly. Here is a victory gained by the Lamb; "The Lamb shall overcome." Christ must reign till all enemies be put under his feet. He will be sure to meet with many enemies, and much opposition, but he will also be sure to gain the victory.

Thirdly. Here is the ground and reason of the victory assigned; and that is taken, 1. From the character of the Lamb; "He is King of kings, and Lord of lords." He has, both by nature and by office, supreme dominion and power over all things; all the powers of earth and hell are subject to his check and control. 2. From the character of his followers; "They are called, and chosen, and faithful;" they are called out by commission to this warfare, they are chosen and fitted for it, and they will be faithful in it. Such an army, under such a commander, will at length carry all the world before them.

Fourthly. The victory is justly acknowledged, 1. By the vast multitudes that paid obedience and subjection to the beast and to the whore. She sat upon (that is, presided over) many waters; and these waters were so many multitudes of people, and nations, of all languages; yea, she reigned not only over kingdoms, but over the kings, and they were her tributaries and vassals, ver. 15, 18. 2. By the powerful influence which God hereby shewed he had over the minds of great men; their hearts were in his hand, and he turned them as he pleased; for, 1st. It was of God, and to fulfil his will, that these kings "agreed to give their kingdom unto the beast;" they were judicially blinded and hardened to do so. And, 2nd. It was of God that afterwards their hearts were turned against the whore, to hate her, and to make "her desolate and naked, and to eat her flesh, and burn her with fire;" they shall at length see their folly, and how they have been bewitched and enslaved by the papacy, and, out of a just resentment, shall not only fall off from Rome, but shall be made the instruments of God's providence in her destruction. (See concluding note on Revelation.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

We have here, I. An angel proclaiming the fall of Babylon, ver. 1, 2. II. Assigning the reasons of her fall, ver. 3. III. Giving warning to all that belonged to God to come out of her, ver. 4, 5; and to assist in her destruction, ver. 6-8. IV. The great lamentation made for her by those that had been large sharers in her sinful pleasures and profits, ver. 9-20. V. The great joy that there would be among others at the sight of her irrecoverable ruin, ver. 20 to the end.



AND after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

The downfall and destruction of Babylon is an event so fully determined in the counsels of God, and of such consequence to his interests and glory, that the visions and predictions concerning it are repeated.

First. Here is another angel sent from heaven, attended with great power and lustre, ver. 1. He had not only light in himself to discern the truth of his own prediction, but to inform and enlighten the world about that great event; and not only light to discern it, but power to accomplish it.

Secondly. This angel publishes the fall of Babylon as a thing already come to pass; and this he does with a mighty strong voice, that all might hear the cry, and might see how well this angel was pleased to be the messenger of such tidings. Here seems to be an allusion to the prediction of the fall of pagan Babylon, Isa. xxi. 9, where the word is repeated as it is here, "is fallen, is fallen." Some have thought a double fall is hereby intended; first her apostasy, and then her ruin; and they think the words immediately following favour their opinion—"She is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird," ver. 2. But this is also borrowed from Isa. xxi. 9, and seems to describe, not so much her sin of entertaining idols, which are truly called devils, as her punishment, it being a common notion that unclean spirits, as well as your ominous and hateful birds, used to haunt a city or house that lay in its ruins.

Thirdly. The reason of this ruin is declared; for though God is not obliged to give any account of his matters, yet he is pleased to do so, especially in those dispensations of providence that are most awful and tremendous. The wickedness of Babylon had been very great, for she had not only forsaken the true God herself, and set up idols, but had, with great art and industry, drawn all

xvii. 3. "Scarlet:" "The dye made from the *Coccus ilicis*, or *kermes*, a small insect found on the shoots of a species of oak in Spain and Western Africa. The use of this in dyeing crimson or deep scarlet has been superseded in modern times by the cochineal insect (*Coccus cacti*)."—Webster and Wilkinson.

xvii. 15. "The waters . . . are peoples, and multitudes," &c. The sea is a common emblem of nations and peoples. "Thou stillest the raging of the sea, and the madness of the people." The second

clause throws an interpreting light on the first. Whatever power or influence the harlot exerted over the people, she could not have had unless people had consented to her taking it; but the pretensions she puts forward are just those which there is a proneness in human nature to admit. "A large majority, as is well known, of professing Christians in the world are members of churches which distinctly claim infallibility, a claim which could never have been established if men had not been predisposed to admit it" (Whately).

sorts of men into the spiritual adultery; and, by her wealth and luxury, had retained them in her interest, ver. 3

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup



THE POPE'S OWN ILLUSTRATIVE MEDAL.

which she hath filled fill to her double. 7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. 8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Here is fair warning given to all that expect mercy from God, that they should not only "come out of her," but be assisting in her destruction, ver. 4, 5. Where observe, 1. That God may have a people even in Babylon, some that belong to the election of grace. 2. That God's people shall be called out of Babylon, and called effectually. 3. Those that are resolved to partake with wicked men in their sins must receive of their plagues. 4. That when the sins of a people reach up to heaven, the wrath of God will reach down to the earth. 5. That though private revenge is forbidden, yet God will have his people act under him, when called to it, in pulling down his and their inveterate and implacable enemies, ver. 6. 6. That God will proportion the punishment of sinners to the measure of their wickedness, pride, and security, ver. 7. 7. That when destruction comes on a people suddenly, the surprise is a great aggravation of their misery, ver. 8.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, 10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. 11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: 12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, 13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. 14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off

for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! 17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade



ANCIENT SHIPS.

by sea, stood afar off, 18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

Here we have a doleful lamentation made by Babylon's friends for her fall. And here observe,

First. Who are the mourners; those that had been bewitched by her fornication, and those that had been sharers in her sensual pleasures, and those that had been gainers by her wealth and trade, "the kings and the merchants of the earth." The "kings of the earth," whom she had flattered into idolatry, by allowing them to be arbitrary and tyrannical over their subjects, while they were obsequious to her; and the merchants, that is, those that trafficked with her for indulgences, pardons, dispensations, preferments, &c.: these will mourn, because by this craft they got their wealth.

Secondly. What was the manner of their mourning. 1. They stood afar off, they durst not come nigh her. Even Babylon's friends will stand at a distance from her fall. Though they had been partakers with her in her sins, and in her sinful pleasures and profits, they were not willing to bear a share in her plagues. 2. They made a grievous outcry, "Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city!" 3. They wept, and "cast dust upon their heads," ver. 19. "The pleasures of sin are but for a season," and they will end in dismal sorrow; and all those that rejoice in the success of the church's enemies will share with them in their downfall; and those that have most indulged themselves in pride and pleasure are the worst able to bear calamities: their sorrows will be as excessive as their pleasure and jollity was before.

Thirdly. What was the cause of their mourning; not their sin, but their punishment. They did not lament their fall into idolatry, and luxury, and persecution, but their fall into ruin,—the loss of their traffic, and of their wealth and power. The spirit of antichrist is a worldly spirit, and their sorrow is a mere worldly sorrow. They do not lament for the anger of God that was now fallen upon them, but for the loss of their outward comforts. We have a large schedule and inventory of the wealth and merchandise of this city, all which was suddenly lost, ver. 12, 13, and lost irrecoverably, ver. 14. "All things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all." The church of God may fall for a time, but she shall rise again; but the fall of Babylon will be an utter overthrow, like that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Godly sorrow is some support under affliction, but mere worldly sorrow adds to the calamity.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. 21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

xviii. 2. "Mightily" is omitted by all the ancient MSS. Read, therefore, "He cried with a strong voice." "Foul spirit;" the word here rendered "foul" is the same as that rendered in this verse "unclean." It is better, therefore, to translate both by the same English word. Alford uses the word "unclean" in both cases.

xviii. 3. "Drunk of the wine of" &c.: the majority of ancient MSS. read, "Drunk of the wrath of her fornication." "Delicacies;" rather, "luxury."

xviii. 6. This verse seems to be addressed to the executioners of God's wrath, and not to God's people, who are warned to come out of Babylon before her fall. It is better to adopt the rendering "repay," instead of "reward her," &c. The word "you" is not found in any of the ancient MSS.; hence the verse may read, "Repay to her as she repaid, and double, double according to her works."

xviii. 12. "Thyine wood;" Alford renders "citron wood." It is the Latin *Citrus*, and is said to be a species of cedar, or *lignum vitae*.

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

We have here an account of the joy and triumph there was both in heaven and earth at the irrecoverable fall of Babylon; while her own people were bewailing her, the servants of God are called to "rejoice over her," ver. 20. Where observe, 1. How universal this joy would be; heaven and earth, angels and saints, would join in it. That which is matter of rejoicing to the servants of God in this world is matter of rejoicing to the angels in heaven. 2. How just and reasonable; and that, 1st. Because the fall of Babylon was an act of God's vindictive justice. God was then avenging his people's cause; they had committed their cause to Him "to whom vengeance belongs," and now the year of recompence was come for the controversies of Zion; and, though they did not take pleasure in the miseries of any, yet they had reason to rejoice in the discoveries of the glorious justice of God. 2nd. Because it was an irrecoverable ruin. This enemy should never molest them any more; and of this they were assured by a remarkable token, ver. 21. An angel from heaven takes up a stone like a great millstone, and casts it into the sea, saying, Thus shall Babylon be thrown down with violence, and be found no more at all. The place should be no longer habitable by man, no work should be done there, no comfort enjoyed, no light seen there; but utter darkness and desolation, as the reward of her great wickedness; first, in deceiving the nations with her sorceries; and secondly, in destroying and murdering those that she could not deceive, ver. 24. Such abominable sins deserved so great a ruin.

CHAPTER XIX.

In this chapter we have, I. A further account of the triumphant song of angels and saints for the fall of Babylon, ver. 1-4. II. The marriage between Christ and the church proclaimed and perfected, ver. 5-10. III. Another warlike expedition of the glorious Head and Husband of the church, with the success of it, ver. 10 to the end.



AND after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: 2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. 3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

The fall of Babylon being fixed, finished, and declared to be irrecoverable, in the foregoing chapter, this begins with a holy triumph over her, in pursuance to the order given forth, "Rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets," ch. xviii. 20. They now gladly answer the call; and here you have, 1. The form of their thanksgiving, in that heavenly and most comprehensive word, "Alleluia, praise ye the Lord;" with this they begin, with this they go on, and with this they end, ver. 4. Their prayers are now turned into praises, their hosannas end in halleluias. 2. The matter of their thanksgiving; they praise him for the truth of his word, and the righteousness of his providential conduct, especially in this great event, the ruin of Babylon; which had been a mother, nurse, and nest of idolatry, lewdness, and cruelty, ver. 2; for which signal example of Divine justice they ascribe "salvation, and glory, and honour, and power" unto God. 3. The effect of these their praises. When the angels and saints cried, "Alleluia," her fire burned more fiercely, and "her smoke ascended for ever and ever," ver. 3. The surest way to have our deliverances continued and completed is to give God the glory of what he has done for us. Praising God for what we have is praying in the most effectual manner for what is yet farther to be done for us; the praises of the saints blow up the fire of God's wrath against the common enemy. 4. The blessed harmony between the angels and the saints in this triumphant song, ver. 4. The churches and their ministers take the melodious sound from the angels, and repeat it; falling down and worshipping God, they cry, "Amen, Alleluia."

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice

of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. 10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The triumphant song being ended, an epithalamium, or marriage-song, begins ver. 6. Where observe,

First. The concert of heavenly music. The chorus was large and loud, "as the voice of many waters," and "of mighty thunderings." God is fearful in praises; there is no discord in heaven, the morning stars sing together; no jarring string, or key untuned, but pure and perfect melody.

Secondly. The occasion of this song; and that is, the reign and dominion of that omnipotent God who has redeemed his church by his own blood, and is now in a more public manner betrothing her to himself; ver. 7. "The marriage of the Lamb is come." Some think this refers to the conversion of the Jews, which they suppose will succeed the fall of Babylon; others, to the general resurrection. The former seems more probable. Now,

1. You have here a description of the bride, how she appeared; not in the gay and gaudy dress of the mother of harlots, but "in fine linen, clean and white," which "is the righteousness of the saints;" in the robes of Christ's righteousness, both imputed for justification and imparted for sanctification; the stola, the white robe of absolution, adoption, and enfranchisement; and the white robe of purity and universal holiness. She had washed her robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and these her nuptial ornaments she did not purchase by any price of her own, but received them as the gift and grant of her blessed Lord.

2. The marriage feast, which, though not particularly described, as *Mat. xxii. 4*, yet is declared to be such as would make them all happy that were called to it, so called as to accept the invitation: a feast made up of the promises of the Gospel, "the true sayings of God," ver. 9. These promises, opened, applied, sealed, and earnest by the Spirit of God in holy eucharistical ordinances, are the marriage feast; and the whole collective body of all those that partake of this feast is the bride, the Lamb's wife: they eat into one body, and drink into one Spirit; and are not mere spectators or guests, but coalesce into the espoused party, the mystical body of Christ.

3. The transport of joy which the apostle felt in himself at this vision. He fell down at the feet of the angel to worship him, supposing him to be more than a creature; or having his thoughts at the present overpowered by the vehemency of his affections. Where observe, 1. What honour he offered to the angel; he "fell at his feet to worship him." This prostration was a part of external worship; it was a posture of proper adoration. 2. How the angel refused it; and this was with some resentment. "See thou do it not;" have a care what thou doest; thou art doing a wrong thing. 3. He gave a very good reason for his refusal: "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus;" I am a creature; thine equal in office, though not in nature; I, as an angel and messenger of God, have the testimony of Jesus, a charge to be a witness for him, and to testify concerning him; and thou, as an apostle, having the "Spirit of prophecy," hast the same testimony to give in; and therefore we are in this brethren and fellow-servants. 4. He directs him to the true and only object of religious worship, and that is, God; worship God, and him alone. This fully condemns the practice, both of the papists, in worshipping the elements of bread and wine, and saints, and angels; and the practice of the Socinians and Arians, who do not believe that Christ is truly and by nature God, and yet pay him religious worship. And this shews what wretched fig-leaves all their evasions and excuses are which they offer in their own vindication. They stand hereby convicted of idolatry by a messenger from heaven.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the

Some identify it with the *Cypressus thyioides*, or *Thuia articulata*. The *thuia* was an evergreen African wood, from which choice vessels and statues were made.

xviii. 20. "Rejoice over her," &c.: most of the ancient MSS. read, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets."

xix. 1. Alford renders, "After these things I heard as it were a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; the

salvation and the glory belong unto our God." The words "and honour" are omitted in the best MSS.

xix. 5. "A voice came out:" the Sinaitic MS. here has the plural—"voices came out," &c.

xix. 12. "Many crowns;" more properly "diadems." These are not merely the wreaths of victory, but the diadems of royalty, worn by him who is "King of kings."

xix. 17. "Supper of the great God:" Alford renders "banquet;"

winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men*, both free and bond, both small and great. 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

No sooner was the marriage solemnized between Christ and his church, by the conversion of the Jews, but the glorious Head and Husband of the church is called out to a new expedition; which seems to be the great battle that was to be fought at Armageddon, foretold *ch. xvi. 16*. And here observe,

First. The description of the great Commander: 1. By the seat of his empire; and that is, heaven; his throne is there, and his power and authority is heavenly and Divine. 2. His equipage. He is again described as sitting on a white horse, to shew the equity of the cause, and certainty of success. 3. His attributes. He is faithful and true to his covenant and promise; he is righteous in all his judicial and military proceedings; he has a penetrating insight into all the strength and stratagems of his enemies; he has a large and extensive dominion, many crowns, for he is "King of kings, and Lord of lords," 4. His armour; and that is, "a vesture dipped in blood," either his only blood by which he purchased this mediatorial power, or the blood of his enemies, over whom he has always prevailed. 5. His name: "The Word of God." A name that none fully know; but himself; only this we know, that this "Word was God manifest in the flesh;" but his perfections are incomprehensible by any creature.

Secondly. The army which he commands, *ver. 14*. A very large one, made up of many armies; angels and saints following his conduct, and resembling him in their equipage, and in their armour of purity and righteousness; "chosen, and called, and faithful."

Thirdly. The weapons of his warfare. "A sharp sword," proceeding from his mouth, *ver. 15*, with which he smites the nations; either the threatenings of the written word, which now he is going to execute, or rather, his word of command, calling on his followers to take a just revenge on his and their enemies, who are now put into the wine-press of the wrath of God, to be trodden under foot by him.

Fourthly. The ensigns of his authority, his coat of arms; a name written on his vesture and thigh, "King of kings, and Lord of lords;" asserting his authority and power, and the cause of the quarrel, *ver. 16*.

Fifthly. An invitation given to the fowls of heaven, that they should come and see the battle, and share in the spoil and pillage of the field, *ver. 17, 18*; intimating that this great decisive engagement should leave the enemies of the church a feast for the birds of prey, and that all the world should have cause to rejoice in the issue of it.

Sixthly. The battle joined, the enemy falls on with great fury, headed by the beast and the kings of the earth; the powers of earth and hell gathered to make their utmost effort, *ver. 19*.

Sevently. The victory gained by the great and glorious Head of the church; the beast and the false prophet, the leaders of the army, were taken prisoners; both he that led them by power, and he that led them by policy and falsehood; these are taken and cast into the burning lake, made incapable of molesting the church of God any more; and their followers, whether officers or common soldiers, are given up to military execution, and made a feast for the fowls of heaven. Though the Divine vengeance will chiefly fall upon the beast and the false prophet, yet it will be no excuse to those that fight under their banner, that they only followed their leaders, and obeyed their command: since they would fight for them, they must fall and perish with them. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye rulers of the earth; kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way," *Ps. ii. 10, 11*.

CHAPTER XX.

This chapter is thought by some to be the darkest part of all this prophecy; it is very probable the things contained in it are not yet accomplished, and therefore it is the wiser way to content ourselves with general observations, than to be positive and particular in our explanations of it. Here we have an account, 1. Of the binding of Satan for a thousand years, *ver. 1—3*. 2. The reign of the saints with Christ for the same time, *ver. 4—6*. 3. Of the loosing of Satan, and the conflict of the church with Gog and Magog, *ver. 7—10*. 4. Of the day of judgment, *ver. 11* to the end.

and, following the best authorities, joins the word "great" to "banquet," and not to the word "God," as in the English version.

xix. 20. There is some authority for reading, "The beast was taken, and those that were with him, the false prophet that wrought the miracles in his presence," &c.

xx. 1. "The bottomless pit;" rather, "the abyss."

xx. 2. "A thousand years;" many expositors, ancient and modern, have taken this period to refer to an early one in the history



AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

We have here a prophecy of the binding of Satan for a certain term of time, in which he should have much less power, and the church much more peace, than before. The power of Satan was broke in part by the setting up of the gospel kingdom in the world; it was further reduced by the empire's becoming Christian; it was yet farther broken by the downfall of the mystical Babylon; but still this serpent had many heads, and when one is wounded, another has life remaining in it. Here we have a farther limitation and diminution of his power. Where observe, 1. To whom this work of binding Satan is committed: to an angel from heaven. It is very probable this angel is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ; the description of him will hardly agree with any other. He is one that has power "to bind the strong man armed, and to cast him out and spoil his goods;" and therefore must be stronger than he. 2. The means he makes use of in this work. He hath a chain and a key; a great chain to bind Satan, and the key of the prison in which he was to be confined. Christ never wants proper powers and instruments to break the power of Satan, for he has the powers of heaven and the keys of hell. 3. The execution of this work, *ver. 2, 3*. 1st. "He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan." Neither the strength of the dragon nor the subtlety of the serpent were sufficient to rescue him out of the hands of Christ; he caught hold, and kept his hold. And, 2nd. He "cast him into the bottomless pit;" cast him down with force, and with a just vengeance, to his own place and prison, from which he had been permitted to break out, and disturb the churches, and deceive the nations. Now he is brought back to that prison, and there laid in chains. 3rd. He is shut up, and a seal set upon him. Christ shuts, and none can open; he shuts by his power, seals by his authority; and his lock and seal even the devils themselves cannot break open. 4th. We have the term of this confinement of Satan: a thousand years; after which he was to be loosed again for a little season. The church should have a considerable time of peace and prosperity, but all her trials were not yet over.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

We have here an account of the reign of the saints for the same space of time in which Satan continued bound. And here observe, 1. Who they were that received such honour. Those that had suffered for Christ, and all that had faithfully adhered to him, not receiving "the mark of the beast," nor worshipping his image; all that had kept themselves clear of pagan and papal idolatry. 2. The honour bestowed upon them. 1st. They were raised from the dead, and restored to life. This may be taken either literally or figuratively; they were, in a civil and political sense, dead, and had a political resurrection; their liberties and privileges were revived and restored. 2nd. Thrones and power of judgment were given to them; they were possessed of great honour, and interest, and authority; I suppose rather of a spiritual than of a secular nature. 3rd. They "reigned with Christ a thousand years." They that "suffer with Christ shall reign with Christ;" they shall reign with him in his spiritual and heavenly kingdom, in a glorious conformity to him in wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, beyond what had been known before in the world. This is called "the first resurrection;" which none but those that have served Christ and suffered for him shall be favoured with. As for the wicked, they shall not be raised up and restored to their power again till Satan be let loose. This may be called a resurrection, as the conversion of the Jews is said to be "life from the dead." 3. The happiness of these servants of God is declared. 1st. They are "blessed and holy," *ver. 6*. None can be blessed but they that are holy, and all that are holy shall be blessed. These were holy as a sort of fruits to God in this spiritual resurrection, and as such blessed by him. 2nd. They are secured from the power of the second death. We know something

of the Church. This view was held by Origen, Jerome, Augustine, and the principal patristic writers down to Aquinas and Bede. The difficulty of this view is that no period in the past history of the Church and the world seems fully or fairly to correspond with such an imprisonment of Satan for a thousand years.

xx. 4. "Beheaded;" the axe was especially used by the Romans in capital punishments.

xx. 8. "Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle,"

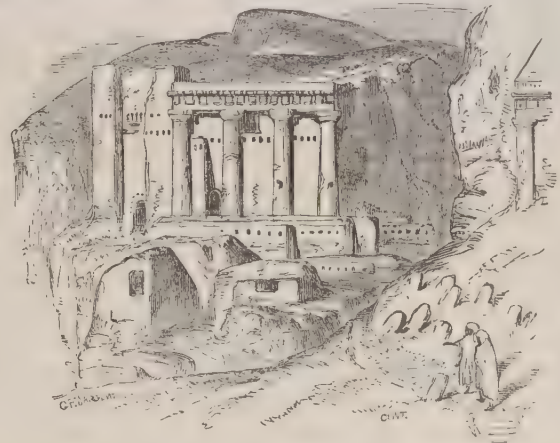
of what the first death is, and it is awful; but we know not what this second death is; it must be much more dreaded; it is the death of the soul, eternal separation from God. The Lord grant we may never know what it is by experience. They that have had experience of a spiritual resurrection are saved from the power of the second death.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Here we have an account of the return of the church's troubles, and another mighty conflict, very sharp, but short and decisive. Observe, 1. The restraints laid for a long time on Satan are at length taken off. While this world lasts, Satan's power in it will not be wholly destroyed; it may be limited and lessened, but he will have something still to do for the disturbance of the people of God. 2. No sooner is Satan let loose but he falls to his old work, deceiving the nations, and so stirring them up to make war with the saints and servants of God, which they would never do if he had not first deceived them. They are deceived, both as to the cause they engaged in, (they believe it to be a good cause, when it is indeed a very bad one,) and they are deceived in the issue; they expect to be successful, but are sure to lose the day. 3. His last efforts seem to be the greatest. The power now permitted to him seems to be more unlimited than before; he has now liberty to beat up for his volunteers in all the four quarters of the earth; and he raised a mighty army, the number of which was "as the sand of the sea," ver. 8. 4. We have the names of the principal commanders in this army under the dragon, Gog and Magog. We need not be too inquisitive what particular powers are meant by these names, since the army was gathered from all parts of the world. These names are found in other parts of Scripture. Magog we read of in *Gen. x. 2*; he was one of the sons of Japhael, and peopled the country called Syria, from which his descendants spread into many other parts. Of Gog and Magog together we only read in *Eze. xxxviii. 2*, a prophecy from whence this in the revelation borrows many of its images. 5. We have the march and military disposition of this formidable army; ver. 9, "They went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city," that is, the spiritual Jerusalem, in which the most precious interests of the people of God are lodged, and therefore to them a beloved city. The army of the saints is described as drawn forth out of the city, and lying under the walls of it, to defend it. They were encamped about Jerusalem; but the army of the enemy was so much superior to that of the church, that they compassed them and their city about. 6. You have an account of the battle, and the issue of this war: "Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured the enemy." Thus the ruin of Gog and Magog is foretold, *Eze. xxxviii. 22*, "I will rain upon him, and upon his bounds an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, and fire and brimstone." God would, in an extraordinary and more immediate manner, fight this last and decisive battle for his people, that the victory might be complete, and the glory redound to himself. 7. The doom and punishment of the grand enemy, the devil. He is now cast into hell, with his two great officers, the beast and the false prophet, tyranny and idolatry; and that, not for any term of time, but to be there "tormented day and night for ever and ever."

[We may expect that a thousand years will follow the final destruction of the antichristian, idolatrous, persecuting powers, during which pure Christianity, in doctrine, worship, and holiness, will be diffused over all the earth; and all idolatry, infidelity, cruelty, and all other evils, which now harass and desolate the earth, will be restrained by the almighty operation of the Holy Spirit; and godliness, righteousness, peace, and purity, will render the earth in some measure like heaven itself. Hitherto the depravity of human nature, and the malignant agency of apostate angels, have been shewn in the state of the world. Nothing but the power of God can prevent men from listening to the temptations of apostate angels, or from opposing, despising, or perverting the Gospel itself. But at length the Lord will arise; by his mighty power he will destroy the wicked, and confine fallen angels. By the all-powerful working of the Holy Spirit fallen man will be new-created; and repentance, faith, and holiness, will as certainly prevail as unbelief, impenitence, and unholiness now do. That measure of righteousness, which the universal prevalence of true Christianity must produce, will immensely lessen the quantity even of natural evils. We may easily perceive what a variety of dreadful pains, diseases, and other calamities, must cease, if all men were true and consistent Christians. All the evils of public and private contention will be ended, happiness of every kind largely increased. Every man will try to alleviate suffering, instead of adding to the sorrows around him; nor shall they hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain of God. The wild notions and extravagant practices grafted on the belief of a millennium, long caused even the name of it to be objected to by many, yet we have as just grounds to expect such a happy event as the Jews had to look for a Messiah; but those who suppose it will be a carnal millennium are as much mistaken as the Jews were in looking for a temporal deliverer. It is our duty to pray for the promised glorious days, and to do every thing in our public and private stations which can be instrumental in preparing the way: even as David made abundant provision for the temple Solomon was to build. When this thousand years will be the event must determine, but the dawn of this glorious day cannot be very distant; and we ought to advert to those things which may prepare the way for it, in the application and improvement of our time and our several talents.—*T. Scott*, as abridged in *R. T. S. Commentary*. There are difficulties in every theoretical view that have not yet been cleared up; but there is no difficulty at all in the general truth and in its practical application.—*Bickersteth*.]

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.



BURYING PLACE AT JERUSALEM.

The utter destruction of the devil's kingdom very properly leads to an account of the day of judgment, which will determine every man's everlasting state. And we may be assured there will be a judgment when we see "the prince of this world is judged," *1 Jno. xvi. 11*. This will be a great day, "the great day when all shall appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." The Lord help us firmly to believe this doctrine of the judgment to come! It is a doctrine that made Felix tremble. Here we have a description of it; where observe, 1. We behold the throne and tribunal of judgment, great and white, very glorious, and perfectly just and righteous. The throne of iniquity, that establishes wickedness by a law, has no fellowship with this righteous throne and tribunal. 2. The appearance of the Judge, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, who then puts on such majesty and terror, that "the earth and the heaven fled from his face, and there was no place found for them;" there is a dissolution of the whole frame of nature, *2 Pet. iii. 10*. 3. The persons to be judged; ver. 12, "The dead, small and great," both young and old, low and high, poor and rich; none so mean but they have some talents to account for, and none so great as to avoid the jurisdiction of this court. Not only those that are found alive at the coming of Christ, but all that have died before; the grave shall surrender the bodies of men, hell shall surrender the souls of the wicked, the sea shall surrender the many that seemed to have been lost in it. All these are the King's prisons, and he will cause them to set forth their prisoners. 4. The rule of judgment settled: "The books were opened." What books? Why, the book of God's omniscience, who is greater than our consciences, and knows all things (there is a book of remembrance with him both for good and bad); and the book of the sinner's conscience, which, though formerly secret, will now be opened. And another book shall be opened—the book of the Scriptures—the statute-book of heaven, the rule of life. This book is opened as containing the law,—the touchstone by which the hearts and lives of men are to be tried. This book determines matter of right, the other books give evidence of matters of fact. Some, by the other book, called "the book of life," understand the book of God's eternal counsels; but that does not seem to belong to the affair of judgment. In eternal election God does not act judicially, but with absolute sovereign freedom. 5. The cause to be tried, and that is, the works of men; what they have done, and whether it be good or evil. "By their works men shall be justified or condemned;" for though God knows their state and their principles, and looks chiefly at these, yet, being to approve himself to angels and men as a righteous God, he will try their principles by their practices, and so will "be justified when he speaks and clear when he judges." 6. The issue of the trial and judgment, and that will be according to the evidence of fact and rule of judgment. All those that have made a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell, shall then be condemned with their infernal confederates, cast with them into the lake of fire, as not being entitled to eternal life, according to the rules of life laid down in the Scripture; but those whose names are written in that book, that is, those who are justified and acquitted by the Gospel, shall then be justified and acquitted by the Judge, and shall enter into eternal life, having nothing more to fear from death or hell, or wicked men; for these are all destroyed together. Let it be our great concern to see on what terms we

or rather to "the war;" of the words "Gog and Magog" no very satisfactory derivation has been proposed. Some derive them from a Persian word signifying "mountain," in which case the reference would be to the Caucasian range. The terms *Gogh* and *Mogh* are still applied to some of the heights on that range. In the Koran, Gog and Magog are localised north of the Caucasus. There appears to have been from the earliest times a legend that the enemies of religion and civilisation lived in that quarter.

xx. 13. "Death and hell;" rather, "death and hades." So also in verse 14.

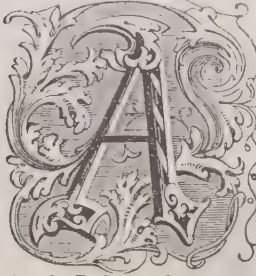
xx. 14. "This is the second death:" all the ancient MSS. add "the lake of fire."

xxi. 3. "Voice out of heaven:" the oldest MSS. read here "out of the throne." The closing part of the verse gains force if we omit the words in italics, and read, "He shall be with them, the God."

stand with our Bibles, whether they justify us or condemn us now; for the Judge of all will proceed by that rule. Christ shall judge the secrets of all men according to the Gospel. Happy are they that have so ordered and stated their cause according to the Gospel as to know beforehand that they shall be justified in the great day of the Lord!

CHAPTER XXI.

Hitherto the prophecy of this book has presented to us a very remarkable mixture of light and shade, prosperity and adversity, mercy and judgment, in the conduct of Divine providence towards the church in the world. Now, at the close of all, the day breaks, and the shadows flee away. A new world now appears, the former being passed away. Some are willing to understand all that is said in these last two chapters, of the state of the church even here on earth, in the glory of the latter days; but others, more probably, take it as a representation of the perfect and triumphant state of the church in heaven. Let but the faithful saints and servants of God wait a while, and they shall not only see, but enjoy, the perfect holiness and happiness of that world. In this chapter you have, I. An introduction to the vision of the new Jerusalem, ver. 1—9. II. The vision itself, ver. 10 to the end.



AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

We have here a more general account of the happiness of the church of God in the future state, which it seems most safe to understand the heavenly state.

First. A new world now opens to our view; ver. 1. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth;" that is, a new universe; for we suppose the world to be made up of heaven and earth. By the new earth we may understand a new state for the bodies of men, as well as a heaven for their souls. This world is not now newly created, but newly opened, and filled with all those that were the heirs of it. The new heaven and the new earth will not then be distinct; the very earth of the saints, their glorified bodies, will now be spiritual and heavenly, and suited to those pure and bright mansions. To make way for the commencement of this new world, the old world, with all its troubles and commotions, "passed away."

Secondly. In this new world the apostle saw "the holy city," the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven; not locally, but as to its original. This new Jerusalem is the church of God in its new and perfect state, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," beautified with all perfection of wisdom and holiness, meet for the full fruition of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.

Thirdly. The blessed presence of God with his people is here proclaimed and admired: "I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men," &c., ver. 3. Observe, 1. The presence of God with his church is the glory of the church. 2. It is matter of wonder that a holy God should ever dwell with any of the children of men. 3. That the presence of God with his people in heaven will not be interrupted, as it is on earth, but he will dwell with them continually. 4. That the covenant, interest, and relation that there is now between God and his people will be filled up and perfected in heaven; "they shall be his people," their souls shall be assimilated to him, filled with all the love, honour, and delight in God that their relation to him requires. This shall be their perfect holiness, and he will be their God. God himself will be their God; his immediate presence with them, his love

fully manifested to them, and his glory put upon them, will be their perfect happiness; then he will fully answer the character of the relation on his part, as they shall do on their part.

Fourthly. This new and blessed state will be free from all trouble and sorrow. For, 1. All the effects of former trouble shall be done away. They have been often before in tears, by reason of sin, of affliction, of the calamities of the church; but now "all tears shall be wiped away," no signs, no remembrance of former sorrows shall remain, any farther than to make their present felicity the greater. God himself, as their tender Father, with his own kind hand, shall wipe away the tears of his children; and they would not have been without those tears when God shall come and wipe them away. 2. All the causes of future sorrow shall be for ever removed; "there shall be neither death nor pain," and therefore "no sorrow nor crying." These are things incident to that state in which they were before, but now all former things are passed away.

Fifthly. The truth and certainty of this blessed state is ratified by the word and promise of God, and ordered to be committed to writing, as matter of perpetual record, ver. 6, 7. The subject matter of this vision is so great, and of so great importance to the church and people of God, that they have need of the most full assurances of it; and God, therefore, from heaven repeats and ratifies the truth thereof. And besides, many ages must pass between the time when this vision was given forth and the accomplishment of it, and many great trials must intervene; and therefore God would have it committed to writing, for perpetual memory, and continual use to his people. Observe, 1. The certainty of the promise averred; "These words are faithful and true;" and it follows, "It is done," as sure as if it were done already. We may and ought to take God's promise as present payment; if he has said he makes all things new, it is done. 2. He gives us his titles of honour as a pledge or surety of the full performance, even those titles of Alpha and Omega, "the beginning and the end." As it was his glory that he gave the rise and beginning to the world and to his church, it will be his glory to finish the work begun, and not to leave it imperfect. As his power and will was the first cause of all things, his pleasure and glory is the last end; and he will not lose his design, for then he should no longer be the Alpha and Omega. Men may begin designs which they can never bring to perfection; but the counsel of God shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. 3. The desires of his people towards this blessed state are another evidence of the truth and certainty of it. They thirst after a state of sinless perfection, and the uninterrupted enjoyment of God; and God has wrought in them these longing desires which cannot be satisfied with any thing else, and therefore would be the torment of the soul if they were disappointed. But it would be inconsistent with the goodness of God and his love to his people to create in them holy and heavenly desires, and then deny them their proper satisfaction. And, therefore, they may be assured, when they have overcome their present difficulties, "he will give them of the fountain of the water of life freely."

Sixthly. The greatness of this future felicity is declared and illustrated, 1. By the freeness of it. It is the free gift of God; he gives of the "water of life freely." This will not make it less, but more grateful to his people. 2. The fulness of it. The people of God then lie at the fountain-head of all blessedness; they "inherit all things," ver. 7. Enjoying God, they enjoy all things. He is all in all. 3. By the tenure and title by which they enjoy this blessedness, by right of inheritance, as the sons of God,—a title, of all others, the most honourable, as resulting from so near and endeared a relation to God himself, and the most sure and indefeasible, that can no more cease than the relation from which it results. 4. By the vastly different state of the wicked. Their misery helps to illustrate the glory and blessedness of the saints, and the distinguishing goodness of God towards them, ver. 8; where observe, 1st. The sins of those that perish; among which are first mentioned their cowardliness and unbelief. The fearful lead the van in this black list; they durst not encounter the difficulties of religion, and their slavish fear proceeded from their unbelief. But those that were so dastardly as not to dare to take up the cross of Christ, and discharge their duty to him, were yet so desperate as to run into all manner of abominable wickedness,—murder, adultery, sorcery, idolatry, and lying. 2nd. Their punishment; they "have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." First. They could not burn at a stake for Christ, but they must burn in hell for sin. Secondly. They must die another death after their natural death. The agonies and terrors of the first death will consign them over to the far greater terrors and agonies of eternal death,—to die, and to be always dying. Thirdly. This misery will be their proper part and portion, what they have justly deserved, what they have in effect chosen, and what they have prepared themselves for by their sins. Thus the misery of the damned will illustrate the blessedness of those that are saved, and their blessedness will aggravate the other's misery.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he that talked with me had

xxi. 7. "All things:" the best MSS. have not "all things," but "these things." "His God . . . my son:" rather, "I will be to him a God, and he shall be to me a son."

xxi. 11. "Having the glory of God:" there is doubtless here an allusion to the Shechinah, but more is meant.

xxi. 18. "The building of the wall of it:" Alford renders, "the masonry of the wall of it."

xxi. 19, 20. The arrangement of stones here is not the same as in

the high-priest's breastplate. Here they are arranged according to their various shades of colour. It has been thought that chrysoprasus is probably an error for chrysopaston, a dark blue stone studded with gold, as Marbodius has understood. By this substitution, all the shades of blue will follow each other. (Compare Note on chap. iv. 3.) "Sapphire," probably the lapis lazuli, an opaque blue stone. "Emerald," or smaragdus, bright transparent green. "Jacinth," or hyacinthus, is the sky-blue sapphire.

a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. 17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. 18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

We have already considered the introduction to the vision of the new Jerusalem in a more general idea of the heavenly state; we now come to the vision itself; where observe,

First. The person that opened the vision to the apostle; "One of the seven angels that had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues," ver. 9. God has a variety of work and employment for his holy angels. Sometimes they are to sound the trumpet of Divine providence, and give fair warning to a careless world; sometimes they are to pour out the vials of God's anger upon impenitent sinners; and sometimes to discover things of a heavenly nature to those that are the heirs of salvation; and they readily execute every commission they receive from God. And when this world shall be at an end, yet the angels shall be employed by the great God in proper, pleasant work to all eternity.

Secondly. The place from which the apostle had this glorious view and prospect; he was taken in ecstasy into "a high mountain." From such situations men usually have the most distinct views of adjacent cities. They that would have clear views of heaven must get as near heaven as they can, into the mount of vision, the mount of meditation and faith, from whence, as from the top of Pisgah, they may behold the goodly land of the heavenly Canaan.

Thirdly. The subject matter of the vision; "The bride, the Lamb's wife," ver. 10; that is, the church of God in her glorious, perfect, triumphant state, under the resemblance of Jerusalem, having the glory of God shining in its lustre as *uxor splendet radiis mariti*,—"comely through his comeliness put upon her," glorious in her relation to Christ, and in his image now perfected in her, and his favour shining upon her. And now we have a large description of the church triumphant under the emblem of a city, far exceeding in riches and splendour all the cities of this world. And this new Jerusalem is here represented to us both in the exterior and interior part of it.

I. The exterior part of the city, the wall and the gates; the wall for security, and the gates for entrance.

1. The wall for security. Heaven is a safe state; those that are there are enclosed with a wall, that separates them and secures them from all evils and enemies. Now here, in the account of the wall, we observe, 1st. The height of it, which we are told is very high—"seventy yards," ver. 17, sufficient both for ornament and security. 2nd. The matter of it; "It was as jasper;" a wall all built of the most precious stones for firmness and lustre, ver. 11. This city has a wall that is impregnable as well as precious. 3rd. The form of it was very regular and uniform; it was foursquare, the length as large as the breadth. In the new Jerusalem all shall be equal in purity and perfection. There shall be an absolute uniformity in the church triumphant; a thing wanted and wished for on earth, but not to be expected till we come to heaven. 4th. The measure of the wall: ver. 15, 16, "Twelve thousand furlongs" each way, each side, which is forty-eight thousand furlongs in the whole compass, or fifteen hundred German miles. Here is room sufficient for all the people of God; many mansions in their Father's house. 5th. The foundation of the wall, for heaven is a city that hath her foundations, ver. 19. The promise and power of God, and the purchase of Christ, are the strong foundations of the church's safety and happiness. The foundations are described by their number and by their matter. By their number, twelve, alluding to the twelve apostles, ver. 14, whose gospel doctrines are the foundations upon which the church is built, Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. And as to the matter of these foundations, it was various and precious, set forth by twelve sorts of precious stones, denoting the variety and excellency of the doctrines of the Gospel, or of the graces of the Holy Spirit, or the personal excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The gates for entrance. Heaven is not inaccessible; there is a way opened into the holiest of all; there is a free admission to all those that are sanctified; they shall not find themselves shut out. Now, as to the gates, observe, 1st. Their number; they are "twelve gates," answering to the twelve tribes of Israel. All the true Israel of God shall have entrance into the new Jerusalem, as every tribe had into the earthly Jerusalem. 2nd. Their guards which were placed upon them; "twelve angels," to admit and receive the several tribes of the spiritual Israel, and to keep out others. 3rd. The inscription on the gates; "The names of the twelve tribes;" to shew they have a right to the tree of life, and to enter through the gates into the city. 4th. The situation of the gates. As the city had four equal sides, answering to the four quarters of the world,—east, west, north, and south; so in each side there were three gates, signifying that from all quarters of the earth there shall be some that shall get safe to heaven, and be received there, and that there is as free entrance from

one part of the world as from the other; for in Christ there is neither Jew, nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free; men of all nations and languages, that believe on Christ, have, by him, access to God in grace here, and in glory hereafter. 5th. The materials of these gates. They were all of pearls, and yet with great variety, "every gate one pearl;" either one single pearl of that vast bigness, or one single sort of pearl. Christ is the pearl of great price, and he is our way to God. There is nothing magnificent enough in this world fully to set forth the glory of heaven. Could we in the glass of a strong imagination contemplate such a city as is here described, even as to the exterior part of it,—such a wall, and such gates,—how amazing, how glorious would the prospect be! and yet this but a faint and dim representation of what heaven is in itself!

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. 23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. 24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. 26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

II. Now we come to take a view of the interior part of the new Jerusalem. You have seen its strong wall, and stately gates, and glorious guards; now we are to be led through the gates into the city itself.

1. And the thing which we observe there is the street of the city, which was pure gold, like transparent glass, ver. 21. The saints in heaven tread upon gold. The new Jerusalem has its several streets. There is the most exact order in heaven: every saint has his proper mansion. There is converse in heaven; the saints are then at rest, but it is not a mere passive rest; it is not a state of sleep and inactivity, but a state of delightful motion. The nations that are saved walk in the light of it; they walk with Christ in white; they have communion, not only with God, but with one another; and all their steps are firm and clean. They are pure and clear as gold and transparent glass.

2. The temple of the new Jerusalem, which was no material temple, made with men's hands, as that of Solomon, and Zerubbabel, but a temple altogether spiritual and divine. "For the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple" thereof. There the saints are above the need of ordinances, which were the means of their preparation for heaven. When the end is attained, the means are no longer useful. Perfect and immediate communion with God will more than supply the place of gospel institutions.

3. The light of this city. Where there is no light there can be no lustre, nor pleasure. Heaven is "the inheritance of the saints in light." But what is that light? There is no sun nor moon shining there, ver. 23. Light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun. What a dismal world would this be if it were not for the light of the sun! What is there in heaven that supplies the want of it? Why, there is no want of the light of the sun, for the glory of God lightens that city, "and the Lamb is the light thereof." God in Christ will be an everlasting fountain of knowledge and joy to the saints in heaven; and, if so, there is no need of the sun or moon, no more than we here need to set up candles at noon-day, when the sun shineth in its strength.

4. The inhabitants of this city. They are described here several ways: 1st. By their numbers. Here are whole nations of saved souls; some out of all nations, and many out of some nations. All those multitudes that were sealed on earth are saved in heaven. 2nd. By their dignity; some of the kings and princes of the earth: great kings. God will have some of all ranks and degrees of men to fill the heavenly mansions; high and low. And when the greatest kings come to heaven, they will see all their former honour and glory swallowed up of this heavenly glory that so much excels. 3rd. Their continual accession and entrance into this city; the gates shall never be shut. There is no night, and therefore no need of shutting up the gates. Some one or other are coming in every hour and moment; and those that are sanctified always find the gates open; they have an abundant entrance into the kingdom.

5. The accommodations of this city. All the glory and honour of the nations shall be brought into it; whatever is excellent and valuable in this world shall be there enjoyed in a more refined kind, and to a far greater degree. Brighter crowns, a better and more enduring substance, more sweet and satisfying feasts, a more glorious attendance, a truer sense of honour, and far higher posts of honour; a more glorious temper of mind, and a more glorious form and countenance, than ever was known in this world.

6. The unmixt purity of all that belong to the new Jerusalem, ver. 27. 1st. There the saints shall have no impure thing remain in them. In the article of death they shall be cleansed from every thing that is of a defiling nature. Now they feel a sad mixture of corruption with their graces, which hinder them in the service of God, and interrupt their communion with him, and intercept the light of his countenance; but at their entrance into the holy of holies they are washed in the laver of Christ's blood, and presented to the Father without spot. 2nd. There the saints shall have no impure persons admitted among them; in the earthly Jerusalem there will be a mixed communion after all the care that can be taken. Some roots of bitterness will spring up to trouble and defile Christian societies, but in the new Jerusalem there is a society perfectly pure. First. Free from such as are openly profane. There are none admitted into heaven that work abominations. In the churches on earth sometimes abominable things are done, solemn ordinances profaned and prostituted to men openly vicious, for worldly ends; but no such abominations can have place in heaven. Secondly. Free from hypocrites, such as make lies, say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie. These will creep into the churches of Christ on earth, and may lie concealed there a long time, perhaps

xxi. 22. "No temple therein:" while on earth the bodies of Christ-loving men are called the temples of God the Holy Ghost, in the perfected state, in the new Jerusalem, God himself is their Temple. (Compare 1 Cor. iii. 17.)

xx. 24. "The nations of them which are saved:" the words "of them which are saved" are not found in any of the most ancient MSS. "In the light of it:" rather, "by means of the light thereof."

xxii. 2. Translate, "In the midst of the street of it (the city) and

of the river, on one side and on the other," &c.; the meaning being that the trees were on each side, in the middle space between the street and the river. Compare Ezek. xlvii. 12, from which we assume that several trees of one kind are meant by the "tree of life."

xxii. 3. "Curse:" i.e., accursed thing. "There shall no more be those accursed things which bar the residence of God among his people. See Josh. vii. 12, which shows that these words are in close connection with what follows" (Alford).

all their days; but they cannot intrude into the new Jerusalem which is wholly reserved for those that are called, and chosen, and faithful; who are all written, not only in the register of the visible church, but "in the Lamb's book of life."

CHAPTER XXII.

In this chapter we have, I. A further description of the heavenly state of the church, ver. 1—5. II. A confirmation of this and all other visions of this book, ver. 6—19. III. The conclusion, ver. 20, 21.



AND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: 4 And they shall see his face: and his name *shall be* in their foreheads. 5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

The heavenly state which was before described as a city, and called the new Jerusalem, is here described as a paradise, alluding to the earthly paradise which was lost by the sin of the first Adam. Here is another paradise restored by the second Adam. A paradise in a city! or a whole city in a paradise! In the first paradise there were only two persons to behold the beauty and taste the pleasures of it; but in this second paradise whole cities and nations shall find abundant delight and satisfaction. And here observe,

First. The river of paradise. The earthly paradise was well watered; no place can be pleasant or fruitful that is not so. This river is described, 1. By its fountain-head; "the throne of God and the Lamb." All our springs, both of grace, comfort, and glory, are in God; and all our streams from him, through the mediation of the Lamb. 2. By its quality; "pure, and clear as crystal." All the streams of earthly comforts are muddy; but these are clear, and salutary, and refreshing: giving life, and preserving life, to those that drink of it.

Secondly. "The tree of life" in this paradise. Such a tree there was in the earthly paradise, Gen. ii. 3. This far excels it. And now, as to this tree, observe, 1. The situation of it; "in the midst of the street," and on either side the river; or, as it might have been better rendered, "in the midst between the terrace-walk and the river." This tree of life is fed by the pure waters of the river that comes from the throne of God. The presence and perfections of God furnish out all the glory and blessedness of heaven. 2. The fruitfulness of this tree. 1st. It brings forth many sorts of fruit; twelve sorts, suited to the refined taste of all the saints. 2nd. It brings forth fruit at all times; yieldeth its fruit every month. This tree is never empty, never barren; there is always fruit upon it. In heaven there is not only a variety of pure and satisfying pleasures, but a continuance of them, and always fresh. 3rd. The fruit is not only pleasant, but wholesome. The presence of God in heaven is the health and happiness of the saints; there they find in him a remedy for all their former maladies, and are preserved by him in the most healthful and vigorous state.

Thirdly. The perfect freedom of this paradise from every thing that is evil; ver. 3. "There shall be no more curse;" no accursed one, *καταναίμενα*, no serpent there, as there was in the earthly paradise. Here is the great excellency of this paradise, the devil has nothing to do there; he cannot draw the saints from serving God to be subject to himself, as he did our first parents; nor can he so much as disturb them in the service of God.

Fourthly. The supreme felicity of this paradisaical state. 1. There the saints shall see the face of God; there they shall enjoy the beatific vision. 2. God will own them, as having his seal and name on their foreheads. 3. They shall reign with him for ever; their service shall be not only freedom, but honour and dominion. 4. All this shall be with perfect knowledge and joy. They shall be full of wisdom and comfort, continually walking in the light of the Lord; and this not for a time, but "for ever and ever."

6 And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. 7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. 8 And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. 10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. 11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. 12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. 13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. 14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. 15 For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. 16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star. 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. 18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

We have here a solemn ratification of the contents of this book, and particularly of this last vision, though some think it may not only refer to the whole book, but to the whole New Testament, yea, to the whole Bible, completing and confirming the canon of Scripture. And here, 1. This is confirmed by the name and nature of that God that gave out these discoveries; he is "the Lord God, faithful and true," and so are all his sayings. 2. By the messengers he chose to reveal these things to the world; the holy angels shewed them to the holy men of God; and God would not employ his saints and angels in deceiving the world. 3. They will soon be confirmed by their accomplishment; they are things that must shortly be done. Christ will make haste, he will come quickly, and put all things out of doubt; and then they will prove the wise and happy men that have believed and kept his words. 4. By the integrity of that angel that had been the apostle's guide and interpreter in these visions; and that integrity was such as that he not only refused to accept religious adoration from John, but once and again reproved him for it. He who was so tender of the honour of God, and so displeased with what was a wrong to God, would never come in his name to lead the people of God into mere dreams and delusions; and it still is a farther confirmation of the sincerity of this apostle that he confesses his own sin and folly into which he had now again relapsed, and he leaves this his failing on perpetual record; and this shews he was a faithful and an impartial writer. 5. By the order given to leave the book of the prophecy open, to be perused by all, that they might labour to understand it, that they might make their objections against it, and compare the prophecy with the events. God here deals freely and openly with all; he does not speak in secret, but calls every one to witness to the declarations here made, ver. 10. 6. By the effect this book thus kept open will have upon men; those that are filthy and unjust will take occasion from thence to be more so, but it will confirm, strengthen, and further sanctify those that are upright with God; it will be a savour of life to some and of death to others, and so will appear to be from God, ver. 12. 7. It will be Christ's rule of judgment at the great day; he will dispense rewards and punishments to men according as their works agree or disagree with the word of God; and therefore that word itself must needs be faithful and true. 8. It is the word of Him who is the author, finisher, and rewarder of the faith and holiness of his people, ver. 13, 14. He is "the first and the last," and the same from first to last, and so is his word too; and he will by this word give to his people that conform themselves to it, "a right to the tree of life," and an entrance into heaven; and this will be a full confirmation of the truth and authority of his word, since it contains the title and evidence of that confirmed state of holiness and happiness that remains for his people in heaven. ["Alpha and Omega" &c. This and other like passages incontrovertibly refer to Christ, and according to the known signification of the Jewish expressions, they declare his absolute perfection, his perpetual

xxii. 4. "Not only shall they personally and in secret (chap. ii. 17) know their sonship, but they shall be known as sons of God to all the citizens of the New Jerusalem, so that the free flow of mutual love among the members of Christ's family will not be checked by suspicion, as here."

xxii. 6 "Holy prophets;" rather, "spirits of the prophets;" their spirits being taught by the Spirit of God, and so made the means of instructing others. "Shortly;" see chap. i. 1.

xxii. 10. Compare Dan. viii. 26, xii. 4, 9, where the command is the reverse, as the days are many.

xxii. 11. Alford says, "See Ezek. iii. 27. Compare Matt. xxvi. 45. The saying has solemn irony in it; the time is so short that there is hardly room for change; the lesson conveyed in its depth is 'change while there is time.'" "Be unjust . . . filthy . . . righteous:" rather, "commit injustice . . . pollute himself . . . do righteousness."

presence and protection; and that he is the Author, the effective agent, and the end of the scheme of providential government with respect to the church, which forms the subject of the prophetic books. To perceive their force, we should compare them with the like terms in the Old Testament applied to Jehovah.—*J. P. Smith.* 9. It is a book that condemns and excludes from heaven all wicked, unrighteous persons, and particularly those that love and make lies, ver. 15, and therefore can never be itself a lie. 10. It is confirmed by "the testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of prophecy." And this Jesus, as God, is "the root of David," though, as man, his offspring,—a person in whom all uncreated and created excellencies meet; too great and too good to deceive his churches and the world. He is the fountain of all light, "the bright and the morning star;" and as such has given to his churches this morning light of prophecy, to assure them of the light of that perfect day that is approaching. 11. It is confirmed by an open and general invitation to all to come and partake of the promises and privileges of the Gospel, those streams of the water of life. These are tendered to all that feel in their souls a thirst which nothing in this world can quench. [Such a declaration of free grace seems inserted just in the close of the sacred canon to encourage the hope of every humble soul that is truly desirous of the blessings of the Gospel, and to guard against any suspicious of the Divine goodness. The word we render 'take' often signifies 'receive,' and the word 'freely' is as much as 'gratis,' which implies the freedom of the gift, and probably refers to the invitation, *Isa. lv. 1.—Doddridge.*] 12. It is confirmed by the joint testimony of the Spirit of God, and that gracious Spirit that is in all the true members of the church of God; "the Spirit and the bride" join in testifying the truth and excellency of the Gospel. 13. It is confirmed by a most solemn sanction, condemning and cursing all that should dare to corrupt or change the word of God, either by adding to it or taking from it, ver. 18, 19. He that adds to the word of God draws down upon himself "all the plagues written in this book;" and he that takes any thing away from it cuts himself off from all the promises and privileges of it. This sanction is like a flaming sword to guard the canon of the Scripture from profane hands. Such a fence as this God set about the law (*Deu. iv. 2*) and the whole Old Testament (*Mal. iv. 4*), and now in the most solemn manner about the whole Bible, assuring us that it is a book of the most sacred nature, Divine authority, and of the last importance, and therefore the peculiar care of the great God.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

We are now come to the conclusion of the whole; and that in three things, 1. Christ's farewell to his church. He seems now, after he had been discovering these things to his people on earth, to take leave of them, and return to heaven; but he parts with them in great kindness, and assures them that it shall not be long before he comes again to them: "Behold, I come quickly." As when he ascended into heaven, after his resurrection, he parted with a promise of his gracious presence, so here he parts with a promise of a speedy return. If any say, Where is the promise of his coming, when so many ages are now past since this was written? let them know he is not slack to his people, but long-suffering to his enemies: his coming will be sooner than they are aware, sooner than they are prepared, sooner than they desire; and to his people it will be seasonable. The vision is for an appointed time, and will not tarry. He will "come quickly;" let this word be always sounding in our ear, and let us give all diligence that we may be found of him in peace, "without spot and blameless." 2. The church's hearty echo to Christ's promise. 1st. Declaring her firm belief of it: "Amen," so it is, so it shall be. 2nd. Expressing her earnest desire of it: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus;" make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or like a young hart on the mountains of spices. Thus beats the pulse of the church, thus breathes that gracious Spirit, which actuates and informs the mystical body of Christ; and we should never be satisfied till we find such a spirit breathing in us, and causing us to look for the blessed hope and glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the language of the church of the first-born, and we should join with them, often putting ourselves in mind of his promise. What comes from heaven in a promise should be sent back to heaven in a prayer. "Come, Lord Jesus;" put an end to this state of sin, sorrow, and temptation; gather thy people out of this present evil world, and take them up to heaven, that state of perfect purity, peace and joy, and so finish thy great design, and fulfil all that word in which thou hast caused thy people to hope. 3. The apostolical benediction, which closes the whole: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen." Where observe, 1st. The Bible ends with a clear proof of the God-head of Christ, since the Spirit of God teaches the apostle to bless his people in the name of Christ, and to beg from Christ a blessing for them, which is a proper act of adoration. 2nd. Nothing should be more desired by us than that the grace of Christ may be with us in this world, to prepare us for the glory of Christ in the other world. It is by his grace that we must be kept in a joyful expectation of his glory, and fitted for it, and preserved to it; and his glorious appearance will be welcome and joyful to those that are partakers of his grace and favour here; and therefore to this most comprehensive prayer we should all add our hearty Amen, most earnestly thirsting after greater measures of the gracious influences of the blessed Jesus in our souls, and his gracious presence with us, till glory has perfected all his grace towards us; for he is a sun and a shield; he gives grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. (See Supplementary Note in following pages.)



SMYRNA.—THE SCENE OF POLYCARP'S MARTYRDOM.

"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."

- xxii. 13. See chap. i. 11.
 xxii. 14. "Do his commandments:" according to another rendering adopted by Alford, "that wash their robes."
 xxii. 15. "Dogs:" impure and filthy persons. (See *Phil. iii. 2*; *Psa. xxii. 16*; *Matt. vii. 6*.)
 xxii. 16. "Root of David," as being Jehovah; "the offspring of David," as man; "the bright and morning star," as he who is the light of the world and herald of the everlasting day.
 xxii. 17. This verse had perhaps better be regarded as the words of the apostle himself, in answer to what has just been said by our Lord.
 xxii. 18. "This is at least an awful warning both to those who despise and neglect this book, and to those who add to it by irrelevant and trifling interpretations" (Alford).
 xxii. 20. "Amen;" join this with the words following, the whole being St. John's reply to the words immediately preceding, as addressed by the Lord Jesus.

Supplementary Note.—Of the interpretation of the book there are different views. Some regard all the visions as long since accomplished. These, usually spoken of as the Præterist School, claim among their supporters Grotius, Hammond, the learned and eloquent Bossuet, Eichhorn, Ewald, Lücke, in Germany; Professor Stuart, of America; and in this country the late lamented Professor Maurice and Professor Lee. Others, who go by the name of the Futurist

School, affirm that the main portion, if not the whole of the predictions, remain to be fulfilled. Among the adherents of this view, which must be regarded as modern, are to be found Dr. Todd, the two Maitlands, Williams, and De Burgh. The Historical interpreters view the visions as unfolding the destinies and fortunes of the Church from the earliest times till the end of time. Mede, Sir Isaac Newton, Vitringa, and Bengel were adherents of this view; and in our own time Hengstenberg and Eorard among German, Faber and Bishop Wordsworth among English expositors have adopted it, but the most weighty support to it has been given by Elliott. His learned and painstaking Commentary is a very armoury for the historical interpreter; and his expositions will never fail to command the respectful attention which is due to one who has dedicated his life to one great object, and whose unrequited labours have been rewarded with the noble honour of having cleared away encumbrances from a path which many yearned to tread. Against these three schools of interpretation it is easy to find objections, and perhaps as easy to find supporting evidence. It seems, for example, hard to believe with the Præterist that the counselling voice of prophecy should have spoken only of immediate dangers, and left the Church for fifteen centuries unwarned; or with the Futurist to believe that eighteen centuries of the eventful history of the Church are passed over in silence, and that the whole weight of inspired warning was reserved for the few closing years of the dispensation. Nor, on the other hand,

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE TO THE REVELATION.

[Not a few writers on the Apocalypse have applied the vials (*ch. xv. and xvi.*) to the times in which they respectively lived—recent authors to the revolution in France in 1792, both in its causes and effects, especially as seen in the dreadful events attendant upon, and in the long and bloody wars occasioned by, it. With reference to such systems, Mr. Scott remarks, 'Not being disposed to controvert this interpretation, and much less to subscribe to it, I only again observe that, in my view, our posterity at the end of this century will be more competent judges of this subject than we can be.' Adopting the latter opinion, we deem it right, instead of entering into historical details supposed to be illustrative of the pouring out of the vials, to lay down a few general principles drawn from the word of God, by which we may be guided in the interpretation, both of the events alluded to, and of the extraordinary changes now in progress, and of those still more mighty, which, in the judgment of wise and pious men, are not far remote. The truly great Jonathan Edwards, in his *History of the Work of Redemption*, written upwards of seventy years ago, divides the duration of that history into three periods; the First, from the fall to the incarnation of Christ; the Second, the period of Christ's humiliation; and the Third, from Christ's resurrection to the end of the world. Respecting this latter he observes, that the design of the Son of God, in his humiliation, was to lay ground for the overthrow of Satan's kingdom, and that now is come the period for effecting it, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out," *1 Jno. xii. 31*; that another part of the Divine purpose was to gather together in one all things in Christ, and that now is come the time for this also, *Jno. xii. 32*, compared with *Gen. xlix. 10*; and that, when his sufferings were finished, and his humiliation perfected, the time in a special sense had arrived for his accomplishing the eternal salvation of his people, *Heb. v. 8, 9*; and that great ending of all Divine dispensations, the glorifying of the Godhead; *Jno. xvii. 1, 2*, "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." He farther observes, 1. That the times of the period spoken of—namely, that from the resurrection of Christ to the end of the world—are for the most part those which in the Old Testament are called "the latter days." 2. That the whole of this period is sometimes in Scripture called "the end of the world," *1 Cor. x. 11*; *Heb. ix. 26*; so called because occupied in bringing things to their great end and issue as contemplated by God in all the previous dispensations of his providence, and as consummated in the gradual accomplishment of these dispensations themselves—whence, perhaps, the expression of the apostle, "the ends of the world" are come upon us—not the end, but the ends, in the plural number, as though the world had several endings one after another. 3. That the state of things which is attained in the events of this period is called a new heaven and a new earth, *Isa. lvi. 17, 18*; *Lxvi. 22*; see also, *li. 16*. For we have seen, as the former state of things, or the old world, by one step after another, is through this period coming to an end, so the new state of things, or the new world, which is a spiritual world, is beginning and setting up—the heaven and earth which are corruptible are shaking, that the new heaven and new earth, which cannot be shaken, may be established and remain, *Hag. ii. 6, 7*; *Heb. xii. 26, 27*. Jonathan Edwards proceeds to say, The waters of the long channel, which has so many branches, and so many turnings, when emptied into their proper ocean, which they had been seeking from the beginning and head of their course, then come to their rest. The end of God's creation of the world was to prepare a kingdom for his Son, the heir of all things; in as far as that kingdom advances in the world, so far are things wound up and settled in their everlasting state, and a period put to the course of things in this changeable scene; yea, so far are the first heavens and the first earth come to an end, and the new heavens and the new earth, the everlasting heaven and earth, established in their room. Having premised these observations, and also that the condition arrived at through the events of this period is the same with that so often referred to by "the kingdom of heaven," or "the kingdom of God," that the expectation of such a kingdom, and the expression used to denote it, seem to have been derived from *Dan. ii. 44*; *vii. 13, 14*; that great earthly kingdoms had before existed, the Babylonish, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman; but that Christ came to set up the last kingdom, which is not an earthly, but a heavenly kingdom, "not of this world," *Jno. xviii. 36*; a kingdom appointed to him by the Father, *Lu. xxii. 29*; a kingdom begun, in its spiritual state, soon after his resurrection, becoming more perfect on the downfall of antichrist, and rising into that glorious and blessed state into which the church shall be received at the day of judgment, *1 Cor. xv. 50*, the apostle, in reference to the resurrection, declaring that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,"—having, we say, made these preliminary statements, he continues, with a view to the clearer understanding of scripture truth concerning this period, to observe more particularly, 1. That the setting up of the kingdom of Christ is chiefly accomplished by four successive great events, each of which is in Scripture called Christ's "coming in his kingdom"—the first being Christ's appearance in the wonderful dispensations of his providence in the apostle's days, in setting up his kingdom, and destroying its enemies, which ended in the fall of Jerusalem, called, *Mat. xvi. 28*, (compare *Mat. xxvi.*) Christ's "coming in his kingdom;" the second being that which was accomplished in Constantine's time, in the destruction of the heathen Roman empire, and is represented as Christ's coming, and compared (*ch. vi. to end*) to his coming to judgment; the third being his coming at the destruction of antichrist, and so described in *Dan. vii.*, and other places; and the fourth being his coming to the last judgment—the event principally signified in Scripture by Christ's "coming in his kingdom." 2. That each of the three former is a lively image or type of the fourth and last, namely, Christ's coming to the final judgment, as the principal dispensations of Providence, previous to his first advent, were types of that advent. a. As Christ's last coming to judgment is accompanied with a resurrection of the dead, so is each of the three foregoing with a spiritual resurrection, called the first resurrection, (*ch. xx.*), in reference to the times following the overthrow of antichrist. b. As Christ will appear in the last judgment in the glory of the Father, so it was aforetime, in the judgments he brought upon his enemies; as his last coming will be attended with a literal gathering of the elect from the

four winds of heaven, effected by God's angels with a great sound of a trumpet, *Mat. xxiv. 31*, so each of the preceding had its spiritual ingathering effected by the trumpet of the Gospel, and sounded by the ministers of Christ. c. As on the last appearance of Christ there will be great degeneracy, so it has been with the others—in the opposition to him of the Jews in the heathen persecutions, before Constantine in the wickedness of antichrist, and before the last by Gog and Magog, as described in the *Revelation*. By each of these comings of Christ God works a glorious deliverance for his church. The first, ending in the fall of Jerusalem, was followed by a blessed spiritual state; at the second there was an advancement to liberty from bloody persecution; the downfall of antichrist will be followed by the prevalence of the truth, liberty, peace, and joy, so often described in prophetic Scripture; and in the last, the church will be advanced to consummate glory in both soul and body in heaven. d. Moreover, each of these comings of Christ is attended with judgment—the Jews were overthrown, so were the heathen persecutors, so will it be with antichrist, the most cruel and unrelenting of all the church's enemies; and so at Christ's final manifestation will the ungodly perish; and, as on each of the former manifestations of Christ, there was, or will be, an ending of the old and a beginning of the new heavens and new earth, so, on his last appearance, there will be an end to a temporal, and the beginning of an eternal state. 3. Each of the four great dispensations is but a step towards the accomplishment of one event—the one event prophesied of *Dan. vii. 13, 14*; expected by the Jews, and called "the coming of the kingdom of heaven;" referred to by Christ and John the Baptist, when they said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," and gradually accomplished in the above dispensations; and because these four events are but images one of another, and the three former, as it were, but types of the last, and all of them together but so many degrees onwards in the accomplishment of the same great end, hence they are all from time to time prophesied of under one, as in *Dan.*, and *Mat. xxiv.*, where some passages appear more applicable to one and some to another of them. 4. In each of these steps the event is being accomplished. There was an advance to it in the destruction of Jerusalem—a greater advance in the time of Constantine, on the fall of antichrist; a farther degree will be approached, so that the kingdom of Christ is gradually prevailing by these several great steps of its fulfilment from the time of Christ's resurrection to the end of the world. 5. And all the great providences of God between these four great events are to make way for the kingdom and glory of Christ in the great event following. It was so before. Those which remain till the overthrow of antichrist, and the beginning of the glorious times of the church which that overthrow will introduce, seem all to prepare the way for that intermediate event; and the providences of God following it seem, in like manner, to be for the greater manifestation of the Redeemer's glory at the end of the world, and in the consummation of all things. Thus far President Edwards.

In regard to the number of periods mentioned in the passage, and the times of their commencement and close, a doubt may be entertained by our readers. But we believe it to present such right general views of the Divine administration as will safely guide us in the interpretation of what is yet hidden in the Apocalypse, so far as we are either designed or qualified, previous to their occurrence, to understand the events therein prefigured. As to these events, there is an extensive and deepening conviction amongst the observers of God's providence and word that the present times carry the elements of a not far distant fulfilment of the predictions uttered in the sixteenth and immediately preceding and following chapters. To this conviction the late Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, gives utterance in a form remarkably coincident, as to the principle enunciated in it, with the Periodical view presented by the great American divine. "I believe," writes Dr. Arnold, (*Life*, by Stanley, i. 273,) "that the day of the Lord is coming; that is, the termination of one of the great *aeons* of the human race, whether the final one or not, that I believe no created being knows, or can know. The termination of the Jewish *aeon* in the first century, and of the Roman *aeon* in the 500th, was each marked by the same concurring calamitous wars, tumults, pestilences, earthquakes, &c., all marking the time of God's peculiar season of visitation. And society in Europe seems going on fast for a similar revolution, out of which Christ's church will emerge, purified, I trust, and strengthened by the destruction of various earthly and evil mixtures that have corrupted it." In another work the same author observes, "Modern history appears to be not only a step in advance of ancient history, but the last step; it appears to bear marks of the fullness of time, as if there would be no future history beyond it." After some remarkable observations explaining, and in proof of, this opinion, he proceeds,—"We have the full proceeds of earth's resources before us, and they seem inadequate to supply life for a third period of human history. I am well aware that to state this as a matter of positive belief would be the extreme of presumption. There may be nations reserved hereafter for great purposes of God's providence, whose fitness for their appointed work will not betray itself till the work and the time for doing it be come; but, without any presumptuous confidence, if there be any signs, however uncertain, that we are living in the latest period of the world's history, that no other race remain behind to perform what we have neglected, or to restore what we have ruined; then, indeed, the interest of modern history does become intense."—*Lectures on Modern History*, p. 38. There are other writers who go still farther in this direction. They maintain that the greater part of the seven vials is already poured out—that even the sixth is so, and the way of "the kings of the east" (meaning thereby the Jews) being thus prepared, they will speedily return to the land of their fathers; that the millennium is near, "at the commencement of which Christ will come, and during which he will dwell personally, that is, bodily, on the earth—when his saints that have died shall be raised from the dead, and reign with him, while other men shall be living in their natural bodies upon the earth along with them; that there will be an apostasy after this millennium, and then the day of judgment. And some who hold this view place the conflagration of the heavens and the earth previous to the millennium; while others, I believe, postpone it till the day of judgment. (See fuller statement in Supplementary Note on *Jer. xxiii.*) The passage in

can we be thoroughly satisfied with the Historical School, however ably and learnedly represented. There is a certain nakedness about mere historical fulfilments: the form is there, but we seem to miss the living breath of the Spirit. The fault of the Historical interpreter is that he is too readily caught by the external resemblance, and notes too little inner principles. We are disposed to view the Apocalypse as the pictorial unfolding of great principles in constant conflict, though under various forms. The Præterist may

then be right in finding early fulfilments, and the Futurist in expecting undeveloped ones, and the Historical interpreter is unquestionably right in looking for them along the whole line of history; for the words of God mean more than one man or one school of thought can compass. There are depths of truth unexplored which sleep beneath the simplest sentences. Just as we are wont to say that history repeats itself, so the predictions of the Bible are not exhausted in one or even in many fulfilments. Each prophecy is a single key

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE TO THE REVELATION.

Scripture on which this expectation is founded is in *Rev. xx. 1-10*. It is very extraordinary," says Dr. Carlie of Dublin, in his *First and Second Advent, with a View of the Millennium*, "that round this solitary symbolical announcement of a thousand years, during which Satan is to be bound in the bottomless pit, have been congregated almost every promise of external glory contained either in the Old or New Testament; and a period of blessedness has thus been held up, during the present transitory, imperfect, sinful state of man, which, has, to a fearful extent, been made to obscure the great promise to which the faith of the church has been directed in all ages, and on which the hope of every individual member of the church rests; namely, the eternal separation of the righteous from the wicked, the destruction of Satan, the abolition of death, and the everlasting peace and joy of all God's people in the presence of God, and the restitution of all things—all to be effected by the second coming of Christ to judgment. On the above passage I would observe, 1. That the events predicted in it, whatever they may be, are to be previous to the coming of Christ for judgment, because the account of the day of judgment immediately follows as part of the same vision, with its essential characteristics,—the destruction of Satan, the sitting of the Son of man on his throne, the judging of the righteous and the wicked, the passing away of the heavens and the earth, the rising of a new heaven and earth, the eternal blessedness of those who were written in the Lamb's book of life, and the eternal banishment of the wicked to outer darkness and torment. The events, then, symbolized in this prophecy belong to our present imperfect condition, and therefore, they cannot be propounded as promises, that is, as objects of faith; nor ought they ever to be confounded with that event which, throughout the whole of Scripture, is held out as the great object of the faith and hope of the church—the second coming of Christ, and the literal resurrection of all the dead. 2. It is to be remembered that this passage is a symbolical vision, and that, before we can decipher it, we must ascertain what the symbols import.—And it does appear to me to be rash and hazardous in the extreme to involve the very essentials of Christianity, the very cardinal points of its doctrine, in the obscurity and uncertainty of such inquiries. Keep these symbolical prophecies apart from the plain declarations of Scripture presented to our faith, and the revelation of God's purposes is clear as light—a child may understand and believe it; intermingling these prophecies with the plain declarations of Scripture, and the whole instantly becomes vague, indistinct, and dubious. 3. In this account of the millennium nothing whatever is said of Christ's coming. But immediately before it there is a description of a personage, who can be no other than the Redeemer, going forth on a white horse, to smite and subdue the nations, followed by the "armies of heaven" on white horses. The armies of heaven seem to point at the messengers of Christ—the preachers of his Gospel—the soldiers of the cross; and it is also confirmed by "the sharp sword," that is, the Word of God, going out of his mouth, and by other parts of the description; so that we are probably to understand by it a wide diffusion of the Gospel by the ordinary means, but with extraordinary power of the Spirit, previous to the binding of Satan. 4. The leading event in this prophecy of the millennium, on which the others seem to depend, is the binding up of Satan for a thousand years. And what might be the effect of the removing of such a powerful stimulant and guide to evil, and of leaving men to meet the offer of mercy in the Gospel simply under the influence of their own natural alienation from God, we cannot clearly anticipate; but it would probably be a more cordial and extensive reception of the Gospel than has ever yet been witnessed. 5. By the reviving of the souls or spirits (for nothing is said of the bodies, be it remembered) of those who were beleaguered by the witness of Jesus, and who had not worshipped the beast, nor received his mark upon their foreheads or on their hands, we may perhaps understand the revival of the principles and faithfulness of the martyrs of the primitive age, and of the age of the Reformation—the manifestation of a similar zeal and faithfulness by the people of God; and their reigning with Christ may signify their being raised to influence and honour in consequence of their union with Christ, their obedience to his law, and their upholding and defending it. 6. But a resurrection is spoken of—a first resurrection, implying a second. This, it has been hastily inferred, must be a literal resurrection of the bodies of part of the saints at the millennium, and called the first resurrection with reference to the final resurrection of saints and sinners at the day of judgment. But no hint is given in the promises, on which our hopes are to be fixed, of any other resurrection than "the resurrection of the last day." Two resurrections are spoken of in Scripture—a spiritual resurrection from the death of trespasses and sins, and the resurrection of the body, which may be called a first and second resurrection. But what is more directly to the point is, that the most graphic description of a resurrection to be found in prophecy certainly does not signify a literal resurrection of the body, but a political and spiritual resurrection of the Jewish nation from its state of dissolution, dismemberment, and corruption (*Eze. xxxvii. 1-14*). As, then, there is a first and second resurrection of the Jewish nation—one that has already taken place, and another that is yet future,—may not this first resurrection be the first raising up of the world from that state of confusion and spiritual death in which it has been lying since the fall to some measure of peace and order, and subjection to the will of God, which would be effected by the general diffusion and reception of the Gospel, and the withdrawing of Satan's influence? To this period may belong many of the prophecies of the Old Testament, such as the knowledge of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea; the King of Zion ruling the nations with a rod of iron; the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdoms of our God and his church; all flesh seeing the salvation of God; the restoration of the Jews to their own land, and their being held in reverence and honour for the sake of Him who was their kinsman according to the flesh. It does not appear that in that universal kingdom of the Redeemer, spoken of in these prophecies, the whole world is to be really converted. A rod of iron is not the sceptre with which Christ governs his people, nor does dashing men in pieces convert them. And then, there are plain indications that the subjection of many will be a feigned subjection—that all are not to be spiritually brought under his rule. But all opposition may be subdued, the law of Christ may be universally acknowledged, the laws of the kingdoms of the world may be founded on the law of God, and administered in accordance with it; wars may cease to the ends of the earth, and the whole structure and practices of society tend to the repression of evil and the encouragement of good. And thus may there be to the world, even during its present imperfect state, what the apostle calls, in reference to the conversion of the Jews, "a life from the dead." (See Note, abridged from *T. Scott, on Rev. xx.*) 7. By the "rest of the dead" must be meant all besides the martyrs and faithful confessors; namely, those who rejected and opposed the Gospel; and, by their living not again may be meant, that this spirit of opposition to Christ, and rejection of his truth, will be extinct, or at least dormant, during the thousand years of the withdrawing of Satan's influence. 8. By the loosing of Satan must be understood his again being left at liberty to try men's profession of subjection to Christ, by temptation; when, it would appear, that he will succeed in exposing the hypocrisy of some, and exciting the enmity of others, till he shall collect a multitude like the sand of the sea, and engage them in a new and desperate effort to banish the dominion of Christ from the earth. 9. But the provocation is complete. Sin has sufficiently developed

itself. The repetition of the old delusion indicates that Satan had done his worst, and had exhausted all his armoury of wicked inventions. The Lord says, It is enough; and Jesus appears in his glory, quashes the diabolical and audacious enterprise, and with it puts an end for ever to the mischief of Satan and his angels, and their human coadjutors. 10. Then follows the second resurrection, implied in the mention of the first, when the earth, after its conflagration, shall come forth from the furnace in renewed beauty, and perform its revolutions under a new and serene sky, from which every portent of wrath and indignation shall be withdrawn; and the saints of God, having been raised in glorious, incorruptible bodies, shall be placed upon it; and Jesus shall come in his glorified body, and dwell and reign among them, and all shall be peace and joy in the worship and service of the Lord for ever and ever. And then, lastly, shall be the second death. What that death shall be we are not left to conjecture. It is mentioned several times in this book in terms which fix it to be the final and utter destruction of the wicked, (*Rev. ii. 11; xx. 6, 14; xxi. 2.*) In this series of events, the coming of Christ in his power and majesty, the renovation of the earth, the resurrection of the saints in glory, the judging of the quick and the dead, and the final destruction of the wicked, are promises plainly announced in the direct declarations of Scripture, and therefore certainties. The events previous to these, being indicated only by symbolical visions, of difficult interpretation, can assume no higher a place than conjecture; nor is any thing here claimed for them beyond conjectures—perhaps, however, more in accordance with the strains of prophecy than the conjectures of those who are urging upon us a literal personal coming of Christ before the millennium, two literal resurrections, an apostasy, and the subduing of that apostasy, that are to follow the personal coming of Christ,—nay, according to some, that are to follow the conflagration of the heavens and the earth, and thus the erecting upon a single symbolical prophecy, conveyed in vision uncertain in its interpretation, of a whole dispensation after that which is expressly called "the last days."

Whilst entertaining generally the views stated in this passage, we would still not be insensible to the ominous character and events of the present times. But we exceedingly doubt the wisdom of applying to every recent, and still more to every progressive, event the predictions contained in that part of *Revelation* before alluded to. We therefore prefer giving the views of former writers on the passages in question, when, by comparing these with Scripture, and with surrounding changes, we may be led to apply them with a confidence, all the greater that it has arisen, not from our imagining (as men in every age are apt to do) that recent or passing events fulfil the particular prediction, but from observing their singular accordance with that prediction as commented upon by learned, holy, and discerning men, removed, by their position in another age, from the influence too often injuriously exerted upon the cotemporary interpreter. In this light the following extract from Dr. Owen's (1649) Commentary on *Hebrews* (xii. 27) appears interesting and important in the present times:—

"The Lord Jesus Christ, by his mighty power, in these latter days, as anti-christian tyranny draws to its period, will so far shake and translate the political heights, governments, and strength of the nations, as shall serve for the full bringing in of his own peaceable kingdom; the nations so shaken becoming thereby a quiet habitation for the people of the Most High. I shall only add that punctual description which you have of this whole matter, as Daniel calls it, in the *Revelation*, with respect unto its accomplishment, *ch. xvii*. The Roman harlot having procured ten kings, or kingdoms, into which the last head of the Roman empire sprouted, about the year 450, by the inundation of the northern nations, to join with her, they together make war against the Lamb, *ver. 12-14*. *Ver. 12*, 'The ten horns which thou sawest' upon the last head of the great beast, the Roman monarchy, are 'ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet,' to wit, when John saw the vision," but received power as kings one hour with the beast." About four hundred years after this, the pope ascended to his sovereignty, and these western nations grew into distinct dominions about the same time. *Ver. 13*, 'These have one mind,' that is, as to business in hand, for otherwise they did and do vex one another with perpetual broils and wars; 'and shall give their power and strength to the beast,' or swear to defend rights of holy church, which is no other than Babylon, and act accordingly. *Ver. 14*, 'These make war with the Lamb,'—having sworn and undertaken the defence of holy church, or Babylon, they persecuted the poor heretics with fire and sword; that is, the witnesses of the Lamb, and in them the Lamb himself, striving to keep his kingdom out of the world; 'and the Lamb shall overcome them,' shaking and translating them into a new mould and frame; 'For he is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they that are with him,' whose help and endeavors he will use, 'are called, and chosen, and faithful.' *Ver. 16*, 'The ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast,' being now shaken, changed, or translated in mind, interest, and perhaps government, 'these hate the whore, and shall make her desolate,'—are instrumental in the hand of Christ, for the ruin of that antichristian state, which before they served,—'and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.' Hence, *ch. xviii. 2*, Babylon, and that whole antichristian state which was supported upon their power and greatness, having lost its props, comes toppling down to the ground: 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen,' *ver. 2*, and the saints take vengeance on the whore, for all her former rage and cruelty; 'Double unto her double, according to her works,' *ver. 6*. *Ver. 9*, 'And the kings of the earth,' being some of them shaken out of their dominions, for refusing to close with the Lamb, 'who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her,' learning and practising false worship of her institution, 'shall bewail her, and lament for her,' as having received succour from her, her monasteries and shavelings, in their distress, whereunto indeed they were brought for her sake, 'when they shall see the smoke of her burning,' beholding her darkness, stench, and confusion, in her final desolation. Now, all this shall be transacted with so much obscurity and darkness, Christ not only appearing unto carnal eyes, that though 'many shall be purified and made white, yet the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand,' *Dan. xii. 10*. There shall be no such demonstration of the presence of Christ, as to open the eyes of hardened men: but at length, having suffered the poor, deceived wretches to drink of the cup prepared for them, he appears himself gloriously, *ch. xix. 13*, in a more eminent manner than even before, to the total destruction of the residue of opposers. And that this will be the utmost close of that dispensation wherein now he walketh, I no way doubt.—The assertion being cleared and proved, the reasons of it come next to be considered: 1. The first is, that it shall be done by the way of recompence and vengeance; *Ps. ii. 4, 5; Ps. cxxxvii. 8, 9; Isa. xlvii. 1-3; Isa. xlv. 26; Jer. l. 33, 34; li. 24, 25, 34, 35; Zec. xii. 2-4; xiv. 12; Rev. xviii. 6, &c.* 2. That by his own wisdom he may frame such a power as may best conduce to the carrying on of his own kingdom among the sons of men; *Ps. ii. 9-12; Rev. xvii. 14; Mat. xviii. 20; 1 Cor. x. 26; Eph. iv. 11-13; 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14; Ps. xlv. 6; Is. xlv. 7, 23*. He hath promised his church that he will give unto it holy priests and Levites, *Isa. lxi. 90, 21*, which shall serve at the great feast of tabernacles, *Zec. xiv. 16*—a sufficient demonstration that he will dwell still in his churches by his ordinances, whatsoever some conceive: so also, that he will make her civil officers peace, and her exactors righteousness, *Is. lx. 17, 18*. They shall be so established that the nations, as nations, may serve it; and the kingdoms of the world shall become

which unlocks many doors, and the grand and stately drama of the Apocalypse has been played out perchance in one age to be repeated in the next. Its majestic and mysterious teachings indicate the features of a struggle which, be the stage the human soul, with its fluctuations of doubt and fear, of hope and love, the progress of kingdoms, or the destinies of the world, is the same struggle in all. We may approach this book, therefore, with feelings of the profoundest awe. Its full and unfathomed depths we cannot hope to

explore; their complete investigation may belong to that era when we shall know as we are known; but there are meanings we can understand, there are warnings we can profit by. There are tendencies and influences, subtle and plausible, which may lead the soul into bondage; against these we may be guarded. There are principles clear, simple, godlike: by these we may be guided, and these will be victorious at the last.

Additional Notes.—*Chap. i. 10*. "The Lord's day:" some have

the kingdom of our Lord, *Rev.* xi. 15. For the present, the government of the nations (as many of them as are concerned therein) is purely framed for the interest of antichrist. No kind of government in Europe, or line of governors, so ancient, but that the beast is as old as they, and had a great influence into their constitution or establishment, to provide that it might be for his own interest. This is a second reason why the Lord Jesus, by his mighty power, at the bringing in of his immovable kingdom, will shake the heavens and the earth of the nations; even because, in their present constitution, they are directly framed to the interest of antichrist, which, by notable advantages at their first moulding, and continued insinuations ever since, hath so rivetted itself into the very fundamentals of them, that no digging or mining, without an earthquake, will cast up the foundation-stones thereof. The Lord Jesus, then, having promised the service of the nations to his church, will so far open their whole frame to the roots, as to pluck out all the cursed seeds of the mystery of iniquity, which, by the craft of Satan, and exigencies of state, or methods of advancing the pride and power of some sons of blood, have been sown among them. Add hereunto, that in this mighty work the Lord Jesus Christ will make use of the power of the nations, the horns of them, that is, their strength; *Rev.* xvii. 16, they must hate the whore and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh and burn her with fire. Now, whether this can be accomplished or no in their present posture is easily discernible. Doth not the papal interest lie at the bottom of all or the most ruling lines of Christendom? Can that be ejected without unbottoming their own dominion? Do they not use the efficacy of the Roman jurisdiction to balance the powers of their adversaries abroad, and to awe their subjects at home? Hath not the pope a considerable strength in every one of their own bosoms? Are not the locusts of their religious orders all sworn slaves to him, for number sufficient to make an army to fight the greatest emperor in the world? Are not most potentates tied by oath, or other compact, to maintain either the whole, or some part of the whole, tower, under the name of rights of holy church, prelates, and the like? And can any expect that such as these should take up the despised quarrel of the saints against that flourishing queen? Doubtless, no such fruit will grow on these trees before they are thoroughly shaken.

There is a probation for systems as well as persons. If they do not accomplish the good for which they are responsible, then they are thrown aside, full trial having been made of them. The monarchies and monarchs of Europe have been on such a trial for centuries. They have had incalculable spheres and opportunities of good. They might have enlightened their subjects, given them the Bible, instructed them in religion, led them to God. Instead of that, they have proved supremely selfish, and in most cases despotic. They have ruled, not for the good of the nations, but for their own pleasure. God's kingdom has not been advanced by them, nor sought; but their own—their own families and parties. The few have not ruled for the many, but have used and ruled the many for themselves. The happiness, the peace, the interests in every way, of whole nations, have been sacrificed to the personal ambition and luxury of individuals and families. It looks now as though God were bringing this experiment to its end. He seems about closing up this book of the demonstration of human depravity. The next experiment may be, whether the people will use their opportunities, and the time of their power, any less selfishly—any more for the good of mankind and the glory of God. Perhaps now God will let this experiment be tried. Almost every other has been tried. The world has endeavoured to live without God, and cannot do it. Empires have tried it, and ruin after ruin has tumbled to the ground. False religions and corruptions of Christianity have been tried, and they and the world have rotted on together. Now, if the French people, or any other people, imagine that a favourite or untried form of government or socialism is to make them, without a radical change of character by the influences of the Gospel, good and happy, they are sadly mistaken. The people will speedily discover that government was never instituted to stand in the place of personal religion, industry, and virtue; and that if they leave it to government, and throw it upon government, to do all for them, for that very reason government will be able to do nothing. Government must be supported by popular virtues, but otherwise cannot produce them. The object of government is not to give or prescribe religion to a people, but to protect them in becoming and being religious, in God's way.—*Rev. Dr. Cheevers.*

Even in our own country the hope is entertained by a very numerous class, that by the march of intellect, the diffusion of knowledge, and the improvement which all our institutions are soon expected to undergo, an era of virtue and happiness, unparalleled in the history of the world, is speedily approaching. But if efforts for such an end were to be successful, how small a contribution would it bring to the sum of human happiness! God would be as unknown to men as ever—Christ would be equally disesteemed—the soul would remain in the miserable darkness and in the degrading bondage of its natural condition—ambition, avarice, envy, lust, every passion would continue, and prevent them from profiting by what would otherwise have ministered to their improvement and happiness. No: separated from knowledge and faith in the truths of religion, things that are in themselves blessings may become a curse; add to

which, the miseries flowing from events over which man has no control, and which, with all the foresight and sagacity of which this boasted knowledge may be productive, he never, never can avert. Disappointment would still attend his pursuits, and dissatisfaction be felt by him even when successful. Still disease and death would seize upon himself, upon his relatives and friends—upon all. No merely human knowledge can avert these events, whilst it leaves us destitute of that faith which would have yielded support under them. So that, between the absence of religion and the presence of natural evils, he is as vain and miserable as before. Even if believing that God will overrule this desire of knowledge and spirit of improvement for his own glory and the good of his people, we ought not to anticipate the perfection and continuance of human happiness in a present state. Not until the former things have passed away, and been succeeded by a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, shall the purpose of God and the destiny of man be completed. Then the glorious manifestation of the sons of God shall take place, in expectation of which the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And in the mean time, seeing that we look for such things, let us be diligent that we may be found of God in peace, without spot and blameless; and account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation, 2 *Pet.* iii. 13-15.

We conclude in the words of the author to whom, in this revision of the original comment on the book of *Revelation*, we are so greatly indebted. "Our Christian poet's exquisite language," says Mr. Elliott, "does by no means adequately express the probable severity of the coming crisis:

"The groans of Nature in this nether world,
Which heaven has heard for ages, have an end.
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
The time of rest, the promised sabbath comes.
Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh
Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world; and what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things,
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest."—

Winter Walk at Noon.

' Ere the sabbatism of the saints begins, something much more is to be looked for than the mere gusty closing blasts of a long tempest, or billowy heavings of the sea before a calm, as it works itself to rest. The final conflict between Christ's true church and antichrist, and their respective chiefs and supporters, both visible and invisible, is set forth in prophecy as most severe. It is individually that the application of the subject is most important; and when thus personally applied, need I say how unspeakably deep and solemn its interest! It is not enough that we belong to the most orthodox church, profess the most scriptural faith, and be even zealous for it against the many errors and heresies of the day. The question is, Are we of Christ's true disciples, his "little flock," to which alone the Father has given promise of the kingdom? Have we then the evidence of belonging to it? Have we received the apocalyptically-noted mark and seal of God's holy Spirit; and the inward light, life, and spirit of holiness and adoption, which he alone can give? Is our faith fixed on Christ as the sun of righteousness? Do we hold to the written word in life, as well as in doctrine? Do we witness for Christ in an apostate world; as in the world, but not of the world? Do we seek to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, in holiness, spiritual-mindedness, benevolence, self-denial, and patient perseverance in well-doing, through evil report as well as good report? Do we seek to improve our several talents for him, as those that must soon give account? Does our charity abound to Christ's flock and people? Is the lamp of faith trimmed, and its light kept burning within us, as by men that watch for their Lord? Is the thought of his coming precious to us? Do we look for, and love the thought of, his appearing? Doubtless there are many who can answer these questions in the affirmative; and happy are they. But there are many more, it is to be feared, with whom misgivings will arise in the conscience, as they reflect upon them. Alas! who can doubt the prevalence, in what has been not inaptly called "the religious world," of much of false profession; much of the Laodicean spirit of lukewarmness, self-conceit, religious pride, earthly-mindedness; much of the characteristic deadness of the church of Sardis, "having a name to live, but being dead?" With all such, what cause is there, in contemplation of the coming future, for humiliation, holy fear, repentance! Blessed be God, though the acceptable time remaining be short, it is not ended. Though the Master seems to be on the point of rising, he has not as yet actually risen, and shut to the door. Not only is the probationary period of permitted evil as well as good prolonged, as it is written, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is holy let him be holy still," but the voice of mercy and love is also yet to be heard, inviting sinners to salvation: "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."]

thought that this expression had already become a familiar designation of the Sunday, but it seems more probable, as Trench remarks, that its use began with this passage. For a refutation of the notion that the Lord's day is equivalent to the last or judgment-day, see Notes in Alford's "Greek Testament."

i. 11. The words "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and" are omitted in all the old MSS.; they have probably been inserted from verses 8 and 17. "What thou seest, write in a book:" this must be understood as applying not to the epistles to the seven churches only, as Hengstenberg maintains, but to the whole of the Apocalypse.

i. 12. "Golden:" throughout the East a sense of sacredness was attached to this metal.

ii. 10. "Crown of life:" "Is this crown the diadem of royalty, or the garland of victory? I believe the former" (Trench).

ii. 11. "Second death:" here, too, the promise corresponds with the character of fidelity. The faithfulness unto death is rewarded by a victory over death, even the second death.

ii. 13. "Satan's seat;" or, rather, "throne." We have no sufficient information to explain why this city should be described as

thus pre-eminently bad. Some have supposed a reference to the lying wonders said to be performed at the Temple of Æsculapius, but this is hardly sufficient to explain so strong an expression as Satan's throne. "Antipas:" of the person here mentioned we know absolutely nothing. The later Latin martyrologies give an account of his death, but these are not dependable. Hengstenberg suggests that the name is symbolic, and signifies one who for Christ's sake has dared to stand out "against all." This is too fanciful to be satisfactory.

ii. 17. "White stone:" Trench inclines to see an allusion here to the Urim which the high-priest wore (*Exod.* xxviii. 15-30; *Lev.* viii. 8), and which he conjectures may have been some precious stone, probably the diamond.

iv. 4. "Four and twenty seats:" rather, "thrones," for the same word is used as in verse 2.

iv. 8. Alford places a full stop after "wings," and then reads, "around and within they are full of eyes." "Holy, holy, holy:" this word is used eight times in the Sinaitic MS., nine times in the later Vatican MS., and three times, as here, in the Alexandrine and many other MSS.

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